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LIFE IN COLOR

The gemstone market is alive with possibilities. Ahead of the year's biggest gem show, we talk to dealers about what's trending

AUCTION SPECIAL

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DIAMOND ANALYSIS

From De Beers' declines to Dubai's rise, our experts assess the market

RISING GOLD PRICES

How jewelry manufacturers are navigating the metal's record highs

TALKING THE TORQUE

This rigid metal choker is taking the season's catwalks by storm, especially in combination with longer necklaces. **By Francesca Fearon**



The runaway success of Chemena Kamali's debut as fashion house Chloe's creative director last year coincided with a revival of boho-chic clothing and jewelry. Chloe's lacy lingerie dresses, chiffon harem pants, and sturdy cotton and suede workwear jackets were perfectly suited to long necklaces with dainty trinkets, and that necklace style made an appearance at many shows, including the black-leather-clad Balmain collection and Chanel's pastel tweeds.

The upcoming season, though, is zooming in further on necklines, with designers and stylists combining those long trinket necklaces with metal collars and chokers on the catwalk. Chanel, for example, juxtaposed snug pearl chokers with longer birdcage-charm necklaces at its latest show. Similarly, models at Isabel Marant wore rigid metal chokers, or torques, with longer necklaces sporting puka shells for that handcrafted, festival-ready vibe.

The torque is an intriguing new design development, albeit a style dating back

thousands of years. In recent seasons, we have seen jewelry collections embrace long and short chains, fine chains, chunky Cuban chains, pearl necklaces, diamond rivières, and recently chokers — so now, this hoop of rigid metal seems ready and ripe for revival.

Antique roots

Appealing for their striking minimalism, torques featured on adjustable chain fastenings in the Hermes and Missoni spring collections. Elsewhere, Gucci creative director Sabato De Sarno paired his updates of Tom Ford’s iconic jersey dresses with gold chokers and armbands that recalled Ford’s famous bamboo handbag from the mid-1990s, which in turn was based on the 1947 original. In the past, the torque was a favorite design of Alexander McQueen, and Kamali showed torques suspending trinkets in her fall-winter Chloe debut.

While the torque’s roots lie in classical antiquity, its pure lines and easy simplicity make it look unapologetically modern. Valerie Messika’s high-jewelry catwalk presentation in Paris last year featured diamond-embellished torques with interchangeable diamond pendants, available in a choice of cuts. New York brand Eva Fehren’s gold Axis collar and Los Angeles-based jeweler Jonne Amaya’s question mark-shaped torque share that linear elegance. Anoon, a new British brand produced by Greek artisans, focuses on a simple gold hoop of diamonds or pink sapphires with a lapis or white-opal disc drop. Equally modern are the torques in Parisian Gaia Repossi’s Serti sur Vide collection, which use flexible titanium cable.

In London, Glenn Spiro recently unveiled a group of gold torques suspending amber beads and Baoulé

decorations from west Africa, marrying history with contemporary design. Meanwhile, antiquity specialist Lalaounis is on a mission to breathe new life into jewelry designs from classical Greece.

“Torque-style necklaces can be seen in the art of many civilizations throughout the centuries,” explains Demetra Lalaounis, director and daughter of founder Ilias Lalaounis. “It is the purity of form that makes them such a timeless classic, ancient in feel and yet so contemporary.”

Various versions appear in the brand’s Neolithic, Cycladic, Classical and Hellenistic collections. “We opt for more minimalist designs, with the hammered version in 22-karat gold, available in different widths, being a signature of ours,” she says.

Alternatively, the designs in its Animal Kingdom collection echo the Hellenistic style, using more intricate workmanship such as filigree wire and granulations.

Sculptural layering

Torques are similarly integral to Egyptian brand Azza Fahmy and have been selling out fast online.

“Every few seasons, we make sure to revisit and reinterpret torques, ensuring they remain a timeless yet dynamic element of our designs,” says Amina Ghali, the company’s head designer and the daughter of its eponymous founder. “Their bold, sculptural quality perfectly complements the intricate craftsmanship we’re known for, making them a staple of Azza Fahmy Jewellery.”

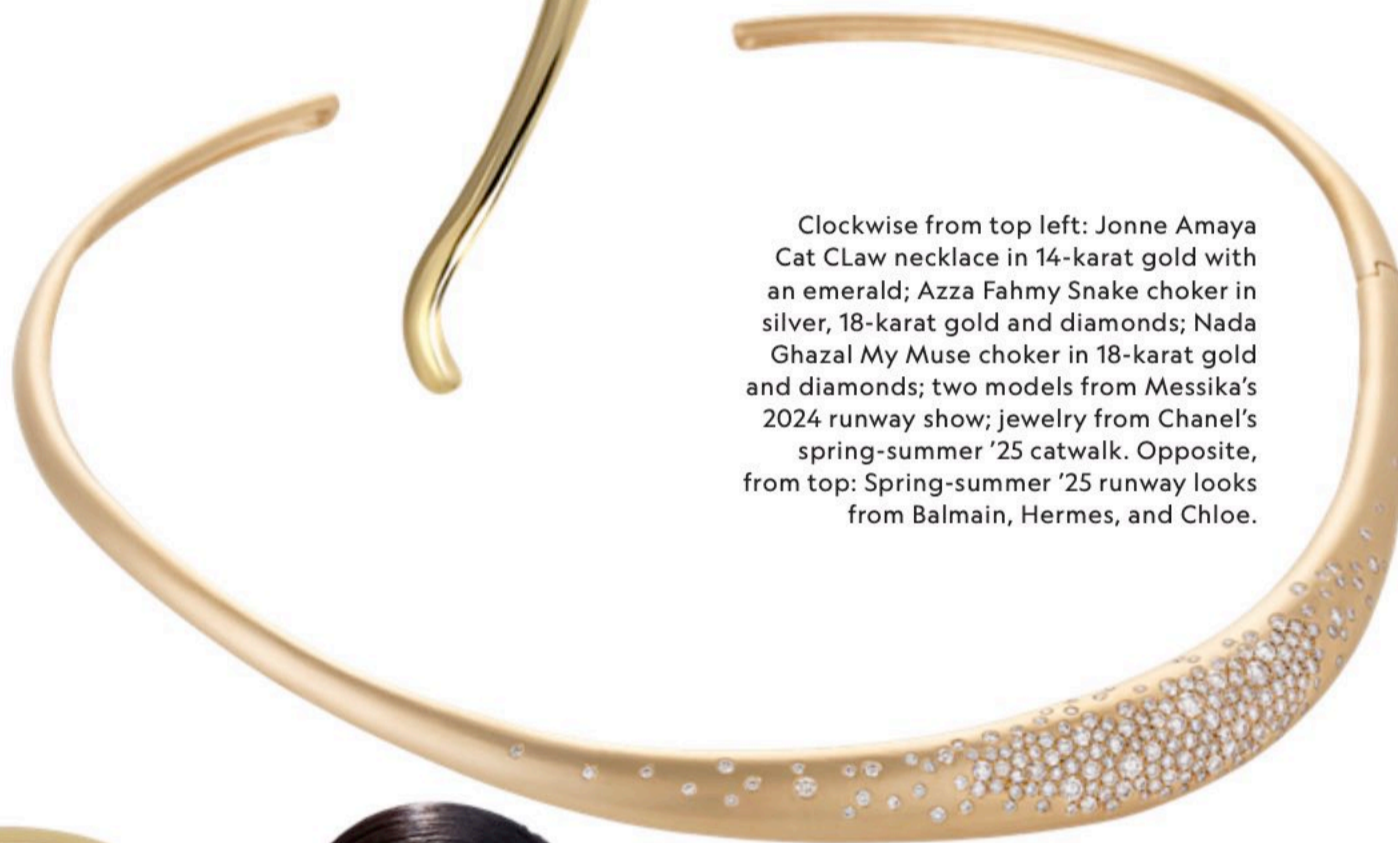
Assessing the way stylists are combining torques with long pendants on the catwalk, Ghali believes the look “offers a fresh and modern way of layering that resonates



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Clockwise from top left: Jonne Amaya Cat CLaw necklace in 14-karat gold with an emerald; Azza Fahmy Snake choker in silver, 18-karat gold and diamonds; Nada Ghazal My Muse choker in 18-karat gold and diamonds; two models from Messika's 2024 runway show; jewelry from Chanel's spring-summer '25 catwalk. Opposite, from top: Spring-summer '25 runway looks from Balmain, Hermes, and Chloe.



deeply with our philosophy of creating pieces that are both versatile and meaningful.” It is, she adds, “a direction we’ve already been exploring.”

Lebanese designer Nada Ghazal feels a deep connection with torques and prefers designing them to other necklaces. A current favorite is a satin-finished gold edition sprinkled with diamonds in her My Muse collection.

“I like jewelry that sits on your skin,” she says. “It’s part of you, it becomes integrated with you and feels sensual.”

Unlike the classical Greek designs of the past, Ghazal’s and Lalaounis’s torques have a slight curve, so they are comfortable on bare skin or over clothing. The Lalaounis director admits, however, that “comfort doesn’t seem to be a great consideration when it comes to clients looking for a torque necklace. It is all about the look.”

