

# PERFUMED JEWELRY

The  
History of  
Wearable  
Perfume



Lykke®

# Table of contents

01



## ANTIQUITY

Perfumed Jewellery of Ancient Civilizations

02



## THE MIDDLE AGES

The Pomander:  
A Perfumed Talisman

03



## RENAISSANCE

The Art Devoted to  
Fragrance

04



## EARLY MODERN ERA

From Talisman to  
Fashion Accessory

05



## MODERN AGE

Perfumed Jewellery  
as Ornament

06



## 21ST CENTURY

Modern age of the  
perfumed jewellery

# Perfumed Jewellery of Ancient Civilizations

For thousands of years, perfumed jewellery has intertwined fragrance and symbolism, transforming objects into personal adornment.

Golden earrings with pendants designed to contain perfume are among the earliest known examples, dating to the 4th–3rd century BC. These refined pieces, now preserved in the Metropolitan Museum, show that jewellery was both decorative and functional.

In ancient Egypt, beads made from skhab paste – a mixture of amber, rose petals, cloves, saffron, nutmeg, and musk – were warmed by body heat, gently releasing their fragrance. They symbolised protection, fertility, and seduction, particularly among married women in North Africa.

## PANNEL 01

01



*It is believed that the pendants hanging from these hollow gold earrings once contained perfume. Dating from the 4<sup>th</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, such refined pieces show that jewellery was both decorative and functional.*

02



*A South Arabian incense burner, probably dating to the 5<sup>th</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> century BC, was used for burning natural aromatics in homes and temples. Objects like this served to release the scent of frankincense and other fragrant resins, central to both daily life and religious rituals in the region.*

03

*In ancient Egypt, wax cones infused with resins and oils such as myrrh were worn on the head. Body heat melted the cone, releasing fragrance that perfumed hair and clothing. The cones symbolised purity and protection, playing an important role in both daily life and ritual practice.*



# The Pomander: A Perfumed Talisman

During the Middle Ages, scent was valued not only for pleasure but also for protection. At a time when it was believed that disease spread through the air and foul odours, nobles wore pomanders – small spheres of gold or silver filled with aromatic substances such as musk, ambergris, rose, and violet.

Jewellery at that time was not worn for beauty, but for health – scent was a shield, and the pomander an amulet against disease and the foul air of the cities.

These objects often carried the symbolism of power and belonging to the upper classes. They embodied status, protection, and ritual – all in one.

## PANNEL 02

01

*Detail from a triptych, c.1510: King Balthazar holding a pomander, by Hieronymus Bosch.*



02

*A golden pomander from 1515, crafted in Germany, represents a luxurious example of Renaissance goldsmithing.*



03

*The “musk ball” pendant, also known as a pomander, dating from c. 1500, originates from Germany or Switzerland. The ball was hollow inside, allowing it to be filled with aromatic blends like musk, ambergris, rose, cloves, and cinnamon.*



04

*One of the earliest pomanders, believed to have been a love gift, was worn by a woman on a chain at her waist. Its segments depict the Judgement of Paris, the mythological event in which Paris was called to decide which of the goddesses—Juno, Venus, or Minerva—was the fairest. Paris chose Venus, with the inscription reading: “Venus is the most beautiful; her claim is clearly just.”*



# The Art Devoted to Fragrance

In the Renaissance, the pomander flourished, no longer serving solely as protection but a true work of art. Crafted from gold, silver, or gilded metals, and adorned with enamel, pearls, and precious stones such as rubies, topaz and, emeralds. Fragrance entered daily life, yet remained in the possession of the select few.

By the late 17th century, the pomander returned to fashion in new forms — as a small box, an egg, or even a miniature book. Inside, fabrics infused with perfumes, porous woods, or even locks of hair were placed as tokens of affection and good fortune. No longer merely a talisman against illness, the pomander became a cherished private object.

Worn by both men and women, often hidden in folds of clothing or hung around the neck, it evolved into a sensual and deeply personal object, woven into both everyday rituals and moments of intimacy.

## PANNEL 03

01

*Some pomanders opened into segments like a flower, revealing multiple compartments for different scents in the form of pastes or powders. Jewellery thus became a layered symbol of freshness, status, seduction, and health.*



02

*Pomanders of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries represent luxurious masterpieces of Renaissance goldsmithing, crafted from gold and silver. They were widespread among the nobility and at royal courts, where they embodied a union of luxury, practicality, and symbolism.*



## From Talisman to Fashion Accessory

By the late 18th century, ladies carried their vinaigrette boxes – small containers for scented vinegar – attached to a chatelaine, an ornamental chain or series of chains worn at the waist. By the end of the 19th century, the chatelaine often also held a small bottle of smelling salts, used to revive women who, constrained by tight corsets, occasionally fainted. Thus, the chatelaine was more than an accessory – it was both an elegant ornament and a practical companion.

In the 20th century, smelling salts fell out of fashion as liquid perfumes gained popularity. Yet perfumed jewellery did not disappear. On the contrary, it remained present, with major jewellers – from Cartier to Tiffany – creating and promoting diverse forms of perfumed jewellery, adapting them to contemporary tastes and trends. Perfumed lockets, pendants, and bracelets continued to offer an elegant way to wear one's favourite scents, uniting function with luxury.

## PANNEL 04



01 - 03

*Pomanders of Queen Elizabeth I were highly fashionable accessories during the Tudor and Elizabethan periods. In 1864, the perfumery Piesse & Lubin created a faithful replica of the Queen's pomander, based on the original held in the Kensington Museum. It contained six rare fragrances and was sold as a luxurious perfumed pendant.*

*A 19th-century gold pomander with a perfume bottle, crafted in the style of the mid-17th century and probably of French origin. It features spring-loaded, stylised petals that open to reveal twelve vinaigrette compartments with sliding perforated leaf-shaped grilles.*

*An early 17th-century pomander, made in Germany from enamelled gold and adorned with pearls.*

04

*A silver vinaigrette pendant with a scent container, dating from the 18th century.*



## Perfumed Jewellery as Ornament

In the 18th century, perfumed jewellery shifted from protection to fashion and pleasure. Pendants and medallions concealed balms or herbs, richly decorated with filigree, gemstones, and precious metals. They became seductive accents worn against the skin – symbols of refinement and taste.

This period introduced the vinaigrette – a small box with a sponge soaked in aromatic vinegar, carried in gloves, on chains, or in pockets. Beyond its refreshing and invigorating qualities, it offered protection against unpleasant odours in overcrowded cities. The vinaigrette was a personal companion and an elegant accessory – an object of both function and style.

## PANNEL 05

01

*Women's clothing lacked sewn-in pockets until the late 19th century, giving rise to the chatelaine – a decorative clasp from which keys, watches, sewing tools or vinaigrette boxes could be suspended. Both practical and elegant, it was a fashionable detail always within reach.*



02

*Vinaigrette, around 1804–1809. Gold, pearls, porcelain*



03

*Perfume bottle in the shape of a blade, made of glass and silver, worn as a pendant.*



04

*The vinaigrette contained a sponge soaked in a fragrant blend, accessible through a perforated or sliding lid, allowing the scent to be inhaled when desired.*



05

*A timeless union of elegance and fragrance - this ornamental chatelaine holds a delicate perfume bottle, enabling its owner to carry her signature scent with style wherever she went.*



# Modern age of the perfumed jewellery

In this century, the magic of perfumed jewellery has not vanished. While no longer worn for hygienic purposes, these decorative pieces have re-emerged as elegant accessories. Their timeless history and aromatic charm continue to captivate, evoking a world in which a scented pendant was more than an ornament – it was a token of love, protection, and wonder.

Perfumed jewellery has crossed centuries and cultures, leaving behind a fragrant legacy that still stirs our senses today. More than beautiful embellishments, they remain bridges to bygone eras – to tradition, romance, and the enduring spell of scent.



## PANNEL 06

01

*Lykke's perfumed locket allows you to carry your favourite fragrance or essential oil with you all day. A small sponge inside absorbs the fragrance and releases it gradually, while the magnetic clasp keeps the contents secure. The necklace can be personalised by choosing the colour of the insert, making it adaptable to individual style.*



Lykke<sup>®</sup>  
● touch of happiness

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BACK TO TABLE  
OF CONTENTS