



Splendor of Ethnic Jewelry: From the Colette and Jean Pierre Ghysels Collection

Frances Borel

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Over the long course of human history, jewelry and other kinds of body adornment have expressed a multitude of meanings in people's lives - social position, marital status, individual wealth, self-esteem. All these things and more are revealed in the objects that men and women use and wear on and around their bodies. And those who can perceive and understand the subtle meanings of these richly elaborated, finely crafted, and beautiful things are the richer for it. Among the world's finest private collections of ethnic jewelry is that of Colette and Jean-Pierre Ghysels. Formed over the course of more than thirty years of dedicated world travel, conscientious trekking, and trading, the Ghysels' collection has, until now, not been available for viewing except to the couple's friends and selected scholars. Never exhibited extensively, never published in any comprehensive way, the collection has remained carefully protected in Brussels. Published here for the first time, the Ghysels Collection comes to light in brilliant photographs - made especially for this book - by John Bigelow Taylor and accompanied by a thoughtful and wide-ranging introductory text by a Belgian scholar, the art historian France Borel. Among the four hundred stunning color reproductions from the collection are pieces from every corner of the globe - Africa, the Middle East, the mountain kingdoms of Asia, India, the golden triangle, Indonesia and Malaysia, the Philippines, China and Japan, Oceania, and the Americas. The materials of which they are made cover an enormously wide array: gold, silver, brass, bronze, and iron; precious and semiprecious gems such as carnelian, turquoise, and amber; animal fur, bones, teeth, and feathers; shell, ivory, wood, leather, stone, glass, seeds, plant fibers, and clay. The range of sizes, forms, and craft techniques is equally amazing. In her lucid and readable overall survey of the subject and in geographical section introductions, France Borel leads the read

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