



From top: The Sinopé necklace from Cartier's Surnaturel high jewellery collection imitates the flow of the river; the Panthère Tropicale watch is a striking collision of contrasting stones

# These denizens of the natural world have been removed from the constraints of reality

jewellery watches, describes, “The animal has not been reproduced, yet is still there, very much in spirit.” She shares more about the Surnaturel collection.

*Can you explain the significance of nature to Cartier?* Nature has always inspired the arts, and jewellery in particular. Cartier has put forth a robust interpretation of nature from the very beginning, which remains just as inspiring, timeless and contemporary today, especially through stylisation. As far back as 1914, founder Louis Cartier used the panther in the form of an abstract motif with onyx and diamond spots on a watch.

There has always been something fundamental about the way Cartier represents nature. It should never be taken at face value; it is always reflective, but never literal. There has always been a desire to say more and make something unique to Cartier, to tell a story and present ideas that fuel the imagination.

*What is the thought process behind the unique interpretation of nature in this collection?* It all started from the desire to look at nature



differently and to express it in another way using our contemporary vocabulary. What matters in this collection is the paradox between nature and abstraction. To this end, the designers focused on a single element in each piece—the way water moves, the structure of a plant, or scales and fur in the case of fauna. Taken out of their usual contexts, these elements took on lives of their own.

*What does Surnaturel represent in Cartier's design evolution?*

The collection encompasses the whole story of Cartier's creation, which has always questioned the perception of forms. It presents three different ways of looking at nature: naturalism, stylisation and abstraction.

The most obvious and figurative is naturalism, which reproduces nature. Stylisation describes an act of simplification that makes it possible to arrive at the essential element of the design. This pared-down method is actually the most complicated for the designer. With abstraction, nothing remains of the original image except for its essence, so we are no longer limited to one narrative representation and can now add a sensorial dimension.

Guided by the stones, the designers express sensations like that of fur slipping between the fingers when stroking a panther or conjure up ocean waves or peaceful lake water. An entire sensory repertoire is thus opened to complement Cartier's vocabulary regarding nature.

*Which stone or set of stones particularly stood out to you and inspired a design?*

The Tillandsia necklace features an exceptional pair of 83.23-carat and 81.09-carat oval-shaped beryls that appear to float above a diamond lattice. It's a skilful design that gives two perfectly paired gems both life and lightness. The asymmetry of the design, with its playful curves and counter curves, and the two central stones that are slightly offset from each other, create a sense of movement within the piece.

# Abstract Art

Cartier's Surnaturel high jewellery collection shows that the possibilities are endless when creativity isn't bounded by realism

By Ho Yun Kuan



From a feline form prowling across a Panthère de Cartier bracelet to gemstone flowers blossoming over a Tutti Frutti necklace to a prickly succulent perched atop a Cactus de Cartier ring to the menagerie occupying the Faune et Flore line, nature has always been Cartier's favourite muse.

In the creation of Surnaturel, its latest high jewellery collection unveiled last year, the maison once again welcomed the wilderness into its workshop—but through a different lens. The panther is elusive, showing only its hide in the Hemis necklace and Panthère Tropicale jewellery watch; a snake makes its appearance, but only in a highly stylised form as the Opheis necklace; a crocodile lays in waiting, disguised as the Gharial necklace with only its scales giving it away.

Deconstructed and made abstract, with only key elements kept as identifiers, these denizens of the natural world have been removed from the constraints of reality, hence the name of the collection, Surnaturel, or supernatural in French.

Not only inspired by nature but also led by it, each piece in the collection had its starting point in a spectacular gemstone. In the Hemis necklace, it's a 71.80-carat cushion-shaped kunzite, intensely pink with hints of purple and no inclusions visible to the naked eye. In the Gharial necklace, five Zambian emeralds totalling 11.31 carats take centre stage along with a supporting cast of diamond “scales”. Jacqueline Karachi-Langane, the creative director of Cartier Prestige, which oversees fine jewellery, exceptional objects and fine

Images Cartier



From top: The Gharial necklace reimagines crocodile scales with diamonds and emeralds; Jacqueline Karachi-Langane; the coral on the Panthère Tropicale jewellery watch is delicately gadrooned