

Dogs in jewellery

If you are a 'visual person,' then social media platform Pinterest is the place for you. Designed to be a visual search engine, the platform is constructed of photos that have been 'pinned' to the accounts of its users.



When researching the background to my art deco style brooch, I found huge resources for dog-inspired jewellery. Most dog jewellery pieces fit the definition of costume jewellery: items made of inexpensive materials

with or without inexpensive gemstones. However, even if the original items were inexpensive, older pieces of costume jewellery can be valuable, particularly if sold to the right collector.



One company that is cited regularly is Trifari, based in the United States. Gustavo Trifari, an Italian immigrant, began producing jewellery in 1910 with an uncle before leaving to form his

own firm. The company prided itself on producing quality items using original designs which is one reason why the items are collectible today, valued for their timeless quality. When metals became scarce during the World War II years, the company even patented its own plating process called Trifanium, which made pieces look like gold and silver but could withstand the test of time. Dogs have featured many times over the years in the Trifari range, such as this Afghan Hound brooch.



Bakelite, an early plastic polymer that was patented in 1909, was another common material used to produce dog-inspired jewellery through the 1940s. Bakelite, which was typically produced in shades of brown, red,

white and green, was an inexpensive material resulting in coloured jewellery pieces that were affordable for the working classes. This Scottie Dog brooch from the 1940s is a good example of the use of Bakelite.



Since Bakelite has become valuable, inevitably there are fakes in circulation. One of the best ways to check if a Bakelite piece

is authentic is to touch a red hot pin against the back of the piece. Real Bakelite won't melt or burn. If the material does burn or melt, it's a good sign that the piece you are holding is a fake.

For those wanting to collect at a higher price point, dogs have also featured in precious jewellery pieces. One example is this Edwardian dog brooch made in gold with white diamonds and emeralds. 