

Saffronart Conference speakers trace rich history of Indian jewels

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L-R Alex Popov, John King, Jack Ogden along with moderator Nirupa Bhatt as they take questions from the audience

The second day of the Saffronart conference titled 'Mapping a Legacy of Indian Jewels' was a jam packed session with reputed speakers from the world of diamonds, coloured stones and jewellery. The session began by paying tribute to India's bohemian state Goa as Hugo Miguel Crespo gave a detailed history of the jewellery pieces popularized during the Portuguese colonization of Goa. Fashion designer Wendell Rodricks accompanied this by giving a sartorial glimpse of his home state. He elaborated on the clothing, jewellery and quirky customs of the free spirited Goans.

The conference progressed to the world of diamonds as Nirupa Bhatt, MD, GIA, India and Middle East took the chair and introduced famous jewellery historian Jack Ogden. Ogden traced the 2500 years of diamond trade with a key focus on diamonds with Indian origin. John King, ace coloured diamond specialist brought to life the unique characteristics of coloured diamonds. He said, "Coloured diamonds have captivated mankind since thousands of years. They have been associated with power of gods and have had a mystical significance."

British jewellery specialist Joanna Hardy had the audience under her spell as she celebrated the unparalleled magnificence of coloured stones like emeralds and rubies. She showed videos created by legendary jewellery house Van Cleef and Arpels as they showcased their

stunning collection of emeralds and rubies in varying sizes. She commented, “Beauty, durability and rarity are the characteristics of a great gemstone.”

The session ended with Dr Usha Balakrishnan who was responsible for curating the entire conference. She gave a riveting account of treasuries of Gods and Idioms of adornment across the southern route. She shared, “In South India deities are offered daily services one of which is known as alankaram which means adornment with jewellery.” Her attention to detail and in depth research was a fitting end to this enlightening conference.

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