



## **OBJECT ANALYSIS**

### **Construction**

The object is a hair comb for females constructed in the early 20th century. The main components of the object are the designed piece of green floral and leaf design, which contain blue and yellow artificial gemstones, which makes the item lightweight. The surface of the item is solid green with an iridescent shimmer while the underside is green with a yellow discolouration to it. The other main component of the piece are the four prongs which are intended to be fixed into the wearer's hair. The prongs are smooth which indicates that the item has no functional purpose to hold the hair in place but rather add further adornment to the wearer.

### **Materials**

The object is made of celluloid and contains artificial gemstones. Cellulose is an artificial material, commonly referred to as celluloid, was discovered in 1838, and was originally used as a polymer, and a common substitute for ivory and tortoise shell (Matthews David). The first common artificial gemstones were made of glass, however with the discovery of artificial materials, plastic gemstones became more common, like the ones within this hair comb.

### **Use and Wear of the Piece**

The hair comb is a decorative element intended to be added to styled hair both natural, and wigs. The item is slightly discoloured on the underside, a gemstone has fallen out, and there are tiny scratches on the prongs.

## **HISTORICAL AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS**

### **Wealthy Hair Trends**

When determining the birth of a fashion trend, the root cause can often be narrowed down to the emulation of celebrities and royalty depending on the trend and time period one examines. There is a reason for this, and it has transcended through time for as long as fashion and dress historians can trace back. Through her analysis of hats and dressing practices Charlotte Perkins Gilman (61-71) she determines that people have this implicit drive within them to exude desirability and wealth through their dress. Specifically, through garments and pieces that are stylish, unique, and most importantly distinguish one from others who might have the same ambitions as your own (Perkins Gilman 62-63). Some of these ambitions are most often than not tied to socio-economic gains such as marrying above one's own class within the Edwardian period. Within a postmodern society it could also mean convincing others of higher qualifications through the comfort of perceived wealth.

## HER MAJESTY QUEEN MARY.



Queen Consort Mary of Teck, 1893.  
Unknown Photographer.

In regards to the hair comb itself, members of the British Royal family have been seen wearing elaborate and ornate hair combs, some of which are classified as tiaras, such as Queen Consort, Mary of Teck (Queen Elizabeth II grandmother). The hair comb, although a small accessory, allowed the wearer to add an element of luxury and opulence to their dress through visible embodiment. Hair combs, according to Jen Cruse have around for about 500 000 years, appearing since the stone age, through antiquity, till modernity (14 - 30). Hair combs in their original manufacturing were hand made by artisan comb makers which allowed for a unique and detailed piece which took anywhere from several weeks to several months to make (Cruse 54). Artisan comb makers started to emerge around the medieval period and existed until the 19th century (Cruse 21-28). Unique combs allowed for distinction for the wearer and high artistic appeal of the comb itself, and was not limited to the perception of wealth once placed within an elaborate hairstyle accompanied with one's best outfit.

# MANUFACTURE FRANÇAISE DE PEIGNES : AUGUSTE BONAZ

171, rue du Temple - PARIS  
Usines : OYONNAX (Ain)



Hair Comb advertisement for Auguste Bonaz comb factory in Oyonnax, France, 1919. Artist: Marcell Fromenti

However, well into the long-reigning popularity of hair combs the second industrial revolution allowed for the mass production of goods which was not limited to garments and accessories (Cruse 48-51). Machine-made hair combs allowed for a greater production of hair combs, but the popularization of artificial materials from natural and endangered materials allowed for a greater accessibility to a growing middle class, and working class to afford once extravagant and luxurious hair accessories in different styles and soon were not limited to just purchase one piece due to the low costs. However elements of artisan craft still remained in manufacturing process such as the comb factory Oyonnax, France as discussed by Alison Matthews David such as the molding and gemstones which would have to be placed in by hand. The ability to exude a perception of wealth, luxury, extravagance, and desirability was becoming easier for middle and working class people, much to the disdain of the wealthy.



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The world of jewelry accompanying a gold metal and gem includes a diamond head-band, diamond earrings with pearl and enamel drops, a pearl and jade necklace, and diamond and enamel rings. The gown from Harper's Bazaar, see page 116.



Harper's Bazaar

JEWELRY FROM HARPER'S BAZAAR BY FRANCES BURNHAM

## A HAIR'S LENGTH SEPARATES PAST *and* PRESENT

**A**MERICAN women, firmer than European, because desirous of short hair, and, for the past season, they have been making strenuous efforts to acquire sufficient length of hair to meet the demands of the new European coiffures. With long tresses an accomplished fact, aided by the help of nature or the skillful transformer, the woman of fashion may choose for her style of hair-dressing any one of the several types that are now sanctioned by the mode. But, in making her selection, she must always bear in mind the style and silhouette of her costume, which is not always the same for all hours of the day. For example, for the morning in the city, or for that matter, in the country, too, she will pre-

Smooth Rippling Coiffures

Expose the Ears and Coil

At the Nape of the Neck

CHIFFERS AND TRANSFORMATIONS  
BY MARYEL

fer to wear a small snug hat which demands a very particular style of hair-dressing. The American woman prefers a softer treatment of the hair to loose the hair under the morning or sports hat, than does the Parisienne, and she will therefore not dress her hair, for this occasion, à la Groppe, slicked back into a large chignon, as she would arrange it in the evening, but wear it rather fluffy and soft, concealing the ears harmoniously. She would do well to remember, however, that for the morning hat, though the style of hair-dressing may appear informal, the hair must always be neat, smooth, and crisp if the woman is to be harmoniously attired and look really smart. For the afternoon, and for the evening, of course,

Vogue article about the new hair trends. (Vogue, 1922, p. 39 photographer unknown.)

Yet a negative consequence to mass produced hair combs were that machines simply could not produce the detail and unique, one of a kind pieces compared to artisan makers. Losing a key, implicit element of dress - the desire to be unique from others - was a contributing factor to the slow death of this hair accessory. However, the final hit in the death of the hair comb was first wave feminism and the abandonment of old generational feminine ideals and the popularization of short bob hairstyles with the new adult generation in the 1920s and 1930s (Matthews David 198, Cruse 53).





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