



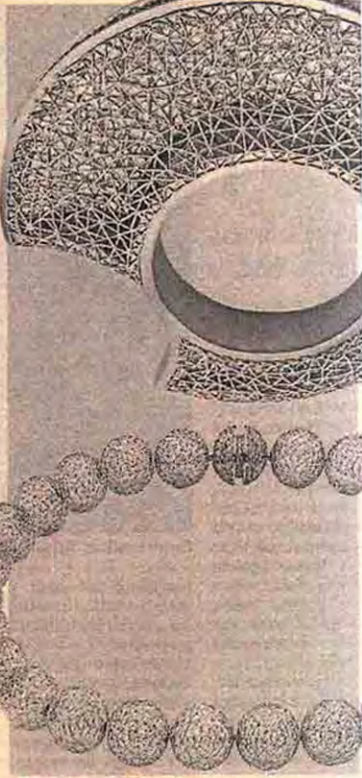
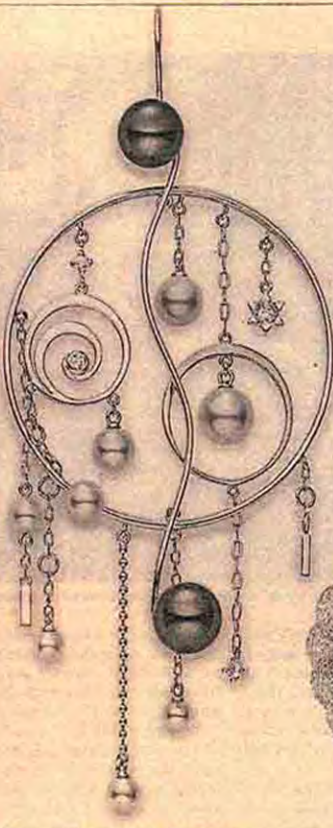
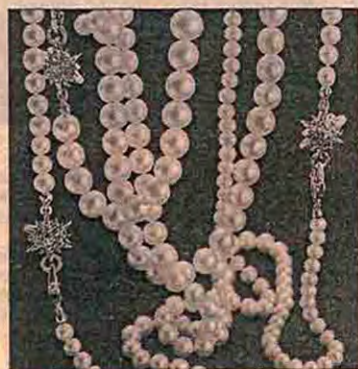
FINANCIAL
TIMES



Dynamic: Chanel



Elegant: H Stern



Romanticism: Yohji Yamamoto

'Mr Laser': Tom Rucker

Space oddities

Jewellery is drawing cosmic inspiration from the moon, stars and science fiction this Christmas, says **Fiona Harkin**

The moon has moved into Cancer, Mercury is retrograde, and the stars have favourably colluded to create that inexplicable phenomenon, a trend.

With prices ranging from £450 to the high six figures, jewellery is set to be the hot seller this Christmas, according to the National Retail Federation in the US, and the hottest jewellery trends are drawing cosmic inspiration not only from the moon and constellations but space travel and science.

One only has to look at the looming reality of space tourism, complete with Virgin Galactic flight suits

designed by Philippe Starck, or the spaceship-like spread of the French architect Jean Nouvel's Louvre Abu Dhabi, to see that "imagineering" our future is back in vogue.

"In my teenage years, I was a big fan of James Bond and *Star Trek* - Goldfinger's laser canon and Spock's gun," confesses UK-based jeweller Tom Rucker, also known as Mr Laser due to the unique welding technique he uses to fuse platinum wire into cage-like spheres. So spectacular are the effects - good examples include his Technical Innovation Geo.2 Moon rings and Sun Stroke earrings - that the technique has brought

Rucker a Goldsmiths' Craft and Design Council Award.

Rucker's sci-fi-inspired jewellery also brings to mind the stylised starburst brooches and earrings on display in the Diamond Fund exhibition, housed in the vaults of in the Kremlin in Moscow.

Another designer applying his transgressive eye to jewellery design is fashion creator Yohji Yamamoto, who has teamed up with pearl specialist Mikimoto to create a moody and ephemeral collection of jewellery, titled *Stormy Weather*. It features a mix of styles ranging from futuristically ovoid and organic shapes to pretty cascading star and moon motifs.

Yamamoto's challenge was to apply his cerebral fashion ethic to jewellery. "Circumstances created a paradox," he says. "I met Mikimoto and I learned how complex and natural the beauty of a pearl can be." He has moon-shaped rings with cratered surfaces - because "it is related to the pearl, its colours, shape, light, romanticism and mystery".

Stand-out pieces include those featuring an indulgent array of Mikimoto's finest iridescent spheres, like a "moon cycle" necklace with a colour-graded selection of pearls ranging from fluffy-cloud white to storm-cloud grey; or pearl earrings set on an axis, surrounded by a

saturnine ring of brushed white gold.

Luxury showroom and distributor H.P. France's London-based designer Lara Bohinc has also drawn upon the cosmos as inspiration and recently launched a rather grown-up range of fine jewellery called *Solaris* for Cartier, full of smooth spheres and twinkling diamonds. At the same time, however, for her latest own-label collection called *Eclipse*,

Bohinc has turned to sci-fi pop culture. "The collection was inspired by Princess Leia from the film *Star Wars*, solar and lunar eclipses, shooting stars, the Milky Way and the galaxy," she says of the range of *passementerie*-style gold or platinum-plated neck collars and cuffs that wouldn't look out of place in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*.

Milky moonstones are also proving popular among London's independent jewellers, appearing as smooth teardrops in Shaun Leane's latest collection, and toy globe-like spheres suspended in gold rings in Emma Q's *Cosmos* line. Then there's eclectic fine jeweller Solange Azagury-Partridge, whose

heady new chypre fragrance, *Cosmic*, actually goes so far as to list "stardust" as one of its ingredients (that's finely ground meteorite particles to you and me).

The jewellery industry has long been enamoured of star motifs. At jeweller H Stern, its elegant, Victorian-inspired *Stars* collection now features a cocktail ring with a star-shaped setting magni-

duced a 50th-anniversary commemorative version of this classic timepiece. It is also looking to a possible Martian future with its "From the Moon to Mars"-inscribed *Speedmaster Professional Moonwatch* featuring the faces of Mars, the Moon and the Earth on its chronograph counters.

Finally, there is specialist Dutch watchmaker Christian van der Klaauw's extraordinary *Planetarium* wristwatch, which features a revolving mini solar system and is perfect for space-obsessives - such as Tom Rucker. "I was always dreaming of becoming a moon walker," he says. Yamamoto, however, has no desire to go galactic, despite his cosmic-inspired jewellery. "Oh no, never!" he says. "Life is already so complicated on our planet. I will go on enjoying the moonlight from earth."

fied under a juicy-coloured gemstone. Chanel is elaborating on Coco Chanel's dynamic *Comète* costume pieces: tiny diamond comets wrapping around the finger or the wrist.

There's also something for the boys in this star-studded trend. Omega is drawing on its history as the maker of the *Speedmaster* watch that the blighted Apollo 13 astronauts used to time their gravity-driven swing around the moon to propel them back to earth. It has pro-



Yamamoto has moon-shaped rings with cratered surfaces (pictured)

Twinkle, twinkle

www.cartier.com
www.chanel.com
www.emmaq.com
www.hstern.net
www.klaauwatches.nl
www.larabohinc107.com
www.mikimoto.com
www.omegawatches.com
www.rucker-platin.com
www.solangeazagurypartridge.com
www.stormyweatherjewelry.com