

Cognition, communication, discourse, 2025, 30, 7-23

<https://periodicals.karazin.ua/cognitiondiscourse>

<https://doi.org/10.26565/2218-2926-2025-30-01>

Received April 27, 2025; accepted June 22, 2025; published online August 1, 2025.

SYMBOLS IN BRAND STORYTELLING

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Article citation: Belova, A.D. (2025). Symbols in brand storytelling. *Cognition, communication, discourse*, 30, 7-23. <https://doi.org/10.26565/2218-2926-2025-30-01>

Abstract

The article highlights the role of symbols in digital storytelling that is becoming an effective marketing strategy. Digital technologies made storytelling on websites and social media platforms multimedia and multimodal and opening up new creativity horizons. The research is based on the analysis of storytelling of famous jewelry maisons – *Cartie, Tiffany, Boucheron, Van Cleef & Arpels, Harry Winston* – on their websites. These brands creations are symbols of obsession, of great dreams, *idée fixe* for millions of people. Stories have become an essential component of textual and visual information on the websites thus providing access to the brand history, timeline, heritage and values for the wider, global audience. Luxury brands' logos are easily recognized symbols associated with exclusive design, unrivalled creativity, refined taste, high social status. Culture-specific symbols pertaining to different civilizations are efficiently integrated into jewelry design. Some creations become emblematic of the maisons and symbolize the brands. Jewelry pieces of luxury brands can turn into symbols – magical elements of flora and fauna, cosmos, human world. The maisons prescribe symbolic value to their creations in their advertising and marketing campaigns. Symbols turn out to be pivotal for meaning making in the storytelling techniques, both visually and textually, spanning the most important facts of the brands founders' personal and professional lives, the history of the brand, acquisition of unique gemstones and creation of iconic jewelry items that become the milestones in the brands' development. The stories about the brands and their creations visualize symbols. Culture-relevant symbols are aptly intergrated into jewelry pieces design and visualized in multiple stories on official websites. High Jewelry items and luxury jewelry items become brand-specific symbols. Luxury brands creations become iconic and might symbolize nature world, cosmos, human life and activities. Symbolic storytelling is interlaced with complicated cognitive and semiotic processes, interdiscursivity, diverse implications what makes meaning making and decoding more sophisticated and fascinating.

Keywords: *digital, marketing, meaning making, multimedia, multimodal, semiotic, symbol, storytelling.*

1. Introduction

Storytelling is becoming one of the essential strategies in modern marketing and advertising. Initially defined as “the act of telling a story” (“Storytelling”, n.d.), storytelling has evolved into multimedia and multimodal rendition of an event, invention, creation on websites and social media platforms. The intricate digital narration can be visualized with utmost creativity when heterogeneous images are juxtaposed in short captivating films or exquisite picture-text

combinations. *Stories* have become a conspicuous section of the official websites architecture. The prestigious jewelry maisons – *Cartie, Tiffany, Boucheron, Van Cleef & Arpels, Harry Winston* – established in mid-19th-early 20th century use storytelling to project their brands and creations on their official websites and social media. The brands that have become themselves the symbols of taste, wealth and social status write their history, create their mythology, chronicle the events associated with the rich, outstanding and famed via symbolic storytelling. The maisons' logos are easily recognizable brand symbols associated with impeccable style and flawless design. Luxury jewelry brands created fabulous jewels for the royalties, the richest people in the world, celebrities – trend-setters and megainfluencers of the past – who contributed to symbolization of the spectacular jewelry items and participated in their value co-creation. Diverse culture-specific symbols quite often become the source of inspiration for jewelry designers. Some maisons developed company-specific symbols and successfully utilized them in design, branding and marketing. Symbolic storytelling is efficiently used to convey messages and meaning, to describe and promote jewelry pieces, to arouse interest and positive emotions, to enforce memorability and create memorable marketing campaigns.

The article is *aimed* at the examination of semiotic dimension of brand storytelling on websites of famous jewelry houses.

The *objectives* of the research include the analysis of symbols and icons as sign types in symbolic storytelling of jewelry houses, symbolization as a discursive and marketing strategy, usage of symbols in multimodal communication.

The language *data*, visual images, samples of multimodal communication were collected on the official websites of the maisons – *Cartie, Tiffany, Boucheron, Van Cleef & Arpels, Harry Winston*. The information was retrieved in September 2024 – January 2025.

2. Methodology

Symbols are as old as humans; they are older than the written word. Humans are visual creatures and remember images better than words (“Measuring the Effectiveness”, 2024). Ernst Cassirer described human being as ‘animal symbolicum’ (Cassirer, 2021/1944). Humankind accumulated lots of universal symbols of creation and cosmos, plant and animal world, human world and spirit world (Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism, 2010). In the globalized world, with its linguistic and cultural diversity symbols might function as a universal language.

Generally, a symbol can be defined as a “a written character or mark used to represent something: a letter, figure or sign conventionally standing for some object, process, etc.” (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). Other definitions of symbols emphasize the relationship of the sign and reality: “something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance” (“Symbol”, n.d.).

The meaning of signs and their role in the life of society was researched by eminent scholars of the 19th-20th centuries – Ferdinand de Saussure (Saussure, 2011), Charles Sanders Peirce (1931–1958: 2.297), Roland Barthes (Barthes, 1982), Umberto Eco (Eco, 1976; 1984; 2011) – who developed signification theory and created semiotics as a discipline. Charles Peirce's semiotic theory included taxonomy of signs where a symbol was one of the signs types together with an icon and index (Peirce, 1931–1958: 2.297).

In the last decades the attempts are made to redefine basic terms and central issues of semiotics (Bouissac, 1998; Bredin 1984; Bronwen & Felizitas, 2006; Bruce-Mitford & Wilkinson, 2008; Chandler, 2017; Cogley, 2010; Colapietro, 1993; Yiheng, 2023). In the 21st century, semiotics is being transformed into cognitive semiotics that implements broad transdisciplinary, conceptual-empirical approach to signs. Meaning making is studied in terms of transmediality, synergy, multimodality (Zlatev, Sonesson, & Konderak, 2016; Pelkey, Melanson, & Rosenbaum, 2019; Biglari, 2023; Chrzanowska-Kluczevska, 2023; Yefymenko, 2021).

Symbols simplify complex concepts making it possible to understand the idea at a glance and, thus, facilitate communication, cognition and information exchange. However, some signs might represent complex concepts, such as the shared values and ideologies of a particular culture or group. Some symbols need unpacking the hidden meaning to deconstruct the logo. This is the second order of meaning, or signification, that was identified by Roland Barthes in his “*Mythologies*” as a *myth* (Barthes, 1991).

Symbols are effectively utilized in business and marketing (Miller, 2015). Symbols quite often become the source of logos (visual symbols) and, thus, magnetic eye-catchers. In the 21st century, in the world of visual culture and information abundance, a logo is no longer just an artistic expression of the brand, it is a must-have for business. A simple and distinctive logo can reinforce brand identity and instantly trigger brand recognition. By using the same colors, shapes, and typography companies can achieve online and offline cohesion of a brand awareness symbols (“Measuring the effectiveness”, 2024). As an effective marketing tool a logo has a range of functions: it identifies produce of the brand, shapes the brand identity, communicates brand’s values, evokes positive emotions, influences purchase decisions, increases brand loyalty. The logo simplicity enables it to adapt to changing design trends and evolve without losing its core identity. Companies might re-brand their logos, transform them into favicons for online communication. Thus, by balancing the frequency of logos both in off-line communication and on-line presence, creating captivating narrative woven through symbols and symbolic language, brands can enhance their visibility on the market and connection with global audiences. In television commercials that tell stories within short time frames symbols are strategically placed in the very end to reinforce brand messaging, to make lasting impression, to make enduring impact on consumer perceptions. Through creative and successful marketing and advertising campaigns brands can “elevate from mere products to powerful symbols of aspiration and identity” evoking emotions, sparking conversations, and forging lasting connections with consumers (Torossian, 2021).

Symbols go beyond logos and brands. Luxury jewelry pieces have become samples of durable symbols associated with exceptional beauty, irreproachable elegance, refined taste, immaculate design, and high social and financial status.

3. Findings and discussion

Cartier, jeweller and watchmaker since 1847, launched its multimodal storytelling campaign in 2012 when the epic commercial *L’Odyssee de Cartier* (Golden Time TV, 2015) was released to commemorate the 165th anniversary of the brand. The commercial highlighted the central concept of the maison – integration of diverse civilizations aesthetics into jewelry design. The visual narration is based entirely on symbols.

The Odyssey of the *panther*, the brand *mascot*, starts and ends in Paris but on its itinerary the Big Cat visits three civilization centres that influenced *Cartier* approach to design – Russia, China and India. First, the panther travels to St. Petersburg and walks in symbolic Russian landscape of *snowy cold winter*, *troikas* and *sledges on frozen Neva*, *onion-shaped domes of the Russian-Orthodox churches*. Then the panther wanders along *the Great Wall of China* incarnated as a giant golden *dragon*, a legendary creature of Chinese mythology and culture, a well-known symbol of the ancient civilization. Afterwards the panther finds itself in India, it rides a giant *Indian elephant* with mini *Taj Mahal* atop, meanders in jewelry bestiary among countless *precious gems* encrusted in marvellous jewelry plants and flowers. The panther manages to leap off onto the plane piloted by *Alberto Santos-Dumont*, the Brazilian aviation pioneer, who casts a glance at the *Cartier wrist watch* named after him – *Santos de Cartier*. Finally, at the Grand Palais the *Cartier* mascot meets Shalom Harlow, a supermodel, whose wrist is decorated with *panther-bracelet*. Thus, the visual narrative unfolds via civilizations symbols, culture-relevant and brand-specific symbols. Real and imagined worlds mingle as well as Cartier masterpieces and 3D animation. That first three and a half minute film by *Cartier*, full of special effects, the product of two-year-work, was too exquisite

and sophisticated to be called a commercial. It was filmed in Paris, Prague, Spain and the Italian region of the Dolomites. Bruno Aveillan, the director, had a team of 60 people on location and 50 special effects operators working in post-production for six months (Culture Divine, n.d). The captivating advertisement wrapped up in *cultural symbolism* demonstrated that “French dominance in the international world of luxury jewellery is a fait accompli” (Davies, 2012).

L'Odyssée de Cartier continued in a series of eleven short films accessible on the website (Figure 1) and YouTube. These videos give more detailed information about civilizations and cultures as a source of inspiration for The Maison Cartier, about innovative approaches to design, singularity of Cartier jewellery, about celebrities who enjoyed fabulous masterpieces and contributed to their symbolic value and to the glory of the maison. Multiple culturally-relevant symbols are effectively integrated into the narrative. All the chapters of digital Odyssey are samples of multimodal storytelling with photos, episodes of documentaries, animation, one-point perspective virtual glass gallery that creates the impression of a splendid journey in time and space.



Figure 1. L'Odyssée de Cartier.

<https://www.cartier.com/en-us/la-maison/the-story/lodysee-de-cartier/>



CHAPTER 1

Jeanne Toussaint, La Panthère

Figure 2. L'Odyssée de Cartier. Chapter 1.
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/uKPs3MTlsw>



CHAPTER 10

A Dialogue with China

Figure 3. L'Odyssée de Cartier. Chapter 10.
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/4UxRag5tIYo>

One-point perspective brings into focus Cartier *panther*, the maison mascot, walking along the mirror gallery used to exhibit the enlarged Cartier masterpieces (Chapter 1) (Figure 2), to lay out impeccable *geometrical patterns* symbolic of Islamic architecture that marked a new approach in jewelry design (Chapter 4), to shower walls with innumerable sparkles of dazzling diamonds that are linked in priceless *Maharaji necklaces*, in unique jewelry pieces of luminous movie stars of the 20th century (Chapter 7), to pay tribute to China via *Chinese style* patterns on the gallery walls and virtual jewelry on the shelves (Chapter 10) (Figure 3). Easily recognizable symbols, patterns, colors of Islamic, Chinese, Indian civilization are incorporated into the videos with emblematic Cartier creations.

L'Odyssée de Cartier chapters are in English but with audible French accent to emphasize the roots of the brand and of the *Cartier* dynasty. This new Odyssey violates the chronological order and starts with the story about *Jeanne Toussaint*, female Artistic Director of High Jewelry from 1933 to the 1970s, nicknamed *Panthère*, who revolutionized contemporary jewelry design (Chapter 1) (Figure 2), invented a new bestiary, including the mesmerizing *panthère* that became the symbol of the brand in the second half of the 20th century. Janne Toussaint creatively rendered Persian, Indian, Chinese motifs in unexpected combinations of vibrantly colored stones with yellow gold and, thus, introduced a new style and unique elegance – “*Toussaint taste*” that influenced many famous women. Chapter 2 tells about London department where under Jacque Cartier legendary luxury watches – *the Cartier Crash* – were created. Assymetrical geometrical shapes symbolized a departure from Cartier classical style, embodied London spirit, and revealed the fantastic amount of intellectual, technical, creative efforts that marked any Cartier innovation. *The Cartier Crash* became a part of Cartier identity, an *emblem* of the brand, thus, acquired the symbolic value. The atmosphere of the bygone Russian empire, of the opulent Czar court is recreated with the photos of Russian aristocrats, winter St Petersburg cityscapes, black and white documentaries, films episodes, videos of airy tiaras and exceptional stones that got a new setting a century later, for example, in *The Romanov Bracelet, 2015* (Chapter 3). To meet Russian opulence Cartier started working with platinum and invented the new *Garlard* style easily recognized in famous *kokoshnik* tiaras, a symbolic Russian headdress. Later, being influenced by *Saisons Russes* in Paris Cartier combined blue and green in *peacock-feather motifs*. Being influenced by India in the early 1920s Cartier experimented a lot with bright colors combinations, united *touquise*, emerald and diamonds, mixed sapphire, emerald and ruby, finally, *Tutti-Frutti Style*, one of the Cartier's emblems, emerged (Chapter 8).

Symbols are easily noticeable in the retro style films of The Maison Cartier (*The pioneering spirit: celebrating the history and legacy of Cartier*; Cartier Legendary Stories – *13, rue de la Paix*; *New Bond Street*; *The New York Mansion*) (Figure 4-6) when the narrative develops via old black and white photos of the legendary members of the Cartier family, music and brief texts limited to captions. *The pioneering spirit* ... tells about Alfred Cartier, the founder of the company, and his three sons – Louis, Pierre and Jacques. Louis Cartier's ideas revolutionized watch design making pocket watches outdated. Photos and videos of the watches sparkle in the kaleidoscope of black and white photos of old Paris, against the background of the symbolic *Eiffel tower* and other historic sights (Cartier, 2023b). Louis Cartier, founder's grandson, joined family business in Paris in 1898 and soon moved to 13, rue de la Paix, where Cartier style began to emerge, where such jewelry icons as *panthera*, *Trinity*, *tank watch*, *Tutti-Frutty* were designed and created (Figure 4). The journey through time and milestones of Cartier design history teleports viewers to another legendary Cartier address, New York Mansion in 1917 and 2017 that symbolizes 100-year-history, legacy and glory of the brand (Figure 6), and where other iconic creations – a *love bracelet* and a *nail* – were designed.



Figure 4. Cartier Legendary Stories: 13, rue de la Paix.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJgK4fSTEzs>



Figure 5. Cartier Legendary Stories: London's New Bond Street.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX_EVtATovA



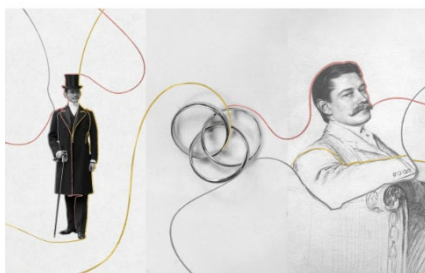
Figure 6. Cartier Legendary Stories: The New York Mansion.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AV2muAuX_U

Symbolic storytelling and advertising intermix in *Cartier Tank Française* (2022) where Guy Ritchie gave a retrospective vision of the spirit of Paris, of its creativity. Catherine Deneuve, the muse of French cinema, one of the symbols and personification of France, an ambassador of elegance, and one of The Maison Cartier long-term clients is starring in the film. Catherine Deneuve's photos, momentous episodes from her films shot in different decades, are concentrated on *Pont Alexandre III*, one of the most famous landmarks of Paris, and the filming location, but the actress successfully keeps pace with the times with the legendary *Tank Française* on her wrist (Motivate Val Morgan, 2023).

In 2024, on the occasion of *Trinity* collection centenary (Cartier, n. d., “The Trinity Collection”), The Maison Cartier launched another eleven-chapter-project – *Trinity Stories: A History*, “from the day Louis Cartier imagined its design to the moment it was adopted by the icons of past and present” (Figure 7). The word *icon*, synonymous to *symbol*, is used in the titles of several chapters (*The Birth of an Icon*; *One Icon, Multiple Styles*; *An Icon for Icons*) (Figure 8-9). The symbolic language is quite obvious in the Cartier icons' stories. In Chapter 2 the narration starts with a typical opening line of limmericks – “*There once was a man...*” – and exemplifies how centuries old narration traditions are interwoven into multimodal and multimedia brand storytelling. *Trinity* collection has become emblematic of the brand long ago, the word *trinity* selected as a name for the collection is one of the well-known symbols.

Cartier



TRINITY STORIES:
A HISTORY

Figure 7. Trinity Stories: A History.

<https://shorturl.at/edaXQ>



CHAPTER 5: ONE ICON, MULTIPLE STYLES

[Discover](#)

Figure 8. Chapter 5. One Icon, Multiple Styles.

<https://shorturl.at/edaXQ>



CHAPTER 6: AN ICON FOR ICONS

[Discover](#)

Figure 9. Chapter 6. An Icon for Icons.

<https://shorturl.at/edaXQ>

The **Maison Boucheron** storytelling is realized on the official website in *Our Maison* section with the subsections *Family Spirit*; *Freedon to Create*; *The Sense of Style*. *Family Spirit* includes video about Frédéric Boucheron, “a visionary, a unique jeweler like no other, who opened his first

boutique of jewelry pieces and precious curiosities”, who reinvented “the codes of High Jewelry” and demonstrated “never-seen-before-creativity that remains at the heart of the maison” (Boucheron, n.d., “Quarte Classique Tube”).

The timeline is located in the section *A Story of Firsts*: a set of short historical videos and brief texts about Frederic Boucheron and the maison's iconic creations – *Question Mark Necklace* (1879), the first necklace without a clasp, the *Reflet* watch, a watch of a groundbreaking design with the invisible clasp hidden within the case, and the largest order ever placed at Place de Vendôme (Boucheron, n. d., “Quarte Classique Tube”). The extraordinary *Question Mark Necklace* became a style icon that brilliantly withstood the test of time being constantly reinvented:

- (1) *This rare creation became the symbol of a High Jewelry feature ahead of its time. Its asymmetrical shape, unusual for the time, earned it the name of Point d'Interrogation – the question mark. More than 140 years after its creation, it remains one of the symbols of Boucheron's style. ... Firstly, for its unique, immediately recognizable asymmetrical shape – a true aesthetic statement for its time (late 19th century). But above all for its ability to transform with the theme and mood. During its first production period between 1881 and 1893, the Question Mark embraced floral, plant, animal, and figurative motifs. Since her arrival in 2011, Creative Director Claire Choisne has reinterpreted and contemporized the Question Mark. Year after year, the Boucheron Studio creates new variations on this great classic.* (Boucheron, n. d., “A Story of Firsts”).

The Maison Boucheron revealed its unparalleled expertise, innovation and unique sense of style the 26 first times (“26 Firsts”, 2025). No wonder, many stories about the maison's heritage include the cluster *never-seen-before* (a *never-seen-before* creativity, a *never-seen-before* ingenuity, *never-seen-before* intuition, *never-seen-before* innovation), for example:

- (2) *1928. Never seen before. On August 2, 1928, Paris was abuzz with the arrival of the Maharajah of Patiala. The Maharajah entrusted his treasure to Boucheron to create the largest order ever placed at Place Vendôme* (Boucheron, n. d., “A Story of Firsts”).

The descriptions of incredible gemstones and The Maison Boucheron timeless creations include fairy tales patterns such as *Once upon a time...*, *once in a blue moon*, for example:

- (3) *Once upon a time... On this August morning in 1928, the Maharajah was surrounded by warriors, who were just as imposing as him and carried iron chests. Louis Boucheron, who welcomed them in his boutique at 26 Place Vendôme, discovered an extraordinary treasure inside these chests.* (Boucheron, n. d., “Looking”)

In 2022, Creative Director Claire Choisne paid homage to this treasure by creating the *New Maharajahs High Jewelry Collection* – a new page of Boucheron's History of Style (Boucheron, n.d., “Looking”). Other jewelry pieces – *the Quatre icon*, Boucheron's contemporary signature, *the Serpent Bohème Collection*, the emblematic vintage icons of the Maison – extended the symbolic creations of The Maison Boucheron.

Like other jewelry houses Boucheron has its mascot – *Wladimir the cat*. Boucheron's bestiary traditions were initiated in its workshops in 1866. According to the archives the image of *Persian cat Wladimir* was used for brooch design since the end of the 19th century. In 1979 *Wladimir the cat* became the muse of the maison and the star in the advertising campaign (Figure 10). In 2018, the maison token was brought to life in the new ANIMAUX DE COLLECTION (Boucheron, n. d., “ANIMAUX DE COLLECTION”) (Figure 11).



Figure 10. Wladimir, the Cat, 1979.
https://www.boucheron.com/int_en/collier-wladimir-chat-jcl01323.html



Figure 11. Wladimir, the Cat Sleepers, Necklace, Pendant, Ring.
https://www.boucheron.com/int_en/collier-wladimir-chat-jcl01323.html

Van Cleef & Arpels collection (Van Cleef & Arpels, n.d., “The Van Cleef & Arpels Collection”), The Heritage Gallery (Van Cleef & Arpels, n.d., “The Heritage Gallery”), the Timeline (Van Cleef & Arpels, n.d., “Timeline”) contain many gorgeous creations that were becoming emblematic of the maison decade by decade. There are photos of the legendary jewelry items, sketches of the masterpieces, archival documents, textual information as well as posters of multiple exhibitions in megacities across the world that bring beauty and happiness to general public. In the 1920s, Van Cleef & Arpels was obsessed with geometrical forms and passion for oriental – Egyptian, Chinese, Japanese, Indian – motifs and incorporated numerous *culture-relevant symbols* into jewelry design. In the 1940s *ballerina clips*, *fairy clips*, *lovebird clips* revealed the designers’ poetic inspiration. The Maison created unique *Zip necklace* in the 1950s; made gorgeous jewelry for international figures and royal houses, designed the iconic *Alhambra long necklace* in the 1960s; launched its extraordinary *Snowflake* collection in the 1980s. *The Zip necklace*, *Alhambra long necklace*, *Ballerinas*, *Snowflake* collection have become well-known and easily recognizable symbols of The Maison (Figure 12-15).

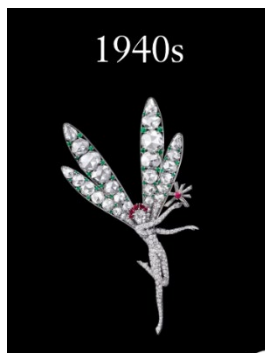


Fig.12. Little Winged Fairy Clip.
<https://www.vancleefarpels.com/en/the-maison/timeline.html>

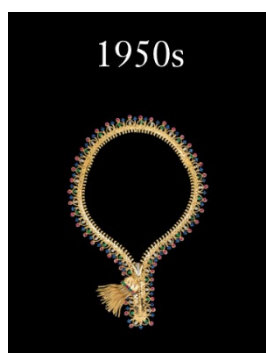


Fig.13. The Zip necklace.
<https://www.vancleefarpels.com/en/the-maison/timeline.html>

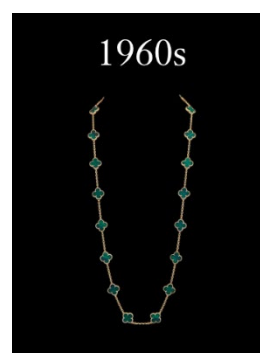


Fig.14. Alhambra long necklace.
<https://www.vancleefarpels.com/en/the-maison/timeline.html>



Fig.15. Snowflake Collection.
<https://www.vancleefarpels.com/en/the-maison/timeline.html>

Fairy and *Ballerina* clips (since 1941) inspired by dance quickly became emblematic of the brand and initiated a long and mutually beneficial partnership of The Maison and ballet troupes (Figure 16-18) (Van Cleef & Arpels, n.d., “The Graceful Fairies”). The acquaintance of Claude Arpels with George Balanchine sparked a ballet dedicated to precious stones – emeralds, rubies and diamonds – in 1967. In its turn, Van Cleef & Arpels imagined a four-chapter-collection (ballet, emerald, ruby, and diamond). Dancers were enjeweled in *Ballet Précieux High Jewelry* collection (2007) (Van Cleef & Arpels, n.d., “The Graceful Fairies”) and *Lady Arpels Ballerine Enchantée Watch* (2013) (Van Cleef & Arpels, n.d., “Lady Arpels Ballerine”). Semiotically, jewelry items of *Dancers of the world* collection can be interpreted as *icons*.



Fig.16-17. Delicate Dancers.

<https://www.vancleefarpels.com/en/the-maison/the-heritage-gallery/dancers.html>

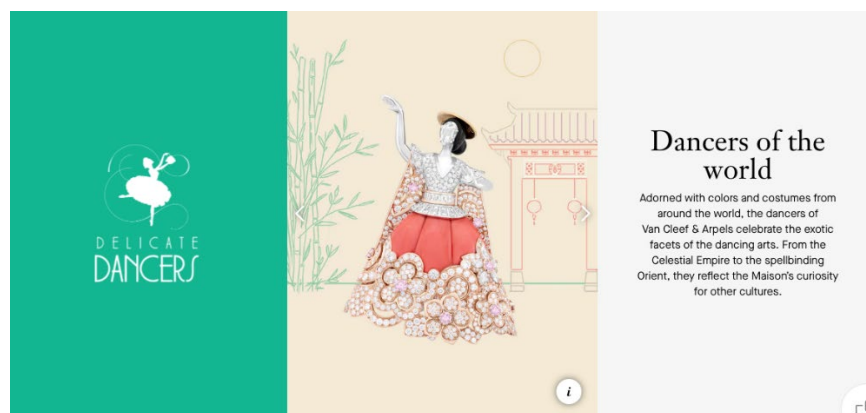


Figure 18. Delicate Dancers. Dancers of the world.

<https://www.vancleefarpels.com/en/the-maison/the-heritage-gallery/dancers.html>

The Maison *Van Cleef & Arpels* debuted with the collection in 1906 at Place Vendôme, Paris. In 2006, to pay tribute to the city of its birth, the Maison designed *Une Journée à Paris High Jewelry* collection, a bejeweled stroll along the symbolic sites in the French capital – the Jardin des Tuileries, Île de la Cité, Avenue Montaigne, the Eiffel Tower, the Opéra Garnier and Place Vendôme (Van Cleef & Arpels, n.d., “The High Jewelry”). Similarly, The *New York Collection* by Harry Winston was inspired by the symbolic sights, enduring spirit and style of the city that never sleeps (Central Park Ring, Manhattan Adornment Necklace, 718 Marble Marquetry Necklace, Brownstone Necklace, HW Graffiti Brooch, City Lights Earrings, Avenue Classic Graffiti). Photos of the spectacular jewelry pieces and watches are displayed on the website against the background of watercolours (Harry Winston, n. d.).

Van Cleef & Arpels – A Maison born from a love story – realizes its symbolic storytelling as Love Stories. The narrative starts with the black and white wedding photo of Alfred Van Cleef and Estelle Arpels. The “&” sign in the Maison’s name has become a symbol of unity, of happy and successful marriage. Not accidentally, fairy tale formulaic language is used in the love story:

- (4) *Once upon a time, there was a story of love and precious stones... It all started in 1895, in the heart of Paris, with the marriage of Estelle Arpels, daughter of a dealer in precious stones, and Alfred Van Cleef, son of a lapidary. The young couple shared the same values: a spirit of enthusiasm and innovation, a sense of family and a passion for precious stones*” (Van Cleef & Arpels, n.d., “Estelle Arpels”).

Love stories have become a rich source of inspiration for the Maison: *a diamond heart*, mentioned in the sales records from 1906; numerous creations that accompanied love affair of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, the wedding of Grace Kelly and Prince Rainier of Monaco, engagement rings, wedding bands, watches, High Jewelry creations, *Lady Arpels Pont des Amoureux* watch, *Histoires d’amour* High Jewelry watches, etc. (Van Cleef & Arpels, n.d., “Love Stories”). A magnificent collection of sweet nothings, *tokens of love* –*hearts, cupids, arrows, Love Birds* are advertised on the eve of Valentine’s Day (Van Cleef & Arpels, n.d., “Token of Love”).

In 2019, Van Cleef & Arpels interpreted William Shakespeare’s ode to love, his *Romeo and Juliet*. *Romeo & Juliet* clips (Figure 19), symbolizing lovers, have become the most figurative pieces of the collection, as well as *The Balcone clip* where the couple declared their love... (Figure 20).



Figure 19. Romeo and Juliet.

<https://www.vancleefarpels.com/en/collection/s/high-jewelry/thematic-collections/romeo-juliet.html#romeo-and-juliet>



Figure 20. Balcone.

<https://www.vancleefarpels.com/en/collection/s/high-jewelry/thematic-collections/romeo-juliet.html#balcone>

Tiffany & Co. that offers *With Love, Iconic Gifts Since 1837*, is inextricably associated with *Tiffany Blue* color. The hue was selected by Charles Lewis Tiffany in 1845 for the cover of his first catalogue (Tiffany, n. d., “The Tiffany Blue Box”). The catalogue with the emblematic cover is still being published but in the 21st century Tiffany & Co. has other Blue Books: *Blue Book 2023: Out of the Blue* (Tiffany, n. d., “Blue Book 2023”) and *Blue Book 2024: Tiffany Céleste* (Tiffany, n. d., “Blue Book 2024”). Color symbolism is utilized by the brand in the website design as background color.

Tiffany Blue box was an object of desire and a symbol of dreams since the middle of the 19th century (Tiffany, n. d., “The World of Tiffany”). The image of the blue box with the *Bird on a rock*, Tiffany legendary creation, atop marks the Landmark at 727 The Fifth Avenue, New York (Figure 21).

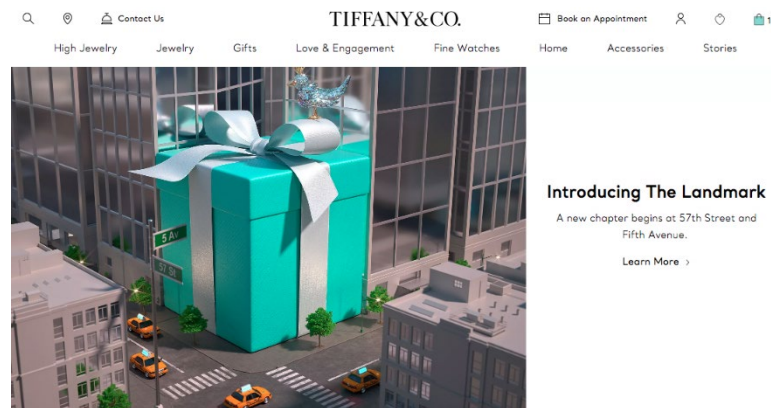


Figure 21. The Landmark.

<https://www.tiffany.com/stories/the-landmark-nyc-immersive-experiences/>

“Capturing Tiffany’s unparalleled artistry and innovation, each handcrafted high jewelry design is an extraordinary symbol of the House’s savoir faire” (Tiffany, n. d., “Beyonce Toured”). Tiffany & Co. prescribes symbolic value to its creations: Lock by Tiffany – A symbol of Protection (A timeless icon inspired by a padlock from 1883, Lock is an expression of love’s enduring protection. A universal symbol of what matters most, Lock keeps safe that which is cherished (Tiffany, n. d., “Lock) (Figure 22); Knot by Tiffany – A symbol of Connection (Knot is an expression of love’s unwavering bonds. Inspired by an archival bow crafted in 1889 – a symbol of life’s most enduring ties –Knot embodies meaningful connection (Tiffany, n. d., “Knot”) (Figure 23); T by Tiffany – A symbol of Possibility (Figure 24); Sixteen Stone by Tiffany – A symbol of Strength (Figure 25).

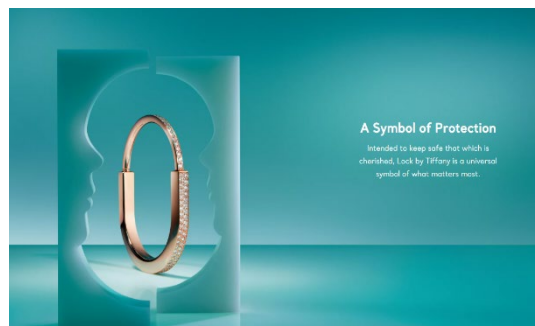


Figure 22. Lock by Tiffany – A symbol of Protection.

<https://www.tiffany.com/stories/collections/lock-by-tiffany/>

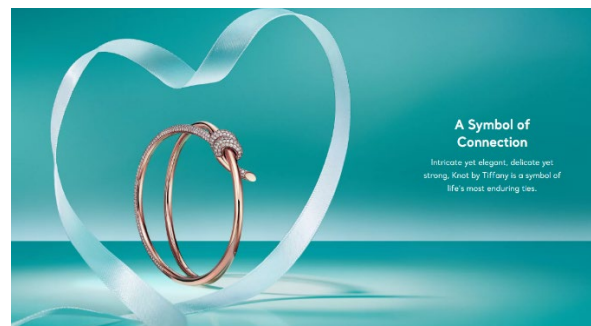


Figure 23. Knot by Tiffany – A symbol of Connection.

<https://www.tiffany.com/stories/collections/knot-by-tiffany/>

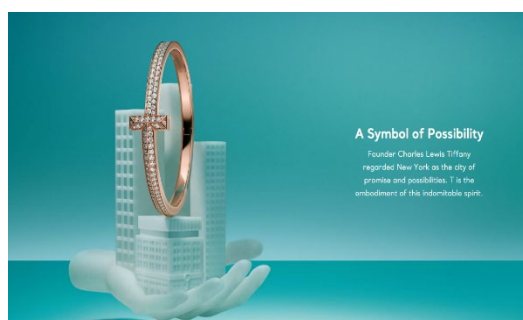


Figure 24. T by Tiffany – A symbol of Possibility.

<https://www.tiffany.com/stories/collections/t-bytiffany/>

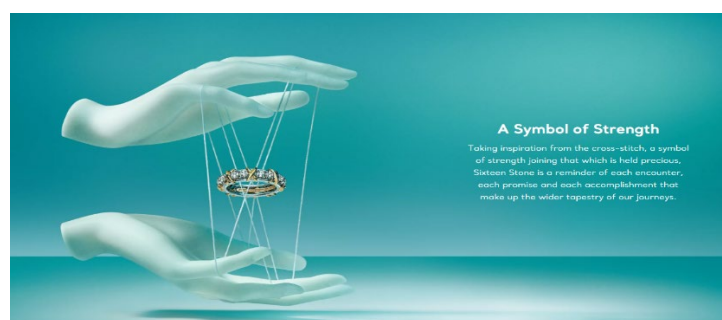


Figure 25. Sixteen Stone by Tiffany– A symbol of Strength.

<https://www.tiffany.com/stories/collections/sixteen-stone-by-tiffany/>

Many Tiffany creations are marketed as *symbols of love, icons of love that make the language of love* (Figure 26-28).

Some of the Tiffany love symbols were re-imagined with the minimalist design. For example, a padlock – an Archival Motif for the brooch with the key (Figure 29) – inspired *Lock by Tiffany* (Figure 22) 140 years later.

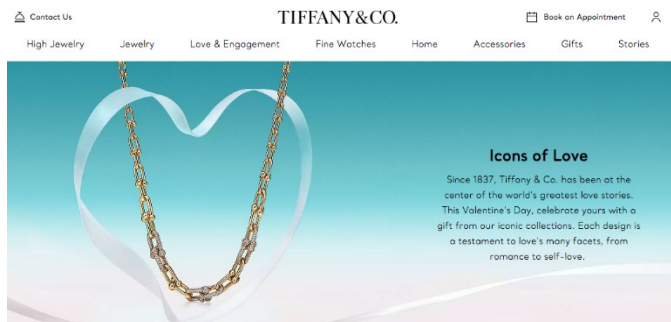
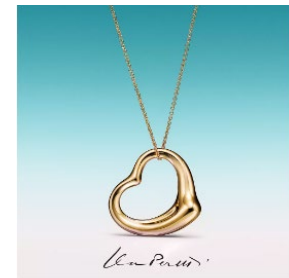


Figure 26. Icons of Love.

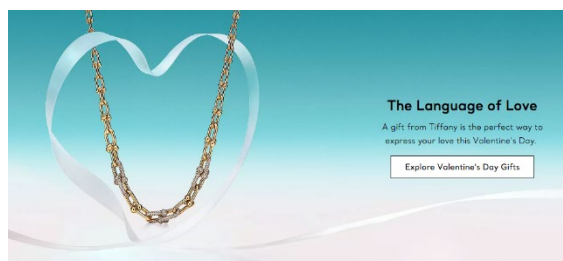
<https://www.tiffany.com/stories/guide/luxury-valentines-day-gift-ideas/>



Love Symbols Jewelry

Figure 27. Love Symbols Jewelry.

<https://www.tiffany.com/>



Extraordinary Valentine's Day Gifts

Figure 28. The Language of Love.

<https://www.tiffany.com/>

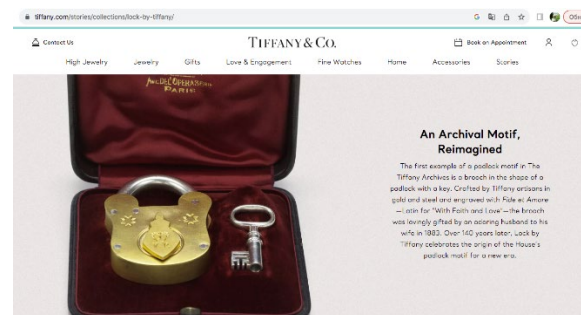


Figure 29. An Archival Motif, Reimagined.

<https://www.tiffany.com/stories/collections/lock-by-tiffany/>

The legendary *Bird on a rock* by Jean Schlumberger (Figure 30) was reimagined in several wearable masterpieces. The *Bird on a rock* became the main character for animated story about the *Landmark* at 727 The Fifth Avenue, New York, a ten-story-mansion, full of Tiffany treasures and immersive installations (Figure 31).



Figure 30. Bird on a Rock.

<https://www.tiffany.com/high-jewelry/jean-schlumberger/bird-on-a-rock/>

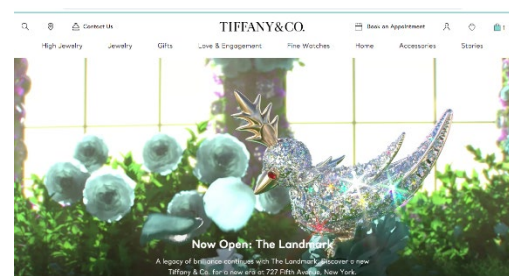


Figure 31. Landmark.

<https://www.tiffany.com/stories/the-landmark-fifth-avenue/>

Audrey Experience intallation celebrates the iconic film *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, “a key moment in cinematic history and the cultural impact of the House” (Figure 32).

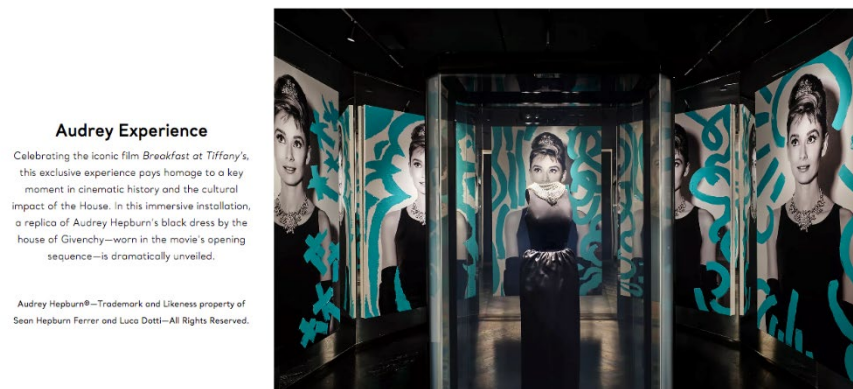


Figure 32. Audrey Experience.

<https://www.tiffany.com/stories/the-landmark-nyc-immersive-experiences/>

The 2024 Holiday Campaign also pays tribute to the legendary American movie. Anya Taylor-Joy demonstrates the iconic brand creations (*Knot by Tiffany*, *Lock by Tiffany*, *Hardware by Tiffany*, *Sixteen Stone by Tiffany*) – “facets of love all of which are a gift” (Figure 33). *Tiffany Blue Box* externalizes the dearest dreams. The actress with *Tiffany Blue Bags* is looking at the virtual shop window as Audrey Hepburn was looking at the window of Tiffany & Co. flagship store in 1961 (Figure 34). The semiotic intermixture of Tiffany & Co. symbolic creations in the 2024 commercial with the iconic episode from the legendary *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961) is a perfect example of interdiscursivity in meaning making.



Figure 33. The 2024 Holiday Campaign.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fmn67A
NHJpg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fmn67ANHJpg)



Figure 34. Audrey Hepburn in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (Edwards, 1961).

4. Conclusion

Symbols are utilized by brands in their marketing and storytelling in several ways. Culture-relevant symbols are aptly intergrated into jewelry design. Luxury brands logos turn into the objects of obsession, admiration and dreams. High Jewelry items and luxury jewelry items become the symbols of the brands – brand-specific symbols. Becoming iconic luxury brands creations convert objects of plant and animal word, elements of cosmos, phenomena of human life, that inspired the jewelry design, into symbols.

Symbolic storytelling augmented by designers' creativity has enormous potential in the era of visual culture. Symbolic storytelling is interlaced with complicated cognitive and semiotic processes, interdiscursivity, diverse implications what makes meaning making and decoding more sophisticated and fascinating.

Further research might span use of diverse media for brand storytelling, symbolism in storytelling of other business, brand storytelling on diverse social media platforms.

Declaration of the conflict of interest

The author has no competing interests or funding support to declare.

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СИМВОЛИ У БРЕНДОВОМУ СТОРІТЕЛІНГУ

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Рукопис надійшов 27.04.2025; отримано після рецензування 22.06.2025; опубліковано online 1.08.2025.

Анотація

У статті висвітлюється роль символів у цифровому сторітелінгу, який набуває популярності як ефективна маркетингова стратегія. Цифрові технології відкрили нові можливості для сторітелінгу на веб-сайтах, зробивши його мультимодальним. Символи виявляються надзвичайно важливими для нарративу ювелірних брендів класу люкс. Дослідження базується на аналізі сайтів відомих ювелірних домів – Cartie, Tiffany, Boucheron, Van Cleef & Arpels, Harry Winston. Творіння цих домів стали символами одержимості, мрією, ідеєю фікс для мільйонів людей. Історії стали невід'ємним компонентом архітектури веб-сайтів, забезпечуючи доступ глобальній аудиторії до історії бренду, цінностей і спадщини компанії. Логотипи люксових брендів – це легко впізнавані символи, що асоціюються з ексклюзивним дизайном, вишуканим смаком, неперевершеною креативністю, високим соціальним статусом. Культурні символи, що належать до різних цивілізацій, ефективно інтегровані як у дизайн ювелірних виробів, так і у прийоми сторітелінгу. Деякі прикраси стають емблемами брендів. Доми надають символічне значення своїм творінням під час рекламних кампаній. Ювелірні вироби люксових брендів можуть перетворити в символи елементи флори і фауни, космосу, світу людини. Люксові дома наділяють символічною цінністю прикраси у своїх рекламних і маркетингових стратегіях. Символи виявляються ключовими для формування сенсу в сторітелінгу, яку візуальному, так і текстовому форматах, охоплюючи найважливіші факти особистого та професійного життя засновників брендів, історію бренду, придбання унікальних дорогоцінних каменів і створення знакових ювелірних виробів, які стають віхами розвитку брендів. Культурні символи влучно інтегровані в дизайн коштовностей та візуалізуються у багатьох історіях на сайті. Прикраси, що належать до рівня високого ювелірного мистецтва, розкішні ювелірні вироби стають символами бренду. Творіння люксових брендів стають культовими і можуть символізувати світ природи, космос, життя та діяльність людини. Символічний сторітелінг переплітається зі складними когнітивними та семіотичними процесами, інтердискурсивністю, різноманітними імплікаціями, що робить створення сенсів та декодування інформації більш витонченим і захоплюючим.

Ключові слова: маркетинг, мультимедійний, мультимодальний, семіотичний, символ, створення значення, сторітелінг, цифровий

Декларація про конфлікт інтересів

Автор заявляє про відсутність будь-якого конфлікту інтересів щодо статті.