



*Young Lady with Mirror. A cold painted bronze and ivory Art Deco figure by Paul Philippe, circa 1925, 32cm high.*

to first impressions, they are not ivory figures partially clad in bronze.

The creators of these figures included the most eminent sculptors of the period, with Ferdinand Preiss, Demetre Chiparus, Claire-Jeanne-Roberte Colinet, Bruno Zach, Otto Poertzel and Josef Lorenzl being among the

most highly revered, with Preiss and Chiparus being regarded as the two top names.

Other top rank artists include Paul Philippe, Marcel Bouraine, Joé Descomps, Dominique Alonzo, Maurice Guiraud-Rivière and Louis Sosson. Usually only a limited number of examples of each figure were made, sometimes in more than one size, and signed by the artist. Such individually crafted works of art were never plentiful or inexpensive, and many have been lost over the last 80 years, or so.

Some were actually melted down for munitions in WW2. In those surviving, condition is very important: handling over the decades may have worn their patina or cold painting, they may have developed hairline cracks, or have been chipped or broken. Few, if any, perfect examples still exist and those that are near perfect command a considerable premium – particularly if they are unrestored and by one of the revered artists mentioned above.

But beware, for there are many reproductions around. Cheap plastic imitations are easy to spot, but those actually



*Charleston Dancer. A gilded and cold painted bronze and ivory Art Deco figure by Joé Descomps, circa 1925, 41.4cm high.*

made in bronze and ivory in the 1970s are somewhat less obvious. Many carry spurious signatures too and some even appear at auction. There are many signs evident to the experienced eye, however, such as a base made of later marble or onyx, obtained after the original seams ran out. The best advice to a collector is to buy from a reputable dealer who will guarantee the authenticity of the pieces he, or she, sells and point out any restoration.

Such beautiful works of art do not come cheaply, however, but for those who can afford them they offer considerable style and beauty and glimpses of people and their lives in a different time and place. □

*All photographs courtesy of Endymion. Ian Shanks can be reached at 01382 801801.*



*The Creed. A patinated bronze and ivory Art Deco figure of an Egyptian priestess by Demetre H Chiparus, circa 1920, 41.5cm high.*



*Oriental Dancer. A patinated and cold painted bronze and ivory Art Deco figure by Demetre H Chiparus, circa 1920, 40cm high.*