

LOUISA GUINNESS GALLERY

THE BOLDNESS OF CALDER

A NEW EXHIBITION OF JEWELLERY BY ALEXANDER CALDER

27 SEPTEMBER – 5 NOVEMBER 2016



Anjelica Huston wearing *The Jealous Husband* (c. 1940) by Alexander Calder, 1976, photo by Evelyn Hofer
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Louisa Guinness Gallery is delighted to present the first solo exhibition in the UK of Alexander Calder's jewellery: *The Boldness of Calder*.

The exhibition brings together major pieces of Calder jewellery from around the world, presented amongst iconic images of the jewellery being worn on notable women throughout history, as well as contemporary images commissioned especially for the show.

Calder's radical artistic practice reimaged the horizons of 20th century art and resulted in an acclaimed legacy which continues to influence contemporary art today. He was an innovator in concept, materials and form, using real-time motion to animate his works and imbue them with unprecedented performativity.

To wear Calder's jewellery was to share in his iconoclasm; his earrings, bracelets, headdresses, necklaces and brooches were deeply unconventional in their time. They were made of simple silver or brass wire, and occasionally found materials, and were often oversized and unwieldy. At a time of rigid sartorial norms and patriarchal traditions, his non-precious 'jewels' appealed to women with avant-garde tastes and an eye for the unusual.

"Like true vessels of Calder's artistic manifesto, the women who wore his jewellery were some of the most forward thinking and unconventional of their time" says Guinness.

“Our decision to exhibit images of these women wearing their Calder jewels - Simone de Beauvoir, Georgia O’Keeffe and Peggy Guggenheim among them - alongside the jewels themselves, is a celebration of their, and Calder’s, subversive spirit.”

“We were also keen to show the contemporary relevance of Calder’s jewellery. Not only was his artistic manifesto prescient, these jewels have a timelessness and of-the-moment relevance that continues to appeal to young people today”.

This in mind, the gallery has collaborated with fashion designer Elise Overland and photographer Alexander English to include a series of arresting contemporary images of Calder jewellery on young men and women.

Wavy lines, spirals and zigzags reveal Calder’s unique approach to form. Consisting of hammered and bent metal, all of his jewellery pieces were one-off and hand-crafted, as evident in the tool marks that remain visible on the unpolished surfaces of the works. Works were often created with a specific wearer in mind; many of his brooches form initials or names. Calder never used solder - all fixings and fittings, like the works themselves, are made either from bent silver, brass or, rarely, gold (he seldom used precious metal, preferring brass and silver).

Calder Foundation President Alexander S. C. Rower notes, “Making jewellery was extremely personal for my grandfather, and he adamantly refused to edition his pieces. Each work is completely unique—just like his mobiles. His pioneering aesthetic remains an inspiration for leagues of studio jewellers today.”

Testing the boundaries of sculpture with his fearless experimentation, Calder pioneered what has become the genre of wearable art.

The exhibition is presented in collaboration with the Calder Foundation. Recent solo exhibitions of Calder’s work have been held at institutions including: Tate Modern, London (2015-16); Fondation Beyeler, Basel / Riehen (2016); Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow (2015); Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporaneo, Mexico City (2015); The Pulitzer Arts Foundation, Saint Louis (2015); Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (2014); and Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2013-14). The first museum presentation dedicated solely to Calder’s jewellery, organised by the Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach (2008), travelled to the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, among other international venues.

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ABOUT THE GALLERY

Louisa Guinness Gallery works with today's leading sculptors and painters to create jewellery as well as collecting and dealing in works by master artists.

The gallery opened in May 2003 with its inaugural exhibition 'Past and Present; Jewellery by 20th Century Artists'. With this show Louisa Guinness departed from her original focus on artist-made furniture into the world of artists' jewels. Since then she has worked on over 18 separate projects with leading contemporary artists.

Each new work is published in a small edition to the highest standard. Most are handmade in London's famous Hatton Garden district or the artist's studio. The ethos behind the jewellery is that it should be treated as wearable sculpture: whilst it is not being worn it is a piece of art independent of function, at home on a coffee table or in a dressing room.



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