

ART | NEED TO NOW

Calder jewellery shines at Louisa Guinness Gallery

A rare chance to buy wearable art by the celebrated sculptor



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MING LIU

Artists making jewellery has been a hot topic recently, not least within the *Financial Times: How To Spend It* reported on the new wave of such makers working today, while at the FT Weekend Festival a few weeks ago, a panel discussed jewellers crossing the art divide. Following the debut jewellery show of Claude Lalanne, Louisa Guinness – the go-to gallery for artist-commissioned gems – is hosting the first UK solo show of jewellery by Alexander Calder: sculptor, inventor of the mobile and a forefather of this specialised form.

Calder's jewellery is often associated with the rakish, unconventional women who wore his creations – Anjelica Huston (first picture), Simone de Beauvoir, Georgia O'Keeffe (second picture) and Peggy Guggenheim to name a few. In celebration of this link, the exhibition will juxtapose the gems with archive shots of famed patrons in iconic pieces, alongside contemporary images by British photographer Alexander English that have been commissioned especially for the show.

Aptly titled *The Boldness of Calder* and running from Tuesday September 27 to Saturday November 5, the exhibition will feature a total of 35 pieces – some on loan from museums and private collections, others for sale (from \$50,000) – and all of which are one-off and handcrafted. Most striking are the fantastically oversized necklaces, such as a cool brass wire number that's nearly 40cm in diameter, or a 1950 Tudor collar-like piece (third picture) with hints of the current craze for all things ruffles. Elsewhere, a cloth and silver necklace (fourth picture) from 1942 highlights Calder's use of unexpected materials, while a bold, sculptural layering of silver half-rings is truly statement making.

The brooches, meanwhile – from an undulating 1940 brass and steel wire design to an almost primitive hammered silver piece (fifth picture) – speak to Calder's signature use of bent fixtures and fittings over soldering. Whether art or mobiles, his creations had a certain whimsy touched with subversion – here brilliantly embodied in an unusually feminine 1945 brass Flower headpiece.

The overwhelming impression is of how avant-garde Calder's "wearable art" still looks seven decades later. "We were keen to show the contemporary relevance of Calder's jewellery," says Guinness. "Not only was his artistic manifesto prescient, but these jewels have a timelessness and of-the-moment relevance that continues to appeal today."

Tuesday September 27 to Saturday November 5 2016 at Louisa Guinness
Gallery, 45 Conduit Street, London W1 (020-7494 4664;
www.louisaguinnessgallery.com).

