



A Man Ray pendant brooch inspired by his painting *Observatory Time—The Lovers* is just one jewel in the exhibition “Sculpture to Wear,” at Sotheby’s East Hampton.

HIGHLIGHT

Ready-to-Wear

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READING TIME: 2 MINUTES

“Probably due to their dimensions,” wrote the Surrealist artist Man Ray, “the two lips resembled two bodies embracing. It was very Freudian.” He is describing his *Observatory Time—The Lovers* (1936), an eight-foot-wide painting featuring an elongated pair of flame-red lips hovering in a pale sky, an observatory visible in the distance, perhaps bearing witness to a fiery passion. Man Ray’s work was a *cri de coeur* over his dashed love affair with the siren and muse Lee Miller. Decades later, in 1970, he transformed the red lips of his painting into the gold lips of a pendant brooch, a talisman to love. Like so many artists, Man Ray was using jewelry as a new medium for creative expression. Paintings and sculpture could become precious metal and gems—sculpture to wear.

The best known of these artists-cum-jewelers is the ever delightful Alexander Calder, the granddaddy of the bunch. Beginning in the 1930s, Calder’s wife and friends became walking mobiles when wearing the artist’s necklaces and bracelets, primitive executions in bent, curled, and twisted silver and brass.



Anjelica Huston wears a necklace designed by Alexander Calder, 1976.

Within a decade, and in collaboration with the goldsmiths and skilled craftsmen who executed their designs, artists in the U.S. and Europe became creators of adornment. They included Max Ernst, César, Man Ray, Giò Pomodoro, Lucio Fontana, Claude Lalanne, Niki de Saint Phalle, and Jesús Rafael Soto, all of whom are among the 28 artists featured in the must-try-on selling exhibition “Sculpture to Wear,” at Sotheby’s East Hampton.

A collaboration between Louisa Guinness; the Louisa Guinness Gallery, London; and Tiffany Dubin of Sotheby’s, the exhibition presents more than 80 pieces of jewelry—many unique or part of a limited edition. All are available for purchase, and prices range from \$700 (for a recent pair of Christopher Thompson Royds ear clips) to \$210,000 (for a Lucio Fontana bracelet made in 1967).



An embarrassment of wearable riches, spanning, from left, Niki de Saint Phalle’s *Nana* necklace and brooch, Man Ray’s *Optic Topic* mask, and Anish Kapoor’s *Water Ring*.

In addition to offering creations by celebrated mid-20th-century artists, the show includes jewelry that Guinness has commissioned over the years from artists working today—names such as Anish Kapoor (his rings are like reflecting pools), Mariko Mori (her pieces contain the serenity and mystery of her installation works), Jeff Koons (remember the bunny rabbit?), and Sophia Vari, whose commanding works are especially modern.

“What I’ve tried to do,” Guinness explains, “is to raise awareness that contemporary artists’ jewelry is a genre. These are pieces for a new type of collector—a collector of artists’ jewelry, people who love bold or interesting jewelry.”

As she points out, “Some people would like a Picasso on their walls. Others prefer to wear one.” —*Ruth Peltason*

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