



Clockwise from far left: Anish Kapoor Form 1 pendant in 18ct white gold, £14,600; Antony Gormley necklace in steel and rubber, £5,875; and Claude Lalanne copper Collier Seringat, £28,506, all at Louisa Guinness Gallery.

stealing the show

Celebrated artists and architects are taking fine jewellery in exciting new directions, says Vivienne Becker. Photographs by George Ong.

Serious art collectors searching for serious jewellery that reflects their aesthetics and values are gravitating towards a new generation of esoteric, powerfully intriguing jewels by artists and architects. This is not about the jewel as a precious work of art, nor about the artist-jeweller; this is a separate genre that has appeared out of smoke from the explosion of both art and jewels into our cultural consciousness over the past decade or so. But as it carves out a place for itself, it also taps into a rich, and relatively little-known, legacy of 20th-century artists and architects, from the Pre-Raphaelite painter Edward Burne-Jones to the great pioneers of modern art – Picasso, Braque, Dalí, Ernst.

Alexander Calder was perhaps the most important and influential artist to focus his sights and insights on jewellery. With a personal passion, he hand-made over 1,800 distinctive one-of-a-kind pieces that were worn by "everyone" in Bohemian Paris of



Clockwise from above: white gold and diamond cuff links by Tim Noble and Sue Webster, £5,875; and gold cuff links by Peter Blake, £4,113, both at Louisa Guinness Gallery. Filigree silver and gold Hearts Pendant by Frank Gehry, £360.

"there's no confusing it. It occupies a different space, jewellery has a great and wonderful history and I wanted to enter it in some small way." Having already made jewellery for many years, he created a collection of Water Jewels for Louisa Guinness, relating to his famous mirrored sculptures. There are massive rings, pendants (pictured on opening page) and cuff links in potent, precise yet fluid forms: concave circles and teardrops are polished in the centre to a mirror-like finish or house gleaming enamel (from £4,113 for cuff links to £32,900 for large pendants in an edition of five). The central shining pool draws the eye inwards, contrasting with and reflecting the matt texture of the curved rims. "The concave mirror acts almost like a gem," explains Kapoor. "And the rich colour of the gold reflects back

Elvis cuff links often worn by Blake himself. He was, says Guinness, going to make compilations of found objects but decided to glamorise the cuff links instead, encasing the watercolours in 18ct gold and making the bar at the lock in the shape of a spoon as a concession to the *objet trouvé* idea. Guinness impresses on me that this project has taken three years to develop and each of the 50 pairs being made will be unique.

One of the most appealing elements of the artist's jewel is the resolutely non-formulaic variety and originality of visual language. At the Guinness gallery you can find a gold Louise Bourgeois spider brooch (£699,875) after her giant spider at Tate Modern next to Sam Taylor-Wood's white gold and diamond Tear-Catcher ring (about £10,575) - made by Shaun Leane, it has a compartment to catch your tears and comes with a series of phials for storing them. Then there's a graphic gold necklace (£9,400) and earrings (£3,525) outlining a light bulb by Michael Craig-Martin (celebrated teacher of the YBAs, notably Damien Hirst) and from Tim Noble and Sue Webster come jewels of gold looping script spelling out "I'm beautiful" (from £1,410) or skull-motif cuff links (pictured above left, from £1,410). In a very different romantic mood are the poetic and sculptural copper jewels, adrift with flowers, butterfly wings and sycamore seeds, by French architect and decorative artist Claude Lalanne (from £1,410, necklace pictured on opening page).

Architect Frank Gehry turned his huge-scale talent to jewellery when he joined Tiffany as a named designer. Launching his first collection in 2006, he transferred his

the 1930s and 1940s, and are much sought after today (from \$47,000 to \$176,250 at Louisa Guinness Gallery).

In fact, the market in jewels by 20th-century masters is opening up, overlapping with a blossoming in contemporary artists' jewels. And here there is a sense of continuity. Picasso, for example, worked with goldsmith François Hugo on medallion-type jewels, and today Hugo's son Pierre continues in his father's atelier near Aix-en-Provence, hand-hammering gold pieces from limited editions by Picasso and Ernst (from £11,163).

Specialist London dealer Louisa Guinness sells vintage gold pieces by Picasso (from £16,450 to £23,500), vibrant enamels on gold by Niki de Saint-Phalle (£21,150) and mechanistic jewels hobbling with gold spheres by Belgian Pol Bury (from £4,200 to £25,950, bracelet pictured right), but her main energy goes into developing collaborations with contemporary British artists. "I started collecting pieces by the great masters," she says. "When I looked for more contemporary jewellery I found a hole in the market. I started talking to friends who are artists [her husband is the art dealer Ben Brown] and they were interested. They see jewellery as an extension of their work. So I started an exhibition project with a group of artists including Anish Kapoor and Antony Gormley, among others. I try to take the pain out of it for them and manage the fabrication in most cases. Each one is different; Gormley, for example, works from the same blocks of steel he uses in his sculptures [necklace pictured on opening page, £5,875]."

The so-called YBAs (Young British Artists) seems particularly keen on turning their talents to jewellery. Sculptor Marc Quinn translates his recurring themes of time and decay, as seen in the ephemeral nature of flowers and fruit, into gold pieces: surprisingly, softly romantic but with the same presence and power as his sculptures. A perfect, succulent strawberry cast in gold, with diamonds replacing the pips, becomes a pendant in an edition of 10 (£28,200). The strawberry is as if frozen, he explains, and dusted with diamonds it becomes erotic and emotionally charged. "All jewellery is about time," he says. "Jewellery travels through time,

giving it a poignancy. It's about the tension between perfection and imperfection."

He has just finished a series of rings based on orchids. Each unique piece (£9,400) was cast in his own foundry from a real orchid which has, says Quinn, symbolically sacrificed its life for immortality. He likes the paradox of the ephemeral and the eternal. "I do feel that I'm making art works, through jewels I can talk about profound things in a beautiful way. I see the jewel as a three-dimensional dream or wish."

Anish Kapoor, on the other hand, is firm in his belief that the jewel is not art. "Jewellery is jewellery," he states,

on itself with a dark mysteriousness. The preciousness of the jewel is to do with scale and the way things are made, the polish and form." Guinness says that Kapoor was very particular about the making of his jewellery, insisting on the very sharp edge to the curled metal surrounds. For Kapoor, this craftsmanship is where the preciousness lies.

Equally precious, Pop artist Peter Blake has created a series of cuff links containing small original signed watercolours (pictured above left, £4,113), each with its own story. They were inspired by a cheap pair of



Above, in front: Pol Bury bracelet from 2001 in 18ct white and yellow gold, £25,950, from Louisa Guinness Gallery. Above, behind: resin and crystal cuff by Zaha Hadid for Atelier Swarovski, £225.