

Wearing Your Art on Your Sleeve



Modern and contemporary jewelry at Design Miami/ blurs the lines between ornament, design, and high art **By Nazanin Lankarani**

THE VALUE OF JEWELRY has traditionally been measured by the weight of its precious metals or the quality of its stones. But a number of dealers specializing in contemporary and artist-designed jewelry, along with the organizers of Design Miami/, the biannual fair dedicated to 20th- and 21st-century furniture and decorative objects, are attempting to change that perception in the eyes of fairgoers by presenting pieces that elevate jewelry to the level of art.

Celebrating its ninth year, Design Miami/, held alongside Art Basel each December and June, has become a premier destination for collectors of top-quality historic and contemporary design. This season the number of galleries presenting jewelry as wearable art has increased to seven, all showcasing pieces that highlight the interplay between jewelry, sculpture, ornament, and art.

"Design Miami/ has been carefully building its jewelry program since 2008," says Alexandra Cunningham, director of exhibitions for the fair. "This December's fair features the most versatile selection of galleries presenting different jewelry narratives— studio jewelry from modern and contemporary metalsmiths, jewelry made by 20th- and 21st-century visual artists, and critical or conceptual jewelry by designers."

Two newcomers, Louisa Guinness Gallery and Elisabetta Cipriani, both London-based galleries, have joined an

international roster of fair veterans: Didier Ltd., of London; Ornamentum and Mark McDonald, both from Hudson, New York; Antonella Villanova, of Florence; and Caroline Van Hoek, of Brussels.

Like traditional fine art, artist jewelry derives its value from the creativity of its maker and the recognizable touch of the artist but with an added advantage— it's wearable.

Emphasizing creativity over material, Louisa Guinness mounted a show titled "The Artist as Jeweler: Interpreting Stone" to mark the inauguration of her new dedicated space in London's Mayfair last October. Pieces from the exhibition, among others, will be on view in Miami.

For the London show, Guinness commissioned a group of artists including Anish Kapoor, Sophia Vari, Michael Craig Martin, and Ron Arad to use non-precious materials like alabaster, glass, marble, or pebbles to create jewelry. "A piece of jewelry signed by an artist is just an extension of his work," says Guinness. "We wanted to play with the idea that in jewelry, like art, the value of the material is irrelevant."

For Guinness, coming to Miami is partly about introducing a new audience to this concept. "This is a relatively new market, yet we find that people are generally enthused about our pieces and thrilled to learn that Anish Kapoor also makes jewelry." Among her pieces, Guinness is showing a large bowl-shaped pendant by Kapoor in 22-karat yellow gold with a square rose-gold interior. The piece is typical of

Kapoor's sculptural plays on void. Produced in a limited edition of five, it's priced at £35,000 (\$56,245).

Elisabetta Cipriani, the other first-timer at the fair, also specializes in jewelry by modern and contemporary artists. In a booth custom designed by Venezuelan artist Carlos Cruz-Diez, Cipriani is presenting a selection of colorful, kinetic pieces alongside vintage silver brooches borrowed from the artist's own family collection.

Cruz-Diez, an artist often associated with the kinetic art movement, has created seven new pieces for the show, including pendants, bracelets, and rings, all of which, like his artwork, explore the nature of color and light, as well as the effect of the wearer's motion on the perception of the piece. "Carlos's jewelry creates a rhythmic pattern in which the colors change as you move," says Cipriani.

"The vintage pieces are not for sale, but I thought it would be touching to show jewelry the artist has made for people he loves," she adds.

Commercial galleries, however, are not solely responsible for educating the public about studio-designed, innovative jewelry. "The quantity and quality of museum exhibitions devoted to artists' jewelry in the past year alone is quite significant," says Cunningham.

Among them is the traveling exhibition "Picasso to Koons: The Artist as Jeweler," curated by Diane Venet, one of the foremost collectors of artist-designed jewelry. It was this show that persuaded Cipriani to come to Design Miami, after she viewed it last spring at Miami's Bass Museum of Art. The show opens on December 2 at the Hangaram Design Museum in Seoul, South Korea.

"I was very impressed by the quality of the visitors at the show who seemed intrigued by the artist jewelry," Cipriani notes. "I knew immediately I had to be in Miami."

A historically groundbreaking museum show of artist jewelry will be the subject of the fair presentation by Didier Ltd., known for its collection of jewelry by postwar artists.

In 1973 the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston mounted "Jewelry as Sculpture as Jewelry," for which GianCarlo Montebello and Joan Sonnabend were the principal lenders. Montebello was then a producer of artist jewelry, and Sonnabend had opened a gallery at the Plaza hotel in New York, exhibiting pieces by the likes of Alexander Calder and Pablo Picasso for the first time.

"Until that show, no one took art jewelry seriously as an interesting, investable, or collectible area," says Didier Haspeslagh, co-owner of Didier Ltd.

Didier Ltd. is presenting pieces from the 1973 show acquired from the family of philanthropist and art collector Vera List, who had herself purchased pieces from Sonnabend.

One spectacular design is an 18-karat gold, agate, and ebony necklace by Italian artist Lucio Del Pezzo. Others include a Calder brooch in sterling silver and various pieces by Roy Lichtenstein, Man Ray, and Pol Bury.

"Anybody can go out and buy traditional jewelry, but if you wear a piece by Calder, you become part of an exclusive club that wears art on their body," says Haspeslagh. "Wearing artist jewelry is an understated yet effective way of conveying your personal taste in art." □

From top: Didier Ltd. offers Lucio Del Pezzo's playful gold, ivory, agate, chryso prase, and lapis Abacus necklace from 1969; Louisa Guinness brings both Frank Stella's dynamic gold ring from 2010 and Sophia Variis Salmon's pendant, 2013, in black Belgian and white Carrara marble with lapis lazuli on a black silver chain; Elisabetta Cipriani presents Carlos Cruz Diez's 2013 gold, black rhodium, and acrylic Chromo interference cuff. Opposite: Louisa Guinness will also show the 24 karat gold and lapis lazuli La Jolie pendant, designed in 1961 by Man Ray in an edition of 12.



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