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# Artists with an eye on jewellery

## CHARITY AUCTION

by Colin Gleadell

**F**our of the world's top living artists who have experimented with making jewellery have donated examples that will be sold for charity at Sotheby's tomorrow. Artists give words to charity all the time, but this is the first occasion on which these artists have taken part in a jewellery sale.

Among the Cartier and Bulgari diamond necklaces, brooches and earrings on show today are a silver charm bracelet by Damien Hirst (£12,000 to £17,000); a 22-carat gold-and-enamel ring by Anish Kapoor, with a void where a stone would normally be placed (£15,000 to £20,000); a gilded cuff bangle shaped like intertwined fingers by Louise Bourgeois (\$25,000 to \$30,000); and a ruby-and-diamond pendant by Subhojit Gupta, the star of the new *Indian Highway* exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery (£20,000 to £25,000).

For Joanna Hardy, Sotheby's jewellery expert, the auction "marks an extremely exciting development in the recognition of unique jewellery as art".

As such, it is building on the little-charted tradition of jewellery-making by earlier 20th-century artists who worked primarily as painters or sculptors. Picasso and Braque both made jewellery late in their careers, as did the Surrealists Salvador Dali, Man Ray and Meret Oppenheim. During the Sixties and Seventies, the Italian goldsmith GianCarlo Montebello worked with a number of contemporary artists, such as Lucio Fontana and Niki de St Phalle.

The most prominent 20th-century artist in work in this vein was the American sculptor Alexander Calder, whose best handmade jewellery from the Forties has sold at auction for as much as \$350,000 (£230,000). At the Art Basel Miami Beach fair this month, the Pace Wildenstein gallery from New York mounted a special display of Calder jewellery, where prices ranged from \$25,000 to \$450,000. An exhibition of his jewellery is currently at the Metropolitan Museum in New York and will travel to the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin next year.

Examples by Calder and many of

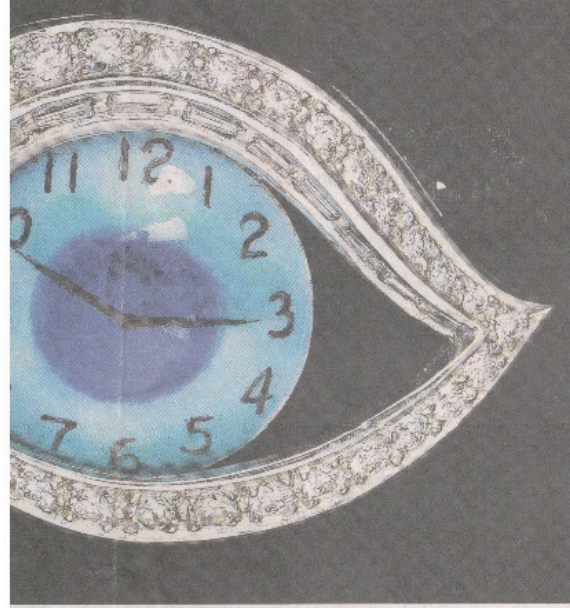


“One dealer calls the works ‘portable sculptures’”

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these 20th-century artists are included in an exhibition mounted by the specialist dealer Louise Guinness at the Ben Brown Gallery in Cork Street, which closes on Friday. Prices here range from £1,050 for a pair of silver skull-and-cross-bone cufflinks by Tim Noble and Sue Webster to nearer \$125,000 for a Calder necklace. Dali's *Eye of Time* brooch is £20,000.

Guinness is the only dealer in Britain specialising in jewellery designed by artists as opposed to professional jewellery designers. A collector at first, she opened for business in 2003 after



commissioning artists Anish Kapoor, Antony Gormley and Sam Taylor-Wood to make works that she describes as "portable sculptures" for sale. In the past two years, she has commissioned new works such as a necklace in the shape of a lightbulb by Michael Craig Martin, a strawberry-shaped, diamond-encrusted pendant by Marc Quinn, and a pair of spoon-shaped cufflinks with original collages by Peter Blake.

At the Design Fair in London in October, she was one of the most successful exhibitors, selling works by the majority of her artists. "Most of the

buyers were in London for the Frieze Art Fair," she says, deferring the art rather than craft appeal of the work she sells.

"Wearable art is the new jewellery," says Guinness, and it is beginning to catch on. In addition to other specialised galleries that have sprung up in Germany, Paris and New York, museums are also taking an interest. In the past two years, the Metropolitan Museum in New York and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston have acquired large collections of art jewellery. "They represent another art form. You don't

**Shining examples** (clockwise from above): Dali's *Eye of Time* brooch, Jeff Koons's *Blue Diamond*, Anish Kapoor's coloured rings, and a silver charm bracelet by Damien Hirst



find them in the jewellery store," says Jane Aldin, of the Metropolitan.

But tomorrow, Damien Hirst *et al* will be in the unfamiliar environs of a jewellery sale. Considering the maestro swirling around the contemporary art market at the moment, this could just prove to be a safe haven.

In Russia, where people are anticipating a devaluation of the rouble, they are putting their cash into gold, which has reached record price levels. The Sotheby's sale is, therefore, a test both for contemporary art and for the jewellery market as a whole.