

ART TO WEAR

**Jewellery by Post-War
Painters and Sculptors**

Martine Newby Haspeslagh

DIDIER LTD

66b Kensington Church Street, London W8 4BY

www.didierltd.com

info@didierltd.com

INTRODUCTION

This is our second catalogue devoted to jewellery by internationally renowned painters and sculptors, and contains 98 jewels by 56 artists and one architect, Ettore Sottsass (89-90). Again these are historical jewels, acquired from the secondary art market and created for the most part between 1940 and 1990, and while a few may have been made more recently, they represent old rather than new modern editions. This time we have tried, where possible, to reproduce these jewels at life size to give a better indication of the large size of some and the intricate details of others. There is still much to learn about the artist's jewel and the creative urges within so many artists, and especially sculptors, to reproduce in miniature the essence of their art, but we hope that this catalogue will be both informative and convey our enthusiasm for this fascinating and until recently neglected art form.

Since our last catalogue one major publication on artists' jewellery has been published. Written by Diane Venet to accompany her incredible exhibition, *From Picasso to Jeff Koons, The Artist as Jeweler*, which was held at the Museum of Art and Design in New York in 2011, this book and the exhibition truly showed the range, breadth and creativity of the artists who have produced jewellery, while also putting these jewels in the context of the rest of their and other artists' work. We are very proud to have been able to lend pieces to the exhibition in New York and for its future travels to Greece, Spain and the Far East over the next couple of years.

Exhibitions have always been an important avenue for showcasing contemporary artists' jewels. The first international exhibition that displayed artists' jewels alongside those of professional jewellers was the *International Exhibition of Modern Jewellery* held in the Goldsmiths' Hall, London, in the autumn of 1961. Some artists specifically designed jewels for the exhibition including Man Ray, whose *La Jolie* gold pendant was later produced in an edition of twelve in 1970 (85). Other artists submitted photographs of pieces for consideration and among these is a metal prototype for the gold acrobat bangle (7) by Michael Ayrton that was cast by the London artistic jeweller John Donald. This is a rare example of a British artist making jewellery, while the gold bangle itself was subsequently acquired by Elisabeth Taylor. A second piece formerly in her collection is a well-known gold and ruby brooch (22) designed by Franco Cannilla and made by the Fumanti brothers in Rome in the late 1960s that appears on the front covers

of two Fumanti exhibition catalogues in 1971, and in a publicity photograph modelled by Brit Eckland.

In 1962 the exhibition *L'antagonismes II. L'objet* in the Musée des Arts Decoratifs, Paris, brought together for the first time a wide range of objects designed by artists including furniture, silverware, ceramics, glass, clothing, and jewellery. We are fortunate to have a unique jewel from this exhibition: a gold and ruby brooch called *Voeux 60* (70), by Georges Mathieu, one of France's leading artists of the time. Other artists exhibiting included Lucio Fontana, Philippe Hiquily, Costa Coulentianos, and Pablo Picasso, other jewels by whom may be found in this catalogue.

Ten years later in 1972, and then in 1974 and 1976, about twenty artists were commissioned to design jewellery for a special exhibition within the biannual international show *AUREA* held in Palazzo Strozzi, Florence. Although most were Italian sculptors like Giorgio Facchini, Alberto Giorgi, Umberto Mastroianni, and Luciano Minguzzi, some international artists were approached including Wifredo Lam. Lam produced ten unique jewels for the exhibition with Annamaria di Genaro, including a necklace with an African mask (57), the image taken from his 1949 painting *Figura*, and a pendant with the horse of the Apocalypse (58) from a painting exhibited in Havana University in 1955.

Some museums were further involved by commissioning artists directly to create jewels for their own museum shops. The Société des Amis du Musée National d'Art Moderne de Paris was particularly active in this field and we have included three examples edited by them in this catalogue. The first designed by Claude Lalanne is a galvanized bronze necklace with a bow, *Petit*



Cesar, *Le sein*, unique stainless steel pendant (23), 1967

INTRODUCTION

collier X (55), which was produced in an edition of eight in 1972. The second *Tête* (91) was created by Niki de St Phalle in 1982. This is an 18ct gold and enamel pendant/brooch produced in an edition of twenty by her close friend the Milanese jeweller GianCarlo Montebello. The final example is an unmatched pair of gold rope earrings, *Couple d'outils* (53), by Christian Jaccard, also produced in an edition of eight in 1989.

Sculptors for the most part make their own jewels and do not require the help of jewellers to transform their ideas into reality. These sculptors' jewels are usually unique and are mostly made in the same materials as their sculptures and often have no intrinsic value. Harry Bertoina used Beryllium bronze for three pendants (9-10 and 12), while Calder favoured beaten brass for his hair comb (18), and Ibram Lassaw used dripped molten bronze (59). Claire Falkenstein, unable to afford more precious materials in her early career, used nickel wire and plastic beads (37-38), and George Rickey used steel wire that was later gilded for his kinetic necklace, *Two*



Trying on del Pezzo's abacus necklace (78) at PAD

Lines with Spirals (88). There are also two pendants made from scraps of wood and covered in black paint by Louise Nevelson (74-75). Silver jewels in the catalogue include an initial brooch by Calder (19), a collar made from cast cabbage leaves by Judith Brown (15), and a pair of sublime earrings by George Rickey (87).

The sculptors mentioned above are all American, however, a different picture emerges with sculptors from Italy, many of whom made their own gold jewellery having been taught goldworking while at university. There are two gold brooches by Alberto Giorgi, *Cubico palette* (44) and *Movimento 055 Studio Uranio* (45), and a pendant, *Testa di Edipo* (66) by Giacomo Manzù. Furthermore, Bruno Martinazzi preferred to work in 20ct yellow gold (67-69). It should also not be forgotten that Arnaldo and Gio Pomodoro both started their careers as jewellers before becoming sculptors. In the catalogue there is a unique gold cuttlefish bone cast brooch by Arnaldo Pomodoro (81) and a gold ring, *Apollo* (83) mounted with a white agate engraved with a lyre by Gio. Fontana's silver-gilt pendant decorated with drilled holes (43) may have been produced in the Pomodoro workshop like his brooches and pendants formed from sheets of gold that he pierced with a rusty nail. There are also two silver pendants (82 and 84) produced in unfinished editions of 200 by the Pomodoro's brother-in-law GianCarlo Montebello, who also executed jewels by Fontana.

For us there is a hierarchy among jewels produced in editions and all the pieces from editions in this catalogue were conceived during the artist's lifetime and are not posthumous productions either sanctioned or indeed issued by the artist's estate. The most important pieces are the prototypes, especially those fashioned by the artist themselves. There are four such pieces in this catalogue: Cesar's stainless steel pendant, *Le sein* (23), which was later produced in gold with a diamond nipple; George Rickey's gilded steel wire necklace, *Two Lines with Spirals* (88), which was produced in a gold edition by GianCarlo Montebello, and two *Falling Man* pendants (95/96) by Ernest Tino Trova, which come from his estate and have never been seen before.

Next in the hierarchy are the artist's proofs followed by the number 1s from the edition, which can often be the same. One such piece is a gold and glass pendant/brooch *Asclépios* (98) designed by Sophia Vari for Baccarat. Helene Drude, director of Le Point Cardinal Gallery in Paris, was given by François Hugo the artist's proof of Picasso's brooch, *Ovale* (80) in a special

INTRODUCTION

circular box as a thank you for staging the exhibition, *Atelier François Hugo. Sculptures d'or et d'argent*, in her gallery in 1967. Art dealer's wives were often the lucky recipients of jewels, for example Calder gave Hester Diamond an initial silver brooch (19) and Barbara Staempfli was presented with Rickey's prototype *Two Lines with Spirals* (88) after the gold edition had been completed, Rickey's wife Edith having received one in gold.

There are six number 1s in the catalogue, three are by CoBrA artists and originate from the same collection: Karel Appel's, *Clown with Diamond Eyes* (2), and two pendants by Corneille, a flying bird (28) and a footed fish (29). The other three pieces comprise a gold pendant and chain by Georges Braque (14), a gold necklace by Alicia Penalba (77), and a mixed metal brooch by Carol Summers (92). Furthermore, some editions were never finished, so the pieces can be much rarer than initially thought. A case in point is Joe Tilson's *Ziggurat* (94). Originally conceived in a limited edition with twenty-five examples, only two were ever produced because of the high production costs. The number one from the edition went to Joe Tilson, but he only received the jewels and not the presentational box, leaving our example the only complete ensemble.

The first collaboration between artists and a jeweller was at the instigation of the Rome jeweller Mario Masenza. He worked with over thirty artists including Gino Severini and Giorgio de Chirico, and six pieces are included in this catalogue: a zodiac gold cuff (20) and a gold ring (21) by Franco Cannilla, a gem encrusted cuff (48), collar (50), and compact (49) by Lorenzo Guerrini, and finally a pair of gold and diamond earrings by Giuseppe Uncini (97). Masenza also employed the goldsmiths Diderico Gherardi and the Fumanti brothers, Danilo and Massimo, who continued to create jewels with artists after they left Masenza, including the aforementioned Franco Cannilla (22).

Perhaps the most influential Italian jeweller, however, is GianCarlo Montebello who, together with his wife Teresa Pomodoro, set up GEM Montebello in 1967 to produce jewellery by artists. By the time they stopped in 1978 following a robbery they had worked with nearly sixty international artists. Here we have nine examples: Roberto Matta's tiny pendant, *Don Giovanni* (71), Lowell Nesbitt's *Lily* necklace in a painted box (73), Lucio del Pezzo's abacus necklace (78), Arnaldo Pomodoro's kinetic cylinders pendant in silver (82), Gio Pomodoro's rhodium-plated pendant necklace (84),

Man Ray's *La Jolie* gold necklace (85), a pendant and earrings by Hans Richter (86), Joe Tilson's *Ziggurat* (94), and Niki de St Phalle's gold and enamel pendant/brooch, *Tête* (91), which he made after GEM closed.

In France Héger de Lowenfeld worked exclusively with Georges Braque, a collaboration that was so close that Braque called him 'the extension of my hands'. There are two examples in the catalogue, *Procris* pendant on a *Minos* chain (14), and a gold and diamond necklace, *Alcyone* (13) that was finished by his former assistant Armand Israel. In the south of the country the goldsmith François Hugo worked with a number of artists including André Derain (*La crêtoise*, 34) and Pablo Picasso (*Ovale*, 80). Pierre Hugo, continued in his father's footsteps, completing unfinished editions, as well as making jewels by Arman (6) and Corneille (*Fenêtre sur l'été*, 27) for Stéphane Klein. In Paris F.&F. Gennari worked with their own stable of artists including Jean Filhos (*Défense magique* erotic ring, 41 and *Regard inavouable* brooch, 42), Alicia Penalba (*Myriade* necklace in white and yellow gold, 76), and galleries such as Galerie Maeght, producing Pol Bury's, *Quattorze demi-sphères sur un carré* (17). In Nice, Louis Billant of Argeco in addition to César and Louis Cane produced jewels with Arman including the pendants *Roues de montre* (3), *Le petit harpe* (4), and *Galaxie* (5), and with Jean-Claude Farhi (*Plastic Passion*, 39).

Finally, this catalogue contains half a dozen important jewels from a single Florida collection that were purchased in the late 1960s and early 1970s from the pioneering dealer in artists' jewels, Joan Sonnabend. Her gallery, Sculpture to Wear was located in the lobby of the Plaza Hotel, New York, and she later opened her Obelisk Gallery in Boston. Most of the jewels from this collection were made by GianCarlo Montebello, an exception being the pendant by the Belgian sculptor Pol Bury, *Fils d'or sur un disque* (16), which had been executed by Jacques Bugin for Galerie Maeght in Paris. We are fortunate to know how much she originally paid for some of them, with the intricate work reflected in the high prices of \$4,800, \$5,000 and \$5,200 for the *Lily* necklace by Lowell Nesbitt (73), *Ziggurat* by Joe Tilson (94), and Lucio del Pezzo's abacus necklace (78) respectively, all of which were designed with impressive presentational boxes. *La Jolie* by Man Ray (85) cost a more modest \$3,200 in 1970, despite being made in pure gold.

Martine and Didier Haspeslagh

Michael AYRTON

London, UK 1921 - 1975

7. Acrobat gold bracelet, circa 1960

Internal diameter: 5.3 x 4.6 cm; width: 0.8-1.5 cm

Unique 18ct gold cast sculptural hinged bracelet of two male acrobats holding hands and with their feet touching together; fastened by a gold peg on a safety chain inserted between the feet. Designed by Michael Ayrton and executed by the London artistic jeweller John Donald, and bearing his J.A.D. mark.

Provenance: Dame Elizabeth Taylor (Christie's, New York, December 2011)

A photograph of a metal prototype of this bracelet is preserved in the archives of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, London, amongst jewels under consideration for inclusion in the ground-breaking *International Exhibition of Modern Jewellery* organized by Graham Hughes in conjunction with the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1961. This exhibition was an attempt to revitalize the British jewellery industry after the Second World

War and with 901 exhibits, it was the first time that work by international artists could be compared alongside those by commercial jewellers. This bangle, however, was never included in the exhibition. How Elizabeth Taylor came to acquire the gold bangle is not known, but she was in London in 1960/1961 filming *Cleopatra*, while Ayrton, who also moved in acting and literary circles, was an old friend of Nigel Balchin, one of the original script writers of *Cleopatra*, and had by this time married Elisabeth Balchin. The only piece that Ayrton did exhibit was a gilt-bronze *Icarus* pendant lent by Elizabeth Ayrton (no. 29 in the exhibition catalogue).

Ayrton took up sculpture working in wax and bronze in the 1950s under the tutorage of Henry Moore. His first studies were of acrobats that were possibly a response to his own painful arthritis. From the mid-1950s Ayrton became fascinated by Greek mythology and especially with the myth of Daedalus, successfully working again with John Donald to recreate the mythical golden honey-comb.



Harry BERTOIA

San Lorenza, Italy 1915 - 1978 Barto, Pennsylvania, USA

11. Silver kinetic pendant, 1940-1943

Height: 4.5 cm

Unique forged silver kinetic pendant, the two halves held together by a single rivet.

Unsigned

This pendant was made while Bertoia was teaching metalwork and jewellery at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, at the beginning of the Second World War. It was here that he met Charles and Ray Eames, he even designed their wedding rings, and later joined them in California to design furniture. He then worked for Knoll where in 1952 he produced his iconic *Diamond Chair*, royalties from which enabled him to devote the rest of his life to his first love of sculpture.

12. Beryllium bronze necklace, 1962

Height: 10 cm; width: 22 cm

Unique necklace made from short rods of Beryllium bronze fused together to create an arc like a piece of tribal jewellery.

Unsigned

Provenance: Made by Bertoia for his daughter Lesta's 18th birthday.

For a pendant also formed from fused rods of Beryllium bronze arranged in a spiral cf. *Bodyguard. Une collection privée de bijoux d'artistes*, exhibition catalogue, Passage de Retz, Paris 2010, p. 32.



Georges BRAQUE

Argenteuil, France 1882 - 1963 Paris, France

14. *Procris* pendant on *Minos* chain, 1963

Pendant height: 3.7 cm; width of pendant: 5.2 cm;
length of chain: 78 cm

18ct gold oval pendant decorated with a bird facing left in black enamel, on a long 18ct gold chain. In this pendant Braque was inspired by the myth of Procris who was tempted with jewels by her husband Cephalus while in disguise to test her fidelity. At first she resisted, but later succumbed at which point Cephalus revealed himself and drove her away. No. 1 from an edition of 75.

The pendant marked BIJOUX DE BRAQUE, HÉGER DE LOWENFELD, 12 PN 1/75 2058 ©, and with French 18ct hallmarks; the chain with BIJOUX DE BRAQUE PAR HdeL, 46, R1 © and with French 18ct hallmarks on each alternate link.

The original gouaches for the pendant and the chain are reproduced in Héger de Lowenfeld and Raphael de Cuttoli, *Les metamorphoses de Braque*, Paris 1989, pp. 52 and 50 respectively, while annotations on the originals show that they were intended to be worn together.



Alexander CALDER

Lawton, Pennsylvania, USA 1898 - 1976 New York, USA

18. Brass hair comb, *circa* 1940

Height: 11.5 cm; width: 15.5 cm

Unique hand-hammered brass hair comb formed from five separate lengths of brass wire, which were flattened and then shaped to form three simple narrow loops, one wider loop, and a horizontal bar with typical spiral ends. All the pieces were then riveted together to form a rigid comb with eight prongs. Signed with SC monogram.

Calder.Calder Foundation no. A16810

Exhibited: Willard Gallery, New York, 1940

From an illustrated inventory notebook of 1940 it is known that the original selling price for this hair comb was \$40 (cf. Alexander S.C. Rower and Holton Rower, *Calder Jewelry*, New Haven 2007, p. 75).

