Art & Exhibitions

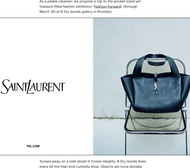
Art Meets Fashion at B Dry Goods, the Little Brooklyn Gallery That Could

Andy Warhol's Keith Haring T-shirt? Check. Vintage Hermès handbags? Check. David Hockney's red Bowler? Check.

Andy Warhol's Keith Haring T-shirt (1984) Courtesy of B Dry Goods

by Lee Carter • January 31, 2024

The trade couture shows have just ended in Paris, following another round of men's collection in Europe. While you'd be excused for feeling a little fashioned out, don't let pause for too long before heading to the little shop that could in Brooklyn. As a public charioteer, we propose a trip to the pocket-sized yet treasure-filled fashion exhibition "Fashion Forward" (through March 30) at B Dry Goods gallery in Brooklyn.



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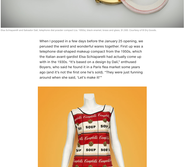
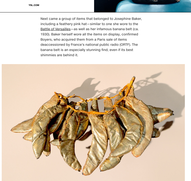
Tucked away on a side street in Crown Heights, B Dry Goods feels every bit the high-end curiosity shop. Objects are hung densely and stacked high, and all handpicked by gallerist Gabe Bryers, who has been selling vintage fashion for years. He's knowledgeable about the 175 items on display, ranging from rare vintage memento to contemporary finds.



Hermès Bracelet and Earrings (late 1970s–early 1980s) Courtesy of B Dry Goods

When I popped in a few days before the January 25 opening, we perused the weird and wonderful wares together (Trick up was a Yetephone that shipped makeup compact from the 1950s, which the Italian avant-gardist Ettore Sottsapsass had actually come up with in 1969). Bryers, who's been selling since 2010, and Sottsass, who said he found it a Paris flea market some years ago (and it's not the first one he sold), "They were just hunting around when she said, 'Let's make it!'"



Ettore Sottsass, Joseph Ettore, 1969, 3.5 x 7.5 x 2.5 cm, metal and plastic, Courtesy B Dry Goods

Several paper dresses caught our eye next, one bearing an outsized face of Bob Dylan and another, produced by Campbell's Soup, with a photorealistic rendition of Andy Warhol's face. Also called it the Warhol "Souper Dress," and it was originally folded inside of a magazine.

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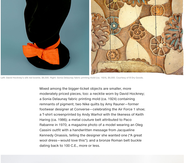
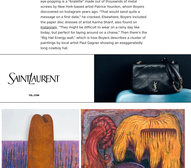
Next came a group of items that belonged to Josephine Baker, including a feathery pink fan—similar to one she wore in the Ballet of Versailles—as well as her infamous banana belt (ca. 1930). Bryers said he found the fan in a Parisian apartment. Bryers, who acquired them from a Paris sale of items deaccessioned by France's national public radio (ORTF), The banana belt is an especially stunning find, even if its over shimmies are behind it.



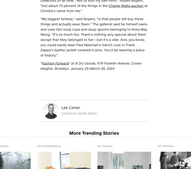
Josephine Baker's Belt (ca. 1930) Courtesy B Dry Gallery, Photo: Gabe Bryers

There is another Josephine Baker item in another display. When Karl Lagerfeld gifted a case he'd designed to Anita Leon Tallon, the Parisian dealer who had been Lagerfeld's longtime partner, a portfolio of original fashion illustrations by the French cartoonist artist Paul Colin. Some of those images, which were published unknown in 1930, depict a young, front-faced Baker—whose journey from a small Missouri town to the center of the Paris beau monde is well-documented in Jonathan Eig's book. Bryers said he pretty rare to find a complete set of these pictures, I said Bryers, "made extra special because of the Lagerfeld provenance."



Pink Ostrich-Leather Bowler Hat (Hermès, 1960s) Courtesy B Dry Gallery, Photo: Gabe Bryers

The condescension of the show—literally in the center, dripping in ivy—is our treats—is a large trunk owned by Marie Antoinette, battered by many journeys in horse-drawn carriages on unpaved roads. "This was used to transport Marie Antoinette's lemon grass and tea, and it's actually from Versailles," said Bryers. The items were not "this things" meant to be kept, like furniture, so they were typically destroyed after they became unusable—which explains why they are so rare today. Bryers said he sometimes had a trunk maker on site at Versailles, as one does. I'm sure she had hundreds of trunks at one time, but Versailles only has three of them left," explained Bryers, who said he spent years negotiating with the museum to acquire the trunk and finally hit on closing of what it was. After all, the trunk reads "Grande cassa de Reine" across the top, or "Wardrobe of the Queen."



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The asking price for the trunk is $250,000. "That's the price we paid," said Bryers, adding that he hopes to sell it to one of the very were sales happening where Supreme Court Ruthie Fowler were going for $200,000, and Marie is very not right now as the Supreme Court. Fowler, who's been a fixture in the fashion, goes to a collection of 170 drawings by the couturier Hubert de Givenchy, costume designs for the Bolshoi Ballet's production of Giselle in 1981. "They were gifted to his coordinator in New York, but we can only show a handful of them as they are so delicate." Given them fragility, this archive is selling for $250,000.

Lady Gaga's Sculpture of a Bracelet (Jean Paul Gaultier, 2010) Courtesy B Dry Gallery, Photo: Gabe Bryers

Wood among the bigger-ticket objects are smaller, more revolutionary period pieces, too: a marble worn by David Hockney; a Sonia Delaunay fabric printing mold (ca. 1924) containing remnants of pigment; two fabric quilts by Amy Reuner (former footwear designer at Converse—celebrating the Air Force 1 shoe, one of the company's most iconic sneakers); and a Keith Haring quilt (Haring (ca. 1988), a metal crucifix belt (attributed to Paco Rabanne in 1970, a magazine photo of a model wearing an Oleg Cassini dress, and a Hermès bracelet (late 1970s–early 1980s). Kennedy Onassis, telling the designer she wanted one (it's gold wood dress—would love this!), and a bronze Roman bell bucket dating back to 100 C.E., more or less.

Hockey Decorative Marble (1977–2000) Courtesy B Dry Gallery, Photo: Gabe Bryers

Contemporary fashion makes its presence known, too. The most recent item is a bracelet by Lady Gaga's longtime jewelry designer, screwed by New York based artist Patrice Naunton, whom Bryers discovered on Instagram years ago. "That would send quite a ripple through the art world," said Bryers, adding that he included the paper dies dresses of artist Karina Sharf, also found on Instagram. "They might be difficult to wear on a rainy day like today, but perfect for laying around on a chaise." Then there's the "Big Hat Energy wall," which is how Bryers describes a cluster of photographs by artist Paul Gagner showing an exaggeratedly long cooking hat.

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Paul Gagner's Big Hat Energy Wall (2000–2023) Courtesy B Dry Gallery, Photo: Gabe Bryers

Part of Bryers's job, as he sees it, is to save archives from the dustbin of history. He once got a call from a collector—the people allowed to enter forgotten storage lockers for rich payment—who had inherited the contents of a Hollywood Hills mansion. Inside, but a trunk full of musical manuscripts that turned out to be incredibly rare jazz manuscripts by Charlie Parker. If that guy hadn't called Bryers, those manuscripts would have ended up in a tiny, lesser-known museum, which ended up with a "wonderful" collector, then surfaced again after his death. Which is to say, they wound up in the collection of Charlie Watts, drummer of the Rolling Stones and one of the great jazz aficionados. Bryers said he sold the trunk for "mid-six figures, "not about 75 percent of the things in the Charlie Watts auction of Christie's came from us."

"My biggest fantasy," said Bryers, "is that people will buy these things and actually wear them." The gallerist said he himself owns many items, including a Hermès bracelet he purchased for his wife. Bring "It's so much fun. There's nothing very special about them except that they belonged to her—but it's a vibe. And, you know, Jackie Kennedy wore that dress, and Lady Gaga wore that. Zeppo's leather jacket crumbed in pins. You'd be wearing a piece of history."

"Fashion Forward" at B Dry Goods, 419 Franklin Avenue, Crown Heights, Brooklyn. January 25–March 30, 2024

Lee Carter
Associate Guide Editor

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A GoFundMe campaign has been launched to replace the monument.

A Jackie Robinson statue in Wichita was cut off at the ankles, dismantled and burned, police said. Photo courtesy of Wichita Police Department.

by Adam Schrader • January 31, 2024

A statue of Jackie Robinson, the first Black player in Major League Baseball and a civil rights icon, was torn down and burned in Wichita, Kansas.

The statue was cut off just above the ankles, thrown in the back of a truck and stolen from McAdams Park in the night of January 24, officials with the Wichita Police Department said during a broadcasted news conference last week. Authorities have been hunting the suspect or suspects since then.

On January 30, firefighters were dispatched to a trash fire at the crosstown Garvey Park around 8:39 a.m. and extinguished a "small residential-style trash can" that was on fire, the Wichita Fire Department said on social media. The firefighters discovered some of the dismantled remains of the statue, but not all the pieces have been recovered.

Afterward, the police department provided an update that investigators from its property crimes bureau found the truck believed to have been used in the theft. The owner of the truck was not identified.

"Detectives are continuing to follow promising leads that we are confident will result in an arrest," police said in the statement. "We are still asking the public for help in bringing the people responsible for this horrible act into custody."

The Jackie Robinson statue in McAdams Park in Wichita. Photo courtesy of Wichita Police Department.

The statue was installed at McAdams Park in April 2021 by League 42, the local nonprofit Little League organization for children. The league takes its name from the number Robinson wore on his jersey when he signed with the Brooklyn Dodgers.

As the team's first Black player in 1947, Robinson emerged as a stalwart for racial equality. After his retirement, Robinson continued to fight for civil rights, joining marches and demonstrations, and discussing social justice issues in his syndicated column, "Jackie Robinson Says." He was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962.

League 42 has since launched a GoFundMe campaign to replace the statue and has raised more than $130,000. "It was found in disrepair and cannot be repaired," Bob Lutz, the executive director of League 42, said in a message about the sculpture. The league has maintained the mold used to cast the original statue.

He added the Little League organization remains devoted to providing low-cost baseball and education opportunities for 600 children in its programs. "They are as heartbroken over this theft as any of us," Lutz said. "We are determined to replace the statue."

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