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‘It Was Completely Overwhelming’: Here’s How Four Artists Put Their Spin on a Dior Classic

Since 2016, Dior has invited a group of artists to transform its iconic Lady Dior bag into a canvas. Here, four of this year’s chosen creatives unpack what went into their take on the timeless accessory.



Photography by Joe Perri. All images courtesy of Dior.

Art and fashion have been bedfellows for centuries. One look at Paul Cézanne's early painting *The Conversation*, modeled off a fashion plate from the popular pamphlet *La Mode Illustrée*, reveals muted shades and cinched silhouettes that have been sartorial guideposts of Western style for generations—reinvented countless times, and filtering into designer collections in renewed forms.

Few designers can claim as prominent a place in this long history as Christian Dior. The designer's debut collection—which pioneered what was dubbed “The New Look”—marked an insistent departure from the uniform utility of the 1940s, ringing in an era of timeless femininity. With nipped waists and bustling skirts flowing to mid-calf, Dior established the postwar era as synonymous with meticulous glamour, crystallizing the house's association with unparalleled savoir faire and well-heeled women everywhere.

Only a few decades later, Lady Diana cemented the house's reputation in the new millennium, sporting her namesake Lady Dior bag to a Cézanne retrospective at the Grand Palais in 1995. Shortly after, she was spotted with the handbag swinging from her wrist as she stepped off a plane in Buenos Aires. A reflection of Di in its simplicity and elegance, the bag quickly became part of her signature look—she is even said to have requested a navy version, to match her eyes.

This aura of effortless adaptability has adorned the Lady Dior bag ever since. Beginning in 2016, the house began to pay homage to this legacy by welcoming an annual coterie of renowned artists—from Jeffrey Gibson and Mickalene Thomas to Sara Cwynar and Ghada Amer—to put their own spin on the iconic piece. Working hand in hand with Dior's crafts people, myriad creatives have left their mark on the bag as part of the maison's Lady Dior Art Project, now in its ninth edition.

Below, 4 of this year's 11 artists reveal the stories and symbols that inform their interpretations of the time-honored piece.



Photography by Joe Perri.

Danielle McKinney

"People use clothes and fashion to tell a story of who they are. When you put a blue garment on Brown skin, it becomes like heaven. I could tell in my first meeting with the Dior artisans that they had captured all the intimate elements that I didn't even see in my own paintings. I will never forget looking through all the wonderful samples of materials and colors that would eventually make up this bag."



Dior Lady Art limited edition in collaboration with Danielle McKinney, price upon request. Available at select Dior boutiques nationwide.

"It was completely overwhelming to see them reproduce a painting I love and treasure into a wholly new medium. I felt their respect for my artistic vision and for the painting—be it in the reproduction of the colors or the details that matter most to me, like the butterfly. This collaboration symbolizes the idea of the butterfly itself: transformation. Dior took something so intimate and transformed it into something that could be experienced by all."



Photography by Jungwoo Park.

Woo Kukwon

"This was a unique opportunity to experience up close what it takes to bring an artist's work to life in a product. Our greatest achievement was to find the materials that would most appropriately and vividly express each motif and pictorial element of the different works. I think I've achieved a satisfactory result by reinterpreting the work as a 'wearable' three-dimensional sculpture, rather than a simple print. I want it to resonate with everyone in a way that's deeply personal and hard to put into words."



Dior Lady Art limited edition in collaboration with Woo Kukwon, price upon request. Available at select Dior boutiques nationwide.

"When viewing my work, one might embrace it without hesitation as something familiar, or sometimes focus on the 'hand-drawn' text that's hard to make out at first. Or sometimes, by chance, one finds that somewhere on the canvas, one element paradoxically represents the whole. But I don't intentionally try to hide it. My objective was to present the work in an unadulterated form, allowing it to speak for itself and to be interpreted in the manner desired by the viewer."



Photography by Joe Perri.

Anna Weyant

"The story of my Dior Lady Art handbag began in Paris over dinner with Delphine Arnault. She sort of casually mentioned the project and wondered aloud if I might participate. I was so excited about the idea that I had already begun my design sketches by the time I received an official invite."



Dior Lady Art limited edition in collaboration with Anna Weyant, price upon request. Available at select Dior boutiques nationwide.

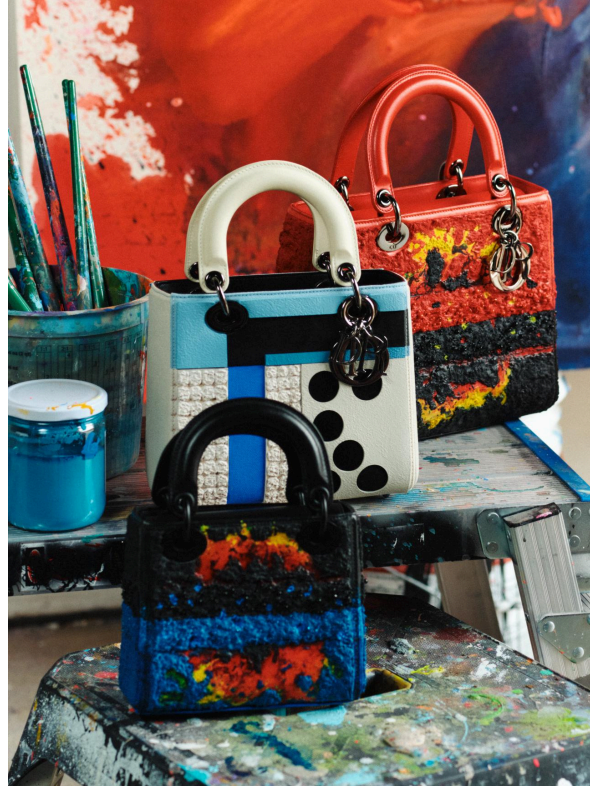
"Working with the team of artisans at Dior was a pleasure. They are so talented and thoughtful and made my job easy. We met many times during the collaboration to discuss design development and review material samples, hardware finishes, etc. I hope my handbag brings joy to those who interact with it. I wish I could live with all of the past Dior Lady Art handbags! They are all so special, but I particularly adore the designs (and work in general) of Ludovic Nkoth and Hilary Pecis."



Photography by Joe Perri.

Vaughn Spann

"I wasn't sure how much authority I'd need to relinquish in order to achieve the result with this collaboration, but I knew I wanted to take a risk in order to translate a few series I've become recognized for. If prints are opportunities for works of art to be more democratic, then I wanted these bags to follow suit."



Dior Lady Art limited edition in collaboration with Vaughn Spann, price upon request. Available at select Dior boutiques nationwide.

"We explored different ways to make sure the materials chosen not only translated my paintings but also spoke to the language of fashion—for example, using various beading processes such as trompe l'oeil to enhance areas that might otherwise fall flat if recognized as painting. We also debuted a traditional-style briefcase handle onto a Lady Dior bag for the first time, with a contemporary twist. I want the person who carries my bag to truly feel like they are taking a piece of me on each journey, and I wanted the bags to feel as close to living with an original painting of mine as possible."