

ELLE

THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN'S

Haley Bennett

IN THREE MONTHS, SHE'S KISSED JUSTIN THEROUX, STOLEN SCENES FROM DENZEL AND CHRIS PRATT, AND PLAYED WARREN BEATTY'S SIREN. BENNETT HAS IT ALL: BEAUTY, TALENT, A SLEW OF A-LIST DIRECTORS ON HER SIDE—AND, SUDDENLY, STARDOM.

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CHARMED, I'M SURE

In her latest project, creative matchmaker Liz Swig links the work of seven iconic artists in a bracelet that blurs the line between fine art and jewelry. **By Molly Langmuir**

Charm bracelets have been around for millennia, literally—they date back to at least 4,000 B.C. Egypt, when both men and women would be buried with them as a way to communicate with the gods. In 1958, though, when my mother received a bracelet for her thirteenth birthday, they were a uniquely female accessory used to mark both memories and rites of passage; by the time I was born, tiny objects dangled from almost every loop of my mom's thick silver chain. It tinkled when it moved and had a certain heft, but beyond the physical weight, it also had a potent psychic density, with each item—tiny ice skates, a ¾-inch Span-

Liz Swig

ish bull—offering a window into the woman she'd been before I came along. That bracelet was less jewelry than talisman.

The same could be said of the latest limited-edition version from art world dynamo Liz Swig, which comes with seven artist-designed charms, each more intricately crafted than the next. "Historically, charms have been a form of documentation for women," says Swig, an art collector with an impeccable eye (her first acquisition, in 1986, was by Cindy Sherman) who's served on the board of New York's Whitney Museum. "[Photographer] Laurie Simmons told me something that I think is spot-on: that charms in the '40s and '50s were almost what

Instagram is today. I wanted to look at the importance of charm bracelets, but also look ahead to what they could be."

First independently, and since 2014 with her company LizWorks, Swig has long been in the business of creative matchmaking. She started by pairing the French porcelain maker Bernardaud with artists such as Jeff Koons (who made plates, cups, and saucers) and Kara Walker (pitchers)—"I wanted to turn the dinner table into a canvas," Swig says. Next, she focused on eyewear, uniting Selima Optique with multimedia artist Paola Pivi in 2015—resulting in shades that look like optical antennae—and artist Vik Muniz, whose colorful pairs Swig exhibited at four art fairs in seven months.

These collaborations advanced a very modern conversation about the blending of design, art, and fashion, but also asked Pop Art-esque questions about commodity and creativity. When Swig began casting about for her next project, though, she focused on an area largely untouched by this recent coalescing of disciplines—jewelry—which is particularly strange when you consider that Alexander Calder, Man Ray, and even Picasso produced brooches, earrings, and necklaces (as did artists in the Bauhaus movement). Swig's limited-edition brace-

let—only 50 were made, at \$58,000 each—situates itself directly in that lineage.

"The project was charmed from the beginning," Swig says, meaning both that it came together easily—each A-lister she approached immediately signed on: Simmons and Sherman, plus Mickalene Thomas, Barbara Kruger, Wangechi Mutu, Rachel Feinstein, and Shirin Neshat—and that at times an invisible hand seemed to be at work. Swig reached Thomas as the artist was watching the TV show *Charmed*; Simmons had photographed her own mother's charm bracelet with a macro lens years earlier, to remember every detail; and a month before Swig contacted Feinstein, the artist had helped her daughter select charms for her seventh birthday. "I thought, God, charms are really cool," Feinstein says. "They're like tattoos, a moment that you identify with through an object."

To produce the piece, Swig teamed up with Ippolita Rostagno of the jewelry line Ippolita. "Exploring the playful nature of charms with seven fabulous female artists was an interesting challenge," Rostagno says. After much back-and-forth, Feinstein designed a tiny painting of a silhouetted figure, embedded with diamonds; Sherman's—two photographs nestled inside a golden egg—nods to her fascination with the chickens she raises in her backyard. In Thomas's charm, black lips covered in sapphires reference the lushness of beautiful women; in Kruger's, a coin reads, cheekily, "Money can buy you Love." Every design reflects the life force of the artist herself, Swig says: "You feel the power of these women in the weight of each charm."

From left: Cindy Sherman, Shirin Neshat, Wangechi Mutu, and Rachel Feinstein

