

COLNAGHI

PRESS RELEASE

THE ART OF ADORNMENT

Colnaghi London— May 12, 2026 – June 10, 2026

Colnaghi London is pleased to present its forthcoming exhibition, *The Art of Adornment*, which brings together works spanning from Antiquity to the 20th Century, presented alongside jewellery and belts by luxury costume jewellery brand **Sonia Petroff**, including a first presentation of its Spring/Summer 2026 collection.

Sonia Petroff was a highly respected accessories designer from the 1960s through to her retirement in 1990. A Bulgarian aristocrat who fled during WWII, she settled in Rome, where she designed for Valentino, Balmain and Nina Ricci, as well as for a discerning private clientele across the globe. Drawing on nature, the Mediterranean, mythological symbolism and art history, her bold and joyful pieces were crafted by Roman artisans and worn by the international jet-set. In 2017, her archive passed to her niece by marriage, Maria Leoni-Sceti, who relaunched the brand in 2018 and who continues to lead the brand's bold and aesthetic vision today.

Founded in 1760, Colnaghi is the world's oldest commercial art gallery and has long been recognised for its expertise in Old Master paintings, drawings and antiquities, presenting museum-quality works to collectors and institutions worldwide.

Highlights from Colnaghi include a finely carved Olmec serpentine mask (c. 900–400 BC); a highly finished profile of an idealised woman by Jacopo Ligozzi (early 17th century); and an evocative, unfinished portrait by Olof Johan Södermark depicting a young woman in Italian costume (c. 1830).

Placed alongside Sonia Petroff's designs, these works trace the evolving language of adornment - as a marker of status, identity and devotion, and as a site of technical and artistic ambition. The exhibition emphasises craftsmanship across disciplines, from the painter and sculptor to the jewellery designer, highlighting shared techniques, materials and forms across three millennia.

On the collaboration, Maria Leoni Sceti of Sonia Petroff comments:

'There is a natural harmony between what we do at Sonia Petroff and what Colnaghi represents. Our work has always been about elevating adornment into something that carries meaning and history - much like the masterpieces Colnaghi has championed for centuries. This collaboration allows us to place 20th century expressions of Italian costume jewellery within a lineage of timeless artistic excellence.

By aligning with Colnaghi, we are inviting a deeper conversation about the role of beauty, heritage, and personal expression in shaping how we experience art and fashion today'.

On the Spring/Summer 2026 collection, she adds:

'The five new capsules within our Spring/Summer 2026 collection celebrate abundance through evocative natural forms, with the Bee, Eterna, Orofina, Zinnia and Lobster Vibe capsules revisiting joyful motifs drawn from our archives. The collection reflects an ongoing dialogue between nature, artistry and memory, where archival richness is reinterpreted with lightness and a renewed sense of vitality'.

Exhibition Information

Title: *The Art of Adornment*

Dates: May 12, 2026 – June 10, 2026

Location: Colnaghi, 26 Bury Street, London SW1Y 6AL, United Kingdom

Opening Hours: Monday to Friday 10am–6pm

Enquiries: press@colnaghi.com

Website: <https://www.colnaghi.com/>



Olof Johan Södermark (Landskrona 1790 – 1848 Stockholm), *Young woman in Italian costume*, Oil on canvas, 60.5 x 48 cm (23 3/4 x 19 in.)



Sonia Petroff, *Leaf Earrings* (green), 24K Gold Overlay, Brass, Green and black resin stones,
Made in Italy, handcrafted by artisans



Jacopo Ligozzi (Verona ca. 1550 – 1627 Florence), *An ideal head of a woman with an elaborate headdress*, Pen and brown ink, over traces of black chalk; laid down, 31.5 x 21.4 cm (12 3/8 x 8 3/8 in.)



Sonia Petroff, *Falena choker* (blue), 24K Gold Overlay, Brass, Enamel, Swarovski Crystals,
Made in Italy, handcrafted by artisans



Olmec face mask, Mexico, 900–400 B.C., Carved and polished green serpentine, H: 10.5 cm



Sonia Petroff, *Bee Belt* (burgundy), 24K Gold Overlay, Brass, Enamel, Genuine Italian Leather, Made in Italy, handcrafted by artisans