

Exhibition

A New Salon-Style Hamptons Gallery Is Made for the COVID-19 Era

Sélavy is perfectly adapted for the times

By Jane Keltner de Valle

July 23, 2020



The gallery, which is easily viewable from its exterior. Photo: Jacob Snaveley

When [COVID-19](#) struck, many a New Yorker fled to the Hamptons. Christina and Emmanuel Di Donna, the founders of blue-chip art gallery [Di Donna](#), did more than that: They hatched a new business venture there. [Sélavy](#), a shoppable salon of art and design that opens on Jobs Lane in Southampton this week, is what cofounder Christina describes as “an extension of our living room—mixing design furniture, which we have been collecting for a while, with paintings, works on paper, and

sculpture.” It’s the opposite of a white-box gallery. “From a personal perspective,” says Emmanuel, “we found a lot of comfort living with our own collection during this time.” Beyond that, he continues, “We recognize that people don’t necessarily feel comfortable going into galleries right now.”

Sélavy is a glass-enclosed box through which everything can be viewed from the outside—a literal window into a well-lived life. (Interested parties can enter the space by-appointment.) The art and design is also fully accessible online. As Emmanuel notes, “We have utilized all of the useful technology we have refined and adapted to during COVID, such as online presentations and virtual viewing rooms, and created a platform where all information, images, details, and videos of the artwork will be easily available to view up close or purchase on our Sélavy website.”



A look inside. Assorted art books and a Wassily Kandinsky print pair nicely with a small Yves Klein blue lamp. The large mirror is by Claude Lalanne. More specifically, the aforementioned works are: Wassily Kandinsky, *Réciproque*, 1935; Yves Klein, *Untitled Blue Sponge Sculpture* (SE 322), c. 1961; and Claude Lalanne, *Miroir Feuilles Hosta*, 2018. Photo: Jacob Snavelly

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For the opening curation, the Di Donnas partnered with friends and former colleagues Fairfax Dorn and James Zemaitis to source particular pieces of design, from Surrealist to contemporary. “Beyond the rigor we apply to the selection of each object, we believe that art collecting should mix cultures and time periods,” says Emmanuel. “We want to show historical paintings surrounded by unique pieces of furniture, all celebrated for their beauty and intrinsic value. Having a Jean Arp bronze next to a Rogan Gregory table invites all sorts of dialogues. The curviness and sensuality of a Loie Hollowell painting next to the austerity of a Jean-Michel Frank alabaster lamp invites another discussion.” Adds Christina: “The works selected for each vignette are based entirely on our own aesthetic and how we personally would want to interact with them.”

And consider it an ever-evolving arrangement. They plan to curate new exhibitions every six weeks, working with different collaborators from the world of design each time. “Sélavy is a hybrid: part living room, part art fair booth, part e-commerce,” says Christina. “Homes evolve over time. It takes years of trying things, changing pieces, and rotating interiors to find whatever harmony works for you. This will be the same at Sélavy.”



The large red work is by Loie Hollowell and the small table is by John Van Koert. Loie Hollowell, *Stacked Lingam in red, yellow, purple and green*, 2016; Jean (Hans) Arp, *Agenouillée*, 1961 (1965); and John Van Koert, *Mid Century Modern Table*, 1956. Photo: Jacob Snively



A final look around the space, where a modern wooden chess set plays off nearby wood and ochre tones. Lysberg and Hansen, *Pair of Lounge Chairs*, c. 1940s; Charles and Ray Eames, *A Half-Height FSW-6*, 1952; Max Ernst, *Schachfiguren (Chess Set)*, 1944 (1960s); and Nuvolo (Giorgio Ascani), *Untitled*, 1959. Photo: Jacob Snavely

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