



news

FIRST PERSON:

AJF MEMBERSHIP EXPANDS OWN VIEWS ON ART JEWELRY

The overriding mission of the Art Jewelry Forum is to promote education, appreciation and support for contemporary art jewelry. While the focus for this is outward, those who support this mission through their membership should also be beneficiaries in terms of expanding their knowledge and views of art jewelry. Recently, **Susan Cummins** interviewed AJF member **Donna Briskin** on how her views of art jewelry have changed since becoming a member.

I found myself pushing a brochure into the hands of a friend of mine the other day. Why? Because, as she had been looking, really looking, at my jewelry and kept asking questions about the materials, the artists, the concepts, I found I was answering the questions from personal knowledge and exposure to the artists. What dawned on me was that I knew all of this from, and only from, my participation on the trips and attendance at lectures that have been organized by AJF. Having that range of exposure had totally changed how I viewed the body of work—and I knew that participating in AJF would do the same for her.

Early in my "AJF" life, I participated in a panel of collectors speaking to jewelry artists who wanted to know why some people were beginning to consider themselves **collectors**. I remember distinctly, showing my small, gold "art jewelry". My concern at the time was that it should be very wearable in an office environment and must NOT make a statement. I didn't want my jewelry to provoke strangers to talk to me or to get people to ask me "what is it?". In my mind at that time, "art jewelry" was a well-designed, one-of-a-kind or hand-fabricated version of "real jewelry."

AJF has provided me with access to venues where the concepts and messages of jewelry artists could be explored. This has been at museum shows, at collectors' homes and artists' studios and in speeches in public places. The main thing I have appreciated is the opportunity for artists and collectors to interact—nothing, and I mean nothing, has done more for my appreciation of the field than the dialogues that I have been able to have with the artists. This was really brought home on the Seattle trip, when

Karen Lorene arranged for some emerging artists to speak at our brunch. The concepts were so intriguing. There were the rings that connected the two hands, which I saw as not too dissimilar from handcuffs, but were meant to "calm down our speech and frantic hand motions." There was a necklace that included a glass section into which burnt paper had been blown. I believe it was called "diamonds with inclusions", and played with our concerns about the imperfections of "real" diamonds. One other necklace that caught the attention of a friend choked you figuratively and literally the more weights you added to it. I think it was called "Greed". Appreciating this kind of jewelry is a long way from the clean, simple gold designs I bought only a few years ago.

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NEW WAYS TO REACH AJF

The name's the same but we have now made it even easier to reach us! We have a new mailing address, phone number with answering machine, and e-mail, too! Please make note of the following:

Mailing address:
Art Jewelry Forum
P.O. Box 590216
San Francisco, CA 94059
Phone number:
415-522-2924
E-mail:
artjewelryforum@hotmail.com

Speaking of e-mail, we are very interested in getting e-mail addresses for as many members as have them. It will make communicating with members easier and less expensive at the same time! So if you have an address, won't you please take a moment and send it to us via our e-mail address? Thank you.

2001 Emerging Artist Winner Announced

There were 39 applicants, from 17 states around the country, mostly women. After narrowing down the field to three, the panel of judges selected **Mark Rooker** as the winner of the 2001 AJF Emerging Artist Award because his work combines a conceptual and technical consistency that was unique to the group of applicants.

Mark is currently an Assistant Professor of Graphic Design and Metals/Jewelry at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. He has two MFAs, one in Metals and one in Graphic Design, from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the same university as attended by last year's winner **Yeon-Mi Kang**.

This year's judges were: **Mia McEldowney**, a collector, independent curator, CERT trustee and Art Table member; **Joanne Rapp**, craft consultant, Haystack trustee, Art Table member, a member of the American Craft Museum Collector's Circle, and founding member of the Art Jewelry Forum; and **Judy Bloomfield**, a collector, American Craft Council trustee, and founding member of the Art Jewelry Forum.

This is not Mark's first award. He won the Grand Prize

Student Award from the Society of American Silversmiths. He also received an Honorable Mention in "Celestial Seasonings: a Loose Interpretation III." Mark has exhibited in Talente 2000 at the International Trade Fair in Munich, and in exhibitions in galleries in Chicago, St. Louis, Boulder and New Pontiac, Michigan.

Elizabeth Shypertt, AJF board member, presented Mark with the award at this year's SNAG conference in Richmond, Virginia.

IN HIS WORDS *An Interview With Mark Rooker*

With all the choices out there in the world, why become a jewelry artist?

In short, because I love it. I love the materials, the contemporary and historical work, the challenges of the design and technical processes, the tools, and the breadth of opportunities the field has to offer.

I started working in metal during my last semester as an undergraduate Graphic Design student, and got hooked, though it didn't occur to me right away to

become a metalsmith. Then I went back to grad school for Graphic Design and started working in metal again. I just got more and more hooked on it until I was convinced it was what I wanted to do with my life. Now I can't imagine doing anything else.

Were there any particular artists whose life and/or work has inspired you along the way?

In my current work, I am most inspired by Sci Fi and Detective Fiction illustrators such as **Ed Valigursky**, **Frank R. Paul**, and **Rafael de Soto**. In contemporary metalsmithing, I enjoy **Marilyn DaSilva**,



FEEDBACK LOOP
BROOCH, 1999
6 x 2.5 x 1.25"
MIXED MEDIA

Bruce Metcalf, and **Richard Mawdsley's** narrative work, and **Zack Peabody's** mechanical aesthetic.

What advice do you give your students today about pursuing the same profession?

It depends a lot on the student, of course. Not everybody has "The Hands" or the attention span necessary for this medium. However, for the ones that do, I tell them that there's no better profession they could choose. It combines form, function, self expression, and technical experimentation, with the



BUYING POWER
BROOCH, 1999
5.5 x 4 x 1.5"
MIXED MEDIA

good financial prospects of a medium with strong mass appeal. It also has such a broad range of approaches, from pure commercial craft to high art, that anyone with an aptitude for the profession should be able to find a niche that makes them happy.

How do you describe what you are trying to accomplish with your work at this particular stage?

At this point, I've built a strong palette of technical skills, and I know how to communicate a concept through my work, but I'm



FATAL ERROR
BROOCH, 2000
4 x 2.75 x 2.375"
MIXED MEDIA

trying to more fully develop the conceptual side of my work. The "Regular Programming" series was a big step forward for me because it so successfully expressed my ideas conceptually AND technically.

Board News

The Art Jewelry Forum thanks **Sharon Campbell** for her leadership and support as President of AJF for the past year. Her passion and enthusiasm for the field of art jewelry have contributed towards the growth of the organization. Sharon continues to be an AJF member and we look forward to her ongoing participation. The Board is pleased to announce that **Rika Mouw** has joined in the position of National Events Outreach Chair. In this role, Rika will be working with AJF members around the country to determine where it makes sense to host a short, one-day regional event as well as our trips.



ATTITUDE AND ACTION

North American Figurative Jewelry



aJF member Gail Brown curated this exhibition traveling as noted in the calendar section of this newsletter. Gail has a wonderful full-color, eight-page brochure, the next best thing to seeing this exhibition in person. The information below is excerpted from that brochure. Copies are available from Gail for \$5.00 pp, gailmbrown@mindspring.com

Images of the human form are an ever present visual benchmark: age-old but, potentially and individually, always new to those passionately challenging and exceeding the familiar. This exhibition shares some breadth of intensely focused, contemporary celebration and contemplation of the human figure. It addresses the nature and issue orientation of one-of-a-kind jewelry by seventy-five artists from North America.

These makers explore physical, emotional and social issues by representing aspects of bodies or their parts. They employ the articulated human form as a conduit of chosen information about self and character exploration, family, ethnicity, community and spirituality. They use the figure as a literal or symbolic element, often imbued with humor, from the appreciably recognizable to the personally abstract.

The scope of the exhibition includes participation of mature, mid-career and newly emerging makers: present is a range of visual vocabulary of both the familiar and the unexpected, the particular and the universal, in the distinct forms of creative, wearable adornment, of intimate physical scale, yet often of awesome emotional impact!

There is much layered information and courageous baring of the individual souls of the artists which then become personal connections to the wearers and the audience. In selected techniques and sensual media, of diverse moods, individual character, and varied size, these makers fervently address issues of human connections and missed connections. They reveal heartfelt attempts at self awareness and growth, appreciation of time and memory fragments, observation and commentary of the social and ecological worlds. They offer an awareness of and narration on contemporary culture, history, religion, literature, the history of jewelry and references to traditional definitions of beauty. They visually document the monumental condition of "being human" and invite us along on the inspired journey!



Barbara Mail

Like Mother,
Like Daughter
18k gold, 22k gold,
seashell,
bi-color tourmalines

FIRST PERSON:

AJF Membership Expands Own Views on Art Jewelry

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By now, several things have changed in my personal view of my collection:

- 1) My art jewelry is now much larger in scale—I am no longer afraid to make a statement and, in fact, I wear it constantly to the office. The reaction is interest and admiration (mixed with "not getting it"), rather than the look of inappropriateness that I feared.
- 2) The materials have changed dramatically—from silver to polymer even to jars of spices!
- 3) Wearability is no longer a factor—my latest purchase was Sara Hood's necklace of real Chinese Lantern pods that would disintegrate if worn. It is simply a display piece for me and I cherish it as that. For me, it truly symbolizes that art jewelry is just that, ART, and can be appreciated on that level, not simply as adornment for the body.

Actually many things have changed in the art jewelry field in the past few years

which have helped promote the work of these special artists. For example, I was reflecting at SOFA/Chicago that when AJF first presented a jewelry artist as a speaker in 1998, it was the only such speaker. This year, SNAG had 5 jewelry artists speak, the British Craft Council had several, and Mia McEldowney from Seattle was the AJF sponsored speaker. I feel that I have been part of this growth and development by participating in the Art Jewelry Forum. I have learned a lot, had lots of fun, and feel I have done something worthwhile.

What more could I ask! ●

AND THE NOMINEES ARE... One of the goals of the Art Jewelry Forum is to encourage and support exhibitions, publications and programs which feature contemporary art jewelry. Last year, AJF made a donation to the Oakland Museum of California to help underwrite the show "Elegant Fantasy—the Jewelry of Arline Fisch." Our other donation was to the Tacoma Art Museum to help them add to their permanent collection of art jewelry.

If you know of an upcoming museum show of art jewelry in your area, please let us know. We will consider donation requests, along with all others we receive.

GALLERIES

Susan Cummins Gallery

12 Miller Avenue
Mill Valley CA 94941
415-383-0244

Kathy Buskiewicz, "Nature of Money/Money in Nature",
March 6 - 31

Kranitsky & Overstreet,
"Inklings", April 3 - 28

Bruce Metcalf, "Dark Matter", May 1 - June 2

De Novo

250 University Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94301
650-327-1256

Ross Coppelman, opening
March 17

Barbara Heinrich, opening
May 5

Helen Drutt Gallery

1721 Walnut St. 2nd Floor
Philadelphia PA 19103
215-735-1625

"A View By Two" (coordinated with the RISD show of the same name)

January 27 - March 24

Nancy Worden, April 4 - May 5

Georg Dobler, May 12 - June 30

Facèré Jewelry Art Gallery

US Bank / City Centre
1420 5th Ave. #108
Seattle Wa 98101
206-624-6768

"Quinta Essentia", jewelry by
Lisa & Scott Cylinder, City Zen Cane,

Valerie Mitchell, Cynthia Toops & Dan Adams,
March 15 - 28

Jewelerswerk Galerie

2000 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington DC 20006
202-293-0249

Sally Marsland, April Ruudt Peters, May

OXOXO Gallery

1617 Sulgrave Avenue
Baltimore MD 21209
410-466-9696

"Botanica", including **Sarah Hood, Maria Phillips & John Iverson**, March

10 - April 12

"Color on Metal", curated from the new book by **Tim McCreight & Nicole**

Bsullok, April 14 - May 17

Velvet da Vinci

508 Hayes St.
San Francisco CA 94102
415-626-7478

"Jewelry from Barcelona", including **Carles Codina, Xavier Ines Monclus, and Silvia Walz**, May 1 - 31

Rhode Island

School of Design

Providence, Rhode Island

"A View By Two" curated by

Louis Mueller and Barbara Seidenath.

Featuring **Giampaolo Babetto, Manfred Bischoff, Hermann Junger, Myra Mimplitsch-Gray, Gerd Rothmann, Sonda Sherman and others**.

Closes April 15.

Sybaris Gallery

202 East Third St.
Royal Oak MI 48067
248-544-3388

Diane Falkenhagen, March 3 - April 7

Enamel Jewelry, featuring **Jamie Bennett, Sarah Perkins, Barbara Seidenath & Johan van Aswegan**, April 14 - May 19

OTHER SHOWS

The Victoria and Albert Museum

London, England
For members traveling in England this spring, The V&A presents the work of **Jan Yager**: City Flora/City Flotsam in their Design Now Gallery, April 5 through August 3



AJF Art Jewelry Forum
P.O. Box 590216
San Francisco, CA 94159-0216

The deadline for receiving material for the next issue of our newsletter is September 1 for publication in October.

- Please send your contributions directly to **Pat Rodimer**,
59 Webster Street, San Francisco, CA 94117.
- Calendar contributions should be directed to **Bruce Metcalf** at:
610.771.0289 Fax; or **metcalf-LEFOLL@worldnet.att.net**
- If you have any questions about this publication, please call
Pat at **415.626.7755**.