

## ***Elegant Armor: The Art of Jewelry* To Open at MAD in September 2008**

### **Exhibition of Innovative Modern and Contemporary Jewelry Will Inaugurate The Tiffany & Co. Foundation Jewelry Gallery**

NEW YORK, April 24, 2008—The Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) will inaugurate The Tiffany & Co. Foundation Jewelry Gallery in its new Columbus Circle home with *Elegant Armor: The Art of Jewelry*. On view from September 2008 to March 2009, the exhibition explores the inspirations for contemporary jewelry, including the fine arts, the human form and the natural world. Featuring over 130 works from 1948 to the present, pieces are drawn from the museum's collection of approximately 450 modern and contemporary works. The Tiffany & Co. Foundation Jewelry Gallery, which will house the entire collection in accessible study drawers is a unique study center dedicated exclusively to contemporary jewelry.



Arthur Smith, *Neckpiece*, 1948  
Brass, forged, assembled.  
Overall: 6 ½ x 7 11/16. Purchased by  
the American Craft Council, 1967.  
Photo: John Bigelow Taylor

Holly Hotchner, director of MAD, noted, "We're very grateful to our partners at The Tiffany & Co. Foundation for establishing this facility as an innovative international resource center. It will be a significant addition to MAD, and to the field of contemporary jewelry. The Museum's commitment to collect and display the finest of contemporary work will give the artists in the field a presence in the New York art scene. Our new jewelry center will be an important destination for New York's culture and fashion communities."

"Since its founding in 1956, the Museum has had a distinguished history of interpreting the cultural significance of modern and contemporary jewelry," said Ursula Ilse-Neuman, recently named Curator of Contemporary Jewelry, who organized *Elegant Armor*. "Our permanent collection

of jewelry and innovative exhibition programming have served to highlight the work of both established and emerging artists from around the world. MAD's collection explores the range of concepts, materials and techniques that make contemporary jewelry one of today's most visually exciting art forms."

"We are pleased to have funded the creation of The Tiffany & Co. Foundation Jewelry Gallery, which embodies the Foundation's mission to enhance the appreciation of jewelry as an art form," said Fernanda M. Kellogg, president of The Tiffany & Co. Foundation. "Through an innovative program of exhibitions and by establishing the gallery as a research center, we hope to support the museum's efforts to educate and inspire both emerging artists and all those who have an interest in jewelry."

The diverse collection—with styles ranging from minimal to theatrical, and materials from the everyday to the opulent—presents major themes in contemporary jewelry. The exhibition is divided into four sections: Sculptural Forms, Narrative Jewelry, Painted and Textured Surfaces, and Radical Edge.

## Sculptural Forms

Many prominent artists give primacy to pure form, creating jewelry that functions as small sculpture, on and off the body. These works range from minimalist, biomorphic and organic, to kinetic jewelry and pieces informed by architecture and engineering.

Minimalist works include the celebrated 1967 *Armband* by Gijs Bakker and Emmy van Leersum and Linda MacNeil's 1995 geometric necklace of mirrored glass and gold, a significant recent acquisition of the Museum. Eva Eisler is an artist whose work is influenced by engineering and architecture, as in the 1990 *Brooch* from her "Tension Series," which resembles a diminutive modern bridge. Important early examples of sculptural jewelry by pioneers in the studio jewelry movement include Art Smith's 1948 brass neckpiece, and Margaret de Patta's surprising kinetic brooch from 1947.



Verena Sieber-Fuchs, *Apart-heid* collar, 1988. Fruit-wrapping tissue paper, wire, 16 in. (diam.) Gift of Donna Schneier, 1997. Photo: John Bigelow Taylor

## Narrative Jewelry

American jewelry artists are especially renowned for incorporating narrative content in their wearable pieces. In addition to using signs and symbols, stories and legends, and sociopolitical messages, narrative jewelry can also include images inspired by nature or the human body. Pioneering American studio jewelry artist Sam Kramer's surrealist-inspired 1958 *Roc Pendant* draws on elements from the subconscious. African-American artist Joyce Scott's *Voices* neckpiece of 1993 comments on social injustice; its beaded faces have closed silenced mouths.



Bruno Martinazzi, *Metamorfosi*, 1992. 20-karat and 18-karat gold. 2 1/2 x 2 7/8 x 2 7/8 in. Museum purchase with funds provided by Hope Byer, 2006. Photo: John Bigelow Taylor

Verena Sieber-Fuchs from Germany made her 1988 *Apartheid* collar of tissue paper used for wrapping oranges from South Africa as a commentary on apartheid. The human hand is depicted figuratively in the 1992 *Metamorfosi* bracelet by Italian sculptor-jeweler Bruno Martinazzi. The hand also appears in German artist Gerd Rothman's *Palm Print* bracelet of 1997, this time a cast silver imprint of the artist's own palm.

## Painted and Textured Surfaces

Some artists move beyond classic silver and gold to achieve brilliant color in their pieces by inlaying metals, enameling, or using stones or beads. Earl Pardon's 1979 *Necklace* and Jamie Bennett's 1988 *Aiuola Brooch* reflect a painterly approach to the use of enamel. Colored stones also add chromatic interest. Native American contemporary jewelry pioneer Charles Loloma uses brilliant turquoise in his *Bracelet* from 1968. Bernd Munsteiner of Germany combines gold with deep blue lapis lazuli in his *Brooch/Pendant* of 2001. Texture also impacts the viewer and wearer of these works: Italian artist Gio Pomodoro's 1963 *Brooch* has a multi-layered surface of white and yellow gold. And for her 2000 *Bracelet*, Tone Vigeland, Norway's premiere art jeweler, joined hundreds of individually hammered steel beads to create an object that moves and changes when worn.

## Radical Edge

Many works in the Museum collection are conceptual in nature. Some are created with a theatrical intent to stand alone as sculptures. Germany master jeweler Otto Künzli's *Gold Makes You Blind* is a simple black rubber bracelet that covers and entirely hides a nugget of pure gold from the viewer. Mary Ann Scherr, a leader in the American studio jewelry movement and important teacher, investigated the potential relationship between jewelry and medicine in her 1974 *Electronic Oxygen Belt*, a neck pendant with electronic components and an oxygen mask hidden inside. Germany's Ulrike Bahrs' brooch from 2000 combines the fine materials of gold, silver, and garnets with holography to create a mysterious fleeting image. American innovator Stanley Lechtzin used rapid prototyping stereolithography to make his 1999 *Plus-Minus Brooch*, while his partner Danielle Kerner's 1999 *Mag-Brooch* was made with selective laser sintering in DuraForm polyamide joined by rare earth magnets.



Stanley Lechtzin, *Plus-Minus Brooch*, 1999. Stereolithography, rapid-prototyped epoxy, rapid-prototyped gold, 7 x 3 ¼ x 1 ¼ in. Gift of Dr. Noah Lechtzin, 2001. Photo: John Bigelow Taylor

## Curator

Ursula Ise-Neuman, a curator at the Museum of Arts and Design since 1992, has organized numerous exhibitions at MAD, including *GlassWear* (2007); *Corporal Identity: Body Language* (2004), in collaboration with the Museum of Applied Arts in Frankfurt Germany; *Treasures from the Vault* (2004); *Zero Karat: The Donna Schneier Gift to the Museum of Arts & Design* (2002); and *Radiant Geometries: Fifteen International Jewelers* (2001). She has been instrumental in expanding the Museum's focus on contemporary jewelry design. She has organized numerous exhibitions in all the traditional decorative arts media, written extensively for catalogues and magazines, juried many competitions and lectured widely.

## Public Programs

The Museum will present, in conjunction with the opening exhibition in The Tiffany & Co. Foundation Jewelry Gallery, a colloquium on contemporary jewelry (date to be announced). The event will bring together experts from Rhode Island School of Design, Cranbrook Academy of Art, and SUNY New Paltz to discuss new directions in the field, with design presentations from students and young designers.

The Education Department, in conjunction with the grand opening of its new building, is also creating a series of public and educational programs designed to appeal to widely varying audiences, encompassing artists' demonstrations in the Museum's unique open studios, performances, workshops and lectures in the Museum's new galleries, education center and auditorium.

## Exhibition Organization

The Tiffany & Co. Foundation Jewelry Gallery and its programming are being supported by The Tiffany & Co. Foundation through a grant of \$2 million, the largest gift that the foundation has made since its inception in 2000. The gift follows a strong, ongoing commitment embraced by both The Tiffany & Co. Foundation and the Museum to preserve and promote excellence in craftsmanship and design.

## About The Tiffany & Co. Foundation

The Tiffany & Co. Foundation, which awarded its first set of grants in 2000, provides support to nonprofit organizations dedicated to the education and preservation of the decorative arts

and environmental conservation. For more information on The Tiffany & Co. Foundation, please visit [www.tiffanyandcofoundation.org](http://www.tiffanyandcofoundation.org).

**Museum of Arts and Design (MAD)**

The Museum of Arts and Design is the country's leading cultural institution dedicated to the collection and exhibition of contemporary objects created in a wide range of media, including clay, glass, wood, metal and fiber. The Museum celebrates materials and processes that are embraced by practitioners in the fields of craft, decorative arts and design. MAD's distinguished permanent collection includes more than 2,000 objects by renowned artists and designers from around the world, representing many forms of creative expression and technical mastery. The Museum will move to a new 54,000 square-foot building at Two Columbus Circle in Manhattan in 2008. In its new home, designed by Brad Cloepfil of Allied Works Architecture, the Museum will be able to display works from its permanent collection in dedicated collection galleries for the first time in its history.

**For additional information about the Museum of Arts and Design, visit [www.madmuseum.org](http://www.madmuseum.org).**

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