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A Contemporary Approach to the Design of Jewelry

By

Mary C. Sartor

B.F.A., University of Colorado, 1967

A thesis submitted to the faculty of the Graduate
School of the University of Colorado in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

Department of Fine Arts, Creative Art

1971

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This Thesis for the Master of Fine Arts Degree by

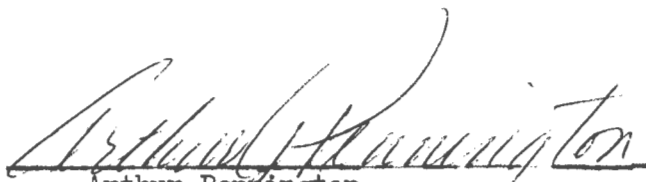
Mary C. Sartor

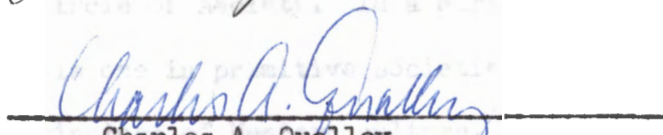
has been approved for the

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by


Arthur Pennington


Charles A. Qualley

Date May 25, 1971

Personal adornment is one of the oldest and most fundamental needs of man. Superstition, awareness of social position and the desire for secure investment are some of the fundamental urges behind man's desire to adorn his person. Jewelry and personal adornment have been invested with magic, sybolic meanings and commemorative values. Contemporary artists have attempted to emphasize the aesthetic value of jewelry, demanding a reexamination of conventional attitudes toward jewelry; designing forms which are an expression of their insight into life rather than an article of value mainly for the precious materials from which it is made.

One motive for the wearing of jewelry, which falls within the contemporary spirit, might be attributed to the aspect of role playing in modern society. Modern jewels can become costumes, they are an integral part of modern dress, and with them the wearer can advance his individuality or assume new roles within his circle of society. In a curious way this ascribed role parallels one in primitive societies and reaches back to the very beginnings of Western culture. One can draw a parallel with the wearing and use of African masks and compare the large jewels in this collection with the Egyptian jewels of the dynastic periods.

It is interesting to explore this idea as it relates to the designing of modern jewelry. Large pieces can be fabricated

which insinuate their strength on the body that supports them. Collars which envelop the chest and back, collars which are linked in flexible elements which flow over the breasts and define the base of the neck, pendants which hang below the waist with movable parts that call attention to the stomach and thigh, are examples found in this thesis collection. These pieces become costumes which expand the possibilities of the wearer in that the jewels contribute attributes that the wearer can assume for himself. Thus, one can break out of the human limitations and experience other existential adventures. Contemporary man, who lives in continuous and direct competition with a crowded community of similar individuals, responds to the need to be different--to impress--so that he can impose his individuality and thus make himself noticed as a person.

If the jewel and the wearer are so closely melled, the jewel enveloping the wearer and the wearer contributing the support of the jewel, what happens if the roles are reversed or ordered in other ways? Three jewels in this collection use a symbol of the human form as part of the design. One golden citrine surmounted by a gold figure that holds a steering wheel and reaches toward a piece of machinery, could become an ironic comment on the contemporary life; a ridiculous and humorous object. Another gold object becomes a fetish figure--a miniature sculpture--which presents a caged human figure topped by an uncaged chimpanzee; a zoomorphic subject which makes its own comment on the evolution of man still tied to the instincts of his

beginnings. A pendant of gold shows a tiny human figure emerging from a folded form but silhouetted against an undefined opening. Thus we have examples of the human related figure becoming the jewel itself; used symbolically, with many associative meanings.

Finally a jewel was created which reflects the viewer so that the reflected image becomes a part of the concept which is not complete without the reflected image. This piece is constructed of front surface mirrors set in a right angle cubic section brass frame, employing the light reflecting properties of a corner cube mirror so that the viewer always sees the same reflection of himself from any position. An amethyst and four Herkimer diamonds are arranged so that the reflected image is surrounded by a circle of bright faceted stones, becoming a small introspective environment complete only with the participation of the viewer.

There are conventional pieces in this collection, rings, broaches and pendants, which exploit the properties of the metals and minerals to create small sculptural ornaments. One silver ring is a gleaming, granulated, modeled mound of metal which supports a lustrous blue pearl at its top, creating a jewel which could not possibly be worn without imposing its presence on the wearer.

A variety of techniques have been used to create the jewelry in this collection. One collar is silver and gold; the pieces cut from sheet silver, flat silver wire, and gold

filled wire. Another collar is copper woven mesh flooded with silver, linked with silver jump rings and embellished with silver domes. A large breast plate pendant is an interpretation of the filigree technique, using silver rings in a variety of sizes to form a large butterfly shape.

Water castings soldered into a medallion combine with forged heavy gage wire and ribbons of thin gage metal to make the long silver pendant. The man's jewel, designed to be worn in place of a tie, is also formed from water castings combined with fabricated support. Several pieces are cast using a burnout of wax or plastic as the case may be. Silver granulation becomes the surface treatment of a ring, faceted stones are set with prongs, and cast forms are combined with fabricated forms in the smaller jewels. Following is a complete list of the 19 pieces in the collection that forms this thesis presentation:

1. Pendant with small human figure, 14K gold, cast.
2. Pendant with yellow pearl, 14K gold, cast.
3. Pin with human figure surmounting large Citrine, 14K gold, cast.
4. Votive figure on small pedestal with Chimpanzee, 14K gold, cast.
5. Collar, copper woven mesh flooded with silver solder, sterling silver rings and fastenings, ornamented with sterling silver domes, fabricated.
6. Man's jewel, sterling silver, water castings fabricated.

7. Introspective enviornmental jewel, brass, top surface mirrors, amethyst and Herkimer diamonds, fabricated.
8. Ring of twisted wire, 14K gold with 2 pearls, cast.
9. Ring, petal shape, 14K gold with large baroque pearl, cast.
10. Ring, blue sapphire, 14K gold, cast.
11. Ring with textured surface, 14K gold, cast.
12. Ring, granulated surface, sterling silver with blue pearl, cast.
13. Breast plate butterfly pendant, sterling silver, fabricated.
14. Pin, wave forms, 14K gold with two pearls, cast.
15. Pin, cock, 14K gold with large baroque pearl, cast.
16. Pin, mermaid form, 14K gold with pink baroque pearl and three small pearls, cast.
17. Pin, textured surface, 14K gold with 2 Titania stones and 2 peridot stones, cast.
18. Collar, linked forms, sterling silver and gold filled wire, fabricated.
19. Pendant, sterling silver, water casting and fabricated.

In partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree M.F.A. in Creative Arts

Mary C. Sartor

has submitted this written thesis
as a supplement to the creative thesis

one gold and citrine pin
Number and Medium

1 1/4" x 1 3/4"
Size

untitled
Title

which is in the permanent possession of the
University of Colorado and recorded with the

Department of Fine Arts

Approved by

W. P. Pennington
Chairman of Committee

Frank Sampson
CO-Chairman of Committee

Charles A. Qualls
Chairman, Fine Arts Department

NUMBER OF SLIDES AND MEDIUM

<u>#1 pendant</u>	<u>folded form with small figure</u>	<u>14 K gold</u>
<u>#2 pin</u>	<u>squatting man with machine parts</u>	<u>14 K gold & citrine</u>
<u>#3 sculpture</u>	<u>man in cage with chimpanzee</u>	<u>14 K gold</u>
<u>#4 sculpture</u>	<u>cube section with top surface mirrors</u>	<u>brass and mirrors quartz crystals</u>
<u>#5 collar</u>	<u>linked forms set with half domes</u>	<u>copper and silver</u>
<u>#6 collar</u>	<u>linked multiple forms on chocker</u>	<u>silver and 14K gold filled</u>
<u>breast plate #7 pendant & rings</u>	<u>filigree butterfly cast rings</u>	<u>silver pendant, silver ring with pearl, gold ring & pearl</u>



