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“JEWELRY OF IDEAS: GIFTS FROM THE SUSAN GRANT LEWIN COLLECTION” PRESENTS THE RARE AND RADICAL

FALL EXHIBITION BRINGS 150 AVANT-GARDE WORKS TO THE PUBLIC,
SHOWCASING THE LIMITLESS POTENTIAL OF JEWELRY DESIGN



GIAMPAOLO BABETTO, BROOCH, 1947



JOYCE SCOTT, NECKLACE, 2016

AUG. 18, 2017

“Jewelry of Ideas: Gifts from the Susan Grant Lewin Collection,” opening Nov. 17, celebrates the recent gift from the renowned collector to Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum. On view through May 28, 2018, the exhibition, co-curated by Ursula Ilse-Neuman and Cooper Hewitt, features 150 brooches, necklaces, bracelets and rings, and traces radical developments in jewelry from the mid-20th century to the present. Works on view highlight jewelry design’s expressive and innovative achievements, ranging from works that make a political statement by eschewing silver and gold for industrial materials, to pieces that employ found materials to tell a personal narrative.

“It is with much gratitude that Cooper Hewitt has accepted this collection of modern and contemporary jewelry from a champion of the field,” said Caroline Baumann, director of the museum. “The Susan Grant Lewin Collection significantly expands the range and depth of Cooper Hewitt’s jewelry holdings to encompass the inventive approach of the studio jewelry movement and the impact of later groundbreaking conceptual and materials-driven contemporary jewelry design.”

The exhibition captures the diversity and achievement of modern and contemporary jewelry designers from Holland, Japan, Israel, the United States and elsewhere. Many of the pieces confront social, political or personal concerns using unconventional materials and techniques. Contained within a ring may be a history of the mathematical proportions of the Palladian villas of the Veneto, as in the case of Giampaolo Babetto. Within a bracelet may be a rejection of the cult of the precious, as seen in Otto Künzli's "Gold Makes You Blind," where an 18-karat gold ball is encased in a rubber bangle.

"I have been collecting jewelry for decades and it only becomes more exciting as the field of conceptual jewelry design continues to flourish," said Susan Grant Lewin. "I meet designers from around the world, so the collection is international in scope. I like to find the leaders and innovators—the most experimental jewelry designers—and I am thrilled that Cooper Hewitt is exposing their revolutionary work to the general public."

Highlights of the works on view include:

- Intricate beading by 2016 MacArthur Fellow Joyce Scott, who depicts moments of sexism and racism and calls attention to their engendered violence
- A silver and acrylic kinetic ring by Friedrich Becker, 1993, designed to axially rotate in response to the gestures of the hand that wears it
- Ted Noten's rejection of habituation and embrace of the unexpected, as seen in his 2003 pendant necklace, "Fred," which encases a fly and a pearl in his signature cast acrylic
- Kiff Slemmons' narrative necklaces, including her 2008 piece, "Reliquary of My Own Making," constructed of photographs that document her design process
- The tongue-in-cheek, conceptual smoking instrument, "Manhattan Piece," 1987, by Otto Künzli; a tubular design allows the wearer to exhale cigarette smoke through a brooch or button
- Pioneering assemblage pieces that were the first to make curious whimsy out of the everyday, such as Ramona Solberg's 1989 necklace featuring two dominos on a leather cord
- Brooches and body ornamentation by American jewelry pioneer Arline Fisch, who applies an innovative technique of weaving metal
- Abstract, painterly brooches from Thomas Gentile, who uses materials such as gold-flecked bronze, aluminum and eggshell inlay
- A necklace made of coal and recycled paper feathers from Attai Chen's "Compounding Fractions" series, 2010, which portrays decay as delicately beautiful
- Work by Jamie Bennett, whose gold and enamel brooches act as canvases for abstract imagery reminiscent of vegetal Persian tapestries or paintings by Joan Miró

"Jewelry of Ideas: Gifts from the Susan Grant Lewin Collection" is made possible in part by the Rotasa Fund, Society of North American Goldsmiths (SNAG), Gallery Loupe, Sienna Patti, William P. Short III, in memory of Nancy Jean Fulop Short, Helen W. Drutt English, Kim and Al Eiber and Ornamentum Gallery.

PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

The exhibition will include a series of programs and workshops that explore topics in contemporary jewelry and how designers have revolutionized the field, including a two-panel afternoon symposium (Nov. 17), a jewelry workshop (Nov. 18) and a Tea and Talk with prominent jewelry collectors (Dec. 12). For a complete roster of events, visit cooperhewitt.org/events.

PUBLICATION

An accompanying 176-page publication by Ilse-Neuman will be published by Cooper Hewitt and distributed domestically by ARTBOOK | D.A.P. and internationally by Arnoldsche Art Publishers. Featuring hundreds of full-color illustrations, the catalog will explore the groundbreaking techniques and materials used by more than 90 world-class jewelry designers, with their accompanying process statements. Retail price: \$40.

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This publication is made possible in part by the museum's Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Publications Fund.

ABOUT COOPER HEWITT, SMITHSONIAN DESIGN MUSEUM

Founded in 1897, Cooper Hewitt is the only museum in the United States devoted exclusively to historic and contemporary design. Housed in the renovated and restored Carnegie Mansion, Cooper Hewitt showcases one of the most diverse and comprehensive collections of design works in existence. The museum's restoration, modernization and expansion has won numerous awards and honors, including a Lucy G. Moses Preservation Award from the New York Landmarks Conservancy, a Gold Pencil Award for Best in Responsive Environments and LEED Silver certification. Cooper Hewitt offers a full range of interactive capabilities and immersive creative experiences, including the Cooper Hewitt Pen that allows visitors to "collect" and "save" objects from around the galleries, the opportunity to explore the collection digitally on ultra-high-definition touch-screen tables, and draw and project their own wallpaper designs in the Immersion Room.

Cooper Hewitt is located at 2 East 91st Street at Fifth Avenue in New York City. Hours are Sunday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. The Arthur Ross Terrace and Garden and Tarallucci e Vino cafe open at 8 a.m., Monday through Friday, and are accessible without an admissions ticket through the East 90th Street entrance. The museum is closed on Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. Public transit routes include the Lexington Avenue 4, 5 and 6 subways (86th or 96th Street stations), the Second Avenue Q subway (96th Street station), and the Fifth and Madison Avenue buses. Adult admission, \$16 in advance via tickets.cooperhewitt.org, \$18 at door; seniors, \$10 in advance via tickets.cooperhewitt.org, \$12 at door; students, \$7 in advance via tickets.cooperhewitt.org, \$9 at door. Cooper Hewitt members and children younger than age 18 are admitted free. Pay What You Wish every Saturday, 6 to 9 p.m. The museum is fully

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accessible.

For further information, call (212) 849-8400, visit Cooper Hewitt's website at www.cooperhewitt.org and follow the museum on www.twitter.com/cooperhewitt, www.facebook.com/cooperhewitt and www.instagram.com/cooperhewitt.

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