

METALSMITH

JEWELRY • DESIGN • METAL ARTS

Inquire Within
Pushing Boundaries
For the Love of Nature



volume 28 number 3
\$8.50 usa \$10.00 canada
www.snagmetalsmith.org

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cover
SUSIE GANCH
Rest, 2007
steel, enameled copper
10 1/2 x 22 1/2 x 20"

from top
SUSIE GANCH
Untitled, 2007 (detail)

DAVID HUANG
Lucent Terrain #589, 2007
(detail)

JAN YAGER
The Tiara of Useful Knowledge, 2006 (detail)

FROM THE EDITOR

SUZANNE RAMLJAK



"Only connect. These two words form the resonant epigraph of E.M. Forster's 1910 novel *Howard's End*, set in rapidly changing Victorian London. This phrase also provides a fitting coda to the contents of this issue of *Metalsmith*. Implicit in many of these articles is an appeal for connectedness and communality.

The jewelry of cover artist Susie Ganch is rooted in a deeply unified worldview and sense of life's interconnectedness. Her open structures with flexible extensions are designed to convey the porous interplay between the body and its surroundings. "We are just permeable matter," says Ganch, and she accordingly builds works that demonstrate the fluidity of material experience.

In her essay on biophilia and jewelry, biology professor Maura Flannery provides testimony for our essential connection to the natural world. This vital instinct to bond with other species finds repeated expression in animal- and plant-based adornment through history. By stressing the ties between jewelry and nature, Flannery hopes to awaken the innate biophilia in others and to spur greater appreciation and preservation of the living environment.

A desire to connect also informs the work of David Huang, whose luminous copper vessels lure one into their glowing hollows and provide a calm respite to recollect oneself.

Reconnecting with the public motivates designer Benjamin Lignel's article on the untapped potential within mass-produced art jewelry. Lignel unravels the biases that prevent contemporary jewelers from creating editions, which could infuse the marketplace with wondrous, yet affordable works. In the process, Lignel reminds us that the greatest obstacles to making connections are often abstract concepts rather than any physical barrier. ||

METALSMITH

a publication of SNAG the organization for jewelers designers and metalsmiths

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ANALYZE, AND PROMOTE EXCELLENCE IN
JEWELRY AND METALWORKING**

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Metalsmith (ISSN 0270-1146) is published in January, March, May,
August, and October by SNAG, a not-for-profit organization, 540 Oak
Street, Suite A, Eugene, OR 97401
www.snagmetalsmith.org

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

to *Metalsmith* (5 issues): \$34 North America, \$49 International
SNAG one-year membership rates include a subscription to *Metalsmith*:
\$79 North America, \$95 International
Students: \$49 North America, \$62 International

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The full text of *Metalsmith* is available through
EBSCO Publishing and Art Index.

NATIONAL NEWSSTAND DISTRIBUTION

CMG, 250 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019

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POSSESSED



THE BOARDMAN FAMILY COLLECTION OF CONTEMPORARY JEWELRY

by JO LAURIA

Lois Boardman didn't acknowledge herself as a collector until recently, even though she had gathered more than 300 significant pieces of contemporary jewelry. Fond of referring to herself as an "accumulator," Boardman had to accept that she was labeled a "serious collector" in a field that was being revalued in the art world, claiming new converts within the museum community, and welcoming other enthusiastic supporters and collectors. Her epiphany was sparked by several key events, including the development of the Art Jewelry Forum collectors' group over the past decade; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston's acquisition and 2007 exhibition of the Daphne Farago jewelry collection; and the announced plans to tour the current exhibition of the Helen Williams Drutt Collection of contemporary jewelry by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Boardman now realized it was time to admit to her "serious folly," and start the daunting process of documenting her accumulations, cataloguing works that have been closeted from the field, some for more than 20 years. In this effort, she looked to the advice and example of her mentor, friend, and confidante, Helen Drutt.

**"FOLLOW YOUR NOSE
LIKE IT WEAR IT LEND IT
EITHER YOU GET IT OR YOU DON'T"**

Lois Boardman on collecting

Boardman and Drutt have a shared history in the arts dating back to the early 1980s, when both served as volunteers of the National Task Force in the Crafts, a team of 32 volunteers enlisted by Eudora Moore, then Craft Coordinator of the National Endowment for the Arts. The volunteers were trained to gather pertinent information about crafts from every region in the United States. During the one-year term, Boardman and Drutt were frequently paired as roommates. Hailing from Southern California, Boardman had studied ceramics under Ralph Bacerra at Chouinard Art Institute, directed programs for the Pasadena Art Museum, and assumed the directorship of the California Design Exhibition Series, replacing



Moore. Drutt founded the Helen Drutt Gallery in Philadelphia in 1974, specializing in the crafts, and became recognized as an expert and activist in the field. Their pairing was portentous and serendipitous. Boardman remembers: "Helen was, at all times, wearing an intriguing piece of jewelry—a clever way to initiate conversation. Helen felt that as long as she was selling it, she had an obligation to be its best promoter. Her avant-garde taste in jewelry—and commitment to wearing it; her vast knowledge of the field; and her close relationships with jewelers from every continent piqued my interest and eventually led me down the ruinous path of collecting. I am indebted to Helen for exposing me to the field of contemporary jewelry, and for all the fun and wonder I've had pursuing this adventure.

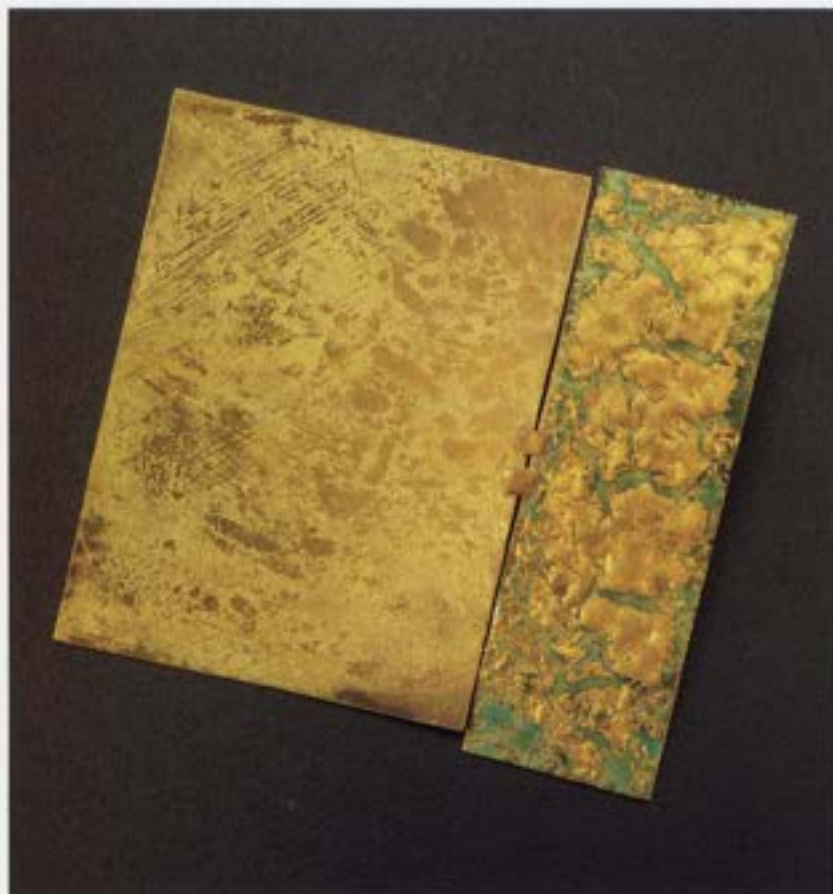
And thus began a lifelong friendship, a kinship bound by their mutual appreciation, dedication, and absolute pursuit of acquiring and collecting jewelry of their time. Since then, Boardman has learned about the field from Drutt and other esteemed dealers; she has joined support groups and attended conferences to advance her connoisseurship; and has sought out artists in their studios and attended their exhibitions to stay nimble and informed. She tries not to buy into labels, or succumb to status or copycat acquisitions. Instead, she relies on her "trained eyes" to judge a piece on its own merits rather than looking to others for validation. Further she has vowed to follow her nose, sniffing out the unusual, the edgy, the experimental, and frequently the disturbing. Consider Elizabeth Kadre Defner's 1983 neckpiece, *Rat's Skull* featuring a golden cast of a rodent's

cranium: Sebastian Buescher's 2006 brooch, *Pregnant Tree Boy* which encapsulates black widow spiders under glass; Georg Dobler's outrageous 1999 necklace sporting oversized cast silver scarabs clustered around a huge gemstone (which Boardman insists she has worn to Costco); Susie Ganch's 1999 headdress, *Static Orbital Model #3 (Menorah)*, wherein the wearer's head is encircled by an orbiting candelabrum; and Nancy Worden's 2001 neckpiece, *Gilding the Past*—a not-so-classic commentary on the brutalities of war—comprised of gilded cast chicken bones. And then there are the pieces that reflect Boardman's quirky sense of humor: for example, Karl Fritsch's 2005 Ring, which looks like exploding prisms ready to launch into space off of Boardman's finger. These pieces best convey Boardman's vision and guts in building her collection: she dares to take risks, even if it means risking a mistake.

But it would be misleading to imply that Boardman doesn't prize pure beauty and wearability. Boardman willingly admits that her favorite material is gold, and her collection contains several stunning examples that are elegant and scaled for wearing. Recently, Italian jewelers of the Padua school, with their contemporary and experimental approach to using gold, have caught

opposite
Collector Lois Boardman wearing GERD ROTHMANN's 1984 Gold Nose (gold cast made from a mold of Boardman's nose)

above
ELIZABETH KADRE DEFNER
Rat's Skull (neckpiece), 1983
fine and white gold, opal, hair, wood, emerald, ruby
7 1/2 x 6"
Photo: Anthony Cutha



**"CONTEMPORARY JEWELRY COMMUNICATES
IT STARTS UP A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE
WEARER AND THE MAKER."** Lois Boardman

Boardman's eye. She has newly acquired a gold brooch by Graziano Visintin, and a gold and silver brooch by Stefano Marchetti, and intends to collect at least one piece from every artist connected with the school.

Over 25 years, Boardman has assembled a sophisticated collection of exemplary pieces, representing a broad base of key American and international jewelers, with a concentration of works from a select group of artists whom Boardman collects in depth. To date, the artists in Boardman's collection who are represented by more than five pieces include: Peter Chang, Breon O'Casey, and Wendy Ramshaw (British); Sharon Church, Helen Shirk, and Nancy Worden (American); and Georg Dobler, Michael Becker, and Karl Fritsch (German). Taut, personal, and vital, this collection speaks about the jewelers of our time: the search for an expressive language that reflects both individual knowledge and universal experience; the cultural movements and changing zeitgeist; and the arc of technology and advances in materials and processes. In essence, these works are a



currency of our contemporary culture, and offer the potential to increase awareness and understanding of the creative development of individual jewelers, as well as the evolving history of the studio jewelry movement as it transitions from adolescence to maturity.

From a curatorial point of view, the Boardman Family Collection has all the hallmarks of a considerable public collection: the range and diversity of the objects confirm long-term commitment and expansive reach, the thoughtful accumulation of works over time, often representing early, middle, and late periods of an artist's oeuvre, provides depth; and the strategic inclusion of works that correspond to the defining moments of an epoch, render this collection of contemporary works aesthetically sound, historically significant, and worthy of attention.

In the interest of history, Boardman is ready to fling the doors wide and bring the Boardman Family Collection from its private domain into the public arena. As a dedicated collector, Boardman delights in caring for and

preserving these objects, and lending them to important exhibitions. And most importantly, by daring to wear pieces from her collection at any occasion, Boardman has helped to raise awareness and appreciation of contemporary jewelry. □

JO LAURIA is an author and independent curator of decorative arts and design.

opposite
GRAZIANO VISITIN
 Brooch, 2003
 gold
 2 x 2"
 Photo: Anthony Culha

KARL FRITSCH
 Ring, 2005
 patinated silver, glass stones
 height 3"
 Photo: Anthony Culha

above
NANCY WORDEN
 Gilding the Past, 2001
 silver, copper, brass, gold, coral, bone,
 turquoise
 length 43"
 Photo: Rex Nystedt