

WAG

MEGAN MULLALLY

BRINGS HER BAND – AND
HUMOR – TO RIDGEFIELD



Fascinating designs

**ARTISTRY
EXPLORED**
Painter
Nathan Lewis
Dealer J. Russell
Jinishian

**BUILDING
SUCCESS**
Architects
Brad DeMotte
and Rocco DiLeo

**CHEF DAVID
DIBARI**
Pushing the
culinary envelope

PATTERN PLAY
Alison Kouzmanoff's
fabrics
The book on Indian
textiles

SET TO MUSIC
Christine Ebersole
Heloïse Piéaud

INSPIRED BY ANTIQUITY

BY MARY SHUSTACK

Jewelry design is a subject that continues to fascinate.

Those seeking evidence need only look to New York City Jewelry Week 2018. November's inaugural, informative and downright enjoyable event – one that extended beyond the city's borders to include institutions such as the Katonah Museum of Art – was a dazzling cavalcade of nearly 100 exhibitions, lectures, workshops, tours, collaborations and special events dedicated to promoting the world of jewelry.

While the 2019 event is already set for Nov. 18-24, those with a love of jewelry, particularly its design, can feed their passion now at the Bard Graduate Center Gallery in Manhattan.

That's where "A View from the Jeweler's Bench: Ancient Treasures, Contemporary Statements" continues through July 7.

The exhibition delves into jewelry design by way of contemporary jewelers and how they draw from antique forms and techniques to create modern-day works of art.

The exhibition focuses on, as its name signals, the creative process and how the jeweler's bench is where the work is made by hand. To that end, the exhibition includes not only a jeweler's bench but also tools and sketches to explore further the process itself. It also traces the connections between the past and present through form, technique and materials.

Sasha Nixon, who earned a master's degree from Bard Graduate Center in 2018, has curated the exhibition and will lead March 16's "Curator's Spotlight Tour."

The dozen contemporary jewelry artists featured in "A View from the Jeweler's Bench" include Ashley Buchanan, Jeanette Caines, Lin Cheung, Giovanni Corvaja, Mary Lee Hu, Gabriella Kiss, Otto Künzli, emiko oye, Mary Hallam Pearse, Nicole

Jacquard, Anya Kivarkis and Kiff Slemmons.

Though the work is indeed diverse, British-based Cheung seemed to sum up not only her approach but foreshadow the focus of the exhibition, as well, in a 2013 interview with *Current Obsession*. The interview with the digital platform and independent contemporary jewelry magazine is noted on her website.

"I use archetypal jewelry forms in my work as a basic language with which to build a conversation about jewelry. By borrowing and referencing the familiar shapes of lockets, rings and necklaces, I am priming the pieces ready to receive an idea, a thought, an observation. They are visual cues indicating I am commenting on something I've noticed about jewelry – the subject of jewelry and the possibilities that surround the jewel – and not the jewel itself."

She continued to tell *Current Obsession* that her work is part of a new tradition.

"A new generation of makers are reevaluating and repositioning these iconic forms at the core of their work from which to build their ideas. Inside every piece of contemporary jewelry can be found the DNA of its archetypal ancestor. A self-referential 'jewelry language' is developing and as a result is perhaps less concerned about what jewelry is, but exploring instead what is it doing, where is it, what is it saying, who does it belong to and why." ■■

The Bard Graduate Center Gallery is at 18 W. 86th St. in Manhattan. Exhibitions that also continue through July 7 there include "Jan Tschichold and the New Typography: Graphic Design Between the World Wars" and "The Story Box: Franz Boas, George Hunt and the Making of Anthropology." For more, visit bgc.bard.edu.

Mary Hallam Pearse's "Untitled (Necklace)," from the "Girls Play Games" series (2013), silver, aluminium, diamonds, polycarbonate. *Courtesy of the artist. Image courtesy Bard Graduate Center Gallery.*