

Two True Daysailers | Seven Maine Jewelers | A Fleet of Luders

MAINE

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2008 SHOW PROGRAM INSIDE

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Display through October

Beyond

Sam Shaw: pin pendant
"Ocean Geometry,"
carved granite beach stone,
Tahitian pearls in gold



Stephani Briggs: earrings, natural American freshwater pearls, high-karat gold



Devta Doolan: earrings, South Sea pearls, 24-karat gold

Fine jewelry making is a major enterprise in Maine. The artists who lead the way work in all manner of materials, some expected, some not.

MAINE OFTEN TOUTS ITS BOUNTY of tourmaline. Indeed, the handsome crystal, best known for its becoming shades of green and blue, is the state's official gemstone. It has been extracted from Maine granite dating back to the 1820s, when it was discovered at Mount Mica in Paris.

While tourmaline continues to be a mainstay for many jewelers here and elsewhere, in

Tourmaline

Seven Maine Artists of the Ornament BY CARL LITTLE



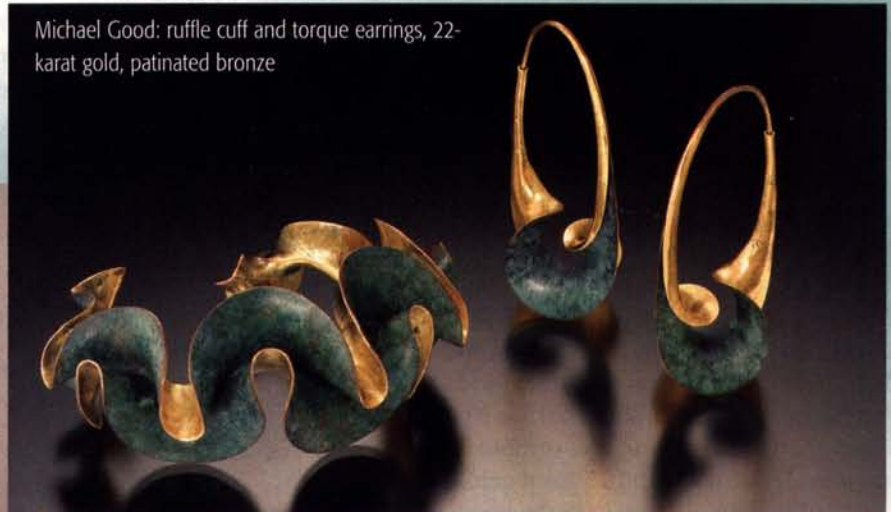
Cara Romano: stitched felt bracelet: sterling silver frame with felted wool base, cotton stitching.



Elizabeth Prior: sterling silver bangles and cuff, stamped with latitude and longitude



Ellen Wieske: rings made of tin, acrylic, and silver



Michael Good: ruffle cuff and torque earrings, 22-karat gold, patinated bronze

recent decades Maine-based artists of the ornament have grown increasingly innovative and wide-ranging in their choice of materials. The seven jewelers showcased here employ everything from beach stones and felt to tin and freshwater pearls, as well as plenty of gold and silver, in their earrings, rings, bracelets, brooches, and necklaces.

Jewelry is made in all corners of the state, but there are distinct clusters. Portland has the largest contingent of jewelers, for a number of reasons. The metals program at the Maine College of Art (formerly the Portland School of Art) attracts many top-notch artists, and many tend to remain in the area after graduation. After all, the city offers easy access to transportation to New York City, Philadelphia, and other places farther afield where workshops are led, and fairs and shows can be attended.



Stephani Briggs, pendant: faceted quartz and carnelian fabricated in 18- and 22-karat gold

Stephani Briggs

BORN AND RAISED a New Englander, Stephani Briggs settled in Portland after graduating from the Portland School of Art. Over the years she has made strong connections with the Far East, visiting India and Tibet on many occasions. (She is sympathetic to the plight of the Tibetans and has supported charities there.) The art and culture of these countries have found their way into her work as have the materials she has collected on her visits there: emeralds, rubies, and turquoise. And, yes, she works with Maine's own tourmaline. She combines these stones with 18- and 22-karat gold.

Working out of a studio in the heart of Portland's arts district, Briggs celebrated her 25th anniversary in business last year. And what a year it was: on her first appearance at the prestigious Smithsonian Craft Show in Washington, she sold more than 65 pieces.

"A piece of jewelry should transcend ornamentation and be able to stand alone as an object of fine art. It should reference its history and heritage as a class of personal and—in many cultures—ritual object."

—SB

Elizabeth Prior

ANOTHER GRADUATE of the Portland School of Art, Elizabeth Prior was born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and raised in Maine. She attended Penland School of Crafts in North Carolina on her way to becoming a full-time production jeweler in 1987. She currently shares a storefront space in the State Street Theater building with several craft artists.

Like many jewelers, including her friend Stephani Briggs, Prior started out working exclusively in silver until she could afford to purchase gold. Now she specializes in combining the two metals. She uses a variety of techniques, including embossing and metal stamps, to accent the work. She also works with a variety of stones, from Arizona turquoise to Maine tourmaline.

In 2004, "intrigued by the flame," Prior began lampworking, creating exquisite glass beads. She recently devel-



Elizabeth Prior, necklace: lampworked glass beads on linen

oped a line of jewelry stamped with the longitude and latitude of the buyer's choice—a hit, she reports, with boating people—"sailors especially."

"The desire to adorn oneself transcends all socio-economic and cultural boundaries. It is my hope that my creations will speak to this fundamental human desire as well as to the need to acknowledge and commemorate the events of our lives."

—EP



Devta Doolan, ring: 22-karat gold, black diamonds

Devta Doolan

Devta Doolan is also headquartered in Portland. A New Zealander by birth, as a boy he moved with his family to Connecticut. While attending Clark University, he fell in with master metalsmith Tim McCreight at the Worcester Craft Center. Doolan eventually moved to Portland, where he creates award-winning one-of-a-kind pieces. His bold, tactile, and often organic jewelry, inspired by the work of the late Swiss jeweler Andrew Grima, features a wide range of stones, among them, fire opal, black diamonds, Tibetan turquoise, New Zealand green jade, and black tourmaline, often set in gold.

"In my work I strive to create an identity that is both ancient and contemporary. I want to blend disparate elements to create a unified whole. I become myself through my work."

—DD

Ellen Wieske

MANY A U.S. CRAFT ARTIST'S resumé features a listing for a workshop either taught or attended at the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts on Deer Isle. (Devta Doolan, for example, took classes there with Swiss metalsmith Max Frohlich.) Some of those artists came to teach or study and remained in the region year-round.

Ellen Wieske, Haystack's assistant director, first arrived at the school as a studio assistant for jeweler Gary Griffin, with whom she had studied at Cranbrook Academy in Michigan. Originally from Detroit, Wieske fell in love with the school's setting and the people there—it was a place to get work done.

Wieske has consistently explored non-traditional materials in her work, using everything from tin to Popsicle sticks. In the winter of 2006-2007, she created 90 rings in 90 days. She displayed the rings in the shape of a calendar at Dow Studio



Ellen Wieske, five rings: leather, aluminum, rubber, plastic, silver, wood

on Deer Isle, a workspace and gallery she shares with her partner, ceramist Carole Ann Fer.

"I was looking for a way to shake out some new ideas by forcing myself to play around a little each day," Wieske says. "I went from wood, to rubber, to metal, to junk, and so on."

"Each material I play host to deserves my full attention and respect. My skills hold no prejudice. I make many things in which utility and art interact. Glory to the everyday world, and may the ordinary be revealed to be extraordinary." —EW



Hap Sakwa

Michael Good, "Open Baroque" pendants: gem beads with 18-karat gold

Michael Good

BORN IN PITTSBURGH, Pennsylvania, of Belgian parents, Michael Good came to Haystack at a key crossroads in his life as a jeweler. He was questioning his future as a goldsmith when he took a class with Finnish-born metalsmith Heikki Seppa. From that experience, Good was inspired to explore anticlastic raising, a metal-shaping technique first used in pre-Celtic times. His rediscovery of the ways of the ancients led to an acclaimed line of jewelry that has found its way into galleries and collections around the world.

Today, Good heads a production team that works in a two-story studio and gallery showcase on Route 1 in Rockport, Maine. He continues to explore anticlastic raising, applying it to new lines, including ribbon torque cuffs and bangles fabricated from bronze and gold. He has also translated some of his designs into sculpture.

"I continue to examine the subtle changes and the consequent visual effects of a plane as it moves non-definitively through space. Anticlastic raising has proven to be the ideal method for generating structures that help explain more complex movements inherent in organic life." —MG

Sam Shaw

WHEN SPEAKING about the jewelry scene in Maine, Sam Shaw is one name that is bound to come to just about everyone's lips. Shaw's dual roles as master metalsmith and dealer (Shaw Contemporary Jewelry in Northeast Harbor) has led him to a place of prominence in the state and the nation. A graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design with long family ties to the Maine coast, Shaw became renowned for his use of beach stones in jewelry that is often bold.



Robert Diamante

Sam Shaw, twig necklace: 18-karat gold, large trillion tanzanite, sapphires and diamonds

Shaw's most recent collection, "The Twig," also finds inspiration in nature. He casts twigs in 18-karat gold, elevating the commonplace to something precious. At the same time this twig jewelry is illusionary: what appears to be fragile is actually solid. In all his work, Shaw prefers the simple to the complex and form over narrative.

"If I have a reason to be on this planet, it's to create and surround myself with beauty. That said, I should explain that beauty, for me, takes a particular form. Beauty does not simply arise from a thing's surface, but manifests itself within it, through tensions or contrasts at play." —SS

Cara Romano

THE YOUNGESTER IN THIS BAND of seven, Cara Romano graduated from the University of Maine in 2002 with a degree in interdisciplinary fine arts. Following an internship with metalsmith Curtis LaFollette, she joined the LaFollette Group, a collective of craft artists located in the downeast hamlet of Cherryfield that includes Curtis and his wife, Marion, a fine-art rug designer. In her jewelry, Romano combines sterling silver with colorful felted wool. These pieces have already gained her attention in the craft arts world, including a best in show award at the 2007 Providence Fine Furniture and Fine Craft Show.



Cara Romano, stitched felt earrings: sterling silver with handmade shepherd hook and felted wool base with cotton thread stitching

Orenstein Photography

THE MEN AND WOMEN introduced here represent just a small cross-section of the remarkable roster of jewelry artists working in Maine at this moment. Like their brethren, they exhibit their work in galleries and fairs locally, regionally, nationally, and sometimes internationally. Some share their skills through workshops and demonstrations; some have assistants, others work solo. For each, the mission is the same: to create jewelry that engages the eye of the wearer and the beholder.



MBH&H contributing editor Carl Little is a regular contributor to *Ornament* magazine. He edited *Discovery: Fifty Years of Craft Experience* at Haystack Mountain School of Craft (*University of Maine Press*).

More information about these artists, including upcoming exhibitions and gallery representation:

- www.stephanibriggs.com
- www.epriorjewelry.com
- www.devtadoolan.com
- www.dowstudiodeerisle.com (Ellen Wieske)
- www.michaelgood.com
- www.shawjewelry.com
- www.lafollettegroup.com (Cara Romano)

“Each day I am on a journey through the creative process, a meditation on simple design. I work in limited production runs and one-of-a-kind series, valuing each piece on its own, allowing one body of work to inspire the next.” —CR

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Pierre-Auguste Renoir, 1877, *Vignon à Cagnes (Vue Vignante à Cagnes)* (detail), 1906. Gift of Colonel and Mrs. P.W. Garboch.