

# Edge of the Sublime Enamels by Jamie Bennett

November 3, 2009 – February 28, 2010

Teacher and Student Education Guide



ART | CRAFT | DESIGN  
BELLEVUE ARTS MUSEUM

**Edge of the Sublime: Enamels by Jamie Bennett  
November 3, 2009 – February 28, 2010**

*Edge of the Sublime: Enamels by Jamie Bennett* was organized by **Fuller Craft Museum** in Brockton, Massachusetts; Jeannine Falino, Curator. This exhibition has been partially underwritten by the **Windgate Charitable Foundation, Rotasa Foundation, Art Jewelry Forum, Mr. and Mrs. Ronald D. Abramson, Ms. Barbara N. McFayden and Ms. Susan Beech. Bellevue Arts Museum's** presentation has been curated by Nora Atkinson, Exhibitions Curator and is made possible by **ArtsFund** and the **City of Bellevue**.

Bellevue Arts Museum Education Guides are produced by Patrick McMahon, M.Ed, Education Curator. Teachers and students are welcome to use these guides to supplement museum visits for educational purposes.

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## **About Bellevue Arts Museum**

### **Mission:**

Bellevue Arts Museum is the Pacific Northwest's center for the exploration of art, craft and design through exhibition, educational programs and partnerships, emphasizing the work of regional artists.

### **History:**

The Pacific Northwest Arts and Crafts Association, Bellevue Arts Museum's sponsor, was founded in 1947 with two goals in mind: to promote the artists and crafts people of the region, and to establish a cultural and educational center serving Bellevue and East King County.

The first event sponsored by the Pacific Northwest Arts and Crafts Association was an outdoor art fair presented in Bellevue Square, a regional shopping center, in July 1947. The annual Fair has been held in the same location ever since, and today the **Bellevue Arts Museum artsfair** is the largest and most prominent art event in the Northwest, attracting more than 350,000 visitors each year.

Bellevue Arts Museum was established as an arts museum in 1975. Over the years, the Museum has consistently presented high quality exhibitions that have had a broad regional and/or national impact and has developed a strong reputation as an important showcase for contemporary and traditional art.

Deciding to tap back into the museum's roots as a community art fair, the Board of Trustees hired national craft and design expert Michael Monroe, who had served as curator and then director of the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery of American Craft and Director of the American Craft Council, in 2004 to head the renewed vision of "illuminating and enriching the human spirit through art, craft and design." Since then the Museum has presented 46 world-class exhibitions celebrating high-caliber international and local artists, as well as over 500 free or low-cost educational programs attracting over 50,000 annual visitors.

In 2010, Bellevue Arts Museum will continue its focus on craft and design by both Northwest and internationally renowned artists while expanding its programming and outreach.

## About Bellevue Arts Museum Education Guides

Bellevue Arts Museum is happy to offer education guides that help draw connections between exhibitions and classrooms. The information, activities, and ideas provided in these education guides work best when they are supported by a classroom visit to the Museum and a docent-led tour. Educators are welcome to mold the activities and assessments to fit their specific classroom environments. Educators are allowed to make copies of information related to exhibits provided they are for educational purposes and classroom use.

Thank you for your interest in Bellevue Arts Museum. We look forward to seeing you in our galleries.

Sincerely,

Bellevue Arts Museum  
Education Staff

## Planning Your Visit

**Tour Reservations:** Please schedule your school tour two weeks in advance with Patrick McMahon, Education Curator, at 425.519.0793, or [patrickm@bellevuearts.org](mailto:patrickm@bellevuearts.org).

You can also now reserve a tour through our website. Visit [www.bellevuearts.org/education](http://www.bellevuearts.org/education) for more information.

**School Tour Days & Times:** School tours are generally offered between Mondays and Fridays between 11 am and 3 pm. BAM also reserves the 10 am hour exclusively to scheduled group visits.

**Tour Options:** A typical tour takes approximately 45 minutes total. Please inquire if you might be interested in an optional 45 minute time period in a classroom working on an art project that correlates with the exhibit. We can work with the teacher to provide the best experience for students.

**Confirmation:** After your school tour is scheduled, a docent will contact you to confirm the arrangements and review any special requirements

**World Languages:** Our World Language docents are available to give tours in German, Dutch, Russian, and French.

**Special Needs:** Bellevue Arts Museum is fully accessible for those with special needs. We are willing to make other reasonable accommodations if necessary. Please let us know of any special needs or requirements that will require accommodations when you are scheduling your visit.

**Group Fees (group rates 10+ people):**

- Students/seniors: \$4 per person
- Adults: \$6 per person
- Art Project (Optional): \$2 per student materials fee
- 1 free chaperone is admitted for every 10 students. (20 students = 2 free chaperones, etc.)
- Additional chaperones are welcome at the adult group rate
- All student groups receive 1 free chaperone regardless of size

Please inquire about our sponsored admission for free or reduced lunch recipients.

**Payment options:** We accept cash, checks (payable to Bellevue Arts Museum) Purchase Orders, and the following credit cards: Visa, Mastercard, American Express and Discover.

**Food:** Tours should generally conclude with enough time to return to school for lunch. No food or beverage is allowed in the upstairs galleries. If students plan to bring sack lunches, accommodations may be made in the museum. Also, Bellevue Downtown Park and Bellevue Square are within walking distance of the museum.

**Feedback:** We welcome both affirmative and constructive feedback so I can learn what works well and how we can improve so we can continue to offer the best possible experience for you and your students at Bellevue Arts Museum.

**Transportation/Student Drop off Areas:**

If the cost of school busses is a deterrent, please inquire with the museum for possible reimbursement.

**Busses:**

Thanks to Kemper Development, Bellevue Arts Museum is happy to offer convenient and free bus parking for groups visiting the museum.



**Directions for busses:** Bus parking is adjacent to the Museum’s southern wall. Busses can enter the lot when traveling north on Bellevue Way NE and turning right at the *Scan Design* sign immediately prior to the Bellevue Arts Museum parking sign. This will lead to a lot between the Museum and the old Safeway/ Bartell’s lot. Busses can let off here and park along the red railing for the duration of the group visit. The parking spots are numbered and labeled as *reserved*, however they are not being used. To exit, busses can either turn around and exit onto Bellevue Way NE or pull through the lot and turn onto NE 6th street.

**Carpool:** If you carpool, we offer free parking in our garage.

## About the Exhibition

*Edge of the Sublime* presents a first-ever retrospective of works by Jamie Bennett, one of the most important enamelists working today. This exhibition explores the artist's creative use and development of a variety of enameling and metalworking techniques to produce highly color-saturated imagery on signature brooches, necklaces and pendants. Included are more than 80 ornaments, in addition to paintings and a selection of wall reliefs, sketches and notebooks. Drawings and accompanying texts shed light on the artist's practices, revealing both working processes and conceptual developments.

Over the past 30 years, Bennett's painterly innovations have greatly expanded the field of fired enamel into a medium for contemporary expression. Enameling is an ancient method of decorating metal by sifting or painting enamel powder (finely ground glass) onto a metal surface and then heating the piece with a torch or in a kiln to melt and fuse the glass to the metal. Certain influences are clearly visible in Bennett's work, including his fascination with words and symbols, and his mother's work as a fashion designer/dressmaker.

## About the Artist

Jamie Bennett divided his time growing up between a Pennsylvania suburb and New York City. After a brief period at New York University, he transferred to and graduated from the University of Georgia, Athens with an undergraduate degree in business in 1971. After receiving his BBA, Bennett followed his passion for the arts to the State University of New York (SUNY) at New Paltz, where he devoted himself to becoming a metalsmith. He completed his MFA in 1975, and went on to several teaching positions including a faculty position for the Program in Artisanry at Boston University. He is now a Professor of Art in the Metal Program at his alma mater, SUNY at New Paltz. His work is included in the collections of over 20 museums around the world, including: the Victoria & Albert Museum, London; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; Musée de Arts décoratifs, Paris; Museum of Arts & Design, New York; and the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.

### Appointments

1985-Present: Professor, SUNY New Paltz  
2002-2004: Chair, Art Department, SUNY New Paltz  
1999-2005: Graduate Coordinator, SUNY New Paltz  
1980-1985: Professor Boston University  
1976-1978, 1980: Professor, Memphis Art Academy  
1974-1976: Professor, Bradley University, Peoria, Illinois

## Exhibition Wall Text

### Edge of the Sublime: Enamels by Jamie Bennett

With paint, pencil, and powdered glass enameled on metal, Jamie Bennett achieves uncommonly poetic effects expressed in floral and patterned imagery, using a sensuous touch to create surface interest. An iconoclast, Bennett has challenged the paradigms of traditional jewelry forms and hierarchies of art. Over a career that now spans more than thirty years, Bennett has become an internationally acclaimed artist and innovator in the world of contemporary jewelry and enamel.

*Edge of the Sublime* represents the first-ever retrospective of works by Bennett, exploring the artist's creative use and development of a variety of enameling and metalworking techniques which have made him one of the most significant enamellists working today. Sketchbooks, paintings, drawings, and wall sculptures, exhibited alongside Bennett's enamels, give a sense of the artist's practices and offer a glimpse into both his working process and conceptual developments.

Bennett first established his international reputation in 1986 when he produced enameled jewelry using unique, electroformed shapes, but it is also the rich color palette and imagery he employs, freed by his technical advances, that bring his signature brooches, necklaces, and pendants alive. Revealing far more than mere mastery of medium, Bennett's painterly sensitivity and lyrical subjects have greatly expanded the field of fired enamel as a medium of contemporary expression. Among the influences

clearly visible in Bennett's work are his fascination with words and symbols, and his mother's work as a fashion designer/dressmaker.

Curated by Jeannine Falino, former Carolyn and Peter Lynch Curator of Decorative Arts, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *Edge of the Sublime* debuted at Fuller Craft Museum in Massachusetts before traveling to Bellevue Arts Museum and other museums nationwide.

## Wall Quotes

“It is important to me that the work, the physical object, is sensual; the work itself, not just the image on the work or the idea of the work. Being sensual means that they are active, alive, stirring, they are vulnerable and revealing... Hopefully it is not just a matter of understanding, but also [of] being involuntarily stirred.”

- **Jamie Bennett**

“The sketchbooks represent scattered parts and pieces of a puzzle. If the sketchbooks have a theme, it is their very lack of any single coherent pictorial subject or overridingly consistent textual narrative. What is evermore pronounced is a diverse and disjunctive experience of the world—a sense that things do not always fit together in a logical pattern or expected fashion.”

- **Karl Emil Willers**

“...the word *ornament* is a synonym for *jewelry*, and Bennett has been instrumental in bringing the term and its various meanings back into currency.”

- **Jeannine Falino**

“What makes a poem a poem...is that it is unparaphrasable. There is no other [way] to say exactly this; it exists only in its own body of language, only in these words... It’s the same with painting. All I can say of still life must finally fall short; I may inventory, weigh, suggest, but I cannot circumscribe; some element of mystery will always be left out.”

- **Mark Doty, *Still Life with Oysters and Lemons***

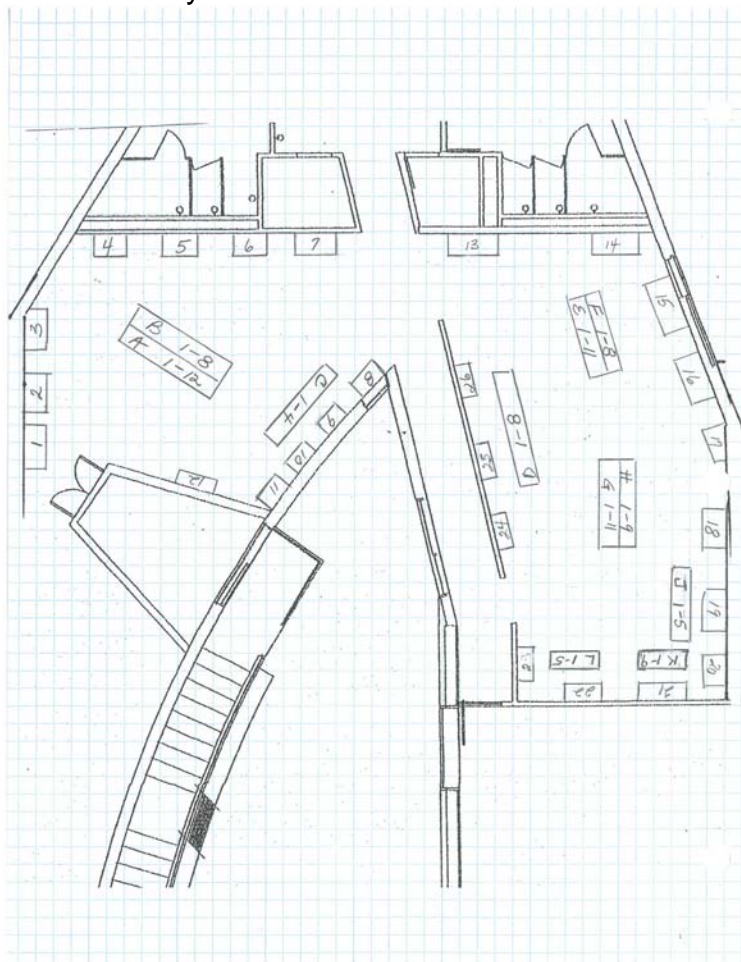
“I want to disturb the forms of jewelry—redefine the idea of appropriate emotive jewelry.”

- **Jamie Bennett**

“Bennett explores the endless and often eccentric ways that, through the collection and display of objects of desire, memory, longing, and loss, we can make meaning in domestic space.”

- **Patricia C. Phillips**

## Exhibition Layout



## Helpful Web Links

- <http://www.siennagallery.com/artist-bio.php?artistID>
- [http://www.taboostudio.com/artist\\_pages/j\\_bennett\\_as.htm](http://www.taboostudio.com/artist_pages/j_bennett_as.htm)
- <http://www.newpaltz.edu/metal/people.cfm#Jamie>
- <http://www.ramart.org/ram/Jamie-Bennett.html>
- [http://books.google.com/books?id=q7D7aBfF2zsC&dq=artist+Jamie+Bennett&printsec=frontcover&source=in&hl=en&ei=amvLStbZi5KEswPB24CVAQ&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=11#v=onepage&q=artist%20Jamie%20Bennett&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=q7D7aBfF2zsC&dq=artist+Jamie+Bennett&printsec=frontcover&source=in&hl=en&ei=amvLStbZi5KEswPB24CVAQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=11#v=onepage&q=artist%20Jamie%20Bennett&f=false)
- [http://www.bellevuearts.org/exhibitions/upcoming/jamie\\_bennett.htm](http://www.bellevuearts.org/exhibitions/upcoming/jamie_bennett.htm)
- <http://www.newpaltz.edu/faces/nov06/jamiebennett.html>
- [http://www.92y.org/content/pdf/NYCArts\\_JamieBennett\\_CV.pdf](http://www.92y.org/content/pdf/NYCArts_JamieBennett_CV.pdf)
- [http://www.ornamentmagazine.com/se\\_jamie\\_bennett.html](http://www.ornamentmagazine.com/se_jamie_bennett.html)
- <http://www.sofaexpo.com?NY/2008/lect.htm>

## **ARTS**

### **1. The Student understands and applies arts knowledge and skills.**

- 1.1 Understand and apply arts styles from various artists, cultures, and times.
- 1.3 Understand arts concepts and vocabulary

### **2. The student demonstrates thinking skills using artistic processes.**

- 2.1 Apply a creative process in the arts: conceptualize the context or purpose, gather information from diverse sources, develop ideas and techniques, organize arts elements, forms, and/or principles into a creative work, reflect for the purpose of elaboration and self evaluation, refine work based on feedback, present work to others.

Apply a responding process to an arts presentation: engage actively and purposefully, describe what is seen and/or heard, analyze how the elements are arranged and organized, interpret based on descriptive properties, evaluate using supportive evidence and criteria.

### **4. The student makes connections within and across the arts, to other disciplines, life, cultures, and work.**

- 4.1 Demonstrate and analyze the connection among the arts disciplines.
- 4.2 Demonstrate and analyze the connection between the arts and other content areas.
- 4.3 Understand how the arts impact lifelong choices.
- 4.4 Understand that the arts shape and reflect culture and history.
- 4.5 Demonstrate knowledge of arts careers and the role of the arts skills in the world of work.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **1. The student uses listening and observation skills and strategies to gain understanding.**

To meet this standard, the student:

- 1.1 Uses listening and observation skills and strategies to focus attention and interpret information.
- 1.2 Understands, analyzes, synthesizes, or evaluates information from a variety of sources.

**Project:** Sand Enamels

**Exhibition Link:** Edge of the Sublime: Enamels by Jamie Bennett

**Grade Level:** 2-8

**Time:** 30 - 45 minutes

### Overview & Rationale

The enameling process starts with pulverized or powdered glass that is then poured into a defined area with a metal back. The piece is then fired in a kiln where the glass fuses and creates the enameled surface. In this project kids will explore the process of enameling without using actual enamels. Instead they will have a simple pattern drawing and pour sand into the different cells to create their sand drawing that is created very similarly to enameled jewelry.

### Objectives

- Students will be able to describe the process of creating enamels.
- Students will demonstrate control over artistic mediums
- Additionally, the project works towards the following Essential Academic Learning Requirements in the Arts.
  - ✓ 1.1                      ✓ 2.1                      ✓ 4.1
  - ✓ 1.3                      ✓ 2.3

### Materials Required:

- Paper
- Pencils
- Colored Sand
- Glue with brushes
- Pattern sample copies
- Plates for catching excess sand

### Tasks

1. Visit Edge of the Sublime: Enamels by Jamie Bennett
2. Discuss the overview and rationale of the project referring back to the exhibition and the process of enameling
3. Show students completed sample of project
4. Invite them to use one of the sample designs or create their own. Tips: The smaller the field or more detailed, the more difficult it will be to place the sand and glue accurately.
5. Once a drawing is created (or chosen from the samples) have students pick a section and smear glue in only that section.
6. Pour a small amount of sand over the glued section. Shake the rest onto a paper plate or other receptacle so it can be reused.
7. Repeat this process with the remaining sections until the entire piece is covered with sand.

### Assessment Options

Host a critique and have students discuss their use of colors and/or their design.

Have students compare this process to actual enameling and see if they can identify the differences.

### Modifications/Adaptations

Older audiences would benefit from creating their own designs, whereas younger ones would be more likely to complete the project with pre-made patterns.

**Project:** Embossed Jewelry

**Exhibition Link:** Edge of the Sublime: Enamels by Jamie Bennett

**Grade Level:** 3 - 8

**Time:** 30 - 45 minutes

### Overview & Rationale

Jamie Bennett explores questions of ornamentation and decorative jewelry. Many of his pieces would not fit one's traditional description of jewelry, yet they are intended to be worn. With this project students will be able to create their own art jewelry using embossing powder to add shine and texture.

### Objectives

- Students will identify characteristics of jewelry.
- Students will demonstrate creativity in their jewelry making.
- Students will show understanding of artistic processes including planning, sketching, and creating.
- Additionally, the project works towards the following Essential Academic Learning Requirements in the Arts.
  - 1.1
  - 1.3
  - 2.1
  - 2.3
  - 4.1

### Materials Required:

- Cardstock
- Yarn/String
- Glue
- Embossing Powder
- Embossing Tool
- Stamps
- Ink Pads
- Scissors
- Scratch paper
- Pencils

### Tasks

1. Visit Edge of the Sublime: Enamels by Jamie Bennett looking at the question of ornamentation.
2. Discuss project overview with students.
3. Begin lesson with a group discussion to try and identify characteristics/requirements of jewelry. Can it be any material? Does it have to be worn? Is there a size limit? Etc. Possibly display some samples and have the students assess if these would qualify as "jewelry".
4. Demonstrate the process of embossing using stamps and an embossing tool. (embossing tool gets hot and should be reserved for adult use)
5. Show students some examples of how they could turn their pieces into different types of jewelry – bracelets, necklaces, brooches.
6. Allow students to sketch some designs out if they wish.
7. Let them stamp on the cardstock and sprinkle a little embossing powder onto the ink while it is still wet. Then have an adult hold the embossing tool over the stamp and the students can watch as the powder fuses and raises off the surface of the cardstock.
8. Students can then, cut the pieces, add other decorations and create pieces of simple jewelry using their work.

**Assessment Options**

Host a critique and have students introduce and discuss their jewelry pieces.

Have students write a definition of jewelry.

**Modifications/Adaptations**

This project will work well with both older and younger students, although older student work will have more opportunity for detail and creative designs.

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR BUS REIMBURSEMENT**

Bellevue Arts Museum can reimburse a limited number of schools up to \$200 to help defray the costs of bus transportation to and from the museum.

Please indicate when you are scheduling your tour that you are also applying for bus reimbursement. Mail/Email/Fax the necessary information to Bellevue Arts Museum Attn: Education Curator.

### **To apply:**

Submit a brief introduction written either by teacher or student(s) that identifies the class being served, why you are visiting Bellevue Arts Museum, how a museum visit will benefit your class and why your group desires bus reimbursement.

### **OR**

Include completed "Bus Reimbursement Application"

### **What is required after visit:**

- Invoice/Receipt that lists the cost of the bus used on the day of the field trip (after field trip has occurred - this is usually attainable through school or district)
- Return post-visit survey
- Post-visit statements by at least 5 students and teacher
  - For example: I enjoyed my visit because....; I learned....;
- Thank you card or letter to be given to reimbursement sponsor (to be identified later)

## BUS REIMBURSEMENT APPLICATION

Class:

Ages of students:

School:

Address:

District:

How many TOTAL people will be served by this field trip (includes teachers, chaperones, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

How many STUDENTS will be served by this field trip? \_\_\_\_\_

1. Why is your class interested in visiting Bellevue Arts Museum?

2. How will this visit benefit your class?

3. How will this visit help attain curricular objectives?

4. Why is your class seeking reimbursement for transportation costs?

## **FEEDBACK FORMS**

The Museum strives to provide an enriching educational experience for students and teachers. We welcome your positive feedback as well as constructive suggestions so we can continue to offer strong extension opportunities for classrooms and make our programs and exhibitions accessible and easily integrated into class settings.

Please fill out one of the included feedback forms and mail/fax it to the Museum, c/o Education Curator. You can also send an email to [patrickm@bellevuearts.org](mailto:patrickm@bellevuearts.org).

## EDUCATION GUIDE FEEDBACK

Thank you for your interest in Bellevue Arts Museum. We appreciate your feedback. Please mail or fax this form to Education Curator at 510 Bellevue Way NE, Bellevue, WA, 98004. 425-637-1799 (fax)

Education Guide

Used: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Name

(optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Class used with:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

Did your class tour the museum?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

1. Please comment on the education guide's usefulness to your class.

2. Did you use or adapt any of the suggested assessment options from this guide?

3. Please comment on the organization of the education guide.

4. Do you feel this exhibition and education guide provided opportunities for higher-level thinking?

5. Please offer any other comments or suggestions.

## GROUP TOUR EVALUATION

Bellevue Arts Museum thanks you for your participation in a docent-led exhibition tour. Please complete the following questionnaire in order to help us evaluate and improve our tours.

Your Name (optional)

---

Group Name (optional)

---

Docent's Name (optional)

---

Tour Date

---

How did you hear about our exhibitions?

What factor/factors influenced your decision to visit Bellevue Arts Museum?

What did you/the group like best about the tour?

What did you/the group like least about the tour?

Please Circle:

### Ease of Scheduling

Difficult ----- Easy  
1      2      3      4      5

### Friendliness of Museum Staff

Not at all ----- Extremely  
1      2      3      4      5

### How did you enjoy your tour?

Not at all ----- Extremely  
1      2      3      4      5

### How beneficial was your tour?

Not at all ----- Extremely  
1      2      3      4      5

Please share any other insights or suggestions you have.

If you are interested in receiving information regarding future educational opportunities at Bellevue Arts Museum, please provide your email below.

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## FOR STUDENTS

### Terms

Artist Jamie Bennett uses the technique of enameling to fuse glass to a metal surface. This is an ancient method of decorating metal. The artist may sift the enamel powder, which is finely ground glass, onto the metal surface or mix it with water or oil and then paint it onto the metal. The piece is then heated with a torch or in a kiln to melt and fuse the glass to the metal.

**Electroforming**—The artist often works with a process called electroforming to create three dimensional pieces to enamel. A wax shape is suspended in a tank filled with water that has minute copper metal particles in solution. An electric current passes through the solution causing the metal particles to build up in layers over the original wax shape. The metal coated wax form is removed from the solution, the shape is then heated melting the wax, and then the wax is poured out, leaving a hollow metal form ready for enameling

**Enameling**— Enameling is the process of fusing glass to metal. A thin layer of finely ground glass is applied to a metal and heated in a hot kiln until the glass flows into a smooth glossy surface. It is then removed, cooled and reapplied, often many

times. Enameling is an art form offering a wide variety of techniques, color palette and exploration to the artist.

**Cloisonné** is probably the most well known of all enameling techniques. The term “cloisonné” comes from the French word cloison meaning an enclosed area or cell. Thin strips of wire are applied to an enameled surface in a design and fired until they sink. Various colors of enamel are then inlaid in and around the wires and re-fired

**Champlevé** offers a recessed technique applied to metal. It is achieved by the use of acid etching, engraving, embossing, electroforming or fabrication. The enamels are then inlaid into the design.

**Plique-à-Jour** is a beautiful technique offering the look of a stained glass window by using transparent enamels without a metal back.

## Looking Closer



Jamie Bennett  
*Coral Tesserae* (neckpiece), 1984  
Collection of Donna Schneier  
Photo: Dean Powell

Use the image to the left to think about and answer the following questions.

- Is this a piece you would consider wearing. Why or why not?
- How does this piece use cloisonné? (look at the definition on the previous page?)
- List 5 words that can describe the design on this piece.
- Bennett often thinks of his pieces as miniature paintings that you wear. What elements of this piece might lead you to that description?

## Looking Closer



Jamie Bennett  
*Florilegium I*  
Collection of Anne and Ronald Abramson  
Photos: Kevin Sprague

Use the image to the left to think about and answer the following questions.

- Describe the imagery in this piece.
- How would you wear this piece as jewelry?
- On a scale of 1 – 10 (10 is highest) how difficult do you think this piece would be to make and why?
- What do you think the back of the piece looks like?