

PRESS RELEASE
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(photos available)



Bellevue Arts Museum Presents a Retrospective
Look at Four Decades of Jewelry Created by
Northwest Artist Ron Ho
September 21, 2006 - February 18, 2007

Bellevue, WA – Bellevue Arts Museum presents the exhibition *Dim Sum at the On-On Tea Room: The Jewelry of Ron Ho* on view at Bellevue Arts Museum starting September 21st. This exhibition celebrates the work of Northwest jewelry artist Ron Ho. Ho has been a fixture in the community as an artist, collector and teacher, whose interest in creating jewelry was heavily influenced by the late Ramona Solberg, a Northwest artist. This retrospective exhibition leads the audience through a collection of approximately 50 jewelry pieces – necklaces and pendants – spanning four decades of the artist’s creative work. From the first and pivotal piece *All Fall Down*, created in 1969 under the influence of Ramona Solberg’s found-object pieces, to the necklaces inspired by his travels throughout Asian countries such as Afghanistan, Thailand, Nepal, Vietnam and Indonesia, the exhibition explores the artist’s maturation of a sensibility for the Asian world and the coming to terms with his Chinese heritage.

By using materials enriched by cultural associations (jade as found in carved Chinese buttons; the Eskimo ivory of fishing harpoons; the African ebony of wooden beads), or by referring to a visual vocabulary of

objects deeply bound to cultural customs and traditions (Chinese chairs and food, profiles of dragons and Asian temples), Ho's work delivers an experience of exoticism charged with suggestions of his cultural origins mixed with other cultural iconography . This is critical in underpinning the relevance of Ho's exhibition, particularly its relevance in Seattle and the Pacific Northwest, a region also bonded to its own pervasive mix of cultures.

“This exhibition provides museum visitors the opportunity to explore the artist's exceptional expression, imbued by his lifelong quest for place and placement. Trans-cultural identity is paramount in understanding Ho's composition, especially in consideration of his personal quest for cultural roots.” said Michael Monroe, Director “ This reflects his search for ‘becoming Chinese’ – a journey back to a cultural sphere to which to belong.”

Visitors will find a display of extensive text and images that provide informative, historical context illustrating the maturation of Ho's culture sensibility and artistic evolution, linking his work to his cultural and educational roots and providing an appropriate overview for his contribution to the field.

“Our intention is to celebrate the fertile tradition of contemporary jewelry in the Northwest.” said Curator Stefano Catalani. “The found-object style was established and brought to national attention by the seminal work of such extraordinary jewelers and teachers such as Ramona Solberg and Ruth Pennington. Ron Ho was greatly influenced by his dynamic teacher, Solberg, which changed the course of his artistic career, switching his allegiance from painting to jewelry.”

Born in 1936 in Hawaii, and raised by parents who had been brought up in traditional Chinese families, Ron Ho experienced from childhood the contrasts between, and idiosyncrasies of, the adherence to old Chinese beliefs and the American lifestyle. At the same time, the cultural diversity of the Hawaiian ethnic landscape nourished the young Ron Ho's fascination for other cultures and their material expressions, later to become a relevant part of his artistic practice.

Ho is an honored art educator and has taught art in the Bellevue School District for 32 years at all levels. Ho completed his public school career as an elementary art specialist and now continues to teach in schools in the region as a Seattle and King County Arts Commission artist-in-residence and recently with the Tacoma Art Museum's National Endowment for the Arts Grant in conjunction with their Ken Cory jewelry exhibit. He is also the recipient of several distinguished art educator honors, including: one of the

"100 Outstanding Alumni" and "Distinguished Alumnus of the Year" by Pacific Lutheran University, the "Pacific Regional Elementary Art Educator of the Year" by the National Art Education Association, "Washington State Elementary Art Educator of the Year" by the Washington State Art Education Association, and the "Asian Artist of the Year" by the Wing Luke Asian Art Museum.

Bellevue Arts Museum has produced a catalog to accompany the exhibition, a high quality off-set printing, case bound, hardcover publication with 50 color plates and 20 small black and white images. The publication includes an introduction by Stefano Catalani, curator at Bellevue Arts Museum, and an essay by noted curator and arts writer Ben Mitchell. The exhibition has been organized by Bellevue Arts Museum and is sponsored in part by the Rotasa Foundation, Friends of Ron Ho and media sponsor KUOW 94.9.

Related Educational Programs:

Friday, November 3

Walking Tour with Curator Stefano Catalani

Take a walking tour of the exhibition *Dim Sum at the On-On Tea Room: The Jewelry of Ron Ho* with Museum Curator Stefano Catalani. Catalani will take visitors through the show and talk about the distinct style of this Northwest jeweler, providing a rare glimpse behind the scenes of creating and showcasing a major jewelry exhibition.

Free with admission

Meet at 7:00pm in the Museum Forum

Sunday, November 5

Captured Memories Jewelry Sculpture Workshop

Artist/Instructor: Larry Calkins

Join Artist/Instructor Larry Calkins for this hands-on jewelry sculpture workshop for all ages. Visit the exhibition *Dim Sum at the On-On Tea Room: The Jewelry of Ron Ho* to see how one artist created a series of memory assemblages and jewelry pieces from found objects. Then try your hand at making a jewelry piece based on your own life memories. You'll leave with a piece to wear, a lifetime treasure. Please register in advance by calling (425)519-0770.

\$10.00 Non-Members/\$8.00 Members

Museum Forum

12:00 – 3:00pm

Friday, November 17

Style, Silver and Sensibility : A Conversation with Jewelry Artist, Ron Ho

View *Dim Sum at the On-On Tea Room: The Jewelry of Ron Ho* and then join us for an informative slide lecture with the Artist and Michael Monroe, Executive Director and Chief Curator of Bellevue Arts Museum. The Artist has chosen a few of his distinctive jewelry pieces to discuss. An unusual opportunity to hear an artist at the peak of his career. The artist will be available to sign exhibition catalogs after the lecture.

\$7.00 Non-Members/\$5.00 Members

Museum Auditorium

7:00pm

Bellevue Arts Museum

Bellevue Arts Museum is the Pacific Northwest's center for the exploration of the fine art of craft and design. An emphasis is placed on regional craft artists as part of the national and international conversation on fine craft and design. Bellevue Arts Museum is located at 510 Bellevue Way NE, Bellevue, WA 98004. The Museum's main information line is 425.519.0770 and website is www.bellevuearts.org

For more information: Renate Raymond, Bellevue Arts Museum, 425.519.0754 or renater@bellevuearts.org

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