

PRESS RELEASE**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 1, 2007

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Esther Knobel
Daisy Wire, 1993 (detail)
Silver and 18k gold
7 1/2 x 7 1/2 x 1 1/4 inches
Photo: Michael Tropea, Chicago

**Bellevue Arts Museum
hosts a major Israeli Jewelry Exhibition**

***Women's Tales:
Four Leading Israeli Jewelers***

March 8-June 17, 2007

Bellevue, WA-Bellevue Arts Museum presents the exhibition *Women's Tales: Four Leading Israeli Jewelers*, the first comprehensive study of Israeli contemporary jewelry to focus on the careers of four of its leading women jewelers, featuring 127 jewelry pieces. The exhibition began a national and international tour and Bellevue Arts Museum is one of only three cities in the United States hosting the exhibition before beginning its European tour in 2008-09. The exhibition will close at The Israel Museum, Jerusalem during 2009-2010.

Women's Tales: Four Leading Israeli Jewelers is the first in-depth study of the works of leading jewelry artists **Bianca Eshel-Gershuni, Vered Kaminski, Esther Knobel, and Deganit Stern Schocken**. Each of these artists has played a critical role in forging an Israeli identity in the contemporary jewelry movement, one that is distinctive of Europe and America and their work has brought international attention to a country that was previously largely unrecognized for its contribution to contemporary jewelry. All four artists were trained in Europe and looked for inspiration in other European contemporary jewelry, which has a focus on non-precious materials. These four artists work is uniquely autobiographical, reflecting their womanhood, being wives and/or a mothers living in Israel and strongly impacted by its culture.

In her seventies **Bianca Eshel-Gershuni** is the eldest of the four jewelry makers, and her works are full of expressive emotion and personal statements by combining precious and common materials she frequently conveys her feelings of being a victim of lost love and war. The artist **Vered Kaminski** painstakingly employs the labor intensive processes of jewelry making to create works that focus on pattern and reflect life in Jerusalem both its multiculturalism as well as the actual physical geography. **Esther Knobel's** jewelry is all about her memories; she combines images of the familiar, sometimes even employing found objects, with innovative functional solutions to create body adornment that deals with color, pattern and references her family and her daily life in Israel. **Deganit Stern Schocken's** jewelry is inspired by her ongoing investigation of the meaning of jewelry and its relationship to the body itself. The pieces show the influence of her lifelong passion for architecture and city planning, in particular for Tel Aviv's well known modernist buildings.

“The exhibition of these four Israeli artists is revolutionary in the fact that the visitor will gain a sense of the past and present everyday life in Israel. Each artist's work can be considered not only a personal adornment item but a small tableau representing a unique story, event or memory of that maker,” Michael Monroe, Executive Director, “ Each piece is elegant and demands to be worn even without the existence of precious materials.”

Accompanying the show is a 128-page fully illustrated book enhanced with stunning photography by the well-known Chicago photographer, Michael Tropea, it consists of essays by Alex Ward, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem Curator of Design and Architecture; Davira S. Taragin, Racine Art Museum's Director of Exhibitions and Programs; and Helen W. Drutt English, independent curator, art historian, dealer and collector who is considered one of America's leading experts on contemporary jewelry. The exhibition catalog was co-produced by the Israel Museum, Jerusalem and the Racine Art Museum.

This exhibition is organized by The Israel Museum, Jerusalem (IMJ) and the Racine Art Museum (RAM). *IMJ and RAM are grateful for the following sponsors:* Association of Israel's Decorative Arts (AIDA). AIDA was founded by Dale and Doug Anderson and Andrea and Charles Bronfman to foster the development of contemporary decorative artists from Israel by connecting them to an international audience of galleries, institutions, and collectors; International Partnership Among Museums (IPAM), which is administered by the

American Association of Museums (AAM) and funded by the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA); SC Johnson; Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin; Racine United Arts Fund; Racine Community Foundation; Karen and William Boyd; Elwood Corporation; Doron and Marianne Livnat, Holland; Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago; Knight-Barry Title; Bruce and Ann Bachmann; Bank of Elmwood; Sonny and Diane Fixler; Design Partners; Members of the RAM Society and other donors to the Racine Art Museum.

This exhibition is dedicated to the memory of Andrea Bronfman, whose devotion to Israel and to the advancement of the fields of contemporary art and craft in Israel lies at the heart of this collaboration.

Educational Programs:

Saturday, March 17

Israeli Jeweler Demonstration, Iris Guy Sofer

Born in Israel, Iris Guy Sofer began studying conceptual design at an early age. Her avid interest in the field led to her formal study at the renowned Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem. She will be demonstrating how to create her unique hand-embroidered woven designs featuring earth stones. A walk through of the *Women's Tales: Four Leading Israeli Jewelers* exhibition will encourage visitors to ask Sofer questions about technique.

Bellevue Arts Museum Forum

12-2 pm

Free with admission

Saturday, March 31

Byzantine Chain Bracelet Making Workshop

Instructor: Julia Lowther

Jewelry artist Julia Lowther teaches you to make a Byzantine chain bracelet in this short workshop. You will learn to link sterling silver jump-rings into this versatile and alluring pattern. The knotted and entwined finished appearance belies how easy it is to make. Leave with amazing jewelry to wear! No experience necessary. Moderate patience and hand-eye coordination required. Enrollment is limited. Call 425.519.0770 to reserve your place.

Bellevue Arts Museum Classroom

12-3 pm

\$36 Members/\$46 Non-members; Materials Fee of \$30 payable on registration

Saturday and Sunday, April 21 and 22

Knitting + Persian & Open Maille Chains: Two Day Workshop

Instructor: Julia Lowther

Learn the Viking knitting technique to create a knitted wire tube in delicate gauge fine (pure) silver wire, using fingers and minimal tools. Next, learn to wind and cut jump-rings of sterling silver, and learn to link them into the chic Persian and Open Maille chains. The delicate interwoven globes of the Persian chain are very feminine, while the stylish open lattice of the Open Maille chain appeals to men as well as women. Because just a few simple hand tools are required to make a very diverse selection of patterns, chain making is a relatively portable activity with lots of potential. No experience necessary. Moderate patience and hand-eye coordination required. Enrollment is limited. Call 425.519.0770 to reserve your place.

Saturday: 10 am – 3 pm

Sunday: 11 am – 4 pm

Bellevue Arts Museum Classroom

\$100 Members/\$110 Non-members
Materials Fee of \$55 payable on registration

Bellevue Arts Museum

Bellevue Arts Museum is the Pacific Northwest's center for the exploration of the fine art of craft and design through exhibitions, partnerships and education activities with an emphasis 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. Admission price \$7 adults and \$5 for seniors and \$5 students. 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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