



1: Gallery Loupe

Each newsletter we will be introducing you to one of the galleries that has joined AJF to support and promote contemporary jewelry. This month's AJF Questionnaire has been answered by Eileen David of Gallery Loupe. (To visit the gallery website, [click here.](#))

Where did your gallery name come from, and what does it mean?



2: Patti Bleicher and Eileen David of Gallery Loupe

Eileen David: When it came to naming the gallery, we were drawn to the image of a loupe – a magnifying lens through which otherwise unseen details become apparent. We see the loupe as a wonderful metaphor for the world of contemporary art jewelry – a world where perceptions are altered and the unexpected is revealed the longer and deeper you look through it.

How long has the gallery been open?

We opened the gallery in September 2006, so our sixth anniversary is coming up soon.

What kind of town is Montclair and what's it like being so close to New York?

Montclair is a 'Manhattan-minded' town – that's not quite in Manhattan. It is actually located less than 15 miles from midtown with easy bus and train access. It's known for its diverse population and eclectic, progressive character. Montclair has two downtown areas with many interesting non-chain stores, some of the best restaurants in New Jersey, charming coffee houses, galleries and antique shops. It's a town with a great deal of culture including the Montclair Art Museum, an Indie movie theatre, the well-known Wellmont Theatre and other great destination spots. It really is the ideal town for a gallery specializing in contemporary art jewelry.



3: Gallery Loupe

Where did your interest in contemporary jewelry come from?



4: Patti wearing George Rickey earrings

I've loved jewelry from as far back as I can remember. In fact, I still vividly remember the feeling I had when I purchased my very first 'piece' – a 'diamond engagement ring' from Woolworth . . . \$1.50. As time went on, I became somewhat bored by the jewelry I was seeing and started to search for more unusual pieces. While on a trip out West, I discovered a piece by Marjorie Simon at a small gallery. It was a silver brooch with a found watch face and stones. On the side of the brooch is written: 'The Past Was Close Behind.' Once I found out that the artist was located in New Jersey I felt compelled to contact her and let her know how much I was enjoying her piece. I had an enlightening conversation with Marjorie which led me to other artists' work and a complete passion for the field. Fast-forward almost two decades . . . so much has happened and yet . . . the past still feels close behind.

How do you explain to someone who doesn't know anything about contemporary jewelry what exactly it is that you sell in the gallery?

When I introduce someone to the world of contemporary art jewelry, the point I try to get across is that this work is created by artists who have chosen jewelry as the medium for their artistic expression – in the same way some artists might choose painting, sculpture or other art forms. I explain that unlike commercial jewelry that is often driven by the value of precious materials, art jewelry is driven by ideas, experimentation with materials and by the artist's interest in initiating a dialogue about what 'jewelry' is – and what it can be.

The contemporary jewelry world is a broad church, with many congregations. If the whole scene were crowded together in a room, which groups would you tend to gravitate to?

In truth, I could probably 'pray' very sincerely amid many congregations . . . but, if you're asking me to gravitate to one specifically, it would be the congregation that believes in the importance of actually wearing the pieces – of bringing them out into the world and letting people see them, react to them, ask about them. Art jewelry is unlike any other art form in that it can be worn – what a shame to miss that opportunity. Also, exploring the relationship between the wearer and the object is a fascinating part of contemporary jewelry. Losing that personal connection is sort of like leaving out a few sentences in a story. It can still be a wonderful story but it's not the whole story.



5: Attai Chen, *Compound Fraction Series Brooch*

Do you show jewelry from other countries as well as American work? Do you think there is much difference?

We show both American and international work and have given a great deal of thought to this question. If there is in fact, a difference, it is primarily discernable within the context of a group show in which all the artists are from a given country. We have had four such shows with specific themes, from Sweden, Holland, Israel and Australia. Presented as a 'nation specific' exhibition, one can definitely argue that there are distinct threads of commonality that do in fact emerge. However, on an artist-by-artist basis, it's harder to make that argument. With today's ability to instantly exchange what is being taught and seen on the global stage, the lines are blurred and it is increasingly more difficult to categorize contemporary jewelry by where in the world it is being made.



6: Georg Dobler, *Cosmic Energy Neckpiece*, papier mâché

What are the three most interesting pieces of jewelry you've seen lately?

- 1) Georg Dobler, *Cosmic Energy Neckpiece*, papier mâché
- 2) Attai Chen, *Compound Fraction Series Brooch*
- 3) George Rickey, *Earrings*