April 9, 2018, New Haven, Conn.—The Yale University Art Gallery is pleased to present an installation of 16 pieces of American studio jewelry from the 1930s to the present day, a promised gift of Toni Wolf Greenbaum. Greenbaum is a New York–based art historian specializing in 20th- and 21st-century jewelry and metalwork. She is the author of Messengers of Modernism: American Studio Jewelry, 1940–1960 and is currently writing a monograph on modernist jeweler Sam Kramer. Greenbaum has lectured internationally and has curated exhibitions for several museums. She is also an associate professor at Pratt Institute, in Brooklyn, where she teaches a course in theory and criticism of contemporary jewelry.

The works from Greenbaum’s collection—all of which she has worn and enjoyed—are installed in the galleries for modern and contemporary design, on the museum’s third floor. They expand upon the Gallery’s existing jewelry holdings, presenting further evidence of the vital role of jewelry within the context of 20th-century and contemporary American decorative arts. Studio jewelers design and fabricate one-of-a-kind or limited edition pieces in a studio, rather than factory, setting. The pieces on view are made from a variety of substances, including aluminum, brass, enamel, paint, plastic, repurposed objects, silver, and tin, and they demonstrate techniques such as hammering, chasing, assembling, anodizing, patinating, and mokume gane (a Japanese metalworking technique that uses mixed metals to produce a distinctive layered pattern resembling wood grain). The gift brings new artists to the Gallery’s collection, among them Harriete Estel Berman, Peter Macchiarini, and Art Smith.

Greenbaum has said, “Jewelry is my profession, and I've written and lectured on its history for the past 35 years. Jewelry is also my passion, and my commitment to it extends beyond the academic to include collecting. I believe jewelry to be a key societal marker, as almost everyone wears some form of jewelry. Jewelry has the power to convey more information about its owner than almost any other object. In fact, through my studies I have found jewelry to be one of the most
revealing signifiers of the human experience. Jewelry also forges a relationship of unparalleled intimacy between the maker, user, and viewer. After all, jewelry is worn close to the body and involves not only sight, and sometimes sound, but touch as well.”

The public is invited to the Gallery on Thursday, May 31, at 5:30 pm, for a lecture by Greenbaum titled “Wearing Your Heart on Your Sleeve: Jewelry as Cultural Marker.”

On View
Through August 26, 2018

Related Programs

Gallery Talk
Wednesday, June 27, 12:30 pm
“Social, Political, Personal: Jewelry from the 18th Century to Today”
Caryne Eskridge, the Marcia Brady Tucker Senior Fellow, American Decorative Arts

Lecture
Thursday, May 31, 5:30 pm
“Wearing Your Heart on Your Sleeve: Jewelry as Cultural Marker”
Toni Wolf Greenbaum, jewelry historian and associate professor, Pratt Institute

All programs are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted. For more detailed programming information, visit artgallery.yale.edu/calendar.

Yale University Art Gallery
The Yale University Art Gallery, the oldest college art museum in the United States, was founded in 1832 when the patriot-artist John Trumbull gave more than 100 of his paintings to Yale College. Since then its collections have grown to more than 200,000 objects ranging in date from ancient times to the present.

General Information
The Yale University Art Gallery is located at 1111 Chapel Street, New Haven, Connecticut. Museum hours: Tuesday–Friday, 10 am–5 pm; Thursday until 8 pm (September–June); and Saturday–Sunday, 11 am–5 pm. The Gallery is closed Mondays and major holidays. Free and open to the public. For general information, please call 203.432.0600 or visit the website at artgallery.yale.edu.
Press Contacts
Joellen Adae, Director of Communications, 203.432.0611, joellen.adae@yale.edu

Janet Sullivan, Communications Coordinator, 203.436.4666, janet.sullivan@yale.edu