

Focus on Fine Art Metals

Gabrielle Rudig, Liza Hardy, Emily McComsey, Mary Kay Witmer & Oscar McDonah

Abstract

The Advanced Metals Students exhibit showcases of Gabrielle Rudig, Mary Kay Witmer, Oscar McDonah, Emily McComsey, and Liza Hardy, who have come together to form a creative community of students who share an appreciation of jewelry and metalsmithing. With common goals of learning new techniques and honing existing skills, this group actively engages in meaningful discourse creating an open and honest atmosphere in which growth and improvement thrive. The art pieces in this exhibit convey how artists can work together as peers and colleagues to create meaningful and alluring works of art.

Gabrielle Rudig

Gabrielle Rudig's two pieces help create a relationship from the natural world to the physical, human world. Both of her sets are made with sterling silver and Montana river stones that she found, cut, and polished herself. Gabrielle's first jewelry set titled "Ripples of Stones" embraces the natural shapes of stones and creates the texture of the ripple effect of stones being tossed in water. This set includes two cuff bracelets and one ring. The bronze elements surrounding the stone can be seen as air bubbles from the splash created. "Embrace the Irregular" is Gabrielle's second jewelry set containing a link bracelet, a necklace pendant, and ring. After polishing the Montana rivers stones used in these pieces, Gabrielle wanted to play with balance and the nonuniform shapes of the stones. She used the principles

of lines and dots to accent the pieces to create a unique design that encapsulates the stones. The shine of the metal and semi-matte finish to the stones creates a sharp contrast to catch the viewer's eye.

Mark Kay Witmer

Mary Kay Witmer's necklace entitled "Will You Miss the Birds?" celebrates the common bird that connects us all with its constant presence in the background of our lives. Her piece is inspired by the fact that songbirds so commonly surround us and our assumption they will always be there. Her piece beckons the viewer to be aware of the songbird's presence and contemplate their own connection to the birds in their world. The centerpiece of her necklace is a found object called a blind spot mirror and causes the viewer to see their own reflection within the

bird pendant, thus, connecting them with the bird. Her overall piece is a composition of fabricated copper and silver with sections of bronze chain connecting the components. The branches are cast in bronze and the back plate of the pendant includes an etched segment of Robert Frost's poem "The Ovenbird".

Oscar McDonah

Through his piece, and the course in which it was created, Oscar McDonah wished to explore concepts including the process of documentation and its characteristics of temporality, sentimentality, and meaning established through proximity and/or context. He then explored these aspects of documentation by seeking out vintage late 1960s, early 1970s, family photographs abstracted from their original contexts and participants or holders to use for decals and the subject matter of his work. Through this abstraction of context, he intended to explore how the original meaning and sentimentality changes when presented to a new audience. His process focuses on varying enameling techniques such as the application and firing of decals, as well as the process of Champléve, and a conceptual focus on the practice of documentation. This piece incorporates the processes of enameling, as well as the firing and setting of decals using a kiln.

Emily McComsey

The two pieces that Emily McComsey has on display were made with the same concept of delicacy. She is inspired by intricate, light work that encompasses a fragile, yet durable feel. The tree agate necklace and ring were made in February 2022. The stones that are set in the pendant were cut and polished by herself. She then accented the cabochons with tube set aquamarines and emeralds to bring out the mix of green and blue in the tree agate. The

piece was designed to focus on refinement and improving clarification. The materials used for this piece are sterling silver and fine silver. In March 2022, she created the amethyst necklace and ring. This piece was designed around a new technique she learned of forming and manipulating stones with diamond cutting discs, burs, and drill bits. Sections of the amethysts are smoothed to refine the stone in a way that would continue to move the viewer's eye around the piece. To compliment the piece, she drilled a hole into both stones and filled it with a tube set aquamarine. The materials used for this piece are sterling silver and fine silver.

Liza Hardy

Liza Hardy's pieces in the show are two metal masks made from precious metal clay. They are meant to represent two different versions of how they experience happiness. One is true genuine happiness, shown by a gentle smile and fungus growing. The other is a masked version of happiness that they feel that they are forced to put on for society. The smile is wide and awkward, held open painfully. These miniature masks were made with special clay that turns into metal when it's heated to high temperatures. They made them in the spring 2022 semester for their independent study on fine art metals. Their study focuses on different types of masks, each emulating various emotions.