



Patina Gallery  
Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA

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 Ivan Barnett of Patina Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico, United States.

*Your gallery is located in Santa Fe, which has a pretty interesting art scene. How has your location shaped the kind of work you show?*

For over a century, artists have found their way to New Mexico, as we did, drawn by the poetic light, organic tones of the landscape and indigenous cultures. During the past decade or more, Santa Fe has become an important international arts destination and it attracts visitors from around the globe. This allows Patina to present very sophisticated, fresh works against a unique historic and cultural backdrop. There is a reason that Santa Fe is called the 'city different.' Patina = Beauty Over Time and Soul Stirring Works really says it all for us.

*You don't just show contemporary jewelry, but also ceramics, fiber, wood and sculpture. What's the relationship between all these types of craft and how do you deal with differences in the way you display and sell them?*

Yes, we do show more than jewelry. Patina also exhibits clay, wood, sculpture, fiber and other mixed material objects. We have always felt that great design should inhabit all works that we show, regardless of scale. There is no doubt that jewelry may be what Patina is best known for, but we think of the other larger works as important feasts for the eyes. In many ways, the objects could be viewed as 'oversized' jewelry. We look at the quality of techniques, back, front, side,

bottom. It all needs to have been considered. We think of our 2000 square feet of space as one large piece of kinetic sculpture, where the eye can explore and zoom in and zoom out.

*How long have you been running a gallery?*

Allison and I opened Patina in the summer of 1999 and we have been in the same historic location ever since. The building was a hardware store at the turn of the twentieth century and it wasn't used as an art gallery until the 1960s. We are located two blocks from the Santa Fe plaza, between the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum and the New Mexico Museum of Art, both important contemporary museums. In 2012, Allison and I will both have lived in Santa Fe for twenty years.



*Where did your interest in contemporary jewelry come from?*

Allison grew up surrounded by art and the business of rare, unique things. Her grandmother, Irma 'Tillie' Moses Kessler, opened one of New Orleans most respected boutiques in the early 1930s and continued to offer highly stylish, beautiful clothing until 1962. Her shop was *the* place to acquire unique clothing designs from around the world. And Allison has always been interested in small-scale works. Growing up surrounded by art inspired Allison to study metalsmithing with Michael Jerry and Barbara Walter at Syracuse University and less than a decade later, she was representing both their works in her gallery.



Allison Barnett wearing Kathrine Lindman silver and enamel necklace (2011) and Erich Zimmerman silver earrings (2011)

As for me, I started making simple wire jewelry in art school at the Philadelphia College of Art under Olaf Scoogfors. My art career started in 1969 after graduation and I have been a studio artist ever since, working in mixed media, especially metal. It wasn't until some years later, in the 1990s, that Allison and I began making our own collaborative jewelry. In the early days of the gallery we included our works among the Patina mix.

*How would you describe contemporary jewelry in America to someone who knows nothing about it?*

The best way to describe jewelry in America would be to say that it's diverse and wide ranging. Today's makers work with such a wide variety of materials, from gold, silver and platinum to less conventional materials, like iron, rubber, found objects, wood and glass . . . an endless list. There is a dynamic core group of American makers that have signature styles, many have been makers for decades and do extraordinary work . . . artists like Pat Flynn and Harold O'Connor. And then there is a younger 'guard' of talents that are making their mark. The extreme cost of traditional materials has spawned much new creativity. There is also a new breed of Asian born artists making especially extraordinary jewelry today.

*What niche do you and your gallery occupy in the contemporary jewelry eco-system?*

Patina holds a unique position in the field because we show studio jewelry in the same gallery space with larger works. We stage them in a manner that allows ‘aesthetic discussions’ to take place, a kind of dialogue between the jewelry and different objects. Beauty still has a large role in our choices. By coming to New Mexico, our visitors are already in a place of deep, intrinsic natural beauty and the Patina experience is one of immediate engagement with texture, scale, color and surface. I think that being artists ourselves is important to the Patina style. The gallery’s atmosphere is as important to us as the art we exhibit. Our mission is to transport the visitor into our personal world of our taste and style. Our canvas is the space itself and the objects and jewelry are our palette.

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

Picking only three artists is very difficult. Every artist at Patina is doing something important and new. The three names that come to mind, at the moment, are Sandra Enterline, Myung Urso and Claire Kahn. Sandra’s newest works push her vocabulary as one of America’s pre-eminent talents, with such deep passion for the materials and design. Myung only began making jewelry a few years ago, creating mixed media pieces from fabric, wood, silver wire, inks and paint. Each piece is like an extraordinary meal! And lastly, Claire Kahn’s works are like none other in the world and Patina is her only gallery. Her crocheted bead necklaces transform jewelry into spiritual objects. Never in the history of Patina has there been such a visceral response to a jewelry artist’s work. Her works are ‘in motion’ while never being moved.



Sandra Enterline, *Earrings*, 2011  
oxidized silver, diamond slices, 3 inches



Myung Urso, *Necklace*, 2011  
mulberry paper, silver, thread, 20 inches



Myung Urso, *Necklace*, 2011  
mulberry paper, silver, thread, 19 inches



Claire Kahn, *Necklace*, 2011  
crocheted glass beads, sapphire briolette, 38 inches