

CREATIVE DESIGN // BY IRINA MISSIURO

Design Heroes

Mimi Favre discusses her favorite designers



Mimi Favre
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MIMI FAVRE OF MIMI FAVRE STUDIO in Philadelphia creates “attentively handcrafted contemporary designs rooted in classical jewelry styles.” After attaining a bachelor of fine arts degree in metals from the Rochester Institute of Technology, she moved to New York City to apprentice with German master jewelers. Later, she worked as a bench jeweler and model maker with a highly specialized jewelry manufacturer, where she executed one-of-a-kind luxury designs. Now an independent designer, Favre creates fine jewelry using traditional goldsmithing techniques and recycled precious metals.

What designers do you admire now? I admire Hemmerle [Munich, Germany], Paul Morelli [Philadelphia], and Alex Sepkus [New York City]. Founded in 1893, Hemmerle is a fourth-generation design house specializing in bold jewelry that exudes color and scale. They are precise and often architectural. Morelli’s Meditation Bells collection has a spiritual



Alex
Sepkus



Paul
Morelli



Hemmerle

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quality. His work incorporates granulation elements that are reminiscent of ancient goldsmithing techniques. Sepkus creates small universes in his pieces. His organic shapes, choice of color stones, and applied textures cover entire surfaces in great miniature detail.

How did you discover these designers? Morelli emerged in the early '80s when craft shows were in full swing. He made a married metals pair of Ribbon earrings

that were very different, rooted in the craft aesthetic yet refined like fine jewelry. He was one of the first designers to successfully bridge an art jewelry aesthetic with fine jewelry quality.

I first saw Sepkus’s work at a jewelry show about two decades ago; it is like no other—quirky and playful.

Hemmerle is a more recent discovery, though it is a centuries-old design shop. A pair of turquoise Grandiole earrings I saw on the internet won me over. Their

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current designs reference traditional jewelry yet are thoroughly fresh and contemporary.

How do they inspire you?

Hemmerle inspires me the most. The designs' focus on color is achieved by combining different colored precious and non-precious metals and outstanding gemstones, stones, antique cameos, or coins. All are impeccably made and one of a kind.

Sepkus's work is just covered in hand-applied texture and small forms in such an artful way—front and back. Much of it is tailored to one-of-a-kind-sized stones.

Morelli has developed many collections—all are very different. He has amazing design versatility.

Which elements of their designs draw you in? Why?

The jewelry by all three is impeccably made. Designs are beautifully conceived; this is evident when viewed from any angle. Attention is given to transition of form from the front, side, and back. Sepkus's jewelry in particular reveals the touch of the goldsmith's hand; all of his pieces' surfaces (front, back, inside) receive equal attention in the detailed textures and hand finishing.

Describe a particular piece/collection that these designers had done and reveal the most exciting aspect of it to you.

I particularly love Morelli's Meditation Bells collection. The pieces are a beautiful adaptation of ancient Tibetan bells, which are used for prayer and imbued with spirituality. The collection is inspired by the aesthetic of ancient Tibet and eastern design. I have a long chain from this collection with small bells and a center bell that rings. It's a gentle, subtle sound. The matching hoop earrings have many tiny non-ringing bells that follow the shape of the hoop. Their design references Indian style. Morelli's bells are made in 18k gold and he uses details such as granulation and raised-surface designs to add elegance. The sound is such a bonus. These are so elegant and personal to wear.

How is their work similar to yours?

I imagine that the creative process is similar. When I create a design on paper or in my head, I am able to make it exactly as I envision it. Both Sepkus and Morelli are

trained goldsmiths, bench jewelers who are also able to employ their skills firsthand when working out a prototype or a one-of-a-kind design. Like these great designers, I create for the pleasure of the individual wearer.

How does wearing their jewelry make you feel?

Wearing my Meditation Bells pieces is the same feeling as admiring a great painting on your wall or using a piece of handmade pottery. It's about the connection to the artist and their vision. ♦



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