

Master basic wire techniques *p. 51*

A leading art museum turns the spotlight on polymer *pg. 42*



Art Jewelry

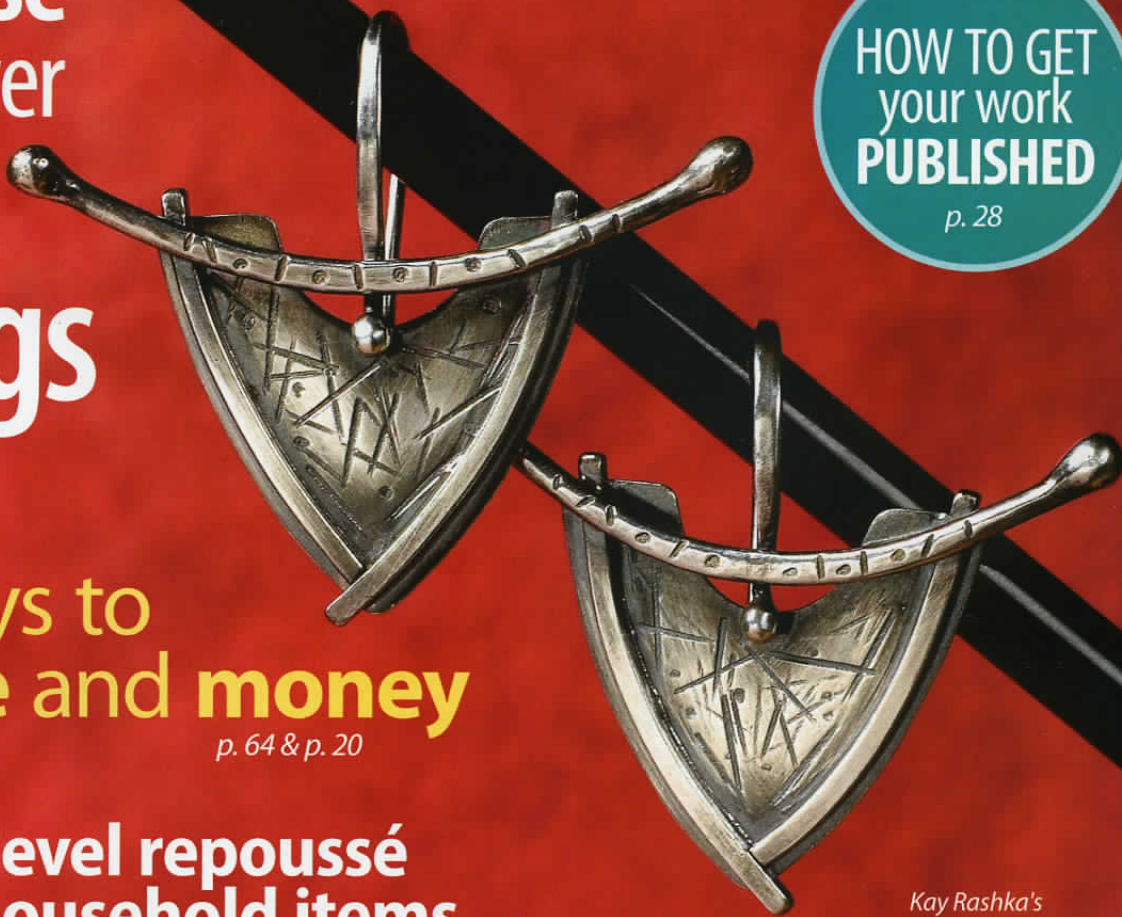
BEGINNER, INTERMEDIATE & ADVANCED PROJECTS

SEPTEMBER 2011

Make these sterling silver shield earrings *p. 56*

HOW TO GET your work PUBLISHED

p. 28



METAL CLAY USERS:

Smart ways to save time and money *p. 64 & p. 20*



Entry-level repoussé using household items *p. 32*

Kay Rashka's sterling silver shield earrings, p. 56.

Jump-start your half-Persian chain mail weave *p. 38*

DON'T MISS: Metalsmithing 101: Machine finishing *p. 26*
Stone Sense: Labradorite *p. 23* • Basics *p. 72* • Gallery *p. 44*
Creative Clasps: Peg clasp *p. 48*



www.ArtJewelryMag.com

Volume 7 • Issue 6



A conversation with Bruce Pepich

Executive Director and Curator of Collections at Wisconsin's Racine Art Museum (RAM), Bruce Pepich was instrumental in bringing a collection of polymer art, shepherded by polymer artist Elise Winters, to RAM. *Terra Nova*, opening in October, celebrates 10 of the most extraordinary polymer artists working today. These are excerpts from the full interview, which you can find at www.artjewelrymag.com/onlinearticles. —HLW

Tell me about how you met with Elise Winters, who organized the donation.

Elise was looking at her own collection and trying to make some long-range plans for placing work. We had about an hour-and-a-half long meeting and we really clicked. I think she realized we would be a good potential home for her work, and, at the same time, she was on this journey to meet other curators. When people in the field found out that she was taking this path, a number of other collectors contacted her about wanting to become involved in this, and it ended up becoming a consortium of about four people who had material.

I jokingly say to people, but I feel it seriously as well, that placing work is like an adoption service. I want that 'baby' to end up in a home where it's going to be loved. So you really do try to find connections between the pieces you want in your collection and the artists you need in order to fill holes and tell the story. You also try to make connections that will resonate with the public. And you have to think about presenting and caring for the objects as well.

You've commented that different institutions have different missions. How does polymer fit with the mission of RAM?

I look at it on one hand — and probably the more important point of view — as a documentation of what the artists are producing so that 100 years from now, we'll have a physical record of what people were thinking. And what the artists were thinking. And, in a way, that documents the development of the current major figures throughout their careers so that we can see ideas germinate and change and reappear when you look at a body of work over a period of time.

The second thing is, I look at the audience. And what particularly appealed to me, philosophically, about taking polymer in was

that it's a material that's been used by hobbyists and really driven by the hobbyist/practitioner audience because you couldn't get exposed to it in art school, for example. So the enthusiasts in the field are the people who have come up with all the technical advances up until now. With that in mind, I thought of stating to the public, 'Here's a material some of you may use, here's a material that some of your *children* may use; come in and see it used artistically.'

What is the connection for RAM with the community and the Midwestern sensibility with craft?

One of the reasons we picked crafts as a focus [for the museum] was that this once was the second most industrialized city in the state. In the '50s and '60s, Racine was the center of the world's tool and die industry. We had lots of Northern European descended people who had great craftsmanship skills and great manual dexterity. ... We were also the home of Western Publishing and Golden Books and we had high-quality color lithography printing taking place here. So both of the areas the museum concentrated on — crafts and prints — were activities that people in this community were employed to create.

Even outside of that, many families have a quilt, a coverlet, a handpainted bowl that a great-aunt or a grandmother made. There was a respect for the work of the hand that does come down through generations. So today, even though there aren't a lot of those factories still around, you've got grandchildren or great-grandchildren of people who printed at Western Publishing or people who puzzled out or strategized how they were going to make this kind of a mold to make this delicate part for a tool. They took great pride in producing things with their hands. I thought the local community, even people who were not art aficionados or regular museum goers, would respect and understand what they saw the minute they walked in the door. And that has been a good connection for us. **A**

[Above] *Anemone Necklace* by Cynthia Toops. Polymer, shell, bone, glass beads, sterling silver. [A] *Brooch* by Steven Ford and David Forlano. Polymer, sterling silver. [B] *Odalisque* by Kathleen Dustin. Polymer. [C] *Woodland Ruffle Cuff* by Elise Winters. Polymer, acrylic. [D] *Meander Credenza* by Bonnie Bishoff & J.M. Syron. Polymer, ash, Japanese tamo. [E] *Blossoming Radii pin* by Jeffrey Lloyd Dever. Polymer, steel, copper. [H] *Koi Bowl with Lilac Stand* by Barbara Sperling. Polymer, lilac branches. Photos by Penina Meisels. All art works are from the collection of the Racine Art Museum.



A



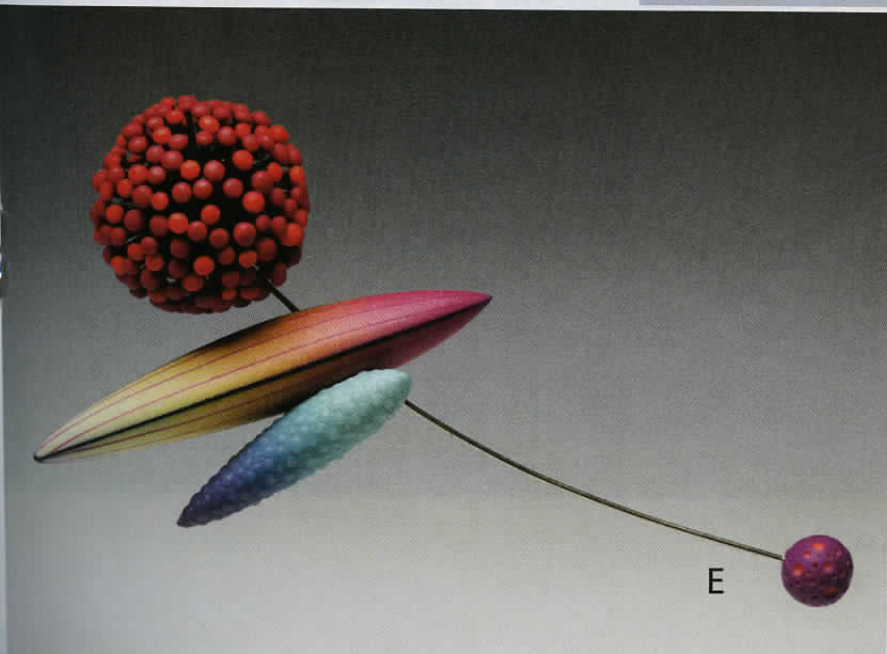
B



C



D



E



F