



## **Made in Mexico: Contemporary Jewelers with Mexican Heritage**

October 16, 2016 – February 5, 2017

Not afraid to use jewelry to share stories or reflect emotion, many contemporary art jewelers create work that is thought-provoking and engaging. Even when not being worn, their pieces can reflect the personal, social, and cultural. This exhibition features the work of three artists who use nonprecious materials to explore their Mexican heritage. In addition to investigating ideas and issues that have personal meaning, **Lorena Angulo**, **Jorge Manilla**, and **Georgina Treviño** create works that speak to the influence of collective histories and shared experiences.

While Angulo has adopted an iconography that responds to Mexican folk and artistic traditions, Manilla and Treviño explore aesthetics that are more streamlined and abstracted. Regardless of their style, each artist deftly combines their responses to greater cultural concerns and influences with their personal interests in tradition, emotion, memory, and the urban landscape.

The diversity of materials represented by these artists corresponds to the innovation of contemporary art jewelry worldwide. Whether they have a metalsmithing background or not, many of those creating art jewelry freely utilize whatever medium best suits their working style, has specific meaning for them, and/or enhances their artistic vision.

**Lorena Angulo** creates brooches, neckpieces, and earrings that are influenced by her interest in Mexico's rich cultural and artistic traditions. Using silver, bronze, gemstones, and various other materials, Angulo combines traditional Mexican folk symbols—such as hearts, crosses, skulls, flowers, and images of the Virgin Mary—with her personal experiences living and traveling in many parts of Mexico as well as the United States.

Angulo was born in Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, Mexico, but lived in a variety of Mexican states as a child, and credits her aesthetic to this wide and varied exposure to Mexican society. A member of the Society of American Goldsmiths and a founding member of the Metal Clay Artists of San Antonio, she first attended the Iberoamericana University Northeast in Baja California, Mexico, where she studied mass communication and then continued with a focus on advertising at the University of Texas at El Paso.

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After years of working as a graphic designer as well as a business manager for her family's print shop, Angulo moved to New Jersey where she began to create her own artwork. Eventually, she made the decision to move her family to San Antonio where she opened a retail store, **Pueblo Folk Art**. Once a student at the Southwest School of Art, she now teaches there as an adjunct professor in the metals department. Angulo creates most of her work using precious metal clay (PMC)—a material that contains particles of precious metals as well as a binding agent that burns away when the clay is fired, leaving the metallic substances behind.

Interested in the complexity of human existence and in exploring “the cultural meaning of jewelry and its conceptual possibilities,” **Jorge Manilla** creates work that reflects his interest in human psychology and emotion as abstract and metaphysical concepts. Believing that black is positive, in that it can represent an end which also implies a beginning, he frequently uses it as the color in his work to encourage viewers (and wearers) to speculate about “the secret and the unknown” in the universe. Alluding to religious iconography, both Catholic and indigenous, Manilla utilizes a host of experimental techniques in combination with more traditional materials like wood, bone, and silver.

As a metalsmith—and also as a butcher and boxer, two other professions that he has held—Manilla draws on the patience, perseverance, and hard work that he learned growing up as a child in Mexico. Born into a family of Mexican goldsmiths and engravers, he studied drawing and sculpture at the Academy of San Carlos, Mexico, and jewelry making at the Academy of Craft and Design at the Mexican Institute of Fine Arts. Manilla then moved to Belgium, enrolled at the Hogeschool in Ghent where he received his BFA in sculpture, and then studied jewelry design at the Karel de Grote Academy in Antwerp. Manilla has taught workshops all around the world, including Brazil, Spain, Mexico, Chile, and Belgium. He is currently a professor in the department of jewelry at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp, Belgium, where he is working on his PhD.

Responding to the cultural and social codes of class and wealth that can distinguish urban spaces, **Georgina Treviño** uses non-traditional materials, such as cement and rope in her jewelry, as an echo of the primary material used to build homes in her childhood hometown of Tijuana, Mexico. Treviño casts cement—sometimes with textures—then adds other materials and paint in order to create geometric shapes that loosely suggest the hard walls of buildings significant in her experiences.

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Directly impacted by the move from one cultural setting to another, Treviño explores this experience in her work. Of it, she states, “these forms represent trapped memories; the geometric [aspects] represent the hard walls of my childhood and the organic represent the hollowness that I see and feel now when I look back and try to hone in on those memories. The use of metal implies the half-way-done feel of rusting buildings... The cement forms themselves look heavy but are hollow and very lightweight. This is a direct reflection of the impression I had when I touched the hollow wood walls in the United States after living my entire life in the denseness of concrete.”

Treviño received her BA in applied design with an emphasis on jewelry making from San Diego State University. In addition to exhibiting internationally, she maintains a studio and showroom space that includes her production jewelry in San Diego.

Lena Vigna

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