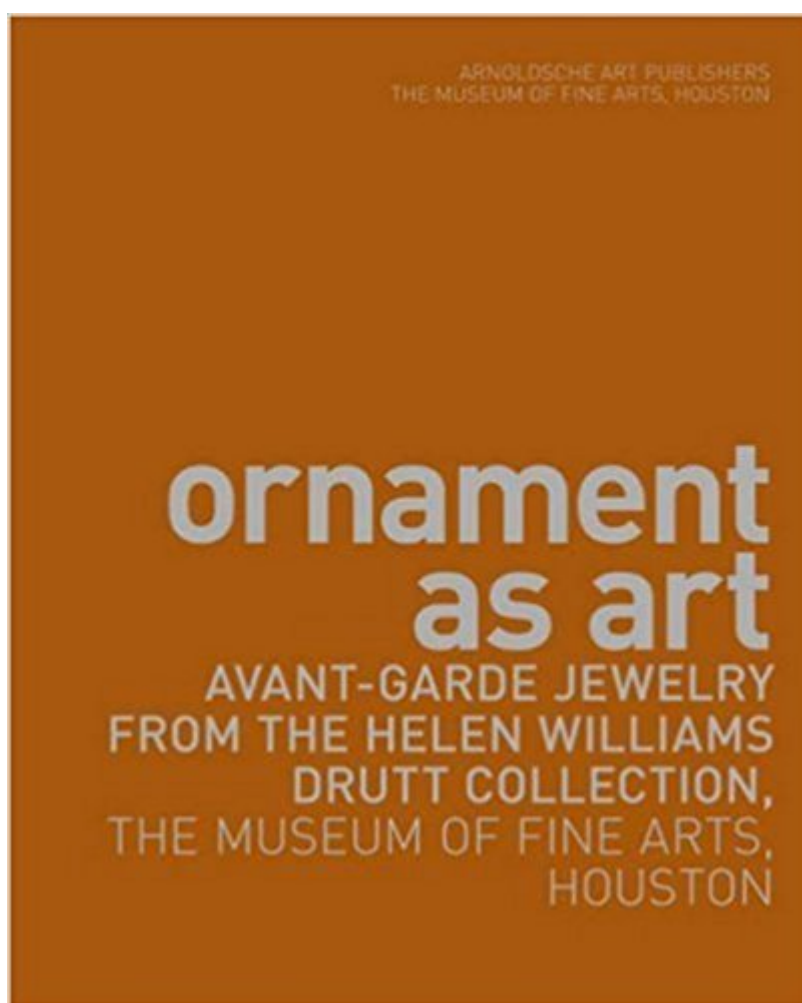


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Ornament As Art: Avant-Garde Jewelry From The Helen Williams Drutt Collection



Synopsis

A catalogue of the contemporary jewellery to be found in the Helen Drutt Williams collection in the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This beautiful book, co-published by Arnoldsche Art Publishers and the Museum of Fine Arts Houston is an encyclopaedic and glorious celebration of one of the world's great collections of contemporary jewellery. ... It is divided into four parts. Part 1 contains essays by Helen Williams Drutt English and Cindi Strauss, curator of contemporary applied arts and design at the MFA Houston: on developments in jewellery 1960-2006; on Drutt's 'experiences and relationships of the past forty years'; and on minimalist and conceptual tendencies within the collection. It also records a dialogue between the two on the history of the collection and the Helen Drutt Gallery in Philadelphia. Part 2, 'Featured Works' or a visual who's who, highlights a selection of work by each jeweller. ... The well-written commentaries combine general discussion on the significance of the artists, their preoccupations and distinctive working methods with specific comment and contextual material on the individual pieces illustrated. ... Part 3 consists of an illustrated checklist of the entire collection, including some designs. ... Part 4, the appendix, has an invaluable chronology from 1960. ... Its global view makes fascinating reading and allows national parallels and tangents to be readily appreciated. The biographies and extensive bibliography that follow are also a great resource.

--Findings, Issue 43, March 2008

The word 'jewellery' immediately invokes notions of valuable objects made of gold or silver and set with precious stones - ornamental objects that are also status symbols for their owners. Since the 1960s, however, things have profoundly changed in jewellery: artists have broken with the conventions of traditional jewellery to view their work in the wider context of movements in contemporary painting, sculpture and architecture. What has mattered since then is artistic intention rather than the market value of the materials used. The Helen Williams Drutt Collection at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, comprising 800 exceptional jewellery objects and drawings by 175 internationally acclaimed artists from 1963 to the present, documents this change with unprecedented clarity. The collection includes pieces of jewellery made of such unusual materials as sherds of glass from soft-drinks bottles, shredded books and all sorts of plastics. Links with art movements and schools such as Minimalism, Conceptual art, the Bauhaus and Constructivism are compellingly traced. The relationship between jewellery and the body has been re-aligned. A selection of pieces from the Drutt Collection has been shown since 30 September 2007 in the exhibition 'Ornament as Art' at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston. The publication published by ARNOLDSCHE on this occasion goes far beyond the exhibition, however. In a large format - with an orange flock cover that is intricately silver-tooled - the book represents a completely illustrated, annotated catalogue of the entire collection. Moreover, a selection of objects is shown in colour in large plates and exhaustively analysed by Cindi Strauss, curator of modern and contemporary decorative arts and design at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. In an essay, the author works out the links between contemporary jewellery and modern art. Further, a detailed historical chronology of contemporary jewellery as well as biographies of the artists whose work is featured provide invaluable information. This publication sets standards for evaluating the importance of contemporary jewellery as a global art form, taking readers on a trip through five decades of innovative experimental jewellery. A 'Who's Who' of avant-garde artists in jewellery and an indispensable standard work for lovers of contemporary auteur jewellery.

A superb compendium covering most of the important art jewelry artists of the 20th century. Most artists get three to 10 large photos plus more small photos of their work. Includes relevant sketch book pages from some artists. Yes, there's a great deal of text, too, in this hefty tome, but nowhere else have I seen such complete and coverage of this branch of art... this the only professional level catalog raisonné of what is surely the most important and largest collection of "avant garde" jewelry in the world. Snatch it up!

A well-made book which does a good job of overviewing the careers of various art jewelers of the 20th century. This is Helen's collection and she had personal experiences with many (if not all) of the artists presented. This is an invaluable bit of history and contains many beautiful photographs. The back of the book contains small, thumbnail-sized views of other works made by the artists. These images are quite small and difficult to see. The text is a large portion of the book and I would have liked to have read more writings from the artists themselves (as well as more photographs). A few of the pieces would have benefitted from multiple views, instead of a single (albeit beautiful) image.

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