

Maine's JEWELRY ARTISANS

BY ROBERT DIAMANTE

Maine's fertile tradition in craft has deep roots, and its reputation for having some of the finest artisans is far reaching. I have been working with jewelers for more than 25 years. I can say confidently, Maine has some of the best. If I am biased, I am unabashedly so.

The jewelers I mention below are those with whom I have worked in the past or are still working. I share their names enthusiastically. I have seen the quality of their work and admired their exquisite design sense. These artisans love their art.

The most sparkling facet of all is how close they are to home. True luxury is the pleasure of knowing the hand of the maker whenever you put your jewelry on. And meeting a maker is a gift within reach. Plan a visit to view their collection. Commission a custom piece, repurpose an heirloom, or purchase a treasure already in their trove.

Jewelry is not a luxury, an extravagance, or something to pull out for dinner parties. Jewelry is meant to be lived in, as sensuous and exquisite as your own body.

NISA SMILEY (nisajewelry.com)

Nisa Smiley lives an idyllic Maine lifestyle on the Blue Hill peninsula surrounded by the woods and the ocean. Her sense of place is her inspiration. In her hands, textures from the natural world, the rich colors of the seaside, and nature's patina are all deftly translated into precious metal. Nisa's jewelry embodies the deep intimacy people experience after spending time in Maine and developing a profound connection to place.

"My jewelry reflects my relationship to this environment—quiet. But there is always an eye-catching moment within the stillness. I am drawn to moments that could be missed if I were moving too quickly. I translate those moments into my jewelry."

From 20 to 80, collectors for Nisa's work defy age. Each handmade piece is like an artifact of place, emotion, and experience. Browse through her website or make an appointment to visit her studio in downtown Ellsworth.

Others of Note:

- epriordesign.com
- nataliereedfinejewelry.com
- robincuststudio.com



Nisa Smiley at her bench.
Photo by Wylde Photography

Nautilus
Slices with
Yellow Gold.
*Photo by
Berlian Arts*



ANITA ROELZ (circlestonedesigns.com)

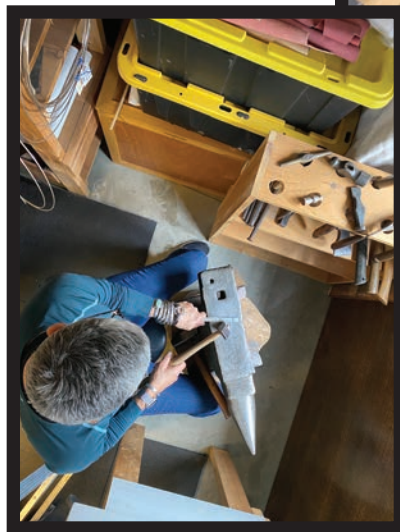
“Bracelets and rings are pieces you see on yourself every day. The pleasure is there for you always.” Energy, enthusiasm, and boldness are not enough to describe Anita Roelz, a largely self-taught jeweler from Woolwich. Her work is rugged and full of texture and color. Her silversmithing is fearless. Plus, she knows her way around a layered look.

“As we know, one piece of jewelry is never enough. I have always been a bracelet stacker. A bracelet stack is a great way to express yourself. We have multiple opportunities on the body to layer.” She adds, “a stack on your arm makes a beautiful sound.”

Peruse Anita’s website or visit her at one of the many Maine craft shows where she regularly exhibits.

Others of Note:

- christinepetersjewelry.com
- jackiehaines.com
- jnielsenjewelry.com



Photos courtesy Anita Roelz



PATTY DAUNIS (daunis.com)

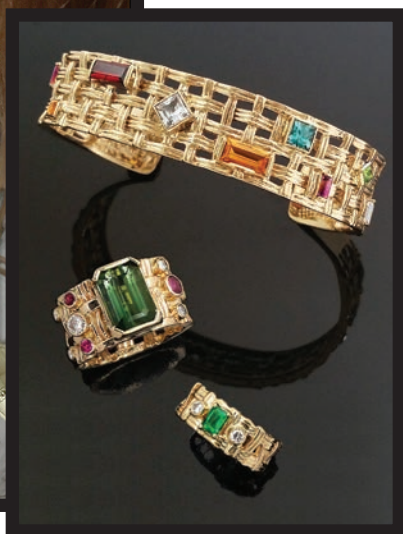
An article about jewelry in Maine would lack grounding if Patty Daunis were not mentioned. At one point during our chat, I called her “the doyenne of Maine jewelry.” She laughed robustly and dared me to use it. That’s Patty. Her work embodies what we think of as fine jewelry: signature profiles, collectible groupings, gold and silver brought up to high polish, and exquisite jewels. But don’t think you know Patty from the jewelry in the cases of her downtown Portland studio. Much of her work today is a reexamination of her roots in metalsmithing.

“Over 40 years ago I began making sculptural pieces, chalices, and bowls. When I began making jewelry, I felt from day one I was making sculptural objects. If I were to do a sculpture for a business, I would go in and research the space and the personality of the business. The same goes for jewelry—it is site-specific art for the body.”

A visit to Daunis in Portland’s downtown is an experience. Plan your time—you’ll need it.

Others of Note:

- jayneredmanjewelry.com
- Lisajanegrant.com
- Nancylinkin.com



Above: Patty Daunis with a client. Right: 14k woven bracelet with family birthstones, wide woven ring with client’s stones, and narrow woven ring with our emerald and diamonds. Photos courtesy Patty Daunis



Bijoux Royale: Rubelite
Tourmaline and Pearls in
18k and 22k Yellow Gold.
Photo by Berlian Arts

STEPHANI BRIGGS (stephanibriggs.com)

The tradition of goldsmithing goes back millennia. One thinks of Tut and the riches of the Ancient Near East. To work exclusively in gold with agility and finesse takes a master. Stephani's work has always felt regal to me. Maybe it's that she discovers her stones during her trips to India. Or perhaps because her works feel like master drawings. Stephani's ability to illustrate in gold is astonishing.

"I was a painting major at the Portland School of Art [now MeCA]. But I had enrolled in a metalsmithing elective. One day a gem cutter came to class to present. I was hooked. I immediately saw the potential of color in metal."

Stephani's finishing technique—creating a soft emanating luster by working the fine gold to the surface—is signature. Open the treasure chest on her website. Every piece has a story as unique and colorful as the jewelry itself.

Others of Note:

- hclmetalworks.com
- hollyhamiltonjewelry.com
- pattybolzgoldsmith.com
- tracyjohnsonjewelry.com

You're My Forever:
18k Yellow Gold
Rings with
Multi-Colored
Tourmalines and
Full Cut
Diamonds.
Photo by
Berlian Arts



I encourage readers to explore the additional links beneath each profile. The Maine Crafts Association is also another terrific resource (mainecrafts.org). •

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