



Shop Talk Standing for Jewelry Arts

Facéré Jewelry Art Gallery
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Karen Lorene **2** launched her career as a dealer in 1972, selling “turn-of-the-century furnishings and doodads” on her front porch. Twelve years later, she opened the elegant Facéré Jewelry Art Gallery in downtown Seattle. “I still can hardly wait to get here every day,” Lorene says of Facéré (pronounced fa-CHERRY, it’s a made-up name, she cheerfully admits, meant to evoke handwork and sophistication). The gallery is itself jewel-like, a 250-square-foot freestanding space in the lobby of the City Centre building, offering vintage pieces as well as contemporary work, such as Margaux Lange’s *Giggles* bracelet **1** made from silver and deconstructed Barbie dolls, by 55 leading and emerging makers.

A published writer, Lorene is working on a personal history (completed chapters are on the Facéré website) that tells the

story of her evolution from Chicago schoolteacher to antiques shop owner to noted jewelry authority (she was a guest appraiser on the popular PBS series *Antiques Roadshow*), and recalls the ups and downs of building a small business.

In your memoir, you come across as part romantic idealist, part practical business person. A perfect combination for an art dealer?

Yes, because so much of what you do is create friendships—with the artists, and with your client base, friends you turn on to this very small world of jewelry art. I think jewelry art is where glass art was 20 years ago. People are just becoming aware. Some have been aware; it isn’t like this is a new field. But many come in and say, “Do people really wear this stuff?”

Still?

Still! Every time I go to the theater, I check out how many women are wearing interesting jewelry. If I find one in the

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crowd, that’s a miracle. But here’s the big change. If I go to an art event, it’s competitive: who’s wearing the most exciting jewelry? That’s just come about in the last 10 years in Seattle.

With jewelry, you’re with your art wherever you go. People will touch it. And you have to like that interchange. It’s saying, “I stand for this form of art. This is part of who I am.”

Do you wear a lot of jewelry?

I wear jewelry even when I go to the grocery store. Two jewelers came into the gallery yesterday. I said to them, “And where is your jewelry?” If they don’t wear it, why would they expect anyone else to wear it?

You had two Facéré stores for a little while.

We started with antique jewelry and grew into jewelry art.

I thought, great, I’ll have two locations, one for each. Well, I now have them together, and I’m very comfortable with that, because I think it’s important that the artists see where their roots are. For years the sale of antique jewelry allowed me to show jewelry art. Then slowly it became fifty-fifty. Now I sell 30 percent antique, and 60 percent jewelry art. But it’s taken all these years to build that base of people who love jewelry art.

How does your knowledge of antiques inform your approach to contemporary work?

It makes you aware of craft. It’s important that the artists we show really have the craft in their fingers. Almost everyone we represent is a metalsmith, except for perhaps three who work in glass.

Victorian jewelry was brilliant about convertibles—like a bracelet that would become a tiara, that would come apart and become earrings. I encourage artists to think about different ways to wear their work. From my side of the counter, to be able to tell a customer “you can wear this as either a brooch or a necklace” is a selling point.

Wasn’t Kurt Cobain one of your customers?

I wasn’t there that day, but he came in with his hair all purple and spiky, and purchased the most delicate piece of Edwardian platinum jewelry for Courtney Love’s engagement ring. Not edgy at all. The most traditional, fine piece of jewelry you would ever want to have. —J.L.

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