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RePlace

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ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
The College of Imaging Arts and Sciences
School for American Crafts
In Candidacy for the Degree of
MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN METALS AND JEWELRY DESIGN

RePlace
By
Kyriani Hinkleman
July 2017

COMMITTEE SIGNATURE PAGE

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ABSTRACT

The work featured in the collection RePlace consists of wearable art jewelry made primarily from found objects that were previously discarded. When the found components are collected, the purpose of their existence is shifted, and continues to change when the objects adopt a new meaning as jewelry. Preciousness of these materials is enhanced based on their emotional attachment to memories and their relationship to place and experiences. Focused on connecting a viewer to an experience and memory through wearable pieces, scenes and compositions were created by combining found objects with hand-fabricated structures.

By exploring materials foreign to traditional metalsmithing techniques, and because of the nature of the discarded objects, each work is one of a kind and cannot be reproduced. Material availability in the jewelry industry and inferred preciousness of objects is challenged through the use of weathered elements. Similar to gemstones in traditional jewelry design, these discarded objects act as focal points in the work. Because of their unique state, the rarity of the pieces elevates their perceived value. The essence of where and how the fragments lived in their past life is apparent but not obvious, as most of the pieces are unidentifiable. Viewers are invited to contemplate the history and purpose of the components based off their physical appearance.

In the form of jewelry, a deep sense of intimacy is experienced as the pieces are worn close to the body. Because the components were collected from a particular landscape and often resemble its traits, the process of constructing each piece triggered my own experiences of visited and imaginary places and served as a physical recreation and keepsake. The finished pieces invite viewers to confront their own visions of place and to allow for the resurface of memories of the natural world they have experienced themselves.

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INTRODUCTION

As a long time collector of found objects, I have always had an emotional connection with the things I've picked up and the places they were gathered from. Items ranging from rocks and leaves to lost buttons and bits of plastic all became precious to me because of their specificity, ability to hold memories and their symbolic representation of experiences.

Today, adornment is widely seen as a form of self-expression and plays an important role in identity. This concept has been proven in history through adornment ranging from tribal jewelry used in rituals, to heirloom pieces signifying power and status (Fig. 1-2). When worn on the body, jewelry becomes a representation of the person wearing it. It accurately reflects their daily habits, style, and even personality.



Fig. 1: African woman wearing Bicone pendants and other traditional jewelry.



Fig. 2: King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra in royal dress and adornment.

Through its ranges of purpose in history, it is known that jewelry is typically composed of precious materials. If a material or object is so treasured and important that it is used within jewelry, and worn as a form of self-expression, it is assumed that piece is valuable in some way.

I am interested in wearable pieces that provoke memories custom to each individual, based on their experiences of place, space, travel and landscape. My goal is to reclaim discarded objects and transform them to suggest a narrative through form and visual language, and assign them new value in the context of contemporary jewelry. The body of work in the collection *RePlace* designates value to found objects that have been discarded in the environment through their adaptation into contemporary jewelry. In the context of jewelry, the

significance of found objects becomes elevated, challenging typical expectations of fine jewelry and the ideal materials normally expected.

CONTEXT

As a child with an explorative nature, I grew attuned to the familiarity in the land that surrounded my single-family residence, nestled in the center of a suburban community. I knew my backyard, the front porch, and the surrounding wooded area, inside and out. The stress cracks that made up our driveway, and the exact locations of sharp thistle patches intruding in our soft grass. If I was not at school, I was outside. Year after year, I would watch the four mild seasons of the east coast climate roll through and affect the weather accordingly. I could smell the first breeze of autumn before it was chilly enough to need a jacket and summer meant only going inside to eat and sleep. There were times where I wanted to touch every inch of the land- and all at once. It was comforting and for me, it was home.

That house and community was where I resided for 20 years. Although interests shifted as I grew and matured, my roots within a nature engaged childhood shaped my expanding curiosities as an adult. Growing up, I was thankful to have been able to travel and it was during these explorations that I developed a compulsion to collect objects from different places I visited. The findings ranged in size, shape and material but were all usually found outdoors. There was something captivating knowing I could take a piece of a place with me. Every object was specific and one of a kind, and came with an extensive story based on where it came from and why it was intriguing to me. To feel connected to a location, I felt as if I needed to claim a part of it. In hindsight, it is obvious this desire stemmed from the deep connection I had with my childhood sphere, and the overwhelming desire to grasp and retain it through time. With the ever-growing collection of trinkets and findings, I began to realize these objects, although interesting in the appearance of them, did not emotionally stimulate anyone but myself. The connection of story and intimacy was only relevant to my own mind.

It was about this time that my interests shifted to jewelry. Jewelry was a similar scale of the objects I used to collect, I could still emotionally connect to wearable pieces, and adornment became an effective platform to show my own style. I loved finding jewelry at different destinations and purchasing pieces based on my time there. I had a new form of treasure to obsess over that felt fresh and sophisticated. During my studies as an undergraduate student, my interests developed even more when I was introduced to jewelry design as a craft focus and degree-seeking program. The act of collecting jewelry evolved into making wearable pieces specific to my own style and desires. This concept became an entire different form of self-expression and allowed me to convey characteristics specialized to myself. During my creative evolution, I found my work became centered around material exploration and the attempt to

capture moments of memories and feelings through objects. By doing so, I realized using only traditional materials in my practice such as silver, gold, and gemstones, felt ineffective and dull. The most exciting way to convey my ideas, was to introduce alternative components into my work. By doing so, my creative process is ever-evolving which means I often took on new roles. Instead of just a metalsmith, I occasionally have to become a seamstress, a wood carver, or a painter. I've researched materials such as resin, concrete, wax, clay, etc. all in hopes of expanding my material understanding and toolbox. I identify as an artist and metalsmith, but at times felt the term *investigator* was more accurate.

Within history, researchers and archeologists learn through fragmented findings and are required to piece together stories based on the objects they discover and the area they were located in. They find evidence of age through the decay of materials but ultimately, this process is a puzzle and relies on estimations based on previously concluded theories. Many uncovered works including ancient sculptures such as *The Winged Victory of Samothrace* were found in portions and are still not whole. Researchers have had to estimate the statue's purpose and original place of display. Unlike found parts of artifacts uncovered through history, gemstones, and metals are mined, then refined, cut and polished to desired perfection. Once they are presented in their final form, the sparkling gems do not show signs of ever having lived within the earth. They are then transformed in order to be considered useful in jewelry. We know these materials have established value tracing back through traditions, commerce, and culture that continues to grow because of the constant use as adornment and precious commodity. Jewelers and their audiences are taught to spot value in these materials and use them appropriately. Within the industry, precious metals and gemstones are considered valuable because of their scarcity and treasured because of their size. During this exploration, I decided to abandon the ideal norms of fine jewelry and leave behind the gleaming gemstones for a focus on the act of prospecting new precious materials.

Throughout my immersion in art and craft studies, I found inspiration in artists and historical movements that were centered on new material investigation. Dadaism and specifically the assemblage technique were fascinating to me, as this method of creating was fresh and unusual during the early 1920's and still continues to evolve in relevance today. Raoul Hausmann's assemblage titled, *Mechanical Head (The Spirit of our Time)*, 1920, was a small sculptural piece made from a collection of items including a hairdresser's wig-making dummy, camera segments and a ruler (Fig. 3).



Fig 3: Raoul Hausmann, Mechanical Head
(The Spirit of our Time), 1920

Each of these objects were combined with various techniques, but all had a specific reason for being used in the work and attributed to Hausmann's concept and his reaction to the society he was living in, post WWI. The use of alternative materials to speak on relevant issues, including war, was more effective than other forms of artistic expression during this time because of the found objects' ability to hold pre-existing perceptions. While the portrait was a close focus in the art world, Hausmann's use of a model head expanded the ideal expectations of portraiture. Found objects were adhered to the wooden head and represented literal thoughts. The use of these materials through assemblage spoke more deeply to me as a viewer than when I was experiencing a two dimensional piece of artwork. This artistic encounter with found objects and discarded materials became a focus in my practice.

Mixed media artist Amy Tavern is one who has shaped my discoveries along the way of finding my creative voice as a three dimensional artist and jeweler. Tavern is a creative working with mixed media and found objects in the format of installation and sculpture. She has created work using components that mimic landscape, as well as transformative 'drawings' that become three dimensional through the use of alternative materials. During a residency in Iceland, Tavern created a piece titled, *Island of 14,264 Days*, where she used the technique of hand stitching and embroidery to create a representation of time and approached an abstract idea of physical location (Fig.4). She describes the finished 2-D project as, "...an imaginary island that represents my life. It presents my experiences as an independent landmass seen at once in a far away and a close-up view. It is also a self-portrait, an abstract interpretation of my physical form and persona... The moments captured in the countless knots comprise the number of

days I had lived when I completed the piece, as the island itself established a place of existence and home for me.”¹



Fig.4: Tavern, Amy., *Island of 14,264 Days*



Fig. 5: Tavern, Amy. *We Walk on the Same Ground*, dirt collected from friends.

After finishing this piece, Tavern achieved the ability to believe that home is a mindset and not a physical location. Furthering her studies, she decided to become fully immersed in abstract sculpture and installation. As a way to better express her ideas and to talk about experiences of travel as well as her personal understanding of being *home*, she continued to explore projects and collections using objects found in different places. *I Live Here Now* and *This is What I Found There* are a series of objects picked up by Tavern, which she felt were accurate representations of locations and her experiences. Still exploring her own meaning of home, *We Walk on the Same Ground* was a collaborative piece that involved sourcing dirt from 23 of her different friends residing all around the world (Fig. 5). She later created a wearable reliquary that included the dirt from all friends mixed into one container. As a viewer, the dirt in this piece seems arbitrary, but the fact that they are contained and worn around the neck proves the sweepings to be important in some way.

For me, Tavern’s most influential projects were the ones that conveyed a sense of location based off the objects found there. Using a very organized method of display and grouping, Tavern created her own assemblage of materials. The objects she found displayed in these collections did not mean anything to me emotionally, but the assortment as a whole evoked my memories and experiences of landscape, travel, and allowed me to assess my own

mental identification of home. Just by viewing the objects found in Iceland, I could imagine the climate and scenery there.



Fig. 6: Tavern, Amy, *This is What I Found There*, 2014

The bits of rope, fragments of bone and tiny shells suggest that she was close to the seaside. The way she separated the objects by similarities in size and color leaves the viewer with cool toned palettes of gray and greens, mimicking shades usually found outdoors. Not certain where exactly she found these objects; I imagine them scattered across a rocky seashore, or found shoved in between the cracks of a pier or loading dock.

This very personal way of developing a setting, although always specific to the respective artist, was easy for me to relate to. It brought out a sense of nostalgia that was understandable and comforting, something I hadn't felt through art or craft before. While studying Tavern's work, I become more inspired to reconnect with the process of sourcing discarded objects and reinventing their significance within my work, specifically through the medium of jewelry. It is this sense of wonder and exploration of memories via found objects, I wish to create within my work. Just as I often think back to my childhood enveloped in nature and the things I have found, the jewelry in my collection *RePlace* is intended to provoke and resurface memories within a space and time that is specific to each viewer. By choosing to wear one of my pieces, it is safe to assume the wearer has established an emotional bond with the work and feels connected to it in some way.

EVOLUTION

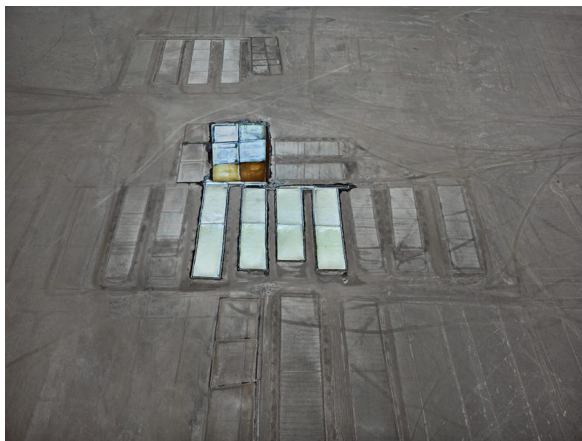
While working through this series, the curating process of the found objects became essential. I was not strict with what I was looking for, but instead picked up whatever caught my eye. After a few sessions of walking, exploring, or just going about my day-to-day actions, my collection began to grow. Most of my items were found outdoors while hiking, walking and exploring new places, and showed obvious signs of weather and reactions to environmental factors, as well as previous human touch. My favorites were things I couldn't immediately identify, or ones that included bits of writing as if it were a clue to a past life. The collected objects were assessed and laid out in my workspace. During the process of research, experimentation, collection of materials and construction of the pieces, the body of work went through many stages and evolved vastly in the short 10 months of study. After picking up a new fragment or discarded component, it would sit on my bench for range of time before anything came of it. I would analyze the found fragment and ask questions such as, *where did it come from? What was its former life? What did it remind me of? What caught my eye in the first place?* By asking these questions, it helped me create a scenario in my mind in which to represent the pieces in a new light. The ones I was most attracted to seemed to be fragments of larger pieces. This idea felt abstracted but comforting, as if the object was giving me freedom to add to it and make it whole again. Parts were paired together in different ways; maybe they complimented each other compositionally, or perhaps they were found while I was on the same adventure and felt forever connected. It became a process of arranging and rearranging objects based on my memories of travel and exploration in nature throughout childhood and until today.

Throughout the evolution, and realizing the intimate connection I wanted to create between the viewer and the found objects, I continued to find confident evidence that wearable art jewelry was the most successful method of presentation for my work. After considering the use of my original rock collection from my childhood, I thought back to the work of Amy Tavern. When viewing her assortment of objects, their emotional significance was not relevant to myself, nor another viewer. But what came across strongly was the essence of a place she had been to or resided and the pieces were small mementos representing her time spent there. I found the objects interesting but still felt disconnected to them. Wearability puts the viewer close to the nature of the object. The viewer and the object become more connected, as the wearer becomes completely immersed in a piece. I wanted my viewers to feel engaged with nature or even transported back to a certain time and memory. Later during installation, I found I had

used a similar aesthetic to Tavern, in the sense of minimal representation and letting the objects stand alone against a white background to speak for themselves.

While creating, I was also thinking about typical metalsmithing practices. Most precious metals and gemstones are targeted and mined, leaving behind pollution and severe land devastation. One of my main focuses and challenge for myself was to keep my process ethical and responsible. I did this not only by using recycled and morally sourced metal, but also by substituting most materials for found objects. Clasps were made from found nails and tubing, and mechanisms were created using renewed bearings or rivets that had previously been a part of some other mechanism. The traditional metalsmithing processes used were primarily for structural support and utilized in order to fix the found materials into one cohesive piece.

I studied nature of discarded objects and while essentially turning trash into treasure, I developed a fascination for wabi-sabi and the occasional destructive character of mother nature. In the past, organic curves and familiar shapes found in the outdoors have subconsciously formed my style as a metalsmith and I have often looked to landscape photography for inspiration in my work. While out hunting for lost and forgotten objects, I found myself often surrounded by litter, encroached by the remnants of human touch and also saw trauma to the land caused by industry. During research in landscape photography, the photographs of Edward Burtynsky caught my eye. He is a Canadian photographer who focuses on, “the dilemma of our modern existence—the impact we as a species are having on the surface of the



planet.”²

Fig. 7: Burtynsky, Edward. Salt Pans #10, Little Ran of Kutch, Gujarat, India, 2016.



Fig. 8: Burtynsky, Edward. Silver Lake Operations #16, Lake Lefroy, Western Australia, 2007.

Burtynsky's images often have an eerie sense of non-identifiability, which I found to be similar to some objects I picked up. I found myself looking to Burtynsky's photographs for compositional inspiration and often sketched scenes of places that triggered in my memory when viewing his photographs (Fig. 7-8). To me, images of these unfamiliar lands resembled the curbside gutters and median strips on busy roads or scattered puddles in the forest, which collected bugs and sometimes trash. Forgotten places like these are where I found most of the decaying components used in my work. Elements such as lacquer barely holding onto a steel beam and bits of rusted grates worn so thin they were on the brink of collapse became my most treasured findings. One of my favorite pieces was a paintbrush that has been decaying at the bind, bristles barely still attached. After I uncovered this discovery from a few layers of dirt, I imagined all the uses it could have once had. Completely unique and custom to its own handlings, my most prominent reason for keeping it is the fact that nowhere else in the world will there be an exact replica. Although this brush did not become part of a wearable piece, nor was displayed in the exhibition, *RePlace*, it sits in a tin on my shelf, as any prized possession would (Fig. 9).



Fig. 9 Found paintbrush and tin

Expanding my methods of research, I was also thinking of alternative ways to use the discarded metal pieces. Knowing the metal was in the process of decaying, I was fixated on the fact that soon, although it may not be for many years, components such as the metal shards would decompose completely and become part of the earth again. During the design process, I was faced with the duty of considering what would be left behind if and when decomposition were to happen. It was sometimes a frustrating concept thinking I had found and become connected to an object that would someday disappear right before my eyes. As a way to preserve the rusted iron pieces, I went through a series of conservation techniques ranging from applying lacquer to taking prints of the pieces and using them like a stamp. My goal was to

preserve the rich colors found on the surface of the iron, as I felt that was just as important as the shape. To preserve the color and in attempt to duplicate the visual representation of the pieces, the prints were my favorite method of conservation. Rusty fragments were arranged in various patterns and the prints were used as a backdrop for two of the pieces in the exhibition.

Despite this fleeting concept of material temporality, the metal was used in jewelry pieces regardless. Aware of the transitory nature of these found fragments, the wearable pieces take on a different meaning. There were a few times when it felt as if I needed to search for a specific found object or alternative component to complete my composition. It was challenging to submit to the process and take solace in knowing what I found was all I needed to make it work. I had to keep in mind that unlike ideal fine jewelry, the works are not heirloom pieces, but instead, fragile moments that represent the passing of time and the tailored significance of preciousness.

BODY OF WORK

By presenting discarded materials in a gallery setting, the pieces were naturally heightened in value, but my goal was to ensure this sense of importance would carry through after the end of the exhibition. My success came from the fact that they are wearable art jewelry pieces, and have handcrafted elements with some identifiable, precious materials to support. Countless hours were spent making sure these found objects were effectively represented according to my own principles. My goal was to creatively show the purpose for picking the objects up, their importance, and why they deserved a new life in the form of jewelry as meaningful and essential objects. Each piece was carefully constructed to ensure the discarded components were secure, and portrayed effectively, but also wearable. Although I feel these works live cohesively in the same collection, the scene and attachment to memory conveyed in every piece is custom to each set of objects, resulting in the ability for the individual jewelry work to stand alone and support its custom anecdote if needed. Because of the one of a kind nature of the found components, no piece has the same objects used or can be duplicated. From this collection, it would be difficult to make a production line, but this adds to the value of each work. Each wearable piece is reliant on the nature of the found objects and cannot be replicated precisely.



Fracture Bracelet

Found components, sterling silver, 14k gold

When exploring an old building, a sliver of bright teal caught my eye. I pulled at the sheet, and a pallet of vibrant greens and browns were revealed. The copper slates were old window shims that had oxidized from the rain and years of exposure to outdoor weather. The initial reason for keeping the slates was because of the striking natural coloration, and it continues to be my favorite element. If this same piece were made with slates of shiny brass or copper, the piece would convey a much different feeling. It is constructed around a hinged infrastructure made from sterling silver and gold, holding the sheets away from the wrist. When displayed open as a sculptural object, it resembles a structure similar to a roof, and feels like a welcoming shelter, but once closed it becomes constricting and cage-like around the wrist. This piece is meant to be transformative in concept and function.



Scape Necklace

Found components, sterling silver, steel cable, 14k gold

As the remnants of rusted metal began to stack up in my workspace, they adopted the essence of the brown mountain range I visit every year in the fall. My family owns land in the Blue Ridge Mountains, and once a year, we hike to the summit. The *Scape* neckpiece recreates this brown, layered scene and became a capsulation of this experience. Displayed behind the work, was an original rust print, made using some of the pieces included in the composition. When creating the silver framework to hold the rusted iron pieces, I left it square to mimic a traditional frame. Intended as a jewelry piece, the wearer has the experience of being inside a painting, or the more abstract idea of being able to wear a landscape.



Full Circle Brooch

Discarded components, sterling silver, tanzanite

The round, concrete embedded washer was picked up from the ground near a dumpster behind industrial buildings, and I was unable to identify it. Even after research, I did not find any evidence to its past life or purpose. This was intriguing to me because of the freedom I had to interpret its future use. After arranging materials complementing the washer, I wanted to compare round elements. Contrasting old with new, a tanzanite gemstone was set in the middle of the brooch. This study of form and nesting of objects creates a scene that in my eyes is similar to a solar system.



Rise Brooch

Found components, sterling silver, peacock ore

During my research, many people reached out and gifted objects to me. Although most did not interest me, one particularly special piece was given to me by my sister. A grooved chip of concrete with mirrored strips laid inside. I connected with it because it was different than anything I had found and I knew it was important to her because she held onto it for a long period of time before we finally saw each other. When she handed it to me, she said it reminded her of the times we watched the sunrise bounce off the water at the beach. I was immediately transported back to those memories and every time I looked at the mirrored remnant, I couldn't help but recall that experience. I held onto the piece, keeping my mind open to its complementary components and its future fate. In the end, I chose to recreate the scene it reminded me and my sister so heavily of, and title it in an obvious sense as well. As a result of the composition in this brooch along with the title, most viewers will describe it as a sunrise. This work, as well as the *Scape* necklace, are the most straightforward and relatable pieces in this body of work.



Sod Necklace

Found components, rope, sterling silver, synthetic rubies

This necklace was made based off the memory of the time my parents purchased new grass for our front yard. At first, I was intrigued by the rolls of bright green carpet. After it was rolled out by the commissioned workers, they drove away leaving one of the edges unfolded, revealing the brown underside. It was then, the whole yard felt false and oddly intrusive. This specific memory came to me when I found a crushed piece of green tin trapped behind a dumpster during my recent travels to North Carolina. A component obviously meant for the garbage, was now repurposed and turned into a wearable art piece with immediate mental transportation to a childhood experience. A favorite moment from my thesis exhibition opening, a man came up to me and said this piece reminded him of a blanket his grandmother made for him. Although the component struck very different memories, the unique nature of the green slate has the ability to tell a different story, custom to each audience.



Harvest Shoulder piece

Found components, paper, bronze

Looking at landscape lead me to recreate a piece with reference to depth through horizon lines. While creating the prints that captured the rusting tones found in the iron pieces, I had several two-dimensional works that ranged from small samples to elaborate scenes on paper. I was also briefly interested in the idea of body maps and a body's relationship to the land. I felt if I were to map my own body in different ways, it would resemble a topographical map of mountains and other landmasses. The two dimensional metal prints were turned into three-dimensional compositions by wrapping layered paper and allowing it to protrude away from the body's center. Once finished, the form and colors used reminded me of a field ready for harvest. Alone and on its stand, this piece appears to be a study of land and could pass for a sculptural model of a terrain. However, when on the body, the shoulder piece becomes a wearable map.



Bustle Neckpiece

Found components, copper, sterling silver, brass

While growing up in suburbia, any visit to a big city was fascinating to me. Everyone seemed to be on a faster pace and got twice as much done in one day. I'd go home after a visit and remember the experience as dashing and blurry. In my collection of found objects and materials, I had a few pieces that felt more industrial than others. A scrap of scuffed acrylic mirror and a bent plate of aluminum had a sense of loudness to them that reminded me of a large city. These components were arranged into a neckpiece that surrounded the head in chaos. As an added visual component, and the desire to attach the scene back to myself, the maps of my surrounding cities in Maryland, were etched into the aluminum. Baltimore, Washington D.C. and Annapolis grids were cut and reconstructed, blending these three areas together, as they were often represented in my mind. The stilted structure similar to the form in the *Fracture* bracelet, mimics construction scaffolding and holds the pieces fixed. When worn, the neck piece takes the viewers mind to a different place and recreates the feeling of being in the center of a hectic metropolis



Folded Study
Found Components, bronze

Because of the vast methods of research and experimentation completed leading up to the finished works, I ended with several pieces that were not wearable objects, but instead, studies of materials and techniques. One of which was a series of three folded objects, two were found and one was created by me. When collecting discarded pieces, I often found things that were similar to each other, but was particularly interested when I found two round objects that were folded and compressed in almost exactly the same formation. In hopes to figure out how these pieces were handled to end up folded so crisply, I decided to recreate the form in my studio space out of metal. During the process, the metal became oxidized, scratched and beaten up. People who would view my process, became confused and couldn't tell which piece I had made and which pieces were found. This was fascinating to me; I was essentially creating a sample that could pass as a discarded, found object. I was doing more than just making something look old and worn, I was hiding my hand as a maker in the craft field and instead, blending into the natural world around me. Although this series was not a wearable piece, and the concept was quite different, I felt it was important to my exploration and included in the final exhibition collection.



Recoil Bracelet

Found components, sterling silver

As another study of form through characteristics of materials, this bracelet is made from old mattress springs found while hiking in my hometown. Thinking about the old and new traits of metal, I combined the rusting spiraled wires with repeating forms made from polished sterling silver. Viewers often correctly identified the mattress springs, but to see them corroding and useless, the association of comfort was not connecting. This bracelet takes the recognizable symbol of rest and turns it into a wearable band resembling a barbed wire fence. To add to the repetition and hectic spiral formation, the bracelet was displayed on two slates of found mirror, allowing the form to double.



Edge, Neck and Wall piece
Found component, bronze

Unable to identify the found strip of steel with embedded rubber, I was faced with another situation of creative freedom. This time I studied the piece closely and pulled inspiration from the features already included. So much detail can be seen in the discarded strip, ranging from color variations reminding me of the foamy space where water meets land, to flaking particles imitating the rocky edge of a cliff. Similar to the *Scape* neck piece, a rust print was displayed behind this piece as a backdrop to further allude to its relationship with landscape. The found segment felt adequate enough to stand on its own, and in an attempt to keep the content minimal and the focus on the layered ribbon of corroding material, a round bronze frame was added, making the finished work a wall piece, or a wearable necklace. Because of the versatility in the found object and the broad sense of relevance, I do not feel as though this piece is strictly a wearable object, or only a wall piece, but a composition that can be adopted and considered by the individual viewer.

INSTALLATION IMAGES







CONCLUSION

During this process, I have rediscovered my interests in discarded and found objects because of their ability to suggest a story through their visual details, as well as refer to a specific time and place. While in the production of the collection, my biggest challenge was to stay attuned to my sense of creative investigation as well as the consideration of my formal art history and craft process studies. It was very easy to say I liked a found component, but the process of validating it through the accurate representation in wearable art jewelry was the biggest challenge. I understood as a child that wearing clothing and jewelry is an expression of oneself. My rock collection was an expression of my experiences and a desire to hold onto memories. Continuing to seek understanding of myself as an artist and jeweler, I have left the rock collection behind, and moved onto a more sophisticated form of curating and expression while retelling experiences specific to my past memories. By not losing my sense of personal connection to the work, an underlying level of understanding is achieved and carried through to viewers. All pieces were either found or made by me, which allowed me to develop and display my style as a collector and was able to show my personality through the curation of these works. By replacing precious materials usually found in jewelry with discarded components, my own idea of preciousness was assessed. This visual evidence of time and character displayed through the worn appearance of the found objects conveyed its age and previous location. In my opinion, these ephemeral traits provided valid evidence that the materials should be cherished.

The most effective attribute within the thesis exhibition was the fact that I did not use mannequins to display the jewelry pieces. Instead, I wanted the works to stand alone on a white wall, or on a pedestal and convey more directly as a curated scene or collection of objects. I felt as though this method allowed the found objects to be under examination, which is what I wanted from the audience. Although most translate clearly into wearable pieces, some pass as sculptural collections.

Moving forward, I will stay connected to my desire to collect objects, and allow the process to freely inform my creative work. From this investigation, my language in craft and comparisons in traditional metalsmithing will continue to broaden. To stay relevant in a contemporary craft field, it is important to keep an extensive understanding of material study and experimentation. I have learned that discovered items, identifiable or not, can hold much more information than just what is present in their appearance. The ability to allude to a place,

show the passing of time, and trigger memory, all attribute to the value of a found object. Memories are often fragmented and just like the components in the collection *RePlace*, assembling the objects into finished works allowed for a more complex understanding of not only the value of the materials, but also their relationship and emotional connections to my experiences.

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