



Above: CELESTIAL TIDES SCULPTURE, Corinne Perez-Garcia, of bronze, cast, 17.8 x 15.2 centimeters. Inset: HARMONY BRACELET of sterling silver.

Right: EYE, MOUSTACHE AND MOBILE EARRINGS, Lynne Merchant, of sterling silver; wire-wrapped and forged, 2009. Photograph by Robert K. Liu/Ornament.



venue

LITTLE &



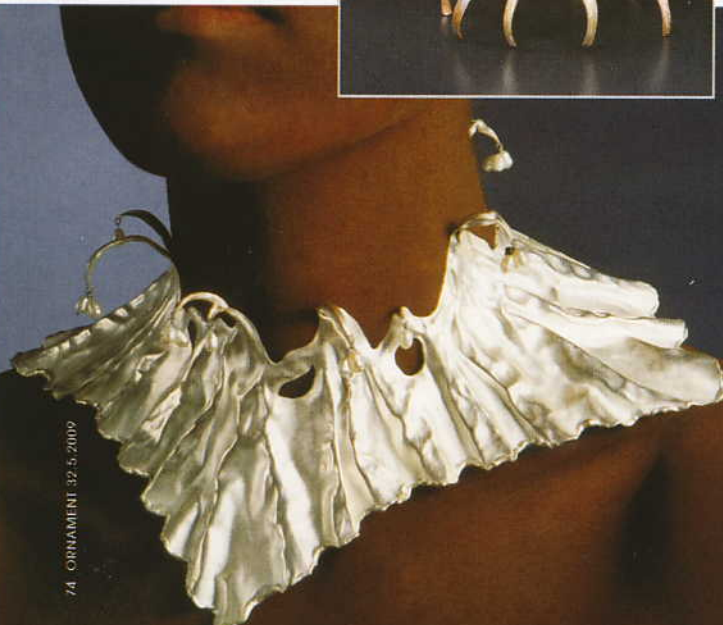
CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION NECKLACE, Alexandra Hart, of sterling silver and fresh water pearls. Photograph by Adam Bujnowski.

Inset: CORSET SCULPTURE, Alexandra Hart, of copper; anticlastic hammer-formed. Photograph by Alexandra Hart.



The coming of the Calder Jewelry exhibition to the San Diego Museum of Art (www.sdmart.org), showing from July 25, 2009 to January 3, 2010, has caused a sympathetic response on a level Calder himself would have appreciated. Little & Large is the artistic venture sponsored by the San Diego Visual Arts Network, an extensive project involving over a hundred artists and several dozen galleries. In a grand tribute to Alexander Calder, Little & Large, beginning late summer and continuing until December 2009, requested of participating artisans a piece of jewelry and a sculptural work. For many of these artists, who work only in one medium, this has promoted extensive experimentation and a pushing of boundaries. The project also collaborated with a number of San Diego galleries to exhibit the fruits of this endeavor. Jewelry artist Lisa Van Herik, a volunteer for the Visual Arts Network, excitedly remarked, "In all my years in the fine craft industry, I have never seen an exhibit promotion of this impact or magnitude. Art jewelers doing sculpture and sculptors doing art jewelry."

With both a whimsical role model and, perhaps, the anonymity of the crowd, those involved in Little & Large have been able to produce work that explored new themes or utilized new techniques. Many of the jewelry artists had never produced sculpture. Van Herik notes that it was quite difficult for detail-oriented jewelers to produce large-scale work. Floyd Elmore, the gallery owner for Colosseum Fine Arts, laughingly relates the anxiety of many jewelers on whether their sculptural piece would be too large to display. Most of these turned out to be nine to twelve inches in height. To Elmore, who frequently displays sculptures five times larger, this was an incongruous concern. However, this association has in turn surprised the gallery owners, many of whom have





HUMANIKIN SCULPTURE, Lynne Merchant, of old fence, seeds, pods, feathers, leaves, height 1.65 meters.

Right: ODYSSEY SCULPTURE, Lisa Van Herik, of copper and enamel-coated copper wires; handwoven. Inset: EMBRACE BRACELET, Lisa Van Herik, of sterling and fine silver, amethyst briolettes, twined.



LARGE

by Patrick R. Benesh-Liu

never shown jewelry. "I've found myself looking through a cardboard tube at my paintings and sculpture," comments Elmore, who now appreciates the amount of detail which can go into an artistic piece.

While by and large most of the artists involved in the promotion simply adopted the creative spirit of Calder, a few also were inspired by the thematic elements in his work. Lynne Merchant's pieces reflect the spirals and mobile-like qualities of Calder's jewelry. She was delighted to also be able to create a sculptural work in honor of the artist. "I've always wanted to make a mannequin—here was my chance. Since I am fascinated with giving new life to organic material that is on the brink of decay, it was natural to hunt and gather my materials from the rich vegetation around me." Tara Magboo also experiments with kinetic elements. Her headpiece, *Savage Beauty*, has faceted stones hanging from the flowers depicted on the piece, which represents the Asian kudzu vine.

The San Diego Visual Arts Network (www.sdvisualarts.net) is a nonprofit, volunteer-run organization for artists in the San Diego area. The group was founded in 1998 by a number of art community activists. It has evolved from an artist directory into a fully fledged online database and promotional society composed of one hundred thirty volunteers. Founding member and coordinator Patricia Frischer is very pleased with the success of *Little & Large*, and is looking forward to further enterprises. "The weather may be hot most of the time in San Diego but we are all out in the cold without each other. Our *Little & Large* gathering created a palpable energy. You can almost see sparks of creativity flying through the air. This interaction is what we hunger for and our art is the food that ultimately satisfies us." ☺



Left: SAVAGE BEAUTY HEADPIECE, Tara Magboo, of sterling silver, faceted prasiolite and aquamarine.



Below: BROKEN TREE SCULPTURE, Tara Magboo, of copper and Prismacolor pencil coloring; forged.

