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Press inquiries: Call 800.952.6222 or email events@riogrande.com (not for publication).

Rio Grande Announces Winners of 2019 Saul Bell Design Award Competition

At a celebration dinner held on May 19 in Albuquerque, NM, Rio Grande announced the winners of the 19th annual Saul Bell Design Award competition. In this international competition, finalists were selected from hundreds of entries submitted by designers from around the world. The pieces epitomize the very best of the jewelry industry in creativity, design and fabrication. Through two rounds of rigorous judging, experts drawn from across the jewelry industry chose first- and second-place winners, as well as a single best-of-show recipient, from designs submitted in nine competitive categories. Prizes, awards and congratulations were presented to each winning designer at the gala dinner and celebration event, which coincided with the Santa Fe Symposium® jewelry technology conference.

The winning designs, as well as all finalist pieces, are featured online at saullbellaward.com with downloadable, high-resolution photos of each entry.

Since launching in 2001, the Saul Bell Design Award has become one of the most sought-after prizes for jewelers and metalsmiths worldwide. For information about the 2020 Saul Bell Design Award competition, designers are invited to visit saullbellaward.com, email events@riogrande.com or call 800.952.6222.

Rio Grande thanks all of the artists who submitted their work, as well as the judges who carefully evaluated their submissions. And we congratulate each of the winners and finalists, whose work rose to a level of craftsmanship and creativity that, as always, is breathtaking.

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2019 Saul Bell Design Award Competition Winners

Best of Show

“Lineal Alchemy” by Debbie Sheezel (Melbourne, Australia)

Enamel

First Place: “Spirit & Flame” by Sandra McEwen (Raleigh, NC, USA)

Second Place: “The Endless Love” by Garen Garibian (Los Angeles, CA, USA)

Gold/Platinum

First Place: “Moebius No.1” by Pierre-Yves Paquette (Saint-Jerome, QC, Canada)

Second Place: “Star Hen Galaxy Pendant” by Adam Neeley (Laguna Beach, CA, USA)

Silver/Argentium® Silver

First Place: “Prospect Palace” by Mehrnoosh Ganji (Melbourne, Australia)

Second Place: “Suftal Fidda” by Maja Houtman (Utrecht, Netherlands)

Alternative Metals/Materials

First Place: “Eclipsim” by Kirk Lang (Seattle, WA, USA)

Second Place: “Torus Bracelet for an Astronaut” by Ezra Satok-Wolman (Caledon, ON, Canada)

Hollowware/Art Objects

First Place: “Luminous Relic #1628” by David Huang (Sand Lake, MI, USA)

Second Place: “The Echinacea Teapot” by Valerie Jo Coulson (Pequea, PA, USA)

Jewelry Collection Fashion/Bridge

First Place: “Kirigami Pearl Collection” by Karin Jacobson (Minneapolis, MN, USA)

Second Place: “Jupiter” by Liz Sabol (Pittsburgh, PA, USA)

Jewelry Collection Couture/Fine

First Place: “HELICES” by Sophia Hu (Las Vegas, NV, USA)

Second Place: “Sunshine and Shadow” by Valerie Jo Coulson (Pequea, PA, USA)

Emerging Jewelry Artist 18 Years of Age and Younger

First Place: “Midnight” by Christopher Liu (Allen, TX, USA)

Second Place: “Mokume Chainmail Choker” by Ethan Hansen (Salida, CO, USA)

Emerging Jewelry Artist 22 Years of Age and Younger

First Place: “Open Spiculum Cuff with Black Diamond” by Timo Krapf (Pittsford, NY, USA)

Second Place: “Flower of Life Amulet” by Tristan Dunn (Asheville, NC, USA)

2019 Finalists

Enamel

“Collection of Thirteen Eyes” by Lillian Jones (Raleigh, NC, USA)

“Releasing Butterflies” by Sydney Scherr (Santa Fe, NM, USA)

Gold/Platinum

“The Mystic Fountain” by Garen Garibian (Los Angeles, CA, USA)

“Jellyfish Earrings” by Pavit Gujral (Chandigarh, India)

“Queen Bee” by Llyn Strong (Greenville, SC, USA)

Silver/Argentium® Silver

“Flowering” by Christine De Vogel (Rotterdam, Netherlands)

“Counterpoint” by Han-Yin Hsu (Tacoma, WA, USA)

“An Elegant Disintegration” by Andi Terry (Liberty Hill, TX, USA)

Alternative Metals/Materials

“Bear Bones” by Heidi Kumpli (Nederland, CO, USA)

“The Dweller of Unal” by Judicael Vales (Nevada City, CA, USA)

“Light Two” by Ashley Warsaw-Fiorvanti (Hilton Head Island, SC, USA)

Hollowware/Art Objects

“Cherry Blossom in Winter Snow” by Marilyn Bailey (Hendersonville, NC, USA)

“Well of Life” by Janet Huddie (Crownsville, MD, USA)

“Agave Pitcher” by Preston Jones (New York, NY, USA)

Jewelry Collection Fashion/Bridge

“Migration of Butterflies” by Wiwat Kamolpornwijit (Alexandria, VA, USA)

“A Thousand Masks” by Zejia Lin; Dongguan GAFA Culture & Creativity Institute (Guangdong, China)

“Fusing and Freezing” by Mingshuai Sun; Dongguan GAFA Culture & Creativity Institute (Guangdong, China)

Jewelry Collection Couture/Fine

“Christmas Tree Worm Collection” by Pavit Gujral (Chandigarh, India)

“Pablo Neruda Collection” by Eva Martin (Queensland, Australia)

“Illusion Collection” by Farzaneh Nozari (Savannah, GA, USA)

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Emerging Jewelry Artist 18 Years of Age or Younger

“Heirloom” by Jade Adelman (Haverford, PA, USA)

“Howling Wolf” by Alexandra Ortiz (Fort Worth, TX, USA)

“Seraphina” by Abby Schwab (Fort Atkinson, WI, USA)

Emerging Jewelry Artist 22 Years of Age or Younger

“That Which Could Not Be Done” by James Betts (Christiana, PA, USA)

“Dinner Ring” by Nicholas Hesson (Holland, PA, USA)

“Splash” by Dillon McNamara (Longmont, CO, USA)

2019 Saul Bell Design Award Competition Judges

Describing the Saul Bell Award judges, jeweler Sophia Hu (2017 Finalist, 2018 Best of Show, 2019 First Place in Jewelry Collection Couture/Fine) says, “I really appreciated the two rounds of judges in the competition. They have the eyes and taste to see deeper, to identify and appreciate all the design efforts I put into each design in this collection.” Judge bios and photos are available at saulbellaward.com.

Final Round

Victoria Adams—award-winning jeweler and designer

Jason Marchiafava—master jeweler, engraver, educator/mentor at New Approach School for Jewelers

Claudio Pino—lapidary artist, jeweler, designer and Metal Arts Guild of Canada Master of all Metal

Emily Benoist Ruffin—2002 Saul Bell Design Award-winning jeweler and designer

Marc Williams—goldsmith, production and custom jeweler and designer

First Round

Munya Avigail-Upin—jeweler, educator and co-owner of ALCHEMY 9.2.5. fine jewelry gallery

Ann Cahoon—jeweler, educator, writer and 2010 Saul Bell Design Award finalist

Jim Dailing—educator, metalsmith and custom bridal jeweler

Shane Hendren—award-winning jeweler, designer and Rio Grande Jewelry Tech Team member

Gloria Stewart—custom jeweler and designer

About Rio Grande

Among the largest worldwide suppliers to the jewelry industry, Rio Grande was founded in 1944 by Saul Bell, a skilled bench jeweler, teacher and mentor who supported metalsmiths and jewelers throughout his life. Today, Rio Grande is a member of The Richline Group, a Berkshire Hathaway Company, and remains committed to supporting jewelers in every way possible.

For more information about the 2019 Saul Bell Design Award competition, please visit saulbellaward.com.

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