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It's Erotic... It's Erotic!

Student metalsmiths fashion education people can wear

■ Students use their skills to raise money for the department and themselves

By Mason West
 Oregon Daily Emerald

When confronted with the challenge of making 20 to 40 pieces of jewelry in less than two weeks on a self-determined budget, junior Kelly Shannon conjured up a crustacean. The ring design Shannon created relies on folds to shape the metal like a cocktail shrimp.

"It was like an origami thing," she said. "You can use metal like a lot of different elements; I thought of using it like paper."

These shrimp rings are Shannon's contribution to the Metalsmithing and Jewelry Program's Cheap Jewelry Sale, happening today from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the lobby of Lawrence Hall. More than 400 pieces for the sale were made by intermediate and advanced students in metalsmithing as a class project.

Though the project is required for the class, students buy most of their materials. Tracy Steepy, visiting assisting professor for the metalsmithing department, said part of the challenge is for students to budget themselves for a production line where no piece will be sold for more than \$10. Students are not graded on how well their work sells, but they have some motivation.

"The sale is designed as a fundraiser for the department, but proceeds are split 50/50 with the students," Steepy said.

Shannon found a cheap solution for her project: using the free scrap

metal available in the workshop. Senior Devienna Anggraini is working with copper wire and enameling to make necklaces, earrings and bracelets. She said 40 yards of wire costs \$1.99, but the real cost is the time she spends working with it.

Neither Shannon nor Anggraini could give an exact number of hours they spend working on their projects. Steepy said the department recommends students spend at least six hours a week outside of class, but Shannon said metalsmithing students typically spend much more than that.

Maru Almeida did all her work for the sale this week, but the third-year master of fine arts student has already had some practice. This is her third sale with the University, and she participated in three others during her undergraduate work at University of Texas at El Paso. Almeida waited to start work on the sale because she said she was focusing on the "Hermetic Insights" show, which features work from the metalsmithing graduate students. Her pieces on display this week in the LaVerne Krause Gallery are part of her graduate project to incorporate sugar with precious materials to make jewelry.

Almeida said she enjoys experimenting with new materials that she must find ways to manipulate. So far, she has been working with sugar packing, crystal growing and melted sugar to create different pieces. Tying with the convention that jewelry must be made of precious materials plays a big part in Almeida's aesthetic ideology, she said.

"You might want to eat these," Almeida said about her pieces.

"You'll think about how you are going to enjoy this piece — look at it, wear it, imagine what it tastes like."

Shannon said her drive to create pieces is not grounded in the process of creation but in the aesthetic. As she held the shrimp ring, she said, "I'm not interested in making this to make it. I'm more into it structurally. Jewelry is like small sculptures."

To produce a volume of pieces for the show, Shannon said the design has to be "dumbed down" aesthetically and economically.

"You still have to be artistic," she said, "just within stricter parameters."

Both Steepy and Almeida said part of the show's purpose is to give students a practical perspective on their profession.

"As an artist, sometimes it's good to rely on the fact that you can create something that will be profitable," Almeida said.

At the same time, Almeida came to the United States from her home in Chihuahua, Mexico, to study jewelry as an art form. She said if she would have stayed in Mexico, she would have learned to make jewelry as a trade without any personal artistic exploration. Almeida said the contact between jewelry and the wearer doesn't lessen its artistic value, rather it makes jewelry an "intimate art."

"I've never had anything that is gold or diamonds or precious in itself," she said, "but an original piece of jewelry can say a lot more about the person."

Mason West is the senior Pulse reporter for the Oregon Daily Emerald. He can be reached at masonwest@dailymerald.com.

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'New Voices'
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ships with other people can transcend that sensibility," Appel said.

Lauren Armstrong, a senior theater arts major who plays Dana in "Peephole," said she enjoys the challenges of her part. Armstrong said she idolizes her character because Dana questions everything she is told and can remain perfectly calm in the face of danger and death. She described the play as the story of "a yuppie couple, Dana and Gerard, residing in a large city during the Apocalypse."

"(Dana's) driving force — her reason for living at this point in her life — is not her material possessions, her place in a capitalist society or a belief in a divine entity, but her love

for Gerard," Armstrong said.

Willis said the playwrights, student actors, designers and crew members have all made valuable contributions to the plays while defining their talents. But he also said the two plays are very different from each other.

"'Peephole' is slightly absurdist, while 'Leaving Shallot' is very naturalistic," he said. "Both plays contain a mix of humor and serious emotion, though the balance is more comic in 'Peephole' and more dramatic in 'Leaving Shallot.'"

This is his fourth production in the Arena Theatre, and Willis said he has been faced with coordinating the efforts of all the artists working on the production of both plays, instead of just one.

"Part of the fun of the evening of the two plays is that they are very different stylistically," Willis said. "Seeing the two styles side by side gives audience members a chance to compare their own reactions to the different styles in a more immediate fashion than seeing separate productions at separate times."

Tickets are available at the EMU Ticket Office and on the days of performances at the University Theatre Box Office in Villard Hall. Curtain time for all performances is 8 p.m., and no late seating is allowed. For more information, call 346-4363 or 346-4191.

Lisa Toth is the Pulse and features editor for the Oregon Daily Emerald. She can be reached at lisatoth@dailymerald.com.

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