



Jill Newhouse Gallery presents

“Art to Wear”

Unique Jewelry made from Antique Gold, Silver, and Various Works of Art

Designed by **Gabriela Sismann**, of Galerie Sismann, Paris

October 10 through 18, 2023

Monday-Friday 10-5 pm; Saturday 12-5
and by appointment

Opening reception Tuesday October 10, 5-7 pm

History, romance, and fashion come together through the scholarship and creativity of Gabriela Sismann.

On view at Jill Newhouse Gallery for 10 days only, Sismann will exhibit 32 unique handmade pieces of jewelry made from Antique Works of Art.



A mid-17th century Baroque embossed silver plaque becomes a large dazzling necklace. An 18th century button from a Georgian court costume becomes a unique ring. A 15th century Venetian relief is turned into a unique pendant and pieces of a Renaissance belt in silver with vermeil rosettes, studded with silver pearls are transformed into a chic and wearable bracelet.





Sismann describes one of her creations as follows:

*“**The Egyptian Heart Scarab** is at the origin of one of my most personal creations. Passionate about Egyptology, I left the American continent for Paris in 1991, with dreams of excavating the sites of Antony and Cleopatra’s tombs, work which would have embodied both my decisive choice in my life and my first passion. I discovered this wonderful scarab on the French Art Market, and immediately fell in love, but I needed time to think about the mounting.*

Heart scarabs were very popular amulets. For the ancient Egyptians the heart was not only the center of life, but also of thinking, memory, and moral values. This scarab mostly appears as an amulet, but it was also used as jewelry. According to ancient belief, found in Chapter 30 of the Book of the Dead, the function of the heart scarab, was to bind the heart to silence while it was being weighed in the underworld to ensure that it did not bear false witness against the deceased. When a person died, a heart scarab could be placed on their heart and bound underneath the bandages of the mummy, so that it could not be physically removed from their person.

After several months of reflection, I showed my initial drawings to my goldsmith, one of the greatest in Paris, who accompanied me through the final stage of the creative process. My wish was to allow the Heart Scarab to be worn as a pendant just at the solar plexus at the center of the energy of the human body, as was customary in Ancient Egypt. In order to make this happen, I decided on a minimalist design that would be a new and exciting piece of jewelry while also respecting the integrity of the

object. This is my goal in all my designs. I chose gold, which as a material was an ancient Egyptian symbol of both Eternity and the Sacred, and following the original shape of the Heart Scarab, I made it visible from both sides with an integrated ring that hangs from a torque, making it easy to wear while keeping this fabulous New Kingdom object as the main focal point.”

Also on view is a **unique pendant with a very rare medieval miniature depicting the Virgin and Child made in Paris circa 1420**. Sismann describes its creation as follows:



“Mounted as a pendant on a modern flexible silver gilt torque, this Medieval stucco miniature bears witness to the flourishing period of activity in Parisian workshops during the reign of Charles VI. At the heart of this modelled medallion is an elegant Virgin and Child, wearing a high crown and a large, floriated mantle with soft flowing drapery, characteristic of the transcription of the "International Gothic" within the Parisian goldsmith's and ivory workshops. Mary's face is perfectly oval, with small features and a snub nose, evoking the sumptuous figures sculpted on ivory in Paris in the first half of the 15th century. Thus, her profile is superimposed on that of an ivory figure carved in Paris around 1410-1420, today at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (1), or on that of another delicate ivory medallion from the same period also at the Metropolitan Museum (2). During the 15th century, a luxurious art of living developed within the princely courts. This atmosphere of seigniorial splendor favored the blossoming of goldsmithing and especially enamels, which reached perfection and supreme refinement around 1400 with the implementation of the technique of enamels

in the round, with sumptuous colors, used for the realization of "jewels", altarpieces, medallions and other miniature pious images...

Whether this work is a vital link in the chain of Parisian production of luxury items in the 15th century, or a moving testimony of personal devoutness, this rare miniature gives us a peak into a moment of the splendor of the reign of Charles VI, as well as showing us the taste of his court for objects of finery.

