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SIGNS OF LIFE

This is the ninth year of the *Signs of Life* publication and exhibition at Facère Jewelry Art Gallery. Karen Lorene, the owner of the gallery, is also a writer, and it is her passion to pair jewelry and writing. By telling parallel stories, the meaning of both the writing and the object are enhanced. The

artists invited are Kevin Crane, Lisa Fidler, Chris Irick, Alexia Markarian, Eleanor Moty, Michael Owen O'Neill, Ron Pascho, Lin Stanionis, and J. Fred Woell. The authors quoted are Alan Averill, Stephanie Barden, Wendy Call, Sigrun Susan Lane, Paulann Petersen, Jennifer Munro, Cat Rambo, Susan Rich, and James Stark.



Susan Cummins: *Signs Of Life* is the ninth in the series of publications from Facère Jewelry Art Gallery. How did it start? What compels you to continue?

Karen Lorene: For a number of years, Facère Jewelry Art Gallery sent gifts to customers as a thank you for their continued support. During these years, I was in a writing group and kept thinking that our writing was good enough that we should create our own literary magazine. Time passed, and the writing idea stuck. The literary magazine idea morphed into a thank you gift.

I'm taken with the idea that the arts should be more integrated. Since half of my life is writing and half of my life is Facère Jewelry Art Gallery, I decided to proceed with the idea of the literary magazine combined with a showing of jewelry art. We have nine matched cases in the gallery. How about a show of nine jewelry artists accompanied by the writing of nine published writers? Sounded good to me. *Signs of Life* was born.

I've continued to produce the show and the magazine because it is a very exciting, comfortable marriage of arts. And it is great fun!

Are there any other publishers that pair art and literature that you follow?

Karen Lorene: I know of no other literary magazine that does what we do. However, my husband subscribed for a time to a science journal that used fine art for their illustrations. What a brilliant idea! I stole it.



How do you decide which writers to invite? Where do you find them?

Karen Lorene: The emphasis for this show and the jewelry artists we choose is one of narrative. Being a struggling writer, it seemed to me, since I told writers that they could NOT write about jewelry, that the narrative side of the jewelry art would inspire them. We choose jewelry artists from all over the United States. We often find their work in such magazines as *Metalsmith*, *Ornament*, *American Craft*, and in the Lark Books series.

Which do you pick first, the written text or the piece of jewelry?

Karen Lorene: Once the jewelry artists are chosen (about a year before the show, usually in October), we ask that we have a single image (a professional photograph) from them sometime in January. A single image is sent to each writer (my choice), and the writers are encouraged to use the image as inspiration for their written piece. We attempt to have a cross section of poets, novelists, essayists, etc.

When matching the jewelry to the writing, are you looking more at the visual impact or the idea of the piece of jewelry and its relationship to the text? For example, in "Coo" the text is about how we see letters and how they turn into writing and the jewelry *Protector* has some crude

markings on it, which could indicate early markings or letters. But because of the title, I think it is a talisman. How were you thinking about it?

Karen Lorene: I trust the writers. I trust the jewelry artists. What grows from this marriage is magic. For instance, at the opening lecture/reading where artists describe their body of work (five to ten pieces for this show), Ron Pascho, the creator of *Protector*, shared with the audience that he had never met the writer, never spoken to the writer, and yet he felt they were a perfect match—each created a fresh idea that came together in a perfect union.



Is there an underlying theme for you that joins the couplings together to form this volume?

Karen Lorene: No theme is anticipated past the title of the show *Signs of Life*.

By the way, in the introduction of this publication you indicated an interest in combining food, music, and large sculpture into this project. What are you thinking?

Karen Lorene: I have dreams of combining this event with chefs, musicians, and sculptors in the future. For now, the literary magazine and the show are enough of a challenge.

Is there a way for people to purchase this volume?

Karen Lorene: *Signs of Life* literary magazine may be purchased by emailing Facèré Jewelry Art Gallery or calling (206) 624-6768. The cost is \$12.00 US plus postage.

Thank you.



