

## *Brighten Up! Contemporary Enamels*, Jun 1, 2024 - Jun 14, 2026

Contemporary Enamels For centuries, artists across the globe have embellished objects through enameling, which uses high heat to fuse powdered colored glass onto a metallic surface. Contemporary enamels showcase a broad array of techniques, from those based in historic processes to the daring and experimental. This presentation combines objects from the collection with recent acquisitions, including those generously given by the Enamel Arts Foundation, which serves to educate, document, and promote a greater awareness of the art form of enamelwork. Together, these works demonstrate the many ways artists enliven metal through bold and bright enameling techniques.

- Emily Banas associate curator decorative arts and design

Information about the objects on view can be found here: [publications.risdmuseum.org/visitor-guide/brighten-up](https://publications.risdmuseum.org/visitor-guide/brighten-up) or by pointing your smartphone's camera at the QR code above RISD Museum is grateful to the Enamel Arts Foundation for their recent gifts of artwork and funding for collection care.

RISD Museum is supported by a grant from the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, through an appropriation by the Rhode Island General Assembly and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, and with the generous partnership of the Rhode Island School of Design, its Board of Trustees, and Museum Governors. Brighten Up! Contemporary Enamels Information about the objects on view can be found here: [publications.risdmuseum.org/visitor-guide/brighten-up](https://publications.risdmuseum.org/visitor-guide/brighten-up) or by pointing your smartphone's camera at the QR code above Brighten Up! 1 2

### CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Colette, American, b. 1937  
*Pictogram #7 Brooch* 1991  
Gold, silver wire, enamel and pearl  
Gift of Robert Denton **1991.140**

California-based artist Colette is recognized for her enameling, but more specifically for her use of a technique called cloisonné. Enclosures made of wire are pasted or soldered on a metal base to contain enamel pigments within the designated areas. The placement of very thin wires in this brooch is a testament to the artist's skill. The design, which Colette referred to as an Ideogram, expresses her thoughts and emotions with pictures and symbols, as opposed to words.



## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Barbara Seidenath, German, b. 1960; (RISD Faculty 1990-, Jewelry + Metalsmithing)

*Arctic Brooch* 1999

Sterling silver, enamel

Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund **2001.21.1**

In this brooch, complex layers of fine-silver sheet are arranged to convey the crisp beauty of ice shards floating in the Arctic Sea. The color nuances are produced by the varied thickness of transparent enamel layers, creating a sense of dimensionality and suggesting the depth of the ocean. Nature and landscapes have been an important source of inspiration for Barbara Seidenath. *Arctic Brooch* marked a departure in her practice, as she moved from explorations of color to investigation of depth and surface.



Barbara Seidenath, German, b. 1960; (RISD Faculty 1990-, Jewelry + Metalsmithing)

*Wurzelblüte / Root Flower Earrings* 1991

Eighteen-carat gold; coral; enamel

Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund **2001.21.2ab**



Kay Whitcomb, American, 1921 - 2015; (RISD 1939-1943, Jewelry + Metalsmithing)

*Crea* 1979

Enamel on copper with steel frame

Gift of the Artist **2009.96**

The use of cloisonné on this vase is impressive, particularly for the scale of the object and the number of thin metal partitions that were required to separate the various enamel colors. During her time at RISD, Kay Nickerson Whitcomb studied in what was then known as the Department of Jewelry, Silversmithing, and Fabrication Design. She learned enameling, specifically cloisonné, during her third year of study, and it became an important technique in her repertoire.



## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Kay Whitcomb, American, 1921 - 2015; (RISD 1939-1943, Jewelry + Metalsmithing)

*Vase* / 1998

Copper, enamel, silver, gold wire, foil

Gift of Deborah Krupenia and Witchulada Dina Keith, family of the artist

2018.51.4



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Lilyan Bachrach

American, 1917-2015

*Floral Plate (Pink Ground)* 1960s

Copper and enamel

Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.1



Kenneth F. Bates

American, 1904 - 1994

*Salome's Comforter Box* 1977

Copper, enamel, brass and gold foil

Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.2

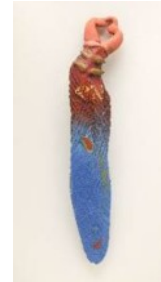


What appears, at first glance, to be a relatively simple patchwork design is elevated in the hands of expert enameler Kenneth F. Bates. A paint box of colors was plotted out here in tiny squares, the enamel layered over thin sheets of gold foil known as pailons to create a rich depth and shine. To further play up the inspiration of a comforter, as the title implies, Bates applied tiny lines of silver to suggest stitched fabric.

## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Jamie Bennett  
American b. 1948  
*Priori #9 Brooch* 1988  
Enamel, copper, and silver  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.3

This brooch from Jamie Bennett's *Priori* series represents a break from traditional enameling techniques that the artist began exploring in the 1980s. While enameled jewelry typically has a distinct front and back, Bennett created this piece in the round, evoking small-scale sculpture. The granular texture of the enamel creates a subtle patterning that is highlighted with an application of gold foil.



Jessica Calderwood  
American, b. 1978  
*Solace* 2020  
Glass bead, enamel, copper, porcelain, milk paint  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.4

In *Solace*, Jessica Calderwood explores the use of drapery in wrapping and obscuring the body. The juxtaposition of forms—the crumpled enamel “cloth” on the smooth yet visually textured base—demonstrates the versatility of enamels. The colored stripes were made by melting glass beads into the surface of the enamel. A close look reveals a tiny hole at the center of some of the beads.



Karl Drerup  
American; b. in Germany; 1904 - 2000  
*Fishing Plate* 1940s  
Enamel on copper  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.5



## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Marilyn Druin  
American, 1941-2001  
*Pendant* 1990s  
Sterling silver and gold with enamel  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.6

This small pendant presents a variety of enameling techniques executed by artist Marilyn Druin, who was, remarkably, self-taught in the medium. Her use of gold complements a palette of blues, red, and black. The surface is enhanced with cloisonné (metal partitions), *basse-taille* (hand-engraving), and *guilloché* (mechanical engraving). This creates a rich visual collage that acts almost like a sampler of enamel processes. The back of the pendant features hand-engraved designs that mimic those on the front, perhaps evidence of how Druin worked out the initial pattern.



Aurélie Guillaume  
Canadian, b. 1990  
*Crushed* 2018  
Enamel, copper, fine silver, sterling silver, opals, and cubic zirconium  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.7

In this brooch Aurélie Guillaume uses the technique of cloisonné sparingly, but to great effect. She drew lines in wire to create an animated and heartfelt facial expression—a nod to her background in illustration. To create an additional layer of texture, she fused tiny clear glass beads onto the surface of the enamel.



Charity Hall  
American, b. 1978  
*Ant Brooch* 2016  
Copper, enamel, silver, and garnet  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.8



## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Doris Hall  
American, 1907 - 2000  
*Large "Sun & Fish" Bowl* 1950s  
Enamel on copper  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation **2022.56.9**



Thom Hall  
American, b. 1948  
*Two Boys with Pier* 1989  
Silver cloisonné enamel on fine silver  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation **2022.56.10**



William Harper  
American, b. 1944  
*Feathered Amulet* 1970s  
Copper, enamel, silver, feather  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation **2022.56.11**



Anne Havel  
American, b. 1957  
*All Roads Lead Home Brooch & Pendant* 2021  
Copper, enamel, sterling gold, pearls, and stainless steel  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation **2022.56.12**



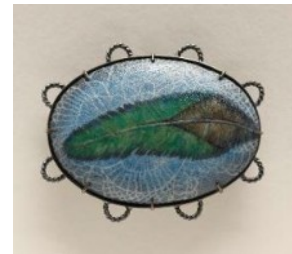
Anne Havel's *State of the Earth* series draws from notebook sketches she made to channel her angst about the ills of the world. Havel explains: "In this piece, the central red element is home. I felt no matter which route I took . . . I could not escape devastation, but the roads always led me home, for which I was grateful, for it was obvious some were not so fortunate."

## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Harold B. Helwig  
American, 1938 - 2012  
*... For the Flag (#70216)* 1976  
Copper and enamel  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.13



Mi-Sook Hur  
American, b. 1965 in South Korea  
*Feather Lace 3: Crown Jewels* 1976  
Enamel, copper, sterling silver, stainless steel  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.14



John Iverson  
American, b. 1953  
*Brooch (multi-color)* 2000s  
Gold and enamel  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.15



Andrew Kuebeck  
American, b. 1985  
*Joey in Profile Brooch* 2021  
Silver, fine silver, enamel, and photo transfer  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.16



Combining his training in both metalsmithing and photography, Andrew Kuebeck uses the enameled surface to illuminate the hidden histories of gay representation. Kuebeck's photographs are inspired by beefcake photography, which gained popularity following World War II with closeted male audiences. Kuebeck prints photos onto decals that are transferred onto the enameled surface and fired, fusing the image.

## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Marion Lang  
American, 1914 - 2014  
*Peacock Plate - Blue Pattern* 1960s  
Copper and enamel  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.17



Zachery Lechtenberg  
American, b. 1989  
*Unicorny* 2018  
Enamel, copper, sterling silver, and stainless steel  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.19



Zachery Lechtenberg deploys enamel to create graphic illustrations inspired by the bright colors and bold lines of cartoons. As opposed to the glossy surface that enamelwork is traditionally known for, Lechtenberg polishes the work, which produces a matte finish.

Rick McMullen  
American, b. 1951  
*Primal Pendant* 2013  
Glass, enamel, gold, silver  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.20



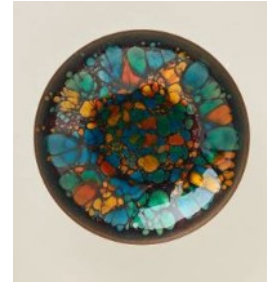
Myra Mimplitsch-Gray  
American, b. 1962  
*Splitsies* 2014  
Porcelain enamel on steel  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.21





## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Win Ng  
American, 1936 - 1991  
*Brown, Blue and Gold Bowl* 1960s  
Enamel on copper  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.22



J. Esteban Pere  
American, b. 1939 in Chile  
*CVI Plaque* 2020  
Enamel on copper, and fine silver foil  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.23



While colorful enamel panels are typical of Juan Esteban Pérez's work, this dark and chaotic composition was made in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. It evokes the feelings of anxiety, fear, and isolation that marked that collective experience: separated, yet together. Pérez's use of silver foil provides a counterpoint to the enamel, perhaps the reflection of hope amid uncertainty.

Sarah Perkins  
American, b. 1953  
*Linguist's Staff Brooch* 1997  
Silver, enamel, onyx, rose quartz, and 14k, 18k, and 23k golds  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.24

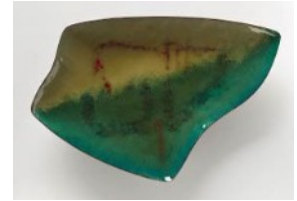


Sarah Perkins  
American, b. 1953  
*Red Moss Container* 2012  
Enamel, copper, and silver  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.25



## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Arpad Rosti  
American, 1909-1999; b. in Subotica, Serbia  
*Large Amorphic Tray* 1950s  
Copper and enamel  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation **2022.56.26**



June Schwarcz, enameler  
American, 1918 - 2015  
Margarete Seeler, metalsmith  
American, 1909-1996; b. in Germany, 1909- 1996  
*Pewter Box with Enamel Plaque (#778)* 1979  
Pewter, enamel, and copper  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation **2022.56.27**



For this collaboration, metalsmith and enameler Margarete Seeler created the pewter box and lid. June Schwarcz then produced the lid's enamel surface using a technique called *basse-taille*, meaning "shallow cut" in French. In this process, a metal substrate (in this case pewter) is engraved, carved, or stamped before being covered in translucent enamel, which highlights the design underneath.

June Schwarcz  
American, 1918 - 2015  
*Vessel #2465* 2012  
Copper and enamel  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation **2022.56.28**



One of the most innovative enamellers of her time, June Schwarcz is known for utilizing techniques such as electroforming to create her unique shapes. For this process, Schwarcz created a copper model, which she submerged in a chemical bath. Copper particles were then deposited onto the model through an electrical current. After the form had built up to its desired thickness, Schwarcz finished it with the addition of enamel.

## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Judy Stone  
American, b. 1944  
*Cylindrical Bowl* 2013  
Copper and enamel  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.29



Joseph Trippetti  
American, b. 1923  
*Owl Plate* 1950s  
Copper and enamel  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.30



Edward Winter  
American, 1908-1976  
*Footed Bowl* 1937  
Copper and enamel  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.31



Jade Snow Wong, 1922 - 2006  
*Blue Bowl (G)* 1950s  
Copper and enamel  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.32



Katherine S. Wood  
American, b. 1950  
*Diver / Pursuit* 1980s  
Enamel, copper, and wood  
Gift of The Enamel Arts Foundation 2022.56.33



## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Timothy Veske-McMahon

American, b. 1982; (RISD Faculty, Jewelry + Metalsmithing, 2015-present)

*Lump ObB, Ring-object* 2011

Copper, brass, aluminum, vitreous enamel, topaz, aquamarine, agate, resin, and powder coating

Gift of the artist and Gallery Loupe, Montclair, New Jersey **2022.57**



This playfully bright composition is a deeper meditation on process. In his Lump series, Timothy Veske-McMahon arranges gemstones in colorfully exaggerated settings within pieces of enamel, recalling geological shapes and textures. To create the lumps, powdered enamel is melted into a solid form and then shattered and reassembled. Veske-McMahon explains: "In simple terms, jewelry is a reorganization of ore. Components extracted, refined, and recomposed via human minds, hands, and tools."

Aaron Decker

American, b. 1989

*Die! No! Bomb!* 2022

Silver and enamel

Mary Ann Lippitt Acquisition Fund **2023.48.1**

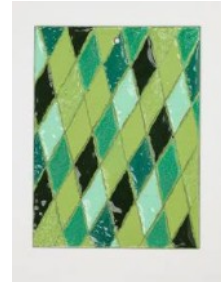


These enamel samples reveal the artist's process of developing colors and textures for this unique jewelry-object. Aaron Decker explains:

The only dinosaur that I saw when I was a kid was Reptar from the Nickelodeon show Rugrats. I think it's funny that my idea of a dinosaur is so concretely in my mind as that image. . . . He is bright green, scary, and moves like Godzilla. I could never know what a dinosaur skin looks like, but there is enough embedded understanding of popular culture, images of lizards, and what we have collectively agreed these beasts look like, to trick a viewer into thinking this glass is "like" dinosaur skin.

## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Aaron Decker  
American, b. 1989  
*Model for Die! No! Bomb! Skin Greens* 2022  
Copper and enamel  
Mary Ann Lippitt Acquisition Fund 2023.48.6



Aaron Decker  
American, b. 1989  
*Model for Die! No! Bomb! Skin Texture* 2023  
Copper and enamel  
Mary Ann Lippitt Acquisition Fund 2023.48.7



Kaori Juzu 珠数 かおり  
Japanese, b. 1978, Japan  
*Deep Below Shadows Brooch* 2022  
Enamel, steel, copper, bi-color metal, and silver  
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2023.127.3



When creating new jewelry pieces, Kaori Juzu hammers out and shapes copper in spontaneous ways, without using drawings or models made beforehand. She sifts powdered glass onto the surface of her works, with each color applied and fired individually. Her final application of heat gives each piece a textured matte surface.

Kaori Juzu 珠数 かおり  
Japanese, b. 1978, Japan  
*Remember to Breathe Ring* 2021  
Enamel, copper, 18k gold, bi-color metal, and patinated \*shakudo\*  
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2023.127.4



## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Esther Knobel  
Polish, b. in 1949, active in Israel  
*Brooch* 2023  
Copper mesh stitched with iron thread, enamel, and silver  
Mary B. Jackson Fund **TL40.2024**



The surface of this brooch is decorated with small yellow flowers, giving it an air of sweetness often associated with enamel jewelry. Yet the crumpled texture belies its joy: are we witnessing an ending? Something discarded and left behind?

This brooch is from Esther Knobel's recent body of work, which explores enameling on copper mesh. Knobel visually transforms this rigid material into something fluid and fabric-like, with the allure of softness

Tanya Crane  
American, b. 1974  
*Badge Brooch* 2022  
Copper, enamel, sterling silver, brass, wood, and steel  
Mary B. Jackson Fund **TL41.2024**



Here, bright red enamel calls attention to itself, as badges often do. Although Providence-based artist Tanya Crane has typically worked in black and white, her recent jewelry includes vivid colors inspired by nature. This brooch's smooth red surface stands in contrast to the piece of wood above, recovered from an old building in Boston. Says Crane: "This is a non-traditional take on a badge. This honors the materials which literally carry the weight of progress, change and individuals who fabricate structures, and usable items that we take for granted every day."