

# MASSC

# METAL ARTS

SOCIETY OF  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Mar Apr 2009

# Alison Antelman

April 4th & 5th, 2009

## Custom Clasps

Location: UCSD La Jolla Fee: \$125 plus \$20 materials kit (MASSC members)



Create clasps that are safe, secure and truly one-of-a-kind. Come up with unique solutions to complete your designs. Learn the key and box clasps, make original simple latches, and unusual shaped ear nuts. We will discuss customizing terminals and findings to unify your art jewelry. We will explore a variety of solutions to link your custom-made clasp to the rest of your piece. Students are expected to go with their own design impulses in order to explore new ideas in finishing their jewelry. Basic fabrication, including soldering, required.

This workshop will be filled via the MASSC lottery system with MASSC members receiving priority. To put your name into the lottery, contact Ketarah Shaffer by March 5th, 2009. Everyone will be contacted on March 6th with the lottery results. ketarah@earthlink.net or Day 714-556-9286, Evening (before 8pm) 949-643-9693. Please ask for Ketarah if calling.

More information about Alison Antelman can be found on her web site at: [www.antelman.com](http://www.antelman.com)

## We have some plans for 2009



*Corliss, resting on the window sill of a house, during recent adventure in India.*

MASSC for 2009 – digital evolution, great workshops and more. An honest but shameless approach to ask you to renew your dues for 2009

2008 was the year that MASSC truly went digital. Over 75% of our members now receive their newsletters via email. Credit cards are accepted for dues, donations and Demo Day. Soon, we will have a special area on the MASSC web site specifically for workshop payments by credit card. Yes, MASSC is getting into the here and now.

Speaking of the here and now, the association will be treading into the realm of data bases during 2009. Eventually, every MASSC member will be assigned a user name and password to access “member only” areas on the web site. Imagine being able to log onto the MASSC web site and view a technical video, download the latest newsletter, or get a discount coupon from an industry supplier! There are lots of things in the works and they are all good reasons and benefits of being a MASSC member.

Our Barter Town event this past summer was such a success that MASSC will schedule another one for 2009. A nice air conditioned facility has been suggested for this year with room for the traditional pot luck social. In the meantime, consider what you may want to trade and plan to do some bartering.

Your association is also looking into venues for social networking during 2009. I’ve seen many artists make connections that help their studio businesses with sites like Flickr and Crafterhaus. There is enormous potential here. It’s the savvy creatives who share their knowledge, display their work, establish themselves as a benevolent authority and get noticed by the right people. Social networking spells SUCCESS in capital letters. MASSC wants to be there for you, acting as a stepping stone to your success. You’ll be seeing more on this as it develops.

So why do we do all of this? Because we’re more than just great workshops! We want to give you every opportunity to acquire knowledge, network, get noticed and be a successful artist. So here comes the honest, shameless pitch, – If you haven’t renewed your dues for 2009, do it now. You can renew your membership ( or join for the first time) on the MASSC web site, [www.massconline.com](http://www.massconline.com). MASSC is growing and so are the benefits of being part of this dynamic group. Be part of it.

*Corliss Rose*  
President, MASSC



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**MASSC web site: [www.massconline.com](http://www.massconline.com)**

### **MASSC Newsgroup:**

[MetalArtsSociety-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:MetalArtsSociety-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

MASSC serves the needs and interests of artists working in metals and provides an environment for the exchange of information, instructional workshops, demonstrations, lectures, and panel discussions. Annual dues Sept 1-Aug 31); Regular Member, \$30; Family, \$45; Full-time Student \$20. Please add \$5 to your annual dues if you would like to receive a printed copy of the MASSC newsletter. All others will receive the newsletter via email. Membership forms are available at [www.MASSCOnline.com](http://www.MASSCOnline.com)

# Welcome to New MASSC Members

- Jody Fink, Los Angeles
- Robin Hawk, Woodland Hills
- Janice Montgomery, San Diego
- Eva P. Nathanson, Los Angeles
- Marilyn White, Inglewood
  
- Magdalena Goudie, Miami Beach, FL
- Brenda Mazza-Corby, Bakersfield
- Lisa Van Herik, La Jolla
- Jay Whaley, San Diego
  
- Lydia Hall, Pasadena
- Maribeth and Joseph McFaul, Mission Viejo
  
- Joy Chow, Diamond Bar
- Linda Harrington, Lakewood
- Sally Jewett-Brocato, Los Angeles
- Carol Krieks, Irvine
- Sally Pataky, Whittier
- Erick Salazar, Santa Ana
- Sally Talebi, Mission Viejo
- Irene Yu, Los Angeles
  
- Judy Beard, Placentia
- Maggie Greenwalt, Lake Forest
- Louis Hernendaz, Chula Vista
- Joan Kim, Long Beach
- Alicia Minette, Long Beach
- Jennifer Monroe, Westminster
- Jeanie Pratt, Nipomo, CA
- Susan Siering, Los Angeles

# Working Wire

with **Mary Lee Hu** by Kay Taylor

**Metals Professor (ret.), University of Washington**

Mary Lee Hu constructs body sculpture in high karat gold wire using the traditional textile techniques of twisting, wrapping, looping, braiding, knitting, weaving and more recently twining. She treated the workshop attendees to slides (open to public) of her work and demonstrations of these processes and encouraged us to experiment with wire to gain practical knowledge.



wrap, wrap the finer wire at right angles around the larger wire. For a lazy spiral, wrap the smaller wire more loosely. You can work a large amount of individual, small gauge wire by bundling it up neatly, with about 6" to work. (Bend the beginning end around the end, so it doesn't slip off.) With this technique extra wires can be added

## **TWISTING**

Basic wire twisting involves using a bench vise, a hand-operated drill and a cup hanger. Wire is bent in half; the ends are caught in the vise, and twisted with tension by catching the loop with the cup hanger that is "chucked" into the drill. To create different effects, the drill can be wound clockwise or counterclockwise for a herringbone pattern. Multiple twists can be twisted together. Smaller gauge wires can be twisted around larger gauge wires. Round wire is very conducive to twisting, but flat and square wire can be twisted, as well. Solder too secure the ends. To identify twisting patterns, take a close look at the ends for a cross section.

Additional Source: Herbert Maryon, *Metalwork & Enameling*;

## **WRAPPING**

Basic hand wrapping usually involves wrapping small wire around larger wire. For a tight

to the large wire; if a bundle of wires is used as the large wire, some of those individual wires can be looped up in a pattern or no pattern in between wraps. Wrap up close to each loop.

A fun exercise is to bunch up scrap wires, wrapping them together with the finer wire and bending the ends up at right angles, later to be melted into balls after the wrapping is complete.

With these two techniques, it's possible to create bugs, lizards, fringe, and the beginning of a looped base for later additions. It's important to plan schematics.

## **CHAIN-LINK , WICKER, EPAULETS & FIBULA SPRINGS**

Chain link and wicker patterns normally used in basketry can be scaled down to jewelry fabrication. Inspiration can come from everyday things and by applying it to wire. In some cases, specifically chain link, it is important to draw out the pattern and make each link exact.

For epaulets, wind fine wire on a round wood dowel about 6 inches long, making sure that it is indeed round. If the dowel is thick, put a nail in one end (saw the head off), which will fit into the chuck of a hand drill. Wind the wire by holding the hand drill in a bench vise, winding while directing the wire carefully down the dowel (hold one end of the wire in chuck along with the dowel). Make another coil of matching length, which can be a different color. Fold a heavier wire in half, each half longer than the coils. Slip each coil on each “leg” of the folded wire (the folded wire will be put in the bench vise so it should be slightly longer than the two coils). Put a cup hook in the chuck of the hand drill. Put the open end of the coil assembly in the vise, with the coils pushed to the folded end. Catch the fold with a cup hook and wind the hand drill, twisting the two coils together. The result is called a “general’s epaulet”, which is the spring that hangs from vintage military coat shoulder caps. This is exactly how bottle-brushes are constructed, as well.

To fabricate a fibula spring start with stiff, heavy gauge wire (harden by placing one end of the wire into a bench vise, holding the other end and pull). Using a dowel rod of the desired diameter, place the halfway point of the wire behind the halfway point of the dowel. Carefully wind the wire down toward you 3 or 4 revolutions. Bring the bottom half up toward you, crossing over the spiral and continue winding the same number of times. Scoot both wires toward the right end, allowing the second (farthest right) coil to slip off; bring it back around so that both loose ends meet in the middle on the dowel. Roll the set-up so that the two tails (now in the middle of the dowel with a spring on each side and one connecting wire spanning the distance) are pointing toward you. Bend the left wire up and over the spring set-up to become the bow. Bend the right wire down and under the spring set-up to become the pin. Bend the bow at the end to catch the pin at the desired length. Use the pin stem mechanism as part of the design.



Additional Sources: Jeremy Adamson, American Wicker; Mark Campbell, The Art of Hairwork; Virginia Harvey, The Techniques of Basketry; Doris & Coker, Alec Johnson, Straw Craft & Corn Dollies

### **BRAIDING**

Braiding is distinguished from weaving in that weaving has warp and weft wires.

In braiding odd or even numbers of wires may be used. It can be done flat or in the round, with or without multiple wires being used as “one”. Typically, round wire is used, but flat wire can be used in some techniques of braiding.

The Neolithic braid is worked clockwise with either an odd or even number of wires and in the round, either with or without a round form to work around. The result is a hollow braid of about 12 strands of wire. It grows “up” while it’s being worked on being held by a bench vise. Many variations can be done by adding on wires, pulling numbers of wires out of the mix, or using double wires. The Neolithic braid is known as a Viking Torc.

The Hawaiian braid is usually an 8-strand braid and can be done round or flat.

The multistrand diagonal braid is typical of Danish jeweler, Hanne Behrens.

Japanese kumihimo is a form of

round braiding.

Additional Sources: Joan Michaels-Paque, A Creative and Conceptual Analysis of Textiles; Catherine Martin, Kumihimo – Japanese Silk Braiding Techniques

### **KNITTING**

When knitting wire, Mary suggests using a crochet hook to catch the continuous wire to form loops. Start with a “bouquet” of wire loops (doesn’t matter whether odd or even in count) that is wrapped to hold the loops together. Then begin with the remaining wire to make loops. This technique is different than Viking Knit in that the loops do not twist.

It is possible to knit wire on a knitting machine.

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## WEAVING/TWINING

There are several techniques used in weaving wire. Soumak Weaving is a typically rug weaving pattern of looping weft threads around the warp threads. Over two, back and forth on the front side creates a her-ringbone pattern. By flipping the piece over after each completed row, the pattern appears on both sides. Other patterns are possible, as well.

An attractive weaving method is twining. It requires going over & under EACH warp wire, alternately with two weft wires. Mary Lee Hu's signature weaving is double-twinning, using two weft wires as one.

For double weft twining, start with about 20 gauge warp wires, and 26 gauge fine silver weft wires. Fold the 24 feet of the 26 gauge fine silver wire in half, resulting in 12 feet on each side of the middle. Wind one end into the center, making one hank, then wind the other into the center, resulting in the two double 6 foot sets of wires you twine with around the warp. Wrapping the wires in the twining method creates a slant "stitch". For single weft twining, start with 12 feet of weft wire and repeat as above.

To add warp wire, increasing the diameter of a basket, for example, add one wire folded in half so there are no loose ends. It is slipped in between two existing warp wires and worked in the same way. It's a little awkward at the beginning, but shapes up fairly quickly. Add these "v"s at every spoke of the basket for symmetrical shape, so a 12-wire warp basket becomes a 36-warp basket. The addition will show, so you want to make a pattern with it, using it to your advantage.

To decrease warp wire, skip one and bend out, then twining the next wire. Exposed ends can be twined or woven.

There are many ways to hide the ends. One way is to bend the warp wire at a right angle, twine over three, and push the end under to hide. When the final shape is achieved, apply paste flux (Superior) to entire piece; heat; air cool; saw ends evenly, then sand the ends. Finish the piece by fabricating a snugly fit

frame and soldering each and every wire with a small solder pallion (melted into a ball) at the frame joint. Use hard solder for rings, and easy solder for pieces less stressed when used.

Additional Source: Arline Fisch, *Textile Techniques in Metal*

## TUBE SAMPLE

To check how a pattern will look, it's a good idea to make a woven/twined tube with sample "stitches".

Pencil a pattern out on graph paper. Don't "float" more than five wires because they tend to catch and break while worn.

Start with 18 or 20 warp wires (at least 20 gauge). When making a bracelet 48 warp wires are good.

Repeat pattern can be every 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 12, or 24 warp wires. Work toward the top and when you reach the top, pull the warp wires UP (they will slip up fairly easily), so you're always working on the shorter end.

## HELPFUL HINTS

When butt soldering two ends of wire, flux, use a very small amount of medium solder, balled up and applied to one end. Butt the soldered end up next to the other wire, moving small torch

up and down the wires. Watch carefully for the lump of solder to move. The key is to use as little amount of solder as possible, so it doesn't lump and show.

To bundle several sterling silver wires together with the intent of melting the ends together, use fine silver wire as binding wire, making sure the "binding" wire is not too close to the point of melt. Fine silver will not mark the sterling or gold wire it is binding.

Use a cooler torch when melting wire end into a ball for less wrinkling and deformity.

Look at the flame coming off your metal; when the flame turns orange, it's annealed (fine silver, sterling, and gold).

To twine gold wire, use 18k for the warp and 22 k for the weft.



# JCK Reports Online Jewelry Sales Down 12%, And Why You Don't Care.

Total online sales grew 7 percent in 2008. On the other hand reported online jewelry and watch sales fell 12 percent year-over-year—making it one of the poorer performing categories in a down year for online spending, according to digital tracking firm comScore.

The current trend in negative hype is an interesting and somewhat skewed perspective typical of mass marketing mentality. But what does it all mean for studio jewelers?

First is the fact that on-line sales actually grew 7% last year. Mass merchandising sees this as a negative because this year's rate of growth did not surpass last year's rate. The reality is that the market GREW. The only thing that shrunk was the RATE of growth. In general, this is reassuring news for studio jewelers who sell on-line.

Secondly, the poorly performing jewelry sales that are being reported are from large commercial jewelry outlets such as department stores and mall chains. Customers here are commodity jewelry buyers who's typical purchase is event driven (wedding, birthday, anniversary, Valentine's day). Studio jewelers, on the other hand, typically sell their wares in regional shows & fairs, galleries & boutiques, and on-line, where buyers are more style and personal statement driven.

OK, so commercial jewelry sales are down. The double whammy for many jewelry manufacturers is the price of gold and silver is at historic highs. This drives overhead up as the cost of replacing metal inventory increases. Its also says something that

while online sales were down for commercial jewelers, they were up for just about everything else. If you think it's because of the oft quoted myth that jewelry buyers have to see and feel the piece before they buy, think again. \$400 million in annual sales

says otherwise. Look to purchase motivation

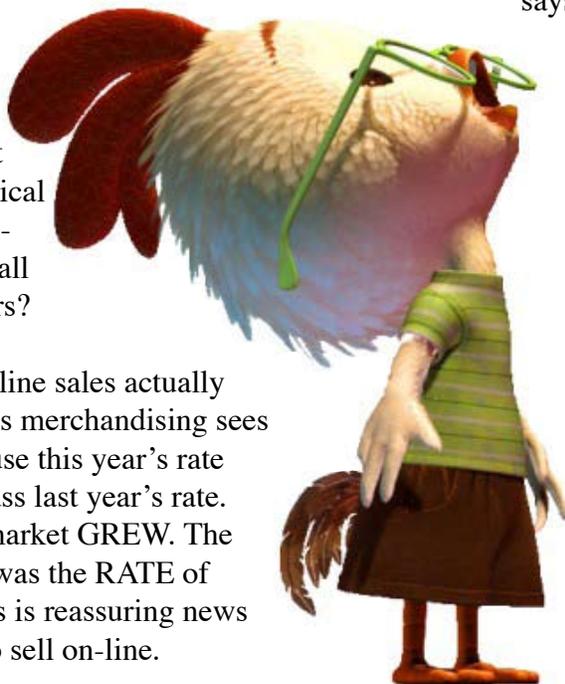
for a more plausible explanation. We've all seen the commercials that promise your ring will appraise (by the seller) for twice what you pay for it. Or the simple reminder that your beloved will recognize you for the inconsiderate a\*\*hole that you really are unless you annoint her with a 2 carat symbol of your enduring love. That's what they call "Hardball" marketing. And people usually resent it.

Which brings me to another piece of trend reporting that may interest you. Commercial jewelers are looking more and more to studio jewelers for insipiration. This means that the "alternative" materials that studio jewelers have been using and experimenting with for years

are finding their way into commercial jewelry. It keeps the overhead and material costs down and co-ops a fashion-forward cache at the same time.

While imitation is flattering it is also a good indication that studio jewelry is healthier than you might think. Adding to this is the continued growth in on-line shopping. Commercial jewelry manufacturers are increasing budgets to drive more and more customers online and away from high overhead brick & mortar stores. This also benefits online studio jewelers who can offer original designs to compete with tepid commercial knockoffs.

*Got a different opinion? Send it to Duke Sprue, the newsletter guy at [dukesprue@massconline.com](mailto:dukesprue@massconline.com)*



## Ethical Metalsmiths in Transition

Working on multiple projects while living in three different cities and two different time zones has proven more difficult than we imagined. After working together for three years, we decided to phase out working together as a team. We share a mission but have decided to pursue it in different ways, which will allow each of us to make the best and most productive use of our time, resources and abilities. We plan to build upon our common work together as we go forward.

Jennifer Horning plans to continue her work with a broad audience, including metalsmiths, independent jewelers, suppliers and their customers, to lead them in taking practical action to increase social and environmental responsibility all along the supply chain. She is available for consulting work with clients on ethical sourcing, product certification and policy reform. Jennifer's email address is [jenniferhorning1@gmail.com](mailto:jenniferhorning1@gmail.com).

Susan Kingsley and Christina Miller will carry on as co-directors of Ethical Metalsmiths, the artistic collaboration they began in 2004. Their mission is to inform

and inspire people to care about and protect the world's environmental resources, peoples and cultures from unethical mining practices. They will continue working within jewelry and metalsmithing communities as well as with consumers, businesses and organizations who share their goals. They plan to keep you informed and continue producing exhibitions and projects such as Golden Opportunity, Composting Good and Evil and future editions of Radical Jewelry Makeover. Ethical Metalsmiths will maintain their affiliation and non-profit status with EARTHWORKS and will participate in joint efforts to leading to mining reform, including the establishment of ethical standards, material certification and fair trade. Ethical Metalsmiths email address is [mail@EthicalMetalsmiths.org](mailto:mail@EthicalMetalsmiths.org).

We are all proud of what we accomplished together and thank you for your support and encouragement.

Jennifer Horning  
Susan Kingsley  
Christina Miller



1644 S. Clementine St. Anaheim CA 92802

May 16th, 2009  
Demo Day  
El Camino College

Sept, 2009  
Kathy Palochak  
Tufa Casting

The next Board Meeting:  
Sunday, March 29th at 10:00 a.m. at  
1644 S. Clementine St.  
Anaheim, CA 92802  
Members Welcome