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Nicky Almasy

Jewelry

• Award-winning Singaporean designer Samantha Lim's line, Heavenly Jade Jewelry Designs, has been exhibited at the Royal Ontario Museum Canada and Shangri-La Pudong. Needless to say, she's talented. Lim began teaching last August to prove that homemade jewelry doesn't have to look cheap (as it often can). The seven person class is mixed with novices and experienced jewelers, 90 percent being regulars. It's no surprise then the class has a chatty, boisterous buzz. But students buckle down come craft time. Each session focuses on a different bauble; one day they finish earrings; the next, bracelets. Lim obsesses over attention to detail, giving students ample feedback so they leave with jewelry they're proud to wear. She also prepares students to set out on their own by teaching how to source supplies at Shanghai's best places and prices. // RMB300 per class includes all materials. Classes held at Colorbox and Studio No. 5 (1502 1229 058, www.samanthalim.com)

• *Clarification: Samantha was finalist at "The 8th Samshin International Diamond Jewelry Design Awards 2003".*



Sparkle and flair

Global Times | October 11, 2011 08:59

By Erick Peterson

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Homemade jewelry at Samantha Lim and Lilli's Shanghai. Photos: Erick Peterson/GT and courtesy of the owners of two shops

Accessible materials

"I think it's critical that if you work on something, a piece of art or a project, materials should be accessible to you where you live," said Lim, who points out that metal findings, stones, clasps, wires and beads can be found at locations all over Shanghai.

These objects can give a Chinese look to a piece of jewelry. Further influences can be incorporated into the design, as a jewelry maker can use Chinese designs, calligraphy or Chinese characters in their work. One need only browse shops for inspiration in such designs.

That said, Lim maintains that not every piece of jewelry needs to express a Chinese influence. After all, a person creates so that he can demonstrate his own creativity.

Cui Guodong, owner of Lilli's Shanghai, has been making jewelry in Shanghai for 11 years.

"I love colorful stones, pearls and jewels. I like unique designs," Cui said. Further, he says that he especially enjoys Chinese designs and jade.

Working on jewelry can be difficult for amateurs, according to Cui. Specialized equipment is necessary for making the most exquisite pieces. Even simple jewelry benefits from the use of a polishing machine, which he recommends for amateurs. With experience, a jewelry maker can even start crafting pieces out of soft silver and then other metals.

Ambition need not end here, however, as there is plenty of room for a person to develop their skills and advance to even higher levels. But all of the jewelry makers in Shanghai the Global Times spoke to said that the lower levels give hobbyists plenty to enjoy. The opportunity to enjoy your art and wear it in public is an attractive proposition.

The Seed Project

Add: Room 302, Bldg 7B, 50 Moganshan Road 莫干山路50号7B幢302室

Tel: 158-0060-9022

Samantha Lim

Add: No.5, Lane 169 Jiashan Road 嘉善路169弄5号

1/F, No.20, Lane 383 Xiangyang Road 襄阳路383弄20号1层 (in Colorbox Creative Arts Center)

Tel: 150-2122-9058

Lilli's Shanghai

Add: Room D, 1/F, Maosheng Mansion, 1051 Xinzha Road 新闸路1051号茂盛大厦1层D室

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Jessica Eagleson and a piece of her jewelry. Photo: Erick Peterson/GT

Subjective tastes

And you do not necessarily have to create with anyone else in mind but yourself. Eagleson has created many pieces that have found buyers. It was one of her pieces that remained unsold at auction, however, that stole her heart. The piece was a rather flamboyant ring, adorned with feathers and bathed in color. Other people liked her other works which are colorful and fun but seem tame by comparison. Still, she likes the ring. Taste is subjective.

Another consideration, which is more practical than creating jewelry that speaks to your heart, is finding a place to buy the ingredients for your work. Anyone who wishes to make jewelry needs a supplier of beads, wire and other objects. The best place, she suggests, may not be local stores, where prices are often high. She buys much of her materials on online purchasing sites such as taobao.com, where she can pick up goods at lower prices.

Eagleson offers other suggestions for anyone making jewelry. People who take up this activity should try to incorporate Chinese styles into at least some of their works. One easy way of doing this is to learn Chinese knot-making and then use these knots in jewelry.

Information for a class she teaches can be found at www.theseedproject.com. In her class, she offers many more tips on making jewelry.

Another instructor, Samantha Lim, also holds her own workshops in Shanghai. She says that her classes are dedicated to making use of resources available in China when producing jewelry. China, a mass producer of stones and other jewelry-making materials, is a prime location for pursuing this hobby, which does not always occur to people who relocate here.

According to Lim, some of the greatest satisfaction that a person can feel when making jewelry is reusing old items. A homemade watch band, for instance, gives a watch a new look. People who have beloved items in the closet can put these pieces of jewelry back into use, where they can be worn, enjoyed and showed off.

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Sparkle and flair

Global Times | October 11, 2011 08:59

By Erick Peterson

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Homemade jewelry can be a creative pursuit. Photo: Erick Peterson/GT and courtesy of the owners of three shops

The work of local jewelry makers, teachers and professionals make obvious their love of making jewelry. The pieces they create range from the playful to the traditional, items that may include wild colors and intrinsic details. One thing that jewelry makers in Shanghai have in common, however, is that they are passionate devotees of their craft. Furthermore, they encourage creativity in other people.

"It's pretty easy," said Jessica Eagleson, co-founder of the Seed Project (where she recently auctioned pieces of her homemade jewelry for charity), expressing her opinion on entry-level jewelry making.

Eagleson, who has been making jewelry for two years, said jewelry making is something most people can do providing they have an interest in the subject. Thus, a new creator can begin the hobby with confidence.

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