

Opinion: Ethnic and Antique Jewelry Designs

Commentary by Laura Bracken (email@BrackenDesigns.com)

This isn't an article, nor is it really much of anything other than my opinion.

I wanted to explain why/how I love ethnic-style and/or ancient jewelry designs.

Let me back up a second and show you a conversation I recently had with a very... um... particular customer (in person).

Me: And these are lampwork. Do you know how lampwork is made? A glass artist takes different colored rods of glass and melts them with a blow torch, one at a time, producing different shapes, layers, and designs that form a bead. Then they take the beads and bake them in a kiln to help strengthen the bead for a long, sturdy life. Then they clean the bead and inspect it.

Customer: Wow, that's really neat.

Me: It certainly is, and I couldn't be more proud to work with the creations of these glass artists.

Customer: Do you have this bead in a bigger size?

Me: Um... no. It's a one of a kind bead. She only made one of them.

Customer: Can you get the same thing in a little bit lighter color?

Me: I suppose... if I asked the Lampworker to do a special order for me.

Customer: Great! But I only want one bead like that. And I need it by this Friday. Oh and is it still \$25 for the bracelet... and that includes the matching earrings, right?

Me: ARGH! (but in my head only... so far)

Sigh...

The problem, you see, is I don't think enough people appreciate what "handmade" means. Yes, we shoot for uniformity when we're making a set of something... but they're NOT machine made and they hopefully won't look machine made.

I, for one, tend to prefer jewelry that LOOKS like someone made it and not like it is one of 4 billion spewed out of a machine, rough-edges filed by one assembly-line worker, and shine buffed by the next.

So embrace those odd and even awkward designs.

The next time someone wants to know why the bracelets at YOUR table are \$50 while similar looking things at the next table are only \$10, you should have a slew of answers for them.

As usual, here are some quotes to inspire you:

- The thing that is really hard, and really amazing, is giving up on being perfect and beginning the work of becoming yourself.
- If people can't accept your imperfections, that's their fault.
- Artists who seek perfection in everything are those who cannot attain it in anything.
- A wise architect observed that you could break the laws of architectural art provided you had mastered them first.
- Finality is death. Perfection is finality. Nothing is perfect.
- Perfection is the inward condition of the mind and spirit, not an outward set of circumstances.
- Creativity requires the courage to let go of certainties.
- Creativity comes from trust. Trust your instincts. And never hope more than you work.
- Creativity involves breaking out of established patterns in order to look at things in a different way.
- Creativity is a type of learning process where the teacher and pupil are located in the same individual.
- Creativity is piercing the mundane to find the marvelous.
- Don't think. Thinking is the enemy of creativity. It's self-conscious, and anything self-conscious is lousy. You can't "try" to do things. You simply "must" do things.
- One of your most powerful inner resources is your own creativity. Be willing to try on something new and play the game full-out.

Heh... Okay, I went a little off course here, but I think it's related... somewhat.

To be creative includes trying new things and not being afraid to be different. What we refer to as making something "outside of the box".

Personally, I find great appeal in items similar to those on the front of this newsletter. Jewelry fashioned by hand and from designs of their imagination. I can't wait to continue trying that myself.

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