

COMMUNITY

Jewelry Artist Schilling Opens Gallery, Studio

BY MARTINIQUE DAVIS

TELLURIDE – Jeweler Amy Schilling works in metal, but the creations she engenders are much more than simply molded gold or silver. A piece of Schilling jewelry is like a story's final chapter, or the completion of a journey. Her art represents the final, tangible product in a sequence that begins with the people that create the raw materials and ends with the person that wears the piece.

As Schilling explains, each piece of her jewelry represents a rich tapestry woven from many individual strings – the workers who transform natural resources into usable raw materials, the artist who creates the jewelry, and finally the person who wears the final piece. “Each of these lives has a distinct story – the artist's inspiration, the wearer's joy, and the laborers' daily efforts. I seek to understand these living stories fully because they are what give rise to my jewelry, and without any one of them my work would not be possible,” says Schilling.

Another chapter was recently added to the Schilling jewelry narrative, with the opening of Schilling Studios gallery on Pine Street, in the space formerly occupied by Lucas Gallery. Using part of the space as a studio, Schilling will continue to weave stories into wearable art, but she also now has a space to showcase her work.

“This represents my art coming full circle,” says Schilling of the new gallery. While she has been creating jewelry as a full-time profession for 13 years, Schilling Studios repre-



SCHILLING IN HER NEW SPACE: ‘This represents my art coming full circle.’ (Photo by Brett Schreckengost)

sents her first private gallery space. (Her jewelry was previously represented by the Telluride Gallery of Fine Art.)

Schilling's work is made up of raw organic elements juxtaposed with finer artistic details: molded metal chain necklaces strung with chunky sea green, blue, and rose-colored recycled glass beads; asymmetrical, six-sided silver bracelets etched with austere splashes of dots and stripes; and rough gold and platinum rings sparkling with diamonds. Most of Schilling's creations have been inspired by other artists – specifically, the ancient people whose medium was rock, and whose petroglyphs and pictographs serve as a window into ancient cultures today. Once a ceramic artist exclusively, Schilling was struck by a bolt of inspiration after finding rock art while hiking in

New Mexico. “I saw the images in metal,” she says. That vision propelled her toward apprenticing at the studios of well-known metal jewelers, and eventually into becoming a full time jeweler.

Schilling's fascination with petroglyphs and pictographs also inspired her travels around the world. Her desire to learn

more about ancient art forms has led Schilling to create connections, and ultimately affiliations, with artists and craftspeople from around the globe. During a trip to Ghana in 2005, she established a partnership with a community of glass bead makers, ultimately incorporating their beads into her own work. Currently Schilling is working to create a similar relationship with the Coboclos people of the Brazilian Amazon, whose carved wooden beads will adorn her next jewelry series.

The Coboclos use scraps of wood left over from logging operations to create intricately carved wooden art. Schilling has connected with an artists' cooperative of 40 Coboblos carvers, who she plans to visit during a trip to Brazil this fall.

“It's something I believe in,” she says of the Coboclos coop. “It's not just about making jewelry, but also about helping people and being conscious of the environment.”

Being conscious of the entire jewelry-making process, from the creation of the metal to the mining of the diamonds, is vital to Schilling's production.

She has toured silver mines in Bolivia, after which she committed to using reclaimed metals almost exclusively. Her diamonds are certified conflict-free, and recycled glass is a major element in many of her lines.

Now that Schilling has her own studio, she can more effectively showcase not just her jewelry, but the story behind each piece. “My customers will now be able to better understand the whole story of my art, not just the little pieces of it,” she explains.

Her use of reclaimed metals, conflict-free diamonds, recycled materials, and art by indigenous craftspeople, is part of the story behind Schilling's jewelry. The rest of the story can be uncovered by visiting the gallery and speaking with the artist in person. Once renovations to Schilling Studios are complete, visitors are welcome to stop by the space, Monday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. The gallery is located at 151 S. Pine Street in Telluride. For more information about Schilling, visit www.amyschilling.com.

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