

Explore exhibitions and garden displays all summer at the Paine Art Center and Gardens

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"Maker & Muse: Women and Early Twentieth Century Art Jewelry" opens Saturday at the Paine Art Center and Gardens. (Photo: John Faier)

OSHKOSH - Thousands of plants and flowers accompanied by the largest art jewelry exhibition ever presented in Wisconsin makes this summer one of the best times of the year to visit the Paine Art Center and Gardens.

The arrival of June means gardeners are planting all new displays of annuals around the nearly four acres at 1410 Algoma Blvd. The gardens are expected to flourish over the coming months with an array of zinnias and snapdragons, coleus, brugmansia, bells of Ireland, daisies, dahlias and more.

Meanwhile, the opening of the Paine's summer exhibition, "Maker & Muse: Women and Early Twentieth Century Art Jewelry," is Saturday.

"Maker & Muse" celebrates the impact of women on art jewelry across five regions: Great Britain, France, Austro-Germany, New York and Chicago. These regions saw the emergence of bold, experimental artists who pushed the boundaries of traditional jewelry design. Women influenced art jewelry as muses to male designers and, for the first time, as designers themselves.

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Art jewelry developed as a reaction to the conformity of mass-produced goods throughout the Industrial Revolution. Each of the designers represented in "Maker & Muse," though inspired by their own individual cultures and surroundings, shared similar aesthetic ideals. They sought to produce innovative jewelry with semiprecious stones, enamelwork and dramatic forms.

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The intricate, handcrafted pieces offer themes in sensuality, nature, whimsical, ethereal beings and more fascinating inspirations. A silver waist clasp brings an octopus to life with garnet eyes, while a pendant uses abalone and pearl to depict an excursion on the sea and a necklace with gold and sapphire features flowing, feminine characters.

"Maker & Muse" features more than 200 exquisite works by renowned artists, such as Louis Comfort Tiffany, Charlotte Newman and René Lalique, and provides a glimpse into the social, political and economic contexts in which they were created. Works were drawn from the collection of Richard H. Driehaus, as well as other prominent collections.

The Paine's curator of collections and exhibitions Laura Fiser will offer a chance to learn more about the exhibition at 2 p.m. Sunday in the studio, located on the lower level of the mansion. Viewers can also register for Tea & Tour events in July and August.

Complementing "Maker & Muse" is another exhibition in the Paine's Gothic Gallery, "Treasures from the R. Harder Gallery of Gems & Minerals."

The R. Harder Gallery at Jewelers Mutual Insurance Group in Neenah has been collecting specimens for display since 1994, and houses one of the nation's largest private collections of minerals and gemstones in their natural form. Featuring a special selection from the gallery, this mesmerizing spectrum of gems and minerals on display at the Paine highlights rare specimens collected from around the world.

The Paine features extended hours and special admission June 22 through Sept. 22. The hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays through Sundays. Admission is \$12 for adults and \$7 for ages 5 to 17. Admission is free for children ages 4 and younger, as well as for Paine members. Learn more about the Paine at thepaine.org.

Noell Dickmann is the marketing manager at the Paine Art Center and Gardens.

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