

JEWELRY

New Gold conference examines issues affecting jewelry and luxury

March 23, 2018



Wendy Brandes, *Maneater Ring: NYC Taxi and Passenger*, featuring 92 yellow diamonds, totaling 0.59 carat, 92 white diamonds, totaling 0.46 carat, 130 black diamonds, totaling 1.04 carats, two small rubies, and 23 grams of 18K gold. Made in New York. Image credit: Wendy Brandes

By STAFF REPORTS

Initiatives in Art and Culture will debut the 8th Annual International Gold Conference April 12-13 in New York, featuring leading figures in jewelry, mining, technology and government.

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Themed "**Gold: Vortex, Virtues and Values**," the conference will explore the range of gold's subject matter, from responsible business practices throughout the worldwide supply chain, to new trends in jewelry manufacturing, design, and apprenticeship. New frontiers in social media, government and legal affairs, and presentations by leading goldsmiths round out the two-day event. Attendees can buy books on gold and jewelry at the conference, with book signings will take place.

"We strove to capture quintessential elements of the time in which we live," said Lisa Koenigsberg, founder/CEO of Initiatives in Art and Culture, New York. "Hence vortex, which implies forceful swirling and thus change. While virtues and values are core positive elements of the history that humanity continues to write about and for itself."

Sessions topics include "A Rising Tide: Women and the Jewelry Industry;" "Washington Update," "Optimizing Consumer Experience: Technological Approaches to Personalization " and " Industrial Revolution 4.0: Cultivating and Perpetuating Old World Skills."

Here is the dialogue with Mr. Koenigsberg:

What's the theme of this year's **Gold Conference**?

In essence, the theme is the relationship between an enduring, unwavering measure of beauty and value, gold, as seen within the vortex of change and the uncertainty with which we presently live.

How is it different from last year's focus?

In this year's conference, there is an emphasis on issues affecting gold, jewelry and luxury at this time of seemingly tumultuous change.

We consider methods of fabrication, manufacturing, governmental policy and regulation, women in and their impact on the jewelry industry, and sustainability and ethical sourcing.

Central also are new approaches to communications, including social media.

IAC considers the impact of this watershed era on gold's abiding allure and enduring value.

Have you noticed a change in the gold jewelry market in the past 12 months that is a harbinger of things to come?

There is a robust sense of possibility.

One moment that speaks to the compelling power of gold is the engagement ring given by Prince Harry to Meghan Markle. A global sensation, the ring is made of yellow gold her "favorite" and a stone sourced from Botswana.

What is the state of jewelry in the U.S. and overseas in terms of design and marketing, as well as consumption?

On the one hand, consumers desire jewelry and hence it is a luxury. On the other hand, jewelry expresses personal meaning and history and embodies emotion and hence can be seen as a necessity.

Jewelry retains a central place in the marketplace and in the hearts and minds of consumers.

Exceptional artistry and cutting-edge technology ensure varied aesthetic possibilities, while customization and personalization address the importance of story telling, authenticity and meaning yearned for by the recipient and expressed in today's marketing.



De Vroomen, The Moon and the Stars, a repouss brooch with cabochon moonstone and diamond, featuring enamel by Jane Short. Image credit: Leo and Ginnie de Vroomen

You have a catchy subtext for the event: Vortex, Virtues and Values. What was the idea behind that?

We strove to capture quintessential elements of the time in which we live. Hence vortex, which implies forceful swirling and thus change. While virtues and values are core positive elements of the history that humanity continues to write about and for itself.

What was the logic behind the program?

Beginning with a discussion of the actual value and price of gold and what impacts them, we consider craft, artistry, skill, and design, all aspects of transforming this precious metal into jewelry.

We discuss a broadened customer base for gold, and how it relates to manufacturing, sourcing and mining, governmental regulation and policy.

Of particular import is the rising role of women in the market place and the jewelry industry.

We conclude with the consideration of the appropriate ways to use social media and other marketing means to convey the compelling and hidden power of gold.

The speaker list has must have been hard to put together.

We are always governed by the quest for the best and we are delighted to host leading jewelers and goldsmiths, manufacturers, industry leaders, market analysts and major figures in sustainability, ethical sourcing, and responsible practice topics of increasing import.

What should the conference attendee walk away with after two days?

We intend to impart:

- an understanding of the enduring importance of gold and its value
- how jewelers and goldsmiths are creating objects that are relevant to and are expressive of our time
- how manufacturers are meeting the market challenges and delivering for the customer
- current marketing trends, among them the importance of story telling, personalization and narrative, as well as authenticity
- A greater understanding of the supply chain from mine to market and an awareness of sustainability's increased importance to the consumer and to society.

[Please click here to register for the Gold Conference](#)



Lin Stanionis, Awakening, 2011, featuring 18K gold, sterling, gemets, enamel, snake skeleton. Collection: Jon Blumb

Here is the agenda of the Gold Conference that will be held at the Bohemian National Hall on New York's Upper East Side:

THURSDAY, APRIL 12

8:30 - 9:00 a.m. Registration and Coffee

9:00 - 9:15 a.m. Opening Remarks

Mark Hanna, chief marketing officer, Richline Group, A Berkshire Hathaway Company.

9:15 - 9:25 a.m. Introduction

Lisa Koenigsberg, president, Initiatives in Art and Culture.

9:25 - 10:05 a.m. Valuing Gold in an Age of Uncertainty

Jeffrey M. Christian, founder and managing director, CPM Group.

10:10 a.m. - 11:10 a.m. Panel: Washington Update

Linus Drogs, owner and president, Au Enterprises; Mark Hanna, chief marketing officer, Richline Group, A Berkshire Hathaway Company; Elizabeth Orlando, economic officer, Bureau of Economic Affairs, Office of Threat Finance and Countermeasures, U.S. Department of State; Susan Thea Posnock, director of public affairs and education, Jewelers of America; Tiffany Stevens, president and CEO, Jewelers Vigilance Committee. Peggy Jo Donahue, Peggy Jo Donahue, Writer, moderator.

11:10 - 11:30 a.m. Break

11:30 a.m. - 12:10 p.m. Digital Dimensions: Technology in Transforming Behavior

Andrea Hill, founder and CEO, Hill Management Group.

12:15 - 1:00 pm Crafting the Exquisite: the Archeology of Creativity

Alexandra Mor, haute joaillerie designer, in conversation with Brandee Dallow, founder and president, Fine Girl Luxury Brand Building & Communications.

1:00 - 2:15 pm Lunch on your own and book signings

2:15 - 3:15 pm Panel: Sustainable Beauty: The Pursuit of Ethical Jewelry

Blair Lauren Brown, jewelry designer; Nina Farran, founder, Fashionkind; Robert Goodman, co-founder and co-owner, Robert Goodman Jewelers in Zionsville, Indiana; Stewart Grice, vice president, mill products, Hoover & Strong; and Monica Stephenson, founder of idazzle and ANZA Gems. Christina Miller, independent consultant and co-founder/former executive director of Ethical Metalsmiths, moderator.

3:15 - 3:30 pm Break

3:30 - 4:00 pm Optimizing Consumer Experience: Technological Approaches to Personalization

Jean-Jacques Grimaud, director, sales, SolidWorks SELL, Dassault Systmes.

4:05 - 5:05 pm Blockchain Technology is Here

Mark Hanna, chief marketing officer, Richline Group, A Berkshire Hathaway Company; and Marla Beck Hedworth, global business lead, jewelry, precious metals, and gemological industries, UL.

5:15 - 6:15 p.m. Champagne Reception

6:15 - 6:30 p.m. Opening Remarks: A Rising Tide: Women and the Jewelry Industry

Lisa Koenigsberg, IAC president; and Ronnie Vanderlinden, president, Diamex Inc., Diamond Manufacturers & Importers Association of America, and the United States Jewelry Council.

6:30 - 7:30 p.m. Panel: A Rising Tide: Women and the Jewelry Industry

Wendy Brandes, jewelry designer and writer at Wendy Brandes Jewelry; Brandee Dallow, founder and president, Fine Girl Luxury Brand Building & Communications; Jenny Luker, president, Platinum Guild International, and president, Women's Jewelry Association; and Barbara Palumbo, writer and founder of Adornmentality.com and What'sOnHerWrist.com. Hedda Schupak, editor, Centurion Newsletter; moderator.

FRIDAY, APRIL 13 ~ IAC'S Eighth Annual International Gold Conference, Day 2

9:00 - 9:40 a.m. *Moda Operandi: A New Business Model for Jewelry*

Deborah Nicodemus, CEO, Moda Operandi, in conversation with Mickey Alam Khan, founder and editor in chief, *Luxury Daily*.

9:45 - 10:45 a.m. Panel: Full Steam Ahead: The Journey Towards Ethical Sourcing, Transparency, and Responsible Practice

David Bouffard, vice president, corporate affairs, Signet Jewelers; Aime Boulanger, coordinator, Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA); Tiguidanke Camara, chairman and CEO of Tigui Mining Group; Elizabeth Orlando, economic officer, Bureau of Economic Affairs, Office of Threat Finance and Countermeasures, U.S. Department of State; and Tiffany Stevens, president and CEO, Jewelers Vigilance Committee. Rob Bates, news director, *JCK* magazine, moderator.

10:45 - 11:00 a.m. Break and book signings

11:00 - 11:55 a.m. Collaboration and Innovation: The Work of Leo and Ginnie de Vroomen

Leo and Ginnie de Vroomen, Dutch goldsmith, and artist/designer.

12:00 - 12:45 p.m. Artistry and Variety: The Glories of Enamel

Jane Short, enameller and creator of the Millennium Bowl for the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths in London.

12:45 - 2:00 p.m. Lunch on your own and book signings

2:00 - 2:55 p.m. Casting: Transforming the World. A Conversation.

Lin Stanionis, studio jeweler and visual art professor, department of visual art, University of Kansas; Jen Townsend, studio jeweler and co-author of *CAST: Art and Objects Made Using Humanity's Most Transformational Process* (2017); and Rene Zettle-Sterling, co-author *CAST*, professor at Grand Valley State University, and past president of Society of North American Goldsmiths.

3:00 - 3:55 p.m. Panel: Industrial Revolution 4.0: Cultivating and Perpetuating Old World Skills.

Ann Cahoon, department head of jewelry making for the North Bennet Street School, Boston; Ted Doudak, CEO, Riva Precision Manufacturing; Patricia Madeja, studio jeweler, goldsmith, professor and coordinator of the jewelry program, Pratt Institute; Rich Youmans, chief communications officer, MJSA/publisher, MJSA Journal; and Katrin Zimmerman, jewelry designer and founder, Ex Ovo. Andrea Hill, founder and CEO, Hill Management Group, moderator.

4:00 - 5:00 p.m. Panel: Who's Got the Power? Influencers, Ethics, and the Regulation of Social Media.

Wendy Brandes, jewelry designer and writer at Wendy Brandes Jewelry; Barbara Palumbo, writer and founder of Adornmentality.com and What'sOnHerWrist.com; Monica Stephenson, writer and founder of idazzle and ANZA Gems; and Sara Yood, senior counsel, JVC. Peggy Jo Donahue, Peggy Jo Donahue, Writer, moderator.

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