

Artist Statement

Amber Petersen

My current works are primarily jewelry/metalwork sculpture. Jewelry/metalwork is a 3-dimensional medium, which contains many avenues of exploration, critical thinking, and risk-taking. I love working with sterling silver and copper, especially in methods of enameling (i.e. *cloisonne* and *champleve*). I also enjoy many techniques of fabricating jewelry from sheet metal (i.e. hammering, milling, stamping, etc.).

As an art-maker I love to communicate on a personal level. I love the fact that jewelry is a personal and wearable art. My Senior Exhibit, *Processing Peace*, is a personal example of art therapy. These jewelry pieces symbolize the various stages of grieving: denial, depression, anger, and acceptance or rather peace. My father, Steven Petersen passed away last September from a near ten-year battle with kidney, brain, and lung cancer. Peace lilies were funeral gifts from friends of the family. I wonder if they are intended to bring us peace, or do peace lilies represent my father's peace? However, the only peace I have found comes from God the Father, the Prince of Peace. He is helping me work through my grief in the processes of jewelry---processing my peace.

2 Corinthians 13:11

Finally, brethren farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Artist Bio

Amber Petersen

Amber Petersen is a full-tuition Honors Scholar who aspires to be a jeweler, one who designs and creates as well as repairs and refines estate jewelry. She will receive her Bachelor's of Fine Art at Bemidji State University, Bemidji Minnesota, with a concentration in Jewelry/Metals Spring 2006. In the past two years, Amber has placed artwork in numerous class exhibitions and held her first solo show of life drawings in Spring 2005. She is a charcoal life drawer who uses her knowledge of the physical human body to make jewelry/small-metal sculptures. This relationship of the body and jewelry fuels her art. In 2004, she received the Lind Scholarship for an art history paper entered in the juried Annual Student Award Show at Bemidji State University. She is also a member of the Student Art Association and the Honors Program. She premiered her first solo jewelry exhibition/thesis project April 2006 at the Ramsey Gallery at Bemidji State University.

Processing Peace: **Art Therapy for A Grieving Artist**

Amber L.(Petersen) Vold
Senior Exhibit/Thesis Project

Honors Thesis Advisors:
Jauneth Skinner, Professor of Visual Arts
Kyle R. Crocker, Professor of History

Abstract

What is peace? Webster says peace is “freedom from or a stopping of war, freedom from public disturbance; law and order, harmony within a group, an undisturbed state of mind; serenity.” This is such a perfect and lovely notion, but surely it is mere words for hurting souls. It is too perfect for an imperfect world. Peace is neither concrete nor swiftly attained by human strength or knowledge. Peace is a process---or rather processes within processes. Attaining peace involves the physical, the emotional, and the spiritual body; it is a chaotic course of developments working and changing simultaneously.

“Processing Peace,” my Senior Exhibit/Thesis Project, which took place April 7th through the 30th, 2006 in the Ramsey Gallery of the Bangsberg Fine Art Building at Bemidji State University in Bemidji, Minnesota, deals with my struggle to find peace amid grief. This is a grieving artist’s version of art therapy. This reflective essay explains my design inspiration, maps my grief, expresses the motivation for my artwork, and the ideas and techniques behind each jewelry/small sculptural piece, and installation issues. Through the methods of journal writing, drawing, painting, jewelry designing, metalsmithing, and enameling, I am processing my peace---grasping for growth and seeking something that looks like peace.

Design Inspiration

The design inspiration behind my exhibit comes from a common funeral gift, a peace lily plant, one particularly given in remembrance of my father, Steven Jerome Petersen (1953-2005). Peace lilies or *Spathiphyllum* have foliage ranging from lime green to deep blue-green, and its leaf-like blooms are generally a stark white with lime green veins, a canopy for its lime green to brown bulbous stamen. A mature peace lily sits near the dining room window, and I curiously wonder if the plant is meant to bring my family peace, or if it represents the idea that my father is finally at peace, or both. It is a friendly gesture, but I find it peculiar.

Grieving is another peculiar practice. It presents itself when something or someone has been lost. Lost is how my family and I felt September, 15th, 2005 at 3:00 a.m., the day and moment my dad passed away. Losing my father to cancer, Renal Cell Carcinoma, was not as difficult as seeing him fight it, surgery after surgery. Blood in his urine signaled the devastation to come; it began with the removal of his kidney and spleen, then a brain tumor, numerous bouts of radiation therapy, removal of his other kidney, a stroke, dialysis every other day, tumors in his lungs, brain, and lymph nodes, and Cyber Knife surgeries. Over a very insecure span of almost ten years, there were numerous trips to hospitals in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota---University of Minnesota Hospital, Abbott Northwestern Hospital, and St. Joseph's Hospital to name a few. Sometimes he flew by helicopter or chartered plane, with our entire family trailing behind afraid and anxious---trying to keep some sort of composure. Other times by car, my mom drove him to different hospitals for check-ups, nervous for the results. No wonder dad told me a few weeks before he passed away, "Amber, I'm tired". He was not tired from just a long day, he was tired of fighting for his life. Those ten years had been enough---more than enough.

Understanding Grief

No one explained the course that I would be taking after his passing. I knew that I was grieving, and it hurt, but I was clueless about my emotions. Looking at grief as a natural process of life changed my perspective. One Psychologists says: "Grief is a natural reaction to letting go of something that we value, whether it is a lifestyle, a job, a person, or a dream" (Noller).

According to this statement, I have been grieving the loss of my father for several years. Not only him, but the lifestyle my family once had, and the dreams we once shared. I grieved for our sense of security, since the day of his diagnosis. I have been living in fear of losing my father, and everything he contributed to our family---from fatherhood to finances. I dreaded the phone call that eventually came.

There ^{are} five so-called stages of grief. Denial, bargaining, anger, depression, and acceptance are the most common steps in the grief process (Archer). Some psychology scholars believe these phases are steps; however, steps imply that one precedes another. One Psychologist, Dr. William Lamers more accurately constructed a loop of words illustrating a "normal" grief process. He uses the five R's: Reaction, Resistance, Reality, Resignation, and Reorganization (Noller). In this loop, Lamers uses words such as numbness or disbelief to describe the reaction, and bargaining, blaming, anger, denial, and/or fear as part of the resistance stage. In all of these stages, Lamers provides five to ten words of possible attitudes and behaviors---most I have experienced and some I still experience to this day.

Looking back at my journal entries including some of my most personal experiences, thoughts, and emotions, the phases of grief intersect one another. When my father passed away before our eyes, no one could deny it. It was very real. Nothing could be more real than hearing his last breaths. Dad passed away at a hospital in Fargo, North Dakota, the same hospital where

my maternal grandfather was recovering from heart surgery. He died with the majority of our extended family surrounding him, and I felt more alone than ever.

A few days later at his visitation, everything seemed unreal, surreal. Was I in denial? Could this be happening? His cold hands, the casket, the crying crowd of family and friends---it was a chilling experience, an experience my mind tries not to revisit. Later at the burial site, I welcomed the sun. I wore my sunglasses---feeling like a child believing no one could see me. I was not there. I scanned the crowd looking at their sad faces. I felt sorry for them, because I could not feel for myself. A few weeks later, I let loose. A wailing cry that tore me open. It stripped me bare. I had no strength; It was a facade. No one could console me in that moment. I cried not for the pain he endured, but for myself, my pain of losing him---knowing he would never walk me down the ^aisle at my wedding, or play with my children. I cried for what could have been, but would never be.

Artwork as Grief Therapy

My pain turned into fuel for my jewelry artwork. A stupid plant became my muse---the object of my exhibition. Leaf shapes of three sizes were cut into tooled steel to create stamps. The angle of the cut had to be at fourteen degrees, and the slightest shift of my focus led to a fatality of saw blade. Needless to say, there were many blade fatalities, and a significant amount of profanity to follow. After the arduous task of making a stamp, I cut multiples of an identical leaf shape, a hundred within the hour. With an abundance of copper, I stamped until the stamp started to lose its cutting action. The hydraulic jack did most of the work, but cutting out the stamps took two frustrating hours of my life. Then, the stamped leaf shapes needed to be deburred, an action of removing rough edges. A flex shaft, an electric combination tool with interchangeable bits that drill, sand, or polish, became my trusted tool of choice. Selecting a

speed by foot peddle, I quickly and easily deburred the edges, drilled holes, and polished each leaf shape.

Reflective Comments of Individual Artwork

1. Wilting Peace Series

The first piece I made for my exhibition was the *Wilting Peace Series*, Champleve enameled copper in the shape of peace lily blooms. I cut ten blooms from 18 gauge sheet copper with a hand saw. Once cut, each bloom was prepped for etching, a process of using acid to bite into the metal rendering a relief design controlled by a resist such as Blue-Goo, permanent marker, glue, paint, or tape (Matthew). I used tape to protect the back of each bloom, then I used a black permanent marker to draw where I wanted the metal protected, specifically the edges and the stamen shape. Then, I traced the permanent marker with Blue-Goo, which is a lasting, full protection against the etchant. The Blue-Goo needed at least 2 hours to fully dry.

Once the resists felt dry, the blooms were placed in a bath of sulfuric acid for approximately 20 hours. The etchant power of the acid was significantly depleted, because the etchant should only take a few hours. Once etched to the desired depth, the resists were removed with paint thinner, and the blooms were "pickled" in a different acid to clean the surface of the metal. After being pickled, the blooms are neutralized with baking soda, and then, cleaned with soap and water. Then, the blooms are wet-packed with a mixture of white enamel, clear fire (the binder), and water. *Champleve* is the process of wet-pack enameling the fields where the etchant has eaten away, and the process is repeated and stoned until the enamel completely fills the fields (Henson). Enamel is ground sands of glass that are bound to metal at 1350-1500 degrees, depending upon the enamel. After each kiln firing the blooms were pickled and cleaned, because of the black firescale that develops on the surface due to the heat of the kiln.

The problems I encountered included pits and discoloration of enamel. The enamels probably contained trace impurities and may have been improperly labeled. Also, the pickle may have created some of the pits or simply impurities on the metal surface. Nevertheless, the results were not as I had envisioned, the blooms were ugly. I would never wear them. The blooms were too ugly, too heavy, but I spent way too much time to just discard them. I called these blooms the *Wilting Peace Series*, because they looked as if they were dying, wilting---just how I felt, drained, starving for support. I used four of the blooms in the show, two attached to the thin copper wire. I call it a sculptural piece rather than a wearable art, because no one should wear something that has so much loathing behind it. The wire represents the lack of support, which led to the depravity of the peace blooms. Much like my immediate family, we did not support one another. We all looked for our own ways to deal, deny, or suppress our feelings. Left wilted, depression visited me.

2. Still Hurting Me

Still Hurting Me is a sterling silver identification bracelet. The idea behind this bracelet is to represent a hospital bracelet. The first line reads: Petersen, Amber L., and the second line reads: 022184021496000000. Below my name is a barcode of eighteen numbers, the first six digits is my birth date, the second six digits is the date of dad's diagnosis, and the last six digits--all zeros, represent the unknown date when my hurting will cease. It symbolizes the fact that if one person is terminally ill, the whole family is ill. I became ill the day of his diagnosis, and I suspect I will continue to hurt to some degree. The letters and numbers were hand stamped, and are accentuated with patina (liver of sulfur), an acid that speeds the oxidation process of the metal---blackening the letters (McCreight). The bracelet appears like it was plunked upon by a typewriter, very sterile and mechanical.

3. No More Sickness, Dad

No More Sickness, Dad made in the same manner as *Still Hurting Me* reads: Petersen, Steven J., and the second line reads: 122753021496091505. This identification bracelet is tucked inside one of his original plastic hospital bracelets. His barcode represents his birth date, diagnosis date, and date of death. Simply put, both identification bracelets spell out the reason for my jewelry/metalwork art show. These pieces, which seem out of place among plant-like shapes, define the truth about why I grieve. These bracelets are not jewelry, because jewelry is adornment a person chooses to wear. We did not choose to wear this sentence; nobody chooses cancer.

4. Depression

Depression is a set of copper earrings I cut from the painstaking process of steel stamp cutting. I cut multiples of a small leaf shape with the hydraulic press, often having trouble with the jack. However, this process proved worth while. It allowed me to cut numerous multiples of a small leaf. Once cut, drilled, and deburred, I used a ball peen hammer to make uniform depressions in the leaves. Pounding metal with a hammer releases tension. It is a freeing experience to focus frustrations toward something constructive. Once every leaf held the evidence of my own emotional tension, twelve leaves were attached by copper jump rings to copper curb chain findings. Each earring contains six leaves staggered, dangling from a chain. These beaten leaves hang from stems, ear wires of 20 gauge copper wire. In the installation of the earrings, I hung the set over a miniature terracotta pot filled with soil. Fourteen other depressed leaves rested around the pot as if they had fallen from the dangling plant earrings. *Depression* is a withering plant baring the scars of my anger and losing its leaves by the forces of life, and finally becoming uprooted.

Looks Like Peace, *Growing Peace Lily*, *New Hope*, *Peace from the Vine I* and *II*, and *New Growth I*, *II*, and *III* are executed by the process of Cloisonne enamel. Cloisonne is a process of firing a base layer of clear enamel on metal, then using flat wires, like fine silver fired onto the enamel, which separates fields of color or shapes. The wires are dead soft, which can easily be shaped; however, it is a tricky process to keep the wires exactly in their place. When kiln fired, it is necessary to watch the fine wires so they do not drop through the base layer and melt. Like Champleve enameling, the fields are wet-packed and fired until the enamel is flush with the metal which separates the enamel.

The basic leaf shapes of *Looks Like Peace*, *Peace from the Vine I*, and *II*, and *New Growth I*, *II*, and *III*, are stamped by hydraulic press from two different leaf stamps I cut from steel. The smaller stamp cut out *Depression* and *Looks like Peace*, and the larger cut *Blank Peace*, *Peace from the Vine I*, *II*, and *New Growth I*, *II*, and *III*. However the *Wilting Peace Series*, *Growing Peace Lily*, and *New Hope* were cut by hand, the more laborious technique of hand sawing, an ancient technique that requires patience and time---things I often lack.

5. Looks Like Peace

Looks Like Peace is an illustration of how I appeared. Seemingly at peace, but really my mind was a war with my emotions. *Looks Like Peace* is beautiful on the front side with its cloisonne enameled white bloom and green stamen, but on the back side the earrings reveal the bare tarnished copper surface. Just as the earrings hid the ugly surface of the copper, I hid my ugly emotions. Surprisingly this was one of the most desired jewelry pieces, I sold two sets of the earrings.

6. Blank Peace

Blank Peace represents the beginning of a really innovative way to display some of the pendants. The thick green-coated wire that wraps around the neck is a wire used for working with real and artificial flowers. This piece represents the closest thing to a break through in my emotions, and it is a step back from all the fuss of forcing my artwork. It is an uncomplicated neck stem, my version of a torque-like necklace, and earrings made from sterling silver with the aid of found objects like green coated wire, green seed beads, and sterling silver ear wires. The leaves were simply cut, sanded, and then assembled; the beauty of the metal is allowed to stand on its own. It is the first use of sterling silver in the peace lily blooms, and is the foundation for the neck stems to follow.

7. Growing Peace Lily

Growing Peace Lily is the very opposite of *Blank Peace*, it is the most complicated piece. These earrings and pendant were hand cut from sterling silver, and cloisonne enameled in the shape of a growing peace lily plant. The design is constructed so the peace lilies dangle upside down. However, due to the size of the earrings and the need for multiple firings, each became much too heavy for wear. Other problems such as poor enamel made them aesthetically undesirable as wearable art. Also some of the predrilled holes in the metal filled with enamel during one of the firings rendering them impossible to suspend from ear wires. In the exhibition, I placed them in a manner as to look wearable and simply stated Not for Sale (NFS) on the works list, a simple way to still exhibit them as wearable art.

8. Process Materials

This is the evidence of the multiple processes used in my exhibition. The process

materials represents my research/experimentation of enamels, such as the enamel test strip of green enamels on a white base coat as well as bare copper metal and the watercolor illustrations of design ideas. Also the rough stamped leaf shapes, some with tested enamels or textures, bare the evidence of the cutting action of a steel stamp. Findings such as ear wires and seed beads illustrate the use of outside materials to aided in the layout of many of the pieces.

9. New Hope

New Hope is a pair of cloisonne enameled earrings made from hand cut sterling silver. This cloisonne enameled sterling silver is the first experiment of using a precious metal for enameling. Most enameling books do not suggest the use of sterling silver as a base metal. One source explains that sterling silver alloy "...may contain trace elements of selenium and tellurium, which naturally occur in silver ore," which can prevent enamel adhesion (Grice). However, this piece proved successful. I felt confident to continue experimentation of using sterling silver as a base metal.

New Hope is my visual explanation of feeling a sense of hope, a new sense of what lies up ahead. It is the light that shines through the depression of losing my dad. I began to see that God meant this all for good, to change my life, and give me new sense of life. It may be a life without my biological father, but it meant a greater relationship with my heavenly Father. Perhaps someday it means a better relationship with my other family members. Lord knows, that those relationships were rendered bankrupted along with my father's health.

10. Pressed Peace Lilies I and 13. Pressed Peace Lilies II

Pressed Peace Lilies I and II are an attempt to converge jewelry with line drawing. I formed scrap pieces of brass wire into leaf and stamen-like shapes with different size round nose pliers. Then I rolled square and rectangular shapes of sterling silver through a rolling mill with

various abstract wire shapes. The rolling mill forces the wire down into the sheet metal, leaving a glossy imprint of the wire. Then each piece was drilled, sanded, and refined. Jump rings were attached so each pendant could be suspended on a chain or string of beads. The three pendants of *Pressed Peace Lilies I* were exhibited without the use of beaded wire; however, *Pressed Peace Lilies II* were strung on beaded wire coming out of a tipped over terracotta pot with soil spilling on the shelf of the display case---just to add drama to the pieces.

11. Peace from the Vine I and II

These neck stems, *Peace from the Vine I and II*, represent the peace that I am experiencing on a day to day basis, a peace that comes from my heavenly Father. By relying on God's purpose for my life, I am beginning to see that God has a better plan for my life than I do. God is the Vine and He supports the branches. Through spiritual processes of allowing God to bring healing into my life, I am able to find a portion of peace. I am learning that peace is not the absence of suffering it is the process of allowing God to meet my needs. For so long I was trying to obtain peace on my own, but there is no peace without God's love and abiding grace. These neck stems are a bright yellowish green, a renewing green, of cloisonne enamel on sterling silver. They are the expression of the beautiful changes that God continues to bring into my life out of the pain of losing my dad.

12. New Growth I, II, and III

New Growth I, II, and III are sterling silver cloisonne enameled neck stems, another version of *Peace from the Vine* using other shades of green or rather chartreuse. Each are unique by the variations in the shapes of the stems. In the installation of the works, two of the neck stems are coming out of the soil within a terracotta pot with seed beads sprinkled abundantly around. This is the proof of new life, and in my case a different life. Even though my dad died

of cancer, my life continues, and I am thankful that God gave me a personal way to express my grief through wearable art, jewelry/metals. *New Growth* signifies the change that God has brought to my life because of my father's cancer and his death. It does not mean that I will no longer continue to grieve, but it means that God continues to grow me, and is revealing a mighty purpose for my life.

Installation Commentary

"Processing Peace" was an overall success. I profited well, and received great positive feedback. Regardless of setbacks or problems I encountered with the enamel projects, such as pitting, bubbling, cracking, etc., my show pushed the limits of my enameling abilities. For example, most enameling resources dissuade sterling silver as a base metal; but I created some great examples of successful enameled sterling silver pieces.

My exhibit is a testament to the variety of jewelry artwork that can come from using a few basic shapes cut from a steel stamp with a common hydraulic jack. Not only the variety of work, but also the amount that can be produced is amazing. Producing jewelry this quickly looks promising for a future jewelry business.

I believe the installation of the works using the natural curvature of the wood display in the case of the Ramsey Gallery worked well. I did not want the jewelry to look like a store display. I wanted an organic display like the inspiration, a peace lily plant. The terracotta pots and the potting soil supported this organic notion. The rusty color of the pots even matched the square of paint located in the upper left corner of the display case. Something I had not planned, but pleased me. I also bought a small peace lily plant to use in the exhibit. I thought it would help viewers differentiate the peace lily plant from its cousin the calla lily. I also enjoyed the changing nature of the plant within the display case. It began to wilt and wither becoming more

like some of my jewelry pieces, especially the *Wilting Peace Series*.

I discovered that the less complicated the jewelry pieces, the more desirable it was to viewers. Giving me insight into what is more profitable for sale. One thing I wish I had remembered is to have business cards available, because you never know when someone is interested. I also discovered that numbering your pieces to coincide with a works/price list is preferable to full labels for jewelry works. A full label may overwhelm a small piece, and are very difficult to read in a deep case such as those in the Ramsey Gallery at Bemidji State University. The numbers worked well with the installation.

The only thing that stood out in the installation were the I.D. bracelets, but I felt it was necessary to include them as a physical reminder of dad's illness. Most people associate them with hospitals, and I included them knowing that most people would not understand the numbers below our names. That did not matter to me, because I knew and after all this show is about me using art for grief therapy.

Conclusion

Overall, this exhibition/thesis project helped me through a very difficult time in my life. Grieving is a natural collision course of processes. Everyone deals with grief in divergent ways. Sometimes allowing yourself to focus on other things such as hobbies, events, and/or relationships is a way to keep from falling apart, and retain some sort of normalcy. Other times, we allow ourselves to cry, yell, or just talk.

My journal entries suggest that grief is a personal experience. Losing my father to cancer provided a design possibility, a peace lily plant. I used the peculiar funeral gift and the idea of peace for my jewelry artwork. Through the many processes of creating my artwork, I allowed myself to grieve and express my grief in a constructive manner within this thesis project. Art as

grief therapy forces me as an artist to create personal art and work with my emotions. I have experienced "new growth" in the physical process of jewelry making, the mental process of problem-solving, and spiritual process of finding peace. My exhibit, "Processing Peace," proves that making art is a positive process of grief therapy. Even though it seemed painful at times, grief grew me as an artist as well as a person. Thank you, Dad.

Works Cited: A Bibliography

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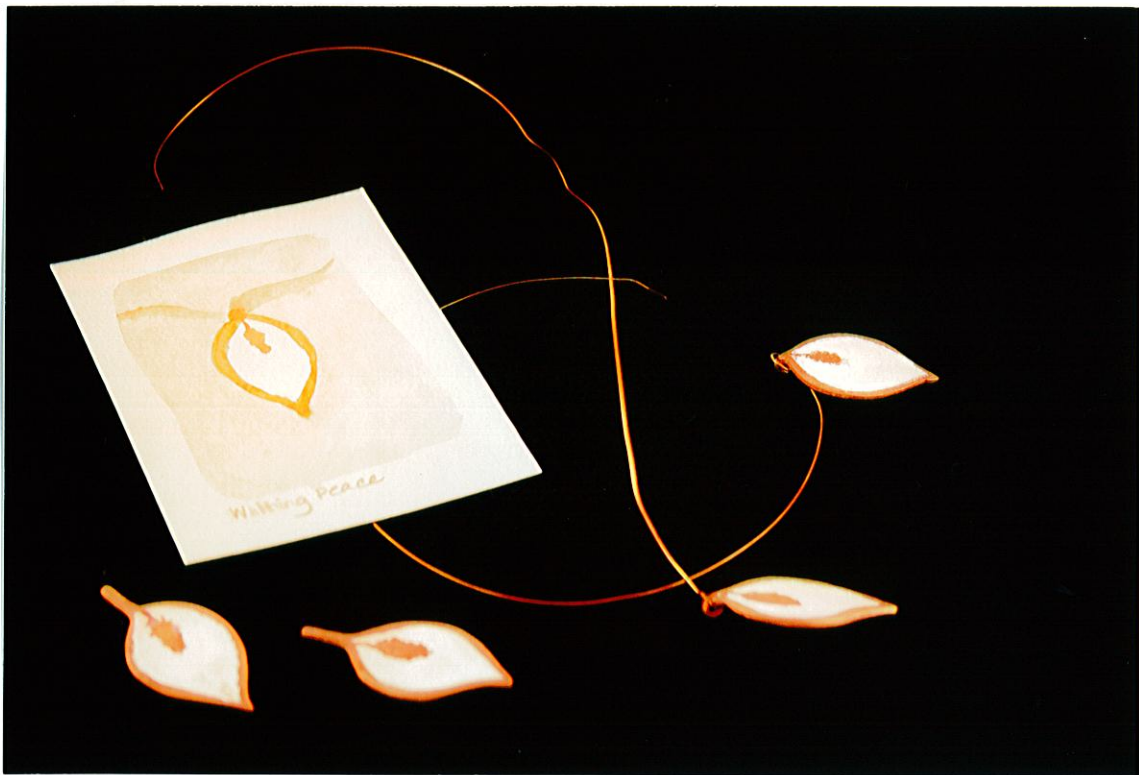


"Processing Peace" Installation
Artist: Amber (Petersen) Vold





Peace Lily Plant



1. Wilting Peace Series



Installation
of 1. Wilting Peace Series
2. Still Hurting me
3. No more Hurtings, Dad



2. Still Hurting me

3. No more sickness, Dad



4. Depression

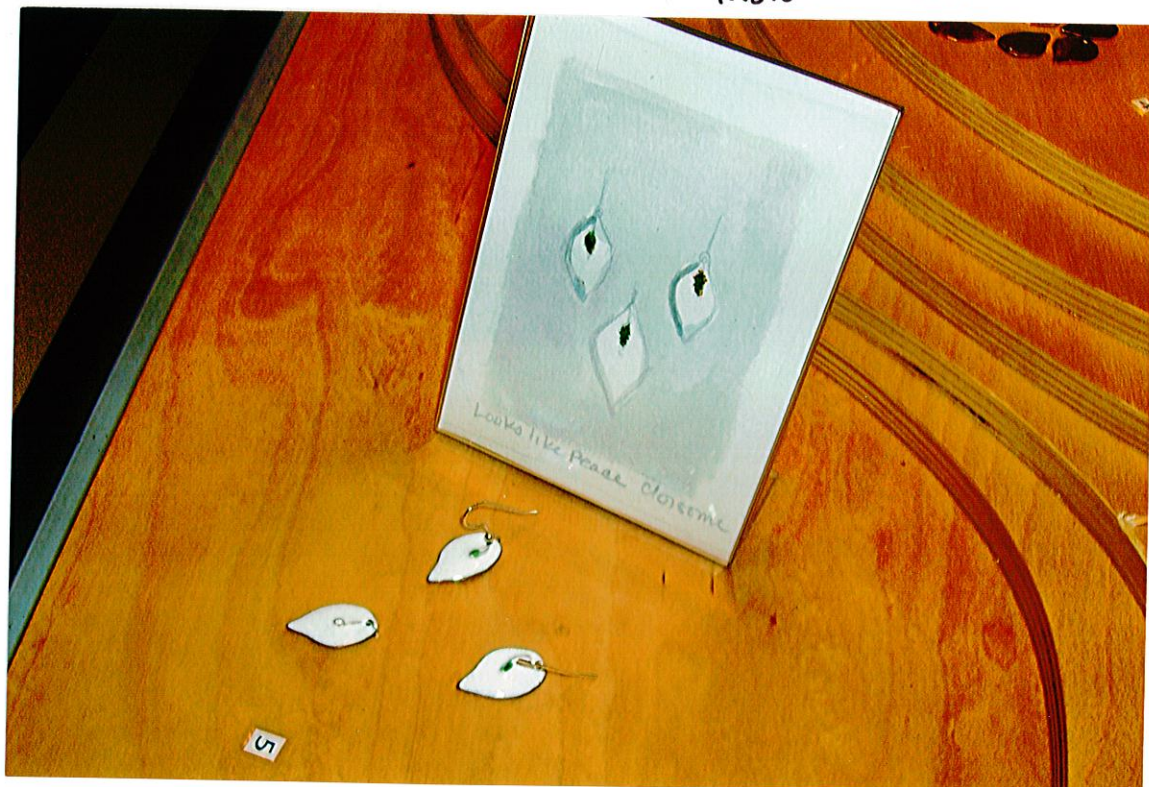
Installation below





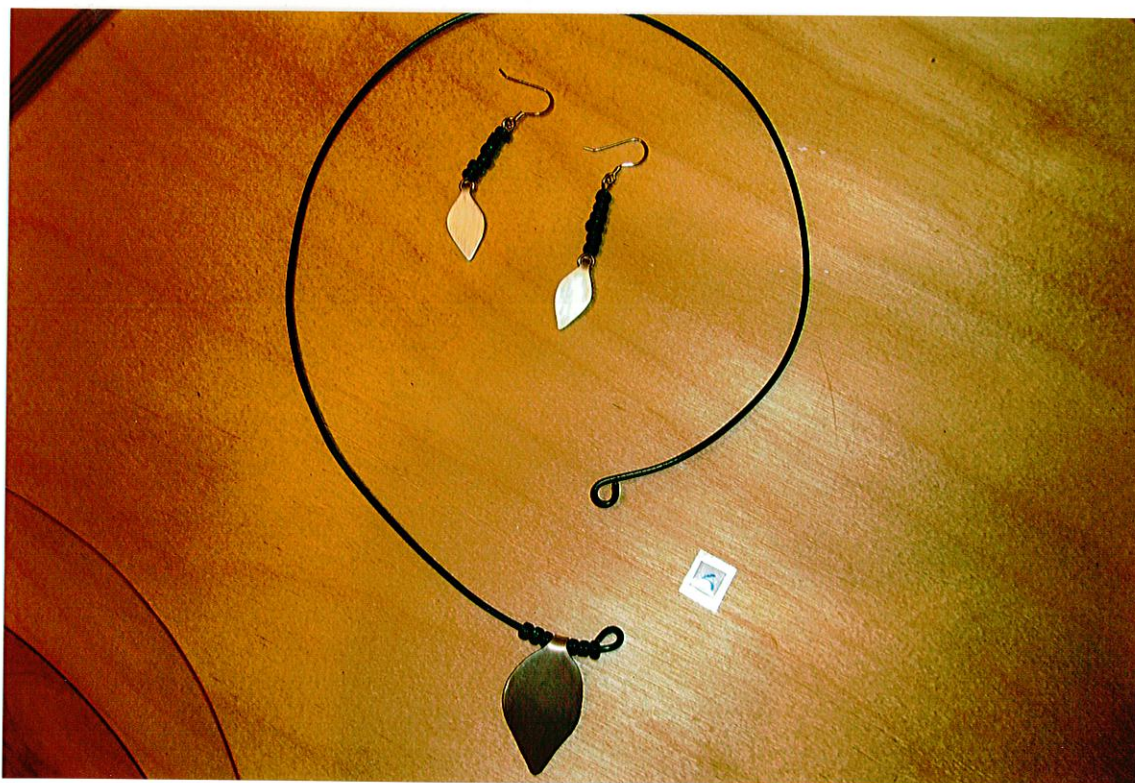
5. Looks like Peace

Installation below





6. Blank Peace
installation below





7. Growing Peace Lily
Installation below





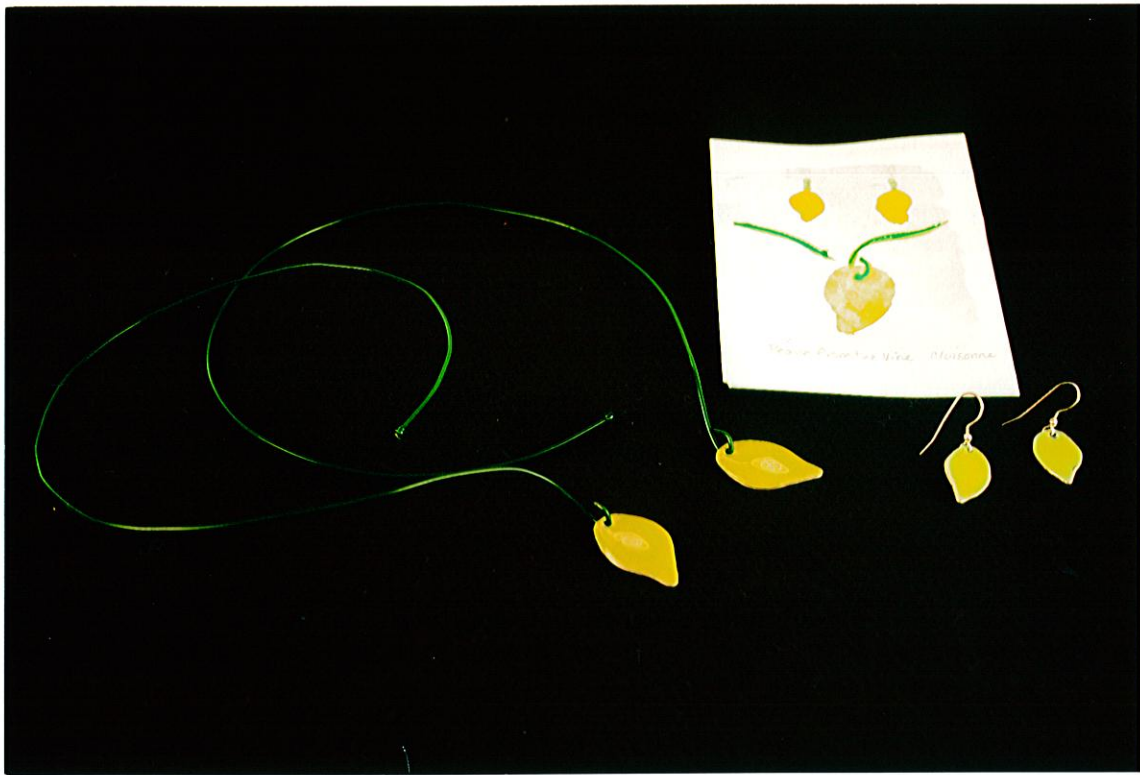
8. Process Materials



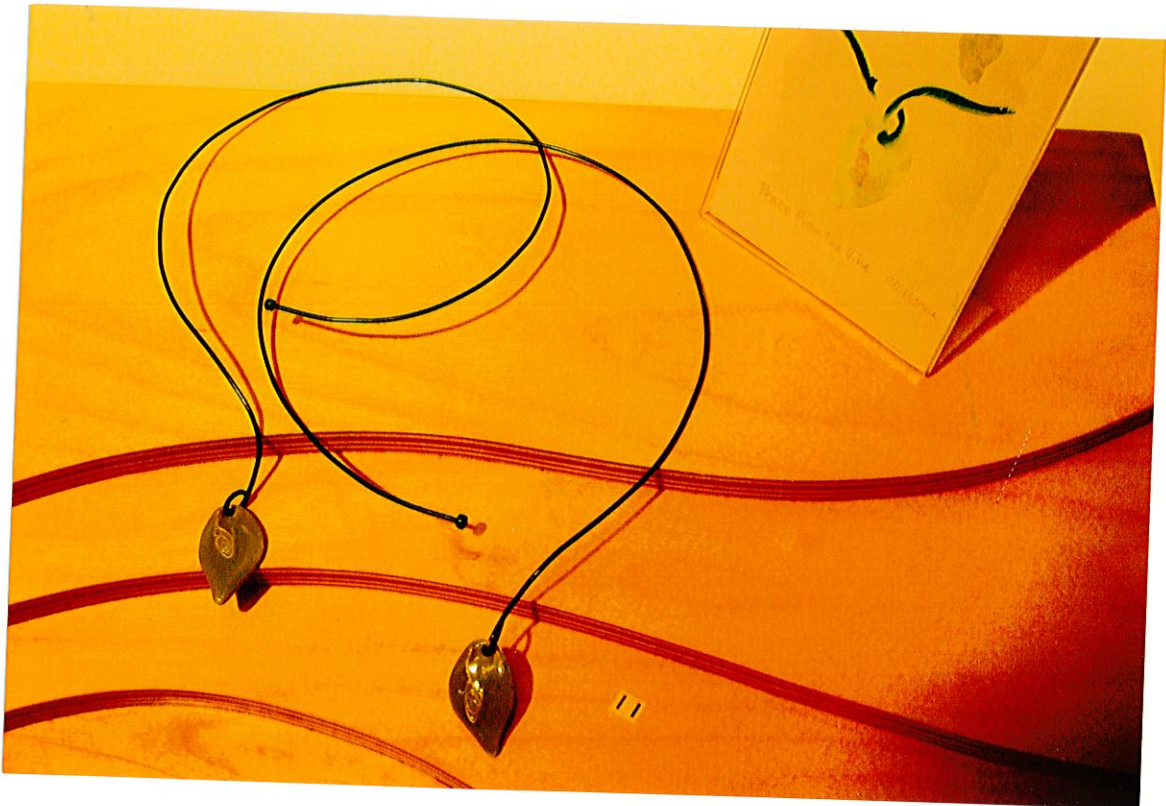


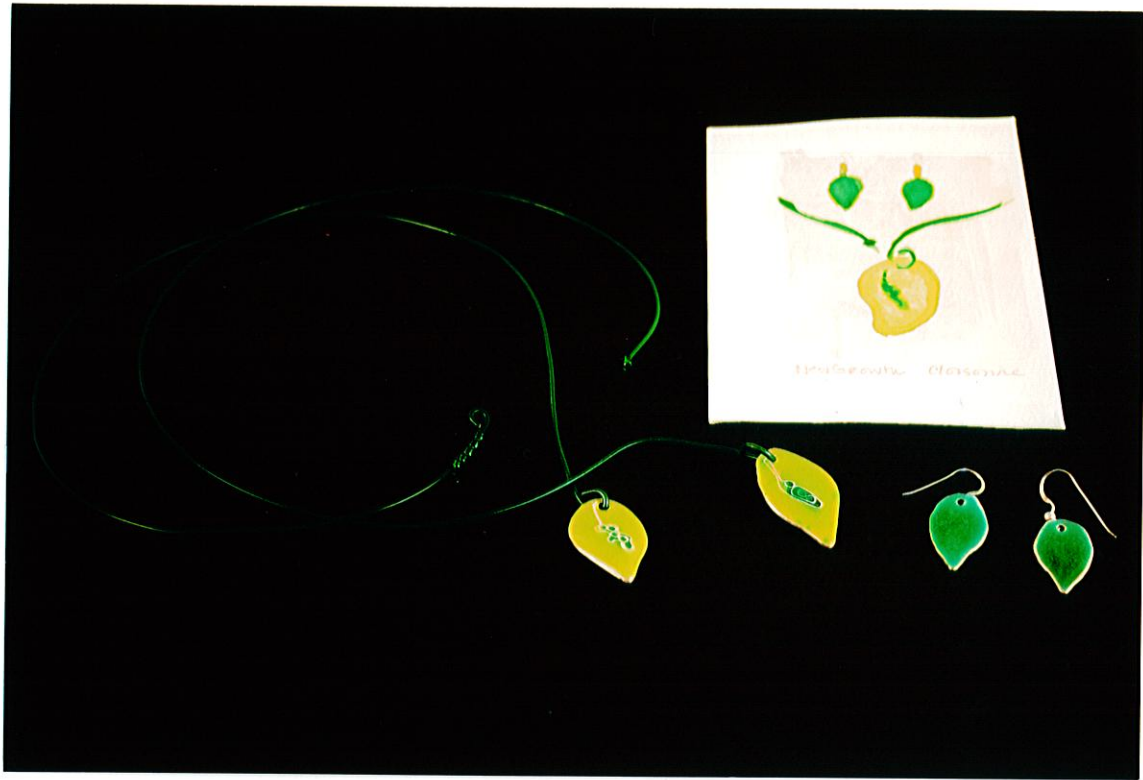
9. New Hope





11. Peace from the Vine
I and II





12. New Growth I & II





10. Pressed Peace
Lilies I
Installation below

13. Pressed Peace
Lilies II
Installation reverse side





Resume

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Education

2006

Expected Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree, Visual Art with Concentration in Jewelry/Small Metals, Bemidji State University, Bemidji, Minnesota

Selected Solo and Group Exhibitions

2006

Processing Peace, Senior Exhibit/Thesis Project, Ramsey Gallery, Bemidji State University

2006

Group Show, Talley Gallery, Juried by Jauneth Skinner, Steve Sundahl, John Holden, Cecilia Lieder, Terry Garret at Bemidji State University

2005

Digital Painting, Digital Painting Class Exhibition, Gallery X,

2005

BSU Jewelry Students, Combined Jewelry/Metal Class Exhibition, Ramsey Gallery

2005

Virgin Experience, Adv. Jewelry/Metals Class Exhibition, Touche Gallery, Bemidji State University, Bemidji, MN

2005

Life Drawings, Solo Exhibition, Gallery X, Bemidji State University

2004

Red Wood Self, Career Practicum Class Exhibition, Touche Gallery, Bemidji State University, Bemidji, MN

2003

Untitled, Visual Foundation II Class Exhibition, Gallery X, Bemidji State University, Bemidji, Minnesota

Internship/Job Experience

2006

Sales/Retail Support, Ken K. Thompson Jewelry, Mall Location in Bemidji, Minnesota, Don Andree, Store Manager

2006

Internship, Local Estate Jewelry Vendor, Shawn Hyde, Business Operator in conjunction with mentor/grad assistant/artist jeweler, Paige McCoy and Jauneth Skinner, Professor of Record, Bemidji State University, Bemidji, Minnesota

Related Experiences

2004

Car Painting, a fundraiser collaboration of Bemidji State University Art Association and the Bemidji Community Arts Center, Bemidji, MN

2004

Teaching Practicum, Bemidji State University, Bemidji, MN, assisted David Jansen of Solway Elementary School, Solway, MN

2003

Iron Pour Workshop, Bemidji State University, Bemidji, MN

Awards

2004

Lind Scholarship, "*Animal Images in Art History: Connections and Patterns throughout Ancient and Medieval Art*," Art History Paper, **Annual Student Award Show**, juried by M. A. Papanek-Miller, Kyle Crocker, Carol Struve, Steve Sundahl, Jauneth Skinner, Cecilia Lieder, Terry Garret, and John Holden, Bemidji State University, Bemidji, MN

2002-2006

Full-Tuition Brenda and Dave Odegaard/Bemidji State University Foundation Scholarship, Bemidji MN

Memberships

2004-2006

Member, Student Art Association, Bemidji State University, Bemidji, MN

2002-2006

Member, Honors Program, Bemidji State University, Bemidji, MN

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--- PRESS RELEASE ---

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FOR IMMEDIATE

Processing Peace
---Bemidji, Minnesota Premier---

April 7, 2006

For the first time in Bemidji, Minnesota, Amber Petersen, local artist jeweler will exhibit recent metalwork in a one-month exhibition at the Bemidji State University Ramsey Gallery of the Bangsberg Fine Art Building, 1500 Birchmont Dr NE, Bemidji, Minnesota. The exhibition will open on April 7, 2006, and run through May 30. The opening reception is Friday, April 7, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Works included in the exhibition are wearable jewelry and small metal sculpture created using techniques of sheet fabrication and enamelwork, Champleve and Cloisonné.

Amber Petersen's designs are inspired by a common funeral gift, the Peace Lily. Ideas behind the shapes, textures, and titles are based on the emotions of grieving the loss of her recently deceased father. The processes of metalwork and enamelwork are a form of art therapy, a way of processing peace in a grief-ridden time.

Amber Petersen
Honors Thesis Proposal Plan (Ivy Knoshaug)
BFA Senior Exhibit (Kyle Crocker, Jauneth Skinner)

My Senior Art Exhibit/Honors Thesis Project will address the bereavement process and emotions of grief: denial, bargaining, anger, depression, and acceptance. Through the use of artistic jewelry processes, i.e. drawing, metalsmithing, enameling, etc., and journaling, I will discover, examine, and utilize my emotions of the bereavement process to create jewelry pieces for exhibition, a kind of art therapy from the artist's perspective. To satisfy my Bachelor's of Fine Art degree with concentration in Jewelry/Metals, this exhibition will open April 7th 2006, in the Ramsey Gallery of the Bangsberg Fine Art Building at Bemidji State University (BSU) in Bemidji, Minnesota. Later a written component, thesis project/reflective essay, addressing the research, the emotions, and psychological as well as artistic processes behind my example of art therapy will be submitted to the BSU Honors Council to satisfy the Thesis Project requirement of the BSU Honors Program.

September 15th, 2005, my fifty-one year old father, Steven J. Petersen, passed away from a ten-year battle with kidney, brain, and lung cancer, Renal Cell Carcinoma. Since his death, I have been experiencing the bereavement process. However, grief has been a part of my life for the whole of those uncertain ten years. With his death, it seems only natural that I am compelled to research art therapy. After all, art is my passion and as a student artist, I am committed to communicate through art making, and jewelry is my favorite medium of communication. My plan is to put my emotions on exhibition, to share my experiences and feelings, and illustrate how art is therapeutic to a grieving artist.

Art therapy is neither a new phenomena, nor are psychological studies and theories

lacking; however, there is little discussion of art therapy from the artist's perspective. Studies lack insight into the artist's benefits through the processes of art making. I intend to research psychological terminology and theories of grief and art therapy to understand and map my own emotions and experiences of the past six months while using jewelry/metals work as grief therapy.

Art therapy is very relevant to today's world. Everyone experiences grief, and anyone can use art as a means of communicating grief. I will illustrate the benefits of working through grief, and believe many will benefit by the visualization of art therapy via an art exhibition. My project will take the form of an art exhibit and reflective essay which involves the research of art therapy, grief, the cancer experience, jewelry art processes and techniques, and journaling of experiences and emotions. Tools I intend to use are as follows: psychology studies and terminology of art therapy and grief; a personal journal; drawings and drawing tools; jewelry/metals materials, tools and equipment (i.e. silver, copper, findings, enamels, kilns, saw, flex shaft, etc.), and an art exhibition space.

Working Bibliography

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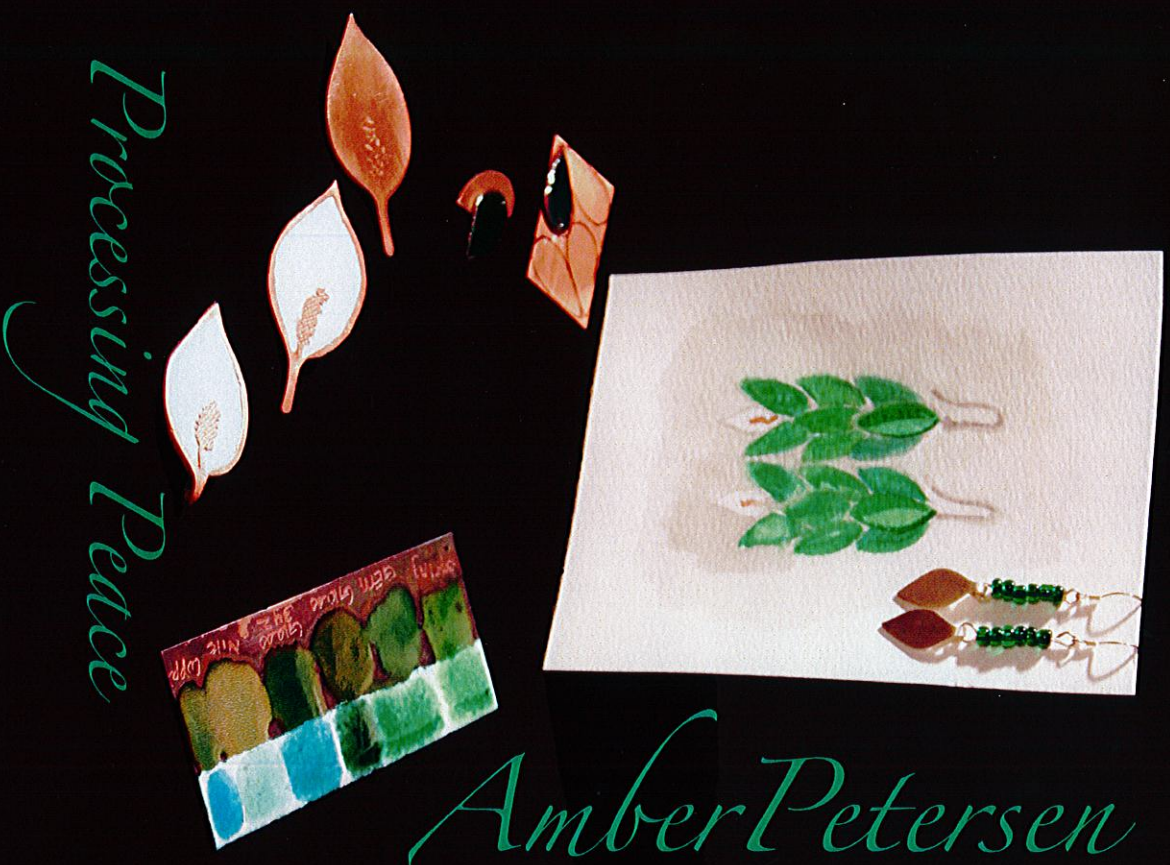
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Hill, Malinda Ann. M.A. "Healing Grief through Art: Art Therapy Bereavement Group Workshops". Drawn Together. <<http://www.drawntogether.com>>. 1 March 2006.

Matthew, Glenice Lesley. "Enamels, Enameling, Enamelists". Wisconsin: Krause Publications, 1984.

Noller, Gail A. "Finding Your Way: Families and the Cancer Experience". Minnesota: American Cancer Society, 1988.

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Amber Petersen

Processing Peace
Recent Metalwork

April 7 - April 30, 2006

Ramsey Gallery
Benidji State University
Bangsberg Fine Art Building

Opening Reception
April 7, 5 pm - 7 pm

*In memory of my father, Steven Petersen
(1953 - 2005)*

Amber (Petersen) Vold-Processing Peace, Jewelry Works List

contact information

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1. Wilting Peace Series

NFS

Champleve Enamel on Copper, Copper wire
Small Sculpture

2. Still Hurting Me

Private Collection

Sterling Silver Stamped w/ Patina I.D. Bracelet
"Petersen, Amber L. / 022184021496000000"

3. No More Sickness, Dad

Private Collection

Sterling Silver Stamped w/ Patina I.D. Bracelet
"Petersen, Steven J. / 122753021496091505"

4. Depression

NFS

Hammered Copper Earrings w/ jump rings and Chain findings

5. Looks Like Peace

Cloisonné (White w/ Green) Enamel on Copper, Fine Silver *Cloisonné* wires,
Earrings w/ Sterling Silver Earwire Findings.....15.00
Pendant w/ Sterling Silver Jumping.....10.00

6. Blank Peace

Sterling Silver, Sterling Silver Wire and Bead findings
Earrings w/ sterling silver earwires.....10.00
Neck stem w/ bead findings.....20.00

7. Growing Peace Lily

Cloisonné Enamel on Sterling Silver
Earrings w/ Sterling Silver ear wire findings.....NFS
Pendant w/ Sterling Silver jump ringNFS

8. Process Materials

Enamel on copper color test strip and leaf shapes, copper shapes, seed bead
findings, watercolor of a jewelry design, sterling silver earwire findings.....NFS

9. New Hope

Cloisonné Enamel on Sterling Silver
Earrings (nonwearable).....NFS

10. Pressed Peace Lilies

Milled design on Sterling Silver w/ sterling silver jump rings

3/4"x 1/4" Pendant w/ one jump ring.....15.00

3/4"x 1/2" Pendant w/ two jump rings20.00

3/4"x 3/4" Pendant w/ two jump rings..... 20.00

11. Peace from the Vine I, 11

Cloisonné Enamel on Sterling Silver Neck Stem Wires w/ bead findings

Neck Stems.....35.00

12. New Growth I, II, III

Cloisonné (Chartreuse w/ Gem Green) Enamel on Sterling Silver w/ Bead findings, and Neck Stem wires

Detached Pendant (I).....35.00

Pendant and Neck Stem w/ Bead findings (II)35.00

Pendant and Neck Stem w/ Bead findings (III)Sold

(Above on Right Shelf)

13. Pressed Peace Lilies II

Milled design on Sterling Silver w/ sterling silver jump rings and clasps, green wire, bead findings

Necklace 1.....25.00

Necklace 2.....25.00

Necklace 3.....25.00

(Above on Left Shelf)

Potted "Peace Lily" Plant

note: This peace lily was purchased for display purposes. It is not the actual funeral gift we have in our home.

Watercolor jewelry designs are not for sale.

Also, each jewelry design is unique; however, most of my designs may be custom made to suit your taste. If you see something you want, but want it made with a different color enamel, beads, metal, etc., give me a call at #209-9596 and I will make it happen.

Enjoy and God Bless,



Amber Petersen, student artist/jewelry designer