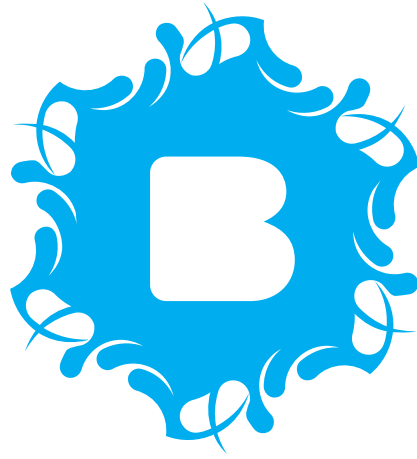


Press Release



April 2008

Exhibition of Silver Jewelry Designed by Legendary Modernist Jeweler Art Smith On View Beginning May 14, 2008, at Brooklyn Museum

From the Village to Vogue: The Modernist Jewelry of Art Smith will honor the gift of twenty pieces of silver and gold jewelry created by the Brooklyn-born modernist jeweler Arthur Smith (1917–1982), primarily from Charles Russell, Smith's companion and heir. This small exhibition will be on view at the Brooklyn Museum from May 14, 2008 through May 17, 2009.

The presentation of Art Smith jewelry will be enhanced by archival material from the artist's estate, including his working tools, the original shop sign designed by Smith, period photographs of models wearing his jewelry, preparatory sketches, and account books. Presented along with Smith's work are twenty-three pieces of modernist jewelry from the permanent collection by such artists as Elsa Freund, William Spratling, Frank Rebajes, Eva Eisler, Ed Weiner, Claire Falkenstein, Jung-Hoo Kim, and others. Inspired by surrealism, biomorphicism, and primitivism, Art Smith's jewelry is dynamic in its size and form. Although sometimes massive in scale, his jewelry remains lightweight and wearable due to his awareness of the female form. The jewelry dates from the late 1940s to the 1970s and includes his most famous pieces, such as a "Patina" necklace inspired by the mobiles of Alexander Calder; a "Lava" bracelet, or cuff, that extends over the entire lower arm in undulating and overlapping forms; and a massive ring with three semiprecious stones that stretches over three fingers.

Trained at Cooper Union, Art Smith, an African American, opened his first shop on Cornelia Street in Greenwich Village in 1946. He later moved the business to 140 West Fourth Street, where it remained throughout his career. Not only one of the leading modernist jewelers of the mid-twentieth century, Smith was also an active supporter of black and gay civil rights, an avid jazz enthusiast, and a supporter of early black modern dance groups.

This exhibition is organized by Barry Harwood, Curator of Decorative Arts, Brooklyn Museum. The exhibition is supported by the Harold S. Keller Fund with additional support from the Donald and Mary Oenslager Fund.

Press Contact:

Sally Williams, Public Information Officer (718) 501-6330, sally.williams@brooklynmuseum.org

Adam Husted, Media Relations Manager (718) 501-6331, adam.husted@brooklynmuseum.org

Marcus Romero, Associate Publicist (718) 501-6354, marcus.romero@brooklynmuseum.org

Brooklyn Museum

200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11238-6052

T (718) 638-5000 F (718) 501-6134

www.brooklynmuseum.org