

Fall 2019

Sculptured Adornment: The Jewelry of David Hayes Rack Card

Fairfield University Art Museum

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SCULPTURED ADORNMENT
The Jewelry of David Hayes



October 4 - December 21, 2019

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SCULPTURED ADORNMENT

The Jewelry of David Hayes

Humans have been crafting and wearing jewelry for the past 5,000 years. More than simple accessories, these objects serve as symbols of class, family, gender, and originality. Jewelry can also be seen as miniature sculptures worn on the body; in this light, jewelry celebrates the union of craft and materials, as artists have built upon both old and new techniques to create work that enriches the experience of both wearer and viewer. The exhibition *Sculptured Adornment: The Jewelry of David Hayes* focuses on the work of a sculptor who branched into jewelry-making during the 1950s. The pieces of jewelry on view primarily served as gifts for Hayes' family members and friends, and represent the loving relationships he had with them. This exhibition, which opened at the Georgia Museum of Art in May 2019, presents these personal ornaments to the public for the first time.

Hayes was born in 1931 and grew up in Connecticut during the Depression and the Second World War. He left New England for college in the Midwest, earning a bachelor's degree in art from Notre Dame in 1953 and a master's in 1955 from Indiana University. Hayes won a Fulbright scholarship and subsequently spent eight years in France. Along the way, he met several artists who influenced his skills and aesthetics, including the abstract sculptors David Smith and Alexander Calder. Hayes died in Coventry, CT in 2013.

Hayes' sculptures combined seemingly organic shapes with industrial materials, often on a monumental scale. His jewelry, in contrast, is small and delicate. This intimate exhibition includes approximately 40 brooches and pendants. Most of the brooches do not have clasps, leaving flexibility for the wearer to determine how to attach them to clothing. The hammered surfaces of these talisman-like objects brings the strength and mystery of iron-shaping into the 20th century. Both naturalistic and abstracted elements in the pieces on view suggest an otherworldly aesthetic.

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