

ABOUT US

To me, metalsmithing is more than just the technique of working metals into a desired shape. It is the skillful blending of art and science to create a lasting symbol of one person's love for another.

Andrew Nyce Designs

Andrew Nyce knows metals. Trained as a Metallurgist and Materials scientist, Andrew carried out research and development on high-performance metals and ceramics for 43 years. In 2002, he formed Andrew Nyce Designs and embarked on a new career that married his passion for metals with his interest in jewelry-making and metalsmithing.

Andrew Nyce Designs crafts unique, custom-designed wedding, commitment, engagement, and men's rings in Mokume Gane and Damascus Stainless Steel. It was natural for Andrew to gravitate toward these unusual and complex materials.

"I am intrigued by the history and beauty of Mokume Gane and Damascus Stainless Steel. Each of these materials has beauty in their patterns, colors and the play of shadow and light that speaks to me and motivates me each day. No two pieces of jewelry are ever exactly the same."

At Andrew Nyce Designs, the joining of different metal alloys to create Mokume Gane or Damascus Stainless Steel is a metaphor for the union of two individuals who journey along a shared path in life.

Andrew Nyce

Andrew's career as a goldsmith and jewelry designer did not follow a traditional path. For most of his professional career, Andrew worked with exotic materials in the realm of science and engineering. Andrew holds B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Metallurgy and Materials Science. And he founded and managed a highly successful advanced materials consulting R&D firm. Through the years, he occasionally created art and jewelry from these high-tech materials.

In the mid-1990's, Andrew considered taking formal jewelry-making courses. But, the demands of running his firm prevented him from pursuing this interest. At the start of the new millennium, two years before selling his business, Andrew made the leap and began taking jewelry-making classes at the Maine College of Art. Upon selling his company in 2002, Andrew pushed headlong into jewelry-making with the same dedicated approach that he brought to his former career. In the jewelry studio, Andrew found that he was able to balance his artistic side with his scientific side.

Along with additional coursework at the Maine College of Art, Andrew has immersed himself in carefully selected intensive jewelry workshops that focus on design and technique. He also has undertaken hundreds of hours of private lessons with master goldsmiths and teachers including Tim McCreight, Pauline Warg, Jean Paterak, Ann Hollerbach, Paulette Werger, Blaine Lewis, Kate Wolf, Phil Piorier, Steve Midgett, and James Binnion.

Adhering to a motto of continuous learning and scientific discovery, Andrew has embarked on several collaborative research projects designed to advance the state of the art of jewelry-making for practicing jewelers. These projects have provided Andrew with knowledge and experience that make him a better goldsmith. Along with his co-authors, Andrew was presented with a collaborative research award from the Santa Fe Symposium on jewelry manufacturing technology in both 2005 and 2007.

Gary Roe

Gary brings 14 years experience as a goldsmith to Andrew Nyce Designs. He owns his own company, Jewelry Trade Technical Services, where he specializes in high-end jewelry fabrication and stone setting. Gary's expertise also includes prototyping of custom jewelry from concept to finished piece, wax carving, casting, laser welding, and CAD rendering.

Gary graduated with a BFA (summa cum laude) in Jewelry and Metals from Maine College of Art in 1994. Gary's first job out of school was working for Brown Goldsmiths, one of the top custom jewelry makers in the Northeast. He became their master wax carver. After 2 years, Gary moved on to Folia, a high-end jewelry gallery in Portland, Maine, as their master jeweler. At Folia, Gary gained a reputation among the jewelers and artists as the technician who could solve complex fabrication issues and produce a piece of jewelry that met their expectations for the piece. In 2003, Gary founded Jewelry Trade Technical Services in order to become a technician to the jewelry trade specializing in jewelry fabrication and stone setting. Gary uses some of the most technologically advanced equipment available for jewelry fabrication.

"I enjoy being challenged in the technical aspect of fabricating jewelry. The creative challenge of solving a fabrication issue motivates and excites me."

MOKUME GANE THE TECHNIQUE

Mokume Gane (Mo-KOO-may GAH-nay) is an old metalworking technique that originated in Japan in the 1700s. The words translate to “wood eye metal,” which accurately describes the topographical patterns that appear when metals are twisted and forged using this process. The look is similar to the swirling, watery patterns of Damascus steel or ancient Chinese lacquer work. Though the technique was initially developed for use in sword making, jewelry and hollowware are the most common modern commercial applications of this method.

The Ancient Story

Japanese craftsman Denbei Shoami (1651-1728) is credited with the invention of Mokume Gane for embellishing samurai weapons and hilts. The process was only used in sword making until the 19th century. Changes in Japan’s political and social structure in the late 1800s saw the collapse of the caste system dominated by the samurai warriors. They were no longer allowed to carry their katana (sword) in public so demand for these arms decreased. Metalsmiths then began transferring their skills to create more artistic products.

The Modern Story

The husband and wife team of Eugene Michael Pijanowski and Hiroko Sato Pijanowski brought Mokume Gane to the United States in the early 1970s. They learned the technique from ninth generation metalsmith Norio Tamagawa.

Today Mokume Gane jewelry, flatware, hollowware and art objects are created by layering precious and semi-precious metals such as gold, platinum, palladium, sterling silver and copper. The layers are bonded and deformed by rolling, forging, and twisting. A combination of punches, chiseling, and carving and surface abrasion exposes the beauty of the work: the unique layering of these metals. A Mokume Gane artisan can make an unlimited number of distinct patterns with no two being precisely the same.

Reflections on Working With Mokume Gane

Andrew Nyce shares his thoughts on why he enjoys working with Mokume Gane:

"My first attempt to make Mokume Gane ended in failure which created a desire to learn the art of making Mokume Gane. I am intrigued by the process of patterning Mokume Gane. And I am passionate about using Mokume Gane as my canvas, metal working tools as my brushes, and different color alloys as my paints in order to create miniature paintings.

There is a personal satisfaction in making a billet of Mokume Gane by selecting alloy sheet thicknesses, stacking arrangements and colors, and, then, individually patterning each Mokume Gane ring. For me, learning to pattern Mokume Gane was a process of thinking in three dimensions and then countless hours of hands-on experimentation."

