



## **Press Release — For Immediate Release**

Dateline: May 2017

Press inquiries: Call 800.952.6222 or email [events@riogrande.com](mailto:events@riogrande.com)

Information above is for questions about the press release; please publish only the information below.

## **Rio Grande Announces Winners of the 17th Annual Saul Bell Design Award**

At a celebration dinner held on May 21 during the Santa Fe Symposium® in Albuquerque, NM, Rio Grande announced the winners of the 17th annual Saul Bell Design Award competition. Through rigorous judging, two panels of experts chose first- and second-place winners in each of eight competitive categories, as well as an overall Best of Show winner. Prizes, awards and congratulations were presented to each winning designer at the gala dinner. The winning designs, as well as all finalist pieces, are featured online at [saulbellaward.com](http://saulbellaward.com).

### **2017 Judges**

Final-round judge bios and photos are available at [saulbellaward.com](http://saulbellaward.com).

### **Final Round**

Debbie Sheezel, internationally recognized enamelist

Kaminer Haislip, award-winning silversmith and educator

Mark Mann, GIA Senior Director of Global Jewelry Manufacturing Arts

Michael Good, metalworking pioneer and advocate

Kent Raible, master goldsmith

### **First Round**

Joseph DeBella, gemstone dealer, importer and jewelry designer

Phillip Scott, metalsmith

Royce Kohlmeyer, artist

Maria Samora, artist and designer

Emily Benoist Ruffin, designer and goldsmith

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**2017 Best of Show Winner:**

Valerie Jo Coulson\*

"Firenze"

Pequea, PA, USA

\*2002 SBDA Finalist, Gold/Platinum; 2014 SBDA First Place, Silver/Argentium® Silver

**2017 Gold/Platinum Category Winners:**

**First Place**

Sarah Williamson

"Unfurl Rebel Jewel"

Nevada City, CA, USA

**Second Place**

Henry Spencer\*

"Sinuous Line"

Effingham, NH, USA

**2017 Silver/Argentium® Silver Category Winners:**

**First Place**

Arturo Sanfelix Garcia

"Passarola"

Valencia, Valencia, Spain

**Second Place**

Matthieu Cheminee\*

"Stampclastic"

Montreal, QC, Canada

\*2006 SBDA Finalist, Gold/Platinum

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## **2017 Metal Clay Category Winners:**

### **First Place**

Cindy Miller

"Cultivated Woodland"

Athens, AL, USA

### **Second Place**

Liz Sabol

"Cheshire Cat"

Pittsburgh, PA, USA

\*2016 SBDA Finalist, Metal Clay

## **2017 Enamel Category Winners:**

### **First Place**

Sandra McEwen\*

"Fool's Errand"

Raleigh, NC, USA

\*2015 SBDA Second Place, Enamel

### **Second Place**

Nicolette Absil

"Dried Flower Series: Chrysanthemum"

Philadelphia, PA, USA

## **2017 Hollowware/Art Objects Category Winners:**

### **First Place**

Aleksandr Maryaskin\*

"Discovery of Eggcellence"

Yorktown, VA, USA

\*2014 SBDA First Place, Hollowware/Art Objects

### **Second Place**

Henry Spencer

"Nuthatch Box"

Effingham, NH, USA

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## **2017 Alternative Metals/Materials Category Winners:**

### **First Place**

Andy Cooperman  
"Poison Ring No. 2"  
Seattle, WA, USA

### **Second Place**

Sophia Hu  
"Turning "  
Las Vegas, NV, USA

## **2017 Emerging Jewelry Artist 22 Years of Age and Younger Category Winners:**

### **First Place**

Jason Baide\*  
"Flexibility"  
Bozeman, MT, USA  
\*2016 SBDA Emerging Jewelry Artist, Third Place

### **Second Place**

Yeonjung Hong  
"Embrace"  
Providence, RI, USA

## **2017 Emerging Jewelry Artist 18 Years of Age and Younger Category Winners:**

### **First Place**

Autumn Lee  
"Rocket Askew"  
Auburn, WA, USA

### **Second Place**

Jordan Harrison  
"Locked In"  
Auburn, WA, USA

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## **2017 Finalists**

### **Gold/Platinum**

“Angel’s Teardrops” by Garen Garibian\* (Los Angeles, CA, USA)

\*2016 SBDA First Place, Gold/Platinum

“Ruby Flora Cuff” by Ricardo Basta (Century City, CA, USA)

“Aqua Morgana” by Adam Neeley (Laguna Beach, CA, USA)

### **Silver/Argentium® Silver**

“Origami Butterfly” by Sophia Hu (Las Vegas, NV, USA)

“Aspen” by Wolfgang Vaatz\* (Rio Rico, AZ, USA)

\*2016 SBDA Second Place, Silver/Argentium® Silver

“Flipping Wedges Bangle” by Dana Fear (Cedar, MI, USA)

### **Metal Clay**

“Triptych” by Iwona Tamborska (Kraków, Poland)

“Fairy Flower Wreath” by Helen Sang (Pärnu, Estonia)

“Thorn Bird” by Wendy Wallin Malinow\* (Portland, OR, USA)

\*2002 SBDA First Place, Precious Metal Clay®; 2005 SBDA Finalist, Precious Metal Clay; 2008 SBDA Swarovski® “Create Your Own Style” Award Winner; 2010 SBDA First Place, Metal Clay

### **Enamel**

“Evolutionary Ring” by Palash Banerjee (Dubai, United Arab Emirates)

“Warm Embrace” by Marcus Synnot (Mt. Claremont, Western Australia)

“La Luna” by Karen Olsen Ramsey (Grass Valley, CA, USA)

### **Hollowware/Art Objects**

“Royal Coach” by Leonardo Maldonado (Delray Beach, FL, USA)

“The Crane and Plum” by Haiyin Liang (Xiamen, Fujian, China)

“Golden Botrus Teapot” by Genevieve Flynn\* (Kansas City, MO, USA)

\*2015 SBDA Second Place, Hollowware/Art Objects

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## **Alternative Metals/Materials**

“Old World Vines” by Valerie Ostenak (Phoenix, AZ, USA)

“3 Lines and 9 Dots” by E. Douglas Wunder (Kutztown, PA, USA)

## **Emerging Jewelry Artist 22 Years of Age or Younger**

“Tomato Flower” by Valerie James (Lansdale, PA, USA)

“Treasure Box” by Steven Voorheis (Cannon Beach, OR, USA)

“Mismatched” by Ryan Bodley (Westerville, OH, US)

## **Emerging Jewelry Artist 18 Years of Age or Younger**

“Sovereign Ring” by Matthew Tom (Wellesley, MA, USA)

“Aspirations” by Sinclair Vandervoort (Wellesley, MA, USA)

“The Reign Never Ceases” by Jhordin Prescott (Auburn, WA, USA)

**About Rio Grande:** Among the largest worldwide suppliers to the jewelry industry, Rio Grande was founded in 1944 by Saul Bell, a skilled bench jeweler, teacher and mentor who supported metalsmiths and jewelers throughout his life. Today, Rio Grande is a member of The Richline Group, a Berkshire Hathaway Company, and remains committed to supporting jewelers in every way possible.

Since launching in 2001, the Saul Bell Design Award has become one of the most sought-after prizes for jewelers and metalsmiths worldwide. For information about the 2018 Saul Bell Design Award competition, designers are invited to call 800.952.6222 or email [events@riogrande.com](mailto:events@riogrande.com). Visit [saullaward.com](http://saullaward.com) for general information about the Saul Bell Design Award competition.

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