



Three Sisters

Giving new meaning to “Statement Jewelry,” noted artist and raconteur, *Amy Lehmann*, shares how women’s personal journeys are honored and celebrated in her coveted custom creations.



I began making powerful pieces of jewelry for myself, drawing symbolism and wisdom from eclectic components wherever I was inspired to travel. Surprising cultural collaborations unfolded before my eyes as I harmoniously intertwined treasures from countries that likely never had opportunity to co-create. I juxtaposed textures rough and polished, materials precious and ordinary, and comingled antiquities and tribal elements with gifts of nature. Within the sheer beauty of these works I discovered enormous meaning in my story. I also derived a beautiful sense of calm on this path and was inspired to name this work StoryPeace™. I realized that this gift I had afforded myself, I could offer others.

There is significant opportunity for healing in a woman’s telling her story. In my custom work, I relish incorporating deeply meaningful, supportive elements drawn from the world’s cultures to create a metaphor for a woman’s journey, something supremely inspired by her story. Our work together gives her a symbolic language to understand and

celebrate herself on a very deep level.

This art-form is concurrently subtle and bold. While likely to evoke intrigue, these pieces respectfully allow a woman to share aspects of herself should she wish. She may also choose to quietly enjoy the beauty of her story’s resonance with others.

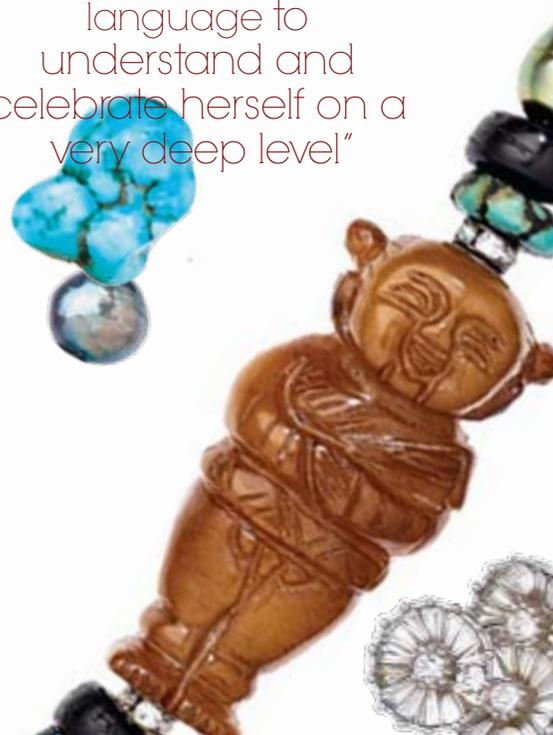
Destined for legacy, each StoryPeace™ is as unique as its muse. Bringing light to a woman’s experience through this medium is a remarkable honor.

While names and some details have been changed to honor privacy, what follows, with their permission, is the story of the Three Sisters.

I was thrilled to hear from Aurelia, a former client of mine. We had done some wonderful work together exploring her life’s journey, which had recently included a long and then triumphant battle with breast cancer. It was a delight creating a special StoryPeace™ that celebrated her loving, vibrant, maternal self, her monumental business acumen, and her undeniable fighting spirit. I will never forget her joy and surprise at my inclusion of the fastener from her hospital wristband amongst the jewels and other unique found objects in her piece. As I had hoped, she shared that the “little piece of metal” from the band served to fully acknowledge and esteem the sacred place her cancer fight had played in her growth and evolution. I recall with happiness unveiling her special necklace to her in a very personal ceremony and revisiting the courageous work we had done together. On that very day she had received a beyond-welcome call from her doctor informing her that she was officially in remission.

Today’s call from Aurelia had a surprisingly different tone. After some catching up, Aurelia revealed to me that her cancer had returned, and like so many other women before her, she was faced with a terminal diagnosis. Reaching out to me as a confidant, Aurelia shared that her deepest wish was for her divergently different daughters to have the gift of knowing and loving themselves in a way that she had learned to through our process together. She also felt that since much healing had come through for her during our time together and when she wore her unique necklace, she hoped that creating a StoryPeace™ for each of her girls would generously serve them and her on their road together and beyond.

“Our work together gives her a symbolic language to understand and celebrate herself on a very deep level”





What the world sees when Zara shows up is a marked elegance and poise. For her I created a bold and balanced piece entitled "Grace."

Zara, 41, was the eldest sister. A highly successful attorney who worked exceedingly long hours, she was proud of the barriers she had broken in the office, ranking as the highest woman in her firm. Like her mother before her, she greatly desired to be a role model for her daughter. Married, with one young daughter, Zara was perennially torn between her work responsibilities and her family's needs. Though she managed to please all at home and in the office, she was unforgiving of her own imperfections. She held dear her little one's latest accomplishments and lamented missing certain milestones, such as her daughter's first steps. At work, Zara often felt trapped in a man's world, reporting that much of her female intuition and brilliance were disregarded and she bemoaned the regularity with which she held back sharing her ideas as a result. She also reminisced about her days when she and her husband had traveled spontaneously, slept in at will, and danced into the wee morning hours. She treasured what her mother had taught her about nature and was saddened to think how much she will miss their long walks in future autumns.

As a result of our talks together, Zara came to realize that some time, no matter how brief, needed to be allotted to indulge her own interests. I was delighted when she reported that she had signed up to take a stand-up comedy course, something she had always wanted to do.

Zara was tall and fit and wore business chic attire and tended toward iconic accessories. Though she said that she felt a mess juggling all her professional and personal responsibilities, what the world sees when she shows up is a marked elegance and poise. For her I created a bold and balanced piece entitled "Grace."

As Zara is a trailblazer in the work world, I chose a hand-woven sterling silver wire and crystal, deco dragonfly appliqué to denote what Japanese culture attributes to this delicate insect, courage and strength. A carved agate spiral is strategically placed to be worn above

Zara

Zara's heart to symbolize both divine feminine energy and the awareness of oneself in the context of the whole. It was my belief that Zara would benefit from a gentle reminder that she is never alone, as she shares a connection with a global sisterhood where other women are making historical strides both in and out of the office.

Turquoise intentionally permeates the piece, as it is associated with maternal energy. It is a tribute to her beloved mom and a reminder of the wonderful mother that she is to her sweet daughter—loving, brave, present, and intentional in all she does. Near where the piece when worn lies upon her shoulder are two carved turquoise elements. The first, a woven Celtic symbol, is meant as a fond reminder of the strong connection she enjoys with her beloved husband, with whom she shared a wonderful trip to Ireland where they gleefully danced the nights away. The second carving is of a laughing Buddha, a fun nod to her comedic interests, as well as a common symbol of happiness and abundance, both gifts for her to receive while honoring some needed time for herself. An old Tibetan turquoise bead encased in silver and dotted with coral, lends nurturing energy and wisdom of the ages so that Zara remembers to be true to herself and value rather than dismiss her insights: The world no doubt needs her unique and inspired perspective.

Family is clearly what grounds Zara and brings her joy, thus I included an antique diamond earring in the formation of a bouquet of three

glittering flowers to represent her family unit, her source of pure beauty, light and growth. Understanding how much her mother's illness saddened and frightened her, I elected to include some supportive elements. First I chose an Egyptian scarab, associated with the eternal renewal of life, a gentle message to take solace in the inevitable and continuous cycle of life. Finally, the piece closes with two lovely leaves that form a clasp, symbolic of the special foliage walks she and her mother enjoyed hand in hand throughout the years, and the many that await her and her daughter.

So accustomed to doing for others and putting on a brave face, when presented with her StoryPeace™, Zara trembled slightly, welled up and sighed, "I get it now...why my Mom wanted this for us. Thank you so much, this truly is a gift."



Exemplifying courage and strength like the dragonfly, Zara masterfully brings both to life at home and in the office.

Jade

The youngest of the three sisters, Jade, was the free spirit of the bunch. She had traveled the globe, lived and volunteered in remote locations, and fancied herself open to going wherever there was a need. She wanted to be of service in whatever she did, and often sold short her own inner wisdom. Jade was constantly seeking in all she did: seeking approval, seeking permission and seeking spiritually. She knew she could connect with people in a special way when she was working from an authentic place, though she did not value this unique quality. She had a quiet presence and a bright light around her that all but her could see. Her family always looked to her when weighing decisions. Others sought direction from her, which yielded insight about her natural leadership capabilities. Our work together gently

revealed ways in which she could begin to see how much she mattered to the many she encountered, and how much of a positive catalyst she really was. Jade had always given so selflessly. Suddenly seeing herself anew through our work really moved her.

Jade, 29, was lithe, wore earthy colors, and did not draw much attention to herself in how she dressed. For her I was inspired to create a substantial piece meant to be highly visible. Her piece is entitled “Wise Sage,” the redundancy intentional, to remind her of her tremendous inner wisdom. To assist me with this illustration, I purchased an old tribal belt adornment from Ghana that is a sizeable brass piece, loosely in the shape of a sun, said to signify the great rays of light within. This antique piece was said to be passed through the generations and only to be worn

exclusively by revered tribal leaders—perfect for Jade who is the sought-out voice of reason and fairness in her family. Also featured in this necklace is a carved piece of serpentine jade in the shape of a wise teacher, from China, which drapes over the heart when worn. As her other needs for seeking fell away, her spiritual seeking increasingly fueled her. I added support

for this in the piece by incorporating ornately-carved gold beads and nuggets from Nepal, a country noted for its commitment to inner knowledge.

In all of Jade’s experiences, she enjoys the dual role of student and teacher: learning and disseminating knowledge matter most to her. Much of her volunteer work is international and is focused on cultural harmony, so I represented this global community in a tapestry of seeds from Columbia, a variety of peacock pearls from Asia, grounding turquoise, amber, amethyst and carved wooden beads from Mali.

Over her right lung I chose to highlight Jade’s inner sparkle, her true self. A critical location for intuition, I chose a large faceted smoky quartz, as it is said to help one be more firm in one’s resolve. As service matters so much to her, vintage rhinestone beads were selected as a final playful reminder that she is of greatest service to herself and others when she shines.

Though completely foreign for Jade to have this kind of visibility, I felt it important to present her StoryPeace™ to her in a ceremonious fashion, akin to a college graduation. As special marching music played, I created a path for Jade to approach a podium. There I made a valedictorian’s introduction, gave her her piece and invited Jade to make a commencement speech. Somewhat to my surprise, Jade spoke without hesitation. She poignantly thanked all of her teachers past and future and acknowledged how much this journey had meant to her. She encouraged her peers the world-over to use their lives for good and spoke inspirationally about the unlimited possibilities that lie ahead. She scanned the room to take in the whole moment, and then stepped down from the lectern. While giving me a big hug she got very quiet. Jade shared how truly alive she felt in ways she had only dreamed. “You’re right, Amy, I have all the tools I need. No holding back now or ever.”



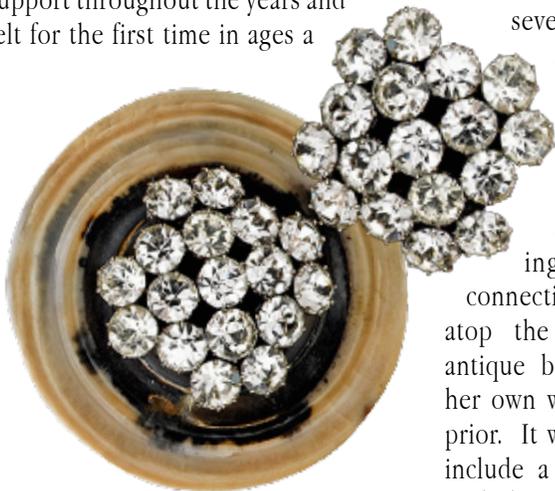
Known for their spot-on intuition and fairness, Chinese Wisemen inspired the symbolic inclusion of this carved jade statue

Jade's piece is entitled "Wise Sage," the redundancy intentional, to remind her of her tremendous inner wisdom.



Sierra, the middle sister, 38, had a lot going on in her life when we met. In addition to making sense of the gravity of her mother's cancer recurrence, Sierra was planning a renewal of vows celebration with her husband of nearly 10 years. She was also six months pregnant. Talking about this unborn child brought up so much emotion for her. She was beside herself with joy and anxiety at the notion of meeting this baby. She shared that she and her husband had struggled to conceive for six long and frustrating years, with dreams nearly fulfilled and then dashed mercilessly without warning. This pregnancy meant the world to her. She adored children, and had dreamed of having a family of her own for as long as she could remember. As her endeavors in school, work and life had come easily to her, this most challenging road to conception had rocked her faith and confidence entirely. Sierra was also unforgiving of her body for all it had put her through. She wondered if she could trust this time. Her worries aside, I will likely never witness sweeter smiles than those she displayed during our talks when she received playful kicks inside her belly.

This upcoming commitment ceremony planned for their 10th anniversary was also important to her. She was very moved by her husband's patience and support throughout the years and felt for the first time in ages a



Something old... for many reasons it was special to include an original detail from Aurelia's wedding dress in Sierra's matrimonial piece

Sierra

desire to a truly celebrate. The original plan was for the couple and her sisters' families, along with Aurelia, to steal off to the South Pacific for an oceanside wedding. As the pregnancy was a most welcome surprise, the plan had shifted to a beachside location just a short drive from the couple's home, timed to occur a few weeks before the baby's arrival. Naturally Sierra hoped her mother would be well enough to attend.

During my directional presentation, I explained the salient themes I was inspired to create along. She very much liked the idea of my fashioning her special StoryPeace™ as one that could to be worn at the wedding. I entitled her piece "Prosperity" as it is replete with special wishes and tidings for Sierra and her expanding family.

Sierra had spoken of her love of the water and how she swam to cleanse and balance her mind, body, and spirit during trying times. It is for this reason that I chose to include several organic gifts from the sea in her necklace. At Prosperity's forefront one finds a striking centerpiece, an ancient Naga shell from Nepal, beautiful and strong with a natural spiral ingrained therein, symbolizing connectivity to the divine. Layered atop the shell I fastened a fancy antique button Aurelia had worn on her own wedding gown so many years prior. It was very special to be able to include a matrimonial piece that had such longstanding family significance. Calling upon the wisdom of one of the sea's bravest and fiercest creatures, I chose to incorporate a delicate piece of

shark cartilage to symbolically convey great focus, survival and forward momentum, all of which Sierra is a stunning example.

Becoming a mother is Sierra's definition of true joy and abundance. To be worn above Sierra's heart, befittingly, I positioned a stunning, antique, silver and mother-of-pearl teething ring. Inside the opalescent teething ring I carefully suspended a Sanskrit prayer for fertility support, to bolster the success of this pregnancy and make smooth any future ones should that be her wish. An old silver Buddha from China echoes wishes for compassion—compassion toward herself, in this beautiful and challenging new role as a mother. Buddha is situated atop a vintage deco rhinestone bead whose sparkle hints at the miracle of birth at hand.

The sterling clasp closes the necklace with intertwined bridal bouquets, symbolically connecting the couple's two wedding ceremonies and paying tribute to the deep and blossoming love and commitment that she and her husband share now and always.

It was a delight to present Sierra with her StoryPeace™. She immediately slipped it on and cradled her neck. While she was most excited to wear it at the upcoming ceremony, she also looked forward to prominently displaying her piece on its stand as a work of art from which to draw strength. She said she joyfully awaited the day when her child would inquire about the necklace. She anticipated thumbing through the piece's handmade companion book together, lovingly revealing her own sacred journey.

—AMY LEHMANN



I entitled Sierra's piece "*Prosperity*" as it is replete with special wishes and tidings for her and her expanding family.



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