

**The Story of California. The Story of You.**

Oakland Museum of California



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## **OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA PREMIERES MAJOR EXHIBITION OF FAMED MODERNIST JEWELER**

### **“Space-Light-Structure: The Jewelry of Margaret De Patta” Examines the Life and Art of Pioneer Jeweler**

*Exhibition showcases Bay Area Artist’s Influence  
on Jewelry Making and Modern Art*

This release is available online at: [www.museumca.org/pressroom](http://www.museumca.org/pressroom)

**(Oakland, CA)** August 17, 2011—The Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) announces the first major retrospective of distinguished San Francisco Modernist jeweler Margaret De Patta (American, 1903–64). ***Space-Light-Structure: The Jewelry of Margaret De Patta***, premiering at OMCA **February 3 through May 13, 2012**, features new scholarship and a comprehensive examination of the Modernist artist and her influence on jewelry making. ***Space-Light-Structure: The Jewelry of Margaret De Patta***, which is presented in conjunction with the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) in New York, will be on view in OMCA’s Gallery of California Art.

“Margaret De Patta’s jewelry is a stunning example of how a California pioneer influenced significant changes in the art of jewelry making,” says **Associate Curator of Design & Decorative Arts Julie Muñiz**. “This exhibition not only allows OMCA to showcase the strength of our craft and decorative arts collection, but it reinforces the Museum’s commitment to telling the extraordinary stories of California and its people.”

The Oakland Museum of California’s collection features over 1,000 pieces of studio craft made after 1945—including the most extensive collection of De Patta’s work in existence today, most of which was donated by her husband, Eugene Bielawski, after the artist’s death in 1964. ***Space-Light-Structure: The Jewelry of Margaret De Patta*** will feature 50 jewelry pieces as well as ceramics, flatware, photographs, photograms, and newly released archival material. In addition, the exhibition will showcase artwork by international Modernists—such as László Maholy-Nagy, Gyorgy Kepes, El Lissitzsky, and Milton Halberstadt—whose work was influential on De Patta’s innovative designs.

A seminal figure in the American Modernist Jewelry movement, De Patta was born in 1903

and moved to the Bay Area in 1923. She started making jewelry shortly thereafter, and opened her workshop in 1935. Distinguished as one of the few American jewelers whose work was allied to the evolving ideas of the modern art movement, De Patta's work was heavily influenced by the Constructivists and features architectural forms with simple, modern lines.

De Patta left the Bay Area to study at the School of Design in Chicago in 1941 with László Moholy-Nagy, a former teacher at the Bauhaus in Germany. Under Moholy-Nagy she experimented with the abstraction of different materials and forms, furthering her development as a pioneer who fused Modern sensibilities with jewelry design. The influence of Moholy-Nagy's influence on De Patta is apparent in her use of semitransparent stones that transform light, in her experimentation with three-dimensional construction, and the dispersal of light through body motion and kinetic materials.

*Space-Light-Structure: The Jewelry of Margaret De Patta* is curated by OMCA Associate Curator of Design & Decorative Arts Julie Muñoz and MAD Curator of Jewelry Ursula Iles-Neuman, and is made possible by support from the National Endowment for the Arts. Accompanying the exhibition is a 248-page catalog, co-published by OMCA and MAD with support of the Rotasa Foundation.

## **ABOUT THE OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA**

The Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) brings together collections of art, history and natural science under one roof to tell the extraordinary stories of California and its people. OMCA's groundbreaking exhibits tell the many stories that comprise California with many voices, often drawing on first-person accounts by people who have shaped California's cultural heritage. Visitors are invited to actively participate in the Museum as they learn about the natural, artistic and social forces that affect the state and investigate their own role in both its history and its future. With more than 1.8 million objects, OMCA is a leading cultural institution of the Bay Area and a resource for the research and understanding of California's dynamic cultural and environmental heritage.

## **VISITOR INFORMATION**

The Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) is at 1000 Oak Street, at 10th Street, in Oakland. OMCA is situated between downtown Oakland and Lake Merritt. Museum admission is \$12 general; \$9 seniors and students with valid ID, \$6 youth ages 9 to 17, and free for Members and children 8 and under. OMCA offers onsite underground parking and is conveniently located one block from the Lake Merritt BART station, on the corner of 10th Street and Oak Street. The accessibility ramp is located at the new 1000 Oak Street main entrance. For more information, visit [www.museumca.org](http://www.museumca.org).

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