

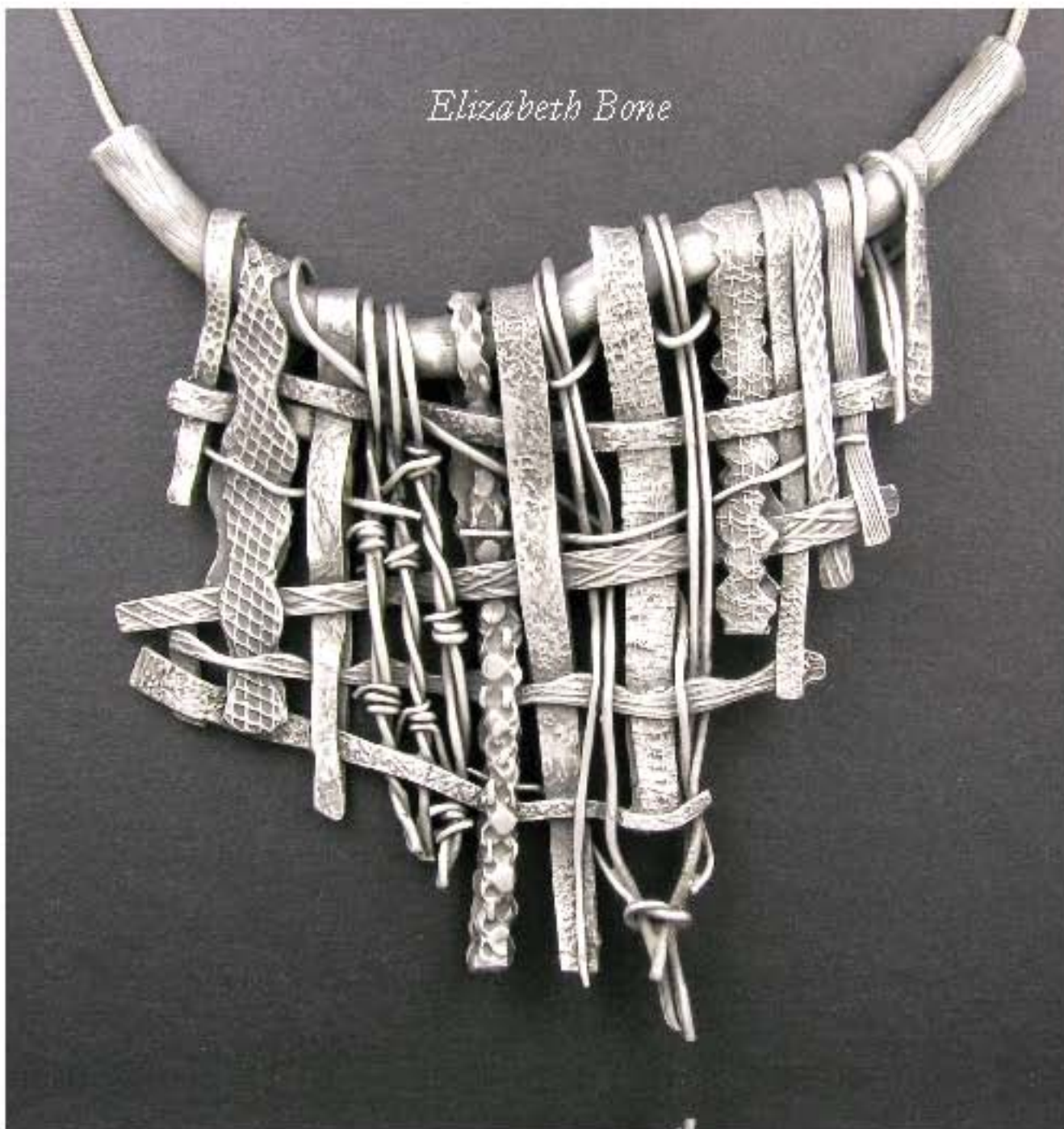


SILVERSMITHING — *for* — JEWELLERY MAKERS

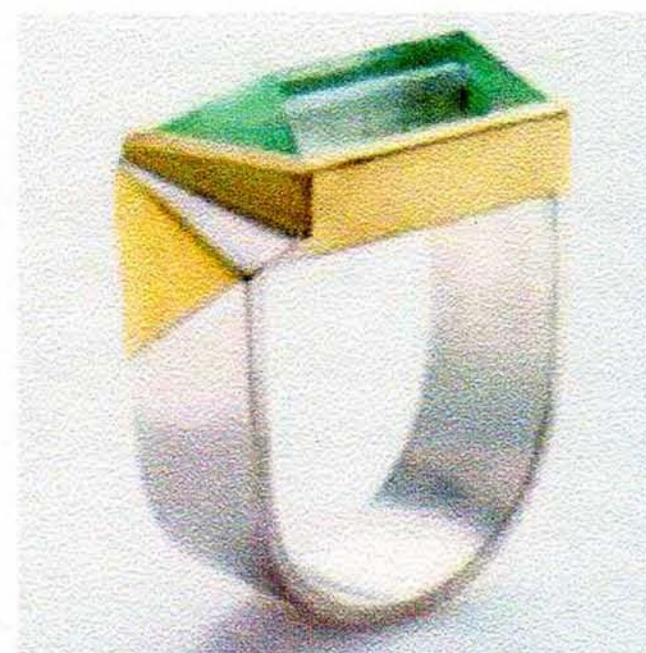
Techniques, treatments & applications for inspirational design



Elizabeth Bone



Regine Schwarzer was born in 1961 in Hanau, Germany. She grew up in Bavaria and trained in jewelry making and metalwork at the Zeichenakademie Hanau, one of the oldest training institutions in Europe. In 1993 she moved to Australia where she now lives and works in the Adelaide Hills. In 2010 Schwarzer completed a Masters Degree in Visual Arts and Design. Her work is exhibited widely nationally and internationally, is included in many private collections, and has been published in several books.



Reflections aquamarine ring by Regine Schwarzer.
Photo: Grant Hancock

Regine Schwarzer

Where do you find inspiration?

My first encounter with fossils was as a child in the Frankenjura, Germany, digging in the fields with my father, who was a “fossicker” and collector of rocks and minerals. I rediscovered my passion for finding treasures while traveling through the Australian outback. Inspired by the colors and structures of these minerals, I learned how to shape them and now use them frequently in my work. Working with the material evokes a sense of discovery for me. In search of formations, hidden treasures, and patterns reminiscent of landscapes, the stones are sliced open and examined.

Is the design of a piece led by the stone or do you design the piece and then search for the right stone?

It is a selection and design process from the beginning. I explore the

diversity of shapes in colored gems, and I cut them in new, experimental ways. I studied traditional gem cutting techniques, and with that skill as a base, I explore the possibilities and varieties of shapes and colors that translucent and semitranslucent stones have to offer. Traditionally the placement of facets at definite angles on a piece of translucent gem material enhances the reflections and color flashes that cause scintillation. I have a particular interest in working with inclusions within the stones that conventional techniques discard. These inclusions, or natural impurities, are incorporated into the design of the piece. My intention is to reduce and change the angles on the stones so that their inner life is revealed.

Combinations of materials are selected, tangible structures opposing internal lines and formations, colors harmonizing with

each other. Visual uniqueness gives value to common materials that are often overlooked or disregarded. By slicing into the materials I discover structures, patterns, and colors, traces of their geological history hidden in the layers. The stone is always the starting point for every piece of jewelry I make.

What are the processes that you go through when making a piece?

I like to work with the shape, color, and inclusions of each stone and form them into shapes that go beyond the well-known rounds, ovals, and squares. I like to work from the outside to the inside of rough gem material, responding to its random qualities and color. Cutting a stone is like unveiling the unpredictable and embracing the unexpected.