

# Inspired Design

by Suzanne Wade

## Shahasp Valentine: Inspiration Evolution

Shahasp Valentine's Organic Series of Naturally Inspired Forms began as an idea before she was even a jeweler. "It came to me in seventh or eighth grade, but I was never able to execute it to my satisfaction," she says. "When I heard about PMC that's the first thing that popped into my mind — now I finally have a way to make the idea that's been in my head for 20 years!"

Creating the lilies of her mind's eye was just the beginning, though: the lilies led to her Organic Rings series, which led to a group called Habitat, inspired by the abundance of sea life she found on a vacation to South Africa. Those led to the "Wave" series, which led in turn to "Knife Edge," and the "Knife Edge" pieces led, most recently, to a series featuring twigs and pearls.

"I do see it as all related, it's all part of nature and our environment. There's a thread for me with the flower and the forest and the ocean," Shahasp says. "Each group just sort of evolves out of the previous one. I didn't consciously plan it to look good in a display case."

The organic designs aren't the only series Shahasp has created: her Modern Artifact series is inspired by "cathedrals and kings," and is based on more traditional jewelry designs. The two very different collections allow Shahasp to tap into different sources of inspiration.

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Shahasp's Lily #1. Photo by Hap Sakwa.



Organic Ring #46, PMC and ruby.

"When I'm working with the organic group, I stay within the organic nature of PMC and let it undulate and flow. If I'm not in the right mood for that work, it doesn't happen. The inspiration just has to strike me," she says. "I approach the Modern Artifacts series completely differently. I have a technique where I start with an idea that's literally one-quarter of the design, scan it into the computer, refine it, and mirror it four times to create a round or square pattern. The inspiration comes from things like seeing a little architectural detail in a book and saying, 'What would that look like?'"

Shahasp says that rather than limiting her creativity, working in a series allows her to follow her inspiration to new insights. "It's just enormously satisfying in a creative way to continue that work to the next logical step until you feel you've reached the conclusion."



A Twig pendant from Shahasp's Organic Series.

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