

ART

How Four Architects Envision the New SFMOMA — as Jewelry

By SU WU MARCH 21, 2016

For fans of the sort of jewelry that's best described as "architectural," the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art has something better: It has commissioned four trained architects to translate the museum's new building into wearable designs. In May, the museum opens a new expansion by the Norwegian architecture firm Snøhetta. "Who would match a Botta building with a Snøhetta building? It really is a challenge. They are as crazy as me," laughs the Buenos Aires-based architect Diana Schimmel, of Mario Botta's original 1995 design for the museum. Schimmel's pieces for the capsule collection similarly play on the merging of disparate elements; she's paired, in a mix of gold and silver, Botta's iconic round oculus and the striated lines of the new annex into a single entity.

Available starting today in the museum's online store (and in the gift shop once SFMOMA reopens in May), the pieces reflect a shift in scale from skyline to neckline, undertaken by "women with these structural minds, converted to jewelry, which inherently has structural qualities," says SFMOMA's jewelry and accessories buyer Shane Salvata, who honed her eye at Saks Fifth Avenue and spearheaded the collaboration. Some of the 44 pieces of jewelry in the collection were inspired by the surrounding landscape of San Francisco and the museum's living wall, the largest in the country; others, including from the architects-turned-jewelry designers Alice Roche, Marion Cage and Andrea Panico, by the new façade designed

by Snøhetta, which “picks up the rippling effect of the waves in the Bay and shifts in appearance so beautifully with the changing light,” says SFMOMA director Neal Benezra. “I’m still amazed how four people could interpret something so completely differently, and within the same medium, and yet each looks like the building,” Salvata says.

“A professor once said that to design a hospital is the same as to design a spoon. I always saw him as a strange person until I began to design jewelry,” says Schimmel, a longtime patron of museum gift shops. “The user will understand, or not, the proportions, but they never mistake their feelings.”

Correction: March 21, 2016

An earlier version of this post misspelled the surname of SFMOMA’s jewelry and accessories buyer. She is Shane Salvata, not Saltava.



Clockwise from top left: Diana

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mixed metal, \$315; Alice Roche
Flow Necklaces, silver, prices
vary; Marion Cage Statement
Necklace, silver, \$750; Andrea
Panico Stacked Ripple Ring,
silver, \$135, and Stacked
Ripple Bracelet, silver, \$399.
Maria Del Rio, courtesy
SFMOMA