

Why is one moment so much more important than another?" ponders jewelry designer LeeAnn Herreid. Good question!

Each minute is made up of the same amount of seconds, each hour the same amount of minutes. But, like in a movie, time often seems to take on a life of its own, accelerated with excitement or at a snail's pace with anticipation. Thus, time after time, one moment feels more important than another. "Why is that?" Herreid reiterates. "Sometimes I feel completely calm, sometimes I am absolutely running amok trying to get everything done."

LeeAnn's answer to this thought provoking question is unique. She provides a system of checks and balances in a form that can be worn. Her functional jewelry holds the promise of inspiration and adornment, symbolic pieces that cue the wearer to consider balance and direction in daily life: a spirit level to remind you of the pursuit of balance, a compass so you never lose your way. Thus her innovative designs are comprised of pieces with a purpose.

"The levels and compasses not only check the bearing of the world around you, but they also function as a point of self-referral," notes LeeAnn.

## MAKING MOMENTS



Photography by Lauren Lake



# Matter

Pieces  
with  
Purpose





“A common theme that runs through my work is the acknowledgement that we are all at the center of our own solar system, but all make up a part within the infinity of the universe.”

“The bubble moves with every action in a reaction- Newton's law being shown on both the wearer and the world surrounding them.”

Can that small bubble sealed in the circular level secure a moment in time? Though it physically can't hold onto time, the wearer's consciousness of the moment is increased through the symbolic relationship to their jewelry.

In a society obsessed with saving time, making time and re-creating time, it seems there is less and less time to enjoy the functionality of all that time has to offer: simply savoring the hours in the day. Though we are producing technology that keeps us in touch with friends and family in a “real time” application, we seem to have less “real time” to actually spend with everyone.

“I read somewhere that hunter gatherers had more leisure time than we do...and they were growing and capturing their own food! It seems

that we spend all this time to accumulate time-saving devices, and in the end we spend the extra time to make the extra money to pay for all of these time-saving devices. If we factor out the difference, I would wager that we save no time in the end.”

Her purpose is not without beauty. In Herreid's work, purpose and beauty blend proportionately, the key that identifies each piece as an individual icon, the name LeeAnn has chosen for her business. The subtle curve of a metal ruler transforms the tool into a beautiful reflection of measure, and diamond dust is captured in a form that accentuates the dazzle and charm of the sealed essence. Compasses become a centerpiece and function as a gemstone in a ring or cufflink.

How did LeeAnn find herself immersed in a simplicity of design so rich in symbolic complexities? “The history of time-keeping has always been fascinating to me. When I was at art school, I was making a series of sundials.”

"LeeAnn's jewelry is interesting in its contradictions: it is both decorative and utilitarian; industrial yet personal. The crisp, graphic quality of her work appeals to our customers as well. A fine stainless steel ruler curved to wrap a slender wrist? Why not?"

**David Branham**

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reason for being.”

“People in the past who were using sundials needed to know which way was north- it is of paramount importance to orientate a sundial accurately to get a correct reading.”


“I had made several sundial rings and necklaces at the time that I made my first compass pieces. I wanted the wearer/user to be able to have a sundial on one ring, and a compass on the next. Simply by laying the hand flat and pointing it towards north, the wearer would know the time and cardinal points of their immediate surroundings. More than just beautiful, I wanted the jewelry to have a reason for being.”

Blending the concept of wearer and user, LeeAnn's work teaches a lesson about time: participation leads to self-referral and it is moments of reflection that actively contribute to our consciousness.

As in all things, time functions as an impetus for evolution. “A major factor in my re-thinking of jewelry occurred when I was cleaning the jewelry I rarely-to-never wear out of my jewelry box. I resolved to only keep things that I really used or was terribly attached to. This action added fuel to my 'get rid of all things that have no reason for being' fire.”

“I abandoned the sundial which had started the whole thing in favor of the compass design, which is much more useful in the world that we live in today. This led to the level, thermometer, abacus and ruler pieces. They assist the wearer in having a greater awareness of their surroundings.”

Life, in essence, is a series of moments and our personal histories become the stringing together of the moments we best remember, the moments we pay the most attention to. Consider this reflection in Herreid's chain mail lariats. “In my mind, each piece is made up of time spent and wishes made. Traditionally, (in King Arthur's time) each link had a wish embedded in it through its maker. If you have ever sat and made chain mail by hand, you can easily understand how this would be the case. So much time is spent in tiny little tasks. (Jewelry-making involves a huge amount of time spent in tiny little tasks). It is a reminder that objects take on the attention and intention of the maker and then the wearer.”

What is it about our lives that seems to speed or slow our experience of time? One moment can explode into a full length feature film, and the next moment can be lived in a form of video fast forward. How do we put it all into perspective? Is one moment really more important than another? Perhaps the real questions are: Is my life in balance? Do I know where I am going? The answers might just lie in your relationship with the individual icons you choose to wear. 

“In regards to the concept of time, it fascinates me that it is metalworking that caused many changes in the ages- the ‘bronze age’



and the ‘industrial revolution.’ So, to work in a process that has ostensibly changed history the most radically, and has always been the most universal form of currency, is amazing. If I can work with these processes, and these materials, while encouraging the wearer to take part in and observe their personal world then so much the better!”

“LeeAnn’s work forges a remarkable balance between elegant jewelry and functional hardware, and she does it with both wit and style. Her craftsmanship is superb and she is a pleasure to work with; one of our favorite artisans.”

**David Bolotsky**  
Founder and CEO  
UncommonGoods

LeeAnn Herreid lives and works in the growing community of artisans in Warren, Rhode Island. Her work is available in galleries and museum shops throughout the United States and abroad. Her pieces have been praised internationally, and have found themselves invited to be the stars of television shows and award celebrations. Visit her website, [www.individualicons.com](http://www.individualicons.com) to learn more about her array of pieces with a purpose.