

DISCOVERIES



For her Mythical Creatures from the Golden Menagerie series, jewelry designer Temple St. Clair Carr (pictured at near left) collaborated with artist Nancy Lorenz (far left), who crafted a special box for each piece; shown here is the Frog Prince ring and its gilded fly-leaf box. Above: The Secret Garden serpent necklace. Below: The Resounding Fox ring.

DEBUT
TANDEM TREASURES

For a unique series, jewelry designer Temple St. Clair Carr conjures exquisite creatures, each presented in a sublime box by artist Nancy Lorenz

New York jewelry designer Temple St. Clair Carr and artist Nancy Lorenz met serendipitously nine years ago, while dropping their sons off at school. Casual chitchat blossomed into a deep friendship as the two discovered they were kindred souls. “We both love the slow processes of creativity and the touch of the hand—the notion of the ‘perfectly imperfect,’” Carr says. It’s a philosophy that informs the work of each woman. Carr’s jewelry line, Temple St. Clair, is coveted for its fusion of old-world craft techniques with modern style. Lorenz, meanwhile, uses venerable materials like gold leaf and lacquer to create furniture, wall paneling, and other decorative elements for the likes of Peter Marino, Tomas Maier, and Michael S. Smith.

The pair eventually decided to collaborate, uniting their talents in a project that comes to fruition this fall with Carr’s Mythical Creatures from the Golden Menagerie, nine one-of-a-kind zoomorphic pieces (five rings, two sets of earrings, a bracelet, and

a necklace), all housed in extraordinary collector’s boxes fashioned by Lorenz. Each of Carr’s bijoux is truly a work of art, conjuring its namesake—a frog prince, phoenix chicks—from mesmerizing gemstones. But the real magic is in the painstaking craftsmanship that went into every creation. Carr surpassed her usual exacting standards, pushing her elite Florentine stone setters and goldsmiths to new feats of wizardry. The lifelike articulation of the Secret Garden Serpent necklace, for instance, necessitated a complicated type of connection, and a single artisan spent hundreds of hours placing the 1,091 stones, a painterly palette of tsavorite garnets, tanzanite, royal-blue moonstone, and diamonds. “It had to be assembled twice, first to work out the joints and then, after being taken apart, to execute the setting,” Carr explains. She enlisted



HAIR BY NICHIEDO BOERBERS; MAKEUP BY DANIEL LOUISE

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Clockwise from top left: Sketches for the Great Horned Owl ring. Three of Lorenz’s boxes. The Secret Garden Serpent necklace in progress, before its favorite scales were inset. The Flying Fish bracelet, atop its waterfalls-inspired container. Tanzanite and Lightning Ridge black opal are just two of the rare stones that make up the Phoenix Chicks earrings.

one of Florence’s last jewelry chisellers to render the strokable fur texture on the 18K-gold Sleeping Fox ring, including the small patches between the spinels and rich garnets that form his voluptuous tail. As she notes, “Work of this caliber requires uncompromising effort and time”—three years for the whole collection, to be precise. To source the gems, Carr scoured the globe to secure the most luminous and exotic examples. For the Medusa Moon Jellyfish ring, she employed a rare opal from Andamooka, Australia, to transmit the animal’s eerie lit-from-within transparency. She even incorporated stones not typically used in jewelry—a challenge for her setters—among them the ring’s electric-blue hazyinite. The fantastical creatures find a perfect complement in Lorenz’s boxes. “I wanted to create a world for them to inhabit,” the artist says. “So I conceived each one like an intimate room.” She had poplar boxes handcrafted in Kyoto, Japan, by a supplier of containers for tea-ceremony bowls, and then layered them with materials such as lacquer, mother-of-pearl, and cracked reverse-gilt glass. As she saw Carr’s designs evolve from initial sketches to finished pieces, Lorenz further embellished her own work, adding ever more luscious colors and intricate

details to correspond to the jewelry. “My first instinct was to do something quite simple, but Temple encouraged me to go off the deep end,” she recalls with a laugh. Many of the boxes are exuberantly sculptural. To honor the Great Horned Owl ring, formed from sapphires, diamonds, and emeralds, Lorenz puzzled together a nest of gilded sticks, while the bracelet depicting flying fish, whose iridescent scales are realized in alternating bright-green tsavorite and blue-green Paraíba tourmaline, is sheltered by a waterfall of silver-leafed resin. Though the collection will be sold by appointment only at the Temple St. Clair studio in Manhattan, it will reach a broader audience than such rarefied items usually do. Mythical Creatures will be exhibited in November at New York’s Salon Art + Design Fair, and in January 2015, it travels to the Fondation Pierre Bergé-Yves Saint Laurent for Paris’s haute couture week. Carr is also producing a limited-edition book on the series, featuring photographs by another friend, Robert Clark, who documents wildlife for National Geographic. Additionally, those who purchase a piece will receive a special one-off volume, bound by Florentine bookbinder, highlighting their particular creature—a fitting tribute to a dynamic collaboration. templestclair.com —JEN RENZI

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF TEMPLE ST. CLAIR; WILLIAM WALLGREN; CHRIS DENHAM; WILLIAM WALLGREN; ROBERT CLARK