

## **2016 OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONALS IN THE ARTS**

### **Chris and Danielle Merzatta**

Self-identified “cradle artists” who manifested their talents early, Chris and Danielle bring extensive training, commitment to responsible sourcing and unique design to the art of creating fine jewelry.

Danielle earned her BFA in sculpture at Moore College of Art & Design (PA) and an MFA in metalsmithing at Cranbrook Academy of Art (MI). At Peter’s Valley, she earned her arts-in-industry badge as the only woman in the hot shop of MetalFab Inc., a large steel fabrication plant in New Jersey. She earned her academic badge teaching in the Foundations Department of Pennsylvania College of Art and Design.

Chris holds a BA in Art History and German along with a BFA in Jewelry from University of Georgia (UGA). A Teaching Fulbright in Mainz and studies at the Technical School for Design in Pforzheim focused his work in Germany for six years, after which he returned to the Lamar Dodd School of Art at UGA for an MFA in Drawing and Painting. After graduate school, he worked under the direction of architect William Massie on an artisan architectural build in Milan, NY - a project that landed the cover of *Dwell* magazine. He then moved to the island Mustique in the Grenadines under the direction of architect

Rafaella Bortolucci to build a contemporary guest home on the edge of the island.

The couple met in graduate school at Cranbrook, married, merged their names and creatively faced the 2008 economic downturn by starting Merzatta Jewelry. Their intricate designs are organic and modern, inspired by patterns and textures found in nature. They are also key members of the consortium of Ethical Metalsmiths that imported fair mined gold to the US, starting in 2014.

Their work is widely collected throughout the country and has attracted national attention. The Merzatta logo was among the top ten of the national 2014 HOW Logo Design Awards and their website was a winner in the 2014 Print Design Annual. They have exhibited at highly competitive Art Festivals, received several corporate awards and won Best In Show at a recent Miami exhibit. Their second solo exhibit opens at Wallflowers Gallery in Bernardsville in December of this year.

Therefore, in recognition of their outstanding work as jewelry artists and their ability to incorporate natural, sustainably-sourced materials into inspired designs, Morris Arts is pleased to award the 2016 Outstanding Professionals in the Arts award to Danielle and Chris Merzatta.

Will Danielle and Chris please come up to accept their award. March 30, 2016