

Eveli

Energy And Significance
The Wheelwright Museum Of The American Indian

By Laura Beach



“Blue Reeds and Purple Nights,” circa 1990. Gold, turquoise and sugilite; width 3 inches. Private collection.

SANTA FE, N.M. — What is Native American jewelry? Is it a style or a sensibility, something to be taught or learned? Or is it a birthright, authentic only as an expression of a shared, communal tradition? An exhibition at Santa Fe’s Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian through January 15 challenges long-held assumptions about tradition and innovation, individualism and community while offering a privileged look at a genre that is more dynamic than some suppose.

Organized by museum curator Cheri Falkenstien-Doyle, “Eveli: Energy and Significance” takes up the story of Eveli Sabatie (b 1940), a contemporary jeweler of French North African descent who was one of only two apprentices of Charles Loloma (1921–1991), the Hopi artist whose inventive ornaments in gold and



“Orchards of Love,” circa 1975. Fabricated silver with fossilized ivory, red jasper, chrysoprase and turquoise. Outside diameter 3 inches. Private collection.

colored stones influenced a generation of craftsmen and are among the most avidly collected examples of Native American art and design.

“What I most admire about Eveli is her originality. She worked with materials that she loved, manipulating them through carving and through combinations of color and texture that no one else was using. She really stayed true to her vision, and the results are quite beautiful,” says Falkenstien-Doyle.

The exhibition is the first solo presentation in the museum’s Center for the Study..

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“Fertility Rites” pendant. Silver, ironwood, coral and spiny oyster. Private collection.

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