

2011 AGTA Spectrum Awards :
• Best Use of Pearls •
• 2nd Place Object of Art category •
for
"Who are You?"

What can you do when you find a single freshwater pearl that "wiggles", "squirms" and 'talks' like a caterpillar except make a caterpillar!!

When I found this pearl at the Tucson Gem Fair in 2010 I knew instantly that it was the caterpillar from Alice in Wonderland. Then the search began to find another pearl for his hookah pipe. With some research I found the original wood engraving illustrations by John Tenniel for the first edition of Lewis Carroll's classic book that provided the inspiration for the design. The overall height is 9 cm (3.5 inches) including the base.



John Tenniel caterpillar illustration



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Detail #1



Detail #2

Heather McNair, a goldsmith with Jewels by Design, crafted most of the piece while Erkki Mursula created the stand. The mushroom was hand-forged from 18K yellow gold, and the spines, feet, arms, moustache, glasses and all the other details of the pieces were cast or hand-fabricated from green, yellow and white gold. The gills on the underside of the cap were carved in wax and cast in silver and then oxidized. The hookah pipe is another single freshwater pearl and is topped with a small ruby for the firebowl. Small demantoid garnets are set in the flanks of the caterpillar and his eyes are brown diamonds. The spots on the mushroom cap are tiny white Akoya seed pearls and the small mushrooms at the base of the stem are natural colour south sea button keshi pearls. The back of the mushroom is hand-engraved with the title: "Who are you?" (the first words that the caterpillar said to Alice when they met) and the words "Taller" and "Shorter" to indicate which side of the mushroom Alice should eat in order to grow taller or shrink in size. As a sculpture when mounted on the quartz crystal base it will spin and tilt, the mushroom with attached caterpillar and his pipe may be removed from the quartz crystal base and be worn as a brooch or pendant when it is not on display.

If you would like to see "Who are you?" in person, it can be viewed in our store.



Llyn L. Strelau, Jewels by Design Ltd.
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