



Steve Ford & David Forlano

Free to Invent

Big Bead necklace
(043), 2012, polymer,
sterling silver, 17 in. long

THIS PAIR, KNOWN COLLECTIVELY as Ford/Forlano, are distinctive by their backgrounds: Trained as painters and print-makers, they are self-taught jewelry makers. Their material? Humble polymer "clay." Their painterly approach has drawn notice. "Steve Ford and Dave Forlano's work represents, to me, the single most transformative influence in the world of polymer clay," says Ulysses Grant Dietz. "They have ennobled a material relegated to preschools, and have developed a design vocabulary as deeply rooted in modern art as it is in craft."

How they describe their work: "Inventive, sculptural, unexpected, coming out of six hands working together (we also work with a metalsmith, Maryanne Petrus)."



Hydro Top pin
(230), 2013, polymer,
oxidized sterling silver,
3 x 2.75 x .5 in.

Their training: "We're self-taught. That means we're free to invent, unrestrained by what jewelry should be. It also means that we make a lot of mistakes."

Why they make jewelry: "To make something that someone loves enough to want to wear on their body, that's visually involving. It's great fun."

Their biggest challenge: "We are collaborating long distance, so the usual back-and-forth that develops a piece takes more time now."

Their biggest reward: "We're always thrilled to see the happy response people have when they come look at our work and try it on. It is nice to be reminded that our work can bring so much pleasure to people."