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Form Emphasis For Metalsmiths



Synopsis

Redefines the vocabulary of metalsmithing. In print for more than three decades. A master artist and teacher of metalwork presents a bold new approach to creative expression in metal. Believing that the time has come for the artist to free himself from the functional forms that have dominated the metal smith's craft—the cup, the box, the pitcher, etc.—Heikki Seppa urges the craftsman to create in terms of pure form, and in this book he shows him how. Two Things are essential. The first is a thorough understanding of the special properties of metal as an artistic medium and an intimate knowledge of techniques for working it. Only when he has mastered the physical means of working with metal can the artist free his imagination for unimpeded creation. Though not addressed to the beginner, Seppa discusses the fundamental techniques of planishing, soldering, and hinging—all the basic means by which metal is shaped. The second is to free the artist from thinking in terms of function, since this limits his concepts of what can be created. Even such traditional forms as the cube, the cone, the cylinder, and the dome have their limitations, and Seppa opens new possibilities by creating a new vocabulary, new terms by which to identify the many shapes metal can take under skilled hands. A major feature of this book is an extensive glossary of these terms, each one illustrated with a sketch by the author. The book is profusely illustrated throughout with the author's own sketches of the ideas and techniques discussed. It will be of significant value to the accomplished craftsman as well as to teachers and advanced students of this exciting and growing art form. The artistic metal creations of Heikki Seppa have won international acclaim, from his award of master status in silversmithing from the Ministry of Education in his native Finland to numerous exhibits and awards here and abroad. As a teacher of metalsmithing in the School of Fine Arts of Washington University, Mr. Seppa's work with young artists led to the formulation of the new approach to creativity in metal that he details in this book.

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Customer Reviews

One of the most innovative and influential silversmiths of the latter 20th century, the late Heikki Seppä helped introduce the technique of reticulation to the United States while also developing and popularizing new methods for shaping sheet metal into three-dimensional shell structures. His own works are notable for their use of bold sculptural forms. Seppä insisted that silver could be an expressive, rather than merely utilitarian, medium and for combining silver and gold with other metals to create striking contrasts and color blends. Born in Seinäjoki, Finland, in 1927, Seppä studied at the Goldsmith School of Helsinki and the Central School of Industrial Art in Helsinki. He continued his professional training in 1948-49 with George Jensen Silversmiths in Copenhagen, Denmark, and two years later emigrated to British Columbia, Canada, where he taught jewelry and metalsmithing at the Civic Center in Prince Rupert. Seppä died in 2010.

There is a reason this book has become the Bible for many forming metalsmiths. It's more than a "how to" book. The author seeks to establish a lexicon of standardized terms to make communication between smiths more exact and fruitful. This is not a book for those just beginning metalsmithing. But those with a solid understanding of the craft and an imagination will find it highly rewarding! It should be kept as a reference in every creative metalsmith's shop.

This book is essentially about shaping metal in the art-metal area; however, it does contain chapters with useful techniques for raising shapes and planishing, which is applicable to any work involving sheet-metal. The text is rather heavy and the diagrams supporting it are rudimentary and often have no sub-titles of explanation. I like the book but as a ready reference, but it would not be the one I pick up first- a DVD on metal-shaping would probably be more useful.

This is a must have for anyone interested in metal forming. Author, the late Heikki Seppä, was a master of this technique. His language and instructions are clear.

If you are really serious about foldforming and metal raising, this is the seminal work written in the '70's, published by the Kent State University Press. Somehow, it seems that many of the best jewelers I know are from the Midwest. My teacher warned me that this is a very advanced book. I've tried what looks like some of the easiest forms to make and got beautiful results. Thing is, they did not resemble the form in the book at all! The directions assume prior knowledge and can be cryptic to a novice. If you are new, books like Creative Metal Forming (de Longhi, Eid) and Foldforming (Lewton-Brain) are what you should be using. They will keep you busy for a few years. Still, read this book, play with the forms, but don't expect to master it unless you've been fold forming raising for a while. The author names every single one of his forms. It's a bit different than most, but the names are interesting. New to foldforming or not, I'd get it and plan to grow into it.

ok

This book is full of great information. I am a beginner in metal forming and this book has given me endless ideas and inspirations of projects I have added to my list of things to do.

This book by Heikki puts considerable emphasis on educating the reader in the appropriate use of the correct terms used to describe the various forms and shapes, it is helpful to keep a dictionary in your workshop so at least if you are not successful in creating the desired shape that you aspire to, you will be able to describe with an impressive range of terminology what it was supposed to have been. On a more serious note however, I would have preferred, sharp detailed photos of the varying procedures rather than drawings (A picture is always worth a thousand words) . A sample viewing inside the book prior to purchase would also have been helpful. I have for a considerable time now been searching for detailed information about the procedures for creating the very deep drawn Acanthus Leaves such as found in the early French era. This book unfortunately will be added to my collection of "interesting but not what I was hoping to find collection". I found nothing of great value in it for the pursuit of traditional leaf work but I would certainly highly recommend it for anybody anticipating some freeform sculpture as depicted on the cover page. Dietmar

This book was highly recommended by my instructor who is, herself, a master of metals. She referred to Heikki Seppa as the Master of Master Metalsmiths. His book has taken me to a higher level of understanding and creativity. A valuable addition to any metalsmith's library.

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