

"I AM MAGICALLY ATTRACTED BY SYMBOLS." JEWELRY DESIGNER CORINNA HELLER ALSO USES THE CROSS SYMBOL IN HER PIECES. SHE WANTS HER CROSSES TO HAVE AN UNOSTENTATIOUS, MINIMALIST AND YET THREE-DIMENSIONAL FLAIR.

# THE CROSS — A UNIVERSAL SYMBOL AND TRENDIER THAN EVER

WE HAVE KNOWN THE CROSS FOR HUNDREDS AND EVEN THOUSANDS OF YEARS. TODAY IT IS REGARDED AS A SYMBOL OF CHRISTIANITY ON THE ONE HAND, AND ON THE OTHER IT IS WORN AS A FASHIONABLE ACCESSORY, ESPECIALLY AS A JEWELRY PENDANT. IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT ONLY A FEW HUNDRED YEARS AGO, WARS WERE FOUGHT AND PEOPLE WERE KILLED IN THE NAME OF THE CROSS. THIS IS WHY THE CROSS STANDS FOR SACRIFICE AND SUFFERING, BUT ALSO FOR UNITY, LOVE AND FORGIVENESS.

**VIEWED FROM** a rational standpoint, the cross symbol is composed of a horizontal and a vertical line that cross each other and thus create an intersecting point. The vertical line is the heavenly and divine plane, also regarded as the spiritual, male and active one, while the horizontal line is the earthbound, passive and female one. This is why the cross is regarded as a symbol of unity – of heaven and earth, of male and female.

In the history of human civilization, the symbolic meaning of the cross underwent several changes. Drawings carved into cave walls suggest that this symbol was already known in the Stone Age. However, it is supposed that back then it represented an abstract depiction of the number 4 – or what people perceived as this number – possibly referring to the four seasons of the year or the four cardinal points. But why 4 of all numbers? A circle, the symbol of perfection, is divided by the cross into four equal parts. Therefore it is no wonder that this symbol was believed to have a special religious or spiritual meaning. This explains why we speak of four seasons, the Buddhists believe in the four noble truths whose symbol, in turn, is the wheel or cross, and why Christians speak of the four Gospels and the four Evangelists.

We have known the cross as a religious symbol since about 2,500 to 1,500 B.C. In its original shape it was regarded as a token of good luck or salvation. It was used as a symbol in all advanced civilizations, in different shapes and associated with different meanings. For the ancient Egyptians it was the symbol of life, fertility and rebirth, for the Assyrians it was a symbol of the sun. After Jesus died on the cross, it became a Christian symbol.

Today we know the cross as a universal symbol emblemizing the "four ends of the world" on the one hand, and on the other an intersecting point, i.e. a center of the unity of heaven and earth, of the male and the female. However, it was not until late that the Christians started associating this unity of the two axes, i.e. the horizontal (representing the bond between man and the earth and his fellow men) and the vertical (the unity of heaven and earth and the divine) with the resurrection of Christ. Until the time of Emperor Constantine I (288-337, Roman

VON LEO WITTWER: KREUZ MIT CHARAKTERISTISCHEM ÜBERSCHLAG



KREUZANHÄNGER AUS DEM ATELIER PATRIK MUFF, VERSCHIEDENE AUSFÜHRUNGEN, SILBER 925, NYMPHENBURGER PORZELLAN

HALSSCHMUCK VON LARA ZÖLLER, SILBER 925, MESSING, GLASSTEINE, THEMA: PRUNKSTÜCK (ABSCHLUSSARBEIT)

Emperor from 306 to 324 and Byzantine Emperor from 324 to 337), the cross was an executioner's instrument and a popular device for punishing dangerous criminals and slaves with the death penalty. This is why depictions of the cross were painstakingly avoided. In the course of time, however, it spread more and more, for example as a roadside cross, grave cross, jewelry cross or somebody's cross to bear and often as a magic symbol to exorcise witches or ghosts. In our day and age, the cross symbol is used in many different ways and it is no longer limited to this purely religious or spiritual function. We deliberately wear the cross as a fashionable accessory. Especially in jewelry design, which often resorts to symbols, the cross plays an important role and is used in the creation of precious as well as trendy jewels such as necklace pendants or rings. We spoke with Patrik Muff, a Swiss jewelry designer who has been living and working in Munich since 1998, about his work in which symbols play an important part.

**What does the cross mean to you personally?**  
 PM: I have a cross tattooed on my back...

**Perhaps you can also tell us what your clients associate with it or whether they regard a cross pendant from a purely fashion-related point of view?**

PM: Like many other symbols the cross also found its way into the fashion world. I offer symbols to my clients. How they interpret them is up to each individual wearer. Someone who wears a skull pendant is not automatically a rocker. Today, we should no longer presume that a person wearing a cross pendant is devout. But maybe faith as such means a lot to him or her. ■■■ Katharina Möschl

TEMPLERKREUZ VON FOCHTMANN



**Why do you use the symbol of the cross in your jewelry?**

PATRIK MUFF: Since I work almost exclusively with symbols, there is no way around the cross. It is a very powerful symbol. Its mere presence supposedly chased away Draculas ... But I also like the symmetry of the cross, its shape...



KLEINER SIEGELRING „JERUSALEM KREUZ“ VON PE GIERS, GRAVUR IN ROTWEISSEM LAGENACHAT, ROTGOLD 750



ANHÄNGER „KREUZ OHNE SCHWERT“ IN GELBGOLD 750 VON PE GIERS