



# WITH HEAD, HEART AND HANDS

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**AN ACCOUNT OF GOLDSMITH PE GIERS AND HER  
REMARKABLE JEWELRY AS WELL AS THE ART OF  
GEMSTONE ENGRAVER ERWIN PAULY**

**"SPREAD YOUR WINGS FOR THE MIRACLE OF THE HERE  
AND NOW."**

Pe Giers is a veritable poet, and one who knows how to express herself with more than words at that. By converting messages into jewelry she creates eloquent witnesses of her dreams and fantasies. With her idiosyncratic intensity she affects the world around her: the people she meets, the art she interprets, the materials she shapes. Her "Jewelry on Behalf of Joy" is able to do all kinds of things. For some it tells a long story about becoming and being, about the power of the elementary, others are simply delighted by its beauty – and both is good.

The jewelry created by Pe Giers is brought alive by the beauty of the materials, the perfection of the customized craftsmanship and above all by the power of the symbols. Whether dragons, angels, skulls, a cross, a sword or a phoenix, they all unite the past and the present, thus lending mythology a modern flair. Because, despite all the respect that this designer has for the symbols of bygone epochs, there is always a little tongue-in-cheek involved that endows her pieces with a certain lightness. Her collection is composed primarily of rings featuring round, square or elliptical shapes such as her Dragon rings, Cigar Band rings and signet rings, but also includes pendants, locket and cufflinks. With their plain and simple forms and smoothly flowing lines, all these pieces are visibly beautiful and palpably first-class – what has been created by Pe Giers "has weight" in several respects. Thus, she considers a large and simultaneously lightweight gold ring as a contradiction in terms. The hallmark of her creations are the fantastic engravings in the stones and their remarkable fineness and



PE GIERS

expressiveness. These are the work of master gemstone engraver Erwin Pauly from Veitsrodt near Idar-Oberstein, a grand seigneur of his trade. Both Pe Giers and Erwin Pauly consider it as a stroke of divine luck that they met. By now, the unconventional jewelry designer (47) and the experienced engraver extraordinaire (75) have been collaborating closely for almost 20 years.

## TWO PEOPLE, TWO STORIES:

### Pe Giers "I am a little vagabond."

Pe Giers, born in 1962 in Saarbrücken, Germany, tells us about herself: "I come from a loving family with high ethical values and a lot of turbulences. I was raised in a strict environment and always took advantage of the great opportunities for rebellion. This is how I developed a solid foundation and strong wings.

My father was a strategist, my mother an artist. I have always been in creative environments, and friendships were often based on collaboration. I loved what inspired me: nature, people in all their diversity, contradictions, absurd things, Dada, foreign cultures and their art and craftsmanship, philosophy and in particular the unanswered questions of life, stories, and mythologies as well as traveling, of course, and mobility in every respect."

Pe Giers, who still calls herself a "little vagabond", spent two years in her youth without a permanent home, traveling Europe. "Survival is not a problem" is the positive attitude she developed back then when she easily made a living selling kerchiefs and shawls. She herself sums up her career as follows: "I spent a lot of time at theaters, with painters, poets and singers, married a great artist (Walter Giers, editor's note) and have a son with him (Victor is 18 years old now, editor's note). I attended acting school, performed on stage and played minor parts in movies, worked as a photo model and found my way back to goldsmithing."

This could also be described as follows: Pe Giers, who already developed a passion for beautiful stones in her youth, one day discovered the address of Pforzheim's Technical College for Goldsmiths on the desk of a friend. She spontaneously applied – and was accepted. Her training there was followed by years of further training and journeying which she mainly spent on Ibiza and Sardinia. In 1985 she obtained her journeywoman's certificate in goldsmithing in Schwäbisch Gmünd and then studied at Frieder Nögge's Kleintheater ("small theatre") school in Stuttgart. In 1987, back in Schwäbisch Gmünd, she started running an atelier in collaboration with her friend Corinna Heller, also a jewelry designer. In 1995 she passed the examination to become a master goldsmith with honors and established her own atelier. Schwäbisch Gmünd, she says, has remained her "base of operation" until today.

"An authentic piece of work is pure pleasure," is how Pe Giers comments on her delight in creating. She would love to work like she used to in the past when she was able to spend weeks on one single piece. But she also learned that "Being creative is not a romantic dream but hard work, every day, and ideally combined with well-developed self-criticism and stamina." Time and again she wants to liberate and recreate herself which, unfortunately, is impossible without losing her historical identity. "Which part should I destroy so as to avoid ending up in another type of bonda-

*"I enjoy writing. Writing makes you happy. Sentences can be like chocolate candies."*



MEDAILLON  
„KAISERDRACHE“



MEDAILLON  
„SCHUTZENGEL“

*"Originality is the imperative basis as well as the expression of a certain vanity, of course."*

ge?" It's a good thing that Pe Giers has a strong partner to work with who, thanks to his traditional trade, offers this imaginative goldsmith some sort of "grounding":

Erwin Pauly who, even at age 75, has lost none of his creative power. "I realized the opportunities that lie in the age-old art of engraving stones when I met Erwin Pauly for the first time," Pe Giers says. "This was in the late 1980s." Back then, stone engraving had almost been buried in oblivion and thus was a great challenge for her in her search for a path of her own in jewelry design, for some sort of "untilled soil".

"I was immediately captivated by Erwin Pauly's unique skill and his enthusiasm for his work, and we have worked together ever since. Over a period of almost 20 years we managed to revive this great art to some degree. We share a great passion for stories, mythology and symbols."



„FEDER“



„PHOENIX AUS DER ASCHE“



„PHOENIX“

WENDERING „ANARCHIE UND VERANTWORTUNG“



*"Symbols have existed since the beginning of mankind. The power of images has always been important. After all, most people were illiterate until only a short while ago. Therefore they used images as a lasting means of expression. Who knows whether we understand these images correctly in our day and age. Perhaps many an unearthed piece is actually a "comic book figure" created in antiquity." Pe Giers*



„KAISERDRACHE“



„FLIEGENDER DRACHE“

## Erwin Pauly: "My profession is my life."

Intaglios and cameos, coats-of-arms, monograms and emblems for signet rings – interest in the age-old art of engraving gemstones is increasing again today. Erwin Pauly, whose name is inseparably linked to gemstone working, is a true master of this trade. His subtle creations that excel both in artistic expressiveness and technical perfection and truly stand out from the ordinary are prized all over the world. The most recent example is his demonstration of the art of engraving in front of international art experts within the framework of an exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts in Berne. "This fills me with pride," he says. He knows that the contacts to the world's leading goldsmiths and jewelers are not handed to you on a silver platter. "You have to work for them, and everybody has to follow their own path and find out what is important to them," Pauly says. The collaboration with Pe Giers is a special challenge for him. "With her ambition, Mrs. Giers has created a new genre, and I am indebted to her for the long years of collaborating successfully in all technical respects. But the motifs designed by Mrs. Giers also demand pretty much everything from me as an engraver, with every new piece we create."

The 75-year-old, whose career now spans almost six decades, reports that after he finished his apprenticeship, he attended night classes specializing in portraying faces. For Petra Giers, this explains the inimitable plasticity of his cameos. "You have to experience how a piece of agate takes shape under his hands and how he creates a face with the help of drills and mills." "The stone starts to speak," Pauly calls it. "It's like staging a play," is how he describes the process of creating a cameo. On a minimum of space these miniature works of art tell their story.

### CREATING MASTERPIECES

Erwin Pauly passed on his love for and attention to details as well as his striving for perfection to his three sons (all gemstone engravers) and his apprentices. Journeywoman Eva Röhrig, for example, won the first prize in a national competition and is currently preparing for her master's exam. Even if the master's certificate is no longer a prerequisite for working self-employed in his trade, Pauly is not worried. "A master is who creates masterpieces." The option of getting one's mastery certified is still open to anybody."

If one would combine all the activities of this master gemstone engraver, who is still working, they would surely amount to 100 years. Throughout his life this grand seigneur of his trade has untiringly spoken out for his profession and supported quality craftsmanship as opposed to mass-produced pieces made by machines. For decades, Pauly has held honorary positions such as chairman of the Koblenz chamber of crafts' examination board for all gemstone-related professions in the Birkenfeld region. In addition he works as an authorized expert and appraiser for Artexperts Berne, a company active in the field of the fine and applied arts. He is also a member of the Koblenz chamber of crafts' plenum and spokesman of the German Gemstone Museum's board of trustees. "Volunteer work is an affair of the heart," he says. "Not resting on one's achievements but instead always looking for new challenges" is his life philosophy. Thus he is very far from thinking about retiring. "I am healthy and enjoy my work. My profession is my life." ■■■