

Brooch
(untitled)

Georg Jensen
1912

Brosche mit Anhänger, 1912
Entwurf/Ausführung: Georg Jensen
Material/Technik: Silber; Opal
9.9 × 6.3 cm
Eigentum: Museum für Gestaltung Zürich / ZHdK



Through the purposeful selection of materials, the Danish artist and craftsman Georg Jensen (1866–1935) made the Art Nouveau jewelry pieces he designed into affordable products. This elegant silver brooch set with opals depicts the geometrically ordered arrangement of a flower head.

Inspired by complex stamens such as those of the passion flower, Georg Jensen connected the delicate openwork eight-lobed rosette into a star shape using small bars. He achieved depth through the layering of two offset quatrefoil elements, from the center of which a moving pendulum prominently dangles. The opals ideally reinforce the kinetic effect, with the reflections of the semiprecious stone emerging from the black of the interstices making the piece a feast for the eyes. The son of a knife grinder, Jensen began learning the craft of goldsmithing at the age of fourteen and subsequently studied sculpture at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts until 1892. His ceramic figurines were quite well-received, but in order to earn a living he went to work at the prestigious porcelain firm of Bing & Grøndahl. He tried his hand at founding his own pottery studio, and later worked as a silversmith in

Mogens Ballin's Copenhagen metal workshop. There, as the supervisor for thirty workers, he gained the necessary experience to found his own silversmithing workshop, which he did in 1904. The same year, he attracted a great deal of attention with the exhibition of 110 of his pieces at the Kunstindustrimuseet in Copenhagen. At his stand, a critic wrote, one could purchase "cheap and mass-produced silverware with a perfect artistic expression." In fact, in the early years, Jensen produced his works entirely by hand. He later used a punch press—for example, for the front faces of brooches—in order to meet the great demand. Nevertheless, a great deal of manual work was necessary to complete a finished product. After 1904, production at Jensen's factory was in full swing, and he soon found it necessary to expand, opening branches in Berlin, London, and on New York's Fifth Avenue. Collaborations with artists and designers have proven to be a consistently successful concept to this day. (Sabine Flaschberger)

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