



ABOUT ARJE GRIEGST

Arje Griegst had an inner fantasy life so rich and fantastical that his pieces feel as if they come from some hallucinatory alternate universe. A goldsmith, sculptor and above all an artist, Griegst worked in an extravagant world of unparalleled craftsmanship and materials. His unbridled passion for the baroque, the surreal, antiquity and fairy tale nature produced a breathtaking body of work that spans fine jewellery, tableware, chandeliers and fountains.

Using his own customised cire perdue techniques he was able to sculpt pieces without restraints. He waved his magic wand to make rigid materials come alive, rendering gold almost in its liquid state, freezing choppy waves in time and pouring porcelain like liquid. Spanning the Orient, Nordic and Greek mythology, the depths of the ocean and faraway galaxies, he was trying to unravel the mysteries of an ever-changing universe by capturing things mid-transformation.

To his fellow Danes, he was somewhat of a holy terror, a defector who rejected the stringent lines of modernism to build his own gilded kingdom. Born in 1938 as the son of a Lithuanian goldsmith who had arrived in Denmark at the turn of the century, Griegst took up his father's metier and became an award-winning apprentice at Copenhagen-based jewellers Just Andersen before setting up his own workshop in 1963 and teaching at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem.

At the time of his debut, few things were more anti-establishment than Griegst's intoxicating baroque-punk spirit. Here was a man who was the total opposite of coolly controlled modernism: he cooked feasts from Salvador Dali's cookbook, listened to stormy opera and sculpted pieces that vibrated with sensual energy.

Griegst was completely ahead of his time and yet his experimental spirit was very much of his time. He was driven by the meeting between the material and the spiritual, and the idea of metamorphosis. He saw nature as divine and magical and amplified that feeling. From prestigious solo exhibits and commissions for HM The Queen of Denmark to collaborations with Royal Copenhagen, Georg Jensen and the Bel Fiore bronze foundry in Pietrasanta, Italy, his work evolved naturally between mediums and genres.

Blurring the lines between jewellery and art, Arje Griegst's pieces are crafted using only the most precious metals and exquisite stones chosen for their organic shape, clarity and colour. Today, his legacy lives on in his works – re-issued from original casts and as highly sought-after antiques at auction – and his work can be found in the collections of The Cooper Hewitt Museum and has been exhibited at The Victoria & Albert Museum in London and The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Today, his legacy lives on in his works, re-issued from original casts by his wife Irene Griegst and son Noam Griegst who continue his incredible craftsmanship while preserving the spirit and history of Griegst's contributions to art.

GRIEGST



*Arje Griegst with the Sea tureen in Royal Copenhagens shop at Amagertorv.
Copenhagen, 1976*

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FROM TOP LEFT: 1. Pinocchio, black coral, 20ct gold, raw opal, diamonds, sapphire, oriental pearl, 1993. 2. Cosmos ring, 20ct gold, rough diamond and paraiba pearl, 1991-1995. 3. Sea tureen, soup ladle in gilted silver. App. 10 pieces were made. Royal Copenhagen, 1976. 4. Queen Margrethe II's tiara. 21 and 18ct gold, amber, diamonds, moonstone, pearls, opals and emerald in the shape of a summer meadow with poppies. 1976