



36

[Material Content]

Modern circle ring with adjustable inner band. Inside hallmark reads: "Pauline Rader"

Size: 20.67 mm
Weight: 8.80 dwt
Estimated Melt Value: \$10.05

[Year Found]

Unknown

[Metal Detector Test]

Change in Frequency Caused by Ring: 13.1 kHz

Enhanced Current in Metal Detector from Ring: 6µA

[Intuitive Reader]

Unable to connect.



37

[Material Content]

Purple and blue enamel butterfly ring.

Size: 16.42 mm
Weight: 2.55 dwt
Estimated Melt Value: \$2.67

[Year Found]

2010–2011

[Metal Detector Test]

Change in Frequency Caused by Ring: 4.7 kHz

Enhanced Current in Metal Detector from Ring: 3µA

[Intuitive Reader]

Unable to connect.



38

[Material Content]

Wide band with engraved wings on front and back. Inside stamp reads: "GUESS"

Size: 19.88 mm
Weight: 9.97 dwt
Estimated Melt Value: \$11.38

[Year Found]

2012–2013

[Metal Detector Test]

Change in Frequency Caused by Ring: 14.1 kHz

Enhanced Current in Metal Detector from Ring: 2µA

[Intuitive Reader]

"This person still thinks about this ring. It feels like the man it belonged to is now in his late 40s, early 50s. He has an emotional connection to the ring because it belonged to his brother who is no longer with him. This was something his brother wore often. He didn't wear it for sentimental value but this man that lost it did. The ring was like an heirloom. I'm not sure how his brother passed but the relationship between them was rocky. His death was surprising and sudden. The man that lost this ring started wearing it to represent his connection to his brother who passed on. It was kind of a way of saying, 'I know we've been through a lot.'"

Rose Salane's *60 Detected Rings*

A beloved novelist, whose book *Transcription* is out in April, singles out one artwork that impacted him.

by Ben Lerner

60 Detected Rings
(1991–2021) (Person
36–40), detail, 2021.

I thought of Rose Salane's *60 Detected*

Rings (1991–2021) when asked to inaugurate a column called Revelations because the word is so close to “revaluations,” and what the art I love reveals to me is how our measures of value might be challenged and transformed. Salane bought the rings in *60 Detected Rings* at an estate sale; they'd been collected by a woman named Jill Benedict, who, using a metal detector, had gleaned them from the beaches of Atlantic City over a period of 30 years. Salane had the rings evaluated by a lab that recorded the electromagnetic frequency of the metal (when detected) and the ring's “melt value”; she also had psychics interpret – reveal – what they could about the rings' previous owners. Salane then mounted the rings in cases and captioned them with these scientific and economic and psychometric classifications. I first saw the resulting artwork at the New Museum

triennial in 2021, but I think of it often.

What value did these rings once hold for those who wore them? The pathos of the “melt value” is that the metals of these objects are decidedly not precious. The spiritualists' speculations about the histories of the rings' wearers are ways of imagining sentimental value in conflict with the meager price the materials would fetch. What value did the rings hold for Benedict? What did Salane pay for them? What did she pay to have the archive assayed by the lab, by the spiritual workers? And how much does it cost to collect *60 Detected Rings*, what is the “value added” when these materials become Salane's work of art?

A metal detector senses disturbances in the electromagnetic field caused by an object; as I looked at the rings I also detected small disturbances, fluctuations in value that seemed to make these rings vibrate with possibility.

The newly auratic rings felt haunted – by those who wore them, by Benedict. Salane makes the rings – which might have been dismissed as litter – appear like small archaeological finds or religious relics. I think of Robert Smithson's *Monuments of the Passaic*, his reading of industrial sites as “ruins in reverse” and “memory-traces of an abandoned set of futures”; Salane offers a more intimate version of this artistic anthropology. There is also a postapocalyptic feel here, as though Atlantic City had been washed away; “apocalypse” of course means “revelation.”

All these oscillations between new and old, trash and treasure generate a little wave of possibility. Salane achieves something I aspire to in writing: a reframing, a recontextualization, that reminds us that our world might be weighed differently. Great works of art melt value so that it can be reformed. ●