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Art & Architecture

Carlos Museum's "When Gold Blossoms" explores artistry, meaning of Indian jewelry

by Catherine Fox | May 11, 2010

Adolph Loos, the Viennese architect and polemicist, famously assailed ornament as a crime, but, globally and historically speaking, he and his fellow modernists are in the minority. The will to decorate is a universal trait, and it reaches its apogee in India.

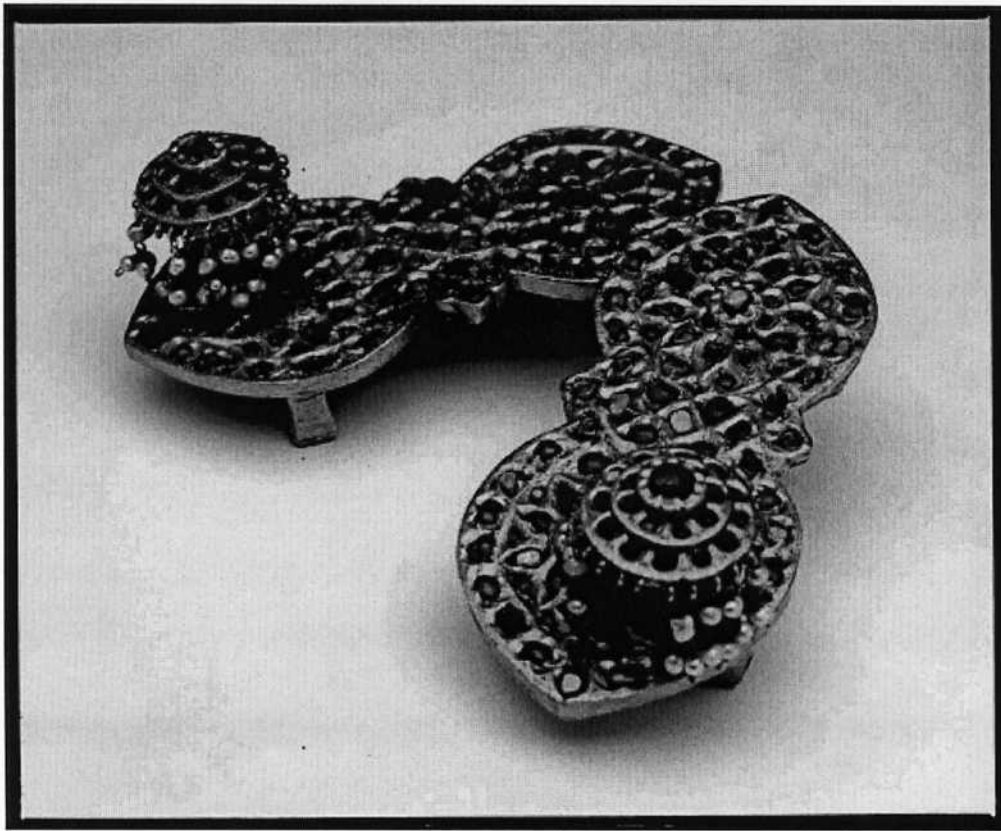
As I wrote in *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, "The whole subcontinent is bedecked to the nines, with patterns and vivid colors, profusions of flowers and lots of gold. You see it not only in ornate temple decorations but also in pageantry of everyday life, particularly the dress of Indian women and their abundant jewelry, worn head to toe.



The nose ring is said to aid fertility and childbirth. Some, however, feel that it symbolizes the treatment of women as chattel.

“As you will discover visiting ‘When Gold Blossoms,’ an exhibition of exquisite Indian jewelry at the Michael C. Carlos Museum, this will to decorate — be it buildings or bodies — is not simply an aesthetic preference, a desire to beautify or ostentation. Ornament plays a critical role in the practice of Indian religion, the machinery of social relationships and the expression of identity.”

For more, see the story in the [AJC](#).



Emory professor Joyce Flueckiger says that Hindus believe that one way to love God is to adorn God. These miniature sandals were intended to dress an icon in a family shrine.

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