

## *REVIVAL*

### **Artist Statement:**

Charlotte is a jewelry artist in Portland OR. driven by a matriarchal lineage of jewelry making, she specializes in the fantasy and gothic revival wearables. Utilizing wax casting, precious metals and gem stones in her work. She has a love for whimsy and magic, always incorporating some whisper of magic in the jewelry she creates. Her favorite pieces to create are pendants and charms.

### **Abstract:**

Thank you for being here :)

For my thesis, I have created a collection of silver and bronze jewelry that I have titled "Revival." My goal has been to create a reality separated from the everyday by its revival aesthetic, specifically inspired by earlier Gothic Revivals. The jewelry, precious metals and stones, will be a physical manifestation of my chosen aesthetics and revivals. The jewelry acts as a physical form for escapism and magic – one that is much needed in this current political landscape.

In my research, I utilized Pinterest as an unconventional form of research, but one that is a contemporary digital version of the types of visual research common to previous revivals. In addition, multiple different forms of fantasy media acted as further inspiration. I want my work to invoke a feeling of whimsy and magic – something that I'm always seeking. My jewelry is sacred to me, acting as my protection and comfort. I want this collection to embody those feelings as well.

## Thesis Speech

### **(Slide 1)**

Thank you so much for coming to my Thesis. I appreciate you all for being here.

A little bit about me before we jump into it. I'm a Sculpture Major with a Fashion Minor. And as you can see, I have a focus in jewelry and wearable art.

Just a brief overview of what my thesis will be. I want to recontextualize reality in my aesthetic (taking from the gothic revival) that seems separate from every day. I want to revive my idea of fantasy through my jewelry using other historical revivals as inspiration, revival inception if you will.

Let's jump into how I got into jewelry, and fantasy. As with most things, it started with my mother. I wasn't always into shopping or caring too much about my clothing or appearance. I was a utilitarian child, and would complain to no end when my mom would drag me shopping with her. But one day, I don't even remember why, I decided I loved shopping and clothes and accessories and fashion. And my mom was so excited that it became our fun activity we would do together. Back to school shopping at Nordstrom, vintage shops, my mom's favorite local boutique called SweetLife, flea markets, and antiquing! To me she was always the authority on fashion and jewelry, and I've always looked up to her for what to wear. I still text her my clothes and outfits occasionally asking what she thinks.

Because me and my mom loved to hunt for unique fashion. Curating our closets and jewelry boxes (especially with vintage and antique pieces). I started to gain my own opinions and ideas of style and fashion. I noticed I was being influenced by the media I consumed (thank you dad) and the trends of my classmates. My jewelry tended to lean fantastical and whimsical. Unicorns and dragons, colorful gem stones, rubies, crystals. I was drawn to pieces that looked enchanted. Part of the criteria was if it looked like something a fairy would wear.

**(Slide 2)** It was of course inspired by my mom who would also seek out special pieces, something that has a story or just something that spoke to her. The influence from my mother and the introduction to many fantasy movies from my dad, heavily influenced me as a kid and teenager. It shaped the aesthetics I now draw on for my art practice today.

**(Slide 3)** With all the art I've ever created it's always had a fantasy element. Mythical creatures like dragons, griffans, and unicorns. My high school art teacher would joke with me if I was going to add a dragon to every piece I made, and I did. It's become a part of my identity as an artist. To always seek out dragons, magic and whimsy. To have the ability to create whatever I imagine. Of course I would use that to build myself a world of magic.

**(slide 4)** Through this body of work I wanted to push my love of magic and fantasy in the physical and tangible realm. To use my pieces as a form of wearable escapism. Something that when you wear any of the pieces, that you feel connected to your own magic, and can stand against injustice. My jewelry will have a feeling of protection within this uncertain time *cough cough* this fucked administration and economy. They become a type of charm or amulet for the wearer.

**(Slide 5)** To go along with the idea of amulets and projection I'm going to use the stones' existing meanings attached to them. Like how garnet is a symbol for passion and strength, sapphire is wisdom and loyalty. Amethyst is clarity and peace, Citrine is success and positivity. Spinel is resilience and healing, Aquamarine is tranquility and harmony, and Tourmaline is protection and emotional balance. I will say the meanings of gemstones most likely stem from superstition and marketing. As I got this information Brilliant Earth, a jewelry website, and a rock and crystal meaning book.

**(Slide 6)** My work is made from wax carving that is then casted into silver and bronze (for the look of gold without the price tag). Bronze had its own challenges though.. More on that later.

I used citrine, spinel, amethyst, sapphire, aquamarine, tourmaline, and garnet as the precious stones on my pieces. Silver and bronze were chosen as they were common material for the Gothic period and colored stones became increasingly popular during the Gothic Period (~14th century). Whereas previously colorless stones and cabochons were more frequently used. Which is good for me because I wanted to use color in my pieces.

Here we get into the meat of my thesis.

**(Slide 7)** I initially wanted to create a new fantasy world where my jewelry could exist. Building lore to surround each piece and creating a magic system that the jewelry would embed itself in. But after my proposal I was told that it didn't feel grounded enough, and I had too many ideas and I should find a way to nail down my concept more than just a fantastical world for my collection to exist in. After meeting with my mentor, Laurel, she pointed out how my sketches and general inspiration appeared more Gothic in style rather than the Art Nouveau and Victorian styles I had initially chosen to reference. Upon talking it out more, I realized that current political events and unrest could be influencing my style through pushing me to use fantasy as a form of escapism.

**(Slide 8)** My deeper discussion with my mentor led us to discussing Gothic revivals and how my artistic expression was appearing as a revival of the revival. What does this mean? Think of any re-imagining of Frankenstein or Dracula. Each director has their own take on the original story. Each interpretation of Mary Shelley's Gothic novel Frankenstein (1818), may become more influenced by the contemporary lens of the director and the time of the movie's making. I'll use Robert Eggers' Nosferatu (2024) and Guillermo Del Toro's Frankenstein (2025). Both directors are using old stories and reviving them through their own aesthetic lens. While also creating commentary on our modern world.

Let's talk more about Gothic revival, what am I reviving? What other revivals am I pulling from. When my mentor was asking me where I was getting a majority of my inspiration I sheepishly told her Pinterest. Even though it's an accepted form of ideation or mood board making, it didn't feel professional enough to mention. But Laurel told me that it's actually perfect for what I'm trying to convey and explore. The idea that Pinterest is actually a revival of art books.

As I showed her my Pinterest boards and images I was referencing, she pointed out how it was the Gothic Revival that she initially saw in my proposal. From the images, we were able to track down physical books where a few of the images I pinned came from.

**(Slide 9)** A book of Pugin's work (born 1812–died 1852), architect and father of the gothic revival, he created many intricate building facades and decorations inspired by the original gothic of the late 12th century–16th century. I also found a book of iron work designs, swirling and floral, spiky and curved. Those books became my physical versions of Pinterest and vice versa Pinterest was my digital book of images. It's fun to think about how Pinterest holds the source images I needed but they remained detached from the original context and it became free floating on the internet until I *pinned* them down to find the original source.

**(Slide 10)** Another mini revival I'm using is the unicorn and dragon. As I feel they are the most recognized fantasy creatures. However, I want to change the idea that the dragon is evil and at odds with the unicorn, the unicorn being a representation of purity and verginity, and the dragon typically represented as the devil in christianity in the 15th century. I love dragons and think they're so cool. I want to revive the dragon to be good, because to me dragons are intelligent and wise creatures, I imagine they would be great friends and protectors alongside the unicorns of the world's magic and creatures.

**(Slide 11)** I want to remove the dragon from that imagery, but I also wanted to mention it because it shows how I'm reviving the dragon in my own way. I'm only taking the aesthetics I love and leaving the parts I don't vibe with.

**(Slide 12)** Revivals aren't direct copies and that it's about what you take and what you leave that tells the story or story about the artist (me). What do I like, what are my favored aesthetics, what about the current times resonates with me enough to shape my work. In addition to *Dracula* or *Nosferatu* and *Frankenstein*, there are many more movies and TV shows I can mention that create their own revivals or adaptations of existing stories and folklore. I will mention the ones whose aesthetics I took from and resonate with me the most.

*Nosferatu (2024), based on the 1922 silent film which is based on vampire folklore*  
*Guillermo Del Toro's Frankenstein (2025), revival of Mary shelly's Frankenstein*  
*BBC Merlin (2008-2012), based on a 'mythical' figure that was around during the 12th century and the time of kings and queens*  
*The Last Unicorn Movie (1982) and the book (1968)*  
*Alice in Wonderland (2010) based on 1865 English children's novel by Lewis Carroll*  
*Disney's Sleeping Beauty (1959) and the live action Maleficent (2014) A revival of the story "Sleeping Beauty" by Charles Perrault*

**(Slide 13)** I know Disney can be kinda controversial, but I must give them their flowers when they're due. Reviving the Grimm Brothers fairy tales to the point where most people only see them as Disney stories and movies is marketing genius. And would honestly be cool if people could start seeing my work as something synonymous with fantasy and magic.

All those revivals, where the aesthetic was contemporary for the time it was made, but also carried a reflection of the past, holding a contemporary idea of the past, both the inspiration and the year it was made. The fashion/ costuming works as an example, most of the wardrobes aren't perfectly historically accurate. But that is because each story isn't trying to recall historical fact, but take the aesthetics and tell a new story set back in a time that could've existed. Conceptualizing reality and reformatting tough

topics and controversy in a more palatable way for audiences. The revivals I referenced and mentioned share many similarities to this approach.

To relate myself to the directors of the revivals I mentioned, I also express myself through aesthetics that appeal to me but what I decide to honor vs what I decide to change is inevitably a political commentary on who I am as an artist and the times we currently are in.

This is where the escapism I mentioned earlier comes into play. Escapism is meant to deal with discomfort in one's personal life or political unrest in the world. Using (fantasy or whatever your chosen genre) escapism is a way to control what's uncontrollable.

Gothic horror (Dracula and Frankenstein) is another way to deal with the uncertainty and horror of the everyday. Horror becomes a component of escapism. Monsters being the manifestation of societal issues that become more manageable once turned into a monster to act as the issues actualized.

**(Slide 14)** My jewelry is my version of a film made to grapple with complex realities that we find ourselves in. My pieces are attempting to shape reality in a way that makes sense, or how I want reality to make sense. Similar to the films, they're grappling with real societal issues in a way that is more manageable, making it more palatable to people that are slightly more *intellectual*. And on the thought of *intellectuality*, in one of the books I checked out from the library on Gothic Revival, in the intro it says "Throughout the 19th century Gothic remained popular amongst the "bourgeoisie" and Gothic style appealed to those with *intellectual* or artistic leanings." It's always been for us baby, us artists and *intellectuals*.

Another connection I'm drawing with revival is nostalgia. Which I feel plays a heavy part in my work as well. It's a strong emotion to pull on for audiences (and an emotion that sells, think Disney, who is constantly making live actions or revivals of their classic animations and stories). Revivals are rooted in nostalgia, and romanticism of the past.

And through my own nostalgia, my path to jewelry and this thesis project is rooted in my memories of picking through my mother's jewelry box, watching fantastical movies with my dad, and singing barbie songs with my sister. As well as reading many fantasy books, mainly about dragons - Shout out to Tui T. Sutherland for writing *Wings of Fire*. My appreciation for these periods of time, aesthetics, and fantasy stories, all come from what my family passed down to me, and what I experienced with them.

In the very beginning before I thought about my thesis concept, I was working with ceramics. But I had an itch for jewelry. So I played around with ceramics and landed on porcelain; per a recommendation from the previous ceramic tech, James. He said it would be the best for charms and what I was aiming for because of its bright white finish and lightness of material. I sculpted stars, hearts, and other little shapes and carved out spots for gems in them. I would use epoxy to attach the gems to the carved seats, as there is no way to facet gems into ceramic/ porcelain. I also used luster glazes, made from gold, that gave the porcelain the illusion of being metal and metallic, either white gold which appeared silver, or bright gold which appeared in the classic gold color we all think of. This was really integral to my experimenting and practice. It made me want to work and create jewelry out of metal even more, and is what set me on the idea of using that desire to fuel my thesis work.

#### During My First Semester (Aug-Dec)

I focused time on sketching, material gathering, picking out which metals I wanted to use, gold vs bronze. I was also deciding what gemstones fit the vibe, or what vibe fit my gemstones. I also started on wax carving my pieces.

**(Slide 15)** The gemstone choices were mainly just because I liked them, or they were relatively easy to get a hold of. I was fortunate to have familial financial support for this project. Two of the stones I used I got at a gem auction on sept, 20, 2025! My first auction ever, and I had so much fun. I got the spinel in the Dragon's Eye, and the large citrine! The rest of my gems came from the Columbia Gem House. (More on that later)

**(Slide 16)** Wax is so much fun to work and play with. When I break it I can melt it back and fix it like new. It's pretty strong when it sets and can be drilled into and carved without breaking, given that the wax piece isn't already thin and small. This was probably the easiest time I had with my thesis and the creating process. I only have to worry about the wax, and while I was considering the material the wax would be after... I didn't realize how difficult it would actually be to flush set in bronze and also the smaller pieces I made..

Then during Second Semester (Jan-April)

That's when production and casting started. I chose the outsource casting because I wanted to focus my energy and creative output on design, and finishing. It was also less stressful for me to have it professionally casted so I didn't have to worry about learning a new process and potentially messing up the one-of-a-kind pieces I carved out of wax. Mistakes breed growth and knowledge, and I know it would've been valuable for me to learn the process.

**(Slide 17)** HOWEVER, I did take a short 2 day class on wax ring casting hosted by CMAG, the creative metal and arts guild, and got a taste of the process on a smaller scale. Since I saw how it was done, that also helped inform my decision to send it off to get casted professionally. The casting place, Carrera Casting Corp. came as a recommendation from my friend Hannah. She also wanted to find a place to cast her own work and she had previous experience and knowledge of what good pricing is. There are places in Portland that cast, but the turnaround time was longer, or there was a waitlist, or someone Hannah knew in the industry didn't have great things to say about their services... So ultimately Carrera casting was the winner.

Tangent how I met my friend Hannah who's been helping me at each step in the jewelry making process-

I met her at the gathering of the guilds in April 2025. We had mutual friends and I expressed wanting to get into making my own jewelry and she offered to help! She's been coaching me, and teaching me new techniques ever since. She's also been an incredible resource for whenever I run into a gem problem or material problem. She

works at Columbia Gem House, a family run company. They have gem cutters, miners, and are known for responsible gem sourcing. Hannah also has a business account which has allowed me access to spaces, materials, and the casting company, I wouldn't have been able to use otherwise.

Back to talking about the casting process.

**(Slide 18)** I had to ship my wax pieces to Carrera casting in New York. Two day shipping there, two day casting, and two day shipping back. For about a week I had to wait to receive my pieces back. Not bad at all! But then one week turned into two.. And the tracking number was no longer tracking... All my pieces were lost in the mail. I panicked, obviously. But Hannah helped me file a claim and we contacted fedex customer support and 3 days later they arrived! Thank God.

**(Slide 19)** I then got to filing and sanding off the leftover spews that were still attached to my pieces. Spews are small wax pieces connected to the main part of the jewelry during the wax stage. They act as channels for the metal to flow through evenly and turn into the finished casted object.

**(Slide 20)** Hannah let me borrow her tumbler and all my pieces came out sparkling and shiny silver and bronze. Then it was time to set the gems. I picked two types of settings, prong and flush setting. Realistically I should've done prong for all my settings, it's a little more beginner friendly, but I wasn't thinking it would be as difficult as it turned out to be, and I was attached to the aesthetics of flush settings. The silver thankfully wasn't too hard with some direction from Hannah. But the bronze, oh boy I had a time.. Firstly it's wayyy harder than silver, and I had to put in twice as much work to file everything down and grind out the seats for the gems. I also have two bronze flush settings, one a star, and one in the hilt of the sword. My first attempt at flush setting the amethyst I had resulted in failure. See, flush setting a stone means grinding away at the seat until it sits perfectly flush in the seat. you can hammer the material around the gem and it condenses the material around the gem. So when I was attempting to hammer the bronze lip I created for the amethyst, I was hammering harder than I would the silver

(because bronze is harder than silver, and also amethyst is a *soft* stone) and I smashed the amethyst! I was honestly devastated and didn't know what I was going to do. But I shifted to the prong settings as I knew I would have an easier time. So I fitted the seat for the amethyst in the big star, and was bending down the prongs over it one by one. And on the last prong... I must've used too much pressure and I cracked the gem in its setting. And just when I was finished too. So I had to heat up the bronze, bend the prongs back up and remove the crushed amethyst. After I annealed the star I texted Hannah with what to do. THANKFULLY Hannah to the rescue. Since she works at a gem house she was able to help me replace my amethyst in my sword and also replace the star. She advised I should pick a harder gem than amethyst, so we landed on a gorgeous green sapphire for the big star. She took the sword and star into her work where they have a special and precise tool to be able to set difficult work. It's similar to the tool I was using to set the stones but it's automated for more precise work. So now the sword and star are collaborative pieces. And I'm super thankful that I had her to help me.

**(Slide 21)** Another mishap happened with the Charm Ring. I first tried to solder the little charm onto the ring. And when I did that I held the flame on the little charm too long and the solder flowed into the seat I had for the gem. Meaning I had to completely re-shape and grind away the extra material. And when I did that I lost too much and the gem no longer fit perfectly inside the seat. So, that little charm's gem is super glued inside... BUT after my thesis I will be remaking her better and stronger, just for now she's a little rough.

And with all the hiccups I am more knowledgeable from it! And will not be making the same mistakes on my future projects. (very fortunate I could also afford the mistakes I made, and had the time and resources to fix them!)

**(Slide 22)** For my display, it took a lot of back and forth to land on the display you all see today. I initially thought I would need a solid wood table. Or some intricate custom

display. But honestly, simple was the way to go. I sourced purple velvet jewelry display dishes that I used to hold my pieces. I picked the layout of my display table to have elements that elude my inspirations. Velvet, silk/ satin, and images from my pinterest board.

*\*\* (flip through final slides)*

My intended audience —I want my audience to be able to recognize my collection as magical or whimsical. They don't necessarily have to know it's a revival, but they could gather it from the fantasy elements in my designs and the understanding that I have taken euro fantasy aesthetics and turned it into my own thing.

The title of my collection is "*Revival*"

As an ender,

My work can exist on Pinterest, becoming a part of the digital art book that first inspired me. Hopefully living infinitely on the internet and inspiring someone else. It is my hope that my work lives on to inspire more whimsy and personal revivals. Seeking inspiration from old and new sources. Allowing a culmination of sources to shape your aesthetics and thoughts. I want the takeaway to be to allow more whimsy into your life. It does NOT have to be expensive jewelry (though it certainly can) just look for the magic in the everyday, or create and foster it yourself. This whole idea of personal magic is very important to me, and I feel the ideas are transferable—appropriate to the crazy world we live in. Having a little magic to ground you.

(Only if asked)

I know yall are curious to know the costs so here it is!

This is the if you want to buy + Cost Break down and Final price:

I'm charging myself 40/hr. Which is double what I make at my retail job, but also \$10 less than what my more experienced friend Hannah charges.

The **Dragon Eye - \$440** spinel was \$100, \$40 for aquamarine, around \$20 for the silver, chain \$45, material cost \$205, My time was 4hr \$160, Hannah's was 1.5 \$75, Total \$440

The **Dragon head - \$570** garnet \$40, tourmaline \$4, silver -\$10, chain- \$110, material cost \$164, 10 hours is \$400, Total: \$564, rounding up to \$570

The **Dragon - \$220** silver - silver \$6, Chain \$49, material costs \$55, 4 hours is \$160, Total: \$215, rounding up to \$220

The **Unicorn - \$180** silver - silver \$4, chain \$50, material cost \$54, 3 hours is \$120, Total: \$174, rounding up to \$180

The **Iron work garnet - \$300** garnet \$25, silver \$6, chain- \$52, material costs \$58, 6 hours is \$240, Total: \$298, rounding up to \$300

The **Swirling flower - \$220** tourmaline \$8, silver \$10, material \$18 chain NFS borrowed from my mothers collection, 5 hours is \$200, Total just for the charm: \$218, rounding up to \$220

The **Heart Ring - \$270** \$6, garnet \$20, material costs \$26, 6 hours is \$240, Total: \$266, rounding up to \$270

The **Large Citrine - \$290** citrine \$80, silver \$6, material \$86, chain NFS borrowed from my mothers collection, 5 hours is \$200, Total: \$286, rounding up to \$290

The **Sword - \$600** bronze \$5, silver \$6, amethyst \$40, Sapphire \$30, material cost \$81, chain NFS borrowed from my mothers collection, 8 hours is \$320, + 3 hours of Hannah's time is \$150, and 3 hours of my time is \$120 Total: \$590, and I'm going to round up to \$600 because the sword is such a special piece to me

The **Charm Ring - \$240** Aquamarine \$15, silver \$10, rhodalite garnet \$20, material costs \$45, my time is about 3 hours \$120, and Hannah's was 1.5 hours \$75 equaling \$195, Total \$240

The **Drop Charm - \$190** garnet \$56, tourmaline \$4, silver \$10, material costs \$70, my time was 3 hr \$120, Total \$190

**Little Star - \$190** rhodalite garnet \$20, bronze \$4, material cost \$24, my time was 4hr \$160, Total \$184, I'm gonna round up to 190 because I like even numbers for all my pieces.

**Big Star - \$590** sapphire \$400, bronze \$5, materials \$405, time spent 2hr \$100 Hannah and 2hr \$80 for me. Total \$585, I'm going to round up to \$590 to continue the trend of ending in zeros for each total cost.

(this number is for me, not the audience unless asked—Total for the whole collection is: \$4,300, only including materials and excluding display and tools, my thesis project cost: **\$1,291.27**)

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Pinterest <https://www.pinterest.com/homefeed/>

*Nosferatu (2024)*

*Guillermo Del Toro's Frankenstein (2025)*

*BBC Merlin (2008-2012)*

*The Last Unicorn Movie (1982)*

*Alice in Wonderland (2010)*

*Disney's Sleeping Beauty (1959)*

*Maleficent (2014)*