



Bio:

Scott David Plumlee has been inspiring a new generation of chain jewelers over the past decade, leading 100+ workshops nationwide. Scott has recently published his first book *Handcrafting Chain & Bead Jewelry* to much acclaim and will be teaching from the rough draft of his second book. A world traveler and jack-of-all-trades, Plumlee has studied ancient craft designs while trekking throughout 32 countries on four continents.

We'll set up Q & A style interview with the following questions:

1. What would you say to the beader/jewelry designer who hasn't tried chainmaille yet?

A metal jump ring is really not that different than a glass seed bead or a semi-precious gemstone bead. It is merely the singular building block unit that is then assembled into a linear pattern like a bracelet or built into a planier sheet like chainmaille. Jumprings differ from beads in the sense that metal jumprings can be made in any size, shape, and wire cross-section imaginable, quite easily in your home studio; allowing unimaginable possibilities that stretch far beyond what anything mass-fabricated could achieve. Okay, this is the part your just going to kick me for – I assemble the majority of my beaded chain jewelry while sitting in my lazy-boy recliner, watching my DVD collection of the Simpson's – that's right, me and Homer making the bling, bling!

2. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

Gosh, apart from flying around the country, being treated like family wherever I go, and having the remarkable opportunity to inspire people with my god-given talents. I guess the best part is the slow progress of an individual student, watching that light bulb of 'aha – I got it' flicker on. These things bring me happiness and that's enough for me.

From an educators point of view, I have had the opportunity to teach elementary, middle school, 6-form college, high school, community college, and university level; it is such a huge relief that I get to teach adults who want to come to class and learn without any 'dunce in the corner' discipline issues.

3. What is it about chain making that makes it your favorite artistic medium?

My first craft passion was clay and I almost finished a BFA in ceramic pottery at the Appalachian Center for Crafts before I realized that almost anything conceivable with clay on a potter's wheel had 'been done'. So when I started playing with silver wire, I noticed that chain making designs had a lot of room for improvement; evolving at a standstill since the Japanese & European Renaissance chainmaille design periods.

When I dropped out of my BFA to travel around the world, chain making became my mobile craft outlet; the ability to sit on the beach with a few hand tools and craft stunning jewelry still makes me giggle inside. Although I do have a short attention span, over the past 13 years, I never been bored by chain making! This mobile craft has never ceases to amaze me with the possibilities of pattern; I am continually and renewably entertained, delighted and spellbound! Also, you can throw your chain against the wall and it wont break – try that with your ceramic teapot – ha.

beSo when I started making chain in 1994, no one was doing it, now its getting more and more popular and I'm more than happy to ride the wave, as every re-juvinated craft has a popularity parabola.

4. Aside from the ancient patterns, how would you describe your style?

It might be easier for me to say what my work is not - I see a lot of jewelry that may photograph really well, but would be just torturous to wear; I want my work to be so smooth, silky and physically balanced so that the wearer almost forgets its on. I want people to wear my work because they enjoy how it caresses their skin and the compliments they receive as an extension of their own beauty. I make my jewelry with the altruistic desire that it find a good home and be adorned on many a wrist and neckline.

From a design aspect, I try not to add any 'content' for contents sake into my jewelry. I would admit that my work is an amalgamation of conscious decisions that follows a path of least resistance between aesthetic beauty and wear ability. I set physical parameters for myself as to wire gauges sizes, precious metal wire types, size and quantity of beads and then I let myself go and have fun – play with an earring like it's a 15-foot sculpture. Its easy for me to remove myself, because I'm a guy, what do I know about earrings?

5. Where do you find your inspiration?

Goodness, where don't I find inspiration? Continually amazed at the returned smile from a stranger, the petals of a new and unique flower, the Cheshire-cat smile of a waxing moon - how all things are connected and can be quantified by numbers. Oh no, not the math lingo – yes, my beaded chain designs are physical representations of mathematical formulas that are analyzed through the lens of pattern recognition. Truth be known, the 'mad-scientist' problem-solving aspect of my design trail and error is the most intense and satisfying part of my jewelry-making journey. Then when I get it all figured out, I have to slow down and spend 6-months taking pictures to print a book – just as the ebb and flow of the moon brings new life from the sea to land.

6. Did your 5 years of travel across 35 countries have any affects on your designs & artistic views? Does any particular country standout for you artistically?

Most indubitably YES – I would not be who I am without globetrotting through my early 20's - as I believe we are all dictionaries of our life experiences. Being a history buff, I spent much time and effort to visit countless art museums and archeological site. These mental snapshots comprise a pretty good cross section of worldwide craft mediums, themes, icons, shapes, styles, and techniques. This allows me an objective mental resource to see what has and has not been done, as I am always striving to do "what has not been done".

A handful of powerful places that should be humble visited are: Bushmills, Ireland; Barcelona, Spain; Paris, France; Venice, Italy; Eos, Greece; Giza Pyramids, Egypt. In the Western Hemisphere: Vancouver Island, Canada; Tahoe, CA; Taos, NM; Chitza Nitza, Mexico; Lago Attilan, Guatemala; & Machu Picchu, Peru. Good luck – sdp.

7. What's next for Scott David Plumlee? (new book, bead society appearance, video etc..)

I am currently working on delivering of my 2nd book to Watson-Guptill, looking at a May -09 release. I have also been speaking with Kalmbach to be a contributing editor in writing a monthly column for Art Jewelry Magazine. Recently meet with the production company, PageSage, who wants to do a series of instructional DVD's with me. I currently have 38 workshops in 17 cities scheduled for 2008; accepted to teach 9 classes in 7 days at the Milwaukee B&B show. In early 2009, I will be one of four craft jewelry instructors taking 100 students on a 5-day Carnival Cruise from San Diego to Cabo San Lucas and back. So honestly, my life has been unfolding like a movie script – grin.

When I come back to California in March, I will be in high demand as always. First, I will be teaching three weekend classes at the famous Beadissimo (march 14, 15, 16th), then the following Tuesday (march 18th), I am the guest speaker for the BSNC's (Bead Society of Northern California) March meeting in Emeryville, CA. I will be giving a half-hour address, sometime between 7:30 and 9pm entitled, 'Dodecahedron: The Twelve Facets of a Craft Book Author'. The following evening I will be teaching at the Bouncing Bead in La Mesa just outside San Diego, offering a 2-day 8-hour advanced class on the 19th & 20th. Then, I will then be doing a collaborative class with Sherri Haab on PMC-Byzantine on Saturday, March 22nd. Whew, I'm tired just typing all this - hope I can keep up with my imagination & ambition.

Please feel free to add anything you feel would add to this feature.

Better to be happy than right – Taoist proverb
Change is inevitable – Growth is optional – bumpersticker in WA

Christine, Thank you for this opportunity to share my voice with your student demographics, I sincerely hope that my words do not fall on blind eyes and the student enrollment is fulfilled. PEACE> sdp.