

Ute Decker Honored for Pioneering Ethical Leadership in Jewelry

NEW YORK, NY – July 9, 2025 – Visionary artist jeweler Ute Decker will receive the prestigious **Initiatives in Art and Culture (IAC)'s 2025 Award for Leadership in Responsible Practice in Jewelry**. Lisa Koenigsberg, founder and director of the Initiatives in Art and Culture comments: “Ute Decker is widely recognized for her tireless advocacy of environmental stewardship, fairness in materials sourcing, and the importance of transparency and ethics in the creative process. Decker's work exemplifies a synthesis of aesthetic mastery and ethical resolve, offering a model for what contemporary jewelry can and should stand for.”

Decker will accept the award at the **15th Annual International Gold + Diamond Conference in New York, held in person from July 14-16, 2025**. This year's program addresses the complexity and possibility of jewelry's future, reinforcing IAC's commitment to shaping responsible, inclusive, and visionary industry practices.

Amidst global transformations like geopolitical tensions, climate crises, and shifting consumer values, the conference renews a call for shared purpose: safeguarding the planet, protecting human rights, and preserving artistry and cultural traditions.

Interdisciplinary speakers include Rachel Perks (World Bank), Emefa Cole (V&A), Lucian Simmons (The Met), John Mulligan (World Gold Council, CIBJO), Gaetano Cavalieri (CIBJO), Nicolas Luchsinger (Buccellati), Mark Emanuel (David Webb), and Ivor Agyeman-Duah (Manhyia Palace Museum, Ghana's chief negotiator on cultural restitution).

A Visionary at the Intersection of Art and Ethics

Since her impactful 2009 debut, Ute Decker's 'arrestingly beautiful wearable sculptures' with their originality have established her as an influential voice in contemporary jewelry. **The Financial Times describes her work as 'a powerful statement' that sets 'a shining ethical example,'** earning her rapid acclaim, including her **recent inclusion in Phaidon's 'The Jewellery Book,' edited by Melanie Grant, which features 300 of history's greatest names.**

Her distinctive sculptural forms are exhibited globally and held in prestigious collections, including the **Victoria & Albert Museum**, the **Swiss National Museum**, and a recent special commission for the **Dallas Museum of Art, where her 18kt Fairtrade gold hand sculpture will be featured in “Constellations,” a major exhibition of contemporary jewelry opening in November 2025.**

Beyond aesthetics, Ute Decker's pieces are rooted in profound ethical commitment. She was one of the **first globally to champion and work with Fairtrade Gold**, rigorously tracing materials from mine to finished piece by supporting small-scale and artisanal mining communities. Her dedication extends to using only non-toxic chemicals in her studio and advocating for industry-wide transparency. Decker's extensive research became the foundational content for **EthicalMaking.org, the most comprehensive global resource for responsible jewelry practices.**

Decker's grounding in political economics, journalism, and languages provides the intellectual framework for art that consistently engages with themes of integrity and interconnectedness. Her simple inquiry – **"Where do my materials come from?"** – led to years of research, prompting a V&A invitation for an exhibition proposal where she delved deeper into gold's entire story – tracing its cosmic origins forged in supernova explosions, its darker destructive realities, its path through diverse civilizations, its inherent beauty, and its intricate historical, artistic, and cultural significance.

The IAC Award: A Testament to Enduring Impact

The 8th Responsible Practice in Jewelry Leadership Award will be presented to Ute Decker during a **dedicated Awards Ceremony and Reception on Tuesday, July 15, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.**

"This award is a deep honor," says Ute Decker. "It acknowledges years of quiet, persistent work advocating for more equitable practices in an industry where such voices remain often unwelcome. Yet, it also celebrates the growing momentum, shaped by the insights and courage of countless individuals from a myriad endeavors and historical moments.

My degree in political economics instilled in me a deep interest in context — the unseen connections shaping our visible world. As a winemaker's daughter, I also learned early how careful stewardship of soil, the very weather, and the vintner's skill are all essential for a good vintage. This holistic approach also guides my jewelry making: if my gold, if any material, may carry a hidden stain of Amazon destruction, exploitation, or illicit gain, then for me, outward allure is mere illusion. I want my pieces to have a true beauty from the inside out.

Equitable provenance isn't just a detail; it's a deeply felt philosophy. This award strengthens my resolve to underscore the fundamental principle that authentic artistry, running a business, and our profound human responsibility — and dreams — are not separate paths. Even when we are taken on unexpected directions, fraught with uncertainties and difficult choices. These decisions are inherently linked, each illuminating the other.

I see my works as having a history, a soul, they create meaning and no matter how small – will be playing their part in shaping our future — because everything is interconnected."

Registration for the 15th Annual Gold + Diamond Conference is now open on [Eventbrite](#).

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utedecker.com - artinitiatives.com

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Forthcoming exhibitions & events of Ute Decker

Wartski The Brooch – from 1200 BC to the Contemporary, 1 – 12 Oct | London

Goldsmiths' Fair, week 1, 23 - 28 Sep | London

Constellations: Contemporary Jewelry at the Dallas Museum of Art, 9 Nov – 3 May 2026 | Dallas

The Jewellery Book by Melanie Grant (Phaidon), out Sep 2025



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1. Ute Decker holding 18Kt Fairtrade gold hand sculpture. Photo Alun Callender
2. Calligraphy hand sculptures by Ute Decker in 18Kt Fairtrade gold. Photo Jamie Trounce.
- 3., Portrait of artist jeweler Ute Decker. Photo Alun Callender.