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# Inspiration *creation*

SHERRY CORDOVA IS A SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA JEWELRY ARTIST

*Sensations from my travels around the world are incorporated into pieces as the main inspiration. My art is inspired from the peaceful, fragile, and varied beauty found during my explorations beneath and around the world's seas.*

## Clearing the Mind for New Ideas

Under the water it's so quiet that breathing into a SCUBA regulator seems loud. The loud sound of my breathing makes me focus on my breath, something I have a hard time doing in a yoga class back in the "real" world. My mind wanders far more slowly under water because I'm so content being there that I stay in the present moment. Each moment.

I wonder why there are soooo many tiny trunk fish at this part of the country. I watch them swim in front of my mask and

marvel at their helicopter style swimming techniques. I enjoy the way the sunlight comes down through the 50+ feet of water as a backlight for the coral and the fish.

I see so many new combinations of coral forms that I'm constantly confusing other divers with the underwater photos I take. I wish I could tell them "No—it's not a creature, it's an interesting coral formation" so they'll move on and continue their own explorations.



## NEW EYES

See that brown thing in the picture to the left? That's the stem that falls off of a bird of paradise plant. How many times have I looked at those? My molding compound was ready for it this time. A long walk on a sea glass strewn beach had me pumped. Imagine all the new pieces I can create with all that glass. I can make a whole necklace of pieces from the same beach—in the same color of glass! Those pieces of coral are 'designs' I have seen before. This time I decided to mold portions of the designs so that I focus on linearity and circular shapes.



# The Almost Hidden Message

*The designs themselves are often statements on what society values higher than the environment. Read more and see more pictures at [sherrycordovajewelry.blogspot.com](http://sherrycordovajewelry.blogspot.com)*

The creation of metal art, and jewelry in particular, can involve the use of metals whose mining damages the environment. Metal clay is very 'green' since the metal clays are made from by-products of other manufacturing and reclamation processes. Using recycled materials is one way to help the environment.

Coral itself is often a material used by designers, and its use is at the direct short term and long term expense of the environment.

As an avid SCUBA diver, on many occasions I have witnessed first hand how the removal of coral and shells from live reefs and 'dead' beaches can harm our fragile marine ecosystems.

I love the sea and understand the desire to have mementos and jewelry that evokes vivid memories of beautiful scenes and experiences.

My solution is to travel with molding compound. Relaxing on exotic beaches, I mold the washed-up coral and shells I find around me. I return the coral and shells in the condition I found them, and only take my molds and memories with me when I leave.

My *Modern Cameo* line of necklaces asks the question highlighted on this page.

**"What's more precious? The profile of someone we don't know in a traditional cameo, or our environment?"**

If my work prompts you to ask yourself "Why would I prefer 'real' coral?" or "What damage is being done when coral is taken from

the ocean?" then you've heard the almost hidden message in my work.

## THE NEW DESIGNS

I return home from a trip anxious to turn the impressions into jewelry to wear and share. Each piece of finished jewelry elicits an acute remembrance of a trip.

Looking at the picture of some of the new earrings I created with molds from this last trip, you can see one new direction. Two sided molds of coral and limpet shells allow me to create 3D pieces that closely mimic the originals.

The coral shaped earrings at the left side of the second row were left with the metal clay unburnished so that the pieces would be white—just like the coral



## SCUBA DIVING: Ocean Air and Interesting People



I started diving more often to be able to have some quiet time in the 'real' world of nature, away from manufactured cubicles and technological tethers. Places I dive rarely have phones in the room, or a reliable message system at the front desk of the resort or hotel, or on the dive boats. Perfect!!!!

The people I now vacation with are friends I met while SCUBA diving. My vacation friends rarely ask me about what most people refer to as the "real world." They love to travel and are up for adventures like zip lining in the mountains of the Honduras. And, they are truly happy for me when they hear that I just snorkeled with

a whale shark in the waters off the Yucatan Peninsula.



**Look how beautiful that coral is when left in the ocean!**

