This Moment, The Only & This Place. 2020, Mona Wallström.
Materials: Mixed media. Photo: Mona Wallström.

VOLUME 4 - JOURNAL OF JEWELLERY RESEARCH

Contents:

Editorial: Volume 4 Journal of Jewellery Research

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The 4th Volume of the Journal of Jewellery Research has been developed during the global pandemic that we are all still experiencing and there has been a moment of taking stock for many of the authors featured here where the roles, nature and value of contemporary and other classifications of jewellery have been reflected upon in relation to our lived experience of the world. Equally in the development of this volume we have been mindful to give authors more time to respond to reviewer comments and develop their papers as we've all learned to manage life this last year and the different paces and challenges it has placed on us.

This new volume draws together the latest reflections in the study of jewellery culture and design and offers a critical view of different uptakes and interpretations of the meaning of jewellery's role in our lives. Jewellery is part of our social and intimate life but also its role is increasingly becoming related to enhancing our wellbeing, and of course it is a generator of knowledge.

The last edition introduced a new feature: Exhibition Review. This year we are pleased to present a new addition to the wider discourse of exhibiting jewellery proposed by Eliana Negroni. Her review is a particular reflection of the significance of Italian jewellery curatorial work spanning ten years with Gioielli in Fermento (GiF) in the area of Val Tidone, in the Emilia-Romagna county in Italy. This review of a long journey into curating contemporary jewellery exhibitions in Italy is welcome, and it acknowledges the noteworthy contribution to the dissemination of this narrow but important field of research.

It also opens up an international recognition of the longstanding contribution of the Italian curatorial work systematically protracted by mainly female curators in Veneto and then subsequently followed by other curators in other counties of Italy such as the significant contribution by Maria Cristina Bergesio in Tuscany. Everything is framed by a very strong and complex social cultural context, where contemporary jewellery is obscured by the predominant presence of Italian Fashion Design. Looking across the various editions of the exhibitions reviewed by Eliana Negroni, her tenacity in promoting this field evokes appreciation for her determination and strong character, which hopefully will inspire younger generations. Looking at the whole Gioielli in Fermento (GiF) project, it is notable to highlight the international resonance of the event and the constant involvement with international schools. The annual GiF has consistently gained reputation and the number of participants is testimony of this fact, to the extent that in 10 years around 800 pieces of jewellery have been exhibited.

A unique perspective is offered by Susanne Bennewitz with her paper on the movie Casablanca by Warner Brothers (1942) focusing on the historical and the audio-visual work within the film to introduce an aesthetic taxonomy that considers the interplay between jewellery, material culture and costumes. She provides a new view that goes beyond the conservative and white-male notion embedded in the film. Instead, she offers a new reading key through jewellery, textiles and decorations, specifically looking at jewellery and when it becomes an important agent in the visual language of the movie.

Bennewitz continues with a multifaceted approach of the movie including an aesthetic argument in the context of the contemporary language of form linked with the ‘signature’ of the New Bauhaus and related schools of American Modernism. She also brings into the discussion the Viennese Adolf Loos, and his views in relation to ‘ornament and crime’. The same author is also debated in the paper by Chiara Scarpitti.

Scarpitti’s paper proposes a critical discussion on the on-going debate about ornament and its role in contemporary jewellery. The paper extends the critical debate of this aspect by introducing concepts and theories by Italian architects, designers such as Alessandro Mendini, Andrea Branzi, but also theories by the philosopher Mario Perniola. The discussion moves from general considerations on how we perceive and engage with jewellery from the wearer to the viewer perspective to a much more stimulating exploration that opens up an intriguing consideration on surface and depth, when visualising a piece of jewellery. For instance, the appearance of the physicality of the artefact is deconstructed and its surface is here the centre of attention. The surface stands for the external skin of the jewel, and it becomes the starting point to explain the deep relationship between the wearer, the viewer and the jewellery when it is worn. Scarpitti substitutes the word surface with ‘membrane’ and creates a metaphor whereby the inanimate surface of the jewel acts as a ‘relational membrane’ between the individual and the external world. Furthermore, Scarpitti explores this explanation with the assistance of Perniola’s philosophical perspective asserting the coexistence of depth and surface, concluding that what is visible on the surface of a piece of jewellery is at the same time intimate and internal. It is an interesting paper that expands our critical literature to some Italian authors who are not translated in English. Therefore, it enriches the ongoing debate with new interpretations.

Sarah O’Hana and Stephen Bottomley open up the nuanced tensions and opportunities within an undergraduate project that bridges the disciplines of jewellery and textiles. Their paper draws together historic textile innovation with experimental contemporary digital manufacture in metals in the Tech-tile project that had been led by Bottomley and O’Hana and how this framed an undergraduate project engagement with a Mallorcan textile manufacturer who specialise in Ikat. The innovative spirit within the historical development of Ikat fabrics and the Tech-tile project is felt across the relative time periods and ways of working with materials and processes and highlights some interesting ways in which contemporary jewellers have consistently been influenced by textile techniques and materialities. O’Hana then details the ways in which a large cohort of students engaged with the brief, drawing on opportunities and challenges in perceiving different cultural contexts and opening up the various ways in which the students developed work. It is an interesting invitation for more writers to bring their teaching experiences and undergraduate work to research description and to share the thinking, experimentation and design ideation within research contexts.

Another educator and goldsmith Rebecca Steiner draws our attention to how an emphasis on products within craft fields as a criterion for success is a flawed,

unsustainable measure in our current and future world. She champions the value of craft skills and how an embodiment of these as a way of being may give us clues to a better way forward. She argues how "(…)patience; material expertise; communication of concepts; dexterity; mastery leading to increased willpower to tackle future challenges, and increased confidence" are some of the things gained from developing a craft skill and emphasises the importance of a craft education to inspire autonomy and give a sense of agency in the world. By walking us through different examples of alternate forms of using craft skills to generate an income she argues for more sustainable modes of career and thinking about the special, rather than the abundance in what is created as an output. Steiner's paper draws our attention to something fundamental and a reassessment of what the 'product' of craft skill can be – i.e. how it can be the knowledge shared to others and the wellbeing nurtured through action rather than the object or abundance of objects made.

Eva van Kempen similarly draws our attention to the urgent need to revive the craft of Dutch filigree before it is lost and how this may become a route to wellbeing for people who could join her in taking up the mantle of Filigree Ambassador. van Kempen's paper charts the origins of the craft and relationship with Chinese filigree, the intricacies of the technique and its history. She documents her interview with the last living Dutch Filigree Master and gives a detailed overview of the craft in the Netherlands and China. The constraints of the pandemic led her to use digital platforms to raise awareness of the dying craft and make a call to arms for others to join her in igniting its preservation. She emphasises the meditative aspects of the craft and how the pandemic has caused many of us to pause and to contemplate ways to create a slower pace for ourselves in our lives as well as contribute to joint efforts of good together.

Mona Wallström brings us a design fiction as methodology paper exploring nkisi from Congo-Brazzaville and Congo-Kinshasa – investigating them as 'charged objects' through the creation of letters sent to imagined people representing key actors in the lives of the objects and their eventual home in the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm, Sweden. Her design fiction strategy has enabled her to open up the space for questioning, imagining and reflecting on the different forms and bodies of wisdom and knowledge that have existed around these objects across their lives. It has given her the means to inhabit different people's perspectives and imagined experiences and to bring her own into this conversation. It has also enabled her to ask a multitude of questions, without the need for these to be answered – valuing the space to ask these things in an open forum and reflect on their implications. Wallström's paper invokes the multiple voices that exist in and around the nkisi and the paper is in itself a testament to the voicedness and dialogicality of things and people. It is exciting to see how Wallström has used the journal paper as an opportunity to instigate conversations with people from history and from disperate cultures, but to then use it as an open letter to our contemporary culture and jewellery field – to all of us reading this. In this strange, last year, when we've all been attempting to find new ways to retain a connection with each other and the things that matter to us it feels particularly meaningful to be able to publish a paper that breaks the construct of a complete or fully encapsulated paper to reach out as a form of conversation to us all.

Getting rid of bling and dangling jewellery. The movie Casablanca and its aesthetic stronghold against the orient

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ABSTRACT

The popular movie *Casablanca* by Warner Brothers (1942) has become subject to multiple and erudite publications in a wide range of fields from psychoanalytical to postmodern or political studies. It is well known for its impact on the moral at the American home front during the Second World War. The Hollywood classic has also become a standard reference to illustrate the migration of European artists, writers, and actors to the US in the 1930s and 1940s, thus contributing to a new factual authority of the imaginary. This paper reconsiders the Hollywood romance from a different perspective. My focus is historical and examines the audio-visual work as part of a popular narrative of design history. The aim is to show an aesthetic plot and argument in the Californian movie based on its taxonomy for design, material culture, costumes, and jewellery. My argument shall provide evidence for the motion picture as an early milestone of building a transatlantic alliance of Bauhaus Modernism and Streamlining, set against the threatening background of Maghreb ornaments and female illusiveness. The refugee drama establishes an aesthetic outpost of American Modernism of Californian Style in the 'black markets' of Northern Africa, thus contrasting the image of 'Eastern' ostentatious luxury against Western minimalism. Secondly, clothing and jewellery is gendered feminine, illusive, and materialistic as far as they are not coherent with the utilitarian principles of the American home front society.

The movie is a striking example of the Western exclusiveness in the aesthetic and moral argument of Modernism which became part of art history. Deconstructing the argument of design in the narrative calls attention to the roots of orientalism in Design history as well as the eurocentrism in the art literature on Jewellery.

INTRODUCTION

The black-and-white melodrama tells the usual love-story where three people are one too many. A love affair between to strangers in Paris is abruptly ended by the armed conflict of the Second World War. Yet, the Nordic Ilsa (Ingrid Bergman) and the American Rick (Humphrey Bogart) meet again in the French protectorate of Northern Africa: He is the lone wolf and expatriate, running a high society club in Casablanca; she arrives as the wife of a famous resistance fighter on their flight from fascism. A turbulent development of intrigues, martial law, and political conflict unfold around the nostalgia and revival of true love. With the surprise of the last scenes the American Rick emerges as the natural warrior, fighting the way out for Ilsa and her husband Laszlo and bidding farewell in renunciation. He gives the impression of an outlaw hero, yet in the impeccable dress of the evening wear scenes. In contrast to the stable male lead, we witness with Ilsa the miraculous conversion of a lady of leisure into a serving wife fit for her entry into the American home-front society by getting rid of jewels and fringes. With my following close reading, I am probing our cultural knowledge nurtured by *Casablanca*, the movie that pulled the masses to the box offices early in the year 1943 and ever thereafter. First and foremost produced for the US market, the movie became iconic in American culture. It also became a classic of film culture within European standards, although the reception and interpretation differed widely across national cultures and politics. Meanwhile the European and the American receptions have to a great extent

converged, making the film ‘cult’ (Eco 1975), maybe ‘fetish’ (Harris 1992), but definitely a pillar in the canon of film history. It has even become part of postcolonial Moroccan culture, but the picture has no origin in Moroccan or Muslim history, nor in the colonial and wartime history of the residents or refugees of the different ethnic and political communities.

My following argument shall provide some evidence that the cultural bond of style fostered a political message which was and still is different from the usual canonisation of the movie as ‘antifascist agitation’. While the conservative and white-male notion has been discussed by recent studies in literary criticism and popular culture, the synopsis based on jewels, textiles and decorations has been left out so far. I see the motion picture as an early milestone of building a transatlantic alliance of Bauhaus Modernism and Streamlining, set against the threatening background of ornament, female luxury, and oriental consumption. These three being the standard etymologies for adornment jewellery in Western social theory since the 1880s. I invite to critically reflect the stylistic argument of Modernism celebrating a victory over the Orient.

Ethical superiority in schools of Western Modernism is a hotly debated topic in the wake of postcolonial readings. The critical reassessment has recently profited from several exhibitions and publications leading up to the centennial of the Bauhaus brand (i.a. Oswalt, 2019). The postcolonial studies have one starting point in the publication *Orientalism* by Edward Saïd in 1978, which placed the Western – Eastern paradigm at the core of the new critical analysis of literary representations of the other. Earlier on, Frantz Fanon developed a new language to describe power relations of racism especially for the colonial and postcolonial situation in the Maghreb, for example by his book *peau noire, masques blancs* (1952). Today the reflection on the simplistic binary and on the construction of identity by othering is basic to cultural studies, gender studies, the field of art, and design theory, leading to new visions as *Designs for the pluriverse* (Escobar 2018). But the far-reaching consequences for the academic tradition of art and design history are still under discussion and not easy to cope with. How do we unravel longstanding premises, how can we reference without referring to a Western standard, and who is to design the terminology for the confrontations and entanglements in global history (Adamson 2011, Böhme 2014, Huppatz 2015, Kravagna 2017, Barnard 2020).

For example, fashion theory seriously taking up the call to decolonize its own academic tradition must give up ‘the fashion’ in the sense of a temporal socially defined phenomenon, whereas a new starting point from ‘the act of fashioning the body’ may serve to leave the colonial taxonomy behind. (Gaugele 2019, Jansen 2020). The systematic dilemma in jewellery studies is similar for that matter. Already Roland Barthes noticed in his essay *From Gemstones to Jewellery* (1961) that the terminology of ‘modern jewellery’ from 1900 meant the absorption into the Western discourse of ‘the fashion’. Sometimes the shortcomings of terminology in our field of study are evident and left for future generations. For example, the encyclopaedic article *Jewellery* in *Grove Art Online* (Lightbown 2008: 1) states clearly its limitation to ‘Western jewellery’. The reader who looks for information on ‘non-Western Jewellery’ is redirected to geographical keywords. In other works of reference, the equation of the concept of jewellery with a specific European tradition in material,

aesthetic, and social history is less obvious. Especially descriptive overviews based on collections are likely to reproduce the threads of Western interest, appreciation, and classification (cf. Stephan 2009: 18). The contemporary author-based concept of artist's and designer jewellery is defined by its distinction from adornment, magic practice, tradition, or anonymous craftsmanship, which prompts a classification of non-Western jewels in general as sheer 'costume' or 'livery jewellery' (Ludwig 2008: 8-9; 231 274) On the other hand, we profit greatly from comparative literary studies (Doniger 2017) as well as Marcia Pointon's cultural history of jewellery to deconstruct well-established tropes in the inner cosmos of the European world (i.a. Pointon 2009). For my study, the work by Simon Bliss on jewellery in the age of European Modernism is of particular importance. It proofs a new performance of wearing jewellery by the 'new woman' in the 1920s (Bliss 2019). This gives the historical background to the fairy tale of European femininity in the Hollywood picture *Casablanca* from the 1940s. Although quite outdated, the narratives of aesthetics maintain their persuasive logic, because it plays at the frontier line to an imagined oriental other. It is the smoothing comfort of identity by style, 'Western' as well as 'viril', that made this movie extremely popular.

QUESTIONS OF STYLE: THE COSTUMES OF THE KNIGHTS

Before we turn to the visual language of the movie, the film script already aligns some cues. We have French Captain 'Renault', the Levante Signor 'Ferrari', the German Major 'Strasser' and other personnel waiting in line with the American Rick 'Blaine'. All these names trigger imaginations of lifestyle design. The brands of European cars still echo a clear reference. The association of 'Strass' as cheap and fake adornment is in place for the hate figure of the German Nazi Strasser. While the last name 'Blaine' for our hero resonates with 'plain' and neutral. In combination with 'Richard', as Ilsa calls the hero, this name recalls Richard Neutra, the most famous architect in California of the 1940s. His last name was not fictional but quite telling of his realised vision of Functionalism. It equals the matter-of-fact and reductive principles of the International Style that was inspired by him and fellows from the European Bauhaus. The name László for Ilsa's husband – the lucky US-immigrant in the movie – refers to two stakeholders of the Bauhaus trademark in the US: Firstly László Moholy-Nagy, who had translocated to North America in 1937; secondly to the interior designer Paul László who was at the time even more proverbial in California as king of style: Born in Hungary, educated in Vienna and well known for his studio in Stuttgart, he tried to escape to the States in 1937. When he finally made it to the shores of America, he only had to follow his reputation under the Californian rich and famous to continue his career. When he opened his own studio in Beverly Hills in 1941, he already held commissions by the first row of stars of Hollywood (Tigerman 2011).
The dramatis personae are earmarked as icons of national design, helping the audience to keep track of the axes of good and evil. Presumably, the Germans with their allies are the menace while the resistance fighters are the good guys. Yet, the visual language criss-crosses the historical battle line of politics. For example, the male rivals of the Western world display the same 'artfully glamorous' in their dress. (Since the

owner of the copyright on the visual material of *Casablanca* follows a restrictive policy, I must accommodate us with rough sketches for the purpose of this article.) The hero Rick starts out in an ambiguous white-and-black suit, but Laszlo, the fugitive of a concentration camp, enters the scene in a bright tropical suit (Vonalt 1991). Throughout the movie he shows noble attire, a continuity of white understated suits and a calm posture with just a small scar above his right eyebrow (which needed post-editing in many scenes). He is casted as the righteous 'white knight' to such a degree of symbolism that he loses credibility to his rougher and worldlier competitor Rick. Important are the striking similarities in dress and habit of our two idols with Renault and Strasser, the two representatives of Nazi military power. All of them men of authority, they address each other on equal terms and respect the same conventions of Western society. 'Strasser and Renault both have their dark and light uniforms, one apparently for day wear and one for evening […]. We should note too that even Rick wears a uniform, after a fashion – his white tuxedo jacket with its white folded pocket handkerchief – that marks his authority over the cafe's customers.' (Vonalt 1991: 57). Umberto Eco already declared that the four male leaders form a class in itself. In his short essay deconstructing the movie's inner logic, he states: 'The whole story is a virile affair, a dance of seduction between male heroes' (Eco 1975: 10). He points out that the German military man Strasser displays Caesarean characteristics as well. Or, as Vonalt has phrased it, military men 'are not evil, comic-book villains', definitely not in their light evening dress in the nightclub. 'Rather, in their own way, they are attractive, sophisticated, well mannered, and capable of charm.' (Vonalt 1991: 58) The military men are brought together with the civilian leaders into the same arena of power, all of them observing a common cluster of diplomacy and gentlemen's agreements. Their outfits clearly identify their social rank and bestow their characters with credibility and continuity. The famous trench coat worn by Rick is the epitome of this male compliance of appearance and being. The military attire places the civilian Rick on equal terms with the other knights and leaders. On top, Rick can be identified by his trench coat over time and over continents. He wears the exact same piece of clothing both at the train station in Paris in 1940, where he waited for Ilsa, and at the airport in Casablanca one-and-a-half year later, where he sees her off.

FEMALE DRESSING AND JEWELLERY

Not surprisingly, the female star attracts much more attention because of her outfit. The lead character Ilsa is to a great degree sketched by her visual appearance. The artificial extravagance of her image is striking, probably even discriminating. Eco summarises that Ilsa 'herself does not bear any positive value (except, obviously, Beauty)' (Eco 1975:10). He may be right that the female lead will be remembered as nothing besides an icon of herself, an icon of beauty. Yet if we follow her staging closely, we notice a grammar of femininity and a significant development of her fashion under the influence of Rick.

Ilsa starts out as a constant source of irritation. She changes gears from one scene to the other. Her dresses point in opposite directions, questioning her true character. She enters the picture in divine elegance, coping with all expectations for a society lady in an international hotspot of nightlife (ill. 1). She is dressed

in a seamless white combination with a floor-skimming skirt. The white is less noble than giving way to her sexuality. She shows bare skin under her top; only heavy jewellery distracts our attention from the jacket's V neck, a fairly new style. At first sight, she is a lady of glamour and abundance, a stereotype of beauty by luxurious consumption. Her white skin sparkles with jewels. Later on, I will follow the implications of the flashes sent out by her gemstones, which correspond to her distant emotions. Her next appearance interprets the white as innocence. She returns for a second time on the same night to Rick's café, all by herself. This time she is closed up like a nun, dressed in a coat with long puffed sleeves. She wears a broad belt with three clasps vertically aligned. Her nudity from earlier on is clearly locked away. Her hair is covered with a long white scarf made of tulle. The fabric would serve a bridal veil very well. This woman is still elegant, but she implies the chastity of a maiden.

The next morning Ilsa is seen in a casual and most modern outfit. It is a new interpretation of the sailor dress: A T-shirt with broad horizontal stripes underneath an egg-white dress of slim fit. The top of the dress has a vertical split, exposing the bodice down to the waist, where it is fixed by a small belt (ill. 3). The immaculate, half-opened shell is tempting to peel off: provocative but not irritating. The following evening, we see a paraphrase to this combination worn by another woman. The French lady Yvonne, who fancied Rick and others in the club, wears a flamboyant long dress. It combines the black-and-white horizontals and a revealingly deep V neck in a shiny bodice. Now we get the clearly feminine and sexual potential of Ilsa's street-style look.
Ilsa herself surprises us on the second night at Rick's place with another twist in her wardrobe: she displays colours, a blouse with paisley pattern and ruffles. The cut is decent, and the materials are not pretentious. She

Ill. 2 The couple Victor Laszlo and Ilsa Lund on their first visit to Rick's Café in Casablanca. Drawing of film still from Casablanca. USA, Warner Brothers, 1942/43

Ill. 1 'Everybody sells diamonds. There are diamonds everywhere.' A jewellery dealer bargaining with an emigrant in Rick's Café. Casablanca, min. 7.

no longer wears jewellery, only one finger ring. The simplicity of the outfit is almost down to earth, which in this plot is 'French soil'. The paisley resonates with the anti-bourgeois French patriots who will stand up to sing 'La Marseillaise' later that night. But the paisley pattern also resonates with the dress of the Mediterranean singer who had a great solo on our first night in the club. She performed a song about wild and consummating love. We were directed by glances, counter-shots, and the soundtrack to listen to her as the alter ego of Ilsa, who was contemplating her days back in Paris. The singer was draped in lots of Maghrebi jewellery and a paisley dress. Now Ilsa is dressed in the same Mediterranean frou-frou. With this outfit she will finally pick up on the love affair with Rick. And she will regress to a girlish attitude.

Ilsa's attire does not tell us too much about the true character of the person, only that she might be a deception to her fellow characters and us. In the case of the heroine, the clothes are only layers. They represent everything: glamour, sensuality, and chastity, sketching Ilsa as a femme fatale. Clichés about female consumerism and the erratic and capricious nature of woman are inscribed in this figuration of gloss. Models of natural love and true inner beauty are only found in contrast to Ilsa, most importantly the Bulgarian newlywed Annina, who discusses sacrifice, devotion and caring love at great length. This ideal wife is dressed in a very sober black suit, straight and simple. No jewellery, no veil, no adornment disguises her open mind. What you see is what you get. One of the classical stereotypes of female beauty is the materialistic bind. On the one hand, the opulence of female staging implies a beauty of adornment and décor not built on divine nature itself (Doniger 2007: 253). On the other hand, the female body itself is inclined to transform into a currency. In the Western tradition these questionable qualities of female allurement have been strongly linked to imaginations of the orient.

THE BLACK-MARKET VALUE OF JEWELLERY, CHASTITY AND LIVES

The long opening act of the movie unfolds the value of external beauty in an overtly materialistic world. The materialistic discourse ties one scene to the other: the illegal gambling in Rick's café, the ransacking of refugees, the fees for smuggling and the profit of treachery. Obviously perverse. Everyone seems to inhale the stale air of the oriental environment. Everything is for sale, the black 'boy' as well as the female 'white slave', which had been a topic of Western concern since the Victorian feminist movement and which was a central figure in the Western representation of the Arab hemisphere.

With the movie's first shot at ground level on the African continent, we are submerged in a wild street life, monkeys and a man of very dark complexion marking the African realm. Practically every space in depicted Casablanca is discriminated as a market place, if it is not international territory. Only rarely is the old part of town called 'Medinah'. Most of the time, the Moroccan quarters of the town are synonymous with 'the black market'. Signor Ferrari is the dealmaker in this cosmos of commercialised relations. Not incidentally is he the only oriental figure in the movie, distinguished by his Arabic clothing, gestures and huge finger rings. He even uses the hookah pipe and holds on to the fly whisk. These utensils have indicated the

harem in Western art since the beginning of the nineteenth century, as depicted in *La Grande Odalisque* by Jean A. D. Ingres. Even the colour line of Ferrari's café, the Blue Parrot, may direct us to the colour frame of Ingres' painting at the heart of French orientalism: the harem woman reclines amid blue drapery and opulent jewellery. Her nudity shines in contrast as translucent porcelain (Mancoff 2010: 294-7).
'Diamonds are a drug on the market. Everybody sells diamonds. There are diamonds everywhere,' scolds the 'Moorish' dealer in the movie's exposition when an emigrant asks for cash for her bracelet (ill. 2). And this statement seems convincing, considering the amount of jewellery worn by the women in Rick's café and on the streets, supposedly all to be sold or to be stolen. The women market their commodities, and the men are happy to cash it. This is also how we get to know Rick in the first place, signing a cheque for a woman. As in the Western picture of the harem woman, the linkage between the opulence of jewellery and the availability of the female body is very close. Although these are bourgeois Europeans fleeing, they match the temptations and attitudes of the oriental world. The original script had a line in which a refugee woman contemplates her choice in escaping Casablanca by prostitution: 'It used to take a Villa at Cannes, or the very least, a string of pearls – Now all I ask is an exit visa.' The line got censored by the Hays' office (Harmetz 1992: 163).

THE NATURE OF JEWELLERY AND TEARS

Most of the nuances of the image of the female star were worked out by the director of photography, Arthur Edeson. He excelled in creating the luminous character of the movie, because he was an expert in dressing actors in shades, sparkles, contrasts, and patterns. His technique to distance Ilsa into an ideal and distant being of imagination and longing has become one of the visual signatures of the movie. The famous close-up shots of Rick and Ilsa leave her – in contrast to him – behind a haze. Rick/Humphrey gains reality and personality in those counter-shots, while the soft focus on her face builds up to the disguise of shells and skin of femininity. Together with the vagueness of beauty comes the technique of highlight in the glamour photography of the time: in all her vagueness Ilsa sends out flashes, either by sparkling diamonds or by sparkling tears. Especially in the introduction of the character, the lighting cameraman spells out the bling effect of her lavish elegance. When she enters Rick's club for the first time, she wears a large bow brooch, a bracelet, earrings, and a diamond ring, as if she had gone to Maison Chaumet on Place Vendôme on her last errand before leaving Paris. This finery is not what you might expect for someone sharing the misery of political persecution and exile. Even under normal living conditions, the combination of brilliant-cut diamonds would have indicated aspirations beyond the bourgeois realm.
Ilsa's jewellery becomes an important agent in the visual language of the movie: its stones send – from time to time – rays of light to sketch the mysterious lady. While we rationalise her bling effect in the first place to her jewellery, another source of lighting effects evolves soon after. Her eyes start to fill with tears; we see that glitter for the longest time, again and again, but we have to wait for her to cry. After forty-five minutes, she does not cry, but we do get to see a single drop slowly running down her cheek, like a pearl on velvet.

The audience is relieved to finally see her reacting as the ideal woman, moved by feelings, out of control, with tears. Yet the emotion is captured so artificially that we might feel blinded again, this time not by gems but by false tears. With the femme fatale and her alluring beauty, we encounter a classical association of ostentatious jewellery.

RAIN: TEARS OF NATURE

It's raining cats and dogs on the very day when Rick catches the last train before the Germans invade Paris. Sure, weather is a common backdrop to illustrate the feeling of a protagonist, and Rick is definitely miserable waiting in vain for his girlfriend to join him. But in this visual narrative, the rain, the flood of water from the sky, is not only an analogy of nature and human feelings; the natural waters are needed to fully picture the breakdown of the hero in the Parisian love story. While Rick receives the breakup note from Ilsa on the platform, the camera switches to the point of view of the male protagonist himself. In the following shot, we read through Rick's eye the farewell of Ilsa. Her handwriting in front of us is dissolving by drops of water, as if the shedding of tears was moistening the paper in our hands (Harmetz 1992: 337). This scene is another example of the ample play with gendered possibilities to show and read emotions. Even an anti-hero in the less conventional style of the underdog studio Warner Bros. shouldn't be seen with tears running down his cheeks. Thus we do not see Rick bursting out in tears, but as compensation we are offered the subjective position of a man with strong and true feelings. The visual illusion of a flood of tears conveys the figure's emotions. The source of the watershed even underlines the credibility of male feelings; they are grounded in nature.

Ill. 3 Rick and Ilsa's encounter on the street market; Ilsa is wearing the black striped top. Casablanca, min. 54.

Ill. 4 Ilsa and Rick's rendezvous in his private apartment above his club. Casablanca, min. 80.

DOWN-DRESSING THE LADY TO SERVE AT THE HOME FRONT

Jewellery and ornament are not reserved for women only. Most of the male characters exhibit them as well. The military men wear uniforms complete with gold trimmings and appropriate medals, although, in comparison to the female display of gold, this metal does not blind and does not ask for attention. It is just an appropriate means to indicate the social status of the person. As long as it is part of a stable outfit, the décor is legitimised. The German military Strasser may be overdoing it a little: he even cares to show up in formal attire with white gloves. The male hero Rick wears a ring on his right hand, the antithesis to his bachelor comportment, adding status and history to his biography. The semiotic function of jewellery for these male Westerners differs greatly from that of all female jewellery since it is neither arbitrary nor to be discussed. Rick wears 'his' ring back then in Paris, and as patron of a Moroccan nightclub, day and night, it belongs to him. Another political hero in the play can even rely on his finger ring to prove his true identity. That is the case for Mr Berger, who shows a signet ring with the Cross of Lorraine in order to gain Laszlo's confidence that he serves as a contact to the political underground movement. Thus the question is not who is bejewelled but whether we take a character's attire as natural or legitimate. Ilsa's appearance is inconsistent and bewildering, its inconsistency alluding to the feminine gender, the bewilderment fuelled by the abundance of oriental materialism.

But this is not the end of the story. If we are willing to see a development of both heroes Rick and Ilsa (which Eco denies), then we get to the formative discourse on female style in this wartime movie. Under the influence of Rick, she finally comes to terms with how to dress properly: the very last scene shows Ilsa ready to embark for the US. This is not the society queen anymore, not the lady of leisure who lingers between market stalls. This is, for the first time, an outfit to master the realities of life. Take off her hat and you will see a woman prepared to travel, to work and to become one in a row of many – at least according to the signatures of American female fashion in the 1940s. Gradually the heroine became dressed down, was stripped of her jewellery and frou-frou. On the last day in Casablanca, Ilsa finally favours a utility suit of strong quality and with huge patch pockets on the front. Still feminine, yet 'fashion on the ration' (Imperial War Museum 2015). The tone is muted and matches Rick's trench coat. Actually the costume refers to the same group of clothes as his, since it resembles the new line of uniforms for the women's voluntary services and auxiliary units to the American army. Even before the attack on Pearl Harbor, an official structure had been established to organise female services for the national effort. The woman in a volunteer uniform became the embodiment of responsible conduct on the home front from 1941 on.

This is the woman that Rick sends off for a useful future in the US while he stays on the battleground in Northern Africa. Now the woman has come of age to dress decently and to serve society. The development in the dress code of Ilsa illustrates a purification of her personality on a metaphorical level. On a very literal level, it fulfilled the national war effort of the Hollywood industry. Thomas Doherty and others have reconstructed how intensely the American cultural industry assisted in mobilising the national spirit during

World War II. The US government and the US military actively asked the Hollywood studios to collaborate closely (Doherty 1999). For example, Washington issued war bonds, and the film studios subscribed to get the message to the people. The call to 'Buy War Bonds' was neatly woven into the trailers as well as the billboards and newspaper clips advertising *Casablanca* and other screenings. But more than that, the American public needed stories and images to fill the gap between the pluralistic and individual federalism at the core of the American constitution and the call for the military service or even the sacrifice of life (Kapczynski 2006). With blockbusters and many more B-movies, the Hollywood production of the 1940s piled up stories on the American in 'combat' and at the 'home front'. In general Hollywood studios agreed to new measures of political censorship and fostered the social and economic consensus for a unifying national goal in world politics. Timeless and suburban plots could contribute to the rationale of a country at war. These home-front movies focused on the civilian, namely the woman, as part of the national endeavour. The individual pursuit of happiness, which by American reasoning was widely conceived as individual property and material success, had to be harmonised with an austerity regime.

Even the style of interiors, the material on the set and the thoughtful handling of resources were stipulated in the understandings between the Office of War Information and the Hollywood studios. Washington didn't want to see cars crashed or pies smashed, least in the imaginary. For example, when *Casablanca* went into production, the costumes were subject to restrictions. The Warners' publicity office was later on avid to promote the movie as 'the first important "all-cotton" picture of this wartime season', manufactured 'in strict accordance with priority rulings' for costumes (Harmetz 1992: 112-3). I am not so convinced that the wardrobe for Ingrid Bergman was crafted from nothing than cotton tissue, but we can see that by the time *Casablanca* was released, the confinements on the fashion industry in ordinary life had made an impression on the American public. The wartime fashion featured a new style, closely in line with Western Modernism and American Streamlining: slim lines, no ruffles, no useless ornaments, no precious material (Maffei 2010). The change in Ilsa's outfit illustrates this development towards a national American style to serve the needs at the home front, leaving behind the European bourgeois splendour and coming to terms with oriental counterfeit.

THE ORIENTAL FRAMING OF DANGER IN CASABLANCA

According to modern textbooks on emigration and illegal flight during World War II, it makes more sense to locate a melodrama on the chances and deceptions of refugees in the European port cities, in Hamburg or Amsterdam, Lisbon or Marseille. This is where most of the refugees saw the overseas steamer and haggled over identity papers and permission to travel. Only extremely few European refugees happened to come to Casablanca in the French protectorate to wait for a future in North America. In fact, the same harsh legislation as in Vichy France put Jewish life there in extreme peril. I want to suggest that the plot gains a new momentum by adding the African myth to the myth of the free America on the other side of the Atlantic. Transferring the story to the last fort before

the desert added a common cultural frontier line to the political struggle between Western regimes which develops to the Arabophobia in the 1990s (Edwards 2001). Rick's café becomes the American outpost in an oriental environment, thus distracting us from the European axis of problems.
The studio decided early on to picture the story in the Maghreb. Following the argument of style, design, and material culture for reading *Casablanca*, we have to consider this a Hollywood genre of the 'Eastern' or the 'Arabian nights'. Already in the early years of sound movies, Hollywood had picked up on the imaginative power of orientalism and set the old tales of sensuality, futile opulence and subjugation into moving pictures. As Peter Evans remarks, 'Hollywood's East is no less figurative than, say, Shakespeare's Italy, a displaced setting for the representation of insular realities. And yet, in other ways – in a modern frontierless world […] – these metaphors of the Orient inevitably reduce the complexity of different cultures while perpetuating ignorance and prejudice' (Evans 2000: 158-9).
The drama takes place in distinct spaces, each territory under the rule of its landlord: the American nightclub, the zone of French authority and the oriental city. This is a threefold hierarchy of spaces with a gradient of autonomy. On a plot level, the Third Reich with Marshal Pétain on the leash is infiltrating life in Morocco everywhere. On a visual and sensual level, 'oriental culture' of lush decoration infiltrates daily life. Even the fortress of American lifestyle and Rick's club and office are packed with arabesque ornaments, horseshoe arches and oriental latticework. Palm leaves impress their shadow on walls and people (ill. 1). Carved lampshades diffuse irritating patterns on the vaults of the café. Hardly one plain wall, hardly one straight line to be seen. Rick himself in the opening scene plays chess on a board that is not recognisable as

Ill. 6 Arrival of the German Major Strasser at Casablanca airport, the shot framed by a horseshoe arc. Casablanca, min. 5.

Ill. 5 Bauhaus building in Dessau by Walter Gropius, built 1925/26, reconstructed (Photo: 2013).

such. In its oriental version, the squares of black and white are totally dissolved by intarsia.
Right from the movie's opening, we are guided to the American spot in the city as a safe place: from the first sequence with the animation of war and misery in Europe, we approach the African coast from a bird's-eye view. We are suddenly confronted with a Moorish skyline, rooftops and minarets. Rough music sets the tone, somewhere between African instrumentation and Arabic tunes. The camera tilting down reveals a disturbing street scene of a pre-civilised society: a dense crowd of pedestrians of all ages, carrying or hawking everything. Animals are for sale. The camera focuses on a black African marketing two monkeys with broad gestures. This genre painting is cut off by the first action sequence of the diegesis, the quest for the transit papers and the shooting of an underground agent. A Maghreb woman in regional clothing and jewellery is shown as a bystander at the murder, showing no motion or emotion. The next sequence pictures the arrival of the German Major Strasser, welcomed with military honours at the airport. The shot is framed again in a Moorish style; this time the events on the runway are pictured through a small gateway in the shape of a horseshoe arch.

REDEMPTION THROUGH THE LÁSZLÓS AND OTHER DESIGNERS OF NEW BAUHAUS

Finally, the dense exposition leads us to the central figure and the central enclosure. Again, from above, with a crane shot of the lit sign on top of the building, we are placed in front of the solid wooden doors – rather fortified gates – of Rick's place. Drops of familiarity fill the air, American music spills into the night and a tune by George Gershwin. 'The camera […] tracks forward, toward and through the door and into the main room of the nightclub, following three other parties.' (Harris 1992: 117). Entering the club like VIPs, we are embraced by a medley of Americanness. Sam is singing a neat version of 'It Had To Be You', arranged by Max Steiner. A few seconds later we listen to 'Ohh, my hair is curly, ohh, my teeth are pearly …'. The camera tracks forward through the grand hall of the café, taking us deeper into the fortress. We are gliding through a second door, following the waiter into the central room of the club, the illegal casino. Finally, we find and settle with Rick, who has already been announced as the master of this social universe (Harris 1992: 16-22). Next a point-of-view shot in extreme close-up, Rick's face in reverse angle, and from that moment we have gained a solid position, we have touched home base in Casablanca. Most of the movie is shot inside Rick's café, establishing it as the viewpoint on the manners and dangers outside, which are a mixture of Europeans gone astray and an animalistic African exotic.
This is where the public tour of Rick's premises ends. The personal space of the American is one level up, above the saloon and above his office. That room is only used for the central scene, the intimate encounter with Ilsa on the second night. Seeing his private apartment later on, equipped according to his taste, we understand that everything downstairs looked buoyant and splendid but was only a concession to the gambling clients and the eclecticism of colonial Maghreb. The American side of Rick and his vision of modern style are only to be found in his private room, clearly modelled in the California style of modern design.

Richard's apartment features the new informal style of West Coast architecture and interior design from Richard Neutra to Paul László: a fleecy sofa, a rattan shelf on the wall, a room divider of wooden sticks, the lamp shade freed from phoney dangles.

Certainly, the horizontal structures leave the strongest impression. The night scene in the apartment is almost exclusively backlit through the venetian blinds (ill. 4). Black stripes of higher or lower intensity show on surfaces and faces. The game on shadows with arabesques and palm leaves in the clubs is here superseded by geometric forms, mostly the horizontal line. The framing of figures and faces by arches in the first part of the movie is now transferred into rectangular frames (Nielsen 2002: 100).

It is a repeated standard in literature on *Casablanca* to interpret the horizontals as a visual for danger, a hopeless situation, and the equivalence to prison bars. I suggest leaving the canonised interpretation of the film noir style aside and follow an aesthetic argument in *Casablanca* in the context of the contemporary language of form. The horizontals function as a structural antagonism to the oriental shapes. Especially as part of the aesthetic of Rick's apartment, the horizontals appealed to the contemporary American audience as a signature of the New Bauhaus and related schools of American Modernism with the common credo against abundance and against the application of useless ornament. In the mind set of fin-de-siècle Vienna, these categories had been strongly coded with gender and ethnicity. The Viennese Adolf Loos, who stressed the clichés of national and ethnic taste and invented the wording of 'ornament and crime', became a transatlantic reference point in a serious discourse on the cultural and moral superiority of Functionalism and the benefit of the rectangular. Western art history has taken up the trope of 'ornament' again and again, but only postcolonial criticism pointed to the deep and persistence influence on cultural stigma in Northern academic and design tradition (Kravagna 2010, Franz 2015).

The transatlantic connection and appreciation of Functionalism was already in place when the political refugees from Europe arrived in the late 1930s. Earlier transatlantic migration and an influx of European trained designers can already be seen in the 1920s, especially in Hollywood. The art director for *Casablanca*, Carl Jules Weyl, was born in Stuttgart and educated in Europe but had already started a Californian career in the 1920s, partly in real-life architecture, partly in film settings. His Austrian colleagues in Hollywood, Schindler and Neutra, declared themselves students of Adolf Loos and fellows of his dictum against the ornament long before the second wave of émigrés (Long 2011: 64-71).

If we stick to the master narrative in Warners' *Casablanca* that America is the only place to raise your kids in freedom, then Ilsa is actually liberated by Rick to leave and live the American dream. The night in his apartment ends with the famous double portrait of hers. We catch her reflection in a mirror and see her portrait reframed by six squares of the mirror's frame. She has been freed from horseshoe arches, mashrabiyya latticework and organic shapes. Her salvation for a democratic future finds the visual equivalent in her aesthetic purification. Ingrid Bergman became one of the beauty icons of the film industry through this picture, modelled by lightning, lenses and dresses to illustrate the transformation to the American ideals of Modernism. In a way she is a forerunner of another

successful beauty icon from Western California, Barbie. The very first outfit of the Barbie doll included a bathing suit in broad black-and-white stripes, horizontals, a popular reference to the current fashion of Hollywood celebrities in the late 1950s. By that time Ingrid Bergman was already canonical, and her black striped top on the second day of our plot in Casablanca was a classic.

CONCLUSION

The transatlantic alliance of Western Modernism became politically effective in the post-war era. It represented common roots and norms of the Western world against the east and the south. It was as crucial to reintegrate West Germany in the Western alliance of democratic cultures after the war. Our example of the Warner Bros.' movie visualises this argument of style already in the 1940s because it takes the question of material culture and lifestyle to such a symbolic level that it outplays the actual alliances of political powers in the last years of the war.

The cult film Casablanca has been shelved. But the aesthetic argument is still present. It is relevant to decipher the formative stages of cultural figurations that became so vigorous again after the end of the Cold War in the 1990s. While Eco stated that the superfluous and random usage of all available stereotypes prevented Casablanca from pure kitsch, the postcolonial and gender awareness takes us a step further (cf. Edwards 2010). The utopian America was modelled on a deeply rooted discrimination of the oriental and not-so-white environment as the marketplace for jewellery and sex. These stereotypes still foster the construction of meaning and relevance in design history and it will be a long way to decolonize the epistemic regime (Recklies 2018). Reading an elaborately and well-informed handbook on the history of Jewellery, we find again the Maghreb woman as an example for the other side of Jewellery, adornment that is based on sheer financial power (Unger 2017: 428-9). The photography of a person in overwhelming decorum, the face in a rainfall of silver tokens as hair dress, serves as documentary proof for Wedding customs in modern Morocco. Yet, the image of the ceremonial gown of the Fez region is part of a conceptual work by the French artist Valérie Belin. Her work Moroccan Brides (2000) marks the turn in her artistic investigation on the photogenic quality of objects and nature to that of human body parts. Still searching for the artificial ornament, she started to integrate faces and masks in her still-lifes. The staging and alienation in the series 'Moroccan Brides' are the genuine exploration of the artist Belin. The evocation of otherness in this photography with a Fez bridal costume is part of the dialogue between the photographer and us, the spectator of art and movies.

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Exhibition Review: Gioielli in Fermento

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JJR journal of jewellery research

Gioielli in Fermento is an International Jewellery competition based in Northern Italy. The first edition took place in 2011 and this year is its 10th anniversary. It was conceived to provide a platform for established, emerging artists and designers for exhibiting a piece of experimental jewellery inspired by a given context. This anniversary prompts some considerations about editions, works, selecting and inviting artists, the present challenges and the future double edition. Still playing with the connection between wine and studio jewellery and using the words of wine, Gioielli in Fermento 20|21 comes to suggest the concept of maturity and evolution viewed through artists' research.

THE PROJECT

The city of Castel San Giovanni (Val Tidone, in the Emilia-Romagna region) in collaboration with AGC the Italian Association for contemporary jewellery, hosts the 20/21 Edition of this contemporary studio jewellery competition, linked to the local cultural context. The lands south of the Po river, the soft profiles of hills and vineyards that slope down till the city of Piacenza, are the juried exhibition's inspirational landscape since the beginning, open to its international audience. There is a main section for submissions by established and emerging artists and two sections for jewellery students (art or technical colleges and MA programs).
Gioielli in Fermento (GiF) was initiated 10 years ago, transforming over time the original theme of its Mediterranean background and atmospheres, but still keeping the ethical and geographical link. It sounded unconventional in 2011 to present this kind of liaison in contemporary jewellery, a popular context winking to an artistic niche, with a very simple excuse: the

Gioielli in Fermento 20|21 catalog, vol.1 painting by Ieva Bondare

Fig.1

conviviality, as overlapping between creative arts and the world of wine and wine making. In Italy wine is a widespread tradition and also a big market. It has a deep cultural root both humble and sacred. Italian wine quality and reputation has developed a lot in recent

years, becoming often a luxury item and a symbol of lifestyle.
It has been challenging to explain this seeming oddity for years, when audience and observers ask about this project that “deals with wine”. The overarching aim of the event was - and still is - to bring people together, interconnect and implement the contemporary jewellery communicative power towards a wider audience. This was the curator’s attempt to mediate an exit from a kind of elitist environment, assuming that experimental art jewellery can be understood and appreciate beyond cultural and social peculiarities(1).
The naming of Gioielli in Fermento recalls to the term fermentation and the chemical phenomenon in wine making and was adopted as a metaphor for the field of contemporary body ornaments. It refers to a “transformed” output, a piece of art jewellery, which is the result of research itself.
By now the point is to question how all this ferment achieved ten years of exhibitions. How effective all the tales related to a lively surrounding context have been, after a series of annual themes dealing with conviviality, landscapes, quality of life, Mediterranean shades, memories, colours, emotions, roots, territories and materials(2). So, when the milestone of the 10th edition has been presented, the aim was to detect the progress traced by this exhibition. If, on one hand, this can be answered focusing on the progressive enhancement of the context (see chapter below), on the other hand the theme of the current edition - Evolution and Ageing - wish to point out this achievement. To debate where is experimental jewellery going, if towards the unknown or to the refinement of skills, near freestyle performance or keen to maturation of practice and progress. The works recently selected try to provide the answers. The main consideration while looking at 20|21 selected works(3) is a maturity in terms of workmanship and accuracy of each work shown. It is a kind of refinement that edition after edition accomplishes, towards more effective so called *statement-pieces*, works which are like manifestos for their author, and then for the wearer who choose them. It is not a detail that the scrupulous selection process came along the past years always through real view of all entries by the jury members.

THE JURY AND THE INVITED ARTISTS

The process of selection has a fundamental role for the quality of the project. The works are selected every edition by a jury composed of eminent figures from the world of jewellery and art. The current judging panel of the double turn 20|21 counts prof. Alba Cappellieri, Politecnico University of Milan and Jewellery Museum director, Vicenza, Italy; Renzo Pasquale, artist and teacher, Padua Gold school, Italy and Olga Zobel, founder of Galerie Birò, Munich, Germany. The current edition marks the difficulty of the process made partially by a virtual procedure. The final exhibition, with the composition of the double edition across the pandemic time, is delayed until all the selection could be concretely examined in the final phase (see last chapter).
Besides components of the jury are always different and perspectives change at every session, the general criteria for selection focus on wearable pieces, best if never-seen-before. Shared elements of evaluation are: balanced combination of concept, form, individual character, harmony with the body, structure, freshness in use or accuracy of making techniques. In synthesis,

Fig.2-3

the work with a strong originality always gains an unanimous favourable opinion. Every member of the jury, subjectively, loves to be surprised, and if it happens simultaneously, this facilitate the analysis of the other relevant elements, as a group.
Alongside the authority of the jury, the group of advisors and the section for invited artists[4] help in developing a deeper investigation of the conceptual side of the general theme associated to the project. The result is a strengthening of the concept behind GiF, namely the idea of Jewellery Fermentation: a dynamic approach, a constant research of a well-defined identity or, at least, of an intention[5] that appears confirmed in the evolution of artists' work line, in their own desire to establish themselves as artists and creators of personal expressive codes. This way, guest artists are kinds of benchmarks to dialogue with.

THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE CONTEXT

Submissions are considered for a prize, sponsored by Joya Art Jewellery and Objects (Barcelona) and the international company Allied Group based in Valtidone. The current edition offers a new exchange opportunity for one of the awarded artists to interact with the goldsmith artist Gigi Mariani through a workshop session to be held at Archivio Negroni. The celebration award and the exhibition take place in Villa Braghieri, a XVIII century mansion dated to a noble family of the Italian county. This venue is particularly effective to display contemporary jewellery as the pieces of work are juxtapositioned in a historical background, this offer continuity as one of the characteristics of the display setting chosen by the curator was to present the jewellery in an unexpected context. This is a determinant element of the close connection between the project and its environment, which has made it successful since the first exhibitions. Every exhibition context has always been strictly related to the theme of the project. The set design of the first six editions was right inside a gorgeous ancient winery estate. At that time one of the main goals was to

keep the dialogue between more descriptive pieces and conceptual ones. The balance was not always easy to present nor predictable and immediately intelligible to all. The next is an example of how the context was key to plan the exhibition setting of each year. Year 2015 marked a sign in the proceeding of the project. It was the year of Universal Expo in Italy, held in Milan for 6

Fig.4

months, with the theme “Feed the planet”. Food and wine rose as the main topic connected to all aspects of life, and art was included. GiF was already investigating those themes. The “Colour of the night” brooch by Corrado De Meo shaped as grapes illuminated by the moon became iconic. The latter had a great appeal for the main language told by contemporary jewellery: the ability of telling a story (connected to youth memories of the author), the intriguing look of the piece and its paradox in volume and weight, the fact that artist was contemporary to his audience, could meet people and speak about his work. Finally, this started to change the perception of food&wine tradition and bio-diversity respectful culture not only in Italy but all over the world, sensible to contemporary lifestyle. From then onward GiF got

Fig.5-6

on taking part in themed events, with more consideration, as everywhere this kind of events were spreading. The audience looked at the exhibition with more confidence and interest. Gallerists were interested in enhancing the conviviality and the hybrid experience. Thus, Italian cook Master Gualtiero Marchesi was invited in the jury board and then GiF-The Dinner was presented in consequence of this development in 2017 and 2018 and asked to be replicated and hosted in Barcelona (first edition at Torre Fornello winery, in collaboration with Italian

Michelin star chef Isa Mazzocchi. Meanwhile, years 2016, 2018, 2019 marked the most important achievements for GiF project, with the exhibits at SoFa Chicago, Oratorio S.Rocco in Padua and collaborations with international galleries(6). GiF project was hosted by all these venues as the nature of the event provided a new hybrid experience and prospective that brings together contemporary jewellery and the convivial pleasure of enjoying food&wine. It is important to highlight the concepts of hybrid field and connections: in GiF contemporary jewellery stays in its essence, wearable art with a powerful role of communicating messages. Wearable artefacts that attract people in choosing and wearing it, rather than being an art experiment or a performance(7). The hybridization relies in getting viewers closer playing with their favorite subjects and passions and discover "elective affinities". In our case, the key aspect of showing an unexpected subject (art jewellery) to local visitors and an unexpected scenery (the world of wine) to expert observers is part of the process. Mixing known territories with the pleasure of discovering the different and the unknown in a provocative equilibrium, gets that spark of hybridization.

2020-2021: THE PRESENT AND FUTURE IN THE 10TH EDITION - EVOLUTION & AGEING (8)

The collection chosen by the jury for 2020 appears in a globally suspended time. The pandemic that broke out in the first months of the year indelibly marks a dividing line in the activity of everyone. To emphasise this time of transition, it was decided to record the path between what "was" until the explosion of the pandemic, the dangers of contagion, the paralysis of all activities and the confinement – before, called the ANTE(9) – and what implied rethinking our lives, our reactions, our roles, from then on – after, called the POST.

Through their works, authors try to record, undergo, respond to changes from a conceptual, practical and existential point of view. The first part of this research, selected in 2020, constitutes a kind of last antecedent: contents, to be discovered, by opening a focus which will be a whole view together with a second selection - a call open all over 2020 - looking forward to a final combined exhibition in 2021/2022. Observing the two bodies of work across the fracture of the pandemic, new meanings will emerge. Covid-19 face off probably enhanced a need to re-build, join, develop the search for a complementary or juxtaposed work, by evolution or revolution, dissolution or reconstruction. Or simply looking for balance. Body-ornaments will interpret a need, a relief, a message, an escape, a gratification, a memory: personal amulets of a new era.

Fig.7

A VIEW FROM INSIDE

Some considerations by the curator might help understanding how the concept of “evolution” and “ferment” in making is readable through the works. This is explained here with different examples.
In all the past editions more than 800 works have been selected (applications were more than the double), from all over the world. Some of them grow fond of the project and apply often being confirmed repeatedly; on the other hand, many new candidates emerged within the annual collection.
For many of them GiF became stimulating to aim at new inspiration for a mid career body of works or a starting point for emerging research or a stage to present an individual way of dialogue between nature, materials and body. Some evident examples of this transition can be seen in the pieces of work by Claudia Steiner and Liana Pattihis (with pieces from her “Chained Interpretations”, winner in 2014 and 2016 and those selected from “To mend my broken heart” series), Sara Shahak and Viktoria Münzker. They interpreted the metaphor of fermentation without departing from their media, but rather find new expressive ideas and the reinforced confirmation of

Fig.8

their relationship with natural processes and artistic interventions in recovering and re-appropriation of the meaning of objéts trouvés or production waste.
Besides, there is an interesting juxtaposition between Western and Asian cultures expressed by artists coming from contiguous rather than very far countries. Far East countries are more and more attentive in exhibiting and let their work be known in Europe. It is not always easy to interpret their statements in relation to GiF’s context, but overall their interpretation of the theme starts a dialogue between views. Looking at the works by Mia Kwon, which constantly attempts to get closer to the

Fig.9

mood of the project - started in 2013 with “The sense of taste” - her way to use white porcelain to emulating sweet food details or tracing a pictorial emotion painted like recognizable landscapes (2017 brooch and 2018 necklace) which set a real change from the look her pieces had at first presentation as emerging participant. Among the awarded artists, Yasuko Kanno (Japan, 2019) approaches a recurrent issue, the instantaneous relation between strength and fragility, by an abstract use of metal that can be put in front of more “Mediterranean” interpretations like the ones by Gigi Mariani or Nicoletta Frigerio (Italy, 2011). Another observation deals with Latin American culture, always joyful and wishful to connect with Mediterranean culture, especially when the themes recall shared traditions like the wine making or migration origins. There are also interesting sources of mixed cultural backgrounds that rise evident through the contrasting combination of materials and techniques, as we can see from the works by Pena, Soto Ventura, Chelminsky and Von Dohnanyi.

CONCLUSIONS

If it is difficult for the curator to express a critical view of the project being too much involved in it, it can be said that a constant challenge in renovating and interpreting a new way to set up the next events is strongly perceived. The originality of the idea of the GiF is clear and it has been appreciated until now by a growing audience including the community of professionals in the field. Tomorrow the function of the original context might loose of effectiveness while all

Fig.10

conditions are quickly changing: art jewellery’s horizon has both expanded, thanks to the development of digital platforms, while it is territorially restricting. Lifestyle is changing, in all fields economical and social sustainability are critical points and impose reassessments in term of cost-benefits of exhibiting events. The limitation of financial and human resources to organize the project is critical as well. A full re-thinking is on the go, even more now having to face an overturned season responding to the pandemic situation.

NOTES

(1) The elitist niche of contemporary jewellery is here intended as an environment, built on a limitate number of academies which raised a restricted community of teachers, tutors and researchers, all artists themselves, who influenced a small number of galleries and collectors, altogether estimating themselves as outsiders.

(2) For all editions themes: https://gioiellinfermento.com/about

(3) Selected works are published on the catalog Gioielli in Fermento 20|21 Part 1 available on klimt02.net, agc-it.org and gioiellinfermento.com websites

(4) Further information about jury members and invited artists can be found here https://gioiellinfermento.com/profiles

(5) On the meaning of intention, the inspiring interview In conversation with GianCarlo Montebello, Art Jewelry Forum, October 2015. https://artjewelryforum.org/node/7164

(6) Exhibitions traveled in Italy, Europe and US. Further information about sponsors can be found at https://gioiellinfermento.com/il-circuito-espositivo/

(7) Many examples in contemporary art came before and after: to remain closer to the field i.e. artists like David Bielander, Rachael Colley, Lauren Kalman, Gisbert Stack, the Steinbeisser project.

(8) Ageing stays for a metaphorical higher maturity: aging for a wine means it rests some years in a barrel to refine its qualities and become a precious product by the expert wine maker for the most demanding customers.

(9) In Italian the word antefatto coming from ANTE- and fact, means a preceding event. In May 2020 a first preview of selected works from 20 | 21 part 1 collection, has been shown online: https://bit.ly/fermento2020 with full artists list.

IMAGES

Fig.1 - View from Villa Braghieri, Valtidone, Italy

Fig.2 - Setup at Villa Braghieri, Gioielli in Fermento 2019 Photo A.Petrarelli

Fig.3 - Setup at Torre Fornello Winery, Gioielli in Fermento 2019, Valtidone, Italy, Photo A.Petrarelli

Fig.4 - Corrado De Meo The color of the night II, polystiren, acrilics, silver, brooch, 2016 Photo: F. Cavicchioli private collection

Fig.5 - Oratorio S.Rocco Padova, September 2018

Fig.6 - Barcelona: OffJoya 2015 at Cassina Barcelona (Photo: Minim Bcn) and Joya 2019 at Design Museum.

Fig.7- Sara Shahak, Gettin'red brooch, iron, titanium quarz, glass colours, stainless steel; Viktoria Münzker Hyacinth perception brooch, drift wood, silver, smoky quarz; Gioielli in Fermento 2019.

Fig.8 - Mia Kwon, Likelaces necklace 2013; Full of emptiness, necklace, Gioielli in Fermento 2018.

Fig.9 - Gigi Mariani Rusts ring, silvar, patina, Gioielli in Fermento Award 2011, Photo: P. Terzi private collection; Yasuko Kanno Shape of the moment, silver, steel, brooch 2019 Photo: T. Shimomura; Nicoletta Frigerio, Zolla, brooch, silver, bronze, Gioielli in Fermento Award 2011, private collection.

Fig.10 - Rita Soto Ventura, Overflowed, brooch, horsehair, vegetal fiber, gold thread, anilines, rubber, steel; Dania Chelminski, Opuntia necklace, opuntia stem, silver, iron, lacquer, Ph. Ran Erde; Gioielli in Fermento 2020.

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Eliana Negroni is instigator and curator of the Gioielli in Fermento project. She is a designer and maker based in Italy. Graduated in 1990 from Milan State University, she is actively involved with AGC (Italian association for contemporary jewellery). Since 1997 she works in the field of metalworking and tool-making and has been experimented on her own aluminium jewelry design for several years.
Eliana is also the founder and Director of the Archivio Negroni, in Milan. It is a contemporary craft hub, originated from her family's heritage jewellery tool-making firm.

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Mediterranean threads: jewellery and textile design narratives

Author: *Sarah O'Hana and Stephen Bottomley*

JJR journal of jewellery research

ABSTRACT

The close partnership that jewellery has historically shared with fashion and textiles is legendary, not least for its inter-relationship with the wearer and the body. It is challenging, however, for learners to travel across disciplines in search of novelty and question standard practices, even when there are plenty of established jewellers to observe as role models.

This paper focuses on the jewellery designs created in 2019 by undergraduates from the School of Jewellery at Birmingham City University, UK, in response to an industry project set by artisan weaving company Teixits Viçens from Mallorca, Spain. The project is introduced via Stephen Bottomley's Tech-tile project of 2006 that shares a common thread of Mediterranean textile histories and contemporary jewellery.

As principal investigator of Tech-tile, Bottomley's study in Venice of the work of Spanish-born textile designer Mariano Fortuny (1871-1949) had generated a collection of jewellery pieces that Sarah O'Hana later participated in. Using results from her research in laser processing, she collaborated by re-creating elements of the original textile qualities achieved by Fortuny using laser-controlled oxidation of titanium.

An understanding of cross-cultural, interdisciplinary research provides a solid foundation on which O'Hana negotiates the academic partnership in this project, between the Mallorquín textile company and the jewellery undergraduates. Students are here engaged as designers and producers of potentially viable new products for the company through the observation of cultural heritage, woven fabric collections and textile production processes.

The paper analyses the circular collaboration between craft and design with culturally diverse stakeholders through a rich visual display of jewellery, methodologies and undergraduate design proposals. It also illustrates how original thinking can be found by working across disciplines and how this contributes to the dialogue of craft with society in a journey of self-transformation.

Keywords: *jewellery, heritage, textiles, interdisciplinary, narrative, craft*

INTRODUCTION

Developing new products between academia and industry is an endeavour paved with uncertainties, but significant opportunities can be borne by honouring and advancing past cultural heritages and traditions. This paper is a testament to such practice and observes how undergraduates from the BA (Hons) Jewellery & Objects course at the School of Jewellery at Birmingham City University, UK, became active participants in the conversation of design thinking and craft development through a live project with Teixits Viçens, an artisan weaving company operating from Mallorca, Spain.

The School of Jewellery is the largest in Europe offering undergraduate and postgraduate programmes across the discipline spectrum. The Jewellery & Objects course is a three-year programme that focuses on practical skills alongside intellectual engagement and critical thinking. Students are trained as creative problem solvers and are encouraged to develop an individual and questioning attitude through an experimental and approach to materials and established perceptions. The live project is

scheduled in mid-way into their second year, in the second semester.

Teixits Viçens is one of three remaining companies on the island that specialises in the design and production of typical Mallorquín ikat fabrics, traditionally known as Roba de Llengües, or Cloth of Tongues. The technique of resist dyeing of ikats is thought to have arrived in Mallorca via Italy around the 16th century. Mallorca's strategic position in the Mediterranean made it an ideal stopping point for the trading routes of silks and ikatted fabrics travelling to Valencia from Italy (Carbonell Basté, 2013). Early commerce between Baghdad and the caliphate of Córdoba in Andalucía can be traced to show the spread of the technique across the Mediterranean, also exported to the Americas in the 1500s. (de Avila, 2016). The earliest ikat designs can be traced through the patterns created today by Teixits Viçens as they weave traditional techniques and cultural heritage with 21st century design and ideology. Mallorca is one of the last remaining places in Spain still to produce this kind of resist-dyed woven cloth (Santandreu Riera, Garau Vadell, 2009).

A background of Mediterranean textile histories is shared in this paper with Stephen Bottomley's Tech-tile project from 2006. The prelude briefly tracks his investigation of the work of Spanish-born textile designer Mariano Fortuny (1871-1949) in which a collection of jewellery pieces derived from Fortuny's oeuvre was developed for exhibitions at Villa Fortuny in Venice, Italy, and the Hove Museum and Art Gallery, Brighton, UK (Bottomley, 2007). Newly available, emerging technologies were central to Bottomley's work for the

Fortuny's work was a fusion of past and present thinking, a mixture of medieval and classically inspired designs, embellished with patterns drawn from both natural and Eastern geometry. These patterns were transferred through the application of the new techniques emerging at the time in photography and printmaking, which ultimately extended the boundaries of his textile craft (Bottomley, 2007:13).

Tech-tile project, a point of interest that was shared by Sarah O'Hana, then researcher in laser processing for contemporary jewellery. Her subsequent invitation to the project generated a series of responses to the time-faded colours and surface textures left by Fortuny in his fabrics, by controlling different laser systems to create oxides on titanium.

The projects travel over diverse cultural boundaries to encourage the disruption of established patterns and promote original thinking. This has the effect of creating a sense of achievement by developing the practice of individual makers, argued by Peter Korn (2015) as being instrumental in advancing society. The study unpicks past and present narratives, and analyse the circular economy of collaborative craft and design with diverse stakeholders through the following questions:

- Can sharing diverse craft vocabularies be applied to expand the production range of an independent, bespoke industry through international academic partnership?
- How do differing cultural perspectives and materials knowledge constrain or expand design thinking?
- What strategies may emerge to promote communication and understanding between the designers, clients and collections?

TECH-TILE + MARIANO FORTUNY (1871-1949)

Bottomley's research of the work of Fortuny is documented in a series of jewellery pieces entitled Tech-tile. His designs mirror the arabesque geometric designs featured in Fortuny's textiles as motifs and matrices, transcribing these into jewellery designs, see Figure 1, via a range of digital technologies, including digital scanning, reverse engineering, rapid prototyping and laser cutting and engraving (Figure 2). He sought to capture the anomalies and irregularities within the original Fortuny textile motifs where possible, retaining them within the complex cut paths of the computer files and ensuring each circle or line remained unique and individual. The apparent symmetry and mathematical

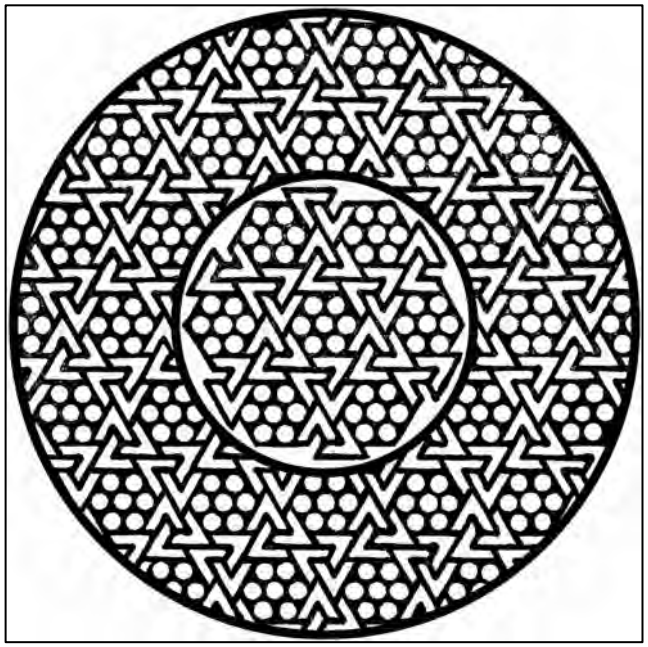

Figure 1. S. Bottomley, Drape Series, 2007, CAD artwork for laser cutting bangle and brooch, Ø 135mm. Image supplied by S.Bottomley.

Figure 2. S. Bottomley, Drape Series, 2007. Neckpiece #1, Silver and acrylic, 1 of 2, Ø 410mm. Photo: C. Colquhoun

geometry were therefore not consistent, presenting an ultimately human legacy in the final objects (Figure 4). Perfection and precision, so commonly associated with computer-aided design, is intentionally avoided in this body of work to reflect a sense of ageing, brought on by steady wear and tear, evocative of both the relentless passage of time and the softer materials of the original inspiration (Bottomley, 2007). O'Hana's participation also made use of digital files, this time for marking a series of ten titanium bangles using different parameters (settings) on a standard Universal X-660 CO_2 laser. An example of this can be seen in Figure 3, where each parameter is rendered in a different colour. Predictable, specific oxides on the titanium surface are created by the different laser settings. These appear to the eye as colour (seen in Figure 4) though they are attributed to light interference (Perez del Pino et al, 2004; O'Hana et al, 2008). A different laser system (Violino 532 nm Nd:YAG) was used to mimic the time-faded colours and rich printed velvets of the original Fortuny fabrics seen in Figure 5. The lower power of this laser system, coupled with its smaller spot size, denser hatch styles and higher speed potential, enabled a more localised, concentrated heat affected zone. This explains how it was possible to achieve colours higher on the titanium oxide spectrum that require more heat, such as the yellow and bright turquoise visible in Bangle 10 (Figure 6).

As a project clearly underpinned by the textile

Figure 3.
S. Bottomley, S. O'Hana, K. Shoba. Tech-tile, 2007, Digital rendering for CO_2 laser marking of Fortuny bangle 1. Photo: K. Shoba

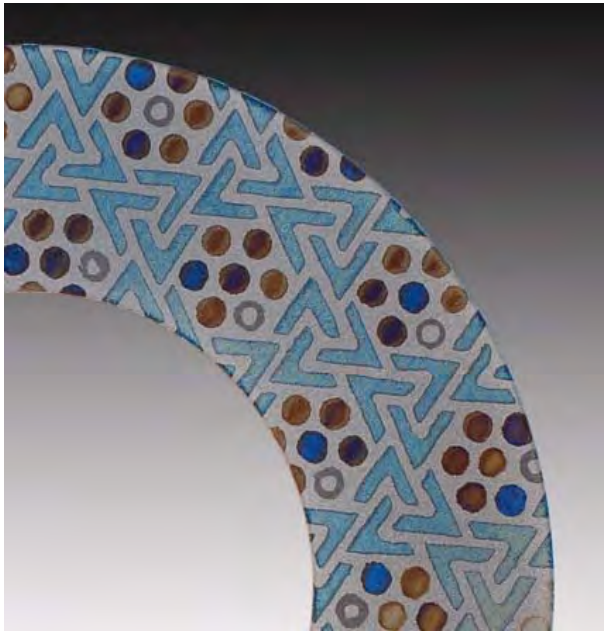

Figure 4.
S. O'Hana, K. Shoba Fortuny bangle 1, 2007, laser marked titanium, 1 of 10, Ø 135mm. Photo: K. Shoba

discipline, Tech-tile is a fitting introduction to the live project carried out by the School of Jewellery undergraduates and Teixits Viçens. It is always useful to observe notable examples in antecedents like Caroline Broadhead's woven beaded bracelet *Stuck in Mexico* (2011, p.112) and in the cultural heritage of the Silk Route in Jung-Ji Kim's woven gold brooch *Gold Knots* (2007, p. 18-19). Furthermore, the entire oeuvre of Susan Cross (Cross, 2020) and Felieke van der Leest (Schrijver and Worsdale, 2006) serve to demonstrate uniquely different treatments of textile influences and technique appropriation for use in, and development of their jewellery output. Of the many more examples that could be included here, perhaps one of the most important is Arline Fisch (1996), whose publications follow a lifetime of exploration of textile techniques using metal and have been fundamental in paving the way for generations of jewellers working in this cross-disciplinary genre.

As so often happens, artists in different times and different places stumble onto the same idea seemingly without reference to each other or to historical antecedents (Fisch, 1996:7).

Figure 5.
Mariano Fortuny, after 1909, Dyed silk velvet with printed gold and silver Japanese motif, Photo: Fortuny Museum archive, supplied by S. Bottomley.

Figure 6.
S. O'Hana, K. Shoba Fortuny bangle 10, 2007, laser marked titanium, Ø 135mm. Photo: K. Shoba

Figure 7. Teixits Viçens, 2019, details of woven fabrics on display at the Teixits Viçens shop, Pollença, Mallorca. Photo: S. O'Hana with kind permission from Teixits Viçens

TEIXITS VIÇENS, MALLORCA + SCHOOL OF JEWELLERY, BIRMINGHAM

Teixits Viçens had not collaborated with a British university before, even less with a relatively large group of international jewellery students. A total of 39 out of 52 students opted to take the live project in 2019, 31 of which were from different parts of China. An increasing number of Chinese students have attended the School of Jewellery in the last decade (Fei, 2017), resulting from new trade opportunities and cultural relations (Hunt, 2017). This is relevant because of the singular relationship that necessarily developed throughout the project, between the extreme diversity of the British, Chinese and Mallorquín cultures. It would be critical for the author as project leader to maintain a faithful transmission of dialogue between the company and the student group. It would also be important to manage the expectations of all participants in a venture that hoped to produce new ideas for a company whose iconic fabrics (see Figure 7) have been synonymous with a Mediterranean lifestyle for generations. What is significant about the authentic Mallorquín Ikat fabric, the *roba de llengües* or *cloth of tongues* is that it is characterised by having an identical pattern on both

sides, so having no front and reverse side. The technique is still a very manual process and involves preparing the white cotton warp threads and dyeing them with solid colours by tying in sections according to required patterns. The design is created once the dyeing is complete and the warp is then taken to the loom. This is the most laborious stage as it requires specific counting of threads and accurate placing of them on the loom. This sequence can be seen in Figure 8. The warp is then woven with linen to create a flat weave as illustrated in Figure 9, one of their most emblematic designs.

Teixits Viçens asked students to: design and make a wearable piece inspired by the fabrics and/or the dyeing and weaving processes of the company; observe the company ethos of natural materials and not use plastic; consider the company's cultural background relating to the patterns and designs of the cloth and understand the inspirational elements used to make them: landscape and coastline, light and colour, climate and lifestyle; not be restricted by notions of traditional jewellery and be experimental providing the piece is wearable. They hoped to select three winners, and perhaps put the most appropriate into production as a limited series.

We gave them the freedom to create any type of jewellery they wanted, with the materials of their choice, excepting plastic (Campomar, 2019).

Figure 8.
Teixits Viçens, 2018, from left to right: sequence of dyeing cotton thread by resist, drying dyed threads and transfer to the loom for weaving Mallorqín Ikat fabric or cloth of tongues. Photo: S. O'Hana with kind permission from Teixits Viçens

The study by Karla De Ketelaere, (2008) illustrates the provenance and colours of the resist dyeing for ikat cloths inherited by the Mallorcan companies. These are reflected in the designs and colour palette of Teixits Viçens and are distinctly recognisable across the island. At the foot of the Tramontana mountains, in Pollença, Northeast of Mallorca, it is clear to see how the surrounding landscape and local coastline (see Figure 10: middle) inspire their fabrics (see Figure 10: right). The climate and colours of the Mediterranean, so representative of a holiday culture, would need consideration, as would their clientèle. How to transmit this across to the academic environment of Birmingham in the depths of winter? Students would face many challenges:

- They would not meet the client in person or visit their factory to absorb the character first-hand.
- The expectation to present a commercially viable product was a new requirement from the course module.
- They would be unfamiliar with working professionally in fabrics.
- Resistant jewellery materials might need to work alongside the flexibility of fabrics requiring clean studio spaces.
- Technical and practical problems could arise from the need to join different materials.

As a first measure, students were introduced to relevant

Figure 9. Teixits Viçens, 103 Blue-Light Blue, 2019, fabric sample from Collection Ikat, cotton / linen textile. Photo: S. O'Hana with kind permission from Teixits Viçens

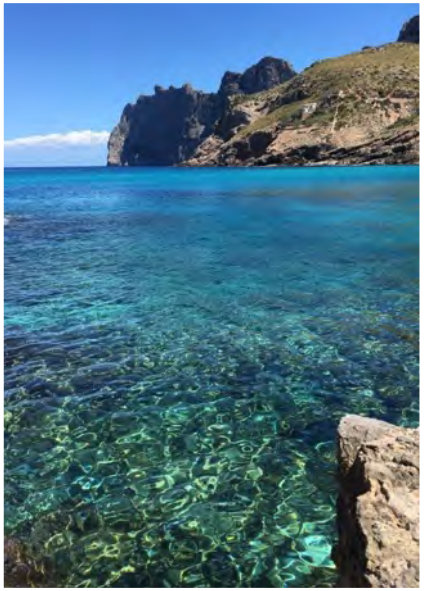

Figure 10. Middle: Cala San Viçens, 2019, Northeast Mallorca, Photo: S. O'Hana. Right: Teixits Viçens, 200 Blues, 2019, fabric sample from Collection Ikat, cotton / linen textile. Photo: S. O'Hana with kind permission from Teixits Viçens

textile techniques thanks to an intensive workshop organised within BCU at the School of Fashion and Textiles. By working directly on handlooms and experimenting with colour theory and proportion using fibres and yarns, students were immersed in as close an environment as possible to that of the Teixits Viçens workshops. Could this materials cross-over provoke a point of innovation for the company through the introduction of precious metals, or the rethinking of pattern and colour from alternative material perspectives? The following is a selection made by the company from the 39 submissions presented to them via design posters that were then made up as prototypes. They are viewed in the following groups:

1. Use of company fabrics / threads
2. Use of company patterns / colour
3. Inspiration from local environment
4. Winning designs

Figure 11. X. Feng, 2019, poster for the design of Landscape Brooch. Photo: S. O'Hana

Figure 12. X. Feng, Landscape Brooch, 2019, silver plated base metal, Teixits Viçens fabric, Ø 65mm. Photo: S. O'Hana

SELECTED WORK: USE OF COMPANY FABRICS / THREADS

Most submissions celebrated the striking visual qualities of the company fabrics. In this group the solution shown in Figure 11 illustrates how the simplicity of a stylised metal landscape cut in profile can set off a choice of fabrics to suit the customer as a brooch with alternative backgrounds. The design (see Figure 12) consciously employs factory leftovers, but also suggests that customers may wish to repurpose their own timeworn Teixit Viçens fabrics by cutting selected pieces to frame. By contrast the anticlastic bracelet in Figure 13 employs multiple layers of fabrics, not giving particular attention to which one, but rather celebrating their multi-coloured frayed edges. The fabrics are sewn together, are added as a separate component and remain in place through stitching and pressure, with only hints of pattern appearing between the layers. It is a good example of how a student can be driven primarily by a specialist technique in her own field (see Figure 14).

Figure 13. R. Xu, 2019, bracelet, gilding metal, Teixits Viçens fabrics, 90mm x 80mm x 60mm Photo: S. O'Hana

Figure 14. R. Xu, 2019, bracelet, gilding metal, 90mm x 80mm x 60mm. Photo: S. O'Hana

The easily frayed nature of the woven fabrics drew attention to the multicoloured loose threads appearing across the workshops during the project. The asymmetric earrings in Figure 15 use loose threads to connect the fraying character of the weave with the flagship blue colours of the company. The same tones are used in *V Necklace* (Figure 16), a lightweight piece designed for wear in the Summer or in hot countries. The graphic simplicity of this thread-wrapped pendant uses the characteristic company initial with materials like jute and wood, in keeping with their artisanal ethos. Actual company threads corresponding to pattern *121 Yellow-Blue* (Teixits Viçens, 2021) are woven in the neckpiece named *Time,* shown in Figure 17. *Time* deliberately references the traditional shuttle illustrating an ancient Chinese metaphor that uses the weaving instrument to describe how time flies. These are all proposals for constructing jewellery by reducing the original fabrics back to their thread components.

Figure 15. X. Ye, Minimalist Earrings, 2019, earrings, cotton, silver plated metal, approx: 80mm x 40mm. Photo: S. O'Hana

Figure 16. A. Sª Ana, V Necklace, 2019, necklace, Teixits Viçens cotton thread, wood, jute, brass, approx. length 400mm. Photo: S.

Figure 17. Y. Xue, Time, 2019, neckpiece, wood, Teixits Viçens cotton, silver, 200mm x 50mm. Photo: S. O'Hana

SELECTED WORK: USE OF COMPANY PATTERNS / COLOUR

There are many processes that students have access to at the School of Jewellery beyond the traditional ones available to jewellers and silversmiths. The technique of dye sublimation is one such example and allows dyes to be transferred through heat onto materials such as plastic, card and anodised aluminium. In *Colourful Route* (see Figure 18) the bracelets deploy a diverse range of miniaturised company patterns through their digitised transference via dye sublimation to the aluminium surface. *Colourful Route* also observes the historical ikat background of the company and the geographical position of Mallorca, situated between different cultures in the Mediterranean. The design contributes to the concept of pattern transfer onto other materials that is already used by Teixits Viçens. Part of their retail display includes a range of locally made ceramics that feature a stylised ikat motif in their flagship colours (see Figure 19). The distinct *tongues* of the Mallorquín ikat are picked up again in the fabric

Figure 18. Z. Liao. Colourful Route, 2019, two bracelets, aluminum, fibre, Ø 70mm. Photo: S. O'Hana

Figure 19. Teixits Viçens, Coffee Set Blue, 202, cup and saucer, ceramic. Photo: supplied by Teixits Viçens.

Figure 20. Z. Wei, 2019, bracelet, Teixits Viçens fabrics, silver plated base metal, length approx: 200mm. Photo: S. O'Hana

shown in Figure 20. By first reducing one *tongue* to a stylised minimum of three steps, the design then relies on the repetition and inversion of individual elements to create a pattern that references the staggered structure of the original motif. Meticulously sewn edges define each element to form the flexible bracelet. The addition of silver components and company logo were an enterprising decision by the student and were well received by the company team as a method of adding value to a fabric jewellery piece.

SELECTED WORK: INSPIRATION FROM LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

Pieces inspired by the mechanical process and observation of how cloth is woven, expressed a different viewpoint. The only proposal to concentrate entirely on articulation with no reference to colour is the design seen in Figure 21. It is composed of identical elements extracted from the understanding of how adding a warp to the weft requires an alternating vertical movement of shafts on the loom. The finished bracelet, shown in Figure 22, is 3D printed and cast into solid metal before being gold plated.

By contrast the brooch in Figure 23 places colour centre stage through its reference to the weaving process. At first glance it appears that the threads have been dyed in solid colours by tying them in sections according to the pattern required, as the method of

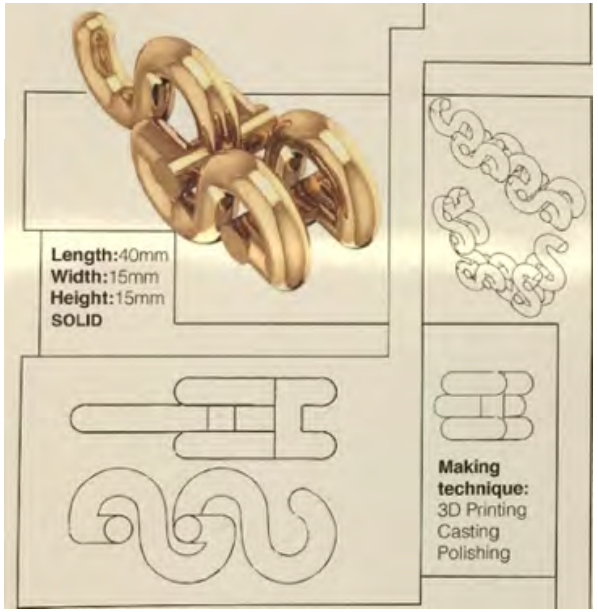

Figure 21. C. Duan, 2019, poster (detail) for the design of Connecting Jewellery. Photo: S. O'Hana

Figure 22. C. Duan, Connecting Jewellery, 2019, articulated bracelet, 3D printed, cast in base metal, gold plated, 40mm x 15mm x 15mm. Photo: S. O'Hana

resist dying for the *Roba de Llengües*, explained earlier. But it is an illusion of this, being instead composed of a warp made of silver wires, with coloured threads woven across to specific points. The enlarged image of the brooch, shown in Figure 24, illustrates the resourceful nature of this design that, by measured composition of white amongst coloured threads, achieves the effect of the original *tongues* in a scaled down version, appropriate for wearing as jewellery.

Objects on display in the shop at Teixits Viçens also became the focus of some attention, and this can be seen in the poster in Figure 25. *Window Goods* illustrates the design of a simple choker (see Figure 26), inspired by the frames on which the cylinders of threads are displayed in the shop. The triangular metal structure becomes another miniaturised response to the company environment, and the catch, so often overlooked in prioritising aesthetics, is cleverly hidden within the barrel holding the fabric.

Figure 23. X. Zhang, 2019, brooch, silver, cotton. Photo: S. O'Hana

Figure 24. X. Zhang, 2019, brooch (detail), silver, cotton. Photo: S. O'Hana

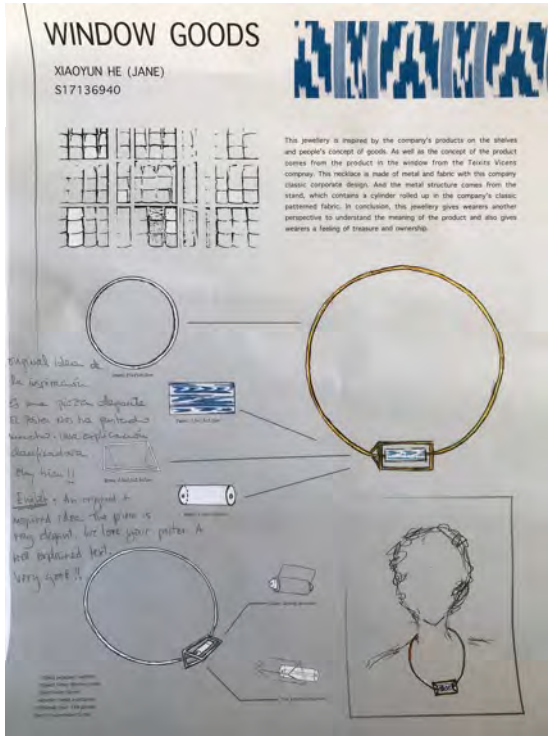

Figure 25. X. He, 2019, poster for the design of Window Goods. Photo: S. O'Hana

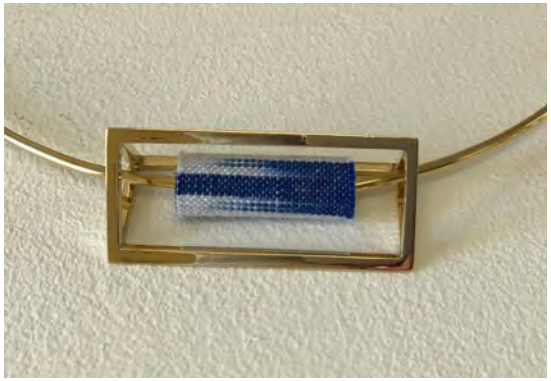

Figure 26. X. He, Window Goods, 2019, choker (detail), base metal, gold plated, Teixits Viçens fabric, 55mm x 15mm x 15mm. Photo: S. O'Hana

SELECTED WORK: WINNING DESIGNS

The team at Teixits Viçens reviewed the submitted pieces with the author, discussing the aesthetics, commercial potential of the designs, company style fit and quality of final production. This was a critical moment in the collaboration as it required a particular combination of business acuity, knowledge of jewellery production and an understanding of academia. The company team were drawn to some designs but establishing three winners became less clear. The submissions ranged in commercial potential, quality of finish and realistic wearing possibilities, but what academic staff might see as a learning stage with room for improvement may not so easily be understood by industry. To conclude the project in time, the academic team elected three winning submissions based on verbal discussions with the company These are presented in reverse order.

The third award was given to the design *Chain? or Tassle?* The poster (see Figure 27) explains how patterns in the company fabrics remind the student of traditional chains and tassels of Chinese accessories. These are unpicked and brought into three-dimensions by laser cutting individual elements in wood, then wrapping them with single-coloured threads in reference to specific company fabrics. The final composition, seen in Figure 28, shows how the tassels and gold-plated hairpin bring a uniquely Chinese response to the Mallorquín fabrics, effectively merging the two distant cultures into one piece.

The second award takes inspiration from the traditional mechanical spinning equipment used in the Teixits Viçens' factory. The bracelet, seen in Figure 29, shows

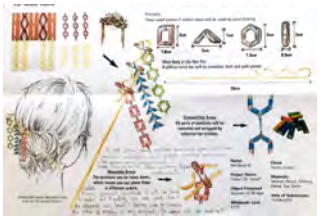

Figure 27. W. Xi, 2019, poster for the design of a hairpin. Photo: S. O'Hana

a gold-plated frame through which a thin strip of company fabric replaces the threads normally found on the equipment. This was a favoured design by the company because of its clear visual reference and simple elegance, both fitting their Mediterranean

We had a feeling that the bracelet presented by H. Gower in brass and blue threads, inspired by our workshop spinning machinery, would be an important design for us (Campomar, 2019).

contemporary aesthetic. First prize was awarded to the proposal *Flàmules DIY Brooch Kit* (see Figure 31). Using a precise combination of separately created components, the student presents in her poster (see Figure 32) an assembly complete with brooch elements and findings, colour coordinated company threads for winding, including an instruction sheet (see Figure 33) and a bag for safe keeping. The idea is appealing because it attracts, though not exclusively, a younger audience, but also, in unpicking the composition of the fabric and reducing it back to separate threads, the kit presents individuals with the freedom to arrange their own colour variation to suit. In providing the customer with a choice in the making, some knowledge of the company's weaving history and techniques

Figure 28. W. Xi, Chain? or Tassel? 2019, hairpin, gilding metal, gold plated, walnut wood, fibre, length 200mm. Photo: S. O'Hana

are also transferred, reinforcing in this way the company's hand-made ethos.

CONCLUSIONS

The live project carried out by undergraduate students from the School of Jewellery in Birmingham is presented in this paper via a brief overview of Bottomley's Tech-tile project, both sharing a background of Mediterranean textile histories. Diverse craft vocabularies are used in the interest of developing new production ranges for industry, but it is also useful to know how fundamentally different the cultures are that have been managed in this

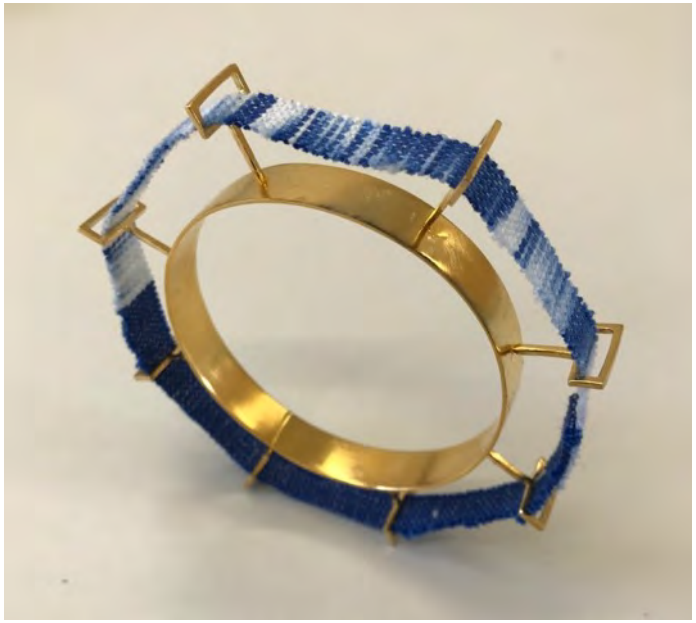

Figure 29. H. Gower, 2019, bracelet, brass, gold plated, Teixits Viçens fabric. Photo: S. O'Hana

project. The provenance of most student participants, is China, one of the largest countries in the world renowned for its mass commercial production, and Teixits Viçens, an artisan, family-run company on a small island in the Mediterranean where all processes from design to finished article happen under one roof.

Feedback from the Teixits Viçens team was discussed in Mallorquín, written in Spanish and translated to English for a group whose majority first language was Mandarin, though the conversation was driven mainly by the common language of making and design thinking.

An important result of the live project is that it allowed the multiple voices of teachers and students to reach the public arena (Fanghanel, 2013). Not only is the students' learning transformed by the process of having to design for a client and by receiving valuable professional

Figure 30. Teixits Viçens, 2018, spinning equipment at the Teixits Viçens factory, Pollença, Mallorca. Photo: S. O'Hana with kind permission from Teixits Viçens

feedback on the proposals, but in addition academics are able to further develop teaching and learning methodologies for subsequent collaborative external projects. This may also underpin and extend the academics' own research, a concept proposed by Mike

Neary for progressive pedagogic practice that he named Student as Producer (Neary, 2011).

As a winning idea, the *Flàmules DIY Brooch Kit* is outstanding because it shows smart thinking for a new type of product, but importantly it also brings to the customer a knowledge of materials and an involvement in the act of creation. To know how and where something is made instils in us an investment that promotes a much-needed responsibility as consumers (Lloyd-Jones, 2011).

…as we are not jewellers, the collaboration with students from Birmingham City University has been very useful to us because it has brought us close to the essence, the most primitive and innocent part of the creative process. Being linked only by craft is very exciting and experimental, because we speak the same language, without ever having met (Campomar, 2019).

Figure 31. B. Zhao. Flàmules DIY Brooch Kit, 2019, Teixits Viçens fabric and cotton threads, wood, copper, 55mm x 95mm. Photo: S. O'Hana

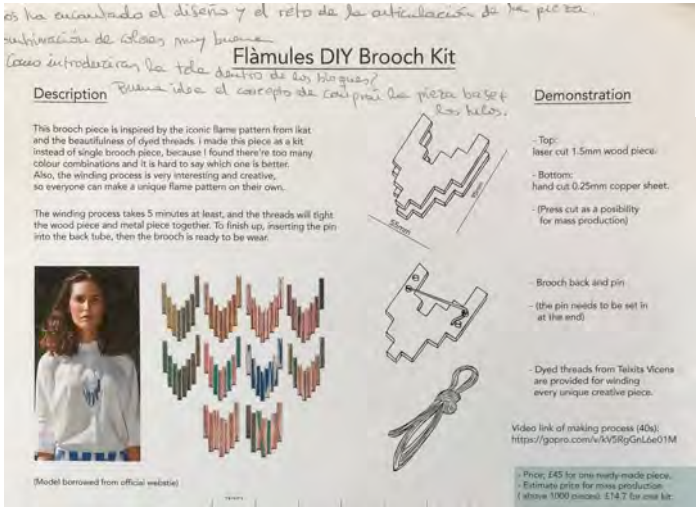

Figure 32. B. Zhao, 2019, poster for the design of Flàmules DIY Brooch Kit. Photo: S. O'Hana

Figure 32. B. Zhao, 2019, instruction sheet for the design of Flàmules DIY Brooch Kit. Photo: S. O'Hana

But making, of course, is not all about the hand made. It includes the intelligent use of innovation that technology apportions the crafts, demonstrated by the articulated bracelet in Figure 22.

(Fortuny) now set up workshops for fabric printing, etching, photography, carpentry, and painting. These were virtual laboratories for experiment and invention (Deschodt, 2000:30).

Fortuny also showed this in his textiles and Artwork. He was a clear advocate of the newly emerging techniques in photography and printmaking for the advance of his multifaceted output. In the Tech-tile project, Bottomley and O'Hana responded to Fortuny's oeuvre by exploring emerging technologies of the early 2000s, when laser processing was already becoming a regular tool of the fashion and textile industries. Fortuny would most likely have made very effective use of a CO_2 laser to engrave his rich velvets and perhaps replicate the art of devoré.

> The student workshop in hand weaving and colour thread mixing influenced many submissions, as can clearly be seen in the brooch in Figure 23 and the neckpiece *Time*, in Figure 17. But the underlying value of this learning, this self-transformation, was the reciprocal session offered in return to the textile students at the School of Jewellery. Here, the symbiotic relationship that jewellery

has with fashion and textiles was understood first-hand via relevant exercises in techniques such as wire drawing. Jewellery student helpers, as well as textile students, understood together that it would take a highly ductile metal, like gold, to draw down a wire thin enough to weave. This put into context the historical use of precious metals in textiles, thought to have originated in China over two thousand years ago, but which is still used very exclusively in fashion today (Bright, 2008).

Nonetheless, industry and academia are not always reconciled, and expectations can vary unknowingly. Three finalists were not selected by the company (they were ultimately confirmed by the academic team) though a personable relationship holds to date. That the project was not fixed by a contract and that students were unable to meet the client in person, both had detrimental consequences. Nothing matches the effect on learners than having the client respond to their work in the studio. Without this there is a loss of adrenalin and so of urgency as familiar lecturers take their place for yet another module. Similarly, that the company could not meet with the group created a distance and a loss of understanding of what it means to be an international (and national) jewellery student in the U.K. By contrast Tech-tile was a project built on the relationship of the author with curators of Fortuny's work in Venice, absorbing the subject first-hand and in situ.

Critical feedback from Teixits Viçens highlighted H. Gower's bracelet (see Figure 29) which they found very appealing, and the brooch made by X. Zhang (see Figure 23) which they were pleasantly surprised by. And though they point at a lack of finish and contextual presentation, they also remain open to further collaborations. The following points are therefore offered as conclusive overview and help with subsequent external projects between academia and industry:

- Establish a memorandum of understanding from the outset between both parties.
- Engage the help of a legal team to draw up appropriate documentation that clarifies:
    - Intellectual Property
    - Royalties / product prices
    - Prizes
    - Dates of project duration including deadlines
- Manage the expectations of industry who may be unfamiliar with undergraduate levels of attainment and establish a project with clear, expected outcomes and firm boundaries.
- Enable the client to meet with the students.
- Transmit to students the critical importance of design thinking, relevant materials testing, contextual presentation and most importantly: finish.

We believe this first experimental collaboration has been very positive for us and we hope it has a future. We are open to carrying out other projects with the university. (Campomar, 2019)

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The Contemporary Jewelry Perspective. Meanings and evolutions of a necessary practice.

Author: *Chiara Scarpitti*

JJR journal of jewellery research

ABSTRACT

The essay affirms the legitimacy of contemporary jewelry practice as a meaningful form of cultural production that cuts across the fields of design, art, and industrial production. The analysis is double and concerns the meaning of the ornament, and its projection to future scenarios defined by renovated instances and digital technologies.
Concerning the ornamentation's debate, it has been at the center of the entire 20th century, from Loos to Morris, Bloch to Maldonado right up to the present day. The question has mainly focused on the usefulness of decoration, the aesthetics and its value. Following the instances of contemporaneity, the objects move now in a multi-faceted direction, aimed at asking questions and expressing concepts, and becoming, in this sense, narrative and relational "subjects". In the jewel object, where uselessness constitutes its immense wealth and uniqueness, the issue becomes complex since its existence is related mainly to a series of functions that are not practical but communicative, and identifiable as intimately useful. Far from a short-term inspiration, the contemporary jewelry designer has necessarily fed on a cultured design study, expressing the vision of the world he wants to communicate. It is not just a matter of embellishing people through an ornament, but of incorporating immaterial values, creating an object-thought capable of stimulating the mind and producing knowledge. Thinking about the future scenario of this design approach, the international debate on jewelry requires new perspectives, focused on deepening the discipline towards the main issues of the current era. In the face of changes such as Industry 4.0 and widespread digitalization, it is no surprise that contemporary jewelry starts to need exploring a broader spectrum of topics, including sustainability, technologies, politics and social issues that most influence today's society.

Keywords: *contemporary jewellery, design culture, aesthetic of the ornament, philosophy, digital technologies, future scenarios*

INTRODUCTION

JEWEL AS AN OBJECT-DISCOURSE

In the field of design culture, the traditional relationship between "design" and "industrial" seems to be crumbling today in the light of a contemporary production oriented towards a heterogeneity of expressive possibilities and diversified solutions. The disorientation has also been amplified by the rising of new fields of investigation, connected to the more immaterial and artistic areas of design. Among the provocative statements that have investigated the usual concept of industrial design in recent decades, it is worth mentioning the one curated by the *Master Curating and Writing* of the *Design Academy* of Eindhoven presented at the *Fuori Salone del Mobile* in Milan in 2014. When asked "If the world needs another chair", the text shifts the focus of the question to the new roles of design about the ever-changing needs of the contemporary world. "The heartfelt rhetorical question 'the world needs another chair' can be answered simply with a 'Yes.' Every era deserves its chair design as a testament to its time. But the world needs more. [...] The world of design needs critical reflection, heated debate, well-informed discourse." (D.A.E., 2014, p.11).

In light of these considerations, the functionality parameter contains multiple meanings and aspects. Different interpretations and criteria may evaluate an object's functionality: the degree of technological experimentation, the material innovation, the theoretical speculation, the future vision of socio-cultural scenarios, and more. "Rarely do the innovators of the project find themselves among the designers who respond directly to market demand, beyond the usefulness and importance of their products, because the market is by definition conservative. [...] The world needs designers who dare to look beyond the professional limits and what the market and society demand." (Schouwenberg, 2013, pp. 98-105).
Similarly, these reflections can be translated from the product to the design jewelry world since historically, it traces its design origins in methodologies and approaches that belonged to this field. But, differently from the industrial product, jewelry's raison d'être lies mainly in a physical object that interacts with the user, constituting itself as an experience that is materially tangible or functional to a thought. By deepening jewelry's materiality and perception, its sector's current transformation also depends on this duplicity, amplified by various factors such as the segmentation and internationalization of the market, the advent of digital technologies, the transdisciplinarity of the practice, and the self-production. All these factors determine together the growth and consolidation of a new type of jewel, generally now defined as "contemporary."
Talk about contemporaneity means to talk about future thinking. A speculative investigation into the aesthetics and future visions of jewelry cannot be immediately circumscribed by market laws related traditionally to its commerciality, portability, durability, ease of use. The degree of expressiveness of a contemporary design jewel can't respond only to these parameters.

Its value can also consist of its ability to interact with a community, investigate new cultural frontiers, and witness its times.

All of these can also be considered equally fundamental aspects. Regardless of what are the intimate needs it may satisfy, the contemporary jewelry project manifests its deep identity through a more complex meaning, as a kind of *object-discourse*. "In the civilization of objects, the word loses its primacy: material products are texts, they are discourse. They speak to us of the social and cultural history of men. Which is also the history of ideas, behavior, spiritual meaning, ethical and aesthetic principles." (Penati, 2013, pp.11-12).

THE ORNAMENT BEYOND SURFACE.

In line with the ideals of the rationalist project of the twentieth century, Adolf Loos, for the first time, presented the ornament as synonymous with waste, defining it as something useless and ethically improper. He did not accept decoration as an element juxtaposed or detached from a shape: each work had to be seen in the light of its necessity, where the aesthetic result is obtained by combining sobriety, simplicity, quality of the raw material, and perfection of the execution technique. With the publication in 1909 of *Ornamento e Delitto*, a long series of comparisons and reversals of perspective opened up to the scenarios and modes of action of the twenty-first century. Many decades later,

in the opposite direction, some of them start to concern a unitarian idea of aesthetic, meaning, and function, beyond the separated form-function dichotomy. Synthesizing the postmodernist thought with a renovated contemporary spirit, Paolo Portoghesi in 1980 affirms: "Postmodernity proposes the end of prohibitionism, the opposition to functionalism, the reconsideration of the arts as an aesthetic process, not exclusively utilitarian; the return to ornament, the affirmation of a widespread hedonism." (Portoghesi, 1980, p.25). In this perspective, as Mendini affirms, hedonism does not correspond to the superficiality of the soul but rather to the freedom of thought toward a kind of more instinctual creativity.

Today decoration may prevail over design. And I say to myself: maybe even architecture could have its fashion shows, could have a seasonal character, could change as well as the decorations on a skirt! Decorations vanish into thin air with the speed with which they arrive, and in that transitory moment in which they live, we like them morbidly. They are like snow, pills, festoons, and scales, making even the coldest structures of our everyday life energetic. [...] I am attracted by the "depth of the surface." (Mendini, 1981).
Mendini's reflection, who has always been "obsessed" by the concept of decoration, describes the critical gaze through which today's mankind is allowed to observe the contemporary jewelry with new eyes. In them, ornament and thought coincide through correspondence between aesthetic and meaning. In the jewelry case, an object par excellence where "its uselessness constitutes its immense richness and uniqueness" (Perniola, 1994, p.16), the question is much complex since it is precisely through this intimate correspondence between appearance and understanding that the exchange between the user and the world takes place. And, in this sense, its very existence unfolds.
For this type of object, the external surface is configured as the first visual and mental contact element. It is a relational membrane between the author and the user, between the external world and the individual.

Surface and depth coexist to the extent that one lives and flows into the other in a mutual exchange of thought connections.

As Mario Perniola writes, "there are two different ways in which the surface can be recognized as a depth. The first is linked to libertinism and dandyism and could be expressed by the phrase "the superficial is deep." [...] But there is a second way of understanding the relationship between surface and depth that sounds: "the deep is superficial," that is to say, there is nothing so intimate, internal and substantial that it is not in its turn showable and evident." (Perniola, 2004, p.101-102).
In this philosophical perspective, in several parts of the speech *Iconoclastia and Ornament*, held at *Documenta 7* in Kassel in 1968, Bloch suggests an aesthetics not necessarily identifiable with the transparency and easy comprehension, characteristics traditionally attributable to a past design paradigm. His analysis is aimed at an eternal, inevitably enigmatic research. He refers to an ornament understood as an *Organon of knowledge*, a kind of inner body organ full of sensitivity. (Bloch, 1968, pp.77-78).

In the latter meaning, in particular, if we stick to the term's etymology, to say that a jewel is ornamental would mean that a jewel has as its primary function that of embellishing a person on the surface. But, if by jewel we mean an object that is metaphorically embodied by the user - which is like a part of the body of the wearer, like an element creating a new symbolic combination - then, it is difficult to remain on that superficial plane, the traditional etymological sense of ornament. To put it in Gombrich's way, decorating a body means transforming it, superimposing a new order on a pre-existing state, contradicting or empowering the original structure. (Gombrich, 2000, pp.112-113). Our original structure - which is the naked body - is always modified, expanded, revised, and reinterpreted through a principle of self-modeling and self-amplification. In these expansion possibilities, a jewelry piece has the possibility to activate all his power.

TANGIBLE MEANINGS

Reaffirming the importance of immaterial thought on the logic of the practical function, Andrea Branzi says that the exclusive association of design as industrial and functionalist "eliminates all the long previous history linked to the traditional creation of apparently useless objects; but like all useless things, absolutely indispensable to the growth of human civilization, which does not expand only through tools, useful or functional devices, but above all through useless things such as art, music, poetry." In this vision, it is clear that in the contemporary object, and even more so in jewelry, this apparent uselessness is essential and full of meanings.
Referring to the attractive power of a jewel, in the essay *Ornamenti*, Ettore Sottsass states that, at the origin of jewelry, there is the human desire to possess virtue, power, a special and unique light. "Exceptional is the possession of little shells arrived from unknown distant seas. Exceptional is the possession of quetzal feathers, green-gold epiphanies in the darkness of the forest. Exceptional is the possession of amber, resin from trees sunk in the very, very ancient swamps. Exceptional is the possession of coral, collected on the plains, on the rocks at the sea's bottom. Exceptional is the possession of gold, dispersed in the waters of the mountains". (Sottsass, 2001, p. 550).
In a contemporary jewel's project, it should never overlook the immaterial value of a meaning.

There is another way of making jewelry, which does not pursue the logic of turnover as its primary purpose and is not intended for mass production, but rather to the possibility of the designer to think new ways of operating and being in the world.

Reflecting on the controversial relationship between design-industry-jewelry, this passes through the urgent need to open the discipline to multiple productive scenarios, not only dependent on large industrial systems. This is an indispensable premise for a rethinking of its relationships since it puts the single author's responsibility at the center of the field.
Far from only industrial purposes, a function of a jewel based itself on a mixture of values - not practical, but symbolic and communicative - that can be identified as real utilities: functional to consecrate a promise of love or a pact of friendship; functional to express mourning

or a joy; functional to the recognition of social status; functional to the communication of its own world vision. Each jewel can have multiple meanings, intertwined and always linked to something personal - non-verbal messages, difficult to summarize in a unique and defined purpose. "Ornaments are in fact simultaneously: something that we have or put on; things that we are; things that are us, that is, that determine our identity, whether it is permanent or only ephemeral." (Fiorani, 2006, pp. 23-24).
Just as in the past, a jewel represents a tangible platform on which the content of meaning grafts itself: a religious, sentimental, apotropaic, ritual, social meaning. The resulting union is a set of cumulative meanings, which can overlap, contradict and strengthen each other, creating a unique, rich, dense image whose summing up is inseparable.
In this sense, a jewel has to be seen as a transcendent and visionary object, which also embraces the values of symbolism, empathy, mystery. More than in other design objects, in the jewel, the surface represents its essence. In this sense, its function assumes the role of a powerful symbolic metaphor for the wearer, especially when the appearance, thanks to the design, perfectly expresses its content.

RELATIONAL JEWELRY

Around the idea of jewelry, different worlds and design approaches gravitate. One jewelry is linked to the fashion sector, one linked to the high jewelry and precious materials sector, one linked to the world of art and design, and others. Often, they are intertwined, and their boundaries are difficult to trace. However, each of these pursues different purposes and covers needs that differ according to the type of meaning and context they embody.

To define more precisely the kind of jewel we are talking about, we can start from the analysis of its etymology. Far from an idea of a jewel understood as *iocum*, whose Latin meaning indicates adorning oneself while having fun, the type of jewel referred to this essay coincides with a jewel that hybridizes art and design, thought and technique, invention and matter. According to this orientation - in line with Skinner's definitions of contemporary jewelry - its aesthetic function is not the overriding reason for its use. (Skinner, 2013, pp.10-11).

Contemporary jewelry connected to the design culture does not create passing objects. It is not linked to fast fashions. It does not have a decorative nature as its ultimate goal.

Simultaneously, the idea of futility is subverted by a different selective criterion by the user: a choice motivated by reasons of cultural nature, of meaning, of adherence to the concepts expressed by the designer, or the artist who conceived it.
The jewel-project performs its function in public and involves the body's exteriorization towards the community: the bejeweled body is how the individual exposes himself to the world, communicates, and reveals himself. In this vision, the jewels chosen for self-representation are worn as a sort of unwritten identity card that speaks about us. If we look with a careful eye, a jewel can trace its owner's cultural spirit, distinguish it, and sometimes disclose its inner soul. It

can describe aspects of a person through its presence or lack. (Scarpitti, 2019b, pp. 89-95).
To express the importance of a concept in a jewel, many Italian masters of contemporary jewelry - like GianCarlo Montebello, Giorgio Vigna, Carla Riccoboni, Giampaolo Babetto, Annamaria Zanella, and Alba Lisca (Fig. 1, 2, 3, 4) - have reinterpreted the quality and beauty typical of Italian design, creating timeless objects. Their objects result from long research work on materials, techniques, shapes, and contents at the same time. In the light of a design conceived in this way, we speak of identity and performance objects, objects that "make be," projections of a non-verbal mechanism of communication. Jewels like those are made of both precious and non-precious materials. Through the most sophisticated constructive processes, they recall symbols and metaphors, complex imagery that passes to the wearer through a spontaneous transposition.
Through its specific inclination to public ostentation, the value of a jewel is deeply connected to society and the other with which we are continually confronted. In addition to the value of use, we can speak of communicative value, when a jewel has its primary purpose of telling and enriching human lives. In this sense, linked to its ability to establish relations, we could speak of contemporary jewelry as a relational practice. (Bourriaud, 2002, p.25).
It's a relationship that involves the user, the observer, and the object - a knot of meaning that is both surface and substance. It is a narrative that is evocative, suggestive, and not demonstrative, capable of revealing immaterial meanings on human bodies.

Fig.1 | Optic topic, mask, Man Ray, produced by GEM Montebello, 1978. Materials: gold plated silver.

Fig.2 | Volo, earrings, Alba Polenghi Lisca, 2008. Materials: silver, satin-finished plate. Ph. Altin Manaf.

Fig.3 | Superleggeri, necklace, GianCarlo Montebello, 2000. Materials: steel, 750 yellow gold.

Fig.4 | Madreforme, pendants, Carla Riccoboni, 2013. Materials: silver.

Referring to the symbolic dimension, Raimon Pannikar states that "The symbol is neither a purely objective entity present in the world (that thing 'down there'), nor a merely subjective entity present in mind (in us 'down here'). No symbol is not within and for a subject [...] The symbol embraces and constitutively binds the two poles of reality: the object and the subject. [...] It is something that "invites" the relationship, the participation." (Pannikar, 1979).
Understanding and absorbing a jewel's meaning in these terms is equivalent to embracing its underlying system of signs and symbols, bringing to light a human universe of stories and values. To relate to it, being in a state of correspondence means to take charge of its message and convey it to the outside world, in a continuing dialogue with the other. "We are still here to show ourselves to others, to play comedies or dramas; we are still here to dress, to decorate ourselves, to decorate ourselves from head to toe to be able to represent well that part we think we want to represent [...] The part we are playing is always more or less drawn by the desire to be or to appear in some way "exceptional": sometimes exceptional to escape conventions, sometimes exceptional to blend in." (Sottsass, 2001).

JEWEL, SUBJECT, THOUGHT

Different from traditional jewelry, contemporary jewelry is characterized by a strongly innovative approach. It does not necessarily adopt precious materials, but rather it is oriented towards an evolution of new aesthetics, meanings, and processes. Contemporary jewelry is an advanced research sector compared to a classic type of jewelry, which crosses

geographical boundaries and it is an interesting impulse for a design renewing. Thanks to the role of the web and social media, it is constantly in expansion, consolidating its importance. This emerges from the data traffic generated from the new online platforms for the sector knowledge, such as *Klimt02* (whose views are doubling year after year), *AJF Art Jewelry Forum* (mainly aimed at sharing critical texts and articles), associations, blogs, and curatorial projects of different nature.

The core of its investigation could be focused on a different kind of craftsmanship, understood not as a category but as a process, i.e., a way to approach an artistic project through technical and intellectual skills. (Adamson, 2007, p.3-4). The relationship between materials and techniques in contemporary jewelry is emblematic since it consists of a relationship that challenges the usual compositional norms of a precious ornament. Traditional goldsmithing techniques are combined with ancient techniques' rediscovery - such as granulation, niello, filigree, for example - or advanced digital techniques or unusual materials such as coal, paper, wood, plastics, fabric, marble, or others, invented or assembled innovatively. It is a sensorial exploration of materials and technologies that sets the reasons for its being, first of all, in a semantic investigation of the object, understood as a sensitive extension of one's interiority. "Design is something organic and living that is born inside and in contact with the body or the "flesh" of materials. It is not an abstract fact [...] but is born within the potential of materials. It is matter-form". (Fiorani, 2000, pp. 12-15). In this interpretation and manipulation of indefinite matter, understood as substance, all the fascination of designing a contemporary jewel lies.

The difficult categorization of contemporary jewelry can also be explained by its adherent being of an era, the present one, defined from time to time as liquid, weak, hypermodern - understood not as monological, but dense of unresolved points of thought. In its being multiform, multi-semantic, and transversal to heterogeneous techniques and materials, contemporary jewelry perfectly expresses a nuanced and constantly changing identity. In the *essay What is Contemporary Jewelry?* Damian Skinner sketches out a series of basic principles, connoting its definition in a "body-oriented, self-reflexive, artisanal study activity", closely connected with the artist practice. (Skinner, 2013).

From these multiple perspectives, contemporary jewelry dialogues with its specific epoch while remaining connected and, at the same time, overcoming the expressive and communicative methods with which traditional jewelry operates. Indeed, rather than faithfully representing its own time, it tries to go beyond it, (Agamben, 2008, pp.3-4) anticipating its social, material, and technological evolution, in the risk, sometimes, of being misunderstood and remaining hermetic to the general public.

This is undoubtedly a complicated challenge for a sector that, by its very nature, is bound to ancient know-how that has crystallized over time. However, precisely because of this ancient devotion to the past, it is more than ever desirable to implement an evolutionary process that, while drawing on history - in terms of knowledge and techniques - knows how to deal with the human being while respecting its actuality.

From a design perspective, whenever contemporary jewelry takes on a new challenge, its presence offers the viewer a reflection on what and how it can exist in the world. Within the context of a theoretical-critical

culture of contemporary jewelry, it is a question of reflecting on the relationship between the object's metaphorical capacity to evoke something other than itself and its strictly technical/aesthetic connotation. In this sense, moving away from the domain of functionality, the technique suggests new research paths through which the most humanistic and sensitive component of the project finds space.

Jewel, subject, and thought are connected to the extent that there is an exchange of energy and mutual influence.

The jewel is, indeed, a device with a strong symbolic power that is tied to our emotional and perceptual sphere, amplifying it. "Jewelry is more intimate than a picture or a sculpture. It is one thing to hang a painting on my wall and consciously invite someone into my home to show it to him, and it is quite another thing to pin a piece of jewelry to my lapel and go to the office, into the subway, or to the opera house. I must be able to identify 100 percent with a piece of jewelry. There is no distance between the object and its wearer." (Britton, 2018, pp.14-18). In this interpenetration between the wearer and the jewel, the type of manufacture with which the object is made plays a fundamental role. The study of its manufacturing takes on the meaning of a precise choice by the designer on whether or not to explore a certain sensation for a purpose that is not only functionalistic but, above all, cognitive. In this sense, the technique's comprehension also passes through the senses and symbolic language: an evocative dimension that express meanings oriented to a new intellectual experience.

THE DIGITAL SCENARIOS OF CONTEMPORARY JEWELRY

In the background of the contemporary jewelry spreading, the industry 4.0 is everywhere and affordable, while contemporary design culture interfaces with digitalization in an increasingly integrated way. It is quite clear that the transition from digital to post-digital is underway. The international debate on digital production requires a greater awareness of the role of design within the future scenarios of jewelry. The digital technologies are now widespread, but the places of production, if they really want to innovate, have to be sensitive cultural systems. The stratified know-how must be constantly renewed. In this scenario, the relationship between man and digital is increasingly complex since technology has been an expression of civilization - now assumes a crucial role. The speed with which computer systems are progressing together with the arrival of the *I.o.T.* (*Internet Of Things*) - now evolved towards the *I.o.E.* (*Internet Of Everything*) (Cisco, 2019) - place the world in a global network, which connects men, things and living beings. In the *I.o.E.*, the human world, the natural world, and the world of the web coexist in a unique experience of life. With the elimination of material and virtual barriers, the design uses new working methods, hybrid tools, and matters.
The digital component has become an essential element also in a contemporary project that looks to the future, even more so if these technologies are integrated with science and nature, towards a hybridizing productive horizon. Innovative software, 3D scanners, manipulation of new materials, and contamination

between skills shape new product scenarios and completely subvert the old way of designing. This is the landscape in which a series of pilot experiments highlight a renewed relationship between subject, jewelry, and technology. The theories of Mel Alexenberg bear witness to this: "Postdigital pertains to art forms that address the humanization of digital technologies through an interplay between digital, biological, cultural, and spiritual systems, between cyberspace and real space, between embodied media and mixed reality in social and physical communication, between high tech and high touch experiences, between visual, haptic, auditory, and kinesthetic media experiences, between virtual and augmented reality, between roots and globalization." (Alexenberg, 2011, p.11).
From atoms to bits to return to atoms - or rather to physical matter and the importance of our corporeity - one of the future jewelry design scenarios consists of total customization that takes the individual as the starting point and arrival of the project. (Fig. 5, 6, 7, 8)

In the post-digital era, the design production no longer means repetition identical to itself, but it is a process of singularizing an object that, combined with a person, reveals its most intimate characteristics.

"The body is our first technique, but it is also our first material. It is the medium with which we construct and modify the world. To call the body into question, building up our own subject, means to be rooted in the sensitive being that we are, and in perception and action." (Fiorani, 2000, p.15).
The tangibility of our existence passes through a revisitation of the body understood as a field for an exploration both of the material perception, through the adoption of traditional goldsmith techniques and artisan production, and digital use of technologies and computerized tools.
Among the most recent researches, the biometric design can generate a diversified multiplicity of objects adopting as formal parameters the body's measurements. Through 3D scans and virtual mapping of a single part - such as the neck or the wrists - it is possible to build, with the help of algorithms, unique jewels that perfectly fit the human anatomy.
Experiments of this kind are already widespread in the biomedical field for the generation of prostheses and custom-made limbs. However, in fashion and design, these can give rise to new wearability for the jewel, close to each person's aesthetic and functional needs.
On the borderline between biological and digital, several designers and artists are investigating the intersection between practices related to microbiology. Jewels are connected to the body's external or internal anatomy because they are linked to organs and clinical parameters, return outputs that can be transformed into shapes, colors, emotions, all singular and unrepeatable. The iris' morphology, the heartbeat, the neuronal frequencies or the breath, a strand of hair, a fingerprint: each element of the body can condense into a precious object.

Fig.5| The Aesthetic of Fears, mask, Dorry Hsu, 2013. Materials: 3D printing clear resin, hand colour dye.

Fig.6 | Alter Self I, brooch, Darja Popolitova, 2017. Materials: plastic, silver, steel.

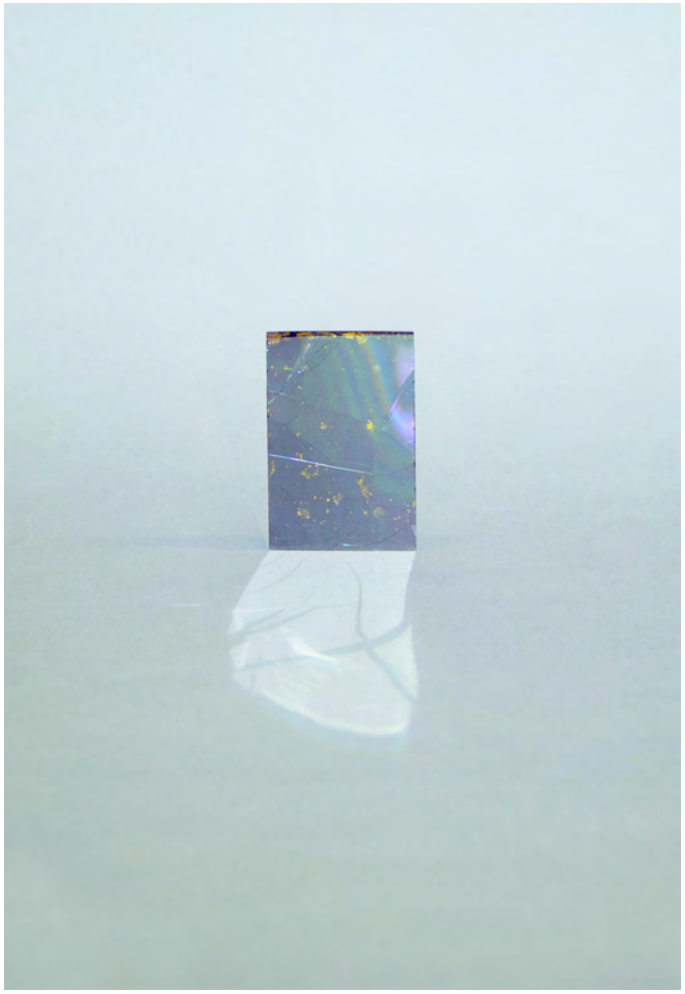

Fig.7| Black Transparency, brooch, Conversation Piece, 2018. Materials: gold, e-waste.

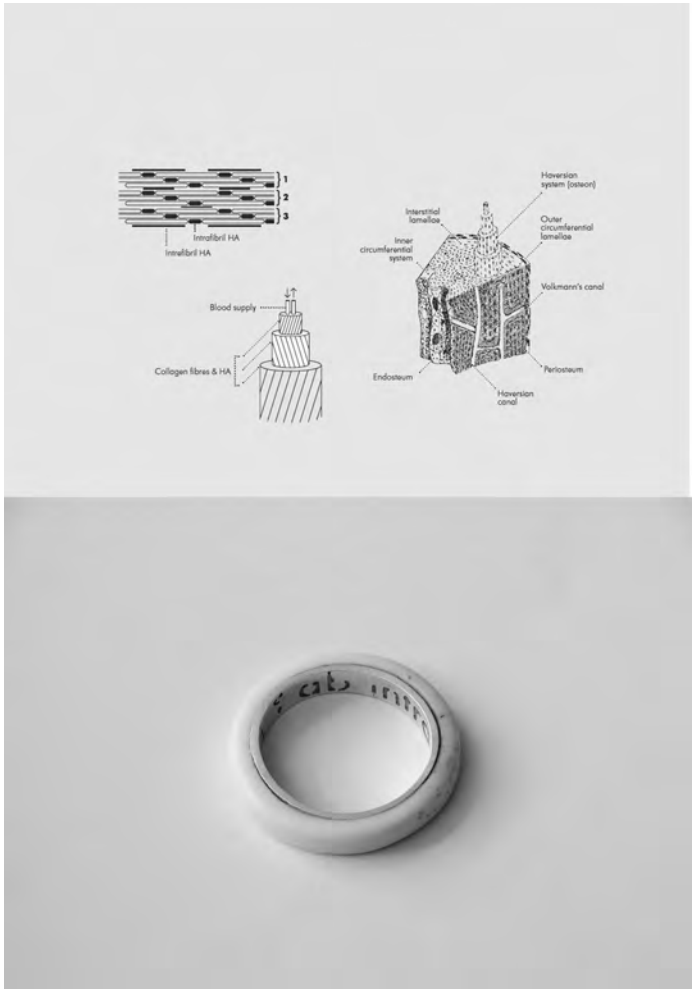

Fig.8 | Bio Jewellery, ring, Ian Thompson, Nikki Stott, Tobie Kerridge, 2006. Materials: silver, bone tissue.

CONCLUSIONS

A NECESSARY PRACTICE.

In a transdisciplinary and post-digital vision, the contemporary jewelry designer appears as an alchemist who investigates nature's logic from the inside, reconstructing its dynamics, processes, and differences. However, these reflections do not always positively reconnect mankind with the natural environment but rather lead to a destabilization of the dichotomies of human-nature, human-human, and human-technology. It is the beginning of a design phase that places mankind at the center of technology, not only as the final recipient but also as an actor in the "construction" of his own process and reciprocal relationship.
Far from a short-term inspiration, the contemporary jewelry designer needs to nourish itself by a cultured research study by analyzing shapes, materials, the idea he wants to communicate, and its vision of the world. It is not just a question of embellishing the person through an operation of decoration, but of embedding within the object a meaningful immaterial value.

It concerns creating a disruptive thought able to stimulate the mind and to produce knowledge because, first of all, the contemporary jewel's design is aimed at intellectual consumption.

In light of this, the international debate on jewelry-making requires new perspectives focused on deepening this strategic design role.
From a production point of view, the gradual shift we witness is from a homologated manufacture of equal multiples - clearly exemplified by a previous industrial design paradigm - to a new manufacturing of unique multiples, towards a renewed 1:1 ratio between individual and product. (Scarpitti, 2019a, pp. 75-80). In this sense, digital technologies can be the most evocative frontiers for contemporary jewelry projects because of their ability to open horizons and explore new possibilities. Despite this, it is also essential to support them by a vision that binds itself to a humankind's anthropological dimension, for a deeper and actualized awareness. Not surprisingly, the future of this kind of disruptive jewelry will investigate a much always broader and unusual spectrum of new themes, including the sustainable, political, and ethical issues that affect today's society.

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Future-Makers: Making a Living without Costing the Earth

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ABSTRACT

In a world where exponential growth is recognised to be unsustainable, what place will products have in the future? By reflecting upon three commercial ventures this paper identifies the sustainability potential of a shift away from 'product' and towards craft as a process, highlighting ways this shift can be harnessed to increase wellbeing and improve our approach to sustainable practice.

As an educator, I argue that this shift should be reflected in the way we teach craft today. "Future-Makers" should be experts in *materiality* as well as material, with the ability to reshape, repair, improve and transform. In a future of active de-growth, craft practice can become a key component of our successfully transitioning toward a more sustainable world. It will be our students who will enact and therefore instigate a new normalcy of crafts practice for this future.

The idea of "Making a Living" discussed in this article positions success beyond a capitalist perspective of profit – the aims here are to achieve a satisfactory financial living for craftspeople whilst also achieving other success factors such as quality of life, enjoyment of work and a stable (no longer precarious) career.

"Costing the Earth" recognises that our current criteria for success in the crafts is unsustainable and that we need to move away from a ceaseless production of objects, whilst still retaining and championing crafts skills and a hands-on outlook. This article identifies that this would not be through the creation of 'products' but instead, for both makers and audience alike, through a wider embodiment of crafts practice as a way of being.

INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

Craft-making has been shown to aid wellbeing (Yair 2011), to build community (Gauntlett 2011) as well as providing a tangible connectedness with the world (Sennet 2009; Collins 2018). Yet our world is currently suffering for the products we create. Within all areas of craft, no matter the level of professionalism, there are objects produced that people do not need, and many models and prototypes made in the designing of these.

I am a goldsmith by profession, and in my free time I throw pots at a ceramics class. Some of these I have given as "gifts", most I make purely for the fun of making, and these are left unfired: crushed and reconstituted into useable clay to be thrown again the next week. The reason I no longer finish these pots is that I am acutely aware of the problems of over pot-ulation: we have just Too Much Stuff. Who am I to add more unnecessary "stuff" to the world? I call it "stuff" purposely because it is misleading here to get into a question of functional or non-functional objects, or of craft vs art. Does it matter if the plastic floating in the ocean is an old water bottle or a piece of contemporary jewellery? Ultimately it all ends up in the same place and perhaps we need to let go of sentimentality.

We have to take on board this responsibility just as much as any big business, because together we are big business. The crafts contribute £3.4bn to the UK economy (Crafts Council 2014). The university where I

teach sees around 300-400 students a year and each of them will make hundreds of objects. So what can we do? This leaves me in a conflicting situation as a maker and as a tutor. How can I prepare the makers of tomorrow to be able to exercise their creative agency, to be able to voice their ideas through material whilst retaining an awareness of the implications of this creative production?

The key takeaways from a crafts practice are not negligible. These are, amongst others: patience; material expertise; communication of concepts; dexterity; mastery leading to increased willpower to tackle future challenges, and increased confidence. Good craft education is important because it inspires autonomy and a sense of agency in the world - that what we think or are able to do matters, and that we can inspire change. We live in a world where products finish our sentences, guess our next steps, correct our mistakes and reroute us through the shortest most convenient paths, forgetting on the way how important it is to get lost, how muddling through a sentence or paragraph can lead to new routes of enquiry, how mistakes and explorations lead not only to new discoveries but also to self-growth. I am passionate about craft education because I see it rekindle that passion in others; how students' abilities with a piercing saw or a blowtorch trickle confidence into other areas of their lives, how students developing a creative voice through material find they can now interact with their surrounding world in a new way; fixing, changing or customising their environment and questioning what was previously a given.
Yet, in the recent DfE Research Report (DfE & IFS 2018), the value of craft education is measured only in outputs. Graduates from arts courses are economically worse off than those who study other subjects (for men, "studying creative arts actually reduces earnings by an average of 14% relative to not attending university" (DfE & IFS 2018, p42)). Our 'first-year earnings' record is lower than those who have left school without studying (ibid. p57-58). With governmental proposals to adjust fees relative to graduate income, we could be left running underfunded courses that may not be able to provide a level of material expertise that is so essential for a craft practice. From the perspective of a practitioner, this feels short-sighted. It would be helpful if the impact of crafts practice could be measured in an alternative way.

Within our current economic system however, 'making' must, if it is to be economically viable, transform into "making a living" (Arendt, H 1958). This focus on output may limit the opportunity for a craft career to lead to enhanced knowledge, self-growth or wellbeing, as in an equation where time = money, product must always win out over process. For creative practitioners this may mean spending less time and care making their work as an eye is kept on the profit margin. Making a living in the creative industries therefore becomes a very different experience than the careful craft making that attracted these makers to set up their own studio practices in the first place. Are there any ways for practitioners to experience the benefits of making within the current context of consumption?

Makers are resourceful entrepreneurs, often creating their own opportunities to earn a living. Research from the Crafts Council identifies that makers share

"[…]enthusiasm for an independent, self-directed career, making their own decisions and creating their own opportunities in pursuit of personal goals. Makers seem to find ways of working that suit them" (Yair 2011). Craft entrepreneurs are reassessing what it means to be entrepreneurial; profit may be less important than quality of life. Many new practitioners are entering the crafts as a second career, seeking a fulfilment and level of peace that was not forthcoming within their previous work. Yair (2011) continues to note that *"makers can - and do - create very viable businesses that also promote opportunities for personal satisfaction and work-life balance, which are known to enhance wellbeing."*

Through examples of public-facing workshops, this paper aims to identify entrepreneurial activities that retain the wellbeing of a craft practice without adding to issues of over-production and environmental damage.

PROCESS AS PRODUCT

If we wish to co-create a more environmentally friendly way of acting and being in the world, it is imperative that we begin to interact in a more physical, tangible way with this world that we are a part of. Learning a craft brings much more than an understanding of how to make. It brings a wider understanding and appreciation of the material world, leading to greater care and concern for our surroundings. This care then feeds back to us.

Throughout my own experiences as a crafts educator since 2009 I have noticed a gradual shift in the public's approach to craft and making, leading to an increase in the number of students interested in craft experience days or in learning a new skill for the sake of it. The craft council's research backs up this observation, noting that

"The popularity of craft courses, DIY networks and knitting clubs shows that people enjoy gathering together to make things: Crafts Council research shows that many makers today provide craft leisure workshops, courses, holidays and corporate away-days, servicing a market keen to experience making with their families, friends and colleagues." (Yair 2011).

This shift appears to demonstrate a gradual move towards 'process' as 'product'. In gift-giving, the stages of this move towards ethical consumption might be, for example:

1. Buy a jumper for someone
2. Buy a handmade jumper for someone
3. Handmake a jumper for someone
4. Gift someone the tools, material and knowledge to make a jumper e.g. a short course/ DIY book / experience day

These stages have wider implications both for the gift-giver and for the receiver of the gift. The resulting impact of these purchasing decisions might be:

1. Buy a jumper for someone – leads to reinforcement of capitalist status quo.
2. Buy a handmade jumper for someone – the ethical alternative, often labelled to indicate this. May lead to

the purchaser feeling they have 'done their bit' ("*in the very consumerist act you buy your redemption from being only a consumerist*" (Zizek 2010)).
3. Handmake a jumper for someone – May lead to appreciation of the work involved in handmade goods. Improves knowledge of how a jumper is made, knowledge of materials. May make more informed choices of future jumper purchasing. May be more able/inclined to repair clothes in future.
4. Gift someone the tools, material and knowledge to make a jumper e.g. a short course/ DIY book / experience day – as above, for the receiver of the gift. They may then make jumpers for others, purchasing own materials = more control over decisions, more likely to buy local and support local economy, increased awareness of environmental and sustainability issues relating to material decisions (especially if this is specifically taught in the session). Ripple effect to others = economic change.

As craft and maker fairs have grown in popularity there has been a move towards commodifying the experience of crafting as well as the product itself. Christy Petterson, organiser and founder of the Indie Craft Experience in the US, writes

"We want people to show up and buy tons of stuff, but we also feel like there is more to the experience. We want people to walk away inspired to try crafting themselves and to realise why it is so important to shop handmade" (Levine & Heimerl 2008, p 56).

How successful is this? Is the experience of visiting a craft fair or knitting a jumper able to change someone's worldview? To make the jump from consumer to active repairer and creator of objects involves first a level of curiosity about how things are made (Collins 2018). When making skills are practiced and repeated over time, the maker may start seeing things in a new way and start viewing objects as 'material' ready to be transformed. This shift in perspective is familiar to craftspeople but may be an alien concept to 'digital natives' whose material possessions are rarely designed to be repaired by their owner (with some exceptions that prove the rule e.g. Arduino technologies, opensource software and the Fairphone). This open-source approach to materials can be seen as a *threshold concept*. Meyer and Land (2003, p1) describe a threshold concept as

"[…]akin to a portal, opening up a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something. It represents a transformed way of understanding, or interpreting, or viewing something without which the learner cannot progress. As a consequence of comprehending a threshold concept there may thus be a transformed internal view of subject matter, subject landscape, or even world view."

This is also referred to as "troublesome knowledge" (Perkins 1999); a concept that cannot be truly understood without first changing the way you see the world. Understanding therefore becomes a transformational experience that cannot be easily forgotten or unlearned. The ideals of the makers running workshops point towards this transformational experience:

"Felt club isn't just about providing a great shopping experience, it's about providing an education… - showing people why and how they should be interested in the handmade movement" – Jenny Ryan (Levine & Heimerl 2008 p56)

"…these events reflect our ability to value both a handmade creation and the community that brings it to you…It's a place where our hobbies, our ideas, and our worldviews are packaged up into a tangible object to share" – Christy Petterson (Levine & Heimerl 2008 p58)

The understanding of a threshold concept requires that the student brings something to the table. It is not something that can be learned passively, but must be experienced actively and in an engaged manner. This is where craft making workshops hold the potential to not only provide an income for the maker, but to also provide an opportunity for learning; both learning how to make and also – through material practice – to see the world as a craftsperson might see it.

"It can be hard to picture what the future would look like, and so to be making things, as examples of future creative diversity, in the here and now, offers a powerful and tangible form of inspiration to others – and challenges the apparent inevitability of the present. […][Makers] show by vivid example that you do not have to accept all of mainstream culture, and you can start to create your own alternatives instead." (Gauntlett 2011)

We should aim here to create real alternatives, and not just recreate, by hand, existing modes of consumption.

The following workshops explore ways in which to build this shift in perspective, by moving from a consumption of craft towards a co-creation of the craft experience.

PROCESS AS PRODUCT – WORKSHOP EXAMPLES

As a practitioner I make a living through a variety of teaching, designing, making, researching and consulting. Portfolio careers are common in the craft industries and present an attractive option for someone who is interested in the many facets of craft practice and engagement. For myself and others, these separate 'careers' are intertwined, each informing and supporting the other (for an in-depth exploration of how 'teaching' *is* 'making', see Peter Korn's Why We Make Things and Why it Matters). Here I present these options as futuring; as a way of exploring how the nature of a craft business may change as we move towards a world focussed more on collaboration than consumption.

The first workshop setting is the Mobile Jewellery Workshop – a commercial venture designed, organised and run by myself for two years. Couples booked sessions in which I would teach them how to handcraft wedding bands, and guide them in handmaking their wedding rings for each other. These day-long workshops allowed the couple to practice first and to gain an understanding of the principles and techniques of metalwork before making their finished rings. It attracted students for whom the sentimentality of the making process was a key part of the exchange of

bands, as well as students who wanted a wedding ring design that could not be sourced from the high street.

The second workshop was a collaboration with English Heritage, where myself and fellow jewellery artist and practitioner Naomi Clarke designed and organised a public-facing jewellery workshop to take place within the historic setting of JW Evans in the Jewellery Quarter in Birmingham. This jewellery workshop included a tour of the space and a talk by the (now retired) owner of the factory, Antony Evans. The context of the space fed into the design of the workshop; attendees were given traditional tools and techniques to work with in creating their pieces. Attendees were generally local to the area and with an interest in history, or had been bought a place on the workshop as a gift.

The final workshop, much larger in scale, was organised by the Southbank Centre in collaboration with Tilt, a design agency in London. This workshop invited volunteers from across a variety of craft and design fields to design and build a social space for use by the athletes during the 2012 Olympic Games in London. I participated as a volunteer for this event alongside a team of architects, designers and fellow craftspeople from a variety of industries. I have included this example from outside the jewellery industry as it demonstrates how jewellery workshops could be expanded upon into a larger scale venture.

Through these three examples we will see where and how transformational experiences can take place, and how a workshop can vary from transactional surface-learning to something that builds and strengthens community and individual agency.

WORKSHOP EXAMPLE 1: THE MOBILE JEWELLERY WORKSHOP 2015 – 2017

In 2015 I established the Mobile Jewellery Workshop as a response to the growing popularity of a ‘Make Your Own Wedding Rings’ workshop I taught in London, after having to turn away a number of potential students who lived outside of the city. This solar-powered jewellery studio travelled the country, partnering with the National Trust to run wedding ring making workshops in beautiful locations. The workshop taught couples to make rings for each other, imbuing otherwise commonly purchased items with the ‘hand of the maker’; their partner.

Fig 1: The Mobile Jewellery Workshop parked at Lingfield in 2015
Photo: Rebecca Steiner 2015



Figs 2-4: Students at work in the mobile jewellery workshop; hand tools; finished rings. Photos ©Rebecca Steiner 2016

The focus was on the process and the experience as an event in itself. The location and workshop space were self-consciously designed to be 'instagrammable' – rather different from the reality of a working jewellers' space. Photos would be taken for the couple as they worked, and music added to a relaxed atmosphere of making. The resulting rings were professionally finished products; I was on hand ready to step in if needed to ensure a quality of product and satisfied customers. These factors commodified the experience and may have invited a rather transactional approach by the participants. However as the business grew it began to attract students with more creative ideas that could not be merely purchased elsewhere. Fig 5 shows a ring made by a student who wanted to include materials from the place where he met his partner; a found steel bracket and some leaves from Spitalfields market in London. A design was discussed and agreed, using the leaves to imprint a texture onto silver and then setting the cast steel within the silver band. The cast steel was a rough mix of stainless & mild, making it difficult to saw through with our piercing saws. Drill holes were made to aid this process, and the student chose to keep the drill holes in the piece rather than filing them back as planned, as a memento of the making process. This project stood out as the first visible shift at the ring making workshops from students as consumers recreating what is for sale in the shops, towards students co-creating the craft experience. It may demonstrate that younger participants are becoming more creative in their purchasing and design choices, and appear to value the meaning above than the intrinsic commercial value of the object.

From the perspective of 'making a living', the workshop format presents an interesting alternative to

the classic wedding ring 'product'. The workshop brings in a full day's earnings for the teaching jeweller, yet only one pair of rings has been made to achieve this end.

Fig 5: Ring in progress. The steel was inlaid, and the leaves and stone were used to texture the silver. Photo: Rebecca Steiner 2016

'Making a living' is therefore achieved with less production, less waste and a slower working pace. Hand tools and slow making can be embraced, in fact this can add depth to the experience for the participants. This will be seen in further detail in the next example.

WORKSHOP EXAMPLE 2: JW EVANS 2019

This second example shifts us further from a 'product' outcome, leaning even more heavily on 'process'. As part of a feasibility study for English Heritage, I worked with fellow jeweller Naomi Clarke to plan and deliver a jewellery workshop within the preservation space of JW Evans in the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham. The location is an old silversmith's factory reopened to the public as a museum. Pictured (Fig.6) are Anthony Evans (the previous owner of the business) and Naomi Clarke (jewellery historian and co-creator of the workshop). The aim here was for participants to gain a hands-on experience of making in the space; which by its nature would be very different to making in the sterilised and 'prettified' environment of most other experience-led jewellery schools.

With myself and Naomi on board as educators, participants were guided in the design and creation of jewellery pieces using traditional hand tools that were true to the historical context of the space.

Fig 6: Anthony Evans (far left) sharing historical designs with workshop participants. Photo: Rebecca Steiner 2019

The room, dark and cold in winter and with its uneven cobbled floor, made for a challenging space in which to run a jewellery workshop. Yet workshops indeed functioned in these spaces and it quickly becomes apparent how much we take for granted today. Attendees learned to use the tools and to understand the properties of metals, learning to make whilst also negotiating the low lighting and cobbled floors. This embodied experience of making allows for a deeper, more physical understanding of the space and the

realities of working life for those who laboured there. In this instance the jewellery made by the attendees – the 'end product' - was not the sole aim of the workshop. The event itself was a historical learning experience, with the jewellery becoming a memento of the day. Within this environment we can clearly see the context of making becoming more important than what is being made.

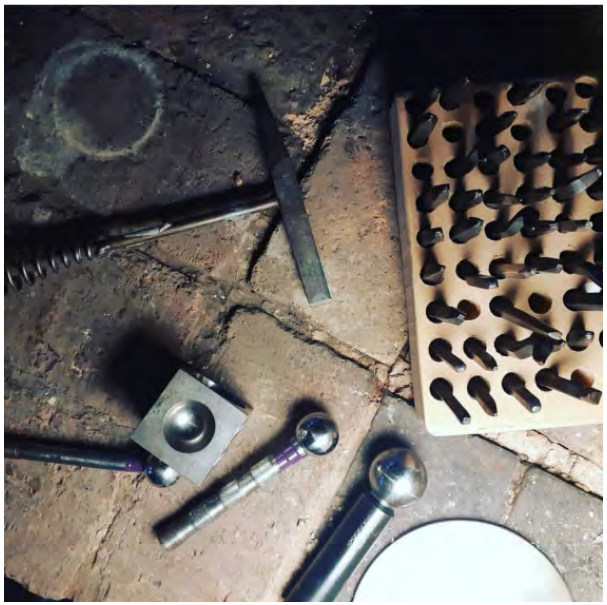

Fig 7: Hand tools used during the workshop Photo: Naomi Clarke 2019

Here is where the boundaries of a 'commodified craft experience' and a 'co-created craft experience' can begin to be unpicked further. A commodity could be defined as something that can be purchased and owned via a transaction, often financial. Therefore a craft experience that has been commodified may invite a transactional view from the participant – they want a takeaway product and may have certain expectations about the quality of this. The craft experience is seen as tourism, as separate from everyday life, and may be 'othered'. Transformation is therefore unlikely to take place (although this is not a negative – these experiences may still be enjoyable, positive and increase wellbeing (Yair 2011)). A co-created craft experience on the other hand may be transformational, whereby new understanding can lead to an "altered world view" (Meyer and Land 2003). In this case leading to an embodied understanding of the realities of life in the workshops, and therefore a 'letting-go' of romantic or nostalgic conceptions of the past.

In this way, the products created in the workshop are merely sidelines or symbols for the greater learning that took place, both for Naomi and myself as facilitators and for the attendees of the event. This workshop example demonstrates how a craft experience can be about more than the making of a product. The process itself is one of transformational material and historical understanding, through making.

The two examples above still rely (however loosely) on a physical take-away, a product. The next is an example that resulted in physical making where the participants were not able to 'take-away' or even use the finished 'product'. This example lies outside of jewellery, but may demonstrate a format for engagement in future jewellery workshops.

WORKSHOP EXAMPLE 3: SOUTHBANK CENTRE FESTIVAL VILLAGE 2012

The final example steps away from jewellery but provides a helpful model for collaborative practice, identifying that people are keen to participate in an activity where there is no tangible take-away for the participants. In this event volunteers engaged in a collaborative making practice to attain a joint end goal for the benefit of visitors to the Olympics in London 2012. The Festival Village at the Southbank Centre was entirely imagined, designed and built by this team of volunteers over a period of 4 months. I took part during the build and was able to see how a team of people can make and innovate together, improvising with limited resources and time to create a space for artists visiting during the cultural Olympics. Key participants in the Festival Village were older makers, who brought knowledge with them to share with younger designers.

"Throughout the entire project, over 200 members of the public participated in the design and making of the Festival Village… many came simply because they wanted to try something new." Says Oliver Marlow of Studio TILT, the design team running the project.

"Involving people in the codesign and comaking of a space has a transformational effect both on those participating but also on the quality and impact of the final space." He continues; *"The participatory build process has given the space an energy and spontaneity that is empowering not only to the volunteers but also to visitors of the space."* (Marlow 2012).

Fig 8:
Considering wheelbarrow seating for the space. Photo: Andrew Lock 2012

The use of language such as "transformational" and "empowering" really captures the change at the heart of this project. The finished Festival Village was imbued with a sense of collaborative achievement. Skills and ideas were shared freely and its creation inspired a new network of makers keen to continue learning and building long after the project was finished. The end use of the space is important, but it is what takes place in the process of the creation of the space that really has the ability to change people and their future engagement in making.

The ability of this larger-scale workshop to both strengthen community ties as well as sharing and educating cross-disciplinary craft practices highlights the true value and possibilities of craft education in building a sustainable future. The organisers of the workshop make an income from the project, commissioned by the Olympic Village team. The volunteers gain a sense of collaborative achievement and the opportunity to learn and share craft skills. All materials used in the design and development of the space were scavenged, 'up-cycled' or hand crafted, aiming for a reduced environmental footprint and at the same time educating those involved into novel ways to rethink and reimagine materials.

EMBODIED PRACTICE

The workshops outlined above demonstrate different forms of learning, from surface-learning to a more in-depth 'embodied' form of practice. This cannot be forced, as mentioned earlier it requires the student to bring something to the table – to be open and ready for new experiences. When this happens, real transformation can occur.

An embodied understanding of the world has direct repercussions. In "Supersizing the Mind" Andy Clark explains the significance of an external or bodily idea of "mind".
"It matters that we recognise the very large extent to which individual human thought and reason are not activities that occur solely in the brain or even solely within the organismic skin-bag. This matters because it drives home the degree to which environmental engineering is also self-engineering. In building our physical and social worlds, we build (or rather, we massively reconfigure) our minds and our capabilities of thought and reason." (Clark 2008 pg xxviii)

By engaging in an embodied way with the materials that surround us, a crafts practice can, when viewed as a 'way of being' in the world, reconfigure our worldview and lead to a more environmentally friendly way of interacting with our surroundings.

CONCLUSION

The physical outcomes of the workshops - the pieces that are made - are not in fact 'products' in a classical sense. The true products created here are the memories of the experiences of making. Wedding rings as a reminder not only of wedding vows but of the care and craftsmanship of a loved one. Mementos from the JW Evans workshop mark a learning experience, discovering history and delving into an embodied experience of witnessing this history. The construction of the Festival Village at Southbank was also a construction of a creative community – the friendships and connections that resulted as a side effect of co-making.

These examples shown here are tiny pieces of a much larger pattern. We can learn from the entrepreneurial practices of craftspeople worldwide who are opening up their making experiences to others. These makers show us that by inviting more people to learn, it is possible to both make a living as well as to expand a community that is enabled to make a more fundamental change.

"When you sit down to make, it is time productively used – so it really is an act of resistance" (Figueiredo, D 2019).

Coming back to the analogy of the handmade jumper – inviting a wider audience to share in our craft practice may be the first step in that shift away from purchasing and towards considerate co-creation, providing a better 'way of being' for all.

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The Filigree Ambassador: A Strategy to Revive an Intangible Cultural Heritage & A Preliminary New Theory on the Origin of Filigree

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ABSTRACT

In 2021, the last known Dutch filigree master Cor Kuijf, trained from father to son, retires after a career of sixty-five years. This event reminds us that specialised goldsmithing is on the verge of extinction in the Netherlands, and that filigree knowledge is disappearing worldwide. This article considers filigree skills as part of the world's Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO), and presents an argument to revive and 'update' filigree as a methodology for cultural preservation. Practising basic metal filigree techniques can offer accessible solutions for reviving this near-extinct specialisation, while offering a new form of self-care in today's fast-paced society.

Driven by a passion to keep filigree alive for future generations, field research was conducted in the Netherlands and China for a MA thesis at the Sandberg Institute in Amsterdam in the second semester of 2019. This article builds on the knowledge and experiences gained from this relatively short period of research, reflection, and technical practice. It integrates past and present developments of the economic and cultural relevance of filigree in both countries; two extreme cases of Intangible Cultural Heritage sponsorship support, or the lack thereof, by the industry and the state.

Building on a recent resurgence of interest in craft triggered by the international lockdowns of 2020-2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the author consequently aims to create a contemporary rhizomatic online network to safeguard filigree skills and knowledge. This effort involves a call for 'Filigree Ambassadors' to join forces in collectively remembering and renewing the craft of filigree by innovating in the field together.
This paper builds on the research to propose a new theory of the origin and dissemination of filigree that can contribute to future research.

Keywords: *ancient jewellery craft, craft and well-being, filigree history, contemporary craft, safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, ethnic craft, Dutch filigree, Chinese filigree, origin of filigree*

INTRODUCTION

Filigree is one of the oldest and most specialised ornamental techniques known in the field of metalsmithing. Relying on unearthed evidence, existing research suggests it originated in Mesopotamia roughly 4,600 years ago, from where it was disseminated to other parts of the world (Sumerian Shakespeare, n.d.; Lang Antique Jewelry University, n.d.a; Tait, 2006; Briceño, 2011, p. 20). Although the brief study of the evolution of Dutch and Chinese filigree is of a predominantly supportive nature to this paper, it suggests that Dutch filigree was likely greatly influenced by Chinese methods, and that it was direct trade with China that initially introduced the craft to the Netherlands. This paper hypothesises the thus-far overlooked suggestion that filigree may have originated in prehistoric China[i]. Through migration and cultural exchange of filigree objects between Asia and Europe, the technique continued to evolve and embed itself within numerous cultures over time. From the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the technique was practiced in nearly all European and Asian countries. Political

events, discovery voyages, and sea trade played a major role in the exchange and hybridisation of methods and stylistic features to such an extent that a universal filigree style emerged (Menshikova & Pijzel-Dommisse, 2006, p. 20; Liu, 2020, p. 185-187, p. 194). In 1985, traditional regional filigree was still actively produced in Algeria, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sumatra, Tunisia, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), Yemen, the countries comprising the former Republic of Yugoslavia, and elsewhere (Untracht, 1985, p. 172). In the Netherlands, as in many countries, the popularity of filigree has decreased so severely that it is now only present in national folk dress.

This paper argues that filigree has found a new relevance in fast-paced contemporary Dutch society due to its slow and repetitive making process. It is said it takes a lifetime to master filigree. As Mr. Cor Kuijf is the last active Dutch filigree master, his impending retirement is regrettable. He is the last craftsperson in the Netherlands who inherited this thin-wire jewellery technique of 'captured air' (Untracht, 1985, p. 172). Kuijf is seventy-five years old, and will end his work without having transmitted his skills to a successor. Naturally, then, these skills will disappear. His familial training, handed down across thirteen generations before him, is a bridge from the past to the present—a kind of continuity that creates deep meaning and reinforces one's sense of connectedness in a fast-paced and individualised society. Without investment in new modes of knowledge transmission, this intergenerational connectedness is at stake.

During her study at Sandberg Institute in Amsterdam, the author researched ways to personally learn and transfer the disappearing knowledge and skills of filigree. During this period, she was challenged by provocative questions such as: "If nobody needs this product anymore, why should the technique be preserved?" It was an incentive to prove the value in something old, to present it in a way that is relevant and new. Much like the resurgence of traditional textile applications such as folds and pleats, jewellery designers today can be inspired by ancient techniques to create contemporary work. Together with granulation, filigree is at the base of the field's historical development (Tait, 2006, p. 12). The Japanese martial arts style *Shu-Ha-Ri* describes the three stages from learning to mastery; *learn the rules, bend the rules, break the rules*. The *Shu-Ha-Ri* approach is essential to the understanding of the importance of preserving filigree as both knowledge and cultural heritage. The disappearance of filigree practice would erode many possibilities for self-development of future jewellery designers and makers.

As part of an artist residency at contemporary jewellery studio *San W* in China, the author conducted field research into the history and current state of filigree in China, as well as in the Netherlands upon return. For this qualitative investigation, an interview was conducted with 桑 Li Sang, a modern filigree teacher at Shanghai Institute of Visual Arts; Professor Zhang Fann, contemporary jeweller and Head of the Contemporary Jewellery department of Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) in Beijing, who studied and researched Chinese traditional jewellery techniques and culture; and lastly, two elderly craftsmen of the

ethnic group Miao: Zhang Zheng Kun, a filigree inheritor teaching at Shanghai Industrial and Commercial Technical School, and 吴智 Wu Zhi, a traditional Miao Filigree inheritor teaching at the Professional Fashion and Jewellery Technology Institute in Shanghai. The findings of these interviews indicate that the Chinese approach to safeguarding filigree skills led to a revival of the ancient craft. Besides this field research, 桑 Li Sang and the author were incredibly fortunate to be invited to visit the private Filigree Museum in Shantou, Guangdong Province, owned by the fashion jewellery brand *Chao Hong Ji* (CHJ). A distinction between the first two Chinese filigree styles and the necessity to define these was established during this visit. Additionally, and at the courtesy of *TRADITIONOW*, both were admitted to a CHJ Filigree Residency, a program that is part of China's national safeguarding strategy, which will be elaborated on. Here, a private masterclass provided practical knowledge about Chinese Filigree Inlay, which is expanded upon in detail in the endnotes. While in China, it became clear that the Chinese model for preserving the craft of filigree has a lot to offer to the Dutch context. Taking into account that Dutch and Chinese society, culture, and histories are not to be directly compared, this article learns from these two models separately in order to map a new strategy to revive filigree in the Netherlands, and possibly internationally. It should be mentioned that few western people have researched this area of filigree in the last century. According to American-Peruvian scholar and practitioner Ximena N. Briceño, the lack of research conducted on Peruvian filigree in the last century is likely due to the high level of specialisation and its entanglement with history, migration, trade, and creativity (Briceño, 2011, p. 5, 65). It cannot be assumed that filigree research lacks in other parts of the world for these same reasons. Further research is required, indicating a perpetual cycle.

This article hopes to inspire others to become 'filigree ambassadors', and to engage in sharing and gaining filigree skills and knowledge in contemporary and social ways as a means to safeguard this ancient goldsmithing specialisation for future generations. Inspiring attempts to revive filigree in Portugal have proven fruitful (Gomes, 2004; Campos, 2012; Albino, 2012, p. 45-47).

DEFINING FILIGREE

In order to define filigree, definitions formulated by Oppi Untracht, Maria Menshikova, Ximena N. Briceño, and David Huycke were considered. Thin metal wire threads are 'rolled (stretched), twisted, flattened, and cut, before being made into open work airy objects' (Menshikova, 2006, p. 18). Filigree works can be enhanced further, or 'completed', by another ornamental technique called granulation, which produces a decorative pattern with the use of tiny metal balls. Furthermore, filigree is composed of three visual elements, namely the object itself; the design that composes the filigree object, which is outlined by a thicker wire; and, the weave, pattern, or units that fill in the design that composes the object. However, some filigree works may be composed of the weave only, or even have a design without a weave (Briceño, 2011, p. 6). The English term comes from the Italian '*filigrana*', a compound derived from the Latin '*filum*' meaning thread of wire, and '*granum*' meaning grain, but it may

consist entirely of wire (Untracht, 1985, p. 176). Filigree can be combined with other techniques and mounted with stones (Untracht, 1985, p. 180; Menshikova, 2006, p. 12). As it seems there is no unambiguous definition of filigree, the author concurs with the origins of the word filigree; *filum* and *granum*. To make filigree's definition more comprehensive, David Huycke's definition of granulation was considered. Huycke is a Belgian scholar, silversmith, and master of granulation. He asserts that the intention of the goldsmith practicing granulation is to obtain an interesting visual effect with a maximum reflection of light (Huycke, 2004, p. 40). If this perspective is applied to filigree, the following definition arises: *Filigree works are made from thin wires and/or incorporate small balls, and the practitioner intends to reach an interesting visual effect by covering a maximum amount of space using a minimum amount of material*. Regarding varying styles of filigree, a distinction can be made between filigree for folk or regional purposes, filigree made for elites and royalty, and filigree intended for export and trade.

A CRAFT ON THE VERGE OF EXTINCTION

Demonstrated by its wide distribution all over the world, filigree techniques were historically popular and regionally important in the goldsmithing trade. As the number of practitioners producing traditional filigree is declining in the Netherlands, so is it declining worldwide (Stone, 2019; Indo Indians, 2017; Malta Independent, 2009; Kosovo, 2012; Ruby, 2019; UNESCO, 2019). There are several probable causes for this. The loss of interest among new generations of makers might have to do with the time-consuming techniques, or the fact that filigree involves one of the most difficult soldering techniques to master, and could well be a result of the way time is valued and understood in our contemporary moment. But the worldwide decline of traditional filigree skills also has social causes, such as fading traditions like familial skill transmission and the disappearance of age-old regional dress and jewellery wearing. Furthermore, the wide range of job opportunities that come with a higher standard of living and globalised and technologised markets leads to a profound loss of certain knowledges and skills, both detrimental to the fate of filigree. Finally, the traditional character of the craft must be noted. In Dutch culture, filigree had lost its appeal and assumed a somewhat 'dusty' image by the 20th century (Besten, Den, 2011, p. 202). This may well be contributed to the fact that over the past 200 years or so, filigree has mainly been used in relation to regional dress (Zuthem, 2018) that dates back to 17th century Dutch fashion. Contemporarily, regional dress has become part of folklore and tourism, meaning this living tradition has come to a standstill. Now, in a time when innovation is of paramount importance, at least in the Netherlands filigree seems to have lost its place in society and on the market.

ADDED VALUE FOR TODAYS' SOCIETY

The time-consuming nature of filigree seems to be at odds with the contemporary focus on 'efficiency' or the ever-present aphorism 'time is money'. In the Western world, however, the growing number of meditation and wellness retreats (e.g. Voigt and Pforr, 2014; Norman & Pokorny, 2017, p.1) indicate that there is a need to separate oneself from this relentless cycle, or as is said

in Dutch: '*onthaasten*', which means to 'de-rush'. The popular 'craft clubs' (Crafts Council UK, n.d.) in the United Kingdom also reveal a prevalent need for social crafting. Moreover, in May 2019, the *BBC* published the results of a survey showing that out of 50,000 respondents, over 37,500 people believed that creativity could help manage stress and anxiety (Crafts Council, 2019). The research complies with earlier well-documented evidence that creative craft activities can enhance well-being at all ages, while potentially relieving psychological discomfort, depression, and anxiety (e.g. Warner-Smith & Brown, 2002; Griffiths, 2008; Collier, 2011; Burt & Atkinson, 2012; Bailey & Fernando, 2012; Pöllänen, 2015a, 2015b). Engaging in new creative activities appeared to be particularly good for emotional health and well-being, regardless of one's skill level (Crafts Council UK, n.d.; Kleiber et al., 2002, p. 230; Pöllänen, 2015a p.11, p.19).
It is exactly in the relatively accessible, repetitive processes of filigree making, with clear tasks and immediately visible feedback, that one can experience a sense of *flow*. This repetition combined with the challenges and possibilities for learning can completely immerse the maker. For the duration, one could forget all the unpleasant aspects of life (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 58; Ren, Min, & Xie, 2020 p. 288). The chance of experiencing flow is increased by working on this small scale, as it requires a great sense of control as soldering temperatures near 'destruction temperature' of the work (Baines, 2005, p.113), offering opportunity for a meditative (Ren et al., 2020 p. 288) flow. Filigree is understood to be the most minuscule and detailed work that can be done by human hands (Besten, Den, 2011, p. 201).

Consequently, this paper proposes that the accessible basics of filigree offer another facet to the popularity of craft activities today, especially since this niche craft offers opportunities for continuous learning. As opposed to more widespread craft activities like crochet or knitting, knowing that one might contribute to sustaining an ancient metal technique for future generations can provide a deeper sense of meaning in addition to other common benefits of crafting (Kleiber, et al., 2002, p. 228; Pöllänen, 2015b, p. 66-67). Knowledge of making is a crucially precious resource and, for some, making is even critical for survival (Charny, 2011; Victoria and Albert Museum, 2011; Pöllänen, 2015a, p. 12-14; Jeffries, 2020). In the hurried rhythm of contemporary society it is easy to forget the ways in which handcraft can be beneficial to well-being. According to Maikel Kuijpers, archaeologist and producer of a short documentary, material knowledge is crucial to innovation (The Craftsmanship Initiative, 2020), thus indicating the importance of craftspeople. Inheritors gain their profound material knowledge through on-the-job training and experience, but as the inheritance of filigree skills diminishes both in the Netherlands and worldwide, these knowledges will no longer be expanded upon, and risk being lost.

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

In 2003, UNESCO[ii] adopted a new international treaty called 'the Convention for the Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage' (ICH). ICH connects people and encourages a sense of continuity and identity. Being registered in the inventory offers media coverage that can raise awareness, increase patronage,

Figure 2 Cannetille necklace, part of a parure made by Guillaume Louis Ploem and C. Charles Colsoul in Amsterdam, ca. 1824 - ca. 1838 Rijksmuseum Collection

and mobilise a group of stakeholders to create recognition of importance for social cohesion (UNESCO, n.d.a; UNESCO, n.d.b).

In 2008, filigree inlay art was approved to be registered as Chinese ICH (Wei, 2019) and a Traditional Craftsmanship Protection Law was applied in China, facilitating the renovation of skills and arts (Gemological Institute of America, 5:26 min, 2018). On 25 February 2011, the country saw the Intangible Cultural Heritage Law of the People's Republic of China enacted, aiming to better preserve the country's traditions of historic, literary, artistic, or scientific value (Li, 2012, p. 355, 362).
In contrast, the Netherlands signed the UNESCO treaty relatively late in 2012, and so far has not recognised Dutch filigree as being ICH. In the Netherlands, unlike in China, the registration of Dutch ICH needs to be requested by a practitioner or community. Supported by the fact that the core of ICH protection rests with people and social practice (Anying, 2019) and because the understanding of the value of ICH status guides people's behaviours (Su, et al., 2020, abstract), the author is currently in the process of registering traditional Dutch filigree as Dutch ICH.

DUTCH FILIGREE

Dutch history showcases a wide variety of regional folk dress with accompanying region-specific jewellery, often made of filigree. The combination of costume and jewellery provides information about the wearer's origin (Zuthem, 2018, p. 59).
At some point, filigree works were popular amongst higher ranks of Dutch society (Unger & Leeuwen, Van, 2017, p. 395), as seen in figure 2; an example of a

Old Dutch Regional Filigree Makers unknown
Figure 1 (top Left) Zuid-Beveland ca. 1825 - 1850
Figure 3 (bottom left) Nieuw- en Sint Joosland ca. 1870 Dutch Open Air Museum Collection (On loan from the Royal Collections, The Hague)

cannetille necklace: a style of filigree that was inspired by peasant's textile embroidery (Lang Antique Jewelry University, n.d.b). Jet Pijzel-Dommisse, Curator of Decorative Arts, Kunstmuseum Den Haag, confirms the presence of filigree at the House of Orange, its supply, and the application of the specialisation by internationally recognised the Hague goldsmith Hans Coenraet Breghtel (1609–1675) (Menshikova, 2006, p. 92). The Dutch filigree industry was present in nearly all cities in the Netherlands from 1650 onward (Rijksmuseum, 2020).
Farmers, fishermen, children, and women could own and wear silver as well as gold filigree. Dutch filigree jewellery was produced region-specifically, and had functions in both small and larger rural communities, therefore it is plausible that the Dutch filigree industry only produced for the local market, and not for the purpose of export.

THE LAST DUTCH FILIGREE MASTER

On 12 November, 2019, the author conducted an interview with Cor Kuijf (born 1945, Schoonhoven) in the studio of the Silver Museum in Schoonhoven. At seventy-five years of age, he still works as a self-employed jeweller. Aside from being his profession, filigree is also his hobby. According to Kuijf, he is the only remaining Dutch filigree 'specialist', having inherited the craft as well as the knowledge of filigree pieces belonging to Dutch traditional costume by designated town and region. Kuijf's family began working in filigree in the 1600s, and he is the thirteenth generation of 'wire workers'. The skills were passed on to him by his brother, father, grandfather, and great grandfather. He had seven brothers and one sister, and all eight brothers worked in the family filigree business, while their sister became an engraver. In around 1950, there were 250 wire workers in Holland; now Kuijf is the last active filigree master. None of his three children have an interest in pursuing the family's tradition and his grandchildren are still too young to learn. Kuijf accepts that today's market and the time needed to work with filigree do not align. "If one doesn't reach a certain speed that comes with many years of practice," he said, "it can take four weeks instead of four hours to produce a work. In that sense, it basically becomes 'unsellable'". Kuijf's father was ninety-seven years old when he died behind the workbench. This was how his father meant it to happen. Kuijf, on the other hand, wants to enjoy his retirement after sixty-five years of working (he started working in his father's workshop at the age of ten, which was still allowed in the 1950s under certain conditions).

CHINESE FILIGREE

Chinese filigree inlay art, on which will be elaborated in the following paragraph, originated in the Warring States Period (475-221 BCE) (Ren, et al., 2020 p. 289) and it advanced in maturity in the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) Dynasties. This was followed by the 'golden age' of filigree art with the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), which reached its peak in the Qing dynasty (1644-1911).

A huge change came during the so-called *Cultural Revolution,* China's national trauma, which officially lasted from 1966 until 1976, when making, wearing, or owning jewellery was forbidden (Hsu and Lucas, 2013; *the Straits Times*, 2016). Filigree making by private practitioners, came to a standstill for a long period of

time. Remarkable is that, while almost all jewellery people owned was confiscated by the government and melted (Capello, n.d.; Jie, 2013), the largest Chinese filigree inlay factory, that was established in Beijing in 1958, remained active in this period of social upheaval. Employing more than 1,000 practitioners, it flourished due to export in the 1970s and 1980s (cn.hujiang.com, 2013; Ren, et al., 2020 p. 230). In 2002, the factory allegedly declared bankruptcy due to declined export demands (cn.hujiang.com, 2013). As it was a state-owned factory (Wei, 2019), the motives behind confiscating people's jewellery during the Cultural Revolution, might have been driven by money rather than ideology.

There are few reliable theoretical sources readily available in English on the subject of Chinese filigree. Therefore, what follows builds on the author's first-hand research at the Chao Hong Ji Jewellery Filigree Museum and studio in Shantou, China. It has more than 2,000 mainly Chinese filigree items on display (Xihan Action, 2014). There, two distinctive filigree styles were observed. The first is the regal kind, '花丝镶嵌', or '*Chinese Filigree Inlay'* (China Global Television Network, 2017), usually made of 22 carat thin gold wires. It was meant only for the emperor, his wife, and up to four of his many concubines. The affix 'inlay' refers to the use of precious stones, however not all filigree inlay contains stones. In contemporary China, it is also referred to as 'silk-making' or 'filament mosaic', and 'filigree craftsmanship' is even explicitly regarded as a specialisation within the Chinese handicraft industry (Ren, et al., 2020 p. 228, p. 230). Like filigree made in other countries, Chinese filigree inlay uses twisted and often roll-milled gold or silver threads of different weights. However, these works often do not have a supporting wire frame like filigree work made elsewhere; they are more three-dimensional, and loose components can be soldered on top of these frameless designs, in a process known as layering.
Chinese filigree inlay patterns can be woven from ultra-fine thread that can support itself, sometimes even without soldering (Menshikova, 2006, p. 57; Ren, et al., 2020 p. 228, 230). By visual analysis, this method was found to integrate a more extensive number of techniques[iii] than filigree produced elsewhere. What also sets it apart from other filigree practices is that it

Figure 4 (left) At the entrance of CHJ Filigree Museum in Shantou, China, visitors encounter the world's biggest filigree statue, 'The Bridge' measuring five by two metres and made of 24 carat gold plated 999 silver filigree inlay, jade, coral and lapis lazuli
Figure 5 (middle) and 6 (right) Details of 'The Bridge'

has a more free, visually artistic approach, which can be attributed to all-round craftsmanship paired with Chinese culture. Jeanette Caines (2019, p. 88), in her paper on Chinese filigree inlay for the Gemological Institute of America, argues that "in China design always represents something. Design elements are not chosen simply for beauty. A fairy tale, proverb, or a symbol denoting luck, prosperity, longevity, or other virtue would be indicated by the choice of design. There are multiple layers of meaning built into design". The term 'artistic craftsmanship' comes to mind, referring to a category of artistic works exhibiting both artistry and craftsmanship (DACS, n.d.) (Menshikova, 2006, p. 22). The country's imperial history can be seen to have pushed the development of Chinese filigree inlay to reach unparalleled heights (Caines, 2019, p. 92).

A private guided tour at the Forbidden City in Beijing illustrated how, for almost five centuries, the country's most highly regarded filigree masters were held captive to continuously make artistic golden filigree works inlaid with precious stones and decorated with Kingfisher feathers (tian-tsui). After the collapse of the Qing Dynasty, filigree inlay masters escaped to Beijing, where they set up studios in southern Beijing that specialised in filigree inlay (Roberts, 2020). Yet this specific type of filigree, with its immaculate execution of technically complex design and high levels of artistry, has not been recognised widely in western historical publications. Menshikova's research, however, did trace a fair percentage of filigree objects in the Hermitage collection to China and some to India, crediting Asian trade as the main contributor to the dissemination of filigree in Europe (Menshikova, 2006,

Figure 7 Gold Leisi Filigree Hairpin with Lotus and Shen Instrument Design and Precious Stone Inlay
Qing dynasty (1644–1912)
Length 13.8cm, weight 54.5g
Chengxuntang Collection
Source: Art Museum, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Figure 8 Antique Chinese Ethnic Filigree earrings of the ethnic group Miao, silver, date and maker unknown Source: Rug Rabbit

p. 22-26). While Oppi Untracht notes that filigree can be combined with other techniques, and refers to a work that combines filigree and granulation from Tang Dynasty as a 'truly extraordinary achievement' (Untracht, 1985, p.352), he does not explicitly describe China's more complex and sophisticated application of filigree[iv] (Untracht, 1985, p. 172-184).

The second type of filigree from ethnically diverse China is '*Chinese Ethnic Filigree*'[v]. This paper predominantly refers to China's most prominent ethnic group for producing filigree, namely the Miao group, a linguistically-related group who now live mainly in Guizhou, Yunnan, Guangxi, and Sichuan in southern China. The origin of the Miao peoples has not been universally accepted, although associations to the Neolithic cultures such as Daxi Culture 5,300–6,400 YBP–Year Before Present—have been attested (Wen, Li, Gao, Mao, Gao, Li, Zhang, He, Dong, Zhang, Huang, Jin, Xiao, Lu, Chakraborty, Su, Deka & Jin, 2005, p. 732, p. 733). Therefore, it is likely that in accordance with legends, Miao people were among the first people to settle along the Yellow and Yangzi Rivers in present-day China. Even though there were several and worthy attempts to provide Miao people with a script (e.g., Deal & Hostetler, 2006; Enwall, 2008, p.1), until recently Miao people hardly had a standardised script, which might not solely be the result of historical events, but also a political choice (Tapp, 2002, p.1; Enwal, 2008, p1; Michaud, 2020, p.1). Visual narratives, representing Miao peoples' history, are worn on the body in the form of embroidered clothes and silver jewellery made of an alloy of 999 silver, sometimes partially gilded and combined with other techniques. Delicate pieces are made from twisted filigree wires soldered on top of thin silver sheets using a less pure silver (70% – 80%), then chased and *repoussé*—worked with a hammer—respectively from the front and reverse side, and mounted to headpieces, necklaces, and other body adornments. Each body part has its own corresponding silver ornament, many of which are decorated with a sense of *horror vacui*—filling the entire surface (Capello, n.d.). Women wear

up to fifteen kilograms of silver jewellery as part of their embroidered costume at ceremonial festivities (The Art Institute of Chicago, 2016). Wedding customs are the main reason that filigree skills were passed down reliably throughout the history of Miao people. It is custom in Miao culture for a father to begin dowry jewellery preparations when his daughter is born, buying or making wedding pieces every year. It has been suggested that the whole ensemble, ownership of which guarantees women's autonomy after marriage, might have been inspired by ancient Miao armour (Bowers, 2020a, 2020b).

The author defines a third type of Chinese filigree, namely '*Chinese Export Filigree'*, which is created with the intention of export (Forbes, n.d; Menshikova, 2006, p. 23, 42, 45; Backman, n.d.; Ransom, 2012; cn.hujiang.com, 2013; Ren, et al., 2020 p. 230). The research presented works that differed visually from *Chinese Ethnic Filigree* and *Chinese Filigree Inlay*, as well as differing in function, material, and quality, presumably all depending on the designated client or market. In 1975, Crosby Forbes, the first curator of Asian Export Art at the Peabody Essex Museum (PEM), published a ground-breaking study titled *Chinese Export Silver, 1785 to 1885,* with John Kernan and Ruth Wilkins. In 1988, the museum opened a permanent exhibition of Chinese export silver (Forbes, n.d). The PEM now has one of the largest collections of Chinese export silver in the world with some 800 examples. PEM's website reveals it holds at least one golden filigree bracelet in its collection (Eberhard, 2019). This indicates that this type of filigree deserves recognition.

CHINA'S INFLUENCE ON DUTCH FILIGREE

It has been proposed that filigree was introduced to the Netherlands in the second half of the 17th century through trading activities by the Sephardic Jews from Amsterdam and Middelburg (Reij, de, 2017). This statement corresponds with global filigree research findings (Mensjikova, 2006, p. 20; Rijksmuseum, 2020). By some negligible first-hand visual analysis of Dutch regional filigree artifacts, the author proposes that the development of traditional Dutch regional filigree style is heavily influenced by Chinese art and filigree. An example is shown in figure 3. This is particularly visible when Chinese Ethnic Filigree earrings, bangles, and hairpins, and the Dutch 'Zeeuwse knoop' as shown in figures 1 and 10, are

Visual stylistic similarities of traditional Dutch filigree and Chinese Ethnic Miao Filigree, date and makers unknown (fltr) Figure 9 Antique Chinese Miao Ethnic Minority Silver Hair Pin, stock # M171 Asian Ethnic Artifacts Figure 10 Dutch Zeeland button, brooch, silver. Source: www.zeeuwseknopen.com

(from middle to right) Figure 11 Antique silver Chinese Ethnic Uyghur Filigree Earrings. Source: Cose Così Jewellery, Bologna, Italy Figure 12 Antique golden Dutch hood ornament Tholen, circa 1900, 18 carat gold cannetille work. Source: Dekker Antiquairs, Amsterdam, the Netherlands




compared. Clear similarities in motif, such as ‘flowers’, ‘spiders’ and ‘caps’, are depicted. Dutch *cannetille* ornaments, such as those shown in figure 12, likewise showcase clear similarities with *Chinese Ethnic Uyghur Filigree* as seen in figure 11. One of the subtlest decorative techniques applied in unearthed artifacts from the Han period (206 BCE - 220) were made by this ethnic minority group native to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in Northwest China (Liu, 2020, p. 177).

Pijzel-Dommisse noted peculiar descriptions of which only a small percentage is made of filigree (Pijzel-Dommisse, 2005). Terminology such as ‘Chineeswerck’ meaning ‘Chinese work’, ‘Chineesch’, ‘Indiaensch’, ‘fildegreyn’, and ‘draadwerk’ meaning ‘thread work’ in Dutch, are used next to each other, sometimes even commutated in royal inventory lists from 1676 onwards (Menshikova, 2006, p. 84-86). Her findings contribute to the understanding of some of the difficulties in uncovering the provenance of filigree works, and simultaneously leave room for the authors’ statement to be correct. However difficult to evidence, it is plausible that filigree was introduced to the Netherlands by direct trade with China, as from 1602 onwards the Dutch traded intensively with China through Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie or VOC (the Dutch East India Company), (Menshikova, 2006, p. 20). The Dutch, like the British, then ruled the Cantonese market (Menshikova, 2006, p. 23), and many motifs, flowers and ornaments were replicated in Dutch designs and depicted in Dutch paintings and objects (Kunstmuseum Den Haag, 2014; Corrigan, et al., 2015). This assertion doesn’t imply that the findings by De Reij are incorrect, but rather adds another layer of historical complexity.

ALTERNATIVE THEORY TO FILIGREE’S ORIGIN

As a direct result of this research, some clues were found that are valuable to document for future research. Peter Frankopan, an English Professor of Global History at Oxford University, states that the ancient world was more sophisticated than we often believe and that we have overlooked the influences from the east on the west (2015, p.26). In this light, a new scenario for the origin of filigree is proposed, namely that it first emerged in prehistoric China. Like Mesopotamia, the accepted origin of filigree, prehistoric China is one of the cradles of civilisation. It should be taken into consideration that the beginning of Mesopotamia’s written history is stated at 3,100 BCE, whereas China’s earliest known written records date back to 1,250 BCE. Nevertheless, it is likely that developments in other fields did occur in China prior to this event. In the process to formulating this hypothesis, the following fields were briefly considered: presumable early trade by evidence of horse domestication, (the state of) archaeometallurgical research, history and traditions of present-day ethnic Miao peoples.
The earliest of five periods of trade Forbes mentioned (1975), is ‘prior to 1785’. This undefined period includes the Silk Route, and an overland Steppe Route across the northern steppes of Central Eurasia, said to be: “the other great pillar that cannot be ignored in considering the history of cultural exchange along the Silk Roads” (Tanaka, Sato & Onishi, 2010a). At

present, most scholars believe that the first known domesticated horses were Mongolian horses of the Eurasian Steppe (Tanaka et al, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c; Wan, 2013, p.2, p. 19, p. 20), which potentially led to horseback cultural exchange in China (Mei, 2003). Evidence on horse domestication in China remains absent. However, one hypothesis proposes that domestic horses in East Asia were tamed by local ethnic people (Ning, Ling, Hu et al., 2019, Background). An indication that Miao peoples may have domesticated horses early, is supported by present day horse fighting contests, presented as Miao people's tradition to bless and celebrate harvest (Ecns.cn, 2017). As Miao peoples were likely amongst the first inhabitants of China, it is plausible that early cultural exchange, and 'silk-horse commerce' (Tanaka et al, 2010a) including metals and jewellery occurred on horseback and or by water of the Yellow and Yangzi rivers.

There is limited English literature available on the history of metallurgy in prehistoric China and related research was often not comparative. The first documented evidence of an early tin-copper industry was not in a primitive stage of development and the statement that recent excavations suggest that metallurgy may even have been homegrown (e.g., Barnard, 1983, 1987, 1993; Mei, 2000; Linduff, 2004, Linduff & Mei, 2009, p. 5, p. 1; Liu, Hsu, Pollard, & Chen, 2021, p.1, p.2), indicate metal was already in use for longer than officially registered. Relics related to copper smelting were found on sites related to cultures along the Yellow River from 5,000 BCE. The high skill level of unearthed Chinese ethnic filigree artifacts made by the Uyghur minorities (Liu, 2020, p. 177, p. 187), supports this hypothesis. Perhaps the exceptionally high level of craftsmanship showcased in first-hand examined ancient Chinese filigree artifacts is only attainable through millennia worth of skill inheritance. Menshikova states that Chinese masters and their high level of artistic craftsmanship have influenced the development of this technique in Russia, the near East, and Transylvania (Hungary), among other places (Menshikova, 2006, p. 22). Although it remains unevidenced by found filigree artifacts, future cross-disciplinary research – that includes a study of settlement history, distribution, application of scientific, technical methods and concepts, as well as steps of craftsmanship (Hauptmann, 2007, p. 8) - on provenance of found ancient filigree artifacts (e.g. Di Martino, Perelli Cippo, Scherillo, Kasztovszky, Harsányi, Kovács, Szőkefalvi-Nagy, Cattaneo, & Gorini, 2019) can take into account that filigree may have originated in prehistoric China from Ethnic Chinese peoples, initially most likely made from a copper alloy as later Chinese artifacts showed great variety in copper alloys (Liu, Bray, Pollard, & Hommel, 2015, p. 1, p. 2; Liu, et al., 2021) and that from there through trade it disseminated to other parts of the world.

SPONSORSHIP SUPPORT IN THE NETHERLANDS

In the Netherlands, more effort is needed for the safeguarding of filigree skills. To date, the focus of state funding for cultural heritage is predominantly directed to the research of museum collections, thus foregrounding tangible cultural heritage, and not the safeguarding of skills as ICH. Dutch museums' tangible cultural heritage, referring to physical artifacts,

are researched, documented, and published in previously referenced books with the support of indirect state funding[vi]. However, when it comes to the safeguarding of filigree knowledge as ICH there is not more than one example. Since 2010, the state-funded vocational school of goldsmiths offers both beginner and advanced filigree courses, but the number of hours they require is evidently negligible compared to familial training that begins at an early age and spans a lifetime. The course was initiated and developed by Caroline Giel, a teacher at the school. This indicates that the Dutch approach to the funding of filigree skill preservation is bottom-up, as it is down to individuals first and foremost to even secure funding via institutions.

SPONSORSHIP SUPPORT IN CHINA

During field research in China it became clear that, after filigrees near-erasure during the Cultural Revolution, it is experiencing a revival as part of a national strategy named '*Chinese Folk Culture Protection Plan*' (Ye, Zhou, 2013). For the past twenty years, China has engaged in the preservation of many fields of ICH in a number of ways unlikely to be replicated by any other country. The Chinese government annually invests more than one billion yuan ($140.91million) in research and preservation of the country's ICH, which now has both legal and fiscal protection (Anying, 2019). At least five factors were identified that have contributed to the renaissance of filigree in China. The first is the recognition of inheritors of ICH at national, provincial, municipal, and county level, who then enjoy an average subsidy of 20,000 yuan (around 2,841 U.S. dollars) per year (Xinhua, 2019a). The second factor is collaborative relationships between the government, inheritors, academies, enterprises, charity organisations, media, and designers (Xihan Action, n.d.; Xihan Action, 2016). There are currently collaborations between Master Jingi Bai and *Zvahoj* (LPS China Magazine, n.d.), between Master Yao Yingchun, *CHJ Jewellery*, *TRADITIONOW*, and *Xihan Action* (China Daily Europe, 2015; Beijing Tourism, 2019; Yakun, 2020), and between the Swiss brand *Swarovski* and Chinese Art Schools (Ru, 2019; Xinhua, 2019b). Enterprises like *Chao Acer*, *Bai Tai*, *and Chow Tai Fook* have invested in expanding the market of filigree jewellery (Ren, et al., 2020, p. 231). The third factor is a national training program for inheritors in which students from approximately 100 universities can participate (Anying, 2019) and where the two elderly Miao filigree masters that were involved in the field research are teaching. The fourth factor that contributed to a revival of filigree is the broadcasting of several TV series informing young people about the history and culture of their ancestors of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, while showing imperial filigree inlay being worn by famous actors (Wei, 2019; Guide in China, 2019). The fifth is the fact that there are many state-sponsored events, such as the annual award for '*Person of the Year for Intangible Cultural Heritage in China*' (WeChat, 2020). The reasons China invests so heavily in ICH preservation perhaps lie in securing its future income through tourism (Wang, Ma, & Liu, 2021, p. 1175-1176; Her & Meissner, 2021), trade, and export (Defever & Riaño, 2016), the latter is proven by China's '*Belt and Road Initiative'*, an infrastructure scheme launched in 2013, that stretches from East Asia to Europe. By showcasing China's ICH, tourists are

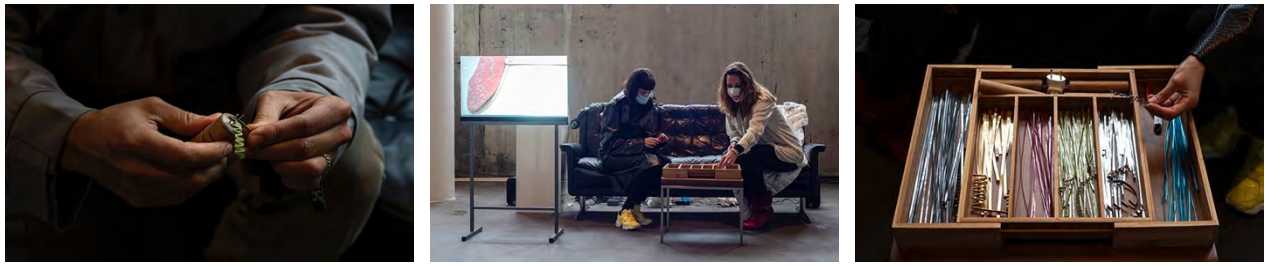

Figure 13, 14, 15 2020 graduation exhibition Sandberg Institute 2020, Het Hem, Zaandam, The Netherlands. Performative installation: visitors receive a five-minute filigree experience, while author provides oral history. Video Projection: Filigree Talk #1 and #2 (Can be viewed on the Instagram page @The_Filigree_Ambassador) Photos by Ayako Nishibori

persuaded to buy Chinese filigree in government-owned jewellery stores, but it remains uncertain just how popular filigree will remain in China long-term if the works are not designed to appeal more to contemporary consumers. After all, the causes of worldwide decline in interest in filigree are still at play, in spite of the government's grand sponsorship efforts.

THE FILIGREE AMBASSADOR

Inspired by the current state of filigree in the Netherlands and the limitations and implications presented by the COVID-19 international lockdowns, the concept of *The Filigree Ambassador*[vii] arose. This entity is still becoming, but aims to be research-driven, educational, and product-oriented, and will ultimately form an independent force in the re-activation of the filigree tradition and its history. It will do so through interaction with (inter)national professional practitioners and museums, as well as art schools, historians, hobbyists, amateurs, collectors, and wearers. Combining oral history with technical instruction, the emphasis will not be on mastering the craft of filigree, but on the experience of *practising* the craft, on socialising material knowledge production, and on stimulating makers to use different materials and to find new applications in an attempt at 'updating' the style of filigree artifacts. Innovation is seen as a means towards preservation of this vulnerable, intangible cultural heritage.

Since its conception in the summer of 2020, The Filigree Ambassador, or rather the author aiming to inspire future ambassadors as: '*the first Dutch Filigree Ambassador*', undertook five initiatives: first of all, the Instagram page @The_Filigree_Ambassador was launched. As a virtual representation of the concept, its visual content emphasises the meditative aspects and new applications of the craft while showcasing significant filigree works across time and place. This page facilitates contemporary practical research for, with, and within a sub-niche community, where common interest is shared, and the transmission of knowledge is paired with receiving it: the conversation is multi-directional. Community members can filter the returning content by hashtags such as #filigreetalk, #shortvideosofalongcraft, #stretchingfiligree, #meditativeaspectsoffiligree, #iseefiligree,

#chinesefiligreeinlay, #chineseethnicfiligree, #chineseexportfiligree, #contemporaryfiligree, #thelastdutchfiligreemaster, and #filigreeinanewform. The potential of this contemporary, spontaneous, and social way of learning, researching, and networking should not be underestimated. Through the conveniently organisable community, the ambassador learned, for example, about the existence of *cannetille* (figure 2), and about a current revival of silver filigree in Mompox, Colombia. Secondly, a series of '*Filigree Talk*'—videos of accessible dialogue with practitioners and scholars—was kicked off with two Italian contemporary jewellery makers, Lavinia Rosetti and Valentina Caprini. These videos are published on the Instagram page. The third initiative was to transmit basic filigree knowledge through a workshop using the video-conferencing platform *Zoom*. Participants of the workshop received a '*Filigree Starter Kit*' containing a broomstick tool and some prepared, thus flattened, anodised aluminium wire upfront. Under socially-distanced virtual guidance, participants—who are well-known in the jewellery field—were able to experience basic filigree by making ribbon wire. The aluminium results were returned to the studio of the ambassador who constructed it into a contemporary necklace. This work can be viewed on Instagram using the hashtag: #filigreewiththestars. This workshop was, as the fourth activity, repeated outside of the virtual realm at the 2020 graduation exhibition of the Sandberg Institute at Het Hem in Zaandam, the Netherlands, as illustrated in figures 13—15. The fifth initiative was to disseminate findings of this research in a specialised academic journal such as *The Journal of Jewellery Research*. An upcoming activity is to research how—and in collaboration with whom—to set up *The Filigree Embassy*; an open-source skill-sharing platform through which to collaboratively formulate relevant background information, articles, and curated tutorials on filigree, and to make them readily available in Dutch. This forthcoming website could ultimately be expanded internationally. The project is supported by *the Creative Industries Fund* (Stimuleringsfonds, 2020), the Dutch cultural fund for design, architecture, digital culture, and 'every imaginable' cross-over. Another forthcoming activity is the participation of '*iAtelier'*, as part of the '*Crafting Europe*' project—co-funded by the *Creative Europe Programme of the European Union*—to innovate craft, in the form of an inter-disciplinary collaboration with Amsterdam-based *Ming Design Studio* that will take place this year. Future plans incorporate a design competition for students of Dutch art and design academies.

CONCLUSION

Along with the disappearance of many traditions in contemporary society, both in the Netherlands and around the world, the traditional craft of filigree is at risk of obsolescence in the near future. The most rapidly-fading facet of the tradition is the familial transmission of filigree skills. In sustaining this traditional metal technique for future generations, it is crucial that practitioners, wearers, and enthusiasts gain a sense of awareness, even urgency, for the preservation of this intangible cultural heritage. The previous lack of awareness may have already sealed the fate of filigree in the Netherlands, but it is not too late to try.

The Chinese method of skill-preservation, with a combination of safeguarding knowledge-transmission,

funding, and promoting its filigree legacy, successfully instigated a revival. These state-sponsored programs are initiated 'top down' in China, whereas in the Netherlands funding currently needs to be secured from the bottom up, through a relatively competitive application process to request funding as a practitioner. To preserve what remains of filigree knowledge in the Netherlands, the author suggests the following strategy: the registration of filigree skills as ICH (in process), reframing practices of the technique as a contemporary form of self-care in relation to safeguarding ICH, 'updating' the aesthetics of filigree works through the finding of new applications and uses of inexpensive materials, cross-disciplinary collaborations, design competitions for a new generation of makers, and, lastly, innovating collectively with the aid of social media to build and maintain an open-source skill-sharing network. The latter could begin nationally and expand to functioning as an international or ultimately even a global effort, forming a strong rhizomatic[viii] network for filigree skill-preservation. Furthermore, this strategy could be translated to the task of preserving any other endangered craft skill.

Looking further into filigree presents several research opportunities. Thirty-six years after Untracht's contribution to filigree history scholarship, further research is needed to uncover to what extent filigree is still actively produced in traditional, regional styles. The statement of a strong influence of Chinese Ethnic filigree on traditional Dutch filigree, the introduction of filigree to the Netherlands by trade, as well as the alternative theory of the origin of filigree in prehistoric China, can be considered in forthcoming comparative studies. If parallels between periods of local filigree development are to be found in relation to migration and cultural exchange leading back to the cradles of civilisation in more parts of the world, a wider overview of filigree's origins, provenance, and development could begin to be realised. This knowledge could offer practitioners a greater sense of connectedness with people across time and place.

A result of the unprecedented times we currently occupy with COVID-19, it has become clear that it is not always necessary to travel to carry out research, and not all learning can or must be done at academic level. Accessible, contemporary, open-source software and social media offer a multitude of networking, peer-to-peer learning, skill-sharing, and researching opportunities, all reachable with the use of a simple hashtag or handle: #thefiligreeambassador and @the_filigree_ambassador. The Filigree Ambassador is greatly looking forward to taking root.

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i Noteworthy is that Maria Menshikova Curator of Chinese Decorative Arts and Jewelry in the Oriental Department of the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg omits any statement on filigree's origin (Menshikova, 2006, p. 12, p. 18), possibly foreseeing an alternative theory to that which is currently accepted.

ii UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation) has developed the term 'Intangible Cultural Heritage' to define cultural practices and expressions that are passed on from one generation to the next, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge, and practices concerning nature and the universe, or the knowledge and skills needed to produce traditional crafts.

iii Chinese filigree inlay employs a wealth of techniques, such as:

- nipping: the shaping of specific Chinese pattern-units, using a measurement tool to get high levels of accuracy. The thin wires are cut with a scalpel knife and shaped by fingers and tweezers
- piling: the pattern-units are glued onto Chinese watercolour paper
with wood glue (first-hand), lotus glue, or lily root glue (Caines, 2019, p. 94).
- layering: the soldering of more than one layer of filigree
- jointing or soldering: the glued-down, piled pattern-units are soldered with powder solder all together, instead of soldering in stages with the tension-method. The glueing-method is more efficient and contributes to reaching higher levels of accuracy. The paper and glue burn without influencing the process
- plaiting: to keep strands of the twisted wires in place, they are glued together with wood, lotus, or lily root glue before they are plaited
- filling: the outlines of a pattern are filled in with roll-milled twisted wires which are shaped into curves and curls, with fingers and tweezers
- knitting: can be part of Chinese filigree inlay works and often has a three-dimensional character
- weaving: often incorporated into Chinese filigree inlay
- repoussé: shaped filigree wires are soldered onto a thin precious metal sheet, before the inside of the outline is worked with a hammer from the reverse side and soldered onto a three-dimensional construction of piled pattern units or another airy construction, such as weave or mesh
- mounting: refers to precious stones that are usually mounted or inlayed in Chinese filigree inlay works
- tian-tsui: electrical-blue coloured feathers of Kingfisher birds were often placed in imperial or royal filigree inlay headpieces
- enamelling, or Beijing Enamel: applying a thin coat of finely, ground glass to a closed-back silver filigree piece. When heated to a high temperature, the glass melts and fuses to the silver. Usually executed in the colour blue as a less costly alternative to tian-tsui (Roberts, 2020), and presumably used for Chinese Export Filigree.

iv Untracht's book was first published in 1982, which means it was written during, and in the aftermath of, China's Cultural Revolution, when it was forbidden for craftsmen to make filigree (as it was considered bourgeois). This could perhaps explain why Untracht did not mention Chinese filigree inlay in particular. This lack of western recognition of Chinese filigree

inlay could also be attributed to the effects of the country's history of social upheaval and revolution, the difficulty for foreigners in accessing Chinese information, or China's own negligence of it, and our Eurocentric, colonial view of the world.

v Other Chinese ethnic groups that have an ancient jewellery tradition are Hmong peoples, Dong peoples, Shuni peoples, Yi peoples, Li peoples and Yao peoples (Capello, n.d.) and Uyghur peoples (Liu, 2020, p.177).

vi The book by Hanneke van Zuthem, Curator of Costume and Jewellery at the Dutch Open Air Museum in Arnhem, which showcases 240 regional jewellery works (Van Zuthem, 2018), was funded by the museum and its supporters. The museum's annual report of 2018 states its income consisted of 42.9% subsidy and 57.1% of its own generated income (Nederlands Openlucht Museum, 2019); therefore, the realisation of the book was partially and indirectly funded by the Dutch state. The frequently referenced book by Menshikova and Pijzel-Dommisse (2006) was partially funded by the Dutch state and sponsors. However, as opposed to the Open Air Museum, the Hermitage funds its own activities with support from businesses and private individuals (Hermitage, n.d.). Likewise, the research done of Pijzel-Dommisse (2005) is executed in relation to the Kunstmuseum Den Haag, which receives state funding.

vii The unpretentious term of 'The Filigree Ambassador' was handed to me by classmate Morgane de Klerk, when we were brainstorming our future occupations.

viii A rhizome is the underground stem of a plant that can regenerate from nodes on the rhizome. It is known to be a stronger root system than non-rhizomatic ones, as the rhizome will regenerate on a node elsewhere after one plant dies. In 1980, the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and the psychoanalyst Félix Guattari introduced a rhizomatic approach to reality, as developed in their work 'A Thousand Plateaus'. Dave Cormier, a philosopher and scholar on education, applied this to knowledge transmission (Cormier, 2008).

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A Sense of Awe and Wonder

Author: *Mona Wallström*

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ABSTRACT

The idea that objects can hold value or power within themselves is built on several societal agreements. First, the act of adding meaning to the object. Second, the society's trust in the meaning of the object. Third, the feature of the object as an intermediator – of stories, emotions, and experiences. This kind of objects will here be referred to as “charged”.

In this paper, I suggest that objects can transfer not-known-but-sensed experiences, that the object itself can communicate regardless of the sender.

An artefact in a museum collection is moved there from its origin context, through several events; the making, the collecting and the selecting for display. By focusing on these events, some of the charging aspects, as well as the questions of the value of unique objects, today’s consumption patterns, and concerns on contributing to production have in this analysis been articulated. These objects and aspects have been examined from the perspective of contemporary jewellery making. This research includes 6 wearable objects created to make a visual interpretation of commonly known concepts of what this charged personal value could be.

Even though the current Swedish society is secular, charged objects can still be relevant – as a bearer of non-monetary values and personal meaning connected to existential experiences. The possibility of non-verbal intermediating information and perspectives through an object is not easily trusted as it is not precise, but is an advantageous if reaching out for broader interpretations.

INTRODUCTION

The artefacts in the collection from Congo area (now Congo-Brazzaville and Congo-Kinshasa) in the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm were acquired in the early 1900s. To a large extent, they were collected by Swedish missionaries. The majority of the objects are weapons and so-called nkisi. Nkisi are small objects, often sculptures or wearables that were considered to be connected to spirits or ancestors and were used for guidance: to bring fortune, as an intermediator of rituals, or as protection from diseases or enemies. Michael Barrett, curator and researcher at the museum likes to qualify them as “charged” as the nkisi ritual, visual and material practice is extremely complex and not easy to capture:

“*But even more important, nkisi is not one thing, but all of these: the spiritual being(s), the material composite of vessel plus ingredients, the rituals that must be performed to "catch the spirit", the ritual specialists, i.e. nganga and assistants, the client that pays for the making of the nkisi and the surrounding society as the audience to support and be convinced by the spectacle of the rituals.”*

This research aims to examine these charged objects, nkisi, from different points of view – the nkisi maker's, the collector’s, the museum's and the contemporary jeweller's. The making and the purpose of the object is examined, as well as how they were selected into the collection and how they are presented in their new context. This raises questions about if charged objects, objects with an immanent story or an existential or spiritual purpose, have a relevance in a European

secular society today and how this could be connected to the art jewellery field. The research connects to the artist's own practice by giving suggestions regarding how objects could be charged in our secular society and what wearable objects/jewellery could look like today.

METHOD

This research uses written letters as the method of finding perspectives on mentioned charged artefacts and the connection to the art jewellery field. The letters are addressed to imagined representatives of the actors involved: a nkisi maker, a missionary, a museum and an anonymous fellow art jeweller. This fictional approach enables embedding the layers of events these objects carry and making up a story from both gathered pieces of information and the artist´s own experiences. The questions of this research circle the personal and the existential and needs a more intimate form in order to come closer to the meaning of the object. The letters are not written to be answered, (some cannot be – for obvious reasons) but is a way of opening a space for thoughts and bringing in knowledge and experience that focuses on one particular perspective at a time. The narrative as a scene for transferred wisdom have been used in most cultures.

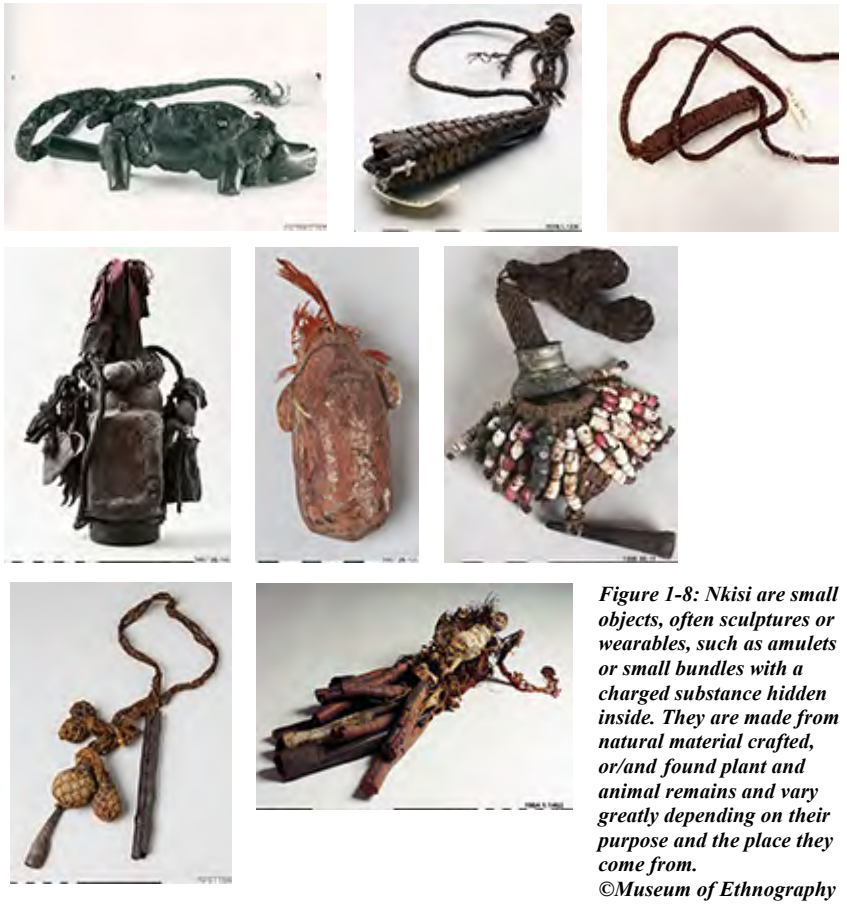


Figure 1-8: Nkisi are small objects, often sculptures or wearables, such as amulets or small bundles with a charged substance hidden inside. They are made from natural material crafted, or/and found plant and animal remains and vary greatly depending on their purpose and the place they come from.
©Museum of Ethnography Stockholm Sweden

A Sense of Awe and Wonder

November 2019

Dear Nkisi maker,

I came upon the nkisi that you made in the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm, Sweden. It brought up so many thoughts within me and it has occupied me for a long time now.
Because I am a maker myself, I understand the way you practically work with the nkisi. The preparing and handling of materials, the hardness, the irregularities, the climate impact, all the experience needed to get it right, the thoroughness in making. But what I am most curious about is the other part: the "charging" of the nkisi. The curator of the museum preferred this term, instead of "magical", "powered" or "spiritualized", so I'll stick to "charged".

So, dear Nkisi maker, how did you get the task to charge the objects? Did you choose it for yourself or were you chosen? Is it an inherited profession? How did you deal with the trust the believers gave you?
When making pieces myself, I often have something to express, a story to tell. I believe that these meanings can be transmitted through an object. There has to be an understanding though, not necessarily a precise one, so that the recipient can transform the experience of the object to make it their own.

I like to think of this kind of objects as tools or intermediaries for these needs. That we connect through them to other humans or beings.
Today we own a lot of things. Most of them do not really mean anything, they fill up our spaces for a while and then we throw or give them away. Humans learnt how to make things that make life easier. Our creativity made the things better and enabled us to make them faster so that more things could be made. This has accelerated, and now our society is consuming things to an extent that our environment and climate is collapsing. Now we need to reconsider all of this and ask ourselves why.

In societies where people don't have so many things, of course the things made have more importance and you give every object more attention and care. You use local material, find the right one, process it so it becomes usable for this particular object and then make it as beautiful as possible and use the material to all of its capacity. This is what makes nature become culture.

During my life time, many new kinds of materials have been invented to perfectly fit their purpose of making new things. The materials are often quite good in regards of effectiveness, but they have a price when they contribute to lacking working conditions, climate change, environmental disasters, etc. Our society have good intentions, but we are destroying the earth in the name of culture.

Comparing our societies, existing in different times and places, is not easily done and may not even be appropriate. My interest lays in the conditions of being a nkisi maker, and in the practice of charging objects. It is close to thoughts that I have concerning my own work as a jeweller and artist. Our professions have similarities but, I think, we would define them totally differently if we had a chance to exchange perspectives on this.
Many thoughts are emerging in me and I might write you again when I have sorted them out a bit more.

With all my respect for your work,

Mona Wallström

December 2019

Dear Missionary,

I came across your name in a research project that I am doing at the Museum of Ethnography. You are stated as a collector of many of the artefacts from the Congo.

Of the majority of the artefacts, there is very little information, most often only the local name and the material it is made out of. Maybe you got instructed to do it this way, but you have to understand that it is hard for me, living in another time and place, to understand the artefacts. I have been thinking a lot about these objects and why you have chosen to collect them. I recently read a book called "Between Memory and Museum – a dialogue with folk and tribal artists" (Wolf & Wolf, 2015 p.18) that describes a collaboration between local museums and community in India. The book is looking at the museum as a collective memory from many angles. This is said about the collectors:

"In this sense all collections are contingent. The objects brought in to a museum have necessarily been displaced from their original contexts of use, worship or decoration. So, an exhibit begins to mean something only when an explanation is woven around it. But the accounts that locate the objects in a museum can never be complete, there is always more that can be said. Each narrative-however authoritative it may be- tells us more about the collector as it does about the collection."

Now, when I know where the artefacts that you collected ended up, I can imagine the complexity of events and choices that finally resulted in the nkisi being placed in the showcase where it caught my eye. The nkisi has a religious or spiritual purpose. Is this the reason why you took is, because you were interested in the spiritual thinking? Or, was it a way to take power, magic or cultural identity away from them? The collection also includes a lot of weapons, so from my perspective it is not far as stretch to suspect that this could have been a way of disarming people – both physically and spiritually. Did you feel that the nkisi was charged? If you felt it, I can understand that it was important for you to take them away. But didn't you wonder what the charge was and how it worked, effecting you with another belief and culture? If you didn't feel it, why collect so many? The nkisi are very nicely made, you can see how much effort that was put in making them detailed and expressive with a big collectible value. This must have been the case for most of the few things made in rural the Congo in the beginning of 1900. Collecting nkisi seems to have other purposes.

The society in which I live is what we call secular. Many people do not express an awe for God or gods in churches, mosques or temples. This does not mean that people don't have faith, but that their faith is a more personal position, not shared. In an individualistic country as mine, one might claim that this is a resistance against the socially constructed behaviour and rituals that all religions encourage. As an atheist, I actually can't imagine that we humans will end up in different sorts of after lives, if there is one. It seems very inconsistent. There must just be a need to make up different images of another kind of existences that mirrors our dreams and fears. Some cultures, like mine, seem to have a thicker membrane between this life and others, that affects how much they interact with each other.

A philosopher of today, Martin Hägglund (2019), states that mortality makes us free. This means that we will take better care of the life we have, if we accept the thought that this life is it, and not assume that something better is coming thereafter, like paradise or nirvana. To not strive for a better after life by doing good in this existence, but to do good in this life because this is the only chance we have. According to Hägglund, this is linked to how communities can be organized both in politics and ethics in order to make a better life for everyone.

I am sorry, I got triggered and started to preach myself. The missionary system provokes me and I have a hard time to accept what happened in the Congo in the name of your Faith. In a book on Swedish missionaries in the Congo (Pia Lundqvist 2018 p.46-47) it is claimed that the socio-cultural

patterns in society were more affected than people's religious practice. The nkisi cult even increased during the colonization, even though elements of other religions were integrated. For me, this was a bit satisfactory, that the ancestors were not abandoned and that the membrane stayed thin.

Dear Missionary, now I want to return to the charged objects. In your religion, objects with intermediary capacity, such as the chalice, the crucifix etc., are also treasured. Objects like these are initiated to be sacred – but are not holy – and to facilitate the connection between God and the individual.

I find this idea – that objects can hold value or power in themselves, not visible but still sensed – very interesting. Firstly, the agreement on and trust in the meaning of the object, which the society holds. Secondly, the charging and how the maker takes on this trust. As you understand, I am not that interested in communicating with God, but I am still curious about the intermediation that I think works between individuals as well. As a Maker, an artist, looking at my work from this point of view, I can feel a bit overwhelmed with the responsibility of what can be transferred through my pieces.

When reading the book about the Swedish missionaries in the Congo, (Pia Lundqvist 2018), I learned more about why you and your colleagues went there. I can, myself coming from a rural part in the north of Sweden, recognize the seeking of new experiences and knowledge. Aside from the religious aspect of looking for other purposes of living. I now understand that it was not only your devotion to your Faith that made you end up in the Congo and that you also might have contributed to something good, as schools and health care was introduced by the church. And, at least in theory, bringing the concept of everyone's equality before God, which was not even reflected on by the colonizers.

Now, I am not as condemning of you, as an individual missionary, as before, but despite of this, the mission system will in my eyes never be justified.

When writing this to you, I feel a bit embarrassed, but I do appreciate being able to see the nkisi in the museum. It has ended up here, far away from home, but it probably did in good intent from every person involved in its journey. It is impossible to go back in time and make it right, the only thing we can do is to learn, repair and improve.

Despite our different positions, thank you for your time,
warm greetings,

Mona Wallström

December 2019

Dear Museum,

When walking around the museum, I realize that you are a craft museum. All artefacts are made by hand, by skilled crafts persons. I hadn't really thought of this. All your artefacts are representations of ways of living; objects that have a certain purpose which is agreed upon in the context where they were used. There are no pieces made by a person with their own intentions. The Makers have no names, even though they must have had very important roles in the society.

I like museums and I like looking at objects. The object can produce so many thoughts and associations, and awaken curiosity. It does not always create an eagerness for explanation. It is enough in itself, as if the story to be told can be sensed just as well by it's appearance. The act of experiencing the object – imagining how it feels to hold, to smell its scent, see how it is made and imagining it in another time and place – that is what makes the wonder. As a maker, this comes easy for me.

In 2013 I went to a lecture with the anthropologist Tim Ingold about art as an investigative action.

In my log I wrote this:
"he talked about the importance of leaving the path and getting lost, and about knowledge that can "ruin the sight" – to be able to listen to birdsong without necessarily defining the species."
It has stuck in my head since then. This is similar to my approach to museum collections. I must have embraced his lecture and in some way recognizing one of the methods, getting lost, in my practice. Later that year I went to the Medical History Museum: The museum's mission is to "manage and communicate the Western material medicine heritage".
In the log I wrote:
"History told through things, not many signs to explain. Encouraging to see the objects as form, construction and color, without knowing what it is.

If the object is presented without its purpose (or any information about it), I can give it a new history, built upon my own experience[...]
Every artefact in the museum has many stories within it. The first relates to the in the making of it and to the context from which it comes. Then there is the story of its journey, who collected it and moved it from its original home, then the story of how it is displayed. Some of the object's stories are more apparent than others. To distinguish these layers, you either need a lot of information or, which I prefer, time and thought"

From the book "Between Memory and Museum – a dialogue with folk and tribal artists" (Wolf & Wolf, 2015 p.32):
"When an object is removed from its own contexts it loses implicit associations, and needs labels or captions to place the viewer. On the other hand, if the context of a museum display is broad, discerning viewers can read a more "universal" significance into an image."

In the novel "La vie mode d'emploi" (Perec, 1978) stories about the residents of a house in Paris are told through the objects in their homes.

The author indicates, not only that we need to make an image of, first, the object itself and, second, of its intermediating qualities. It is interesting that it is credible, that a non-image communicator- the author- uses a non-verbal intermediator to tell the story.

Doug Bailey refers in a lecture, 2019 to archeology as an interpreting science. Findings at excavations need to be put in context and interpreted, by "not the most creative experts". Bailey is advocating for more creativity in the act of interpretation in science. In his book "Breaking the Surface" (2018), that he presented at the lecture he collates the archeologist digging holes with artists making holes as a working method. Now, this statement that scientists are interpreters is, when I think about it, obvious, and must apply to most disciplines in science. Everything measured and tested must still be interpreted and the interpretation has to be agreed on. Not until then it is facts.

In museums, the time aspect is an extra complication. Information is lost, and there is no one left to ask for the facts. That is, interpreting will always be a part of the perception of artefacts.

Don't get me wrong, I'm really interested in receiving knowledge and facts, only advocating an acceptance of a broader view of interpretation and what will become knowledge. It is about relying on the visual object's ability to transfer information, too.

The project that I have been working on builds upon the nkisi from the the Congo collection. I named it "A Sense of Awe and Wonder". The title is linked to these charged artefacts, but also reflects my feelings for you, the museum – it is what I feel when I walk your halls and meet all your objects, that keep telling me their stories.

With deep respect and gratitude,

Mona Wallström

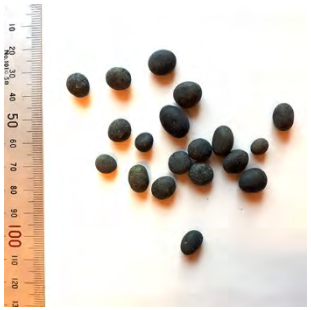


Figure 9-12.
Process: Charged material.
Natural shaped stones from waterfall close to where I grew up in the north. It does not exist any more, sacrifieced for electicity. The stones are set in wood from branches picked by my studio. The natural cracked stones are from where our family spend our summers. They are set in bark from birches from my birthplace. Flax cord is coloured with onoin peel from kitchen waist.

Figure 13-16.
Process: Charged material.
Jewellery of hair appeared already in the Middel ages, mostly in purpose of worship or mourning. The tradition is still vivid in parts of Sweden. Human hair is the remnants of a person and for ethic reasons I have chosen to work with my own. Gathering fallen hair, sorting in colour and then set in wood using brush binding technique, resulting in "hairbrushes".

Figure 17-20.
Process: Charged from folklore. Phenomena in nature have been seen as signs of special quality. During periods of frequent appearing rickets children were pulled through cavities or loops that naturally occurred in trees called "smöjträ". For the smallest children loops were grown in a small tree and when set in shape cut and put on the breast when feeding. This would prevent the child from sickness. These loops were made in the autumn and harvested in spring. After peeling they were connected with soft skin and flax cord.

February 2020

Dear Colleague Art Jeweller,

I am just writing you to tell you a bit about my thoughts on working as a jeweller and artist. Working on one's own, making all decisions and keeping motivated is not always smooth sailing and that's fine. And getting lost is part of the game.

I was impressed when I heard about a group of artists that bought an old mine in an almost abandoned countryside. The mine is now a cultural centre, built upon a special philosophy. When discussing the development of the centre, and before making any decision the group always take a 5-minute break to consider the question: "Is this meaningful?" In this era – of fast solutions, financial stress and expectations from society where it is impossible not to compare yourself to other people's achievements break to consider this question, might change or strengthen a decision. But giving it this time to reflect and implement is then worth every second.

In the project that I am currently working on, I am examining the complexity of the meaning of making, and the object as an intermediator of stories, emotions and experiences. I am suggesting that objects can transfer not-known-but-sensed experiences, that the object itself can communicate.
If we only give trust in words for knowledge and scientific correctness we can get caught in fake news as well. We need to encourage understanding other ways of perception and train these skills fully and us see the potentials we have through all our senses.

The starting point for my project, is the nkisi from the Congo. They are objects with a certain charge, connected to other dimensions. In relation to this, I want to emphasize that the kind of art work we do today also have an intermediating function in a more existential and social context. The receiver (viewer, user) most likely does not meet the makers. It is then not possible to

know if the message sent will be interpreted the way it was intended. On the other hand, this creates a possibility for the receiver to interpret the piece in a way that suits them. Since art does not deal with truth or falsity, I do not regard this as a problem.

As a guideline in the project, I used the discussion on artistic research in practical art making written by Nina Bondeson and Marie Holmgren "Tiden som är för handen – om praktisk konsttillverkning" (2007 p. 77): "The mythical and mystic potentials in art are not mysterious. They merely stem from our human ability to ask unanswerable questions. All kinds of practical artwork are very potent in these matters, since it, fully or partly, can make its way into existence without any particular obligation to verbal conceptualization." and further "Establishing this research must also imply paying attention to the difference between research through, in and about art and artmaking. Questions and answers, about verbalization, description and knowledge production must be upheld with assistance of Steadfast Uncertainty."

When I googled the title of my project "A sense of Awe and Wonder", the search results came from all different fields: psychology, pedagogy, theology, medicine, art (all kinds), etc. as well as some about experienced nature phenomenon, child birth, salvation, healing and so on. To be honest, I would never had chosen this title until I heard a lecture by Ola Sigurdsson about the work in bringing forward the definition of existential health that the World Health Organisation is currently doing. (Well, the definitions are agreed upon, but not as much when it comes to existential or spiritual health). When WHO is stating what existential health is and it should be a possibility for every human, I interpret that awe and wonder is a human right. I have not seen this perspective.

I hope that you agree with me that all expressions of art have a purpose of communicating – not to explain or state, but give perspectives. I like to think about my pieces of art as "suggestions" – to reject or embrace.
The main reasons for wearing jewellery are: to show alliance, status, memory, as a decoration or for protection or good luck. The last ones, which include amulet and talisman, are not common in contemporary jewellery practice. This kind of jewellery is supposed to be charged in order to protect or give you advantages. I have a feeling that this kind of jewellery has low status among us, probably because their supposed power, the charge, overrules the makers/jewellers own artistic intentions. If this kind of jewellery deals with power, charge, faith, existential meaning, maybe we could think about our practices in a different way.

The Nkisi maker in the Congo put a mix of different substances inside the object. This way it became charged. Of course, each substance has a meaning, but the main reason why it is perceived as charged is that the idea of its purpose and power is agreed upon by the community.

If this feeling of awe and wonder, this recognition of non-verbal communication, that is finding its way deep into the mind of the viewer, also can be experienced in contact with a piece of art – are we then also chargers? But, what does the charge entail? How did it get into the object, the art piece? What is a charged object today?
Now, leaning on the "assistance of Steadfast Uncertainty", I'll say, being makers at least gives us a possibility to charge In my first art school (preparatory) our teachers, mainly male, maintained the theses of that -art is to really see, the rest is just technique and practical work and that -you need to work really hard, but the piece should look like it was done in a second. I believe that I was guided better by the teacher's pencil correcting my drawing or an approving murmur behind my back. The non-verbal communication has been around long before there was a language.

I read a lot, mostly fiction. When reading, I imagine what the characters look like, the landscape, the rooms in which they move, their gestures, the smell and taste of food etc. This is a non-image communication. Even though the author and I do not have the same view of the characters, the transfer of the story is undoubtedly there. It is not precise, but the "un-preciseness" is its advantage. When making my own images the story is not only interpreted, but to some extent also created by me. The story adjusts to me and my experiences, and in this way, I can connect to the story even more.

The non-image communication (verbal) we learn and trust as an effective intermediator of information as well as feelings. Maybe we lost a bit of the trust but not necessarily the understanding, of the non-verbal. I am certain that this kind of communication, visual arts, music, dance etc. is valuable when it comes to not-so-precise and co-creative exchanges between humans. I have a complicated relation to things. In 2012 I wrote this in my log: "I don´t like to have many things around me either. I feel that the things demand me to use or take care of them. Somehow, they intrude in my daily life and take time and focus from more important chores."

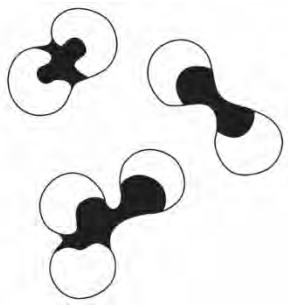
A colleague of mine, Linda Tedsdotter is focusing on the artists and the role that the creativity had in this development in her project Apocalypse Insurance-Raft (2019):
"- I have to confess that there was a time when I imagined that art is virtuous (even if sometimes dark, depressing or gloomy) and that one way or another it exists to do good. But what if art is the source of all things bad? That it was exactly art, which thousands of years ago furthered greed and selfishness, leading to capitalism and then finally created the foundation for the environmental problems we face today". In "Apocalypse Insurance - Gardening" (2020), she declares that she won't do any artwork that cannot be used in some other purpose.

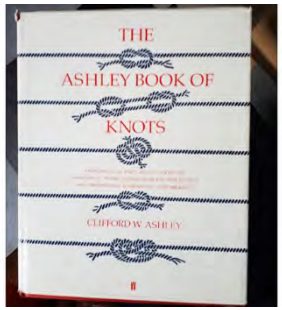
My production is not big, but still "useless" in the practical sense. This concerns me as well. My strategy is to put so much meaning in each object that they transform from a thing/object to be, as I wrote before, an intermediator between individuals. Sometimes I even think I overdo it, bring too many "stories", so that I just blur the understanding. Anyhow, I really believe that this intermediary possibility is an essential question for an artist: How do I get this piece that I am making to have meaning for someone else?

With hope of further dialogue from a devoted, but concerned, fellow jeweller,

Mona Wallström

Figure 21-24.
Process: Illustrating a charged moment. Sketches on splitting cells. Visualizing the cell split three dimensional by using two magnifying glasses set in wood from my birth place. Split "cells" are from other types of wood representing different kinds of characteristics. The wooden pieces are held together with silk cord knot from instructions in the Ashley Book of Knots.





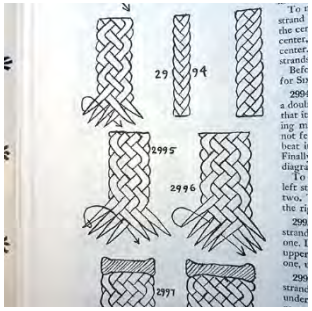


Figure 29-31.
Process: Charged with a secret message.
A secret message to the owner of the wearable object from its maker. The message is written on paper and wrinkled. By wetting the paper, it can be rolled to a small hard ball. The paper ball is set in braided fallen horsehair. To read the message the piece will be destroyed.

Figure 25-28.
Process: Making tool for charging. In order to capture and keep the desirable; happiness, a memory, love or a dead soul etc. these objects can be used as factual or symbolic tool. A butterfly net and a cage made in found horn from reindeer and silk. Silk is knotted and braided from instruction in the Ashley Book of Knots.

A Sense of Awe and Wonder

April 2020

Dear Nkisi Maker,

It has been a while since I wrote, but I have been very occupied with the thought that I brought to you in the last letter; making things and how to charge them in the context I live in.

Today, there are still things that are treasured, or charged, and they are most often connected to persons, places and events. There are also others that protect or give guidance or devices for capturing the coveted.
These objects have been given, besides the visual appearance, another kind of value: one that is very personal but still, to some extent, comprehended in the society we live in.
Despite this, I don't think that the substances that you used to charge the nkisi are as relevant today. Medicine, the curative capacity of which is scientific proven, is trusted in society today. The charging might work without a visible substance but it still needs references to known concepts.

Relations are the most important things in our lives, not only our closest family, best friends, colleagues. We worship and admires; we love and commit to persons that we might not even have met. Remains of holy persons have been kept as sacred objects; images of holy persons painted with their eyes following you in the room as a proof of an ever-guarding God. Even things that used to belong to an admired or at least famous person can have a high value. It is as if a touch of divine individual has made the things something else. And in jewellery, there are many examples of this, for mourning; rings with hair from the deceased, the use of parent's rings in the children's marriage, etc.

Sometimes I have a sensitivity to places and can react to untold, not-yet-known facts about a place. It is like there is a parallel dimension that emerges in me. I have been travelling a lot and memories of the places that I have visited are more powerful than other experiences during the trip. Today, some of the most famous travel destinations have problems with people taking things from the places with them, like stones, shells and other objects, which will change and eventually destroy these places. Some are already on the point of being ruined and have, due to this, limited the number of visitors or even fully closed.

As for the events, they can be societal or personal, and can be connected to relations, big changes or to something you have achieved. We remember where we were when the twin towers in New York were attacked. Those who were in Berlin when the wall fell will remember it forever. These are events that will forever be a part of the story of our time. Being in the right place and doing the right thing can even get you a medal. In war, depending on who's side you are on, in competition measured in comparative numbers; fastest, highest, longest etc.

To capture and keep things or creatures, for pleasure or as a symbol of a connection, is common in many cultures. The Romans even had a God, though minor, whose purpose was to be caught. Occasio was the personification of opportunity, luck and favourable moments, was not easy to catch as he/she had only one lock of hair to grip by. Insects have in many cultures been captured as symbols of life, death and resurrection. This passage from larvae, through the pupa's hardened outside, inside transforming and coming out as a fully developed butterfly or beetle, which are collected both alive and dead.

Many of the amulets and charms today are used for protection, to prevent evil things from happening. The folklore in Sweden is filled with strange creatures: some evil and some nice. Some you have to treat well to not fall into their disgrace. Some will guard your house or help you find the path. Diseases were signs of disgrace or the evil powers. Some protectors that could be found in nature. When a large hollowness is found in a tree the child is pulled through the hole and will then be protected from rickets. When protecting newborns, a small loop is made of a branch an put on the breast so the child is feeding through the loop. I really like this image of getting protected but such a simple, but poetic act.

A secret message can have a romantic glow, as when lovers need to hide their relationship, or cause an intriguing and thrilling excitement, when used by spies. The messages can be clear or coded, but are only for a selected receiver. A mentor can give individual advice, a stanza directed directly into your heart. Randomly found objects or phenomena in nature can by some be seen as omens, of good or bad, or signs from God, and have always been a way for humans to try to understand our existence.

In my project "A Sense of Awe and Wonder" I have made suggestions of charged objects. I have tried to use local material as much as I could, preferably without any killing involved, but I haven't fully succeeded. Wood, birch bark, stones and reindeer horn are found in nature, leather (local) and silk (imported) means that creatures were sacrificed, but at least the hair from horses and humans fall off frequently, no harm done. The main components of cord (flax) paper (wood) and glass (quartz sand) might be local, but in processing the origin is lost. Even so, these materials have associative qualities, related to daily life, that were useful for the pieces.

So, I made these 6 wearable objects suggesting what a charged object can be today:

***The Only** is made of wood with human remains, in this case my own hair as remains from the dead are, in my society, even too charged.*
***This Place** is made from natural shaped stones from Gallejaur falls (close to where I was born and raised, now dead, sacrificed for electricity) set in branches from where I live now.*
***This Moment** is illustrated by a cell division, a reminder of the birth of my children.*
***Capturer** is an intermediator of capturing the desirable illustrated by butterfly net and a cage.*
***Preventers** is made by branches traditionally in Scandinavian folklore called "smöjträ", used for preventing rickets*
***Messages** is made with secret messages written on paper, wrinkled and set with horsehair.*

Thank you for speaking to me through your nkisi. I have probably misunderstood a great deal, not only by living in another time and place, but, I think, mostly because my interpretation is built on my experiences and imagination.

But from one maker to another, aren't these our best assets?

With great gratitude, awe and wonder,

Mona Wallström

P.S. The image shows my pieces worn by colleagues from my art community D.S.

©Johan Wingborg

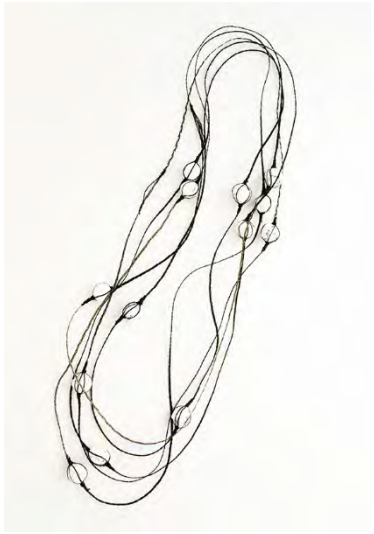
The Only
Wearable object connected to a person. Wood, human hair, leather.

This Moment
Wearable object connected to a specific moment, illustrated with a cell split. Magnifying glass, wood, silk cord.

This Place
Wearable object connected to a place. Wood, natural shaped stones from Gallejaur, birch bark, flax.

Capturer
Wearable object serving as a tool for capturing and keeping the desirable. Horn from reindeer, silk cord.

Preventers
Wearable object with 11 connected "smöjträ" for protecting from illness.
Wood from cultivated thin branches, thin leather, flax cord.



Messages
Wearable object with secret messages.
Paper, waterproof ink, fallen horsehair.

CONCLUSION

Most of the things we own do not mean very much to us. In a sense they are nothing (no thing) as they can disappear without any existential trace of loss. Some losses might only remain as a feeling of lost monetary value. Charged objects have another kind of value: personal or communal, and related to the intermediated content of the object. Through the letters to a Nkisi Maker, a Collector, a Museum and a Fellow Jeweller it becomes obvious that there are many stories and levels in the content added, from the makers intention through different events to the final recipient. Every level adds perspectives that are included in the interpretation of the object. This non-verbal communication through an object is what we, as jewellers and artists, do – tell a story in a material format. To trust and encourage this ability, applies to both the maker and the receiver. The possibility of intermediating information and perspectives through an object is, somehow, disregarded today. However, this form of communication has an important ability to link people and cultures together. And, by using "un-preciseness" in the transmission, the receivers can then also be co-creators through their own experiences.

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Swedish jeweller and artist. MFA from School of Design and Craft at Gothenburg University where she later in 1995-2001 was Head of department. Co-founder of Hnoss Gallery, now Hnoss Initiative. Her work often refers to memory, history and storytelling and is shown in several exhibitions, national and international. This research was made during 2019-20 studies at Research Lab Craft! at Konstfack Stockholm. www.monawallstrom.se

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