

Wearing space: bringing jewellery to space or space into jewellery

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Abstract

Contemporary jewellery is about adoring the human body and exploring its limits. Thus I am asking myself how is jewellery related to space? What is the relationship between the body, jewellery and the built space that surrounds us? The essay aims to look at the examples of jewellery that provides alternate ways of understanding the body and its relationship to wearing jewellery by approaching it through body's motion in space. I am going to discuss these questions through a concept of social choreography, investigating how is a jewel affected by the movement of the body as well as how does the jewel affect the body. Thus I am going to talk about jewellery as a sign and its meaning as transitional object.

I will discuss jewellery and its relationship to and presence within the space of architecture.

Is jewellery the most effective form of art to talk about the human body and its correlation to space? Perhaps. However, this research made me realise that it is important to consider that jewellery is not only an object hung/exhibited on the body for reasons of projecting identities, power or status. The body has a much more non-hierarchical relation to objects that surrounds us, where jewellery also belongs.

I hope that this kind of thinking about jewellery objects will attract more attention into society and culture.

Wearing space: bringing jewellery to space or space into jewellery

Contemporary jewellery arises as a system of signs. In semiotics, a sign is something that can be interpreted as having a meaning, which is something other than itself, and which is therefore able to communicate information to the one interpreting or decoding the sign. A sign is composed of the *signifier*, and the *signified*. For eg. pronounced word apple becomes a signifier of an actual apple which is the signified. If we draw an apple on a paper it becomes a sign. I think that often in contemporary jewellery the signs from which jewellery arises, as mentioned before, are used questionably. That is: often the signs used are in some way always referring to what traditional jewellery used to signify. I think it is important for contemporary jewellery to be freed from tradition in order to develop. Therefore I have chosen to investigate something seemingly unrelated, but i believe important : the relationship between jewellery and the built space.

I am and have always been fascinated with seeing the world from high up, a skyscraper or a mountain. People as dancers walking the streets, parks, inside their apartments, their changing rhythms, speed, as if seeing everything from above. From an airplane it is pleasurable to see the abstract choreography of moving bodies. This choreography can be seen as social choreography. As a Dutch art critic Jan Verwoert put it: *Social choreography is a concept that blends the dynamic aspects of*

*picturing the world as a stage with the analytic edge of reading social life as coded: as dancers on a social stage we move in synchronicity with groups or break away to perform solos and, relying on the gestures we have rehearsed, we structure the space and time of everyday life through the specific choreographies of our motions.*¹

I am aware of the wideness of the subject of social choreography as being a contemporary dance practice that can include deep dramaturgical research and art practices. However, in this text I want to zoom in specific choreographies and in the jewels on those bodies that perform them, to try and think about whether and how jewellery is related to the built space.

According to Oxford's dictionary, jewellery is something to possess, to carry, to protect or adorn your body with. Space according to the same source, is a continuous area of expanse which is available, unoccupied. I am interested in "wearing" the space. I believe that there is two ways of doing that: one is to bring the space into jewellery and the second is to bring jewellery into space. Thus I am wondering about space that is unavailable and occupied - the built space.

Jewellery like the built space is very close to the human body. I am curious how is it then related, how is jewellery "in space", "containing space"?

Would wearing space mean to carry or posses space or would space posses jewellery?

Firstly I will discuss the body and architectural spaces in terms of scale and proportion, thus also motion. I will describe an experiment called a '*living room*' I did earlier this month, where I invited five friends to think about how could we 'wear' a living room we were having dinner in. Each of them was given one hour to visualise their idea. That is: does wearing a living room mean carrying it on your shoulders? How else to approach it? Where does jewellery appear and space disappear and visa versa...

Later I will mention artists whose practices involved thinking about jewellery in relation to the body, its movement and built environment. These are a jewellery maker Jing He, dutch artist Karen Bartels, who works with how jewellery interacts in the public space; a Belgian artist Liesbet Bussche, who makes jewels for architecture; a Dutch jeweler Dinie Basems and Onno Boekhout who worked with jewellery as no longer something that is put on the body but as in how the body is placed

¹ Jan Verwoert *Tell me what you want, what you really, really want* (Sternberg Press 2010) p, 81

in jewellery. I will only discuss the works of Liesbeth Busse and Jing He since these appear as the the most relevant to my subject.

Subsequently I will discuss my own attempts in describing examples of my jewellery work, where I specifically researched a particular kind of space – the space of transit. Those could be the metro, train station or the airport. I am asking myself questions: what is public and private? What does memory of texture mean to us? How much information does one need to experience a certain space? I am interested in the remnants of our existence embedded in our surroundings, the reflections of buildings within ourselves. I wish to bring the built space back to the human body.

In this text I am also going to refer to the issues of contemporary jewellery since it is more relevant for me, than jewellery in general.

Bringing space to jewellery (the experiment)

It is through the body we measure the world; it is our medium through which we understand the world. *A lot of jewellery is designed to fit comfortably around the human body, create intimate spaces or dominate the body, but the proportions remain constant in relation to the human form.*

I want to think about the triangle: space, body and object. If we take the space as built, the body as ours and the object as wearable, proportion is approximately clear. Our body's height 150cm up till 200cm whereas architecture's varies from 300cm and more. Thus the object can only be smaller than the two. The possibility to wear the object on our bodies asks for preferably a quite small size.

However, it is exciting to think about this triangle in a sense of the motion of the body in relation to the built space. What does the object than become? Thus how to wear space?

I made an experiment and invited several friends to have dinner in my house; in return they all would participate in my project for the evening called a *living room*. I gave everyone one hour to try and think how would

they “wear” this room and after share our thoughts. The results were exciting.

After this whole hour of sitting on the couch in the centre of the room, my friend Mary made a drawing of the room saying that only this way she could wear the the living room in her pocket. She also said that wearing a living room for her was taking the whole living room with her, home. It couldn't be just a detail or a thing from the room it had to be the whole place with everything inside. This way she could think of me there, she associated it with me living there. I found her drawing very interesting.

Wearing for Mary meant having with her at all times, like an amulet. I was thinking that her initial idea was to possess the living room as a static image, a memory of it. Her drawing depicted the room from above, thus had all the bigger furniture pieces inside it. This drawing was almost a map of the room except of the fact that she drew the patterns of upholstering, ornaments of the curtains and shadows that came from the furniture. There were no people in the image and the general feeling of the image appeared rather melancholic, since the forms drawn were not precise, faded. You could see she did not attempt to draw the room the way it was. The colours varied from grey to some sort of steel blue. I noticed that she, apart of moving her right hand, did not move, did not walk or touch anything, she just looked. I am thinking now whether that affected her decision of solving the task. If she would have moved the weight of her body from one side to another, from one part of the room to another, it would maybe the outcome would not have been a drawing? However, I was fascinated with the sense of melancholy in the image. On the one hand, it could show that Mary depicted my living room as a this space which she thought was deep-rooted in me, maybe some important events took place there, thus she paid respect to that, on the other hand it could be that this melancholy came in as distance. The distance she took from the actual walls of the room, from everything inside the room in fact. *Melancholy is appearing as non-communication, it is related only and firstly to a transcendental sense – sight. There is no melancholic taste, smell or tactile sense. Distance which sight brings creates a place, landscape, scene, distant (fading or faded) groups of tactile forms. Form is a place of melancholy* said a Lithuanian postmodern philosopher Arvydas Sliogeris.² Mary depicted the living room from the perspective of seeing.

² Arvydas Sliogeris *Melancholijos Archipelagai* (Apostrofa 2009) p, 34

Another girl Joana explained that for her wearing the room was simply being there, inside. Only then could she experience the wearing of the room. Joana said that she could interpret wearing in only two ways: wearing on one's body as clothes, showing and wearing inside, keeping for one's self. Thus combining these two ideas together resulted into experiencing the room, by simply being inside it, performing ordinary actions. The sound of walking, the smell of the food presented for dinner that day, the feel of the deep cut in the living room's floor and the way light hit the wallpaper for Joana was the room. A writer Franz Kafka writes : *Everyone carries a room about inside him. This fact can even be proved by means of the sense of hearing. If someone walks fast and one pricks up one's ears and listens, say in the night, when everything round about is quiet, one hears, for instance, the rattling of a mirror not quite firmly fastened to the wall.* For me this quote clarifies Joana's thoughts. I think it would be interesting to see it resulting into a form of performance.

The living room must be detached from the main building, by cutting it off with an angle grinder, dumped on wheels and transported said my friend Petras. His statement immediately reminded me of the work of an American artist G. Matta Clark (1943-1978) . His interventions caused defences on the existing structures and led the given architecture to fail its initial goal of solving specific problems (stability, protection etc). Matta-Clark's 'building cuts' were actual holes on the building that tested the building's support system. Fundamental elements to the architecture became absent and challenged the building's stability. The questions he was asking was : Can architecture be produced through destruction? What is the sense of ownership? What is the essence of a property?

Not only that Petra's idea would ask the same question but also he took the task of wearing the livingroom quite literally. I find it a very logical decision. The closest way to actually wearing a room is to physically engage with it no matter how big or heavy the object is. If the project would proceed he would have to destroy my whole house in order to detach the living room and transport it with a big car. Would it not be that if he managed to carry the room on his shoulders, the task would be unconditionally fulfilled?

With that in mind, Loreta's idea to take an object from the room and carry it with her was rather interesting. The only question I had in my mind was: What will she take?

There is an enormous amount of things in the room apart of walls floors and ceilings. Loreta chose a piece of wallpaper that was hanging loose in the corner behind the desk. She said that only the walls “have seen and kept “ all that happened in the room, thus the wallpaper would bear traces of existence. By having the piece of paper in her pocket she would wear the living room.

Therefore, Loreta’s solution is the closest to how I myself see it. I am interested in the walls, ceilings and floors and in their surfaces. For me, to wear a room is to wear the surface of the room. The traces of the surfaces are in a way invisible; we can never know what time has left, collected there. The surface is the closest to our bodies, we touch the surface of the buildings we live in. In that way it has a direct connection to our physical bodies. I am interested in materializing the surfaces and bringing them back to the human body in a form of jewellery.

The results of the experiment also defined the name of itself: *the living room*. Meaning that the room is not only a just walls that shelters but also has a special relationship to us, it ‘lives’.

I want to come back to the concept of the sign. The latter piece of wallpaper, Loreta chose as a solution to wearing the living room. What does the piece signify if put on the body as jewellery? For Loreta it is a sign that represents my living room, it is remnant of the space, that she wants to keep and protect. For anyone else who does not know anything about me or my living room, the piece of wallpaper is merely a piece of wallpaper, which came from a space where it probably used to belong to a bigger piece. That is what this piece would signify as jewelry, because it’s audience would see it as a mere piece of wallpaper. However isn’t it interesting and challenging to wear a piece made out of wallpaper? Would this piece speak of the importance of the place where the fragment comes from for the wearer? Would moving this piece of paper around mean that it would be in a state of transition/change?

I decided to continue with researching that relationship between the built space, human body and jewellery by choosing another type of space – the space of transit.

Spaces and objects of transition

In my daily life, I am fascinated with spaces like the train station, the airport, the metro. These are spaces we pass through everyday, there is a lot of movement happening daily. Transition is change. The change that happens in these spaces is changing one's location. We visit these spaces to get from one part of town to another, from one city to another. We do not stay in these spaces for a long time, we do not live there. Only a couple of hours is the time we spend there. Everything happens quite fast: firstly we are looking for our platform or gate, walking among countless amount of people, the scenery moves quick, we stop to have a cup of coffee (that is only if we have to wait) and finally we get on the train, bus or plane to bring us to another place.

Usually while we are proceeding with all these actions we do not show emotions or feelings on the contrary we become cold and passive. We are in the moment of transition. If transition is change does it mean we are in a moment of change? What kind of change?

This reminds of the british psychoanalyst's D.W. Winnicott's theory of transitional phenomena.

Winnicott says that in addition to the inner world and external reality 'there is the third part of the life of a human being, a part that we cannot ignore, an intermediate area of experiencing, to which inner reality and external life both contribute. It is an area which is not challenged, because no claim is made on its behalf except that it shall exist as a resting-place for the individual engaged in the perpetual human task of keeping inner and outer reality separate yet inter-related' (1951, p. 230). 'This third area might turn out to be the cultural life of the individual' (1989, p. 57) It is important that it is an area or space. It is not the sharp boundary-maintenance referred to as reality-testing. It is intermediate: 'illusion, that which is allowed to the infant, and which on adult life is inherent in art and religion' (Ibid.).³

On the one hand, I am not sure how and whether I can relate this intermediate area of the human life, which Winnicott is talking about, to the transitional space I am interested in. However I am sure there are

³ Article Robert.M.Young *Transitional Space: Transitional Phenomena 2005*
<http://human-nature.com/mental/chap8.html> (Accessed on Feb. 4th, 2015)

similarities, which are about the change that can potentially happen in this area of transition. On the other hand, I believe that as likely as not while waiting for a metro at the station, while being in this moment of transition, we have the a short period of time to contemplate about our day, work and life values but also just the wall we face or the people we see. That moment in a way summarises a portion of our feelings about things. There is nothing else to do during waiting for one's train, there is no obligations, responsibilities, this moment has probably no real function. Ofcourse we can choose to fill this moment by calling someone, or planning something for the coming day, planning dinner or even reading, but I do believe that that summary can happen unconsciously. Now, is this then the third area between the external reality and the inner world Winnicott was writing about? He also said that this area might be the cultural life of the individual. Thus, I think that the moment of waiting for the metro, even if not directly related to culture at all, can definitely be in interesting ways influencing or challenging one's intellect.

In his book *Playing and reality (1951)* Winnicott talks about the transitional object. When an infant reaches a certain age in his life he needs an object to take place in mother-child bond. These objects can vary from playing with one's hands and lips to relating to part of a sheet, blanket or bit of cloth which is sucked or caressed. All these things the psychoanalyst calls transitional phenomena.

When symbolism is employed the infant is already clearly distinguishing between fantasy and fact, between inner objects and external objects, between primary creativity and perception. But the term transitional object, according to my suggestion, gives room for the process of becoming able to accept difference and similarity. I think there is use for a term for the root of symbolism in time, a term that describes the infant's journey from the purely subjective to objectivity; and it seems to me that the transitional object (piece of blanket, etc.) is what we see of this journey of progress towards experiencing. It would be possible to understand the transitional object while not fully understanding the nature of symbolism. It seems that symbolism can be properly studied only in the process of the growth of an individual and that it has at the very best a variable meaning. For instance, if we consider the wafer of the Blessed Sacrament, which is symbolic of the body of Christ, I think I am right in saying that for the Roman Catholic community it is the body, and for the Protestant community it is a substitute, a reminder, and is

*essentially not, in fact, actually the body itself. Yet in both cases it is a symbol.*⁴

Here I want to come back to the project of *the living room*. Specifically in the last example where Loreta took a piece of a wallpaper hanging loose in the corner, to have it in her pocket as “my livingroom”. I wondered if this piece can in any way have resemblance to a transitional object?

This piece of wallpaper is for Loreta a symbol of my living room with a lot of meanings and thoughts behind it, but for anyone else it is just a small piece of old wallpaper. The transitional object is what we see of this journey of progress towards experiencing says D.W Winnicott. That is, I understand, when a child no longer has his mother as a comforter, soother at all times, then he has to “hold on something else”, an object. He has to start to experience the world around him by giving meaning to things. In that way this object he chooses becomes a very important to him.

For my master project I am making jewellery pieces that are reminders of transitional spaces and of objects we tend to overlook. I want to “freeze” fragments of spaces and objects into a permanent form as opposed to quick and changing nature of these spaces. Therefore celebrate the walls, floors and ceilings of the stations. I am making imprints, where architectural elements function as a mold. Later, they become jewellery with a possibility to wear them, to have these spaces with you. The materials vary from glass and metal to dry paint sheets that come from the wall. Consequently, I am interested in whether or not these jewellery objects become transitional objects and in which way? Can there be transitional objects for adults? If I come back to the time of waiting in the station, the time of no function, I wonder what would happen if I compare or connect it to the time one would spend with a jewellery piece which is about that space? Would it serve the same purpose of taking time to reflect, time for one’s self?

I will quote D.W Winnicott once more:

I am here staking a claim for an intermediate state between a baby’s inability and his growing ability to recognize and accept reality. I am therefore studying the substance of illusion, that which is allowed to the

⁴ D.W Winnicott *Playing and reality* (Tavistock publications 1971) p.3

infant, and which in adult life is inherent in art and religion, and yet becomes the hallmark of madness when an adult puts too powerful a claim on the credulity of others, forcing them to acknowledge a sharing of illusion that is not their own. We can share a respect for illusory experience, and if we wish, we may collect together and form a group on the basis of the similarity of our illusory experiences. This is a natural root of grouping among human beings.

Here the writer explained that the reason why he is writing about the transitional object is that he initially wants to understand how a human being, in his early age, starts to recognize and accept reality. I am therefore interested in whether a transitional object can challenge adult's recognition and acceptance of reality. By having and wearing the jewellery pieces one would also wear the space that jewel has an imprint of.

In the next part, I will talk about another example of an artist who research space object and body relationship.



Dovile Bernadisiute *Leipzig hauptbahnhof* 2015

Jing He: choreography of bodies and lamps

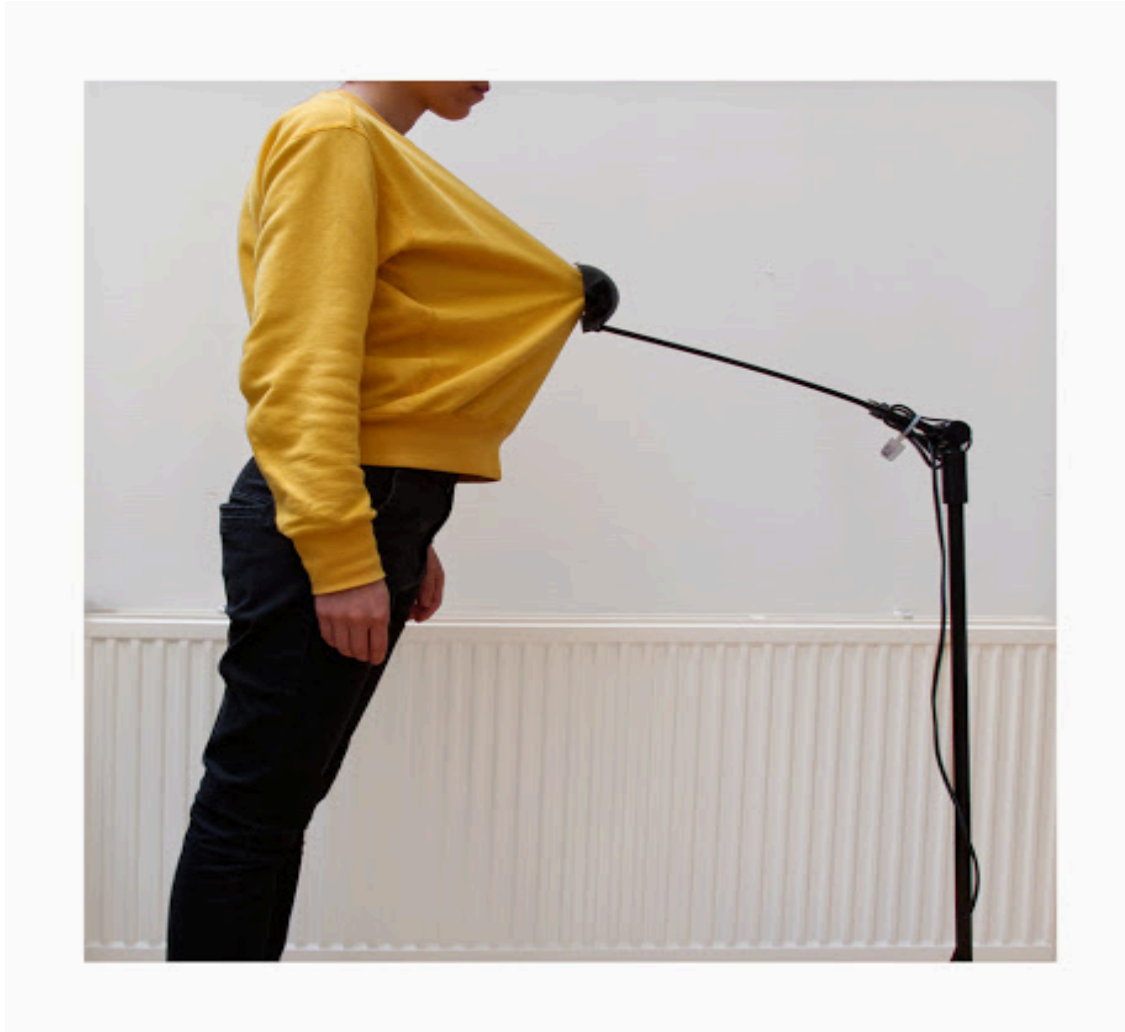


Jing He : *Instant pins/ potential pins 2014*

Contemporary jewellery can speak of devotion, project identities, start a discussion, and work as a symbol of status, luxury item, yet offers something distinctive by focusing on aspects of physicality and wearability.

He takes simple, usually cheap, often plastic objects that are oftentimes kitchen tools or other domestic objects and makes them into brooches. She makes the pin not only to function as a connection between an object and the body, but also as a crucial part of the brooch's structure. I would like to take as an example a work called *Instant Pins/Potential*

Pins that you see in the picture below. She “pins” a swing-arm lamp to her sweater. The work intrigues by the domesticity of the chosen object, especially out of which to make a piece of jewellery. The lamp has very little material value, maybe even no emotional value; it is almost only general, impersonal. How can it work as a jewel?



Jing He : “Instant pins/ potential pins” 2014

Philosopher Marko Gylen, in his text on philosophy of jewellery writes:

Mass production easily loses touch, the touch of suspension, the ability to move in unique moments. We are surrounded by objects that are not made but mass-made, and mass-made not of wood or silver but of information and consumption. That is why the objects made with traditional skills and crafts, and of traditional materials, are carrying with

*them a sphere of nostalgia or history and they move us differently now than in the past centuries. Nevertheless, coping in the present day world gives birth to new skills of suspension with new materials.*⁵

When Gylen talks about “suspension,” he means the effect of being pulled into making sense and that we are continuously trying to make sense of the world. For me the brooch/lamp is an example of these new “skills of suspension,” of how a jewel opens possibilities to make sense, not by attaching meaning to it, but letting it be itself.

Usually jewellery moves with the movements of the wearer. In this case, the wearer’s movements are restricted by the jewel. I imagine if my room had lamps that are also brooches, my decision to wear them would determine my movement in my room: I would walk up to the lamp (I guess, otherwise, I would not just walk up to the lamp without any reason), and I would pin myself to it (or rather the lamp would pin me down?). I understand the potential triviality of this action: one might ask why do we make jewellery out of lamps? Don’t they have their own function? A lamp gives light - that is its only purpose. By making a lamp a jewel, I think of the science fictional aspect of the work. As we see in the image, the person’s body and the brooch have almost the same height, the lamp becomes humanized, it somewhat resembles the human body.

According to anthropologist and philosopher Bruno Latour, our hybrid reality is divided into two cultures: the “soft” dimensions of our existence where social categories are projected onto an object and “hard” dimensions of an object where objective powers of the thing are the strongest. He states:

Things are imparted with meaning by use and perception, by touch, by looking at and being looked at, by habit and tactile appropriation, by a coincidental discovery during a walk or conversation. It is not about the research into either the ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ qualities of an object are naturally applied in practice, but how these two cultures function together, form a complex whole, goes unnoticed in many cases. This duality of objects according to B.Latour should function together and suggests the quasi-

⁵ Mark Gylen, transcript of a lecture : *Punctuations...towards a philosophy of jewellery* http://www.saimia.fi/koru3/docs/Gylen_Punctuations.pdf (accessed on January 23, 2015)

*object. This object builds a new knowledge. Rather than considering an object as a fact or a value and to see it simply as a (stylistic) form or social function, we must begin to grasp the facts/values as intrinsically inter-related wholes. Quasi-objects are much more social, much more fabricated, much more collective than the 'hard' parts of nature, but they are in no way the arbitrary receptacles of a full-fledged society.*⁶

Accordingly, I would like to think about He's brooch as a quasi object. By removing the function of the lamp and giving it a purpose of adornment, she creates space for rediscovery of the object and its relationship to the body and space. Again I will quote M.Gylen where he talks about the material things:

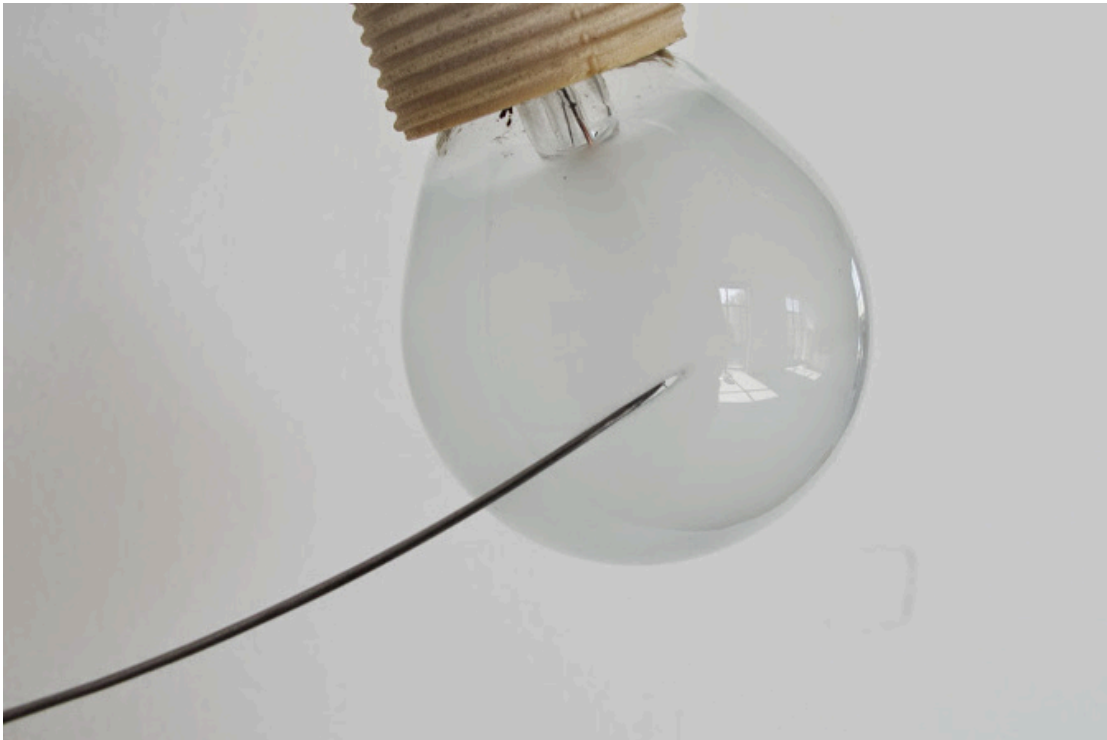
*The thing is there, in its being, in its materiality and factuality. It is a fact, staring, challenging, waiting. As a fact it affects us. As a material thing it matters to us. The basic question is not the scientific one: what is it / what is the cause of it, but existential one: what to do with it, where does it belong, what's the sense of it, what the heck? If we knew what to do with things, unquestionably, we would merely follow mechanically the given sense of our whole existence. But then we would not be able to experience this knowledge as knowledge, this sense as sense. We wouldn't be able to experience anything.*⁷

⁶ Article *The quasi-object* Roemer van Toorn;
<http://www.roemervantoon.nl/quasiobject.html> (accessed on January 17, 2015)

⁷ Mark Gylen, transcript of a lecture : *Punctuations...towards a philosophy of jewellery* http://www.saimia.fi/koru3/docs/Gylen_Punctuations.pdf (accessed on January 23, 2015)



Jing He : "Instant pins/ potential pins" 2014



Jing He : *Instant Pins/ Potential Pins* 2014

In my eyes, He's comparison of everyday objects to jewels is very successful. I imagine people pinning themselves to their lamps in their rooms, standing there pinned for a while, and unpinning themselves to go. I think it is a beautiful movement and execution of the jewels: it is a micro choreography potentially performed.

Therefore J.He's work is an example of wearing space in a way of wearing a fragment that the space consists of.

Bringing jewellery into space

To wear a jewel is to break it and make it disappear

Our bodies move in architectural space in countless different directions everyday, either with groups or independently. Accordingly, our motions form a specific movement; a certain social choreography is created.

I want to think about an apartment building. Many people move in many different directions everyday in their apartments. Usually, the directions are limited to the number of rooms there are. The French artist G.Perec writes:

07:00 The mother gets up and goes to get breakfast in the
KITCHEN

07:15 The child gets up and goes into the
BATHROOM

07:30 The father get's up and goes into the
BATHROOM

07:45 The father and the child have their breakfast in the
KITCHEN

08:00 The child takes his coat from the
ENTRANCE-HALL

and goes off to school"

08:15 The father takes his coat from the
ENTRANCE-HALL

and goes off to his office

08:30 The mother performs her toilet in the
BATHROOM...⁸

When the choreography of groups end, then the solo or mini choreography starts. I am very interested in the moment when one sits down in the midst of his social life of the “family/apartment” and starts to stare - stare into the wall; or stare into the corner, usually without any reason, maybe to relax, to contemplate, to rest, or maybe due to lack of concentration. I am interested in what one sees then, on the surfaces of the walls, in the corner of the ceiling. Zooming into these places opens new worlds. Cracks in the ceiling start forming maps of new worlds, surfaces speak of memories that are being merged with the present moment. When I look at the surface of my wall it makes me think about one thing: that everything in my worldview starts from the surface because I see it first; I am exposed to it. I can only imagine or figure out from books or other sources of knowledge, what is behind the surface - how thick is the wall, how it works as a wall, how expensive it is and so on.

Surface as a word has a slightly negative meaning to it, being used to connote superficial or shallow as opposed to deep and significant. It is a paradox. Surface is tactile; it holds remnants of the human body, our sweat, dirt, dust... Surfaces of buildings are like the second skin of the human body. It is in this case that it is interesting for me to think about jewellery.

During the process of writing about these topics I decided to make an experiment, which would hopefully relate them or raise more questions. I started to make a piece of jewellery that would question the jewel’s relation to the human body and connect the body to the built space. I made a bracelet out of many layers of old graffiti paint, which over the years has formed a thick sheet that has fallen from the city building wall. This bracelet is, as you can see in the picture below, 9 cm wide and 17cm long. It has an aluminum clasp, which follows the width of the bracelet. At the very first stage the bracelet appears as a flat, hard sheet, which suggests wearability only from the clasp.

⁸ Georges Perec “Spieces of spaces and other pieces” trans. John Sturrock (Penguin books 2007) p, 28-29



The clasp hints to closing it, while the length hints to closing it around one's wrist, since it the wrist is the only body part to which it can relate relative to size. Therefore, in order to close the clasp and wear the bracelet one would need to wrap the sheet around the wrist, which would cause the sheet of paint to break/crack. This way the bracelet does not immediately insist to be worn, as hung on or put on the body to hold it, instead it seduces with possible pleasure/disappointment of breaking it.

So what happens if I decide to close the clasp, break the sheet around the wrist and wear it? The bracelet is worn. Not long after I noticed that the more I move my wrist, the more the bracelet cracks. It breaks especially noticeably by performing repetitive movements – twisting open a bottle cap, for example. After noticing that the bracelet is cracking up, I tended to restrict my movements, to stop and think about the bracelet, about protecting it. Also, I saw the bracelet as part of myself; I secretly expected that it should also protect me. However, something that breaks easily and is worn often will also disappear, which contradicts the typical understanding of a piece of jewellery. Does breaking a bracelet mean destroying something valuable? To make the bracelet disappear and have it exist only in memory contradicts the most powerful motivations of wearing jewellery: desire, wealth and position. So maybe it questions,

rather than contradicts, these supposed values? Also, to wear out something valuable, to the point when it disappears, gives it an ephemeral quality, which I believe is very beautiful. After all, the bracelet is made out of layers of graffiti paint. Graffiti is a form of public art, that projects people's beliefs, and reflects on society by painting on the walls. I see the paint as material that is a remnant of our existence. By giving it grace and the qualities of a jewel, I therefore hopefully give it power. I am interested in how jewellery can bring the built space closer to the body. For example, how can we wear space? This subject, however, is quite wide and only tangentially related to the topic of this paper, so I will leave it to another time.

I would like to compare this experiment with that of He's lamp/brooch. The most important aspect of the two examples that I tried to investigate is that of how does jewellery appear on or with the body in alternate ways and what would that mean? Thus, the bracelet firstly challenges the viewer wear it as a jewellery; secondly, it causes a different kind of actual wearing. The lamp/brooch does almost the same. Both jewels provoke the decision of wearing and define the movements of the body.

Because picturing people wearing jewels like this would be quite hard, the question becomes: how do the jewels work socially and culturally? How do they, according to Mark Gylan, make sense? I think the most essential is to look at these jewels as *punctuations that temporarily suspend and puncture the processes of life*.⁹ Different arts have various qualities of suspension; the most powerful aspect of jewellery as art is that it works in social life, on someone's body, and thus has an enormous communicative power and "punctuates" in a very particular way.

One example of how it works this way is the notion of the "punctum" that Roland Barthes describes in his book *Camera Lucida*.¹⁰ The book talks about the essence of photography and providing the concepts of "studium" and "punctum": studium as coded meanings of the photograph

⁹ Mark Gylan, transcript of a lecture : *Punctuations...towards a philosophy of jewellery* http://www.saimia.fi/koru3/docs/Gylen_Punctuations.pdf (accessed on January 23, 2015)

¹⁰ Roland Barthes *Camera Lucida* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1981) trans. Richard Howard, p, 43

that are available to everyone and punctum as private meaning, a detail or an object that draws the viewer's gaze in a unexpected way. He writes:

Duane Michals has photographed Andy Warhol: a provocative portrait, since Warhol hides his face behind both hands. I have no desire to comment intellectually on this game of hide-and-seek (which belongs to the Studium); since for me, Warhol hides nothing; he offers his hands to read, quite openly; and the punctum is not the gesture but the slightly repellent substance of those spatulate nails, at once soft and hard-edged.

I think this kind of personal meaning belongs to a jewel. Punctum is an important part in jewellery since it is a detail, a partial object that suddenly strikes our attention. I wonder what are the possibilities to expand the punctum? Where does the story in our minds go after we are struck by this abrupt detail? How does jewellery do its job as punctum, and is it relevant for thinking about its social and cultural application? In the next chapter I will give an instance of works of where I think punctum is very clearly visible.

Liesbet Bussche: big jewellery

Another example of an artist who is relating jewellery and space is a belgian Liesbeth Bussche. In one of her projects she reinvented ordinary street dividers and concrete balls to make larger than life jewellery pieces. Using forms of conventional jewellery she remade elements of urban landscape into earrings necklaces and pendants. The form resembles the original form of an earring with a push-back closure for example, however it is much bigger. It is bigger than a human form itself. How do we relate to these big urban jewels? What are they for?

Let's take an example of an earring on the road. A big metal stick with a closure is attached to a ready made, already standing in the street, concrete ball (barrier used to prevent cars from driving into that particular street) On the one hand, this big earring makes any passer-by smile when finding a purposeful change in the uniform vocabulary of the urban landscape. On the other hand, does one think about wearing it? What about a possibility of sticking it in your ear and feeling the weight of

our urban existence? Or is this jewel for the city? For that particular street?

I am interested in that slightest probability of this earring actually being for me to wear. Jewellery is something to adorn your body with. Thus I feel excited about an idea adorning myself with part of the city, even if it is just a proposal which can never come to reality.

I always looked for ways where contemporary jewellery actually reaches it's audience and gets it's work done. Oftentimes it is rather difficult, since this kind of jewellery is about what an artist wants to say as opposed to favouring wearer's desires. I find L.Bussche's big jewels actually working in that way.

As I was talking about earlier in the thesis her works have something of punctum in them. The fact that they are literally very big and their presence in the street is visible but in a somewhat subtle way, strikes the eye of an onlooker. Even though the jewels does not work on the human body, one can relate to it through punctum. One receives a private message of it's own as a meaning of a piece.



Liesbet Bussche 2011

Another example is a red and white street divider that the artist crocheted out of small plastic beads. First one would not notice anything special but once one would come closer would see that many hours of labour are put in it. Thus, one would immediately start relating it to their body as it reminds of the bead bracelets we all once had.

How would it feel to wrap this whole length of the street divider around the wrist or the neck? One would metaphorically experience the entire space on him/her self which the divider had surrounded. It would probably be heavy and uncomfortable, but how would the idea of a divider work on the human body? What would it divide?

Maybe the artist made it as a kind of decoration of the area, instead of having a boring, alarming-coloured stripe. Maybe instead she has put care and time into it. In connection I would like to quote the philosopher Marc Gylan who says:

*A decoration or an ornament is no mere surplus. On the contrary, it makes something seen as a work of art. Applied art is in the midst of everyday life, where there are no white walls of the galleries providing shelter and space for suspension. Thus it sometimes needs extra markers that demarcate it as art, as a suspension in the flow of life.*¹¹

The “big jewels” of L.Bussche are examples of where jewellery is pushed of it’s boundaries into space and perhaps it might be pushing the boundaries of space. I am fascinated how when we connect artis’t work to sign we immidiately see that there is an interesting contadiction between what the original object’s signyfyies and what it becomes after the artist makes them into jewellery.

¹¹ Mark Gylan, transcript of a lecture : *Punctuations...towards a philosophy of jewellery* http://www.saimia.fi/koru3/docs/Gylen_Punctuations.pdf (accessed on January 29, 2015)



Liesbet Bussche 2009



Liesbet Bussche 2009

Conclusion

All the different themes I was discussing as well as the progress of my practical work led me to a conclusion that for me it is important to bring jewellery closer to the built space we live in. That is because, in my eyes, contemporary jewellery makers tend to make jewellery that speaks of subjects that are only close to jewellery itself. Also jewellery tends to illustrate the subjects, consequently the illustrations end up on the human body. The illustrations consist of signs that then work as a piece of jewellery. I think in order to expand the potential of jewellery it is important to see it in a non-illustrative way. In my practice I am trying to directly use already existing forms, avoid images and illustrative gestures in order to achieve an autonomous form. I am trying to move away from language as a signifier and come closer to a physical understanding of my work.

Therefore what is certain, in any case is that jewellery is worn on our bodies. It is very close however to what is external to us, surrounds us in space.

Jewellery is a cultural and social art form, since it functions on someone's body, with someone recognizing it and reflecting on it. Therefore it has an enormous power of communicating.

What writing the thesis and making my work showed me is that my interest lies in the potential of jewellery as a medium. It proved me that it is important to bring jewellery closer to the space we live in or bring space into jewellery. I have chosen to discuss examples that talk of possible entrances. Is human body a podium for jewellery or is jewellery a podium for the human body? What happens really if we switch these two things around? Does it really work, does jewellery remain jewellery when we can't wear it comfortably?

A big motivation that led me to write this thesis is to understand what jewellery can be for me, thus I chose a topic which would directly talk about wearing jewellery on a human body in the space we live in.

However, I have tried to talk of how to wear space in a form of jewellery. Perhaps there are other forms of art that could reflect or be reflecting on this more, but doesn't jewellery have a huge power? In the field of contemporary jewellery, the body is crucial and inevitable. I want to place jewellery between my body and the built space that surrounds me. Movements of the body, the position of the body as a podium, alternate ways of wearing, as well as making should be called into attention. It appears

that all the examples discussed above show that it is relevant to think about these issues in order to find new approaches. I am excited to continue my practice in thinking and creating jewellery in this way even though, paradoxically, I understand that the jewels I introduce as examples in this text are far from inviting the majority of people to wear them. However, because of the complexity of the issue, I believe that starting from a more radical understanding of jewellery is possibly fruitful.