

Schmuck2 – Susan Pietzsch
(text for ppt Herzogenbosch)

adding to, subtracting from, and multiplying jewellery

Schmuck2 was founded 1997 - as non profit organization.
Since 1998 an international exhibition programme with different collaborations such as museums, galleries, associations has been developed.

Schmuck2 has no permanent exhibition space. Projects happen in different venues or in public space.

Schmuck2 is combining people from different cultural backgrounds such as jewellery artists, fine artists, designers, art-theorists etc., using unconventional concepts that move between fine and applied arts.

Schmuck2 is shaping the image of contemporary jewellery in various ways, dealing with unconventional ideas and developments in the field of jewellery.

“Fitting – Swapping jewellery on a trial basis”

A flexible exhibition system was used travelling to different occasions such as Weimarer Kunstfest (Art festival), the “Euroscene”, a festival of contemporary dance in Leipzig and other events.

Passengers passing by were asked to spontaneously swap their own jewellery, which they were wearing for an unconventional piece of jewellery from the exhibition. The pieces had been created by designers at a workshop before. Also participants were asked to send the exchanged piece from the exhibition back in a special package handed from us after two to four weeks together with a completed questionnaire.

Polaroids of the jewellery and their part-time-owners were taken
And displayed in an online photo gallery.

“Fitting” was an attempt to introduce contemporary jewellery outside the general gallery space. It was a rich project and could have served ideas for years to work on the questions which move us so often in the jewellers scene.

“What are you wearing? – Jewellery”

was the first project involving contemporary artists in a project of Schmuck2.
During a two weeks workshop at Heiligendamm - the former base of Schmuck2 - artists were asked to explore the boundaries of jewellery by creating various objects from an artistic point of view. Having no knowledge about craft, goldsmithing etc. the pieces have got a fresh character. I felt the pieces can be called contemporary jewellery

I can also say: contemporary jewellery is for me jewellery which keeps a strong concept and is fitting in an artistic context. The result of this and other projects give a good example of what contemporary jewellery is for me.... however not everything is jewellery in that sense.

For example;

Michaela Sadlowski

reflected from the very near environment trees at the mystic wood called "ghost wood", keeping signs, shapes and words carved by visitors into the bark. Sadlowski casted the bark in latex and projected them onto the human body. She was transforming the latex casts into a wearable piece of jewellery. Later she took photographs of the pieces on the naked body, let them deform the body - making a possible history of the individual body visible.

Ulrike Solbrig

created absolute wearable jewellery pieces. She translated a two-dimensional map of an underground network into a real three-dimensional net structure. The underground map is turned into an accessory which can be worn as a belt or at the side in a belt loop.

"Simple Beads Cultured Seeds"

- was the first project which was documented by a catalogue. Also involved contemporary artists and jewellery artists from different countries such as Finland, Japan and Germany. Collaboration with Schloss Plüschow an artists house and residence place in the northern German province of Mecklenburg. "Simple Beads Cultured Seeds", the title was in the first place a hint at the countrified surroundings of its location. The title also suggested the theme for the workshop in which artists, jewellery artists and designers created their works.

Okamoto Mitsuhiro

uses everyday items like packaging, company logos or branded articles, which he puts in a new ironical and subversive context. Directly related to jewelry are his Euro-rings. "Do-it-yourself" - rings made of Euro coins. The middle parts, with their national symbols, can be punched out so that the unifying aspects of Europe remains. His work can be understood as a copy of the global tendencies of Americanization. Also as: a political statement in the shape of jewelry.

Kimmo Heikkilä

was taking the title directly. He knitted roots as well as barrier tapes in their original size. Heikkilä worked as a real craftsman but exchanging materials he is solving an artistic thought to his pieces.

Valentina Seidel works in collaboration with the artist staged artist portraits.

One of the most outstanding works of the exhibition was the video and sound work of Anja Knecht. The video shows a false diamond necklace "breathing" against a black background. Underlying the moving necklace are fragments of dialogue from the Hitchcock movie "To catch a thief". In that movie Grace Kelly, the daughter of a millionaire, is falling in love with a jewellery thief.

Her work can be read on two levels:

as a dialogue about jewelry, value and possession, and as a dialogue about love

"Jewels of the third milenium" - Immaterial jewellery

Regarding to the overwhelming video work of Anja Knecht, Schloss Plüschow invited Schmuck2. The question "How does the phenomenon of increasing „dematerialization“ reflect upon the concept of jewellery and our need for jewellery?" should guide this exhibition.

While thinking about the context of the exhibition Anne Schloen, the second curator and me, we noticed that immaterial quite often needs a lot of material.

In the young history, there is one of the best jewellery pieces by Manfred Nisslmüller a mini soundtape in the pocket of a shirt repeating the word brooch.

Suska Mackert was putting new value to the old train station of Plüschow. At Plüschow there are two train stations.

For the immaterial aspect also the work "Affiches" was shown, older work of the artist. Mackert did erase the jewels - in this case medals - out of the copy from a newspaper - only the act of decorating is visible.

The work of Hannes Gamper: a table decorated by an oriental necklace and a recorder playing oriental music is meant to create the imagination of a fully decorated oriental woman dancing to the music.

A new adornment is pointed out with the work of Seidel and Pietzsch :the label of fashion brands. in the case of Camper - a Spanish shoe brand, are soles decorated with patterns and graphics. Logos become visible in sand, on wet streets or in the case of the artists on a wooden board, stepping before on the installed wet zone. The artists show that each person leaves a personal pattern on the ground after a while marks fade and become immaterial after some time. In the repeated exhibition a video work showed the growing and fading of patterns on the installed wooden board as flowers growing on a green meadow.

Apart from the immaterial effort, the exhibition made understood how the term of jewellery can be meant in our modern times.

"Wrappinghood"

English city Middlesbrough - middle England near to Newcastle got a new Institute of Modern Art called "mima". James Beighton is here and he will tell about the details of the institute. Before the completing of the new building and opening of mima a series of exhibition in public space was organized to announce the new centre of the town as well to introduce contemporary art and design to the visitors and inhabitants of Middlesbrough which had not been much closed contact to any art scene before.

Wrappinghood should meet the public where they were at this certain moment and raise curiosity for what will come up in the future. The project was set between art, jewellery and fashion, between inside and outside and was initiated to bridge the space between consumption and art.

The work by German artist Ines Tartler was installed just in front of the building site and

was with this location and its golden colour the most obvious work in that show. A golden cover was replaced over a car. The contrast between the shiny golden surface and the dirty site nearby was an integral part of the work.

Ines Tartler takes up the stress ratio of cover and contents, as well as function and aesthetics.

Placed in the centre of the town the car did announce the show very glossy.

I was searching for a tool or a way to keep the exhibit together. I decided to invite the Spanish designer Marti Guixé. His radical concepts can be called contemporary design. He has become famous for his critique of consumer society and his unusual take on disregarded objects of everyday-life. He presents simple solutions for a complicated world that on first sight seem irritating but that are actually quite practical. Form is not the most important aspect for him, but the idea and the use. He brings the principle of »form follows function« to a head: As little form as needed, as much function as possible and sometimes, he even finds a form for complete function. His tape kept the art works together and has been the joining element of the show. It was stuck on houses, showcases and fences and did link the different exhibition works. Most of the tape disappeared immediately. The Wrappinghood tape did not really cause a positive reaction, we have been even almost in hands of police. But it was showing that it was a good decision to get into the public before art is hidden in the golden temple of art - the museum. It can be said that at least a relation to future visitors was formed by intervening every day life. A subtle game with the borders between art and the everyday, the public and the illegality.

Suska Mackert

A German artist, well-known in the jewellery scene for her artistic approach on the notion of jewellery, spent days on her knees to bring the statement "Materials with a shiny surface reflect light, while elsewhere the light is fully absorbed" on the floor in gold leaf. The letters stood in distinct contrast of the expensive pieces of jewellery behind the security glass of the jewellery shops. Passers by carried the delicate gold leaf under their soles away and got involved in the project without chosen so.

That clothing can be also a package and opposite was shown by the work of Japanese artist Aya Tsukioka. She started her series "Camouflaged clothes in the city" by coming afraid of a stalker and her wish to disappear immediately. Her objects look like wending machines - made out of printed textile. In the performance you can see how a skirt moves into a drink dispenser, like a chameleon.

The person who is wearing the skirt can sudden hide behind the textile without being noticed.

Dealing with decoration could be also seen in the work of two Danish artists Ole Krabbe Poulsen and Rene Schmidt.

Their work was installed directly in front of the shops where they found the

content of their work.

The huge offer of colourful rubbish, cosmetics and household articles in the shop next to their exhibition space shaped the surface of their blown up objects. The work was installed in one of the most scrubby shopping malls of Middlesbrough. The air filled cars, bottles, sheeps and boots did look like the shop next too and some of the passers by didn't even noticed the difference of the shop or the art installation next to.

In that sense the artists point out clearly what relevance packaging possesses in todays product consumer media world

In the Wrappinghood show was no work about adorning the body with precious materials but Wrappinghood has opened a debate, which the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art will enjoy for many years failing to conclude. I am pretty curious what James will tell about a change happened in Middlesbrough.

After that big challenge of the exhibition in public space I was asked to curate a jewellery exhibition for Kunsthaus in Ahrenshoop. Compared to the works I have shown in former shows it became an exhibition which shows pieces in the small format

“XS – extra small”.

I choose works from two jewellery artists :

Florian Ladstätter with his series of bead necklaces. He produced them in larger editions and entered the fashion world Manon von Kouswijk, her artwork ranged in the show from napkins, porcelain objects to very beautiful jewellery pieces.

The fashion label Bless showed their cable jewellery: bothering cables adorned with beads, rubber bands, stones, fur and lace. Turning nerve - racking cables into glamorous accessories for interiors.

In the case of “XS extra small” the exhibition system was the most remarkable aspect. All items were shown on the floor using the Top Manta System by Marti Guixe.

Guixe took the system from illegal CD and DVD sellers displaying their stuff on rectangular pieces of cloth. Two bands are crossing the textile from edge to edge. In case of emergency the textile can be easy transformed into a bag, which carries the criminal items hidden. The illegal display is turned into a legal one by embroidering the exhibition title, the credits and other information on the cloth.

In the case of “XS” show in Tokyo the credits were drawn with markers on the wall by students of Hiko Mizuno college. This simple and very flexible form of presentation allows the works in XS-format to retain their ambivalence, something they would certainly lose if they were locked away in glass showcases.

The exhibition XS was followed by a much more abstract project developed in cooperation with Suska Mackert:

“Glitz and then some”

As graphic designers do always accompany our works, 12 international graphic designers and artists were asked each to design a poster under the theme "glitz and the some". With the request we didn't want them to use the headline glitz and then some in words themselves, rather we wanted them to express their own ideas about jewellery.

We have been interested in, how jewelry as a phenomenon is represented by graphic designers and artists such as Gabi Altevers & Karla Detlefsen (ger), cyan (ger), Daniel Eatock (uk), Hansje van Halem & Michiel Schuurman (nl), Melle Hammer (nl), Kazunari Hattori (jp), Atsuki Kikuchi/ Bluemark Inc. (jp), Jan Kny (ger), Harmen Liemburg (nl), Hiroki Masunari (jp), Jacques et Brigitte (ger), David Reinfurt & Stuart Bailey/ dextersinister (usa).

The posters were installed as an installation on the wall.

The exhibition was accompanied by three contemporary art positions such as Heike Bollig, Cecile Belmont and Stefan Wischnewski.

“reloaded”

This exhibition went again in the public space and did feature one of my favourite themes. Automobility is a central feature of our modern society. A special bond exists between humans and cars. In the show artists dealt with the automobile as a social symbol, regarded as a »driving business card«. And also the formal design of the car was analyzed.

Marti Guixe's car mirror was placed as a huge mirror in the city - just next to the street. People can drive with their car in front of that mirror to see what they look like with their car. Anybody can judge if the car matches their self-image and how they merge. Hidden of that work is the almost two months work to get permission for installation.

»Dress Your Car in Couture« – under this headline BLESS has designed a car-cover for the British auto magazine, »Intersection«. In 1997 Desirée Heiss and Ines Kaag founded the Label BLESS. As a label they work in fashion and product design, searching for »new solutions for the everyday« . Their »garment« of a car cover consists of a soft fabric that is custom fit for the cars surface like a second skin. In contrast to a normal car-cover BLESS did work out every detail of the car. Characteristic for the cross-over thinking of both designers: the car-cover can be used as a sofa as well.

Stefan Wischnewski is always dealing with cancelling the borders between art and reality. He has worked with cars and the theme of mobility already on his solo polo tour - an moving exhibition system installed in a normal VW polo - driving across the country and offering exhibition space in his car to other artists. In his work »Safety-Car«, the car becomes the object for action as well. The term, »safety-car« comes from car racing, where it is used to reduce the tempo in dangerous situations to ensure the security of the participants. For the cover Stefan Wischnewski has sewn together security vests:

Not the human has to be protected but the car.

The flashy colours, the unusual cover made out of security vests and the labelling »UN«, referring to the G8-Summit that took place in Heiligendamm in 2007. The »Safety-Car« was driving for a few days through Bad Doberan - the city next to Heiligendamm.

A work which was not shown in the exhibition, but featured in the catalogue as we have been not able to get the permission for. In her works, Leni Hoffmann is researching the border between painting and sculpture, plane and space, art and architecture. she is rolling together with her coop workers balls in plasticine onto the street to then be flattened by cars driving over them. Public transport is instrumental in creating an ever-changing image. The painting changes with every vehicle that passes over a sphere of modelling clay. Possibly, particles of the material remain stuck to the car's tires, to then be left all over the city: the car is turned into a vehicle for creativity.

A completely different connection of jewelry and car, shows the work »crystals«: glittering, sparkling, glowing – like precious gems, car turn signals lie between pebbles on the beach. The uses for gems are plentiful, but most often, they are used as ornamental stones in the production of jewelry. A trend - setting sample for the theme of jewellery and photography.

notes for the lecture at Herzogenbosch January 2009

Susan Pietzsch

www.schmuck2.de