

# UNEXPECTED PLEASURES

The Art and Design of Contemporary Jewellery

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## EXHIBITION THEMES

*Extracts from the Design Museum, London publication UNEXPECTED PLEASURES: The Art and Design of Contemporary Jewellery\**

### WORN OUT

Worn Out enlivens the exhibition by highlighting the different ways contemporary jewellery is worn. After all, jewellery needs to be worn by real people in real situations to realise its full potential. Along with our clothing, sunglasses and wearable technologies, jewellery will say where we belong in the world. It will express intent, add detail to our daily rituals, signal an inner life and, of course, invite the viewer to read between the lines. Jewellery will attach itself to its wearer, making either discreet intimate connections or bolder public statements. It can be serious or frivolous, experimental or ceremonial, tasteful or daring, but in all circumstances jewellery will “talk” for its wearer.



For contemporary jewellers, imagining how jewellery adorns the body is part of a creative process centred in design and art practice. Here, this section offers a selection of bolder statements that exemplify this single proposition, giving an insight into past experimentation as well as current thinking by mixing significant pieces from the Contemporary Jewellery Movement with a range of exciting new works. And if you are lucky enough to wear one of these extravagant pieces, it may be surprising how carefully wearing has been considered in making, and how much pleasure is experienced when “worn out”.

### LINKING LINKS

Linking Links looks at the way meaning is invested and expressed in contemporary jewellery. Social networks and the environment in which jewellers work conditions their thinking, shaping their ideas about making, wearing and belonging. Contemporary jewellers inventively play with creative strategies to make their artistic statements, opening up not only links between different media but also unexpected links between people. Here, jewellery objects are clustered according to ideas and approaches that bridge the experiences of both the maker and the wearer.

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Using themes as a structure to link seemingly disparate works, each individual cluster is collected into one of two streams of thinking: the first focusing on the creative systems in which jewellery is made, and the second highlighting the social expressions used in jewellery to express belonging.

Each cluster offers examples of how works will speak to one another, while the conversation between clusters draws specific attention to the key forces that drive jewellery's production and use. At the centre of this conversation lies design thinking, and this section highlights those aspects of design that are central to contemporary-jewellery practice, including aesthetics, materiality, technology and reproduction.



The clustering of works in Linking Links invites a sweep of focus, from the micro scale—where the enduring qualities of jewellery are laid bare—to the macro scale, where the meanings are opened to imaginative interpretation. And an opportunity is presented to begin an understanding of the broader “creative” language of contemporary jewellery.

## A FINE LINE

A Fine Line offers an insight into the origins of contemporary jewellery today. Creative jewellers have always been intrigued by the essence of jewellery expressed over time, from ethnic traditions to modern status jewellery. At the same time, they have inevitably sampled or rejected ideas, approaches and technologies they have encountered in overlapping artistic disciplines as a way to find a unique creative voice. This section features attention-grabbing pieces grouped according to their origins within diverse creative fields: inventive jewellery made by artists Alexander Calder and Anni Albers; fashion interpretation by Dolce and Gabbana explorations Ettore Sottsass; and artistic ceremonial armband that comes from Australian Indigenous craft traditions.



Works by key instigators of the Contemporary Jewellery Movement are presented parallel to these influencing examples. With the exception of two jewellers who are no longer alive, all these makers have continued to work in contemporary jewellery, and they are represented in other sections of the exhibition. These origins provide a broad context for understanding the ongoing relationship between

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jewellery and design. Jewellery is revealed as a focal point for thinking, a point at which distinct creative fields have collided over the past sixty years. A Fine Line reminds us that the challenging spirit of contemporary jewellery can be kept alive by trading glimpses between the past and the present.

*\*This publication is available at NGV Shop.*

## WHAT'S ON

**Lecture and discussion: The Language of Things**

**Fri, 20 April, 6–8pm**

**NGV International, Clemenger BBDO Auditorium, \$18 Adult / \$12 Member / \$14 Concession**

Speakers Deyan Sudjic, Director, Design Museum, London; Susan Cohn, exhibition curator and Ab Rogers, Exhibition Designer.

To kick start *Unexpected Pleasures: The Art and Design of Contemporary Jewellery* join us for this rare opportunity to view the exhibition after hours and hear Deyan Sudjic Director, Design Museum, London give a talk. This will be followed by a group discussion with Susan Cohn, Exhibition Curator and Ab Rogers, Exhibition Designer.

**CONTEMPORARY TWILIGHT SERIES: Worn Out**

**Thu, 24 May, 5–7.30pm**

**NGV International, NGV Schools Entrance**

Offering afterhours access to NGV's Contemporary Exhibitions space, as well as a bar and lounge, this series features talks and activities by curators, artists and industry experts. In association with Mari Funaki galleries partake in this exclusive opportunity to wear and be dressed in jewellery pieces by the curator of the exhibition, Dr Susan Cohn.

### CAPTIONS:

**Doug Bucci**

USA

*Trans-Hematopoietic neckpiece* 2010

3-D printed acrylic resin as one interlinked piece

45.7 x 45.7 x 5.1 cm

Collection of the artist

© Doug Bucci

Photo: Rebecca Annand

**Mah Rana**

*Jewellery is Life* (2001 to present)

steel, paper

2.5 x 2.5 cm

Collection of the artist

©Mah Rana

Photo: Mah Rana

**David Bielander**

*Scampi* (2007)

silver (copper anodised), elastic

10.0 cm (diam)

Collection of the artist

© David Bielander

Photo: Simon Bielander