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Discover Art Jewelry from Selected
Jewelers, Galleries and Institutions



Interview with Jiun-You Ou

INTERVIEW / Artists Making

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Jiun-You Ou
Brooch: **Far or Near, Bright or Dark I Series**, 2011
Sterling silver, fine silver
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“Most of my works are about something that I cannot or do not want to explain and express with relatively clear tools like speeches and writings. They are about my life history and body experiences, something self-indulgent, or even about things that I would be afraid of being despised after exposing.”

Do you think that jewellery is being standardized? What is there of local and universal in your artistic work?

From the perspective of being a creator/maker, I actually do not think that jewelry has been standardized; it is because that we are living in an ever-changing world, and our works reflect the world in a certain degree. Nevertheless, from the experience of interacting with general viewers in these years, what gives me a strong impression is that they still focus on some questions, such as “is this piece easy to wear” or “does it look good on me” when they consider contemporary jewelry. Of course, functional objects tend to possess a basic purpose to be expected, which is inevitable. However, these observations have made some impacts on me, which makes me start to think about the meaning and possibility of “functionality” in my work, and that is why I try to develop a series of works about “jewelry or object”.

On the other hand, compared to the discussion of local/universal, I am more interested in: How to interpret some of the visible results or phenomena in different cultures for possibly originating from a common cause from a point of view of an individual person. These two terms, local and universal, are not opposite; just like the real meaning in the “uniqueness” sometimes may point to a kind of “universality”. Certainly it is not about right or wrong to adopt and apply the elements of local/culture; however, it is always better to me to remind myself not to follow the means of create a style/recognizability on purpose.

What do you expect when exposing your work to the public (for example with an exhibition)?

Most of my works are about something that I cannot or do not want to explain and express with relatively clear tools like speeches and writings. They are about my life history and body experiences, something self-indulgent, or even about things that I would be afraid of being despised after exposing. They are made as memories to be unforgotten. As notes for myself, they are not single events happened at certain points of time, but perceptions that have been flowing continuously at all time. That is why I allow them and like them to constantly change. So whenever I finish a work, I always have a feeling that “it is all about itself from now on.” Therefore, I usually don’t have any expectations to get any feedbacks in certain ways. However, somehow I can get some comforts through the “presentation” because I know “someone knows it”. Also, this kind of comforts does not need to respond, so that I can continue them freely.

Are other areas besides the jewellery, present in your work?

In the spring of this year, I developed a “(in) effective” project about the space and contemporary jewelry/object. The theme of this project is to state the “dysfunctional” state of “being ineffective when something/someone should be effective” from my own body experience and life history. Through this project, I’ve found that I can extend the working methods I use to deal with metal/jewelry to apply to the space and the configuration of the objects in the space. By doing this, the space has transformed into a field bearing memories and activities, and the viewers can put themselves in this space to watch and to interpret with more diverse possibilities. Although I have to put a lot of effort and time on it, I really enjoy the process of this experience.

The last work, book, film, city that has moved me was ...

I just read **Capital in the Twenty First Century** by **Thomas Piketty** recently. The reason that I read this book is because that I have realized that not only the society I live in, but also a lot of issues raised in the whole world recently are all directly or indirectly associated with “wealth distribution”. Besides this, the other motivation for me to read this book is that as a maker/creator – producing by my hands, there are many times I indeed feel powerless when facing the extremely big and powerful situation “wealth accumulates through capital”. It is not all because I am worried about becoming one of the poor when the gap between the rich and the poor is widen, but it is also because that I am worried that the “freedom” might disappear during the process.

A place, space, country whose creativity surprises me ...

A couple of years ago, I was quite attracted to Estonian contemporary jewelry works, and I also purchased a wonderful book **Castle in the Air** about an Estonian group of artists called **ohuLoss**. Their works have become recognized and gained more and more attention in recent years, but somehow I still can’t forget the thrill I felt when I saw their stunning work for the first time.

Is there any designer, jeweller, artist, you appreciate a lot?

I have started paying attention to **Theaster Gates** since **DOCUMENTA (13)**. Due to his background: including ceramics, urban planning and religious studies, his work is mixed with various media. One of his works is transforming old buildings to be used as the assembly hall for the neighborhood, and the development of the local area is even driven by his work consequently. Before, I was sometimes resistant to be positioned as a “craftsman”, but Theaster Gates’ works have made me start to think that craft can also play a role in improving the life. Sometimes it just seems too rush when we try hard to make ourselves/craft escape from the traditional role. When craft has been replaced by design or industrial manufacturing procedures in result, we need to think about things like “craft as a process” or “craft as a manner”.

What piece or work has given you the most satisfaction?

I made this white repoussé brooch with very few tools and in a very casual mood a few years ago. It can be said that I almost have nothing to say through this work. I just listened to what the materials had implied, followed the feeling of my heart at that moment, and then completed it. However, it becomes a reminder to me, reminding me to create things with a very simple mind, not to be affected by thoughts like demonstrating techniques, styles, or trying to meet others’ expectations.

Do you read Jewellery Magazines? What is your source to get information?

I don’t read magazines often actually. Some of my information was from Facebook. However, there is too much jewelry related information on it and it takes time to filter through to find what you really want to read. Besides, I also read some articles on **Klimt02**, **Art Jewelry Forum** or **Norwegian Crafts**.

Do you discuss your work with other jewellery artists or any other person?

I think the question may be about: “What do you want through the discussion with others?” In fact, most of the time, we already have the answers for our own work if we are honest enough. But the very important point is that whether you can accept that your work has problems but you can’t tell right away by yourself. Perhaps it’s because that the starting point of my creation is not from academic colleges, and I always do it by myself and try to figure out all the problems. But when I look back, these experiences are really precious

to me. That is, you have to perceive yourself and make decisions by yourself.

What is your first thought when you hear the word Future? What do you expect for?

To me, the meaning of “future” is related to the word “unknown”. Of course I have expectations to the future, but it is also inevitable for me to feel anxiety and fear. Especially in the last couple of years, the changes in science and technology and the world are just too fast, and I often have a feeling that a lot of the daily scenes are hard to handle with our existing experience. So in the face of some situations, the question always pops up in my mind: “What the ancients would do?”. In fact, many things can be done with limited tools and in relatively clumsy ways. Therefore, it is all about whether we can accept such a situation, as well as ourselves in such a situation. The thoughts for the future may have to return to a simple but difficult question: handling ourselves.



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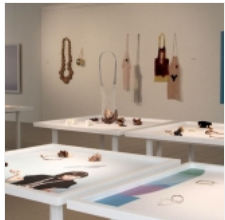
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