

Ákos Lipóczki:

JEWELLERY THEN AND NOW

- Theses -

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INTRODUCTION

The title of my doctoral dissertation is “Jewellery then and now”, my doctoral advisor is András Bánfalvi. Regarding the choice of subject for my doctoral research and design project, we focused on defining a theme that may broaden my perspective as an object designer and contribute to the metal design profession as well. I created an interview series with 30 jewellery designers on the history of our profession in order to fully comprehend its present and determine its future.

The audio archive, the core of my doctoral dissertation, may also serve as a starting point for future research that focuses on the relationship between jewellery and mankind, offering insight into the history and development of Hungarian metal design in the 20th century as well as its role in the world of design. The content of these conversations may help us comprehend and define the identity, characteristics and values of our profession in the 21st century.

My professional research focuses on jewellery, based on my interview series. Apart from defining and interpreting the concept of jewellery, the fundamental aim of my theoretical study is to outline my DLA design project. My doctoral dissertation investigates the evolution of jewellery functions, the role jewellery plays in our everyday life as well as its relationship towards other objects based on human ethological, ethnographic, sociological and object history related characteristics.

1. TUSK

The reasons that led to the making and wearing of jewellery are deeply rooted in our society. The more archaic the examined society, the more apparent the fundamental function of jewellery becomes. Apart from being instinctual, the reasons and occasions when our predecessors wore a certain type of jewellery were acts of expressing qualities that are only characteristic of humans.

My curiosity regarding these specific characteristics, why they developed and how mankind evolved led me to the field of human ethology. Dr. Vilmos Csányi and I discussed the relationship between jewellery and human nature. In this chapter I explain why certain

breeds of animals received their own “jewellery” from Mother Nature. I discuss the instinctive signs and behavioural systems created by nature and give a precise account of the differences between human and animal communication.

In the second part of the chapter, I focus on the evolution of object and tool creation along the course of human history. I explain the processes, which stemming from fundamental instincts, led to the refinement of object creation. I examine how jewellery became the token of non-verbal communication. Rituals and traditions are an organic part of traditional ethnic clothing.

2. EARRING

In terms of functionality, jewellery is a very complex “functional object”. It has its own specific role and tradition in every community. It refers to the lifestyle, customs and way of thinking that are characteristic of a specific era, culture or ethnic group. It expresses and reflects the relationship between people. It can be a sign, a symbol that answers unasked questions. It can refer to the age and family status of its wearer. It can differentiate between ordinary days and special occasions. It is a status symbol, the expression of identity and religious belief. It plays a practical and magical role in the life of humans. It adapts to the body, it is present in our appearance, in our traditional ethnic attire.

Based on the interview with ethnographer Terézia Balogh Jánosné Horváth, the chapter titled Earring portrays the characteristics and role played by jewellery in Hungarian traditional ethnic clothing.

Within the framework of my research, I examine the various jewellery related ethnic traditions found in 19th century Hungary. I included ear accessories in the list of jewellery functions analysed by ethnographers. To this day, the earring has maintained its original form, yet its inner content and function have changed continuously and significantly over time. Through my personal experience I portray the possible contents a small earring can communicate towards the outside world – then and now...

3. CSORBA

It is easy to become entangled in the continuous change of social values in 20th century Hungary. In order to comprehend the phenomena that are mirrored by the objects surrounding us, it is important to be familiar with historic correspondences. In my interview with historian Gábor Klaniczay, we discussed questions related to why we wear jewellery. How and why do people distinguish themselves from one another? When, where, why and how did clothing become attire, and attire become fashion? How did Hungarian clothing culture change and evolve over the course of the 20th century?

Examining the clothing tendencies in Hungary in the two-and-a-half decades following WWII allows us to comprehend the correlations within our object-based world, and thus our jewellery and clothing culture as well. I portray an era in which traditional values shifted, blended until the formerly parallel worlds merged into each other. I discuss how, when and why rural people began to reflect urban patterns in their clothing. What was deemed suitable attire according to socialist morals and what was regarded as appropriate community behaviour in the 1960s? Why did three generations of the Csorba family look at each other incomprehensibly: my great-grandfather in boots, my grandfather in work shoes and my mother wearing sneakers?

4. SIXTEEN QUESTIONS

I am interested in contemporary jewellery; in the profession. In jewellery designers, makers, thinkers. I am curious about what people have to say on the subject of jewellery in Budapest, Hungary, in the 21st century. 29 out of 30 people agreed to the interview, honouring me with their trust. I had the opportunity to peek into workshops, to converse with designers. These conversations granted me insight into the past decades of the profession, into the era in which they lived and worked. The predefined 16 questions were answered with many different experiences, opinions, emotions, moods, age differences and thoughts, which can be listened to, analysed and interpreted.

In order to pursue research that is suitable for content-based analysis, I turned to sociologist Dr. László Horváth for advice on how to correctly conclude such a survey. This writing, apart from presenting the methodology of sociological research, is an imprint of my personal motivation. How, why, with whom and with what success I pursued my research.

In this chapter, I ask jewellery designers question number 10:

“What role does jewellery play in our life, and where is its place among other objects?”

5. JEWELLERY

Based on the codes and standards compiled in reference to question number 10, I analyse the most significant concept related to jewellery functions: sign.

I address the most important role of jewellery: communication. As a cultural signal, jewellery cannot appear without conveying something about its wearer, without mirroring the world, era, culture and society in which it was born, without hinting at its designer, at the person by whom it was created.

In this chapter, I ask jewellery designers question number 7:

“What jewellery do you design and create?”

6. THEN

The many answers given to question number 7 reflect the fact that while each of the designers has created jewellery, only a few of them focus predominantly on jewellery in their work. Most designers work in many other areas of metal design, including medal design, statuette design, enamelled-relief metal sculptures...

It is interesting to witness this balancing act between applied art and fine art, with reasons rooted deep in the profession.

This “metaldesignerdecorativesmithsculptorobjectdesignerappliedartistjewellerydesigner” profession has long strived to find its own identity. I portray the past decades of the profession through different schools, educational methods, exhibition reviews and personal

memories, its possibilities, its relationship towards life, thus allowing us to comprehend its past, present and future. My future.

7. Now

As a conclusion to this doctoral dissertation titled “Jewellery then and now”, I have created a so-called “jewellery tree” which presents the various jewellery functions and subject choice possibilities that define my personal DLA project:

“Apparel shaping jewellery for fashion designer label Je Suis Belle.”

In the final chapter of my doctoral dissertation I present the design and execution related details of my final project. The written dissertation is complemented by a CD attachment, which is a virtual diary of the design process of the *“apparel shaping jewellery”*. It contains a wide range of background material, collections, analogies, and project defining presentations.

By portraying the work of *Maison Martin Margiela*, I examine what signs a fashion designer icon uses in order to accentuate his own character, vision and individuality.

My apparel shaping collection examines important junction details that serve as illuminating analogies.

My JSB_doll and *LIP_doll* presentations offer a glimpse into the design process and teamwork with the fashion designer group, which resulted in a “beach jewellery wrap”. This jewellery-clothes is part of the summer collection, which is cooperation between Je Suis Belle and Ákos Lipóczy.

The *My fallwinter* screening is an emotion based inspirational material that shows the birth of the fall-winter collection.