

Crafting new spatial and sensorial relationships in contemporary jewellery

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Abstract The body occupies a significant place in both contemporary jewellery and architectural practice. The wearable object is made for the body and, therefore, invites the presence of a wearer, even if only metaphorically. Similarly, our built environment is constructed in relation to the scale of the human body and to accommodate our actions as users of architecture. Yet, important to both practices is the relationship between the object — jewellery or architecture — and the body beyond its physicality.

This paper examines embodiment from a cross-disciplinary perspective. Drawing on Jack Cunningham's model (2005) *maker-wearer-viewer* as a framework, I propose an extended schema that integrates the object within the relational dynamics, with the aim to investigate the embodied relationship between object and wearer.

Underpinning the research is a case study that I conducted on the sensorial qualities of Peter Zumthor's architecture, in particular Therme Vals. The study demonstrates that the embodied experience of the architecture by the user contributes to the development of these qualities.

In this paper, I argue that the transposition and testing of this concept in jewellery generates new relational variables, from which a new methodology of practice in jewellery informed by architecture emerges.

Introduction

At first glance, the disparities in scale, function and purpose of architecture and contemporary jewellery conceal their shared characteristics. A closer analysis, however, reveals that the body is an inherent feature of both disciplines. In architecture, the scale of the human body operates as a measuring tool around which the concept of shelter is designed. The architectural space is inseparable from that of the body, enabling a range of human activities to take place within it. The body, however, is much more than a physical entity through which the scale and presence of an object is determined. The body extends beyond human anatomy into the concept of embodiment, a phenomenological proposition that originated over a century ago and continues to influence philosophers, artists and architects today.

In contemporary jewellery practice, the body primarily functions as a physical platform from which a range of themes, including but not limited to social,

cultural, historical and political issues can be addressed through the wearable object. Yet, as with architecture, the body in contemporary jewellery is also used as the basis for exploring new conceptual lines of enquiry, as a way of testing ‘thresholds of wearability’, including, for example, concepts of embodiment from the viewpoint of both the maker and wearer.

In the context of this paper, I examine embodiment from a cross-disciplinary perspective. Drawing from Swiss architect Peter Zumthor’s phenomenological approach to architecture, I am re-imagining the role of the jewellery object in the relationship between maker, wearer and viewer, which was first suggested by contemporary studio jeweller and academic Jack Cunningham (2005). Cunningham’s research into narrative jewellery is underpinned by his viewing the communicative nature of jewellery through a triangular relationship between maker, wearer and viewer. For Cunningham, a piece of jewellery, the brooch form in particular, is the conduit through which this relationship unfolds. The jewellery bears the maker’s histories and experiences that, when worn, becomes subject to the wearer’s personal interpretation. By wearing the object the wearer instigates new meaning, which s/he can then communicate to the viewer. While Cunningham’s model has value in recognising the role of the jewellery object in establishing a dialogue between maker, wearer and viewer, in my view, it also has limitations. Cunningham’s proposition does not take into account the role of the tangible object within the relationship, omitting to address the sensorial characteristics that are significant to the manner in which the wearable object is made, interpreted and experienced.

Through the making and disseminating of a series of rings, I propose to extend Cunningham’s model by presenting a new relational schema between maker, wearer, object and viewer. This circular schema acts as a permeable environment from which an array of new relational variables and cycles are formed, with the aim of imagining, experiencing and interacting with the world in new ways.

Within this schema, the object is able to operate as a conduit or extension of bodily experience and, in the process, to become the embodiment of the wearer/user. Drawing from the work of architects and theorists Christian Norberg-Schulz and Juhani Pallasmaa and Zumthor, amongst others, this paper examines the embodied relationship between object and wearer.

Jewellery as architectural construct

The link between architecture and contemporary jewellery is an important aspect of my current doctoral research that investigates similarities between architectural landscapes — where natural and built environments are interdependent — and the relationship between the wearable object and the body. My creative work has always been informed by architectural constructs. Using the ring form as a vehicle through which to examine spatial relationships between inside/outside and solid/void, I create compositions of geometries to suggest architectural

spaces. The intimate scale of jewellery enables me, for example, to transform an architectural detail into a feature of the wearable object as a way to create miniaturised abstract architectural models. The shift in scale, however, is more than mere reconstruction of physical spaces; it also transforms our bodily and spatial relationships with the tangible object. As Karen Franck notes:

Our bodies are porous and permeable, taking in sensations, matter and information as well as producing them. We may begin to realize that our bodies are so very open to objects, people and surroundings, that they extend beyond the boundaries of our skin, into the world, incorporating into them what is different from us. We may notice that bodies are always moving (even ever so slightly), changing, and acting with intention and initiative (even when lying in bed and refusing to get up). And we may rediscover how much architecture, at many different scales, can support and enhance the activities and experiences of daily life (Franck & Lepori 2007: 47–48).

In jewellery, however, these bodily relationships are not always possible. During an exhibition featuring my architecture-inspired rings, peers from the fields of art and architecture highlighted the problem of not being able to have a tactile engagement with the work on display. It was argued that, while the rings invited curiosity through their architectonic features and the juxtaposition of materials, their static position in the exhibition prevented a full understanding of their qualities as wearables. Exhibited as artefacts, their materiality appeared to have been lost, and this disconnection was emphasised by my decision as the maker to remove all evidence of the making process. Figures 1 and 2 are testimony of such an approach; surfaces have been stripped of any hammer or file marks, of any signs that infer human intervention, leaving the pristine circular voids as the only elements that suggest a possibility for physical interaction.

Making through ‘being’

As a contemporary jeweller, my interaction with materials is mostly immediate. Through making, I have developed a unique visual language based on material knowledge. This sensibility towards materials is the result of years of experience, during which I have acquired craft skills through tacit knowledge. As a maker, I transpose ideas into ‘matter’, but their successful materialisation is underpinned by my engagement with materials through the senses. This relation between the materials used and the body of the maker is an important characteristic in the crafting of an object that emanates from the fusion between the activities of the hand and the mind (Sennett 2008: 119–20; Pallasmaa 2009: 50–59). This process is described by phenomenologists as ‘making through being’. It is also described by Maurice Merleau-Ponty as ‘being as a thing’ (1976). These concepts are extensively explored by Pallasmaa. He argues that, through the design process, the experienced architect is able to imaginatively occupy the space s/he is creating, and therefore to engage in a multi-sensory experience that supersedes the mere visual representation of a drawing or model (Pallasmaa

2009: 59). This approach is also evident in the practice of Zumthor. Trained as a cabinetmaker prior to becoming an architect, Zumthor's knowledge of materials is inherent in his work. In the same way that Pallasmaa describes the relationship between the craftsman and his materials as a collaborative one, where the maker ought to 'listen to his material' (Pallasmaa 2009: 55), Zumthor talks about the 'poetic quality' of materials (2006b). He believes that materials can become poetic only if the architect is 'able to generate a meaningful situation for them, since materials in themselves are not poetic' (Zumthor 2006b: 10).



Figures 1 & 2. Sabine Pagan, untitled, ring, 2011, sterling silver, monel, 30 x 21 x 8 mm

Photo: Grant Hancock

In contemporary jewellery practice, the notion of embodiment has also been extensively explored.¹ Some jewellers have done this directly by choosing to use their own bodies as a way to coalesce ‘object’ and ‘body’. These include, for example, jewellers who use surgical intervention to nest jewellery under their skin, or body piercing, or use the skin as the generator of the jewellery, as in *Blisterring* by Tiffany Parbs. By controlling the pouring of hot wax on her finger, Parbs creates an ephemeral ring out of a reaction of her own body (den Besten 2012: 136–37).

Other jewellers have addressed embodiment more indirectly, through the exploration of the emotional potential of the qualities of the materials they use. These emotional transactions are open-ended, allowing the wearer and/or viewer to overlay them with their own associations and interpretations. For example, the notion of embodiment is evident in the work of Karl Fritsch. The material qualities of his jewellery, in particular the ring form, are achieved through the making process and the wearing of the work. Using wax, Fritsch sculpts his jewellery directly with his hands. The wax blanks are subsequently cast in metal and left raw. As a result, fingerprints, impurities and oxidation marks provide unique visual and tactile characteristics that, together with the inclusion of faceted stones, contribute to the materiality of the work. At times, old ring mounts are embedded within new ones, imbuing the work with past histories and experiences. Rüdiger Joppien notes, however, that for Fritsch the concept of embodiment — the amalgamation of old material with new, and the role of the hand in the making of the work — is not complete until the work is worn (cited in Baines, Fritsch & Rothmann 2010: 14). One can assume that by wearing the ring, seeing and feeling the textural marks left by the maker’s hand on its surface, the wearer’s own embodied experience gradually filters through their hands into the ring, imbuing it with its own presence and stories.

My interest in the embodied potential of jewellery was triggered by an investigation into the role of my own jewellery as worn and unworn rings. Originally, the rings that I developed for my doctoral research used the wearer’s hand purely as a topographical environment, where skin, fingers and knuckles are part of a terrain on and around which I build architectonically. In this way, the rings form an integral part of the hand. Once detached from the body, however, and displayed in an exhibition setting, the same rings could be said to operate less effectively. Alternatively, this absence could indirectly signal an implied body and thus draw attention to the potential connection between body and object.

In architecture, if we consider the ‘user’ as the equivalent of the wearer in jewellery, we can affirm that their role is one of a critic, for it is through the user’s engagement with the work that the work gains integrity. This open-ended relationship with the user is particularly evident with architects who use a phenomenological approach in their work. This method of operating provides the architect with new foundations for further making and knowing. In his essay

¹ For further details and examples, see den Besten (2012: 125–39).

responding to Paul Carter's *Material thinking* (2004), Cameron Tonkinwise explores the notion of *knowing through making*, in which he argues that the 'knowing' of the maker is only determined by others. He notes,

The ultimate arbiter of how much making does involve knowing things of newness and significance, will always be those others not involved in the making, particularly those that come long, and longer, after the making. (2008: 2)

If the act of knowing is attributed to the 'other' — here the user — then I argue that, through an embodied experience of architecture, in time the user contributes to enriching its materiality and, thus, generating new meaning.



Figure 3. Sabine Pagan, *Site #2*, ring, 2009, 9k yellow gold cube (handmade), surgical steel mount (rapidprototyped), 35 x 35 x 12 mm

Photo: Emily Snadden

The implications of these observations prompted me to rethink the relational role of my work in the context of contemporary jewellery. On this basis, I was interested to undertake an extensive case study of Zumthor's sensorial architecture to test the idea. While I am aware that a number of contemporary jewellery practitioners have developed their own methods to examine concepts of embodiment, I felt that drawing from architecture might reveal approaches not yet employed in the realm of jewellery practice, such as the way in which materials and surroundings contribute to our experience and memory of sensorial architecture. I was also interested in the shared aesthetic sensibilities of Zumthor's architecture and my work.

Experiencing the architecture of Peter Zumthor

In 2010 and 2011, I conducted a series of research fieldtrips, with the aim of experiencing firsthand Zumthor's unique architecture. I chose to focus my research on his building, Therme Vals. At the time, as a jeweller and gemmologist, the gift of quartzite samples from Vals had been enough to entice me to visit the site. Made from feldspar, quartz and mica, the stone displays stunning shades of grey traversed by white streaks from which, depending on the cut and light, silver speckles shimmer. From large block to thin bricks, milled or cut by hand, its surface sandblasted, polished or left raw, the diversity in application of Vals quartzite as a material is an important characteristic of Therme Vals. There are 60,000 stone slabs of various sizes, cuts and textures featured throughout the building as floors, stairs and walls.

Therme Vals baths

Therme Vals is a building that houses thermal baths and belongs to a larger hotel complex. Situated in Vals, Switzerland, the small village has long been known for its spring from which water is collected and subsequently distributed to both the Valser factory — where the Valser brand of water is bottled — and Therme Vals baths. Situated at an altitude of 1250 metres, access to the village is only possible by road, and the postal bus is the only public transport. The narrow and winding road runs across the steep valley and, in some areas, the turns are so sharp that sounding the horn is the only way to signal one's presence to a driver coming in the opposite direction. Tunnels along the way are evidence of the many rock falls and avalanches the valley has endured over the years. On each side, the rock face streams with water and, in winter, the same landscape reveals beautiful icicles. The 30-minute trip to Vals is an important part of the journey to Therme Vals. It provides visitors with an understanding of the setting in which Zumthor's work is situated, and the significance of his architecture in contributing to a sense of place. From the bus stop, only a long flight of stairs and a small sign indicate the route that leads to the baths. At the end of the stairs, the building stands proud.



Figure 4. East façade of Therme Vals

Photo: Sabine Pagan, 2010

In his study of Therme Vals, Vincent Mangeat uses an analogy of a cave to discuss the architect's innovative approach to materiality, blending both architectural and geological tectonics with the aim to create a unique architecture, where the building sits in symbiosis with the environment (2004: 53). Partially buried in the mountain, the building's stone walls act as an extension of its mountainous surroundings and sit comfortably among the roofs of local houses, all made out of the same material. From uphill, the grassy roof gives away little of what lies underground.



Figure 5. Detail showing Therme Vals building protruding out of the slope

Photo: Sabine Pagan, 2010



Figure 6. Typical Vals stone roof

Photo: Sabine Pagan, 2010

Inside, the notion of erosion produced as a result of a continuous contact between water and rocks has been used as a metaphor for carving out the building into an arrangement of various pools. Each has a distinct size, temperature and sensorial function: *Flower bath*, *Sound bath*, *Fire bath*, *Cold bath*, *Indoor bath* and *Outdoor bath*. The placement of these pools as well as the *Sounding* and *Drinking stones* is ambiguous and, together with a deliberate lack of signage, bathers must rely on their senses to navigate through the space. The building is transformed into a labyrinth where the element of surprise is fundamental to the experience of the space (Mangeat 2004: 53–55).

As I descend the stairs the warm water slowly engulfs my body. The confined passageway forces me to move along the wall. A narrow opening draws me in. I traverse. Inside, the intimate scale of the bath is surrounded by tall stone walls, from which even the slightest whisper echoes; their jagged, unpolished surface creates a unique texture for both the eye and the hand. Leaning against the brass rail, I gaze, feel and listen. It's so beautiful.²

I visited Therme Vals a number of times over six months, as a way to familiarise myself with the location, and witness the changes in the building through the seasons. This has proven indispensable to my understanding of sensorial architecture. Therme Vals is about engaging our bodies with stone and water, and the seasons bring contrasts in the experience of these materials. Both have the capacity to warm up or cool down our bodies accordingly. For example, even during the coldest winter months, the outer pool is warm enough to bathe in. Snow, rain, fog or sunshine all bring a particular atmosphere to the experience of being exposed to the elements while submerged in water. Exposed to the sun, the stone radiates heat and invites our bodies to walk, sit or lie on it; by contrast inside, the cool properties of the same stone soothe our feet when stepping out of the *Fire bath*. Through the seasons, the light changes, affecting the intensity of reflections through the interstices, the glass windows and the water, modifying the appearance of the stone walls. Whether outside or inside, full-size windows frame the landscape, projecting the view across the mountains and drawing the visitors in.

I documented my visits to Therme Vals mostly through notes and photographs and later re-examined them following visits to other buildings designed by Zumthor: the Sogn Benedetg church, not far from Therme Vals; the Kunstmuseum, Bregenz, Austria; the Kolumba Museum, Cologne, Germany and, more recently, the Steilneset memorial, Vardo, Norway. Points of reference started to emerge; I noticed the weight of the doors, the interstices that elegantly divide and lighten floors, walls and/or ceilings; the low steps on stairs and their adjacent brass rails, fitted neatly in the floor, away from walls.

In his buildings, Zumthor demonstrates a consistent phenomenological approach to orchestrating architecture, placing the body at the centre of its experience.

2 Extract from author's diary, research fieldtrip to Therme Vals, Switzerland, December 2010.

Through my experiences of Zumthor's work and, in particular, of Therme Vals, it became clear that the process of walking to these sites — which are not always, but often, isolated — formed an integral part of my experiencing of the work. By repeating this process, without realising it at the time, I was creating a new method for my contemporary jewellery.

Atmospheres

In his book *Atmospheres: Architectural Environments — Surrounding Objects*, Zumthor (2006a) discusses his attempt to identify what inherent characteristics are at play when creating atmosphere in his architecture. He proposes 'The Body of Architecture', 'Material Compatibility', 'The Sound of a Space', 'The Temperature of a Space', 'Surrounding Objects', 'Between Composure and Seduction', 'Tension between Interior and Exterior', 'Levels of Intimacy', and 'The Light on Things' as qualities that, in his view, form the essence of presence in architecture. He also notes, however, the influence of 'Architecture as Surroundings', 'Coherence' — when place, use and form come together — and 'The Beautiful Form' as personal, sensorial attributes that move him at a much deeper level. Together, these titles reveal the architect's phenomenological approach to thinking about and making architecture. In the context of my research and jewellery practice, and drawing from my personal experiences of his work, it is these last three qualities that most resonate with me. As Pallasmaa has observed, 'Architecture is born out of the body, and as it is experienced, it returns back to the body' (Pallasmaa 2012, cited in Deane 2013: 3).

Influenced by both Zumthor's account of sensorial qualities, within which the embodied experience of architecture holds a significant role, and Pallasmaa's proposition of the 'cycle' generated by the performative relationship between the body and architecture, I have developed these concepts in my jewellery.

The experience of the 'user'

In both architecture and contemporary jewellery the sense of surprise, or the unexpected, is fundamental to the making of rich experiences for the user. Zumthor's ability to envision how future users will inhabit his architecture plays a significant part in the success of his work. For example, Therme Vals and Steilneset depict a unique atmosphere that is grounded in materiality and place; however, unless the user experiences the work, this atmosphere is superfluous. The sensorial qualities of his buildings have been imagined by Zumthor, constructed by others and now experienced by users. In this way, one can see the emergence of a cyclical condition generated by the interrelations between the architect, the building and the user. Seen in this way, one can argue that the role of the user also contributes to the meaning of the building through their embodied relationship with its materiality.

My research transfers this concept to the relationship between maker/wearer/viewer that is typical of contemporary jewellery practice. Drawing from the

cyclical relationship proposed by Pallasmaa, I propose a circular trajectory along and across which maker, object, wearer and viewer move and intersect with one another, creating new possibilities for spatial and sensorial relationships. Using this schema as a framework in the *Hand over* ring project, I test the proposition that the wearer contributes to the meaning of the ring object.

***Hand over* ring project**

Hand over is an ongoing jewellery project that proposes to use temporary wearers in the making of a series of rings that explore an embodied relationship between maker, object and user. Informed by my understanding and experience of Zumthor's architecture, each ring I make is documented through photographs and subsequently handed over to a wearer. The wearer is then asked to wear the ring continually for a given time and to document their relationship with the work. The aim is to examine how the limited time spent wearing the ring affects the wearer's sentimental attachment to the ring. If new sensorial characteristics develop as a result of the wearer's relationship with the ring, how will these subsequently be interpreted by the maker, wearer and viewer? The significance of the research is to demonstrate the permeability of my new schema, using a temporary wearer as a method to activate the potential transformative condition — physical and/or conceptual — of the ring, as a way to imbue qualities that cannot be paralleled in any other form. In doing so, I argue that the role of the temporary wearer contributes to the *making* of the work, generating a new methodology of practice in contemporary jewellery.

The ring

In my jewellery practice, the ring occupies a significant place. As the maker, I find the hand the most interesting and challenging part of the body to work from. Metaphorically, I see and use it as a site. Rarely still, the hand reflects an ever-changing landscape to which anything built must adapt itself. Unlike the brooch, for example, the ring's location on the hand means that it is as much visible to the wearer as it is to the viewer. The intimate contact between the body and the ring is conducive to the wearer interacting with it. Often this is done unconsciously, out of boredom or anxiety for example. But rings on hands also signify other kinds of relationships, ones that develop as the result of wearing them 'out in the world'. My research examines the nature of these relationships along with the role of the loop as a symbolic part of the ring. I am interested in its mutable role, defining absence when the ring is exhibited off the body, yet also providing the means for it to be worn on the body. In the context of my research, the loop of the ring is also used as a metaphor to represent the circularity of the relationship between maker, object wearer and viewer.

maker–wearer–viewer

In 2005 Cunningham curated an exhibition entitled *maker–wearer–viewer: Contemporary European Narrative Jewellery*, in which he invited more than 70 makers from 20 countries to submit wearable work that explored the genre of narrative (2005). While concepts of body and wearability are themes that have been and continue to be the object of research by makers, curators and critics in contemporary jewellery practice, Cunningham's proposition to establish a dialogue between maker, wearer and viewer as a way to explore the narrative genre provided a new perspective at the time. For Cunningham, the nature of his investigation has eventuated from examining the transformative character of the narrative, when the jewellery object imagined and realised by the maker becomes a wearable object worn by others.

The narrative object can be ambiguous in its communicative character. It relies on the viewer's subjective interpretation. A dialogue is consequently established between the maker, the originator of the artefact's statement, the wearer, the vehicle by which the work is seen, and the viewer, the audience who thereafter engages with the work. For the wearer ... there exists a certain authority to re-interpret the object. The potential to make her/his own personal statement is therefore significant. (Cunningham 2005: vi)

For jewellery critic Liesbeth den Besten, however, Cunningham's relational proposition is problematic. She argues that, if the exhibition focuses on the narrative genre, the relational message itself should be featured within the title *maker–wearer–viewer*, to better acknowledge the communicative nature of jewellery (den Besten 2006). While my work isn't informed by narrative, I too believe that, as it stands, the relationship maker–wearer–viewer does not fully describe the potential for the interpretation of contemporary jewellery. In Cunningham's proposition the wearer 'is the vehicle by which the work is seen' (Cunningham 2005: vi). It suggests, therefore, that the work is appraised by the viewer only when *worn* by the wearer and doesn't attend to the fact that, more often than not, the exhibition setting or photographs are important platforms to view contemporary jewellery. In this instance, the exhibited/ collected/ published object is dislocated from its origins as a worn object. Consequently, the inherent quality of the jewellery object as a wearable becomes secondary, transforming the role of the wearer into that of a viewer and thus altering its relationship with the object. This shift forms an integral part of the maker/wearer/viewer discourse that, in my view, should be considered within the schema.

If the work is appraised off the body, then the relationship between maker/wearer/viewer and the object becomes fragmented through the absence of the wearer's tactile engagement with the work, but also through the absence of the role of the wearable as the conduit between the wearer and viewer. Thus, the wearable is deciphered through the visual realm only, leaving notions of materiality in the territory of the imaginative. The physical space one creates

by isolating the tactile and functional aspects of the wearable from the viewer prevents the sensorial characteristics of the work from being experienced, and also prevents the maker from exploring new possibilities.

Proposition: Wearing as making

The *Hand over* ring project explores ways in which the relational role of the wearer creates new meanings for the work, and makes visible how these meanings can then be incorporated in the processes of making new works. The creative work from which findings will be drawn is at its early stages and the examples below are far from conclusive. By presenting the significance of Zumthor's architecture on creating atmosphere, however, and through the account of my own experiences of his work, I have established a framework and defined a new method for the development of my current body of jewellery work.

Site #3 — ring experiment

First exhibited in *Archetype*, *Site #3* was not made with the intent to become a 'testing' device.³ The ring was made prior to my various research field trips and, thus, did not carry the same concerns about materiality and place that inform the current development of test rings. I see *Site #3*, therefore, as the model from which the research proposition originated, but *not* as a sample ring to test the proposition. *Site #3* was my first attempt in using digital technologies to create wearables. I was interested in examining the characteristics of the traditional handmade approach alongside that of the digital, to create a series of cubes as architectural features to be set in my rings. While *Site #3* was entirely drawn on CAD, it was subsequently cast in different elements and materials: the loop structure in surgical steel and the cube in sterling silver. Distinct in their colours and hardness, I wanted the base to portray a sense of permanence and strength against the more fragile and precious cube presented as the ornament.

During the exhibition, a conversation around jewellery being exhibited as artefacts triggered the idea to examine the meaning of the relationship maker, wearer and ring in this context, which led to the setting up of an experiment. I gave *Site #3* to a colleague, a landscape architect, with the premise that she would wear the ring continually for a month. The timeframe was random, yet important, for it affirmed an end point to the experiment. Despite the ring not being the most comfortable for daily wear, the wearer soon became accustomed to it and, at the conclusion of the project, shared her regret at having to return it.

³ *Archetype* solo exhibition was held at the gallery Zu Design, Adelaide, October 2008.



Figure 7. Sabine Pagan, *Site #3*, ring, 2009, sterling silver, surgical steel, 38 x 25 x 11 mm

Photo: Emily Snadden

Observations and questions emerged as soon as the experiment was over. Was the wearer missing the physicality of the ring, the relationship between the object and her body, or the short-lived ‘ownership’ of the ring? Would the outcome have changed had the ring belonged to the wearer? During the period of the experiment the physical characteristics of the ring changed little. The corners of the cube had been rounded as the result of daily wear, but there was not enough transformation to question whether dints and marks could potentially bring a sensorial quality to the work. How would the viewer engage with this ring in contrast to the original one? Does the story of the wearer who contributed to bringing new meanings to the ring affect the viewer’s interpretation of the work?

Using *Site #3* as the foundation to build my argument, I am currently working on a series of test rings that are to be worn for a period of up to three months. Unlike with *Site #3*, the rings are informed by my experience of embodied architecture, as opposed to architecture as a ‘building’. This time, therefore, the rings have been made with the intent that the experiments may generate elements of chance and curiosity. For example, through daily wear, the ring will be exposed to conditions that trigger wear and tear that I may have anticipated, but couldn’t possibly control. The aim is to examine how the qualities Zumthor has identified as important to creating an atmosphere can be interpreted and adapted to jewellery. For example, the quality he names ‘Between Composure and Seduction’ addresses the significance of movement in architecture as both a spatial and temporal art. For Zumthor, it is important to seduce the user of

the space by creating an atmosphere that lets them wander throughout the building as opposed to directing them. Of course, given the dramatic shift in scale, a literal transposition of such an approach into jewellery is impossible. This doesn't, however, prevent rethinking ways to engage our body with the object. In *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, Susan Stewart positions the body in relation to both the landscape, as the gigantic, and the miniature world. She notes,

We are enveloped by the gigantic, surrounded by it, enclosed within its shadow. Whereas we know the miniature as a spatial whole or as temporal parts, we know the gigantic only partially. (2007: 71)



Figures 8 & 9. Sabine Pagan, *Inside(out) between*, 2012, sterling silver (also heat treated), monel, 31 x 30 x 8 mm

Photo: Grant Hancock

The ring can be experienced as a spatial whole; it is small enough to be viewed from all angles. In my work, however, I use spatial relationships between interstices and intersections of solid/void, interior/exterior as a way to draw the wearer into the work, in the realm of their own memories and imagination. My interpretation of architectural qualities into jewellery is applied through subtle elements, prompting both the wearer and viewer to experience them over time and depending on the 'conditions' of the environment they find themselves in. Standing inside, outside, moving the hand, grasping things with the hand, shaking hands are all elements that will affect the conditions in which the embodied characteristics of the ring are lived and experienced.

Bathing light— testing the proposition

Early winter morning. Silhouettes slide silently across the water. Roofs, pastures and peaks are barely visible behind the thin layer of fog. A matter of minutes and all will be revealed. In the background, the sound of streaming waterfalls. Eyes closed, I feel the air crisp and cold brushing across my face. Immersed and leaning against the stone, my body is comfortably warm. Time passes. Stepping out of the water, I move briskly; my skin cringes at the contact of the freezing air; the heavy brass door is in sight again. I enter. One last glance; the light is now shining through the fog. Stone and water are awake.⁴

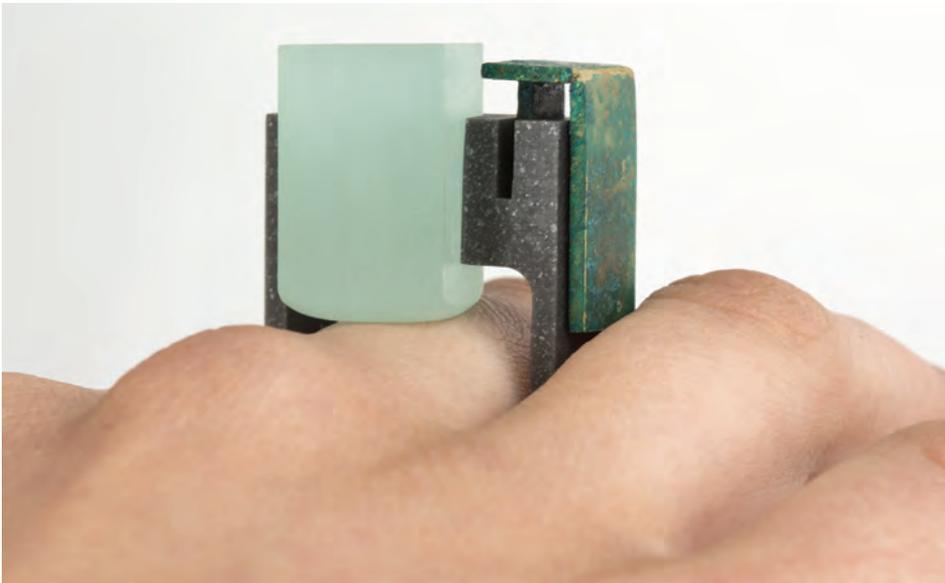


Figure 10. Sabine Pagan, *Bathing light*, 2013, corian, marblo, patinated brass, 40 x 30 x 12 mm

Photo: Tim Crutchett

4 Extract from the author's diary, research fieldtrip to Therme Vals, Switzerland, December 2010.

My research uses the exhibition context as a way to present my proposition to include a temporary wearer as part of my method of making new contemporary jewellery works. Similar to material and process investigations where the maker does not always have full control of their actions, the wearer's input brings new meanings to the work. At times their temporal embodied experience of the object is visible through alterations in the physical characteristics of the ring's surface. Other times, the meanings are conveyed in other forms, through documentation of their experiences presented alongside the object.

Moving away from the traditional round or square openings that tightly encircle the finger, *Bathing light* suggests an alternate space, one that holds the ring in place while permitting light to pass through the void. When unworn, the ring is not immediately recognisable as a ring, but could also be read as a sculptural or architectural model. Here the design process takes into consideration not only the loop as the functional element that enables the ring to become a wearable object, but also the way it signifies 'absence' when unworn.

As stated before, while the physical properties of some of the rings in the *Hand over* project will be subject to change as a result of being worn, others, such as *Bathing light*, will not. The materials they are made out of are not prone to marking or developing patina, especially within the first three months. In these examples, textures and patinas are applied when the rings are first made. Either way, however, the project is not only reliant on the materials' transformation across the short duration of the experiment. It also seeks to transfer the method that I developed during my research field trips as a user of architecture into the realm of my contemporary jewellery practice.

Upon receipt of *Bathing light*, the wearer was briefed on the intent of the research. She travelled across the globe wearing it everyday. Its presence as a relatively large ring attracted attention; it was pointed at, commented on and touched by others, contributing to her own daily life, her story. Then it broke. Using elastic as a temporary solution to hold components together, she continued wearing the ring before handing it over on her return from overseas. At first I wondered what the unexpected and premature outcome would mean in the context of my research, but soon was convinced that the breakage of material as well as the wearer's solution led to the ring reaching new potentials.

I have now the opportunity to amend the ring in a way that would not have been possible without the input of the wearer (breaking the ring). The experiment, therefore, brings new openings; some rings may be beautified by the action of wearing, and subsequently exhibited in their new form; some may be used as models for generating others; and, others might be transformed multiple times through my input as the maker and that of the wearer as a contributor. Without a timeframe, the cycle could last indefinitely.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have examined how a phenomenological approach to architecture can inform the development of a new methodology of practice in contemporary jewellery. Through my firsthand experience of various works designed by Zumthor, I have identified the significance of sensorial qualities in our engagement with architecture, and proposed to test its application in contemporary jewellery practice.

This knowledge served to identify the limitations of Cunningham's proposed relationship between maker, wearer, viewer. In response, I have developed a new circular schema, in which I have demonstrated how the relational dynamics between maker, wearer, object and viewer can be expanded to encompass the concept of embodiment. While the *Hand over* case study is still in its preliminary stage, my research suggests that the performative role of the temporary wearer in the project can make valuable contributions in the meaning and realisation of the ring through materiality.

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