A REMARKABLE LACUNA:
THE POST-DIGITAL GAP IN MUSEUM CURATING FOR CONTEMPORARY JEWELRY

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ABSTRACT

In 2020, the internet is its own authentic space, and online "meta-versions" of objects are a new material currency. This thesis investigates the current Post-Digital Era, its effects on today's image economy and evolving conceptions of aura, as well as its impending demand on museum exhibition practices. It will also relate these important themes to one particular field—Contemporary Jewelry—the most recent iterations of this practice to be defined and analyzed. This genre exemplifies larger themes in art and design in which making becomes hybridized with digital processes, and viewing synched with virtual space. Using one of the field's most experimental artists as a case study, this thesis will define terms like the Digital Gesamtkunstwerk and Hyperreal Jewelry. Guided by theories of Boris Groys and Glenn Adamson, among others, the document will also discuss the evolution and circulatory nature of Form-Giving: what was once the sole objective for an artist or craftsperson – whose roles increasingly include providing media content – the term now enters the prerogative of the curator. For jewelry, this is only recently being understood, as arts institutions that collect it have struggled to create aptly profound shows. As an attempt to distill new criteria for more advanced curatorial practices, recent exhibition projects will also be investigated. That which will emerge include: museum-worthy objects as images or content, abandoning the white cube paradigm, creating context and telling stories, and positioning Contemporary Craft into the larger zeitgeist so as to define moments in culture. In combination with thoroughly documenting exhibitions, this short list of standards will help to insert Contemporary Jewelry into the Post-Digital Era, continue and support the relatively recent historization of jewelry exhibition-making, establish a critical theory for the field – the Remarkable Lacuna after which this thesis is titled – and reaffirm the museum's role as a vital destination for art and material culture – and its symbiotic relationship with cyberspace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

In a 2019 exhibition review for his column in *Crafts Magazine*, the design historian, writer and critic Glenn Adamson questioned the very fate of exhibitions and their roles in the future. His logic centered on the disruption that the New Millennium brought on all aspects of life after Y2K—the dot com bust, 9/11, the 2008 Great Recession—wondering if it would soon be the museum's turn to be disrupted. How would museums continue to serve the contemporary object maker, when all the tools to expose their work are now at their own disposal? Museums have long held the position of being places of exhibition and validation. Adamson asked: "But how much longer will that be true?"[1] Adamson was speaking about a show that dealt with how every day the Millennial generation reconciles its Post-Digital reality through making and self-expression[2]. This thesis acts as an extension to the question, and argues that this digital/physical generational divide in how objects are seen and experienced should actually inform curatorial practice.

This document will also discuss evolving concepts around authenticity, and the growing social value of virtual representations of objects versus the physical originals. Likes, shares and reposts are the Millennial Generation's currency: the more "engagement" something gets, the more clout it can amass. Access to just about anything including commercial products or objects of art and design subsequently comes in the form of scrolls, swipes or double taps on a smart phone. This thesis will not argue whether in person connections to objects are decreasingly necessary for them to hold value. Rather, it will evaluate whether or not certain museums—the long venerated ultimate destination for art, design and material culture—are acknowledging their curatorial responsibility to keep up with the Post-Digital Era's demands. Demands that pertain to this thesis include: being more inclusive of contemporary object makers' evolving, hybridized-practices —meaning, those that fold newer, digital processes into the traditional, handmade ways of making; creating exhibition spaces that become

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[1] Glenn Adamson, "Letter from America: Showcasing the Future", *CRAFTS Magazine*, July 1, 2019, 22.

[2] The referenced exhibition is a show I curated called *Non-Stick Nostalgia: Y2K Retrofuturism in Contemporary Jewelry,* The Museum of Arts and Design, March 21 – June 21 2019.

singular form, viable as a new kind of cyclic internet content; and building newly relevant contexts, storylines, or frameworks for certain kinds of art and craft objects, new and old.

More and more, object makers, craftsman, artists, designers—anyone art critic, media theorist, and philosopher Boris Groys would refer to as "form givers"—are becoming "content providers"[3]. Their work, or what it is they make or produce, can be more generally described as output: it's a combination of the object, the generated image of the object, any written component about what is depicted, together formatted specifically for digital consumption. Social media is proving to be an extremely viable destination for expressive and identity centric forms of art like Contemporary Jewelry[4]: social and cultural contexts can be generated with relative ease by the very makers themselves, a quick and relatable alternative to the white cube paradigm that has long dominated the field. Parts of this thesis will demonstrate how jewelry is being extremely well served by the internet, both from creation and viewing standpoints. In a best-case scenario, we are talking about certain objects becoming a sort of digital *Gesamtkunstwerk,* or total work of art*,* only fully readable online.

When the work may as well look better on the screen than it could ever in real life, trapped behind glass, what becomes of the museum's role? Museums must reconcile the synchronicity of physical and virtual spaces that the Post-Digital Era has provided. Now more than ever, they are faced with choices of decentralizing their collections, inventing new strategies, and adapting to what, at the time of writing, is an evolving post-pandemic world that has already raised existential questions of museums' physical exhibition practices. The new norms that are unfolding from the pandemic will almost certainly change physical exhibition-making, and heighten the development on the digital strategy as a complement, not necessarily a substitute. Whether museums were ready for it or not, 2020 has proven that the Post-Digital Era is ever present and here to stay.

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3 Boris Groys, "From the Form-Giver to the Content-Provider" in *Museums at the Post-Digital Turn,* Milan: Moussee Publishing, 2019, 36.

[4] Contemporary Jewelry is also known as Art Jewelry, which is one-of-a kind adornment-based objects made primarily after WWII through today. More pertinent to this thesis is what is being made actively by Millennials, all of which to be more defined in Chapter Two. Note: both spellings of the word

These questions pertain, in particularly interesting ways, to all kinds of objects. But as a jewelry maker and curator, I focus here on both making and exhibiting these specific kinds of objects, in theoretical context of that becoming potential content to be shared and experienced in our changing times. Discussions around the '21st century Museum' tend to revolve around macro issues of inclusivity, accessibility, audience sociality and experience creation, all of which are great; this thesis introduces a more object-centric point of view into the conversation. The response to the pandemic could also accelerate this shift as more museums use the internet to disseminate what they have in their care differently– hopefully with a more zoomed in approach. I also think that in the future, as access to physical art spaces might continue to be compromised, the curator's role as a custodian and organizer of visual culture, one that contributes to the evolution of object-based critical theory, should come to mean something new and hopefully more.

Even without the complexity of pandemic response, the Post-Digital age already demands that museums update standard curatorial approaches for Contemporary Jewelry within museums that value the field. But what does that mean, and why is it necessary? Chapter One looks at three core topics as a means to define the Post-Digital: using previously mentioned emerging literature on the subject, we will define the term as it pertains to our current epoch, museums in particular, its effects on Contemporary Jewelry practice; the latter looking at Estonian Artist Darja Popolitova as a case study. It will then discuss the idea of meta-versioning as it pertains to an object's representation and reproduction in image, using Duchamp, among others, as an example. The first chapter will also discuss evolving definitions of authenticity and aura, where perspectives by curator Omar Kholeif will be presented. In Chapter Two, the thesis will provide a telescoped history of the field of Contemporary Jewelry and how we arrived at what I've defined as Hyperreal Jewelry. It will also discuss the evolution of jewelry in context, notably the shift away from the white cube in favor of identity-centric contexts and/or the creation of virtual avatars. The chapter finishes with the important considerations of jewelry historian Marjan Unger— her "remarkable lacuna" being lacking critical theory of the field—which exhibitions inadvertently fill. Finally, Chapter Three will extend

theories offered by Groys as it pertains to the evolving role of the curator as the new form-giver, and digital optimization of museums as an important archival tool. Various museums and jewelry exhibition examples have been chosen to stand up against those thoughts, some exemplifying our shared philosophy better than others. Who has been primed for the Post-Digital merge we are currently in the midst of? The thesis will finish with a summation of new criteria that can guide object-based museum exhibition projects in the future.

1. WHAT IS THE POST-DIGITAL?

This thesis begins with a discussion around the Post-Digital – that is, put simply, the human conditioning of digitalization processes – and its effects on art making and viewing, as well as their reverberations in the museum space. Curator Lorenzo Giusti has initiated this conversation in *Museums at the Post-Digital Turn*[5]. The book is a collection of essays that hinge on digital culture's interpretation within museum activities, curatorial practice, and infiltration of contemporary art genres like installation, performance and new media. According to Giusti, the Post-Digital Era can be described as "the normalization of the digital revolution and the cultural context that has developed in relation to the game-changing advent of new technologies in everyday life"[6]. Starkly truer today, he continues:

> The web is no longer a virtual zone, an alternative to reality, as it was defined for a long time, but a concrete place in its own right, an extension of the world, and actual dimension on par with the other spaces in which we live. This condition has influenced every sector of artistic production, not just new media art or other specialized fields. Nowadays, every medium appears to have been transformed by the existence of the internet and the possibilities offered by digital technology, and inevitably this condition has influenced not only our ways of working but also exhibition spaces themselves, museums first and foremost, substantially affecting the forms in which art is conceived, created and enjoyed.[7]

This thesis hopes to initiate Contemporary Jewelry into this wider discussion, and perhaps the best way to do so is to lead with an example.

Craft as 21st Century Content

Born in 1989, Estonian Jewelry Artist Darja Popolitova is what American writer and educator Marc Prensky would call a "Digital Native", one of the "'native speakers'

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[5] Co-edited with arts writer Nicola Ricciardi. The book comes after a symposium he organized of the same name. Giusti is also the vice president of the Association of Italian Contemporary Art Museums (Associazione dei Musei d'Arte Contemporanea Italiani).

[6] Giusti, *Museums at the Post Digital Turn*, 17.

[7] Ibid., 18.

of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet."[8] This term was first introduced in his 2001 article "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants", coined to describe and differentiate what we now refer to as Generation Y—or Millennials who have grown up inundated with new technologies —from the elder side of Generation X, Boomers and anyone born before. Instead, the latter groups had to learn these technologies, thus they are the "Digital Immigrants", or foreigners, so the analogy goes – they will never quite rid of their "accents" entirely.[9] We could also put it in another way, stated by Rhode Island School of Design interior architecture professor Michael Grugl in his 2019 article, *Spatial Computing and Interiority: A Sensuous Relationship:*

> "[Millennials'] relationship with digital technology is not dissimilar from the relationship the general public maintains with infrastructure. It was there when they grew up, it has undergone some changes, but conceptually it was always meant to be used in everyday life… this perception of global information networks and digital tools as infrastructure informs the ways they approach ongoing and future technological advancements in the context of their creative development. [10]

Prensky's article is 18 years old, but Grugl shows us his argument still stands. It can also help us understand the ways 3D objects are largely seen and experienced today, on devices; in a sense, devices are the Millennial infrastructure. It also helps us understand the growing ubiquity of newer, hybridized craft practices of today, like Popolitova's, as exemplified by her Instagram account.[11] Among candid shots of friends and events from her personal life, of significance are: a mix of the artist's amorphous, at times chromed out, alien-esque jewelry pieces[12] – mostly brooches, earrings and pendants – A) either on a white background, the standard "professional" convention; B) installed in an exhibition setting; C) featured as a still from one of her video pieces; D) as a digital process shot before its material manifestation takes place; E) in her hand; F) on her body, most likely in the form a selfie; G) or some combination of it all. In the last few

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[8] Marc Prensky, "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants" in *On the Horizon,* MCB University Press, Vol. 9 No. 5, October 2001, 1.

[9] Ibid., 1-3.

[10] Michael Grugl, " Spatial Computing and Interiority: A Sensuous Relationship" in *Museums at the Post-Digital Turn:* Milan: Moussee Publishing, 2019, 345.

[11] @darja.popolitova

[12] How and of what these pieces are made will be discussed further in Chapter Two.

scenarios, the background of the photos are often digitally altered via pixilation or some kind of textural doctoring. She also sometimes presents herself in wigs, iridescent makeup and/or with face filters alluding to some kind of virtual alter-ego (Figure 1). With titles like *Narcissus, Anti Clicking Spike* and *Digital Detox Brush* (Figures 2-4), she is making work that Christiane Paul – Professor of Media Studies at Parsons and Adjunct Curator of Digital Art at the Whitney – would say "addresses the digital condition."[13] The Post-Digital, that is, which in her essay *Museums in the Post-Digital Past and Future: Materials, Mediation, Models* Paul relates the term to art practice specifically as "a condition of artworks and objects that are conceptually and practically shaped by the internet and digital processes, yet often manifest in the material form of objects such as paintings, sculptures, or photographs;"[14] jewelry too in our case. Worth noting is that the works she puts on her Instagram are not for sale: many jewelers, other kinds of designers and of course small brands also use the platform as a destination for their commercial products. But for the most part, Popolitova does not often do so. While interesting, this thesis will not focus on commercial aspects of creative output found on social media, or the blending of those activities, though the reader should keep in mind that the space is often used for both, and with varying levels of distinction.

One of this thesis' focuses, instead, is that though the physical jewelry objects are the crux of what Popolitova creates, they are also just a part of the total picture, or the collective persona she presents when she shares that jewelry online. Many of her posts also include detailed captions that range from functioning as an exhibition label more or less, including the jewelry piece's title, its date, materials, etc (Figure 4) — to spaces of introspection. The latter often involves the artist's evolving relationship to making and technology as a craftsperson (Figure 5). For example, in the caption of her post from March 29, 2019, where she depicts herself wearing both a virtual face filter and a physical pair of earrings that she made (Figure 6), she writes:

> The process of making jewellery through a screen is defined by the minimalism of movement, friction, emotional and muscular tension (compared to classical jewellery techniques). The emphasis on 3D modelling is obvious—creation of a

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[13] Christiane Paul, "Museums in the Post-Digital Past and Future: Materials, Mediation, Models" in *Museums at the Post-Digital Turn,* Milan: Moussee Publishing, 2019, 143.
[14] Ibid., 145.

meaning is based on the slightest physical experience—via look, gesture, and posture of a body.[15]

She then goes on to ground that statement by referencing the concept of "embodiment", or in her words when "the body is seen as inseparable from sensory experience and perception."[16] With this post, she seems to imply that the difference between physical adornments and "digital adornments" – the latter being how curator Filippo Lorenzin and arts writer Carol Civre would describe what we see on Popolitova's face in this post – need not be distinguished necessarily. In their text *More Real Than Real,* written for Current Obsession Magazine, they wonder, "does it even make sense to think about our reality as being divided into two separate realms? Even when the laptop is closed and the phone is muted, one's behavior is still shaped by what happens online. If it is true that we are in a post-digital world, one's identity must also go beyond what can be defined as two distinct realities."[17] Perfectly embodying this philosophy, Popolitova self-actualizes through an alter-ego who uses a combination of physical and digital adornment; the processes of creating each are increasingly less distinguishable.

At times these layered Instagram images and their descriptions go far beyond revealing to the viewer how she makes her work, promoting it for sale[18], or showing them how to wear her jewelry, even in a hypothetical virtual dreamscape. They also are not memes.[19] As a whole, a certain post becomes something singular, more than the sum of its parts: each output is a Digital *Gesamtkunstwerk,* or 'total work of art' (Figure 7).

In summary, Popolitova uses the combination of image creation, digital manipulation of that image, and accompanying text generation, plus the independent distribution of those images via Internet platforms like Instagram to formalize and create space for the physical objects that emerge from her studio. The totality of her output, that

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[15] Darja Popolitova, Instagram Post, March 29, 2019, https://www.instagram.com/p/Bvl6RKnjndY/

[16] Ibid.

[17] Filippo Lorenzin and Carol Civre, "More Real than Real", *Current Obsession Magazine* Issue 7, 2019.

[18] Though one could always inquire directly through direct messaging.

[19] Memes in a sense are viral transmissions of cultural ideas through composite images and text. Professor Richard Dawkins coined the term in 1976, and in 2013 described them as "anything that goes viral" - which Popolitova's work does not need to do in order for it to be important.
Olivia Solon, "Richard Dawkins on the internet's hijacking of the word 'meme'", Wired, June 20, 2013, https://www.wired.co.uk/article/richard-dawkins-memes.

which we find on Instagram, thus becomes content – that is, media-related content, which "can refer to the information provided through the medium, the way in which the information was presented, as well as the added features included in the medium in which that information was delivered."[20] Unable to find quite as useful a definition elsewhere, the aforementioned quote was actually taken from Wikipedia. I feel this collective definition is an acceptable one given that the whole concept of 21st century content is very much dependent on its open source nature; "new" content is often born from preexisting content, built from the same images, attitudes or references, and originating sources are almost impossible to determine. The definition goes on to clarify: "The medium, however, provides little to no value to the end-user without the information and experiences that make up the content."[21] This is true enough for Popolitova's work, which is what makes it exciting and multifaceted in the context of her field: the information and experiences that make up her particular content is imperative to the reading of the physical pieces of which they play a part— a new ingredient for Contemporary Jewelry.

One could still argue, however, that there's plenty of value to be found in the individuality of a single, physical piece once it leaves her studio and finds its way in the hands of a collector— they may or may not care about her Instagram posts that contextualize them. But what about if and when her work is found in a museum? Should it be standing alone, on a white pedestal, or inserted within some visual or textual framework relative to its own makeup? After all, its context is what makes the object singular – again, the Digital Gesamtkunstwerk. Today the boundaries between Art with a capital A and generative mass-media content have been blurred; Popolitova is just one example of this phenomenon, and one of few in the Contemporary Craft world. If we assume such hybridized practices will increase, it begs the question: should curators be paying attention? Is it art, or just "weird stuff" on the Internet"? According to critic and curator, Ed Halter, in conversation with curator and Director of Bard College's Center for Curatorial Studies grad program, Lauren Cornell, the line between them both "was never

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[20] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Content_(media)
[21] Ibid.

that clean-cut" anyway.[22] In their cross-interview, *Mass Effect. On Art and the Distributed Spectacle,* he is referring to online art of the mid 2000s, but this still remains to be true for Contemporary Craft or for jewelry artists like Popolitivoa: Contemporary Jewelry is only now beginning to thrive in this liminal space and play with "self-insertion" into pop culture and today's "economy of images".[23]

Meta-Versioning: Objects as Images

Before discussing further the potentiality of objects going viral, this section begins with some personal perspective. Not unlike Popolitova, I am also a digital native, though born in 1986 I consider myself to be a Millennial elder. I grew up on dial-up, and although barely, I do remember a life before the internet. I can recall the day we got it: I was in third grade, and my whole family gathered around our bulky computer screen and waited for what seemed like an eternity for a photo of a sailboat to slowly load, top to bottom. It was confusing, but such actions became less and less so over time, as kids my age developed an ease to web surfing, chat room loitering, emailing chain letters, taking personality tests, discovering music, burning CDs, and more. We were asked at a young age to give ourselves screen names, to write away messages and short bios (Figure 8). We could project the parts we liked the most about ourselves to the world anonymously, naively making it up as we went along. As we got older, literally everything went online, from commerce, to creativity via personal blogs, to art sharing platforms, and more. Enter Google Image search and the rest is almost history. As virtual accessibility expanded, we pieced together our identities pixel-by-pixel, uploading and downloading, sifting through the infinite, open-source virtual database that the internet became.

The internet is filled indiscriminately with images; from high-resolution photos to "poor images" – "an illicit fifth-generation bastard of an original image", as artist and filmmaker Hito Steyerl calls them[24]. Combine that with the advent of social media and the birth of the 'me me me' generation post-Y2K, and it is no wonder that the work of

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[22] Lauren Cornell and Ed Halter, "Mass Effect. On art and the Distributed Spectacle" in *Museums at the Post-Digital Turn*, Milan: Moussee Publishing, 2019, 67.
[23] Cornell, "Mass Effect", 63.

Popolitova exists today (a lite version of Steyerl for jewelry, perhaps), that digital narcissism is a trait of Gen Y, not to mention those that follow. Today's Post-Digital Era is built on extreme reference culture and appropriations accelerated by a visual economy where images of things are based on preexisting images of things, they find new meaning, and somehow arguably become singular things in and of themselves. Memes are a succinct example of this experiential process (Figure 8). Some of these images could even be considered as virtual found objects.

Given the complexity of a thirty-year span of digital evolution, and that even those with passion for physical objects discover them through social media platforms, this thesis asks: what might the future turn our relationship with the authentic material sources of images into, the actual physical objects that make up our material culture? As more of our physical reality syncs up with our screens, will our value system for objects change? Will we want more IRL time with them, or less? Will our appreciation for tactile materiality go up or down? And what will that mean in the post-pandemic era, which is now being defined by a reality almost entirely devoid of physicality, only linked to our screens?

The hope is that the collective favor for objects, primarily hand-made and/or one-of-a-kind, will indeed increase. The rise in craft-oriented exhibitions in major museums or biennials over the last five or six years is of good indication[25], as is more widespread opposition to consumerist purchasing tendencies[26]. Seeking objects out in a museum for example, serves as a direct respite from screen dependency, yes; however, it is also simultaneously something with which our phones assist us. Just think about how we initially find out about the show or an artist, the modes in which we engage with art when faced with it in person, and how we share the objects and experiences we have with

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[24] Hito Steyerl, "In Defense of the Poor Image", *e-flux,* Journal #10, November 2009, https://www.e-flux.com/journal/10/61362/in-defense-of-the-poor-image/

[25] The 2017 Venice Biennale's Arsenale was very craft focused. The Whitney's current show, Making Knowing: Craft in Art, 1950–2019 is a more recent example. Glenn Adamson, "Why the Art World is Embracing Craft", *Artsy,* January 13 2020, https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-art-embracing-craft.

[26] This thesis will shy away from any discussions about consumerism or capitalism, only focusing on our desire to interact with material culture, art and design through the museum.

others. This document is not here to question whether it is good or bad, just to say that this is where we are.

Glenn Adamson is similarly curious about the synthetics of digitization and object appreciation. During an interview for this thesis, he noted, "We are running a digital experiment on an entire generation without a control group;" an idea he says he brings forth in his recent book, *Fewer, Better Thing*s. He went on: "we don't know what we're doing to ourselves," in speculation about the long-term effects. This book title alone sheds light on his personal thoughts about where we ought to be headed (especially in terms of private consumer tendencies). But in regards to the cultural guardians of art and design objects, it gets a little trickier: are museums the control group, or at least the closest thing we have to it? [27]

This thought was made in response to my considerations about Boris Groys's key text, *From the Form-Giver to the Content Provider,* which considers the internet's potential to be an intermediary between art versus mass media. With sharp precision, Groys discusses 21st century art production and distribution, listing only two channels through which this happens: the market, where the physical work circulates, and the internet, where the digital representation of the work on the market circulates, most likely meaning the art object shown on a white background. But there is a third scenario, "when artists leverage possibilities for producing and distributing art that are specific to the internet… in a somewhat subjective personalized way, from a perspective that the mainstream media does not take." He is surely referencing Internet Art, but it's also exactly as examined with Popolitova. He continues:

> The content can be an already existing situation that is too strange or, on the contrary, too trivial to be covered by standard journalism… actions, performances or other kinds of processes initiated by the artists and then documented by them. And it can be a work of total fiction—here the process of creating this fiction becomes documented.[28]

Groys takes a hopeful point of view, that the internet allowed artists to be the masters of their own domain, freed from censorship or exclusion, and able to share their work without the fear that its inherent content will be separated from or eclipsed by the

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[27] Adamson, in person interview, December 11, 2019.

physical form it takes. The internet as an independent destination for art has also undoubtedly influenced what art, or jewelry, gets to be. But we have to remember that as a place, the internet is not nearly as democratic as it seems. Groys also asserts that it is neither a match nor substitute for the museum as "the primary source of information about art"— even when the latter might be considered exclusionary and elitist. Why? Groys states that although matter is, in theory, accessible to anyone and everyone worldwide, platforms such as Instagram are actually "extremely fragmented… in practice the internet leads not to the emergence of universal public space but to the tribalization of the public… the internet is an extremely narcissistic medium, a mirror of our specific interests and desires."[29] Thanks to user history and algorithms, the bubbles of our social circles and peers, we are only seeing what we want to see. Groys uses the analogy of the museum as a city to drive his point home. Going from place to place in urban spaces, we are forced to confront and be provoked by all kinds of things, whether or not we like them or would choose to see them. This is essential to perspective, identity and taste development, among many other human things. Essentially, a curator's task is to do the same, to place objects and visuals in our paths that we have not necessarily ever seen before, and facilitate human connections to them. When art institutions are doing their jobs best, they can "transcend the fragmentation… and create a universal space of representation that the internet is incapable of being. Museum exhibitions are interesting and relevant when their contents derive from different fragments of the internet and social networks" – just as they would beyond national and cultural divisions.[30] Here, once could speculate about what this means both currently and post-pandemic, though we'll touch on that in this document's conclusion.

Either way: like cities, we need museums. Now recall Adamson's point about museums as a control group. Though they are selective, museums are, in theory, the witness bearers to what goes on in the physical world and cyberspace alike. And what

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[28] Groys, "From the Form-Giver to the Content-Provider", 38.

[29] Groys, "From the Form-Giver to the Content-Provider", 41.

[30] Ibid., 37-41.

they chose to bring inside should be, as Groys puts it, an "anti-selection", in which all diverse fragments are given equal representation."[31]

But Adamson wonders if Groys has considered all of the effects of our Post-Digital visual economy:

> Is it going to be the photograph of the thing that is the actual thing? And if so, is it an infinite regress where each thing is only validated by its meta-version? Because once you grant that an object can slip into a meta-state as its primary state, can that keep happening forever, like a cascade? It is worryingly bad for the museum.[32]

But does that have to be? This thesis' position is that today's digital meta-versions do not necessarily compete with or stand in the way of the museum's role in society; it's just a matter of evolving due diligence and awareness. Museums have seen and dealt with this before, albeit in smaller doses. Take for instance Duchamp: he used his own likeness as material for his self-portraits in drag; the readymade was an early version of recycled 'content' given new meaning by an artist; towards the end of his career he created miniature reproductions and replicas of his own works; and with projects like *The Green Box* and *The White Box*, he used photographs of his work and personal notes to try and "go some where else, to try and make works of art which are not works of art."[33] According to experts in the film *Marcel Duchamp. The Art of the Possible*, the reproductions, which he also allowed other artists to make, were key to ensuring that his ideas were disseminated to a very wide audience and furthered, an act that was arguably the key to his success.[34] Even his infamous urinal was reproduced 15 or so times over, the original captured only once in a photograph[35]. No one really questions which one is more authentic than another, whether seen through an image of it or faced with one in person.

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[31] Ibid., 43.

[32] Adamson, interview.

[33] Quote by Paul B. Franklin, *Marcel Duchamp. The Art of the Possible,* film directed by Matthew Taylor. Cargo Film & Releasing, 2019. Accessed April 1, 2020.

[34] *Marcel Duchamp as Rrose Sélavy,* 1920-192. Duchamp made smaller replicas of many of his prior works of arts, all of which becoming elements in *Box in a Valise,* 1935-1968. *The Green Box,* 1934, and *The White Box*, 1966 were books of compiled personal notes about the 4th dimension and photographs of preexisting works.

[35] Dazed, "The works of art that aren't as original as you thought", extracted from Matt Brown, *Everything You Know About Art Is Wrong,* London: Batsford, 2017, https://www.dazeddigital.com/art-photography/article/37203/1/the-works-of-art-that-arent-as-original-as-you-thought

And I would argue that its infinite digital reproductions still do not discourage people from wanting to see one in real place and time.

Art, at the end of the day (and in thanks to Duchamp's thinking) "thrives on spectatorship; the dangers of institutional theories is not that spectators are eliminated, but they are disempowered. They are in fact deprived of the right of saying, 'this is not art'."[36] If anything, I think that the internet fills this gap. The gesture of artists and designers putting things on the internet is analogous to Duchamp's act of absolving himself to finish his work, an action he gave to the spectator. The museum used to be the primary place this happened; in the Post-Digital era, the museum largely becomes a place of reinforcement— every second the circuit of Duchamp's Creative Act[37] is exponentially fulfilled by the internet's mass recirculation of images.

Adamson's thoughts corroborate this idea. When speaking about the Post-Digital shift from form-giving to content-provision, he ponders the idea of "intellectual property as the core unit of exchange rather than the object – it's basically where creativity and capital overlap in the purest form, so that makes you think that were entering a circulatory system where content and form may themselves be colliding." For Contemporary Craft artists this is absolutely true: the form or object, or even the conceptual ideation to give form in the first place (like if it were to remain as a digital file, for example), will always come first. It's intrinsic to the content, at the heart of one's urge to create. It is doubtful that form will ever be totally eclipsed by content; it is perhaps rather just time to acknowledge that "form was already content to begin with."[38]

Perfectly exemplifying this 21st century Duchampian idea is Adamson's article *The Rise of the Hyper Pot*, where he posits that online viewing mechanisms have been beneficial for seeing certain objects and their textural quality with hyperreal clarity. In essence, he suggests that social media has been valuable to craft artists, like Japanese ceramicist Takuro Kuwata, by allowing for a kind of virtual experiencing material based works like his and others (Figure 10). The pieces are "of un-placeable abstraction" and

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[36] Quote by Thierry de Duve, *Marcel Duchamp*, film.

[37] The Creative Act was a talk given by Duchamp in 1957 that claimed the spectator of art as the artwork's "prosperity", or component which puts it into being. An audio recording can be found here: http://www.openculture.com/2015/10/hear-marcel-duchamp-read-the-creative-act.html

"highly photogenic... Though literally saturated in materiality, they are also primed to

perform on the digital stage."[39] The assertion comes from the level of user engagement

Instagram posts of Kuwata's work gets, both from the artist's own handle, as well as

Adamson's or anybody else's for that matter:

> I knew it would get a good response. It has all the earmarks of Instagram bait:
> eye-popping color, a strong graphic silhouette, just the right balance of weirdness
> and familiarity. The photo was expertly lit, too. Kuwata presumably thinks about
> that kind of thing, for his own Instagram feed has an impressive following (over
> 11,000,[40] last I checked). And none of this is incidental to the work. Kuwata's
> ability to move back and forth between styles gives his oeuvre the quality of a
> time lapse, or visual distortion field – an effect accomplished with a mere press of
> the button in a CAD program, but hard to achieve in ceramic. His pots seem to
> signify two ways of being in the present: on the one hand, a resistant connection
> to the earth; on the other, the basking, acid glow of a computer screen.[41]

> I would extend Adamson's thoughts to Contemporary Jewelry objects as well.

Artists like Popolitova seem to already understand this, as do some more tactility

reliant jewelers like Aaron Patrick Decker[42] with his works in colorful enamel (Figure

11). In general though the approach of exploiting Instagram as a primary viewing

platform for small works like jewelry could be pushed much further.

So if Hyper Pots were to become an exhibition - what would that look like? At the

point of our conversation, Adamson's idea for a show would be to build an entire room

around a single pot with some sort of a "multimedia situation" happening around it, most

likely including zoomed in detail shots of the piece's textural surface (Figure 12). "The

pot would be the gravitational core of this orbiting spectrum of media experiences. The

idea there is that the pot is still required as the anchor, so if you don't have the pot, then

depending on how you think about it, either the pot is the anchor or the alibi for the rest

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[38] Adamson, interview.

[39] Glenn Adamson, "Rise of the Hyper Pot", Originally published in 'Ceramic Momentum: Staging the Object,' an exhibition at CLAY Museum of Ceramic Art Denmark in collaboration with Copenhagen Ceramics, 2019, https://www.glennadamson.com/work/2018/hyperpot.

[40] As of mid April 2020, Kuwata has just over 24,000 followers on Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/takurokuwata/, accessed April 12, 2020.

[41] Adamson, "Rise of the Hyper Pot".

[42] https://www.instagram.com/aaronpdecker/

of the content."[43] The idea sounds like an interesting Post-Digital exhibition experiment (blending of physical and virtual space in action), though could the idea for the show could be better than the thing itself? Would the attempt to exalt the object through digital visual multimedia teeter the exhibition too close to spectacle? And though the "anchor" of the show is arguably decorative, would the intention of the pot as a functional object be taken too far beyond its original context? But then again, what is that context? Especially considering one's first encounter with the show's subject is most likely on the screen. Perhaps a better question to ask is this: what *is* the source of the artwork's aura or authenticity, and what becomes of it once its physical representation is indistinguishable from it as virtual content? I suppose an easy but inefficient answer is that it depends.

Post-Digital Aura and Authenticity

Any discussion regarding viewing and seeing physical objects like Contemporary Jewelry would be remiss, for better or for worse, to not consider the fundamental but evolving views surrounding aura and authenticity, as put forward by Walter Benjamin and John Berger. Benjamin's seminal essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* discusses the degradation of an artwork's aura by way of its repetitive reproduction through image. He posited: "Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be." But needless to say, life is no longer that simple. What if the place is cyberspace, and its existence as an object of value is actually validated by its meta-versions, as Adamson suggests? Benjamin continues, saying that "the presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity." But when considering the object as just one element of Digital Gesamtkunstwerk, or even singularly depicted on a white background yet found online, for example, can that theory still be applied? Is it a moot point? If "technical reproduction" today comes in the form of a thumbprint to a smartphone with unlimited data supply, or as speedy as a screen grab or Instagram repost, is the "copy of the original" really being put into "situations which would be out of reach

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[43] Adamson, interview.

for the original itself" like Benjamin says?[44] With memes, maybe, but that kind of regression is the whole point to a meme's understanding. This thesis posits that for jewelry objects, the answer is no. This is in part due to what is alluded to in previous sections: that the museum is now a place of reaffirmation to an object's value, or its existence as art-related content - its first declaration as such now being made online.

Perhaps another way to consider these thoughts is to point out the reality in which curators seek out and find new work to consider for museum exhibitions. Take for instance curator Omar Kholeif, who confesses that sometimes a reproduced image of an artwork found online is enough for him to want to put it in a museum show.[45] I have done the same. Curators rely on the internet to discover and locate works of art. Kholeif's admission can be found in his book *Goodbye, World! Looking at Art in the Digital Age*, where he applies the condition of "technophoria" to how we see, experience and make art at this moment in time. He defines the term as "a new metabolic state devised by late capitalism whereby human needs and desires are purely satiated by the continual evolution of their electronic devices."[46] Adding a layer of complexity, Kholeif rightfully points out John Berger's astute extensions of Benjamin's theory in regards to the influences of pop culture and marketing on image (re)production: "the intent of the subject—to be idolized, to be envied—as integral to a work of art as the intent of the artist."[47] In short, Instagram is fulfilling Berger's prophecy to the Nth degree.

Today, most artists who embrace some aspect of social media probably understand this — even artists from the old jewelry guard like David Bielander and Ruudt Peters now have IG accounts[48] — using the system to get more eyes onto their work, or to direct traffic to in-person viewing opportunities from all over the world. Artists like Popolitova take it a step further, using the very system as material, which gives form and intellect to her output, which comes in multiple iterations (Figure 3). Who, therefore, is to say which version is more authentic than another? If museums want

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[44] Walter Benjamin, translated by Harry Zohn, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in *Illuminations*, New York: Schocken Books, 1969, 218.

[45] Omar Kholeif, *Goodbye, World! Looking at Art in the Digital Age,* Sternberg Press: Berlin, 2018, 102.

[46] Kholeif, *Goodbye, World!*, 89.

[47] Kholeif, *Goodbye, World!*, 101-102.

[48] @davidbielander; @ruudtpeters (Figure 13).

to maintain their role as validators of cultural and artistic originality, they need to do a better job recognizing this burgeoning hybrid reality — an object's meta-versions — especially in the Contemporary Jewelry field.

This thesis posits that, as Kholeif suggests, we are past the contemplations of Benjamin and Berger, as we have now evolved into a state where we "no longer just examine an image, we metabolize it: taking it in, processing it, and then repurposing it for a new public consumption;" as such, he says the "agency" of aura must be reexamined, because "the traditional notions of art — its spatiality, its tactileness, its dimensionality, its authenticity — are no longer the dominating attributes in how we look at visual work."[49] This is true, even for jewelry, which more than other kinds of art and design objects relies on materiality and tactility to be appreciated. Does that mean, therefore, that the aura can only be achieved when a piece of jewelry is in the human hand, around the neck, or on a finger — in that moment when a person feels compelled to wear it? For the most part, actors in the field have traditionally maintained this position. But it's not necessarily the case anymore. I ask: is jewelry's new authentic space actually the in-authentic internet? When a piece's hyperrealness looks better gleaming from the screen of a smartphone than it might in physical reality, is that its aura radiating before our eyes?

On our devices we can zoom in on the details, and haptically 'experience' the tactility of small objects in a virtually augmented way. Jewelry is only just beginning to enter this realm. The phenomenon has already been extremely favorable for the mass proliferation and exponential creativity of nail art or eye makeup trends, for example. Extreme cases are found in artists like Juan Alvear, or @nailsbyjuan.nyc, whose creations play with peoples' perception; some are "real" in the sense that they exist in the physical world, but others appear to be 3D rendered on the computer: it is extremely difficult to tell the difference (Figure 14). Coauthored by Popolitova and Nathalie Nguyen, the article *Digital Adornments/Embodied Craft* (again published in Current Obsession Magazine) discusses what they call the rise of "Digital Adornment"; this term is meant to describe the virtual accessories seen on the screen, which appear to be handmade with

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[49] Kholeif, *Goodbye, World!*, 173-174.

materials like chromed plastic, metal, glass, polymer clay, etc — but indeed, are not.[50] Seeming both real and fake, in this case, the source of the image's authenticity is mysterious in the best of ways, but genuine nonetheless. "Trained internet users perceive evidently edited digital contents to be more genuine than the real because they recognize the alteration. If it is clear that a picture was edited, viewers take the manipulation to be part of its narrative. The application of digital cat's ears on one's picture is a more effective statement of honesty than #nofilters."[51]

Questions of aura and authenticity, as it pertains to seeing and experiencing Contemporary Jewelry, have always been a convoluted conversation in the field. In the past it was considered that aura is theoretically derived only when one can encounter, touch and wear the object – but museums cannot facilitate this. Does this reality then substantiate the potential of digital images as better viewing windows compared to, for example, plexi vitrines? But this does not mean that the internet as a conduit for object viewing renders the curator's role obsolete. In fact, this thesis asserts that museums remain vital organizers and liaisons for connecting objects to the lives of the people, as expressed earlier in the museum as a city analogy. Jewelry is dependent on its human element. Increasingly, artists like Popolitova try to insert that quality into the way we encounter the work on their websites or feeds in the most fantastical iterations. It's an important focal point of the practice which should be carried through by museums; jewelry curators almost seem to be afraid of it, or at least take it for granted, seen in the fact that they're relying far too heavily on white cube exhibition conventions. This will be discussed further in Chapter Three. But in combination to everything considered so far, curators should feel urged to bring a higher level of sensitivity and ingenuity to their craft to keep pace with Millennial makers and viewers alike.

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[50] Darja Popolitova and Nathalie Nguyen. "Digital Adornments/Embodied Craft", *Current Obsession Magazine* Issue 7, 2019, 2.
[51] Lorenzin and Civre, "More Real than Real".

2. WHAT IS CONTEMPORARY JEWELRY, AND HOW DO WE SEE IT?

It is important to recognize that most people are not familiar with the special kind of art jewelry around which this thesis orbits. To illustrate its past is to do three things: to see it clearly in its current hyperreal form, to make sense of its intersections to the Post-Digital, and to create the basis for a critique on how museum exhibitions have attempted to interpret it.

Hyperreal Jewelry and its Predecessors

The origins of Contemporary Jewelry can be sensed as early as the Arts & Crafts movement (largely in the UK and the US from the 1860s —1920s) which, generally speaking, was a reaction against the Industrial Revolution,[52] and the role of the machine, with its emphasis on a return to hand craftsmanship and traditional techniques. The Met's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History shows examples of jewelry pieces and other design objects that characterized this era (refer to the first piece on the timeline in Figure 15). Despite its timeless popularity, the Art Nouveau style was a relatively short lived period running parallel to Arts & Crafts, originating in Paris around the first World War, and eventually evolving into what we know to be Art Deco, which reached the United States by the 1930s. Art Nouveau is a particularly important moment for jewelry, as it was characterized by what I refer to as "material transcendence;" which in this era, meant using stones and precious material in a far more figurative and painterly way for the very first time (Figure 16). As the Met writes: "Art Nouveau designers endeavored to achieve the synthesis of art and craft, and further, the creation of the spiritually uplifting *Gesamtkunstwerk* ("total work of art") encompassing a variety of media."[53] This remains to be key criteria for today's Contemporary Jeweler.

From there we move into other important periods that decontextualized material value and "decorative" line and form, like Bauhaus, Modernism and Minimalism – all periods that highly influenced the far more aesthetically reductive trends adopted by

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[52] This thesis will not be explaining the Industrial Revolution in depth, but I may point to how WWII changed material availability and its effects on arts institutions.

[53] The Metropolitan Museum of Art, "Art Nouveau" in the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/artn/hd_artn.htm

jewelry makers like Art Smith, Naum Slutzkey and Margret de Patta (Figures 17) as early as the 1930s and continuing through the 60s. This jewelry is commonly referred to as Modernist Jewelry, Studio Jewelry or even "wearable art"[54] – the antithesis of the gem-encrusted fine jewelry made by luxury houses like Cartier. Post WWII effects on the scarce availability of precious material for jewelers was also at play; the surplus of industrial materials thus made its way into art academies worldwide, to make a long story rather short.

In her book, *On Jewellery* — which for the Contemporary Jewelry field functions as a textbook so to speak — Leisbeth den Besten uses Amanda Game and Elizabeth Goring's definition of Studio Jewelry as the following: "Jewellery produced by individuals, working in their own studios, usually alone, at most with one or two assistants, who deliberately control every aspect of producing a piece of jewellery from original idea to finished work."[55] This definition is preferred because as we evaluate jewelry in the Post-Digital sense, it does not discriminate between traditional techniques of the hand, and virtual computer-aided technologies that are becoming more and more commonplace in the jeweler's studio, which will be discussed later in this thesis.

Art Jewelry is a term that comes into use around the mid 1970s, used to characterize the same tendencies; "its most salient feature is its involvement with the ideas of art: vision, intellect, and concept."[56] What den Besten leaves out, is the pivotal component that enabled jewelry's eventual shift from the decorative or supplemental to art in its own right: the rejection of inherent material or intrinsic value to give the piece meaning. She also takes for granted (and omits a stance on) the fact that this jewelry is born from art school academia, a fairly privileged point of departure where few have access[57]. Even so, a central figure on the pulse of this initial reconceptualization is German jeweler Hermann Jünger. Not only did Jünger disregard the expected mastery of the traditional techniques of his time in favor of creative looseness and experimentation

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[54] Marbeth Schon authored two books about this movement in jewelry history: *Modernist Jewelry 1930-1960: The Wearable Art Movement*; and *Form & Function: American Modernist Jewelry, 1940-1970.*

[55] Amanda Game and Elizabeth Gore. *Jewellery Moves: Ornament for the 21st Century.* Edinburgh: NS Publishing, 2007, cited in Leisbeth den Besten. *On Jewellery: A compendium of International Contemporary Art Jewellery.* Stuttgart, Germany: Arnoldsche, 2011, 9.

[56] den Besten, *On Jewellery*, 9.

of form akin to drawing[58] — but he was also one of the first trained goldsmiths to swap the use of precious materials for non-precious ones like enamel — a tendency many others would follow, using anything from cheap metals, plastic, resin, fabric, etc., together defining Art Jewelry as a stand alone field of art/design/craft. Later he also was one of the first to incorporate the participation of the wearer in his pieces (Figure 18), making them interchangeable and interactive, another piece of criteria that would be carried through to future generations.

In Beston's *Reading Jewellery* chapter she goes on to frame the modern Dutch jewelry phenomena, which generally speaking, took many of Jünger's experimental tendencies and expanded on them greatly. The work of artists like Gijs Bakker (Figure 9) and Emmy van Leersum– whose work in steel and aluminum tubing often shown on models in the form of "happenings," and were based on Constructionist principles – took Amsterdam by storm in the mid 1970s. They solidified a place for this "New Jewelry[59]" as an autonomous and conceptual art form. Den Besten states, "you had to agree with the jewel. Under the influence of changing tendencies in the visual arts, the jewel as art object could gradually become a medium for storytelling."[60]

It is not within the scope of this thesis to discuss the entire evolution in the field, from each country in which it operates (for example the Italians have their own history, as do the Americans, etc.) But treating certain key figures as important milestones helps us understanding the contextual genesis of digitally augmented qualities of jewelry like Popolitova—work that characterizes the late 2010s in the field and of which she is leading.

The term Contemporary Jewelry is interchangeable with Art Jewelry[61]. Academic categorization conventions tend to focus on country-by-country output (the Dutch, the

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[57] This thesis will not engage in a conversation surrounding the ethics of higher arts education.

[58] Ursula llse Neuman, "The Jewelry of Hermann Junger". *Ganoskin,* https://www.ganoksin.com/article/jewelry-hermann-junger/, first published in *Metalsmith Magazine*, 2002.

[59] A term den Besten also refers to, allegedly coined by artists Peter Dormer and Ralph Turner in 1985 to describe recent advancements. den Besten. *On Jewellery*, 7.

[60] den Besten. *On Jewellery*, 61.

[61] Albeit being a far more vague title for those outside the field, often being confused with demi-fine or mass produced jewelry design, and misused by others not aware of our field. People also refer to the field as Contemporary Art Jewelry.

Germans, the Italians) – but due to globalization and the internet, in combination with the increase of international academic jewelry departments[62], a nationalistic approach does not quite work to distinguish different making practices and styles of the 2010s. Den Besten's book is mildly aware of this by not focusing on geographical synopsis of the history or chronological framework. Instead she uses tropes found in jewelry vocabulary to differentiate and categorize, such as: *The Body, Jewellery and Ornament, Jewellery and Tradition*. And yet, because jewelry is always in dialogue with the body, ornament and tradition, these can also be rather reductive. Written in 2011, Den Besten was also not able to include the last 10 years of jewelry making. The past decade will therefore be summarized in brief in bringing us full circle to Popolitova's aesthetic, Hyperreal Jewelry, a term I coined in 2017.

As previously asserted, the key issue with the Hyperreal is that some jewelry pieces look better on the screen than they do in real life. This was a reality I faced when asked to write a catalog text for an exhibition that featured works in jewelry by emerging international artists, pieces I initially could not make sense of. For instance, some of the pieces by Millennial Chinese artists Qian Wang and Xiaodai Huang were first shown to me as image reproductions in an email. I wrote the text about the work before I got to see them in person. In different ways, Art Jewelry has always toyed with its own purpose, stretched the boundaries of what is, wants and allowed to be worn, and expanded the lexicon of what it means to make something traditionally. But the visual vocabulary of these pieces went beyond what I had ever seen before – Wang's mastery of plastics achieving geometric, multi-colored forms as hectic as they are calming, Huang's kaleidoscopic patterns from 3D modelling processes as chaotic as they are dazzling (Figure 20). When I saw them in person, however, I was underwhelmed. One could argue that because I saw them in images first, I was robbed of their aura. But I disagree; in this case, the pieces were just poorly made, which the photo seemed to hide. I use this example not to further the conversation about what we could call screen or digital aura, but to point to the augmented nature of the pieces, which exude hyperrealism. The jewel had become secondary to itself, leading instead with the feats of its own makeup and the

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[62] One of the most important schools being the Akademie der Bildenden Künste (Academy of Fine Arts in

circumstances of its existence. It is jewelry that had become cyborg – "a futuristic, advanced simulation of something all too familiar."[63]

Hyperrealness can also be found in the work of other artists such as Annika Pettersson (SE), Saika Matsuda (JP/DE), Jiro Kamata (JP/DE), Timothy Veske-McMahon (US), Noon Passama (NL), Hansel Tai (CN) (Figure 21), and of course Popolitova. The aesthetics are sleek, at times color-defying or flawlessly chromed, somehow sharp and amorphous at the same time. But the real Post-Digital makers are those from this list that use but also exploit digital technology's blind spots (like CAD, computer milling and 3D printing) as the means to create their jewelry pieces. For example, artists like Pettersson and Grinovich take advantage of either the technology's naivety as aesthetic mark making, or its loss of data to manifest physical form abnormalities.[64] Popolitova, alternatively, uses the program's function as a mechanism to almost entirely replace the hand-made processes that have defined jewelry for millennia. Co-edited with jeweler Sofia Hallik, her scholarly text *Digitally Produced Jewellery: Tactile Qualities of the Digital Touch* discusses the phenomena of "taking digital information as a material of its own." The piece investigates the practices of craftspeople that "have been deconstructing the software in order to explore the human-digital relationship…" whose objects "reach the phase of post-production" and "become tangible" or conversely "never leave the phase of pre-production, and function as digital representations."[65]

Although worth examining as a topic in and of itself, discussing these burgeoning making tendencies in Contemporary Jewelry is not within the scope of this document; it is introduced so as to illustrate what niches of the field look like in 2020, and to

Munich, commonly referred to as the Munich Academy), where Herman Jünger went and eventually led.

[63] Riggs, Kellie, "YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW: HYPER-REAL JEWELRY" in Preziosa Young Exhibition Catalog, Le Arte Orafi: Florence, Italy 2017.

[64] Pettersson's Glitch in the Copy Series is a perfect example (top of Figure 20): the artist digitally modeled the silhouette of a classical Victorian brooch, 3D-printed it in aluminum, 3D-scanned the print, and then 3D-printed the scan, twelve times over. With each pass, the integrity of the copy is compromised through degradation and generational distortion. Although these terms allude to loss, the phenomenon is known as "acquired noise," as the forms grow larger and more amorphous at every step. The process is the dependent variable in the experiment, the will to repeat as captivating as the dynamisms hidden in the results.

[65] Sofia Hallik and Darja Popolitova, "Digitally Produced Jewellery: Tactile Qualities of the Digital Touch", *Research Catalog,* 2019, https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/612909/715222.

demonstrate its relationship to the Post-Digital. Alternatively, it will examine how the Post-Digital human body is more commonly being inserted into the ways in which we see and experience jewelry online. This is important as the majority of existing exhibition frameworks for Contemporary Jewelry have not yet taken notice — but should.

From the White Cube to Digital Alter Ego

The shift of Contemporary Jewelers turning to insertions of the self within the online presentations of their work is in no doubt thanks to the proliferation of social media. With some exception (refer to the photo based works of Otto Künzli in Figure 22) up until where den Beston departs around 2011, the field traditionally has defaulted to a white cube convention when it comes to visual framework for any given piece of Contemporary Jewelry. To be brief: just as it happened in the art world during the rise of Minimalism, the jewelry world too favored white, context-less "neutral" physical environments, opting for photography to match; the piece of jewelry was commonly shown on a depthless, glossy white background. This has largely remained the standard – no sense of scale is articulated, not to mention any reference to the piece's creation. The white cube approach is not unique to this medium, so what is the issue? To put it simply, Contemporary Jewelry is different: it is a far more loaded object than other types of art and design, which is discussed in the following section. Artists from a younger generation embrace this complexity and play with its format, the Internet Age allowing them to reject neutral space and insert themselves into their jewelry with ease.

Some of the only written explanation on the topic is from researcher, curator and jeweler Anneleen Swillen. In her essay *#IFYOULIKEIT: Online Presentation within Contemporary Jewelry Practices*, Swillen positions artist Lisa Walker (NZ) as one of the initial figures to have normalized jewelry donned self-portraits (now commonly referred to as selfies) as a viable way to present jewelry to the viewer. Walker came to prominence in the early 2010s. She primarily makes necklaces and pendants composed of found objects or non-precious materials from fabric to old Nokia cell phones. The work is quirky; though she was trained at the famed Munich Academy and no doubt has goldsmith skills, her practice is defined by an embrace of the conceptual that shows she

both understands exquisite form and technique, but abandoned both to give permission to wear the most absurd collages of things around one's neck. Her images as such are vital: she, herself, shows the viewer that it is "ok" to do so, all the while giving jewelers permission to frame their jewelry with more immediacy (Figure 23). Swillen states of the necklace and the image of the artist wearing it, "they are both art works and presentations of art works," [66] the images printed and found at exhibitions or in publications, and of course, online. Wonderfully provisional, they remain unpretentious.

Over the years other artists have followed suit to depict their creations: Julia Walter (DE), Ada Chen (USA) and Simon Marsiglia (SE) (Figure 24) - and of course Popolitova - together exemplify a new generation of jewelers and their preference for superimposing the self onto their jewelry pieces, and vice versa. Chen and Marsigila are particular examples: both born in the mid 1990s they consciously use social media platforms as material in their Digital Gesamtkunstwerk, the element of voyeurism being absolutely key. Whether it is a lack of interest in the white cube paradigm, or just a natural next step as social media becomes further and further embedded into our lives, or a combination of the two, context creation that hinges on the expression of personal and/or cultural identity is becoming imperative to the work of Millennial makers. The tendency is beyond form: it is now about attitude. In this way, living a life under the gaze of others is a radical new format for Contemporary Jewelry.

Chen, Marsigilia, and Popolitova's work talks about identity, but more generationally speaking, as Digital Natives, questioning the line between self-(re)presentation and what Popolitova calls "digital narcissism" that exists in many of the "alluring personalities found on social media… I wear jewelry for my digital identity," says Popolitova. "I don't wear it so much in real life. Maybe because I do it in my head all the time… A friend of mine expressed it very well: 'I am hot only online.'"[67] And a lot of Millennials feel this way: all three of these artists exude a strange level of comfort involved in such transparent self-awareness. Through their processes and as a result of

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[66] Anneleen Swillen. "#IFYOULIKEIT: Online Presentation within Contemporary Jewelry Practices" in *Presenting Jewellery: In Search of New Contexts,* Françoise van den Bosch Foundation: the Netherlands, 2019, 11.
[67] Stated by the artist in an email-based interview, 2018

their output, the three also gain a clearer understanding of their work; they *become* the work. This is another way the work becomes Post-Digital, simulative of some reality in the liminal space of the physical and virtual.

Popolitova needs the Internet to give her work meaning, but it also gives her something a museum space really cannot provide. Again, it has to do with authenticity, a hyperreal type of aura. In the past, jewelry photographed on the body was nothing much more than something staged (Figure 21). But in this new age, the aforementioned artists' hyper projections are far more authentic— as are the Digital Adornments of @nailsbyjuan.nyc; and the 3d Makeup filters rendered in videos by artist Inès Marzat (@ines.alpha; some of her filters are available for general use on platforms like Instagram and Snapchat), which are arguably no different from the physical, hand-embroidered and beaded headpieces of James T. Merry (@james.t.merry) (Figure 25)[68]. Lorenzin and Civre put it well: "The filter, once applied to one's digital picture, is a manifestation of our inner feelings, as if the phone were a magic mirror with the power of reflecting our real selves;"[69] they are "physical and multi-sensory expressions of culture."[70] What Popolitova, Chen, Marsigila, and even Walter show us is that even object-centric adornment has a place within this burgeoning Post-Digital reality. This should be of interest to museums, not seen as a threat. As Groys states in his essay *Art and Workers: Between Utopia and the Archive:*

> Under the museum regime, art was produced in one place (the atelier of the artist) and shown in another place (the museum). The emergence of the internet erased this difference between the production and the exhibition of art. The process of art production insofar as it involves the use of the internet is always already exposed— from its beginning to its end.[71]

This quote reaffirms two thoughts central to this thesis: that Contemporary Craft and Jewelry should in some way be a part of and participate in this dialogue; and that museums should similarly admit that the "museum regime" is evolving, that the internet

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[68] Marina Elenskaya, "James T. Merry and Inès Marzat", *Current Obsession Magazine Issue 7,* 2019.

[69] Lorenzin and Civre, "More Real than Real".

[70] Popolitova and Nguyen. "Digital Adornments/Embodied Craft", 2019.

[71] Boris Groys, "Art and Workers: Between Utopia and the Archive" in*: Art and the Internet in the Twenty-First Century,* edited by Lauren Cornell, MIT Press: 2015, 359.

is erasing the difference between their physical spaces and their potential new virtual ones. This in turn could actually be of benefit to the objects and curatorial work under their guardianship— a theory the current pandemic is putting into overdrive at the moment. One could look to the example that the Google Arts & Culture platform has been setting for partner museums already, a space primed for virtual accessibility to museum collections and physical exhibitions optimized for online viewing. At the time of writing this thesis, three "Online Exhibits" put together by the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum were available for viewing[72]. Of the shows, one allowed the user to zoom into a 16th Century embroidered cabinet door panel, which is actually quite satisfying (Figure 26). In person, one would never be able to examine the work that closely. Another show assembled a sequence of various design objects, including jewelry, made by African American artists from the 1950s onwards; with a click on any given object, the user is forwarded to another page with more historical information about the piece than provided in the "exhibition" (Figure 27). The third was an online version of a physically installed exhibition at the museum featuring works by William Morris and Louis Comfort Tiffany, *Nature by Design: Botanical Expressions* - the images a mix of installation shots zoomed in and out, and single pieces on white backgrounds, and its accompanying information (Figure 28).

Though the objects that these curatorial assemblages presented aren't exactly what this thesis has been talking about or defining, the hybrid interface is relevant: just imagine how such a platform could perform for the likes of Popolotiva, Marsiglia or Marzat; their work is simply primed for the opportunity. The proliferation of these types of online exhibitions would also help advance new scholarship around the evolving field of Contemporary Jewelry at large; which could be a positive outcome of the post-pandemic era.

Exhibitions as Critical Theory

This thesis aims to position Contemporary Jewelry into wider conversations than the field normally experiences, which also reiterates its cultural and social importance.

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[72] The Google Arts & Culture page for the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, New York City,

One might consider that museums were first to make such statements for as long as they've been including jewelry in permanent collections, or via temporary exhibition programming. In the United States alone, jewelry from ancient to contemporary is well represented – the following major museums have some on display at all times: Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Dallas Museum of Arts, Museum of Arts and Design NYC (MAD), Cooper Hewitt and the Metropolitan Museum of Art[73]; not to mention a handful of other smaller sized institutions. LACMA and MAD have acquired extensive contemporary pieces for their collections, similar to their European counterparts like Die Neue Sammlung in Munich specifically. Others of note include the National Museum Sweden, the V&A in London and many Dutch institutions like the Design Museum den Bosch (NL), the Stedelijk in Amsterdam, and the Rijksmuseum. However, many of these museums while articulating their institutional commitment to its display, are lacking in more substantive, sophisticated exhibition programming. This section will assess what this means and why it is needed. First, it will examine why jewelry exhibitions are a vital asset to the field: they are, in essence, the most substantial effort at creating a critical framework around it. There are only a few books that make a profound attempt.

Written by the late Marjan Unger, collector and jewelry historian, *Jewellery Matters* aims to establish the universal importance for jewelry scholarship. Using various historic pieces in the Rijksmuseum she places jewelry in the "context of the people who wore it, their culture and their time, and interlaces surprising perspectives from art history, fashion theory and anthropology with the cultural, historical and material characteristics of the jewellery."[74] Unger does so positing that a critical theory of jewelry is extensively lacking, with a few noteworthy exceptions—like the Dutch Platform and Magazine Current Obsession, whose edgy publications, experimental articles and programs aim to place jewelry into a winder cultural context, thanks to its editor Marina Elenskaya. In general, the previous statement by Unger is true when comparing the field

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accessed late April 2020, https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/cooper-hewitt-national-design-museum.
[73] The MET does not have its own jewelry collection, but rather there is some jewelry included in all of its seventeen departments.
[74] Marjan Unger and Suzanne Van Leeuwen. *Jewelry Matters*. The Netherlands: Rijksmuseum, 2019, 13.

to other craft-based fields like textiles, fashion or ceramics. Is this, in part, due to the sheer amount of jewelry that has stood the test of time and is collected by institutions? Could museum collections of jewelry be the stand-in for a written down critical theory surrounding the field? Inadvertently, I think they are – more so the exhibition, so as they are not superficial or directionless. Unger's book does not examine the exhibition as a means of discussion or viewing the phenomena, but her insight upholds the position on jewelry's universal and institutional appeal. Unger states:

> It is a subject with an easy charm and a complex, sometimes even bewildering character. The many stories that jewellery has to tell only really come into their own when placed into a broad context. Oddly enough, the fundamental question of why people wear jewellery has seldom if ever been addressed by those who have studied and written about jewellery - a remarkable lacuna… Jewellery is such a universal phenomenon that a definition seems superfluous, but if all manner of opinions and arguments are attached to the notion of jewelry without any reference point against which they can be gauged, they become virtually unverifiable.[75]

Unger, once an expert in the field of jewelry at large, argues that without a given reference point, some kind of cultural context, the power of jewelry will be missed entirely, and the reasons behind wearing it, even in its wildest iterations (as we have seen), will go unknown to others. She states that the lack of scholarship perpetuates this phenomenon, which there is some truth to (and her book attempts to remedy), but museum exhibitions can fill this gap in myriad ways. Indeed, exhibitions can be nuanced categorization methods that carry so much potential for cultural, generational and historical perspective and clarity, especially when subjects like self-image, self value and individuality are folded in, all topics Unger focuses on in her book.

It is interesting to know that Unger bequeathed her personal collection to the Rijksmuseum toward the end of her career. This is not uncommon: the American collector Susin Lewinn did the same, giving 150 pieces to the Cooper Hewitt. Her gift was then turned into an exhibition called *Jewelry of Ideas: Gifts from the Susan Grant Lewin Collection,* but seeing that she's more of a jewelry enthusiast rather than a historian, the show had little academic merit, not to mention much of any relevance to the

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[75] Unger, *Jewellery Matters*, 25.

larger zeitgeist. The show's installation also, unfortunately, quite resembled a gift shop display, completely negating the integrity of the individual pieces (Figure 29). When collections are the whims of private collectors, not curators, the contribution to a critical theory in jewelry is not going to be significant, Unger being an exception to this rule of course. This thesis therefore will soon be looking at recent permanent collections refreshes, two small and two large international group shows, most of which being a step in the right direction for the field; the Lewin example has been put forth only as an example of what the field should very much try and avoid.

As for scholarship in the history jewelry exhibitions, historian and jeweler Benjamin Lignel compiled *Shows and Tales,* the only published book to date on the subject, the range being from 1946 until present day. It's a compilation of essays and interviews by curators, scholars and makers, including a comprehensive text on the theories behind this particular genre of exhibition, and its needs. Lignel suggests the international culture of jewelry exhibitions has always been inventive, yet largely defined by for-profit gallery shows and fairs, and later, more creatively by artist-led independent initiates. "In post war America and Europe, museums and cultural institutions played a central role in giving jewelry studio practice a platform, through large, often all-inclusive exhibitions. But dealers would soon take over as the leading advocates of the field: Often (ex)makers themselves, they encouraged exhibitors to treat their exhibition space as a laboratory…".[76] An increase in artist run projects (pop-ups and "off" events during fairs, for example) would begin to define the 1990s and explode in growth in the last fifteen years.

Lignel presents a certain ethos around what it is we do have written down: he considered the jewelry show "a space of production… as actions rather than reports of practice – and exhibition-makers as producers rather than caretakers." In other words, good shows tell stories: this thesis asserts that we can tell even better stories through the right kind of curation of Contemporary Jewelry.

And there are plenty of stories to tell: jewelry is what stands between us and everything that is. It is how we relate to ourselves, to others, to our individuality, our

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[76] *Shows and Tales: On Jewelry Exhibition-Making*, Mill Valley: Art Jewelry Forum, 2015, 7.

sense of belonging. It is comfort, ritual, empowerment, a mask, or a memory, all wrapped into a compact, portable totem. It is the oldest form of creative expression. It permeates all cultures and all timelines. Everybody wears it, and everyone can recognize it. But fundamentally, adornment allows us all to move through the world as our authentic selves, whoever we may be on any given day. This can happen in both physical and virtual space - on the street, or on the internet; the latter exponentially becoming the foremost place to find it, as we have seen. And the most creative, artistic and imaginative versions of it are worthy of people's attention, in more appropriate and authenticating ways than it often gets categorized or put on display.

So what should museum jewelry exhibitions of the future look like? What do they need to consider so that they are adding to a critical theory of the field, meanwhile being interesting and engaging places for newcomers – all while keeping into consideration the demands of the Post-Digital Era? In our last section, guided by offerings by Groys, Adamson and a handful of daring curators, the six exhibitions presented will be compared and analyzed in hopes of extracting a basic set of standards that can be used in the future of jewelry curating.

3. WHEN EXHIBITION BECOMES FORM

The naming of the first section of this chapter is an ode to two things. First, Harald Szeemann's groundbreaking 1969 exhibition, *When Attitudes Become Form.*[77] Praised for being radical, this show redefined exhibition practice as a "linguistic medium" that favored the processes behind newly conceptual genres like Post-Minimalism, land art, and Arte Povera over the final physical forms of works. According to professor and historian Bruce Althuler, looking back the show epitomizes "the romantic conception of the curator as inspired partner of the artist, a creative actor who generates original ideas and structures through which art enters public consciousness."[78] Echoing these ideas, the title is also a more literal reference to theories Groys presents around the exhibition as medium—that is, when curator takes the role of form-giver.

In our interview, Adamson discussed the "elastic tension" between the static experience of visiting the museum, and the cyclical journey of an image created from that exhibition. Put in another way: do exhibitions, or even aspects of one, become its own sort of content? Adamson stresses that the museum's most powerful property is its IRL quality, which for better or for worse, "is not incompatible with the idea that the museum is also an Instagram set. Because it's when you have that moment with that altarpiece and whip your phone out, take a picture of it, tag it, and send it out into the world, that's where the elastic tension happens."[79] Whole exhibitions, not just individual pieces, should be compelling the same kind of behavior. It should also go without saying: shows should also be singular, and thus be able to enter into a cyclical cyber orbit as such. To say this is not to claim this hasn't been happening already. As a quick example, Adamson has almost 15,000 followers on Instagram, his feed stockpiled with art and design objects from all eras and geographies. Some are photographed in situ with an artist in their studio or on the gallery floor, or on a white background, or zoomed into details. It is a digital

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[77] This exhibition took place at the Kunsthalle in Bern, Switzerland.
Enrico Boccioletti, *Live in Your Head. When Attitudes Become Form,* Press Release, 2013, http://moussemagazine.it/55vb-fondazione-prada/
[78] Altshuler, *Biennials and Beyond: Exhibitions that Made Art History: 1962-2002.* London: Phaidon, 2013, 93.

destination in its own right, as he is recycling objects as content with historical curiosity
and perspective. It also includes shots of the interior of certain exhibitions, like from the
Noguchi museum, MoMA's *The Shape of a Shape* show, or the Museum of Art and
Design's retrospective of fashion designer Anna Sui.[80] For a historian, critic, and
tastemaker like Adamson to post a shot of a museum exhibition must mean curators are
able to cultivate a collective sense of aura with a truly remarkable exhibition space.

But when can the exhibition as cyclical content be more profound? Early
examples include the times that pioneering shows have become the subject of reprises;
exhibition as exhibition content as it were. Take for example Kynaston McShine's
Primary Structures[81] revisited almost fifty years later as *Other Primary Structures*; and of
course, *When Attitudes Become Form,* reworked by Germano Celant at the Venice
Fondazione Prada for the 2013 Biennale. Are these perhaps the early examples of
exhibition meta-versioning? The idea precisely corroborates Groys's claim that when
installations are documented and put on the internet, it "becomes content and, thus, open
again for a form-giving operation inside the museum."[82]

Marina Abramović's live durational performance at MoMA in 2010 is a slightly
different example. It is safe to say that exponentially more people saw photo and video
documentation of the project than were able to experience it themselves[83]. This particular
show came up many times across Giusti's *Museums;* from Malene Vest Hansen
reminding us the piece was featured in many documentary formats, such as a seven-
channel video, an HBO documentary and YouTube streamings, to Halter and Cornell
recalling the plethora of visitor-taken photos posted to tumblr and Facebook. "Then there
were those images of people waiting in long lines, a phenomenon that had a kind of
recursive allure of its own. These close-up and candid moments have now become the
new currency of a new economy of images that is very different from the spectacularity

[79] Adamson, interview. The reference to an altarpiece refers to an earlier comment in our conversation
about the traditional sense of aura Benjamin describes.

[80] https://www.instagram.com/glenn_adamson/, accessed April 13, 2020.

[81] *Primary Structures* debuted at the Jewish Museum in 1966 and done again with more cultural diversity
in 2014 at the same museum.

[82] Groys, "From the Form-Giver to the Content Provider", 46.

[83] It's of interest to note that this project took place before the proliferation of social media - imagine what
its outreach would be today.

of earlier generations," Halter states.[84] The power of the project as a whole was amplified by the fact that it went viral; the images of spectator after another being moved to tears in front of the artist compounding interest and awe. Abramović's performance turned circular content interestingly does not compete with itself nor does it "impede the ease with which documentary formats feed the cult of the artist-persona," affirms Vest Hansen.[85]

This type of circulatory system was beneficial to both artist and museum, and points to what ex-director of public programs at Tate Britain, Victoria Walsh would call a "radical reorientation… away from the notion of the aura of the work and the logic of the art market" and towards a visitor/spectator/audience oriented approach, which includes that online."[86] What this anecdote leaves out however, is a discussion round the element of performance and the experientiality that facilitates; in earlier iterations of this document, visitor engagement and experience economies as vital ingredients to exhibition-making were to be highlighted — shows like the Dallas Museum's *Different by Design* is a great example. In light of the pandemic, sadly, this topic will surely have to be reconsidered.

Looking at these earlier examples reiterates this thesis' position that 'cool photos' of exhibition installations cannot and should not replace in-person viewing experiences. Museums can and should remain important, irreplaceable spaces for art and material culture, of which curators should maintain dominion. One can recall this document's earlier explorations of object as image, and form-givers (Contemporary Jewelers included) becoming content providers, thanks to our current Post-Digital age. Groys goes on to further that line of thinking, stating that curators are now, in fact, the new form givers. It is a hopeful point of view, one that reaffirms the position that we are far beyond the need for white cube conventions inside the museum, even for object-based works like jewelry. He states:

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[84] Halter, "Mass Effect", 65.

[85] Malene Vest Hansen, "Curatorial Challenges: Contemporary Exhibition Strategies" in *Museums at the Post-Digital Turn,* 261.

[86] Gail Cochrane and Pier Paolo Peruccio, "Design, Curatorial Practices, and Conservation" in *Museums at the Post Digital Turn,* Milan: Moussee Publishing, 2019, 230.

And that means that the curator has to find a specific form, a specific installation, a specific configuration of the exhibition space for the presentation of digital, informational material. Here the question of form becomes the central one again. However the form-giving shifts from individual artworks to the organization of the space in which these artworks are presented. In other words, the responsibility for the form-giving is transferred from the artists to the curators who use the individual artworks as content—this time content inside the space that they created… form giving remains the main occupation by art in the museum whatever the format.[87]

And museums cannot let architecture do all the heavy lifting. The next section takes an analytical look at two major international museums with newly curated, world renowned jewelry collections and stands them up to the above thinking: the Die Neue Sammlung, Munich's Design Museum, and New York's Museum of Arts and Design.

Jewelry Rehangs – For Better or Worse

Die Neue Sammlung is one of the world's oldest design museums and can be found within the Pinakothek der Moderne. In the basement of this building lies the Danner Rotunda, a room that holds one of Europe's most prized Contemporary Jewelry collections. Since 2004 they have been displaying a large selection of its collection, which is on permanent loan to the museum. Owned by the Danner Foundation, the collection consists of over 520 individual pieces made by roughly 170 international jewelry artists[88]. Most of them are still actively making. It is an insider's museum: to the jewelry field, it is an absolute must-see, and alongside their permanent collection display, which is re "curated" by some of the collection's own artists every few years[89], once or twice a year the museum favors solo shows by some of the field's greats[90] which are usually located on the top floor of the circular building overlooking the atrium of the museum.

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[87] Groys, "From the Form-Giver to the Content Provider", 44-45.

[88] Danner Stifung, The Danner Rotunda, http://www.danner-stiftung.de/danner-rotunde.php

[89] The Danner Collection was first arranged by Herman Jünger and Otto Künzli in 2004; Karl Fritsch in 2010, and Alexander Blank, Hans Stofer, and Mikiko Minewaki in 2020.

[90] Norwegian female artist Tone Vigeland, American Thomas Gentille, and Italian Giampaolo Babetto are some examples.

In both formats, the museum tends to opt for a very minimal approach to display, and the pieces, especially those in the basement that run the gamut in date, material, and maker, completely lack context. This includes their most recent "rehang" debuting in March 2020. Orientations are allegedly new, and pieces are laid out without mounts on white, either low to the ground plexi-covered tables or vertical wall cases (Figure 30), numbered, with one giant piece of newsprint available to learn who made what, etc. The jewelry is presented like artifacts, no different than any random Etruscan fibula found in any given natural history museum (Figure 31). The issue is not that narratives and timelines have been mixed together; to the contrary, that is when some of the more interesting associations surface. But here, there is no information about any of the pieces individually, nor indication of the rhyme or reason behind the pairings made. Without any nod to its history, there is no way a viewer can infer how this jewelry came into being. For a permanent collection, this is not ideal. Additionally, there is neither an installation to admire, nor a view to capture in a photo that isn't just of the interior. The exhibition takes no form: a sad fate for an otherwise impressive collection.

It is worth mentioning that a virtual viewing experience of the Danner Rotunda was made available in March 2020, theoretically an excellent resource in times of COVID-19. But it is a highly inadequate system, only showing the room at large, with only select vitrines to see into, and only by one or two pieces at a time (Figure 32). Die Neue Sammlung's Instagram is almost entirely inactive with little to no presence of jewelry.

Is there a better way to display so much jewelry at once – pieces authored by hundreds of different makers? Yes. The jewelry room at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London is an example of a thoughtful and deliberate installation that displays its entire 3,000 piece collection at the same time, and within well considered categories (Figure 33). One might consider it as Gesamtkunstwerk quality, as a whole taking a very specific form.

Aside from the exception of the V & A, the tendency to shove a bunch of jewelry together in a small space just because the work itself is small, is misguided, and the opportunity for intellectual or artistic clarification is thus completely sidelined. Text-

based components of a display of jewelry confirm the reasons people ought to be looking at it to begin with, whether or not it is an in-person wall text or label, or if that text becomes a caption for photo posted to social media. The right written framework can make an object worth a longer gaze, and make it sing. Along with lacking atmospheric considerations for jewelry exhibitions like in the Danner Rotunda, overall themes or concepts are also all too often void of profound consideration or cultural relevance, even when they are temporary exhibitions[91]. *Unexpected Pleasures: The Art and Design of Contemporary Jewellery* at the Design Museum London in 2012 is another example. With 186 works by 126 international makers, the show seemed to be built around the simple fact that there is a lot of this weird, artistic jewelry being made around the world, and nothing more.

When jewelry curator Barbara Paris Gifford began planning the Museum of Arts and Design's (New York City) reinstallation of their permanent jewelry collection, it is as though she wanted to purposefully avoid all the above tropes. According to Gifford, the museum's jewelry collection is made up of about 950 jewelry pieces, all made after 1950, and 400 of which are after the 1990s to the present day. The collection comprises almost a third of the museum's total number of objects. Since 2009 and prior to 2020, almost 200 of those pieces were on permanent display in the 45 nonchalant pull out cases found in the Tiffany Gallery, each having held three to five pieces, or what the museum calls "unexpected treasures in the country's only gallery dedicated solely to contemporary jewelry".[92] The pieces used to lay on a white background, accompanied by a small label indicating the name of the artist, material, and date made.

This format is pretty standard in the world of jewelry display – drawers are essentially space savers, and because of the small scale of jewelry objects, they are a widely used mechanism as they allow the museum to fit a lot of pieces into a small area. However, this means that pieces are overcrowded and lack space for their own framework. Additionally, American museums are obligated to cover, seal and

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[91] There are of course exceptions, like the Met's 2019 exhibition *Jewelry. The Body Transformed* - a comprehensive attempt at educating visitors about why all civilizations have worn jewelry. Unger would have been intrigued.

[92] Dina Noto, "The Museum of Arts and Design, New York", *Art Jewelry Forum,* June 24, 2009, https://artjewelryforum.org/the-museum-of-arts-and-design-new-york.

temperature regulate pieces made of certain precious materials, like silver, therefore significantly limiting how the piece can be viewed. Though done out of respect for the objects, these are not ideal conditions for contextually informed and stimulating viewing. Craft curator Namita Gupta Wiggers explains this well:

> Viewing' – a term used to describe the way a visitor engages a painting – does not adequately encompass experiences with a craft-based object. For example, physically holding or turning over a painting or photograph does not typically alter one's interpretation or experience of such objects in a way that is critical to understanding the image itself. Turning over a piece of jewelry, however, can reveal a wealth of information, such as how the materials and physical form link the maker and the wearer's body as a physical or imagined space, a critical element in understanding conceptually focused contemporary art jewelry.[93]

The *45 Stories* project is a thoughtful attempt to compensate for these logistical restrictions, and the first time the museum's jewelry collection "will be treated with the same attention and focus as the other exhibitions that take place in the Museum."[94] Through an ongoing meeting process, Gifford's committee of jewelry experts (artists, critics, historians) have distilled 45 important narratives around place, technique, material, and/or a moment in history and culture, all of which center on a particular jewelry piece by an artist in MAD's collection that best exemplifies those narratives. The show opened in February 2020, the preexisting drawers pulled out from the wall and built into a large, custom designed structure that spans the whole second floor (Figure 34). The pieces are displayed sometimes alone or sometimes paired with one from another maker; at times they're also situated next to photos contextualizing the work on a body, and all displays include a written narrative positions the work within some moment of culture, making tendency, or wearing philosophy. An example: American artist Mallory Weston's large metal, faux snakeskin neckpiece entitled *Bow No. 3,* is discussed in a few different ways: within the context of textile techniques found in jewelry, but also through her play with archetypes and contemporary use of symbols (Figure 35).

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[93] Namita Gupta Wiggers, "Curatorial Conundrums: Exhibiting Contemporary Art Jewelry in a Museum", *Art Jewelry Forum, October 19, 2010,* https://artjewelryforum.org/articles/curatorial-conundrums-exhibiting-contemporary-art-jewelry-museum

[94] Museum of Arts and Design, *45 Stories Presentation,* .pdf, June 17th, 2019.

There is no formal sequence to the exhibition. Each story is relative to itself – the most compelling and essential information has been distilled to optimize viewer understanding and appreciation. After one year, the drawers will be placed back into the wall, each drawer becoming a sort of singular work, which may work better as a viewing experience; from story to story, the graphics and colors really have nothing in common. But the concept as a whole is loosely reminiscent of Gene Moore's iconic mid-century window displays at the Tiffany Flagship – each window was a singular work of art in its own right (Figure 36). Oddly, this comparison represents a better way forward for the exhibition of objects to become form or content to be re-circulated. Each of Gifford's stories is interesting for different reasons, the shared format loosely echoing the way we see and digest things on Instagram (Moore actually being way ahead of his time in this regard), though some are more visually dynamic than others. This could be especially helpful in the post-pandemic era, or when there are currently no in-person viewing opportunities, assuming digital content is created from the show. But even though each drawer appears that they could be photogenic and fit for device viewing as an image, their readability falls unfortunately flat on the screen (Figure 37).

Since MAD's closure, the museum has initiated Zoom based programming for their members, which take shape as virtual interviews between some of the writers and artists featured in the exhibition. It is access one would never get inside the museum walls, nor would ever happen had the museum not been forced to shutter. And it is very much a Post-Digital stance on viewer engagement, not to mention an admirable shift towards engaging curatorial when it comes to matters of development, communication, or museum education. Pandemic or not, this synthesis should happen far more often. And there is so much more that could be said here.

Here we have quickly looked at two almost opposing standpoints of permanent collection rehangs: one that has defaulted to the conventions of the far too neutral white cube, without consideration for context or Post-Digital optimization; the other favoring quality over quantity in their almost MoMA-esque re-categorization approach, keeping in mind evolving modes of seeing and the value of telling stories. The Danner Rotunda sets a standard no better than a missed opportunity, but as with *45 Stories,* aspects of

proceeding examples hope to serve new examples to follow. I have now pulled out two smaller exhibitions, one that takes a closer look at thematic integrity for jewelry exhibitions, the other our physical relationship to handheld objects.

More with Less

  I find it worth noting that I encountered the aforementioned museums through regularly made physical visits. The next two, however, were recently through Instagram. They are Elizabeth Essner's *Handheld*, at the Aldrich Museum in Connecticut, and Sarah Darro's *Treachery of Material: The Surrealist Impulse in Craft* at the Houston Center of Contemporary Craft. Both shows happened in 2018, and I never saw either of them in person. As a testament to their ability to be compelling spaces through image (and bolstered by their compelling frameworks), they have made it into this thesis regardless.

  Both projects are complex in their simplicity. In *Treachery,* Darro paired the jewelry artist Julia Maria Künnap —who meticulously hand carves precious stones into seemingly melting masterpieces — with the fused glass artifact-esque sculptures of mixed media artist Michael Crowder (Figure 38). The pairing is exquisite, together demonstrating how they each "employ Surrealist strategies in their approach to both process and material."[95] Darro seeks to include the work of Künnap in a wider conversation about the newfound relevancy of Surrealism as it pertains to the studio craft tradition, not jewelry; a rare and lovely lens through which to see and understand jewelry. Though using normal jewelry display conventions like Plexi boxes in front of neutrally colored backgrounds, her work, sparingly displayed, still looks amazing next to the curiosities of Crowder, as images of the installation reveal.

  I interviewed Darro at this year's Spring/Break Art Show (2020) where she was manning her small group exhibition, *Total Work of Art,* of all names.[96] Though no works in jewelry were included, she transformed her humble space into a visual delight — the show simply aiming to apply "the architectonics of the Wiener Werkstatte and the 'more

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[95] Sarah Darro, *Treachery of Material,* Exhibition Statement, January 2018, https://www.sarahdarro.com/treachery-of-material
[96] The show featured ceramics, work in textiles and paintings by Heath West, Sarah Wertzberger, and Robert Raphael. It was not a museum show; Spring/Break is an independent art fair.

is more' of Postmodernism onto the hyperspace of late capitalism- gitterwork is glitched; ornamentation is structure; and excess is function."[97] Shots of Darro's installation definitely appear to fulfill this year's theme for the fair, *In Excess,* but more importantly Groys' prophecy of curators becoming form givers (Figure 39). This may be in partial thanks to the emerging tendency of exhibitions becoming more and more "immersive", as noted by arts writer Seph Rodney in an article for Hyperallergic: Darro's show among others "deepen and extend that feeling of immersion by being hallucinatory, obsessive, and ravishing."[98]

 During our conversation, Darro spoke about the importance of exhibitions to be what she calls "visually sticky" – put simply, they have to look good on Instagram.[99] She said her project is getting far more traction on social media than other exhibitors at Spring/Break that use more neutral display conventions. I asked her about jewelry specifically, objects for which she says the framework is more important than other kinds of things. "People are magpies," she said, implying they are attracted to anything shiny and also need to be able to see themselves in the work that they are viewing.[100] But the sticky visuals are just one component to this emerging curator's point of view, or rather an exciting means to and end. On her website, she states that her goal is "reinvigorating museum spaces as forms of discourse, innovation, action, and engagement through experience."[101] It is an inspiringly intersectional approach from which museums should take note – one that may stem from her being a risk-taking Millennial curator, not yet being thirty years old.

 The concept behind Darro's Spring/Break show is informed by an astutely Post-Digital perspective. Though Elisabeth Essner's *Handheld* takes on a far more classical and subtle visual aesthetic, its content and considerations are worth looking at too, and it also achieves singular form. Images of Essner's exhibition show around 18 objects by 15

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[97] Instagram post from February 27, 2020, https://www.instagram.com/p/B9Fx7B_ps5V/

[98] Seph Rodney, "Spring/Break Art Show Is a Work of Art Worth Diving Into", *Hyperallergic*, March 5, 2020, https://hyperallergic.com/546170/spring-break-art-show-is-a-work-of-art-worth-diving-into/.

[99] Sarah Darro, in-person interview, March 5, 2020.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Sarah Darro, website homepage, https://www.sarahdarro.com/, visited March 1 2020.

makers,[102] none of which are jewelry, but are small sculptures and forms made by designers and silversmiths using similar techniques. Everything is laid out on one white table, the pieces striking a rhythmic quality. It is curious, but doesn't seem revolutionary at first glance; one might argue it is completely satisfactory seeing it through the images from the press release or on Essner's Instagram – which are worlds beyond those of certain pairings in the Danner Rotunda (Figures 33). But the show had considerations invisible to the virtual viewer, only truly "sensed" when there in person says the curator. Over a phone interview, Essner told me that a lot of work went into the spatial considerations of the room and its relationship to the table on top of which the objects were installed, for which designer Jonathan Muecke was commissioned to make. For instance, the size of the table's surface was directly proportional to the size of the area around it. When speaking about this, Essner described Muecke's work as "quite complex in the most simple way," able to understand both objects and the vital space around them. "And I think that in this show in particular, that was really central, but you can't see it. You can only kind of feel it, and I wanted that sort of echo, of this really obtuse relationship we have to touch, to be infused in the exhibition design… but you can't look at pictures and know this." [103] She finished the thought by noting it was a similar situation in reverse, in terms of objects looking better in images than they might in person.

The overarching concept that brought the works together, some vessels, others essentially riffs on a vessel to the point of liberating its functional qualities (like with silversmith David Clarke, for example), were more than their similarity in size or their allusions to the domestic realm. It was to make a point about our evolving relationships to tactility. From the exhibition's press release, which is especially poignant and powerful right now:

> Touch is, in many ways, our most intimate sense, and our hands are its primary agents. Hands are meant to hold lots of things: pencils, babies, heavy pieces of furniture, other people's hands. Yet, for many of us in today's world, the feeling in our hands that is most familiar is the easy weight of our handheld devices. Today, touch increasingly takes the form of a swipe, where sensation is often

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[102] Alma Allen, Aldo Bakker, Kathy Butterly, David Clarke, Iris Eichenberg, Laura Fischer, Jennifer Lee, Shari Mendelson, Jonathan Muecke, Ron Nagle, Kay Sekimachi, Christopher Taylor, Anne Wilson, Thaddeus Wolfe, and Shinya Yamamura.
[103] Elizabeth Essner, in-person interview, February 25, 2020.

ignored in favor of access to the flat visual landscapes of our own selection—a place where we can look at imagery as much as we want, but we cannot touch. However, as we think of traditional forms for our most precious things the words of grandmothers echo worldwide, "Look but don't touch." This surprising parallel between the domestic and the digital offers viewers a point of departure to consider the relationship between haptic and optic, hand and eye, in contemporary life.[104]

Having studied human sensory history, Essner's curatorial perspective is more internal, more bodily, a great consideration for better approaches for jewelry. *Handheld* attempted to heighten issues around touch "in a way that is nonverbal… Our bodies carry with us the most profound and basic parts of who we are. So they carry pleasure, they carry pain. They have incredible sensory skill that is so innate we don't think about it, but that's actually incredibly sophisticated."[105] Tactility is an innate reference point for jewelry, which is perhaps why as a concept it is often overlooked as an interesting theme, Essner being an exception. Kholeif sustains the idea*:* "As digital media have become increasingly haptic or touchable, the way we physically engage with the world is altering."[106] And although in a far more nuanced way than Darro, Essner's project also welcomes aspects of the Post-Digital Era albeit through the offering of a contemplative, much needed antidote. It is also an excellent argument for the necessity of an exhibition to become form, and then content — content which in theory can lead someone to a meaningful, in-person sensory experience they would not have come to know otherwise.

Both Essner and Darro's curatorial approaches can be taken as lessons. In different ways, they each reaffirm the singularity of in-person viewing experiences, and highlight the importance of exhibitions becoming singular forms worth recirculating. It could be suggested that the success of these projects was in large part to the shows having small rosters. Are bigger group exhibitions capable of similar hybrid engagement? The final case studies are two larger-scale museum projects that may have attempted to answer that question. The temporary shows, one being an exhibition I curated, are

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[104] Elizabeth Essner, "Handheld" in *The Domestic Plane: New Perspectives on Tabletop Art Objects,* The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, 2018, 118.

[105] Essner, in-person interview.

[106] Kholeif, *Goodbye, World!*, 133.

attempts at more explicit conversation around the generational, Post-Digital zeitgeist, and raise questions around the very role of museum exhibition efforts.

Defining Culture?

In reference to Adamson's comments in the introduction of this thesis, he described the 2019 exhibition at MAD, *Non-Stick Nostalgia: Y2K Retrofuturism in Contemporary Jewelry* (*N-SN*) as "an examination of what happens when the near future collides with the recent past."[107] The show aimed to position jewelry in a cultural conversation about our adolescent hopes and dreams of the future, the technological promises never kept, and making and wearing as both a coping mechanism and means to self-actualize, whether that was online or in the physical world. Upon closer inspection, many of the Hyperreal pieces that went on display teetered between being nostalgic rejections of technology, "obsessively anxious" in their processes, or gleaming with HD clarity with more embrace of an uncertain and narcissistic future. Yes, the show was about showcasing jewelry, but it was also about the age in which we are living. Many of the previously mentioned artists in this thesis were there.

However, for Chen and Marsiglia, I as the curator excluded any of their physical jewelry pieces, opting instead for collaborative Digital Gesamtkunstwerk compiled from various works found online (Figure 41). We showed Pettersson's *Glitch in the Copy* series, brooches whose forms are determined by lapses in data during the 3D scanning and printing processes when done over and over again; and pieces by Veske-McMahon that speak to the outsourcing of human memory and algorithms learning to mourn (Figure 42). Material and processes were mentioned, but not as an end-all, but as illustrative to Post-Digital hybridity. We also gave room for the projection of face filters by Ines Marzat, on the label leaving directions to download them yourself on Snapchat. We featured Current Obsession's Jewellery Oracle, a naïve AI chatbot programmed to answer all your questions about jewelry and the ways we make it. Visitors were encouraged to engage with it, and did (Figure 43).

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[107] Adamson, "Letter from America".

The exhibition also showed Darja's sensual, digitally-manipulated selfies automatically swiping on screens (Figure 44) – works that at the time of signing contracts for the show, she could not quite determine whether they were indeed works of art (which would require complicated loan agreements) or images we could simply license to use. The curatorial perspective of the exhibition was that it didn't matter what they were exactly, if they were art or process or somewhere in between; it was that they deserved to be there regardless.

As for the exhibition as a whole, we tried to create a very specific aesthetic point of view with custom, amorphous pedestals, iridescent film, and multi-color lighting bouncing off the walls, together building a visually and spatially immersive space that jewelry almost never gets – one that would simultaneously live up to the simple, pre-established criteria that it could look amazing in a photo (Figure 45). I wanted it to visually speak to the zeitgeist from which it had all been born. A small detail but vital nonetheless: All the wall labels included the artists' Instagram handles so as to create a new circuit on behalf of the artists between the physical world and cyberspace.

Hindsight tells me the that in some ways the show might have lived up to the Post-Digital and form-giving standards experts like Adamson and Groys have put forth throughout this document; an Instagram post by design curator Christian Larsen in July 2019 is a small but telling example. The post, which depicts a cell phone photo of one of the Marsiglia's works on display, somehow reads as more than a review. Is it an open sourced meta-version of one of his digital stills? For Larsen, the piece evidentially conjured thoughts around luxury, future material scarcity, and Millennials' "jaded reality" of a "no future..." one that exists "under a veneer as thin as the flash of an insta story."[108] The image he recycled had been on Marsiglia's own Instagram account since April of 2017, but in this case, the museum was still able to be the primary place of artistic discovery.

And here we end up full circle, where I argue that curators are still important cultural liaisons, even when the internet does so much of the heavy lifting today. It's truly a symbiotic relationship. MAD could have let all the wonderful jewelry objects of *N-SN*

maintain their lives online, but some of the artists hadn't yet taken full advantage of the circulatory nature of images today, that is, posting meaningful content of their creations; curators can take pride in doing that for them vis-à-vis visibility of the exhibition. The show was by no means perfect; certain departments in the museum missed an opportunity to take full advantage of the virtual viability of the show, and its contents, thus contributing to the circulation of images in a way that could have benefitted their museum. The Zoom programming mentioned earlier would actually have been a great asset to the exhibition, as an example. The same would have gone for some kind of experimental social media promotion: having put documentation of Ines Martzat's facefilters projected on the museum wall back on social media would have completed an interesting meta-version circuit.

The final exhibition about to be presented, is here to reiterate one more point about the importance of a hybrid, truly Post-Digital curatorial practice. It has to do with the value of an archive, an investment imperative to furthering Unger's desire to establish and push forward a critical theory of Contemporary Jewelry. *Body Control: Jewellery and Fashion at the Boundaries of the Human Body,* which debuted in 2019 at the Museum Arnhem's temporary space, de Kerk, is yet another meta example of a Post-Digital show that speaks about a Post-Digital time. The exhibition is body-centric and, with around 100 artists, leans a bit too close to a survey show. Even so, the main idea was that the human body is more than a wearer, it's also an "image determiner;" many of the pieces articulating how humans have attempted to "engineer our bodies". The curator, Anne-Karlijn van Kersteren, who is under 30, offers many relevant ideas to consider. This includes forgoing traditional label conventions for a QR code functioning app in which visitors could seek out all information about works on their cell phones – including photos or videos of the works on bodies– made by experimental jewelers and designers like Laruen Kalman, Ana Rajcevic and Iris van Herpen to name a few. "I wanted to include many photos and videos, but didn't want to have screens everywhere," she stated in our Skype interview. The app solved that problem. As you can imagine, it worked better for certain demographics of people. But nonetheless, even when the show came

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[108] Christian Larsen, Instagram post, July 19, 2019, https://www.instagram.com/p/B0HoHtMlkus/. (Figure

down, the virtual document remained, all of the information about the show and its works still in theory accessible. These extra measures were taken as an extreme attempt not to fall into the same trap as the Danner Rotunda, a place "not appealing to anyone other than jewelry makers," so says van Kersteren, who comes from a fashion background.[109] To her, the social aspects of jewelry are too important to ignore. As for the installation, van Kersteren successfully transformed the interior of an old church into a mesmerizing visual feast that looked amazing in the flesh and in a photo (Figure 47).

According to van Kersteren, her personal curatorial perspective comes from wanting to expand on societal issues and interest, not speak to insiders. That in combination with the exhibition becoming form, with detailed documentation of objects and their texts, the space becomes optimized for any format, simultaneously primed as an important archival record. It doesn't have to be an app, of course. Generally speaking, it also begs the question of whose role it is to be the one documenting. If it is not within the museum's purview, I suggest they at least make it easy for others via photogenic, scholarly but socially and culturally relevant exhibitions. They should attempt to define moments in culture, with an emphasis of looking forward; no longer should museums be a place for jewelry history's greatest hits. If all of the above happens, wider contributions will be made: Lignel's work on historicizing the evolution of jewelry exhibition-making will be continued, and Unger's critical theory lacuna for Contemporary Jewelry will too be filled.

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46).
[109] Anne-Karlijn van Kersteren, in-person interview, April 10, 2020.

CONCLUSION

A Post-Digital Prophecy

In 1968, theorist and art critic Jack Burnham published "System Esthetics" – a seminal text that ultimately prophesized the art world's move away from "objecthood"; resulting from the natural, evolving symbiosis between humans and computer technology. He said: "We are now in transition from an *object-oriented* to a *systems-oriented culture*. Here change emanates, not from *things*, but from *the way things are done*."[110] One could suggest that the Post-Digital Era gives a name to precisely what he aimed to describe. Two decades into the twenty-first century, the world now is hyper-connective, open source and user-generated. As we have seen, this includes the new ways of making, seeing, feeling and interfacing with Contemporary Jewelry practices. Burnham's prediction resonates now more than ever; but whether in embrace or trepidation of technology, the connectivity informs new meanings around our relationship to objects, and also informs what they are allowed to become. Looked at from a certain vantage point, we might be entering an era that returns to the object albeit more intangibly. Museums need to find their footing within this reality, as exhibitions can ever more be the antidote to the fatigue of digital media that we combat everyday. Though it might dazzle in a photo, we still need to be able to find these objects in the physical world, just with new contexts, frameworks and the visual delight to intrigue. Museum exhibitions are vital to completing the circuit of the human element, the key that jewelry needs to be itself.

At the time of our conversation, Adamson's thoughts on museums embracing online platforms was the following, though now it feels rather eerie to say: "The museum is a social technology, it's really built around the idea of an in-person experience and a sense of authenticity, and I don't really think the public has embraced the idea that a museum could be about something else."[111] Today in light of the pandemic, they have to. The ideas presented in this thesis could easily pivot towards the emerging concerns that

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[110] Jack Burnham, "System Esthetics", *Artforum,* VOL. 7, NO. 1 (September 1968), 31.

[111] Adamson, interview.

the pandemic surfaces: is the museum world ready to accept its new virtual roles? For now, we can only speculate and begin to adapt to achieve the best outcome possible, given the severe physical and emotional limitations we are facing.

In the meantime, and in the spirit of going forward regardless: what has emerged as key criteria for the future of jewelry-based exhibition-making? In summation, there have been many things to keep in mind. Identity-centered concepts and virtual processes are crucial ingredients to Post-Digital creative practice, which deserve to be highlighted. Digital Gesamtkunstwerk are becoming an intriguing new format for Hyperreal Contemporary Jewelry, and digital aura is not inauthentic aura. The white cube convention is insufficient for Contemporary Jewelry; objects like jewelry are about stories: tell them, and be transparent. Each piece has its own positioning in culture or history, and nuances are worth giving a closer look to, too. Organizing projects around societal interests and the zeitgeist at large is similarly key to generating interest from audiences of all kind, especially Millennials; cultivating moments of engagement when able, is as crucial in the pursuit to giving exhibition form as is making the exhibition look amazing in a photo. Be generous: documenting it thoroughly and giving access to that content both contributes to ongoing critical theory establishment, and caters to Post-Digital seeing opportunities so innate to many, which for better or for worse is becoming the new normal. This is our new curatorial challenge.

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Anne-Karlijn van Kersteren

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debuting March 2020. Curator Petra Hölscher

Handheld, Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, opening May 2019. Curator Elizabeth
Essner

Non-Stick Nostalgia Y2K Retrofuturism in Contemporary Jewelry, opening March 2019.
Curator Kellie Riggs

Treachery of Material, Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, opening Januaray 2018.
Curator Sarah Darro

RIGGS, K.

APPENDIX

Figure 1
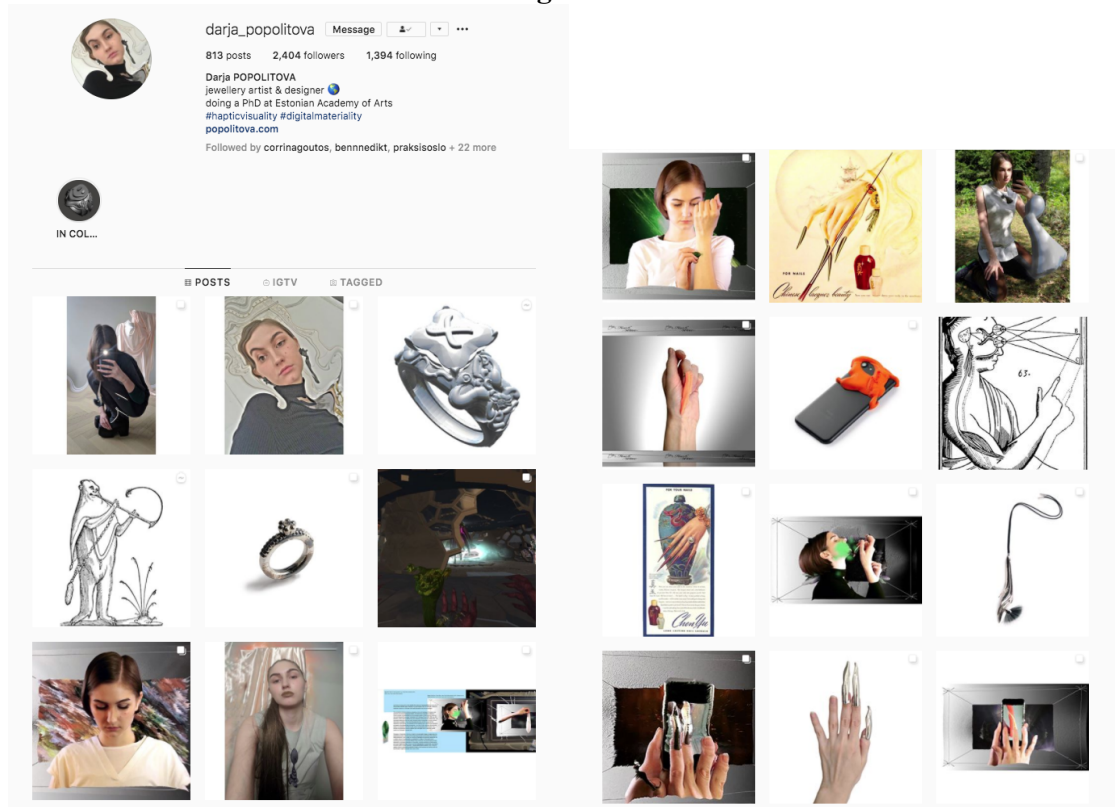
Screen shots of Darja Popolitova's Instagram feed showcasing the many iterations of content she produces.

Figure 2

A representation of Popolitova's brooch *Narcissus,* shown on her Instagram. Note the date in the grab on all Intagram posts found in Appendix.

Figure 3
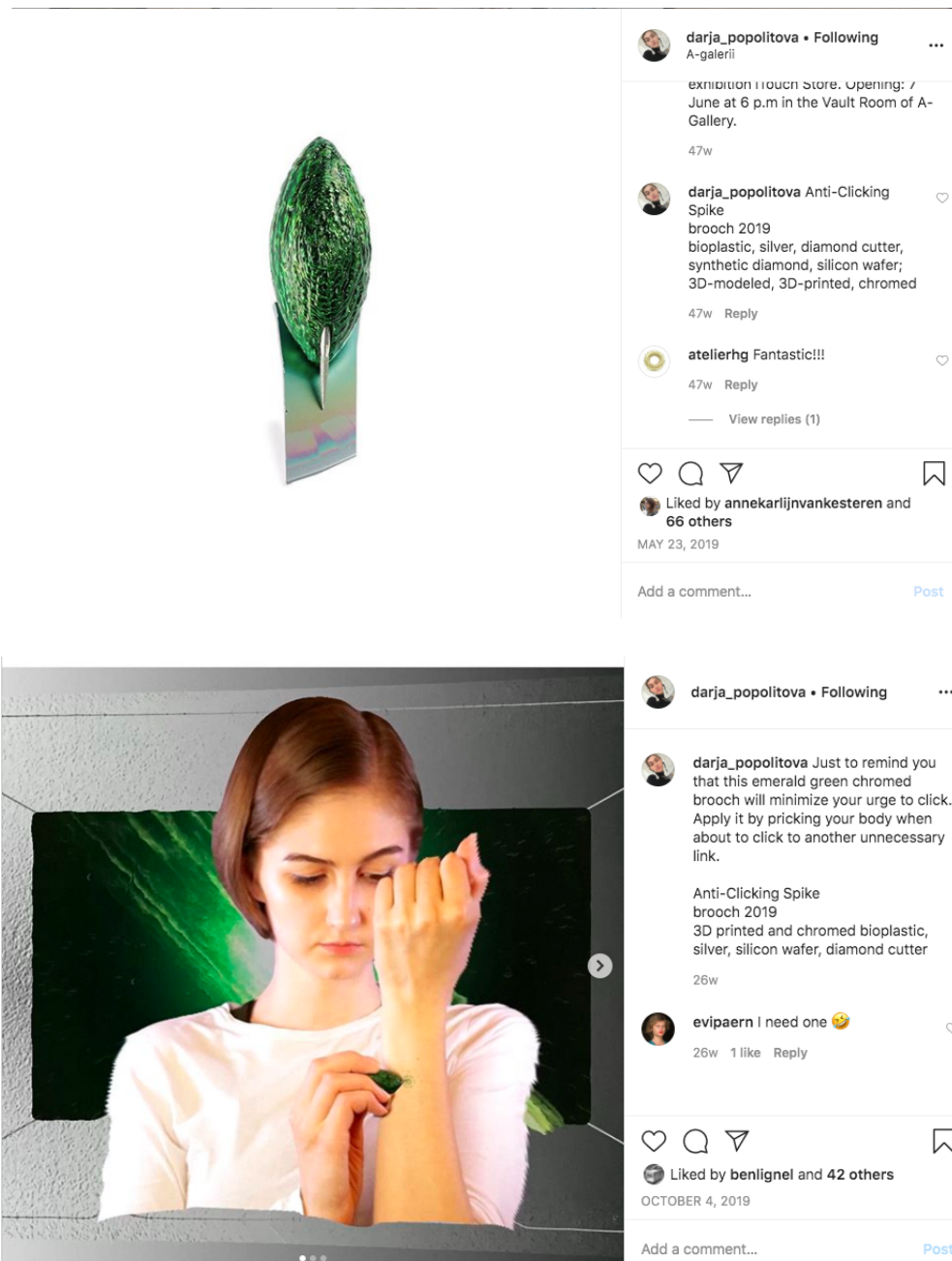
Two depictions of Popolitova's piece *Anti Clicking Spike;* top is a repetition of the brooch on a white background, bottom is a still from a video piece involving the brooch.

RIGGS, K.
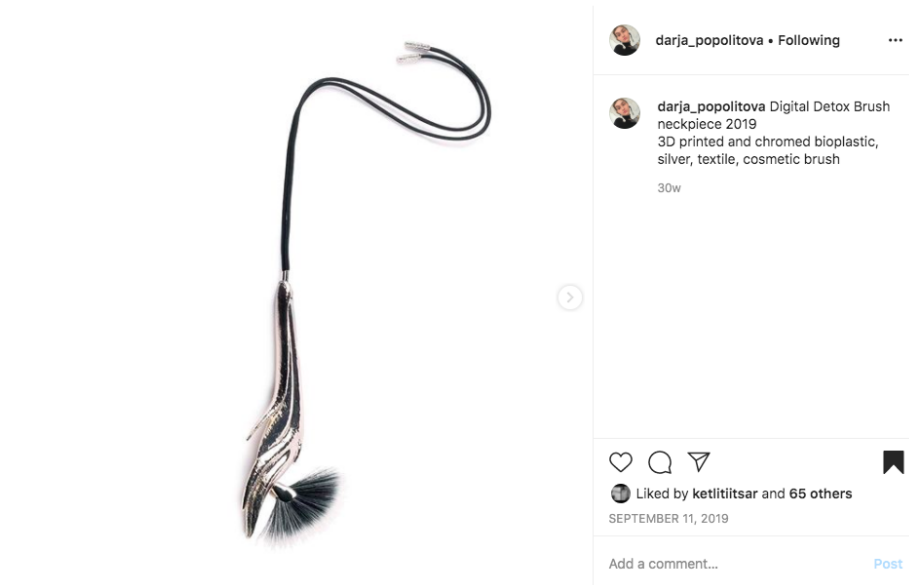
Figure 4

A representation of the piece *Digital Detox Brush* also posted to Popolitova's Intsagram, its caption not unlike an exhibition label.

Figure 5
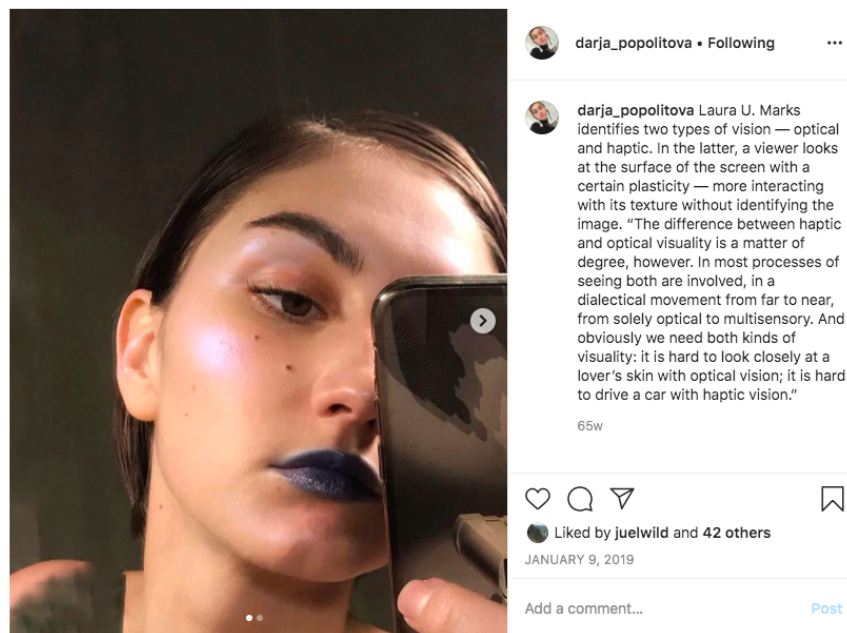
An example of an introspective caption found on Popolitova's Instagram.

Figure 6

Popolitova wears a virtual face filter and a physical pair of her own earrings; the caption another example of the artist discussing her relationship to making as well as illustrating the concept of embodiment.

Figure 7
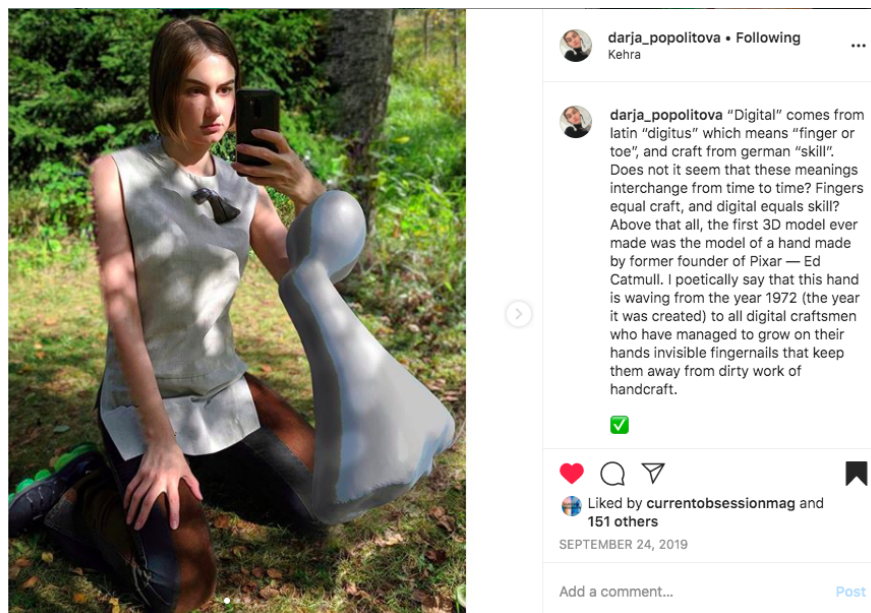
This post exemplifies the concept "Digital Gesamtkunstwerk"; Darja depicts herself wearing a brooch she made via 3D processes, while the digital rendering of the brooch floats in space in front of her. it is unclear if the outdoor background is real or entirely doctored.

RIGGS, K.

Figure 8
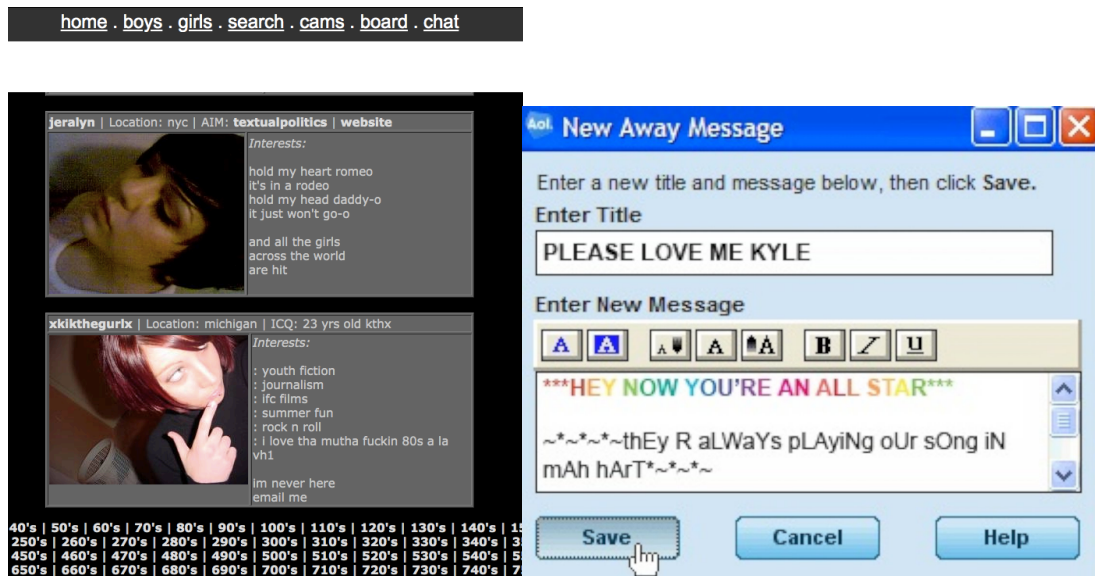
Left: user profiles from one of the earliest forms of social media, Make Out Club; Right: an exampole of an
AOL Instant Messenger (AIM) away message.

Figure 9
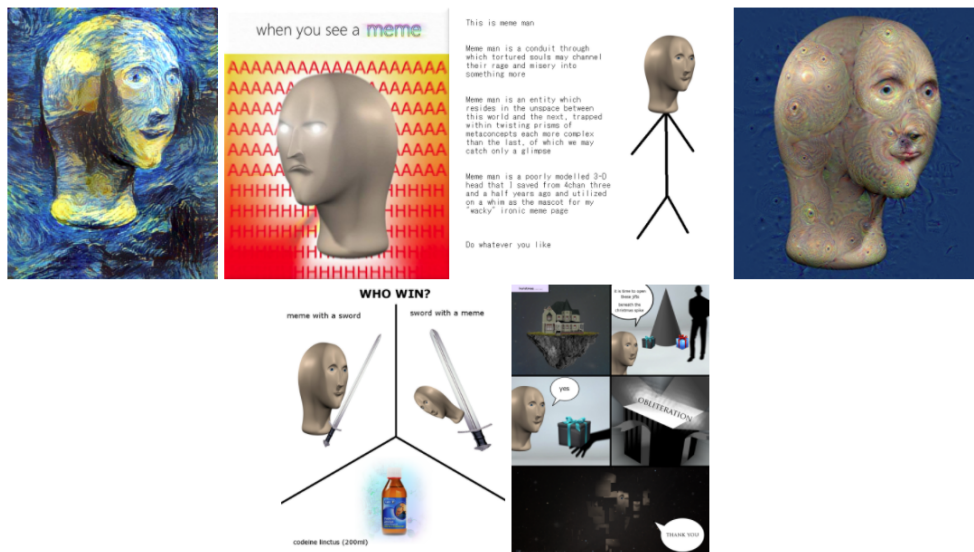
Top: "Meme Man" which originated in 2014 on the Facebook page, "Special Meme Fresh".
Bottom: proceeding memes that use Meme Man.
Images sourced from: https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/meme-man
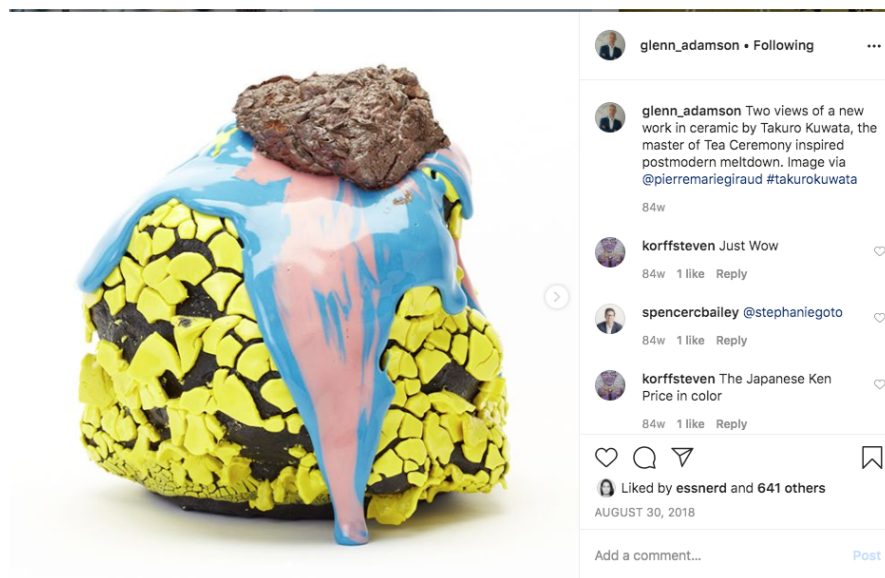
Figure 10

Instagram repost of a pot by Takuro Kuwata – and example of what Glenn Adamson calls a Hyper Pot.

RIGGS, K.

Figure 11

A screen shot of posts from Decker's Instagram feed, featuring the *Camo Ball Earrings,* enamel and green gold. All nine posts were made February 18, 2020. @aaronpdecker

Figure 12
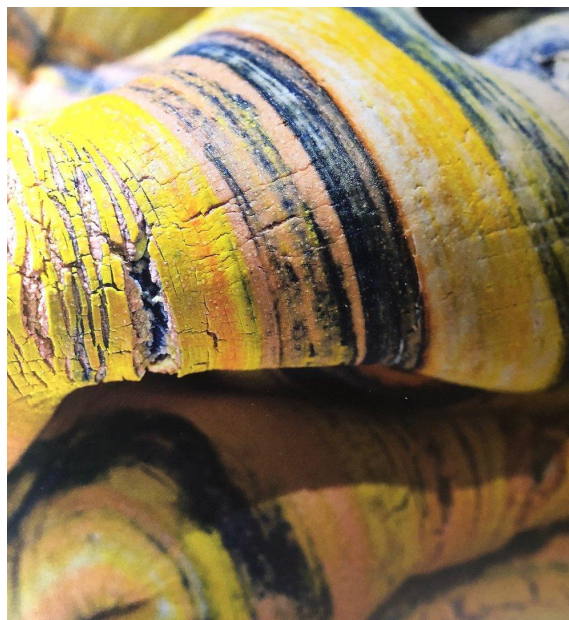
Detail of a ceramic work by Anton Alvarez.
Source: Adamson, "Rise of the Hyper Pot".

Figure 13
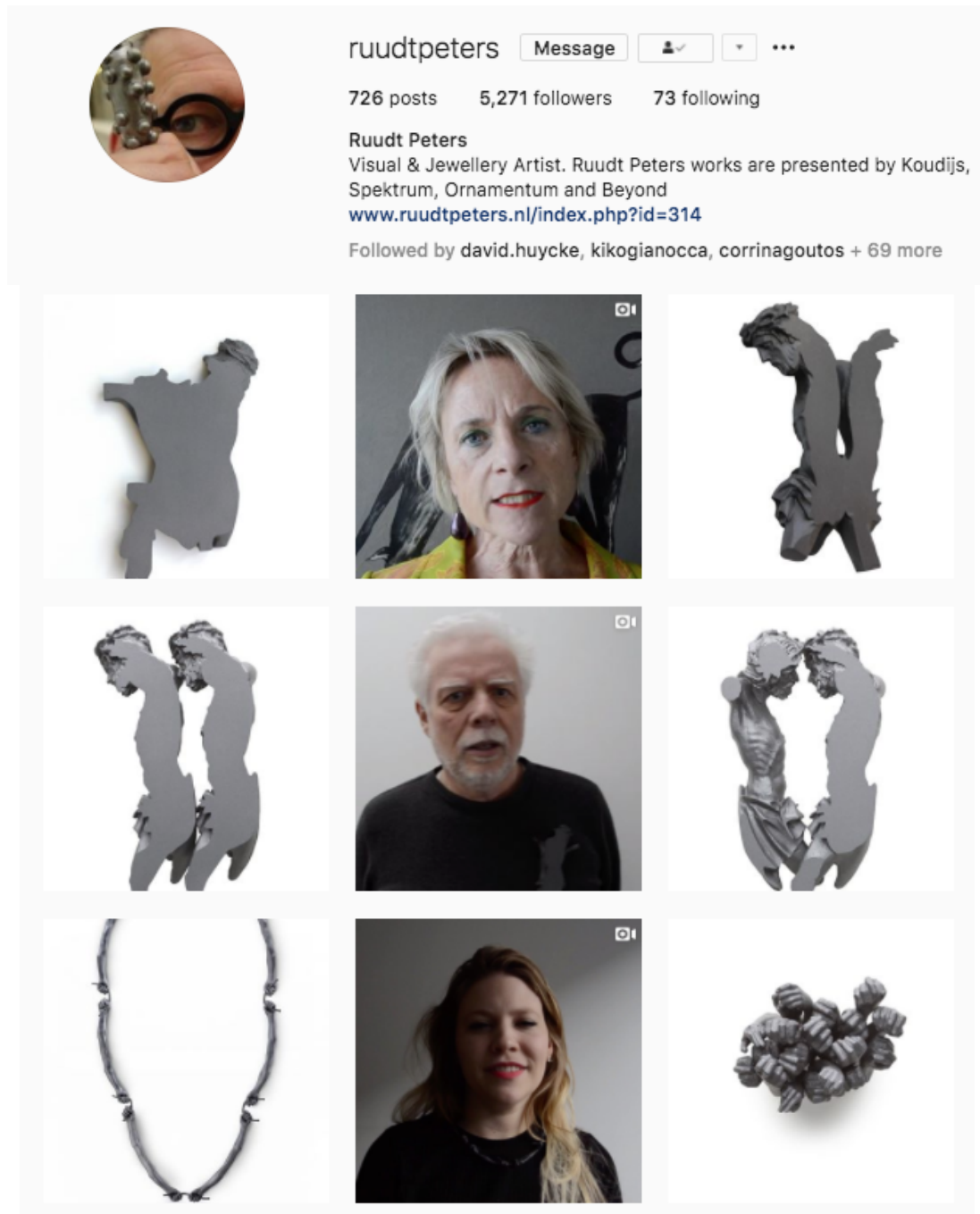
Screen grab from the Instagram of Dutch Artist Ruudt Peters. Peters was fundamental to the growth of Art Jewelry in his country. The videos shown in the middle row were accessible via QR code at his 2017 retrospective, *BRON,* at the CODA Museum, Apledoorn, the Netherlands. Screen grab taken mid April 2020.

RIGGS, K.

Figure 14
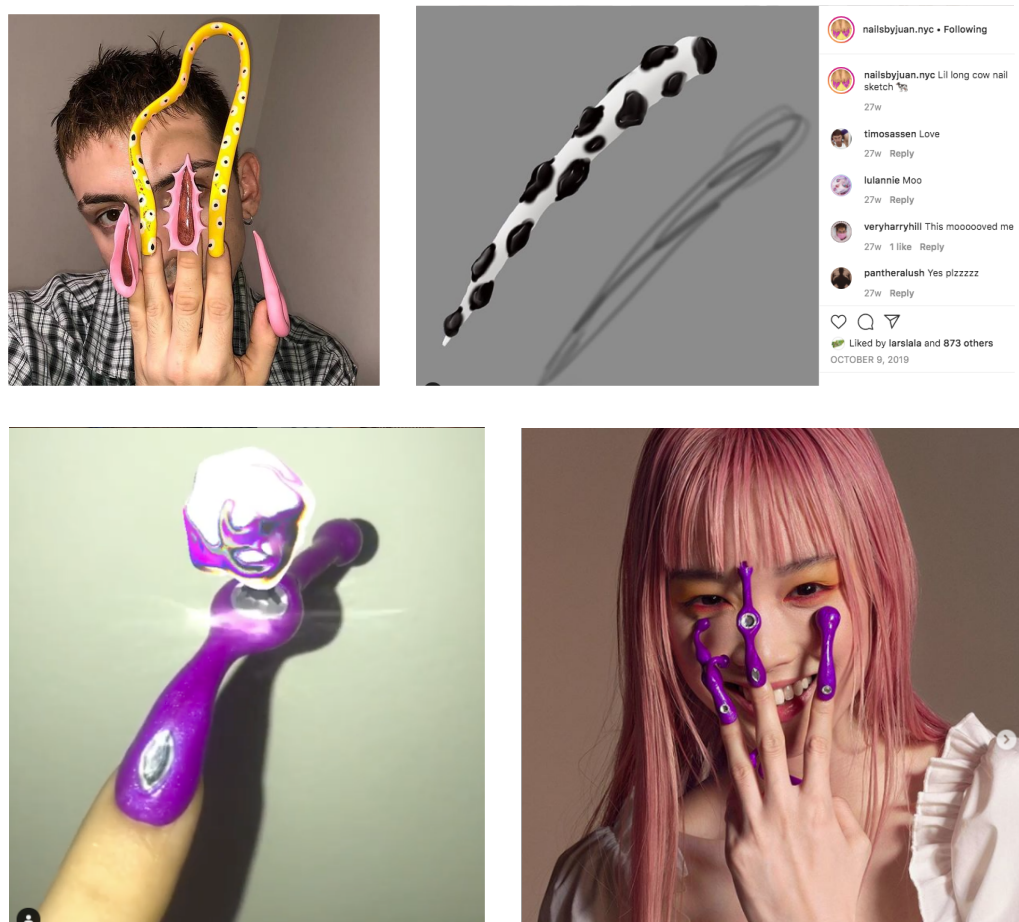
Screen grabs from @nailsbyjuan.nyc that feature various Digital Adornments; Each is difficult to distinguish as real or fake. Dates of posts vary, 2019.

Figure 15
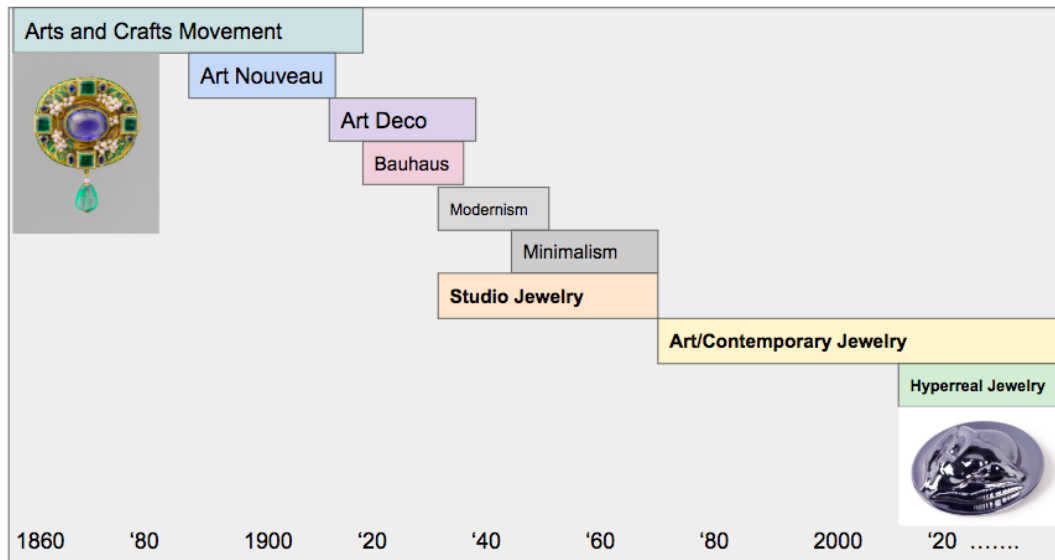
Left: Gold, sapphire, pearl, emerald and enamel pin by Florence Koehler, American, date ca. 1905. She was credited by critic Roger Fry as an "influential force in the 'modern revival of craftsmanship'".
Right: Darja Popolitova, *Narcissus* brooch, plastic, silver, modeled & 3D scanned, CNC milled, vacuum formed, 2017.

Figure 16

Art Nouveau era pendant, France circa 1900, made from gold, enamel, mother-of-pearl, opal, emerald, colored stones, gold paint, which exhibits exoticism, romanticism, and material play.

Figure 17
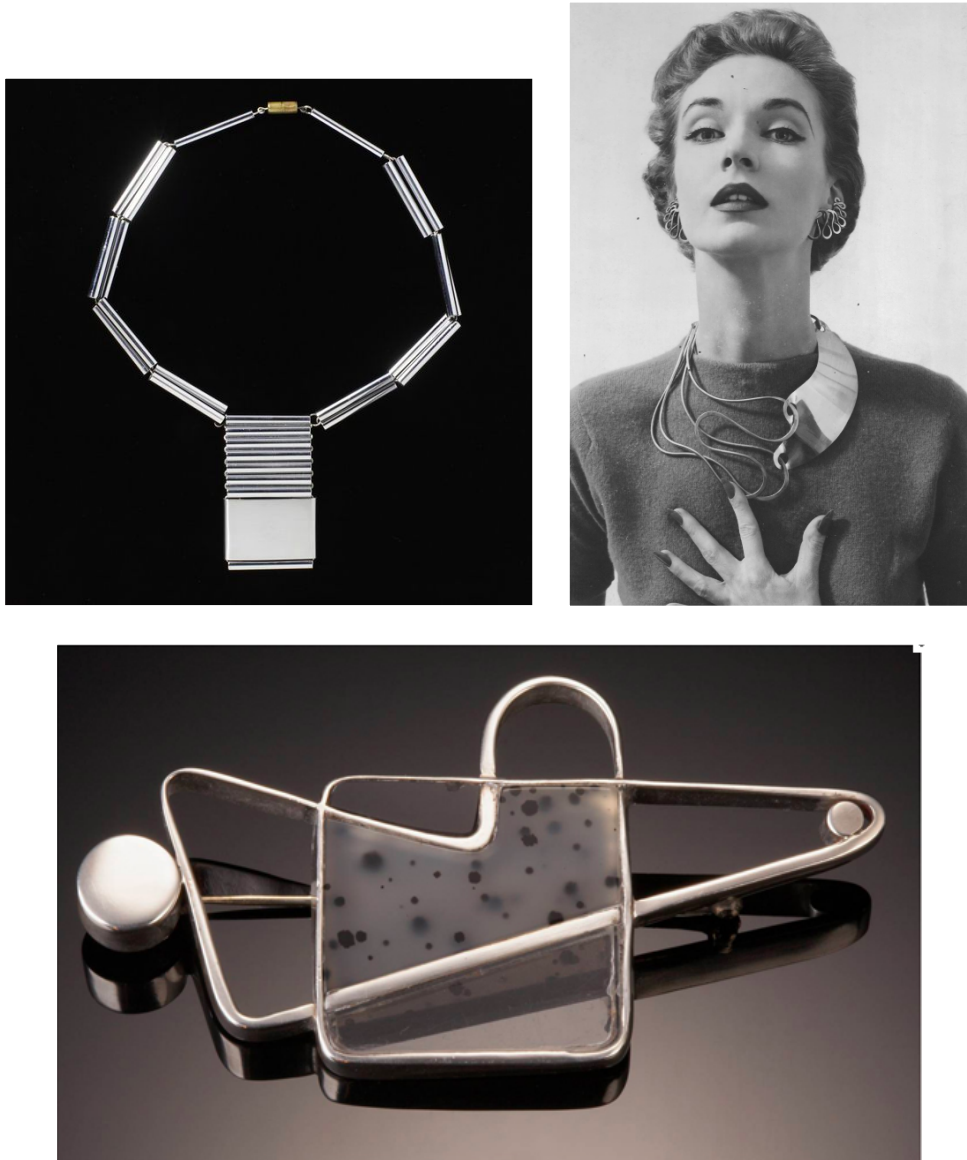
Modernist/Studio Jewelry examples. Top left: Necklace by Naum Slutzkey (b.1894 Germany), made 1930, chromium plated brass.
Top Right: Necklace and Earrings by Art Smith (b. 1917 United States), made 1948, silver or brass.
Bottom: Brooch by Margaret de Patta (b. 1903 United States), made 1941, sterling silver, moss agate, onyx.

Figure 18

Works by Hermann Jünger. Left: Pendant in probably gold with stone, probably 1960s
Right: Choker in enamel with fourteen interchangeable pendants from 1978-1979

Figure 19

Work by Gijs Bakker Left: Stovepipe necklace and bracelet, probably aluminum, 1967.
Right: Shoulder piece, probably steel, 1967
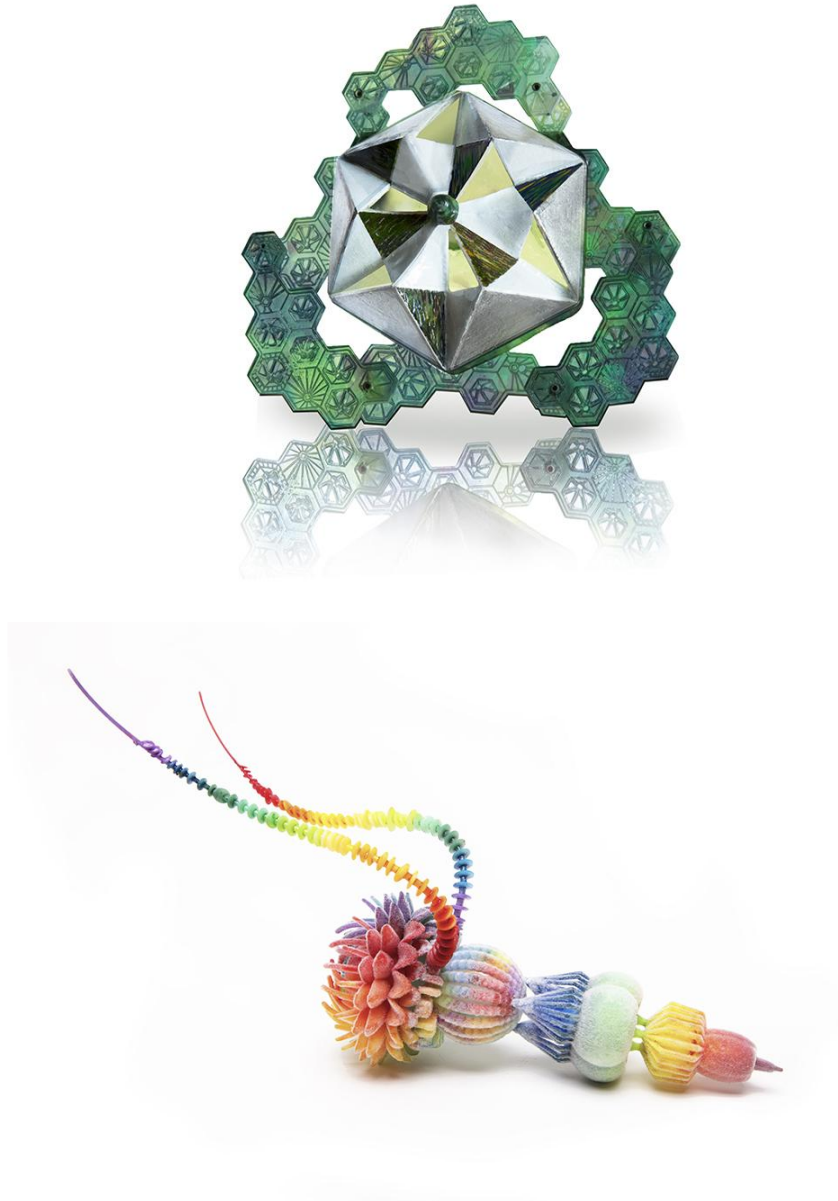
RIGGS, K.

Figure 20

Pieces that helped coin the term Hyperreal Jewelry.
Top: Brooch by Qian Want, *Obstructive Scenery,* 2016, acrylic, polypropylene, nylon, sterling silver.
Bottom: Object by Xiadia Huang, *Variants*, 2016, resin, velvet.

Figure 21

Hyperreal Jewlery examples. From left to right:
Brooch by Annika Pettersson, *Scan6_33%,* 2018, Aluminum
Brooch by Saika Matsuda, *Fiat Lux 02,* magnet, phosphorescent powder.
Brooch by Timothy Veske-McMahon, *Tender II*. Brooch, 2018. Sterling Silver, Brass.
Necklace by Jiro Kamata, Border Pendant, 2016, corian, dichroic mirror, silver, nylon string.
Bracelet by Noon Passama, 2018, hand sculpted bracelet, electro-formed with silver.
Brooch by Hansel Tai , *BMP (Blue Milk Pierced),* 2018, copper, surgical steel piercing, chrome.

Figure 22

Works by Otto Künzli. Left: *Ring for Two People*, 1980. Right: *Suzy*, 1984
These photos were staged, the body being the catalyst for the work to succeed. For example in *Suzy,* if the frame were removed from the body, you would just have a frame. The artwork lies in the fact that the frame has been turned into a neckpiece, which functions through the photo.

Figure 23

Lisa Walker, Necklace made of mixed media, circa 2010, depicted in a selfie.

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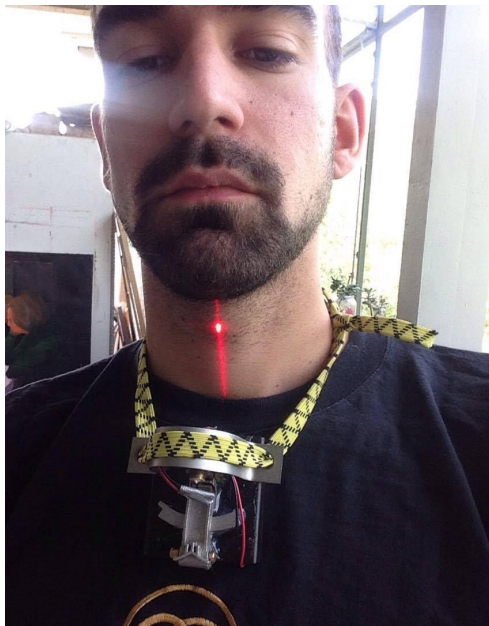
Figure 24

Top Left: Julia Walter with *Wiggle Earrings,* 2018
Top Right: Ada Chen with *Speak English We're In America,* 2018
Middle: Simon Marsiglia with *Choker Monitor,* 2018
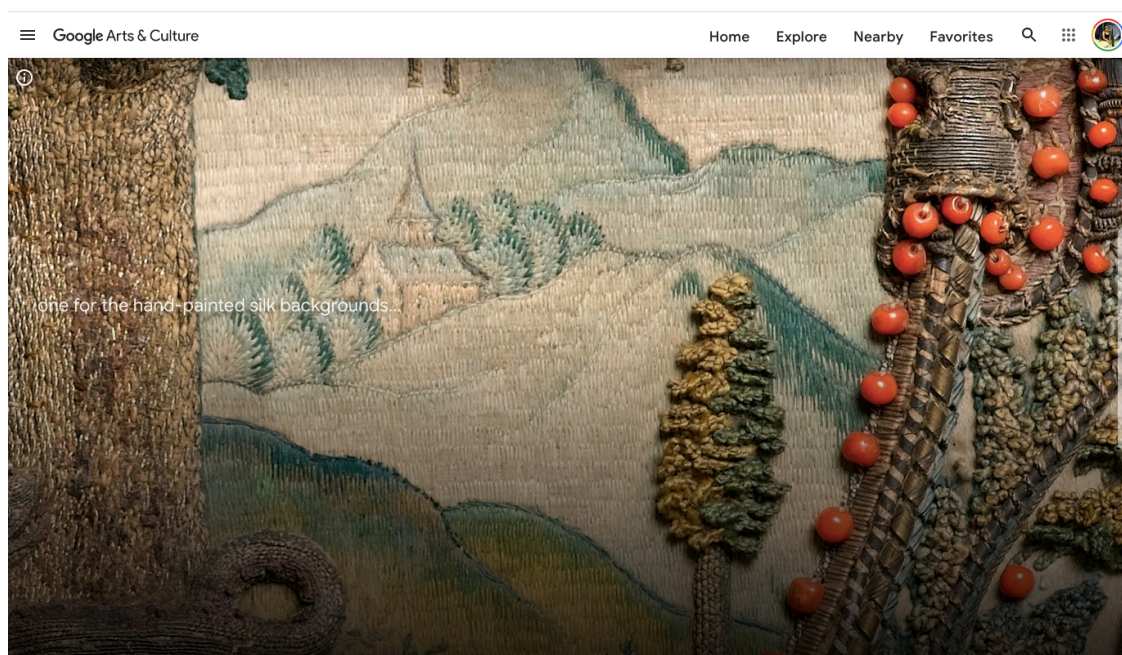Bottom: Screen shot of Marsiglia's Instagram feed, dates vary from Fall 2019.

Figure 25
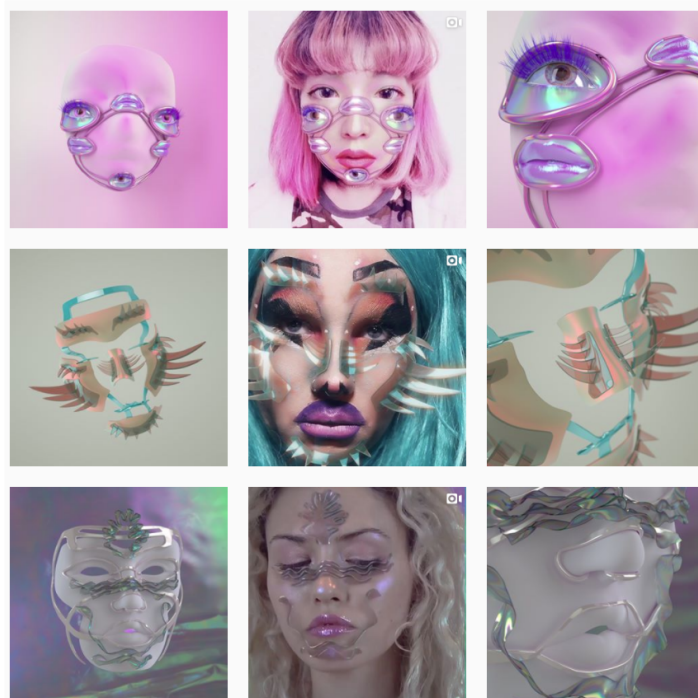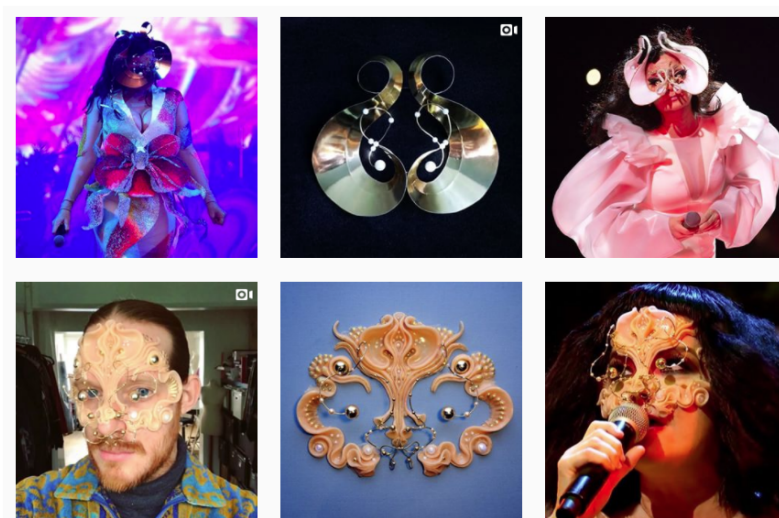
Top: Screen grab from @ines.alpha featuring three of her 3D makeup pieces.
Bottom: Screen grab from @james.t.merry featuring his headpieces.

Figure 26

Screen shot of the 16th Century embroidered cabinet panel from the Cooper Hewitt's Online Exhibition,
Zoom Into This Embroidered Panel for a Cabinet Door.

Figure 27

Top: Some sequencing of the Cooper Hewitt's Online Exhibition, *African American Design.*
Bottom: Supplemental information about a piece once clicked on.
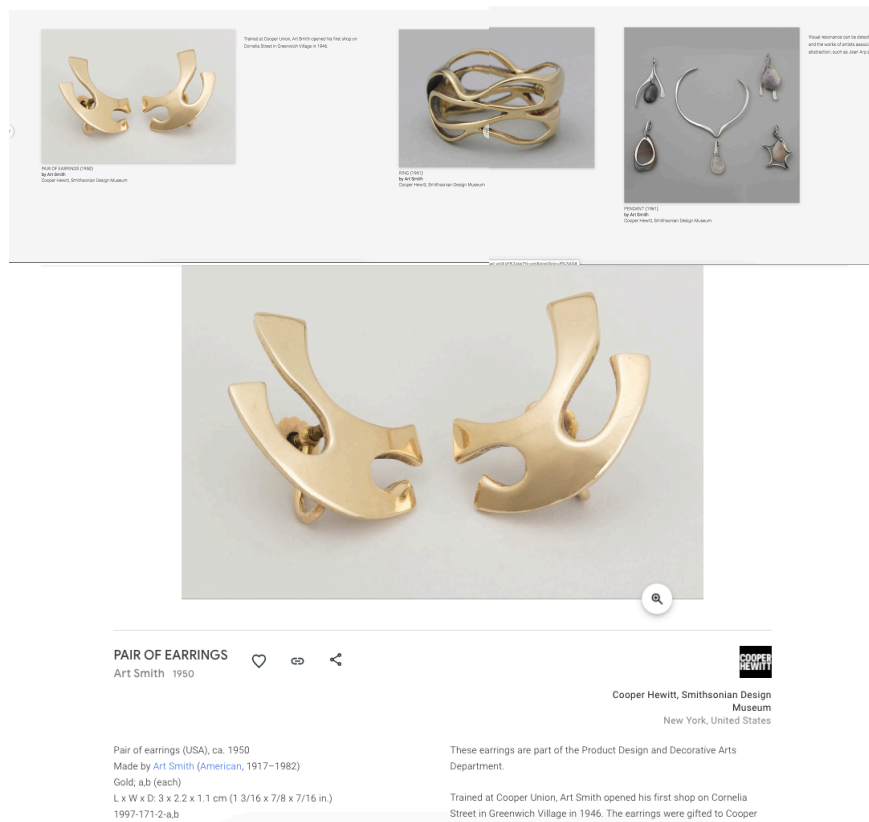
Figure 28

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Various screen shots from the Cooper Hewitt's online version of their exhibition, *Nature By Design: Botanical Expressions.*

Figure 29

An installation shot of *Jewelry of Ideas: Gifts from the Susan Grant Lewin Collection*, the Cooper Hewitt 2017. The display resembles a jewelry sale more than an jewelry exhibition.

Figure 30

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Top: a past iteration of the Danner Rotunda
Bottom: the current status (2020) of the Danner Rotunda; this is a screen shot from their new virtual tour feature on the Design Museum's website

Figure 31

Top: the display of Etruscan jewelry in an Italian Natural History Museum.
Bottom: Pieces in the Danner Rotunda, photo taken in 2012 I believe. Both photos are from the author's personal archive. There is hardly any differene.
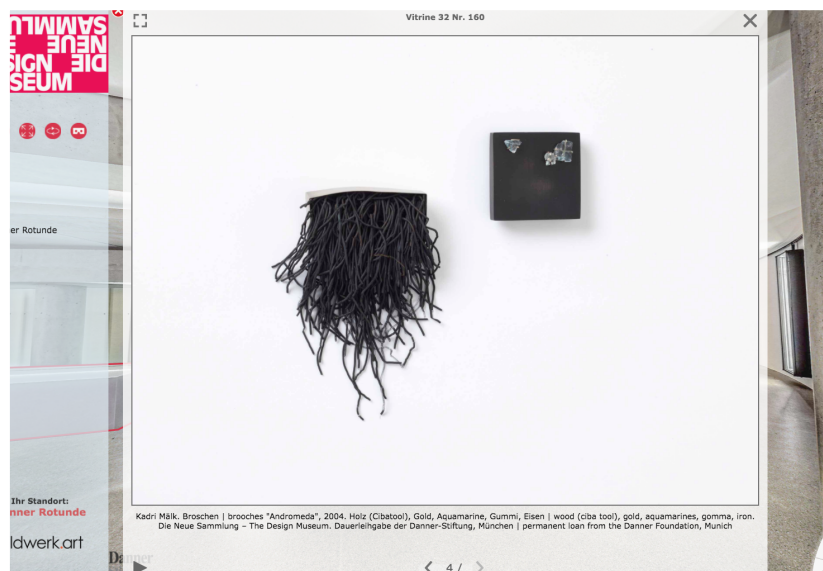
Figure 32

A view one encounters when using the Danner Rotunda's virtual viewing mechanism. Only one to two pieces are seen at a time, like in the above photo.

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Figure 33

A view of the William and Judith Bollinger Gallery at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

Figure 34

Installation photos of *45 Stories,* courtesy MAD Museum. The top photo is of the main exhibition space; the bottom of the Tiffany Gallery with a timeline of Contemporary Jewelry placed over the section the original drawers. This is where they will be placed once the exhibition comes down.

Figure 35

Mallory Weston's drawer in *45 Stories.*

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Figure 36
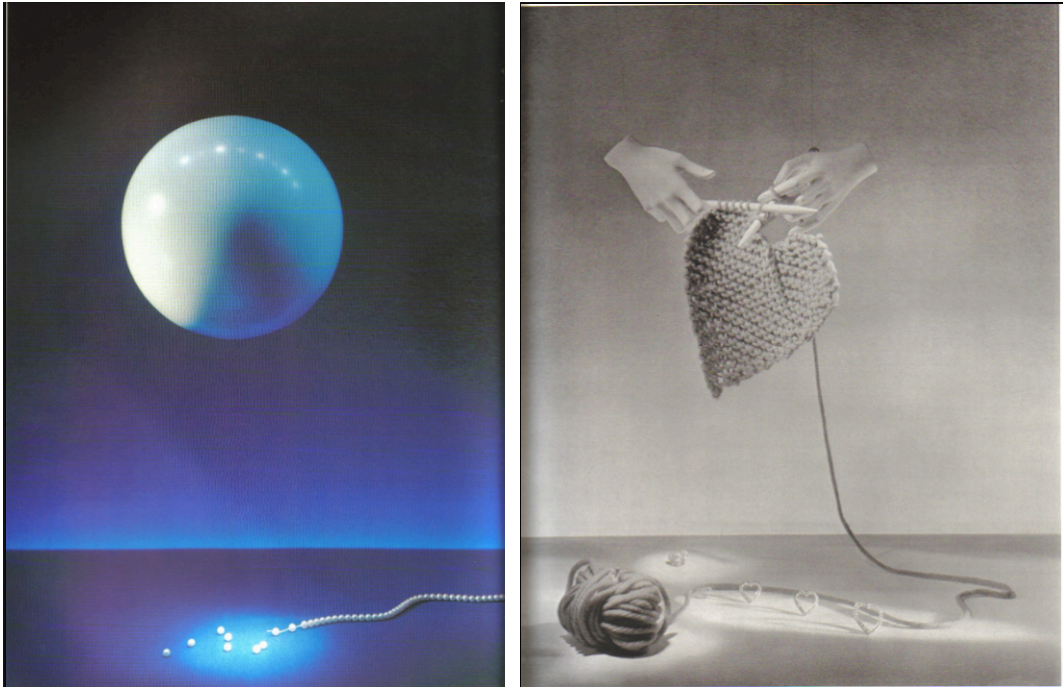
Examples of Tiffany Window displays designed by Gene Moore.

Figure 37
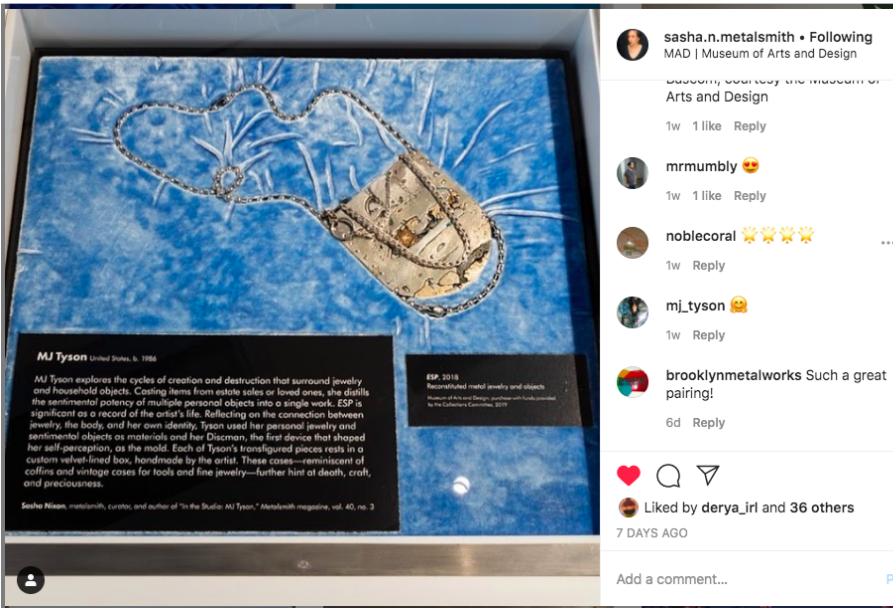
Some examples of individual drawers in *45 Stories*; the top is artist MJ Tyson's draw represented in an Instagram post. It is unfortunate the display itself could not have been photographed more clearly to ensure digital readability on social media.

Figure 38

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Top: Various pieces by Julia Maria Künnap. Bottom: various pieces by Michael Crowder
Treachery of Material, curated by Sarah Darro.

Figure 39

Installation shot of *Total Work of Art,* curated by Sarah Darro.

Figure 40

Installation shots from *Handheld,* curated by Elizabeth Essner. Source: Artsy

Figure 41
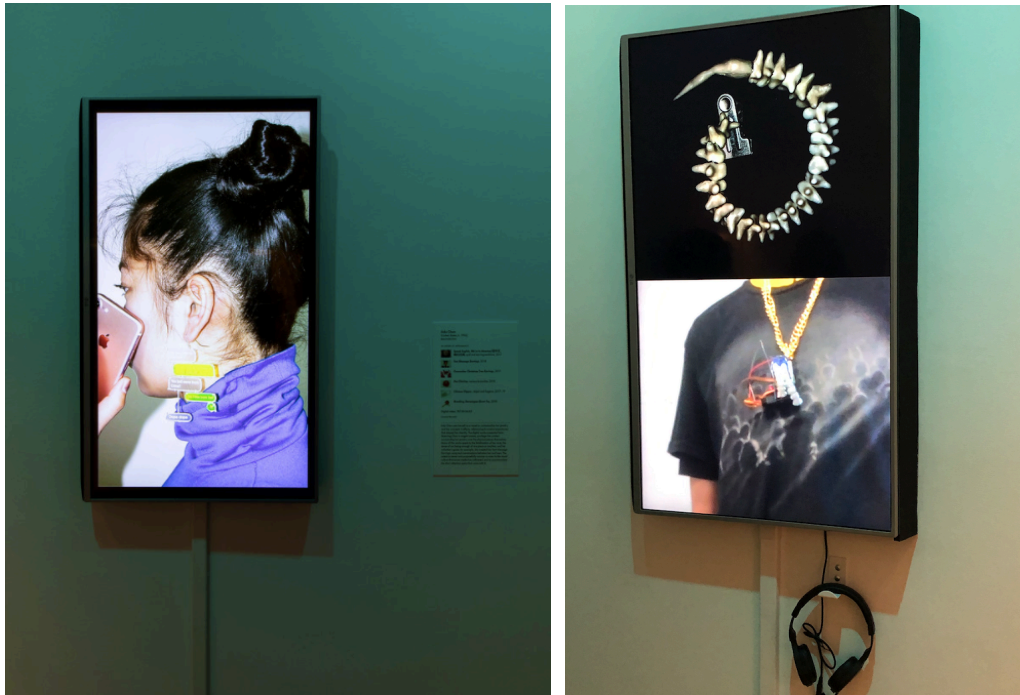
Installation shots of Ada Chen and Simon Marsiglia's photo and vidwoworks in *N-SN;* their physical jewelry pieces were only represented digitally on screens.

Figure 42

Above: Projections of Ines Marzat's 3D Makeup videos. Below: Annika Pettersson's *Glith in the Copy* brooches installed.

Figure 43

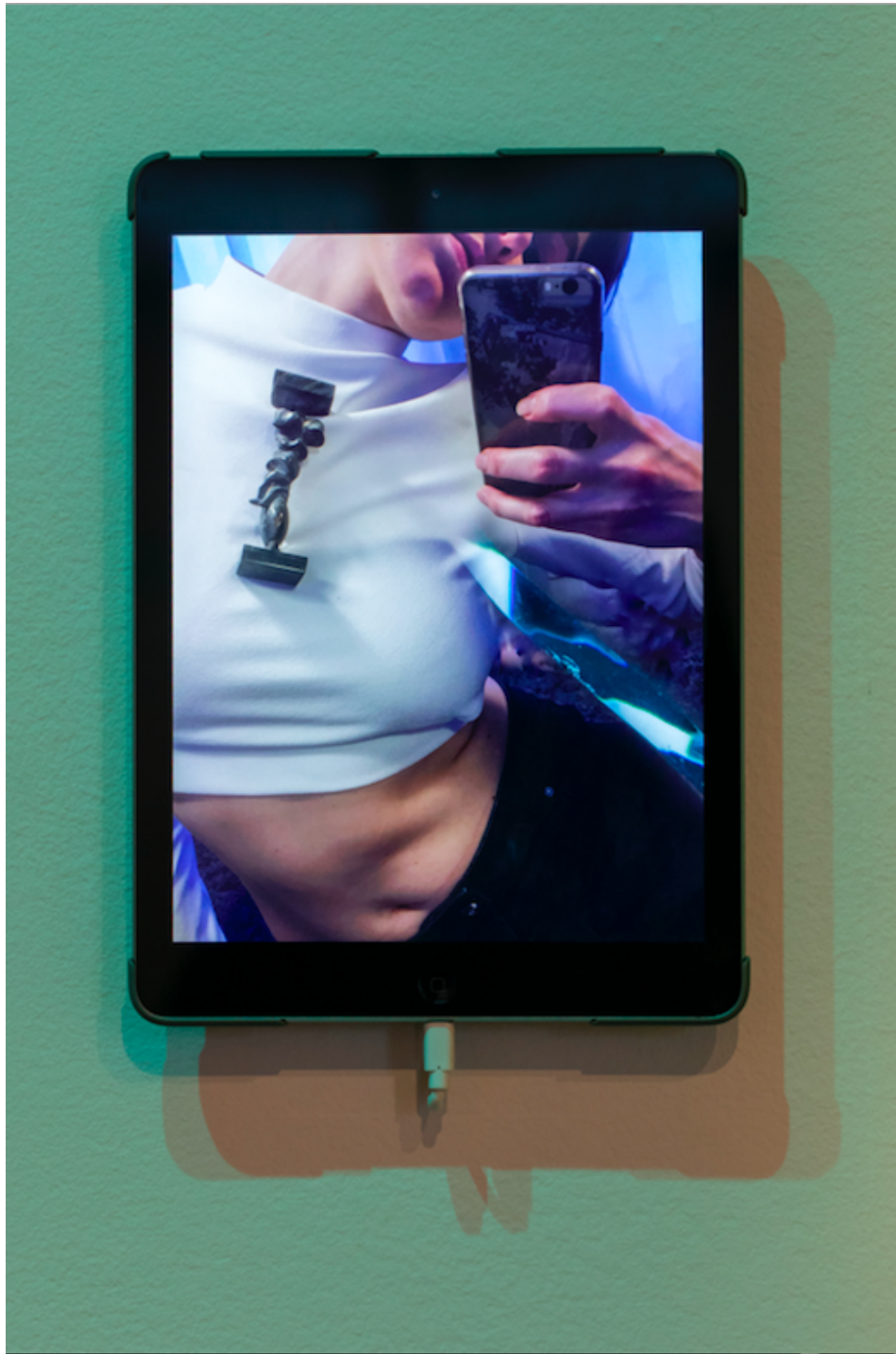A museum visitor engaging with The Jewelry Oracle at *N-SN*.

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Figure 44

Photo of one of Darja Popolitova's selfies, or as this thesis defines them, a Digital Gesamtkunstwerk.
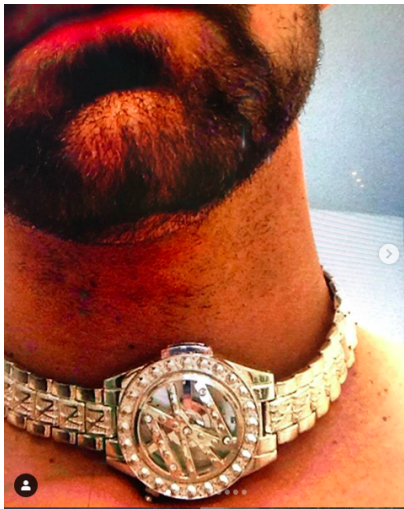
Figure 45

Wide angle installation shots and one casework close-up from *Non-Stick Nostalgia: Y2K Retrofuturism in Contemporary Jewelry*

Figure 46

christianalexlarsen Kellie Riggs, Non-Stick Nostalgia: Y2K Retrofuturism in Contemporary Jewelry, Museum of Art & Design, NYC. The analog century uploaded into the digital one with a lot of static and noise, paranoia and fear, as well as visionary optimism for a potentially brave new globally networked and unified civilization. Almost 20 years into the 21 century, we see how technologies have evolved and marked us in unforeseen ways. Much like the Arts & Crafts Movement reacted to the Industrial Revolution at the turn of the 20th century, a new movement is fomenting in reaction to the Digital Age. Of all artistic forms and mediums, jewelry is one of the most portable, intimate, and simultaneously social, a system of beloved personal totems, combining traditional forms (necklace, ring, pendant, etc) with materials that express what society values most. Platinum is in one day, gold is out the next. But what happens when water is scarcer and scarcer? Could a crystal container of ice cubes stand in for diamonds? If hung on a man, could it be a masc4masc emblem of his jock sports-drink virility? Does it beg for you to touch it, draw an emoji in the drops of cool condensation, some analog flirtation in a DM cruising world? What happens when a flashy blinged-out pricey watch morphs into a choker/dog collar? And do you actually wear it, or just pose for selfies in it, an extension of your projected social media image? Curator @kellieriggs has cleverly quipped Non-Stick Nostalgia as the title of her daring exhibition closing Sunday. The show examines the way jewelry is taking on new virtual as well as physical dimensions. Made by 29 international artists all under the age of 35, these "millennials" have plugged into the styles of the late 20th century, when the future was still positive, subcultural, transgressive, and diverse. Many of these makers have met this "mood" with jaded reality in an age of pessimism for a no-future, with no sense of "here" here under a veneer as thin as the flash of an insta story. The results will 😺. #jewelry #retro #future #nonsticknostalgia #y2k #contemporary #art #masc4masc

Instagram post by Christain Larsen – former decorative arts curator at the MET - reviewing the exhibition *Non-Stick Nostalgia: Y2K Retrofuturism in Contemporary Jewelry.* Post made July 19, 2019 Oddly enough Larsen was hired by MAD in early 2020 as their Windgate Research Curator.

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Figure 47
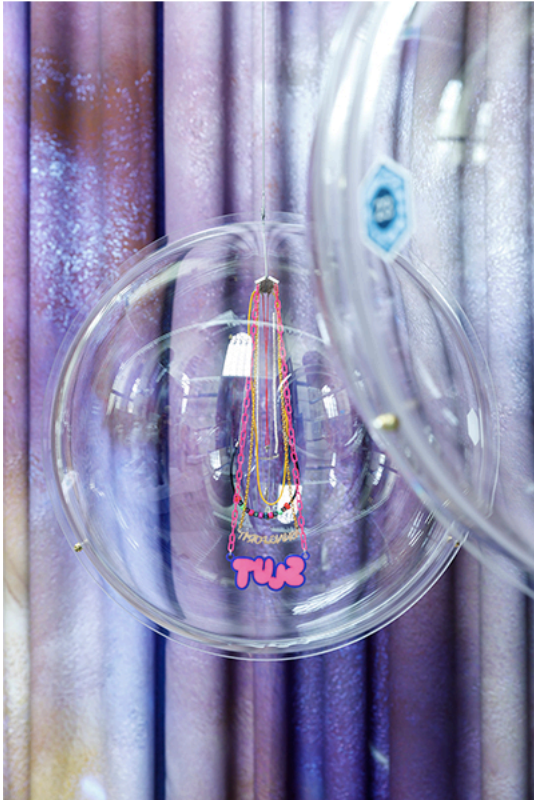
Installation shots of the exhibition *Body Control.*