



Jewellery Moment

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abstract

A glimpse into a childhood memory, when the world was as beautiful as it could ever be: while playing in the sea on a hot summer day. The sun is reflected on the surface of the water and makes the water splashes around you glitter.

For me these little effects, that make the world more worth looking at, are *jewellery moments*. In this word combination, *jewellery* adds preciousness to the *moment* and *moment* makes the *jewellery* temporary.

Essential for the *jewellery moment is light*. Despite its habitual status in our life, it still has the power to fascinate us. It has a big impact on our emotions and defines how we experience the world around us.

In this research I translated the *jewellery moment* into pieces of jewellery. Each of the three variations represents a different approach to the theme: The first one is to make someone see more *jewellery moments* on his own. The second represents a *jewellery moment* itself. The last is not only one, but also causes more *jewellery moments* to appear.

jewellery moment

I remember the world being at its most beautiful as it could ever be when playing as a child in summertime in the sea under the sun. The water glittering around me, catching the light and reflecting it in every direction. Everywhere you look there is something that catches the eye, the contrast of the shadows under the trees, a flicker of a light flash reflected from anywhere. The world in that view is always in motion, never resting and always challenging, directing the eye from one point to another. I remember looking at the way the water drops run down when someone came out of the water with his head again after diving in. And then looking for the moment when the last water drop was about to drop from the earlobe, just where an earring would be. I remember thinking that this exact moment looks like the perfect jewellery to me.

This image of that specific moment capturing the perfect jewellery, is something that carried itself into my work in making jewellery. It is a precious and fragile thing and hard to catch. It is more about a moment than material. But in spite of that, for me, it is jewellery. I named it a *jewellery moment*.

In this combination of the words *jewellery* and *moment*, the *jewellery* symbolizes the adornment and the *moment* symbolizes that it is not lasting. Combined together, the *jewellery* makes the *moment* into something beautiful, while the *moment* makes the *jewellery* into something impermanent. My definition of beauty in this context is not „just pretty“ on the surface but intriguing and interesting altogether. By connecting these two words they influence and change each other. *Jewellery*, which is often connected to its materiality, loses its claim on the substance and can therefore exist on another level. The addition of the preciousness itself forms a *moment* out of time. The decision to choose the word *jewellery* is very subjective and I am specifically not excluding artists working in other fields of art.

These *jewellery moments* can be found in many different places. It can be found in the rainbow that colors the sky with his whole spectrum of colors. Or in the way the light is reflected from a glass of water, where you can make out the patterns on the ground. Sometimes it can also be the flicker of a light flash that is reflected from someones watch directly into your eye. They are what makes the world worth looking at. They bring color into a black and white surrounding, bring contrast into a uniformly colored space and bring poetry into the world.



fig 1. light ray

light

Closely intertwined with the *jewellery moment* is light. In order to see we need light to reflect the image of what we perceive with our eyes. Without it our most relied upon sense of sight wouldn't work anymore. Light makes our surroundings visible to us and also gives parameters to orientate ourselves in this world, with colors, perspectives, reflections and many more.¹ The role of light in our life is such an essential one, that because of that it is often overlooked. Edgar Varese (1883) compares this also to other senses. „You do not hear a croak. You hear a frog.“² Our mind is trained to focus on the object itself and not on how we receive it. In the same way we focus on the objects we are able to see, because there is light to see it, and not on the light itself. But there is also another way of experiencing light, by not seeing due to it, but seeing it. Going back to the example of the frog, this means there is also a way to focus on the croak itself, instead on the frog causing it.³

Focusing on the medium light itself is a field a lot of artists have worked and experimented on. Although its habitual status in our life, light never lost its power to fascinate us. Looking at a sunset after a warm summer day or searching for a rainbow in the rain, there are a lot of qualities that make the world even more worth looking at.

Light has a big impact on our emotions. There is nothing like a sunny day to take a walk and lighten the mood. Everything can look promising in the right light and look very scary alone at night. This difference depends not only metaphorically on which light we see it in.

In his Installation called *Plexus* Gabriel Dawe (1973)⁴ plays with the emotions light triggers. He reconstructed artificial rainbows and placed them in different surroundings, like the stairway of an old building. Even though the rainbow is out of context there, it adds a special, magical detail to this place, just like a real rainbow does to the sky. For him this rainbow represents „a glimmer of hope (...) to show that there can be beauty in this messed up world we live in“⁵. His project shows how much associations and emotions are connected to light and what an important role it plays. He builds the rainbows out of fine threads in the specific colors of the spectrum. That way he uses the appearance and emotions from the rainbow, by using completely analog materials. He imitates the outcome of the play with light, without playing with the light itself.



fig. 2 Gabriel Dawe „Plexus no. 19“ 2012

¹ Weibel, P.; Jansen, G., *light art from artificial light. light as a medium in 20th and 21st century art* (2006) 46-47

² Norretrander, T.; Eliasson, O., *Light! On light in life and the life in light* (2015) 21

³ Norretrander, T.; Eliasson, O., *Light! On light in life and the life in light* (2015) 21-22

⁴ <http://www.gabriel-dawe.com/> (25.05.2018)

⁵ <https://mymodernmet.com/gabriel-dawe-plexus-no-19-italy/> (25.05.2018)

Playing with the light itself is another way to work with it. There are a lot of characteristics that define the appearance of light and they all hold an importance of how we see the world. One of the most basic one is reflection. The surface of the objects defines how much light is reflected from it. The flatter the surface gets, the more light it reflects, up to the point we only see the reflected light. Naturally this plays an important role in our everyday life, surrounded by reflecting glass and mirrors. But especially in the field of jewellery this has always been a very important feature. From the raw look of a natural stone goes a long way to the polished surface of a diamond cut, and there are a lot of possibilities in between that often define the quality of the piece.



fig. 3 Alyson Shotz „mirror fence“ 2003-2014

Alyson Shotz (1964)⁶ approaches the medium light in a scientific and experimental way. In her *mirror fence* she takes the feature of reflection and takes it out of context. A fence always symbolizes a border and separates something into two parts. By making the surface of the fence reflective, it almost becomes invisible. With this project she shows what a great impact the material and the surface of the object have on its appearance and its statement.⁷

In the construction of diamond cuts, reflection and refraction form a perfect picture. With the right measurements it is possible to direct the light within in such a way that it is captured inside. By changing from the material air into the material diamond, the light slows down to half of its speed.⁸ After the light ray entered the material it is directed through it in exactly the right angles so it stays inside and only enters the diamond again at the top. Behind the light patterns that appear when you look at an ideally cut diamond, lies a world of mathematical perfection.⁹ For me this perfect brilliance can be interpreted as one jewellery moment in itself.



fig. 4 Diamond proportions and direction of light

⁶ <https://www.alysonshotz.com/> (25.05.2018)

⁷ <https://www.designboom.com/art/alyson-shotz-mirror-fence-03-05-2014/> (25.05.2018)

⁸ Besen, S. ; Mayer W. J., *Patterns of light. Chasing the spectrum from Aristotle to LEDs* (2010) 40-45

⁹ <https://www.lumeradiamonds.com/diamond-education/diamond-cut> (25.05.2018)

Without light we wouldn't be able to see anything. But if there is nothing but light you wouldn't see more than you would in complete darkness. Sometimes even death is not imagined as complete darkness, but as overexposure of light. What we need for a clear sight, is a regulated balance of contrasts. On a sunny day that can be the shadow beneath the tree and the dark branches against the sunlight. This interacting between light and darkness gives our eyes places to focus on and make it possible for us to create a precise image in our head.¹⁰

In the collection *Bi* of the jewellery artist Jiro Kamata (1978)¹¹ this interaction of contrasts plays an important role. The material in the center attracts the attention of the viewer, the colors, reflections and the light play draw the eyes inside. This agitation is contrasted with a clear and calming border to the outside. The strong restricting frame separates the inside from the outside and makes it a small universe of its own.¹²



fig. 5 Jiro Kamata „Bi“ necklace 2013

Through Isaac Newtons (1643) experiment with the prism we know that white light coming from the sun contains the complete color spectrum we see in the rainbow. He directed a light ray into a prism and noticed that on the other side of it, it came out again, but split into colors.¹³ This experiment also worked the other way around. By gathering all colors together into the prism, it comes out again as one white ray.

Inspired by the experience of „being bathed in the sunlight of the Provence, the stained glass with Matisse's vibrant colors suffused the room with full of colors“¹⁴ at the Chapelle du Rosaire in France, Tokujin Yoshioka (1967) built his installation *rainbow church*. He constructed an eight meter high window out of about 500 crystal prisms, that split the incoming light, filling up the space with all the colors of the rainbow. This overwhelming effect made the visitors experience the light itself with all their senses.¹⁵



fig. 6 Tokujin Yoshioka „Rainbow church“ 2010

¹⁰ Norretrander, T. ; Eliasson, O., *Light! On light in life and the life in light* (2015) 75-77

¹¹ <http://www.jirokamata.com/> (25.05.2018)

¹² <https://artjewelryforum.org/artists/jiro-kamata-dark-to-light-to-dark> (25.05.2018)

¹³ Besen, S. ; Mayer W. J., *Patterns of light. Chasing the spectrum from Aristotle to LEDs* (2010) 75-76

¹⁴ <http://www.tokujin.com/> (25.05.2018)

¹⁵ <https://www.dezeen.com/2010/02/12/rainbow-church-by-tokujin-yoshioka/> (25.05.2018)

own approach

After looking into work that has been done for, with and about the medium light, I made out three different approaches how my *jewellery moment* could be created.

The first possibility is to make somebody see more *jewellery moments* for himself. In this intimate approach I interfere with what the person sees around him. The second one is to create one more *jewellery moment* in itself. This addition is there for everybody to see and brings more beauty into the surroundings. The last option combines the previous ones and creates a *jewellery moment* catalyzer, which is not only one himself, but also triggers more around him.



fig. 7 Janika Slowik „see more“ pendant 2018

First approach:

How many *jewellery moments* someone experiences is something that comes from within. It depends on the way you see the world around you and how you interpret it. Some days it is easier to notice all these beautiful details around you, and on some cloudy winter days you might need a little help finding them.

My basic idea is to create a wearable piece that you can look through, and by doing that it makes you see more *jewellery moments*. It doesn't create a completely new universe, but instead takes what is already there and puts it together in a different way than it was before.

This change of perspective started out as glasses but got more complex during this research. Instead of having only one way to look through, my final necklaces can be interacted and played with. The organic shapes that almost look like naturally grown crystals, are build out of little forms that are reflective inside. The measurements and angles in which the surfaces face each other is a mixture of experiments with kaleidoscopes and diamond cuts. Within, the light gets thrown from one reflective facet to the next and deconstructs the view. It splits it into tiny fragments and creates a new one with different perspectives.

Second approach:

By wearing a *jewellery moment* on your body, you bring a bit more beauty into your world.

For this approach I created necklaces and brooches which function as closed environments playing with the light. The fine rills of the material inside interfere with each other and create an interesting pattern. This regular and controllable pattern gets interfered with by a Swarovski brilliant set inside. In this combination, the focus is not on the cut itself, instead on what it does to the pattern. It distracts the lines from its usual way into an organic form, that is always in motion, depending on the perspective you look at it. Through this addition the piece becomes unique. This changing inside is held together by a frame. It creates a border to the outside, but the reflective surface of it softens this sharp impression.

Third Approach:

This is a combination and a conclusion of the first two and creates a *jewellery moment* catalyzer.

The brooches are constructed out of layers of transparent film. But when light shines onto them, they split it into all the colors of the rainbow. The more light shines onto them, the stronger become the colors. This effect gets reinforced by the mirror surface underneath. But the mirror doesn't cover everything and while it reflects some of the colors back, it lets some of them go onto the wearer and his surroundings, making them a part of the beauty.

The layers combined together build a closed organic shape. In the way they are layered together, this exact shape is hard to grasp, instead it blurs into a vague, changing form.

Despite in what different directions these three approaches go, they have a lot of similarities that reconnect them. One of them is that all of these pieces make things visible that were already there, instead of adding something new. Just like the colors being already in the light around us, they need to be split to be visible for us.

Another thing is the importance of perspective. The *see more* necklaces don't have a front-, or back-side, instead are meant to be turned around and be seen from different perspectives. In the *Interference* pieces, the patterns change depending on the angle you look at them. In the *Katalysator* brooches, the effect is always in motion and is changing depending on how the light shines onto them. The pieces all live from the interaction between wearer and piece and emphasize this relationship.



fig. 8 Janika Slowik „Interference“ brooch 2018



fig. 9 Janika Slowik „katalysator“ brooch 2018

There are some characteristics that can be found in all of the pieces. One of the most important one is the mirror surface. For the *see more* collection they are the base and through interacting with each other they create the perspective change. In the *interference* collection, the frame is reflective and behind the rilled sheet is a mirror surface, which reinforces the effect. The *Katalysator* collection uses mirrored sheets as a background to the transparent film.

For the light ray to be reflected precisely as you want it to, the form needs a perfect inner structure. This is the base of every piece and defines the outside shape. Sometimes I softened this regulated impression by adding a coincidental last step. You can find this in the *Katalysator* piece. Here the form of the layers are always the same, but the shape, they build on the reflective background, changes.



fig. 10 Janika Slowik „see more“ pendant 2018



fig. 11 Janika Slowik „Interference“ pendant 2018

The aspect of the *moment* is translated differently in the pieces. In the *see more* necklaces the smallest movement changes the outcome. Everything is temporary. You can try to recreate the image you saw for a second, but it will never be exactly the same again. This also counts for the *Interference* pieces, the way the pattern looks depends on many factors, like how much light there is. It also changes depending on your angle to it. You can look at it with somebody else and neither of you will see exactly the same effect. With the *Katalysator* brooches, the moment is interpreted on different levels. One is that the general appearance depends on the surroundings. With no light you would only see transparent film. But as soon as there is light colors appear. The way the light shines onto them and how they get reflected by the surface underneath, changes the outcome. If you look really closely, there is also a difference between artificial and natural light, because natural light contains a broader range of colors. The way the foil is layered, it creates the impression of an undefined outline. Without the contrast of a boarder, it seems like the brooches blend in with the surroundings. The eyes loose their focus between the transparency and the colors and seem to be overexposing with light. All this creates the appearance of something that is hard to grasp and relate to the *moment* as something that is difficult to capture.



fig. 12 Janika Slowik „katalysator“ brooch 2018

Conclusion

The inspiration for this project was a blurry memory of glittering effects, that, added together, create an overexposure of beauty. One little detail stands out, which is the image of the water drop about to drop from somebody's earlobe. This image is my first *jewellery moment* and inspired me throughout the project.

One difficulty with bringing an emotion that exists only in your head into visual reality is that it should not lose its essence during that translation. To make it possible to still see the vagueness in the final pieces, it was important to keep the blurriness. You can still find it in the blurring shape of the *Katalysator* brooches, the undefinedness of the changing patterns inside from the *Interference* pieces and in the confusion of the *see more* necklaces.

Jewellery is often defined over its materiality, which gets obsolete, when you combine it with the word *moment*. Without these restrictions, the definition for jewellery can get much wider again. That doesn't mean that the material gets less important. What changes are the qualities of why it is important. I chose my materials because of their characteristics, like transparency, reflection and lightness. If the brilliant inside is a real diamond or just glass, doesn't change the effect of it. The connotations associated with traditional jewellery remain still very relevant for me, and I like to allude to them.

Light plays a very important role in our life, most of the time unconsciously. It is able to define our mood and the atmosphere around us. One of my goals was to bring this importance back into our focus. By making jewellery that shows what our surrounding light quality is, it pushes our unconscious experience of the light around us, back into our consciousness. The moments when we are aware of the light, remain the magical moments like the rainbow appearing at the sky, or a sunset. These visions trigger our emotions.

There are a lot of features of light that define how we perceive the world around us. One of the most important one is reflection. It can reinforce a shape, and it can also contradict it. In my pieces you can find both possibilities. The reflective surfaces increase the effect of the *Interference* and *katalysator* pieces, but on the other hand they soften the border to the outside. Especially in the traditional jewellery reflections have always played an important role, and still do. But unlike in jewellery worn for status, the maxim is not the more, the better. Instead it can influence the way of expressing your concept.

The brilliant cut represents an optimum of directing light rays. This perfect working with light is a strong symbol for me and that is why I decided it to appear in some of my pieces. In the way I put them in between two sheets, the focus gets drawn from the cut to how it changes the pattern. In this way they appear because of their connotation, not as *jewellery moments* on their own.

The brilliant cut influenced this project also in another way. While rebuilding the shapes of different cuts I realized how important the exact measurements are. Light can do amazing tricks, but you change one angle a little bit and the whole effect can be gone. To direct the light, the rays need to be lead precisely in the right direction. To accomplish this, you need an inner structure that is nothing less than perfect. This forced me to get into the mathematical background of shapes and to spend a lot of time comparing prototypes with the smallest modifications.

The balance between light and dark is what creates clear shapes for our sight. In my *see more* necklaces I play with this contrast and you can also find it in the frame of the Interference pieces. In the Katalysator brooches on the other hand I wanted to emphasize the overexposure of light. Without a clear figure, the material fades into the background. This emphasizes the dream-like nature of it

Another motif that was important, were the colors that you can achieve by splitting light. Colors were very relevant for me, but I wanted them to appear naturally. The foil that my *Katalysator* brooches are made of, unite this natural splitting of colors with a transparent lightness. Also I wanted the colors to change depending on the surroundings. This wish produces some difficulties with the general idea of jewellery. Of course people want them to always look at their best, even in bad lighting. It is not possible to make something that gets nicer the more light is shining onto it, but stays equally beautiful with less light. This was a cracking point that took a lot of my attention.

One significant part of this project was that I wanted to translate an impression, that is absolute subjective. Someone else, working on the same topic, would have come up with a completely different aesthetic than I did. I experienced this differences in interpretation a lot of times during my research, which forced me to formulate precisely what I wanted to express. It still leaves a lot of room for variations. With my work I don't want to exclude all the other interpretations, but instead I want to encourage people to find their own *jewellery moment*.

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list of illustrations

fig. 1 light ray

teeth of the sea: highly deadly black tarantula (vinyl-lp)

<https://writerssecrets.files.wordpress.com/2017/05/hello-im-tom.jpeg?w=1088>

fig. 2 Gabriel Dawe „Plexus no. 19“ 2012

installation at villa olmo

*23' * 23' * 23' m; agora + gütermann thread, painted wood and hooks*

http://www.gabrieldawe.com/installation/plexus_019.html

fig. 3 Alyson Shotz „mirror fence“ 2003-2014

permanent installation at storm king art center, new windsor, NY

*42.06 * 91.44 * 10.16 cm; Starphire mirror and aluminum*

<https://www.alysonshotz.com/mirror-fence-storm-king/>

fig. 4 Diamond proportions and direction of light

<http://www.line69.ch/shop/images/bilder/unterteihhoehe-g.jpg>

fig. 5 Jiro Kamata „Bi“ necklace 2013

47cm; dichroic mirror, silver

http://www.oona-galerie.de/images/Jiro_Kamata_BIN2.jpg

fig. 6 Tokujin Yoshioka „Rainbow church“ 2010

Museum beyond, Seoul

8 meters high, 500 crystal prisms

<https://www.dezeen.com/2010/02/12/rainbow-church-by-tokujin-yoshioka/>

fig. 7 Janika Slowik „see more“ pendant 2018

*7 * 7 * 6 cm; plastic mirror, silverchain*

fig. 8 Janika Slowik „Interference“ brooch 2018

*10 * 10 * 1 cm; stainless steel, plastic mirror, lenticular foil, swarovski brilliant*

fig. 9 Janika Slowik „katalysator“ brooch 2018

*9 * 9 * 6 cm; stainless steel, diffraction grating film*

fig. 10 Janika Slowik „see more“ pendant 2018

*7 * 7 * 6 cm; plastic mirror, silverchain*

fig. 11 Janika Slowik „Interference“ pendant 2018

*15 * 15 * 1 cm; stainless steel, plastic mirror, lenticular foil, swarovski brilliant*

fig. 12 Janika Slowik „katalysator“ brooch 2018

*9 * 6 * 3 cm; stainless steel, diffraction grating film*