

Lāsma Ansone

Touch

Master in Object & Jewellery
PXL-MAD, School of Arts, Hasselt
Academic year 2018 – 2019
Article supervisor David Huycke

ABSTRACT

Touch is a powerful tool to gain “little pleasures of life” even though mostly we are not aware of this activity itself. However, most people today experience a shortage of tactile stimulation and this trend only intensifies. Interaction with objects around us gives the feeling of being in contact with the world: it calms down and gives satisfaction. In my research I do not look on touch only as a mean of putting on the jewellery piece but as a way to gain wide range of different sensations thus bringing tactility into consciousness. Theoretical and practical research within topic “Touch” resulted in jewellery pieces where wearer can follow the form of the piece of jewellery with the hand and use touch as a means of aesthetic appreciation and exploration.

In my master collection I distinguish two different approaches how to deal with tactility in jewellery. *Visual tactility and Contrasts* is the first group of jewellery pieces where focus is on the hand pieces that give a different pleasant sensation when touching them. In the second group called *Hand imprint* the dominant element is the chain where hand-modelled elements still contain visual-tactile marks from the making process.

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION.....	1
1. Perception.....	2
2. Classification of touch.....	2
3. Do not touch the art! (history in museums).....	3
4. Touch the art!.....	4
Objectives Own project.....	5
METHODS OF VIZUALIZING TOUCH.....	5
1. Haptic gaze.....	5
2. Marks by the maker.....	6
3. Contrast.....	8
OWN PROJECT.....	9
1. Visual tactility and contrast.....	10
2. Hand imprint.....	14
CONCLUSION.....	16

INTRODUCTION

In earlier days children mostly played outside. They had an ability to interact with the world, where every material and object through an imagination could turn into anything: built cities out of mud or capture a frog in order to slide over the moist, cool skin, were common activities that gave a great satisfaction.

Vivid memories from my own childhood are days in August, grain harvesting season, when I could immerse myself in a pile of freshly grown grain. However, in fact most people today experience a shortage of tactile stimulation and this trend only intensifies. This problem becomes more apparent in the case of digital technologies, since children nowadays have less direct material connection to the world they refer to. The process of mediation is hidden from view in the interface. People more and more experience longing of richer tactile experience. One of the consequences of living in a society of the image is that our hands are often “hungry” for what only our eyes are able to take it (Classen, 2005: 403-406). As a result of proliferating digital technologies especially people who are not makers themselves are experiencing lack of a physical interaction. Touchscreens have become as the most touched object, but in fact it contains only a few materials – glass-like plastic and rubber or plastic sheet for the backside. Therefore, there is a concern that the society is losing contact with the physical world and having disengaged existence, because it is the grounding sense, the sense of tangibility that places us in the world.

We are all seeking pleasant experiences while avoiding unnecessary pain. I believe touch is a powerful tool to gain “little pleasures of life” even though mostly we are not aware of this activity itself.

Interaction with the objects around us gives the feeling of being in contact with the world: it calms down and gives satisfaction (Ellingsen et al., 2016). Traditionally, in museum or gallery context jewellery is not considered to be free for touching due to its preciousness or fragility. Also when jewellery piece is being worn on somebody, touching without the permission to enter in personal space mostly is not acceptable. Ever since the contemporary jewellery has challenged and stretched the field’s borders in both material and shape, this “not meant for touching” viewpoint is often not relevant anymore. Jewellery, similarly like other art disciplines, tend to engage with the viewer or wearer in a more personal way, especially in the time of the dominant, impersonal digital world.

The act of putting on and wearing a jewellery piece includes some kind of pleasure and tactile stimulation plays an important role here. Jewellery is an appropriate medium to express the importance and necessity of tactile stimulation in everyday life. It can serve as a calming tool, gives pleasure or triggers particular memory, because jewellery is easily portable, it is a wearable object that can be touched unconsciously, when interaction is needed the most.

With this project I want to emphasize the often under-vaunted significance of touch and give ability to physically interact with the jewellery piece, thus challenging the “do not touch”-message in society and art. Expressing these thoughts in jewellery is the main part of my practical research where I have divided the pieces in two groups according to different approaches. In my work I focus either on the different, pleasant sensations or on the visual-tactile marks from the hand modelling process.

PERCEPTION

Touch is one of the basic senses, which can exist independently of the other senses and is - prior to the other sensory modalities - necessary for survival. Sense of touch is particularly diffuse and a varied source of information. Our environment, whether natural or build, "tattoo" our skin with tactile impressions (Howes, 2005: 28). Aristotle distinguishes a single organ that corresponds to each sensory faculty via a medium that transfers the sensation to the organ. In the case of touch there is no obvious single organ to which it corresponds. We are not affected or altered by the sense-object itself, nor simply through the medium (flesh), but actually in synchrony with the medium. That is why we fail to notice the medium in the process and our contact with things is in a mistaken manner perceived as direct, as unmediated. Bodily experiences are often described as the root of our knowledge, thereby not only the mind but also bodily experience plays a role in our education (Wiegel, 2010).

CLASSIFICATION OF TOUCH

Touch can be described and grouped in several ways. Neuroscientist Francis McGlone (°1943) in the article "The Two Sides of Touch: Sensing and Feeling" divide touch in three groups: "active", "passive" and "intra-personal" touch. "Active touch" is a touch perceived as a consequence of movement. We experience particular type of touch when we physically interact with someone or something. "Active touch" is used when we consciously explore by touching or working with our hands (fig. 1). "Passive touch" is experienced when another person or object is touching you. In this case the movement of self is not

required. For the recipient, touch from another person can be soothing, give rise to pleasurable feelings, and potentially suppress pain and negative emotions. An example of a jewellery piece that describes "passive touch" is *Tufted Bracelet* (Fig. 2) by the British jewellery artist Caroline Broadhead (°1950). The soft inside part, made of nylon monofilament, constantly touches the wearer's wrist. Thereby "passive touch" is received directly from the object, while it is worn. The last group is "Intra-personal touch" – touching oneself with one's hand or object (Fig. 3). In the case of the last one, the body is experiencing both "passive touch" on the body part being touched and "active touch" on the body part (for example hand) delivering touch (McGlone, 2008: 42, 43). In the situation when the person touches oneself with an object - artefact or jewellery piece, "intra-personal touch" is experienced. "Intra-personal" touch is often visually represented in works of Czech filmmaker and artist Jan Švankmajer, in both his static artworks called *Tactile experiments* (Fig. 4) and in films where he is showing person's interaction with objects emphasizing tactility. His aim is to liberate tactile perception as a means of poetic expression (Vasseleu, 2009). Touch serves also as a functional and an educational tool (we are learning by touching). Merleau-Ponty said that "what is given is not the things on its own, but the experience of the things" (Kemske, 2009). The hedonic value of touch is related to characteristics like softness, temperature, force and velocity (Ellingsen et al., 2016). Touch is ten times stronger than verbal contact and is able to express, for example, joy better and more nuanced than a facial expression.



Fig. 1 Working with hands



Fig. 2 Caroline Broadhead. Tufted Bracelet, 1980.



Fig. 3 touching oneself with object.



Fig. 4 Jan Švankmajer. Tactile lids, 1978

DO NOT TOUCH THE ART!

Using multiple senses to investigate museum objects enhance the impression of having comprehended the nature of exhibits. Nevertheless, museum collections today are not for touching, as a contrast to the late 17th and 18th century museums / private collections, where touching was an essential part of museum visits. Visitors not only touched objects in museums in order to verify their true nature, however, they touched them because they wanted to experience them intimately or even establish an imaginative intimacy with storied ancient people (Classen, 2005: 277). At one level touch supplements sight; we learn about objects and their materiality by touching. We fulfil our curiosity by testing dullness, gravity, coarseness or fineness, fastness or looseness, stiffness or flexibility, roughness or brittleness and softness, clamminess or slipperiness. While museums and galleries still dwell to include the tactile sensations, department stores do it more often, thus turning the sense of touch into “one of the best salesman” (Classen, 2005: 403). Of course, in a museum context there is a problem with allowing visitors access to exhibits through senses other than sight, especially through touch. It is important to note that touch is critically important for the visually impaired visitors. Even though, touching and handling museum artefacts create risk to their conservation, researchers have pointed out that the opportunity to touch objects is highly rewarding and attracts more visitors (Mcglone, 2008: 42, 43). Multisensory approach in museums can also enhance the exhibits’ role in knowledge transfer, enjoyment and social care.

TOUCH THE ART!

Until the era of Enlightenment, mostly due to religious belief, tactility in art was a common thing. Then the perceptions of the senses and their significance changed dramatically. In the 19th century the five common senses were divided in a strict hierarchy – touch, taste and smell were considered as lower senses (also as a result of the system in museums), and opposite, the hearing and especially the vision were seen as the higher senses. As a reaction to this hierarchy, at the beginning of the 20th century, artists started experimenting with non-visual senses, especially with touch. Artists in the Futurist, Dada and later on Surrealist movement demonstrated many ways in which touch can be inherent to the experience and meaning of a work of art. One of the first tactile artworks was Marinetti's (1876 - 1944) series called Tactile Plates (Fig. 5). Incorporating a mental journey from Africa to France, the plate allowed one to experience a variety of sensations and connotations evoked by the fingertips gliding gently over various textures in a downward movement. Marinetti's aim was to restrict the visual to a minimum, because vision influences the tactile perception. Marcel Duchamp (1887 - 1968) in his work *Please touch!* (Fig. 6) uses a strong visual image - a naturalistically shaped foam breast surrounded by velvet, which seduced the viewer to reach out and touch, thus breaking two rules simultaneously: an institutional ("do not touch" message in museums) and a social one (Verbeek, 2012). Also in more recent years some artists have incorporated tactile qualities in their works. Touch, especially, is widely used in installation art (site-specific art), where artists offer to the audience to go through unusual bodily experience or in a performance art where "inter-individual"

touch is often used as a tool to break social rules. In the following paragraphs I will look more closely on different approaches that other artist in the field of object making have used to reveal tactility in their practice. The same approaches are used to describe my own project.

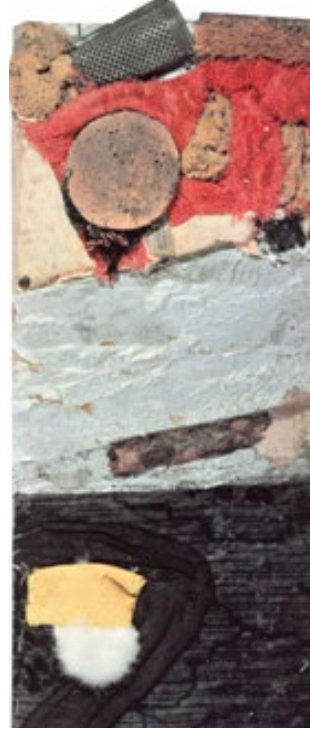


Fig. 5 Marinetti, Tactile plate, 1921



Fig.6 Marcel Duchamp, Please touch! 1947

OBJECTIVES OF OWN PROJECT

It is important to understand the role of touch in our lives, and then to reflect on it personally. Touch is not just a gesture, a passing caress; it is part of a network of practices and emotions. Perhaps, all makers become sensitized through the heightened awareness of physical properties resulting from their works. My aim when working with touch is to allow a person to discover the jewellery piece physically, thus experiencing greater tactile diversity in their life.

The aim of introducing touch is to facilitate deeper understanding of the principles and qualities of materials used in the pieces which is indiscernible through visual perception alone. The intention is doing it by enabling the wearer to follow the form of the piece of jewellery with the hand and use touch as a means of aesthetic appreciation and exploration. My wish is to emphasize that information about interrelation of rhythm, movement, contact, and pressure is only available through touch. These are the tactile qualities of materials that can draw particular forms of action, for example, to tap, to caress or to hug, can signal quality and even create an emotional experience. The challenge is to find the right materials and proportions that instinctively invite and trigger an interaction. It is interesting to experiment with elements, like soft curves that echo the human body, textures and "little imperfections". These elements could visually entice individuals to touch, thereby experiencing pleasure and gaining new knowledge about materiality and sensation itself. When the jewellery piece is held and caressed, it broadens a tactile aesthetic for jewellery and shifts focus from an adornment itself to one's physical and emotional experience of these pieces.

METHODS OF VIZUALIZING TOUCH

Different methods that artists used in their work and show tactility are divided into three groups. These three approaches will be discussed in the following paragraphs: Haptic Gaze, Marks by the Maker and Contrast. In the first paragraph Haptic Gaze focus is on relationships between touch and vision. In Marks by the Maker the touch in the making process is discussed and in the final part Contrast elements that can activate the desire of touching are considered.

HAPTIC GAZE

A term closely related to tactility is "haptic gaze"¹ The artwork that visualize the "haptic gaze" the best is Meret Oppenheim's (1913 - 1985) iconic work *Breakfast in Fur* (Fig. 7). Just by looking at it, the work of art evokes a strong tactile feeling. One can almost physically experience the sensation of the fur on the lips and hands, when imagining drinking from fur covered tableware. The artist uses widely recognizable, soft, enjoyable materials, therefore imagination is easily activated. However, it is important to note that in the case of the "haptic gaze" vision is still dominant over touch.

¹ "Haptic gaze," a term first used by the Austrian art historian Alois Riegl (1858-1905) at the beginning of the 20th century and more recently applied to new media art. The expression refers to the sensual awareness of tactile properties elicited by visual observation; in other words, one automatically experiences a sensation of touching by caressing two- or three-dimensional surfaces with the eye (Verbeek, 2012).



Fig. 7 Meret Oppenheim, Breakfast in fur, 1936

Optical illusion in art is another method related to “haptic gaze” and tactility. Works that incorporate optic illusion at first are consumed by the eyes which fool to obtain clear understanding about properties of the material. Further, touch is sometimes needed to gain truth about the object. Several studies have found that touch becomes meaningful as an interpretive resource mainly by reinforcing or challenging the way an object is seen. In other words, interpretation is often framed in terms of how information from real touch differs from what is seen and thus expected in terms of texture, materiality, shape, temperature and size (Chsistidou, Pierroux, 2018). The Spanish artist Jose Manuel Castro Lopez (°1959) transforms hard surfaces of rocks into gentle fabric-like or skin-like creases. He simultaneously shows the softness and hardness of the pieces, thus confusing the viewer, while touch can erase doubts. This approach is very interesting, especially, because his sculptures, for example *Stone – 3* (Fig. 8) includes curiosity and confusion.

It should be noted that one of the difficulties when working with touch is to capture these subtle differences in photography. Digital presentation form cannot provide full experience, because the physical interaction is not possible. Švankmajer (°1934) has pointed out challenges to work with tactility in

audio-visual medium: “It is true to say that the film viewer does not experience tactile sensations directly on his or her body. However, I rely on the conjunction of “touch-vision” senses, learned from the practical tasks of everyday life and also on the effects of reflexive psychosis, which to a certain extent governs even the psychology of us, normal people” (Stehlíková, 2011). We can assume that sight is capable, to a greater or smaller extent depending on individuals, to transfer tactile sensations in a mediated way.



Fig.8 Jose Manuel Castro, stone-3

MARKS BY THE MAKER

Systems for measuring sight or hearing are widely used. For touch there isn't one universal system how to measure it. Chinese-American geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (°1930) has written: “Touch unlike the other senses, modifies its object. It reminds us that we are not only observers of the world but actors in it” (Tuan, 2005: 79). Touch leaves visual – tactile marks. Objects that we handle day to day transform our body and hands, similarly like our touch in long term deforms

surfaces, like the sea creates pebbles out of rough stones. Estonian jewellery artist Tanel Veenre (°1977) has collected and then included in his book photographs of makers' hands, thus showing visually the traces of touching while working (Fig. 9). When working with soft, inelastic material marks from the making process define the end result. In fact, most of the product prototypes before they go to the production line are made by hand, but this step is hidden from society.

Touching some symbols can seal a promise or make an act of devotion (Finnegan, 2005: 21). Because of symbolic belief the act of touching sometimes plays an important role after the art work is already made and exhibited. For example, people are touching a statue on the Charles Bridge in Prague to make a wish, thus polishing certain parts of the surface (fig. 10). Another reason to touch historical objects is to gain feeling that one is "touching" the history. People want to feel a connection. For some people it is a way to say "I was here", because artefacts were here years before we were around and will be here for years again afterwards (Candlin, 2017).

German artist and silversmith Rudolf Bott (°1956) uses methods where he casts hand modelled wax containers into metal. Thereby the shape is determined by movements and size of the artist's hands and most likely the form and curves of the vessel will fit almost perfectly in another person's hands. Additionally, the surface of the art work contains fingerprints – visual marks on the surface being touched (Fig.11). Human fingerprints are detailed, nearly unique, difficult to alter, and durable over the life of an individual, making them suitable as long-term markers of human identity (Hueske, 2009). German gold- and silversmith Gerd Rothman (°1941) has analysed the human body and experimented with it for more than 30 years. Rothmann's jewellery

works with cast fingerprints in silver or gold create a unique relationship with the wearer, because they are the customers' of their family's prints. His *Family Necklace* contains the individual fingerprints of the members of one family (Fig. 12) (Gans, 2010). When working with tactility, Rothman adds double preciousness to his works, because his pieces mostly are made out of precious materials and they hold a strong emotional value. In the works by Bott and Rothman touch is more important before the work is finished, because the first steps of these works were created almost without the mediation of instruments and the gestures of the artist or the customer are the most important.



Fig. 9 Tanel Veenre. HANDFUL – KÄEULATUSES, Photograph from book, 2015



Fig. 10 Plaque at the base of the statue of John of Nepomuk on Charles Bridge in Prague.



Fig. 11 Rudolf Bott, Container, 2001



Fig. 12 Gerd Rothmann, Family Necklace, 1988

CONTRAST

Like all other senses, the tactile sense is activated by contrast – shift of heat and cold, roughness and smoothness, lightness and weight. Several artists use the contrast between materials (soft and hard), between materiality and shape or contrasting shapes that are used in one object. With the series of Brush-i small tables, Belgium design studio *Alliages Design* contrasts the rigidity and the coldness of the metal with the flexibility, the undulation, the warmth of unexpected materials that bring to the furniture a singular touch (Fig. 14). In his sculptures, Italian object and jewellery artist Paolo Marcolongo (°1956), uses contrasts between shapes - rounded blown Murano glass forms as opposite to the pointy metal wire construction (Fig. 13). In this case, also compared to Marcolongo's jewellery pieces, tactility is limited and contrast itself plays the dominant role. Norwegian jewellery artist Tone Vigeland (°1938) has been working with contrasts between hard materials, like silver and flexible, smooth shapes (Fig. 15). She said: "I'd been looking for a soft, sensory tactility – as a contrast to the hard metal" (Zieger, 2012). Sometimes contrasting surfaces

differ a lot in size - most certainly little "imperfections" on smooth surfaces like grooves or bumps attracts our attention and we will slide over it with our hand or fingers. These kinds of elements work as a target or button. Besides, we all have pre-existing models in our heads; elements that we recognize to be made for touch. One example for a pre-existing model could be the button – made out of different materials, in the size of fingertip or palm and always compressible. Today's society is also described as a "pushbutton" culture. It points out, first of all, the problem of having a disengaged existence and secondly, the fact that tactile interaction with the fingertip is still ongoing (Classen 2005: 404).



Fig. 13 Paolo Marcolongo, Sculpture, 2016



Fig.14 Alliages design studio, Brush-i tables, 2018



Fig. 15 Tone Vigeland, Necklace (silver), 2001

Swiss Jewellery artist Sophie Hanagarth (°1968) often contrasts hard material, like stainless steel or iron, with rounded, sensual shapes. Her aim is to create jewellery that is sensual, incorporates desire and often she achieves it through the irony. Often in her works some manipulation (flexibility, movement) is involved, because it is a tool how she awakens sensuality. For instance, in her *Lipstick rings* she uses the delicate shape of the mouth and lips as the ring-hole, which in this case works like a target (Fig. 16). *Fleece with golden paws* has a strong reference to fur collar (boa), not only because of the shape, but also because a similar flexibility in hard material like steel is achieved (2004, fig.17), (Lebas, 2015).



Fig. 16 Sophie Hanagarth, Lipstick-rings, 2014



Fig. 17 Sophie Hanagarth, Fleece with Golden Paws, 2004

OWN PROJECT

According to literature (Verbeek, 2012, Kemske, 2009, and Chsistidou & Pierroux, 2018) there are elements that attract touch more, for example, references to the human body, soft materials that offers a pleasant touch, contrasting surfaces or the use of widely recognized objects that are meant for touching. Likewise, people tend to put their hands into gaps or holes to assess their depth, knock on objects to determine their hollowness or solidity, and touch sharp edges to assess the precision with which the material had been cut (Candlin, 2017).

In my work the aim is that pieces also visually offer or promise pleasant touch. This is one of the main reasons why I incorporate bright, warm colours. We automatically tend to associate colourfulness with childhood and toys that are meant to be touched and played with. My goal is that a person experiences pleasure and satisfaction while he interacts with the piece. These sensations can recall enjoyable memories, although it is very personal thing.

Palms and fingertips are the most sensitive; thereby I am working with the touch experienced through these body parts. This “sensitivity” can be measured using two-point discrimination threshold – the smallest distance between two

locations on the body needed to allow two stimuli to be perceived as distinct (Gallance, Spence 2008: 170). Basically, it proves that we are able to distinguish the most subtle differences particularly with our fingertips. Moreover the index finger is used most often to evaluate the qualities of the surface. Other exceedingly sensitive body parts are lips and the tip of the nose. However, most of the people are used to start to explore unknown objects with their hands; therefore my jewellery pieces are mainly made to be touched and to be appealing for the hands. Similarly like in the methodology, my own approach is divided into several paragraphs that focus on different approaches. However, the groups Haptic gaze and Contrasts are merged together in my own practical work and also in the text.

VISUALL TACTILITY AND CONTRASTS

One possibility to show tactility in a visual way is to use, the concept of the “haptic gaze” or the “visual tactility” approach. An important aspect is that mostly before we presume to touch something, we inspect it with the eyes. Therefore, the relationships between vision and touch remains important. Touching often serves to heighten visual engagement with the object transforming the hand into a kind of "optical prosthesis" (Christidou, Pierroux, 2018). I am interested to use it together with elements of optic illusion, because it clearly shows that touch can provide truth and quite often vision alone is not enough.

In the paragraph Methods of visualizing touch I studied different qualities of materials and shapes that activate our desire to physically interact with objects. Besides visually recognizable pleasant materials, for instance fur or feathers,

also contrasting elements appear to be appealing for touch (Fig. 18). Also “pre-existing” elements (for example buttons for pressing or sliding over, all kinds of handles etc.) that are widely recognizable to be made for touching invite person more often to interact with the object. (Fig.19). In my practice I freely combine previously mentioned, slightly different elements. In some pieces visually tactile elements, like soft brushes or sponges are used as main focus point, in others, the contrast between materials or surfaces have the main attention. In my practical work I do not use contrasts between geometrical and organic shapes but instead I use contrasting materials and different textures; like soft and hard materials that are equally enjoyable for touch (Fig. 20). I have included the contrast between textures in the same material, for instance when one side is polished and the other is uneven, and adding another material into a main, bigger shape, thus contrasting different qualities of materials (Fig. 21).



Fig.18 Lasma Ansone, pendant, 2019, ebony, brush, 137x26x26 mm



Fig.19 Lasma Ansonne, pendant, 2018, stabilized wood, silver, sponge, leather, 84x46x11 mm (backside)



Fig.20 Lasma Ansonne, pendant, 2018, stabilized wood, silver, sponge, cord, 121x67x21 mm (Backside)

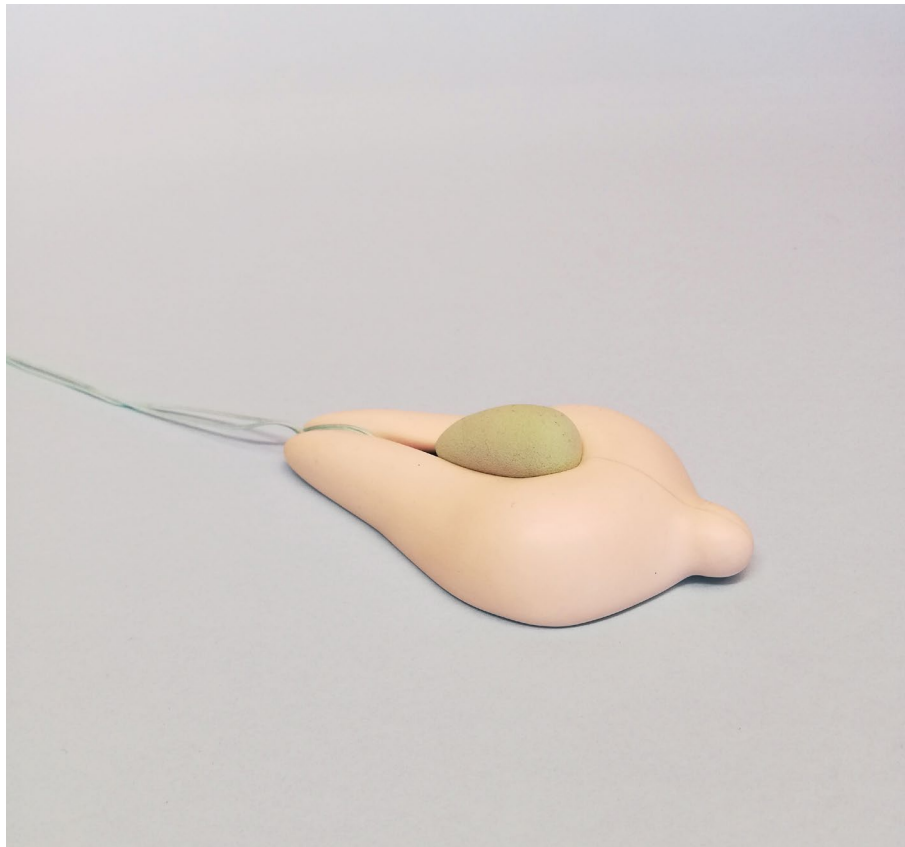


Fig.21 Lasma Ansonne, pendant, 2018, JUMA, sponge, cord, 105x60x20 mm

However, all the pieces in this group have a lot of similarities that reconnect them. I started this approach by modelling shapes that have references to already existing hand tools, especially handles - shapes that are comfortable for the hand (Fig. 22). Even though some recognizable object references can be found, pieces remain abstract. British sculptor Anthony Cragg (°1949) describes the shapes of his abstract, organic sculptures as not existing in this world (Kellaway, 2017). Because of my approach to prototype shapes in soft material beforehand in order to find the right proportions, the overall shape becomes more abstract and undefinable. Back in the days, makers paid great attention to delight of the hand and how the handle of the file or hammer snuggles in the palm. As a reason to use smooth shapes I also see in fact that as a result of intense touching, for instance with our hands, the shape becomes smooth, round or oval, but never with sharp edges. In making objects more comfortable to hold and aesthetically pleasing, it is worth to remember about the cultural value associated with different tactile qualities. For example, western culture tends to associate heaviness with durability and quality (Classen 2005: 403). My goal is to find the right combination of shape, weight and materiality that perfectly fits in the hand thus giving pleasure and maintaining a reference to the hand size tool or object.

Another aspect that is essential for me is the sensual appearance of the shape and surface as reference to the body and skin. For example, I appreciate the works of young Italian photographer Daniele de Carolis (Fig. 23). Also objects with sensual appearance, referring to the observed unauthorized touches in museums, usually attract tactual attention more often. Hence, some of my pieces contain the reference to the body curves. For example the piece with the brush (Fig. 24)

apart from the curved body it has a brush that is a clearly recognizable enjoyable element. Another pendant (Fig. 25) that also contains curves is made of half hard and half soft material. However, in this case the contrast is not that obvious only by looking. A pendant made out of light blue stabilised wood² (Fig. 26) probably has the strongest association with the body, due to its abstract backbone line.



Fig. 22 Hand tools

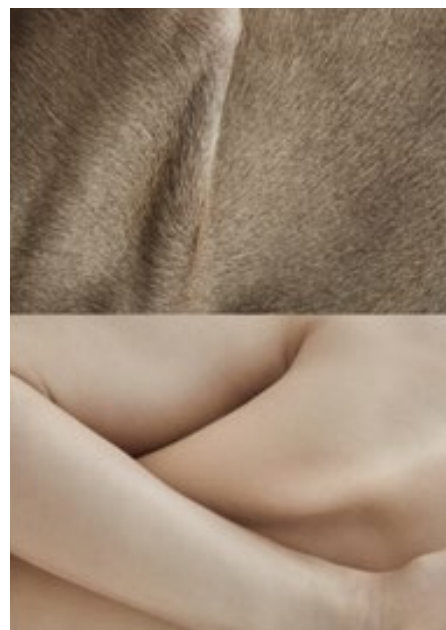


Fig. 23 Daniele de Carolis, Horror vegetarian, 2018

² Stabilized wood is wood that has been impregnated with a chemical stabilizing solution. The purpose of stabilizing wood is to make it more durable and less prone to warping or cracking than natural, untreated wood.



Fig.25 Lasma Ansone, pendant, 2019, stabilized wood, silver, sponge, cord, titanium, 115x35x37 mm



Fig.24 Lasma Ansonne, brooch, 2019, sponge, resin, brush, titanium, silver, steel, 150x35x23 mm (front side)



Fig.26 Lasma Ansonne, pendant, 2019, stabilized wood, silver, cord, 112x42x25 mm (front side)

HAND IMPRINT

Another approach is to make the making process visible. This approach compared to the previous one – Visual tactility and Contrasts is more direct, because the shapes and sizes are derived solely from my hands and finger's own involvement. In this group chains that are made of Milliput³ are the dominant elements. Every piece is made with hands and thus contains fingerprints and imprints made by the maker. Although the pieces, as opposite to the ones in the previous group are rather rough, yet, they still have a rounded and smooth feeling as a result of hand-modelled soft material. Compared to the pieces in previous group, here “passive touch” can be experienced much better, because these necklaces cover a larger part of the body. The decision to make a chain is found in the fact that the chain is one of the basic elements in jewellery with ancient history. However, traditionally hand-made chains also require the involvement of many tools. The chain's ability to move, its overall feeling and the sound it makes, depends on the size of the chain links and on the total length. Chain elements are combined with other materials and also in different lengths, thus incorporating multiple sensations. For example, the longest chain remains the classic long pearl necklaces that women put around the neck several times and the sensation changes depends on the number of layers (Fig. 27). I believe that in the case of the pearl chain, the most enjoyable moment is the interaction with it while layering around, thus my aim is to translate this action in my own work. All of the chain links except one is made of Milliput. A different one is made of oxidised silver. One similar, yet varied element is rather noticeable by the touch then sight. The big chain links of short necklaces

³ Two part versatile epoxy putty which is highly adhesive to most materials.

allow the wearer to interact with them differently – the link sizes are big enough to be explored completely by the fingertips (Fig. 28). Significant is that pieces are handmade and it is not possible to reach this result in any other production method. Every link is unique and contains little imperfections, thereby the steps of the making are very visible. I believe that this very direct way of working can evoke the realization that anyone could make it with their own hands. Handmade objects are universal, comprehensible for all the humanity, but now they have established their position as a luxury. My aim is that person who holds one of the necklaces experience the genuine feeling of being connected with handmade object and the maker behind it.

Chain necklaces are combined with visually and sensually different materials. These other materials serve as a big contrasting element thereby highlighting the tactile diversity. Necklace with the wood element (Fig. 28) has a strong contrast between rough chain part and smooth, sensual neck-shoulder element which follows the shape of body, thus providing constant pleasant feeling in the neck area. According to literature (Classen 2005: 403) we tend to more appreciate products that are a little bit heavy. The weight has an important role in these necklaces and besides the visual look, it also determines the length of the pieces, in order to reach desirable weight.

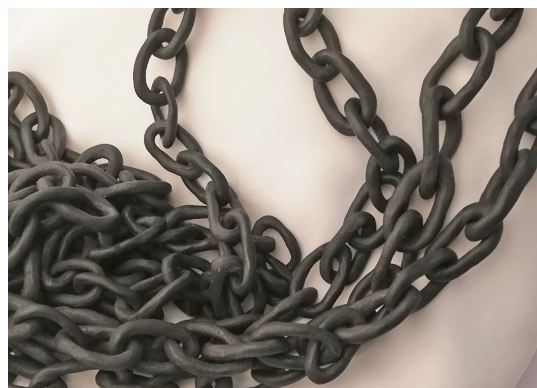


Fig.27 Lasma Ansone, chain (necklace), 2019, milliput, silver, 1590x40x15xmm (close-up)



Fig. 28 Lasma Anson, necklace, 2019, milliput, silver, stabilized wood, 290x200x35 mm

CONCLUSION

Aim of the jewellery project **Touch** was to challenge the “do not touch” message in jewellery art with collection that is both visually inviting and physically very pleasant for touch. Through this project I want to emphasize the importance and great emotional impact of touch in daily life. Starting point for this project was a combination of rich tactile experience in childhood and observation of today’s digital reality. As well as the personal enjoyment of interacting with jewellery while putting it on or off, made me think about the powerful role of touch.

The research is build up in two parts.

The first, theoretical part of this research project provides knowledge about essential elements that can trigger people’s curiosity and desire to touch. Touch is a complex sensation on which we rely on everyday life. Theoretical part gives the overview of the classification and perception of touch. Tactility’s importance in art has changed from time to time and today’s increasing number of institutions and artists pays attention to the role of tactility in society. Alongside other artists, especially in installation field, also jewellery artists have used different features of touch. Jewellery artists that work with tactility are divided in three groups according the approach that they use in their artistic practice. In Visual tactility the use of visual elements are equally important as tactile, in the Marks by the maker artists explores the touch in making process and in the group Contrasts artists use different elements that are opposed to each other, thus creating curiosity and inviting to explore the object by touching it.

First part serves as a background in the understanding of the **second part** where my own artistic work is discussed.

To describe my own works I use two groups –Visual tactility & Contrasts and Hand imprint. (In my practical work I mix together the elements of Visual tactility and Contrasts, thereby I distinguish two groups instead of three). The first group consists mostly of hand size pendants that incorporate both contrast and visual tactile elements. In the group Hand imprint main element is chain as a reference to classical jewellery. Every chain link is hand modelled and contains visual tactile marks by the making process. Every piece is meant to be explored by touch, but additionally some of the pieces have more visually recognizable parts, for example, brush, thereby the physical sensation can be imagined without real physical contact.

Theoretical material also influenced to distinguish different approaches how to deal with tactility in my own practice, thereby covering broader and more contrasting, yet still pleasant sensual experiences. For example, the article of unauthorised touch in museum helped to select specific elements to include in the jewellery pieces. These elements are touched by the museum visitors, like human body curves, all kind of holes and gaps, and also handles. Likewise other art works that incorporate fingerprints influenced me through finger and hand imprints to show visually the making process – touch before art work is finished.

Material selection was based on their characteristics, both visual and tactile.

As my main materials I have chosen stabilized wood due to its colourfulness and great density that allows polishing the surface. As a contrasting material I used both readymade and self-casted sponges. Stabilized wood is not widely recognizable as material therefore people tend to touch it in order to explore, also colourfulness draws attention. Another soft material that is used in contrast with the hard ones is brush. I believe that brush compared to sponge was more successful choice due to its visual recognition. Another much used material is Milliput two part epoxy putty. I am satisfied with this choice, because material is durable and it allows the most direct way of tuning hand modelled elements into jewellery. Used materials could be divided in two groups – materials which tactility is visually obvious, like brushes or sponge and materials that most likely have to be touched to fully understand their qualities.

Another important aspect is that mostly in my pieces I use “man made” materials. As I mentioned before, people have lost connection to the nature and in a way it would be logical to use natural elements, but my aim, by using mostly synthetic materials, is to show that complete return to nature is impossible and people are very accustomed and very trustworthy to the man-made.

The **shapes** of the jewellery pieces in Visual tactility and Contrasts are various and organic. They have a reference to handles and tools. In my works I play with the abstraction testing its limits, yet these attributes can be read precisely because we share the same symbolic universe. Pieces are approximately in hand size and the dominant material is wood. Dense material surfaces are mostly made very smooth in order to make tactile experience very pleasant. Discussing and comparing the works of M. Oppenheim and Marinetti I discovered that the visual tactility and the use of recognizable and enjoyable materials can evoke a strong tactile feeling even without touching it. This concept was used in my pieces that contain a brush details. The reference to traditional jewellery is important to me therefore widely used element in my works is chain. I interpreted this classical element by modelling it with hands, without hiding the making marks. Even though chains have relatively rough look, elements are organic and in a way smooth.

Viewer/wearer

One difficulty is to anticipate which element and material will invite the viewer/ wearer to physically interact with the piece. People could be divided in three groups, the ones who touch objects even when it is prohibited, people who are willing to do it when it is allowed and third group would avoid touching in most of the situations. For example, in exhibition context, I want to give the audience the possibility to touch the jewellery pieces. My hope is that people experience different pleasant sensations while holding the piece and thereby bringing the importance of physical contact back into our focus. Also the aim is that collection of jewellery pieces is attractive way to represent pleasure and enjoyment. Volumes are made to invite to be stroked by the fingers. What seems to be a natural element, the product of a contingency, is actually something calculated and elements in every piece are carefully selected.

When jewellery piece is being worn my hope is that the piece gives pleasure and serves as a calming tool, because one of the touch properties is the ability to calm down. Also when jewellery piece is being worn on somebody, touching without the permission to enter in personal space mostly is not acceptable, but it still has an ability to create a dialogue.

Even though most probably are not aware of it, tactile experiences can trigger pleasant emotions. Undeniably, people have different preferences in sensation wise. Field of jewellery is a very interesting space and an appropriate medium to express the importance and necessity of tactile stimulation, especially because the body plays a fundamental role.

Future

However, the main tasks for the Master's thesis are fulfilled and gained knowledge and experience could be used for the next projects. In the future it would be interesting to test the outcome by using greater diversity of sizes for the jewellery pieces. For example, piece that covers body more would also give different sensations. Also, as I mentioned before, relationships between tactility in jewellery and other specific body parts could be more deeply explored. For instance, to focus on other types of jewellery, like rings, bracelets or even more unusual body adornments. In my Master collection, due to time constraints, I made pendants, necklaces and brooch, also, because these types of adornments can be worn by people with all body sizes. Significant aspect is that all invented shapes and material combinations are my personal visual tactile language and anyone else, when working with this topic, would come up with different result.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC LIST

1. BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Candlin, F., 2017, "Rehabilitating unauthorised touch or why museum visitors touch the exhibits", *The Senses and Society*, 12:3, 251-266, DOI: 10.1080/17458927.2017.1367485

Christidou, D., Pierroux, P. 2018, "Art, touch and meaning making: an analysis of multisensory interpretation in the museum", *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 34:1, 96-115, DOI: 10.1080/09647775.2018.1516561

Classen, C., 2005, "Touch and Technology", *The Book of Touch*, ed. Classen C., Berg Publishers, 403 – 406.

Ellingsem, D. M., Leknes, S., Løseth, G., Wessberg, J., Olausson H., 2016, "The Neurobiology Shaping Affective Touch: Expectation, Motivation, and Meaning in the Multisensory Context", *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6:1986, doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01986

Finnegan, R., 2005, "Tactile Communication", *The Book of Touch*, ed. Classen C., Berg Publishers, 21.

Gallance, A., Spence, C., 170, "A memory for Touch: The cognitive psychology of tactile memory", *Touch in Museum*, ed. Chatterjee H. J., Berg, 170.

Howes, D., 2005, "Skinscapes: Embodiment, Culture and Environment", *The Book of Touch*, ed. Classen C., Berg Publishers, 28.

Hueske, E., 2009, "Firearms and Fingerprints", *Facts on File/Infobase Publishing*, New York.

Kemske, B., 2009, "Embracing Sculptural Ceramics: A Lived Experience of Touch in Art", *The Senses and Society*, 4:3, 323-345, DOI: 10.2752/174589209X12464528171932

McGlone, F., 2008, "The two sides of touch: sensing and feeling", *Touch in Museum*, ed. Chatterjee H. J., Berg, 43.

Tuan, Y., 2005, "The Pleasures of Touch", *The Book of Touch*, ed. Classen C., Berg Publishers, 79.

Verbeek, C., 2012, "Prière de toucher!", *The Senses and Society*, 7:2, 225-235, DOI: 10.2752/174589312X13276628771640

Wiegel, L., 2010, "Perception in the digital age", *RMA Thesis – Media and Performance Studies*.

1. WEBSITES

Ganss, J. C., 2010, "Gerd Rothmann: Catalog Raisonne." Art Jewellery forum, review, online: <https://artjewelleryforum.org/book-reviews/gerd-rothmann-catalog-raisonn%C3%A9-1967-2008>, last consulted on 05.05.2019

Kellaway, K., 2017, Interview with Tony Cragg: "I'm most interested in the emotional qualities of things", online: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2017/mar/05/tony-cragg-sculpture-interview-rare-category-objects>, last consulted on 05.05.2019

Lebas, C., 2015, "Iron woman's soft toys: in conversation with Sophie Hanagarth." Art Jewellery Forum, online: <https://artjewelleryforum.org/iron-woman%E2%80%99s-soft-toys-in-conversation-with-sophie-hanagarth>, last consulted on 05.05.2019

Stehlíková, T., 2011, "Tactility and film, interview with Jan Švankmajer." online: <https://cinestheticfeasts.wordpress.com/2013/06/16/tactility-and-film-interview-with-jan-svankmajer/>, last consulted on 05.05.2019

Vasseleu, C., 2009, "The Svankmajer Touch." Animation Studies Online Journal. Online: <https://journal.animationstudies.org/cathryn-vasseleu-the-svankmajer-touch/>, last consulted on 05.05.2019

Zieger, R., 2012, "Hands on" interview with Tone Vigeland. Norwegian Crafts, online: <http://www.norwegiancrafts.no/articles/hands-on>, last consulted on 05.05.2019

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1 Illustration for active touch
<https://alleyoopgroup.com/staying-in-touch-the-rise-of-tactility/>

Fig 2 Caroline Broadhead. Tufted Bracelet, 1980
<http://www.aestheticmagazine.com/interview-jewellery-artist-caroline-broadhead/>

Fig. 3 Touching oneself with object
<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-3514279/Can-tickle-Unnering-ability-sign-schizophrenic-like-traits-experts-warn.html>

Fig. 4 "Jan Švankmajer. Tactile lids, 1978
<https://journal.animationstudies.org/cathryn-vasseleu-the-svankmajer-touch/>

Fig. 5 Marinetti, Tactile plate, 1921
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.2752/174589312X13276628771640?needAccess=true&journalCode=rfss20>

Fig. 6 Marcel Duchamp, Please touch! 1947
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.2752/174589312X13276628771640?needAccess=true&journalCode=rfss20>

Fig. 7 Meret Oppenheim, Breakfast in fur, 1936
<https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2016/02/09/466061492/luncheon-in-fur-the-surrealist-tea-cup-that-stirred-the-art-world>

Fig. 8 Jose Manuel Castro, stone-3
<https://www.thisiscolossal.com/2016/12/wrinkled-stones-jose-manuel-castro-lopez/>

Fig. 9 Tanel Veenre. HANDFUL – KÄEULATUSES, Photograph from book, 2015
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/139893132153752944/?lp=true>

Fig. 10 Plaque at the base of the statue of John of Nepomuk on Charles Bridge in Prague
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Plaque_at_the_statue_of_John_of_Nepomuk_on_Charles_Bridge.jpg

Fig. 11 Rudolf Bott, Container, 2001
<https://mocosubmit.com/not-just-a-bowl-of-cherries-at-galerie-sofie-lachaert/>

Fig. 12 Gerd Rothmann, Family Necklace, 1988
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/285697170089730771/>

Fig. 13 Paolo Marcolongo, Sculpture, 2016
<http://www.paolomarcolongo.com/index.php>

Fig. 14 Allriages design studio, Brush-i tables, 2018
<https://alliagesdesign.com/brush-i/>

Fig. 15 Tone Vigeland, Necklace (silver), 2001
<https://dnstdm.de/en/tone-vigeland-schmuck-objekt-skulptur-2/>

Fig. 16 Sophie Hanagarth, Lipstick-rings, 2014
<http://www.sophiehanagarth.com/>

Fig. 17 Sophie Hanagarth, Fleece with Golden Paws, 2004
<http://www.sophiehanagarth.com/>

Fig.18 Lasma Ansonne, pendant, 2019, ebony, brush, 137x26x26 mm

Fig.19 Lasma Ansonne, pendant, 2018, stabilized wood, silver, sponge, leather, 84x46x11 mm (backside)

Fig.20 Lasma Ansonne, pendant, 2018, stabilized wood, silver, sponge, cord, 121x67x21 mm (frontside)

Fig.21 Lasma Ansone, pendant, 2018, JUMA, sponge, cord, 105x60x20 mm

Fig. 22 Hand tools

Fig. 23 Daniele de Carolis,, Horror vegetarian, 2018

Fig.24 Lasma Ansone, brooch, 2019, sponge, resin, brush, titanium, silver, steel, 150x35x23 mm (front side)

Fig.25 Lasma Ansone, pendant, 2019, stabilized wood, silver, sponge, cord, titanium, 115x35x37 mm

Fig.26 Lasma Ansone, pendant, 2019, stabilized wood, silver, cord, 112x42x25 mm (front side)

Fig.27 Lasma Ansone, chain (necklace), 2019, milliput, silver, 1590x40x15xmm (close-up)

Fig. 28 Lasma Ansone, necklace, 2019, milliput, silver, stabilized wood, 290x200x35 mm