

# Jewellery all along the line



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**Jewellery all along the line**

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## Jewellery all along the line

Where do the origins of jewellery lie? The current exhibition shows how the origins of jewellery - a string - developed into a wide variety of meanings and forms, continued in an unbroken line through the history of mankind and is still valid today. The use of a string is virtually the zero point of this line. It is the starting point for today's jewellery culture and can already be scientifically proven in early archaeological finds. Since the beginnings of its use in jewellery in South Africa around 75,000 years ago, its use has branched out into a variety that spans cultures and eras and still shapes our understanding of jewellery as wearers today, as well as shaping jewellery creation as a design theme. Let us now follow this string on a line that runs through our design, taking curves or making waves.

In our exhibition, we illuminate this convergence - the global consent in development - from the Stone Age tool for cord production in Blaubeuren around 35,000 years ago. And the use of this cord made from various plant fibres for necklaces with carved prehistoric beads to contemporary interpretations by international jewellery artists.

The evidence of the cord as a jewellery object in Stone Age cultures is fascinating. What is even more fascinating is that it is still used today and is still made in the same way, including the many different symbolic associations of content. After all, their use bears witness to our creativity, our spirituality and our social connections. The selection of exhibits and protagonists provides an approach for analysing and discussing the significance of jewellery today.

**Barbara Schmidt**

Curator of the exhibition

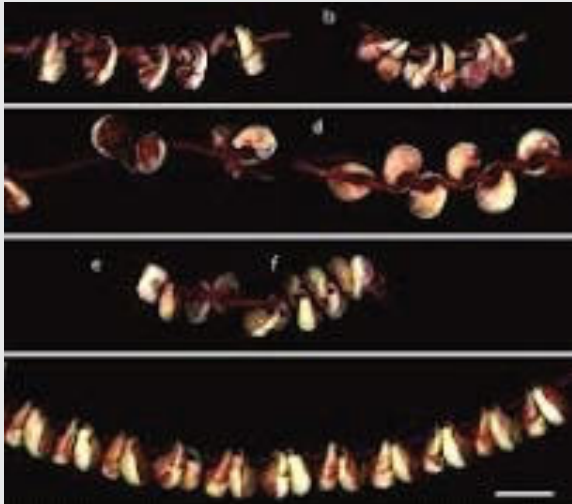
Head of the Cultural Department

Handwerkskammer für München und Oberbayern

## The cord as origin

It was a global sensation when Prof. Dr. Christopher Henschilwood carried out a scientific archaeological investigation of Blombos Cave on his grandfather's property near Cape Town, South Africa, and presented the oldest jewellery known to mankind to date to the public in the *Journal of Human Evolution* in January 2005. The dating of the 39 pierced conch shells found there revealed an age of around 75,000 years.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0047248404001307?via%3Dihub>



The result was an experimental set-up to scientifically recreate the abrasion marks of the shells. This investigation proved that the pierced mussel shells were pulled onto a string and worn as jewellery.

One of the co-authors of this scientific paper is Prof. Dr. Marian Vanhaeren, the international expert on early personal ornaments at the Université Bordeaux Chargée de Recherche | CNRS. Using scientifically based, experimental archaeology, she demonstrated that the pierced shell snails were threaded onto strings and knotted and worn in various demonstrable ways.

It was the first time that not only Stone Age weapons and tools but also personal objects - jewellery - were found during an excavation from this period, thus providing evidence of symbolic thinking. In further investigations and through cultural comparisons, Prof. Dr. Marian Vanhaeren demonstrated why this jewellery was made and worn. She presented 14 reasons that early people symbolised in these shell necklaces.

Her research supports the theory that even 75,000 years ago, people were able to talk about topics that are not materially tangible: e.g. love, social status, relationships within a group, spirituality, individuality, hierarchy, beauty... These motivations were and are still depicted in jewellery. They are the same themes that still concern us today and why we still value and wear jewellery.

[Speaking with beads: the evolutionary significance of personal ornaments](#)

Surprisingly, the same species of shell snails can be found in many different places around the world and their use in jewellery can also be traced archaeologically through the ages. Prof. Dr. Marian Vanhaeren found the living shells presented below in South Africa, but also in New Guinea, for example, at river mouths on the beach, where these finds are still being made into necklaces today. To this day, these shell snails are coloured, e.g. red by ochre or black by reduction burning, and offered for sale.





Nassarius kraussianus, found on the beach of Stillbay Beach, South Africa, on loan from Prof. Dr. Marian Vanhaeren



Nassarius Globulos, found on the beach of Biak, New Guinea, on loan from Prof. Dr. Marian Vanhaeren and Prof. em. Dr Wulf Schiefenhövel.



Nassarius kraussianus, found on Stillbay Beach, South Africa, burnt black after the Stone Age model, on loan from Prof. Dr. Marian Vanhaeren

These pieces of jewellery - the pierced shell snails - are the first pieces of jewellery that we have archaeological evidence of. We can also see the drilled holes through which the shell snails were threaded. So the string already existed 75,000 years ago. But it was made of other, more perishable organic material and is no longer detectable by archaeological means. All we can see today are the traces of abrasion that the cords left on the holes when they were worn. It can therefore be assumed that the cord was already worn around the neck or arm, marking a line, a sign on the body. In order to thread a shell snail onto it, only the technique of drilling a hole had to be invented.

As cords are also useful in everyday life, the cord represents a transition from a tool for everyday use to jewellery on the body. We see similar transitions with weapons and jewellery, where these objects also have a dual function and serve both as a means of defence and as an ornament on the body.

Surprisingly, cords are very similar on different continents. Were they also produced in a similar way?

A spectacular tool find on the Swabian Alb, now on display in the URMU, the Prehistoric Museum of the University of Tübingen in Blaubeuren, shows the way in which this perforated rod could be used to produce targeted and even results in cord production around 35,000 years ago. Archaeologists cooperating with Prof. Dr. Nicholas Conard, Senckenberg Centre for Human Evolution and Palaeoenvironment at the University of Tübingen, have published a new study on this subject:

#### Rope making in the Aurignacian of Central Europe more than 35,000 years ago

„Evidence for the manufacture and use of fiber technology such as rope and twine is rare in the Paleolithic, despite the widely held view that such artifacts were in regular use during the Pleistocene. On the basis of the discovery of a more than 35,000-year-old perforated baton made from mammoth ivory at Hohle Fels Cave in Ach Valley of southwestern Germany together with experimental studies, we are now able to demonstrate one way people of the early Upper Paleolithic manufactured rope. This work contributes to our understanding of the evolution of technology, cooperative work, and Paleolithic social organization.“

[Nicholas J. Conard und Veerle Rots, Sci. Adv. 10, eadh5217 \(2024\) https://www.science.org at Universitaet Tuebingen on January 31, 2024](https://www.science.org at Universitaet Tuebingen on January 31, 2024)



Pierced ivory rod from the Hohle Fels cave, south-west Germany, with three views. Convex surface second from the left, flat surface on the far right. Distal end at the top, handle facing downwards.  
Photo: M. Malina, University of Tübingen.



## Dr. Sibylle Wolf

Senckenberg Centre for Human Evolution and Palaeoenvironment at the University of Tübingen (2023) explains: "My field of work includes so-called Ice Age art and Ice Age jewellery from the period between around 42,000 and 12,000 years ago. The jewellery was made from different materials. I recreate the production of pieces of jewellery, starting with the relevant raw material and ending with the broken artefact. The way in which the jewellery was attached to a surface also plays an important role: how and with which thread were small beads attached to clothing, for example? Knowledge of the use of artefacts made of bony materials enriches our knowledge of life during the last Ice Age through current research and experimental archaeology. I examine the various tools and weapons made of mammoth ivory, antler and bone, which bear witness to the complex working methods of our ancestors. I am also interested in the numerous Ice Age depictions of women and the image they conveyed. I am interested in the identities of people in archaeological cultures, which can be traced through finds such as jewellery. My aim is to explore the life-world of Palaeolithic hunter-gatherer women through their material remains."

<https://www.urmu.de>

The exhibit of a perforated stick shown in the exhibition is a contemporary replica by Dr. Sibylle Wolf.

Thanks to the generous trust of the URMU

and the collaboration with Dr. Sybille Wolf and Prof. Dr. Nicolas Conard of the Senckenberg Centre for Human Evolution and Palaeoenvironment at the University of Tübingen, we are also able to show original Stone Age beads made of mammoth ivory from the Lone Valley from around 35,000 years ago, which provide evidence of the use of a cord.



Drop bead made of Mamut ivory, approx. 25,000 years old, found in Lonetal; Photo: Private

Contemporary replicas of Bernhard Röck's Stone Age ivory beads can be purchased in the exhibition.

## Bernhard Röck

"The craft of ivory carving originated in the Palaeolithic period over 40,000 years ago. Modern man, Homo sapiens, migrated from Africa to Central Europe. During this time, the Neanderthals, who had been widespread here long before, disappeared. In caves on the edge of the Swabian Jura, Stone Age people carved animal and human figures from mammoth ivory, which are currently the oldest known works of art of mankind and are the subject of intensive scientific research. In addition to Ice Age art, finds of musical instruments and a great wealth of Ice Age jewellery, mainly carved from mammoth tusks, are evidence of the dawn of a new era.

Archaeo-technicians have repeatedly demonstrated the chipping method used by Stone Age ivory carvers with their flint tools. Ivory carving is the original profession for all man-made art and culture. Whether the Vogelherd-horse, mammoth or lion head, all Ice Age artworks, including the lion man, were once conceived and designed by ivory carvers.

The craft of ivory carving is offered as an apprenticeship in Germany and is still practised by a small number of people. Since October 1989, when the African elephant was included in the highest protection level of the Washington Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the workshops have almost completely stopped processing recent ivory. The job title of ivory carver was retained in the trade regulations. Since then, the craftsmen have done the same as the Ice Age carvers and use fossilised mammoth ivory."

<https://mammut-poa.de>



Two-hole beads carved from mammoth ivory according to Stone Age models, modern; Photo: Private

## Monika Nabyal

Monika Nabyal introduces us to another cord-making technique. The indigenous Eipo from New Guinea drills cords with fibres from plants in the immediate vicinity by hand along her thigh. In this way, she can produce delicate yet very strong cords almost endlessly. The term for string in the Eipo language describes precisely this process of making: twisted with the left hand: tapwe. Tapwe string is knotted, for example, to make an aleng (net bag), a very important object in their culture, which is skilfully crocheted using only the fingers and without any other tools. It accompanies the Eipos throughout their lives. As babies, they are carried on their mother's back in a carrier bag with the strap around the mother's forehead. Later, a larger bag is used to carry the harvest or hunting spoils and finally the very large bag in which the deceased are buried outside the village. The short documentary film with Prof. Dr. Wulf Schiefenhövel, Emeritus of the Max Planck Institute and Monika Nabyal from New Guinea clearly explains the production of the cord and its use. An application to recognise this cord production technique as an intangible cultural heritage of New Guinea has already been submitted.

Link to the film in the gallery archive:



The documentary film was shot in October 2023 at the Handwerkskammer für München und Oberbayern, Director: Jens Christopher Ulrich, camera and editing: Michael Schuhmann.



Handmade string made from plant fibres, 2023;  
Photo: Dasman Nabyal

During the exhibition, each visitor will receive a piece of this New Guinea cord made in the Stone Age method as a necklace, sealed with a QR code to the gallery archive and to the film/reader. These pieces of string link all the wearers together as a group of people interested in jewellery who were visiting us in Munich at the time.

In this reader, the artists speak with their own voices. They comment on their works and their statements illuminate both the thematic background and the social context.

We would like to thank all those involved who have contributed to the success of the exhibition with their great commitment!

## Helen Britton

The Australian Design Centre announced in October 2023 that Helen Britton has been selected as the next artist for the "Living Treasures" exhibition series: Master of Australian Craft. Helen Britton is a multidisciplinary Australian artist based in Munich, Germany. Her work includes jewellery, sculpture, drawings, stencils and installations and is informed by folk culture and folk art, endangered traditions, environmental degradation and human fears. In her latest work, she draws on the traditional use of shells - and uses her own twisted string in a special way. She builds a bridge from 75,000 years ago to the present day with a truly timelessly beautiful work.

"Since childhood I have created shell necklaces. This practice intensified when I left Australia. Isolated from the ocean I create these works as a meditation on my home and my culture and to use the materiality to stay in touch with who I am and where im from. They are private works rarely shown, dense with symbolism and this one no exception. The moment of collecting these particular shells was captured be Elena Alvarez Lutz in her film „Hunter from Elsewhere“, as was the dying of the silk and making of the string with John Parkes. It is serendipitous that Johns works are in the exhibition and that Elena’s film will be showing in Munich the following day. I like to image the circularity of the necklace reflecting that sequence of connection."

<https://www.helen-britton.com>



Shades of Distance, Necklace, 2023, Shells, Hand-dyed Silk;  
Photo: Dirk Eisel

## Cord made from various materials

To this day, international jewellery artists examine various materials with regard to their quality for processing them into cords. The aesthetics of the material are appealing and seem to take centre stage. But behind this there are often important concerns, such as the transmission of the cultural heritage of a region, the connection to one's own origins or the preservation of creation. Worn on the body, this cord becomes jewellery. Suddenly the cord opens up our view beyond the aesthetic context. It expands its role away from its possible use as an everyday tool to a function as part of a social context. Anyone who is aware of the symbolic categorisation cannot separate the symbolic meaning from the cord, i.e. the idea from the object. It is almost unseemly to use a symbolically located cord for other purposes and to ignore its symbolic character.

The significance of the symbolic charge is based on agreements within the respective social group in which the cord is worn. Depending on the occasion, this cord can combine many characteristics or emphasise individual ones. When worn on the body, however, the cord becomes very powerful. With its help, highly personal or even transcendental concerns can be transported, passed on and understood across cultures and epochs.

It is astonishing that even someone who is unaware of the group-internal agreement on the symbolic content of a particular cord - i.e. an outsider - recognises that something special is meant by it and that a cord on the body is probably not merely an aesthetic adornment. Because this line is universal. It is used worldwide and across time. It is a visually familiar constant that acts like an exclamation mark.

This simple geometric intervention - the line - is used to emphasise parts of the body or to connect certain parts of the body with each other. Even the simplest cords distort and organise our figure and influence our posture. The string can hang loosely from the body or be tied tightly. When tightened, it activates our muscle tone and emphasises our own perception of the constricted area and its movement. The constriction immediately catches the viewer's eye, however delicate the cord may be.



## Carolina Lutz

„The work „Seam“ is the attempt to free a drawing from its two-dimensional existence and bring it to life. The delicate line of thread is sewn by sewing machine on a cotton fleece in one go. Whoever separates the seam from its base, transforms the two-dimensional work into a wearable necklace. Therefore, the owner is becoming co-creator of this piece of jewellery. This transformation is irreversible, but small traces of the base remain visible in the seam.“

<http://www.carolinalutz.de>



Seam, 2023, neck jewellery, cotton, thread, application medium, silver leaf, lacquer, ca. 30x30 cm; Photo: Carolina Lutz

## David Bielander

"Scoubidou is a special knotting technique for cords. All you need are the plastic braided cords and perhaps some accessories. From the very beginning, however, the actual theme was the cord. It was in this context that my "invention" of a raspberry with all its decisive parameters, e.g. the large opening at the top that I loved as a child, came about. I am interested in the transformation of a simple string into a recognisable thing."

<https://klimtoz.net/forum/articles/three-works-david-bielander-lausanne-palace-mudac>



Raspberry necklace, 2005, plastic cord, silver 1/9 serial work; Photo: Simon Bielander

## Jasmin Matzakow

"I was looking for a material that exists outside our financial system and still offers something to people. When I discovered stinging nettle, I was amazed at its many uses: food, medicine, clothing, textiles, garden fertiliser, dye and cosmetics. This well-known cultivated plant grows everywhere and in most parts of the world. Its ambivalent connection to humans is already mentioned in the Bible: it is both a stinging curse and a healing blessing. To make this jewellery, all I need is a knife and gloves to harvest the nettles and plenty of time to twist them into yarn - as has been known for thousands of years.

With the "Ecotechnomagic" series, I comment on our current environmental problems: that there are more solutions available than we realise, just as the nettle grows unused on our doorstep. However, we need a shift in our perspective so that we recognise the things that are already working well and develop them further. Jewellery touches the wearer because it is worn on the body. I have worked the nettles so that the wearer can literally be touched by this serious subject."

<https://jasminmatzakow.de>

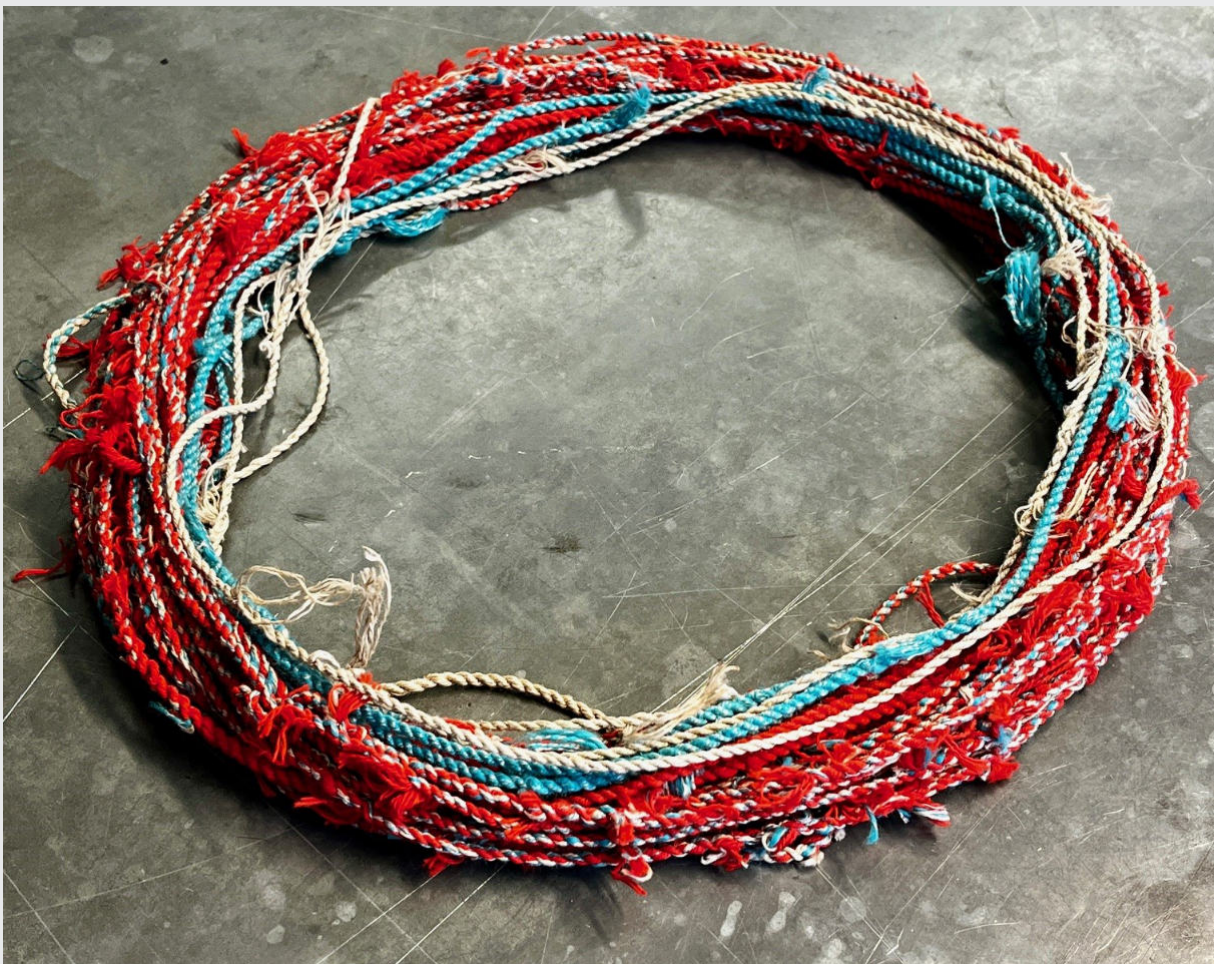


Ecotechnomagic-Time, "Untamable", 2018, 75 woven nettles;  
Photo: Jasmin Matzakow

## John Parkes

"I learnt to make cords in secret in 1990. It was my first year at art school and it seemed like a silly skill. When I saw what emerged from the hands of an artist in attendance, I sat down next to her and followed her to watch the dexterity of her hands. I've been making string/cord ever since.... There was an international exhibition in Perth, Western Australia, called "String Me a Story" that combined string and text (maybe it was in the mid 2000s). I had the role of curator at that event."

[@john.parkesjp](https://www.instagram.com/john.parkesjp)



John Parkes, necklace made of hand-twisted textile cord;  
on loan from Helen Britton and David Bielander,  
Photo: Helen Britton



## Misaki Nomoto

"Most traditional Japanese handicrafts originally served daily needs. Today, daily necessities can be mass-produced cheaply and the need for original, functional and beautiful handicrafts has dwindled. That's why I want to find ways to preserve them.

The title "YUI" means: weaving threads, having a connection with people and bundling different things into one. This work is a combination of the skills of two crafts, Japanese paper and bamboo craft, and my creativity. I received the instructions for making paper threads from the paper craftsman. The threads used in this work are all handmade by me. When I visited his studio, I noticed "the pride of the craftsman" and "the beauty in every process". I made this collection with the conviction of preserving this technique in my hand and familiarising myself with this craft in order to continue the tradition in some way.

"Embrace" is a piece of jewellery that emerged from my encounter with the Japanese paper craftsman. The workshop for making Nishinouchi paper\*, the material for this piece of jewellery, has inherited not only the technique of papermaking but also that of paper weaving with paper threads. It used to be a commonplace material, but today kimono, obi and tapestries made of paper fabric are treated as high-end items. Therefore, most people are not familiar with paper fabrics. I wanted to popularise the material by using it to make a piece of jewellery and learn how to make a paper cord. In the working process, I felt that the shape of the paper made "momu" was very beautiful. The necklaces created from a single piece of paper are designed in a way that fully emphasises the charm of the material."

\*Nishinouchi paper: High-quality Japanese paper produced in the northern part of Ibaraki Prefecture. There are currently only two studios.

\*\*momu: The process of making a thread by rolling it with your own palm

<https://klimto2.net/jewels/misaki-nomoto-brooch-2019-yura>



"Embrace", 2019, Nishinouchi paper; Photo: Misaki Nomoto,

## The connection between us

By wearing a string, you can not only thematise yourself and your imaginary world. You can also use the string to show a connection that can be perceived by everyone. Either very concretely, connecting a person with a third thing, e.g. stringing a pendant on the cord and wearing it around your neck. Or in a figurative form. This string then stands for a spiritual connection with something invisible or with other people. How quick our eyes are to find connections between two points and connect them with an imaginary line! Some people speak of a red thread that runs through their lives. And although it is in a red signal colour, it is only thought of and traces our leitmotif, our turning points and motivations for important decisions.

Emotional connections also only take place in our heads. Nevertheless, they carry us through our lives. It is family ties and friendships with people that accompany, strengthen, motivate and keep us on our path. Just like a spiritual connection to people we have never met before - be it the lyrics of a piece of music or the mood in a painted picture - they shape our lives or speak to us from the heart. Some of the selected items tell of the cruel past of colonisation, of the most difficult lifelines of our ancestors and the after-effects that continue to this day. These invisible connections help to shape our personality. Jewellery often serves to thematise or even visualise these important, otherwise invisible connections.



## Barbara Schrobenauser

"Cords - fine and simple, very fine and thick threads, various yarns and narrow ribbons in all colours - collected from friends, family, colleagues and acquaintances. A fine hand-knotted net with volume is attached to a silver ring. I spend many hours knotting piece by piece into the net the remnants that have been lovingly selected for me or kept for a long time (you could use them for something - and yes, now they fulfil a purpose). A thank you to the world out there. This is how the "You and me" brooch was created. I also use my collection for other works - I look for ways to express our relationships and experiment with simple textile techniques."

<https://www.flachware.de/barbara-schrobenauser>



"You and Me" brooch; various cords and yarns, silver, stainless steel, knotted approx. 150 mm x 150 mm x 50 mm; Photo: Mirei Takeushi

## Farieda Nazier

"As a creative practitioner who utilises visual art, performance and craft as a means of disruption and subversion, my work explores the psychological and perceptual consequences of historical legacies and how these are closely linked to socio-political contexts. With provocative installations and performances, I utilise discursive possibilities in my practice, in the public sphere and in my pedagogical concept."

<https://fariedanazier.wixsite.com/fariedanazier>



Bangle, 2022, silver; Photo: Farieda Nazier

## Kazumi Nagano

"The world is connected by various invisible threads. There are different countries that should be more connected. So I would like to endeavour to connect them with a cultural thread. In my work, my invisible thread travels through different countries. But this invisible thread also connects me to many friends around the world. Even if I can't see the thread that connects my friends to me, I can feel it everywhere with my heart. That makes me happy.

I make jewellery as if I were painting a picture. I come from a Japanese painting background and my artistic senses, which I learnt from my Japanese paintings, naturally influence my jewellery. The moon is often a theme in Japanese paintings. To express it, I used gold to represent the quiet glow of moonlight, not the powerful glow of sunlight. Looking up at the moon connects us all."

<https://artjewelryforum.org/interviews/kazumi-nagano-bijoux-et-objets-contemporains/>



Moonlight, 2023, gold thread, gold plate nylon thread, woven, 4.5 x 8.5 x 6.0 cm Photo: Kazumi Nagano

## Ketli Tiitsar

"In my work, I investigate what I remember about the environments and situations associated with me and how these memories are interwoven with the materials. I consider how many of these memories are personal and how many are intergenerational. The use of wood in my jewellery came from a desire to re-use the everyday skills and techniques I had learnt as a child in Estonia in a house heated by a wood-burning stove. It was my job to prepare the heating material for the winter: to collect it, transport it inside and peel off birch bark to light it. In the studio, I tried to repeat a similar routine, using the same materials and reinterpreting them. I mainly use wood from my childhood home and my grandparents' garden. The carved lines connect me to memory and this practised practice."

<https://www.instagram.com/ketlitiitsarjewellery>



Second Nature, 2015, brooch, wood, metal,  
Photo: Ketli Tiitsar

## Lisa Waup

"Over time, we have developed a variety of ways to express our memory and to ensure that memories can be passed on to future generations. Our true concept of time is multi-layered, shifting and changing over the generations and especially depending on the circumstances in which we find ourselves. When the genocide of culture began in so-called Australia, time collided and looped. The memory loop describes the endless, intertwined connections we maintain and carry with memory and the stories that have been passed down."

<https://www.lisa-waup.com>



Looping time, 2023, hand-dyed raffia, antique clock parts,  
acrylic tyres, cotton thread, glue; Photo: Sarah Weston

## Mari Ishikawa

"Musubi": Each brooch consists of a Japanese kumihimo (Japanese: braided cord) and is formed from silk thread. "Musubi" (Japanese: knot) means to tie a relationship together. In ancient times, it was believed that a knot tied in connection with a wish would give substance and permanence to that wish. By tying knots with simple lines, different shapes can be created. Just as knots come in different shapes, so do people's wishes. Every wish can create a new future."

<https://mari-ishikawa.de>



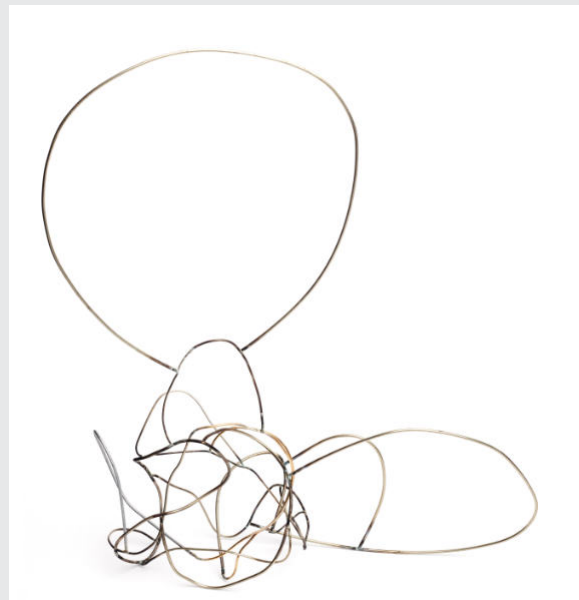
Musubi, 2023, brooches, silver 925, silk, size 90/110/60mm;  
Photo: Mari Ishikawa

## Nelly van Oost

"In the intimacy of my studio, the line becomes my language. My artistic research is orientated towards my desire to shape the immaterial, to transform my thoughts into tangible objects. A recurring theme in my work is the connection between people and what links them together. The line often serves me as a link, as an energetic field that materialises. The jewellery becomes an invitation to meet, a tangible representation of their connection.

The string is much more than a simple material; it is a drawing in motion. Every twist, every curve is an exploration, a dialogue. I play with infinite possibilities and create jewellery to transform the simplicity of the line into a three-dimensional construction. The grey line of metal is coloured at certain points by oxidation or paint. The line comes to life."

<https://www.nellyvanoost.com>



Instant, 2013, brooch, nickel silver, colour, steel,  
Photo: Lotta Duse

## Susie Heuberger

"This piece is about the grieving process, specifically the loss of a father, and explores how to deal with the grieving process despite distance. The necklace was designed with the intention of placing the center at the level of the stomach, symbolic of the place where all the emotions of pain, loss and sadness come together in my experience. Each detail of the necklace, as well as each corn, represents a particle that symbolizes my connection to my Mexican side and my father's heritage."

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CWlm3mtLDIS>



"Cosecha", necklace, 2023, native corn from Oaxaca, obsidian, cotton, silk; Photo: Nicolas Berkenheide

## Yiftah Avrahami

"A match that lights a candle. Extinguished after it has extinguished its flame. My story is about hope and the journey it makes from one to the other. About the flame of memories and remembrance. A collective that simply adds a new memory. A new scar. A crystal that was formed in darkness but now carries a hope that no one can turn off."

[@dot\\_melanin](https://www.instagram.com/dot_melanin)



One candle after another and a pile of burnt matches, 2024, necklace, citrine crystal, candle thread, amber, Photo: Dot Melanin



## Yuxi Sun

"During our lockdowns, I had the opportunity to reflect on my life and the time a few years ago. This necklace collects personal stories and moments from my youth: I had kept all the photos in a box for more than 10 years, they were the witnesses of my old times. Each picture was now connected to another by orange-coloured threads. I was immersed in my memories as the needle went through each picture, as the thread connected photo to photo."

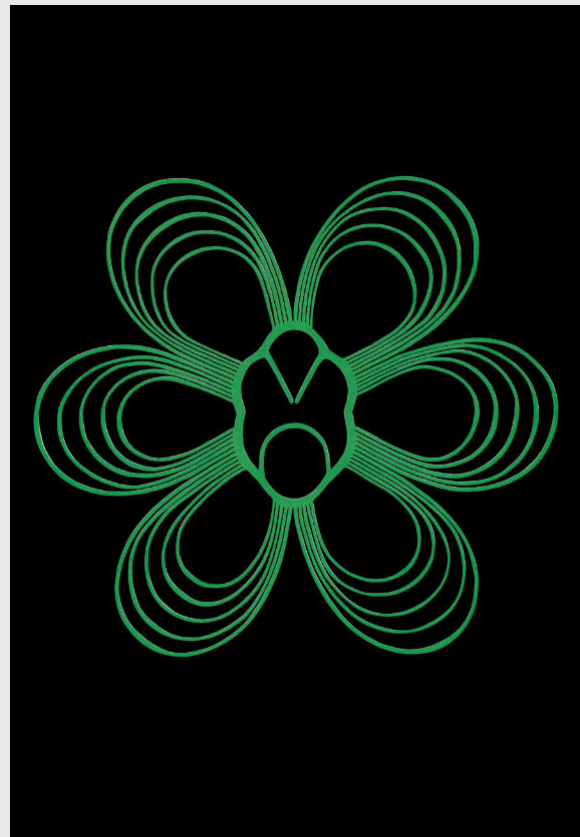
[@ucyuxi](#)



"They are kept and remembered", 2020, chain; Photos, threads; Photo: Yuxi Sun

## Between drawing and calligraphy

The following works demonstrate the universal application of one of the simplest aesthetic means: a line, the connection between two points. The line has a starting point, actively takes up a direction, starts moving and comes to an end. It is also a dynamic process in terms of language and gesture: we draw a line from ourselves and our body, away from ourselves and towards our surroundings, with which we connect. Depending on the tool, this line can take on a sketchy form with a pencil or a calligraphic form with a brush, for example, and be lifted from paper up into volume, into the third dimension, in another material.



Mirjam Hiller, Fine Art Print "orchaotess", Edition 1/10/2023

## Alexandra Bahlmann

"The origin of jewellery in the form of a line, as a string or cord, on which small pierced objects are threaded or woven and which encircles the neck, is known in German as Perlenkette, in English as 'string of pearls'. The English word 'chain' is etymologically derived from the Latin 'catena', which means shackle and chain. It is the same with the German word 'Kette'. Both are united by the conceptual connection with the term 'fetter' in addition to its use as a technical or decorative chain. In English, this technical aspect seems to be so dominant that neck jewellery made of elements pulled onto textile cords deserves an extra term. In many of my works, both aspects are combined - the technical: interpenetrating metallic elements, as well as the textile: beads strung on cords. I also like to use prefabricated metre chains (metallically connected), which have a textile character. For the exhibition, I am showing fragile 'lines' as a statement on current events. In a time of successive crises and growing inequality that is unsettling and driving our society apart, in which woke-ness leads to cancel culture, dotted, broken, heterogeneous, slithering, cautious, questioning, fragile lines seem appropriate to me."



Bracelets, 2008, oxidised and bright silver,  
Photo: Alexandra Bahlmann

## Alessandra Pizzini

"It doesn't actually exist. A jumble and all sorts of branches that lead astray, so beautiful, but. Actually just a construct, a graphic representation. Simplification, separation and the attempt to create order, but. Time itself doesn't run like rain either. Confusion, knots, onwards and backwards and a certain longing. So in and out, forwards, backwards, chaotic and structured at the same time, the line around your neck confuses you."

[www.pizzini-design.com](http://www.pizzini-design.com)

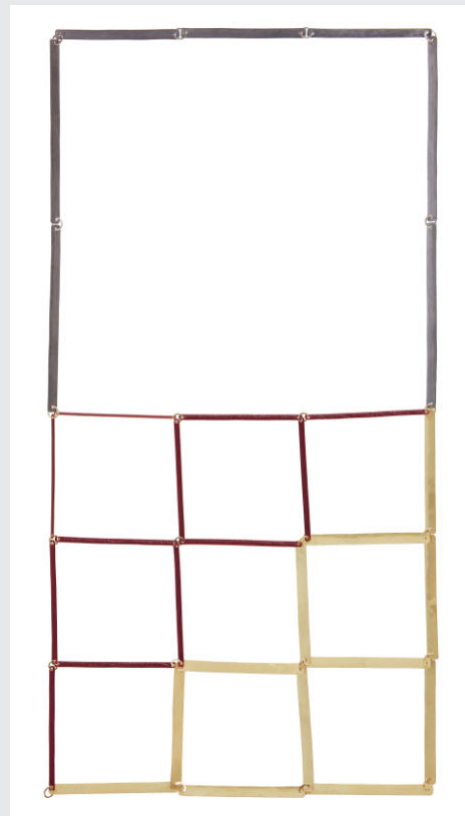


"Glitz and glamour", chain, aluminium and natural resin in bright red and purple; Photo: Brigitte Sauer

## Annelies Planteijdt

"Beautiful City - New Rooms - These pieces have a history and a future at the same time. By reusing parts of earlier "Beautiful City" pieces, these "New Rooms" offer me new space. A new work has emerged from earlier pieces. I was able to realize a new perspective with the same parts. It was like a gift to myself. Instead of looking back, I looked forwards. Something has opened up again. Nothing has been lost. The concept of the earlier works still exists. Labour and material are still used, there is no loss of time. There is only a change in time."

<https://klimtoz.net/jewellers/annelies-planteydt>

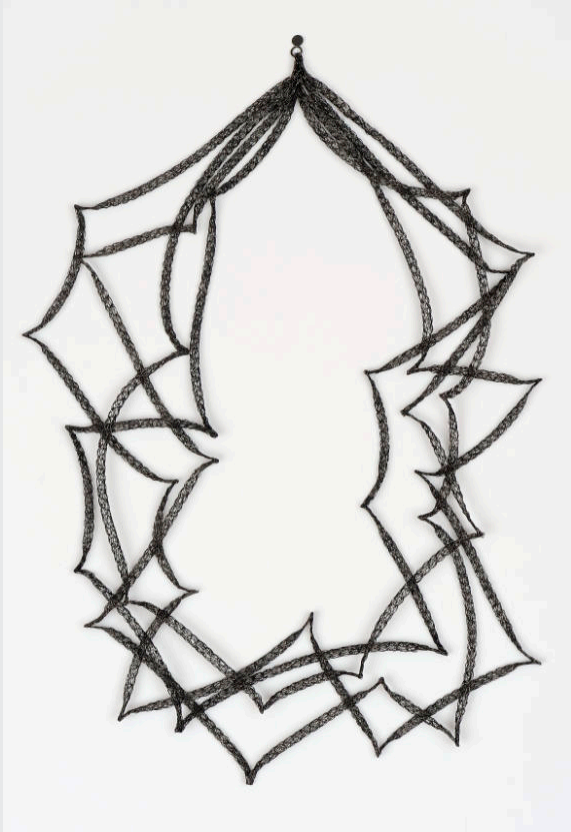


"Beautiful City-New Rooms-Gold Magenta Ground", 2022, Halsschmuck, Gold, Tantalum, Pigment, Photo: Vermetfotografie

## Doris Betz

"The line plays the main role in my artistic work! At different speeds, each line tells its own story of the beginning, the journey and the end. Added to this is my fascination with movement. My linear abstract drawings often serve as a template for jewellery. The drawn line is replaced by wire. Some of the necklaces shown here from 2015 are made from 30 metres of wire that is rolled, folded and twisted. With this movable band of blackened silver, I follow the lines of a drawing."

<https://www.bayerischer-kunstgewerbeverein.de/Doris-Betz.html>



"One-Line-Queen II", 2015, necklace, silver, patinated,  
Photo: Bernhard Roth



## Florence Lehmann

"Why do we wear jewellery? To go out into the world as if for the first time, to make ourselves suitable to appear. Starting from the connection between this first appearance and the wearing of jewellery, it examines the secrets surrounding this appearance. Think of a ring, a bracelet, a necklace. To put it on, so that it exists, you put it on: and so it is born. Think of yourself, of your arrival in this world: and this is how you are born. The journey ends when the child's head emerges, stops at the nose. It freezes time to seize the moment and better understand its meaning. I like the line (and the notions it covers) when it opens up new fields of perception rather than circumscribing them."

<https://hedendaagsesieraden.nl/2020/03/04/florence-lehmann/>



Birth in Gold or Ductility, 2004, necklace, 900% gold, approx. 21 x 14 cm Photo: Florence Lehmann

## Giovanni Corvaja

"The brooch consists of several hundred small golden triangles soldered next to and on top of each other. My aim was to create an object that glows from within and the light changes with the movement of the viewer. I forged each triangle with highly polished tools to transfer this lustre to the surface of the gold elements. The simple round shape emphasises the complexity of the inner geometry: on the one hand, segments that converge towards the centre, and on the other, the effect of many spirals. However, the spiral effect is an optical illusion."

[www.gioannicorvaja.com](http://www.gioannicorvaja.com)

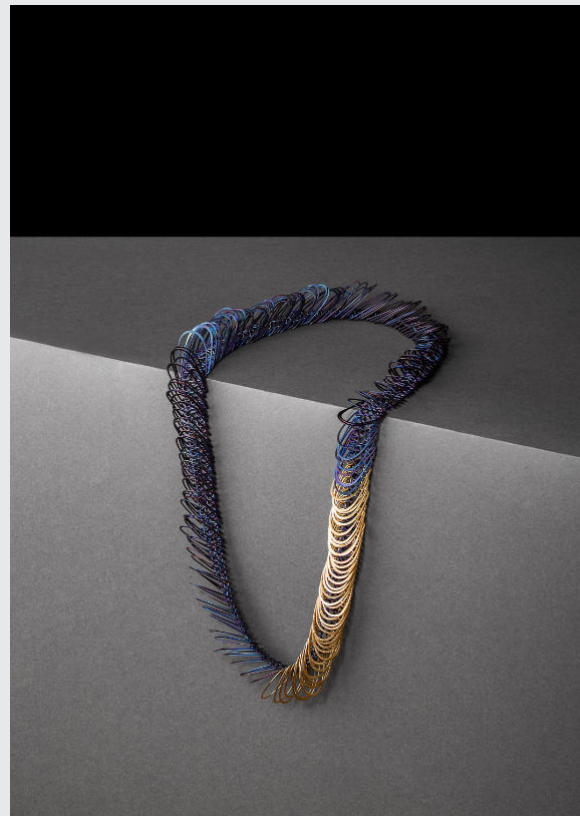


Round brooch, 2018, soldered and forged triangles, 18kt gold;  
Photo: Giovanni Corvaja

## Heather Woof

"My designs are characterised by a simple aesthetic and a love for pattern, rhythm and movement. My inspirations are based on the observation of nature and the world. The process of drawing and methodical production flows into my designs. My aim is to create pieces of jewellery that strike a balance between simple form and subtle detail."

[www.heatherwoof.com](http://www.heatherwoof.com)



Slinky necklace, necklace, silver, gold-plated silver,  
Photo: Heather Woof

## Iris Bodemer

"For me, jewellery is a three-dimensional drawing on the body, which serves as a canvas. I draw directly with the materials, immediately. The lines are like a pencil drawing - the idea is present, form and expression become reality through the hands and the tool. The line in space is complex, the dimensions can change and lie somewhere between 2D and 3D, depending on how it is viewed. The basis of my work is Marcel Duchamp's "Bottle Dryer", a sculpture and at the same time a thought experiment: this three-dimensional object casts a two-dimensional shadow on the wall - what if the bottle dryer is the shadow of a higher-dimensional object? What might it look like?"

[www.irisbodemer.de](http://www.irisbodemer.de)



Construction.5, Pendant 2020, Thermoplastic, electro-formed silver, Courtesy of Schmuckmuseum Pforzheim, Photo: Nicole Eberwein

## Jacqueline Ryan

"The 2 brooches, "Superstructure" and "Forest City", that I have made for the exhibition "All Along the Line" present as 3-dimensional linear structures that are like small 3-d "drawings" contained in frames. As I build them, due to the way that they are assembled in overlapping structures, they grow inwards and upwards within the dimensional limits of their frames, like small constructions or buildings sprouting from a foundation. Before deciding to pursue 3d design and metalwork, I had originally intended to study graphic design or illustration as a career but abandoned it for metalwork. Nonetheless, I continued using graphic tools - papers, pens and cutters - as a means to find and explore my own artistic identity as a metalsmith. The techniques of goldsmithing have given me the means of etherealizing the small and very graphic intricate paper sculptures I make into jewellery. I try and interpret them, in metal, in a way that allows the jewellery to entrap the same qualities as the paper maquettes that are part of my studies. When I trace out gold and silver with a metal piercing-saw the hand-saw takes the place of the pen and the gold or silver become my "paper". All pieces begin with hand-drawn lines on the flat metal sheet to be pierced out with a saw and later hammered and sculpted into fully 3-dimensional forms that then become wearable artworks. Since each process is hand-executed each finished piece carries the marks, imperfections and irregularities which are the unique signature of the human hand. I believe that the techniques of hand-crafting transmit and entrap within the object, the inimitable warmth and vitality of the human soul."

[www.jacqueline-ryan.com](http://www.jacqueline-ryan.com)



Brooch, enamel, 750 gold, approx. 52x60 mm;  
Photo: Jacqueline Ryan

## Juliane Schölß

"The rings and bracelets are created using the potato moulding process. The liquid precious metal flows like a red-hot line in the negative mould of a raw potato and is joined to form a ring when the ends of the molten metal meet. Sometimes this line of liquid metal ends prematurely and solidifies, leaving the end open. All rings and bracelets are unique. Displayed in lines or rows as a harmony, the formal and technical process becomes clearly visible, while the different alloys increase in their colourfulness and nuances."

[www.julianeschuelss.de](http://www.julianeschuelss.de)



Bracelet, Shibuichi, cast; Photo: Eva Jünger

## Kathrin Sättele

"I look for lightness and sculptural volume in my delicate and exciting pieces of jewellery. The forging process is of central importance here. The hammer blow determines the momentum and strength of the lines. As the cross-section changes from round to flat, shapes are created that are reminiscent of expansive calligraphy. Over the course of time, forging has become a kind of "drawing" with the hammer. Forging makes it possible to work in a light, springy and voluminous way."

[www.saettele-schmuck.de](http://www.saettele-schmuck.de)



Bangle, double oval, gold 750, forged, ca. 9x7cm, Photo: studio3 Hildesheim



## Khanya Mthethwa

"In "Cultural Threads", my necklace serves as a link between Zulu culture and the overarching theme of "line" in this exhibition. Inspired by Zulu sandal art, which reuses the material of car tyres decorated with traditional triangular patterns, the piece becomes a visual narrative of cultural continuity. The diamond shapes interwoven with strings pay homage to Zulu geometry and connect tradition with the present. White beads symbolise purity and underline the universal language of jewellery. "Cultural Threads" is a living testament to the enduring dialogue between cultural heritage and the evolving lineage, weaving a story that transcends time and geography."

<https://defsa.org.za/author/mthethwa-khanya>

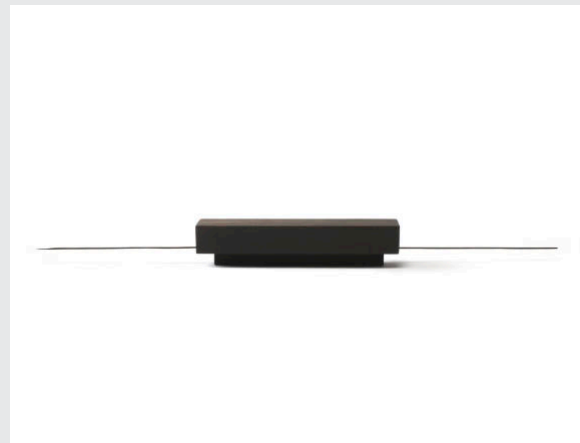


Umswenko-Ndlovukazi, 2019, necklace, string, polymer;  
Photo: Matome

## Kun Zhang

"My work reflects an inner monologue, an abstract representation of a tension caused by the discrepancy between a conscious orientation in the physical world and poetic speculations about existence. My small-format sculptures show an interplay of robust and elusive forms, whose sensitivity is deepened by the density of the worked precious wood."

<https://www.kun-zhang.com>

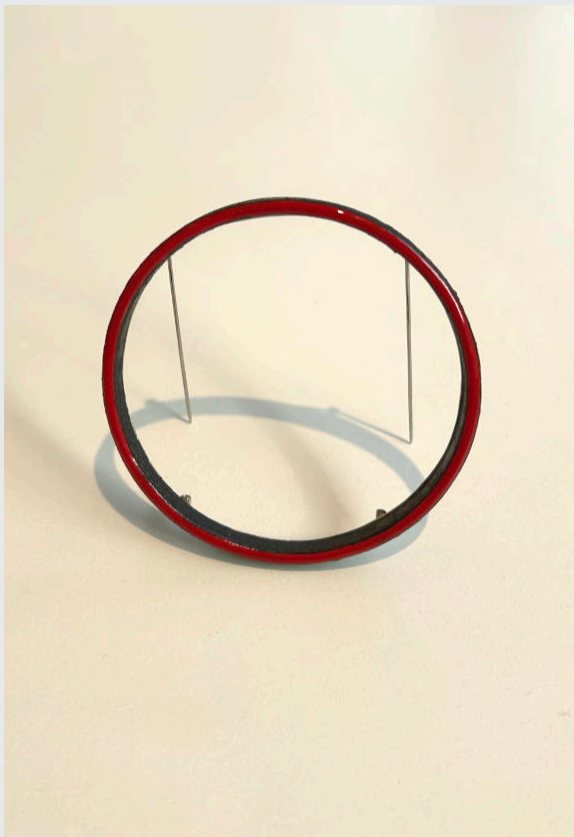


Brooches, 2018, ebony, 247 x 202 x 8 mm; Photo: Kun Zhang

## Mandy Rasch

"In my work with industrial enamel, reduction to the line is the means of expression. The form alone is a line. The line shapes the surface."

<https://mandyrasch.de>



Brooch, 2023, enamel, Silver, steel ca. 8 cm,  
Photo: Mandy Rasch

## Margherita Berselli

"I see my work as an investigation focusing on specific elements such as lines, folds, extensions, inclusions and orientations on the body. I found these characteristics in the natural composition of tourmaline quartz. From the beginning I was fascinated by these floating lines inside the stone, their positions in the light space, the distances between the individual lines. For me, the score represents the space in which a series of signs takes place. Score is a word that represents my group of structured signs on a surface. Their specific positions reveal a new rhythm created by my artistic gesture."

[www.agc-it.org/it/soci/604-margherita-berselli.html](http://www.agc-it.org/it/soci/604-margherita-berselli.html)



"Intersecting Score II" 2020, brooch, tourmaline quartz,  
obsidian, stainless steel; Photo: Margherita Berselli

## Margit Jäschke

"If you ask me about the "red thread" in my work, I don't think primarily of ideas, concepts, materials or processes, but of the term "favourable moment". In Greek mythology, Kairos is the god of the happy moment and the favourable moment in time. He stands for momentum. The necklace "The golden thread" is based on the idea of the golden wave. It was developed as a contribution to the Marzee Gallery's 40th anniversary. A golden thread is entwined with 40 colours - one colour for each year the gallery has been open. Gold and colour stand for the gallery's programme. The ribbon was both function and content. The work shows the ribbon again as a functional element, but also as a creative one. The ribbon runs through life, with interruptions, interventions and changes of direction. In the end, however, it will unwaveringly close."

<http://margit-jaeschke.de>



Necklace "On the golden thread", 2024, gold, fine gold-plated silver, plastic; Photo: Georg Dobler

## Martina Dempf

"In my approach to natural materials, I make their uniqueness visible by transforming them into jewellery. The corkscrew hazelnut with its unusual growth and unpredictably developing lines has particularly fascinated me and challenged me creatively. My jewellery objects are not about reshaping or alienating materials, but about capturing their specific expressive power."

<https://www.martina-dempf.de>  
[www.trans-form-dreams.de](http://www.trans-form-dreams.de)



Twister, 2018, corkscrew hazelnut (*Corylus avellana*), necklace, silver, hemp, steel; Photo: Harald Müller-Dempf

## Sofia Beilharz

"Geometry is always my starting point. Clear and reduced forms move from two-dimensionality to three-dimensionality and unfold. They explore the relationship between simplicity and complexity and describe the transition between dimensions. The wearer's body and movement play an important role. Boundaries between jewellery, clothing and body begin to flow, are dissolved and disappear. A line consists of the connection or stringing together of dots or other small elements. It can take on various forms. A line alone on a surface creates tension, allowing for different divisions and proportions. Whether dynamic, balanced and calm, or expressive and exciting, round or angular, a line can express anything. It can be consciously designed and guided or left to chance to a certain extent."

<https://www.sofiabeilharz.de>



Simplum, 2011, chain, anodised aluminium tubes, Siliconband; Photo: Melanie Warnstaedt

## Sonia Pibernat

"My research focuses on exploring the movements of my body. By focusing on exercises, I reach a state of unconsciousness and freedom. In this state, I can push boundaries, discover unknown movements and experience unfamiliar aspects of my body. It also allows me to perceive space in a new way. As soon as I have internalised these movements and feel comfortable in this space, I turn to the materials. I usually use paper and plastic, which I mould with my whole body to create large volumes. Or I create spontaneous lines that evoke a sense of movement. This exploration forms the basis for my jewellery and is part of the "Spontaneous Movement" project. During the creative process, I have realised that the concept of line is becoming more and more important to me. Together with the material, this element is the basis of my work. Each piece interacts differently with the body, thanks to the different shapes I was able to achieve by playing with the lines."

<https://soniapibernat.com>



Spontaneous movements, 2018, brooch, gold 18 ct, 15 x 7 x 9 cm; Photo: Cornelia Wruk



## Steven Kaplan

"As I spend time with the wood, carving, removing material, refining the surfaces and smoothing the wounds, the intricate shapes become lighter, the knots loosen. I call them "Partially Unfinished", and that is all they can ever be. They are slowly executed gestures that lie between complete tightening and dissolving. They are given the power to be constantly unresolved. They are objects of tension that bind nothing to their place but their own existence, and they will never dissolve."

<https://www.stevenkp.com>



Partially undone knot, relief (necklace), 2022, hand-carved ebonised cherry wood, oxidised sterling silver, deerskin; Photo: Rob Chron

## Lines and surfaces

A horizontal line reminds us of a horizon and brings expanse into our view. In the interplay of horizontal and vertical lines, our eyes complement surfaces of different sizes, which can be calculated at the respective ends of the lines. Ornamental rows of the same line or stripes grow together to form a vibrating surface. Many design principles are dedicated to this visual interplay, which in the strength of the material even rises to small spaces.



Carla Riccoboni, Gamma 2008; Photo: Sergio Maraboli

## Andrea Maxa Halmschlager

"The title "Bortabesque" refers to the terms border and arabesque. The latter comes from Arabic and refers to an ornament that could have its origins in Islamic art. An arabesque consists of intertwined lines of mathematically stylised plant tendrils. Textile borders in a wide variety of motifs, styles, finishes and dimensions form the basic material of these works. Variable, three-dimensional ornaments are created from flat cuts, the front and back of which result in an interplay of patterns and colours."

[www.halmschlager.at](http://www.halmschlager.at)



Bortabeske 26\_III necklace, label borders, press studs, total length: approx. 70 cm; Photo: Andrea Maxa Halmschlager

## Andrew Lamb

„I reference visual illusion and optical principles in jewellery to echo the perfection found in nature, tempered by the shifting patterns of how we see and perceive the world. The ideas within the ‘optical’ and ‘colour changing’ series necklaces, are underpinned by traditional goldsmithing methods. I am driven in my practice to advance what is possible in aesthetic form through wearable objects that preserve technical mastery through a rigorous exploration into the properties of wire.“

<https://www.andrewlamb.co.uk>



Optical necklace, 2001, Gold, diameter approx. 190mm, Photo: Keith Leighton

## Carla Riccoboni

"The entire planning process focused on the voice, which was chosen by the students\* *SEGNI SUL VOLTO* (characters on the face) as an instrument and expression of identity. Similar to alphabets created by transforming sounds into symbols, the voice of each participant reciting an ancient Chinese poem was recorded and transcribed into lines using an algorithm. By superimposing the lines generated by the voices, a petal-shaped image was created: the voice petal, which visualises the fusion of the identities of the participants in the collective work. The voice petal was further developed into three jointly designed symbolic objects that stand for the importance of listening, confrontation and dialog. Together they visualise one of the possible future perspectives for jewellery objects: the hybridisation of technical and biological elements, an unsettling vision and important topic in the current debate on the consequences of technological progress. The "third object" is a work that is worn at eye level, blocking the view and thus directing thoughts inwards. It consists of 13 elements mounted on top of each other, which form an enlarged voice petal (petalo-voce) when viewed from above."

\*In the aftermath of the pandemic, thirteen designers, architects and goldsmiths are working together on the question of the topicality and future prospects of jewellery: Tongqiang Bai, Annarita Bianco, Gisella Ciullo, Micol Ferrara, Letizia Maggio, Simona Materi, Giulia Morellini, Silvia Sandini, Barbara Uderzo, Cristian Visentin, Claudia Zanella. Concept and direction Carla Riccoboni; LAO coordination: Alice Rendon

<https://www.carlariccoboni.it>

<https://www.artiorafe.it>



Second object the body, 2022, silver, CAD rendering,  
Photo: Private



## Caroline Broadhead

"I like the idea of one kind of bead portraying another kind of bead, each with its own sense of value and tradition. I have always been interested in things that change, objects that have two identities or can fulfil two functions. The net of glass beads holds an image of a string of pearls and, when stretched out it can be worn around the neck as a kind of scarf, but this change means the image disappears, and in order to find it again it has to be manipulated and this requires a bit of patience."

<https://carolinebroadhead.com>

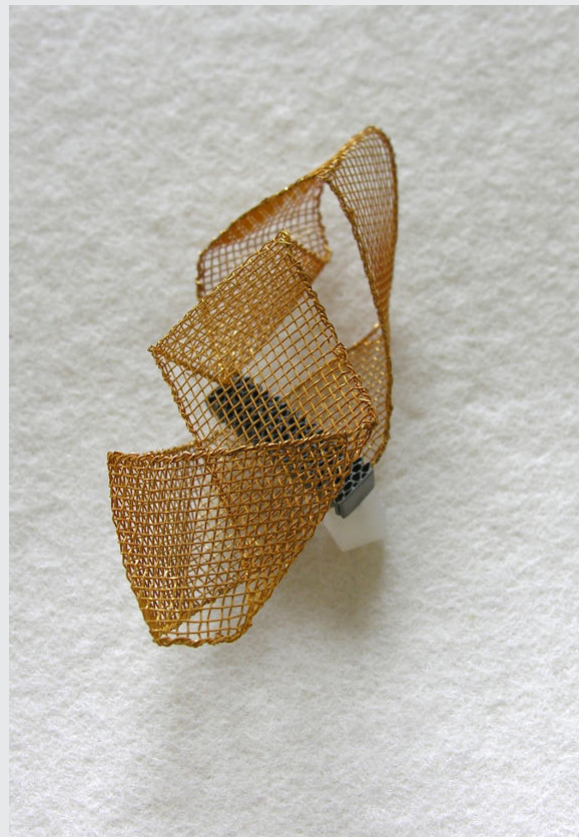


Frippy Pearls, necklace, glass beads, thread; silver;  
Photo: Caroline Broadhead

## Erico Nagai

"Japanese lifestyle and Japanese culture are a theme in Munich. The great interest in Japanese aesthetics is also a sign that bridges of connection have been built here. These bridges were built by people, to a large extent also by Erico Nagai."

<https://www.hwk-muenchen.de/artikel/erico-nagai-mittlerin-zwischen-den-kulturen-74,2546,3648.html>



Brooch, gold fabric, woven; Photo: Erico Nagai



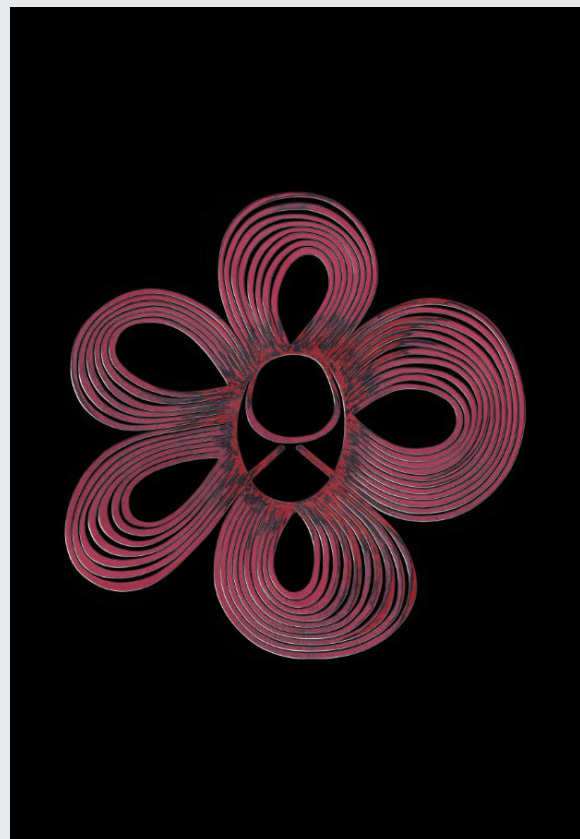
## Mirjam Hiller

"The line coming from the plain surface. The line as a distance. The line that holds everything together, that connects. - It is the basic structure of my work. My works originate from a feeling or a thought that extends into the three-dimensional space in my imagination. I mentally unfold this structure into a two-dimensional shape, which I transfer onto a sheet of paper. This transformation from 3 to just 2 dimensions enables me to understand even complex forms. With the help of the line, I structure the surface. I organise, connect and delimit it. The resulting drawing on paper remains vague and serves primarily as a guide for my actual pencil, the saw. I use the saw to define the exact course of the line as soon as the sketch is on the sheet of metal. This line is immovable. It demands decisions, clarity and does not accept any overlaps. Slowly, millimetre by millimetre, it is created by the cut of my saw. Every inattention has its impact. So, I sit there and saw my line, usually being patient, focused and excited. I saw until the line comes loose and breaks out of its rigidity. This way, I free it from the plain. Now, I can let it grow back into the three-dimensional space. Maybe the line has changed but I have the feeling that I do understand a little bit more about myself and about the world."

<https://mirjamhiller.com>



orichaotea, Brooch, 2023, stainless steel, colour,  
14 x 13 x 4,5 cm Photo: Mirjam Hiller



orichaotea, Fine Art Print, Edition 1/10/2024

## Oliver Meinicke

“The history of "Ehrbarkeit" (honourableness) as a distinctive mark for craftsmen traces its origins to the early 19th century. During this era, travelling craftsmen, who had roamed the roads of Europe for centuries, encountered the issue of charlatans masquerading as journeying journeymen, derogatorily referred to in journeyman slang as "bacon hunters" (a term used to scorn those who falsely claim to be on the move).

These "bacon hunters" sought to exploit the supportive structures established for genuine journeymen, aiming to deceitfully benefit from their esteemed reputation. In response, the adoption of the "Ehrbarkeit" emerged as a means to distinguish authentic journeymen. The "Ehrbarkeit" consists of a crocheted ribbon crafted from wool cord, embellished with the emblem of the specific trade:

Honourable foreign journeymen bricklayers and stonemasons: Black;

Honourable foreign journeymen carpenters and slaters: Black;

Roland shaft: Blue;

Foreign Freedom Shaft: Red;

Free Encounter Shaft: Grey.

The "Ehrbarkeit" cannot simply be purchased but is bestowed upon a journeyman who has demonstrated worthiness. Being granted this distinction is equivalent to being recognised as a full-fledged member of the trade group. Typically, this follows a probationary period lasting several months, during which the novice journeyman is expected to exhibit qualities of integrity, dependability, and fellowship. Thus, the "Ehrbarkeit" serves as tangible evidence of the journeyman's dedication to the aforementioned virtues. Consequently, it is considered highly improper to handle

another's "Ehrbarkeit", underscoring the sanctity attributed to the "Ehrbarkeit" of itinerant craftsmen.



Oliver Meinecke wears his honours at the celebration of the 2023 Jahresbestmeister; Photo: Private

## Pei Wu

"My way of working is relatively intuitive, consciously orientated towards emotional expression. Nevertheless, I emphasise strict logic and precision. Personal feelings are a great source of inspiration; by collecting relevant stories from the environment and going as deep as possible to the source, I try to bring my stories to a social level and tell them in a way that makes them understandable. The emotion moulds the material, mainly stones, into a specific shape. The stillness of my work comes from a frozen moment of action. People often perceive my works as soft and gentle at first. But then comes the tension and the weight. The gentle touch of the material with the oppressive form; behind the endearing appearance lies uncertainty. The combination of all the senses reflects the state of mind. "We are all very similar", but we only truly communicate with each other by expressing our deepest feelings."

<https://www.peiwujewellery.com/>



Behave!, 2022, amethyst, braces blocks, steel wire, 23 x 16 x 4 cm Photo: Pei Wu

## Peter Skubic

Peter Skubic said: "Jewellery is a spiritual discipline". The central design principles of his works - often made of the unusual material stainless steel - are rigour, clarity of proportions, precision, radical minimalism and unyielding stubbornness. Tension brooches, balance objects: these are the characteristic designations of some groups of works. The artist-constructor Peter Skubic saw jewellery making as an adventure, a physical action, a creative act of liberation and a crossing of boundaries.

Peter Skubic passed away on 1 February 2024. His work and his tireless search for the essence in jewellery has shaped generations. His teaching in Cologne and Halle inspired his students. We miss him, his humour and his positive energy.

<https://dnstmd.de/radikal-peter-skubic-schmuck>



Brooch, 2008, steel, steel cable; Photo: Petra Zimmermann



## Stefano Marchetti

"In these pieces, I first soldered gold and silver wires together to form an initial shape. Then, I forged and chiselled the metal fabric to achieve the desired form. Finally, the silver was consumed, revealing the final shape: the skeleton. Analogous to analogue photography, the end result remains unseen until the process concludes, requiring imagination during the design phase.

While this brooch might appear to be the result of sawing or casting, these processes wouldn't yield the same outcome. It's challenging to capture the sensitivity of the delicate hammer work on thin golden or platinum wires. The piece in platinum and shibuichi is the "semicolon" brooch. The semicolon in writing is an important tool to control time; it may expand it or freeze it for a certain time. I love speech, and when I do it, I try to play with long or short pauses. In written language, I see the semicolon less and less, with the exception of different functionalities like in chats where it became this: ";-)". A powerful use but totally different. The brooch is a homage to the semicolon in its use of time control."

<https://www.marzee.nl/stefano-marchetti>



Semicolon, 2023, brooch, Platinum; Photo: Stefano Marchetti



## Typhaine Le Monnier

"Surfaces of a circle: the function follows the shape. But how can you adapt a function to a shape? In this case, the shape is a circle and the function is to support it. How do you support a circle? By adding mediating elements whose function is to adapt the circle to the body. The composition of different shapes and materials, such as stone, brass or wood, mediate with each other and also decorate the neck. In the series, lines become surfaces, ribbons loop into wearable circles that float around the neck."

<https://www.galeriedoor.nl/artist/typhaine-le-monnier>



Area of a circle Yellow and Blue, 2019, necklace, lacquered steel, stained mahogany, 20 x 2.5 x 2cm; Photo: Teresa San-

## Volker Atrops

"It is a pin the block is the jewellery part, shows a pencil line that has been traced with a saw."

Ho ho highly decorative and repeats again the symbolism: thread cutting."

<https://v-a-info.de>



From time to time, I draw a line, brooch, wood, 18kt gold; Photo: Volker Atrops

## The cord for rituals

A string could be infinite if we could find infinite material or extend it in our minds until it goes beyond our imagination. In many spiritual practices, we are a small section of a line, a link in a tradition and of a larger context that leads from our past into the future and beyond. This is visualised by wearing a cord on the body, which is used for various spiritual practices and rules.

## Cingulum, Latin: belt

"In Christianity, the Catholic priest wears a cingulum around his waist during the service. It is a cord that is used twice to gather the alb, the liturgical vestment. It is a reminder that the people of Israel ate the Pasha festival meal girded before the Exodus from Egyptian captivity, i.e. ready for departure. When a priest presides over the liturgy girded, it is a sign that Christians are ready to set out: God will deliver us from all affliction. We are ready for this liberation." Nicola Riess, pastoral worker, Archdiocese of Munich and Freising

Monastery brothers and sisters also use the cingulum to gird their robes. Three knots are tied around their waist every morning when they get dressed, reminding them of their three vows: poverty, obedience and chastity.



Cingulum, cotton cord, Caritas retirement home of St. Willibrord, Munich; Photo: Private

## Tasbīh, Arabic حَبْسَبْت

"The use of the Islamic prayer chain, also known as tasbih, to repeat the words "SubhanAllah" (Exalted from every blemish is Allah), "AlhamduliLah" (All praise and thanks be to Allah) and "Allahu Akbar" (Allah is greater (than anything we can think of) 33 times each, is a commonly practised form of dhikr (remembrance of Allah) in Islam, preferably after the end of the ritual five obligatory prayers. This practice has deep religious and spiritual significance for many Muslims and is often used to praise God, express gratitude and emphasise Allah's majesty. The number 33 was traditionally chosen as it has a special meaning in the Islamic tradition. The total number of 99 (33 x 3) spots on the prayer chain corresponds to the 99 names or attributes of Allah in Islam. By repeating these words, Muslims can focus on the different aspects and attributes of God and establish a deeper connection to their spiritual practice. However, the use of the tasbih chain is not a mandatory obligation in Islam, but a recommended Sunnah practice (recommended actions based on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad). It serves to strengthen the awareness of Allah and the spiritual dimension of life. It is important to note that the intention and devotion of the heart are of great importance when performing such actions. It is not just about mechanical repetition, but about inner devotion and striving for a deeper connection to God. The use of the tasbih chain and the practice of dhikr are widespread in many Muslim cultures and contribute to the spiritual development and inner peace of believers. It is a form of remembrance and worship that serves to clear the mind, calm the spirit and strengthen the spiritual bond."

Zentralrat der Muslime e.V.



Tasbīh, cord, alabaster, on loan from Sokol Lamaj, Chairman of the Muslim Council Munich e.V, Photo: Private



## Eruv, Hebrew, בִּירֵיעַ, Shabbat border

Eruv refers to three procedures that allow certain activities that are actually forbidden on Shabbat according to Jewish law. This usually refers to an Eruv for carrying, but there is also an Eruv for cooking and an Eruv for travelling. The laws of the Eruv are very complicated and extensive.

The Eruv for wearing, because the believers are not allowed to wear anything on Shabbat, including their own house keys, for example, to go to synagogue. However, the Eruv belt offers the possibility of complying with this prohibition by integrating the house key as part of the belt and still being able to go to prayer when the house is locked.



Eruv belt, on loan from Gady Gronich, Secretary General of the European Rabbinical Conference, Munich; Photo: Private

The Eruv for travelling refers to a symbolic fence around a Jewish residential area. It is derived from the 2nd Book of Moses, which states that one may not leave "one's place" on Shabbat (15:25-29). This Eruv consists of a cord to delimit an entire neighbourhood, within which believers are allowed to move on Shabbat. The number of streets included also means a great deal of effort to check whether the Eruv is actually still intact on Shabbat.

<https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/der-juedische-eruv-was-die-schnur-an-manhattans-100.html>



Eruv post on the beach in Tel Aviv, Israel, where Yiftah found a torn piece of Eruv cord during a storm.



Loan from Yiftah Avrahami



## Sacred string in Hinduism

To this day, Indian Brahmins wear a simple cord as a sign of belonging to their religious group. It is "the sacred string" that enables one to perform yajnas, certain rituals. In fact, the string stands for the oral transmission of religious practice in verse from teacher to student before the verses were written down. In the sutras, the verses, daily life is precisely ordered and precise rules are given for certain situations. The string on the upper body identifies the bearers of this knowledge.



Janeu, 3 strands of 3 cotton threads each, on loan from Shreedevi Deshpande; Photo: Shreedevi Deshpande

## Janeu

"After the Upanayanam or thread ceremony, a Brahmin wears 3 strands of 3 cotton threads across his upper body. This is related to the stages of a Brahmin boy's life. When they begin their training, there is a ceremony called Upanayanam or thread ceremony where the Brahmin child is introduced to the training (this includes learning the scriptures and prayers) - at this stage the child is given a set of three threads to wear at all times. He has to follow a ritual of chanting certain prayers called Sandhya. This phase is called Brahmachary. Another set of 3 strings is given to the Brahmin at a ceremony just before marriage when he enters the phase of Grihastha, the father of the family. They are required to wear 2 strands of 3 threads each on their upper body. The third strand of 3 strands is also worn as it frees the wearer from wearing another garment, the Angavastram or upper body cloak. Therefore, after marriage, a Brahmin wears 3 sets of 3 strands each. These are changed from time to time due to wear and tear. For special poojas, the threads are dipped in curcuma water, which turns them yellow."

Shreedevi Deshpande, Bangalore, India

## Kusha grass ring

"The Kusha grass ring is mainly used for Pitru Pooja (pooja to worship the ancestors) with 3 blades of grass. For auspicious poojas performed by the Brahmin (priest) and Kshatriya (warrior) castes, the 2-strand kusha ring is used. A blade of grass is removed from the ring, which I am enclosing. The priest gives the ring to the wearer (the person performing the pooja). After the pooja ceremony, the ring is removed from the finger, the knot is opened and immersed in a lake, river or sea along with all other biodegradable pooja materials (this is called Visarjan)." Shreedevi Deshpande, Bangalore, India.

This plant (*Poa cynosuroides* or *Desmostachya bipinnata*) is the first in the history of creation and is therefore considered sacred. Together, the three strands form a sacred cord and symbolise the intimate connection between body, speech and spirit.



Kusha-Grasring, on loan by Shreedevi Deshpande, Bangalore, India

The spiritual themes surrounding a string on the body have branched out. Whether they are monotheistic or Hindu ideas practised worldwide today, they are all linked by a refreshingly clear visualisation. Since then, we have been tapping into this thread for our increasingly complex world of thought and our various transcendental ideas.

But can't we also see the string as a common basis again, as an element that connects our cultures? Couldn't we use the cord as a starting point again to recognise further similarities and connections between us?

## Imprint

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