

## **Jury Report Françoise van den Bosch Award 2010**

Forty years after the highly individual work of the young Dutch jewellery designer Françoise van den Bosch helped her break through internationally, the award that bears her name has been awarded to a woman of equal boldness and focus.

Lisa Walker was born in 1967 in Wellington, New Zealand, so she truly is from the other side of the world. It is hard moreover to imagine a greater contrast than that between the meticulous conception and pure proportions of Françoise van den Bosch's work and the exuberance with which Lisa Walker puts together her colourful jewellery. That Françoise van den Bosch was trained in the best traditions of the goldsmith's trade is still visible in her work. Likewise Lisa Walker received traditional training in her native country. Yet the gusto with which she has set those traditions aside and has managed to provoke even the greatest aficionados of contemporary jewellery, can be seen as a direct continuation of the creative and professional freedom for which Van den Bosch and a few of her fellow designers battled four decades ago.

Lisa Walker might not actually have won this year's award, as she was originally lined up as a jury member. However, when illness unexpectedly prevented her from coming to Amsterdam, the remainder of the jury seized the opportunity to name her the 2010 laureate. The jury members were Paul Mertz, a board member of the Françoise van den Bosch Foundation, Ted Noten, the 2008 winner of the Award, Hilde de Decker, jewellery designer and coordinator of the jewellery department at the Sint-Lucas college in Antwerp, and connoisseur and commentator Marjan Unger.

Each award is a tribute to the winner's contribution to jewellery, but it also naturally sends out a signal. The choice of Lisa Walker honours a rebel, whose merits lie in the joy of provocation. She doesn't buy materials, but avidly collects thread, fabric, old shop stocks and junk of every kind. She doesn't smith, she glues. And in a big way: the liberally applied adhesive sometimes drips from her work. Gluing comes, however, right at the bottom of the list of smithing techniques. Lisa Walker is extremely productive and has single-mindedly freed herself from established notions of jewellery.

Discussing whether her work is beautiful; whether it is beautifully made; or whether it is actually far from beautiful, isn't relevant. What counts is the authenticity. Lisa Walker sees the

beauty in mundane materials; she uses colour combinations from which anyone else would shrink, and she takes the dimensions of her designs – especially her neckwear – to extremes. ‘Unwearable’ is the title of the awkwardly narrow book on her work that was published in 2008, and it’s true that for several of her pieces, even her most seasoned fan would think twice about wearing them.

But true admirers will always at least try, because when it comes to jewellery design, Lisa Walker is the real thing. Her exploration of the field’s boundaries makes her very much a designer who thinks about the function of jewellery and applies her own rules to her work. For all the spontaneity her jewellery exudes, every piece is carefully conceived and made.

What’s more, this easy-going New Zealander who has spent many years with her antipodals, studying and working in Munich, has remained true to jewellery throughout, ever since her earliest training at Otago Polytechnic in Dunedin in 1988. The award reflects not so much the many years she has been working, as the energy and wealth of ideas with which she has enriched the field of jewellery. Her work positively drips with the pleasure of making, just as it drips with the glue she uses so freely.

The signal that the jury wishes to give out through this award lies in that sense of pleasure and optimism: in 2010 – every bit as much as 40 years ago – it is precisely from within the love of jewellery that the boundaries of the field need to be opened up, and that new ways of looking at jewellery as wearable objects should be discovered through the adventure of the maker’s own work.

Jewellery is a medium for saying something about a time and about a society, and above all about the way in which individuals can make their own way within it. Lisa Walker’s work contains all sorts of connections to worlds beyond that of jewellery, without ever denying jewellery itself. The jury honours her for having the courage to take image and technique beyond the point where others stop. It thanks her too for the optimism with which she commits herself to jewellery as a medium for a myriad of messages.

The Jury of the Françoise van den Bosch Award 2010:

Paul Mertz, chairman

Hilde De Decker

Ted Noten

Marjan Unger