SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES

Introduction

A starting point for reflecting on current affairs in the field:

Terms identifying the jewellery discipline have always been contested, often used interchangeably on axes in time and space: studio Jewellery, author jewellery, art jewellery, contemporary jewellery, to name a few. However, an understanding of what the discipline encompasses has always been clear: a shared system of values and concepts about making, wearing and giving meaning to jewellery connected to an infrastructure that includes art academies, galleries, collectors, thinkers and museums. At least, clear for those active in the field; 'outsiders' often wonder about the strict boundaries of the discipline, about what contemporary jewellery is and not is.

The last decade we've seen a careful shift in thinking about these strict boundaries that runs parallel to wider social discussions about diversity and inclusion, as well as to a shift towards interdisciplinarity that is currently prominent in all cultural fields.

Diversity and Inclusion

The jury emphasizes the importance of rupturing the status quo of the contemporary jewellery field. Disciplinary boundaries should be questioned and ownership of the field contested: who and what is included - and excluded - and why?

They are critical of dominant aesthetics and narratives in the field, a Eurocentric gaze prevails which causes exclusion of many forms of expression and aesthetics. There is limited presence of artists of colour and "non-Western" artists. Historically, these groups have been systematically excluded, ignored and overlooked which has resulted in underrepresentation in the field.

The jury would like to see an active investment in opening up the field to a plurality of voices and perspectives though they also acknowledging that diversifying the field is a process that takes time; art education plays an important role in this. Looking at the discipline through the wider lens of adornment could be a way forward.

Additionally, the jury misses an overall reflection on current societal themes in the field and challenges the still dominant tendency towards individual introspective narratives. What can the specific jewellery gaze add to wider societal discussions?

Crafting new futures

Although the jury fully embraces and applauds the shift towards a new visual language of the craft of jewellery design with a new generation of makers working with 3D programming and other such technologies in the digital realm, they are of opinion that the craft itself – traditional techniques, materiality, etc - is under pressure. Nevertheless, the jury sees a clear future for the field. The discipline's history is deemed important, and with many first generation makers still practicing intergenerational dialogue is encouraged, familiarizing a new generation of makers with all aspects of the discipline whilst encouraging them to create new narratives and connect to other disciplines.

The jury feels that in order to find new and diverse audiences, it is imperative to find new ways of showing and researching jewellery. Connecting to other disciplines and fields such as fashion, could help broaden the scope of what contemporary jewellery is and could be. However, in this hybrid

future there is a risk that something will get lost. The jury advises to anchor the discipline in academic discourse and art education. Furthermore, the Françoise van den Bosch Foundation could play a role in the transfer of knowledge and history of the discipline and emphasize its representative function in the field.

The Recipient

Taking the above analyses of the contemporary jewellery field into consideration the jury unanimously puts **Chequita Nahar** forward as the recipient of the Françoise van den Bosch award.

Chequita Nahar is a jewellery designer, tutor and curator. Her work is informed by her bicultural background; growing up in two cultures —Suriname and the Netherlands— and reflects a fusion of influences. In her work, she combines Surinamese crafts and techniques with methods that are rooted in contemporary jewellery practices. In it, she discusses Surinamese culture, its rituals, symbolism and visual language which she connects to her experience of Dutch culture. The jury is of opinion that this interaction, which is essential to her practice, brings relevant and important perspectives to the jewellery field, as it relates to contemporary and social topics concerning Dutch colonization, Surinamese culture in The Netherlands, migration, and diaspora, among other. Additionally, the jury values her commitment to the craft of jewellery design in all its aspects, as a maker and educator.

Awarding Chequita Nahar this prize is not solely a way to applaud and stimulate her manifold practice. Chequita Nahar is an important voice in the contemporary jewellery field through her engagement in the field as a passionate educator (Head of programme Fine Art and Design, Maastricht Institute of Arts) and curator (Schmuck, 2020). She has been an important promoter of diversity and inclusion in art education, fueling a -sometimes difficult- discussion in the field whilst making sure everyone is included, bringing people together on a topic that often triggers polarization. The jury applauds her commitment to opening up the field to polyphonic narratives and perspectives and in broadening its scope, and appreciates her role as instigator of a discussion about diversity and inclusion. By awarding her the prize, the jury wants to stimulate her artistic practice and educational endeavours, and make sure her voice reaches a wide audience.

Lastly, the jury believes it important that a black female voice is brought into the series of winners of the Françoise van den Bosch Award, thereby questioning the role of this award and the representative function of the foundation.