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MASTER OF FINE ARTS

Sculptural Jewelry in Line Composition

By

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# Table of Contents

Introduction ----------------------------------- 1- 2

Inspiration ------------------------------------- 3- 5

Concept ---------------------------------------- 6- 9

Work ------------------------------------------ 10- 12

Conclusion ------------------------------------- 13
Abstract

As a contemporary female Asian artist I want to create sculptural jewelry to be a bridge between western and eastern culture. The most concern for my thesis is developing line work which is one of the most interesting works to me. I created contemporary sculptural jewelry by engaging with the body line compositions. My intention to create jewelry that can be associated with both the body and also stand on its own as a sculptural form. Movement, pattern, rhythm, intersection, space, boundaries, scale, symmetry and asymmetry engage the body within the line compositions revealed in my works.

Introduction

Female contemporary artist

Art can be a reflection of the time and life in which we live. As a contemporary artist, I make unique wearable sculptural jewelry which reflects this time. Jewelry can have a close relationship to an individual, and symbolize humanity, society, and culture. I make jewelry to be close to the person, so my jewelry engages with the human body. I create from inexact lines and I follow my instinct. Intuitive feelings rhythmically shape the lines. My intention to create jewelry that can be associated with both the body and also stand on its own as a sculptural form. Space and time are revealed in these compositions. My jewelry imaginatively addresses interior and
exterior, movements, symmetry and asymmetry. When I am creating with lines, I use my instinct to extend from the body into space, and vice versa.

**From Korea to America**

After graduating from a metal art program in Korea, I decided to study art in America and to come into contact with a different culture. Meeting people of different ethnic groups changed my thinking. One of the impressive things was the diverse opinions about beauty. People are inspired from their own cultural backgrounds and human diverse friends I also could get inspiration from different parts of the world. Moreover, I was impressed by the endless natural scenery in America as opposed to being surrounded by many buildings in from my hometown Seoul Korea. I appreciate living in beautiful nature.

**Influence of Education**

The most important reason that I decided to in the metal field was my interest in jewelry. During my first year as a graduate student, I created sculptural jewelry which was shaped with line and then I added fabric to combine line and mass. I have tried to make sculptural jewelry that moves with the person. When I make an every piece of work, my primary concern was the judgment coming from the people who saw my work. When I firsts created a new idea, my greatest concern was to make it appeal to the viewer. This thought stayed with me and at times I was inhibited when developing a new design. When I encountered this problem, Professor, Leonard Urso
advised me to follow my instinct. I have tried to develop my own view toward for my art work, and I realize the most important things for creating art is to follow true expression. I then wholeheartedly trusted my instincts and towards finding beauty for my art work. I strongly believe jewelry should have an esthetic appeal for both the viewer and wearer. My thesis conveys beauty through jewelry.

Inspiration

Awareness

When I was a primary school student, my class often visited ancient history museums. There are several themes revealed from the many kinds of historical. I spent most of my time looking at jewelry which was from of gold, silver, other metals, and wonderful gems and also wood and stone. Since ancient times, people have put on jewelry. Moreover, people used various materials for jewelry which d they wore on different places to their body.

In ancient times, jewelry expressed not only beauty but also symbolized the
wearer’s status and wealth, and often people wore jewelry for special ceremonies. Jewelry form have changed in style, scale and materials for each period, it is often true that people prefer beautiful jewelry. At the present, many people also wear jewelry in pursuit of beauty. I believe the pursuit of beauty is an eternal truth for many people who wear jewelry. The basic premise of my thesis is that jewelry should reflect it’s time and through.

**History**

1. Ancient times

   In animal kingdom, only humans adorn themselves as a variety forms. The world jewelry is result from the Latin world jocale which meant “plaything”, and defined any piece of precious material (gemstones, noble metals, etc.) used to adorn one’s self. In South Africa, the oldest man-made jewelry which is mollusk or *nassarius kraussianus* shells is discovered. Those are dates back to Middle Stone Age 100,000 years ago.

   Actually, over 40,000 years ago when ancestors began to migrate from the Middle East to Europe they already making began prolific jewelry. They were called as Homo Sapiens. They used crudely fashioned jewelry as necklaces and bracelets. Most of materials are made of bone, teeth, mother-of-pearl, various types of shells and stone strung. Those materials at that time as jewelry is not precious compare with modern time’s materials, but for ancients those materials were very precious value to themselves. After this period, humans started to use metals for jewelry. First metal
materials were copper and were seen around 7,000 years ago. That period jewelry used not only to protect heal disease, against harm, and ward of evil but also as a symbol of wealth and status. Thus, people wore jewelry to adorn nearly every part of body, and materials used getting diverse.

2. Middle Ages

During Middle Ages, using stones for jewelry were getting diverse in color and methods of settings were developed. Even though materials of jewelry were developing, from influencing of Carolingian and Irish renaissance, jewelry design always got strong religious aspects throughout middle ages. Jewelry became symbol of wealth, but prohibited wearing not only precious stone but also gold and silver for citizens. Because of that reasons jewelry could not great develop, but continued the basic methods of manufacture.

3. The Renaissance

Because of great development of jewelry filed throughout the Renaissance, we can call “the jewel age”. One of the most important characteristics of the Renaissance period was looking for beauty. As an object of ornamentation for beauty and a distinct symbolization of their wealth, people wore jewelry. Ecclesiastical influences made jewelry design more diverse. Jeweler used as objects of real life like parrots, lizard and pelicans. Moreover, they used vivid color and exotic materials with precious stones. These developments were great influence on future jewelry filed.

4. 18th Century
During the eighteenth century, it was called as “the age of germs”. Stone’s cut and arrangement of jewelry were very important. Moreover, as developing of fashion, jewelry became necessary to dress. In other words, jewelry became a part of fashion. Other great important affect was made brilliant cut of diamonds in 1700. It was influence to create in cutting of other germs.

5. The 20th and 21st Century

These days, jewelry exists as a part of art with an advance in craft field. Biggest change of the twenty Century is using synthetic materials. Thus, forms and materials of jewelry are becoming more diverse. Jewelry artists have started to imbue with jewelers’ subjective value into each piece of jewelry. In other words, Jewelry is not just an expression of beauty but a part of art field which included jewelers’ concept. Jewelry had been developed many ways, but basic role is still remained. This role is the ornament for human body.

Artist

Barbara Hepworth is a famous female English abstract sculptor, involves with constructivist movement. Hepworth great influenced my work. She was born in 1903 in Wakefield, Yorkshire, England. She studied for two years at the Leeds School of Art before being admitted in 1921 to the Royal College of Art in London. When she was in college, she met two men, and both were quite important in her life. Their careers paralleled her own. One was sculptor Henry More, and the other was painter Ben Nicholson. One was a lifelong friend, the other a lifelong husband. In 1931, she married Nicholson. Hepworth's works seem
to be inspired by mathematics and mathematical models, and her early work, consisted of realistic forms, but after the 1930’s she changed her work to create with pure forms. Hepworth sculptures excite me and had played an important role in my thesis work. She mainly used stones, and presented movements using metal line and string. Most important terms of her work were shape and space. Hepworth always considered positive and negative spaces. Moreover, for emphasis space, she drilled holes though her work, and shaping metal line and string these holes.

In books from Alibis, Hepworth said, “I felt the most intense pleasure in piercing the stone in order to make an abstract form and space; quite a different sensation form that of doing it for the purpose of realism.” After carving basic forms, Hepworth applied other material lines. This means her work is not shaped from one mass but unlimited opened to space. Intersection lines and surfaces a solid mass. I believe that the most interesting aspect is how she used specific forms and special concerns which are expressed through the use of material part and selects details of her work. She always addressed the important of craftsmanship in her work.
Wave (1943 – 1944) by Barbara Hepworth
An Oriental Painting

As an Asian student, I always tried to put my Korean background and my experience in America into my art work. While preparing my thesis concept, my background in America can connect eastern and western culture. So I study more Korean painting, especially ‘The Four Gracious Plants’: It intends plum, orchid, chrysanthemum, and bamboo. Also, it is the symbol of four seasons and a factor for an Asian man of virtue. Among these four plants, the orchid is the most beautiful. In spite of slender form of orchid, there are not only weak lines but also strong lines in painting of orchid. Actually, in oriental painting, one of the biggest characters is strength and weakness of drawing line. Painters created strength and weakness line at the same time and they left some space empty. This empty space is not just unfinished drawing but beauty of deliberately blank space. Painters drew one by one with their’- true heart. Thus, each line represented the artist’s sensitivity, personality, and emotion. Moreover, in Asian panting, there is a sense of silence- stillness and dramatic facts. According to how can draw line, viewer can feel a sense of space, the beauty of empty space and movement in line.
Chrysanthemum

Bamboo

Bamboo

Orchid A kind of apricot tree
Architecture

As Korean painting serve as Asian influence, architecture serve as my western interest. I primarily studied America western architecture at RIT, but research alone was not enough for my thesis work. I visit Chicago where I felt the need to see the architecture directly. Chicago is called as city of architecture. The city Chicago located a lake which is one of the great Lake in the word. Each building is front by the water. Architecture, nature and people are harmonized. Moreover, both the outside and the inside view of building is well matched.

Each building has special feature and beautiful shape of line in its own space. Buildings coexist with both symmetry and asymmetry. One of the most harmonious architectures that I saw was Pavilion in Millennium Park, designed by Frank Gehry. It reflects well this time in which we live. The performance center, combined the stage of an organic features as if kneaded by hands with the parts for the audience consisted of mere frames has been built beautifully forming a piece of work in large scale. Such a building, which contrasts with its surrounding nature and with the nearby resident to be the example of the nature-friendly buildings.
Kapoor Sculpture at SBC Plaza-Cloud Gate

Jay Pritzker Pavilion and the Great Lawn
Concept

Movement, pattern, rhythm, intersection, space, boundaries, scale, symmetry and asymmetry with engaging the body, in line compositions described my works. I created contemporary sculptural jewelry by engaging with the body with line compositions. Every period, jewelry is changed like style, scale, and materials. However, primary role of jewelry is worn. Therefore, engaging well with the body is priority of jewelry. With original role as jewelry, I have tried to apply sculptural facts. Sculptural jewelry could be wear as jewelry and it could stand on its own as a sculptural form. With this concept I explored sculptural jewelry forms with line compositions by building up new space.

Line

I believe that all objects could be represented as a line, and these line movements fill up space. I made sculptural jewelry to mix with line and mass as a first-year graduate student. I was inspired by line movements of organic shape. Lines from organic forms make me feel comfortable. While preparing the thesis show, I seem to have a natural attraction for creating line composition, thus I decided to concentrate on more line. I use my instincts for drawing line to extend from the body into space and vice versa with craftsmanship.

Every line which I created comes from my pure feeling that I want to express instinctively as lines. These lines built up both interior and exterior at the same
time, and with this process, other spaces are coming into being. All strength and weakness of line compositions have interactive relation with getting into the rhythm. In line movements, each line of different length shows the opening and closing in boundlessness of space and crossed on interaction points. It represents another line composition in certain space. Each line created each space, and lines and spaces got to be harmony. These lines built up their own pattern and with this pattern, line compositions were created as a sculptural piece of jewelry.

**Movements**

In line composition, one of the most important facts for thesis that I want to express is natural movements of lines for my sculptural jewelry like drawing. Each line has its own angles and these small angles create various movements of lines. Each object has its own shape and movements. I intended movements to let a person feel a multiplicity of expressions. I have tried to have certain patterns in various movements of lines and these patterns make rhythm. This rhythm goes back to feel movements. From movements, viewer can feel rhythm and harmony at the same time. That was my concern. In addition, movements of line compositions created extension from the body into space, and vice versa.

**Scale**

With movements, other important for creating jewelry was scale. Usually, for jewelry, there are certain sizes, so people do not use big scale. However, I wanted to
apply bigger scale which represents sculptural facts. Sculptural jewelry should be a certain size as sculptural forms. I have tried to satisfy both aspects as jewelry and sculpture. So I made bigger size jewelry which is comfortable for the body. This scale is extended both from the body to outside and from outside to the body. In addition, these sculptural jewelries are not heavy and, with good balance, people can wear them easily. That is also my important intention for sculptural pieces of jewelry.

**Color**

Color also is important in my jewelry. Color sets a mood and builds a certain character about jewelry. Actually, I always thought jewelry should be the original metal color and I could not imagine using color on to metal surface. However, I wanted to try experiment so I applied colors to jewelry. I have made several tests to achieve certain colors. Thus, I used metal’s original color for some pieces, and I have tried to apply different color to other pieces. Color is one aspect, for this thesis. That aspect could be visually pleasing and exciting. With various colors, certain jewelry series can be better compositions as jewelry and as a sculptural form.

**Material**

As a contemporary artist, I have tried to use commercial materials which reflect this time and life with my craftsmanship. I searched many commercial materials and that was the biggest challenge for me. I wanted to combine line compositions of metal and show totally different feeling compared to metal feeling, so materials should
be more flexible and light for comparing with metal. Thus, I decided to use fiber optics, acrylic, glue and plastic. Those materials have are flexible and light. Those materials could be bent and heated into any kinds of shape, so I can combine them with metal line easily. Combination both metal lines and plastic lines offered extreme feeling as different materials.

Body

The most important role of jewelry is to be worn. It means jewelry can not be separated from the body. People wear jewelry to express beauty. All jewelry is more beautiful when it is worn. In other words, not only for purpose of wearing but also for showing of the beautiful body is important role for jewelry. This is my premise for creating jewelry. Thus, I have tried to engage between jewelry and the body. With this premise, I give meaning to angle and length of each line. First, I have tried to create jewelry from the body to outside. Second, I have tried to create jewelry from outside to the body.
Work

1. Mixed Space1 (Figures 1-2)

I spent a lot of time on this piece. I stated to make this among all my works, but I finished this last. When I started this I wanted to apply more sculptural fact as a wearable jewelry. So I broke rule about materials which is not usually used for jewelry. First, I used copper wire and I hammered for texture and then twisted each line with heat. I tried to make various textures, thus when I twisted the line I turned right and left with all different lengths. As a result, all twisted lined are different, so they show a lot of unique textures. After finishing the build up line, I put in a tube for holding fiber optics. I matched all distances for each tube for sense of space, and decided to paint. I wanted a dark color for the body, so I used black, navy, and gray. For the fiber optic part, I wanted to show a more flexible shape and various vivid colors. Thus, for all different shapes of fiber optic line, I bound each end of line with glue, and heated all different parts of the line. After heating, all fiber optic bent as a various shapes. With this shape of fiber optics, I painted several colors, and then I added glue for finishing. That glue part created variety of movements as well as small surfaces.

2. Mixed Space 2 (Figures 3-5)

Compare with Mixed Space1, I tried simpler lines in a bigger space. For this piece, I used sterling silver for the body, and I made smaller and more sensitive textures. For this textual, when I heated the line I twisted and tightened them. I built line to extend
from the body to the outside. To emphasize the backside, I made a simple line composition for the front side, but more line composition for the back side. Moreover, both right and left side edges of the lines are finished with sharp lines for point. After building up, I got a beautiful silver from the heating. It had all different brightnesses and chroma. Thus, I kept that color, and I put each fiber optic as a long length. I applied to paint dark color for edge of fiber optic-(between edge of fiber optic and silver tube) for more connection between fiber optic and silver.

3. Mixed Space 3 (Figures 6-7)

When I designed these, I was inspired by Korean painting, so I tried to create strength and weakness of line composition. The most important theme of this line composition is variety of color and space of line as a small sculpture. These line compositions not only look like small sculptures but also all these have function as a ring. I made all couple line compositions. Thus, all pairs of line have a unique expression. I tried to express all different colors for each of line compositions. I use original color of sterling silver, several kinds of patina, and paint.

4. Orchid (Figures 8-9)

In Korean paintings, there are many paintings of ‘the Four Gracious Plants’-Among them I was inspired by the beauty of orchids. When I saw paintings, from one origin of root, orchid creeps over, and each leaf has strong shape. In other words, it expressed strength and weakness of line. I tried to express that inspiration for my jewelry. I made
a shoulder brooch. Thus, I could create a space between shoulder and line compositions. As a root, from the body of brooch I built up line composition.

5. **Diadem (Figures 10)**

When I designed this, one thing I want to show the direction of line movement in pattern and rhythm from head which is top of each person’s body to the more upper side which has a more unlimited sense of space. Thus, I started to build up bottom to the top part. I used four kinds of thickness, and all different lengths of line. I wanted to show changing sense of space, so bottom part made by complicated with shorter line, however, as going to the top part, line is less complicated with longer line. Each line could not be strong, but all line combination created not only strong movement but also a lot of space in rhythm to the top over the head.

6. **Ramus (Figures 11)**

In contrast to the diadem, I used simple line composition from hand to arm. Moreover, this line composition of work provided different meaning compared to others. Comparing with other pieces, wearing this piece turns negative space into positive space. I used three different sizes of sterling silver tubing and acrylic. I built up a form between fingers and all edge of tubing I put acrylic as a same thickness with silver tubing. I sanded all acrylic. For bending acrylic, I boiled water and put acrylic, and when it was heated I bent it.
7. Ramification (Figures 12)

In these series of brooches, I concentrated on more movement of fiber optic. I simply designed organic shape with metal tubing, and then played with movements of fiber optic. For center piece I used copper, and for others I used sterling silver. I put five different sizes of fiber optic to different size of tubing.
Conclusion

My definition of the jewelry has grown along with my artistic expression. The definition of jewelry to me is reflecting this time and our life with engaging well with the body. Moreover, as an international student from eastern and western culture which I have experienced I tried to reveal both aspect of beauty. When I design, most concerns that I needed to express to be considered were both associated with the body and also stand on its own as a sculptural form in space and time with line compositions. For both facts of jewelry and a sculptural form, I created oversized jewelry. Thus, my jewelry has not only as a wearable function but also has a sculptural form.

Preparing thesis work, I have tried to find new materials and technique which is never used before. Thus, I have applied not only basic skills like soldering and hammering, but also twisting technique of metal with multitude of materials like fiber optics, plastic, and acrylic. This new technique provided my work to create variety of beautiful textures harmonizing with materials.

Throughout the preparation and completion of this thesis and thesis work, I found my potential as an artist and learned more for my future art work from considering diversity of materials, design, and technique. Also, this sculptural jewelry of line composition is a vehicle for me as a contemporary female artist to express myself within certain formal boundaries.
(Figure 10)