



DREAMING BIG – ENLARGING JEWELLERY TO THE SIZE OF A LANDSCAPE



Interview with Jelizaveta SUSKA
by Austeja PETRAUSKAITE

Tell us about yourself. How has your path as a jewellery artist started?

I was born in Latvia (1989) and at the age of 24 I moved to Sweden. In 2015 I graduated from the Academy of Design and Crafts (HDK) at the University of Gothenburg. I also studied in Latvia, Germany and Japan. Currently I am a resident at the IASPIS program in Stockholm.

I have always been interested in art and have been trying things for as long as I can remember. It is interesting because art brings variety, beauty, fosters independent thinking and new perspectives. And Art jewellery can be all of it. When applying for the Art Academy of Latvia, I chose the discipline that I knew the least about – metal design. Bachelors had a classical jewellery approach, focused on traditional materials. During my second year I did an exchange semester and was tutored by jeweller Georg Dobler. Those five months made me fall in love with art jewellery.

What has been a seminal experience for you?

It is hard to say what was the most crucial experience for me. I would say that it was important to have different perspectives on contemporary jewellery that I learned by having contact with different cultures.

Your biography is very colourful, it seems you never stop creating. What's a project you are currently working on? What is your dream project?

Thank you. Currently I am working on a virtual reality experience. I always wanted to become tiny and explore gigantic world from a perspective of Thumbelina. Perhaps I even create my jewellery so if I would be tiny I would see a marvellous landscape. So, to make my dream come true I will virtually enlarge my work to the size of a landscape.

What makes you passionate about jewellery?

I would say it is the possibility to be able to wear the art on yourself or carry it with you. That makes it, in a way, more accessible. Besides, the discipline is relatively new, and I would like to believe that it has a lot of potential.

Where do you find inspiration for your design?

My inspiration is coming from general experience. I think I am some sort of a "filter" that absorbs all kind of life situations, processes it and produces a product. Result of my art practice is this product. It would be hard to describe it in one example.

What is the most integral part in your work? What themes do you pursue?

You have probably heard of the fairy-tale Thumbelina written by Hans Christian Andersen. When I was a child I imagined myself being as tiny as her; the gigantic world seemed to me to be more beautiful and full of



Photo: Jelizaveta SUSKA

tempting adventures. I still think that, sometimes.

It's striking where our imagination can take us. When I work on my jewellery I aim to be a demiurge, to create my own new world. At times, I craft my works so that if I were to become tiny and drop onto my jewellery, I would see a marvellous landscape. Such associations, are for me a vessel that transfer ideas to the material.

The pieces are made of your own material where one of the compounds is polymer. How this material came to your jewellery?

How has your works change over time?

I started my project with a mind map. My key words were "memories" and "silent moment". I thought that I would like my work to look like stone, as stone is something that is often associated with memories (I think many of us have picked up stone to remember a particular day). Then, after a period of research, I came up with my own material that has two main compounds: polymer, that is light and transparent, just like 'a moment' and crushed marble, that creates an illusion of a solid stone. In the beginning of crafting each piece, the material is hot and dynamic but in a while it turns still, like a metaphor of a moment becoming a memory.

Now I am exploring more "horizontally" than "vertically". What I mean is that I am trying all the possibilities I have with this material. For example, I use different ingredients. In a work series Frozen in Amber I take instead of original marble – amber. I used Baltic amber as I associate it with my homeland – Latvia and with the past. They're fossils from around 44 million years ago but were also widely used in the Soviet Union. I believe that amber could even be considered as a stereotype of this period. I aim to destroy this perception by crushing the stones and their accepted value by using them in another context and stepping away from what I have seen so many times before. For other edition called The Night I am using magma sand and black marble as symbols of fears and darkness.

What memorable responses have you had to your work?

I really enjoy reactions when people realize that my work is not made of stone. It is pure emotion of a surprise!

Name three artists you would like to be compared to.

Not sure if "compare" would be the right word but I definitely admire works of Otto Künzli, Katashi Kojima and let's say Daehyun Kim (moonassi).

What's the best piece of advice you've been given?

If it is hard to make a choice between two similar options – pick randomly. ■