You Tell the Tale

It's hard to know if Jeanett Gustavsen is a jeweller or a storyteller. Perhaps she is both. Her work – compact aluminium disks, often in greenish tones – ranges in size from small change to commemorative medals. These disks may be joined in clusters, like intersecting spheres in a Venn diagram. Despite their initial similarity, their surfaces are distinct: punctured by small squarish shapes or covered with tight rows of engraved fine lines. Devoid of pins, chains and clasps, the pieces can be attached to each other and to clothing with discreet magnets; the pieces are completely modular, so one set of disks can be worn as a brooch, earrings, a necklace or a combination of all three, depending upon the wearer and how many pieces are attached together. Gustavsen's design – its appearance and its functionality – recalls the more geometric designs of Vienna Werkstätte which combined rich ornament with mute abstraction in useful objects, from jewellery to furniture. While cultivating such historical echos, the artist is open to futuristic readings, if not a science-fiction scenario of planets swirling in a cosmos – a reading reminiscent of the sense of ornament in the classical Greek definition of the term *kosmos.* In addition to making jewellery, Gustavsen produces drawings and short stories. It is tempting to segregate these media, yet her overall practice – modular jewellery, drawing, writing – suggests that all of her works are driven by the potential of narrative: not a finalised tale but the possibility of telling one, living one. With their modularity, the green aluminium disks are like the chapters in Julio Cortazar's *Rayuela* (Hopscotch, 1963): a novel that could be read chronologically or by »hopping« around the pages. Her disks could be akin to characters or their props in a story, whether recollected from the past, imagined in the future or time-travelling back and forth. By inviting each person to decide how to wear her disks, Gustavsen pushes jewellery from a confirmation of identity (think of the wedding ring) to an invitation to experience a new identity. *Jennifer Allen*

Jeanett Gustavsen (1987, Tjøme) is a Norwegian jeweller based in Oslo where she completed her MFA studies at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts in 2015. While studying, she started her own gallery Spikern in 2012 and collaborated with Yuka Oyama in the group exhibition »From the Coolest Corner: Nordic Jewellery« in 2013 at the National Museum of Decorative Arts and Design in Oslo. Exploring post–Cold War futurist aesthetics, Gustavsen works with precious modular objects, making them into living nostalgic reminders of the dream of a final frontier.

The Nonchalant 2015.

MAGNETIC FIELDS For as long as I can remember, I have been seduced by science fiction and aerospace. These realms make me want to look up in the starry sky and think of the first encounter on the moon, where one step was, in many minds, impossible but became the start of something wondrous. My way of looking up and away was quite a huge leap to take for a little girl in the eighties. Television not only gave us a close history of the world's sufferings but also constantly reminded us of far away galaxies that experienced the same, only in another time than ours. There was always a question that bugged me: What happens when you are able to travel out there? Well, you should also expect visitors. With those deep thoughts, I started a lifelong preparation for a possible encounter. I had already learnt that flared pants, weird machines and silly hairdos were to be expected, but I also learned that my towel should always be nearby and that the answer to everything was 42. I bought heavy-duty shoes, had a towel tightly packed with me at all times and wrapped things in aluminium foil. I must add that I was deeply afraid of microwaves at that time.
I understood later that some of those gimmicks were more useful for my imagination than for a survival kit. I also found out that I enjoyed literature that did not involve only the dystopian and, in some way or another, an apocalyptic future. My conviction of outer space became rather an idea of stories about what it can be. One interesting approach is to figure out how to illuminate the planetary orbit or to make constellations with objects that are not commonly considered space props. How does that influence our perspective and possibilities?
Nevertheless ... I still find myself afraid of the weird phenomenon called the microwave. How on earth did someone find the idea and the interest for that? *Jeanett Gustavsen*

Jeanett Gustavsen

Innerspace 2015. All images courtesy: the artist; all photographs: Ravn Heggerud.

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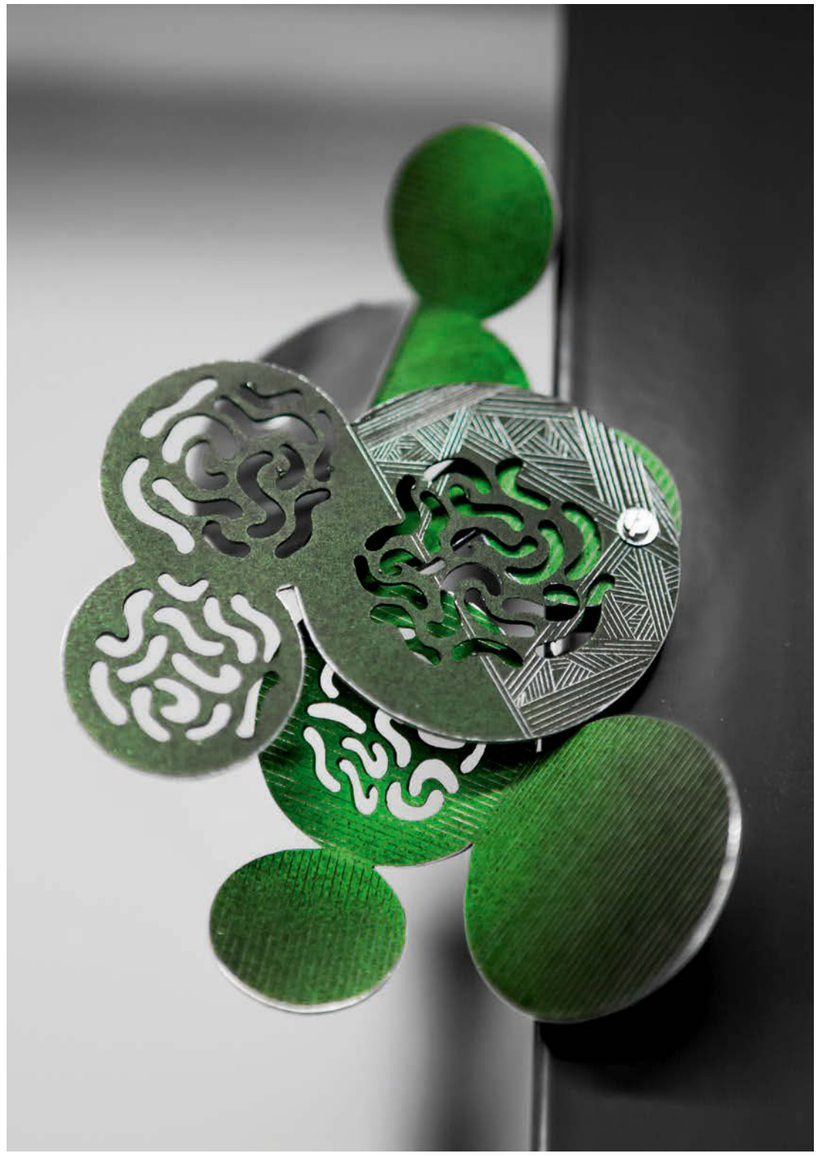

Untitled 2015, aluminium, paint, steel, magnet, machine screws.

Work in Progress 2015.

Jeanett Gustavsen

Is There Anything Out There? 2015.

Jeanett Gustavsen

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