

THE STORY OF ONE THEME – ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JEWELLERY AND ARCHITECTURE

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When talking about architecture in goldsmithing, especially jewellery, first of all, the term ‘theme’ used in the title of this study must be clarified, and for the needs of the analyses below it should be understood as various architectural forms defined by the term ‘microarchitecture’. Therefore one speaks of treating the whole building as a goldsmith’s work, as in the case of medieval reliquaries, monstrances or thurbiles taking the form of the Heavenly Jerusalem imagined in the shape of a Christian temple¹, as well as Jewish ritual rings depicting a house or temple in Jerusalem. We are not talking about microarchitecture as a representation of real architecture, as in the case of Pelplin feretory of St. Barbara described by Kinga Szczepkowska-Naliwajek (depicting the tower – the holy attribute), but the pattern understood as an artistic idea for the entire goldsmith object, in this case – jewellery, especially rings.

In addition, any architectural fragment should be considered an architectural form, including architectural detail, which forms the basis of the entire goldsmith’s work. The use of this element – detail or decoration appearing in the architecture of a given era – in jewellery or, more generally, in goldsmith, poses many problems to the researcher. The most difficult thing to resolve is whether the pattern for a goldsmith’s work is in this case

¹ The microarchitecture in reliquaries is mentioned by Kinga Szczepkowska-Naliwajek several times in her publications on goldsmiths (1987, 1996a, 1996b, 2002). On the theme of Heavenly Jerusalem as a model for the goldsmith’s implementation of medieval thurbiles, see: Kobielius 1989.

architecture, or perhaps both of the arts – architecture and goldsmithing – have adopted some decorative themes typical of a given time. An example of this second situation can certainly be the tracery decorations of Gothic pastorals or Neo-gothic triangles found in cast-iron sentimental jewellery produced in Germany in the years 1800-1860².

Finally, with the term from the title, you can relate various references to structures used in architecture. It seems that in the modern sense – as indicated by the descriptions of jewellery made in the 20th and 21st century – the term ‘architectural’ means simply ‘built’ in jewellery. It refers not only to forms modelled on specific architecture, but also to the simple, clear and transparent structure of a given object. This applies especially to minimalist jewellery, devoid of a decorative detail, whose principle is a form constructed like in the case of architectural work. It is, of course, a contractual term, and perhaps even colloquial, which is therefore difficult to define, because it is based on the perception of the recipient rather than on the specific features of the subject. A great example of this way of using architectural forms in jewellery is the work of the marvellous and admired in Europe Japanese artist Mariko Sumioka, who is inspired by both the traditional architecture of her country and its transparent construction as well as the diversification of materials (fig. 1)³.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the image of real architecture (the entire work or its fragment) or imaginary one is used in jewellery products, which since the 1980s have gained huge popularity in Europe. One cannot, however, consider the subject of contemporary products without analysing, even briefly, the history of the discussed phenomenon, which is by no means a novelty created in the past century. Architectural forms have been

² Cast-iron jewellery produced in Prussian manufactories during the Napoleonic wars gains the symbolic importance of resistance to the French invaders in the years 1815-1816. Its neoclassical forms, present in the first decade of the nineteenth century, after 1815 will replace the Neo-Gothic stylistics of tracery leaves, an example of which are, for example, cast-iron earrings from the Prussian manufactory, dated 1820-1830 and stored in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (inventory No.: 96C&D-1906). See: E. Dębowska 2001; 2011.

³ www.marikosumioka.com/#!about/aboutPage [accessed: 7.04.2019]. See: Ross 2012.

appearing in jewels since antiquity. Above all, it is worth mentioning the objects modelled on city fortifications: *corona muralis* and *corona vallaris*. Crowns with an element of city walls and defensive towers decorated the heads of the Greek deities Tyche and the Roman Cybele, which are, among other things, town patrons. That is probably why they appear at the temples of the personification of countries and cities in the *Iconography* of Cesare Ripa (let us mention for example the personification of Italy, which 'has a crown with the towers and walls' [Ripa 1998: 49], and this crown – as the author further says – is supposed to indicate the 'ornamentation and dignity of the Cities, Lands, Castles and Towns' [ibid.: 51]). *Corona muralis* is not only an attribute of goddesses or personification – in ancient Rome, alongside the crown of the *vallaris* or the crown of *castrensis*, it was the prize for the legion officer who first defeated the fortifications of the besieged city. The testimony of this tradition are the images of Roman emperors on coins minted on the occasion of won victories, on which coins there are crowns with towers and defensive walls (*muralis*) or palisade (*vallaris*).

Architectural forms in women's jewellery will appear for the first time during the Merovian dynasty (481-751). In many museums around the world are stored rings found in women's tombs, dated to the V-VII century, whose simple ring is decorated with an object resembling a building on the central plan. Three interesting objects with different complexity of decorations can be found in the private collection of Benjamin Zucker⁴ presented in October and December 2014 in the Les Enluminures gallery in New York, Paris and Chicago at the exhibition entitled *Cycles of Life: Rings from the Benjamin Zucker Family Collection* (fig. 2-4).

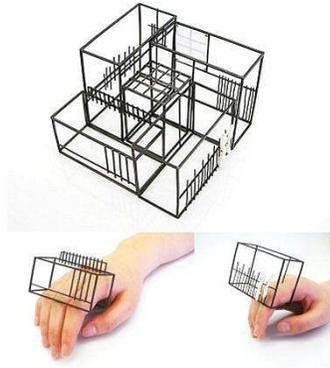


Fig. 1. Mariko Sumioka, Tea House

⁴ www.artstolife.com/arts-to-life/benjaminzucker.php [accessed: 12.05.2019].



Fig. 2. Merovingian ring from the collection of Benjamin Zucker, around 500 AD (origin: France), on the deposit of the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, 1985-2013

Fig. 3. Merovingian ring from the collection of Benjamin Zucker, the end of 6th – the beginning of the 7th century (origin: France, Gaul), on the deposit of the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, 1985-2013

Fig. 4. Merovingian ring from the collection of Benjamin Zucker, the end of 6th – the beginning of the 7th century (origin: France, Gaul), on the deposit of the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, 1985-2013

The authors of the catalogue of the exhibition derive an architectural form of decoration of the presented artefacts from the shape of a baptistery or reliquary, although none of the Merovingian rings has inscriptions that would confirm their connection with Christian symbolism. The cylindrical form decorating the wedding ring has not been identified unambiguously to this day. Nor was it convincing enough to justify its symbolic meaning, read in the context of marriage as an image of a house or the House of God, as in the case of Jewish wedding rings. Some researchers, such as Diana Scarisbrick (1993), believe that this is just a type of decoration without any symbolic function.

In British Museum there are also two, slightly older than the Merovingian, rings with the image of architecture (British Museum, inventory No. AF.482 and 1872.0604.245), found in Lombardy, dating from the 6th–8th century. Although the representation of the building on the ring of these – probably Ostrogothic or Early Byzantine – rings is clearly associated with the form of the temple, also in this case it has not been possible to unambiguously confirm its symbolic meaning (fig 5-6).



Fig. 5. Architectural Lombardish ring (?), Early Byzantine (?), British Museum, inventory No.: 1872,0604.245, 6th–8th century (place of finding: Lombardia)



Fig. 6. Architectural ring Ostrogocki (?), Early Byzantine (?), British Museum, inventory No.: AF.482, 6th–8th century (place of finding: Lombardy, Milan)



Fig. 7. The ritual ring from the treasury of Erfurt, from before the mid-fourteenth century

Rings with the image of the building, whose symbolic function is not in doubt, begin to appear only from the 13th century (Ward et al. 1981: 104). As ritual rings, they will serve the Jewish community. The most beautiful example of such a building is the Gothic ring found in 1998 during archaeological works in the centre of Erfurt among items belonging to the so-called Treasury of the Zadadis, buried in 1349 (fig. 7) (Campbell 2009).

It is worth mentioning that the wedding ring of the Jews is an important symbolic element of the marriage ceremony in the Judaic tradition. The groom gives it to the bride, saying the words: 'Here you are devoted to me with this ring'. The act of putting it on the pointing finger of the right hand of the bride begins the ceremony of marriage.

The shape of the ring, referring to a simple house or a richly decorated temple, has a twofold significance. First of all, it indicates the purpose of the marriage, which is to build a house, understood as a symbol of family ties (the ring is usually inscribed with the wish of happiness: 'Mazel Tow!'). Secondly, the richly ornamented building decorating the ring is also

an image of the Jerusalem temple, which, according to Jewish tradition, should always be remembered.

The rings in question have been worn since the medieval times. They were usually made of precious materials, without stones. They had a more or less complex form, although some of the rabbis recommended simplicity to symbolize the equality of all before the law.

In the Victoria and Albert Museum in London there is a large collection of Jewish rings dated from the 16th to the 19th century, coming from the rich sets acquired in 1871 from Edmund Waterton. The provenance of these artefacts is not certain, presumably – as the owner said – the place where they were made was Italy (fig. 8-9). Some researchers, analysing the features of their style (rich decoration with colourful enamel), point to the Venetian workshops (Ward et al. 1981: 104).



Fig. 8. Jewish wedding ring, V&A Museum, London, inventory No.: 863-1871

Fig. 9. Jewish wedding ring, V&A Museum, London, inventory No.: 866-1871

It should be noted that as early as in the 15th century, Jewish wedding rings with the house or temple of Solomon – like the Erfurt ring – have added motif of intertwined palms from the decoration of *fede* rings, present in Europe since ancient times⁵. It is also worth noting that in the 19th century

⁵ On the subject of *fede* rings, see: Wrześniak 2015.

their decoration reveals borrowings from European jewellery, especially sentimental – from engagement rings with the motif of turquoise forget-me-not, popular in Victorian England.

By signalling only a wide subject of fashion changes in Jewish rings, one cannot fail to mention one of the most interesting objects in the Victoria and Albert Museum (inventory No. M.35-1939). The ring in question was designed by Charles Ricketts (1866-1931) and made by the London jeweller Carlo Giuliano (1826-1895) in the years 1899-1903 for the artist May Morris, daughter of William Morris. This work combines the style of the Middle Ages in a very interesting way (filling a pomegranate cabochon) and the Jewish ritual ring (building) (fig. 10).

When talking about architecture and jewellery, one cannot ignore a significant group of objects made in *mosaico minuto romano* – Roman



Fig. 10. May Morris's ring, daughter of William Morris, 1899-1903, project: Charles Ricketts (1866-1931), goldsmith: Carlo Giuliano (1826-1895), inventory No.: M.35-1939

micro-mosaics, whose appearance in jewellery Maria Grazia Branchetti (1986: 21-25)⁶, the subject matter expert, dates back to 1775. It was then that for the first time Giacomo Raffelli⁷ presented in his workshop in Rome ornaments decorated with *smalti filati* (see: *ibid.*: 21; Petochi, Alfieri, Branchetti 1981; Gabriel 2000). Mosaics from the microscopic tessera, whose large-scale production in Vatican workshops (operating from the end of the 16th century) began at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, served primarily to decorate small utility objects such as snuff boxes, cans and caskets, often the gifts of the Pope to distinguished guests of the Vatican (see: Branchetti 1986: 23; Gere, Rudoe 2010: 409-410). At the time, that is in the 19th century, gold, silver and even base

⁶ The author refers to Giovanni Moroni's *Dizionario di Educazione Storico-Ecclesiastica*, published in 1840-1861, who gives the year 1775 as the date of displaying the first objects of the micro-mosaic jewellery by Giacom Raffelli. See: Moroni 1846: 78.

⁷ More about Giacom Raffelli, see: Iwaszkiewicz-Wronikowska 2015: 249-256.

metal jewellery, decorated with micro-mosaics, was made on an almost massive scale. According to Branchetti, the iconography of these ornaments had its source in recently discovered Pompeian frescoes, and perfectly fit into the love of antiquity that characterized the neoclassical period. Apart from mythological themes, animal and plant representations, in the first half of the 19th century, the most popular were ornaments decorated with views of the ancient Roman ruins. These facilities were particularly sought after by travellers visiting the Eternal City (Letkiewicz 2015: 309), who were supplying souvenirs at the workshops at Piazza di Spagna (Branchetti 1986: 25). Jewellery from *mosaico minuto romano* became – due to its low cost of production – a popular Roman speciality, which in 1810 was presented at the exhibition of Roman crafts on Capitol Hill (see: *Monstra capitolina...* 1910: 407; Branchetti 1986: 25). It is this popularity among travellers that will become, over time, as Massimo Alfieri (1986: 38) claims, the cause of the degradation of this labour-intensive technique and the final collapse of it with the beginning of the last century. According to the author, jewellery and small objects decorated with micro-mosaics, often with the image of the ancient (ruins of the Roman Forum, the Pyramid of Cestius, the Pantheon, the Coliseum) or the modern architecture of the Eternal City (St. Peter) embodying the Pagan Roma or the Christian Roma, in the last quarter of the 19th century become objects of a very low artistic class. Brooches, bracelets, necklaces or earrings, decorated with massive micro-mosaics plaques from ever larger longitudinal tessers, with time will lose their wide (still in the first half of the 19th century) repertoire of topics (fig. 11). In the 20th century, it will be limited only to a few popular motifs used today, mostly images of a young girl. Laborious depictions of Roman architecture, which were interpreted as a symbol of the city visited, will go almost into oblivion. It is worth paying attention to the fact that it is these popular objects that owe the beginning of the perception of jewellery with the image of architecture as a symbol of the city. This perception is also today widely present (as will be discussed later in this study), however, in most cases the connections between architecture and jewellery are limited only to recreate an architectural object in a goldsmith's work, without its artistic, creative processing.

In the 80s of the 20th century architecture appears in jewellery in a completely new version. The first creator using this kind of motifs in

jewellery – especially in rings – was a Florentine goldsmith Alessandro Dari (see: Wrześniak 2016), who has created more than nine hundred works inspired by architecture, especially originating from Italy.

In the initial phase of his creative work, in the collections of the *Crown*⁸ and the *Churches*, artist used a geometrized and strongly simplified form which was a synthesis of the architecture of the Gothic churches of Tuscany. He tried to reflect the essence of a given building, using only one of its elements. There were domes, windows and other details that Dari discovered in the Veneto architecture (*Venice* collection). In the *Churches*, a sacral building becomes a synthesis of elegance, faith and harmony. Jewellery is a symbol of spirit and moral integrity for Dari, which is why, for example, the *Santa Maria del Fiore* ring, inspired by the Florence Duomo, does not represent the real building, but its essence – the most important symbolic meaning of faith, symbolized here by a camera-coated diamond ball. Brunelleschi's dome is therefore a visualization of the church, whose treasure is the light of faith, expressed by shimmering stones (fig. 12).



Fig. 11. Roman micromosaic (private collection, Rome)



Fig. 12. The *Santa Maria del Fiore* ring from the collection of *Churches*

⁸ Since 1991, the already mentioned *Crown* collection is being created. It is worth mentioning that most of the rings from this collection are miniature crowns referring to the form of ancient crowns *muralis* and *vallaris, castensis*.

Architecture, especially sharp verticalism, means for Alessandro Dari a spiritual element, an element of sanctity. In turn, in the *Love* collection, the tower symbolically refers to a man, signifying his stability, strength and protection that he provides to a woman (fig. 13-14).



Fig. 13-14. Alessandro Dari, rings from the *Love* collection (Crown, symbolizing the spiritual element, refers to a woman, Tower – symbolizes the stability of a man)

It is also worth mentioning the ring dedicated to Pia de' Tolomei – mentioned in the fifth song of *Purgatory* from the *Divine Comedy* of Dante, wife of Baldo d'Aldobrandino de'Tolomei, the owner of Castel di Pietra in Maremma (fig. 15). The legendary story of Pia refers to the event from the end of the XIII century, whose essence is a combination of love, betrayal and death. The woman was to fall in love with a man passing by near her home, which caused her to be pushed out of the window by her newly married spouse. In rings dedicated to Pia Alessandro Dari under a stone or a pearl – referring to the name of the Baldo castle (It. *pietra* – 'stone') – places a row of Gothic windows that symbolize love and death at the same time.

Jewellery with architectural forms, which comes out of the hand of Alessandro Dari, refers to the building in three ways. The first of them is a distant inspiration that results in a synthetic vision of architecture, as in the first collection of *Churches*. The second is an inspiration of architectural elements, for example a Gothic sharp arch, especially in the *Venice* collection. The third is the symbolic meaning of the tower, castle, fortress



Fig. 15. Alessandro Dari, Pia de' Tolomei's ring from collection Giardino dell'anima

as a reflection of femininity or masculinity. Finally, Dari uses the masterpieces of world architecture as a decorative element, but above all as a symbol of the cities in which they are located (to mention only two examples: the dome of St. Peter in the Vatican and the Hagia Sophia church in Istanbul [fig. 16-17]). However, this is not just an imitation of the architectural form of the object, because the combination of real architecture, included in the micro-scale, with the coral often used by the artist, which symbolizes fertility, should be understood as a representation of the idea of a city – a centre with creative abilities, especially in the sphere of culture.

In the 80s of the 20th century, the workshop of the second outstanding Florentine goldsmith master – Paolo Penko, was created. He was the one who created a very interesting collection of jewellery referring to works of art (including architecture) (Valentini 2010). Particularly interesting from the perspective of this study projects, are objects from the collection *Gioielli nell'Arte (dall'Architettura)*. Goldsmith is inspired by the mosaic ornaments of the façade of the church of Santa Maria Novella and Tempietto San Sepolcro, which carries on the openwork forms of hangers, and the rusticated texture of the Florentine palaces: Palazzo Rucellai, Palazzo Medici-Ricardi



Fig. 16-17. Alessandro Dari, rings from the collection of Churches

and Palazzo Pitti (fig. 18-19). Paolo Penko plaques, using only one element of architecture, become almost abstract objects, whose beauty is determined by the diversity of texture, while their architectural design is treated as a pretext to create interesting realizations, which in no case are copies of existing buildings but the source of a completely new quality⁹. This is especially evident in the case of the stones from the Palazzo Pitti façade, which have been copied as a simple, economical in the form of a pendant. This minimalism conceals the romantic legend of a Florentine curiosity: in the façade of the palace, there is the longest and shortest stone next to each other. The first, whose length is almost 11 meters, and the second of 33 centimetres. It is assumed that the first owner of Palazzo Pitti, Luca Pitti, was to order the laying of stones, whose symbolic significance referred to him as the greatest among the Florentine nobles, and his enemies who were marginalized (Macchiabelli 2014).



Fig. 18-19. Paolo Penko, stones from the façade of Palazzo Pitti

Among artists operating outside of Florence, who use architectural forms in contemporary luxury jewellery, the leaders are: operating in France Jean Boggio, Briton Theo Fennel and Sevan Bıçakçı working in Istanbul, whose projects can be included in a common collection of very rich forms referring to specific architecture, varied by additional elements creating

⁹ To the character of Paolo Penko's creation, combining old techniques and patterns with contemporary sensitivity and modern, minimalistic taste, draws attention the author of the catalogue of contemporary jewellery exhibition, Ornella Casazza (2007: 80).

the atmosphere of fairy-tale splendour. The works of the first of them are a distinct borrowing from the works of Alessandro Dari. Some objects could even be considered as copies of Dari's works, as for example the *Ravenna* ring, which is a clear reference to the rings dedicated to Pia de' Tolomei. However, Boggio¹⁰, who works in Lyon, creates a magical, colourful world of decorations without symbolic subtext (in contrast to the Florentine master). A fun, joyful world filled with dancing figures, spinning merry-go-rounds, trinkets and architectural objects that represent the image of a fairy tale castle in a wonderful garden (rings from the *Garden of Delights* series) (de La Rochefoucauld 2014). French designer often gets inspired by specific architectural objects, however, he does not directly copy their forms, giving only a general impression of the architectural form of the building (*Ca' d'Oro* rings or *Palladian Villa*) (fig. 20).



Fig. 20. Jean Boggio, *Ravenna*

Creations of Theo Fennell¹¹ are similar in expression. His workshop began in London in 1982, to soon open branches in the largest department stores in England, including the most exclusive – Harrods. Among the artistic inspirations of the English artist, architecture appears as – it can be said – a project base that has several views or layers of meaning. Apart from the direct references to such architectural masterpieces as the Coliseum or the Egyptian pyramids¹², an architectural object, especially a defensive wall or stronghold, serves

the artist to organize a small, valuable object that is a synthesis of the world around us or an imaginary world of a fairy-tale origin. In his projects, the artist most often uses the metaphor of a wall hiding a wonderful garden behind the gate. A permanent element of the rings are gates,

¹⁰ <https://jeanboggiofrance.com/> [accessed: 27.05.2019].

¹¹ Theo Fennell – British artist born in Egypt, studied at The Byam Shaw (now Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design); www.theofennell.com/about-tf [accessed: 28.04.2019].

¹² See opened ring-pyramid with sarcophagus and mummy inside and ring-coliseum with killed gladiator in the arena on the artist's website: www.theofennell.com [accessed: 28.04.2019].

doors, drawbridges that open to reveal the secret – garden, road or some wonderful place. Under an expensive stone, often decorating the cover of a can decorating a ring, there are miniature objects referring to history, which the ring illustrates – like a pot with gold in a ring with a graceful name *At the End of a Rainbow* or an emerald castle in a ring inspired by the story of the Wizard of Oz (fig. 21-22). One could say that Theo Fennell’s rings are a microcosm enclosed in a miniature stronghold or hidden under a bowl of a glass sphere, while the use of architectural motifs is not only a formal operation organizing the space of the work, but above all a symbolic image of a wonderful world where miniature doors lead – like those which led to the mysterious garden from the novel of Frances Hodgson Burnett (*Secret Garden*, released for the first time in 1911 in London). All you have to do is open them to move to a dreamland straight from childhood dreams. The inspiration for a British artist is not a specific work, but a synthetic idea of a mysterious castle, whose sources should be sought not only in children’s literature, but also in memories of childhood spent by an artist in Egypt, Pakistan and Singapore.



Fig. 21-22. Theo Fennell, *At the End of the Rainbow* and *The Wizard of Oz*

The creations of Sevan Biçakçı, a Turkish artist (of Armenian descent) called the ‘Jeweller of stars’¹³, relate to the aesthetics of the miraculous garden from the tales of the *Thousand and One Nights*. Using various goldsmithing techniques, as well as micro-mosaics, ceramic polychrome tessers and

¹³ <https://www.sevanbicakci.com/collection> [accessed: 28.04.2019].

intaglio in semi-precious stones¹⁴, Biçakçi creates rings with cabochon images of sacred objects (especially Hagia Sophia and Blue Mosque) and secular objects (Topkapi Sarai) of Istanbul (fig. 23). Architecture is here only one of the decorative elements referring to the present in the city of the Byzantine or Ottoman heritage, which is a constant source of inspiration for a Turkish jeweller (Fowler 2014).

Next to the Turkish master, the most popular artist jeweller designing decorative micro-architecture is Philippe Tournaire¹⁵, working in Paris, the author of city rings (fig. 24). The most creative realizations of the Parisian artist are the collections of *Archipolis* and *Metropolis*, in which the city has been included in a synthetic image of various buildings made of gold and expensive stones (these are not copies of specific cities, but rather a synthesis of the city, giving the general impression of the urban agglomeration in the micro version). *The Love Temple* collection is equally interesting and creative, in which the artist refers to the forms of the Merovingian architectural rings.



Fig. 23. Sevan Biçakçi, Laleli Ring



Fig. 24. Rings by Philippe Tournaire

¹⁴ Sevan Biçakçi drills semi-precious cabochons in a deep *intaglio* technique using dental drills. See: Fowler 2014.

¹⁵ www.philippetournaire.com/fr/ [accessed: 12.05.2019].

It is also worth paying attention to the ring with the charming name of the *French Kiss*, in the form referring to the inverted Eiffel Tower (fig. 25). The aesthetics of Philippe Tournaire's creation is economical and simple compared to the works of the artists mentioned above, while the architectural forms are reduced to the minimum needed to recognize the object. This is a modern approach, based only on the association with the work of architecture, and omitting small details. The artist uses architecture in two ways: as a decorative element of the ring symbolizing the city in which it is located, and as a construction element – as in the mentioned engagement ring, which is based on the inverted Eiffel Tower.

We find a similar use of microarchitecture in jewellery designed by British artist Vicky Ambery Smith, whose realizations are primarily micro-copies of famous objects (fig. 26). Rings and brooches created in her goldsmith's workshop are even more economical in form, more synthetic, almost minimalistic. This is facilitated by the fact that Smith is keenly inspired by modern architecture.



Fig. 25. Philippe Tournaire, French Kiss



Fig. 26. Vicky Ambery Smith, Opera

Microarchitecture is currently appearing in large-scale jewellery, and in addition to specific buildings, artists are keenly inspired by their entire teams. Over the ocean, the most-used motif is the urban landscape, or actually the objects accumulated in it. We should mention two American artists: Christina Elleni, who creates flat silver and plexiglass jewellery in San Francisco, using the contours of the characteristic urban buildings

(fig. 27), and Sharon Massey – an American art doctor at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania, whose *Streetview* collection is a visualization of urban tenement houses (fig. 28). Both artists are interested in the urban tissue, the contour of which is determined by buildings of different heights, illuminated or remaining in the shade.



Fig. 27. Jewellery by Cristina Elleni



Fig. 28. Jewellery by Sharon Massey



Fig. 29. Jewellery by Caitie Sellers

The city is also an inspiration for the works of the American artist Caitie Sellers (fig. 29), who creates jewellery collections from soldered metal wires reminiscent of sketches of city views.

It is worth mentioning one more way of mapping architectural forms in jewellery – this is the use of architectural detail in the micro scale, known for example from 19th-century iron jewellery, also used by the aforementioned Caitie Sellers in bracelets resembling balustrades

or fences. Donna Veverka from Boston performs massive silver jewellery inspired by ancient architecture (theatres and amphitheatres) and modern detaFig. The artist has made a collection of jewellery decorated with

miniature copies of fragments of grooved column shafts, which refers to the phenomenon of secondary use commonly found in art, so-called spolises (fig. 30-32).



Fig. 30-32. Jewellery by Donna Veverka

Architectural detail is also the subject of interest in the creation of Joshua Ryan de Monte in Baltimore, who uses the latest technology to make jewellery printed on 3D printers in macro size. This jewellery is actually a reference to the seventeenth-century orifice, which in the artist's realizations takes an architectural form patterned mainly on the Italian Gothic and Renaissance buildings (fig. 33).

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The brief overview of jewellery workshops presented above shows that at present, goldsmith artists eagerly reach for the commonly known pattern, which is architectural work. They copy its appearance or creatively process it. In this way, micro-copies of masterpieces of architecture, recognizable objects, associated almost instantaneously with a specific city, have become in the 20th century and remain to this day an excellent souvenir from travels. It seems that the last, the simplest view of architecture, based only on the emotional perception of an object considered perfect, is common to many contemporary artists, such as Giampiero Alcozer¹⁶ or Giulia Nardi¹⁷. In the 20th century, souvenir jewellery with the image of architecture is

¹⁶ <https://it.alcozersshop.com/> [accessed: 23.05.2019].

¹⁷ www.nardi-venezia.com/gioielleria.php [accessed: 24.05.2019].



Fig. 33. Jewellery by Joshua R. de Monte

common in Europe, especially bracelets with Rome architecture made of interconnected cameos or metal plaques, or perhaps chains with tags – mini-replicas of buildings or sculptures. Objects of this type appear relatively frequently on online auctions on Etsy and eBay portals, where they are referred to as ‘vintage jewellery from Rome’ and dated mostly in the middle of the last century. In addition to high-class artistic works, a huge number of items are produced by small goldsmiths, design companies, and even mass produced by so-called chainstores, among which the Pandora

brand – leading on the European market – producing beads or tags of alleged collector value.

Among the architectural objects undoubtedly the most often reproduced in Europe are goldsmiths copies of the Roman Coliseum and the Paris Eiffel Tower. The image of the amphitheatre fascinates many jewellers who – like already mentioned Giampiero Alcozer or Theo Fennell – make rings with this most recognizable European building. It is incorporated in the collections of not only Italian jewellers (e.g. Damiano Tacchi¹⁸), but also Donna Veverka from Great Britain, Vicki Ambery Smith and Zara Simon (collection *Metropolis*¹⁹). The Coliseum, regarded as an emblem of a gladiator, was also used by the Australian jeweller Stewart Hornibrook²⁰, who makes rings with copies of ancient gems, often of his own invention. Contemporary jewellers are especially fond of Gothic and Renaissance objects, especially Italian ones – for example, a Venetian *palazzo* with a decorative Gothic window is repeated in many projects in various ways.

Jewellers and jewellery designers in the United States and the British Isles eagerly reach for the image of skyscrapers from Manhattan (also in individual realizations referring to the Chrysler Building or Brooklyn

¹⁸ <https://www.gigarte.com/damianotacchi/home> [accessed: 24.05.2019].

¹⁹ <http://zarasimon.com/shop/precious-collection-metropolis.html> [accessed: 24.05.2019].

²⁰ www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100000470301728&fref=ts [accessed: 24.05.2019].

Bridge), which in a strongly simplified, geometrized version is promoted as an ideal jewellery for modern residents of large agglomerations urban areas. It is worth mentioning the *Urban Dimension* collection created in 2015 by Shlomit Ofir, a designer working in Tel Aviv, who used geometrical forms of skyscrapers in a set of minimalist jewellery called *Manhattan*²¹, and simple rings of the Charlotte Reid²² project.

All these projects, whether in an exclusive or popular, cheaper version, if they do not carry a deeper symbolic charge, have a sentimental aspect referring to a journey – held or desired, sometimes travelling to an imaginary world of fairy tales, like Theo Fennell's rings. This travelling aspect of architectural jewellery is very often used by designers as a marketing gimmick based on the fame of masterpieces and the desire to have even their replicas. The artists reach for the fixed design, corresponding to the general tastes, generally recognized as good. References to the glorified past, the remains of which are Roman ruins, innovative at the beginning of the 20th century construction of the Eiffel Tower, arousing curiosity and admiration achievements of the human mind, such as the Venice built on the water with a lace braided Gothic arches or modern buildings that are tangible proof of architectural genius – all this for about two hundred years is a guarantee of commercial success of great artists and small craftsmen. The number of artists who create jewellery on the forms referring to the appearance of the architecture or the entire urban plan as well as the constantly emerging craft workshops boasting of old goldsmith techniques or the production of jewellery, which can be described after its first creators (Roman goldsmiths from the Castellani family [see: Munn 1984; Weber Soros, Walker 2004; Gere, Rudoe 2010: 398-411; Lipczik 2015]) as archaeological, show how effective this technique is.

The analysis presented in this study – however preliminary it is – would be incomplete if it did not touch another aspect of jewellery creativity using architectural motifs: a technical aspect that is undoubtedly a limitation of the creators of this interesting jewellery. It is worth noting that artists are constantly moving around the same fixed repertoire of forms suited

²¹ <https://www.shlomitofir.com/product/long-manhattan-necklace-2/> [accessed: 24.05.2019].

²² www.charlottereid.com [accessed: 24.05.2019].

not only to technical requirements, but also utility objects. In rings as a decorative element, the architectural object with the central plan is most often used; it is often a dome (frequently movable) decorated with a micro-mosaic or semiprecious stone. Many artists create rings with opened cans (in the shape of an architectural object) containing additional symbolic elements, for example Alessandro Dari, Theo Fennell or Barbara Walters. In bracelet designs most often, there is an architectural detail, flat plaques with the image of architecture or hangovers with buildings in the micro scale. Many artists, while creating bracelets, necklaces or brooches, use a series of tenement houses representing the buildings erected along the street. In earrings – which cannot be too heavy – most often an openwork Gothic window appears, rarely encrusted.

Everything starts with observing the city, from fascination with urban planning, view, architecture... and everything leads to the city. Concluding the reflections on the relationships of architecture and jewellery, one must mention – referring to this fascination – the artistic activities of Liesbeth Bussche, acting, as it would seem, in opposition to all the creators discussed above. Anonymous artists creating jewellery in Merovingian times, craftsmen performing Jewish wedding rings or contemporary goldsmiths borrowed architectural works or urban landscape and created their miniature models to wear. Liesbeth Bussche, on the other hand, a street artist, ‘clothes’ Amsterdam in macro size jewellery (fig. 34). Analysing her artistic activities, one can refer to the theory of everyday aesthetics: the artist treats jewellery



Fig. 34. *Urban jewellery by Liesbeth Bussche*

as a decoration that beautifies the city – a living organism. Decorates it with large earrings, necklaces, chains. Strange, new, surprising action? However, justified by the centuries-long tradition. The city is, in the end, a woman from ancient times, and among the personifications in Cesare Ripa's *Iconology* (1998) – richly clad, with a *muralis* crown on her head.

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Summary

The hereby text is a short study on the relationship between architecture and jewellery. In the first part, it presents the history of occurrence of architectural forms in jewellery from antiquity to present day in the European culture. The second part delivers the examples of contemporary artefacts, particularly rings with microarchitecture. The analysis of the collected examples proves that architecture – its form, construction and detail – is a motive of decoration willingly used in jewellery design, often of a symbolic meaning related to the household or the temple (wedding rings, ritual rings). Nowadays, especially in the 21st century, microarchitecture in jewellery often emerges with reference to the place of origin, i.e. the famous building being, most frequently, the commemoration of a journey, able to bring back the memory of a visited city.

The architectural jewellery, whose meanings and functions are the subject of the hereby study, has undergone many transformations throughout history. Even though it has transitioned from simple to complicated and decorative forms, from precious and rare to cheap and popular objects of mass production presenting the miniature replicas of buildings, the jewellery nearly always symbolises the city. Much less often the jewellery

design occurs with reference to the metaphorical meanings of buildings as a representation of permanency (the tower in Alessandro Dari's jewellery) or marital union (the house and the temple in Jewish rings).

Keywords: microarchitecture, architectural jewellery, history of jewellery, ritual ring, symbolic meaning of jewellery, jewellery in culture