

# Kristy Bujanic and “The Cabinet of Love for a bit of Fluff”, A new talent interview – by Juan Riusech

I met Kristy for the first time at the Munich Jewelry Week. She was presenting her school work, bag in the back, in the nomad exhibition of the master students of the PXL-MAD school (Hasselt, Belgium). It was one of the freshest exhibitions in the MJW 2017. Kristy presented her graduated project and won an award for it. I went to the award ceremony and I was really impressed with the project. A new talent is born !



In the research project “The Cabinet of Love for a bit of Fluff” Kristy Bujanic investigates the possibilities to communicate childhood memories through jewellery and objects. The feelings attached to these memories are personal but still very recognizable. She focuses on balancing the duality between love and disgust by using materials that evoke recognition and enhance these universal feelings. Her work can be situated within different rooms in the mental image of a house. These rooms now only exist in her memories. She chooses spaces that made a big impression on her. For this project she chose the bathroom as central space, the location where our loved ones are allowed to be their most intimate self. Here you can experience the raw reflection of a person’s real physical being and simultaneously love them for it.

About her work, Tine De Ruysser (\*) says : “Her jewellery collection ‘The cabinet of love for a bit of fluff’ is based on childhood memories at the houses of her Kroatian parents and grandparents. Rooms that might be a bit grimy, but where she felt a strong sense of love. She brings together the feeling of being raised in two cultures and love versus disgust in a collection that refers to sentimental jewellery and ordinary household items.”

(\*) Tine De Ruysser is a jewelry designer and the teacher of Kristy at PXL-MAD School of Arts. Tine De Ruysser was the mentor of Kristy’s graduation project.

After my visit to the graduate projects exhibition in Gank at the C-mine, I wanted to know more about Kristy’s work and thoughts about jewelry.

**What’s your vision about contemporary art jewelry?** My vision is that art had the purpose to communicate. Therefore I think all arts, contemporary jewellery as well, need to have the ability to speak to its viewer. This universal language is something that I think is very important. Contemporary jewellery can surprise me again and again. The fact that I can look at something and still need to figure out how it’s made, can really make my day. I think the best thing about contemporary jewellery is that it’s not dependent of a specific type of material. Contemporary jewellery can be made out of everything, that’s what makes it so refreshing and contemporary! Therefore it can speak the language of the world we live in now. And last: contemporary jewellery can speak on an emotional level by the specific use of specific materials.

**You are freshly graduated. What are your memories and feelings during this education period ?** I’m very happy to say I didn’t get lost in my work this year. This was something I really wanted to hold on to. I find it very important to work in a linear line with parallel routes and not the other way around. Looking back to previous projects, I really wanted to keep focus with this one. It can be very easy to lose track, especially with such a personal project as this one. My classmates and teachers helped me to find the borders of my field of interest/project and

to hold on to them. When I look back, I'm surprised with how much I've grown on both technical and artistic level. I've created projects that reflect so much of me and the way I see my environment. I'm grateful for the teachers and colleagues that helped me in finding my way forward as artist.

**Your graduation work has been selected and awarded as one of the best this year in Belgium. Did you expect it ? How this will influence your future work ?** I didn't expect my work to be selected or awarded but I'm very happy I did (still smiling)! It means a big deal to me. On one half my project is about my personal memories and experience but on the other half it is about sharing and communicating feelings through jewellery and objects with the viewer. To me, this means my work succeeded in communicating with the viewer. This feels like a little triumph already because that was what I initially wanted my objects to do: Making people start feeling, talking and thinking.

**In your graduation work you start with the bathroom as central point of your imaginary house ? why this ? will we see the other rooms of this house one day ?** I chose the bathroom because, in my opinion, it's a room you only share with people you have an intimate relationship with like your family, friends or partner. This kind of intense relationship comes with it's very positive but also negative sides. I'm looking for a translation of a feeling that contains this same kind of duality between attraction and repulsion. Because I want to achieve a same kind of intensity, I chose the bathroom as a metaphor. I started in my grandmothers bathroom, which is originally (dirty-light) pink. I also chose this color because to me, it's also a bit fleshy and raw. In short, it completely suited the feeling I was going for. In my project I also referred to the laundry-room, a small hallway and the garage with a few jewellery pieces and objects. These rooms had a different ratio for this specific feeling. I mean that some objects referred more to a specific childhood memory (that includes this attraction/repulsion) than to that specific feeling in general. More at the end of the year, I started making 'cross-overs', pieces that could be situated between two rooms. This because they enhanced feelings and memories of both rooms. About my work in general

I can say that for some pieces, I worked with the feeling and had the memory as main focus. For other pieces I focused mainly on generalizing the feeling and working with it's recognition by the viewer. My work will evolve with the materials that will trigger me to make new pieces. It will all depend on the next matter that will enhance the exact feeling I'm looking for.

**what are your expectations in the contemporary art jewelry in general ?** I always love to see experiments, great techniques, new materials and combinations and of course a great search for translation of emotions, feelings and stories!

**what other artists or styles have influence in your work ?** In my project I've got my inspiration from Victorian sentimental jewellery, in which they used hair of deceased lovers in pendants for example. This you can see in the use of steel, oval shapes, the use of the idea 'hair' and the over-all emotional connotation with jewellery in my pieces. Contemporary jewellery designers that have influenced my work and way of thinking are Melanie Bilenker with her hair-jewellery, Maisie Broadhead's way of thinking and Hirotoshi Itoh with his stone sculptures. My two favourite jewellery designers who have inspired me throughout my whole education are Akiko Kurihara and Lin Cheung.

**what are your next projects ?** Because my work is very personal, I have the feeling I can still go further into the subject. My summer vacation in Croatia refreshed my insights and inspired me again (and again). Next to my artistic jewellery, I would like to work on a few of my multiple-series which gave me a lot of satisfaction the past years.