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Capítulo 16

**FROM SCULPTURE TO  
JEWELRY:  
ANALOGIES OF  
ARTISTIC PRACTICES**

*Da Escultura à Joalheria:  
analogias das Práticas Artísticas.*

## RESUMO

Desde a origem do Homem até aos dias de hoje, a escultura e a joalheria estão presentes na vida humana numa relação íntima entre si. As primeiras peças de joalheria remontam a materiais e técnicas comuns à escultura, tais como pedras esculpidas. Tanto a escultura como a joalheria desenvolvem o processo criativo baseado em discursos baseados em metodologias, que incluem o valor do desenho, a materialização de objectos e, portanto, técnicas. Têm em comum características composicionais, simbólicas e de identidade, tais como tridimensionalidade, volume, escala, espaço e a relação com o corpo humano. Escultura e jóias como objectos artísticos são formas de expressão pessoal, independente e original, combinadas com total liberdade criativa, que transmitem ideias e sentimentos. Neste artigo, ao analisar a diversidade de jóias criadas por vários escultores, internacionais e nacionais, verificamos que a linguagem de identidade de cada autor é transferida para estes objectos íntimos, tornando-os assim obras contemplativas.

## PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Escultura íntima, Joalheria, Processos Metodológicos

## ABSTRACT

From the origin of Man to the present day, sculpture and jewelry are present in human life in an intimate relationship with each other. The first pieces of jewelry go back to materials and techniques common to sculpture, such as carved stones. Both sculpture and jewelry develop the creative process based on discourses based on methodologies, which include the value of drawing, the materialization of objects and, therefore, techniques. They have in common compositional, symbolic and identity characteristics such as three-dimensionality, volume, scale, space and the relationship with the human body. Sculpture and jewelry as artistic objects are forms of personal, independent, and original expression, combined with total creative freedom, which convey ideas and feelings. In this article, when analyzing the diversity of jewelry created by various sculptors, international and national, we verify that the identity language of each author is transferred to these intimate objects, thus making them contemplative works.

## KEYWORDS

Intimacy Sculpture, Jewelry, Methodological Processes

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## 1. Introduction

From the origin of Man to the present day, sculpture and jewelry are present in human life, in an intimate relationship with each other. Man needs to produce artistic elements, so that he can mark history, and transmit a language of culture and/or identity. The first pieces of jewelry go back to materials and techniques common to sculpture, such as carved stones and the handling of metals. Within this context, both sculpture and jewelry were developed based on their specificities, in a certain artistic and historical period, thus marking a civilization. In all cultures, jewelry pieces had a prominent place, thanks to the value of the material with which they are made, and to the iconography.

Since ancient Egypt, men used jewelry as an amulet, symbolizing belief, and protection. In Greece, despite the laws against ostentation, the first pieces of jewelry are characterized by simplicity and the use of geometric shapes. Already in Roman civilization, the goldsmith's work was appreciated, and they used colored stones, but the Roman Law also prevented excesses and determined the amount of gold that each woman could use. As a religious theme and using a generous amount of gemstones for jewelry decoration, the Byzantine Empire used filigree and granulation in delicate works, where it adopted jewelry as a symbol of status and religiosity. Until the beginning of the Renaissance, artistic works that resorted to the hands, developed by artisans, were seen as minor arts.

However, it is in the Baroque period that craftsmen can assume themselves as artists and feel the need to have an intellectual knowledge linked to practice. In this way, the authorship of the works became relevant as each artist develops to a certain extent their style and perfects the techniques. In the Rococo period, jewelry pieces lost their artistic importance, and were used only to differentiate social classes. In Rococo, jewelry is once again praised, being divided into jewelry for daytime use, being light and carefree, and nighttime, full of elements and shiny. The next style, neoclassicism, brought to jewelry a decorative art inspired by Greek and Roman models, which imposed a simplification of lines and shapes. With the arrival of the 19th century, innovations in the field of jewelry are constant, and in the Industrial Revolution, color is replaced by brightness, due to the elite society that gives great importance to luxury and modernity. During the Art and Crafts era (1890 – 1914) the simplicity of good craftsmanship and design was praised, rejecting Industrialization. In this way, the artists created their pieces manually, giving importance to the artistic work, and not to the value of the metals. The jewelry was inspired by nature, Pre-Raphaelite paintings, Renaissance and Etruscan themes, and developed by abstract and symbolic forms. Thus, official schools of design began to emerge, created with the determined objective of improving the design of manufactures and making art compatible with industrialization, but the high price that these exclusive jewels had made the movement last a short time as industrialization sought a greater number of parts with relatively moderate prices.

Traditionally recognized for the preciousness of materials, jewelry has been recognized as an object of high value for at least 7,000 years. Full of a universe of symbolist and meanings, jewelry accompanies rites of passage, defines statutes in society, and in many groups is loaded with religious symbology.

Created to adorn, transmit beauty, identity and the language of a people, jewelry needed formal and technical transformations to respond to a demanding society, in search of innovation, concepts, and often exclusivity.

Sculpture and jewelry as artistic objects are forms of personal, independent, and original expression, combined with total creative freedom that convey ideas and feelings. Jewelry's main objective is personal adornment, it responds to a need, while sculpture develops through the field of perception, emotions. However, both develop the creative process based on discourses based on methodologies, which include the value of drawing, the materialization of objects and, therefore, techniques. They have in common compositional, symbolic and identity characteristics such as three-dimensionality, volume, scale, space, and the relationship with the human body (Kingdon, 2014).

Throughout the research, we found a relevant amount of exhibition catalogs – whether they were strictly dedicated to the jewels of the artists studied here, or to exhibitions of their plastic works. As we discovered new publications, we saw that all this documentation included significant content to help consolidate the memory and discourse about the artist's jewel. In the various collections consulted, we found at least one catalogue: some clearly more interesting than others, provided with texts, sometimes extremely poetic or succinct, sometimes rich in details; in addition to images that offered a real view of the jewelry (Kaplan & Shaw, 1967).

## 2. Jeweler Artist, and/or Artist Jeweler

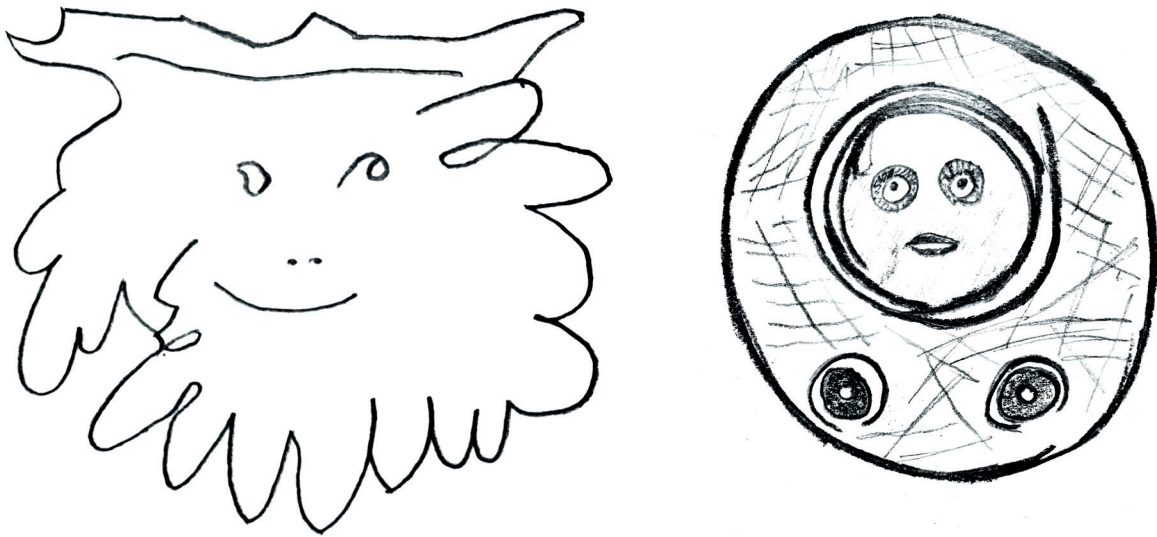
Until the 20th century, the great names in jewelry were Cartier and Boucheron, who created figurative pieces with many diamonds, whose objects were intended to ornament and satisfy the vanity adopted in the style of the Belle Époque. At that time, Art Nouveau inspired jewelry artists such as René Lalique (Figure 1) and Georges Fouquet who prioritized in their jewelry aesthetic qualities stylized in nature, and in abstract forms.

Lalique, unlike other artists, did not choose precious gemstones for the composition of his pieces, but materials such as bronze, glass, mother-of-pearl, and ivory (Kingdon, 2014). He renewed the style by combining elegance, decorative art, and other work patterns. In this way, jewelry has a double function, that of adornment, and that of satisfying the tastes of people who wanted to display their wealth through jewelry. In this way, the object gains prominence by being produced through an idea, concept, and by being presented and commercialized through museums and art galleries.

Contemporary jewelry has a free form, a freedom of expression. Author jewelry appears for an audience that was looking for innovation and novelties, for unique and exclusive pieces, with their own identity. Seen by some as a necessity, or as one of the most direct means of making a personal statement, it is not strange to note the numerous proposals given to the field of jewelry by painters and sculptors of the artistic avant-gardes. Not used to commercial jewelry, some artists were interested in transposing to jewelry their plastic investigations developed in more traditional artistic languages, such as painting and sculpture, for example. For some, jewelry came to be seen as a new possibility in the search for a personal language, for an intimately artistic intention, as a means of expressing the sensitive (Santos, 2008). Thus, before almost exclusively belonging to goldsmiths and jewelers, it was during the 1920s and 1930s that these first incursions, somewhat tenuous, began to take place on the part of established non-jewelers artists, such as Alberto Giacometti, Alexander Calder, André Derain, Emil Nolde, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Georges Braque, Jean Arp, Jean Cocteau, Jean Dubuffet, Julio Gonzalez, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Man Ray, Meret Oppenheim, Pablo Picasso, Pau Gargallo, Salvador Dalí, among others (Guinness, 2018). The unique jewel or author's jewel assumes the identity of a work of art, just like the sculpture. Artists become jewelers as jewelers become artists.

Pablo Picasso made jewelry mainly to offer his friends and his lovers, he produced a series of gold brooches designed between 1956 and 1973, which resulted in plaques with embossed face designs. Through the traces of the drawing, we were able to identify that they are characteristic in the paintings and portraits that the painter-sculptor developed during his artistic career (Schadt, 1996).





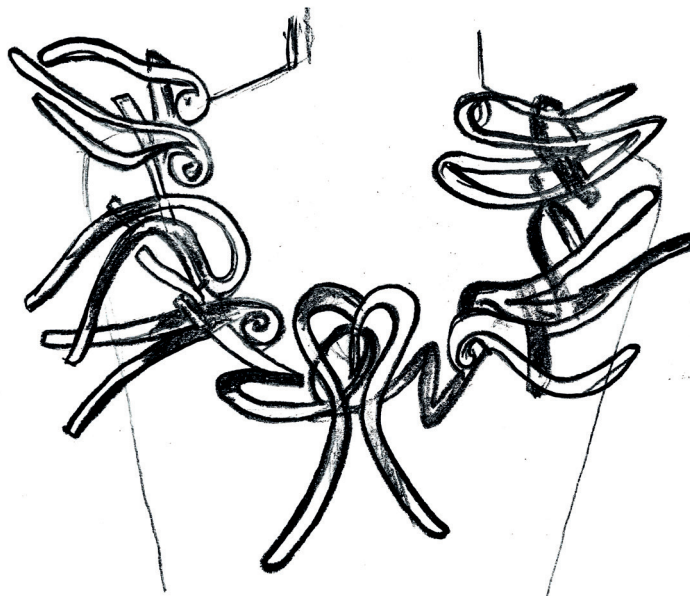
**Fig.1**  
Pablo Picasso. Series of seven  
gold brooches

The only woman Picasso painted and portrayed, more than anyone else, was Jacqueline Roque, the artist's second wife and model for the last seventeen years of his life. In this gold medallion measuring 5.4 cm in diameter, Picasso represents his portrait.

Alexander Calder (1898-1976) began designing and conceiving jewelry from 1929, totaling 1800 objects in all, made during his lifetime. Each jewel has only one model, and therefore a personal meaning. Calder created mainly for his wife Pilar and their daughter Dolores. Among necklaces, bracelets, earrings, rings, brooches, tiaras, etc., many jewelries were created as personal gifts for family and friends, such as Luis Bunuel, for André Breton's wife or Marc Chagall, for Joan Miró, among others.

They were unique pieces in bronze, brass, silver, gold, often combined with other objects found such as colored glass or fragments of ceramics and wood. Brass wire is also one of the materials of excellence present in her jewelry, which twisted, beaten and fixed, creates spirals, letters, and drawings, which refer us to the speech of mobiles. The spiral, for example, marks a return to primitive art. And the modeling of the wire transmits the movement coming from the sculptures and configures the universal symbols of the ancient populations (Guinness, 2018).

Some of the jewels would not be practical for common everyday use, like the one we see in figure five, but the idea of creating them is in the sense of putting art at the service of the practical action of decorating the body.



**Fig.2**  
Calder. "Harps and Heart".  
Brass necklace. 1937.



Fig.3  
A Calder. Brooches.

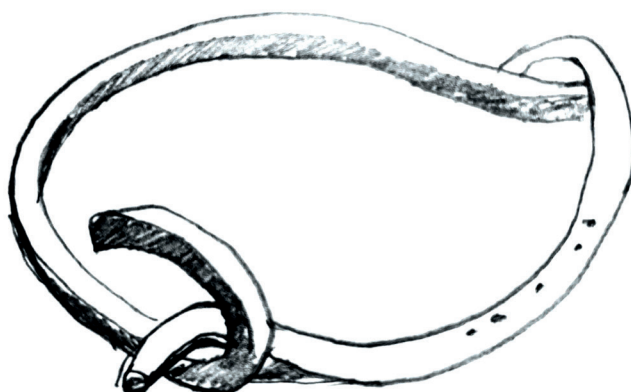
In these circumstances, from modernism to the end of the first European avant-gardes, we see a greater strengthening of ties between jewelry and art (and for what would be called artist's jewelry), intensified both by the return of renowned artists, as by the involvement of many jewelers with the current artistic movements. From then on, jewelry was recognized as an independent artistic category.

Exceptions aside, some artists did not have any specific training in jewelry that would allow them to produce their own creations. Consequently, they had to entrust their execution to others. The artist had the freedom to create, sketch or model the piece, while the jeweler – the experienced craftsman – was responsible for applying a function to the created object, or rather, the solution of technical issues related to the use of the jewelry.

### 3. International Exhibition of Modern Jewellery, 1890-1961

In 1961, from 26 October to 2 December, the International Exhibition of Modern Jewellery, 1890-1961, was organized at Goldsmiths' Hall, London, by the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths in association with the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A). Recognized by some jewelry historians as well as curators as a pivotal event in the history of jewelry, it was one of the most ambitious and far-reaching shows on European soil. The exhibition aimed to stimulate public interest in jewelry as an art, as well as encouraging British designers in this field (Hughes, 1961).

Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010) based on "Spider" 1996, designed two brooches, one in gold and one in silver. In addition to these objects, he designed the necklace in the 1940s as a personal statement against the violence he had witnessed against prisoners during the Spanish Civil War, who were asphyxiated by shackles in this way. It was also conceived as a commentary on the female state, a metaphor for women's social, political, and legal constraints prior to the feminist movement.

**Fig.4**

L. Bourgeois, “Shackle Neckla-  
cc”. 1998.

Anish Kapoor began exploring the field of jewelry in 2003, when he was invited by Louisa Guinness to the opening of her gallery. The first object “Large Water Ring” resulted in two versions, white and yellow gold, polished pieces like the artist’s stainless-steel sculptures. For Anish Kapoor, the scale of the jewelry was the most challenging aspect. Three-dimensionality is part of their practice, however, it is necessary to know how to design an object to a certain scale, so that the effect, the message is transmitted. As in sculpture, Anish Kapoor’s jewelry (rings, earrings, necklaces) intertwine with the perception of space.

**Fig.5**

Anish Kapoor. “Large Water  
Ring”, 2013.

As the research to prepare the exhibition, new names of artists of different nationalities, ages and schools emerged, with works in different techniques and materials, making it evident that a considerable number of contemporary artists made jewelry at one time or another. As stated by Becker (1982), this entire network – spaces for the promotion of art, artists, jewelers, editors, critics, etc., despite having different but complementary roles – was decisive for the consolidation and dissemination of the artist’s jewel, strengthening its legitimacy as an artistic object, developing a consensus about its value and how the jewelry could be appreciated (and marketed) (Becker, 1982).

The fact that many artists revisit the field of jewelry – often giving the same importance to jewelry as to plastic works – has caused the space between different types of jewelry to



shrink rather than widen. And that is precisely what the exhibition wanted to prove: “that all good jewelers are artists” (Hughes, 1961). Therefore, the exhibition functioned as a show in which all that was new and captivating in jewelry would be present, from the turn of the century until that moment. By juxtaposing the jewelry production of renowned artists and professional jewelers, the show contemplated a diversity of influences, opening space for comparisons and new dialogues.

In short, we verified that the exhibitions worked as an important way to show the artists’ jewels, and reveal a circular movement: the dissemination, the mobilization of the public, the consumption, and the systematization of collections.

As a result, most of the pieces gathered were in line with the traditional concept of jewelry, as they share its functional aspect and are intended to adorn and beautify. The importance lies in artistic value, rather than material value.

## 4. Jewellery in Portugal

The sculptor, goldsmith, and carver João da Silva (1880-1960), trained in Paris, brought to Portugal the novelty of contemporary artistic jewelry, completely rejecting historicism, and valuing formal originality to the detriment of the intrinsic value of gemstones and precious metals. His jewels with *laliqian* characteristics, chiseled with floral motifs and female figures, did not have any repercussions, and are only found in contemporary Portuguese jewelry from the 1920s onwards (Comenda, 2009).

Alongside sculpture, Jorge Vieira (1922-1998) created a series of jewelry. Based on the themes and materials that he explored in author and public sculpture, he made jewelry in terracotta, iron, bronze, and various types of stone. However, he also developed some silver jewelry (Comenda, 2009).

However, it is in the late 50s and early 60s that the main innovations in the creation of jewelry in Portugal are expressed. Kukas (1928-) and Alberto Gordillo (1943-) are the pioneers of designer jewelry, by breaking with the traditional conception of jewelry, and by presenting modern pieces (Filipe, 2010). Kukas creates a more conceptual and avant-garde jewelry than Gordillo, her jewels have a contemporary expression and have a handcrafted nature, as they are created by herself.

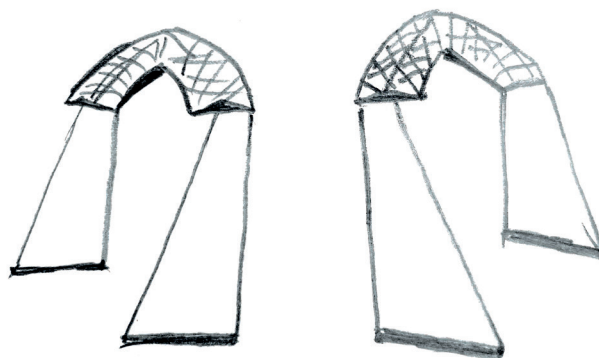
Kuka’s path is unique in the art scene. His ideas are evident in a natural way, mainly due to the influence of all the people who have acquired his work throughout their lives, and who have given rise to the creation of a particular language around his works. As a rule, jewels result from geometric refined, and linear shapes, where sensitivity and sculptural language are present. This characteristic is manifested in the taste for matter and modeling, in the plasticity, and in the particular attention to the concrete nature of shapes, textures and volumes. Kukas does not lose the desire to expand his pieces to a sculptural scale, just as he aspires to produce his utilitarian objects on an intimate scale.

In addition to formal issues and direct contact with the materials, it also highlights the importance of gestures, corporeality, and the tactility of each surface. The pieces have a body of their own, a density and a weight, a concrete structure, qualities obtained by the experiences lived in the sculpture of the way in which each material is treated. It competes a lot with the scale, size, proportionality of earrings, bracelets, rings or safety pins. Silver and gold, chrome, or silver metal, are combined in an original way with a singular meaning. Added to these are stones chosen for their translucent nature, as the material allows for a preview or penetration of space, as they are permeable and changeable to light and reflections (VV.AA., 2011).

The privilege given to primordial and archaic forms, such as cubes, spheres, spirals, or pyramids, reminds us of some adornment objects used since primitive peoples and ancestral cultures. Kandinsky, Léger, Miró and Picasso are some of the names that inspire her, that awaken her, but also because they manifest a sculptural understanding of reality, a taste for industrial aesthetics, and an abstract sense (Schadt, 1996).



**Fig.6**  
Kuka. Necklace. Silver and silver  
moonstones.



**Fig.7**  
Kukas. Earrings. Gold and silver  
moonstones.

Gordillo, with a different path of Kukas, also determines significant ruptures in traditional jewellery, also contributing to the renewal of jewellery in Portugal. It deconstructs the usual patterns, either through the introduction of organic materials or through its shape, as we can see in the “Colar Teia”, an object in plantina, avant-garde for the time (1973). The modernizing design, inspired by Baroque and Art Nouveau grammar, combines worked silver with semi-precious stones and mother of pearl (Comenda, 2009).

It is through Kukas and Gordillo that jewellery in Portugal appears inserted in spaces of artistic context and has a total acceptance by curators, critics and the general public.



**Fig.9**  
Alberto Gordillo. "The Collar".

The continuity of the renovation of Portuguese jewellery is marked by the work of José Aurélio (1938-), who has been dedicated to the world of jewellery since the late 1950s, during the experimental phase of these ceramic objects at the SECLA studio, in Caldas da Rainha. Her jewels extol the affinities between these small objects and sculpture, especially that of public space. Based on the materialization of affective bonds, on the association with personal memories and significant political moments, the jewels are much more than objects dedicated by the artist to specific recipients and episodes. They are manifestations of a creative process in its purest form, and of a body of historical references in which we recognize signs from the second half of the 20th century to the present day. They still represent today the stronghold of man's relationship with his beliefs, for being able to conceive forms and compositions that reflect his culture, and that of the people who live it. It is in this game of tradition/innovation that José Aurélio finds himself, when making these jewels that are linked to a magical ritual, to fire, because of metals (*José Aurélio*, 2006).

Developed in the most diverse materials, from gold to silver and ivory, they include precious and semi-precious stones, corals, amber, zinc, tin, copper. The jewelry pieces present, represent ideas, symbols that convey memories and desires explained in a minimalist way.



**Fig.10**  
José Aurélio. Bronze and stones.



**Fig. 11**  
José Aurélio. Brass and Cooper.

In this way, contemporary jewelry has been underestimating the material value of its productions, in favor of less tangible ones. The ability to interpret the world or a personality, revealing trends or proposing new existential values, is a matter of innovation that recognizes the value and manifestation of modernity, guided by a departure from its representational function, in favor of an increasingly existential. In the future, jewelry will keep some of its traditional statutes along with other symbolic arguments, valuing the natural body and not hiding it. Bringing artists and designers together, revitalizing techniques and promoting new forms and concepts, reinterpreting ancestral techniques, new projects have emerged that could play an important role not only for jewelry but for the entire community, acquiring economic, social, aesthetic, ecologically integrated into the sustainability plan.

It is concluded, concluding this study, that national jewelry has evolved, markedly towards a communicational, inter and transdisciplinary dimension, absorbing various influences (from Portuguese culture and contact with others) and building pieces of high poetic value, detaching itself from tradition. , maintaining, however, a connection to memories and techniques that are revealed in the work of some jewelers and that underpin the construction of the contemporaneity of jewelry.

## 4. Final Considerations

Like art, jewelry was and still is an object of communication. It is present in time and space, allowing us to understand social relations since antiquity, in the formation of the civilizing process, revealing the style and way of life of society. Over time, jewelry is built, is present and bears witness to cultures, gestures, beliefs, and philosophies of peoples. As an everyday artifact, both in life and after the death of its wearer, the jewel carries a diversity of values and elements that help us to understand in more detail and rigor, the life story of its wearer, and of the place where inhabits.

Jeweler was one of the last artistic practices to renew itself in contemporary times, but it accompanied the transformations of the plastic arts, demarcating itself from the field of decorative and applied arts, in which it was integrated throughout the history of art. Contemporary artists have come to underline the boldness of Lalique, who was one of the first artists to present innovative proposals for jewelry in his time, dictating new norms and protocols not agreed upon by traditional jewelry.

In this article we can find chronological, symbolic, formal, and conceptual relationships. Sculptors who integrate into their jewelry work, some in an intimate way, others in an open

way. Artistic creation emerges as a mediator between the body and technology. The development of digital technologies and, later, biotechnologies required the body for new types of interaction with artificial objects to the point where the boundaries between the biological and technological, the natural and the artificial, the human and the robotic progressively blur.

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