



Material Art & Design

2006

1001 rings

Barros, Maureen Anne Hubbard, Yung, Lily and Vickerson, Ken

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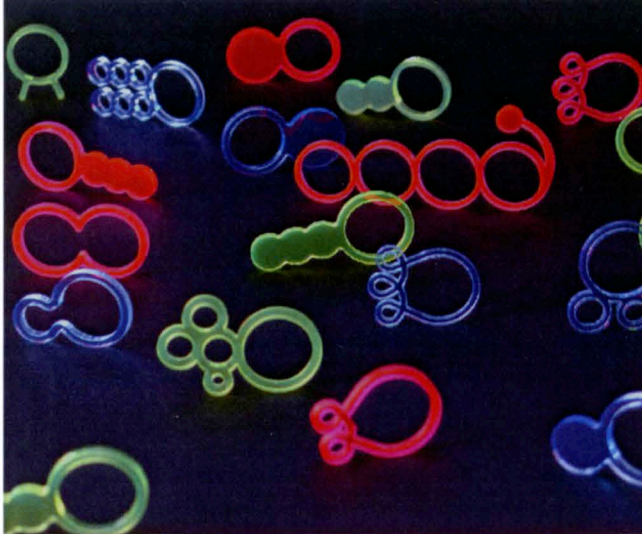
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November 15 to
December 3, 2006

OPENING RECEPTION

Thursday | November 16
5:00 to 8:00 pm



1001 rings

Kai Chan, Lise Downe, Gina Fafard, Tiana Roebuck, Lily Yung



***new* gallery**

906 Queen Street West

Toronto, Ontario M6J 1G6

tel. 416-588-1200 www.new-gallery.ca

gallery hours

Wednesday to Sunday, 1 to 6 pm

COVER IMAGES

TOP: rings by Lily Yung

BOTTOM: ring by Lise Downe

new views 12

Kai Chan, Lise Downe, Gina Fafard,
Tiana Roebuck, Lily Yung

1001 rings

by Ken Vickerson

1001 RINGS, WILL YOU COUNT THEM?

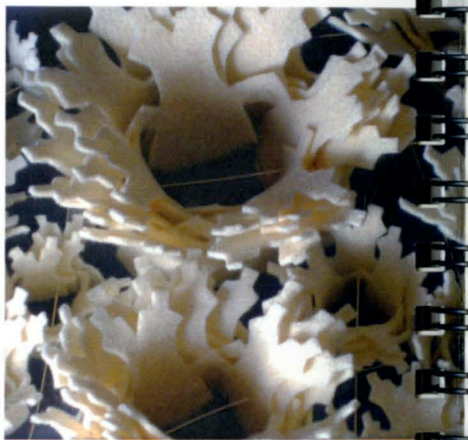
Someone will...don't distract them...they're on a mission. 1, 2, 3, 4....

Though the origins of the ring are lost to us because early examples were likely made of perishable materials, evidence from the Paleolithic period suggests that our ancestors were concerned with personal adornment. "This most universal and fundamental need of human beings

could be likened to a desire to impose order on nature or to stand out in a crowd."¹ Encirclement itself has many symbolic meanings: eternity, continuity, the sun, the soul, completeness, enclosure, boundary, fidelity, perfection, life cycles...the list goes on, especially when associated with specific religions or cultures.

The inspiration for this project came from the fertile mind of Onno Boekhoudt. Onno, a highly respected jeweller and teacher from the Netherlands, visited Canada regularly and had a great influence on the people who met him. Among them was Lily Yung, the instigator of this project. One of Onno's workshop themes was "101 Rings." As you might expect, the participants were to make 101 rings over the course of two days. This proved to be a liberating experience for some as they had an opportunity to let their creativity run riot. Unfettered, the participants dredged unrealized ideas from memory banks and manifested concepts that may have been gestating for years. For all, it was time to think quickly. Onno understood that these forces combined to nurture vitally original work. With 1001 rings one might expect a multiplicity of approaches, room for experimentation, mass production and sketches for more complete work. These five artists have marched to those boundaries and beyond.

Lily Yung has continued with digital design and fabrication systems explored in her exhibition, *Prototyping*, presented last fall. Lily has taken a production approach for her rings which are rendered in plastics, silicone rubber and stainless steel. I was struck then, as I am now, by the juxtaposition of the crisp digital design with the almost natural marks left by the machining processes. A group of brightly coloured acrylic rings, ordered like some alien alphabet, are energized by the reflections of the laser cut edges. When arranged on a surface bathed in light they produce an aura which further enhances this perception. Her shells, like rings made by stereolithography, have the texture of natural formations. These marks are similar to process marks left by the hand...or a ghost in the machine.



rings by Tiana Roebuck

An inveterate experimenter, Kai Chan's rings demonstrate a progression of ideas worked through various series. Made from materials that have lived previous lives, these works speak to me of the difference in the assigned value of materials for the maker and the viewer. Recycled material carries a history and its associated significance. In the rings made of progressive sizes of buttons stacked like Babylonian towers, each button has a unique history to be contemplated. Kai's sense of humour is evident in works such as the one made of a bit of wood, a rubber hose, a button and some twisted wire, and another made from a large red funnel with a painted wooden egg; both have the power to provoke a broad smile. Though Kai is adamant that his rings must be wearable, I believe they are meant for occasional wear as some would prove challenging to have on in certain situations.



rings by Gina Fafard

Found objects are also a source of inspiration for Lise Downe. Plant stems are delicately stitched together to form an ephemeral construction for one or more fingers. In another work the fossilized sections of crinoids (ancient sea animals) are strung together to form an equally fragile ring. Either could be a good departure point for the contemplation of the transitory nature of life. "It has been an opportunity to look at the ring in the simplest of terms...the little Dutch boy's finger stuck in the dike, for example. One could argue that the dike is a ring. Unwieldy and inhibiting any possibility of being worn elsewhere, but a ring nonetheless."²

Tiana Roebuck chooses to interpret the ring in the broader context of encirclement, "as a shape-not object."³ Tiana's production is dedicated to her two grandmothers, both seasoned hand workers and inspirations for her as a child.

Influenced by her paternal grandmother's intricately cut paper dolls, Tiana explores their linear geometry in works of her own. Her maternal grandmother is acknowledged in works that refer to classic cross stitch patterns. Nostalgia, tribute and an interest in traditional craft practice are the points of convergence for these works.

Concern for resources, the inherent toxic effects of conventional jewellery practices and an absence of electricity have led Gina Fafard to rediscover crochet, a skill developed in childhood. Her rings convey a truth to materials, her past and herself.

Onno Boekhoudt died in a tragic automobile accident in October of 2002, taking a profoundly potent influence from the craft community. For me, this exhibition serves as fitting memorial to his life and work.

KEN VICKERSON is an Associate Professor at the Ontario College of Art and Design.

KAI CHAN is the recipient of Jean A. Chalmers National Crafts Award (1998) and the Saidye Bronfman for Excellence in the Fine Crafts (2002).

LISE DOWNE is an artist and writer who lives and works in Toronto.

GINA FAFARD is a NSCAD graduate jeweller who is currently pursuing her interests in sustainable construction.

TIANA ROEBUCK has a BFA in Jewellery and Metalsmithing from NSCAD and is currently in her third year as a Metal Studio resident at Harbourfront Centre.

LILY YUNG is a jeweller of non-precious material currently using computer aided design and manufacturing technologies.



rings by Kai Chan



Canada Council
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Tiana and the **newviews** collective wish to acknowledge the support of the Ontario Arts Council.

Lily and Kai wish to acknowledge the support of the Canada Council for the Arts.

ENDNOTES

¹ "The Ring-Design Past and Present," Sylvie Lambert

² Artist Statement, Lise Downe, 2006

³ Correspondence, Tiana Roebuck, 2006

Because there is very little critical writing on contemporary Canadian crafts, Anne Barros and Lily Yung felt the urgent need for craft artists themselves to take action and inform the viewing public that there are ideas behind the materials in craft practices. We hope that **new views** will make critics reflect on their indifference to crafts, while at the same time provide interested writers an opportunity to have their views published. In so doing, it is anticipated that the much needed writing on crafts will begin to happen. Aside from serving as a record for future reference, such documentation will help contemporary Canadian craft artists to define their place in the history and tradition of craft making.

This small publication was started and funded by the two editors who then formed the **new views** collective with writer Barbara Isherwood. We hope that the craft community will recognize its importance and will help us keep this going by subscription and sponsorship for individual issues. For more information please call 416-924-7068 or e-mail us at newviewsinfo@yahoo.ca.

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editing Lily Yung and Anne Barros

design Kathe Gray/electric pear & Melissa Kaita

photos Lily's rings by Sophie Bouy