

Jewellery Art & Design

This is a e-newsletter about art, jewellery, design and the process of changing vocation. With personal observations of the pitfalls and joys that naturally follow.

In this issue: A peek into THE DESIGN PROCESS



Tripping on pearls



My absolute favourite gem is the pearl.

The pure grey pearl in particular - the grey pearl is my black swan. Uncommon. That perfect big grey pearl is my vision of uttermost accomplishment and beauty. An ideal to strive for.

As a designer I'm trained to be critical and analytical; consequently I don't easily fall for things. But when I fall for a certain design not only do I fall heavily - I know why I fall. And don't get me wrong; I like falling and I often trip on pearls.

The odd, bizarre and humorous have always played an important role in jewellery design. Personally, I look for playfulness. The little 'something' that makes me smile.

Mother of pearl - tears of Venus. I love my pearls. Love the way they feel; love how they make me feel. Pearls have an air of femininity, of luxe and signal readiness for an enjoyable day or evening.



Colours make me smile. And the colours red, blue, yellow and green stir up the best of my childhood feel-good memories. A splash of these primary colours is all I need to take the edge off a slightly too formal piece of jewellery.

Any little pearl has this effect on me. And the more pearls, the more my anticipation of fun and feast is fueled. More often than not, I play and improvise with my different strands of pearls. By combining or adding things to them I can tone down the formality and turn them into something unexpected. To me, pearls need absolutely not come as your grandma's string of pearls.

It's hard to find items that balance strict and fun. So I decided to have a go at it myself - designing the type of jewellery that I would like to wear. Have a peek into the design process:

The necklace above is a prototype in a series I call 'Squares and Spheres'. It's made from glass pearls and vintage wooden cube beads on a silk string. For the moment with a lobster clasp but future designs will benefit from this cube clasp you can see beside it. New versions of this design are on the drawing board - for freshwater pearls and semi precious cubes. See samples below.

An apropos to humorous: I just love these ear rings in gold and south sea pearls, by Swiss jewellery designer [Bruna Hauert](#) - she calls them *Prinz Schneebeli*!

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Personal note:
Ignorance is NOT bliss!

The jewellery design process is not so different from any other design work. *Creating* jewellery, however, requires a challenging amount of new knowledge. At least I can do drawings, but I have tons of ignorance to surmount. Now I strive to learn how to:

- put beads on a string,
- play with intervals, size and colour
- achieve light, sparkle, fluidity and balance,
- understand motion and weight of a beaded string,
- learn about precious and semi precious stones, tools, metals, suppliers.

Then, train my hands to accomplish tricky tasks - that will be the hardest part. From experience I know how it helps having the skills to model your ideas. Hence, I gather information about tools and techniques.

With a treasured plier from my childhood stone passion days I fumble away following u-tube instructions for how to wrap a head-pin.



It looks so easy, but my hands do not agree.

Nor do they like to open and close a jump ring. Maybe after the hundred time I will be comfortable with those movements?



For now, my shoulders tense up, my sore eyes long for magnifier glasses and I feel totally inadequate, which I deeply resent.

- Get over it, practise more, I tell myself. I want, after all, to sell what I make.

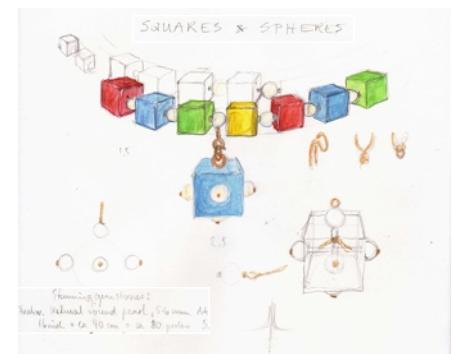
My design process usually looks something like this:

Seeing/dreaming, imagining/drawing, planning/doing - then redoing.

Not much different from any other designer I imagine, so why bring it up? Because a large part of the design process is invisible, it's in the mind, not on paper. I want you to remember this next time you pick up a well-designed expensive piece; that not only do you buy a nice thing, what you hold in your hands is the result of someones dream. What can be imagined can be made.

Most of this you don't see:

- Just by opening my eyes my head gets filled with **ideas**. To keep my head tidy I plot down all ideas fairly loosely but with lots of written details. I have learned the hard way that a loose sketch alone makes no sense later.
- The **inspirations** may come from seeing jewellery material like beads, stones, findings. Or from fashion, art, or the garden - even from reading. A hardware store and every-day items may trigger new ideas as well.
- The material that inspires me already points to a **style**, even when the idea is still vague.



'Squares and spheres' sketch. Samples of cube beads; dyed blue kiwi jasper, blue-green Cryscolla, yellow turquoise, red agate and pearls.

Delicate chains and dainty attachments certainly indicate a different **style** than chunky, bold stones or wood.



- The **style** provides a **framework** which becomes apparent through the properties of the chosen materials (their size, weight and colours).



- At this stage I sketch and make lots of **work drawings**. I rather let things evolve on paper, changing ideas many-times around before sourcing more material. Various directions develop, useful for new designs further on and for others to see.



ABOUT:

I'm Tittin Rinde, Norwegian visual artist/designer living in France, educated in Norway at KHiO, Oslo National Academy of the Arts. Textile designer by degree, visual artist by practise, visual communicator by experience and creative thinker by nature.

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This part of the process you can see:

- When I have a promising sketch I start to lay out **the components** and move them around. They can fall into place quickly, but oftentimes I have to go many rounds before it really sings.
- **The colours** of the initial inspiration may cry out for contrast - like a complementary colour. I may add a colour that works, but then the size of the new bead may look all wrong, or overpowering, and need to be added in groups of smaller beads.
- By adding small beads, I may have to correct the number of large beads, or their position. And suddenly, an interesting **pattern** emerges.
- A pattern creates a **rhythm**, which I may like or not. So, I play with the pattern until it has a good rhythm.
- Then, I check the colours again. Do they **sing** along with the rhythm? Maybe they just hum, or maybe there's no sound at all. Or worse, they are loud and tone deaf!



Musicality is a good measure when trying to understand why a well-crafted piece with wonderful components merely feels ok. While in comparison, another far less elaborate piece, is really standing out! Musicality is my best explanation then.

- At this stage I choose stringing material and findings. **Findings** are the little things that hold the piece together; like clasps, bead caps, spacer beads, etc. - all these are integrated parts of the style.
- When I work on a piece I try to visualise the **level and angle** it will be seen at. This helps me judge whether the different components are in the right place.
- Then I **string**. As I'm still learning there's a good possibility that I'm not pleased with the fluidity or balance of a necklace and I will unravel it. Again and again, until it clicks.



The blue necklace here is such a case.
But that's a story for next time!

A bientot! Tittin @ GREY PEARL