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English Jewellery in Blue Delft

Roberta Bernabei

The Dutch are noted for being famous travellers, an innate characteristic that has inspired a group of Delft citizens to annually organize events and exhibitions based around the theme of Delft Blue ceramics. By turning the title, *Delfts Blauw* in Dutch, into an acronym, and then matching each letter with a country they select the origins of the participants. For example, last year it was Denmark’s turn; this year England and next year will be Latvia and so on until W is reached.

This year’s event, *Wandelroute 2004* primarily focused on jewellery and clocks and ran from the first Sunday of September until the 31st of October. The opening was a big event with 4 demonstrations in different silver and goldsmith workshops, one of which was, ‘Jewellery With Textiles’ by Felieke van der Leest, followed by 3 workshops/video presentations and 8 exhibitions; one of which being held at Galerie Lous Martin. As we all are aware, the Netherlands has been at the forefront of developments in the history of contemporary jewellery, and Lous Martin has been actively involved since the 1960's. For instance, from 1969 to 1975 she ran Galerie Sieraad in collaboration with Hans Appenzeller in Amsterdam, and afterwards organised VES from 1984 until 1992. Ten years ago, she moved to Delft to take over Gallery Trits, renaming it Galerie Lous Martin in 1996.

At the moment, she stocks a broad range encompassing jewellery from international artists, in addition to bags, scarves, lamps, watches and exciting interior design objects such as, *Table talk* by Nel Linssen; well known for her velvet-like paper bracelets. A diverse cross section of jewellery activity and artistic levels are represented from very young students such as, Uli Rap right up to well-established artists such as, Ruudt Peters, and Rian de Jong etc. This enables the gallerist to offer customers a wide range of prices and collection opportunities: A philosophy that encourages reluctant customers to make their first purchase, a both affordable and dynamic one; with a long term view to stimulating interest in more expensive or experimental avant-garde work.

*Sieraden uit Engeland* is Martin’s group exhibition of jewellery, and it showcased the talents of ex-students and lecturers from LUSAD, Loughborough University and the Royal College of Art. The participants were Chloé Berrangé, Angela Evans, Katie Morvan, See Sun Yung, Carla Nuis, Olga Kosica, Vicki Ambery-Smith, Jane Adam and myself.

One of the most exiting bodies of work was Katie Morvan’s containers and bracelets 2004. The former are made with layers of images extrapolated from family memories whereas the large cylindrical bracelets are cast from translucent milky white wax, through which it is possible to observe black and white pictures. Looking through this blurred misty sequence of photos observers may imagine or perceive they are witnessing glimpses of their own memories. Lous stated that Morvan’s work had been the most successful with...
her customers. Nonetheless, she somewhat surprisingly noted how she continues to have to educate her public into accepting and buying contemporary jewellery, notwithstanding its ever lengthening history as an art form and Dutch origins. She concluded our discussions with some observations and advice for students and young jewellers alike, underlining the importance of visiting galleries prior to submitting work; thereby ensuring their work will fit into the ethos of the gallery or tailoring their selection of works wherever appropriate (in other words, a focussed and well researched approach is likely to be more successful the scatter gun). Above all, she emphasised the need to address the cover letter correctly and to the right person!

The next solo exhibition at Lous Martin will last from 7/11/04 – 15/01/05. Titled, Natureluurs, it includes a series of necklaces by Evelin Sipkes that were inspired by nature in Curacao. For further information, www.galerielousmartin.nl