

Doris Betz' work combines plastics with oxidised silver, using fine networks of wire to create an ambivalent stitched effect set in strong colours of black and white.

Finally Christiane Forster's work is in this group the most informal, using acrylic and silver in flat brooches incorporating found objects and nacre, providing surface detail and depth.

The effect is almost that of peering into a murky pond to see mysterious half-submerged objects floating or sinking below the surface.

The exhibition provided a valuable opportunity for us to see the recent work of some prominent German artist-jewellers.

Dot Sim

The Scottish Gallery, 11 September to 4 October

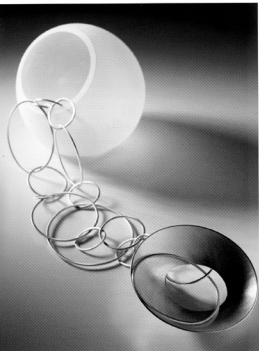
Reviewed by Kathy Vones

After completing a masterclass with Australian jeweller Susan Cohn and a subsequent residency at Northlands Creative Glass in Lybster, Dot Sim is now exhibiting the fruits of her labour for the first time at the Scottish Gallery in Edinburgh. Perceived to be a departure from Sim's minimalist exploration of the Scottish landscape, her current work investigates the themes of jewellery as an heirloom and intimate container of memories. To this end Sim has combined pieces of her jewellery with mouth blown glass vessels, the production of which doubtlessly formed a major part of her residency at Northlands. Anyone who has ever tried their hand at glassblowing will know that it is not something to be picked up overnight, requiring practice as much as skill, so the results presented by Sim here are very adept indeed.

Most of the vessels exhibited are gently curved containers and undulating 'cushions' made of both coloured and clear glass, and each vessel is paired up with a piece of jewellery to either enclose or display. In some cases, the rounded pendant of a necklace acts as a stopper or lid to the vessel, its chain dangling inside the container, tantalisingly obscured by the sandblasted texture on the outside. Particularly successful in that respect is Sim's Necklace in a blue bowl, which allows a glimpse inside the container with its shiny interior reflecting the chain contained inside, while the light blue colour of the vessel permits the shadow of the chain to leave a ghostly imprint on the outside. Rings placed carefully on indentations in gently curved glass cushions are reminiscent of baroque presentation cushions at wedding ceremonies, whereas a grouping of coloured vessels with necklace lids is visually evocative of a cluster of beautiful, plump mushrooms.

However, not all of Sim's pairings are equally successful. Wavy pins which have simply been placed halfway inside the glass vessels resemble bamboo sticks in vases, such as can be seen in countless interior design magazines. The Wavy Bangles, which seem to have been arbitrarily hung over the rims of their containers, inspire the question why the pairing of vessel and jewellery is necessary at all. Sim's concept of jewellery as heirloom and container of memories is hardly new, and the main problem with this recent body of work is that the jewellery, other than being placed in conjunction with the glass vessels, does not truly reflect this concept. Not differing much in style nor execution from Sim's previous work, it almost feels like the concept was attached to the work as an afterthought in order to unite the two very different elements of jewellery and glass.

There is no doubt that Sim's jewellery is beautifully executed and technically sophisticated, and that her understated aesthetic will appeal to a great number of people, but the spark of excitement hinted at in some of the pieces utilising coloured glass is lacking in her white and clear glass vessels, which form the majority of pieces in the exhibition, and sometimes make the work tasteful to the point of predictable. This exhibition may not represent as dramatic a departure from Sim's previous work as anticipated, but it is nevertheless interesting to see this talented jeweller's endeavour to expand her visual vocabulary by exploring the possibilities of blown and kiln formed glass in conjunction with her jewellery.



Dot Sim. Chain and bowl, 2006. Silver, frosted glass.