



MASTER THESIS
A METAMORPHOSIS
OF CONTEMPORARY
JEWELRY DESIGN

FROM RING
TO CHAIN
TO SCULPTURE

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2023



To everyone that has supported me throughout this journey

Master Thesis
A Metamorphosis of Contemporary Jewelry Design
From Ring to Chain to Sculpture

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Master Design Specializing in Artistic Conception
Reutlingen University 2023

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This Thesis does not contain a Confidentiality Clause

MOTIVATION

My choice of theme and motivation for writing this academic paper on the evolution of jewelry design, is that I have gathered and learned so much valuable information about jewelry design over the past 10 years; throughout my education and during my own independent artistic work, but also by reading trade journals and books on the subject.

It has always been my wish to compile my knowledge. There have been some scientific and academic articles on the theme, but unfortunately not many, and most of them are more than 8-10 years old and therefore not very current.

Often found are books that show an overview of single artists or surrounding only specific jewelry. Current works are mostly on sustainability in the jewelry business, or on new digital technologies to create jewelry.

What is lacking, is an overview of traditional jewelry design, what it means, and why we even wear jewelry. And also an overview of the change in style that has happened within jewelry design in the past decades, transforming the way jewelers design and turn their works into contemporary jewelry and art pieces.

I think we need to ask some questions about contemporary jewelry that are not often asked. It is a quite young genre that is continuously developing. And it is exciting to see the transformation happening.

I also keep questioning my own work, not quite finding the “right” place to place it. When I am asked what I do, I say I am an artist. Saying I am a jewelry designer often confuses people, seeing as most people only know traditional jewelry and goldsmithing, and not contemporary jewelry or jewelry art.

Is contemporary jewelry really art? Or can a sculpture be a piece of jewelry? Or can a piece of jewelry morph into a sculpture? And what happens when jewelry is scaled up and loses a connection to the body? This is where I would like to position my work. Compiling an overview of the history of jewelry, the important style change into contemporary jewelry that happened mid 20th century, and some artists important to this movement. And this is, in my opinion, an important addition to the research on this subject.

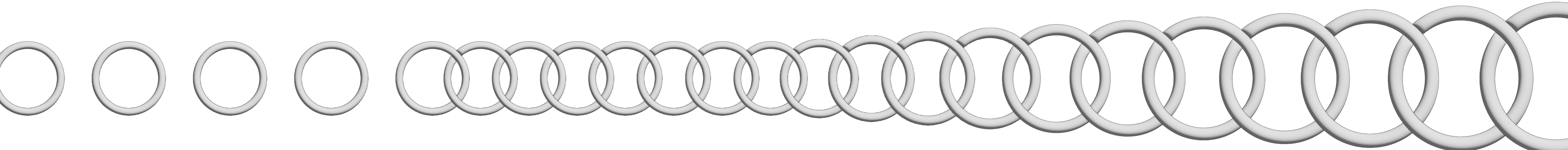
Then, using this overall theme as an inspiration I will try to blur the lines between jewelry and art. With this, I will create a small collection of my own pieces, showing the metamorphosis in and through my work while also showing the transformation I have gone through becoming an artist.

INSPIRATION

As a big source of inspiration, I wish to focus on my own cultural heritage and life. Seeing how jewelry always has been very important to cultures all around the world, specifically in nordic history, I would like to use elements found in norse culture, art and craftsmanship. I have often used and quoted historic elements and patterns from my ancestors in Norway, and combined them with my own modern aesthetics. By using these elements, that I am already familiar with, I can create works that are contemporary and relevant today, but based in history. Not just based on my own history, but also that of jewelry and metal art in general.

A metamorphosis of contemporary jewelry design will depict my journey in jewelry design and the evolvment of my own design aesthetics, and also illustrate the metamorphosis that has happened in the jewelry business in the past 100 years. To stay within the scope of what is possible to produce in 4 months of work, and narrow the workload, I have decided to create a set of parameters that will be used in my design process, and that will limit the possible design outcome.

In the future I wish to continue this work, working without the limits of parameters, and see where it goes when I give my ideas leeway. But for the scope of this paper, I will stay within the parameters possible to implement in this short amount of time.



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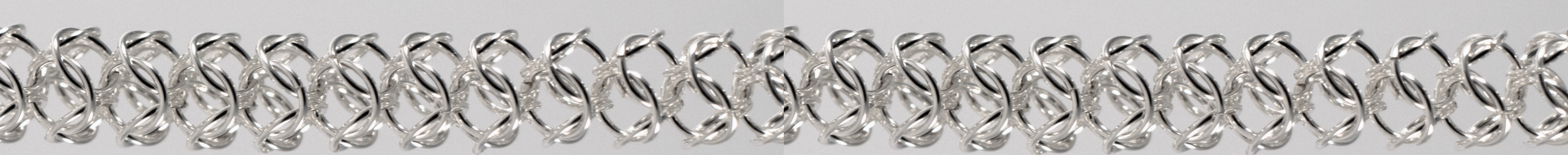
DECLARATION OF AUTONOMY

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THESIS CONTRACT

ABSTRACT

Contemporary jewelry is a quite young field of art and design, that has not yet been completely defined. There is very little research being done around the genre of contemporary jewelry design in general, most of the literature concerning this theme is about singular artists or museum exhibitions, and not about the change in style that started in the early 1930s. This research will create an overview of what has happened historically, and in which direction contemporary jewelry is heading today. And seeing if contemporary jewelry is separable from contemporary art, or if the genre itself can blur the lines between art and jewelry. Showing examples of work from different time periods, focusing on the ring as an example, and what can be made using rings. Taking inspiration from rings, chains and chainmail, creating new contemporary jewelry and sculptures, that morph in size, material and color and seeing if loosing the connection to the body through these parameters, changes contemporary jewelry into art, or if contemporary jewelry is art in itself. Making a series of contemporary jewelry and sculptures to test the theory. Even though contemporary jewelry is rapidly and continuously changing, and having very few rules, it balances between art and jewelry, and it can definitively be both. There is a need for discussing this theme further, and there needs to be more research in this field in the future.



INTRODUCTION

Contemporary jewelry design has taken up a role in between jewelry and art and created its own new modern and provocative art movement. Where jewelry is not just a token of wealth and social status anymore, that can be handed down from generation to generation, but is a way of expressing emotions, criticize injustice and describe the designers' attitude towards life and general opinions on different themes.

Using repurposed or recycled materials that are uncommon in jewelry, that are not seen as "valuable" like gold, silver, or gems. And with that, creating a new worth, through telling stories and expressing their opinion on important themes with every jewelry piece.

Contemporary jewelry is not just about adorning the body, but is more about making a statement, often creating unique and limited pieces. Modern jewelry artists challenge clichéd stereotypical representa-

tions of themselves and want to put focus on topics that are different and unusual. (Design-Ma-Ma 2011; Xiao and Puman 2014)

Many artists are not trained in jewelry making, but they still produce wearable art or jewelry sculptures, that challenge the boundaries of traditional design. Not having trained as a goldsmith, being unbounded by the goldsmiths restraints, can give artists a freer rein to explore more conceptual work, that make a statement, more than making perfectly executed jewelry.

The first goal of contemporary jewelry is not to enhance the beauty of the wearer, like traditional jewelry, but to challenge the wearer and the viewer into thinking. (Guinness 2018)

By looking at the transformation this genre has gone through, since the style slowly emerged in the 1930s, and what it is

today, we can learn to embrace the fast paced change happening in contemporary jewelry.

There is a very narrow line between art and contemporary jewelry, and the research in this work will take a closer look at the different genres, and if it is possible to blur the lines between them.

And by looking at the history of contemporary and traditional jewelry, it can inspire new work and new aesthetics. By compiling this knowledge, new ideas have the space to grow.

Using cultural heritage as an inspiration also gives the project a new and also emotional level, creating tension and making the finished pieces more than just contemporary jewelry or art. Lifting the designs to a new level and strengthening the expression of the pieces.

Definition: (1530) a profound transformation or evolution of something changing into something else. A change in form or structure. Originally by witchcraft or supernatural means. From Greek: metamorphōsis “a transforming, a transformation” from metamorphun “to transform, to be transfigured” from meta “change” and morphē “shape, form”. A word of uncertain etymology.

Not only animals like the caterpillar can go through metamorphosis, natural substances may also undergo metamorphosis.

Heat and pressure, over time, eventually turns coal into diamonds.

METAMORPHOSIS

[met-uh-**mawr**-fuh-sis]

JEWELRY

The instinctive action of wearing jewelry is found in almost all ancient civilizations. Jewelry, like clothing, has always been an indispensable part of every culture on all seven continents. Jewelry is amongst the most widespread of art forms, but also one of the most forgotten in modern times. We see it and wear it every day, but do not often hear of its multifaceted history and power.

But since when do people decorate and adorn themselves? We assume that jewelry was initially made for symbolic acts or ritual occasions. One speculation is that man collected various objects associated with the environment and then in different ways attached them to the body. Findings such as stones or shells riddled with erosion, animal teeth, bones, straws and other flexible plant fibers, flowers, or also coloring materials such as soot and ash or ocher to color the skin could have been the earliest way to adorn oneself.

One can only guess what the first decorative objects were used for and why man began to associate objects with the body, but it is a speculation that on the one hand

they were trying to distinguish oneself from others, on the other hand it could also have been to identify and feel part of a group. Creating a strong bond between the object worn and oneself.

These assumptions are based on the interpretation of the few very early pieces of jewelry that have survived, and the behavior in dealing with jewelry that can still be observed today in various societies.

In addition to other forms of expression, jewelry is also a first and important form of communication in this context. By adorning oneself, man satisfies the two opposing needs of individuality and belonging. A hunter, for example, can show his individuality and status by wearing trophies of his hunting success, on the other hand, he can also identify with the other hunters and differentiate himself, for instance, from the gatherers or other society groups. (Bähr and Schneider 2013; Holcomb et al. 2018)

In recent years, very simple but clearly hand processed snails and seashells have been discovered, which have been identified as jewelry and estimated to be up to 150 000 years old. They are snails from the Nassariidae family, pierced and colored with red ocher, possibly threaded onto plant fibers. (Bähr and Schneider 2013; Bouzouggar et al. 2007) Showing that early civilizations wore and treasured handmade jewelry. Jewelry is so varied and diverse, and it is difficult to define what jewelry really is and why we wear it.



Part of 32 perforated seashells found in Bizmoune Cave, Morocco - among the first signs of human adornment known. Dating back around 142 000 to 150 000 years (Ajudia 2022)



Perforated seashells found in Blombos Cave, South Africa - dating back about 75 000 - 82 000 years (Ajudia 2022)

Quote on previous page ('Metamorphosis | Etymology, Origin and Meaning of Metamorphosis by Etymonline' 2022; 'Metamorphosis Definition' 2022; 'Metamorphosis Meaning' 2022)



“The decision to adorn a certain part of the anatomy speaks to the choices that have been made by both the maker and the wearer and underscores the singularity of each. Like two halves of an apple, both elements need to come together to make a whole that is a manifestation of creativity and that says »take note, I’m here!«”
-Alexander Calder (Guinness 2018)

Alexander Calder - Collier “Jealous Husband” brass wire 1940 (Cain 2017)

SYMBOLISM

Wearing jewelry has always had a symbolic meaning. It symbolizes social status, protection, currency, opulence, self-expression, prosperity, relationships and is a fashion statement. Jewelry has been used for various reasons in history. As a symbol of wealth or power, as a religious symbol, as a symbol of love, as an amulet with different meanings or just as an ornament to adorn oneself.

The same patterns can be observed throughout history, epochs, and cultures when it comes to allocation and differentiation of jewelry. Group membership or social class were often marked by jewelry. Sometimes recognizable to everyone, but also often only recognizable to the respective members of that group or class. Hierarchies and importance in the group were made noticeable.

Jewelry has played a very important role, especially in religious contexts. Among other things, it was believed in some cultures that trophies or depictions of animals would transmit certain characteristics

to humans. For instance, strength, courage, speed, or cleverness. Jewelry depicting spirits and divine beings was often only intended for rulers or tribal chiefs. These objects also included strict rules about who could put them on and when they could be used.

Over time, jewelry has lost some of its value and importance. Although, even today some importance of jewelry has survived, for instance necklaces with religious images or symbols of royal power.

But jewelry has always been seen as something durable and worthy, so it has been passed down over generations not just because of the worth of the materials, but also because of the emotional worth. Containing the spirit of someone who wore the jewelry or just containing the presence of history.

It is something permanent, and it can be contained and given away, or reworked and melted down, to create something new. It can be shared. And it serves as a thread through history, connecting past

and present. An example in modern times is the collecting of old family gold, to create wedding bands for young couples. And furthermore, the tradition of wearing something old and new, borrowed, or blue at weddings is still seen today through the use of family heirloom jewelry borrowed or gifted for the occasion.

Often jewelry is used to symbolize traditions, cultural memory and personal remembrance. Jewelry often represents something special.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was an integral part of the fashion. Showing emotions on the outside. Using everyday motifs assigned with a meaning to send messages. E.g., wearing black jewelry for mourning, made from black glass, black gemstones or from black wood. This was also sometimes worn for celebrating life and that we are all mortal (Memento Mori). Often lockets contained real hair to commemorate a loved one who was deceased, missed or far away. (‘Symbolism in Jewelry 2022’)

THE CHANGE OF STYLE AND TECHNIQUE THAT HELPED CREATE THE NEW GENRE “CONTEMPORARY” JEWELRY DESIGN

We know that adorning the body has deep roots in history and symbolizes so much more than just wearing something pretty. It is a complex human need to show status, provoke admiration and fulfill a human wish to be complete somehow. (Holcomb et al. 2018)

Jewelry is namely, contrary to its reputation, neither incidental nor superficial. Rather, it is a complex artifact in which body language, social codes, religious ideas and determinations, and aesthetic norms interact with each other on different levels. There is potentially an almost infinite number of all imaginable types of jewelry, because every part of the human body can be accentuated and decorated with it. Jewelry serves as an amplification of the different parts of the human body. It conveys information about belonging and status, as a sign of the social value, whether single, married or widowed. Jewelry is also given as a dowry or at symbolized rites of

passage such as marriage, birth, and death. The use of jewelry has also changed over the past thousands of years. Individual forms of jewelry such as clothing pins were initially used to fasten clothing, but later they also had a parallel function as a means of payment. (Scarpitti 2021)

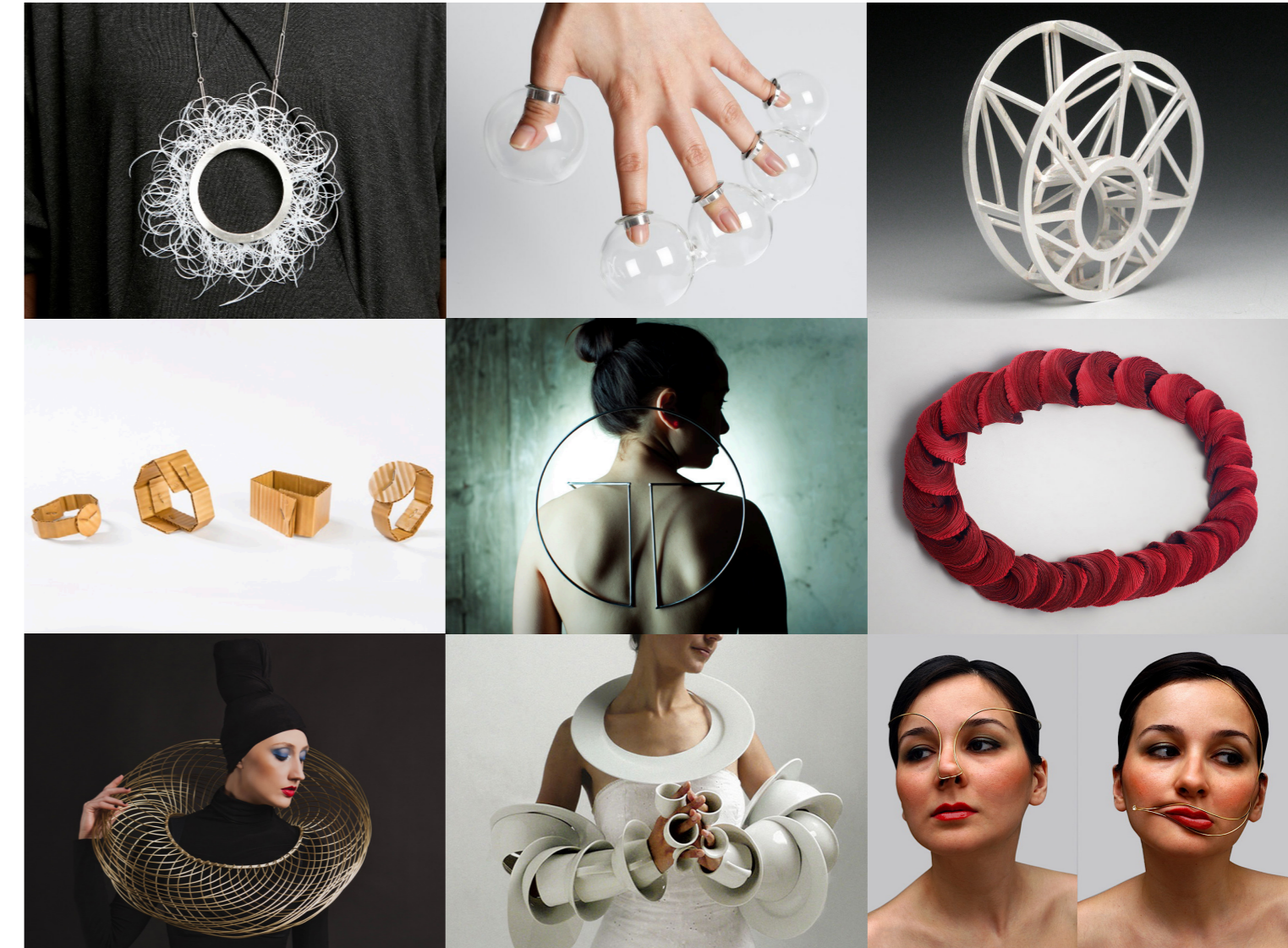
Traditional jewelry used mainly gold, silver and gems and was expensive and something not everyone could obtain. The surfaces were polished and the pieces were mostly small and accessible. Regarding the materials and colors used in contemporary jewelry on the other hand, the variety appears to be almost endless and imaginative. Ranging from materials such as cardboard or paper, industrial materials, ceramics, metals, minerals, glass, textiles, plastics, bird feathers, other organic substances, and animal parts like beetle wings to human or animal hair and many more. (Design-Ma-Ma 2011, Guinness 2018, Xiao and Puman 2014)

Contemporary jewelers worked with the idea that the jewelry should have a connection to the body, enhancing it, and most importantly, tell a story.

It highlights unusual parts of the body, plays with wearability, and often criticizes social- and other injustices. It is created without strict rules, it is playful, and it is free. Bordering on art.

Contemporary jewelry artists dare to try new things, sometimes even creating something which is, in our society, perceived as ugly. Or making a statement using “ugly” materials. Contemporary jewelry is meant to be provocative. This lets artists start conversations on different, sometimes also difficult topics. Which is, today, more than ever, important.

The need to express ones opinions and views on the world is not going away, and with art and jewelry, many artists become a strong voice that they would otherwise not have.



From left to right, top to bottom:
 Margherita Potenza “No Name” (Cooke 2017) - Natha Khunprasert “Sensational Fingertips” (The Plus Paper 2015) - Erin Knisley “Gesture Ring” (Knisley 2022)
 David Bielander “Gold Rings and Bracelets” (Kwok 2015) - Katerina Reich “IO” (Reich 2022) - Yong Joo Kim “Transitions in Red Velcro” (Joo Kim 2022)
 Jesse Mathes “Territorial Defense” (Mathes 2022) - Marie Pendariès “The Dowry” (Neyman 2022) - Burcu Büyükkünal “Terrifying Beauty” (Hérolt Petitpas 2022)

In the late 1930s and in the beginning of the 1940s classical fine jewelry started to change into more expressive jewelry, called studio jewelry, that later during to 1950s and 1960s became what we now call contemporary jewelry design, differentiating itself from classical, traditional and fine goldsmith jewelry.

After the second World War, many artists wanted to break away from established practices and start to express themselves in a new way and not be constrained by the trade. In the beginning, it was just material surfaces they reinvented, moving away from the polished precious metal trends of pre-war jewelry.

By using non-conventional techniques and chemicals, traditional jewelry became a newfound look and feel. (Chadour-Sampson 2019)

With this change in aesthetics and material, came many artists trying out new techniques, new surfaces, new compositions, and most of all playing with wearability and non-wearability.

This break from traditionalism could be compared with the emerging of photography in the late 19th century. Until that point, drawing or painting had been seen as recording reality, and with photographic images taking over the role of realistically portraying the world, drawings became more of a recording of notions and emotions. In the same manner, jewelry stopped being only valuable and pretty objects pic-

turing the world, and turned into a form of expression, and depicting the world how the designer sees it, being less naturalistic and becoming more expressionistic. (Bähr and Schneider 2013, Metcalf 2012)

Clunk jewelry, foremost used as a description for large and partly unwearable contemporary rings, became popular in the mid to late 1960s, and still is to this day. Clunk is a notion that came from sculptors. Later also continued by the Arte-Povera avant-garde movement in the 1960s and 1970s. It was a criticism of classical sculpting, at the idea that sculptures needed to be beautiful to be good art. Clunk jewelry took inspiration from this movement and is a critique of conventional preciousness in classical jewels. (Metcalf 2012; Tate 2022)

The use of plastics in contemporary jewelry in the late 1960s and 1970s was quite radical at that time, moving partially away from metals, and using materials seen as “cheap”, “inexpensive” and “abnormal” to create jewelry. (Chadour-Sampson 2019)

This started a complete re-assessment of material values. By the 1970s contemporary jewelry became more and more playful, and created a new aesthetics founded upon freedom of expression and individuality. At this time jewelry often became a second component like a kinetic movement or the use of interchangeable parts. By the 1980s it was more accepted that

jewelry had forever changed direction and split from traditional values and hand-crafts. Artists started focusing on the relationship between jewelry and the body. Playing with proportions and wearability. Newfound lightweight materials made it possible to create larger works, that blurred the line between jewelry and sculpture.

In the 1990s even before the discussion about sustainability in jewelry design started, artist Beate Leinz started making conceptual rings out of recycled bottles. Thereby starting a discussion about how artists should consider where their materials come from. (Chadour-Sampson 2019) This was not only well-received in the jewelry community, but was also soon picked up by the schools teaching jewelry art. They embraced more materials than ever before, amongst them were paper and paper-mâche, feathers, resins, aluminum, other materials from nature and most importantly ethically sourced metals.

By the 2000s contemporary jewelry was known and practiced over the entire world. Today it is taught on every continent, and the exchange and reciprocity between countries is enormous. There are huge contemporary jewelry competitions, stipends, artist in residency offers and grants available. Contemporary jewelry is now seen as its own division in arts. Settling somewhere between jewelry, sculpture and art.

Contemporary jewelry often balances between a sarcastic take on jewelry and pure kitsch. It is anything you can imagine and then some. In any material or shape. And until this day, the contemporary movement has not stopped moving forward and continuing being unique, individualistic and has no dominant style defining the genre. It adapts to trends in the art and fashion world, but it continues to be unique and different.



Ego Update Mystification, plastic, acrylic 2015 (Jamrichová 2022)

SCULPTURAL STUDIO JEWELRY AND NEW MODERN AESTHETICS

○ 1930 - 1949



Left: Ring 1930 brass wire and ceramic.
Right: Bracelet 1930 brass, silver and steel.
Alexander Calder ('Calder Foundation' 2022)

Alexander Calder (1898 – 1976), American sculptor, known for his kinetic sculptures. He was one of the first sculptors creating jewelry. His work, historically changed the field of jewelry, by banging out partly kinetic jewelry in silver and brass, with just a hammer and a pair of pliers. Not caring that he had no previous experience in the field of jewelry. He created what he called wearable sculptures. (Metcalf 2012) During his lifetime he produced about 1800 pieces of jewelry, most between 1933 and 1952. ('The Met Museum' 2022)



Sugar cube ring 1936 silver gold-plated, sugar, engraved with a unique serial number.
Meret Oppenheim ('Emma-Museum: Meret Oppenheim' 2022)

Another artist making way for new jewelry thoughts was the surrealist artist Méret Oppenheim (1913 – 1985). In the late 1930s she created an absurdly delightful sugar cube ring, switching the expensive gemstone normally found in a gold ring, with an interchangeable sugar cube, that can be refreshed at any time, making the gem redundant. A completely new approach to creating jewelry. (Chadour-Sampson 2019)



Necklace 1930 chromium-plated brass section tubing.
Naum Slutzky 1930 (Victoria & Albert Museum Collection 2022)

The Ukrainian goldsmith Naum Slutzky (1894 – 1965) taught at the Bauhaus from 1919 – 1927 and was one of the first goldsmiths to combine precious materials with glass, chrome, and plastics in avant-garde and modernist jewelry. In his eyes the value of the materials used in art was not important, but rather the design. He was so ahead of his time that some of his works could be mis-dated to the 1960s or 1970s. (Chadour-Sampson 2019; 'V&A The Collections' 2022)

CLUNK JEWELRY

○ 1950 - 1969



Sculpture 1947 steel and brass brazed.
Theodore Roszak ('Theodore Roszak' 2022)

Clunk is a notion that came from sculptors like Jean Dubuffet in the late 1940s and abstract expressionists like Herbert Ferber and Theodore Roszak that wanted to break with conventionality in materials and aesthetics of classical sculptures. Creating a discussion around what was perceived as art, and what was perceived as pretty or ugly art. And changing the "rules" of what artist were "allowed" to create. (Metcalf 2012)



Interchangeable rings:
Left: 1957 yellow gold, rutilated quartz.
Right: 1960 white gold, chrysoprase and rock crystal.
Friedrich Becker ('Prof. Friedrich Becker e.V.' 2022)

Another pioneer at this time was Friedrich Becker (1922 – 1997) that invented the "Kugelspannring" an almost invisible two-point-setting for an unconventionally cut gemstone that held the stone in place using only tension. Becker was known for his kinetic and interchangeable jewelry and sculptures. And even though his jewelry could be placed in the more "traditional" section of jewelry, he still played with bending the "rules" of traditional jewelry, and moreover creating room for new artists to emerge. ('Art Aurea' 2022; Chadour-Sampson 2019; 'Ganoksin: Friedrich Becker' 2022)



Ring designed for Georg Jensen 1963 silver.
Vivianna Torun Bülow-Hübe (Chadour-Sampson 2017)

A female pioneer at this time was Vivianna Torun Bülow-Hübe, or simply Torun as she named herself. One of the first internationally known jewelry designers from Sweden. A woman working in a man's world, she did not like to design for rich women who wanted to show of their husbands "fortune". She started creating what she called "Anti-Status-Jewelry" out of wires and non-precious gemstones. From 1969 onwards she worked exclusively for the famous silver-smithing company "Georg Jensen" founded in 1904 in Copenhagen. (Chadour-Sampson 2017; 'Georg Jensen' 2023)

REBELLIOUS JEWELRY



1970 - 1989



Left: Ring 2014, aluminium.

Right: Ring 2021, silver, synthetic gemstones.

Karl Fritsch ('Ornamentum Gallery' 2022; 'Karl Fritsch Artworks' 2023)



Bracelet 1983 gold-plated and oxidized silver.

Tone Vigeland ('MutualArt: Tone Vigeland' 2022)



Ring 1989 rose quartz, gold.

Tina Chow (Chadour-Sampson 2019)

Karl Fritsch (1963) a German goldsmith and designer, who mostly designs rings, and is a proponent of the clunk ring movement. With his unique take on the classical ring he creates rings that are handcrafted to perfection, but at the same time his works are anything but classical. Disregarding every jewelry rule and pushing every boundary, he creates rebellious pieces of contemporary jewelry often made of precious materials mixed with non-precious Materials. (Fritsch 2022)

In Scandinavia, the silversmith Tone Vigeland (1938) was a pioneer in sourcing materials from ethical and economically accessible materials. Her early work was characterized by modern and minimalistic Scandinavian design, later in her career she developed a unique style made from thousands of similar pieces, seemingly minimalistic, but in reality, highly complex. Vigeland's jewelry has often been said to be inspired by Norwegian chainmail or Viking jewelry. (Linder 2022)

Tina Chow was a known American fashion idol and model, turned jewelry designer inspired by Andy Warhol. She created one of a kind mixed media jewelry. Using materials like bamboo, rock crystals, silk cording, gold and silver. Her first collection was sold at Bergdorf-Goodman in New York. She believed jewelry could have the ability to heal wounds. She was often inspired by her family roots in China and used traditional Chinese bamboo basket weave techniques in her work. (Chadour-Sampson 2019; 'Dk-Farnum Collection' 2018)

STATEMENT JEWELRY



1990 - 2023



Recycled Plastic Ring 1993 polyethylene.

Beate Leinz (Chadour-Sampson 2019)



Rings 2011-2017 fine gold-sheet, air.

Kim Buck "Pompous" ('Exhibition Kim Buck' 2022)



Ring "Smog-Free-Ring 2017 glass, smog diamond.

Daan Roosegarde ('Studio Roosegaarde' 2022)

Beate Leinz was a pioneer when it came to using recycled materials. She created the first conceptual jewelry out of plastic bottles. Later in her career she started her own eye-wear brand "Leinz Eye-wear" where she makes plastic glasses partly 3D-Printed. Her company today works towards zero-emission eye-wear. ('G. L. Brunton' 2021 ; Chadour-Sampson 2019)

A modern contemporary artist known for playing with the worth of materials is the Danish jewelry artist Kim Buck (1957). In one series of rings "Pompous" a thin sheet of 999,9% pure gold was filled with hot air, making something as simple as air unbelievable expensive. ('Xiao and Puman' 2014; 'Kim Buck' 2022)

Another artist known for making a statement is Daan Roosegarde. In 2017 he created the "Smog Free Ring". The bezel of the ring consists of a glass cube which contains smog from Beijing which was collected from the Smog Free Tower and with it the wearer donates 1000 m3 clean air to Beijing. The ring consists of 42% carbon and is therefore, for some, the new and pollution free diamond. Also criticizing the not very sustainable diamond and gem industry. (Chadour-Sampson 2017; 'Studio Roosegaarde' 2022)



A piece of jewelry that is worn all over the world, in every culture, and that has not changed much in its shape and significance.
It is probably one of the first pieces of jewelry we think of when talking about jewelry.
Namely:

THE RING

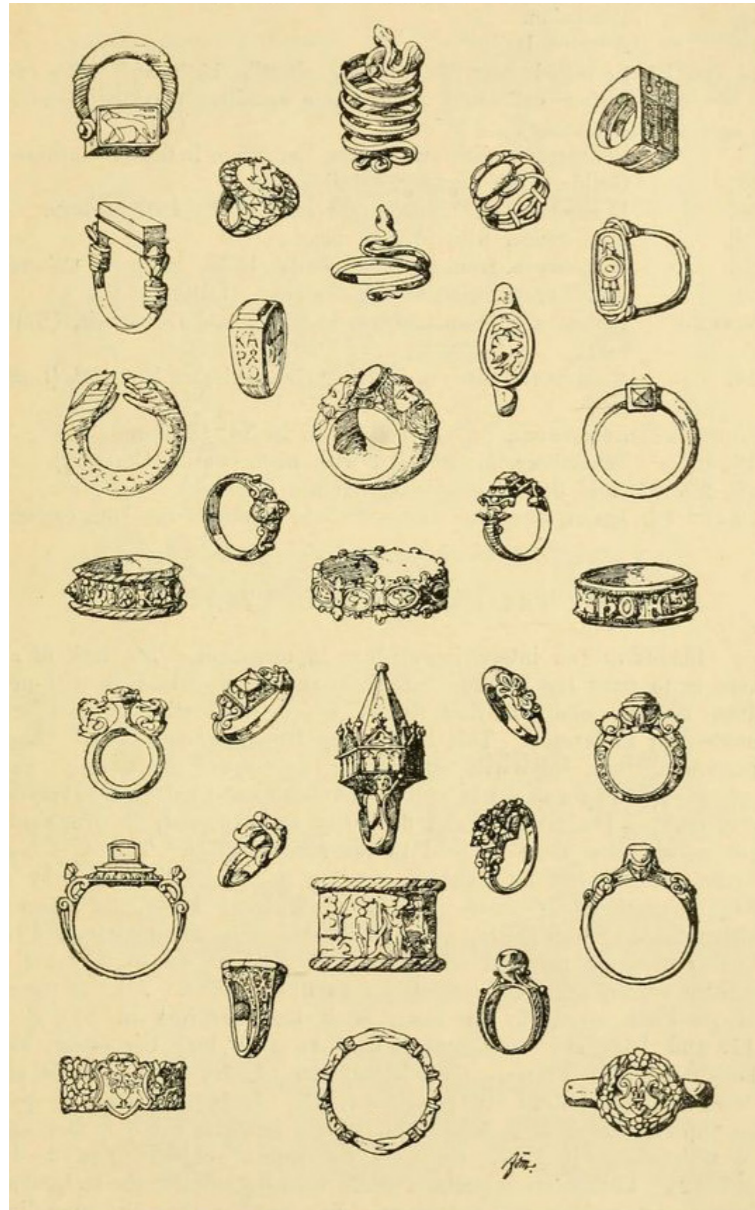
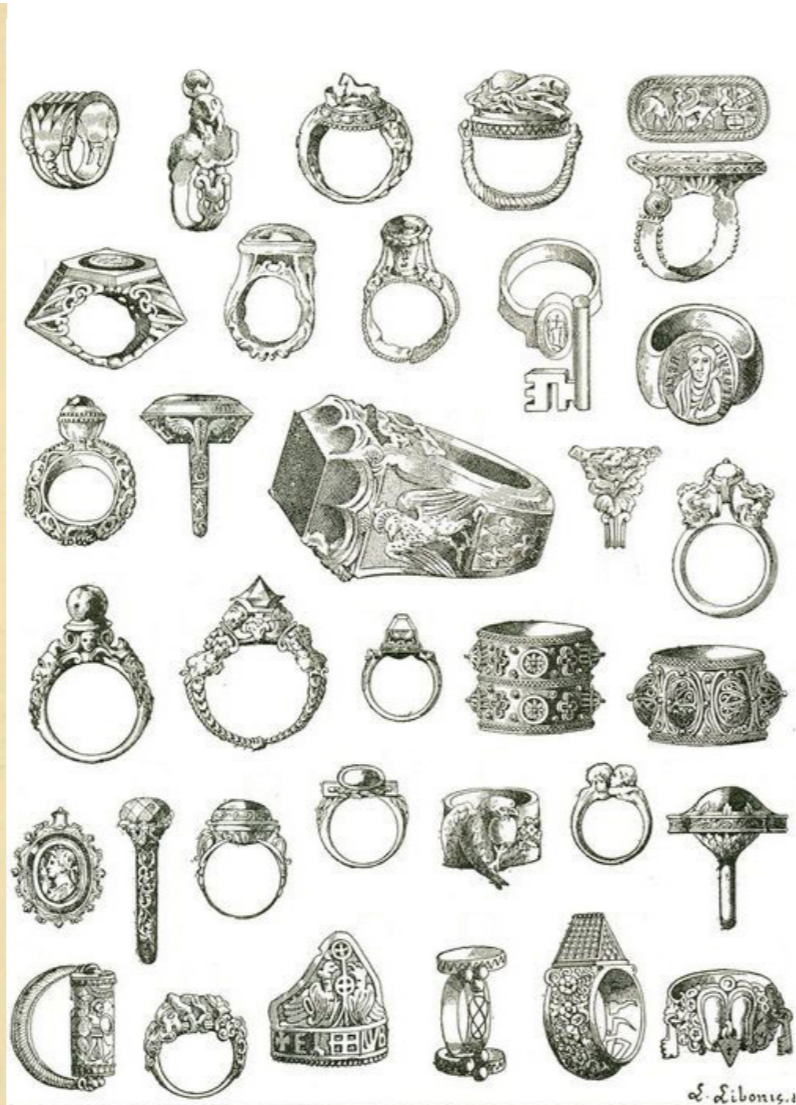


Image left: Handbook of Ornament (Meyer 1900)

Image on the previous page "gold ring" ("Gold Plated Tungsten Ring" 2022)



BAGUES ANCIENNES : 1. Bague égyptienne avec pierre; 2. Bague égyptienne; 3. Bague de Ramsès II; 4. Bague grecque (arabée); 5. Bague étrusque; 6. Bague romaine; 7. Bague trouvée en Syrie; 8. Bague byzantine; 9. Bague à clef (galle romaine); 10. Anneau et cachet de Childéric; 11. Bague mérovingienne; 12. Bague moyen âge; 13. Anneau de bronze xv^e siècle; 14, 15. Bagues moyen âge; 16, 17. Bagues du xv^e siècle; 18. Bague émaillée du xv^e siècle; 19, 20. Anneaux italiens du xv^e siècle; 21. Bague à camée antique du xv^e siècle; 22. Bague du xv^e siècle; 23. Bague à dragon d'or du xv^e siècle; 24. Bague du xv^e siècle; 25. Anneau du xv^e siècle; 26, 27. Bagues du xv^e siècle; 28. Bague à cylindre au xv^e siècle; 29. Bague hongroise du xv^e siècle; 30. Bague (anglo-saxonne); 31. Bague à deux chatons (anglo-saxonne); 32. Bague (anglo-saxonne) du xv^e siècle; 33. Bague de fiançailles (Allemagne).

Image right: Le petit Larousse illustré (Augé 1936)

Image next page: Signature of Lucas Cranach the Elder ("Cranach Digital Archive" 2022)

A SHORT HISTORY AND SYMBOLISM OF RINGS



The most ancient ring found is from the Paleolithic period, found in Pavlov in the Czech Republic, made of mammoth bone. The ring is about 21 000 years old.

Most objects in history, owe their origins to some sort of use. Rings were believed to be an object of exchange, as means of payment, worn on the fingers for keeping it safe. (Zdenka et al. 2019)

Rings are not only precious, but also have a strong symbolic meaning and such a characteristic shape that is worn on the most visible and prominent place on the body, the hand. They are always in contact with the skin, are clearly visible when we speak and gesture, and are in contact with everything we touch, they age through use. Rings therefore, could be said to store memories in its patina, and is one of the most intimate forms of jewelry.

They are also perhaps the most evocative pieces of jewelry, filled with different meaning and symbolism. Historically made of precious material like ivory, gold

or silver, alternatively made of bronze, iron, or tin. Sometimes made of stones with corrosion holes or carved bones. Often also made with gemstones, wood, glass, or enamel. In modern times, rings have been made of all kinds of material and material-mixes, plastics, acrylics or recycled or up-cycled materials. (Church 2017)

The meaning of wearing specific jewelry has diminished in recent years. Except when it comes to engagement rings and wedding bands, that are still surrounded by traditions and faith, creating a bond between two wearers of rings.

Finger-rings are made and fitted to fit a specific finger and is often made in collaboration between the artist or goldsmith, and the customer.

Rings and other jewelry were strategically used in paintings to communicate authority and wealth. The painted gems also symbolized properties like courage, wisdom or innocence. Some painters even

used jewelry in their signatures. Lucas Cranach the Elder painted a black winged serpent holding a ruby ring in its jaws and wearing a crown. Some tales of historic rings have been filled with magic, celestial origin, and superstition. Like the signet ring worn by King Solomon, with which he could speak to animals and capture evil spirits and demons. By losing his ring that he got as a gift from the angels, he lost his kingdom, and by finding it again, he recovered all that he lost. The signet ring and royal power are intertwined in this myth. (Holcomb et al. 2018)

Magic rings have filled many stories, often dismissed as legends, but still, they have an important role in our belief system.

We manifest who we want to be through jewelry. It is an aspiration to be something more or something different that drives us. The imagined, or what we wish for feels as if it is in our reach, when we adorn ourselves. This is the logic of rings, and also that of jewelry.



20 000 BC - 500 BC



Bone ring from the Paleolithic period
Moravia, Czech Republic
ca 21 000 years old (Zdenka et al. 2019)



Gold ring with steatite scarab bezel and
amuletic signs. Egypt 1500 BC-1400 BC
(Waterton Collection 2023b)



Engraved ring with a sphinx and human
figures, silver, England 600 BC - 500 BC
(Waterton Collection 2023d)

500 BC - 500 AD



Granulated ring, silver, gold
Greece 500 BC - 400 BC
(Waterton Collection 2023g)



Gold ring with an image of Jesus
Port of Caesarea, Israel 323
(Pfeffer 2023)



Gold ring with Latin inscription,
Hampshire, Britain, 350 - 450
(National Trust Collections' 2023)

500 AD - 1100 AD



Gold ring, filigree in the form of dragon
heads, England, 800 - 900
(Waterton Collection 2023f)



"The Chelsea Ring", inlaid gold and
filigree silver, England 775 - 850
(Waterton Collection 2023k)



Gold Viking ring
Scandinavia 900 - 1100
(Waterton Collection 2023l)



1100 AD - 1600 AD



Nielloed gold signet ring with Greek
inscription, Byzantium 1100
(Waterton Collection 2023i)



Ring, gold, cabochon sapphire
Western Europe 1200 - 1400
(Waterton Collection 2023j)



Posy ring, engraved with inscriptions in
black lettering, gold, England 1500 - 1530
(Waterton Collection 2023h)

1600 AD - 1900 AD



Gimmel ring, gold, turquoises, enamel
Holland 1575 - 1650
(Waterton Collection 2023e)



Ring, gold, enamel
England 1792
(Waterton Collection 2023c)



Filigree ring, gold
Malta 1880 - 1910
(Waterton Collection 2023a)

1900 AD - 2023 AD



Gilt ring with bezel in the form of a
composite flower, silver, France 1961
J. C. Champagnat (Champagnat 1961)



Ring "Moonlight Shadow" silver, gold
Germany 2008 Mari Ishikawa
(Ishikawa 2008)



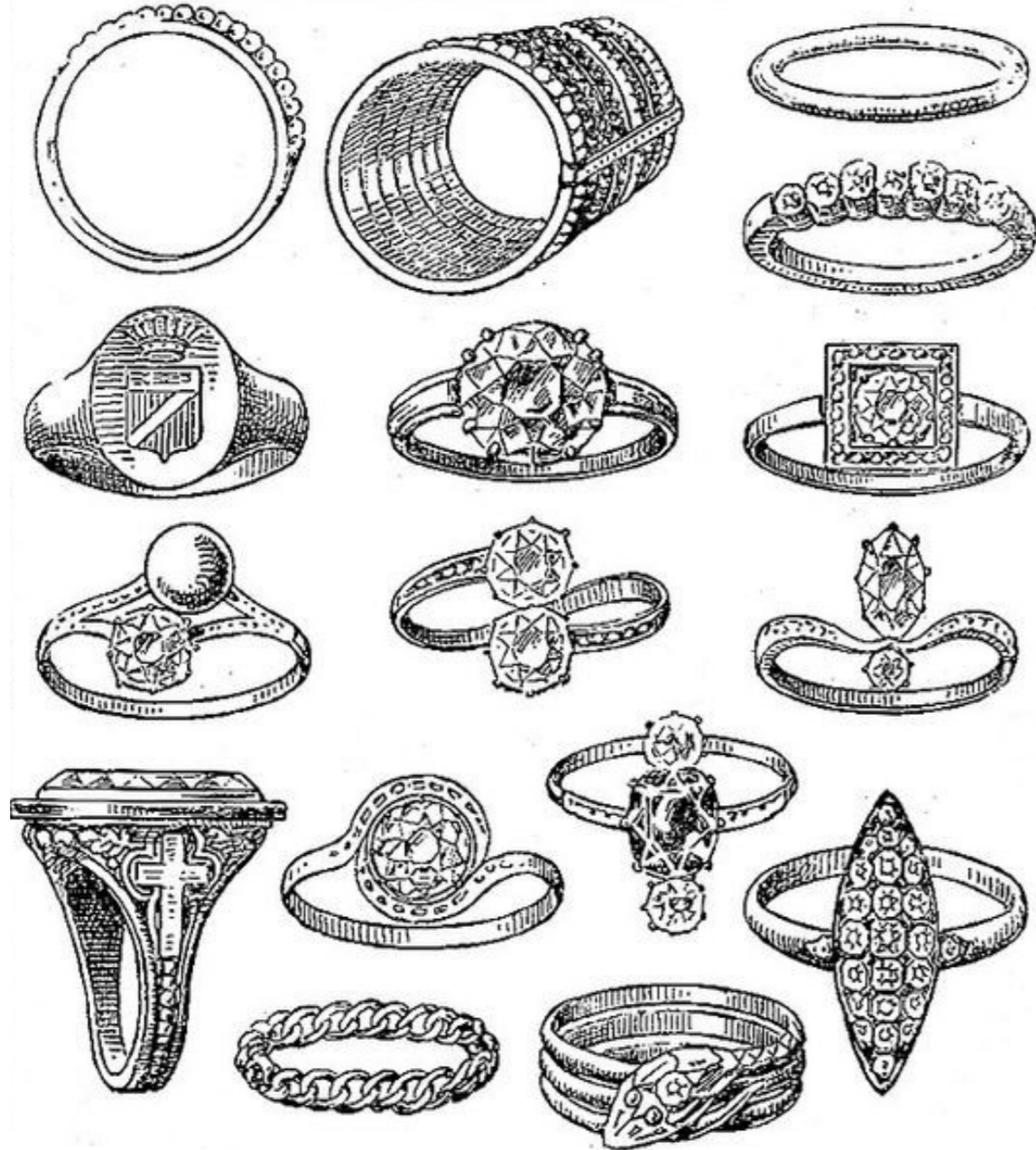
Sculptural Ring, Anodized Aluminum
Austria 2012 Fritz Maierhofer
(Maierhofer 2012)

RINGS

Most rings can be divided into three Elements: The bezel, the hoop and the shoulder. Each of which can become its own decorative treatment. The hoop encircles the finger, the bezel on top is the decorative element, often combined with gemstones or an engraving. And the shoulder binds the two together.

There are many different kind of rings, and mostly historically they served a purpose, like a signet ring stamp could serve as an authentication of documents. Rings were often seen as magical charms, because of the abilities tied to the gemstones used. (Church 2017)

Other kinds of rings are: signet rings, wedding rings, chastity rings, poison rings, memorial rings, club rings or rings commemorating public figures or events. But the most common ring is the plain ring, without decorative elements, without gemstones, without engravings. The plain ring is not only worn on the finger, it can be used for making chains, and the chains can become wearable pieces of clothing (chainmail) or other jewelry and objects.

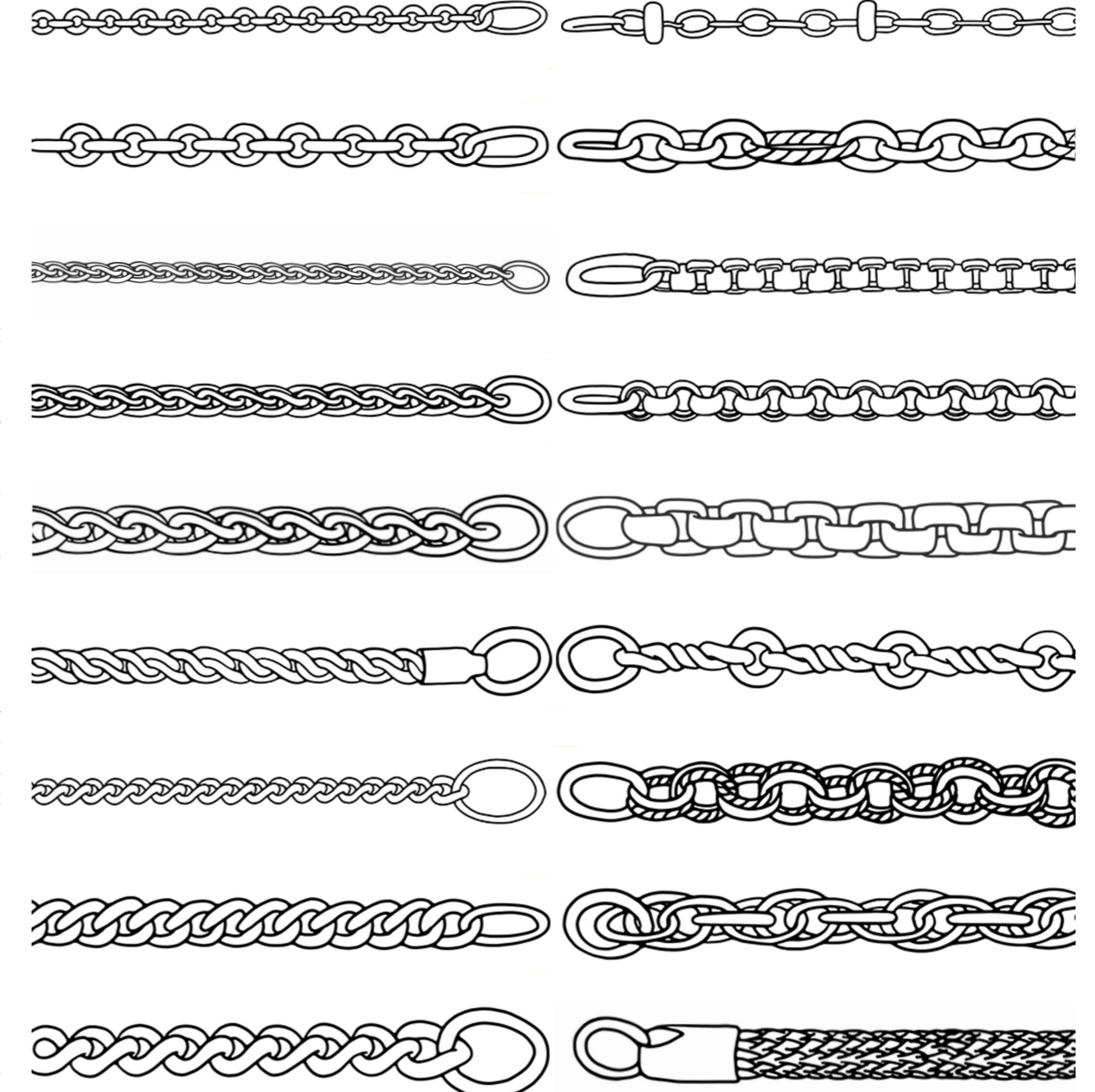


(‘Obsession: Vintage Jewelry Ads’ 2009)

CHAINS

A chain is nothing more than many rings connected. Historically used for everything from anchoring ships and helping with heavy work, like getting water in the well, to later making tires work in the snow. Chains have been used in jewelry for approximately 2500 BC. The Egyptians were the first believed to shape gold and silver into jewelry chains. (Cifarelli 2010) Depending on the ring size, combination of the different rings together and the treatment of the metal, they created jewelry chains with patterns like “figaro”, “rope”, “twisted”, “serpentine”, “fox tail”, “anchor” and “wheat”. (Avery 2022) Also a weave of interlinked rings forming a mesh - chainmail, has been used for protection since the 4th century BC. It was thought to be invented by the Celts. (Murphy 2019) Today chainmail is still used in protective suits against sharks for divers and protective gloves and aprons in the industry. Metal rings, interlinked or not, have multifarious roles in our society.

And they are not just practical, but also very fascinating. The way simple patterns can create very different looks, just by using plain rings.

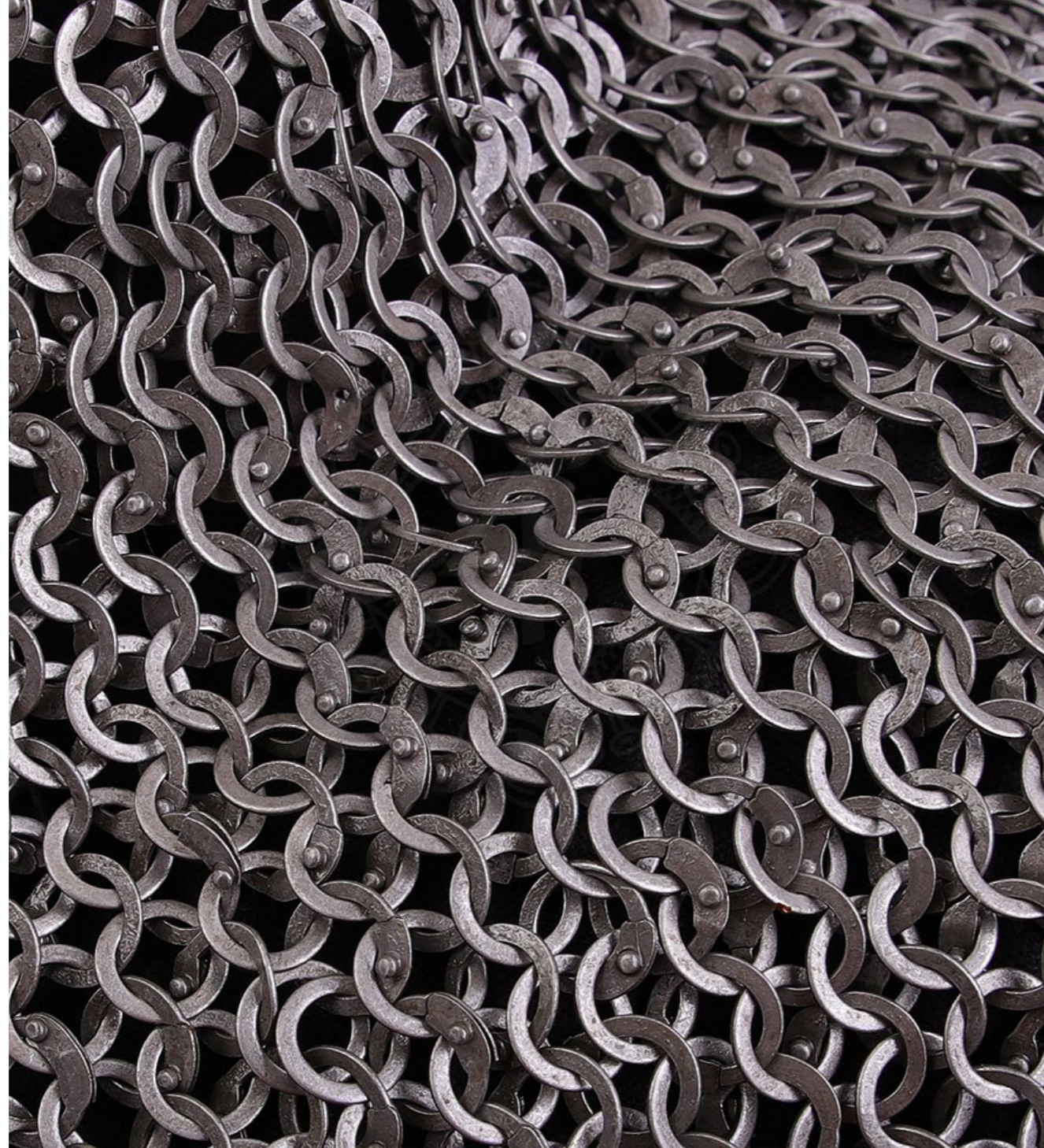


Different chains (Avery 2022)

CHAINMAIL ARMOR

Chainmail is a flexible form of body armour worn to protect the body against bruises and weapon attacks. An early form of chainmail consisted of rings that were sewn onto leather or fabric. This kind of protection probably originated in Asia. This method was later improved on by weaving the rings together. Creating a fabric-like piece of armour, possible to fit perfectly to the wearer. (‘Britannica Dictionary’ 2023)

Often only some parts of the body was covered in chainmail, since the weight of the pieces were quite high. Often the arm wielding the sword had a sleeve of chainmail, or to protect the head and neck, a hood of chainmail was worn. It is unclear where the word “*mail*” originated. It might derive from the Latin word “*macula*” which means “*opacity*”. Referring to the see-through armor. Or it might be a French word “*mailler*” which means to “*hammer*”, “*loop*” or “*stitch*”. Referring to the rings that are open in the pattern, that must be riveted to “*shut*” the rings after weaving them together. (Völk 2018)



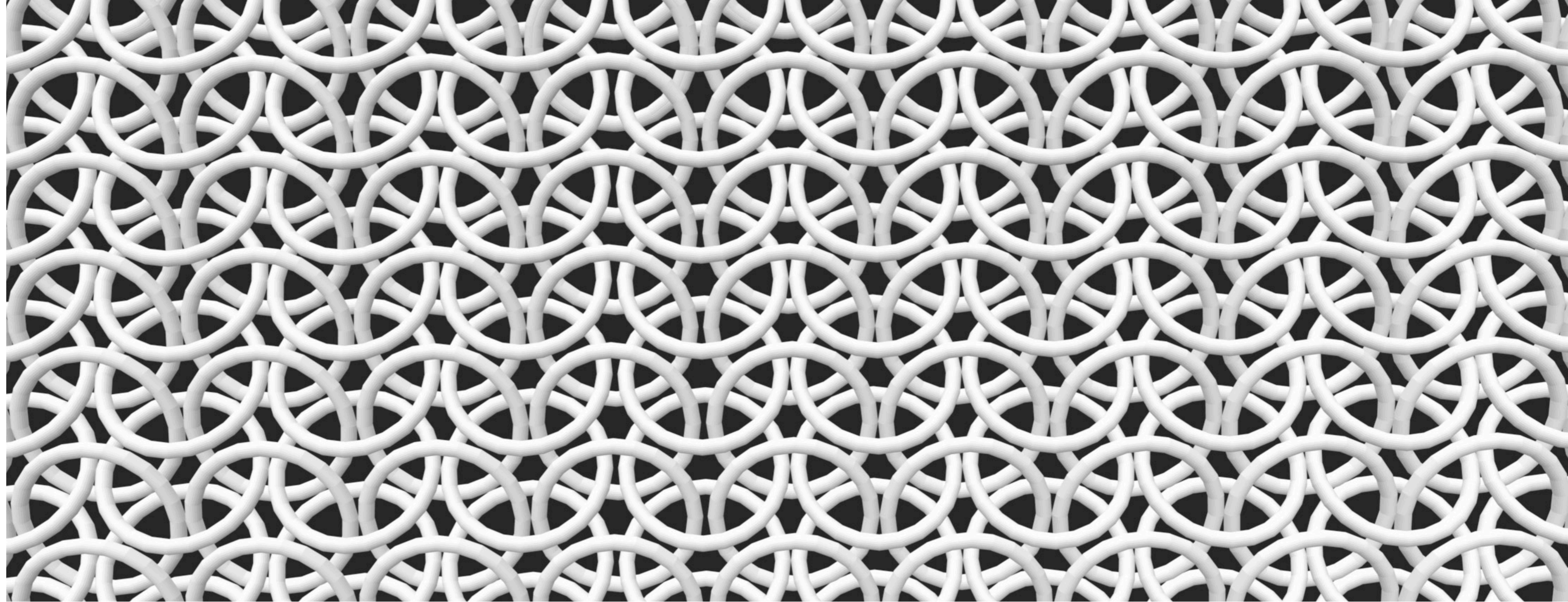
Round riveted chainmail (‘Round Riveted Chainmail’ 2022)



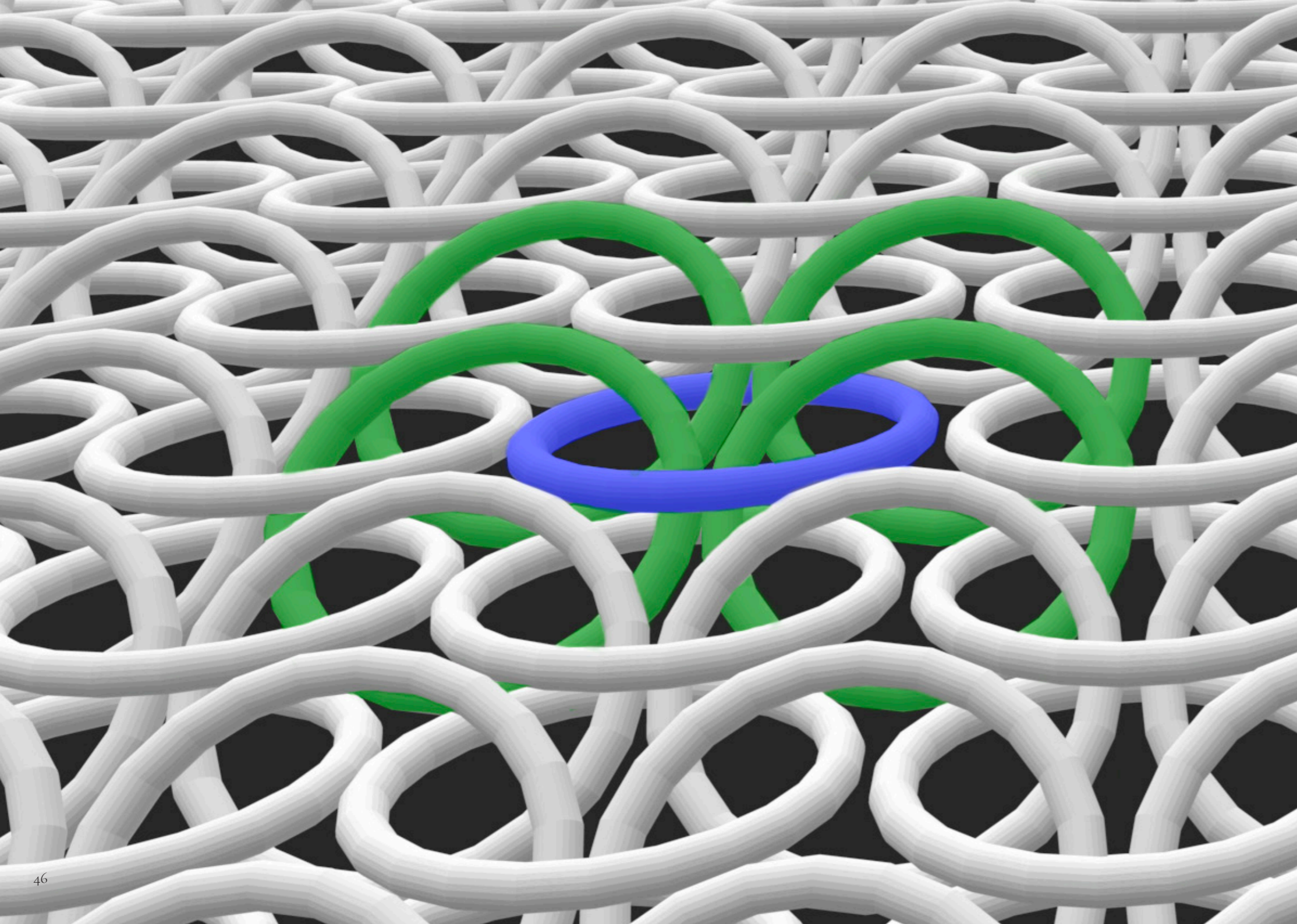
Open ringed chainmail (‘How to Make Chainmail’ 2022)

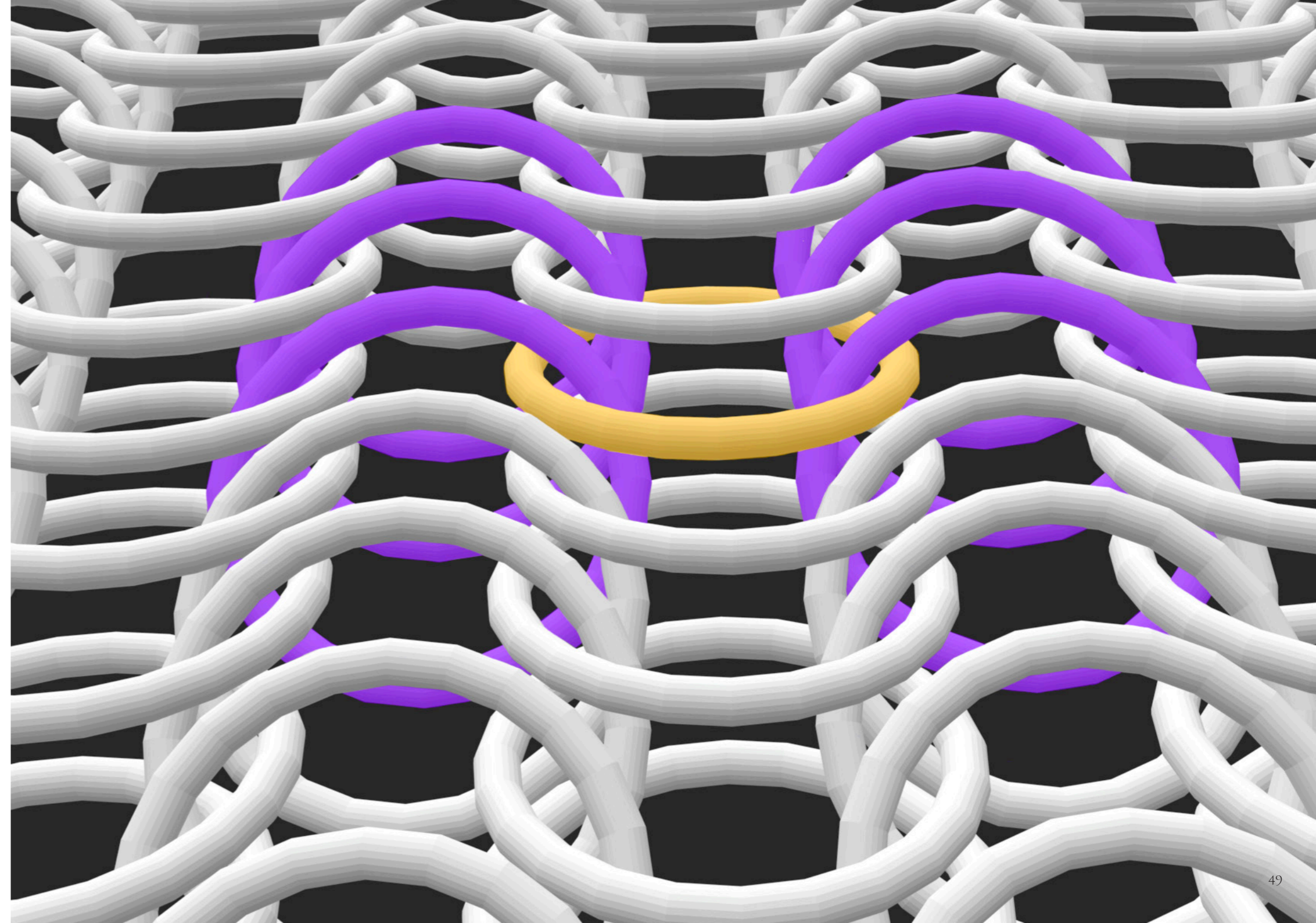
CHAINMAIL PATTERNS

There are three major groups of chainmail: Japanese, European and Persian. Japanese chainmail is thought to be about 3000 years old. The weaving of flat fabric-like structures were known as “kasuri”. Usually the rings were much smaller than and more delicate than European or Persian chainmail. And often the rings were lacquered before being used, to protect against rust. European flat weave was most likely created by the Celts around 400 BC. At the beginning the rings were also sewn edge to edge onto leather to reinforce it. The way of making chainmail changed when the smiths realized that interlinking the rings gave more strength and flexibility in the piece. Persian chainmail is a lot less researched than other kinds of chainmail, but it had very intricate patterns, and is thought to have been used more for decorative purposes. Chains and chainmail is always stronger when more rings are connected to each other. The four in one European weave or the six in one Japanese weave are the original chainmail used in armor. Most newer patterns are derived from the original chainmail.



CAD Rendering of a chainmail pattern - four in one weave



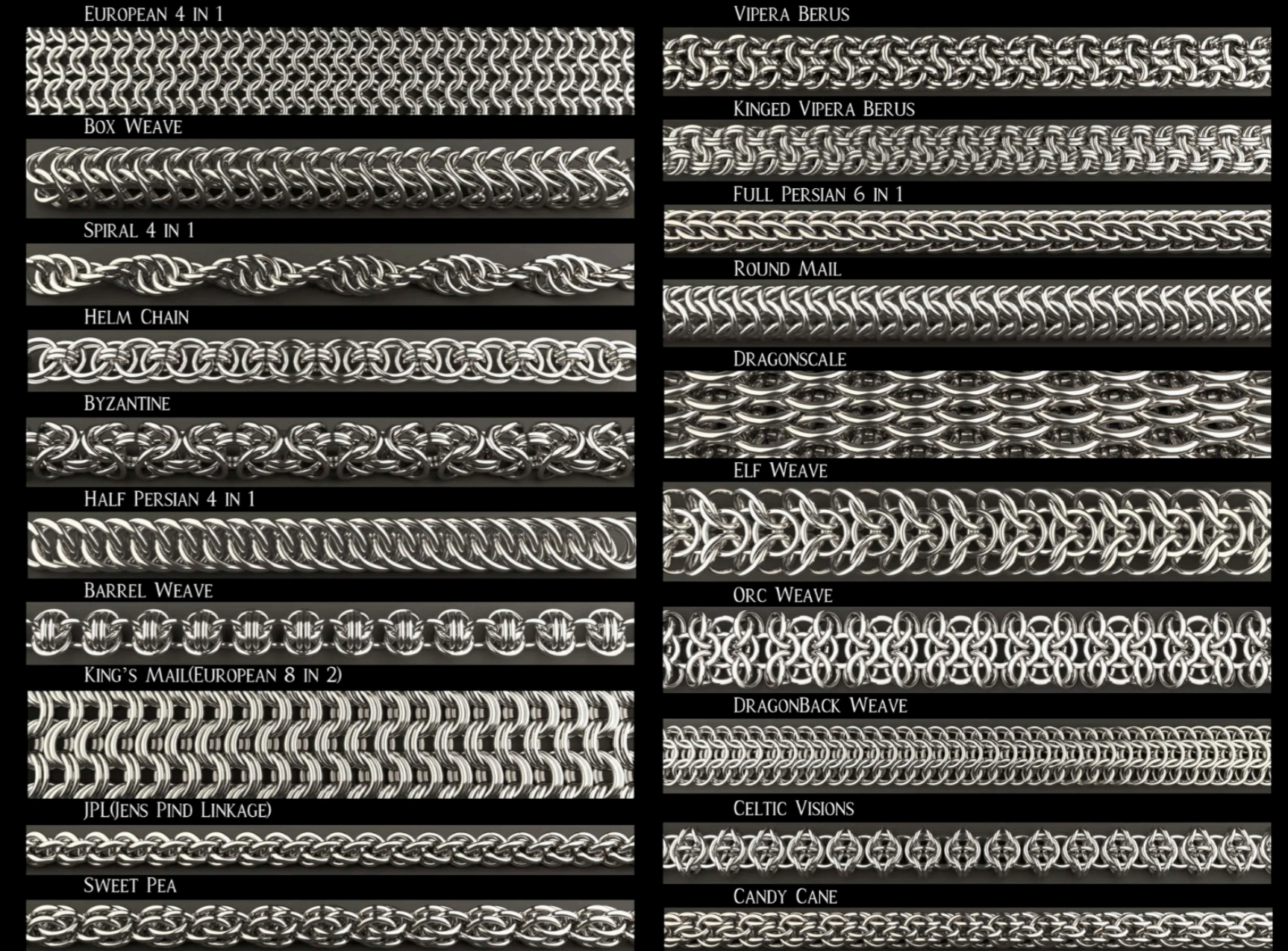


WHERE CHAINMAIL IS FOUND

Chainmail has not only historically been used as protection, but also in decorative elements like wall hangings, fashion, accessories, jewelry, art and ornaments. Chain-mesh-bags, for instance were in style in the 1870s. ('Whiting and Davis Collection' 2023) Chainmail itself, has not changed much, many of the original patterns are still used today. Often by jewelry- or fashion designers. Historical jewelry patterns have often been found in Scandinavian Viking burial sites. In Scandinavia there were no known occurrences of fine metal like silver and gold at the time. (Silver found in Norway in 1623, Gold found in 1758 (Ihlen 2020; Brüggge 1932)) So the Vikings must have traded it on their journeys. They often melted coins and made wearable jewelry of the metal, to show off their prosperity. Some found items from the Viking Era even show jewelry where parts have been

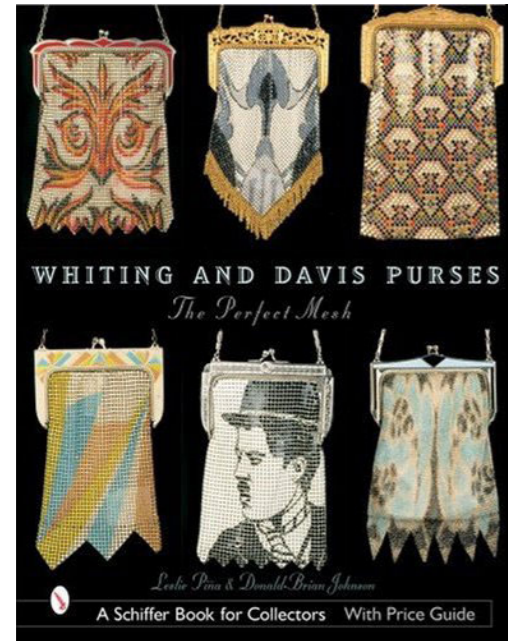
cut off, probably used as means of payment elsewhere. (Graham-Campbell 1980) Jewelry often had a second practical function as a belt buckle, brooch, or needle. In addition, however, it also shows a person's social rank or their membership in a certain group. The Vikings often wore amulets that were associated with animal- or divine powers. Jewelry was worn equally by men and women. Woven chains were initially used between pairs of brooches, and later on they became necklaces and bracelets, worn on their own. (Elsner 1980) Chainmail and chain mesh was mostly a completely hand-made operation. In the middle of the 17th century the first mesh-machine was invented by Jaques de Vaucanson in France. Other machines started to appear in England around the 1800s, mostly making durable chains for use in the industry.

In America they focused on making high-speed mesh-machines, and a German by the name of Kollmar took this technology to Pforzheim, improved it, and by that making Pforzheim the center of jewelry chain making in the world. ('Emoche - Gemstones and Jewelry' 2020) Many traditional jewelry designers and goldsmiths, but also contemporary jewelry designers have used classic chainmail patterns in their work, some have also developed their own new patterns. Chainmail patterns are quite easy to use and adapt or customize, since they are made of single rings that can be adjusted as needed. Often jewelry contains chainmail-inspired components in different sizes, often linking pieces together. Chains and chainmail is often used in bigger pieces, as a connection between other materials, or under other materials, to keep the piece flexible.



Above: Different chainmail jewelry weave patterns ('Complete Chainmail Kit - Weave Tutorial Book' 2022)
Left: Six in one Japanese chainmail flat weave (Diliberto 2020)

DECORATIVE CHAINMAIL



Decorative Purses 19th century
(‘Whiting and Davis Collection’ 2023)



Plain Purse 19th century
(‘Wheeler Antiques’ 2023)



Chainmail Purse 2012
(Arnold 2012)

CHAINMAIL INSPIRED CONTEMPORARY JEWELRY



It is Known jewelry “Fashion Armour”
(‘It is Known Jewelry’ 2023)



Jolynn Santiago “Accumulation” 2013
(Santiago 2013)



Yokoo “Hyperion” 2012
(Yokoo 2012)

Definition: Flexible armor of interlinked metal rings. Chain mail is a flexible mesh material, basically a metal fabric. It's effective at protecting fighters from cutting and slashing weapons. Chainmail provided a relatively lightweight alternative to hard, heavy plate armor. Sometimes chain mail is just called mail, from the Old French maille, "mesh." It is unclear where the word "*mail*" originated.

It might derive from the Latin word "*macula*" which means "*opacity*". Referring to the see through the armor. Or it might be a French word "*mailler*" which means to "*hammer*", "*loop*" or "*stitch*". (Völk 2018)

CHAINMAIL
[tjein-meil]



DESIGN

While researching and writing about this theme, I found a correlation between contemporary jewelry and art.

Contemporary jewelry pieces mostly highlight the body, but are often challenging widely shared notions about form and function. The pieces alter, compliment or draws attention to the body, and with that, change the way we interpret jewelry. Many contemporary jewelry designers today refer to their work as “*contemporary jewelry art*”. Placing themselves in between the genre “*art*” and the genre “*contemporary jewelry*”. But when does something become art? Are large contemporary jewelry pieces wearable sculptures? Or do they become an object, not possible to compare with other art? Or is jewelry in itself art?

Trying to answer these questions I came up with my designs. They balance somewhere between contemporary jewelry and art. They change and morph in shape and size, with intricate patterns that seem sim-

ple and plain when repeated over and over again, but are still highly complex.

Choosing circles, as they are seen as wholesome and perfect. And by using only this one shape, the ring, I want to see where the border between sculpture and jewelry is blurred. Using something so simple and plain, in larger quantities, but changing and transforming the size, I want to create the in-between. Making objects that can be seen as traditional jewelry, as contemporary jewelry **and** as art.

Through using old chainmail patterns, and the diversity and variety in different sized rings. I will create wearable jewelry and then create objects that look like jewelry, but are no longer wearable, pushing them to become so large, that they loose the connection to the body. And then seeing what is perceived as jewelry, and what is not. And try to challenge the viewer into seeing jewelry design in a new manner. Starting a new conversation about contemporary jewelry, art and sculptures.

The design of the pieces follow certain parameters to narrow the possibilities of different design options. I will only use round rings. They are made of metal. One piece will consist of only one size of wire, with one diameter, but the rings created from this wire, can have different sizes within the work. So the rings are either all the same size, with the same diameter wire, or the rings change size within the work, while the wire stays the same, and thereby creating a change or transformation within the piece.

I want to look at the proportion with the human body, seeing if the size of the piece change this relationship. Seeing what happens when more rings are added or taken away. Since jewelry, especially chains, are mostly mobile and agile, I want to make objects that are agile too. By hanging the pieces, I can show the relationship with the body, and also have a lot of mobility.

I want to make jewelry pieces that are wearable with the patterns I develop, then

I will scale some pieces up in size. Since the time is a factor I will not be able to make all models big and small, but I believe if I show some pieces in large sizes, the viewer can imagine the other pieces transforming too.

The materials chosen, are silver for the smaller jewelry, since the material is quite soft and easy to shape into rings, but still hard enough to be worn and used. Also being one of the traditionally used materials in jewelry, it fits my vision. The bigger jewelry pieces I will create using steel jump rings produced by the company Wafios in Reutlingen, that are specialized at making machines bending metal. The contact to the company was made through colleagues at Innoport, where I went to see how I could implement my ideas for this thesis. (‘Innoport Reutlingen’ 2023; ‘Wafios - Maschinen Für Federn, Drahtbiegen und Rohrbiegen’ 2023)

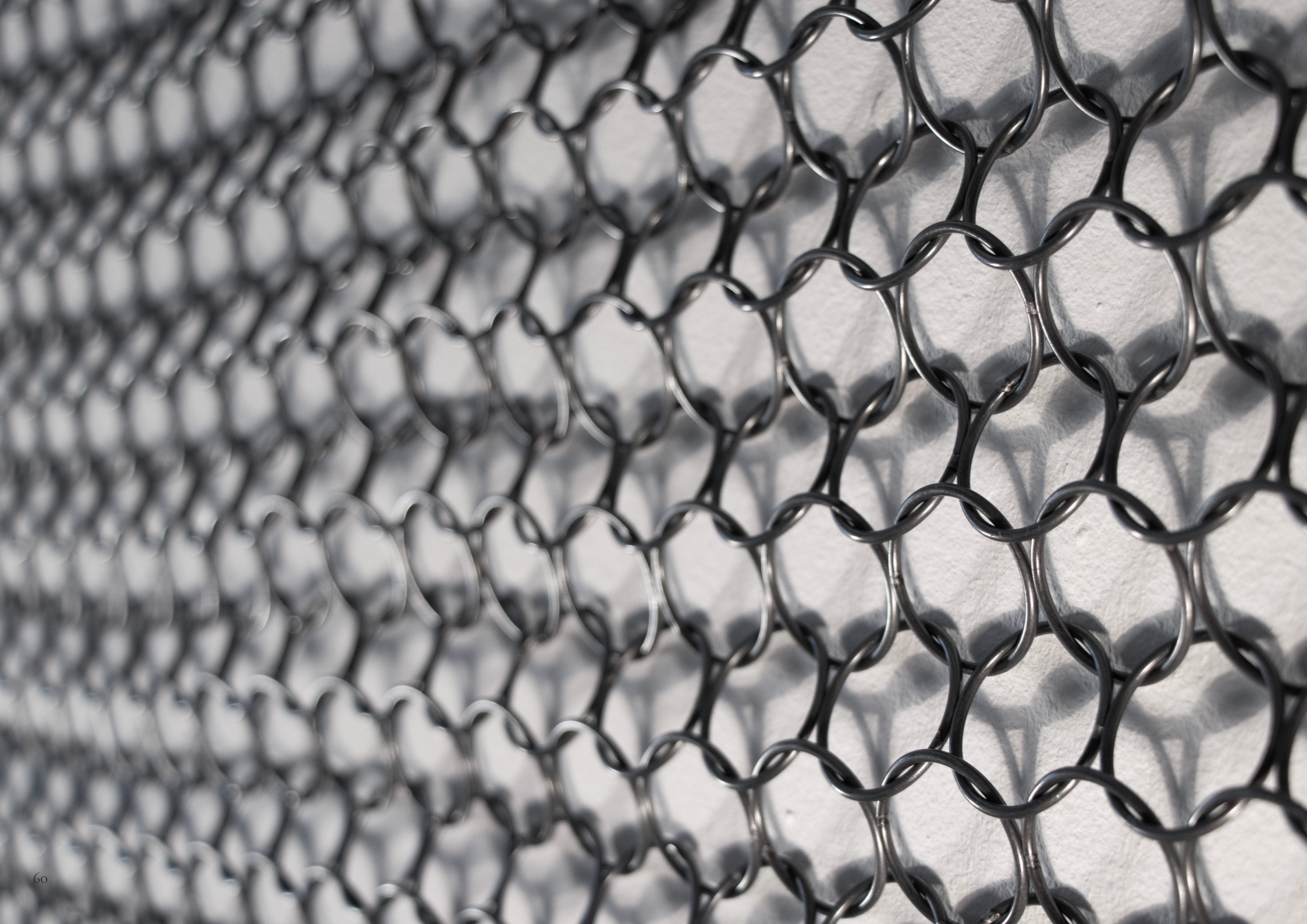
I will also use larger laquered metal hoops used for other crafts, that I often use in

conceptualizing and building models in my workshop. These rings are usually not used in my finished projects, but here I find they fit perfectly. Creating airy and light designs, that are possible to vary in size, through the different sized rings.

The designs are based on the four in one european weave chainmail, and use this pattern as a starting point, to create new patterns, or morph the old patterns into something contemporary. The designs show an experimental approach to historic patterns. Threedimensionality plays a big role in the designs, transferring a flat pattern to pieces that are round.

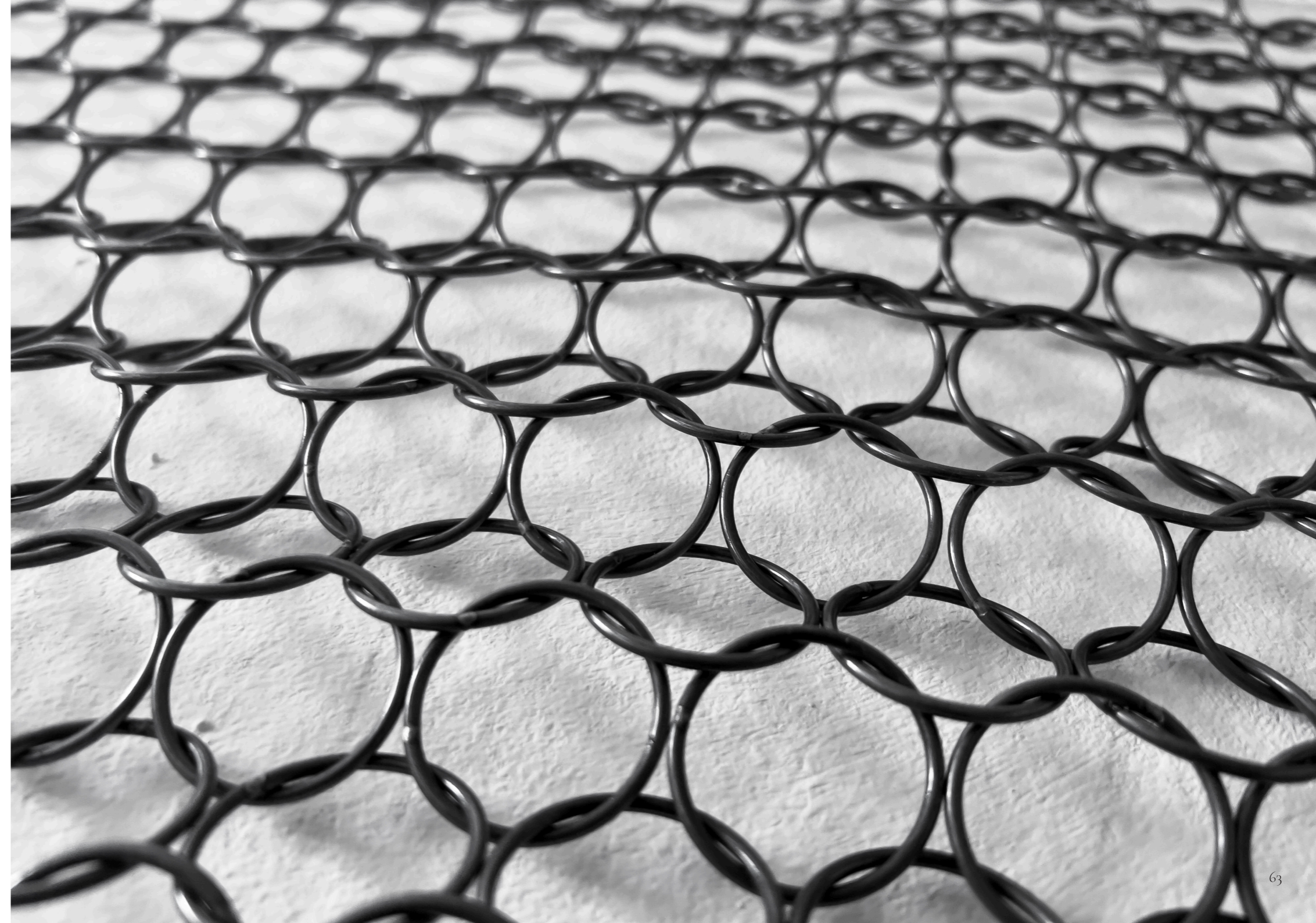
The pieces will be photographed using a model, to show the dimensions and sizes of the designs.

I will organize an exhibition showing all the pieces together, letting people stand next to, wear and touch the pieces, seeing how the pieces are perceived by an audience, and creating a discussion around the pieces.



Model of the Chainmail Pattern Four in One European Weave in the size 500 mm x 800 mm with 30 mm rings and wire thickness 2 mm. The piece consists of approximately 662 rings. All the following pieces are based on analyzing this pattern.

Every single ring in the 4 in 1 pattern is connected to four other rings. By turning each row of rings either to the outside or the inside, alternating every row, the pattern becomes a three dimensionality even when the pattern itself is flat. In armor, the rings were always kept small, to keep mobility and avert weapons piercing the chain-mail. Using bigger rings creates more depth. And when you scale the pattern up, you can play with the various sizes of rings to create different effects.





DESIGN ONE - MOVEMENT

The first draft was inspired by the movement, lightness and the sound of different chain patterns. When wearing chains they move almost snakelike on the skin, and whilst hanging chains are very dynamic, and often they have a very special sound to them.

I wanted to create something that was light and movable, but still quite large and made of metal. The pair of earrings created are approximately 10 cm long, and the larger rings used have a diameter of 4,5 cm. So quite a large sized piece of jewelry. Almost out of proportion, especially for the ear. Connecting to the contemporary thought of jewelry, being oversized, but still having a connection to the body, being somewhat wearable.

They are made of Titanium, so the large size weighs almost nothing, and therefore they are still comfortable and not painful to wear. When hanging they turn around in circles and tinkle quietly, the sound is very pleasant.

Using gravity as an inspiration, letting the rings move wherever they want, not being controlled by anything but free movement. If you turn all the rings to one side, you see the underlying repeating pattern, that is exactly the same in both earrings, making them move in the same way when worn.

The earrings are very aesthetically pleasing to look at, through the round shapes, the movement, and also since they mirror each other.

Also important for me in the design process, was to show where the rings have been welded or fused together.

This is something often hidden in traditional jewelry. And I wanted to accentuate exactly that, where the points of the metal is fused together. To create a tension and show the process of this piece being put together.

This is also used in some of the other designs, because a ring pattern for a chain, always has rings that are "open" to weave the patterns. In many chains they are not

soldered or riveted shut, since the weave of rings creates a very strong chain by itself. Often the chains are also so small, that soldering is not an option, if the chain is to stay flexible.

And by showing this, it is possible to see how the pieces were put together. Using opened and closed rings in different ways to create the different patterns.

This design, I chose to transform in size, and see what happens, when having multiple repetitions of elements together in one piece.

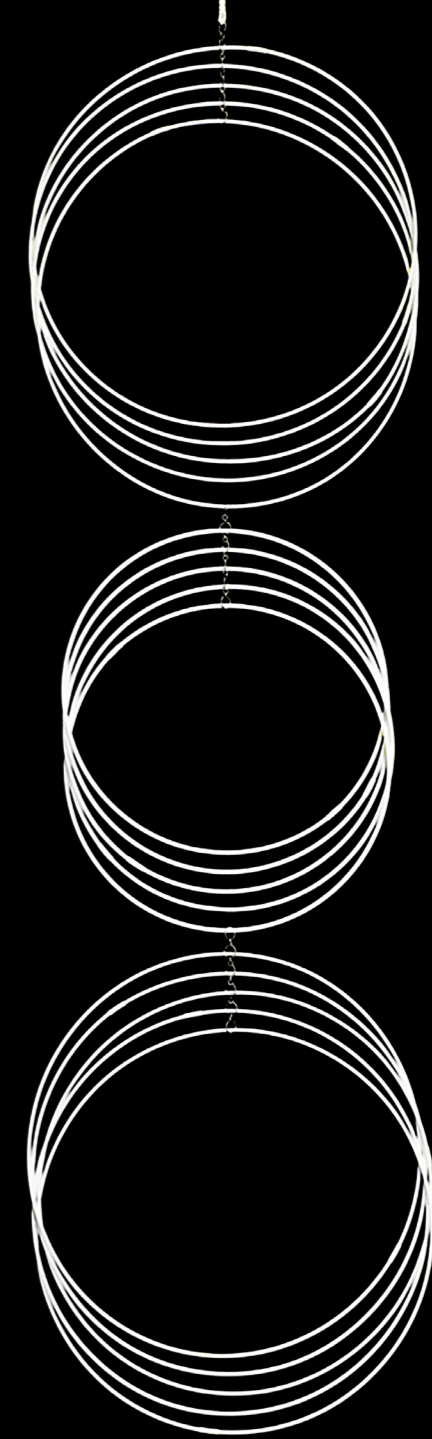
Developed was a hanging sculpture based on the pattern of the earrings, in white lacquered steel. As flexible and agile as the earrings, but in a size that loses the connection to the body, not being wearable as contemporary jewelry anymore.

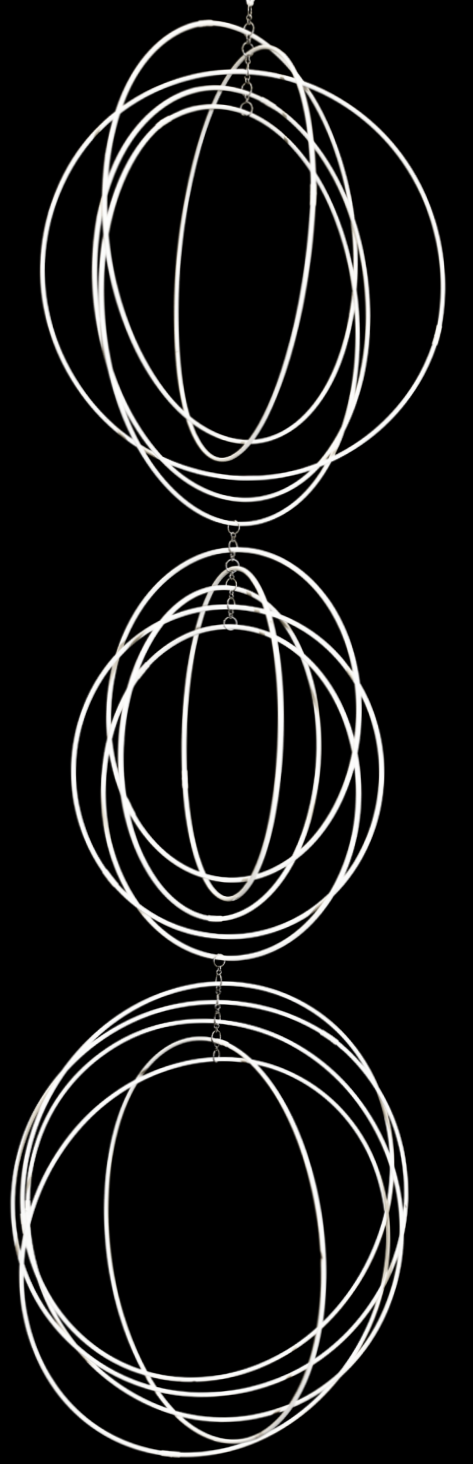
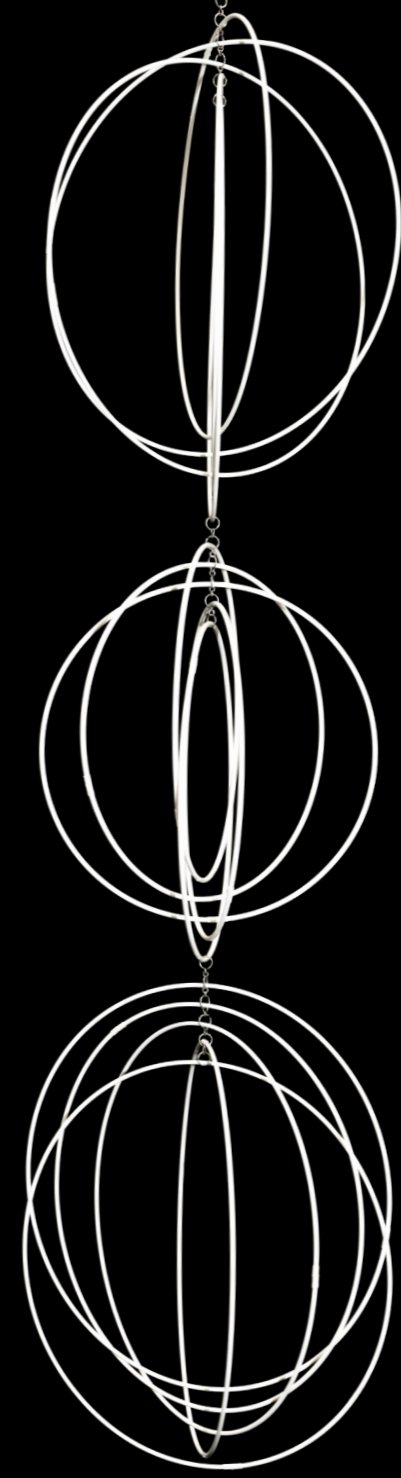
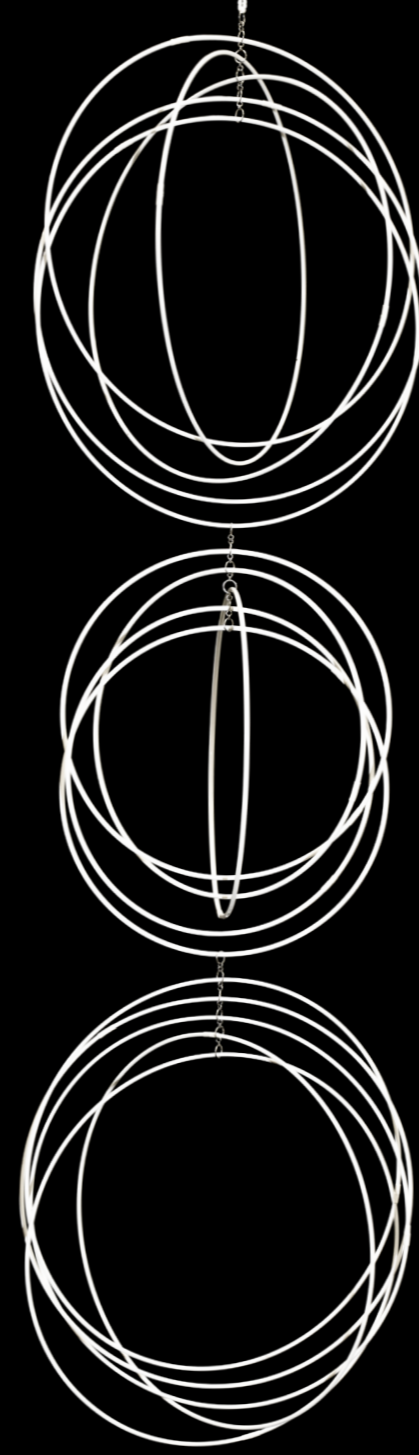
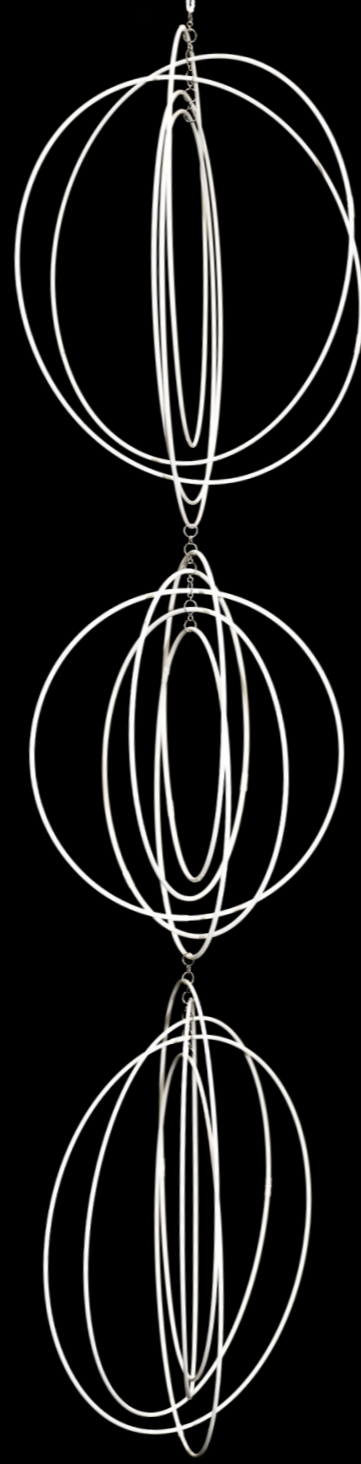
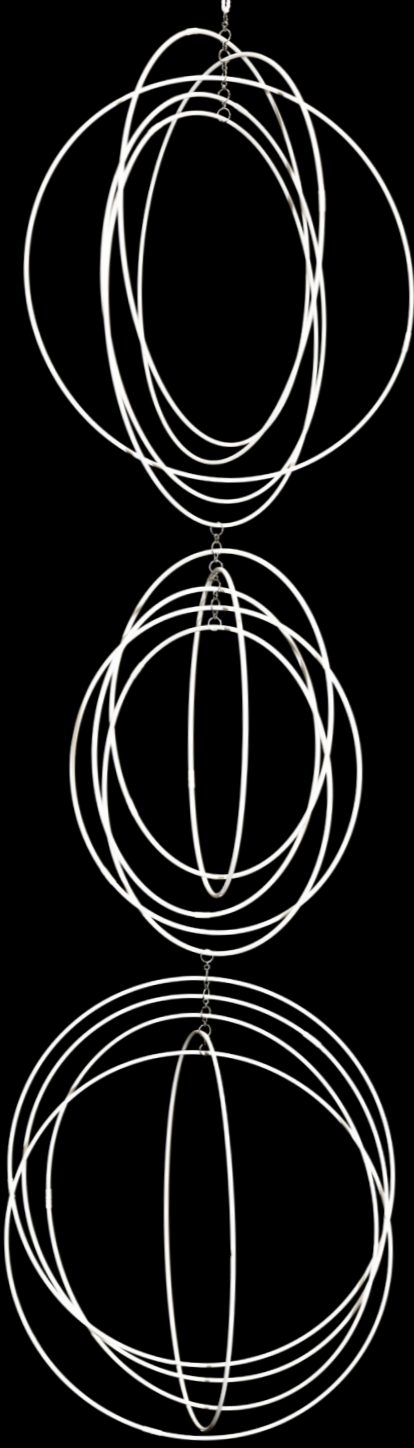
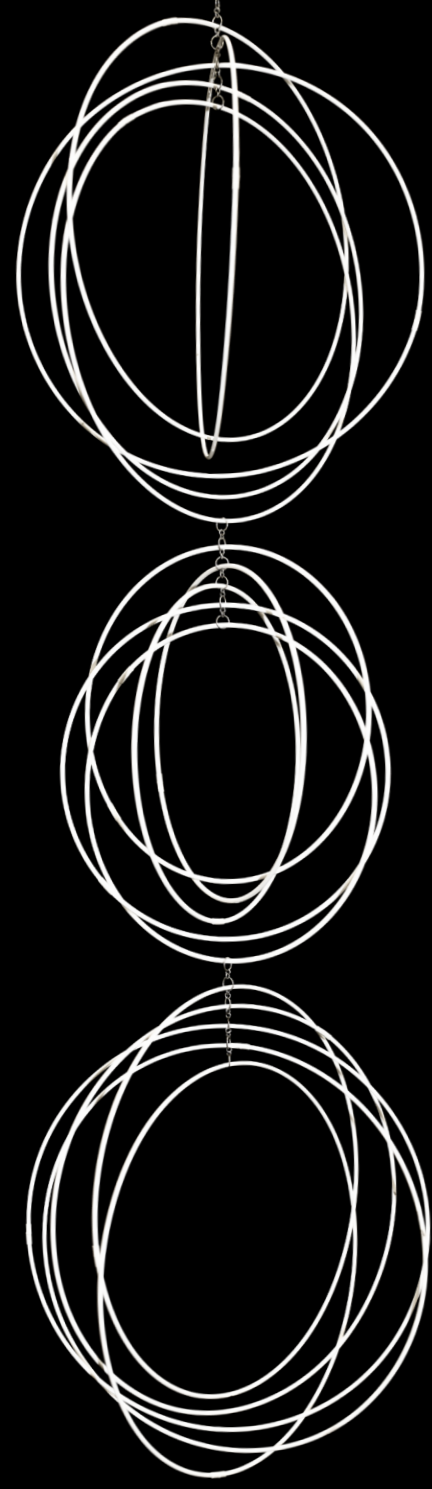




The second part of the first design is a larger, hanging piece. That consists of the exact same pattern as the earrings, scaled up and repeated three times. Not possible to wear, becoming a sculpture, loosing the connection to the body. We can stand next to it, and make it move by touching it, but it is no longer a piece of jewelry.

The length of the piece is approximately 1 Meter in length and the rings have a diameter of 30 cm. Every set consists of 5 rings. Moving freely the rings turn outwards, creating different patterns when the rings overlap each other. On the next page you see a sequence of the piece moving and twisting. A quite playful piece.





DESIGN TWO - THREE DIMENSIONAL CHAINMAIL FOUR IN ONE WEAVE WITH THREE RINGS

The second draft was inspired by the classic four in one European chainmail weave, mostly used in armor. The intention was to create something three dimensional from something flat. Creating a new pattern by using the historic pattern.

Working with three rings in every horizontal round, the resulting pattern is quite dense, but still it creates a very harmonious impression. This pattern works very well in the jewelry size, looking like a quite simple chain when the rings are kept all the same size. But also very complex when viewing longer, since every ring is connected with four other rings, in a three dimensional plane, making it somewhat difficult to understand the pattern. When the pattern is used with larger sized rings, it becomes easier to understand how the rings are linked. The design changes when it grows, becoming more airy and see-through. And by scaling it up, it also adds a new level in the middle of the chain, where empty space is created.

This space could be filled with something, by a rope for instance, showing the round three dimensionality, but it also looks very good when left open.

Through the complexity of the design, the choice was made to keep all the rings the same size throughout the chain. Making it a more plain overall look. But also keeping the connection to the jewelry chain, that looks very harmonious when it is kept simple. The metamorphosis of this patterns is shown by scaling up the chain itself as it is, keeping the jewelry character of the design, in three different sizes.

The first piece is made of silver, with rings that have a diameter of 4 mm, and the wire thickness is 0,6 mm. It consists of 999 rings woven together.

The second piece is made of steel, with rings that have a diameter of 20 mm, and the wire thickness is 2 mm. It consists of 510 rings woven together.

The third piece is made of white laquered steel, with rings that have a diameter of

100 mm, and a wire thickness of 3 mm. It consists of 150 rings woven together. The patterns always need an uneven number of rings that is divisible by three.

The three pieces have a totally different effect on the wearer and the viewer. They all connect with the body, and are possible to wear as contemporary jewelry, but they also all make a different impression. The silver necklace is delicate and light, the steel necklace becomes heavier and more imposing, and the white steel necklace becomes airy and light, even though it is quite big and heavy.

The color of the pieces play a role here, white as opposed to black or gray create a lightness. But also the size in contrast to the body. The steel necklace seems heavy and big when worn, whilst the white steel necklace almost soars on top of the wearer. Silver always creates a feeling of preciousness, and is also mostly seen as light in weight through the mirroring surface and the smaller rings.



The silver necklace is very agile through the six rings in every chain link that are either angled outwards or inwards. It creates a smaller surface where the rings connect, and with that, it gets more mobility.





The many chain links manage to stay in their round shape when hanging. When putting the necklace down, the pattern falls in on itself.

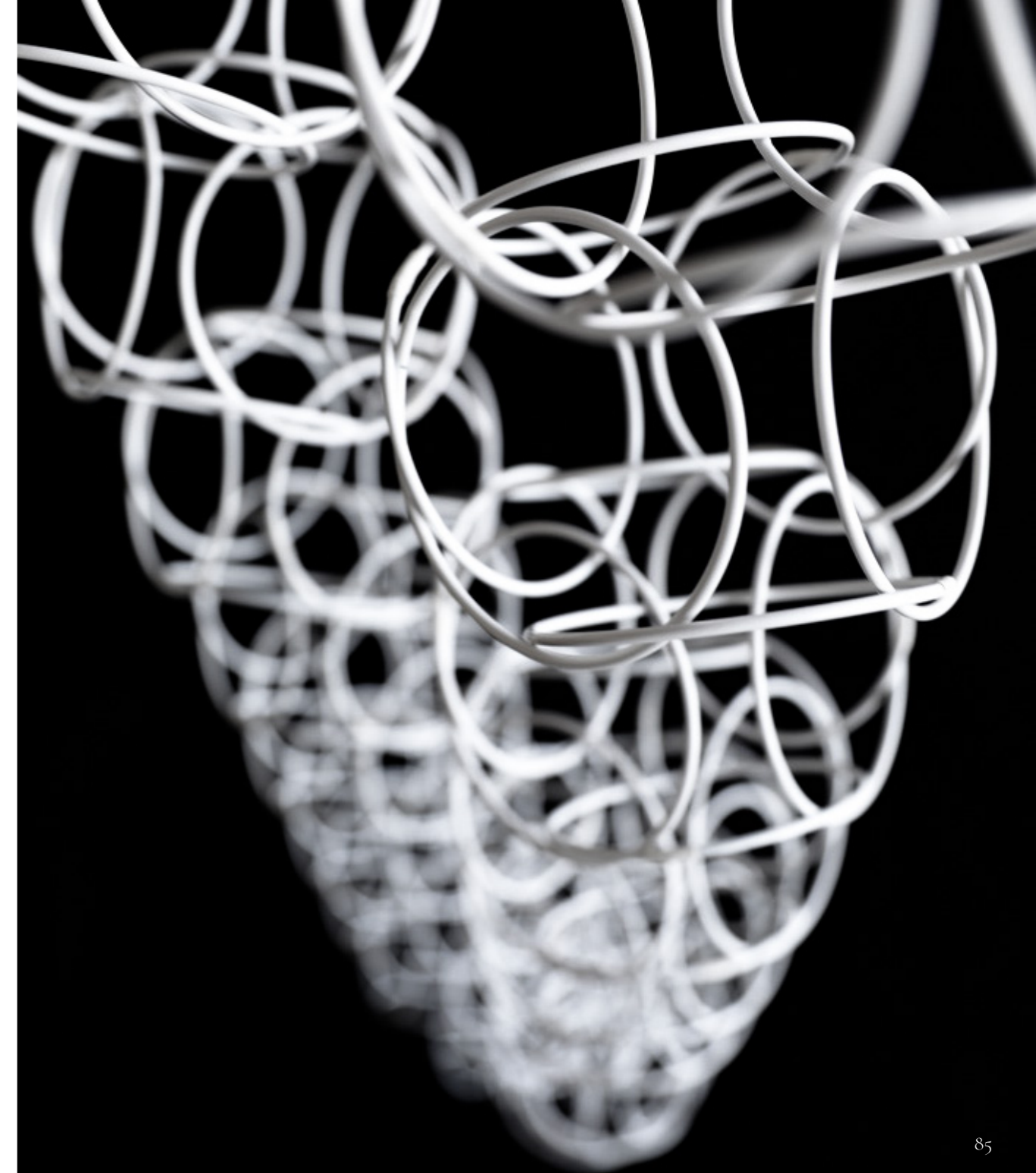
The steel necklace flows nicely when worn, and it is tempting to play with the movability and agility of the necklace whilst wearing it.





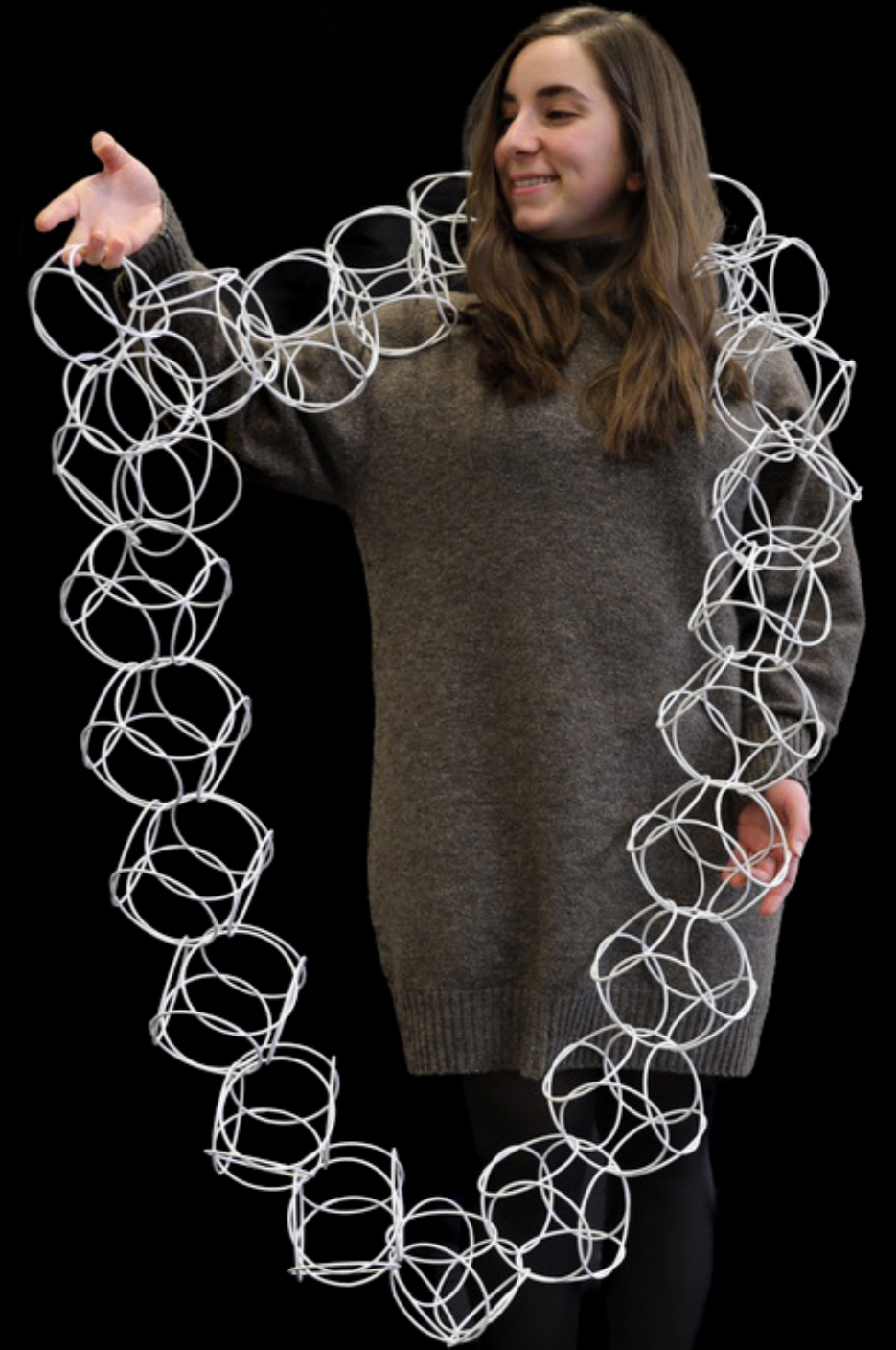
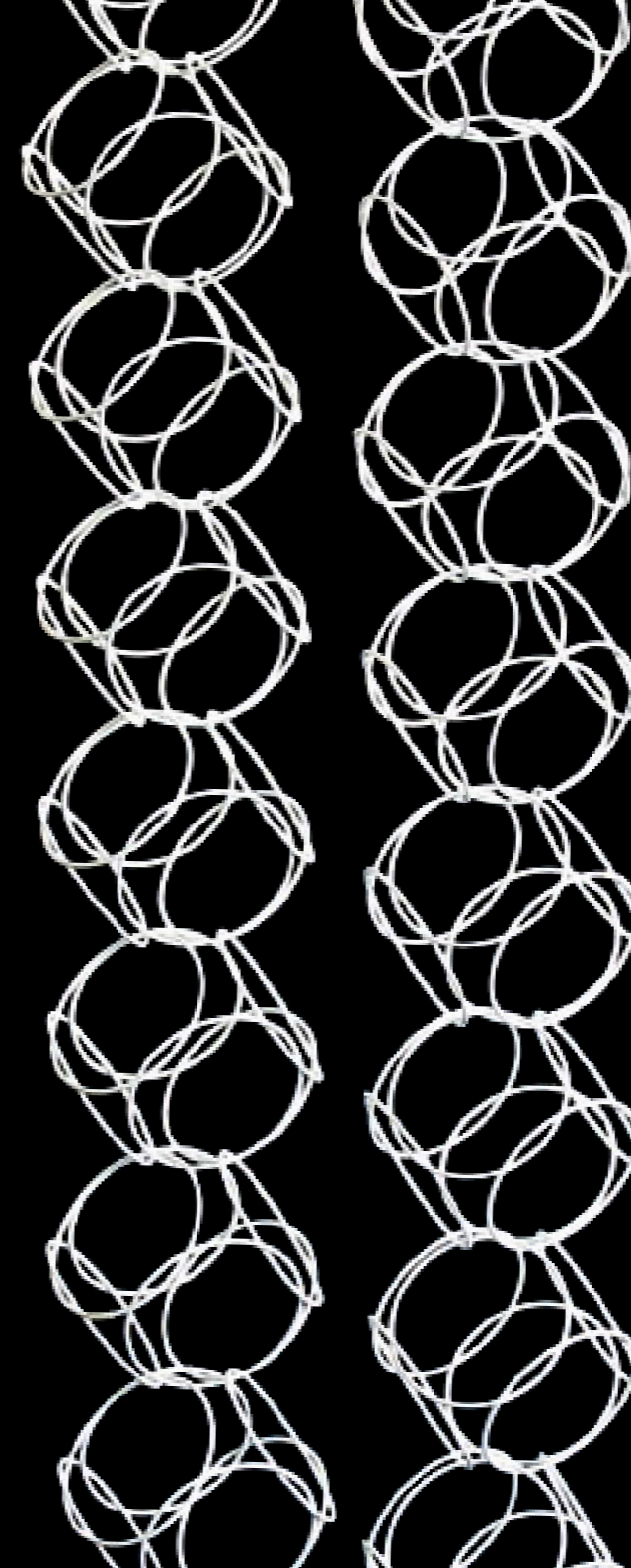


The oversized necklace seems to almost soar around the neck of the wearer.



The chain has an empty space in the middle of the chain as well as space in between the rings, that gives the piece its airiness.

The piece, when hanging, becomes a repetitive pattern, calming the design. And when it is moved, it seems more playful and fun, not necessarily more complex or complicated as one would think. When the piece lies on the ground the pattern falls in on itself, it needs the hanging tension to stay upright.



DESIGN THREE - THREE DIMENSIONAL CHAINMAIL FOUR IN ONE WEAVE WITH FIVE RINGS

The third draft was also inspired by the classic four in one European chainmail weave. Making the pattern more complex by using five rings in every horizontal round. Becoming even more three dimensional than the first design. This innovation, I have not seen anywhere else as a pattern, and it is very exciting to work with it, and develop it further.

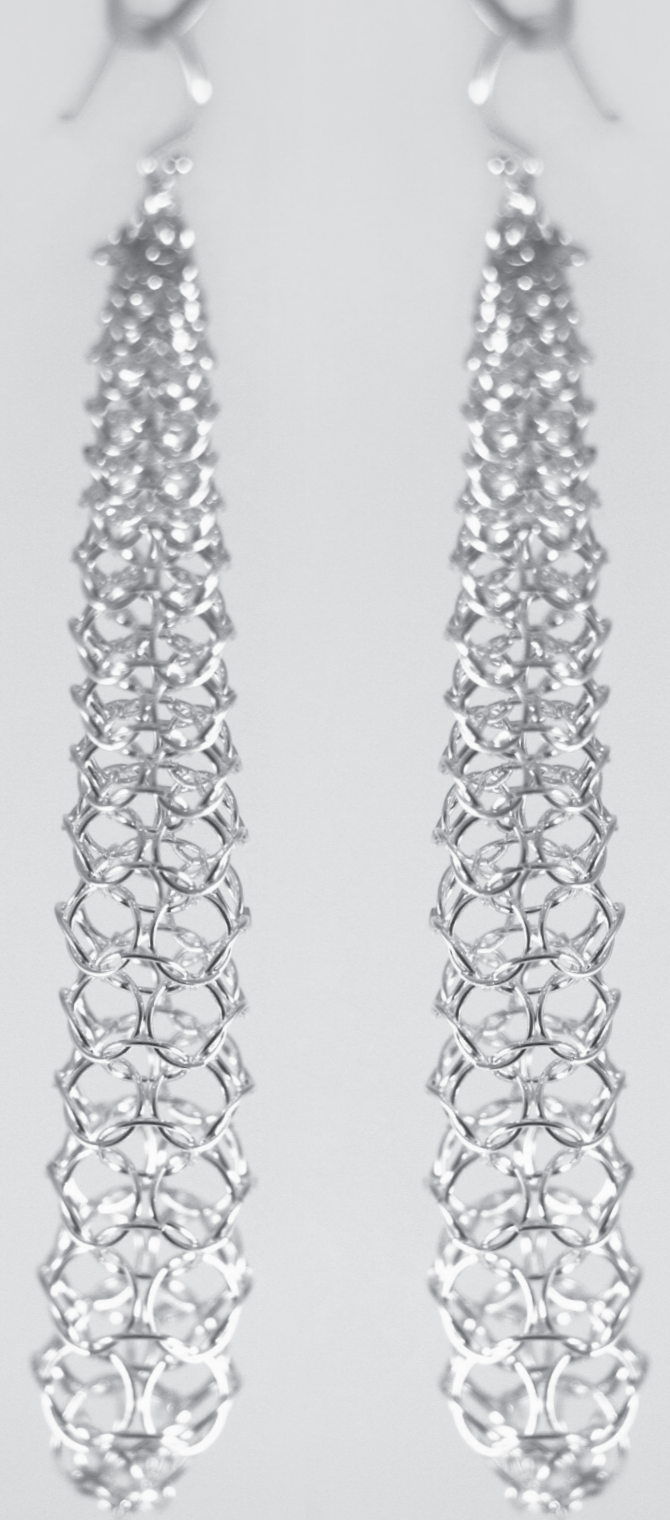
The decision to use more rings in the circumference changes the ways the pattern is seen and how it can be used. This pattern is difficult to use in smaller sized jewelry designs, because the diameter of every round chain link of consisting of 10 rings, is wider than the design with six rings in every chain link, and therefore it often falls into itself unless the design is hanging vertically. It needs gravity to keep the pattern upright. Jewelry chains used as necklaces or bracelets lies on the body or around the neck or arm, and will almost always unfortunately become flat with this pattern. What did work very well, was

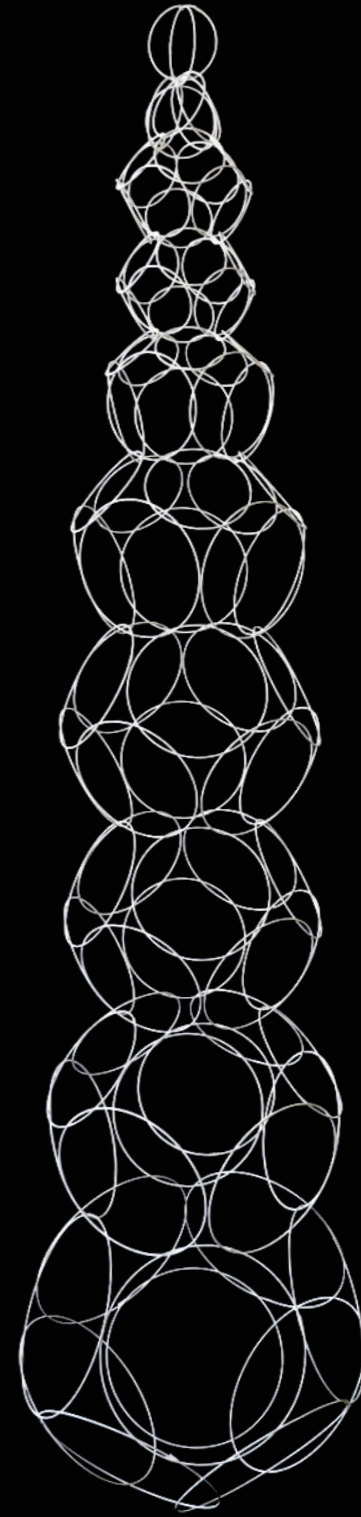
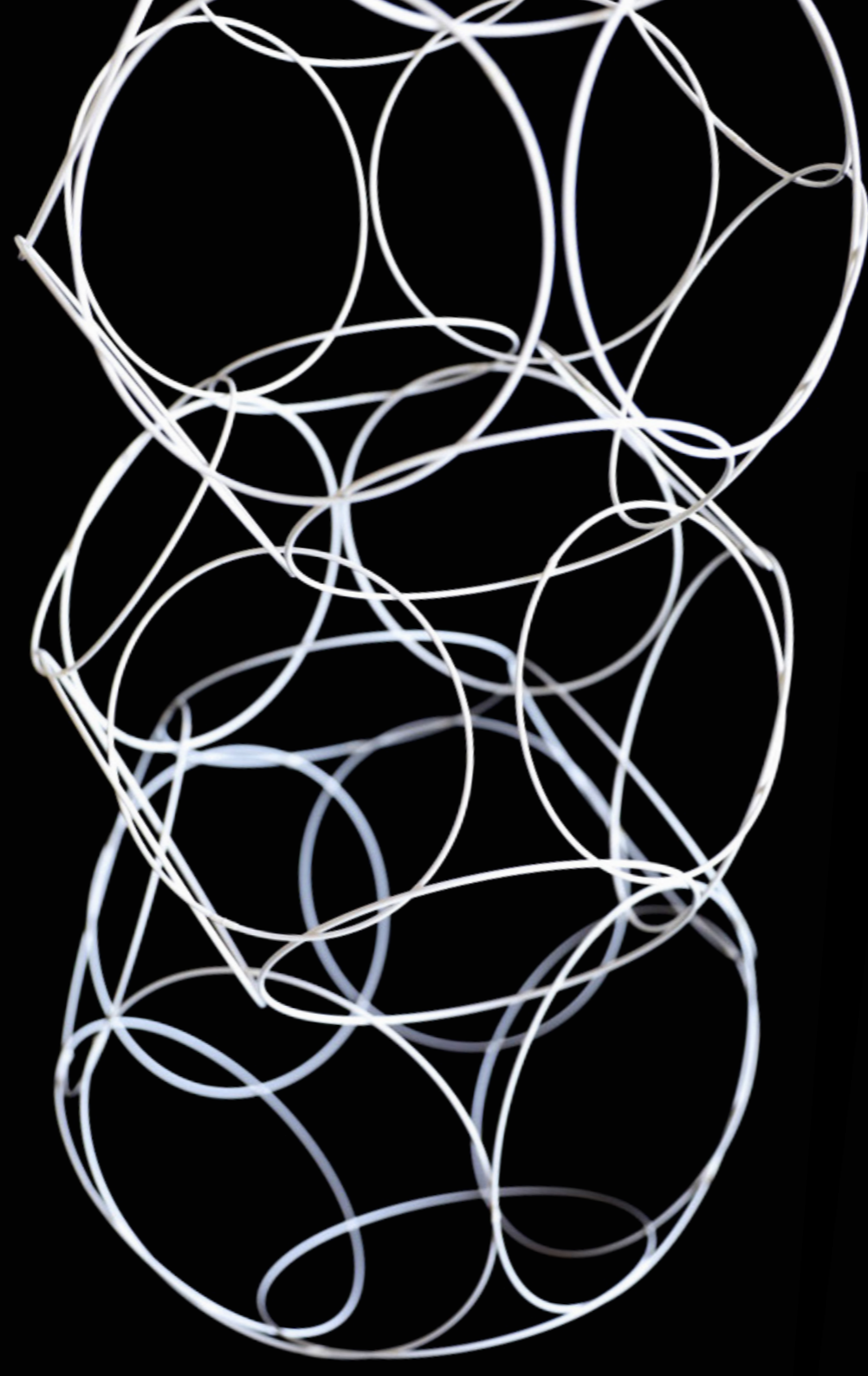
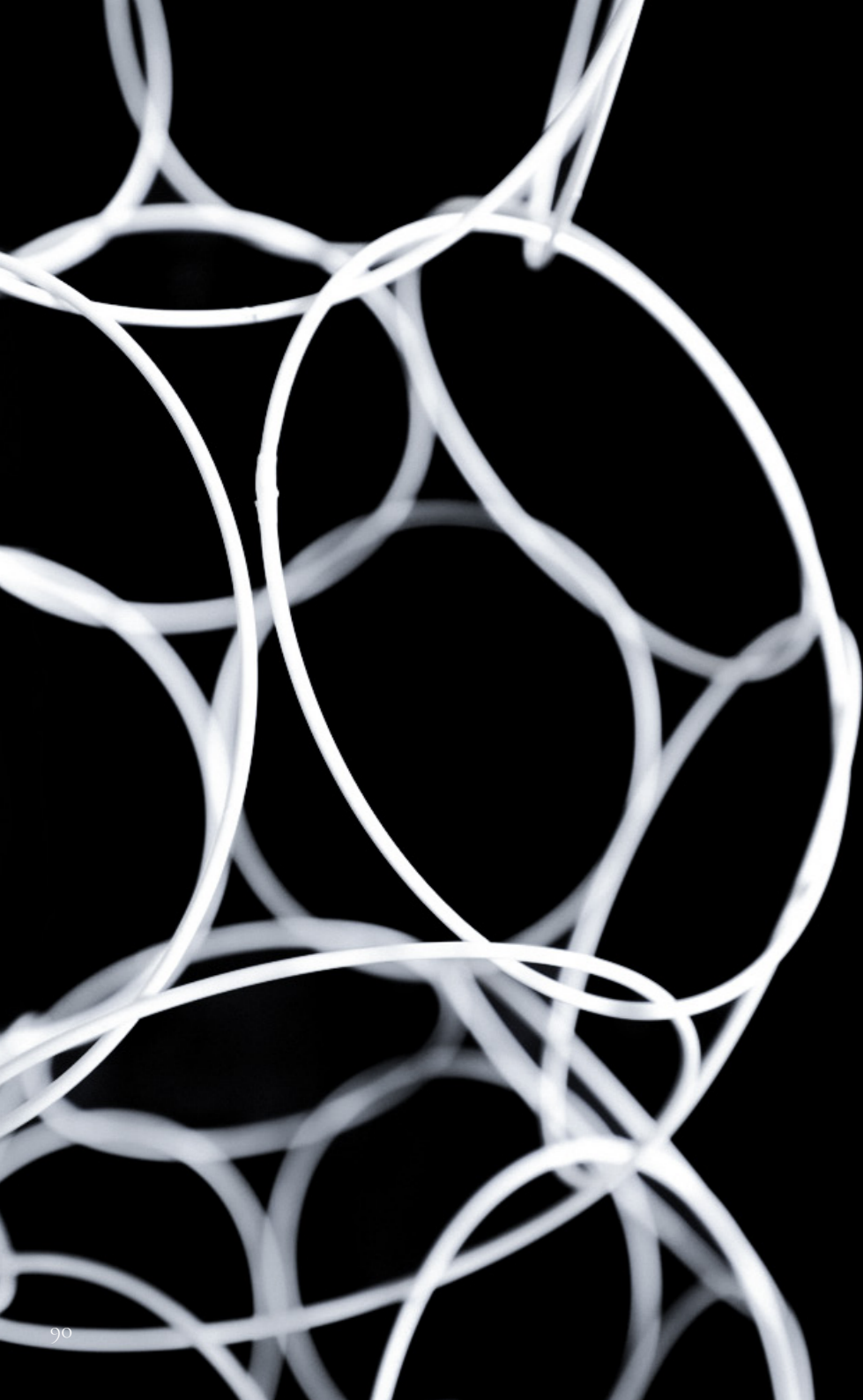
making hanging earrings. Usually bigger sized earring designs are difficult to make, because of the high weight of materials. With the ring patterns, you get a lot of air in between the material, and therefore they are lighter, and possible to wear more comfortably. This pattern becomes very intriguing in bigger sizes. Being almost the opposite of the three ringed design. Seeming easier to understand when the pattern is small, and becoming more complex as it gets bigger. With this design the decision to work from small to large, morphing the pattern, was made to create a different look than in the first design. And with the metamorphosis of not just the size of the work, but also of the rings, it moves away from jewelry, becoming more sculptural. It looks really light and airy because of the white color, and it becomes fascinating to look at in the bigger size. Trying to figure out how the rings are really interlinked. The materials and pattern used in this design, also play a role in how the pieces

are seen and interpreted. In both silver and white laquered steel they look very delicate and open. To create a consistency, but also a tension and transformation in size in the pattern, the sequenced pattern used, is always first 30 rings of one size (3 times the chain elements with subsequently 10 rings in every chain element) of the first size, then 10 rings of a size 0,5 mm bigger (earrings) or 50 mm bigger (sculpture). Then again 30 rings 0,5 mm/50 mm bigger, 10 rings, 30 rings and so on, until the piece has the right length.

This pattern could be continued in bigger sizes. But the bigger the rings get, the harder it is to keep them from not falling in on themselves, so there might be a limit in size, unless you connect the larger rings that lie next to each other together. Made with steel rings you could spot weld the rings together where they touch each other on the side. In the white piece, it is done by taping the rings together, seen as it is not possible to weld the material.

The earrings are made of silver with a 0,6 mm thick wire. The rings vary in size from 3 mm to 9 mm. One single earring is 140 mm long and consists of 190 rings. The hanging sculpture is made of white laquered steel rings with the wire thickness of 3 mm. It starts with the size 100 mm rings and ends with 300 mm rings. Its height is 2 meters and it consists of 85 rings.





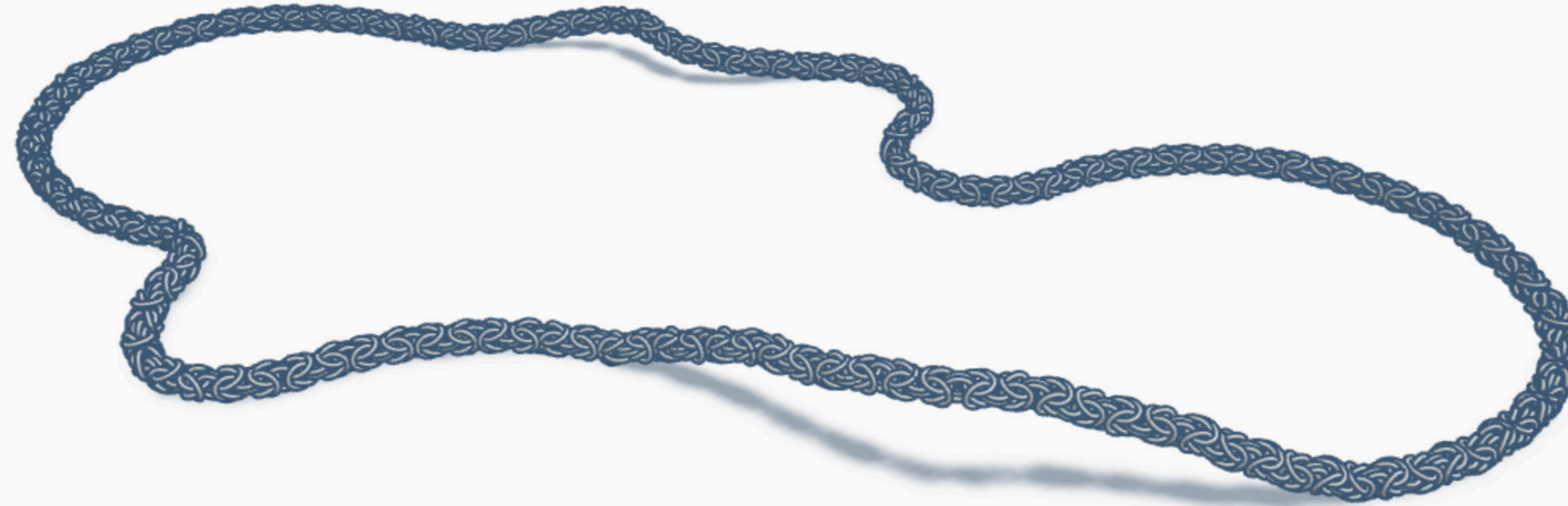


DESIGN FOUR - A CHAIN THAT GROWS AND GROWS BASED ON A KINGS CHAIN PATTERN

The fourth draft was inspired by classical chain jewelry like king and queen chains or helm/helix chains. Using regular chain patterns, that morph in size whilst keeping a connection to the body by still being in the shape of a necklace.

What changes when the chain necklace becomes bigger, longer and heavier than “normal” necklaces?

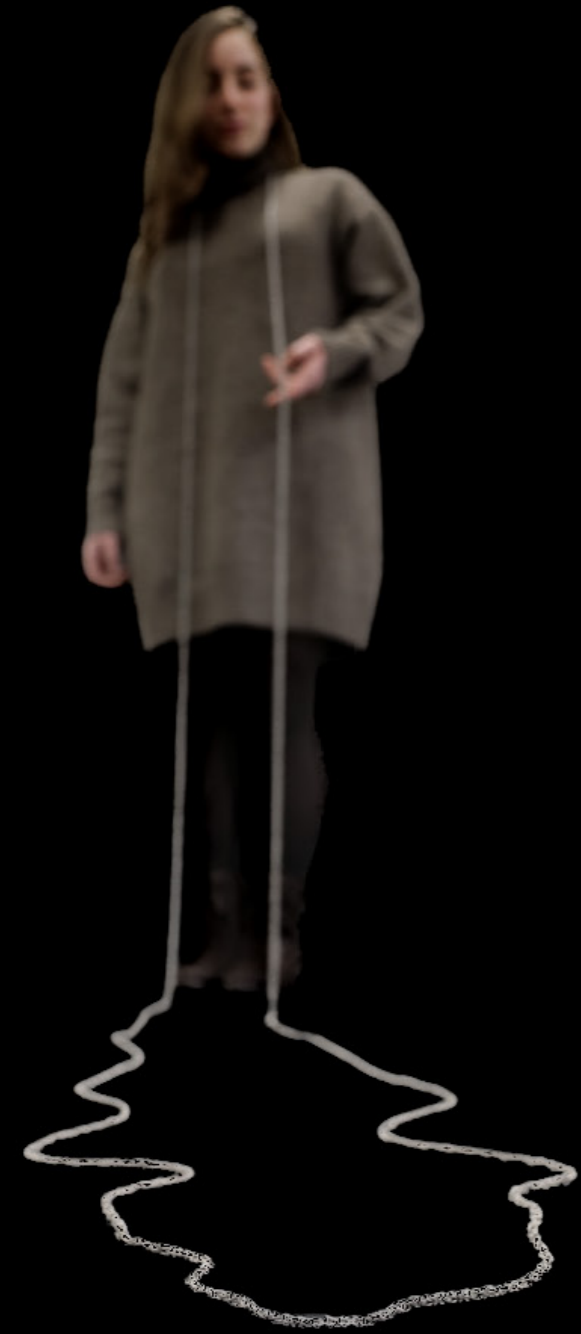
This design is probably the one design that comes closest to contemporary jewelry design. It is made from stainless steel, a not so common material in traditional jewelry design, it is big, but still not completely unwearable. It has a connection to the body, but can still be seen as an object as well as a piece of jewelry depending on how you present it. Lying on the floor, it seems more like an object, but worn around the neck, it becomes a piece of jewelry.



The necklace is 6 meters long and consists of approximately 4602 rings.









DESIGN REFLECTION

Contemporary jewelry has a connection to the body, not all sculptures do. Being in a room with a sculpture does create a connection between viewer and object, but it is different than wearing material on the skin, and connecting with the worn piece through touch. Jewelry needs to be worn on the body to work. Even when it is large and barely wearable, it is still jewelry, just in the category of contemporary jewelry. And contemporary jewelry has a lot less rules to follow, being allowed to be free in the manner it is worn.

My pieces are all varied in sizes and patterns, and they all have a very different effect on the viewer.

It was a challenge to create the larger pieces, since I am used to working in smaller sizes, but it worked really well, and I am very happy with the results.

I will continue working with the patterns that I have discovered and learned, but also the one that I developed, with the four in one weave with five rings. And I will continue using my heritage as inspiration for future work. Using rings in my work, has always fascinated me, and to see how many different options there are using only one shape inspires me further.

Working in smaller and larger sizes has shown me how much a piece can change just by scaling it up or down. I am very excited to see how others react to my work.

I have learned so many new things during this process, developed my design aesthetics further, and researched a theme in depth that has interested me for many years.

I experience that this project has given me the opportunity to connect several areas of my knowledge and experience and I have gained many new insights.

The documented stage of development compiled in this thesis generates an inspiration for expanding and opening the area of contemporary jewelry design, indicating a direction of research that I am looking forward to explore more thoroughly in my future work.

CONCLUSION

Contemporary jewelry design is continuously changing, and it has very few rules to follow. Which makes it an exciting genre to work within, but also exciting to break out of. The first designers that dared to do something different in the early 1930s did exactly that, they started to think outside the box, challenging the box, and why it was there in the first place.

And that is what I am trying to do, seeing where the line is between contemporary jewelry and art, and where I can blur the lines and ask new questions, bringing my work to a new level.

There is definitely a need for more research on this topic in the future. And that is what I will set out to do, exploring the line between contemporary jewelry and art and how I can blur the lines and ask new questions, to bring my work to a new level. But also proving that my jewelry can be both: art-jewelry and jewelry-art. Through the work with this thesis, I acknowledge that the definition is not so important, but rather what the pieces say, and that they make you think and feel something new. I have many questions still, and I think more will come over time. I hope that others also have questions and dare to ask and discuss them.





THANK YOU

A big thank you goes to my parents, that are always there when I need guidance.

Also, Professor Henning Eichinger and Dipl. Ing. Ma. Javiera Advis for their support and supervision.

A huge thanks goes to Julian Pandt from the company Wafios in Reutlingen, supplying me with thousands of steel rings, that I would never have been able to produce on my own.

And for helping me conceptualizing and implement my ideas, I would like to thank Adrian and Marc at Innoport in Reutlingen.

Thank you also to my fellow students Janika Weiß and Verena Burger for all the help, and for keeping me on track, finishing this project.

And thanks to everyone that helped me proofread this book.

GLOSSARY

Adorning - to add something decorative to a person or thing, like wearing jewelry.

Anodize - anodizing is a chemical process that converts the metal surface into a decorative, durable, corrosion-resistant and anodic oxide finish that doesn't chip or peel. Often used on aluminium or titanium in different colors.

Arte Povera Movement - A movement of artists who attempted to create a new sculptural language through the use of found objecta and everyday materials. Arte-Povera literally means "poor art".

Officially the movement took place between the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s in major cities throughout Italy. As a profoundly influential era in contemporary art, arte povera introduced the world to new and rebellious materials.

Avantgarde - As applied to art, avantgarde means art that is innovatory, introducing or exploring new forms or subject matter. It first appeared with reference to art in France in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Bezel - the upper part of the ring hoop. It can consist of a flat table, be engraved with a design or have a setting for gemstones.

Cabochon - a cabochon, pronounced cabuh-shon, is defined as a gemstone that has been shaped round and polished, rather than faceted (like diamonds often are). These stones usually have a smooth, domed top surface and a flat base. Usually made round or oval. Often with natural inclusions and markings or highlights of other visual effects such as a play of color, a cat's eye or an asterism.

Chain - many rings connected in different patterns are called a chain.

Chainmail - a flexible mesh material, a metal fabric, made of thousands of interlinked rings. A flexible armor used for protection against cuts and bruises.

Contemporary Jewelry - a style of jewelry starting in the 1940s and 1940s working with freedom in design and material, approaching the body in a new way. Not always suitable for practical purposes. Continuously evolving with time.

Enamel - glass being applied to metal and

then heated to fuse it to the surface. The finish of the enamel can be translucent or opaque depending on the temperature used to melt the glass and the glass itself.

Ethically Sourced Materials - Ethically sourced materials means that products and services from each point of a business's supply chain are obtained in an ethical way, which includes upholding rights, decent working conditions, health and safety, good business ethics and more. A fully transparent and responsible way of making products with a minimal impact on the environment.

Filigree - ornamental fine goldsmith work made with gold or silver wire.

Gilt/Gilded - gil·ding | gil·din noun. An object decorated with a thin layer of gold, gold leaf, or gold foil. Gilding is the process of applying a thin layer of gold, gold leaf or gold foil to the surface of another material, often a more durable metal.

Gimmel ring - a gimmel ring (from the Latin 'gemellus', or twin) comprises two or sometimes three interlaced hoops with separate bezels that can be joined snugly

together. They were often decorated with clasped hands and hearts, and engraved with romantic mottoes, the phrases from marriage services or with the names of a couple. Symbol of friendship and alliance.

Granulation - ornamental fine goldsmith work made with grains or beads of gold or silver soldered onto a piece of metal..

Helix/Helm-Chain - A helix is a shape formed by a smooth curve. A helix chain is held together at specific points by jump rings in order to maintain a curved formation. A helm chain ist the exact same thing, just with two layers of rings lying paralell. A helm/helix chain is usually made with two different sized rings.

Inlay gold/silver - designs are cut into the surface of a piece of metal and inlaid with a different metal of contrasting color or texture. to create depth.

Memento Mori - Latin phrase meaning "*remember you must one day die*". Often used to describe rings, paintings and other objects decorated with emblems related to death, such as skulls, hourglasses and coffins.

Mesh - A woven metal fabric, either made from interlinked rings, like in chainmail, or from knitted/woven wire. A flexible and strong metal fabric that is often used for industrial purposes.

Niello - niello (from Latin: Nigellus = "blackened") is a metallic alloy with sulfur which is used as a surface decoration technique which, much like enamel, is fused to a metal base. The luster of niello, however, is metallic instead of vitreous and it is much tougher than enamel.

Open Chainmail - chainmail where the rings are not riveted shut. The open rings are called jump rings.

Paleolithic - the paleolithic Period or Old Stone Age (c. 2 500 000-200 000 years ago) characterized by the use of rudimentary chipped stone tools used.

Patina - is a thin layer of something that has formed on the surface of something. When speaking of metal patina is a film or incrustation, usually green, produced by oxidation on the surface of, for instance, bronze or copper. Patina can also be created artificially using certain chemicals.

Posy Ring - ring with '*poesy*' or motto usually engraved around the hoop of the ring.

Rivet - riveting chainmail is a technique where metal wire is coiled into a spiral or metal. You take the spiral and cut off rings with overlapping ends. Later you flatten these ends by hammer strikes and punch a hole. During manufacturing, the rings become harder as you deform the metal. A metal spike (rivet) is put through the hole and the ends are hammered flat to seal the ring.

Signet Ring - a ring engraved with a coat of arms, initials, a personal device or a merchant's mark which could be pressed into wax to serve as a signature or sign of authenticity.

Sources - ('Britannica Dictionary' 2023; 'Cambridge Dictionary' 2023; Church 2017; 'Dictionary.com' 2023; Mahn 2023; 'Round Riveted Chainmail' 2022; Völk 2018; Waterton Collection 2023; Zoucha 2022)

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Erstprüfer/in: Herr Prof. Henning Eichinger

Zweitprüfer/in: Frau Javiera Advis dipl. Ing. M.A.

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