

## Horror Vacui – The Fear of the Void

Manchester Craft and Design Centre, Manchester, 23 January-7 March

Reviewed by Charlotte Verity

'Horror Vacui', or 'The Fear of the Void' is the ninth members' exhibition from Germany's 'Forum für Schmuck und Design' (Forum for Jewellery and Design). The exhibition opened in Cologne in July 2008 and its 7 venue tour will be complete in Peine, Germany in November 2009. The showing in Manchester is the only UK venue for this international exhibition. The launch event on Saturday 24 January invited visitors to participate in jewellery making activities, listen to some live music and enjoy complimentary drinks while browsing the many and varied exhibits.

'Forum für Schmuck und Design' was established in 1984 with the aim of 'providing a platform for contemporary jewellery and contact between the artists and interested people'. In this exhibition, 85 jewellers from 13 countries have responded to the concept of 'Horror Vacui - Fear of the Void'. Five are U.K. based artists: Jivan Astfalck, Lucy Harvey, Antje Illner, Toni Mayner and

Kathryn Partington. From the beginning, the principle of exhibiting the work of the members of the forum was that there would be no jury. It is interesting to note that they still adhere to this principle, and contrary to what one may suspect, this has in no way diminished the overall quality of the exhibits.

The members address the fear of emptiness in their own distinct ways, attempting to shed some light on the conundrum. The many various questions being asked include, 'Who am I without You?' (Ute Reinhart, F) and, 'Is there anything less?' (Barbara Voit, NL). Every exhibitor has approached the subject from a different angle and used different materials, and for these reasons the display is eclectic and exciting.

Drug blister packs (Udo Goertz, D), antipsychotic drug labels (DUO Unikatschmuck, Julia Carolin Blecken, D) and a television set (2 Schmuckschmiede, Kratzsch und Schlink, D) illustrate the ways in which we may endeavour to fill the emptiness in our lives. Unusual materials used include burette taps (Linus Roeder, D), baking soda (Susanne Leu, D) and tombac, an alloy of copper and zinc, often used in Russia for making medals (Kwang-Sun Lee, ROK). I was most impressed by Anke Wolf's 'Ob Sternenhimmel oder Blütenmeer' ('Whether starry sky or sea of flowers') necklace and wallpainting, made entirely of stainless steel wire. As each exhibit is so distinctly different, every visitor should be able to find pieces to which they can personally relate.

A 112 page full colour catalogue is available for £15.00 plus £1.50 p+p. Please send £16.50 cheque, payable to 'Manchester Craft and Design', to Kelda Savage, Crafts Programme Officer, Manchester Craft and Design Centre, 17 Oak Street, M4 5JD.

During the 'Horror Vacui' exhibition there is a complementary display at a studio in the Manchester Craft and Design Centre: 'Black is a Colour', showing work by local jewellers Deborah Zeldin O'Neill, Eve Redmond, Mai Sakuma, Carly Pettit and Edward Chadwick.



Barbara Nimke. Necklace.  
Shown in Horror Vacui exhibition