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WEATHERED FUSION CRUSTED METEORITE – pendant – 2013 – stony meteorite NWA (Unclassified, North West Africa), silver, nylon cord – 42×68×33 mm
METEORITE BALL - pendant - 2013 - stony meteorite NWA (Unclassified, North West Africa), silver, leather cord - 60 x 54 x 47 mm
Sigurd Bronger wearing
Widmanstätten Structured
Meteorite 1
DISTANCE AND NEARNESS
A PHILOSOPHICAL ESSAY ON PRIMARY QUALITIES IN ART OBJECTS

The jewellery objects of Reinhold Ziegler express a basic tension between distance and nearness. They are distanced in the sense that they consist of elements that represent and refer to things in an external world about which we have limited knowledge. Meteorites – the theme of Cosmic Debris – usually come from the so-called asteroid belt that lies between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. Their origin, about 4.57 billion years ago (one billion years older than our own planet), and journey through outer space exceed the boundaries of our physical and rational horizon of understanding. Meteorites are coagulated stardust from the time when our solar system was formed. They come from the same material that provides the basis for our existence. But for us, the origin of stardust and the solar system are distant realities we cannot access through direct observation. Meteorites take us closer to the origin of being. They are extra-terrestrial bodies captured by the earth’s gravitation, but they also implicate something about our own origin when they become part of our experienced reality here on this planet.

In this essay, I reflect on what it means to approach these works via concepts, especially concepts integral to the field of philosophical aesthetics – or directly, *sans language*, through the senses. I also inquire into the limits of human knowledge by discussing what it means to predicate primary and secondary qualities to these works, and by elucidating what they can imply about viewing ourselves from a first-person or a third-person perspective. My aim is to show some of the depth and breadth of meaning *Cosmic Debris* affords about the position of humanity in a wider horizon of understanding.1

Generally speaking, the jewellery objects in *Cosmic Debris* are pure and fundamental in form. They create sensory impressions of something basic and genuine, which exists in, or at the very least is constituted by, the natural reality around us. The meteorite works draw associations to ontological realism: the idea that objects in the external world are as they are independent of how we experience them (Stroud 2000). Ziegler is preoccupied with external and authentic aspects of the world that are minimally affected by the viewer’s standpoint and need to categorize.

In contrast to a traditional individualistic jewellery object that is meant to accentuate the wearer, it is now the wearer who should accentuate the jewellery object. He or she stands as a facilitator and then recedes into the background. The wearer is drawn into something essential, beautiful and remote, which comes from another place. Also the time the wearer is allotted here on earth is reduced and placed in a more comprehensive interpretive frame. The experience of standing before a larger, eternal universe of meteorites and interpretive spaces is accentuated and becomes dominating. The inspiration arises to see oneself from the outside.

One of the jewellery objects, *Meteorite Ball* (p. 10), brings to mind a globe, since it has a ring-shaped holder similar to the gadget a globe is fastened in, and which enables it to spin in all directions. The polished meteorite was not initially part of our planet, and as a representative of the concept *meteorite*, it still does not have a natural existence here on earth. Precisely for this reason, it becomes a representation for us. A representation can never be identical to what it refers to – it must be something other than the object of reference. But the meteorite is a *natural*
METEORITE CHISEL - pendant - 2013 - stony meteorite NWA (Unclassified, North West Africa), silver, nylon cord - 130×20×15 mm
M A S S 2 - pendant - 2011 - granite, silver, nylon cord - 42 x 30 mm - private collection, Norway
APPLE - pendant - 2011 - birch wood, oil paint, leather cord - 50×55 mm - private collection, Norway
MILLSTONE – pendant – 2011 – granite, silver, leather cord – 17 × 60 mm – private collection, Norway
ON IDENTITY IN ART AND LIFE
A CONVERSATION BETWEEN ANDRÉ GALI AND REINHOLD ZIEGLER

ANDRÉ GALI: In *Cosmic Debris* you have worked with meteorites both as material and as theme. I can see many reasons why you have chosen to work with meteorites, but it would be interesting to hear why you have chosen this particular material.

REINHOLD ZIEGLER: To me, meteorites are a natural variation on the basic theme in my art: using jewellery as a medium to express something about the larger, non-personal aspects of existence. For my first solo exhibition, I worked with gravity as the theme; a universal, extensive force of nature that exists independently of the individual’s will and preferences. I have chosen meteorites as the theme in my second exhibition because it is the material that physically lies furthest away from us. Most meteorites come from asteroids that orbit between Mars and Jupiter. This material thus tells us something about conditions beyond life on earth.

AG: How did you get this idea specifically?

RZ: I saw a photograph of a meteorite in a newspaper and sensed that the expression was very close to an aesthetic idea in my mind. I read the article and learned that meteorites are residue from the creation of our solar system, and contain some of the proto matter from which our solar system is built. At that point I realised that this material to the highest degree coincided with what I work with, both aesthetically and thematically.

AG: You state that you are interested in the non-personal, something I take to mean a distance from the individual, but at the same time you cultivate this material, you turn it into jewellery and in so doing, it comes nearer to the individual.

RZ: Yes, and this nearness, the way I see it, is a precondition for experiencing what is distant. Distance and nearness are not necessarily opposites, but rather two terminological extremes of the theme *space between objects*.

AG: A more common strategy in art jewellery is to exploit this intimacy in order to create jewellery that serves as an identity marker, meaning a kind of token of the personality of the person wearing the jewellery. Can I understand your project as a wish to depart from this?

RZ: I believe that the role of jewellery as an expression of the wearer’s personality is too one-sided in art jewellery. I can see how the jewellery’s closeness to the body would make this kind of approach natural, but my claim is that there are other possibilities in the medium of jewellery that this focus on individuality conceals. I myself found another approach after a meeting with the French philosopher Georges Bataille, who pretty soon became my intellectual source of inspiration. The entire foundation of my work is actually built on the following statement from his book *Eroticism*:

‘We find the state of affairs that binds us to our random and ephemeral individuality hard to bear. Along with our tormenting desire that this evanescent thing should last, there stands our obsession with a primal continuity linking us with everything that is.’

What Bataille says here, is that the human being is caught in a kind of dilemma, where on the one hand it wants to defend and justify its position as a unique individual,
CROSS PEEN HAMMER - pendant – 2013 – granite, ziricote wood, silver, nylon band – 155 × 70 × 21 mm
PINCER PLIERS – pendant – 2012 – silver, leather, nylon band – 150 × 42 × 20 mm – private collection, Germany
ORANGE POUCH - pendant - 2012 - leather, silver, nylon zipper, nylon cord - 85×40 mm
REINHOLD ZIEGLER

1965 Born in Kristiansund, Norway

EDUCATION
2001–06 The National College of Art and Design, Oslo, Norway
1989–90 Jewellery Design, Staatliche Zeichenakademie Hanau, Germany
1984–87 Goldsmithing, Elvebakken Polytechnic High School, Norway

SOLO EXHIBITIONS
2014 *Cosmic Debris*, Galerie Wittenbrink FünfHöfe, Munich, Germany
2011 *Gravity*, Galleri Format, Oslo, Norway

GROUP EXHIBITIONS
2013 *Révélations*, Grand Palais, Paris, France
2012 *Aftermath of Art Jewellery*, Museum Villa Stuck, Munich, Germany
2008 New and Norwegian – A *World of Folk*, Stavanger, Norway
2007 *European Jewellery Exhibition*, Østfold Kunstnersenter, Fredrikstad, Norway

2006 *Nine Materials*, Galleri Platina, Stockholm, Sweden

2004 *Triennale*, Oslo, Norway/Leipzig, Germany

AWARDS
2005 3rd Prize Norwegian National Design Competition, Souvenirs

PUBLIC COMMISSIONS
2010 Major Chain for Modalen, Norway
2007 Major Chain for Iveland, Norway
2012 Major Chain for Aremark, Norway

GRANTS
2012 Three-year working grant, Norwegian Government
2010 General grant, Norwegian Government
2009 Study grant, Norwegian Government
2008 Establishing grant, Norwegian Government