



Paul Derrez, Galerie Ra

Each newsletter we will be introducing you to one of the galleries that has joined AJF to support and promote contemporary jewelry. This month's AJF Questionnaire has been answered by Paul Derrez of Galerie Ra, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

35 years old – that means Galerie Ra is almost middle-aged! What keeps you opening the door year after year?

Its more than just opening the door . . . It's a mixture of passion, addiction, commitment, vision, skills, labour and discipline.

What have been your biggest challenges during the last three decades?

To go international, shortly after opening Ra in 1976, was a change in terms of the previous situation of the field – and crucial for the development and success of Ra.

Moving Ra in 1983 to premises Vijzelstraat was a huge and ambitious step. At the same time starting the Ra bulletin-posters added to the unlimited ambition/expansion.



Vijzelstraat 80, Amsterdam, 1983-2010

Moving Ra in 2010 to Nes felt as if we were going back to our roots. Smaller, more precise, more personal, more intimate.



Nes 120

If you could give your younger self one piece of advice, what would it be?

I should have listened to my mother: be smart, gain a good income, savings and a pension. Now I've end up famous and poor!

How do you explain to someone who doesn't know anything about contemporary jewelry what exactly it is that you sell in the gallery?

Ra shows work, mainly jewellery, that has not existed before, that you have not seen before. The pieces express in a specific way personal or more general ideas and themes, they relate to the maker/the artist, to society and to the moment.



Gijs Bakker exhibition, Vijzelstraat 80, Amsterdam, 1983-2010

Galerie Ra has a collection of contemporary jewelry. Why did you started collecting, and what are your goals in putting the collection together?

Galerie Ra has what I call a permanent collection, but this is an overview with work by all the represented artists. With my husband Willem Hoogstede I have also collected jewellery for private use. This Paul Derrez/Willem Hoogstede collection is separate from the gallery. About 500 pieces cover 50 years and form a broad spectrum. The reason to buy them is to wear them, but also the reference to the maker and the moment. Often an exhibition in Galerie Ra became, in hindsight, important.



120 Nes interior

What difference does it make being located in Amsterdam? Do you feel any special responsibilities to represent Dutch jewelers? How do you keep up with what's going on around the world?

Amsterdam, as a lively international hotspot, was crucial to fit the international ambition of Ra. Nowadays, with easy and intense international exchange, it's less important. I hardly realise anymore where the artists are based. Geography does not count. I try to be informed about what happens in jewellery in the world, but at the same time I commit myself to the artists I have chosen to represent in Ra. I have developed a good sense for quality and professional attitude.



Peter Hooeboom and Anja Eichler exhibition opening

What niche do you and your gallery occupy in the contemporary jewelry eco-system?

What do you mean by this? Making and dealing with this kind of jewellery is extremely luxurious and at the same time essential. It's a form of refined culture!

What are the three most interesting pieces of jewelry you've seen lately?

Fortunately, I also feel, touch and wear jewellery. To appreciate a piece, this personal, three-dimensional interaction is crucial. So I've selected three pieces from the current show at Ra, pieces that are right in front of me now:

Johanna Dahm, *William Tells Shot*, rings, made from gold or silver bars. The hole is shot through. A design that deals with greed and aggression.



Johanna Dahm, *William Tell's Shot Ring*, silver 10 gram, 35 x 20 x 5 mm, series

Catherine Truman, *Red Shell*, brooch. Carved from English lime wood. This silent, hybrid brooch refers to nature, is shell and leaf at the same time. Incorporates historical awareness and superb craftsmanship.



Catherine Truman, *Red Shell Brooch*, English Lime wood, 70 x 60 x 20 mm, 5 variations

Ela Bauer, *Plastic Rings*. A perfect product: beautiful, wearable, affordable.



Ela Bauer, *Rings*, plastic, 33 x 33 x 33mm, series