



Conference delegates
on the waterfront in Lisbon.

Ars Ornata Europeana

Em Toda a Parte. Em Lugar Nenhum (Everywhere – Nowhere)
Symposium of Contemporary Jewellery, Lisbon, 7-10 July

Stephen Bottomley reports:

This year's symposium was organised by the newly formed Portuguese jewellery association PIN in collaboration and the Ar.Co Centro de Arte and with other cultural agencies within Lisbon.

The theme of the conference questioned the role and place of the jewel. Cristina Filipe was the dedicated host and director of the symposium, putting into place an intensive programme of talks, workshops and exhibitions in key cultural sites throughout Lisbon.

The keynote speakers for the first day at the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga were Michael Rowe (UK) and Robert Baines (Australia). Both had been asked to participate in *Closer*, the principal exhibition held there. The exhibition included over 20 designer/artists, (primarily Portuguese), who interacted with work from the museum's historic collection and environment. This challenging exhibition alerted the conference delegates to the ideas that would be explored in greater detail over the next few days. A ten-minute performance piece designed by the Dutch artist Noam Ben-Jacov and dedicated to the late Onno Boekhoudt was impressive.

The disparate natures of the two keynote speakers' own work and their talks that evening also clearly illustrated the wide terrain to be explored. Rowe's highly logical and systematic enquiry into form, proportion and balance was a carefully drafted and fascinating analytical talk that dealt with known forces and very real material qualities. Baines' talk was a foil to this with its humorous invented historical narrative for a supposedly long lost Australian/Portuguese jewel, *Java-la Grande*, on display in the museum, that played with what was 'real' or may be suggested by the integrity of displaying an item in a museum context.

The second major exhibition *Nomad Room, Contemporary Jewellery: Intimate Space and Public Domain* was curated by Monica Gaspar at the Museo do Design, Centro Cultural de Belem. The works set up a dialogue with the Berardo Collection of Modern and Contemporary Art in the museum and in particular the current exhibition *Building/Unbuilding /Inhabit* curated by Delfim Sardo and of which he gave a fascinating tour to prior to our seeing *Nomad Room* on this second day. *Nomad Room* was an expertly directed display with the type of focused and intelligent accompanying essay by Gaspar that we have been so fortunate to come to expect from this Spanish historian. Maybe because so many exhibits of *Nomad Room* were very familiar to me it is the *Closer* exhibition that I treasure and continue to reflect upon still.

No definite conclusions or outcomes were drawn by the end of the second day and the disappointing debate that followed ran rapidly out of time after a very mixed series of panel presentations. Maybe this debate had come too early in the programme? Certainly the next two days provided workshops and tours from which individual debates on the symposium's nature naturally began to grow. Yet there were so very many opportunities for the delegates to gather late into the night in the open-air bars and cafes to discuss the topics that such matters were soon forgotten against the magnificent backdrop of the city.

The ACJ is now the largest of the European associations attending the symposium; the others are based in Germany, Spain and now Portugal. This year the Switzerland Association which hosted the last symposium has folded, though several of this group were in Lisbon and hope to reform in another guise. A small number of jewellers from



Robert Baines and Michael Rowe supporting Cristina Filipe, the organiser of the AOE conference in Lisbon.

Photo Stephen Bottomley

Greece were also in attendance and are keen to attend our conference in London next year and seek advice in forming a group. As the largest European association the ACJ clearly has a role to play and we must look *Closer* at how we may work more widely in the future.

Naghmeh Sarbakhsh reports on the workshops which were an integral part of the *Ars Ornata Conference*:

On Saturday 9 July, the third day of the conference in Lisbon, all the participants gathered at Ar.Co Centre for Art and Communication, to take part in a workshop called 'Coffee, Jewels, and Cigarettes'. The theme of the workshop was inspired by Jim Jarmusch's film *Coffee and Cigarettes*, a series of black and white films which motivates the participants for brainstorming. The AOE participants were divided into groups of 8-10 people, led by the symposium organisers and others, including Cristina Filipe (PT), Monica Gaspar (E), Auli Laitinent (S), Astrid Niggeloh (D) and Christoph Zellweger (CH).

The group that I attended was led by one of the organisers, Manuel Vilhena (PT). He started the workshop with a brainstorming session and divided the group into five couples. Our topic was cigarettes and smoking: therefore we needed to think about the pros and cons of smoking. After an hour of exchanging ideas we had an opportunity of using the jewellery workshops, which were perfectly located opposite the garden where we had been in the morning. We used the workshops to make pieces of jewellery depending on our ideas. I have to say the workshop ran very smoothly and was well thought out, prepared and structured by Manuel Vilhena. In the afternoon all the different groups got together and presented their pieces to the other participants. The amazing part of the workshop for me was that a lot of people did not speak English or any common language but somehow we managed to understand each other. I suppose that when you are in a jewellery workshop, you speak the same language. It had been a fantastic experience for all different makers and designers and art historians getting together and exchanging ideas and culture.