



Opening Discourse. 'Recently Crafted' at Statements Gallery, Napier.

"Art will once again be Viewed" wrote Laura Cumming in The Observer recently. Her premise was that the change in status of the financial world may bring a reappraisal of value judgements to our society. Indeed, the notion that true value should be appraised extends from Art to property, monetary instruments and especially to debt.

The last 20 years have served to let us ignore established relationship and proportion, to accept without investigation and to observe without critical acuity.

In another article on 'Art in the era of Dubya' Jeff Koon's work is described as "a cloying cliché presented as profundity" and Sir Harold Kroto, scientist and nanoscience pioneer comments "all Calvin Klein has to do is take a \$3 wristwatch, add CK and people will pay \$50 for it. Hopefully this crisis will bring us all to our senses".

Still looking back, this time 50 years, we find an occasion where value was created in its natural environment. Miles Davis, jazz trumpeter, took a group of musicians to a studio with some ideas that he had just sketched. A short time later, "Kind of Blue" emerged on tape; an album that still 'sounds like it was made yesterday', a document to the spontaneous creativity of accomplished musicians given freedom of expression and gentle guidance. This album carries the Heavenly aspect of the Chinese observation of Art, that which contributes beyond the Earthly input of notes and chords and raises the sum of worldly Good.

Auckland journalist Rod Oram, a fine viewer of the big picture of economics, considers us to be in a permanent structural shift, not just a realignment. He considers that consumption will continue, but much less freely and that value, not price, should be the driver of the offer; customer service is at the basis of a good business, as we have all observed when trying to persuade the plumber to venture out after hours to save our flooding house!

These examples have all caught my eye in the Press this summer. With each item, I have been able to tick off Christine's approach to her profession. Trained in 1970s Germany, she learned how to appreciate value, to offer the "Wertarbeit" for which her nation was renowned. Her approach to Art was also a personal one, there was no future in mimicking industrial jewellery – they could always make it thinner and cheaper – and only by concentrating on single unit production would her client be assured of maximum value in a product that 'looks like it was made yesterday'.

Beautiful stones, be they rare and costly or profane and inexpensive, carry an individuality with which the wearer can identify. The construction of the surround to optimise the effect of the stone generates a harmony between content and creator, establishing a true value in the piece.

An extension of the value that Christine offers is in the resurrection of Dormant Jewellery. So many dressing rooms contain a box holding Aunty's engagement ring, Granny's necklace, the remaining half of a pair of earrings or the chain once considered fashionable but too shameful today! Precious metal, stones, sentiments and family history all lying unappreciated in a dark corner. Taking these items and adding an artistic component to their restructuring brings new life and pleasure for relatively little outlay. We remember the pleasure of the 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung' brooch in which three previous relationships, holiday memories and inherited rings were united to a highly personal yet beautiful piece of jewellery. It must be noted that this work stands alone, is fully resolved and justified WITHOUT the story of its components needing telling. When this is revealed, the value increases from an established base.

The Art world shares the laws of the general economy. As Gary Hamel states, strategic resilience comes from making your future, not defending your past. The consumer may need education in appreciating the value of a Good and we as creators must regard our finished product with critical eye before exposing it to the public, in the trust that "Art will once again be Viewed".

Welcome to the work of a consummate artist:

Christine Hafermalz-Wheeler, The Artist Goldsmith.