

HOW MUCH?

Re-Imagining Contemporary Jewelry

Alexandra Darby (curator) | Miriam Simun | HE&HU
Chinatown Soup | 16B Orchard Street | April 12-24, 2016

Opening Reception | April 14th, 6-8PM
Panel | April 21st, 7-9PM



[NEW YORK] *How Much?* is the first in a series of curatorial projects about the perception of value and its relationship to craft practice. Presented by Australian curator and jeweler Alex Darby, the exhibition brings together artists who are actively challenging our expectations about jewelry's role and place in our culture. The opening reception will be held on Thursday April 14th from 6-8PM.

This exhibition questions whether the functional form of jewelry and its ability to operate independently from an exhibition context makes it cease to exist as "art". In a shout-out to the gross price inflation of the contemporary art market, Darby critiques assigned values of luxury materials by adopting a price structure that is divorced from monetary and social valuations.

Joining Darby is contemporary artist Miriam Simun, whose work poses questions to perceived progress through a critical investigation of social, technological, and environmental change; and experimental art group HE+HU, made up of artist couple Wei He & Naishu Hu, who employ food as their main medium, along with sculpture, installation, and performance to create participatory art events they call "AVENT".

Together these artists reassess value by using unexpected materials and forgoing limitations associated with traditional jewelry-making practice. This exploration of jewelry as an art form questions the system of value that governs contemporary jewelry making and associated commodities. Doing so in New York City—with its longstanding history of high-end jewelry production—adds further dimension to this inquiry.

Darby is an artist and curator whose practice is concerned with the intimate relationship people have with objects and the ways we understand materiality based on notions of value. Originally from Sydney, she now lives and works in NYC and holds a BA in Jewelry & Object Design, and an MA in Art History. In addition to her art practice, Alex works for NEW INC, the New Museum's incubator for arts, technology, and design and is engaged with their diverse community of artists and entrepreneurs.

Chinatown Soup's site history as a crafthouse in the old Lower East Side makes it the perfect location for this exhibition. The gallery will host a panel *Can we make craft in New York?* on Thursday April 21st at 7PM that features the artists in conversation with thematic of their work. The panel and exhibition will be accompanied by an interactive online catalog that can be found at howmuch.online.

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