

Brosche, or the jewelry without object of Manfred Nisslmüller

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Jewelry is a perturbation.¹
—Manfred Nisslmüller

For the Austrian artist Manfred Nisslmüller, jewelry is a disruption, an object that clashes, interrupts the flow of an ensemble, disturbs our habitual perception and our aesthetic sense, and derails the appearance of the person who wears it.²

From time immemorial, jewelry has anchored its modes of production, its use and its reception on different systems of signs that permit communication between groups or individuals. In contrast, Nisslmüller calls into question how we, as a group of people, perceive things, by dispensing with formal actualization and the material reproduction of what we are used to seeing (in contemporary as well as classical jewelry). And so he continuously evaluates, compares, reflects on, and questions the public about jewelry and about its own intellectual and aesthetic conditioning toward it.

Nisslmüller looks at the world and the history of art analytically, critically, sometimes ironically, and often subversively. He questions the established historical values of classical jewelry, as well as some aspects of contemporary practice, and he proposes pieces so diverse that his creative approach remains singular to this day.

The work Taschenrecorder (1984–1993, made in eight examples) is one of his key works. There are eight cassettes named Brosche, Visage (die Augen ... die Nase ...), Geräusche, Vögel am Bach, Lärm, Hundegebell, Musik, Kirchenglocken.³ There is also a pocket tape recorder of a model that is no longer fashionable. These objects are arranged together in a red box. In this rather austere container, the tape recorder does not reveal anything about its “creator.” It is industrial object, already-made, available to everyone. Devoid of personal workmanship, or technical know-how. Nisslmüller offers to us a



Manfred Nisslmüller, Taschenrecorder, 1984–1993, hand-held recording and playback device, set of eight mini-tapes, box, overall dimensions: 234 x 213 x 57 mm, photo: artist

