



► Exhibition poster, "Roma Jewellery Tradition – Rosa Taikon", 1969. Photo: Nationalmuseum, Stockholm

Beauty and Struggle

An article about the jewellery artist Rosa Taikon (1926–2017)¹

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ABSTRACT:

The focus of this article is the Swedish Romani jewellery artist Rosa Taikon and her practice during the first part of her career. It opens with a description of her education and the development of her unique expression, combining late modernist art jewellery and Romani craft traditions. Two exhibitions are analysed. The first is the exhibition „*Zigenskt smycketradition – Rosa Taikon*“ at the Nationalmuseum in 1969, which was her great debut exhibition during the counter-culture heyday. This exhibition was as much about Roma history and traditions as about Taikon’s own work. The second example is the exhibition „*Rosa Taikon. Bernd Janusch. Smyckekonst. Corpus Silver*“ at the *Röhsska musset* [Museum of Design and Craft] in Gothenburg in 1983, which was presented as post-modernist discourse was coming to the forefront, and therefore made less visible political statements than the one in 1969. By analysing this change, I do not just want to portray a brilliant, creative artist, but also to discuss the conditions in which Taikon worked and the difficulty of an artist from a minority being regarded on the same terms as her peers. The article ends by pointing to the important work regarding Taikon’s legacy that is being done in Sweden today.

Key words: jewellery art, craft, Romani traditions, Sweden

ABSTRAKT:

Tento článek pojednává o švédské romské šperkařce Rose Taikon a její tvorbě v průběhu první části její kariéry. Začíná popisem jejího vzdělání a vývoje jejího osobitého výrazu, v němž se spojují pozdně modernistické umělecké šperky s romskou řemeslnou tradicí. Předmětem analýzy v článku jsou dvě výstavy. První je výstava „*Zigenskt smycketradition – Rosa Taikon*“ v Národním muzeu ve Stockholmu ve Švédsku v roce 1969, kterou debutovala v době rozkvětu alternativní kultury. Tato výstava byla věnována jak romské historii a tradicím, tak i vlastní tvorbě Rosy Taikon. Druhým příkladem je výstava „*Rosa Taikon. Bernd Janusch. Smyckekonst. Corpus Silver*“ z roku 1983 v *Röhsska musset* v Göteborgu, prezentovaná jako v té době aktuální postmoderní diskurs. Tato výstava proto obsahovala méně viditelná politická prohlášení než výstava z roku 1969. Analýzou této změny nechci jen přinést svědectví o brilantní, kreativní umělkyni, ale také diskutovat podmínky, v nichž Rosa Taikon pracovala, a o obtížích, kterým čelí umělkyně pocházející z menšiny, jež je posuzována stejným metrem jako její vrstevníci. Článek končí poukazem na důležitou práci týkající se odkazu Rosy Taikon, která dnes ve Švédsku probíhá.

Klíčová slova: šperkařské umění, řemeslo, romské tradice, Švédsko

¹ The research for this article was made possible by the Hälsinglands Museums project of the Rosa Taikon Archive, <https://halsinglandsmuseum.se/projekt/rosa-taikons-verkstad/>. The author has been active as researcher within this project.

At the Swedish Nationalmuseum of Art and Design there is a permanent exhibition called *The Treasury* exhibiting ‘objects of vertu’ – a room full of objects of adornment, jewellery, and smaller pieces created from precious materials. One vitrine, called “Jewellery for Modern Life”, presents art jewellery made during the decades after the Second World War. During this period, artists changed the understanding of jewellery design from that of producing precious, decorative objects to that of subjective experimentation with forms and materials. This late modernist jewellery was exhibited in 1959 by the Nationalmuseum in the exhibition *Nutidssmycken* [Contemporary Jewellery] (Hernmarck 1959). The vitrine showcases works by several of the artists represented in the 1959 exhibition along-side others who were active in the decades after the Second World War.

In the lower left corner of this vitrine, the visitor can see the magnificent necklace *Bara Ihlo* [“Big Heart”] made by Rosa Taikon in 1968. It is an expressive silver necklace, large and beautifully crafted with intricate decoration. The necklace combines late modernist expressive jewellery with Romani craft tradition into something unique that is not to be found in the work of any other artist represented in the vitrine.

By analysing the development of Rosa Taikon’s early career, I will show how she formulated her own jewellery language, one that contributed to the development of Romani jewellery traditions as well as to how her art jewellery was made and understood.

This single piece exhibited at the Na-

tionalmuseum gives evidence of Rosa Taikon’s importance in Swedish art history. However, she is just represented there by *Bara Ihlo*. Compared with her peers, such as the jewellery artist Torunn Bülow-Hübe, whose works the museum placed in the centre of the above-mentioned vitrine, this is a weak representation. The Nationalmuseum owns 36 pieces that Torunn Bülow-Hübe produced over a period of forty years. That means the museum followed Bülow-Hübe’s artistic development, whereas Rosa Taikon’s successful career, which spanned more than fifty years, is represented by just one piece.

To challenge this unbalanced representation, I want to show the development of Taikon’s practice by discussing two events in the first part of her career. The first is the exhibition “Roma Tradition – Rosa Taikon” at the Nationalmuseum in 1969, during which the museum bought the *Bara Ihlo* necklace. The second example is the exhibition “Rosa Taikon, Bernd Janusch, Jewellery, Hollowware, Silver” at the *Röhsska musset* [Museum of Design and Craft] Gothenburg in 1983. By analysing the changes in her work occurring during and between these two events, I do not just want to portray a creative and brilliant artist, but also to discuss the circumstances in which Rosa Taikon worked.

Early life

Rosa Taikon’s father, Johan Taikon, came to Haprandá in the north of Sweden on the Finnish border with his father, Kori Taikon (*Caldars* 2002:



◀ Silver necklace *Bara Ihlo* designed and crafted by Rosa Taikon, 1969. From the collections of the Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, NMK 85/1969. Photo: Hans Thorwid – Nationalmuseum, Stockholm

² The Rosa Taikon Collection at the Hälsingland Museum.

16) and his brothers. The family were Kalderash Roma who came to Sweden from Russia through Finland. In 1926, Rosa Taikon was born in a camp outside the small village of Tibro in the southern region of Sweden. Her mother was Agda Karlsson, a farmer's daughter from Härryda who had met Johan Taikon at a restaurant in Gothenburg where she worked as a waitress. Johan Taikon would support his family by running a travelling amusement park, as well as taking on tin-plating commissions. During Rosa Taikon's upbringing, the family moved frequently, living in tents, caravans or hotels. Her mother died when Rosa Taikon was only seven years old, which resulted in her having to take a lot of responsibility within the family. Early in life she learned how to play the drums and would tour around Sweden together with members of her family (Taikon 1963: 23, 56). She would also perform outside her family, appearing in the film *Smeder på Luffen* ("Smiths on the Road") in 1949, and she participated in and won the beauty pageant called *Tusensköna* ["The Daisy"]. During the 1950s she would appear in several more films and become friends with many artists in Stockholm.

At Konstfack

In 1961 Rosa Taikon was accepted to the *Konstfack* University College of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm, one of the most prestigious art schools in Sweden. Although she comes from a family of smiths, she was the first to receive a formal education at an

art school. In fact, any form of formal education was difficult for Roma to access, as her family could not stay in one place for a longer period of time. This, alongside institutional racism, made it difficult for them to access education (Rodell Olgaç, 2013: 199). Rosa Taikon was 35 years old when she was accepted to the metalworking department at *Konstfack*, where the well-known silversmith Sven Arne Gillgren was the head teacher. She studied at *Konstfack* until 1967.

In the Rosa Taikon Archive at Hälsinglands Museum in the north of Sweden one is able to go through her sketches following her work at *Konstfack*. There are classic sketches of hollowware alongside jewellery.² There are also design ideas for objects with clean surfaces and sharp lines, a form of design that one would find among most student works at this time. From these preserved sketches one can follow her work going in a different direction and how she makes sketches of her family's jewellery and integrates aspects of them into her own work. Through the sketches, it is possible to follow her developing her own unique language, in which she would combine late modernist expressive jewellery with Romani traditions. Her powerful jewellery at this time had bold shapes and precise details. She decorated the surfaces with granules and filigree into intricate compositions that emphasised the form. There are decorative details present with a direct reference to the traditions of her family.



◀ Silver earrings designed and crafted by Rosa Taikon.
Photo: Carl Öst Wilkens – Hälsinglands Museum



▲ Silver ring Towhér designed and crafted by Rosa Taikon, 1969. Photo: Bernd Janush

Preserve a tradition

In the article *Konsthantverk, sång, dans, musik. Något om zigenarnas kulturarv* [Craft, song, dance, music. Something about Romani cultural heritage] from 1966 (Taikon 1966), Rosa Taikon writes about her practice, in which she was attempting to "preserve some of the old Romani jewellery art" while at the same time observing how "its fine character and decorative designs can be transferred to a modern form without losing its specific style" (Taikon 1966: 101).

Until recently, outside of the Romani groups in Sweden, very little has been preserved or even known about the Romani tradition Rosa Taikon referred to in her work. The most common craft was, of course, tinning, which for a long time was a source of income. Rosa Taikon's father was trained as a silversmith in Samarkand, and through his work log one can follow his travels all over Sweden to do tinning commissions for restaurants, hotels, bakeries and military garrisons (Fernstål, Hyltén-Cavallius: 87–91).³ However, he also created more elaborate jewellery. Among Rosa Taikon's sketches archived in *Konstfack* there is one of an intricate necklace made by her father. However, very few museums have collected these objects. There are some pieces in the Nordic Museum in Stockholm, where several are attributed to Rosa Taikon's uncle, Bomba Taikon,⁴ and an impressive silver belt is dated to the end of the 19th century at the *Hallands kulturhistoriska museum* in the south of Sweden.⁵ A great contribution to knowledge about Roma craft tradition in Sweden was made by the project *Romskt hantverk igår, idag, imorgon* [Roma craft yesterday, today, to-

morrow] conducted between 2017 and 2019 by the Romani Culture Centre in Malmö in collaboration with the Regional Museum in Kristianstad.⁶ The project created a large inventory of jewellery and craft objects found among Swedish Roma. As a result, the book *Romska Smycken. Hantverk, tradition och ett sätt att leva* [Roma Jewellery. Craft, tradition and a way of life] (Nilsson, Kaldaras 2018) was published. This is a groundbreaking work that published a history of this craft as practiced within the Romani community and traced it to the making of non-Romani craftsmen creating pieces according to Romani designs. The book has several examples of Swedish Romani jewellery, including examples of the tradition that Rosa Taikon references, among them a belt made by her father. The piece is not as elaborate as other works by Johan Taikon⁷ and consists of interlocking axe-shaped pieces with coins issued by the *Svenska Kennelklubben* [the Swedish Kennel Club] (Nilsson, Kaldaras 2018: 42–43). *Romska Smycken. Hantverk, tradition och ett sätt att leva* has a whole chapter about Rosa Taikon, giving evidence of her importance. She is portrayed there as someone who "modernised the smithing art of the Roma, made her own interpretations" (Nilsson, Kaldaras 2018: 97). In the text, the authors also point towards the important work that Hälsinglands Museum is doing by building an archive for Rosa Taikon's work and creating a permanent exhibition about her, as this displays the importance of the Romani craft tradition and shows how it is part of "all Swedes' common cultural heritage and history" (Nilsson, Kaldaras 2018: 99). This dual function is a good definition not just of Rosa Taikon's work, but also of her importance.

³ See also: https://halsinglandsmuseum.se/inlagg/2020/johan-taikons-arbetsbok/?fbclid=IwAR2SGPTkZXYr-0sKj0RuPx0_wFb5FBqVY0uSdZtzif-UsB0ydEipr_sTMzHU [retrieved 2020-09-17]

⁴ <https://digitaltmuseum.se/search/?aq=topic%3A%22Romska%20historia%22&o=0&n=80> [retrieved 2020-04-10] and <https://digitaltmuseum.se/011013840606/romskt-diklosmycke-av-guld-och-stenar-diklo-ar-den-huvudduk-som-bars-av> [retrieved 2020-04-10]

⁵ <https://digitaltmuseum.se/011024191676/zigenarbalte> [retrieved 2020-04-10]

⁶ <http://www.rkcmlmo.se/page/hantverk/> [retrieved 2020-04-10]

⁷ See for instance: Zigenens smycketradition. Rosa Taikon. Stockholm: Nationalmuseum, 1969, p. 19.



► Gold and silver breast chain, early 19th century, Photo: Torkel Edenborg



▲ Belt made by Johan Taikon, 1930s. Photo: Torkel Edenborg

However, *Romska Smycken. Hantverk, tradition och ett sätt att leva* does not go into detail about the individual maker and the conditions in which traditional pieces were made. There are, of course, different forms of making. One practice is described in the report *Kelderashgruppens historia och kulturarv i Sverige* [History and cultural heritage of the Kalderash group in Sweden] (Demetri, Dimeter-Taikon, Rodell Olgaç 2010: 66). This gives an account of how objects were actually made by specific non-Romani craftsmen. Yet *Romska Smycken. Hantverk, tradition och ett sätt att leva* provides evidence of Romani craftsmen producing not just for their own group, but also on commission for customers outside the Roma group (Nilsson, Kaldaras 2018, 40). Rosa Taikon gives several different accounts of this production. In the article "*Konsthantverk, sång, dans, musik*" Rosa Taikon describes what she states was an event of traditional production from the beginning of the 1930s. She does not describe an actual situation, it is a fiction of a possible event. Despite this, the description gives some insights into how we can understand the work of Rosa Taikon in relation to the production of her relatives. In the article, she narrates a story of some of the men in her family spending an evening practicing a craft that had been practiced by them for a very long time (Taikon 1966: 100). She tells us how the skilled craftsmen are "working with simple tools", how the men were divided into groups in which some were tinning while others were watching and learning, while a third group, older men, performed more advanced work. The older men are, in her story, engaged

in joint production in which, as Rosa Taikon puts it, they carry out what she calls "the design elements" and in this process "forms emerge that have never been sketched on any paper, but literally go from hand to hand" (Taikon 1966: 101). This is a tradition performed through a collective act and approved by the participating older men. In another article, she gives an account of the way her father makes wooden and silver staff by himself and the finished product then being collectively examined and handed over to its owner (Rosa Taikon 1981: 12–13). In yet another text she gives an account of watching her father crafting jewellery by himself late at night (Taikon 1969: 14; see also Taikon 1963: 15). What all these accounts give us is the information that the tradition is performed by men, which makes Rosa Taikon an unusual exception as a woman developing a tradition that up until now had been performed exclusively by men. The majority of her jewellery was made not for her family, but for gallery exhibitions, museums, and her many non-Romani customers. She is unique both in relation to the majority society's late modernist jewellery practice and in relation to the traditions of her family. She has participated in, practiced and developed two traditions.

Romani rights activist

As part of her degree work at *Konstfack*, Rosa Taikon made an ornate silver belt for her sister, Katarina Taikon. While Rosa was attending *Konstfack*, she and Katarina came to the forefront of the Romani civil rights movement. An important milestone in this process

was Katarina Taikon's debut book *Zigenerska* (Taikon 1963) published in 1963. This is an autobiographical book that light on the situation of Roma in Sweden as well as on the authorities' ignorance of the situation. Subsequently the book had a huge impact. The same year it was published, 1963, Karl-Axel Sjöblom's and Roland Hjelte's documentary *Vagabond eller vanlig människa?* ["Vagabond or Ordinary Man?"] was broadcast on national television. The program showed the terrible conditions in which the Roma were still living in Sweden, and it also showed the ignorance of the politicians responsible.

Katarina and Rosa Taikon fearlessly challenged power and institutionalised racism. During their civil rights campaigning, the sisters contributed to the founding of the *Zigenarsamfundet* [The Roma Society] in 1964 (Selling 2020: 68). Among other things, *Zigenarsamfundet* published the magazine *Zigenaren: amé beschás* [Journal of the Roma] between 1965 and 1973 (Selling 2020, 36). The magazine was a platform for discussing contemporary politics, for organizing debates, and for writing about history from a Romani perspective. When Dr Martin Luther King, Jr visited Norway to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, he also came to Sweden to attend a meeting with Katarina Taikon (Mohtadi, 2019: 127–128). The 1960s were a time of civic activism for housing, for the right to education, against structural racism, and activism about many other issues concerning the lives of Roma (see Mohtadi 2019). This was a struggle Rosa Taikon would be engaged in throughout her life. She would be given several awards for this work.⁸

The civil rights work created increasing interest in Roma culture and made Katarina and Rosa Taikon into public figures.

Exhibition at the Nationalmuseum

In 1966, Rosa Taikon made her gallery debut at the Bollmora Library. This was an exhibition that, despite being staged at a library in a suburb, received several reviews in the daily press. Articles were written about how Rosa Taikon "starts from old Roma forms and patterns" and "proceeds in her own very independent way" (reviewer unknown: 1967). Another reviewer, Rebecka Tarchsys, wrote in *Dagens Nyheter*, one of Sweden's major newspapers, that in Rosa's works she saw an "educated" continuation of a tradition and that she did not appreciate the modern forms as much as the traditional jewellery. "Educated" here meant trained in the jewellery tradition of the majority society (Tarschys 1967). The reviews document that even before Rosa Taikon left *Konstfack* there was great interest in her art. A smaller exhibition was also staged in 1967 at the Royal Library containing pieces made by Rosa Taikon alongside literature and photos by Björn Langhammer.⁹

In 1969, Rosa Taikon was given an opportunity to stage a solo exhibition at the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm. She would produce the exhibition in collaboration with her partner, Bernd Janusch, an architect who also had become a jewellery artist. Apart from showing his own jewellery works, Bernd Janusch also designed the exhibition space.

⁸ 2010 *Illis quorum meruere labores* from the Swedish Government, 2013 Riksskådebanans Culture Prize, 2013 Olof Palme Prize, 2014 Doctor Honoris (honorary doctorate) at Södertörn University.

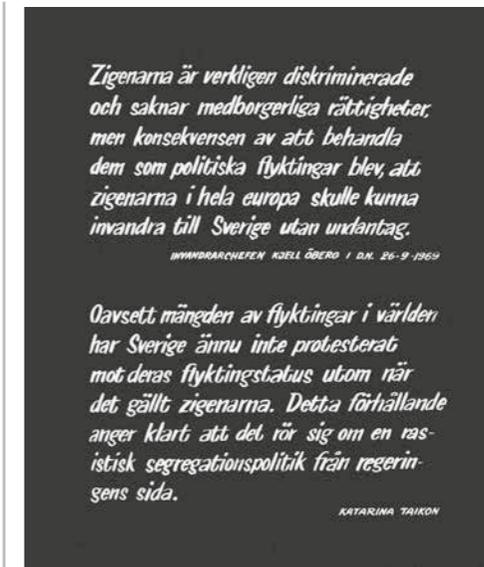
⁹ Kungliga biblioteket, Ämbetsarkivet 1661–2012, Handlingar rörande utställningar och arrangemang 1920–2008, Volym F13:18 Förteckning över utställningar 1952–1977.



▲ Roma Jewellery Tradition – Rosa Taikon, exhibition at Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, 1969. Photo: Nationalmuseum, Stockholm

The exhibition was, to a large extent, curated by the artists themselves and not by the museum. As a result, less focus was placed on Rosa Taikon as an individual artist in order to give space to Romani history and the civil rights struggle (Taikon 1969). The exhibition was called “Roma Jewellery Tradition – Rosa Taikon”. The title emphasised her family tradition rather than Rosa Taikon as an individual jewellery maker, communicating Rosa Taikon as an example of a tradition rather than emphasising her as an individual artist.

The late 1960s was a period of counter-culture in which cultural expression became a method of protesting and formulating alternatives to the given order. Rosa Taikon’s exhibition is a very good example of this movement, as the Nationalmuseum became a platform for day-to-day activism. When the exhibition opened, Rosa and Katarina Taikon were in the middle of a campaign to prevent a group of Roma being deported from Sweden. The activism was visible in the exhibition at the museum as well as on posters advertising the exhibition and in the exhibition catalogue. Within the exhibition, the visitor was confronted by satirical political drawings as well as by signs with critical statements about the Swedish immigration agency. Placards in the gallery pointed to the inconsistency and racism of the Swedish state when it came to the immigration of Roma. In both the exhibition catalogue and posters, there was a piece demanding asylum for Romani refugees under the 1954 Swedish Extradition Act. An issue of the *Zigenaren* magazine was published for the exhibition in which that contem-



porary activism continued alongside a republishing of Katarina Taikon’s article from the exhibition catalogue (*Zigenaren*: amé beschás, 1969).

An exhibition at Röhsska

A few years after the exhibition at the Nationalmuseum, in 1973, Rosa Taikon and Bernd Janusch’s life changed when they bought an old schoolhouse in the small village of Flor in the north of Sweden. It was a choice they made to be able to focus even more on their work. The old schoolhouse was rebuilt by Janusch, who had a background as an architect, and it became an artwork in and of itself. The ground floor became their workshop, and on the upper floor there were rooms for the couple to live in. The house was full of beautiful, precise details where one could recognise shapes found in the jewellery work of both artists.

◀ Poster exhibited in the “Roma Jewellery Tradition – Rosa Taikon” exhibition at Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, 1969. Photo: Nationalmuseum, Stockholm

The text reads:
 “Romani people are really discriminated against and lack civil rights, but the consequence of treating them as political refugees would be that Romani people from the whole of Europe would, without exception, migrate to Sweden.”
 Kjell Öberg, Director-General [of The Swedish Migration agency], citation from the daily newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*, 26 September 1969

“Despite the number of refugees in the world, Sweden has not yet protested against any others being given refugee status - with the exception of the Romani people. This condition demonstrates that we are dealing here with the racist segregation policy of the Government.”
 Katarina Taikon.

¹⁰ Conversation with Bernd Janusch 11 09 2019.

It was a unique artists' house, a *gesamtkunstwerk*, where the house was thought through and designed in every detail. In the workshop, the couple created a workbench where they would sit and work facing each other. For many years they would work almost in symbiosis. Many times they even created pieces together. Their exhibition "Rosa Taikon, Bernd Janusch, Jewellery, Hollowware, Silver" at the *Röhsska musset* [Museum of Design and Craft] in 1983 is a good example of their collaboration.

Unfortunately, there are no surviving images of the exhibition as displayed in the museum, but the catalogue is interesting in how Rosa Taikon and Bernd Janusch chose to exhibit their work, as it differs from how their works were described in the 1969 exhibition. The 1983 exhibition had travelled to 13 places before it arrived at Röhsska, the last place where it was exhibited. It travelled both in Norway as well as in Sweden, starting at the Tendenser [Tendencies] event at Gallery F 15 in Moss, Norway, organised to showcase current Nordic applied arts.

The exhibition catalogue begins with an article by the *Röhsska musset* [Museum of Design and Craft] director Jan Brunius in which he focuses rather more on the techniques Rosa Taikon used in creating her jewellery than on her Romani background. He gives context to her most commonly-used techniques, filigree and granulation, placing them in the broader art history of Sweden and Europe (Brunius 1981: 6–7). This is one of the rare texts that does actually mention her production. The words used to describe her work are somewhat in relation to

the 1969 exhibition. The beginning of the 1980s was a different time, something that is clear in the brief description of arts and crafts in the Swedish National Encyclopaedia, where the late 1960s and 1970s are defined as a time of questioning and community engagement, whereas in the 1980s applied arts "made a comeback" and the concepts of the exclusive and the personal returned (Dahlbäck, Lutteman 1993: 272).

Rosa Taikon's own writing in the *Röhsska* catalogue is also less explicitly political, as she focuses more on her early music practice, on her father's creation of the staff mentioned earlier, and on the importance of music and rhythm in her work. She also discusses her most commonly-used material, silver, and writes about how she is creating "forms that escape explanation in words but rather should be experienced through the senses". References are made to "the sensualism" in Indian temples (Taikon 1981: 12–14). Rosa Taikon and Bernd Janusch allowed themselves to be inspired not only by traditional Romani jewellery, but also by forms found in other cultures such as India.¹⁰ The theme of sensuality was also picked up by the reviewers of the exhibition (Fredlund 1983), a fact that tells us that the beginning of the 1980s is a different time from the politically engaged late 1960s, a change that clearly also influences the staging of Rosa Taikon's work.

Beauty and struggle

Early in her life, Rosa Taikon went beyond the boundaries of the norms of her family. As a woman, she continued a tra-

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▲ Detail from the house of Rosa Taikon and Bernd Janusch in the village of Flor. Photo: Peter Hoelstad



▲ Detail from the house of Rosa Taikon and Bernd Janusch in the village of Flor. Photo: Peter Hoelstad

dition that up until her time had been carried exclusively by men. She would develop this tradition by combining it with contemporary art jewellery discourse. During her education at *Konstfack*, art jewellery was going through a great change, from jewellery as a minor object of adornment to jewellery as a platform for subjective expression. This format would define her work, which subsequently would alter in relation to contemporary influences. She continued to develop her jewellery with great integrity and always with a sharp notion of form while applying details from her family tradition.

Rosa Taikon took part in the development of not just one but two jewellery traditions, Swedish Roma silversmithing alongside late modernist art jewellery. *Romska smycken: hantverk, tradition och ett sätt att leva* describes her position well as that of portraying and confirming Romani history and tradition while at the same time positioning this tradition as part of a common Swedish cultural heritage. This makes her not just one of the most unique, but also one of the most important jewellery artists in Sweden.

This uniqueness is clearly not fully appreciated by national institutions such as the Nationalmuseum, and they are not alone—Rosa Taikon is represented in just one Swedish textbook on Swedish jewellery history (Ericsson 1990: 88–90). When she was invited to *Konstfack* to give a lecture in 2013, it was the first time since she graduated in 1967 that she had been invited back to the school, despite the fact that she had exhibited her work in all the major institutions, been

reviewed by big newspapers, and had TV-shows made about her life (Zetterlund 2017).

The 1969 exhibition at the Nationalmuseum took place during the most hectic period of Katarina and Rosa Taikon's activism. It was a time of counterculture, a perspective that was present in the way the exhibition was put together, including the staging of contemporary activism alongside the strong educational aim of the exhibition. Yet the exhibition was also political in another, less direct way, as it created a contrast between the fine craft it exhibited and the many pieces presented in the other galleries of the National Museum. The exhibition made it clear how the Romani tradition was absent from the way in which the Nationalmuseum chose to define "the nation". The exhibition presented a radical challenge that has not yet been answered by the Nationalmuseum – not then, and not now.

I would argue that the Nationalmuseum's approach is an example of a structure present in majority institutions presenting minority cultures. To understand this way of narrating minority identity, Stuart Hall's article "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" is useful. Hall argues for two distinct understandings of cultural identity. One identity is defined as a common cultural identity with a shared historical experience and stable cultural codes. Against this form of essentializing identity, he proposes a definition of identity in which identity is not something that already exists beyond time and place. Hall writes that "[C]ultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything that

is historical, they undergo constant transformation” (Hall 1990: 112). Identity is a forming process that is related to history, or rather histories, but that primarily is a process of becoming, cultural identity “belongs to the future as much as the past” (Hall 1990: 112). A singular object in a collection becomes a career without a time, without a relation to the futures that could change it.

However, through some current, vital work, the situation is about to change. Through the important work done by the Roma Culture Centre in Malmö, the knowledge of one of the traditions that Rosa Taikon refers to is being furthered. Perhaps the most important effort in strengthening the reception of Rosa Taikon’s work by the majority society is being done at the Hälsinglands Museum. Building the Rosa Taikon Archive allows for current knowledge production about this imaginative, precise, and complex artist and opens up room for future research projects.

Resources:

Archival materials

Kungliga biblioteket, Ämbetsarkivet 1661–2012, Handlingar rörande utställningar och arrangemang 1920–2008, Volym F13:18 Förteckning över utställningar 1952–1977

Nationalmuseum archive, Stockholm

Nationalmuseum image archive, Stockholm

The collection of Rosa Taikon at Hälsingland’s museum, Hälsingland Museum, Hudiksvall

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