

>>EXHIBITION

LUCY WILLIAMS: PAVILION

Until 11 January

Timothy Taylor Gallery, London

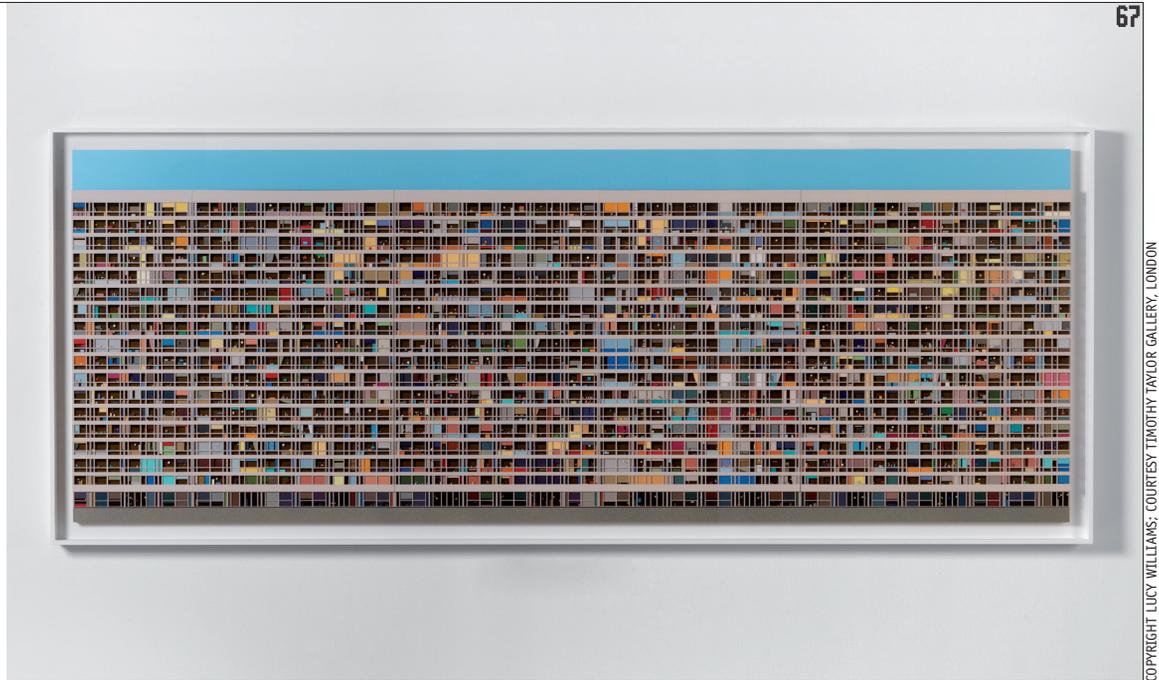
Review by Herbert Wright

Right: Williams' epic collage, depicting Jean Dubuisson's *Maine-Montparnasse* apartments across 2.7m, appears as a rich, articulated texture from afar but reveals intimate interiors close up

Like much of the architectural community, British artist Lucy Williams is transfixed by modernism. She uses montage to create images of modernist architecture, layered pictures with just millimetres of depth and a variety of materials that are so meticulous, each can take up to three months to make. At the Timothy Taylor Gallery, some of her latest works are even mounted on an orthogonal wooden frame with coloured panels inspired by Bauhaus.

The 16 works on show survey interiors, which are not identified, and exteriors of specific buildings. All are unpopulated, and most works present a straight-on view of buildings. Seen through the lighting gel and Perspex she uses to brilliantly represent the bronzed glass in the Seagram Building, and across her four-storey section, ceilings angle with height. That particular piece infuses Mies van der Rohe's monolithic design with unexpected warmth.

Her renderings of Eric Lyons' Span housing share it, underlined by use of astutely chosen materials such



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as jesmonite in the lattice panels of Herrick Court. However, an occasional use of blue needlepoint, as in Parkleys, is a misfit – its opaque texture is totally unlike a clear sky. Otherwise, colours are painstakingly built up with paint, and depth with layers built on cork or elements protruding from their plane. Even oven knobs in an interior have form.

Perhaps the most stunning work on show is the biggest, a 2.7m-wide representation of the facade of Jean Dubuisson's *Maine-Montparnasse* apartments (1959-64). Here, Williams is a peeping tom, revealing each lampshade, cupboard and book

behind every window. Yet through some 1,000 windows, there is still no-one to be seen.

Stripped of context as well as people, this mammoth residential block, in reality part of the looming Paris complex that includes a 210m-high office tower, becomes a mesmerising field of colour and geometry. It has the joy of the *Unite d'Habitation*, but without embellishments (roof structures, piloti), leveraging the grid to the max. Here, the abstract purity Williams finds in modernism is taken furthest, verging magnificently towards a flat Piet Mondrian canvas

(despite the 3.5cm depth frame).

It's easy to compare Williams with Thomas Demand, the master of cardboard facsimiles. Both render their subjects super-cleanly, opening a gap between reality and representation. While Demand exploits this gap to question perception, Williams is passionate, out to celebrate her subjects. With depth, colour and texture, she refreshes their puritan rationalism and adds to it. She strips modernism of its arrogance and makes it lovable again. Williams is so much more than a master draughtsperson with an eye for colour – she brings beauty and fascination to her subject.

>>EXHIBITION

UNEXPECTED PLEASURES

Until 3 March

Design Museum, London

Review by Enya Moore

Right: Atelier Ted Noten's *Tiara for Maxima* was designed in the wake of Princess Diana's fatal crash – with the safety of her Dutch counterpart Princess Máxima in mind

By way of introducing *Unexpected Pleasures*, curator Dr Susan Cohn describes the relationship between contemporary jewellery and design as akin to the rapport between two strangers at a party: They spot each other across the room, think they know each other but are unsure. They end up talking find they get along.

This slightly awkward relationship is an apt description of where contemporary jewellery has previously sat within the design world.

Unexpected Pleasures marks the first foray of contemporary jewellery into the Design Museum. The exhibition, containing an impressive 186 pieces, is split into a variety of themed displays. The 'categories' that Cohn has created are welcome additions to the customary labelling jewellery or craft receives. Instead of focusing entirely on the skills, materials and processes used by the jeweller, the message being portrayed



COURTESY ATELIER TED NOTEN

is treated with equal importance, if not more.

Physical Matters examines the use of different materials to enhance a given idea, whereas *Handmade* highlights the making skills of jewellers. Nel Linssen's trademark paper jewellery illustrates this to great effect; Linssen stacks paper discs to create thick, textured coils to wear around the neck or arm. And *Finish Me Off* takes digital technologies as its focus, highlighting that within jewellery making digital manufacture has been used for quite some time.

Dividing the jewellery into these categories succeeds in highlighting

diverse techniques, ideas and processes, but it also loads the visitor with somewhat dense information, requiring a deliberately paced trip around the gallery.

Statement pieces are dotted around in solitary cabinets under the heading *Worn Out*. These showcase notable designs as precious artefacts, such as Droog co-founder Gijs Bakkers' *Dew Drop* (see p42 for more on Droog), a photograph of a rose encased in PVC to be worn around the neck, and Paul Derrez's *Pleated Collar* of plastic and steel. Another well represented Dutch designer is Ted Noten, whose *Tiara for Maxima*

is, as usual with his work, loaded with humour.

For the opening, a panel discussion, chaired by Design Museum director Deyan Sudjic with a luminaries including Cohn, design critic Stephen Bayley, the V&A's Glenn Adamson, and jeweller Solange Azagury-Partridge, sadly fell back on tired deliberations that cloud craft-related disciplines. The customary barriers between design, art and craft were thrown in with some archaic statements about what design is or should be; however, as pointed out by Bakker, this conversation is over.

Contemporary jewellery traverses boundaries of fine art, design and craft, and has done so for years. In regards to the exhibition's validity at the Design Museum, Adamson made the valid remark that museums and galleries are starting to behave as the art students of today who, 'make a video one day, a pot the next and a necklace the day after that', realising that there is no longer a need to be rigid within disciplines.

One would hope that this flexibility in the arts will lead to a wider appreciation and acknowledgement for areas such as contemporary jewellery.