

Fusion of Love and Freedom: Pet Jewellery Designs

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Abstract: With the deepening of economic globalisation, people's living standards have risen significantly. Driven by new lifestyles and development trends, more and more people choose pets as important companions in their lives. The concept of jewellery design in this paper originates from jewellery designers' thoughts on the relationship between people, pets and the environment, and takes the close relationship between contemporary people and pets as the starting point for an in-depth discussion on the association and communion between people, pets and the environment. Taking the phenomenon of snails being kept by some people as a starting point for research, this paper explores the problems faced by this species in terms of limited living space and freedom due to its high reproductive capacity. The five Snail Cat jewellery collections are inspired by the concepts of "freedom of pets" and "love and freedom", and are based on documentary research and explorations with artists. The five pieces of jewellery in the Snail Cat collection reflect the jewellery designer's core philosophy of replacing the companionship of a pet with the value of freedom, compensating for the companionship of an animal to a human being through the wearing of jewellery, and raising awareness of the importance of returning the freedom of a pet.

Keywords: Jewellery Design; Pet Freedom; Human-pet Relationship.

1. Introduction

In recent years, pet ownership has become increasingly popular as a practice for people seeking companionship and emotional support. This trend reflects not only the deep-seated human desire for emotional connection but also inspires jewellery designers to create pieces that symbolise the profound relationship between humans and their pets. The Snail Cat collection, in particular, seeks to replace the physical companionship of pets with jewellery while simultaneously championing the freedom of pets, thus exploring the intricate and multifaceted relationship between humans, pets, and the environment.

The conceptualisation of this project is grounded in a range of comprehensive research methods, including interviews, documentary analysis, and artist case studies, to highlight the shared spiritual values between humans and pets. Both pets and jewellery fulfill the human need for emotional connection and companionship to some extent, making them significant elements in daily life. However, while pets provide emotional support and comfort to their owners within the domestic sphere, their freedom is often constrained. This project aims to bridge these aspects by merging the symbolic value of jewellery with the theme of companionship, using jewellery's intimate nature to provoke reflection among pet owners on the state of "freedom" and "limitation" experienced by their pets.

In a natural environment, pets are inherently "free" creatures, embodying independence and instinctual behavior. However, under human care and within domestic settings, they often transition into a state of captivity, becoming dependent and restricted. This inherent tension between the states of freedom and confinement serves as the foundational inspiration for this project. To convey this complex dynamic, a series of detachable jewellery pieces have been designed to symbolise the 'restricted freedom' of pets. When the components of the jewellery are connected, the pet's form is integrated into the piece, illustrating a relationship of dependence. Conversely, when the components are detached, the jewellery transforms to present the pet as a complete and independent entity, symbolising the freedom it inherently

deserves.

Through the "pet perspective," this project re-examines the boundaries of the relationship between humans and pets, emphasising the intrinsic value of pets as sentient, independent beings. The design calls upon pet owners to not only appreciate the emotional support that pets provide but to also respect their natural instincts and inherent rights. This advocacy for pets' natural freedoms encourages a shift in how pets are perceived—not merely as possessions or emotional surrogates, but as beings deserving of autonomy.

This project also seeks to prompt broader social discourse about the ethical considerations inherent in human-pet relationships. The detachable nature of the jewellery serves as a metaphor for the delicate balance between attachment and freedom, reflecting the dual nature of human-pet relationships—one that involves care and companionship, but must also acknowledge the potential constraints imposed by human needs and desires. The materials used in the jewellery, such as soft fabrics and flexible components, aim to evoke the tactile, comforting presence of pets while simultaneously suggesting their vulnerability under human control.

Ultimately, this project aspires to reshape public understanding of the role of pets in our lives and the way we engage with them. By introducing jewellery as a medium that embodies both love and freedom, it challenges pet owners to reconsider their responsibilities and the ethical implications of keeping pets as companions. Through these reflections, the project encourages a more empathetic, respectful, and balanced approach to pet ownership, fostering relationships that are built not just on attachment and dependence, but on mutual respect and shared well-being.

2. Theoretical Framework

The philosophical underpinnings of keeping and caring for animals in modern society are largely made up of the core themes of animal rights theory, animal welfare theory and animal liberation theory. Scholars such as Peter Singer, Tom Regan and Gary Francione, as representatives of these theories, emphasise the value of animals in terms of sensory

abilities and self-awareness in terms of the value and rights of living individuals. Together, the views of these scholars constitute the animal rights school, which advocates the granting of fundamental rights to animals and favours moral respect for their senses and sense of self.

2.1. Animal Liberation Theory

Since its publication in 1975, Singer's book *Animal Liberation* has laid an important academic foundation for animal ethics, becoming a landmark event for the cause of animal protection, and has even been hailed as the bible of the animal rights movement[1]. Since then, the book has been translated and published in many languages and has had a profound impact on the global ethical community. Singer's theory of animal liberation is based on the sensory capacity of life, and advocates that as long as individual organisms have the capacity to feel pain and pleasure, their interests should be considered equally, and puts forward the core idea that "all animals are equal".

2.2. Animal Rights Theory

In 1983, Reagan published *In Defence of Animal Rights*, in which he explored in depth the issue of animal consciousness under the framework of the "belief-desire" theory and put forward the concept of animal rights, arguing that all animals should enjoy the right to life, liberty and bodily integrity. 1986, American environmental ethicist Paul Taylor put forward a biocentric approach to environmental ethics in *Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics*, arguing that animals, like human beings, have the right to choose what is right for them. Taylor, in *Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics*, proposed a biocentric approach to environmental ethics, asserting that animals, like humans, have the right to choose what is right for them. Taylor argues that animals should not be viewed merely as tools for research, food, or clothing, but as beings with emotional and moral values that deserve respect. These ideas provided theoretical support for animal rights activists, driving them to fight for justice for animal rights and against human injustice and cruelty to animals. They have argued for a ban on the slaughter of animals, against the use of animals in experimental research, and against the use of animal products in clothing and other accessories[2].

2.3. Animal Welfare Theory

Animal welfare theory states that animals were created for human use and should be used for food, development of clothing, research projects and other purposes. However, it also states that all animals have feelings and emotions just like humans and should not be subjected to inhumane treatment[3]. Based on animal rights theory, animal psychology theory and animal welfare theory, I advocate that while respecting the instrumental value of pets, we should also respect their intrinsic value as independent individuals. This not only includes providing pets with the space to make choices, but also emphasises that pets, as beings with autonomous will, should enjoy due respect and care.

2.4. Design Concept and Methodology of "Snail Cat" Jewellery

The design concept of this jewellery stems from the designer's deep reflection on the relationship between humans, pets and the environment, and is based on the intimate relationship between contemporary people and their pets,

exploring the contradictions and harmonies therein[4]. Based on the practice of snail breeding by some people, the design focuses on the situation of snails, a species whose living space is gradually reduced and its freedom restricted due to its high fertility in long-term breeding. Through research, documentation and interviews with artists, the designers drew inspiration from the idea of "pet freedom" to create a series of five "Snail Cat" jewellery pieces. This series of jewellery not only demonstrates the designer's intention to replace the companionship of pets with jewellery, but also conveys the idea of returning the freedom of pets, reminding people that the companionship of pets is to be cherished, but the freedom they deserve should be respected even more.

In order to materialise the ideas presented and incorporate them into the design of the jewellery, this paper uses the interview, documentary research and artist research methods as the design methodology. The interview and documentary research methods provide a wealth of data and theoretical support, and then the artist research method is used to apply the design concepts to the actual creation of the jewellery.

3. Research Methodology and Related Artists

3.1. Interview Method

In order to gain a deeper understanding of how people view their pets, this study expanded the scope of data collection using a combination of online and offline methods. Through in-depth interviews with three pet owners, the study explored their motivations for owning pets, the way they live with their pets, and their attitudes towards pet freedom. One interviewee argued that pets are destined to be domesticated by humans and that this is their "destiny", but this view ignores the wishes and needs of the pets themselves and does not pay attention to their desire for freedom.

In addition, the jewellery designers used internet platforms to collect and analyse web pages, videos and online comments related to pets and jewellery. For example, one comment reads, "It's cute and fluffy. When you open the door, he will stare at you with wide eyes and then run to the door to rub against you and bark twice. He will stay with me until the end of my life. I love my cat, and I don't care if he loves me or not, because he's just a silly kitten with no concept of love, and his company is enough." Comments like these reflect the increasing emotional attachment of contemporary young people to their pets.

In the fast-paced modern life, it is often difficult for young people to maintain stable and lasting relationships, and raising children can be too heavy and expensive. As a result, pets have become an ideal choice for emotional support. People can gain emotional support and enjoy long-lasting companionship through pet ownership. Based on this observation, jewellery designers have come up with the design concepts of "Pet Freedom" and "Love and Freedom", which provide an important direction for subsequent jewellery designs.

3.2. Literature Research Method

Through extensive review of previous research, we have expanded the content and theoretical foundation of this study and have gained a wealth of data and ideas from the results of industry experts and scholars. In "Why Pet Ownership is Fundamentally Unethical," the authors present a thought-provoking viewpoint: "We are property owners, and they are

our property." This view sees pets as a commodity and likens the title "pet owner" to a relationship of ownership of property or slavery, suggesting that human control over pets is some form of species discrimination.

Other scholars argue that dogs that have been domesticated for a long period of time have adapted to a life of dependence on humans at a genetic level, and that it would be difficult for them to return to survival in the wild. However, this dependence does not imply complete adaptation or fulfilment. For example, certain articles point out that domestic dogs in bondage lose their autonomy under restrictive conditions, and that such restrictions infringe to some extent on their free choice and natural behaviour.

At the same time, there is controversy as to whether the loyalty and attachment of domesticated dogs to their owners really implies emotional fulfilment. It has been argued that a dog's loyalty is merely an expression of dependence rather than true emotional fulfilment. If dogs view humans as substitutes for pack members, then the relationship reflects more of the humans' own needs and assumptions than the dogs' active choices. If humans need pets as emotional substitutes, the act of domestication is primarily an understanding and construction of the pet relationship from the human perspective.

To sum up, this study can express the contradiction between human's emotional attachment to pets and pets' desire for freedom through jewellery design, in order to explore the theme of "love and freedom", and to achieve respect and reflection on pets as independent individuals.

3.3. Jacqueline Treder

Jacqueline Treder is a performance artist who is deeply disgusted by the practice of cosmetic testing on animals and seeks to communicate the cruelty of the practice to the public through self-experimentation [5]. In a glass window in Oxford Circus, she performed for ten hours. During this extreme series of events, Treder had her mouth clamped with pliers, was force fed, had a strand of her hair shaved off and was given two injections. Through self-replacement, this artist physically demonstrates to the public the pain of animal abuse.

Treder's performance art is not only a direct visual impact, but also practices the concept of animal protectionism. Her extreme self-mutilation experiments can effectively stimulate the audience's senses, making it easier for them to substitute into the role of animals and focus on the ethical issues raised by animal experiments. Through this intense form of expression, Treder succeeds in triggering a profound reflection on animal experimentation, prompting viewers to re-examine the relationship between humans and animals and their moral responsibilities.

3.4. Lan Cheng

Lan Cheng is an avant-garde artist working to dissolve the boundaries between art and artificial intelligence. Drawing on principles of video game design, cognitive science, and improvisation, he develops "living simulations"-virtual ecosystems that begin with basic programming properties and are allowed to evolve on their own with no intent or purpose given to their creators. By modelling the dynamics of often imaginative organisms and objects, Ransom aims to reveal the relentless causality of the natural world.

He describes these analogue works as a kind of 'neurogym', a form of exercise for confusion, anxiety and cognitive

dissonance. Such feelings, accompanied by constant change, have become an important feature of our times. Lan Cheng creates a vacuum, an ecosystem of complete freedom and self-will, a wildly innovative approach that is distinctly avant-garde. Through the means of modern artificial intelligence, he creates a primitive world of freedom, a conflict and opposition that is thought-provoking.

While many artists explore the nature of freedom, Lan Cheng offers a concrete representation of the possibility of freedom that is deeply compelling. Such a concept deeply inspires me and I also present the idea of independence and freedom in my jewellery designs through the freedom to dismantle[6].

3.5. Dan Witts

New York-based artist Dan Witts's East London work *Empty the Cage* [7] cleverly raises the issue of animal consumption and its horrific consequences by placing chicken claws and pig's heads in 30 different locations on the streets of Shoreditch. Witts argues that phenomena such as climate change, deforestation, wildlife extinction, water waste, air pollution and the deadening of the oceans can all be directly attributed to the production of meat, dairy and eggs. The artwork strikes a direct chord with this perspective in an everyday way for passers-by.

Inspired by this, I have designed a section of the jewellery design as a chain of confinement, aiming to go deeper into my theme of freedom and bondage. This design not only reflects a concern for animal rights, but also provokes reflection on consumer behaviour and its environmental impact.

4. Analysis of the "Snail Cat" Jewellery Collection

The project is based on a fairy tale about the "freedom and dilemma" of animals in the relationship between humans and their pets, and a series of jewellery designs based on this background.

There was a little girl who was diagnosed with depression by a doctor who suggested she get a pet to keep her company and maybe it would have some healing effect. So, the little girl went into a pet shop, and there was a unique snail cat in the pet shop who had grown up in the pet shop and had never seen the outside world. The snail cat was very curious about what the outside world was like, so he wanted to see the outside world by being adopted. The girl noticed that the snail cat was so different, she had never seen a pet like this before and the snail cat looked so lonely. She thought: maybe we are the same, both so lonely and unique. So the little girl bought it and brought it home. The little girl gained the snail cat's company at home. When she was sad, the snail cat would rub its head against her and lick her teardrops with its little tongue. When she is happy, the little girl strokes the snail cat's fluffy shell and it purrs in comfort. The appearance of the snail cat brightened up her dark life, and she would tidy up and clean up for the snail cat every day, and when she was lonely, she would talk to the snail cat. The little girl took the snail cat as her spiritual support and the whole meaning of her life. The girl is very kind to the snail cat, but she hates to step out of her home and won't let the snail cat step out of her home. However, the grounded snail cat is eager to see the outside world and looks forward to playing and exploring with her previous companion in the pet shop, so the snail cat tries to run away from the girl. However, every time the little girl sees

the snail cat trying to escape, she catches it back and scolds it angrily, because the snail cat is her only hope for life. Over time, the snail cat gave up its struggle and began to mope around, no longer having a smile on its face and becoming depressed. The girl noticed that the snail cat had no more smile and was no longer willing to play with her. She gradually became depressed and her health got worse and worse, and finally fell ill. In a daze, she had a dream in which the snail cat asked the girl to give him freedom, and it hoped that the girl would step out of her room, see more of the outside world, meet new friends, and learn to love herself and enjoy her own life. He also wants the girl to respect the snail cat's own wishes. The girl wakes up in grief, but chooses to let the snail cat return to the forest. Slowly the girl learns to accept the fact that the snail cat is no longer with her, and she also understands that people need to learn to be independent and not to impose their will on an innocent animal. When she misses the snail, she makes her own jewellery and crafts about the snail cat, and the process of making the jewellery slowly heals her, allowing her to reconcile with herself and the snail cat.

This project is based on the storyline of the protagonists, the snail cat and the little girl, who have designed a series of jewellery pieces that are independently detachable and combinable. For the wearer, the body of the jewellery is detachable, when it is attached to the jewellery's fittings it becomes part of the jewellery, and when it is detached it becomes another independent individual piece of jewellery, symbolising the snail cat and the little girl respectively. Pets and jewellery are similar in terms of spiritual value for humans, both play a role in accompanying and embellishing humans to a certain extent. Therefore, this design integrates the two, and through the characteristic of jewellery accompanying humans closely, it warns pet owners to a certain extent, hoping that humans will not imprison their pets with their own desires. Therefore, in the choice of materials, the soft healing touch is used as much as possible to simulate the feeling that pets bring to humans. For this project, we mainly chose wool, imitation wool fabric and silicone to realise our theme. We hope to add some magnetic materials in the future design, mainly want to express that accessories and the main body will repel each other if they are too close, and can only coexist at a moderate distance, reflecting the sense of moderate distance and boundary.

A total of 5 pieces of jewellery have been designed for this project.

The first design uses palm jewellery to express the human desire to control a pet. When people hold the jewellery in their hands, it is like touching a pet, and the action of holding the snail in the hand is like trying to control the snail in their own hands, when people hold the body of the snail jewellery with force, it is squeezed and deformed, and even destroyed. In this piece of jewellery, I used soft silicone and plush fabric to simulate the feeling of a pet, and silicone is an easily deformable material that is also suitable for this piece of jewellery. At the same time, the accessories of the jewellery are mainly designed with chains, to simulate the prison chains to confine the pets. It fits the theme well. In terms of craftsmanship, it is divided into four parts. The first part is the snail's translucent and extruded body. I first used super clay to make a prototype of the model and glued a wooden stick to the body part so that it can be combined with the snail's shell part with glue, and then glued it to a wooden board with cardboard around it as a container to form the mould. Next,

spray the inside of the container with mould oil to make the mould release better. Pour the silicone slowly into the container and wait for a day, carefully remove the mould and apply a thin layer of petroleum jelly to the inside of the mould so that the silicone does not stick to the mould after being poured in, then pour the silicone into the mould and wait for a day before carefully removing it. Wait for the mould to dry completely and then paint the first part of the snail with acrylics. The second part is the snail's shell. I cut out two pieces of imitation wool fabric, then I took a handful of dyed wool and poked it with a needle to create a pattern on the snail's shell. Then I used pearlescent white beads to sew around the outside of the wool for decoration. Next turn the fabric inside out and sew around the edges, sewing two thirds of the way through turning the fabric inside out to place the stuffed cotton. The second part is then completed by gluing the open part to the raised part of the snail's body and fitting the metal lobster clasp. The first part of the jewellery is the chain, I 3D modelled the look of the chain, resin printed it, then filed the edges, fitted the metal lobster clasp, attached it to the snail shell and the overall jewellery was complete.

The second design is a snail jewellery piece that clings to the earrings, representing the over-domesticated, over-dependent pets that have to rely on humans to survive, and it is a jewellery piece that can be worn every day, just as humans keep their pets by their side all the time. At the same time, the earrings of this piece of jewellery are also removable, and can be replaced with a bag charm or a mobile phone charm to reflect this sense of companionship and being in control all the time. For the crafting part, I still used super clay to make the prototype of the model, then I used silicone pouring film, slowly poured jasmonate into the silicone model, waited for 2 to 3 hours, took it out carefully, and then sanded it with sandpaper to make it smooth. For the snail shell part, poke the shape with wool, then poke the pattern of the shell with white wool, glue the body and shell. Since the metal ring was placed on the snail's arm, I needed a bigger and thicker one, so I wrapped copper wire around the ring to make it look like a spring, sawed the centre with a saw, and then finished it off by filing it. Then I used pliers to attach the lobster clasp, the metal ring and the earrings.

The third design is a soft snail bag which is a detachable design, when the body of the snail is removed, it can become a pillow. When he becomes a pillow, people will keep leaning their heads against it and hugging it, while when it becomes a backpack, people will keep strapping it to their bodies. This design shows how much control people have over their pets. Similarly I used soft colours and filled the body of the snail with cotton to show the healing and soothing feeling that human pets bring to humans, as well as the powerlessness of pets over human control with this soft material. For the craft, I first cut out the circle of the snail shell from the faux-fur fabric, then poked out the shape of the snail shell from the dyed wool, then turned the fabric inside out, leaving a spot where it would be combined with the snail's body, and stitched the edges together with a sewing machine. Then cut out the body part of the snail and poke the snail's features with the wool, then turn the fabric inside out and sew it together, leaving some space for the cotton. Next, place the snail shell into the cotton and sew it to the snail body. Sew a fabric for the clasp on both sides of the shell and place the square clasp in it. The same goes for the bag, sew the body together and then sew a clasp to the front and back of the bag and place the lobster clasp into the bag.

The fourth design is a snail hair band with three snail accessories that are removable and attached with velcro. The hair band allows people to put their favourite snail on their head and show their pet to people, showing how much they love their pet, but people want to fix him on their head, also showing the controlling nature of human beings.

The fifth design is a snail brooch. The brooch is the ornament closest to the heart, reflecting the importance of the pet to the pet owner, and reminding the pet owner of the need to treat the pet with sincerity. At the same time, the snail is also removable and can be reassembled into the first hand jewellery, as a way of expressing that although people value their pets, they still want to hold them tightly in the palm of their hands and control them at all times.

5. Conclusion

This article explores the intricate relationship between people, pets and the environment, which is both paradoxical and unifying, and identifies how jewellery design can convey an owner's love for their pet and the pet's desire for freedom. The five Snail Cat jewellery collections are inspired by "pet freedom" and "love and freedom", highlighting the designer's respect for pet freedom and giving pets their independence. Wearing these jewellery pieces is not only a sign of appreciation for the animals, but also a sign of love for them. Wearing these jewellery pieces is not only a way of compensating for the companionship of an animal, but also a reminder of the responsibility of giving pets the freedom they deserve.

We expect the end result to be that pets will be able to live their lives on their own terms, not commodified by humans, but respected as independent creatures. Humans should understand the intrinsic value of pets as animals and not simply see them as fillers for the emotional world. This concept not only reflects respect for animal rights, but also

prompts us to re-examine our relationship with our pets and pursue a more balanced and harmonious model of human-pet symbiosis.

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