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20 Years of Karl Fritsch: Inside the artist's first U.S. retrospective at Salon 94

By Sue Williamson



Installation view of Karl Fritsch at Salon 94. Courtesy of Salon 94.

"A ring can be everything," explains German-born, New Zealand based jewelry artist Karl Fritsch, whose first U.S. retrospective is now on view at New York's Salon 94. "There are so many reasons to wear a ring and there are often stories attached to them. Jewelry is like a memory container for all these life stories and I offer new containers for people to fill." Fritsch's "containers" straddle the line between sculpture and jewelry—an idea he has played up with by displaying them all on one long piece of plywood in the middle of the gallery. "I like it when jewelry is not behind cases. This is a way you can come really close to it and engage with it," he says. "When I mix the pieces up, new stories and new communications happen and they talk to each other." Some baubles take on animal shapes, others are more classic, and Fritsch's style has clearly changed countless times in the last 20 years—yet his commitment to the ring remains steadfast. "I never get bored making a solitaire ring and I'm always trying to come up with a contemporary, today version," he says. "Narrowing the focus always opens up a new path."

Karl Fritsch: A Retrospective is on view at Salon 94 through December 18, 2015.