

Overview

conversations on jewellery in aotearoa, nz issue #16

March 2014

The WUNDERRUMA Edition



WUNDERRUMA

**GALERIE HANDWERK
MUNICH, GERMANY**

7 MARCH- 17 APRIL 2014

inside:

Curators Warwick Freeman and Karl Fritsch speak candidly about the road to Munich

The Jewellers Guild of Greater Sandringham visit Fran Allison for conversation and chocolate eclair

Niki Hastings-McFall talks to Sharon Fitness about art and jewellery

**LIESBETH DEN BESTEN
KRISTIN D'AGOSTINO
JUSTINE OLSEN
BRANDLANDIA**

AND MORE

editorial

Hello world.

It's us.

The Jewellers Guild of Greater Sandringham with the first printed edition of Overview to celebrate Wunderrūma curated by Warwick Freeman and Karl Fritsch. It is some distance from digital hijinks to tabloid shenanigans and here at Guild headquarters extra meetings, with more chips and beer than is good for us, were imperative to getting Overview from screen to newsprint.

And though it has been some time since the Acta Diruna, its daily messages carved into stone and metal for the Roman public, we remember its intention here in Overview because it represented a transparency in the process of government. This transparency to process is our beat as well and we bring you an Overview world-view of how over 76 kiwi jewellers came to Munich. We have reticulated the splines, adjusted the plasma manifold and calibrated the dilithium crystals and gone in search of the story behind Wunderrūma.

Sharon Fitness and Jo Mears give us a topsy-turvy account of which way is up – depending on where you are standing. Jo Mears is our newest contributor; find out what 'Jules' gets up to in our next issue. Note, any resemblance to real and actual people in this comic strip is purely coincidental.

Liesbeth den Besten took her golden pen and wrote a new manifesto for jewellery-ness. Forget about 'schmuckashau' she states. OK. We will.

Kristin D'Agostino offers up an American view of taonga, in order to learn more about her adopted county. What do you think? She wants to know and has provided an addressed aerogramme for you to cut out and send back to us here in Sandringham.

Raewyn Walsh, along with Sharon and Kristin, visit Karl and Warwick to get the inside scoop on Wunderrūma. Exclusive! Karl Fritsch is a real person, not just the head and shoulders seen on screen in these pages. We cannot tell you what the exhibition is going to look like, but we can tell you about the kind of thinking that surrounds it. We think they are awesome.

Look to your right and you will see an invitation to 'an idea' from Renee Bevan and Jhana Millers. There is more inside from Justine Olsen, Niki Hastings-McFall, Neke Moe, Fran Allison, and Zoe Brand. All made possible thanks to the support from sponsorship and advertising and our thanks go to the galleries and individuals who have contributed to this, the Wunderrūma, edition of Overview.

Kia Ora.

Imagine a big chunky bracelet

Imagine it in your favourite colour

Imagine it on your right wrist

Now imagine you can never take it off, ever

An idea is an ongoing project and collaboration by Jhana Millers and Renee Bevan. Exhibiting instructional ideas for artworks both online and in the public space. We invite you, the public, to author and activate these ideas and email images or stories of the resulting work to be shared on our website anidea.info.

This instruction was created by Roya Hazel Lea.

If you would like to share your story or an image please send it to us at submit@anidea.info.



It's just a jump ring to the left

Sharon Fitness and Jo Mears
get some global perspective



The right side up world

It all depends on what way you look at it I suppose. Global perspective. You could say we have a bit of an upside down, chicken and the egg complex.

Who is looking at who. The idea of distance and the problem of distance and New Zealand being so far away from the rest of the world. The fact that distance is not really a problem anymore with the internet and all the imagery. You can see things however you wanna see them, but there is still that yearning... To go to Europe to see jewellery in the flesh and not just to see imagery. To make connections.

If you stand on your head and look down at Earth from above the South Pole you would see the Earth rotating clockwise on its axis and rotating clockwise around the Sun. Proof! We all know that clockwise is the right way to go, therefore, the South Pole is the true top of the world.

I think Einstein might have had a relative theory of space time warping.



NZ eye view

Before, you could only bridge that distance by getting on an aeroplane, and now you can bridge it on the internet. The internet is almost like a Tardis that can shoot imagery in real time... and also real time with FaceTime and Messaging and the sharing of information is so quick but it doesn't replace the actual object in the flesh, and the people in the flesh.

'There is an art, or rather, a knack of flying. The knack lies in learning how to

throw yourself at the ground and miss.'[i]

We pretty much had to teach ourselves how to make jewellery in Aotearoa New Zealand out of Bone, Stone and Shell – well we did in the 80's anyway. A few Europeans moved in and taught us tricks in the 60's, and later Herman Junger and Otto Kunzli came to visit, but mostly we did our own thing. Our jewellery schools started in the late 80's. In the 90's one of us moved to Europe and started playing with glue and sheep.

Why? Because to the regular Schmuck attendees, we are outsiders. We present an outsider version of contemporary jewellery that perhaps has less baggage than the usual European suspects, although still lugging a sidecar of meaning and innuendo particular to the place we come from.

You cannot escape time or even creating time lines. Connecting things that are not connected. Making connections. Time and connections. It's connecting time. That's what they are doing they are connecting time. Warwick and Karl are connecting objects from different times. Bringing them together in a Tardis called Wunderrüma.

In Munich, a time warp away from reality space.

Alternative gravitational perspective: Top is the top of the Earth (the bit you are standing on) and down is the centre of the planet.

The internet is like a Tardis. Bringing time capsules together. So Wunderrüma could be like the opening of a time capsule, but that time capsule isn't just one time, its this whole buzz of the things from now and from then that were maybe forgotten, brought out of the drawer, to hold themselves to be just as valuable in this time as they were in that time.

'Lets do the time warp again.'[ii]

By Sharon Fitness & Jo Mears

[i] Douglas Adams, *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy* (Pan, London) 1979

[ii] Richard Obrien, "The Time Warp" lyrics, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, (20th Century Fox) 1973

The desire to bring together a bunch of things that kind of speak to each other and the concept of time when distance was a big problem, and now we are in another time, in a time warp, where distance is not a problem, but there is a desire to connect in person. With Wunderrüma there is a timeline with the early Maori Taonga stuff and the Bone Stone Shell and the new guns and the old guns.

But Europe was inhabited first so it must be on top. Yes, cavemen invented schmuck.

The city comes alive with a swarm of contemporary jewellers weaving in and out of the galleries. Meeting new people becomes almost more important than seeing the work. Laying paths for a web of interconnectedness. Creating possibilities for future encounters, living jewelleryness, having fun. Schmuck, the exhibition, brings everyone together.

Meanwhile, established critics are saying that Schmuck is dead. If you stay in one paddock too long you will run out of grass.



Bone Stone Shell 25 Years On

Justine Olsen, Curator Decorative Art and Design at Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, NZ

During the development of Te Papa's exhibition *Bone Stone Shell: 25 years on*, jeweller Alan Preston remarked that his practice involves 'working from whatever is under my feet'. His comment encapsulates the shift in thinking which, in the 1980s, saw contemporary jewellery move away from Europe and towards the traditions of New Zealand and Pacific adornment. The touring exhibition *Bone Stone Shell: New Jewellery New Zealand* clearly articulated this shift. Organised by the Crafts Council of New Zealand and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, between 1988 and 1992 it gave New Zealand jewellery an international voice.

Bone Stone Shell: 25 years on is a com-

memorative exhibition that sets out to show the original works against a background of traditional Māori and Pacific adornment. Objects from Te Papa's contemporary jewellery collection are also displayed to examine *Bone Stone Shell's* more recent local influences and its inheritors.

The History

By the early 1980s, New Zealand jewellers were looking towards traditions within Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific, and a shift away from the use of European precious materials was becoming evident. Shows at the Dowse Art Museum in Lower Hutt and the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts exhibited

works in bone and stone from a range of carvers and makers including Owen Mapp, Donn Salt, Hepi Maxwell, Doug Marsden, and John Edgar. Like traditional Māori and Pacific adornment, the original shape of the material frequently influenced the final form. Members of Fingers, the influential Auckland jewellery collective, were also reconsidering natural New Zealand materials. In *Paua Dreams* (1981), for instance, they attempted to rescue pāua from its souvenir status. In the words of jeweller Warwick Freeman, the show was a step towards giving 'people permission to like [pāua] ... even to love it'. (1)



Owen Mapp, Koru Amulet, 1983. Purchased 2012. Te Papa

In 1985, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade decided to focus on jewellery as part of its cultural diplomacy programme to bring New Zealand craft to international audiences:

Not nearly enough has been shown to give an indication of the truly original jewellery – body adornment – that is currently being created by the talented and original craftsmen and women of New Zealand. (2)

The show's working title was *Body Adornment: Bone Stone Shell*. The Crafts Council of New Zealand appointed John Edgar as curator, and chose three selectors: jeweller Kobi Bosshard, James Mack (director of the Dowse Art Museum), and Edith Ryan (crafts advisor for the QEII Arts Council). The Crafts Council worked with the Details group of jewellers, a body of metal smiths and bone and stone carvers, to ensure as wide a representation as possible. By June 1987, 36 makers had responded to the invitation for submissions; the final selection took place in November. Twelve makers were finally selected from criteria that included the need to 'communicate the uniqueness of the New Zealand product' (3); 'cohesion and thematic integrity' also assisted final choices. *Bone Stone Shell: New Jewellery New Zealand* opened in Wellington in February 1988. It went on to tour Australia and Asia, finishing in Japan in 1992 at a Tokyo craft expo.

The collection was originally intended to be offered to a public institution (4). In 1993, the majority of the collection was

acquired by the Friends of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa, with the remaining works acquired soon afterwards. It is now regarded as Te Papa's foundation collection for contemporary jewellery.

The New jewellery

Considered today, the 'new jewellery' of *Bone Stone Shell* remains fresh and contemporary. Common themes arise among the works, many of which are large in scale. Alan Preston, Paul Mason, and Roy Mason all share an interest in Pacific traditions. Preston's fascination for Pacific materials and forms are reflected in his large breastplates, made from mother-of-pearl and vau (hibiscus-bark fibre). In the exhibition's catalogue, he acknowledged the importance of Pacific traditions to his own practice: 'I give thanks to the people of the Pacific and their ancestors. Their traditions together with mine are a source of ideas and inspiration for my comments about a new Oceania.' Preston also incorporated silver in his work, signalling its contemporary nature.



Alan Preston Breastplate. 1987. Gift of the Friends of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 1993. Te Papa

Paul Mason's large ceremonial bracelets made from Tākaka marble and Giallo Siena stone also evoke the Pacific, their simplicity echoing the forms of bracelets from the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. Politics strike at the heart of Roy Mason's necklace, bracelet, and brooch trio, all made from the same gold-lipped oyster shell, sourced from the Solomon Islands. The brooch depicts a missile falling towards an idyllic island with the sky already filled with nuclear fallout. In his artist's statement, Mason referred to the shell as 'a home for innocent life' – a protest against nuclear testing at Moruroa Atoll.



19 Tory Street, Wellington, New Zealand. www.theseehere.com

Display (2013). Jhana Millers & Suska Mackert. Digital prints, Sandwich board (plywood, 23ct gold leaf)

Reimagining a former world was the premise of both Paul Annear and Dave Hegglun. Annear's adze works, shaped from pounamu (New Zealand greenstone), and Hegglun's handheld, delicately carved bone boxes record mythical or imagined worlds. The intimacy of Hegglun's work has a parallel in Eléna Gee's boxed jewellery. By enclosing beach materials in the 'flotsam and jetsam' of industrial parts, Gee connected childhood memories to the gathering of pāua, bone, and pebbles. These materials, simply



Dave Hegglun *Land alive*. 1987. Gift of the Friends of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 1993. Te Papa

threaded and drilled, suggest intervention in its most limited form. Such techniques, and the focus on memory and the found, anticipate work by the next generation of jewellers, including Lisa Walker.

Warwick Freeman and Michael Couper both explored contemporary connections in their work for *Bone Stone Shell*. Freeman's experiments in 'squaring up the circle' draw on a workshop task set by visiting German jeweller Hermann Jünger in 1983. His three circular necklaces are made of chicken bone ('Tegel', he cheekily described it), pāua, and argillite shards, the latter material recalling Māori stone-working techniques. Couper's two angular necklaces (a third is currently on tour in China) are made of argillite, granite, and pounamu, exploring contemporary forms with traditional materials.

John Edgar's love of materials is evident in his finely worked handheld objects. Edgar is concerned about the conserva-



John Edgar, *Compass*, 1987. Purchased 1993 with Charles Disney Art Trust funds. Te Papa,

tion of pounamu, Aotearoa New Zealand's most valued material, and only one item, *Compass*, is made from that prized resource. Other works – '*Cracking up*', *coins of the realm*, *Stone stone, stone bone*, *Stone stone shell*, and a series of three amulets – are made from less valued materials: argillite, greywacke, marble, and jasper.

Jenny Patrick formed her lyrical *Flight of the birdsring* series and two necklets from pāua, the naturally shaped shell forms connected and bound by silver and gold wire and sheet. Inia Taylor and Hamish Campbell both worked from bone to create figurative pendants. Taylor, the only Māori jeweller represented in *Bone Stone Shell*, has clearly been influenced by traditional forms such as matau (hooks). However, his pendants reference the fish rather than the hook itself.

Bone Stone Shell: 25 years on also features portraits of the 12 makers by photographer John Daley. Originally commissioned in 1987 for the exhibition's catalogue, the photographs capture the jewellers and carvers amidst local surroundings, with texture and material offering an immediate reference to their work. Michael Couper, for example, stands in front of a rocky cliff face at Muriwai beach, his bare feet in the sand.

After 1988

Bone Stone Shell continues to shape the contemporary jewellery landscape. A selection of work by jewellers after 1988 considers the ongoing relevance of themes such as the politics of cultural exchange. Freeman's *Tiki face* (1992) and *Koru whistle* (1993) take note of a shared cultural heritage and comment on the cultural appropriation debate, while Jason Hall's *Gate* series of brooches (2004) reassemble colonial wrought-iron gates to suggest kōwhaiwhai (painted rafter patterns). Areta Wilkinson's *96.04.25* (2001) pendants comment on the museological dangers of removing cultural property from its original context.

The development of found materials is also explored through Jacqui Chan's *Host a brooch* series (2011), constructed from the debris of the Christchurch earthquake. Lisa Walker's necklace *What Karl didn't take with him* (2010) exemplifies 'found' with used and discarded objects left behind as Walker and her husband, jeweller Karl Fritsch, prepared to move to New Zealand. Among the *Bone Stone Shell* generation, Preston has continued his exploration of the found – his most notable work being *White foreshore* (2003–04), a horizon line of shell brooches collected from Muriwai beach, close to his home and workshop. Freeman, meanwhile, has taken a more archaeological approach to the found.

'Carve and ye shall find' was his dictate in *A different red, a different black* (1999–2013) – a series of pendants and pins based on archetypal forms.

Contemporary Pacific material offers comparisons between the work of Pāke-



Lisa Walker *What Karl didn't take with him*. Purchased 2010. Te Papa



Warwick Freeman, *A different red, a different black*, 1999–2013. Purchased 2013. Te Papa

hā and Pacific artists. Traditional and contemporary materials continue to reflect a sense of Pacific adornment, especially through the work of Sofia Tekela-Smith and Sia Kata Women's weaving group.

Opening weekend

On 19 and 20 October 2013, the exhibition's opening weekend drew six of the original *Bone Stone Shell* jewellers: John Edgar, Alan Preston, Dave Hegglun, Jenny Patrick, Inia Taylor, and Hamish Campbell. Discussions centred on the commissioned works, as well as Daley's photographs. Edgar led conversations with selectors Edith Ryan and Kobi Bosshard about the background to the selection. Taylor spoke with curator Megan Tamati-Quennell about his work and life after the exhibition. 'A fish out of water' was the autobiographical title that also referred to his magical necklets carved in bone in *Bone Stone Shell*: New Jewellery New Zealand.

Contemporary jewellery in New Zealand continues to evolve as jewellers consider their place in the world. New Zealand's connection to Europe, especially Germany is rapidly expanding with opportunities to contribute and engage in conversations on an international level.

Bone Stone Shell: 25 years on is on show in the Collection Focus gallery of Ngā Toi | Arts Te Papa, Te Papa's changing programme of art, until 17 March. It will reopen early May to 20 July. arts.tepapa.govt.nz

Footnotes

1. Warwick Freeman. Artist's interview. Te Papa, 2012.
2. Attachment to Agenda item G6. Crafts Council Executive Meeting April 1985.
3. Letter to applicants from Crafts Council of New Zealand. John Edgar archive
4. Attachment to Agenda item G6 Crafts Council Executive Meeting April 1985

Acknowledgements

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Kristin D'Agostino

JANEDODD.CO.NZ

The golden standard of Schmuckashau

Liesbeth den Besten is looking forward to the kiwi invasion of Munich and summarizes the 'golden Schmuck standard'. The essay is based on her Zimmerhof lecture 2013.

'Schmuckashau' – this is the word I encountered recently in a text by an Australian critic, reviewing Robert Baines' publication *Fabulous Follies, Frauds and Fakes* (2013). In the review the notion *Schmuckashau* stands for the highest in contemporary jewellery, according to the reviewer: 'the revered Schmuckashau has for five decades arbitrated taste in art jewelry'. The reviewer continues to tell that Australian Robert Baines is a celebrated *Schmuckashau* - attendee for many years, who even was awarded the prestigious Herbert Hoffman Prize.

Schmuckashau, the word the reviewer uses refers to the old name of the jewellery event in Munich, which was once addressed to as Schmuck Schau, which literally means: jewellery exhibition. Today it is simply called Schmuck. But in English the word schmuck, which is spelled the same way but without a capital S, has a rather questionable connotation; it is slang, used for penis, and for an obnoxious or contemptible person – a difficult word to use in English and very remote from jewellery. *Schmuckashau* is a wonderful invention – it is contemporary jewellery language in its purest form, a mixture of German and Aussie-English, a phonetical monster that gains magical power because of a combination of incomprehensibility and the values it stands for. It summarizes the many miles of distance and misunderstanding between the continents, between the pre-

sumed centre and the assumed periphery, between those who are initiated and those who are still longing for a rite the passage to Munich, the so called centre of the world of contemporary jewellery.

Schmuckashau also points at a problematic tendency, especially when it is used as some kind of criterion for quality – as is the case in the Australian article. If used in that sense it stands for the confusion of ideas that has led us to think that there is a kind of standard, a style, some sort of idea about how contemporary jewellery is supposed to look like. I can summarize this standard easily: in the first place it is abstract (or semi-abstract); in the second place it is composed or assembled; and in the third place it is wrapped, glued or bound together. Although the general feeling of a piece may be quite poor, there is a focus on the isolated aesthetic object.

Every year we can watch the numbers of this jewellery growing, there is more *Schmuckashau* now than there has ever been before, it comes from every corner of the world, for the most part it is completely exchangeable which means that the work doesn't give you any clue as to where it originates from. For the in-crowd it is instantly recognisable as contemporary jewellery.

A language has developed, a vocabulary based on recycling, copying and assembling. Today we all speak jewellery – a language that is established and confirmed at the yearly jewellery-Mecca in March, the big social jewellery community gathering, the network magnet, the exhibition machine.

But I am a little bit worried by this idiom, by people speaking jewellery. One

of my main concerns is that contemporary jewellery has become a fait-a-complit, a matter of fact, a this-must-be-it-experience, and nobody is asking questions anymore. Well, Nanna Melland did ask questions last year. Her *Swarm*, consisting of hundreds of small airplanes in different sizes, was the first piece ever, in the decades long history of Schmuck at the Internationale Handwerksmesse, that was shown outside the showcase. People could actually buy a part of the installation during the show – but isn't it crazy that a work like hers, how much I love it, is observed as something outrageous within the context of *Schmuckashau*? As a matter of fact it tells more about the supposed golden standard of *Schmuckashau* than about where contemporary jewellery has arrived today.

During the Schmuck event jewellers can test their ability to temporarily present jewellery in the city. With very few materials – and sometimes very little costs – places that are not really made for it are temporarily occupied by jewellery: jewellery out of the showcase, such as an antiquarian bookshop, bowling alley, church (the Swedish), Orangerie, restaurant and foundry. Some exhibition sceneries are so well done and so beautiful, that they are better than the work shown or better than the exhibition's concept. In Munich you can encounter beautiful titles and beautiful sceneries – yet the reasons for bringing the work of different artists together in one exhibition is often completely unclear. Is it because they are good friends, because it is fun to see each other and work together for a couple days, because they know this space and want to be present in Munich? Often you can wonder: was there any reason to make this exhibition? Munich, during Schmuck, offers too many examples of bad curating, where good pieces of jewellery become props in a wonderful setting. And then even the best piece of jewellery loses its control.

Jewellery as props, objecthood without jewelleryness, isolation and exclusion – these are the tendencies in contemporary jewellery I see today. Although it is really nice in the bubble – I also like to be there every now and then – I wonder how long it will last. Aren't bubbles supposed to burst at a certain point? For how long have we been busy to explain what contemporary jewellery, or art jewellery, or jewellery art, or author jewellery is about, for how long do we have to go on? For this reason it is wonderful of course to be in the bubble, to speak jewellery to your companions, and to make presentations for the aficionados. And of course you can see beautiful new work in Munich but still my plea is to open up, to loosen up, to dare and step out of the comfort zone. Jewellery is a wonderful field where great seeds are sown and rich harvests can be gathered.

But I also think that we need a more critical attitude towards everything that is accepted and has become a standard. It's time for a change.

Last year The Exhibition / Die Ausstellung was programmed as the mother-of-all-exhibitions, the event you shouldn't miss. Although there is probably some irony in the title, we should take care. The Exhibition is Professor Otto Künzli's overview of 45-odd years of working in the field of contemporary jewellery, compressed in about 80 showcases.

Otto Künzli is a main figure in the contemporary art world; as a smart as well as sensitive conceptual artist, and as a teacher, his contribution to the field is invaluable. Künzli has been one of my jewellery heroes from the moment I became interested in jewellery – this was in the 1980s – and I have seen many exhibitions of his work, in galleries and museums, since then. The reason for my enthusiasm about his work is his way of looking at jewellery, exploring its limits and unveiling its ethics, making unwearable jewellery and invisible jewellery such as the gold bullet for the armpit as well as jewellery everyone wants to have and wear. Through his work he was able to stretch my ideas – and not only mine of course – about jewellery and the body, for instance through his jewellery that literally connected two people. His work is rich, complicated sometimes, by times humorous, and often I was completely washed over by it.

The Exhibition however appeared to be rather disappointing to me. I will try to explain why, because it has to do with my ideas about this so-called 'standard' in contemporary jewellery. The exhibition set-up was a typical Otto Künzli design, with a mass of showcases seemingly scattered through the room at random. People who visited the exhibition *Des Wahnsinns fette Beute* (2008), about the Klasse Künzli, know what I mean. Also the numbering of the showcases followed no rational path, and we could watch again visitors nervously looking through the exhibition's handout, turning it over again and again to find the number they were looking for – we have seen these scenes before (in *Des Wahnsinns fette Beute*, and in the new set-up of the Danner Rotunde in the Neue Sammlung). This is Otto Künzli's vernacular, his very own exhibition idiom that follows its own rules, logic and humour.

The scary New American Flag on one wall was good to see in reality finally – it is an impressive piece of cloth, merging three popular American symbols into one very powerful and aggressive image that determines the atmosphere in the room to a certain extent. For the average non-initiated visitor, this flag may be



very confusing and controversial – what does it have to do with the exhibition, which is for the rest only about beautiful aesthetical objects in showcases. Where is the connection with the flag, why was that flag hanging there, where is the story?

The objects in the showcases must appear as puzzling as UFO's to those visitors who are not acquainted with the work of Otto Künzli, not to mention with contemporary jewellery in general. The lack of documentation and information made this exhibition a true insider-event. What does the uninitiated visitor make of a box filled with a tiny brooch with two pins (Brooch for two People, 1980/82) or of the golden bullet in a box (Bullet for the Armpit, 1982) - without ever having seen the photographs that in fact were part of the work when he conceived it? (catalogue Körperkultur, Vienna 1982). Insiders could rejoice to see in reality all those pieces they only knew through images, and for some people this was like some sort of spiritual encounter. This is what the New Zealanders wrote about it in their *Overview* magazine: "All those Ottos we know and love in one room; the Red Dot, One Metre of Love, Oh Say, the postcards, the Ring for Two Persons, Gold Makes Blind, the Mirror Glasses, the Mickey

Mouse heads, the importance of being there." Hmm... the importance of being there, maybe this sums up the meaning of The Exhibition the best way.

Because the Otto Künzli exhibition missed any further documentation or information, the objects were pulled back in their objecthood. It was as if looking at the images in a book or on the Internet. They had lost all life, they became mere objects: cuttngly sharp, shiny red, highly polished, symbol like, but completely flat and even distracted from people, or the body. His famous chain, composed of 48 re-used wedding rings, missed this contextual information deeply; if you know the story of the necklace and the stories of the individual rings the piece becomes alive. As a matter of fact Künzli made a small archive box with cards containing the stories of the donators of the rings. Why was it not exhibited?

What went wrong here is that all attention of the curators of the exhibition was focused on the objects. But Otto Künzli's work is not a sum of objects at all. It is rather a continuation of projects, processes, stories and concepts. The Wedding Ring Chain was the outcome of a project and a process Künzli went through: first there was the idea, then there was an advertisement 'I collect

wedding rings' in a local newspaper, repeated 10 times in 1985, and then came the reactions. Künzli not only collected all those used wedding rings but also the stories of the owners. By leaving them intact, and only cutting them through in order to be able to connect them – Künzli connected the personal – mostly sad - histories of many individuals. Therefore it is a contemplative object. But in the exhibition this chain, stripped of its stories and background, was reduced to merely an object. Only the very well informed viewer knows how to appreciate this object.

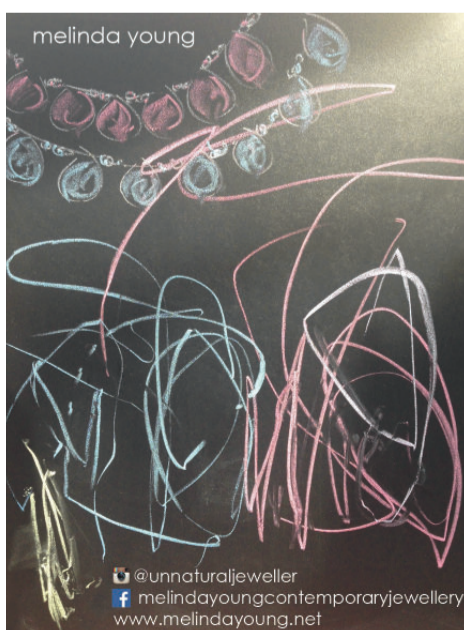
Otto Künzli is also famous for his photographic series, as a means of artistic research, but there was no evidence of this, apart from a small series of photos from the *Gallery of Beauty* series. And so the exhibition was a collection of objects that were ripped of their context and emotional content, bypassing the stories, the processes and the artistic photographic research – while this is exactly what makes Otto Künzli's artistic career so singular and so important.

I cannot help to think that this focus on the aesthetical object is a very deliberate choice. But I have been racking my brains about why the exhibition was curated like this. The only reason I could

find is this: the exhibition wanted to stress the perfection of Otto Künzli's work, or as the introduction text to the exhibition reads: "Objects with a clear, minimalist appearance, captivatingly crafted to perfection, and highly visible – jewelry that adorns and at the same time possesses an autonomous aesthetic status of its own." The presumption is thus: we don't need to add more information because this perfect work speaks for itself – not only as jewellery but even more as autonomous art objects. Maybe this is true, maybe the work does speak for itself indeed, maybe it speaks an art language, maybe it speaks jewellery but the language of jewellery is highly self-referential and outside the small circle of speakers nobody understands. The average non-informed museum visitor must have felt lost between the many showcases.

The Exhibition showed me how objecthood excludes jewelleryness.

Objecthood excluding jewelleryness - this is what happens everywhere in *Schmuckashau*. *Schmuckashau* is a monoculture of beautiful (although not always), wearable (well, mostly) objects that are completely frigidly exhibited in well-designed displays. It forgets about its users, the wearers, the humans that



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like to wear jewellery – sometimes it looks as if these objects not even want to be worn. Jewellery has developed into a correct language, highbrow, not for dyslectics, stutterers, and persons with a different language and background, not for the foreigners, and especially not for wearers. I would like to make a plea for less coherence, for more distortion, for more confusion and more discussion, for less finished objects exhibited in wonderful places and for more open ended works, for less gallery-imitating presentations and more happenings and events in the streets, subway stations, the fair, and shopping malls, and for more efforts to have jewellery on the right spot: on human beings.

At *Schmuckashau* we have created our own bubble where everyone knows each other and everyone likes each other but nobody else knows us. The city of Munich is completely blank about what's going on - other people have no idea that thousands of people from all around the world get together in their own Munich comfort zone each year again in March to celebrate jewellery.

In a recent New Zealand Overview magazine there was a critical comment on last year's Schmuck by Peter Deckers, from Dutch decent, living in New Zealand for more than 30 years, teaching jewellery, curating exhibitions, and organising other events. Well, this Peter Deckers writes about the shows in the city: "The ones we saw did not overly excite. The shows were safe repeats from European makers or showed work with predictable and obvious influences of typical school styles. Is the Eurozone recession also creeping into the artist's creativity?" This is a serious critique from a person who travelled more than 30 hours by plane, all the way from Wellington to Munich, to see what is happening in the world Olympics of contemporary jewellery. As a real Dutchman he is honest and expresses his deception straightforward.

As a matter of fact the *Handshake* project, a mentoring project with young mentees from New Zealand and tutors from all over the world, brainchild of Peter Deckers, was one of the very few innovative projects that participated in Munich. It was innovative because of the collaboration between mentees and mentors via Internet, Skype and blogs, and also because the final show involved some work that was made on the spot or was open ended: Jhana Millers, interested in value systems, continued her project 'This Brooch cost me my credit card', inviting people to donate their credit card that she converted into a brooch on the spot. And Sarah Read introduced the 'Home from Home' open call - inviting visitors to step out of their usual routine and invite an artist – Sarah

Read – into their home for a 3-day residency.

By the way, New Zealanders, kiwi's, are wonderful people, they have a great sense of humour, a lovely life style, and they are struggling with their isolated position somewhere halfway between Australia and Antarctica. I've been there twice by invitation and I was amazed by the eagerness of New Zealand jewellery people to know more and to become part of this global jewellery scene. Because they lack direct connections with the supposed jewellery centres in the world, they developed their own infrastructure and a kind of out of the box thinking.

A good example is The See Here, a window gallery in Wellington, where exciting events and presentations take place – the invited artists can do anything they want in this shop window. In 2012 Sarah Read decided to do an artist-in-residency at The See Here under the title 'Look, no hands: a creative retreat'. She wanted to work there simply as an artist but without knowing where it goes. First she had to deal with the fact that she had to work under the public gaze. Then she had to occupy the window space, and finally she spent her time (one month) reading, thinking, working at her workbench, interacting with passers-by and receiving visitors.

Another project of Sarah Read involves co-creation with other people: in response to the February 2011 earthquake in Christchurch, she sewed simple and colourful ribbons with the text 'This too shall pass'. They were made in collaboration with other people and sold for 10 NZ\$, as a support to The National, one of New Zealand vanguard jewellery galleries, which happened to be in the red-zone of Christchurch, the area that was most affected by the earthquake and had to be cleaned out during a few hours after the catastrophe. All of Read's work has to do with jewellery or adornment but she prefers to collaborate with others instead of the isolation of her studio.

During the last big jewellery event in 2012, called JEMposium (organised by Peter Deckers), some artists introduced the Jewellers Guild of Greater Sandringham – a name with a wink – to a bigger audience. Sandringham is a rather undeveloped multi-ethnic suburb of Auckland, not very well connected to the city centre by a rather poor public transportation system. So the name Guild of Greater Sandringham underlines isolation within isolation. This group of enthusiastic jewellers, started a Facebook group and produces a wonderful and very informing internet magazine every few months. Started as a need to connect and to keep each other updated in New Zealand it has become my lifeline with



New Zealand all the same. And now they present their first printed issue in Munich during Schmuck.

It is interesting to see that refreshing ideas, ideas that make us think differently about issues such as value, studio, and uniqueness, now seem to come from far away, from the periphery and that the centre is stuck in the formal standards of *Schmuckashau*. This is my reason for referring to them: the New Zealand view on contemporary jewellery provides us with a peripheral view, the view from outside, the mirror that is held up to our

face, and the view that is missed so much at *Schmuckashau*.

This year New Zealand is represented in Munich with *Wunderrüma*, an exhibition curated by Warwick Freeman and Karl Fritsch in Galerie Handwerk. I'm looking forward and I'm a bit worried: could they avoid *Schmuckashau's* traps? But I trust both curators: the grand-old man and the smart-ass. Let's see how they tackle *Schmuckashau*.

I would like to finish this essay with a manifest for contemporary jewellery:

- forget about sceneries and props
- forget about objecthood, focus on jewelleryness
- forget the aficionados, target on the uninitiated
- focus on the 'why and how' of jewellery, on people and jewellery
- focus on questioning instead of answers
- focus on experiment instead of nice results
- focus on process and projects
- take care of finding your own vernacular, use slang when necessary
- focus on inclusion of other media and strategies
- focus on sharing and collaborating
- forget the unique one-offs for the gallery every now and then, try multiples
- forget about Schmuckashau.

Polynisation

Sharon Fitness asks Niki Hastings-McFall (the person who taught her how to file a brooch pin) about her journey.

You graduated from Manukau Institute of Technology in 1994 not long after the Bone Stone Shell movement washed over New Zealand Jewellery. What kind of effect did this show have on your material exploration?

Massively, hugely and all-consumingly. I think its fair to say we were all influenced at that time, in some way or another by the Bone Stone Shell era. Simultaneously accompanying this movement there was a frenzied and intense exploration of 'alternative' materials - a crazy juxtaposition of 20th century, space-age, industrial 'non-precious' and/ or non-traditional jewellery materials such as plastics, acrylics, brass, titanium, niobium, wood, fabric, rubber, paper, ceramic.... You name it... anything went. I loved that. The freedom and the totally anarchic ability to explore, utilise, cannibalise and reincarnate whatever you could. It was a very cool time to be involved in the jewellery revolution!

You established an incredibly successful contemporary jewellery practice before bursting out into the high art world with larger installations. How difficult was that jump?

It wasn't difficult at all... not really a jump so much as more of an inevitable slither. I always made work that came from a concept and then had to figure out how to fit it into a jewellery context. I never really thought of myself as a real jeweller in the sense that it was always arse backwards. First the idea, then the work, then... oops- it needs to be a piece

of jewellery! Often that involved bunging a brooch fitting in or, if I was lucky, drilling a hole and making a pendant. Until I started looking at Pacific body adornment forms, the concept always overrode the jewellery considerations. Once I found the area of jewellery that really intrigued and fascinated me the conceptual aspects and the jewellery format began to gel in a much more synchronised way.

Being fluent in both contemporary jewellery and sculpture, do you now find it easier to communicate on a larger scale? Do you still make jewellery sized work?

I dont know that communication is easy in any genre. I make jewellery sized work that isn't jewellery and large scale works that arguably are jewellery in that they have evolved directly from a jewellery context, are predominantly informed by jewellery and frequently involve the use of jewellery tools and techniques

Much of your work explores colonialism, cultural crossovers and mixed messages. Was encountering your Samoan heritage later in life a huge culture shock?

Yes but in a very positive way. It gave me huge freedom to weave in and out of liminal spaces. I always say now that my work is about Not being Samoan. In the sense that that is a very typical displaced space to inhabit for many Pacific Island descendants of this era... hence it is about Samoan-ness without laying some kind of Colonist appropriative claim to actually being Samoan. Which I am so not... even my aiga calls me the skinny white palagi!

For Wunderrūma, you are adorning the



Campbelltown tree installation from Towards the Morning Sun, Sydney 2013



From The Maui Dynasty, The Suter Gallery, Nelson 2008-2009

Galerie Handwerk building with synthetic flower lei synonymous with sunny South Pacific island life. How do you think this will translate in a mid-winter Munich, potentially covered in snow?

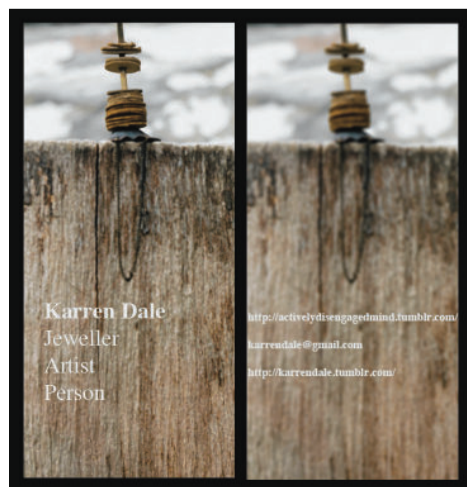
Not at all sure it will translate per se, but it will sure as shit look mental.

Now that you are almost an outsider (given that you are a fantastic installation artist now), looking back to jewellery, how do you see the NZ contemporary jewellery scene, and do you find it weird that we keep claiming you as our own? Is this ever a hindrance to you or do you embrace your bi-craftyness?

the end a few of us (including some smartarses from Workshop 6 ... Jane Doddly Woddly, Areta Wilkinson I believe)... decided to call it CRART. And a rose is a rose anyway. It's not a hindrance although for a while I really wanted to believe that jewellery was art and therefore I was an artist. Now I am happy in the realisation that I don't know and I don't care. I still make jewellery and I make other stuff that isn't jewellery, and I'm not really bothered about quantifying it one way or another. Is it good crart or bad crart is the only question I care about. And I love being Bi-crafty.... great terminology!

thanks Niki!

I love to be claimed by the jewellery world. Oh that old art / craft debate.... in

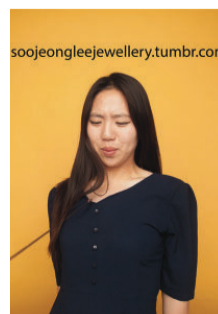


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PLAN B

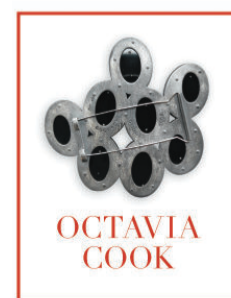
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Ich weiß es nicht

Curators, Warwick Freeman and Karl Fritsch talk about some things they know

Sharon, Raewyn and Kristin make a pilgrimage over the water to Warwickshire where they talk to Warwick and Karl about the road to Munich.

Raewyn: What is in the show? Fran said something like it was a quirky look at what's been made and what's being made...

Warwick: 'Quirky' I looked that up - maybe translates into German as 'schrullig' but my dictionary also said 'cranky or wacky' - we'll take all those. As to being a look at 'what's been made and what's being made' there is quite a time range that is covered. There are contemporary pieces out of the Dowse collection, and a couple of contemporary pieces from Te Papa - this work covers about three decades. But mostly Te

Papa's contribution was much older Pakeha and Maori and some Polynesian work and that isn't going to Munich (that's a long story about incompatible fire regulations). The Maori works we had chosen from Te Papa were all pieces that are worn through the ear, with the exception of one Tiki and one pendant. They are not in Munich. We have patched it a little bit from the local ethnographic museum, (The Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde) and we have borrowed half a dozen Maori kuru from a private collector, but it is not going to be much of a presence - nothing like we intended to be there..

Karl: That was quite a big thing at one stage because with all the Maori earrings and all this discussion - is it jewellery or not - is taonga not jewellery. That was

very interesting, all that first contact. What are we looking at actually, what are the rules about it. I got really excited about it. The access was great. At Te Papa they were wonderful, and to see all that stuff and to get the whole discussion going there. At some stage they were really partners and they wanted to have a curator come to Munich and do all of the welcoming, and the blessing, so I thought, that actually would be a great part of the show. It's very important to show that part of New Zealand culture. And in Munich I really would really love to show that - especially at such an event like Schmuck. Just the different way of dealing with jewellery, what you are looking at - all that genealogy... you know, the Maori way. Something different to offer in that Schmuck context - but yeah that didn't happen and that was a big shock. That took a while to get over actually.

Warwick: Part of looking at the older work was about us expanding the concept of what contemporary meant - we were working with the understanding that everything in New Zealand is contemporary, relative to European cultures. The time frame that you are looking at in terms of manufacture of adornment is not very long. So we threw that idea of contemporary - not out - but put it in a different frame, and called the Maori work contemporary as well. Back then we subtitled the exhibition '1000 Years of New Zealand Contemporary Jewellery' (by the way it's now subtitled 'Schmuck aus Neuseeland').

And that thinking about time came from conversations we were having with the curators at Te Papa, where it wasn't about the past - sure the objects were old but they were always dealing with them as being 'now' and so those concepts of Maori time, not being lineal in the past to present manner, came up as a way of looking at objects. So we sort of took that idea on for everything in the show, regardless of when it was made, it was 'contemporary'. If you look at the period we usually call contemporary, there are pieces from the 80's and 90's which came out of The Dowse collection, but we haven't made any attempt to place any of them on a continuum. The whole structure of how the exhibition was conceived, and how the catalogue is presented has got none of that chronology. We hoped that that feel would carry right through to how it was displayed but we still have to address issues around how the Maori taonga will co-exist with the contemporary work when the show meets up with the Te Papa work when its back at The Dowse in July.

The idea of the taonga sitting alongside some of the materials that contemporary jewellers use still has to be talked about. We don't work in the same exhibition

environment that they do at Te Papa. The Te Papa curators and conservation experts have quite specific ideas about how their objects are allowed to be displayed. So when people like Karl and I come into the space, we have to comply, negotiate. Yeah, we have done a fair bit of talking, but it is still not over, eh Karl?

Karl: Ah no, it is never over.

Warwick: We may not ever be able to have these objects in the same room as a piece of contemporary jewellery because it is made out of shit. We've got work made of rabbit shit, flies, we've got cigarette butts, all sorts of stuff, that functions in the domain of Noa. If the Maori taonga is considered to operate in another domain, they may not even be able to sit in the same room, let alone the same cabinet.

Karl: We approach the Maori work in the same way we approached anything else, we were just looking for something that looked contemporary that we liked. It was very interesting, the information that we got back there. You know, we would choose something for a certain look that suited our project, but then you would find out the curators position on what was a good tiki, what a good tiki should look like. It was interesting to find out their aesthetics about a tiki or even if a tiki is a male or a female. And different curators look at them differently, so there was a lot of information that came across, but just to say that our approach - like this is historic work or you might think it is looked at differently, but our approach was in looking. We applied our eyes the same as we applied to any other work. There was no difference just because it's historic we didn't look for something different, or with different rules. But you have to obey different rules. You don't get around them.

Warwick: I think the ways that work has to be brought into the show will have to be negotiated. For instance, the idea of mixing it through the contemporary work, that's not something we can assume.

Taonga as it stands now tends to be stuff made by the old people. In other words, it can be around European contact, it can be after contact, or a long way into the 20th century but there is a sense that it has achieved the status of taonga. In other words, although we might view it for its ubiquity (it is just a pair of earrings), they have been removed from that context into this other one that is called taonga. And that kind of holds it. To know whether they were always intended to be treasures, or whether they have become treasures as a consequence of colonialism where they are moved from one state to a museum state, and all those things it's very complicated, but



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Brendon Monson,
Pulley Pendant, 2013,
basalt, brass and nylon

Leaders in contemporary craft since 1986

very interesting. As Karl said, one of the biggest disappointments was that none of that idea was going to Munich. Although I don't know that we would ever have been able to take the complexity of that idea, to Munich, and to even explain it would have been very difficult. But at the same time, to us that complexity, the existence of that complexity in our exhibition, was very interesting.

Sharon: I got the feeling when you came around and visited us that you were picking works that might suit some of the older pieces that you had seen. Did your selection change once you realised that couldn't have certain taonga?

Warwick: No, we had made our selection before Te Papa said no to it travelling. I think our selection was running on totally different parameters. We were operating quite instinctively.

Quite a lot of the ambivalence that we both feel around the show now - before we see it installed in Munich - is related to having to trust that instinct now. It's like we've lost a certain amount of confidence because we stopped collecting a while ago now and we have lost our feel for it. I just know we were really sure at the time so I think our instinct is still right - eh?

Karl: Well, there is nothing else, so if it's not right, that will be it.

Warwick: We didn't choose anything else. I think when you construct a show, you can fabricate whatever image or idea you want, and so, you are not restricted by your own sensibility. I mean, some people will have to get used to the idea that it is not a national showcase of New Zealand contemporary jewellery... They'll find out though. There was the sense that some of the work we asked for from various makers, came with the response 'Are you sure about that? You want that piece? I make much better stuff'.

Karl: It's funny, that intuitive thing. You go and start to look at the things and choose what you like. It's hard - it came to an end because the show has to go, it has to travel. You have to make lists, you have to do dah dah dah, but in a way it almost feels like we started something. A way of looking. And now looking back at it, when you start travelling, that fact of you go to peoples workshops because they were somebody, or easy to access - they're not even online or stuff like that - and you just discover different things that they do, and I find that now really amazing. I would like to just go on and keep going in the car together - go to people's workshops and pick pieces. Put them together - all those pieces you like and put them in a show together. That would be my ideal now, from our experi-

ence. What we've put together now, this is documenting our start, our approach. Where we started and how we ended up. Well, that is the picture of it.

Warwick: Yeah, and in some ways there was a point when putting the catalogue together where we re-photographed all the work, and we thought, you know the best way of describing this would be if we had documented it at the time, so that even the catalogue represented the process. As it is now, the catalogue is broken into two pieces - one is the commentary that I did about the process Karl and I used to create the exhibition and the other is a succession of the usual catalogue type photos, that show all the work. It would have been nice - kind of more faithful to the process if the images of the work were made where we found them. And that could have been in the gallery or in the museum drawer you know, but even that is a distinctive context. There is this photograph, the stage of the process - that we called clumping. Looking at the work together. Looking for a resonance, the ability of the work to make connections with each other. That was another important part of what we did.

Karl: That's the thing, when you put those cut-out images on the floor and you come across those things, and they're just really nice and you like them. There is those moments where you think 'oh it's a lovely show, but, it's not the real thing'. We still don't have an idea of how it will look, we haven't seen it. It's exciting, in Munich it will be the first time. When you present it there is so much you can influence what the work looks like, how you make it speak. We haven't done that yet. There are different ideas around it. That photo, that is quite nice, but we can't do that in Munich, but we are still excited, you know, about how it will look like when it's on show.

Warwick: Yeah, we could be laughed out of town.

Raewyn: So do you think you have got a lot to lose?

Warwick: ... In terms of our stature and authority as makers? Ah.. no because I think at the heart of it we did it from a position of - not so much authority - but full engagement. And if it's wrong and if it makes a crap show, then so be it. I don't think it's going to be a crap show, but I think there is the possibility that people will look at it and kind of go "Hmmm... that's nothing special". But then what is the expectation? That New Zealand will produce a show, put it into the Schmuck week cauldron and have everybody go "Oh my god, how come we didn't know?" We certainly didn't even think it was possible to fabricate that image. Perhaps you could get strong groups

of work from ten people that are really kicking, and put them in the Ruma and people will say 'Wow is everybody in New Zealand this good?' No - instead they will see 70 or 80 artists. Some of them are students, some of them have been making for 40 years, and they are all sitting on the same level. Sometimes with only one piece, so if they ever made anything better this is not the opportunity to get any sense of that.

Karl: It is a bit hard to get back to that feeling, you have when you do your own show. There I don't care, I do it because I like doing it, but with this exhibition, all that attention happening, all that money that CNZ have put into it, all the people involved, you start getting a bit nervous. You can't say, 'I don't care'. We're trying bloody hard now. But it's not easy to take up so much more responsibility than I usually take for putting a show together.

Warwick: No, but I don't think we are afraid of anyone. The CNZ investment is quite substantial, but at the same time, we never lied to them. We always said this show is what Karl and Warwick like.

Kristin: Yeah but that's just being truthful. If you are the curators and you said it was going to be a survey show, then it is what you choose. I think it's exciting because it's a different way of doing it. And it is a bit challenging and a bit risky, but that's what makes it so exciting for everybody.

Warwick: But at the same time, some of the territory that we engaged with, sometimes you look at it and you say, what are the qualities we are wanting to show people here? For instance you are looking at a string of beads, and as a maker, you might understand where a string of beads fits into the big picture, but when you are trying to impress, a string of beads sometimes doesn't go very far, even a good string of beads. But I think all the strings of beads we have got in the show are good strings of beads. They are worth looking at and I can stand beside every decision we made. There are decisions where Karl was more in favour and ones that I was more in favour.

Karl: I love them all.

Kristin: Are you still using that lovely list of categories?

*From: *Borges - attributed to 'a certain Chinese Encyclopedia' the Celestial Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge'*

Types of Animals

- those that belong to the Emperor,
- embalmed ones,

- those that are trained,
- suckling pigs,
- mermaids,
- fabulous ones,
- stray dogs,
- those included in the present classification,
- those that tremble as if they were mad,
- innumerable ones,
- those drawn with a very fine camelhair brush,
- others,
- those that have just broken a flower vase,
- those that from a long way off look like flies.

Warwick: Yes, we reworked that list for jewellery. They became the clumps, as we call them. We started off with completely made up categories before we had any idea of what we were going out to look at, and they were quite random. Made it look like we had a plan but the real plan was just to be set loose without any particular criteria. And so, as to 'are we still using it'? I think we have essentially, to the spirit of it anyway. Although one of the biggest categories we ended up with was 'Ich weiß es nicht'. Which is: 'I don't know'. So there was a point where, if it didn't fit one of the categories we had it got put in Ich weiß es nicht. Which turned out to be quite an important category.

Karl: But that was good, with Ich weiß es nicht, there were things that appeared on the way that opened up new opportunities. I feel comfortable in its openness. It allows a lot of things to speak, in different ways. But I still hope it's different from another country's groupings.

Sharon: So how many people did you go and visit?

Warwick: Sorry can't tell you without doing a count - we never kept a record. A lot of the work we just saw in galleries. There are a few workshops that I regret we didn't go too. But, in some ways, the



touring wasn't constructed around selecting actual pieces for the show, the touring was about informing us on what was going on out there. Now I think there would be a few other places we would quite deliberately go.

Karl: That was quite exciting, I think in the beginning we thought we kind of knew what was going on out there with all the exhibitions, so I thought our tour was justifying it, making sure that we had seen everything, but actually it opened up a lot more than I thought – the touring and the actual visits became much more important than I thought they would.

Warwick: The visiting of the workshops became not so much a method of finding pieces, but a way of working out what we were looking for.

Karl: If Warwick and me had just sat and talked in front of the Skype it would have looked different from sitting in the car for hours and days together with time to kill. We just got to know each other better, just thinking and sitting there, and talking or not talking about stuff. It just helped to visualise the whole feel for the thing.

Raewyn: So is the show in Munich for a European audience?

Warwick: Yes, but it has also got a life for here. Its life is about its return here too.

Karl: Well for me in the beginning it was always important for me that it was a show for Munich – the people I know there, to show them what is happening here. And I think Warwick always saw it more in the beginning as a show that's important for people in New Zealand.

Warwick: Well, they will forget it in about 3 weeks in Munich, whereas they won't forget it here for years. They will be grumbling about it for ages.

Karl: Ha, they only do it every 25 years.

Warwick: I think it has the capacity to do more work here than it does in Germany. Simply because it presents as an opportunity or a catalyst for people to talk - about what? Well if you are going to do a show based on a country's production for a gallery in Munich – what would you do? What would that look like for you? I think in the past there has been a tendency to really control that look, and only use the people who are considered to be the best at what they are doing. That has to do with the insecurity around New Zealand's self image. We see it constantly recorded in the comment 'It is as good as anything in Europe, isn't it'. But it never should be

about that. This show isn't about being as good as anything in Munich – it's about what we make in New Zealand. For that reason it is not trying to prove anything. I think it is an honest show. I think it is a good representation of what we do here but it is not trying to prove anything. Hopefully people will get a sense of what is happening in this place. It has a variety to it, but at the same time I think it has distinctiveness.

Karl: Ich weiß es nicht.

Kristin: So if you had to say what the atmosphere of that show is, would you say honest?

Warwick: Well, honest to us. I think that is going to be the interesting conversation on its return, whether it is honest to anybody else. This is what we think it is, what do you think it should be?

Karl: I think when I look at the work, it is what I look at. It is not something else. It doesn't try to solve contemporary jewellery. If it is a hook, it's a hook. It tries to solve its own problem, but not anything more than that. I think.

Warwick: That's right. It is what 'I look at'. It is what we saw.

Karl: Actually some jewellery comes attached with stories but we didn't guarantee that we tell the story. We took the freedom. If we like the piece, we show the piece. And don't tell the concept of why the piece is like that. It was like our rule – we didn't want to represent maker's stories.

Warwick: Yeah, we didn't cut anyone any slack in that regard. Possibly one small exception. We allowed Billy Apple's work to say it exists because of the Golden Mean. But for instance the tags by Sarah Read, we didn't say they exist because of the earthquakes in Christchurch. So why did we cut Billy that tiny bit of slack and not Sarah? I think in a way, it is because Billy's piece – 'Mary's Ring' only exists because of Wunderruma and so that narrative is particular to the process we talked about before of visiting people. When we first saw the ring it was just a page of calculations by Billy for a wedding ring for his partner Mary. Karl arranged for it to be made in Germany, in platinum. In the end it didn't take long but through the process of us wanting for the show it earned a particular narrative. Mary got her wedding ring because of Wunderruma. In some ways it is the most austere, minimal piece of jewellery that is in the show but it has a rich personal narrative but we didn't tell that story just the one relating to the page of Golden Mean calculations because that was part of our narrative – us putting the show together.

And amongst the visual artists we approached who weren't operating in the jewellery field there was never an expectation that we include any narrative – there didn't seem to be that neediness – not like you find it in the jewellery sector. I think the motivation for the inclusion of work that came from outside the field of contemporary jewellery came because we saw work that had the feel of jewellery. Quite often contemporary jewellery takes the feel of the visual arts, so when we visited these people about their work it was always about work of theirs that had a jewellery feeling. Courtney Johnston director of The Dowse said early on that it looks like 'Warwick and Karl are taking jewellery for a bit of a walk': We never let any boundaries affect where we walked – who we approached for work. I wanted to include Michael Hill in the show as New Zealand's most famous jeweller and Karl's last call on that kind of thinking was, why can't we include the 'one ring' (the ring from Lord of the Rings) in the show and we got very close but in the first instance we didn't want the show to be about taking the piss and on the second we couldn't quite bring ourselves to enter negotiations with New Line Cinema.

Karl: But the story that comes with Billy Apple's rings is pretty good.

Warwick: Yeah, it's better. It's personal – it's about why jewellery gets made.

Karl: It wasn't really only a wedding ring for Mary.. how long did he work on it?

Warwick: 1998 he started working on it.

Karl: And Billy could never get someone to get the measurements right, and then her finger changes in size. There were piles of paper about the process and it became an artwork. In Germany there are companies who do that perfectly with a machine, it can be done really easy. This is a great story – an individual trying to solve a jewellery problem.

Then suddenly Inia Taylor popped into the picture because of that Bone Stone Shell show at Te Papa and he did a talk there. I didn't know those people existed, and then suddenly there is this guy raving on about carving. And I thought wow there are so many interesting people out there. Here is he working his mind around jewellery, although now he makes a helmet. The helmet fits into our show somehow.

Raewyn: Is there a helmet in the show?

Warwick: Yes, a motorcycle helmet.

Us: hahah

Warwick: Inia has a whole making whakapapa for that helmet. It is made of



OCTAVIA COOK

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clumping procedure

carbon fibre woven in the same manner as his auntie's make kete for collecting kai moana. Also the pattern on it is part of his story - that adoption, the interpretation of kowhaiwhai rafter patterns for tattoo is part of his development as a tattooist - he was there when it was first done on the set of 'Once were Warriors'. Although none of that story is in the show. What you get is a helmet. And what is also part of the narrative is that he made bone carvings that were in Bone Stone Shell - he was the only Maori and the youngest maker in that exhibition. But in this show, he has a carbon fibre racing helmet.

Raewyn: So have you explored that Bone Stone Shell connection in the catalogue?

Warwick: A little bit in my introductory essay. As I said in that essay, I didn't expect to be referencing Bone Stone Shell but it does relate in that it is a precedent. It was more the synchronicity of it popping up 25 years later. A lot of the politics around Bone Stone Shell was about who got left out: there are at least 3 artists in Wunderrūma that were making in those materials back then but weren't included in Bone Stone Shell. It's not like they are doing anything different now, it is just that it now feels right to include their work. Bone Stone Shell was a lot about exclusion I think because it was trying to frame a particular idea around what contemporary jewellery practice in NZ should look like. We don't have that same framework around this show. Not at all. Ours is more democratic.

Karl: I thought about this the other day, and Warwick mentioned it in the catalogue, what news does our show have to broadcast? But I never think about shows like that but it's probably more about the things you don't see in there. There is not much that looks like Bone Stone Shell. Maybe that is the news. The things you don't see.

Sharon: It will be really good to see the show.

Raewyn: It'll probably be a really big turnout at The Dowse...

Warwick: We have to talk about the show at The Dowse, Karl. Wunderrūma has been one of those projects where just when you thought everything was done something else comes along. All the time. There has been this incredible performance for the staff at The Dowse over the ability to send material from one country to another country officially. It seems 90% of the show has been fumigated. That's a terrible exaggeration but it seems that most NZ jewellery is either made out of shit, or a protected something or rather. It seems a feather can't leave the country without a certificate, and if it happens to be a gannet feather, like on Alan Preston's piece then it has to be publicly gazetted for 30 days by DOC (Department of Conservation) to see if anyone objects to it leaving for a while. In our field we just put in a box and not tell anybody but The Dowse is obliged to tell everybody. We think more paperwork is travelling with the show than

jewellery. The staff at The Dowse working on Wunderrūma have been fantastic at sorting out that stuff for the show.

Karl: There will be probably no New Zealand contemporary jewellery show traveling overseas for another 25 years.

Kristin: So the taonga is not leaving. What about the taonga from Germany?

Warwick: That was fairly easy, there were only a few pieces to choose from and it was just a straight forward exchange between two local institutions. We borrowed five kuru from a private owner but even they can't leave the country, even for temporary export, without going through an approval process by the Ministry of Heritage and Culture. The application gets sent out to experts, who give an opinion over whether the taonga can go for a holiday.

Kristin: Did you have any idea of the amount of work for this?

Warwick: Not on that level. No, the original idea was to bang it all in a suitcase and stroll into Munich with it. But it went way beyond that in interesting ways. If you want to engage with the museums you have to accept their criteria. There has been a bit of frustration but we have got used to it now.

Kristin: Have you got any of your own work done in the last 6 months?

Warwick: Not much - the Wunder has

certainly sucked up a lot of time that would have normally gone into making. Karl has got about 3 shows on around Schmuck, I only have one.

Karl: Yeah but for Munich I am fine now.

Raewyn: Are you in Wunderrūma? Have you curated yourself into the show?

Warwick: That was always an issue - whether to curate yourself into your own show - yes just the one piece.

Karl: A collaboration piece.

Warwick: A footnote piece but I think that probably is the right decision.

Raewyn: So someone like Sarah (Read) whose work might want to have the story around it - does she know that this is not happening?

Warwick: Did we tell her? No. But then she didn't offer us the story. Whether the artists expected us to write their essays I don't know. Although the artist's narrative can always inform the way you look at things we didn't take it as the reason the work got into the show in the end. Maybe that means we aren't proper curators? The thing about the narrative is that when you do know it, you can be enriched by it but at the same time there is always that moment when you stand outside the narrative and see the work for what it is not what the artist intended. I think we both quite like that moment. The artist's narrative can make it more interesting but, at the same time, it can make it less interesting. Sometimes the narrative kills it - I find that a lot, particularly in craft.

Karl: There are those pages in the catalogue with the Maori earrings, the kuru, the kapeu and the mako. Along side there is a photo of a Maori man wearing one of those earrings and for me it is interesting. And it was quite a revelation how they wear it in the ear - how they put a piece of material on it and pull it through the ear hole. It looks pretty cool and totally amazing and this picture tells the story of how this piece works really beautifully as jewellery. It looks amazing on that person and that is such a big part of how jewellery works.. and then on another hand the text in the catalogue from Areta Wilkinson shows that conflict - is it jewellery or not? How do we look at it? I really like all these aspects coming together - it is just a piece of pounamu with a hole and now we have the whole jewellery discussion going on.

Warwick: I think the choice of some of the Maori pieces are not highly crafted pieces of adornment. They are what Karl says - a rock with a hole in it. But they do the job. They do the business once

you put then into the kind of context that Karl is talking about.

Raewyn: But that kind of expanded conversation is not going to happen in Munich is it? It is going to happen here because it is not their conversation. It is ours.

Warwick: And if you assume the responsibility that you are going to explain everything in the show to everybody then I think you are kidding yourself.

Kristin: It is going to be labelled when you see it?

Warwick: I think the only labelling you get is what you see in the catalogue: the name of the work, the date of production and the materials. The more ambitious version of the show was that there should be no names, - no makers names and no dates.

Sharon: Ooo, you would completely subvert the jewellery hierarchy...

Warwick: There is no hierarchy in the Wunderrüma.

Sharon: So do you think you are going to display it in the clumps?

Warwick: We are working on that basis but will see how that goes - for us they do have a kind of conversation; a narrative and the categories... how many clumps can you recall Karl?

Karl: How many? Ich weiß nicht. More than ten.

Warwick: There is work that has made it into the show because of its sometimes tenuous relationship to other work in the show. This makes our selection a little unstable. I think there is a lot of instability in the show and I think that interests us. You ask the question all the time: is it good? Good enough to put in the show and travel it half way around the world? On its own sometimes it isn't but with the other work yes - it gets to earn its passage.

Karl: The works are what they... they are what you look at. There is no trick.

Kristin: Well thank you so much for this...and good luck

Sharon: Who wants another pineapple lump?

All: Yes please!



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Sharon Fitness, Karl Waving, 2013

One mans' taonga is another man's grandmother

Kristin D'Agostino

The more she learns, the less she knows. She invites us along for the random, bumpy ride as she grapples with the concept of taonga in the context of a jewellery show.

Surprise! It's a random Christmas gift of a spare ticket to see Leonard Cohen, tonight! It was his last show of a five year tour; and needless to say, a stunner. Mr. Cohen had gathered the best musicians from around the world to be his backing band, and the resulting sonorous experience was noteworthy.

I found it magical to be whisked out of my normal (heavily domestic) life and to be plopped in front of practioners at the top of their game. And it is with that same sentiment, that I anticipate the upcoming Wunderrūma show. Although they dub it recreational, esteemed jewellers, Karl Fritsch and Warwick Freeman, have taken up curating and gone fishing for Kiwi works that give the best impression of NZ through their eyes. Although they possess different tacks this pair are exceedingly good at mounting shows. The show is partnering with the Dowse Museum and contains 'work is what Karl and Warwick sniffed out – not sure it looks like New Zealand jewellery but it smells like it.' [1] To complete their expedition, even the secret stores of Te Papa Museum (the national museum) were not beyond their cast, including taonga.

<Insert sounds of the proverbial record scratching to a halt!>

'ohhhhhh, Did that say taonga?!?!?'

An email and a phone call:

Day 1 The email:

Dear K –

Hope your trip to States is great and you are enjoying time with the Whanau (family). Life is good here. Wunderrūma is including taonga. Good luck on the flight. See you next week.

Love,

Guildette

Day 2 The phone lines circle the globe:

<Sound of K reading emails and sipping coffee>

"WHAT?!?! TAONGA?"

<sound of phone dialing lots of numbers, beep beep beep..... Then ring, ring, ring>

K: Hello! I just got your email.

Guildette: Where are you?

K: Cleveland

Guildette: Oh.

K: So, how is everyone? Is this a big deal, this taonga thing?

Guildette: Um, no, I don't know, I think it is all above board. The Wunderrūma is partnering with the Dowse and the taonga is part of a museum collection, and I think that the Dowse will make sure all the protocols are met. I think that there is a Māori curator involved.

K: I am not saying it is bad, or shouldn't be done, but I still think that it this a big deal to send taonga to Munich.

Guildette: Hmm maybe.

<natter, natter, natter>

K: Okay got to run, but I will see you in a few days.

<Click>

Things you don't need Me to remind You of.

Pre-European contact, Māori was an oral culture.

Stories, songs and treasured objects referring to important ancestors have a whole different role in an oral culture.

Taonga – is sometimes translated as treasure "procured by the spear" or "highly prized object"[2]

There are 83 words for the color red in Māori.[3].

Koha – present[4] a gift.

Mana - power, authority, respect, prestige.[5]

A contextual note on taonga for my fellow Northerners: Taonga is a concept that after 10 years of living in NZ I don't fully understand. Taonga is loosely de-

finied as a treasured thing. It is the status an object might acquire when it is really special. In the Māori world it is thought to contain a living force. In Europe, it might be akin to objects found in a cathedral --- or in the crypts of said cathedral. But I am way out of my depth here and eagerly await the essay by Areta Wilkinson in the Wunderrūma catalogue discussing how taonga is not jewellery.

'According to Paul Tapsell, *taonga* were 'any tangible or intangible item, object or thing that represents a kin group's genealogical identity in relation to its estates and resources and is passed down through generations' (2000:169)'[6]

But wait, it's not just me, who is grappling with this term, the word seems to be in flux.

Despite attempts to pin down the meaning of this ambiguous concept, there is evidence that the meaning of the term *taonga* in English continued to change (Hedley 2004:64-8). Researcher Hineihaea Murphy (1999: 2) found that defining *taonga* was 'a difficult and somewhat contentious task'. Linguist Harry Orsman (1997: 813), for example recorded a shift from 'goods' to 'a treasured artifact or person'. [7]

Words like transubstantiation, spiritual

and magic come to mind. Coincidentally, there is a Māori word that jeweller, Areta Wilkinson[8] pointed out to me, that just blows my mind. *Whakaahua*, means concept taking form. And it describes the process of say, a carving in a meeting house, representing an ancestor and over the generations becoming or embodying that ancestor. So that is what we are talking about. There is breath amongst the jewellery in Wunderrūma.

Kiwi curator, Justin Paton, in an article '*Speaking sticks and moving targets - new works by Shane Cotton*' talks about Cottons' show at the Institute of Modern Art in Brisbane which includes painted baseball bats which look remarkably like taonga. Paton wonders, "What should a traditional object look like? Who has the right to make one? Who has the right to tell others they can't? And are these questions of life-and-death significance, or is it all just a game?"[9]

...artists frequently push and probe towards the edge of what's considered acceptable. And it is this uncertain edge—this foul zone—where Cotton makes himself at home with the bats. *Serpent Garden*, for instance, despite being a bat, is a remarkably traditional-looking Māori artwork, webbed in white lines that mimic the play of light along the surface of a carved weapon; it's no great



Peter Deckers 'Brooch Chain Ring' 2012

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stretch to imagine this object in a museum case alongside some spot-lit ancient patu or taiaha. But the same can't be said for the harshly named *Coloured Head Crusher*, which seems to wear, along its multicoloured length, the mortal emblems of past 'hits' or 'strikes'—Cotton's version, perhaps, of the bat wielded by the Nazi-killing 'Bear Jew' Donny Donowitz in Quentin Tarantino's lurid war film *Inglourious Basterds*. Far from being content to sit quietly in a museum case, this is an object that seems to want to stir up trouble—to knock out the glass that keeps history at a distance and release all its conflicts and contradictions. [10]

Flashback - Happy Halloween Kids: I am not a native Kiwi. But I am the mother to two New Zealand -born sons. I recently joined a uniquely Kiwi childcare cooperative where the parents are the teachers. You bring your kids, but you stay with them and also up-skill in early childhood education a la New Zealand style. This particular organisation has made a commitment to bi-culturalism [11] and to uphold the tenants of the Treaty of Waitangi [12] in raising these young Kiwis. It is a great thing, but something I constantly, accidentally butt-up against and am reminded of my cultural difference. For instance, I was helping plan the activities for Halloween and being an American, said the obvious thing that popped into my head... "Let's carve pumpkins!" Despite the safety and logistical concerns of 2 year olds wielding large knives, my dear colleagues, simply raised a question... "Is that playing with food? Should we do that? [13]" No one told me not to... or that I shouldn't...but it gave me pause. At the end of the day, I decided I would play with my pumpkins at home. It turns out that Italian-Americans possess habits that are naturally completely offensive to Māori customs... we sit babies on tables, touch their heads non-stop and play with our food all day long (from throwing pizza dough in the air, to carving pumpkins and stringing popcorn for Christmas decorations).

So taonga in a jewellery show. I have been going around asking everyone, 'Is this a big deal?' It might be me putting my American, hyper-sensitive, ultra-politically correct lense on the situation, but it is intriguing and exciting concept that feels a bit risky.

Book report: On my journey, to figure out more about taonga, this book was recommended to me, *Exhibiting Māori: A history of colonial cultures of display*.

It tracks the history of displaying Māori from the nineteenth century to present. The amazon.com blurb states, "*Exhibiting Māori* traces the long journey from curio, to specimen, artifact, art and taonga (treasure). [14]

Did Wunderruma just complete the circle: From curio, to specimen, artifact, art and taonga (treasure) - back to curio? In the last chapter, the approach to displaying taonga is discussed as exemplified by the 1998 Te Papa's 'Mana Whenua' installation in the section entitled, *Māori talking about Māori: the development of the 'Mana Whenua'*.

Awhina Tamarapa, Māori curator and concept leader on the Museum of New Zealand project, argued that the problem with conventional museum displays was that Māori taonga were grouped according to criteria such as form and function, rather than by the tribal affiliation and genealogical histories that animated them. 'All cultural treasures in museums', Tamarapa argued, 'should be displayed in partnership between the people who created them, the people who led them and the people who will see them on display' (1996a: 197). [15]

And on this same topic this passage gave me a lot to chew on:

Taonga were given respect, honoured, elevated, and heightened by scale, layout, words, graphics - they were not deconstructed and certainly not classified, dated or analysed in an academic or scientific way. Atmosphere and mood were created with lighting, music and space, so as to give objects a sense of *mana* and *taonga*. Multi-media technology such as videos, audios and soundscapes were employed to simulate the life force of object-beings in the act of communicating with the Māori descendants. Taonga were perhaps best thought as responses, rather than as objects, constituted not as inherent qualities but through the *mana* bestowed by the patrons who were owner-spectators. Artefacts and art were thus transformed into ancestral treasures by representing, alongside the objects, the owning group's relationship to the object. As Hakiwai explained:

Our mission was to literally break down the walls of the museum, reconnecting the umbilical cord between taonga and people, building two-way highways so that life could be given back to taonga that had been sleeping for years. (1999:12)[16]

A lovely thought: "It is worth noting that Māori have always said that they walk backwards into the future, with their ancestors before them like beacons, not behind them in the dark." [17]

I like to think about this and imagine what it could mean. It reminds me that this is a very different world view to mine. After listening to Warwick Freeman and Karl Fritsch very generously talk about the show, it occurred to me that they were exploring Māori concepts of expanded time in their approach to "contemporary" in this show. And I really liked that approach.

Day Dream interrupted: Once there were two intrepid explorers that went on a brave fishing mission. They went deep, deep, deep into a dark place and found old buried treasure. They mapped out a careful plan to show us the special treasure. Each had a place where it fit just right. But the treasures were so special they couldn't be moved. Their careful maps were thwarted and I cannot stop thinking of the buried treasures and wondering about their stories.

20 Questions

What happens when you put taonga in a contemporary jewellery show?

What would this show be without the taonga?

Does this catch exceed the quota?

If you weren't told, would you know which work is the taonga?

"When you are given something or take something from Māoridom, put something back in - the principles of koha needs to be used." [18]

I wonder what form the koha back to Māoridom will be for use of their taonga?

Within New Zealand exhibition history, Māori objects have gone from curio, to specimen, artifact, art and taonga.

[19] Does the name Wunderruma imply taonga is a 'curio'? Or all of New Zealand work is 'curio'?

Am I being too uptight about this?

If the Māori ancestors and taonga tie the people to the land and the culture was oral, then the objects function as anchoring people to the place. What happens when you raise the anchor and call it art?

Does this show extend the dialogue? (Some may argue my dialogue has become too extended).

In a conversation with Māori jeweller, Areta Wilkson, she asked what is taonga for Paheka (a kiwi of European descent)? What would that look like and how would that function? Is this show hinting at those questions?

Is it a questionable idea to write an article about a show that has not occurred and you have not seen? absolutely!

Final Flashback: The narrator went on vacation to the beach and lost her favourite sunglasses midway through. She was bummed, the sun is very strong in New Zealand and one needs sun glasses here. But then her husband found a broken, one-armed pair of sunglasses. And because the sun is so strong here, (and a certain roman nose) she happily wore the broken glasses. Then, what luck, the husband found an arm to fit the sun glasses (not the original unfortunately). A bit of duct tape and hurray! Glasses. A few days later, the narrator noticed the original half said Prada.

Prada + duct tape + random arm - Does that work? Oh yes. Oh yes. C'mon Wunderruma, do us proud.

It remains to be seen: Overview needs you. Be our eyes, we would love to hear from you. Here is an envelope. Just cut, stamp and send.

footnotes

[1] From draft Wundertext notes by Karl Fritsch and Warwick Freeman

[2] McCarthy, Conal, *Exhibiting Maori: A history of colonial cultures of display*, Berg, Oxford, 2007, p 209

[3] Laird, Tessa. *A Rainbow Reader*,



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Clouds, Auckland, 2013, p 11.

[4] McCarthy, Conal, *Exhibiting Maori: A history of colonial cultures of display*, Berg, Oxford, 2007, p 209

[5] *ibid*

[6] McCarthy, Conal, *Exhibiting Maori: A history of colonial cultures of display*, Berg, Oxford, 2007, p 177.

[7] *ibid*, p 176.

[8] I would like to thank Areta for the generosity, kindness and patience she has extended throughout my learning curve. She has given more than can be adequately noted in this tiny text.

[9] Paton, Justin, *B.171*, Autumn 2013, Christchurch art gallery, pg 13 <http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/bulletin/171/speaking-sticks-moving-targets/>, Accessed 13/2/2014.

[10] *ibid*

[11] Bi-culturalism in New Zealand terms is Maori and other.

[12] Signed on 6 February 1840 by representatives of the British Crown and various Māori chiefs from the North Island, the Treaty of Waitangi, established a British Governor of New Zealand, recognised Māori ownership of their lands and other properties, and gave the Māori the rights of British subjects but its practical application is still a debated issue.

[13] Food is considered *tapu*, sacred, and it is considered disrespectful to play with food.

[14] *Exhibiting Maori*, <http://www.amazon.com/Exhibiting-Maori-History-Colonial-Cultures/dp/1845204751>, Accessed 11/2/2014

[15] McCarthy, Conal, *Exhibiting Maori: A history of colonial cultures of display*, Berg, Oxford, 2007, p 177.

[16] McCarthy, Conal, *Exhibiting Maori: A history of colonial cultures of display*, Berg, Oxford, 2007, p 180.

[17] Laird, Tessa. *A Rainbow Reader*, Clouds, Auckland, 2013, p62.

[18] *Report to the NZ Playcentre Federation*



tion from the working party on Cultural issues: Families growing together, New Zealand Play Centre Federation, Auckland, 1990. P 45

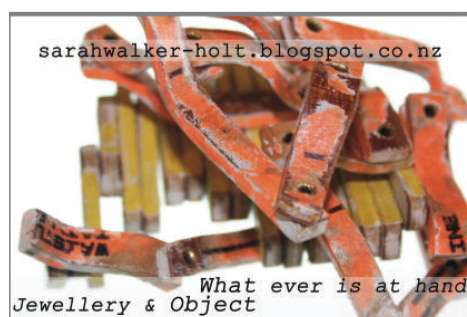
[19] McCarthy, Conal, *Exhibiting Maori: A history of colonial cultures of display*, Berg, Oxford, 2007, p 177.



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“Work makes work”
Warwick Freeman, 2011

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Kirsten Haydon, 'Ice container, brooch', 2012

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that you haven't made
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Studio Visit

Surrounded by dogs and visiting friends, and amidst the sound of shelves being made in the front room, Sharon and Raewyn sit down to interview Fran Allison – Wunderrūma starter, jeweller, artist, and teacher.

All: Hello, hi, ooo a whippet, Buenos Dias, bonjour, hiya...oh hullo

Fran: Sharon and Raewyn are here to interview me.

Friend: Oh why? And on what?

Fran: For their magazine, I feel very privileged.

Friend: Ahhh

Raewyn: So we could start out talking about the Wunderrūma show. There is an article from Liesbeth in which she mentions that she is looking forward to seeing what Karl and Warwick will do – The grand old man and the smart arse she calls them.

Fran: Hahahahah.

Raewyn: Yeah, quite the call.

Fran: Oh that is great. Of course Warwick's other title is god. Whenever Niki (Hastings-McFall) emails she calls him that.

Sharon: Haha.. Dear God...

Raewyn: It's me, Niki...

Fran: It has been really interesting actually, because I had nothing to do with the work they picked which is how it should be...

Raewyn: And what is your impression of the show – what is it?

Fran: It is an eclectic, strange, no that's not the right word...a quirky look at what has been made and what is being made in New Zealand – through their eyes. It's good. Warwick talks about it very well and so he will fill you in. It is great that it is happening. I figured my role, really, was helping it to happen.

Raewyn: So if we think about the last major international jewellery event, Bone Stone Shell would you see them as quite different?

Fran: Oh yes, they are completely different. Bone Stone Shell was done specifically for the overseas market – I think it

was even funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or Tourism Board. I don't think it went to Europe though.

Raewyn: Hmm, we are interested in that. What does it become by going to Europe as opposed to being here?



creative fencing



Fran Allison, Martha's Duster, 2011

Fran: I think Wunderrūma talks about the connections with Munich – the Academie features large – Lisa went to the Munich Academie, Flora is there now, there is very strong connection between Otto and Warwick. They have a strong friendship. And Hermann Junger came out years ago, which is when it kinda started. So it talks a lot about the connection with Munich and with Germany.

Slurp, slurp slurp – very hot day and one of the dogs needs a drink

Raewyn: Yeah, I get the sense, without seeing the show and without yet reading the catalogue, that going to Munich and then returning to The Dowse is going to make everything clearer for us. As New

Fran Allison

Zealanders...you know sometimes you have to step out of your environment to see who you are.

Fran: I certainly think it is going to raise a lot of questions, which is good. Hopefully what it will do is stimulate some discussion. I am sure some people are going to hate it and there will be some people who really don't understand the choices. I don't understand some of the choices but I am not going to say who they are.

Sharon: Haha...Are those apricots on the ground Fran?

Fran: They are peaches but they have a disease that causes them to fall off before they are ripe and they never ripen. I tried everything. Here have some éclairs. So I can't really say anything about the show until I have seen it.

Raewyn: What can you say really.

Sharon: What about the set up?

Fran: That will be a Warwick and Karl scenario.

Raewyn: Karl is good at that stuff.

Fran: He is. It is kinda like making a piece. They would be thinking about it. In some ways The Dowse show is a more important show because they tried to borrow a lot of stuff from Te Papa but it didn't work out because it couldn't travel. And remember Sharon; we saw all that amazing stuff with Dr Michaela Appel in the Volkerkunde museum. We saw some beautiful stuff there.

Sharon: Are they using any of that?

Fran: A couple of pieces. The specifically NZ pieces not the wider Pacific.

Raewyn: How long have they given themselves to set up?

Fran: Three days.

Fran: Yeah. And Niki is going to do the tree outside so that is going to be really cool.

Sharon: Mmmm

Fran: I know, it is really exciting that it is happening. The first year that I went over to Munich was 2009 and I thought wow, this is great. I met up with some people I had studied and worked with in England, it was fantastic and I looked at

the Australian show, which I think was in 2010 and I thought 'Hey we can do that'. So, there I was being introduced to Herr Lösche and I said I really think you should have a New Zealand show.

Raewyn: Nice one!

Fran: Yes, I am never known to keep my mouth zipped in that sort of situation. And nothing came of it. And then, I think it was the year before last, Karl said to Wolfgang, I would really like to do a New Zealand show. And Wolfgang said, I think you should talk to Fran, he remembered. So Karl rang me and said shall we do this. And I thought Warwick and Karl would be a great team, so I called Warwick and asked him if he wanted to do this. And he ummed and arred and said alright then.

Sharon: You put him on the spot.

Fran: It was really great he agreed. And it is interesting that people are comparing it to Bone, Stone, Shell because it is a completely different kettle of fish – to extend the fishing metaphor.

Raewyn: Yes, but in terms of scale and international ambitions, and the idea that it involves a broad section of the jewellery community.

Note: Bone, Stone, Shell was made up of 12 exhibitors Wunderrūma has over 60

Sharon: Warwick and Karl have been really inclusive eh? They have looked at a lot of people's work.

Sharon: This éclair is massive.

Fran: Shall we go halves?

Sharon: Yeah.

Fran: I know they found some surprising things, which is the great thing about a public call for work. There are so many other things that are happening – we now have so many people in Talente thanks to Renee doing a great job, Shelley Norton and Peter Deckers in Schmuck. There are going to be so many people there. Is Ross going?

Raewyn: Yeah. He is my roomie. When I booked my hotel I could only get a twin room, so I sold the other bed to him.

Friend: (passing back through): It is like the garden of eden around here. Look there are grapes and peaches...

Fran: Yeah, the peaches...

Friend: There are bananas around the corner. I'm going to eat that éclair, is that alright?

Fran: Yeah, go on.

Friend: Sorry to interrupt you.

Fran: I am actually a bit nervous about what they want to know.

Raewyn: We are easing you into it.

Fran: Yeah, we have been talking generalities so far. Hey see you guys at lunchtime.

Friend: Ok see ya.

Raewyn: When you work on your jewellery do you work to a project or do you just go in there?

Fran: I have always in the past worked towards an exhibition or show, cause that is how I work best – the pressure of a deadline – and then I realized, after doing those videos and having fantastic conversations with all these jewellers, that I have gone about it completely arse about face. Because, in the past, I wasn't always happy about what went out, so it

didn't match the decision I had made long ago to never send work out unless I was happy with it. So now I work differently, and I am lucky I have the freedom to do that cause the teaching keeps me, and Raewyn, you said to me a while back; where is your work, you haven't got anything out there.

Raewyn: Oh man, that is twice you have brought that up. I feel bad.

Fran: Yeah, I was quite shocked when you said that but then I thought, no that is ok. I have work, I have been making but I don't want to send out failures. The shed is full of failures.

Raewyn: Oh goody. We will have to have a look at those.

Note – in the shed we did not see failures we saw lots of interesting experiments.

Raewyn: So when you have done your video interviews of other people in their workshops, have you noticed a pattern of how people present themselves? Or has it been quite honest?

Fran: People have been incredibly generous, with the interviews that I have done. I was absolutely amazed, when I took that trip and went to Amsterdam – the

incredible generosity of people giving me such a lot of their time, you know. And people spending the whole day. I spent pretty much the whole day with Daniel Kruger, and went out to lunch with him. In some ways so much was missed when I paused the camera when we had conversations over lunch, and I think back and think – what did we say there – whereas the other stuff, I've got it all recorded and I can refer back to it. It's fantastic. I think any kind of nervousness disappears, the more you talk... so as long as you just leave the camera where it is, people forget that it's running, and then they just start talking.

Sharon: Yeah, I had two cameras pointing at me.

Raewyn: Two cameras? Two angles?

Fran: That's right. Oh that just was Graeme being smart.

Sharon: Doing a spare or something... And one of them did turn off aye.

Fran: Yeah, but I got much more low-tech than that when I was doing it on my own. Initially it was really difficult to work the camera. Because I had done my homework and worked out what I wanted to know, but trying to make sure the

camera's still going and making sure its not jolting and that the questions are still happening. Oh, when I was talking to Liesbeth in her home, her cat jumped up and was walking all over everything and rubbing against the camera. It was great.

Raewyn: But it's quite like a threshold really, I mean, coming to interview you, and taking photos of your workshop, and then seeing those photos in the Wunderrūma catalogue... and you know that Thinkspace show I just had, I used an image of my studio for the invite, and as soon as I had sent it off I felt a bit yucky actually.

Fran: It's such a private space.

Raewyn: It is! Oh well, thanks for letting us in.

Fran: Ha, that's alright.

Raewyn: But...how much do you need to know about the person and the making to get more out of the work. Do you need to know that stuff?

Fran: Well when I was doing those conversations/interviews, it wasn't so much about the work, it was more about the process, so I was interested in the different methods and ways that people...

MAKE JEWELLERY

MANUKAU INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

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work by Sarah Walker-Holt

sometimes, you have to trick yourself into making stuff.

R+S: Mmmm

Raewyn: So, who is it for?

Fran: The videos? They are for you all. They are for all makers who make stuff.

Raewyn: Do you have a stand out interview?

Fran: Hmm... Stand out interview... god, that's really hard... Daniel Kruger was good. Warwick – he had been the latest, and it's really good. He always has gems of wisdom dropping out of his mouth right left and centre.

Sharon: I know!

Fran: One of the things I was interested in – and this was why Wunderrūma is so interesting for me – is that whole thing of place, because it's something that in New Zealand we spend so much time mulling over – you know, here we are, such a long way from many things, there's a lot of sea between us and the next continent – and we always sort of go 'Are we up to speed? Are we? Are we? It's at the back of our psyche I think, quite a lot of the time. Not so much now actually, but it used to be like that. And identity, things about identity are always at the forefront, and so, the idea of place and how and if where you are – what kind of influence it has on your making and material choices. And that was one of the questions that I asked everybody. The responses were very interesting. I'm putting a video on vimeo next week that is about place, in time for Schmuck I hope, so it's not about one person and their processes, it's got lots of bits and pieces in it.

Raewyn: I saw that ones that you played at JEMposium, that sort of trailer, which was really good – the Helen Britton one really stood out for me, jaw dropping, actually.

Fran: I want to do a big one on her because she's a very good person to interview, she's very clear. I need to see if I can go and get more material from her actually. Yeah, I am quite excited about them. And so I'm kind of hoping that if I send the videos out there, it might give other people the same making injection.

Sharon: Oh, yeah, it will.

Raewyn: Or just... get thrilled again by being in the workshop.

Fran: Yeah, get enthused.

Raewyn: You know, sometimes if you have a deadline, you just go in there and sit.

Sharon: Organise paper clips.

Fran: Yeah, look at the cobwebs.

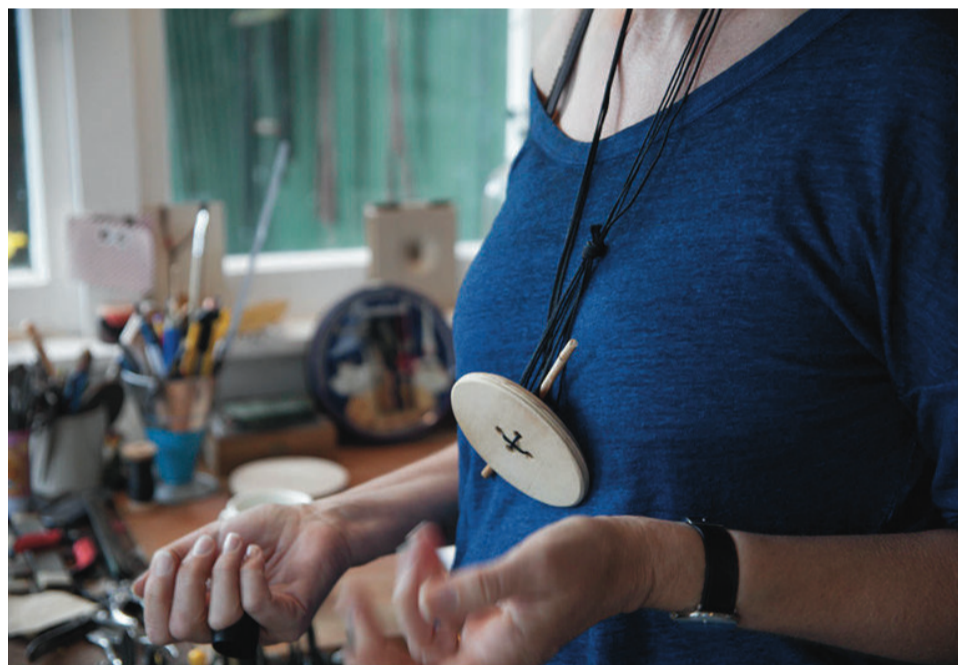
Raewyn: Yeah I saw a cicada caught in a spider's web the other day, outside my window. I thought, Shit! That's a big meal for a spider, it will last for weeks. So.. is Weeds going to do anything soon?



where the magic happens



plating favourites



Fran with button experiment

Fran: We are having a meeting next week. We are all so vague at the moment.

Raewyn: It is such a great thing.

Fran: Yeah, Weeds was actually a direct response to Bone Stone Shell, because it came out of that Bone Stone Shell lecture that Damian was at, at the Museum. Andrea and I came out and we looked at each other and said 'There is so much more than Bone Stone Shell!'

Raewyn: What year was this?

Sharon: That would have been 2005/2006 wouldn't it?

Fran: Yeah

Raewyn: Nobody would debate that these days.

Fran: No, what we did then with Weeds was 'of its time', and I think that what has happened is that, we use Weeds now as a way to crit each others work, which is fantastic, but we are all talking about what's relevant now actually.



structure brooches



the famous shelf of tins

that is a deadline you know, and I do that for family.

Raewyn: Of course. Are these your structures?

Fran: Yeah those are the things that I started to make out of the structures for the flowers.

Sharon: Cool, do you mind if we touch?

Fran: Yeah, Touch anything. I've got the shed next door too, which is supposed to be mine as well. It has got my finisher...

Raewyn: Ooooh! Oh I would love one of those. Um... and do you listen to your cassettes?

Fran: No, haha, I know, look at them! And there are more in here...that's how old I am.

Raewyn: And they are taped ones, off something else.

Sharon: Retro.

Fran: Yeah, home taped. I don't usually listen to them, I don't know why they are there. They are there because I can't throw them away.

Raewyn: I know, I've got a few cassettes.

Fran: And look at these draws... The Travelling Willburys.

Sharon: I used to have that CD. I remember when I borrowed your old beetle, you had one tape in the tape deck. Yeah, I don't know who it was, it was that one that goes 'Suddenly I see'.

Raewyn: And this is the famous shelf!

Fran: Yeah, full of tins.

Raewyn: Oh, there's one with a hole cut out.

Sharon: Oh, I have to get a photo of that Tin Lei.

Raewyn: And have you got a favourite tool?

Fran: Oooh.... The thing that first springs to mind is this old pair of parallel pliers. They have a little groove in them. They are really really beautiful to use.

Sharon: Wow, look at all those tools Fran!

Fran: There aren't many. I left most of my stakes behind when I left England. It's really funny because whenever I go back to London I stay with my oldest friend Jules, and I left her with my really big engineers flat plate, and we jointly

Let's go out to the shed.

Sharon: That is a great vice.

Fran: I know, that was here when I came. The guy that lived here, the Niue Island family that lived here, the father or son used to repair cars, and so I got a fantastic socket set. And this vice I bought and sent over from Australia.

Raewyn: You are kidding me. It's so heavy.

Fran: So I've currently got to make some wedding bands for my niece, who is getting married in three weeks time. They are very specific about what they want, so this particular texture here, and I don't usually do stuff like that but I guess

owned lots of stakes because she is a silversmith..... I look at them and want them back!

Raewyn: Oh my gosh! Look at them. And look at this! (*bendy fork*)

Fran: Oh yeah, I make these things that are um..

Raewyn: Oh, it's bendy! That's useful.

Fran: It's really useful.

Sharon: Yeah, if you need a bendy fork.

Fran: It's like how I make those things there with legs. I actually want to move back into making bigger things at the moment, so I thought right, that is what I'm gonna do, I am going to go in there and make bigger things.

Raewyn: Right. And what is happening here?

Fran: Oh, that's me messing around with the new things... with the idea that... well, I don't know yet. I am going to make one like this – like that. A gingham one. What I want to do is make a whole lot of buttons that emulate fabrics, but they are actually objects, they are not buttons. It's that thing – one of the things that Warwick said when I interviewed him which I always think of – you know, that thing he does, where he takes objects and he transforms them by changing the material, so that you change the reading. So if you think about those handles that he did, you know, they came from something that he picked up on a beach, which was the handle of an old screwdriver. And if you change the material, you change the way it's read and you change the scale, then it becomes something other. You start to read it as something else. But, you still see the essence of it. So you saw this, you saw it as a button because it is a button, but maybe it's just one small part that makes it recognisable as a button – only that.

Raewyn: So you are not thinking of them as jewellery.

Fran: Yeah, maybe.. I mean that's why I put that on it. So yeah, it is jewellery, but it needs to go back on the body. Because it's a button as well, it needs to go back on clothing.



Raewyn: That's a nice scale.

Fran: The other thing that I realised from the videos is that you are working away, and in some ways you are aware of what other people are doing in your immediate group that you talk to, but it's



things with legs



greenspace in central auckland

interesting to find out that there are things that everybody who makes things does, and I think everybody who makes things, collects things. Even if they don't physically collect things, they might be collecting images... or youtube videos, or they might be collecting stuff, you know.

Raewyn: Mmm it's a big part of it isn't it. That's what struck me in those photos in the Wunderrūma catalogue, of the studios. There were piles of stuff, it was all about stuff

Sharon: Yeah, I saw that. I was actually trying to recognise all the workshops and people in the photos. There were a lot of guys in there that I had never seen before – older guys..

Fran: It's such a good idea. I think other

people's workshops are such interesting spaces, because they are private spaces, and so, they have things in there that you just never see. And things in there that you never thought they might be interested in, which is great. And in New Zealand, some people have fantastic

Fran: Do you? I remember when I came out to video you, you were in the bathroom. It was just hilarious, because you had this kind of board that went over the bath that you were working on.

Raewyn: No baths in there... You could bath and make at the same time perhaps.

Sharon: Yeah nah. We don't have enough water for that...

Raewyn: But I think we talked to Shelley about doing a workshop interview for Overview and she said 'Oh no, I just sit on my couch' and I said 'Exactly, that's the point' you know, because she always says such great things. It would have been interesting.

Fran: Yeah.

Sharon: One day we'll get her.

Fran: This used to be a wash house, it used to be half the size. When I first moved here I used to use this cruddy little washhouse and then my cousin Max who is a builder came up and we built another metre out.

Raewyn: And that's plenty of room, isn't it. Do you have a log? I'm getting a log soon, I'm very excited about that.

Fran: I want a log, but I fear that it wouldn't actually fit. Where are you getting your log from?

Sharon: We chopped down a tree.

Raewyn: Yep, Sharon is my log baron. Do you use your silversmithing stuff much?

Fran: Yip. It's one of those things – if you are taught that way, then that's the way you tend to go first.

Sharon: You could teach some silversmithing at school... That's what we should do with the year ones! Can we please?

Fran: Yes! Let's do it. It's so fun.

Sharon: Yeah, because I don't know how to do it.

Fran: Yes, it's such good fun. I love it – I haven't done any classic silversmithing, and raising for years. That's alright. When I'm in London I will get Jules to give me a little sample session.

Sharon: Yeah, we have all those stakes, it's a shame not to use them.

Fran: I know. I've got to get that lathe working at work too. I've been wanting to do that for ages – I want to do those buttons on it.

workshops, like, the view from Peter Deckers workshop is phenomenal – down the valley – it's just such a beautiful workshop.

Raewyn: But I also like the idea that there are people who have set up in their laundry, just a little possie, or you know, Mary said at a lecture once that she was set up at the end of her bed for a while, because it's all about how you don't have to have the perfect workshop to make stuff.

Fran: And it's like the gallery, you know, like Zoe's bedroom gallery.

Raewyn: Oh yeah.

Sharon: I have two workshop spaces set up, but I actually do most of my work on the kitchen table, or in the lounge.

Raewyn: Oh well, this is all very inspiring.

Fran: Is it. Oh good, because I opened it up this morning and thought, oh dear - because it's all very familiar to me. But it's nice to see all the little things that other people pick up on.

Sharon: Just your pliers collection is pretty awesome, and all the little files and bits of scrap everywhere... and the little things that you put on your windowsill.

We admire the green spaces at the end of Fran's garden, made up of all the backyards of the neighbourhood. So much green space in the centre of Grey Lynn

Sharon: This is where Fran got married. Down there in the garden. We were running really late and I ran in here and stood on the shed step and looked around. And like, ten seconds later she walked out onto the deck and down the stairs.

Fran: Yes that's right. That was really good timing. And you got it all on video!

Sharon: Yeah, I was wearing my video brooch.

Fran: I keep finding myself going back to doing things with flowers and bloody nature things, you know.. and I think its because you see it all the time.

Raewyn: But it's what you do with it that matters.

Fran: I keep banging my head against it and going 'Flowers and jewellery.. No! No more' but, you know.

Fran: Does anyone want to go halves in another chocolate éclair?

Sharon: Okay then.

To watch Fran's Jewellery Conversations videos, log into

<http://jewelleryconversations.com>



Brandlandia

WELCOME TO THE PERSONAL SPACE PROJECT

PERSONAL SPACE PROJECT is an online gallery documenting a private gallery that exists in the real world. Online 24 hours or in real life by appointment. Located in Canberra, Australia in the bedroom of jeweller Zoe Brand.

For me, being a contemporary art jeweller means that not only do I make objects but I also deal in ideas and this project at its very basic level is a gallery that hopes to explore this further. It also happens to be located in my bedroom.

I wanted a space that was about the ideas, not the need to sell the work, or to play it safe. I wanted to be able to call the shots, exhibit artists who were doing interesting work and projects, and who didn't perhaps always fit in the normal gallery/shop realm. I have chosen to locate it in a personal space, a place where you would normally store your jewellery after it is purchased and when it is not being worn. It seemed to me then that a bedroom, my bedroom was a perfectly sensible place to house such a gallery.

Jewellery is a part of dress, a part of who we are and how we present ourselves to the world. It is also a part of how people read our appearance even before we have spoken a word. The reality that jewellery is superfluous to the body, and requires the conscious decision of the wearer to put it on and wear out, is precisely the very thing that makes it such an interesting and exciting idea to investigate.

Contemporary art jewellery has a bit of a hard time being understood by the general public, not to mention artists, designers, and even jewellers might not always comprehend what we do. Perhaps this is because jewellery is one of those things that everyone inherently understands and they cling to their preconceived notions of it like a life raft.

People know how it works, where to put it, where to buy it, when to wear it, and when to give it. They also know why they wear it, although undoubtedly this could be understood on a sliding scale or conscious and subconscious actions. Contemporary art jewellery pushes the boundaries of these constructs. It can ask challenging questions of its viewers, often requires boldness of its wearers, and sometimes disregards the body altogether.

PERSONAL SPACE PROJECT

I make artwork that exploits common conceptions about traditional jewellery. I offer up humorous comments in the form of jewellery, small scale artworks and occasionally the odd participatory project or performance. I want to make you think about why it is that you wear, give or desire jewellery. I want to make you think about everyday materials and how they have the ability to tell stories of their own. I also want to make you question how you view the world. Perhaps, after this experience you might find a renewed glint in your eye, a smile on your face and a beer in your hand, because sometimes life shouldn't be so serious.

This idea has been swimming around in my head for a number of years and I'm so thrilled that it now exists in the real world. I will exhibit contemporary art jewellers and artists who deal in ideas and manifest their way of viewing the world into refreshing, remarkable and often witty, objects, art works and projects.

The PERSONAL SPACE PROJECT exists as a real space that you can visit (by appointment), however Canberra isn't a huge bustling city, despite it being Australia's capital. I believe that the need for an online presence is important so that the ideas can spread further and engage a wider audience outside of Canberra.

I hope this gives you something just a bit different to ponder at night before you drift off to sleep and that it might delight or excite you as much as it does me. Welcome to the PERSONAL SPACE PROJECT, I think you'll be very happy here.

- Zoe Brand

COMING UP AT THE PERSONAL SPACE PROJECT....

MARCH - BRIDGET KENNEDY

APRIL - CLAIRE McARDLE

MAY - RAEWYN WALSH

JUNE - THE ITINERANT ROOM

JULY - MANON VAN KOUSSWIJK

AUGUST - VOLKER ATROPS

SEPTEMBER - RENEE BEVAN

OCTOBER - MELINDA YOUNG



Sharon Fitness, September 2013



Roseanne Bartley, October 2013



Duke Frost, November 2013



Nina Baker, December 2013



Caz Guiney, February 2014

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