

POLARITY

HS4



Vivien Atkinson

Mandy Flood

Nik Hanton

Jennifer Laracy

Brendon Monson

Katie Pascoe

Sandra Schmid

Kylie Sinkovich

Nadine Smith

Caroline Thomas

Kim Whalen

Keri-Mei Zagrobelna

Ben Lignel

Volker Atrops

Vincent Pontillo-Verrastro

Judy Darragh

Aaron Decker

Francis Upritchard

Tanel Veenre

Ben Lignel

Regan Gentry

Nicolas Cheng

Beatrice Brovia

Lisa Reihana

INTRODUCTION

The Way We Live Now

Hello Visitor!

This group of 12 jewellers asked me to contribute a short text for their show Polarity. I'm known for having an interest, and some familiarity, with the field of New Zealand contemporary jewellery so of course I said 'yes', although I wouldn't be able to see any of the works before the exhibition opened. So in musing about what I might write I started thinking about what the jewellers had told me about their work and also the word 'polarity'. This word suggests to me 'contradiction' and 'opposition', the notion of things being separate and irreconcilable.

What the jewellers talked about was something different. Caroline Thomas discussed "the constant 'push-me pull-you'" of her ideas and said she was "constantly tussling with an inner dialogue". Rather than their ideas being, or remaining polarities, she and others conveyed a strong sense of establishing dialogues by joining ideas up. Jennifer Laracy describes her enquiry about the past and the present as a 'journey', with her travelling between and connecting her interests. These artists demonstrate that their practices have established 'conversations' between disparate ideas and they certainly don't seem to be confounded by the oppositional nature of polarities. Mandy Flood describes the ideas in such a dialogue as "independent but utterly dependent". And it's the tension of these different or independent ideas being held together that helps establish the voice of the individual maker. Kylie Sinkovich says "With that 'voice' (our work) we are able to communicate and articulate our feelings around our evolved idea with a heightened sense of understanding and conviction."

These jewellers have a wide range of interests and are clearly going in many different directions. It is common for such exhibitions to be described as giving you, the visitor, a 'snapshot' of contemporary practice. I'm not sure if Polarity is really a snapshot of contemporary New Zealand jewellery practice. For that to be the case I think the exhibition would have to be more comprehensive in terms of the types of practices. But what I think the exhibition does is throw some very interesting light on the field of contemporary jewellery itself and our contemporary world. I'll explain.

The term 'contemporary jewellery' came into currency in the 1950s and 60s (sometimes it has been called art jewellery or studio jewellery) when a new generation of makers began to experiment with materials other than the precious metals and precious stones of conventional jewellery. The development of this new field of contemporary jewellery was seen as being focused around a single and fundamental concept, 'the critique of preciousness'. Noted Australian commentator Dr Kevin Murray said in a recent talk in Wellington, " 'this critique involves 'the struggle to liberate jewellery from restrictive notions of value, so that it becomes available for artistic expression and experimentation, a deeper engagement with society, and a new awareness of the body and the wearer'. " 1

50 years since its emergence the field is much larger than it has ever been. Noted Paris-based commentator Ben Lignel wrote after the 2016 Munich Jewellery Week (the annual Olympics of the contemporary jewellery world) that "Even though we all tend to meet up in the same railway station, I don't believe jewellery is actually on a single train, going in a single direction. The commentator's point, I think, is that differences in practices are too big to ignore, and this signals the road ahead: We must now attend more precisely to jewellery's diversity, lest our "supportive family" syndrome start stifling the development of distinctive offshoots." 2 The differences evident in Polarity, I think, are emblematic of the current state of the field of contemporary jewellery itself.

If we think about what is before us it also seems to me that this assembly of works speak very loudly about our contemporary world. Googling 'characteristics of the contemporary age' I came across a list of four defining characteristics of our age.

1. Multiple meanings or multiple worlds. Check: As Ben Lignel noted above there are many things going on in contemporary jewellery and they're not necessarily connected. Just look around the room. 2. Work in non-traditional forms. Check: Yes, our eyes confirm this. For instance Nadine Smith writes of her "desire to give a sense of life to the discarded". 3. Comments upon itself. Check: Mandy Flood has said her work is about "the exploration of materials and their end states". Jen Laracy said she is "thinking about traditional settings, decoration and adornment". 4. Features cultural diversity. Check: Amongst these 12 are people from Maori and Pakeha backgrounds and people born in a number of different countries who now live in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Anthony Trollope's 1875 novel *The Way We Live Now* aimed to reveal the characteristics of the times. In presenting the works gathered it seems to me that *Polarity* not only presents contemporary practice but it embodies and makes visible some of the current attributes and dilemmas of contemporary jewellery as well as some of the defining features of our contemporary world.

Bye, Philip Clarke
July 2018

Philip Clarke was the inaugural Director of Objectspace. He has been a judge for Art Jewelry Forum and is currently a trustee of the Blumhardt Foundation. He collects contemporary jewellery.

Notes

1. <http://kevinmurray.com.au/text/from-tabu-to-blockchain> Presented 12 April 2018 at The Dowse Art Museum.
2. <https://artjewelryforum.org/we-are-all-in-this-together-we-are-not-in-this-together> 03/28/16
3. <https://quizlet.com/44549325/contemporary-period-characteristics-flash-cards/>

VIVIEN ATKINSON

Mentor: Ben Lignel

Shelter

The title *Shelter* references Maslow's paper 'A Psychology of Human Motivation' in which he proposed a hierarchy of human needs - with the physiological needs of air, water, food, shelter and clothing forming the base.

There is an increasingly romanticised and commercially constructed concept of what this shelter should be and what it should provide, but this is far from the complex reality of everyday life for most.

Lost
lose
hose
home

Hell
help
heap
head
herd
here
hare
hale
hole
home

work
word
cord
core
come
home

fear
bear
beat
best
west
went
lent
lint
line
lone
hone
home

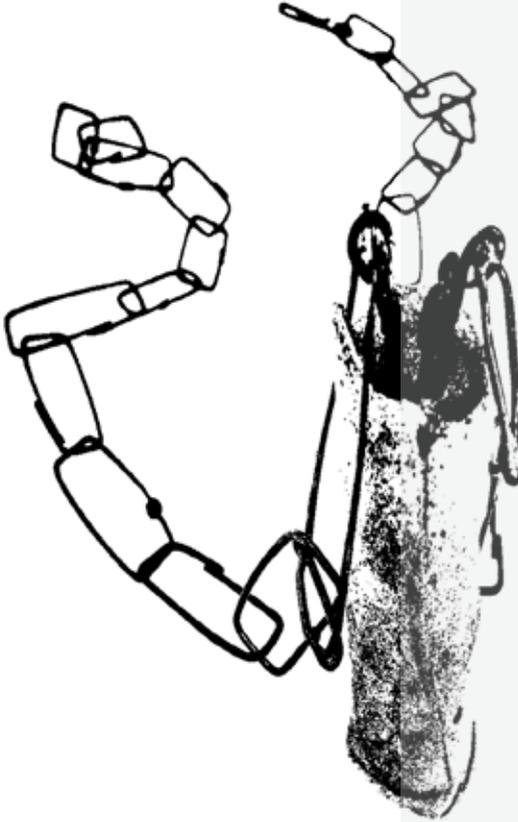
life
lime
lame
came
come
home



BY TADUNA

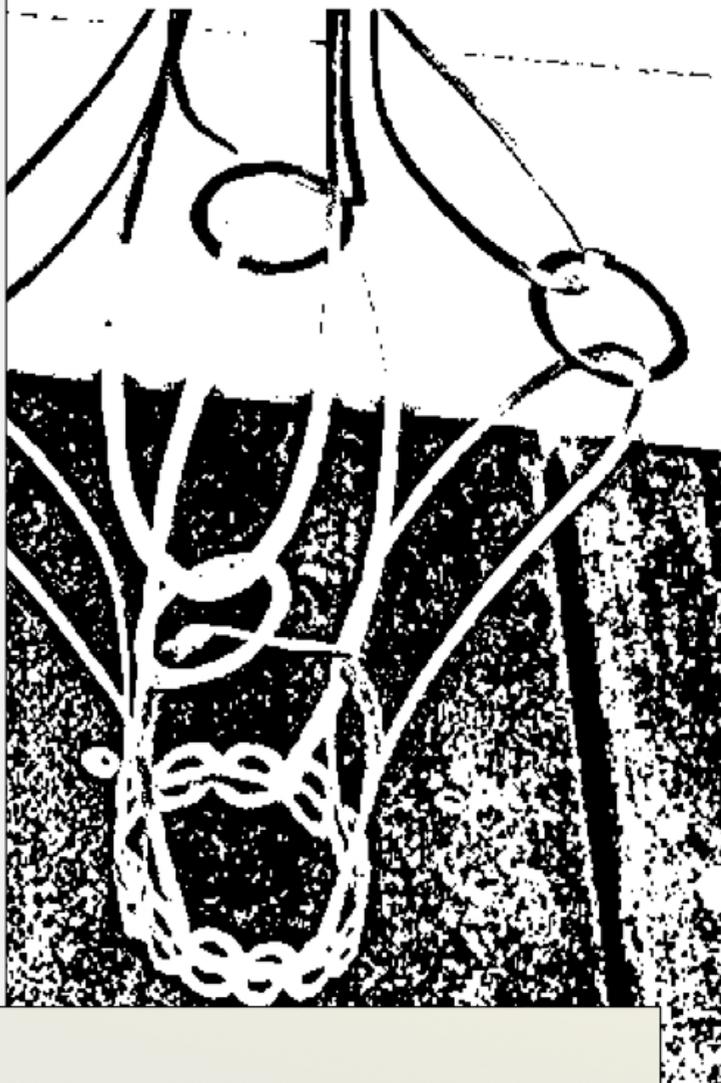
MANDY FLOOD

Mentor: Volker Atrops



Through my mentorship with Volker Atrops I have begun to understand this polarity of personal expression is like that of breathing. Inhale; Exhale; Independent but utterly dependent on each other. The tension of my making is shown through the exploration of materials and their end states

CONTRARY



No you can't ! Yes I Will !

NIK HANTON

Mentor: Vincent Pontillo-Verrastro

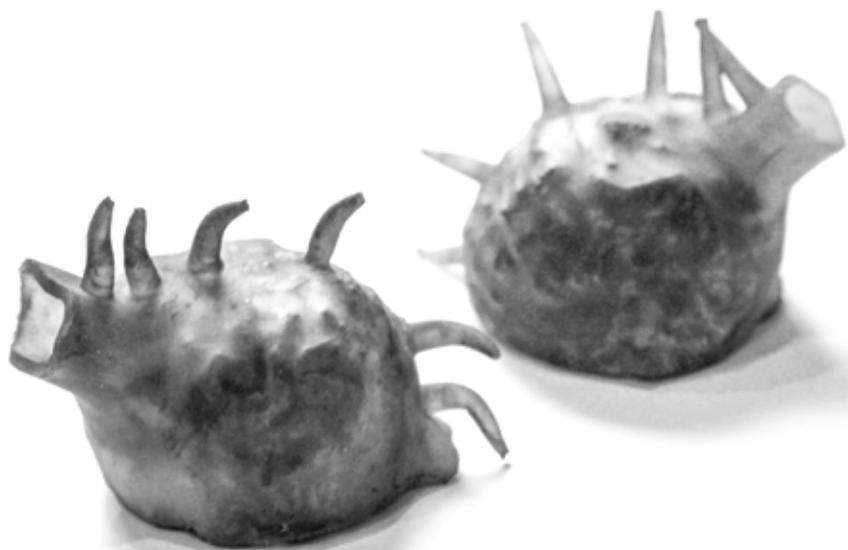


DUAL PROCESS

We think and we feel- two contrasting ways in which we approach the world.

One conscious. One automatic.

The automatic is difficult to bend to our will, but the conscious can be altered with persuasion.



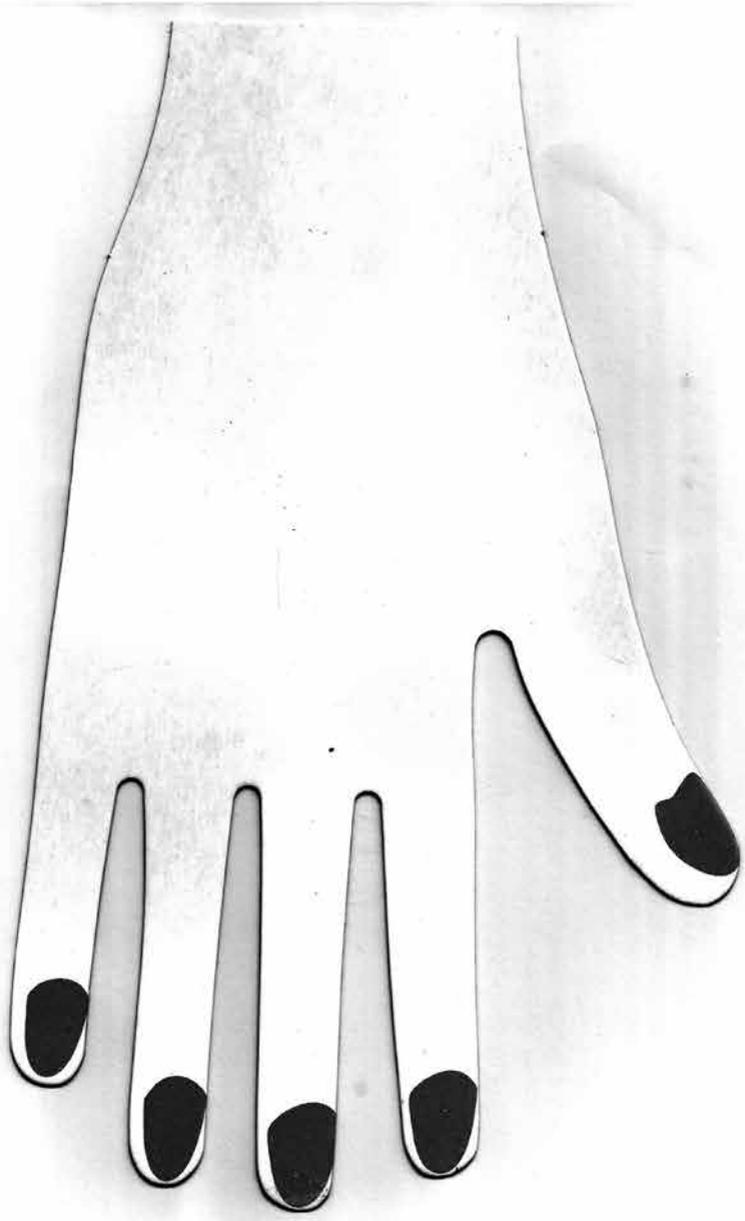
JENNIFER LARACY

Mentor: Judy Darragh

Block ring, Jennifer Laracy, 2018



to adorn to decorate to be close to the body



Up Side Down, JudyDarragh, 2018

BRENDON MONSON

Mentor: Aaron Decker

The migration and settlement to Otago in 1848 inspires the confrontation, a dilemma of self.

This dilemma materializes through the digital and the analogue intersection. It is in the imperfect, tactile, and subjective qualities of the handmade that digitized, historic artifacts can be flexed, molded and manipulated - mirroring the identity which I question.

It is that polarity is where I arrive in my practice, divided between an infatuation with the handmade and an obsession with the 'digitally made.' From the outside these two do not mix, yet somehow inside my practice they untie. Decorative forms whose origins rest in crafted, ornamental, Victorian interiors intersect as I subvert these motifs into assembled plastic jewelry, in both material and concept.

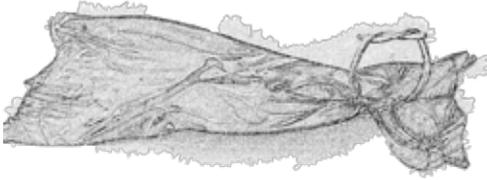
Although not obsessed with environmental tendencies tied to plastics, I instead obsess over the intense kitsch it carries in contrast to the forms I utilize. Gradated hollow plastic forms popping into one another make this piece up. Formable, movable, plastic - a disregard for the Immovable, timeless forms





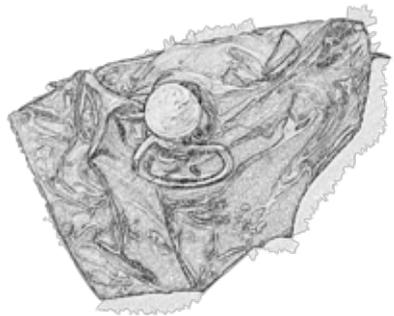
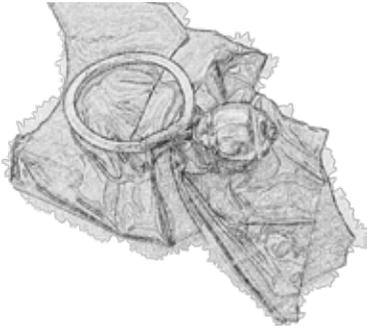
KATIE PASCOE

Mentor: Francis Upritchard



&/both





Polarity suggests opposite ends, black and white, contrast, extremes, a certainty of one or the other. What I am interested in, is something less sure, the vaguely illuminating space in-between. Somewhere intuition, conflicted states and dissonance lie.

Highs and lows can carry remnants of both states with them. When you come home what are the fragments of these states? Is it an afterglow or a residue? A smudge of makeup, a smear of a fingerprint, a promise or a collapse?

SANDRA SCHMID

Mentor: Tanel Veenre



Moths

Brooch 2018

Aluminium, Sterling Silver, Stainless Steel

120x140x50mm

Virtual becoming reality

"Moths"

When night falls, moths come alive. Guided by stars and moonlight, these nocturnal animals are also attracted to artificial light, misled and trapped.

'Glowkids'

When night falls, parts of our human society comes alive. Attracted by computer screens we are consumed by the virtual world. Eyes wide open, our faces are lit up by the glow of the screens we are so absorbed by.



KYLIE SINKOVICH

Mentor: Ben Lignel



There is polarity in everything we do, whether we are conscious of it or not. We create the bulk of our lived experience in-between these extremes, in the space where we can hear the quiet voice of our own truth.

Like in the stillness between the in-breath and out-breath, where there is both nothing and everything; a place of no-thingness that also contains the pure potential of creation.

My current body of work is an invitation to take time to centre oneself in the heart, to notice what is felt, and to let go of the compulsion to think.

Present

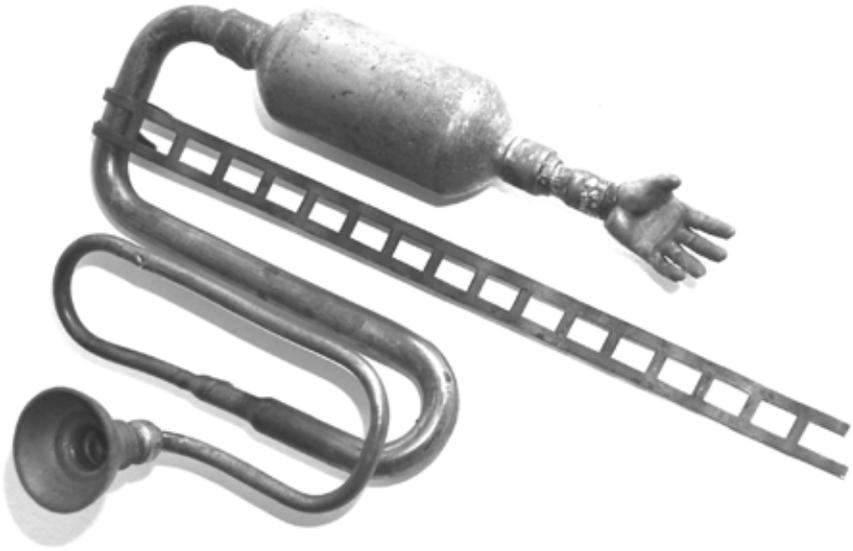


Matter

NADINE SMITH

Mentor: Regan Gentry

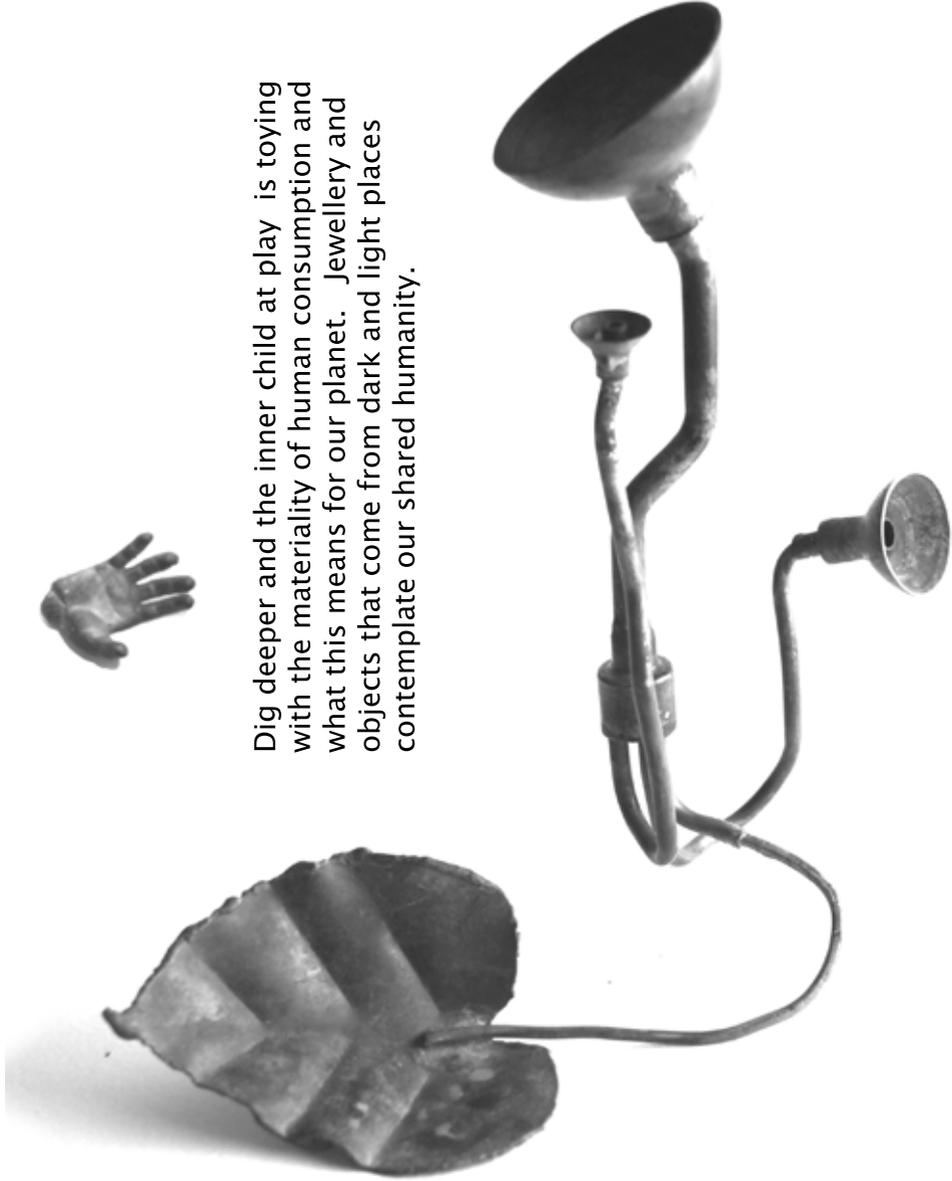
Mentor: Regan Gentry



Waste Land

What makes matter matter?

Letting my whimsical mind roam free, I breathe a sense of life back into the discarded. Poles apart from their initial function, by-products are given an opportunity for renewal. The inanimate springs to life in other-worldly creations.



Dig deeper and the inner child at play is toying with the materiality of human consumption and what this means for our planet. Jewellery and objects that come from dark and light places contemplate our shared humanity.

CAROLINE THOMAS

Mentor: Nicolas Cheng

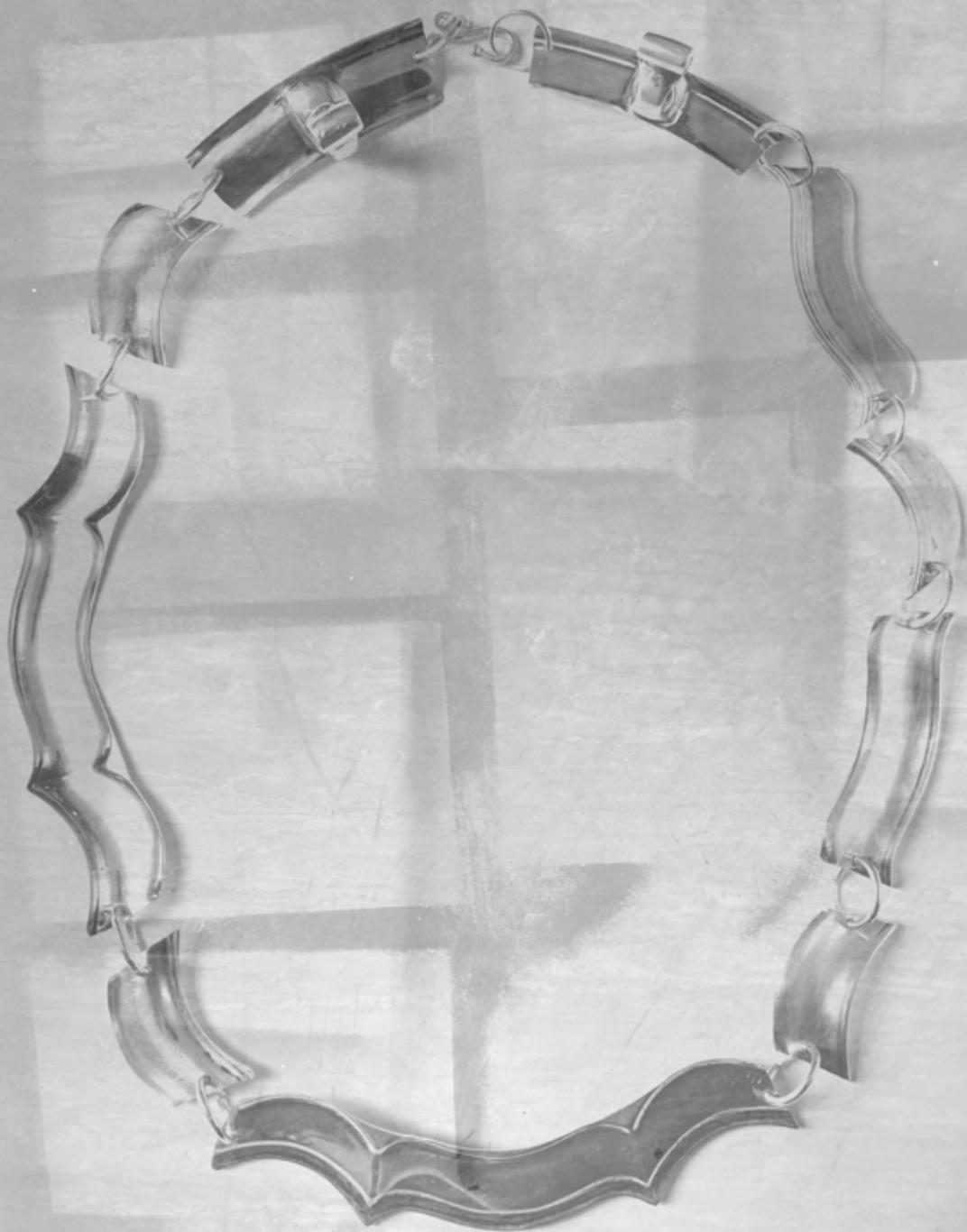
On Discovering the Small Edge of Something Very Big

My work at Corban Estate reminds me of a recurrent dream I used to have, of looking through a peephole in a fence at what I understood to be the whole world spread out like a carpet in front of me. The overriding feeling I took away from that dream was one of unease, a discomfort at the contrast between something vast and endless and something tiny and mortal.

I typed the phrase 'something very big in something very small' into a search engine and the title of the last entry on the first page of searches jumped out at me. It was a medical article about the history of statins and contained the phrase 'On Discovering the Small Edge of Something Very Big'.

This phrase sums up for me the core of what I have been exploring in this series of work for 'Polarity'. A piece of jewellery more often than not, is a small decorative object that can also contain massive emotions and ideas such as the history of a family, the symbolism of a nation and the fragility of memory. As such, an item of jewellery, as well as the individual who wears it, could be described as a small edge of something very big.

In addition, I interpret this phrase as being redolent of the impossibility of ever understanding the complete truth of anything and the futility of thinking otherwise. However, we are always able to occupy our own individual Small Edge whilst contemplating the Very Big and acquiring an understanding of some of the parts of the mysterious whole as we go along.



SO WHILE EVERYTHING PUTREFIES
wars waging,
beauty's forms are eternal.
I seek to honour the ephemeral
by exalting its neglected,
life giving roots,
as well as its
ephemeral shells.
I carry this vessel,
inside here watching,
eyes that commit, tenacious
bleeding heart running
through my trembling hands
away into the Underworld..
Bound and buried..
In sacred sands.
And through embodiment,
the soul's feathers flourish
so that she may return
to her origin..
Bless you sacred ancient
kauri taonga.
Come home.
Aroha tahi.

KIM WHALEN

Mentor: Beatrice Brovia



KERI MEI ZAGROBELNA

Mentor: Lisa Reihana

"The Object's Lament"

I am Naked

in front of a room full of strangers

left alone @ night

the Ruru comforts me

whispering old laments

from my ancestors

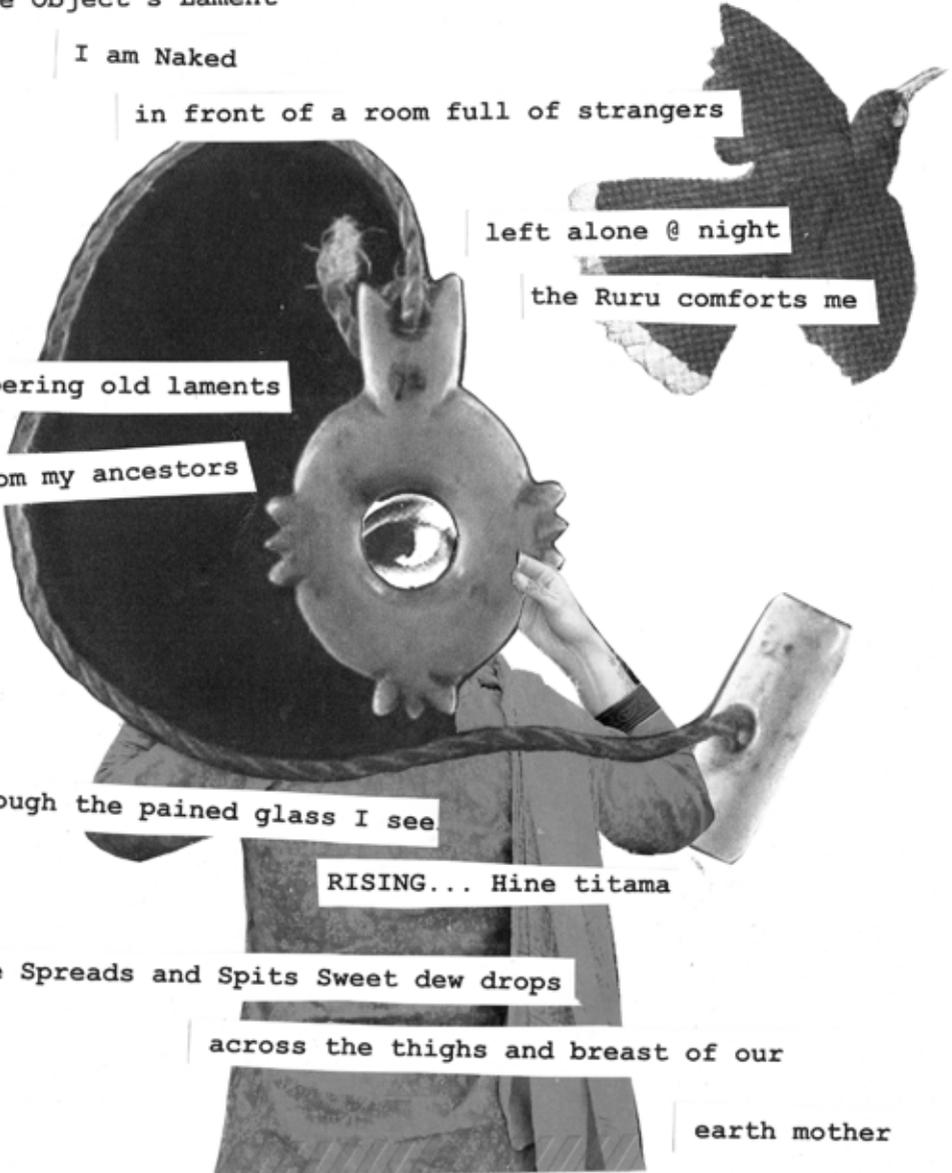
Through the pained glass I see

RISING... Hine titama

She Spreads and Spits Sweet dew drops

across the thighs and breast of our

earth mother



FLINCHING, PIERCING FLUORESCENT is flicked on

.....the gallery is open... the night.... now gone

It is open for the spectators to "Caste" their gaze

across my open body

Shaped with stories and scars,

of the present,

and the past

try to conceptualize my Soul but know. That.

It... Is... Vast...

And KNOW this.... that I will be Here

long after...

Your Bones turn to Dust.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Handshake 4 would like to thank Makers 101 and Creative New Zealand, for all their support over the past two years. In addition, we would like to thank our friends, family and above all, our mentors for their patience, guidance and wisdom. Without the help of these stellar agencies our progress as makers and as artists would have been a much more difficult and lonely process.

We are also indebted to Tanel Veenre, Lauren Kalman and Gabby O'Connor for sharing their expertise with us in a series of invaluable master classes and crit sessions, and to Philip Clarke for his thoughtful introduction to our exhibition catalogue.

Finally many thanks to Pah Homestead, TSB Bank Wallace Arts Centre, Toi Pōneke Arts Centre and Corban Estate Arts Centre for allowing us to exhibit our work in their esteemed galleries.



Makers 101





HAND SHAKE

PRENTICE & PRODIGY
4

ISBN 978-0-473-44784-7

Printed at Inky Palms

Auckland

Aotearoa

New Zealand

2018