

# overview

conversations about jewellery in Aotearoa, NZ



issue #7  
May 2012

## editorial

*Raewyn Walsh gathers in news from all over.*

Phew!!!

The last issue of Overview was a meaty one. That was when we reflected on JEMposium and tried hard to process the information/ideas overload from the weekend. And while most of us are still chewing things over, we thought we would offer up something a bit lighter for this issue. Something a bit easier to digest. So, Overview #7 - the “#7 combination fried rice issue” - is made up of a tasty selection of jewellery related tidbits from here, there, and everywhere.

Above all, JEMposium extended our jewellery circle and we are pleased to have built on existing relations with our friends in Australia. Norfolk Island (now residing in Sydney) artist Margarita Sampson sent through some more thoughts on the ATN rings that had such an impact at JEMposium, and previous contributor Zoe Brand reviews her experience of the Susan Cohn curated *Unexpected Pleasures* that is showing at the NVG in Melbourne until August. Sharon Fitness tells us about her involvement in RETROSPECT, the jewellery show that has left the Pah Homestead and travelled to the Wallace Gallery in Morrinsville, and looks back on growing up in this town.

March also marks Schmuck week in Munich, Germany and we hear from the New Zealand delegation that set off on the now annual pilgrimage to Europe. See Overview #2 for reports from the 2011 group. Suni Gibson and Lynsay Raine represented at Talente, and Caroline Billing from The National gives us a curators view of Schmuck and the surrounding events. Congratulations also go out to Octavia Cook and Jacqui Chan who were selected to exhibit at Schmuck 2012. We get a more personal insight into the European experience from Becky Bliss who spent some time with her Handshake mentor Fabrizio Tridenti. Our new jewellery BFF Lisbeth den Besten also sends news of own jewellery adventures since she was here in Aotearoa. We have provided links to some of her activities.

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to Overview - Sharon, Kristin and I do not have much to say this time round - we are to busy making stuff and hope you are to.

All the best

Raewyn, Sharon, and Kristin

# monologue

*Margarita Sampson came to JEMposium from Sydney and this is what she saw...*

In February I had the pleasure of attending Jemposium, a symposium of contemporary jewellery held in Wellington, NZ. Among other esteemed practitioners, Ted Noten was billed as a keynote speaker, the Dutch jeweller who with associates Marcel van Kan & Cathelijne Engelkes had successfully transformed his Atelier Ted Noten (ATN) into a sought-after brand, utilising the tropes of fashion & advertising in a Hirst/Koons/Warhol-ian fashion. Ted was elevated to a near-mystical persona, with witty slogans that suggested “Ted Noten loves women” among others.

Ted, alas, was not able to make it, and sent both a video of himself and his 2-I-C Marcel van Kan. Meanwhile, over at Photo-Space the ATN Miss Piggy “Wanna Swap your Ring?” project was in full swing. The concept: a certain amount of pink nylon pig-rings (of an infinite series) were arranged in the form of a gun, and you could take one and replace it with a ring of your own you didn’t want any-more. It could be a failed experiment from your studio (the text suggested), a ring (ie engagement) some-one had given you that you never wanted, etc. It took places in different cities in the world, with each one assuming it’s own character. The wall of rings will now be exhibited elsewhere, so the New Zealand one, as others, one will form a unique snapshot of a time & place.

It troubled me somewhat, and investigating exactly why has taken a while to nut out. It’s complex and I’m not sure I’ve nailed it even now. Here’s the deal: the rings read to me as design-trinkets. A ring that had any associated value to me (even bad memories) as a straight swap to a ring that came out of a big plastic bag by the handful? That doesn’t seem fair, ATN - where are your memories & associations? Your offering, as it were, of yourself? Or are we buying into a rhetoric that says: because of your status, your mass-produced trinket is glamorous, desirable and equal one-to-one with anything we may have to offer? Strangely, if they had been for sale (they retail at 30 euros online), I would have been happy to buy one. Money has no intrinsic value, either. So what price do I put on my ring-associations? I would have been happy with a swap between people in different countries where we offered a similar ring (I loved the pin-swap with the ‘two hour time limit ‘making-parameter). I would have been happy to give a ring to the project, and it would have pleased me to think of it sitting next to the others. Interestingly, Marcel expressed ATN’s mild disappointment that the Japanese version contained many swapped rings made (on the spot) from wire or paper, or a cheap key-ring, for instance, thus subverting the suggested rules of exchange. So why not offer up a scrap of twisted paper, you ask? It...it just felt a bit disrespectful. Maybe the problem was that I was unable to proffer an equivalent item for exchange & thus felt thwarted by

the original premise. Marcel had said that ATN wanted to play with ideas of value & worth, which, if that was the object, has been mightily successful in this case.

So, it wasn't a high priority to get myself one...and yet, there was a little nagging envy as Jemposium people waggled their pink pig rings at each other. The allure of the desirable, finite item. The Birkin bag of Jemposium? Perhaps I should hurry down and get one? Rumours were that they'd all gone...Meanwhile, back at the ranch, Marcel van Kan took us through a presentation on the work of ATN. Despite being an admirer of the virtuosity of the work of ATN for many years, the talk left me a little cold for various reasons, not least being their condescending attitude to women...fickle, high-heeled-wearing, diamond-bedazzled-creatures.. it felt like were we in another era.(The text should read "Ted Noten loves his own idea of Women"). I was left with the feeling that there wasn't much mana in the "Big Banana" of ATN.

At the conclusion of the talk Marcel, with a flourish, took a handful of leftover yellow rings from a previous project and threw them into the audience. ...One was heading straight my way, gosh... and as X (next to me) put in a heroic goalkeeper's jump in front of me, the ring deflected off his sleeve and fell between my feet. Ah, the little yellow ring. Viperish thing. Hell, it was between my feet, everyone was excited, it was all good fun, wasn't it? Still I couldn't shake the feeling that I'd been swapped a shiny mirror for a piece of land. Beads & a handful of nails while the 'Euro's steal the show. Again. I wasn't the only one with misgivings, as later discreet, over-coffee-mutterings percolated.

So, I wore my yellow ATN ring for two days. I showed it off when people admired it. I tried to admire it myself. Were they now more desirable than the Miss Piggy ring? More exclusive? Was I special? X next to me was downcast, the pink rings had all been taken and the yellow was his last chance for a ring. (Although a mysterious VIP ATN banana ring showed up later..) Were we now in a strange ring-stratified hierarchy with ATN at the head? How did this happen so quickly, so easily? I loitered near the Miss Piggy ring-gun-wall later at the closing party & tried to screw up the courage to swap my yellow one for any number of the recognisable & desirable rings on the wall..oooh, look, a minimalist Warwick Freeman, a cheeky Karl Fritsch, a lush Julia de Ville.....not to mention the many other beautiful pieces with their hidden associations for the wearer. What was it that Warwick didn't like about his ring? Or had some-one else put it there.? The wall felt rich and meaningful and secretive. Full of narrative. Would I betray them by doing the clandestine swap? Certainly their work was desirable, but they had given it up in good faith. And I'm well-mannered by nature, was sober enough to decide it was probably theft, and thus kept my yellow ring.

By the last day I'd taken the yellow ring off. It wasn't attractive in itself and I had very mixed feelings about it. I found X at the Masterclass and discretely handed it over. Oh Joy! I'd gotten rid of the troublesome thing & it had gone to some-one who really wanted it, and was overjoyed to unexpectedly receive it. And here the story might have ended, except some time later, he came up and gave me a beautiful hand-made ring from his own studio...black, faceted, asymmetrical, bold & strong. A ring I would have chosen from a line-up. Tears sprang into my eyes. We each had a memento of Jemposium. We all came out happy. Larks sang from the treetops. The End.

*Miss Piggy: "A democratised ring for everyone, available for a low price and manufactured in an unlimited series. With this rapid prototyped ring the artist tries to conquer the world: a genuine Ted Noten ring for every woman on earth is his ideal." From the ATN website.*

- Margarita Sampson

# interview

*Sharon Fitness caught up with Handshake participant Becky Bliss and found out all about her experience with Fabrizio Tridenti.*

**SF: Of the twelve Handshake mentorships, yours has become the most personal in the last few months. How have the mentorship roles developed since Fabrizio came to stay with you during JEMposium?**

BB: I met them at Auckland airport when they first arrived, it was a bit like meeting old friends, but they became new friends. They both have a great sense of humour, and Fabrizio is a constant practical joker.

If anything, we've had less contact since returning from Europe. He has said several times that I don't need him any more as a mentor. I don't think that is the case, and given that I've only just started experimenting again, contact will increase soon. They are going to Prague in June for residency.

We had a lot of jewellery discussions over breakfast and while walking around Munich.

**SF: Have you had time to make much work since this change in your relationship? Have there been any major shifts in your thinking and making?**

BB: I've only just started making again since events of the year overtook me. It's taking a while to assimilate the visual feasts and conversations, which will continue for a long time, I hope.

- Time to experiment and look for new materials more critically.
- The importance of the craft. Fabrizio's work is so beautifully made.
- Dedication.
- Trust your instincts.
- Go back to use of colour
- The importance of photography and taking the time to get a good image that requires little or no photoshopping. I now have a permanent area set up for photography in my studio.

I now have a sign on my wall taken from an interview with Fabrizio which says:

Aesthetics

Intrigue

Sensuality

Sculptural appeal



**SF:** You were lucky to be able to spend time with Fabrizio and Sahaja in Munich and Italy - what were the highlights of your overseas jewellery adventure?

**BB:** Three highlights, really.

The first being able to visit Fabrizio and Sahaja in their home in Vasto, and to see and hold some of my favourite pieces. And to spend more time with them in a relaxed environment. Their house was just like it looked on skype, so it felt very familiar. Sahaja and Fabrizio are both very giving people. When they were here for JEMposium they offered a lot of people to skype them if they needed any help. I know several have taken up their offer. I arrived at Rome, straight on a bus to Pescara to be met by Fabrizio, Sahaja and Jacqui Chan, immediately to the new coffee and ice cream shop. I took several deep breaths (quite often) to realize I was on the Adriatic coast.



Another was definitely Munich and hanging out with the New Zealand group.

It's hard to give the concept of size. Schmuck is part of the annual trade fair at Munich. If you imagine a hall bigger than the Wellington overseas terminal full of exhibits, but there are 5 of them in a row, and Schmuck and Talente take approximately a third of one of them.

Added to that are the contemporary jewellery shows. We would leave the hotel at 9.30 am and return about midnight, having seen 8-9 exhibitions.

We were lucky to have a tour of the Academy from Otto Kunzli and hear how his course is structured.

Munich has made me realize how small the world of contemporary jewellery is, but how lucky I am to be part of it. I was stunned at the beauty and quality of the work in Schmuck and Talente, seeing it in real life. I also saw how different New Zealand and Europe contemporary jewellery is and what a unique special thing we have here.

It was a shock to realize that all of the famous jewellers still have to have part-time jobs, unless they teach.

I spoke to a woman in a gallery in London who was expecting it to close when some of the owners were forced to retire from teaching in the next few years.



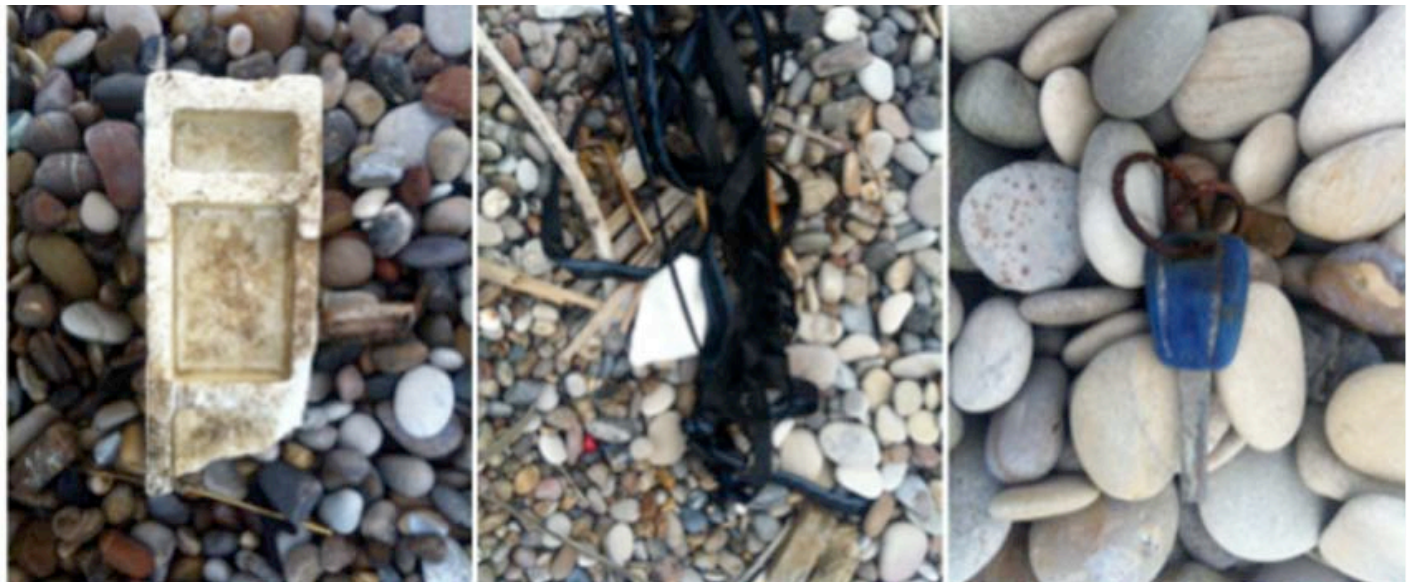


And the third was visiting the Ted Noten Atelier.

Peter Deckers, Hilda Gascard and I met Marcel at the atelier in Amsterdam. We had a guided tour the enjoyed tea, cake, and wine in the courtyard with Jantje Fleischhut. Then afterwards went to dinner at Ted's home.

**SF: I saw a photo of you all picking up beach debris in Vasto. Did you bring anything home to make into brooches?**

BB: I took photos for inspiration. Although the Vasto beach is a conservation area, it is full of rubbish, most of it plastic, from all the shipping in the Adriatic and I guess from Croatia and all those other countries to the east. There are also big black globs of oil from the oil rigs along the coast that look like asphalt.



**SF: What is the best Italian dish they taught you to make?**

BB: That's hard to know. We learnt how to make gnocchi and pasta. Accompanying both dishes was Otto Kunzli salad.

Otto Kunzli salad:

Steamed broccoli

Roast macadamia nuts

Nice olive oil, balsamic

(You can't get much simpler)

The 2 gnocchi sauces were divine:  
Olive oil and thyme  
Sage and butter



**SF: What is the best advice you have received from Fabrizio about your practice?**

BB: FT advises strongly to enter competitions, to have a website, a catalogue and to join Klimt. He also strongly suggests I return to colour.

**SF: Si può parlare italiano ora?**

BB: Fabrizio is now intent on learning English. The last few days we'd walk around Munich feeding words to each other, FT to learn English and me to learn Italian. Ask him to say 'throw'.



## reflection

*Caroline Billing recently returned from a visit to TALENTE/Schmuck as part of the CNZ delegation which included artists and curators in March this year. We asked her to report back on her experience:*

Visiting Talente, Schmuck and Munich, was a wonderful experience. I have a far greater appreciation for the contemporary jewellery scene in Germany and Europe and of the level of work selected and shown at Talente & Schmuck. The numerous exhibitions by emerging and established jewellers was very exciting to see. It was impossible to visit even half of what was on show across Munich in that week, but some stand out exhibitions included visiting the Pinakothek der Moderne, Die Renaissance des Emailliens, a comprehensive international exhibition of contemporary enamelling work at Galerie Handwerk, Returning to the Jewel is a Return from Exile, Nr. 5, Robert Baines, Karl Fritsch, Gerd Rothmann, presented at the Munich Residenz, solo exhibitions by Lisa Walker (GLEE at Galerie Biro), Alexander Blank, and Simon Cottrell at Wittenbrink.

Each day was a non-stop exhibition tour, with presentations in dealer galleries, museums, an antique book store, small shops, transformed empty spaces, and a live jewellery performance in the underground, an exhibition in cases at the Hunting and Fishing Museum, and a Mobile Gallery by graduate Akihiro Ikeyama. The end of week highlight was the opportunity to hear a lecture by art historian and writer Marjan Unger: Freedom has its limitations. Jewelry now, seen from a Dutch perspective held at the Pinakothek der Moderne.

The opportunity to meet artists and other gallerists from Europe, visit jewellers' workshops, and learn more in-depth about their practices was invaluable. I was fortunate enough to spend time with Helen Britton, David Bielander, Simon Cottrell, Gerd Rothman, Robert Baines, Laura Deakin, and many others. Another highlight of the trip was visiting the Munich Academy, meeting Otto Kunzli and learning about European teaching approaches.

I was also able to extend my trip to visit Felix Fury, owner of Gallery So in Solothurn (and London), where a solo show of David Bielander was on exhibition, and I also met Helene Poree in Paris. The trip with the NZ contingent was also an excellent opportunity for daily discussions and conversations that do not normally occur in NZ, especially as many of us work in isolation. I relished this and the chance to develop and strengthen relationships with practitioners from NZ.

The trip to Munich was invaluable; I returned stimulated and refreshed, inspired and more knowledgeable. Like many before me, I left with the intense desire to return as soon as possible. Whilst aware that the niche world of contemporary jewellery may be tiny in the bigger scheme of things, (and mostly confined to the realm/world? of the internet), my world just got a whole lot bigger...

- Caroline Billing

# reflection

*Suni Gibson and Lynsay Raine*

## What were the most scary hairy moments of Schmuck and Talente?

Suni: My scariest moment wasn't so schmuck related but a classic Munich experience nonetheless. The mighty home football team Bayern Munich were playing Basel the afternoon I arrived. Fresh off the plane wide eyed and lofty I managed to emerge from the subway into Marienplatz and right into the heaving center of a football riot, armed police met leaping, chanting, hugging hometown supporters.. wild. I made it out unscathed and held up in a gourmet chocolate shop until the crowds quietened down. And almost as scary and strangely quite similar was helping with security at the opening of *Returning to the Jewel is a Return From Exile ...* Robert Baines, Karl Fritsch, and Gerd Rothmann, a jewellery riot.

Lynsay: I am not too sure there were many scary or hairy moments that I can think of, if there were I have erased them from my memory. I guess I always felt quite safe as I was always with at least a few members of our NZ jewellery family. There were about 12 of us in total (including our adopted italian cousins Fabrizio and Sahaja) If anything I think people may have been scared of us! Or at least curious as to who the heck this bunch of people with funny accents were. We were quite the posse wondering around the streets of Munich, Jacqui Chan leading the way and the rest of us marching behind. The only really scary thing I can think of is the amount of bavarian sausage cheese and potato that we consumed within one week!

## What was your favourite show or installation?

Suni: Favourite Installation: Akihiro Ikeyama's flawless custom bicycle gallery which we stumbled across numerous times. I also enjoyed *Slanted For Granted*, Nicole Beck, Melanie Isverding, Despo Sophocleous, these women are serious business, the install was dynamic and interactive in a quiet subtle understated way, look them up!

Favourite Show: Lisa Walker, *Glee* at Galerie Biro



Fig 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 4



Fig. 3

Also the Danner Rotunde at the Pinakothek Der Moderne, this show alone is worth the 32 hour flight to Munich, its pretty permanent so you can visit it anytime (figure four).

Also enjoyed 'Renaissance of Enameling' at Galerie Handwerk, a thorough presentation of enameling featuring work by over forty artists from sixteen countries. Galerie Handwerk is administered by Chamber of Trades for Munich and Upper Bavaria also responsible for the fair, Talente and Schmuck.

Lynsay: Goodness, It is so hard to pin point just one. I would say the prize for overall standard of work and presentation would have to go to Mumuration, a show including the work of Silke Fleischer and Adam Grinovich. They used muslin fabric to divide the room, simple, yet very effective for drawing attention to the work. The standard of work at the Handwerk gallery was mindblowing, there were hundreds of jewellery pieces by jewellers that all use enamelling in their practice, there was so much I only got to see half of it! I take my hat off to the 'Pin up' jewellers, new graduates including Lisa BJORKE and Martra Mattsson (One of the Talente prize winners) who I thought put a lot of effort into making their space look really good. Rumour has it they even slept in their exhibition space! The 'Slanted for Granted' show by three Munich Academie graduates was good, quite the hangout of the trendy up and coming types methinks.

### **How has this experience altered your view of the contemporary jewellery world?**

Suni: Apart from generally broadening my horizons I feel most affected by the studio visits and the visit to The Academy we were lucky enough to make. Observing established makers at work really raised the bar for me in terms of commitment and diligence, these visits were an informal lesson in best practice and very inspiring indeed.

Lynsay: We were quite lucky to have the opportunity to do some studio visits thanks to Fran Allison. It was a good chance to get a good behind the scenes look and ask questions to some well known jewellers and get away from the hustle bustle of the exhibitions. We had a cup of tea with Helen Britton and David Biedlander who were very lovely and down to earth. They work hard but know how to have fun. Meeting Laura Deakin was great, she is Australian but has recently graduated from the Academie. Again, she was very down to earth and easy to relate to and had lots of great advice.

On the flipside, watching Olga Berg (owner of Biro gallery) in action was pretty amazing. I helped out at the opening of Karl Fritsch, Robert Baines and Gerd Rotmans opening. It was my first experience being around some major jewellery collectors. That night really was like being in a different world.

### **Where too from now?**

Suni: Well, I made lots of new friends, sold one of the Talente pieces, and have one galerie invite/lead (watch this space).

Lynsay: I haven't had any immediate repercussions as yet, even though I met countless people. For me, getting to know some more members of the jewellery community a little more was great as I feel I have opened up the circle a little. I met my Handshake mentor Andrea Wagner who I will visit at the end of May so it will be interesting to continue and build upon networking there. Thanks to Creative New Zealand who provided funding for me to visit Munich and be a part of it all, I feel I have been part of an amazing experience that I only want to build upon. I know a lot of people would have seen my work over that week in the Talente exhibition and that in itself is a great start for me as an emerging jeweller.

### How can we find out more about what you do?

Suni: See a very brief presentation of work and notes here: [sunigibson.com](http://sunigibson.com) and keep an eye on [thesehere.com](http://thesehere.com)

Lynsay: Some new work is on it's way to the National Gallery in Christchurch and I have a website [www.lynsayraine.com](http://www.lynsayraine.com)



*Fig. 5*



*Fig. 6*

#### Photo credits:

01. Akihiro Ikeyama | [akihirokeyama.com](http://akihirokeyama.com)

02. Slanted For Granted. Image by Melanie Isverding.

03. Olga wearing Lisa Walker [galerie-biro.de](http://galerie-biro.de). Image from Bella Neyman [objectsnotpaintings.blogspot.co.nz](http://objectsnotpaintings.blogspot.co.nz).

04. Danner Rotunda at the Pinakothek Der Moderne. Image from Bella Neyman [objectsnotpaintings.blogspot.co.nz](http://objectsnotpaintings.blogspot.co.nz).

05. Suni Gibson. Work selected for and shown at Talente in Munich 2012.

06. Lynsay Raine. Brutal Beauty Block Pendant shown at Talente in Munich 2012.

## review

*Jewellery musings from our Australian correspondent Zoe Brand, a devout contemporary jeweller*

A few weeks ago I flew to Melbourne on a 24 hour whirlwind jewellery safari. Why? Because ‘Unexpected Pleasures – The Art and Design of Contemporary Jewellery’, a survey show of international contemporary jewellery opened at the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV). Being the massive jewellery geek that I am, I had to see the show the moment it opened.

So, after a quick tour of the NGV and having to ask the front desk where the ‘Unexpected Pleasures’ exhibition was located (behind the potted plant, down the hall, past the toilets, opposite the lecture theater...) I charged up to the threshold of the room, and was abruptly stopped by a gallery guard. The subsequent exchange went a little something like this:

‘Are you a Member, miss?’

‘No’,

‘Sorry, Members only today’.

My heart sank and words stumbled out of my mouth

‘What. No. This can’t be. I’ve come all the way from Sydney. One day only. I HAVE to see this show. But. But. But..... Pleeeeeeaasssse!’

With a pitying look, a quick nod of the head, and a ‘go on then’, I scurried into the room before he decided to change his mind.

I couldn’t believe my luck. My heart was racing, my palms were sweating, the potential devastation of almost not being granted entry was still lingering when an unexpected wave of emotion swept over me. I almost cried with joy. Ok Ok, I can hear you saying ‘seriously, that’s a bit pathetic’. In hindsight I tend to agree, but there I was in a room full of pieces I had only ever seen in books, on posters plastered to my wall, or distorted on the computer screen in front of me in. It was just me and one other (I suspect an actual member) in room full of my most lusted after jewellery pieces. I swoon pretty easily over a Gijs Bakker, an Otto Kunzli, a Benjamin Lignel, a Caroline Broadhead or a Peter Tully, so it was thrilling to see the scale, texture, colour, and details that you just don’t get from the facsimile.

The circular display cases lead you around the gallery, and it is nice to see an incredible sensitivity about the space given to each work. The exhibition design/furniture allows you to thoroughly ponder each selection without the usual crowding of pieces in a vitrine.



I must admit I didn't spend much time reading the display labels. Perhaps it was because I was too excited, or maybe subconsciously they were a bit long for a quick glance to find out what I was actually looking at. I have heard comments that the text may have been a bit too much of a lecture; some people just don't like being told how they should view an exhibition. Or perhaps they were written as though speaking to the already converted, which of course I am, but I guess if we intend to educate the general public and share with them our world, which I must admit can be pretty confrontational or totally uninteresting to the uninitiated, shouldn't we give them the tools, clear and simple to help them understand?



I think Susan Cohn ticked almost all the boxes when it comes to exhibiting jewellery. It is often noted/criticized that jewellery displayed in gallery spaces is shown without its context, the body. Here, Cohn cleverly projects onto the gallery wall a life size room full of people having a glass of wine, adorned with jewellery, animated in silent conversations. I must say these people, do look a little uncomfortable and rather awkward at times, they clearly know where this video will end up, but it still it is pretty mesmerizing to see how the jewellery they are wearing may dictate the way their body moves and reacts to its restrictions/freedoms. As Cohn has been known to argue, jewellery is not 'activated' until it is worn the body, so I think this is a beautiful and pretty genius solution of putting jewellery back into context.

I really enjoyed the array of ideas about jewellery that Cohn has put together in this show. There are most certainly pieces on display that will challenge even the most devout convert. I went to be immersed in a room of my favorite contemporary jewellery. I wasn't disappointed. You should go.

- Zoe Brand

# monologue

*Sharon Fitness delves into her history of the town of milk and glass bead bling and discovers it is not as bad as she remembers.*

I grew up in a small town in the middle of the Waikato. Its biggest claim to fame was having the highest concentration in the world of dairy cows within a 20km radius. I could hear cows mooing from my bedroom. The founder of the town, Thomas Morrin, wanted to call it Lockerbie after his hometown in Scotland and I have always wondered how much cooler the town could have been if the town councilors had not named it after him, post mortem, resulting in a name that sounded like Morons with Ville on the end. Dooming it, in my opinion, to smallness in size and of mind. I cannot remember there being any great artiness or degree of culture in the town when I was growing up. Nobody wore interesting jewellery.



1.

It was the kind of town where almost everyone knew you and difference of any kind was fodder for gossip, which meant that there was a very strong push for me to be normal like everybody else. If I could be certain of one thing in my teenage years, it was that sooner or later, my parents would find out what I had been up to in great detail. I couldn't wait to get out and I have spent the past twenty one years trying to spend the least possible amount of time there, to the point where I actually developed a bit of a phobia of bumping into anyone who used to know me on my rare visits home. Therefore, the news that we would be touring the RETROSPECT show from the TSB Wallace Arts Centre in Auckland to the Wallace Gallery Morrinsville came with delight mixed with terror.

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1. town logo stolen from <http://www.morrinsvillenz.co.nz>

The gallery is located in the old Post Office, diagonally opposite our family business. I have fond memories of this building; the phone booths in the foyer, the little flap doors where I would post my mail or airmail (I loved those blue airmail stickers), the little red doors where I would collect things from PO Box number 221. The little garden at the end that used to have a waterfall, the dark blue glass under the window counters where I filled out my Post Office Savings Bank book and the unusual grid pattern on the ceiling.

Due to the nature of Morrinsville as it was, there was much debate when Sir James Wallace, who owned the meat works and tannery a few kilometres out of town and has an impressively huge 5000+ piece New Zealand art collection, wanted to help the locals to open a gallery. Gossip and anti-art sentiment flew here there and everywhere, mainly because the patron is not an ordinary type of person. Apparently a town councilor's wife, went knocking door to door with a petition to stop to this art establishment ruining the morals of the township. What could art possibly do for Morrinsville they asked and why should Morrinsville's ratepayers pay a penny towards it.

Luckily, common sense prevailed and the Wallace Gallery Morrinsville opened just over a year ago. It has slowly but surely gained respect and regular patronage from the locals and has built up a steady stream of people passing through, who now have a reason to visit this town.

The dilapidated abandoned old Post Office building has received a much needed facelift and now hosts a rotating selection of The James Wallace Arts Trust collection, two community gallery spaces and a small gallery shop.

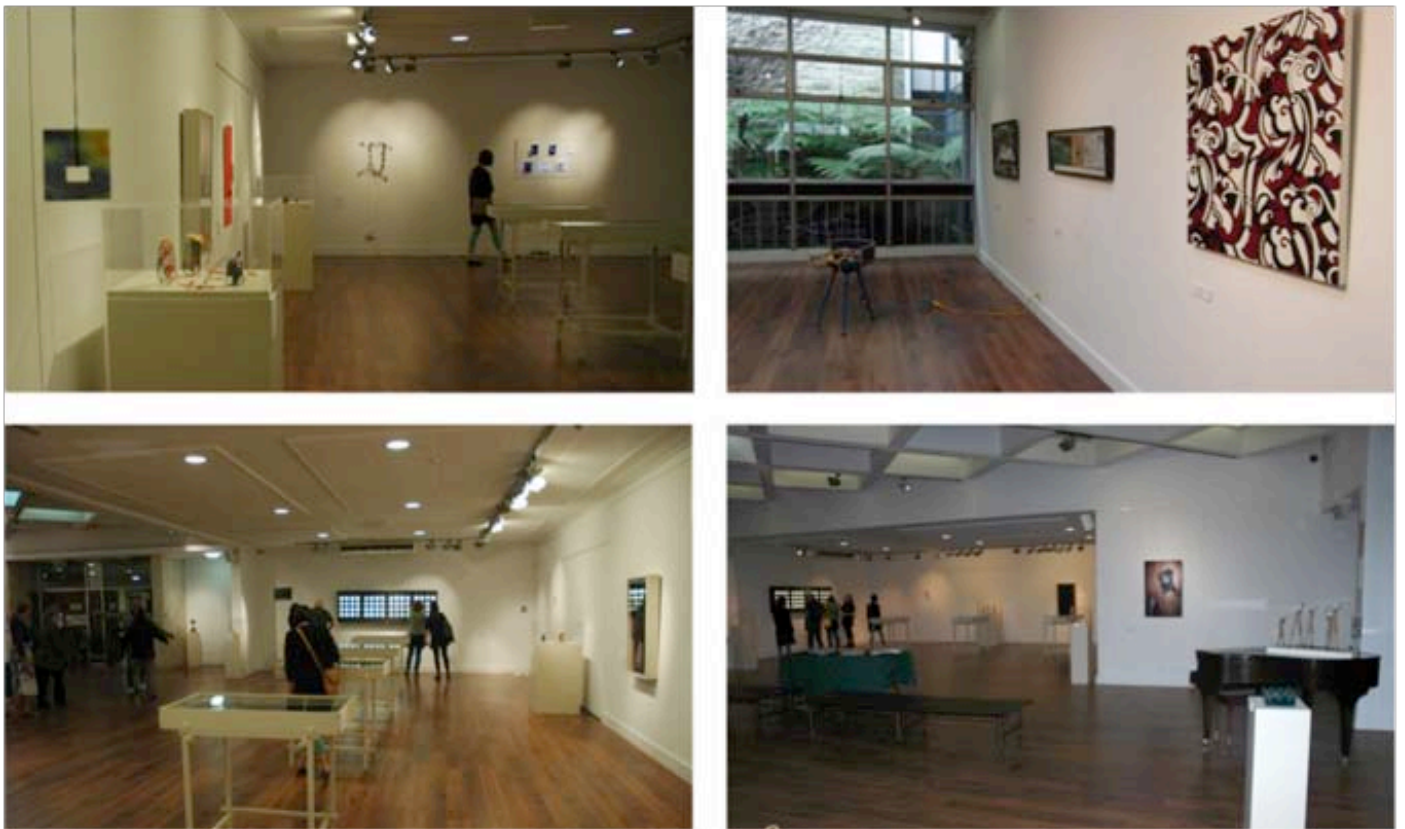
My partner Jo and I now visit my parents in Morrinsville more frequently, planning our visits around the gallery opening hours and have been increasingly impressed with the caliber of exhibitions on show.

The Auckland Jewellery Geeks to came down to help us set up RETROSPECT and were extremely helpful, bless their cotton socks. My mum was absolutely super, bringing us morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, feeding us pre-opening dinner (I warned her that quite a few of the Geeks are vegetarians, so she conjured up six different meat dishes). She organized the catering for the opening and even came running when we had a silver-dip emergency. Such a legend! Quite a few times Jo and I ran across the road to borrow an alum key or screwdriver or wooden door wedge from my dad. So very handy having them nearby.

On two occasions I had to venture out of my safety zone and walk down the main street of Morrinsville. My aforementioned phobia kicked in and I prayed not to bump into anyone from school. With blinkers on I almost crashed into my brother-in law, but thankfully did not have to talk to anyone else. Returning from Mitre10 for the second time with a 1mm drill bit, I did notice

one old lady half a block away walking towards me. Hmmm that looks like Mrs Reid I said to myself, before getting back to my blinkers. As we crossed paths, I glanced over and saw that it was indeed Mrs Reid. Fancy that, still the same after 28 years. I recalled this incident to Cath on my return to the Gallery. ‘Oh did you say hello?’ she said. ‘Hell no’, I replied. Mrs Reid taught religious programming at primary school when I was ten.

RETROSPECT looked fantastic in the Wallace Gallery, taking up twice the amount of space that we had at The Pah Homestead and was accompanied by a Wallace Collection sideshow in the other half of the room that Jo and I selected to compliment RETROSPECT.



Morrinsville has never been exposed to contemporary jewellery before, so we got surprised, but mostly impressed, responses from the punters at the opening, including one person who thanked Jo for bringing the show to Morrinsville because it was so wonderful. My aunty was suitably impressed when she discovered we were in ‘that gallery’, having expected that our little jewellery show would be in one of the community galleries. ‘It’s not my cup of tea’ she said, ‘but good on you’.

Mum’s friend Pat was so inspired by Nadine Smith’s robotic constructions that she vowed to go home and start glue gunning together all the digital watch pieces she had been collecting for years. Jo is dying to talk to her about Rosalie Gascoine next time we see her at the beach.

Phillipa from the local high school couldn't stop raving about our exhibition and told me how she went to Fingers once years ago. She recalled a Kobi Bosshard ring that she almost bought and has always wished she had. I encouraged her to go back to Fingers, which she has, and she has since informed us that she has taken many students and friends to see the show.

Pauline (who was responsible for the eclectic floral art display in the foyer) professed how much this gallery had improved things for the local art societies.

I had to ask cousin Tony who that strangely familiar lady over there was. She was my teacher when I was eight and we ended up having quite an amusing discussion about the implicit sexual-ness of the floppy poppies brooch I was wearing.

Cath's cousin's daughter reportedly walked around the whole show admiring everything and then asked 'But where's the jewellery?' It seems we broadened at least one person's perceptions then.

One lady confessed it was her first visit to an art gallery ever - what an excellent introduction to our world.

My uncle who is now 75 and quite a lot wobblier than I remember, told me that he was so pleased that Morrinsville had an Art Gallery now, almost holding back the tears. 'It's just marvelous what it is doing for the town' he said.

I had to agree with him.

-Sharon Fitness

## postcard from the edge

*Hoping to use the Overview newsletter as a platform to keep in touch with some of our guests from the JEMposium conference, we asked Liesbeth Den Besten to send us a brief snippet of what she has been up to.*

Some people think I'm now retiring after my book but you want to know what I'm up to. Good question. Since New Zealand I've been abroad 5 times: Schmuck (Munich), Gothenburg (Sweden), two weeks ago I spend some days in Oranienbaum, Dessau and Berlin (half work, half holidays) and last week I travelled from Oslo (Norway) to Zurich (Switzerland). In Oslo I was part of the jury for the third Nordic Jewellery Triennial From the Coolest Corner <http://www.coolestcorner.no/>

It was an interesting jury with knowledgeable people all from Nordic countries (I was the only exception; for your information: Holland is NOT part of Scandinavia): it is good to see Scandinavian jewellery is growing, it has more potential now but it needs more adventure. Still I think the jury made a good selection of work. The exhibition will start in Norway, Oslo, in January 2013 with a two-days international conference (I am one of the invited speakers). Also in Norway I proposed my concept for an exhibition about Dutch and New Zealand jewellery at Galeri Format <http://format.no/> that will take place during the Triennial. Soon we will start preparing.

In a 'tropical' Zurich I attended the opening of my Jewellery Unleashed! exhibition at the Museum Bellerive, lovely located near the lake with stunning views on the snow covered Alps. It is strange to see your exhibition in a completely different context (a 100 year old villa) and extended with Swiss work (separated in different rooms). The exhibition lasts till the end of September this year. So, if anyone travels to central Europe this year: grab your chance but be aware of the difference between the original show and the extended one! <http://www.museum-bellerive.ch/> As was also the case in Holland, the Swiss can post their own favourite piece of jewellery on a special site <http://www.mmkarnhem.nl/ENG/entfesselt>. Bernhard Schobinger added some awesome bloody ones.

I like to be able to write again about different subjects than jewellery:

- In an introduction to the European Prize for Applied Arts (organised by the World Crafts Council in Mons, Belgium) I question the role of applied arts today, questioning also if you can continue organising events along these rather old-fashioned categories (the text was accepted, the catalogue is printed, the opening is on the 13th of July).

- Today I will finish a review of a Dutch design exhibition in the palace of Oranienbaum, not far from Berlin, built in the 17th century by a Dutch princess of Oranje-Nassau. (This review is now up and in English, so check it).

[http://www.design.nl/item/dutch\\_design\\_from\\_a\\_crafts\\_perspective](http://www.design.nl/item/dutch_design_from_a_crafts_perspective)

- Yesterday I visited the studio of a Dutch ceramicist, Netty van den Heuvel, who passed away sadly earlier this year. On 26th an overview exhibition of her work opens at an Amsterdam gallery and I will do a talk. See: <http://www.galeriedewittevoet.nl/>

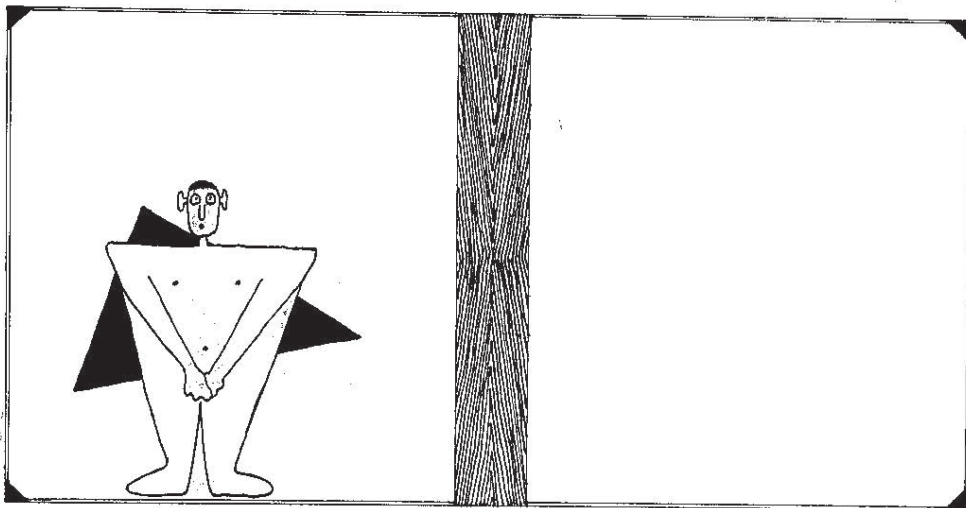
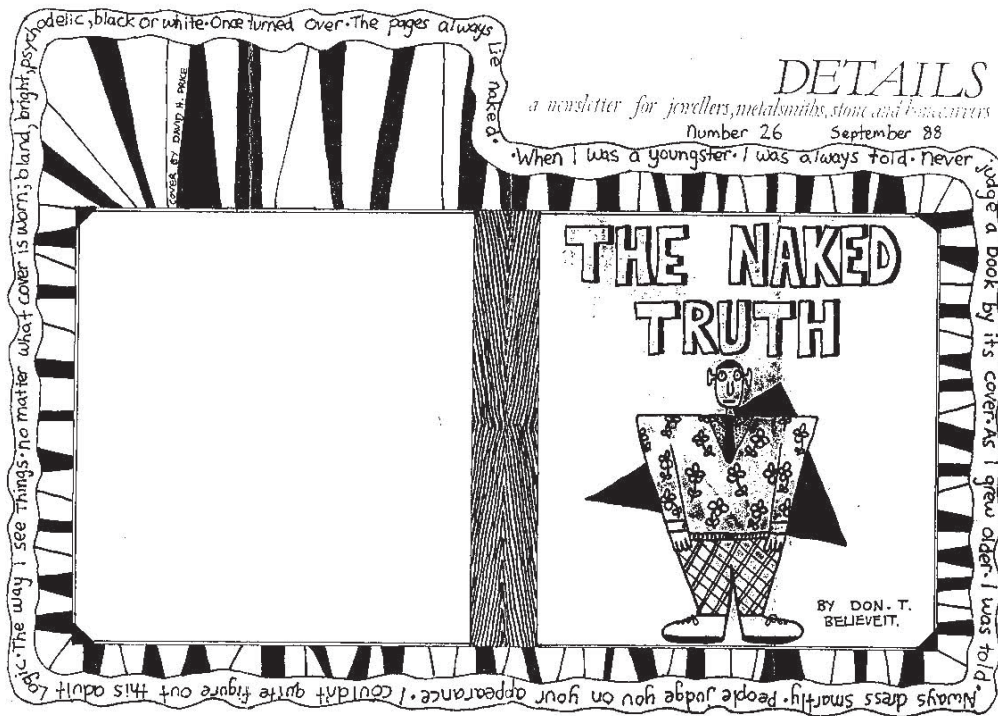
For the rest it is jewellery, *jewellery* & **jewellery**.

I'm still considering whether I will attend the Zimmerhof Symposium in Germany in June but first I have to deal with some VID's (Very Important Deadlines) – especially one for a Damian Skinner book!

- Liesbeth den Besten

# soundbite

We listen out to the voices from the past and see what was going on in jewellery in the 1970s and 1980s...and into the 1990s



from Details No. 26, 1988



# small talk

*Jewellery exhibitions, events, and workshops*

## Auckland

### Masterworks Gallery

May 24th

Neckware 9

Jewellery Box - Trevor Bryon

THINKspace - Craig McIntosh and Frances Stachl

June 28

Jewellery Box - Sarah Walker-Holt

## Auckland

### Objectspace

June: 7-up Talk Fest

18-23 June

[www.objectspace.org](http://www.objectspace.org)

September: Master of Craft

Kobi Bossard

### Fingers Gallery

June 25th - July 6th

Rachel Bell - *Post*

July 16th - 27th

Matthew McIntyre Wilson

## Christchurch

### The National

We have recently set up in a new location at NG, 212 Madras St, Christchurch

May 18th - June 16th

Renee Bevan - *New Work*

and catalogue launch

## Morrinsville

Wallace Gallery Morrinsville

April 21 - June 10

RETROSPECT

## Wellington

### The See Here

May 11 - June 3

Vivien Atkinson

June 4th - 24th

Matthew McIntyre Wilson

NB:

The See Here is now located at 19 Tory St, Wellington

# small talk

*Jewellery exhibitions, events, and workshops*

## OBJECT SPACE 7UP

Talkfest

18-23 June

2012

Brian Parkes(AUS)/Warwick Freeman/  
Tim Walker/Linda Tyler/Emma Ward(CNZ)/  
Alan Preston/Moyra Elliot/Douglas Lloyd-  
Jenkins/Deborah Crowe/Fran Allison/  
Charles Walker/Elizabeth McClure/D Wood/  
Jenna-Lee Philpott/Philip Clarke/

7UP is a free talkfest for all with a stake in New Zealand's craft sector. It is a unique opportunity for makers, designers, students, teachers, collectors and organisations to learn about sector successes, stories and changes. 7UP includes evening talks and installations and concludes with sector leaders assessing our field, its wider environment and future. 7UP marks the completion of over seven years of programmed activity at Objectspace.

7UP HOURS  
12-9pm/ 18 Mon-21 Thurs June  
12-5pm/ 22 Fri and 23 Sat June

Objectspace  
8 Ponsonby Rd  
Auckland  
09 376 6216  
info@objectspace.org.nz  
www.objectspace.org.nz  
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Ministry of Transport  
Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Innovation  
Ministry of Social Development  
Ministry of Treasury



# RETROSPECT

a contemporary jewellery show curated by Jo Mears

The Pah Homestead, TSB Bank Wallace Arts Centre 1 February to 15 April 2012 Opening Tuesday 31 January 6pm  
Wallace Gallery Morrinsville 21 April to 10 June 2012 Opening Friday 20 April 6pm

Peter Deckers Debbie Adamson Vivien Atkinson Renee Bevan Nadene Carr Jacqui Chan Kristin D'Agostino Cath Dearsley Gillian Deery Sharon Fitness  
Sunni Gibson Victoria McIntosh Ross Malcolm Vaune Mason Jhana Millers Neke Mca Shelley Norton Lynsay Raine Sarah Read Nadine Smith Raewyn Walsh



The Pah Homestead TSB Bank Wallace Arts Centre 72 Hillsborough Road, Hillsborough, Auckland  
Tue-Fri 10am-3pm Sat, Sun & public holidays 10am-5pm www.tsbbankwallaceartscentre.org.nz  
Wallace Gallery Morrinsville 167 Thames Street, Morrinsville Tue-Sun 10am-4pm www.morrinsvillegallery.org.nz

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