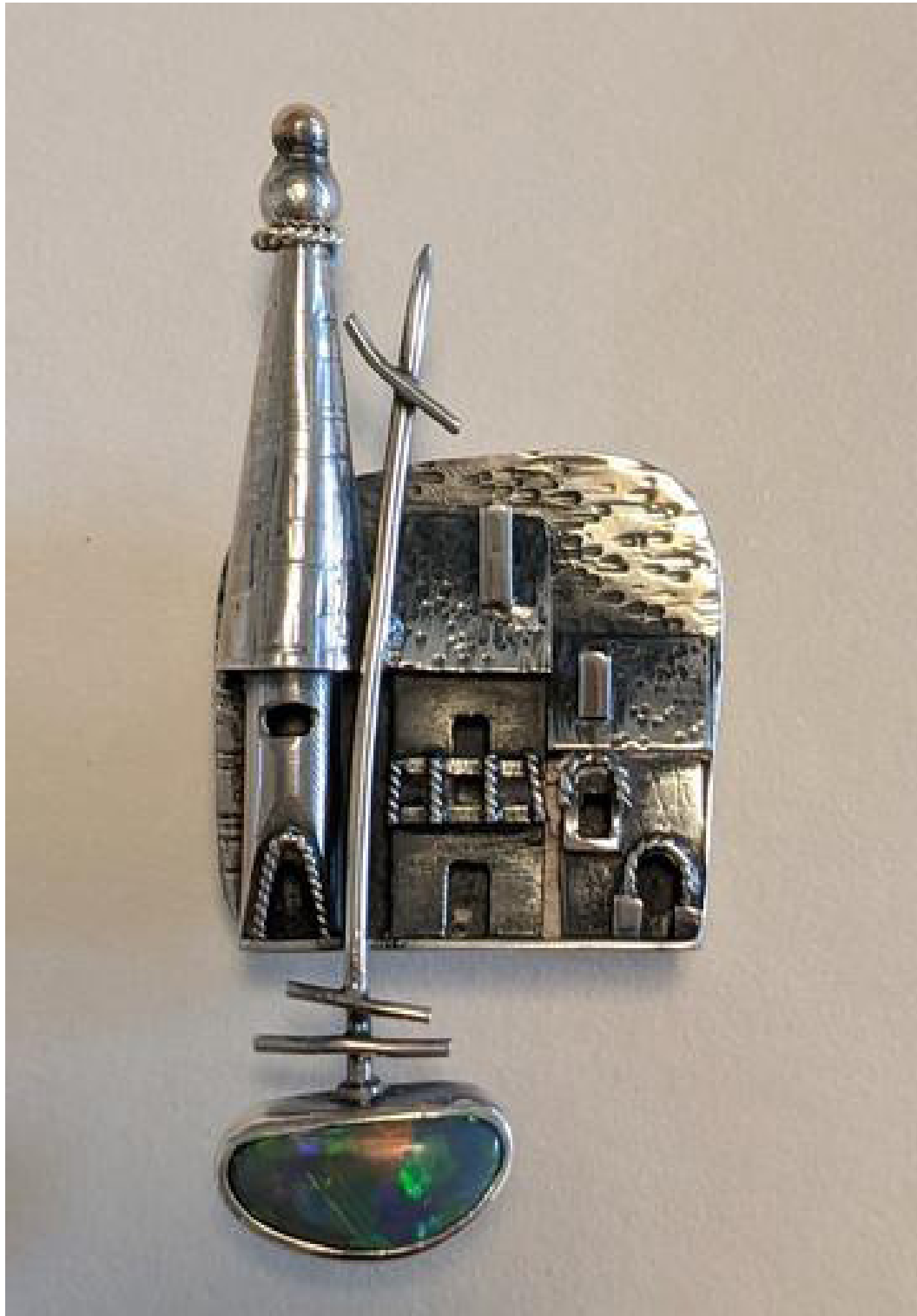




telopea

Editor : Irene Manion

Issue 4 October 2021



EDITOR'S NOTES

Welcome to the fourth issue of *Telopea* and thank you to all who responded so positively to the last issue.

The main focus in this issue is jewellery and we have two articles. The first is on contemporary jeweller Helen Wyatt. Helen uses a mixture of materials to make unique conceptual statements about human impact on fragile environments. Helen also reveals a unique community project that starts right at her front door (or window).

The second jeweller is Ksenija Benko. Ksenija is a longstanding member of Craftnsw who started her practice in the 1980's. She sought out and learned from some luminaries in jewellery at that time. Ksenija was also a former president of the Society and gives us some insight into her role and the exciting craft scene that was around her at that time.

The Society of Arts and Crafts started in 1906. It has a rich history with some famous members who forged an Australian identity into the exploratory, skilful

and unique work which evolved as the identity of the nation evolved, reflecting uniquely Australian subject matter while simultaneously drawing influence from international art styles.

A regular feature of this journal will be a look back to the past, highlighting the work of past members. In this edition the waratah, which became the emblem for Craftnsw has been interpreted differently by members across the history of the society.

Finally, a display of some of the work of our members currently part of our inaugural online exhibition in a two page spread.

Please visit our website to see our first online exhibition 'The Value of Hands' and also access the tutorials that Craftnsw is now offering. (see page 11)

If you have anything of interest, a link to a craft-related video that has drawn your attention, or would like to submit an article for inclusion in the journal, this would be most welcome.

Ed.

Cover image:

'Fremantle Harbour, 1948' by Maret Kalmar

This sterling silver brooch was handmade by Maret Kalmar, a longstanding member of Craftnsw. It consists of sterling silver & solid opal. The brooch was made from her memories of arriving in Fremantle from Europe aboard the American navy transport ship, *General Stewart*, in 1948.

Maret has been a silversmith for 30 years. Art and design has always been the centre of her life. Her Estonian heritage and experiences in Australia have both played an important part in her artistic development.

Maret synthesised her heritage and experiences in Australia to create silver pieces using materials of various origins, such as found objects, antique pottery shards, excess pieces from museum collections, small bone and timber carvings, from her travels in Australia and around the world.

Maret participates in various local and interstate exhibitions and her work features in many private collections.

CRAFT NSW THE VALUE OF HANDS

Although a physical exhibition was not possible during Covid, Craftnsw members and invited guests have been enthusiastically producing beautifully hand crafted work as well as staging our first online event with all the new learning curves and skillsets that this process has involved.

The exhibition is the first online exhibition on the Craftnsw website. It opened on October 8 and will run until October 31, 2021.

Please visit, enjoy and treat yourself or a friend or family member to a beautiful, locally made, hand crafted item.

Go to: <https://www.artsandcraftsnsw.com.au/pages/exhibitions>



Hape Kiddie

www.artsandcraftsnsw.com.au

8-31 October 2021

An Online Exhibition

The Value of Hands



Top right: Helen Wyatt
Left: *Show of Hands*. Silver pendant.
Below left: *Coal and Mangrove brooch (front)*
Below right: *Coal and Mangrove brooch (Back)*

All images for the article courtesy of Helen Wyatt.



HELEN WYATT

JEWELLER

1. You have been working across the arts including as a jewellery artist since you finished your degree at Sydney University. You also have a Master of Visual Arts from Queensland College of Art. What opportunities, circumstances, and/or choices drove you to start working in metal?

I have been making wearable objects since I was at school. My public high school in the late 1960's/ '70's was a powerhouse for young women in all fields including the Arts. The art teachers were amazing educational and artist professionals. My particular teachers specialised in metal, clay and print. I loved the process of problem solving that metal offered.

Family circumstances stopped me being able to study architecture at the time so I took up art history and developed my making skills as a jewellery artist. I attended the workshop of Wal van Heeckeren where my teacher at school had studied. Working on a small scale meant that my art practice was reasonably portable and for years, as I moved from shared house to shared house, my equipment came too.

For 40 years I worked in the education system in a range of capacities – teaching visual arts; leading a high school and a school district; developing curriculum for the Arts; developing arts as critical and proactive literacy for disadvantaged schools. Once I left the education world, I was free to pick up the tools I still had and start again. I was particularly motivated by attending an extended workshop in Wanaka New Zealand in 2012.

I knew that I wanted my work to be contemporary and informed by current practices. I still had my metal skills base but I was very open to working across media and taking advantage of all the experiences I had had through my career to produce work that was relevant to a wide viewing (and wearing) public. SquarePeg Studios in Marrickville was a fabulous environment to build that connection to contemporary practice and skill. At SquarePeg, Majella Beck and Diane Appleby were inspiring teachers. I am also grateful to Katie Cairns at Sydney Community College and Lucas Blacker at Ernst Pfenninger for helping me on my journey with a solid skills base.

Enrolling in a Masters Degree by research at Queensland College of Art under the supervision of Elizabeth Shaw gave me access to an intellectual community, as well as local and international opportunities that have been much appreciated.

2. Your work is driven by conceptual considerations, often deriving from your response to place. Your reaction to marginal environments such as mangrove swamps has been the subject of your work. Can you elaborate on this using specific examples.

I've always loved landscape and recording landscape in print and through photography. I find that I am always drawn to worlds that are liminal in some way. (We are living in one right now of course – partly in and partly closed off from the world). I am stimulated and inspired by beauty but challenged when beauty steps across a line into the strange, quirky, ominous, wild side of things. As a result, I found myself looking



Top: *Foliage and Structure 1*
Bottom: *Foliage and Structure 2*

around my physical worlds and being drawn to liminal places such as the White Bay Powerhouse and the coastal edge of the eastern suburbs beaches heading south to Maroubra.

When I was studying in Brisbane, I was living in West End. The local area was once a rich gathering place for the local indigenous people – sitting as it does on an elbow in the Brisbane River. The river is a tidal estuary generating lots of food and native life for its original inhabitants. Once colonisation overtook Meanjin, West End became a site for convict labour, migration, industry and, now, it has massive housing development. The site has many stories to tell.

The mangroves edging the river are holders of some of these narratives. The trees protect fish and are spawning grounds; they process much carbon dioxide and harbour methane gas below ground. They help generate the fresh air we need. They also collect the debris we cast off and factories have been happy to spill their refuse into river. Mangrove swamps have repelled those potential occupiers desiring more picturesque landscapes to inhabit.

The mangroves have that wonderful liminal quality I find so intriguing. They have their own beauty but it is more sublime and challenging. As I researched the mangroves, of course, I learnt more and more about their qualities and functions. I learnt about their decimation and reclamation along the Brisbane River and found them increasingly full of intrigue.

What I also found was mangroves everywhere. While their press has improved, they are still found in the liminal/marginal sites of cities up and down the coast where we have seen industry rise and fall over time. In

Newcastle, they visually define the Hunter River and they abutt the site of the former iron and steel manufactories. Today they challenge the coal loaders – threaten to take back the spaces they are fenced out of.

In my work I began to capture some of these ideas as well as the qualities of the plants and sites. In Newcastle, particularly, there are the coal hills, the giant structures of industrial plant and the foliage of raw forests – including mangroves – that they are built upon. It is as though this greenery threatens to take back what has been overlaid on the land. For example, in *Coal and Mangrove* (page 4), I have played with the textural coal qualities and implied the foliage form. On the back, I've developed the sinuous tree forms and their leaves. I am drawn to the marginal in space but I am also drawn to marginal site of the body where work can reveal and work can conceal – as is the case in this brooch when it is worn. In *Structure and Foliage*, (page 6) the piece plays with the monumental structures that you encounter when driving around the Port of Newcastle.

3. Which piece exemplifies what you are currently striving to achieve in your work? Describe it and explain why it is significant in your development as an artist/craftsperson.

None of us have been untouched by the current pandemic of course. While staying at home, I've thought about how we communicate in new ways. In 2020, hands were a focus – washing and sanitising repeatedly, avoiding surfaces. In 2021 we are now masked up. It is our eyes that express the emotions hidden behind the masks that disguise our noses and mouths. I started to explore just how much eyes interact with the other



Top: Brigitte Kennedy window exhibition 2019
 Opposite page: *The Eyes Have it*. Brooch. Helen Wyatt.
 Watercolour on Rawhide coated in archival wax, 925 silver.

Left and below in clockwise order starting at the top:

1. Art Trail and F Tanner Baker Bakery November 2019
- 2 and 3. Crowd gathers around F Tanner Bakery
4. Locked in a Greek Fantasy Window display at F Tanner Bakery.





facial features to express the nuance necessary to communicate ideas and feelings. Isolated from the rest of the face, the eyes are ambiguous but worthy of careful study.

In making these works I drew/painted in watercolour on rawhide. The surface was finished by coating it in archival wax and each eye is framed in 925 silver that can be attached to clothing with a steel pin.

4. How important is using new materials, both precious and nonprecious, and employing new techniques in your current work?

My work is focussed more on contemporary ideas than on breaking new ground with materials. I really enjoy the qualities of base and precious metals but I am particularly mindful of their sources. It is really important that I use 925 silver that is recycled; the copper and brass can be recycled; gold is problematic for many reasons. The exploitation involved with the mining of gold is terrible (throughout its history and still now). Gold is so strongly associated in our modern world with status and consumerist value. I generally avoid using gold despite its beautiful colour.

I use materials that I have and for which I have developed a skill base. That said, I am not averse to trying new things. The rawhide used in Show of Hands was material I had bought by accident and it was lying around the house for a few years. When I thought about vellum and parchment I figured I should give this material a go. I also wanted to include a broader range of representation than the more stylised forms that are possible in metal. That said, I love repousse and chasing (a way of working metal by pushing into it from both sides) as a form of drawn image-making.

I don't like to be limited by a single set of techniques or material. I like to use my work to think about the world in which are living now and to pick up on observations that others may not have seen.

5 You have played a role in involving the community in the arts. How have you engaged with young people in your local area and what do you see as the role arts and crafts can play in their lives.

I have had a long career helping young people use the arts to talk about their lives, to gain insights into themselves and to critically engage with the visual world around them. That has been very rewarding and lots of fun.

I have always been committed to the idea that, in our visually saturated world, we need a visual vocabulary to express our ideas and to communicate. I am also very committed to the notion that people need to use their hands to know the world.



F Tanner Baker street window gallery.
Charlotte Van Ewyk June 2021

F Tanner Baker Micro-Galleries
STRANGE THINGS by Catherine Large



Opening 6-8pm 15 November until mid-December
Creative Arts Trail 23-24 November 2019

Wearable and small objects formed by a master craftsperson and artist honour family memories in ways that have universal resonance. Catherine Large trained in Melbourne and Sydney and teaches at Queensland College of Arts.

Cnr Goodsir and Evans Streets Rozelle

We are, as a society, becoming materially illiterate. Opportunities that help young people to manipulate a wide range of materials and to learn how things are made are essential for a sustainable and satisfying future for all of us.

This thinking was captured years ago when I was teaching students how to use photoshop – back in the days when this was a novelty. The task was playful – they got to manipulate my face with as many tools as possible that were available on the computer. The kids came to me saying: Miss, can't we just touch something? To them, art class was about the physical experience.

I have lived in one of Balmain's oldest bakeries for a long time. It has derelict ovens in the back yard and a shopfront on the corner of a street that was once the main avenue into the peninsula. I had a dream for a long time that I would like to enliven the street by using the shopfront windows creatively. I was also hoping to encourage others who live in neighbouring shopfronts to do something similar. We all live so shut down – we barely know each other because we turn our attention inwards rather than out to the street. Consequently, I have set up F Tanner Baker Micro-Galleries. Over the last two and half years, the focus of this window gallery has been on exhibiting small objects and raising the profile of contemporary jewellery/ small sculpture. Increasingly though, artists have been creating environments in the window that are fun and topical and I really like this direction.

It was great to have my neighbours initiate shows. Most recently, a former student of the Australian Film TV and Radio School who lives across the road mounted a playful show; other neighbours commented

on lockdown and the demise of Trump's America in several fabulous dioramas. Currently, I have invited the neighbours in Goodsir St to capture ideas they have been thinking about during lockdown. This has involved five families who I think are pretty chuffed to be exhibiting on the street in the window gallery space.

Concurrently, I have been working collaboratively with two other artists as Windowsmiths. Last year we mounted a series of pop-up window displays in a vacant shopfront in Balmain. The idea, once again, was to activate the street. This year we installed a show in the window of the Australian Design Centre on William Street. We call the installation *Murmuration*. 200 jewellers' pliers colourfully lit from below formed a bird-like swarm. The swarm became an implied necklace. With Sydney Craft Week for 2021, Windowsmiths is putting together a digital piece of some of our transformational practices – casting, sawing and hammering – mesmerising I hope.

6. What advice would you give to someone who might be interested in beginning a career working in your

medium?

A career as an artist can be wonderful but it must be funded somehow. Many artist jewellers at least have skills that mean they can sell small works more readily than some other artists. There has to be a balance, though, and there are traps. Many jewellers work long hours applying potentially unsafe practices for little money.

To sustain your artistic practice, find an inspiring open-minded community and learn as much as you can about skills and possibilities. There are so many sub-groups working in jewellery – trade professionals, hobbyists, artisans, exhibiting artists. Each has their place and there is learning to be had in all spheres but don't be limited by the thinking or form of any one. For me, I have been lucky to be able to pick and choose what I have wanted to learn and from whom.

If being an artist jeweller is appealing, make sure you become familiar with the world histories of art and those of craft – contest them, but build your knowledge base. Look, too, to contemporary craft across many fields.



Craftnsw is pleased to announce that we now have four online tutorials available. True to our original mission statement a set of 4 online tutorials was videoed by Brick Studios. The tutorials are presented by specialists in their field.

Paper Cutting - Miguel Castro

Making a string bag - Jillian Culey

Felt making - Pam de Groot, and

Machine Embroidery - Irene Manion

You can access these tutorials via the Craftnsw website by clicking the link below

<https://www.artsandcraftsnsw.com.au/pages/craft-tutorials>



Various pieces of jewellery created by Ksenija Benko.

KSENIJA BENKO

JEWELLER

Ksenija Benko has been a long-standing member of the Society of Arts and Crafts (Craftnsw). She joined the Society in the 80s and was a President of the Society from 1985 through to 1987. Now 97 years old, my interview with Ksenija was a wonderful opportunity to meet with such a sharp, intelligent, colourful person whose anecdotes and memories of the society were a pleasure to record.

1. You have been a jewellery practitioner for many years. What opportunities, qualifications, circumstances, and/or choices enabled you to start working in this area?

I have been a full-time mother to my husband and two sons till they left home, housekeeper and gardener. And I chose not have two careers that involved working outside the home, so instead, I went to a dress-making school and learned pattern making, dressmaking and tailoring. When the boys left home, I decided that it was time for me to do something for myself. I went to lapidary where a friend and neighbour was teaching. My European husband would not approve of me going out in the evening by myself, so I got around it. I would go there with my neighbour. I became skilled at polishing stones to cabochons. So, what was I going to do with all of these polished cabochons?

I happened to see a small add about the Society of Arts and Crafts NSW in the Herald advertising the gallery and the classes the Society was running. By enrolling in these classes, I knew I was going to learn much more so, I embarked on improving my education.

Having these cabochons I had polished as lapidary, the idea was to repost them in finished jewelry items.

2. Which pieces most accurately exemplifies what you strive to achieve in your work?: I truly had no high idea of 'striving for achievement'. Things just evolved. I met other jewellers and with time my skills developed. I was always motivated to produce work of the highest quality.

3. Materials are an integral part of your process. How do you go about sourcing your materials?

I sourced sheets of silver, gold, tools and wire from regular suppliers. The collection kept growing in my home workshop.

4. Explain the role of 'concept' vs 'skill' in the production of your work.

I just get an idea and think out how to bring it alive. First one must like what one intends to do. And that entails learning and practicing. I did go back to classes to continually develop my skills.

5. You have been a longstanding member of Craftnsw. Tell me a little about



how you became a member and your journey to becoming president of the society.

The Craftnsw gallery, (which in the 80s had its permanent residence at Harrington Street, the Rocks Sydney), organised classes with Valerie Aked as a jewelry teacher. She taught silversmithing. They organised many local and overseas artists including people like Vincent Ferrini who taught at Boston University, Charles Lute O'Brien (sic) and others.

I joined the classes of the society, in Harrington street. There was a student exhibition. Not knowing what to present I actually brought in some pieces. They were from various classes I had attended. They liked my work and suggested I join the society. I replied, I don't think I am good enough. But Phillipa Byatt said, I am telling you as president who is also on the selection committee. You just have to present three

different items. In later years this grew to six items.

So I became a member and had a duties at the gallery. I think it was once a week. I don't remember exactly. Not every one wanted to do it, and I guess they didn't twist peoples' arms.

The gallery was half store, half school and half meeting place. There was a meeting one day whilst I was working there. After a while, silversmith Isobel Bath, said to me: "I have been on the committee for many years. Its high time for me to go. And I think you should take my place". So, my nomination to the committee was accepted in 1985 and in 1985 I also became president.

My thought was that the standards needed to be raised.

And in time it was no longer, "this is nice, it will sell." That's what I heard from the committee at the gallery and it just riled me somehow. At least I did not think this to be the right criteria. And so a standard was put in place.

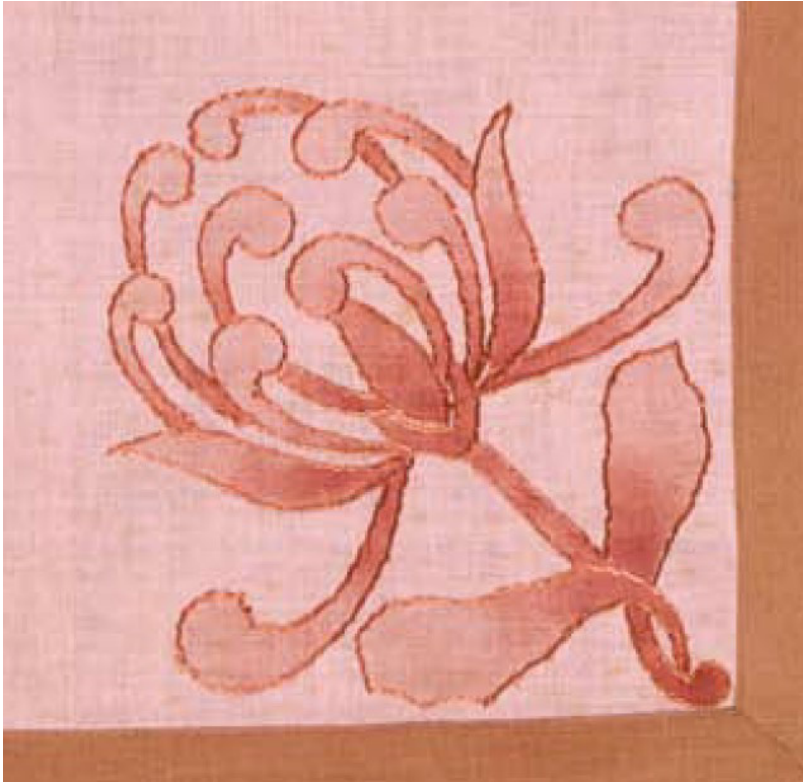
There were a pair of earrings. Ever so simple. I didn't think they fitted the standard which Craftnsw was aiming to achieve. I bought them so that they would be removed from display and besides, I thought I could use the wire. After a few weeks, another pair just like the first pair of earrings appeared. Phillipa said "Are you going to buy them as well?"

An article on the Jeweller Vincent Ferrini who was one of the many distinguished teachers who were invited to teach at Craft mentioned by Kseija above can be found at this link:

<https://www.ganoksin.com/article/jewelry-vincent-ferrini/>

THE HISTORY OF CRAFTNSW.

THE WARATAH - TELOPEA



A section of the original tablecloth which incorporated the waratah motif designed by Eirene Mort. Image taken from *Social Riches*, the catalogue of the Exhibition celebrating the centenary of the Society of Arts and Crafts New South Wales 1906 to 2006, Curated by Gillian McCracken p6.

including printed textiles, tapestry, embroidery, ceramics, brass, wood and leather, woodblock and lino printing, and etching. She trained under Antonio Dattilo-Rubbo in Sydney, followed by further training in London (1897) where she designed fabrics for Liberty of London, and became enthused by the arts and crafts philosophy and work of William Morris. Mort designed the waratah motif which the Society adopted as its badge and emblem (see page 17) in 1915.”*2

The design of the waratah can also be seen in a tablecloth by Mort. She hand-stencilled the repeat image onto organdy and hand embroidered the edges. This piece was exhibited with the Society of Arts and Crafts and ultimately purchased by the Art Gallery of NSW. The image (pictured above) is simultaneously a stylised, simplified, representation of the uniquely Australian flower, and a linear design that is immediately recognisable as being influenced by the internationally recognised Art Nouveau movement.

Margaret Preston who was a member from 1929 and Vice President from 1953-56 produced many lino block prints of vases of flowers including waratahs which are well known today.

A waratah (telopea) is the logo for the Society of Arts and Crafts. The image of the waratah has appeared in work of members of the society since its inception in 1906 through to today.

The image has evolved over time reflecting societal changes, the choice of materials, and the influence of artistic trends.

1906

When the Society first came together it had “the general aim of encouraging the pursuit of arts and crafts in NSW. The society promoted the use of Australian materials and design. *1

Eirene Mort was a foundation member and an active exhibiting member and teacher. “She was a prolific and talented designer and maker of a range of media

(left) Wire sculpture of waratah by Natalie Fong

Galvanised Steel wire with Aluminium mesh and sheet

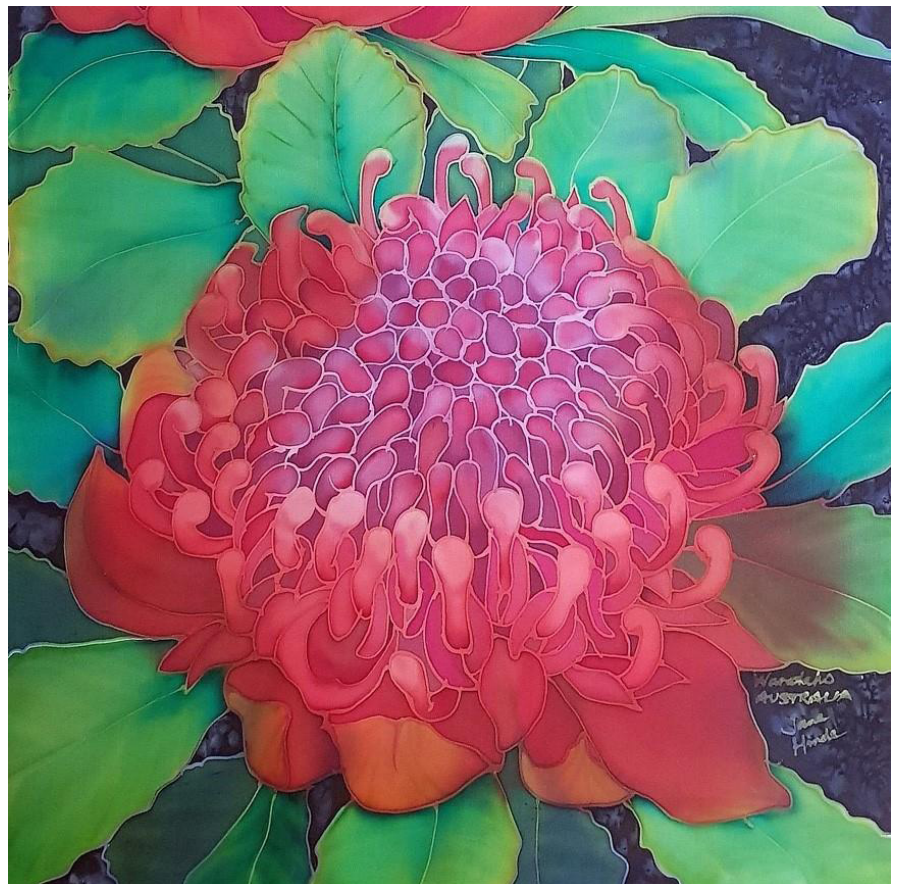
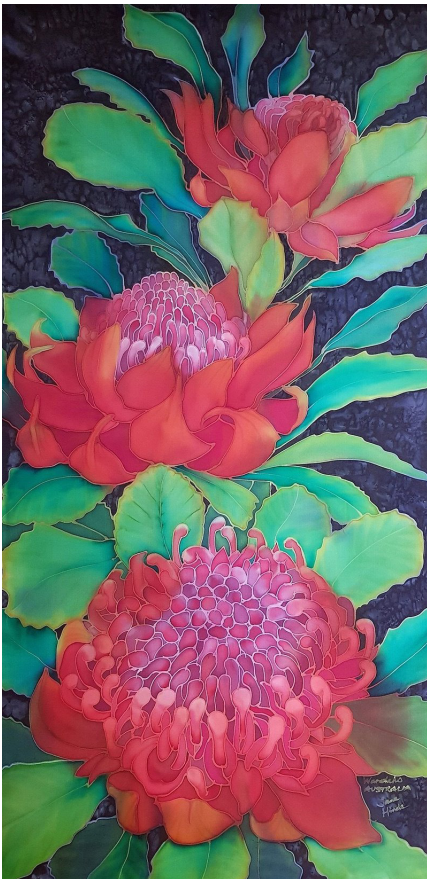
size 12 cm x 10 cm x 5 cm



Waratahs by Jane Hinde

Waratahs are iconic Australian native flora & the emblem of state of NSW. Hand painted on Crepe Satin using silk dyes. A combination of batik and traditional silk painting, a colour wash is applied first, then clear gutta (wax resist) drawn over with the final painting using rich colours. The black background is textured using salt crystals.

(below)



2021

Two current members of the Society have produced work in different media that contain the waratah as subject matter .

Natalie Fong has produced an intricate wire sculpture using galvanised steel wire and aluminium mesh and sheets. This sculpture interprets the complex structural form of the waratah in monochrome materials, using linear repeated curves. Jane Hinde, who uses a combination of batik and silk painting in her wall hangings, has used delicate tones and line to create her interpretation of the architecturally complex form of the waratah.

These two more recent works show the artists' focus has been strongly informed by their media of choice. The linear three-dimensional sculpture by Natalie Fong demonstrates an understanding of how the combination of complex linear layers of wire can be employed to form the shape of the waratah and her use of contrasting metals and mesh enhance the central form.

Jane Hinde's design is governed by the use of gutta outlines, which are needed to stop the dye colour from spreading on the silk and contain it within boundaries. Her use of

many delicate tones of red and green create a painterly tonality held within the delicate lines. Each artist has interpreted the same subject to reflect the constraints of their chosen media and the times in which they have been created.

Irene Manion



*1. *The Society of Arts and Crafts of New South Wales, A History of Constancy and Change*. Ruth Kerrison. p1-2

*2 Gillian MacCracken, *Social Riches, The Society of Arts and Crafts New South Wales, 1906 - 2006*. 2006, page 8. Catalogue for the exhibition held at Manly Art Gallery and Museum.

*3. *The Society of Arts and Crafts of New South Wales, A History of Constancy and Change*. Ruth Kerrison. p2.

(above) The various versions over time of the waratah logo for the Society of Arts and Crafts NSW, (Craftnsw). The most recent version, seen on the cover of *Teloepa*, has varied the text from the 2005 version of arts crafts nsw to just craftnsw. The stylised design of the waratah remains the same as the 2005 version.

WORK CURRENTLY ON DISPLAY IN THE ONLINE EXHIBITION 'THE VALUE OF HANDS'



Some of the work currently on display at the online exhibition *The Value of Hands*. Clockwise starting at the top left of the page: 1 Yaya Hadrys, Silk Shawl, contact printed with natural dyes of eucalyptus leaves and bark. 2. and 3 (detail). Helen Wilder Merino wool scarf, handwoven. 4. Nicky Coady *Jugs with Attitude* - Boro design 5. Liz Calnan, Wallhanaging, handwoven silk.





Clockwise from top:
1. Lyn Pavey *Below the Canopy* Textile Sculpture
2. Carolyn Cabena *Viridine* Silk and rayon velvet scarf
3. Sue Fraser *Jade Tribute* Equine porcelain paper clay sculpture
4. Heidi Francis wheel thrown porcelain





The Society of Arts and Crafts of NSW trading as craftnsw

Founded 1906

Incorporated 1929

ABN: 55 000 022 195

Patron: Professor The Honourable Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO

Ambassador: Claudia Chan Shaw



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