



BOTANICA IMMORTALUS

"I paint flowers so they will not die." - Frida Kahlo (1907-1954)

Artists are divine enchanters. By virtue of their ability to capture and record the ephemeral elements of the world around them, artists grant the subjects of their artwork eternal life. The subject of a portrait will never age a day beyond the final brushstroke; a lush virgin landscape will never succumb to the devastation of human endeavours; and a blooming flower will never wilt and wither. The ravages of time, disease, death, tragedy and decay, through the immortalising power of art, the humble artist provides the potential to escape them all.

JamFactory presents *Botanica Immortalus*, a group exhibition, curated by JamFactory's Assistant Curator Caitlin Eyre, of five contemporary Australian jewellers whose work features botanical forms. The exhibition explores the way in which jewellers use precious metals to render the fleeting beauty of flowers and foliage immortal. While some of the artists craft flowers from metal to preserve their likeness in the face of natural decay, extinction and ecological disaster, others use the medium to capture a moment in time or an emotional response. The featured artists are Shimara Carlow (VIC), Yuko Fujita (VIC), Michelle Kelly (SA), David Neale (VIC) and Olivia Spark (NSW), most of whom are exhibiting in Adelaide for the first time.

Melbourne-based jeweller and silversmith Shimara Carlow grounds her practice in a childhood fascination for collecting the shells, stones, mermaid's purses, feathers and seed pods that were washed along the seashore in her native Ireland. Long inspired by natural forms, in particular seed pods, Carlow presents a series of tactile jewellery pieces that were inspired by her first visit to Australia and her enchantment with native flora. Her pieces feature delicate cast silver gum nuts collected from the Waite Arboretum in Adelaide.

Yuko Fujita is a Japanese-born jeweller based in Melbourne. In her jewellery practice, Fujita transforms the textures, colours and shapes of botanical elements into delicate abstracted jewellery pieces that celebrate the creativity of Mother Nature. While the abstracted shapes borrow elements from nature and conceal the true forms of the flowers and foliage, Fujita's wearable artworks capture the essence of the living entities they were inspired by. Her most recent body of artworks translates the botanical-themed artworks of the great painters into jewellery. In this series, Fujita channels Vincent Van Gogh, Gustav Klimt and Claude Monet by utilising the natural landscapes where each artist lived and worked to provide subtle links between their work and hers.

Adelaide jeweller and metalsmith Michelle Kelly presents a new series of jewellery based on her interest in Mycology (the study of fungi). Drawn not only to the wide variety of forms, colours and structures found in fungi, Kelly is also fascinated by the important role these organisms play in balancing the Earth's precious ecosystem. In the creation of these jewellery pieces, Kelly combines traditional metalsmithing techniques with experimental surface treatments, patination applications and kinetic additions to capture the alien beauty of fungi.

Melbourne-based gold and silversmith David Neale creates intricate botanical-themed jewellery that are 'sketchy poems about plants, rather than exact replicas of a particular specimen'. Ensuring that evidence of the making processes are visible in the finished piece is particularly important to Neale. This evidence of the maker's hand deliberately conveys that his botanicals are crafted by a person rather than nature, yet still they have the ability to sensitively evoke the real living plant. In this way, Neale does not seek to replicate nature, but instead focuses on capturing the essence of the botanical and interpreting it into a jewellery design.

Emerging Sydney-based jeweller and recent University of New South Wales graduate Olivia Spark presents a series of delicate metal bouquets featuring critically endangered native Australian flowers. Displayed in glass beakers, the endangered flowers are contextualised as rare historical specimens, the lone survivors of their species. Through her artworks, Spark explores the impact of European settlement and global pollution on our precious ecosystem, rendering the vulnerable flora in metal to preserve their likeness for future generations.

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JamFactory respectfully acknowledges the traditional lands of Kurna people and we pay respect to their spiritual relationship with their Country. We also acknowledge the Kurna people as the traditional custodians of the Adelaide region and that their cultural and heritage beliefs are still as important to the living Kurna people today.

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Image: Olivia Spark, *Prostanthera Marifolia*, 2017. Photo: courtesy of the artist.