



MARK MAKING



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Bench is an artist run studio established in 2012 in response to the need for creative spaces in Brisbane. The studio facilitates the sharing of ideas, the creation of new work and the critical discussion of art and design. The result is a small community of makers dedicated to promoting jewellery as an art form both nationally and internationally. Through Bench, these artists explore and manipulate the crossover between visual art, craft, fashion and design, seeking to extract the best principles from each area and incorporate them into their own practice. The experience of working collectively has had a significant impact in the development of their individual practices. Members assist each other in various studio tasks and challenges while navigating the obstacles of early career practice together. Work is made that would have otherwise been impossible, opportunities are shared and experienced with peers, and motivation is lifted by the collective energy of the studio.

Mark making is a broad term the Bench artists have used to characterise the forms, patterns and textures within their artwork. It is not limited to a particular material, surface, process or function. They have used mark making to expand the boundaries of their work, by reconsidering how it informs and connects facets of their practice: sketching, designing, thinking, making, viewing, wearing and experiencing the object. Mark Making, the exhibition, sees Bench members explore and examine the physical process of mark marking and its potential to transform the physical into the non-physical, ephemeral and intangible, considering marks made upon the maker, the wearer and the viewer. In this way, the artists reflect upon the act of leaving or making a mark. From the point of view of the consumer, jewellery may be collected or gifted to mark a significant moment in time, but from a makers point of view, a mark on, or represented by, a piece of jewellery can be a nuanced and thoughtful act. Mark Making presents work that represents the different and unique ways that four Bench members interpret this concept, and how their collaborative environment supports and enhances critical thinking on the subject.

ANDY LOWRIE

Before I work with a material or start piecing an object together I do a lot of drawing. I draw shapes and patterns but also scribbles and messy textures. When ideas for jewellery making emerge it is often a combination of the things I see in my drawings, the things I see in other objects and the things I see in nature. Working in sheet metal, I have to translate ideas into the flat plane of this material and I rely on drawing and paper cutting to do this.

I am interested in the surfaces of objects and materials. The marks that collect on the surface of objects we use motivate me to explore my own ways of working with materials. For the last few years I've been painting, enamelling, scratching and, most recently, drawing on objects that I fabricate in metal first. It creates a surface that I think of as being sympathetic to the bodies my objects will adorn. Bodies are a canvas in a state of constant change, showing signs of age and bearing marks of our existence, and I want my wearable work to acknowledge that rather than contrast with it. The human presence that these marks bring to the work is important to me - the connection it creates with a non-human material that can be transferred to someone else.

Thinking about jewellery forces me to think about the body as it relates to other things. While in the past I have resisted the lure of the natural world, it is hard to separate the human body from it and the many parallels that make for compelling visual connections.

In instances where I have used graphite marks, I am relying on its visceral or intuitive qualities, evocative of the written word but not so descriptive. A repetitive and overlapping application of these marks builds a decorative mask over the surface of an object. But I think this surface goes beyond decoration, as these marks recall a human presence, whether displayed on or apart from a body.



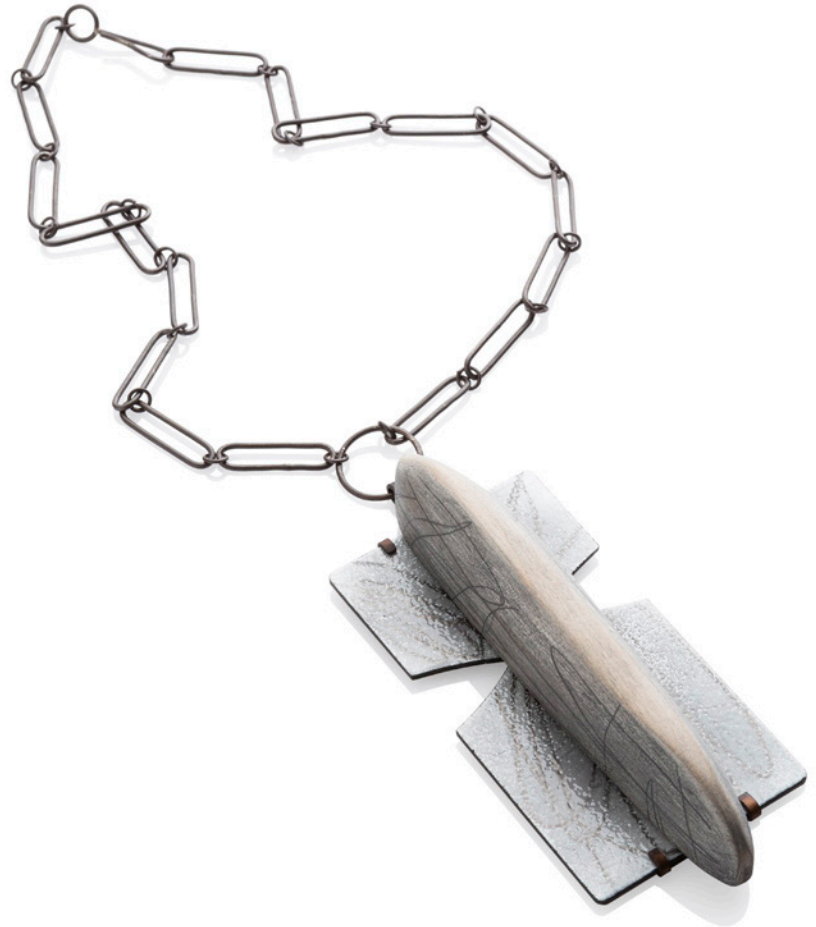
Andy Lowrie
Paper Moth #5 (Brooch) 2018
Sterling silver, copper, basswood, paint, graphite
and stainless steel pin.



Andy Lowrie
Long Drawn Face II (Necklace) 2018
Sterling silver, steel, vitreous enamel, basswood,
paint, graphite and copper.



TOP:
Andy Lowrie
Paper Moth #6 (Brooch) 2018
Sterling silver, copper, basswood, paint, graphite
and stainless steel pin.



RIGHT:
Andy Lowrie
Long Drawn Face I (Necklace) 2018
Sterling silver, steel, vitreous enamel, basswood,
paint, graphite and copper.

CLARE POPPI

Humans leave daily marks on the earth as we go through our lives and function within a globalised community. These marks are sometimes damaging: the scar of a gold-mine, an oil slick from a ruptured fuel tanker or the nitrogen plume from industrial farming leaching into waterways. Not all the marks society makes are necessarily malicious, as can be clearly seen in the blossoming tufts of regenerative planting projects or the linear grids of agriculture that provides food and sustenance. While these examples refer to mark making on a grand scale, it is important also to consider the intimate interactions and minute marks we each leave on our personal environments.

The work I have presented in this exhibition explores how jewellery itself can leave marks not only on the environment but also on our souls. These intangible marks can be seen in the Growing Jewellery series where the act of growing the jewellery creates an emotional mark on the wearer - they are intimately connected with the work through the physical act of nurture. Daily interaction is required to keep the plants alive and a certain level of awareness and care must be taken when the jewellery is worn. The Seed Bomb Jewellery marks the earth in a more literal sense, with plants eventually blooming where the seeds are dispersed into the environment.

The Seed Bomb Necklaces give over the making of the jewellery to the wearer, empowering the end user and granting them agency. The user is not reliant on the maker and is therefore free to create and re-create seed necklaces at their will. This parallels their autonomy in deciding when, where and how the necklace is broken up and dispersed. It is the wearer who brings the static work to life, through use the wearer creates their own mark on the environment. In these works I rely on the wearer to propagate the my conceptual intent. The purpose of this work is not so much a literal attempt to regenerate environments as it is concerned with starting a dialogue about the marks we leave on our earth.



Clare Poppi
Seed Bomb Necklace (Calendula) 2018
Recycled 925 Silver, 925 Silver Chain, Clay,
Calendula Petals, Seeds, Recycled Cotton Cord



Clare Poppi
Seed Bomb Necklace (Lemon Myrtle) 2018
Recycled 925 Silver, 925 Silver Chain, QLD
Sapphire, Clay, Lemon Myrtle Leaves,
Seeds, Recycled Cotton Cord



TOP:
Clare Poppi and Katie Stormonth
Collaboration #1 (Brooch) 2018
Recycled sterling silver, timber



RIGHT:
Clare Poppi
Growing Brooch 2017
Recycled 925 Silver, 925 Silver Clutch Pin, Soil, Plant

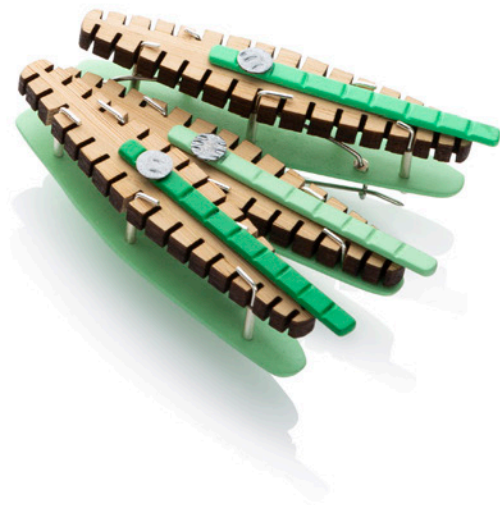
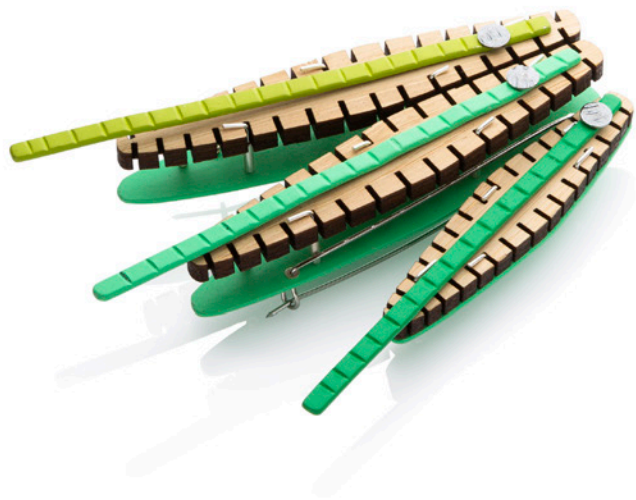
KATIE STORMONTH

The works I have created for Mark Making are part of a larger body of work, 'Blended Modes and Mediums', which explores ideas of colour, texture, form and materiality. These new pieces were developed through an intuitive method of making, where the use of repetition establishes the foundation of construction.

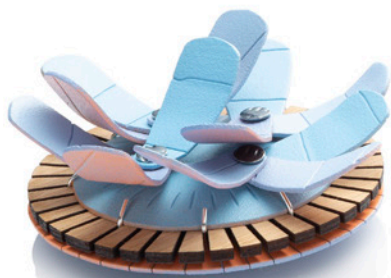
Developing this body of work over the last two years, I experimented with my methods and pushed my practice into realms of innovation and play. Each subsequent series advances the work into new territories, as I formulate new techniques for construction and layout. My hope is for the works to forge a relationship with the viewer or wearer, one that draws on and exposes memories connected haptically and visually with our surroundings. Playing with form, texture and colour, I use these elements as triggers for prompting pre-associated memories we have formed with objects or experiences. Marking the pieces with hammers and surface manipulation, these components recall aspects of our environment.

Beginning with an initial shape, I use repetition to develop a layout. Repeating the shape over and over, and layering the components in dynamic compositions, the results are large wearable pieces with a visual impact enhanced by scale and colour. Although they are light, when worn the works affect the wearer with these qualities and impose their presence on sight and body.

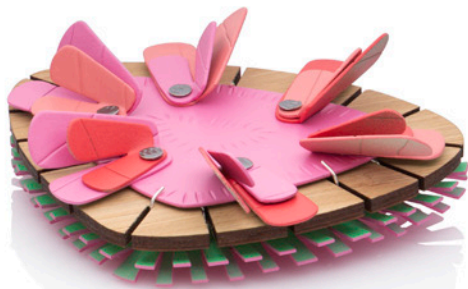
Each viewer or wearer will have their own unique experience with the works. Their experiences are all dependant on the connections they have made with their surroundings and the memories they hold. For some it will simply remind them of a flower from a garden they pass on their daily walk, but for others it may expose a memory from their childhood, triggered through the experience of the similar textures and colours.



Katie Stormonth
Blended Modes & Mediums: 4.0 (Brooches) 2018
Aluminium, sterling silver, stainless steel,
bamboo, and acrylic paint.



Katie Stormonth
Blended Modes & Mediums: 3.0 (Brooches) 2018
Aluminium, sterling silver, stainless steel,
bamboo, and acrylic paint.



Katie Stormonth
Blended Modes & Mediums: 3.0 (Brooches) 2018
Aluminium, sterling silver, stainless steel,
bamboo, and acrylic paint.

NELLIE PEOPLES

My practice is based in jewellery and small metals. At the core of my practice is the exploration of the connections made between objects and people; and how the object itself plays into those connections by representing on-going narratives. A thread that runs through my body of work is that cherished objects, in particular jewellery, have the potential to act as an aides de mémoires of a special event, beloved person, or a particular place.

Through my current body of work I explore the mark the object makes upon the wearer, and viewer alike, with a particular focus on the register of place. There is a recognition that feelings for and about a specific place are deeply personal, however they evolve out of a collective experience that is unique to that place and does not occur in the same way anywhere else. The places that are the catalyst for this current body of work are specific, yet can be read universally from Canberra to Brisbane and beyond.

In this body of work there is special importance placed on the object's surface. Through physical mark making a terrain has evolved: whether that be through being marked by use, or deliberately created on an object in order to create the potential to mark the wearer and viewer. The inspiration for the physical marks made was drawn from environment of a specific place through line and gesture, and superimposed onto an object.

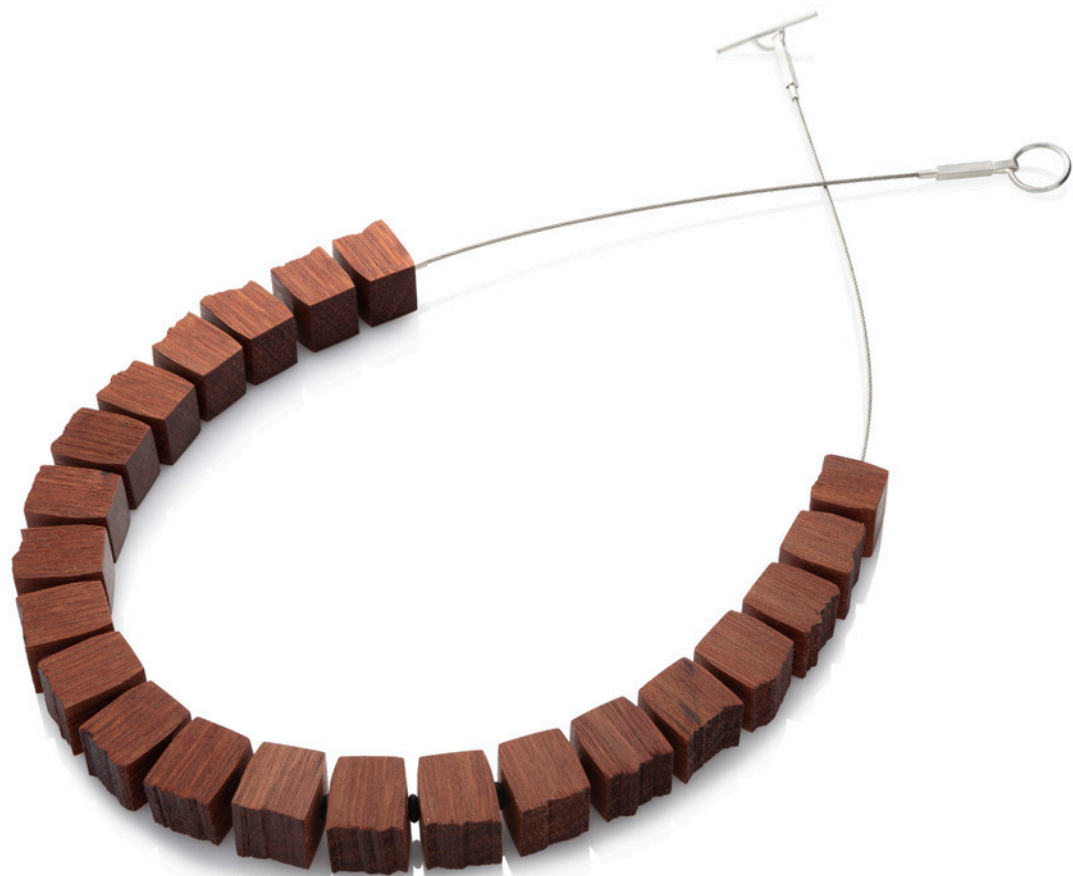
Whilst drawing on the dots, lines, forms, patterns and textures of a specific place to create the objects, there is an understanding that in the same moment these locations pattern our emotions and memories. My hope is that by gazing at these objects the viewer is transported to a specific place, and are reminded that they are connected to the ground on which they stand, and the world at large.



Nellie Peoples
Bifocal series: December 2001 (Black Mountain) 2018
(Brooch) Copper and sterling silver.



Nellie Peoples
Bifocal series: Canberra East IV - VII 2018
(Brooch) Sterling silver



Nellie Peoples
Horizon: South -35.2694, 149.1589
(Mount Ainslie, Canberra, Australia) 2018
(Necklace) Sterling silver, stainless steel,
reclaimed Canberran timber, rubber, epoxy resin.

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