

WAnt

Contemporary Jewellery from WA 21st Century Graduates

Alister Yiap: *Pharaoh collar*,
2009, acrylic, leatherette
cord, 400 x 800 x 250mm.
Finalist Young Fashion
Awards. Photo Meiji
Nyugen



In the first of two articles Western Australian jeweller and writer Dorothy Erickson introduces a vibrant group of Western Australia's multicultural contemporary jewellers

The multicultural Jewellers and Metalsmiths Group of Australia (WA) Inc. has a varied and interesting collection of members hailing from many parts of the world—Brunei, Britain, France, Germany, India, Iran, Malaysia, Netherlands and USA as well as native-born Australians.

This diverse group makes for an exciting meld when they exhibit together, as they are doing at present. The varied ethnic and life backgrounds greatly enrich the work on exhibition in *WAnt: Contemporary Jewellery from WA* currently travelling in Australia. Seen first in Melbourne



7



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in 2017 it will travel to Ellenbrook Art Centre near Perth and Bunbury Regional Art Galleries in 2018.

The group was started by Dorothy Erickson as the Western Australian Jewellers Group in 1978 when Western Australians were completely omitted from a national survey exhibition. The selector had not visited Western Australia, apparently believing that there would be nothing worth seeing. When the national Jewellers and Metalsmiths Group Australia was formed in 1980 this Western Australian group morphed into the Jewellers and Metalsmiths Group Australia (WA) Inc. as the voice of professional artist jewellers in the State. Later, under Felicity Peters, it expanded to encompass a wide range of recreational jewellers. An active group, they have a website and regularly arrange exhibitions, workshops and events. The current exhibitors were chosen for their ability to deliver an individual conceptual approach that incorporated both personal vision and good design, realized with fine workmanship. Most have multiple qualifications having come to jewellery as a second career. A number graduated recently whilst others commenced making in the 1960s. Working together as a team has proved an interesting adventure.

One of the newest members Fatemeh Boroujeni, an ethnic Bakhtiari from Iran, is vastly qualified with a painting degree in Fine Art from Tehran University, a degree in Industrial Design from Azad University,

CE 8

a Masters in Applied Arts and Design from Curtin University and an Advanced Diploma in Jewellery Design from the Central Institute of Technology in Perth (the former Perth Technical School) where she graduated in 2015 taking out the major prizes.

Boroujeni makes bold artworks in which the imprint and heritage of her home city of Isfahan can be seen in the decorative details that reference the block printing designs of the textiles traditional to the area. Counterpointing the intricate Persian patterns are her elegant forms. Boroujeni feels her work, drawing as it does on her cross-cultural background and global influences, creates a contemporary dialogue that combines points of view in surprising ways.

Boroujeni says of her current work:

I combine Persian patterns with contemporary designs and forms. As an artist, I am inspired by the humble brush, this tool has infinite potential, which can be used to create sensational masterpieces. Each artist knows their brushes intimately, employing the unique qualities and personality of each individual brush. In my work, the hair of the brush references its importance in art, painting and calligraphy.

In this collection I have deconstructed the brush to its most basic elements and used the contrasts of light and dark, soft and hard, dull and shiny to create works of art that symbolise the different sides of our inner and outer selves.



Opposite:
Fatemeh Boroujeni: *River, sun and the farm*, pendant, 2015, patinated copper, bristle, 400 x 80 x 40 mm. Photograph the artist

Top: Fatemeh Boroujeni: *It is all about me*, bangle, 2015, patinated copper, bristle, 80 x 60 x 7mm. Photograph the artist

Left: Fatemeh Boroujeni: *Hoopoe*, ring, 2016, sterling silver, bristle, 58 x 58, x 6mm. Photograph D. Erickson

CE 9



Another new member and graduate from Central Institute of Technology (in 2016 its name changed to North Metropolitan College of TAFE) who took out the major prizes that year was English born Elizabeth Hawkey. After migrating to Australia as a nurse, raising children and seeking an artistic pursuit, Elizabeth came to jewellery as a second career. With family in the industry in Birmingham and a major interest in dance and costume her early works can be seen to reference the delicate lace of Elizabethan costume and the exuberance of Venetian Carnivale.

While still a student she exhibited in the World Skills exhibitions in 2014 and 2015 and was selected for Contemporary Wearables in Toowoomba.

Of her current work she says: *It reflects my ongoing fascination with history, architecture, costume and textiles. The peacock tail, associated with immortality, divine guidance and protection, continues to provide inspiration. Crochet, being a textile technique, provides a lightweight malleable surface, which when attached to a prefabricated form allows the wearer to wear the jewellery with ease. After dark it displays a beautiful effervescence reminiscent of diamonds in candlelight.*



Above: Elizabeth Hawkey: *Taming Nature* armband, 2017, sterling silver, 110 x 65 x 47mm. Photograph Yasmin Eghtesadi

Below: Elizabeth Hawkey: *Inner Eye* collar, 2016, sterling silver, fine silver, 380mm diameter. Photograph Yasmin Eghtesadi



Annika Hauschild: *Blüten* necklace, 2016, sterling silver, 47 x 95 x 2mm, chain 400mm. Photograph Tony Holly

Also new to Australia and the jewellers group is Annika Hauschild with a Diploma in Jewellery Design from Central Institute of Technology. Originally from the former East Germany interested in art but orphaned in her teenage years the need to earn was paramount so she trained as an accountant in Hannover, then travelled in the Far East and Australia before migrating in 2012 to join her Australian boyfriend. Able at last to pursue her favoured interest she obtained her Diploma in 2016 and has since worked as a studio assistant at Philip Noakes' private jewellery school Contemporary Metal in the Perth suburb of Osborne Park. She won the Outstanding Student Award in the JMGA (WA) Inc. exhibition *What Goes Around* in 2016.

An ardent conservationist, Hauschild's designs are based on plant forms but also bear homage to the Viennese Secession and Jugendstil jewellers of the turn of the 20th Century in Austria and Germany.

She is fascinated by the way *these brave revolutionaries broke away from traditional design principles to explore new concepts. ... turned organic shapes such as flowers into abstract and minimalistic and sometimes geometric designs.* Annika enjoys working with organic shapes and forms, often using found objects to develop modern, clean and sophisticated designs with a hint of elegance. Her *Blüten* or blossom pieces exhibit what is today considered a typically Germanic trait of crisp hard-edged pared-back design.

Western Australian born Alexandra D'Ulisse graduated from Curtin University in 2012 with a Bachelor of Arts in Jewellery Design. She had originally commenced a fine art degree but her interest in patterns, systems and structures within nature and architecture saw her move across to jewellery design. An outstanding student, she was offered the Resident Graduate Craftsperson scholarship for 2012-13 following her graduation and after that became the 'Technical Officer' for the jewellery studios at the university for 2014-15.

In 2016 Alexandra won the Technical Excellence Award in the JMGA (WA) exhibition *What Goes Around* with a computer-aided design utilizing 3D printing technology to produce a bracelet delicately rotating on an axis. *Honeycomb bangle* was constructed using hexagonal cells. For this exhibition she continued to develop her interest in fractals and repeating patterns found within nature ... broadening this to encompass architectural patterns, exploring ways that these could be manipulated and repeated to form unique and complex 3D jewellery as seen in her *Sweeping Arches* ring.

Below: Alexandra D'Ulisse: *Twist of Honey*, bangle, sterling silver. 89 x 89 x 12mm. Photograph Yasmin Eghtesadi

Right: Alister Yiap: *Liberty* collar and arm piece, 2008, aluminium, collar 300 x 300 x 200mm, arm piece 900 x 150 x 150 mm. Photograph Meiji Nyugen

Opposite page: Alister Yiap: *Micromech Crystal Cage*, pendant, 2013, sterling silver, obsidian crystal, 101 x 40 x 43mm. Photograph the artist



Alister Yiap was born in Sabah, Malaysia to Chinese parents and arrived in Perth in 1990 as a small child. Introduced to jewellery making at Willetton High School where friends gave him a Swarovski crystal pendant he began to explore the world of crystals and facets. Making crystal bead jewellery as a hobby led him to decide to pursue jewellery, fashion or design as a profession. Offered a place at Curtin University of Technology Alister graduated in 2008 with a Bachelor of Arts in Jewellery Design and since 2009 has taught at the Central Institute of Technology, recently renamed North Metropolitan College of TAFE. Alister works often with the fashion industry and has been a finalist in many awards including WA Young Achiever of the Year Awards 2017 in the Art and Fashion category.

His works for fashion events are eye-catching and feature in international books. He has been selected for *Contemporary Wearables* a number of times. Since 2013 he has been undertaking public art works. His jewellery embraces new technology as he is interested in how the computer can aid the design process, whilst allowing for hand fabricating final elements to keep the maker's touch. His intention is to project a thought-provoking display that looks to question traditional notions of jewellery.



American born Lynndy Young has not yet graduated from any jewellery course but was highly commended and won the 'People's Choice' in her first foray into exhibiting in the JMGA (WA) exhibition *What Goes Around* in 2016. Her move from commerce to jewellery in 2015 can easily be understood and she has already set up a business model.

Lynndy writes: *I have had a passion for jewellery for as long as I can remember. Having jewellers in my family, my maternal great grandfather, (traditional jeweller) and my paternal grandmother, (a contemporary jeweller and artist) allowed me great access to all types of jewellery. Some of my fondest memories growing up in South Carolina were when I would fossick through my mother's and grandmother's jewellery boxes, trying everything on and polishing the pieces revealing their brilliance. The jewellery varied as much as the two most important women in my life—one strong and classical and the other strong and outrageous! My summers and elective school courses were filled with my artistic pursuits.*

After completing my tertiary education in Commerce I travelled to the UK where I worked mainly in banking and met and married an Australian. I moved to Perth in 1994 and have three gorgeous boys. As my children have grown older, I have moved back to artistic pursuits more in line with my roots. I enjoy producing pieces that reflect the fluidity of nature and the season. I also find inspiration working with the rigidity of geometric shapes. I am as eclectic as the two women who raised me!

Another latecomer to jewellery is Parisian Blandine Hallé who arrived in Western Australia in 1997 after adventures in a variety of countries that included being a trekking guide in Algeria and the European Alps. She decided to stay and completed a Bachelor of Commerce at Curtin University of Technology in 2001 and in 2003 a Graduate Diploma in Secondary Education. Although she began craftwork as a woodworker assisting disabled people, enrolling in Jacquie Sprogoe's enamelling classes at Fremantle Arts Centre saw her change disciplines and she took an Advanced Diploma of Jewellery Design at the Central Institute of Technology in 2013 and then in 2016 commenced a postgraduate Diploma of Applied Arts at the Escola Massana in Barcelona in Spain graduating in June 2017.

She says: *Following the model of circular economy, I design and make jewellery using discarded materials that I recycle and repurpose. As I am walking around the urban or natural landscape, I collect things I find – objets trouvés. I delight in transforming the mundane and the discarded: through a joyful alchemy, the old and the dirty give birth to a colourful and bright artwork.*

Chain of Fools 2 won the Best Interpretation of the Theme at the biennial JMGA exhibition *What goes Around*. The work in the current exhibition was created in Barcelona where the architectural details fascinated her. The series "looking out of the window" (in Spanish "mirar por la ventana") is an evocation of windows of Barcelona and architectural details inspired by tiled

roofs, balconies, shutters ... The window symbolises the passage between private and public space, between inside and outside, as a means of connection between our own inner emotional and psychic world and the outside world of people and the environment.

Right: Blandine Hallé: *Chain of Fools 2*, necklace 2015, painted recycled chain and coiled wire. 350 x 220 x 80mm. Photograph the artist

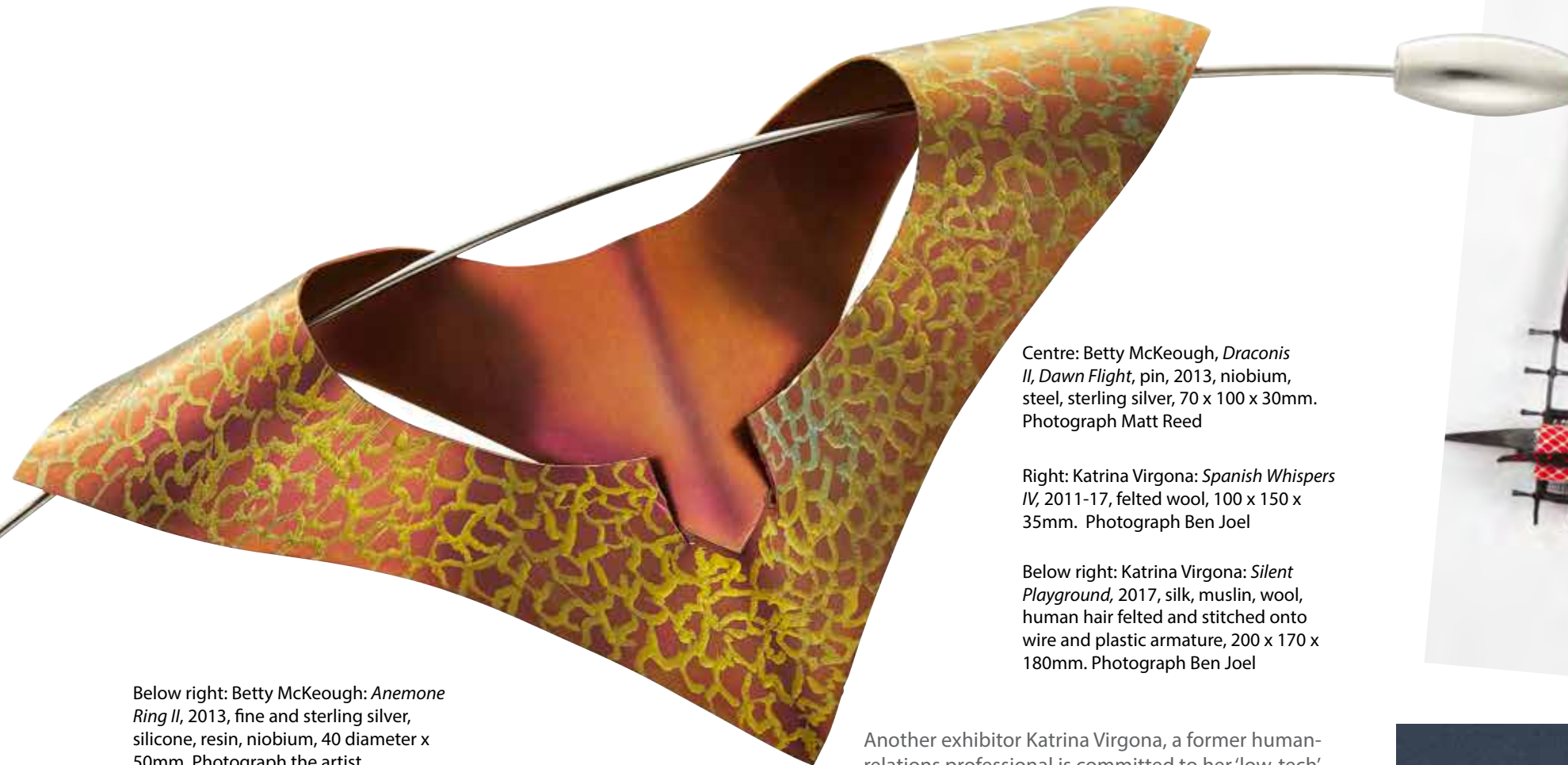
Below: Blandine Hallé: *Looking out the Window 5*, brooch, 2017, patinated and goldplated brass, photographic paper, polycarbonate, 64 x 75 x 17mm. Photograph the artist



Lynndy Young: *Off Track*, bracelet, 2016, sterling silver, 14ct gold, 69 diameter x 12mm. Photograph Yasmin Eghtesadi

Farmer's daughter Betty McKeough from Northam never considered herself to be artistic and instead graduated from the University of WA with a Bachelor of Arts in 1983. She became a broadcaster on radio and television before marrying another journalist and moving about the State. Betty, a stalwart of JMGA (WA) in recent years, says she is an accidental artist taking various hobby classes that led to certificates, advanced certificates, diplomas and eventually an Advanced Diploma in Jewellery at the Central Institute of Technology in 2010.

McKeough's *Draconis* works were inspired by the *Song of Ice and Fire* books and utilize a Japanese paper folding and cutting technique, *Kirigami*. She has an on-going love affair with the reactive metals used in that series. McKeough often explores the use of textiles and found materials in her work. Brightly coloured silicone tentacles on children's toys have been used to great advantage to create small sculptural forms reminiscent of marine life on barrier reefs. The glowing tentacles wave gently on the hand as if moved by waterborne currents. She says her work *fancifully depicts nature resuming what man abandons. Thin tendrils curl from metal containers; rampant plant life erupts, and exploratory tentacles of some curious marine life or imagined hybrid emerge.* The work contrasts hard against soft, colour against mono chrome and organic against man-made.



Centre: Betty McKeough, *Draconis II, Dawn Flight*, pin, 2013, niobium, steel, sterling silver, 70 x 100 x 30mm. Photograph Matt Reed

Right: Katrina Virgona: *Spanish Whispers IV*, 2011-17, felted wool, 100 x 150 x 35mm. Photograph Ben Joel

Below right: Katrina Virgona: *Silent Playground*, 2017, silk, muslin, wool, human hair felted and stitched onto wire and plastic armature, 200 x 170 x 180mm. Photograph Ben Joel

Below right: Betty McKeough: *Anemone Ring II*, 2013, fine and sterling silver, silicone, resin, niobium, 40 diameter x 50mm. Photograph the artist

Below left: Betty McKeough: *Anemone Ring I*, 2013, fine and sterling silver, silicone, resin, 40 diameter x 50mm. Photograph the artist



Another exhibitor Katrina Virgona, a former human-relations professional is committed to her 'low-tech' jewellery making. Originally from North Queensland she lived also in Fiji before undertaking a BA majoring in psychology at the University of New England in New South Wales. She came to Western Australia in 1984 and undertook an Associate Diploma in Arts Management at TAFE then a Bachelor of Visual Arts in 2002 followed by honours from Curtin University in 2006. She has been undertaking part time teaching in the School of Design and Arts at Curtin University since 2002.

Katrina says she creates 3D artworks and contemporary textile jewellery by drawing on a diverse range of materials combining natural fibre with synthetic structures. Felting is a major preoccupation with a number of works having an ambience of sea creatures while others have a more political message. *Spanish Whispers* focused on architectural concerns across art, textiles and jewellery. Flamenco rhythms, colours and detailing were recognisable prompts. The works have been exhibited widely in Australia and Japan and feature in the international publications of Lark books. Her small sculptural straight jacket *Silent Playground* (at right) has recently been selected for an international textile exhibition in Como in Italy.



Opposite page: Sultana Shamshi: *Arboreal Group 1*, brooches, sterling silver, fine silver, agate, chrysoprase, trading beads, laminated paper, enamel, 2012-17, size each approximately 60mm high. Photograph Shaheen Hughes



Sultana Shamshi: *Palm tree No 3* from *On the Silk Road* series, 2017, fine silver, Venetian trading bead, 65 x 52 x 14mm. Photograph Shaheen Hughes

Indian born Sultana Shamshi, an exotic mix of Hindu, Arab and Persian extraction from a family that for many generations before the Persian Mughals came to India had trading links to the Middle East, emigrated to Perth in 1982. She has since travelled and lived in Europe and the Far East but prefers to call Perth home. A keen gardener with a love of trees and forty years gardening experience she has been exhibiting her clusters of arboreal inspired jewellery around Australia since graduating from the Central Institute of Technology in Perth in 2012. The new collection with work from the Silk Road Series and others *inspired by years on Cyprus, depicting trees from Greek, Cypriot, and Syrian myths and legends* is homage to her obsession with botanical nature and is reinforced by her interest in culinary arts

and spices. These trees include the 'Megalo Tama', the wishing tree in Paphos, Cyprus ... and 'Daphne' metamorphosing into the laurel tree. The clusters of tree brooches are imbued with her heritage reflecting the multiplicity of intricate and delicate detail seen in much Indian art. She says: *I grow trees, live amongst them and make jewellery inspired by them. I dream about trees, and they pervade my conscious and sub-conscious mind. Their enduring presence in the human psyche, their symbiotic relationship with us, their complex patterns and astonishing diversity, their place in our cultures and myths, inspires me at every level.*

These are some of the individual journeys of members exhibiting in *WAnt: Contemporary Jewellery from WA* showcasing the diverse backgrounds and jewellery made by artists in Western Australia. Space precludes covering all participants in one article and the remainder will be covered in the next instalment to be published in OZ ARTS issue 13.

Dorothy Erickson