

WAnt



Contemporary Jewellery from WA
21st Century Craft Revival Artists

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In her second article jeweller and writer Dorothy Erickson introduces a diverse group of Western Australian contemporary jewellers



The 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, the USA, as well as native-born Australians. Many are second career jewellers.

This diverse group makes for an exciting meld when they exhibit together as they are doing at present. Their varied ethnic and life backgrounds greatly enrich the work in the exhibition *WAnt: Contemporary Jewellery from WA* which is currently travelling in Australia, first in Melbourne in 2017, and then at the Ellenbrook Art Centre near Perth and Bunbury Regional Art Galleries in 2018.

New to the group is **Jenny Crisp** born in the exotic location of British North Borneo (now Brunei) who arrived in Perth in 1941 and in the 1950s trained as a nurse and midwife. She has been an almost perpetual student since 1965 taking courses in Australia, Canada, the UK and Italy and completing an Associate Degree in Arts at Edith Cowan University in 2001 and finally graduating in 2007 from Curtin University of Technology with a Bachelor of Arts. Interspersed with this she has taught metalsmithing and has run an art gallery. Crisp works on larger forms and these days is primarily a sculptor but has returned to raising hollow forms in recent years. Her exhibition list is long as is her list of commissions and awards including making prizes for the *Parmelia Race* in 1976 and being selected as one of 'Ten Western Australian Craftsmen' to show at the Art Gallery of WA in 1977. Her work is part of the State Collection at the Art Gallery of Western Australia, the Benedictine Monastery at New Norcia and in various municipal collections.

Above:

Jenny Crisp: *Ladle*, 1980s, sterling silver, 90 x 135mm.

Photograph the artist.

Opposite page:

Jenny Crisp: *Sprite*, 2017, fine silver; metal polish, copper, nickel wire, paper, charcoal, 230 x 140 x 225mm.

Photograph Severin and Jenny Crisp.

Right:

Max Ball: *Ocean on Fire*, 2015, sterling silver; shell, semi-precious stones, 60 x 25 x 25mm.

Photograph the artist.

Jenny Crisp says:

*Silversmithing and repoussé were my first interests some years ago under Kitch Currie and Eric Car in Perth, Bruno Martinazzi in Italy and in Canada. I have recently returned to metal raising and repoussé. I am fascinated with the way metal can be made to flow and shape. ... Much of my work is sculptural, specifically the wire heads with charcoal on paper, being expressive of the many constraints we experience in life. *Sprite* performs an act of liberation, which the last few years have afforded, while looking back to summer classes in Italy with noted sculptor Bruno Martinazzi (the lips of *Sprite* (left) reference Martinazzi).*





Also new to jewellery is architect turned jeweller **Max Ball** originally from Sydney, who moved to Adelaide as a child and arrived in Perth in 1964. He graduated from the Western Australian Institute of Technology (known as WAIT and now Curtin University) as an architect in 1982, then practised and in later years designed solar passive homes.

But Ball eventually became disenchanted and in a new relationship with an artist and needing a wedding ring it was suggested he try making one himself. He enrolled at Fremantle Arts Centre where Barbara Cotter encouraged him. He continued to take intermittent part-time lessons in jewellery design there and at TAFE from 1995-2002.

Ball and his new wife Penny Hudson took a sea change and opened the Purist Gallery in the Margaret River tourist area which they ran from 2002 to 2012. With many visitors to the area his jewellery is now in private collections around the world. An Australia Council for the Arts grant to make new work in 2008 allowed him to develop his ideas and culminated in solo exhibitions in Perth. Ball regularly exhibits in Contemporary Jewellery at Toowoomba Regional Gallery. Current work reflects his interest in things mechanical.

Ball says:

... the way forward for me was back to basics. ... bold simple shapes imbued with universal meaning. Shapes that have brought mankind from primitive to modern. The wedge, fulcrum and lever, the wheel, cog and ball bearing, the bolt and nut, screw thread and zip. ... these inspire my new body of work ... with their bold aesthetic and kinetic spirit.

A stylized, handwritten signature or logo in black ink, consisting of a few bold, sweeping strokes.

A stalwart of the group, Western Australia born **Barbara Cotter** makes quiet understated works of great grace that repay close inspection and contemplative reflection. She completed a Bachelor of Visual Arts at Curtin University in 1991 and has since worked as a research officer, project officer, curatorial assistant, co-editor of various publications and sessional academic on the campus and at centres such as Fremantle Arts Centre, Central TAFE, and various high schools while exhibiting nationally. In 1995 she completed a Postgraduate Diploma and in 2005 a Master of Creative Arts also from Curtin.

She is currently the part-time 'Collections Manager' at Curtin while working as a studio based jeweller. Cotter specializes in beautiful and very subtle enamelling.

Cotter says of her work:

It takes a single pause to perceive change and growth, fast and slow, intentional and unexpected. It takes time to observe how interactions progress to experience, and then experiences are re-interpreted to form memories. ... the mundane travels an equal alongside the significant ...

I invoke previous work and blend seemingly disparate ideas to make new works that are fragments of life reinterpreted. The surface textures of the enamel reference the layering of the discordant rhythm of day-to-day life.

The repetition of marks hints at the fragments of identity, both physical and metaphorical, that are the consequences of the past creating the future.

South Australia born **Jill Parnell** came to Western Australia as a teenager. Although she had always wanted to be an



Opposite page :
 Max Ball: Two of a Kind
 and Nut Job, rings, 2017,
 sterling silver, stainless
 steel and cubic
 zirconia, 60 x 55 x 35mm
 and 45 x 50 x 15mm.
 Photo Yasmin Eghtesadi.

This page centre:
 Barbara Cotter: PYR
 Series ring, 2012.
 vitreous enamel, 18ct
 and 9ct gold, 24 x 30 x
 40mm. Perth Product
 Photography.

Top:
 Barbara Cotter: Tracings,
 5 brooches, 2002,
 enamel on copper and
 fine silver:

Left:
 Barbara Cotter: I Want
 To: Be A Butterfly rings,
 2017, vitreous enamel
 on fine silver and copper;
 sterling silver, 28 x 25 x
 23mm, 13 x 20 x 23mm
 and 33 x 20 x 23mm.
 Photo Yasmin Eghtesadi.





art teacher she became a paediatric nurse and moved into the public service but continued to paint in oils whenever possible. Painting miniatures of her children and needing to frame them led to jewellery classes and in the 1980s to enamelling which led eventually to a Diploma in Art Studies at North Metropolitan College of TAFE, Carine in 1989, and a Diploma in Art and Design from the same college in 1995. Using vitreous enamel she inserted colour into the work and has pursued enamelling with vigour ever since.

After visiting Germany, assisted by an Artflight grant from the WA Department for the Arts, where she saw unique Japanese techniques, she travelled to Japan to undertake workshops with master Tsuruya Sakurai studying Plique à jour and Moriage, which are undertaken in a different manner in Japan to other countries.

Parnell has won many awards and now teaches silver jewellery-making and enamelling at Fremantle Arts Centre and on occasion at Central TAFE. A long time JMGA member Parnell also gives many workshops in the country. Her pieces for the exhibition are memento mori:

In memory of special people who have touched me and are no longer living. Remember Tom and Bid is for my mother and her sister, who were both trained as tailors and seamstresses. The pendant when open reveals stitching in gold on a tapestry-like mesh. The cloud formation is to indicate they have passed on. Another is for a friend's mother who took up photography late in life and spent a lot of time searching for perfect blooms.

Bethamy Linton is that rare person—a fifth generation artist. Her great, great grandfather taught Queen Victoria's daughters, her great grandfather was the legendary

Top left:
Jill Parnell: Ring, sterling silver, vitreous enamel, iolite,
35 x 30mm diameter.
Photograph Pascal Veyradier.

Left:
Jill Parnell: Golden Wattle, sculpture, 2012, sterling
silver, vitreous enamel, 80 x 120 x 40mm, winner
of the Artistic Award at the 46th International
Enamelling Artists' Exhibition, Japan 2012. Photograph
Mei-See Liang Jackson.

Above:
Bethamy Linton: Heel to Throat, neckpiece, 2010,
anodized titanium, sterling silver, 210 x 150mm
diameter. Collection of the Powerhouse Museum.
Photograph Bewley Shaylor.

Opposite page and below:
Jill Parnell: Remember Tom and Bid, pendant, sterling
silver, 60 x 40 x 8mm.
Photograph Yasmin Eghtesadi.







Right:
Bethamy Linton: Banksia Grandis Series
Cuff no 3: 2016, forged and anodized
titanium, sterling silver; 85mm diameter
x 40mm.
Photograph Bewley Shaylor.

Above:
Bethamy Linton: Banksia Grandis Series
brooches: 2016, forged and anodized
titanium, sterling silver; 125 x 40mm.
Photograph Bewley Shaylor.

Below right:
Bethamy Linton: Xanthorrhoea, ring,
2017, sterling silver; 32 x 29 x 50mm
ring size R.
Photograph Yasmin Eghtesadi.

Below:
Jacquie Sprogoe: Fool's Gold No 2,
2014, brooch, fine silver with enamel,
silver & gold foil, sterling silver, 18ct gold,
pyrites, 60 x 73 x 13mm.
Photograph Bewley Shaylor.



Western Australian artist J.W.R. Linton, her grandfather the silversmith Jamie Linton and her father the silversmith John Linton. Her grandfather's and father's interest in the unusual Western Australian flora also pervades her work. She lives in the forest in the Darling Range observing the passing parade of wildflowers from her doorstep. Bethamy learnt her original skills from her father; started an apprenticeship in 1997 and has since been mentored into professional life by David Cruickshank in NSW and Hendrik Forster in Victoria.

A powerhouse of energy she taught in the Advanced Diploma course at the Central Institute of Technology from 2011 to 2017 whilst maintaining a busy studio practice in the Swan Valley, developing a property in bushland in the hills and raising a small son.

For *Love Lace* staged at the Powerhouse in Sydney in 2011 a pierced and coloured titanium collar made a striking exhibit. She has since exhibited in major exhibitions in Australia and shown in the USA and China. Her solo exhibition in 2012 focused on the annoying 'critters' that invaded her space when she moved to Hovea, but recent work reflects the indigenous plant life of her immediate environment, such as *Banksias* and *Xanthorrhoea*. *Banksia grandis* leaves curl seductively

Below left:

Christel van der Laan: *Self Reflection*, brooch, 2014, oxidized silver, onyx, mirror, gold, paint, 80 x 100 x 25mm, that is touring with an exhibition 'A Year in the Making'.

Photograph Robert Frith.

Below right:

Christel van der Laan: *Cut Price*, bangle, 2011, polypropylene, sterling silver, paint, 115 diameter x 30mm. Exhibited in her solo exhibition at Kalaf Gallery, Cottesloe. Photo Adrian Lambert.

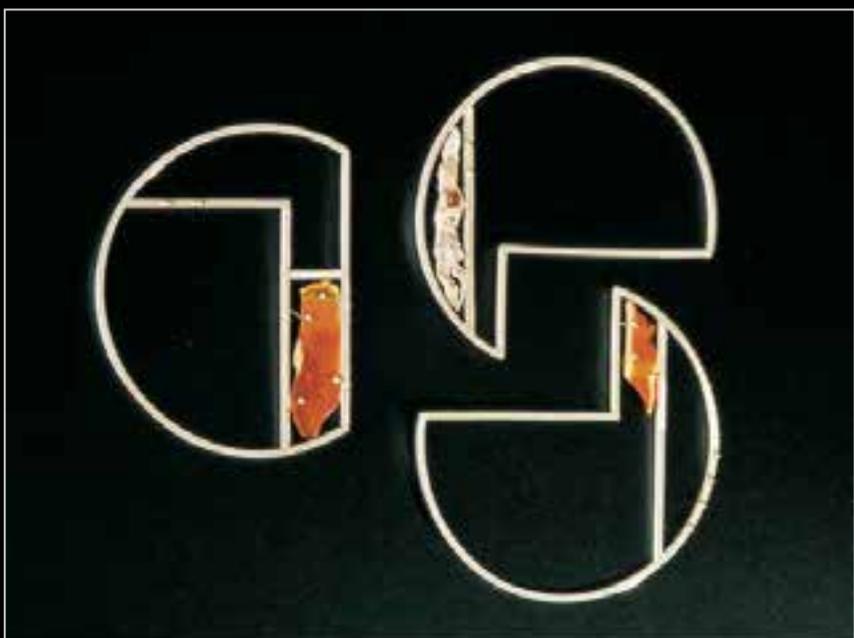
around an arm or across a chest. The *Xanthorrhoea* inspires a spectacular bracelet and a series of striking rings. Her students have included Fatemeh, Elizabeth and Annika (see Part I in issue 12).

Nature also inspires longtime stalwart of JMGA (WA) **Jacquie Sprogoe** who commenced her jewellery training as a young widow with two small children. Before marriage Jacquie O'Connor, who grew up in Perth, worked as a secretary and she has put these skills to use for the group, being co-opted to act as honorary secretary from an early stage. She took a Diploma in Art Studies at Claremont Technical College finishing in 1976 before transferring to WAIT (Curtin University) where she graduated with a Bachelor of Art in Design in 1979 and then worked there as a technician and tutor until 1985. An Australia Council for the Arts grant enabled her to be Artist in Residence at Fremantle Arts Centre in 1987 and produce two solo exhibitions in Fremantle and Adelaide. She taught at Fremantle Arts Centre, gave workshops around the country and then managed the Centre's craft shop until 2004. A skilled artist interested in close observation of nature, her sensitive drawings—often made from photographs—are reflected in the sensitive and subtly enamelled jewels she makes. Most are brooches, many of which have been exhibited in international enamelling exhibitions since 1995.

Jacquie Sprogoe says of her new work:

I constantly see masculine and feminine forces at work. In both natural and manmade structures the masculine lines are harder and stronger. ... the feminine force will seek to soften ... lichen and moss will slowly grow over bare rocks, gentle ferns sprout from cracks in wall faces, small weeds creep





Opposite page top: Jacquie Sprogoe: Green Lace 1 & 2, brooches, 2017, enamelled fine silver; sterling silver; 50 x 68 x 8mm and 60 x 50 x 5mm. Photograph Yasmin Eghthesadi.

Opposite page below:
Dorothy Erickson: Sunset armrings, 1982, sterling silver; 18ct gold, mookaite and 9ct gold, sterling silver and citrine, 100mm widest dimension x 5mm. Exhibited in a solo exhibition at Galerie am Graben in Vienna in 1983. Collection of the Schmuckmuseum, Pforzheim, Germany and the Victoria & Albert Museum, London. Photograph D. Erickson.

Right:
Christel van der Laan: Holy Land – neckpiece: 2013, ceramic honeycomb, powder coated and oxidized silver; vintage findings, 290 x 130 x 45mm. Exhibited in international travelling exhibition 'Not Too Precious' in the UK in 2015-16. Photograph Acorn Studios.

among curb stones, peeling bark and weathering of all sorts adds colours and patterns to surfaces, rusting metal, even peeling paint exposes mottled surfaces beneath. ... My work expresses this duality that is constantly and silently at work around us.

The following three artists have been involved in the selection or mentoring and essay writing for the group. Netherlander **Christel van der Laan** spent her childhood surrounded by the exotic cultures and dazzling natural environments of South Africa then her teenage years in a cultured milieu in the Netherlands before emigrating with her design- oriented parents to Western Australia where she enrolled in a Bachelor of Psychology at Murdoch University graduating in 1988.

Married and studying for a Masters degree she came across contemporary jewellery in a book at her local library. Entranced, the young mother enrolled at the North Metropolitan College of TAFE, graduated in 1998 and rapidly made an international name for herself. "The idea of preciousness in jewellery and the search for beauty in the discarded and overlooked", intrigued her. The first series, made from polypropylene swing tags, can be seen in numerous books. She followed that with her current work carved from a jeweller's tool—ceramic honeycomb soldering-block—juxtaposed with found objects carefully collected over the years.

Australia Council and Arts WA grants allowed her time to develop a significant body of work that has been exhibited around the world in prestigious invitational exhibitions since 2004 and is now found in major collections. She says she "often agonizes over the placement of the elements as each component plays a critical role in the final composition". For this project Christel has written an essay on design for jewellery and mentored the participants.

Also in many collections in major Australian galleries is Western Australia born **Brenda Ridgewell**. Originally



an art teacher she decided to upgrade her qualifications but in so doing became entranced with the jewellery option offered at WAIT now Curtin University, switched her focus, and was soon exhibiting nationally. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Design in 1982 and then in 1997 was awarded a Master of Arts from Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. She commenced exhibiting internationally in 1992.

Her powerful body-works based on personal space won many awards particularly between 1994-8, including the City of Perth Craft Award, Contemporary Wearables Award, Darwin Crafts Acquisition Award, Alice Craft Award and the *Up Front* Award.

Her older work appeared to provide protection for her personal space keeping others at a distance while newer articulated work interrogated the more intimate spaces



Above:
 Brenda Ridgewell: Creating Space
 I, ring, 2005, sterling silver, 9ct gold,
 cubic zirconia, freshwater pearls .c.
 50 x 50 x 15mm. Exhibited in her
 solo exhibition "Personal Space:
 Personal Pleasure" at Gallery East
 in Fremantle.
 Photograph B. Ridgewell.

Below:
 Brenda Ridgewell: New Form,
 oxidized sterling silver, stainless
 steel, 1220 x 95 x 45mm.
 Photograph B. Ridgewell.



on the body that hold and nurture relationships, shifting and bending to adapt to pressures.

Brenda Ridgewell went on to become Studio Director Jewellery and 3D Design at Curtin University in 1998 retiring in 2013. Her latest work is quite delightful, reflecting life retired from teaching and travelling with her new husband. Playing with the geometry of form, it is light hearted and playful with many moving parts. She has been a selector and mentor to the group keeping a sharp eye on their technical skills. Former students include Alister Yiap and Alexandra D'Ulisse.

The final exhibitor is myself **Dorothy Erickson** a former Western Australian teacher returned from living overseas and in need of stimulation who graduated with an Associateship in Art from the newly opened WAIT (now Curtin University of Technology) in 1973, followed by a Bachelor of Arts in Design also from WAIT in 1979 and a PhD in Art History from UWA and the Royal College of Art, London in 1992.

I lectured at WAIT from 1975-1980 where Brenda and Jacquie were my students then set up my studio and exhibited internationally with some 38 solo and some 350 group exhibitions to my name. I have won a number of awards and my work is held in major collections nationally and internationally including the V&A in London, the Schmuckmuseum in Pforzheim, Germany and Dallas Museum of Art, USA.

I am the author of four books and numerous articles and have been a selector, mentor and essayist for the group particularly encouraging the participants to express their individuality. I am the daughter of the late Living National Treasure Rica Erickson and there have been two earlier articles "Her Mother's Daughter" covering our work. See Oz Arts 5 (Winter 2015), Oz Arts 6 (Spring 2015).

Our multicultural jewellers who are at various stages in their careers have had an enjoyable and constructive time working together towards this series of exhibitions, not only making their own work and explaining it to the wider group but designing the transportable showcases and general display as well as fundraising—each according to their interests, skills and contacts—and contributing expertise to grant applications to pay for the showcases, transport and a catalogue. The three mentors have also enjoyed assisting and inducting the new artists into the intricacies of a career as an artist jeweller.

Dorothy Erickson



Above:
Dorothy Erickson: *Brunonia Australis* – Native cornflower; necklace, 2014, steel cable, aquamarine, sterling silver and 24ct gold doublé, gold-plated silver beads, variable size.
Photograph D. Erickson.

Right top:
Dorothy Erickson: *Trachymene* - Laceflower pendant, 2014, gold-plated silver; aquamarine, apatite, steel cable, pendant 150 x 150 x 150mm, chain 1100mm.
Photograph D. Erickson.

Right;
Dorothy Erickson: *Grevillea paradoxa*, neckpiece, 2012, sterling silver, steel mesh, steel cable, tourmaline, rhodolite, goldplated brass beads, 2012, 830mm long.
Photograph D. Erickson.

