



Dichotomies in Objects:

Contemporary South African Studio Jewelry from the Stellenbosch Area

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Curated by Lauren Kalman and Carine Terreblanche

Curatorial assistance from Nanette Nel

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Nanette Nel, Verkeerd-om Protea, 2007. Therese de Villiers,Untitled 2, 2007



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Carine Terreblanche, Herinneringe (Remembrance), 2008. Joani Bekker, Aurelia, 2009.

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Ackeem Ngwenya, *The Little Prince: Balance*, 2009. Joani Bekker, *Vaira-japanese symbol for a diamond*, 2009.

Lize van Robbroeck

This exhibition by former and current students and lecturers of the Department of Visual Arts of the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, reveals the conceptual orientation of the Department's jewellery division. With this focus on conceptualisation, the work represents a current of radical avant-garde practice that is quite unique in the broader field of South African jewellery design. The department of Visual Arts, with its three streams of Jewellery Design, Fine Arts and Visual Communication Design, encourages exchange and creative collaboration between the three sub-departments. As a product, initially, of the Bauhaus, the **intent** to blur the boundaries between the fine and applied arts is still strongly felt. The jewellery on this show demonstrates the proximate influence of Fine Arts in the rigorous conceptualisation of the work, as well as a concern with social activism that prevails in the Visual Communications courses. Coupled with fine technical accomplishment, the social awareness and avant-garde thrust of these pieces represent South African jewellery at its most challenging.

The liberation of jewellery from its traditional ornamental and ritual functions frees space for an intense exploration of discourses currently topical in the artistic domain. The close imbrication of jewellery and the body, in particular, resonates with a contemporary artistic concern with embodiment and identity, and allows for a direct exploration of the performative aspects of personal and collective identity and the role that bodily adornment plays in a postmodern era of identities that are in constant flux and formation. In South Africa, perhaps more than in most social milieus, personal, national and ethnic identities are under **constant** interrogation. The typical postcolonial tension between conflicting cultural values, the pressing nature of race- and class-based social and economic inequities, and the underlying ideological schisms in the national imaginary provide rich

grounds for the critically aware jeweller. grounds for the critically aware jeweller.

The local flavour of the work on exhibit reside not so much in direct quotations of the African context, as it is evident in the interrogation of the complex intersection of the local and global. The work on display in this exhibition resists any vulgar reproduction of Africa as imaginary trope, revealing, instead, an acute awareness of global contemporary trends in avant-garde jewellery design and the unique possibilities these critical discourses offer for an exploration of the singularity of our complex socio-cultural terrain. Nanette Nel's use of, for instance, the national symbol of the protea, which she deconstructs, inverts and **feminises**, becomes a complex interrogation of her ethnicity, nationality and gender. Gussie van der Merwe's work suggests an almost cloying hyper-femininity, indicated by the use of stockings, handkerchiefs and upholstery, against which Ackeem Ngwenya's sculptural aesthetic seems stark and masculine.

Ranging from an engagement with Industrial technologies to deceptively simple pre-industrial forms; using found objects from nature as well as artefacts from popular culture; utilising traditional materials such as gold and precious stones and unconventional materials such as balloons and silicone rubber, the wide array of jewellery pieces on exhibit deny any reductive reading of the South African socio-cultural sphere. Light, humorous pieces, such as Eric Loubser's lyrical, self-enclosed miniature worlds, contrast with serious social and personal commentary - witness Erika Voigt's stark evocation of the **dehumanising** trauma of illness and hospitalisation. From the sharp social satire of Nini van der Merwe's medals, in which the pomp and splendour of public recognition is parodied, to the morbid aesthetics of Anthi Vojatjes' small animal skulls, it is apparent that no dogmatic school-character is cultivated, but that students and lecturers alike embrace jewellery as a field of

infinite possibilities for the interrogation of personal, social, aesthetic and bodily concerns.

What distinguishes the contemporary avant-garde jewellery in this exhibition from similar conceptual statements in the field of the Fine Arts, is a concern with technical proficiency and a strong aesthetic inclination. In some of these jewellers' work, the formal, sculptural quality of the work takes precedence over content. Maeve Roseveare's layered, paper-thin folds of metal remind of origami, while Marie-Louise Naude denies the heaviness of the metal she works with by constructing forms of exquisite delicacy, evoking the organic flesh and tendrils of mollusks. Therese de Villiers' sculptural kinetic pieces have an industrial feel, while Idané Burger and Carine Terreblanche's aesthetics derive from the sophisticated simplicity of African material culture. The confluence of concept and form, tradition and modernity, the geometry of nature and the hybridity of culture, make for an exhibition that offers rich rewards for both eye and mind.

A strong awareness of contemporary global jewellery practice informs this exhibition, and lends it a competitive and cosmopolitan feel. Often provocative in content or radically experimental in form, the emphasis is not on functionality but on expanding the frontiers of the applied arts in the South African context. The local arena of South Africa is revealed, in this exhibition, as a dynamic nexus of influences and artistic discourses.

Lize van Robbroeck
Associate Professor
Visual Studies
University of Stellenbosch



This page uses images of objects by (left to right)
Kirsten Gerber, Untitled, 2009. Jacomien Labuschagne, Blown away 3, 2009

Carine Terreblanche

The unique, fresh and unusual quality of the South African contemporary jewellery on display – all produced by former and current students and staff from the Jewellery Division at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa - is reflective of a specific tradition and the product of a variety of influences that have made the Jewellery Division at Stellenbosch unique in its field in South Africa. The artist jewellery is a product of a specific historical process combining the mostly western tradition of jewellery making that underpinned the founding of the Division as well as the reality of functioning in an African environment with its own unique jewellery heritage. The jewellery produced at Stellenbosch thus reflects the region's dynamic mix of cultures and its diverse socio-political realities while nevertheless steeped in traditional methods of jewellery design.

The Department of Visual Arts at the University of Stellenbosch was established in 1963. Influenced by the philosophy and objectives of the Bauhaus, which had shaped the thinking and teaching of the original German staff members of the Department, a strong emphasis was placed on the relationship and interaction between the fine and applied arts.

The Jewellery Division of the Department of Fine Arts, founded in 1968, was the first jewellery department with a creative contemporary approach in South Africa. German trained Dieter Dill was appointed as Head of the Jewellery Section in 1971. During his twenty three years tenure, Dill established a strong tradition based on a European design approach. He trained and mentored numerous well-known creative goldsmiths. Some of his students became internationally acclaimed contemporary goldsmiths and teachers such as Prof. Daniel Kruger, now head of Jewellery Design at the Hochschule für Kunst und Design in Halle, Germany and Johan van Aswegen, who teaches in the Jewellery and Metalsmith Division at Rhode Island School of Design in the USA.

Dill's successor, Errico Cassar, himself trained under Dill, studied at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Munich, Germany under the renowned Herman Junger. The established design tradition at Stellenbosch University further continued and evolved under Cassar from 1994 to 2006.

In 2007, I became the new head of the jewellery division. I was trained under both Dieter Dill and Errico Cassar and also studied at the Gerrit Rietveld Akademie in Amsterdam. Together with my colleague Nanette Nel, we aim to maintain the unique character and tradition of the Jewellery division in an increasingly diverse and inter-connected globalised world. The four year degree course in creative jewellery design and metal techniques still follows the same tradition in design teaching instilled by Dill but combined with a strong emphasis on conceptually based jewellery and on the unique multicultural context within which we function.

In 1988, Dieter Dill already commented on the challenge of teaching jewellery design in a university context as follows:

"An Art and Design School like the Department of Creative Art at the University of Stellenbosch, exists in the sphere of tension of a fundamental contradiction. On the one hand we try to reflect ever present artistic, technical, economic and social changes, to include them in educational programmes, and as far as possible to help initiate and influence such changes. At the same time we try to make a student learned and proficient in his job. The constant question is, should an art and design department conform and take part in the consumption – promoting manipulation which the market demands or should we resist this situation and undertake violating the aesthetic norms of the moment." (Twenty Years Jewellery Design, exhibition catalogue, University of Stellenbosch Art Museum, 1988).

The South African jewellery industry is still dominated by the various mining companies (AngloGold, Anglo Platinum and De Beers) and the same challenges identified by Dill remains. As a Jewellery division in a Visual Arts Department, our interest lies in the development of the contemporary and conceptual jewellery movement and in engendering critical discourse. The challenge is to train students for a relatively conventional, commercial industry while at the same time encouraging them to question and challenge the traditional technique by experimenting with self-found adaptations of techniques and ideas in order to develop individual solution-finding skills. Each student is encouraged to find his/her own style and/or voice through experimental design exercises and to draw inspiration and make reference to their own African and/or South African heritage.

The Division of Jewellery Design can be described as a creative workshop where ideas are developed by expressive means in tune with trends in the contemporary design world while at the same time reflecting its African and South African influences and identities. Design is understood as sensitive to both new contemporary trends and the historic roots of jewellery (Western and African), and is expressed through a reinterpretation of age-old techniques in the light of new concepts in jewellery. We strongly believe that contemporary jewellery, with its indisputable ability to provoke, critique, record, transmit, and generate meanings, qualities, and ideas, is able to engage individuals in a deep and personal way, and also to forge common bonds among groups – something of great importance in post-apartheid South Africa.

Carine Terreblanche
Head Jewellery Division
Department of Visual Arts
University of Stellenbosch



This page uses images of objects by (left to right)
Maeve Roseveare, Fossilised Tin, 2009. Anthe Voyatjes, Untitled #2, 2009

Lauren Kalman

South Africa's independent studio jewelers work within a complex political, social, and economic context. Situated at the bottom of Africa, jewelers often express a feeling of isolation from the global metalsmithing community. In their work, European traditions become hybridized with the heritage of indigenous African adornment, regional landscape, and the commercial jewelry industry. The platinum and diamonds that are mined locally are a major part of their design vocabulary, and are integrated with influences like colonial Dutch architecture, makeshift township settlements, and West African goldsmithing.

South Africa is a country of dichotomies. Mountains drop into the ocean, and expanses of desert transform into ordered, picturesque vineyards. Extreme poverty rubs against modern excess. Less than two decades after the end of apartheid, relations and common ground between races are still being panned out of the deeply complex history of the place.

The country is striving to amend social injustices, most notably the apartheid ideology that sanctioned a class system based on race at a governmental level, which crescendoed in the latter half of the 19th century. Large shifts in government structure and humanitarian rights occurred in 1994 with the first democratic election, followed by signing of a new constitution in 1996.

In the very new democracy of South Africa, disparate cultural heritages are brought together, but not homogenized; witness the government's acknowledgment of eleven national languages. This poetic attempt to recast a vision of "unified difference" mirrors the country's complicated history of turmoil, reinvention, and struggle to move forward.

Surrounding most of the urban centers are the informal settlements, referred to as townships, which are comprised almost exclusively of populations of non-European descent. The whitewashed Dutch-colonial architecture of Stellenbosch, , with its upscale tourist guesthouses and boutiques in the celebrated wine region outside Cape Town, for example, is in stark contrast to the overcrowded, ramshackled matrix of the surrounding settlements. In Stellenbosch, like in so many other cities in South Africa, extreme poverty is perpetually affronted with extreme affluence.

South Africa is also known for its mining operations and is the world's largest gold producer. The infamous DeBeers has a foothold in the country's diamond industry. The mining of precious metals and stones is a large component of the economy, which, with its less than pristine human rights reputation, employs around 150,000 people. Major South African mining corporations like AngloGold Ashanti, Anglo Platinum, and DeBeers are involved in not only jewelry production but in funding schools, exhibitions, museums, and cultural institutions.

For the studio jeweler, the infrastructure of the production industry can be difficult to navigate. Economically viable commodity objects are emphasized, often at the expense of experimentation and content. As Sandra Klopper, Dean of the Arts at the University of Pretoria, points out, the government's emphasis on "beneficiation," which demands that local materials be used to their full value as commodity objects, further complicates the jeweler's practice. There is, generally, a limited understanding of what it means to be an art jeweler. The South African government regulates the procurement of precious metals and stones; independent jewelers must apply for a permit in order to purchase and manipulate raw materials. For some jewelers, this bureaucracy hinders a productive studio practice, and is even seen as a symptom of an industry controlled by a few key players.

Precious materials are often juxtaposed with found debris. Considering the breathtaking and diverse landscape of South Africa, naturally indigenous organic objects are a major influence and material on jewelry. In much of the local work, finely crafted settings cradle coal, indigenous woods, and other non-precious materials.

Some jewelers are incorporating pop culture and street crafts; in this work, the found object is often used to produce a parody of the commercial jewelry industry. Jacomien Labuschagne sets faceted stones under brightly colored latex balloons. This juxtaposition is sometimes comical, as the shining stones peek through the orifices of the dirtied balloons.

Makeshift construction using materials like rubber, plastic, and recycled metal is ubiquitous, from township buildings to handmade crafts designed for the tourist market. Some jewelers adopt this bricoleur mentality, as in Marnell Kirsten or Eric Loubster's work where found objects and kitsch are combined with immaculate craft and a formal understanding of design.

The most engaging South African studio jewelers continue to push boundaries in their work. This gives them the opportunity to influence the commercial industry and challenge narrow views of what jewelry is and who makes it.

This essay is an excerpt from an article originally published in *Metalsmith Magazine* vol 29 no. 3

Lauren Kalman
Artist
Part Time Faculty
Rhode Island School of Design



Vaira-japanese symbol for a diamond. Silver, gilding. 2009

Joani Bekker



Aurelia. Silver. 2009



Etched identity. Warhog tusk, reindeer horn, silver, garnet. 2008

Bea Bernard



Circles of life. Kudu horn, silver, garnets. 2008



No Title. Silver, brass. 2007



No Title. Silver, brass, brandy citrine, pipe. 2007

Idane Burger



No Title. Silver, brass, tigers eye, coral, rutile quartz. 2007



Untitled. Fine silver, sterling silver. 2009

Kirsten Gerber



'Our Liberty'. Fine silver, sterling silver, copper, enamel. 2009



A private affair: 3. Silver, brass, perspex, steel, found object. 2007

Marnell Kirsten



A private affair: 5. Silver, brass, perspex, steel, found object. 2009



Bouer (Purple), Clipart (Orange), La Boutton (Blue), Sponser (Green), Pointer (Yellow).
Silver, rubber, plastic, aquamarine, peridot, sin, ruby, cubic zirconia, citrine. 2009

Jacomien Labuschagne



Blown away 3. Silver, rubber, plastic. 2009



Greenhouse. Silver, glass, plastic. 2008



Eric Loubser

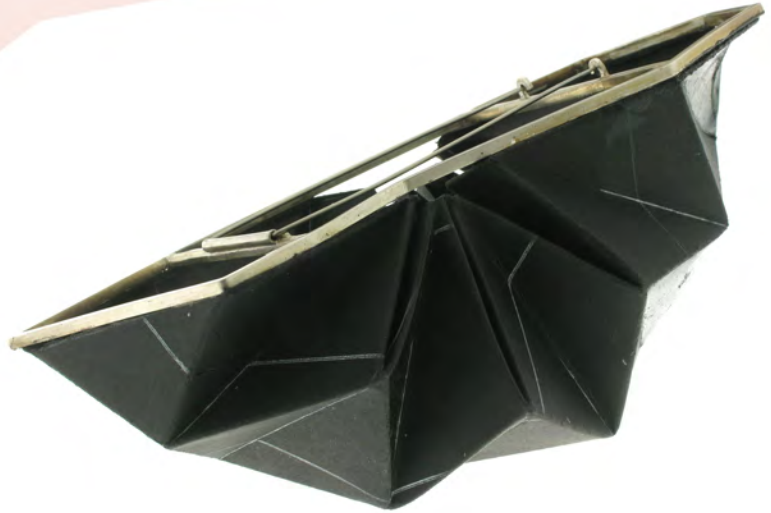


Untitled. Silver, glass, plastic. 2008



Assembling Fear. Paper, silver. 2009

Lee Malan



Assembling Fear. Paper, silver. 2009



Ducks Differ. Silver. 2008

Karin Matthee



Duck, Ducks, Ducking. Brass and silver. 2008

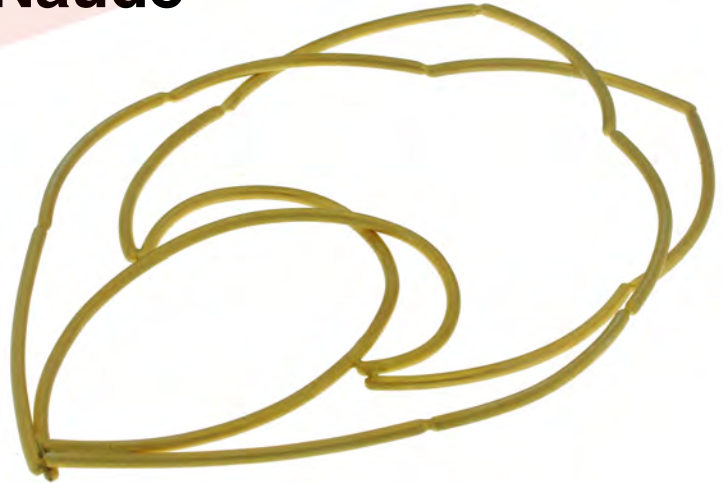


Introvert. Silver, nickel silver. 2007

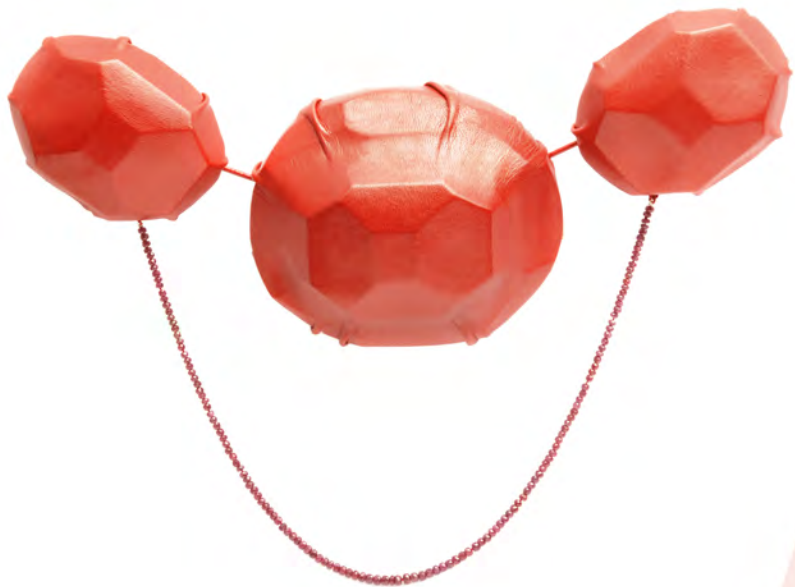
Extrovert. Silver. 2007



Marie-Louise Naude



Golden noise. Silver, gold plated. 2008



ROOI. Rubies, leather, copper, paint, silk. 2009

Nanette Nel



Verkeerd-om Protea. Silicone, silver. 2007

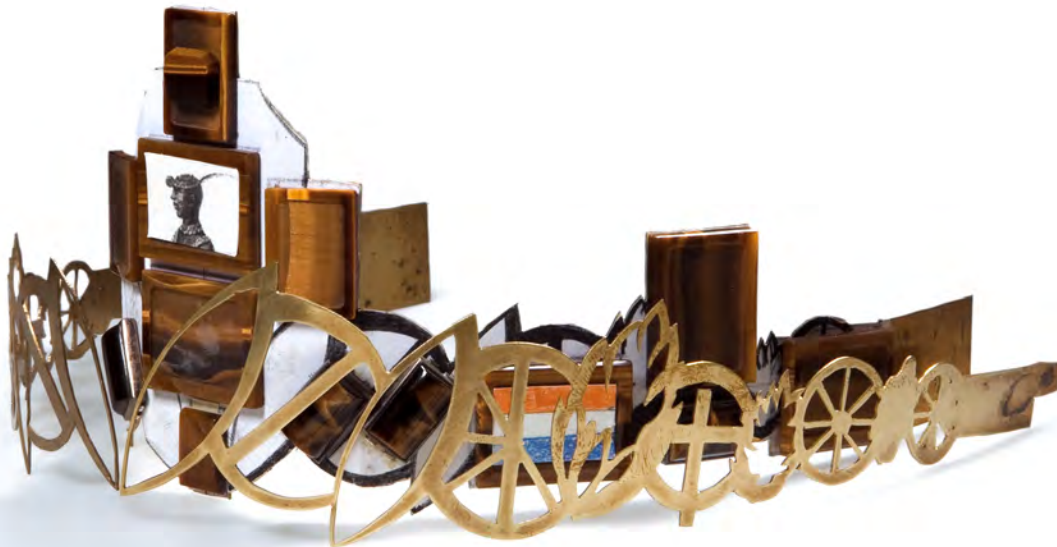


The Little Prince: Balance. New silver. 2009

Ackeem Ngwenya



The Little Prince. New silver. 2009



Tieroog Tiara. Mild steel, 22k/sterling silver bi metal, tigers eye, enamel, cheetah fur. 2010

Johan van Aswegen



□□□d rush. Bronze, 18k gold, gold plating. 2009

□□□□d Rivier. Bronze, silver, paint. 2009



Maagspeld, rugspeld, borsspeld en boudspeld. Silver, steel, upholstery, stockings, thread, handkerchief. 2008

Gussie van der Merwe



Blombos Ring Series. Silver, gold leaf, thread, flocking, shell, found object, tourmaline, ring boxes. 2008



Button for my buttons 1. Silver, ribbon, cotton thread, found objects. 2009

Nini van der Merwe



Console 1942. Silver, ribbon, velvet, found objects. 2009



Paper Planes. Fine silver, sterling silver. 2009

Maeve Roseveare



Fossilised Tin. Sterling silver, enamel, tin foil. 2009



Herinneringe (Remembrance). Wood, gold leaf. 2008



Herinneringe II (Remembrance II). Wood, gold leaf, silver, steel pin. 2008

Carine Terreblanche



Binnepret. Lime wood, 9 carat rose gold. 2009



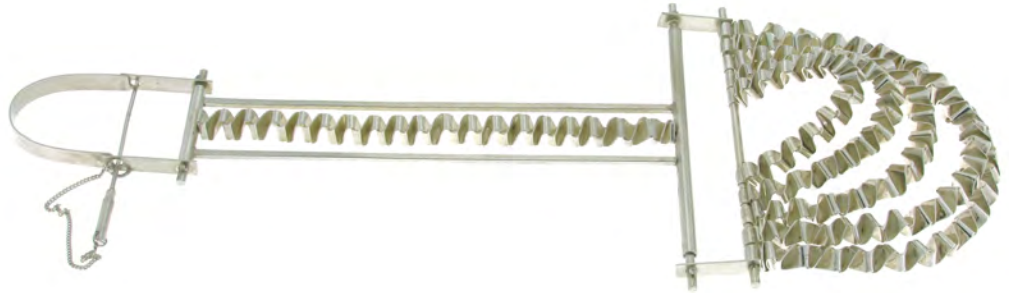
Untitled 2. Silver, silver chain. 2007



Untitled 3. Silver, silver chain, cotton thread. 2007



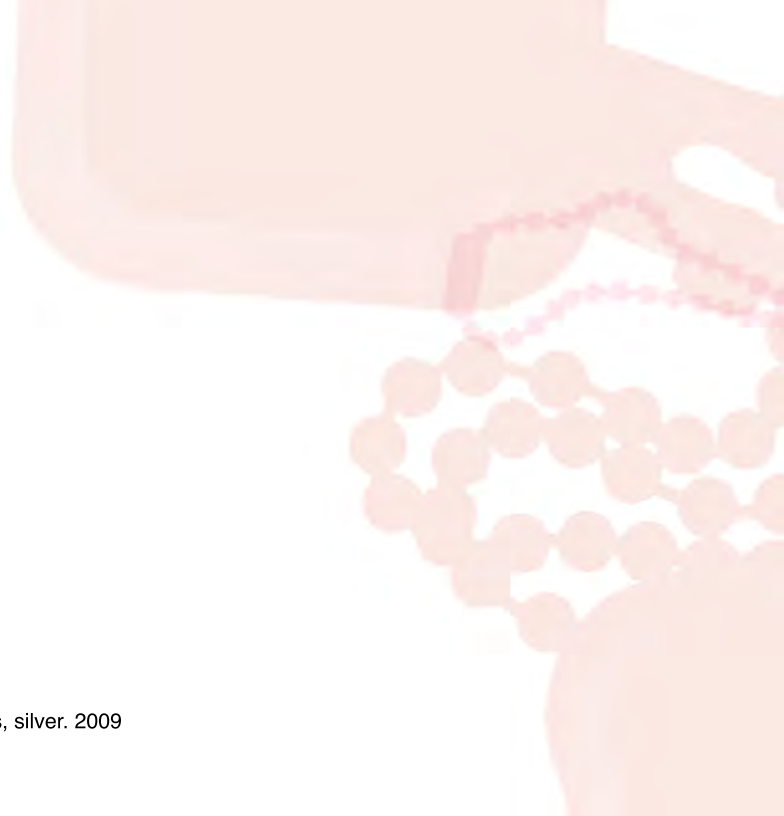
Therese de Villiers



Untitled 4. Silver, silver wire. 2007

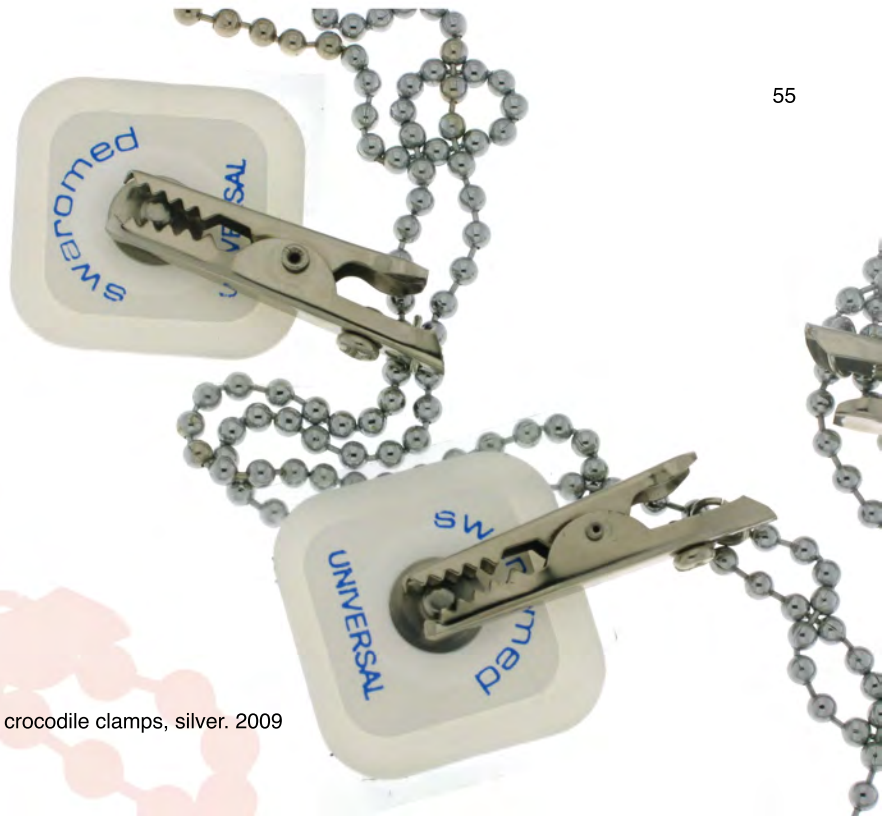


DNA chain with capsules. Brass, pharmaceutical capsules, brass joints, silver. 2009

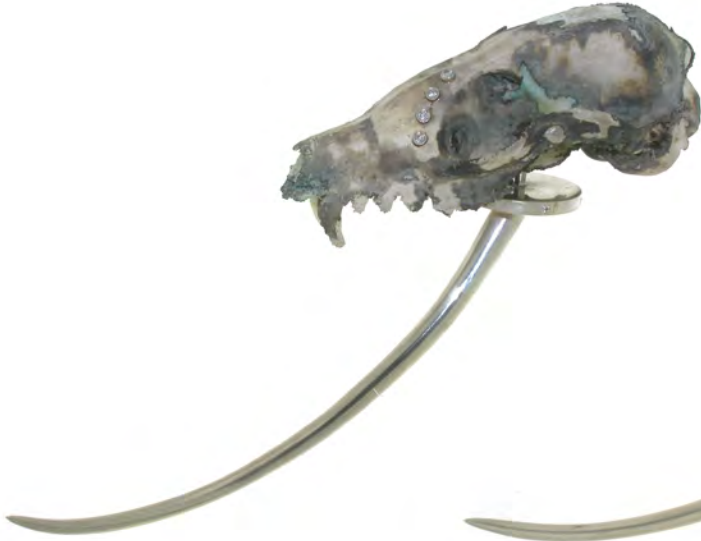


Erika Voigt

55



ECG chain. Stainless steel, ecg stickers, crocodile clamps, silver. 2009



Untitled #1. Sterling silver, silver tourmalines, cubic zirconium, animal skull. 2009



Untitled #3. Sterling silver, pearls, animal skull. 2009

Anthi Voyatjes



Untitled #2. Sterling silver, smokey quartz, animal skull. 2009

Artist Statements

Joani Bekker

This body of work is inspired by my interest in the cultural institution of marriage. I am especially interested in the banality of the Western marriage ceremony and the wedding day. By creating jewellery with plants in them I aim to reintroduce the love relationship between the couple and the families. We all seem to get so lost in the 'hype' of the wedding day, that we ignore the patience, time and effort that go into maintaining healthy relationships, not only between partners but also between families. I also question the discomfort brides go through in order to look beautiful on their wedding day. By over exaggerating traditional elements of Western marriage customs I aim to highlight this discomfort. I also poke fun at the traditional white dress, symbolising purity/virginity. I beg the question; how many brides are still virgins on their wedding day?

Bea Cecile Bernard

Objects from our environment develop and influence pure identity. I used some of the objects that had a profound influence in my life to create jewelry pieces that communicate my identity to the outside world. The resulting range of jewelry charts the path of my maturing identity.

I used Damascus steel in my pieces. Damascus steel is a unique type of steel that is used in the technique of blade smithing. Because of my family's involvement in the knife industry I had the opportunity to master the technique in order to hand produce Damascus steel. I set pieces of my own handmade Damascus steel in rings, pendants and brooches.

All the animal materials used in my jewelry were gathered from my family farm in the Lowveld in South Africa, once again communicating aspects of my identity, whereas the seeds I found at my house in Stellenbosch represent my identity as a student.

The collection of jewelry not only conveys the importance of identity to myself, but also represents the different stages of the development of my identity.

This page uses images of objects by (left to right)

Gussie van der Merwe, Maagspeld, rugspeld, borsspel en boudspeld, 2008. Bea Bernard, Circles of life, 2008.

Idane Burger

The stereotypical and oversimplified view of Africa created an object of inquisitiveness- a fetish for Western consumption. My aim is to convey the way that African objects were interpreted by the Modernist; an approach entrenched in Western conception of aestheticism. My collection of objects is a documentation of profound African cultural objects which contrives a sense of an artifact, rather than an art work. Ethnographic objects with significant and religious meaning, as the most important fact for valuing them within a given culture, have been stripped of their meaning and have been regarded as art objects, when viewed by the Western viewer in art museums. Art museums thus do not represent these objects as part of a society but rather in isolation, where aesthetic experience and beauty dominate the social curiosity. The objects are represented as “abstract wholes” cut out of their specific context (cultural, historical and inter-subjective).

The ‘African objects’ which I created as fragments and as a way of reassembling and constructing the world, are juxtaposed in order to represent a material world of truth. There is an internal controversy about the ambiguity of African cultural objects and the extent to which it constructs history and meaning in different Western contexts of display. I use found objects which are true to ‘the culture’ and also produced castings in copper and brass of the original found object. Hand crafted, realistic imitation of objects found during my research also form part of my collection. The use of semi precious stones, diamonds and highly polished surfaces evokes critique regarding the objects as art and adds an element of debate between ethnographic- and art object.

The challenging concept and style of both the production and display of my collection articulates the complexity and power of the object communicated to the viewer. These multivalent approaches to the objects make it the viewer’s task to identify the significance which the objects correlate and how they can relate to the object.

Kirsten Gerber

These projects have lead me to touch on many aspects of techniques. I have found that through these techniques my personal style leans more towards bold, yet fragile designs, using elements such as fold forming and enamel in my work. My continuing interest in the idea of the manipulation of jewellery creates an element of design left up to the wearer, with the aspect of comfort for the wearer also being very important to me. An extensive design process in all my work derives from strong elements of imagery or has a direct link to images itself, often also to representations of personal significance.

Marnell Kirsten

Desire. Passion. Obsession.

My work aims to show how these elements translate metaphysically, whilst combining their obvious sexual elements, in the entire jewellery process; a process that develops from the desire of the artist in the conceptualisation of a piece to the eventual owner's desire for a piece that resonates with him/her. Jewellery needs to be crafted with and through passion, and worn with the same fervour, otherwise these pieces become mere 'empty' objects. In effect, the entire process needs to be a passionate one – a passion that inevitably develops into obsession.

In choosing materials and deciding upon manufacturing processes, I follow my own desires – an emphasis on the inescapable narcissism inherent to the jewellery process and a reflection of desire's anxious play between the Self and the Other. The subtly phallic teardrop shape – which by itself is worthy of lengthy discussion – is fetishised through obsessive repetition in each idiosyncratic piece – each an extension of myself.

This collection seeks to explore the private desires, passions and obsessions behind my jewellery, which are mine, yet never mine alone. What happens to these unvoiced private emotions when they are subject to public scrutiny? A question even more elusive when the public knows – albeit never completely – what the work is about. Since passion is universal, it is inevitable that a certain part of these emotions should be conveyed. What fraction stays behind to remain my own? Does the consequential void in that which is accessed by the public, remain an emotional and ontological wasteland, or does the viewer's desires, passions and obsessions supersede my own, nullify, and ultimately replace, it? Do I therefore cease to be important in the process once my privacy enters public domain, or do my pieces continue to bear resemblance to the emotions that gave birth to it?

The desire, passion and obsession behind my jewellery is a private affair, but will inevitably transcend the boundaries of my own privacy to resonate with and contribute to the 'private' of the jewellery's viewer/owner. Upon revealing the broad premise behind my jewellery, I choose to remain silent about particularities. The resultant sense of mystery creates a certain tension of unattainability, ironically encouraging desire for it. I am the artist, yet this desire ensures that I am never alone in this role.

Jacomien Labuschagne

The main theme of my work is PLAY. Bernard Shaw said that we “do not stop playing because we grow old” but rather that we “grow old because we stop playing.” I concur. With inspiration rooted in childlike characteristics such as curiosity and the natural enthusiasm to discover the “unknown”, I thrive in design – regarding it as somewhat similar to the carefree, endless days of 'playing' during my childhood. I aim towards a natural and seemingly effortless in the simple manifestation of original ideas in my work. Somewhere within a social background of complex discourses and commercialism, I have identified an empty and unclaimed space for a glimpse of freedom - where one can breathe deep, create, play and most importantly, just be. Lastly, I believe that 'Art' per se succeeds if it somehow manages to surprise its spectator. May you be surprised, or more so, reminded of your carefree childhood.

Eric Loubser

My work is inspired by the cute and pop genres in art and design. I work in precious metals, precious and semi-precious stones, but also incorporate man-made materials such as enamel paint, Prattle putty, and various found objects. My work is not meant to be taken “seriously” in the sense of academic insight or deeper meanings: I do not try to create work that solely relies on its concept: it is mostly made to be enjoyed by a bigger and more diverse audience. I like to make work that the viewer can interpret intuitively: it is more about what it will mean to them personally, whether they think it is beautiful, cute, funny, or has no meaning deeper at all, or whether they see it as ugly, unattractive or as carrying a definitive underlined message. I often try and create a sort of sentimentality where the viewer develops an individual personal relationship with a piece. To achieve this, I like to work with figures (like the girls dancing in the light bulb) which act like characters in a story, and create miniature environments for the viewer to identify with. I like the idea that the person who wears the piece of jewellery is carrying around a secret tiny world with them – making their connection to the piece more personal and adding to its sentimentality.

Lee Malan

Currently my work is inspired and developed from the personal interpretation of the colour Black. These pieces are birthed from my interest in fashion and my constant desire to explore new materials.

“Black is the sum of all colours. It’s not hesitant and never the same.” This quote by Christian Lacroix, summarizes my approach towards the study of the colour black. In my work I have used elastic, Perspex and paper. These materials are naturally interpreted as light and movable. The use of these materials assist my approach to creating contrast and transforming material into faceted sculptural surfaces that create an illusion of an object that holds surface and weight.

I create work that looks at challenging the small scale of traditional Jewellery, by inviting them to explore a new approach to using material to create special volume, angles and structures in jewellery.

Karin Rae Matthee

My aim has been to reproduce, rearrange, reconstruct and manipulate everyday objects. I look to transform these objects into precious pieces of jewellery by changing their natural context. In completing this process, I hope to replace the functional value of everyday objects, with the aesthetical beauty and value of precious objects. With certain pieces I have looked to illustrate the mass production process by creating detailed, pattern networks made up of reproduced everyday objects, placing them in new compositions. I hope to reveal the power of composition and context in my jewellery. I have used mainly silver, wood and enamel; using the precious characteristics of these materials to bring in a quality of treasured value to everyday objects. With this body of work I hope to pose the question:

What gives an object true value, functionality, aesthetical beauty, mass- production, or individualism?

Marie-Louise De La Marque Naudé

My work is inspired and rooted in the concept of fantasy. I have used the idea of fantasy, as well as images and stories within this field as a source of inspiration for the development of designs. My interpretation of the designs is not visually literal with regard to my source of inspiration, but rather something which creates an overall mood that is associated with myth and fantasy. My aim is to evoke a sense of other worldliness with regard to the way my work is viewed and interpreted by the viewer/wearer.

Nanette Nel

My art practice and art works exist on the boundaries of contemporary jewellery and fine art practice. I question the body-object relationship in my exploration of jewellery, objects and the handbag as subject, and investigate the formation of an idiomatic, metaphorical or symbolic visual language that emerges in these works. I concentrate on social, cultural and personal history to serve as foundation for the conception of my art works. I retranslate South African culture-specific symbols into objects. By using Afrikaans titles I establish these symbols through art objects within a specific South African context.

The Mielie (Corn) collection signifies the opposites present within the South African community, the division between the poor and the rich, the hungry and the fed, the cared for and the outcasts.

The Protea collection is a representation and developmental transformation of the National flower of South Africa, The Protea. Here I feminized and sexualized this symbol which has significant cultural value for South Africa. The protea as cultural icon also symbolizes peace, as it was used by the Apartheid government and by the Democratic, Post-Apartheid government. By turning the objects inside-out and outside-in and including secretive elements to the work, it represents the private and public sphere at which jewellery exist; this border between the hidden and exposed is what this collection aims to signify.

The last collection of leather works becomes an exploration and process of retranslation of the traditional use of material within a broader contemporary jewellery discipline. These works comment on socio-political and economical situations relevant to my nationality.

Ackeem Jr Ngwenya

An understanding of jewellery as miniature sculptures has been the foundation of my work for the past few years. Progressively, I have come to the conclusion that most sculptures, if not all, intend to present an idea or concept in a fixed instance and position without the unnecessary complexities that arise unintentionally in the process of communicating an idea or concept verbally. Consequently, in designing and producing my jewellery the sculptural property of 3D has been quite central to my work. I have not given much attention to the idea of my work as being body related, as this has not been my primary concern. My work therefore has the ability to be jewellery in itself with sculptural characteristics irrespective of a subject.

Johan van Ashwegen

As a rule I do not work with excessive historical or sociopolitical themes.

This group of work germinated in 1994 on my first visit to Providence, Rhode Island. Here I came upon a small parcel of Tiger eye frames in a jewelry surplus store. Tiger eye, indigenous to South Africa, often used in curio jewelry, struck a cord. The frame-like structures immediately conjured up space for miniature portraits/images -a gallery –a tiara.

To me Tiger Eye Tiara is not meant to be a statement piece, more a collection memory of times passed and past.

A tiara – a piece of jewelry to distinguish the wearer, taking the acknowledgement and burden on your shoulders to carry it with responsibility and pride.

The Afri-Canna earrings have strong ethnic reference – sharp thorn-like forms diffused by the dangling bead –a seed from the Canna lilly – home grown from my garden.

The titles and materials used refer to pivotal events that shaped the destiny and history of South Africa – blood, gold, and diamonds.

The over jewelry execution of the earrings emphasizes the manipulation of sophistication on the natural. Cast bronze twigs from the Tulip tree –silver, gold and diamonds and an intricate hanging of the bead.



Gussie van der Merwe

Through my work I investigate jewellery as a social medium. I am fascinated with how jewellery can connect and cause people to interact with each other. Value, sentiment and meaning are central themes to my work.

The constant pondering of the many definitions of what jewellery is, has always been part of my art making process. Through my designs and creations I try to explore what jewellery means to me, but also how it differs from one person to the next. My inspiration for my work comes from the interaction and relationship with my own jewellery that I wear each day as well as the stories people tell me about theirs.

I combine found objects with silver to enhance its preciousness and to question its sentimental value. I use found objects in my work because I love how they resonate stories and connections with people. I don't try to make something new, but try to reinvent and question that which already exists. My jewellery creations aim to explore questions such as: How do we relate to the world around us through the owning and wearing of jewellery? What is considered a jewel? How does the communication process of a jewel work? How does a jewel convert from being an anonymous object to being an object of personal value?

Nini van der Merwe

My work and my life are combined at the core. There are a vast number of influences in my work of which day to day experiences, people and objects that I come into contact with are but a few. I am an obsessive collector, and this habit becomes visible in my work. This habit has also led to my work being inspired by, or containing, found objects of varying size and origin. Jewelry is a way in which I can give visible value to the seemingly insignificant objects that I am constantly surrounding myself with. There is a strong sense of nostalgia and sentimentality in my work, but because the objects found in my work are seemingly mundane and universal in essence, it is **easy** for most people to relate to. Throughout my work I try to keep it light and always add a bit of humour where possible. I do this by commenting on the value people give to their collections, and the sphere of 'prize-giving'. I draw inspiration from various methods of showing prestige and in doing so I am poking fun at other collectors, but mostly at myself. All in all my work tries to draw attention to the details in life that often get lost in the madness

Maeve Roseveare

For each series, I design from completely different aspects that inspire me and have relevance to the series. I have looked at fold forming and design around the creation of folding paper to create paper planes which incorporate this technique into my work. I have experimented with enamel and tin foil together and have 'fossilized/petrified' tin foil within enamel which caused me to be greatly influenced by images of fossils and how they are buried within the earth. I have also looked at dance and movement, and have used images within my series to capture the beauty and emotion within the art of dance. Although within my work my design inspiration has come from **completely** different areas for each series, I have found that my work is often delicate and constructed. It consists of many different parts that repeat each other for emphasis. In my body of work I strive towards an aesthetic that allows for the contrast between fragility and strength.

Carine Terreblanche

Metaphors of my thoughts:

In my art practice the two-dimensional investigation of forms is guided by a meditative and subconscious working process. The first series of wooden forms derived from drawings in my design book. The drawings are made by a process that could be compared to doodling, a subconscious process where I have little control over my drawing process and its outcomes. When I follow this process the individual design drawings always seem to be members of the same family. It is almost as if my subconscious has a set of signs or an alphabet with which it communicates to create metaphors of my thoughts. The interpretation of the drawing into a three-dimensional object **represents the transition into a more conscious, controlled decision making process.**

The oval, often used traditionally in jewellery lockets and photograph portrait frames, is the inspiration for my second series of wooden forms. To me, the oval represents a symbol of remembrance and memory. Similar to the first series, the use of metaphors through forms now communicates memories and lost thoughts.

My third series is informed by the same subconscious drawing process. The forms in this series make a strong reference to traditional African artifacts and objects. In my search for a parallel visual reference and origin in the influences around me, I discovered headrests from the South African Zulu tribal art, which represents a very close visual connection to my forms.

Therese de Villiers

My work consists of two different bodies:

The first is a series of kinetic brooches/hairpins. These designs were inspired by the way that kinetic architecture relates to the movement of the body when transformed into pieces of jewellery. I especially wanted to work with the idea of skeletal structures in movement, so I looked at a lot of iron framed architecture where the structural layout of the whole building is visible, for example bridges, arcades, and glass houses. This kind of architecture gave me the idea of bodies in motion and (as with the body) I wanted my jewellery structures to be able to move wherever the different parts are connected to each other. I made use of a lot of hinges in my pieces to connect the different parts to each other, enabling the pieces to move and transform into different shapes. All of these pieces were made out of sterling silver.

My second body of work is called Twine. Twine is a series of work that plays with the manipulation of metal to create intricate textured surfaces. The work consists of different types of silver wire, chain, and smithed metal, which are woven using different techniques to create sculpture-like pieces of jewellery. I enjoy the way in which you can take a piece of metal and transform it into an organic and raw work of art. What makes this body of work so different and interesting is that there is no specific recipe for how each individual piece of work is formed, but rather the manner in which each piece develops in its own way and with its own special and unique character.

Erika Voigt

My designs are inspired by the human body and the medical sciences. I make use of commercial ball chain that one finds in bathrooms and kitchens in my jewellery. The chain represents the DNA helix that is found in the nucleus of human cells. The main role of DNA molecules is the long-term storage of information. DNA is seen as a blueprint of our identity and the DNA segments carry our genetic information. The commercial chain that I use is plaited and in some instances also enamelled to form neckpieces. I also make use of plastic tags and pharmaceutical capsules to symbolise the DNA segments that carry our information. These plastic tags and capsules are connected to the chain in the form of pendants. I also make use of ECG stickers that are used to monitor heart rate in the medical field as pendants. This piece was x-rayed to portray that the outside of the body also becomes part of the inside of the body, when this neckpiece was worn when x-rayed. I therefore try to demonstrate that Jewellery becomes an extension of the body.

Anthi Voyatjes

My work consists of a narrative about life and death, and through this process of exploring this specific concept I was greatly inspired and drew reference from seventeenth and eighteenth century memento mori and mourning jewellery. Skulls were commonly used as a symbol of death within this specific type of jewellery, however its purpose through symbolising death was to constantly remind people to celebrate life. The use of skulls throughout my work, symbolises death but simultaneously acts as a stimulant to celebrate life.

Most of the skulls within my work have been manipulated through the process of electroforming. However I have purposefully allowed sections of the bone to remain visible to maintain its authenticity. Additionally, I have silver and gold plated the skulls, which plays on the concept of preciousness, and makes further reference to the semiotics of life and death.

This page uses images of objects by (left to right)

Ackeem Ngwenya, *The Little Prince*, 2009. Gussie van der Merwe, *Blombos Ring Series*, 2008





Lauren Kalman

Lauren Kalman was born in Cleveland Heights, Ohio. She completed her MFA in Art, from the Ohio State University and received her BFA, with a focus in metals, from Massachusetts College of Art.

She is an artist and educator and has worked with nonprofit centers including the Indian Church Village Artisan Center in Indian Church, Belize and GlassRoots Inc, in Newark, New Jersey. She has taught at various institutions including Rhode Island School of Design and Brown University.

Her international exhibition record includes a solo exhibition at the Centro Cultural Recoleta in Buenos Aires, Argentina and her video work has also been screened in several international film festivals. Four of her photographs from the Hard Wear series are part of the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston.

She hopes to use her art to affect social thought. By creating objects and images that are unconventional in their relationship to the body, she is questioning traditional values. In making her work, she has become more aware of the values she ascribes to her body and the objects used to adorn it. Through her work, She hopes to communicate alternative thought about material worth, social custom, and the body.

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Idane Burger, No Title, 2007. Lee Malan, Assembling Fear, 2009.

Carine Terreblanche

Carine Terreblanche completed her BA (FA), BA (Hons) and a MA (FA) the University of Stellenbosch. She also studied at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam during the 1993/94 academic year. Terreblanche lectured at the University of Stellenbosch between 1994 - 2001. In 2001, she left the academy to work as an independent goldsmith in Cape Town. In 2007 she returned to the University of Stellenbosch as coordinator of the Creative Jewellery Design and Metal Technique Division. Terreblanche is interested in the development of Contemporary Jewellery in South Africa. Her teaching interest and research focuses on the making of contemporary jewellery within a South African context. Her work challenges and questions the traditional approaches to goldsmithing and jewellery.

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