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When a group of seemingly disparate artists from the same field exhibit together it is natural for audiences to seek the similarities and differences. The practitioners in “Cinderella’s Stories” are linked in many ways. All have worked in WA, most trained in Curtin University in Perth (formerly Western Australian Institute of Technology) and worked there with David Walker. Most have their studios in and around Perth and there are commonalities between the work of each artist. The most obvious similarities are those found in the works of Brenda Ridgewell, David Walker and Carlier Makigawa, who structure their pieces so they form open containers.

Makigawa’s work is more fluid, with smaller sections making up brooches and bangles. Bright red fragments of highly polished coral captured in the interspaces of two brooches contrast with the matt surface of unpolished silver and the dark, matt surface of oxidised silver. The lacquer in Red Frame brooch delineates the apertures of three spaces, drawing our eye and urging us to consider how we might fill them. They might capture fleeting memories or re membrances or they might just create spaces for us to segment and live our lives.

Ridgewell’s “space” brooches and necklace are more geometric, with grids overlaying each other. Tiny cubic zirconia punctuate the outer ring of several works, sparkling and glinting as the light catches them. In Eternal Space necklace, each tiny box is marked by a cubic zirconia. A small grid overlays a larger grid in Crossed Space brooch creating diagonal and triangular areas beneath which allude to supressed

CINDERELLA’S STORIES
Contemporary jewellery from Western Australia

Beaver Galleries, Canberra; Lesley C raze Gallery, London; Artsite Gallery, Sydney

Marchel van der Laan, ‘Priceless II’, 2011, brooch, painted silver, polypropylene price tag end, diam. 1 x 3 cm

Gillian Rainer, ring, 2006, 18 ct gold, diamond, 3.2 x 2.2 x 2 cm

Felicity Peters, ‘Japanese Chrysanthemum Medallicature’, 2010, ring, stg silver, 18 ct gold, with tumbling 24 ct gold foil to the surface of fine silver. This produces a rich gold colour, while using very little of the precious metal. In Wave Bangle a wide band of gold encircles a waisted band of corrugated silver. Her work is linked to Erickson’s in Japanese Chrysanthemum Ring, with a slice of coloured tourmaline captured in a gold setting.

Gillian Rainer’s rings and brooches reflect her interest in the flora of WA. She casts silver and gold forms, enhanced with diamonds, garnets and other semi-precious stones. The overlaping of metal in her brooches also reflects the work of the other jewellers in this exhibition. The only male participant is David Walker, who resettled in Western Australia in 1973. For many years he has been fascinated with the colouration and texture of metal. His Ho Tine Tones brooch is pinched copper, rather menacingly bound and held in place by stainless steel. In the Memoire Minigram brooch curved and stained twigs are captured in a container, evoking very personal memories. The colour and texture of the twigs play with the more formal grids and geometry of the pendant’s construction. The signature of Christel van der Laan work is her use of unusual materials. Polypropylene swing tags are highlighted by painted red silver in Cut Price Bangle. Tags overlapped each other from petrol shapes, and their placement over a grid in Precious II Brooch, link it to the work of other exhibitors.

The qualities of the materials used by each artist is palpable, whether it is gold and silver, polypropylene swing tags, painted twigs, or semi-precious stones. All the works are decorated and lively while simultaneously being very wearable. In the halcyon days of the Austra lian Council, during the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Crafts Board toured many exhibitions of jeweller in Australia and overseas. For this exhibition Dorothy Erickson received a small grant from the Government of Western Australia Department of Culture and the Arts to assist with touring costs. She organised the exhibition to be mounted at Beaver Galleries in Canberra, Artsite Gallery in Sydney and Lesley C raze Gallery in London. Although I find it dispiriting that artists are placed in this position, I do congratulate them for their enterprise.

Jewellery-making is alive and well on Western Australia and we are fortunate to see the energy and artistry of these respected jewellers.

Meredith Hinchcliffe

David Walker, ‘Space Frame 1’, pendant, stg silver, 6.3 x 1.5 x 1.5 cm

David Walker, ‘Eternal Space’, pendant, stg silver, 6.5 x 2.5 x 2.5 cm

Felicity Peters, ‘Bluebird of Paradise’, brooch, 18 ct gold, aquamarine, steel cable, perspex, 27 cm

David Walker, ‘Red Frame’, brooch, stg silver and lacquer, 6 x 11 x 3 cm

Carlier Makigawa, brooch, 2010, stg and oxidised silver, coral, 9.5 cm

Carlier Makigawa, brooch, 2010, stg and oxidised silver, coral, 9.5 cm

David Walker, ‘Memento Mori II’, pendant, Victorian ash, silver, stained glass, 10.5 x 5 x 2.5 cm

David Walker, ‘Memento Mori’, pendant, stg silver, multi-adjustable rubber collar, 50 x 5 x 2 cm

Felicity Peters, ‘Eternal Space’, 2010, neckpiece, stg silver, cubic zirconia, 3 x 43 x 2.5 cm

Christel van der Laan, ‘Crossed Space’, brooch, 6.5 x 2.5 x 2.5 cm

Christel van der Laan, ‘Crossed Space’, 2006, brooch, 18 ct gold, silver, polypropylene price tag, diam. 6.3 cm

David Walker, ‘Space Frame 15’, pendant, stamens steel, 7.5 x 7.5 x 1.5 cm

Brenda Ridgewell, ‘Crossed Space’, brooch, stg silver and cubic zirconia, 6.5 x 2.5 x 2.5 cm

Christel van der Laan, ‘Precious I’, 2006, brooch, 18 ct gold, silver, polypropylene price tag, diam. 6.3 cm

Brenda Ridgewell, ‘Eternal Space’, 2006, brooch, 18 ct gold, silver, polypropylene price tag, diam. 6.3 cm

Meredith Hinchcliffe

Felicity Peters, ‘Peridot Waterfall’, 2005, stg silver, tourmaline, 4 x 3 x 0.5 cm

Brenda Ridgewell, ‘Scare Tissue’, 2006, stg silver, polypropylene, 6 x 3 x 2 cm

Dorothy Erickson, ‘Bluebird of Paradise’, 18 ct gold, aquamarine, steel cable, perspex, 27 cm

Christel van der Laan, ‘Cut Price Red’, 2006, bangle, painted silver, polypropylene price tag end, diam. 1 x 3 cm

Felicity Peters, ‘Japanese Chrysanthemum Medallicature’, 2010, ring, stg silver, 18 ct gold, with tumbling 24 ct gold foil to the surface of fine silver. This produces a rich gold colour, while using very little of the precious metal. In Wave Bangle a wide band of gold encircles a waisted band of corrugated silver. Her work is linked to Erickson’s in Japanese Chrysanthemum Ring, with a slice of coloured tourmaline captured in a gold setting.

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