

SECTION:

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FRAGMENTATION AND THE FOUND IN THE PRODUCTION OF
CONTEMPORARY JEWELLERY

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A Masters of Design by Research project that asks the question:

“How can materials and histories be linked by a methodology of making that utilises fragmentation and the found?”

Focussed primarily on the production of contemporary jewellery, the project explores material and theoretical concerns surrounding the use of found materials, the ability of materials to carry meaning and hints of purpose, and the way in which processes of fragmentation can help or hinder the reading of those meanings and purposes. Fragmentation can also be considered as a current state of the human condition. Historical and current jewellery practices are investigated, as well as wider critical and art theories pertaining to the given fields of investigation.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	Research proposal	05
2.0	Theory and Practice Review	07
3.0	Project Development	11
3.1	From a domestic rut	11
3.2	To wood, tools and the countryside	17
3.3	To further fragmentation	34
3.4	And back to jewellery	37
3.5	Towards Resolution	47
4.0	List of images	57
5.0	Bibliography	59

1.0 RESEARCH PROPOSAL

RESEARCH QUESTION:

How can objects and histories be linked by a methodology of making that utilises fragmentation and the found?

AIM:

To develop a working methodology in which found materials and processes of fragmentation are used to direct both the physical properties and conceptual framework of a resulting body of jewellery objects.

OBJECTIVES:

Develop a personal working methodology that allows for the use of a wide variety of found materials.
Investigate the use of fragmentation within this methodology.
Explore the use of found materials in contemporary jewellery and wider art practices.
Begin to unravel the indexical nature of the materials used and how their histories can be hidden or uncovered by various treatments or levels of fragmentation.

METHODOLOGY:

Materials are collected from a variety of sources, according to my own aesthetic sensibility, focussing on colour, patina, connotations and denotations. These are taken back to the studio and arranged on work tables according to shape, material and intuitive combinations. Photography is used as a drawing tool, framing groups of objects and formations for possible use.

Groupings of materials are taken from the work tables and re-photographed and formatted, searching for possible jewellery forms. Associations specific to these materials are recorded in a project journal. These are then interrogated to varying degrees and made into a finished jewellery object. Emphasis is placed on a working methodology that is experimental, fluid and exploratory, while also encompassing traditional materials, techniques and forms associated with jewellery.

Finished objects are documented by photographing them first as material groupings, then in various states during the making process, and lastly as finished objects, resulting in small series of images showing the fragmentation of the original material and eventual recombination. This is followed by my own critical reflection, and that of supervisors and peers by way of supervisory meetings, the staging of exhibitions throughout the project and a blog kept during the period of study. These will identify failures and successes while determining the next course of action.

During the period of study workshops and exhibitions both at home and abroad will be attended, to push the project further forward and to be exposed to current and historical works and practices.

Alongside making, ongoing theoretical and conceptual research is conducted. That pertinent to the research topic is recorded in the project journal along with thoughts as to how these could be expressed by the physical jewellery objects produced. Hunches or suppositions are made from this new information, feeding into practice, this process continues in a cyclical manner.

2.0 THEORY AND PRACTICE REVIEW

Conventional jewellery practice has often centered on the construction of objects with high monetary and status value due in part, to the use of rare stones, metals and materials. Conversely, many contemporary jewellers have been challenging these notions of value and preciousness by investing these qualities into an ever expanding repertoire of often overlooked materials and processes. In his essay in the catalogue, **A Pocket Guide to New Zealand Jewellery**, Damian Skinner explains how these challenges have been taken on in the Pacific, to quote:

In New Zealand in the 1980s a group of New Zealand jewelers...turned to natural materials and the example of Maori and Pacific adornment to transform the critique of preciousness into something unique and distinctive to New Zealand (7).

These jewellers were widely known for an exhibition titled **Bone Stone Shell: New Jewellery New Zealand** (1988) in which these three title materials were the primary focus. Traveling internationally, the exhibition was organised by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs, managed by the Crafts Council of New Zealand and curated by jeweller and sculptor John Edgar. Featured were works produced by 12 contemporary jewellers from New Zealand, amongst them Warwick Freeman and Alan Preston. (plate 1)

This work,



PLATE 01: ALAN PRESTON

... which presented itself as so uniquely New Zealand, was actually a response to international jewelry and its move away from precious materials. The critique of preciousness in New Zealand contemporary jewelry was quite different to the critique of preciousness in international jewelry. In many ways, the contemporary jewelry in New Zealand did not undertake a critique of the concept of preciousness at all; instead, jewelers worked hard to instill alternative notions of preciousness into a group of materials not commonly viewed in that light. The point was not to eradicate preciousness, but to refurbish the concept and create a new kind of preciousness that spoke more directly to issues being negotiated by New Zealand jewelers in the 1980s (Skinner 52-3).

Although this project is not so focussed on issues around the formation of national identity, this history is pivotal in my understanding of debates around preciousness and material use, and of the influence of place.

It seems that all creative genres now have their history of a use of found materials. We could start with Duchamp's Fountain, Picasso's collages and move through Kurt Schwitters Merzbau to a multiplicity of current day practices that incorporate the found. We can hear sampling as a norm in contemporary music and may look to contemporary jewelers such as Bernhard Schobinger and Lisa Walker for the use of found and scavenged materials in contemporary adornment. (plates 2-4)



PLATE 02: KURT SCHWITTERS



PLATE 03: BERNARD SCHOBINGER



PLATE 04: LISA WALKER

Nicolas Bourriaud explores this notion in his text **Postproduction**, he states that,

Since the early nineties an ever increasing number of artworks have been created on the basis of pre-existing works; more and more artists interpret, reproduce, re-exhibit, or use works made by others or available cultural products.

This art of postproduction seems to respond to the proliferating chaos of global culture in the information age...
[7] Bourriaud continues:

“the artwork functions ... like a narrative that extends and reinterprets preceding narratives” (13).

Bourriaud’s description of reinterpretation, reproduction, and re-exhibition begins to unravel a link between the use of found materials and their fragmented nature, or the fragmented nature of a practice that incorporates them. This link is also hinted at by Lea Vergine in the book **When Trash Become Art - Trash Rubbish Mongo**. Vergine questions the employment of trash in the work of artists during the last century, saying that,

“twentieth-century culture is packed with recovered material, reuses and contaminations, shreds, fragments, discards and ‘noise’” (7), continuing on to discuss the political, sociological and psychological significance of the use of trash in art.

The intention of this project has been to investigate both the fragment and the found. Also investigated is the ability of found material to carry meaning, the effect of fragmentation on that material and it’s meaning, underpinned by the notion of fragmentation as a current human condition.

FRAGMENT:

A broken off, detached or incomplete part; a (comparatively) small (detached) portion; a broken piece; a part remaining when the rest is lost or destroyed.

Break into separate into fragments.

FRAGMENTATION:

The act of breaking or separating into fragments; the state of being fragmented; specially ... separating into parts which forms new individuals or units.

FOUND, of FIND:

An act or instance of finding; a discovery. Meet with or come upon by chance or in the course of events. Become aware of or get permission of by chance; come across, meet with.

Learn through experience or trial. Detect; discover the identity or true character of. Gain or recover the use of. Discover or obtain by searching; rediscover. Ascertain by mental effort or calculation; discover by study or inquiry.

(Shorter Oxford English Dictionary. Fifth ed.)

3.0 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

3.1 FROM A DOMESTIC RUT

In March 2009 the brief for this project was written. Prior to this I had finished an undergraduate design degree and was working and exhibiting regularly. I was also in a rut. My contemporary jewellery practice had continued on from my graduate work which was based predominantly on the use of materials and methods associated with the feminine and domestic handcrafts and their related discourses. The materials, with their heavily prescribed readings and connotations, were beginning to become increasingly limiting. So, when given the opportunity to participate in the Masters of Design by Research program, it was decided that this period of study could be utilized to begin identifying some of the core beliefs that drove my making and to begin developing a practice that allowed the assimilation of many pre-existing materials with varying histories into forms that could be recognized and developed as my own.

While still holding a great degree of empathy with the materials and discourses surrounding the domestic environment, it was soon identified that the deeper attraction to these materials was the same as that to many others. I was intrigued by materials that had been discarded and rendered with no intrinsic value, unattractive, or no longer useful, basically, junk. I would set out to explore what attractions these materials still held, how they could be used to make new objects, and how, through visual signs, these objects relayed a sense of history and use. An interest in the notion of the fragment had also become apparent, I noticed the use of a fractured aesthetic around me in all art forms, and decided to incorporate a conversation about this into the mix. This reflected the nature of the found material (often a piece of a prior whole), a process involving the physical breaking up of materials, and a desire to reflect a feeling that our lives themselves were becoming increasingly deconstructed.

These investigations have taken a variety of forms within the timeframe of the project. While reaching many definite points of understanding and clarity during this time, there also remain some open questions. I recognize and acknowledge that this is the beginning of a very long investigation, in which many things will only become clear after even longer periods of making, or in retrospect.

The project began with the collection and documentation of found objects which were then assigned a number while the time, date and location of collection was recorded. These objects were daily detritus, that stuff which had been discarded, broken or lost, found in the street, in dumpsters, opportunity shops, on shorelines and forest floors. These were made into basic arrangements and photographed, but the priority action was primarily the collection and investigation (almost, the saviour) of the original object. This found thing held a lot of weight in my thinking, and I had trouble tampering with it.

During this time these processes of collection and transformation were referenced predominantly to the Situationist practices of *dérive* and *détournement*. My intention was to collect the objects while on *dérive*, and alter them by the process of *détournement*.

Dérive, literally, drifting, is the practice of:

rapid passage through varied ambiances. ... In a dérive one or more persons during a certain period drop their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there. (Debord, "Theory of the Dérive")

Seen as a necessary action for escaping the everyday drudgery caused by advancing capitalism, the *dérive* would also help the Situationist to develop the field of psychogeography, defined as “the specific effects of the geographical environment (whether consciously organised or not) on the emotions and behavior of individuals” (Debord, “Definitions”). *Détournement* translates to English directly as diversion, rerouting or hijacking; turning something from its usual course or action. In **A User’s Guide to *Détournement*** it is explained that:

any elements, no matter where they are taken from, can be used to make new combinations. ... when two objects are brought together, no matter how far the original contexts may be, a relationship is always formed. ... the mutual interference of two worlds of feeling, or the juxtaposition of two independent expressions, supersedes the original elements and produces a synthetic organisation of greater efficacy. Anything can be used. (Debord and Wolman, “A User’s Guide...”)

At this time, my understanding of the found was simple: that which I had to, literally, stumble upon, and as in Debord’s statement above, in theory, anything could be employed. Using very slight discretion in the choosing of the objects I thus ended, a few months into the project, with an abundance of material, much time spent documenting and tracking that material, and the realisation that if the end goal was to be reached, these findings would need to be approached in a different way.

Discussed during supervisory meetings, these intense processes of collection and documentation were identified as an important part of my methodology, but continued to the extreme, they also functioned as safety behaviors, a way of avoiding the central focus of the project: the production of a new jewellery object. It was suggested that it may be helpful to regard the element of personal aesthetic and choice, the choosing of some found materials over others. It was also identified that I was stalling on the issue of form. My concentration on collection techniques was distracting me from the need to make these found materials into a new object. Anxious to preserve the already existing patina and form of the materials, and not wanting their 'story' or voice to be hidden. I had trouble forcing the found objects into new forms, or to use them as directors of their own. The possibilities felt endless and intervention seemed pointless. Struggling to find a voice in this process of collection, arrangement and redisplay, unsure as to whether my tampering could offer anything to this conversation between the objects, I began to wonder if these arrangements were better left alone. This was an area that was in great need of attention and consolidation. (plates 5 and 6)



PLATE 05: MATERIAL ARRANGEMENT



PLATE 06: MATERIAL ARRANGEMENT

3.2 TO WOOD, TOOLS AND THE COUNTRYSIDE

This necessary block coincided with my attending the 'nOw source' workshop in the Netherlands conducted by Dutch conceptual jewellery designer, Ruudt Peters. The workshop is a private program intended for students or graduates of art academies and artists or designers who seek to enrich their work. This workshop in particular was intended to help us discover the source of our own creativity. In my current period of uncertainty this course of intense study was incredibly difficult, resulting in a major crisis of confidence and purpose. Peters' instruction was that on my return home I narrow down the selection of materials; to focus on one in particular for a short time, and to concentrate on materials that had a definite meaning to me personally. Traveling further north to Finland, spending some time in remote areas, I decided that this material would be a natural one, wood. (plate 7).



Wood, a material with which I had an affinity, but had never used and explored. I was spurred on by the knowledge that wood also came in industrial forms, immediately offering the possibility of a material contrast. During this trip I was exposed to many art works that I had until then not viewed in the flesh, amongst these were pieces made by jewellers Dorothea Prühl and Edgar Mosa. (plates 8 and 9) These raw and disarmingly honest works were revelatory and the experience further clarified, in my mind, the ability of this material to communicate some of my intended conversations. It was also decided, that on my return to New Zealand, a period of relative confinement was needed to process and interrogate this experience. Inspired by a quote from an unknown author:

“to create is always to speak of childhood”,

I returned to my childhood home and was subsequently reminded of the first sources of my creative endeavors: a combination of my mother's sewing room, father's mechanical workshop, engineering lathes and farm tools (many homemade for particular specialised tasks), grandmother's embroidery, gardening, lace-making and book-binding, and grandfather's fishing, tapestry, saddlery, lapidary and leather work. Most important or noticeable in my attachment to these things were the tools used to create the resulting items, the transfer of knowledge and skill implicit in these humble and often makeshift objects.

The materials collected until this point were largely from utilitarian backgrounds with prescribed purpose. This process had uncovered a rift between the desire to produce those objects to be framed as art and, in contrast, to produce simple and functional domestic ones (blankets, bowls, clothing, etc.).



PLATE 08: DOROTHEA PRUHI



PLATE 09: EDGAR MOSA

Packing my belongings, I moved to a small cottage that had been occupied by my newly married grandparents at the close of World War Two. In 1953 it had become too small for their young family and had remained in their ownership, it was initially rented to local families, but had now lain unoccupied for almost 15 years. Situated in fairly remote country, overgrown and officially derelict, it was here that I set up my workshop for 12 months in the middle of this project, determined to begin unravelling some of these issues identified with my practice. While the initial decision to live there had been a highly logistical one (low rent, close to family, much space and hugely private), inevitably, the location had an influence on the work that developed there. (plates 10-14)

On setting up this studio work began to be made again, with the issues of form and function in mind. Objects that referenced utilitarian forms began to be produced, framed as 'pseudo-utilitarian tools'. Objects that referred to the tool, while clearly not performing the function of one.



PLATE 10: HOUSE AND STUDIO



PLATE 11: HOUSE AND STUDIO



PLATE 12: HOUSE AND STUDIO



PLATE 13: HOUSE AND STUDIO



PLATE 14: HOUSE AND STUDIO

The influence of location appeared initially to be a predominantly aesthetic one. Materials used included willow from nearby trees, natural and synthetic debris gleaned from local beaches and forests, combined with fabrics, plastics, threads and other items gifted to me by older family members. Often, due to their era of production, these were the colors and textures of 1950s and 1960s domesticity. Further combinations were made with materials gathered during my childhood; growing up in the 1980s, these included neon, spandex, synthetic cords and modeling clays. This mix of materials, the conversations and the tensions that could be had between items with disparate, but eventually shared histories, was exciting to work with. The resulting palette is one that I have continued to use throughout the remainder of the project. (plate 15)

Using this new repertoire of found items, the formal qualities of the tool were explored through an equation of parts: handle + join + end = tool. Using combinations of found natural and synthetic materials, my intervention was placed in the form of the join. The maker acting as a hinge between two juxtaposing materials, and between the human and the natural worlds. This combination spoke again of fragmentation, and refers to Debord's description of *détournement*; the relationship between fragments of two opposing materials, times or environments. (plate 16-22)

The resulting objects contain hints of function that are sometimes obvious, sometimes vague. Regardless, they beg for engagement, asking the viewer, "What is this for?" A small series of these objects were exhibited at Masterworks Gallery (Auckland, New Zealand) and they were found to act as prompts for people to hold and motion with them, speculating as to their purpose. (plate 23)

These objects call to mind the tools displayed in Vladimir Archipov's, **Homemade: Contemporary Russian Folk Artifacts**, tools made out of necessity from available materials in Soviet era Russia and described in the article **Ordinary Heroes and Handmade Tales** as objects that have been "crafted, constructed or assembled from whole or fragments of other objects to form strange but functional contraptions" (Yeh, "Ordinary Heroes..."). (plate 24)

PLATE 15: MATERIAL ARRANGEMENT (PALETTE)



PLATE 16: MATERIAL ARRANGEMENT (TOOL COMPONENTS)



PLATE 17: OBJECT (UN-NUMBERED)



PLATE 18: OBJECT (UN-NUMBERED)





PLATE 19: OBJECT #55 (DETAIL)



PLATE 20: OBJECT #27



PLATE 21: OBJECT #28



PLATE 22: OBJECT #29



PLATE 23: THINKSPACE: FRAGMENTATION AND THE FOUND. MASTERWORKS GALLERY, AUCKLAND

PLATE 24: ANDREI LAZAREV



Or, Japanese inventions named as Chindogu. Kenji Kawakami, in the introduction to the book 101 Unuseless Japanese Inventions, describes the term Chindogu as literally meaning:

...an odd or distorted tool - a faithful representation of a plan that doesn't quite cut the mustard. The ... Chindogist approaches his subject in much the same way that a serious inventor would: searching for an aspect of life that could somehow be rendered more convenient and concocting a method for making it so. ... The Chindogist latches onto and builds a prototype of the best idea he can come up with that looks good at the onset but on closer examination isn't. Having tested and verified that it indeed wasn't worth the effort, the creator of the Chindogu will then congratulate himself on having produced an almost useful implement. (6)

This attraction to an object that hints at a use without actually having one prescribed, is reiterated by the arguments of 18th Century German philosopher Immanuel Kant, who explored the complexities of aesthetic judgement on beauty in his **Critique of Judgement**. During my second workshop, guest critic Jon Bywater brought about a discussion of Kant's notion of purposiveness in relation to this project. Basing his argument around four unique features that he called 'moments', Kant's Third Moment involves the problem of purpose and purposiveness in the art object. In his overview of Kant's aesthetics, Douglas Burnham explains that:

... an object's purpose is the concept according to which it was manufactured; purposiveness, then, is the property of at least appearing to be manufactured or designed. Kant claims that the beautiful has to be understood as purposive, but without any definite purpose. ... It is part of the experience of beautiful objects, Kant argues, that they should affect us as if they had a purpose, although no particular purpose can be found. (Burnham, "Kant's Aesthetics")



Kant's notion of purposiveness has become central in my understanding of this tool investigation and its importance in my practice, as well as assisting me greatly as a point with which to start considering the role of jewellery anew. I could now begin to see how, through visual clues (the bead, the catch, the aperture for finger, wrist or neck) an object could hint at adornment as purpose, and the body as site. (plate 25)

While reflecting on the objects produced so far, it was noted that aesthetic preference was held for the simpler ones. Consideration began to be taken on the importance of exploring an idea or relationship between materials in a simple and humble gesture and I would try in future to invest some of the pared back elements of the tool objects into the jewellery that would be made.

The Japanese concept of wabi sabi has been important in clarifying this. According to Andrew Juniper in the text **Wabi sabi: the Japanese Art of Impermanence**,

Zen monks lead a simple and austere life constantly aware of their mortality. Wabi sabi is a distillation of their humble efforts to try and express, in a physical form, their love of life balanced against the sense of serene sadness that is life's inevitable passing. As the artistic mouthpiece of the zen movement, wabi sabi embodies the lives of the monks and is built on the precepts of humility, restraint, naturalness, joy and melancholy as well as the defining element of impermanence. (ix)

Juniper continues to discuss varying facets of wabi sabi within the text, showing how these underlying principles are

"diametrically opposed to those of their Western counterparts, whose values are rooted in a Hellenic worldview that values permanence, grandeur, symmetry and perfection" (1).

3.3 TO FURTHER FRAGMENTATION

These qualities of impermanence, humility, restraint and asymmetry, have allowed me to view the use of natural or discarded materials, with their raw and unrefined elements, in a new light. Offering another framework to place the work in and to regard while making and reviewing, alongside knowledge of conventional Western forms and aesthetics.

Until this point, the extent of my intervention was still relatively minor. This process of making by recombining and arranging found objects from disparate locations was essentially one of bricolage and it was noted that I continued to maintain a very tentative approach to the materials. It was identified that further inquiry was needed around the physical act of fragmentation to move the work forward.

This investigation began with the consideration of the aleatory literary techniques of the cut-up and fold-in as popularised by novelist William S. Burroughs and artist Brion Gysin. In **The Beat Generation**, author James Campbell explains that Burroughs was frustrated with traditional literary technique, which was

“set in too constricting a form, limited by signals from the world outside, the world of ‘sense,’ which made no sense” (274).

After a chance discovery by Gysin while cutting board on a table lined with newspapers the cut-up technique was developed. In his essay **The Cut-Up Methods of Brion Gysin**, Burroughs describes one way of doing it:

Take a page. Like this page. Now cut it down the middle and cross the middle. You have four sections: 1 2 3 4 ... Now rearrange the sections placing section four with section one and section two with section three. And you have a new page. Sometimes it says much the same thing. Sometimes something quite different... (Burroughs, “The Cut-Up Methods...”)

During this period, inspiration was drawn again from Ruudt Peters, who describes himself as a philosopher and an alchemist, and who explores the discovery, transformation and rediscovery of materials in great depth. Liesbeth den Besten, in the catalogue **CHANGE**, explains how “gemstones are ground to dust or covered with paint or red lead, mixed with polyurethane and other squalid plastics and then sawn through. Says Peters,

“That substance, this earthy stuff, the new discovery of materials, the rediscovery, that is what I find essential” (1-7).

In the article **Jewellery is my Laboratory**, den Besten continues to explore Peters' approach to material, discussing the 1997 collection 'Lapis', inspired by a true alchemistic process, the search for the 'philosophers stone.' Taking cue from an old alchemistic text that instructed one to

“grind the stone to a very fine powder and put it into the sharpest vinegar, and it will at once be dissolved into the philosophical water” (38-45).

Peters began creating his own gems, consisting of ground precious minerals, moulded and set with liquid plastics. Sometimes taking this a step further and slicing into these layers yet again. This process violates

“the unwritten rules of jewellery by deconstructing, destructing and uncovering precious materials. And in doing this replaces old values by new values: time, dedication and meaning” (den Besten, “Jewellery is my Laboratory”).

I began deconstructing the materials in a number of ways, slowly developing my own vocabulary of the fragmented: taking the same material and cutting, grinding, slicing, smashing, squashing, burning, etc. Experimenting with how the readings of a materials history can be helped or hindered by varying degrees of intervention. Some fragments were used as they were, while others were combined with industrial plastics to produce a new composite material, which was then re-fragmented and recombined to create new objects. As a result, these pieces began to speak more clearly of fragmentation, and sometimes took the found material so far from their original contexts that prior histories could barely be read. It also marked a shift away from a bricolage and assemblage based project, to one that strove to transform the found in new directions. (plates 26-33)

PLATE 26: OBJECTS #63, 64 & 65



PLATE 27: OBJECT #59



PLATE 28: OBJECT #68



PLATE 29: OBJECT #69



PLATE 30: OBJECT #75



PLATE 31: OBJECT #75 (DETAIL)



PLATE 32: OBJECT #70



PLATE 33: OBJECT #70 (DETAIL)

3.4 AND BACK TO JEWELLERY

New investigations made necessary the need to work in a format that accommodated a multiplicity of small parts, encompassed some of the aesthetic qualities of the tools, and still spoke clearly of jewellery. After much consideration on the problem of form, I came to decide that those known to adornment, specifically the necklace, the bead and the brooch, were to be my solution. The tool investigation had enabled me to identify the specifics of form that gave these objects their function, offering the viewer hints as to how and where the object could be placed. The circular aperture was most interesting, how, through the most simple gesture, a shape could be very clear in intent: the perfect size to fit a finger or a neck, or to be rather mystifying: either too large or small to allow any body part to occupy it comfortably.

The beaded form became of most notable interest, for the practicality and usefulness offered when considering a variety of small pieces of material, for its clear signal to jewellery forms, and for the resulting aesthetic values: strands of components and their accompanying harmonies or tensions, a form with the ability to carry many fragments in its whole. The beaded form held added significance because of its position as not just one of the earliest recognised jewellery forms, but as one of the earliest known examples of an explicitly symbolic object, an object that marks an important stage in the emergence of modern social behavior. In their 2007 article in the scientific journal of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Bouzouggar et al. expound their findings of perforated *Nassarius gibbsulus* shell beads from Grotte del Pigeons (Toforalt, Morocco), North Africa. These ornaments are dated at around 82,000 years old and

“imply an early distribution of bead-making in Africa and southwest Asia at least 40 millennia before the appearance of similar manifestations in Europe” (1996).

After my ambivalence at the beginning of the project, I had finally reconciled my intention to make jewellery objects, and to place myself within this continuum. [plates 34-36]



PLATE 34: OBJECT #30



PLATE 35: OBJECT #30 (WORN)



PLATE 36: OBJECT #76

At around the same time I was introduced to the notion of the 'index', a term coined by philosopher Charles Sanders Pearce and described by Cassandra Barnett as,

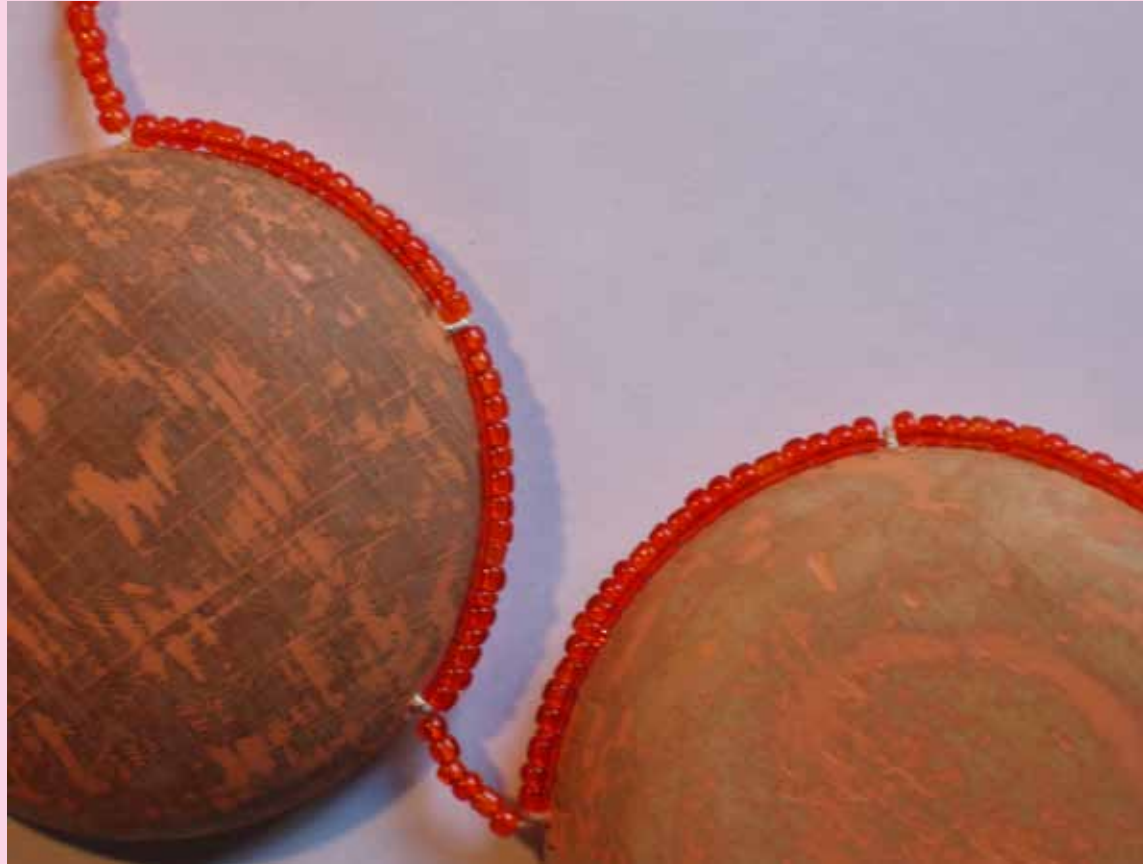
a special kind of sign that can be described as having a physical connection to its object. [...] not just a marker of a past event but an encounter with a sign that summons us to thought [...] to hypothesize - searching our memories and guessing as to a thing's cause. We use it when all we have is a result, a clue ("Indexiclasms..." 13.1).

This term is one that has become widely used within the project, facilitating an understanding that a found material can have an indexical nature which gives information as to its history. Also, that through intervention, I can either make obvious, or obscure these hints, and that my own marks of making throughout the process add new indexical layers. This may include fragmenting a material to an almost unrecognisable degree, or applying treatment to a surface to heighten the awareness of marks made by prior use. This approach was explored in the work 'Mending Mushrooms and Ursula's Orange Beads', where paint was applied to the wooden surface then scraped back, leaving colour only in the indentations that remained from the production of the object, its use as a mending block, and my own marks from sawing, drilling and sanding. (plates 37 & 38)

PLATE 37: MENDING MUSHROOM AND URSULA'S ORANGE BEADS



PLATE 38: MENDING MUSHROOM AND URSULA'S ORANGE BEADS (DETAIL)



From my understanding of indexicality came experimentation with the naming of the objects and the choices of my responsibility in communicating them or not. During former stages of the project the pieces made had been named only as numbered 'Objects.' The intention in this open and unprescriptive title was to allow the materials to speak more directly to the viewer without my interference. A different approach is now being employed, the name of the jewellery object directly referencing the origin of the materials, making their histories explicit in the title, and providing a slightly more generous approach for the viewer.

In the final stages of the project, lessons learnt from the previous investigations were explored solely in the context of the jewellery object. Alongside this making, a clear methodology was also developed, which has helped me to begin maintaining a careful balance between intuitive and planned making and theoretical and conceptual research. This methodology is a cyclical one, a process that involves collecting and arranging materials on large work surfaces, documenting them, unpicking connotations and denotations, rearranging and re-photographing. There is also a cycle within this of making jewellery objects, critique, alteration and so on. I have learnt to give myself permission to discard leftovers or return them to the material stockpiles where they enter the cycle once again. A more stringent process of self-critique has also developed, asking a specific set of questions regarding each object: What is working? What is not working? What comes to mind? (Connotations. Denotations.) How does it relate to the fragment and the found? How does it function as jewellery? Where to from here?

These investigations are recorded in a working journal (plates 39-41) that also includes technical details, material investigations and documentation. After approximately 6-8 months of working in this format, I am beginning to find that these loose guidelines give structure and direction, while still allowing for intuitive and fluid making. These processes have further enabled me to accept the 'failure' as a useful and inevitable tool in a practice of investigative making. Now, rather than seeing it as a negative, I can try to regard it as an opportunity for forward movement, once the nature of the failure has been noted through these critical practices.

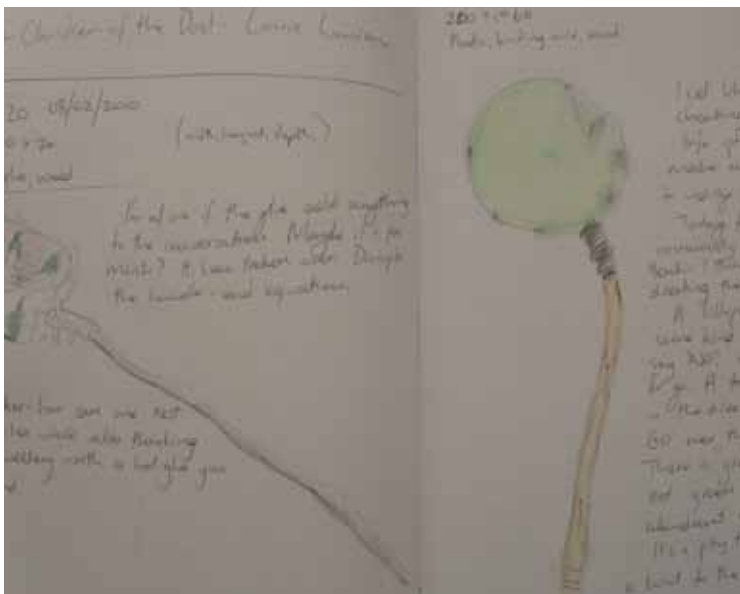
PLATE 39: WORKBOOK DETAIL



PLATE 40: WORKBOOK DETAIL



PLATE 41: WORKBOOK DETAIL



Greater understanding was reached during this period for my desire to unpick fragmentation and the found. Fragmentation was regarded predominantly as a physical act performed on a material, I have come to see that it could also be viewed as a reflection of our current mode of life. Linton Weeks, in the article **We Are Just Not Digging the Whole Anymore**, puts it this way:

we care more about the parts and less about the entire. We are into snippets and smidgens and clips and tweets. we are not only a fragmented society, but a fragment society” Weeks continues on to discuss our “contemporary fascination with fractional information [...] instead of whole number information as a swinging pendulum, from wholeness to fractionality [...] and that when the pendulum swings back, we’ll actually have something that is more than the sum of its parts - as we learn how to integrate all these bits and pieces into a greater understanding of the world (Weeks, “We Are Just Not Digging...”).

I know now that this is something I can strive to explore through making: the multiplicities, variants and tensions between urban and rural, natural and synthetic, precious and ‘junky,’ whole and fractional.

With further investigation of the found came the understanding that while I am using found materials, only materials with which I have a strong personal connection are selected. This shifts more weight on to the choosing of the stuff. If I wished, I could purchase these, but it is the connection to people, nostalgia and place that I am beginning to regard with more importance. As a result, I now view the work more clearly in relation to the New Zealand jewellery history discussed previously, and this is one of the areas in which I hope that a new contribution could be made to the current state of knowledge within this field.

While the participants of **Bone Stone Shell** strove to compress the hierarchy of materials down to include both the natural and the conventionally precious, there were still many commonplace materials from the time that remained unused: perhaps not quite precious enough. My hope is that this hierarchy could be compressed one level further to include a longstanding interest in the discarded, the synthetic, the domestic, crafty and the kitsch alongside the natural and the conventionally precious. In the piece *Stone +* (plate 42), I am beginning to explore this equation, constructing a brooch of stone and silver, then adding a new and slightly uncomfortable layer of Fimo beads that were made by my sister when we were children. In combining these materials I am beginning to address the established narratives within New Zealand jewellery discourse and my own personal history, creating new forms that are more particular to my own experience of that time and location.



PLATE 42: STONE +

3.5 TOWARDS RESOLUTION

While my intention is not to explain national identity, I have come to the conclusion that personal notions of place are increasingly important in my choice of materials, processes and forms. While reflecting on the project it is clear that much of the ground covered is connected to this idea of place, and of a tear between places. There is also no denying a link, or a grounding, in a particular New Zealand culture of using materials at hand or collected from local surrounds, tinkering in the shed, number 8 wire, and do-it-yourself attitudes.

Lastly is the realisation that while this project has aimed to explore notions of the fragment, and the feeling of fragmentation often induced by current modes of living and communication, what I would like to do in future is use this grounding to strive towards a new whole made of these disparate and often opposing parts. Turning a potentially negative comment into a positive and constructive investigation. In Manon van Kouswijk's book **Hanging Around; The Pearl Chain Principle**, a text by Pravu Mazumdar discusses this relationship between the fragment and the whole:

In other words, the field of our vision as well as the objects of our focus are merely fragments of a whole, which is inaccessible to our limited and biased perception. As we take fragments for wholes, giving them names such as 'tree' or 'house,' the whole, of which they are fragments, evades us, in spite of being constantly felt by us as the ultimate medium of our existence" (Mazumdar, "Wearing the World." u.p.).

As in the excerpt from Linton Weeks, hopefully, when the pendulum swings back, the fragments will come together in forms that are greater than a sum of their parts.



PLATE 43: EILEEN'S CUTLERY DRAWER AND PLASTIC TUBING



PLATE 44: EILEEN'S CUTLERY DRAWER AND PLASTIC TUBING (DETAIL)



PLATE 45: EILEEN'S CUTLERY DRAWER AND PLASTIC TUBING (DETAIL)



PLATE 46: WAIOTAHU DRIFTWOOD AND JENNY'S KNITTING NEEDLES



PLATE 47: WAIOTAHU DRIFTWOOD AND JENNY'S KNITTING NEEDLES (DETAIL)



PLATE 48: WAIOTAHU DRIFTWOOD AND JENNY'S KNITTING NEEDLES (OPEN)



PLATE 49: MUSHROOM HOUSE PLY AND PLASTIC TUBING (VIEW 1)



PLATE 50: MUSHROOM HOUSE PLY AND PLASTIC TUBING (VIEW 2)



PLATE 51: MUSHROOM HOUSE PLY AND PLASTIC TUBING (DETAIL)

4.0 LIST OF IMAGES

1. Alan Preston. Breastplate set. 2009.
2. Kurt Schwitters. Merzbau. c.1927-1937.
3. Bernhard Schobinger. Okinawa- Flaschen-Hals-Kette. 2009.
4. Lisa Walker. Pendant. 2009.
5. Material arrangement (brown/cream). 2010.
6. Material arrangement (blue/cream). 2010.
7. Material arrangement (wood). 2010.
8. Dorothea Prühl. Schmetterlinge. 2008.
9. Edgar Mosa. From series Month Three. 2010.
- 10-14. House and studio details. 2010.
15. Material arrangement (palette). 2010.
16. Material arrangement (tool components). 2010.
17. Object (un-numbered). 2010. Cotton, plastic coated copper, wood.
18. Object (un-numbered). 2010. Cotton, sterling silver, wood.
19. Object #55 (detail). 2010. Wood.
20. Object #27. 2010. Ceramic, plastic, wood.
21. Object #28. 2010. Ceramic, plastic, wood.
22. Object #29. 2010. Bone, copper, leather, plastic, wood.
23. THINKspace: Fragmentation and the Found. Masterworks Gallery, Auckland. 2010.
24. Andrei Lazarev. Paintbrush. 1996.
25. Object arrangement (tool to jewel). 2010. Glue, plastic, pumice, sterling silver.
26. Objects #63, 64 & 65. 2010. Glue, plastic, pumice dust, pumice stone, sterling silver.
27. Object #59. 2010. Plastic, pumice stone, sterling silver.
28. Object #68. 2010. Glue, plastic, pumice (whole and dust), sterling silver.

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29. Object #69. 2010. Glue, plastic, pumice (whole and dust), sterling silver.
30. Object #75. 2011. Bone (embedded), cotton, plastic, stone, sterling silver, wood (whole and dust).
31. Object #75 (detail). 2011. Bone (embedded), cotton, plastic, stone, sterling silver, wood (whole and dust).
32. Object #70. 2010. Cotton, plastic (whole and embedded), wood (whole, embedded and dust).
33. Object #70 (detail). Cotton, plastic (whole and embedded), wood (whole, embedded and dust).
34. Object #30. 2010. Cotton, plastic (knitting needles & toy animal), sterling silver, wood.
35. Object #30 (worn). 2010.
36. Object #76. 2011. Cotton, glue, plastic (commercial), sterling silver, wood (dust, embedded and whole).
37. Mending Mushroom and Ursula's Orange Beads. 2011. Cotton, glass, paint, sterling silver, wood.
38. Mending Mushroom and Ursula's Orange Beads (detail). 2011. Cotton, glass, paint, sterling silver, wood.
39. Workbook detail. 2011.
40. Workbook detail. 2009.
41. Workbook detail. 2010.
42. Stone +. 2011. Cable, copper, Fimo beads, pumice stone, sterling silver.
43. Eileen's Cutlery Drawer and Plastic Tubing. 2011. Cotton, paint, plastic, wood.
44. Eileen's Cutlery Drawer and Plastic Tubing (detail). 2011. Cotton, paint, plastic, wood.
45. Eileen's Cutlery Drawer and Plastic Tubing (detail). 2011. Cotton, paint, plastic, wood.
46. Waiotahi Driftwood and Jenny's Knitting Needles. 2011. Cotton, paint, plastic, wood.
47. Waiotahi Driftwood and Jenny's Knitting Needles (detail). 2011. Cotton, paint, plastic, wood.
48. Waiotahi Driftwood and Jenny's Knitting Needles (open). 2011. Cotton, paint, plastic, wood.
49. Mushroom House Ply and Plastic Tubing (view 1). 2011. Cotton, paint, plastic, sterling silver, wood.
50. Mushroom House Ply and Plastic Tubing (view 2). 2011. Cotton, paint, plastic, sterling silver, wood.
51. Mushroom House Ply and Plastic Tubing (detail). 2011. Cotton, paint, plastic, sterling silver, wood.

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