



Editorial



There's been a lot of firsts for me at Platform as we hit the three-month mark: the first time I made an online sale; the first time I went out and got press coverage for my own business instead of someone else's; and the first time I said 'I'm a curator' when people asked me what I do.

Usually when people come into the gallery they ask me if I am an artist, or which work is mine. In the beginning I fumbled my answer, with some babble about my bad tapestry hobby, or my half-written novel, or that I 'just bring the artists together'. There was some blockage that was stopping me from owning the title of 'curator', even though I started this gallery, I select all the work that is sold and shown here, and I choose how each exhibition is displayed and publicised.

And I noticed that it wasn't just me shying away: the young jewellers who weren't sure their work was good enough to be stocked in a gallery; the artists who were certain they didn't deserve their own solo show, or couldn't deliver one. It was always women having these attacks of self-doubt, despite their talent and years of training and experience.

Imposter syndrome is alive and well in the creative industries. Why is it we are so reluctant to claim our creative power? Why do we never feel good enough, as if me saying that I am the curator of this space will send people peeling in laughter, when in fact, I receive compliments every day about the objects I have curated? If the work of the jewellers and artists wasn't good enough I never would have approached them - and I do know how to say no to people whose work I don't think is a good fit.

We have to claim it. It's a little bit 'fake it until you make it' - except we have made it, we're just scared of saying so. That's not to say there's no room for growth, but it is to say that we shouldn't be afraid to claim what we have already achieved. I am a curator. You are a jeweller; you are a solo exhibiting artist. You deserve to be here. Own it.

Kelly Heylen
Curator

Show #04

THE DRUMMER BY R. K. PETRUSEV



18/08 — 11/09

R. K. Petrusev — Women With Cigars

After many years working as an actor, photographer and cinematographer, R.K. Petrusev was acutely aware that it wasn't getting any easier for women in her field.

"There was always a snide remark about being an Australian female cinematographer," she says. "And women were getting far fewer offers and opportunities than men, despite their talent and experience."

Drawing on a long-standing tradition of women in creative fields who have resorted to using their initials instead of their first names in order to have a shot at success (J.K. Rowling, anyone?) R.K. decided it was time for her to do the same thing.

It was her experience of sexism within the creative industries that inspired R.K.'s photographic portrait exhibition, *Women With Cigars*.

"The cigar has such a strong masculine association; you hardly ever see women holding or smoking one."
"I wanted to subvert the masculine image of a powerful

man smoking a cigar. In fact, I think a man with a cigar these days is clichéd and pretentious. A woman with a cigar, however, is powerful because it's unusual and interesting," says R.K.

R.K. brought together a group of women for the photo shoot who represent the breadth of diversity in the Blue Mountains community, from politicians to steampunk authors to former dancers.

"I am interested in how such a broad range of people end up in the Blue Mountains, and I wanted this exhibition to reflect our community's diversity."

"I have chosen to photograph these women - all powerful, established women in their own right - posing with their cigars, in black and white. Black and white has a filmic quality for me; it focuses the audience's attention because there is less to draw the eye away."

"I hope the community will recognise themselves in these images, and celebrate the diversity and strength of women everywhere," she says.

Show #05

JULIE HOLDING HER IMPERFECT MANIFESTO



14/09 — 09/10

Julie Paterson — Use Me Up

For Blackheath-based Julie Paterson, it's not enough to be one of Australia's preeminent textile designers. She is always pushing herself to create or discover the next thing, in line with her philosophy of a creative, deliberate and conscious life.

"Textile manufacturing - even by hand, the way I do it - is resource intensive, and has a heavy environmental footprint. That's why I always aim to give a new life to my own manufacturing fabric left overs, rather than send them to landfill," says Julie.

Use Me Up is an exhibition of functional pieces for the home made from these leftovers - design objects such as cushions, lampshades and curtains, sewn together from a beautifully curated selection of Julie's fabrics. Each object brings together patterns and colours that span decades, but which work as stunning creations in their own right.

Julie's textile design label *Cloth Fabric* has been around for more than 20 years, but she

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recently launched *Scrap Cloth* exclusively for the type of work in this exhibition.

"I wrote my Imperfect Manifesto as a blueprint for how to live a good life, and now with *Scrap Cloth* I am creating a blueprint for how to run a good business - one that respects the environment as well as the creative process," says Julie.

It's a perfect fit for Julie's thoughtful, handmade textile design process, and extends her philosophy to the audience who takes home one of Julie's pieces.

"When they look at their new lamp, they're seeing not only a beautiful design object, but a way of life - a statement about treading lightly and living purposefully. Being able to share these ideas is just as exciting to me as creating a brand new design."

Show #06

Sophie Conolly — Repaired Relations

MORSE CODE BY SOPHIE CONOLLY : IMAGE BY THE ARTIST



13/10 — 06/11

“I’m drawn to materials that remind me of my childhood,” says Sophie Conolly, a trained visual artist from Wentworth Falls. “I am sewing to repair and connect the past to the present; the good memories with the bad.”

Sophie uses materials that offer familiarity, from which she draws comfort as she simultaneously processes confronting themes.

In a labour-intensive process, Sophie creates installations from materials including fabric, thread and reused paper, such as small paper ‘memory stones’ and long strands of Morse code, that spell out childhood memories such as the poems her father used to recite with her.

“I grew up in the country, so using natural materials such as seeds and leaves keeps me grounded in that memory. I choose materials that have a connection to my past - tactile, textured fabrics, or photos and letters that feel symbolic and that recall a pivotal time in my childhood,” she says.

“I use techniques which have ‘women’s work’ connotations -

sewing, embroidery, papier-mâché. This is how I work - quietly and privately - and as the process has evolved, themes have emerged: of childhood loss, emotional isolation and mourning.”

Work labelled as ‘craft’ has long been excluded from galleries, ‘women’s work’ not seen as art - particularly if the work is by a female artist. ‘With this exhibition, Platform is seeking to elevate work like Sophie’s as the art form it truly is: steeped in artistic process and history, with meaning and themes embedded in the work.

“The soft, cushioning, lightness of the materials helps to counterbalance the darkness of my personal memories,” says Sophie. “I’m exploring memory and time, and both of those things are light and fragile, which in turn creates a lightness and vulnerability in the work.”

Through her exhibition *Repaired Relations*, Sophie draws on past experiences in order to heal personal wounds and find closure - themes that are sure to resonate with audiences from all backgrounds.

Ask the Curator: What is Contemporary Jewellery?

Someone asked me the other day what I meant by 'contemporary jewellery', which is the type of jewellery we have at Platform. Most people are more familiar with commercial and costume jewellery - pretty, decorative items that you will find everywhere from mainstream jewellery stores, to markets, to eBay. Contemporary jewellery generally uses the same, traditional jewellery making techniques, but what sets it apart is that it is conceptual, portraying an idea beyond pure decoration. Often the pieces are one-of-a-kind, many of which could certainly be described as 'art'. But don't let that fool you - contemporary jewellery features as much everyday wear jewellery as it does bold statement pieces.

I asked some of our jewellers, and a long-time jewellery collector, for their take on the distinction between contemporary and commercial jewellery - given that it's a term without formal definition, and it can mean different things to different people.

"I believe contemporary jewellery is an important indicator of social, environmental and cultural context."

Claire Brooks, a jeweller from South Australia, says "For me it means extending upon a wealth of traditional jewellery making technique to express an opinion or theme that is relevant to that moment in time. I believe contemporary jewellery is an important indicator of social, environmental and cultural context." Claire's sterling silver *Interlace* range at Platform is a pared back version of her recent exhibition work, which is about the environmental damage plastic is doing to our oceans.

Madeleine Chalfant, a Katoomba-based jeweller, thinks that contemporary jewellery is "that which doesn't draw literally from ethnic or historical designs, but lends itself to using non-traditional materials and experimenting with technique."



Madeleine draws much of her inspiration from her love of printmaking, and uses printing techniques like rolling and stamping to create intricate textures in precious metals.

Mt Victoria resident Julie Ankers, who has been collecting contemporary jewellery since the 1960s, fell in love with the way each individual jeweller is able to make work that expresses both themselves and contemporary ideas, rather than just being a decorative object. "I am so passionate about

contemporary jewellery, and am driven to owning as many pieces as I can, to promote and celebrate the makers' creative vision," says Julie. "Beautiful pieces freely designed and expertly wrought...I salivate at their craftsmanship and ingenuity. Oh, bring them on!"

At Platform you can find jewellery in precious metals like gold and silver, pearl, opal, resin, wood, clay, leather and found and upcycled objects. Pop in any time to try them on, or browse our range online.

