

12 contemporary New Zealand  
jewellers and their collaborators

# Handshake<sup>3</sup>

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**Handshake3: 12 contemporary New Zealand  
jewellers and their collaborators**

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**Objectspace**

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Te Kaitiaki Takekōwhiri o  
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**TE Kaitiaki Takekōwhiri o  
Tāmahi o Tūi Tohorau**



Amelia Pascoe—Ruudt Peters  
 Becky Bliss—Fabrizio Tridenti  
 Debbie Adamson—Nichola Shanley  
 Kelly McDonald—Kirsten Haydon  
 Nadene Carr—Fran Allison  
 Sarah Walker-Holt—Helen Britton  
 Raewyn Walsh—Henriette Schuster  
 Neke Moa—Karl Fritsch  
 Renee Bevan—Harrell Fletcher  
 Sarah Read—Liesbeth den Besten  
 Kathryn Yeats—Ben Pearce  
 Sharon Fitness—Lisa Walker

Prior to my job at Objectspace I was in an academic role at an art school in New Zealand. The school had been founded on the notion of multi-disciplinary practice. Those two and a half words were employed often and freely to conjure a world of newly graduating creatives, professionals who connect across disciplines blurring the edges that have traditionally demarcated areas of study (design, sculpture, photography, etc.). Annual marketing campaigns inevitably featured elaborate variations of ‘real world’ metaphors. In the world of the hot desk and the creative smell-of-an-oily-rag start up, collaboration would be key.

Collaboration too became a maxim in the new worldview of a liberal arts education, where a programme of study’s relevance and appeal is measured by its proximity to industry and commerce. Papers were written and taught about it, appearing in most course outlines and project descriptions, details in regard to authorship and distribution of workload were laboured in classrooms. It seemed we were arguing for a collaboration that was unified and harmonious, two-bodies-one-mind type scenarios, looking back student projects

were often sprawling messes of democracy and compromise. And for all the effort and the energy of propagating collaboration as a new ideology, we’d overcomplicated a word that in the most simple and understandable terms means some form of working together in the hope that it improves the efficiency of the process and / or the quality of the outcome. Not new or revolutionary but a word that describes the simple complexity of working human relationships.

Had we employed the same focus and energy on the more mundane aspects of what it takes to work in close proximity to other human beings we might have gifted them with tools a lot more useful later in life: how to be honest, how to say no, how to argue your idea, how to not get driven out of your mind, how to adapt to whatever form a collaboration might take and shift your expectations and your end goal accordingly. It might be a unified and mutually creative relationship, but more often than not it sits lower down the curve in the vicinity of finding people you can trust and respect, who have different sets of skills and strengths to you.

Watching the third iteration of Peter Decker’s Handshake project come to life

and it has been a formidable reminder that we are never done with learning how to work together, and we all do it differently. 12 New Zealand based contemporary jewellers, each working with another maker (jeweller, artist, writer or designer) located in any part of the world. The pairing in most instances exists from a prior iteration of the project where jewellers identified and asked their idols to act as mentors. For Handshake 3 the mentor becomes collaborator. A challenging and complicated framework, but one which has in New Zealand and internationally be heralded for its openness, its ability to connect practitioners inter-generationally, and to find ways to keep criticality and experimentation alive in a maker's practice once outside of an education system. In these pairings the forces of language, time zones, social hierarchies and culture are all at play, set against a timeframe of deadlines which sees them produce exhibitions and publications in Auckland, Stockholm, Wellington and likely more.

The first of these exhibitions here at Objectspace is intended as the most open expression of the nature of the process the jewellers have been a part of. An articulation of the back and forth, the two-way conversation, multiple voices and multiple authors—it is the honest and imperfect nature of the Handshake methodology. The gambit of relationships are all present, some have achieved an authentic and unified method for making together, some have arrived at a shared strategy that allows the pair to make within the same framework and under the same limitations but with degrees of autonomy. For other jewellers the mentor-turned-collaborator has taken on a role more like an extension of the mentoring voice. Critically engaged, offering feedback and suggestions, a sounding board of the highest order, a guide for all the possible

twists and turns in direction a body of work might take. Degrees of enjoyment and success vary; it's the hair pulling nature of human connection. The joy is in this wider Handshake mechanism, a framework that seems to continually renew, and to always find ways to retain and give value to its participants, encounter a Handshaker past or present and they'll speak of the project and process effusively and with affection.

Handshake demands a kind of involvement that will put the participant in a situation of constant learning, and it begins with the act of the jeweller daring to imagine that a person they have admired, idolised or read about only in books might take up the offer of a human connection with someone in the earlier stages of their career. It encompasses any number of definitions for what the nature of collaboration might look like: unified, prescribed, formal, friendly... there's no jazzed up marketing speak here, no guarantees are given along the way either. For these 12 jewellers, it is in the process of working with someone that they trust and admire, and in committing to a process of working together in a way that requires openness and humanity that enables a reflection to emerge. To look back again at themselves close up and in full detail, to see and understand their own work in new ways and to seek out improvement, engagement and progress.

**Kim Paton is the Director of Objectspace**



## AMELIA PASCOE / RUUDT PETERS

### On the origin of species, 2016

Following a pseudo-scientific methodology adapting elements of Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory to develop a new body of work, jeweller and former scientist Amelia Pascoe has created a series of test works that transform and change with each iteration. Having provided an image as a starting point for Pascoe's material exploration, her Amsterdam-based collaborator Ruudt Peters was then invited to influence outcomes at certain points in the process by introducing mutation events. These mutations took the form of instructions issued to Pascoe, altering the course of the making process.

## BECKY BLISS / FABRIZIO TRIDENTI

### Silent Conversation, 2016

Utilising silence and interpretation as a framework Becky Bliss and Fabrizio Tridenti's Silent Conversation references the inherent difficulties of language, rather than using words they have made use of silence and other forms of communication and interpretation. Using an image taken from their shared time together in Italy as a starting point, their communication has continued as a means of image exchange. Industrial forms, brutalist architecture and concrete featured repeatedly in their back and forth, and inspire the work that each have made. Uncanny similarities and nuanced use of material and form is evident in both makers' works.



DEBBIE ADAMSON /  
NICHOLA SHANLEY  
WITH AARON BEEHRE

**Proof that we exist, 2016**

In opening to us the details of their shared process, Debbie Adamson and Nichola Shanley affirm the relationship developed through collaboration as constitutive in and of itself, a territory neither, either / or, not you or me, but a new body of practice which emerges through exchange. We. In this work the daily textures of the makers everyday experience of the slippage of moments, mood and memory move in and out of reflections regarding their making processes. At one point Adamson paraphrases jeweller Kobi Bosshard, his notion that there must be room remaining in a piece of jewellery for the wearer to inhabit. In a sense their development of a diary form mirrors this. Allowing audiences to come close to the nuance of the work which vibrates at the intersection of making and daily life.

KELLY MCDONALD /  
KIRSTEN HAYDON

**Tool as a Jewel – The Evolutionary Pinch, 2016**

Expanding on previous investigations into notions of utility, economics, the natural environment, and the object, Kelly McDonald's Tool as Jewel explores the human connection to the tool which has spanned millions of years. Using the lost wax casting method, a process relatively unchanged for over 5700 years, McDonald has made 152 sterling silver and steel rings based around the opposable Ynger and thumb of humans most useful adaption in the use of tools. Together with philosopher Sondra Bacharach, writer Kirsten McDougall, jeweller Kirsten Haydon, photographer / graphic designer Juliet Black and editor Mary-Jane Duffy the catalogue Tool as Jewel brings together writing and reflection on McDonald's area of research.



## NADENE CARR / FRAN ALLISON

Things that might one day  
become jewellery, 2016

A series of tests, soft sculptures and maquettes sit on four long shelves each taking their material form from found t-shirts, through acts of deconstruction and remaking. Nadene Carr and Fran Allison's title for their work alludes to the experimental nature of this body of testing, exploring the uncomfortable space that exists between jewellery and clothing or textile forms, choosing a garment as their starting point they have employed a set of strategies and challenges for making, thinking and exchanging ideas which guides the process. Things that might one day become jewellery alludes to time spent by artist or maker out of public view, testing, retesting, walking the line that sits close to failure but allowing space for resolution and progress.

## SARAH WALKER-HOLT / HELEN BRITTON

Build it Up/Tear it Down, 2016

Taking shared experiences working with Ylm and mechanics as a starting point, Sarah Walker-Holt and Helen Britton's collaborative relationship reflects a mutual commitment to a making process utilising a set of simple rules. Working in recycled materials, Sarah in wood from an old radiogram, and Helen in metal from a junk store car radio, each constructed book like casings, almost identical in form. A series of Ylms play inside each digital book, single take video of industry are contrasted with nature, forming slow contemplations of the every day.



## RAEWYN WALSH / HENRIETTE SCHUSTER

### Gold im mund (gold in mouth), 2015/16

When Raewyn Walsh Yrst met Henriette Schuster she gave her a rock with the note *Fl collect rocks* (a notion borrowed in part from Warwick Freeman). For Handshake this small gesture is extrapolated within a theme of silence allowing room for different interpretations to collect around the work. Raewyn makes rocks, a universal motif, which speaks to ancestry, collecting and memory, and the long history in New Zealand of using stone as a material. Casting them in resin brings a surreal and surprising lightness to the work. Henriette uses words to represent silence, writing verse in German accompanied by an English translation, Raewyn in turn undertakes her own translation, the three versions of the text are all present, highlighting the gaps that exist within language where shifts in meaning and understanding might occur.

## NEKE MOA / KARL FRITSCH

### Legend of the Pounamu Ysh, 2016

Stories, myths and legends are at the heart of culture. Passed down through generations, legends grow and develop their own nature with each retelling and interpretation. Our ancestral connection through whakapapa makes these stories more personal and powerful. Neke Moa's work explores the legend of the Pounamu Ysh, she and collaborator Karl Fritsch have in documentary style created their own interpretation and story loosely based on several myths that tell versions of this legend. This in turn provided Neke a basis on which to respond though a series of carved works, specimens and artifacts that contribute to the future and longevity of the legend of Pounamu.



## RENEE BEVAN / HARRELL FLETCHER

What the moon looked like  
the morning she was born, 2016

A project that gathers weight and strength based on the back and forth. An idea that emerged from conversation and exchange between Renee Bevan and Harrell Fletcher, relies in time on exchange and contribution from friends and strangers. The outcome is left to chance, an accumulated collection of jewellery and objects loaned by neighbours within Objectspace's business community and from further afield. Displayed alongside an explanation of an item's significance What the moon looked like the morning she was born, speaks to the simple humility of an object to conjure and maintain emotional connection and meaning beyond its material form.

## SARAH READ / LIESBETH DEN BESTEN

On Jewelleryness: Touch, 2016  
Digital image by Kate Whitley

Sarah Read and Liesbeth den Besten's collaborative process has focused on the discussion and exchange of ideas around notions of jewelleryness. Rather than physical jewellery forms they have explored experiences imbued with jewellery-type qualities such as sensory actions of movement and touch, and the nature of human connection. Their work invites the viewer to engage in an act of jewelleryness to touch. Rubbing the immaculate black table top surface reveals a rich collage of research, ideas and exchange of fragments of the connection that has manifested between Read and den Besten over time.



## KATHRYN YEATS / BEN PEARCE

### Transplant, 2016

For Transplant the formula is simple. Two second hand chairs. Kathryn's a stuffy dated yoral number straight from a grandmother's living room. Ben's a simple stool on wheels, truly tired and worn out. Using only the shared materials from within the furniture degrees of deconstruction and rebuild have taken place. For Kathryn strange charred grafts make suggestion of negative space bracing the chair in its new conYguration, small rock formations teeter on the deconstructed frame of Ben's stool, both are a revelation in the transformative power of matter in the hands of the maker.

## SHARON FITNESS / LISA WALKER

### Sharon Fitness and Lisa Walker went op shopping together, 2016

A cursory read of the work title for Fitness Walker's series and we get a good picture of the preamble. Strange and unholy unions are occurring between forms and things recognisably second-hand. Forlorn and forgotten knitting, dubious souvenir art, pre-loved clothing and children's toys with all the markers of years of play and wear are reconYgured into jewellery forms. These pendants and brooches are at once crazy and outlandish, and yet their unlikely compositions unify materials and forms with seemingly nothing in common. The result q funny, playful, resourceful and empowering; there is no immutable hierarchy possessed by any given object, it ebbs and yows with the care and admiration given to it, by its owner.