

Jeweller forges landscape links

Barbara Heath takes inspiration from history and the land to create contemporary jewellery

I HAVE been making jewellery for 40 years. I started pretty young and I liked it immediately. It suited my interest in art and working with my hands and it has enabled me to have an independent career as an artist.

Jewellery is miniature sculpture for the body. It has so many different meanings for people. It can be like a talisman and it is so close to the body that it carries private meanings for people in a wordless way.

I'm interested in how jewellery functions and feels, as much as how innovative it may be. I'm interested in intrinsic beauty and generosity of materials. I like the heft and solidity of a handmade object and I like to see the evidence of workmanship. I like to make things that people are going to wear and treasure for a long time.

I really like the jewellery of the 17th and 18th centuries, those luscious colourful mysterious gem-encrusted jewels. I've travelled and researched that era of jewellery in the museums of St Petersburg [in Russia] and London.

I live in Brisbane but I come to [my home in the Midlands of] Tasmania for four months a year and this allows me the time and space to be quiet to reflect and to feed my imagination. When I'm here I make drawings and designs.

All of my mother's family came from Tasmania. She was the only member to leave so



ABOVE: Barbara Heath comes to Tasmania to feed her imagination.

MEET the DESIGNER

I've enjoyed family history research here. Each time we visit we might explore a different area of Tasmania. This time we found my great grandfather's grave at Waratah.

The relationship of the artist to the gallery is



ABOVE: Hand-forged link bar necklace.



ABOVE: Gem bangle.



ABOVE: Bangles.

very important in an artist's career. It's almost an old-fashioned idea that we might be in danger of leaving behind, especially now in this world of Facebook and self-marketing. I think a good artist/gallery relationship is a conduit that enables the artist to find their audience.

My latest exhibition was created with Tasmanian landscapes in mind. The Midlands landscape is not your typical leafy, green English-style Tasmania. The trees are sparse here and you can see the soft undulation, the form of the land and lots of sky. So it's all about sky and light colour and the form of the land.

LUCY MACDONALD

Lucy MacDonald is a journalism student at UTAS

Landscape exhibition and jewellery by Barbara Heath opens at Handmark Gallery, 77 Salamanca Pl, tonight at 6pm. Exhibition continues until April 10