



gilded
encounters

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Sophie Carnell

Janine Combes

Alex Parish

Sarah Stubbs

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Hadley's Orient Hotel 34 Murray Street, Hobart

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MAKING MARVELLOUS WEARABLE STORIES

Dr Amy Jackett

Hotels are sites where disparate lives and memories collide. They are sites where “anyone and everything can be remade.”¹ Far from being passive spaces, they can set the tone for encounters, and mould memories.

Hadley’s Orient Hotel has been a momentary yet memorable home for its guests since 1834. Every room is a vessel of stories; every space has witnessed an ephemeral flurry of visitors and guests. The historic building is a treasure trove for artists with much to glean and imagine.

In Gilded Encounters, four Tasmanian artists – Sophie Carnell, Janine Combes, Alex Parish and Sarah Stubbs – creatively portray facets of Hadley’s Orient Hotel through a collection of newly-created art jewellery and small objects.

The artists’ creative research began with absorbing the building: photographing, sketching and tracing elements in the present, and delving into its past through historical research. They isolated details often lost in the larger frame of a room: laced arcs in wallpaper, gridded lines in an oriental screen, the intricate patterns in high cornices. In ceramics, gold and silver, they have galvanised these details and made them portable pieces of Hadley’s.

Their work is eclectic, the different materials, techniques and subjects echoing the tapestry of memories within the building. Designed to be discovered around the hotel, each piece is presented in dialogue with the site that inspired the artist – some prominently exhibited in frames and on painted boards, others hidden in amongst existing décor, displayed in gold-rimmed glass domes and glass cake stands. Former guests are celebrated; there are playful evocations of sweets and dressing up for afternoon tea; while traces of wallpapers and oriental designs are carved into rings and neckpieces.

In the Orient Bar, Alex Parish extracted the contours of an oriental wooden screen. Mapping and dividing the gridded lines, she re-presents fragments of the screen in a series of geometric rings and wall-display neckpieces.

Parish has a talent for translating patterns and refashioning found materials. In the luminous atrium, she presents a suite

of vintage baking-tin neckpieces and rings encased with poppy seeds and hundreds and thousands.

Material-driven, my work incorporates found objects, mimicking the shapes of the structures that have seen the stories I wish to realise and appreciate. I hope these pieces can tell a story of forgotten things, just as the walls of Hadley's would tell if they could speak.

After a lifetime of preparing those palm-sized pastries favoured by Mrs Beeton,ⁱⁱ Parish's found baking tins have been retired and artistically altered in some cases beyond recognition. The tin in *Afternoon Tea* has been opened to accentuate the tin's decorative curved edging to become a jewel-like pendant with the petal-like edges coated with blue and emerald enamel.

Linked and cupped together, the tins in *High Tea*ⁱⁱⁱ playfully evoke necklaces Victorian ladies wore to tea.

In a marvellous juxtaposition of textures, the corrugated oval edging of the baking tin in *Low Tea*^{iv} is paired with a smooth, speckled jasper oval, and a soft-flowing tassel. The jasper has personal significance for Parish, being the first stone she collected when she began her journey as a jeweller. Beside the neckpiece sits a ring which inverts the silhouetted form of the jasper stone and baking tin.

Also in the atrium, Sophie Carnell's dainty silver spoons spout elegant leaves – the same leaves that embellish the garden balconies above.

Carnell also picked up on the notion of travel and safekeeping with a series of miniature silver suitcases, detailed to the level of buckles and keyholes. Her *Suitcase Stories* remind us not only of travelling guests, but also of convict transportation, especially when paired with chained miniature manacles, evoking former convict and pastry chef John Webb, who amassed wealth transporting ice from the mountain^v and established the hotel that later became Hadley's.

Chandeliers glint, reflecting and refracting light, and stories are scattered – fractured, glimpsed at briefly. My work explores these hints, glimmers and shadows using both traditional materials and found objects that are imbued with time, place and stories themselves – piano keys, antique silver, sandstone, crystal and glass.

Carnell made a series of necklaces, earrings and brooches for John Webb's three wives, the evocative titles and materials each relating to a different aspect of the hotel during Webb's time: *Piano Echoes in the Ballroom*, *Snow Becomes Sweet Sorbet*, and *Chandeliers and Silver Salvagers*.



For another set of three neckpieces in the front gallery, Carnell extracted decorative wallpaper motifs and transformed them into exquisite brass neckpieces with patinas to evoke the passage of time.

In the foyer, she created a series of textural rings and lapel pins mirroring the fashions of former guests with fur, beads and feathers.

Wandering the old, undulating corridors, Janine Combes conceived of Hadley's as a stage for a series of performances and stories. Her jewellery pieces for *Gilded Encounters* respond to this idea using parted curtains, views through key holes and motifs of famous and infamous guests.

One by one characters from the hotel step up into the limelight: society women wear silver lace gloves to high tea, opera singers parade in their gold leaf 'bling', John Webb's Ice-houses loom into view on the mountain, and Amundsen's ship the Fram floats into the harbour on a flow of ice. I have made playful works which draw on the sense of celebration and occasion which marks the history of Hadley's Orient Hotel.

In 1912, polar explorer Roald Amundsen docked his ship, Fram, in Hobart after returning from his South Pole expedition and hid in a room at Hadley's to escape the media fanfare. Combes created two neckpieces about Amundsen's



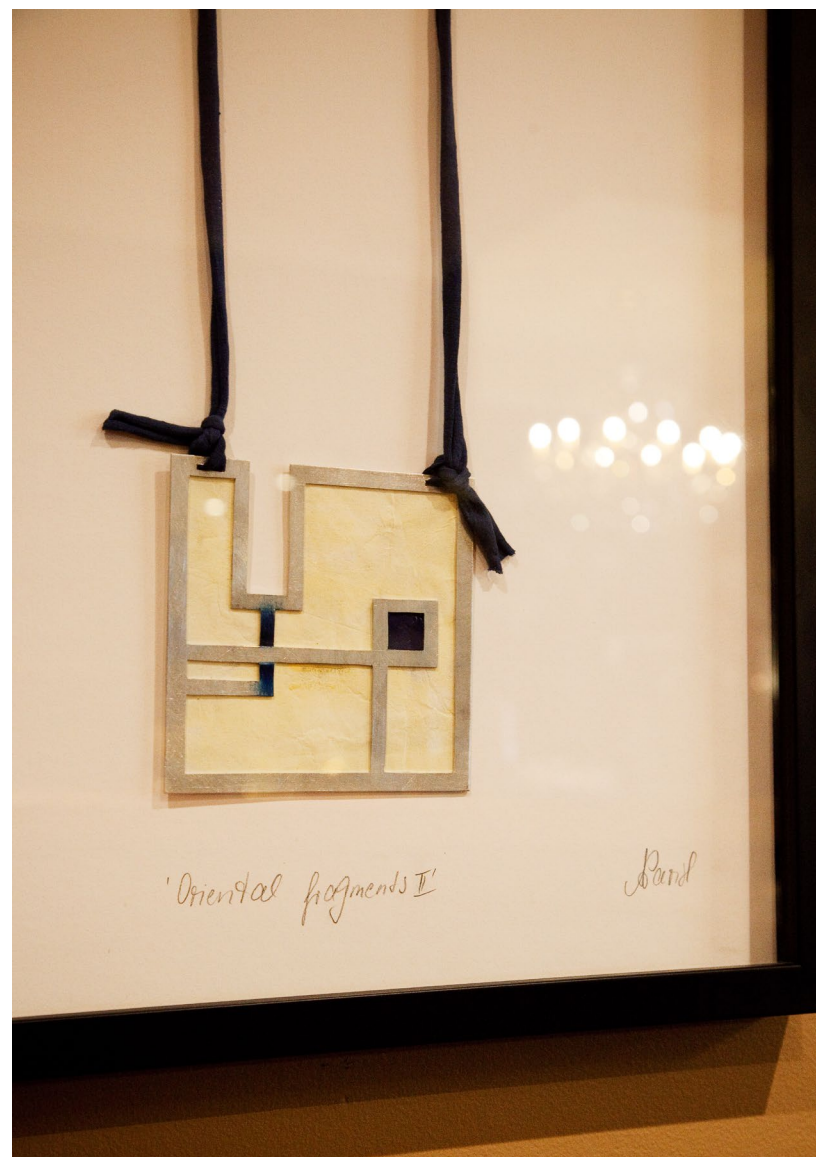
time in the hotel, both alluding to the Fram which Combes set foot on herself when visiting Norway; *The Ice Ship* also includes architectural features from the stair rail near the Amundsen suite in the hotel.

Combes has used techniques and materials in keeping with both the European historic heritage of Hadley's and the influence of the mysterious 'Orient' – embossed silver sits alongside metals embellished with gold leaf and Japanese lacquers adorn carved Italian alabaster.

Dressed in a rich brown silk with gold lace and diamond ornaments, the 'Tasmanian Nightingale', Amy Sherwin, was warmly welcomed at the parlours of Hadley's when she returned in 1887. She met guests and sang in the hotel rooms for over an hour, entrancing all who came to see her.^{vi} The description of her jewels and attire as rich as the description of her performance in the local paper.

Born and raised on a farm in Huonville, Sherwin rose to stardom when she was discovered by members of an Italian Opera Company who happened to be picnicking nearby when they heard her singing in a field.^{viii}

Having also grown up on a farm in Huonville, Combes connected with Amy Sherwin and decided to make a series of necklaces about Sherwin and other famous opera singer guests.^{ix} Elegant silhouetted circles sit atop pleated gowns on long chains, suspended as if on stage.



Sarah Stubbs immediately responded to the architectural heritage of the building as she became entranced by the continuous patterns adorning the cornices and ceiling roses.

Sensing the hotel's history, Stubbs writes: "So many stories could be constructed and told. From famed marriages, to explorers hiding, and secret dalliances. The past is rich, oscillating in volume." Yet as she spent time taking impressions of the cornices and other features of the building, she found herself most interested in the present-day operation of the hotel.

Pressing clay into its crevices, it is the present that draws me in – the staff who move about with care, the clients sitting with bags on leather chairs, the music drifting from the bar, the two women asleep at their table, their cakes and sandwiches half eaten. I feel at home, as I sit at the table in the bar, quickly sketching into clay all that I see and imagine. Past, present and future collide, wedded to my fiction.

Stubbs sketched into her clay and painted what she witnessed. The colours in her work are drawn not just from the building, but also from the people and daily activity she observed.



Stubbs also created three long porcelain and copper necklaces inspired by John Webb's baking with flowery ceramic beads echoing the form of Parish's baking tins.

The jewellery and small objects in this exhibition speak not just of the hotel's history, but also of each artist's personal engagement with the building and those it has hosted over the years. Hidden details have been made remarkable by each artist's eye and material translation. *Gilded Encounters* reveals how contemporary jewellery can uniquely respond to history, place and objects to tell wearable stories.

SOPHIE CARNELL

Sophie's practice explores stories entwined through history, researching and imagining the lives of others and how they related to their surroundings. Precious metals, natural and found materials that have an embedded history of their own, are combined and transformed into objects and wearable tokens that carry an essence of history, memory and connection.

Sophie completed a Bachelor of Fine Art at the University of Tasmania in 2010 and has undertaken further study at RMIT and TAFE Tasmania. Sophie has exhibited widely in Tasmania as well as being a finalist in the Toowoomba Contemporary Wearables Award (2017) - where her work was acquired, the Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize (2018, 2015) and The Waterhouse Art Prize (2018, 2014). Sophie has been a member of FIND Contemporary Jewellery Collective in the Salamanca Arts Centre for seven years.

JANINE COMBES

Working from a studio on Bruny Island, Janine Combes explores the intersect between nature and history using a wide variety of materials and methods to create sculptural, textured and layered works. Combes comes to jewellery making from a professional background in community development and social planning. She has studied jewellery making at TAFE Tasmania, Alchimia Jewellery School in Italy and undertaken a residency at Muong Studio in North Vietnam. Combes has been awarded two Arts Tasmania grants (2015 and 2017) and is represented by Handmark Tasmania. Her work has been shown at the Australian Metal and Silverwork Award exhibition (Castlemaine), Contemporary Wearables (Toowoomba) and Radiant Pavilion (Melbourne).

ⁱ Levander, Caroline Field and Matthew Pratt Guterl. *Hotel Life: The Story of a Place Where Anything Can Happen*, Washington DC: UNC Press Books, 2015.

ⁱⁱ Mrs Beeton was a Victorian writer who wrote one of the most famous cookery books ever published, *Book of Household Management* (1861). Hadley's Orient Hotel use some of Mrs Beeton's recipes for their afternoon tea sweets.

ⁱⁱⁱ High Tea was considered the main meal of the day and often taken either standing up or seated upon tall stools in the evening, typically consisted of meat, bread, vegetables, and - of course - tea.

^{iv} In the Victorian era, Afternoon Tea was also known as 'Low Tea' in reference to the low armchairs and side tables at which guests were seated for sandwiches, sweets and tea.

^v kunyani/Mt Wellington

^{vi} Telegrams: Tasmania, Hobart', *Daily Telegraph*, Launceston, Friday 22 Jul 1887, p. 3

^{vii} '50 Years Ago: At Home', *The Mercury*, Wed 21 Jul 1937, p. 10

^{viii} Rimon, Wendy. 'Amy Sherwin', *University of Tasmania Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies*, 2006, accessed 25 October 2018,

^{ix} http://www.utas.edu.au/library/companion_to_tasmanian_history/S/Sherwin.htm
Dame Nellie Melba stayed in 1909, and Elizabeth Rethberg and Ezio Pinzo stayed in 1936.

ALEX PARISH

Alex Parish is a trained goldsmith with a degree from Goldschmiedeschule (Jewellery School) in Pforzheim (Germany) and a bachelor in Fine Arts with a double major in printmaking and furniture making from University of Tasmania. As well as working under several Master jewellers in Germany, she has undertaken a master course with Lisa Walker and Karl Fritsch at the University of Tasmania. Alex operates out of her own workshop in an industrial warehouse in Hobart. She often explores her German heritage mixed with her Australian influences in her jewellery. She has participated in numerous exhibitions over the course of her practice, such as 'Contemporary Wearables' in Toowoomba (2013), and the Radiant Pavilion in Melbourne (2016). More recently Alex has been involved in CUSP jewellers, and has exhibited as part of 'Inscription and Place' in the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery in 2017.

SARAH STUBBS

Sarah Stubbs is a Hobart based contemporary artist/jeweller. Sarah's practice is multi-disciplinary engaged in transformative making and materiality. Exhibitions include West Space, Platform, CCP, Linden, Para/Site Art Space Hong Kong, Annandale Galleries, Centre for Contemporary Photography, and the Ian Potter Gallery. Sarah co-founded West Space Inc. with Brett Jones. She has worked with various arts institutions in Australia and overseas to produce experimental art catalogues and books. Her work is held in private and public collections including the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.





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Thank you to Professor Kate Darian-Smith for being the guest speaker who officially opened the exhibition, and soprano Grace Ovens for her moving performance at the exhibition opening in memory of the Tasmanian Nightingale.

Lastly, we'd all like to thank our wonderful families.

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