

Mark Vaarwerk

Artist Statement

"Delve into the garages, spare rooms, bottom drawers, cupboards-below-the-sinks of any home and you will be overwhelmed by mountains of stuff - and most of it plastic. Wasted pens, retired TVs or vacuum cleaners or printers, piles of dirty styrofoam boxes and packaging, shopping bags, half empty bottles...

Or a stroll down a busy street, a quick glance in a lunchroom waste-bin, a shortcut down a city alley...

Plastics - discarded, forgotten, superseded, broken. Sifting through this seemingly endless source of raw materials, Mark Vaarwerk transforms these everyday materials, utilising simple techniques, into wearable items of jewellery. A small and colourful fragment, new and re-invented, but with still a hint of its less glamorous past. "

My practice revolves very much about the day-in-day-out routines of everyday people and lives. And the tracery (delicate or otherwise) of their existence.

The bulk of materials from which my objects are constructed are the crumbs left by the average citizen moving through an ordinary city weekday. The office worker, the housewife, the student, the self employed, the unemployed. Materials, typically plastic, that are otherwise thrown out, are collected, manipulated and then transformed using simple experimental techniques. The aim of this transformation is simply to create something unexpectedly beautiful from "worthless" rubbish, itself the product of seemingly meaningless acts. The fact that jewellery is often the result heightens this unexpectedness and prompts the viewer or wearer to question their notions of value and preciousness - not only of the materials, but also of the actions and activities that first consumed them.

C.V

tertiary education

1996-1997 Sydney Institute of Technology, Enmore. Associate Diploma in Arts (Jewellery Design).

1992-1995 University of New South Wales, incomplete studies for Bachelor of Science, botany.

residencies

2007 april, may, june. Australia Council London Studio.

2004 February and March. The hub centre for contemporary craft, design and making, Sleaford, U.K.

2003 January to April. The Pearoom, Heckington, U.K., HAT Australia Jewellers exchange program.

1999 August to November. Mentorship grant awarded by Craft Queensland, funded by Australia Council. Mentor and host Tracey Clement, Sydney.

workshop teaching

"transforming throwaway plastics: some simple techniques"

2012 Square Peg Studios, Newtown 5, 6 May

2008 Queensland College of Arts, Brisbane 10, 11 May, 15, 16 March

University of South Australia, Adelaide, 1,2,3 september, 29, 30, 31 January

Mark Vaarwerk

2007 Australian National University, Canberra, 1-4 January
solo exhibitions

2012 'Alchemy' Bilk Gallery, Canberra.

2010 'homework'. GAFFA, Sydney.

2009 'homework'. Workshop Bilk, Queanbeyan.

2008 'mark vaarwerk retrospective' Metalab, Sydney.

2006 'round' double solo show with vicki mason. Workshop Bilk, Queanbeyan.

selected group exhibitions

2014 'sweet abundance' Oneofftwo, Nungurner, Australia.

'from over there to over here' Lopdell House Curiosity Cabinet, New Lynn, New Zealand.

2013 'words and works from a world away' Project Space/Spare Room, RMIT, Melbourne.

'unnatural acts' The National, Christchurch, New Zealand.

'Chained' Bilk Gallery, Canberra.

2012 'unnatural acts' Craft Victoria, Melbourne.

'Bilk on Tour' Incinerator Gallery, Moonee Ponds; Incinerator Art Space, Willoughby; Bilk Gallery, Canberra.

'Once More, With Love' Studio 20/17, Sydney; NorthCity4, Melbourne; Bilk Gallery, Canberra.

'Unexpected Pleasures The Art and Design of Contemporary Jewellery' National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne and Design Museum, London

'SOS(supercycle our souls)' Ventura Lambrate, Milan, Italy

'Entfesselt Schmuck ohne Grenzen' Museum Bellerive, Zürich, Switzerland

2011 'Ontketend (Jewellery Unleashed!)' Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem (MMKA), The Netherlands.

'unnatural acts' Velvet da Vinci Gallery, San Francisco, USA.

'Contemporary Wearables 2011' Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery, Toowoomba,