

Over your head Statement

In my work I often use clichéd jewellery forms, these archetypes create one layer in my concept; they reference traditional aspects of jewellery and are ciphers for various social groups and their values. The use of ready-made materials, loaded with associations, adds another layer of subtext. The choice of visual metaphor builds further resonance. Finally, the titles give the means of access; they are the maker's signpost to the other aspects at play in the works.

Star Wars is one of a pantheon of corporate "brands", together with Coke Cola, McDonalds, Apple and Levis etc, which dominate western culture, exporting ideas, myths and values to the broader world. George Lucas (writer/director) said he wanted to create a modern day fairytale with the Star Wars trilogies. They are not fairy tales in any "classical" sense – with megadeaths, moral dualism, violence as the sole solution, and the good guys always win and always survive – they were a more effective manifestation of Hollywood violence propaganda. What better way to niche market to children than with fairytales.

Lucas did not receive a fee for directing the first of the Star Wars films. Instead, he negotiated to own all merchandising rights relating to the (soon to be) franchise. The film went on to monumental success both at the box office and in the sales of merchandise, with ranges of dolls, television specials, computer games, and Disney theme parks et al. Characters were specifically inserted into the movies to appeal to young children, and for the first time a movie and the associated merchandise was aggressively niche marketed to young males. Post Star Wars everything in the western entertainment industry revolves around homogenizing and shaping these child and teenage markets for the extraction of wealth and favour. The hyper-commercialism of entertainment and toys had begun.

In focusing on aspects of the trilogys that fitted with the themes and memes that I already explore in other areas of my practice (toys, merchandising, alienation, commodity fetishism and mass culture) - as well as Lucas's ability to bastardise his own earlier works (and a small homage to Otto Künzli) - this work is an older neckpiece of mine Barb-aryan(2006), made up of Barbie dolls' heads cast from diet Coca-cola cans encased/masked by Darth Vader helmets cast in silicon from a Star Wars action figure (boys do not play with dolls).

C.V

Selected Exhibition History

2013 Ashes to Ashes Sydney Design Week exhibition, Studio 20/17 Sydney, Australia

2013 Revolt exhibition, 22nd Legnicia International Jewellery Competition, Gallery of Art, Legnicia, Poland

2012 Profile exhibition, Gaffa Gallery, Sydney, Australia

2012 New Traditional Jewellery: New Nomads exhibition, Sieraad Jewellery Art Fair, Amsterdam & Museum of Modern Art, Arnhem, Netherlands

2012 For the Love of Coffee exhibition, Studio 20/17 Sydney, Australia

2012 2006 exhibition, Studio 20/17 Sydney, Australia

2012 Very Simple Proofs, The Trivial Ring exhibition, Studio 20/17 Sydney

2011 Final Frontier exhibition, Gaffa Gallery, Sydney, Australia

2011 Winter Neckpieces exhibition, Studio 20/17 Sydney, Australia

2011 Touch Pause Engage/The Art of Engagement exhibition, Objectspace, Auckland, New Zealand

2010-11 Excessory exhibition, Museums and Galleries NSW, Manly Art Gallery, Rockhampton Art Gallery, Grafton

Regional Gallery and various other national exhibition venues, Australia
2010 Castoff exhibition, Gaffa Gallery, Sydney, Australia
2010 Winter Brooches exhibition, Studio 20/17 Sydney, Australia
2010 Profile exhibition, Studio 20/17 for JMGA, Sydney, Australia
2010 Re:production exhibition, Gaffa Gallery, Sydney, Australia
2010 Fidelity: inaugural relaunch exhibition, Gaffa Gallery, Sydney, Australia
2009 Alter ego exhibition, Gaffa Gallery, Sydney, Australia
2008 Loaded exhibition, Gaffa Gallery, Sydney, Australia
2008 Military Iconography in the Decorative Arts of New Zealand exhibition, Imperial War Museum, London, England
2008 Fuse exhibition, Jam Factory, Adelaide, Australia
2008 Graduate Metal XI – emerging ideas in jewellery & objects exhibition, Adelaide, Australia
2008 Inside Out exhibition, Zu Design, Adelaide, Australia
2007- 2008 Contemporary Wearables 2007 exhibition, Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery, Toowoomba, and various regional gallery venues throughout Australia

Citations/Bibliography

Sarah Samild, Interview with Excessory artist Vernon Bowden Museums and Galleries NSW 2010. Available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5VSREnF6gw>
Tracey Clement, Art Attachments Australian Art Review Issue 24, Aug to Oct 2010, Westwick Farrow Media, Australia
The Compendium Finale of International Jewellery 2009 Darling Publications, Köln, Germany
Tracey Clement, More than metal and gems Driven magazine Issue 3 2009, Walrus Media, Sydney Australia
Sean O'Connell, Fuse: Artists and Jewellers exploring self and society through diverse technology 2008 JamFactory Contemporary Craft and Design, Adelaide, Australia
Graduate Metal XI 2008: Emerging ideas in jewellery and objects 2008 Jewellers and Metalsmiths Group of Australia, Adelaide, Australia

Employment and Education Synopsis

2008: Enmore Design Centre, Jewellery and Object Design Department:
Tutor for Concept Realisation I, Design Processes I, Exhibition Design III
2004-2006: Enmore Design Centre: Advanced Diploma in Object and Jewellery Design with Distinction, Sydney, Australia. Awarded Tafe NSW State Medal.
2004: Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia
Registration Assistant (3 month contract)
2003: Museum of Sydney, Sydney, Australia:
Maintenance Technician
1998-2003 Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa), Wellington, New Zealand:
2002 – 2003: Object Support Preparator (6 month internal secondment) 2000 – 2002: Exhibition Maintenance and Construction Team Leader 1998 – 2000: AV/Exhibitions Technician
1999 – 2002: Freelance AV Designer / Technical Manager / Production Manager in numerous theatre productions including the Adelaide and Wellington Festivals of the Arts:
2002-2003: Freelance Technician at Enjoy Artists Collective, Wellington, New Zealand for various solo exhibitions
1999 – 2002: Freelance Designer and Technician for various plays at Bats and Downstage Theatres in Wellington, New Zealand
1999 – 2001: Senior AV Technician, Touring Flowers for my Mothers Garden, 18 venue theatre production

Vernon Bowden

1995□1998: Multi -Media Systems, Wellington, New Zealand Staging technician, IT specialist and graphic designer,
1987□1994: Artist - Mixed media, Dunedin and Wellington, New Zealand
1985□1986: Otago Polytechnic School of Art: Fine Art Diploma Stage I & II majoring in Sculpture, Dunedin, New Zealand