

ARTS

Precision and skill in wearable art at Beaver Galleries

Craft

Kerry-Anne Cousins

'COVET: Contemporary jewellery 2019' Beaver Galleries. On until July 7.

Precision and skill, allied with creative innovation characterise the work of Joungmee Do, Daehoon Kang, Melanie Katsalidis, Leslie Matthews, Tae Schmeisser and Robin Wells. These artists use silver and gold, ebony, porcelain and precious and semi-precious stones to form the elements of their small works of wearable art.

Joungmee Do and Daehoon Kang are two Korean artists whose works demonstrate great skill and precision, allied with a poetic sensibility. Both artists draw their inspiration from the natural world and their sensitive use of combining different materials brings a richness and colour to their

work. Joungmee Do's work is based on motifs that have a cultural significance for the artist although with a universal appeal. Her brooches are an abstract arrangement of tiny elements of black coloured steel tipped with gold. In her *Sun flower* brooch these elements form the overlapping 'petals' of the flower. Made from small linked disks in precious metals and black steel, Joungmee Do's necklaces reference the sun and moon and the play of light on dark water as they move delicately to reflect these delicate nuances of light.

Daehoon Kang's works are also engineered with precision yet the artist's inspiration is found in the fluidity of nature. Her forms are based on a sophisticated contemporary version of interwoven knots perhaps akin to those found in Korean textiles. In the *Flow*

brooch, the pairing of ebony with titanium is a particularly lustrous combination with the black shiny ebony contrasting with the deep burnished glow of the metal.

Melanie Katsalidis' self-appointed task is to elevate the status of Australian opals from the crude settings that so often are their fate. Katsalidis has used dark oxidised silver and delicate settings that cleverly do not compete with the display of changing colour and brilliance that characterise this stone.

In the *Suspended small hexagonal square brooch* the ubiquitous bar brooch is reinterpreted with an appealing contemporary twist that displays the opal stones to full advantage.

Leslie Matthew's two *Patterns of Shadow* brooches are made from white unglazed porcelain delicately transcribed with

subtle patterns inspired by the coastal dunes of South Australia. Her neckpieces made from irregular strung organic forms in silver-embossed with textures taken from delicate woven textiles. Some of these neckpieces are also strung with little coloured beads made from jasper, moss agate and Japanese glass forming a poetic

language of form, texture and colour.

Tae Schmeisser's jewellery illustrates common sayings by making them come alive in comic little narratives that take the form of brooches or necklaces. The *Down the rabbit hole* brooch becomes a spiralling narrative wrought as a silver pin complete with tiny rabbit.

The *Wolf Pack* necklace reminds me of an old fashion fob watch chain but with a tiny sculptured wolf holding centre stage instead of a watch.

In their attention to detail and their witty depiction of contemporary mores and skill of execution, Schmeisser's jewellery has something in common with Japanese netsuke.

Robin Wells' brooches and pins in oxidised silver depict the endangered Carnaby cockatoos. The cockatoos are paired with brooches and neck piece of intertwined twig-like forms that recall the bush fires that devastate the bird's habitat. Wells' works are successful as jewellery yet also carry an ecological message involving both the artist and the wearer in a contemporary conversation beyond the work's existence as attractive wearable art.



Melanie Katsalidis - Suspended small hexagonal square brooch.