



# Theatre of Detail

## CALENDAR GIRLS PROJECT

### November: Tiffany Parbs (Tenant 1998 )



Image: Tiffany Parbs self portrait

### Anecdote about Tiff's time at Gray Street Workshop

I procured an access bench at Gray St Workshop in 1998 straight from Art School with the help of Don Ellis and a SAYAB Grant. I distinctly remember feeling intimidated by the calibre of jewellers in the workshop, I couldn't use my tools in front of everyone else and for a long while would steal into the workshop under a cloak of darkness to work. Many cups of tea, daggy music, corny jokes and enthusiastic support from GSW partners and tenants got me through. I learned so much during that year in the workshop; the value of thorough planning from Julie, how to talk about works from Catherine, practical solutions from Sue and patience from Leslie. GSW has always been an incredibly supportive place to learn, laugh and develop as a jeweller, an open honest culture of exchange - I feel really fortunate to have GSW championing in my corner.

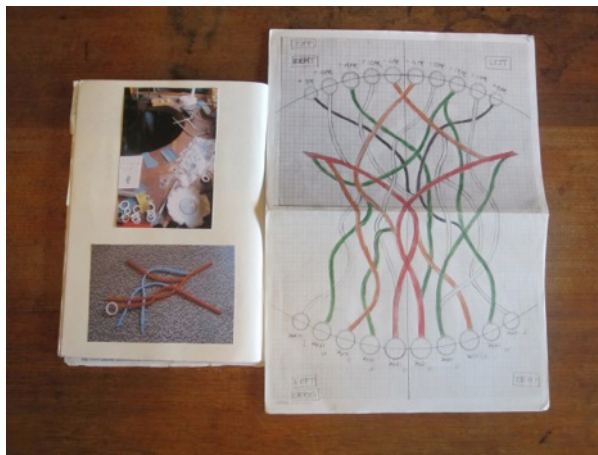


Image 1: *Infuse* work in progress

Image 2: *Infuse*, Tiffany Parbs, 2009, sterling silver, silicon catheters, 320 x 350 x 7mm (object), 340 x 475 x 35mm (print). Photography by Terence Bogue

## Q&A with Tiffany Parbs

### What gives you pleasure in your practice?

My greatest pleasure comes from physically making - there's no greater sensation than sitting at the redgum bench my father made for me twenty years ago and feeling the familiar weight of tools, familiar postures and familiar actions. I get real pleasure from the research process and setting seemingly unfathomable and unachievable challenges for my making, the problem solving of working through conundrums to completion – the process from A to B.



Image: *blister-ring*, Tiffany Parbs, 2005, skin, digital print, 330 x 470 x 40mm. Photography by Terence Bogue

### Do you have a favourite piece, what and why?

My most favourite piece is usually the one just finished and freshest in my mind, so the sense of accomplishment is still current. All my pieces have favourite aspects, whether it's from making, problem resolution, documentation or display, but the one that resonates most for me is *bleed*.

*bleed* was initially created out of a desire to alchemize the structure of sterling silver when placed in close proximity to the body, to alter the physical material of something hard and fixed into something fluid and viscous. *bleed* also comes from a corporeal response to growing older, and cultural assumptions that aging signals a loss of vitality and loss of value. At the core of *bleed* is an expression of personal pain. The pain is intensely personal, my hand is dripping sterling silver because the loss is mine. It was important for me to respectfully capture and preserve this grief.



Image: *Bleed*, Tiffany Parbs, 2013, single channel HD video without sound, 8 min duration, camera by Bernie Ryan

## What usually goes through your mind when you are making work?

Questions, questions and more questions! What am I trying to say? What's the existing context for the idea? Quick, quick, write this down. How am I going to visually represent what I've been researching? What materials will best represent the concept? Do I need to learn new skills to translate the idea? How do I want it to look? Is this working? How can I make it better? Will the idea/piece continue to resonate after one viewing? How come this isn't working? Arrggh! Why am I doing this? KEEP IT SIMPLE!! Why won't this work? This tool/material must be faulty. Bin it - it's not working. Remind me why I'm doing this again! How am I ever going to make this? Why do I always make things so difficult? [Insert generous expletives here]. KEEP IT SIMPLE!!!! Are you kidding me? Why didn't I think of that before?

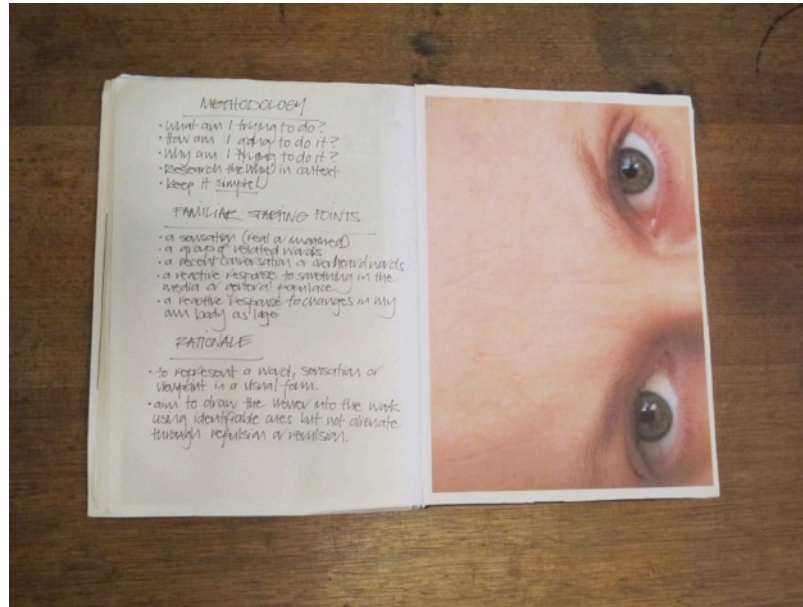


Image: working method

## How do you get from point A – B, from idea to out-come?

Inspiration usually comes from various sources: from social mores, media articles, observed gesture and snippets of conversation, through to a desire to contextualize changes observed in my own body and those around me. Once I get fixated on an idea, I spend considerable time researching associated text and image representations to gain a better understanding of the subject and place my ideas within some kind of narrative framework and identifiable context. During this journal-based research, possible ideas and mental images of potential pieces usually start to emerge. I then conduct low-fi experiments with materials and process (via tests in situ, material play, mock-ups and models), what I lovingly refer to as 'my kitchen experiments', to work through the best way to translate the envisaged works into physical form. If I think I've made a successful representation of the original idea I document and exhibit it, if not, it's trashed and I go back to the drawing board.



Image 1: *growth* in progress.



Image 2: *growth*, Tiffany Parbs, 2009, human hair, cotton net, 580 x 800 x 35mm. Photography by Terence Bogue



# Biography – Tiffany Parbs

Tiffany Parbs completed an *Advanced Diploma in Applied and Visual Arts*, (North Adelaide School of Arts) and Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies (University of South Australia) prior to her tenancy at Gray Street Workshop in 1998. Since then, Parbs has exhibited widely nationally and internationally, with solo exhibitions presented in Australian capital cities and numerous group exhibitions around Australia, America, Chile, England, Japan, Korea, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Parbs has also undertaken several national and international based artist residencies. In 2013 she was awarded an Australia Council Visual Arts Board *Skills and Development Grant London Studio Residency*, culminating in the creation of works for solo projects *gloss* (ACME Studios London) and *gleam* (Gray Street Workshop Gallery). She has lectured in England, Scotland, and Lebanon and her practice is represented in contemporary jewellery based publications as well as the National Museums of Scotland and Manchester Metropolitan University Special Collections.

Parbs's current conceptual practice is concerned with connotations of a worn body. She is intrigued by the transitional relationship between body and object and creates works in response to topical issues prevalent in the media and the pervasive way media positioning influences perceptions in the wider community.



Image: *Baggage*, Tiffany Parbs, 2014, pvc, satin, foam, galvanised iron, digital print 55 x 47 x 17cm (bag unit) 100 x 67cm (digital print).  
Photography by Tobias Titz

## CV – Tiffany Parbs

### education

- 1994-97 *Advanced Diploma in Applied and Visual Arts* (jewellery), North Adelaide School of Arts, Adelaide
- 1989-91 *Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies* (media studies and psychology), University of South Australia, Adelaide

### professional development

- 2013 *Guest Lecturer*, Camberwell College of Arts London, American University of Beirut Lebanon

- 2007 *Artist in Residence*, School of Jewellery, Birmingham Institute of Art & Design, University of Central England, UK  
*Guest Lecturer*, Glasgow School of Art Scotland, Edinburgh College of Art Scotland
- 2003-04 *Assistant and Project Manager*, Susan Cohn/Workshop 3000, Melbourne

#### **select grants and awards**

- 2012 *Skills and Arts Development*, London Studio Residency, Australia Council Visual Arts Board
- 2011 *Ashington Mentorship Scheme*, Helpmann Academy, mentor to Ewa Skoczynska
- 2006 *Skills and Arts Development*, Australia Council Visual Arts Board, VACF Fund
- 2005 *Craft-in-Site*, small grant program, Craft Victoria
- 2004 *Arts Development Program: New Work Creation*, Arts Victoria

#### **select solo exhibitions**

- 2014 *gleam*, Gray Street Workshop Gallery, Adelaide
- 2013 *gloss*, ACME Project Space, London
- 2009 *cosmetic*, Craft ACT, Canberra
- 2008 *cosmetic*, Craft Victoria, Melbourne
- 2005 *embellish*, 2<sup>3</sup> at Sherman Galleries, Sydney

#### **select group exhibitions**

- 2015 *Victorian Craft Award*, Craft Victoria Melbourne
- 2013 *Melbourne Now*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
*Unexpected Pleasures; the Art and Design of Contemporary Jewellery*, Design Museum, London
- 2012 *I am Heathcliff*, Daine Singer Gallery, Melbourne  
*Tough Love*, Australian Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide  
*Unexpected Pleasures; the Art and Design of Contemporary Jewellery*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
- 2011 *Open Mind: International Contemporary Metal Art Exhibition/History & the New Material*, Sungkok Art Museum, Korea
- 2010 *By Example*, The Museum of Arts & Crafts, Itami Japan  
*Extreme Beauty*, Glassel School of Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston USA  
*Salon Vert*, Embassy Gallery Edinburgh Scotland  
*Broadcast Yourself*, Embassy Gallery submission  
*No Soul For Sale: A Festival of Independents* Tate Modern London
- 2008 *Refashioning the Fashion*, Object Australia Centre for Craft and Design, Sydney
- 2007 *Fire, Fire*, The Narrows, Melbourne  
*Goldmember*, The Embassy Gallery, Edinburgh Scotland
- 2006 *Cicely & Colin Rigg Contemporary Design Award*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, NETS touring exhibition  
*City of Hobart Art Prize*, Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery, Hobart
- 2005 *Expiration*, Project Space RMIT University, Melbourne  
*Make the Common Precious*, Craft Victoria, Melbourne and Centro Cultural Estacion Mapocho, Santiago Chile  
*Shades of Gray*, Gray Street Workshop 1985-2005, JamFactory Contemporary Craft & Design, Adelaide

#### **select bibliography**

- 2014 Xiao Liu (ed) *Contemporary Jewellery Art Design*, China Youth Publishing Group and CYP International Ltd, Beijing

- X, Embassy Gallery, Workhorse Press Edinburgh Scotland
- 2013 Susan Cohn, Exhibition in Print: as seen by others: photography as strategy, *Metalsmith*, vol 33(4), pg 20-21  
Damian Skinner (ed), *Contemporary Jewelry in Perspective*, Sterling Publishing New York
- 2012 Susan Cohn, *Unexpected Pleasures: the Art and Design of Contemporary Jewellery*, Skira Rizzoli New York  
Bel Jacobs, 'Jewel purpose and adornments, *Metro News London*, 4/12/2012
- 2011 Liesbeth Den Besten, *On Jewellery*, Arnoldsche Art Publishers, Stuttgart Germany  
Kiwon Wang, *Open Mind: International Contemporary Metal Art Exhibition/History & the New Material* Sungkok Art Museum Korea
- 2010 Miquel Abellán, *Dreaming Jewelry*, Monsa Publishing, Barcelona Spain  
Karen Findeis & Bridie Lander, *By Example*, The Museum of Arts and Crafts Itami Japan  
Kate Fuller 'Conceptual cosmetics, *Barossa Living* Summer 2010, pg 40-42
- 2009 Sakura Yokoyama (ed), Works by Tiffany Parbs: Artist, *+ING Hair Magazine*; Issue 32, pg 38-41, Japan  
Diana Streak (arts ed), 'Body art with a message', *The Canberra Times*, 24/03/09, pg 7
- 2006 Amy Sackville (2006), *New Directions in Jewellery II*, Black Dog Publishing, London
- 2005 Kevin Murray (2005), *Craft Unbound: Make the Common Precious*, Thames & Hudson, Australia

### **Collections**

*Modern Jewellery Collection*, National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

Manchester Metropolitan University Special Collections, Manchester UK

private collections in Australia, England, Iceland, Italy, Scotland, South Africa, Switzerland, USA