



'Daviesia incrassata', 2012, necklace, red jasper and 22 ct gold-plated silver, length 47 cm



'Dampiera', 2014, pendant, gold-plated silver, lapis lazuli, steel cable, 15 x 15 x 15 cm

DOROTHY ERICKSON: 21st-Century Work

Artsite Gallery, Sydney, 1 – 23 November, 2014

DOROTHY Erickson's solo exhibition "Twenty-First Century Work" of jewellery made since the year 2000, opened at Artsite Gallery in Sydney in November, 2014. Coincidentally, her jewellery was also on display in the Powerhouse Museum's current collection-based exhibition, "A Fine Possession – Jewellery and Identity". And four years before, she had also been one of six jewellers from Western Australia to exhibit at Artsite, in "Cinderella's

as 1980, where she exhibited both her Pilbara Collection and Sunset Collection in 1983. Her research and published works have focused on Western Australian histories, notably *Gold and Silversmithing in Western Australia: A History* (Crawley, 2010); *A Joy Forever: The Story of Kings Park and Botanic Garden* (Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority, 2009), *Inspired by Light and Land: Designers and Makers in Western Australia 1829–1969* (WA Museum Publications).

The works in this solo exhibition draw chiefly on Erickson's experiences over time. She says in the gallery brochure, 'My work has varied considerably over the years but enduring interests are colour, geometry and nature', and mentions that past bodies of work have often reflected the light and land of Western Australia. Growing up on a farm at Bolgart in the Toodyay Valley, she must have been influenced to a certain extent by her grandfather who had a goldmine,

and later by training at the newly founded Western Australian Institute of Technology spending time with trade jewellers and visiting artists-in-residence. Her work has always included gold, silver and precious and semi-precious stones to express ideas about her environment. She is now researching her forebears, including a grandmother who crocheted, for a forthcoming "Connections" collection.

The 70 works in this exhibition are presented in two themes. The first is "Her mother's daughter: the wildflower collection". Rica Erickson was a renowned naturalist, wildflower artist and historian, and died in 2009 while her daughter, Dorothy, was researching *A Joy Forever* for Perth's Kings Park and Botanic Garden. Forty-five neckpieces, pendants, brooches, rings and pairs of earrings reflect ideas drawn from many examples of Western Australia's flora, some of them from Rica Erickson's wildflower paintings. Titles include botanical names such as Banksia, Brunonia, Dampiera, Chorizema and Daviesia, and the plants are interpreted through gold and silver forms with coloured stones such as lapis lazuli, sapphire, carnelian, quartz, jasper, amethyst and citrine. Some pieces, with appropriately integrated gemstones, represent twigs, fronds, petals or pods.

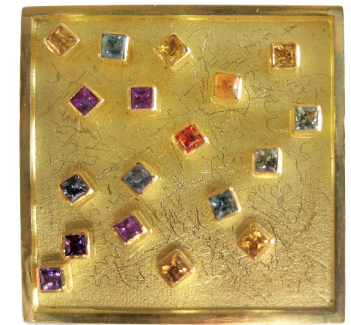
Characteristic is Erickson's use of steel mesh and cable of varying dimensions to suspend pendants, and her clusters of sprays of wires with bead-like attachments that



'Dampiera lavandulacea', 2012, bracelet, stg silver, lapis lazuli and gold-plated beads, 11.5 x 11 x 4 cm

Stories", the exhibition title perhaps implying that artists from such a distance were familiar with being isolated.

But Erickson is far from isolated or unknown. She has been making jewellery since the early 1970s, as well as teaching, researching and writing. She has had many solo exhibitions, starting with her first in Perth in 1977, and has been included in over 300 group shows. She was involved in many of the significant Australian travelling exhibitions from that period, and also made contact with jewellers abroad, such as in Vienna as early



'Abstract Kirche in Cassone', 2004, brooch, 18 ct gold, sapphires, 3 cm sq represent luxuriant floral growth. For example, the fronds of her *Dampiera lindleyi* necklace, which also includes lapis lazuli, gold-plated silver beads and titanium, spring out from round the wearer's neck and shoulders. In contrast some large single stones are set in gold, such as two works identified as *Banksia grandis* which feature lemon quartz: a pendant with mesh cable and a two-finger ring. Some neckpieces and bracelets which refer to plants such as flannel flow-

'Diplolaena augustifolia - Yanchep Rose', 2012, necklace, stg silver, 18 ct gold, carnelian, gold-plated silver beads, steel cable, 30 x 30 x 2 cm



'Adele III', 2004, pendant, 18 ct gold, rhodolite garnet, quartz, garnet beads. 11 x 24 x 0.8 cm



'Nuda Veritas', 2005, necklace, 18 ct gold, carnelian, amethyst, fluorite beads, 13 x 22 cm



'Poesie – Poetry', 2004, brooch, 18 ct gold, with citrine and carnelian, 4.5 x 6 x 1 cm

ers, wattle or boronia, are made of gold-plated silver circlets threaded with matched cut stones such as carnelian, red jasper and quartz. The second theme is identified as the "Homage to Klimt collection". This refers to Erickson's ongoing connection with Vienna, and in particular her interest in the work of the Secessionist artist, Gustav Klimt, known for his symbolist paintings and murals, frequently of nude figures as well as of gardens and landscapes. Inspired by works such as Klimt's *Expectation – Die Erwartung*, *Nuda Veritas – Absolute Truth* and *Kirche in Cassone*, as well as *Beethoven frieze* and paintings of gardens, these pieces of jewellery clearly reflect the geometric shapes and often mosaic-like patterns of colour that appear in Klimt's paintings.

Klimt's painting *Kirche in Cassone*, for example, shows a church on a small hill, behind tall trees, small buildings with windows and a riverbank. Erickson's jewellery on this theme also includes pendants and earrings featuring abstracted lines and forms from the painting – and sapphires! She says it was the availability of a 'wonderful range of multicoloured sapphires that started me on the Klimt journey'. A brooch, *Poesie-Poetry*, in the form of a stringed instrument, refers to a detail in the *Beethoven frieze*, while her pendant/brooches *Apfelbaum* (apple tree) and *Birnbbaum* (pear tree) in the Klimt's Gardens group are tree forms with sapphire and tourmaline leaves or fruit. The slender *Nuda Veritas*

'*Kirche in Cassone*', 2004, brooch, 18 ct white and yellow gold, inset sapphires, 3 x 3 x 0.5 cm

'*Apfelbaum – Apple Tree*', 2004, pendant/brooch, 18 ct gold, tourmaline, 18 ct gold cable, 4 x 4.2 x 7 cm



'*Iolite Expectation*', 2012, ring, sterling silver and iolite



'*Banksia grandis*', 2008, two-finger ring, 18 ct gold, 145 ct lemon quartz



'*Diuris*', 2005, ring, 18 ct gold, lemon quartz and sapphires



'*Lightning Over Perth*', 2004, bracelet, 18 ct gold, sapphires, 10 x 10 cm

pendant is similarly based on a Klimt painting of a nude figure, while her pendant, *Adele III*, refers to the dress and circular collar worn by Adele Bloch-Bauer in another painting.

At first it might seem that the two themes in this exhibition are very different, and that is certainly the case in the geographical location of their subjects. What could be further apart than Gustav Klimt and Western Australian wildflowers? However, it is clear that both collections of work demonstrate Dorothy Erickson's constant interest in form, pattern and colour as well as an astute choice of metals and stones to interpret her close observations in evocations of what surrounds her. In all her works it is also evident that whether a ring, bracelet or brooch, or a complex necklace that moves kinetically on the body, she is very conscious of how jewellery is worn.

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Grace Cochrane is an independent curator, writer and consultant, based in Sydney.

