

Welcome

What to present? I prefer not to explain my work, or what it all means. I am not a purist in my design and making processes and always leave things open for chance and happy accidents. However, there seems to be a golden thread throughout my work practice that might be helpful to categorise.

In short, I create jewellery with creative exploration and processes influenced by poetic forces. I'm interested in the language and value principles of things. I believe that they are intricately linked, and my work reflects this. During my Master's degree I was introduced to Semiotics, I learned how sign processes in language produce meaning which opened up new possibilities. My creative process can be unpredictable and influenced by unusual forces, with each work requiring a unique problem-solving process that can take anywhere from minutes to years.



FOUR CORNERS

Dowse Art Museum, NZ Sept – Nov 2021

These four turning-displays covered four distinct themes/topic principles related to 'VALUE':

- from natural Nature (found and raw surfaces)
- from (or off) manipulated Nature (manipulated raw materials/composites with or off natural materials)
- from imitating Nature (manmade materials, synthetic replacements)
- from perceptive Nature (stigmatised or forbidden/non-ethical materials, materials of perceived value/given value, taboo value, historical value, intellectual value, senses value, memories & stories, etc).



Peter Deckers

in context:

"Observations, Questions, and Dualities of our polarized world."

This photo shows the same pose almost sixty years earlier. As for my background, my upbringing was middle-class and privileged, and I was able to spend all my summers in a beach house playing with nature, making huts and swimming. More and more I was drawn to observing and questioning the polarities of our world in context.

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Between 10 and 15,000 Tibetans were slaughtered in Lhasa



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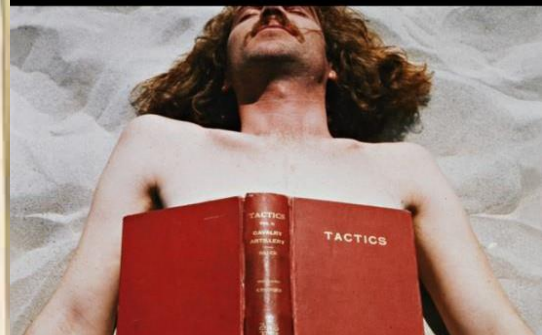
In the sixties, I encountered my first political epiphany and somehow became aware of injustice and undemocratized forces. When TV emerged, I was exposed to the atrocities committed by the Hitler regime, as well as the destructive power of the A-bomb and how political rivalry was played out in the open. However, what affected me the most was an article I read in 1963 about the Tibetan uprising.



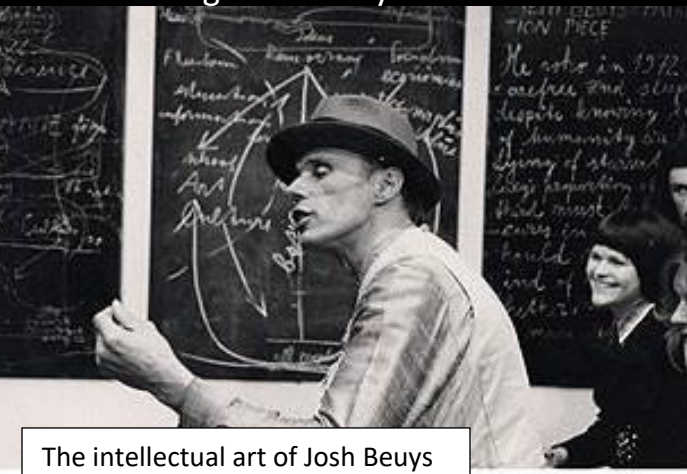
Protest songs of Bob Dylan



Conceptual art of Marcel Duchamp



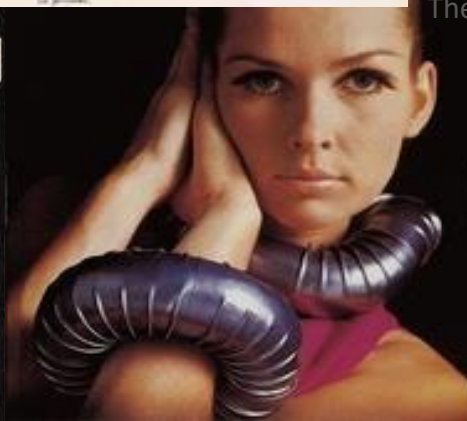
READING POSITION FOR SECOND DEGREE BURN
Stage II. Book, skin, solar energy. Exposure time: 5 hours. Jones Beach. 1970
Performance art of Dennis Oppenheim



The intellectual art of Josh Beuys

happening
&
fluxus

Open-ended Ideas
from DADA & Fluxus



Gijs Bakker



Crazy Welfare State Theater

Through the electronic and the seventies youth revolution, I found myself relating to the ways art creatively got integrated with the mind and modernity.



NATO announced in November 1983 the installation of the new cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe.

This made the Soviet delegation promptly walk out of ongoing Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) talks and did not return until March 1985.

Ultimately, the conclusion of the INF Treaty in 1987 brought the removal of both the SS-20s and their NATO counterparts.



The cruise missiles that were planned on the border of Holland, the effects of Acid rain, dead rivers and lakes, and the thick smog early eighties made us immigrate to NZ, which was not difficult to do at that time.

Moving to New Zealand (Nieuw Zeeland) in 1985 was based on political and environmental reasons.

Questions around VALUE popped up more and more. I wanted to use my art to express concerns about how VALUE is formed, manipulated, abused, and promoted.

How can jewellery be an art form for political, environmental, and economic **value** issues?

Some sample PROJECTS below:

POLITICAL

My anti-nuclear stand grew stronger when the Chernobyl reactor exploded one year later. It was such a privilege that NZ government thought the same.



Chernobyl April 26th, 1986

The hole that released 57 metric tons of poisonous uranium into the air. One year later from our immigration the Chernobyl nuclear disaster happened.

Mourning Jewellery from The Chernobyl Collection



The fictional collection of mourning jewellery from the Chernobyl Collection with background images of sick children affected by the nuclear disaster expresses the silent struggle and suffering from nuclear fallout. (Note: The Chernobyl collection does not exist.)



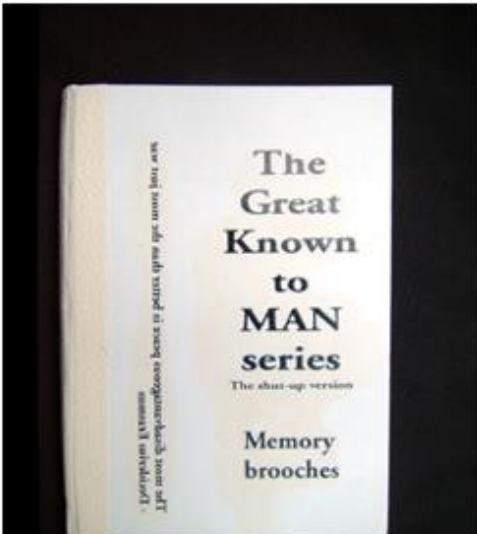
Mourning Jewellery from the Chernobyl Collection, 2004
Mourning Jewellery from the Chernobyl Collection 2004



Shut-up Series

2003-04

The Shut-Up series deals with how we as humans have choices between *Good* and *Evil*.



This cabinet can only be opened by two keys: one made from pure gold and the other made of steel. These keys were the only pieces of jewellery that could be worn as a reminder of one's intentions in life, whether good or bad. The gold key represents the 'good' and can only be used once to open the cupboard, as it destroys itself in the process. A booklet comes with the cabinet, and inside the cabinet are 18 brooches with cut-out pictures of smiling dictators.



These are the dictators or fascists without their smiley mouths that bothered me in my younger live.



Brooches with smiley dictators

**The
Great
Known
to
MAN
series**
The shut-up version
**Memory
brooches**

The most disadvantageous peace is better than the most just war
- Desiderius Erasmus

Peter Deckers

The cover of the booklet had a quote on the spine from Erasmus (16 century Humanist) written in reverse:
The most disadvantageous peace is better than the most just war.

Featuring:

**Franco
Marcos
Castro
Ho
Stalin
Qaddafi
Hitler
Bush
Houssein
Pinochet
Mussoline
Milosevic
Mao
Suharto
Perez
Amin
Khomeini
Pot**





Qaddafi
Hitler
Bush
Houssein
Pinochet
Mussolini
Milosevic
Mao
Suharto
Perez
Amin



ACOUSTIC TILE project was created after I was given an acoustic plaster ceiling tile for an exhibition (*One Eye Gallery, Paekākāriki*).

Acoustic Tile

2004



This installation dealt with the aftermath of the Gulf War of 1990-91 and Nine Eleven.



SHUT UP was written in empty bullet cases. There was sound (of a fly and Bush saying on the day he was informed about 9/11: *I want justice, ahem*).

In the beginning there is... AHEM...



Two toy tanks on the shelf: one *petrol* tank, and one *military* tank.



There are two brooches inside each tank.





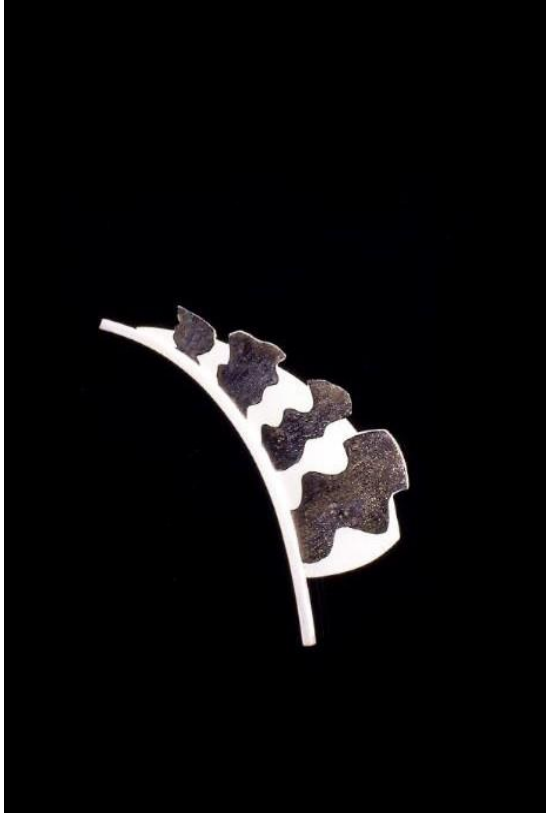
The brooches: left is Barney, dog of Bush and right is Khomeini.



This is an innocent baby who was loved once by his mother. Who is this famous person?

Siden Valley 2006

ENVIRONMENTAL



1985-89
**Environmental
Distortions,**
solo exhibition
1989

When we were
just immigrated
to NZ we
encountered a
cyclone, a
flood, and an
earthquake.





Deflating Standard

AVID, 2015

During my years of practice, we have encountered increasing evidence of global warming, including issues such as ozone depletion, CO2 emissions, rising sea levels, and extreme weather conditions due to fossil fuels (bottom: fossilised coal, and carved wattle representing the biggest recorded hole size in the ozone)



4 stone brooch 2023

Work that portrays the perception of nature: kitchen tile, jasper, beach find, black grout, sterling silver, nickel silver



Pounamu and Silver, 2024



Chrysoprase ring 2023



Pounamu and Silver, 2024



4 mineral brooch 2024

2023-24 work, eg the two pounamu rings hold stigma and the ownership of the material resource. The green chrysoprase was hidden in its surrounding mother rock and has been released from being hidden, and the 4 Mineral Brooch is made from rose quartz, fluorite, beach glass and plastic.



2010

This work, called 'Pleasure Beast', deals with human dominance over nature after seeing an ad promoting giraffe hunting in Africa for \$10K US. This disturbed me, so I created a giraffe silhouette with a detail from a Pollock painting to give the innocent giraffe symbolic space to live in/with.



Cruelty

is the deliberate infliction of physical or psychological pain on other living creatures, sometimes indifferently, but often with delight.

Though cruelty is an overwhelming presence in the world, there is no neurobiological or psychological explanation for its ubiquity and reward value.

(Psychologist Victor Nell, 2006)



The Pleasure Best: in *Moving Targets*
installation, Masterworks, Auckland 2010

Masterwork Gallery, Auckland used to have a wall called: *Think Space*. For that, I created two installations, one dealing with the legalised pleasure killings of innocent animals. The lights were made from shotgun cartridges. The Giraffe is among this installation.



The Beauty Patch : in *Moving Targets* installation, Masterworks. Auckland 2010. detail

The second installation features lasers pointed at society brooches, exploring the value of safety, dominance, and the use of guns for protection.



2011-22 The encounter of invisible immoral foes

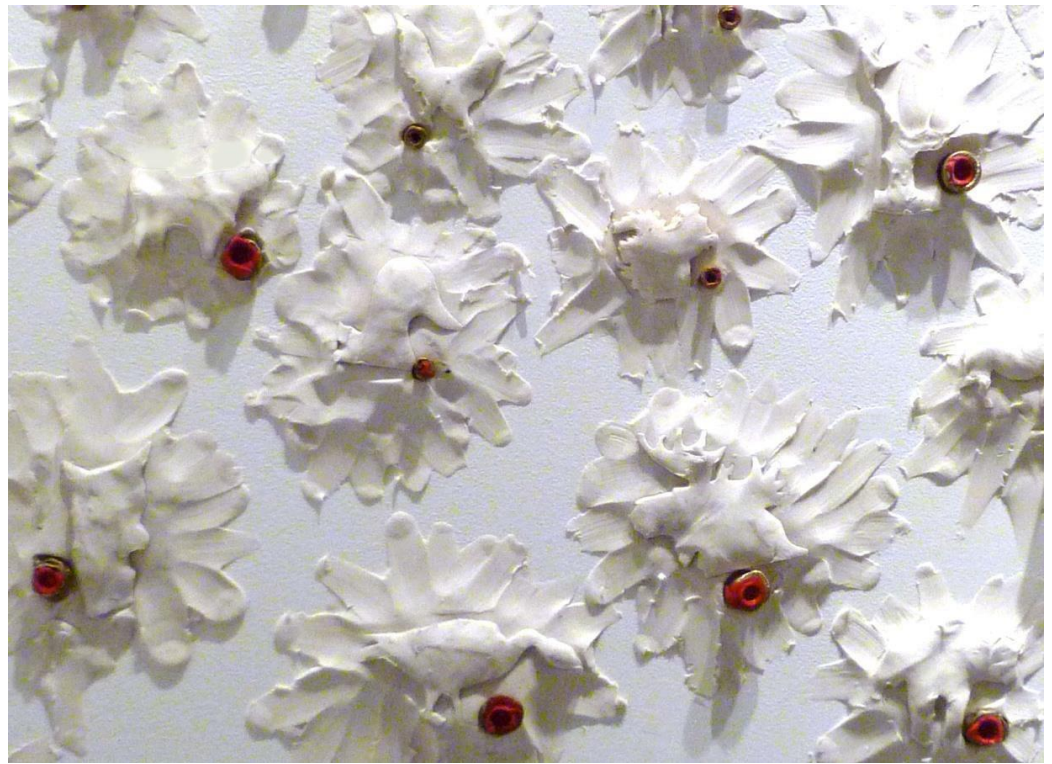
This amulet symbolizes the constant threat of falling prey to the foolhardiness of power, ignorance, and ideology.



Shadow Make-weights, 2010 (installation at Masterworks, Auckland)

An installation made with plasticine, brooches, magnifying glasses, and light projection that throws shadows on the floor. The work deals with the hunting and killing of animals for leisure (i.e. fox hunting, bullfighting, duck shooting, etc).

the
see here.com



The See Here, 2011

This exhibition sparked off a series of other installations. Here the installation is with plasticine, bullet cases, red wax and brooches and was simultaneous with my other installation at the Auckland Art fair



Give and Take installation, Auckland Art Fair 2011

The Auckland Art fair installation with carved and painted Masonite (tempered hardboard) animals, wax and magnifying glasses, nails, and bullet cases.



Give and Take installation, Auckland Art Fair 2011, detail



The killing of any life force should only happen for gathering food (and pest control) and done with great respect for life in a spiritual and human fashion.

RELIGIOUS wars

Throughout history, we have witnessed religious wars that were fuelled by power-hungry rhetoric and with no respect for human life.



Serbian Dream, 1992



Why did the Serbs hate the Bosnians? The root of the problem was that the *Orthodox Christian* Serbs were trying to exact revenge for past actions committed by the Ottoman Turkish Empire. They considered the Bosnian *Muslims* to be a remnant of the Ottoman Empire. The war was between 1992 and 1995. The Serb forces conducted “ethnic cleansing.” The objective was to ethnically purify the Bosnian territory.

de:FORMATION (2013 -14) is based on 'evolutionary changes' from within a system, promoted by outside forces, (re)forming a newer version of itself to the point of deformation

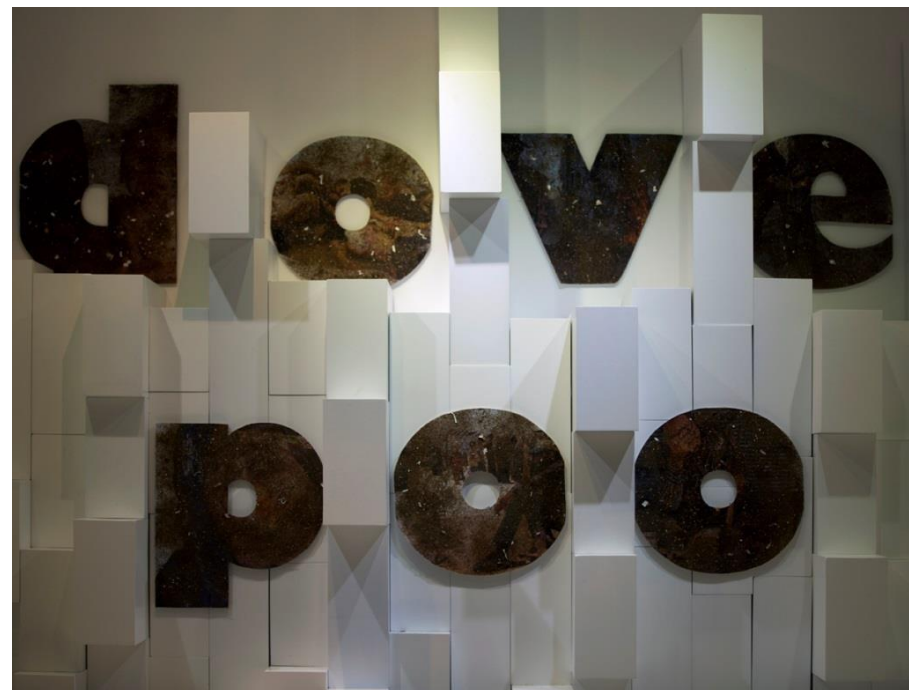


"As near as I can tell, They are fighting over which religion is the most peaceful!"

The installation **de:FORMATION** is based on 'evolutionary changes' from within a system, In the 16 centuries, the wars disrupted the religious and political order in the catholic countries of Europe. Holland was eg at war for 80 years with Spain.



re:FORM series – necklaces, cut books, 2013



Dove Poo (2014 installation)
from the acts of deflation and humiliation

DOVE POO from the acts of deflation and humiliation. This installation expresses concerns over justice, human rights, and suffering. This is more so than ever with the war in the Middle East and the war in Ukraine.

the See here, window display



Each letter had images from the Middle East fighting and/or suffering, This image shows how a 9-year-old i instructed to use a bazooka gun.



Dove Poo (the See here)

The deflated world is entertained by empty olive branches that solve very little.



DOVE POO brooch on a deflating earth beach ball



PERCEPTIVE VALUE



Perceptive VALUES are values that are connected to the intrinsic nature of objects. How we read objects through external and internal interferences.



During the war, my mother cut out the head of the Dutch queen from devalued Dutch silver coins for a jeweller who made bracelets. In return, she received food instead of money. This story inspired me because it overlays many value principles, including the *symbolic value* of hope.

Inclusion, 2003, pair of earrings

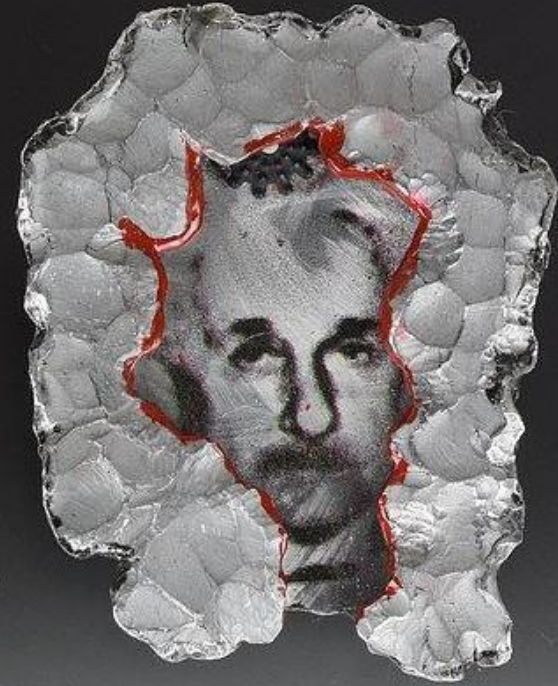


2006



2000

The animal silhouettes first appeared in an object and sound installation called *'NOW THEN, who owns what?, from 2000.*



Mind Game, 2018

Another important value theme is *Intellectual Value* and how that intellect is used within somebodies' existence.



'The One and Only' deals with people and situations who operate differently within our system. The second-hand custom jewellery highlights the negative spaces between the faux stones by the overlay of oxidised nickel-silver rings.

The One and Only, 2010



Objects evoke stories and emotions forming a new value appreciation. A person once shared that their ordinary-looking ring is most *invaluable*. After saving for three years to afford a wedding ring, an elderly person was able to purchase the wedding rings. These two rings with the inscription "6 Month Interest-Free" were made in response.

Wedding Award. 2000



LIGHT REFLECTION

uncontained WATER: *the most precious creation for life.*

Why do we humans like shiny objects? It might come from the evolution of millions of years looking at the stars, or in the search for finding precious water. The light flickering through dense bush revealed to our primal forebears where a precious water source could be.

Life force contained within a condom, 2023.



Ten Most Wanted, 2000

This ring deals with the stories that instantly and unplanned change somebody's existence. I am thinking of the school shootings, 9-11, the Christchurch shootings, bombings, etc. The stones in this ring are all criminal faces from the FBI's 10 most wanted list from 2000. Look at Bin Laden in the left bottom corner.



2023

Man-made lab stones may be of value. These stones read real with instruments but are made in a lab. Authentic stones are often mined from resources leading to massive land devastation or used as financial commodities by warlords who employ child labour in their mines.



2024

This stone reads real but is manufactured in a lab. Black diamonds do not reflect the light, However the material mirrors and promotes how unique the hardness is of diamonds. This style of jewellery brings me back to how I started making jewellery in 1972. Accept the making is now more pleasurable, quicker, purposeful, less restrained, and more creative. This series is at Avid Gallery, Wellington.

PD BIO: <https://handshakeproject.com/bio-peter-deckers/>

WHAT ELSE besides the
jewellery-making practice?

Designing and building
the Akatarawa [workshop & house](#)



1991



1992



2020



2020



2023

Lecturing contextual design, and coordinating & teaching
the jewellery course at [Whitireia Polytechnic](#) for 31 years
1990 - 2021



Whitireia Polytechnic, Te Auaha, Wellington
jewellery workshop 2019 - 2021

Coordinating and developing the
mentor, development, & exhibition programmes
2011 - 2026:

the [HANDSHAKE project](#)

<https://handshakeproject.com>



Makers 101



more

[The HANDSHAKE project](#)

A project that gives selected emerging NZ jewellery artists opportunities to grow and experience professional activities in the form of networking, development, marketing, and exhibiting.

Remaining 2024 **HS8** programme: mentorship, masterclasses, and final exhibition at Pah Homestead, Auckland

In 2025: during the Sydney Biennial: **HS alumni** exhibition at Stanley Street Gallery, Sydney

In 2026: final **HS alumni** exhibition at CODA Museum, Apeldoorn, the Netherlands

OBJECT MAKER Aotearoa Fellowship

is a critical and generative learning opportunity for ten emerging New Zealand contemporary artists who work in object-based disciplines with materials such as glass, ceramics, metals, plastics, stone, textiles, wood, natural and found materials.

[Learn more](#)

<https://objectmaker.co.nz/>

A new art development opportunity for artists in the object media is the **Object Makers Aotearoa** fellowship programme. The programme is based on the programmes and structure of the HANDSHAKE project.

Coordinating the NZ jewellery project:
the **AOTEAROA JEWELLERY TRIENNIAL**

<https://aotearojewellery.org.nz/new-zealand-jewellery-triennial/>



AOTEAROA

Jewellery Triennial

The **second** jewellery Triennial will be at the **Suter Art Gallery Te Aratoi o Whakatū** in Nelson
10th April to 4th May 2025, curator *Sian van Dyk*

Organising, coordinating, and installing:
JEWELLERY EXHIBITIONS



The Refinery, Nelson, 2021



IHM, Munich, 2013



CODA Museum, NL, 2020



The Crypt, London, 2018

thank you

MORE:

Art practice

<https://handshakeproject.com/bio-peter-deckers/>

Art development

<https://aotearoajewellery.org.nz/makers-bio/>

any questions?