

# Meghan O'Rourke



Untitled Bracelet 1, 2007. Anodized sterling silver, 18ct gold, 120 (diam) x 20. Untitled Bracelet 2, 2007. Sterling, 18ct gold, 90 (diam) x 20. Photograph: Tom Rossin

Meghan O'Rourke's early explorations took the form of small rectangular units composed of tiles and imprinted with the sandblasted shapes of foliage. Related designs were syndicated across a range of items including necklaces, earrings and jewellery vessels. Clustered and layered brooch and necklace designs (in both anodised titanium and aluminium) inspired by coral growth and foliage have also figured prominently. From late 2007 more evident sculptural qualities emerged in a series of bracelet, necklace and vessel forms cut from sheets of steel (blackened by heating), an industrial material usually associated with large scale public art works.

## Visualisation

For the artist, realizing ideas as items of sculpture and jewellery requires research and meticulous planning. She takes photographs of scenarios and objects that catch her eye and imagination. Many of her designs are developed and refined on computer (Photoshop). Of her working methods O'Rourke comments, "There are two contrasting elements of working in my practice, on one hand I like having complete control – using the computer to make templates and creating specific colours through anodising. However I also enjoy working spontaneously, having a whole selection on my bench and making assemblages from them... where ideas can jump around a little."



## Realisation

The bracelet forms with cactus-like embellishments incorporate small punch marks similar to decorative marking used in another series of work, *Pod Brooches* in which these kinds of shapes and markings were inspired by tree foliage and rain drops on leaves on a wet day. The linear-nodule cluster forms that compose the *Cluster Brooch* are derived from close observation of coral growth. The designs and patterns which form the bowl were inspired by traditional architectural features observed during a 2008 residency in New Delhi India.

## Process

As a jewellery student acquiring silver smithing skills, O'Rourke glimpsed the technical potential and the technical possibilities of anodizing.\* More recently the artist has extended technical options by reworking anodised and shaped forms by drilling, punching and sanding then re-anodising to build complex layers of textures and colours. The advantage of the anodizing process is that a different level of voltage will produce a range of different colours without eliminating areas of original colour.

\* Anodising is a process that produces a translucent oxide film on the surface of titanium or aluminium. In the case of aluminium it is then dyed and in titanium it is naturally occurring but controlled by a process of electrolytic oxidation. (artist's notes)

## Inspiration

The artist's entire working environment is a source of constant inspiration – like a wrap-around visual diary. Ideas often evolve out of reconsidering a single piece or sometimes bringing different 'samples' together to see how they look. Botanical forms have featured prominently in O'Rourke's work. Sources of inspiration are as varied as plants and botanical specimens, shadows and reflections, marine environments and architecture. The artist's work also explores the optical qualities of metals through the use of colour, contrasting texture and the layering of surfaces. The artist often uses luminous or reflective surfaces, layered with pattern and colour.

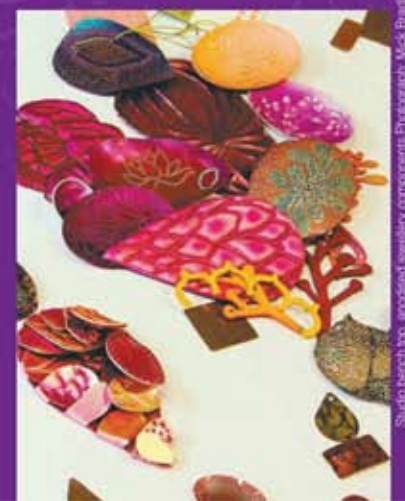
"I aim to create desirable and precious jewellery that is both playful and ornate"



Studio bench top, remaining sections of paper cartoons created by metal piercing and sawing process Photograph: Mick Bradley



Architectural detail India, 2008. Photograph: Meghan O'Rourke



Studio bench top, anodised jewellery components Photograph: Mick Bradley