Understanding Complexities of the Body-Object-Space

Understanding Complexities of the Body–Object–Space

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Abstract

This practice-led research seeks to expand an understanding of the body–object–space through wearable objects that challenge the boundaries of contemporary jewellery in the visual arts. This studio research aims to accentuate a space that may otherwise be unnoticed by extending or limiting the senses through the placement of ambiguous objects on the body.

The exegesis analyses the co-dependency between human and wearable objects, the inner being and outer being, and the process whereby wearable objects gain value from the maker, wearer and viewer. Revealing the body–object–space as co-actors, performances captured in photography and video may offer different perspectives of relational space, which could be intimate or public. As such, this research has utilised photography and video to document people in movement wearing the jewellery and small objects I have made during my candidature.

At the outset of the research, I considered how movement offers us an important way to understand how the body and wearable objects work, allowing us to comprehend the space around the body, including the psychological processes that are evoked. This led to the realisation that the body–object–space is a place where we create and relate; hence, it helps us to understand human nature and identity.

Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

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Vivien Bedwell

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Introduction

Jewellery and small objects worn or not worn on the body offer a unique set of intimate and public relationships and functions. These objects may represent our reflections of our surroundings, the way we see ourselves, the way others see us, and the intimate gap between us and the rest of the world. Whether these objects are worn on the skin or extend from the body, they can create an awareness of parts of the body that may otherwise be unnoticed and may offer possibilities of performing our innermost expressions. These objects could be shrines, mementos, or political statements, and offer augmentation, enhancement, empowerment or contain sentimental value; regardless, all carry meaning only when we give them meaning.

Humans have created many ways of self-expression and the possibilities for communication and body enhancements are endlessly evolving. Technological advances in fields such as Artificial Intelligence, bioengineering and nanotechnology constantly pursue the potential to enhance the way the body functions. Will this lead to a loss of awareness of the way physical objects activate the body and vice versa? Will our bodies evolve and alter the way we physically function and interact to accommodate these new advances? Will we lose touch with our natural physical abilities? My practice-led research explores the activation of body–object–space to challenge the body and mind by highlighting the physical possibilities that extend beyond the body.

My practice-led research was directed at an audience interested in wearable objects that challenge traditional boundaries. The aim was to investigate the spatial awareness that surrounds the body and the movement that occurs in that space, by creating objects that are activated through interaction or intra-action by the maker, wearer and viewer (simultaneously or separately). The objects created over my candidature extend from the body or create a barrier between the body and the surrounding space. My practice accentuates spaces that may otherwise be unnoticed and aims to create an awareness of the movement, and the psychological experience, of the body. Some objects created through this research were a response to limitations, based on the awareness of our own relational space, sensations, or connections.

The initial research focussed on the areas surrounding our body parts that are important for communication and movement, such as the fingertips, the wrist, the mouth and ears. The objects created for the research all have different functions and enforce a certain degree of limitation. It was recognised quite early in the research that imposing limits was a consistent feature of each object, but they also highlighted an unnoticed area beyond the body. The body–object–space challenges the senses conceptually by urging the audience to question the relationship between the body and object.

The analysis of exemplars and literature for this research was not restricted to the field of jewellery; sculpture and performance-based work were also investigated to gain insight from different perspectives, particularly on the way work is displayed at exhibitions. The work of scholars and art historians Leisbeth den Besten, Susan Cohn, Pravu Mazumdar, Damien Skinner, Yi-Fu Tuan, Umberto Eco and Jivan Astfalck provided important views for this research in relation to the body and objects worn on the body. This research aims to understand ideas and theories of the body by the aforementioned scholars, and to interpret them within the context of highlighting unnoticed spaces surrounding the body. This is completed through presenting the interaction or performance that occurs in relation to the body–object–space.

Considering the different ways the objects made through this studio research are viewed and interacted with by audiences became an increasingly important factor. At the beginning of my candidature in 2019, I intended the audience to physically interact with the objects. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, I needed to keep in mind that physical interaction with the objects may not always be possible, especially during the height of the pandemic. The experience of the work between body, object and the audience may not be felt as strongly due to social distancing protocols. The interactions within the body–object–space that are documented may need to be amplified to imagine the full experience of the work. Close up photography, exaggerated body movement or dynamic performance by video were all considered for this purpose.

The human body and wearable objects function in a multi-faceted way through a complex myriad of combinations. It is important to try to understand this in the context of visual art where the wearable object presents significance far beyond an ornamental

function. This research takes into account the different relations that exist in the space between the body and object but also attempts to understand the conceptual underpinnings of contemporary jewellery, and to recognise the value of this field within the visual arts.

Literature Review

Contemporary jewellery challenges the traditional idea that jewellery and wearable objects are merely used for adorning or decorating the body, and it has a unique position within visual arts and culture. Susan Cohn and Glen Adamson, writers and researchers in the field of contemporary jewellery and craft, suggest a certain alignment with Surrealism, because such work explores not only the human-made world in terms of values and the emotion it stimulates in us but also an "alternative commercialism" that blends high art with mass culture.[1] From a maker's perspective, intuition plays an important role in the process of creation, which is subconsciously guided by values and emotion. This also allows the inner world to be explored in the objects that are created, which then potentially can inspire the wearer, the viewer or other makers.

In her lecture at the Radiant Pavillion Seminar in Melbourne, September 2019, art historian Liesbeth den Besten argued that a collection doesn't make sense without the person: the objects need the story and context.[2] This bold statement can be attached to almost all objects. Without the maker, we do not have the initial birth or development of the idea behind the object. Without the wearer or owner, there is no activation or additional meaning given to the object. Without the viewer, there is no interpretation, which adds value again to the object in terms of its intellectual worth rather than its monetary value. Jewellery and objects need human activation. Den Besten posited that "when a collection is put into a museum, its best life is over and the objects acquire a different meaning".[3] Indeed, when placed into a museum, the role of the body and the physical and psychological interaction is no longer there, which may lead to misinterpretation and an intellectual undervaluation of the work.

The body is where the conception of the wearable object takes place. In *On Jewellery: A Compendium of International Contemporary Art Jewellery*, den Besten constructs a chronological survey of decorating or not decorating the body through contemporary

[1] Susan Cohn, "A Brief Contemporary Jewellery History," in *Unexpected Pleasures: The Art and Design of Contemporary Jewellery*, ed. Susan Cohn (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2012), 222; Glen Adamson, "Metal Against Body," in *Unexpected Pleasures: The Art and Design of Contemporary Jewellery*, 96–98.
[2] Liesbeth den Besten, "Collections," presented at the Radiant Pavilion Seminar, RMIT, Melbourne, Radiant Pavillion Seminar, 9 September 2019.
[3] Ibid.

objects from the 1960s to the early 2000s. The type of work I have been researching has lineage throughout these decades. From the 1960s, the body became part of the new genre of Performance and Body Art, which became an international phenomenon. In the 1980s, jewellery makers began to look more closely at the relationship between the body, movement, gestures and geometric forms, and to explore the beauty and individual features of the body.[4] In recent years, there has been more focus on the psychological, corporeal experience of the body and the documentation of the work confronting the uncomfortable. All these themes have strong connections with my research.

Art historian Marjan Unger's explanation of the body "Man as measure" is relevant to my research as I believe the physical body is a vehicle for the mind to understand perception and the body's place on this earth. The objects made for this research extend past the body as a means of highlighting an unnoticed space; therefore, the extensions could be instruments of measurement. Unger's view is that jewellery items are worn in prominent places on the body where the decorative effects are most effective and where they can best be attached, such as the frame of the face and the moving, slender parts of the body.[5] This is a simple yet very important fact to remember when dealing with visual language, especially when aiming to highlight areas of the body that aren't usually noticed.

Pravu Mazumdar stated in his lecture at the Pinakothek der Moderne in 2014 that jewellery can question certain distinctions used to establish human identity. From the moment a piece of jewellery is worn, a two-fold metamorphosis takes place. Firstly, the jewellery transforms from an object in a showcase to an object in relation to the body; secondly, the body of the wearer transforms into a work of art.[6] Mazumdar elaborates that the body is a stage for jewellery where transformation unfolds.[7] This assumes that the object and the wearer experience transformations that occur separately and

[4] Liesbeth den Besten, *On Jewellery: A Compendium of International Contemporary Art Jewellery* (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche Art Publishers, 2012), 127–129.
[5] Marjan Unger, *Jewellery in Context: A Multidisciplinary Framework for the Study of Jewellery* (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche Art Publishers, 2019), 52.
[6] Pravu Mazumdar, "Understanding Surfaces on Jewellery and Identity," Die Neue Sammlung Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, 16 March 2014, https://issuu.com/rainerschmitzberger/docs/mazumdar_dns.
[7] Ibid.

simultaneously. But one can't transform without the other; therefore, they are co-dependent, performing together. When they are apart, that performance or transformation simply can't happen.

When a viewer looks at an object by itself, especially when its purpose, context or meaning is ambiguous, their interpretations of the object can be endless. The viewer can imagine the purpose for it to exist and make up numerous uses for it. When an object moves by itself, it is animated, but how does the body relate to it? When the object is on the body in a photograph, there is more context; the mind is guided as to how the object has a relation to the body. When the object is on the body and is moving, there is a performance; the viewer not only can see the context, but they can also see the co-dependency of the relationship that is unfolding. The body, the object and the space work together to form a connection to possible unexplored or unnoticed areas between them.

Made prior to the commencement of my candidature, the *Body Cues* series (Figures 1 and 2) created for the 2019 exhibition *Nuda Vita I* reflected on how society treats and possibly misunderstands disability and illness, particularly in public environments. The work culminated in a two-part headpiece consisting of aluminium goggles that the wearer is unable to see through when worn, and a snorkel where one end is fitted into the mouth and the other end has Tactile Ground Surface Indicators (TGSI) attached on a wheel. When the headpiece is worn, the wearer is restricted with sight and voice, and the TGSIs are placed in a redundant way, misplacing a useful tactile resource for sensual wayfinding. The intention of the work was to present resources that are vital for people with impairments in a manner that rendered them useless. This was a conceptual reflection on the way these resources are not correctly placed or maintained. The work was photographed on the body in public spaces and the photographs were exhibited with the objects. When compared to the work without the body, the photographs of the work worn on the body display the context of the physical and social impacts when impairment resources are not correctly used or maintained. I found that the audience was drawn to the photographs first before viewing the actual object on display. Peter Dormer argues that photography wields an immensely powerful influence over artists, because it is a way the work is communicated to the world and to posterity in an ideal

position, on an ideal body.[8] The objects worn in the photograph become virtual objects that are not necessarily functional for daily wear but are powerful as images presenting signs that can be read. Damian Skinner supports the importance of jewellery photography, explaining that the photograph offers constructive fictional experiences with the jewellery object, becoming a way the maker is able to communicate and enhance understanding of how a piece functions or disrupts expectations.[9]

Figure 1 Vivien Bedwell, *Way Finding,* 2019, aluminium, polyurethane, silicon, rubber. Photography by Joan Porcel Pascual.

[8] Peter Dormer, "The Body and Jewellery," in *Unexpected Pleasures*, 108.
[9] Damian Skinner, ed., *Contemporary Jewellery in Perspective* (New York: Sterling Publishing, 2013), 25.

Figure *2* Vivien Bedwell, *Way Finding*, 2019, aluminium, polyurethane, silicon, rubber. Photography by Ilaria Ruggerio.

Video is a widely used medium that offers viewers an experience of wearable objects, enhanced by the increased use and accessibility of digital platforms such as the internet and social media. A video performs like a photograph by depicting a wearable object's functions and disfunctions with the addition of movement and sound, which adds an extra dimension in portraying possibilities. Movement and sound enhance the experience by suggesting that the performance exists as a reality.

The work of artist Lucy McRae has been extremely influential in the development of my practice. Her survey exhibition *Body Architect* at the National Gallery of Victoria in 2020 was an example of body–object activation in a gallery environment. McRae explores other ways of being and possibilities for the human body, putting the body through scientific and futuristic scenarios.[10] This exhibition immediately resonated with me because of the playful way the artist explored wearable objects. I responded to the way McRae presented and documented the work through photography and filming performances of the body. In particular, *Body Architect* displayed photographs on large

[10] Simone LeAmon, ed., *Lucy McRae: Body Architect* (Melbourne, Victoria: Council of Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria, 2019).

LCD screens, which kept the continuity of being mesmerised by a screen and anticipating movement. Each image depicted the body in a shapeshifting superhero position in ways that persuade the imagination and present possibilities to the viewer.

As the viewer walked through the gallery, the images began to have some movement of the body or objects worn. Each monitor, one after another, showed more movement than the previous monitor, each telling a different story. These short documentaries culminated with the film *Institute of Isolation* (2016). As a viewer, I felt engaged with these stories and began to visualise the narrative by watching the body and object movements gradually play out on the monitors. This survey displayed a dynamic way of engaging the audience with an experience about the body without them actually experiencing the objects, stimulating the imagination with performance. Observing the body movements and listening to the story behind the objects in a documentary style, I was prompted to imagine the possibilities for the body. Mechtild Widrich argues that documentation is the 'faithful' companion of performance.[11] Performance in itself is a type of public art—it encounters social forces and causes social reactions that, in their visibility and documentation, acquire monumental authority.[12]

Loudie Kardouss, a professional dancer working in parallel with contemporary jewellery, has also harnessed the possibilities of video to depict wearable objects. Her website features a link to her video work *A Jewellery Piece* (2019), and directly above the link is a comment by Kardouss: "Joining forces to give life and constantly renew the shape of the jewel and acting together in the same space-time is a social act."[13] The video depicts a large-scale necklace containing bodies in fishnet cocoons, and it captures the gradual choreographed movement of the bodies, giving life and rhythm to the necklace. This live performance was held at various international exhibitions of film and jewellery. I found this video effectively expressed the movement between the body and object in highlighting an alternative view of the space. This work has the potential to create an awareness of certain body movements and possible relational aspects between the body, the object and space, which is important to my practice.

[11] Mechtild Widrich, *Performative Monuments: The Rematerialisation of Public Art* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2014), 15.
[12] Ibid., 4.
[13] Loudie Kardouss, *A Jewellery Piece*, 2019, http://www.lodiekardouss.com/work-aJewelryPiece.html.

Yuka Oyama's research publication *The Stubborn Life of Objects* offers an important insight on the relations and activation between the body and object. Oyama draws from Japanese traditional culture, explaining that it treats humans, objects, animals and nature as equal elements with no hierarchy, as each has a soul.[14] While informed by traditional culture, Oyama adds many facets to her jewellery practice through sculpture, craft art, performance, fashion, industrial and costume design. Oyama explains the evolution of her work in three phases as she gene-manipulates jewellery art. The first is to exaggerate the scale of the work to dramatise the impact of the work, converting them to wearable sculptures that break free of the conventions that jewellery has to be small. The second is to animate the wearable sculptures by documenting them in performances with film, and the third is to add intimacy to the work by investigating domestic objects and how to establish an emotional relationship with the owners.[15] I found my practice has similar aspects to Oyama's research regarding body and object activation. Oyama explores the social and psychological relationships between the wearable object and the body, investigating how objects can communicate through photography and film. It is important to see how practitioners interpret the body, the object and the space, as there are many ways this area can be depicted. This artist transforms intimate works to a larger wearable scale and performs pieces to show the objects independently in a private space but also documents the objects worn in public space. The objects look like they are difficult to wear and serve a surreal perspective.

Other artists whose works I have examined for this research include Zoe Robertson, Tiffany Parbs, Daniella Saraya, Daniel Ramos, Peter Skubic, Lygia Clarke and Rebecca Horn. All of them explore, in their unique ways, the relationship between wearable objects and performance. However, due to space limitations, their work is not discussed in detail here.

[14] Yuka Oyama, *The Stubborn Life of Objects*, *Reflection on an Artistic Project 2012-2017* (Oslo: Oslo National Academy of the Arts, Department of Art and Craft, The Norwegian Artistic Research Fellowship Programme, 2017), 12.
[15] Ibid., 17.

Exploring Relations

Creating Connections

In the *Oxford Dictionary of English Grammar*, the word "relation" is defined as generally describing a connection between units at any level.[16] By researching the body–object–space, I realised it is important to acknowledge the relational aspect of this work as it relies significantly on the connections that are created not only in the body–object–space but also between the maker, wearer and viewer. If areas of the body–object–space are activated in a manner that is ambiguous, am I trying to achieve a unique relation?

Cohn explains that the relationship of the body to the object has shifted as a result of transitions in knowledge;[17] nevertheless, the fundamentals of the body as object (something we have), as subject (something we are), and as process (something we become) remain the same. What has essentially changed, Cohn states, is the relationship of the body (user-wearer) to an object, an audience, and even the maker.[18] Cohn made this statement to challenge contemporary jewellers to integrate jewellery theory with social context, identity management and performance. However, when looking at the history of contemporary jewellery and wearable art that crosses over different disciplines, body theory and exploration have always been in the foreground. Some examples of artists who have demonstrated this are Caroline Broadhead, Gerd Rothman, Oskar Schlemmer and Lygia Clark, to name a few. Objects are made almost always with body codes, values and meaning regardless of their purpose, whether it be for ornamentation, politics, sentimental value or even production objects. As time progresses, more is learnt about the body and these transitions are reflected in the way objects are made, worn, viewed and used, and the way the body relates to them.

Relational aesthetics is a theme that has a connection with contemporary jewellery, mainly because of the various interactions people have with the object—for example,

[16] *The Oxford Dictionary of English Grammar*, 2nd ed. (Sydney: Oxford University Press, 2004), https://doi.org/10.1093/acref/9780199517965.001.0001.
[17] Susan Cohn, "Recoding Jewellery: Identity, Body, Survival," PhD dissertation, University of New South Wales, 2009, 115, http://handle.unsw.edu.au/1959.4/43809.
[18] Ibid.

making it, wearing it, gifting it, looking at it. This seems to align with the definition of relational aesthetics provided by Nicolas Bourriaud: “art taking as its theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an independent and private symbolic space”.[19] With the different ways available to interact with a jewellery object, there is usually a simultaneous overlap of social interaction as well as independent and private symbolic meaning. Contemporary maker, curator and academic Helen Carnac explains that more jewellery makers are embracing the view that the work doesn’t stop at the making stage. Carnac questions the theory of relational aesthetics by asking if the mode of collaborative making and audience engagement causes the significance of the object to be lost. More specifically, will there be aspects of the body and object relationship that will become lost?[20]

In her extensive interrogation of relational aesthetics, art historian Claire Bishop has raised the topic of relational antagonism. She explains this as being faced with a situation that confronts and pushes boundaries, which urges the audience to decentre their identity, and to rethink and transform their sense of self.[21] Bishop discusses antagonism as seeking quality relations from subjecting or presenting the audience not only with socially harmonic subjects, but also to thoughts and themes that are repressed from harmonic situations, which provides a more concrete ground for rethinking our relationship to the world and to one another.[22] Relational antagonism can create tensions to question our existence, push boundaries of the body, or address complex social or political ideas. My research looked at areas of the body that aren’t usually highlighted to encourage a different perception or relation between object, body and space. There is a certain degree of antagonism in this research with social aspects and body limitations in mind; however, I am not pushing a complex or aggressive agenda, but rather seeking different ways to explore human capabilities by expanding the way wearable objects are positioned within visual arts. Therefore, ‘antagonism’ does not fully resonate with this research but is still poignant, as I am seeking to comprehend the

[19] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics,* trans. Fronza Woods with Mathieu Copeland Simon Pleasance (Paris: Les presses du reel, 2002), 14.
[20] Helen Carnac, "Thinking Process: On Contemporary Jewelry and the Relational Turn," in *Contemporary Jewelry in Perspective,* 235–236.
[21] Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *October* 110 (2004), 53–55, https://www.jstore.org/stable/3397557.
[22] Ibid., 79.

body–object–space as a form of art beyond decoration and to offer ways that objects can open up different interpretations. To achieve this, there needs to be an understanding of the body's abilities and limitations.

Umberto Eco's *The Open Work* explains ambiguity in modern artworks as the product of contravening established conventions of expression; the less conventional the forms of expression are, the more scope they allow for interpretation.[23] He further adds that because modern art possesses a high degree of unpredictability of their contravention of established conventions of expression, these works convey an exceptionally high degree of information but not necessarily meaning.[24] Eco's explanation of ambiguous art resonates with the type of objects made in this research. The objects are made, worn, performed and depicted in ways that do not necessarily have a function for conventional use; however, they are filled with information that could be understood in different ways. By providing viewers with different ways of viewing the body–object–space, the work could awaken effects in a viewer that may impact themselves, other people, or the environment.

Interaction, participation and social context are important aspects of the body–object–space to explore, and jewellery and wearable objects offer complex opportunities for public and intimate interaction. The relational aspect of wearable objects can occur in layered experiences. As a result of the work created for this research and looking at artists researching similar ideas, it became evident that bodily movement with the object is the key trait to experiencing wearable objects, and the relational aspects can occur in multiple ways—making, wearing, viewing or experiencing. Movement provides life; even when the body is stationary, there is movement, which contributes to the context of the body–object–space.

The final works that were created for this research aimed to capture movement and to open up possibilities with the introduction of simple sounds. As discussed further in following chapters, *Golden Ear* (Figure 21) and *Digit Wheel* (Figure 23) highlight through

[23] Umberto Eco, *The Open Work.* trans. Anna Cancogni (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989), 11.
[24] Ibid., 12.

photography and video the alternative ways that the body can relate to objects that do not have a daily function. By combining the movement and sound in the body–object–space, these works dynamically depict messages that are open for different interpretations.

Cohn has argued that contemporary jewellers have a tendency to take for granted the significance of the body in imparting meaning to the jewellery object, arguing they have rarely engaged in the important debates about the body.[25] Instead, they have considered the body in relation to the functional and decorative aspects of the object.[26] It is important to know and explore functional and decorative elements as this is where the basic aspects of the body are understood. There could possibly be different levels of relations that jewellers do explore, but it hasn't been formally mapped out in theory. Elaborating on this, I ask: how can we understand more of the body if we don't know how it relates to anything else in this world? In terms of transitions of knowledge, since 2009, the term "relations" has shifted and not only includes human interactions of an intimate and social context, but also covers human to object to space, as this all affects the relationships that occur. When it comes to wearable objects, who is looking at the body–object–space combination? Particularly during COVID times, more artists are exploring this area and making objects to understand the inner and outer worlds. For example, Theresa Milheiro's *Surgery Tools Inox* (2020) are surgical scissors with extensions that reach out to clamp when the scissors are activated. The objects were made during a time of social distancing where Milheiro reflected on intimacy, erotica and financial relief, topics that are private but are familiar to all people. The objects are photographed by themselves but are also performed being used, such as using the scissor clamps to pinch the nipple area of another person's clothing while remaining a certain distance away, or using the clamps to take money out of a person's back pocket. This not only urges the audience to reflect on their own situation but also to think about how intimate relations and financial relief occur during social distancing, which affects the global population.

[25] Cohn, "Recoding Jewellery: Identity, Body, Survival," 98.
[26] Ibid.

We must be able to form a type of connection or relation in order to understand the body–object–space. This can be understood as long as there is some form of doing action—for example, making, wearing or viewing. The body craves action; it is a live entity, in a constant state of flux, and there is no action without a reaction or a relation.

The movement within the body–object–space creates a relationship, a cycle of effects and change. This is based on various actions: the maker makes the object, the wearer wears the object, the viewer views or reads the object. There could also be situations where the wearer or viewer commissions the maker to make the object, or the viewer could request the wearer to move the object in a certain manner. There is not a relation without any of the acts of motion. Jewellery or wearable objects exist as a product of motion but must consist of a body, the object and space. Therefore, it has been an important factor throughout my work that the connection of these words has equal weight.

Rhythm and Sound

The movement between the body and the objects has been an important aspect of my exploration of the body–object–space. As a result of this movement, rhythm and sound inclusion became a feature that provided a dynamic experience. Stephanie Springgay explains that rhythm, movement, and affect are aspects of materiality that suggest a vital understanding of participation and politics. Rhythm re-conceptualises the 'how' of participation, and as such becomes a core framework for materialistic understanding of working together and taking part of the action of movement.[27]

If movement is a vital key for relations between the body, object and space, then rhythm and sound require exploration. The body itself has an infinite rhythm; movement has rhythm. Some of the studio work included sound and rhythm as part of my exploration of the relational aspect of the body–object–space. I acknowledge that rhythm and sound are broad themes; this is an area that requires further research beyond this candidature.

[27] Stephanie Springgay, "Towards a Rhythmic Account of Working Together and Taking Part," *Research in Education* 96 (2016): 72–73.

Studio Research and Feedback

Methodology

Practice-led research has formed the basis of my candidature. Almost all aspects of jewellery involve action and require reflection. When creating work that is to be worn on the body, it is important to observe and draw conclusions from the actions of making the objects, the action of wearing the objects, and the action of viewing the objects on the body. By depicting possibilities of action within the body–object–space, I anticipate the work to allow different interpretations and connections to occur with the audience. Each layer of action and reflection adds to the symbolism and meaning given to the body–object–space.

Through practice-led research, practitioners often draw conclusions from the technical aspect of the field. In this instance, my practice involved experimenting with skills and techniques within the jewellery field. The weight of the research is in the concept behind the objects, which significantly addresses how contemporary jewellery presents conceptual knowledge through action and thinking. Practice-led research is capable of being heavily concept driven.

Studio Research

Initially, I considered social spatial aspects that potentially affect experiences of our bodies, such as illnesses, disabilities, social interactions, public spaces and environmental issues. As the works progressed, reflections on emotion and sensations played a significant role. The work highlighted the limitations experienced as a result of the extensions placed on the body, which became a prominent trait. A pattern of limiting and extending led to movement and performance.

A variety of objects were made for this research that focussed on different areas of the body, informed by the knowledge that the body–object–space cannot be restricted to one area of the body or space. In everyday life, objects are visible on and off the body, and it would not be true to the topic if I only explored one aspect of the body–object–space, such as the hands.

The process of making each object was a mix of balancing materials and techniques with the concept in mind. The materials used for this research were wide ranging, including sterling silver, aluminium, brass, copper, rubber, paper and cotton. The techniques used were selected according to the scale and nature of the work; for example, cold connection techniques such as riveting worked well with the aluminium large kinetic objects. This technique offers the ability to make parts that move with the body.

In turn, the materials were selected based on the size of the objects; for instance, if the objects were required to be large scale and have movement, then aluminium was chosen because it is lightweight and inexpensive to purchase in large quantities. If the objects were to be small and close to the body, then sterling silver was chosen for its wearable qualities (so as not to agitate the skin) and preciousness. When sound became of interest, brass and aluminium were explored because of the more appealing sounds that were possible.

This research explored a variety of processes and techniques. The creation of individual components that could be assembled, such as wheels, shapes and strips, formed part of the progression of this research. Some viewers have observed similarities between the works and Meccano 'toy kits'. Meccano kits were initially released in the early 1900s, celebrating metal construction and engineering. The kits contained metal parts—mainly shapes, wheels, strips with holes, nuts and bolts—that could be assembled and re-assembled to make mechanical or architectural structures.[28] In the development of the works for this research, particularly those that have moving extensions, such as *Contemplation* (Figure 15), *Digit Wheel* (Figure 23*)*, *Swinging Stars* (Figure 10)*,* and *Fingertips with Extensions* (Figures 8 and 9), I employed a similar process of investigation and play. In this way, the works developed through a combination of controlled planning and chance, where an object's final creation was also guided by my intuition.

One example, which is discussed further later in the exegesis, is the *Digit Wheel Ring.* My intention for this work was to extend the ring beyond the fingers to the ground. This

[28] "Meccano," in *A Dictionary of Modern Design*, ed. Jonathan M. Woodham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

was achieved by creating a ring that would usually be traditionally worn on the fingers, and attaching long pieces of metal to connect it to a wheel on the ground. The ring allowed the wheel to be an attached companion and to move beside the body as the wearer walks. When making this object, the possibilities of size, weight and movement were considered. Because I wished to make a large-scale work, aluminium was chosen because its weight was light enough to withstand the intended size but also allow for movement. Other metals such as copper and brass are durable; however, they are considerably heavier, which may hinder ease of movement. Brass and copper were used as connecting components throughout the project, whereas aluminium made up the main body of work. Assembling the large aluminium components through soldering techniques was not possible as this metal doesn't take well to soldering. This technique also would not allow ease of movement to the areas required for the work. Therefore, cold connections were used, which allowed for fluidity through the creating process as well as movement in the final work. The following sections will discuss each series of work made over this candidature in detail.

Fingertip Rings

Muted Touch

For *Muted Touch* (Figures 3, 4, 5), raised indicators were placed on objects that could be worn on the pads of the fingertips. The technique used to make the fingertip rings was lost wax casting. This allowed me to mould the shape of the fingertips to my fingers and to include the raised indicators with ease. When positioned in a certain way, the combined raised indicators on the set of rings spell out 'do not touch' in Braille. The Braille bumps can be seen by the viewer, but are deemed useless to the wearer. When the finger objects are worn, the wearer can feel their smooth inside surface, but it mutes the sensations in the fingertips when they come into contact with other surfaces, causing them to glide on these surfaces. This acts as a barrier between the wearer and other surfaces, creating a limitation to the wearer's senses.

Figure 3 Vivien Bedwell, Muted Touch, 2020, sterling silver. Photography by Michelle Bowden.

When the fingers move on a hard surface, they make a sound. When moved across the skin, the rings create a massaging effect that could be experienced by the receiver.

When the forms are viewed by themselves, it takes time to understand where they should be worn on the body (Figure 3). By creating a barrier and restricting a sense that would usually be available, the work aimed to open up a different awareness or to heighten other senses as a result of touch.

I was interested in whether displaying the forms by themselves would be enough to prompt a viewer to interact with them. Trials to test silverpoint drawing as an interactive option for this work were carried out (see Appendix A). The results of these trials showed that the effort required for silverpoint mark making didn't produce the impact I was looking for and I decided not to pursue drawing as an interactive element of this work.

When looking at photographs of the objects worn on the body (as in Figures 4 and 5), it is evident that positioning the fingers in different ways can evoke different expressions, similar to how masks can transform a wearer.

Figure 4 Vivien Bedwell, Muted Touch, 2020, sterling silver. Photography by Michelle Bowden.

Figure 5 Vivien Bedwell, Muted Touch, 2020, sterling silver. Photography by Michelle Bowden.

Extensions on the fingertips

After making the *Muted Touch* rings, I handmade extensions to attach to a new set of fingertip rings that protruded from the finger pads. My intention was to create space beyond the bumps to see how this would alter the sense of the work and also to represent different sensations that can be activated by objects that protrude past the body.

Pins and Needles

The body doesn't always experience smooth, pleasant sensations; some sensations feel like pins and needles, or sharp stabbing pains. I wanted to represent this sensation as it could implicate a person's body movement, affecting the way the body interacts with or navigates the surrounding environment. The work titled *Pins and Needles* (Figure 6) is a ring that looks a little menacing in the sense that it looks like it could puncture the skin. There is potential for this to happen as well as for it to leave scratch marks.

Figure 6 Vivien Bedwell, Pins and Needles, 2020, sterling silver. Photography by Michelle Bowden.

Feels Like Spring

Some bodily senses feel spongy and springy. A sterling silver hand-coiled spring with a small sphere on the end was added to a fingertip pad with the intention of adding stability or conversely instability to the spring effect (see Figure 7). I thought the sphere may aesthetically tie in with the bumps from *Muted Touch*. The slight movement in the extending coil adds tension and a playful element. Some feedback I received from people viewing this piece is that it has a sexual connotation.

Figure 7 Vivien Bedwell, Feels Like Spring, 2020, sterling silver. Photography by Michelle Bowden.

Big Wheels

Wheels and objects that have moving components have always been of interest, mainly because this usually involves an interaction from the body and the movement is generally engaging. Wheels aid the body to move from one point to another or indicates that the motion is producing some sort of output. For *Big Wheels* (Figure 8), bumps were included on the domed wheels to tie in with the *Muted Touch* fingertip rings. This also has a very playful and repetitive element. The interaction with this work is continuous and mesmerising. The size is bulky and prompts the hand or fingers to play and move.

Figure 8 Vivien Bedwell, Big Wheels, 2020, sterling silver. Photography by Michelle Bowden.

Touchometre

In the pursuit of more movement, on another fingertip ring (*Touchometre*, Figure 9), I created a bend in the wheel extension which places the wheels in an unusual position on the body. It lends a slight restriction to the object and makes the hand form a different pose that may feel awkward after long periods of wear.

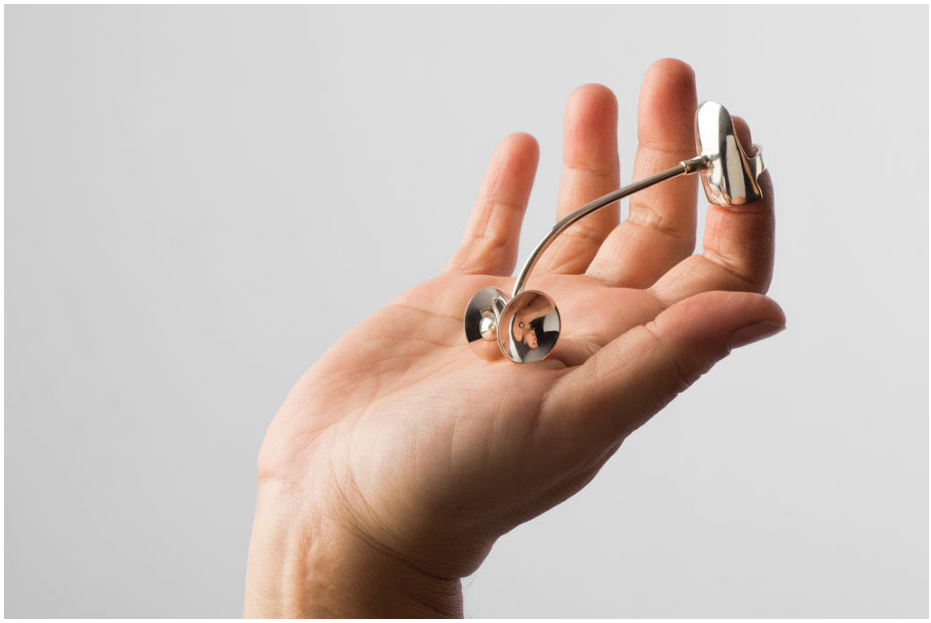

Figure 9 Vivien Bedwell, Touchometre, 2020, sterling silver. Photography by Michelle Bowden

The works in this collection invite an interaction with the viewer and have a playful element. With the objects appearing to have a function, they also invite the viewer to imagine their use.

Swinging Stars

The materials for *Swinging Stars* (Figures 10 and 11) were sourced from Reverse Garbage, West End, with the intention of experimenting with colour and alternative materials. Up to this point of the research, colour had not been used much and I was interested to see if it could visually enhance the experience of my works. When I visited Reverse Garbage, I was instantly drawn to some stars made from ribbon paper. The staff informed me that the stars had been part of the *One Million Stars to End Violence* installation by Maryann Talia Pau, who started the project in 2012 as a commemoration to Jill Meagher, who had died from domestic violence in Melbourne, Victoria. The work consisted of stars made by thousands of people globally who had been affected by Meagher's death and wanted to contribute to the healing and supportive process of the work. In 2018, the Museum of Brisbane provided an installation space at King George Square and the public were invited to participate by making stars. Therefore, these paper stars already had a previous life and purpose. The artist was contacted to request permission to re-use some of the stars for a new project. The work commenced after I received her permission.

The stars in the completed work do not oscillate as freely as I had intended, but it is possible to rotate them with intentional force. However, the stars create a weight on the bangle that makes the wearer conscious of that area of the body past the wrist and hand. Once the bangle is on the wrist, there is a natural inclination to move it back and forth. When the bangle is in motion, the pendulum effect continues to prompt the wrist in this motion and the wearer can't help but to continue to swing. The weight of the bangle creates a rhythm that the body subconsciously continues to follow once it gets started.

The introduction of colours from the stars to the research work added vibrancy that became visually pleasing when combined with the movement created between the

body and object. The colours remind me of the vibrant colours that American artist Marjorie Schick uses in her large-scale wearable sculptures.[29]

It seemed poignant that the repurposed stars were placed on a part of the body that can be used in violent situations, such as a swing of the fists to cause harm or an attempt to defend yourself. In recent local events, there has been multiple deaths as a result of domestic violence. The memory of the repurposed stars gave the work more meaning from the maker's perspective.

When the work is viewed by itself it still has movement, not only through moveable components but through the colour and the shape of the stars. Part of this work creates a border between the body and the space; the hand and wrist are encased or framed by the bangle and the extension bars. With the movement from the arm prompting the pendulum action, the object becomes part of the body and penetrates the space around the body.

[29] Marjorie Schick, "Who's Afraid of Marjorie Schick?," interview with Matt Lambert, *Art Jewelry Forum*, 2016, https://artjewelryforum.org/interviews/whoaes-afraid-of-marjorie-schick/.

Figure 10 Vivien Bedwell, Swinging Stars, 2019, aluminium, copper, paper ribbon, cotton. Photography by Michelle Bowden.

Figure 11 Vivien Bedwell, Swinging Stars, 2019, aluminium, copper, paper ribbon, cotton. Photography by Michelle Bowden.

Censored

Censored (Figure 12) are mouth masks made from sterling silver, rice-paper, silicone and cotton. The intention of making these objects was to place a limitation on the body and cause some discomfort in its wear.

Not long after I started making these objects, different global events began to occur that affected the human body, such as devastating bush fires in Australia and the outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Through the summer of 2019–2020, many Australians who lived in areas overcome with smoke and dust particles from the bushfires found their breathing was affected. There were many who suffered loss of their homes and livelihood. The unfolding pandemic of COVID-19 began in China in early 2020 and has only recently begun to come under any form of control. Globally, people were urged to adhere to social distancing protocols, to limit their travel, and to wear masks to help contain the outbreak. These events affected and are continuing to affect personal body space.

The aim with this work was to accentuate the area around the mouth and to create movement in an object as a reaction of the breath. The materials chosen were lightweight to allow movement caused by the breath. The focus was on the larynx in the throat and different artificial respirators that have a concertina type of movement.

The masks have an organic quality, evident in the area between the concertina where there are not any defined crisp folds. I wanted the masks to have an organic look as breathing is an organic function of the body.

Figure 12 Vivien Bedwell, Censored, 2020, sterling silver, rice-paper, silicone, cotton. Photography by Michelle Bowden.

When the masks are worn, it is quite difficult to talk, as the large metal ring cushioned by the paper is pressed firmly against the face around the mouth. It causes the lips to push out and speech is muffled from not being able to move the mouth properly and the object in front of the mouth. The wearer becomes very aware of their mouth and lips. As the wearer breathes in and out through the mouth, the mask moves. The heavier the breath from the mouth, the stronger the movement. The wearer is aware of the area the breath moves through by the movement of the object and the presence of the object on the face. The viewer can see the object moving and the focus is brought to that area. The breathing adds rhythm to the movement.

The objects were photographed worn around the mouth, in a front and side profile (Figures 13 and 14). I deliberately requested this so that when the photographs are placed alongside one another, they can perform a breath conversation. Video footage was also made of the mask being worn and activated by the breath in front and side profiles. Again, I imagined that the movement depicted in each video footage, when viewed side by side, would make it look as if the bodies are having a breathing conversation, especially with the rhythm and sound of the breath present in the video.

Unlike the traditional form of a mask, *Censored* covers the mouth only, which means the wearer has a choice of whether to breathe by mouth or to breathe by the nose. This can be read in a way that you can choose to breathe with or without restrictions, with or without censorship.

The video evokes an emotion. When the body and an object are seen activated and in motion, especially in a position that restricts a natural bodily function, we feel a certain degree of empathy. For example, the video *Breathing In/ Breathing Out* (1978) shows artists Marina Abramović and Ulay in a performance. With their nostrils blocked, they position their mouths together to breathe in each other's exhalation in a rhythmic way until it becomes difficult for them to breathe any longer. From watching this video, I could imagine the feeling of not breathing or being out of breath. It is an unpleasant feeling, and also frightening as breathing is fundamental to life. When we are pushed to our limits, it creates space for us to recognise these limits.

Figure 13 Vivien Bedwell, Censored worn by male, 2020, sterling silver, rice-paper, silicone, cotton. Photography by Michelle Bowden.

Figure 14 Vivien Bedwell, Censored worn by female, 2020, sterling silver, rice-paper, silicone, cotton. Photography by Michelle Bowden.

The *Muted Touch*, *Extensions* and *Censored* collections were to be exhibited internationally in *Nuda Vita II* during Munich Jewellery Week, March 2020. Due to lockdowns in 2020, this exhibition proceeded online in March 2021. The format of the exhibition was in the form of an animation coordinated by the curator Ilaria Ruggiero accompanied by an online performance of the objects from each artist.

The pictures of *Muted Touch* that were introduced on social media as part of the press release prior to *Nuda Vita II* received comments from the audience that suggested reflections on disease and illness.

Contemplation

Contemplation (Figures 15 and 16) was made when COVID-19 lockdowns eased but social distancing had become a normal way of life. For many, there was an extended time of self-reflection and limited social activities, and returning to interaction in public places was an exciting phenomenon but always to be undertaken with caution.

Contemplation is a mechanical object intended to be worn in front of the mouth, which is activated by turning a handle to rotate the circular shape. It is made from aluminium, vinyl, rubber and cotton which are all lightweight to allow for a moveable large-scale object to be worn on the body. *Contemplation* is an extension of the movement around the mouth, similar to the cogs moving in a mechanism that activate a functional movement. It is an accentuation of the thought that motivates speech. In a situation to speak or not to speak, will the content of my speech be relevant?

Contemplation offers a chance to reflect on the self before we put voice to our inner thoughts. The contemplation process for some could be a mechanical one, where each thought and movement affects the next thought and movement. This work requires activation of the body and object, an action that requires thought. Reflection and contemplation occur within the mind, often without any sounds being made; therefore, it seems fitting that the object doesn't make a sound for now.

This work is best understood filmed, activated on the body. When the object is viewed by itself, it may not be understood where it is meant to be worn on the body.

Figure 15 Vivien Bedwell, Contemplation, 2020, aluminium vinyl, rubber and cotton. Photography by Vivien Bedwell.

Figure 16 Vivien Bedwell, Contemplation captured still from video, 2020, aluminium, vinyl, rubber, cotton. Video by Vivien Bedwell.

When looking at the works described so far, the body–object–space theme is prominent. There is an obvious link to augmentations, limitations and spatial exploration of the body that is highlighted when seeing the objects worn and activated on the body. See Appendix B for a comparison chart of the wearable objects I have created.

Expanding Jewellery Exhibition

Expanding Jewellery was exhibited at Grey Street Gallery from 23 November to 13 December 2020. Preliminary explorations were displayed to highlight different ways of viewing the work, including the objects standing alone on a shelf; A1 size photographs of the work on the body; and two monitors that played videos of the objects activated by the body. In being present at the exhibition for its duration, I was able to make observations of the audience's reaction to the work, talk to viewers, and take note of triggers or viewers' experiences for each piece.

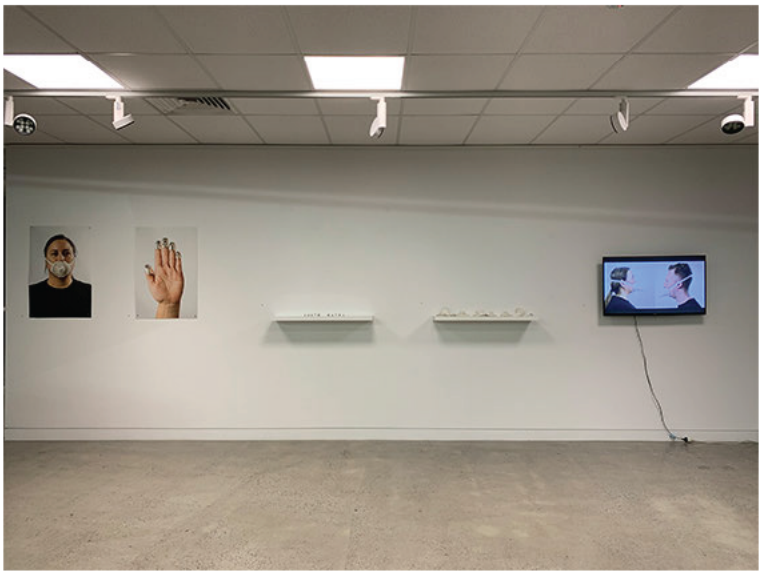

Figure 17 Expanding Jewellery exhibition, wall facing walkway; A1 images, objects on shelf and video.

The exhibition showcased the first six of the original objects made for the candidature and one new piece of work that was made in September–October 2020. Table 1 lists the different ways each work was exhibited in the space.

Wearable Object	**Object/s on shelf**	**A1 Photograph of object worn on the body**	**Video loop of object activated by the body**
Muted Touch	Yes	Yes	No
Touchometre	Yes	Yes	No
Feels Like Spring	Yes	Yes	No
Big Wheels	Yes	Yes	No
Pins and Needles	Yes	Yes	No
Censored	Yes	No	Yes
Contemplation	Yes	No	Yes

Table 1 List of wearable objects and the way each item was displayed.

As expected, not all work appealed to every viewer. Some viewers were drawn to the shiny aspects of the objects themselves, others to the A1 images that depicted the work on the body in proximity. Finally, some viewers found themselves engaged with the

moving images, especially the *Censored* video where the sound of breathing in the object was present.

Among the different reactions, two were most significant. The first was in response to the *Censored* conversation video. Some of the audience felt relaxed by the rhythmic and repetitive sound of the breathing caused by the paper movement of the object. When viewers were standing in front of this video, they were able to recall a memory, mostly from their youth, about playing with paper toys, or expressed how they felt about the sound. As they talked, they watched the movement on the monitor. One morning when I arrived at the gallery, the videos had turned off. The lack of sound and movement made the space feel static. These observations confirmed that the movement and sound contained in the video are important aspects of the work.

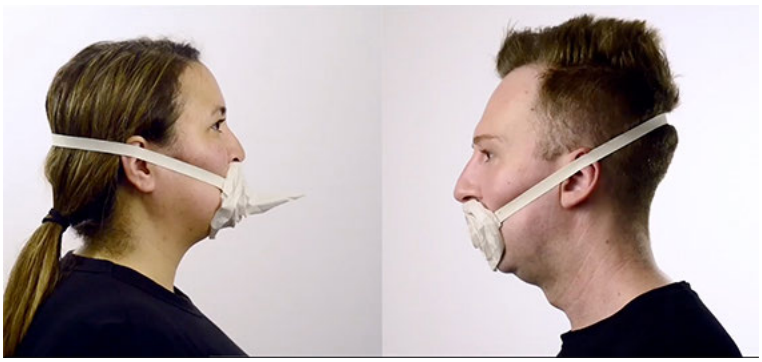

Figure 18 Vivien Bedwell, Censored conversation video still, 2020. Video by Michelle Bowden.

The second significant reaction I observed was in response to the A1 photographic images of the objects worn on the body. The images were printed at a high resolution so that slight accentuations were visible, such as the way the *Pins and Needles* ring spikes were indenting the skin. I could see some viewers of the audience trying to mimic the actions of the positions that the rings were worn, talking about the other possibilities that the object could perform or how they could be worn. It was encouraging that there was some form of movement prompted by these images.

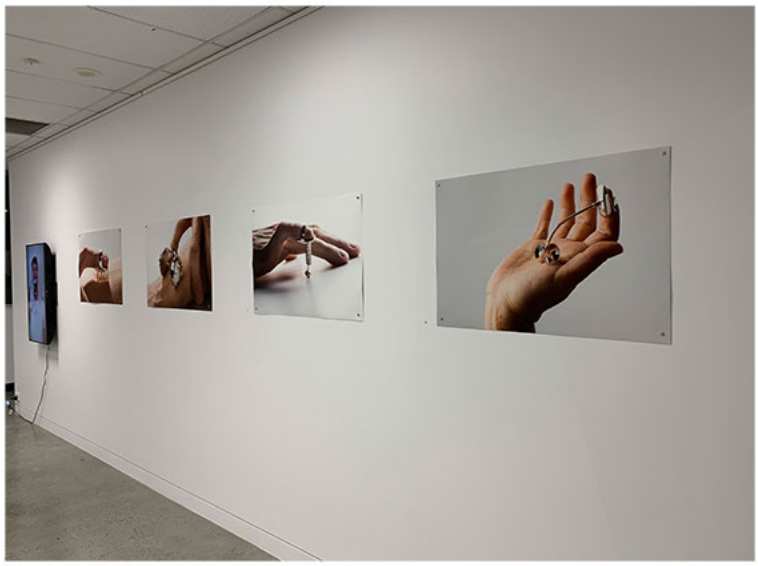

Figure 19 Expanding Jewellery exhibition, wall facing inside gallery; A1 images and video.

Some viewers wanted to try on the work on to feel the movement for themselves. The physical interaction from the audience with the objects is an aspect of the work I had originally intended to pursue and believe this is an important area of body–object–space to explore. However, due to the uncertainty of social limitations, audience physical handling of the objects wasn't heavily relied on this for this research. The large-scale photography and video work act as prompts to encourage a physical interaction with the objects themselves. Future works will most likely encourage the audience to physically interact or handle the work, especially when social distancing protocols ease.

Observations made during the exhibition *Expanding Jewellery* led to the recognition that the inclusion of sound to accompany movement made a dramatic impact in the work; therefore, sound became an important aspect moving forward. See Appendix C for pictures of exhibition layout.

Sound Experiments

Emphasising areas of the body and inner being that are not always noticed has allowed me to offer an awareness of sensations to these areas—to trigger a memory, an emotion or an alternative way of thinking or communicating.

After receiving feedback from *Expanding Jewellery,* the focus in the studio research was to create objects that extend from the body and to include sounds highlighting the body–object–space. The objective for the wearable objects was to create a sound as a reaction of movement from the body. In my studio experiments, I tested different metal forms and the types of sounds they make. In addition to the metal forms, experiments were made with softer materials, such as rice and latex, to include softer sounds. I anticipated that including a range of sounds would offer variety that could be mixed together in a visual and sound composition. Figure 20 shows an overview of the object experiments for sound inclusion, and further information can be found in Appendix D.

The sound experiments helped me to understand that brass metals provide higher-pitched sounds, which are more pleasing to listen to when compared to those made by copper. While the objects were engaging as playful objects, I wanted the objects to extend further from the body to explore the sensorial space. It was decided to keep these objects as experiments to learn from rather than to pursue them as resolved works.

Figure 20 Brass and copper forms to experiment with sound, 2021.

Objects with Sound Inclusion

Golden Ear

Made with the aim to combine movement and sound, *Golden Ear* is a tunnel formed of brass and rayon thread that extends from one ear and is attached to the body with a head band. The spaces between the rayon thread allow glimpses into the movements taking place inside the tunnel (Figures 21 and 22). The shapes that move in the tunnel make a sound in response to movement of the head; sounds can be heard by the viewer, but the wearer experiences more sounds with more intensity. This could be distracting and frustrating for the wearer, as they cannot see the objects making the sound. By having the object protrude into the space on the side of the head, the wearer needs to adjust their spatial awareness in order to navigate their body. Not only does *Golden Ear* highlight the space on one side of the head, but when it is viewed from the end perspective looking into the tunnel, it brings attention to the inner ear—a very private and sensitive part of the body that impacts the balance of the body.

Golden Ear prompted me to reflect on conditions associated with the ears, such as tinnitus and hyperacusis. One's sense of hearing varies from person to person, and the awareness of the space on the side of the head is not always acknowledged as a very sensitive space. The work also prompts consideration of other objects worn on the ears that have become everyday objects, such as headphones and ear buds. These everyday objects allow sounds to be heard intimately without distraction, and to communicate with other people who are not in proximity when using them to make phone calls.

Because *Golden Ear* is best understood with movement and sound, it made sense to use film to present this work.

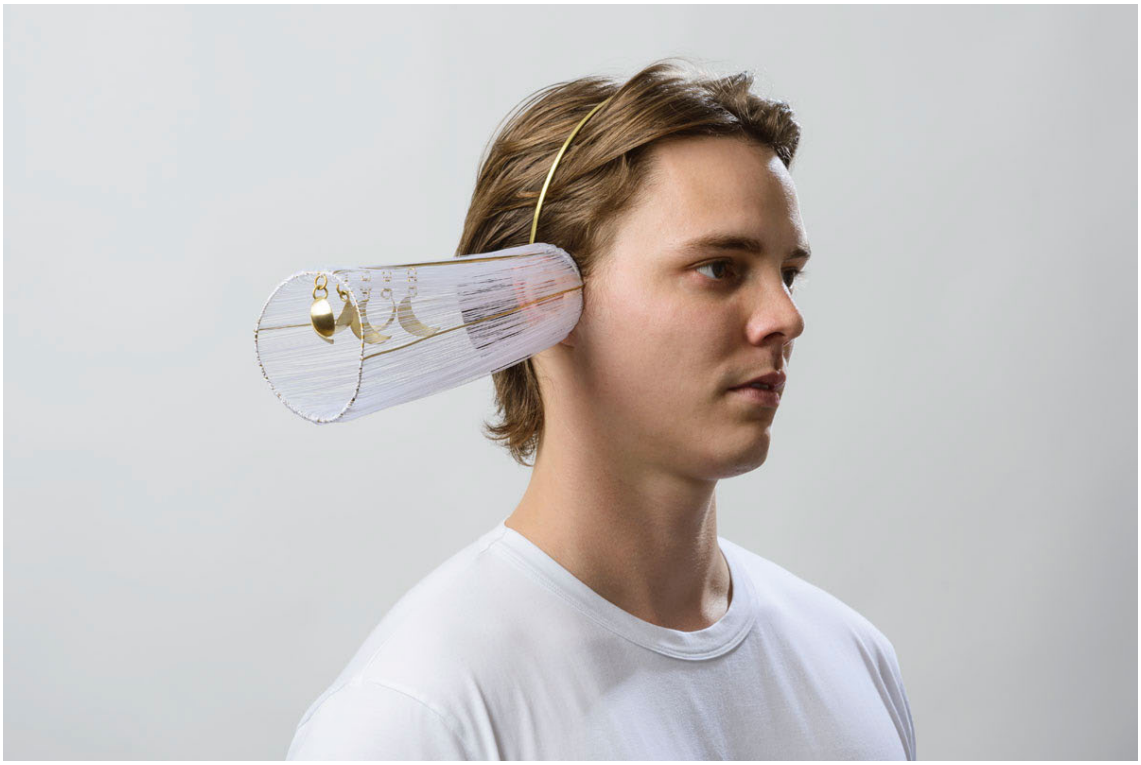

Figure 21 Vivien Bedwell, Golden Ear, 2022, brass, rayon thread. Photography by Michelle Bowden.

Figure 22 Vivien Bedwell, Golden Ear, 2022, brass, rayon thread. Photography by Michelle Bowden.

Digit Wheel Ring

As discussed earlier, the *Digit Wheel Ring* (Figure 23) was made with the intention to make a connection from the hand to the ground. The ring worn on the finger extends and makes a connection with the ground via a wheel. The extension is the length of a walking stick; however, the hinges and wheel prevent the object from having the useful purpose of a walking stick. As the wearer of the object walks, it follows them like a companion and makes a sound. As a result of wrist and hand movement, the body relies on the vibrations and sound to provide sensations instead of the sense of touch from the hands.

There is a playful element within this work which may prompt viewers to experience it for themselves. Wheels are common objects, visible and used during daily routines. However, when it is put on a ring that has a connection to the body, it depicts an unusual scenario. As shown on the body in both the accompanying photograph and video, the work challenges the mind to think of its purpose and function.

Figure 23 Vivien Bedwell, Digit Wheel, 2022, aluminium, brass. Photography by Michelle Bowden.

The work *Golden Ears* and *Digit Wheel* led to the development of one of the final works, *Knee Shaker* (Figure 24). The sound inclusion has given the objects I make an extra sensory feature, which heightens the experience of the work. It is an area I wish to explore further within my practice.

Figure 24 Vivien Bedwell, Knee Shaker video still, 2022, aluminium, brass, cotton, loom elastic. Video by William Leese.

Discussion of the Work in Relation to Historical Precedents: Considering the Body–Object–Space

The Body

> A body is complex, activated through phases in collision and collusion, phasings in and out of processes of individuation that are transformed—transduced—to create new iterations not of what a body is but of what a body can do. What we tend to call "body" and what is experienced as the wholeness of a form is simply one remarkable point, one instance of a collusion materializing as this or that.[30]

Jivan Astfalck considers that the relationship between the wearable object and the body can be divided into three critical positions.[31] The first position treats the object as an independent entity that, when worn, is meant to decorate and adorn the body, and has a definable sculptural identity that can be formally analysed. The second position considers the object as a conceptual one merging with the body, transgressing from the definable object. The third position considers the object in dialogue with concerns of the body, social or psychological phenomena or theoretical concerns.[32] These objects can be a way of communicating or translating visual signs and signals. Is it possible to create work that satisfies all of these positions? Could there be a fourth position that considers the space of the body and the space of the object combined into the experience of the object? I believe it is possible, because to simultaneously decorate, conceptually merge and create dialogue between the body and object—whether it is privately or publicly—relies on being able to have space to do so. Even if the aim is for the object to decorate the body, the idea that the object merges with the body and they become symbols to be read combines all of these positions. For example, imagine a person has a sentimental family heirloom brooch that a deceased relative wore at a significant political event. The owner could wear the object for sentimental purpose, as a political statement, a stance of values, or simply because it matches the outfit they are wearing. These positions can all happen at the same time. Further, what the wearer is doing can affect the way the objects can be read. The space of the object relies on the

[30] Erin Manning, *Always More Than On: Individuation's Dance* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 19.
[31] Jivan Astfalck, "Jewellery as a Fine Art Practice," 18.
[32] Ibid., 18–19.

space of the body and vice versa. By examining the body–object–space helps to accumulate knowledge and understand the body's relationships.

Caroline Broadhead comments, "objects that affect or control the body's movement interfere with the body's autonomy, and therefore with their definition as a person".[33] For the works created for this research, there is a certain degree of limitation or extension of the body; therefore, they challenge the areas affected. Broadhead's statement has urged me to reflect on my creations. Have I been subconsciously challenging my preconceived definition of what it is to be a person all along?

The *Censored* masks (Figures 12, 13, 14) highlight the space in front of the mouth—providing an augmentation or boundary around this space—enforcing a limitation on the use of this space that would otherwise be easily used without noticing it. In addition to this, the movement of the work is activated by the breath; but here, the simple act of breathing is not so simple anymore. Covering the mouth and limiting the subtle action of the breath causes the person wearing or watching to not only imagine and empathise with the body and object, but also challenges their definition of this space. In turn, this may challenge their definition of being a person. Is this work a confrontation or an intervention? It could be argued that it is both. Not only is the work presenting a situation where the wearer or viewer is forced to face the idea of restricting a vital area of the body, but also to interfere with an intimate area of the body that would normally be visible.

Upon reflection, Gerd Rothman's investigation in the 1970s of touch and the individuality of each finger, hand or bodily imprint and Bruno Martinazzi's body forms (see Figure 25) in search of "understanding what it is to be human"[34] are examples of works close to the body that have relevance to my practice. These examples are intimate and showcase the soft curves of the body in hard metal. *Muted Touch* and the *Extensions* collections (Figures 4, 6, 7, 8, 9) are objects that are worn on the boundary of the body and contain a form of intimacy. However, they are not soft; instead, they are hard and

[33] Caroline Broadhead, "A Part/ Apart," in *New Directions in Jewellery*, 35.
[34] Liesbeth den Besten, *On Jewellery: A Compendium of International Contemporary Art Jewellery*, 129–130.

clunky. When worn, the objects create a boundary surrounding that body part; they hug an intimate space close to the body, and in doing so create a limitation to the sensory assets of the body in this space. It is important to have looked at spatial awareness through this area not only to define an intimate space but also to realise that within this intimacy is a boundary that can only be felt by the wearer.

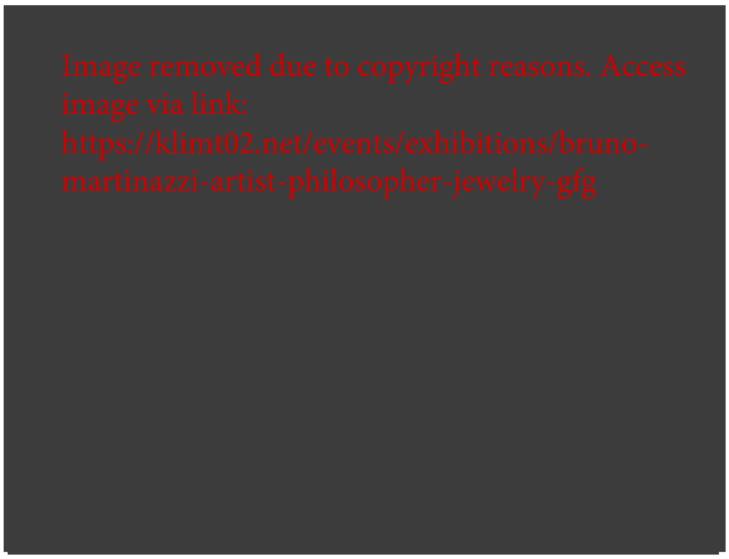

Figure 25 Bruno Martinazzi, Kaos brooch, 1992, 18ct yellow gold. Photographed by Vivien Bedwell during Munich Jewellery Week 2019.

There is an aspect of *Muted Touch* and the *Extensions* that opens invitation for participation. Because the works are small and playful, people may feel comfortable approaching the works and trying them on. Future potential to highlight this interaction could be to include surveillance of people interacting with the work that can be viewed by others. This could introduce not only the idea of interaction but also highlight spectatorship, opening up the boundaries of intimacy.

Object

> Some objects take on a form of life within our minds, demand changed conditions, cause inconvenience and make us behave differently. These objects are not passive players in these scenarios; they are actors that activate us to construct narratives and set immobile entities in motion.[35]

There are many reasons that objects are made for the body. Much of the time it is to enhance our lives in one way or another. Objects are not naturally part of the body, but

[35] Oyama, *The Stubborn Life of Objects*, 7.

carry an affiliation or expression of the body and can be a reaction between the inner and the outer being. Objects can represent a form of expression, challenge perception, or offer a way to experience more than what is already known about the body. The body in co-operation with a wearable object can experience actions and movements that are beyond our norm, pushing the body's boundaries. Oyama's explanation of objects as co-actors resonates—both the body and object are activated; not only for their direct function but also to explore new ways of existing.

I make body extensions as a form of exploration and to consider the ways the body can project itself further than we logically or physically can. I have taken into account the bodily senses and social themes that surround the body; however, the objects are presented in ambiguous ways that leave room for multiple interpretations. Umberto Eco explains that the more improbable, ambiguous, unpredictable and disordered the structure, the greater the information, understood as potential or the inception of possible orders.[36] There are certain forms of communication that demand meaning, order and obviousness, allowing for no possibility of misunderstanding. But others seek to convey to their readers an abundance of possible meanings, which Eco explains is the case with all sorts of artistic communication.[37]

Technology has become a constantly growing extension of the body as a form of functionality and creativity. Mobile phones, the internet, televisions, computers, cars and an ever-growing list all offer modes of experiencing and connecting the body with the earth, other objects, and other people. When the body becomes accustomed and learns from the use of these extensions, it becomes common knowledge and then continues to keep extending further.

Oyama states that in one way or another, objects take a form of life in our minds. She points out that if commodities can evoke various types of emotionality in us and construct fictions, then we should let them also become agents that help enhance our

[36] Eco, *The Open Work,* 93.
[37] Ibid., 94.

ability to imagine and dream.[38] Objects not only have an effect on the body but also on the soul.

Space

History shows that there has been a constant presence of artists exploring the body space through moving wearable objects. Some artist works reflected on for this research include Oskar Schlemmer's *Triadic Ballet* (1922), Lygia Clarke's *Dialogue Goggles* (1968), and Noam Ben-Jacov's body sculptures throughout the 1980s. These practitioners are important to my practice because of the interactive and performative aspects of the work with the human body. They highlight spaces that aren't always acknowledged through traditional wearable objects.

In terms of the relationship between body and object, the space is what allows the interaction and an area to experience this. Yi-Fu Tuan posits that space is directly experienced as having room in which to move. Spatial ability becomes spatial knowledge when movements and changes of location can be envisaged.[39] By creating space that allows the maker, wearer or viewer the experience of the time in that space adds meaning to that space.

Reflection and contemplation, important aspects of communication, are not traditionally depicted through wearable objects. As discussed earlier in this exegesis, *Contemplation* is an object worn in front of the mouth that restricts the movement of the mouth, but the extension requires the hand to activate the circular pendulum in motion. When the object is worn and activated, the wearer is made to reflect rather than speak within the space. The movement depicted in the videos enables a space for the viewer to experience the object. Movement in space also allows for possibilities of rhythm and sound. Activating the sense of hearing offers a way to dynamically enhance an experience.

[38] Oyama, *The Stubborn Life of Objects*, 11.
[39] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (London: Edward Arnold LTD, 1977), 67–68.

Conclusion

The wearable objects made over the duration of my candidature have explored the senses in ways that extend from and limit areas of the body that may be unnoticed during daily routines. This research began in 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and over the course of the candidature, the work expanded and benefitted from the heightened awareness of personal space and the body's senses caused by the pandemic. The body and objects together assist to envision the possibilities of the specific areas of the body and around the body, such as past the fingertips, in front of the mouth, the sides of the head, the space between the hand and the ground. The body and objects together provide information to prompt ideas and issues of social context that are associated with enhancing or limiting the body's abilities or senses.

The photographic and video documentation of the objects I have created portray different ways of viewing the wearable objects that have been placed ambiguously on the body or away from the body. This allows the audience to create their own interpretations of the work. It places the body–object–space in a position that allows a performance to occur, presenting signs that can be read and to expand the imagination. Through photography and video, we are able to gain knowledge, communicate and enhance our understanding of how an object functions or disrupts expectations.

The exhibition *Expanding Jewellery* revealed that rhythm and sound were significant additions to experiencing the body–object–space in a gallery environment. Not only does sound heighten the senses but it also assists viewers to imagine a relationship between the body and object and to engage with the work. Experiments and objects made have been carried out to include a sound component; however, with the depth that rhythm and sound can provide in the visual arts, this component of the work requires further investigation that may follow in future research.

The body–object–space involves a special overlapping of intimate and public spaces. They act together to form an understanding of the self, others and the environment. The movement within the body–object–space depicted in this research creates

awareness and relational aspects that occur in the space—in particular, the motion involved with the maker making the object, the wearer wearing the object, the viewer viewing or reading the object. Jewellery or wearable objects exist as a product of motion but must consist of a body, the object and space.

Transitions of knowledge affect the inner and outer being, which affects relationships in the body–object–space. The more we explore the body–object–space, the more knowledge is accumulated, which opens up other possibilities to redefine the inner self or the outer self, which effectively intersects with the identity of the person. The body is where the conception of the wearable object takes place. This research has considered the body–object–space, recognising that each component is co-dependent and performs together as co-actors; one does not exist without the other.

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Appendix A

Muted Touch* and *Extensions

Trial for *Muted Touch* interaction

There is a way of drawing with silver that may present possibilities for audience interaction. I was interested in considering different participatory aspects of this work. I trialled this by making an egg tempura with egg yolk, water and a drop of vinegar and applied two thin layers of the tempura onto a small panel canvas (12.7 x 17.8cm) and an A3 piece of watercolour paper. I allowed the tempura to dry for approximately 20 minutes.

The intent was to make a drawing with the metal. As time passes, the area drawn with metal will oxidise and become darker. I know that egg is a natural oxidant, therefore I wondered if placing a lime sulphur wash onto a board would do the same thing. The only difference may be that the lime sulphur has a stronger smell, which may not be appealing or pleasant to work with.

Pieces of scrap metal were used from my studio to trial drawing on the tempura. The metal used were sterling silver wire in a couple of different thicknesses; a thicker wire bent in the shape of a ring shank; a piece of sterling silver sheet; a piece of copper sheet; and a piece of brass sheet (Figure 26).

Figure 26 Drawing experiments with different metals

Figure 27 Outcome of different mark making with different metals on canvas

This interactive element is the main reason I wanted to pursue this drawing technique. I was looking for a way for the audience to interact with the finger objects.

Drawing with the sample metal pieces worked on the small canvas panel but not on the watercolour paper. Each piece of metal worked and produced different shapes and shades of mark making. I found that the copper had a slightly different tone of grey to the silver. I was not convinced that this portrayed the essence of movement that I wanted. I don't believe this enables the wearer to create an interactive experience. Why would they wear these finger objects in the first place? Does there have to be a reason? Is wearing the objects on for interaction creating enough impact? Consideration needs to be given to the wear and tear of the drawing instruments.

Appendix B

MVA Research Objects 2019-2020							
Wearable object	**Does the object have moving components?**	**Does the object move with the body?**	**Sound**	**Wearer sensations**	**Receiver's sensations**	**Viewer sensations**	**Restrictions/ Limitations**
Muted Touch	No moving components	Only when the exact body part moves	When metal taps onto surfaces	Smooth metal on fingertips, hard surface, vibrations when tapped on hard surfaces, weight on the fingertips	Hard smooth metal	Depending on the positions of the hands when worn gives the rings different characters. Reminds viewers of bumps that form on the body that create barriers in day-to-day activities.	Difficult to perform everyday activities that involves the hands
Extended Fingertips	Yes- wheels move, spring has slight movement	Yes. The wheels move as a reaction to movement of the body	When metal taps onto surfaces and the large wheels make small sounds when moves	Not much- smooth metal surface on fingertips	Spring- can feel the sphere and coil of the spring on the skin and if wearer is also inflicting the sensations on self can feel tension of the spring. Spike- feel the sharp ends on the skin. Big Wheels- soft long oscillations of the wheel. Touchometre- soft small finer oscillations of the small wheels.	Playful. Spring- tension. Spike- tension and pain. Big Wheels- playful, tactile. Touchometre- playful, awkward	Spring- cannot get close to surfaces. Spike- when c lose to surfaces may cause damage. Big Wheel- bulky and clunky on the fingers. Touchometre- the extension and bend make it awkward to feel anything and position of the hand is restricted to activate the wheels.

Swinging Bangle	Yes- the stars swing like a pendulum	Yes. The object swings with movement of the arm or wrist.	No	Once prompted the swing the movement continues. Can feel a weight on the wrist/ arm.	Only if the swing hits the body, it is a lighter impact than expected.	Repetitive movement is mesmerising. Colour adds vibration.	Weight and size effects performing movements of the arm: creates repetitive swinging movement
Censored (mouth mask)	Yes- the paper concertina	Yes. The mask moves in and out with the breath	The breath, the paper makes sounds only when prompted by the breath	Difficult to speak and move lips. The breath feels restricted. Feeling limited in communicating with the face.	Difficult to understand speech.	Amusement in watching the piece move with the breath. Empathy of restricted breathing. Questioning why the mouth only and not the nose?	Mouth, breath, movement of lips, speech
Contemplation	Yes- the circular pendulum is activated by moving the handle	Yes. The object is moved by the hand.	No	The wearer can see the movement in front of them.	The receiver can be either the wearer or viewer, by watching the movement of the pendulum.	Mesmerising. Humour.	The movement of the mouth is very limited.

Note: The objects reviewed in the table were at mid-point of the candidature and was a way to compare and review the objects to that date.

Appendix C

Expanding Jewellery Exhibition, Grey Street Gallery 24th November – 12th December 2020

Invitation shared digitally

Figure 28 Invitation to Expanding Jewellery exhibition

Entrance to Exhibition

Figure 29 Expanding Jewellery, signage at the entrance to exhibition

Wall 1 near entrance

Figure 30 Expanding Jewellery, Wall 1, objects displayed on floating shelves near entrance.

Wall 2 near entrance

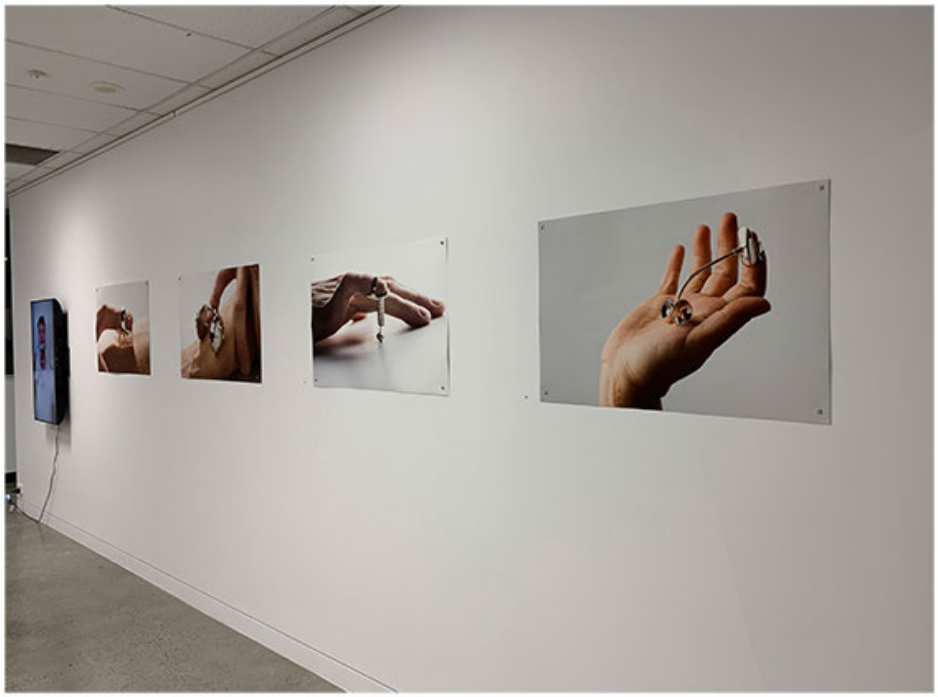

Figure 31 Expanding Jewellery, Wall 2 near entrance, A1 photo images and video monitor.

Wall 2 facing outside walkway

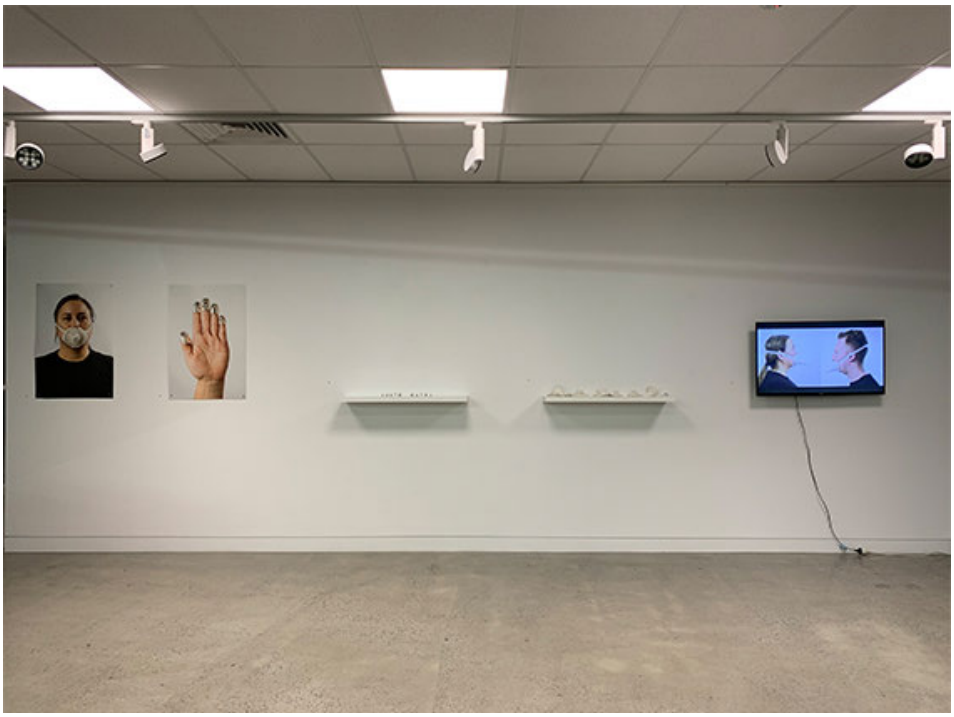

Figure 32 Expanding Jewellery, Wall 2 outside walkway, A1 photo images, objects on floating shelves, video monitor.

Appendix D

Sound Object Experiments

Circle Bell

This object initiated the sound experiments. The way the circles were positioned are successful: a circle for the finger and a circle for the sound. I was happy with the aesthetic aspect of the work, but not with the sound; it was quite flat. The metal pendulum did not offer the freedom of movement to allow the sound to reverberate. Another reason for the flat sound could be the shape of the sound circle—it possibly needs to be a concave or convex shape.

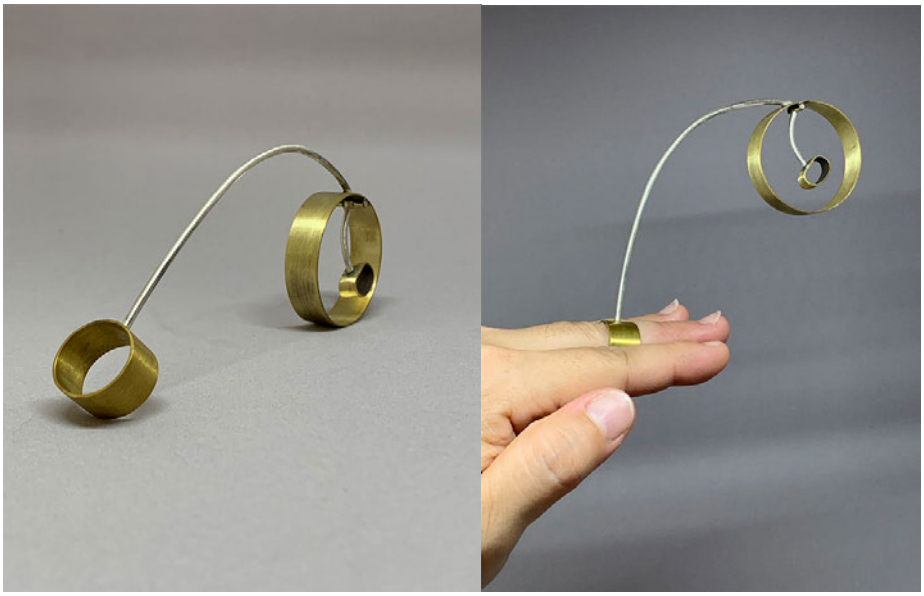

Figure 33 Vivien Bedwell, Circle Bell, 2020, sterling silver, brass.

Concave Circle Bell

Following on from the first experiment, I made the sound circle a concave shape. The pendulum was a fine circle that was attached with monofilament, which allowed for free-flowing movement and for the sound to reverberate.

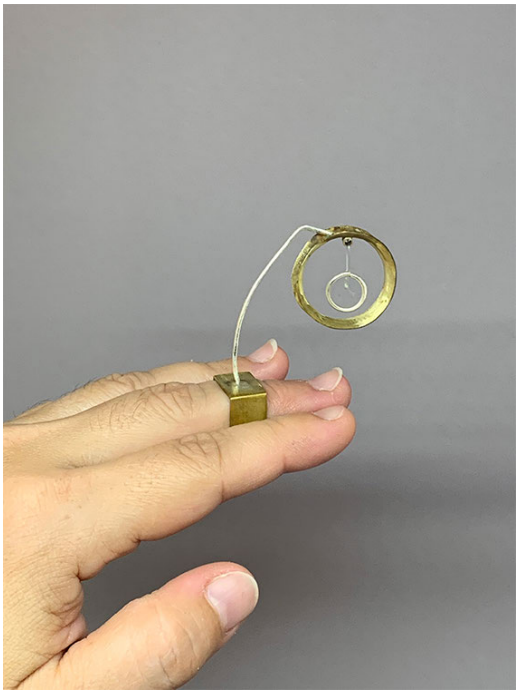

Figure 34 Vivien Bedwell, Concave Circle Bell, 2021, sterling silver, brass.

Tower of Sound

I wanted to find more ways that sound could reverberate and extend from the body at the same time.

I made a sound circle with a concave form, then used a long tube to extend the sound circle from the body. The aim was that the hollow tube would offer further reverberation and possibly a higher-pitched sound. I hung the sound circle from a platform with monofilament which allows it to move in many directions. The sound, like a high-pitched bell, was more like the sound I was seeking to achieve.

The aesthetic and sound aspects of this piece were successful. When the piece is worn, the hand needs to be in an upright position; therefore, there is a limitation to the wearer's movement. I also would like to find something to replace the monofilament to create a more finished look without losing the freedom of movement.

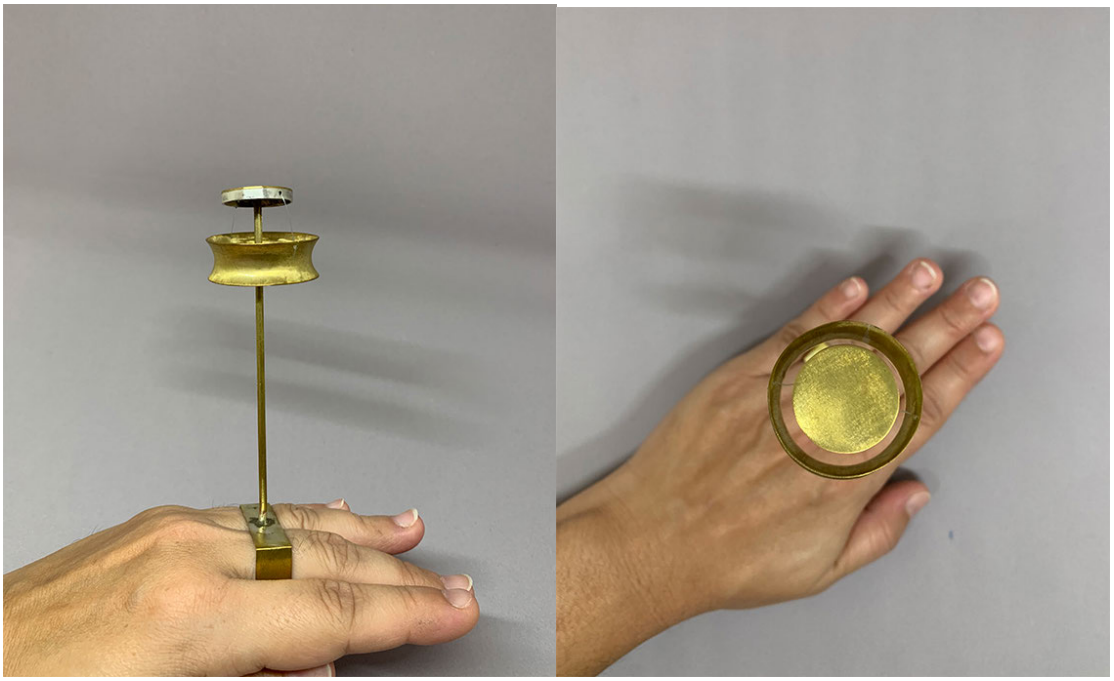

Figure 35 Vivien Bedwell, Tower of Sound, 2021, sterling silver, brass.

Spring of Sounds

For this work, I was interested in vibration and movement in the objects. I started with the concave sound circle and added springs. The objects react and move to big sounds and when worn on the body move as a reaction to the body movement. I appreciate the way the springs add movement and give the objects personality. I am in the process of finding a way to add sounds without taking away the movement.

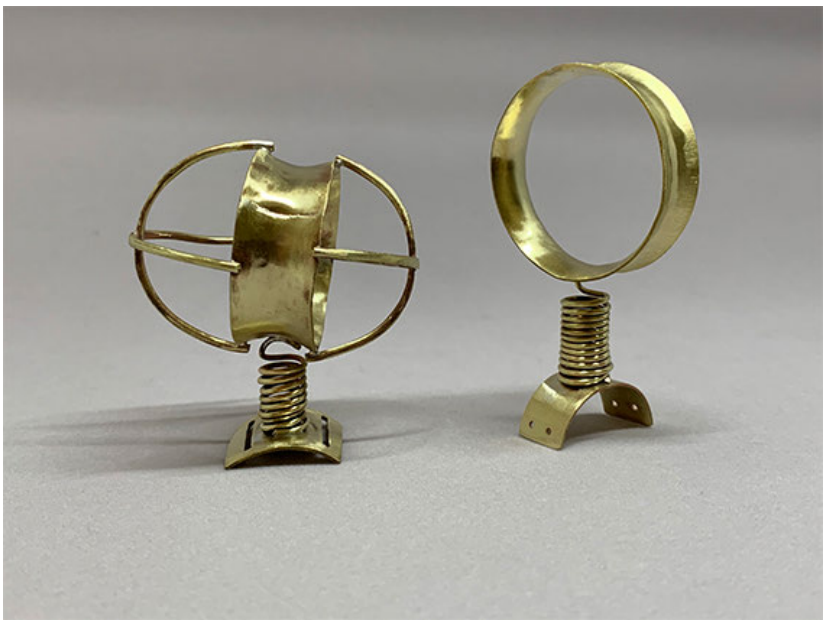

Figure 36 Vivien Bedwell, Spring of Sounds, 2021, brass.

Figure 37 Vivien Bedwell, Spring of Sounds on the hand, 2021, brass.

Finger Drums

I wanted to see other type of sounds I could make that were not so metal oriented. I made a drum consisting of a copper dome and cone. Rice was placed in the cone and sealed the top with latex. This created a soft sound against the metal when shaken upright; when moved upside down, it made an even softer sound against the latex. The variations of sounds this created were pleasing. I then followed through with making a finger mallet to beat against the latex. This created another form of soft sound which I also really liked. This offers a variety of sounds.

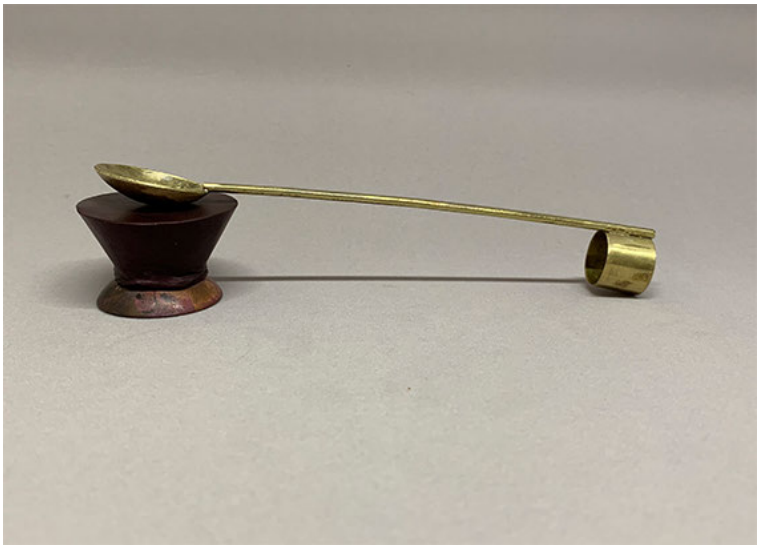

Figure 38 Vivien Bedwell, Finger Drums, 2021, brass, copper, rice, latex.

Figure 39 Vivien Bedwell, Finger Drum activated with the finger, 2021, brass, copper, rice, latex.