Jewellery LAB Exhibition 2026
The National, Ōtautahi Christchurch

7–31 October 2026

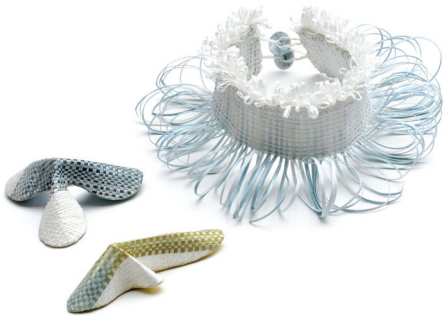
Keri-Mei Zagrobelna Nina van Duijnhoven Raewyn Walsh
Sharon Fitness Lisa van Hulst Amelia Rothwell Amelia Pascoe
Sandra Schmid Justine Fletcher Elfi Spiewack

These ten artists have spent the past year inside Jewellery LAB, Aotearoa's biennial programme for contemporary jewellery innovation. Led by The National and Makers 101, the LAB - *Loose and Brave* - gives artists the chance to experiment, rethink their materials, and develop fresh ideas without the pressure of fixed outcomes.

The 2026 cohort brings together artists at different stages of their practice: experienced makers seeking fresh direction, mid-career artists developing their work, and emerging artists exploring jewellery as a new creative language. This diversity of experience is central to the LAB ethos.

The artists began their LAB year with a masterclass by Estela Saez-Vilanova (Barcelona). From there, the programme unfolded through optional sessions in critical thinking, international lectures, and guided development with Andrea Daly (NZ), Jorunn Veiteberg (NO), and Patricia Domingues (PT/UK). Each artist has taken their own path through the LAB, resulting in a diverse and energetic exhibition.

Jewellery LAB is designed to be artist-led, flexible, and to support growth. The exhibition is the result of that journey — the bold, thoughtful, and exploratory works reflect a year of creative momentum.



Nina van Duijnhoven
No Man's Land 2026

At its heart, my practice is about connection — how we relate to ourselves, each other, the land and that which is greater than us. I'm drawn to the quiet tensions shaping our lives: between presence and absence, voice and silence, fragility and strength, holding on and letting go. The in-betweenspaces where transformation happens and something new takes shape.

This work addresses 'cultural homelessness' —the permanent limbo of belonging everywhere and nowhere at once. It explores losing unconditional Belonging, being suspended between two realities constantly colliding inside a single body, never fully merging.

The internal friction of this experience is expressed by weaving together two clashing mediums: organic paper and woven plastic. In their trapping, folding, and bending, these materials expose the challenging dialogue between the impermanent realities of the past and the structures of a new environment. The threads mimic "code-switching"—the exhausting mental gymnastics of shifting languages, behaviours, and cultural nuances to fit into a space. How do we navigate this complexity—what remains, what is let go, what is reinvented?

Nina van Duijnhoven was born in The Netherlands. She completed a Bachelor of Applied Arts, majoring in contemporary jewellery at Whitireia New Zealand, has exhibited nationally and internationally and was selected for Schmuck (2020). Van Duijnhoven's works are held in the permanent collections of Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand, Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery, Australia, Dallas Museum of Art, USA and Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, France. She lives in Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Wellington.

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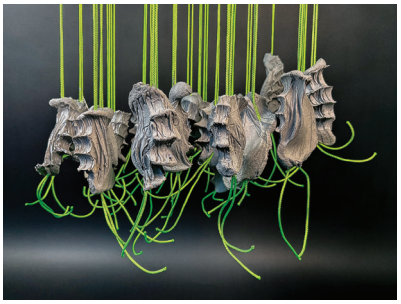


Sharon Fitness
Block of Babbles 2026

Block of Babbles *is the latest twisted branch of a tree where the artist tries to hide meaning and jewelleryness inside a piece of wood. It holds the handprints of 25 jewellers from Aotearoa. I started with a question: could a maker's handprint carry the knowledge and wisdom gathered over years of making and impart some sort of guidance to another hand?*

I invite you to reach out and touch a maker's hand. What does it say to you?

Foraging for handprints, I rediscovered the magic of our jewellery community. The process allowed time with each artist, talking about our making practice - dreams, doubts, superheroes, hands, glue, the value of being together - reminiscing about our active and vibrant community before all the jewellery schools started closing.

This project created an opportunity to rekindle friendships built up over years of exhibiting and collaborating together, attending jewellery weeks and symposiums. A return to our roots, cementing our need to collectively sustain our contemporary jewellery community going forward.

Sharon Fitness is a queer conceptual jeweller based in Te Awaroa Helensville. She has a Bachelor of Visual Arts from University of Auckland MSVA; and now teaches making skills to aspiring artists and architects. Fitness co-edited the Overview newsletter (2011-2016) with The Jewellers Guild of Greater Sandringham and participated in Handshake 1 and 3. Her work revolves around the act of wearing; feelings and impulses of the wearer, reactions they receive, and all the thoughts and motions that float in between.

Justine Fletcher
Stake 2026

I have made this work while considering how I understand, interpret, and purpose ornament in the socio-historical context of my country of birth as a Pākehā contemporary jeweller. By transforming onion skin, waratah fence posts and roofing steel into ornamental objects, I have sought to problematise the colonisation of Aotearoa and my ancestors' settlement here.

The experimental ethos encouraged by LAB fed into my approach, interrogating the way material speaks to the relationship jewellery has both with our bodies, and the wider territories we inhabit. The project stems from trials exploring origin, journeys and place, combining plant material and kitchen ingredients with metal repurposed from functional objects. Repetitive, cumulative processes associated with traditional Anglo-Saxon craft practices have been a way to sit with the subject matter as the work has evolved. The material's origin, imbued with a sense of discomfort, is what makes it precious to me.

Stake intends to make our past strange and acknowledges that the stories of these materials are also my story.

Justine Fletcher is Pākehā, of English and Irish descent. She grew up on a farm in Te Awamutu but has spent most of her life in Te Whanganui-a-Tara. Justine's practice combines jewellery, sculpture, and installation. She studied goldsmithing at the Scuola Ambrosiana in Milan, and recently completed a Master of Fine Arts at Massey University Toi Rauwhārangi (2025).

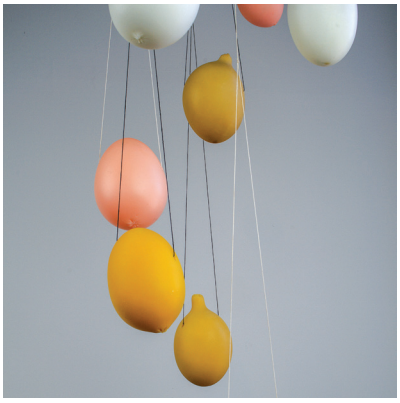
Lisa van Hulst
Drift 2026

Forms cast in ocean-bound plastic, carrying unfamiliar weight, gathered, reshaped, and worn again as brooches.

Drift moves between the natural and the manufactured, where value shifts, materials collide and transform, and surfaces retain their quiet histories.

Lisa van Hulst is a contemporary jeweller based in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington. Her practice explores materiality, memory and the wearable object, transforming familiar forms and personal imagery through processes of collecting, casting, altering and recontextualising. Her work considers how materials and objects accumulate meaning, holding traces of place, experience and time, and moves between the personal and the environmental.

Van Hulst completed a Bachelor's degree in contemporary jewellery at Whitireia New Zealand (2021). She has exhibited nationally and internationally, including a solo exhibition at Bowen Galleries and selection for the Intro international graduate exhibition at Galerie Marzee, the Netherlands. She is a member of artist collectives *TheSeeHere* and *Occupation:ARTIST*.



Amelia Pascoe
Rise 2026

These hollow beeswax forms are called Aithērs. In Greek mythology Aithēr (αἰθήρ) was the personification of the bright upper sky and the pure air breathed only by the Gods. The word shares its root with αἴθω, meaning to shine, to burn, to incinerate.

To cut a thread and take or release an Aithēr is to become, for a moment, an agent of its fate.

Amelia Pascoe was born in Ōtautahi Christchurch. She holds postgraduate degrees in Zoology and Fine Arts. Her engagement with contemporary jewellery has been shaped by study at Whitireia New Zealand, residencies in New Zealand and Italy, and participation in Handshake — a professional development and exhibition programme — with mentoring from Ruudt Peters.

Pascoe's project-based practice develops through the interplay of ideas and making, drawing on real and imagined connections between jewellery, science, and other disciplines. She is drawn to the tension between logical and intuitive thinking, and to work that straddles the boundaries of object and adornment.

The inter-relationships – connections and tensions – between science and art have been an ongoing source of inspiration. Not just the disciplines, their immediate concerns and broader contexts, but also how together they affect the way we think about and operate in the world. The world of contemporary jewellery has provided a new lens through which to explore and frame these interests. A lens which promotes reflection, refraction, inflection and results in outputs that stray towards the edges.

Amelia Rothwell
what is held between 2026

My work moves between idea and object. Sometimes I begin with a question and look for a form or material through which to explore it; at other times, an encountered object or material sets the thinking in motion. I work with metals, textiles and everyday materials, paying close attention to how forms feel in the hand. Touch is central to how I understand and resolve a form. Through repetition, reduction and small shifts in form or material, I look at what changes and what remains.

I return often to ideas of holding; to the relationships between material, object, maker and body, and the possibilities of jewellery and objects as quiet sites of encounter.

Jewellery LAB has extended my material investigation by exploring what happens when aluminium, textiles and pressure forming meet. It continues my interest in how form can hold and be held, while extending my exploration of the space it can create and contain. I am increasingly interested in how relations are held in balance, and how small material or spatial decisions affect what we notice.

Originally from Northumberland, England, Amelia Rothwell moved to Aotearoa in 2006 and is based in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. She holds an MA in Cultural Studies from the University of Leeds and an Advanced Diploma in Art and Craft (Jewellery) from Hungry Creek Art and Craft School. Rothwell participated in Handshake 6. She teaches jewellery at Workshop 6 and in 2026 participated in the Aotearoa Exchange in Munich.

Keri-Mei Zagrobelna
Kakara o te ngahere 2026

These works explore the hue as a vessel for kai, knowledge, karakia and sound. Through Hinepūtehue, they hold a sense of grounding, healing and expression, while scent awakens memory and invites the presence of place and whenua.

The works become vessels for memory, connection and care — carrying what cannot always be seen or spoken.
Mahi toi as rongoā.
Making as a way of holding.

Keri-Mei Zagrobelna (Te Āti Awa and Te Whānau-ā-Apanui) is a contemporary Māori jeweller and multidisciplinary artist based in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington. Jewellery and adornment are the foundation of her work, which has expanded into sculpture, public art, installation, photography, moving image, writing and curatorial practice.

Zagrobelna has a Bachelor of Applied Arts in contemporary jewellery from Whitireia New Zealand (2012). She has exhibited and undertaken projects nationally and internationally, including Schmuck, Munich and the Pacific Arts Festival, Guam. Alongside her studio practice, she is an educator, mentor, writer and emerging curator. In 2026 she is co-curating *Bagurrk Murrup – Kotahitanga* in Melbourne, bringing Māori and First Nations Australian women contemporary jewellers together, and the Jewellery Triennial 2027 at The Suter Te Aratoi o Whakatū.

Zagrobelna's practice is grounded in whakapapa, whenua, wairua and mātauranga Māori, exploring relationships between people, place, material and ancestral presence. Growing up surrounded by museums, taonga and the arts, she developed an early understanding of the power of objects to carry stories and memory.

"I use jewellery as my language and speak through my hands. My eyes hear my thoughts and translate."

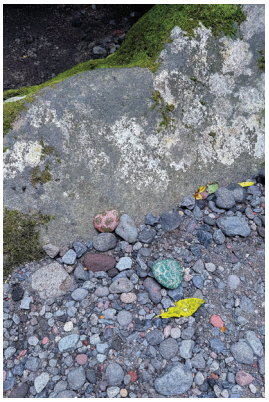
Elfi Spiewack
Connect 2026

In this body of work, I investigate the bond between seemingly unlike materials. Through careful material dialogue rather than transformation, I bring together organic, industrial, precious and discarded matter, seeking to reveal the similarities that exist beneath their apparent differences, while allowing their individual character to remain visible.

I'm interested in questioning hierarchies of value and propose the philosophical view that all matter shares a common origin or interconnectedness. Expanding my practice into sculptural and wall-based work has allowed me to investigate the language of jewellery beyond the body and explore ideas of connection, transformation, time and material relationships on a larger scale. Objects become meeting places, where separate histories and traces of time form new relationships, meanings and aesthetics.

Born in Germany, Elfi Spiewack holds a Diploma from the Pforzheim Goldsmith and Watchmaking School (1990) and a Bachelor's degree from Pforzheim University of Applied Sciences and Design (1996). In 1999, Elfi immigrated to Aotearoa, where she founded contemporary jewellery workshop cooperative The Filing Kabinett in Ōtautahi.

Spiewack's practice is rooted in her immediate environment and ongoing curiosity about the material world. Her European training provides a strong technical foundation, while her work in Aotearoa has developed through close observation of nature, discarded matter, weathered objects and natural phenomena, to continually explore new ways of seeing, wearing and defining jewellery. Elfi has exhibited extensively in Aotearoa and internationally. Her work is held in the collections of Te Papa, The Dowse, and Auckland Museum.



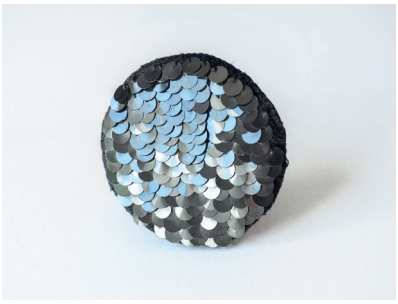
Raewyn Walsh
Camouflage 2026

These works draw upon disruptive colouration: the camouflage mechanism used by animals, reptiles and insects to visually confuse and distract potential predators. Bright colours and strong markings blur form and shape and allow organisms to move safely through the world, to get on with their day.

Foundational to these brooches is the volcanic stone on which the crystal rhinestones sit. Pumice is both elemental and magical in that it comes from deep within the earth, and rains down from the sky. This floating, silicic matter is echoed in the surface rhinestones – another glassy solid that speaks to the stars, light, and magic.

Raewyn Walsh studied contemporary jewellery under Pauline Bern, Ilse-Marie Erl, and Areta Wilkinson at Unitec Polytechnic, Tāmaki Makaurau. She was founding member of The Jewellers Guild of Greater Sandringham and editor of Overview (2011-2016). She exhibits nationally and internationally and is represented in the collections of Te Papa Tongarewa, The Dowse Art Museum, The Arts House Trust, Tairawhiti Museum, Gisborne. She lives and works at the foot of a volcano on the Central Plateau.

The red thread that runs through Walsh's practice follows an interest in making – as an idea, and as an action. Bringing found natural forms and materials together with industrially produced materials she seeks the point where nature and culture intercept, positioning herself close to the line where the wild becomes cultivated. Walsh makes jewellery to be worn and shared – back out in the wild.



Sandra Schmid
Fragment Archive 2026

My son once told me he feels he must forget things to make room for new knowledge. That childhood intuition reveals memory as a dual force: painful in conditions like dementia, yet essential to how we shape our identity. A mind that cannot forget is forever trapped in its own archives.

This work explores memory as something that can be stored, fragmented, altered, and lost, contrasted with the rapid development of AI and its seemingly endless capacity to accumulate and process knowledge. I use obsolete floppy disks as both material and metaphor. By punching holes into the disks, I disrupt their original purpose, transforming storage into fragmentation—a physical gesture of forgetting.

The fragments are used to create a mirror, questioning what remains of human identity as AI continues to advance.

Based in her studio in Martinborough, Sandra Schmid holds a Degree in Visual Arts from Whitireia New Zealand. Her award-winning art has been showcased in prominent exhibitions across national and international stages.

Connection is the anchor of Schmid's artistic exploration. Examining the complexities of modern existence, her work investigates a world where technology introduces both constant connectivity and profound fragmentation. Her conceptual approach embraces this fluidity, translating contemporary shifts, digital ephemera, and the evolving nature of human memory into tangible visual forms.

LAB is supported by

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