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An exploration of the concept of public and private in the context of  
contemporary jewellery

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THE DEGREE OF THE  
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## Declaration of Originality

I, Chia Liang Kao, hereby declare that the material presented in the exegesis is the outcome of my research during my Master of Philosophy candidature and that I am the sole author, unless otherwise indicated. I have fully documented the source of other ideas, work, quotations or paraphrases attributable to other authors.

Signed   
Date 28/07/17

# Abstract

My research uses contemporary jewellery as a means to discuss and explore the concept of public and private through the study of varied theoretical and material approaches, culminating in a body of work that explores the intimate relationship between object, maker, wearer and viewer. My research argues that the concept of public and private depends on an individual's intimate experience. Although these concepts are usually considered to have two opposite meanings, they are in fact closely related and intertwined in our everyday lives.

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# Introduction

The broad views of the public and private self can be explained from aspects of our intimate life. As such, this exegesis discusses and explores the concept of public and private in the context of contemporary jewellery through the study of various theoretical and artistic approaches.

I am often drawn to dualistic things or physically paired objects. Looking at parts of our bodies that come in pairs: we have a pair of eyes, ears, hands, feet and lungs. As an identical twin, I have concluded that my sister and I are a pair. We are nearly identical in terms of genetics but very different in our public and private selves. This made me curious to know more about an individual's dramatic differences and/or similarities in their public and private selves. This then led me to centre my study on the notion of the public and private in the context of jewellery. The research was based on the realisation that paired/dualistic things, and interiors and exteriors of forms, could be used as metaphors for concepts of public and private. All of these have inspired me in my practice-led research journey.

Some relevant analysis of public and private and the public presentation of self can be found in the book, *Public self and Private self*, in chapter one "Private and Public Experiences and the self" by James T. Tedeschi. Tedeschi noted when individuals experience pressure; we tend to behave differently in public and private to avoid

others’ “to make judgments, express attitudes, or engage in behaviours”<sup>1</sup> that are opposite to private self. Public and private are words that are considered to have opposite meanings, but they are closely related and intertwined in our everyday lives. I have chosen to focus on the meaning behind the public and private by centring the research on my own interpretation and reflections in the jewellery-making process. The definition of ‘public’ according to the *Oxford Dictionary* means ‘to exist in open view’<sup>2</sup> and in the Greek word for public is *demios*, literally means, “having to do with people.”<sup>3</sup> Moreover, ‘private’ stands for “an activity involving only a particular person or group, often dealing with matters that are quiet and free from people who may interrupt.”<sup>4</sup> I believe that the concepts of public and private are interconnected, as one cannot experience privacy without an understanding of what it means to be in the public world. The public presentation of the self is “fully conscious” of his or her individual behaviour. Individuals usually in the position of trying to gain other’s “liking, respect, acquiescence, or attitude change.”<sup>5</sup> Therefore, people tend to reveal aspects of themselves in public, such as personal behaviour, clothing, jewellery and so on. These are the aspects that we want the public to portray, as we are aware to be consistently observed from public. On the other hand, we choose to conceal some of

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<sup>1</sup> James T. Tedeschi, “Private and Public Experiences and the self.” In *Public self and private self*, ed. Roy F. Baumeister, (New York: Springer Verlag, 1986), 1.

<sup>2</sup> William R. Trumble et al., *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary: On Historical Principles*, vol. 5th (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 2394.

<sup>3</sup> James T. Tedeschi, “Private and Public Experiences and the self.” In *Public self and private self*, ed. Roy F. Baumeister, (New York: Springer Verlag, 1986), 2.

<sup>4</sup> William R. Trumble et al., *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary: On Historical Principles*, vol. 5th (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 2390.

<sup>5</sup> James T. Tedeschi, “Private and Public Experiences and the self.” In *Public self and private self*, ed. Roy F. Baumeister, (New York: Springer Verlag, 1986), 10.

our private behaviour, marks or things such as contents inside a jewellery piece, underwear, tattoo and more. The act of concealing is to forbid others to personally have direct contact.

An important reference in my research is sentimental jewellery, particularly mourning jewellery. Jewellery in the form of lockets provides small-scale hinged components to store photographs, hair or other relics. This type of jewellery gives wearers the flexibility to open the locket to reveal the inside or keep it closed and secret away from the public. This historical awareness of the sentimental meaning of jewellery sets a foundation for further investigation into the idea of public and private in contemporary jewellery.

In this research I have explored an individual's need for intimate spaces and objects by looking closely at French philosopher Gaston Bachelard's work *The Poetics of Space* (1957).<sup>6</sup> Bachelard's idea of nests and caves reminds us of the need to protect private life and this need for protection and refuge is associated with the idea of home. Moreover, Bachelard's emphasis on architecture, furniture, nests, shells, and small-scale objects highlights the importance of a private space to think our intimate thoughts.

This research has also been informed by Susan Stewart's theory about the scale of

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<sup>6</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994).

objects. This theory will be discussed in relation to jewellery in Chapter 2.<sup>7</sup> Small intimate objects play a critical role in my research and I also use Suzanne Ramljak's writings on intimate objects and subjectivity<sup>8</sup> to discuss ways in which contemporary jewellery can provide sensory experiences. In particular, I explore the potential for small-scale works to elicit an intimate encounter between wearer and viewer.

A piece of jewellery can be intimately meaningful because of the close interaction that occurs between the wearer and the piece. A way to gain an intimate experience in jewellery is through the physical engagement of touch. American anthropologist Ashley Montagu suggests that touching and tactility contributes to an overall human physical experience.<sup>9</sup> The notion of touching in jewellery is therefore important in illuminating the importance of physical engagement in my practice-led research. I have explored abstract and representational forms such as interior and exterior through the use of diverse materials in my works. In order to understand my artistic approach to public and private, I have delved into historical and contemporary examples of artists whose work enhances an intimate experience of jewellery, or explores intimacy in a wider context. I discuss the work of Dongchun Lee and Iris Bodemer, whose sensitive use of materials has influenced my early work. I also discuss the sensory experience of engaging two different spaces in the installation by

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<sup>7</sup> Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 70.

<sup>8</sup> Suzanne Ramljak, "Intimate Matters: Objects and subjectivity," in M. Anna Fariello and Paula Owen, *Objects and Meaning: New Perspectives on Art and Craft* (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2004), 188.

<sup>9</sup> Ashley Montagu, *Touching: The Human Significance of the Skin* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 1.

Roni Horn, *Things That Happen Again; For Two Rooms*, 1986. Also important to this research is the work of Constanze Schreiber, particularly her bracelet *Memento Mori III*, 2006. Peter Bauhuis's *Euscope* devices have also informed my research. This device encourages interactions and conversations and also relates to my concept of public and private in the physical engagement in jewellery.

My research project seeks to critically answer the research question: How can the idea of public and private integrate with the function, design, materials and scale of jewellery? In order to further understand material qualities in relation to the notion of public and private, I have experimented with different materials including: metal, plastic, porcelain, foam, wood, found objects and textiles. I subsequently enquire how these various materials play a part in exploring the notion of public and private in the context of jewellery. The questions raised through this material investigation allowed me to develop a final body of work using textiles, which, because of its association with domestic spaces and clothing, enabled me to conclude that it is an ideal material to use in a body of work that explores intimacy and its relationship with private spaces.

The outcome of my research has culminated in a series of works that aptly represent my own understanding and elaboration on the topic of public and private through the form of jewellery. In Chapter 1 of this exegesis I discuss the earliest work in which I explored doubled and twinned forms and consolidated my research topic. In Chapter 2 I discuss a group of hollow hand-sized pendants, which enable the wearer and viewer to engage the work from the different paradigms of public and private. From this

work, I progressed to producing works that allowed objects to be concealed within them. These range from pillow-shaped brooches to neckpieces that incorporate pockets. These works were made in response to my own need to create private worlds through the collection of small objects and mementos, and are discussed in Chapter 3. In Chapter 3 I also discuss the development of my final body of work, the *Pouch Neckpieces*, which provide a vehicle for containing small objects and explore the potential for engagement between viewer and wearer. This includes the understanding of the intimate relationship between the wearer when glimpsing through inside a pouch jewellery and on the other hand the viewer may feel curious of what is it inside or the story behind the piece of jewellery.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

My research question is: How can the idea of public and private be integrated with the function, design, materials and scale of jewellery? This question grew out of the early part of my research, which originally focused on my experience of being a twin, and looked into ideas of twinship, pairing and doubling in jewellery. My early investigations into twinship led me to focus more on the emotional aspect of the twin relationship, specifically the way in which, as an identical twin, I attempted to differentiate myself from my sister through creating a private world for myself. In this chapter, I will trace this shift in my research.

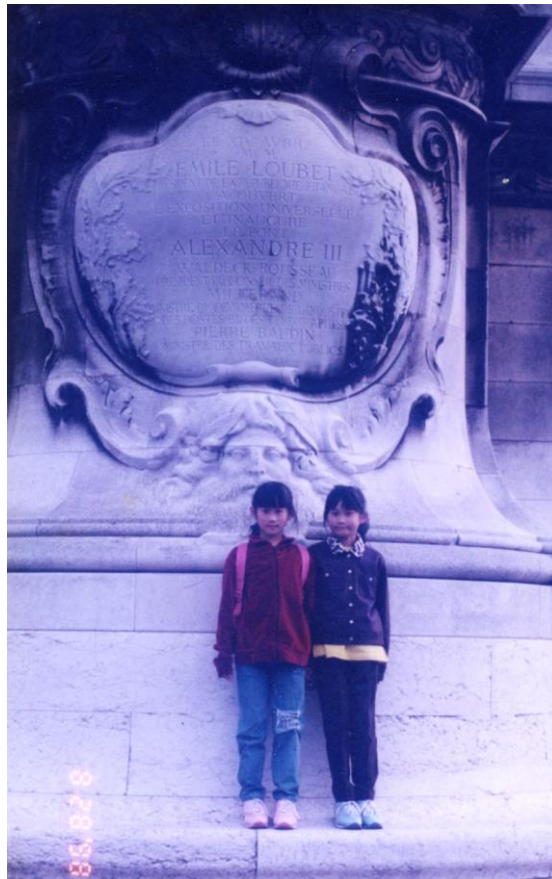
In the first section of the chapter, I will address the early works that deal with twinship: *Twinship Neckpiece 1* and *Twinship Brooch 2*. I will then discuss how my research shifted to focus on ideas about public and private, because I realised that my interest in my status as a twin was really about ways in which I wanted to be different from my sister. In the early stages of the research, I thought of public and private as opposites, and in order to build up a material vocabulary I made a series of works that extended the idea of pairing through the use of opposite words. These works explored qualities suggested by opposing words through the use of a range of materials and colours. The works discussed here are: *Cold-Warm Neckpiece*, *Natural-Artificial Neckpiece*, *Inside-Outside Neckpiece* and *Soft-Hard Neckpiece*. The final work

discussed in this chapter is *Paired Brooch*. It is this work that begins to explore ideas about public and private that led to my final body of works. This chapter also discusses the works of other artists who have influenced this early work and locates them in a theoretical context.

I learned several important things from my practice led research in these early works. Firstly, I learned that the paired forms that I created did not offer enough scope for my research project. However, through this initial exploration I was able to shift my topic to the ways in which the ideas of public and private could be integrated into contemporary jewellery. Secondly, making this work directed me to consider the way in which the design of jewellery can invite interactions between the wearer and viewer. This was to become central to my final work.

# Twinship to public and private

## Personal background



**Fig. 1** *Chia Liang Kao and  
Chia Chun Kao, 1998.*

My twin sister Chia Chun and I are identical in terms of genetics, however we are still quite different in our public and private selves. The differences can be seen in areas of our personality, sociability, and visual identity. We are constantly reflecting on each other's behaviour, are best friends and lifetime competitors. People tend to comment on our similarities, but I am interested in the ways in which we are different. I often look for ways to be different from her, or long for my own personal space. As a child I used to collect small toys and souvenirs and spent a lot of time arranging them and

storing them. In this way I created a private world for myself. This is a habit that I still have today and it has become a focus for my final work, which will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

The first works I made as part of my practice-led research are *Twinship Neckpiece 1* (Fig. 2) and *Twinship Brooch 2* (Fig. 3) These works explored similarities and differences between my sister and myself as twins.

### **Twinship works**



**Fig.2** Chia Liang Kao,  
*Twinship Neckpiece 1*, 2014.  
Wood, silver, copper body filler, paint, cord.  
(Right: Front, left: Back)



**Fig.3** Chia Liang Kao,  
*Twinship Brooch 2*, 2014. Wood, silver, steel, paint, body filler.  
(Left: Front, right: Back)

In these works I used the front and back of the wooden forms to represent the public and private selves of my sister and I. The connected parts of each work may seem identical, but there are actually noticeable differences in the colour, texture and the way they are attached to each other.

I used the same piece of wood and divided it into two carved oval wooden forms in *Twinship Neckpiece 1*, 2014. The two similar forms are joined aligned and riveted with glue, the cord is then attached to the pendant on one side and the other end is attached to the silver prong bail. The front left wooden piece is covered with body filler, paint and nail polish to suggest the glamorous and manicured public image of my twin. The smooth surface of the front is in contrast to the back of the neckpiece, which is covered with pencil marks. On the other hand, the front right wooden piece and the back show the same uneven surface. This side represents the way in which I am less conscious of my own public image than my twin.

*Twinship Brooch 2* has two nearly identical rectangular wooden blocks that are joined

on an angle. These two blocks were originally from the same block of wood and they feature the same carved out area. The left side wooden block, representing my twin, shows that she has a neat public image. I purposely placed the surface in front and attached a silver hook on back. In contrast to the right side of the wood, I deliberately made the wood on the left unrefined on both front and back. The making of this brooch is again about showing the extreme contrast between the public and private images of myself and my twin sister. These works present similarities as well as differences between the two of us.

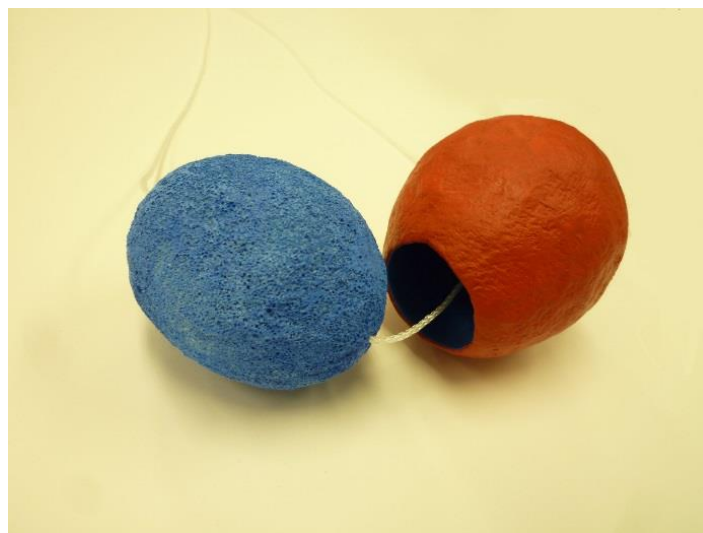
Although I was pleased with some of the formal qualities of these early works, I realised very quickly that they didn't represent the more complex issues in the twin relationship that I was more interested in expressing. I began to reflect more deeply on my relationship with my sister and realised that I was more interested in the ways in which I tried to make myself different from my sister. One way I did this as a child was to create my own private internal worlds. Gradually, my research began to shift to focus on ideas about public and private. Jewellery seemed to be a very appropriate way to do this, due to its scale and its relationship with the body: it can operate as a sign that mediates between public and private worlds.

## **Opposite words work**

I was still interested in doubles and pairing, and so at first I thought of public and private as two opposite words. In order to develop a material and conceptual vocabulary in the early stages of the research, I turned my focus to opposite words

that formed pairs, such as: Warm/Cold, Soft/Hard, Inside/Outside. I made a series of neckpieces that represent these pairings using forms made of rubber foam and paper. All of these works related to ideas about public and private as well, so their format involved an external shell that I thought of as public and another form that represented the private which also fitted into the 'public' shell. This approach helped me to focus on the differences between the interior and exterior.

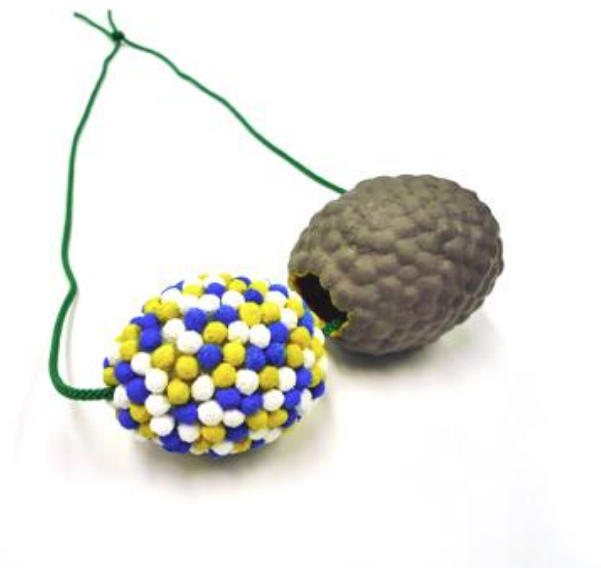
The objects that represent opposite words are connected by a cord to form a neckpiece. I used paper and rubber foam for their material properties, as they are quick to work with and I was able to create multiples in a short time and explore different ideas. I also used papier mâché to create light, strong exteriors that contrasted with the softer foam interior.



**Fig. 4** Chia Liang Kao,  
*Cold, Warm Neckpiece*, 2014.  
Foam, paper, paint, cord.



**Fig. 5** Chia Liang Kao,  
*Natural, Artificial Neckpiece*, 2014.  
Sea foam, paint, cord.



**Fig. 6** Chia Liang Kao,  
*Inside, Outside Neckpiece*, 2014.  
Foam, cotton balls, paper, paint, cord.



**Fig. 7** Chia Liang Kao,  
*Identical Neckpiece*, 2014. Foam, paper, cord.

The works about opposite words include *Cold, Warm Neckpiece, Natural, Artificial Neckpiece, Inside*, and *Outside Neckpiece*. In the work *Cold- Warm Neckpiece, 2014* (Fig. 4), I have used a cold sky blue colour for the interior and warm red colour for the exterior. The neckpiece cord gives an impression that the interior blue foam is linked with the outer red shell. In *Natural-artificial Neckpiece, 2014* (Fig. 5), the smaller piece of sea sponge is left natural while the larger piece is carved hollow and painted silver. This work represents the similarities and differences of the natural material with the artificial.

The interior for *Inside, Outside Neckpiece, 2014* (Fig. 6) was made out of many small white, blue and yellow cotton balls. The purpose was to suggest the playful private part in comparison with the dull grey public shell.

Moreover, *Identical Neckpiece* (Fig. 7) in particular helped me to raise questions in

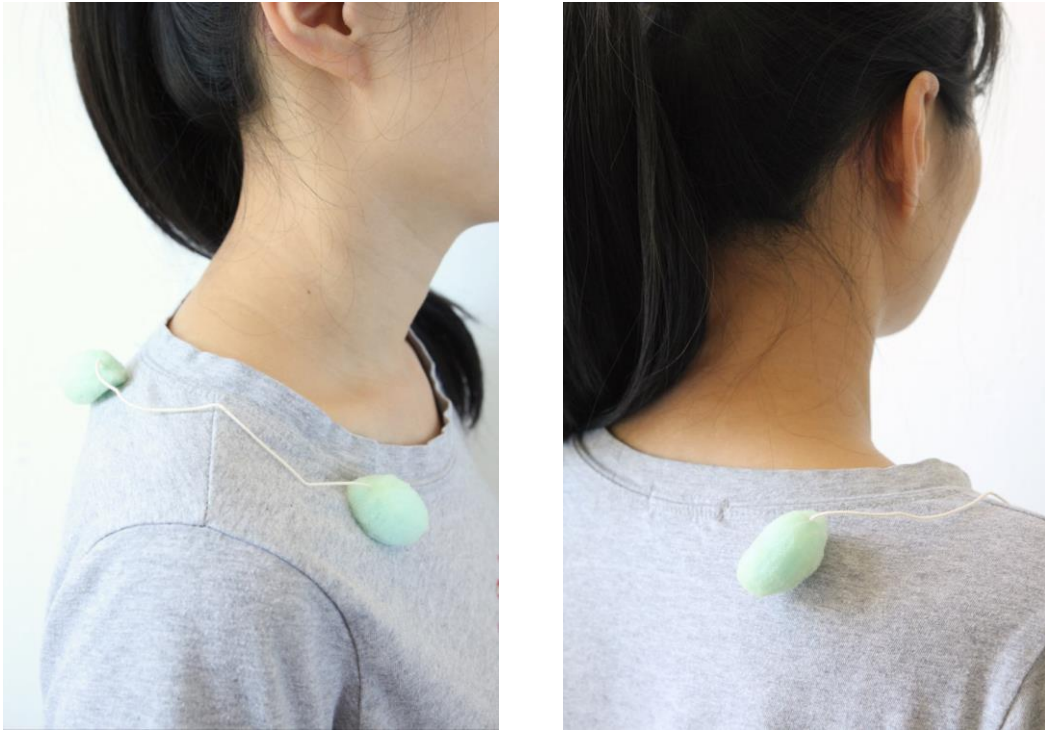
relation to ways of representing ideas about public and private in a jewellery form. In this work I have mainly used paper, cord and foam. Unlike the other works, the foam piece and the papier mâché shell are about the same size, but the foam is able to fit into the shell because it can be compressed into it. I began to ask myself whether it was possible to create an illustration of public and private in which the pair of forms appear to be interconnected in a more open-ended way that did not depend on the idea of one form fitting inside the other.

The opposite words works allowed me to see that in making works that addressed ideas about public and private, I did not need to make paired forms or forms where one fitted into the other. I was beginning to realise that although public and private are two opposite words they are interconnected. They don't need to be thought of as polar opposites.

### **Paired brooch**



**Fig. 8** Chia Liang Kao, *Paired Brooch* (experiment),  
2014.



**Fig. 9** Chia Liang Kao, *Paired Brooch* (experiment), 2014.

Foam, cord, pins, steel.

During the making of the ‘opposite words’ neckpieces, I began to think about the placement of jewellery on the body and how this might be used to explore the two perspectives of wearer and viewer. For example, how might the wearer and viewer relate to and interact with the work when the two are viewing it from different angles? Moreover, how is it possible to provide room for interactions from these perspectives?

As a result of the insights I had during the making of *Soft Hard Neckpiece*, I made a work that used similar forms made out of foam but that were in a looser relationship to each other than was possible within the neckpiece format. In *Paired Brooch* (experiment), 2014, (Fig. 8 and Fig. 9) two foam forms were attached to each other by a string, which provided freedom for the wearer to place the forms anywhere on the

body. For example, the wearer might choose to have one part of the brooch revealed to the viewer and the other hidden behind the wearer's back or in a pocket.

This work gave me the opportunity to create a sense of curiosity and intimacy in relation to the ideas about public and private. I believe that from a viewer's perspective, seeing one part of *Paired Brooch* revealed and one part hidden encourages conversation with the wearer.

During the making of *Paired Brooch*, I found a flexible strategy to prompt both wearer and viewer to engage with a piece of jewellery. The successful part of this work encouraged me to look more into ways in which jewellery provides room for interactions and slowly breaks down the isolating boundary between the wearer (the private) and viewer (the public). Through various experiments with physically paired objects, I became convinced that the concepts of public and private are interconnected, realising through the process of making the works that there was no need to present them as two forms.

## **Contextual framework**

### **Artist influences**

In the early stage of my practice-led research, I looked at the work of Dongchun Lee, Iris Bodemer and Roni Horn. I was drawn to ideas about opposites and pairing in their work, their sensitivity to material choices and ways in which interactions can occur between wearer and viewer in relation to jewellery.

## Dongchun Lee



**Fig. 10** Dongchun Lee,  
*Inhale Exhale*, 2012.  
Neckpiece, pendant. thread, iron, paint.

Korean jeweller Dongchun Lee was one of the artists that inspired me in the beginning of my research. He is relevant to my research because his work is about pairing. Moreover, the way Lee used opposite words to describe his work, as well as his use of materials, helped me to form my practice-led research question.

The title of Lee's series *Inhale Exhale* (Fig. 10) made me consider opposing qualities and pairing. Lee's jewellery pieces are mostly neckpieces and brooches consisting of paired components that combine two opposing parts. One side is always made from iron sheet and the other side is usually made up of different materials such as latex, wood and thread entwined with one another. Although one side has noticeable differences from the other, the components are also conceptually and physically

interconnected and there is a sense of balance in the way in which they are arranged side-by-side.

There are a few reasons why Lee's jewellery pieces have inspired me. Firstly, I was drawn to the visual relationship between the paired objects in this work, particularly the way in which they seem to be in conversation with each other. Secondly, the diverse materials used in this work, inspired me to further experiment with my material library. Lastly, the title of the work, *Inhale Exhale*, uses two words that are opposites of each other but imply an interrelationship that closely relates to the interior and exterior of the human body.

Dongchun Lee made several works entitled *Inhale Exhale* between 2007 and 2012. I will discuss one made in 2012 in detail. The *Inhale Exhale* neckpiece, 2012 (Fig. 10) is made out of two opposing forms connected with an iron plate. One takes the form of an elongated bell tube-like shape, which is tightly bound with a beige thread all over. Moreover, the hanging cord is integrated into the bottle form and makes a loop. The other side takes the form of a rigid leaf-like structure made from iron painted white and has a soldered long thin plate that rigidly connects to the opposing tube-shaped form. In this way, it is impossible for the bottom of the opposite ends to touch each other. The leaf-shaped form bears a resemblance to structures like bronchioles in the human body, making a connection with the act of breathing in the human and natural world. However, it is also possible to argue that the bound tube form represents the containment of oxygen and the leaf-form acts as a release. *Inhale*

*Exhale* is not just about breathing. It also refers to the term inspiration, which means both the act of breathing and the motivation to create.

In the *Inhale Exhale* neckpieces, Lee uses iron in an unexpected way. We usually see and perceive iron as rusty or grey in colour and heavy. To challenge this perception, Lee has painted the iron parts white and used thin sheets to make it light and more approachable.

It is surprising that Lee has used pure iron as the main ingredient in his work for a long time as it is an unusual material choice in jewellery.<sup>10</sup> Lee is interested in iron for two reasons. Firstly it has symbolic values such as power, strength and love. Secondly, iron decays; weathering and rusting and this suggests the passage of time.

Lee believes that jewellery is something personally significant to the wearer, as it can be an ornament, sign or symbol. These ideas have been important to my research with regards to creating works that investigate ideas about public and private in jewellery.

The *Inhale Exhale* series has been an important reference point for my early work. The use of opposite words in Lee's title helped me to generate and develop ideas of the public and private in the context of jewellery. It was through this work that I decided to explore polar opposite words such as simple-complex, warm-cold, big-small, soft-hard, messy-clean, heavy-light and so on. The title of Lee's work, suggests

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<sup>10</sup> Dongchun Lee, "Breathing-Lee Dong-Chun Solo Exhibition," [http://www.arthub.co.kr/sub01/board05\\_view.htm?No=876](http://www.arthub.co.kr/sub01/board05_view.htm?No=876). (accessed 10 May, 2014).

the interrelationship of two supposedly opposite words that are interconnected as they are part of a single cycle or process and this in turn helped me to understand how seemingly opposite words like 'public' and 'private' can also be interrelated.

Lee's use of materials as metaphors in his work also has had a strong influence on my material selection for jewellery making. It gave me the confidence to explore the use of papier mâché and rubber foam because of their material properties, allowing me to make thin, light and strong structures that I could construct quickly. Lee's poetic use of materials allowed me to consider the way my use of paper and foam provided qualities of softness and tactility, representing the private, and with a strong hard shell to represent the public.

The process of making works that related to opposite words resulted in my *Cold, Warm Neckpiece*, 2014, *Natural, artificial Neckpiece*, 2014, and *Inside, outside Neckpiece*, 2014. I realised that the works I created did not need to be restricted to identical size, nor did they need to literally express extreme contrasts to explore the ideas of public and private.

## Iris Bodemer



**Fig.11** Iris Bodemer, *Ingredients*, brooch, 2008.  
Gold plate, plant roots.



**Fig.12** Iris Bodemer, *Ingredients*, brooch,  
2008. Copper, pine cone.

Another influence on my work at this early stage was Iris Bodemer. She has used diverse materials in her practice and paired objects in specific ways. Her work led me to try different materials and not to be limited by my material selection. For example,

I have used foam, wood, paper, and fabric in my work. Moreover, Bodemer explored the similarities and differences between contrasting materials in a manner similar to Lee.

The way Iris Bodemer uses different materials pushes our visual senses to the extreme. She makes use of a wide range of materials, from gold, silver, and gemstones to tape and rubber. Writer and jeweller Marjorie Simon mentioned that Bodemer's works "engage us with their immediacy and combination of materials, textual variety, and repetition of forms".<sup>11</sup> Bodemer says that the series *Ingredients* is all about the combination of different materials, which "subsequently merge to form a conglomerate, an entity".<sup>12</sup> In one of her brooches, the two forms have conflicting qualities. One is a two dimensional smooth plate made from white 750 gold and the piece joined to it is a comparatively smaller, darkish three-dimensional textured form made out of roots and resin (Fig. 11). In another brooch from the *Ingredients* series made in 2008 (Fig. 12), Bodemer again joins two similar forms together. On one side there is a pine cone and next to it is a reflective, crinkled copper sheet. These works demonstrate how Bodemer often places unexpected materials together and shows that she has no interest in the value of her materials. Instead, she focuses on the possibilities of their use and expression in the work. Bodemer embraces materiality, only selecting the material for the colour in works. She also focuses on the use of

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<sup>11</sup> Marjorie Simon, "Variations on Silence: The Jewelry of Iris Bodemer," *Metalsmith* 33, no. 1 (2013): 32.

<sup>12</sup> Cornelia Holzach, "Jewellery by Iris Bodemer," *KUNSTHANDWERK & DESIGN* 2008, 24-29.

specific material to communicate emotions through the particular qualities of a material.

Bodemer creates contrasts between form and detail and this encouraged me to wonder how I could use various contrasted materials to represent and heighten qualities between interior and exterior as well as public and private.

## Roni Horn



**Fig. 13** Roni Horn, *Things That Happen Again: For Two Rooms*, 1986.  
Two solid copper objects installed in separate rooms.



**Fig. 14** Roni Horn, *Things That Happen Again: For Two Rooms*, 1986.  
Two solid copper objects installed in separate rooms.

Roni Horn's installation, *Things Happen Again*, (Fig. 13 and Fig. 14) presents two identical objects. She placed them in two different rooms at different angles so that when the viewer encounters them, the two objects do not feel quite the same. Viewers must rely on memory as they travel from one room to another, as they are unable to see the two works side-by-side.

Horn's installation made me think about other possible ways to understand and express the interactions between wearer and viewer, their different perspectives, and how to relate this back to jewellery. This includes the making of *Paired Brooch*, in which I leave options for the wearer to pin it anywhere on the body; with the ability to be kept hidden (in private) or revealed (in public).

## Conclusion

My early twinship research established a strong foundation for my topic of public and private in relation to jewellery. Through this early work I began to refine the focus of my topic away from twinship, towards ideas about public and private. My early investigation of materials and concepts was informed by the work of Dongchun Lee, which allowed me to see these terms in more complex ways. I began to understand them as interrelated concepts and not just as opposites. The considered material approach of Bodemer and Lee, as well as Horn's installation work, assisted me in thinking about the two perspectives of the wearer and the viewer, furthering my research into ideas that relate to public and private in personal jewellery. These were insights that were carried through into my final body of work. However, these early neckpieces were not entirely successful in communicating my ideas, and I realised that the works I created did not need to always be paired forms, nor did they need to literally express extreme contrasts to explore the ideas of public and private. Following on from this insight, I began to develop a new body of work that continued to explore ideas about public and private in a single form, and, inspired by the breakthrough experiment *Paired Brooch*, I began to consider the relationship between the wearer, the viewer and the jewellery I was making.

# Chapter 2

## Introduction

When I came to understand that the ideas of public and private are interconnected concepts, I began to make single shell forms, exploring the relationships between their inner and outer spaces. This led me to consider other words associated with privacy, such as intimacy, and I began to create works to explore qualities of intimacy in jewellery. This included *Untitled Neckpiece 1*, *Untitled Neckpiece 2*, and some works in which I experimented with metal. In this chapter, I will be examining the meaning of the word intimate, intimate space and scale in the jewellery context. This subsequently led me to make some work that deliberately attempts to make a connection between wearer and viewer. These aspects will be further discussed through examining the work of artists Elizabeth Callinicos, Constanze Schreiber, Cinnamon Lee and Do Ho Suh.

In the middle stage of my candidature I addressed my research questions through experimenting with different materials and thoughtful consideration of scale in jewellery. I decided to reduce the scale in my works, as the larger forms that I had been making did not convey the intimate aspect of jewellery. I also began to reassess my material choices, questioning whether the materials I had been using (such as foam, paper, and cotton balls) were an appropriate choice for my research aim.

## Intimate, intimacy

When researching the ideas of public and private, I found the key word ‘intimate.’ This word helped me to understand the importance of our private world, which also reaches out to the wider public world. According to the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*<sup>13</sup> and *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*<sup>14</sup>, the adjective intimate means private, personal and secretive. This can be associated with close or warm personal relationships, in the sense that is aimed at establishing or suggesting an atmosphere conducive to privacy. Intimacy also suggests a space of friendliness. Intimate suggests detailed, deep, pertaining to the inner/essential nature or existing mind.

The word intimate is a homograph, which means that there are two words that are spelled the same way but mean something different. It is both an adjective and a verb. *The Australian Oxford Dictionary*<sup>15</sup> and *Macquarie Thesaurus*<sup>16</sup> give two explanations of the meaning of the word intimate as a verb. The first meaning is to proclaim, to make known indirectly, to hint, imply or suggest, rather than to reveal fully. The second meaning is to be formal and announce.

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<sup>13</sup> T. F. Hoad and Press Oxford University, "The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology," (New York; Oxford Oxford University Press, 1993), 240.

<sup>14</sup> William Little et al., *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, vol. 3rd. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 1101-02.

<sup>15</sup> Bruce Moore, *The Australian Oxford Dictionary* (Australia, 2004), 655.

<sup>16</sup> J. R. L. Bernard and Library Macquarie, *The Macquarie Thesaurus*, vol. Rev. (North Ryde, N.S.W: Macquarie Library, 1986), 273.3.

When I looked for similar words to intimate in the thesaurus, I have found, indoor, secret, announce, express, hint, confidential, loving, warm, faithful, near, close, dearest and cherished. These various meanings of the word intimate helped me in my making to capture the feeling of owning personal jewellery from a wearer's perspective.

The *Macquarie English–Chinese Bilingual Dictionary*<sup>17</sup> points out that the word intimate in Chinese is 親密. The character 親, which means relatives, close, familiarity and to love, is combined with 密, which means compact, confidential, dense, close and secretive. The word intimate in Chinese culture suggests something mostly shared with someone special and close such as relatives, a lover or best friends. And culturally it also means enclosed and behind closed doors, where it is rarely shown in public; an interpretation of the word intimate which is very similar to the way it is used in English.

The research into the definition, origin and history of the word helped me to look into the word from different angles and understand it in greater detail. This subsequently brought up new ideas in relation to intimacy. The most interesting detail that I discovered about the word intimate is that it is also used to describe women's

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<sup>17</sup> Guofu Wang, *Macquarie English-Chinese Bilingual Dictionary: Maikuali Ying Han Shuang Jie Ci Dian* (Suzhou, China: Suzhou University Press, 1999), 805-06.

clothing that is worn next to the skin, under street or outer garments.<sup>18</sup> The aspect of the word intimate, which relates to clothing will be further discussed in Chapter 3.

Janna Malamud Smith explores intimacy through individual stories in her book *Private Matters: In Defense of the Personal Life*. She suggests that intimacy “offers a space in which a person might become more fully himself.”<sup>19</sup> She clearly points out that privacy allows individuals to have “choice” and “control”.<sup>20</sup> These are important concepts in considering the relationship a wearer has to items of jewellery, especially in relation to the ways in which the wearer is able to control how much they allow the viewer to interact with the jewellery.

## **Intimate Space**

By the end of the early part of my research I had come to the realisation that the terms ‘public’ and ‘private’ are not polar opposites but in fact interconnected ideas. I realised that we can only experience a sense of privacy because we are aware of the ways in which being in public can create a sense of exposure. This led me to start to look into intimate spaces such as shells and nests. I considered these natural forms in relation to the ways in which we create intimacy within intimate architectural spaces such as bedrooms within a house.

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<sup>18</sup> Dictionary.com, "Intimate," <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/intimate?s=t> (accessed 18 June, 2015).

<sup>19</sup> Janna Malamud Smith, *Private Matters: In Defense of the Personal Life* (Emeryville, CA:Seal Press, 2003), 16.

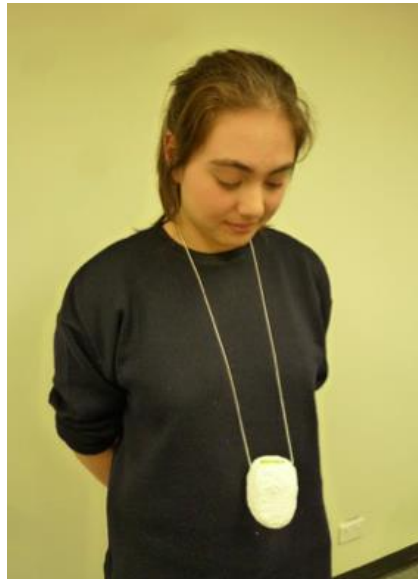
<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

## Workshop Practice

### Untitled Neckpiece 1



**Fig. 15** Chia Liang Kao,  
*Untitled Neckpiece 1*, 2014. Foam, plastic, paint, cord.



**Fig. 16** Chia Liang Kao,  
*Untitled Neckpiece 1*, 2014.  
Foam, plastic, paint, cord.

Building on my previous works in which paired forms represented the interconnected relationship between public and private, I began to make single forms that explored relationships between inner spaces and outer surfaces as a way of extending ideas about public and private. In doing so, these works also became an exploration of intimate space in relation to jewellery. The most important works from this period, *Untitled Neckpiece 1* (Fig. 15 and Fig. 16) and *Untitled Neckpiece 2* (Fig.17), used foam and papier mâché to construct a shell-like form that is representative of home. These pendants provide a private space in which the wearer is able to observe the piece from all angles.

In *Untitled Neckpiece 1*, I created a hollow form painted white on the outer surface and yellow in the interior. At the opening of the hollow form I included a softly rounded found yellow plastic bottle neck. The yellow painted interior was designed to stand out against the white shell of the pendant, and the use of the bottle neck physically softened the rim of the opening, increased visual difference between inner and outer, inviting others to further engage with the interior.

Whilst putting on *Untitled Neckpiece 1*, the wearer can play with the long cord, experience tactile engagement through handling the work and look down to view the interior colour. The neckpiece intimates to the viewer that there is something for them to see or experience. The viewer on the other hand can only see glimpses of the interior from the top. However, the wearer might want to share the neckpiece with the viewer by simply holding it towards them. In this neckpiece the length of the long

cord is designed to assist this act of sharing without having to remove the neckpiece from the body. I believe when the viewer looks down into the pendant, this action would make the viewer curious and want to look closer as well. The experience of sharing a piece of jewellery with others when it is worn suggests an intimate engagement and opening of the private self to the public world.

## **House**

I was drawn to making forms of nests and shells, as they represent an intimate space. We often refer to making nests within private spaces in a house, such as a bedroom. The private space is usually reserved for individual access only. My own house and bedroom are personal spaces where I feel secure and others need my permission to enter into the space. French philosopher Gaston Bachelard's ideas of space still matters currently as he understood that there is a strong correlation between the different intimate domestic spaces in the house, such as cellar, garret, nooks, corridors, and bedrooms.<sup>21</sup> They are intimate spaces that deeply relate in an intimate way to our daily lives; they are places where we hide things away from the public and heightened particular of understanding personal object in space.

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<sup>21</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 8.

## Untitled Neckpiece 2



**Fig. 17** Chia Liang Kao, *Untitled Neckpiece 2*, 2014. Paper, paint, cord.

In *Untitled Neckpiece 2* (Fig. 17), I used a similar strategy as seen in *Untitled Neckpiece 1* in order to relate the interior space to the outer shell. This work is made out of papier mâché in a hollow form. The interior is painted yellow and the exterior black. This strong contrast of colours is unified by the way in which the cord is tied through the interior. The difference between this neckpiece and *Untitled Neckpiece 1* was that I cut out holes in the piece to create openings for the viewer to gaze into the interior private space as though one is looking through a window.

In the making of *Untitled Neckpiece 1 and Untitled Neckpiece 2*, I was working without physically paired forms and suggesting a relationship between public and private in one form. I also examined the experience of the viewer, asking them to engage with the wearer's perspective in relation to the jewellery pieces. I felt this two-way viewing process could invite conversation between wearer and viewer. In making these two pieces, I was focusing on the wearer's interaction with the works.

The wearer's engagement with the work became more crucial in creating a sense of the intimate. They were able to experience the tactility of the work by handling it and by looking down into it whilst it is being worn, they have access to a private space. In contrast, the viewer can only see the neckpiece from certain angles, thus the action of looking may invite conversation between wearer and viewer.

Bachelard mentions that private space does not stay enclosed permanently.<sup>22</sup> There are doors in houses to permit entry and windows can be seen from inside and outside the house. Bachelard points out that there is usually an opening to a space through which we are able to look in. This influenced my decision to cut out some holes in *Untitled Neckpiece 2* to provide openings like windows. However, I found this approach to be not as intimate in comparison with just providing one opening to gaze in. The intimate space remains secretive and the entire space is not revealed to everyone.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 53.

## Metal work fabrication



**Fig. 18** Chia Liang Kao, *Pendant*  
(experiment),  
2014. Fine silver.

The materials that I have worked with previously are mostly foam and paper. They are materials that I can work with quickly to test out multiple forms. However, I felt that the materials I had been working with were no longer successful as I needed to slow down. I wanted to use materials that could make me consider the making process, and my decisions, more carefully. I decided to work with more labour-intensive techniques such as metal fabrication. Although the making process is slower in relation to other processes, it did make me think more deeply and precisely about my research into the public and private. As each metal fabrication takes a long time, it is crucial to be aware of the research concept at all times. Moreover, I chose metal to

experiment with adding weight to the pendant so as to give a more enhanced precious presence for the wearer.

In *Pendant*, 2014, (Fig. 18) I used fine silver to create a nest-like form and began to be more careful in my selection of materials in order to bring them to closer to my core research. The nest-form was originally drawn from Bachelard, where he talks about nests as homes. A nest is a structure built by animals for sheltering and resting as a home. I built nest-like forms because nests suggest “a simple house”.<sup>23</sup> In reflecting on a nest, French naturalist J. B. Robinet published a book called *Philosophical views on the natural gradation of forms of existence, or the attempts made by nature while learning to create humanity* in Amsterdam, 1768. Robinet believes humans have a longing to make shells.<sup>24</sup> We have a subconscious need in searching for home; for nests and shells that suggest intimacy, security and shelter.

The use of silver material to create a shell form made me developed a deeper interest in the relationship between the wearer as private audience and the viewer as public audience, as it can be fabricated in different forms to suggest inside and outside. However, in the end, I decided that metal was not an appropriate material for suggesting intimacy, and this was not helped by the openness of the design of the nest-form. Through further research on the types of jewellery that can deal with

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 112.

aspects of public and private, I decided to delve further into intimate space, intimate objects, and hidden components in jewellery and sensory experience in my works.

I began to be more careful in selecting materials that were closer to my core research aims. Although I abandoned using metal, I enjoyed using it and I have used it to make components of my subsequent fabric works, which I will discuss further in Chapter 3.

## **Scale**

When I researched scale in relation to my work, I came across Susan Stewart's book, *On Longing, Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*.

She noted that the human being has the ability to determine scale, with our "hand being the measure of the miniature."<sup>25</sup> Stewart suggested important points on working with scale, including that "the exaggeration of the miniature must continually assert a principle of balance and equivalence, or the narrative will become grotesque."<sup>26</sup> Therefore, it was essential during my practice to always have control of the scale in relation to the body. While Stewart is talking about representational miniatures, my works are miniatures in relations to human scale. In that context, hands are still the measure of the small in relation to human scale.

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<sup>25</sup> Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 46.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

## Artist influences

There are two very different artists in particular I will discuss in this chapter. The first artist is Elizabeth Callinicos who uses metal fabrication to produce her small hollow form neckpieces (Fig. 19). Her work made me think more deeply about scale in relation to intimacy in public and private jewellery. I will also discuss Constanze Schreiber and Cinnamon Lee who both use the concept of inside and outside, private and public, within a single piece of jewellery. Moreover, I will discuss Do Ho Suh, who creates foldable fabric architectural installations that can be carried with him in a suitcase.

### Elizabeth Callinicos



**Fig. 19** Elizabeth Callinicos, *Necklaces*, 2012. Silver, electroformed.

Elizabeth Callinicos uses metal to make works that explore the interface between private and public. The use of open and enclosed forms offers visual metaphors for intimacy which visually relate to my work (Fig. 19). I am aware of the scale that

Callinicos chooses for her hollow jewellery forms. The smaller openings at the top rim, compared with the wider base vessel form, invite the viewer to engage closely with the work.

In my previous work, I tended to make neckpieces that can fit into the hand and these were purely designed for the wearer's physical engagement with the piece. However, I soon realised that the hollow forms do seem to convey intimacy but it would be more successful if my hollow form works could be smaller in size.

## **Inside and outside**

I have made jewellery pieces that consist of a hollow form, but I am also interested in jewellery that has inside and outside interfaces (for example, the inside of rings, a locket, and the back of a brooch). Jewellery pieces can be said to provide an intimate and special connection between artist and wearer as well as wearer and viewer. I realised that the wearer can create their own private story with mementos in a piece of jewellery that has both inside and outside aspects. Art historian who specialises in contemporary jewellery, Liesbeth den Besten points out the wearer “makes the meaning of a piece, attributing stories, memories and their personality to it, changing a piece of jewellery with meaning”.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Liesbeth den Besten, *On Jewellery: A Compendium of International Contemporary Art Jewellery* (Woodbridge; Stuttgart: Arnoldsche, 2011), 24.

An emphasis on both the inside and outside in jewellery design can be seen in works such as Constanze Schreiber's *Memento Mori III* bracelet and *Secret Hearts* ring from Cinnamon Lee.

### Constanze Schreiber



**Fig. 20** Constanze Schreiber, *Memento Mori III*, bracelet, 2006. Fine silver.

*Memento Mori III* (Fig. 20) is a fine silver bracelet that has a concealed secret; the interior hides stacks of grimacing skulls that suggest elements of mourning jewellery. When the bracelet is worn, the public face of the work focuses on the beautiful balls on the outside. However, when the bracelet is off the body, it becomes obvious that the 'balls' are actually the backs of skulls, placed on the inside where the piece touches the skin. While being worn, this intimate secret is known only to the artist and the wearer.

## Cinnamon Lee



**Fig. 21** Cinnamon Lee, *Secret Hearts ring*, 2009.  
Sterling silver, red cold enamel.

A work that has a similar hidden component in its design is Cinnamon Lee's *Secret Hearts ring* (Fig. 21). In this work, Lee focused on the personal relationship between jewellery and the wearer. From the viewer's perspective, the outside of the ring only shows a repetitive geometric pattern of circles. But on the inside of the ring, a pattern of heart shapes is concealed. Remarkably, once the ring is removed from the finger, it will leave a soft heart-shaped mark on the skin. This serves as a reminder to the wearer; a hidden love message from the jewellery piece. Lee says of that ring "some details may be hidden, while others are exposed."<sup>28</sup>

In this type of jewellery, the maker chooses how much to reveal and what to keep private for the wearer. The wearer can also choose to show others the inside of the ring or the marks on the finger. In relation to this, Lee suggests, "We communicate with the world through what we allow others to see and what we choose to reveal,

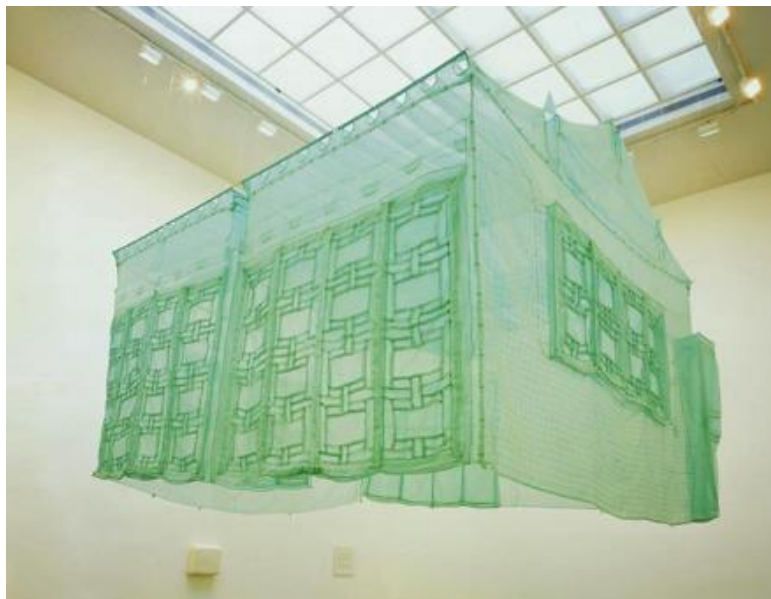
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<sup>28</sup> e.g.etal, "Cinnamon Lee," e.g.etal, <http://egetal.com.au/news/post/secret-hearts-enduring-love>. (accessed 10 March, 2015).

conceal, make overt or keep secret.”<sup>29</sup> This process of wearing and engaging with a piece of jewellery starts to form a special bond and dialogue between the piece and wearer. Writer Paula Owen understands this level of exploration with an art object as it “neutralises the distance between the object and the viewer, allowing for the experience to be personal, ephemeral, associative, and responsive, much like conversation.”<sup>30</sup>

Schreiber and Lee’s approach to jewellery design (work that uses two sides and concealed elements) made me think about alternatives to the hollow form as a way to represent the ideas of public and private.

## Do Ho Suh



**Fig. 22** Do Ho Suh, *Seoul Home/L.A. Home/New York Home/Baltimore Home/London Home/Seattle Home*, 1999. Silk, metal armature.

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Paula Owen, “Fabrication and Encounter”, cited in Maria Elena Buszek, ed. *Extra/Ordinary: Craft and Contemporary Art* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 86.

The research into the hidden components of some work guided me to look into the ways we carry important sentimental objects with us. An example of this is Korean artist Do Ho Suh's sculpture, *Seoul Home/L.A. Home/ New York Home/ Baltimore Home/ London Home/ Seattle Home*, 1999 (Fig. 22). It is a reproduction of his Korean home, made out of silk and a metal armature. He used fabric to re-create the Korean architecture of his home so that it could be expandable and transportable, as well as having the ability to be folded up and placed inside his suitcase wherever he goes. As a foreigner working in the United States, carrying his piece of expandable architecture gives him a sense of being back in his home country, Korea.

Suh mentioned that in dealing with the feeling of cultural displacement he has a longing for a particular space. From my perspective, I can deeply relate to Suh's work as I often live abroad and I do feel displaced. I believe that this explains my habit of collecting mementos and carrying them with me whenever I travel. Through looking at Suh's work I was reminded of the importance of keeping aware of my material choices. I began to think about other materials that might provide metaphors for ideas of intimacy and I decided to explore the use of textiles in jewellery. I will discuss this further in the next chapter.

## Conclusion

I learned several things through the work I made at this stage in my candidature. Firstly, the meaning of intimate space that we engage in began to play a crucial part in my work. Secondly, I considered the importance of scale in jewellery and the need to find a suitable material to convey intimacy. Thirdly, I started to create my own intimate spaces inside the jewellery pieces. By examining relationships between the inside and outside of the works I made, I also contemplated on the possibility of making works with components that could be hidden from the viewer. Fourthly, I reflected on scales more carefully in my work and to think about how much of the work is shown to the viewer or kept private.

These considerations led me to think about my own rituals in creating private, intimate worlds through the collection and arrangement of small objects and mementos. I thought about how I might make works that referred to this habit. The works that resulted from this will be discussed in Chapter 3.

# Chapter 3

## Introduction

The work that I made in the first part of my candidature focused on ideas about public and private in a general sense. However, as I began to think about what these terms meant to me, and to consider how intimacy is concerned with them, I began to think about making work that focused on my own experiences of creating private worlds as a way of coping with the public world. This chapter discusses this work. I delve deeper into my decision to employ fabric in my jewellery as an appropriate material for exploring intimacy. I explain how the use of fabric led me to working with forms associated with textiles. I discuss three of my works: *Pillow Brooch*, *Pocket Neckpiece* and *Pouch Neckpieces*. I also explore how comfort and sensory experience plays a role in my research, especially in relation to the way in which these qualities can invite interaction with a viewer. I discuss the work of Monika Brugger and Sigurd Bronger, both of whom employ fabric in their work. I also refer Peter Bauhuis' *Euscope*s as examples of works that inspire curiosity and desire to interact with the work in a viewer.

## Workshop practice

In the later stage of my research, I began to focus on what the terms ‘private’ and ‘public’ meant to me personally. I thought about how as a child I wanted to make myself different from my twin sister by creating my own private world. I would collect small toys and mementos and would spend time arranging them and storing them in small containers and pockets. This is a habit I have continued into adulthood, and it has become a way for me to create a secure and private space for myself in a life in which I travel and relocate often. I decided to make some work about this habit, using the small items and mementos from my collection.

In *Pillow Brooch*, *Pocket Neckpiece* and *Pouch Neckpieces*, I wanted to suggest ideas about public and private, comfort and intimacy. I also developed ways to invite interactions from a viewer’s perspective.

### Pillow Brooch



Front of the brooch



Back of the brooch

**Fig. 23** Chia Liang Kao, *Pillow Brooch*, 2015. Fabric, stainless steel, plastic, memento.



**Fig. 24** Chia Liang Kao, *Pillow Brooch*, 2015.

I began by thinking about an intimate space such as a bedroom and a bed, and the more physically universally intimate object, a pillow. I started to consider the space under the pillow. The area below a pillow offers an intimate space to hide things and the intimate action of laying our head and face upon a pillow while resting further suggests a sense of closeness and security.

The word ‘pillow’ already suggests a feeling of warmth and intimacy. It offers an emotional space: a place for resting, a place to grieve, or a place to act like a listener for intimate secrets. Bachelard considers spaces within architecture, furniture and objects that provide a level of intimacy. He says that without certain intimate objects like pillows, as “... part of our intimate life... we would lack a model of intimacy.”<sup>31</sup>

Under the pillow itself is a model of intimacy and Bachelard articulated clearly the notions of public and private in intimate spaces. This relates to the kinds of things such as nightwear that individuals may hide under the pillow and personally I used to

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<sup>31</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 78.

place my cherish objects such as a good luck charm and jewellery. With this in mind, I made *Pillow Brooch*, 2015 (Fig. 23 and Fig. 24).

When I was making *Pillow Brooch*, I was thinking of the way Constanze Schreiber and Cinnamon Lee explore the inside and outside of a piece of jewellery. My brooch consisted of a plastic moulded form in the shape of a pillow that was covered in fabric. At the back of the plastic form, I had pressed a small plastic ring from my collection to make an indentation into which the ring would fit. The front of the brooch appears to be a miniature pillow form, while my ring memento is incorporated at the back of the brooch. The reason for choosing a plastic ring under the pillow was to show a memento from childhood could be worn hidden from public view.

The use of my memento originally came from my research into objects with a special meaning that an individual may want to keep private, but which can be carried publically in a piece of jewellery (such as a locket) without others knowing what is inside. The aim of using the pillow form was to create an embracing quality, suggesting that an object is resting on a pillow or being treasured in the jewellery piece. I decided to choose a pillow form because the bed, according to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, is an “archetypal symbol of family life”<sup>32</sup> and an object that suggests our private life.

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<sup>32</sup> Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton. *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self* (New York; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 214.

This plastic ring is placed on the back of the brooch; the private side, close to the chest, only available to the wearer. This allows the brooch to be seen from two perspectives, namely from those of the wearer and viewer. The viewer is able to interact with the work by observing it from an outsider's point of view, in comparison to the wearer who is able to physically engage with the work.

I created a mould form for the ring to sit snugly within and placed a sewn fabric sleeve over the top. The mould is flexible and the personal object is conveniently placed and securely stored when worn. Therefore, the way the object is being stored is a good measure and reflection of the degree of care taken towards it.

Using Polycaprolactone, I found it quite convenient to be able to model the plastic shape and re-heat the material to hold other mementos as well. Nonetheless, some of my experiments using the same principle with other mementos were unsuccessful. Sometimes the object looked as if it was forced into the mould instead of resting there and sometimes the mould shrank in the process of making and the object would not fit. On other occasions, the object was pushed too deep into the mould and this created difficulty in getting it out. It was important for the action of holding to be gentle and easy to interact with. In addition it was also critical that the held mementos did not appear too casually placed in the mould.

It was easier to consider the private aspect of the brooch. It was a challenge to decide how to make the public side of the brooch. I wanted to create some hints to suggest

what kind of object was inside, while also providing a feeling of intrigue so that viewers were encouraged to find out more about the hidden side.

The private component in my work is in intimate contact with the wearer when worn on the body (Fig. 23). The plastic toy may be representative of childhood memories and may not be appropriate for wearing on every occasion, but it can be carried secretly on the body whenever the wearer wishes. The making of the *Pillow Brooch* made me delve further into the personal significance of jewellery and mementos and also the role of comfort in my work.

## **The Personal Significance of Jewellery and Mementos**

The observation of intimate space and the act of storing a memento in *Pillow Brooch* helped me to understand how intimacy could be linked to ideas about public and private. This section will outline the meaning of mementos and their importance in my jewellery pieces. In my work the wearer is able to access both the public and private side of the jewellery and discover an intimate space for self-adornment. The scale of jewellery in relation to the body, and the intimate aspect of it, is the fundamental basis of my research. I was particularly influenced by sentimental jewellery such as mourning jewellery and locketts. This type of jewellery integrates intimacy into its structure or has a hidden component for storing precious objects.

The locket form in sentimental jewellery has a long history that can be traced back to the early seventeenth century. It usually consists of a pendant that is designed in two identical halves secured by a hinge. The outside of a locket does not indicate that it can conceal things on the inside. It is often used to honour someone or is worn in memory of the people we care about. The wearer can choose whether or not they want to disclose what is inside to a viewer. However, it is important to note that in my work I am not interested in the overall hinged design structure of a locket. I am more focused on the idea of storing personal mementos inside a jewellery piece.

My later works utilise the function of a traditional locket (a place to keep something that can be hidden from the viewer). However, fabric has also been incorporated into my works in order to create my own sentimental jewellery.

My research into architectural space in Chapter 2 made me consider my close relationship with mementos. When we are in a private architectural space, we are within a controlled space. On the other hand, the space inside jewellery provides privacy that is portable, and can be worn in a way that allows us to interact with it through close inspection. From this, it is therefore reasonable to state that the sensory experiences of engaging with contemporary jewellery today can be found in small-scale works as they have the potential to elicit an intimate encounter via the viewing process.

According to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, a psychologist that focuses on creative process and human experience. In his text: *The Meaning of things: Domestic Symbols*

*and the self*, there are a number of categories of meanings regarding intimate objects, such as memento, souvenir and gift,<sup>33</sup> also in the text in *Thinking jewellery: on the way towards a theory of jewellery* is a book edited by Wilhelm Lindemann and Joan Clough, they both explained that personal, individual objects are often owned by an individual for a period of time so that they share a common historical memory, allowing the owner to form a strong intimate relationship with an object over time.<sup>34</sup>

They explain that personal objects can provide a form of communication in three ways: as a souvenir that recalls an event or significant places, as items that connect to social distinction, and as items that invite an imaginary interlocutor.<sup>35</sup> My primary focus is on the dialogue between the object facilitate the object and wearer while the piece of jewellery can be three things, cab be the remembrance of somebody, a suggestive statement of the wearer, or it can be an object that facilitates dialogue between the piece and wearer.<sup>36</sup> As Bruce Metcalf believes, jewellery does not simply have a functional value, it can also “touch people.”<sup>37</sup>

In *Thinking Jewellery*, Tilmann Habermas wrote a chapter about the psychology of jewellery as beloved objects. Here Habermas includes a chart of various types of

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<sup>33</sup> Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton, *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self* (New York; Cambridge [Eng.]: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 57.

<sup>34</sup> Wilhelm Lindemann and Joan Clough, *Thinking Jewellery: On the Way Towards a Theory of Jewellery* (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche, 2011), 104.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Bruce Metcalf, "Recent Sightings: Heart and Art," *Metalsmith* 1996, 6.

personal objects such as photos, letters, jewellery, books, cuddly toy animals, diaries, clothing and so on. It was shown that jewellery was the fourth largest on the chart.<sup>38</sup> This shows that jewellery is one of the most common intimate objects in our daily life. Moreover, Habermas suggests that personal objects have a strong emotional bond with the owner, as they usually belong to the owner for a long period of time.<sup>39</sup> A category of intimate objects might include key chains, jewellery, glasses or clothing. Such personal objects are “usually small and easy to handle; and many of them can be carried about or worn on one’s body.”<sup>40</sup>

I agree with Habermas who states that “jewellery as a personal object is particularly well suited to signifying something that remains hidden from others. Only the initiated recognise the biographical and personal significance of a piece of jewellery. Hence jewellery is suited to being used as a sort of secret language.”<sup>41</sup> In the context of my work, the initiative is the wearer carry an object of personal significant to themselves.

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<sup>38</sup> Wilhelm Lindemann and Joan Clough, *Thinking Jewellery: On the Way Towards a Theory of Jewellery* (Stuttgart: Arnoldsce, 2011), 102.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.



**Fig. 25** Chia Liang Lisa Kao's collections of mementos (portion).

Prompted by my research into the personal significance of jewellery, I have thought about the use of my own collections of mementos in jewellery (Fig. 25). I agree with psychoanalyst Donald Woods Winnicott's suggestion that personal objects such as comfort blankets or teddy bears (which he calls "transitional objects") are able to aid the relationship with others and provide personal space for engagement. I believe this quality can also be transferred to jewellery.<sup>42</sup>

As such, I believe that the process of creating jewellery pieces that include mementos has enabled me to look closely at the personal significance of jewellery as well as the relationship between the wearer and viewer. Wearing such pieces is akin to carrying part of the special memory of an object in a way that is accessible to the wearer.

In understanding the importance of including mementos in my jewellery pieces, a

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.,107.

particular habit of mine is relevant. When buying personal objects I purchase two of everything, as I feel more at ease knowing I have a backup if I lose it. I also have a compulsion to buy different types of storage bags. Each memento I now own has a personal memory associated with it. It has slowly become a habit of mine to spend serious time trying to put them in order and keep each one of them in separate bags and boxes I have specially chosen. This action of storing things in bags can be traced back to my grandmother who used to sew in hidden pockets on all the clothes she created for our family.

I carry my personal objects with me wherever I relocate. I know some are irreplaceable. I always store my collection in a secret space so that I am the only person who can access them. Through this process, I feel a kind of satisfaction. Therefore, I agree with Walter Benjamin's idea that "ownership is the most intimate relationship that one can have to objects. Not that they come alive in him; it is he who lives in them."<sup>43</sup>

I have been considering why do I do this. Why am I so obsessed with putting things in bags, pockets and sections? Is it because I spent most of my life overseas that I want to surround myself with familiar personal objects to feel comfortable? Or is it that as a twin I have this urge to find my own space for intimate solitude? I love to put things in different sections in their right place. It bothers me when people try to help me to

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<sup>43</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings.. Vol. 2. Pt. 2, 1931-1934*, trans. Rodney Livingstone and Others, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 492.

move my personal objects. It may also be that in the process of incorporating them into my jewellery pieces I subconsciously try to keep my personal objects even closer to my body.

The ritual associated with collecting started in my childhood and continued in my adult life. It is about choosing what to reveal about myself and to be free from judgement. Aesthetically, my collection of small objects may not seem to be valuable or beautiful to others. However, they have a high level of emotional importance to me as some are irreplaceable. As Donald Norman suggests, "...in the realm of feeling, it is just as reasonable to become attached to and love things that are ugly as it is to dislike things that would be called attractive."<sup>44</sup> German socialist Wolfgang Sofsky also has the same opinion as Norman. Sofsky believes that the "market value might be small, but their personal significance is so great that damage to them would be experienced as a serious loss."<sup>45</sup> This suggests that objects embody our emotions through our associations with memory and past encounters, and they also provide a sense of comfort.

## **Comfort**

In reflecting back to the research on the intimate spaces we live in, we as individuals

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<sup>44</sup> Donald A. Norman, *Emotional Design: Why We Love (or Hate) Everyday Things* (New York., NY: Basic Books, 2004), 47.

<sup>45</sup> Wolfgang Sofsky, *Privacy: A Manifesto* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008), 69.

tend to find our way towards physical and emotional comfort for security. In relation to the house, Bachelard writes, "... we have nooks and corners in which we like to curl up comfortably...".<sup>46</sup> This reminds me that my work is not only about the public, the private and intimacy. It also responds to ideas about comfort; about providing comfort, a warm reminder of a sense of belonging that connects to my experiences with a particular person, activities or place.

Knowing I am surrounded by mementos that are personally significant provides a sense of comfort, stability and continuity. We learn to interact with the things around us and learn our lessons in what provides danger or comfort. I feel the emotional side of owning intimate objects is important to their meaning.

The notion of comfort made me think of the psychological aspect of me keeping mementos inside jewellery pieces. As fabric is able to have qualities of comfort and protection (which are obviously crucial in my work), I subsequently focused on the use of fabric and it soon had a strong relevance to my research with regards to the relationship between intimacy and notion of public and private.

## **Fabric Jewellery**

I have used diverse materials in my works, such as plastic, foam, fabric and paper, to create a relationship between the interior and exterior. I realised that a flexible

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<sup>46</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), xxxviii.

material is needed to invite interaction with the jewellery. I have learned that other synthetic materials that I have used, such as plastic and foam, do not create a sense of friendliness or familiarity and do not encourage interactions. Out of all of materials I experimented with, I decided that fabric is the most appropriate material to suggest sensitivity and familiarity as it is a material that is worn closest to the body in the form of clothing.

For some people, fabric “acts to conceal and cover objects and persons while, at the same time, disclosing them- hinting at their presence.”<sup>47</sup> Clothing mediates between our private and public selves, so fabric is an appropriate material for creating the notion that public and private are connected. The thought of fabric was originally drawn from the way I placed *Paired Brooch, 2014* on the body, which is related to being able to pin the two forms, one in public or one hidden in clothing pockets. The idea of putting things in pockets has hidden, unknown, and protective aspects, which relates to the function of fabric.

I make fabric works that focus on the significance of intimate jewellery. I used to hand sew my pieces, an activity that requires patience and perseverance. I believe making jewellery is also a bit like sewing in this way, as it is very focused and small. Then I moved to using the sewing machine in my making. For me, the use of the sewing machine is an intimate experience; I am closely focused on the fabric and the

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<sup>47</sup> Anne Hamlyn, “Freud, Fabric, Fetish,” in *Textiles: Critical and Primary Sources Volume 4 Identity*, ed. Catherine Harper (London: Berg, 2012), 149.

sewing machine. I built confidence during the making of the cloth works and this slowly opened up other possibilities. Fabric is an interesting material. It is soft and able to be transformed into different shapes.<sup>48</sup> Fabric can be folded, creating spaces that cannot be viewed.<sup>49</sup> This can be seen in my *Pockets Neckpiece*, which I discuss later in this chapter. I agree that working with fabric can provide a sense of privacy.<sup>50</sup> Fabric also “holds the memory of our time and connects us with memories of other times and other places”<sup>51</sup> and this is closely related to my ideas of public and private in the jewellery form. Later in the chapter I will explain how I return to hand sewing some fabric neckpieces.

When people wear fabric jewellery, they start to create their own relationship with the piece. In the past, clothes makers and repairers used to call the wrinkles from the elbows of a jacket or a sleeve as “memories”.<sup>52</sup> I believe the use of fabric in jewellery allows the object to hold the memory of touch through the presence of grease or sweat from a finger, or the occasional unexpected stain. Wearing a piece of soft fabric jewellery makes it approachable, as it is a comfortable and familiar material. The way the use of fabric holds traces from the user is significant; Pennina Barnett refers to

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<sup>48</sup> Claire Pajaczkowska, “On Stuff and Nonsense: The Complexity of Cloth,” in *Textiles: Critical and Primary Sources Volume 4 Identity*, ed. Catherine Harper (London: Berg, 2012), 54.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>50</sup> Beverly Gordon, *Textiles: The Whole Story : Uses, Meanings, Significance* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2011), 26.

<sup>51</sup> Lesley Millar and Arts Sainsbury Centre for Visual, *Cloth and Culture Now* (Epsom: University College for the Creative Arts, 2007), 6.

<sup>52</sup> Judy Attfield, “Change: The Ephemeral Materiality of Identity,” in *Textiles: Critical and Primary Sources Volume 4 Identity*, ed. Catherine Harper (London: Berg, 2012), 197.

cloth material as “a record of daily rhythm, gesture, habit, action and interaction.”<sup>53</sup>

In this way, fabric stores the memory and records how it has been used.<sup>54</sup>

In the late 60s and 70s, contemporary jewellers such as Emmy Van Leersum and Caroline Broadhead used the technical possibilities of fabric to extend ideas of jewellery formulae, and as a carrier for new ideas. More recently, Monika Brugger is another contemporary jeweller who focuses on using textiles on the body in her practice, her choice of fabric was to convey ideas around intimacy of the everyday.



**Fig. 26** Monika Brugger, *Wound, gift of the seamstress*, 2007. Linen, garnets, cotton.

Brugger believes that the “fluidity, suppleness and transparencies of fabric are much richer than what metal can do.”<sup>55</sup> She looks the material qualities of fabric, exploring

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<sup>53</sup> Pennina Barnett, “Stain,” in *Textiles: Critical and Primary Sources Volume 4 Identity*, ed. Catherine Harper (London: Berg, 2012), 1.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>55</sup> Monika Brugger et al., *Monika Brugger: Heimat 1992 / 2008 ; Bijou / Objets Pour Le Corps / Installations = Jewellery / Objects for the Body / Installations* (Woodbridge; Stuttgart: Arnoldsche, 2009), 68.

accidents that can happen to fabric in its everyday life, such as burn marks, or the traces left on fabric from injuries relating to sewing. Brugger's series, *Wound, gift of the seamstress*, 2007 (Fig. 26)<sup>56</sup> focuses on accidents to the garment, in this case, broken seams. Instead of trying to cover the broken seam up and make the garment look seamless, she makes the broken seam the focus of the work, choosing to exaggerate it by adding red garnets and cotton. This corresponds to my interest in how fabric can stain during stitching or when being worn on the body. Like Brugger, I used red cotton threads to stitch buttons on pockets. The red stitching in Brugger's work symbolises blood<sup>57</sup> from the sewing injury. In contrast, I used red stitching to highlight the important detail of a button for opening. The material qualities of fabric emphasise my ideas of public and private in the field of jewellery. Brugger suggests that "the objects that are precious to us serve to support the absence of evidence which, constituting the essential secret of our personal beings, makes each of us someone who is not just anyone."<sup>58</sup> In this way, the memento in jewellery has a special sentimental value that makes us unique. Brugger's choice of material is about intimacy while in a different manner of what I am working.

Fabric can also hold the traces of unexpected or unwanted events when worn on body.

I am aware that the wearer could stain fabric jewellery. This is something that

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<sup>56</sup> Monika Brugger, "Monika Brugger," <http://www.monikabrugger.eu/schweiz.htm> (accessed 25 July, 2015).

<sup>57</sup> Monika Brugger et al., *Monika Brugger: Heimat 1992 / 2008 ; Bijou / Objets Pour Le Corps / Installations = Jewellery / Objects for the Body / Installations*, 72.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

fascinates me with fabric. The stain on cloth is acting as “both remainder and reminder of what has come to pass: both evidence and memory.”<sup>59</sup> Using fabric in my work forces me to understand that even the process of sewing can leave traces such as the stitch marks. Therefore, when wearing a piece of fabric jewellery, the wearer may have this conscious awareness of the materiality of the fabric and can choose to carefully avoid staining it, or simply allow the fabric to stain. Therefore, I believe the staining and wearing aid personal connection and to private ownership of the fabric jewellery piece.

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<sup>59</sup> Jenni Sorkin, “Stain: On Cloth, Stigma, and Shame,” in *Textiles: Critical and Primary Sources Volume 4 Identity*, ed. Catherine Harper (London: Berg, 2012), 221.

## Pocket Neckpiece



**Fig. 27** Chia Liang Kao, *Pockets Neckpiece*, 2015.

Fabric, clip buttons, clay, memento.



**Fig. 28** Chia Liang Kao, *Pockets Neckpiece*, 2015.

The successful use of fabric in *Pillow Brooch* helped me to answer my research question in regards to appropriate material choice. Our human behaviour encourages

us to “cover, conceal, protect, display and shroud.”<sup>60</sup> I remember how my grandmother used to sew inside pockets on all the clothes she made for our family. As such, we would prefer to place our intimate objects in the spaces my grandmother made for us. This realisation made me move away from pillow to pocket as a form for jewellery.

In *Pockets Neckpiece* (Fig. 27 and Fig. 28), I have made five small pockets in linen and combined them into a neckpiece that addresses my research into ideas of public and private. Linen was used because it is a durable material. The neckpiece has five different small pockets; one each for my five pearl mementos. I carried out experiments, drawing different types of pocket forms and sewing the sections together. In this work each pocket is 3.5 by 3cm and is sewn by sewing machine. It is interesting to note that the pearls are concealed inside and the pockets are strung like a necklace of beads. In addition, these pockets can be opened in different ways providing me, as the wearer, options in terms of how I engage with the mementos.

The making of *Pocket Neckpiece* is a reference to my habit of storing. This use of a pocket is similar to clothing in the way that it can provide a layer of covering that acts like an intimate storage space. The use of pockets in my works provided me with a form that suggests it can be opened or closed and invites further engagement from the viewer. These works were not concerned with fully revealing the actual object inside

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<sup>60</sup> Claire Pajaczkowska, “On Stuff and Nonsense: The Complexity of Cloth,” in *Textiles: Critical and Primary Sources Volume 4 Identity*, ed. Catherine Harper (London: Berg, 2012), 55.

the jewellery piece as some pocket pieces may appear completely sealed, and the wearer can choose to keep them closed or open.

*Pocket Neckpiece* allows viewers to question what might lie beneath. Furthermore, I have included different handmade buttons with red cotton stitching to enhance the visibility of the button and that it can be opened.

In this work, I have struggled with how much to reveal and conceal from the different perspectives of the wearer and the viewer. I went on to experiment with this area further in the next body of work, the *Pouch Neckpieces*. Overall, this work made me begin to develop ways of incorporating components into the work that may be unexpected or inviting.

## **Sensory experience**

In using textiles, we often blend together the senses of vision and touch.<sup>61</sup> Looking at a piece of fabric or an interesting object, I have the urge to touch. I want to feel it in my hands in order to understand the material. Is it delicate, stretchy, tight, heavy, light, hard, thin, uneven, filmy, loose etc?

Pennina Barnett refers to this sensory experience as the “haptic,”<sup>62</sup> Haptic means ‘of or relating to touch, and also relates to objects using the sense of touch’.<sup>63</sup> Ashley

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 50.

Montagu also suggests that the notion of wearing a piece of jewellery provides an intimate, interactive experience as the human touch creates the sense of tactility, which is sometimes called the “mother of the senses”.<sup>64</sup> I am curious about the importance of the tactile experience between skin and textiles. Fabric has the “ability to wrap, drape, restrict bind, enhance, and adorn the surface of the naked object”.<sup>65</sup> According to Gen Doy, the meaning of clothing and covering is like the “gestures of touching, possessing and protecting”.<sup>66</sup> These gestures, which relate to the material quality of fabric, are key aspects to consider in making.

I am interested in Claire Pajaczkowska’s idea that as “cloth in clothing is the most tactile of surfaces, always in contact with skin and body, it carries the contradictory meanings of being an external surface turned outward towards the gaze of the viewer, while remaining forever proximate.”<sup>67</sup> The materiality of fabric creates intimacy from the wearer’s perspective, but as clothing it is also part of the public image of a person that the viewer sees.

My fabric jewellery works reflect on intimacy by focusing on the sense of touch, and

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<sup>63</sup> Oxford Dictionaries, "Haptic," <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/haptic> (accessed 1 August, 2015).

<sup>64</sup> Ashley Montagu, *Touching: The Human Significance of the Skin* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971) 1.

<sup>65</sup> Catherine Harper, *Textiles: Critical and Primary Sources* (London: Berg, 2012), xviii.

<sup>66</sup> Claire Pajaczkowska, “On Stuff and Nonsense: The Complexity of Cloth,” in *Textiles: Critical and Primary Sources Volume 4 Identity*, ed. Catherine Harper (London: Berg, 2012), 48.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

by encouraging the beholder to imagine the private object inside.

Liesbeth den Besten points out that the wearing of a jewellery piece demands a “personal commitment” from the wearer.<sup>68</sup> This kind of commitment also takes the form of interaction in jewellery. With regards to the importance of touch in interaction, Donald Kuspit posits “it is the best means of feeling real and alive to counteract to the sense of unreality and indifference.”<sup>69</sup>

## Pouch Neckpiece



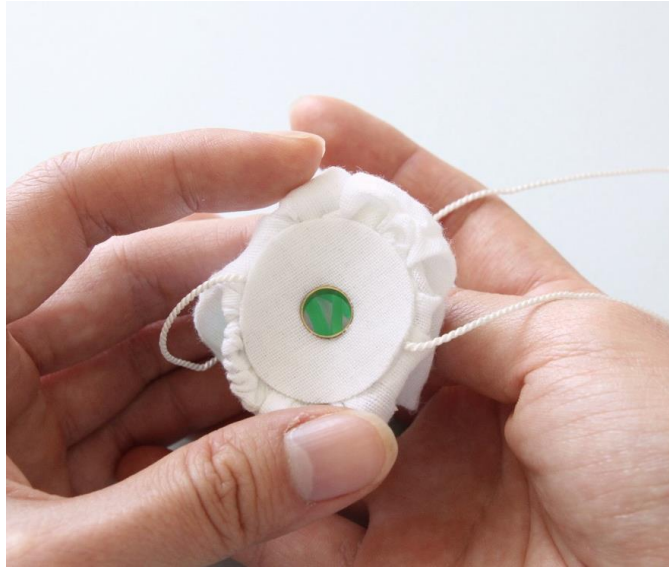
**Fig. 29** Chia Liang Kao, *Pouch Neckpiece*, 2015.

Fabric, brass, copper, cord, memento.

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<sup>68</sup> Liesbeth den Besten, *On Jewellery: A Compendium of International Contemporary Art Jewellery* (Woodbridge; Stuttgart: Arnoldsche, 2011), 99.

<sup>69</sup> Donald Kuspit, "The Decline, Fall and Magical Resurrection of the Body." *Sculpture*, vol 13, no.3 (1994): 21-23.



**Fig. 30** Chia Liang Kao, *Pouch Neckpiece*, 2015.

*Pouch Neckpiece* was a subsequent development of the *Pocket Neckpiece*. The *Pouch Neckpiece* (Fig. 29) also has a space to store my mementos and this design provides more room to physically engage with the jewellery. These pieces were made out of linen, cotton fabric, thread and metal and each one incorporates one of my mementos. I used cotton because it is a soft, breathable natural fibre. The design of each work includes a small aperture with a metal rim located at the centre on the top of the pouch. This provides a channel between the interior and exterior that allows the viewer or wearer to look at the memento inside the pouch. I have considered how the design draws the public's attention to the focal point and creates a sense of intimacy by looking at the memento located in the jewellery piece (Fig. 30). It is important to note that the mementos that I have used in the early works cannot be taken out of the jewellery piece. Firstly, this gives the design a much cleaner look. Secondly, the suggestion of an opening and closing feature would visually distract the viewing of the piece of jewellery from the top opening. This then helps me to further on develop

ways to enable the memento to be taken out from the pouch jewellery works.

In the early works, I have purposely created a small opening at the top of the pendant for the wearer to be able to engage with the work by peering in and glimpsing the memento inside. Doing this provides what Beverly Gordon calls a sense of “comforting feeling of mastery and control.”<sup>70</sup> She goes on to point out that “it is in the intimate distance zones that we find the little things - the small scale objects that must be held up close to the body to be seen and otherwise comprehended.”<sup>71</sup> Having said this, engagement with the memento in the pouch is always only partial, because it cannot be seen completely through the small opening. However, I have control because I know what it is that is in the pouch. The viewer on the other hand, if invited to look inside, will only be able to partially glimpse the object and possibly feel it through the fabric.

The *Pouch Neckpieces* were made for myself, and, like the *Pocket Neckpieces*, include a hidden component containing items from my collection of mementos. When I wear one of the *Pouch Neckpieces*, I look in through the small hole at the top opening. I can feel the memento through the pouch, which triggers associated memories. This is a private and intimate interaction that might invite the viewer to be curious about what I am wearing, touching and looking at. This has the potential to open up conversation and invite touch. Although the work engages with my private

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<sup>70</sup> Beverly Gordon, *The Saturated World: Aesthetic Meaning, Intimate Objects, Women's Lives, 1890-1940* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2006), 31.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

world, the possible engagement with the viewer actually opens me up to relationships with other people as well as the bigger public world.

In the final body of work, I have incorporated my own private mementos in jewellery to emphasise the personal significance of the project for me. However, I believe that in the future it would be possible to adapt the project to include significant objects from others.

## **Opening and closing**

I have experimented with different kinds of *Pouch Neckpiece*. There were a few aspects I need to work on to further answer my research questions with regards to my design of the jewellery form. I realised that I need to consider the form of the pouch so that it corresponds to the form of the mementos. There was also the issue of enabling the memento to be taken out from the pouch to consider. My previous pouch neckpieces did not have an opening and closing option as it was not my intention to portray the mementos as being trapped inside. Nonetheless, I still believe it is valid to provide an option for myself to engage with the mementos in different ways. Therefore, I looked for ways to design an opening and closing pouch neckpiece.

There were many potential ways of designing the opening for the pouch, such as using snap, clips or magnets. However, I found that these methods either left too many gaps or were too clumsy to incorporate with the fabric, which I wanted to suggest sensitive delicacy. It then occurred to me that it could be used in the opening

and closing mechanism of a normal box. The top section would include a bezel strip to fit into the bottom main pouch. Moreover, I would drill two holes on the top part to allow the cord to pass through and be attached on the inside of the main pouch pendant so that the parts cannot become separated. The most important aspect in this design was that it provided options: the memento can be left inside or taken out in order to feel the entire memento. I believe these making processes will help me in creating more pouch neckpieces that are currently in progress. It is important to note that it is not apparent to anyone who cannot handle the pouch jewellery that some of pouches can be opened. However, the reason to create a small hole at top was to allow the wearer to look into the memento, and provide a reminding glimpse of the things hidden inside the pouch jewellery.

## **Artist influences**

Several jewellers influenced the making of my final body of works. Sigurd Bronger has made a brooch that includes components that both cover and reveal and Peter Bauhuis, uses peepholes in his *Eusopes* for looking in or out towards the world.

## Sigurd Bronger



**Fig. 31** Sigurd Bronger, *Curtain Brooch*, 1999.

Brass, steel, cotton fabric, wood.

Curtains symbolise the “unseen”<sup>72</sup> Another jeweller who also incorporates fabric in his work in order to invite interaction is Sigurd Bronger. His *Curtain Brooch*, 1999, (Fig. 31)<sup>73</sup> was made out of brass, steel, cotton fabric and wood. This work is a communicative device that has a fabric curtain which can cover uncomfortable logos on work uniforms. This is another way of looking into the notion of covering, inviting inquiry, and providing an interactive element behind the work. The use of a familiar form such as curtains encourages conversations and interactions with the work. I think the way Bronger employs curtains and the way that I make pocket jewellery both suggest the idea of providing options for the wearer: opening-closing, public-private,

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<sup>72</sup> Bojana Pejic, “Maja Bajevic : The Matrix of Memory,” in *Textiles: Critical and Primary Sources Volume 4 Identity*, ed. Catherine Harper (London: Berg, 2012), 52.

<sup>73</sup> Sigurd Bronger et al., *Sigurd Bronger: Laboratorium Mechanum* (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche Art Publishers, 2011), 109.

revealing-disclosing. This engagement is positive in terms of getting to understand the public and private side of contemporary jewellery.

## Peter Bauhuis



**Fig. 32** Peter Bauhuis, *Little Euscope*, 1999.

Pure silver, sterling silver, optics.

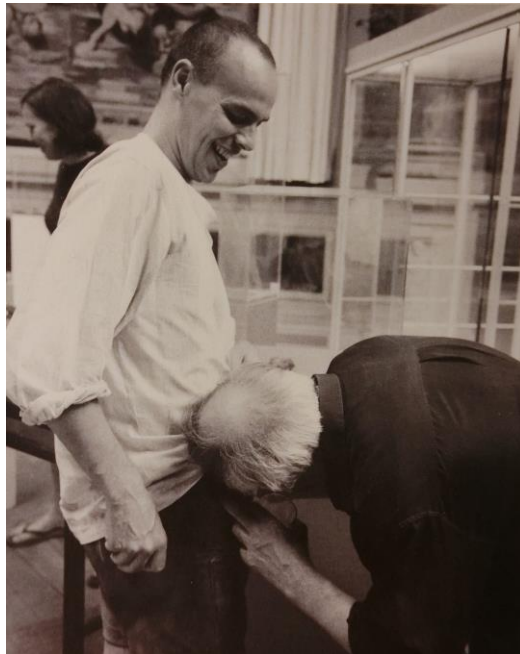


**Fig. 33** Peter Bauhuis, *Peeping into an Euscope*, 1999.

Fine silver, sterling silver, optics.



**Fig. 34** Peter Bauhuis, *Pant pocket peep show*, 1995  
Silver, optics, electrics, batteries.



**Fig. 35** Peter Bauhuis, *Pant pocket peep show*, 1995.  
Silver, optics, electrics, batteries. Hermann Junger  
investigating the contents of Norman Weber's pocket.

When facing the unknown individuals tend to have a mixed sense of fear, curiosity or excitement. Monica Gaspar talks about curiosity as “a desire that is hard to rein in and is a primal human urge that manifests itself through exploration, investigation and learning.”<sup>74</sup> This approach can be seen in Peter Bauhuis’ Little *Eusopes* (Fig. 32 and Fig. 33). The word *Euscope* means an “optical device affording unexpected insight”<sup>75</sup> and Bauhuis’ *Eusopes* are usually small objects made out of silver and connected with a peephole.<sup>76</sup> The *Euscope* encourages viewers to lift, touch and hold the peephole close to the eye for further engagement and the hidden interior suggests that looking into the peephole is the only way to find out the unknown.

A photograph exists of Hermann Junger peering into the pocket of Norman Weber through another kind of *Euscope* in a work called *Pant pocket peep show*, 1995 (Fig.34 and Fig. 35). The *Euscope* incorporates a small lens and a battery-operated light. It is designed to look into private places such as someone else’s pocket. The way in which the photograph relates the device back to clothing reminds me again of my grandmother’s hidden pockets. Otto Künzli mentions that when the viewer looks through the *Euscope*, the device demonstrates a way to temporarily remove the user from the surrounding environment and therefore forces the user to be more concentrated and fixed. Künzli further comments:

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<sup>74</sup> Mònica Gaspar, "Peter Bauhuis: In Praise of Curiosity," *Metalsmith* 2013, 24.

<sup>75</sup> Mònica Gaspar, Pravu Mazumdar, and Goldschmiedehaus Deutsches. *Peter Bauhuis: Jewellery and Vessels : Abecedarium*. (Woodbridge; Stuttgart: Arnoldsche, 2012), 41.

<sup>76</sup> Mònica Gaspar, "Peter Bauhuis: In Praise of Curiosity," *Metalsmith* 2013, 24.

“And what I see no one else can see, and what somebody else sees in the same pants pocket, might as well be something different as what I saw. The experience cannot be shared.”<sup>77</sup>

Moreover, Bauhuis believes that curiosity is an “inquisitive behaviour”<sup>78</sup> which also has the ability to imbue a sense of carefulness. Ramljak suggests the notion of peering into a peephole as seen in Bauhuis’ work gathers us around to a focus point with full concentration.<sup>79</sup> When analysing my process of sewing, I came to a realisation that when sewing, I am either concentrating on threading the cotton through the hole or the sharp tip of the needle. This idea of focusing on a point can also be seen in my *Pouch Neckpieces* with the peephole. It forces us to look at the focal point, so it is like the peephole that we engage with and ponder on.

## Conclusion

During the research, I have come to understand the importance of carefully considering the scale of work. In the process, it is crucial to consider the size of jewellery and the relationship of scale to the body to be able to convey intimacy. The need to carefully select materials, which are closely related to my research aims, also became apparent. In my research, I found fabric to be the material that best represents

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<sup>77</sup> Peter Bauhuis, *Ding* (Friedrichshafen: Verlag Robert Gessler, 2001), 73.

<sup>78</sup> Mònica Gaspar, Pravu Mazumdar, and Goldschmiedehaus Deutsches, *Peter Bauhuis: Jewellery and Vessels : Abecedarium* (Woodbridge; Stuttgart: Arnoldsche, 2012), 38.

<sup>79</sup> Suzanne Ramljak, "Intimate Matters: Objects and subjectivity," in M. Anna Fariello and Paula Owen, *Objects and Meaning: New Perspectives on Art and Craft* (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2004) 191.

my ideas of public and private. My body of work in fabric is more successful now in comparison with the early works using paper or foam. Fabric provides more familiar tactility that invites touch and has the ability to “suggest, enhance, and draw attention.”<sup>80</sup> I also considered weight, scale, the significance of the memento and sensory experience in my final work. I considered how the forms of the pieces could relate to my own attempts to create private intimate worlds for myself through providing a space to conceal and store small intimate objects. I explored ways in which these forms could provide opportunities for the wearer to interact with the work by touching the object through the layers of fabric.

During the research, I became aware of the importance of mementos in my private life and how I include them in my jewellery pieces was the starting point for opening myself to the public world.

In closing, I would say the research into the concept public and private took into account the history of jewellery and focuses on the interaction between the wearer and viewer. I have also realised that Peter Bauhuis’ work about looking into the *Euscope* is especially important in my research practice. This design encourages individuals to play with the device and invite others to be part of their private world, as in *Pant pocket peep show*. I found that the design strategy of allowing viewers to peep into a small space, as in my *Pouch Neckpiece* and Bauhuis *Euscope*, enables the breaking of the boundary between people and arouses curiosity. This aspect of closing the gap

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<sup>80</sup>Jessica Hemmings, *The Textile Reader*, vol. English (London: Berg Publishers, 2012), 16.

between wearer and viewer was the most important breakthrough in my research into notions of public and private.

# Conclusion

In my practice led research, I have explored ways in which ideas about the public and private can be integrated with the function, design, materials and scale of jewellery. My research draws on a range of related themes such as comfort and intimacy. It also explores the emotional significance of jewellery and mementos, through sensory experience of jewellery as a way to address the relationship between maker and wearer.

I have learned that although public and private are opposite words, they are terms that are interconnected, as we cannot have a private experience without understanding what it means to be in the public world. This understanding informed the shift in my studio work from the making of paired forms to the creation of a single form that consists of an inner and outer space. The scale of the jewellery pieces also changed from larger pendant forms in my early works to a much smaller scale in the final pouch works. Suzanne Ramljak's suggestion that by looking into a peephole the viewer is compelled to focus on a single point influenced the final pouch form with an opening. For me, this is the ideal form to represent a sense of privacy and intimacy in jewellery.

Through analysing the work of artists such as Constanze Schreiber and Cinnamon Lee, whose works explores both the public and the hidden sides of a piece of jewellery, I

became aware of the way in which a piece of jewellery can invite an intimate engagement between the maker and the wearer.

From addressing ideas about public and private and intimacy in a general way, I shifted my practice-led research to an exploration of how these concepts were meaningful to me through considering the ways in which I create my own private worlds. Central to my final body of work was the use of my private collection of small mementos, which are incorporated into the works. Who the wearer of my work might be is an important question implied throughout my research. With this in mind, the final body of work was made for me to wear.

In my final body of work, the *Pouch Neckpieces*, I have used material such as fabric, metal, and cord. During the research, experimentation with different materials was important in guiding me to become more selective and considered in my material choices, and be more aware of how they furthered ideas of public and private. Moreover, I discovered that fabric was the most appropriate material to represent sensitivity and intimacy in my work. Using fabric led me to explore forms that are related to textiles and clothing, such as pockets and pouches. The final works use the pouch form which has more room for tactile engagement with the memento hidden under layers of fabric.

Apart from Cinnamon Lee and Constanze Schreiber, two other jewellers in particular have had a significant impact on my project: Sigurd Bronger and Peter Bauhuis. I

found Bronger's *Curtain Brooch*, 1999 (Fig. 31) helpful in two ways. It showed me ways to provide interactive elements for the wearer and the viewer to engage with the piece of jewellery. His use of fabric also showed me the potential for fabric to refer to ideas about comfort and privacy. Bauhuis's series of *Euscope* works explored how jewellery can stimulate curiosity. The peephole element of these works influenced the final form of my own work. In his *Pant pocket peep show* the viewer is given a device that allows him or her to peer into places that are usually part of someone's personal space. This has influenced my final body of work, which closes the gap between the owner of the device and the viewer. The owner of the device actually opens himself or herself up to engage with the wider public world by responding to the curiosity of the viewer about the form of the work.

Whilst the work closes the circle between the private world of the wearer and the public world in which the viewer exists, it is crucial to point out that, according to Otto Künzli, what we see through the peephole will never be the same as what others experience.<sup>81</sup> Therefore, the wearer knows what is hidden in the work, but the viewer will never be able to see the full picture.

In this project I came to the realisation that I can make fabric pouch jewellery works in a hand held size. The wearer is able to feel the softness and warmth from the fabric material and look into the pouch through a small hole. The design of the pouch jewellery is suggesting something that is private whilst remaining hidden from view.

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<sup>81</sup> Peter Bauhuis, *Ding* (Friedrichshafen: Verlag Robert Gessler, 2001), 73.

The research allows me to understand concepts of privacy and intimacy through my individual private habits such as storing things and collecting. However, there is potential in the future to make work for other people, incorporating their own mementos within my fabric jewellery, extending this project to a greater audience after my candidature.

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# Appendix

## Collection of final works

1.



Chia Liang Kao, *Pillow Brooch*, 2015  
Fabric, stainless steel, plastic, memento

1.5 x 5 x 9 cm

Photographed by Qian Peng.

2.



Chia Liang Kao,

*Pockets Neckpiece, 2015*

Fabric, clip buttons, clay, memento

0.5 x 10 x 17cm

Photographed by Qian Peng.

3.



Photographed by Qian Peng.



Photographed by Simon Cottrell.

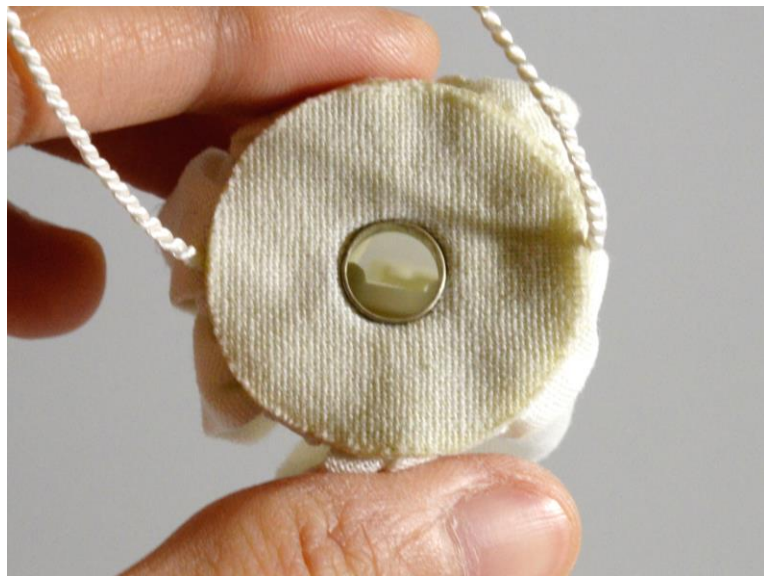
Chia Liang Kao,

*Pouch Neckpiece*, 2015

Fabric, brass, copper, cord, memento

4 x 4.5 x 4.5 cm

4.



Chia Liang Kao,

*Race with me*, 2015

Fabric, silver, cord, memento

5 x 3 x 3 cm

Photographed by Chia Liang Kao.

5.



Chia Liang Kao,

*Let's eat, 2015*

Fabric, silver, cord, memento

5 x 3 x 3 cm

Photographed by Chia Liang Kao.

6.



Chia Liang Kao,

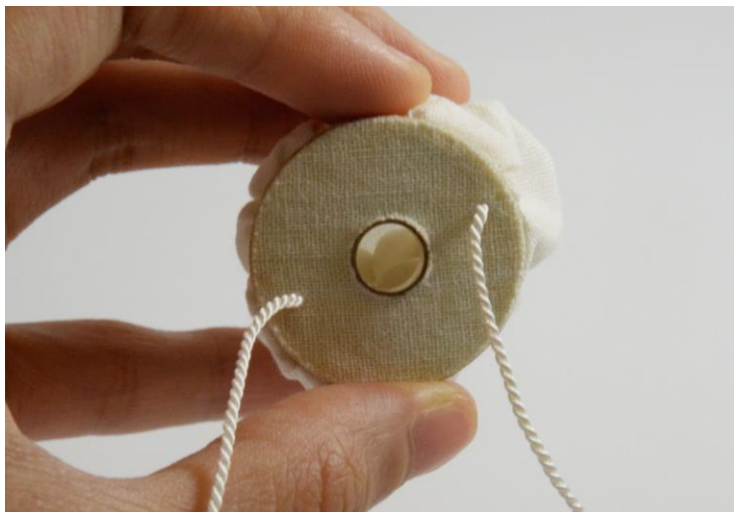
*To do list*, 2015

Fabric, silver, cord, memento

5 x 4 x 3 cm

Photographed by Chia Liang Kao.

7.



Chia Liang Kao,

*Fly away*, 2015

Fabric, silver, cord, memento

5 x 3 x 3 cm

Photographed by Chia Liang Kao.

8.



Chia Liang Kao,

*Let's drink*, 2015

Fabric, silver, cord, memento

5 x 3 x 3 cm

Photographed by Chia Liang Kao.

9.



Chia Liang Kao,  
*Walking in the rain*, 2016  
Fabric, silver, cord, memento  
5 x 4.5 x 3 cm  
Photographed by Chia Liang Kao.

10.



Chia Liang Kao,

*Stack, stack, stack*, 2015

Fabric, silver, cord, memento

6 x 4.5 x 2.5 cm

Photographed by Chia Liang Kao.