jewellery in the urban milieu: explorations in emergence

A project submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and, ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Jacqui Chan
4 March 2014

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**SUMMARY OF RESEARCH**

*Jewellery in the urban milieu* is a practice-led PhD that explores connections between jewellery and the city. This research positions jewellery – as a practice and an artefact – as both immersed within and emergent from the material and lived conditions of the city, and explores how jewellery can encourage the emergence of new possibilities for life within the city.

The PhD takes up the operational analogy of the saprophyte, an organism that decomposes organic matter and recirculates nutrients through its ecosystem, as a parallel for how jewellery might intervene in, transform and recirculate the city's flows of materials. This analogy has enabled jewellery practice to expand to encompass processes of milieu-exploration, gathering, material-transformation, interactive wearing-projects and photography.

The PhD comprises a series of projects that develop and repeat these processes within specific urban situations of Melbourne, Ramallah, Melbourne's Chinatown, and Christchurch.

Within these situations the saprophyte analogy has fostered an attitude of entering into a situation and working ‘in the thick of things’, allowing practice and thinking to be exposed to the forces, constraints and opportunities of each situation. As research, this expanded range of jewellery processes has given rise to particular points of focus and lines of thinking on jewellery and its relations with the urban milieu.

In the earlier projects experimentation and thinking revolved around engaging the city through the making of jewellery. This included interest in the urban milieu’s flows of materials and approaching of the city as a material-ecology; the potential for waste material to be transformed into something new and take on a new life on the body; attention to how practice evolves in counterpoint with a surrounding milieu; how the resulting artefacts accentuate aspects of that milieu; and how the significance of the artefacts is shaped by and shifts according to associations they elicit within particular locations.

In the later projects the research focus moved towards relations between the artefacts and the situations they were produced in. This developed from observations of how the artefacts affected perceptions of a surrounding situation (and vice versa) and people's reactions to the work, and moved towards experiments with wearing. These projects pointed to the sensory and relational affects of wearing, and focused on wearing as a mode for encountering the city in a new way.

This practice-led research makes a contribution to a growing area of contemporary jewellery practice that operates within the urban realm, by attending to how jewellery can be produced in response to material conditions of the city, and goes onto affect the lived experience of the city. In particular this research goes beyond jewellery’s decorative or symbolic function to foreground jewellery’s capacity to provoke new sensory experiences and active engagements of inhabitants with their urban surrounds.

As such this research positions jewellery-practice in a distinctive way – as one engaged in the city, both at the level of its material and ecological conditions, as well as a practice that makes new connections with the milieus or ‘bubble-worlds’ we inhabit in the city. This research also recasts the jewellery artefact as both defined through acts of transforming materials and also through the relations and associations it elicits and performs.

**Research Question:**

This practice-led research asks the following question:

*How can jewellery – as a practice and an artefact – engage the urban milieu, in terms of emergence; and what possibilities does this offer jewellery and its relations with the urban context?*

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*fig. 1 Urban Metabolism Series necklace, 2010, folded powdercoated aluminum architectural flashing, worn in Melbourne.*
INTRODUCTION

jewellery in the urban milieu stems from an interest in connecting jewellery practice with the city. While jewellery is often understood to have a decorative, symbolic or communicative function, this practice-led research explores jewellery’s immersion in and emergence from the material ecology of the city. Coming from a background in architecture, I see the city as an extended site for jewellery – both the lived situation within which jewellery is worn and a rich material resource for its production. In particular, jewellery’s site at the threshold between the body and its surrounding space points to jewellery’s potential to mediate relations between bodies and the city. This research explores how jewellery – as a practice and an artefact – can engage the urban milieu through processes of making and wearing, and how these processes affect how we engage, inhabit and think about the city.

The PhD document begins by introducing the question of jewellery’s relation with the city and the concepts of the saprophyte, emergence and the urban milieu that inform the practice. It then charts the research through four projects, which respond to specific urban locations – Melbourne, Ramallah (Palestine), Melbourne’s Chinatown, and Christchurch (New Zealand) – and explore making and wearing as ways of engaging and opening up new possibilities within these situations. These projects have yielded not only new jewellery artefacts, but also new relations with and experiences of the city, and insights into jewellery’s potential to activate relations between bodies and their urban surroundings.

background

My thinking about jewellery is influenced by my background in architecture. After studying architecture for five years and working in the industry for two, I was lured towards jewellery for its direct engagement with materials and making. My interest was initially sparked in an architecture school project where I constructed small, intricate detail models using various metals (including mild steel, copper and silver). Later, when I started working in architecture, I took night classes in jewellery; eventually, in 2006, I left architecture to teach part-time in the School of Design at Unitec (Auckland, NZ) and to focus on making jewellery.

My thinking in jewellery is influenced by how I have come to think of architecture as a dynamic material and social formation that engages with specific contexts, bodies and forces. This sees built architecture as not merely a combination of form and matter, but as animated by rhythms of inhabitation, weather and gradual processes of change over time. From such a perspective I am interested in jewellery’s relation to specific situations, and how it performs in the world – particularly in terms of its sites, mobility and its relational capacities. This approach to jewellery echoes Peter Eisenman’s ‘diagrammatic’ approach to architecture, which posed architecture not as a question of form, but processes of informing, transforming, and performing – that is, context, process and usage.1 Jewellery is thus engaged in terms of what it can do, rather than what it


3. Curator John Edgar wrote in his essay: ‘This exhibition then is about awareness – of our heritage of Western civilisation and our cultural environment in the South Pacific; of our place in the twentieth century and the values necessary to survive the nuclear age; of the delicate fragility of our ecology and our relationship to the natural materials and the non-renewable resources of our region; of the celebration of the forces that formed these materials and the life within them; and, of the ability to communicate in objects of beauty, spirit and power.’ Edgar, “Bone, Stone, Shell,” unpaginated.

fig. 3 Photographs from the Bone Stone Shell: New Jewellery, New Zealand catalogue, 1988, of jeweller Alan Preston (left) and stone carver and curator of the exhibition John Edgar (right). These photographs reflect how the exhibition positioned New Zealand jewellery as responding to Aotearoa/New Zealand, its natural environment and location in the Pacific.
fig. 5 Yuka Oyama, Berlin Flowers, 2007. Facade of Schwedenhaus, Hansaviertel housing project, Berlin, decorated with garlands. This project is also discussed in project-milieu 4: Material Migrations, on page 141.

fig. 7 Wrappinghood, 2005, installation throughout the city of Middlesbrough, curated by Susan Pietzsch/Schmuck2 for Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art. (left) Martí Guixé, WRAPPINGHOOD taping protocol – INSTRUCTION CARD – 1.0, (right) Susan Pietzsch, Valentina Seidel, spring/summer 05 – Miniskirts. Posters installed on advertising hoardings.


In this context, this PhD more specifically contributes to a growing area of jewellery practice that operates in the urban realm. Projects in this area exhibit a range of strategies for engaging and thinking about the city. A common tactic is to re-site jewellery off the body and into the city, and to adorn the urban fabric. This is seen in the work of Belgium jeweller Liesbet Bussche; in Berlin-based Japanese jeweller Yuka Oyama’s Berlin Flowers (2007) project; and in Melbourne jeweller Caz Guiney’s City Ring (2003) project – all of which are discussed in project-milieu 3: Material Migrations. Other projects employ jewellery as a basis for urban intervention. Examples include: Wrappinghood (2005), an exhibition curated by German jeweller Susan Pietzche, which invited a group of jewellers/designers to create interventions in the streets of Middlesbrough; and New Zealand jeweller Ilse-Marie Erl’s Waterview Countermemorial (2011), which deployed jewellery techniques to commemorate houses scheduled for demolition for a new motorway, by ‘setting’ drill cores from their driveways into trees of a neighbouring reserve. Another approach engages with urban inhabitants as an audience for contemporary jewellery or for jewellery-related performance. This is seen in projects such as Melbourne jeweller Susan Cohn’s Street Jewellery Award (1995), a pop-up street exhibition that rallied the public to vote for contemporary jewellery; Portuguese jeweller Ana Cardim’s performance Clean Your Mind (2009), in which jewellery was used as a prop for theatrical public interaction; and American metalsmith Gabriel Craig’s soap-box-preacher performances, The Gospel According to Craft (2009). Projects that engage the city as alternative space for making and exchange include Gabriel Craig’s Pro Bono Jeweler (2007–11), in which he resites his workbench into the street to give public jewellery-making demonstrations, Melbourne duo Public Assembly’s stall at Camberwell Markets, where jewellery is made onsite from materials sourced in the market and sold by donation; Melbourne-based jeweller Roseanne Bartley’s Seeding the Cloud (2011–ongoing) guided making-walks – discussed further in project-milieu 4: Host A Brooch; and the mobile jewellery workshop Makers Move (2012–ongoing), by Danish jewellers Josephine Winther and Gitte Nygaard – discussed in project-milieu 2: Situation Palestine. Dutch designer Ted Noten has also explored alternative forms for distribution in the city, such as Be Nice to a Girl and Buy Her a Ring (2008–10), for which he installed a vending machine as part of Amsterdam’s Red Light District Project that sold two-euro rings to give to local prostitutes; and Art Rehab (2011), where he made jewellery for taxi drivers as a way to reach an extended audience and attract them to the art museum.

Within this burgeoning field, the projects undertaken in this PhD contribute by situating jewellery’s full lifecycle of making and wearing within the urban milieu, and attending to how jewellery is both transformed from and performed within the city’s flows of materials and bodies. Rather than engaging jewellery as a way of adorning the city, or seeing the city as a backdrop to jewellery performances, the PhD researches jewellery’s potential to be produced from the urban context, and to activate relations and enhance experiences within the urban milieu.

As a note, in this document connections are made with this wider field of practice at specific points that relate to questions arising in the research. This approach reflects the way communities of practice form...
Ilse-Marie Erl, Waterview Counter Memorial, 2009–10. A counter-memorial for the Auckland suburb of Waterview, where 115 houses and a park were to be destroyed to make way for a motorway extension. 115 concrete drill-cores (from driveways) and discs cut from car reflector lights were inserted into trees along Oakley Creek Walkway. The bark will eventually grow over the implants, and the trees will become lockets that store community memory.


fig. 10 Ana Cardim, Clean Your Mind, 2009–ongoing, participatory street performance, various locations. The artist wears a toilet paper holder brooch and invites the public to take a piece of paper, write down their worries and flush them away. Photograph from performance in Barcelona, 2009.

fig. 11 Public Assembly (Lynda Roberts and Ceri Hann), regular stall at Camberwell Markets, 2008-13, Melbourne. Jewellery made from objects found at the markets, sold by donation.
fig. 12 Roseanne Bartley, *Seeding the Cloud*, 2011–ongoing, a mobile jewellery-making project, and response to the issue of waste plastic in the environment, various locations. This project is also discussed in *project-milieu 4: Host A Brooch*, on page 227.

fig. 13 Josephine Winther and Gitte Nygaard, *Makers Move*, 2012–ongoing, public jewellery exchange project, various locations. Photograph of the project in Paris. This project is also discussed in *project-milieu 2: Situation Palestine*, on page 113.

fig. 14 Atelier Ted Noten, *Be Nice to a Girl and Buy Her a Ring*, 2008, jewellery vending machine. For Amsterdam’s Red Light Designs project—which transformed former brothels into jewellery workshops—Atelier Ted Noten installed a vending machine that dispensed 2 euro rings for people to buy for their favourite prostitutes.
around shared sets of concerns and contexts, and this situates the contribution of my research in terms of conversations that emerge through and between projects – rather than locating the contribution in terms of points of difference or distinction from others in the field.

the saprophyte

To explore how jewellery can engage the urban milieu, the saprophyte is adopted as an operational analogy. Saprophyte refers to organisms – such as some fungi – that live by decomposing organic matter and releasing nutrients into a wider ecosystem, thereby processing and producing a living milieu. As an ‘operational analogy’ the saprophyte is taken up to suggest strategies for how jewellery practice can operate in the city, and to inspire processes to engage the city through making and wearing – as distinct from using the saprophyte as a subject matter or reference for jewellery forms.

I first discovered the saprophyte as a proposition for architecture. In an editorial in Domus, ‘In Praise of Saprophytes’, Flavio Albanese proposed that ‘truly contemporary architecture’ would operate as:

a crossover, an unstable and impermanent discipline, a saprophytic machine capable of incorporating and metabolising at different levels the physical and cultural materials of today’s space, in order then to put them back into the cycle of life reassembled in different sequences.

Albanese speculates that the concept of the saprophyte could shift architecture ‘from production and accumulation (implying the erection of new monuments) to the interception and transformation of objects and concepts already present in our environment…(where) its aim is to find solutions and contexts not yet thought of or tested.’

Architecture becomes a continual process of transformation and reinvention, ‘not to produce finished objects but an uninterrupted flow of materials, suggestions and concretions…ready to be reused and rescheduled, in an infinite process of appropriation and release.’

For jewellery, this offers a rich approach to how practice might operate amidst the wider social and material context of the city, and foster new possibilities through the transformation of what is already in circulation. The organism’s role in nutrient-cycling also foregrounds the potential for small, seemingly insignificant things to have a bottom-up effect on larger systems. The saprophyte has fostered an approach to jewellery that feeds off and back into the city through processes of exploring, gathering materials, transforming these into new wearable formations, recirculating these back into the city and triggering ‘flow-on effects’ through wearing.

With this analogy the city becomes an extended site or situation – defined as ‘a set of conditions in time and place’ – within which jewellery-practice operates and jewellery-artefacts circulate. This extends jewellery’s ‘site’ beyond its attachment to the body, to encompass the surroundings within which the wearer (and the maker) is immersed.

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12. In biology, fungi are now classified as ‘saprobes’ or ‘saprotrophic fungi’, as they are no longer considered plants (-phytes). The term ‘saprophyte’ technically refers to saprotrophic plants.


14. Ibid., para. 4.

15. Ibid., para. 4–5.

16. In the context of contemporary art, curator and writer Claire Doherty defines ‘situation’ as ‘a unique set of conditions produced in both space and time and ranging across material, social, political and economic relations’; posing this as ‘an alternative to the exhausted notions of site’, and one which ‘context(s) the literal reading of the specifics of place as fixed and stable’. Claire Doherty, ed. Situation, Documents of Contemporary Art (London; Cambridge MA: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2009), back cover, 14, 13.
A key feature of the saprophyte is its capacity to produce something new within a given situation; as a result, the concept of emergence has also been central to how I have approached these explorations. Within complex systems, ‘emergence’ refers to novel properties and behaviours that arise (often over time) through the cooperation of constituent parts, and are irreducible to or unable to be predicted from those parts. The term is used to describe a plethora of complex interactions, from ant colonies and weather formations to economic markets and artificial intelligence. Jeffery Goldstein, editor of *Emergence: Complexity & Organization*, provides a list of key features of emergent phenomena:

1. radical novelty (features not previously observed in the system);
2. coherence or correlation (the appearance of ‘wholes’ that maintain themselves over time);
3. a global or macro level (emergent properties occur at a level where component parts cohere into ‘wholes’);
4. dynamical processes (an outcome of a process that evolves over time); and
5. being ostensive (able to be perceived).

In sum, emergence can be understood as a dynamic process through which interacting elements cohere into collective configurations that display new and novel features.

Philosopher Manuel DeLanda also clarifies that this ‘newness’ and ‘novelty’ refers to the emergence of properties, capacities or levels of coherence within a system that were not formerly evident in the system or its parts. What is produced in a process of emergence is ‘not new in the absolute sense that something emerges that has never existed before but only in the relative sense that something emerges that was not in the interacting entities acting as causes.’ The research thus explores jewellery-processes that encourage new possibilities, and thereby produce change, within both the making-process and the system of the city.

While emergence is arguably a feature of all creative practices, I engage it as an attribute of the saprophyte analogy that actively orients its processes towards the production of new and unplanned possibilities. For research, emergence fosters an attitude of not-knowing-in-advance and an openness towards yet-unthought-of outcomes beyond my intentions as a maker. This comes to involve developing processes – of both making and wearing – to encourage emergence, and setting these in motion to see what is opened up for practice and its relations with the city. This attitude allows each project to give rise to new formations, encounters, effects and affects that have extended thinking about jewellery and contributed to the city.
the urban milieu

‘Urban milieu’ is a term I use in the PhD to foreground the lived conditions of the city as a dynamic material and temporal-spatial situation in which we are enmeshed. Whereas terms such as ‘the city’ or ‘the urban environment’ emphasise the physical terrain or architectural structures of the city, ‘milieu’ invokes the surrounding or medium in which things are immersed. In biology, ‘milieu’ names a block of space-time relative to the living organism and is the basis of the organism-plus-environment unit of survival; and in French geography, the term was introduced by Vidal de la Blanche to study how human groups adapt to and modify their natural surroundings. In particular, for this practice the Baltic-German biologist Jakob von Uexküll’s (1864–1944) notion of the umwelt – the behavioural milieu or bubble-world shaped by an organism’s sensory capacities and functional needs – has been useful for thinking through the experiential and coevolving relations between the body and the city, and how processes and individuals reciprocally are affected by and have the capacity to affect a surrounding milieu. While in common usage ‘milieu’ has come to refer to social surroundings, I am interested in its ecological sense – where ecologies are understood not only in a physical sense but, as philosopher Félix Guattari proposes, one that includes environmental, social and mental ecologies.

project-milieus

The four projects that constitute this PhD have taken place in specific urban milieus – Melbourne (Australia), Ramallah (Palestine), Melbourne’s Chinatown, and Christchurch (New Zealand). In this document these are engaged as ‘project-milieus’, acknowledging how each project has evolved in direct relation to a specific milieu, and has also produced a milieu through the activities of practice. These project-milieus have come about fortuitously as opportunities have arisen during the PhD – moving to Melbourne to undertake the PhD, my partner taking a contract in Palestine, and invitations to participate in an exhibition in Melbourne’s Chinese Museum and for a solo show in Christchurch. These opportunities presented distinctly different situations to experiment within: the world’s ‘most liveable city’, a city subjected to ongoing political conflict; part of a city shaped by migration and defined by its connections elsewhere; and a city dramatically transformed by an earthquake. In each case, these urban milieus came to be engaged less as a totality of ‘City’ and more as ecologies to be entered into, oriented through and engaged to through practice.
It is important to note that engagement with these locations is not prefaced by a personal history, attachment or familiarity with these places. Jewellery often engages place in terms of personal belonging or identity, and this saprophytic approach is distinctive for offering a means for entering into and coming-to-know unfamiliar situations through practice – both for myself and other participants in projects.

It is also important to be clear that this selection of urban milieus is not intended as a comparative study. Rather, the primary focus of the PhD is to explore how this saprophytic approach to practice has the potential to work amidst any situation to open up new possibilities – therefore the projects could have responded to any urban context. Engaging these urban milieus is less about comparing or defining distinctive attributes of each place, and more about encountering it as a problematic with particular forces, opportunities and potentials; as well as finding ways to inhabit it and open up new possibilities through practice. The focus is not on differences between these locations, but the potential to produce difference within them.

The problematic faced in each project-milieu arose from both the physical, social, political, cultural, ecological and geological conditions of the situation; and my relations, as a maker, entering into these conditions – for instance, Ramallah presented the challenge of responding to a politically tense and culturally unfamiliar situation as a foreigner. As such, the problematic does not exist prior to the project, but becomes apparent through entering into it, and becomes further defined through the activities of practice.

**practice-as-research**

This PhD engages jewellery practice as a form of research that fosters new possibilities for engaging the urban milieu, and enables thinking through practice within the situations it takes place in. This research attends to concepts and relations that emerge through practice, through its material-processes and its active engagements with the world.

This pursues what philosopher Brian Massumi calls productivist approaches to knowledge-creation ‘that embrace their own inventiveness and are not afraid to own up to the fact that they add (if so meagrely) to reality’. The creative research that constitutes this PhD adds to reality through not only thinking in jewellery, but also the actual affects of the creative process – both within the work’s process of production and its engagement with the specific urban milieu – affects that are felt through relation. Theorist Paul Carter writes that creative research attends to how the work proposes relations; describing creative research is an act of invention and a form of material thinking that looks beyond the making process to the local reinvention of social relations. This PhD takes this approach, attending to relations the work forms within a surrounding milieu and amongst the constituents of practice – hence, addressing and evaluating what the work does, rather than what it means. Artist-philosopher Erin Manning also foregrounds the work’s relations with the world, writing that ‘research-creation’ concerns, and unfolds through, the work’s relational potential within...
its ‘work-world nexus’. She describes creative research as an emergent process, a relay between felt and conceptual affects that emerge through the work’s relation with ‘the body-in-process’, within specific contexts. She writes:  

Ask of the creative process that it foreground the activity of creating concepts, that it will these concepts out of the matter-form itself, that it mould the activity of process into a becoming-body of invention. Ask of the process that it value its own becoming, that it open thought and sensation beyond the actuality of what the work appears to be. Provoke sensing bodies in movement, will the forces of transmutation such that a new body (of work) emerges. 

In this sense, not only making and wearing but also creative research is a process of emergence. The thinking and doing that constitute practice-as-research evolve in tandem, where processes for engaging a surrounding milieu give rise to lines of thinking that in turn raise questions or highlight openings for practice, and inspire new processes and new thinking. Thinking and knowing thus emerge through doing, and in this sense practice produces knowledge.

the relationship between the durable record and the PhD

This written and visual documentation of the PhD seeks to capture the emergent nature of this practice-as-research, and follows the processes explored and the thinking they have enabled. In this PhD, the written and visual documentation are merged to form a ‘durable record’ that allows the projects – which have taken place, in the past, within specific urban milieus – to endure and be reencountered after-the-event. As ‘the work’ exceeds the resulting artefacts – and includes their processes coming-into-being and their life and affects in the city – this written and visual documentation presents the vital, if ephemeral, aspects of the work that cannot be fully experienced in the exhibition. This includes encounters within each urban milieu, explorations of saprophytic processes of making and wearing, and the relations, experiences and lines of thinking that emerge through them. The aim here, in keeping with the practice, is not to offer an explanation of the meaning of the projects (which is continually emerging), but to articulate what the projects do and how they have shifted and evolved my thinking about jewellery and city.

The arrangement of the durable record has been approached as a mapping of the terrain of the PhD, and is divided into the four project-milieus: Urban Metabolism Series (Melbourne, Australia); Situation Palestine (Ramallah, Palestine); Material Migrations (Chinatown, Melbourne, Australia); Host A Brooch (Christchurch, New Zealand). The writing maps the development of each project, detailing the saprophytic processes explored, and what emerged through them. This includes processes, things, relations, effects and affects that were produced through processes of making and wearing; the lines of thinking and questioning this enabled in relation to jewellery and its relation with the urban milieu; and challenges, impasses and openings encountered through these research processes. This arrangement reflects the temporal emergence of each

fig. 19 Research photos: dumpsters in various cities: Melbourne, Ramallah, Jerusalem, Munich, Istanbul, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, 2009-12. During the PhD I developed a obsession with photographing dumpsters. I was attracted to their contents and their arrangement, both for possibilities for making and as a reflection of the activities, values and economic conditions of a surrounding milieu.

LANDFILL →

WASTE → CONSUMPTION → MANUFACTURE → → MATERIAL FLOWS →

gathering

'Flow-on effects' →

releasing 'nutrients' →

reassembling / reconfiguring

decomposing

recirculating
project and the development of the practice and lines of thinking across them. The writing also picks up and extends particular lines of thinking that emerge through the projects (and develop between them), together with links to other practices and theories that contribute to the questions or issues encountered through the practice.

the exhibition

The examination exhibition then offers a different form of mapping of the PhD. It aims to draw out and intensify the relations between jewellery – as a practice and an artefact – and the urban milieu produced through each project, and to rework these in such a way as to enable another encounter with the projects after-the-event. As such the exhibition is not intended to – nor is it possible to – re-present the projects in their original form, but is approached as a ‘project-milieu’ of the PhD that offers another encounter with the practice.

In keeping with the saprophytic processes explored throughout the PhD, the exhibition is not a display of jewellery-objects, but an exhibition of practice, understood as a series of processes that operate within and emerge in relation to specific urban milieus. Some projects include objects, while in others these have dispersed off into the world. For these, photographic and textual documentation become the enduring work and enable a secondary experience of jewellery's life in the world.

overview of the research trajectory

The trajectory of the practice-as-research has evolved in response to the three factors: the particular problematic encountered in each project-milieu, the saprophytic processes repeated through the projects, and my evolving line of inquiry regarding how jewellery can engage the city.

*Urban Metabolism Series*, in Melbourne, was the preliminary phase of the research, which developed processes and raised questions that carry through into other projects. This set out to address the overall question of how jewellery might engage the city, and developed a range of processes inspired by the analogy of the saprophyte. The process of gathering foregrounded the city's material-flows, expanded thinking on ‘materials’, and questioned how jewellery might intervene and transform the city's flows of waste. The process of exploring the city on foot also raised the question – central to later research – of how jewellery-as-an-artefact might mediate relations between bodies and cities. The project then concentrated on developing a saprophytic approach to making, which explored processes of transformation and emergence, and foregrounded a distinct relational dynamic involved in making.

*Situation Palestine* repeated these saprophytic processes as a way of entering into and engaging the complex situation of Ramallah as a foreigner. Here, gathering and exploring enabled encounters with material-processes occurring within the urban environment, which yielded singular understandings of the tensions shaping this
city. These processes also foregrounded the relational dynamic between practice, milieu, and my umwelt as a maker, where practice and the work emerged according to my saprophytic processes, as well as the constraints and potentials of this milieu. The resulting artefacts amplified certain aspects of Ramallah’s cultural-political-ecological situation, and led me to explore the effect of ‘resituating’ them back into the street, which altered both perceptions of and dynamics within the surroundings milieu. This inspired me to further explore jewellery’s ‘ongoing life’ through wearing in future projects. Later, wearing and exhibiting this work elsewhere also raised issues around the work’s situation-specificity.

Material Migrations grew from the problematic of how jewellery could engage Melbourne’s Chinatown beyond the theme of cultural identity, and extended the previous projects by engaging the urban milieu through both making and wearing. The processes of gathering, exploring and making foregrounded Chinatown’s flows of bodies and materials, and connections with other places. Material Migrations developed a wearing-project that explored how jewellery recirculates in its ongoing life in the city. The project took what I came to realise was an analytical approach of ‘testing’ the relations jewellery produces through wearing, and therefore involved exploring processes for analysing the wearing-experience. These processes highlighted jewellery’s capacity to make connections and produce affects within the city, and enabled different thinking about the idea of jewellery’s situation-specificity and ideas of relation.

In Host A Brooch I was confronted with the challenge of how could jewellery be relevant in, and respond sensitively to, a city following a natural disaster. This project continued the previous saprophytic processes and developed a new approach to wearing. The process of gathering enabled me to encounter the extreme geological and demolition processes that were transforming Christchurch, and highlighted the human, ecological and geological systems that shape cities. Host A Brooch developed a second wearing-project, which addressed issues from the previous one, and offered up wearing to the public as a way of engaging the city. The text discusses thinking that informed the design of the project, as well as the experiences and relations it produced. The wearing-project foregrounded jewellery’s capacity to activate new sensory experiences, to shift people’s habitual patterns for engaging their surroundings, and to encourage active and creative reoccupation of the changing city. This enabled people to connect with a city undergoing ecological/geological transformation – people whose emotional, physical and social ecologies were also transforming.

This PhD has transformed my practice: extending it beyond the studio to engage different urban situations; shifting the focus from making objects to making relations; and expanding out from my relations and encounters with the city, to create opportunities for others to engage it through wearing. This has given rise to a situation-oriented practice that both enters into situations through making, and produces situations through jewellery’s ongoing life in wearing.

fig. 21 Photos from the four project-milieus: (clockwise from top left) Urban Metabolism Series (Melbourne), Situation Palestine (Ramallah), Material Migrations (Chinatown, Melbourne), Host A Brooch (Christchurch).
The practice-as-research engages making as a way of negotiating the complexities of milieus we are immersed in, and yielding things that in turn act as provocations for further interactions amidst these milieus. The saprophyte analogy in particular enables a distinctive mode for engaging the material conditions of the city – its flows of waste materials – transforming and remobilising these as jewellery, to enable new relations and connections to be made. This has produced an understanding of the jewellery-artefact as a thing-in-process that emerges and continues to change through webs of relations involved in gathering, making and wearing, and within different milieus.

The projects foreground jewellery's connections with the city both at the level of jewellery's physical site on mobile bodies as they move through the city, and also the material, human, ecological, political, cultural, historic, geological forces that shape cities. This contributes to engaging the city at the macro-level of an encompassing material-ecology in which practice operates, as well as at the micro-level of the umwelts we inhabit. This addresses the city, not as a backdrop to urban life, nor a fixed site for jewellery installations, but as a field that is produced and altered through our active and mobile engagements within it.

The PhD projects contribute to an area of contemporary jewellery that operates in the urban context. They foreground jewellery's capacity to actively engage and transform the material and lived conditions of the city, and to engage in complex and challenging situations, such as post-earthquake Christchurch. The wearing-projects highlight jewellery's potential to affect daily urban life, and to enable new relations – characterised by mobility, proximity and sensation – between urban inhabitants and milieus. The wearing-projects thus also contribute to the question of wearing in contemporary jewellery, by approaching wearing as a relational encounter that has the capacity to affect wearers, milieus, and jewellery.

The practice and projects that constitute this PhD pursue the following question:

*How can jewellery – as a practice and an artefact – engage the urban milieu, in terms of emergence; and what possibilities does this offer jewellery and its relations with the urban context?*
In late February 2009 I moved to Melbourne from Auckland to begin my PhD. My arrival in this new urban milieu coincided with first inquiries into how I might respond to the city through jewellery practice. I walked the streets seeking clues for how to engage — indeed, comprehend — the complexity that is the city. The urban milieu engulfed me in its teeming activity, yet resisted easy definition. What was it? The architecture, the colonial grid, well-swept pavements, transport systems, data networks, shop displays, advertising signage, crowds of moving bodies, movements of traffic…? The differences between jewellery and the city, such as scale, complexity, and relationship to the body, made connecting the two feel like a challenge and an improbable endeavour.

Urban Metabolism Series – project-milieu 1 recounts this preliminary phase of the research, which grappled with the overall question of connecting jewellery with the city, and initiated processes and lines of thinking that circulate and expand through the following projects in the PhD.

In response to this problematic I began by exploring the saprophyte analogy as a way of situating jewellery practice as a series of processes occurring within the city. I became fascinated by the processes of these decomposer organisms and their embedded mutualistic relations with surrounding habitats. By breaking down decomposing matter, saprophytes simultaneously sustain themselves and make nutrients available to other processes within an ecosystem, engendering a multitude of ‘flow-on effects’ — feeding microbial life, plant growth, insects and creatures that feed off them — and thus producing a living milieu.

Unlike most organisms, fungal saprophytes are not organised into centralised bodies, but are described as ‘non-discrete organisms’ that spread into their host environments as a mycelial network. This branching structure enables them to explore and exploit vast terrains and to translocate nutrients between heterogeneous environments. As an analogy for practice, this enabled me to consider jewellery as a series of activities that extend into (and transform) a surrounding terrain, rather than centring on the subjectivity of the organism/maker.

The saprophyte’s biological processes inspired a series of processes for engaging the city, which carry throughout the PhD projects. These included exploring a terrain and gathering material; transforming materials via processes of decomposition and reassembly; and producing new wearable formations that can recirculate, like nutrients, back into the city.

I was also interested in the potential for this approach to generate distinctive ways of thinking about the city. Philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, in their collaborative writings, describe how early artisan...
metalsmiths developed distinctive understandings of the world from the perspective of making. Drawing on the work of metallurgist Cyril Stanley Smith, they describe these artisans as accruing sophisticated knowledge of material complexity and the earth’s fluxing materiality through sensual know-how of material behaviours in the workshop, and from sourcing materials within surrounding geological systems. According to Smith, makers developed understanding of materials’ complex variability and mutability well in advance of philosophy’s static view of ‘matter’ or modern science’s atomistic focus on the chemical and structural properties of materials. This expansion of making into a surrounding terrain resembled the saprophyte’s process for intercepting materials within a surrounding terrain, and I was curious how such processes might enable jewellery to engage (and think through) the urban milieu from the perspective of making and materials.

The remainder of this project-milieu tracks these processes and the thinking they enabled. This begins with processes of exploration and gathering that stimulated thinking regarding the material conditions of the city, the idea of materials, jewellery’s site between the body and city, and its potential to affect relations and experiences within the city. It then discusses experimentation with saprophytic making-processes, and the focus they brought to processes of emergence, repetition and the relational dynamics of making. This early phase of the research was important for developing processes and ideas that carry through into following projects in the PhD.

It is worth noting that these early experiments do not fit neatly into the overall trajectory of the research – some are incomplete, unsuccessful, or accidental – but have been important for thinking through concerns and questions, and for indicating impasses and openings in the process. These processes did not occur sequentially, as presented here, but often overlapped. Sometimes their significance became apparent well after the event, or they triggered new lines of thinking over time. These experiments reflect the way this practice-as-research has evolved in a nonlinear fashion, in response to new milieus, materials, concepts, accidents and opportunities.

**MILIEU-EXPLORATIONS**

‘Milieu-explorations’ corresponds with the saprophyte’s processes of extending hyphae – the branching filaments that make up the mycelium structure of fungi – into a terrain in search of nutrition. This section focuses on particular processes of gathering and walking, which posed important questions regarding how jewellery might engage the city that influenced subsequent projects.
GATHERING

Gathering was a key technique for inserting and immersing my practice within the city. The act of gathering followed the natural logic of itinerant things to settle or amass together in certain places, and drew attention to the city’s flows of materials. Gathering involved an ongoing process of exploring the city, taking photos and retrieving materials, and in the process also gathering understandings of the city.

The saprophyte analogy attracted me towards evidence of material-processes taking place in the city. Sapro-, meaning to live on dead or decaying matter, made for a preference for waste materials – things jettisoned from life in the city, discarded and presumed to be at the end of their life – and an attitude of opportunism, gathering things from alleyways or construction sites of the city. In Melbourne’s efficiently manicured streets, materials would briefly gather in recesses, gutters or piles on the pavement before being removed or swept away. Alleyways, like intestines, registered the daily flow of materials consumed and excreted by the city, while on construction sites haphazard congregations of materials defied the CBD’s otherwise well-kept order and highlighted its perpetual process of formation and demolition. At first I gathered whatever I could find. An inventory read:

- Brick, drinking straw, plastic wine-glass stem, champagne cork wire, bottle tops, fragments of crockery, electrical wire and joiner, screws and washers, remains of poster, smashed safety glass, orange plastic light-cover, phone cards, bank cards, polystyrene, packing straps, corrugated cardboard fruit and vege boxes, souvenir tray and coaster, squashed drink cans, broken mobile phone, broken computer mouse, fragments of wall plaster, terracotta fragments, shards of coloured plastic, bottle caps, plastic lighters, flakes of peeled paint, shattered clear plastic, squeezable ball with tentacles, steel ring with ball bearings, bike helmet plastic, used paper cups, money tin printed with Australian money, damp-proof course, used cable ties, spray-painted galvanised steel, plastic strip from nail gun, orange safety-barrier mesh, reflective tape, yellow spray-painted rock, tiles, chips of brick, gravel, tree bark, dirty weathered paper, multi-coloured plastic, broken pieces of glass, asphalt, electrical wire, shards of taxi bumper.

The process of gathering was distinct from collecting. Whereas collecting imposes a system and order onto things – defining what is collectable and what is not – gathering brings things together that naturally come together. Paul Carter writes that gathering and collecting thus represent different attitudes towards the organisation of the world. ‘Collection is always imposed from without; gathering is undertaken from within.’

While collecting severs things from world and retains them in a collection, my gathering process maintained a connection with the city, anticipating the future dispersal of materials – in the sense that ‘those who gather can also leave.’

The studio became a new place for these materials to congregate. Here they were cleaned, sorted into clear plastic bags pinned to the wall, and grouped according to the activities they evidenced. Photography was
also a process of gathering, which captured unruly accumulations of materials – toppling out of dumpsters, crammed into boxes, stacked in alleyways – and allowed them to be transported back to the studio to surround the making-process.

**animate materials**

These processes of gathering and sorting foregrounded the ways these materials circulated through the city, and how they indexed activities and processes that sustain urban life. For instance, bottle tops and food packaging were remains from activities of eating and drinking, and the city's role in providing nutrition for its inhabitants. Broken bicycle reflectors and taxi bumpers were residues of transport systems and collisions. Bank cards were cheap plastic that enabled flows of money and goods. Others were remnants of the city's continual process of construction and demolition. These materials also evidenced histories of extraction (of 'raw materials'), refinement, manufacture, packaging, transportation, sale, consumption, use and waste – and potentials – to become landfill or become something other. Gathering, in this sense, produced a material survey of the city.

I was particularly attracted to these waste materials because they evidenced ongoing processes of change and relations with the surrounding milieu of the city, which resonated with the saprophyte analogy. Although these waste materials were ‘dead’ in the sense that they had been rejected from life in the city, they also had a sense of ‘liveliness’ – being in state of flux, undergoing alterations and deteriorations, lingering in corners of the city or taking circuitous journeys towards landfill. These materials were already in-process, and lent themselves to being further transformed and mobilised back into the flows of life through jewellery.

This enabled a fluid understanding of materials that differed from the predominant view of materials in jewellery as a stable and inert resource, or ‘raw materials’, to be transformed through making. Materials such as gold, silver, acrylic and resin, for instance, are mostly acquired in a blank state, devoid of any evidence of their previous lives and how they were produced. In contrast, the process of gathering in the city foregrounded materials’ former lives, their processes of change and relations within the extended environments of the city. As anthropologist Tim Ingold describes, materials’ properties are not fixed but in a perpetual process of transformation:

> The properties of materials, regarded as constituents of an environment, cannot be identified as fixed, essential attributes of things, but are rather processual and relational. They are neither objectively determined nor subjectively imagined but practically experienced. In that sense, every property is a condensed story. To describe the properties of materials is to tell the stories of what happens to them as they flow, mix and mutate. 38

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Similarly, the gathered waste materials were animated by particular histories, processes and interactions within the urban milieu. This understood materials in processual and relational terms, and thereby also situated jewellery practice as part of the wider material systems in which materials circulate and transform – as a set of processes that foster materials' ongoing life and transformation. This fostered a dynamic way of thinking about materials and the systems that produce them, leading to a more expansive idea of ‘materials’ as the lively matter-energy that makes up the earth, cities, bodies, jewellery.

**the city as a material-ecology**

Like the artisan metalsmiths sourcing materials within a surrounding terrain, my process of gathering produced understandings of the city through these encounters with its material-flows. I came to approach the urban milieu as a *material-ecology*: an encompassing condition consisting of animate material-processes – including bodies – that intermingle and transform within a system of relations and forces.

This was not to overlook the social, cultural or political dimensions of the city, but to consider how human inhabitants are enmeshed in broader, nonhuman ecologies – and to see ourselves as also material things. As political scientist Jane Bennett writes:

> Ecology can be defined as the study or story *(logos)* of the place where we live *(oikos)*, or better, the place that we live...that place is a dynamic flow of matter-energy that tends to settle into various bodies, bodies that often join forces, make connections, form alliances...[where] humans are always in composition with nonhumanity, never outside of a sticky web of connections or an ecology.... To call something ecological is to draw attention to its necessary implication in a network of relations, to mark its persistent tendency to enter into a working system.39

Approaching the city as ‘material-ecology’ thus also foregrounded its relational dimensions, attending to relations of inhabitation, and also relations with larger (social and environmental) systems. This was not to focus solely on ‘materials’ – in a narrow, static definition of the word – but, as illustrated by the gathered waste materials, to acknowledge that social, economic and cultural processes are enmeshed in material ones. This also echoed Guattari’s view of the co-implication of mental (subjectivities) and social ecologies within environmental (or, in my sense, material) ecologies.40 The saprophyte offered an operational analogy for how jewellery practice might enter into and operate amidst this material-ecology to produce new unforeseen possibilities for life: new concretions, new circulations, and new relations.

For the project, the following question emerged through the practice-based research and stimulated a series of investigations and experiments:

> How might jewellery practice intercept and transform these flows of materials and link them up with the body?

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40. Guattari argues that large-scale environmental change depends on reinvention or ‘resingularisation’ of socialpoliticalcultural systems and individual subjectivities. Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, 20.
fig. 31 Francis Alÿs in collaboration with Felipe Sanabria, *The Collector*, 1990-1992, stills from video, 8:56 min (released 2006). The artist walks the streets of Mexico City pulling a magnetic dog on wheels, which collects scrap metal off the pavements. The video can be viewed at http://www.francisalys.com/public/collector.html.

fig. 32 Francis Alÿs in collaboration with Julien Devau, *Barrenderos* (Sweepers), 2004, stills from video, 6:56 min. The artist filmed street sweepers in Mexico City as they pushed an accumulating pile of rubbish until it grew too large to move. The video can be viewed at http://www.francisalys.com/public/barrenderos.html.


43. Roseanne Bartley, interview with the author, 2 July 2012.


46. Walker, Gordon Matta-Clark, 45.

47. Ibid.

artists who engage the material-flows of the city

Before discussing these projects, I would like to gather here other practitioners who have explored a variety of ways to work within the material-flows of the city. Francis Alÿs, a Belgian artist based in Mexico City, has studied the way waste materials gather and pass through streets and human systems of Mexico City, working in a performative fashion. This has included using a magnetic dog and magnetic shoes to gather scrap metal off the street (The Collector, 1990–92, fig. 31); Magnetic Shoes, 1994); depositing colour-coded bronze sculptures in rubbish bags throughout the city, waiting for them to be processed by garbage sorters, and purchasing them back from street vendors (The Seven Lives of Garbage, 1995); and filming street cleaners sweeping an ever-increasing mountain of rubbish through the streets (Barrenderos, 2006, fig. 32).

Melbourne jeweller Roseanne Bartley gathers urban detritus in a process she calls ‘surface archaeology’, where gathered materials evidence social behaviours and connect with broader ecological issues. Approaching her practice as a form of environmental remediation, she proposes that rather than avoiding toxic materials, such as plastic, considering them precious might motivate their removal from the environment.

Other artists work to divert and transform flows of waste materials in order to expose their presence within the city. Waste systems have been a focus for Melbourne artist Ash Keating, whose ambitious projects 2020? (2008) and Activate 2750 (2009) aimed to raise public awareness of urban waste production (fig. 36 on page 43). In each case, tonnes of industrial materials were diverted from waste-processing stations, transported and reconfigured as sculptural installations and public performances. At the projects’ conclusion, the waste cycle was completed by systematically returning the materials back to landfill.

The artist Gordon Matta-Clark also worked with materials that gather in and pass through the city. In his early work he was fascinated by the self-organising properties of matter. He saw detritus within the urban landscape as evidence of matter’s chaotic resistance to human efforts to cultivate nature. Early works Garbage Wall (1970–1) and Jacks (1971) sought to reassert matter’s presence within the city by assembling a plethora of urban materials – rubbish, car bodies, construction waste – into architectural and sculptural structures (fig. 33 – fig. 35). For Matta-Clark, nature did not stop at the city boundary, and matter remained present in the formed materials of the cultivated realm; these projects…challenged both the location of waste by celebrating its continuing location within the system, and the belief that waste was useless and formless.

These practices situate creative practice as one that intervenes in the city’s flows of waste and exposes its excessive production and creative potential. I was similarly interested in the city’s material-flows and finding
fig. 33 Gordon Matta-Clark, Garbage Wall, 1970.


fig. 35 (right) Gordon Matta-Clark, Jacks, 1971. Stills from film footage.
fig. 36 Ash Keating, *Activate 2750*, waste installation and performances, Penrith NSW.  
52m² of waste materials were intercepted from a waste transfer station, and transported to a site in central Penrith. The project included a procession of waste-clad artists and students, who circulated along the highways, commercial streets and through the shopping mall.
I am back in the grid after three days. At the market buying bread.

The buildings generally have flat roofs with a central chimney.

One building in particular intrigues me. Wide street, large proportions with red brick. Dead straight. No detailing. Some green awnings. Big square, large, square, medium. In the middle of the terrace, there must have been 7 or 8 up there. All windows, no glassing bars.

The only feature is a plastered cornice above the central axis. Above the cornice is a row of windows. I am having coffee. I am also having coffee.

It's raining now. My pages are getting soggy.
ways to operate within them through making. While Keating and Matta-Clark draw public attention to the presence and production of waste within the city, I was interested in jewellery's potential to transform waste and put it into new circuits of circulation in the city – and, when worn, its potential to link inhabitants with the material-ecology of the city.

Walking-the-Grid (2009)

In addition to my repeated process of wandering the streets, taking photos and gathering materials, I also undertook a more systematic walking investigation of the city. For the PhD research, this experiment was valuable for foregrounding experiential relations between the body and the city, which led to the question of how jewellery might affect these relations.

After moving to a central city apartment, I embarked on a series of early morning walks over a three-week period. Each day I randomly selected one street on the map and walked up one side and down the other, until I’d covered the entire central city. Each day I set out with only a pen and journal, curious as to whether writing might promote a different mode of attention to the camera lens. This process resembled the Situationist dérive, the psychogeographical technique for investigating relations between inhabitants and the physical geographies of the city by following chance routes to experience diverse ambiances of the city. My intention was to survey the urban milieu from an experiential perspective to grasp its assemblage of movements, forces, materials, histories; and to search for sites to respond to through making. While walking, however, I was confronted by my inability to comprehend the city, let alone perceive it completely, and this brought attention to relations between the body and the city.

Walking allowed me to encounter the city from jewellery's vantage point of the mobile body. My notes detailed an immersive and heterogeneous experience that mixed physical features of the city (buildings, landmarks, vehicles, signage), textures of the weather, sensations, strains on the body, feelings and internal dialogue. Excerpts read:

_The sky has the fine whipped texture of candy floss… With the light behind me a galaxy of disks of chewing gum glisten off the pavement… My natural inclination is to take the small streets and alleys. So I take Collins: big, broad, business. You notice the architecture more._

_‘I like the way they do hoarding in Melbourne. Vertical boards painted black with even spacing between them._

_‘Bacon wafts through the air (again). All the small cafes cater to the business men with cheap deals… I can feel the fat on my skin._

_The sign reads, please refrain from:_

- eating
- smoking
- sitting

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[49] To be clear, this exercise did not involve wearing jewellery.
In the last block there are deciduous trees with white plastic bags snagged in their branches. And opposite a bare site – just carpark surrounded by low warehouses. It’s beginning to rain.

From moment to moment my experience changed according to varying environs and happenings of the city, and also my (in)capacity to sustain interest and attention. In areas where I felt disinterested or my body tired I lapsed into a habitual way of moving through the city, moving efficiently with relative disregard for my surroundings.

day 10

Today walking-the-grid is feeling like a chore. I realise every street cannot be experienced with the same quality of attention. I am a new body each day. My body struggles against the predictability. ‘Oh no, business district again’; the car fumes and dust that leave my throat like a rasp; the relentless noise of cars; the smell of bacon.

Out of refusal, my body powers forth, striding, getting it over and done with. There is a different quality to the senses with a different speed of walking. When I’m slow and feel every step, there is a somatic quality, my body feels its weight encountering the surfaces; my eyes move softly over things, into recesses; curious. When I’m power-walking – the dominant mode of walking – my legs propel me almost separately from the rest of me. Though in some contradiction, I’m not aware of them, I don’t feel them. It is the brain directing. In this case my eyes are open but they see less; they are hardened. My hearing too is internalised. Speed produces a disconnection.

The fluctuating degree of connection and attention were not a product of the milieu itself – not, for instance, symptomatic of the dissociative effects of ‘non-place’ – but my wavering awareness. I experienced the city as if filtered though a bubble-world that both changed with, and induced, continual shifts in subjectivity.

This raised the question of:

How might jewellery enhance attention, stimulate connection, and open up our bubble-worlds to the extended situation of the city?

jewellery-body-city relations

I was also interested in jewellery’s physical site between the body and the city. I made sketches of this relationship that highlighted how the artefact – particularly the brooch – occupied an interstitial zone between the mobile body and the surrounding milieu. And given this intermediary site, I was curious how jewellery might mediate body-city relations.

This question of attracting attention to our surroundings reversed jewellery’s usual vector of expression, where jewellery is often about the wearer and self-expression, a vector radiating out from the wearer towards the world. This is exemplified by sociologist Georg Simmel’s account of jewellery’s ‘radio-activity’, in which the
DAY 01
_The sun streams thorough the window by 6.30. I get up and notice the sun fits between the gaps in the buildings. It shines straight into the bedroom but not the living room. In a few days it will be further south and hidden behind other high-rises._
_The sky has the fine whipped texture of candy floss. My new walking shoes have the word ‘Inspire’ stitched on the tongue._
_With the light behind me a galaxy of disks of chewing gum glister off the pavement. There’s a hot air balloon overhead._
_My natural inclination is to take the small streets and alleys. So I take Collins: big, broad, business. You notice the architecture more._
_I like the way they do hoarding in Melbourne. Vertical boards painted black with even spacing between them._
_The plane trees are covered in small pale leaves. Spring has sprung._
_The bronze sculpture of John Pascoe Fawkner stoops, one knee to the ground to prod the earth with a stick. The sculpted figure is large, but apparently he was a small man._
_1792-1862. To the left and a little behind, John Batman signs a document against his thigh. It’s probably the one with the little swindled the land. The plaque says ‘This is the place for a village’. 1801-1839—he must have died young. The surrounding planting is a mix of Australian proteas (I’m not actually sure they’re Australian—maybe South African), New Zealand felaxes and bright orange clivias (which shouldn’t be planted in full sun). Between the figures the sign declares: PRIVATE PROPERTY. No skateboarding / No cycling. Consumption of alcohol is forbidden. Dogs are forbidden in the forecourt & garden._
_[That should keep the Abos out!]_ _Yellow taxi cabs line the street more than half way down the block. The drivers chat outside the cars. They have dark hair and eyes; they are from elsewhere. A white man in a waist coat sweeps the pavement in front of an exclusive arcade._

DAY 02
_The sun streams thorough the window by 6.30. I get up and notice the sun fits between the gaps in the buildings. It shines straight into the bedroom but not the living room. In a few days it will be further south and hidden behind other high-rises._
_The sky has the fine whipped texture of candy floss. My new walking shoes have the word ‘Inspire’ stitched on the tongue._
_With the light behind me a galaxy of disks of chewing gum glister off the pavement. There’s a hot air balloon overhead._
_My natural inclination is to take the small streets and alleys. So I take Collins: big, broad, business. You notice the architecture more._
_I like the way they do hoarding in Melbourne. Vertical boards painted black with even spacing between them._
_The plane trees are covered in small pale leaves. Spring has sprung._
_The bronze sculpture of John Pascoe Fawkner stoops, one knee to the ground to prod the earth with a stick. The sculpted figure is large, but apparently he was a small man._
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_[That should keep the Abos out!]_ _Yellow taxi cabs line the street more than half way down the block. The drivers chat outside the cars. They have dark hair and eyes; they are from elsewhere. A white man in a waist coat sweeps the pavement in front of an exclusive arcade._

DAY 03
_At the end Lonsdale turns into Albert. There is the park. I can just see down from my window, except it’s not a park—more like a grand front yard to (THE) COLLEGE OF SURGEONS. I guess trainee surgeons must have lived there. There is a sundial and a plaque in the gravel path, the Melbourne High School stood here until 1933 when it was demolished._
_Diagonally over the intersection is the park, I can’t remember its name— Fitzroy Gardens? Who was Fitzroy? I resist the temptation. Parks seems more appealing than this incessant marching of the grid. Today I’ll do Lonsdale._
_Large foyers and revolving doors. ‘Urban’ deli, ‘Urban’ workshop._
_‘Outside THE AGE, a petrified bronze couple (conservative, white, girl with strapless dress, nice figure) demonstrate some gallery + Berlin. (Free advertising)._
_In the last block there are deciduous trees with white plastic bags snagged in their branches. And opposite a bare site—just carpark surrounded by low warehouses. It’s beginning to rain._
_This part of town feels stingy. There are no overhangs on the pavement so I get wet and my writing runs._
_In a few days it will be further south and hidden behind other high-rises._

DAY 04
_Today I want to walk without my brain. Just walk. I follow Little Lonsdale because I can’t be bothered with the main busy thoroughfares._
_In the last block there are deciduous trees with white plastic bags snagged in their branches. And opposite a bare site—just carpark surrounded by low warehouses. It’s beginning to rain._
_This part of town feels stingy. There are no overhangs on the pavement so I get wet and my writing runs._
_In the last block there are deciduous trees with white plastic bags snagged in their branches. And opposite a bare site—just carpark surrounded by low warehouses. It’s beginning to rain._

DAY 05
_My timing must be slightly different today because there’s lots of workmen on the pavement. They wear their fluorescent yellow or orange safety vests—the same as the rubbish collectors—and hang out in groups. I always keep my eyes straight ahead ignoring them with my poker face. I always expect them to leer at me or wolf-whistle._
_I feel like an automation. Walking-the-grid feels like a job. I’ve just walked the length of Bourke (Street) and back. The route is laid out in advance so curiosity and impulse have no role._
_My eyes reveal nothing. I need to close them to hear anything. I feel defeated and hopeless. I got ‘picked up’ once, or at least asked on a date by an old guy on my morning walk. Right after my memory of the one of the wind almost pushed me off the bench. Docklands._
_The rain drives almost horizontal. I feel defeated and damp._

DAY 06
_It’s grey and I’m starting on Tuesday this week. I’m mindful to myself—still recovering from Sunday’s late night on the computer—so I’m walking Little Latrobe. This is partly motivated by my need for coffee beans._
_I’m a bit vacant and I’ve walked this street—at least the Chinatown part—many times. I flip into familiar mode, not noticing much. I did notice a newly bombed wall in Chinatown part—many times. I flip into familiar mode, not noticing much._
_In the city, this alien one, I’m mindful of people thinking my track pants and sneakers are out of place. I’m mindful of men looking at me. I got ‘picked up’ once, or at least asked on a date by an old guy on my morning walk. Right after my memory of the one of the wind almost pushed me off the bench. Docklands._
_The rain drives almost horizontal. I feel defeated and damp._

DAY 07
_Someone is smoking a cigarette. I can smell it. The air is charged. I feel like maybe I should have my camera to capture the invisible things (movements, forces, flows, power) but maybe it’s impossible when you yourself are moving. What is said for stillness?_
architecture periods I don't remember).

This is viscous. All about business.

I'm standing in a doorway to transcribe the billboard opposite. A woman with yellow and green woolly hat and bags on her arms is yelling at me! (with undistinguishable mutterings).

BILLBOARD: (part of the Laneway's Project). ALL CAPS
THE TIME HAS HOW COME FOR THE NATION TO TURN
A PAGE IN AUSTRALIA'S HISTORY BY RIGHTING THE
WRONGS OF THE PAST AND SO MOVING FORWARD
WITH CONFIDENCE... FOR THE PAIN, SUFFERING
AND HURT OF THOSE STOLEN GENERATIONS, THEIR
DESCENDANTS AND FOR WHAT THEY LEFT BEHIND,
WE SAY SORRY... FOR THE BREAKING UP OF FAMILIES
AND COMMUNITIES, WE SAY SORRY, AND FOR THE
INDIGNITY AND DEGRADATION THUS INFLOCTED ON A
PROUD PEOPLE AND A PROUD CULTURE, WE SAW SORRY,
WE THE PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA RESPECTFULLY
REQUEST THAT THIS APOLOGY BE RECEIVED IN THE
SPIRIT IN WHICH IT IS OFFERED AS PART OF THE
HEALING OF THE NATION.'

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, February 13 2008.

In such an instance 'NATION' or any other designated
whole seems unlikely.

The adjoining billboard is a parallel quote from Canada.
My hand is too tired to copy it.

DAY 07

Today the sky is partially clear. The sun enters my room undecided. Because its sunny—and let's face it, it's been rare lately—Maybe I need to head east.

Walking down Spring. I muse on the name. It's the edge condition; a mass of built structures to my right and across the road spaciousness—the odd building but not bounded by the grid.

This route is too long. At least for a weekday when I have a lot of meetings. I turn off Flinders into Queen, I'll have to come back... and to my surprise I realise I'll have to do both sides of the street. The experience is entirely different. I decide to take the first street back, Flinders Lane.

I'm starting to get an instant feeling of dislocation and feeling out of place as soon as I come down this end of town. I see a policeman and think 'I haven't done anything—does it look like I have?' Leaning against a wall or sitting on a bench, writing in my book, looks like a suspicious act at this time of the morning. Or, maybe it’s the track pants, sneakers and black fingerless gloves. Do I look like a homeless person? I guess it's not normal to do exercise outside the gym.

Bacon wafts through the air (again). All the small cafes cater to the business men with cheap deals. I wonder how much bacon they go through. I can feel the fat on my skin.

A sign reads please refrain from:

- eating
- smoking
- sitting

In this area.

Stock Exchange House looks ready for renovation or
demolition.

I keep thinking up alternative plans for exploring the
city. Walking seems too superficial. I'm at once included in the
group. Everyone's marching along, on their way somewhere, no memory of the journey. In this way I must be getting to know the city in the way of most of
the people in the city. The strange tension is, although I become part of a larger urban practice it is not
accompanied by a sense of belonging. Everyone walks eyes ahead. I witness almost no human interaction (aside from the homeless guys yelling at each other yesterday).

Everyone is in a little contained bubble. I begin to wonder if they are fearful of interaction. What would they like to talk to?

I have walked the city for seven days now.

I still haven't drawn anything.

Why is this?

Another time, sometime ago, I realised you can't think about the city, in
the city.

So, maybe it's also a case of not being able to draw the city, in the city.

Or is it, I'd just prefer not to? (as Hélène Frichot might say)

Why is this?

Because the experience blurs in to a multi-sensory whole where nothing can be isolated?

Are there sounds produced by my constant
movement, I cannot touch or grasp, nor see below the surface.

Is it that the interesting aspects are those that are invisible or require abstract representation? (which is
difficult when faced with a concrete world).

Is it just because there is no need, or I'm not aware of the reason to draw (yet).

I have only 3 streets to go. King, Spencer and Flinders.

I'm back to the grid after some days off. I was enjoying
days of wandering, Down any which alley. At the market buying bread.

I have only 3 streets to go. King, Spencer and Flinders.

I've chosen King. I'm as far as the park near Flagstaff and
there is so far nothing interesting about King Street. The buildings are boxy, plain and generally ugly. Lonsdale Court reminds me of Callum Morton's Valhalla (constructed grey war ruin puffing smoke and sound effects). There is too much traffic on King Street.

The buildings generally have that archi-cad look to them
(although most are probably older). No eaves. Minimum
interior. Maximised floor area. There are remains of one old stone church (looks kind of Greek Orthodox in form) and a double storey row house.

One building in particular intrigues me. Wide squatox
proportions. All red brick. Dead symmetrical. No detailing.
No reveals. No eaves. Just a big box. 3 large square
awnings over the pavement. No entrance. There must have been 7 or 8 upstairs. All aluminium. No glass bars. The only feature is a plastered rams head on the central axis, above the entry.

It's raining now. I'm going to get saturated. There are few
awnings over the pavement; People obviously drive, not walk.

At the intersection I have to weave through the crowd.
All black (penguins) = staring with resigned, forlorn looks
on their faces.

The only thing standing out in the rain is the large
fluorescent yellow sign shouting in red 'MAKING LOVE?
DO IT LATER!'

In counterpoint to the tired low-rent offices at the top are the strip clubs at the bottom of the street. Showgirls.

I'm on William Street. A joyless part of town. A small
shriveled man says hello with a cigarette hanging from
his mouth. He sells papers from a fold-out metal stand.

He holds a cardboard sign. HELP.

A man sits on the ground in the corner facing early
awnings over the pavement. People obviously drive, not
walk in this area.

There are no trams on Lonsdale Street. The cars can go faster. So, there are more cars, more trucks, NOISE.

there is a smell of petrol / there is petrol in the air. There
is a smell of car exhaust. Later I realise the petrol smell is
tar. They're filling cracks in the road. I breathe only half
breaths. My lungs resist the hard air. Renee says it's
the worst place to live in Australia if you have asthma—
she has asthma.

A man sits on the ground in the corner facing early
awning over the pavement. People obviously drive, not
walk in this area.

A man sits on the ground in the corner facing early
awnings over the pavement. People obviously drive, not
walk in this area.

A man sits on the ground in the corner facing early
awnings over the pavement. People obviously drive, not
walk in this area.
dazzling effects of adornment emanate out into a surrounding sphere, enlarging the personality of the wearer, and in return attract attention towards them, and endow them with social power.51 While I was also interested in jewellery’s capacity to form relations and attract attention, I questioned how this might be reversed to instead lure the wearer’s attention outwards to towards the surrounding milieu. I speculated that jewellery made saprophytically from the city, when connected with the body, might encourage connection with the urban milieu.

In line with this thinking, in ensuing experiments – in this and later projects – I focused on the brooch as a form of jewellery suited to making connections between the body and the city. My reasoning was, firstly, that the brooch clearly occupies the interstitial zone between the body and the city; and secondly, its degree of autonomy from the body suggests an encounter between the body and an independent thing from the world – unlike earrings, rings and neckwear, which are shaped to accommodate the body, and hence centre on the wearer. The brooch also has an advantage of having fewer gender associations – through associations with badges, pins and medals – which gives it potential to connect with a wider range of inhabitants of the city.

**MATERIAL-TRANSFORMATIONS**

In the previous section, processes of gathering and walking raised questions regarding how jewellery might engage the material-ecology of the city and mediate relations between the body and the city. The next phase of experimentation addressed these questions by exploring processes, inspired by the metabolic/digestive processes of the saprophyte, to transform gathered materials into new, wearable forms. These making-experiments evolved a particular approach to making focused on processes of transformation, repetition and emergence.

As a note, while these processes of gathering, exploring and making are treated separately in this text, in practice these occurred concurrently. Often materials would be gathered and transformed in the same day, and therefore the connection between making and the city were felt more strongly in practice than may be apparent from this writing.

I began by exploring the saprophyte's processes as separate steps for decomposing and reassembling materials. Saprophytic processes of decomposition are significant for transforming materials – for instance, proteins into amino acids – that nourish life within a surrounding ecosystem. In biology, decomposition is defined as ‘a complex of many processes, including fragmentation, change in physical structure, ingestion, egestion, and concentration.’52 This inspired experiments to decompose the gathered materials by drilling, smashing, sandblasting, fragmenting, slicing, and piercing. My plan was to amass a range of fragments and then experiment with ways to reassemble them.


An early finished piece, the City Series brooch (fig. 42) however, highlighted problems with this approach. This piece brought together fragments of taxi bumper, glass, gravel, reflector and a piece from a souvenir tray, in a supporting structure of sterling and fine silver. Although the piece evidenced steps of decomposition and reassembly, I realised this method did not explore the materials’ full potential for transformation. The fragments themselves were not ‘transformed’ — in the sense of being changed in form — but were held in place as secondary, decorative attachments to a base structure. This resembled a traditional jewellery ‘setting’ — where hard, intractable materials are supported by structures made from more malleable materials — and created a hierarchy between structure and ornament. This framed the materials as remnants of what they were previously, rather than enabling their transformation. This method of making moreover involved careful planning and construction to house each irregular fragment, and therefore felt at odds with the saprophyte’s material-processes because it lacked continuity or spontaneity in the process.53

A turning point was not a planned project, but the impromptu act of making an adornment to wear to an event. With tight time constraints I rapidly bent, threaded and knotted together drinking straws into a large open matrix, wearable as a neckpiece (fig. 43).54 In contrast to the previous systematic process, the method of transformation was instigated by the materials, and the work grew incrementally and spontaneously though repeated actions. I then realised a vital feature of a saprophytic making-process was this quality of emergence, where new, unforeseen outcomes take shape through a cooperation of various parts within a dynamic system.

This shifted the focus of making to finding processes to transform materials — still involving decomposition and reassembly — that enabled unplanned formations to emerge through process, as distinct from being designed in advance; and produced self-supporting structures that did not require other materials in their construction.

I became particularly interested in the potential for emergence to occur through repetition, where repetition is understood not as continual production of the same, but — as seen in natural evolution — the production of variation through adaptations or mutations. I was inspired by Deleuze’s concept of repetition as a productive process that gives rise to difference; and a process of discovery and experimentation that ‘allows new experiences, affects and expressions to emerge…[and] affirm[s] the power of the new and the unforeseeable…’55 Like a saprophyte’s recurring processes that produce varied results depending on the organic matter available in different terrains, I was interested in the potential for repetition to enable varied formations to grow through repeated actions; and for repeated processes to produce differing outcomes in different locations, or over time.

I first explored this idea of repetitive actions with ink and brush, as they afforded greater speed and spontaneity than other materials. With a loaded brush I repeatedly dragged, pushed, dropped or bounced ink across damp watercolour paper (fig. 46 on page 56). I noticed the results were influenced by chance, but also a number of variables: proportions of ink and water, distance between brush and paper, pressure and

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53. I use the term spontaneous as it is used in complexity theory and emergence: to describe self-organizing processes that unfold of their own accord, without external control.
54. The wearing of this piece as a group of wearers, at the event and on public transport, also highlighted the potential affect of wearing — in this case a performative, collective act that created a situation. This ignited interest in how wearing might be actively explored in the PhD.
fig. 44 Experiments with processes of decomposition, 2009.

fig. 45 The making-process for the City Series brooch, 2009.
I wanted to find a similarly spontaneous method for working with the gathered materials, and eventually experimented with folding – decomposing materials by cutting (with piercing saw or snips) and reassembling them into new formations with a repeated fold action. This fold action offered a direct way of transforming materials that altered their formal, material and spatial properties, simply by applying the force of hands or tools. Initially I played with credit cards, attracted to their colour, pliability and the cheeky appeal of a material potentially ‘worth more than gold’. These cut and folded well, but could not be joined without secondary materials, such as rivets or glue. So I progressed to other foldable materials whose malleability and strength enabled stronger permanent folds that could be used as a joining system – thus enabling self-supporting structures.

For this process, I then worked with commercial cooking-oil cans, off-cuts of galvanised steel and aluminium architectural flashings. The process of decomposition involved unfolding these things into flat surfaces, then guillotining them into fine linear strips. I chose lines because this played on the idea of transformation as a change of form, and the relation between form, surface and line. This interpreted transformation as involving decomposing, or un-forming, forms into surfaces, then surfaces into lines – as if reducing them to base components – then reassembling or re-forming the lines to produce new forms.

This evolved into a repeated folding process, based on a rule where each strip would be folded to meet another in space, at a precise angle (usually 30 degrees) that allowed it to be wrapped over, down, and back up around the other to be crimped into place neatly beside itself (fig. 47 on page 57). Repeated folding allowed strips to be interconnected potentially endlessly and to coalesce into unplanned formations.56

The way the final formations took shape was influenced by a set of parameters – which included the width of strips, fold angles, and the space required to manoeuvre fingers and pliers – as well as a relational dance between materials, tools and the maker. Moment-to-moment negotiations occurred – not between these discrete entities, but between their properties and capacities: the steel’s malleability and its capacity to be cut, curved, folded, and scratched; to fail when over-bent, and to cut fingers; the pliers’ capacity to fit into tiny gaps, to reach joins deep within the structure, and to damage printed surfaces; and my finger size and dexterity, visual focus, choices of material and the ability to weave the strips in and out of the structure without scratching or overworking them. Through this repetitive process, otherwise flimsy strips of metal interlocked to produce a new entity with emergent properties of strength, three-dimensionality, internal space and new visual characteristics – such as the alternation between coloured and uncoloured surfaces, and differing angles catching the light.

56. The process would begin by enfolding a pin structure, so that the resulting formation could become attachable to the body.
fig. 48 (opposite) Experiment with electrical wire, using a repeated action to enable formations to ‘grow’, 2009.

fig. 49 (this page) Preliminary experiments folding different materials: drinking straws, electrical wire, plastic bowl, bank cards, cardboard boxes, ID card, commercial cooking oil can, 2009.
fig. 50 (opposite) Experiment with folding, phone card, 2009.

fig. 51 Experiment with folding, galvanised steel, 2009.

In these experiments materials were cut into strips in such a way that they remain connected—and therefore did not need to be joined. During these making-process I was fascinated to watch unforeseen formations gradually take shape through a series of random fold actions.
This saprophytic approach to making shifted my own relation to the materials and the making-process. These explorations shifted my role as a maker from designing and constructing objects – which had occurred with the City Series brooch – to working within the making-process; working with materials, with tools, to allow something new to take shape. This involved developing parameters of a process to encourage the work’s emergence, and then entering into the process and guiding it from within. As academic Pia Ednie-Brown observes:

emergence casts the designer out of the role of a controller – or centralised commander – and into a more participatory, guiding role. It involves a mode of composition or creative practice that amplifies and highlights the act of entering into dynamic relation, negotiation and interaction.57

To encourage emergence I found I needed to yield my control over the process, and instead enter into relations of collaboration with other constituents of the process. As a participant in the process, I became immersed in the rhythm of the work’s folding, acting as an assemblage of bodily movements, affects, sensibilities and preferences that guided the work’s formation.

Returning to the idea of repetition, I was also interested in the potential for a repeated process – this folding technique – to evolve new variations over time, and produce diversity from seemingly restrictive parameters. I found that repeating this technique gave rise to differing formations, and their degree of variation became more pronounced as I chanced upon new variables – for instance altering the spacing of joins, folding strips outwards to create protrusions, integrating the pin at the beginning or the end, or discovering new materials. Repetition thus produced an ongoing series in which pieces became differentiated through each iteration (fig. 54).

I also observed that my preferences as a maker counteracted the potential variability of outcomes. Emergence had the implicit risk of undesirable outcomes, and this created a struggle between the undirected process of formation and my efforts to coax it towards pleasing possibilities. In this saprophytic making-process there is no preliminary stage – for instance, drawing – to pre-select the ‘best’ option before making. Every variation was materialised. In architecture, when similar processes of emergence are explored digitally, parametric models are used to generate multiple formal possibilities that enable the designer to play the role of ‘natural selection’ and select the ‘fittest’ form for construction.58 Here, in contrast, with this time-consuming manual process, the process of selection instead occurred within the making-process. Although I had intentionally relinquished control over the process, I noticed a tendency to try to emulate features of previous pieces; for me, the most enticing retained some of the dynamism experienced in the work’s coalescence. Thus my preferences (and risk aversion) as a maker influenced the evolution of the series by reducing the degree of variation from one piece to the next.


These saprophytic explorations affirmed the potential for repetition to enable formations to emerge through a process without being ‘designed’, and to yield new variants over time. This also highlighted that encouraging processes of change or transformation in a system required that I foster particular relations with materials and other constituents of a process. Experiencing this relational dance in the making also pointed to other relational dynamics that jewellery enters into – for instance, the coming together of jewellery-body-city in wearing – and hence these explorations of emergence later influenced my approach to other jewellery processes.

Repetition of the process resulted in an ongoing series of brooches called the *Urban Metabolism Series*. These engaged the city not by seeking a visual resemblance, but as transformations of the city's flows of materials, and through their site between the body and the city. In this sense they were not about the urban milieu, but both of it and in it.

The brooch formations resisted condensing into solid ‘objects’, appearing partially formed in-process, with a potential for further growth, and eliciting diverse associations – graffiti, veins of the body, eco-buildings, fungal growths and subway systems. Their ‘style’ registered the forces, materials and rhythmic actions that brought them into being, and as such, manifest qualities of temporality and change, often resisted in the traditional desire for jewellery to have permanence.

On the body, the brooches’ open matrix formations articulated the interstitial zone where the materiality of the city encounters the matter of the body; and acted as a provocation to lure attention, not towards the wearer, but towards the material-ecology from which they emerged. Whereas Keating’s and Matta-Clark’s works drew attention to the presence of waste within the city, jewellery has the potential to recirculate these materials back into urban life, and stimulate further ongoing connections between the body and the material-ecology of city.

**URBAN METABOLISM SERIES CONCLUSION**

To conclude this first project-milieu, this preliminary phase of research-experimentation was important for developing concepts, processes and questions regarding jewellery’s engagement with the city, which fed through into the following projects in the PhD.

As with early artisan metalsmiths, the saprophyte analogy extended practice beyond the studio and enabled me to engage and thereby open up understandings of the city. Practice expanded to include a range of activities – walking, writing, gathering, photographing – that engaged the urban milieu from the perspective of its material and lived conditions. The process of gathering foregrounded material engagements that shaped an understanding of ‘materials’ as dynamically shaped through historic processes and relations within wider (natural and human) systems. This also enabled me to encounter the city as a material-ecology, or an encompassing network of relations and material processes to intervene in through practice. My practice of

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59. These were associations that others attributed to the pieces.
walking foregrounded jewellery’s site between mobile bodies and the city, and highlighted how my relations with the city were affected by my (in)capacity for attention. This prompted questioning – which became central to the PhD – of jewellery’s potential to mediate body-city relations, and to enhance attention to the urban milieu.

The saprophyte analogy situated jewellery as entering into and inhabiting this material-ecology through making, and working amidst its forces and opportunities. This inspired a process of gathering things previously in circulation in the city (intercepting them on their path to landfill), decomposing them into base-elements, then allowing them to combine into new formations. As wearable objects, these formations then remobilise this waste matter back into the flows of urban life, and have the potential to make literal and experiential connections between inhabitants and the material-flows of the city.

This saprophytic approach to making produced a focus on processes of emergence, which altered my relations, as a maker, with materials and tools. In order to encourage formations that were unplanned, and irreducible to their previous material state, I set up processes based on repetition and sets of parameters that allowed formations to emerge, rather than being designed in advance. This shifted my role as maker to setting up a process and entering into it as a participant – rather than controller – in collaboration with other constituents in the process. These experiences and observations of emergence influenced how I came to approach practice-as-research and wearing later in the PhD.

Through the preliminary experiments in Urban Metabolism Series, questions surfaced that focused the overall research question of how jewellery might engage the city in terms of emergence – questions of how jewellery practice might intercept and transform the city’s flows of waste-materials and link them up with the body; and how the resulting artefacts might mediate and enhance body-city relations. These concerns were taken through into and motivated further practice.

Saprophytic making became thus not only about the re-use of waste materials, but about jewellery’s potential to instigate processes of transformation that are oriented towards new, yet-unthought-of possibilities. This was not only about formal possibilities – new kinds of objects – but also the potential for jewellery to foster continued process of change within a system – for instance, through the relations it enters into through wearing.
fig. 59 Urban Metabolism Series brooches, 2009-10, commercial cooking oil can, aluminium flashing, galvanised steel, stainless steel (pin).
fig. 60 Urban Metabolism Series brooches, 2010-11, commercial cooking oil can, galvanised steel, stainless steel (pin).
fig. 61 *Urban Metabolism Series* brooches, 2011, commercial cooking oil can, galvanised steel, stainless steel (pin).