



# Flightless Birds

Six artists from Aotearoa

12 March - 17 April 2025

Debbie Adamson  
Aphra Cheesman  
Octavia Cook  
Emma Fitts  
Cheryl Lucas  
Shelley Norton



Top: Aphra Cheesman, Emma Fitts, Cheryl Lucas | Bottom: Octavia Cook  
Installation photos by Andrew Curtis



Top: Aphra Cheesman, Debbie Adamson |  
Bottom: Shelley Norton  
Installation photos by Andrew Curtis

## DEBBIE ADAMSON

Debbie Adamson grew up in Central Otago and moved to Dunedin to study Jewellery and Metalsmithing at Otago Polytechnic School of Fine Arts, under Johanna Zellmer and Andrew Last. She graduated in 2009 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts, and the following year showcased in the annual graduate exhibition at the Fingers Gallery in Auckland.

Debbie's work uses industrial steel, forged and carved to create a series of needle like pendants, depicting the leaves and stems of various species of NZ native plants. Some of these are from trees that have become popular in urban design - such as the lancewoods with their very distinct juvenile and adult forms - and some of these are endemic leguminous plants - many of which are vulnerable, and grow slowly in fragile habitats.

*My work is informed by the natural world and our relationship to it. Through the lens of craft based skills I like to observe and explore my surrounding environment, playing with the transformative properties of materials to explore questions about identity, sustainability, and the human experience. I like to incorporate traditional jewellery making as well as a broader approach within my practice.*

*A needle is used to construct, repair or embellish - a tool for working with thread and connecting things. It is generally welded by an individual, historically associated with the work of women, but has also been used as a tool for subversion.*

*When I first started this series, I was working on a garden. I had a lot of learning to do, and very quickly found that I had more questions than answers. Am I looking for beauty? Do I want it to be productive? What about sustainable ecosystems? In short - what kind of relationship do I want to have with the flora that surrounds me, and how does that interact with the wider environment?*

*This rich, complicated and layered consideration of interconnectedness is one that I find myself constantly reassessing, and making this series of pendants, mementos of the natural world, is one way I give myself time to contemplate.*



**Debbie Adamson**

*Lancewoods - Fierce and Common*

*NZ Native Brooms and Matagouri*

*Needle pendants, 2021 - 2025*

Mild steel, silver steel, nylon thread

1



4



3



5



11



14



- 1. *Giant flowered broom*, 2021, 260x8x7mm \$765
- 3. *Common broom*, 2021, 179 x 8 x 8mm \$560
- 4. *Desert broom*, 2025, 113x7x7mm \$440
- 5. *Matagouri*, 2025, 75x5x4mm \$270
- 11. *Lancewood, juvenile*, 2025, 195x17x10mm \$650
- 14. *Lancewood, adult*, 2025, 85x23x5mm \$575

7



8



9



12



17



13



- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| 7. <i>Fierce lancewood</i> , adult, 2025, 110x10x10mm | \$560 |
| 8. <i>Lancewood</i> , juvenile, 2021, 276x10x6mm      | \$765 |
| 9. <i>Lancewood</i> , juvenile, 2024, 250x15x12mm     | \$765 |
| 12. <i>Lancewood</i> , juvenile, 2024, 190x9x5mm      | \$565 |
| ● 13. <i>Lancewood</i> , adult, 2025, 123x19x8mm      | \$615 |
| 17. <i>Kāpuka</i> , 2025, 94x43x8mm                   | \$670 |





10



16



15



2



6. *Fierce lancewood*, juvenile, 2025, 377x21x7mm \$1550  
10. *Lancewood*, juvenile, 2021, 200x11x4mm \$650  
16. *Karaka*, 2025, 129x39x7mm \$690  
15. *Shining Karamu*, 2025, 86x44x9mm \$670  
2. *Coral broom*, 2021, 200x7x8mm \$650

## APHRA CHEESMAN

Aphra is a Naarm/Melbourne based artist from Aotearoa/New Zealand. Aphra's practice includes contemporary jewellery, objects, drawing, video and sculpture. Her research examines our complex relationships with commonplace materials and objects, often considered in relation to the cycles of capitalism and other economic, social, political and environmental systems. Her work is often situated within the overlooked and in-between moments of everyday life and she has a daily practice of observing and collecting from which her research and creative works often evolve.

Her process is both playful and observant. She is interested in the in-between moments of daily life and she is continually looking for objects, materials and things in her everyday that she finds odd, beautiful, humorous, or simply appealing. This begins the process of translating her observations into further research, and making work.

Aphra graduated from RMIT with a BA Fine Art (Honours) in 2020. She has exhibited in Australia and internationally. She was selected for the *Fresh!* graduate exhibition at Craft Victoria (2019), the *Gallery Marzee International Graduate Show* (NL, 2019) and *Talente* (DE, 2022). Aphra is the recipient of numerous awards and grants including; the Joel Elenberg prize (RMIT, 2020), the Emily Hope award (RMIT, 2020) and the Talente Prize (2022). Aphra was selected for *Melbourne Now 2023* at the NGV. In 2020 she completed her BA (Fine Art) (Honours) at RMIT.

*Observing my everyday environment, I seek out traces of encounters between people and things, gleaned objects and materials that are worn or decayed, with signs of interaction and use. My practice considers the complex networks in which people and things coexist and offers the potential to re-examine both our place within these systems, and our relationships with our things.*



**Aphra Cheesman**

*Wall object, 2025*

AC01

Mild steel, stainless steel, acrylic paint, enamel paint, wax, silk thread

29.5 x 11.5 x 1cm

\$2430



**Aphra Cheesman**

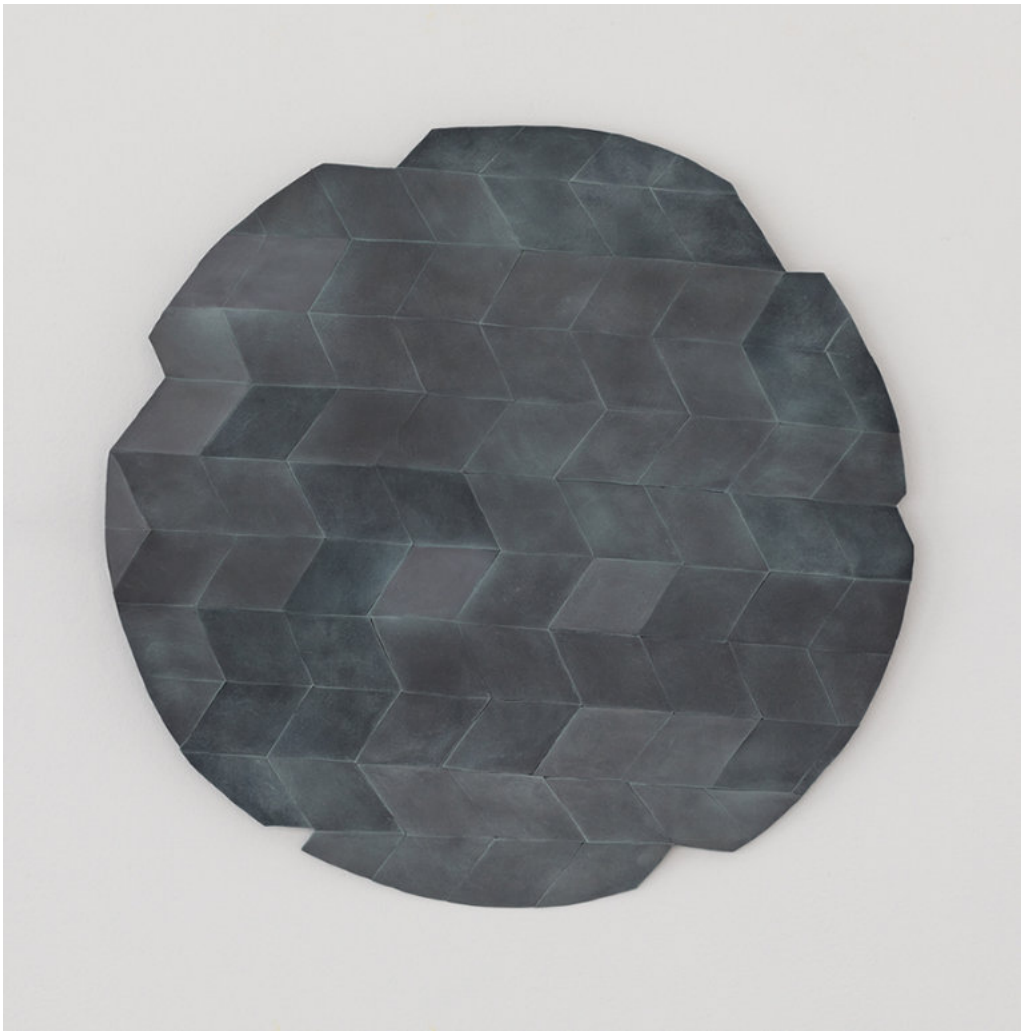
*Wall object, 2025*

AC01

Mild steel, stainless steel, acrylic paint, enamel paint, wax, silk thread

29.5 x 11.5 x 1cm

\$2430



**Aphra Cheesman**

*Wall object*, 2025

AC02

Mild steel, stainless steel, acrylic paint, enamel paint, wax, silk thread

29 x 29 x 1cm

\$2430



Aphra Cheesman

*Wall object*, 2025

AC03

Mild steel, stainless steel, acrylic paint, enamel paint, wax, silk thread

18 x 18 x 1cm

\$1900



Aphra Cheesman

*Wall object, 2025*

AC04

Mild steel, stainless steel, acrylic paint, enamel paint, wax, silk thread

39 x 29 x 1cm

● \$2600



**Aphra Cheesman**

*Wall object, 2025*

AC05

Mild steel, stainless steel, acrylic paint, enamel paint, wax, silk thread

24.5 x 13.5 x 1cm

● \$2780





Aphra Cheesman

*Wall object*, 2025

AC06

Mild steel, stainless steel, acrylic paint, enamel paint, wax, silk thread

15 x 11 x 2cm

\$1900

## EMMA FITTS

Emma Fitts lives and works in ūtautahi Christchurch, New Zealand. Her sculptural paintings and interdisciplinary installations draw from painting, architecture, textiles and art history. Fitts studied at the University of Canterbury, ūtautahi, and completed an MFA at Glasgow School of Art, Scotland. Fitts returned to ūtautahi from the UK in 2014 as the Olivia Spencer Bower recipient, was a McCahon House resident for winter 2018, and completed the Fulbright-Wallace residency at The Headlands Center for the Arts, San Francisco, in 2019.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Laps, pulls buoys and plunge pools*, The National, ūtautahi Christchurch 2024; *Petal*, Melanie Roger Gallery, Tōmaki Makaurau, 2023; *Lapping at your door*, Objectspace, Tōmaki Makaurau, 2022-23; *In The Rough: Parts 1, 2 & 3*, Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery, Titirangi, 2019; and *From Pressure to Vibration: The Event of a Thread*, The Dowse Art Museum, Te Awakairangi Lower Hutt, 2017.

Recent group exhibitions include *Fitts, Hurley, Poppelwell*, Melanie Roger Gallery, Tōmaki Makaurau Auckland, 2024; *Living Room*, Objectspace, ūtautahi Christchurch, 2023; *The air, like a stone*, The Physics Room, ūtautahi, 2023; *Summer exhibition*, Martin Browne Contemporary, Sydney, Australia, 2023; *Woven*, CGallery, Melbourne, 2023; *Tree in a Hurry*, The National, ūtautahi, 2022; *Evolutions of Galaxies*, MADA gallery, Monash University, Naarm Melbourne, 2022; and *Touching Sight*, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna Waiwhet<sup>1</sup>, 2020-2021.



Emma Fitts

*Dawn Digestif*

Flashe, canvas, felted rope

320 x 370 x 70mm

\$3290



Emma Fitts  
*Dawn Digestif* (alternate view)  
Flashe, canvas, felted rope



Emma Fitts

*Noon Apéritif*

Flashe, canvas, felted rope

320 x 370 x 70mm

\$3290



Emma Fitts  
*Noon Apéritif* (alternate view)  
Flashe, canvas, felted rope

## OCTAVIA COOK

Octavia Cook was born in Auckland but currently resides in Port Chalmers, New Zealand. In 1999 she graduated with a Bachelor of Design in Jewellery from Auckland's Unitec, and in 2003 she launched her fictitious family jewellery 'company', Cook & Co. To date Cook's interest in her craft has spanned the traditional forms, settings and materials of jewellery, as well as its packaging, marketing and provenance. Special attention has been reserved for the value and social function of jewels.

Octavia Cook has exhibited her work extensively since 1999. Her work has been shown in exhibitions at Dunedin Public Art Gallery, City Gallery Wellington, the Suter Art Gallery, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, Objectspace, Fingers Jewellery, Galerie Rob Koudijs, Galerie Marzee, Schmuck 2012, Roslyn Oxley 9 and Peter McLeavey.

Octavia Cook's jewellery is represented in private and public collections including those of the Auckland War Memorial Museum, Te Papa Tongarewa, The Dowse Art Museum, Tuhura Otago Museum, Middlesborough Institute of Modern Art (UK), Museum of Fine Arts Boston (USA), Govett-Brewster Art Gallery and most recently, her work *S.H.A.L.L.O.W* (2021) has joined the collection at the National Gallery of Victoria.

*Some TRIP is a rearrangement of four of the acrostic monogram brooches I made to spell IMPOSTER, shown in Cook & Company at Objectspace, Auckland, in 2023. They are all made by hand-piercing and inlaying acrylic sheet then hand-carving the top surface.*

*My move to Port Chalmers in 2012 was a contributing factor to my focus on the natural world. Chance encounters with sea lions on Aramoana Spit, visits to jewelled geckos at Orokonui and seasonal sightings of spoonbills all remind me that I just have a bit part in this performance on earth. These time-consuming monogram brooches force me to slow down and notice details of unexpected beauty in strange places, creating an abstracted image from a figurative starting point.*

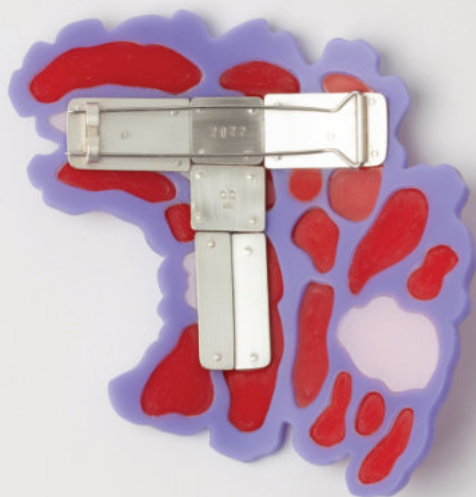
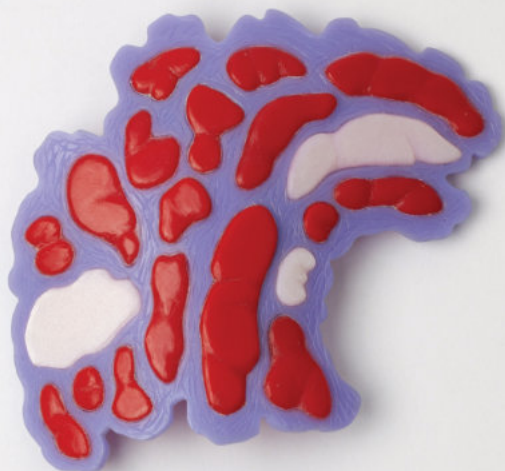
*Traditional patterns extracted from nature to adorn the human body such as houndstooth, leopard print, reptile skin have become symbolic of luxury and social status due to rarity or an evocation of the exotic. The monogram brooches are an experiment in exchanging them for their less glamorous cousins; the turkey instead of the peacock; the basalt replaces the diamond... Also cameoing in the monogram 'personalities' are the fakers, parasites and pests, delivered to the viewer with an importance equal to the more respected celebrities of nature.*



Octavia Cook  
*Some TRIP*  
4 brooches from the series IMPOSTER



*T is for Turkey. Only a mother could love Turkey and I am particularly fond of my most difficult brooch progeny. In an effort to evolve the 2D skin patches to the 3D realm I had to bend the lilac acrylic of Turkey on two planes which made inlaying the red 'caruncles' extra challenging.*



**Octavia Cook**  
*T (Turkey)*, 2022  
Acrylic, silver  
95 x 80 x 20mm  
\$3770



*R is for rock. R (Rock) is based on a basalt rock formation covered in (algae, lichen and bird guano) at Karitane Beach, a 30 minute drive from where I live. The first R (Rock) brooch I made was for the IMPOSTER series that I made in 2022. This R is a portrait of a different rock formation at the same beach making each brooch unique.*



**Octavia Cook**  
*R (Rock)*, 2023  
Acrylic, silver, black sapphires  
110 x 65 x 7mm  
\$3770

*I is for Immortal jellyfish. For those seeking immortality this brooch could be as close as you get - unless scientists figure out how to replicate the transdifferentiation techniques of this tiny jellyfish in humans.*



**Octavia Cook**  
*I (Immortal)*  
2022  
Acrylic, silver, copper  
100 x 72 x 9mm  
\$3770



**Octavia Cook**  
*P (Parasite)*, 2022  
Acrylic, silver  
125 x 58 x 9mm  
\$3770

*P is for Parasitic jewel wasp. My choice of the word IMPOSTER was influenced by wanting to include a letter P specifically to have a parasitic jewel in the exhibition. Brooches are a parasite of sorts- while not exactly a living organism they still need a human body as a host to bring them to life. I have compromised on the abject appearance of most parasites to use the aesthetically pleasing 'jewel' wasp as my muse.*

## CHERYL LUCAS

Cheryl was born and raised in Tarras, Central Otago. She has a Diploma in Fine and Applied Art (Distinction Graphics) from Otago School of Art, Dunedin (1975) and a Post Graduate Diploma in Advanced Printmaking (Lithography) from Wimbledon College of Art, London (1979).

Cheryl taught ceramics and drawing for many years at Ara Institute. Since 2005 she has been working full time from her home studio in Lyttelton. Cheryl exhibits regularly both here and overseas. Awards include Portage Ceramics Merit Award (2017) for her work *Milkstock*, and Sculpture on the Peninsula (2011) Premier Award for her *Harder Larder* installation. In 2013 Cheryl attended a residency in Sturt, Mittagong, Australia and in 2007 the FuLe International Ceramic Art Centre, Fuping, Shaanxi, China.

Cheryl was the 2019 recipient of the Creative New Zealand Craft/Object Fellowship. Her solo exhibition *Shaped by Schist and Scoria*, celebrating her four-decade career, was held at Christchurch Art Gallery in August 2022.

Cheryl's work is held in the collections of Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand; Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu; Canterbury Museum; The Arts House Trust, Museu del Cantir d'Argentona, Spain; FuLe International Contemporary Ceramic Art Museums, Fu Ping, Shaanxi, China; Lincoln University and Ara Institute.

In 2017 she was made a member of the International Ceramic Association, IAC.

### ***Lucky Country Blister Ware***

*Australian Santana Mining Co is currently pushing to proceed with a large goldmine at Bendigo, Central Otago, Aotearoa NZ. I was brought up at Bendigo. This group of work is a reaction to this mining proposal.*



Cheryl Lucas

*Green Wash | Bendigo Blast*

*Lucky Country Blister Ware, 2025*

Ceramic, glaze

130 x 190 x 160mm | 115 x 215 x 134mm

\$1500 ea



**Cheryl Lucas**  
*Cyanide Salad*  
*Lucky Country Blister Ware, 2025*  
Ceramic, glaze  
120 x 174 x 170mm  
\$1890

## SHELLEY NORTON

Shelley Norton is a contemporary jeweller based in Auckland, New Zealand. Shelley holds a Bachelor of Visual Arts from Auckland University (2002), and has exhibited extensively over a twenty-year period including in the group exhibitions *Wunderruma*, Munich, and Auckland Art Gallery, Auckland (2015); *Entfesself-Schmuckfohne Grenzen*, Zurich (2012), and *Jewellery Unleashed*, Group Exhibition, Modern Art Arnhem, The Netherlands (2011). Shelley's work is held in the collections of Tamaki Paenga Hira Auckland Museum, The Dowse Art Museum, Wellington, and numerous private collections internationally

The general concept that underpins Shelley Norton's work is the notion of meaning and how we construct it, and how this fascinating production in turn, defines, supports and constrains us, in our daily existence. By taking the discarded plastic shopping bag, Norton seeks to create pieces that engage the viewer, to enjoy established and new ways of seeing.

French philosopher Roland Barthes describes plastic "as abolishing the hierarchy of substances ... a single one replaces them all, the whole world can be plasticized ..."

*I have always been fascinated by product packaging. How well thought out presentation enhances attractiveness. I once bought a designer top because of its truly beautiful tag. I have been collecting product tags for a number of years now - little pieces of well designed lures. I have also been making my own iterations for a while now as well.*





Shelley Norton

*Labels, 2025*

Recycled plastic bags, oxidised silver pins

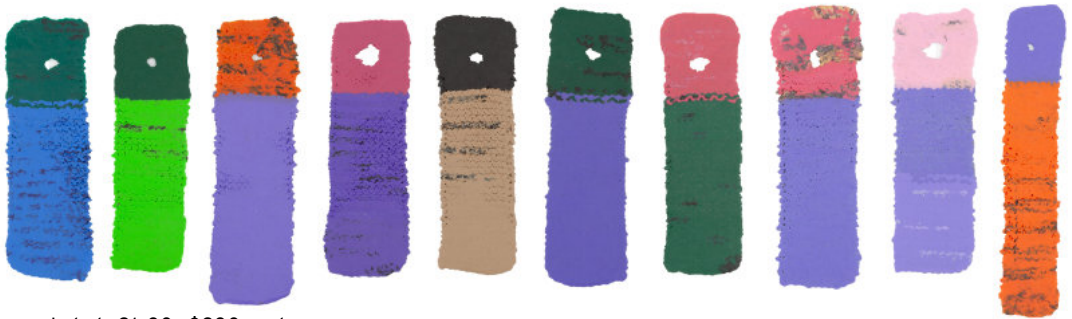
Details and individual prices overleaf



Labels 1-10 \$230 each



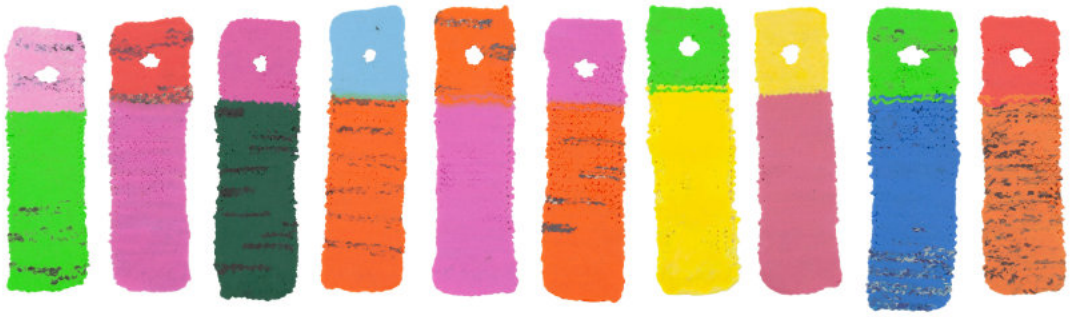
Labels 11-20 \$230 each



Labels 21-30 \$230 each



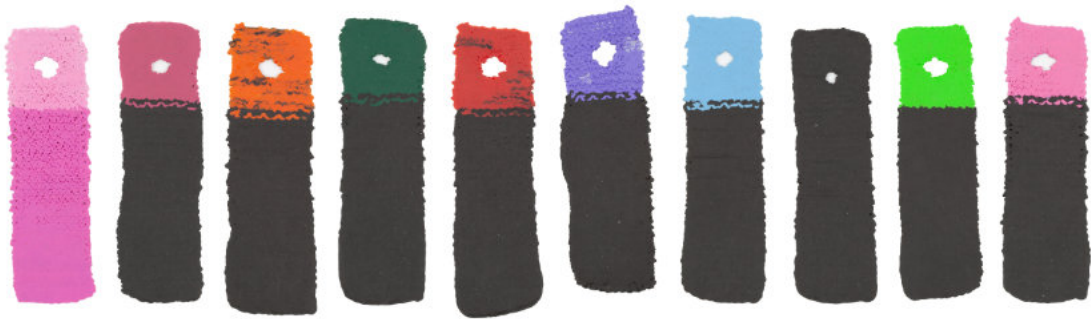
Labels 31-40 \$230 each



Labels 41-50 \$230 each



Labels 51-60 \$230 each



Labels 61-70 \$230 each



Labels 71-80 \$230 each, except 73 \$165 NB: 72 (green red) sold together



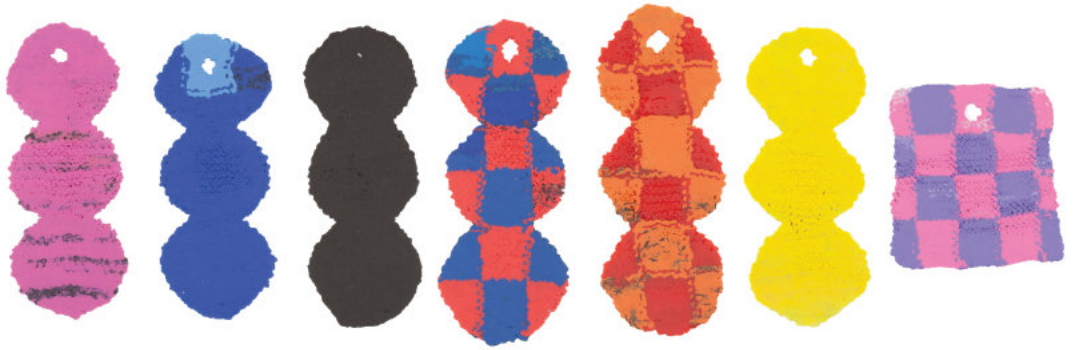
Labels 81 - 90 \$165 each, except 81 & 83 \$230



Labels 91 - 100 \$165 each



Labels 101 - 106 \$165 each  
Labels 107 - 110 \$260 each



Labels 111 - 117 \$260 each



Labels 118 - 125 \$260 each, except:  
124 (dark and light green) - sold together \$230  
125 (red pink) - sold together \$230

Cover image: Shelley Norton 'Labels',  
photo by Caryline Boreham

All prices are in AUD

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