

VANESSA ARTHUR

ONE HUNDRED AND ONE THINGS to buy before you die

29 June - 27 July 2019

SPA_CE

116 Tennyson Street
Napier, Hawke's Bay
thisisspace.co.nz

DENT COLLECTOR

"One should either be a work of art or wear a work of art". (1)

Talking with Jeweller / Artist Vanessa Arthur about the sense of surface in her work, she recounted time spent in one of the towns of the Cinque terra. While there she became aware of how stones and steps revealed an expanded time scale – due to people walking and stepping through doors, and ever so gradually wearing away once hard crisp, chiseled, cut surfaces over centuries.

These accounts reminded me of Horst's well known photographs documenting Cy Twombly and wife Tatiana in their Rome apartment in 1966. There the sparsely decorated apartment is inhabited by his well known paintings. Scratches, scribbles, marks and accumulating transcribe themselves from the street and walls on to large canvas. New and ancient in this environment feel inseparable.

"The idea that the work has a clear provenance in the practice of jewellery making. Yes they indulge the viewer aspects of painting, sculpture and drawing, but the primary relationship is how they are worn and attached to the body." (2)

And it is a familiar sense that one has in the company of Vanessa Arthur's small scaled pieces of 'jewellery'; they are flirting with notions of the unartistic, unpolished, assembled from scratchings of a workshop. Pieced together, not from things discarded, but more like scraps and offcuts that have been kept for repurpose.

"What is this ceremony for", Wittgenstein asked when thinking as the purpose of descriptions.

This in mind, one can detect in Vanessa Arthur's work an internal monologue being articulated externally as to how a piece might exist in the world, how it touches the world and how the world touches it in return.

In this current body of work Arthur's actions and objects are much acts of criticism as of creation. The Diderot sets, group together a charm bracelet, and ring and a pair of earrings. The artist is constructing these works from alarmingly rudimentary shapes, bent wire, metal rods and pieces of safety glass-beaten out of shape into shape.

The Waiting Space pieces are so dryly titled they may as well be 'Untitled'. These larger flat wall mounted works spread thinking between gesture and attachment, and the simple thought that one may encounter such a piece in one of the numerous rooms we sit and wait our turn makes me smile.

"Jewellery as a thing is usually expected to have a high dose of polish." (3)

Un-shiny, flat and an initial glance, stiff and clunky they may be, yet it is this very type of sense that echoes the worn and scuffed, old imbued with impressions. It is as if the pieces harbor slightly inconclusive gestures containing time and thought.

At odds with the genre of jewellery the wearer of these pieces inadvertently smooth's them up through contact and frisson, exposing gradually the histories implied by the maker.

Martin Poppelwell, 2019.

(1) Oscar Wilde. *Phrases and Philosophy for the use of the youth.*
(2) Vanessa Arthur. (3) Vanessa Arthur.

'I stumbled across a book of the same title almost 10 years ago, in the Wellington City Library. A bucket list of luxury objects to buy before you kick the bucket... I thought it was absurd.

Ever since, I've pondered our need for the constant replacement of the objects we own (other than for practical reasons).

To erase all signs of wear and tear, rather than celebrating them.

To distract us from our own brief moment in time?

What if Diderot had kept his old dressing gown? (1)

These new works, 101 small gestures in jewellery and object form, continue my exploration of the leftovers behind the gloss.

Intended to act as small reminders, rather than distractions.

That we too, all become slightly janky, scratched and dented eventually.

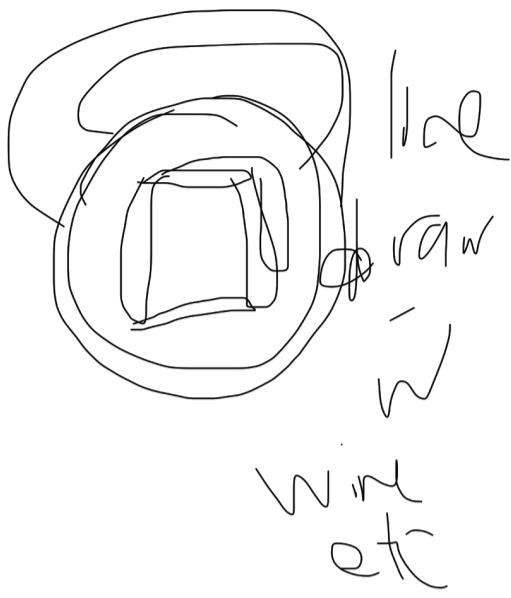
That our time is fleeting and to pluck it while it's here.'

Vanessa Arthur, 2019.

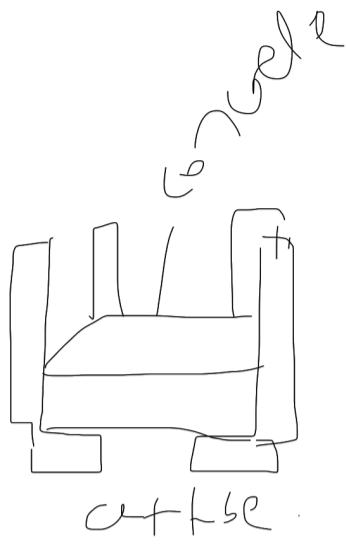
(1) marxists.org. 2005. *Regrets for my Old Dressing Gown.*
<https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/diderot/1769/regrets.htm>.
[Accessed 20 May 2019].



Paint. Erase. Repeat. pins, 2019, brass, sterling silver, heat set paint, enamel paint. 50x50mm



like
draw
w
wire
etc



concrete

office



WAX
wax



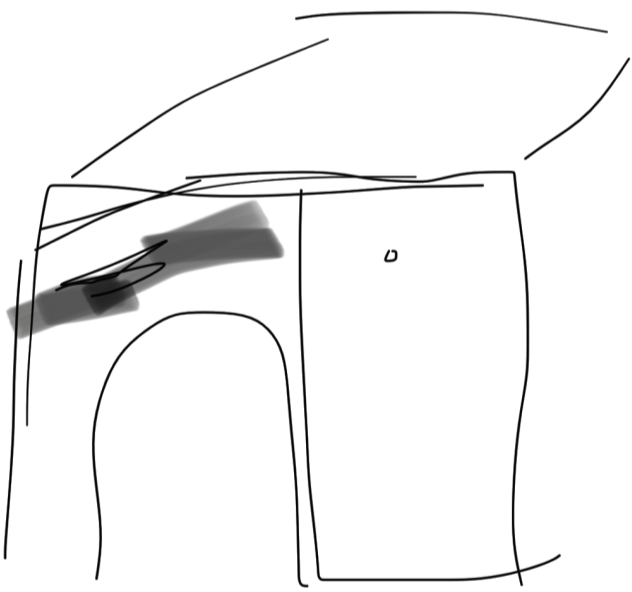
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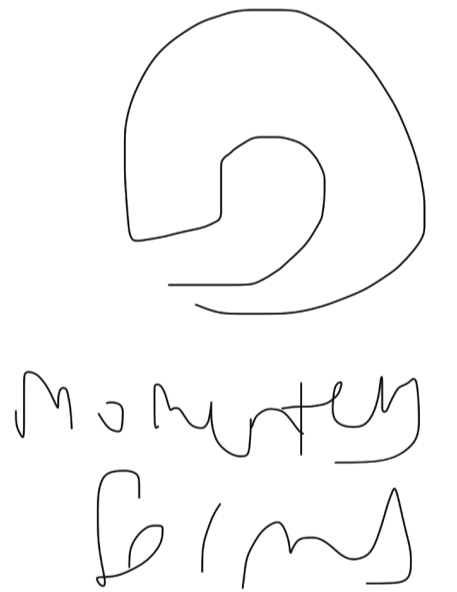
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FAT LINE

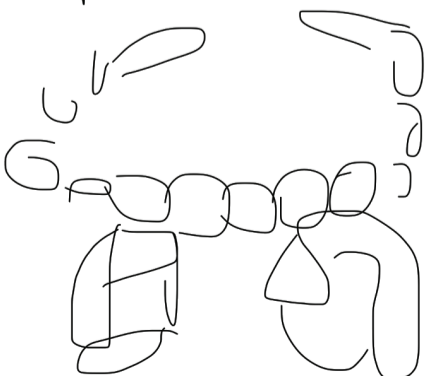


INTO THIS



momentary
beams

repair



pin

