



## The Captain's Daughter

### Bin Dixon-Ward

NOVEMBER 24–27

SEAWORKS MARITIME MUSEUM

#### Bin Dixon-Ward

A graduate of RMIT, Gold and Silversmithing, Bin has exhibited in Australia, Europe, Japan and North America and is the recipient of several awards for her jewellery including the Itami Award (2013) in Japan, a finalist in the Victorian Craft Awards (2015) and the Diana Morgan Prize for Contemporary Jewellery (2016). Her work has appeared in exhibitions including *Melbourne Now*, at the NGV; *Schmuck*, in Munich; *The Future is Here* at RMIT Design Hub; *A Fine Possession* at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney; *Collective Material* at Craft Victoria; and *Out of Hand* at the Museum of Arts and Sciences in Sydney. Bin's work is held in public and private collections including the National Gallery of Victoria, The RMIT W.E. McMillan Collection, The Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, and Musée des Artes Décoratifs, Paris. Bin has taught digital technologies in the School of Art at RMIT, East China Normal University, Shanghai and in the secondary school sector. [www.bindixon-ward.com](http://www.bindixon-ward.com)

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#### Thanks to

Donna Jackson and the Arts & Industry Festival staff  
 Kate MacNeill  
 Lyn Pasquier and the Volunteers and staff of Seaworks Maritime Museum  
 Lois and Kerryn Dixon-Ward  
 Anna MacNeill  
 Photography: Jeremy Dillon

18-27 NOVEMBER 2016

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**The Captain's Daughter** is a collection of contemporary jewellery that reflects my memories as a seafaring captain's daughter. The exhibition draws a connection between the historic collection of Seaworks Maritime Museum, contemporary jewellery and digital technologies. Using 3D printing and modelling software, my jewellery recalls the sensations and objects that define my experiences of life at sea.

My father was a seafarer from the time he was a boy. At only thirteen he left his family home on the coast of Somerset, England to attend sea school on HMS Conway moored off the coast in northern Wales. From that time he spent most of his life on the water, coming ashore only for leave or to study for further qualifications.

The one constant in my father's life was movement. Whether it be the gentle rolling of the ship in a light swell or the terrifying pitching and yawing in heavy seas with massive waves crashing over the decks. Even when tied up in port the ship lurches as cargo is loaded and unloaded. The ship's engines and generator produce a constant vibration unnoticed until you step ashore and the ground feels unmoving and your legs feel like lead.

Shipping is about the movement of people and commodities around the world; whether it be on swanky cruise liners, massive container carriers or humble coastal traders. Dad's life was about movement: moving away from his parents and sister

at a young age; setting up a home for my mother, sister and me on the other side of the world in Melbourne; constantly moving from port to port and country to country. Even when he was on shore leave he would return to the water. In his younger years, on Port Phillip Bay sailing yachts he built himself, and later when he retired, on Patterson Lakes with scale models of the ships on which he had sailed.

Because Dad was not home often, our family had time together where we could. We spent our school holidays at sea, long weeks punctuated by one or two days in port. Pusan, Hong Kong, Osaka, Keelung, Kobe, Manila, Kaohsiung, Auckland, Yokohama, Wellington, Sydney, Brisbane were all familiar destinations. However the enduring memories are of being at sea, and the movement of the ship in the water. The constant vibration of the engines created the background for everything that happened on the ship. The ship was in a constant state of movement.

At times massive swells would toss (by toss, I mean hurtle, with bone shuddering force) the ship forward and back and side-to-side. The sea never resting, these rough days were long and bilious. I will never forget one terrible afternoon heading toward Wellington, as I looked out the cabin porthole, all I could see was the awful metallic grey/green of the stormy swell, no sky, no horizon, just seawater. A special day was when the sea was calm enough to walk up to the bow and peer down to the point where the ship and the water first meet. The massive power of the ship ploughing through the sea was thrilling. A bow wave would rise alongside the hull and undulate along the sides of the ship until it formed a long white tail that would follow the ship as evidence of its passage from one horizon to another.

The sea was Dad's life and memories of movement remain in me.



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