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## **JULIA deVILLE**

New Zealander, Julia deVillie's interest in life and death emerged early. As a child she dressed up in her grandmother's fox-fur stoles, where the mouth would open up to bite onto it's tail. She was fascinated by the idea that this creature was once living.

In 2001 Julia moved to Melbourne and soon after started training in gold and silversmithing as well as taxidermy.

She now combines her jewellery and taxidermy work under the one lable, DISCE MORI (Latin for Learn To Die). She is also producing sculptural artworks under her name and is currently represented by Sophie Gannon Gallery.

Julia has exhibited at the NGV, MCA, FIT (Fashion Institute of Technology in NYC) and has a permanent installation (The Cinerarium, a real burial ground) as well as another work in the collection of MONA in Hobart. Her work is also held in the collection of the NGV.

To prove her dedication to her art form, Julia has donated her body to Germany's renowned Institute for Plastination. After her death, it will be dissected, filled with a special polymer and preserved for exhibition.

### **ARTIST STATEMENT**

I am an Australian citizen living in Melbourne, originally from New Zealand and known Nationally and Internationally for my contemporary art and craft practice. My work is highly profiled and recognisable for its distinctive combination of taxidermy and jewellery as well as its strong animal rights themes.

I am fascinated with the aesthetic used to communicate mortality in the Memento Mori period of the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries, as well as the methods the Victorians used to sentimentalise death with adornment.

I work in traditional gold and silversmithing techniques, combined with materials that were once living such as jet, a petrified wood historically used in Victorian Mourning jewellery, human hair and most importantly, taxidermy. I use these materials as a Memento Mori, or reminder of our mortality.

My work ranges from one-off jewellery pieces using taxidermy animals, to taxidermy animal sculptures that are adorned with jewellery materials and techniques.

I incorporate the symbols of death throughout my work because I think it is important to identify with the concept that we are mortal creatures. I believe if we can accept our own mortality, we can in turn appreciate the significance of life.

As a strict vegetarian, I consider my taxidermy to be a celebration of life, a preservation of something beautiful. I feel strongly about the fair and just treatment of animals and to accentuate this point I use only animals that have died of natural causes.