

WORDS **BEN KELLY**

SILVER LINING

It takes a creative mind to transform ordinary objects into jewellery that can empower and boost the mood of the wearer.

FOR AS LONG AS HE CAN REMEMBER, SIMON Lownsbrough has viewed life through an artist's lens, analysing everyday objects with a creative mind. But experimenting with paint and sculpture always took a back seat to his career as a graphic designer.

"I'm attuned to seeing things in different ways. I can see a snail trail across a path and see the beauty in it. Or see a stone, not a diamond, and appreciate its patterns."

When Simon was made redundant from his job two years ago, he saw the silver lining, rather than a roadblock, in an opportunity life had thrown at him. "It was a chance to stop, breathe and reassess. It gave me a kick start."

A jewellery-making course at JamFactory set him on a new artistic tack, and he has since developed a full-time contemporary jewellery business *Foundform*, transforming items found in wreckers' yards or roadsides into objects of beauty. "It's fantastic because for the first time in my life I'm working for me and I've got passion for it. Make or break, it's up to me."

It was the ability to find beauty in worn and forgotten objects that steered him towards jewellery making. "I found myself drawn towards making smaller things, cutting it down to the essence of what I'm trying to say."

Simon cuts titanium and silver by hand, juxtaposed with materials such as wood, slate, rabbit hide, automotive steel, wax and even broken spectacles. Each piece tells a story. A combination of slate and rabbit hide tells a tale of the land. "They're my stories, whether someone else sees that or not, it doesn't matter. It's like any art; you can walk into a gallery and see a piece of art on the wall. The artist has a story, but you may pick up something else," he says.

This month, Simon will host a jewellery stall for *Foundform* at the Bowerbird Design Market. The biannual event hosts designers across 200 stalls of textiles, clothing and accessories, ceramics, homewares and artwork. Bowerbird gives local makers a chance to rub shoulders with those from interstate and, for Simon, an opportunity to sell direct to the public and gain important feedback on his work and what items are popular.

"People who are drawn to my stall want something different. They can see and appreciate the difference of handmade items, which is great. When someone buys from me, I can guarantee that no one else anywhere has got exactly that."

Foundform jewellery is on display at three South Australian retailers, including Norwood's Brick + Mortar Creative. Simon held his first interstate exhibition earlier this year. Although aiming for perfection in his work, he believes it is the tiny flaws that add uniqueness and character. "My work challenges some people, especially if you're from a more traditional side of things, but that's absolutely fine, they're not going to be right for everyone. From here on it's expanding my visual language, learning new skills and applying them."

The Bowerbird Design Market will be held from Friday, November 23 to Sunday, November 25 at the Adelaide Showground's Wayville Pavilion.

Details: bowerbird.net.au and foundform.com.au

Left: A ring made of silver and copper. **Opposite page:** Pictured with a pendant hand-made from automotive steel, Simon Lownsbrough will host a jewellery stall at the Bowerbird Design Market, featuring items such as a steel necklace, titanium earrings and silver jewellery (**below**).



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Photograph Ben Kelly.

