

In *Smother*, McIntosh explores concepts surrounding protection and vulnerability, defence and danger. She takes common domestic objects – such as white woollen blankets and pastry cutters- and fashions them into neck-pieces, chokers and long boa-like neckware.

In most cases, blankets offer warmth and comfort, protection against the cold. For example, when we feel off-colour we snuggle up in a blanket while we read a book, or watch television. A warm blanket draped around the shoulders is reassuring. It is an image associated with rescue – whether it's rescue from an up-turned boat, a tramping trip gone wrong, or even a road accident. A blanket and a cup of sweet tea will make things better – at least that's what we like to believe.

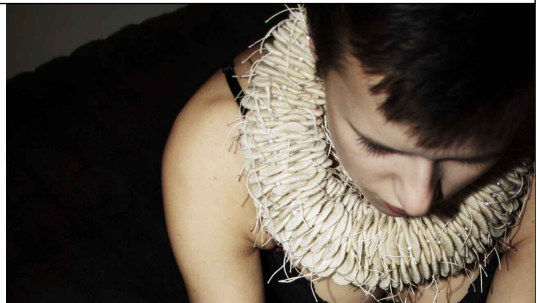
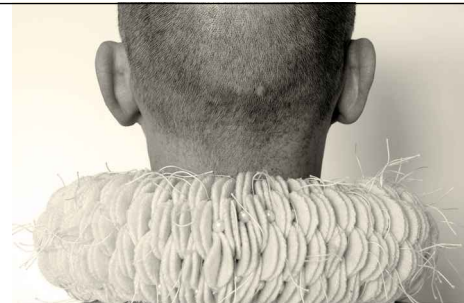
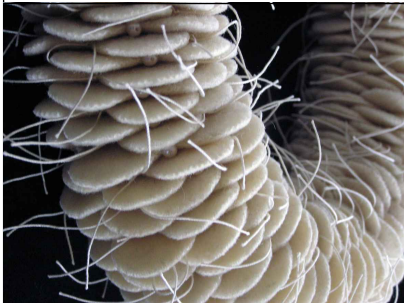
McIntosh knows that blankets are meant to provide warmth and comfort, but it's the other purposes to which they could be used which fascinate her. Pressed over a person's face they have the potential to smother. Cut or ripped into strips, they could wrap around the neck and strangle.

Minimal in colour – the only adornment comes from the addition of white pearls and loose cotton threads – McIntosh's blanket pieces are exquisitely crafted. Nothing appears spontaneous or random; everything is in its place, restrained. She has mastered the skill of balancing hard, unresponsive metals – the pastry cutters – with soft, floppy woollen material. What's more, she has created neckpieces so densely layered – both enclosing and revealing at the same time – that they appear almost sexual, fetish-like. There is nothing simple about McIntosh's work. It is layered with meaning and breath-taking in its execution.

Smother is a thought provoking exhibition. It is a series which prompts viewers to re-consider the materials commonly used in jewellery and body adornment, and to explore the many layered meanings associated with objects chosen from our everyday lives.

SMOTHER

VICTORIA MCINTOSH



NZ contemporary jewellery
lure

6 October – 21 October 2010

Presented in association with the Otago Festival of the Arts

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