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## JACK HADLEY

**Jack Hadley** makes fun art. Unconstrained by a single medium, his practice spans sculpture, furniture and contemporary jewellery, although he has also been known to collaborate beyond even these broad arenas; for example, with local fashion designer **Emma Jing** on a range of one-off hand-painted garments. Even when working within a particular medium, Hadley's work tends to reach beyond, playfully borrowing from architecture to children's toys, decorative art to display mechanisms observed in stores. For his exhibition *Round Round* — part of a series of shows at Objectspace, Auckland which highlighted innovative approaches to making and exhibiting jewellery — Hadley created three wall-mounted, gear-powered works that literally spun round and round. Attached to these mechanisms were dangly forms made of shiny aluminium set with jewels, much like oversized earrings, or perhaps dazzling fishing lures, or a mobile hung above a bed to mesmerise a child to sleep. However, once activated, Hadley's mechanisms were hardly soothing; rather, they bounced and jiggled around like mad, their mechanically-motivated yet uncontrolled movements somehow lending them a charming, almost human quality, inviting a particular flavour of fondness we tend to reserve for anthropomorphised objects: cars with smiley faces, oven gloves with googly eyes, air dancers waving to us from the front of a car dealership. The genius of Hadley is that he understands how playful combinations of material, form and in this case, movement, can subvert our expectations of an object, addling and delighting us as



OPPOSITE: Jack Hadley, *Floral Arrangement (juice, green tea)*, 2021. Aluminium, brass wire, acrylic paint, cubic zirconia, custom brass and rubber support, 36 x 23.5 x 8cm.

ABOVE: Installation view of Jack Hadley's *Polypody*, 2023 at Laree Payne Gallery, Hamilton.

COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND LAREE PAYNE GALLERY, HAMILTON.

we work to unpack why a big earring wiggling on a rod has filled us with childlike glee.

When I asked gallerist **Laree Payne** — who announced her representation of Hadley earlier this year — what drew her to his work, she replied with a story: “A few weeks ago a collector commissioned a work by Jack and shared her primary reason for doing so: Jack’s work made her feel ‘really happy’. I enjoyed this simple remark as it reveals Jack’s ability to disarm and delight, perhaps before anything else. With an aptitude for colour and form, a proficiency across a wide variety of materials and processes, and a disregard for the boundaries between various disciplines (jewellery, design, furniture), Jack has developed a

contemporary art practice which is thoughtful, clever and full of possibility in a totally unique way.”

Hadley has shown regularly over the last couple of years, most recently in *Arts & Crafts* at Funaki Gallery Melbourne, a joint exhibition between Hadley and renowned jeweller **Karl Fritsch**, who was his mentor for the *HANDSHAKE* contemporary jewellery programme in 2021. Also in 2023, Hadley exhibited a series of brightly coloured modular lamps and stools alongside paintings by **Nicola Farquhar** at Laree Payne Gallery, Hamilton where collectors can look forward to seeing a solo exhibition from Hadley in October 2024.

LUCINDA BENNETT