

ANNE MACDONALD

Ornament 2008

Photographic installation of fine art ink-jet prints

Ornament 1 (wall piece of twenty photographs), 251h x 716w cm

Ornament 2 (triptych) 72h x 168w cm

Ornament 3 (triptych) 81h x 217w cm

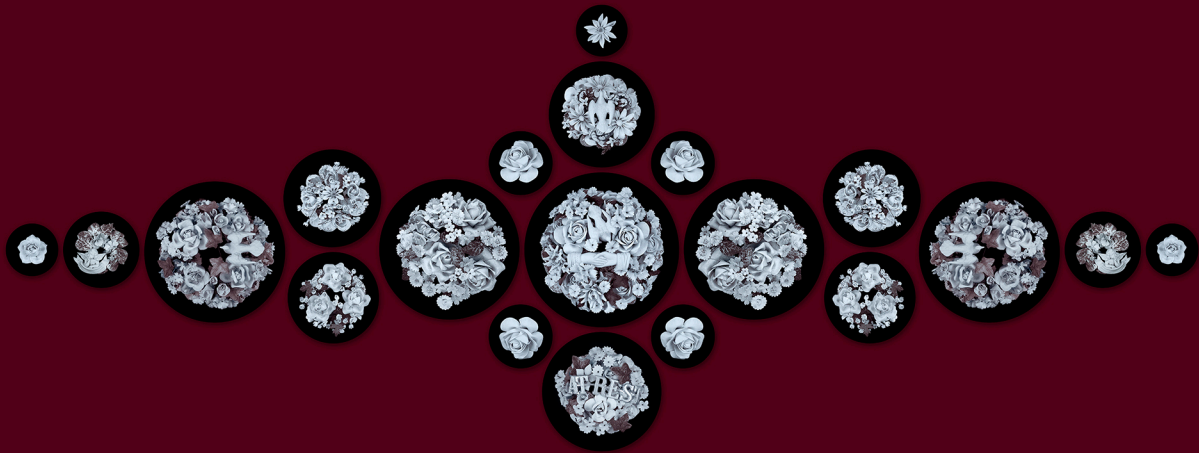
Ornament 4 (triptych) 74h x 194w cm

Ornament 5 (set of five) 86h x 289w cm

Ornament 6 (triptych) 79h x 199w cm

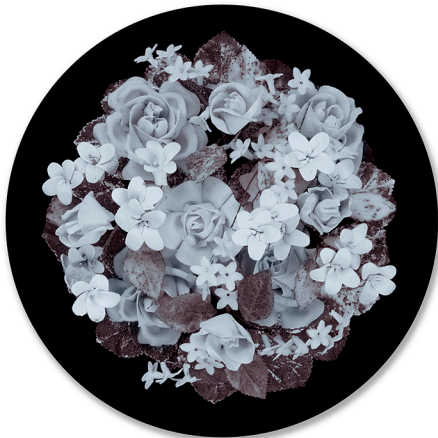
Ornament 7 (triptych) 81h x 231w cm

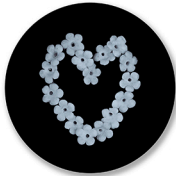
Ornament 8 (triptych) 93h x 195w cm

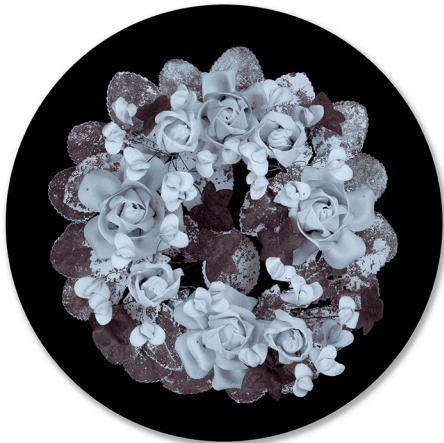




















For Susan Sontag, ‘all photographs are “memento mori”. To take a photograph is to participate in another person’s (or thing’s) mortality; vulnerability, mutability.’ ■■■ Discussing floral memento mori, Geoffrey Batchen argues that the substitution of artificial flowers for real ones ‘is emblematic of the process of embalming, which is an apt metaphor for photography, which also chemically embalms its subject.’ ■■■ Like the photographic image, ornaments ‘still’ life, yet, eventually they too fall prey to duration, and slowly disintegrate through the inexorable passage of time, becoming elegiac metaphors for the transience of existence; premonitions of death rather than evocations of eternal life. ■■■ ANNE MACDONALD

Anne MacDonald
studied Fine Art at the Tasmanian School of Art,
UTAS, where she completed a Masters in 1983. The following
year she began lecturing at the Tasmanian School of Art and is currently
Head of Photography. Since the 1980s she has produced a series of large-
scale photographic installations exploring the relationship between photography,
death and transience. Anne MacDonald has held thirteen solo exhibitions and
participated in over seventy curated exhibitions nationally and internationally.
She is the recipient of seven Visual Arts/Craft Board of the Australia Council grants
including a New Work Grant in 2007 for the development of the ‘Ornament’ project.

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From the installation ‘Ornament’ 2008, fine art ink-jet prints, sizes variable.
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the Arts, its funding and advisory body, supported by the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy,
an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments.
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and Bett Gallery, Hobart, www.bettgallery.com.au,
annemacdonald.com.au

As tokens of love and remembrance,
floral grave ornaments offer greater longevity
than freshly cut flowers. The fragile evanescence
of real flowers has, since the 15th century, made
them ideal subjects for representing the transience of
life, mortality and death itself. 17th century ‘Vanitas’
painters in particular used the iconography of
withering flowers as allegories of time, loss and
absence. ■■■ The photographic still life not only
builds on the long history of vanitas imagery in art,
but also brings with it the additional association of
the photograph as memento mori. Rebecca Solnit
writes ‘All photographs in a sense still life, freezing
it as something no longer living, but virtually
embalmed and immortally immobile’.

ORNAMENT ■■■ ANNE MACDONALD



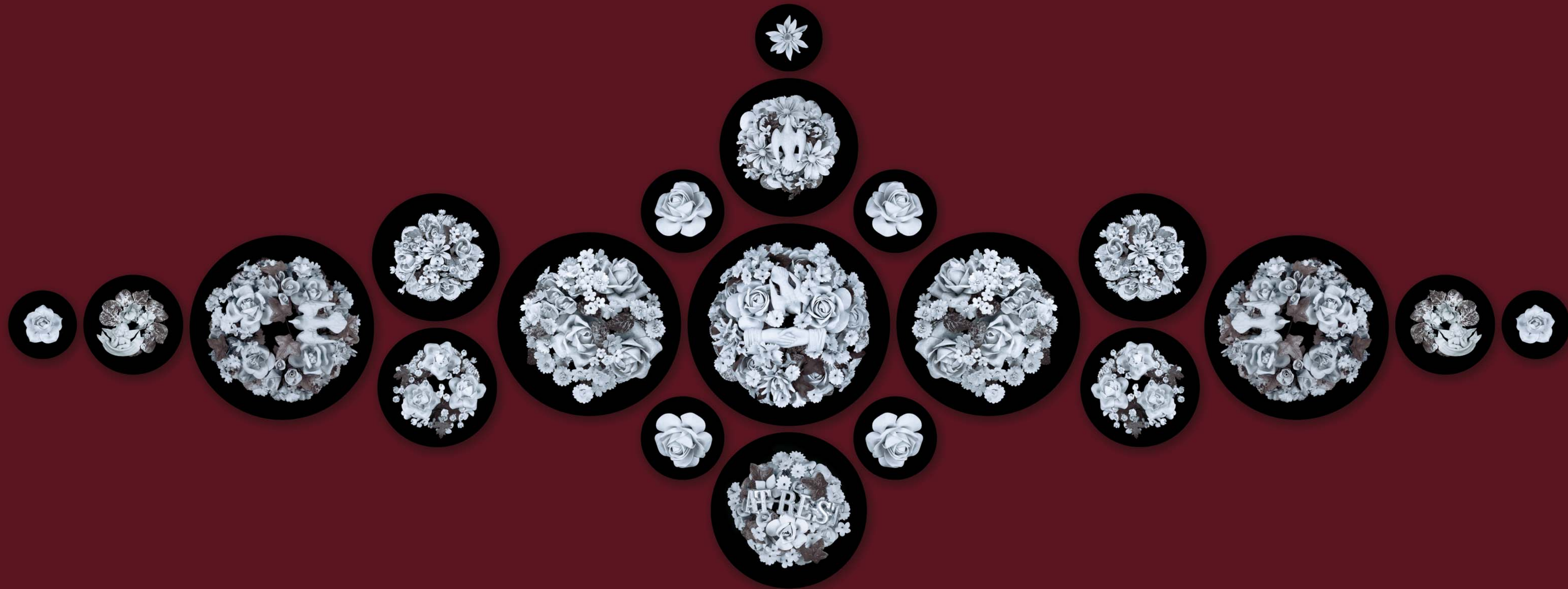
Ornament No 8 (detail)



Ornament No 3 (detail)



Ornament No 1



*Overleaf:
Ornament No 5 (detail)*