

# BEYOND ORDINARY

AN EXHIBITION OF CONTEMPORARY WOMEN MAKERS

13 FEBRUARY - 3 APRIL 2022 | STURT GALLERY MITTAGONG NSW

**We acknowledge the many different Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and honour their elders past and present. We live and create on the lands of the First Nations peoples. We are privileged to gather on this Country and through this exhibition to share knowledge, culture and art.**

# **BEYOND ORDINARY**

AN EXHIBITION OF CONTEMPORARY WOMEN MAKERS

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# MAKERS

Isabel **Avendano Hazbun**

Catherine **Cook**

Rebecca **Evans**

Linda **Fredheim**

Lou **Harriss**

Birgit **Jordan**

Rose **Keightley**

Eliza **Maunsell**

Jeanie **Mulligan**

Carol **Russell**

Sara **Smith**

Sarah **Tracton**

Helen **Walsh**

Stephanie **White**

Catherine **Capan**

Dale **Dryen**

Phoebe **Everill**

Rachael **Hanrick**

Kim **Johnston**

Lana **Kagan**

Chelsea **Lemon**

Laura **McCusker**

Linda **Nathan**

Marian **Shapiro**

Ruth **Thompson**

Tyla **Veney**

Clancy **Warner**

Vivienne **Wong**

# INTRODUCTION

Understanding that the field of timber design and make has historically been dominated by men, this curated exhibition showcases the work of women, exploring an approach to fine woodworking embedded in questions of technique, utility, and the built environment. The exhibition is intended to show the breadth of the current field of woodworking, and how these makers are responding to the world around them. The exhibition presents a range of objects; one-off works to batch products, representing a range of technical approaches and scales.

While this is primarily an exhibition for women in wood the exhibition also includes complementary selected works in other media such as bronze, ceramic mosaic and porcelain. This is an opportunity to converge and contribute to an all-women collective initiative. In the words of one of the makers:

**“This is a dialogue – makers coming together under a common thread of identity and what it is to be both woman and woodworker.”** Cat Cook

We hope to give women makers from around Australia an opportunity to showcase their work in a unique setting. An all-women exhibition of this type has not been presented here for over 30 years. It represents an opportunity to bring increased exposure and from that increase success to the participating artists.

To encourage more women to participate in an area mostly defined by male gender stereotyping, it is important for women to support other women; to educate, represent and be role models, to show opportunities exist and that anything is possible. This is an opportunity for young girls to see that they can do anything they wish to in life, without the boundaries of gender stereotypes.

Women are under represented in many aspects of our society, particularly at the highest echelons of artistic practice, this is an opportunity to make some redress to this situation.

We hope you enjoy the exhibition,

**Dale Dryen and Ruth Thompson**  
Curators



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## TRUSS

With a background in textiles, I studied at the Sturt School for Wood in 2013. Since then I have been producing works in both timber and textiles. I have been involved in numerous group exhibitions as well as recent solo shows at Craft Victoria in Melbourne and The Australian Design Centre in Sydney. I also work as a woodworking teacher at two vocational schools in Melbourne.

Throughout my career as a furniture maker, I have been exploring the concept of functional sculpture, where a functional object can also be categorized as a work of art. More recently my textile and timber practices have both been evolving into platforms to discuss issues of sustainability, consumerism and gender identity.

This work is inspired by the shape and structure of truss bridges. Wrapped in silk organza this shelf holds a box inside, to access the box you must tear the fabric. Like all things out of the ordinary it requires thought, courage, effort and sometimes it can get messy.





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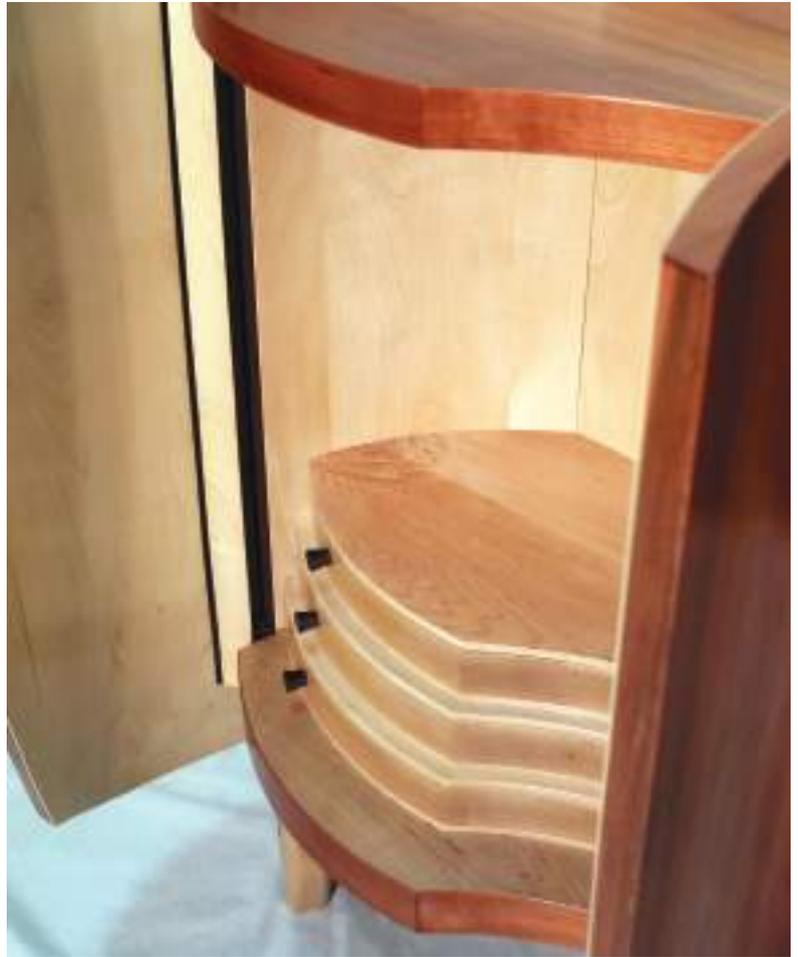
## ON SLOW CABINET

Beyond Ordinary began as an opportunity. To be seen, heard. A conflicting dialogue as I have only ever seen myself as a maker. I feel what I make, speaks for itself, and gives room for those to find their own connection.

'Onslow' is a narrative. My work is both technically and personally driven. It is the diary of a relationship; the initial, the allure, the intrigue, the seduction and the residual. How regardless of perspective, there is always something new to learn, to see, to unveil.

Now. Beyond Ordinary is an opportunity to be unapologetically me, alongside a collective of incredible individuals. With respect to seeing myself purely as a maker; through the eyes of other individuals another narrative may be formed; I understand. All I can say in response is: "Pursue what gives your heart joy". In my case, it is wood dust and mutual passionates. Non-binary, women, men or other united in our differences in the pure passion of making, collaborating, learning and sharing with one another.

Cat Cook completed an Advanced Diploma in Industrial Design at North Metropolitan TAFE, Perth then worked alongside Tracey Laird and David Howlett at The Perth Wood School in 2017. In 2020, Cat completed a six week mentorship with Michael Fortune and Kelly Park at the Centre for Fine Woodworking in Nelson, New Zealand.





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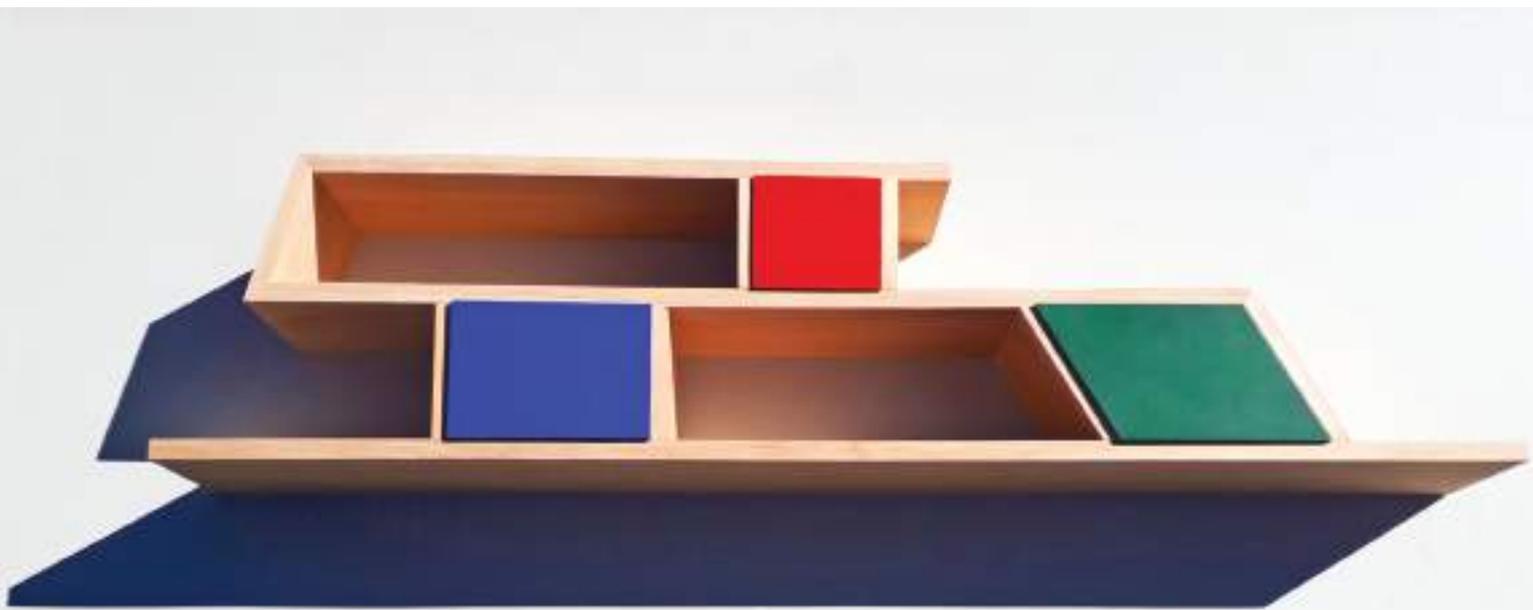
## **WAY OFF BROADWAY**

During the 1980s I lived and worked in Italy and although at that time I was not involved in design, I was influenced by the inherent sense of style in the most everyday items of life there.

This has translated into an exploration of line and gesture in my work. I seek a clarity of form and attempt to express a quietness in my pieces. My regard for materials has led to the use of mainly Australian or Australian grown timbers and, without compromising structure or design, I am conscious of the amount of wood used in each work.

My formal woodwork training included a year at the Sturt School for Wood in 1990, followed by two in the Furniture Workshop at the Canberra School of Art, ANU in 1994-95.

Through participating in this exhibition, I look forward to meeting other women makers. However, I do not wish to be seen as a woman woodworker, but to be acknowledged simply as a woodworker. I hope Beyond Ordinary gives younger women the opportunity to envisage such a career path and in the future not to be seen as extra-ordinary just because they are women in this field.





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## CABINET

I'm a furniture maker and architect. As a graduate I worked onsite with Jeffrey Broadfield, helping to design and make delightful hand-crafted wooden buildings by Richard Leplastrier and Craig Burton.

In 2016 I moved to California to fulfil a long-held dream to develop my woodworking skills, attending the fine furniture program at The College of the Redwoods (The Krenov School). I was part of the Making a Seat at the Table exhibition in Philadelphia (2019) where I became aware of the wonderful breadth of female makers.

After working for Californian architects ArkinTilt, I returned to Australia in 2020 and am working in a way that bridges furniture making and architecture. I enjoy designing and making between scales; from small hand carved pieces to the design of spaces.

I'm delighted and very grateful to be a part of Beyond Ordinary. As an early career furniture maker negotiating how to establish my practice, I'm excited to have the opportunity to walk into a room surrounded by the brilliant and varied work of so many women working locally and learn from their broad experience. For women thinking they might like to get into furniture making, this is an invaluable exhibition.





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## RAINDROP DESK AND CHAIR

I am a professional designer/maker based in central Victoria, my style is influenced by a passion for Japanese and Shaker design, the blend of which gives a clean, crisp aesthetic.

For me the quality of the making should shine thru a piece that is beautiful and functional in equal parts.

Working with wood has been a lifelong career for me as a third generation maker. I graduated from the Sturt School in 2011 and have been developing my practice from my workshop fulltime since then. Teaching and mentoring are a passion for me, I also have a well established furniture making school in Central Victoria.

I love working on exhibition and commission pieces as they test and stretch you as a designer maker to develop something new, and work to a brief, to expand your skills and evolve.

My journey continues.





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## KURVER 1 & 2

I enjoy making objects that store and contain - boxes, drawers, cases and cabinets. Objects that protect and obscure our possessions, but which also say something about the owner. I'm also fascinated by campaign furniture for the sense of style and order it brought to the owners' temporary lodgings, and in some sense these timber bags are a distillation of that ethos - objects that are both practical and impractical at the same time.

For me, the interplay between “form” and “function” always drives the outcome of the design process, but perhaps I do often let “form” have a slight advantage.

Every piece one makes uses all the experience you have gained in previous work, and then that piece informs and allows one to stretch one's skills in the next. Exhibitions like this allow me to push my ideas and make objects just to see how they might turn out, and along the way, I always learn something new or work out a better way of doing a familiar process.

Linda Fredheim graduated with a BFA (Design in Wood) from the University of Tasmania in 1992. Working primarily with wood, she has exhibited widely and undertakes furniture commissions, collaborative projects with other artists and small production runs of bespoke packaging.

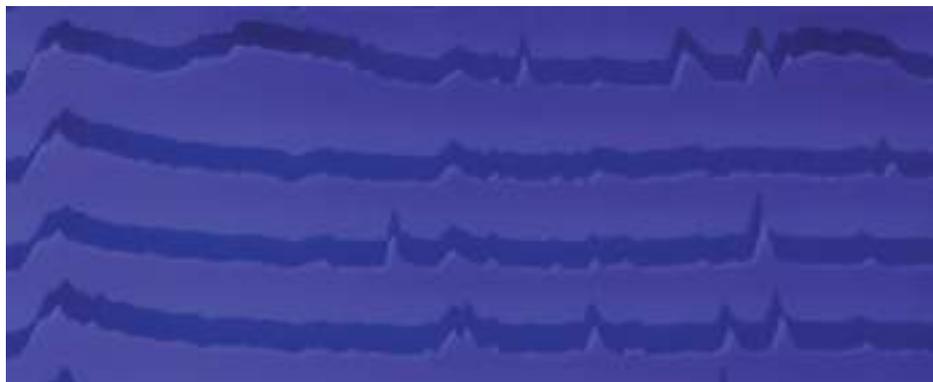




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## HOME AND RECREATION

My work examines the tension between human skill and technology, exploring digital fabrication techniques using hard-gained material and tacit knowledge. My most recent work explores the use of data to generate designs, and encodes information onto everyday objects.

In responding to *Beyond Ordinary*, I considered the way we have been forced to live outside the realms of 'ordinary' over the last two years, adjusting as best we can. Using Google mobility data, the frames show how our time spent at home and on recreation were dramatically altered compared to a January 2020 baseline. From February 2020 to December 2021, 'Home' shows how time spent in places of residence has increased in waves in each state, averaged over a seven-day period, while 'Recreation' correspondingly shows how our time spent on recreation (cinemas, libraries, museums, retail and hospitality venues) has decreased. Both measures have slowly returned to almost baseline levels. Demonstrating our immense capacity to adapt to change on a societal level, I am hopeful we can similarly rise to the challenges facing our climate.





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## I KNOW WHAT WE DID THAT SUMMER

The Black Summer Fires of 2019-2022 occurred during a fire season that stretched from July to late February. Landscapes burnt that had not burnt in living memory. Fire behaved in ways that defied control or containment. 18.6 million hectares had burned. Three billion terrestrial vertebrates died or lost habitat. And still we quibble whether climate change played a role.

Our impact on this place began with the first clearing of the forests on the shore of Warrane. The destruction of millennium old trees for everything from fence palings to wooden street cobbles starts with the wasteful felling and cut of a log, to a maker's careful selection to find the most stable pieces. So much of a vertical ecological village ends up as sawdust and scrap.

This cabinet is a memorial to that loss by fire, to those trees, to the forests that will never be again. It is also a memorial to a craft that can no longer ignore the role it plays in that loss.

After a woodworking course in Sydney, and then working as a french polisher, restorer and maker, I studied at the Wood Workshop, Canberra School of Art 1999-2000 and later returned there to do postgrad study on ergonomic performance seating for musicians.

I now run a small making practice producing one-off pieces, small batch production and the occasional restoration.

Any artist's receipts will be donated to the Environmental Defenders Office.





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## KALEIDOSCOPES

I am an engineer and visual artist/maker. I work with paper, clay, wood, fibre and found materials and practice a range of visual arts such as drawing, painting, printmaking, collage, sculpture, photography, animation and video.

Besides my engineering studies and work, I graduated from the RMIT School of Arts and have been learning about woodwork part-time at the former Melbourne Handsome & Co woodwork school and the Victorian School of Woodcraft.

Over the past years I have been collaborating with the people behind Pianos Recycled, who kindly sponsored material for this exhibition, to use timbers and parts this dedicated team salvages from discarded pianos that would otherwise end up in landfill. Working with these once pre-owned and loved handcrafted materials is special. Each piece tells a story through the marks of the makers, wonderful mirror image veneer patterns, the grains, details, smells and colours of the different timbers that can be hundreds of years old.

I am seeking to continue these stories.

My works of optical illusion toys, seeking to emphasise the uncovered beauty of the old piano timbers, are themed around the magic of mirror images and reflections to experience, see and perhaps wonder.





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## ETAGERE

I have been fascinated by the emergence of 3D printing as a method of fast and affordable housing construction, however I recently have been musing on how the process of layering material through 3D printing is not completely unlike the process of hand-building traditional cob and mud houses.

In this work I chose to work with the timber in its natural alignment. As with cob construction, the work can be sculpted into organic forms that would not be possible in a piece using standard joinery techniques. The design pairs contemporary sculptural form with unique extrusions and surface elevations that hint at the emergence of the material from beneath the ground in a manner that could go on indefinitely.

Rose completed a degree in Biotechnology at the University of Newcastle and worked briefly in pathology research and diagnosis before making the move to Canberra to study Design Arts at the ANU School of Art.

Since graduating, Rose has worked as a designer and maker for the KOIToya furniture studio while continuing to develop her interest in experimenting with novel materials and techniques.





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## CALLAM OFFICES BROAD TRAY

Callam Offices Broad Tray depicts a visual representation of the work of Australian architect John Andrews, and the building 'Callam Offices'. The imagery was developed through sketches on site and photography from multiple angles.

This exhibition provides a platform for female woodworkers to make a statement within the furniture making field; a field often considered to be male dominated. Beyond Ordinary is an excellent opportunity for myself and others involved in the exhibition to showcase our work and the diverse skills we hold. The exhibition will assist in placing our names out into the furniture field and to also showcase new and unique methods to woodworking and making.

Chelsea Lemon is a Canberra based emerging designer and maker who works with timber. Many of her pieces include foliage and plant themes, mixed with interactivity and the decorative woodworking techniques. Chelsea's work explores new ways of incorporating shapes into design, by creating dynamic arrangements and forms that are influenced by nature and architecture.

In 2015 Chelsea graduated from the ANU with Honours in a Bachelor of Visual Arts, majoring in Furniture Design. Chelsea was the 2018 Design Canberra Artist in Residency, and has exhibited her furniture across Australia.





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## SCULPTURAL WALL SHELF NO. 2

This piece is my development of a previous 2019 work. I wanted to create a larger piece, playing with curves, shapes and empty spaces which can be viewed from all angles. The goal was to create a dynamic wall-mounted art work, as well as a surface to display treasured objects. Southern mountain ash was chosen to be worked in a variety of techniques, including bent lamination, joinery of curved surfaces, steam bending and ebonising. Using both ebonised and untreated timber creates a contrast of light and dark tones within the work.

After many years working in live entertainment as a stage manager, production manager, prop buyer and set builder, I attended the Sturt School for Wood in 2019, and immersed myself in fine furniture and timber.

I am influenced by my experiences working professionally in the theatre design world, using scenery and lighting to tell a story. My pieces are often sculptural or textural statements about the colour and grain of a particular piece of timber. Every day I walk through the forest near my home and find inspiration and inner peace.

It is a pleasure to be exhibiting amongst a room of talented female makers.





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## BARCODE SCREEN

Laura McCusker's professional practice spans over twenty years, her work featured in Australian and international publications, and TV documentaries focusing on her studio practice.

Commissioned locally by the Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery, Hobart City Council and by MONA (Museum of Old + New Art), her work has travelled as far as the US, UK and Europe. In 2013 she won the prestigious Clarence Prize for Excellence in Furniture Design.

Her designs combine clean aesthetics, mid-century and South American brutalist influences. Her no nonsense approach to problem solving some of the most challenging commissions has meant that demand for her work continues to increase locally, interstate and internationally. The combination of traditional materials, techniques and skills with contemporary designs produces unique pieces with provenance.

I have been working in a predominantly male dominated field for over 20 years, so long that sometimes I forget how unusual it is. Exhibitions like Beyond Ordinary are important for a number of reasons... visibility, recognition, celebration, community building are just some. If I had seen women practising in this field as a young girl it would have meant the world to me and made it easier to imagine a pathway. Instead, it often felt like I was beating a track through thick scrub, navigating untrodden territory, only to emerge out the other side and find myself in the company of all these other inspirational makers, whose journeys have been strikingly similar and yet unique and worth knowing.





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## MEOWHAUS

Meowhaus by Studia J is the perfect cat sanctuary that also keeps the design lover in mind. The MCM-inspired design with its curved organic form will complement the interior of the modern home, and cats will love its cocoon-like interior with peepholes to keep an eye on things!

Meowhaus was developed into a product during the 2020-21 extended lockdown period in Melbourne. The length and intensity of the lockdown shifted our focus to our immediate surroundings, giving rise to a longing for comfort and nesting. In some ways, Meowhaus is a reflection of this period: a piece that helps to create a calm, safe and beautiful space for ourselves and loved ones – be it partners, family and by extension, our beloved fur babies.

Meowhaus will be launched in 2022 in three timber finishes: American Walnut, American Oak and an ebonised American Oak. Another version will be made available in a variety of colorways in a recycled PET material, which has an appearance similar to felt. All timber components are finished in a non-toxic, plant based oil that is safe for humans and animals.

STUDIA J is the design practice of Jeanie Mulligan that focuses on furniture, lighting and object design. Jeanie is a biologist turned designer and her intention is to create designs with a thoughtful connection between humans and how we live.





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## PARADOX

Carving wood is a paradoxical kind of thing – the more you take away, the more you might be left with. Each of the pieces I've made for this exhibition is the product of time spent pleurably in a process of gradual refinement. Without time pressure, decisions and discoveries can be slowly made.

The wood I have used has a personal significance – it's either been given to me or stored for many years before its time came to be transformed.

The Huon pine was acquired three decades ago and transported 2000k north when my family moved to Queensland. The maple silkwood was given to me by a friend and work associate, sadly now deceased. The spoons were carved from the corner of a red cedar bole stored for a dear friend on our block for over ten years.

It intrigues me how some shapes and forms keep emerging in the things we make – from a mix of influences and a personal aesthetic, the maker's identity appears. Can we tell if objects are woman-made or man-made? I'm not so sure, but it's an honour to have work shown within this collection.





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## OBJECTS OF COMFORT

The pieces I have made for this exhibition are centred on objects of comfort in difficult and extraordinary times.

I have become absorbed in carving small objects, mainly animals or boats. My hope is that they encourage people to lean in and observe them, creating a moment of stillness in the viewer. I want people to view them through the prism of their own life, the memory of a pet or a moment in time. I like to focus on the elements that convey character such as posture and the use of shadows from my knife cuts to create the perception of detail.

Finishing is very important, as is the use of texture. I sometimes use paint that I create using natural earth pigments mixed with shellac and am currently exploring charring techniques (Yakisugi) to accentuate the grain. The small scale is important to me as a piece doesn't need to be large to speak volumes.

The origin of the material is significant and is part of the story of the development of my work. I often use rare and salvaged timber. I feel it's important to know the landscape it came from and the people who retrieve it.





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## CABINET

This exhibition sends a message to all women that there is room for our vision and space for our work.

Sara Smith, the daughter of a Master Carpenter, pursued her passion and relocated to Melbourne in her early 20s, where she completed a Diploma of Furniture Design followed by a Certificate III in Cabinet Making.

Influenced by the sleek, clean lines of early 20th Century design, Sara lists furniture designers and architects such as Eileen Gray, Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier of the Modernist Movement, as the main source of inspiration for her own work.

Sara loves the challenge of producing high end, period furniture and whilst employed at Bainbridge Fine Furniture in Victoria, also developed a love of fine craftsmanship such as veneer and advanced joinery techniques, the use of rich materials and nickel plated details, as seen in the French Art Deco movement of the same era.





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## A STICH IN TIME

As a mosaic artist, it is a privilege to join in conversation with other makers. I am particularly pleased to have been able to produce collaborative works with Ruth Thompson and hope this can be a starting point for other collaborations in future.

My individual series A Stich in Time was developed specifically for this exhibition. In Australia, mosaic is currently predominantly practised by women and balances on the cusp of craft and art. My work explores this by focussing on the crafts of knitting and embroidery, often seen as being the traditional domain of women. When I started this series, I was looking back at 2020 and the activities we took up in lockdown; crafts of all sorts, baking and cooking. And no lockdown series would be complete without a reference to Zoom. At that point I thought we would be looking back on 2020. Ironically it was the NSW lockdown in 2021 which gave me the time and space to complete the work.

Marian Shapiro has been working full time in mosaic since 2003. She is fascinated by the creative tension of using ancient techniques and traditional materials to make contemporary work. Her artwork is shown and collected nationally and internationally and in less unusual times she teaches and speaks regularly both at home and abroad. Marian's work has been featured in many books and magazines.





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## CHAIR FOR QUIET CONTEMPLATION

I am influenced by the clean lines of the Shaker movement and the avant-garde of the Bauhaus movement. Although these design periods are separated by a century, they both epitomise the use of minimalist design while seeking to create works that are visually interesting.

As a designer maker I aim to create works that are visually complex, using simple elements.

The process of creating a bespoke piece for a client, from consultation through to completion of a piece is profoundly satisfying. I enjoy the problem solving involved in taking a piece from an idea to reality. The engineering challenges presented in the manufacturing process to construct a functional, high quality, enduring work change with every new piece created.

As a furniture maker, I am often the recipient of surprised looks, as if the whole notion that a woman would choose to create in timber, is a foreign concept. I believe the exhibition will show that women woodworkers are not an anomaly, just for the large part, unseen. The scope of women woodworkers and the diversity of their offerings will go a long way to changing the perception that it is unusual for women to work in timber or for that matter any materials usually associated with men.

Making objects is in our DNA. Combined with culture and knowledge, the need to make defines the human condition.





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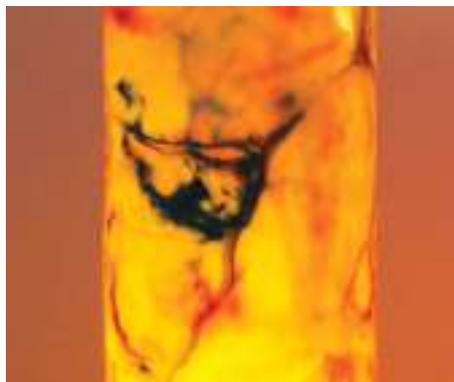
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## JUPITER AND VENUS

Sarah Tracton is a multidisciplinary fine artist and bespoke lighting designer. A graduate of the National Art School, she has built a reputation for using innovative ceramic techniques to create bespoke handcrafted lighting that is an intersection of fine art, craft and functional design.

Having achieved exceptional results and recognition as a trained fine artist with mastery over her materials, Sarah has refined a niche clay slip poured on plaster slab technique. She fuses innovative cordless technologies with traditional craft processes to create lighting that emits exquisitely luminous and ethereal outcomes when paired with LEDs.

With the addition of iridescent coloured stains, Sarah's distinctive coloured ceramic surfaces are akin to landscape topography. Sarah also uses the Japanese Kintsugi golden repair technique, a process of repair, recycle and reuse which combats the environmental impacts of wastage.

Sarah has been a finalist in numerous national prizes and won People's Choice at the Macquarie Group Emerging Artist Prize in 2018. She held her first solo exhibition, Hearing it for Silence, at Abbotsford Convent in Melbourne. In 2021, she was awarded a Creators Fund by Creative Victoria, and a Good Design Australia Winner accolade for her Lucent Collection.

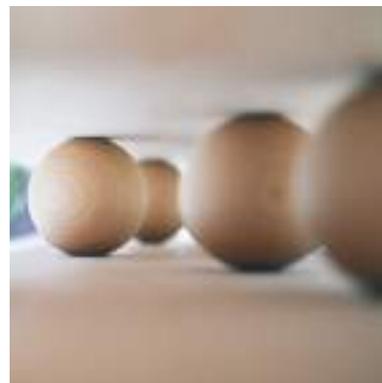




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## HALL TABLE

Navigation in the furniture making industry began 7 years ago, while creating my first piece of furniture as a wide-eyed and bushy tailed year twelve student. I went on to study Product Design while simultaneously taking evening woodwork classes and working as a Trades Assistant, before enrolling into an intensive year of study here at Sturt School for Wood. At present, amid my cabinet making apprenticeship, I work at Tim Noone Furniture Design in Sydney's Inner West.

In response to Beyond Ordinary, I wanted to achieve a hall table that took a refreshing deviation from what's ordinarily seen on the market. The spheres are the heart of my inspiration as the rest of the elements weren't designed until I had the spheres in my hands.

The haphazard placement of the hand turned spheres, delicate shapes, and traditional construction techniques reveal my great admiration for the lively essence of Memphis design and the elegant complexion of Danish furniture.

My experiences have unveiled one attribute that's apparent in all makers and that is that we are daring and Beyond Ordinary celebrates this. In celebration of a talented cohort, creativity, and traditional craft, Beyond Ordinary affords guests and makers the opportunity to forge liberating and empowering connections.

Enjoy!





**HELEN Walsh**

Baranduda VIC

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## RECLAIMED / RECYCLED

I hope Beyond Ordinary offers all exhibitors the opportunity to showcase excellent work, that it attracts an informed and sympathetic audience and that it demonstrates that women producing excellent work in timber is not exceptional but rather, quite ordinary.

Helen Walsh has dabbled in glass work, jewellery, website setup, gardening, trumpet and more. She has formal qualifications in microbiology, biochemistry, drawing and painting, literary studies, religious studies, philosophy, and building design. She studied life drawing and painting and took up woodturning as a more sculptural approach and now also carves in wood. She has been woodturning for 26 years.

Helen preferentially works with reclaimed or recycled timber, partly to use what will otherwise be discarded but also because this timber has features related to its past use or misuse. This history provides colour and texture that is uncharacteristic of fault-free, purchased timber.

There is great satisfaction in making objects from timber that others have discarded as waste or firewood. Such timber is challenging to work. Demolition timber often contains bolts, nails and other fixings, hidden and visible; reclaimed timber surprises with wire, shade-cloth, bullets and other more puzzling items.

The aim is to transform this raw material into a tactile form, complemented and not overshadowed by colour and texture. Form persists when feature and colour are no longer prominent.





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## BIRD: I SEE, I FEEL

Bird... is a sentinel, a silent guardian watching and protecting her surroundings. She is nurturing her egg, her world, for future life; she is a beacon of hope.

Working toward being part of the solution and not the problem within our throw-away society, all materials used here are reclaimed, and in this instance, even the re-claimed materials were re-claimed. The timber came from a demolished house, which I used to make a large figure sculpture. The offcuts, nail holes and all, became the body of Bird.... The bronze is recycled and melted into ingots. I fashioned the egg and nest by carving and welding together scrap bronze from a previous pour. I work with re-claimed materials, both physically and with intent, to give (new) life to something that was once discarded. In this way, I add to the history and the story of the material and subsequently the sculpture.

Clancy gained a BA Visual Arts in sculpture in 2013, and set up her small bronze foundry. Her work has been purchased by prominent collectors, has been installed as public art, and has received numerous awards. Clancy's work often has political and social justice themes as representations of what she experiences, sees, and feels of the world.





## VIVIENNE Wong

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## GALING GIILANG/ /WATER STORIES

### Collaborators

**Ella Havelka** - Wiradjuri woman, Dancer/Choreographer, Artist and Social change leader.

Ella danced for both the Australian Ballet and Bangarra Dance Theatre. She has a Master's in Social Change Leadership and is passionate about creating new pathways for First Nations storytelling through dance and weaving.

**Lorraine Tye** - Wiradjuri Elder and Artist.

Lorraine creates through basketry techniques and other fibre practices. Lorraine has exhibited widely and is involved in sharing her love of making with people from around Australia and internationally.

**Linda Elliott** - Maker.

Linda sees herself as a maker and puzzle solver who brings people together to provide opportunities and empowerment through creative engagements. As a maker her special interest is in textiles and fibre-based activities, which she continually explores and develops.

**Vivienne Wong** - Bespoke furniture designer/maker.

Vivienne established her workshop at the beginning of 2020 under the roof of Worco, a non profit co-operative. Previously a soloist dancer with The Australian Ballet for 14 years, a career change was inevitable, and though furniture making didn't seem the most obvious path it actually made a lot of sense. From dance and into woodcraft Vivienne found a medium that was still creative, tactile, visual and physical.

**Galing Giilang//Water Stories** is a collaborative piece that brings together modern furniture design, the use of Australian traditional materials and the cultural stories of the Wiradjuri people from Wagga Wagga.

Being asked to participate in an exhibition that celebrates female designers, Vivienne took inspiration from the role women played and continue to play in the ancestral culture of the First Nations People.

Galing Giilang was inspired and informed by Vivienne's conversations with Wiradjuri women Ella Halvelka, Wiradjuri Elder Lorraine Tye and Linda Elliott, women who are all part of the Hands On Weavers group in Wagga Wagga.

From their very first discussions, the idea of creating a piece of furniture that brought people together resonated with them all. This led to the recounting of a true love story between two clans that used to reside either side of the Murrumbidgee river, the story of Pomingalarna and Gobbagombalin.

Inspired by this story Vivienne designed a long bench where several people could sit together.

The bench designed has two planks that slant towards the centre, reflective of the Murrumbidgee river banks, and at either ends of the bench the lomandra grass (Dirramaay) has been decoratively wrapped so that people sit between it. On the lower rail, fresh water mussel shells (Bindu-Gaany) have been inlaid in the joinery, evocative of the shady junctions of the waterways where fresh water mussels are found. For the ancestors of the Wiradjuri people finding bindu-gaany at these junctions of the river were significant as they were signs of a healthy river.

The lomandra grass (woven into a rope using traditional methods by Linda Elliott and Lorraine Tye) and mussel shells came from the land around Wagga Wagga. The timber used for the bench was salvaged Blackwood from the Otways.



## OUT OF THE BLUE



## COLLABORATION

**MARIAN Shapiro**

Mosaic

**RUTH Thompson**

Timber

## RED TAPESTRY





**CATHERINE Capan**

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## LOOKING OUT

As an emerging woodworker my key focus is to create unique furniture that is beautiful, well-crafted and carefully thought about, for my own enjoyment, to be loved by someone else or for exhibition. Attending Sturt School for Wood in 2018 was a way to explore newly found skills and further develop my design ideas, while being immersed in the joy of making for pleasure's sake and bringing some of my random concepts to life. In my practice I like to integrate other interests of metal, fabric, or photography into quirky, unique pieces.

Participating in this exhibition is a great opportunity to highlight the contribution of women to this field. To be included alongside such an illustrious cohort is a wonderful honour. Recognition and respect for fine woodworking has always been at the heart of Sturt, and Winifred West is the foundation upon which this special place was created. I hope this exhibition will inspire women of any age or background to know and believe that they can be fabulously creative.

As seen here, women bring their own interpretations, finesse, language and vision to this discipline.

My personal journey within woodworking has been a positive experience. I have always felt encouraged and cared for, from the first day I stepped into the classroom at Sturt and where I now have bench space heaven in a shared creative space.



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## LILY TABLE AND ENO STOOL

The Lily Table and Eno Stool were created as an homage to dear friends. Just as with long lasting and successful relationships, this pairing is a deliberate attempt to recognise that good furniture must work on many levels. In an era of mass consumption, dining tables and stools should be more than everyday items. A place not just for practicalities such as meals but where connections are established, memories are made and stories are shared. It is the ability for pieces to work together that should demand their inclusion in the home. The Lily Table and Eno Stool have been designed and crafted to experience the symbiotic relationship that well considered form can engender between people and natural materials.

With a background in visual arts and design, furniture making is a natural progression for my vision and the desire to create. The act of 'making' represents a unique opportunity to combine time honoured artisanal skills with contemporary design, all while adhering to environmentally sustainable principles. This process ensures that pieces are of a lasting style and heirloom quality in order to compliment modern lifestyles and smaller spaces. The resultant furniture aims to encapsulate an aesthetic that is built upon beauty, simplicity and functionality.



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## CUPRIC ROOM DIVIDER

Being both functional and decorative, the Cupric Room Divider addresses my generation's necessarily transient lifestyle. It is an easily moved object, designed to augment a range of small spaces.

As a student at Sturt, I came across the weaving class. I was fascinated by the extraordinary standard of work and the welcoming environment in which it took place. More than a craft, weaving is a crucial activity for developing social capital and building community. I began exploring the use of woven materials as part of my practice. Wood, metal and textiles are tangible, tactile expressions of our connection to the earth, serving as constant reminders of the preciousness of natural resources. More than just functional materials, they are meaningful expressions of our cultures, traditions and ways of fashioning everyday life.

Lana Kagan has recently relocated to the West Coast and is taking the opportunity to view urban and natural landscapes with fresh and inquisitive eyes, providing inspiration for small-run objects and commissions. Lana aims for a balanced aesthetic with clean lines, conveying a joyful lightness and stability. She is using textiles and metals for visual interest and to consider the relevance of gender and social capital in craft and the making of things. Lana graduated from the Sturt School for Wood in 2020 and currently teaches at the Perth Wood School.



## STEPHANIE White

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## SASSY

This carving is my dear workshop supervisor, Sassy the whippet, who snoozes in the corner of my workshops no matter the chaos and noise of the machines and students.

Sassy is my constant, a calm voice of reason when frustration, perfectionism and self-doubt hammer at my door. This piece has been incredibly challenging to create and I hope it can lead on to more carving, more creating, more teaching and less firewood.

Throughout my career in this male dominated industry, I have constantly been questioned as a woodworker, and there is disbelief and surprise that I can create with timber, run my own business, and use the rather large number of tools that I own. There are so many capable women woodworkers out there, we just have to make ourselves known, and support each other, which is what I feel this exhibition is all about.

Steph is a passionate woodcarver and artist who is also learning the art of lutherie. She started her carving journey with a Stanley knife and a bit of pallet wood in 2016, starting her own business taking commissions and teaching small classes in 2020. She got a top ten finish and a highly commended in the Art and Accessories category of Maker of the Year 2020. Steph volunteers teaching carving to military veterans and first responders through the charity Our Veterans Forge.

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