

MUNDARING ARTS CENTRE PRESENTS

Act-Belong-Commit Elevate Arts

INSTRUMENTAL

The distinct pleasures of tools

21 SEPTEMBER - 4 NOVEMBER 2018



OLGA CIRONIS

Standing on the edge I watch the storm come in, holding her in my outstretched hands as the wind whips wet hair against salty skin. Alone like you, I have the power to make her a sharp weapon or a feather of desire.

This space between us is bursting.

ROSES ARE RED, VIOLETS ARE BLUE, I TRULY DEARLY LOVE YOU

2018
Rose bush, woollen blanket and thread
170 x 50 x 50cm
Photographer: O Cironis
Gallery: Turner Galleries, Art Collective WA

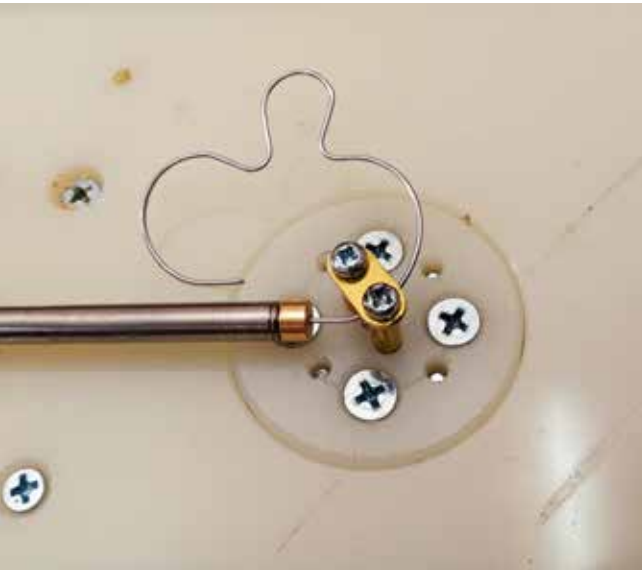


GEOFFREY DRAKE BROCKMAN

Six Devices: Popping Houses is an artwork that tells the story of its own composition, using six discrete 'artistic devices'. These devices are compositional tactics from my 'toolbox', which I employ in many artworks toward the objective of viewer-engagement. The devices used are; volume, familiarity, reflection, colour, repetition and interaction. The final composition, with all six devices active, is an interactive kinetic tableau based on a childish house pictogram.

SIX DEVICES: POPPING HOUSES

2018
Lacquer on aluminium and stainless steel, robotics
4 of 30 x 30 x 13cm and 2 of 60 x 60 x 18cm
Photographer: G Drake Brockman



PHIL GAMBLÉN

A long term fascination with machinery and motion has led me to an idea that I had years ago: to make a prototype machine with its only purpose being to make wire 'sculptures' of some sort. Making a maker.

At the time of writing these words, I am still working on the prototype. It has yet to be switched on for the first time and the result of its production is still a mystery.

PROTOTYPE FOR A MACHINE

2018
Mixed media
80 x 60 x 40cm
Photographer: P Gamblen



PETER HILL

One of my other jobs is as a builder. A few years ago I carved 'Persuader' into the handle of my favourite hammer. All of my hammers started to get names. 'The Deal Maker', 'The Therapist', 'The Over Qualified'.

As the collection has grown, beauty crept in to balance out the pragmatic.

I must confess to taking great joy in transforming these new, functional hammers into useless, good for nothing sticks.

BEAUTIFUL WORK

2018
Hammers, galvanised nails and wooden blocks
Variable dimensions
Photographer: P Hill



KEVIN DRAPER

This artwork comes from a series of works started many years ago while travelling and living in Europe. The folded forms relate to me condensing everything to make travelling easier. This includes clothes, tools, food, even language and relationships with people.

This current investigation of the folding process is about re-inventing, re-settling and quite directly about my own changing physicality as a sculptor who works directly with raw materials.

X-CUT

2018
Steel and timber
140cm x variable width
Photographer: K Draper



ANGELA MCHARRIE

There are differing opinions regarding when and by whom the wheelbarrow was invented, but the earliest archaeological evidence links it to China around 100 CE.

It is a marvellously simple yet effective tool, which allows heavy loads to be carried and manoeuvred by a single person by distributing weight over a wheel. It is a common sight on construction sites and has changed little during its long history.

Out of the Shadows is an imaginative response to the dichotomy between the prosaic role of this indispensable tool and the complex, refined constructions it helps create.

OUT OF THE SHADOWS

2018
Vintage wheelbarrow frame and various timbers
111 x 62 x 167cm
Photographer: A McHarrie



STUART ELLIOTT

Their doppelgangers are handled carefully, they at constant risk. Instrumental to their glamorous counterparts, they avoided Wardrobe. Adaptable, robust, yet their cache crashes in seconds. Their 'work' is vital, their looks a distraction, their future irrelevant. No perky seduction of the maquette; no fascination of the study; no curiosity of the sketch; no exulted destination for these instruments. There is though, undoubted purity in their unrefined honesty. To Linda and Boz – indispensable before you were stellar.

SHADOW BOARD 11

2018
Oil on board
17 x 15cm
Photographer: S Elliott
Gallery: Turner Galleries

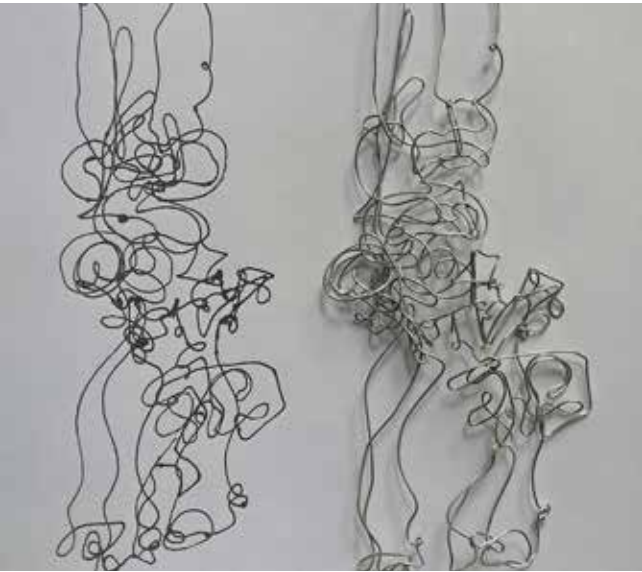


SARAH ELSON

Examining the nature of preciousness and the preciousness of nature, these works are a meditation on growth; realized through the fluid potential of a medium often perceived as static. Transience, ephemerality, sensuality and reciprocity are key words in my practice, so too an understanding of community, relationships and the entanglement of life. *Weapons for a new ecology* transforms the defensive mechanisms of the 'poisonousness' hallucinogenic introduced species *Salandra grandiflora* into fleshy, luscious tools for self-defence.

WEAPONS FOR A NEW ECOLOGY

2004-2018
Recycled silver and copper alloys
Variable dimensions (between 25 x 25 x 16cm and 8 x 7 x 21cm)
Photographer: B Shaylor
Gallery: Art Collective WA



DAWN GAMBLÉN

I am fascinated by the process of decay that manifests itself in both the natural and built environment and is revealed in the surface of peeling paint, cracked dry mud, rust encrusted metal and eroded stone. The progression of entropy reveals an inherent beauty as order dissolves into chaos.

PLIERS - SELF PORTRAIT

2018
Galvanised wire, paper and ink
12 of 21 x 29.9cm
Photographer: D Gamblen

FOREWORD

There is that moment when the tool fits perfectly in my hand; weight balanced, intention clear, action achieved. When the needle threads cleanly, the stitches align, the material welcomes the change.

From the simplest to the most complex pieces of machinery, tool-making and using is so fundamental to our lives the tools become virtually invisible. Historically the profession of artist is one in which the use of the simpler tools is inherent. Setting this to one side for the moment, the artists who focus on technological use are largely confined to more remote systems, I'd like to consider more direct physical use. Altering material to describe an idea or an experience is the bread and butter of many artists.

Brush, plier, file, vice, saw, scissor and jig are nothing without thought. Mind, fire, language – all are instrumental in our capabilities. There has been a lot of discussion among the group of artists in this exhibition around the difference between a tool and an instrument. An instrument is kind of a next level up – a more sophisticated being – perhaps capable of measurement or requiring skilled hands. In the hands of these artists, the common tool becomes an instrument.

And while we're talking about the layered meanings of language – there has been a significant shift over the past couple of decades for art itself to become instrumental. In a system where art is lauded as being integral to a healthy society, while simultaneously starved of the capacity to achieve this; an ever harder push for instrumentalism grows. We know intuitively that music, poetry and art improve our lives and we know we cannot live without story. But there is an increasing demand to explain just how art can improve mental and physical health, stop vandalism, create community. So art can foment a rant too – my apologies.

Geoffrey Drake Brockman takes a moment to laterally address this shift to instrumentalism by describing his own toolbox of devices to achieve 'viewer engagement'. The works become a primer of sorts – here are the tools, unpicked and presented 1,2,3 in a crisp, elegant lesson. Phil Gamblen's *Prototype for a machine* contemplates a machine to make sculpture, and also speaks to me about instrumentalism in art. The humour of a conceptual framework in which the little machine will churn out art, underlines the ridiculous nature of a system that requires art to be utilitarian.

There is poetry and regret in Olga Cironis' response - a sense of longing, hope and loss embodied in the tools of our language and the instruments to which we assign meaning. The group of works including *Roses are red, Violets are blue, I truly dearly love you* allows her audience to string together multiple layers of meaning.

But back to the beginning. 'In the beginning there was fire'. Monique Tippett's *Flame* is a concise description of the fire that warms, providing safety while holding potential for our destruction. The two-edged sword is elegantly described in a work that holds our attention and unpacks layers of meaning. Sarah Elson continues the story in *Weapons for a new ecology* - the forms of defensive / offensive systems developed by plants to ensure their survival, gracefully reflect complexities of human

relationships.

As perhaps was always probable, a number of artists were drawn to the concepts of an earlier history and tradition in the context of colonial endeavour. Tony Windberg considers sophisticated, beautifully tooled navigational instruments in the context of discovery and mapping, creating an elegant series of works pegging an uninhabited Australia in *Terra nullius*. And Denise Pepper's *Spinning Yarns* considers the first fleet and what tools were needed to settle that supposedly uninhabited land, intelligently using fire and heat to mold and re-create splendid versions of the early spindle.

In *Out of the Shadows* Angela McHarrie brings the humble and utilitarian wheelbarrow to our attention – an object instrumental to constructing whole cities - building her fragile, sky-reaching city onto its frame. Using an object known from its earliest known iterations in China around 100 CE to its continuation on building sites today.

The twist Kevin Draper, a master of tools, applies is around adaptation – a changing of intention, a shifting of purpose. *X-Cut* represents the hope that if we just fold and fix this bit, then everything will still work as it should. It's painful and sharply funny at the same time. Peter Hill's relationship with his hammers in *Beautiful Work* is undergoing its own transformation and has something in common with Draper's thinking. They take the tool intended to make something other, and encourage it to become the other, orbiting its own elegant purpose. Dawn Gamblen's thoughts congregate around a similar conceptual base in *Pliers - self portrait*. The original form considers change, a dissolved meaning and purpose progressing to a point where it becomes a chaotic circle.

Our capacity for imagination and wonder enables us to find value and meaning everywhere, and in the most humble of tools. The forms Stuart Elliott made to facilitate the making of art, in turn reflect his concern that we notice more; pay attention. Both the *Shadow Board* and accompanying tool series, including the *Domestic Scarifier*, are presented in a formal array, not quite elevated to shrine status, but clearly prepared to do the work required.

The artists in this exhibition have my enduring gratitude for taking time out of their own work to willingly consider ideas I wanted to discuss.

This exhibition forms part of the larger *What a Tool* project – a title intended to marvel at the magic of material creation, while lightly giving a nod to the sexist underpinnings of that odd perception that tools are a gendered province. Derision is one of the more common tools in the human arsenal, used to create a distance and superiority. In a current environment including hate speech of the most vile, the derogatory appellation has gathered a fondness around itself and it is in this spirit that the project has developed.

Jude van der Merwe

Curator



MUNDARING DISTRICT MUSEUM

MADE IN MUNDARING | Historical Exhibition | 22 Sep - 29 Mar

MUNDARING HALL & SURROUNDS

MUNDARING 'WHAT A TOOL' OPEN DAY | Sun 30 Sep 11am - 3pm

MIDLAND JUNCTION ARTS CENTRE

MIDLAND 'WHAT A TOOL' OPEN DAY | Sun 7 Oct 11am - 2pm

RE-IMAGINED RAILYARD | Art & Social History Exhibition
Opening Sun 7 Oct 11am - 2pm | Viewing Wed - Fri 10am - 5pm until 16 Nov

REMEMBERING TOMORROW | Art Exhibition by Studio Payoka
Opening Sun 7 Oct 11am - 2pm | Viewing Wed - Fri 10am - 5pm until 16 Nov

BOYA COMMUNITY CENTRE

MUNDARING CAMERA CLUB | Photographic Exhibition | 16 Oct - 16 Nov

ST JOHN OF GOD HOSPITAL MIDLAND

ARMAMENTARIUM | Tools from the St John of God Heritage Collection | 28 Sep - 9 Nov

FOR DETAILS VISIT WWW.MUNDARINGARTSCENTRE.COM.AU/WHAT-A-TOOL-2018



OPEN TUE TO FRI 10AM - 5PM, SAT & SUN 11AM - 3PM | CLOSED MON & PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

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