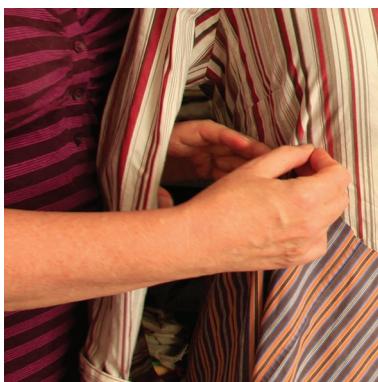




Mundaring Arts Centre presents

IN-MATERIAL

Shire of Mundaring Art Acquisition Exhibition
13 February to 22 March 2015



IN-MATERIAL

Craft practice is in decline. The term “craft” has become a word whispered by arts critics and managers, afraid of the connections with “folk” and “hobby” art. New and emerging craft practitioners are often forced to hide behind the seemingly more glamorous label, “designer”. As many university art courses around the country shift their focus in teaching contemporary art to the “idea” and the “concept”, the skills for making seem to be becoming secondary. Many tertiary craft courses have closed in rapid succession with the sheer cost and labour intensiveness of learning a craft giving way to the more economic, digital design courses, able to pack increased numbers of students into computer labs.

This exhibition brings together fourteen exceptional artists proud to call themselves craft practitioners, each with a strong connection to the Hills community. Their work ranges across ceramics, textiles, jewellery and object making: all unique, all committed to their practice and skill. All have found independent ways to continue their craft practice in amazing studio and workshop set ups in glorious surroundings of natural beauty, so influential for Hills artists.

In curating this exhibition I have encountered

materials “speak” to the craft practitioner, providing inspiration, guidance and surprises which ultimately shape the final outcome.

Ceramicists Greg Crowe, Bernard Kerr and Amanda Shelsher demonstrate wildly different approaches to their work, yet the behaviour of different clays, glazes and firings is core to their unique

outcomes. Greg Crowe fills enormous wood fired kilns with salt glazed stoneware pots twice a year, when the temperatures in a bush fire prone area allow. The outcomes of this process are unknown as each clay surface reacts to the firing and salt vapours in a unique way. Bernard Kerr’s pinched forms are a result of the relationship of

the body of the maker to the work. The form and volume are determined by the shape and size of the hands and the act of making. Amanda Shelsher explores slab and coil techniques, painting slips, oxides and glazes, then scratching into these surfaces before firing. Amanda’s techniques are a direct representation of the precarious and fragile nature of life she portrays in her figurative works.



enormous generosity and enthusiasm from all the artists for demonstrating and sharing their craft practice. All the participants are actively engaged in their respective craft communities, running exciting workshops, teaching, organising and attending conferences, mentoring, undertaking residencies globally and expanding their practice into new realms such as public art. These artists do not see craft as immaterial.

In-Material explores the notion of materiality leading the concept. The fourteen craft practitioners on display take inspiration from the very materials and processes they are experimenting with. Ideas for works are generated through the testing of how glazes adhere to clay, how plants naturally dye a piece of fabric, how two metals will fuse when joined together. The

Tanija and Graham Carr expertly take tooling and saddle-making techniques of leather craft to new levels of beauty. Working collaboratively, their leather vessels seem to be made of wood, stone, metal, drawing together the futuristic and the ancient, the architectural and the tribal.

Rosalind ‘Rozy’ Dann continues her practice from her new home in the Perth hills. As a traditional owner of the Banyijima people of the Pilbara region, she is vested with the cultural authority to tell stories through the craft of emu egg carving. The egg is etched with delicate imagery, each layer revealing a new shade of the exquisite blue, a new layer of meaning.

Trudi Pollard takes a background in ceramics and glazing specialties into natural dyeing to produce

dazzling textile fabrics. From her own colour garden, she explores the beauty of hues obtained from the earth's natural minerals, soils and plants, using the seeds, flowers, leaves and roots. Through techniques such as clamping, stitching, wrapping and capping, Trudi explores exciting patterning, combining the materials into abstract tableaux and garments.

Janie Matthews links ideas of archaeology and palaeontology with traditions associated with keeping and treasuring the old. Collecting cloth, Janie also collects its memories and history. Evoking an awareness of who made, owned and used the fabric, Janie allows the cloth to "speak". From initial dyeing, the cloth guides the choice of stitch, colour of thread and the layers of intricate line and pattern, added over many hours.

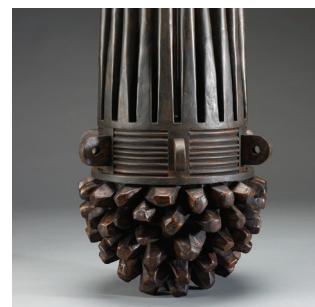
Peggy Lyon also often begins in the natural dyeing process, assembling fabrics to communicate meaning, most recently in flags used for semaphore signalling.

Nalda Searles takes the use of natural and recycled materials into the conceptual sculptural realm. Renowned for weaving forms using natural



individualised contemporary jewellery. Bethamy Linton continues generations of quality silver smithing, juxtaposing the hardness of metal with the lacy delicateness of nature into alluring objects. Julie-Ann Ogilvie and Willem Heyneker both combine found materials with the traditional metals of the jeweller's trade. Julie-Ann has recently been experimenting with copper and laced wire, allowing structures to "grow" in a crystalline sense while Willem collects bold, rusted farm machinery, transforming these bulky objects into graceful forms.

These artists are exemplary examples of the rich tradition of Western Australian craft practice. Their careers reach out into the world, their knowledge and skills are inspiring a new generation and they all continue to search for new outcomes and learnings to push the boundaries of their making. It all begins in the intimate, in material.



Ricky Arnold, Curator



grasses, Nalda uses found objects such as xanthorrhoea bracts, hair, bones and cloth, transforming them into powerful objects infused with the symbolism of life's stories.

Both Jessica Jubb and Katrina Virgona's practice cross the divides between textiles, jewellery and fashion to create wearable art pieces. Jessica Jubb utilises found treasures, recycled silver, simple tools and minimal methods to make exquisite objects with minimal impact on the environment. Katrina Virgona pushes felt-making practices to levels which amaze, combining gleaming colour, abstract forms and glowing stitching to produce organic forms from another world.

Bethamy Linton, Julie-Ann Ogilvie and Willem Heyneker also make beautiful, hand-crafted

In-Material Catalogue Acknowledgements:

Cover:

Artist studio photography, Richard Woldendorp

From L-R, T-B:

1. Willem Heyneker: *Spiral Bound bracelet*; photographer, the artist
2. Julie-Ann Ogilvie: *Shadow Crowns*; photographer, the artist
3. Jessica Jubb: *Banksia earrings* (detail); photographer, the artist
4. Tanija and Graham Carr: *M1 Untitled 2014-4 (Pseudomorphic Transformations series, detail)*; photographer, Victor France
5. Peggy Lyon: *Message from the natural world*; photographer, Vivienne O'Farrell
6. Bernard Kerr: *Flux*; photographer, Bo Wong
7. Nalda Searles: *Alice in Wheatland - Homage to DH*; photographer, the artist
8. Amanda Shelser: *Go Away Black Dog*; photographer, Bewley Shaylor
9. Rosalind 'Rozy' Dann: *Emu Egg*; photographer, Peter Zuvela
10. Katrina Virgona: *Sidetracks III*; photographer, Ben Joel
11. Bethamy Linton: *Dryandra 1 neck piece*; photographer, Bewley Shaylor
12. Greg Crowe: *Here&Now14*; photographer, Kevin Gordon
13. Janie Matthews: *Tempus Fugit*; photographer, Richard Woldendorp
14. Trudi Pollard: *Shibori & Indigo*; photographer, the artist

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Gallery hours: Tuesday to Friday 10am – 5pm; Saturday and Sunday 11am – 3pm;

Closed Mondays and Public Holidays



Government of Western Australia
Department of Culture and the Arts

