

HOLD

CELEBRATION OF MAKERS

HOLD

FORMED WITH FUNCTION IN MIND

Curated by Leanne Bray @ Midland Junction Arts Centre

2021 Indian Ocean Craft Triennial

INTRODUCTION

We took baskets for granted growing up in Africa. Every shopping centre had a basket maker selling his deftly woven wares - lined up according to size - along the pavement. They were so numerous - the appreciation of the dexterity and skill never really registered, they were just functional ware! Then when I returned to Africa, after living in Australia for a few years, I saw them with fresh eyes. The beauty of pattern and form and the awe in their skill. **As a backpacker I would stuff my bags full and post home the ones I couldn't carry.** For years I could never pass the Birchenough Bridge area in Zimbabwe, without spending the time to talk and listen, and of course, buy! The baobab trees flourish there and the fibrous materials that are stripped from the trunks, are used to create a myriad of functional wares.

I built an appreciation for the style, form, and materials of baskets unique to regions, and I treasure works that not only hold the tangible spirit of the maker but hold stories. A basket picked up in Swakopmund in Namibia, a reminder of the time I slept in the remote desert as a hitch hiker, waiting patiently for a ride. A set of four finely woven exquisite pieces collected whilst passing through the Caprivi strip (a thin finger of land between countries.) A vessel swapped for clothing in the impenetrable forests of the Semuliki Valley, a remote part of Western Uganda (at a time I was shot at by rebel soldiers!) A beaded Masai basket gifted by an old friend in Kenya. The stories go on and on.

HOLD has evolved so that everyone may share and see 'with fresh eyes.' Appreciating the skill and form of the oldest foundational craft, and to acknowledge these extraordinary makers. It's important to share these stories - of diaspora, travellers, and settlers, the makers, their origins and purpose, and the opportunity to gather utilitarian baskets, **'borrowed'** from personal collectors has been a sheer joy. I thank those very generous souls. Their stories are of history and family and connections to place.

I knew I could trust Tony (Cunningham) to share his wealth of knowledge about the traditional skills within the Indian Ocean Rim, but it was important to complement the history, with a contemporary local approach. A select group of artists were invited to respond to the notion of HOLD with their own unique stories and skills. As a 'celebration of makers', some have followed the path of tradition, adding their own flair and approach to natural fibres, and some have used diverse contemporary materials, that link to their own unique practice and experience. The opportunity to share an **artist's** story, is a rare and wonderful gift, and their personal connections to family were a standout in the gathering of their tales.

HOLD is a tribute, to the contemporary makers who have allowed us in - to gain a little insight into extraordinary practices, and to pay homage to all the incredible rural women who I have encountered in my travels, employed via piece work, making from necessity - creating vessels to carry and hold. They sit cross legged under trees - as a community - with time immaterial - caught up in a collective sharing - as women universally do! Their timeless process influenced by materiality and need.

I am convinced that this is the perfect opportunity to share the time-honoured skills of **'form & function'** with a broad audience.

LEANNE BRAY – Curator

BASKETRY AND INDIAN OCEAN RIM: MILLENNIA OF TRADE AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE.

It is appropriate that the Indian Ocean Craft Triennial is taking place in Perth. For Australia is at the western end of a geographic arc of cultural and economic exchange that has extended for millennia from East Africa, via the Arabian Peninsula to South and south-east Asia then to western Australia. Unlike the stone tools, pottery or beads that mark these historical exchange networks, it is rare for twine or basketry to survive more than a few decades. Yet of all items of material culture found across the Indian Ocean Rim, none represent the theme of this Triennial (*'Curiosity and Rituals of the Everyday'*) more than basketry. Together with fire, twined string (Figure 1) and valve-type fish traps (Figure 2) are the **most ancient, and widespread part of a "technology package"** that enabled people to survive for 300 000 years in Africa, then expand out of Africa and gradually populate the world. For most of history, we were mobile (or seasonally mobile) hunter-gatherers, who by necessity produced a relatively low diversity of baskets. Using twining techniques to make animal traps, as well as fish, eel and crab traps or to weave baskets to carry seafood (Figure 3) or edible wild plants. What really drove diversification of basketry began 11000 years ago **with the start of the "agricultural revolution"**, where farmers in permanent settlements needed to harvest, winnow, process, carry or store cultivated crops. Uses of twine and types of fish traps also diversified. Twined rope, for example, is essential to ocean-going craft such as the dhows that still trade along the East African coast today (Figure 4). And as people literally risked their lives on the strength of this rope, the cord that held ocean-going canoes, dhows and ships together was a focus of rituals to protect ocean-going sailors. Similarly, in the Pacific, the most important rituals were reserved for the lashing of ocean-going canoes¹. Larger ships and reliable winds stimulated trade and cultural exchange. Ships carried more than baskets of goods. Their Swahili, Omani, Gujerati and Chinese sailors also carried ideas and knowledge between East Africa and Asia. Clearly evident in the Asian weaving techniques influenced Swahili fish trap design today (Figure 5 a, b). From the 10th century onwards, Austronesian traders stimulated a trade boom². And in northern Australia, Austronesians also influenced canoe design³. When European traders entered the Indian Ocean rim in the 16th century, baskets continued to be the "everyday" containers for food, spices and indigo. Most Australians know of the "Batavia", wrecked on the Abrolhos islands in 1629. But few know that the "Batavia's" commander, Francisco Pelsaert, was an indigo buyer, buying baskets of indigo paste in Mughal India, in what was a lucrative trade still seen in China today (Figure 6). Today, as natural fibre baskets are replaced by plastic (Figure 7), this Craft Triennial is a reminder to all of us to treasure past traditions and make sure weaving skills are maintained.

TONY CUNNINGHAM Academic

¹ Malinowski, B. 1922. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. London: Routledge

² Christie, J.W., 1998. Javanese markets and the Asian sea trade boom of the tenth to thirteenth centuries AD. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 41(3): 344-381.

³ Wood, R., 2018. Wangga: the linguistic and typological evidence for the sources of the outrigger canoes of Torres Strait and Cape York Peninsula. *Oceania*, 88(2): 202-231

TONY CUNNINGHAM

Anthony (Tony) Cunningham was born in southern Africa in 1957 and has had a lifelong, parallel interest in art and the environment. After completing his studies, he travelled extensively. In the mid-1980's, after first working for an African conservation organisation, he travelled for a year in Australia and Asia, working on prawn-trawlers, as a builder's labourer and as a gardener. By profession, he is an ethnobotanist, studying links between people, plants and sustainable resource use. He is the author of a widely used text-book on ethnobotany (published in English, Spanish & Chinese (1991)), a definitive book on African basketry (2006) and many research papers. For the past 5 years he has worked with textile weavers in eastern Indonesia through "Threads of Life" (www.threadsoflife.com). He has had a long interest in etching, photography and graphic art. He started photography in 1972 and etching in 1983 and has since progressed to producing limited edition Giclee prints. An expert on the botany of basketry and hand-woven textiles, he assisted the Fremantle Art Centre with their 1993 fibre arts exhibition "High fibre diet". In 2006, he helped FORM with their "Cultural Strands/Woven visions" project, which linked to the public exhibition "Woven forms: contemporary basket making in Australia" (2006). His photographs were exhibited in a joint exhibition with other Australian artists at Perth Galleries (North Fremantle) in 2007. His first one-person show was at Kidogo Arthouse in Fremantle (2010), followed by two group exhibitions in 2010. His work is held in private collections in Australia, Canada, China, Norway, South Africa and the UK.

He is the author or co-author of over 140 publications (mainly in English, but also in Chinese, French, Spanish and Italian). His book on plant resource management (**"Applied ethnobotany: people, wild plant use and conservation"**) is widely used for teaching purposes at universities across the world and is available in English (2001), Spanish (2002) and Chinese (2004) and is the senior author of the definitive book on African basketry (**"African basketry: grassroots art from southern Africa"**). Fernwood Press, Cape Town (2006).

Educational qualifications: PhD (Botany), 1985; Masters in Social Science (1993)

Exhibitions:

- 2007 - Perth Galleries
- 2010 – Kidogo Arthouse, Fremantle (first one person show)
- 2010 – Between River & Sea (Mosman Park art awards);
- 2010 - East Fremantle, "Army art" exhibition.
- 2016 – "Bush & Beach", exhibition at Kidogo Gallery.

Awards:

2018: Awarded a President's International Fellowship (PIFI) award by the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) to work at the Kunming Institute of Botany (KIB) in Yunnan in 2018.

2016: The lifetime achievement award of "Distinguished Economic Botanist" from the Society for Economic Botany;

2003: Awarded the G P Wilder Endowed Chair in Botany, as a visiting scholar at the University of Hawaii in 2004.

2002: Awarded the EK Janaki Ammal Medal of the Society of Ethnobotanists, India, for significant contributions and achievements in the field of ethnobotany.

1999: Received the Sir Peter Scott Award for Conservation Merit from the IUCN Species Survival Commission at their 50th anniversary celebrations in St. Louis, Missouri, USA.



Fig 1.



Fig 2.



Fig 3.



Fig 4.



A

Fig 5.



B



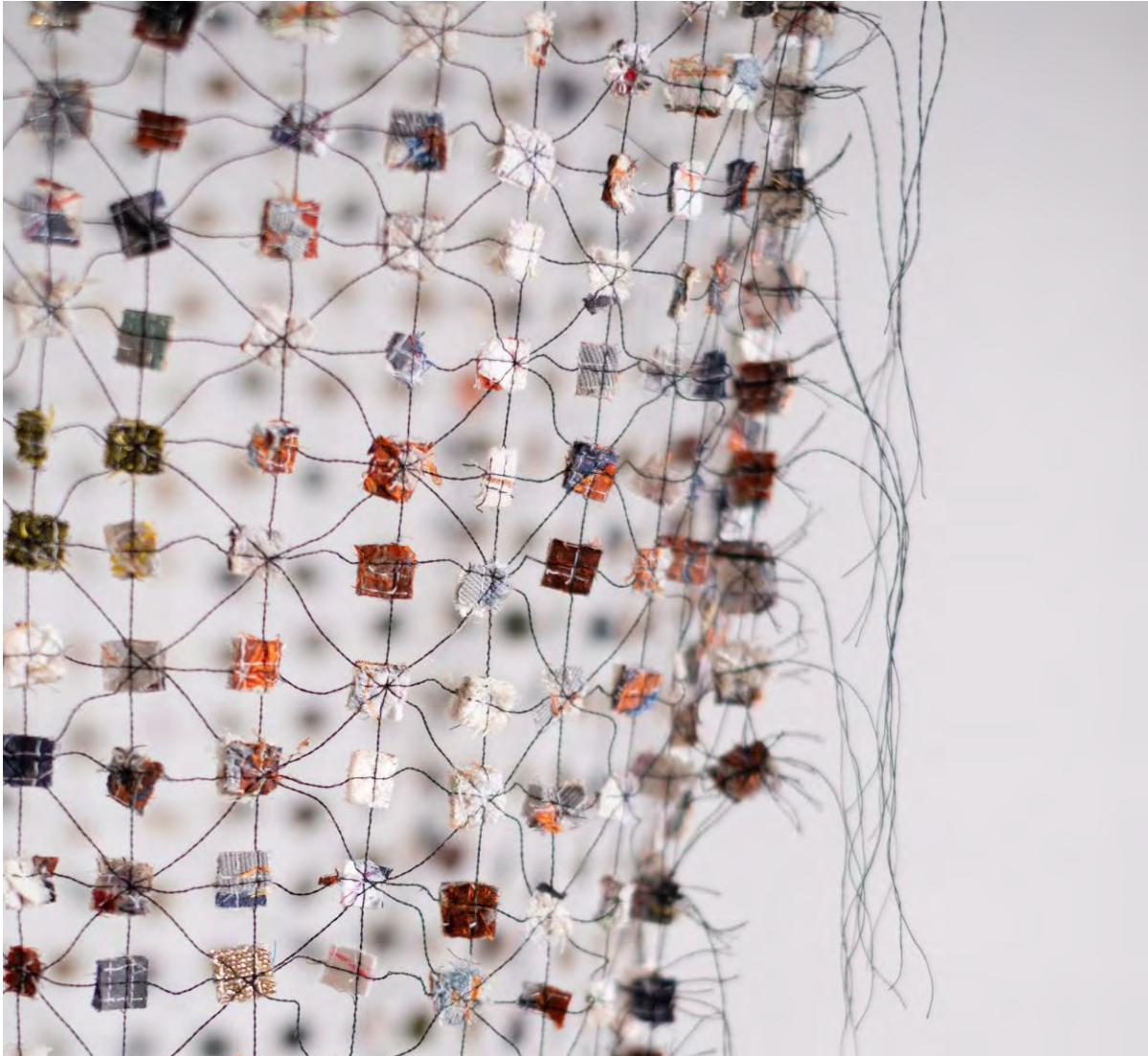
Fig 6.



Fig 7.

ARTISTS

LOUISE WELLS



This work is inspired by a visit to Boola Bardip, the new WA Museum. I saw the stunning *Walteria flemmingi* specimen on display. It is a basket-like deep-water glass sea sponge, and the only specimen found in the Indian Ocean. Like many glass sponges it has beautiful and elaborate lace or lattice-like patterns.

They filter their body volume of sea water numerous times per day. It reminded me of the volume of input we need to filter each day, through all our senses. The news, social media, the influence of others, all have an effect on our well-being. As does the air we breathe, the sights we see. This work looks at what we filter and also what we hold onto. Some thoughts and memories we embrace, some become trapped, and others slip through. As we age some fragments of memory become lost no matter how hard we try to hold onto them. In the current times we need to be careful of what we hold onto and what we allow to pass through. Our life quality will be determined to some extent by what we choose to hold on to and what we can allow to pass through.

Through All Our Senses 2021

Textile remnants from previous works

#1 H 176cm W 54cm D 54cm

LOUISE WELLS BIO

Louise Wells is an artist working in textiles living in Perth, Western Australia.

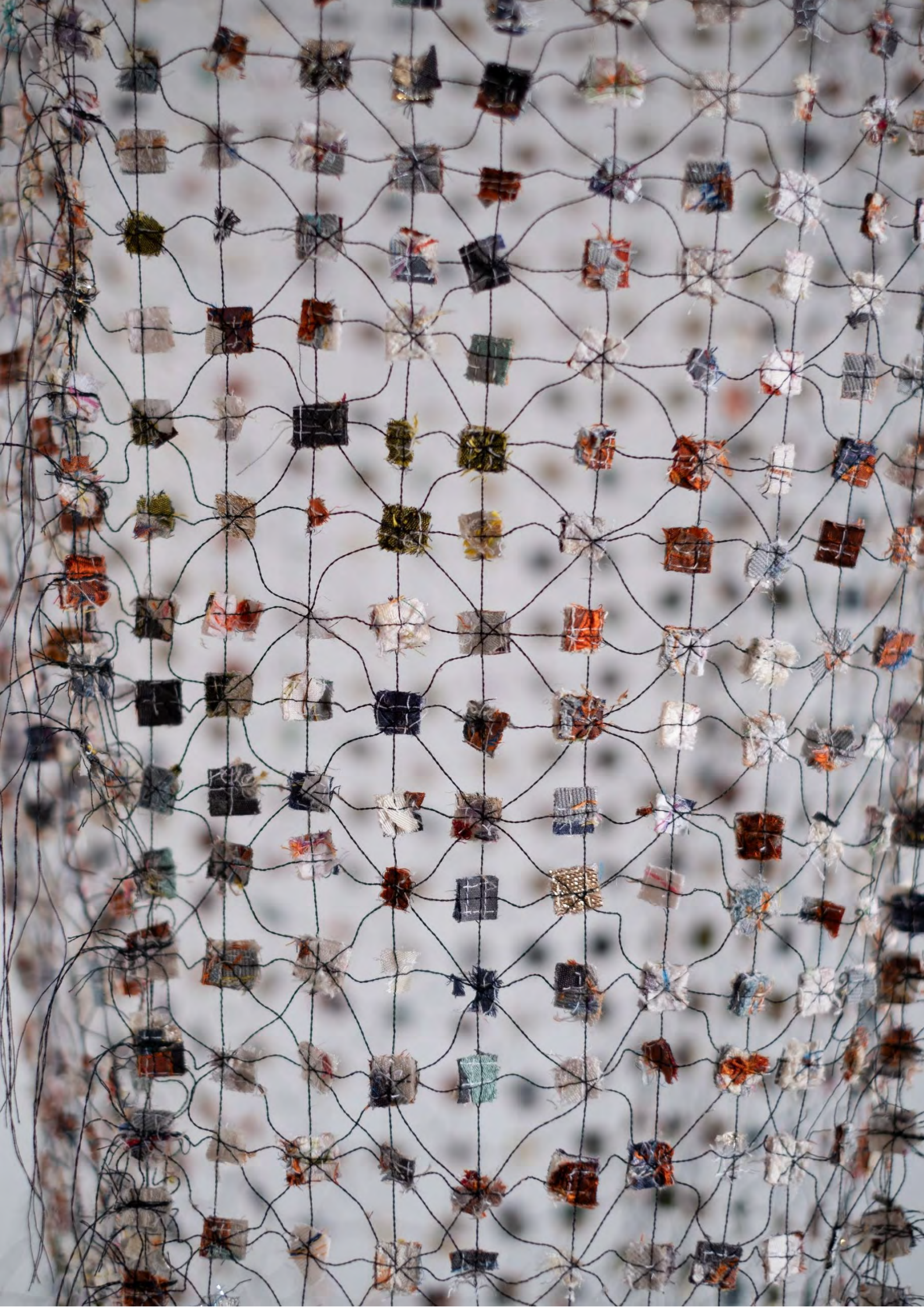
Looking at the lost beauty in the ordinary is a major theme she explores, and this has led to more focus on the use of recycled materials, textile and non-textile, both for their suggested narrative and concerns over waste and for the environment.

Louise uses textile techniques including dye, print, stitch and fabric manipulation and layering, often leaving raw, cut, and frayed edges to create texture.

Over the past fourteen years Louise has exhibited in numerous group and jury selected exhibitions, most recently Collie Art Prize (CAP) and Australian Textile Award. In 2019 her work was selected for Cultura Diffusa, Como Italy and Fiber Arts IX, California USA. She has also been a finalist in Wearable Art Mandurah for five years and has won several awards for her work.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Of Our Time - Ordinary Lives* 2018, *Suburban Secrets* 2021.





ANNE WILLIAMS



The number of space
is twelve, where events in time
gather in one place.

Soil samples from times and places significant to me have been collected, placed in small sample bags, and hung side by side in dilly bags. It has been an interesting journey to consider the concept of twelve as the number of space, and then reflect on the where and when of these places.

THE NUMBER OF SPACE IS TWELVE 2021

Photograph by Chris Williams.

Hand spun hemp, soil samples, wood. Knitting, crochet.

104 x 48 cm

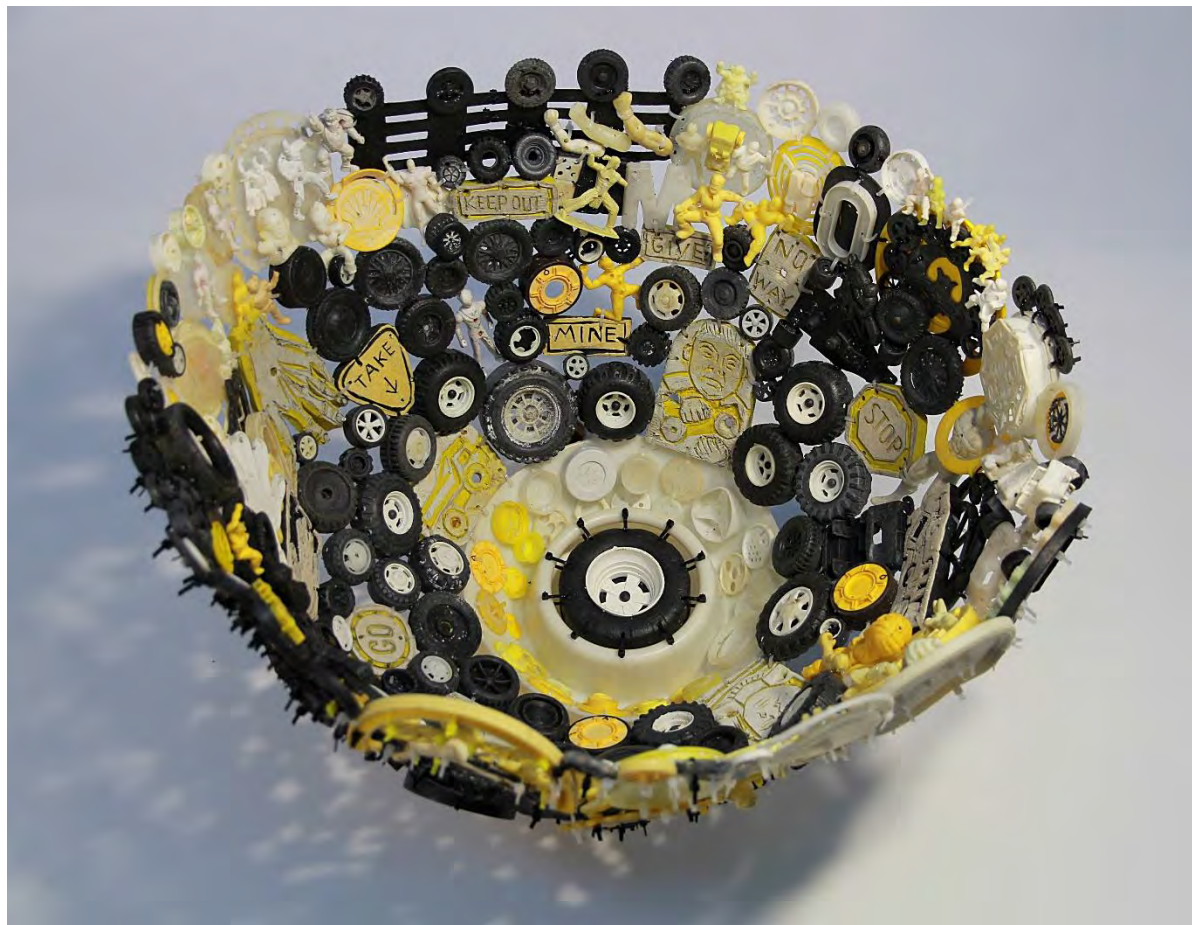
ANNE WILLIAMS BIO

Anne has been a maker all her life and has a wide background in a range of crafts. She has a deep interest in the potential of everyday materials and skills to express the transformative power of human hands in the creation of new forms and meanings.

She has a background in craft teaching and maintains a daily artistic practice, teaches workshops in hand stitching, basketry and doll making and participates in many group exhibitions. She has had 2 solo exhibitions, at MAC in 2016 and MJAC in 2019.



CECILE WILLIAMS



Take Hold is crafted from collected objects and plastic fragments, washed ashore onto Christmas Island, in the Indian Ocean. The large number of black toy tractor wheels, and the endless plastic toys, ignited an internal conversation, triggering a memory from my childhood.

In front of the shed where my mother packed lemons, I played in a sandpit with a boy who was digging holes with his bright yellow toy tractor, until he was called away suddenly. That tractor came home with me that afternoon, unbeknown to the boy or my mother, yet the guilty holes it dug prompted a swift return early the next day, with no-one the wiser except me.

After completing this artwork, I realized there was a similar structural approach and shape that was used in an old 1950's wicker wastebasket I have had around so long that I can't remember where it came from. Starting from a plywood base it was woven upward until the desired height and finish was attained. Take Hold, made from marine debris, waste, has a fishing reel as its base, from where the objects, and my childhood story, are woven and bound till the tale is told.

TAKE HOLD 2021

Marine debris, Cable Ties
53 x 34 x 53cm

CECILE WILLIAMS BIO

Cecile Williams is a Western Australian sculptor whose career has involved her in a diverse arts practice spanning a wide spectrum of the visual arts.

For well over two decades, she has exhibited in both solo and mixed exhibitions, immersed herself in the expansive world of theatre design, worked on environmental and ephemeral art projects as well as creating and mentoring as a community artist in both regional and remote areas of Australia.

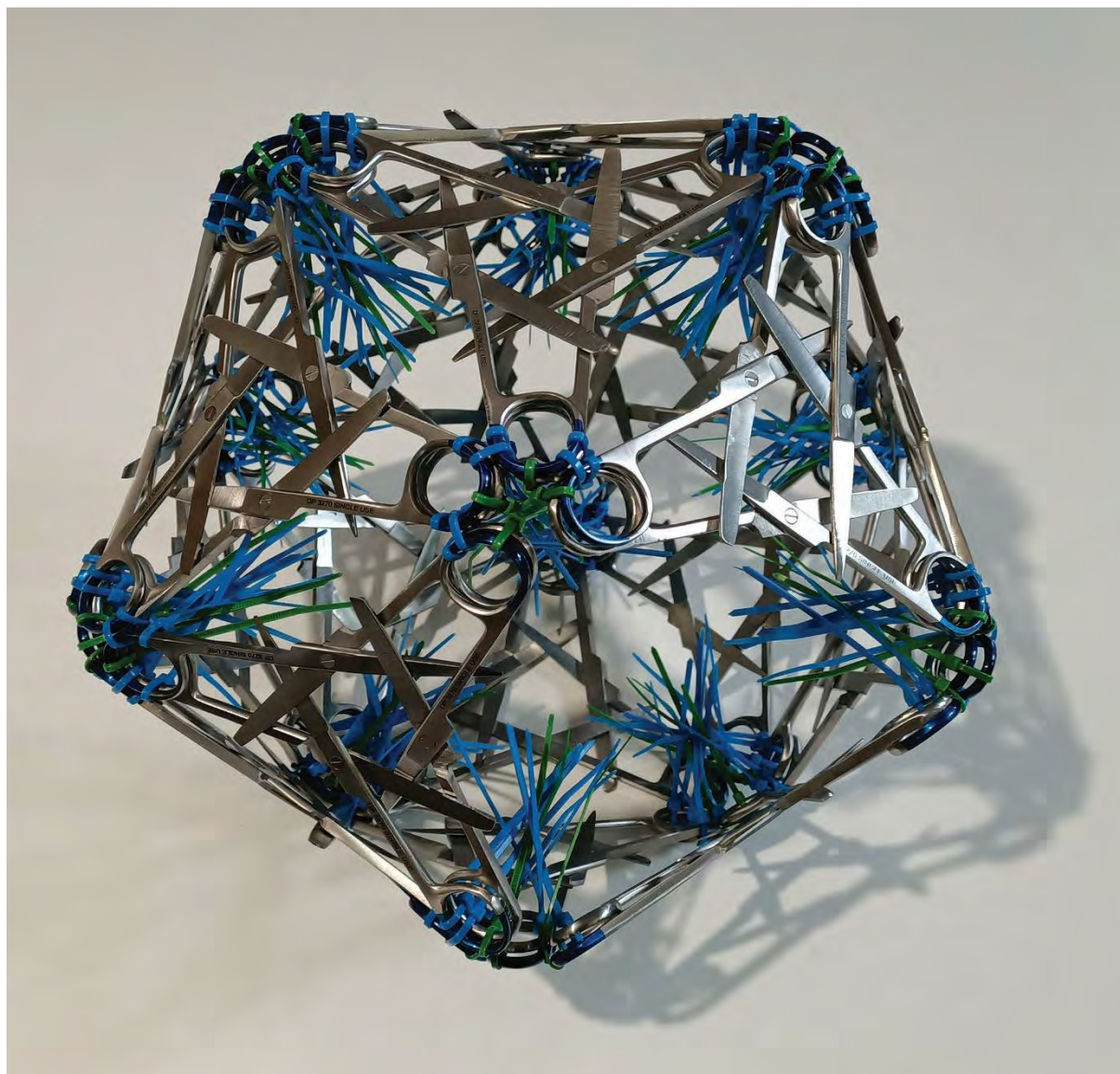
Cecile's enthusiasm for repurposing recycled and found materials has always been an intrinsic force at the very heart of her arts practice. The stories and concerns ignited by these found objects & fragments, are confirmations of experience and triggers of memory. Searching for materials is a profound component equal to the making process.

Her exhibitions have been complimented with residencies in Switzerland, Vietnam & Fiji. Exhibiting both locally interstate and overseas has led to her artworks being acquired from the Western Australian Art Gallery, Edith Cowan University and numerous Private collections such as Kerry Stokes & Janet Holmes a' Court.





DAWN GAMBLER



Familiarity with certain objects can result in them being overlooked – banal objects devoid of any inherent beauty or potential other than what they were initially intended. Using subtle manipulation, these utilitarian instruments have been woven and arranged into patterns uncovering a dance of form and pattern, elevating them to a realm beyond that of their original use. I worked for many years as a Sterilisation Technician at Fremantle Hospital and for me, both surgical instruments and hand-woven vessels share an intensely human connection. I am drawn to the pure physicality of hands-on weaving, an endeavour requiring a deft pair of hands to control the overlapping of materials whilst keeping **everything in place**. Arguably the first 'vessel' was as simple as a pair of cupped hands with fingers overlapping! The touch of the human hand is present in my hospital work too. During each shift I would handle many surgical instruments, the majority being suture scissors...collecting, cleaning, inspecting, packaging, sterilising and delivering. The rounded handles of these scissors delineate holes for fingers and imply human contact. 'Handheld' is an artwork that celebrates the critical, hands-on care provided to the community by hospitals and their humans.

HANDHELD Red 2021

Suture Scissors & Cable Ties

H: 300 mm x W: 300 mm x D: 130 mm

DAWN GAMBLER BIO

Dawn creates from the collected, arranged, readymade and often banal, emphasising the nature of materials being used to poetic effect in her artworks. Transcending their humble origins, she orchestrates common objects into sculptural arrangements capable of inspiring a sense of wonder from the simplest of means.

Dawn graduated with a BA in fine art (sculpture) from Curtin University following three years of study at Claremont School of Art. She has exhibited in shows locally, nationally and overseas and has completed a variety of large scale, sculptural commissions for public spaces in and around Perth.



LEANNE BRAY



My colourful African life has left indelible marks and I have an obsession for hand crafted skills that come out of the that rich and inspirational continent. The influence is an integral part of my own practice and patterns have become the narrative for my own story telling. Within this work, it determines the need for my obsession (or addiction) to a methodical process, stitch by stitch - layer by layer - as I weave together my heartfelt anecdotes. There is a seductive meditation in the process of layering and repetition. My hands are always busy, much like all the women in my family who have 'stitched and made' and like my dear Mum, I have no patience for idle hands.

Basket making is my evening creativity – my pleasure work that has no deadlines – but always it has function, much like the African purpose. My work is made to hold across the arm so the busy hands can keep composing.

HOLD - AN IDLE COMPOSITION 2021

Photograph by Yvonne Doherty

Cotton and rope - coiled, stitched, and formed

52 x 55 x 20 cm

LEANNE BRAY BIO

With a passion for visual art related forums, for over 35 years Leanne has worked full time in the arts. She has maintained a diverse and multi-disciplined, professional background that enables her to tackle just about any creative design project that requires hands on skills. (She has been a maker forever!)

Using her original strengths as a Graphic Designer and illustrator, she has used the combination of strong technical background and sound conceptual development, combined with award winning management skills, giving her the strength, flexibility and professionalism that lends itself to a wide range of artistic adventures.

Leanne has designed, illustrated, lectured at tertiary level, worked with textiles, exhibited extensively both in Australia and Africa, run her own gallery space (here and in Zimbabwe) and developed and run design-based businesses. Leanne has commissioned work in private collections, distributed worldwide. She is full time studio based, complimenting a thriving public art practice.





STELLA PICCIOTTO WINN



When I create I never have a shape in mind. I like not knowing. The elusive form reveals itself when it's ready. Much of the material I work with insists on emerging on its own terms, so resistance is futile!

My act of making is mostly a careful and exacting exploration with trade-offs that eventually shape the memory that's held in each detailed vessel. Each one is a tribute to nature.

I like to think that there's always a delicate beauty present in my work, it's never shouty but a hey, I'm here, this is the story we've examined and unravelled together.

OMBRA 2021

foraged palm inflorescence, fair trade raffia, handspun hemp twine
raffia hand dyed with avocado stones; foraged eucalyptus leaves, bark, buds
23w x 10h cm

STELLA PICCIOTTO WINN BIO

Stella Picciotto Winn grew up in Adelaide and has lived in Bathurst and Brisbane. Home is the port city of Fremantle where her immigrant Italian parents first arrived by ship in the 1950's.

She is a self-taught artist and began her practice in early 2020. Using sustainably sourced plant fibres and dyes such as raffia, sea grass, eucalyptus and earth pigments, Stella creates refined natural fibre vessels and woven sculptures which are recognised for their detail and delicate beauty.

Her interests include traditional Sicilian baskets called 'coffa' and 'u panaru' which were used to collect fruit from her family's orchards. The act of making and its potential for(re)connection to heritage, culture and story-telling is an emerging theme in her work.

The IOTA21 festival is Stella's first exhibition.





LILIANA STAFFORD



Liliana describes herself as a storyteller through art. Her work is inspired by seen and unseen worlds colliding, referencing simultaneously the natural world and layered human relations. Liliana walks often in the natural wetland near her home collecting materials and ideas for her time in the studio. Some of her works echo the stillness we find in the natural world while others consider the nature of life itself.

Liliana works with wire, paper, fibre, vines, willow and whatever other natural materials are in season at the time of making. Liliana says 'Nature cannot speak for itself so we must find a way to do so.'

Her basketry uses finger weaving often with fine threads. 'Together we are strong' Liliana understands that one thread alone is rarely enough but many threads can achieve miracles. Liliana's family came from the Outer Hebrides. They were knitters and weavers.

"I may not know but my hands do". Liliana places her trust when working in her hands and her love of the natural world, finding beauty in the little things she picks up on her walks and asking over and over, 'what next? What would you have me do?'

Arrival 2021

Wire, fibre and silkworm pod
15cm h x 14cm w x 13cm d.

LILIANA STAFFORD BIO

Liliana Stafford's work is inspired by seen and unseen world's colliding, referencing simultaneously the natural world and layered human relations. She is fascinated by the unseen manifested physical: an invisible wind moving a visible leaf.

Some works echo the stillness found in the natural world and speak up for nature's value while others consider the nature of life itself. Throughout her work these concepts collide and dance. Liliana strives to challenge our perceptions of the natural world and how we interact as humans within it, with it and with each other.

Liliana works with fibre, paper, wood, silk, ink, tissue paper. Her sculpture 'Staying Home' won the Alcoa Major sculpture Award at the Rockingham Castaways Sculpture Exhibition 2020.



JAN MULLEN



History generally, and family history regularly, guide my thinking when approaching a new series of works. My starting point for HOLD was five baskets passed down to me from three family members: my mother, my maternal grandmother, and my mother-in-law. How to make these 'mine' was a conundrum but the answer came when considering my other 'basket' collection - a group of 'card baskets' made in the first half of the 20th century from printed images and plastic, blanket stitched together.

I tend to make a project from fabric which I design and print digitally most years. The five original baskets were photographed extensively, then, playing loosely with scale, colour and repeat, I replicated the gist of each.

The flat planes and hand stitch of each basket are my enthusiastic nod to those 'card baskets', but the true inspiration was drawn from the three special women whose baskets sit proudly in my studio

BETTY'S SHOPPING BASKET 2021

My mum Betty made some beautiful cane baskets when she was young, this my rendition of the one I own.

37cm x 35cm x 30cm

Cotton sateen fabric, threads, interfacing, cardboard, vinyl tubing.
Photography, digital printing on fabric, fused interfacing, hand stitch.

JAN MULLEN BIO

Known as a textile artist, though graduating as a sculpture major, I choose to work with any media and technique required - though my interest, expertise, and a business in textiles, has been the backbone of my creative practice for many years.

My constant need for learning and reinvention has me regularly playing with clay, paint, digital print, stitch and sculpture - using any material or technique to suit the idea. The idea and the resulting 'story' is paramount - every decision made flows from this meeting. My art practice continually evolves in response.







MIKAELA CASTLEDINE



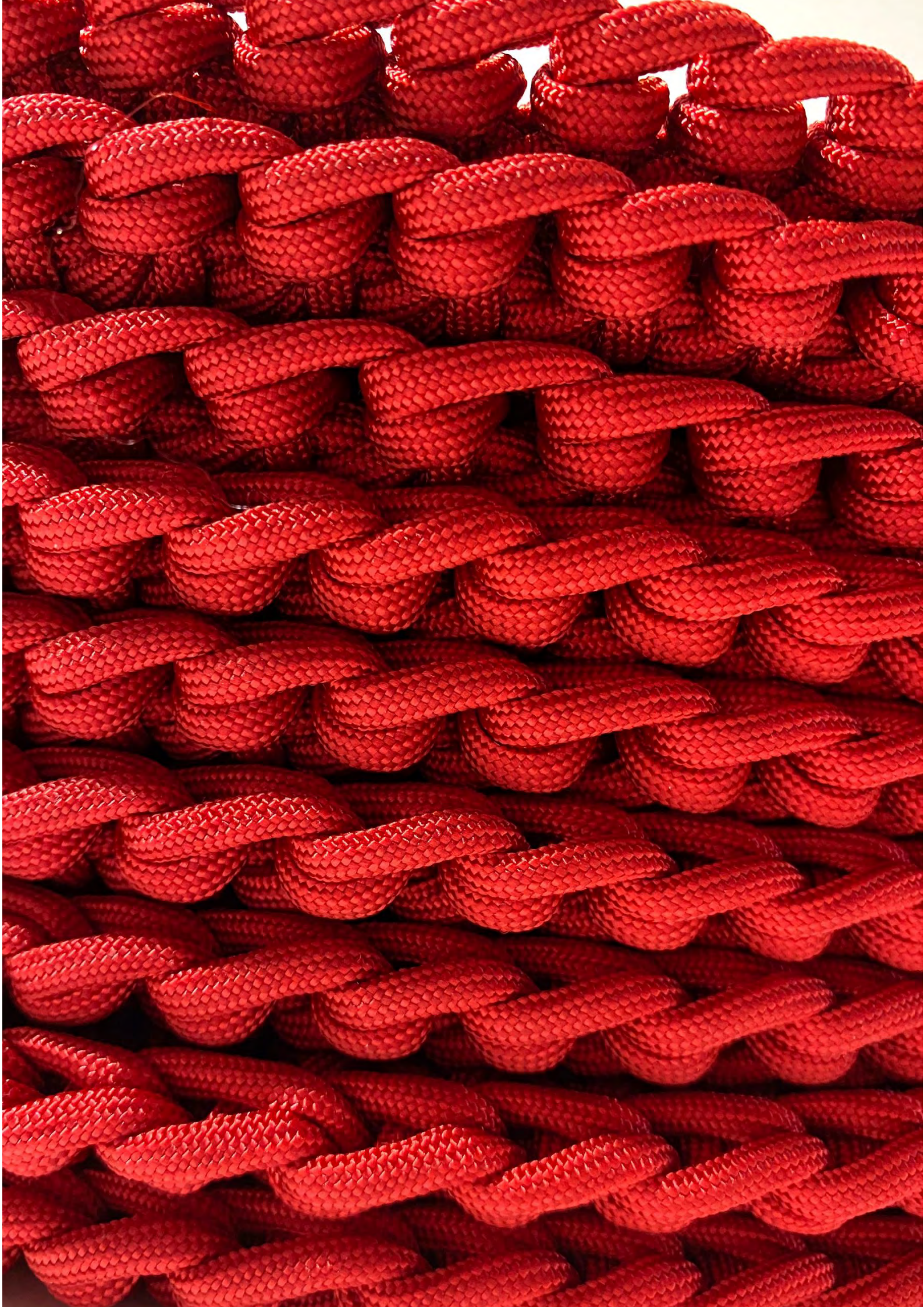
'Still' is part of an ongoing series that references damage. Careful, perfect stitches are made into circular shapes representing periods of time. Using a hot knife, I burn holes into the fabric to better understand and empathise with specific traumas experienced by others. This work is about my stillborn sister whose birth and death at 6 months gestation occurred when I was between 1 and 2 years old. The 9 rings represent a full-term baby and the cut rings the 6 months of this pregnancy. The burnt edges of the crochet represent blood, bone, trauma and death, the space that is scooped out represents the bowl that the baby was placed in after the birth. Although I heard about the event as a young adult, it was only when I read my father's account of the experience more than 50 years later, that I felt the intersection with myself; echoes of the loss of her, jealousy, sibling rivalry, grief and sorrow. The hole she left behind in the family, even after all these years, is there still.

Still 2021
Para cord
42x 11 cm

MIKAELA CASTLEDINE BIO

Mikaela Castledine is an award-winning artist and published writer, with a degree in Applied Science and an MA in Writing and Literature. She has been a professional artist for nearly 30 years, working in collage and sculpture. She was born in the Western Australian wheat-belt, grew up and now lives in the Perth hills. She is best known for her crochet sculptures exploring our connections to animals, religious architecture across cultures and family storytelling.





MEGAN JUREŠA



Stitched with grass, cotton, flax, freshwater pearls and quartz, *Beannacht* (*Blessing*) symbolises hope, faith, and healing after a time of suffering, taking its name from the poem by John O'Donohue:

"On the day when the weight deadens on your shoulders, and you stumble, may the clay dance to balance you... may the nourishment of the earth be yours, may the clarity of light be yours."

In 1996 I saw Montien Boonma's work *Untitled: two acts II*. The raw emotion of that piece had a powerful impact, and I have been excited by the possibilities of the bowl/vessel ever since. *Beannacht* is my response to the overwhelming terror of the New Year's Eve fires in Batemans Bay 2019, and the renewal and healing that has followed. The forests are slowly regenerating, utter devastation giving way to new life and growth.

The work is also a personal celebration of new life - my son Jarrah, due this New Year's Eve, the two-year anniversary of the wall of fire. The empty space within these vessels, and the glimmer of precious stones nestled safely within, reflect possibilities and new life to come.

BEANNACHT (BLESSING) 2021

(Pronunciation: "Ban-Oct"; an Irish/Gaelic word)

Materials: grass, cotton, flax, freshwater pearls, quartz

Vessel 1 dimensions: 16 x 22cm

Vessel 2 dimensions: 17 x 13cm

Vessel 3 dimensions: 12 x 8cm

MEGAN JUREŠA

Megan Jureša is an artist currently based on the Far South Coast of NSW. Inspired by the Arte Povera movement and working predominantly with natural fibres and salvaged textiles, she explores memory, resilience, and connection to place.

With stitching and elements of basketry, Megan creates vessels, objects, sculptures and installations. Her childhood spent wandering and gathering across dunes and coastal forests still influences her practice to this day. Travelling extensively for inspiration and materials, she creates work on-site during her journeys across Australia.

Over the past five years Megan has developed an ongoing creative relationship and connection with Western Australia. Megan was contacted by Nalda Searles in 2016 and offered a mentorship; she completed 3 residencies over 3 years in Perth, assisted at workshops on the East and West Coast, and hosted Nalda in exchange at her Blue Mountains home and studio.





KATRINA VIRGONA



The works in this exhibition extend my interest in historic rituals of collecting and containing hair. Harking back to the narrative of mourning jewellery, and other chattels of remembrance; the various objects here serve as material manifestations of memories and lost moments.

Loose Ends 2021

Wool fibres felted with hair.

Approx. H280 x W160 x D35mm

KATRINA VIRGONA BIO

Katrina was born in Cairns, North Queensland and moved to Fiji for four years with her family when she was nearly nine. On return, she lived, worked and studied in various locations around Australia before finally settling in Perth in 1984. Katrina has completed two Bachelor degrees majoring in psychology (University of New England, NSW 1982) and visual arts (First Class Hons, Curtin University, WA 2006). She also completed an Associate Diploma in Visual Arts Management at North Metropolitan TAFE (1992). Katrina has been teaching at Curtin University since 2002, and she conducts various textile workshops in local communities. Her work has been exhibited and published locally, nationally, and internationally.





FIONA GAVINO



HOLD offered the opportunity to celebrate both my heritage and the technical foundations of my practice. 'My Maori grandmother came to Australia with her parents as a young girl, and during WWII, whilst working in a Brisbane hotel, she met my grandfather. Sadly, he was sent back to the Philippines before my dad was born and my grandmother followed her lovers wishes, bestowing on their child his name - David Gavino. When I married, I chose to keep my father's name as an act of love and respect for the lolo I never met.'

I am grateful for great influences in my work, those of Maori and Filipino basketry traditions along with Yolngu fibre art - taught to me through my adoption by Anne Gondjalk who called me 'waku' (daughter). Amala (mother) as I respectfully called her, instructed me in the ways of harvesting and working with *Pandanus spiralis* and bush dyes.

The three contemporary *Pasiking* are inspired by the rattan backpack of the Cordillera region of Luzon (northern Philippines) and embrace Filipino ideas around design and function. To understand a basket, you must use it - and then you begin to understand a little of the will and spirit of the maker.

PASIKING 2021

Cane, repurposed pleather

FIONA GAVINO BIO

Fiona Gavino of Australian, Filipino, and Māori heritage, is described as an intercultural artist working the traditional into the contemporary. Graduating from Charles Darwin University with a BA Visual Arts (2006) her work features in *Hot Springs; the Northern Territory & Contemporary Australian Artists* (Macmillan Art Publishing). In 2007 she relocated to Western Australia and currently lives and works in Fremantle.

In 2014 Gavino was a recipient of an Asialink Residency and was invited to return the following year to exhibit at the Cultural Centre of the Philippines with a solo show, *In-between-spaces*.

Gavino is known for her cross-cultural collaborations and has worked with the Yindjibarndi women in the Pilbara collaborating with them to create contemporary fibre sculpture, baskets and reviving their traditional practice of net making. In 2018 she undertook a residency in Madrid working with an inner-city community in the throes of gentrification to produce a site-specific installation and for the last two years worked with Japanese artists and the community of York (WA) creating large scale sculptures of endangered Australian animals from wheat straw. Gavino was a finalist in the John Stringer Art Prize, 2020.



KATE CAMPBELL-POPE



This work seeks to honour and celebrate my long-term friend and mentor Nalda Searles, who I first met in 1985 when I attended her Albany Summer School basketry course. During that week I experienced the sudden loss of my sister, and in the months that followed, the act of constructing coiled baskets became an outward spiral to follow, in that period of numbing grief.

Over the years, and several further profound losses later, the act of making vessels of various sorts has provided a powerful form of healing during these times. Baskets and urns, to collect the uncontainable, holding and weaving the spirit and memory in some way.

In current times, the environmental catastrophes we collectively face provide an imperative for me as an artist to speak of loss and the possibility of regeneration. Through stitching and placing, forming and feeling the plant material, a kind of solace may be found; imagining myself into the multitudinous realm of nest weavers, cocoon makers, and bower builders.

'OF MALLEE AND MARRI' 2021

Parrot ravaged Marri nuts, coconut fibre, New Zealand flax
32 x 20 x 10 cm

KATE CAMPBELL-POPE BIO

Kate Campbell-Pope is a visual artist with a practice encompassing community arts, public art, teaching, curating, and mentoring. She has exhibited extensively in exhibitions locally, nationally, and internationally in Chile and Japan.

Her artwork is mostly sculptural in nature, and often using found materials carrying inherent meaning. She uses natural fibre and textiles employing adapted basketry techniques, constructional and decorative stitch, and random weaving.

Kate's practice also includes drawing, painting, installation, and ceramics.

Artworks are represented in a number of public collections such as AGWA, King Edward Memorial Hospital, City of Tamworth, in addition to various private collections.





SIAN BOUCHERD



My preoccupation with this craft connects me with the millennia old lineage of women working with fibre, retracing an ancient and primal motif while at once connecting me to the now; working with plant matter demands a response to the living ecosystem and further, that I take responsibility for my material impact. Working with natural fibres, sourcing them and preparing them places me within the chain of waste and renewal, an increasingly precarious relationship and one that is inherently political. These abstract woven forms hold sometimes complex and paradoxical feelings as I grapple with my place on this a stolen land, the climate crisis, and a generalised dysphoria for social constructs. Through the slow and careful repetition of each stitch I am able to reassert a position, one that feels considered and careful.

FORGOTTEN MEGAFLORA 2021
Weeds, hand dyed fair-trade raffia
Photography Yvonne Doherty

SIÂN BOUCHERD BIO

Siân Boucherd was born in rural Western Australia in 1983.

Following the completion of her Art and Design Degree at ECU in 2007, Boucherd pursued a curatorial practice in the UK. During this period Siân worked at Stour Valley Arts, an organisation with a background in Land Art, working site specifically within an ancient woodland in Kent.

A return to Australia in 2012 saw her return to the studio where Boucherd's interest in the natural environment manifest in her woven works. Through the use of natural fibres such as sisal, jute and wool, Boucherd creates meticulously hand-crafted vessels by way of a coiling basketry technique.

Currently making Fremantle home Boucherd takes her cues from nature's architecture; formations such as pods, nests, cocoons and the unique striations that make up Western Australia's ancient geology.





MERLE DAVIS



Using traditional cultural basket making techniques of coiling and stitching with today's societies discarded waste materials, in particular plastics found in the Indian Ocean and washed up on our beaches, I am making functional vessels that 'HOLD' but also draws awareness to this environmental disaster.

UNRAVELLED 2021
MARINE FOOD CONTAINER 2021
Ocean debris
42 x 35 cm

MERLE TOPSI DAVIS BIO

Merle has an art teachers' certificate STC/WAIT with a textile major. She is a multi-disciplined artist with a wealth of experience in teaching, fashion design, community arts, country arts coordination. She has extensive exhibition experience including Gallery East, Craft West, BRAG, Art Geo, Maunsell Wickes and numerous craft outlets and fairs.

She is represented in many private collections throughout Australia and overseas.

Her current work is based around discarded fishing ropes/paraphernalia and plastic detritus to create works as a metaphor for sustainability and conservation.

SXS Bondi 2019& 2020 SXS Cottesloe 2020.





MARTIEN VAN ZUILEN



In the busy-ness of everyday life, time for artmaking provides me with a vital and nourishing breather. Coming to rest in the very process of creative engagement. Suspended time, aimed to foster and carry me forward. A chance to play, explore, and push the creative envelope.

Making felt is a tactile exploration; a hands-on process of transforming loose woollen fibres into a durable textile and distinctive, narrative objects. Honouring traditional techniques and using minimal equipment, I delight in the freedom of the medium. What matters is an intentional engagement, and the interplay of materials, experience, design, and ideas in a gradual, creative becoming, never finite.

The five vessels started 'life' the exact same size and amount of undyed wool fibres. Starting 'au-naturelle' pares back the essence, it refines my focus and broadens the creative options along the way. Other ingredients were added during the felting process: various natural fibres, textural effects, stitch, and organic dyes. The use of directional shrinkage techniques resulted in the various vessel forms, each a repository of interpretation and narrative, a storyline in visual and material form.

INTERLUDE I - V 2021

Merino wool, silk, cotton, hemp and ramie fibres, muslin, threads, and yarns (wool, cotton, silk, paper), natural dyes (eucalyptus leaves and onion skins), wood.

Hand-felted, stitched, dyed

Photographer: Bewley Shaylor

MARTIEN VAN ZUILEN BIO

Martien van Zuilen (born The Netherlands, 1962) is an established felt artisan and fibre artist based in Perth, Western Australia. She uses wool fibres, mixed media and collected objects to create complex felted forms, sculptural works and distinctive objects, entirely by hand. Martien exhibits her high-quality distinctive artworks nationally and internationally. Since the late 1980s she has delivered felt-making workshops throughout Australia, as well as in Europe and throughout the USA.

Martien was instrumental in establishing the Victorian Feltmakers Inc. in 1995. For 18 years (1998-2016) she coordinated the Australian National Yurt Project. In 2013, she completed her PhD (Anthropology) with an ethnographic thesis on the significance of women's textile art practices within the context of Australia's cultural landscape.

Martien is the current editor of Australia's national magazine FELT, and the Convenor of Fibres West Inc. (www.fibreswest.com.au). Alongside her studio practice, Martien maintains an active teaching schedule and undertakes curatorial work. She has written extensively about the value of the handmade and the meaning of making in contemporary arts practice. Through her artisan dyeing studio *Colourant Dyeworks*, she supplies artists with high quality hand-dyed fibres and fabrics.

Martien's artwork is published in numerous international publications, including *Showcase 500 Art Necklaces* (book), *Surface Design Association* (USA), *Textile Fibre Forum* (Australia), *Felt Matters* (UK), *ViltKontakt* (Netherlands), *Fiber Art Now* (USA), *Yurts Tipis and Benders* (book), *FELT* (Australia), *verFiltz Und zugeNäht* (Germany), the 2015 book *Pots and Pods for Feltmakers, Adventures in the Third Dimension*, the 2016 book *Worldwide Colours of Felt*, the 2019 book *The Women's Gallery 1988-1995*, and the 2020 book *Felt Forward: New Technologies in Feltmaking*. Her 2018 work *Standing Tall* (5 hand-felted vessels) was selected for the juried exhibition 'Family Matters' in the US (Surface Design Association). *Holding I* was selected for the 2020 juried exhibition 'Felt Fiber Transformed' in the US (Fiber Art Now).



GEMMA BEN-ARY



I celebrate womxn's work in all its manifestations, and as I weave I feel honoured to be adding a few words to a greater narrative, to stories and ideas that are universal and ordinary, yet at the same time, so precious and magical. In recent works I am interested in the anatomy of the female pelvic bones, in some ways I think they are the ultimate, or the original vessel, in which we have all been cradled. All of humanity has sprung from this amazing structure.

PRECIOUS UBIQUITOUS 2021

Rafia, raw wool and synthetic gold fibre.
Approx. 38 cm wide, 60cm high and 20cm deep.

GEMMA BEN-ARY BIO

b. 1978 in the Pilbara, and now living in the hills of Perth, Gemma's practice is focused on feminist theory and contemporary craft. Interested in the expectations placed upon women in society, and in the denial of parts of women's personalities and bodies that limit their means of self-expression and potential for equality, she references and celebrates traditional women's work and invisible labour. Using a variety of materials including charcoal and ink drawing, life drawing, still life, weaving, and basketry, Gemma's projects and ideas are usually borne through experimenting with materials. She holds a Bachelor of Visual Arts and writing from Edith Cowan university.



MAXXI MINAXI MAY



A vibrant cocoon, soft, comforting, and colourful. As in much of May's practice, this sculptural form is an example of incorporating traditional techniques and remodelling them in a contemporary juxtaposed fashion. Commercial felt, a ubiquitous, manufactured material forms the basis of layered chromatic felt beads. These are woven together using a network of warp and weft threads forming a thick blanket-like fabric that shapes the cushioned vessel. This woven basket could be imagined to be the home of a unique hybrid creature camouflaged within its habitat, the *Cocoonus Luminosus*.

COCOONUS LUMINOSUS 2021

Wool Blend Felt, glue and cotton thread
H170mm x W220mm x D270mm

MAXXI MINAXI MAY BIO

Maxxi Minaxi May is a multidisciplinary artist interested in the interplay of materiality and conceptual in examining culture as an intermix of the popular, personal and environment - both local and global. Industrialised culture is often explored through popular media, identity, food, DIY, craft, fashions and the commonplace. She encourages fresh perceptions of reality, fantasy and spectacle by reusing, recontextualising or remaking 'readymade' objects and familiar paraphernalia or re-developing ideas into new compositions such as installations, kinetics, sculptures and wall pieces. Her style is typically identified by an extravagant use of colour, replication, ornament, play and design, interjected with juxtaposition and humour.



TANIA SPENCER



FENCE STRAINER BASKETS 2021

Ringlock wire

70cm x 40cm x 40cm

TANIA SPENCER

Tania Spencer is a sculptor based in Lake Grace, Western Australia and combines the textile techniques of embroidery, knit, crochet and weaving with rural and industrial materials. Tania makes large-scale objects, knitted installations and wire drawings from fencing wire and embroiders heavy copper and steel wires onto metal canvases.

Recently her work has shifted to include softer textile interventions in public space. Created **with brightly coloured surveyors' tape, these optimistic new installations are** markers on the landscape, industrial signifiers of change and places of activity.

Tania has a BA(Curtin) and had 6 solo exhibitions. National exhibitions include numerous Sculpture by the Sea, Cottesloe and Bondi, Love Lace, The International Lace Award, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, Sensorial Loop, 1st Tamworth Textile Triennial. Awards 2008 NAB Western Australian Sculptors Scholarship, 2010 Castaways Sculpture Award. Collections City of Melville, Bunbury, Tamworth, Nedlands. Commissioned public artworks located in Albany, Lake Grace and Understory Northcliffe.

As children, my brothers and I, played in the junkheap just beyond the house yard fence. It contained old farming machinery and house implements from the time of clearing the land to the present day. It was an incredible playground that fired my imagination and fostered my interest and creativity in building things.

This junk heap was essential to our working farm, used by Dad as source material for fixing or making new machinery. Like his father before him, making farm implements and structures was a necessity. Reusing steel and using the materials at hand was a matter of cost and practicality.

We lived on a rocky farm, with lots of sheet and submerged granite, making it hard to dig post holes to build and strain fences. Pop used rabbit netting, wire and ringlock filled with rocks, to make gabion type strainer posts for the fences. These strainers are still standing today on our old farm.

This practicality is something that is prevalent in my art practice – Like my grandparents and my parents, using what is close by around me, whether in the junkheap or the farm supplies shop. These baskets are made with the fence wire from our farm.



