AUSTRALIAN
# Wood
REVIEW
123



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Making spade-handle tables

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- ARBORTECH TURBO SCRAPER
- BOSCH CORDLESS DUST EXTRACTOR

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Australian Wood Review 123

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# Editor's Letter

Making things by hand has become somewhat of a political statement. So many reasons can be thrown up as to why it's not efficient, not sustainable, and in a world of consumer 'abundance' not even needed. And we're evolving to a place where AI and CNC can do it better, right?

Well, many of us don't agree. Of course technology is there to be exploited on the 'handmade' journey, but more and more the things we make refute the arguments against. Designs can be customised for individual needs and aesthetics, materials can selected, reclaimed, recycled and importantly made to last.

David Laird is New Zealand maker who thinks deeply about the whole life cycle of what he makes. Sourcing, drying and working with local 'end-of-life', fallen and salvaged woods, he looks to minimise the carbon footprint of the furniture he makes. It's also a sustainable lifestyle choice he is comfortable with. This issue David shares his process for making his 'spade-handle' tables. It's a technique that builds on Windsor mortise and tenon joinery which you can read about from p.38.

Other articles touch on this theme. Transformative Repair (p.76) is a project that puts an artspace spotlight on how and why we should ensure the longevity of things made. In Passages, US maker Vivian Chiu records the history of an émigré community in salvaged materials remade into vessels bearing the imprint of their origin, see p.80.

One look at the work of the carpenters who practise the art and craft of stereotomy will leave you in no doubt these people would be in the Mensa of woodworkers, if such a thing existed! Stereotomy is an art, a science, and a high-end craft. Creating complex curved and even spiralled solid timber architectural wood structures is not for the fearless, but for some it is also a disciplined and even spiritual path. Patrick Moore is a Canadian carpenter and the first from the English-speaking world to be accepted as a *Compagnon Passant Charpentier* in France. Through him we learn a little of what's involved and why this art still has relevance in a digital age. See p.50.

On the cover this issue you can now see the force for positivity that is Jono Everett. Jono's skills as a designer and maker have been learnt through trial and error, experience and formal study. He draws strength from a community of makers and returns that by creating support networks. His work evokes visual lightness while being tuned to strength, aesthetics and function, and reflects a lifetime of 'chasing lines' and 'telling stories'. Read about Jono from p.32.

Since our last issue, a new award for Maker of the Year presented by Carbatec has been established. From the estate of the late Jan Pennell comes a unique and generous bequest. Jan was a distinguished RAAF officer who post-service became an expert woodturner. She was an active Blue Mountains Woodturners club member and her interest in encouraging others is now carried forward in the form of an annual $1500 award for the Maker of the Year entry that features the best display of woodturning. Learn more on p.65.

The deadline for entering Maker of the Year, presented by Carbatec, is 4 September. Work created after 30 June 2021 is eligible and there are six categories, three of which are open to makers all over the world. If you would like to add your work to this year's showcase for fine woodwork and wood art, head to www.woodreview.com.au/moty

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**COVER:**
Jono Everett in his workshop in Newcastle, NSW.

**COVER PHOTOGRAPHY:**
Edwina Richards

# WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER!


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**GREAT VALUE**

*These items are not pictured in the main image*

## Wall Mounted Wood Dust Extraction Kit - DCK-200W

3

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**NEW RELEASE**

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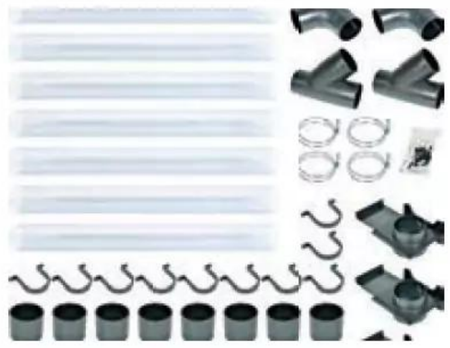

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**Left:** Drilling with larger diameter bits is possible by quickly and easily reversing the head of the tool.

**Above:** Squareness to the surface was tested and found to be very accurate in both X and Y axes.

# Levoite Drilling Guide

*Reviewed by Damion Fauser*

This vertical drilling guide works. With a standard ¼" hexagonal tool drive shaft it can be driven by pretty well any handheld drill or driver. Made from CNC-machined aluminium with stainless steel guide rods, the build quality is quite good. What appealed to me with this brand over others researched was the fact that is doesn't tilt, so I wasn't concerned about any slipping out of perpendicular in use.

The keyed chuck will take 1.5–13mm shanks and therefore is able to work with even large forstner bits (as required for a recent job), but for this you'll need to reverse the main head of the tool, which is quick and easy to do. The drill is guided straight down on two rods. One rod has a flat facet machined for positively locking the supplied threaded depth stop. On the other rod is a return spring, but this is really only strong enough for smaller drills and drivers. I used a larger 18V drill and found I needed to support the weight of the tool once mounted to the drilling guide.

Out of the box the tool tested perfectly square to the reference surface in both the X and Y axes, with just a small amount of play in the shaft with my heavy drill mounted. I found that by locating the tip of the drill where I needed it, I could slightly nudge the base of the guide over to check for squareness and then clamp in place for a perfectly perpendicular action.

There is a great range of optional accessories available to extend the capability of this tool, including extension rods, flip stops and edge guides. I found this to be a well made and workable solution for a reasonable price point.

*Review tool supplied by author. Available from https://levoite.com/*

*Damion Fauser @damionfauser is a furniture designer maker and woodwork teacher in Brisbane. Learn more at http://damionfauser.com/*

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# Bosch GAS 18V-10 L Professional Cordless Dust Extractor

*Reviewed by Raf Nathan*

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2


3

1. Snap on the castors and it's ready to go to work.
2. The unit uses 18 volt Bosch batteries.
3. The pleated filter is easy to access.

A dust extractor is a pretty standard tool now and this one will fit the bill for Bosch cordless owners. Once you pick a brand for your cordless power tools you are stuck with it however, as most battery systems are not inter-changeable unfortunately.

Out of the box this cordless dust extractor is pretty well ready to go to work. Snap the four castors onto the base, fit the hose and slide in a Bosch 18 volt battery. It is rated L-class for dust, meaning light duty filtering of expelled air, so it is not a replacement for high volume extractors in very dusty workplaces. An M-class is better for most professional woodwork.

However, this is a light tool and with battery only weighs about 5.5kg (depending on battery fitted). This makes it easy to carry around while using it as a vacuum cleaner. I raced around my workshop with it, cleaning all the corners and hard to reach spots. Connected to my random orbit sander it seemed to work as well as my standard corded dust extractor.

It has a reasonably sized six litre canister to collect waste which is easy to empty. The pleated internal filter will need tapping out and cleaning regularly, although this is easy to access.

The motor is 260 watt only so it spins hard to generate suction. As such, noise levels are very high at 85db 900mm from the source and a big 98db at the source. Hearing protection is essential.

It comes with a 35mm diameter hose with fittings for both power tools and vacuuming. Run time is critical for any cordless tool and this is rated at four minutes per battery amp so a 4 amp battery will run around 16 minutes. I used a high end 8 amp Pro-core battery and got 35 minutes or so easily. Given the motor size it would be prudent to not overuse it, and to let it cool down between extended run times.

It is pretty well an all-plastic build and given how hard the small motor is working I would not expect good longevity if used constantly day after day. However I could not fault it when used daily for short time periods, and highly recommend it.

*Review tool supplied by Bosch, see https://www.bosch.com.au/*
*Available from Bunnings and power tool dealers*

*Raf Nathan @treeman777 is a Brisbane woodworker and contributor to Australian Wood Review*

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# Felder Format 4 plan 51L Jointer

*Reviewed by Damion Fauser*

This is Felder's flagship jointer, and let me just say from the outset, it deserves the title. I've owned mine for around a year now and it has proven to be an exceptionally capable and accurate machine, significantly boosting my scale capability and productivity.

The planing surface is substantial, being able to process boards up to 510mm in width, but what I find more useful is the table length. At 3000mm total, and with the infeed table being 1650mm long, boards a little longer than 3200mm in length can self-balance on the infeed table without additional support. This has made processing those long and heavy boards so much easier for me.

The fence is super accurate and has not shifted out of square once, even after being moved to any position on the table. The movement mechanism is a substantial piece of engineering, yet is smooth and easy to move with the ergonomic handle and locks rigidly in place with a simple turn of the kip-lock handle. Being a parallelogram mechanism, this allows the machine to be located tight against a wall regardless of the fence position, which can save a lot of space on the shop floor. The fence tilts easily between 90–45°, with adjustable positive stops at each end of that range.

The controls are clear and located at eye level on a post at the rear of the infeed table. Start-up is smooth with the proprietary Felder Star-Delta progressive powerup system.

The height of the infeed table is electromotively controlled with a fast movement up/down control knob and a fine-adjust button with a fidelity of 0.1mm, with the current setting displayed on a clear and bright LED readout. Whilst potentially not a feature required by everyone, this has proven to be extremely


1


2

3

1. The infeed table adjusts easily to create a concave or convex working surface.
2. The fence is rigid and easy to move.
3. Showing the control panel – effective and well located.


useful to me when performing tasks such as centring glue-lines in leg laminations or removing controlled amounts of material for generating tapers for example.

The infeed table also adjusts for tilt in the horizontal plane to allow concave or convex machined surfaces, ideal for springing panel joints for example.

With a jointer as wide as this, consideration should be given to using a power feeder when working wider boards, or for situations where selecting a substantial cut depth (maximum cut depth for this machine is a significant 8mm) for both safety and accuracy. This machine is fitted with mounting points to make installation easier and also has an onboard 20amp, three-phase outlet for powering the feeder, meaning a secondary, dedicated power source is not required.

Dust control is generally very effective, with the fence swing-arm acting as a shroud to direct waste into the extraction port, which is 140mm wide and so can handle a serious volume of airflow. One little quirk I've noticed is that when processing narrower boards with the fence towards the front edge of the table surface, some of the waste isn't extracted properly and instead ejects forwards onto the table surface behind the fence assembly. This is not really a show-stopper and could very well be due to my particular extraction setup. When processing wider stock the chip collection is flawless.

The Euro-style overhead safety guard is segmented so it can fold down the front edge of the machine when the fence is closer to the front edge, meaning the operator doesn't need to move around an extended fence as can happen with rigid Euro-style guards.

The table surfaces are beautifully ground and perfectly flat. Combined with the 120mm diameter cutterblock, this machine produces surfaces that are amazingly smooth and flat, requiring significantly less subsequent processing effort prior to either gluing or finishing.

The standard supplied motor is rated at 5.5kw which would be ample for most situations, but I opted for the larger 7.3kw motor for the volume of larger stock that I regularly process.

This is a seriously capable machine for high-volume shops or for those who demand the very best.

*Review machine supplied by author. More information at https://www.felder-group.com/en-au*

*Damion Fauser @damionfauser is a furniture designer maker and woodwork teacher in Brisbane. Learn more at http://damionfauser.com/*

# Nova Neptune Lathes

*Reviewed by Andrew Potocnik*


1

Nova have recently introduced two lathes which deserve serious consideration. The Nova Neptune and Neptune Max are the same lathe, however one is a bench-mounted midi version while the Max is free-standing with a single-piece bed that is 255mm longer, allows extended spindle turning and sells for $2,849.

What sets these lathes apart is the flexibility afforded by the sliding headstock which can rotate 360°. Doing some homework prior to trialling the lathes, I found they are powered by a direct drive motor which allows the headstock move along the bed to any required position. Normally lathes have pulleys that allow for changes in speed range or torque, however the direct drive system opens many avenues.

If you need to hollow from the end, slide the headstock to where you need it and stand directly in front to shape the inside of a bowl, or work your way into a hollow form. No need to lean over the lathe bed, just stand in front and look straight in. This is a great asset if you're turning repeated forms where fatigue can set in, or if your agility isn't what it used to be.

Likewise, if you wish to turn a bowl larger than the generous 380mm maximum diameter afforded over the bed, you can rotate the headstock up to 360° to select indented increments of 22.5, 45, and 180° to find a position that is comfortable and safe.

The most common problem in this position is providing ample support for the tool rest, but the solid saddle provides plenty. If access is a problem, it can be moved from the right side of the headstock, which is where it 'should' be, and moved to the left of the bed, behind the headstock, which should eliminate the need for an external support.

The bed length of the Neptune is 480mm while that of the Neptune Max is 1080mm. Although not available for me to review, Nova's website shows options for external support for either end of the lathe bed via joining points machined for bed extensions that are also available.

For extra length there are 16" extension beds that fit to either end of each lathe. Although made in New Zealand, all components are rounded to imperial increments and translated to metric conversions on the specification sheets. Furthermore, the spindle size is not the usual metric size of M30, but imperial 1-1/4" 8 TPI. On enquiry I learnt that lathes with M30 threads are not available.

## On test

Putting the Neptune to the test, I found the 1.5hp direct drive Striatech motor provides plenty of torque. Due to its clever internal controller, the motor ramps up power to maintain even rpms


2

when it detects extra load on the workpiece – a great feature.

The lathe features electronic braking, adjustable in the lathe menu, so wood can be slowed without using the handwheel. At 75mm in diameter, this isn't a practical size, but it has four screw holes so you can add a larger wooden disc that will assist in fitting faceplates or chucks to the spindle.

I'm always conscious of how easy it is for older hands and fingers to operate locking levers, considering that many hobby turners are older and small, fiddly fixtures can make or break a sale. Here all levers are large and easily lock without much effort. Spring-loaded micro levers can be moved out of the way with ease, and if that isn't enough, the saddle has three holes that the locking lever can be relocated to.

The handwheel on the tailstock is also large enough to be operated with ease and has a self-ejecting tailstock centre so there's no need to use a knock-out bar, even though the spindle is hollow, which allows for drilling long holes.

The quill has a travel distance of 100mm with laser-cut markings in both metric and imperial, so you know just how far it has advanced, especially handy when drilling holes.

These lathes are a welcome addition to the market. Well made, easy to operate with a powerful motor and swivel heads, as a midi lathe, the Neptune Max could easily be a primary workhorse in any turner's workshop. I'd be more than happy to have one in mine, however I would prefer to have an M10 threaded version.

*Photos: Andrew Potocnik*

*Andrew Potocnik @andrewpotocnik is a Melbourne wood artist, teacher, author and regular contributor to Australian Wood Review. See https://www.andrewpotocnik.com/*

*Review machines supplied by and available from Carbatec, www.carbatec.com.au*


1. The Nova Neptune bench mounted lathe.
2. Large locking levers make tightening the tool rest and saddle easy and efficient.
3. The saddle has three threaded holes so the spring-loaded toolrest lever won't get in your way.

# Arbortech Turbo Scraper

*Reviewed by David Luckensmeyer*



**Left:** The starlike shape of the new Turbo Scraper allows good visuality while shaping. It's not just a texturing tool and can take away material with surprising speed.

**Above:** A depth of cut around 1mm means a soft touch gives a relatively smooth and even result.

I've been using Arbortech products for more than 30 years and have experienced a number of design improvements first hand. The Turbo Scraper is the latest addition to Arbortech's power carving range, and my favourite to date.

The Woodcarver was revolutionary at the time (and still is in its current iteration). In the early 90s, I used it to rough out organic forms – shaping ball and claw feet on a large dining room table. But the original tool could get away from you if you weren't careful. More recently, I bought the TurboPlane and found it had the same ability to remove material quickly but with substantially more control.

The new Turbo Scraper affords more control than ever. The negative cutting angle makes it possible to work in any direction with no actual (or feared) gouging. It cuts more slowly by comparison, but this is a good thing: slower cutting is integral to increased levels of control. If you're working on large scale projects, you'll still want to use the Woodcarver and/or TurboPlane before moving on to the scraper. But for most of us, the new Turbo Scraper is all we are going to need.

The scraper has a depth of cut around 1mm which means a soft touch gives a relatively smooth, even result. Consequently, it textures surfaces beautifully. Using the face of the scraper offers the opportunity for subtle surface variations while on edge the scraper pretty much exactly approximates work with a carving gouge. I very quickly achieved a lightly scalloped surface that invites plenty of touching.

But this is not just a texturing tool. Strokes along a curved pencil line take away material with surprising speed. There's a paradox here that is best experienced personally. On the one hand, the shallow depth of cut combined with the negative cutting angle limit the amount of material removed. Even trying to make the scraper 'gouge' into a timber surface ends in failure. (Really, I tried.) But on the other hand, repetitive passes build up and pretty soon a fair amount of material has been removed.

There are a few standouts of this tool. For starters, it can be used in any direction – with the grain, across the grain, or against the grain. It cuts (or scrapes) with ease. In addition, the advertising about being able to see through to the work while using the scraper is true. I'm used to taking passes with other blades and then checking the results afterwards. But this scraper, with its odd starlike shape, allows good visuality while shaping to a line. And finally, I'm a fan of tooling with replaceable insert knives. Except for instances of extreme abuse, such tooling should last indefinitely. The price for a replacement set of three carbide teeth is currently $60.

To be clear, this tool does not completely take the place of properly maintained and used hand tools. The feeling of contentment when a sharp blade passes through timber is sublime. After completing most of the carving, shaping or texturing with the Turbo Scraper, I still need to grab a hand scraper or fine sandpaper to refine the surface before applying a finish.

That said, the combination of control and power of this new scraper makes it the best tool Arbortech has produced to date. Yes I often like working quietly with hand tools, but I also like working efficiently and sometimes the volume of work requires a powered solution. It is well worth the asking price and will definitely have a place in my workshop.

*Review tool supplied by Arbortech Tools, see https://www.arbortechtools.com*

*David Luckensmeyer @luckensmeyer is a Brisbane-based woodworker and furniture maker, see www.luckensmeyer.com.au*

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# Making a 'Floating' Secret Drawer

**Secret drawers and curved drawer fronts added some extra challenges to this bedside cabinet build. Derek Cohen shows how he tackled these elements.**

I recently completed two bedside tables for a visitor's bedroom at home. The last visitors, my son and his wife, admired the previous tables so much that they adopted them for their home! I do love it when that happens – these days, after 30 years of filling our house with furniture, I continue to build for family and friends. It is one of life's pleasures. Anyway, I got to make them again.

## The design

My preference is for minimalistic furniture. This is not simple furniture by any means, but rather that the elements are reduced to essentials. And this makes for deceptively simple furniture which is often a great deal more work to do. In this case, less really is more.

The tables are essentially Tasmanian oak boxes on jarrah stands, sort of Krenov-meets-mid-century-Danish in concept. Each table has a single curved drawer front, and a tiny, window-like drawer on the side at the rear (**photo 1**).

Each bow-fronted case floats above a bow-fronted base. The legs are tapered and splayed. The choice of the light Tasmanian oak on the dark jarrah is to add to the separation of forms, and increase the sense of it floating. Peaceful and calm…is that not what one wants at bedtime?

Guests will look at the tiny drawer and say: 'Cute – I can keep my watch, rings, and earrings in there!' Woodworkers instead say: 'How did you get it to float in the middle of the case?' 'What is holding it up – why

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does the tiny drawer not fall out?' And then, 'How can I build it?' We like a puzzle to solve.

## The tiny drawer

Well, obviously the drawer does not hang in space. If it did, it would look like the view in **photo 2**. Instead, it rests on the platform shown in **photo 3**.

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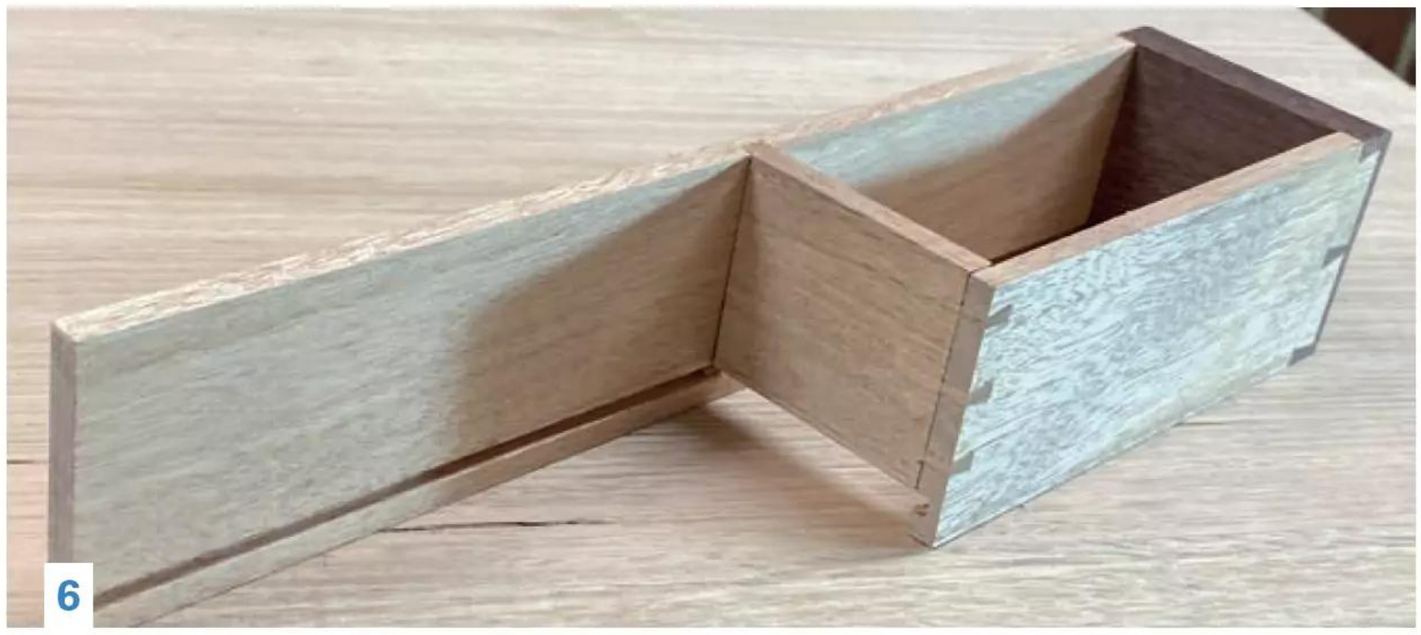
The platform is just a box with a backing board (which will become a fence or guide for the drawer). This is screwed to the base of the case (**photos 4, 5**).

The drawer is designed with one long side. The remainder is pretty much a standard drawer, with half-blind front, but where the rear has through dovetails on one side and the



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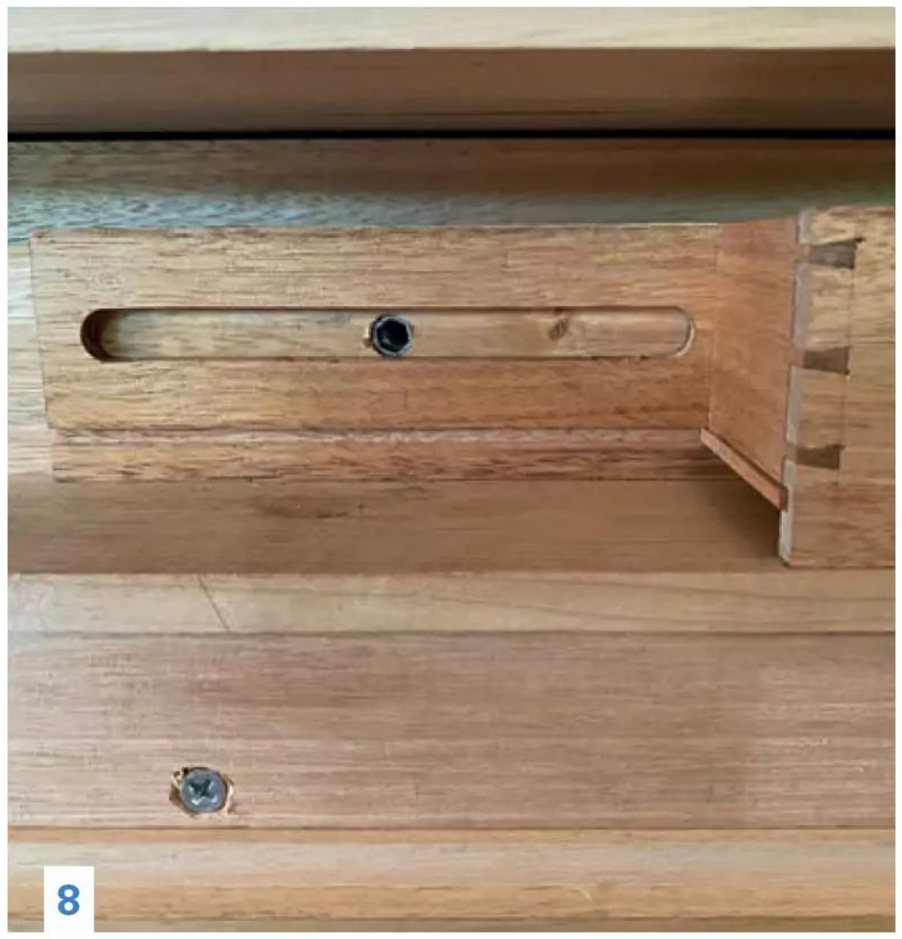
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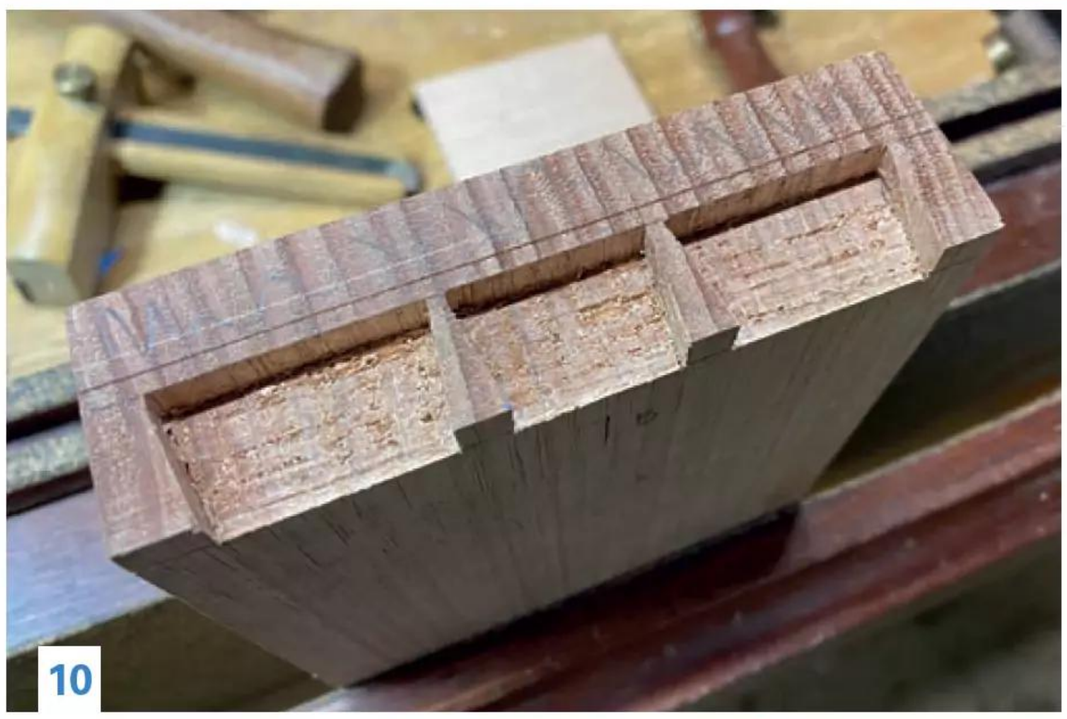
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other attaches to the long side with a sliding dovetail. There is a groove for a drawer bottom. The extension is yet to be mortised in (**photo 6**). Inside the drawer, the mortise creates a mechanism which doubles as a slide and a drawer stop (**photo 6**). **Photo 7** shows the drawer half-open.

**Photo 8** shows how the slide is held against the guide by the stop, which is bolted through the slide. Note the brass ferrule on the bolt to reduce friction (**photo 9**).

## The curved drawer

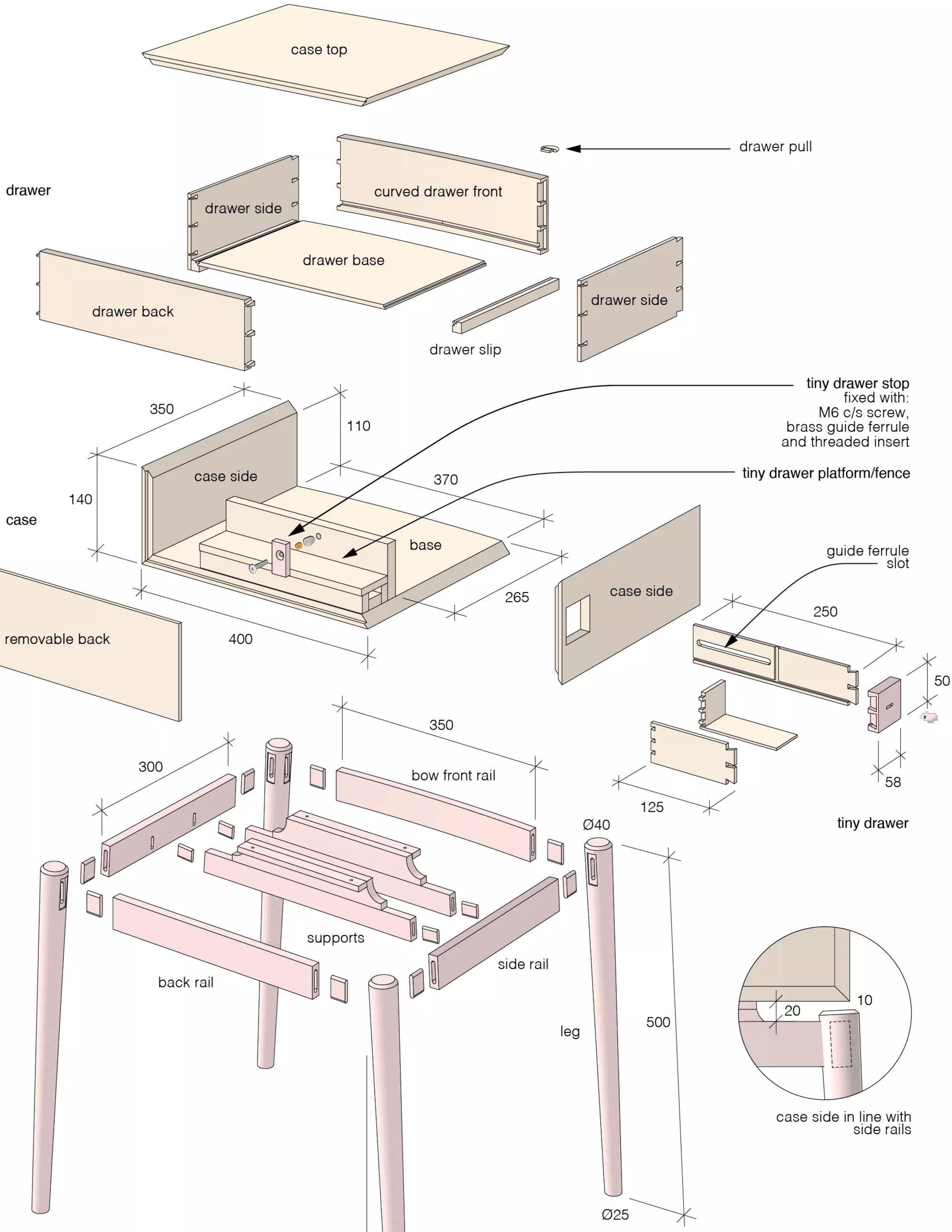
The half-blinds at the front have been completed here. **Photo 10** shows they are cut well back on the board to allow for waste when the curve is shaped.

Before proceeding further, add the groove for the drawer bottom behind the drawer front. Use a plough plane. This is easily done at this stage as the inside is flat. Here the drawer front is held in a sticking board (**photo 11**).

## Curving the drawer front

Assemble the drawer and slide it into the case (as a dry fit) (**photo 12**). The aim here is to transfer the curve of the case to it.

The next step is to saw away the waste along the curve on a bandsaw (**photo 13**). My bandsaw is a Hammer N4400, which has the chassis rigidity to tension a Lenox Woodmaster CT 1" carbide blade. The advantage of a blade this wide is




stand
loose tenon joinery

**Fig. 1** Components (mm), not to scale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its reduced flex, which translates to a straight saw cut.

To smooth the curved surface, use a block plane to traverse across the board to shape down to the lines, working inwards from both sides to avoid blowing out the sides. The plane marks may then be cleaned up with a card scraper.

This is the fit I was looking for (**photo 14**) set in about 1mm to create a shadow line.

## Curving the inside of the drawer

The waste is removed with the bandsaw, as before, working close to the line (**photo 15**). I used blue tape to make the waste line easier to see. A narrow Stanley shoulder plane does a great job of traversing the curve, before cleaning up again with a scraper (**photo 16**).

## The drawer front groove

Place the cut-away parts for the curve below the curve to provide stability when completing the drawer bottom groove. At this stage the groove is at full depth at the outer ends and shallow in its centre. Since the surface now curves, a plough plane cannot be used. Use a router plane, which has a short base and can follow the curve (**photo 17**).

## Drawer slips

Thin drawer sides are elegant and light. Along with hand-cut dovetails, these features are common among finely made furniture. A third feature completes the trifector – drawer slips.

When drawer sides are thin, say between 6–8mm wide, slips are best utilised to hold the drawer bottom rather than ploughing grooves into the sides and weakening them. Slips are runners which are glued onto the drawer sides. They have two purposes: firstly, to hold the drawer bottom in a 3mm groove ploughed into their sides and, secondly, to widen the underside registration of the drawer side.

I like to add a bead as a transition between the slip and the drawer bottom. This turns the contrasting grain


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directions of the parts into a decorative feature. In **photo 18** you can see the bead is ploughed on the sticking board.

The slips are glued to the insides. Note the ploughed groove behind the drawer front and the grooves at the sides via the slips (**photo 19**).

## The drawer bottom

The drawer bottom is made of the same Tasmanian oak and is 6mm thick. The important design element here is that the grain direction runs from side-to-side. Since wood expands across the grain, this allows for movement towards the rear of the drawer. If the construction placed the grain direction front-to-back, movement would be towards the sides, and this would ultimately force the side outward and cause the drawer to bind in the case.

The drawer bottom will connect to the slips with a 3mm rebate at each side. The completed drawer bottom is shown in (**photo 20**).

Of course, the drawer bottom starts off straight at the leading end, and this needs to be curved to fit the curved groove behind the drawer. Use a washer to scribe the front (**photo 21**).

**Photo 22** shows the fitting of the drawer bottom into the slips which act to offer extra bearing surface. The finished drawer is shown in **photo 23**.

## Drawer handles

Simple half-round pulls to maintain the curved theme. These are mortised into the drawer front (**photo 24**).

Features and details such as these add interest to a design, however they often require more time to execute. If you enjoy these processes your rewards will be doubled.

*Derek Cohen is a child psychologist by day, and on weekends has been a serious furniture maker for over 30 years. His Floating Bedside Tables were shortlisted in Maker of the Year Awards 2023.*

# Layers of History

**In the light of his training as an ébéniste in France, Louen Pinpin writes about the history of veneering for furniture making and details the basic process.**


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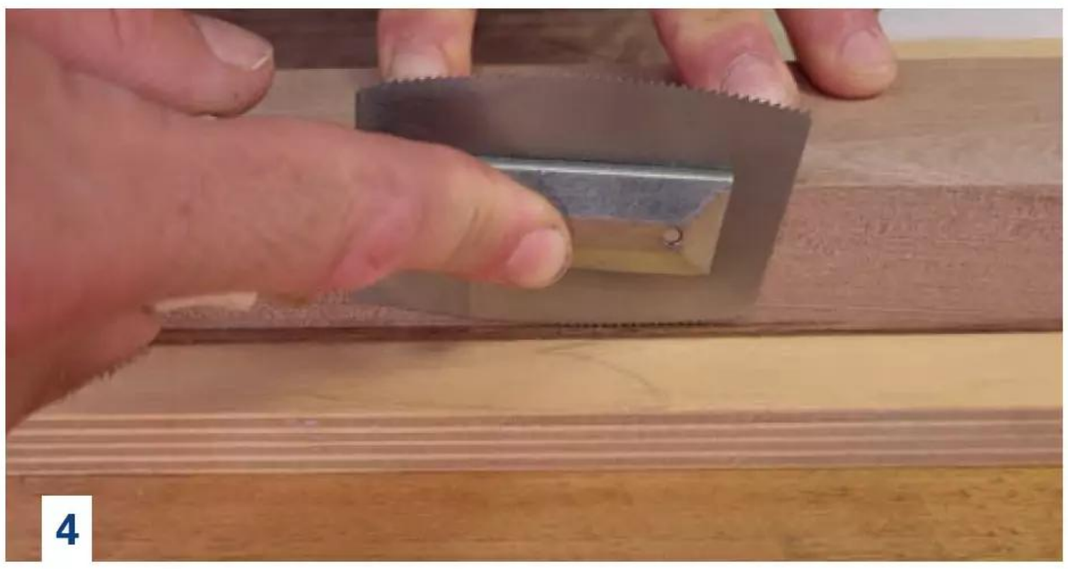
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When I first arrived in Australia and started looking for a job as a furniture maker, I found that only a few companies seemed to work with veneer. Veneering was a significant part of my trade qualification and very common among furniture makers in Europe, so I was surprised at apparent supremacy of solid timber work. Don't get me wrong – I love a sharp-looking dovetailed drawer or a well-fitted through tenon, and I think Australians are very skilled, and lucky with the diversity of timber available to them.

## What is veneer?

Veneer is simply thin sections of wood that can be applied to solid timber or substrates such as plywood and MDF. Commercially sawn veneers are around 0.6mm in thickness, while shopsawn veneers are generally thicker and from 3 to 5mm thick.

Using veneer allows you to make the most of rare and/or highly figured timbers, while exploring a host of grain arrangements. Used alone or with other materials, you can give a unique touch and push the aesthetic and technical boundaries that solid timber imposes.

**Main:** Louen Pinpin demonstrating veneering techniques in Melbourne.

**Cutting veneer**

1. Use a wood under-surface and a piece of wood as a straightedge. Cutting tools shown include a Japanese single bevel knife and two types of veneer saw.
2. Apply pressure to secure the veneer sheets.
3. Note how the teeth of a veneer saw angle towards the apex of the curve so you can crosscut from both sides.
4. Follow the direction of the grain as closely as possible.


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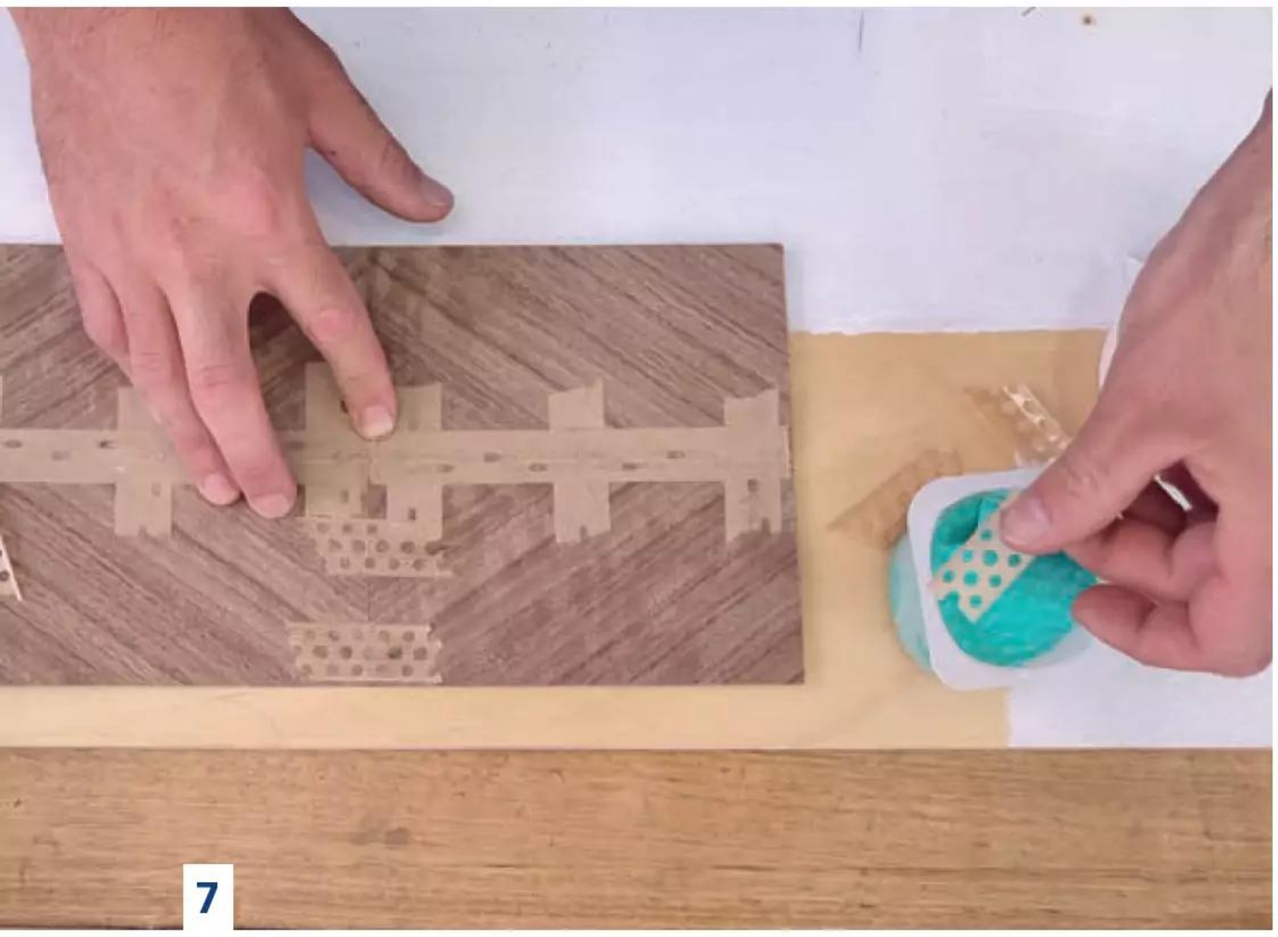
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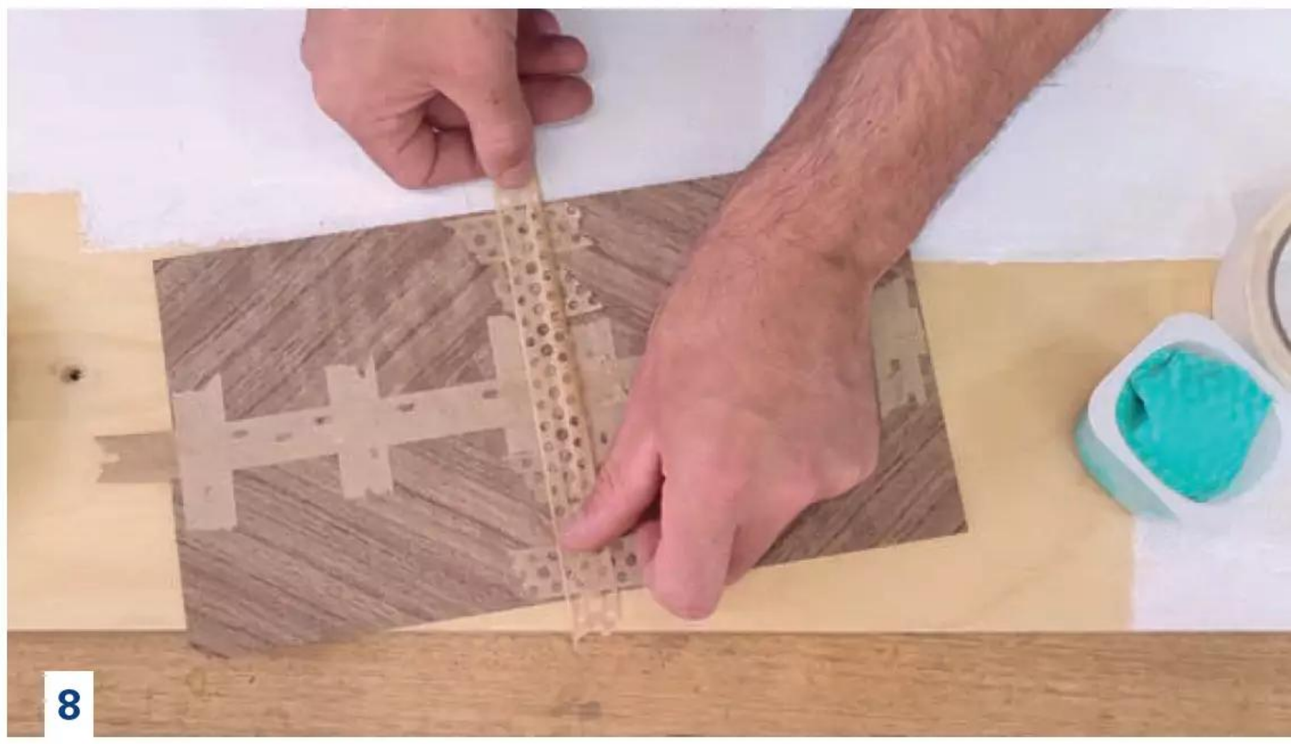
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## Veneering and marquetry

The history of veneer is connected to that of marquetry as far as techniques and uses go, however they are separate crafts. Marquetry is also an art in its own right and taught as such. In essence, the main difference nowadays comes from the curves employed. Furniture makers work with straight lines or continuous curves, whereas marquetry artists focus and develop techniques, imagery and patterns based on non-continuous curves.

Veneering as a furniture making art has its roots in ancient Egypt, from the technique of intarsia, where shapes are carved out of a main material and filled with others. Many surviving examples of furniture throughout history were inlaid with precious timber, glass, stones or bone.

These techniques spread across most ancient lands before subsiding with the Roman Empire, even though furniture remnants displaying elaborate techniques were later found.

Fast forward to Italy in the 15th century, and we see those techniques again used by the so-called *Scuola Fiorentina* for inlaying solid marble slabs with marble, jasper, and semi-precious stones, all of which bring us closer to modern marquetry techniques.

By the end of the 16th century, new woods started arriving in woodworking workshops, with ebony leading the way. The Dutch were the first to import small quantities into Europe, however it was expensive and used sparingly. Gradually, the idea emerged to veneer a thin layer of ebony onto solid local wood.

The birth of the cabinet as a furniture form accompanied the development of veneering. The new veneering techniques rapidly spread across Europe and were imported full-blown to France after the mid-17th century, where furniture of unprecedented luxury was created to decorate Versailles and the other royal residences of Louis XIV.

Andrée Charles Boulle led the way in developing new processes using tortoiseshell and brass combined with his veneered works. From there, other furniture makers specialised in veneer, separating themselves from solid timber furniture makers.

Veneering went through a resurgence in the 20th century during the Art Nouveau and Art Deco movements, where the preciousness of the materials used were highlighted. After World War II, new materials were used for furniture making and veneer was then seen in either very fine furniture, or in conjunction with plastic laminates, which probably led to the bad reputation which some veneered furniture gained.

## How veneer is made

Sawing logs to obtain veneer was done manually until the end of the 18th century, after which the mechanical


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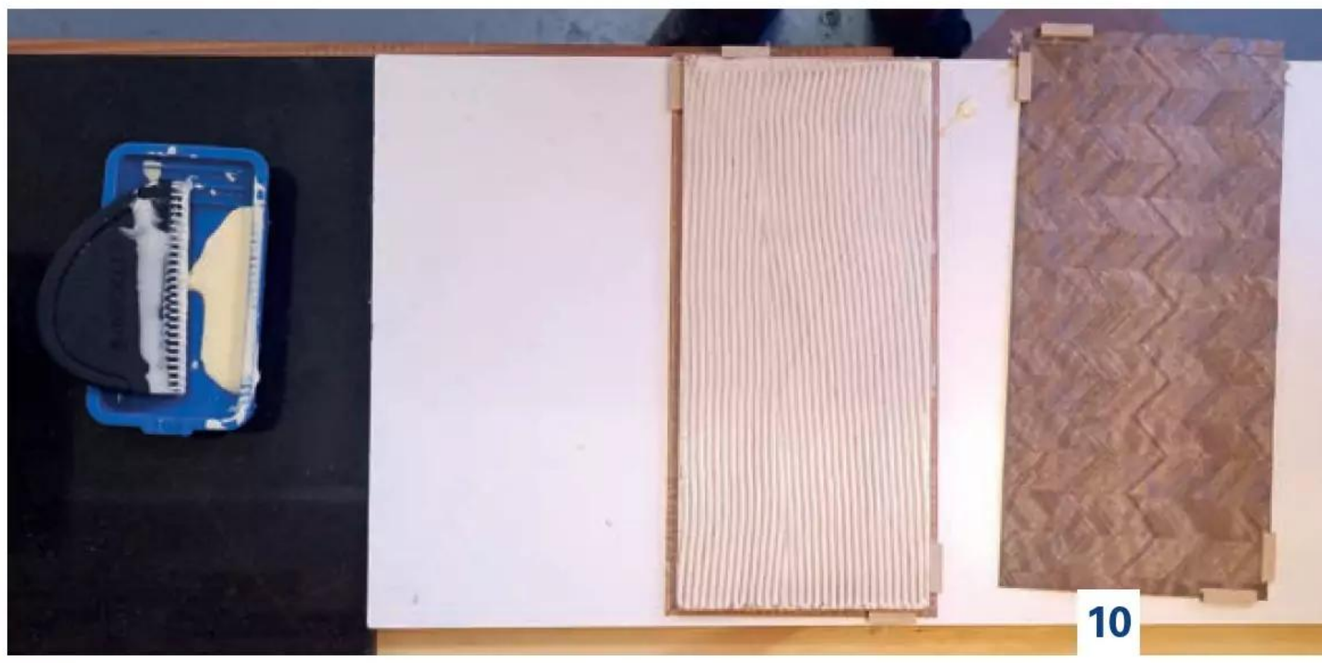
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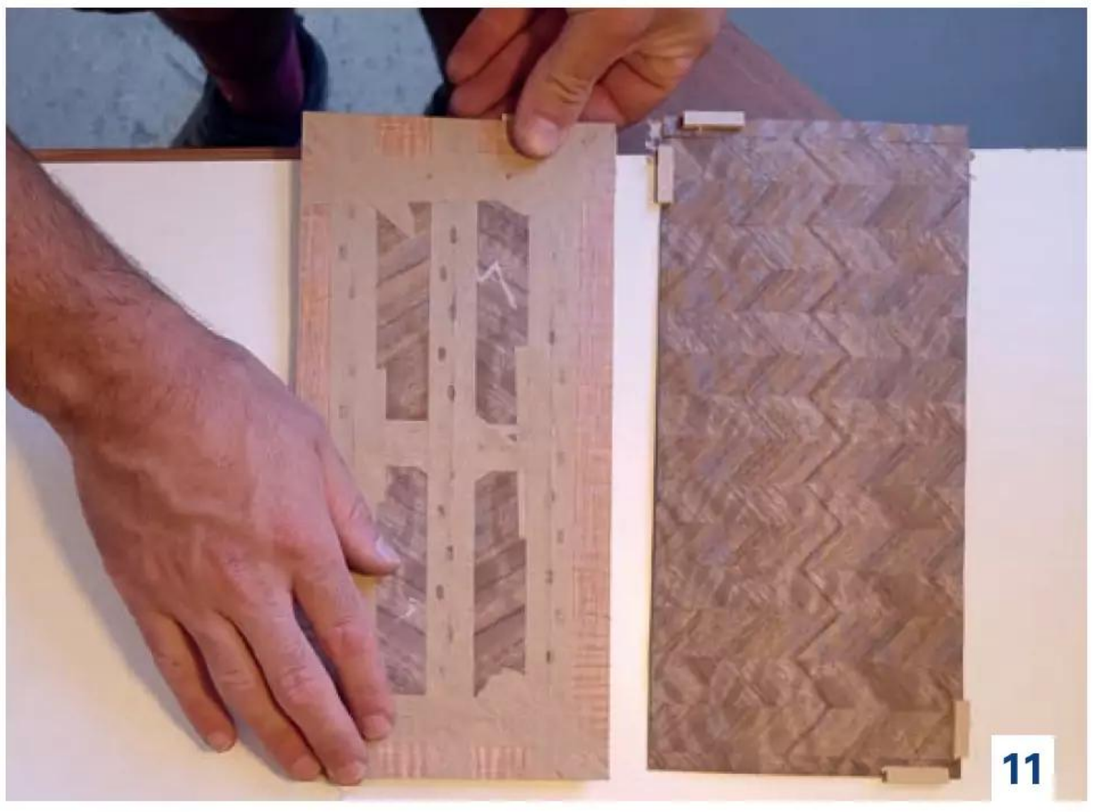
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saw appeared to accomplish what is known as vertical wood sawing. This technique uses an oscillating saw that operates horizontally.

The log is hung on a metal frame that lifts at each passage of the blade. It can take up to an hour or more to saw a veneer sheet from a four metre long log – it's a slow operation and the wood lost in the kerf of the blade makes sawn veneers very expensive.

Nowadays, manufacturers use highly efficient slicing machines, however significant preparation such as softening the fibres before processing is required. Slicing is however the main technique used today, as it is more efficient and faster. Some of the old veneer saws still remain today, mostly to provide veneer for pre-industrial furniture restoration or for very rare veneers as the preparation for slicing, especially steaming, can result in a slight loss of wood colour.

## Techniques and processes

Veneering is a tricky art to master. Every timber is different in the way it reacts to the processes of cutting, gluing, or even taping, and any potential pitfalls are magnified by the thinness of the material.

Some tapes tear out grain on some timbers, some veneers are very brittle to cut, and others are very hard to trim after gluing. However, within the same species there are similarities that help processes. Always be careful when working with a species or grain type for the first time.

Veneer work can be broken down into five main steps – below are some general principles, tips, and techniques for each step. Before you start, make sure to mark the order of the sheets in your bundle with chalk to keep grain continuity.

## Cutting

There are many ways to cut veneers using a circular saw, router, or hand tools. I will focus on hand tools such as a knife or veneer saw as these are usually enough for most projects and an important step in learning how to veneer. I also use a shooting plane, but a regular bench plane will do just fine. There are three principles to note when cutting veneer.

**Blade sharpness:** A blunt blade will compress your veneer before it cuts and result in an inconsistent or torn cut. Make sure you use only blades with a single-sided bevel, as with a veneer saw or veneer knife. Don't using double bevel blades or knives as you will end up with V-shaped cuts and these will show in your finished work.

**Grain direction:** Every time you cut veneer it's very important to follow the grain direction as closely as possible. This is why a veneer saw has teeth which angle towards the apex of the curve allowing you cut in both directions. You can do crosscuts, going inwards towards the inside of the veneer you're cutting from both sides. Veneer will tear out along the grain on the ends if you don't pre-cut it first.

5. Use only knives with a single bevel.
6. Using a shooting plane to trim veneer edges.

### Taping

7. Use moistened veneer tape to join freshly cut sheets – first tape perpendicular to the cut...
8. ...next tape along the join.
9. Taped up top and bottom veneer matches for a box lid prior to gluing showing ply substrate in the centre. It's important to veneer both sides of the panel to prevent warping.

### Gluing

10. PVA glue is suitable for veneering – a grooved spreader or a roller helps to distribute glue evenly onto the substrate.
11. The taped-up veneer sections, called layons, are carefully placed onto the glued surface. Stop the veneer slipping when pressing hot gluing small pieces of grey cardboard or thin MDF on the veneer overhang.


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**Support the veneer:** Always make sure that your veneer is held down securely. If your sheets are loose, it can result in tear-out and misalignments. It's important to always use a wooden straightedge for guiding the cut on top and a wooden cutting surface underneath. When working with a shooting plane, clamp your veneer between the straightedge and cutting board to lock it in place.

## Taping

To join veneer sheets, the freshly cut edges need to be reassembled and first taped perpendicular to the cut to tighten them together before taping along the joint. Veneer tape shrinks when it dries and this helps to make a neat joint.

It's best to avoid using regular tape for joining veneer, as this can be very hard to remove after pressing. However, it does come in handy for intricate patterns when you need to follow and match the grain from different sheets.

## Gluing

PVA is the most commonly used glue for veneer. It's important to note that both sides of a panel need to be veneered as the panel will warp if not counterbalanced. It's advisable to trace your pattern onto the panel edges as a reference when positioning your veneer. To prevent the veneer slipping under the press, small pieces of grey cardboard or thin MDF can be glued on the veneer overhang with hot glue.

## Trimming

After pressing, the veneer needs to be flushed on the panel. A chisel, veneer saw or knife are usually the best tools for this. Use the

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**Trimming**

**12.** You can press the laid up veneer in a mechanical press (shown here) or in a vacuum bag that uses compressed air.

**13.** After pressing, flush off the veneer overhang with a chisel, knife or veneer saw.

**14.** To get the tape off, dampen it but don't overwet – the tape should come off easily with a scraper. Take care not to mark or compress the veneer fibres.

**Sanding**

**15.** Use a light touch when sanding. Never sand lower tan 120 grit, and make sure that your sander is flat on the panel.

**16, 17.** Closed and open views of a completed box that utilises the creative possibilities of combining the colour, figure and grain orientation of different wood species.

panel edge as a reference for the chisel and flush the four sides of the panel back. Once this is done, place the panel on your cutting board and flush the front with the veneer saw once again using the panel edge as a reference.

You can use the end of a scraper to remove the veneer tape. First soak a sponge in a container of warm water. Dampen the tape only, making sure not to wet the veneer too much or allow the scraper to mark or dent the veneer – the tape should then come off pretty easily. Wait till the surface dries before you proceed to scrape or sand your panel.

## Sanding

Sanding veneer can be tricky. Never go below 120 grit, and always make sure that your sander is flat on the panel. Sanding has to be done with an 8-pattern disc if using an orbital sander or along the grain for manual sanding.

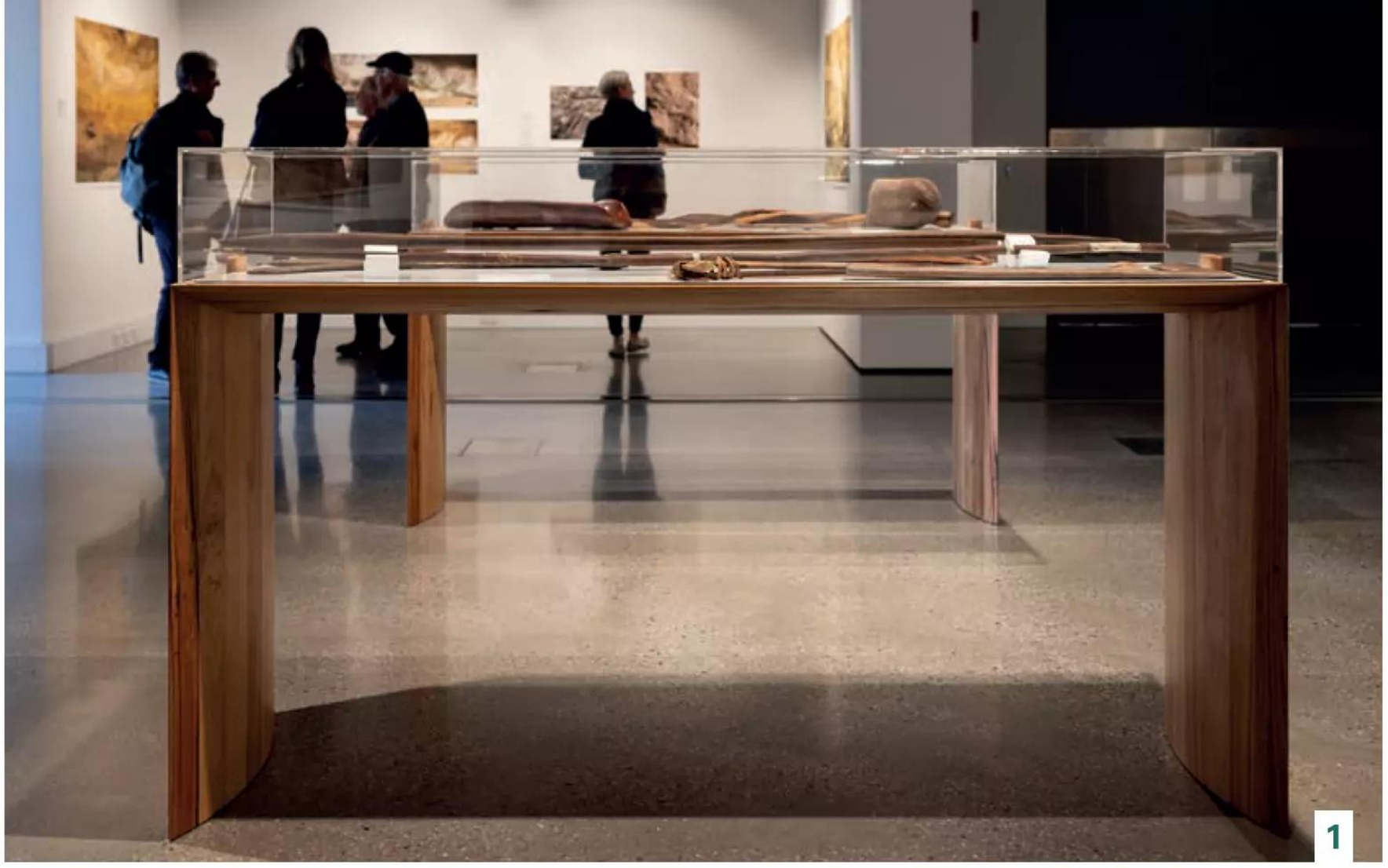
Veneering stands as a testament to the history of furniture making. From its ancient origins to its current applications, the use of veneers allows artisans to marry tradition with innovation. Veneered furniture offers a canvas for creative expression and a link to centuries of craftsmanship. Let us not forget the enduring beauty and craftsmanship encapsulated in delicate layers of veneer.

*Photos: Louen Pinpin*

*Louen Pinpin trained at École Boulle, France's renowned school for art and design. His Soil and Sea boxes were a category winner in Maker of the Year Awards 2022. Now living in New Zealand, he can be contacted via Instagram @louenpinpin and @lapinfurniture.com.*

# With and Within

**Jono Everett is all about collaboration and community projects, but when it comes to design, that's a solitary pursuit. Story by Linda Nathan.**



**Main:** Jono Everett in The Soap Factory space in Newcastle.

1. *Slip Vitrines* (display cases) for indigenous artefacts as part of the *Spirit of Place* exhibition at Singleton Arts and Cultural Centre. 'Pushing minimalist aesthetic and technical challenges to the line, these showcases play on super fine sections against the wild rawness of southern mahogany.'
2. Jono Everett with partner Sophia Emmett, founders of The Soap Factory community.

*Photos pp.32, 33: Edwina Richards*

Some of us do our best work away from others. The shed, studio, workshop, whatever you call it, can be a place of retreat, a bastion of endeavour and an antidote to worrying about all that stuff going on out there.

But for others, it's the community of others that fires creativity and sweetens the daily grind. Jonathan (Jono) Everett is one such. For the last 10 years he has worked out of The Soap Factory in Newcastle, a collective he set up with his partner Sophia Emmett.

Currently there are eight other makers there, and incidentally they're all women – it wasn't planned that way. It's a collective of independents but Jono and Sophia lead the way things work. There's never been an official meeting and many of the residents have been there for 10 years, so clearly the model is working.

If you asked Jono to sum himself up, you might get this for a short but packed resume: 'I guess in a nutshell my story is one of a varied approach to design and fabrication. I have passion for collaborative projects with galleries and museums and community projects. I make one-off furniture pieces for exhibitions and sculptures, take commissions, and manage a collective arts studio. I am running upskilling workshops to people who may be at some disadvantage, and working with people to re-establish their lives in disaster zones.'

Jono calls himself an artist, a designer and a fabricator, and wood is his main but not only medium. One of his earlier business forays was also a cooperative. After completing studies in the then-led-by George Ingham Wood Workshop at the ANU School of Art, Jono started Trout Design with two others, and he and Scott Mitchell went on to successfully work singly and together on projects for some nine years.

Jono moved to another set of challenges working as a carpenter/furniture maker, architectural and then heritage manager at Parliament House. There he oversaw maintenance, restoration and new building and infrastructure works. And yes, at times it got political.

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**3.** *Slip Bench* in local eucalypt. ‘It’s important to give furniture pieces a title. It evokes an emotion and can draw the eye to a certain design detail – in this case the 5mm knife edge along the top and legs. These pieces were a labour of love. Amazing what a billion hours of sanding can produce.’

**4.** *Bundle Floor Light*, 2.4 metres high, hoop pine. ‘Repetitive cuts and strips of timber and other materials feature heavily in my work. There is an innate human connection with the sensation brought by particular timber sections and weights – dominos, poker chips, a handful of twigs. This was an attempt to embody that sensation and tactility, and express growth. The structure spreads organically, finding its own shape and produces a light of splintered fragments.

**5.** *Brush Chair*, patinated steel and celery top pine. Developed during the design and fitout of a clothes store in Melbourne.

*Photos pp.34, 35: Jono Everett*

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**6, 8, 9.** *Apartment Chair*, Tasmanian myrtle. 'This is an extremely lightweight and strong chair. Years of development led me to pare back the design – no back rail, super fine leg section, and importantly a 6mm seat and back from 1.5mm ply sheets, laminated directly to the chair frame, giving it form and structural integrity – much like the body of a stringed instrument.'

**7.** *Maypete Side Table* in jarrah and stainless steel. I've been making these for nearly 20 years. I named it after my mum and dad for all the support they have given me in my complex and challenging career as a designer maker.

He is passionate about his making and works with interior designers and architects to deliver considered interiors for commercial spaces, museums and galleries. Add to that commissions for bespoke residential commissions and you get the picture – it's a busy creative life with a lot going on.

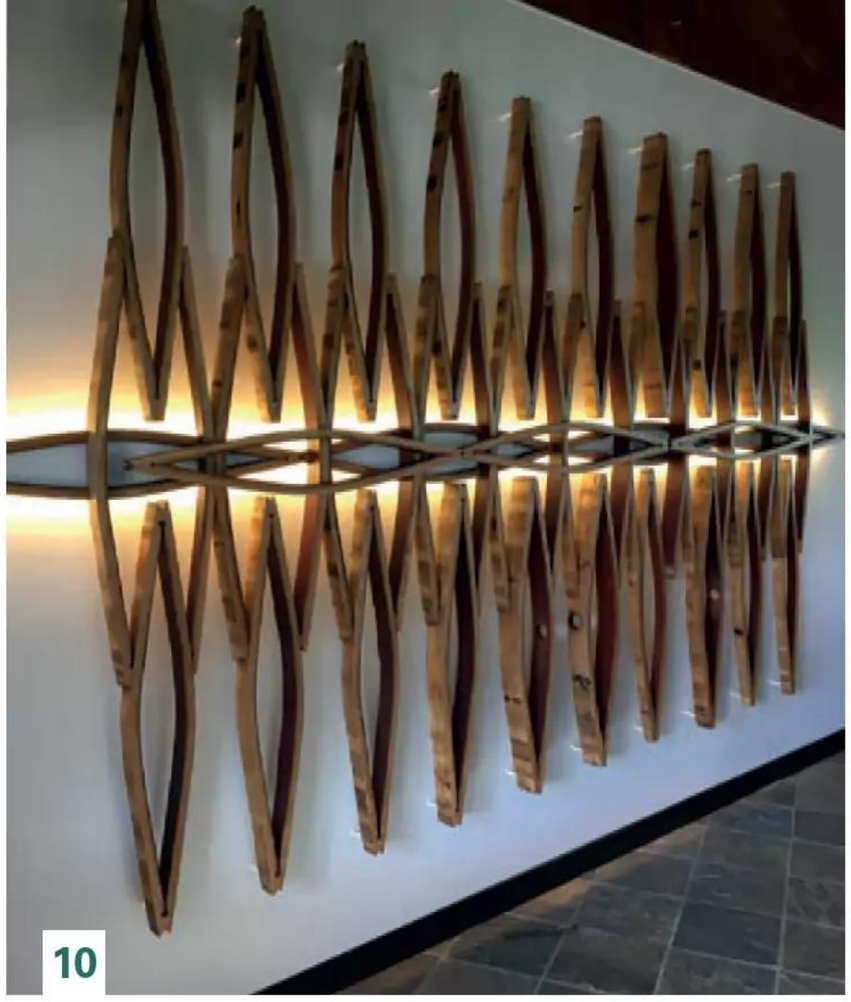
Jono is a well-spring of positivity. His social media is peppered with comments like, 'I am so lucky to work in the creative world. Every day is a new project, I get to work with a myriad of amazing people and loving what I do.' 'I am the luckiest person alive.'

He is a people person but when it comes to design it's a different matter. Design starts with pen on paper, and being in the zone. 'I need complete silence, and being in my space. Without being too 'hippy' about it, you need to express an emotion. That's what art is. It's an expression of what it is to be human', says Jono, taking it to a deeper level.

'You start with a feeling and try to capture it through a design sketch. It's so important to get the sketch right. If my sketch doesn't marry up to the feeling I'm trying to capture, I have to get rid of it and start again. It could just be a couple of lines, but they have to be the right lines, and then you can't mess with them.

'When I then go to create a shop drawing, like a proper design, it has to be true to those lines because that's where the truth is, in those lines, capturing that emotion. That's why I need quiet, because it's a sensitive and delicate process before it rounds out into being more active. Coming up with original ideas for every commission is pretty challenging', he says. 'There's a lot of work in the design process.'

Going back even further on his timeline, after high school years, Jono



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**10, 11, 12.** *Wine Wall*, salavaged French oak from 'retired' wine barrels, commissioned as a sculptural focal point for the Glandore Estate cellar-door in the Hunter Valley. 'These beautiful timbers show the patina of age on one side and the burgundy rich stain of red wine on the other. Working within a predetermined curve is very challenging. I polished and oiled the beautiful French oak faces of the staves.

I didn't fight shakes and irregularities in radius or thickness but allowed the rough external faces to remain (echoing the fields, the land and work) and the luminescent red staining of the inside faces tells the story and tradition of the wine making process. Backlit and mounted against a white wall, the overlay produces a strong graphic presence, a drawing with wood.'

**13.** *Life*, a sculptural piece in red box.

*Photos this page: Jono Everett*

made things from a home garage, and then embarked on his own journeyman travels. With an interest in Japanese design, and through a friend's connection, he found work with a master craftsman just outside of Tokyo.

What did he learn there? 'Every morning (the master) would just sit in Japanese *zazen* (meditation) with his tools before him, in silence. And it could go for quite a while, but it was about having respect for the tools, and a quietening and centring.' Not speaking Japanese wasn't really a problem for Jono, 'because (the master) didn't really seem to want to talk much anyway'.

Despite the influence of travels to Japan and afterwards to Denmark, Jono has distilled his own style. If there's 'a sense of singularity', it's a search for a lightness in both a visual and physical sense. 'It's a cliché, but it's incredibly difficult to make things look really simple,' says Jono, 'because 'lightness' often means deploying more advanced techniques such as lamination and torsion box construction.'

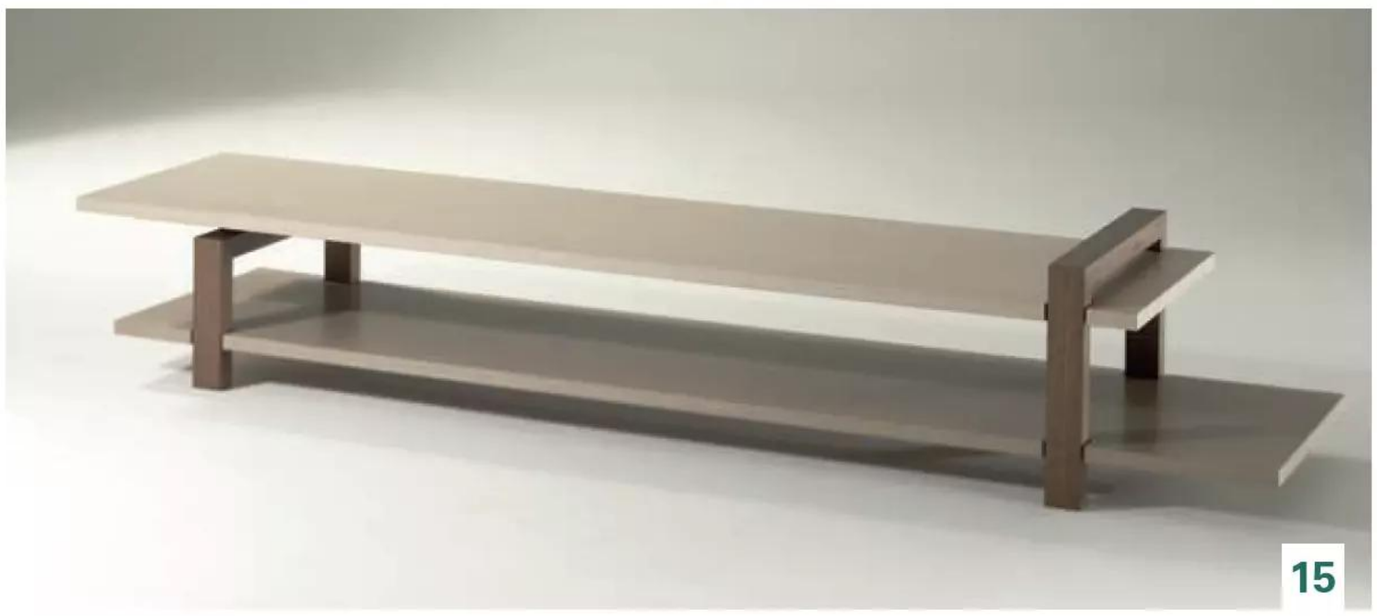
Jono is all about support structures, social and physical. 'If you're not familiar with a torsion box – you're missing out on all the good times,' he said, referring to the way he makes his *Slip Benches* and *Slip Vitrines*. *It's a clever design. A substantial skeleton is overlaid with eucalypt veneer. The top underside and pedestal supports are curved towards 2mm fine knife edges, so visibly the volume 'disappears'. Strong, light, understated.*

'A chair is a difficult creature to design', says Jono. 'Every challenge in design and making is in a chair. Because you've got that conviviality of strength, weight and visual appeal.' Designed some 20 years ago, his *Apartment Chair* has been made many times in different

**14.** *Flight Table*, American oak with ebonised under-frame. 'A super special table for a client in the East End – trying some bold angles.' *Photo: Jono Everett*

**15.** *Lima Sideboard*, a short run production item in American walnut and dyed poplar veneer. *Photo: Rene Lawler*

**16.** *Synergy*, cherry, maple, glass funnel. 'Made with Sophia Emmett. Tenuously close to one another, the pieces create a flow, but also a tension. The work is about relationships. The glass is inscribed with the words from a letter I wrote to Sophia when we first met.'



iterations. 'It's fantastically strong and really, really light', he said. 'The trick with that chair is that it has no back rail. The strength comes through the lamination of the back and the seat as the structural component, rather than being "dropped into" the chair as you normally do.' The back is a 6mm thick lamination, made up from 1mm veneers.

The 'right lines' that Jono speaks of as the basis of his designs are very apparent in strokes of his *Brush Chair* and *Flight Table*. They are both one-offs and he refers to them as artworks.

So where does inspiration come from? 'It's really great to expose yourself to design, read a lot of design books and look at what everyone is doing through social media but if I've got a commission or a project that I need to think through, I turn all that off. I think it's really healthy to disengage when you're designing and that's why trying to replicate designs off the internet will inevitably fail because you don't have those 'lines' – you're trying reverse engineer somebody else's concept. It's exciting to tell your own stories.'

Time is your friend too. 'I think you are your work', said Jono. 'If you can, work with simplicity and precision and clarity, and at the same time push boundaries. You can really nail some good stuff if you work within those parameters. I think you get better at those things too. In the last few years I've had better commissions, better opportunities to explore.'

It comes back to the continuum though. Now there's a sense of wanting to pass learnings and skills on. 'What with institutions dissolving, there are less and less places to learn fine and traditional making skills and it's really important they don't disappear, so I feel a degree of obligation to share them. I have taught at TAFE in Canberra and at the (no longer existing) School of Fine Furniture in Tasmania. There will be classes here but we'll do it differently.'

The objective is to make classes affordable and explore community funding options so that a wider range of people can come and learn to make. 'That can help people who are economically challenged – we don't want to be selective about who can do these classes. That would be my gift to society, I guess. My real passion is community outreach. I'm much more interested in a community base and allowing unfettered access to all, and really empowering people.'

Working with and for others, and creating work that tells its own story is what Jono Everett is all about.

*Learn more about Jono Everett @everett_creative at https://www.everettcreative.com.au/*

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# From Tree to Table

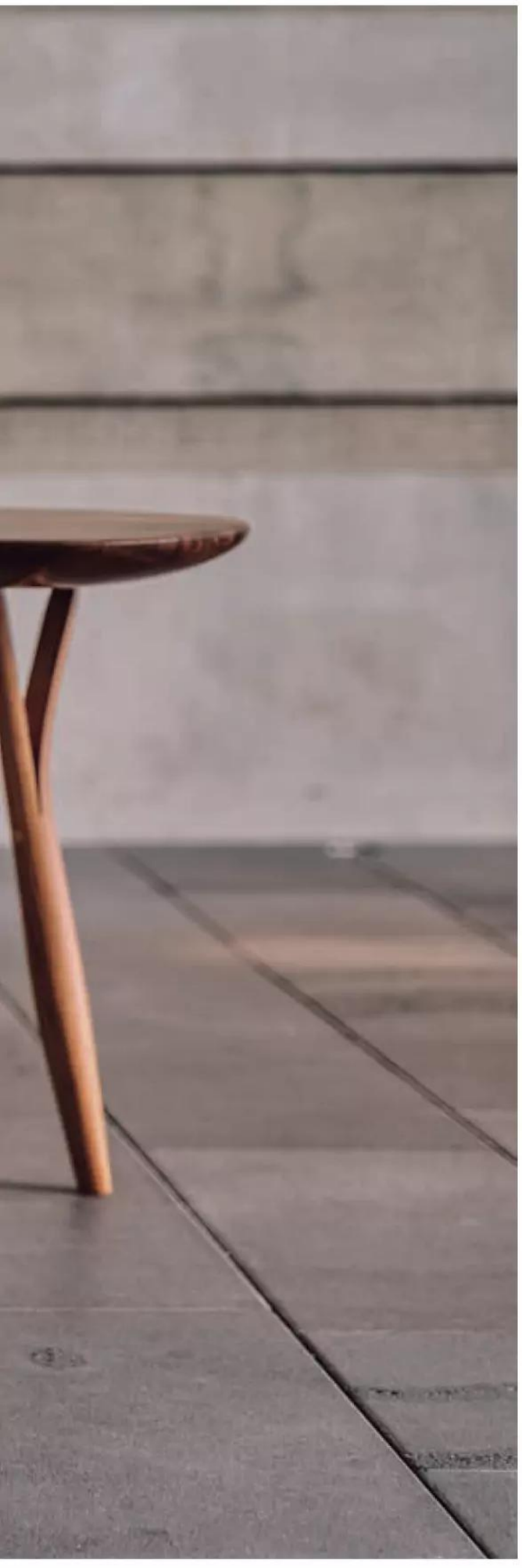
**David Laird shows how he makes his 'spade-handle' tables, and explains why he likes to make furniture that 'weighs lightly on the planet'.**

I am a carpenter from Amberley, New Zealand. As the son of a carpenter, I have been lucky to learn the joy of working with my hands from a young age. This was a gift I am grateful for as not all have this opportunity.

Looking back, my philosophy as a maker started early on when I went to work with my dad and would salvage native timber framing that was surplus to house alterations. I always saw a value and appreciated the history of this timber. In the words of George Nakashima, I look to 'give the trees a second life' – well in this case, a third.

My philosophy is not from the spiritual sense of George Nakashima, it is driven by the need to sequester carbon. Trees are the lungs of the earth – by producing oxygen, they also capture carbon. Utilising end-of-life timber will continue to capture the carbon contained within the heartwood until that wood decays or is burned.

My passion is in craftsmanship, but central to the evolution of my furniture is finding green and sustainable ways of making things that will last and can be repaired. Considering the environmental challenges we face,



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1. *Spade-handle table* by David Laird, made from locally sourced end-of-life English walnut top with steam bent salvaged elm legs.
2. Showing the wedged mortise and tenon construction of the table from below.
3. 'End-of-life and wind-thrown trees are not perfect timber. It comes back to working with the tree for maximum yield.'

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I believe that sustainability should be synonymous with good design. Combining traditional techniques for milling, seasoning and steam bending timber with some modern methods permits an efficient process that weighs lightly on the planet.

## Working with salvaged timber

End-of-life and wind-thrown trees are not 'perfect' timber. Urban timber has often not been pruned for timber production, however the wood is unique. You have to work with the tree to get the maximum yield – my designs are a direct result of utilising various parts of a variable resource. A good example of this are my 'spade-handle' tables (**photos 1, 2**).

Working with salvaged timber has challenges, the first is sourcing timber. Locally sourced timber has a small footprint for transportation, and air drying and finishing off in my solar kiln dries the timber gently with no additional energy required.

When I decided to work from locally sourced end-of-life trees, I contacted local arborists and councils about the possibility of buying wood from them to make furniture and outlined all the benefits. I didn't get any supportive responses and the general consensus was that it was too difficult for them, and their preference was to mulch the trees.

Hopefully attitudes can change to allow this wood to keep capturing carbon while we appreciate its story – some of these trees date back to the early plants brought to New Zealand (**photo 3**). Over time I have built contacts that support this philosophy, or would just like something useful created with the wood. Working with small local sawmillers has been the key.

Harvesting your own timber has benefits but it's also challenging. You need room to store the timber – it takes 12 months per inch to air dry the hardwoods I work with. Also, the supply of timber available is not milled to order – it's just what has blown over, or needs to be cut down at a certain time.

I have found this to be an opportunity to develop an

4. Dating back to 1870, a grove of English walnut planted by settlers on the Banks Peninsula, South Island, New Zealand.
5. For the legs, select straight grained stock and mark out 640mm long x 54 x 54mm square sections.
6. Mark the split in the leg stock.
7. Bandsaw in 280mm for the split prior to steam bending.
8. After bandsawing, 25mm of wood remains on each side for the curved and shaped tenons.
9. Start the bend 50mm from the bottom of the split (marked in red) to lessen the risk of the split continuing to run through into the leg. The form has been made to allow for spring back.

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understanding of the properties and uses of the species available. Once the land was cleared, settlers to New Zealand planted hardwoods that were useful in their homelands. Revisiting these uses is where I found my passion for chairmaking.

Visiting the site of the trees provides a direct connection to where the tree has grown, and gives an insight to its past. Recently I harvested standing dead walnut trees on the Banks Peninsula from a grove dating back to 1870 (**photo 4**). The elm, ash and oak I source date back to these early plantings by New Zealand settlers. It is a privilege to work with timber planted by earlier generations who knew they would not see the timber mature.

There are real benefits working with the raw material. I can identify suitable grain for steam bending and then manage the drying process so the wood has the right moisture content. I enjoy having a direct connection to the wood. I am constantly learning.

## Making the spade-handle table

My spade-handle table is inspired by traditional ash steambent spade handles. I first started experimenting with steam bending over the covid lockdowns as it is a low energy, ecological and economic method for forming wood. During this period, I developed the leg design you can see here.

Initially I turned the legs from green timber on the lathe, then cut 'the split' using a bandsaw prior to steam bending. However I found needed larger turning stock to get two 25mm thick tenons on each leg. The smaller tenons really limited the size of the tabletop, but the 54 x 45mm stock allows for 25mm tenons and provides enough timber for shaping.

I really enjoy the steam bending process, from selecting the timber to completing the bend. It gives a hands-on connection to working the wood while allowing you to practise a traditional process. I have had failures but these have developed my understanding of the process.

Temperate hardwoods bend well and moisture content needs to be considered. Working with locally sourced timber, I generally bend elm, oak, walnut, ash and European beech with success.

## Prepare the stock

First, select the bending stock and machine to 54 x 45 x 640mm long (**photo 5**). The leg is shaped from carefully selected quartersawn timber with straight grain free of knots or defects. With steam bending, any weakness in the timber will be stressed to failure.

Ideally this air-dried bending stock will have a moisture content of 20–15%, you can use greener wood, but it takes longer to dry the leg down after bending. The elm I use can be unstable if bending with a moisture


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content above 20% and it's hard to get consistency in the leg bends.

## Time to split and steam

Mark the split in the leg stock (**photo 6**). I bandsaw in 280mm deep (**photo 7**), leaving 25mm of timber each side of the cut (**photo 8**).

As a rule of thumb, the legs are placed in a steam box for one hour per 25mm of timber at 100°C. I find each species responds differently and its moisture content will also affect how heat is transferred through the bending stock. The more you do it, the more you will develop a feel for it.

The stock is taken directly from the steam box to bend on a form. I start the bend 50mm from the bottom of the split (marked in red in **photo 9**) to lessen the risk of the split continuing to run through into the leg. As this is a gentle bend and there is no access, I don't use a strap for this bend but instead use a timber wedge and my hands to bring the wood to the form where it is clamped in place.

If there is too much tension in the wood to bend, return it to the steam box as it's not ready yet. Leave it on the form to cool for at least an hour.

## Leave the legs to dry

Afterwards the leg is transferred to a bending frame and dried down to below 8%. I use a drying box or my solar kiln for this. A moisture meter (**photo 10**) is used to monitor its progress, and another indicator is that the leg will become looser on the drying frame as it dries.

## Shaping the legs

Once the bent legs are down to under 8% moisture content they are ready for final shaping. The double tenons are first shaped with hand planes and spokeshaves, and then completed using the 1/2-inch tapered tenon cutter. I then use a combination of hand tools are to finish shaping the leg (**photo 11**).

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## Making the top

With the legs complete, I select a timber slab for the top. Generally, for tabletops I use slabs that have character or features that make them unsuitable for a chair or stool seat. I have made spade-handle tables in many sizes from 1025 x 535mm to 500 x 400mm and just let the slab determine its own organic shape.

The slabs have been dried from green sawn, through air drying and finishing in the solar kiln. Flattening the slab and stabilising any defects is the next process.

## Mark out for and fitting the legs

The legs are set out 120° from each other and located on a balance point which depends on the shape of the top. The double tenon for each leg is individually set out as the legs can have some variation after the drying process. I drill a template first in a scrap piece of wood to get the correct angles and spacing of the tenons before drilling the actual top (**photo 12**).

These legs have a spacing between centres of 120mm. The front mortise has a drilling angle of 10°, while the front mortise is 15°. I drill 12mm diameter pilot holes at these angles determined by the legs and then use a 3/16-inch to 1-3/16 inch reamer to match the 1/2-inch tapered tenons cut on the legs (**photo 13**).

## Assembling the top and legs

With the legs fitted I now do the final shaping of the tabletop using a combination of hand planes, spokeshaves, cabinet scrapers and sandpaper to complete an organic form that flows to the touch (**photo 14**).

Everything is now complete for the final glue-up (**photo 15**). I use tapered wedged through mortise and tenon joints on the table because they are not just relying on glue and are backed up with great in-service history. I locate the outer tenon on the table in the mortise first and

**10** Use a moisture meter to monitor the drying progress.

**11.** A selection of hand planes and spokeshave and the tenon cutter shown in the photo below are used to shape the legs.

**12.** Make a template in a scrap piece of wood to get the correct angles and spacing for the tenons before drilling mortises in the top.

**13.** The leg tenons are each individually fitted. A tenon cutter again helps here.

**14.** With the legs fitted, the tabletop edge and surfaces can be shaped and smoothed.

**15.** All the parts for a new spade-handle table laid out prior to glue-up. The ties for stabilising the shrinkage crack were inspired by the work of NZ artist Gordon Walters.

**16.** Hide glue is the author's preference. It has a longer open time and makes future repairs easier.


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squeeze the tenons together to insert the inner tenon into its mortise (**photo** 16). I like to use hide glue because in years to come someone else may then be able to easily repair the table or recycle the wood.

After the glue has dried the table is cleaned up for final sanding and finishing. A natural oil finish suits these tables as it can be replenished when needed.

The table is now complete and the wood used can continue to tell its origin story for generations to come.

*Photos: David Laird*
*Portrait by Richard Lord*

*David Laird @davidlairdchairbler was winner of the Recycled & Rescued category for Maker of the Year Awards 2023. He lives in Amberley, New Zealand and makes a range of handmade chairs and tables to order using local salvaged timber. Learn more at https://www.davidlairdchairbler.co.nz/*

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# Material Explorations

**Be true to your own voice and establish a unique style, says West Australian wood sculptor Olive Gill-Hille in an interview that discusses her processes and inspiration points.**

*Sourcing, jointing, stack laminating, shaping and sanding is hugely labour intensive work. What does all this mean to you and how do you make ends meet?*

I think with what I do you really have to love the process, the material and the end result. Most days I get up and look forward to getting into the studio. Although I have a wonderful community in my partner, family and friends who are invested and love to help me out, mostly I make these works entirely on my own, and at this time there is no studio assistant and very little outsourcing. It is a very personal process which heavily involves the artist's hand.

*Why have you chosen wood as your main medium?*

There's something about wood I find really warm. There is this wonderful familiarity that everyone has to the touch of wood, it's a texture we all know. I think there is a quality within wood that all humans connect with. As a natural material it feels like it's made from a matter not far from ourselves, it has been a living thing.

I think another element of wood I really love is that it's so transformative, you can source a gnarly piece of wood, something really unruly, and through working with the timber it can reveal a refined object. I love that it goes through this evolution.

*Which species do you prefer and why?*

I work with a variety of different timbers but I definitely specialise in Western Australian hardwoods such as jarrah. While I love working with imported timbers like walnut and oak

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**Main:** Olive Gill-Hille in her studio with an in-progress work. *Photo: Olivia Senior*

1. *Brace* and *Brawn*, 2022 Fremantle tuart. *Photo: Olive Gill-Hille*

2. In the studio, the raw material. *Photo: Nick Fitzpatrick*


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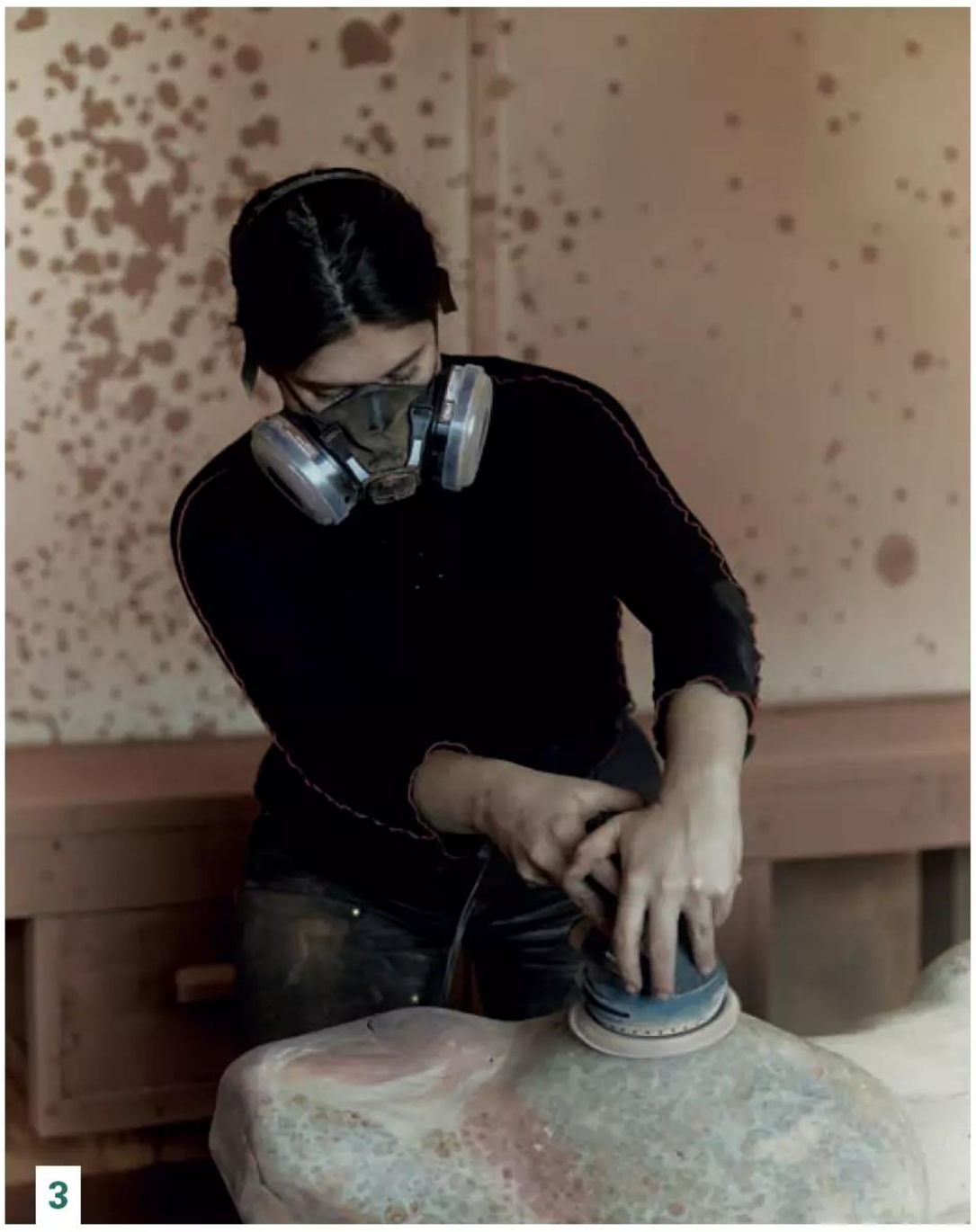

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3. The artist sanding a jarrah burl sculpture. *Photo: Olivia Senior*

4. *Figures*, two functional artworks/ stools, paulownia. *Photo: Olive Gill-Hille*

5. *Brace, Brawn, Knot, Guts*, 2023, various salvaged softwoods. *Photo: Olive Gill-Hille*

6. Nocturne, ebonised American black walnut. *Photo: Olivia Senior*

7. Oil finishing over the ebonised surface of *Haptic*. *Photo: Olivia Senior*

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because they're so malleable, they're quite removed from my process. There are times where exotic varietals will be right for a piece but typically sourcing the timber myself, from nature and as ethically as I can, has become a big part of the narrative imbued within the works.

*What does sourcing your own material give to the work?*

I think it means that the process of making my pieces begins earlier than most, the adventure and experience of locating fallen trees on properties and determining the quality of the timber, that's all part of the story of the work. Often the locations I go to will subtly dictate elements, there might be a curve or a particular form that references the landscape the material came from.

*You've studied sculpture at the Victorian College of Arts and furniture design at RMIT? How have the two blended for you?*

I think VCA opened my mind to conceptual thinking, it allowed me to more critically analyse my process and the works I create as well as develop my knowledge of art history and the context of myself within that, whereas the furniture design degree was mainly practical and taught me so much about making. I really loved my time at RMIT doing the associate degree, I fell in love with timber there and I was happiest spending as many hours as I could in the workshop.

*What's your usual process for creating a new work? Do you draw or sketch first? Or do you work intuitively?*

There are two different starting points for my work, sometimes if a piece of wood 'speaks' to me in a particular way I will jump right in and work with the natural grains and shapes that are already there, intuitively carving. Other times, particularly with my stack laminated works and the more functional pieces, I will begin with sketches and watercolours to establish the design I like. My process definitely involves a lot of drawing, sketching and painting throughout as a way of working things out.

*Where do you sit within a world where the medium of wood is still mostly transformed by men? Has this influenced your work?*

It's not just woodworking that is dominated by men, to this day I think sculpture in general is still dominated by men. I remember very consciously wanting to bring my experiences as a woman to the realm of woodwork. I wanted to make forms that referenced my own experiences. It's a funny thing, because for centuries men have been creating almost voyeuristic sculptures of the female form, and I think in the last 80 years or so we have seen women trying to reclaim these shapes, me included. I consider some of my pieces as almost a form of self-portraiture.

*Do you use hand tools as well as powercarvers?*

I love my powercarvers but I do also use gauges, drawknives, chisels and rasps. It really depends on the material I'm using and what the design of the work is, whatever tool is most suitable for the job.

*Is your income primarily from gallery sales or private commissions?*

I would say it's a real mix of both and year to year this changes. My gallerist, Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, has been wonderful while navigating these last few years and staging my first two solo exhibitions. I've been exclusively represented by the gallery since 2019. It's based in Rushcutters Bay NSW and specialises in functional art and high-end design from Australia and New Zealand.

*How did the concept for Trunk originate, and what did it mean to you?*

*Trunk* was my debut solo exhibition, it explored themes of life cycles, death, the human body and the West Australian landscape. These themes came about in part as I had just moved back to Perth from Melbourne because my father had terminal cancer. It was a time I felt very grounded in Western Australia and I was rediscovering this world in the South-West. I felt connected to place and was also going through a period of lots of reflection and grief. *Trunk* was made from exclusively West

8. *Flex 1, Flex 2, Hush* and *Awry*, 2022, ebonised jarrah. *Photo: Olive Gill-Hille*

9. Olive Gill-Hille ebonising *Bones*, a bench made from jarrah for Asymptote. *Photo: Olivia Senior*

10. *Conflux*, 2023, Asymptote collection, jarrah. 'Joined shapes that create a single wall panel.' *Photo: Olive Gill-Hille*

11. *Haptic, Convergence, Resonance*, 2023. 'A series of sculptures sit in the studio.' *Photo: Nick Fitzpatrick*

Australian timbers, there was a lot of experimentation and exploration there.

*Tell us about your recent exhibition Asymptote – what does the title reference and how is that reflected in the works?*

Asymptote is a mathematical term meaning 'a straight line that continually approaches a given curve but does not meet it at any finite distance'. This exhibition was about exploring ideas relating to touch. It could be the touch between two people – those tender moments before two courting people first lay hands on one another – but also on a greater scale maybe the moment before an impact.

Finding a word for the very delicate and quiet moment before two people touch was quite difficult, and ultimately I liked the sound of 'asymptote' and the way a clinical word could be repurposed for something so romantic.

This body of work is made from jarrah, sheoak and eucalypt. Some of the works were salvaged from old bushfires or burn-offs from local properties and the charcoal surface of these was incorporated into the pieces. All the works went through a process of ebonising, with a mix of steel wool, rusty nails and white vinegar that reacts with the deep red tannins of the West Australian timber to blacken the surface. I love that this is a natural reaction rather than a straight-up stain and is almost like the timber itself is speaking.

*Are you working on a new collection of work or planning any new directions?*

I am working on a new collection of work. I have never properly exhibited in my home state, and that has become very important to me in the last few months. I'm now looking at putting together a show to take place here next year. There are new things I'm currently planning and exploring, but I'm not quite ready to reveal those!

*What's your advice to other makers who want to pursue a sculptural path and make it work as a career?*

Never stop making, and try and make something every day. I think in lots of ways what is most important is being true to your own voice and establishing a unique style. People appreciate authenticity.

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*Learn more about Olive Gill-Hille @olivegillhille at www.olivegillhille.com and via https://gallerysallydancuthbert.com/*

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# The 3D World of Stereotomy

**The application of complex geometry to building methods is an art and a craft which dates back centuries and defines cultural identities. Patrick Moore is a Canadian carpenter who has devoted years to the study and dissemination of stereotomy.**

**Left (l–r):** Mr Kenzo Akao (Museum Director), Patrick Moore, Jérémie Abbate and Luc Adam stand before Jérémie and Luc's stereotomical masterpiece which was displayed in the Takenaka Carpentry Tools Museum's travelling exhibition *Kigumi – Revealing the Carpentry Behind the Wood Joint in Japan*. Jérémie constructed the classic guitarde and Luc constructed the roof structure shown below. A concave cone with an offset centre creates a seemingly inflated semi-circle. The front curved roof surface has a large 3D curved and tapered St Andrew's Cross with double curved purlins either side. The cone has been sectioned multiple times to create the sloping ridges, six diversed (rotated) curved hips (where two adjacent faces of the piece follow both roof surfaces), three regular hips, and three regular valleys.

**Opposite:** It took Sim Ayers 520+ hours of dedicated application to create his masterpiece which made up from 347 individually crafted pieces. From the imperial hip rafters to the graceful double curved arches, every element was carefully designed and cut with the utmost precision. It represents a step into the layered masterpieces of the revered French Compagnon carpenters.

At its simplest, stereotomy is a way of putting 2D drawings into 3D sections. It's a skill that can be applied to constructions, large and small. It has been called the alchemy of solids and employs geometry in ways that date back centuries – some even claim it goes back to the building of Solomon's temple. It's manifest in historical cathedrals, temples and architectural structures throughout the world.

'It's a way of locking in your human Autocad or Sketch-up, and it's beyond any tool', says Patrick Moore, a Canadian carpenter who has undertaken over 10 years of accredited training and achieved the notable distinction of being the first person from the English-speaking world to be accepted as a *Compagnon Passant Charpentier* in France.

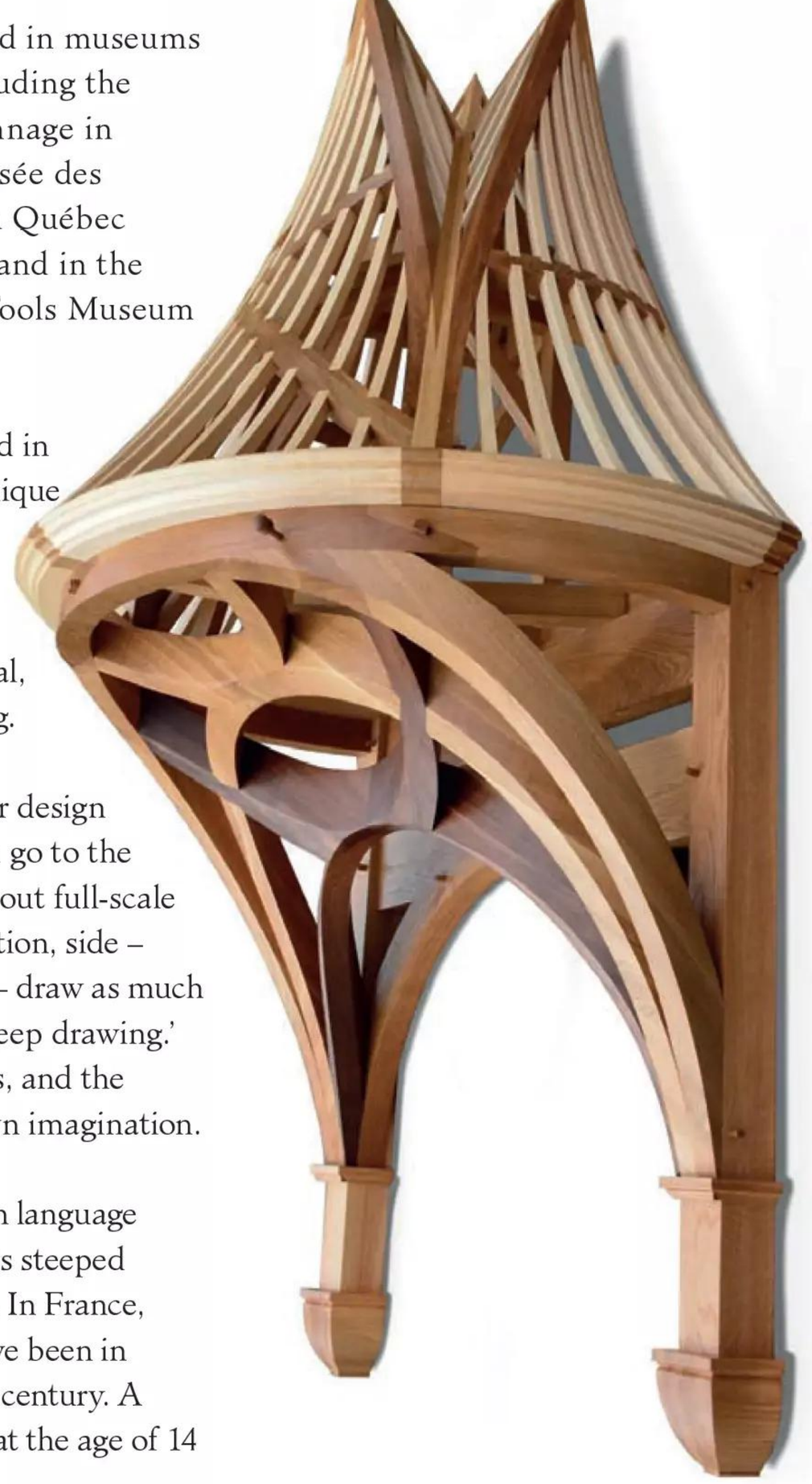
Patrick went on to complete a Masters with *Les Compagnon de Devoir* in France and also holds a degree in construction management, along with diplomas in heritage carpentry and masonry, as well as many other certificates and professional association memberships.

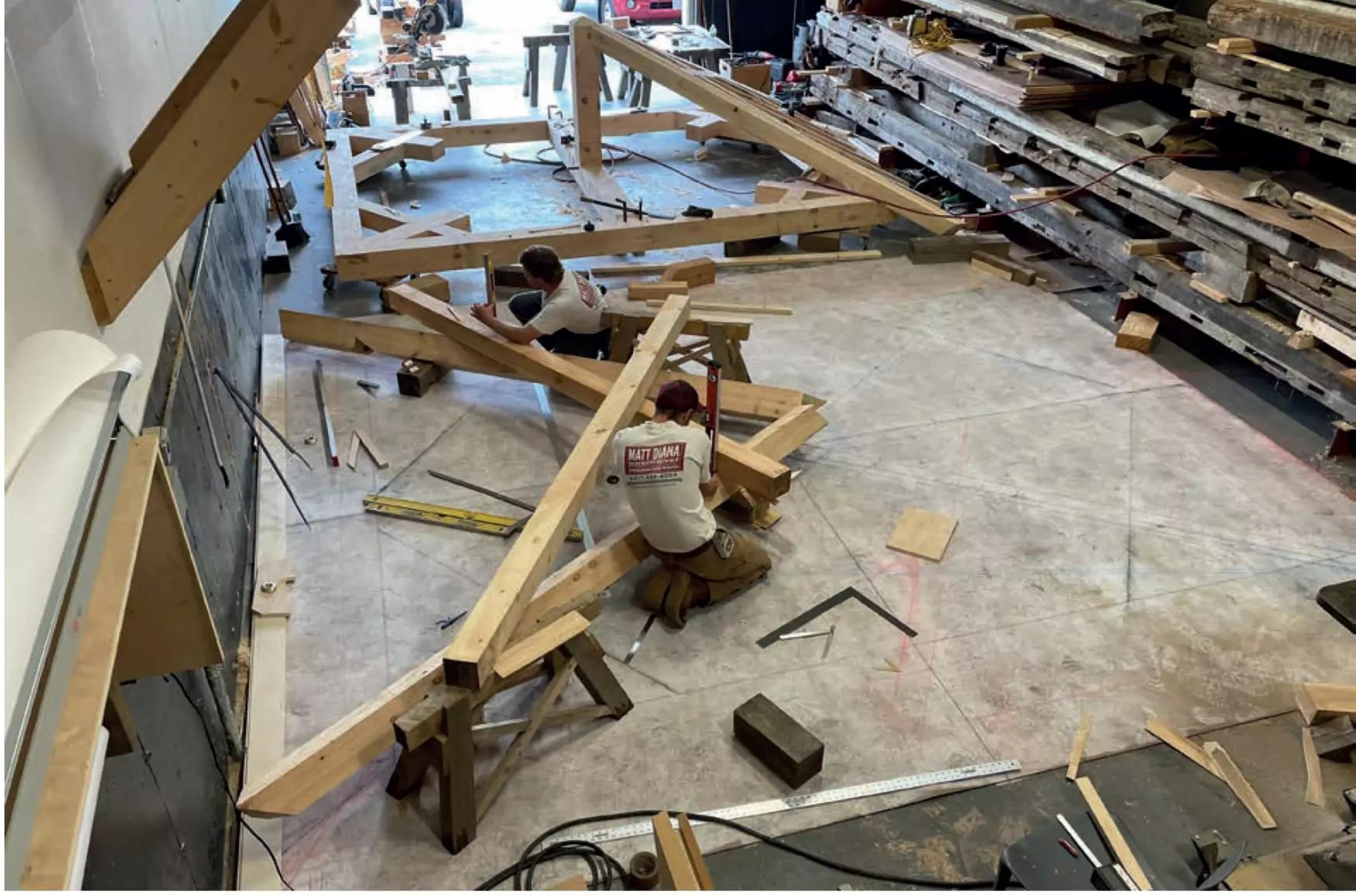
He has works displayed in museums around the world, including the Musée du Compagnonnage in Tours, France; the Musée des Maîtres et Artisans du Québec in Montreal, Canada; and in the Takenaka Carpentry Tools Museum in Kobe, Japan.

Stereotomy is not an end in itself, but rather a technique and an art that can be applied to your skillset, he explains. It's the application of non-digital, hands-on visual learning.

'Once you've nailed your design down', Patrick says, 'you go to the drawing board, or lay it out full-scale on the floor. Plan, elevation, side – slicing it from all views – draw as much as you know and then keep drawing.' It's a 'mind skill', he says, and the limits really are your own imagination.

Historically, with its own language of symbols, stereotomy is steeped in symbolism and ritual. In France, apprentice programs have been in existence since the 13th century. A trade education started at the age of 14






**Right:** As a complex learning exercise, this one-of-a-kind gazebo was built by Patrick Moore's former student, Matt Diana along with his work crew. Matt utilised the four different ways to orientate a hip and included two St Andrew's Crosses on the roof surfaces. A combination of the bevel method and the French scribe (*piquage*) technique was used to lay out the pieces. Matt initially built a 1:10 scale model to work out the details.

and continued for a decade, working during the day, and studying at night.

Producing a 'masterpiece' and travelling as a journeyman were also part of attaining the status of a guild member, as was evaluation on the basis of character traits.

When Patrick returned from his studies in France around ten years ago, he wanted to show others the deep knowledge he had learnt. Hundreds of emails to schools largely met with little response. 'No one was interested: "I've been doing this for 30 years and never heard of it"', was the typical response Patrick said. 'But I knew it was profound and wanted to do something.'

In 2014, Patrick started his own small, professional school and since then has taught hundreds of people at other schools as well as online. The aim has always been to simply 'get the word out'.

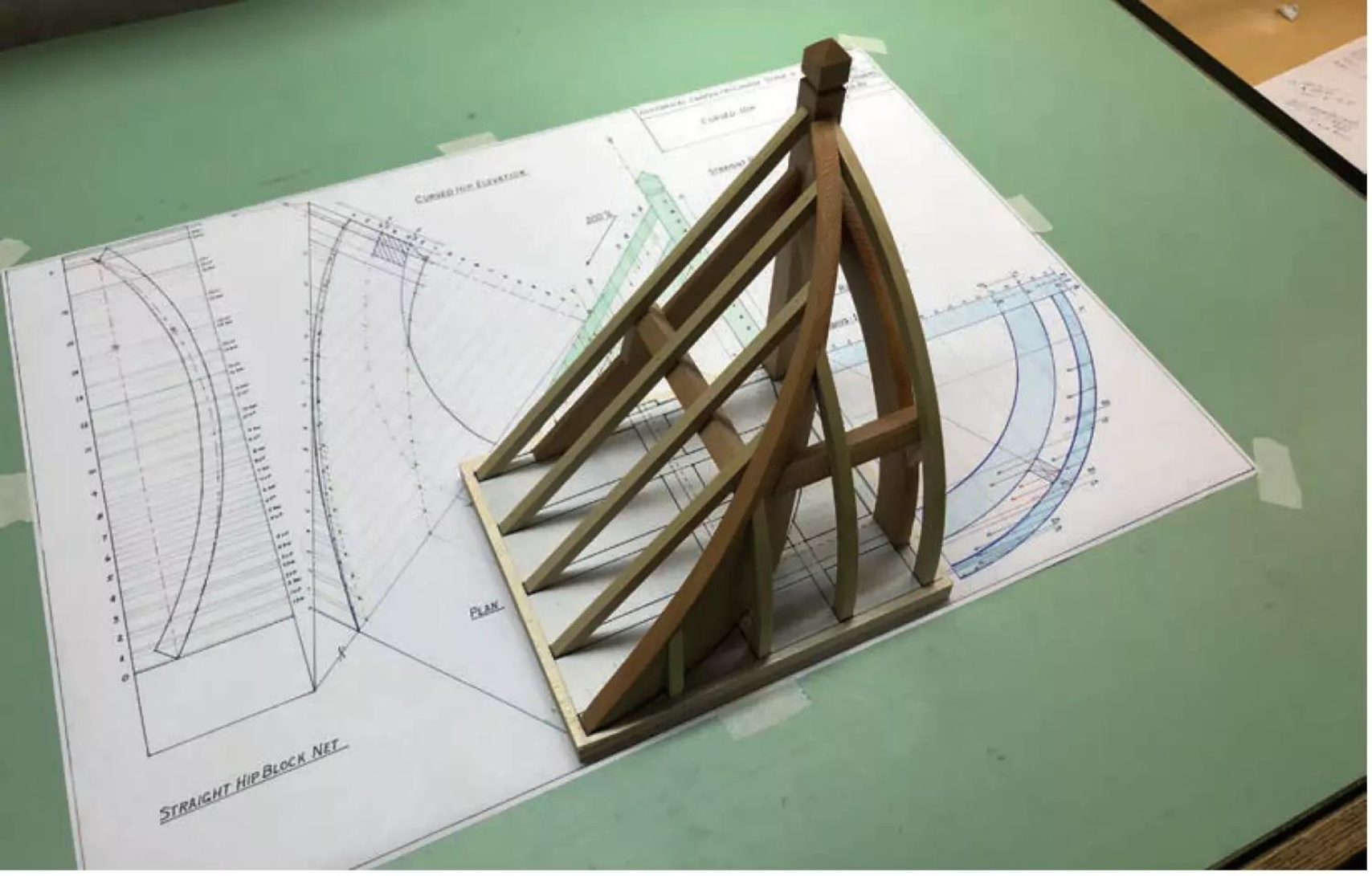
But in an increasingly digital world that's now fuelled by artificial intelligence, what is the relevance of stereotomy? Why not just use a computer? Patrick explains how the benefits from a tactile (as in hand-drawn) method, are a deeper form of learning and a visionary understanding of spatial depth.

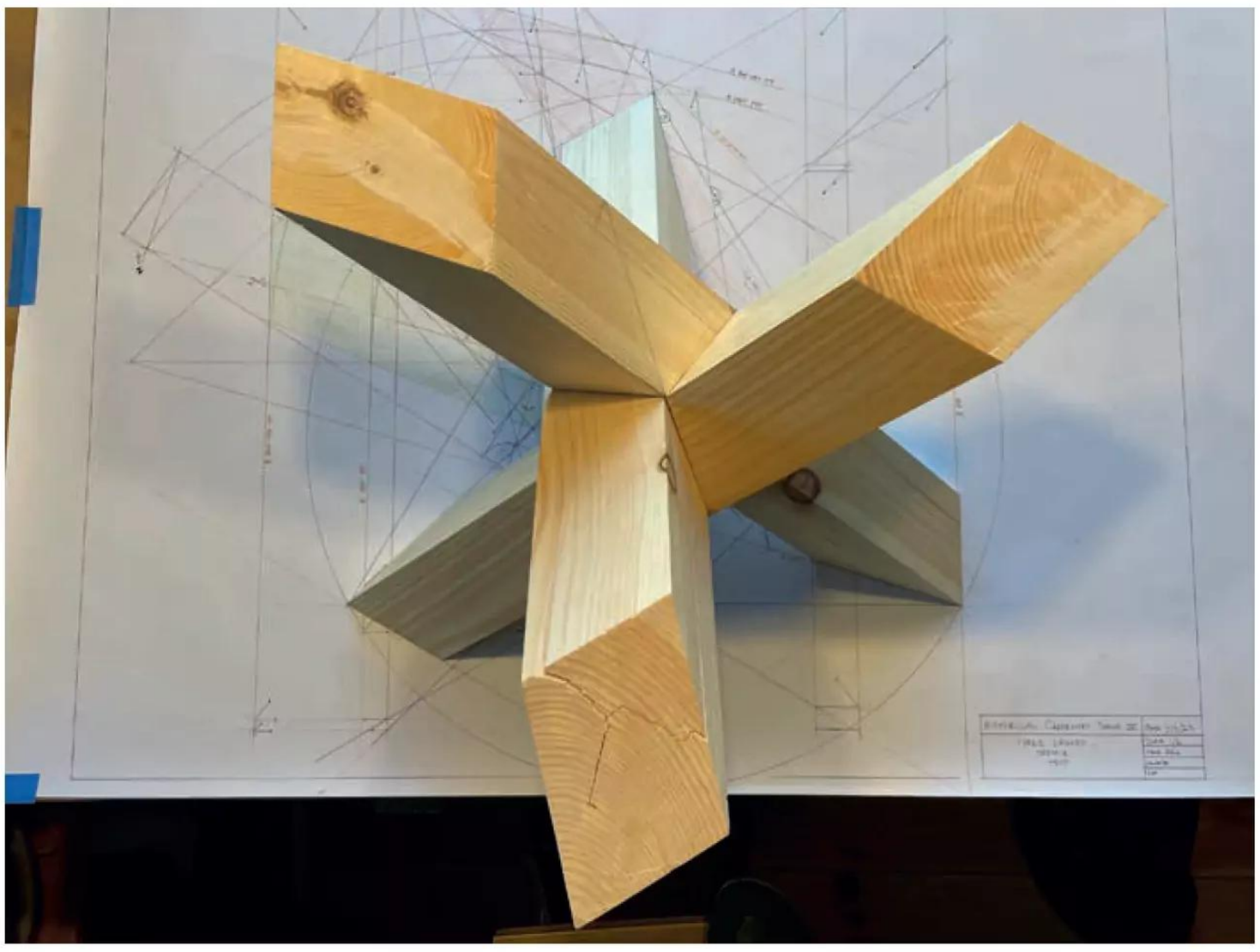
Stereotomy does not rely on complex tools. The basic requirements are a pencil, paper, straightedge and a drafting triangle. 'It's a process that makes complex designs manageable. Students learn to not only do things differently, but to see them differently.'

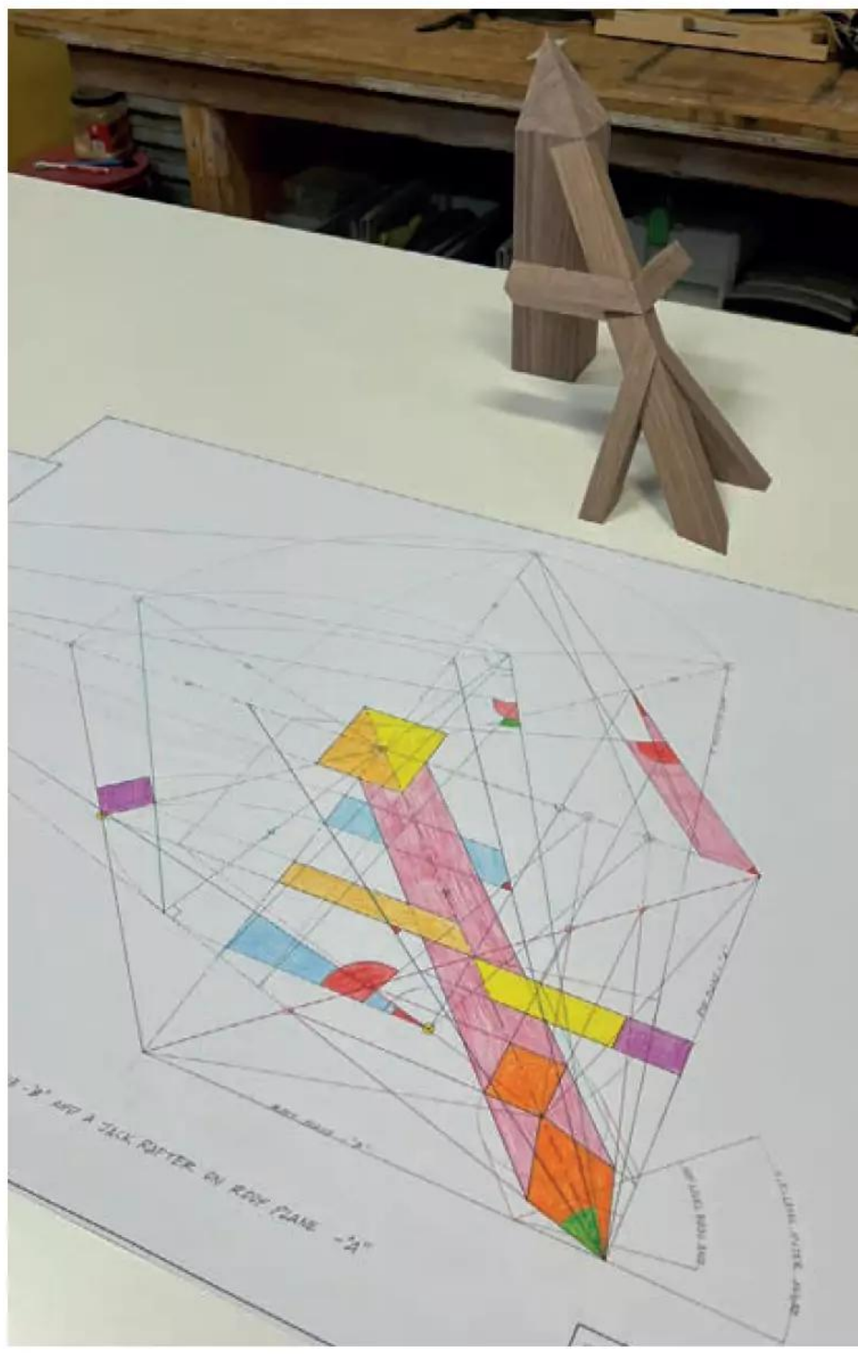
The maintenance of traditional crafts is not only of value for preserving and restoring historical structures – it's way of reinforcing cultural identities.

## History and origins

In the intricate world of architectural craftsmanship, stereotomy is a venerable discipline. This unique intersection of geometry and carpentry has a rich history, versatile applications, and enduring relevance in contemporary construction practices.





**This page:** Stereotomy is a way of creating the 2D drawings from which 3D sections can be cut for the kind of complex historical carpentry constructions that were achieved prior to the advent of digital design applications and artificial intelligence.

The drawings shown here were created as learning exercises by students at Patrick Moore's school. Clockwise from top left: Pat Sowers, model and sketch for 'curved hip' task. David Bowman, sketch and model for 'understanding diverse' task. Ariel Schecter, proof of sketch model for 'three-legged trestle test'.

Derived from the Greek *stereos* (solid) and *tomē* (cut), stereotomy is the art of cutting and assembling stone or wood into specific shapes and architectural constructions.

As an art and a set of techniques, stereotomy reflects empirical knowledge that developed into an intellectual discipline, cultivating the kind of independent problem-solving that is relevant on any worksite. Its importance transcends mere technical proficiency, playing a pivotal role in preserving cultural identity and craftsmanship in the built environment.

Germany, France and Japan have rich traditions of stereotomy within their architectural traditions. Respectively known as *Schiftung, l'art du trait*, and *kiku-jutsu*, each embodies a unique approach. As of 2009, l'art du trait and kiku-jutsu have been listed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO, underscoring their global significance.

## In Germany

Schiftung has been indispensable in constructing complex timber structures, particularly in roof frameworks where the transmission of forces across the structure is effectively distributed. Traditional timber framing, characterised by its robustness and durability, relies heavily on schiftung for the creation of sophisticated roof trusses, dormers, and other architectural features.

Despite the advent of modern technology, schiftung continues to play a vital role in contemporary construction practices. The integration of advanced software has streamlined the process, allowing for intricate 3D modelling and automated fabrication processes. However, the essence of schiftung remains unchanged – it is still about precision, craftsmanship, and ensuring the structural integrity of timber-based structures.

It is deeply intertwined with Germany's architectural heritage. Half-timbered

**Right:** The main entrance to the former US Embassy in Ottawa, is now a national space dedicated to Inuit, Métis Nation and First Nations communities and has the entryway designed by Bassam Daoud (Norr Architects) and made by Patrick Moore and his team at Amor Construction shown right. The entrance alludes to a traditional Inuit wigwam and was made from in-house glue-laminated marine grade plywood.

'The understanding and the practical application of stereotomy was a key factor in the success of this structure. It's a great example of the importance of learning how to visualise 3D space and how pieces interact with one another. The success of this structure is not about learning how to use a computer program, being a genius with mathematical calculations, or simply applying a 'technology. This is about using your intellectual mental capacity to think and problem solve. '

Some 'fun facts':

- There are over 500 different compound cuts
- Not a single piece is the same. They are all different and unique which requires them to be installed in a very precise location.
- Over 20,000 stainless steel screws and 73,000 stainless steel finishing nails were used in the assembly.

*Photo: Patrick Moore*

**Right:** This reception masterpiece by Tim Lanau enabled his acceptance as a *Compagnon Charpentier Du Devoir*. It took around 900 hours to complete.
*Photo: Tim Lanau*

homes, many of which hold significant historical importance as national monuments, dot the landscape along the German Half-Timbered Road, showcasing the artistry and skill of schiftung craftsmen.

## In France

Translating to 'the art of the line', l'art du trait encompasses a range of techniques and methodologies aimed at achieving precision and harmony in timber construction. Originating from Les Compagnons du Devoir, the ancient French craft guild system, l'art du trait has been a cornerstone of French carpentry for centuries.

Unlike conventional carpentry, which relies on standardised measurements and templates, l'art du trait employs a more intuitive approach, allowing the visualisation and execution of complex timber structures without the need for intricate mathematical formulas.

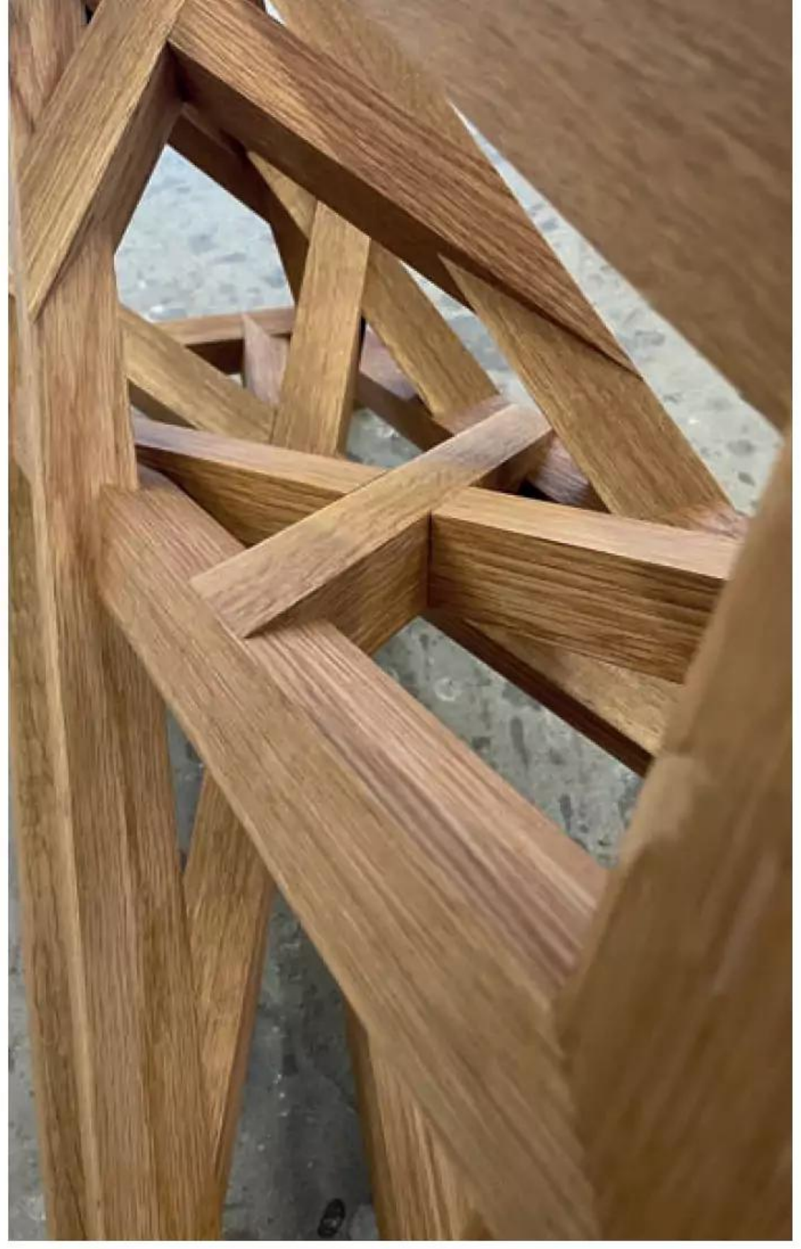
At its core, l'art du trait is about problem-solving and spatial visualisation. Carpenters who master l'art du trait possess the ability to design and construct complex wooden buildings in three dimensions.

Within French trade guilds or *compagnonnages*, l'art du trait carries significant symbolic and social importance. Mastery is a mark of professional achievement and is accessible to individuals from differing social backgrounds. It has been associated with powerful symbolic and initiatory practices, playing a crucial role in the guilds.

Historically, it has given architects and craftspeople the tools and techniques necessary to realise the unique elements that define French architecture. From the elaborate dormers of the *guitarde* and *capucine* to the majestic, twisted spires of cathedrals, l'art du trait is central to shaping a distinctive aesthetic.

## In Japan

From the Japanese *ki* (measuring) and *ku* (signifying 90°) along with *jutsu* (art, way), *kiku-jutsu*



**Left:** Ariel Schecter's trestle to achieve his professional certificate. This trestle required over 200 hours work in total from design to completion. *Photos: Ariel Schecter*

**Below:** Patrick Moore's former student Nathaniel Gruenwald's masterpiece was an entry porch made from yellow cedar which consists of a groin vault formed by two capucines based on a drawing published in *L'Art du Trait de Charpenterie*. It took 300 hours to lay out, fabricate, finish, and install, plus another 60 hours to make the original scale model.

encapsulates the meticulous techniques and methodologies employed by master carpenters. Highly skilled Japanese temple carpenters known as *miyadaiku*, kiku-jutsu played a pivotal role in defining the unique visual characteristics of Japanese architecture.

Japanese pagodas and temples with gracefully curved eaves and intricate joinery are the quintessential demonstrations of kiku-jutsu. The discipline traces its origins back to Prince Shotoku's era in the Asuka Period (590 AD) and reached its zenith during the Kamakura Period (1333 AD), marked by the refinement of techniques such as *oogi-taruki* and *sumi-ki*.

Construction methods have evolved, however there remain dedicated artisans in Japan who diligently practice and uphold this art. Master carpenter Takeo Mochida is a rare holder of this esteemed technique and a dual recipient of the Living National Treasure title. Mochida actively imparts his profound knowledge to the next generation of carpenters, ensuring the continuity of this unique form of stereotomy.

Traditional wooden structures, meticulously crafted using kiku-jutsu techniques, serve as cultural symbols for contemporary Japanese society. The restoration of old temples and shrines owes much to the application of this skill, highlighting its profound impact on preserving Japan's architectural heritage.

In a world increasingly defined by rapid technological advancement and globalised architectural trends, the traditions of Schiftung, l'art du trait, and kiku-jutsu, within the broader context of stereotomy, underscore the value of craftsmanship, tradition, and cultural identity in architectural practices around the world.

*Photos without individual credits courtesy Patrick Moore*

*Learn more about Patrick Moore @thestereotomist and the Professional School of Practical Stereotomy in Ottawa, Canada at https://schoolofstereotomy.com/*

# Lighting the Way

**Two years ago Kara Ghasemiani sidestepped a career as an engineer and enrolled in a full time woodworking course in Sweden – and has never looked back.**

**Main:** Kara Ghasemiani's journey as woodworker was kindled by his interest in making lamps.

**This page:** Carl and Siv Malmsten's vision for 'A school for creative work' was realised in the 1960s with the establishment of Capellagården on the island Öland which lies off the south-east coast of Sweden.

Shown here, views of the school and herb garden with staff building in the background in which Siv and Carl Malmsten used to live.
*Photos: Johan Ekelund*

In 2015 I graduated a mechanical engineer with a master's in automotive engineering. I was in Shanghai on my first job assignment and one evening I found myself in a restaurant with simple but beautiful, rustic lamps hanging from the ceiling, made of thick hemp rope with light bulbs at their ends.

I didn't manage to find anything like it back home so with a simple YouTube search I built one myself. That was the start of my creative journey. I became completely absorbed with building lamps, using fallen branches and logs in the forest as well as upcycling old car tyres and bicycle wheels. When the handsaw in my parents' garage didn't quite cut it (pun intended) I found a friendly furniture carpenter in my neighbourhood who offered to help.

Selling handmade lamps presented some roadblocks in the form of electric regulations and certifications so I lost momentum but started growing more interested in woodworking. By 2019 I was spending one day a week at the carpenters' as an unofficial apprentice in parallel with my engineering job.

Around the same time, I was on a Tinder date with a girl whom I had little in common with, except for woodworking. Her eyes glistened with excitement as she told me about a summer course she'd attended, not once, but twice, at a crafts school in an idyllic countryside village. She told me I just had to apply. We never met again but I did as she said. In the summer of 2020, I lost my engineering job due to the pandemic, right after which I attended a two-week summer course at the magical place that is Capellagården.

A few months later I was arguing with a friend that it would be unreasonable for me to apply for a three-year furniture making course in my thirties, having already spent seven years studying. She asked me the simple but life-altering question: 'If you could do anything in life right now, what would it be?'

I'm currently studying my third and last year at said course. My name is Kara Ghasemiani, I am 35 years old, born and raised in Gothenburg, Sweden, and I feel quite privileged. Privileged to live in a country where we can take student loans without interest and receive government grants for studying. I feel privileged to have the social security to be able to pursue the idea of self-actualisation. And lastly, I feel privileged to have found that elusive sense of purpose that so many of us long for but never find.

I can't say whether woodworking is my purpose in life, that I have been put on this planet to breathe sawdust


and bleed wood glue. All I know is that right now I am so absorbed by the workshop and by creating that I reluctantly take bathroom breaks.

## Recognition and affirmation

When my lamp series *Hide and Seek* was announced runner-up in the World category of the 2023 Maker of the Year awards, I felt a great sense of accomplishment. It's the first outside recognition I have received for my work, and I'm humbled to have been acknowledged among such great creators.

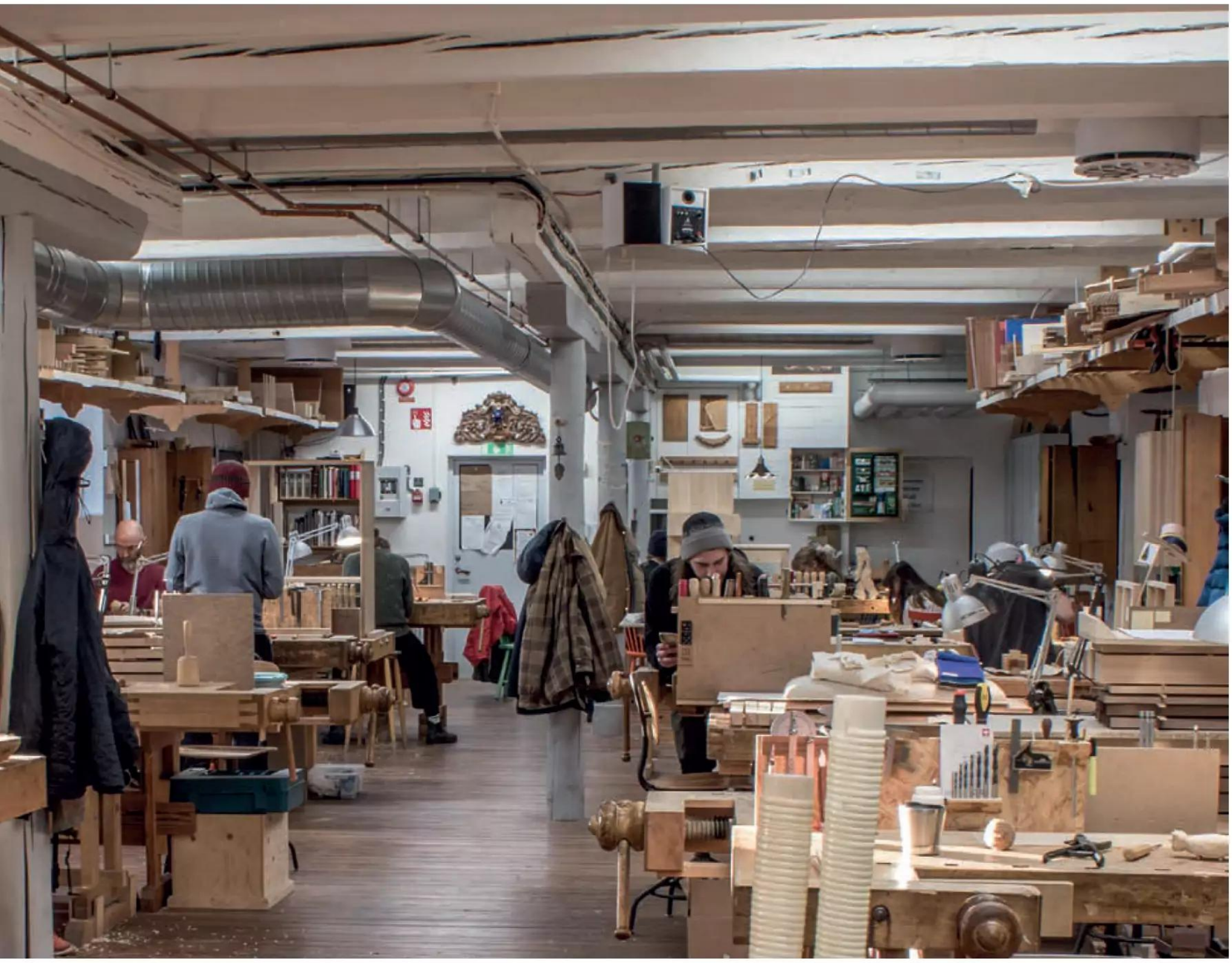
In my first semester at Capella, we had a one-week design workshop where we were to design and build a lamp prototype, focusing on the design process. I felt some pressure since I had a history in lamp-making, and thought I needed to prove myself. As is often the case, for good and bad, I had a quite clear picture of what I wanted to do right from the get-go, so I think the purpose of the workshop was a little lost on me.

I had a vision of Roman pillars illuminated from behind, and curtain blinds in a circular pattern. As I experimented with paper, I knew I wanted to angle the slats to always keep the light source hidden from sight. In my vision, this was a ceiling lamp, but as I was assembling it on my bench, I realised it looked great as a table lamp. I was immensely pleased with the result and the following year I developed the prototype into the lamp series that came runner-up. When I started at Capella I felt like lamp-making was behind me, but the design workshop rekindled that light. I have protected the lamp design and am hoping to put it into production in one way or another.

## Island of creativity

Capellagården is a boarding school for craft and design, located on the island Öland (that literally translates to island-land), off the southeast coast of Sweden. The courses available are furniture, ceramics, textile, gardening and building conservation. The total number of students is around 80, both Swedish and international. The school sits in a quaint and picturesque farming village called Vickleby, and in the low-season I wouldn't be surprised if Capellagården accounts for half of the village population.

The Capellagården foundation was started in 1960 by husband-and-wife Carl and Siv Malmsten with the vision 'A school for creative work'. After having searched the country for a long time, they finally found a farm in Vickleby in 1957 where their bigger visions could be realised. The workshops would be open for work at all hours of the day, the students could live and eat at the school with fresh vegetables from the gardens, and the place would be inspiring and stimulating.



Views of the machine shop and bench room at Capellagården. ‘In winter evenings when the sun lies low, the atmosphere in the workshop becomes quite romantic.’

Carl was a very prolific furniture designer and decorator with a professorial title, but his passion was to give people of all ages the opportunity to further their craft and creative dreams. He used what he earned from his furniture to bring about his school projects. Wife Siv was a trained teacher and was highly involved in school activities.

The quiet and calm rural life in Vickleby suits me. This, and the fact that all our meals are served to us, allows me to focus and invest all my time in creating, without distractions. This place truly is a kindergarten for adults.

The biggest factor in my love for this school is the workshops that are open to us around the clock. Doors are never locked. In the bench workshop each student has their own bench, and the machine hall is fully equipped with everything a furniture carpenter would need.

Being around like-minded, creative people who share your passion for creating is very inspiring and I have learned just as much from my fellow classmates as I have from my great teachers. Seeing what the skilled students of the other departments create is equally inspiring and a welcome contrast to our world revolving around wood. I have even made ceramic handles in a couple of my projects, discovering how meditative (and forgiving) working with clay can be. Intradepartmental collaborations are always encouraged.

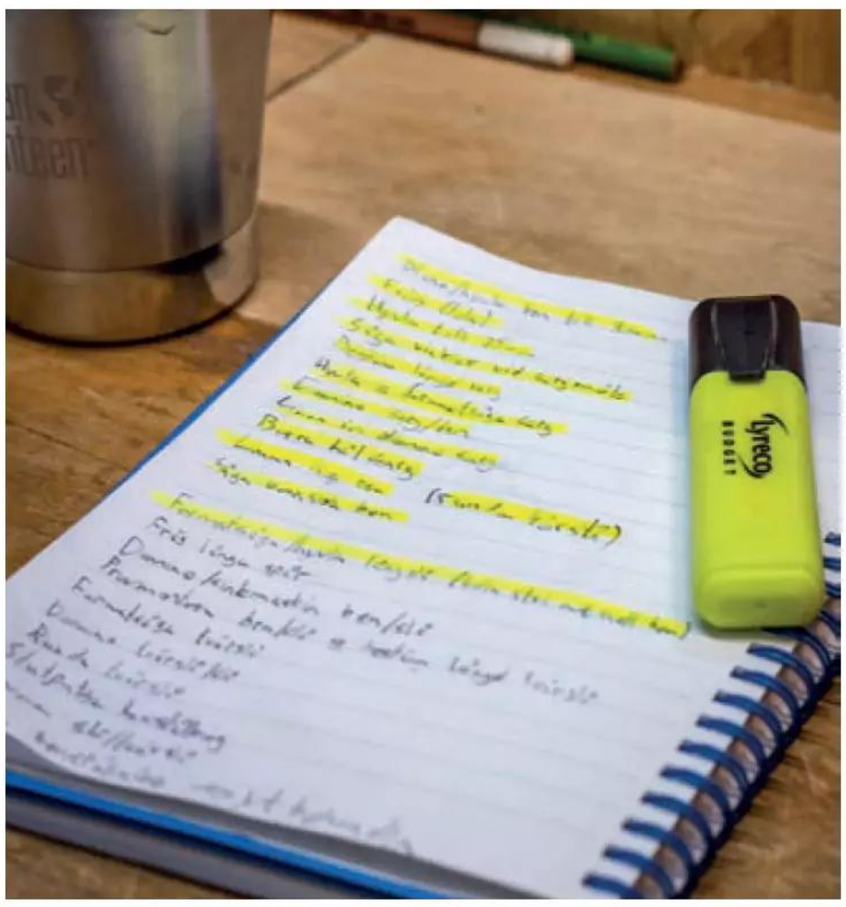
## Beauty Within

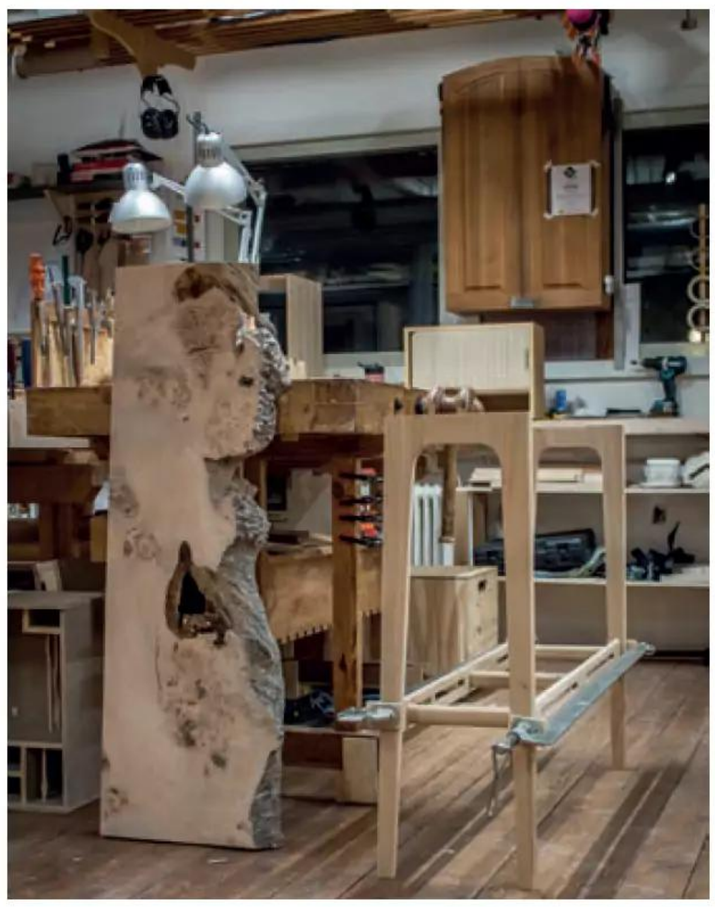
As a third-year furniture student you either do a traditional journeyman’s project  with a defined framework that requires the most part of a year, or you do a more flexible project that is not subject to review and grading. The teachers are there to guide you throughout, depending on your need. I decided on a project year and my theme is live edges. I love trees, and I love the organic feel of live edges and how they remind us of what the material originally was. So for my final year I am exploring the element of live edges and how I can incorporate them into otherwise strict furniture.

I have just finalised the second piece of my live edge series which I’ve named *Beauty Within*. It’s a leg stand cabinet with a tambour door and two drawers that sit atop a wild-looking maple slab. It’s not a secret that I am fond of contrasts, and this piece is full of it! The cabinet case and leg stand are of elm, the case being veneered. The drawer fronts, tambour door and tabletop are maple. The insides of the cabinet reveal some beautiful masur birch veneer that goes very well together with the tabletop.

The maple slab was donated to me by my teacher. It had been lying outside his barn for several years and when I told him about my project and what


**These pages:**
Showing some of the making processes and finished details of Kara Ghasemiani's *Beauty Within* cabinet-on-stand, the first of his third year live edge series.



I was looking for he was generous enough to part with it, and boy am I glad he did! I was literally jumping with excitement as I was planing the withered surface to reveal the hidden universe within. I initially intended to sandblast the live edge but decided to keep the withered surface because I found the contrast gorgeous. What I'm most pleased with in this piece are the live edge drawer pulls. They are a detail that I feel makes the whole piece come together in a subtle yet distinct and playful way.

I really enjoyed making and fitting the butterflies into the tabletop. I think they are a brilliant combination of function and aesthetic detail. I also enjoyed dovetailing the drawers. It had been a while since I did any dovetailing and I'd forgotten how calming and satisfying it can be to spend a whole week by your workbench, only using hand tools. It requires time, and patience, and in a way, that's the point.

## Finding solutions

Many people struggle to define what it means to be an engineer. Engineers included. But what most of us can agree on is that we are good problem solvers. I find that my engineering mindset comes very handy when building furniture. I try to think a few steps ahead and not just about what needs to be done this very moment. I try to account for margins, plan, divide, and carry out my work in a way that is logical, effective and efficient. I feel like I can come up with technical solutions to problems and not get too delayed by road-bumps.

I'm also quite grateful for my knowledge of geometry and trigonometry. It's not advanced by any means, just basic high-school math. But I guess since I've rehearsed and used it so much it comes to me quite naturally when needing to calculate compound angles and various measurements or distances with angles involved. I even held a short trigonometry class for my classmates last year.

My engineering mindset can however be both a blessing and a curse. I often think in terms of profitability and efficiency, with the end customer

in mind. It makes it hard to justify spending two entire days figuring out the perfect drawer pull. What customer is going to pay for that time? I am getting better at it though. Reminding myself that I'm not here to earn money, but to learn, try things, make mistakes, and enjoy myself. And who knows, maybe I'll become a crypto-millionaire who can spend an entire month figuring out that perfect drawer pull.

## Make a list

Being cursed by perpetual optimising, I love lists. Especially crossing them off. Whenever I'm inefficient I've found it's because I don't have a list to follow. I set aside time to write down the coming process steps in my project, as detailed as possible. I do it on my laptop so I can easily organise the steps in the order they need to be done. This takes me around 20 minutes, and then I have a detailed step-by-step to-do list for the coming three or more work days.

When I'm in the workshop the next day, I simply transfer the steps onto my notepad and get to work. I don't need to spend a second thinking what to do next, I will have a clear overview of the work that needs to be done, but more importantly, I will have the great satisfaction of crossing points off with my highlighter! If you feel like you're not making efficient use of your time in the workshop, my suggestion to you is lists! And if you don't care about being efficient, then good on you!

As my time in this paradise bubble draws to an end, I feel both anxious and excited. I'm moving back to Gothenburg where I will start slow, renting a workshop space some days a week in parallel with a part-time job, and see how it develops. My dream is to have a workshop of my own, where I'm recognised enough that people come to me because they want my furniture. I'm still figuring out what it is that defines my furniture, but I am hopeful that I can make that dream a reality in the not-too-distant future.

*Photos: Kara Ghasemiani*
*Contact Kara via Instagram @karacreates*

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# Task Lighting

**Don’t limit yourself to conventional solutions. Prewired batten and flood lighting can be extremely versatile in different workshop situations. Story by David Luckensmeyer.**

Good lighting is important for all aspects of woodwork. Both commercial workshops and hobby spaces need light: general, specific area and dedicated task lighting.

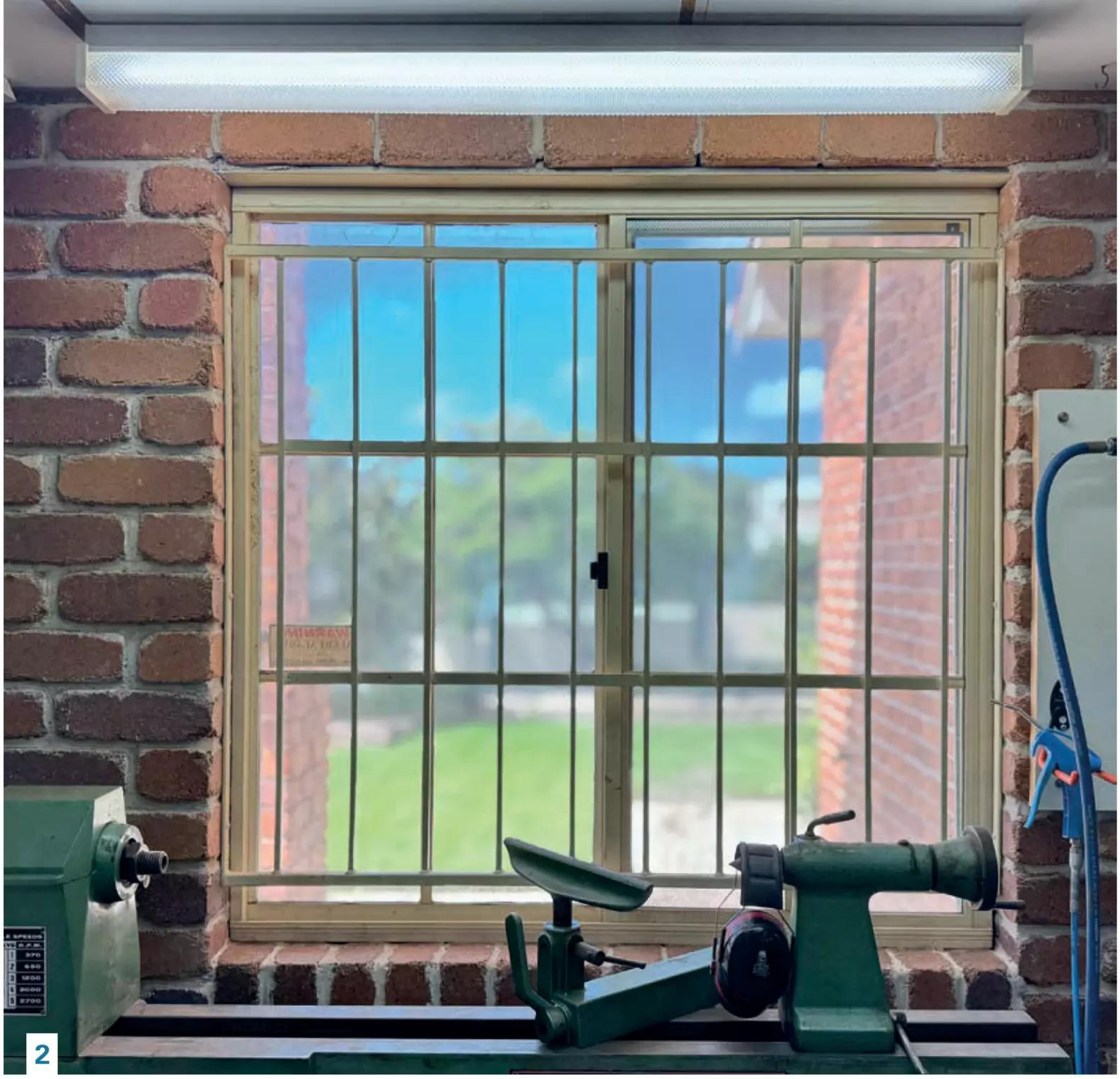
I love the technical details of lights and light sources! After defining some of the terms and ratings you’re likely to come across, I explore conventional and perhaps not so conventional task lighting options available today, including some inexpensive do-it-yourself solutions.

## Definitions and recommendations

**Types:** Incandescent, halogen, fluorescent and LED lights are the most relevant. Fluorescent tubes are still widespread but rapidly being replaced with LEDs (light emitting diodes). LEDs use less power, give off less heat and are generally long-lasting.

**Intensity:** This refers to the amount of light or luminosity emitted over a specific area. ‘Lumen’ (lm) is a measure of the total quantity of visible light while ‘lux’ (lx) expresses its intensity. In practical terms (e.g. the shop floor area): 1lx = 1lm/m2. Uniformity of light is more important than chasing lumens (see below).

**Efficiency:** Most fixtures list wattage or power consumption. But also look



1. An inexpensive aluminium pool fencepost and a prewired flood light make for a great lighting solution over my spindle moulder. The fenceposts are readily available at the local hardware and are great for lighting (and general shop) infrastructure.
2. This fluorescent light fixture not only illuminates the length of the lathe bed, but it is much cheaper than most machine lights with a magnetic base.
3. Because of the multiple flood light sources, I can eliminate (or create) shadows as needed.

for how much light is emitted per watt (W). The range can be quite broad with poor specifications of 70lm/W or worse. Lights above 100lm/W are considered more efficient, but more expensive.

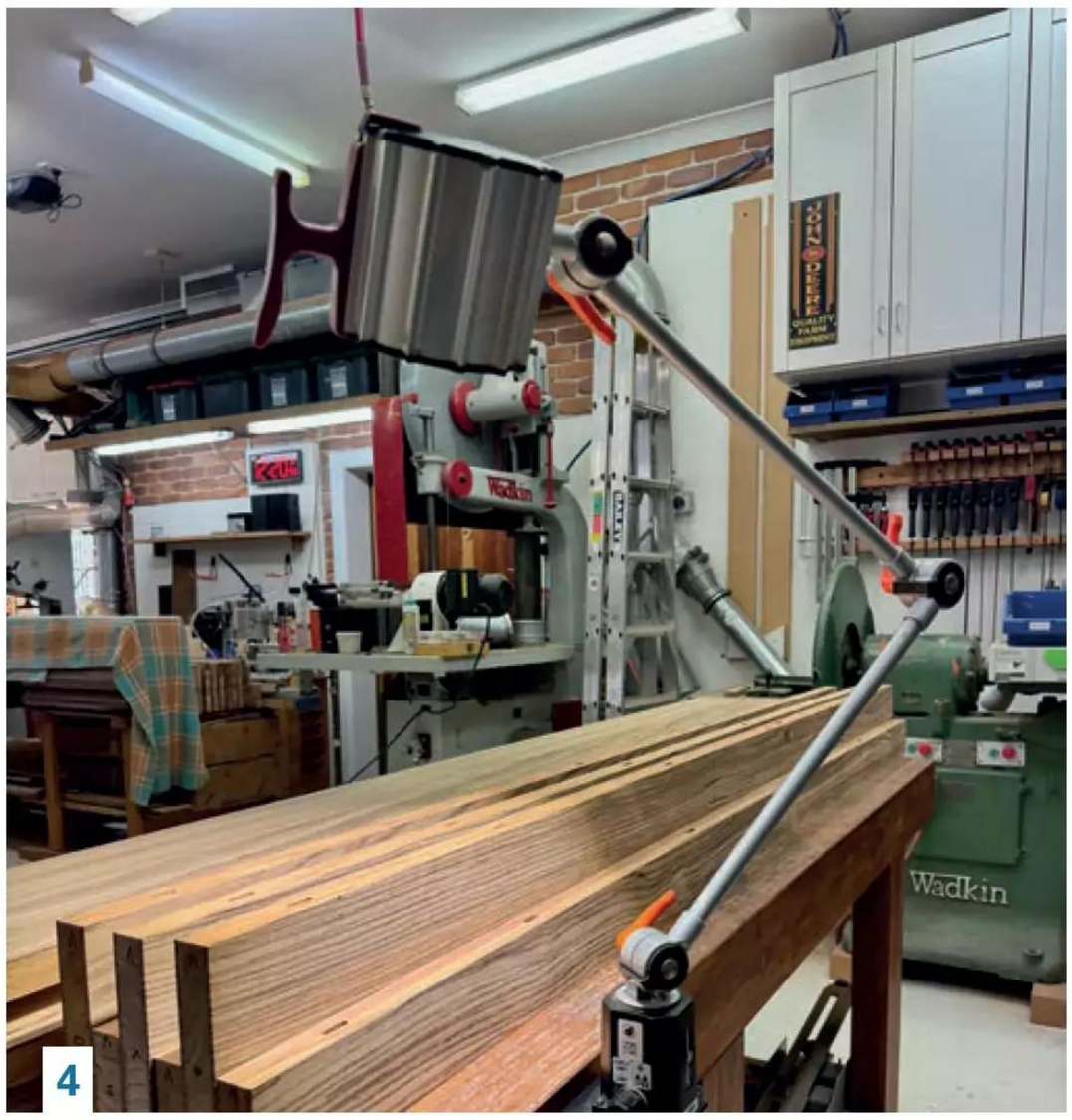
**Colour or temperature:** Measured in kelvins (K), low temperatures are 'yellowish' (2,700–3,000K) while higher temperatures are 'bluish' (5,000–6,500K). There are no right or wrong colours here, although cooler temperatures are perceived as 'brighter' in the shop. Don't stray too far from 'daylight' (around 5,000K).

**Quality:** The colour rendering index (CRI) is benchmarked against daylight (CRI 100) as the best source of light for good colour rendering. Light sources < CRI 80 are poor while sources > CRI 90 are considered good. There is a softness (less glare) and a richness of colour that comes from using higher CRI-rated light sources.

There is a common misconception that lower temperatures (e.g. incandescents, halogens) are better than higher temperatures (e.g. fluorescent tubes) for assessing timber colour and tinted oils for finishing. But it is the quality of the light source (CRI) rather than the colour (K) that is more important for distinguishing colours accurately. The misconception stems from the fact that incandescents and halogens are usually higher quality light sources. LEDs used to be (and often still are) atrocious, but it is now possible to source LED light sources with a high CRI-rating.

## Fluorescent tubes

Fluorescent tubes or batten lights are great for general shop lighting. I also use them for task lighting over my lathe. Mine are attached to a cabinet but an overhead shelf would

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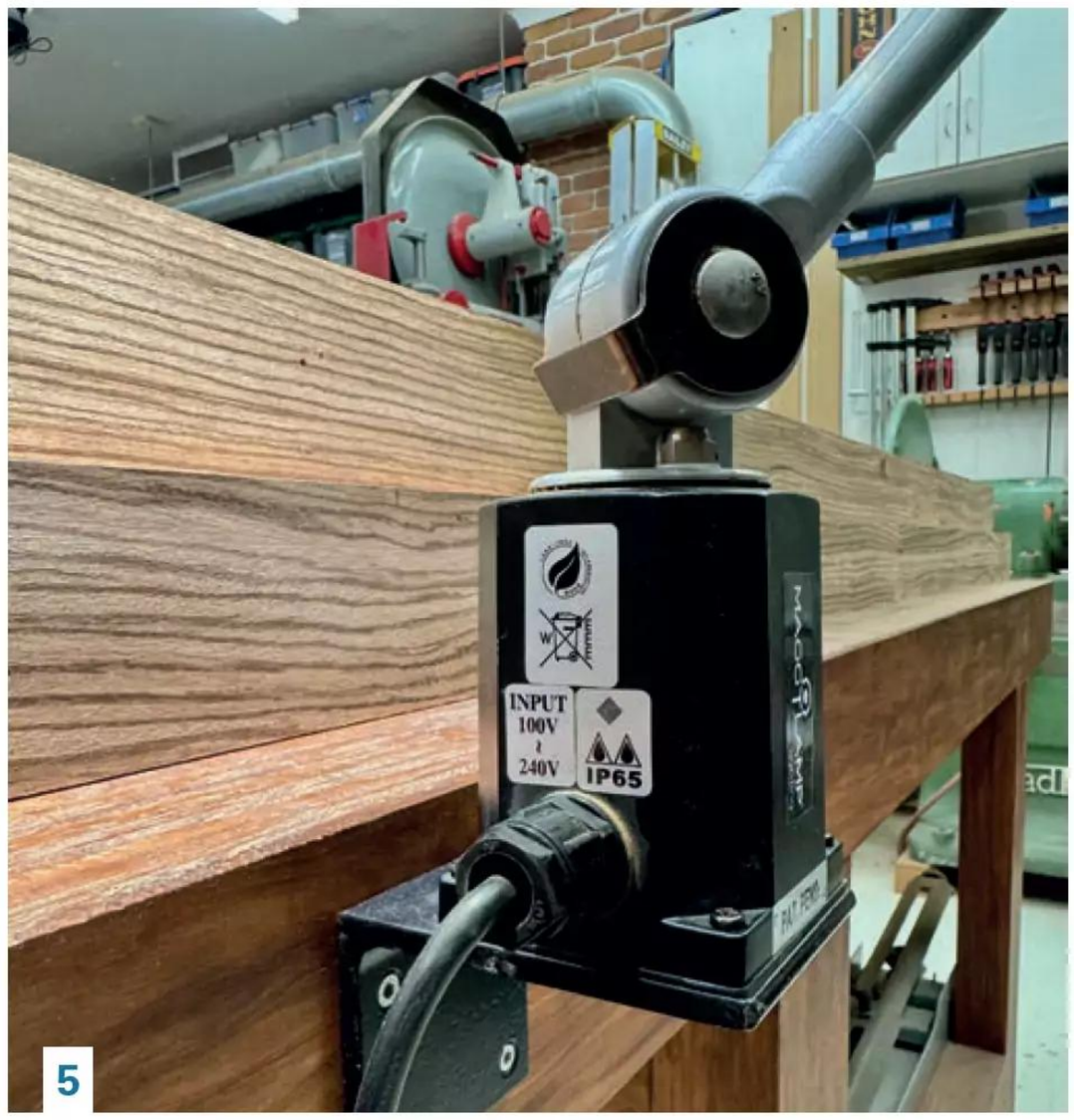


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**4, 5.** I have multiple sets of predrilled holes and can easily relocate task lighting such as the spotlight shown from one end of the bench to the other, or remove it altogether. Sometimes I attach task lighting to one of my European sawhorses for extra versatility. This keeps my bench clear.

**6.** Shadowless light is key for efficient and accurate work.

work too. The readily available DIY versions are plug and play and work well.

## Floodlights for bench and machine work

When LED flood lights came on sale a few years back I bought several and used them in a staggered arrangement to light my hand tool area. Each light can be angled quickly to suit the work at hand, and they are all plugged into one power board with switch. The 10–15W versions work best in smaller areas while 20W versions are better for larger areas.

## Articulated spotlights

Light sources on an articulated arm are versatile and useful for specific tasks in the shop. Different options for attachment (screws, clamps, or magnets) increase usability and I set mine up all over the place. For example, spotlights provide flexible raking light for finishing to expose flaws, or for carving to spot imperfections. Most often I use spotlights on machines or at the bench to illuminate a specific task.

## Bar lighting

Bar lights have been around for a long time but robust knock-about versions are generally expensive. I use a dimmable, articulated bar light at my dovetail bench. It offers wonderfully even lighting for hand sawing and chiselling to a line, and particularly to either side of the line.

The dimmable feature is not a gimmick. Strongly disparate light sources (e.g. general versus task lighting) can bring about the perception of 'dark areas' even if those areas are well lit. Paradoxically, sometimes I can see my work better with reduced intensity or lux.

In summary, if you're in the market for a new task light, consider LED light sources with good efficiency (> 100lm/W), a temperature you prefer (around 5,000K or daylight is a good starting point although I prefer 4000K), and the best quality you can afford (look for > CRI 90). For sure, the bar light is the best for detailed work but there are plenty of prewired, inexpensive DIY options too.

*Photos: David Luckensmeyer*

*David Luckensmeyer @luckensmeyer is a Brisbane-based woodworker and furniture maker, see www.luckensmeyer.com.au*

# A New Award for Woodturning

**Maker of the Year Awards now offer a special $1500 cash award for the best display of woodturning. Ernie Newman writes about the inspirational woman in whose name The Jan Pennell Award for Woodturning has been created.**

**Above:** Jan Pennell with two giant chess pieces she turned as part of club project.

**Right:** Over 2100mm long and 3mm in diameter, Jan Pennell's *trembleur* is 'possibly the longest ever turned'.

The newly created annual $1,500 Jan Pennell Woodturning Award is a generous bequest from the estate of the late Jan Pennell, a distinguished RAAF servicewoman who was also an accomplished woodturner.

Jan Pennell was born in 1948 and grew up in country NSW, trained as a nurse and brought many babies into the world. She joined the RAAF in the Medical Core and rose to the rank of Wing Commander, equivalent to Lieutenant Colonel in the army. She was an expert skier and represented the Australian armed forces in skiing overseas. One of her pleasures was mentoring her staff and she spoke fondly of them decades later.

During her service, Jan Pennell was involved with many exercises in managing local and overseas disasters. She saved many lives in the first 24 hours after the Bali bombing in 2002 when she co-ordinated the aeromedical evacuation for the Australian Air Force and received a high commendation.

When Jan retired, she took up woodturning and completed a five-year course in four. Her sculptural piece for the course was an assemblage of three *trembleurs*. The longest was over 2.1 metres with a diameter of under 3mm, possibly the longest ever turned. To make it she had to join two lathes together.

She was a wonderful asset to the Blue Mountains Woodturners club for 20 years. Her formal roles included president, treasurer, first aid officer and librarian. But she also shared her knowledge and used her managerial and people skills to solve problems and create a positive experience for members. A combination of intelligence, common sense and respect for others made her a terrific leader.

Jan wasn't all strawberries and cream. She could be as sharp as her chisels when she detected foolishness and the term, 'fiercely independent', doesn't do her justice. Tougher than ironbark. Pain was her faithful friend towards the end but if you asked, the answer was always, 'I'm okay'.

Jan's generosity extends beyond the grave in at least two ways. First, she left all her woodworking machines and tools to the club. This is a substantial bequest because as she once observed, 'The one who dies with the most tools wins.' If she didn't win, she was in the final... A second way her generosity lives on is in those of us who knew her. It was infectious. It was an honour and a privilege to know a woman of insight, integrity and kindness. The best of this world can't be told. Words are only shadows. We farewelled one of the best.

*The winning entry of The Jan Pennell Award will be selected across all categories of Maker of the Year 2024, presented by Carbatec. The winning entry may be created with other woodworking techniques as welll and may be made in collaboration with others.*

*Enter your work at www.woodreview.com.au/moty*


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# Making Space

**A recent exhibition in Launceston combined historical and contemporary works to create a conversation between past and present makers. Review by Carol Russell.**

**1.** Tom Samek, *My son's palette*, reclaimed pallet timber, 1040 x 1200 × 60mm

**2.** Tom Samek, *One Tuesday morning* (2017), silky oak, 580 × 950 × 40mm

*Curator's Notes: 'Tom Samek was a pure creative personality – with his practice always reflective of his passion for food, art, wine and everyday life that always had an element of wit and humour. Tom worked in many mediums, including drawing, printmaking, painting, mosaic, casting, tapestry and wood relief carving. He leaves behind a unique and prolific body of work.'*

Over the summer, the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery (QVMAG) in Launceston featured *Making Space,* an exhibition that showcased an array of carved objects; both historical and contemporary. Some of the pieces were drawn from the gallery's extensive collection, whilst others were on loan from artists and collectors throughout the country.

Not all the artists were Tasmanian, however most have either lived there or have a strong connection to the landscape and its unique timbers. I was very happy to have some of my work included.

The show's curator, Dr Ashley Bird, has brought together a diverse range of work, in his catalogue introduction said: 'Making Space is a celebration of subtractive sculpture. Subtractive sculptures start with a single material such as wood, bone, stone or hard clay, and the method involves the sculptor carving and

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chipping away at the material until the finished form takes shape.'

## From the collection

Through this exhibition Ashley wanted to highlight many of the exquisite pieces held in the gallery's collection, some dating back to the mid 1800s. He combined them with the work of contemporary artists. There are many common threads across the work and a strong element of the past informing the present. *Making Space* also featured some of the traditional ivory netsuke that the museum has in its collection. The QVMAG team used this as an opportunity to discuss the ethics of using ivory and the tragic history surrounding the material.

Entering the gallery, your eyes went straight to the beautiful carved Tasmanian blackwood panels by Edith Ransom (1888–1968). Edith was the daughter of prominent woodcarver Sarah Squire Todd (1861–1959), whose work is also

**3.** Carol Russell, *Mother Cat and Kitten* (2022), tiger myrtle and walnut

**4.** Hape Kiddle, *Storm Boy* (2023), boxwood, 70 x 40 x 37mm

**5.** Hape Kiddle, *Möbius play* (2023), Huon pine, 90 × 120 × 120mm

*Curator's Notes: 'As a sculptor and jeweller, Hape Kiddle has been working for many years refining a language in shape and form that reflects his deep connection to the natural world. He sees this relationship as being at the heart of all his enquiries and work reflecting the spiritual connection that humans have to all of ecology.'*

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**6.** Alastair Mooney, *Calyptorhynchus Wizard Staff*, Huon pine, steel, enamel

*Curator's notes: 'Mooney's work spans a diverse variety of media, from ink on paper to sculpture on roof, yet it all shares a uniform handmade aesthetic and light-hearted quality; occasionally transcending into parody with an element of the self-deprecation present in the Australian psyche.*

*'As well as an ever-increasing awe of the beauty to be found in the natural world, Mooney draws on a variety of influences. He is interested in how popular culture reflects the values and, in many cases, the absurdity of wider society, and he approaches the imagery and objects associated with these themes from an anthropological perspective.'*

**7.** Allen L*ane, Sugar spoons in Banksia serrata and Banksia marginata, Vine Spoon* in Huon pine, blackwood love spoon

*Curator's notes: 'Allan Lane was born in 1925 in Maydena, Tasmania. He trained as a joiner and carpenter in Hobart at the age of 15 during World War II, carving wood in his spare time.*

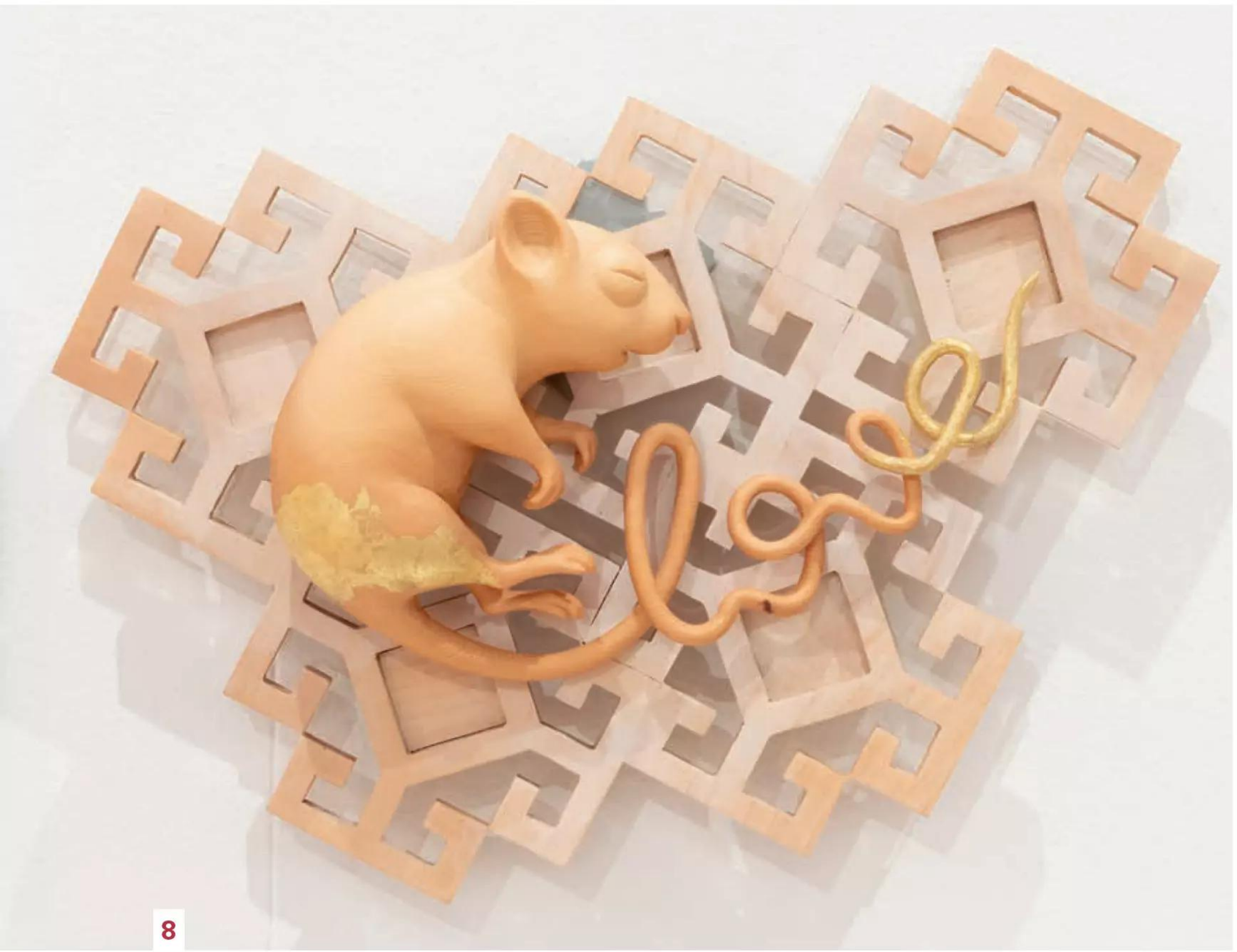
*'All the spoons in this collection have a story attached. Either the wood is significant to a Tasmanian location or history, or to someone important in Allen Lane's life, allowing the artist to remember people and places throughout this life as autobiographical markers.'*

featured in the exhibition and can be found in many Tasmanian homes and public buildings today.

The centrepiece of this part of the exhibition is the magnificent bench in Tasmanian blackwood – the maker is unknown but believed to be renowned carver Ellen Nora Payne (1865–1862). Ellen was a powerhouse and a pioneer of her time. A small wall cupboard of hers sits alongside the bench. These three amazing artisans were all highly respected in their time and have left quite a legacy. All were heavily influenced by the Arts and Crafts style – beautiful crisp tool marks accentuate the grain of the blackwood in their botanical subjects.

## Hape Kiddle

The historical work sits alongside the beautiful fluid forms of Hape Kiddle, born in Aotearoa/New Zealand in 1972. The Huon pine piece *Mobius Play* is a mind-bending exercise in design and skill, and to add to its complexity, the form is split along its




**8.** Chi Ling Tabart, *Many cats love their owners just as much as their owners love them* (2019), Huon pine, radiata pine, acrylic, 24 carat gold leaf, 240 x 240 × 60mm.

*Curator's Notes: 'Chi Ling's characters combine imagination, sentiment and folklore to interpret issues about our environment and the lives we live.*

*'Tabart grew up in south Taiwan, where she trained in traditional painting and completed a graphic design degree. She later moved to Tasmania, where she taught herself wood sculpting and still works as a graphic designer.'*

length. It's a breathtaking piece that stops you in your tracks.

Hape's exquisite netsuke *Storm Boy* in French boxwood was the winner of the Wootha Prize 'Tiny Treasures' category at the Maleny Wood Expo in Queensland last year. A small boy, a self-portrait of the maker, sits atop a pelican. The viewer is drawn to the incredible detail, the tiny toes and the face of the boy in particular. The pelican's eyes are closed, and it emanates an aura of peace, protectiveness and resilience.

## Chi Ling Tabart

A cabinet full of the work of Hobart based artist, Chi Ling Tabart, draws you in with an array of beautifully crafted pieces, most of which are accompanied by a strong narrative and sometimes a poem.

A dead mouse, carved from Huon pine with gold leaf laying on a geometric grid, is a touching tribute to a much-loved cat named Puck. Chi Ling is alluding to the shared love between cat and human and the way in which cats express this by bringing their owners gifts, such as dead mice. It's beautifully executed, as is all her work in the show.

## Alastair Mooney

Artist Alistair Mooney's work was also shown. In 2020, he had a major solo exhibition at QVMAG entitled *Nest*. It featured an array of birds interacting with the detritus discarded by humans. His work is highly ironic and good-natured, belying a deeper message.

*Calyptorhynchus Wizard Staff* shows a cockatoo perched on a staff of carved beer cans. Alastair Mooney's work often features birds as a symbol of the natural world and its state of well-being, and his affinity for nature shines through. He portrays his beautifully carved birds as being forced to adapt to the world that we create. Using ancient Huon pine to carve throwaway objects such as the cans only deepens the irony.

## Tom Samek

There are many personal stories throughout the exhibition. Two of the exhibitors sadly passed away in recent times – Tom Samek died in 2021. For the team putting the exhibition together there was a particular poignancy to having Tom's work represented, as much of it is on loan from his family. Although often more recognised for his distinctly witty paintings, his work in timber is both original and highly skilled.

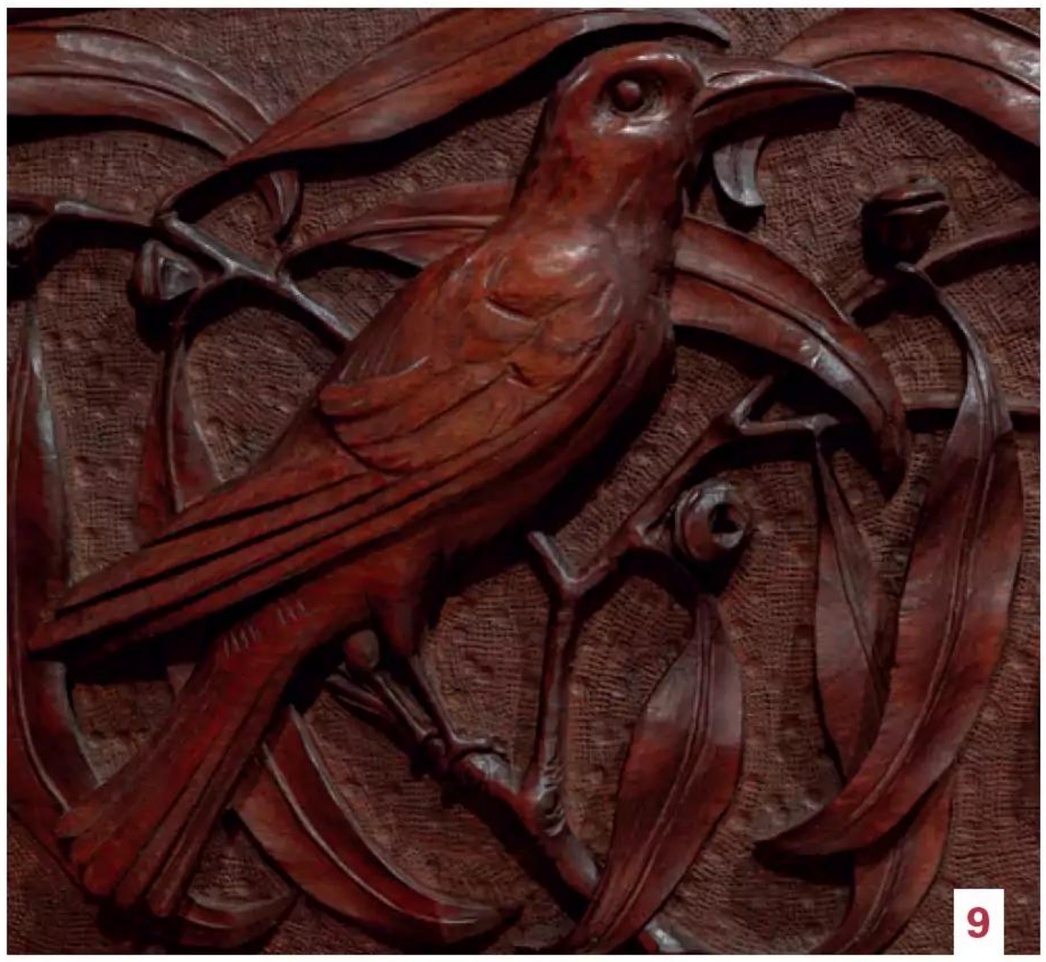
Suspended from the ceiling is the highly evocative work *Beads*. This is a giant rope strung with huge stone-shaped beads. The timber is stained almost black and it takes a lot to resist running your hands over the beautiful carved forms.

Tom's piece, *On Tuesday Morning* has a rather beautiful narrative. It portrays the view from the loft in Hadley's Hotel in Hobart where Tom Samek lived for about 10 years in the

**9.** Detail of carving attributed to Elle Nora Payne. Collection of QVMAG Launceston.

**10.** *Tasmanian blackwood bench seat*. No maker is recorded however the bench is believed to have been made by Ellen Nora Payne or Sarah Squire Todd.

**11.** Ellen Nora Payne (1865–1962), *Cabinet*, blackwood, 450 x 930 × 320mm



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mid 1980s. From the loft he could see the beautiful church across the road with a large tree in front of it. Tom said of the work, 'Every now and then I would notice a beautiful girl bouncing past under this tree. Ten years later, this girl became my wife'.

It's a beautiful work full of whimsy. The timber is stained silky oak, the medullary rays enhancing the different tones. The technique used in this piece is almost intarsia. Samek has used a similar technique in his other featured pieces, *Bone* and *My Son's Pallette*.

## Allan Lane

No exhibition of carving would be complete without spoons represented. In another loss, Allen Lane passed away just before this exhibition opened. His beautiful array of sugar spoons represent so many of Tasmania's significant timber species. It's lovely to see native plum, leatherwood, blackheart sassafras and so many more, it's like a journey through the Tasmanian forest looking at the labels. Most are simple forms but a couple have leaves of sculptural tendrils. Allen has a beautiful selection of spoons on display in QVMAGs permanent collection.

This was such an enjoyable and inspiring exhibition to wander through, I have loved the combination of historical and contemporary work, a conversation between past and present.

*Photos: Angela Casey, see angelacasey.com*

*Making Space was shown at Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston from November 2023 to February 2024. Learn more at https://www.qvmag.tas.gov.au/*

*Carol Russell is a woodcarver and often teaches workshops at woodworking events around Australia. She is a regular contributor to Australian Wood Review and in AWR#120 wrote about carving animals with flat pane carving techniques.*

# Wood Diary

For more events and news sign up to AWR fortnightly newsletters at:

**www.woodreview.com.au**

Diary listings are free. **Email to:** linda@woodreview.com.au

**Note:** Listings are correct at time of publication but may be subject to change. It is advisable to check details with the organiser before visiting.

**23 MAY–2 JUNE 2024**
**Melbourne Design Week**
'Australia's largest annual international design event' presenting innovative and engaging projects across an 11-day program.
https://designweek.melbourne/

**23 MAY 2024**
Australian Furniture Design Award (AFDA) Exhibition opens. The AFDA is a biennial award that fosters Australian designers and makers presented by National Gallery of Victoria and Stylecraft.
https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/

**1 JUNE**
**Hand Tool Event**
All-day tools and technique demonstrations with Lie-Nielsen Australia, HNT Gordon, Ironbark Tools, Australian Wood Review, 10am–4pm, free entry
Damion Fauser Workshop,
4/14 Buttonwood Place, Willawong, Qld
http://www.damionfauser.com/

**7–9 JUNE**
**Q-Turn**
'A weekend of woodturning and skill-sharing for all genres of woodworking.'
The Outlook, Boonah, Qld
https://ipswichwoodcraftsclub.org

**8–9 JUNE**
**Melbourne Knife Show**
Presented by the Australian Knifemakers Guild Inc
Kensington Town Hall,
30–34 Bellair Street, Kensington, Vic
https://akg.org.au/

**13–15 JUNE**
**Design Show Australia**
A national exhibition for interior design, architecture and fitout, ICC, Sydney
https://designshow.com.au/

**17–19 JULY**
**Australian International Furniture Fair**
Trade show where brands showcase furniture, lighting and products, industry seminars. Includes Vibrant Visions in Design (VIVID) design awards.
Melbourne Exhibition Centre
www.aiff.net.au

**28 JULY**
**National Tree Day**
Australia's largest community tree-plantingand nature care event preceded by Schools Tree Day on July 26
https://treeday.planetark.org/

**1 AUGUST–30 OCTOBER**
**Indian Ocean Craft Triennial (IOTA) 24**
Codes in Parallel: an investigation into the multi-various languages codified in contemporary craft. Exhibitions, conference and events. 2024, Perth, Western Australia
https://indianoceancrafttriennial.com/

**10 AUGUST–27 OCTOBER**
**MAKE Award and Australian Design Centre**
2023 exhibition tours to Geelong Gallery, Victoria
The biennial Make Award is a national award for Australian designer makers.
https://makeaward.au/

**19–25 AUGUST**
**National Skills Week**
Raising the status of skills and vocational learning. Vocational Education and Training (VET) has been the foundation of Australia's economy. Showcasing career opportunities.
https://www.nationalskillsweek.com.au/

**1–30 SEPTEMBER 2024**
**Homo Faber**
A celebration of contemporary craftsmanship, inspiring objects: 50 countries, 300+ talented artisans, 400+ objects
Venice, Italy
https://2024.homofaber.com

**3–6 SEPTEMBER**
**Futuring Craft 24: The Value of Craft**
An international conference which 'contemplates the various languages inherent in contemporary crafts' held within Indian Ocean Craft
Triennial (IOTA24).
https://indianoceancrafttriennial.com/

**4 SEPTEMBER**
**Maker of the Year, presented by Carbatec**
Entries close 11:59pm AEDT for Wood Review's awards for fine woodworkers and wood artists.
Information and entry at
www.woodreview.com.au/moty

**5–6 OCTOBER, 2024**
**Woodcraft Manningham Woodwork Club**
Carving group Open Day
Templestowe Leisure Centre,
Saturday 9am – 4pm, Sunday 9am - 2pm
Corner Anderson and Parker Streets,
Templestowe, Vic
Event coordinator: John Paine 0473 579 508
www.woodcraft-manningham.org.au

**1–20 OCTOBER**
**Melbourne Fringe Festival**
Celebrating all things independent art, championing discovery and experimentation. Includes Design Fringe
melbournefringe.com.au/

**11–20 OCTOBER**
**Sydney Craft Week Festival 2024**
Annual city-wide festival of making, presenting contemporary craft and skills workshops. The theme for the 2024 festival is 'Response'.
Led by the Australian Design Centre
https://sydneycraftweek.com/

**12–13 OCTOBER**
**Cooroora Woodcraft Show 2024**
Memorial Hall, Maple St, Cooroy, Qld
Email show@cooroorawoodworkersclub.com
www.cooroorawoodworkersclub.com

**19–20 OCTOBER**
**Woodfest 2024**
Workshops and Makers Market
Bulli Showground, NSW
https://www.woodfest.com.au

**26–27 OCTOBER**
**Goulburn Valley Woodworkers Wood Show**
Includes trade stands, demonstrations, milled timber, kids games, food trucks
Shepparton Showgrounds,
Multipurpose Pavillion
Len Taylor: 0458 777 901
www.gvwoodworkers.com.au

**27 OCTOBER**
**Antique & Collectable Hand Tool Market**
Hand Tool Preservation Assoc Australia Inc
164 Neerim Rd, Corner Neerim & Grange Rds,Caulfield East, Vic,
9:30–12:30pm, $5 entry
https://www.htpaa.org.au/


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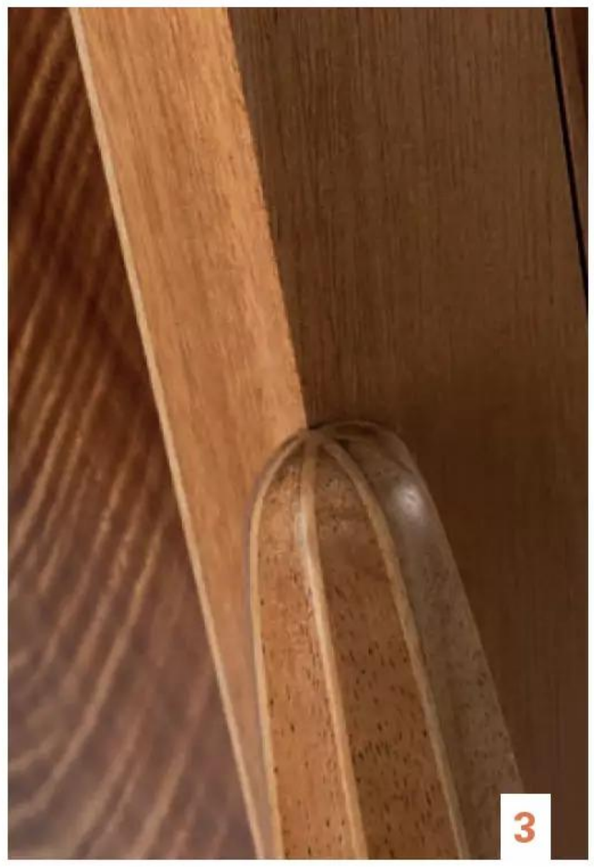
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# The Art of Making 2024

**Studio Woodworkers Australia's annual exhibition recently took place in Sydney and highlighted work by some of Australia's finest wood artists and woodworkers.**

Studio Woodworkers Australia (SWA) is Australia's peak body for professional designer makers and artists in wood. *The Art of Making* is the association's annual exhibition for accredited members and once again in 2024 was curated and presented by the Australian Design Centre in Sydney. In the ADC's words, the exhibition is 'a snapshot of Australia's finest designer makers and artists working in wood today'.

In 2024, the exhibition showed works by Rolf Barfoed, Ian Bell, Richard Coles, Phoebe Everill, Lou Harriss, Gray Hawk, Alby Johnston, Tony Kenway, Will Matthysen, Eliza Maunsell, David Muston, Darren Oates, Nick Pedulla, Ruth Thompson, David Upfill-Brown, Grant Vaughan, Warwick Wright and Peter Young.

A selection of the work shown is presented here with selling prices included in the captions for readers' interest.

*The Art of Making was displayed from March 21 until May 4, 2024 at Australian Design Centre, 101–115 William Street, Darlinghurst NSW, Gadigal Land.*

*Photos courtesy the artists and Australian Design Centre*

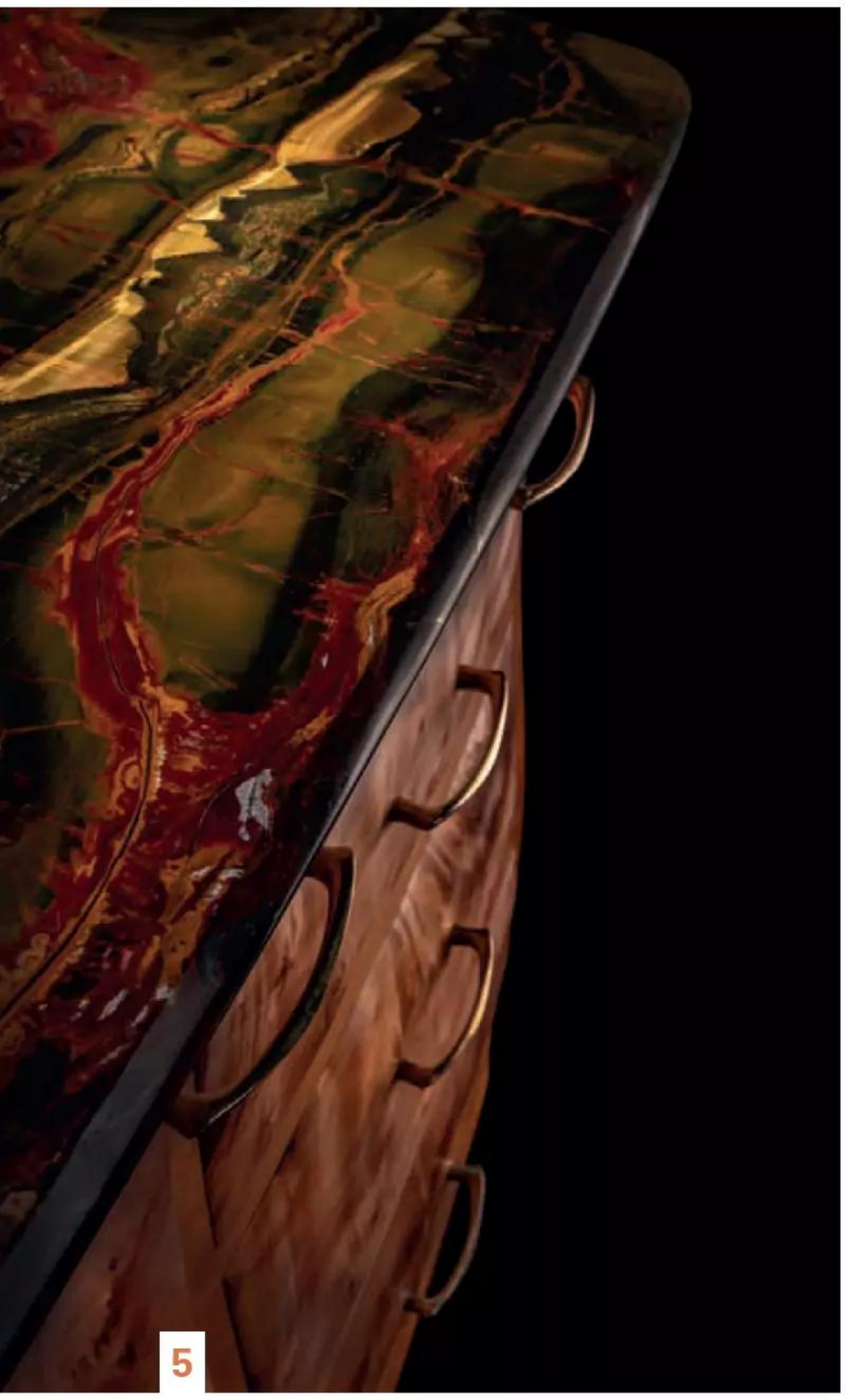
*Learn more about Studio Woodworkers Australia at https://studiowoodworkers.org.au/ and about Australian Design Centre at https://australiandesigncentre.com/*

**Main:** Nick Pedulla @pedullastudio, *Vigne Bench*, 2022, American ash, $28,500. Alluding to growth and development, *Vigne* (vine) represents the maker's journey. Designed to explore personal boundaries, techniques of steambending and sculpting stack laminated sections were employed. *Vigne* components were re-sawn from the same boards for grain colour and continuity.

Also shown, Eliza Maunsell @eliza_wood_co, *Flower wall art*, 2022. From her Southern Highlands, NSW studio, Eliza creates furniture, lighting and sculptural pieces. *Photo: Amy Piddington*

**1, 3, 4.** Peter Young, @peter_young_design, *Drinks Cabinet*, 2022, Queensland maple solid and veneer, Queensland silver ash veneer, $15,000. Inspired by the work of Emile Ruhlmann, the cabinet features his signature torpedo leg as well as matched veneer work and inlay bandings. Making the legs involved sandwiching 3mm silver ash between rectangular blanks of Queensland maple, cutting and re-gluing through several steps. The 'torpedo' shape is achieved on the lathe with the facets hand planed before attaching the silver ash sabot feet using round tenons. *Photos: Greg Piper*

**2.** Tony Kenway @tonykenwayfurniture, *Cunji Dining Table and Chairs*, 2023, quilted Queensland maple, $52,300. After exploring the dining table theme for many years, this suite is Tony's final resolved design. He has spent a lifetime playing with proportions and curved forms in wood and stretching the material to its limits.



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**5. 6.** Alby Johnston @bayspokestudio, *Undula*, 2022, Tasmanian myrtle, tiger eye stone, Huon pine, bronze, NFS. Aiming to highlight some of Australia's finest timbers and semi-precious stones, the chest's curving end panels and drawer fronts are each pillowed and individually hand carved 'to conjure a dialogue between the material and the maker'. The bronze handles were designed to be 'in flow' and to match the tiger eye veins in the stone top. *Photos: Chuck Bradley*

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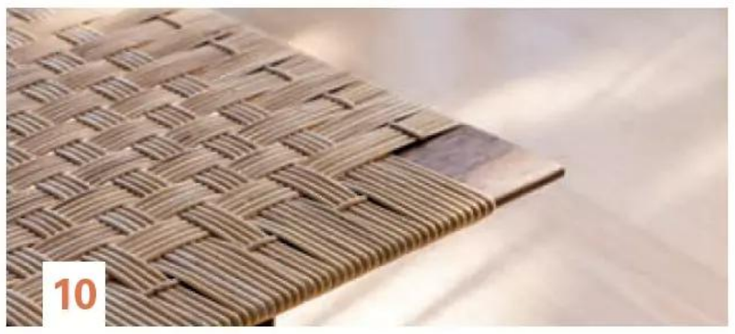
**7, 8, 9.** Will Matthysen @willmatthysen, *Clock 209*, 2023, Qld silver ash, Qld red cedar, ebony, gold-plated brass, steel, glass, $32,175. With a design based on elemental shapes; circles, rectangles and trapezoids are layered in the clock's geometry and composition. Each element is essential, none are purely decorative and all push the limits of the material. *Photos: Ian Hill*

**10, 11.** David Muston @dkmuston, *Criss-cross day bed*, 2023, American walnut cane and leather, $13,750. Echoing his philosophy of 'less is better' as well as a love of precision, David cites inspiration for his daybed from the restoration of a cane and birch Alvar Aalto *Artek Model 45* armchair. The piece was made in collaboration with master weaver and furniture restorer, Adam Stewart and upholsterer Maddy King using traditional vegetable tanned hide. *Photos: Simon Whitbread*



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**12.** Ruth Thompson @shed_at_144, *Searush lamp*, 2024, Tasmanian oak, parchment, $2,466. A collaboraton with printmaker Phoebe Middleton, *Searush lamps* are inspired by folklorist Keith McKenry's poem *The River Songman* and depict the river's journey from mountains to the sea. Shoreline tones on paper with tendrils of timber reflect fragile salt marshes, seaside flora and delicate habitats at risk from human activity. *Photo: Amy Piddington*

**13.** David Upfill-Brown @davidupfillbrown, *Remnant – Tor Born*, 2023. PNG rosewood, 850mm high, $7,560. Reimagining the granite tors of Magnetic Island in Queensland, symbolises a remnant from an earlier civilisation. David relates his sculpture to the human compulsion to establish a sense of place in a rapidly declining environment. *Photo: David Upfill-Brown*

**14.** Warwick Wright @wright.warwick, *Kumiko Cabinet*, 2024, rock maple, red oak with ebony, Ogawa washi paper, acrylic, perspex, $17,600. Incorporating the traditional Japanese kumiko screen in a functional piece of furniture. The cherry blossom stem painting is by NSW botanic artist Jennifer Halley. *Photo: Julia Griffiths*

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# Transformative Repair

**Repair, recycle, reuse, reclaim – there's a revival happening which is all about valuing resources and living more sustainably.**

Transformative Repair is an Australian Research Council funded research project which looks to find new ways designers can tackle repair and reuse.

The project is led by University of South Australia Enterprise Fellow Dr Guy Keulemans, and designer Dr Trent Jansen of UNSW in partnership with craft and design institution JamFactory.

In an irony of the mass production and mass consumption the things we don't want are now also a resource. Circular economy is a production and consumption model that involves reusing, repairing, refurbishing or recycling existing materials and products to promote long-term sustainability.

'Every year in Australia we produce about 70 megatons of waste – that's nearly 500 Sydney Opera Houses in volume and the waste of household goods is a sizable portion of that', Dr Keulemans says.

'Transformative Repair responds to this waste crisis by seeking to find new ways that designers can tackle repair and reuse in their practice, as a service so that clients and customers have more options for prolonging the life of their goods and possessions.'

This year a collection of treasured items were restored by more than 12 designers, artists and craftspeople as part of an innovative arts project illustrating the importance of reuse and repair. Their works were presented in an exhibition which ran from 5 to 21 April 2024 at JamFactory, Adelaide.

The designers and craftspeople tackled the transformative repair of a range of 19th and 20th objects and furniture in different ways. 'For some designers it was a challenging yet simple process of repair and for other designers they're really transforming the object, perhaps giving it a new function, a completely new appearance or a new style', said Dr Keulemans.

*Portraits: Alexander Robertson*
*Photos: @connorphotography*
*Learn more and see videos at:*
*https://transformativerepair.net/*

**Opposite:** Andrew Carvolth with the Khai Liew chair he restored as part of the Transformative Repair project. Last year Khai Liew, who sadly died last year, personally chose designer and craftsperson Andrew Carvolth to repair a broken chair he designed in 2003. Carvolth combined weaving and traditional woodworking techniques, many used by Khai himself, to graft a new seat and front legs onto the chair.

**This page:** Melvin Josy and Bolaji Teniola repaired and transformed the Norwegian knitting table shown which won a 1962 Norwegian design competition. 'The table was in pretty bad shape when we received it due to wear and tear over the years. With lots of effort, care, and attention to detail, Melvin and I were able to bring it into the 21st century with marquetry and laminated stitched timber bathed in a vibrant blue.'

# Passages of Time

**Vivian Chiu creates a collection of vessels from pallet timbers that traces the history and journey of a migrant community as well as her own.**


My newest body of work, titled *Passages (those that carried us)*, consists of vessels created from reclaimed wood crates gifted to me by Wing On Wo & Co (W.O.W.), the oldest continuously operating storefront in Manhattan's Chinatown. The shop, now in its fifth generation of ownership under Mei Lum, is renowned for selling Chinese porcelain ware imported from Asia since 1890.

## How it came about

Mei contacted me at the end of 2022 letting me know they had a large quantity of wooden crates they were looking to gift to a woodworker. I gladly accepted their offer and sensed a duty and responsibility to honour these heirloom crates, recognising their role in safeguarding fragile goods. My idea was to transform the crates into the vessel forms they would have once held.

Each crate panel is meticulously deconstructed, cut into hundreds of individually faceted pieces, and reassembled into a traditional Chinese vessel form. This methodical process preserves the crates' stampings and markings, serving as tangible traces of their journey from Hong Kong to the United States – a journey symbolically mirrored by my own migration, as well as the Lum family's.

## Family connections

I felt an extreme connection to Mei and her family in Chinatown. Both our families come from Hong Kong and we both have an immense drive to preserve and pay homage to our culture and the sacrifices of our elders.

While making these objects, I always had WOW and the Lum family in the back of my mind. I referenced vessel forms that are currently in the store as well as forms from my home in Hong Kong and historical archives. These crates were incredibly sentimental to the family. They had kept them for over 50 years, and working with this material allowed me to connect with my home in a more direct way.

## The process

The crate wood was incredibly hard to work with. The slats of the panels were all different widths and densities, they weren't flat and had cracks and checks all over. I couldn't steam the wood because pine does not steam very well and I couldn't kerf bend the wood because it was so brittle. Each individual facet had to be cut on the tablesaw to achieve any sort of curve.

**Main:** Vivian Chiu in her Virginia, USA studio with vessels in progress from the *Passages* series.

**Top:** Installation view of *Passages (those that carried us)*, shown at Houston Centre for Contemporary Craft, January to May, 2024. *Photo: Peter Mollick*

**Above:** *Huluping vase* – surfaces of this series were left unfinished to preserve the original markings and patina.

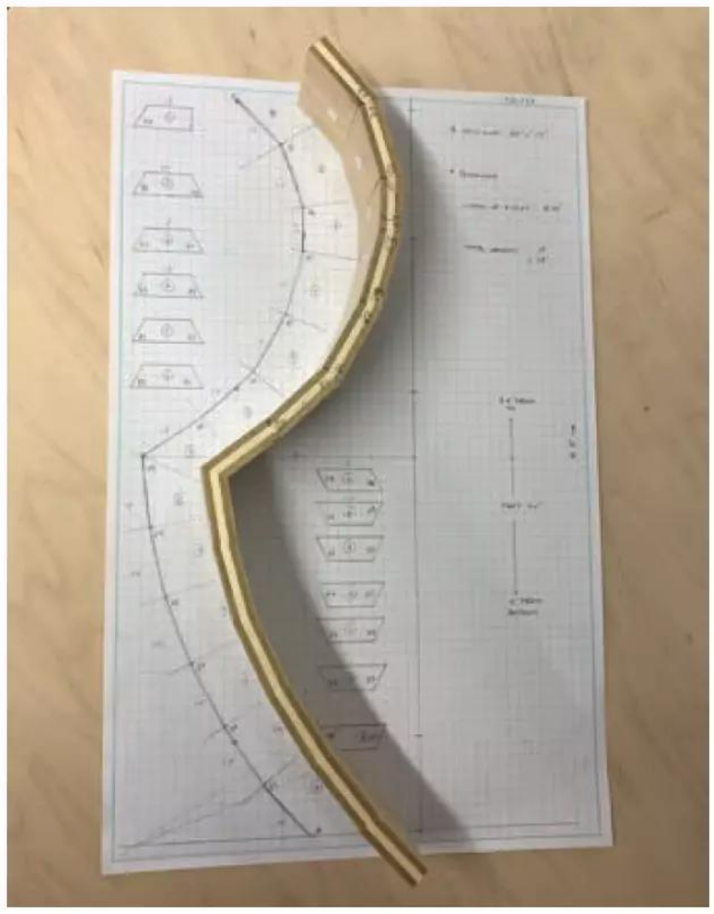
**Clockwise from top left:**

Crate slats were disassembled, denailed, edged, segmented and reassembled into 'columns' for coopering into the vessels. The process was methodical, each piece numbered to preserve its order.

Drawings for each vessel detail the cut angles for coopering each segment.

*Oxblood vases* glued and taped up.

Jigs were designed and made for bandsawing the columns and for glue-ups.



After the panels were taken apart, the edge of each slat had to be jointed before gluing them back into a single piece before cutting into consistent straight widths. This would at least give me a straight edge to work with on the tablesaw. I took great care not to remove the face surfaces so I could preserve as much of the original patina and markings as possible.

Drawings were made for each vessel and plywood prototypes made to check angles before cutting glued-up panels into columns on the tablesaw. Then, referring to the drawing, the sawblade was angled for each corresponding row. Hand numbered stickers were used to keep track of every piece since a single vessel could have over 200 individual pieces. After the pieces were cut, each column was taped and glued in a jig to ensure each section had the same outer profile.

When it came to coopering, I couldn't run each stave through the planer because it would explode into pieces if it hit an edge awkwardly. Instead, I developed a bandsaw jig so I could cut each stave at an angle for a 12-sided vessel. I then had to hand sand the edges on a homemade emery board to get the sides flat enough to glue together.

The series is still growing but currently there are about 30 pieces. I make each form in pairs so each form has a sibling. I have streamlined the process so that I can work on many pieces at the same time (since there is a lot of glue-up time). As of now I can make a pair in about a week but I have to stay hyper-focussed because at any point a wrong cut or angle can ruin the entire piece.

I was constantly in contact with Mei Lum and her father about my processes and decisions. These conversations with the Lum family infused these vessels with intergenerational perspectives on migration and the material culture of New York City's Chinatown. I am incredibly inspired by Mei and her sense of duty to continue her family legacy and I am grateful to make beautiful objects to add to that story.

*Photos: Vivian Chiu*

*Passages was shown at the Houston Centre for Contemporary Craft in early 2024 and vessels may also be seen at WOW in New York. Vivian Chiu hopes to exhibit this series in Hong Kong in the future.*

*Vivian Chiu @viv_chiu studied furniture design at the Rhode Island School of Design and then completed graduate studies in sculpture at Columbia University. She currently works and lives in Virginia, USA. Learn more at www.vivianchiustudio.com*

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