

SURFACE VECTOR | F!NK ALTERNATIVE JUG PROJECT | AFTER

Embrace experimentation: new Craft ACT exhibitions demonstrate the power and courage of new ideas in contemporary craft and design

27 August – 17 October 2020



Canberra, Australia: The spirit of experimentation is alive and well despite the challenges of this year, in three new exhibitions at Craft ACT: Craft + Design Centre from 27 August to 17 October 2020. Emerging and established designers, makers and artists have explored transformation of materials, surface and ideas in sculpture, utilitarian objects and video.

‘A strong tradition of experimentation, of taking materials, ideas and techniques in new directions, is how our sector continues to survive and thrive even during these uncertain times. I am enheartened and inspired by the new directions taken by the exhibiting artists, and by the history of practice which informs the future of contemporary craft and design. These are challenging but exciting times,’ Craft ACT CEO and Artistic Director Rachael Coghlan said.

Surface Vector is a new solo exhibition by sculptor and designer, Dan Lorrimer (NSW). His work is driven by a deep understanding of materials, industrial processes and a keen sense of exploration through making. Dan also explores notions of movement, energy, solidity and illusion through minimalist sculptural forms, often located between the artificial and natural world.

For Lorrimer, this solo exhibition is the culmination of two lines of sculptural inquiry, Fragment Ascent and Splinter Array. Each body of work focuses on notions of motion, force, illusion, growth and decay through abstract minimalist metal forms. Experimentation and development of metal forming techniques are at the core of Dan’s practice. The unforeseen outcomes of experimenting and process-driven work is often the catalyst for new artworks and new methods of making - leading to dynamic and skillfully made work.

Respected curator Eva Czernis-Ryl (Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences) commented, "*Surface Vector* offers rewarding insights into Lorrimer's ongoing sculptural pursuits over the last three years. Series such as 'Fragments' and 'Splinters' are represented. The key works in this exhibition - wall reliefs and sculptures - bear titles like 'Departed Trajectory', 'Triple Junction' and 'Fragment Ascent' and when considered together with the show's title, encourage a look beyond the form and into the compositional strategies the artist employs to achieve his surface tensions."

F!NK alternative jug project is a collaborative exhibition which pays homage to the late Robert Foster, designer and founder of F!NK + Co, who was tragically killed in a car accident in 2016 and is deeply missed. F!NK has a long history of collaborating, mentoring and supporting fellow artists, designers and craftspeople. In 1993, F!NK was established by Foster in Queanbeyan, NSW, Australia, with the aim of creating a design and manufacturing business that would support and generate opportunities for Australian designer-makers. Joined by Gretel Harrison in 1995, together they built F!NK into the business it is today – a much loved and respected Australian design company with an international reputation for producing world-class tableware, hollowware, jewellery and lighting.

Virginia Rigney, Senior Curator Visual Art, Canberra Museum + Gallery, reflected on the timing of the original F!NK jug and today's reimagining by artists: "The F!NK Water Jug emerged just prior to the internet age, that most fundamental shift in recent global history. Perhaps we are living through a similar moment now. With their thoughtful natural intellect, these precisely crafted jugs intend to go on and be part of the conversation around many tables for generations to come,"

F!NK invited 15 creatives with a direct connection to Robert and/or F!NK over the past 27 years to reimagine the iconic F!NK jug with the intent to be included in the F!NK collaborative jug project auction earlier in the year. Artists include Alex Asch (ACT), Chick Butcher (NSW), Bengt Cannon (ACT), Cobi Cockburn (NSW), Cesar Cueva (NSW), Matthew Curtis (NSW), Scott Chaseling (NSW), Xanthe Gay (NSW), Marie Hagerty (ACT), Jess Higgins (ACT), Alison Jackson (NSW), Harriet Schwarzrock (NSW), Louise Scrivener (ACT), Tom Skeeahan (ACT) and Brian Tunks (ACT). Two blank F!NK jugs were provided to each artist with which to begin. The first set of finished bespoke artworks created as a result of this collaboration were sold in the online auction to raise funds for charity. Due to the success of the live auction, Craft ACT invited F!NK to showcase the alternative designs in the *F!NK alternative jug project* exhibition to allow people to view this wonderful collaboration in person.

Gretel Harrison from F!NK + Co said, "This is a true collaboration. The designers have worked closely with the F!NK team to realise their designs. This diverse group of sculptors, jewellers, glass artists, graphic designers and metalsmiths have thrown their enthusiasm into the project and a wide array of different approaches have emerged. The F!NK team has worked through many challenging and complicated technical issues in a variety of mediums to produce the finished works, with individual jugs taking up to six attempts to perfect. This is a true testament to the amazing skills and innovative approaches that the F!NK Team has brought to the project and to their enduring embrace of Robert's personal motto 'Never say it can't be done'."

After by emerging Adelaide-based artist Kasia Tons is a solo exhibition of textiles and photography. Kasia uses textiles to create soft sculptures, 2D works, and wearables that explore personal narratives with universal themes such as home, identity, constructive chaos, and interpersonal

relationships. Kasia has been inspired by the little-known E.M Forster novella *The Machine Stops* (1909) which describes a futuristic society where a machine which sustains daily life suddenly stops.

This beautifully conceived and delightfully quirky exhibition explores a time after technology has thrived. After the technology dies, the hole that is left is filled with creative entertainment and expressions. reminiscent of times gone past.

Valerie Kirk, artist and tapestry weaver commented, "*After* makes us think about the possibilities beyond the world of technology we have grown so accustomed to. It encourages us to reconnect with the freedom of self-expression through making, building on our traditions to reflect our world and tell new stories."

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Craft ACT has developed new ways to support contemporary craftspeople, designers and artists in these challenging times. For instance, Kasia Tons was unable to travel to Canberra to install the exhibition due to border restrictions. Craft ACT has worked closely with Kasia to realise her exhibition on her behalf. Rather than a large opening event this combined block of exhibitions, three small gatherings will be held for close friends and families of the exhibiting artists to celebrate their achievements.

'Even in these uncertain times, it's important to mark these moments in our lives and in artistic practice, to acknowledge the hard work and achievements which have taken place in order to realise an exhibition as beautiful as the three Craft ACT is presenting this week,' said Rachael Coghlan.

New quality online content, such as catalogues, videos, photo libraries and essays, has been developed to extend the reach of these exhibitions to audiences who are unable to visit.

MEDIA CONTACT: For interview requests please contact Madisyn Zabel, gallery@craftact.org.au, 62629333.

Images: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/148340214@N06/albums/72157715641551137>

Exhibition: Open to the public from 27 August, online anytime at <https://craftact.org.au/blogs/current-exhibitions>

Image caption (L-R): Kasia Tons, *Untitled 3*, 2020, photo Dave Laslett. Dan Lorrimer, *Fragment Ascent 12*, 2020, photo Alison Jackson. Marie Hagerty, *Hydria*, 2020, photo DMC Photography.

ARTIST BIOS:

Surface Vector

Dan Lorrimer is a sculptor who is based in Braidwood, NSW. In 2005 Dan commenced his studies at the ANU School of Art, graduating in 2009. During this time he also began working with many established local artists and designers including Richard Whitley, Mathew Curtis and F!NK + Co. Through this direct contact with industry leaders, Dan has developed a passion for creating, spanning both art and product design. With unwavering dedication, Dan has developed a highly productive studio specialising in metal forming.

After

Kasia Tons is a textile artist who is based in Adelaide, SA. She holds a degree in Textile Design, RMIT for which she received the DIA's graduate of the year award and also an honours in Sculpture from UTAS. Her work has been exhibited throughout Australia and Eastern Europe and she has participated in residencies and symposiums in Iceland, USA, Latvia and the Slovak Republic. The Mark Rothko Art Centre, Latvia holds two of her pieces as part of their permanent collection.

F!NK Collaborative Jug Project

F!NK + Co was established by Robert Foster in 1993 in Queanbeyan, NSW, Australia, with the aim of creating a design and manufacturing business that would support and generate opportunities for Australian designer-makers. Joined by Gretel Harrison in 1995, together they built F!NK + Co. into the business it is today – a much loved and respected Australian design company with an international reputation for producing world-class tableware, hollowware, jewellery and lighting.

Alex Asch was born in Boston, Massachusetts, USA and was involved in University art programs in Los Angeles and New York before moving to Australia and studying art at the Australian National University in 1988. Asch has exhibited extensively in solo and group exhibitions throughout Australia and overseas.

Chick Butcher is Kiama based artist who works with glass and mixed media. His works are a direct result of intimate conversations he has with himself. In 2006 Chick graduated from the Australian National University School of Art with Honors majoring in glass. Since then he has exhibited nationally and internationally; his work has been acquired in collections including Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, Glasmuseet Ebeltoft (Denmark) and National Gallery of Australia; and has won several prestigious awards including the Tom Malone Prize in 2009.

Bengt Cannon is a seasoned metalsmith with a background in heavy metal fabrication. Recently, his interests have led to a passion for knife-making. His love of developing skills has led to experiments in forge welding and using different material combinations. Bengt joined Robert Foster at F!NK & Co in 2009, and a strong bond formed between them. Securing the role of production manager his fabrication skills were used in many ways, going onto collaborate with Rob to create products for the F!NK lighting range in 2013.

Cobi Cockburn is a Kiama based glass artist who is a graduate of both Sydney College of the Arts and the School of Art & Design, at the Australian National University. Within her practice, Cobi explores ideas of space and illusionistic depth through compositions of soft colour. Her works form part of both National and international Public collections and she has been included in many of Australia most prestigious Glass Awards. Cobi most recent exhibition was 'Murmuration' at Sabbia in Nov 2019. and she is now working towards setting up the new glass studio / facility at Sydney University, Camperdown.

Cesar Cueva Cesar is a multi-disciplinary Designer and Maker. He initially trained in Architectural Technology and Industrial Design, before graduating from the Australian National University, (ANU School of Arts & Social Sciences) with a major in Gold and Silversmithing. In 2005, he co-founded with his wife Nina Cueva, the pioneering Sydney studio and gallery, Metalab Creative that produced contemporary jewellery and object design for retail. Over the next decade, they curated some 80+ exhibitions where Metalab Creative was later rebranded Courtesy of the Artist. The couple continue to champion Australian art and design today, in their galleries situated in Sydney's CBD.

Matthew Curtis began his career through a studio traineeship at Denizen studio in Sydney in 1991. Working hands-on in the studio led to understanding many aspects of glass to explore form, line and light. Since then he has established his home studio with partner Harriet Schwarzrock in Queanbeyan NSW. He has exhibited internationally for over 25 years, participated in prestigious art fairs such as Chicago's 'Sculptural Objects and Functional Art' Fair, at Palm 3 and 'Collect' at the V&A, as well as many successful solo exhibitions. His work is also widely collected, in Private collections such as Sir Elton John and Public collections including the National Gallery of Australia and the Wagga Wagga, National Glass Collection.

Scott Chaseling is a cross-medium sculptor, who for two decades has centered his practice around notions of mobility, transition and liminality – that idea of non-place. He has exhibited his work nationally and internationally in galleries including, Pergamon Museum, Berlin; Eisch Gallery, Frauenau (Germany); Musee Atelier du Verre, Sars-Poteries (France); European Museum of Modern Glass, Coburg (Germany), and more recently, The Glass Furnace, Istanbul (Turkey, 2016) and Southern Illinois University Gallery, Carbondale (USA, 2016).

Xanthe Gay is a metalsmith based in Bungendore, NSW and has been making jewellery and small objects for over 30 years. Whilst initially self-taught, she later went on to study Jewellery and Object Design at Sydney College of the Arts as well as Gold and Silver Smithing at Canberra School of Art, ANU. Today she works from her Bungendore NSW workshop and gallery, 'X Gallery', that Robert Foster generously helped her design and fit out in 2004.

Marie Hagerty is a Sydney born artist who shifted to Canberra about 30 years ago and has been working primarily as a painter. Her work combines layers of influences, from Russian Constructivism to the sources of mid-Century design. Surface effects and planes appear to shift, mutate and evolve. Marie's work is held in public collections including: National Gallery of Australia, National Gallery of Victoria, Queensland Art Gallery, Artbank, ACT Legislative Assembly, Canberra Museum and Gallery, Bendigo Art Gallery, Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Australian National University; and private collections in Australia and the USA.

Jess Higgins is an emerging artist based in the Canberra region, her practice primarily encompasses print media and drawing techniques. She graduated from the ANU School of Art and Design with Honours in 2015 and has consistently exhibited in regional and metropolitan Australia, most recently working with Ginger Gorman in an arts-documentary collaboration 'On Thin Ice' at the Tuggeranong Arts Centre.

Alison Jackson is a designer, maker and contemporary metalsmith living and working in Braidwood, Australia. Craftsmanship and the way pieces are made has always been an influence to Alison. From the way two surfaces join together, a junction, or the way an edge has been finished, it's all in the details of an object. It is the perfection of being imperfect and the distinctive nature of structures and objects that inspires her. Alison's work is held in both public and private collections, including an acquisition by the Canberra Museum and Gallery. A recipient of numerous notable awards and grants such as the Australia Council for the Arts and artsACT project grants, Alison's work has been exhibited widely within Australia and also internationally.

Harriet Schwarzrock is a glass artist based in Queanbeyan, NSW. In 1999, Harriet graduated from the Sydney College of the Arts with Honours in Visual Arts, majoring in Glass. Prior to graduating, Schwarzrock travelled through North America visiting renowned workshops and studios. On her return to Australia, Schwarzrock began assisting at Denizen Studio, Sydney, working with many of

Australia's most dedicated artists working with glass. Developing her skill and technique whilst finding inspiration and influence for her own work.

Louise Scrivener was the very first graphic design graduate from the University of Canberra and holds a Bachelor of Graphic Design. Her first full-time employment followed at the Communication Research Institute of Australia (CRIA), where as an Information Design Trainee, she undertook basic graphic design duties as well as training in the foundation of Information Design. These principles have stood her in good stead throughout her career and she continues to apply these principles and methodologies today. Today she works as a Senior Graphic Designer at one of Australia's major cultural institutions after an established career in the private sector.

Tom Skeeihan is an award-winning Canberra based industrial designer who specialises in commercial furniture and objects for the home. In 2012, Tom graduated from University of Canberra with a Bachelor of Industrial Design and towards the end of his studies Tom established SKEEHAN studio. A noted young designer Tom Skeeihan exhibits at design fairs across Australia, New York, Singapore and Milan.

Brian Tunks is the Creative Director and founder of Bisonhome which was established in 1997. Brian attended school in Scandinavia and subsequently trained in ancient history and archaeology at the Australian National University. Combined with a love of Asian ceramics this fusion of traditions resulted in the pared-back aesthetic with simple lines and pure colours that characterizes Bison design classics.