



Media Release

For immediate release

LUDERE (TO PLAY) | PLACE MARKERS

Craft ACT launches two new exhibitions that celebrate the spirit of experimentation and play and the beauty of regeneration



Canberra, Australia: Award-winning local and national creatives have filled the Craft ACT gallery with thoughtful furniture, whimsical ceramics and intricate textiles. Two new exhibitions find joy in experimentation and explore the potential of craft and design to celebrate the beauty of renewal.

“Craft ACT is delighted to be presenting the work of three women artists who are all masters in their creative fields. The works on display showcase the talent these makers have and their ability to express their ideas through a deep understanding of their mediums,” said Craft ACT Gallery Manager Madisyn Zabel.

Ludere (to play) features the work of Adelaide-based industrial award-winning designer Caren Ellis and ceramic artist Alison Smiles. These talented women have come together in the spirit of concept, experimentation and play. The collaborative nature of this work is born out of over the 25 years that these two makers have shared lives together, and the contrasting positions on design, contemporary art and craft. In an exploration of the small domestic object, the duo considers the potential in merging materials in differing fields of expertise. Utilising the hand-made, in combination with industrial technology, such as 3D printing, laser cutting and mould-making, a marriage of the clean, precise nature of industry has its edges softened by the touch of the hand made. *“Ludo, ludus, ludere. (A Dantean Latinism of disputed origin). Ludo, ludus, ludere, allude, elude, collude collaborate. This elusive and complex etymology of the idea(s) of play with all its nuances allusions and reflections winds through and structures this joyous collection of ceramics and furniture. These are objects that bely their categories instead becoming sets and spaces of ideas, forms and relations that together, in their beautiful funhouse enact all the spaciousness and transformative possibilities of play,”* writes arts editor and writer Jemima Kemp.

Place Makers is a solo exhibition by internationally renowned and award-winning visual artist Sally Blake. The research for this exhibition began in 2018/19, when Blake collected leaves and barks from the ACT eucalypts from the National Botanical Gardens. Blake later uses these plant materials to create dyes to colour threads and cloth to make baskets and works on paper.

In this exhibition Blake also celebrates the regeneration of Australian forests after the devastating fires that occurred in 2019/20. The fires throughout Australia were so devastating that they have marked a place in history where climate change undeniably declared itself. Blake works with burns, ash, drought-affected burnt leaves and weaving techniques to create works about this huge loss and destruction.

“In her solo exhibition Place Markers for Craft ACT, Sally Blake takes the landscape, in particular eucalypts, as inspiration. Blake’s catalyst for this exhibition was a residency with Craft ACT in partnership with Australian National Botanic Gardens to spend a month in Namadgi examining alpine bogs and fens threatened with climate change. Blake has collected bark and leaves from 24 of the 27 species of ACT eucalypts to dye cloth and threads for her textile pieces. The works examine the different colours and textures of the landscape marked by the eucalypts before and after the fires and in the process of regeneration,” comments Australian Design Centre CEO + Artistic Director Lisa Cahill.

The two exhibitions will be supported by a program of artist talks to deepen understanding of the work and ideas on display. Full details are available at craftact.org.au

EXHIBITIONS: Ludere (to play)

Place Markers

ARTISTS: Caren Elliss | Alison Smiles
Sally Blake

DATES: 22 July – 11 September 2021
<https://craftact.org.au/pages/exhibitions>

LAUNCH EVENT: Thursday 22 July, 6pm.

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

Images: <https://flic.kr/s/aHsmW9JfeG>

Image caption (L – R): Caren Elliss + Alison Smiles, Sculpture and dining bench, 2021. Photo: Michael Haines Photography; Sally Blake, Holding Hope (Eucalyptus pauciflora) and Holding Hope (Eucalyptus mannifera), 2020. Photo: courtesy of the artist.