

Jeremy Brown – HOME GROWN – artist statement

Home Grown presents a new body of work by Jeremy Brown, in celebration of the beautiful street trees of Canberra, the city he was born and raised in. This exhibition invites viewers to wander the streets of our garden city and allows appreciation of some of the more hidden aspects of its natural beauty. By combining two main threads of practice, furniture making and botanical illustration, these works create a juxtaposition between the natural and built environments, bridging the disconnect between the origins of raw materials and a final product.

Canberra holds an international reputation for its green streets, with over 760,000 trees lining the suburbs and other public spaces. Many of Jeremy's fondest childhood memories were created in and around them, but at the time the trees themselves were often overlooked. As he has grown, however, so too has his appreciation of Canberra's trees and the creation of this body of work has allowed even deeper understanding of and personal connection to them. Canberra's street trees also hold high economic value in the environmental benefits they provide, but sadly large numbers require removal each year. Their value, however, does not have to be lost here as this value transcends their use in nature and suburbia. By giving new life to the materials and highlighting their beauty, *Home Grown* shines a light on their further potential and promotes the use of local resources – in this case, one quite literally growing on our doorsteps.

The design elements in the featured timber stools draw inspiration from iconic local architecture, whilst the timber for each has been salvaged from a different species of felled Canberra street tree. Chosen species include claret ash, English elm, London plane, pin oak, river oak and silky oak and the minimalist aesthetic allows the inherent beauty of the materials to take centre stage. Accompanying each stool is an original watercolour botanical illustration, representing the living specimen of each chosen tree in a way that might be more familiar to the viewer. These paintings are observational, painted from living specimens, and aim to accurately depict the plants as they grow on our streets. In contrast, the design of the furniture is abstracted and shaped by the maker's hand, taking inspiration from the human made. This contrast between design-by-nature and design-by-human is both a tool for linking raw materials to their final product, and an ode to the harmonious existence of the two elements in Canberra's own streets.