

Established Melbourne artist, Greer Honeywill, launches her sixth solo exhibition at Craft Victoria entitled, *Against the Grain: works in wood 2000 - 2007*. Honeywill's journey into the unsettling and strange simultaneously evokes a sense of something known and familiar that arises from the domestic environment.

Honeywill, who has been exhibiting since 1995, seeks out the performative in her work and divulges, albeit in a clandestine manner, personal traumas and family stories, that have widely-felt effects. Craft Victoria's curator, Kate Rhodes, and Honeywill discuss the compression of reality and fiction within the works that comprise *Against the Grain* and the artist's desire for an emotional response from her audience.

KR The figure of the child is very important in your work in terms of scale, references to games and your own childhood, why is that?

GH Child scale is diminutive, appealing and unthreatening. The scale allows me to gain the attention of the viewers before they realise there may be a darker message hidden within. But it's also about the imagination. From a child's perspective, the space under a kitchen table becomes a secret 'home' and ordinary pots and pans can be transformed into other worlds, completely incomprehensible to adults.

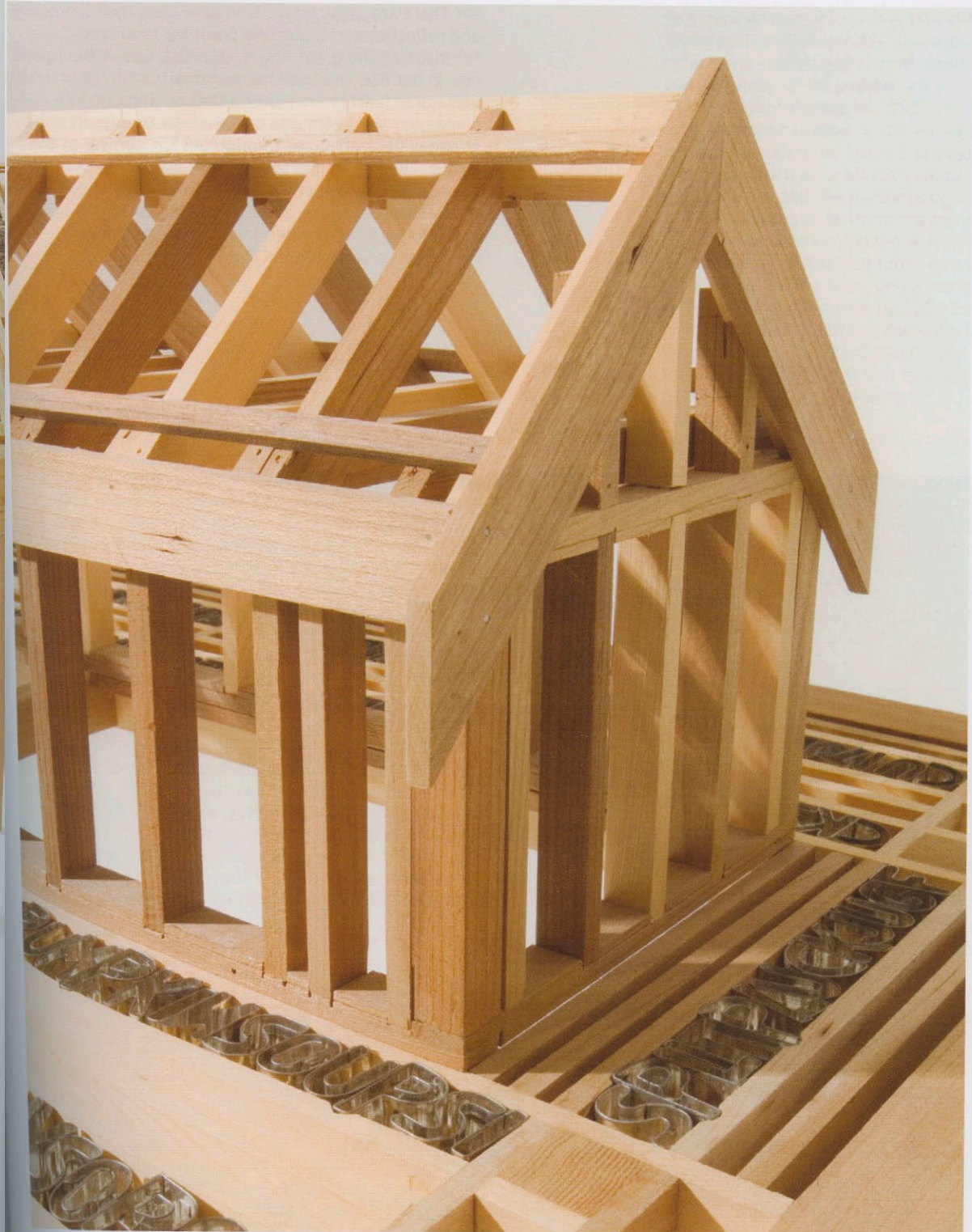
KR How do you find a balance between the self-referential aspects of your practice and the public side of any practice, with references to the home and suburbia more generally?

THE ART OF THE DWELLING SPACE

KATE RHODES SPEAKS WITH DR GREER HONEYWILL



Lately my diet has become a trifle monotonous
2001
Three timbers, tin alphabet cookie cutters
126 x 150 x 56cm
Photograph John Best



DR GREER HONEYWILL

Lately my diet has become a trifle monotonous (detail)
2001
Three timbers, tin alphabet cookie cutters
126 x 150 x 56cm
Photograph John Best

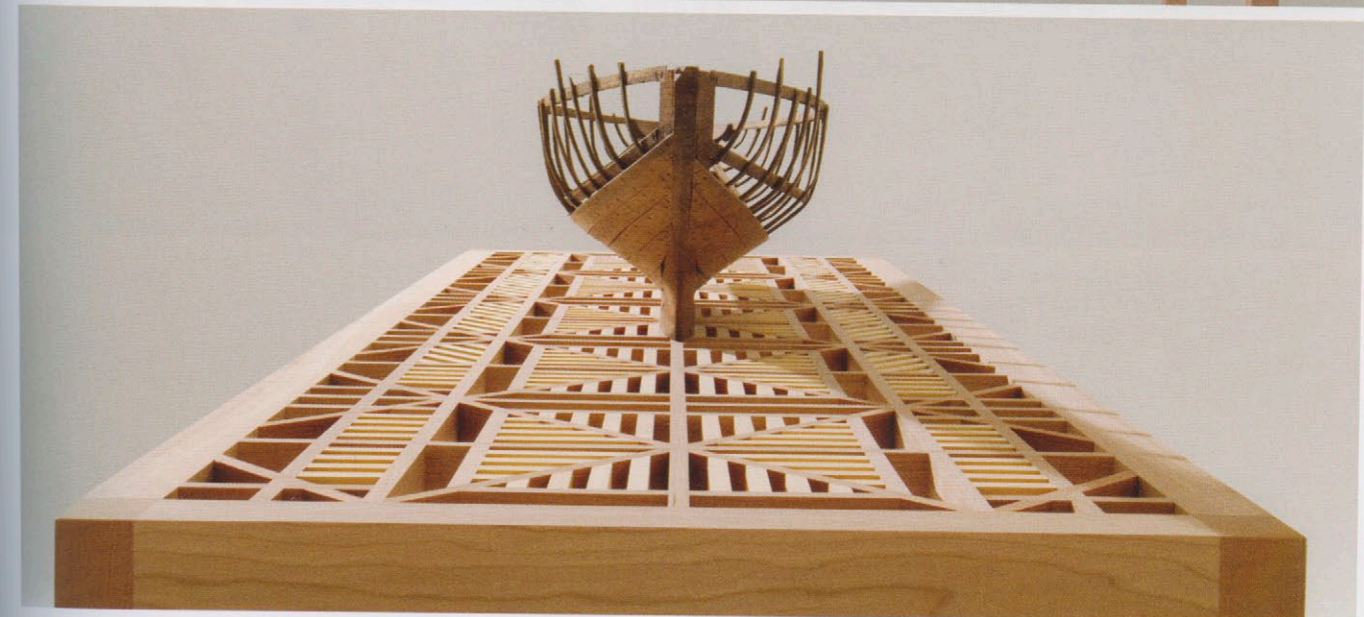
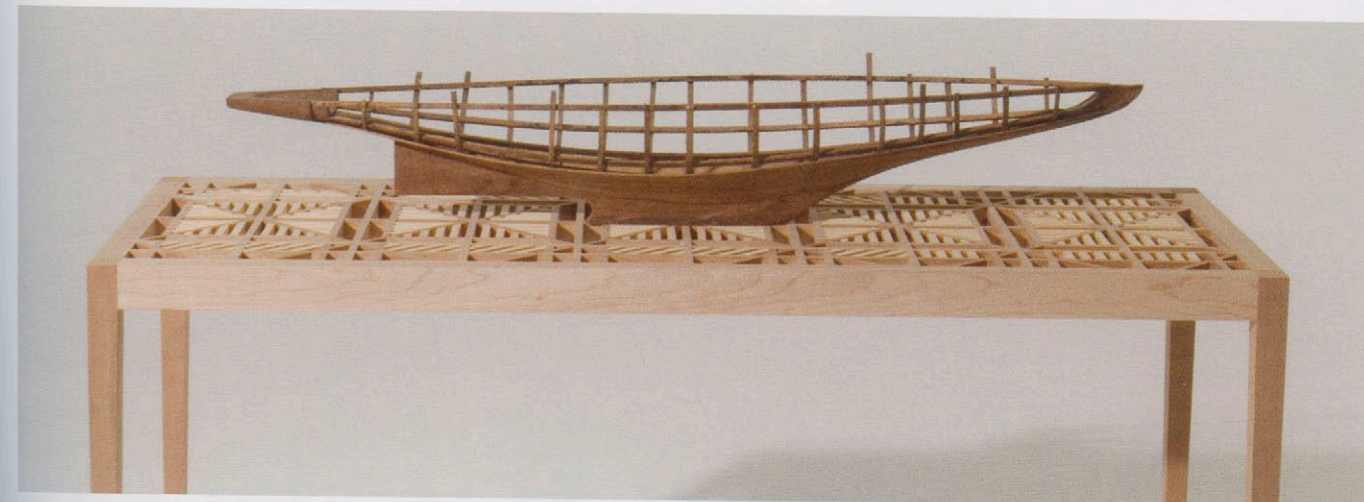
GH There are many artists who have used their memories and reflections as a starting point for their work. For instance the great American artist, Louise Bourgeois, now in her 90s, has used her personal narratives of familial betrayal to fuel her work over a lifetime. Through interviews given over the years one can see how Bourgeois subtly changes her narratives to maintain her control of the telling. The interesting thing is that fragments of memory are constantly lost, and what we forget our unconscious mind reinvents so the question can be asked: am I dealing in truths or fictions when I use my memories and reflections of a childhood lived in the suburbs?

KR *Against the Grain* covers work made over a long period (2000 - 2007), how do you assess the changes and developments in your practice throughout this time?
GH In 2000 I began to make works in wood as one seam of my quite varied practice. In the beginning the works were informed by apprentice models of domestic houses so there is a lattice-like quality to the works that can be seen in *Lately my diet has become a trifle monotonous* (2001) and *Carpet* (2005). The first works were vertical obelisks influenced by the femme-maisons of Louise Bourgeois and they related to the human body in scale. The notion of a woman concealing herself within the domestic home and at the same time revealing herself sat perfectly with the ideas I was grappling with at the time. Then I began to play with works that hovered between a table and an altar as metaphor for sacrifice and time lost in repetitive domestic tasks. *Lately my diet has become a trifle monotonous* (2001) was the first of what was meant to be a trilogy of these forms. This exhibition provided me with an invaluable opportunity



Variations on Monotony
 2007
 Three timbers
 126 x 150 x 56cm
 Photograph John Best

to complete that trilogy and the newer pieces, *Variations on Monotony* (2007) and *Crossing* (2007), reflect the subsequent shift in view to encompass the generality of the suburb rather than the intimacy of the single dwelling. In 2002 I continued to work on pieces that alluded to the woman concealed or consumed within the home this time by obliterating the timber with upholstered canvas to accentuate personal loss and the madness of repetition. At the same time I began to fragment my view moving from the domestic interior and the woman's view to include the child's view. Evidence refers to a world above the table, or set on the table, and a world below that looks rather like a child's game. By 2004 I was beginning to look at the effect of the domestic landscape on the natural environment and *Carpet* is a major work on the effect of urban sprawl on the landscape of the rural fringe I live within.



Crossing
 2007
 Three timbers, found object
 120 x 150 x 56cm
 Photograph John Best

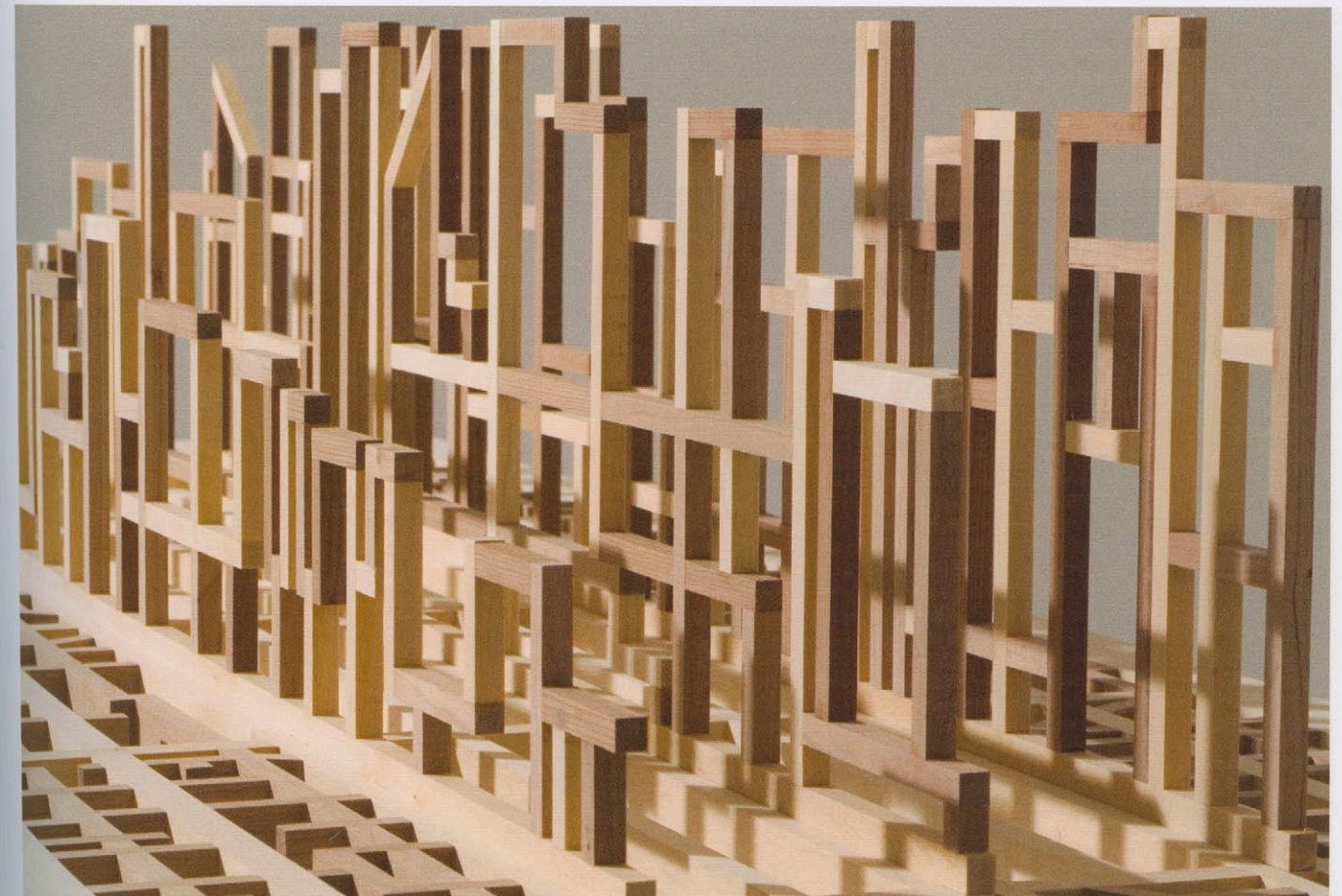
KR Can you describe how you have approached the curatorial side of this mini-retrospective exhibition?
GH The project enabled me to gather works made in wood over a long period and place them with new works utilising similar ideas and materials to provide a unique context in which to read the works and an opportunity to chart a trajectory. I have chosen works that 'speak' within the exhibition space and with each other and works that represent the shifts in view over the seven years. Perhaps it is decades spent working in the theatre that shape my view but I always want to animate the exhibition space and elicit emotional responses from the viewer.



Evidence
2003

Wood, tin, canvas, foam rubber, linen thread, glue
 120 x 123 x 200cm
 Photograph John Best

KR Greer, you have an incredible studio space, located in Woodend. How does living in a regional area, in quite a solitary environment affect your work?
GH Because I work with artisans and fabricators and I'm constantly gathering objects and materials, and therefore meeting lots of people, I enjoy by contrast the solitude, the beauty and the peace of my studio surrounded by trees. I don't play music when I'm thinking. I prefer the silence and the sounds of nature. ☺



Against the Grain: works in wood 2000 - 2007,
 Craft Victoria, 31 Flinders Lane, Melbourne,
 until 23 June 2007

Detail Variations on Monotony
2007

Three timbers
 126 x 150 x 56cm
 Photograph John Best