



Mila Kempner

portfolio 2021

Introduction



Born in Denmark, and currently working out of Australia and Europe I work to create a platform for an open dialogue, between art, architecture and landscape.

Collaborating on commissions with architects, designers, developers and private clients, I have developed a process of creating artworks at the genesis of the building design process. Here we can inform the spatial experience together in order to create the best possible dialogue between art and architecture.

My aim is to create artworks that allow for an integrated experience with an overall perspective of context, place and narrative. I believe this can only be achieved through an open approach to the creative process, allowing each project its own unique voice, each material its own identity.

Each job has a unique set of circumstances, parameters and limitation, all of which communicate a direction. If we are open to this direction we are able to create works which are honest to their intention and in harmony with their surroundings.

As artists we seek at the edges of the known map to return and convey what we have found, so that others can reach out further still. That is our continuing conversation with past, present and future.

SIURELLS

With a long history of periodically working and living on the island of Mallorca, Spain, I wanted to create a series of works that amalgamated the sense of nature with the cultural artisanry the island has developed over thousands of years.

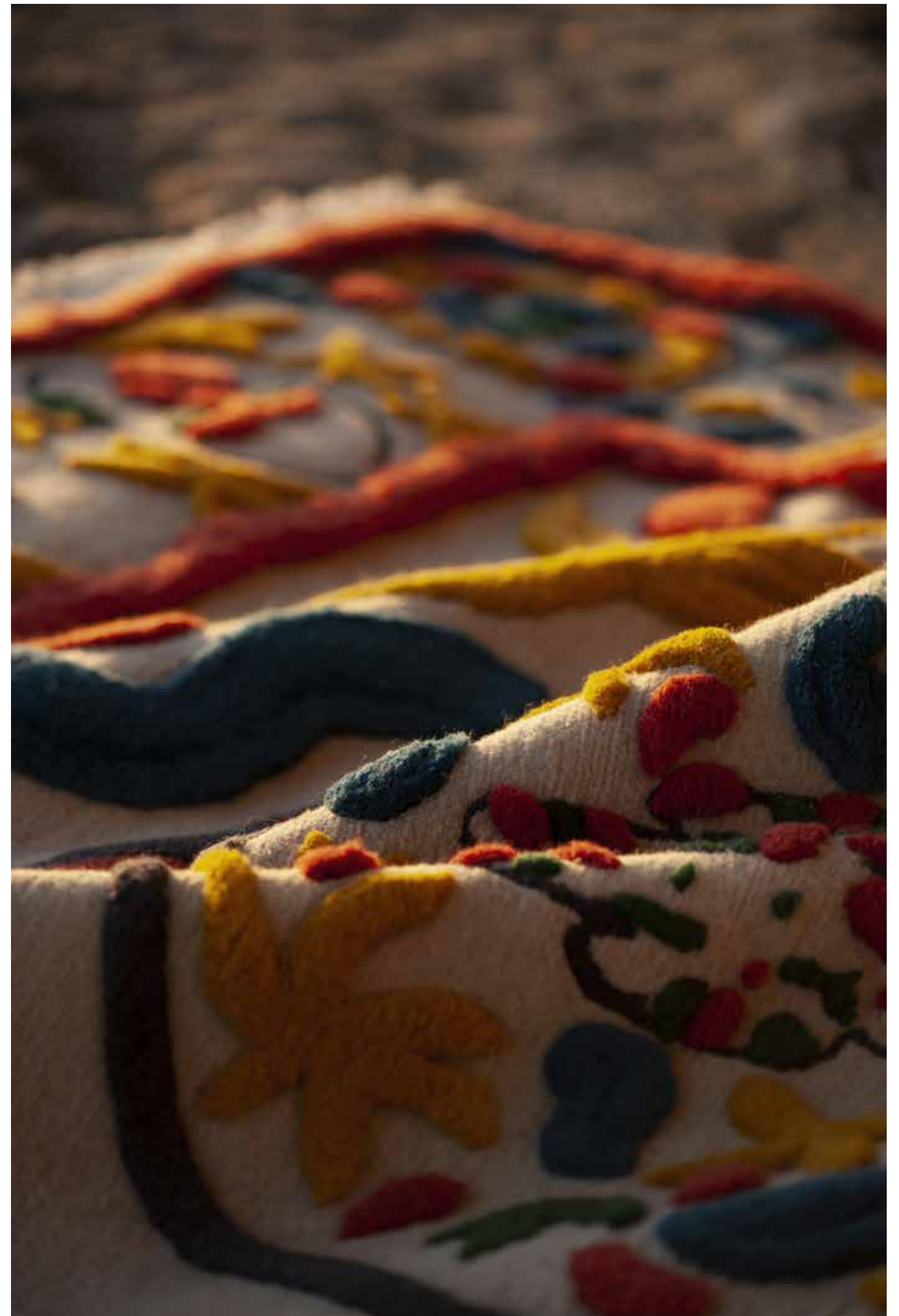
This has led to a series of works dealing with different languages and mediums, the first of which is 'Siurells'.

Inspired by the semi-pagan ceramic figurines of the Balearic islands, I have created a series of tapestry works; symbols and images woven together to create a dynamic and vibrant relief of soft textures.

This particular work is a private commission, created uniquely for the client. All the symbols and images relate to a private experience, feeding a story with life and poetry. The symbols are, however, intended to be generic enough to allow this work to speak to a broader dialogue, one that pulls inspiration from past traditions of tapestry making.

Other works in this series are currently in progress and will be announced as they are completed. Commissions to create unique pieces for personal spaces and narratives are welcome by request.

Collaborator: Carmen Tashi Weave
Images by Mika Utzon Popov







GREETING

Can art be more embedded in our daily life?

Rather than place a separate object within this private home, I collaborated with the architect to create a greeting point in the home.

A point where the outside is acknowledged inside the home. Where the user engages in a deliberate textural change, which they themselves will form.

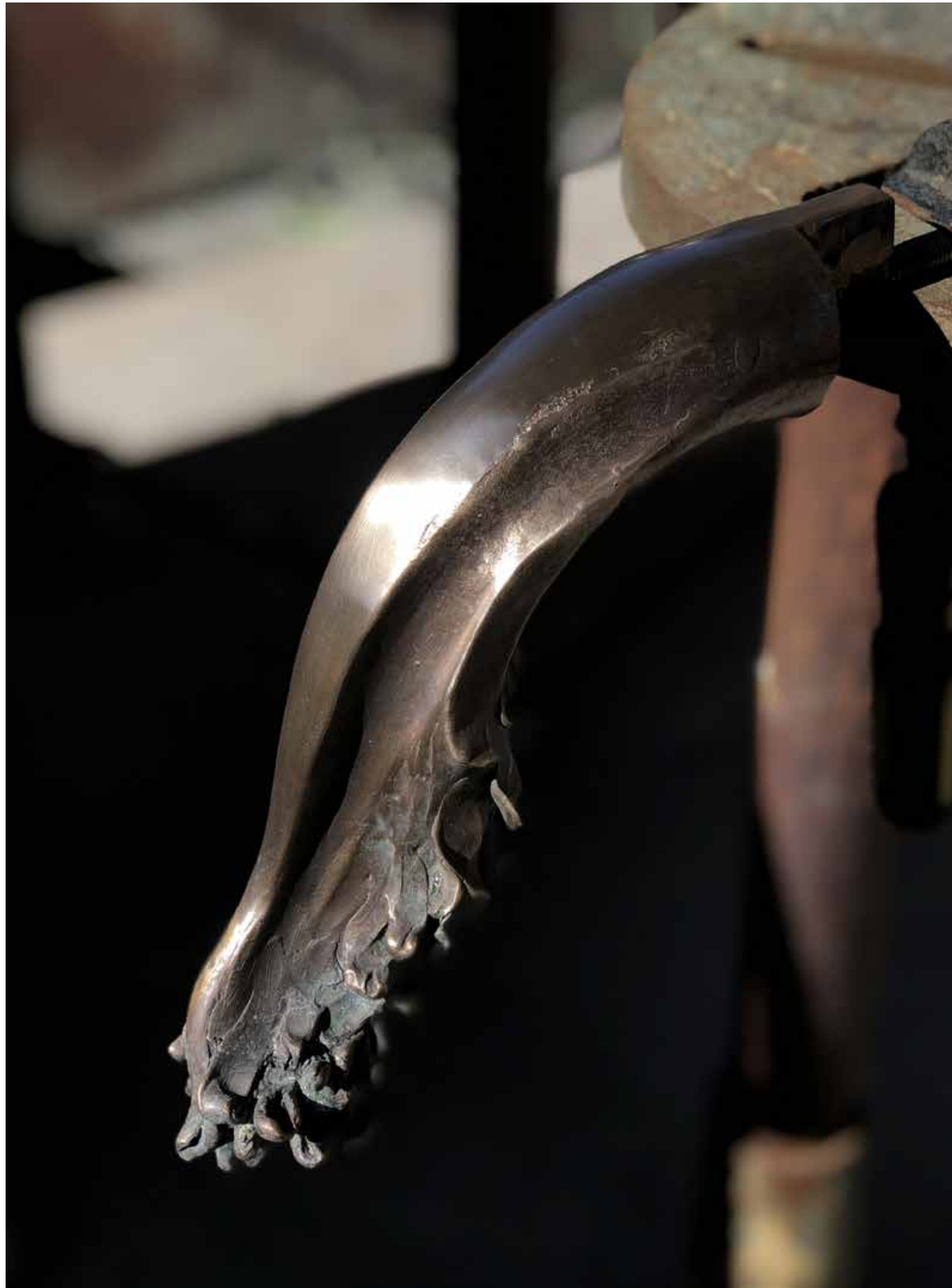
The work sits at the bottom of the staircase handrail, with its organic mass imbedded into the clean lines of the timber.

This artwork, while made by me, will not be completed by me. It is a work which continues to develop as it is used. Each person leaving a little mark of their passing and adding to the story of the work. Just as we do in a home.

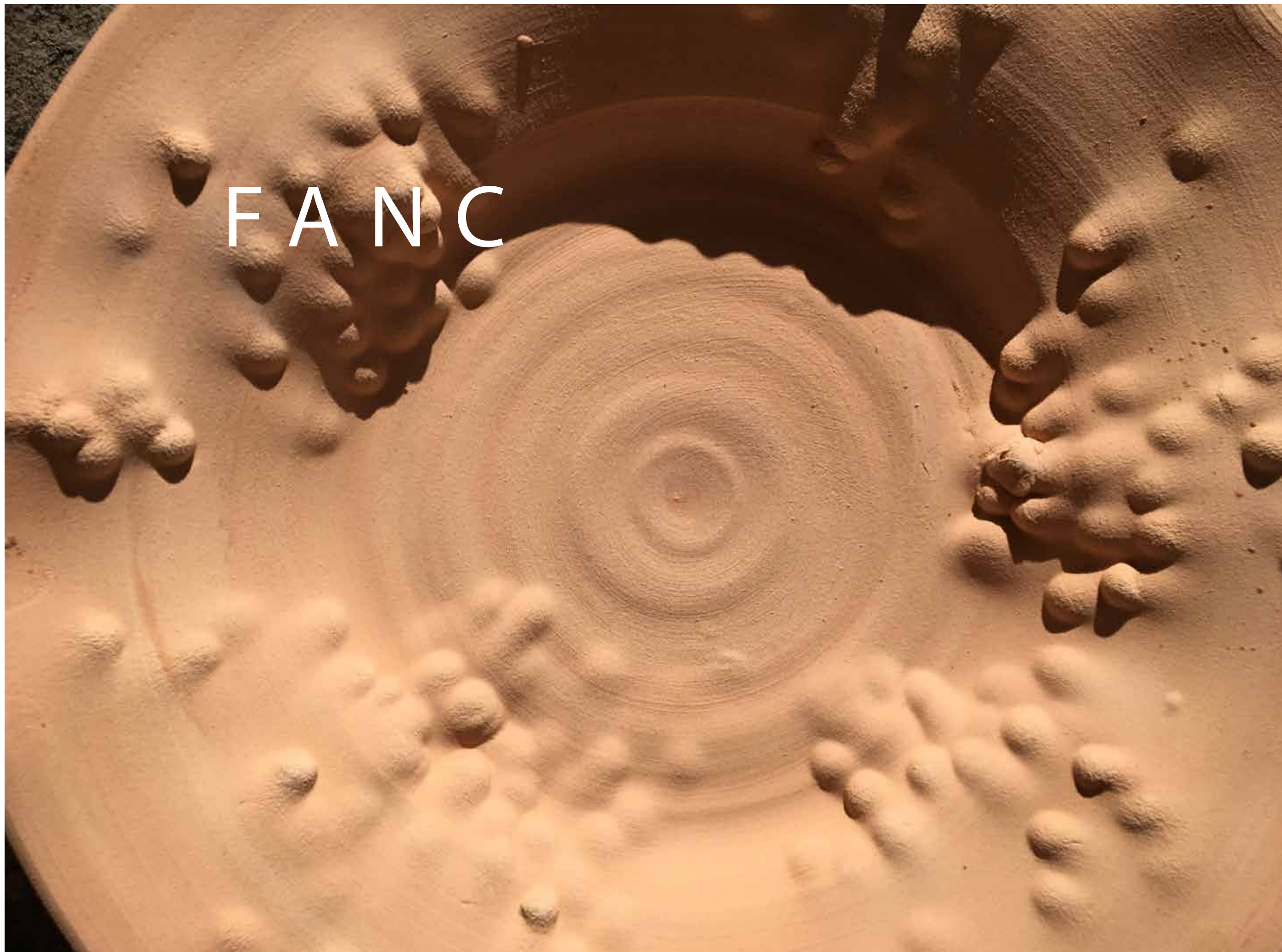
The key to the shift is the patina and the texture. The shape allows for a smooth transition from the timber and then pauses the hand with texture below. A momentary greeting that transforms the patina.

Architect and client: Bob Nation
Bronze casting: Australian Bronze Manly
Images by Mika Utzon Popov





FANC



Can you draw with clay?

The second of the projects which developed from my unearthing of the artisanal history of Mallorca is a series of ceramic explorations.

I chose to work with a material which came out of the landscape and used it to create a sense of that same landscape through a formal process still active on the island.

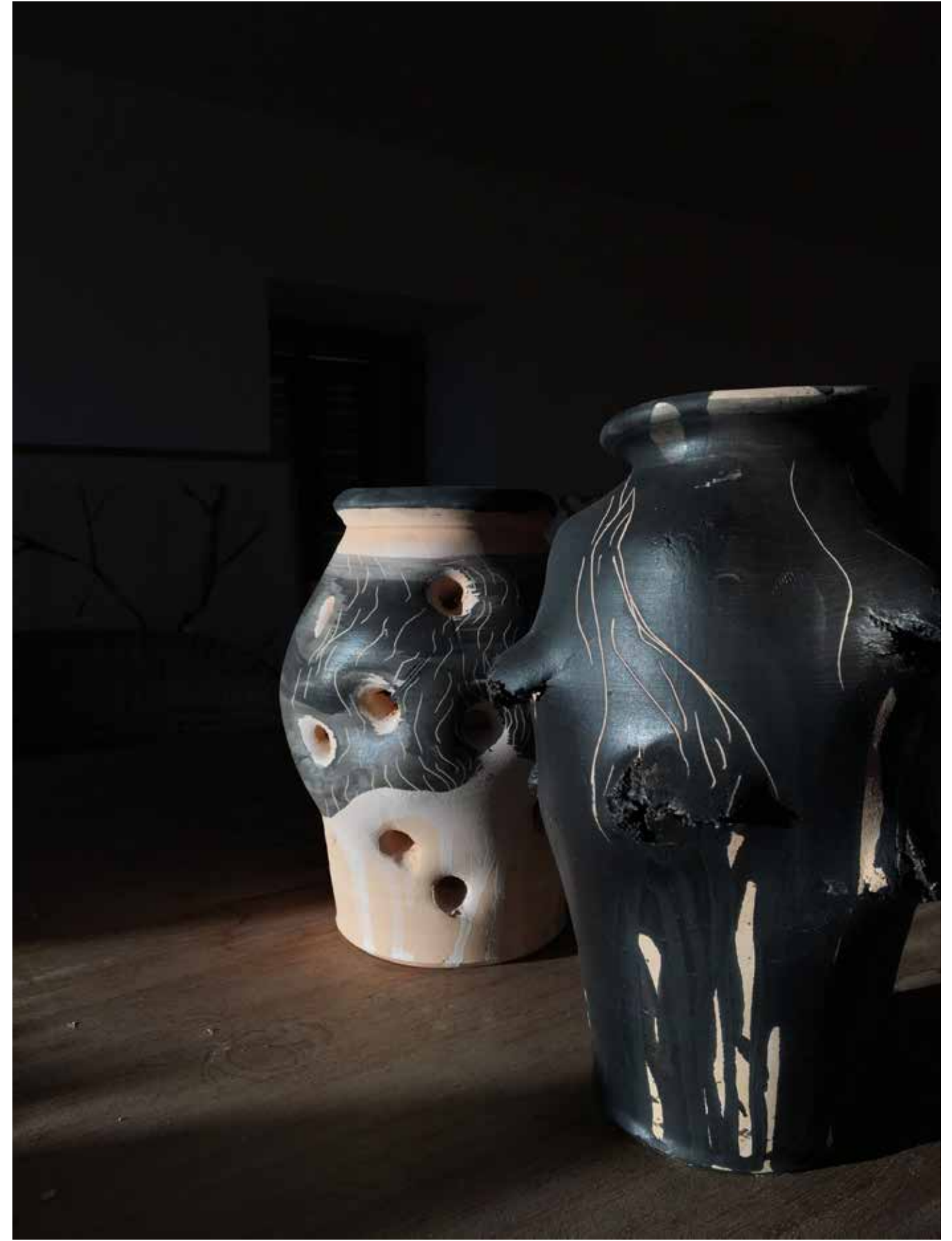
Forming landscape in clay; a way of fusing the land with the ocean, the elements coming together in one expression.

I worked with a local master artisan to create my desired ceramic designs, which I then manipulated into this series of works.

The work continues to progress and is developing into a broader dialogue about landscape and place.

Collaborator: Pere Coll
Images by Mika Utzon Popov





TRIPTYCH

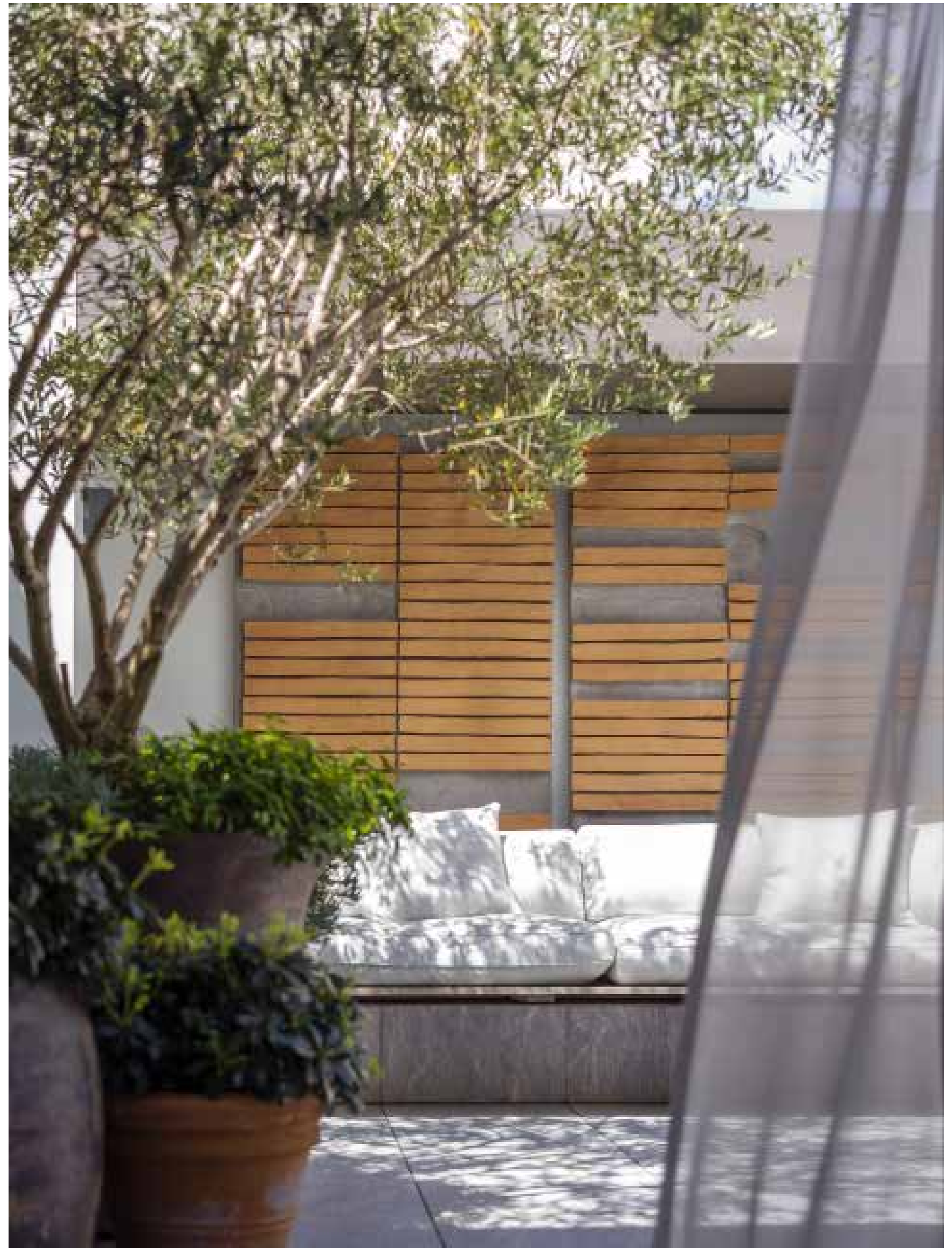
‘Triptych’ is a private commission for an external rooftop courtyard at the edge of Sydney’s Bondi Beach. The architectural language is one of tight lines of concrete, intersected with organic brickwork.

I created this work to reference the surrounding natural environment and incorporate architectural elements of the building – the eternal coastal sandstone cliffs and the adjacent brick stairwell.

The resulting sculpture is a Mediterranean-inspired mural. Three rectangular panels of organically formed concrete form the substructure of the work. Arranged in a grid atop the panels are hand-moulded bricks in a warm terracotta hue, following the undulation of the concrete below.

The bricks were created with Petersen Tiles in Broager, Denmark. The company allowed me to create these unique bricks in their factory, in a collaboration to push their process and develop new ideas for the future.

Brick process: Petersen Tegl Denmark
Brick support Australia: Robertson’s Building Products
Concrete casting: 2 Barrows Concrete
Images by Justin Alexander







FREE SPIRIT

'Free Spirit', composed of 75 hand sculpted silicate bronze cast elements, is a collaborative element of the Dexus development 44 Market Street by Woods Bagot and 360 Landscape.

The intention of the work is to engage the broader streetscape beyond the building's boundaries, creating a visual lift from afar.

To contrast the large pre-cast elements of the building, the sculptural elements are organic in form and coloured the way nature would naturally age their surfaces.

Casting: Australian Bronze

Architect: WOODS BAGOT

Landscaping: 360 Landscape

Commissioned: DEXUS Property Development

Images by Mika Utzon Popov





P O B L E

'Poble' is a public art commission for a retirement development by IRT and Marchese Partners in the city of Wollongong. Poble is the Catalan word for village and inspiration for this project.

I wanted to create a work which counters the prevalent loneliness in retirement by pulling public and private together, as in a village.

Furthermore, I wanted to tie the building to the city's history of steel manufacturing and export by using Corten steel; art as a social structure, connecting to place.

The intention was to create a journey across the building, culminating in a sculptural plaça, a public square, with benches where people can share and reflect, meet and connect.

Opening the journey are six large Corten steel frames, intersections in the building, pulling the façade together in a rhythm of angled panels. Each panel is perforated, allowing ventilation and light into the internal carpark, connecting what is often a solitary dark space to the outside.

Their movement culminates in a sculptural welcome and a public seating installation at the rear of the building. In this large public courtyard the sculptural gateway and the seating area, like symbolic frames, hold the space and create privacy screens without excluding the overall public connection.

Architect: Marchese Partners

Landscape: Taylor Brammer

Client: IRT, Infinity Construction

Production: Ultimate Metal

Images by Ben Guthrie, Guthrie Project





R.M.WILLIAMS NYC



MEMORIES OF LANDSCAPE

'Memories Of Landscape' is a two-part precast concrete installation in iconic Australian brand R.M. Williams' flagship store in SoHo, New York City.

The brief was to inspire the store's internal environment with an artistic response to landscape.

To avoid a 'localised' response to the enormity of the Australian landscape, the work became an amalgamation of landscape memories.

Multiple landscapes ebb and flow into each other across the narrative of the works, creating a movement within the space.

The Australian landscape is visibly formed and scarred by time, the erosion of the elements; it was these longterm effect that became the narrators of this story.

Handcrafted moulds were created, then cast into reinforced concrete and shipped to New York from Australia. The works were then fitted to the interior of the store, designed by Sydney-based architectural firm Popov Bass Architects.

Casting with: 2 Barrows Concrete.
Leather Stitching: Ocean Covers
Interior: PopovBass Architects
NYC Office: ActLab Nyc
Commissioned by: R.M. Williams



CONSTELLATION

With a tight budget to create a work spread over a large surface area, the work became a platform for multiple opportunities.

In a new mixed-use development by SJB Partners in a rapidly changing part of Sydney's central suburbs, this work is part of a new council directive for more creative input in the area.

While the primary intention of the work is to create depth in the space above the street, by creating small sculptural forms, the work also serves as a lighting platform and an arrival platform.

By creating hundreds of small LED crystal lights, we were able to enhance a sense of engagement with the busy commercial thoroughfare below, but also provide a safe arrival entry point for residents at night.

Architect: Adam Hadow of SJB Partners

Client: RDA Property





COAST

'Coast' is a large site-specific, hand-moulded concrete sculpture which reflects on a sense of place and context within the natural environment of the site.

The work was commissioned to help engage a 15 meter long entry space in a residential development in North Bondi, Sydney.

The solution was to create a work which not only gave the building a sense of place but a context to the natural environment in which it sits.

The final result is a translation of the natural coastal sandstone patterns of the surrounding cliffs.

The work is a 7.2 metre, 3.5 tonnes precast concrete sculpture, divided into six equal panels mounted on steel brackets.

Casting: 2 Barrows Concrete.

Architect: Adam Hadow, SJB Architects

Client/Developer: White Birch Projects

Images by Romello Periera

Finalist for the 2013 CC&AA Public Domain Award





FIRST MOVEMENT



'First Movement' was created as a response to a challenging space in a residential building in Sydney's Potts Point.

A large central light well, with windows on three sides facing a 32 metre high wall, posed a major challenge in engaging and lighting this communal space.

On a restricted budget, the solution was to create a series of modular stainless steel doves, mounted at different depths to the wall, in order to break up the space and create a sensation of upward movement toward the light.

Laser cut 316 Marinegrade Stainless Steel doves with hand applied surface texture.
Doves are mounted on 8 mm stainless steel rods with variable mount fixtures for individual adjustment.

Production: Willstain Production
Installed: Beebo Construction
Architect: Marchese Partners for TOGA
Images by Mika Utzon Popov





HEADLAND

The project brief from the clients was to develop a building in which science, art and architecture could come together to create a new experience in medical practice.

The artwork became about holding the substantial space of the front foyer and waiting room and creating a focal point across the large surface of the entry wall.

The solution was to create a large fluid landscape unfolding in segments across the wall, creating a rhythm and flow in the room.

The work is about the journey we experience when we move through a given space in nature, whether physical or in recollection, and is therefore suggestive rather than specific.

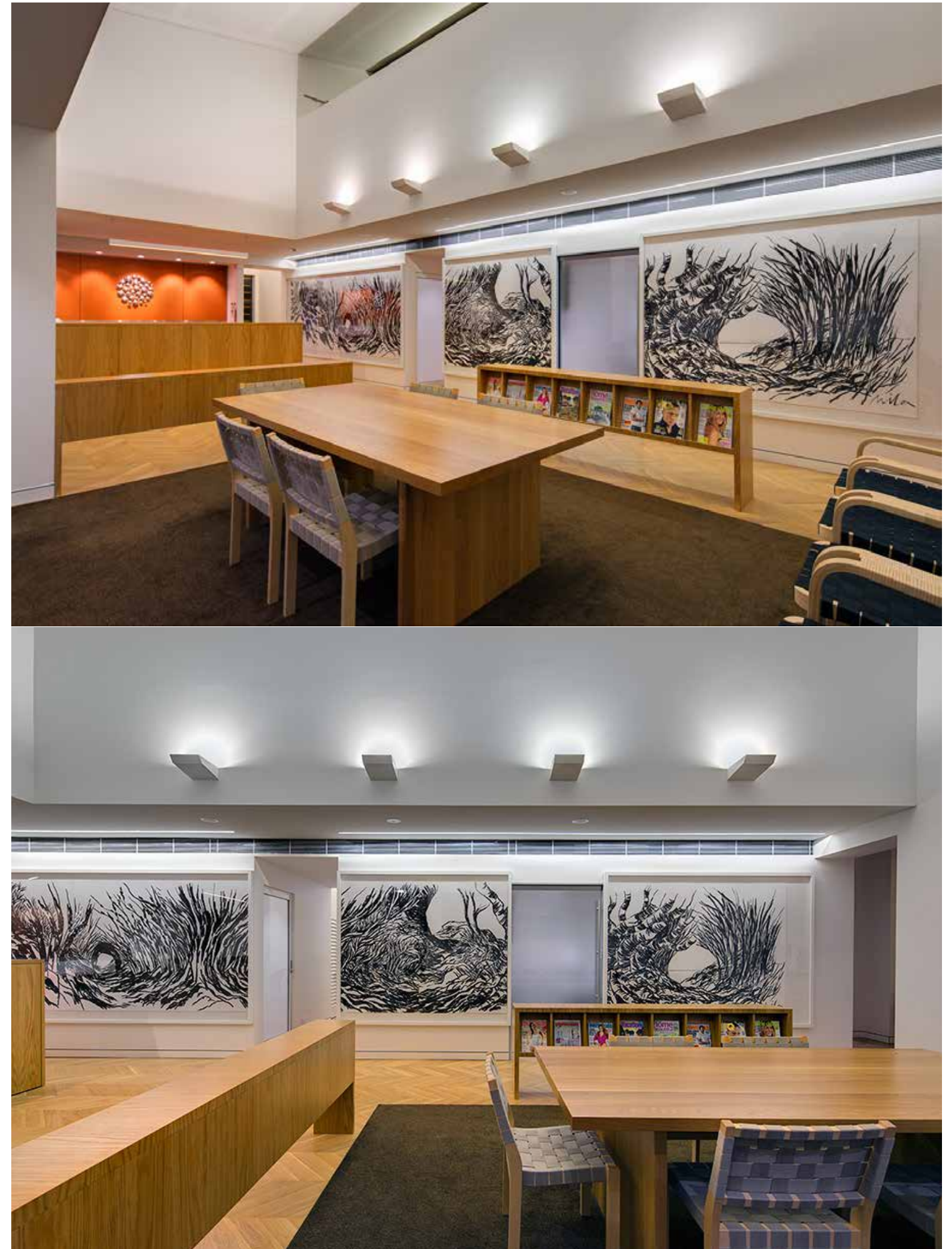
Material: Willow charcoal on 600gsm paper (100x720 cm.)

Architect: Georgina Wilson

Client: Sydney Eye Specialist Centre

Framing: Andrew Bassett Fine Framing

Images by Murray Fredericks



OCEANS

To introduce a sense of connectivity with the ocean in this development, I created a flow of bronze elements, mimicking the energy of the nearby waves.

In a long and narrow arrival corridor the elements jut in and out of the surface of the wall, creating a movement rather than a particular focal point.

The building language is one of clean lines and sparse colours. An inherent challenge in the space was to create texture and volume in contrast to the architecture without further narrowing the space.

I solved this by creating twenty leaf elements, with enough texture 'growing' on their surface, allowing light to play with contrast and generating depth.

Bronze Casting: Australian Bronze

Development: IPM Property

Images by Mika Utzon Popov





SUGARLOAF

In a private home set high above a harbour bay, opposite a national park with little visible construction, the view offers a wonderful contrast to the high density of the city surrounding this area of Sydney.

The work is a translation of the view from the house and serves as a reflection and reminder of the uniqueness of this spectacular site.

The work is therefore intended as daily dialogue between the landscape beyond and with the clients as they move in, around and out of the building.

Compressed charcoal on 600gsm acid free paper
Approx. 200x300 cm
Images by Kraig Carlström



FOLIAGE

'Foliage' was created as a direct response to the surrounding tree-lined suburban streetscape of a large new development in the city of Chatswood, Australia.

The public facade is the first large-scale building on a long suburban street entering Chatswood CBD from the north. As such, the facade acts as a visual and symbolic gateway to the CBD.

The streets of Chatswood are densely lined with native trees and the work is intended to align itself with the original character of this environment.

The work is fragmented in its composition, allowing the large volume of the facade to dissolve and minimize the transition from suburban to urban.

The work consists of large pre-cast concrete inlaid compositions with and an overlay of stainless steel leaves. Both components seek to use the transition of natural light to play across the surface of the facade throughout the day.

Architects: Marchese Partners
Pre-cast concrete: Icon Construction
Stainless Steel: Wilstain Productions
Installation: Beebo Construction
Images by Mark Syke



CV - 2021

1971 Born Copenhagen, Denmark
1995 Graduated National Art School, Sydney, Australia

Currently based in Australia and Denmark

COMMISSIONS

2020 'Growing', 2.3m x 2.7m wool tapestry, private commission, Sydney
2020 'Greeting', Bronze Handrail detail, Private House, Bob Nation Architects, Melbourne
2020 'Oceans', (26 handsculpted bronze elements), IPM Development, Sydney
2019 'Free Spirit', (75 handsculpted bronze leaves) WoodsBaggot Architects, Dexus Development, Sydney CBD
2018 'Transition' (6 piece bronze sculpture) Lane Cove, Yi Fang Development, Sydney
2018 'Foundations' in progress. (large scale precast landscape) CHROFI Architects, Glebe Sydney
2018 'Time', (15 310cm x 120cm structural, precast concrete facade elements). SJB Architects, Crown Develoments, Sydney
2018 'Poble', (Large 3 part corten steel installation), Marchese Partners, IRT, Wollongong
2017 'Constellations', (240x 2200 cm Crystal light installation) SJB Architects, Sydney
2017 'Garden' (85 x 120 cm concrete garden installation)Sydney
2016 'Triptych', (120 x 320 cm clay, concrete wall sculpture) Sydney
2016 'Foliage', (9 story concrete and steel installation), Marchese Partners, Chatswood
2015 'Chairity Project 2015' Commission for Cult Design, Sydney
2014 'Headlands', Focus Eye Specialists, (120 x 180 cm Mixed media on paper), Sydney
2013 Rydges International Airport Hotel, (450 x 2000 cm acrylic wall painting), Sydney
2013 'Coast', (720 x 120 cm concrete panel sculptural installation), SJB Architects, Sydney
2012 'Headlands', Kingsford, (800 x 150 cm charcoal on paper), Georgina Wilson Architects, Sydney
2012 Poster for Australian Artist and the Sydney Opera House, Utzon Center, Aalborg, Denmark
2011 'First Movement', Potts Point, (3600 x 600 cm Stainless steel sculptural installation), Sydney
2010 'Untitled', (100 x 280 cm charcoal on paper), Sydney
2009 Campaign image for the Cancer Council of Denmark collection day, 25.000 copies, Copenhagen
2009 'Sugarloaf',(200 x 307 cm charcoal on paper), Sydney
2003 80sqm. Wall decoration for Restaurant Luftkastellet, Copenhagen
2003 80sqm. Wall commission for XFelt, by Social services of City Council of Copenhagen
2002 120 sqm. wall decoration, Restaurant/Night-club Luftkastellet, Copenhagen

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2012 'Token', Australian Galleries, Sydney Australia
2011 'Mrs.Popov', Australian Galleries, Sydney Australia
2009 'Playback' (part II), Danish Cultural Institute, Bruxelles, Belgium
2008 'Playback' (part III), Australian Galleries Works On Paper, Melbourne, Australia
2008 'Playback' (part II), Danish Cultural Institute, Edinburgh, Scotland
2008 'Playback', (part I), Australian Galleries Works on Paper, Sydney, Australia
2006 'Recollecting Place', Australian Galleries Works on Paper, Sydney, Australia
2004 'Relative Darkness', Centro de Cultura, Felanitx, Spain
2003 'Memory Fragmented', Museo Can Planes, Sa Pobla, Mallorca, Spain
2001 'The Last Goodbye Part II', Gallery Orange, Helsingor, Denmark
2001 The Last Goodbye Part I', Void Gallery, London, England
1999 '3 Millennia', Gallery Us, Helsingor, Denmark
1997 'Thoughts', at Gallery Orange, Helsingor, Denmark

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2013 'Utzon's Opera House', National Trust S H Ervin Gallery, Sydney, Australia
2012 'Australian Artists and the Sydney Opera House', Utzon Center, Aalborg, Denmark
2010 'Artists' Prints made with integrity', Australian Galleries, Sydney, Australia
2009 'Windows on Pain', Carriageworks, Sydney, Australia
2008 'Stock show', Australian Galleries, Sydney, Australia
2007 'Summer Stock Show', Australian Galleries Works on Paper, Sydney, Australia
2007 Adelaide Perry Prize for Drawing, Adelaide Perry Gallery, Presbyterian Ladies' College (PLC), Sydney
2007 Broken Hill Outback Prize Group Show, Broken Hill Regional Art Gallery, Broken Hill, Australia
2006 'Summery', Australian Galleries Painting & Sculpture, Sydney, Australia
2005 'Once upon a time', H.C. Andersen, Marienlyst Castle in Helsingor, Denmark

GRANTS / AWARDS

2013 CC&AA Public Domain Award commendation in Wall category for ‘Coast’.
2000 H.G Foghts grant, Denmark

COLLECTIONS

Centro De Cultura, Felanitx, Mallorca, Spain
Galleri Edition Copenhagen Lithographic Workshop Collection,
Copenhagen Denmark
Museo Can Planes, Sa Pobla, Mallorca, Spain

PUBLICATIONS

2017 Petersen, 36, March. Denmark
2016 VOGUE, Oct. Australia
2016 Whitewall, Sept. USA
2016 Sothebys, Sept. USA
2016 Gear Patrol, Sept. USA
2016 Forbes Magazine, Sept. USA
2015 VOGUE Living, Oct. Australia
2015 WISH Magazine, Australia
2015 Cover Magazine, July issue Denmark
2015 Crown Platinum, Opening Edition, Winter, Australia
2015 ‘Parlour X’, Online Blog, January, Australia
2014 Art & Australia Magazine, Online Edition, 2014,
Australia

PUBLICATIONS CONTINUED

2013 The Australian Financial Review Magazine, October, Australia
2012 Cover Man, Autumn, Denmark
2012 Indesign magazine, Australia
2012 Indesign Live, Online, April 5, Australia
2010 Indesign magazine, Australia
2010 Helsingor Dagblad March 19, Denmark
2009 Cover magasine, March issue. Denmark
2004 “Mallorca Boom” Book by Camper, Son Forteza, Spain
2003 Romeo & Julie nr.7, Denmark
2002 Read This nr.10, Denmark
2002 Teknologidebat nr.1, Denmark
2002 Eurowoman nr.46, Denmark
1996 TAFE Educational Magazine, Australia

Contact:

email: mikapopov@gmail.com
phone: +61 424 015 968
website: www.mikautzonpopov.com

