

THERS

DEVONPORT
REGIONAL
GALLERY

FORWARD

Others: Colin Langridge

The 2014 Solo Commission, Devonport Regional Gallery

Colin Langridge is the recipient of the Devonport Regional Gallery's 2014 Solo Commission. The program provides early-to mid-career artists the opportunity to create new work based on experimentation and a solid conceptual grounding. Langridge has produced a series of sculptural works that focus on refined processes in steam bending and coopered joinery.

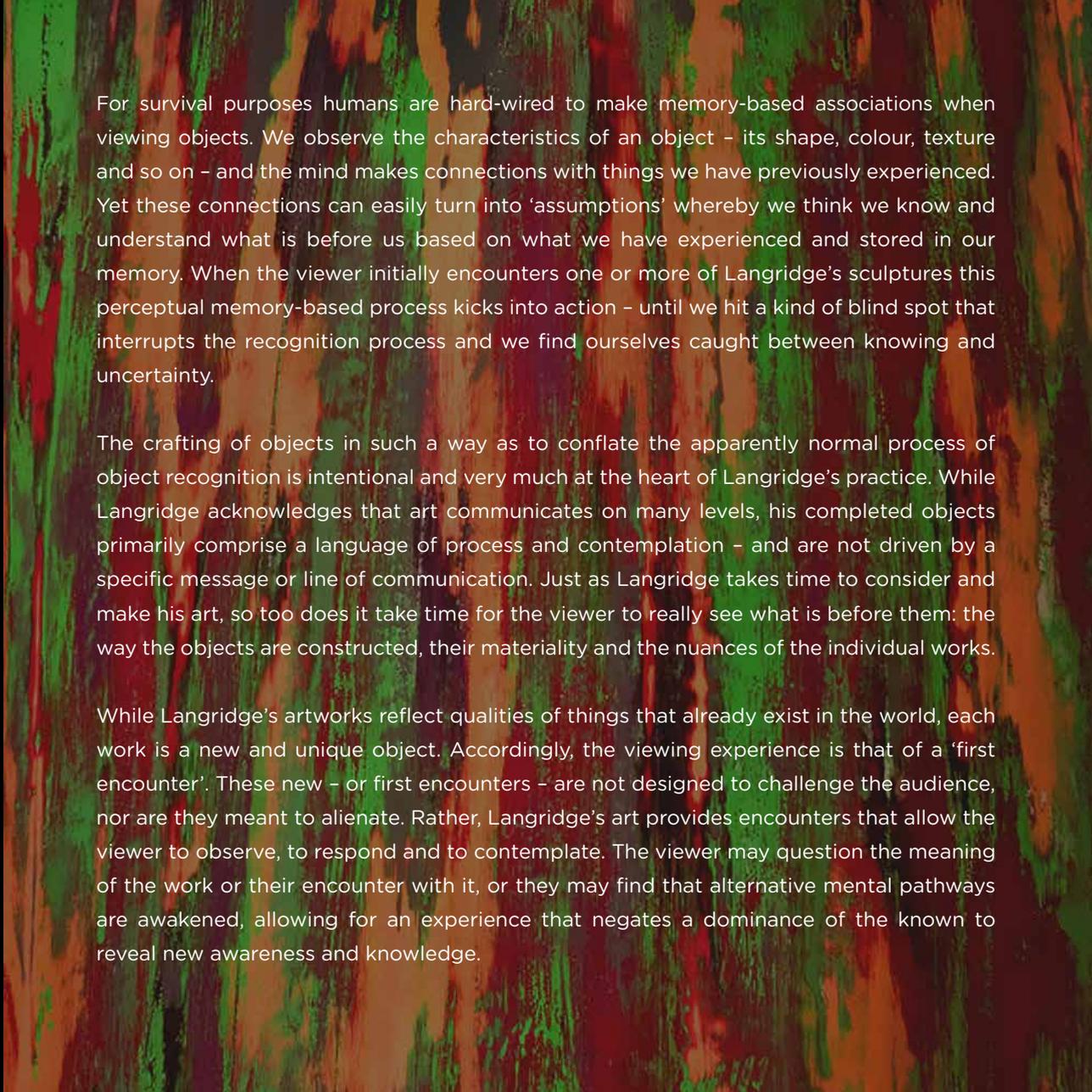
The project has taken Langridge 12 months to complete and showcases sculptural objects that have been painstakingly crafted in wood and polystyrene. The works are a continuation of Langridge's investigation into ontology and the relationship between knowledge and indeterminacy. The Devonport Regional Gallery is proud to present this ambitious project, which highlights a calibre of excellence in conceptual thinking and technique.

CONTEMPLATING OTHERS

To contemplate is to regard something with extended attention whereby new perceptions, imaginings and concepts reveal themselves. Within this process, the ability to question and shift ones frame of reference is an important key to unlocking the imagination and revealing new insights. Contemplation is a vital process in Colin Langridge's practice, enabling him to restructure the familiar into new ways of knowing. Langridge utilises the contemplation process to inspire possible combinations and interrelations with materials while concurrently providing him with the means to observe, experiment and determine disparities and disconnections.

Langridge's art is also motivated by a resonance with and curiosity of a medium's properties and qualities. An understanding of how materials behave and how they can be used is achieved by Langridge through lengthy experimentation - turning raw materials into new states of existence over a period of months.

The more Langridge fine-tunes his process and technique, the closer he comes to presenting the viewer with art objects that appear simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar. Langridge observes: 'Things that initiate a state of wonder and hyper-awareness are fundamental to my practice, where the artworks are often suspended in an indeterminate position between the unfamiliar and the familiar.'¹ These familiar, yet uncertain objects, entice the viewer into thinking about them in different and increasingly complex ways. The viewer is unwittingly caught in a complexity of thought that in some ways mirrors the artist's cognitive process - contemplating the materials, their scale and the relationship of one object to another.

The background of the page is an abstract, textured pattern consisting of vertical stripes in shades of green, red, and brown. The colors are layered and somewhat blurred, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall effect is reminiscent of a close-up of a tree trunk or a piece of weathered wood, with the different colors representing different layers or textures.

For survival purposes humans are hard-wired to make memory-based associations when viewing objects. We observe the characteristics of an object – its shape, colour, texture and so on – and the mind makes connections with things we have previously experienced. Yet these connections can easily turn into ‘assumptions’ whereby we think we know and understand what is before us based on what we have experienced and stored in our memory. When the viewer initially encounters one or more of Langridge’s sculptures this perceptual memory-based process kicks into action – until we hit a kind of blind spot that interrupts the recognition process and we find ourselves caught between knowing and uncertainty.

The crafting of objects in such a way as to conflate the apparently normal process of object recognition is intentional and very much at the heart of Langridge’s practice. While Langridge acknowledges that art communicates on many levels, his completed objects primarily comprise a language of process and contemplation – and are not driven by a specific message or line of communication. Just as Langridge takes time to consider and make his art, so too does it take time for the viewer to really see what is before them: the way the objects are constructed, their materiality and the nuances of the individual works.

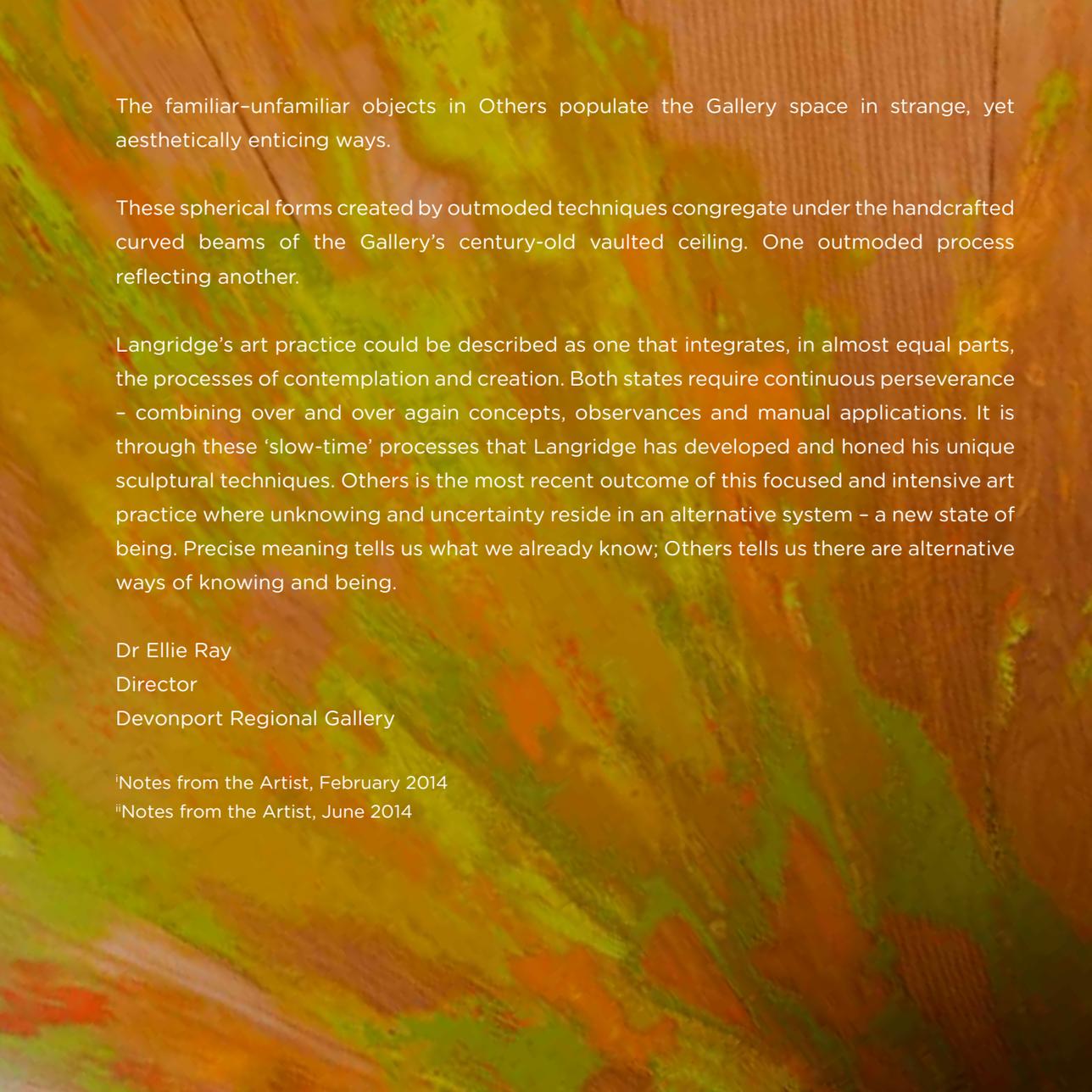
While Langridge’s artworks reflect qualities of things that already exist in the world, each work is a new and unique object. Accordingly, the viewing experience is that of a ‘first encounter’. These new – or first encounters – are not designed to challenge the audience, nor are they meant to alienate. Rather, Langridge’s art provides encounters that allow the viewer to observe, to respond and to contemplate. The viewer may question the meaning of the work or their encounter with it, or they may find that alternative mental pathways are awakened, allowing for an experience that negates a dominance of the known to reveal new awareness and knowledge.

Langridge achieves this by presenting ‘uncertain’ sculptural works that prevent the viewer from responding in a stereotypical manner such as they might with representational art.

As the artist points out: ‘Rather than abdicating responsibility for intentional meaning in my work I am actually trying to create works that are ambivalent. The intention is to create a point of enquiry and activate our questioning processes.’ⁱⁱⁱ It is through this questioning process that we (the viewer) can begin to construct our own meaning about the work.

To stimulate what Langridge refers to as ‘a sense of wonder’, the artist has continued his exploration of outmoded construction techniques, namely coopering and clinker boat building, combining a synthesis of the manufactured and the organic. To the uninitiated, one might conclude that each piece has been laboriously carved into spherical shapes. Yet the fundamental process is coopering – a time-consuming craft that entails specialist green timbers and precise steam bending before joining the individual pieces together to create a spherical whole.

For this Solo Commission, Langridge has also experimented with bending polystyrene in response to the increasing difficulty in sourcing native timbers. This alternative material has proved, through much experimentation, to be a resilient alternative to the timber structures. The polystyrene sculptures have been coated with rubber, which provides stability but also shifts the paradigm from a familiar material to something less familiar. The colours utilised in the finished timber surfaces are strong and purposeful: earth reds and shades of green streak across smooth surfaces, the patterning reminiscent of the skin of a fruit or gourd.



The familiar-unfamiliar objects in Others populate the Gallery space in strange, yet aesthetically enticing ways.

These spherical forms created by outmoded techniques congregate under the handcrafted curved beams of the Gallery's century-old vaulted ceiling. One outmoded process reflecting another.

Langridge's art practice could be described as one that integrates, in almost equal parts, the processes of contemplation and creation. Both states require continuous perseverance – combining over and over again concepts, observances and manual applications. It is through these 'slow-time' processes that Langridge has developed and honed his unique sculptural techniques. Others is the most recent outcome of this focused and intensive art practice where unknowing and uncertainty reside in an alternative system – a new state of being. Precise meaning tells us what we already know; Others tells us there are alternative ways of knowing and being.

Dr Ellie Ray
Director
Devonport Regional Gallery

ⁱNotes from the Artist, February 2014

ⁱⁱNotes from the Artist, June 2014



OTHERS INSTALLATION VIEW (1)

LIST OF WORKS

UNSHAKEABLE DOUBT,

2013, celery top pine, polyurethane glue, varnish, enamel paint, H 154 W 90 D 35.

PERSISTENT PATCH OF SHADOW

2014, poplar, polyurethane glue, varnish, enamel paint, H 90 W 90 D 33.

DEEP IMPULSE

2013, celery top pine, polyurethane glue, varnish, enamel paint, H 168 W 62 D 50.

NOT KNOWING I

2014, poplar, polyurethane glue, varnish, enamel paint, H 30 W 55 D 55.

NOT KNOWING II

2014, polystyrene (EPS), recycled rubber crumb, polyurethane glue,
H 50 W 75 D 75. (Two objects make up this artwork.)

THE REST VANISHES INTO OBLIVION

2014, polystyrene (EPS), polyurethane glue, H 70 W 160 D 160.

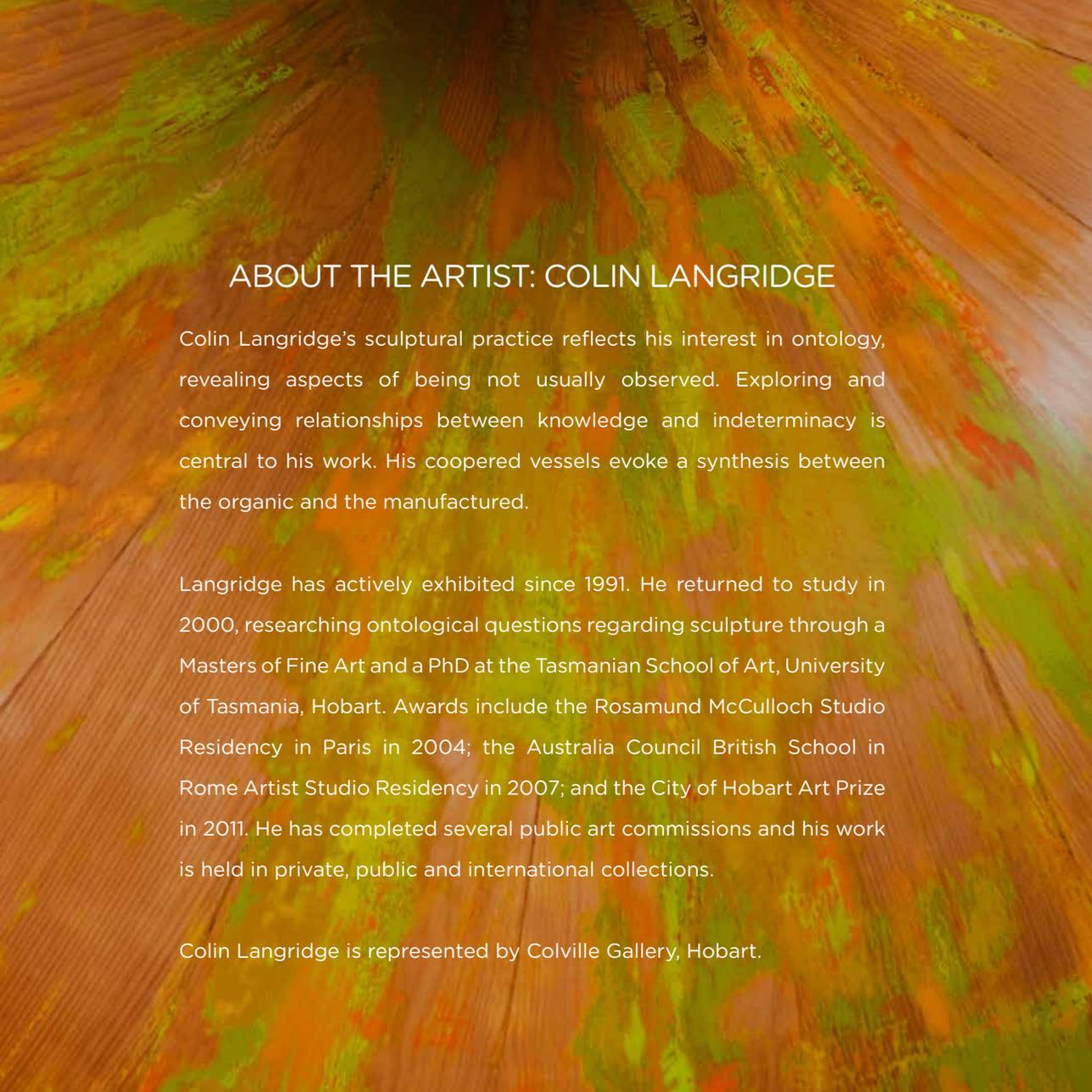
UNBOUND GLANCE

2014, polystyrene (EPS), EPDM rubber, recycled rubber crumb, polyurethane glue,
H 70 W 130 D 130 (black), H 70 W 130 D 130 (grey), H 70 W 115 D 115 (orange).
(Three objects make up this installation/artwork.)





OTHERS INSTALLATION VIEW (2)



ABOUT THE ARTIST: COLIN LANGRIDGE

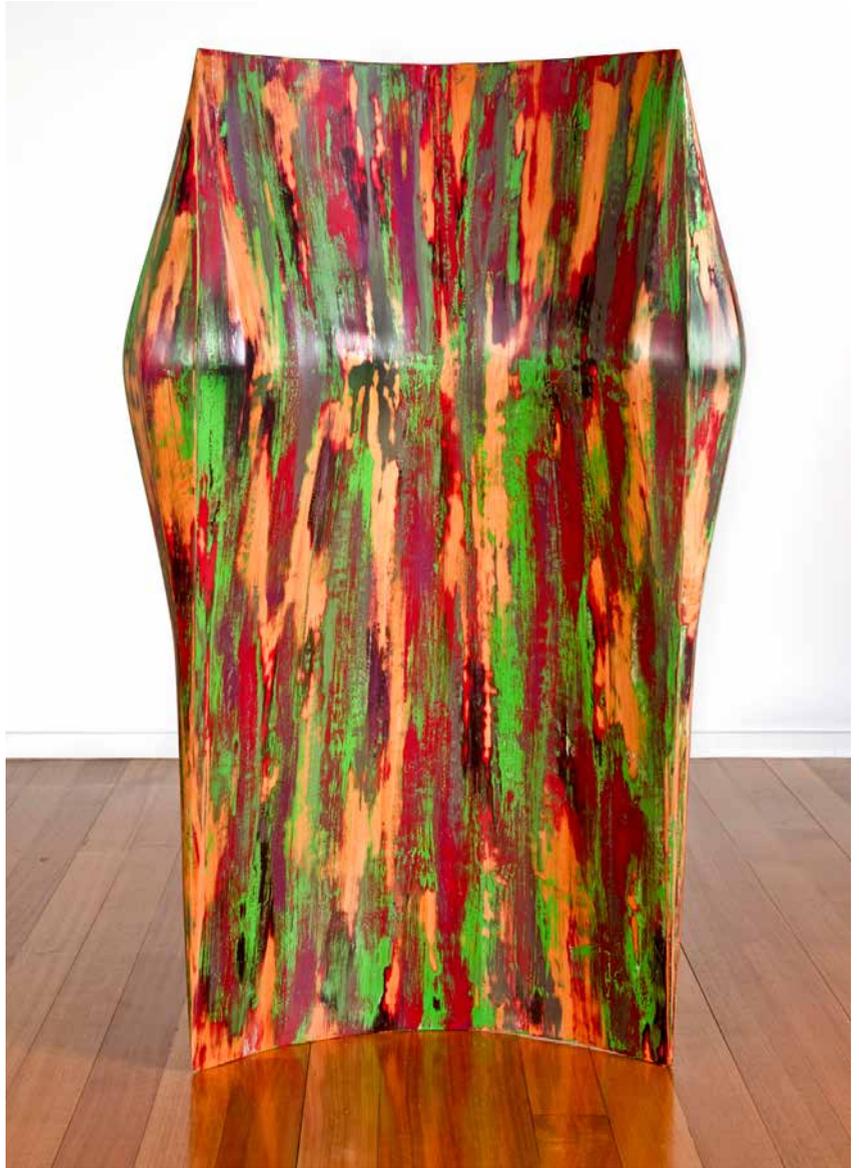
Colin Langridge's sculptural practice reflects his interest in ontology, revealing aspects of being not usually observed. Exploring and conveying relationships between knowledge and indeterminacy is central to his work. His coopered vessels evoke a synthesis between the organic and the manufactured.

Langridge has actively exhibited since 1991. He returned to study in 2000, researching ontological questions regarding sculpture through a Masters of Fine Art and a PhD at the Tasmanian School of Art, University of Tasmania, Hobart. Awards include the Rosamund McCulloch Studio Residency in Paris in 2004; the Australia Council British School in Rome Artist Studio Residency in 2007; and the City of Hobart Art Prize in 2011. He has completed several public art commissions and his work is held in private, public and international collections.

Colin Langridge is represented by Colville Gallery, Hobart.

UNSHAKEABLE DOUBT

2013 - celery top pine,
polyurethane glue, varnish,
enamel paint.





PERSISTENT PATCH OF SHADOW

2014 - poplar, polyurethane glue, varnish, enamel paint.

DEEP IMPULSE

2013 - celery top pine,
polyurethane glue, varnish,
enamel paint.





NOT KNOWING I

2014, celery top pine, polyurethane glue, varnish, enamel paint.

NOT KNOWING II

2014, polystyrene (EPS), recycled rubber crumb, polyurethane glue.
(Two objects make up this artwork.)



THE REST VANISHES INTO OBLIVION

2014, polystyrene (EPS), polyurethane glue.



UNBOUND GLANCE

2014, polystyrene (EPS), EPDM rubber, recycled rubber crumb, polyurethane glue.
(Three objects make up this installation/artwork.)





NOT KNOWING I - detail



OTHERS INSTALLATION VIEW (3)

ARTIST ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Colin Langridge extends his thanks to the Devonport Regional Gallery for commissioning this project; to Dr Ellie Ray for curating the project and to the Gallery staff for their assistance. Gratitude is also extended to Amanda Davies for her invaluable support and assistance; to Arts Tasmania for their recognition of this project; Brian Chapman of Island Recreation for his enthusiasm, generosity and advice; Stuart Houghton for his advice and support; Polyfoam Australia for their advice; and to the staff at Contemporary Art Tasmania for their support.

ISBN: 978-0-9872560-8-9

CATALOGUE DESIGN: Readings Advertising **EDITOR:** Alison Savage **PHOTOGRAPHER:** David Martin



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A photograph of a white sphere, possibly a light fixture or a piece of art, centered within a wooden structure that resembles a tunnel or a large pipe. The wood is light-colored with visible grain and some darker spots. The sphere is perfectly round and has a smooth, matte finish. The lighting is soft, creating a slight shadow on the wood around the sphere.

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