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## UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS.

**Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April at 7:30 pm.**

**Venue: Arts House Meat Market Craft Centre, Large Meeting Room,  
Blackwood Street, North Melbourne. 3051.**

### **Serge Haidutschyk: Bringing wooden insects to life.**

Born in Melbourne of Ukrainian parents, Serge has always had an interest in fine woodworking. Serge completed an apprenticeship in Engineering Patternmaking at the Victorian Railways Newport workshop where, for 25 years, he constructed patterns for train parts including historic steam train parts for the Puffing Billy. He also worked as a contract patternmaker for GCF, a foundry in Footscray, which made heavy castings for the mining industry.

During 35 years as a patternmaker, he acquired skills as a craftsman in woodturning, model making and sculpture, winning many woodwork awards, including first prize in the Australian Working with Wood Show and first prize at the Royal Melbourne Show. His works are mainly made from recycled Australian native timbers such as Huon Pine, King Billy Pine, Kauri, Red Gum and Blackwood. Serge is a founding member of the Altona woodworkers Club.



Serge will talk about how he makes his extraordinarily lifelike wooden insects which can be seen on [www.woodnart.weebly.com](http://www.woodnart.weebly.com).

**When: Saturday 23 May. 9.30 am (note the early start).**

**Where: Timber Zoo, 385 Portarlington Road, Moolap 3224.**

### **Visit to Timber Zoo: Recycled Timber Warehouse.**

Timber Zoo is a well-known specialist recycled timber supplier located near Geelong on the Bellarine Peninsula. They specialise in Australian hardwoods and the range of species used in building and construction from the early to the mid-20th century.

We will have a tour of the facilities, and hear about the origin for their timbers, and the current state of the recycled timber industry in Victoria.



**Wednesday 24 June at 7.30 pm.**

**Where: Large Meeting Room, Meat Market Craft Centre, Blackwood St, North Melbourne.**

### **Phoebe Everill: The design process: from idea to product.**

Phoebe Everill will discuss her design process, starting with an idea and working through to the completed piece, using some completed projects to illustrate her points. Along the way, she'll talk about how she ended up as a studio woodworker, and reflect on being a woman in a traditionally male area of work.



Phoebe started off life as a tradie, and established a successful carpentry and renovations business that focussed on personalised designs and exquisite finishing. She then turned her eye fine furniture by moving interstate to study at Sturt School for Wood in 2009. In 2011 she completed a Certificate IV in Furniture Design & Technology. In 2012 she was an Artist in Residence at Sturt, providing a studio space and machine access to further develop her portfolio. Phoebe is a member of Studio Woodworkers Australia, and is the Chair of that body.

## President's Report, by Jerome Wielens.

### President's report

The year has gotten off to a flying start and I can't believe that it is Easter already. There have been a number of changes at the VWA recently. We started the year off with a working bee at the wood design centre to add some new equipment, improve storage and do a general tidy up before classes resumed (see below for more details). I would like to say a big thank you to all of the committee members, teaching staff and students who helped out over the weekend. We have now farewelled Alex and Callum, two of our tenants as their tenures came to an end. We have also said good bye to Illy after just over a year into his tenancy. Illy was being commissioned to work on larger and larger projects that couldn't be accommodated in the limited space available at the WDC and had to seek a larger workshop. We wish Alex, Callum and Illy all the best for their future careers.



As the old tenants have moved out, we have interviewed and accepted four new tenants – Isabel, Monette, Adam, and Chris. The tenants introduce themselves below. In the meantime you can check out their profiles on our website or you can always have a chat with them at one of our member's meetings.

Our February members meeting was at Treehorn design in Preston. It was great to hear how Joe was building his business making interesting pieces with simple clean designs and developing a brand and product distribution network. Equally interesting were the other craftsmen at the WORCO site including several furniture makers, a harpsichord maker, a luther, a plane maker and a blacksmith. For further details see [www.worco.org](http://www.worco.org). Unfortunately our March meeting had to be cancelled at the last minute but we will endeavour to have Phoebe present again at a later date.

We also welcome our new maintenance manager, John Foster to the WDC. John is taking over from Callum and comes with many years' experience managing workshops and machinery. With a full tenancy and around 60 students using the Centre each week, John will have his hands full keeping blades sharp, machines running smoothly and the rest of the WDC in good order.

Entries are now open for Create-from-a-Crate 2016 and we encourage you to enter and upcycle two hardwood crates into your own individual masterpiece(s). The finished pieces will be exhibited in the Walker Street Gallery and Arts Centre in Dandenong and another regional centre. There are thousands of dollars in prizes to be won. The crates are supplied by Waste Converters and include timbers such as American white and red oak, sycamore, maple, cherry, ash and elm. More details can be found on our website.



## Working bee

A working bee was held over the weekend of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> January before the start of the new school year. We had a number of projects to complete including installation of a new mitre saw and work bench; a variety of improvements to our current storage areas including adding sheeting to some of the racks; two new storage areas for panels and other sheeting material; and of course a good old tidy up. We spent over 200 man hours on the improvements and I sincerely thank all of those who gave a hand. The WDC is still glowing from the clean up and the new mitre saw is working a treat.

Cheers,  
Jerome.



Mark and John working on the new mitre saw bench (Above Left). Sam installing the sheeting to the storage racks, moving excess and abandoned timber into the shared bin (Above Right).



Randall setting up to weld the frames for the new panel storage (Above left). John making fine adjustments to the newly refurbished thickness sander after many years of standing idle (Above right).

## Tenants at the Wood Design Centre.

Over the past few years the VWA has been very fortunate in attracting high calibre graduates in furniture design and woodcraft to the WDC. A maximum of five tenants are offered workshop space up to three years in which to establish themselves and their businesses as emerging practitioners. Here they have access to the machine room including a CNC overhead router and CAM software, and the opportunity to interact in a stimulating environment.

The VWA committee wishes our new members an enjoyable stay at the WDC and every success for the future.

### Isabel Avendano



Isabel is a designer maker specializing in fine furniture, textiles, fibre arts and sculpture. Isabel is interested in blurring the boundaries between fine furniture and sculpture where objects that have a function are also works of art. All her products are hand made and well thought through, making them original and unique. She likes to work in local timbers and organic fibres

### Monette Hoppitt



Working with wood has been a passion of Monette's for many years and in 2012 she moved out of a career in IT to pursue formal training. She began learning under the teaching of Robert Chapman and Stuart Montague at the Illawarra Woodwork School and followed this up with training as a fine furniture designer and maker at the Sturt School for Wood in Mittagong NSW.

Now based in Melbourne, Monette's work features sharp, modern lines combined with classic joinery techniques and highlights the natural colours and characteristics of the timber. As well as working on various furniture pieces,

Monette is currently prototyping series of wooden toys as part of her new business with the aim to bring together the quality and legacy of heirloom toys with unique, modern and fun designs.

## Chris Tomoya James



From a young age Chris's focus has been on place-making; constantly experimenting with ideas in his bedroom. A notable portfolio piece included 'Sea King', a cardboard fortress with a network of tunnels. Another design addressed sick days which consisted of pulleys and ropes connected throughout the room for turning the light on and off, opening and closing the door, and drawing the curtains all from the comfort of his bed.

After working in the design industry for six years in Melbourne and Shanghai, Chris started his own business in 2013 focusing on shop fit-outs and experimental furniture pieces.

## Sam Johnston



Sam Johnston trained as a landscape architect and has worked in the industry for over 12 years, in Brisbane with SPLAT, New York with EDAW/AECOM and London with Gustafson Porter. Sam has worked closely with many brilliant and inspiring designers, the best of whom can, and do, design anything. Sam's research and teaching experience includes various lectures, conference papers, and exhibitions, including Bauhaus Kolleg V and ECLAS 2007 conference, as well as leading the design studios for post graduate and master of landscape architecture students at Kingston University and, most recently, a Lower Pool Design Studio at RMIT, Melbourne.

Sam founded sem design in July 2011 with the belief that design is a universal skill and should draw inspiration from all disciplines. The design studio holds that design should be unique, contextually appropriate and beautiful, whatever it is. Particular interests and experience come from landscape architecture, furniture and fashion, but that is just a start. The studio is underpinned by the notion that the future of design and production is digital, and that through a rigorous process of testing and prototyping beautiful, functional and lasting objects, spaces, and things can be created.



## Adam Markowitz



Adam formed his design studio markowitzdesign, in 2013. In 2014 he was awarded the Emerging Designer award at Vivid for his table 'Fred'. markowitzdesign offers services spanning bespoke commission work to design for production. Adam revels in a joy of materials and a passion for physicality in design, whilst the work of markowitzdesign attempts to integrate the principles of scandinavian humanist modern with contemporary digital practice.

## Create from a Crate 2016.

So far about 20 entries have been received from as far afield as Queensland and NSW, and time is running out to enter and pick up your pallets.



### Key dates to remember:

1. Submission of your completed Entry Form and payment to Meg Allan (VWA Membership Secretary). Pick up your pallets from Waste Converters. **Entries close on Friday 31st of July, 2015.**
2. Send images of completed exhibit(s) and Artist's Statement as set out in the Entry Form to the VWA Membership Secretary, by **Monday 23 November 2015**. These will be included in the Exhibition Catalogue.
3. Delivery of completed exhibits to the Walker Street Gallery on **Monday 1 February 2016**.
4. Opening of Exhibition: **Thursday 4 February 2016 at 6.30pm.**
5. Last day of Exhibition: **Saturday 27 February 2016 at 3pm.**
6. Exhibition pack up: from **3pm Saturday 27 to 4pm Sunday 28 February 2016**.

Further information is available from: <http://www.vwa.org.au/exhibitions/create-crate>;  
<https://www.facebook.com/createfromacrate>.

## Letters to the Editor.

Dear Editor,

On behalf of the general members who would like me to speak on their behalf, (and not those who wouldn't) I would like to express my appreciation of all the work the VWA committee does. Organizing and keeping the Access workshop and classes running is a major task in itself, add to this the maintenance of a most beneficial insurance scheme, the organizing of guest speakers for meetings, occasional exhibitions, website, newsletters etc. It goes on I know.

Pleased and satisfied as I am with where the VWA is, I would love to see more. Back in the eighties when I joined the VWA and for many more than ten years after that the VWA used to run quite successful exhibitions of members works, and there is no reason not to do this again.

This should be both a showcase and a point to encourage the public to consider purchasing and commissioning one off pieces of fine solid woodwork. If others like me would like to see the reinstatement of an annual exhibition for members, I would be very happy to assist in this endeavour. You don't have to be a VWA committee member to be involved, just a VWA member who would like to show off their work and the work of others.

So if you are interested in playing an active participatory roll and devoting some time and energy to such an exhibition I am starting the dialogue, please email me at: [hamish@hamishhill.com.au](mailto:hamish@hamishhill.com.au).

Dear Hamish,

Thank you for your letter. I think this is the first letter I have received as editor in recent years; it is reassuring to know that there is life out there, and the efforts of the committee are appreciated! All communication, and especially offers of active involvement by our members are always welcome, and your letter has been forwarded to the committee for response.

Regards,

Will Matthysen  
VWA Editor.



## Carving a Reputation

by Andrew Potocnik.

Nestled in the thriving metropolis of Malaysia's rapidly evolving capital city of Kuala Lumpur is a centre known as the Kompleks Kraf, a sanctuary from the busy outside world, but also a place that gives outsiders an insight into the country's craft culture.

Housed within its walls is an exceptional museum highlighting the very best and most intricate crafts indigenous to this country. It is filled with wonderfully displayed examples of crafts, coaxed from all forms of material imaginable and transformed into a myriad of functional, decorative and ceremonial objects, which highlight the diversity of indigenous cultures encompassed by this relatively modern nation.

Apart from traditional implements there is a range of timbers on display, some known to us by their western names, others we know very little about. They range from commercially available species to others that are integral to the lives of indigenous people who once used them to make weapons, tool handles or knife sheaths. Some of these include KEMUNING (*muraya paniculata*), sometimes known as Chinese myrtle, a honey yellow hardwood endowed with a beautiful flame-like luminescent grain running through it. Highly prized in Malaysia, it is often used for sculptures and Keris sheaths and handles, or hilts. Keris are traditional knives once used broadly by the farming community of this country. Another is RENGAS (gluta rengas), known as ghost wood by Chinese, suited for high quality furniture. Wonderful examples of traditional objects crafted from some of these timbers offer visitors an insight into how wood is intertwined with the culture of this country.

But I was here to meet a carver I'd heard about through a contact, so I headed off to a

section of the Kompleks, housing small workshops where highly respected local practitioners are able to set up workspaces and explore their crafts. Here I met Zorollah Bin Silin, better known as 'Zoro' (so much easier for Westerners to remember) who has developed a reputation for his intricately carved owls and extensive range of nose carvings.



Zoro's completed knives ready for sale.

Whilst showing me some of his carvings and knives he uses, Zoro explained that he has always had a passion for woodcarving, something he first discovered when still a student; however, working life found him employed in the telecommunications field, which pays better than sales of craft work. Then in the early 2000s, when his company offered voluntary redundancy packages to some of their workers, he accepted and has never looked back, developing his passion as a professional carver.



Zoro poses in his shop, together with a selection of carved noses and owls.

He set up a small workshop at the Kompleks Kraf where he began to explore a variety of motifs before settling on his favourite, the owl. A number of newspaper articles singing the praises of this carver adorn walls of his workshop, proclaiming him to be one of the best in his field in Malaysia. His works have found favour with visiting tourists on the lookout for uniquely crafted souvenirs.

For many years he has been making his own tools, mostly carving knives which enable him to carve some quite hard timbers with relative ease. Beginning with the forging of a blade, he hones it to an incredibly sharp edge, insisting it's not the size that matters; it's how sharp the knife is, and that determines its value to him. A number of blades sit on his bench waiting to be fitted to custom shaped handles.



Knife blades ready for final shaping and awaiting handles.

Zoro is also known as “brother nose” (Mat Hindug) due to his fascination with the human nose, many of which hang in his workshop. He believes that the length and shape of one's nose can reveal a person's origin. Other items he makes are 'golok' and 'kerambit', traditional knives featuring designed and carved sheaths and handles which sell for several thousand ringgits, a price many

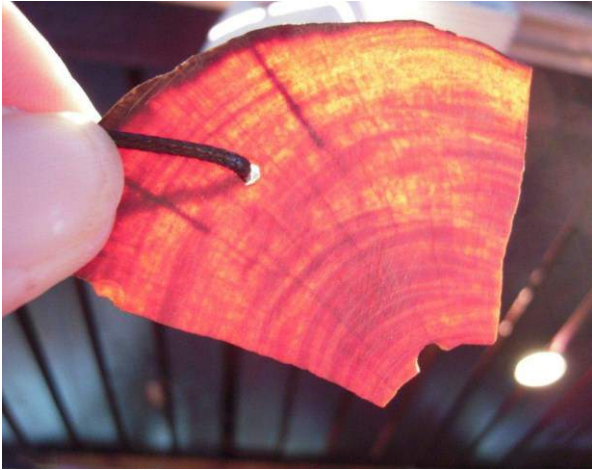




buyers feel is justified due to the unique nature of his work.

He tops these off with a small brass emblem imbedded in each piece as it is completed, not because of vanity, but rather to reflect the pride he takes in each individual item. To make a living out of handcrafts is not easy in Malaysia, so it was with great pride that he told me he has been able to support his family for a number of years with the income generated by his carvings.

Zoro's carving tools.



Among the range of timbers Zoro keeps is a very special sample he shows to all of his visitors - petrified Damar Minyak, or Raju Kayu as it is known locally (*Agathis Borneensis*) which when held up to light glows with translucence, highlighting growth rings of this age old section of tree. He too glows with passion as he draws visitor's attention to this gem of wood...

Translucent petrified Damar Minyak.

When I showed him one of my turned red Gum boxes which features painted dots his eyes lit up as he told me there was a way of improving the dots. He quickly set about drilling a couple of holes into some deep brown coloured Ironwood from Borneo, then rapidly cut and filed a few thin cylindrical pins of cow bone, which he tapped into the holes before trimming off the excess and sanding it smooth before adding a finish to bring out the contrasting colours. Once satisfied with the sample he offered it to me with a look of satisfaction on his face, knowing he'd helped someone else by sharing his knowledge and skills.



Cutting cow bone to show me how it is inlaid into wood to create eyes.



Zoro's 'signature' owl pendant.



A sample of wood with inlaid bone.

I suspect this element of sharing his skill is what gives Zoro the greatest thrill in his role within the Kompleks, not just a master carver, but someone who shares his passion with anyone willing to listen.

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### **VWA member expands Tasmanian distribution for Osmo products.**

VWA member and furniture maker, David Ball, and his wife Rosi have been operating Nature Gleam, retailing natural cleaning products since 2012. Their focus has been on products which are non-toxic, good for humans and good for the environment because “we had met too many people suffering from cancer, respiratory or skin conditions and thought we should offer a healthy alternative to commercial cleaning products”.

Recently David, after making timber bench tops for their kitchen, was wisely advised by a friend to investigate Osmo to finish them. After doing some investigation (google of course), he got chatting to Ray Bellette from Osmo. After using Osmo, David was so enthusiastic about the finish he suggested to Ray that perhaps he and Rosi could become the Tasmanian distributors. Ray welcomed the idea, especially after viewing the Nature Gleam website and considering that they shared similar values.

David and Rosi are now the Tasmanian distributors for Osmo, as well as a full range of natural cleaning products and brushes and cloths (and David's furniture). Check out their website at [naturegleam.com.au](http://naturegleam.com.au) to see what they have to offer.

Any queries – [david@naturegleam.com.au](mailto:david@naturegleam.com.au) or phone 03 6326 2276.





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### Current VWA Committee and Contacts:

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