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Meredith Turnbull
Compositions

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PROJECTS

Gallery Director: Channon Goodwin
 Design: Adam Cruickshank
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This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

**CREATIVE
 VICTORIA**



Meredith Turnbull
Compositions
 05.02.14–22.02.14

Meredith Turnbull's work engages diverse scales, art historical traditions and genres – and manifests in connections between sculpture, images, decorative objects and jewellery. Meredith has an ongoing interest in combining sculpture, craft and display through approaches to excess, adornment and decor. More broadly her work focuses on the related histories of modernism and abstraction across visual art and design.

Meredith completed a Bachelor of Art with Honours in Art History at LaTrobe University in 2000 and a Bachelor of Fine Art, Gold and Silversmithing at RMIT University in 2005. Recent projects include *Co-workers – Hanging Sculpture* for Melbourne Now (National Gallery of Victoria, 2013), *Co-workers, Interior World, (The Other Side, 2013)*, *The Edible Woman, (West Space, 2012)*, *Co-workers (Rae and Bennett, 2012)* and *Target Practice, (Centre for Contemporary Photography, 2011)*.

www.meredithturnbull.com

Alison Lasek

You wouldn't know that it was the day before the installation of Meredith Turnbull's Compositions at BUS Projects. At what was obviously quite a busy time, she welcomed me into her beautiful light-filled apartment in Balaclava, where her studio is also located, to talk about her work for the upcoming exhibition. Her interest in interior design was quickly revealed by a poetic arrangement of 1960s and 70s furniture, standing lamps and houseplants, all set off by a collection of art from local superstars such as Nick Mangan, Damiano Bertoli, Ross Coulter (Meredith's husband, who she lives with) along with her own work.

As we settled into the couch with cold glasses of freshly made SodaStream mixed with ginger cordial and traditional lemonade, Meredith described some of the influences playing into her work for Compositions. Not surprisingly, she has been collecting and reading 1960s and 70s interior design books, particularly English designer Terence Conran's early house and apartment books, whose design philosophy is very much about creating an unpretentious environment for easy living. Meredith is currently undertaking her PHD at Monash University and she explained that her research has been informing her way of working. For the last couple of years she has been looking at Russian constructivist theorist Boris Arvatov's theory of socialist objects as 'co-workers' to human practice, which will likely make up one chapter of her thesis. The constructivist's geometric forms, their interest in the material properties of an object in combination with its spatial presence, along with the importance placed on three dimensional compositions, and later two-dimensional works such as posters, can be seen echoing through time and informing Meredith's critically engaged contemporary practice. Meredith says she wouldn't be making the kind of work that she does if it wasn't for her background in art history; it's leading the practice in many ways. She has also long been interested in the total works of art of the Bauhaus bringing together art, architecture, crafts and interior design. Meredith's own practice creates an inclusive space where art history, design and sculpture sit together and speak a unique sort of interior language.

She describes her work for Bus Projects within the framework of content and context. For the content of her work she draws on art historical references, such as the history of modernism and abstraction, and combines this with craft and design

research. Content is also explored through materialities and the physical making process. While Meredith doesn't see herself as a site-specific artist, her work does attempt to respond to the space and context of the gallery. Each of her projects looks different because of the specifics of the location in which it's installed. I am really looking forward to seeing the way the light from BUS Projects front windows will stream through the timber frame-works or screens that she is constructing to divide the space.

When talking about the scale of her work, Meredith informed me that she has been trying to make her work in a way that ensures all components can be transported by car. This will mean assembling the timber screens within the gallery. But scale plays a more important role in Meredith's work, as we see small things take on monumental qualities and large things at times appear decorative. Meredith laid out her large photographic prints in her airy living room, before walking me through to her studio where I was shown the rudimentary set where they were shot. Black cardboard was simply taped to the wall and the small, propositional constructions that appeared in her prints were made up of ephemeral materials like architectural paper and what appeared to be either yellow-tac or chewing gum. Each of these compositions is carefully put-together; a thought-out arrangement rather than the kind of wild assemblage you might see in the work of many of the artists featured in the New Museum's survey of contemporary sculpture, *Unmonumental* (2007), such as Isa Genzken, whose retrospective at MOMA Meredith really enjoyed.

While standing in her studio I found myself telling Meredith that she has clearly developed a very strong visual language that she really owns, to which she laughed and modestly replied, "I hope so".







Not only but also

Bus Projects is an independent arts organisation dedicated to supporting the critical, conceptual and interdisciplinary practices of Australian artists. Since its establishment in 2001, Bus Projects has acted as a space to produce, present, discuss and engage with contemporary art. In addition to its core gallery-based program of exhibitions, events and residencies, Bus Projects collaborates with a range of artists and like-minded organisations to produce projects off-site and within the public realm. Through this diverse programming, Bus Projects continues to be a crucial convergence point for art, artist and audiences.

This exhibition and publication series, *Not Only But Also*, invests in the creation of innovative works by 24 young and emerging Australian artists and writers, forming an integral part of Bus Projects' inaugural artistic program in its new galleries on Rokeby Street in Collingwood.

Sarah Byrne
Juliet Rowe
James L Marshall
Joseph Breikers
Sam Cranstoun
Meredith Turnbull
Veronica Kent
Kenzee Patterson
Sebastian Moody
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