

# CREATE FROM A CRATE

## 2016



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Walker Street Gallery and Arts Centre  
Corner of Walker and Robinson Streets,  
Dandenong. VIC 3175  
4<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> February 2016

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Hatch Contemporary Arts Space  
14 Ivanhoe Parade,  
Ivanhoe. VIC 3079  
2<sup>nd</sup> March – 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2016

[www.createfromacrate.com](http://www.createfromacrate.com)

[www.vwa.org.au](http://www.vwa.org.au)

[www.wasteconverters.com.au](http://www.wasteconverters.com.au)



## WELCOME TO CREATE FROM A CRATE

The Victorian Woodworkers Association and Waste Converters Recycling are proud to present the 2016 *Create from a Crate* Exhibition.

*A Message from Jerome Wielens, President, Victorian Woodworkers Association*

The Victorian Woodworkers Association are a community of professional and hobbyist makers, turners and designers with a collective passion to celebrate the natural beauty and form of wood. We are also passionate about sharing our knowledge and expertise via classes and workshops conducted at our North Melbourne workshop.

As the interest in up-cycling waste material continues to grow, the sixth *Create from a Crate* Exhibition has once again captured the imagination of a wide variety of participants from all over Australia. The challenge was set to create something special from something unloved. It sounds simple, but for the participants it quickly becomes a complex exercise in problem solving and creative design.

The humble crate is an unsung hero of our economy, providing support for our precious goods as they are transported across the globe. Unfortunately these essential podiums often become a waste product because they don't conform to a particular set of rules. In this exhibition, the timber pallets originated from old growth forests in North America, and were used to ship potato chip wrapping and other goods to Australia. The non-standard dimensions of these pallets meant that their useful life could not be maximised, so they were prematurely relegated to the waste heap. Luckily, the hidden value of this timber was recognised by the management at Waste Converters, and together with the Victorian Woodworkers Association a competition has once again been born.....

Participants are provided with two crates measuring approximately 1500 mm x 760 mm. The quality and nature of the pallet timber is hidden under layers of dirt and weathered grime. It is a lucky dip and while the species and damage are sometimes obvious, often they are not. Water damage, mould, insect attack and physical stress all form part of the crate's unique makeup.

Pulling the crate apart is a feat of patience and dedication, and the maker needs to address complex questions throughout the process. Do I risk breaking the wood while prising the nails out to maximise length, or should I sacrifice the often fragile ends to recover the shorter sections of better quality timber? Is my end goal to up-cycle as much of the timber pallet as possible, or to maximise the value of the finished piece? What species of timber do I have to work with? Does it have any interesting features? Will there be enough timber for my project? Will it be stable? How will the different timbers interact both aesthetically and physically? How do I want to pay homage to the original crate?

I encourage you to consider these questions as you move through and enjoy this collection of works.

## TURNING WASTE INTO WORTH

*A message from Ward Petherbridge, Managing Director Waste Converters / S.M.A.R.T Recycling.*

The act of creating something functional or artistic out of the undervalued, commonplace packaging crate has once again struck a chord with woodworkers throughout Australia. The number and diversity of entries in the 2016 *Create from a Crate* Exhibition is a testament to the growing commitment to re-using and recycling.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of tonnes of pallets, crates and other assorted waste timber are discarded. A significant proportion is buried at landfill sites around Victoria, with only approximately a third of this massive amount of timber being recycled. Due to the limited demand for recycled products, most of the recycled timber unfortunately ends up as low-grade landscaping mulch.

As the entries are submitted, I experience mixed emotions. On the one hand I am excited about the level of commitment the contestants have to recycling. I am also struck by the creativity and ingenuity of the entries and inspired by the skills these craftspeople demonstrate as they transform a scrappy timber pallet into a work of art that reveals the beauty of the timber. On the flipside, when I look out onto my worksite and see the mountains of timber packaging waste, I reflect on the potential of this waste stream, the number of forests that have been culled to produce these piles, and the sheer quantity of timber that doesn't make it to a recycling depot like mine.

I am a strong believer in the waste hierarchy, where re-use is at the pinnacle and landfill is at the bottom. With effort, skill and passion, a lot more can be done with what we discard as a society. Many waste streams contain valuable resources that can be reused and recycled. *Create from a Crate* aims to inspire the community to be less wasteful and look for the gems in our rubbish.

It is with great pride that Waste Converters/S.M.A.R.T Recycling, in conjunction with the Victorian Woodworkers Association, have brought yet another *Create from a Crate* exhibition to fruition. First launched in 2002, this is our 6th exhibition, and the longevity of this concept speaks volumes. I would like to thank the VWA for sharing my enthusiasm for recycled woodwork design and also recognise the generous contribution of our sponsors, in particular, Craig Thomas from Effective Freight Management, who assisted in getting pallets delivered all over the countryside.

This year CFC has become a truly national exhibition, with entrants not only from Victoria but also New South Wales, the ACT and Queensland.

Enjoy *Create from a Crate* 2016!

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## ERLE BARTLETT

### *Music Stands*

Reclaimed crate timbers

The choice of music stands as construction objects seemed a natural choice for Erle because of his longstanding involvement with both music and furniture making.

This was a chance to feature a design that combines functionality with an aesthetically pleasing physical structure.

Erle had no qualms using recycled timber as the materials, the colour and grain contributes positively to the final appearance, especially the way the timber has been broken down and the pieces recombined to achieve the dimensions necessary for strength. The recombination of the individual pieces provides an interesting visual contrast, and acts as a unifying feature throughout the structure.



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## JEREMY BROWN

### *Chair*

Reclaimed crate timbers (maple, oak), aluminium. (H) 850 mm x (L) 445 mm x (W) 530 mm.

The design process for this piece was focused on exploring the structural requirements that are universal for chairs. It involved experimenting with triangulation and testing the limitations of timber as a structural material, emphasized by the use of narrow sections.

The chair is made from a minimal amount of wood. A sleek, light frame has been created through hand-cut joinery and the laser-cut aluminium brackets that connect the back of the seat to the rest of the frame. The nail holes have been filled with resin.



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## TOM BRUNNEKREEF

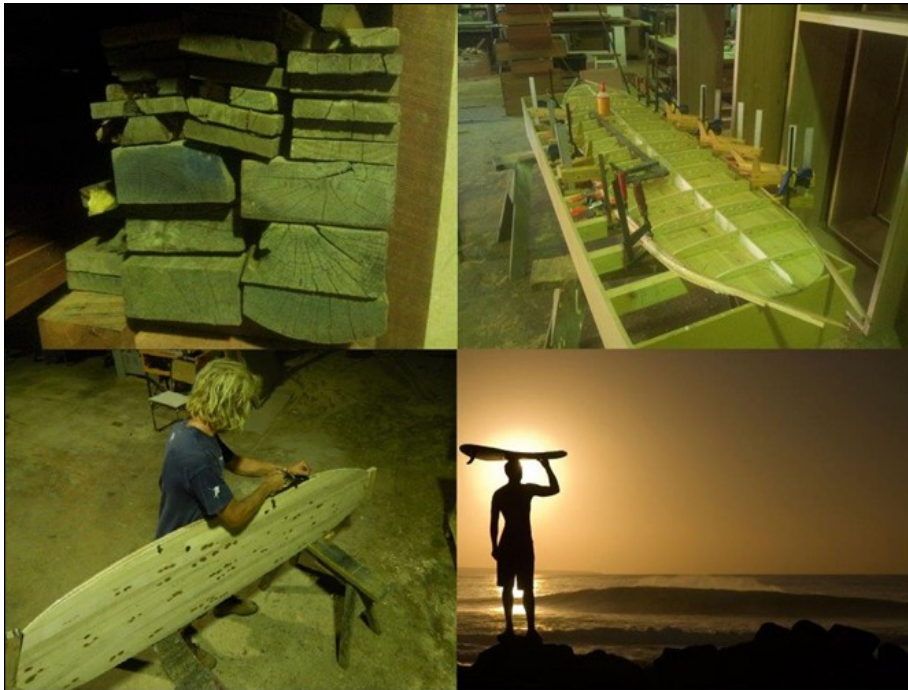
### *Tom's Pallet Surfboard*

Reclaimed crate timbers. Dimensions (L) 2300 mm x (W) 500 mm.

Tom wanted to explore the realm of possibility and see if he could create a working surfboard even if there were lots of nail holes. There's been some inspiring pieces come through this competition and he hopes this continues to stir up people's imagination.

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Tom is a young woodworker who recently returned to his hometown near the coast in NSW. Spending time back in the ocean provided the inspiration for this project.



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## MARK CARRON

### *Chair*

Reclaimed crate timbers (H) 750mm x (W) 720mm x (D) 700mm.

Mark's aim was to create a piece completely from the crate timber, not adding any other timbers or materials.

He also wanted to not only use the crates' large frame pieces, but also to incorporate the 'boards', as these are visually the most identifiable and prominent part of the crate.

As well, he was keen to retain aspects of the character of the crates – nail holes, cracks, knot-holes – as they are indicators that the timber was not of a 'select' quality. But with care, he could recycle the timber into something that showed it had other qualities and applications, and hopefully could live on in this new form for longer than expected.

Mark chose to make a chair as it is designed to carry a load, just as the crate had previously.....

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Mark grew up in Victoria, and moved to Canberra to study at the Australian National University, where he obtained a Bachelor of Science in Forestry. He then worked for over 20 years in public forest management in various locations in northern NSW.

Mark has lived in and around Coffs Harbour since 2001. He became a full time furniture design student in 2010, and achieved an Advanced Diploma in Furniture Design and Technology in 2013. He also completed a Diploma in Visual Arts in 2015.

Mark likes working with furniture clients to design and make individual pieces. He specialises in making tables, chairs, cabinets and outdoor furniture, and is most interested in using local timbers and materials.





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## JONATHAN COHEN

### *Cigar Box Guitar*

Blues musicians from early last century could not afford to purchase guitars and so traditionally recycled cigar boxes and wooden strips to make their instruments. This cigar box guitar exemplifies the ability to recycle material into something both artistic and functional. The American white oak grain is visually enhanced by the use of metal hardware found in most home workshops. The combination of materials results in the highly sought after traditional sound favoured by musicians of both yesterday and today.

The aim of this competition is to exemplify recycling which Jonathan thinks he's done with a touch of humour. He managed to re-saw extensively weathered American white oak to recreate the type of instrument handcrafted by American bluesmen early last century. This traditional approach continues today, sometimes with the addition of an electric pickup, however, he elected to remain acoustic.

The cigar box sides were finger-jointed, and the back and front faces butt-jointed. To accommodate the guitar players hands, a central 'through' neck was fashioned by hand with smooth curves. The finish is a combination of Danish oil for the fingerboard, with Scandinavian oil for the body, neck and headstock.

All metal hardware is either nickel or chrome-plated and was recycled from materials generally found in most home workshops. The frets were made with 6cm nails glued into grooves hand filed with a small space carved out for the nail head. The tips are ground and sanded to measurements transcribed from an industry standard Gibson 24  $\frac{3}{4}$ " (630cm) scale and selected fret markings bored out and filled with dowels. The nut (at the headstock end) utilises a sawn-off bolt which holds the 4 strings in the correct position. The bridge (near the sound hole) is a household key, the string guides are ex-rivet grommets. Machine heads to tune the strings consist of right-angled brackets and eyebolts. The sound hole is a curtain eyelet and the neck is kept centred with two small hinges reflecting the actual cigar boxes still seen today. The front face corners are finished in mirror clips.

The combination of highly figured white oak wood grain and metalwork is striking and contributes to the authentic sound of this instrument.



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## WAYNE CREASER

### *Reuleaux Stool*

Reclaimed crate timbers (H) 450mm x (W) 320mm x (D) 320mm. Finish OSMO Polyx oil.

The design inspiration for this stool is a commonly found traditional three-legged Chinese stool with off-centre stretchers from each leg that meet in a central open triangle. The complexity of the mortise and tenon joinery was intriguing for what is otherwise a utilitarian item. The opportunity to develop the Reuleaux stool came in a university exercise to design and make a stool that incorporated laminated curve and shaped curve elements.

### *Triangulated Chair*

Reclaimed crate timbers (H) 960mm x (W) 530mm x (D) 580mm. Finish OSMO Polyx oil.

The design of the chair is an evolution of a prototype chair constructed using a minimal structure to support a person while still functioning as a chair. The prototype was developed in response to a challenge to use triangulation principles to provide strength and rigidity in a chair sufficient to support a person constructed using small cross section timber. The final design also borrows elements from the Reuleaux stool.

Wayne has just completed the second year of the Bachelor of Design Arts (Furniture) program at the ANU School of Art after returning to full-time study following retirement. He had previously developed his interest in fine woodworking for a number of years by taking evening classes to enhance his skills. Wayne's influences include traditional and contemporary Asian furniture, and architecture and the English and American Arts and Crafts movements.

Email: [creaser@grapevine.com.au](mailto:creaser@grapevine.com.au)



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## BRIAN DAWSON

### *Wine Storage Cabinet*

Reclaimed crate timbers (H) 870mm x (W) 790mm x (D) 390mm.

The cabinet is made mainly of maple with some American white oak. In elevation it tapers one degree to soften its stance. It has 2 drawers which can be used for storing wine glasses or other wine-related objects. The main compartment is made from 18 curved ribs with keyed joints, each bandsaw cut. There are 6 curved oak rib sections, each of 3 ribs, capable of holding 7 wine bottles per section. The gentle curve ensures that each bottle will slide to the bottom of each section. The top is solid maple 28mm thick. The decorative curved skirting and frieze are relief cut with a router and then finished with water based paint. The finish to the remainder is shellac and oil.

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Brian is a semi-retired management consultant. He has been working with wood for 25 years and is mainly self taught. Three years ago he spent twelve weeks at Sturt School for Wood in Mittagong under the tutelage of Toby Muir-Wilson which greatly advanced his understanding and skills.

He is currently the chairman of the New South Wales Woodworkers Association

For more information see [www.flickr.com/photos/brian\\_dawson](http://www.flickr.com/photos/brian_dawson) and [www.briandawsonwood.wordpress.com](http://www.briandawsonwood.wordpress.com)

[brian@valuesystems.com.au](mailto:brian@valuesystems.com.au)



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## ANDREW DOWNIE

### *Coffee Table*

Reclaimed crate timbers (H) 500mm x (W) 613mm x (D) 613mm.

The concept of a coffee table with provision for displaying photographs came from Andrew's wife, Brenda. Its size was dictated by the piece of glass previously given to him by a friend.

All wood in the table is from the Create from a Crate pallets. An early decision was made not to camouflage nail holes and minor imperfections in the wood. All joints are secured with wood glue and Dominos. The table is finished with shellac and Australian-made Danish Oil.

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Andrew is a blind woodworker. All the work is his, apart from larger pieces of pallet being put through a bandsaw by a friend.





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## TRANH DUONG

*Crates in the Round (pairs)* Reclaimed crate timbers (H) 200mm x (W) 120mm x (D) 120mm; (H) 160mm x (W) 90mm x (D) 90mm; turning; 2015

*Oak Leaves* (H) 25mm x (W) 230mm x (D) 300mm ; carving; 2015

*Tray with Peacock Feather* (H) 45mm x (W) 420mm x (D) 135mm; bandsawn; 2015

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Thanh was born in Viet Nam and migrated to Melbourne in 1980. She worked in I.T. before deciding to pursue her love for art, completing the Fine Art in Sculpture degree at Monash University in 2012. She has worked as a teacher in Chinese Painting and pursues her multi-disciplinary art practice from her home studio. Her current art practice explores and develops her skills in woodcraft and making wood sculptures from recycled timbers.



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## FRANK DUYKER

*"Egyptologist Confused By Recent Find"* Sculptural Box , 2015

Reclaimed crate timbers and bamboo dowels

Processes: Assembled and carved wood

The assembled sculpture depicts the ancient Egyptian crocodile god in the form of a large toy robot. It is asking the question: "What would Egyptologist think if they found such an object in a newly discovered ancient tomb?"

The hieroglyphics are real and read: "Royal Robot Makers, Toy Robot Specialists".

The piece was made entirely from one supplied pallet with the only exception being the use of a few bamboo dowels to pin the arms and legs.



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## JOHN FOSTER

### *Small Table*

Reclaimed crate timbers including various American species including Oak, Maple, Cherry & Beech. Top finished with polyurethane, base with oil & wax. (H) 360 mm (W) 810 mm (D) 510 mm

### *Child's Folding Chair*

Reclaimed crate timbers as above. Finished with oil & wax (H) 530mm (W) 250mm (D) 300mm

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John has been making things, working with wood and metal all of his life. After living and working in the UK for a number of years he has returned to Melbourne and established a workshop in the eastern suburbs. He currently makes one off pieces and undertakes commissions.



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## BRENT GERSTLE

### *Extendable table / Bench*

Reclaimed crate timbers.

Extended the piece is (L) 990mm x (W) 340mm x (H) 450 high. Compressed it is 605mm long.

Inspired by Japanese ideas and acknowledging limited space in present day apartment accommodation, the idea of extendable furniture became clear. A simple minimalist table or bench seat becomes a long "coffee table" or 2 seat bench. Minimal footprint most of the time but able to stretch.





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## DAVID HALL

### *Stack of Crates Cabinet*

Reclaimed crate timbers including maple, elm, white oak and poplar. (H) 1300mm x (W) 780mm x (D) 400mm.

David has produced items for a number of CFC competitions over the years and sees the challenge of utilising recycled timber from such a source as a sometimes frustrating but ultimately rewarding exercise. He considers part of that challenge as seeking to make something that has a connection to the source and/or previous use of the timber. He believes that some "warts and all" honesty with the inherent flaws such material brings is important and that those flaws will emphasise the hidden treasures of grain and colour which are revealed as the timber is sawn and dressed and the work unfolds.

This year he has focused directly on the design of the pallets themselves. The doors and sides of the cabinet are arranged horizontally as a stack of four pallets. Recesses in the bottom of each mimic the cut outs for fork lift tines in the main members. Between these, smaller side protrusions provide representation of the cross boards that attach to the top and underside of the pallets' main members.

David is a recently retired engineer and long time VWA member.



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## PETER HARRIS

### *Chess Set*

Reclaimed crate timbers.

The board is (W) 420mm x (L) 210mm x (H) 40mm.

The box is (W) 200mm x (L) 180mm x (H) 100mm.

Peter says that after being taught the game of chess as a teenager many years ago, he never caught the bug. However the board has always attracted him.

He questions why the board and pieces should be exact. He believes bandsawn pieces and nail holes go well with environmental and chemical staining to enhance the contrast with the exactness of the board matrix."



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## PHILIPPA (PIP) HAYDON

### *Tools for Big Cookin'*

Reclaimed crate timbers.

Dimensions range in length from 700 mm spatula to 100mm spoons.

A friend of Pip's has a low to the ground, outdoor gas burner, a 55 centimetre paella pan and a 60 litre saucepan. He enjoys feeding people from these pans and Pip has designed utensils to help him along the way.

There are long handled spatulas for stirring up the onions, garlic and tomatoes that are the first stage of paella cooking, flattish long handled spoons for patting down the rice and for big pot stirring too. Pip also made small spoons for eating straight from the pan. Making an eating spoon that passes Swedish spoon maker Wille Sundqvist's test, that it must feel comfortable when you put it to your mouth, turned out to be not so easy.

The juggling of material, form and function was tricky as the spoon needs to be both strong and comfortable to hold and eat from. The implement also needs to be thin enough in the front section of the bowl to pick up food easily, deep enough for holding capacity but not so deep that your lip won't reach the bottom. Pip is going to keep trying.

And in order to make use of every crate off-cut, there are spoons that range in size from big to little. Lots of these are spoons that look like they would be fun to serve up with. We will always need spoons when ever something needs mixing, tasting, serving, skimming, scooping or measuring. Make it a wooden spoon she says.



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## MARK HILEY

### *Outdoor Furniture Collection*

Reclaimed crate timbers

*Bench seat / storage:* (H) 450mm x (W) 1000mm x (D) 400mm;

*Coffee Table:* (Dia.) 500 mm x (H) 500 mm

*Pot Plant Holder:* (H) 350mm x (W) 200mm x (D) 200mm;

Designed with terrace courtyard living in mind, the bench seat doubles as storage space, while providing a perfect setting for a cup of tea or afternoon drink combined with the coffee table.

The pot plant holder adds to the other two components by giving some life to the setting. Overall the three pieces complement each other and are perfect for a small courtyard or backyard area.





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## HAMISH HILL

### *Table Top Loom*

Mixed species of timber including: Oak (*Quercus*), Maple (*Acer*), Cherry (*Prunus*). 2014-2015.

600mm x 600mm x 800mm

Owning Alpacas creates the need to learn about the fibre arts.

Hamish started by making a loom, which he says is really starting at the wrong end. He should have started with a carding device followed by spinning wheel, but that seemed far too complicated. Constructed over a two-year period, Hamish worked out the design and construction as he went along. There are an assortment of dovetails and pinned joints allowing the whole piece to be dismantled and adjusted readily. This loom is a part of his hobby woodworking, fitted in between professional woodwork and other projects.

[www.hamishhill.com.au](http://www.hamishhill.com.au)

[hamish@hamishhill.com.au](mailto:hamish@hamishhill.com.au)



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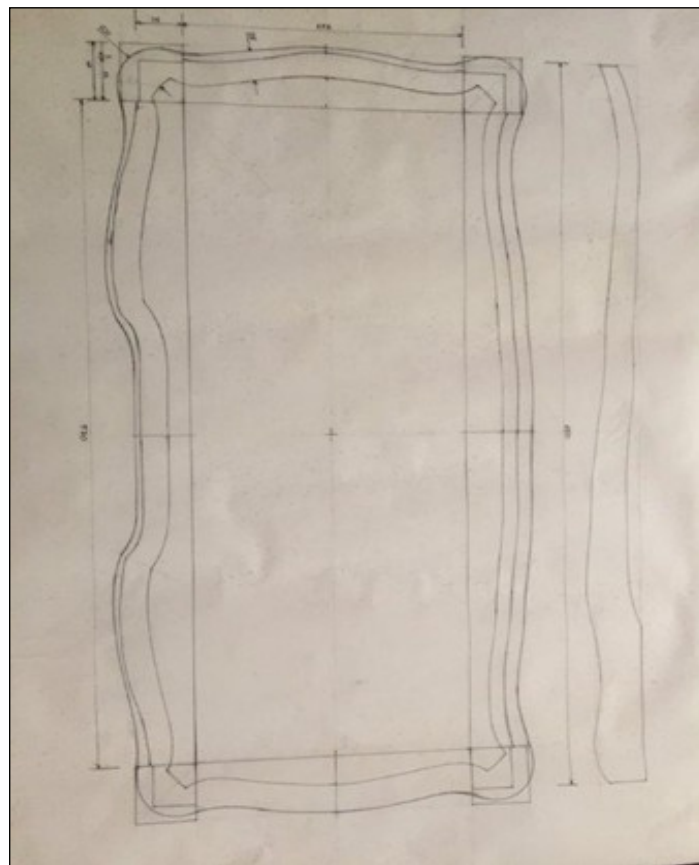
## KIM HUDSON

### *Oeben Ladies' Table*

Reclaimed crate timbers. (H) 670mm x (W) 670mm x (D) 330mm;

A disposable world is leading us to dispose of our world. A big part of the problem is that our everyday things are designed to last only a few years, or more accurately, designed not to last. Yet there is no great secret in designing furniture that can still be of use in a century, regardless of the pedigree of the materials that went into its creation.

Jean-François Oeben was a French ébéniste whose career was spent in Paris, creating almost exclusively for Madame de Pompadour. This piece is derived from several created by Oeben for her, which are still fully functional today. If we can create from a crate furniture which lasts only half as long, we will still go a long way to solving the crisis of overconsumption of the world's finite resources.





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## MICHAEL MCGRATH

### *Bench and Shoe Storage Cabinet*

Reclaimed crate timbers. (H) 500mm x (W) 1100mm x (D) 400mm;

When he was offered two pallets for this year's Create from a Crate exhibition, Michael immediately thought of making a dining room table. Sadly, after measuring the pallets, and discounting the split and damaged timber, he realised there would not be enough for even a smallish table, so moved to Plan B.

The result is a comfortable bench with a shoe-storage cupboard underneath. The bench seat is coopered from sawn sections of the pallet bearers and finished with a curved breadboard end. This was a bit of an experiment for Michael as he had not seen this done before. The door and end panels, shelves and back are made from the pallet planks, re-sawn and edge-jointed to create lightweight, decorative panels.

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Michael lives in Sydney where he has a small home workshop. He prefers to use recycled or scavenged wood, as pre-loved timber is usually well seasoned and often of a size and quality no longer readily available. Over the years Michael has collected a range of beautiful Australian timbers, often rescued from beautiful old buildings demolished for redevelopment. Michael is currently renovating an old schoolhouse in the south of France, including a larger workshop.



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## MELISSA NICKOLS

### *Three Marking Gauges*

Reclaimed crate timbers: maple, cherry, red oak, white oak, reclaimed birch (broken plane), record player needles.

Each item approximately (H) 200 mm x (W) 120 mm x (D) 65 mm

A marking gauge is a simple tool used by a woodworker to accurately mark out joinery. The use of reclaimed wood to make these tools struck Melissa as being somewhat profound: it is still possible to extract a perfect straight line from grey, broken, splintery wood and a muddle of nails.

### *Stool*

Reclaimed crate timbers: maple, cherry, red oak, white oak. (H) 316 mm x (W) 336 mm x (D) 336 mm

This stool was designed with reference to the dimensions of a plastic milk crate and inspired by Chinese joinery.

Milk crates have a classic utilitarian design, and bring a colourful and cheery presence to our urban environment. They provide a convenient height for casual seating, and it seems to be an increasing trend for cafes to provide them as seating. But their removal from the system for which they were intended of course requires the creation of more plastic milk crates, creating an environmental problem. The stool was made as a comment on this issue, and to suggest a wooden alternative.



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## ROSS PEAKE

### *Vise-In-A Vise*

Reclaimed crate timbers: maple, oak (H) 450mm x (W) 100mm X (D) 400mm

Ross' pallets were oak and maple (maple beams and oak planks), and on skip dressing the first recovered plank and seeing that tell-tale oak grain, he says he thought of 18<sup>th</sup> century English Ships-of-the-Line which were built of oak. He immediately thought of building something useful and tough from his timbers.

Maple is a hard wood with good machining properties (turning etc) – he loves making wooden screw threads, so why not try maple in an old style vise.

His Vise-in-a-vise has been inspired by the first documented English woodworking vise dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century – the Moxon Vise (shown in Joseph Moxon's "Mechanick Exercises", the first English book on woodworking). Whilst looking completely different, his design lever-ages off the Moxon in two ways. Firstly, it uses two screws, and secondly, the working height adjusts to accommodate close working of an object without stooping ( an aid for those with dodgy backs).

His Vise has wood screws of 1 1/8<sup>th</sup> diameter. No slide bar on the screw action ( he finds these annoying when tightening the bar in the horizontal position). Hand tension is generally sufficient for small objects, but a spanner (solely of oak) is there for harder "nip-ups".



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## ANNE-MARIA PLEVIER

### *Chess Set and Table*

Reclaimed pallet timbers. Mainly oak and maple, with some other timbers.

Table dimensions: (Dia.) 500mm x (H) 650mm.

Pieces various between 80mm and 150mm high.

Multi-centre turned. Inlaid nails and silver wire. Oak stained with black japan stain. Finished with Danish oil and wax.

Chess sets are a classic wood turners challenge. Anne-Maria says she has been pondering the possibilities ever since she started learning. She tried to make all the pieces look like they evolved in the same crazy world, but still recognisable as the various pieces, and their checker board world is balanced on legs that could run away at any moment.



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## ANDREW POTOCNIK

### Boxes

Reclaimed pallet timbers, ash. Five boxes with dimensions varying from (H) 70mm x (W) 160mm x (D) 100mm, to (H) 60mm x (W) 280mm x (D) 140mm.

### Table

Reclaimed pallet timbers, Pine and oak. (H) 700mm x (W) 550mm x (D) 550mm.

Andrew says dismantling a pallet is an adventure similar to a treasure hunt, or opening a present. You never know what you'll find within; however, in this case you're assured it will be something made of wood. No idea of timber type, clean or cracked wood, seasoned or dripping wet... It's an adventure that once committed to requires a great deal of malleability on the part of the maker taking part.

According to Andrew you need to start with a concept, look at the material you receive, and then be flexible enough to adapt your idea to the material so it fits within the envisioned concept. Along the way the whole thing may grow into something greater than first conceived, or fall flat on its face as an absolute failure!

Andrew simply attempted to allow the timber to dictate what he could extract from its inherent properties, making use of grain patterns, colour of wood, but also create a feature of the parts we consider flaws.

He understands that these crates are made from remnants of the logging industry, wood that can no longer be cut into anything suitable for the high end of the furniture industry, i.e. wood that isn't worth spending money on... But here we can celebrate both its inherent beauty, and its defects, hence the lids of these boxes which also refer to the fragility of our landscape and this great land we live in.



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## NITA ROBSON

### Low Table

Reclaimed crate timbers. (H) 400mm x (W) 1000mm x (D) 1000mm

The theme of the story of pallet to table is one of contrasts. The pallet which was rough, weathered and layered with grime has had its true beauty revealed. That which was purely functional and sacrificial has been reclaimed and destined to be an heirloom. No effort has been made to hide the pallet's history and its future lies in its new form.

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Nita began making furniture later in life. At a crossroad in her life she applied to study design at her local TAFE college. She revelled in her new found world of art and design. She spent a number of years acquiring the skills required to design and make furniture and small products. She experimented with techniques, design styles and materials.

Nita opened her own workshop in 2011 in Sawtell, NSW trading as 'Rings of Time'. Her style is contemporary. Her pieces have clean lines and simple forms. The most responsible way to use our precious resources, she believes, is to use sustainable materials in pieces which will endure the test of time spanning fads, fashions and generations. Repurposing a shipping pallet is in line with Nita's philosophy.





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## DOUG SCOTT

### *Hall Table*

Reclaimed crate timbers. (H) 900 mm x (W) 1445 mm x (D) 265 mm

For his small Victorian terrace, Doug needed a hall table which was narrow so as not to crowd the hallway; long enough to discretely accommodate mail and keys; and which fitted the contemporary feel of the interior of his home by being reasonably high and by highlighting the recycled nature of the timber.

The design aim was simplicity. The design concept was a thin mitred box standing on its side with a shelf just below the top. To achieve the strength required, the shelf evolved into a second box incorporating 4 large splines tying the top, legs and shelf together. The table legs rise up, transitioning through a mitre into the top, and then at the far end through another mitre back down to the floor. To make the table appear to pull back into the wall, the front legs are 0.7 the width of the rear legs. To allow for the expansion and contraction of the timber, all the grain of the major components runs length wise. The grain of the spines is at 45 degrees to the top legs to give a contrasting grain pattern from the top and sides.



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## SHANE SMITH

### *School Desk and Chair.*

Reclaimed crate timbers. *Desk* (H) 650 mm x (W) 580 mm x (D) 500 mm; *Chair* (H) 620 mm x (W) 360 mm x (D) 440 mm

Shane wanted to build a desk and chair for his daughter to sit and draw at. He liked the idea of the old desks he had when he was at school, with the lift-up lids for storing your pencils and paper. He really likes Maloof's rocking chairs, so he designed the chair with that influence in mind. From the side it is also meant to represent the letter A, his daughter's initial. Finish is Teak oil and bees wax.

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Shane is an amateur woodworker who has learnt most of his lessons by reading, watching YouTube and making lots of mistakes. He was first interested in woodworking way back when he was at school, but it wasn't until 18 years later in 2009 when he bought his first house that he was able to pursue his hobby.



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## CLARE SOLOMON

### *Decisions on the Run*

Reclaimed crate timbers, leather, steel. (H) 320 mm x (W) 390 mm x (D) 110 mm

Driven by the anxiety felt when given too much choice in everyday life, this work explores chance as a humorous way of resolving indecision by removing the options to uncontrollable chance processes.

The work draws from traditional fine woodworking techniques, and Solomon's own experience with indecision. Using traditional fine woodworking techniques, she aims to show the importance of the decision being made by the participants, even while the question being answered by the work is trivial and every day. This tension between the highly crafted object and the trivial decision being made gives the decision importance, while also pointing to the absurdity of the situation in which this object would and has been used.



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## ALEX SPRINGHALL

### *Cabinet*

Reclaimed pallet timbers. (H) 1700 mm x (W) 500 mm x (D) 340 mm.

Alex' piece for Create from a Crate 2016 is a cabinet of two compartments, with the doors decorated with marquetry images of Australian native birds - a pair of Crimson Rosellas and a Sulphur Crested Cockatoo.

Alex was a hobby woodworker for many years, before attending Sturt School for Wood in 2002, and retiring from his full-time career as a Hydrographer in 2004. Now, he is an almost-full-time woodworker, making mainly boxes and small furniture on commission and for galleries.

[alex@springall-fine-woodwork.com](mailto:alex@springall-fine-woodwork.com)





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## PETER TALBOT

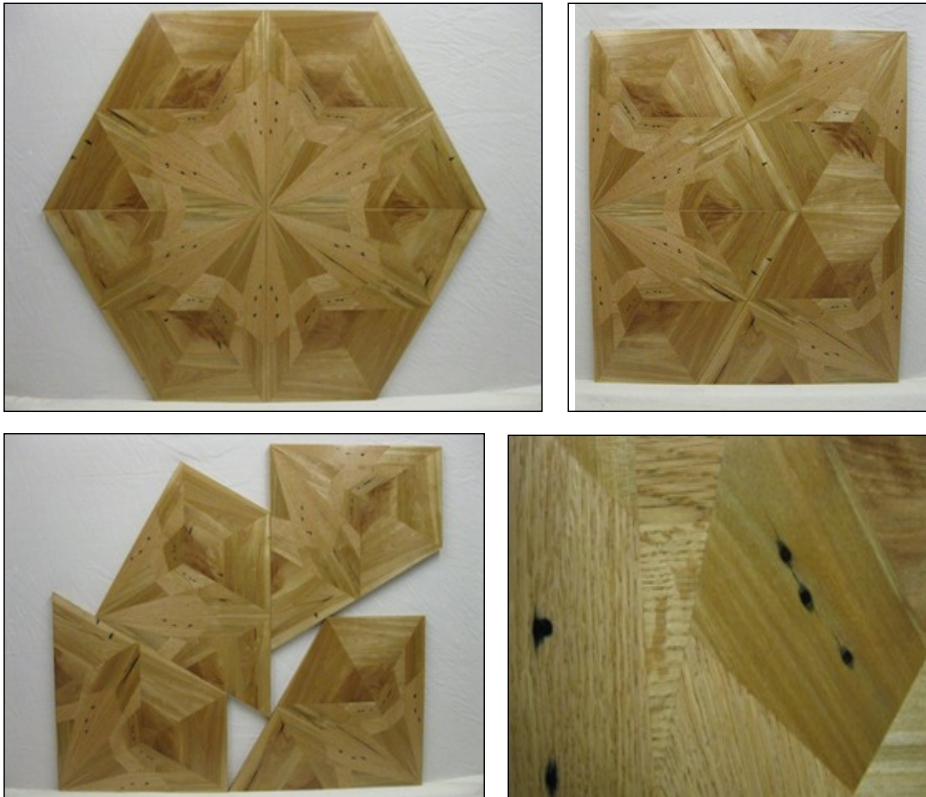
### *"Point of Origin"*, Wall Hanging

Crate timbers for the veneers, American White Oak and others, commercial 5ply for torsion box skins, other for the skeleton timbers, dimensions: (H) 1085 mm x (W) 940 mm x (D) 20 mm.

Inspiration for this pattern came from a parts de-rusting tank, a very thin skin would form on the surface in a series of triangular shapes all interconnecting at a node. A simplified pattern was drawn from this, which then became the basic pattern which repeats enough times in sawn veneers to form a sheet large enough to cover the substrate. A Hexagon, a rectangle, or other.....

For transport reasons Peter decided to make his piece in four sections, a serendipitous moment, the piece could be arranged in different forms, hexagon, rectangle or an abstract pattern... more like the original skin on the tank surface.

[etamaml@primus.com.au](mailto:etamaml@primus.com.au)



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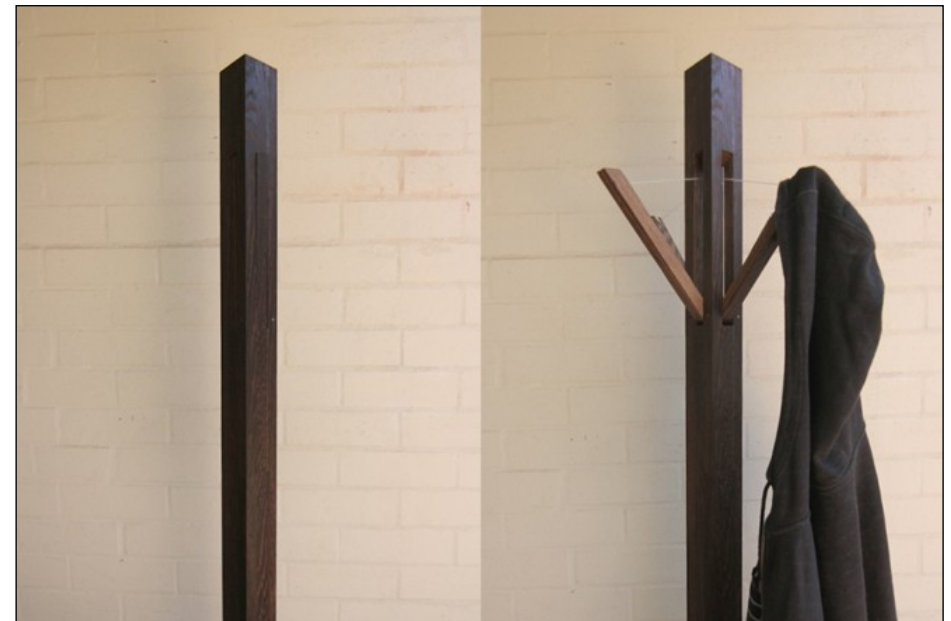
## CHRISTOPHER TOMOYA JAMES

### *The Post*

Reclaimed crate timbers. (H) 1600 mm x (W) 300 mm x (D) 300 mm.

A coat stand in the form of a free-standing post. A secret button at the top releases a pin, which allows the user to pull out the four branches for hanging coats. When the coat stand is not in use, the branches automatically retract and the piece resumes its life as a post.

[chris@tomoya.com.au](mailto:chris@tomoya.com.au)





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## ANGELO TOPPI

### *Writing Desk and Stool*

Reclaimed crate timbers.

Angelo has created a single seat writing desk influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement. The piece features tapered legs and bracing struts complete with two shallow pull out drawers, complemented by a single stool. The recycled nature of the crate is expressed in every component of the desk, from the framed top to the single piece front drawer fascia with matching grain. The drawer linings also beautifully reflect the recycled timber complete with gum vein, knots and fixing holes. The desk is further enhanced by desk accessories, including a marquetry document box and incense and pen holders.



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## PAMELA WHITAKER

### *Chair*

Reclaimed crate timber maple, plywood. (H) 770 mm x (W) 710 mm x (D) 690 mm

According to Pamela, one of her favourite times when creating an object from timber is the initial selection of material (usually rough sawn) and subsequent milling of the material to reveal the nature and aesthetic of the timber. At some point through this process the potential and beauty of the timber becomes apparent and hopefully, converges with the original idea for the piece you are about to make.

Dismantling the pallets used for this project was, she says, honestly, a pain, but so much more rewarding than cleaning up timber stock purchased from a timber yard. The use of this material offers the satisfaction of knowing she has used a material that would have otherwise gone to landfill and taken years if not decades to break down. There is also the satisfaction of working hard to disassemble and scrub these heavy, dirty pallets which, once run through the machines, reveals a renewed resource in stark contrast to the appearance of the dull, dirty greying pallets that went before.



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## JEROME WIELENS

### *Evolution of a Box*

Reclaimed crate timber: sycamore, maple, oak and elm.

First box (H) 80 mm x (W) 360 mm x (D) 240 mm;

Second box (H) 70 mm x (W) 355 mm x (D) 170 mm;

Third box (H) 105 mm x (W) 270 mm x (D) 180 mm;

Fourth box (H) 160 mm x (W) 230 mm x (D) 70 mm;

Finishes: Oil/Wax or Osmo Polyx

This piece follows the transformation of a discarded timber crate as its long forgotten origins are rediscovered, manipulated and repurposed. The first box retains the exposed exterior of the weathered pallet and mimics the original form.

The second highlights the crate's interaction with the biological world. Here the extensive impact of mould, fungus and insects on the pallet's life is captured. The book-matched lid retains the contours of the original bearers which defines its overall shape.

The third box deviates from its source's historical purpose, and changes its utility and function. The working life of the crate has been mostly stripped away to reveal the beautiful old growth timbers that lie within.

The fourth box shows the transformation of the pallet material into a new form. Only the scars from the rusted nails that once held it together, remind us of its past life.



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## ADAM WORLAND

### *Scandinavian Inspired Dog Bed*

Reclaimed crate timbers. (H) 300 mm x (W) 1000 mm x (D) 750 mm.

Adam will be using this recycled pallet timber to make a Scandinavian style dog bed, really not so much a bed, as a sleek Danish styled platform with Scandinavian inspired legs.

He will create this out of the need for a larger dog bed since his gorgeous black lab Farrah has grown out of hers, and she sleeps stretched out from end to end.

Adam uses primarily recycled timber in his work. The name of his small company, Bolton and Tanner Furniture and Design, references his great-great grandfather, who was a joiner in the Richmond area, and another ancestor William Bolton, who was an early explorer of the Alice Springs and Central NT area.

Contact: [adamworland@hotmail.com](mailto:adamworland@hotmail.com)





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

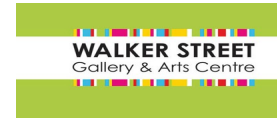
**Jerome Wielens**, President, Victorian Woodworkers Association  
**Ward Petherbridge**, Managing Director, Waste Converters / SMART Recycling  
**John Monument**, Exhibitions Committee, Victorian Woodworkers Association  
**Stephen Farquhar**, Secretary, Victorian Woodworkers Association  
**Rob Allan**, Treasurer, Victorian Woodworkers Association  
**Meg Allan**, Administration Coordinator, Victorian Woodworkers Association  
**Emer Diviney**, Media Coordinator  
**Will Matthysen**, Catalogue production, Victorian Woodworkers Association  
**David Hall**, Catalogue production, Victorian Woodworkers Association  
**David O'Halloran**, Walker Street Gallery and Arts Centre, Dandenong  
**Stephanie Neoh**, Curator, Hatch Contemporary Art Space, Ivanhoe

We would like to acknowledge the support of Effective Freight Management, who sponsored the transport of pallets throughout Australia.

Thanks to the judges for judging the 2016 *Create from a Crate* competition.

This exhibition would not have been possible without the contributions of the artists and craftspeople who took up the challenge of creating these spectacular entries from humble packing crates.

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**Create from a Crate gratefully acknowledge the support of the above organizations.**



Cover Image, Andrew Potocnik.

Box: reclaimed crate timbers.

Image Credit: Andrew Potocnik

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Victorian Woodworkers Association in conjunction with Waste Converters / SMART Recycling established the first Create from a Crate Exhibition in 2003. It has subsequently been held in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2014 and 2016.