

Space Between

DAVID JENSZ + WENDY TEAKEL



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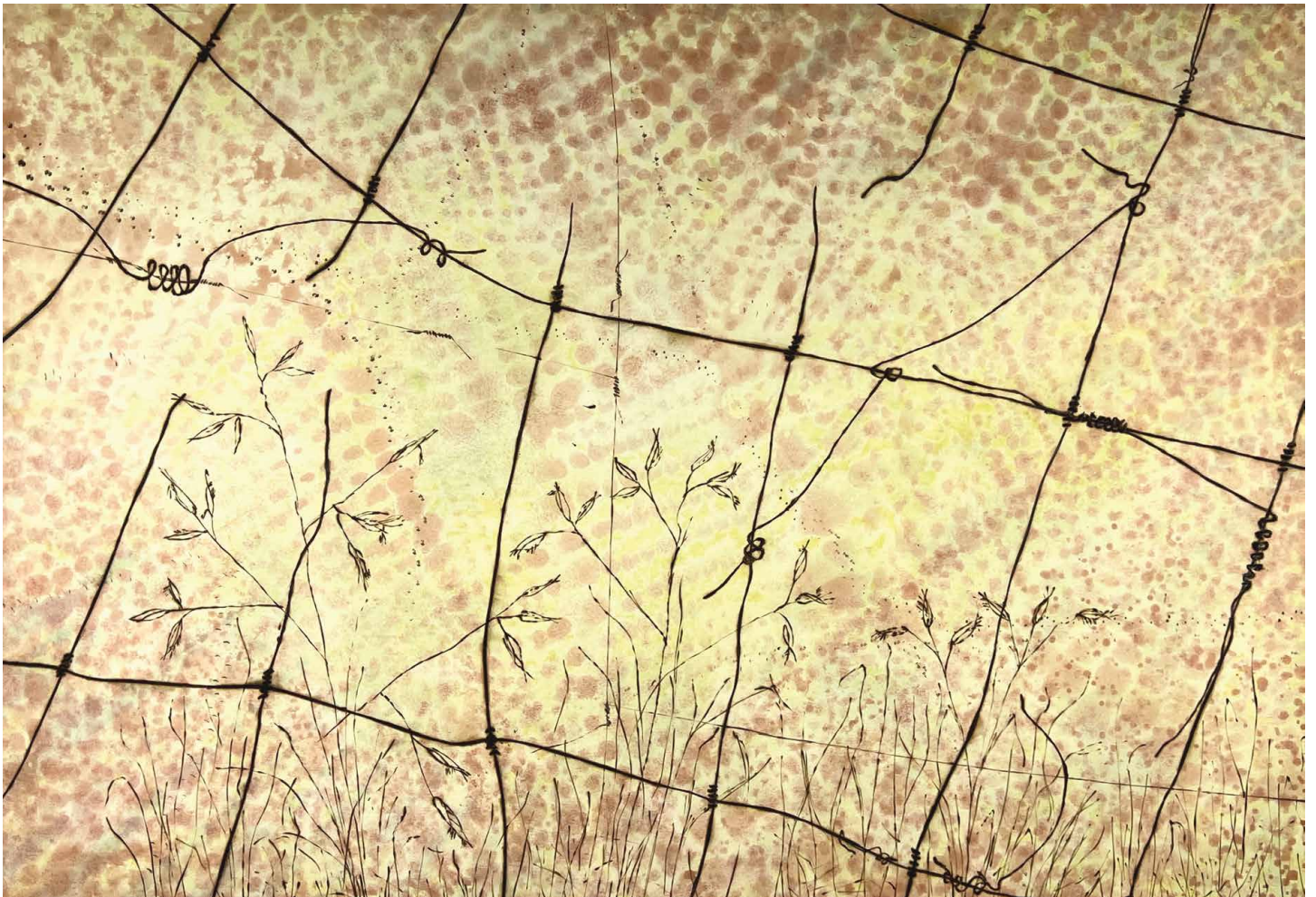
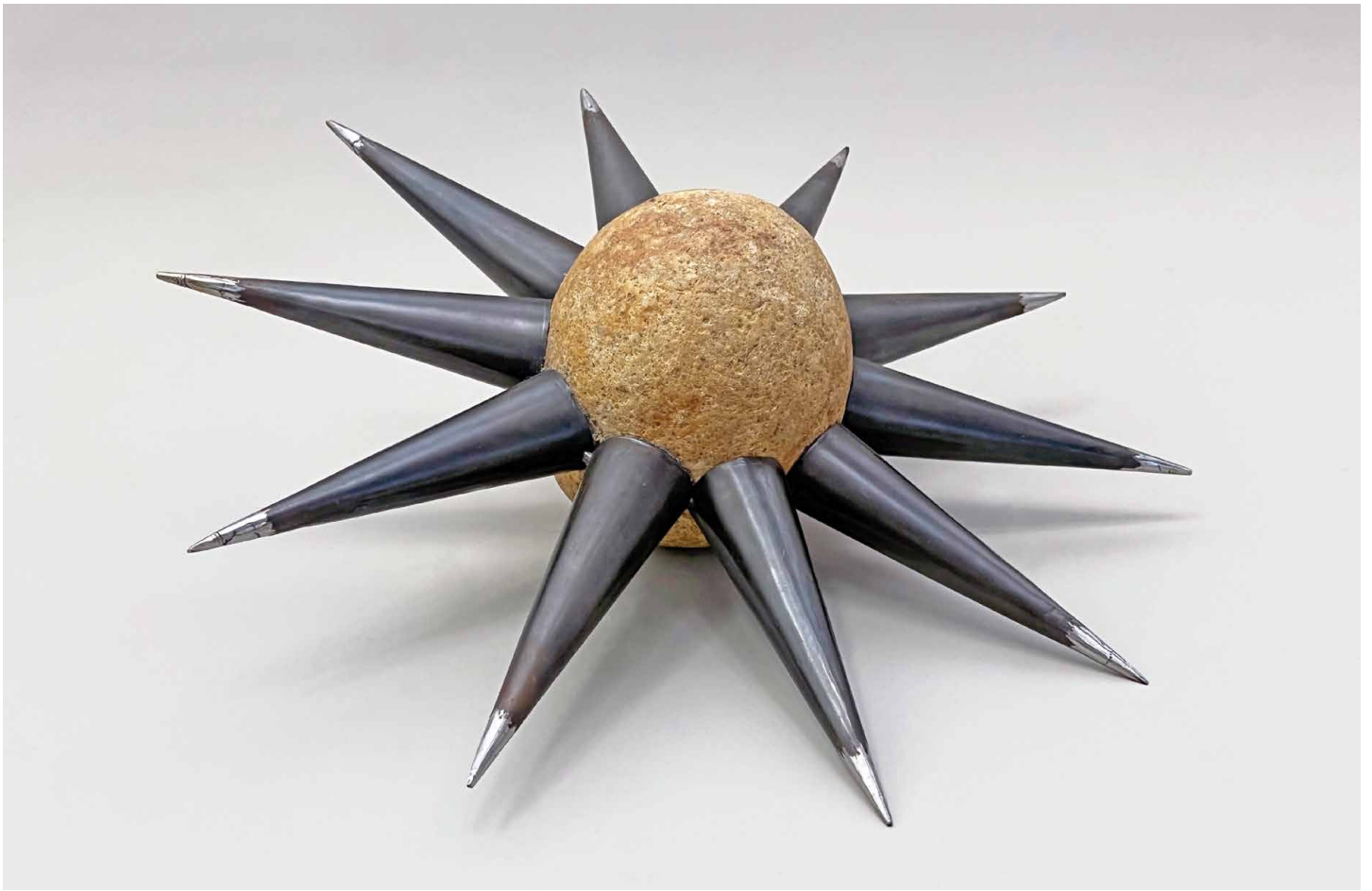
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David Jensz and Wendy Teakel began collaborating in performance-based artworks in the late 1970s, and in 2-person exhibitions showcasing both their practices from the early 1980s. These fell into abeyance while their distinct and demanding individual practices forged ahead, witnessed by the multiple solo and group shows held by each artist since 1986. That said there have been 2 iterations of their showing together – one at the University of Tasmania in 2007 and more recently in 2016 in *Different Cloth/Common Threads* at the Goulburn Regional Art Gallery. *Space Between* could be said to continue concerns manifested in the Goulburn exhibition. That exhibition showcased how the use of materials (sometimes the same, sometimes different) and how their individual modes of making infiltrate the theses established by the artists and alter the timbre and character of the dialogue as established in the exhibition space. The title – *Different Cloth/Common Threads* – clues us into this. In *Space Between* the overt use of the same materials proffers different possibilities. Physical and morphological similarities are overt – textures, size, forms – and instil immediate and easy relationships between the two oeuvre. They also point to differences and in that, conversely perhaps, to connections, or at least allow for the possible simultaneous contemplation of these two characteristics. Neither artist is didactic but nor do they wish their messages to be obscured or diluted in the seductive use of materials. The Modernist dictum of the convergence of form and content is clearly at play in their work.



Wendy Teakel, *Resource*, 2022
River stone and steel
26 x 15 x 11 cm

David Jensz's art is conceptually and technically exploratory and highly individual. His practice though informed by physics and contemporary spatial theories, is ultimately about the individual and where that being finds himself temporally and spatially in the universe. His work is characterised by his astute understanding of the materials used and the expressive power of the alliance of strongly contrasting materials to form dramatic combinations with immediate and continuing visual impact. While stark and seductive simplicity is inherent in his aesthetic approach this belies the often complex intellectual and philosophical explorations undertaken by the artist.



Top
David Jenz, *Extension*, 2021
Stone and steel
17 x 44 x 44 cm

Bottom
Wendy Teakel, *Paddock Edge III*, 2022
Acrylic and pokerwork on paper on plywood
104 x 151 cm



Left
David Jenz, *Vector*, 2021
Stone and steel
23 x 33 x 28 cm



Right
Wendy Teakel, *Home Ground*, 2022
River stones and steel
50 x 18 x 18 cm

The artist's consummate understanding and control of his materials and their thematic and aesthetic expression is beautifully showcased in his latest works. In this exhibition Jenz has reduced the scale of the work. Intimacy of scale does not however decrease expressive power and each work demonstrates the artist's ability to create active spatial configurations around the work that contribute to and underscore the intrinsic sense of balance and order that permeates the artist's oeuvre. In *Extension* for example, the harmonious visual reconciliation of such seemingly opposite materials as river stone and steel, not only makes material contradictions manifest, it celebrates them. The use of simple if unusual conjunctions illustrates possibilities for change within limitation, and is a formal trope that has informed his art since the 1980s. For him a limited, even austere materials choice allows for those chosen to hold within themselves the ability for oscillating roles and meanings with each iteration. The innate contrasts between the organicism of the river stone and the menacing sharpness of the cones of steel create an object that conversely offers itself almost as something playful, something holding within itself the imminent possibility of movement. The internal balance is both physical and metaphysical and in the tension imbued by apparent oppositions, a pointer to the continuing unfolding of initially internal relationships and subsequently external ones.

Vector amply demonstrates the aesthetic efficacy of same materials, different possibilities. The steel elements are curved either upwards or downwards in an alignment that combined with the central river stone produces a crab-like structure absolutely ready for movement.

There is an air of playfulness in this work quietly subverted by the sharpened points of steel. The taut craftsmanship with its intriguing interrogation of materials present in both the works, intimates processes of slow discovery embedded as part of the conceptual makeup in all of Jenz's work.

Jenz's use of lead has long been part of his material repertoire. In *Orbit* his continuing ability to give it evolving identity is succinctly revealed. Lead encircles a river stone in an off-centre grasp giving a playful character to the piece. Contrast is again used to great effect. As well as overt formal differences, textural incongruities add to the work's overall pictorial vocabulary. The surface of the stone is configured with patterns from nature, a sort of natural chiaroscuro that sits in contrast to the bands of chevrons populating the entire surface of the lead band. While we know that lead is a metal, Jenz has imbued it with a welcoming palpability that invites haptic exploration. The presence of imminent movement alluded to in the title and the conjunction of one element circling the other, literally and metaphysically, subtly refers to the artist's ongoing interest in making real the spatial and temporal dimensions that contribute to the constant state of flux that is our world.

The combination of river stone and corrugated iron sees Jenzs drawing on favoured aspects of his formal vocabulary and capitalising on its purposeful limitations. In *Ruff* and *Plume* the hardness of the iron becomes something soft and billowing. In both works the expected precision and finesse in making, always a means to an end and never an end in itself, deliver a marvellous subversion of expected properties in celebrations of mutability and transference within order, aligned with a continual unfolding of internal and external relationships. Both works play with perception and expectations and in their simple elegance beautifully exemplify Jenzs's ability to create intrinsically intriguing and extrinsically captivating objects that seduce the viewer into the artist's controlled and nuanced journey through time and space.

Wendy Teakel is an artist whose interests lie in both rural and cultural landscapes. The reality of the former is an integral part of her life and its influence on her art has manifested itself in a variety of iterations over the years. The cultural landscape is for her those events, places and experiences that inform and define the individual's place in the world. For her place is key to her artistic and personal expression. Place is complex and encompasses cultural, historical, philosophical, aesthetic, conceptual and the structural concerns of making place explicit through art. The notion of the journey is closely interrelated and intertwined with that of place in her art and from the 1980s the journey of the self would provide a sustaining and rehabilitating source for her art. The journey and the vestiges of memory, traces of the past, palimpsests of experiences, that are actualities of the journey as well as providing later access to it are key to the artist's artistic expressions; it is the doing rather than the beginning or end of the journey that is integral for her. The journey holds a temporal aspect as well as a spatial one and these provide resonance with David Jenzs's art. Like Jenzs, Teakel is interested in meaning as something that is slowly revelatory as opposed to the sudden impact. The work in *Space Between* reflects the artist's ongoing exploration, distillation and analysis of place as an intellectual, emotional and imaginative construct that for her is an elision of experience and memory (the journey), location and locale, past and present. It is predicated on

a personal and intimate exploration and an aesthetic disclosure of a private and intimate experience derived from that exploration.

Like Jenzs contrast is a powerful aesthetic tool for Teakel. The use of strong visual contrasts permeates her art and allows for the intrusion (purposeful) of ambiguity and duality of purpose. As in most of her recent art the source for the works in *Space Between* lies in Australia's rural landscape. There is a strong familial connection among the sculptural pieces reflective of their source as well as of the artist's personal experience. Each



consists of a steel base surmounted by river stone(s) in various configurations. This simplistic description belies the complexity embedded within each. In *Resource* the base is a rigid steel structure surmounted by an ovoid river stone. Teakel's control of scale is exemplary. The base alludes to structures such as windmills or supports for water tanks that are ubiquitous in the rural landscape. The base is an open structure composed of a grid of straight and diagonal steel rods. Surmounted by a river stone extending over its the four sides, the base appears to be in a position of imminent collapse. The ostensible precariousness of this balance is just that. Teakel has imbued *Resource* with an ambiguous

Image

David Jenzs, *Ruff*, 2021, Stone and corrugated Iron, 15 x 30 x 24 cm

character –will it be crushed by the stone’s weight or is the base an assertive component holding that weight and in the doing celebrating itself? For Teakel the work of art presents itself multivalently and the insistent insertion of multiple interpretations is a necessary coefficient of all her art. In *Holding Air* similar sculptural elements are combined although here there are 2 river stones, one above the other, on top of the gridded steel base. The combination of steel elements (humanity) and river stones (nature) posits the artist’s interrogative stance. Does the precariousness of balance allude to the imbalance between the natural and the man-made worlds? Or does the elision of the 2 point to a rather more optimistic view of the relationship between the two? Teakel interrogates, she does not provide answers; viewers must search the work for these.

Teakel works in 2- and 3-dimensions. The relationship between these is for her implicit and intimate. In *Paddock Edge III* is densely populated with a dynamic pictorial vocabulary referencing physical components of the bush landscape. There is a delightful rhythmic lyricism embedded in this work that is beautifully expressed in the lightly configured grasses across

the front of the picture plane and the underlying pattern of the earth confined in the areas bound by the spindly wires that separate rural land into working paddocks. Quiet allusions to indigenous ways of looking add a further dimension to this pictorial exploration of the poetics of place.

Space Between exposes different ways of thinking through the use of similar materials. It allows viewers unlimited possibilities to explore and investigate the voices of 2 very articulate and mature sculptural voices. The synergies present are reflective of the sophisticated intellectual, aesthetic and conceptual journeys of both artists and of the incisive imaginative creations resulting from these journeys.

Peter Haynes
 Consultant Curator, Art Historian
 April 2022



Left
 Wendy Teakel, *Holding Air*, 2022
 River stones and steel
 31 x 13 x 13 cm

Above
 David Jenz, *Orbit*, 2022
 Stone and lead
 20 x 40 x 38 cm

Cover image left
 David Jenz, *Plume*, 2022
 Stone and corrugated Iron
 46 x 22 x 12 cm

Cover image right
 Wendy Teakel, *Replacing Air*, 2022
 River stones and steel
 17 x 10 x 8 cm

For further information and CVs for David and Wendy, please see artist's websites

www.davidjenz.com and www.wendyteakel.com
 Wendy is represented by Beaver Galleries