



SIMON FINN

>BREATH-HOLD DWELLING

**LIN
DEN** NEW
ART

IMAGE > [Front cover] Simon Finn, *Breath-hold dwelling* [installation view], 2019.
Image courtesy of the artist and MARS Gallery. Photograph: Theresa Harrison Photography.

Simon Finn creates multimedia installations, including video, drawing and sculpture that are informed by his professional experience in Architecture, visualisation and freediving. Finn is interested in mapping the impact of various forces within oceanic and man-made environments. He harnesses technology and emotion to generate images of hypothetical destruction and regeneration.

Breath-hold dwelling presents a new series of artworks that act as a proposition for the construction of an underwater structure. A place to reforge a connection with nature. Finn calls this structure a breath-hold dwelling.

SIMON FINN

> BREATH-HOLD

DWELLING

JH: What is a breath-hold dwelling and what do you envisage happening in there?

SF: I don't know. I've got a kind of broad stroke of what I think is going to happen, but art always turns out to be different to what you forecast. So, my forecast is that you'll experience a bodily transformation when you go underwater, and then you go into the structure and you observe that natural environment. When you're in that physical circumstance of being

reliant on one breath, you're restricted with the amount of time you can spend, so the looking could become quite frantic. It requires a psychological change and to be calm when the body is saying get back up to air. So, it's sort of meditative and also introspective because you're very aware of what is happening to your body at that time. For example, you can't hear anything when you're at that depth, so your sight is enhanced, and you become more like a fish!

So that's my prediction, that you become more like a fish and I think there's nothing quite like understanding through empathy. Empathising with what it would be like for those marine creatures, seeing where they live and why it needs preserving. This work draws attention to what is under the water, because most people don't see past the surface. They see the surface of the ocean and go "oh yeah that looks cold, must be sharks". It is cold and yes, there are sharks ... but it's a wonderland.



IMAGE > Simon Finn, *Dwell Structure (assemblage) - Option 3* [detail], 2019, scorched wood, laser cut wood and enamel, 70 x 32 x 15cm. Image courtesy of the artist and MARS Gallery. Photograph: Theresa Harrison Photography.



IMAGE > Simon Finn, *Breath-hold dwelling* [installation view], 2019.
Image courtesy of the artist and MARS Gallery. Photograph: Theresa Harrison Photography.

JH: Are the maquettes you have made based on specific locations? I noticed that they each have different topographic forms, are they based on the ocean floor at particular places?

SF: All of them are based within Victorian waters. I would say two outside of Port Phillip bay and two within Port Phillip Bay. The idea is that the maquettes can then be transitioned to the Great Barrier Reef, Nigaloo Reef in Western Australia, or Fiji, or Hawaii. Eventually they could go anywhere. Initially though, I wanted to focus on local waters, to highlight the magnificent underwater marine life we have here. You know, eighty percent of the marine life that is in Port Phillip Bay, only exists in Port Phillip Bay. We've got our own dolphin. There are corals. David Attenborough has done documentaries on the crab colonies. There's a lot to discover here. It's a unique bay. There's no other bay like it that has a certain tidal surge that comes in, and we have slack water for nearly an hour before it drains back out. I think there are over sixty shipwrecks under the ocean just in that little area outside of the Bay. So, there's a huge dive community that are already using it.

JH: And there is an environmental message underlying the work, with an increasing concern about the health of our oceans?

SF: I think the state of disrepair that things are in, seeing the changing eco-systems and things like that, it's hard not to project that onto the work. I think that's there with or without the artwork.

JH: You've been doing freediving training and I'm interested to know about the physical and psychological effects of doing that. It's clearly been very inspirational for you.

SF: I've neglected my training recently, but that's not to say that I don't still get into the ocean two to three times a week. My pool training, with the Geelong Freediving Club, every Monday night, is a series of exercises that we use to prolong the amount of time we can spend underwater. When you're training and you're under water for a certain amount of time, your body is sending signals to your brain "get up and breathe". Through the training you learn how to take the signals and say "no". Because, you become informed that your body can actually stay there, it's just a physiological response that is saying

“no, breathe, breathe, breathe, get to the surface”, which is a survival mechanism, but it’s not actually required. That’s the biggest hurdle, when your whole ribcage is contracting, and then all of a sudden if you can change your psychological outlook it stops. Your brain can actually control those physical urges and we are only limited by the way we think. So, when you say what psychological differences are there, I think it relates to everything we do in life; mind over matter. It’s really healthy as well. Freediving is a really healthy activity and anyone can do it.

JH: And you’ve mentioned before, that once you do get in control of that urge to go to the surface it’s actually quite blissful?

SF: Yeah, because you have to put yourself into a state of relaxation. You think about different parts of your body rather than thinking about the signals it’s sending to you. So, it’s mind over matter. Physiologically, your body goes under some quite extreme changes. The colour of your blood changes after a minute because of the oxygenation. So, there’s a lot of breathing techniques, including ancient breathing techniques, that we’re learning through yoga to help us control how much oxygen we’re taking in and be really conscious of our breath.

Another cool thing is that when you get to ten metres below the water surface, gravity disappears, you just glide. So whatever speed you are going on the way down, that speed continues through the water without any effort. If you come down really fast, you’ll continue at that speed but just gliding. It’s bizarre. There’s no gravity. It is completely gone so you can just be turning and you’re not using your body at all past that one atmosphere. So, you can just hold your breath forever. Some guys go down to a hundred metres.

JH: I was wondering whether, in your blissful meditative state underwater, if you feel at all like some part of your body or genes remembers, or is awakened to our history of having come from the water in the very beginning of evolution?

SF: Absolutely. I mean you almost see it reflected in the way fish react around you as well. If you have a scuba diving tank with noise and bubbles coming out everywhere fish just flee. But if you free dive the fish come around you and they consider you almost one of them and so you can see that reflected in the way that they treat you.



IMAGE > Simon Finn, *Deliverance* [detail], 2019, shark eggs, laser cut wood and enamel, 60 x 60 x 50cm.
Image courtesy of the artist and MARS Gallery. Photograph: Theresa Harrison Photography.

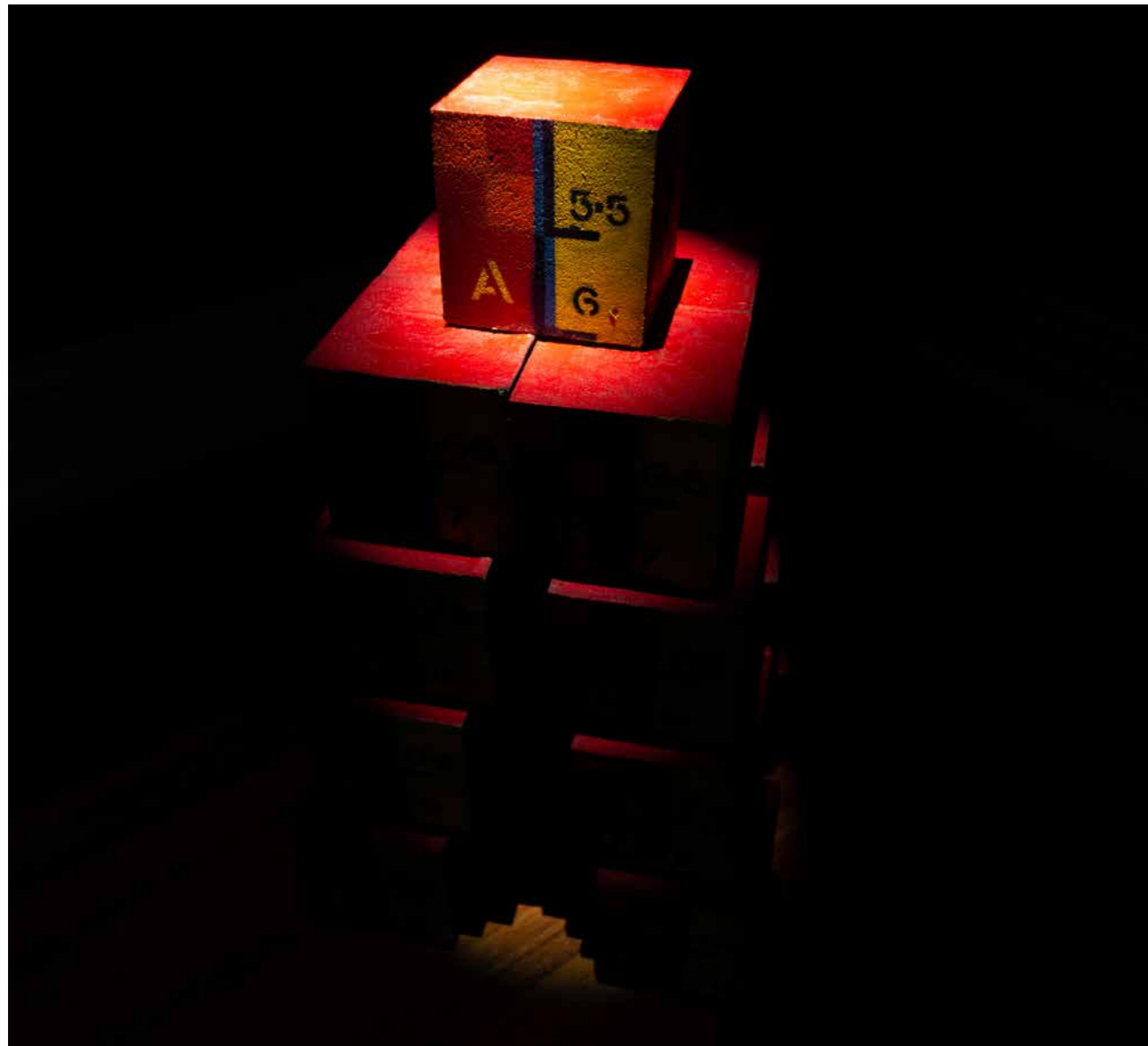


IMAGE > Simon Finn, *Dwelling Prototype - scaled*, 2019, concrete and enamel, 120 x 80 x 80cm.
Image courtesy of the artist and MARS Gallery. Photograph: Theresa Harrison Photography.

JH: And so the idea of us having come from the water all that time ago, do you see perhaps in the future that we might return to the water?

SF: I'm a strong advocate for freediving and I think breathing and breath awareness is something that we should be taught from primary school upwards. I think it's probably a bit of a fairy tale to think that we would return to the seas and swim around like that, so I can't see that happening. But I think the free diving community is growing at such a rate that it's going to become really mainstream. It doesn't cost anything. It's safer than scuba diving. You've just got to learn what your limitations are and swim at that level. I think the more people that get in the water the better.

JH: Is the work you've made for this exhibition really aimed at the free-diving community primarily?

SF: Well, it started off as a bit of a selfish project because I wanted a structure to go and dive down to, that would tell me how deep I was, but now I think that the structure could also help to proliferate fish species, seaweed, corals and things can grow and attach to it. So, it's a dwelling for the marine creatures as well as for humans.

JH: You have also created a video work for the exhibition. How will people experience that in the space and what is it about?

SF: The installation aims to give someone an insight into what the experience of freediving is like. However, I acknowledge how far removed the experience is actually going to be. You know, like anything we see on screen it's always very different to the real world. The idea is that someone holds their breath and the video work is above them and they look up at it and they can see the surface of the ocean filmed from about eight metres under the water.

JH: Your practice is informed by a range of skills and you have a really multifaceted approach to your subject matter. I was wondering how the technical training that you have, particularly related to the software that you often use, helps you to generate your ideas and whether it leads or follows your use of other materials?

SF: I only use technology if it's more efficient. For example, I found, especially for this body of work, it was easier to have the cubes made out of wood and just stack them physically. Just in relation to the physics of moving the blocks. I designed the shape of the blocks on the computer, but to work out the dynamics and the forces at play with the different structures, the computer wasn't useful because it takes so long to render and generate the simulation.

I often use technology as a way of drawing and coming up with sketches and ideas. My ideas actually come together firstly on a computer, and the drawings are a way of refining and rendering. I kind of inverted that process a little bit.

JH: Do you think that advancements in technology can somehow allow us to find a way out of our environmental problems?

SF: No, the opposite. I think that more technology is going to create more problems. So, the older I am getting the less technology I want near me. And I think it goes for not only the way oceans are becoming more removed from our everyday. Just in general, I think technology has a negative impact. I can't see many examples of positive impacts of technology.

Interview between JULIETTE HANSON & SIMON FINN
August 2019

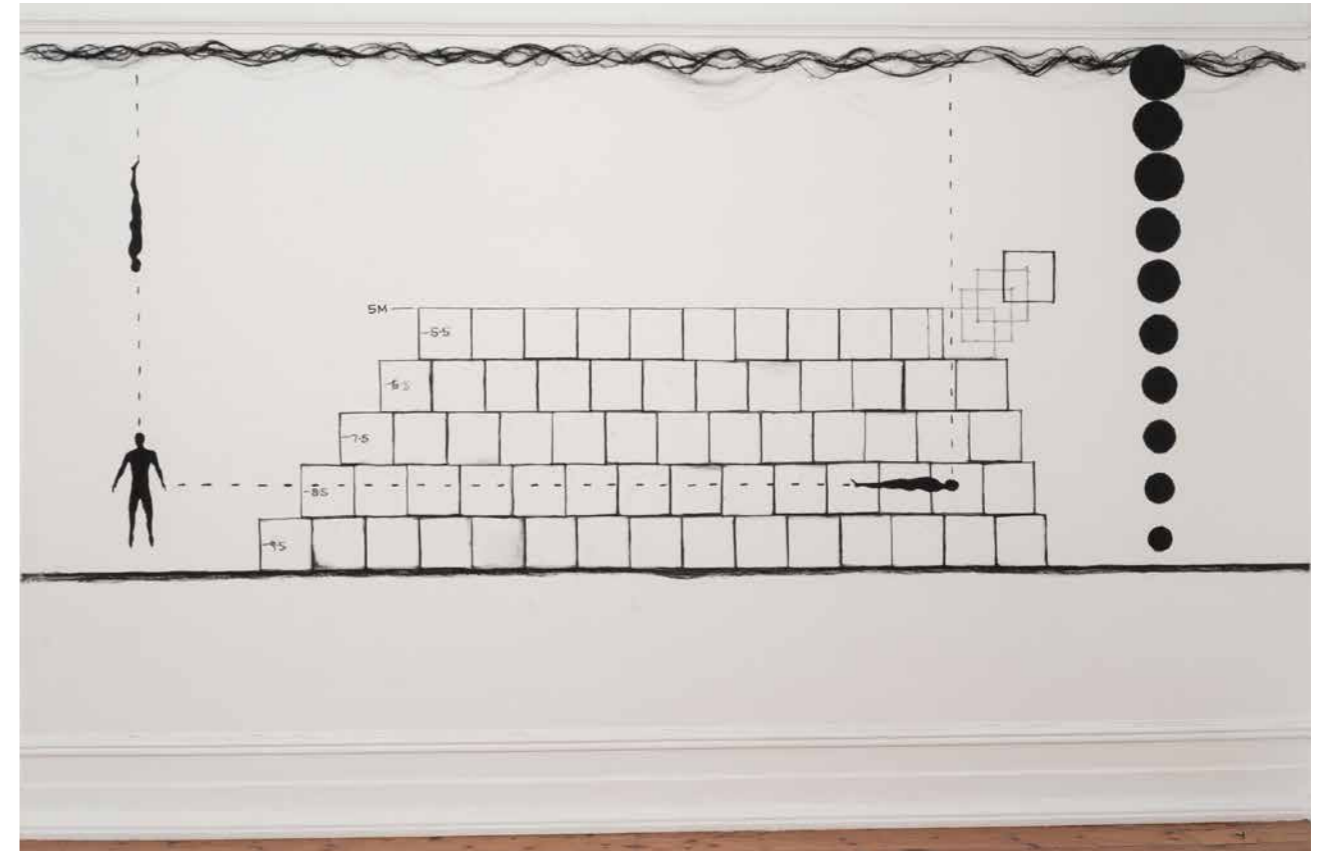


IMAGE > Simon Finn, *Sub Atmos* [installation view], 2019, charcoal.
Image courtesy of the artist and MARS Gallery. Photograph: Theresa Harrison Photography.

Finn generates artworks that are an exploration of temporal representations and the variable syntheses between artist, environment and technology. His practice is supported by 20 years of experience as a 3D visualisation artist, digital imagist, video editor, compositor and animator.

SIMON FINN

Finn has exhibited widely within Australia and internationally, including solo exhibitions Latrobe University Museum of Art, Noosa Regional Gallery, Canberra Contemporary Art Space and Kampung Kollase, Bandung, Indonesia. Finn represented MARS Gallery at the Hong Kong Art Fair in 2018 and has been a finalist for many awards and prizes, most recently the Paul Guest Drawing Prize at Bendigo Art Gallery, the Darebin Art Prize and the City of Hobart Art prize. Finn has received grants and scholarships from the Asialink Centre, the University of Melbourne and RMIT to support his research.

Finn is a sessional lecturer and resource developer at Deakin University and RMIT (Specialised Communication in the School of Architecture), where he is also currently a PhD candidate in Art.

www.simonfinn.info



IMAGE > Portrait of Simon Finn. Image courtesy of the artist.

SIMON FINN

Dwell Structure (coloured) - Option 1, 2019
ink on paper, 55 x 36cm
\$450

Dwell Structure (assemblage) - Option 2, 2019
scorched wood, laser cut wood and enamel,
70 x 32 x 15cm
\$550

Ocean Surface - circle (Black), 2019
synthetic polymer, wood and enamel,
100 x 100 x 5cm
\$500

LIST OF WORKS

Dwell Structure (coloured) - Option 2, 2019
ink on paper, 55 x 36cm
\$450

Dwell Structure (assemblage) - Option 3, 2019
scorched wood, laser cut wood and enamel,
70 x 32 x 15cm
\$550

Ocean Surface - circle (White), 2019
synthetic polymer, wood and enamel,
100 x 100 x 5cm
\$500

Dwell Structure (coloured) - Option 3, 2019
ink on paper, 55 x 36cm
\$450

Dwell Structure (assemblage) - Option 4, 2019
scorched wood, laser cut wood and enamel,
70 x 32 x 15cm
\$550

Deliverance, 2019
Shark eggs, laser cut wood and enamel,
60 x 60 x 50cm
\$550

Dwell Structure (coloured) - Option 4, 2019
ink on paper, 55 x 36cm
\$450

Dwelling Prototype - scaled, 2019
concrete and enamel
20 x 20 x 20cm
\$150

Dwell (recording), 2019
HD video
duration: 00:02:00
\$200

Dwell Structure (assemblage) - Option 1, 2019
scorched wood, laser cut wood and enamel,
70 x 32 x 15cm
\$550

Dwelling Prototype - section, 2019
concrete and enamel
\$850

Sub Atmos, 2019
charcoal
NFS

All prices are inclusive of GST.

ARTIST SPEAKEASY

> EXHIBITION PROPOSAL WRITING

21.09.19 > 2PM-3PM > \$11

Join Linden Director **Melinda Martin** in this professional development workshop for artists to learn how to write effective exhibitions proposals. Presented as part of the **Melbourne Fringe Festival**.

EVENTS

ON HOLIDAYS AT LINDEN

> FUTURISTIC INVENTIONS

21.09.19 - 06.10.19 > FREE, DROP-IN

Inventor Thomas Edison said, "To have a great idea, have a lot of them!" What great idea do you have waiting to happen? This school holiday, we invite kids to drop-in to the gallery to design their own futuristic inventions. Nothing is too crazy nor too impossible!

STRANGE BEDFELLOWS > GIRL GEEKS VS FOOTY FANATICS > 26.09.19 > 6PM-7.30PM > \$25

Kick off the Grand Final long weekend with some sophisticated, cultured chit chat. Just kidding, let's head to the pub. Have a drink with us and decide: Geeks and footy - strange bedfellows or best buds?

CRAFTERNOON FOR KIDS > WHEN I GROW UP
05.10.19 > 12PM-1.30PM > \$15

Join artist **Justin Hinder** for kids art activity! Think about all the wonders the future holds inspired by **Linden New Art** current exhibitions. Look 10 years into the future, 100 years and 1000 years. What do you think the future will look like when you go up?

* Please note > We apologise for any inconvenience, the Linden Workshop is not wheelchair accessible.

MEET THE ARTIST > SIMON FINN

11.10.19 > 1PM-2PM > FREE

Dive into the underwater world of **Simon Finn's** exhibition *Breath-hold dwelling* in this exclusive artist talk. Learn about free diving, the importance of our oceans and our potential for adaptation.

CRAFTERNOON FOR ADULTS

> WRITING THE END OF THE WORLD*

26.10.19 > 1PM-3.30PM > \$6

Join novelist **Alice Robinson** to explore dystopian fiction. In this practical two-hour workshop looking at narrative structure, research, place and character development, Alice will guide participants to explore the logistics and poetics involved in creating dystopian futures on the page.

IN CONVERSATION > BRODIE ELLIS, SIMON FINN & ALICIA KING > 27.10.19 > 2PM-3PM > FREE

Explore the idea of a dystopian future in conversation with exhibiting artists **Brodie Ellis**, **Simon Finn** and **Alicia King**. Discover how their practices engage with some of the most urgent environmental and technological issues of our time.

ARTIST SPEAKEASY > RESIDENCIES

07.11.19 > 6PM-7.30PM > \$11

Join **Linden New Art** and **BLINDSIDE** galleries to discuss artist residencies in conversation with artist **Sam Leach** and **Pippa Dickson**, Director, Asialink Arts. In this professional development workshop suitable for practicing artists, learn about the different opportunities available for residencies and how to choose the right one.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The artist would like to acknowledge MARS Gallery for their ongoing support of his practice.

FOLLOW US

JOIN IN THE CONVERSATION & STAY UP-TO-DATE!

Follow us on social media:

 /LindenNewArt

 @linden_new_art

 @LindenNewArt

Subscribe to our e-newsletter at lindenarts.org

LINDEN NEW ART

DIRECTOR: MELINDA MARTIN
CURATOR: JULIETTE HANSON
DEVELOPMENT MANAGER: LYN JOHNSON
EVENTS COORDINATOR: JASMIN MCNEILL
DESIGN & MARKETING COORDINATOR: MATHIEU VENDEVILLE
GALLERY ADMINISTRATOR: HANA VASAK & SEBASTIAN HAEUSLER
VOLUNTEER OFFICER: CHLOÉ HAZELWOOD

FREE ENTRY
OPENING HOURS
Tuesday to Sunday
11AM to 4PM
Closed Mondays
& public holidays

26 ACLAND STREET,
ST KILDA VIC 3182
www.lindenarts.org
gallery@lindenarts.org
Phone: 03 9534 0099

Trams: 12, 16, 96
(3A weekends only)
Buses: 600, 606,
623, 246

 /LindenNewArt
 @linden_new_art
 @LindenNewArt

LINDEN NEW ART
IS FUNDED BY



GOVERNMENT SUPPORTER



PROJECT PARTNER



port philipp
library service



BLINDSIDIS

CORPORATE PARTNERS



PUNT
ROAD
YARRA VALLEY

