

Furniture makes way for fine arts in Heidelberg West factory exhibition *Industrial Estate*

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A vast dust-extraction system traces the factory ceiling, a network of aluminium tubes creating an octopus-like web. Various workstations and benches punctuate the floor plan: drill presses, belt sanders and table saws take pride of place among piles of off-cut timber and half-completed furniture projects.

The Woodcraft Mobiliar workshop, a fine furniture maker in a large 1950s industrial estate flanking the Darebin Creek in Heidelberg West, seems an unlikely space for a contemporary art exhibition, and for good reason. At face value, the marginalised space of the suburban industrial estate and that of the inner-city gallery are gulfs apart.

But for artist and curator Kym Maxwell, the woman at the helm of new exhibition *Industrial Estate*, the two settings possess more continuity and potential for exchange than we give them credit for.

Opening this Friday night with performances by artists such as Lane Cormick and Julian Williams, the exhibition will feature visual artists including Claire Lambe, Jordan Marani, Madeline Kidd, Dan Bell, Isadora Vaughan, Christopher L.G. Hill and Virginia Overell installing site-specific artworks among the machinery and various workspaces, with sound artists People Person, Wet Kiss and Waterfall Person tackling the space sonically.

According to Maxwell, the show, which was developed with the support of Banyule City Council, is an opportunity to de-mythologise contemporary art for a wider audience and de-ghettoise art from its usual inner-city haunts and institutions. While Melbourne has a vibrant recent history of unconventional art spaces and platforms, *Industrial Estate* takes things a step further, engaging with a community well outside the contemporary art scene's reach.

"People from this area feel like the city doesn't belong to them," says Maxwell, whose partner Dirk Leuschner runs Woodcraft Mobiliar. "They're most likely not going to go in and see *Melbourne Now*. So if there's any way that I can encourage those people to come and look at these works and that these artists can create works that help speak of a sense of place or belonging, then that's great ... It's just about encouraging a sense of esteem."

Artist Kiera Brew Kurec has created a collection of clothing that plays with the notion of bridging or collapsing social divides. "When I was thinking about this show, I started thinking about, as an artist, how much time I spend in industrial areas buying and gathering materials for shows ... having really strange conversations with people who have no idea of what the hell you're making in the end, but who really want to help you get to that end result," she says.

Dubbed *Clothing For Harmonic Living*, the collection takes the form of "pyjama suits that can be worn to bed or as functional apparel". The suits will be free to take and the audience will be encouraged to wear them in the space on opening night.

"They're mid-grey, which is the point of flux between the binary opposites of black and white," Kurec says. "So it's about the questions of what it is to inhabit this grey area between these two poles of our lives and ... unifying the extremities of our everyday experience."

Ash Kilmartin's sculptural work, too, brings together apparently disparate motifs and factors. Referencing the form of a rudimentary, hypothetical sundial, the work comprises a bronze cast of a window handle from her former studio and a wax cast

of a drain cover from the Woodcraft Mobiliar car park. It will sit beneath one of the building's skylights, catching the midday sun, which will in turn soften the wax so as to "take on the grit and dust and debris of the warehouse floor".

Helen Grogan has also chosen to engage directly with the site, installing a large mirror beneath the factory's industrial belt sander that will trace the build up of dust and detritus. Sean Peoples' hilarious sculptural work, meanwhile, takes the form of a rusted, kitsch, neo-gothic wine holder and is embedded with art history references. Created using a 3D printer, metal pigment paint and an oxidising patina of his own urine, the work at once references Andy Warhol's Factory, Piss Paintings and Campbell's Soup Cans (the wine bottle in Peoples' work is filled with his own urine, expelled after drinking no less than three cans of Campbell's Soup).

Maxwell's own work pulls together traces of the site, her own familiar history and some fashion quirks unique to her recently adopted home suburb. "As an artist living with a fine furniture maker, I always felt really inspired by the workshop and the industrial estate and wanted to celebrate it in a sense," she says.

"I want people to feel stimulated in their own suburb ... I guess I'm just trying to get people to think differently about Heidelberg West."

***Industrial Estate* opens on Friday, January 10, from 5pm and runs until Monday, January 13. Open 10am-6pm daily at Woodcraft Mobiliar, 12 Kolora Road, Heidelberg West.**

This story was found at: <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/furniture-makes-way-for-fine-arts-in-heidelberg-west-factory-exhibition-industrial-estate-20140107-30fdd.html>