

JIVE DECELERATION

DARCY WEDD
27 APR – 8 MAY

“I think unconsciously ... you should pursue art as a passionate hobby.” - Dan Graham.

Wedd spends his days making knives, jewellery, guitars, and other instruments. Each has an explicit function that defines its formal structure. Practice brings mastery. He's been making stringed instruments since a teenager. His first was a zither: a few strings on a piece of wood with a magnetic pickup. He learned from internet tutorials. He kept making instruments at a haphazard rate. He gifted me one around 2011 that looks like a Schwitters, this style still typifies his work. It sits on a shelf in my childhood bedroom. He has to do something with his hands, like playing guitar at his desk or in the garage-shed. I fall asleep most nights to him playing whatever. His cigarette smoke floats through the window above my bed.

Art schoolers and artists into music and bands (or vice versa). Tony Conrad, Cale, Lou Reed and Jack Smith in 52 Ludlow Street in '62-64, James Tenney dating Carolee Schneeman,, No Wave, Kelley in Destroy All Monsters, Sonic Youth, John Fahey's terrible paintings, Jenny Watson teaching Nick Cave etc. at what is now Monash Caulfield.

Harry Partch, a 20th century American Just Intonation guru branded himself on brochures for his records and advertisements for his books: “I am not an instrument-builder, but a philosophical musician seduced into carpentry.” He never laid claim to being an artist. Neither did Conlon Nancarrow or Les Paul with his log guitar. Tony Conrad did, though. Tyndall’s Slave Guitar from '81?

Art is not music. Art is not Brend, nor is it entertainment. Brend is “an immediate, real subjective form of gratification”. Henry Flynt says “Consider all of your doings, what you already do. Exclude the gratifying of physiological needs, physically harmful activities, and competitive activities. Concentrate on spontaneous self-amusement or play. That, is concentrate on everything you do because you like it, because you just like it as you do it.” A passionate hobby. “... Total originality beyond art; that your brend is the absolute self-expression and the absolute enjoyment beyond art.” The abolition of work and leisure under a Red sky.

DIY or die; any result is a good result; form follows function; onto the next one share a resemblance. The hand-made brings a humanistic charm, of describing only what is necessary. It is by design that Flynt was the founder of Conceptual Art.

His father is a crafty. His mother is a printmaker. Two factions that were (for better? for worse?) less affected by Conceptual Art's penultimate negation: throwing out technical skills, equipment, honed material practices, disciplines. All for cost-cutting convenience. Wedd resumed making instruments at the conclusion of his MFA. Graham said “The other good thing about art schools ... is getting access to technical schools so you can earn a living if you do not become an immediate success.” Graduate study gets you so far.

The gallery is a guitar shop. One cannot hear the instruments, let alone play them. The representation of stringed instruments (guitars, lutes etc.) is frequent in Baroque painting. It connotes one of the liberal arts. It refers to the five senses and muses. It is an allegory of love, like Caravaggio's The Musicians with Cupid at the left. Vermeer too, and the lute in Holbein's Ambassadors. In the centuries before, music was a vice. It was paradoxically both earthly and heavenly love. The crusades introduced it. Manet's the Spanish Singer. Picasso gave birth to modern sculpture through the subject of a guitar. He did it by using cardboard and metal planes to imply solids, voids, and depth. This inverts how sculpture depends on adding and removing stuff to make shapes. It changes from modelling, casting, and carving to assemblage.

— Douglas Maxted

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List of works (counter-clockwise from door):

Acoustic Guitar and Fretboards (Third Harmonic, Blue Sky, Wine and Roses), 2023–4

Spruce, tasmanian blackwood, tasmanian oak, bone, fretwire, acrylic paint, shellac, nickel silver, tuners, acrylic sheet, coloured pencil, brass, pickup, steel, magnets
97.2 x 30.9 x 9.1 cm (fretboards 40 x 6 cm)

Calabrian Lyre, 2023

Tasmanian oak, pine, brass, nails, nylon rope
46 x 13 x 9 cm

Banjo (Muddy Road), 2023

Pine, tasmanian oak, wire, tuners, X-ray, construction ply, nails
101 x 33 x 9 cm

Electric Guitar (L.H. 6 through 12), 2023

Pine, tasmanian oak, acrylic sheet, copper, steel, tuners, pickup, wiring, fretwire, permanent marker, car seatbelt
95.5 x 31 x 6.5 cm

Octave Mandolin for LV (Lost Vortex), 2023

Tasmanian oak, ebony, olive wood, acrylic sheet, copper, tuners, acrylic paint, fretwire, clear coat, ink
89 x 33 x 10 cm

Electric Guitar (Lissitzky Mustang), 2011

Poplar, purchased neck (maple and rosewood), pickups, wiring, vibrato, tuners, acrylic paint
100.5 x 31.5 x 12.3 cm

Zither For SM, 2017

Construction ply, pine, pickup, wiring, MDF, nails, tuners
44 x 24.5 x 4.5 cm

Prices available upon request.