

Michael Purdy

From One Tree

2021

Exhibition statement

I've been around boats my whole life. From the tiny yellow and red tugboats that moored next to Greenwich Baths as a child, to the dugout canoes of Sumatra and the fishing boats of our Northern Rivers, to the windsurfers and surfboards that I ride, I have always been fascinated by their beautiful lines. So it is hardly surprising that when my stepson Bon alerted me to a large white cedar that his team was cutting down in my home town of Berry in February 2019, it was boats that I saw in the elegant curves of the logs that we loaded onto my truck.

When it came time to start carving I remembered what Lloyd Rees said about landscape painting. "You look and look and look at the the landscape, until you start painting it. And then you only look at the painting." "Well I'd done plenty of looking at boats so rather than preliminary drawings I decided to concentrate on reading the curves and growth rings of logs to try to match different parts of the tree to the different boats sailing around in my head.

Sculpting can be said to be a process of distillation. The aim, to find and express the essence of a subject. Because of my relationship to the tree as a living entity, I felt that in this case the project should be an expression of the essence of the tree itself as much as an expression of the essence of the boats of my memories. Being a tree grower myself, faults in timber tell me stories of calamities in the life of a tree in the same way that shipwrecks tell stories of tragedies that happen at sea. By matching ocean storm carnage with the affects of tree branches snapping on land or conversely plain sailing under sunny skies with long periods of good growing conditions for the tree I aimed to achieve a harmonious organic union in the lines, forms and finishes of the resulting vessels.



Mother Ship

\$2,500

white cedar , woodstain and painted mild steel
H 25cm W 74cm D 17cm



Tree Boat

\$4,400

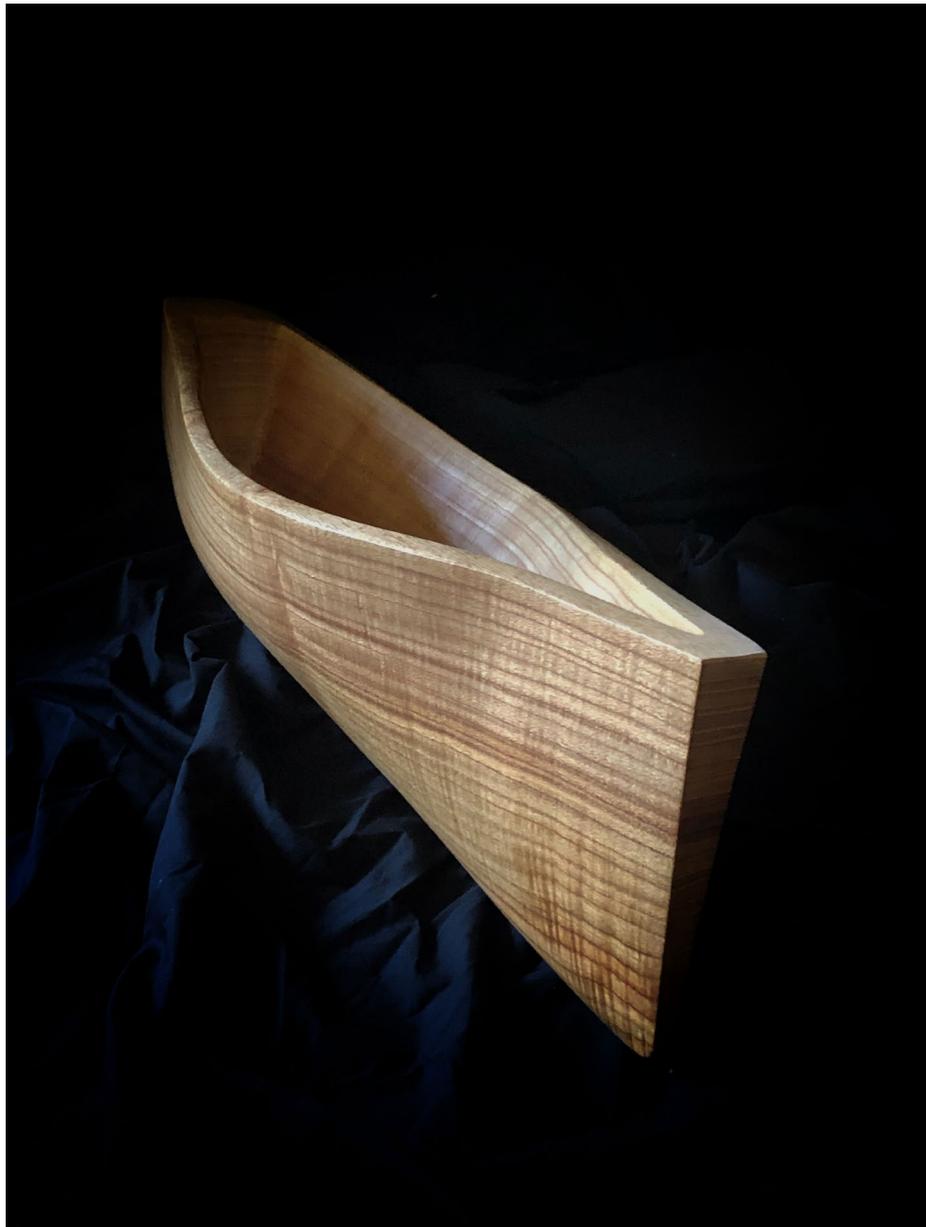
white cedar and painted mild steel base
H 89cm W 34cm D 26cm



Vessel

\$2,750

white cedar
H 23cm W67cm D 22cm



Tommy Sheahan's Clinker

\$3,300

white cedar, Oregon and painted mild steel
H 26cm W 67cm D 26cm



Ghost Ship

\$2,200

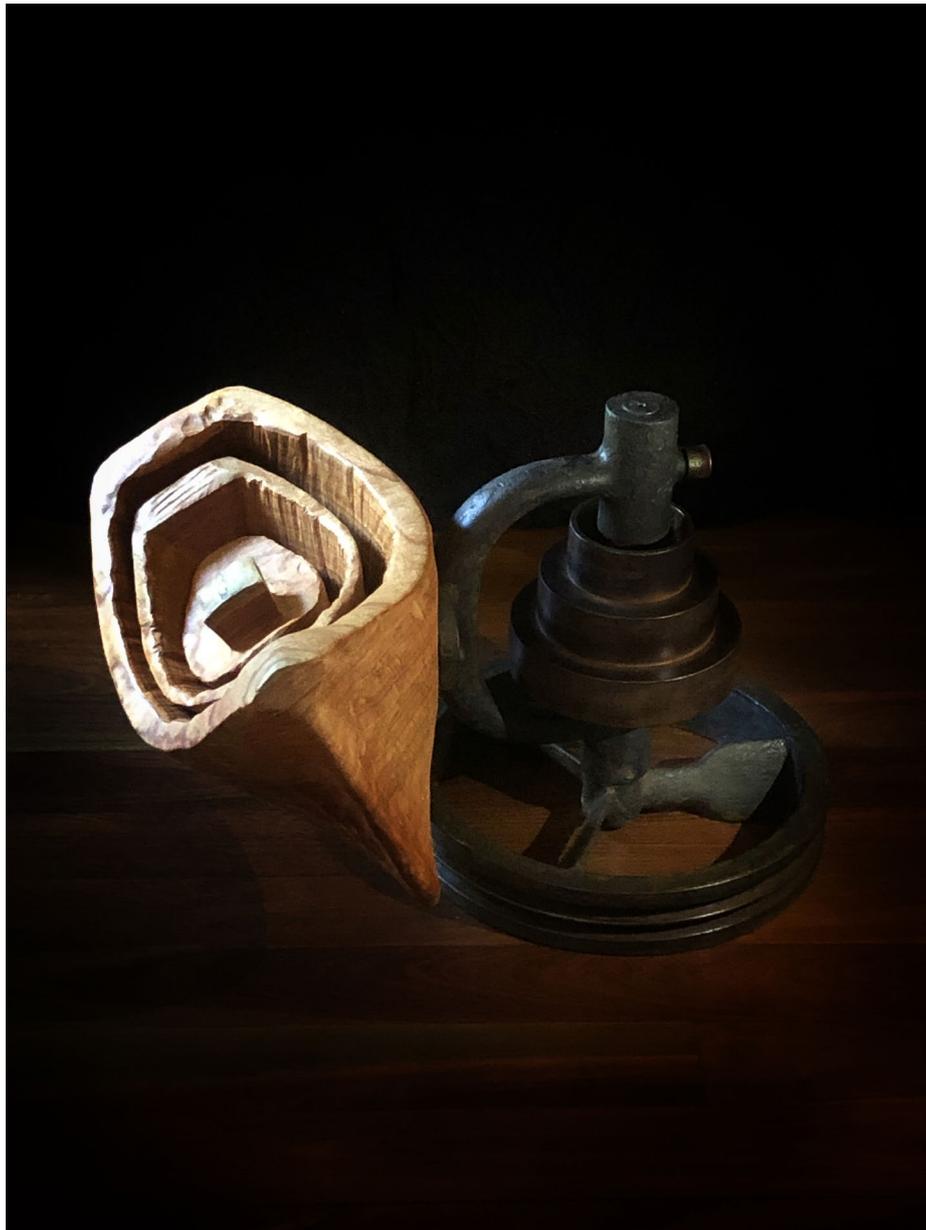
white cedar and painted mild steel
H 29cm W 73cm D 22cm



All in the Same Boat

\$3,750

white cedar and caste iron found object
H 36cm W 55cm D 39cm



Ark

\$4,400

white cedar and brown mahogany
H 80cm W 47cm D 32cm



Rattle

\$2,500

white cedar
H 17cm W 78cm D 14cm



Wrecked

\$2,200

white cedar and painted mild steel base
H 90cm W 23cm D 22cm



Worse Things Happen at Sea

\$2,500

blackwood and mild steel
H 28cm W 36cm D 34cm



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Sculpture in the time of Covid

Sculpture by the Sea, Bondi has once again been cancelled, & my entry, a fifteen tonne Greek ruin entitled "Two Thousand & Twenty" will sit another year in the top paddock, confusing Telecom workers & wombats alike. It sits above us as a monument to the strangeness of the times.

The completion of the Bondi ruin for Sculpture by the Sea coincided with the end of my fifteen year tenure in my South Nowra studio, where all my large sandstone works had been made. Although inconvenient, I saw this as a chance to work from home making more timber works, which compliments my hobby of growing trees.





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gallery

mw

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