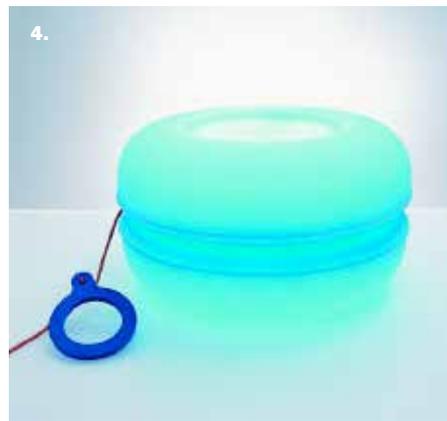
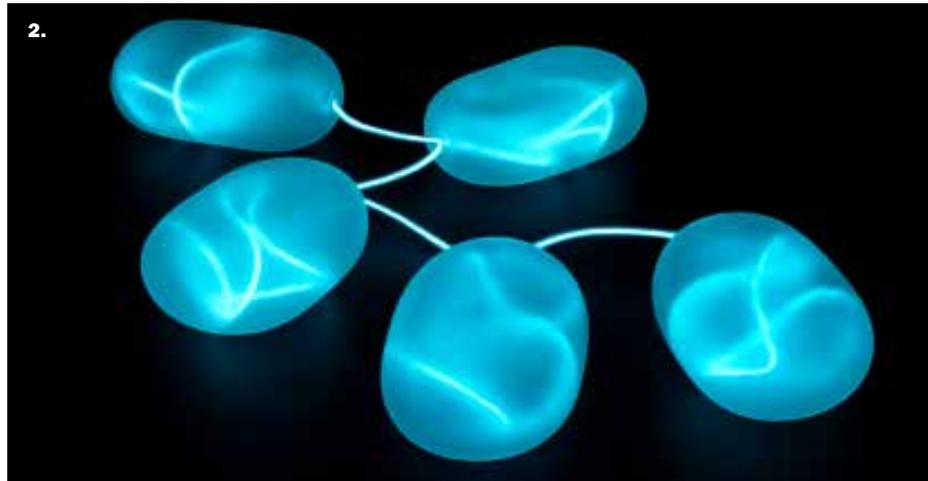


FORM



1. Simone LeAmon, Ricotta 2. Leah Heiss, Drift; 3. Debbie Ryan, Dome House 4. Celina Clarke, Yo 5. Sue Carr, Westin Hotel Melbourne 6. Susan Hewitt and Penelope Lee, Great Petition 7. Kerstin Thompson, Marysville Police Station.

WOMEN IN DESIGN

A new group exhibition at fortyfivedownstairs unveils the creative practices of 14 of Melbourne's leading female designers.

BY DANIELLA CASAMENTO

Melbourne has a rich design culture which is fostered by numerous degree courses offered by our tertiary institutions. While the number of professional female designers who practice architecture, interior design, industrial design, landscape architecture, graphic design and visual art continues to grow, their contributions to shaping our built environment is less recognised than that of their male counterparts.

Women In Design is a group exhibition which unveils the creative practices of 14 of Melbourne's leading female designers. Showing at fortyfivedownstairs, this two-week exhibition is presented by the Design Institute of Australia Victoria Tasmania Branch and is a satellite event of *Melbourne Now*.

Debbie Ryan and Sue Carr (interior design), Helen Watts and Michaela Webb (graphic

design), Kerstin Thompson and Leanne Zilka (architecture), Penelope Lee and Susan Hewitt (visual art), Celina Clarke (lighting), Helen Kontouris (furniture), Jenny Underwood (textile design), Leah Heiss (interdisciplinary design), Simone LeAmon (artist and designer) and Kirsten Bauer (landscape architecture) have produced designs that are embedded in the physical and cultural environment of our city and beyond.

The exhibition features a mix of scale models, plans and photography of completed work, audio video installations and samples of furniture, textiles and light fittings. Each piece tells a story about the designers' careers. Highly visible projects include the Westin Hotel Melbourne, QV2 apartment building and the Great Petition sculpture which rests in Burston Reserve behind Parliament House. Other projects are recognised by their relationship to cultural institutions such as the National

Trust's Polly Woodside Gallery.

Clarke's light fittings are found in many public and private buildings locally and interstate. "Since establishing ISM Objects in 1990, I have seen many women work in this field very successfully," she says. "I would like to see more women move into the local manufacturing field with their design work. With so much manufacturing moving off-shore, it is important to make sure that we retain skills in our local manufacturing industry."

Bauer's work with Aspect Studios spans commercial, infrastructure and public realm projects. Her installation offers an insight into the design process with images of sites alongside designs in development and images of completed projects. Zilka and Underwood's video projection details Fibre-architecture, their highly collaborative practice which investigates the cross-pollination of textiles with architecture through new technologies.

Heiss collaborates with experts from a range of disciplines including nanotechnology, medicine, manufacturing and computer science. Her audio visual presentation demystifies her work at the cutting edge of hearing technologies, biosignal sensing jewellery and more.

Founder of multidisciplinary firm Carr Design Group, Sue Carr says Australian design culture has leapt forward since she began her career in the early 1970s. She says there is now a greater awareness that architecture and interior design are "infallibly linked" which has in turn "increased expectation on our level of expertise and the quality of our delivered outcomes. This

has created a greater sense of responsibility among interior designers and contributed to building the reputation of interior design as a worthwhile and recognised profession."

Kerstin Thompson is one of Melbourne's most prominent architects and says the practice of women in architecture will have evolved when women are respected as architects, "not 'women architects'".

"While there are many women practicing there is still an inadequate number that are highly visible as leaders and authorities in the industry, leaders of practices explicitly responsible for establishing the agenda and direction of projects and more broadly the culture of practice," she says. "This visibility is important because it communicates their role to more people and in turn transforms expectations around our rightful place in construction and design."

The exhibition features biographies of early Melbourne architects Eileen Good (1893-1986), Ellison Harvie (1902-1984), Mary Turner Shaw (1906-1990), Cynthea Teague (1907-2007), and landscape designer Edna Walling (1895-1973), courtesy of the Australian Women's History Forum.

» **Women In Design** shows at **fortyfivedownstairs**, 45 Flinders Lane, Melbourne until February 22.

design.org.au/victas
fortyfivedownstairs.com