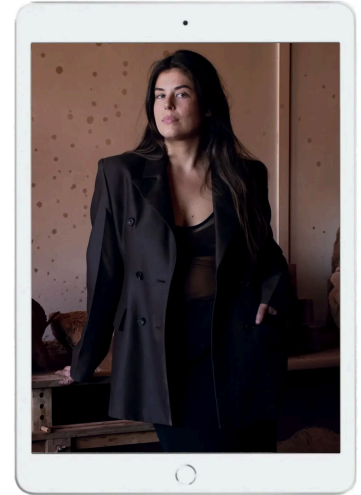

THIS PERTH ARTIST IS ABOUT TO BE SHOWCASED AT DESIGN MIAMI

OLIVE GILL-HILLE MICHAEL BLEBY, AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW, JULY 19, 2024

Artist and designer Olive Gill-Hille wrestles with how to describe herself. But whatever the title, she's making a name for herself.



We're told not to touch art, but Olive Gill-Hille encourages it. Indeed, the 30-year-old Perth-based artist says her timber sculptures, furniture and wall panels only become whole once they are felt.

At her Fremantle workshop, Gill-Hille sketches and then paints a watercolour of each design before she picks up her tools to begin sculpting. She works the timber into smooth, sensuous shapes evoking the human body.

"There is, for sure, a sensuality in the work, because so much of it is touch," Gill-Hille says. "It's either my body in the process of making, or other people's bodies wanting to touch and run their hands over."



Olive Gill-Hille is taking the emerging Australian art form of timber sculpture to new audiences.

Gill-Hille studied fine art at the Victorian College of the Arts and also has an associate degree of furniture design from RMIT. She wrestles with whether to call herself an artist or designer. Designers don't usually do the physical work themselves, but she does it all, from foraging the "road kill" trees – WA-native sheoak and jarrah are two favourites – to the cutting, shaping, sanding and painting.

"A lot of hours go into the polishing and refining of each piece," she says. "It's all me, all my hand."



The works of Olive Gill-Hille will be on show later in 2024 at Design Miami. *Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert*

In effect, she's bringing an Australian perspective on the Arts and Crafts movement that was pioneered in the US by Kansas-born sculptor Wendell Castle, who died in 2018.

She's also taking the emerging Australian art form to new audiences. Her work will be on display at Fremantle Design Week in October, and then in December she will exhibit at the highly influential Design Miami. It will be her first show overseas.

"It's huge," says Sydney gallerist Sally Dan-Cuthbert, who is taking Gill-Hille to Miami along with other Australians Damien Wright, Bonhula Yunupingu, David Tate, Sarah Rayner, Charles Trevelyan, Darren Fry, Rive Roshan, Lisa Reihana and Sophie Carnell. "It's the mothership of fairs, particularly for design."

Fremantle Design Week runs from October 18 to 24.

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