

by **frankie** magazine

# look what we made



MEET THE NEW GENERATION OF AUSTRALIAN MAKERS



Look What We Made is an eclectic collection of maker stories from across Australia. Charting the skills, inspirations, spaces and day-to-day life of 38 local makers, it's an affectionate (yet honest) tribute to the handmade way of life. Crafted from metal and clay and yarn and fabric, glass and paint, plastic and wood – plus a few electric guitars – this book documents a new generation of Australian making.

Brought to you by a whole heap of talented photographers and writers, and the team at frankie press.



LOOK

WHAT

WE

MADE



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studio. photo by savannah van der niet

previous page lauren campbell's pots in  
progress. photo by savannah van der niet

this page weaver daisy watt's thread  
collection. photo by stephanie rose wood

pages 4 & 5 rosaleen ryan mixing up resin  
for her jewellery. photo by hilary walker

pages 6 & 7 zines printed by illustrator  
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pages 254 & 255 jess dare's metal  
memorial flowers. photo by bri hammond

pages 256 & 257 sketches and musical  
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back cover image bonnie hislop's ceramic  
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THANK YOU TO OUR  
FRIENDS AT ROLLIE  
FOR HELPING US  
PUT THIS BOOK  
TOGETHER.

xxx







S PIGLET  
EXPERIMENTAL ZINE JOURNAL  
BASED IN MELBOURNE  
#5

one hour  
six pack  
by Josh Simpson

さつまいも  
SATSUMA-IMO  
ASHLEY RONNING

WILD  
RUM PLOAF

Cheese  
Dreams  
Volume N 1

DODGY  
versus  
HELIO  
TEST PRINT PAPER  
Hand-made from 100% recycled  
risograph test prints  
using soy based ink,  
from Helio Press, Melbourne.

THE SURFACE OF  
VENUS  
GEMMA FLACK

No Place  
Like Space  
Ashley Ronning

INTO THE  
BLACK  
HOLE  
by Ashley Ronning

HELIO PRESS

HELIO  
PRESS

Planting  
Guide  
for  
Autumn  
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NEWLANDS  
BY  
CAITLIN SHEARER

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IV

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AT GIGS  
BY  
OLIVIA GRBAC

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FOR ME / WALKING OUT

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BY  
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DEEP SPACE

Customer  
Mean House

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MAKERS DIRECTORY

WHO  
ARE  
THE  
MAKERS?



They make shoes and beer and hats and albums and zines.  
They use glitter and yarn and clay and paint and metal.

They live all across Australia – in cities and in  
country towns, and at least one sheep farm, too.

Some learnt a trade. Some make it up as they go along.  
Some have part-time jobs. Some barely leave their bedrooms.  
They make alone, and together. They create things that are  
useful. And some that are beautiful. And some that are silly.

These are makers who craft because they want to create  
the perfect something, or the perfectly imperfect one.  
Because they've got something to say. Because their hands  
and brain won't be quiet otherwise. And with a head full of  
ideas – plus a little patience and skill – they can produce  
something of worth, and then share it around.

Look What We Made is a salute to this new generation of  
makers: their spaces, skills and inspirations, and the stuff  
they create. This is a love ballad to them all. The grotty bits  
and the good stuff. The art and the offcuts. And all those  
wonderful things they think, make and do.

Sitting still comes hard  
to Lauren Campbell.  
These days her busy  
hands are turned to  
the meditative – and  
often confounding –  
craft of pottery.





**LEFT**

Some of Lauren's unfired greenware ceremonial bowls, drying slowly while they await their trip to the kiln.

**BELOW**

Lauren's hand tools and potter's wheel get pretty messy through use, but she says the process can be meditative.

**RIGHT**

Finished bowls, vases and plates from Sit Still Lauren. Each piece is wheel-thrown and glazed by hand.





**Byron Bay potter** Lauren Campbell knew she was on the wrong path in life when her dad pointed out she was the only one in the family who worked in an office. “My dad was a fireman, my mum was a nurse, my sister is a jeweller and my brother is a cabinet-maker,” she says. “We’re all pretty hands-y. I was working in financial firms and events companies in Sydney, where I grew up, and I never knew what I wanted to do. I was just plodding along and really unhappy. When my dad made that comment I realised it didn’t feel right to be working in an office in high heels, tapping away at a computer all day.”

So Lauren took herself off to design school, but it was a while before she found her fit. She discovered where her future passion lay while on work experience with an interior design firm. “At this place they had a shop that had furniture and lots of other things, including beautiful pottery. That was the first inkling for me. Everything had led me up to that path.”

Suitably inspired, in 2010 she moved to Bellingen, a small country town roughly halfway between Brisbane and Sydney, where her parents had retired. Lauren planned to start her own business, mixing soft furnishings and pottery, but soon realised she was spreading herself too thinly. “Pottery was the one thing that I was really giddy about. My heart would start racing and I would get over-excited about all these ideas.

“Pottery is having a big boom at the moment, but there weren’t that many people doing it then. I didn’t think it would take me anywhere. I just really loved doing it and it just fell into the right place.”

After learning all she could from “brilliant” potter Tamasin Pepper, Lauren relocated to Byron to study at the local TAFE – a big move since she didn’t know anyone in the area.

It was, she says, a case of trusting her intuition. She set herself up – “when I started I had my wheel out on a balcony” – and began the painstaking task of perfecting her craft. “It’s such a massive process. People don’t realise how much is involved in each piece. One mug, without a handle, takes 17 steps. Adding a handle doubles that.”

Working with clay is often likened to yoga, something Lauren can relate to. She describes it as almost meditative: “The more I get into it, the more I realise the spiritual side of things,” she says. “You have to be present and in the right space, otherwise it won’t work. It’s about sitting down and you sort of zone out into a really special place – except sometimes when you’re rushing it that doesn’t happen, like any job! Your hands just kind of learn what to do and after you’ve practised for a while the muscle memory helps things come out the same.

“Clay has a memory, which is really lovely. Anything from the ground or the earth is living, it’s not inert, so the energy that you put into it will come back to you.” That’s both a positive and a negative – if the potter hasn’t worked the clay properly, things have a tendency to go awry. “You have to ‘wedge’ the clay, which is a bit like kneading, and if you don’t do that right, it won’t flow on the wheel,” Lauren explains. “Then, if you accidentally bump something while it’s on the wheel, the clay will remember it and warp when it’s in the kiln, even if it was reshaped.

“A billion different things can go wrong. It’s definitely a labour of love. Pottery teaches you so much. The biggest thing it does for me is tell me to slow down. I’m constantly going too fast and doing too many things at once – that’s why my business name is Sit Still Lauren. If I go too fast, something will inadvertently happen in the kiln.”

→



Pottery is part art, part science. The firing process requires comprehensive knowledge of how varying temperatures and oxygen rates in the kiln affect the final product. Lauren uses a gas-fired kiln that allows her to tweak the process and achieve the distinctive colours and glossy, drippy glazes of her pieces.

“There have been many, many times where I’ve opened the kiln and it’s been a disaster,” she sighs. “You can’t have any more tears after the first year. You realise you can’t get attached to anything because it could all go wrong at the last stage. That’s the beauty of pottery, but it’s also the challenge because you can’t rely on it to be consistent all the time.”

For the most part, her craft is a solitary pursuit that requires total focus on the part of the maker. Ideally, a potter also needs space. Lauren feels lucky now to have a great set-up in Eltham, near Byron Bay, especially after losing nearly everything from a previous studio and home in the Lismore floods in 2016.

“The space I had in Lismore was amazing. I had my studio in an old broom factory and I was living in a little caravan. But coming here to Eltham felt like coming home.”

Lauren now works in a studio “in a big shed, surrounded by cows”, and lives in a house on the same property with her beekeeper-muso partner and her two dogs. She teaches classes at the Byron School of Clay one day a week and does private workshops with people who want to experience the zen of working with clay.

“When I teach, it gives people a moment’s break from their busy lives. I know a lot of them might not ever do anything with pottery again, but they will come away feeling really calm and having a sense of the meditation involved in making.”

While she’s excited about growing her business, extending her teaching and moving into different areas, Lauren’s biggest challenge is stopping herself from doing too much. She says a recent research trip to Japan was a reminder to keep things simple. “It gets so overwhelming with how many places you can take it, but I don’t want to be this big brand, I just want to make things so it feels nice for me. I still think pottery is a bit like magic. It’s beautiful.” ✱



**ABOVE**

Lauren's studio in Eltham, near Byron Bay, sits inside a shed on farmland mainly populated by cows .

**RIGHT**

More of Lauren's wares for her label, Sit Still Lauren. The name is a reminder to slow down and enjoy her process.

**ABOVE RIGHT**

Treating clay with care while it's on the wheel is super important: any accidental bumps may lead to warping in the kiln.

**PREVIOUS PAGE**

Greenware pieces and plates from some of Lauren's students, drying out before their bisque firing.



## LAUREN ON MAINTAINING YOUR CREATIVE VIBE

You need to do the things that fill your cup up when you're working really hard. Most makers work really hard and they're really passionate about what they do, but you need to replenish before you can give out. It's not sustainable otherwise – your body just won't cope. Being by the ocean and in nature is my biggest release. If I don't get that balance I won't be able to give any more. I also think you need to keep on meeting new people, expanding on everything and growing. I love being around the garden, cooking food and keeping things simple. It's simple advice, but it works for me.



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