



CONDITIONAL

new work by **Alison Smith, Caelli Jo Brooker & Ahn Wells**

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THURSDAY 2 NOVEMBER–SATURDAY 18 NOVEMBER

ACRUX ART GALLERY

In *Conditional*, Caelli Jo Brooker, Alison Smith and Ahn Wells are drawn together for a second time as a trio, to share their most recent work, and explore conditions of making and creative practice. In this way, *Conditional* takes for its inspiration the unique and overlapping conditions of their lives, professions and practices.

The process of exhibiting collectively, and the curious connections made across three distinctly different creative practices, have surprised and inspired each artist.

Navigating the connections between (and conditions of) exhibiting together, finding and making correlations between motivations, challenges and the combined works themselves, are some of the thematic and creative aspects present in the work for *Conditional*.

There are many shared 'conditions'. Each artist has worked in arts administration - as gallery owners, directors, volunteers and curators - connected through colleagues, clients, communities of practice, design education, educational institutions and local creative industries.

Each has also worked across independent galleries, institutional galleries and ARIs as participants in those collective creative spaces - not always under the guise of practitioner, but also facilitating the creative work of others, and contributing to a larger creative community.

They each maintain an art practice beyond their other roles, and a sustained interest in studio making, and the conditions under which creativity is found, made, participated in, performed, shown, consumed, and shared.

Operating under different conditions professionally, personally and creatively, they are connected through the experience, challenges, rewards, and conditions of making.



LIST OF WORKS

1. Ahn Wells
Where you'll find me
2017
mixed media on board
30 x 25.5cm
2. Ahn Wells
Somewhere I know 2017
mixed media on board
33.5 x 25cm
3. Ahn Wells
Beyond these lines 2017
mixed media on board
29 x 21cm
4. Caelli Jo Brooker
Totemic
2017
acrylic and ink on board
120 x 100cm
5. Caelli Jo Brooker
Cast Totem
2017
ink, acrylic and plaster 30 x
15 x 15cm
6. Ahn Wells
Later than now
2017
ceramic and acrylic wool 9
x 5 x 5cm
7. Ahn Wells
Before you arrived
2017
ceramic and acrylic wool 9
x 5 x 5cm
8. Alison Smith
Erosion series #1-#22 2017
multi block woodcut prints
unique states
9. Caelli Jo Brooker
Scribbled Totem I 2017
mixed media on paper
38 x 28cm (image size)
10. Caelli Jo Brooker
Scribbled Totem II 2017
mixed media on paper
38 x 28cm (image size)
11. Caelli Jo Brooker
Ghost Totem II
2017
acrylic and ink
on canvas board 100 x
80cm
12. Caelli Jo Brooker
Ghost Totem I
2017
acrylic and ink on
canvas board
100 x 80cm
13. Ahn Wells
Beyond & Behind 2017
mixed media on paper
105 x 114cm
14. Caelli Jo Brooker
Gem Totem 2017
acrylic on board
50 x 40cm
15. Caelli Jo Brooker
Drum Totem 2017
acrylic on board
50 x 40cm
16. Caelli Jo Brooker
Spectre Totem
2017
acrylic on board
50 x 40cm
17. Caelli Jo Brooker
Double Totem
2017
acrylic on board
50 x 40cm

ARTIST STATEMENT

Caelli Jo Brooker

The ideas explored in the work for *Conditional* remain connected to a personal discourse surrounding consumption, recycling, symbol and materiality explored in the previous trio exhibition – *Turning Over*.

The black backgrounds in the Totem series refer to productive re-use, and work to dismantle the 'new', undermining the often-assumed primacy of the white, freshly sourced, and unmarked, and enabling the traditional blankness of a new surface to be approached in an alternative way. The black both disguises and transforms the content and texture of the under-painting, cannibalising and absorbing the older work underneath. In its consideration and preparation, this blackness also embodies and affords the realisations, revelations and understandings which are the reward of tacit experience and the making process.

Thinking-through-making in this way has afforded a new pictorial syntax. The totemic variations present in *Conditional*, are symbolic of this shift in practice, as one totem, one motif, one pattern, or symbol is replaced with another to join an existing idiosyncratic visual vocabulary.

The conceptual framework for the totems also relies on setting conditions for creating work; deliberate constraints that enable rather than disable, and that allow for participation in the ongoing cycle of engagement with the studio paradigm of 'new work' itself.

www.caellijobrooker.com
[@caellijo](https://www.instagram.com/caellijo)



Caelli Jo Brooker
Totemic, 2017
acrylic and ink on board,
120 x 100cm

ARTIST STATEMENT

Alison Smith

The *Erosion* series is a new collection of wood cut prints. It is an extension of Alison's most recent photo media work, the *Turning Over* series. This work was developed in response to major Newcastle infrastructure projects then recently completed, or in progress, such as the Law Courts and the University of Newcastle's NewSpace campus, along with numerous large apartment complexes, and the boom in medium-density housing construction in the Newcastle suburb where she lives.

For Alison, her art practice is conditional on any number of intersecting demands and opportunities. New work takes time to develop and percolate, at times sidelined by the requirements of business and family, at others compartmentalised into windows and bursts of activity, usually filtered through the lens of being part of a larger creative industries community.

The digitally constructed imagery of the previous exhibition, *Turning Over*, provided a jumping-off point for *Erosion*. With it came a welcome return to the physicality of carving and the textural surface quality that comes from the grain of the blocks and the layering of ink. The dense linear elements of the previous works have been pared back and simplified; the referential imagery has become abstracted; a dominant focus has been placed on the elements of pattern and tone. Working in monochrome and adhering to a circular format have offered additional ways of freeing these characteristics from their origins in the built environment, allowing a new format to emerge.

www.alisonsmith.com.au



Alison Smith
Erosion series #1-#22, 2017
multi block woodcut prints
unique states

ARTIST STATEMENT

Ahn Wells

Ahn Wells is a Newcastle based artist and Director of Gallery 139. For *Conditional*, she has made work across the mediums of drawing, textiles and ceramics. Pushing these materials further than she has before. Combining the traditions of craft work found in the home with the art vocabulary of minimalism and abstract art learnt during formal art study. With a non-objective approach to her artmaking, her work utilises both traditional and non-traditional materials and techniques to explore ideas of repetition, order/disorder, surface manipulation and pattern formation.

Ahn graduated from Newcastle Art School, Hunter St TAFE in 1999 with an Advanced Diploma of Fine Arts and attended The University of Newcastle in 2000 and 2002-2003, receiving a Bachelor of Fine Art, with First Class Honours and the University Medal. Her work is held in University of Newcastle, Maitland Regional Art Gallery and Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery permanent art collections as well private collection in Australia and the UK.

www.ahnwells.com
[@ahnwells](https://www.instagram.com/ahnwells)



Ahn Wells
Beyond & Behind, 2017
mixed media on paper,
105 x 114cm





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ART GALLERY

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