

BRUCE ROWE

If these fragments could be read...

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I have explored an ongoing series of ceramic relief works framed within shelves, box frames, and containers. I've come to see these works as documentation — records of presence shaped by a personal symbolic language. This evolving vocabulary is a structured way of registering and making sense of a moment in time. Each work gathers fragments, pieces that are incomplete and sensed rather than fully understood. Like remnants of a dream, only traces remain, imprinted somewhere deeper and beyond conscious reach. Collecting and framing them holds the pieces together, binding them into something whole.

My practice engages with thresholds and transitions — the frames we pass through as we move from one stage to the next. I'm particularly drawn to the liminal spaces between; between the known and the unknown, the visible and the invisible. I work with natural rhythms, symbol, material, and colour to give form to what resists definition. These are phenomena felt rather than known, shifting and fluid, like time or shadows.

The making process is a conversation between intention and intuition. Marks and forms emerge in response to what comes before, each decision shaping the next. I begin with a large clay slab, divided into a grid of smaller blocks. Working left to right, top to bottom — much like writing — I cut and shape without pre-planning. Unlike conventional writing however, these forms resist translation. They can't be deciphered, repeated, or reconstructed. What is captured is subject to change and shaped by the conditions of its making, shifting from one work to the next.

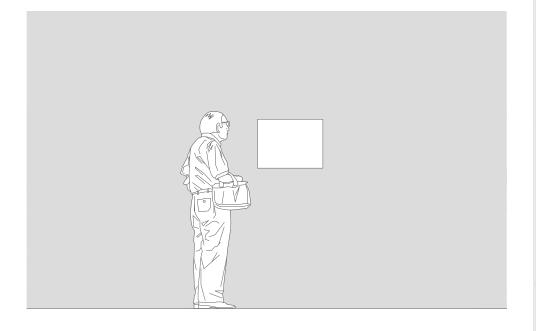
Working with a symbolic language allows me to hold onto these fleeting fragments just long

enough to give them form. Symbols carry meaning beyond themselves. It's a language that is fluid, shifting in meaning and interpretation. Several recent works introduce symbols that function more directly as signifiers, establishing a richer dialogue between viewer, material, and idea. Compositions explore spatial relationships — drawing from references like thresholds, grids, and stair-like increments. These structures imply movement, transition, or passage. And while some forms suggest recognisable elements, their meanings remain open.

Colour plays multiple roles. In some works, it's inherent to the clay itself — emerging through selection, mixing, firing, and finishing. In others, it's added as an engobe, establishing a bonded yet distinct surface. This applied layer responds to temperature, absorption, and the material's own chemistry, creating a dynamic relationship between surface and structure. During firing, both transform together, shifting subtly in response to the process. The timber frames interact in a similar way — the natural tone of the timber influencing the semi-transparent paint finish, built up in layers to harmonise with the ceramic reliefs. Each frame is carefully calibrated to its ceramic counterpart, aligning in colour, scale, and depth.

The relationship between collection, containment and connection is deliberate. The individual fragments are gathered into a unified whole, where adjacencies, alignments and the spaces between elements hold as much weight as the forms themselves.

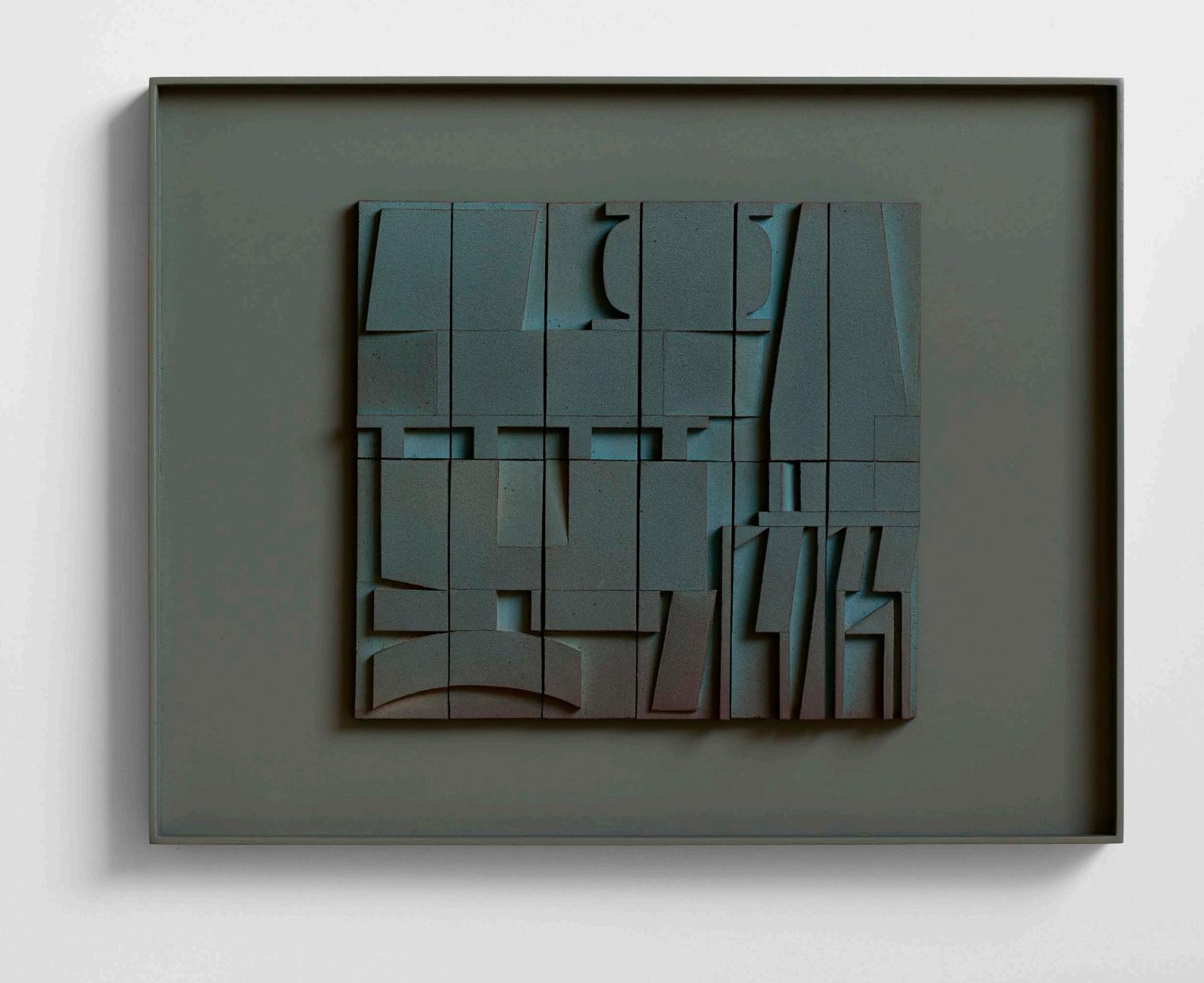
Bruce Rowe 2025

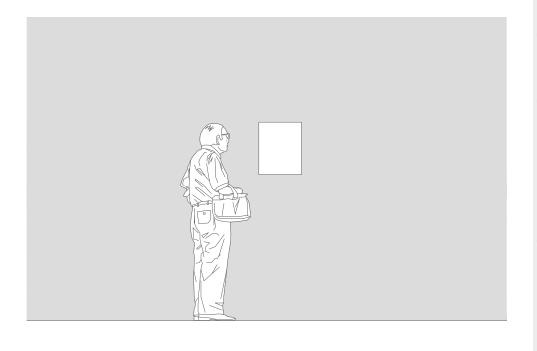




August 2

Frame size mm $565 \times 440 \times 55$ Frame size inches $22.3 \times 17.3 \times 2.2$



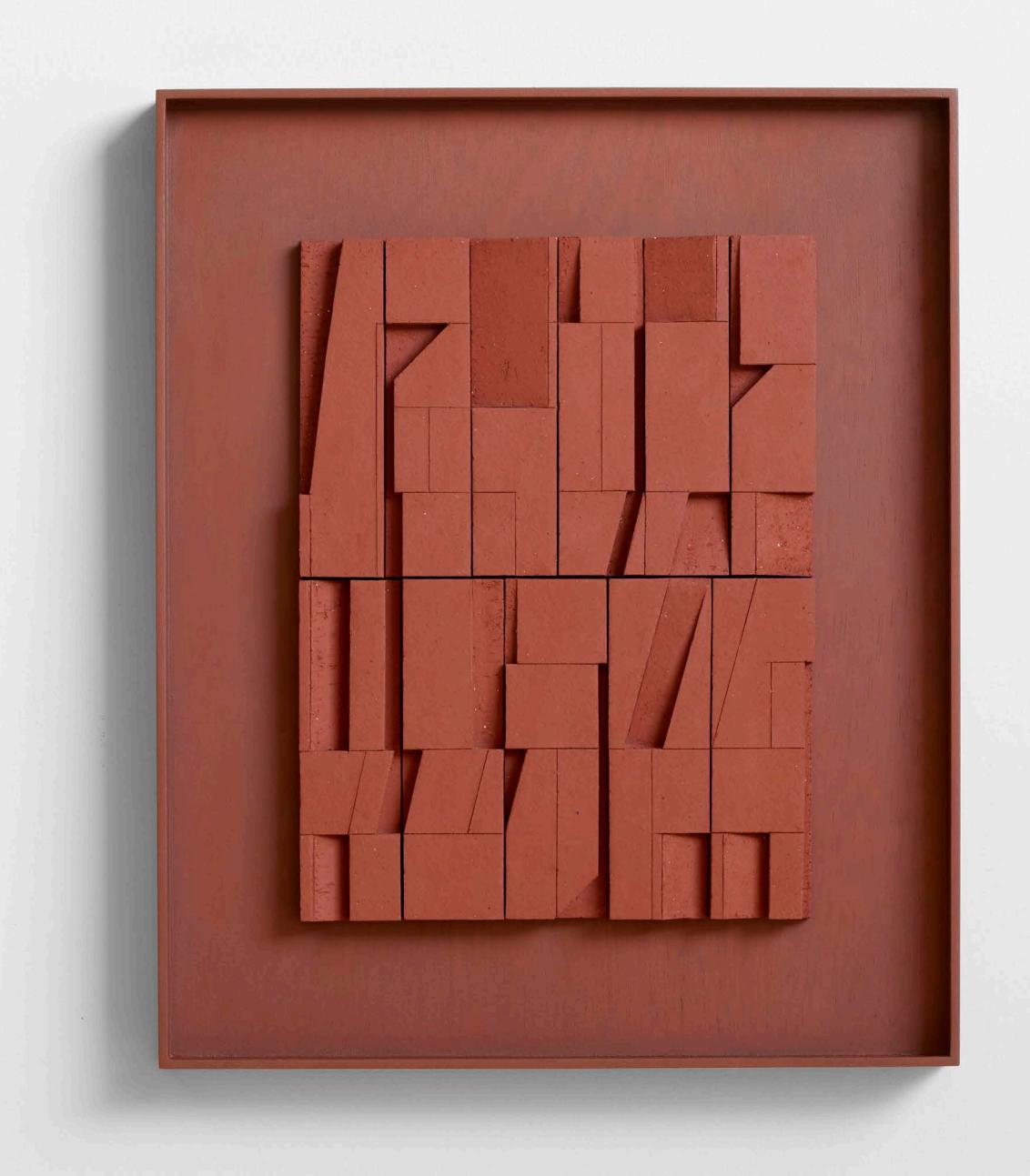


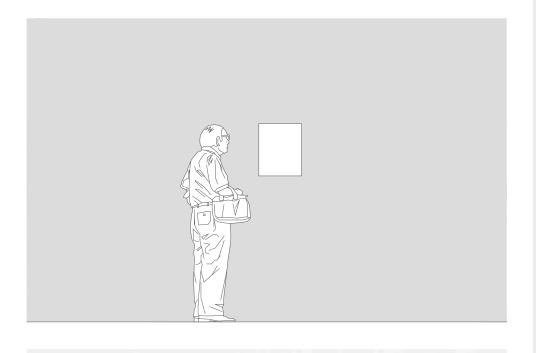


June~23

BR clay, stained timber 2024

Frame size mm $470 \times 385 \times 55$ Frame size inches $18.5 \times 15.2 \times 2.2$

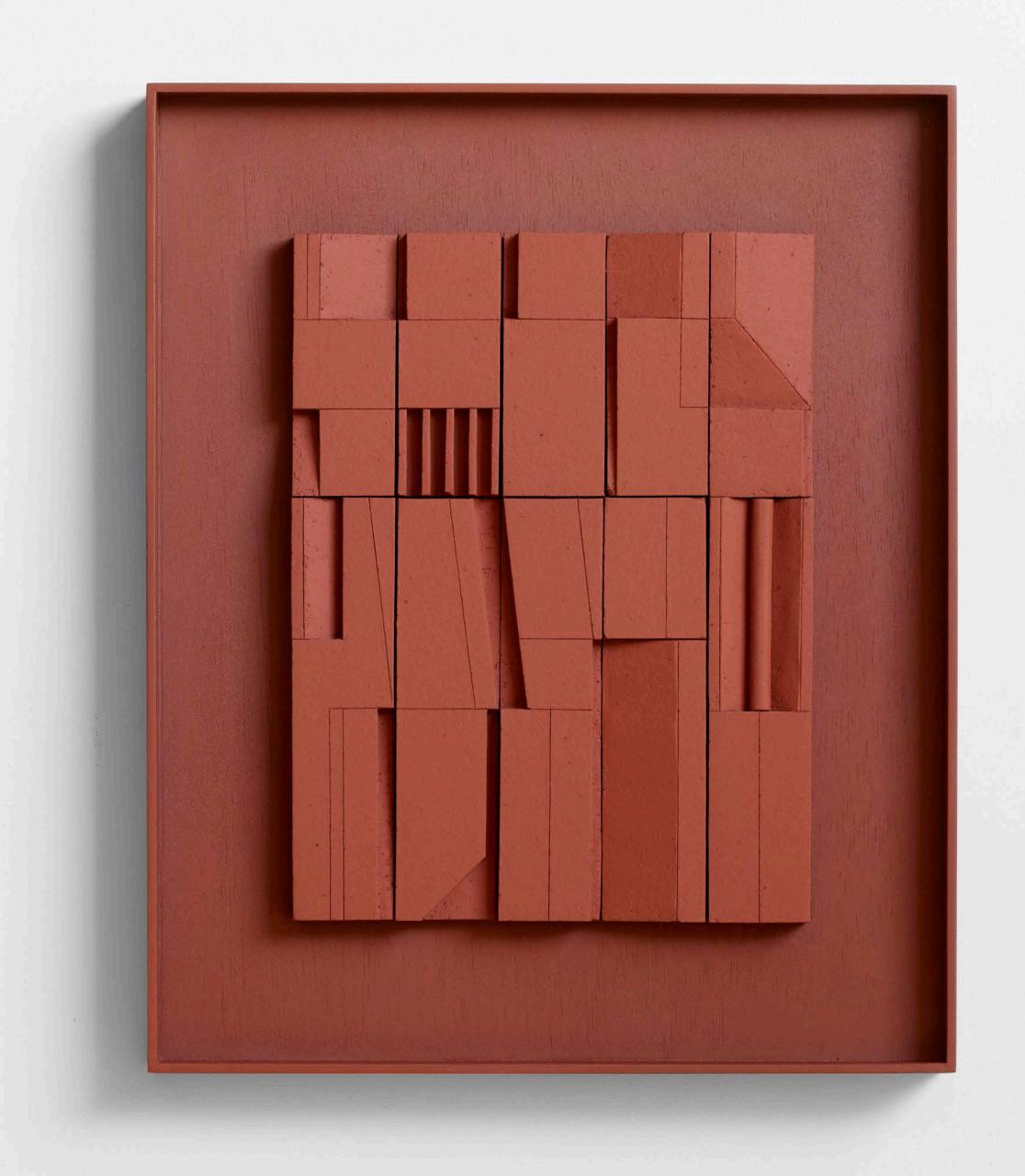


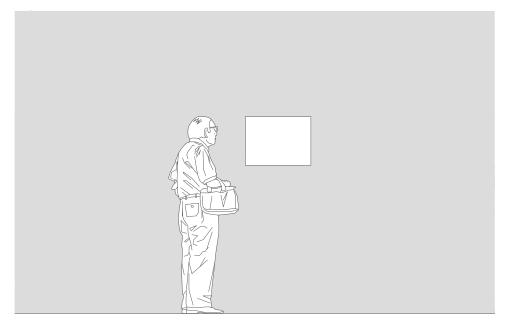




July 5

Frame size mm $470 \times 385 \times 55$ Frame size inches $18.5 \times 15.2 \times 2.2$



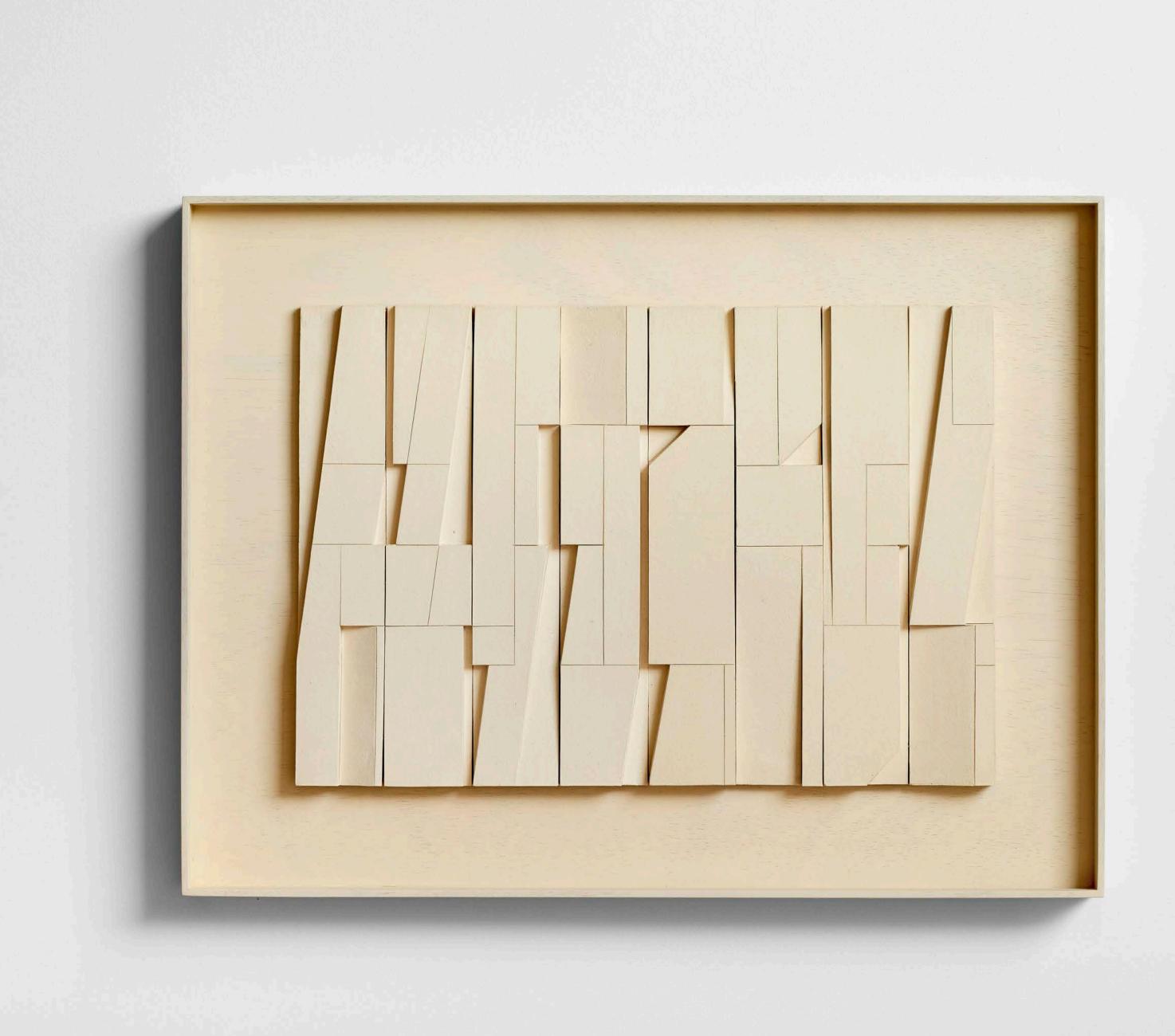


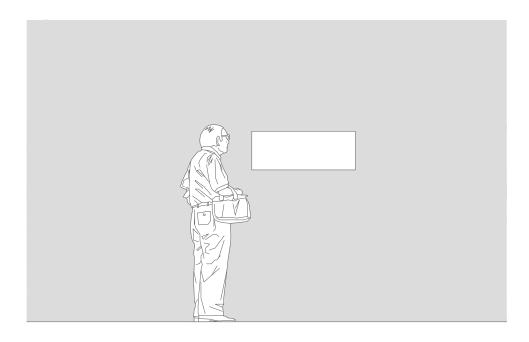


July 7

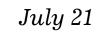
Off white clay, stained timber 2024

Frame size mm $585 \times 440 \times 55$ Frame size inches $23 \times 17.3 \times 2.2$



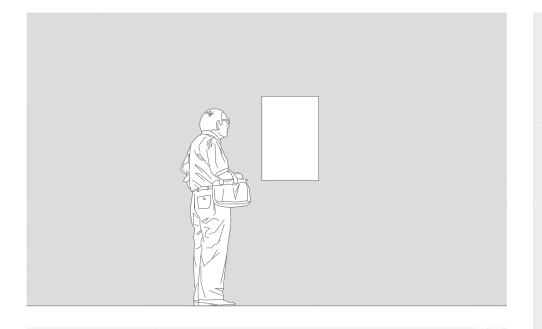






Frame size mm $920 \times 350 \times 60$ Frame size inches $36.2 \times 13.8 \times 2.4$



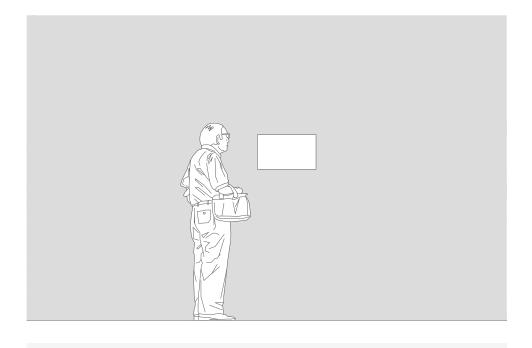




August 3

Frame size mm 750 x 510 x 55 Frame size inches 29.5 x 20.1 x 2.2





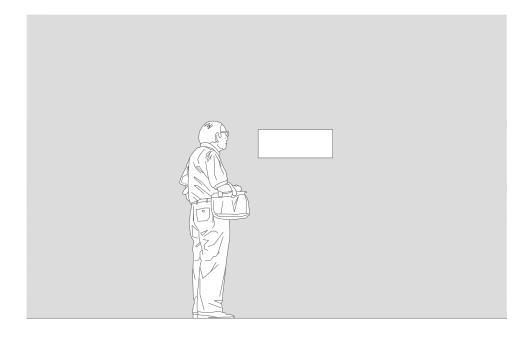


August 8

Raku clay, engobe, stained timber 2024

Frame size mm $525 \times 315 \times 65$ Frame size inches $20.7 \times 12.4 \times 2.6$



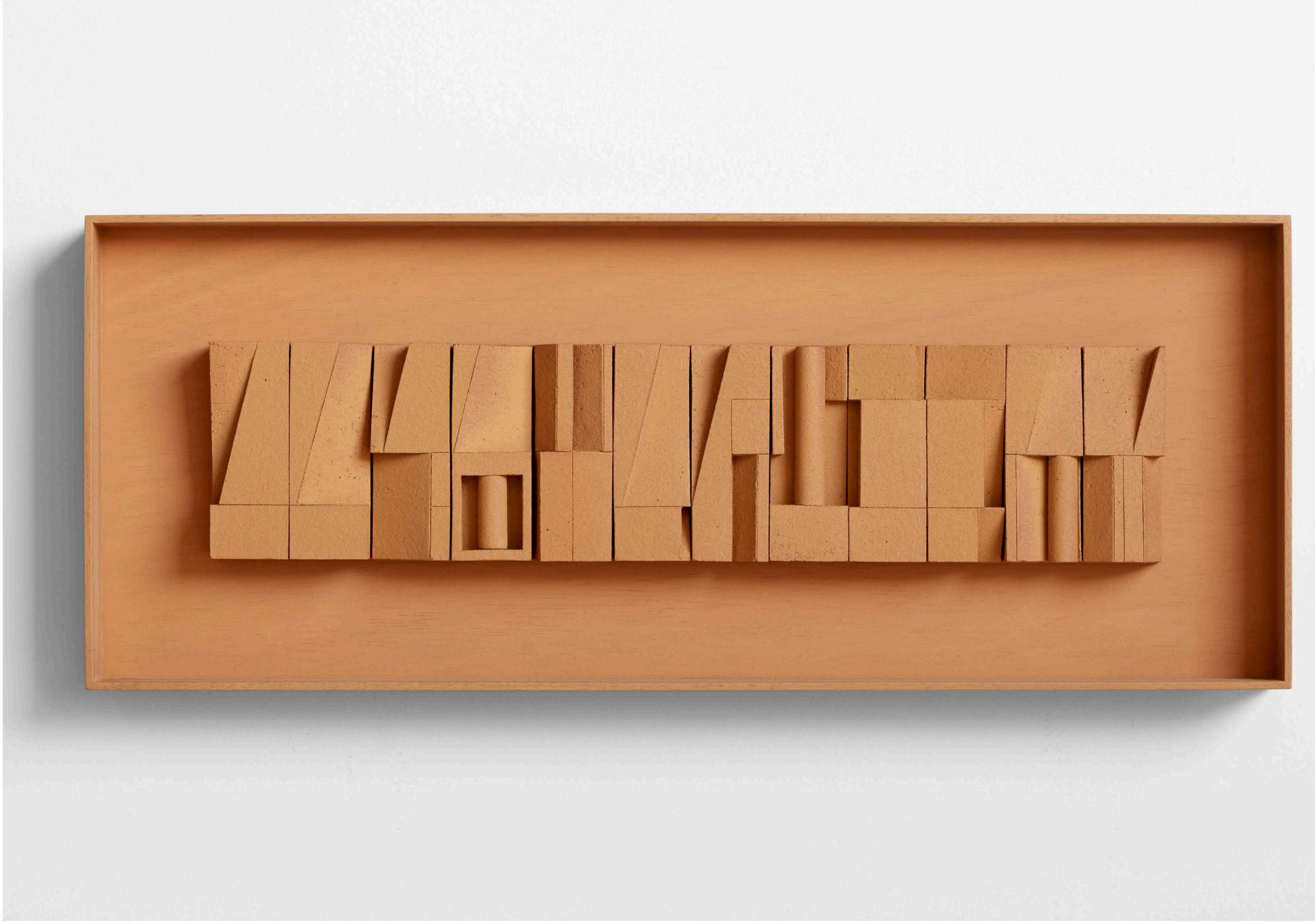


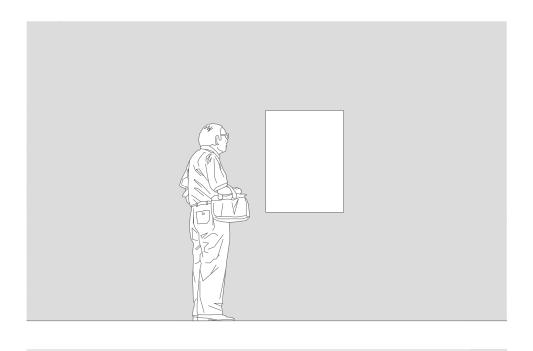


August 9

Raku clay, engobe, stained timber 2024

Frame size mm $665 \times 260 \times 70$ Frame size inches $26.2 \times 10.3 \times 2.8$



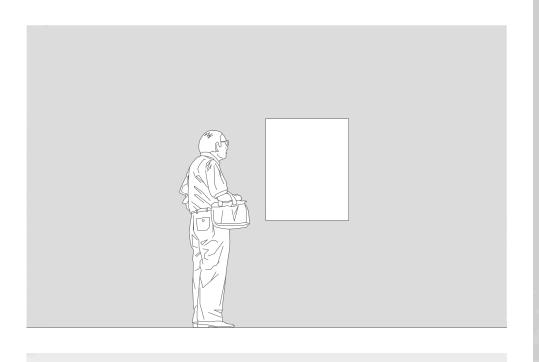




September 4

Frame size mm 905 x 695 x 55 Frame size inches 35.6 x 27.4 x 2.2



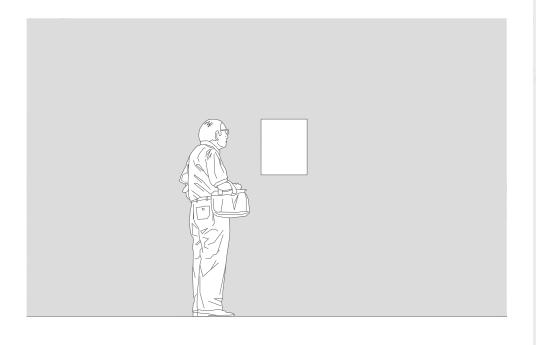




September 14

Frame size mm 905 x 740 x 55 Frame size inches 35.6 x 29.2 x 2.2

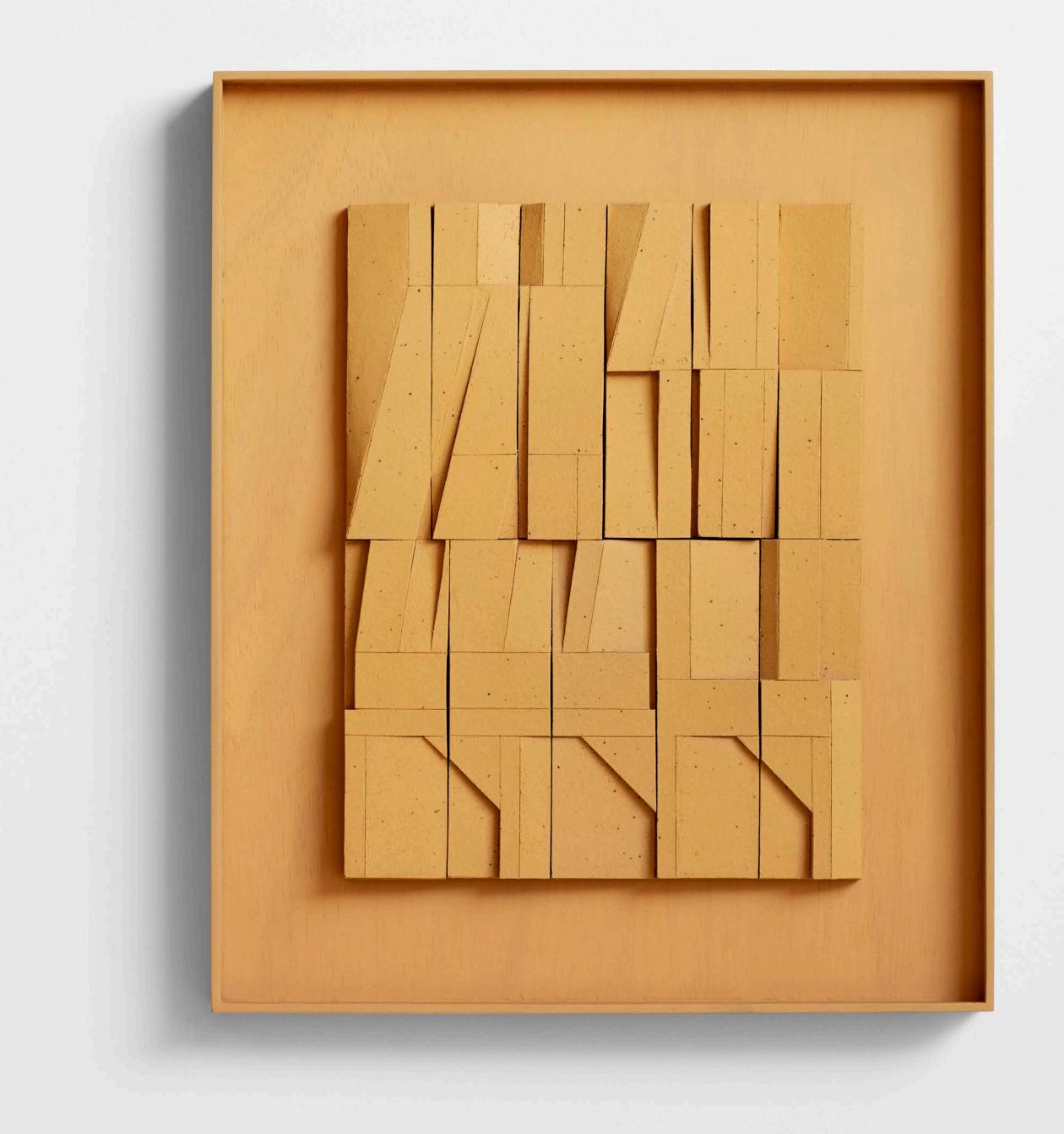


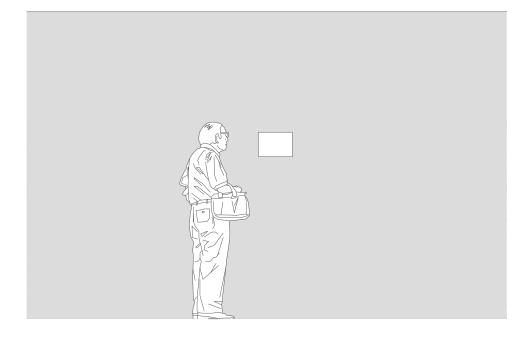




September 28

Frame size mm $500 \times 415 \times 55$ Frame size inches $19.7 \times 16.4 \times 2.2$





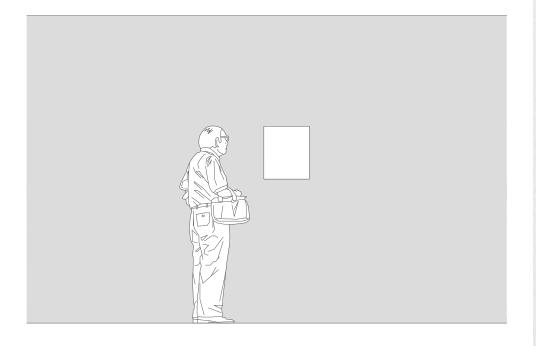


September 30

Raku clay, engobe, stained timber 2024

Frame size mm 310 x 225 x 55 Frame size inches 12.2 x 8.9 x 2.2



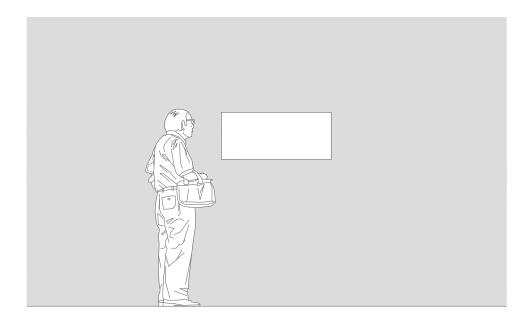


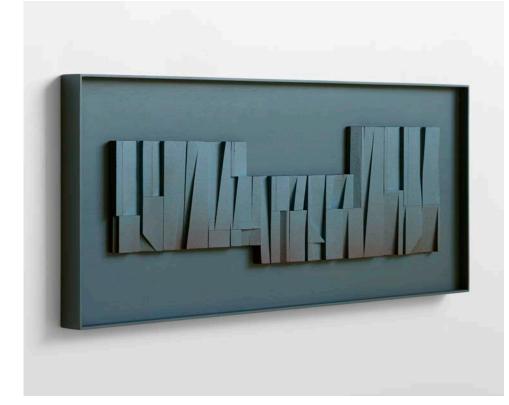


October 1

Frame size mm 475 x 410 x 55 Frame size inches 18.7 x 16.2 x 2.2



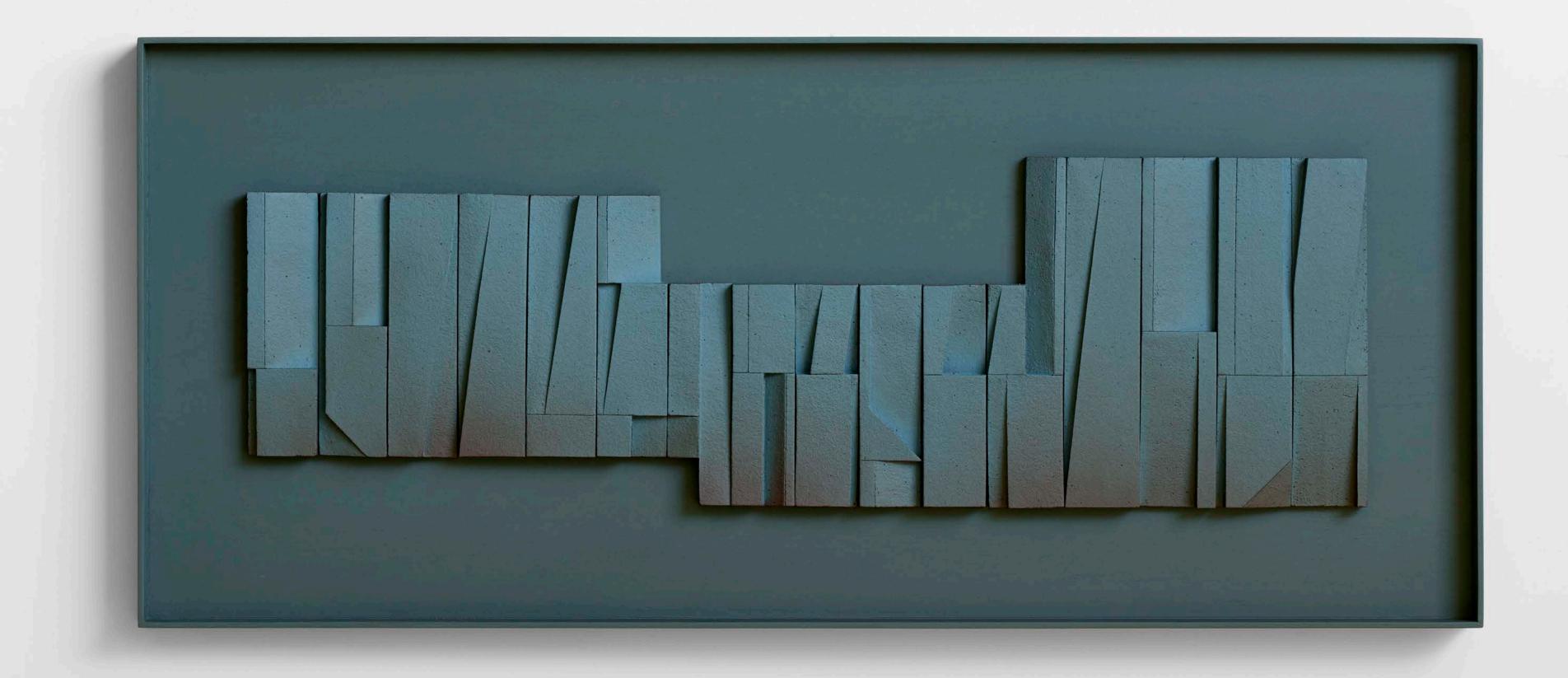




October 11

BR clay, engobe, stained timber 2024

Frame size mm 975 x 425 x 55 Frame size inches $38.4 \times 16.8 \times 2.2$



Bruce Rowe - Artist Statement

My work is personal with the primary intent to visually explore and document my lived, human experience. I have focused on making works about presence, for we exist here, now, and nowhere else. It has taken me many years to reflect and build understandings about the works I have made. It is through the slow, and at times difficult progression of making works that I have come to make such connections to their meaning.

My works include drawing, ceramics and sculpture. Structured, repetitive forms such as stairs, fences, masks, walls and boundaries run throughout my practice. Works examine the often-contradictory nature of these archetypes and the threshold or liminal space that exists between the contradictions. They reference my lived, felt and sensed understanding of passage, refuge, protection and defence.

The physical act of making has a central role in my process. Works are made through a dialogue between drawing, physical effort, time and material. Drawing connects the imagined with the corporeal. The act of making and the time it takes to do so creates a tangible space in my process that I have found necessary for the work to become concrete. Both planned and intuitive action is present. I use ceramic, timber, plaster and a host of secondary or support materials to make work. Sometimes these materials are used in their raw state and at other times a surface is applied. I take an agnostic approach to methodology, process and material; nothing is 'better' than anything else, but everything has meaning; attributes that I explore through my practice.

Bruce Rowe - Exhibition History

Solo Exhibitions

2024 Alter, The Front Room Gallery, Melbourne

2024 Nowhere else, The Front Room Gallery, Melbourne

2019 Recent Works, Stahl & Band, Los Angeles, USA

2018 Ascend, Hub, Melbourne

2017 Structures II, Hub, Melbourne

2016 Structures 2015-2016, Hub, Melbourne

2016 *Structures 2015-2016*, Hub, Sydne

2012 Light Studies II, C3, Melbourne

2010 *Light Studies I*, Cultural Value, Melbourne

Collections

2025 If these fragments could be read, Melbourne 2024 Tableaux, Stahl & Band, Los Angeles, USA 2022 VAS, The Front Room Gallery, Melbourne 2017 Scape, Hub, Melbourne

Group Exhibitions

2014 *Process/Ritual*, C3, Melbourne 2013 *Painting*, BSG, Melbourne

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The Artist would like to recognise the contribution of the following people and thank them for their support:

Claire Hatch, Piers Brown, Tatjana Plitt, Angus Gardner Damien Thiberge

Bruce Rowe - Biography

Bruce Rowe was born in Boorloo/Perth,
Western Australia in 1971. He currently lives
and works in Naarm/Melbourne, Australia.
Rowe has exhibited sculpture, painting and
drawing in Australia and the US.

Rowe's artistic practice explores his lived human experience through an exploration of time, material and process. Structured, repetitive forms such as stairs, fences, masks, walls and boundaries run throughout his practice. Works examine the oftencontradictory nature of these archetypes and the threshold or liminal space that exists between the contradictions. Rowe's personal understanding and experience of refuge, protection, passage and defence are the territory from which many works are developed.

Rowe has participated in group exhibitions and had solo exhibitions of drawings such as Light Studies I and Light Studies II. Rowe has had three recent solo exhibitions of sculptures; Structures 2015-2016, Structures II and Ascend. Recent Works 2019 at Stahl + Band in LA, USA was his fourth solo exhibition of sculpture. *Nowhere else* is his current collection of sculptural relief works completed in 2024.

A dynamic creative practitioner, Rowe founded design studio *Anchor* in 2012, to experiment with the materiality of clay and apply creative thinking to the ceramics process. The studio actively seeks to build bridges between design, craft, architecture and art.

As creative director of *Anchor*, Rowe generates creative solutions and guides them through the design process. He oversees an interdisciplinary team and a structured material research program. The research explores the potentiality of ceramics, waste stream redirection and non-traditional production methods. Selected research streams are developed into products, editioned objects and artworks.

Rowe studied Design at Curtin University in Western Australia before obtaining a Bachelor of Architecture from The University of Western Australia. He has designed numerous residential, commercial and civic buildings in national and international contexts. Committed to creative thinking and spatial education he has lectured and led undergraduate and postgraduate studios at leading universities in Architecture and Design. He is the recipient of numerous awards and is a registered architect with the Architects Registration Board of Victoria, Australia.

brucerowestudio.com