



Catherine Truman, 'Palm Up', 2002, carving in English lime wood, Shu Niku ink, 20 x 20 x 0.5 cm



Catherine Truman, 'Wax Portrait #3', 2003, digital image on paper embedded in paraffin wax, carved surface, 12.5 x 16.5 x 1.5 cm

A TALE OF THREE CITIES

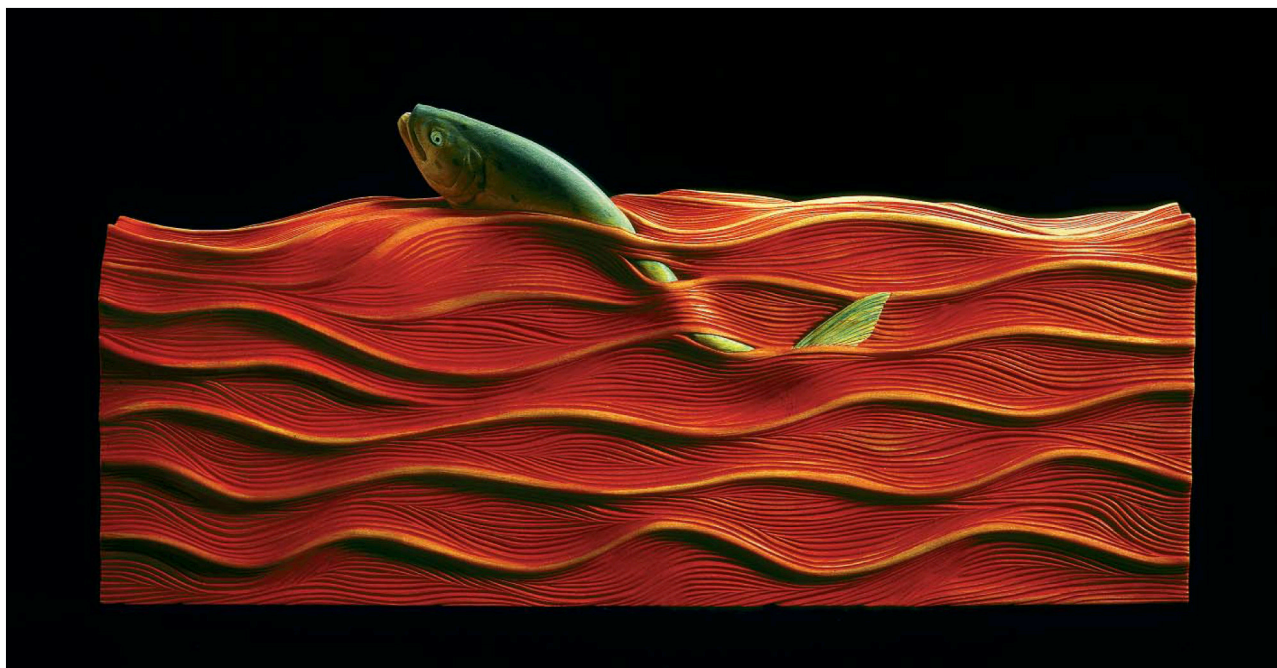
Ian Were looks at three extraordinary object makers – Catherine Truman, Margaret West and Barbara Heath – spanning a period of 20 years, in Adelaide, Sydney and Brisbane, cities the author lived in over the same period.

IN 1983 *Men At Work's Down Under* was a hit in the US (Americans wanted to know what a Vegemite sandwich was), The Big Chill was analysed at dinner parties, 125 million tuned into the last episode of *MASH*, the US invaded Grenada, Motorola tested the first cellular phone, Lech Walesa won the Nobel Peace Prize, and Tennessee Williams choked on a bottle cap.

For me it was a bittersweet year. In some ways one of the best, in others the worst. In July of that year my God-child was born in Adelaide, the city of my birth to which I returned in September after three years in San Diego and Los Angeles. Coming back, Adelaide felt small, but it did have more than a little in common with its megasisters – a Mediterranean-style climate, on the edge of a desert (with water problems), and fabulous wines and

ruby-red sunsets over the sea (well, the gulf of St Vincent anyway). Sometime in 1983 *Craft Arts International* was conceived – with the first issue being launched in late '84. Around this time, I'd met two energetic young jewellers working from a basement studio in Adelaide who were making engaging work – Anne Brennan and Catherine Truman. These were the culturally halcyon times of an Adelaide basking in Don Dunstan's reform decade of the 1970s. The art world in top gear was moving fast, and Brennan and Truman were part of it, working intensely on their first exhibition.

By early 1985 Brennan and Truman, together with Sue Lorraine, had founded Gray Street Workshop (which celebrated its 15th birthday in 2000 with a lively anthology).¹ Truman had just completed studies in jewellery



Catherine Truman, 'A Fish for the Flight', 1993, English lime wood, Shu Niku ink, paint. Commissioned for Aquatic Sciences Centre, Adelaide