



Lizzie Buckmaster Dove's installation *New Moon* at Coledale sea pool. Right, top to bottom: Building *New Moon* and *Full (Blue) Moon*, and the complete *Full (Blue) Moon*. Pictures: BERNIE FISCHER

# Artworks inspired by nature

## POOL, THE ALCHEMY OF BLUE

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Wollongong City Gallery

Lizzie Buckmaster Dove's newest works were inspired by the community at Coledale where she lives, by the suburb's beaches and rock platforms and the way they interact with the tides and the cycles of the moon, and above all by the Illawarra's ocean pools.

"There are lots of themes moving through it and not all of them are completely tangible to me," she says. "They kind of come to me and sometimes disappear again."

"But part of the project for me is about place, and sense of place and community."

"I am yet to meet somebody that doesn't love the sea pools."

"We have such a huge, rich history of sea pools in the Illawarra – we have the most sea pools of anywhere in Australia, if you look at this stretch of coast and compare it

to anywhere else."

The artworks in *Pool, The Alchemy of Blue* – some of which have been installed in the gallery while others were temporary constructions built on the rock platform next to Coledale pool last year – are in some ways a radical departure from Buckmaster Dove's previous work.

In the past she has worked on a small scale, making intricate, precisely constructed objects, often from paper or found objects.

The artworks in *Pool*, however, are not small, delicate and private; they are big, robust and very public.

And rather than being made from fragile materials, they are constructed from rough lumps of weathered concrete.

"It is the absolute antithesis of what I have done previously in terms of material and scale," Buckmaster Dove says.

In other ways, though, the *Pool* works are a continuation of her previous art, drawing inspiration

from nature and her local surrounds.

The new works, in fact, follow on from a previous series, called *The Tide Project*, and both grew out of her daily walks along Coledale's beaches and rock platforms with both referencing the tides and the shifting phases of the moon.



**We have such a huge, rich history of sea pools in the Illawarra**

While collecting flotsam and jetsam for *The Tide Project*, Buckmaster Dove began noticing – and gathering – small sea-worn pieces of blue-painted concrete; fragments eroded away from the Coledale pool.

When she learnt the council was re-lining the pool – and removing the old concrete – she began carting wheelbarrow loads of concrete and

storing them under her house.

She later used the concrete chunks to create circle "moons" next to the pool; *Full (Blue) Moon* was made on the full moon of August 31 last year, and *New Moon* was built on the new moon of October 15, with friends and volunteers coming together to help construct them under Buckmaster Dove's direction.

Buckmaster Dove will construct another in situ moon piece at the Coledale pool for the full moon of May 25, and volunteers are invited to come along and help (gloves and protective footwear essential).

"I love that the sea pools are a really egalitarian thing," she says.

"They were built essentially for people, for miners, who didn't have running water in their houses so it was a safe place to wash."

"And I really love that they wouldn't be built now."

"There is no way with OH&S - I have to get permission to build a rock installation - there is no way they would go in and blast concrete

out of rock platforms.

"They are incredible relics of a past life that are really tangible and that we are still using and interacting with everyday."

"When I look at a sea pool in a rock platform I don't see that as an intervention ... I see that as a natural part of that landscape."

"They are so weathered and in all sorts of states they have almost become a natural part of the landscape."

BENJAMIN LONG



Studio maquette. Picture: LIZZIE BUCKMASTER DOVE.