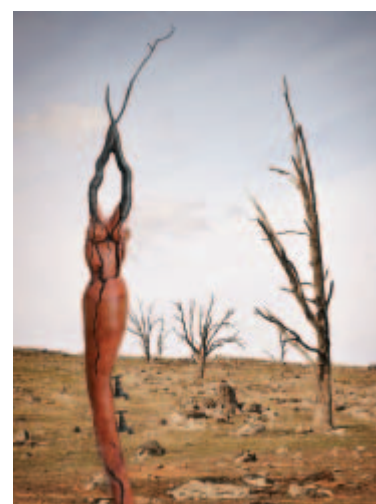
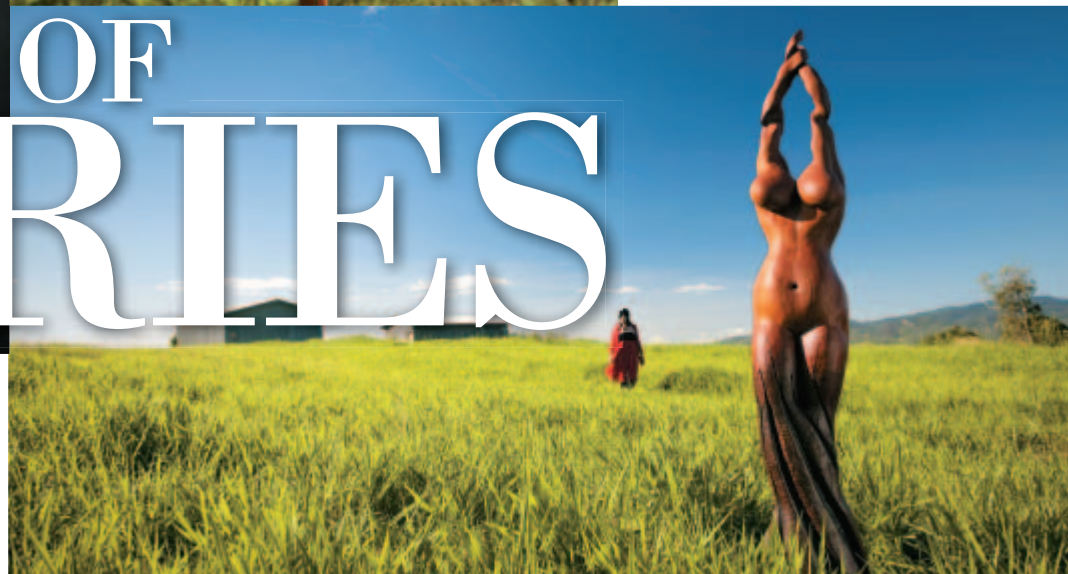


Complex designs: Tolga artist Josie Lowerson brings forward memories of her family and other loved ones, together with memories conjured up by beloved wardrobe residents.

CLOSET OF MEMORIES

STORY BY ROBYN RANKIN PHOTOGRAPHY PETER ROSSI

JOSIE LOWERSON DELVED INTO THE DEPTHS OF HER WARDROBE TO FIND INSPIRATION FOR HER STUNNING NEW EXHIBITION, APTLY NAMED ATTIRE...



There are a few ruthless women among us, but most of us are probably guilty of keeping old outfits for sentimental reasons.

It might be that dress you wore to the races where you met the man of your dreams or the cute skirt and top you wore to that unforgettable girl's night out. Or it might even be your favourite pair of jeans – they don't fit anymore but one day they will, dammit.

Tolga artist Josie Lowerson has thrown open her wardrobe door in search of inspiration for her latest exhibition.

"The clothing hanging on the rack

was a fabric version of a timeline that brought back memories of parties, weddings, funerals, christenings, graduations and other events that we all encounter in the normal course of lifetime experiences," Josie recalls.

She admits holding on to her power suits from the '80s and other items of fabulous clothing she bought overseas.

"The association of the clothing and events is quite powerful as most people have some recollection of what they were wearing during some point in their lives and often this is connected with a strong memory of that occasion," Josie says. She is the eldest of 11 children in a close family.

Josie's exhibition of life-sized

figurative sculptures is made from local Australian hardwoods.

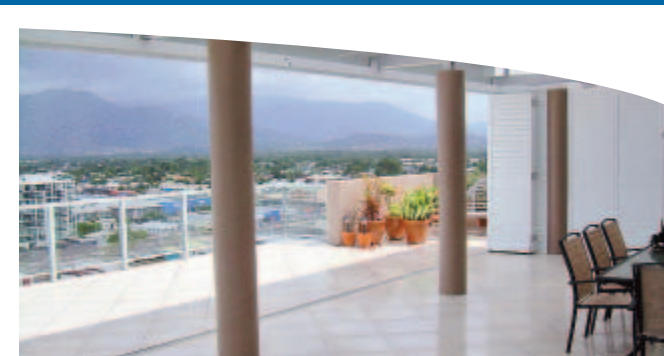
Each of the sculptures pursues a narrative and the use of the feminine form is semi-autobiographical in the sense that it represents a woman's perspective on life. One of the pieces, while in the female shape, is about her father, as evidenced by the twisting turns in the timber, she explains.

Another, the last piece that she was working on in the final months before the exhibition, was a personal commentary about breast augmentation. "I saw two women in their 40s who'd just had it, and then I compare that to a couple of close friends I have lost to breast cancer,"

she reflects. An arts teacher on the Tableland, Josie says while the stories behind each piece are personal, once they are complete, she feels ready to let them go. While Josie's original artwork mediums were photography and painting, she moved to timber sculpture about 20 years ago.

When we left her, Josie was about to go shopping for an outfit for the exhibition opening. We wonder if that will be inspiration for her next series.

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