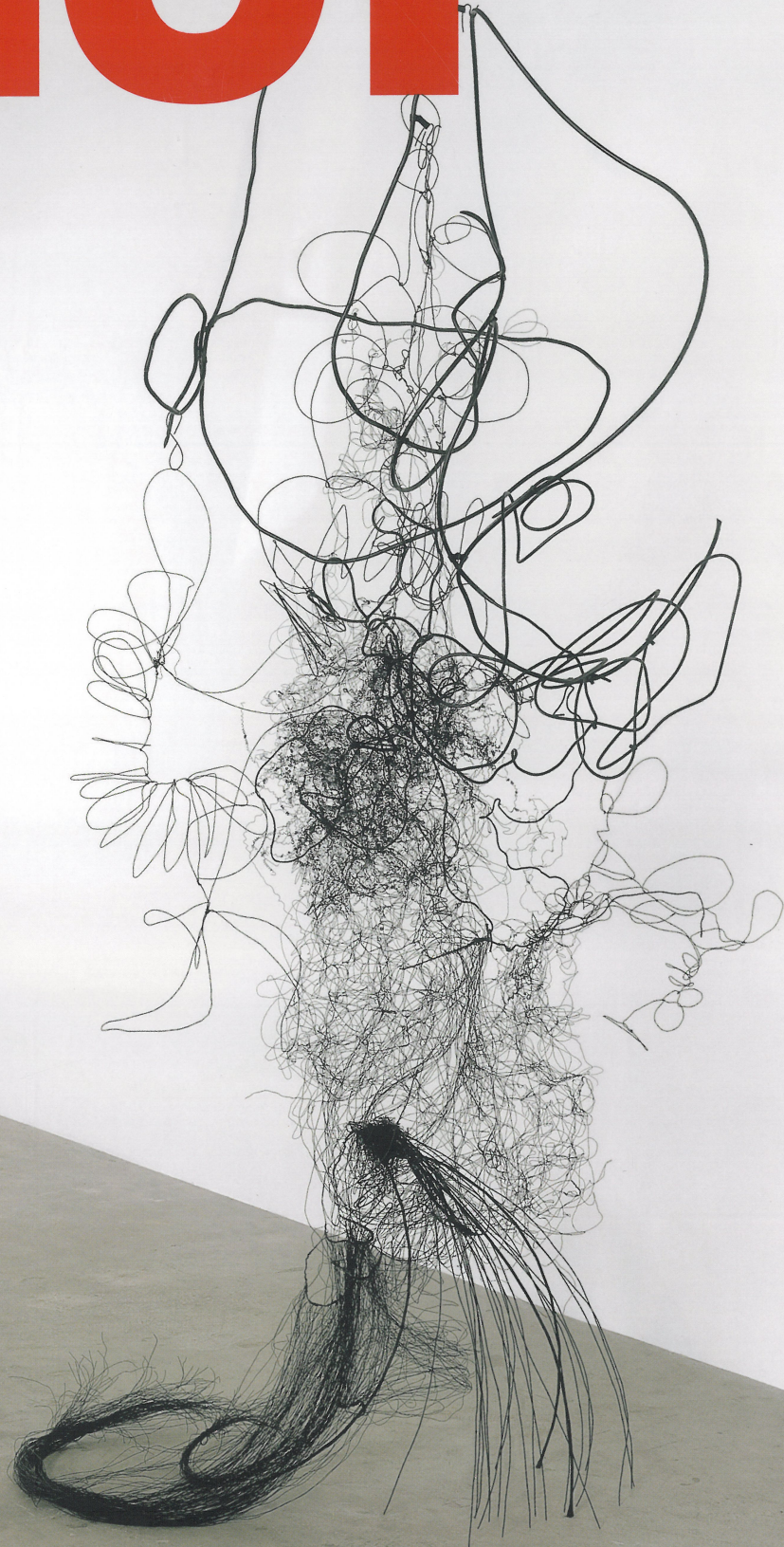


# 101

*Contemporary  
Australian  
Artists*



Honor Freeman's unique practice reveals a fascination with the domestic realm and the 'ordinariness' of the everyday objects and mundane tasks that occupy our lives. Working primarily in slip-cast porcelain, Freeman replicates commonplace and often-overlooked objects such as used polystyrene coffee cups, household sponges and tupperware containers, drawing attention to the essential relationships between us and the things that we use every day. Freeman utilises the surprising mimetic properties of porcelain, expertly crafting objects that belie their materiality and purpose.

As the artist writes:

There is always the thrill of the first cast from a new mould and the transformation from one material to another, from the coldness of plastic to the warmth of porcelain. The porcelain cast from the mould becomes a ghost, the essence of an object. It is this curious and remarkable ability of porcelain to mimic other surfaces, textures and objects. At the same time the porcelain retains the very qualities that make it such a seductive material, it imbues the object with some kind of otherness, transforming it and shifting it ever so slightly and subtly.<sup>1</sup>

In a similar context, Freeman has also made quietly subversive interventions into the urban environment, including affixing porcelain domestic light switches and power points to the sides of buildings and in other unexpected public locations, and dispersing porcelain

bread tags in the streets for people to find. There is a playful quality to Freeman's work – she delights in challenging our assumptions about private domestic space and the public sphere. Humble objects and insignificant moments are commemorated in this way, quietly signifying the passage of time, the rhythmic nature of existence and our interactions with the world. These conceptual and aesthetic concerns have continued in Freeman's most recent practice.

*Soap selection*, 2008, comprises nineteen individual porcelain components that are slip-cast reproductions of actual bars of soap in varying states of use. Each piece of soap is positioned in a consistently spaced single line, which invites the viewer to consider the differences in their shapes and colours. The process of slip-casting has allowed Freeman to achieve an extraordinary sense of realism, utilising muted pastel tones and mimicking the fine fissures, cracks and worn edges of each individual piece. The result is a confounding sense of artful trickery. Porcelain can so precisely imitate the visual qualities of soap that it is only through touch that the true nature of the work becomes apparent. Freeman cleverly exploits the properties of each material, highlighting the duality and contradictions that exist between the softness and ephemeral nature of soap and the hardness and durability of porcelain. There is a delightful sense of intimacy and personal association that each small piece evokes in the viewer, transforming these everyday items into objects of wonder.

Emma Mayall

