



Ground-breaking exhibition explores how design for disability is not all about functionality

artisan, 45 King Street, Bowen Hills Q 4006

11 May - 13 July 2019

Opening event, 2pm Saturday 11 May

A ground-breaking new exhibition, [Agency by Design: Expressive Design for Disability](#) opens Saturday 11 May at **artisan** in Brisbane. The exhibition features 26 works and will be on display until 13 July.

[Agency by Design: Expressive Design for Disability](#) explores how design for disability does not follow a one size fits all model and is not only about functionality – by looking at design tailored to physical and expressive individual needs.

Many of the designs profiled in this exhibition allow the wearer to project a powerful image of how they want to be seen, whether that be glamorous, elegant, strong or simply just wanting to reveal their own life passions. Other designs enhance socialisation or provide individualised assisted technology solutions.

The exhibition comprises jewellery, apparel, ocular prosthetics, furniture and technology and includes the work of: Artificial Eyes Australia, Bravery Co, Technology for Ageing and Disability Queensland, Vivien Bedwell, Leah Heiss, Carol Taylor and Janice Rieger & Megan Strickfaden.

[Agency y Design: Expressive Design for Disability](#) is an original exhibition developed by **artisan**. Kevin Wilson, Curator at **artisan**, explained that agency and ownership were the foundations of the show.

"We were interested in looking at how good design can engender agency in someone living with disability. We wanted to hear from designers who live with a disability, or organisations and business that work closely with the disability community, to learn from their experiences around adaptive and inclusive design," Mr Wilson said.



Image: Image Courtesy of Artificial Eyes.

Image: Smart Heart, 2016. Leah Heiss, Keely Macarow and Paul Beckett in collaboration with St. Vincent's Hospital, funded by Gandel Philanthropy. Photograph by Narelle Portanier.

Image: Image Courtesy of Artificial Eyes.



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Artisan receives financial assistance from its major sponsors, Arts Queensland (State Government) and the Australia Council, the Commonwealth Government's arts funding and advisory body.



"All of the objects in this exhibition have at their core an ethos of the individual or bespoke design. This attention on the individual articulates the needs of people living with a disability to take on an expressive life, beyond notions of basic living, beyond functionality. It was this sense of agency and ownership that formed the basis of the exhibition. Carol Taylor's design work producing glamorous 'wheelchair accessible' fashion is a great example."

A car accident in 2001 left Carol Taylor a quadriplegic, paralysed from the chest down, with only some arm movement and a complete lack of hand or finger movement. In the years since, Carol's achievements have been outstanding by any measure. She has become a mother and returned to work establishing her own law practice. In addition to this, Carol's experience and dissatisfaction with 'off the rack' clothing and a growing interest and desire to address her and others' need for clothing to be both practical and enable the wearer to feel beautiful and glamorous, inspired her to develop a range of 'wheelchair accessible' fashion.

The physical health issues that people with quadriplegia face create unique problems when it comes to clothing design. Items from Carol Taylor's collection are featured in [Agency by Design: Expressive Design for Disability](#).

For **artisan's** CEO Claire Sourgnès, who has been planning the exhibition for some time, *Agency by Design* is a celebration of good design and inclusion.

"**artisan** exists to enrich the lives of people through craft and design. As an organisation, we believe that good design addresses and aims to resolve human problems on both micro and macro scales, and contribute to social well-being. Inclusion is at the heart of what we do at **artisan** and *Agency by Design* is an exhibition that reminds us that designers have an obligation to be designing for everyone in our community," said Ms Sourgnès.

"Like all exhibitions *Agency by Design* took time to develop. We initially connected with Access Arts Queensland to talk about designers or artists they had been working with, which lead the team to meeting Carol Taylor. From there we connected with Technology for Ageing and Disability Queensland, Artificial Eyes, Bravery Co and Leah Heiss. We also partnered with QUT Art Museum with this exhibition, which has opened up a wonderful opportunity to work with Dr Janice Rieger and the QUT Design team.

"We're very thankful to every person and organisation who has contributed to the exhibition's development. It has been a great privilege for **artisan** to explore this area together with the community. I encourage everyone to come along and learn from people's personal experiences around adaptive and inclusive design."

[Agency by Design: Expressive Design for Disability](#) will be officially opened at 2pm Saturday 11 May at **artisan**, 45 King Street, Bowen Hills.

Prior to the opening event, from 12:30pm there will be two designer-led floor talks. At 12:30 to 1:30pm, Carol Taylor, exhibiting designer and winner of the Access Achievement Award for 2018, will discuss her design practise and future aspirations. Then from 1:30 to 2pm, Leah Heiss, multi-award winning designer and RMIT researcher, will reflect on working at the nexus of design, health, and technology.

artisan will also be presenting an ongoing *Agency by Design* talk series during the exhibition, putting the designers working in the sector centre to the conversation.

Visit the [artisan website](#) for full information about the exhibition and events.

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MEDIA CONTACT

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MEDIA KIT

A media kit is available for the exhibition.
[Click here to download the Media Kit.](#)

ABOUT ARTISAN

artisan is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting and promoting contemporary craft and design practice for both makers and their audiences. **artisan** began its legacy in 1970 and has, for almost 50 years, been the home of craft and design in Queensland.

LOCATION

artisan's new home in the Brisbane Showgrounds precinct.
45 King Street, Bowen Hills Q 4006

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AGENCY by DESIGN

Expressive Design for Disability

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