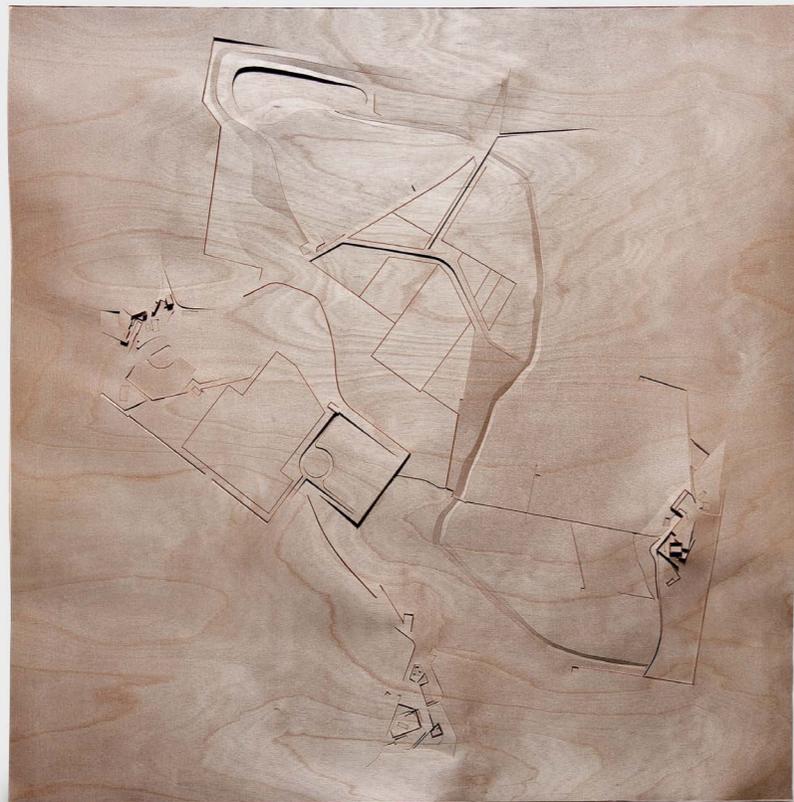


# Architectural Abstractions



*Text*  
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For architect Dayne Trower, what started as a means to understand the geography of a site turned into an art practice that uses the familiar imagery of architectural models. Trower's art practice began during his architecture studies ten years ago, when he would exhibit model artworks that explored deconstructed representations of a site. Now, after years of working together on various projects, he and his wife, architect Simona Falvo, have established Trower Falvo Architects, which allows them to work collaboratively on both the architecture and art practices.

Their fledgling firm incorporates Trower's early art practice as an integral part of their projects to better understand, test and challenge their ideas, but the results can be exhibited and read independently to the architecture. Rather than creating true-to-form vignettes, the duo leave the artworks open, each model divulging precise gestures that are physical abstractions of location. The models engage negative space or the 'in-between' spaces of architecture: the spaces inhabited by the user or the structure's traces on the environment.

The sculptural works are made primarily from birch plywood, selected for its unforgiving but durable material properties, but the duo also consider purpose and scale when choosing materials. 'For example,' Falvo explains, 'on a one to ten-scale facade study of one of our projects, we used concrete and steel to test the proportions and function of steel sliding door components.'

For a recent project titled *Quarry*, in collaboration with experimental interdisciplinary agency These Are The Projects We Do Together, Trower and

Falvo were asked to design a series of pavilions in Beech Forest, a small town in Victoria's Colac Otway Shire. They were also asked to consider an overall landscape and strategy for the gradual development of the site, a sandstone quarry in the Otway Ranges that the agency bought to develop as a research, art, design and education site.

The resulting artworks, rendered in concrete, depict humans' impact on the ecology as slight and minimal interfaces with almost bodily curves. 'Human processes, including land clearing, have irreversibly changed the composition of the Earth,' the couple wrote in their proposal for the project. *Quarry* investigates this impact of the Anthropocene on the environment — an enquiry that is pertinent to architecture and the industry's often unsustainable practices. Their artworks reveal a rehabilitation of the land in a novel and thought-provoking way. 'Our body of work doesn't arise solely from our architectural perspective,' says Trower. 'The connection between human and site relies on how it interfaces with the environment surrounding it; unearthing formal, historical and cultural significance, as a way to inform a new intervention.'

Trower and Falvo's artworks expose the lasting ecological impact of the built environment, appearing to present a deconstruction of architecture that is underpinned by fundamental ideas of impact. The abstraction process reveals an access point for the viewer to consider the volume and experience of a site — how each person and development leaves traces and marks. And even though these artworks aren't necessarily abstract, the absence of familiar markers that define a map or a location leaves them open to myriad interpretations.

Architects Dayne Trower and Simona Falvo's models can be read as abstract works of art independent from the projects they represent. Pictured here is *Foundations*, Scale 1:2000, which takes a macro view of the site that is then explored further in smaller-scale works  
*Image by Garry Smith*



This page, top  
Having established their  
eponymous firm, Trower and Falvo  
now work collaboratively on art  
and architecture projects  
*Image by Giulietta Falvo*

This page, bottom  
*Foundations*, Scale 1:200, birch  
plywood  
*Image by Garry Smith*

Facing page, top left  
*Courtyard House*, Scale 1:200,  
birch plywood

Facing page, top right  
*Courtyard House*, Scale 1:50,  
birch plywood and concrete

Facing page, middle left  
*Quarry*, Scale 1:1000, concrete

Facing page, middle right  
*Quarry*, Scale 1:200, concrete

Facing page, bottom left  
*Invisible Cities*, Scale 1:500, birch  
plywood, American walnut

Facing page, bottom right  
*Invisible Cities — 2*, Scale 1:500,  
birch plywood, American walnut  
*Images by Garry Smith*

