

# Order under Canvas



A journey of exploration  
with furniture

## ORDER UNDER CANVAS

An exhibition of travelling furniture by Linda Fredheim

April 1 - 10 2005

Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, Hobart

Cynthia Bay, Lake St Clair National Park

Highfield House Gardens, Stanley

Launceston City Park, Launceston

August 17 - 30 2005

Waterside Pavilion, Mawsons Place, Hobart

© Linda Fredheim 2005

ISBN 0-9757533-0-4

Edition of 100

March 2005

The artist acknowledges the  
Tasmanian Aboriginal community as the  
traditional and original owners of this  
Island State and its surrounding islands

## Itinerary

Day 1 - Hobart

Day 2 - Hobart

Day 3 - Hobart

Day 4 - Hobart to Lake St. Clair

Day 5 - Lake St. Clair

Day 6 - Lake St. Clair to Stanley

Day 7 - Stanley

Day 8 - Stanley to Launceston

Day 9 - Launceston

Day10 - Launceston to Hobart



## Day 1 - Creating Order

*"To unite elegance and utility, and blend the useful with the agreeable"  
(A. Hepplewhite & Co)*

Creating order is the purpose of furniture, from designating the appropriate place to sit and work, to storing the objects of the everyday and the exotic.

Portable furniture was developed in the mid 18th century for use by army officers to create sense of civilisation and familiar comfort in a foreign land whilst on active service. The pieces were designed to be easily dismantled without tools and were packed into timber boxes or canvas bags for transport and then reassembled on arrival at one's destination. Later on this "campaign" furniture became popular with travellers because of its practical portability, and ease of use.

This exhibition of contemporary campaign furniture investigates the attempts of Tasmania's nineteenth century European settlers and explorers to create order in the "new and unknown" land by describing, renaming and mapping the country.

Each of these contemporary interpretations have been inspired by a notable person from Tasmania's 19th century history, with the pieces incorporating maps, text and images relating to the journeys undertaken.

Through their journals, letters and reports, as well as accounts from their contemporaries, I have tried to get a sense of each person; to create a piece of furniture they might have found useful and practical, but also which in some way embodies their experiences and travels.

The pieces of furniture can thus be loosely seen as "Wunderkammer", but instead of being used to store objects collected while travelling, the furniture stores the places visited and the experience of the journey.



Selection of disassembled furniture from  
*Order Under Canvas*



## Day 2 - A Cabinet for Mr. Sprent

*"This kind of duty is anything but friendly to clothes especially shoes"  
(J. E. Calder & J. Sprent)*

James Sprent, a graduate of Glasgow and Cambridge Universities, arrived in Hobart in 1830. He initially set up a school for young gentlemen, but was soon appointed to the Survey department as an Assistant Surveyor.

In 1833 Mr Sprent was put in charge of the trigonometrical survey of Tasmania which had commenced the previous year. The need for an accurate map of Tasmania, had become more pressing as settlement expanded, and it was hoped that a map produced using the scientific principles of measuring by triangulation, could be used to fix boundaries.

Over a period of 5 years, Mr Sprent travelled through the eastern parts of Tasmania, selecting peaks and hills suitable for observation stations. His gang of assigned prisoners would erect an object (a large cairn, or tripod of long poles) and clear the vegetation around the object, to permit a clear view to and from adjoining stations.

Over 56 stations had been selected and cleared in the eastern, settled part of the colony, before the work was suspended in 1837. From the sightings, measurements and calculations, an interim map was produced in 1839.

The design for this cabinet which covers the survey period from 1832-7 (the eastern part of the Island), was inspired by both the map of Tasmania produced in 1857 by Mr Sprent, and from the reports Mr Sprent sent back to the Surveyor General, George Frankland documenting his progress.

I have selected one station from each of the counties on the map for each drawer. I like to think Mr Sprent may have used it to store his observations and calculations for the stations in each county.



A Cabinet for Mr Sprent - 2005  
myrtle, eucalypt, brass fittings  
850w 397d 745h



## Day 3 - A Set of Boxes for Mr Gould

“zealous in their devotion to science” (Sir J. Franklin)

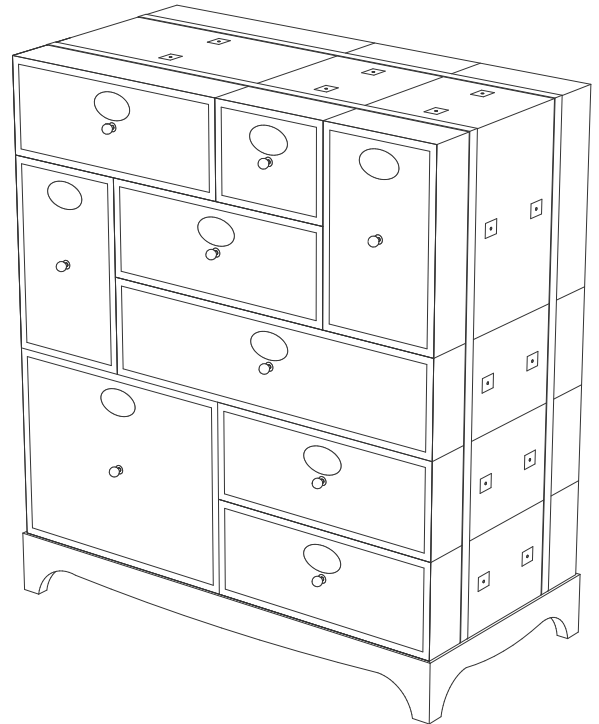
John Gould was born in England in 1804. As a child he collected and sold bird eggs and bird specimens (which he stuffed and mounted), and as an adult set up his own taxidermy business in London in 1824. Four years later he was appointed to position of Curator and Preserver in the Museum of the Zoological Society in London.

Mr Gould is perhaps best known for his folio sets of handcoloured lithographs of birds. His wife, Elizabeth, a talented artist painted the watercolours for the production of the lithographs. Their first book on the birds from Asia was published in 1831.

Elizabeth Gould had two brothers living in New South Wales, who sent back a number of bird specimens from Australia. The Goulds began working on *The Birds of Australia*, but it soon became apparent to Mr Gould that he would need to travel to Australia to acquire a more complete collection and to obtain first hand knowledge of the habitat and behaviour of the birds.

The Goulds and their entourage arrived in Hobart in September 1838. Mr Gould quickly set to work, collecting, classifying and describing the birds around Hobart and further afield in Tasmania, New South Wales and South Australia whilst Elizabeth worked in Hobart on the illustrations for the book. The family left Tasmania in August 1839, travelling to Sydney and New South Wales before finally leaving Australia in April 1840.

This set of collecting boxes for Mr Gould are designed to be used singly or in sets in the field, but they can also be combined and configured to form a display cabinet for the preserved specimens. In Mr Gould’s time there were no high powered binoculars or telephoto lenses, so the only way to describe the birds was to kill them and study them.



A Set of Boxes for Mr Gould - 2005  
Blackwood, eucalypt, brass, laminate, webbing  
800w 400d 920h



## Day 4 - A Cabinet for Mr. Calder

*"he was tireless in the bush" (J. B. Thwaites)*

James Erskine Calder joined the Survey Department in Van Dieman's Land in 1829 as an assistant surveyor. He was a graduate of the Royal Military College, Sandhurst and before arriving in Tasmania had been involved in the Ordnance Survey in England.

As a district surveyor, he worked mostly in the Southeast region, but he also undertook a number of exploratory journeys, mostly during Mr Frankland's period as Surveyor General. He worked intermittently with James Sprent on the trigonometrical survey of Tasmania.

In 1840-2 he marked and cut a track (assisted by Alexander McKay and 7 convicts) for Sir John Franklin and party to travel overland from Marlborough to Macquarie Harbour. Despite meticulous planning on his part, the journey was prolonged due to bad weather. Without his tireless efforts carrying additional supplies for the vice regal party who were unable to proceed due to gales and incessant rain (although not bad enough to stop Mr Calder) it is doubtful that Franklins would have made their destination.

He was a prolific writer on many subjects, but his account of his trip with the Franklins was published several times during his lifetime (and also reprinted more recently). I imagined him recounting the tale many times to friends and acquaintances, so I made this cabinet for him to store the story of the trip and the places he named along the way.

An immensely practical, and hard working man, I always imagined he would travel light so this piece is not designed for travelling but to sit in his home, a reminder of his life in the field.



A Cabinet for Mr Calder - 2004  
myrtle, veneer and solid, eucalypt, laminate, brass  
765w 400d 815h



## Day 5 - A Desk for Mr Frankland

*"A man of education and science" (R. W. Hay)*

George Frankland was appointed in 1826 to the position of assistant surveyor in Van Dieman's Land, and arrived in the colony with his wife and three children in July 1827. He was a lieutenant in the Army and had also been employed in India on trigonometrical surveys.

Upon his appointment, Frankland applied to Lord Bathurst, Secretary of State, stating that as an expert in trigonometrical surveying, he should be appointed as a trigonometrical surveyor with the special duties of mapping the colony, as the island had not been properly or completely mapped. His request was declined.

2 years after arriving, Mr Frankland was appointed Surveyor General. Whilst most of his time was taken up with running the office, managing his staff and resolving boundary disputes, he was still enthused by the need to explore the unknown territory and produce a full map of the colony. He dispatched his staff on several exploratory journeys to the west, and in 1835 he led his own expedition to solve the problem of "the situation of the source of the Derwent"

I made this folding desk with 4 drawers for Mr. Frankland to be both practical and useful. With a drawer for each corner of the island, I imagined him using it to store snippets of information, as it arrived back in the office with a view to producing a complete map, but also practicable enough to be taken with him on any travels he undertook.

I like to think he may have taken it with him on his 1835 trip to discover the source of the Derwent and used it at his "encampment on the little bay, which was named Cynthia's Cove", after the goddess of the moon, and of hunters.



A Desk for Mr Frankland - 2004  
blackwood, celerytop pine, hoop pine plywood, brass fittings  
740h 1400w 700d





## Day 6 - A Pair of Tables for Mr Moore

T. B. MOORE - F.R.G.S. - Explorer

Thomas Bather Moore was born in Tasmania in 1851. He went to school in England, returning to Tasmania in 1868. In 1874 he undertook the first of many trips in western Tasmania prospecting and working small mining claims.

T. B. Moore appears to have been happiest when on the move, examining the country and its natural features as he travelled. He was a keen observer, and kept a meticulous diary of his journeys.

In 1879 he undertook a prospecting trip from Birch Inlet to Victoria (Huonville), travelling down the west coast and via the country south of the Arthur Ranges. Accompanied only by his dogs, Wanderer and Spero, he made the return journey in 4 months. He wrote an account of his trip, naming many unnamed features, which he sent to the Survey Dept.

Over the next 35 years, Mr Moore was employed marking and cutting many tracks in southern and western Tasmania. In 1883 he and 3 men marked and cut the Linda Track (Lake St Clair to Henty River via Mt Lyell), and later in 1886 he supervised its upgrading. The current Lyell highway mostly follows this track. In 1900, he cut a track with 3 others from Birch Inlet to Port Davey closely following his 1879 route.

Mr Moore was frequently away from his home and family in Strahan for many months. This pair of tables were inspired after reading a letter from his wife Mary to the Survey Dept., anxious, as she had had no letter for 5 months. I thought the Moores could each have a matching piece of furniture, one at home with Mrs Moore and one to travel with Mr. Moore. Although he would have travelled light, I like to think he may have used the table as he sketched and wrote up his diary each night.



2 Tables for Mr Moore - 2005  
huon pine , plywood, brass fittings  
350w 350d 590h (closed)  
520w 520d 605h (open)



## Day 7 - A Chair for Mr Frankland

*"more accomplished than proficient" Lady J Franklin*

The Van Dieman's Land Company was formed in London in 1824 by Royal Charter, with the purpose of establishing a large scale sheep raising enterprise in the convict colony of Van Dieman's Land. The company was to receive a single parcel of land in the North West of Tasmania of 250,000 acres suitable for pasture and tillage, roughly square in shape, and bounded on the north and west by coast line.

The advance party for the company arrived in Hobart Town in March 1826 and consisted of Chief Agent Edward Curr, surveyors Henry Hellyer, Joseph Fossey and Clement Lorymer, Agriculturalist Alexander Goldie and Stephen Adey. They travelled north, in several parties, by both land and by sea. A base was established at Circular Head, and from here, many difficult expeditions were mounted by the VDL Company surveyors to search for suitable land and establish overland routes to the more settled areas.

These explorations led the VDL company to realise that due to the nature of the country it would be impossible to select a single parcel of land. Mr Frankland as Surveyor General was soon engaged in a protracted correspondence with Mr Curr regarding exactly where and which parcels of land would be selected for the Company, and exactly what the terms of the original charter intended.

Eventually, after a report from District Surveyor J. H. Wedge and a subsequent visit by Governor Arthur accompanied by Mr Frankland, the location and size of the 6 parcels of land were determined.

Although this chair is designed to fit inside Mr Frankland's travelling desk, I imagine it would be very useful in his Hobart office to sit upon each time he received a further letter from Mr Curr, disputing the direction the negotiations were taking.



A Chair for Mr Frankland - 2005  
blackwood, brass and steel fittings  
745h 440w 440d



## Day 8 - A Box for Mr McKay

*“an active and persevering young man” (J. E. Calder)*

Alexander McKay, was born in Scotland in 1802. He was an apprentice book binder when he was arrested and charged with the theft of a gold watch in 1822. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to transportation for life. On arrival in Hobart Town he was assigned to help clear bushland, but after trying to abscond he was reassigned as a member of a government boat crew, and in 1826 was recommended to the VDL Co for their boat crew.

McKay soon proved himself to be a capable and hard working member of the surveying expeditions of the VDL Co and was recommended for a ticket of leave which was granted in March 1829.

In January 1830, McKay joined George Augustus Robinson’s “friendly mission”, travelling west around the coast of Tasmania by land and sea arriving in Launceston 9 months later, and in the following year undertook further journeys in the north west of Tasmania. In recognition of his service to the government was awarded a free pardon in Nov. 1831

Mr McKay went on to serve off and on for many years in the Survey Department working on many exploratory expeditions, land surveys, and other projects both on his own and under Mr Wedge, Mr Calder, and Mr Sprent amongst others, in all parts of the island.

I have made this box for Mr McKay to keep the stories of his journeys. Engraved around the box are the original names of places he would have travelled to during 1830-31 with his aboriginal guides.

After reading of an incident, where in later years his great granddaughter was told not to mention George Robinson’s name as “he stole Grandfather’s manuscripts”. I have included a secret drawer, and have often wondered where those manuscripts might be now.



A Box for Mr McKay - 2005  
banksia, huon pine, plywood, brass fitting  
308w x 205d x 120h



## Day 9 - A 2nd Cabinet for Mr Sprent

*"ability and perseverance" (W. S. Sharland)*

The arrival in 1847 of the new Lieutenant Governor, William Denison (a Captain of the Corps of the Royal Engineers) saw the recommencement of the Trigonometrical survey of Tasmania.

The project was put in charge of the Deputy Surveyor General, Major Hugh Cotton. Work commenced in September 1847 with Mr Sprent and (a few months later) Mr Calder supervising 3 parties of men, initially clearing and rebuilding the old stations before the difficult work of selecting and clearing the new stations in the more rugged country of the west and north west of Tasmania was begun.

The work proceeded over the next 7 years with Mr Sprent and his parties of men working on a network of stations covering the whole of Tasmania. In 1854 and 1855 Mr Sprent travelled around the state taking bearings from one station to the next.

By June 1856, Mr Sprent had finished all the arduous calculations to enable a map to be produced. The map was drafted by William Hogan from the Survey Dept and printed in England in colour showing the topographical features and counties, as well as existing and proposed townships.

Mr Sprent's handsome and impressive map arrived in Tasmania in June 1859, 3 months before Mr Sprent officially retired from the Survey Dept due to ill health.

I made this cabinet to match Mr Sprent's first cabinet, as I like to think he would have ordered both cabinets in 1837, envisaging that one day the second cabinet would be needed, and that eventually he would be able to hang the map on the wall and place a cabinet on either side of it.



2 Cabinets for Mr Sprent - 2005  
850w 397d 745h



## Day 10 - A Cabinet for Lady Franklin

*"She was small in stature, but strikingly symmetrical" (J.E. Calder)*

Lady Jane Franklin (born in 1791) arrived in Hobart with her husband Sir John Franklin in 1837. Sir John, a naval captain, had been appointed to the position of Lt. Governor. He held the post for 6 years until 1843, when he was recalled and they both returned to England.

Lady Franklin was a keen traveller and before journeying to Tasmania, had travelled widely in Europe. During her stay in Australia she travelled throughout Tasmania and to New Zealand. She was an intrepid woman, climbing Mount Wellington in 1838, and in 1839 undertook the difficult overland journey from Melbourne to Sydney.

A prolific writer, she recorded her experiences in her journal and letters. Reading her journals, one gains a sense of her intense interest in everything she saw and experienced, from the construction of a bridge, to the shape of the landscape.

She is best known in Tasmania for the expedition undertaken with her husband and others, travelling overland from Marlborough to Macquarie Harbour, returning to Hobart by sea via Port Davey. The route through the "New Country" can be followed by the names of the Franklins and those of their family members and acquaintances bestowed on various landmarks.

I have made this portable writing table and matching folding cabinet for Lady Franklin to use whilst on her various journeys. Apart from some letters written to her sister whilst she was away in the "New Country" there appears to be no journal entries. Perhaps the journal has been lost, or, perhaps if she had taken the desk with her on the journey, we may now have her account of a "somewhat perilous journey we made this autumn to Macquarie Harbour".



A Cabinet for Lady Franklin - 2003  
blackwood, eucalypt, copper, silk  
1400h 700w 400d



## Biographical Notes

Linda Fredheim was born in Tasmania. She studied Fine Arts at the University of Tasmania, majoring in Furniture Design graduating in 1992.

Linda is a studio based designer and maker. She has worked with a number of Tasmanian furniture companies developing designs for production as well as undertaking commissions for "one off" furniture pieces in the studio she shares with her partner, Stuart Houghton

Through her involvement in a number of design, craft and art organisations, Linda is committed to the promotion and presentation of contemporary craft and design in Tasmania

### Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2005 *Different Readings* - Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts - Hobart
- 2004 *Design Island* - Object Gallery - Sydney, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery - Hobart, Design Centre Tasmania - Launceston
- 2004 *[show+tell]* - Waterside Pavilion, - Hobart Design Centre Tasmania - Launceston
- 2003 *Impact* - Academy Gallery - Launceston
- 2002 *Interleaves* - Design Centre, Gallery3, Launceston
- 2001 *Ensembles* - Object Gallery - Sydney
- 2001 *Response to the Island* - Long Gallery, Salamanca Arts Centre - Hobart
- 2000 *Divergent Utopias* - Cast Gallery - Hobart
- 1998 *Tasmanian Wood Design Collection*, - Ulm Germany, Goteberg Sweden, Helsinki Finland
- 1995-6 Finalist - *City Of Hobart Art Prize*, Furniture

### Recent Commissions/projects

- 2002-3 *Meridian* - support pieces for John Wolseley works on paper - MCA, Sydney
- 2002 Reception Counter - Montagu Bay Primary School, Hobart, Art for Public Buildings Program
- 2001 *Tracing the Wallace Line* - support pieces for John Wolseley's works on paper, Bendigo, Sydney
- 2000-1 Design and construction of reading couch, and some display elements - Mount Field National Park Visitor Centre
- 1996 *Patagonia to Tasmania* support pieces for John Wolseley's works on paper, Launceston, Melbourne Sydney



Special thanks, to my partner Stuart, for his patience, advice, encouragement, criticism, welding, silver soldering, lifting, carrying, driving, walking, and the use of his CNC router

L.F.

# Acknowledgements

Linda Fredheim would like to acknowledge and thank Mark Fountain, Elizabeth Sadler, Richard Hale, Lesa Scott, Martin Spillane and all the staff from the venues, Jane Deeth and all the people at 10 Days on the Island, the staff at the Archives Office of Tasmania, and Tony Marshall and the staff at the Tasmaniana Library.

Thank you to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council for their assistance and advice on the use of Aboriginal place names

Special thanks to all family and friends who have helped in innumerable ways with encouragement advice, assistance and catering.

The production of the work in *Order under Canvas* has been assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

The presentation of *Order under Canvas* was assisted through Arts Tasmania by the Minister of the Arts.

Furniture Photography - Peter Whyte (except p21 )

Editorial Assistance - Foong Ling Kong  
Jenny Long  
Denise Robinson

