



**EXPANDED DISC-NIGHT**  
by Tony Twigg, 2008, enamel paint  
on timber construction in 16 parts,  
136.00 x 211.00 x 7.00 cm

BY SAM L. MARCELO

# Stick figures

**A**s an artist, sculptor Tony Twigg has more in common with *Home Improvement* character Tim "The Toolman" Taylor than he does with the rest of his chisel-wielding counterparts.

To create the freestanding wood sculptures he is known for, the aptly named Mr. Twigg uses any or all of the five saws he has in his work shed.

"I like power tools. I've got a table saw that makes a terrible, horrible sound; it's frightening but it's terrific for cutting things up in straight lines. I've got a band saw, a circular saw, a reciprocating saw, and a jig saw. I also have an electric drill and an angle grinder for sanding, which allows me to change the surface of [the wood]," he said.

*Standing Sticks*, his latest collection, is made from Casuarina pine saplings that survived a bush fire in Australia.

"There were these tall, thin timbers about an inch-and-a-half to two inches around and six to eight feet tall. The fire had killed the trees, blackened them, caused the bark to pop off, and left them

standing (hence the title of the exhibit). They were perfectly dead and perfectly seasoned," he said.

The inspiration for the disc-like forms that make their first appearance in this collection came from the circular remnants of discarded fruit boxes and wooden slats Mr. Twigg found while randomly walking through Malaysia. Upon his return to Sydney, he played around with the image of a circle divided into strips, and started pulling it apart like a concertina.

"The tension that developed around the edge was very interesting," he said.

He compared the stress to a meniscus formed by a drop of liquid on a table, or by water just about to overflow from a glass filled to the brim. This boundary or edge tightens and holds together the positive and negative space present in his circular pieces.

Aside from shape, the visual aspect of Mr. Twigg's work is defined by the interaction of paint on the striated surface of his sculptures.

"The wood needs a color to resolve itself, and coming to the

right color can be quite complicated," he said.

Increasingly, the artist has taken to using thinner paints that run easily over the wood so that the resulting texture isn't a calculated effort on his part.

"As the surface goes from rough to smooth, the paint dribbles and behaves in different ways. After 20 layers of paint, the piece starts to have a life of its own — a life that's more related to the object than it is to me. The paint creates its own effects on the surface, and I feel there's a little bit of truth in that," Mr. Twigg said.

Put another way, he manipulates the paint by creating the object rather than manipulating the paint on the object.

When left to speak for themselves, the finished sculptures can surprise even the artist. In this show, for example, the paint developed a curiously metallic feel.

"It's not that I set out to imitate metal or that I used paints that looked metallic — I used simple colors: black, white, red, and blue. It's quite strange and it has a lot to do with the texture of paint upon paint upon

paint," he said.

This dialogue between art and artist is the only thing that matters to Mr. Twigg.

"The major relationship when I'm making a work of art is between the work of art and myself. I refuse to let even my wife offer an opinion. I don't want to know what she likes because then, I'd be trying to please her. It's not about that, it's about me finding some kind of truth," he said.

Mr. Twigg added that knowing when a piece is done is an intuitive process: "It may be a feeling of poise, of balance among all the elements in your work... or it may be a disaster. When that happens, you throw it on the floor, break the tension and start again.

"There's an old-fashioned theory that states that what you get out of a work of art is what you bring to it, so that the art is really just a mirror."

(*Standing Sticks* is on view at Galleria Duemila, 210 Loring St., Pasay City, until May 31. For inquiries, call 831-9990 or 833-9815; e-mail [duemila@mydestiny.net](mailto:duemila@mydestiny.net); or visit [www.galleriaduemila.com](http://www.galleriaduemila.com).)