

symbiosis

A chair's sole purpose is to support the human form. In order to function a chair is necessarily anthropomorphic; it must conform to our contours by mimicking our physical structure. Even the language used to describe its component parts mirrors our anatomy. A chair has arms, legs, a back and a seat, just like we do. A chair is never truly empty. A hint of a body always lingers, like a scent, a faint afterimage or a persistent ghost.

Lisa Jones reveals these latent bodies. But in her chair sculptures the power balance has shifted, there is no longer an inherent hierarchy between sitter and sat upon. Bodies and chairs have entered a truly symbiotic relationship: they have become indivisible, interdependent. The soft body of one of Jones's white chairs seems to have dissolved in order to expose its hard skeletal remains. A drooping web of branching silicon veins forms a flexible carapace over another. A third bears scars that trace the outlines of complex glandular systems, like flesh tattooed by the repetitive prick of a needle and thread.

As a starting point, Jones has used a design classic: Arne Jacobsen's 3107 (or Series 7) chair. This use of a domestic object is part of Jones's ongoing desire to create a dialogue between her art and existing structures. Jones chose the Series 7 chair because it is both accessible and recognisable; a Google search yields more than 66,100 results in 0.12 seconds. Jacobsen's 1955 design has been extensively copied and mass produced. As Jones says, "Anyone can have one of these chairs now, I've got them at home. They are familiar, comfortable, contemporary and iconic."

As an artist, Jones is also aware that every found object comes with its own psychological baggage, a history of residual references triggered by both personal experiences and cultural associations. In this way, the Series 7 chair is inextricably linked to sex. In 1963, party girl Christine Keeler took her clothes off, straddled a Jacobsen chair and posed for photographer Lewis Morley. The fact that the chair was actually a cheap copy of the original design made no difference, both the chair and the photo became icons of 20th century design. In Morley's image, the curved form of the chair acts a substitute for Keeler's hidden naked body. Its curves become her curves; the chair becomes the focus of sublimated lust, a fetish.

Jones deliberately accentuates these sexy associations. The wasp waists of her chair sculptures appear to be cinched in even further by laces which pierce their backs and criss cross up and down their spines. Jones has transformed the cool, clean and detached chic of Danish modern furniture into something intimate, visceral, and powerfully feminine. Irrevocably divorced from their original function her chairs have so successfully morphed into bodies that they become slightly unnerving despite their delicate and intricate beauty. Lisa Jones's sculptures provoke an intimate corporeal response, a slight quiver of recognition, desire, revulsion or fear, depending on your predilections.

Tracey Clement
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currently living in Sydney.

1



4



2



5



3



1 *Butterfly Chair*
steel, laminated wood, silicone

2 *Venus Chair*
steel, laminated wood

3 *Gland Chair*
steel, laminated wood, felt, thread

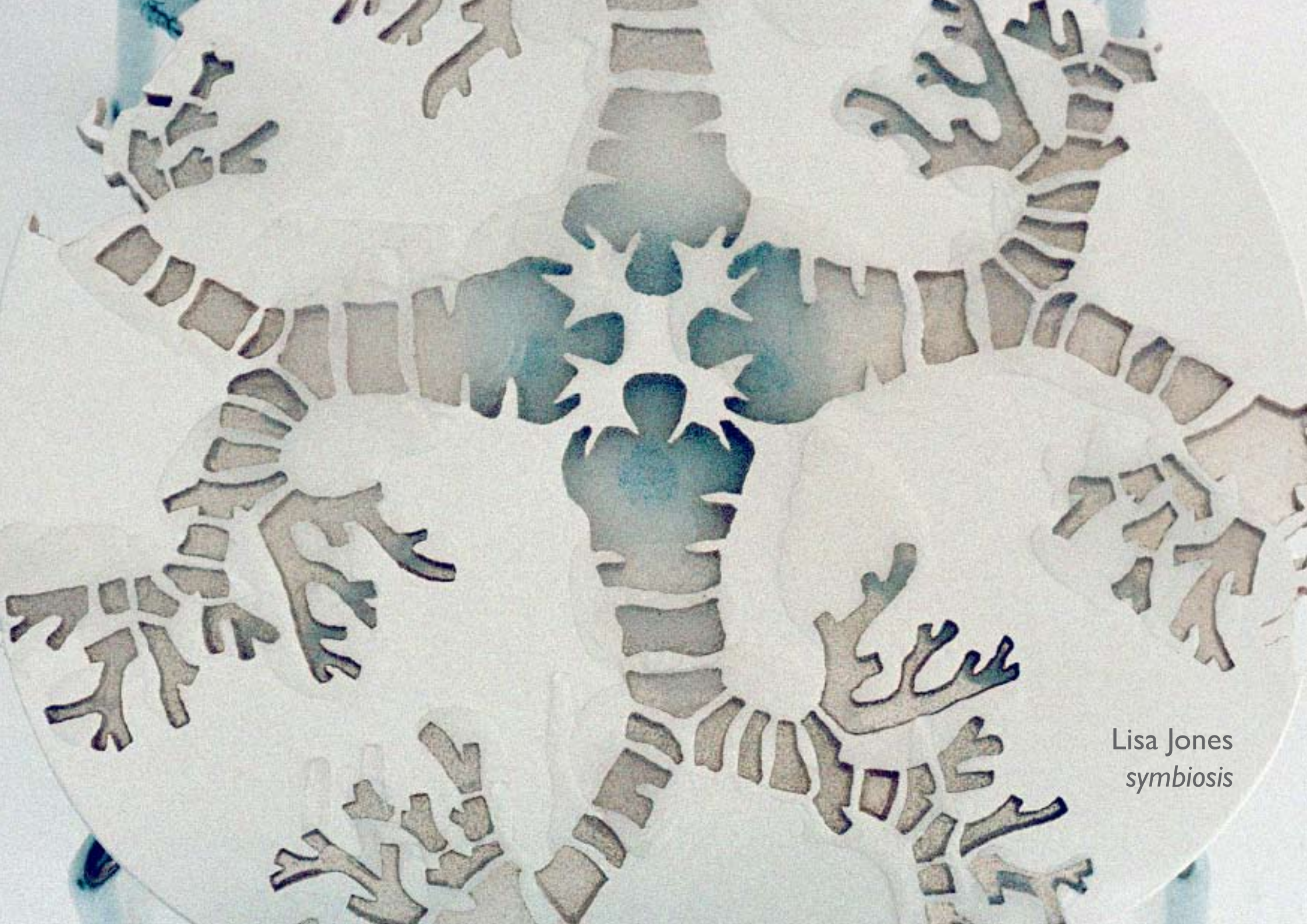
4 *Breath Chair*
steel, laminated wood, silicone

5 *Cortical Chair*
steel, laminated wood, silicone, thread

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