

Through *my* Eyes

25 June to 7 August 2022



Gosford
Regional
Gallery

‘THROUGH MY EYES’, focuses attention on a group of women artists, members of *The Makers Studio* Central Coast, their observations and experiences, their reflections and interpretations about what is important to them and their lives. *The Makers Studio* has been fully operational since mid 2016 and while primarily focused on printmaking encourages all its members, predominantly women, to explore their creativity in all its forms.

The exhibition is in part a response to the *National Gallery of Australia’s* seminal work ‘*Know My Name*’ which draws our attention to the gendered imbalance that exists in art institutions. Women’s art has been under-represented and undervalued throughout history in

both private and public galleries. The NGA’s important ongoing project showcases the art of historical and contemporary women artists whose exceptional works have rarely been exhibited.

This exhibition is but a small contribution to the need for change to redress the gender imbalance in the art world. These works demonstrate the abundant creative diversity expressed by women artists. ‘Through My Eyes’ offers reflections and interpretations of women’s values and their sense of social responsibility across domestic, environmental and global settings. It explores the connectedness of these women artists to their environments and their everyday lives. 

Cheryl McCoy

“Between the light and dark”



“She knows we are but a shadow in the landscape”

LIFE’S JOURNEY has taken me down many different paths with countless discoveries along the way. I have learned much about a past that has helped inform my creativity and who I have become - a printmaking artist of Gamilaraay, Dharug, Scottish & Irish descent living on Darkinjung Country.

I am heavily influenced by my daily walks on Country. I have built a deep connection that inspires my creative mark making. I am humbled by what I see and

experience. When out bush I dissolve into the space allowed, I become a part of Country and nothing more.

In this artwork, I examine our existence on Country and our insignificance. We fool ourselves with the belief that we matter, that we are superior to all things in nature. We ruthlessly attempt to objectify, harness and control mother nature but she is ageless and powerful, and her wisdom is far beyond anything we can know. She

breathes us in and out. She knows we are but a shadow in the landscape.

We need to learn to be respectful and humble and to honour Country and she will respond in kind.

Our existence is somewhere in the spaces she has allowed us – somewhere between the light and dark.

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Janine Debenham

"Falling" (from the Almost Invisible Series)

THIS WORK 'Falling' is from the Almost Invisible Series. The series explores and celebrates both personal and universal themes - a narrative of memory, family and the personal journey of ageing in our society.

Falling is an exploration of self and family history and in some ways both celebrates and mourns the notion that over time aspects of who we are and how we are perceived shift and change. This idea is redolent with a representation of the ravages of dementia on a beautiful woman who is slowly losing much of the complexity of who she was, but thankfully her true essence remains in her presence and our memories.

This large scale drypoint and carborundum print, with bold colour, images of dead proteas and a scrap of old cloth combine to represent myself, my twin sister and my mum... starting to unravel, in a busy entangled world, or perhaps finally shedding the things that really don't matter.

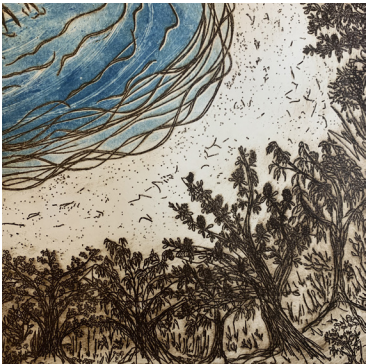
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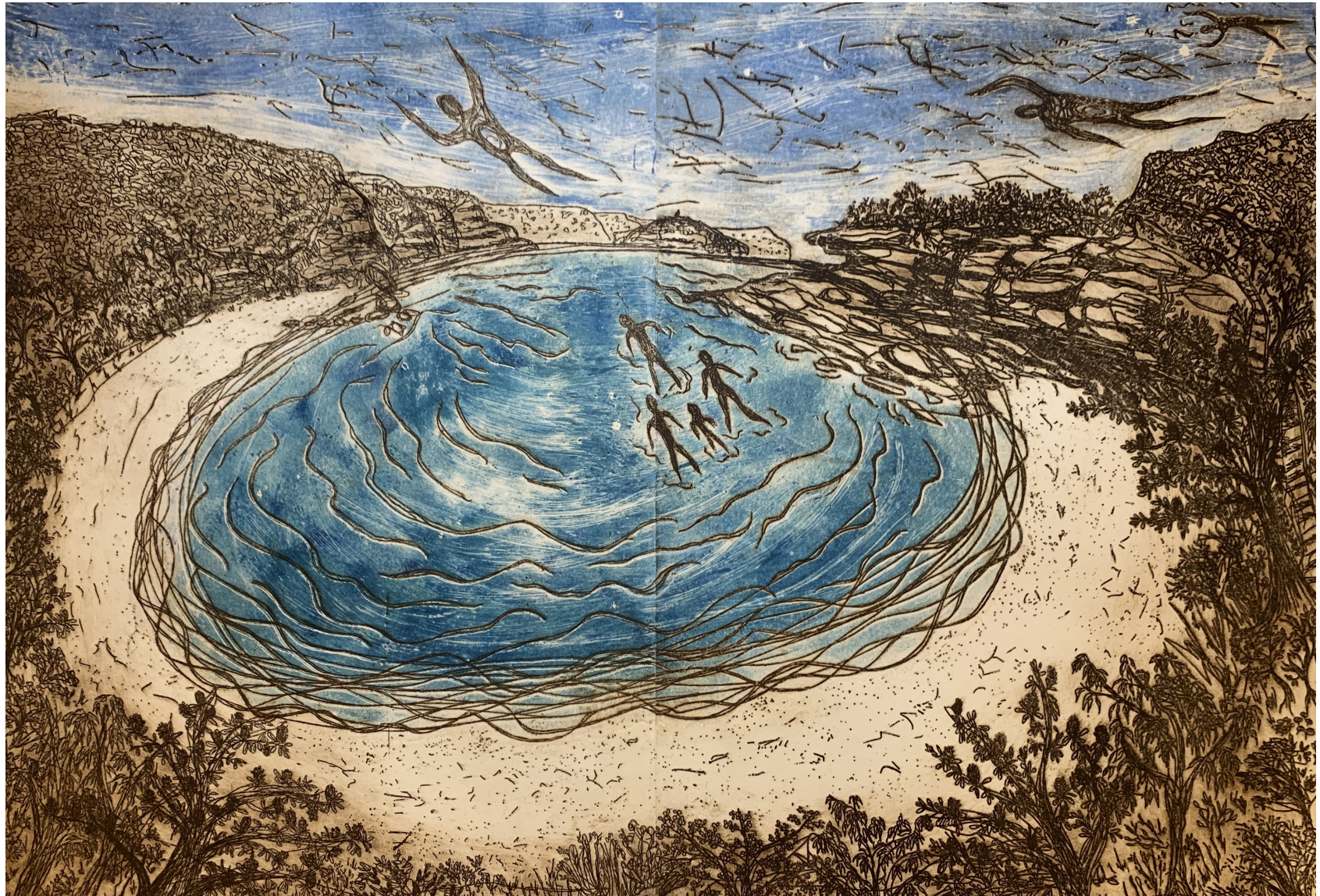
Leah Bennetts

"Place of Healing"



WHEN A person dies, I believe part of their spirit remains here where it is absorbed into the earth, the flora and the fauna, the sea and the sky.

I have a healing place to which I go to immerse myself in the womb of the sea, it is there I feel recharged and reborn. I take my family there and feel the presence of those ancient spirits watching over us.



"...it is there I feel recharged and reborn. "

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Therese Gabriel Wilkins

"Lake Series"

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DO YOU SEE, what I see? The colours of the water as they change at different times of day, the texture of the she oaks, the diverse range of birds that inhabit both the land and the lake. Captured here, through my eyes, is the land I call home.

I walked the land called home from Tuggerawong to Kanwal in the north, Rocky Point to Tacoma in the south, mapping my steps along the pathway and through the reserve each week during Covid 2021 and beyond.

Some things remain constant and others change every day. Birds I had never seen before in this

area appeared, the Ibis, godwits, indicators that there was a change happening, we were in lockdown, but the birds were free to roam undisturbed.

The Lakes Series captures moments in time creating a visual narrative of the land and lake where I have lived for some 32 years.

This series of works is a combination of printmaking methodologies such as lino, drypoint etching, drawing and painting.

"Captured here, through my eyes, is the land I call home."

Seraphina Martin

"Beasts seeking their prey" (opposite)



"Beauty and the Beast"

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I INVITE the viewer into a magical reality where boundaries between fantasy of the known and unknown are explored. Symbolism plays a significant part in my personal language. They identify metaphors for our fears and desires. Flora and fauna, often imaginary, act as allegorical creatures for whimsical human connections.

In the work for this exhibition, I address the ongoing threat of sexual assault against women and the

underlying fears women struggle with to be seen and heard. I have chosen to draw on elements found in fairy tales such as Beauty and the Beast and Little Red Riding Hood to reach into the human psyche and reveal the deep unconscious vulnerability faced by women.

In Beauty and the Beast, the woman is lured by abundant riches. She is trapped by the beast, in the grips of an unknown fate. The wolf in Little Red Riding Hood affirms danger in the woods, a warning for adolescent girls, unaware that they themselves are the prey.

In both tales, the beast symbolises the threat of a predator. The beast contributes to a collective fear of unspoken assault. The curtains in my composition, represents, that which is hidden in confinement associated with fear. Equally, a mysterious enclosed space emphasises a sanctuary dividing the inner and outer natural world.

There is evidence of a metamorphosis in both fairy tales. The wolf gets killed by a hunter, an allegory to rebuild trust and goodwill for a safe passage. In Beauty and the Beast, transformation takes place through human compassion facing ugliness. A belief relating to restoring hope and revive a promise for change.

In the 21st Century women still face suppression, discrimination and violence. Change will only manifest when they are acknowledged, respected as equal in all societies.



Beasts on search of their prey

Seraphina Martin

"Transformation takes place through human compassion facing ugliness"

Tara Axford

“Rock Solid” &
“Rock Steady”

NATURE HAS become a recurring theme in my work, it's the texture of a place that intrigues me, both on a visual and tactile level. The idea of distilling what I see and experience and rearranging it to create a sense of place appeals to me.

During the pandemic local walks have provided solace, with rocks and their formations becoming symbols of strength and durability, their presence something to marvel at and acknowledge.

On the walks I have taken - it is all there - the mess, the beauty, the chaos, the destruction, the renewal. Through my art practice which includes printmaking, collage and basketry I aim to explore the memory of place, deconstruct it and represent it, to rearrange the familiar so it can be seen with fresh eyes. We think we are looking but we don't always see.

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“Past Tense”

“We think we are looking but we don't always see”



“Bloom”

Lisa McArthur- Edwards

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“Only when the last tree is cut, the last river is poisoned and the last fish has been caught will we realise that we cannot eat Money”

– Native American Saying.

I’m concerned over the attitude and impact of humanity on earth. My work goes on a journey of exploration from bountiful life on offer to all, through measurement, analysis, and ownership, creating fragmentation, slowing stripping her down in parts and selling her off for personal gain and status.



“Caught”



“Erosion”

Lynn Buckle

"The Sky is Everywhere"

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PAINTING THE landscape was not something I particularly set out to do, rather it is something that grew out of living on the edge of Rumbalara, a place where the outskirts of suburbia become enfolded into the natural bushland.

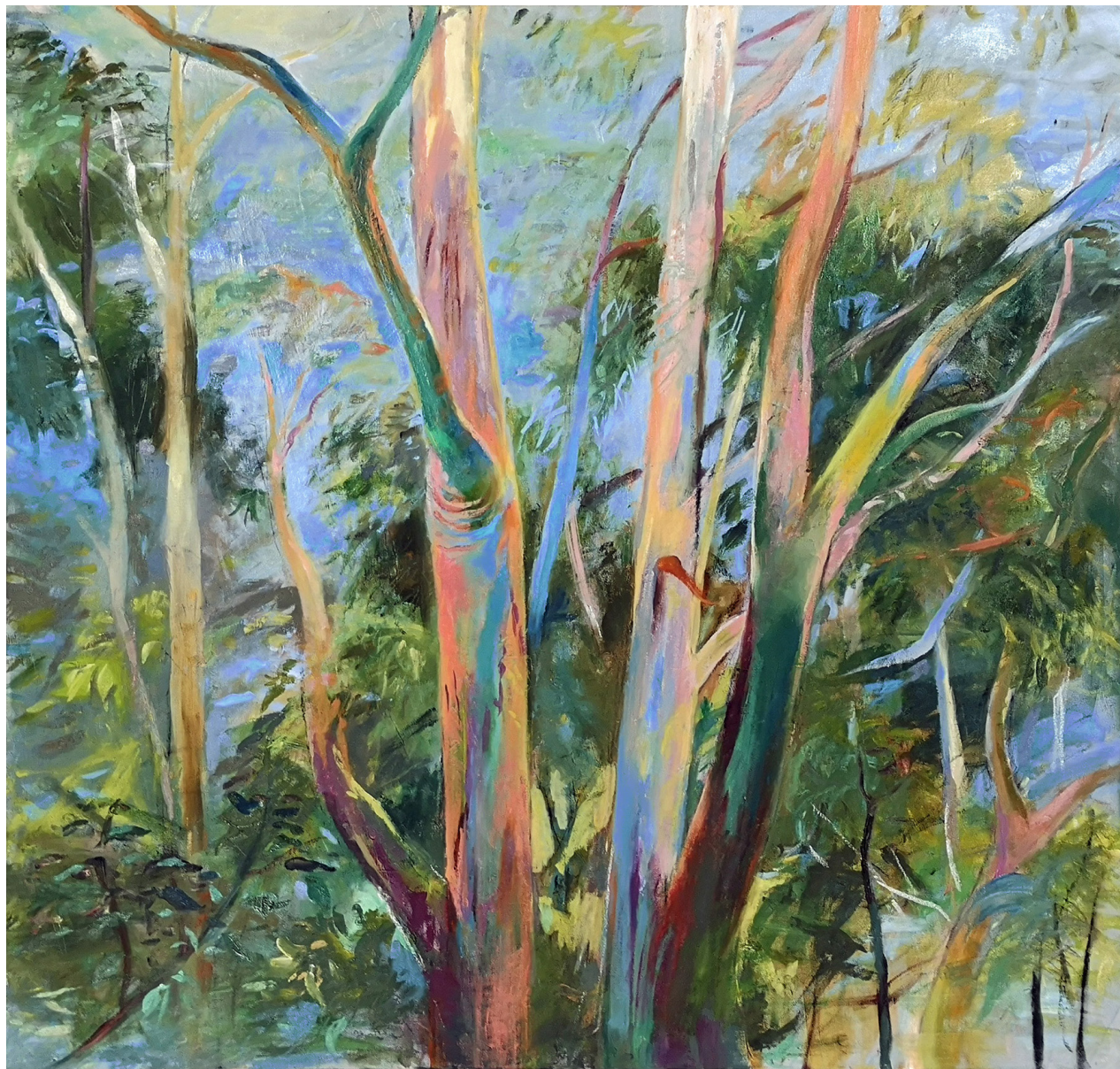
Sitting high on a steep hillside, my studio looks out through the surrounding treetops. From this place I can see a constantly changing theatre of light. Sky and trees mingle. I feel like I am living in the sky. I frequently walk through the surrounding bushland and marvel at a landscape I have grown to love. I enjoy its ruggedness and energy. I am delighted by the variety of surface textures, the transforming nature of the changing light and the way that sunlight filters through the tree canopies.

The Sky is Everywhere was

Painted during the stormy days of our recent unseasonably wet and wild summer and autumn, a confronting time that brought the reality of climate change close to home.

The towering eucalypts with their iridescent, silvery trunks and sinewy branches and the tangled understorey, grow just beyond my studio window. Over time, this work developed into a compilation of both direct observations of the landscape interacting with the light and turbulent weather conditions, and a wish to focus attention on the land and the precious resource our natural bushland represents.

It is for me an anthem of hope, that speaks of resilience but also responsibility. The sky has no borders, we are in this together, there is no time for complacency.



"The sky has no borders, we are in this together, there is no time for complacency"

Carol Vesper

"Memory Coat"

OVER THE centuries women before me have sewn their stories into fabric. Heirlooms and artworks passed down the generations. Masters of re-use and making ordinary everyday things into beautiful items - I hope my Memory Coat becomes one of these.

All my materials are re-purposed "waste not - want not" a favourite saying from my mother. Gifted threads and eco dyed scraps of fabric saved over many years.

"Take care of your memories - you can't re-live them" was a quote that started me on the journey of making my Memory Coat for the exhibition "Through My Eyes". I decided to capture my memories into this textile piece to wear and keep.

I spent many hours stitching and remembering my life - the good, the bad - the ups & downs - reflecting and slowing down, appreciating this time and what my life has meant. I meditatively embroidered and thought about the past and future.

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"Take care of your memories - you can't re-live them"

Indira Fernandes

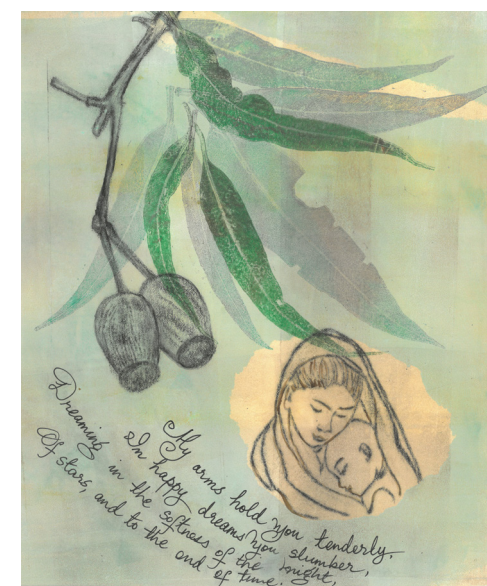
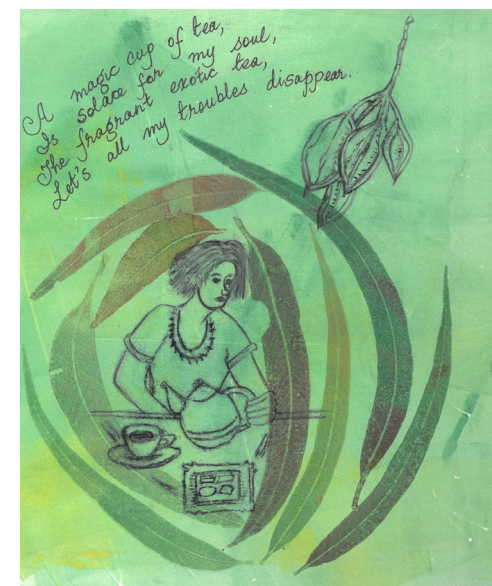
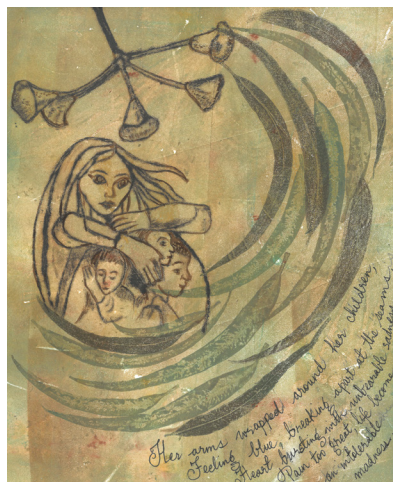
"Contemplations"

THE IMAGERY in the Concertina Book titled 'Contemplations' consists of an assortment of seed pods and eucalyptus leaves in a variety of arrangements with figurative compositions printed on top.

The ephemeral nature of the leaves with the seedpods and the figurative compositions creates a dialogue to reveal metaphorical fragmentary glimpses of the fragility of human connections and the way they manifest in family relationships – focus being placed on the feminine, motherhood, nurturer, and children.

The written word – text – the contemplative richness of poetry is an integrated feature on the pages to open a window to see a different perspective of human connections. Utilizing printmaking techniques and with the inscription of the poems, the artist attempts to draw the viewer 'inward' to experience an encounter with the 'inner spirit'. The imagery and text complement one another in harmony to provide clues to the narrative of the human spirit.

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"My arms hold you tenderly,
In happy dreams you slumber,
Dreaming in the softness of the night,
Of stars, and to the end of time."

Lynne Bailey

"It is in the spaces between that we find meaning and begin to understand"

AS A migrant to Australia at the age of 17 my sense of identity and belonging was ambivalent. English or Australian? Shaped as mother, daughter, friend, sister, partner, teacher, leader. After a critical point in my life, I needed time to just be and drove around Australia, disappearing into vast landscapes and myself. Having always been attuned to nature my journey through Kakadu and Litchfield National Park opened my mind, heart, and spirit.

From having time amongst the glory of the land and its first people I was able to take away not only the images of the land but thoughts, ideas and feelings that would shape my sense of self. This experience translated into my art practice. I have drawn on these rich sources for my most recent works.

The monumental sandstone blocks from The Lost City in Litchfield National Park are the stimulus for my dry point print, It is in the spaces between that we find meaning and begin to understand. The towering blocks stood sentinel, ancient yet waiting. It was a place to move around with respect, listening, looking, feeling.



The challenge in reaching The Lost City with its complex forms emphasised to me that being separate or alone was a matter of context. The sounds of the modern world were missing and the silence

invited an inner dialogue where the heart and spirit spoke to the mind.

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"The sounds of the modern world were missing and the silence invited an inner dialogue where the heart and spirit spoke to the mind."

Michaela James

“Life is not still”



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“My work with everyday objects has morphed into something intentionally more abstractly complex, no longer ‘still’ lives.”

DURING THIS unpredictable pandemic, I have, like others, experienced various phases of lockdown and isolation. This has increased my focus on the beauty that can be found in the most prosaic domesticity and commitment to ensure that painting remains part of my daily life.

Examining Australian artist Kathleen O'Connor¹, I was drawn in by the familiarity of her story: an artist who sought innovation in her field, overshadowed by the men alongside whom she practiced. The familiarity of her story drew me to her work. Although an artist very different in sensibility and approach to my own, the sense we are all in some sort of exile hit home.

This inspired me to experiment with a new approach, with Kate's paintings as a jumping-off point, particularly those verging on the abstract. These helped to challenge my customary, more formalist mark-making and as a result, my work with everyday objects has morphed into something intentionally more abstractly complex, no longer 'still' lives.

¹ Hutchings P.A.E., Lewis, J (1987) Kathleen O'Connor Artist in Exile, Freemantle Arts Centre Press
² Curtin, A (2018) Kathleen O'Connor of Paris, Freemantle Press.

“It is still life,
Umina study
in whites”





The Makers Studio is a creative hub for members and the community located at East Gosford. It offers workshops, social events and exhibition opportunities for beginners through to advanced practitioner level.

If you would like to know more about getting involved please email us on info@themakersstudio.org.au or visit: www.themakersstudio.org
Instagram: [@themakersstudio centralcoast](https://www.instagram.com/themakersstudio_centralcoast).



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