



EARTHWORDS

& ARTLINGS

aela



Tipping Points

Anthology Volume 2, 2022



TIPPING POINTS

EARTHWORDS & ARTLINGS
ANTHOLOGY VOLUME 2, 2022



australian earth laws alliance

**TIPPING POINTS
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ANTHOLOGY VOLUME 2, 2022**

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AELA acknowledges that the sovereignty of the First Nations Peoples of the continent now known as Australia was never ceded by treaty nor in any other way. AELA acknowledges and respects First Nations Peoples' laws and ecologically sustainable custodianship of Australia over tens of thousands of years through land and sea management practices that continue today.

The creators of the *Earthwords & Artlings* anthology would additionally like to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the traditional storytellers of the lands on which this anthology was developed and would like to pay our respects to elders past and present.

Always was, always will be, Aboriginal land.



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FOREWORD

September 2022

Welcome to the second volume of the Australian Earth Laws Alliance's (AELA), Earthwords & Artlings anthology, a diverse collection of creative expressions from visual artists, writers, storytellers, educators, poets, and multi-media artists from across Australia.

Our second Earthwords & Artlings anthology volume is titled "Tipping Points". In creating the Anthology, we wanted to invite people to explore their observations, feelings and responses to how our beautiful living world is changing; reaching 'tipping points' that are transforming our world. Many of us are still feeling fear and trauma after the 2019/2020 bushfires, the 2022 floods and our fears about losing members of the Earth community through the current biodiversity crisis.

Nonetheless, AELA continues to look towards expressions of hope, joy, optimism, and a love for the more-than-human world for guidance through ongoing uncertainty. AELA keenly engages with the creative arts for its capacity to generate ongoing reflection, to hold spaces where we can sit with uncertainty and explore old and new pathways, and to build a gentle (yet inexorable!) momentum towards systemic change.

The concept of tipping points has come to greater public attention over the past few years, as we learn more and more about our rapidly changing climate. As we launch our Anthology (September 2022), we have also seen news pieces,¹ from the journal *Science*. With the title, "Exceeding 1.5°C global warming could trigger multiple climate tipping points",² and co-authored by leading climate scientists from around the globe, the article provides a timely reassessment of the original climate tipping points developed in 2008. More significantly, however, the research

1 Carrington, D. (2022, September 8). World on brink of five 'disastrous' climate tipping points, study finds. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/sep/08/world-on-brink-five-climate-tipping-points-study-finds>

2 Armstrong McKay, D. I., Staal, A., Abrams, J. F., Winkelmann, R., Sakschewski, B., Loriani, S., Fetzer, I., Cornell, S. E., Rockström, J., & Lenton, T. M. (2022). Exceeding 1.5°C global warming could trigger multiple climate tipping points. *Science*, 377(6611), eabn7950. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abn7950>

warns that humanity's most ambitious target--to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels--will still fail to prevent humanity and the planet from passing multiple climate tipping points.

Our Anthology then, seems timely as it invites the exploration of the social and ecological spaces at the precipice of change, whether the thresholds have just been encountered, retreated from, or passed long ago. And whether the tipping points are momentous and calamitous, or banal and unremarkable, Tipping Points provides an open provocation for creative musings about the places, human-nature relationships, and timelines that we find ourselves in . . . or perhaps yearn for.

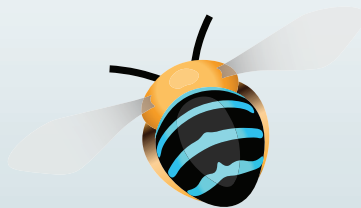
The collection of works we received captured an evocative breadth of expression, with common threads emerging: invitations for closer connections to place and belonging to place; reflections and interactions with the more-than-human world; observations of the movements of time or the transformative impacts of sudden change and disasters; calls for revolutionary, strident (or gentle) defence of place; and reflections on the ongoing upheavals faced by humans and our evolutionary counterparts.

We hope you find the collection thought provoking – and perhaps even comforting during these change times. And we hope it helps you reflect on your own feelings, concerns and next steps.

Michelle Maloney & James K Lee, Editors

Earthwords & Artlings

www.eartharts.org.au



When grey became green

Sharyn Munro

Have I become just another ‘grumpy old woman’?

I know I’m depressed and angry; what I don’t know is why my friends aren’t!

They shake their heads about each reported ‘unprecedented’ drought or storm or flood or bushfire – ‘How dreadful!’ – but won’t let me join the dots to the CC words.

If I begin, the men roll their eyes, swap dismissive clichés, and joke, ‘Not turning into a greenie, are you, June?!’, then return the conversation to important matters like Big W bargains or holidays in Bali.

Their wives purse their lips and nod knowingly; the Change affects some women in odd ways...

Since my husband John died a few years ago, I’ve started watching the ABC, havng always hated the ads on his channels. That’s been opening my eyes!

I’m so tired of being ‘shushed’ or holding my tongue, when I want to run shouting through the streets and shake people awake. And repressed emotion causes ulcers or cancer, my daughter says.

Then last week ABC News showed an interview with a most articulate and respectable 90-year old Kokoda veteran from a Sydney suburb not far from mine. He’d been arrested while protesting against a new coal mine that will destroy a koala forest – and fuel global warming.

He certainly isn’t letting anyone shush him!

.....

The camp is quiet in the pre-dawn winter dark.

Afraid of sleeping in, I’ve been awake for an hour – and sleeping in the car hadn’t been the most comfortable.

A truck had been loaded, but all I’d seen were pinpoints of light bobbing like fireflies; from headband torches, I assumed. They spotlight puffs of breath rising in the chilly air. Steam-driven fireflies.

The truck left under a moon pale as a wish bubble in the black sky, one edge limned by a slim bright crescent. Hadn’t seen that in years...

It’s almost four a.m. Bodies emerge from tents, don beanies and coats, head to the portaloos or to the kitchen tent for a cuppa. I’ve already drunk my thermos-stored tea and brushed my teeth, sneakily rinsing and spitting by the side of the car. I don’t know what the rules of behaviour are here, with no proper amenities, yet not in the bush, but public, in a paddock...

Time to head out.

A convoy of as few vehicles as possible slowly tail each other up the dirt road, lights low.

I’m in the back seat of a high 4WD, jammed between two thankfully skinny men about my own age, mid-60s. There are the usual introductions; after names and towns – Sydney, Armidale, Gosford – here the next question is commonly ‘Done this before?’ Only the Armidale man had.

Next would be ‘What brought you here?’

My answer is simple: ‘I’m here for my grandkids.’ Imagine no koalas! Imagine

two degrees warming...

A sudden braking as the convoy stops; windows whirr down to receive the hissed words of the messenger as she jogs along the line.

‘There’s a road block up ahead; we’ll have to detour and walk in. Follow the leader; parking lights only, OK?’

My heart misses a beat. Good intentions are translating into action more quickly and of a different sort from last night’s briefing. I’d been prepared for a sit-in outside a gate; that wasn’t even trespassing.

But a walk-in?

And driving without lights is illegal, isn’t it?

The whole caterpillar loops round and creeps back the other way, veering off down a long track across open paddocks. Trees begin to loom dimly alongside and over the track. We stop.

The driver says, ‘Hop out here; vehicles are returning to camp, so as not to be a giveaway come daylight.’

I slide across and climb down. Shrugging on my backpack, I stumble over to the soft voices.

‘What’s happening?’ I whisper.

‘We’ve got to walk for about half an hour to where the guys will have put up the tripods; luckily they beat the roadblock. Because we couldn’t stop the workers entering, we’re stopping the machines from starting. Some of us will lock on. The rest of you will just sit like we planned, only more in their face, so to speak, in front of the machines.’

Stopping bulldozers? Hard metal, soft bodies... you idiot, June, they won’t be moving!

Following those who have torches, we move off into the forest. From the muttered

expletives I know I’m not the only one tripping over sticks and roots and logs.

I tap the man beside me, thinking I recognise him – or his parka – as my Armidale fellow passenger. ‘Sorry, but would you mind if I hold on to you? I’m a bit worried about falling and breaking something and holding everyone up.’

‘No problems, I’m probably as much at risk myself!’

‘Why aren’t we following a track?’

‘Because they’ve likely put up motion sensor cameras on those.’

‘Oh’.

Cloak-and-dagger stuff indeed. What would my children say if they could see me now? A giggle escapes at that thought; I tell him why.

‘Yeah, mine think I’ve lost my marbles. But they’ll be bloody grateful in years to come that there’s still some farmland and clean water and natural bush full of critters like koalas left for ‘em instead of a wasteland with great bloody holes in the ground draining the aquifers and turning ‘em toxic. I could spit chips when I think what the government is letting happen here!’

‘Me too. And all for more filthy coal power ...’

‘S-sh-sh!’ comes down the line. ‘Keep it quiet, eh?’

The skyline is now showing a paler edge, and surprisingly quickly the darkness in the forest is giving way to a thin charcoal wash. No colour yet, but shapes are becoming visible.

Pale apricot flushes the eastern sky as we halt amongst the trees at the edge of a raw ochre/orange clearing, where several giant yellow machines are parked. Sleeping monsters.

The bareness is shocking compared to the forest lined up in front of it – ‘the arboreal death row’, I think. I feel sick at the thought of those machines roaring awake, pushing over the trees and scraping away the leaf litter and logs and burrows. The homes, the hideyholes... of koalas, bats, lizards...

The company reckons it will be fine because they will shake the bigger habitat trees to ‘encourage’ animals to leave before ‘gently’ bulldozing and leaving them overnight for any remaining animals to escape. From the size of the trees ahead, I cannot see how ‘gently’ could describe their fall to earth when bulldozed.

It’s hard to believe that a few days ago this bare ground supported a similar living forest, full of living creatures. Now scalped – before being disembowelled.

All this destruction, for a private company to dig up and sell coal, the main cause of the global warming that looms over my grandchildren’s future.

I can’t even cross the road against the ‘Don’t Walk’ light, but this is clearly wrong, and being legal doesn’t make it right.

At the waiting edge of the forest three high bamboo tripods have been erected. Two men and a woman are sitting on their respective platforms, roped to the trees and each other in an interdependent web. So clever, these young people, and so brave; but then, it is their future we’re wrecking...

Four of our group have now locked themselves to the bulldozers, their arms encased in metal tubes; one of them is the Armidale man.

Wow. That ‘old’ bloke.

A team leader calls out, ‘Right, just had word that security are on their way. They’ll call the cops in. Now everyone sit down in front of the machines. Don’t forget that if the cops ask you to move, it’s up to you whether to obey or not, but you may be

arrested if you don’t.

‘I’m asking for a few volunteers as arrestables; hopefully some who don’t have dreadlocks and can’t be accused of being rent-a-crowd! We need to take photos of the arrests to send the media and Facebook and Twitter. It’s the only way to keep the story alive until this madness stops.’

I raise my hand.

‘Greyhaired grannies acceptable?’ I ask, taking off my beanie and stepping forward into the first slanting rays of sunlight.

‘They’re the best!’ he grins, and a small cheer goes up.

As I pass the dozer, the Armidale man gives me a wink and a sideways nod of approval. Like Dad used to when I’d done a particularly good job as his pint-sized helper. It meant ‘You little beauty!’

Light of heart, strong of will, I take out the small foam mat from my backpack, unroll it and place it on the cold earth where I am directed to sit. Too old to risk a chill, I’d decided.

But not too old to stand up for what’s right ... or rather, sit for what’s wrong!

And with a small chuckle and a click of my dicky knee, I do.

Rubbish

Dr Josephine Browne

Despite difficulties in the marriage of my paternal grandparents, it seemed there was one thing they firmly agreed on: Rubbish.

As a child, I was aware that the ways we lived were completely at odds with other people, and that my friends' parents considered my Dad strange, even if they admired his principles and enjoyed his gifts of fresh vegetables. When I had friends over, I had to explain (difficult in Australia!) that baths were preferred to showers in our home, and that the water must be left in; on no account were you to release the plug. It was normal in our family to see the green hose poking through the bathroom window, snaking over the grass, siphoning the bath water into the vegetable patch. As a small child, I was amazed that my Dad could defy gravity, sucking on the hose and making the water flow up, over the windowsill and out to the garden.

Waste had many destinations in our home. Tea leaves and vegie scraps went straight into the stained buckets under the kitchen sink. In later years, the bucket family grew, as water reuse was extended to cooking; we'd tip steaming water from saucepans, carefully using the lid to save the vegetables. The only exceptions for compost, I was forced to explain to each new friend, were

onions and citrus, which upset our worms. I remember the tea-infused, moist air emanating from the buckets in our compost cupboard. Once these buckets were full, my father would lug them into the garden. I'd frequently sit and watch him digging square holes with his spade, tipping in the buckets' contents. We'd smile and marvel at the worms he uncovered, admire their translucence, acknowledge their work. There was a satisfying squelching after the compost was covered with soil, when my father stood and massaged the earth with his gumboots, using his spade for balance.

Every week, my father borrowed a pile of non-fiction books from the library, carrying them home in a tower against his chest. He was impatient with novels, hungry for knowledge and facts. I would often accompany him to the library, allowed a rare independence there, even as a small child, wandering away to choose my own books while he chose his. If I needed help, I always knew where to find him, exactly which shelf he would be standing in front of.

I remember a day in the library when he showed me a particular book, with his customary chuckle at the absurd. The cover showed an image of a tall man. Beside him, an even taller pile of rubbish bags teetered. The book's title was large: *RUBBISH*. It was a moment when the world of my father's mind collided with a real world somewhere outside it. A book about rubbish – an actual book with someone else taking rubbish seriously! Dad explained that

people at a university had studied what was being thrown away over a few years, and that this book was all about what they discovered. I shared his delight, along with his disbelieving amusement.

I had grown up being told that my father's mother, who died before I was born, used to say, 'Waste is the biggest sin in the world.' I recall a much slower unravelling of painful stories of my Grandfather: he suffered depression, induced after underage conscription in the First World War, where he was deeply traumatized by what he witnessed. Grandad was subsequently declared unfit for service in the Second War. Instead, he was sent to what was effectively a sheltered workshop, where such men assisted in growing food to feed the country. During these years of vegetable-growing, Grandad developed ideas about the planet: humans could not just take from her forever; it was necessary to give back, to grow our own food, eschew poisons that harmed insects, and, through them, all the other animals, from birds and frogs, to foxes and deer.

My grandparents' ideas grew among their children, went with them into their own families. My father emigrated to Australia and learned to grow vegetables organically on a suburban block in Melbourne, feeding his family almost exclusively from this garden, and giving plenty away. He found gentle ways to protect plants, like sawdust rings snails avoided, stakes of foil streamers to startle birds from young fruit. We regularly had seaweed or horse manure surrounding our home, the smells invasive before the settling rains. When I suggested

a rabbit might increase our compost efficiency, I was gifted one that Christmas. We were naïve on this score: Ben never had scraps, living mostly indoors as an adored addition to our family. He did, however, provide us with droppings for a decade, after enjoying his organic feasts – end-of-season bean plants, shiny corn husks and grapevine prunings.

Plastic was largely absent from our house, my parents ignoring trends around us for Tupperware and Glad Wrap. Most of our food was bought in bulk and kept in tins. Any paper bags used for daily lunches had to be returned home, to the bag drawer, reused until they fell apart. My father folded his bags into neat rectangles at the quarry, while, at school, my sisters and I endured the scorn of our peers, who threw everything into bins at school, including unwanted food.

A love for the planet and its creatures defined my father: my grandparents' preoccupations flourished and grew in his life and in our home. I'm not certain whether he ever considered that the twin of sensitive connection is sorrowful mourning – over rapacious human appetite, failure to learn. Like my grandparents, Dad surrendered to instinct, planting seeds for a practical life attuned to the responsibilities inherent in a shared home. As I, in turn, have lived these philosophies with my own children, I am conscious that my children are not ridiculed, as my sisters and I were. Instead, they see community all around them, growing visible, as humans reconnect, reconsidering their own place within the more-than-human world.

Conversations with trees about tipping points

Dr Simon Kerr

We drove through a battered old gate and along the rough track of the bush block we had recently bought. 'Our land', what a strange notion. I wondered who else made their home here.

Like the kangaroo families we soon met, we will only spend some of our time here. So we decided to build a 'tiny house'. Nothing permanent and to be moved eventually, as this is mostly home for other beings.

There is one certain however; fire will come. And so our little house is designed to survive a bush fire (to BAL 40, for those who know such things).

But what protects the homes of other beings on the land? We might be able to build to survive as earth's temperatures soar. But not every being can build a BAL 40 house. The homes of kangaroos, cockatoos and mighty river redgums are now imperilled. Their world will get hotter, and maybe too hot for many of them.

This fills me with despair as I watch us racing beyond planetary tipping points. I keep wondering, where in the material reality of fire can hope exist?

I feel a familiar weight of responsibility as I sit in the shade of these tall wise beings. I think, yet again, of how I can change the future for them and us. For this old tree and me. For our offspring.

I see our troubles, our teetering on the unstable edge of some planetary boundary; just another step ... and gravity takes over. We tumble into an unknowable future.

I sit back, observing my mind scrambling for solutions. We must act now! Organise, protest. I watch my mind gravitate to the comfort of familiar notions, well-rehearsed words, ideas trained into me through my university days, professional life, through my activism: to solve this we need everyone. Together we can change everything.

Now, as I sit under these river giants, I am less certain this is the real story of our moment.

The trees are quietly whispering their stories like morse code, the dark kingdoms of mycorrhiza move under my feet, the sky resplendent in its dominating glory, and I realise this living world is the decisive actor in how the future will turn out. There is nothing passive about earth, sky and ocean. They are changing, demanding our attention. Sky rivers of water washing away our resistance, heat so hot meteorologists invent new colours to map it, storm risk forcing an uninsurable future upon more and more of us.

Resistance is futile; sooner or later we will all see the material reality of earth's increasingly clamorous voice. I think it will be sooner than we think. Massive change is now inevitable.

The trees hold me, still me. I feel less anxious. It doesn't all rest on my shoulders. Nor on the shoulders of those trying desperately to warn the world of looming tipping points, of the gravity beyond the cliff. The planet is speaking.

It is slow, sitting under old trees. A good place to think. Deep, unrushed reflection is a serious action in a planetary emergency. But the trees also remind me, this is my mess, a human mess, and we must also take action. Fast.

And now I see another force building. I had too much disappointment over the last three decades to actually notice. It has crept up on me, and I think, on most of us. It lives in the vision of the growing tsunami of minds who deeply understand there is now no going back. It lives in the increasing recognition by billions of people that they are so much better off with fast action; to reduce emissions, rebuild energy systems, to transform agriculture, lower the pressure on the planet. Like an enormous build-up of torque that when released accelerates change faster than we can possibly imagine.

The hardest job is now is holding back this change, though those who do have done a good job to date. But the demand and pressure for change is now unstoppable. A tipping point has been reached. Investors, inventors, social innovators, business, communities, educators, scientists, citizens, cockatoos and kangaroos, future generations, are all overwhelming better off by fast change now. Massive change is now inevitable.

I see a dam, once high and strong, resolutely resisting the build-up of the pressure behind it. But the waters are rising, cracks appearing, now too fast to repair. The pressure is unrelenting. The dam-masters

(masters of delay) will keep saying we must not remove the dam, not yet. Do it slowly, only when all of us are in agreement and an orderly, sensible transition worked out. Delay is the new denial.

The trees whisper to me: 'Anything that is unsustainable will not be sustained'.

I now feel more certain than ever that rapid change is inevitable. There is too much torque built up in key parts of society and the economy to hold back serious change much longer. Too much has already shifted toward renewable investment, zero-emissions policy, new imaginings for cities, regenerative cultures. Too much shifted even in politics.

A new story is emerging from the tragedy of denial and delay. Not everyone needs to become a believer, not everyone needs to be on board. We simply need enough fast wins to bring more of the sustainable into being, and with those fast wins demonstrate a vision of the better future that most people yearn for.

This is key: success breaks the cycle of predatory delay and the unsustainable and drives more success.

We stand at the edge of a tipping point we actually want. One that can't now be stopped.

The breeze moves over my body, tree leaves rustle, chattering easily with the endless gossip of the cockatoos. There is wisdom here. The earth does not need saving. Gaia will continue into the eons. But she is also not abandoning us in silence. Her voice is now being heard. Tough love perhaps, but we are hearing it. I feel calmer, less alone.

“Place” and a Custodial Ethic

Dr Athena Lathouras

For the past nine years, I have been walking in a particular place. Russell Family Park is seven-hectares of land purchased by our local Council as a recreational reserve. Situated at Montville Village in the Sunshine Coast Hinterland, the park is at the headwater of Skene Creek, which joins Obi Obi Creek and flows into the Mary River at Kenilworth.

About two years ago, I had the privilege of meeting with Mary Graham, a Kombumerri (Gold Coast) – Wakka Wakka (South Burnett) person. Mary is an Indigenous elder, philosopher, researcher, and lecturer. Her life’s work has included working to shape more just social policies for Aboriginal people.

A key philosophical contribution Mary has made is the idea that the land is a guide for relationships. For a good society, we would all benefit from adopting what is known in Australian Aboriginal culture as a custodial ethic. She draws from the work of Christine F. Black, who foregrounds that the land is the source of the law. Mary explained that; “The land is a sacred entity, not property or real estate; it is the great mother of all humanity”. (p181)

Significantly, Mary says that the land, and how we treat it, is what determines



A recent planting of 400 rainforest species. Woody weed – Camphor Laurel cut down. In the background – a stand of *Araucaria bidwillii* (Bunya Pine). Photo credit: Author

our human-ness and thus, at the heart of this thinking is a relationalist ethos. Aboriginal relationality is a refined system of social, moral, spiritual, and community obligations. A relationalist ethos is one that centres on the relationship between people and the land, and importantly, action associated with caring for land and for people. Mary writes that ethics only comes

from the action of looking after something outside of ourselves. In the first instance, she argues, this is the land.

As a practical expression of a custodial ethic, Mary talked about; “Place method”, (p109) with its emphases on relationality and interconnectedness with all life forces. How to do this starts with observation. She suggests that people could learn about everything in their own area or place. They could try to replicate the learning that traditionally occurred when Aboriginal people were growing up. They developed sophisticated understandings of the land, the waters, the soils, insects, and all the flora and fauna on that land. Such close learning, Graham (p18) argues, elicits feelings of empathy, where people start to care for the land in their local area and create a sense of place for them.

Hearing about this was a tipping point for me. It was the point at which I realised I could affect change in some positive way. Previously overwhelmed by the enormity of the climate crisis and the future for living

things, adopting a place method approach was the well-being salve I needed. I joined my local BushCare group at Russell Family Park - a band of dedicated volunteers who do rainforest revegetation, creating critical habitat.

The park’s history recorded by founding members, Eric Anderson, Diana O’Connor and Alan Felmingham indicates that the BushCare group commenced in 2007 with the hope of creating a rainforest. Although there were several mature residual rainforest trees on the site, the group mostly found a forest of woody weeds - Camphor Laurels, Privets, and Chinese Celtis with a flourishing understory of Lantana, Wild Tobacco and Raspberry. However, the beautiful red soils told them of the potential for the site, much like the well-established rainforest found at the Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve in neighbouring Maleny. The group meets weekly to tend the park, and with a lot of weeding and some communal tree plants, over 6,000 native species have been planted. One measure of the habitat improvement is that 73 species



Russell Family Park BushCare Group on a cold winter's morning (Permission granted)
(Photo credit: Author)

TIPPING POINTS

of birds have been recorded in the park, with 9 species breeding. The park is also now a beautiful public space for visitors and locals to commune with nature.

Although I am still a relative newcomer to the group, the overwhelming feeling I have now is akin to an Aboriginal custodial ethic, a worldview and way of thinking and acting that is hopeful.

I don't just walk to or in the park.

I have a new transformed relationship with the park.

I love and care for it.

No doubt I would protect it or defend it.

Inexplicably, the park, this place, now owns me.



A walkway at Russell Family Park
Photo credit: Author

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Eliciting a Sense of Place and Hope through a Crankie Theatre

Dr Athena Lathouras

Recently, I discovered a storytelling device called a “Crankie” theatre. A crankie is a box built with two spools inside holding a length of paper, upon which a story is drawn or painted. Turning the crank handles, the story is told as a moving panorama. Akin to turning the pages of a book, the audience of the crankie sees only one image at a time, and a feeling of anticipation is produced about the unfolding story.

Music or a song may accompany the crankie story performance, incorporating a greater arts element. Music making and the visual arts, with an emphasis on the visual and aural satisfaction that creates something beautiful, can release renewed connection to, and a deeper understanding of, stories.

At this tipping point time for climate justice, I created a crankie focussed on the idea of “place”, the significance of eco-systems, and especially trees. When performing the crankie, I hope that people will think more deeply about environmental justice issues and develop a sense of agency to affect change. That can start in a local area through Landcare, Bushcare or Coastcare groups.

My crankie was inspired by a song called *Oak* written and performed by Kris Drever through the project and album - *The Spell Songs II: Let the Light In*. In a recent interview, when the musicians and artists were asked what they hoped would happen

because of this work, the theme of “hope for change” was elicited. Other comments were that the songs will have their own lives... land in people’s lives in ways that people can attach their own stories, concerns and experiences, as well as touch people’s hearts.

Drever composed the song in the United Kingdom about the English Oak tree, which lives for 300 years. I adapted the song to my Australian setting, or my story, changing the words of the song to include the names of Australian native species. For example, I changed the name of the song from *Oak* to *Fig*, in honour of the Small-leaved Fig (*Ficus obliqua*) which lives to over 500 years and the Moreton Bay Fig tree (*Ficus macrophylla*), which lives to over 800 years. The Soft Corkwood tree (*Ackama paniculosa*) became the “medicine tree”; the Bunya Pine tree (*Araucaria bidwillii*) became the “gathering tree” (in honour of the First Nations peoples that annually met for Bunya nut gatherings and to do their ceremonies and business in my local area); and the Carabeen tree (*Sloanea woollsii*) became the “sheltering tree”.

The following is the wording of the crankie theatre I made. The italicised words are spoken by the crankie storyteller. The bracketed [xxx] indicate words or watercolour paintings I drew as illustrations for the crankie story. See examples of the images on the following pages.



Left:
Crankie Theatre with Kookaburra
painting (Photo and Artist:
Author)



Right:
Crankie Theatre
with Carabeen Tree painting
(Photo and Artist: Author)

Once upon a time, and perhaps that time is also now,

the idea of [Place] holds a special significance.

[Australian Aboriginal flag] *For First Nations people of Australia, Place is inextricably linked to land, or Country, and their custodial ethic - traditional practices of caring for a place.*

[Wattle image] *That means close learning about everything in their own area or place.*

[Kookaburra image] *The waters, the soils, insects, all about the flora and fauna.*

If you're a non-indigenous person, I wonder.....

[What does "place" mean to you?] *Does it mean something significant about where you live now?*

[Place, Place, Place....] *Or perhaps where you were born? Or a place where you have special relationships with others? Or even where you call your spiritual home?*

Maybe Place has some other meaning for you.

[Glasshouse Mountains image]

When I'm driving up the Bruce Highway and I see the Glasshouse Mountains I feel "I'm Home". "I'm in my place".

Relationships connect me to a place too. I think of people that are important to me, and special things we do together as a community.

[BushCare Group image] *With other volunteers doing rainforest revegetation, we create habitat and a beautiful public space for people to commune with nature.*

I see this work as my attempt at a kind of custodial ethics.

[Mother Nature image] *And if the trees where we do our plantings could speak, I wonder what would they say?*

Let's find out.

(The Song "Fig" is sung) with illustrations [Corkwood tree]; [Bunya Pine tree]; [Carabeen tree]; the [Fig tree] and a [Fig tree sapling].

Of Loss and Listening

Andrew Skeoch

Painful experiences often bring a reconsideration of what is important. In the aftermath of the 2019 Black Summer megafires, I grieved not simply a change in the landscape, but its ruination. Seventeen million hectares, over twenty percent of Australia's total forests, burned in one season. Conservatively, upward of three billion vertebrate animals immolated, and more species pushed closer to extinction. Many of the cool and wet rainforests affected, which have survived eons since the time of ancient Gondwana, are not expected to regenerate. I especially grieved the magnificent forests of East Gippsland, where I had first begun nature sound recording nearly thirty years ago, standing with my microphones among a cathedral of trees and hearing the voices of Lyrebirds, Pink Robins, Gang-gang Cockatoos, Golden Whistlers and a multitude of honeyeaters, all singing like audible sunshine around me. To lose such a place and its wildlife I found just too huge to comprehend.

I suspect the heartbreak of the bushfires may have reminded many of what is precious – the real values of community and nature. For myself, it prompted a re-evaluation. The devastation, clearly a result of accelerating climate change, was not just an ecological tragedy on an unprecedented scale – it felt personal.

In listening back to the recordings I'd made and published on CD all those years ago, I knew that they documented a now-vanished soundscape. This gives them a certain scientific value in monitoring regeneration or as a measure of restoration efforts, however there was little satisfaction in this for me. These circumstances were the opposite of why I'd recorded in the first place. I also thought of listeners continuing to enjoy these recordings, possibly unaware that the places they evoked are so irrevocably changed. Again, this was not the conservation awareness outcome I'd once hoped to convey.

In my own lifetime, I was experiencing an environmental loss of staggering magnitude. Nature seemed so fragile and vulnerable, its vitality so easily lost.

During this time I sought contact with friends. Some had been caught up in events, their properties and livelihoods impacted. Others were ecologists with a more specific knowledge of what had happened. And then there were the ongoing heart to hearts – with old friends, and my partner, Sarah. I also went for walks to listen to the birdsong of the still vibrant bushland around our home in central Victoria, and be reassured.

Everything seemed to circle back to listening. It felt like a bedrock on which to understand, not just recent events, but my own life. I thought of the people dear to me. Each have shaped me in their own way by simply being who they are. I reflected though, that they wouldn't have been able to do so if I hadn't been welcoming of their influence.

I've come to consider that the measure of a relationship is how much we're prepared to let someone personally influence us. This constitutes the essence of listening; not simply to hear someone out, but with an openness to take something from the discussion and come away with a broader outlook.

I also thought of Harold, an Aboriginal man I'd met many years ago, and his instruction to be still and let the bush get to know me, and that if I did, it would talk to me. He was sharing an Indigenous understanding, handed down from generation to generation, a complete and integrated way of both knowing and being in the world. I could now appreciate his words a little better. He wasn't talking about what I might hear in nature at all. In a way, he wasn't even talking about sound. He was referring to an openness, a willingness to be deeply influenced by tuning in to the wisdom inherent in nature. For him, listening to nature was a way of learning who we can be.

I've been listening to and documenting the world's threatened ecosystems for nearly thirty years now. I've been privileged to travel widely, and hear the universality of nature's soundworld. I've learned something of her wild languages, been puzzled by her ambiguities, and gradually discerned some meaning in them. The

bushfires have been a sad reminder that the softly spoken voice of nature is both precious and so, so vulnerable. Faced with a human world absorbed in its strivings, it may also seem inconsequential.

Yet the voice of nature is the voice of the living world. It speaks of the knowledge of the biosphere, with an authority acquired by natural selection acting over unimaginably vast periods of time. It is expressive of the finely balanced processes that have resulted in the survival and continuance of life. It tells stories of adaptation, diversity, complexity, organisation, relationship, interdependence and sustainability. Life is an honest teacher. And so the voice of nature is an influence we can trust. Nature is speaking to us of the most crucial matters. It speaks of what is necessary at this time. It is telling us of how to live.

Now, instead of listening to learn about nature, we must listen to learn from nature.

A Glacial Being

Emelia C

Of all the ways you could enter the ocean you decided to melt into it.

To shrink yourself so that she could grow,
dissipating into an underworld of clarity.

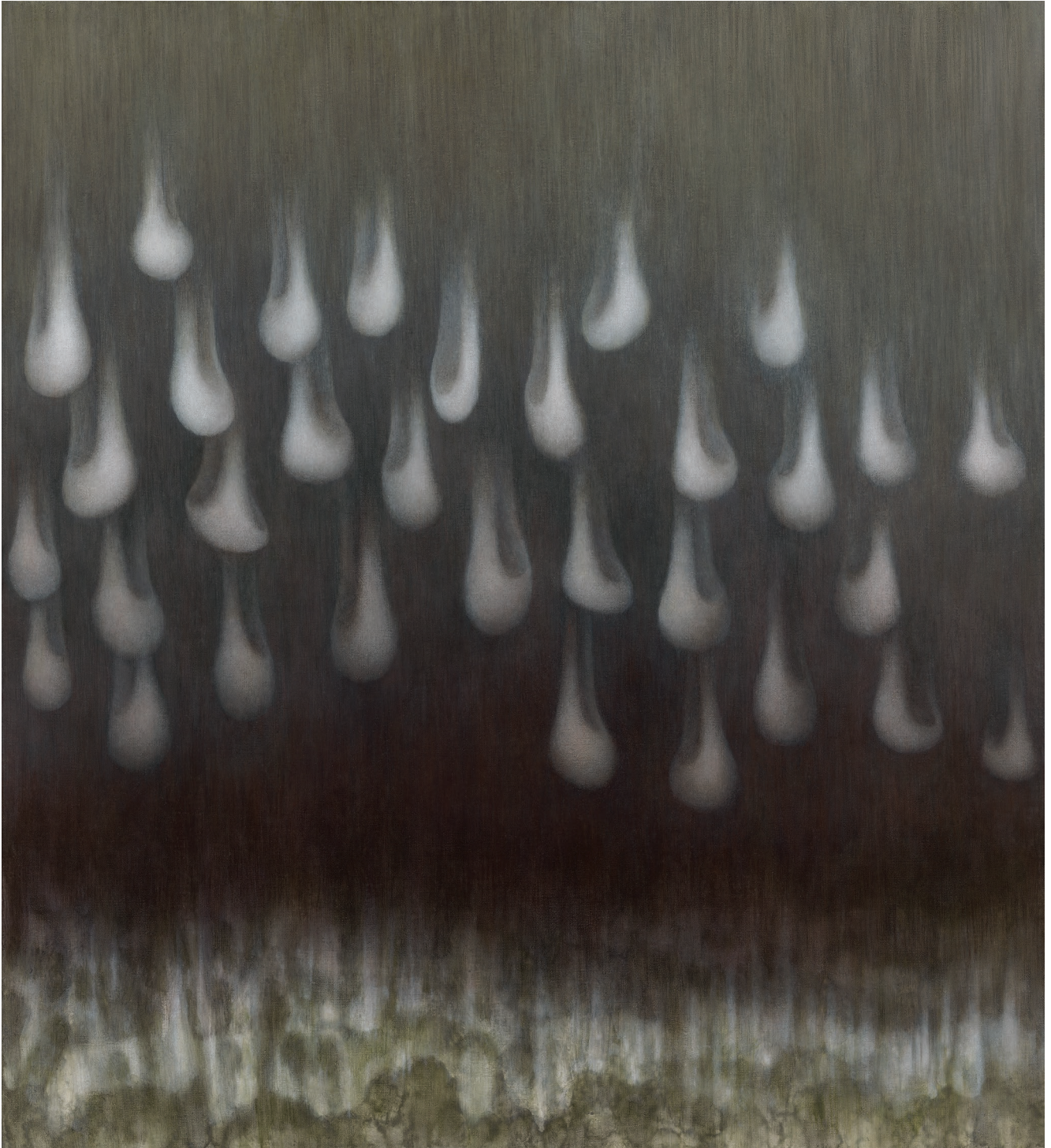
Though they say we have lost you
that cannot be true.
Your life now vibrates in different ecosystems -
more ocean, more life that's what I expect.

Still ice cold without your form
you'll soon feel the heat we ask you to carry.

That's what I was told.

So I dared myself to follow the doer
the ones with warmth in their hearts and change at their fingertips.
I see the way.
I see the way they clamber up on bus shelters
demanding the ice cold stay ice cold,
I see the way they enter places not designed for them
to change the laws so set on your demise,
I see the way they follow the path of resistance to keep you whole.

I am one of them. I am part of you.
Connected to a glacial being, and the Earth that holds you.



Nesting site.

Peter Cameron

We live within lands, seas and airs filled with forces of natural, exuberant abundance. In every moment newly created seeds of life burst into being. From these young held within their given shells, healthy young embryo shoots are nurtured into community nesting sites where they learn complex new forms.

Before passing from the husks of existence, life ripens spirit seed toward its threshold.

Ghost Dances

FOR WOVOKA (1856-1932)

Yi-Hung Chen

In this soil
Seedlings terminate
Themselves

We watch the unfolding through
Ice
And made lakes
Where the last buffalo fell

Flailed hearts sheltered
Beneath ice sheaths now
Peeling open.

My kin were innumerable,
Once
All day, I count their haunting absence.

All night I make graves for
Bodies as they emerge. In the cemetery
Of remembrance.

We are
Melting grief,
Enough to drown sky-scrappers.

Oh, you
Beautiful people

Tell us

(tell us)

There couldn't be, a logic to this destruction...

Right?

...

To your slaughterous gaze,

My visions entail an otherwise

We can be

Falling upwards, from

The ground to the skies

As divine rhythms

Descend

Like fresh rain over ridges

For strength will return to the starved,

For families to become families again.

Under a sun that is always rising,

Every moment illuminates a horizon.

Every moment tells a story of striving.

Every moment,

Fresh footprints

Trails the course of remembrance.

Carrying threads of kinship,

As it carries us.

We dance

Homewards

As we have always done.

pilgrimage

kerryn coombs-valeontis

every 15 – 60 years
when it is told
that the flowers are returned
like persephone
meet me
in violet-blue mountain uplift
warping and faulting
ascending the high passes and we will
traverse out onto triassic basalt
and claystone plateau,
let our lungs, tight
with the memory of smoke
breathe in the mountains, busy
healing themselves, take my hand
where the waratah's
striving back from charcoal-deep monocline
of stump-blackened gums
in the absence of birdsong
let it be late



when quartzose fluvial
sandstone stretches on tip-toe for last
warmth, take off your shoes,
tread softly, pink- brushed flannel petals
appearing at our feet, behold
the completion of drought-fire-flood
sequence that is all this land knows;
tarry with me,
til stratus fuchsia-whisp glaze
the evening, and we
have filled our heart-packs with rosy stars
descend with me to the world overlaid
with carpets of them – a world
all flower-smitten



ecocentric

kerryn coombs-valeontis

tender, like the warble
in the throat of the morning's magpie
and the mopoke's fervent
throbbing the rhythm of velvet nights

molecular, like the struck bell
of the honeyeater alighting on grevillea
miniscule, as the drop of nectar
desired, deep within the blooming

imperceptible, as the yearning of the
escarpment to raise wedgetail-wings higher
tiny as the trinity of trills heralding
pardalote's proximity

permeable; as the dew condenses itself
though the night, malleable
as leaks of planet's liquid heart set rock
porous, like pumice stone, that floats

a mystery, like the changing
of humpback songs, or helictites,
growing horizontal
being, like a tree that has no other choice

Tears of a River

Paul Fletcher

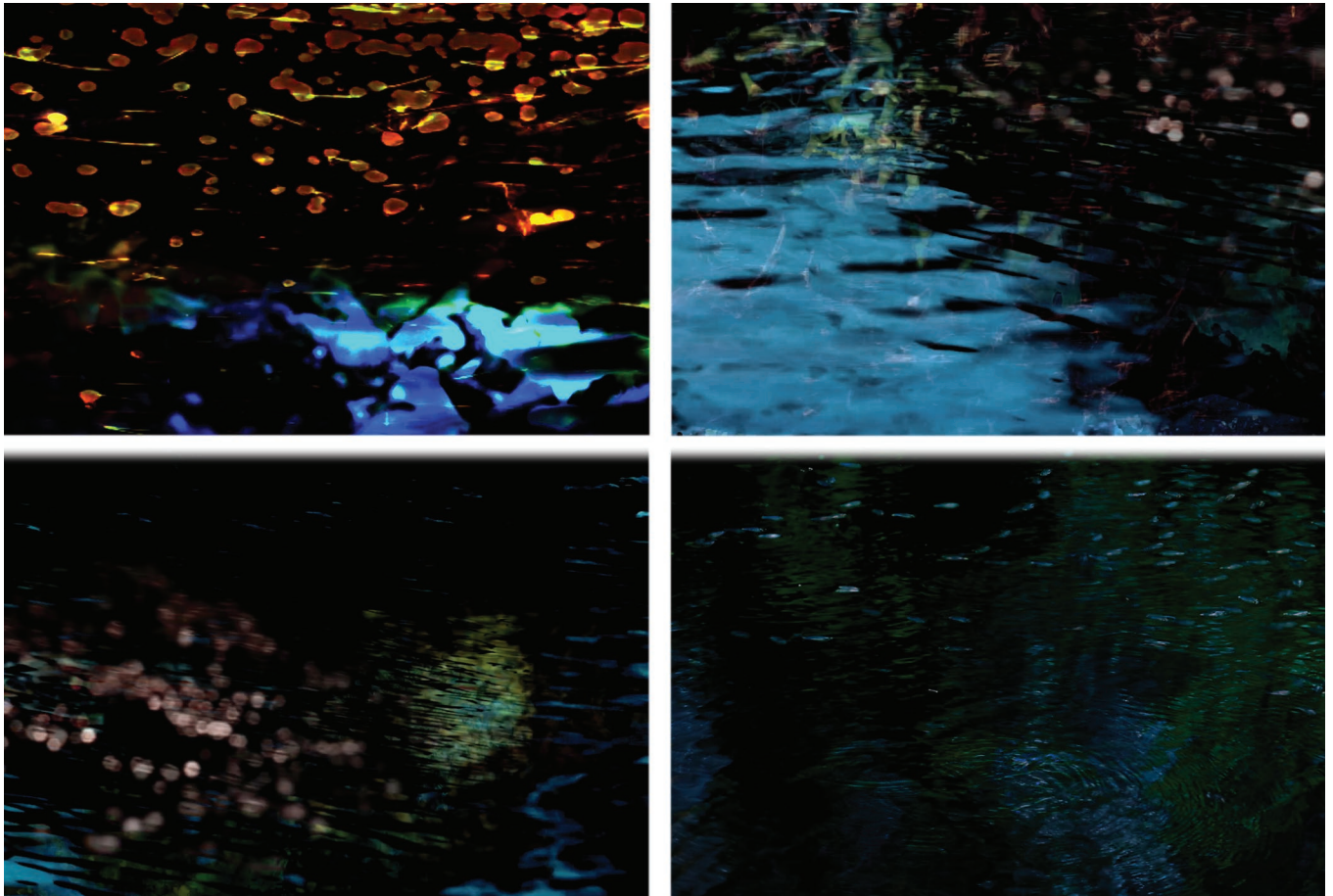


Photo sequence from an abstract short video animation.

Rivers run through the land and out to sea but also ‘run’ through ancient times and into the future. The disruption or destruction of river health and habitats would surely bring a tear to many rivers.

The river mourns the loss of habitat and biodiversity, contamination and dessication but lives in hope hearing of rivers restorative powers around the world.

Video available at: <https://vimeo.com/672228132/42236de6ad>

I asked how she knew it was time

Katie Fitzpatrick

I asked how she knew it was time
how she knew of the ebb and flow
what mystery it was that whispered
when it was time to wilt
or time to grow

She just smiled
and cocked her head
She said

Darling
I've been here for a thousand thousand years
don't you know
I've seen every cycle
every to and fro
I watched you gasp your first breath
and I will take your hand
when it is time to go

The sea has changed me

Katie Fitzpatrick

The sea has changed me
it has gotten into my skin

and left ripples in my hair
like patterns in the sand from the retreating tide

It is reflected in my eyes
they have a different light about them now
like the sun glinting off the ocean surface
but mostly
it has found its way into my soul
 leaked in through the cracks
pulled at my heart
and whispered in my ear
to let go
to go with her

to surrender

to her perfect ebb
and flow

Red Steer

B Woodland Walters



In the morning's east
The blind eye of the sun
Casts no shadow
Smoke cures dry grass

The Red Steer is out of the pen
And none shall bar its way
This time El Nino is the stable-hand,
A warming Earth its back paddock

My heart goes out to those
Who wake in fright
To those who stand and defend
To those who come with halter and rope

This time the keepers scatter
In red-eyed awe
Reconstructing their experiences
In a language no longer meaningful

The noise, the breath, the speed
Not since thirty-nine.
Pamplona is a picnic.

In an instant the Steer has gone
Leaving everything changed
Order lays shrouded in a diaspora of corrugation

You can hear him still
Raging over the next hill
The smell of him etched into the subconscious

Then the recriminations start
The finger-pointers
The opportunists
The promises, the denial

Three weeks later the bush sprouts
And the stable-hand slips silently away

We are still not ready for this sort of farming

B.Woodland Walters
Cottlesbridge, 3099
January 2003

There is no planet B

Judith Floyd

Scrawled on the home made poster
Held high
For all to see

B means zero for plants
And wildlife
And you and me

B - ing aware and active can ignite
The now
The how is up
To you and me

To see now
That there *is no planet B*
Is clever and wise
And kind

That mindful poster
Will be lost along with you and me
Unless the powerful can read the
Words
There is no PLANET B

Don't wait for Mars
We are in the NOW



Haiku glimpses

Ruari Jack Hughes

Summer, long days, heat
A slumber of quietness
Then the year moves on

Out there is desert
Expanse of empty spirits
Riding the dust storms

On the forest floor
Bugs are frantically busy
No time for the sun

The little black ant
Is confronted by a leaf
Changes direction

The icicle drips
Gently, deliberately
A spire will appear

Glaciers retreating
Icebergs cracking off the edge
The world receding

Where do we wander
Across rainbows, through cloudbursts
Seeking refreshment

Butterfly yellow
Winging across limpid pools
Reflecting wonder

A leaf spirals down
Random staircase circling tree
Transporting small bugs

There was a crack
A small fissure in the rock
Now the dam has split

Down in ocean deep
Gliding through silv'ry waters
Wonderful creatures

Shades of light falling
Curtain closing off the day
Ev'ning coming down

Look up to the stars
Light shining from distant stars
Before Earth began

The day trails along
Reluctantly succumbing
Suddenly nightfall

Would you like to come
Tomorrow, make up new games
Or just play old ones

Stay still a moment,
Hear the song of yesterday,
Listen for the future.

Rock Stars 2018

Marian Drew



Ink jet photograph 60 cm x 75 cm

Rock Stars is an attempt to create an intimate sense of connection to the geological, familiar yet strange. Photographed in the Kimberley, this Devonian rock was formed 350 million years ago, when animals were just crawling out of the ocean to inhabit land. To think about rocks is to think about the planetary time of earth's biological and geological evolution. Inextricably entwined, the planet's rocky substance supports the evolution of life and life changes the composition and climate of the planet. I'm aiming to think about the 'geological' in terms of its own agency, not only for what it can do for us as a resource for exploitation, consumption and recreation. Perhaps if we can revive enchantment (enchantment as estrangement and secular enmeshment) not always reducing matter to its raw material but as an 'affective force', it may diminish our fantasy of sovereign relation to environment.¹

¹ Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome, *Stone. An Ecology of the Inhuman*, University of Minnesota Press, 2015, 9. Cohen draws on Jane Bennett, *The Enchantment of Modern Life: Crossings, Energetics, and Ethics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001 and *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010.

The Wounded River

Graeme Gibson

The Northern Rivers we proudly proclaim
 As part of our cornucopia
 This is how we market northern New South Wales
 Yet of one of those rivers – The Richmond
 You must know its true story
 Once nurtured, valued, used and respected,
 Leaving; “clear water, running over clean sand and pebbles,”
 Now muddy, rank, fit for carp and little else
 The squatters, the cedar getters, the graziers all came
 Displacing the traditional custodians, and a way of being
 Setting in train the decline, but blame none of them
 For progress at all costs was the mantra
 All under a cheerful government gaze
 Once; “an ideal of beauty and purity not to be surpassed,”
 Now shallower, narrower, a sad and wounded river
 Privatised the profits, socialised the costs
 That’s the free market way
 It’s my land many say, how we’ve always done it
 And in any case the river’s never been better
 Though those trees are a problem
 The divine desire for wanton leaps and wrong inferences
 Ignores the inconvenient, elevates the will to ignorance
 But change is needed, change must come
 We’re all in this together, no man an island
 It will never be what it once was
 But surely it’s more than water supply, a drain
 Where’s the feeling, the imagination, where’s the love?

Quotations from: Murray-Prior, Mrs T M (nee Mary Bundock), *Memoirs of the early days on the Richmond River*. Copy held in Richmond River Historical Society.

Rising Tide

Mary Forbes

I hope that my painting, *Rising Tide* (oil on board, 2021) [following page], will be a gentle prompt to awareness and action for the benefit of our planet – our home. Climate change tipping points are all too present: the relentless sea level rises, the devastating floods, the catastrophic bushfires.

I have depicted a drowning world with a reflection of a burning sun and tulips. Tulips are presented as a symbol of human interference in the natural world, as they were the subject of the infamous speculative frenzy in the 17th century. I have always seen tulips as beautiful but slightly sinister *fleurs du mal*.

Reflection and contemplation can elevate our consciousness to reconnect with Nature and the spiritual. Caring for our precious planet brings meaning to our lives and expresses our true humanity.

We have been given the Garden of Eden. Let us give it its due honour.



Rising Tide (oil on board, 2021) / Mary Forbes

Come with me into the forest

Karen Hopkins

Come with me into the forest
Breathe with the trees, feel their signs.
Come learn from their stories through the rings of time.

Come with me into the forest, we can learn from the trees,
as they live out the secrets held in their seeds.
Connecting and nurturing through chemical waves scents and sound,
sending messages through fungi, deep in the ground.

Come with me into the forest, bathe in light's ricocheting dance.
Feel the barks tender bumps giving home to the ants.
Smell composting leaves, hear the rising of sap
as it stirs deep within us permanent impermanence.

Come with me in to the forest feel the pain of the saw
through these life-giving companions, grounded, standing so tall.
And feel the cycle of oneness that lives in us all
to be filled once again with the magic and awe.

Come with me in to the forest see the trees from the wood,
feel Earth's interconnection, acting for all life's good
honour our strong gentle giants, forever witnessing change
moving flexibly through centuries of the winds and the rains.

For they are symbols of resilience again and again.



Seeing the wood from the trees

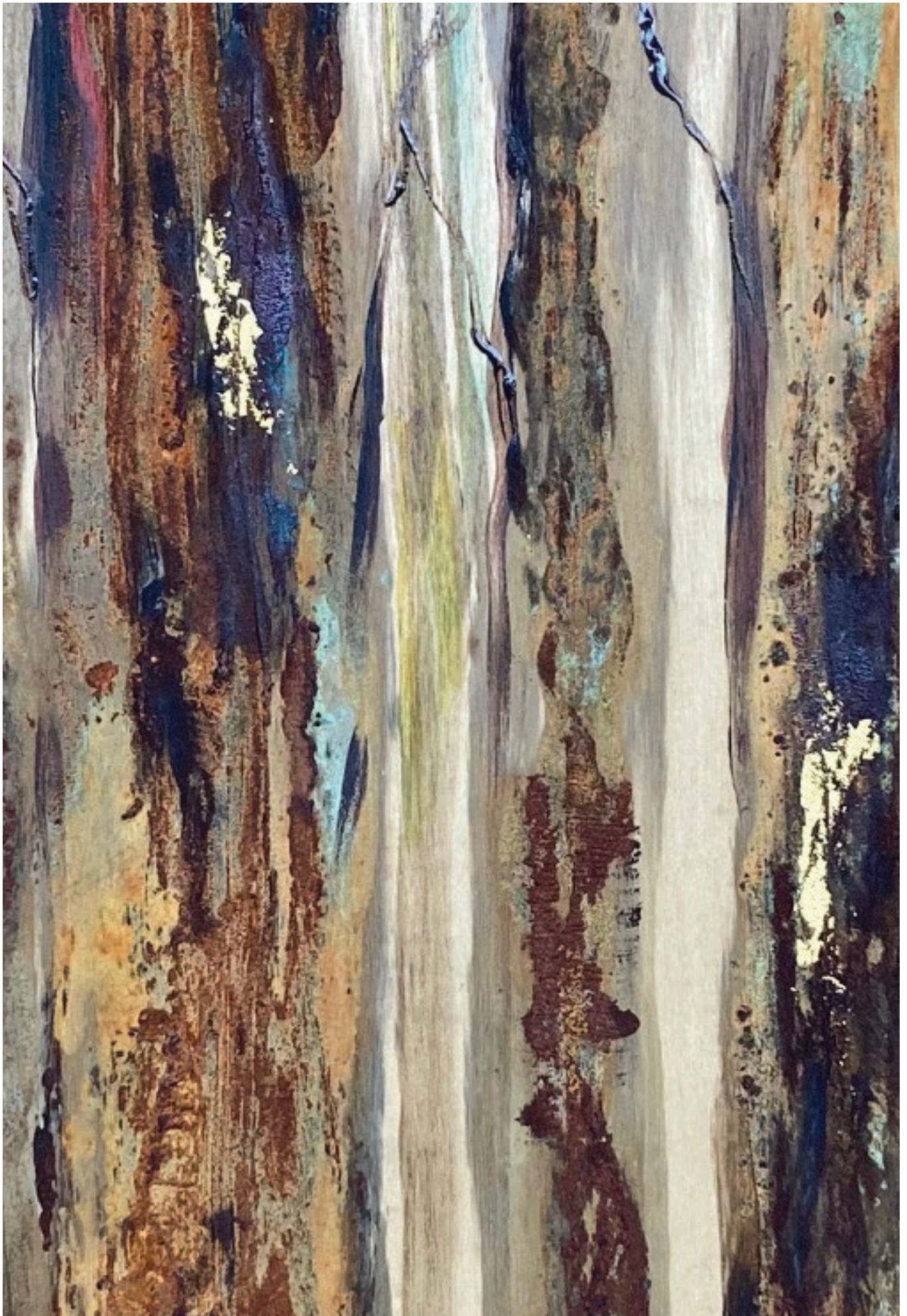
Karen Hopkins

Seeing the wood from the trees

Standing both alone and in groves,
the world rustles carelessly through their boughs,
as into the depths roots inquisitively sink,
and time is recorded ring after ring.

But what happened to create this surmise
of a world where a tree
is worth more dead than alive?

How can it be?
Such is our demise
when together we breathe
and on trees we rely.



Possums in the Roof

Mark Allen

I pick up pieces of broken asbestos in the drizzle
And place them on a wall for a man to take away
And pause for thought
Wondering when the fires will come
When it will be our turn
Perhaps if I burn through enough dead wood this winter
We will be spared... for a while
And will the possums in the roof escape?
Or will they get taken away because they poo?
I watch them at night on the veranda
And for a moment it feels beautiful
Perhaps this moment can stretch until forever
If I don't grasp onto it.



What does it mean?

Moran Wiesel

What does it mean

to say

my body is old,

recycled with parts from the start of the
world, speckled with dust from atoms that
birthed in the farthest stars, the darkest
caverns, the highest skies?

What does it mean to say

my home is this earth,

travelling through veins of mineral skin,
dancing with spirits who cry to me “kin”
– my soul cycles the circles of light that
spiral our globe in gossamer glows of webs
guiding me home again, and again.

What does it mean to hear the fractal lights
of fern-tree life beckoning in whispers for
us to hear the pulsing rhythms of myrtle
wisdoms

– I shake in my bones.

What does it mean

to hear wind-swept cities

keen with the sounds of souls once lost
tearing down statues to free themselves
from our cement blocks?

What does it mean

to stretch in the shade of the graves of the
massacre sites of the old ones here and
know in my heart beat I was once beaten
here too?

What does it mean

to take a spear by ethereal beings that bring
wind and fire flames asking me to lay down
my sword for the ancient stories
needing to
change?

What does it mean

to ask myself

what does it mean

to live this land?

Hollow Moon

B Woodland Walters

There was a hollow in the Moon this morning
Shadow of a scorpion lair
A B-double, its wheels spinning in air
Sluices fungicide into marsh

The ABC trades lipstick for content
Trying to remain relevant in a populist culture
Bad news can't be jazzed up
Good news alone is a fabricated panacea

I am being invited to sip fruit nectar in paradise
While the blue sea edges up the beach
Crepe skin adorns once glistening muscle
Alarm rises, maybe its not about me

Everywhere, the forces of disquiet
Ripple through massing crowds
Dust rises from missile crater
And refugee camp alike

Hard to find an uplifting drone shot in all that

Smudging, Call to Prayer
The Market24hourClock
Are these the way through
The breath, the silence, the surrender
Is this the way back

Tarnas speaks of cyclic conjunction
Intimations of a new world view
But what follows Dionysus?
Business as usual
And a damning environmental report

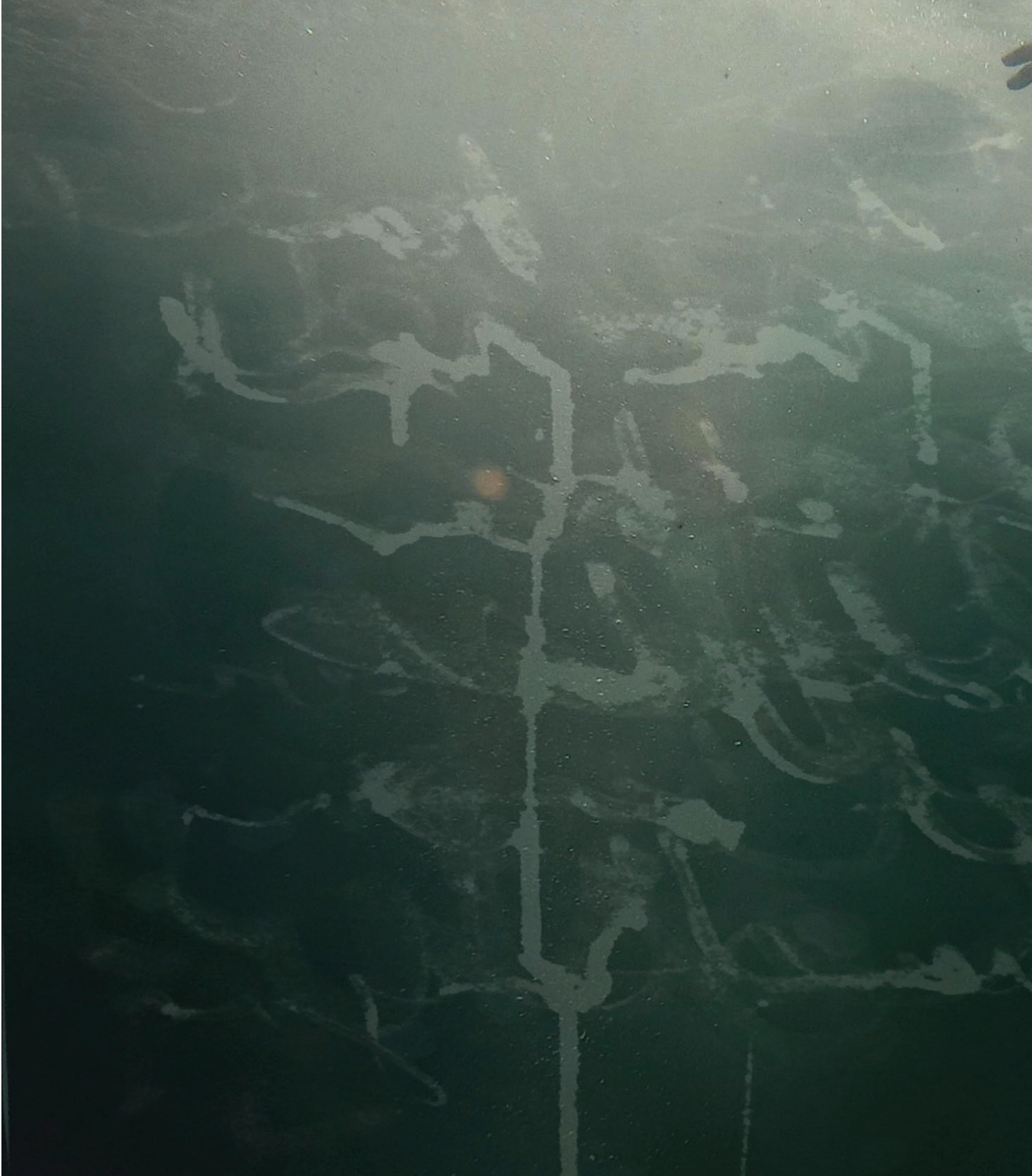
Or the long road

Each leaf and bramble honoured
We breathe in, Gaia breathes out
It's our collective choice
But only if we know our starlight origins

B Woodland Walters
Wattle Glen
June 19, 2022

Threshold

Jenny Pollak





[Complete image shown on a single page on page 55]

Say it like this:

Jenny Pollak

that the torrent took the river to the river's mouth
and then further. Until we were all on our knees.

That the vision was a forest
our hair made

standing on end; that the land didn't hold
back; that so much

unconditional water, so many
trunks, their histories

arrived like a flash,
a fire, an unconditional

brown and black
un-herald of doom; that the falling

continent of a face conceded the journey
by being

tremendously kicked. That's how swift,
that's how

unceremoniously
(no flags, no speeches or declarations

of war) it continued
to rage.

Bowerbird Blues

Pat Simmons

Dear Human, where's all the blue plastic?
My lady friend found it fantastic.
She'd visit my bower
For hour upon hour.
The absence of plastic is drastic.

The clothes pegs were popular treasure.
I'd plot and I'd plan and I'd measure
Just where to place them.
Intruders, I'd chase them.
My lady could browse at her leisure.

Bottle caps added some fun
Randomly placed one by one.
My style was eclectic.
My work pace was hectic.
She'd visit to see what I'd done.

Now I forage for hour after hour
For a beautiful feather or flower.
I'm terribly tired
But my lady's inspired.
She's agreed to remain at my bower.

Hard truth

(F O R D U N K)

B Woodland Walters

How does a new idea
Spread thin and fast
In a wide brown land
How does truth dodge
Through the corridors of power

How does the promise of fortune
Corrupt the spirit
How do citizens
Swallow bitter pills

Land shapes ideas
Catches each gossamer thread
Till the story binds
Across the surface

Damp and green in the north
Dust swirl in the west
Grey and treacherous in the south
Sunrise promise in the east

Rock dust, sand drift, surf and sea
Mix a bit of bush scent or garden ease
Listen to the chatter on the evening breeze
Over fences, benches, beaches and bars
Even now as we reach for the stars

Till the web strands fix to the collective
Bent, twisted, interpreted
Joked, parodied, trolled
Enjoyed, re-enacted, traded
We all own a version

Then it can be written
Whatever truth that might be

But don't forget

We took the children away

B Woodland Walters
'Light Heart Forest',
Rossville, Queensland
April 14, 2022

Gertrude Street

B Woodland Walters

Sitting on a city bench
Still the mind in motion
Let the tide of humankind
Blur to one devotion

All lives are connected
The lives of others lived
What common binding law abides
The Earth and what it gives

Turn the pages over
Trudge now through the past
Rosie in the dungeon
Or rolling on the grass

City streets are sunny
City streets are bleak
Striving for their loved ones
Striving for the sweet

Look into the faces
The tortured and the meek
Earth's disassociation
Earth beneath their feet

Hear the black man singing
Hear the loss, the pain
Archie knows in Gertrude Street
That hope can rise again

B Woodland Walters
Gertrude Street
March, 2017

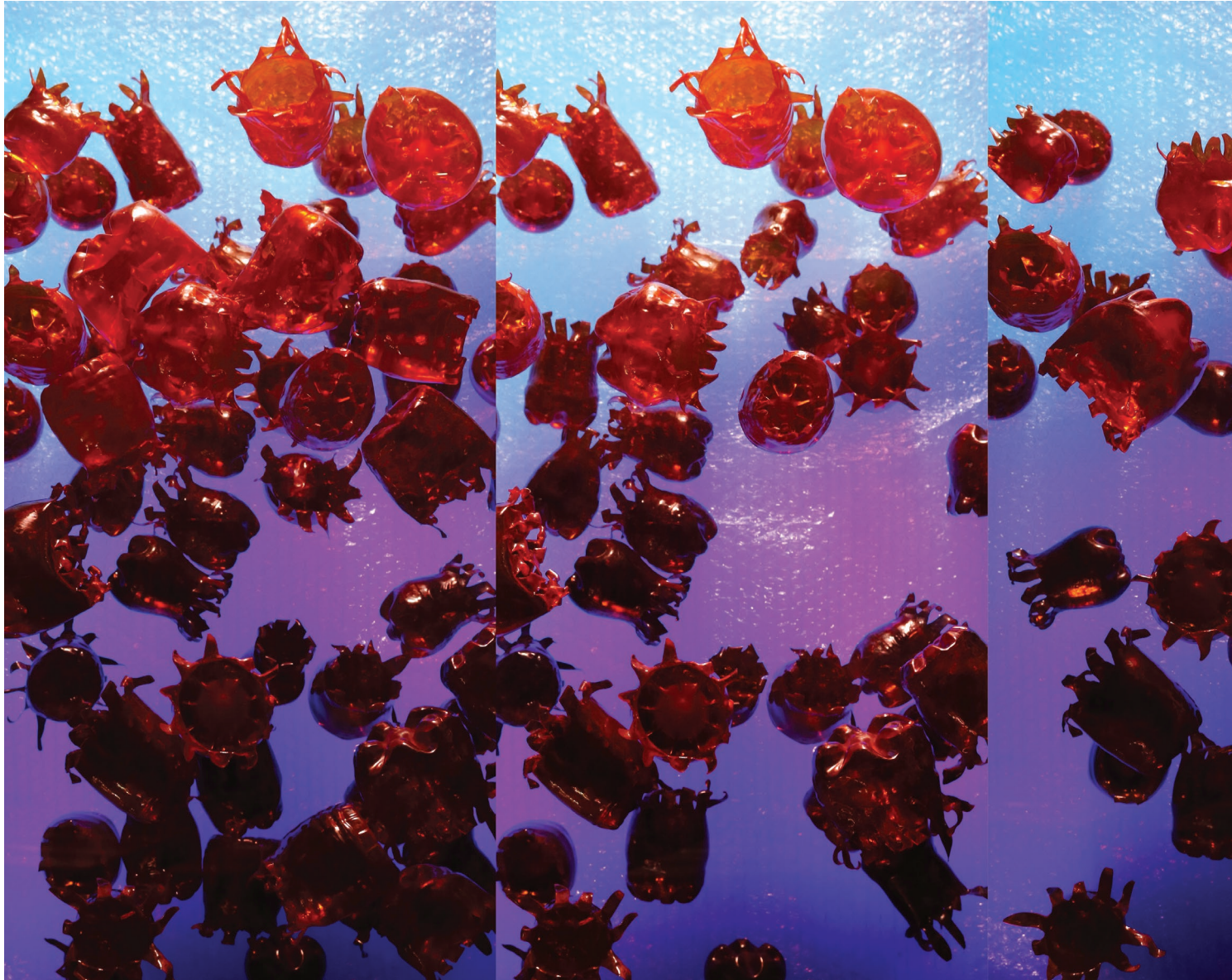
Bloom (2022)

Nadine Schmoll

As an artist and educator, I explore notions of art, science and imagination by creating otherworldly experiences of light and colour that evoke wonder and an appreciation for the natural world. My work explores the relationships between plants, animals and humans, delving into microhabitats to examine evolutionary adaptation in the face of environmental changes, particularly those brought about

due to human activity. I am interested in the potential for humans to learn from nature, to adapt and form more mutually beneficial relationships between ourselves and the world around us.

My practice is informed by an eight month stay on Lady Elliot Island in the Great Barrier Reef, in particular the observation of corals and jellyfish belonging to a



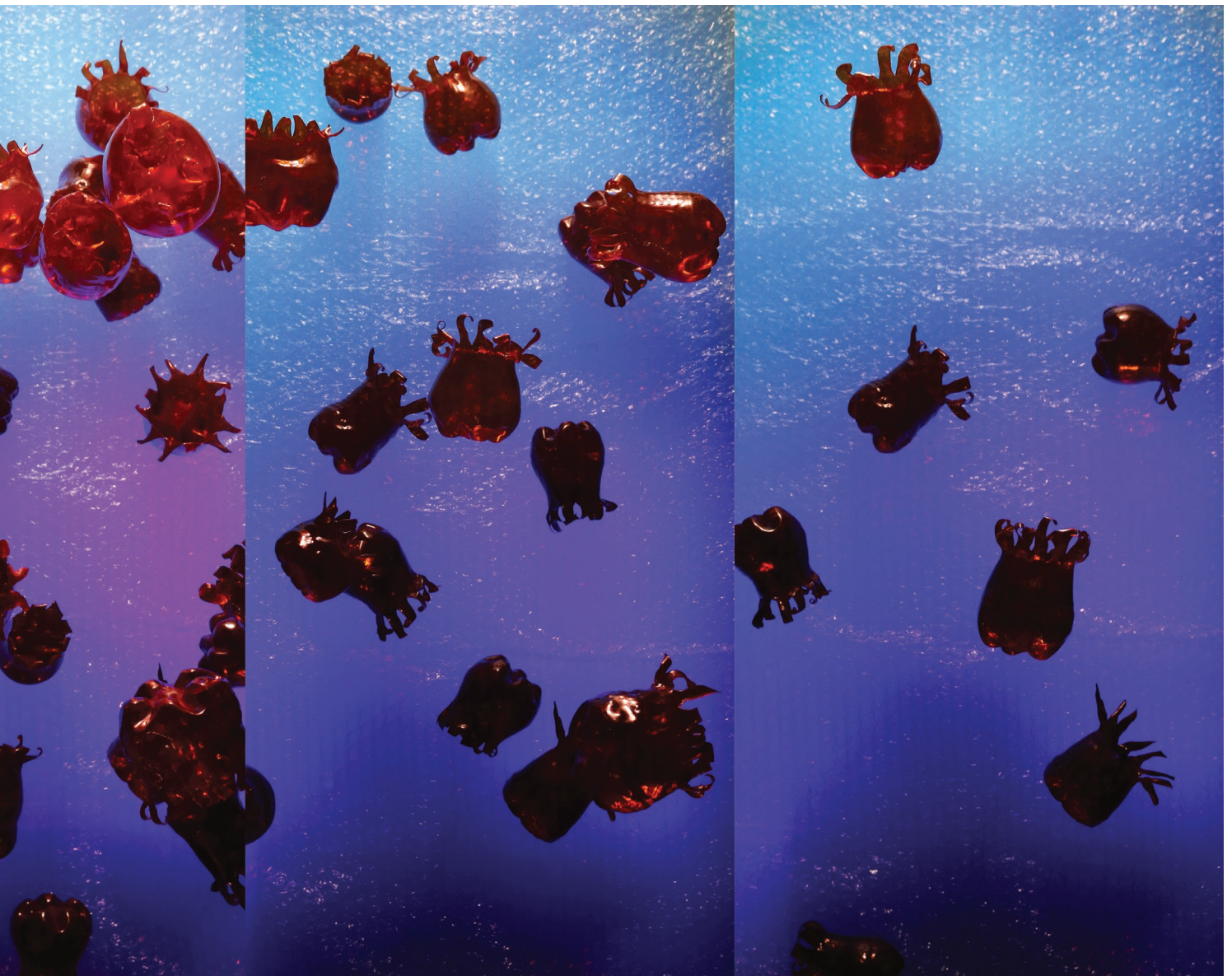
phylum called Cnidarians. Jellyfish are the ultimate survivors, prehistoric creatures that can thrive well beyond the limits of other living things.

The physiological plasticity of jellyfish – their ability to respond to different conditions in different ways and thereby increase their chances of survival – makes them the ultimate survivors. Prehistoric predators dating back millions of years, jellyfish can survive and thrive in even the harshest of conditions, outcompeting other species in their pursuit of resources.

Where fish, mammals and bird life suffer due to human induced pressures on our

marine environment, jellyfish can be found in vast numbers. These jellyfish “blooms” serve as an early warning signal that our marine ecosystem is out of balance.

The collection of plastic waste for creative reuse to make art becomes a community collaboration with schools, organisations and individuals, emphasising our shared responsibility to care for the environment. Forms are made by sculpting plastic with heat into organic vessels. Light allows the objects to transcend their domain by illuminating shapes, patterns and colours on a macro level and creating an immersive experience for the viewer.



[Complete image shown on a single page on page 56]

WE ARE NOT DONE

Cari Taylor

What pulled us from our natural place
Set amongst natures grace
Separated from all that holds us
Wrenched from the mother
Colonialism stole us

....

Pushed poked prodded shaped
Into a mould that we were never made to fit
Into a system that meant we omit
Our truth our beginnings our very essence
We were coerced to comply oppressed like peasants
Riddled with fear we lost our way
Fuelled with trauma we had no say
Our voices taken our liberty stripped
Whilst wine from gold goblets greedy capitalists sip.

....

You've taken our time
You've stolen our roots
You've torn us from our rights
And you've held our necks with your boots
We see you
We see the systems you've made
The lies you've told and the money you've made
We see your corruption we smell your stench
We see the crooked ways of your intent
And we no longer comply

...

We begin to build values, morals and recall ways
that began our story within the old days
a return to living systems to which we belong
amongst union and diversity through togetherness we are strong
we can build economies that unite not divide
that allow equity to be our guide
removing hierarchy, hegemony, tyranny and fear
becoming open to possibility and agents of change
returning to our wholeness from which we are estranged

....

this is on us—we are here from our making
 we allowed, we turned away, we silenced—this is our forsaking
 this is on us—to draw down, draw back, to redeem
 to reuse to recycle to (lets out an exasperated scream!)

.....

only we can take this action only we make systems change
 we are the makers, creators, the future is in our hands
 we are the saviours from whom we must demand
 change
 a turn around
 a new direction
 it is time now for course correction

...

we need our values to be strong, our courage to be resilient
 only through this can our way forward hold brilliance
 not only of mind but of the heart and the sacred
 yes science
 yes research
 yes facts
 yes truth
 but entwined and entangled with all sentience created

...

begin
 begin now, today, this moment, this breath
 what stole us no longer leads us to death
 we are awake, aware, we have realised our wrongs
 and today we can begin to sing a new song

...

Lean in, connect, hold close those you hold dear
 Listen, learn, be guided away from fear
 Understand that the one thing that can never be taken
 is the power of our hands—steady them if they are shaking
 Now raise them to vote—to hold—to connect and become one
 Let them be the voice through which we become
 We are not done
 We are not done

Sugar Glider

B Woodland Walters

Was it the Lion Moon
Or the raking staccato of a Possum
That woke me
To the dawn

Stillness outside holding night sounds
In muffled hand
Indoors, close with sleep
A finite Keep

What was that?
Another in the room
Insistent, a thief?
A dreaded Rat?

The sway of a coat-hanger
Eased my fear
The softest brush
That nimble acrobat

I called a half-whispered Dook
Again, dook, silence, Duk
A tinkle and plop
Then a closer note struck

Tuk came the hello
A musical note
Tuk, she said softer
How does He know my quote?

We exchanged greetings
She, from my jacket
Stared wide-eyed
At this large linguist

I moved slowly
So not to insist
We Tuk-ed and bowed
Outside, the mist

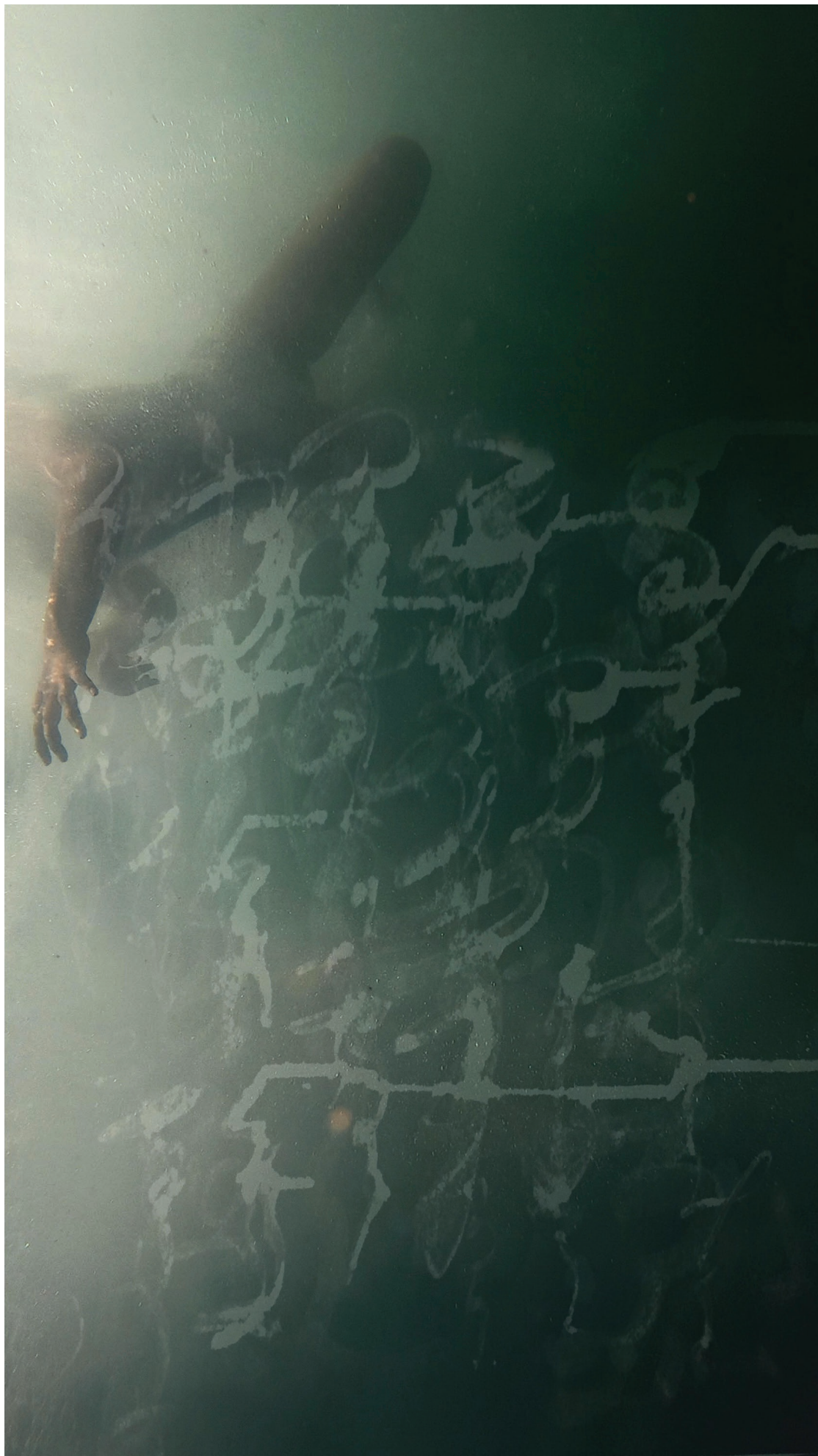
She found a vent
I, my warm bed
Pulling the covers
Together we went

To reflect on our meeting
An encounter that lent
To the day a new prospect
Of belonging
To sweet Gaia's breath

B Woodland Walters
Dunmoochin
December 15, 2019

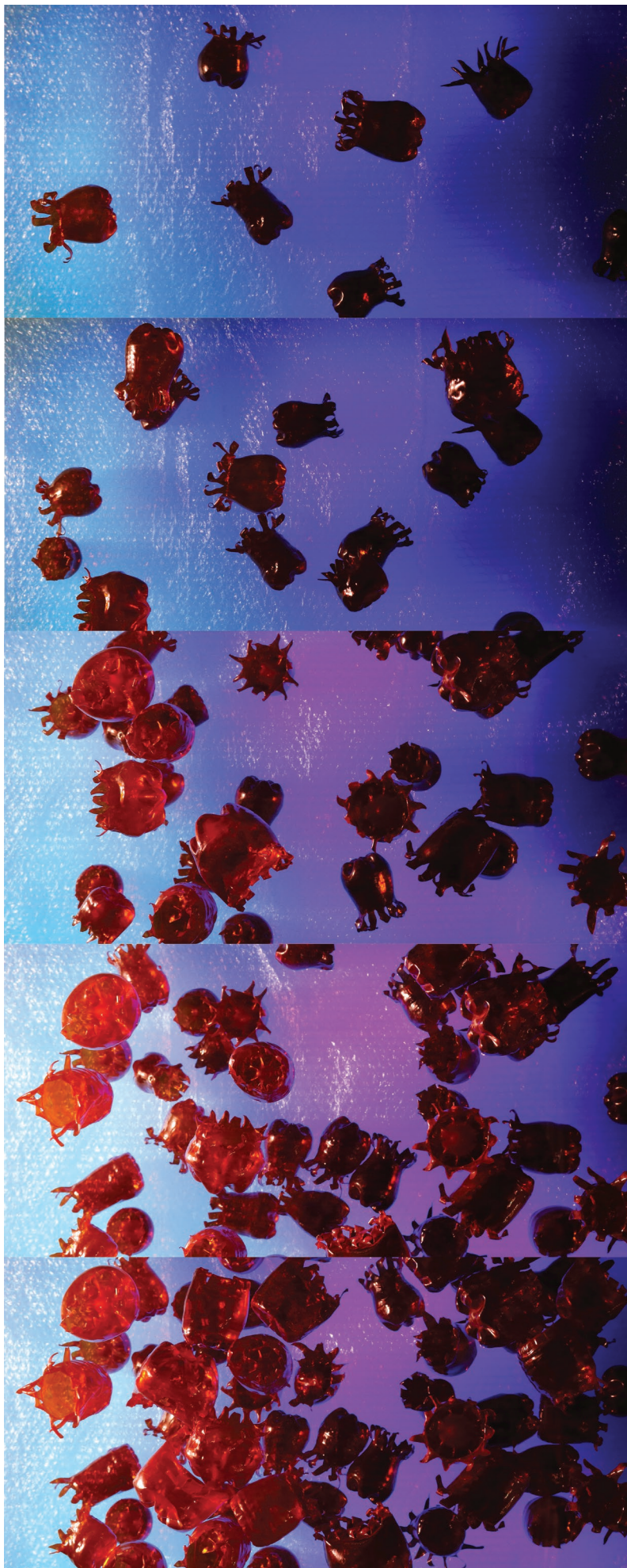
Threshold

Jenny Pollak



Bloom [2022]

Nadine Schmoll



About AELA

The Australian Earth Laws Alliance (AELA) is a national not-for-profit organisation whose mission is to increase the understanding and practical implementation of Earth-centred governance in Australia, with a focus on law, economics, education, ethics and the arts. AELA's work is inspired by the theory and practice of Earth jurisprudence, which is a governance philosophy and growing social movement.

Earth jurisprudence proposes that we rethink our legal, political, economic and governance systems so that they support, rather than undermine, the integrity and health of the Earth.

www.earthlaws.org.au



australian earth laws alliance

Earthword & Artling Biographies

Mark Allen

Mark is the founder of *Town Planning Rebellion* and has helped to develop the *Holistic Activism* movement. As well as writing and running workshops, Mark has recently taken to stand-up comedy as an alternative method of communicating the need for systemic change. He is also an occasional poet and songwriter, having released material with *Counting Backwards*.

- » <https://holisticactivism.net>
- » Counting Backwards - <https://countingbackwards.bandcamp.com>
- » Town Planning Rebellion - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/459336597565689>
- » Holistic Activism: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/211194752603900>
- » email - themindfulactivist@gmail.com

Emelia C

Emelia is a passionate environmental lawyer with a background in environmental earth science. Emelia is a co-author of a policy brief on climate security, displacement and human rights. She is now exploring the intersection of nature and the human experience through creative avenues.

Peter Cameron

Largely self-taught, I've been painting and sculpting most of my life. Through actively engaging the imagination in the arts, we can learn about the reciprocal nature of diverse sense perceptions. Working 'en plein air' then becomes a realising of relational ontology. I've produced around 20 solo exhibitions and live on Garigal country, Sydney.

- » <http://www.petercameron.com>

Yi-Hung Chen

意閔 (Yi-Hung) is an open doorway to meanings and articulations. They dwell gratefully as a Taiwanese settler upon unceded Turrbal lands. They are an ecologist/anthropologist in-training who strives to build good relations.

- » email - justin123chen@gmail.com

kerryn coombs–valeontis

Kerryn is the founder of *Earthheart* online Ecotherapy study, and co-author of *Nature Heals An Introduction to Nature-based therapy in Australia and New Zealand*. (2019 Bad Apple) She collates *Ecopoiesis* an online zine, and has independently published her first collection of poetry (*in parentheses*) in 2021. She conducts poetry therapy for eco-anxiety/grief and terrafurie (earthrage) online.

- » <https://www.earthcreateheal.com>
- » <https://www.naturehealsbook.com>
- » email - kvaleontis@gmail.com

Marian Drew

Marian Drew lives in Brisbane Australia, and is currently Adjunct Associate Professor at Queensland College of Art, Griffith University and PhD candidate at the Canberra School of Art and Design, Australian National University. She was Queensland College of Art (QCA) Director of the Photography Program 2005-2016, and QCA Deputy Director, 2001-2003, where she taught full time 1986-2016.

- » <https://www.mariandrew.com.au/>

Katie Fitzpatrick

All things nature, the universe and beautiful words.

- » <https://instagram.com/katie.vicious>

Paul Fletcher

I have a fascination with nature, technology, visual and sonic artwork. My artwork has been exhibited internationally including Anima Mundi, Ars Electronica, PuntoYRaya, Zagreb Animafest, Centre for Visual Music. The connecting thread through all my artwork is the sharing of connections, observation, and awareness of nature as part of ourselves, inseparable, and interdependent.

- » <https://www.paulfletcherartwork.com>
- » <https://instagram.com/pauledmundio>
- » <https://soundcloud.com/edmundio1>
- » <https://instagram.com/timberjewellery>

Judith Floyd

I was born in a country town in Western Victoria. After my professional training as a nurse in Melbourne I entered the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, an international women's community. I have been privileged to experience many cultures in my 60 yrs as a catholic nun and meet many wonderful people.

In latter years my love of art and writing has helped me contribute to raising awareness in environmental and justice issues.

» email - judithfmm@yahoo.com.au

Mary Forbes

I live on a farm on Gumbaynggirr country, where I love riding my horse alone in the bush, deepening my connection with Nature.

I am a self-taught artist working with a disability, a debilitating illness that has disrupted my career.

My work has been selected for group exhibitions at Coffs Harbour and Grafton Regional Galleries.

» <https://instagram.com/maryforbesartist>

» email - maryforbes969@gmail.com

Graeme Gibson

Graeme Gibson has a background in adult learning and community development. Most of his writing is non-fiction with a focus on nature, community, politics & their intersection. He presents Life Writing workshops and is planning a dedicated foray into nature writing. This will include an eco-biography of a local river, bringing art and science together in word and image.

» <https://www.morethanjusttalk.com.au>

» <https://facebook.com/Graeme3GibsonMoreThanJustTalk>

» email - graeme@morethanjusttalk.com.au

Karen Hopkins

I have a back ground in education and been a professional artist for over 20 years. Nature and the landscape and the interconnectedness of all life are a constant inspiration to me. I paint create sculptures and write poetry and also have experience in eco-art mural painting, exhibition curation and gallery management. Through my art, I aim to bring people closer to nature to appreciate and respect the stories colors shapes and essence that it has to offer and take the viewer on a journey to the deeper levels that connect us all.

This selection of works are inspired by the beauty and the fragility of life on earth, and the importance of living together with care and respect for the earth and all life in an everchanging world.

- » <https://www.karenhopkinsart.com>
- » <https://facebook.com/karenhopkinsart>
- » <https://instagram.com/karenhopkinsart>
- » <https://linkedin.com/in/karen-hopkins-48395a12>

Ruari Jack Hughes

Born in Sydney; lived all over Australia; spent many years in New Zealand and Zimbabwe; a few months in Singapore.

Writes poetry, fiction and drama; published in Australia and seven other countries.

Frequent themes in his writing include: memory; the accidental nature of life; longing for love to be always there; believing tomorrow will still hold hope.

- » <https://www.wordtrack.com.au>
- » email - storyteller@wordtrack.com.au

Simon Kerr

Simon Kerr is a musician, climate thinker and writer. He leads the multimedia climate project Music for a Warming World and the Musicians Climate Crisis Network. Simon trained in Sociology and Philosophy, has a MAppSc (Natural Resource Management) and PhD (Political Ecology). He is an Honorary Research Fellow at La Trobe University and also works on a long-term research program on the Murray-Darling basin.

- » <https://www.musicforawarmingworld.org>
- » <https://www.musicforawarmingworld.org/musicians-network>
- » emails - simonkerrnz@gmail.com - s.kerr@latrobe.edu.au

Athena Lathouras

Tina Lathouras is a Senior Lecturer in the Social Work at the University of the Sunshine Coast. Drawing from critical approaches to community development, she seeks to investigate, support and theorise citizenship and collective action working for social justice and human rights. Her current research includes narrative practices and the Arts as a vehicle for critical reflection and social change.

Sharyn Munro

Sharyn Munro is an award-winning short story writer, author of four books, and 'literary activist', who aims to reach beyond the converted with her personal form of environmental writing. She received the 2014 NSW Nature Conservation Council's Dunphy Award for 'The most outstanding environmental effort of an individual' and has run a nature blog since 2007.

- » <https://www.sharynmunro.com>
- » <https://facebook.com/sharyn.munro.9>

Jenny Pollak

In 2012, after more than twenty years as a full time artist focused in photography, sculpture and video installation, I began a dedicated poetry practice. You can find my poetry in various journals and anthologies, including Meanjin; the Cordite Poetry Review; the Australian Poetry Journal; Red Room Poetry; Plumwood Mountain; the Canberra Times; Verity La; and Australian Award Winning Writing.

- » <https://jennypollak.viewbook.com>
- » https://instagram.com/jenny_pollak_art/

Nadine Schmoll

Nadine Schmoll is an artist and educator whose interdisciplinary practice spans art and science to explore plant, animal and human interconnections. Nadine creates sculpture, installation, photography and wearable art to engage with themes of symbiosis, resilience, community and sustainability. She holds a Graduate Diploma in Secondary Education and has over ten years experience as a museum and arts educator.

- » <https://www.nadine-schmoll.com>
- » <https://instagram.com/nadine.schmoll>

Pat Simmons

Pat lives at Scarborough, NSW. She's a writer of poetry, short stories, flash fiction and children's picture books.

Her poetry for children has been published in School Magazine and has won competitions in Australia and the UK.

- » <https://www.patsimmonswriter.com.au>
- » <https://instagram.com/patsimmonswriter>
- » email - tricia.simmons@hotmail.com

Andrew Skeoch

Andrew is an educator, naturalist, environmental thinker, and one of Australia's best-known nature sound recordists. His presentations seek to address the fundamental questions of our human relationship with the living biosphere, and have been given at TedX, on ABC Radio's 'Big Ideas', and to academic and community audiences.

- » <https://listeningearth.com>

Cari Taylor

A voice for the Living System of creation revealing the foundations, philosophy and ethics of life's sacred systems. A return to this eternal system, to the initiates way, seeded on natural laws that seeks balance for people place planet holds a process that. asks us to dive into our own transformation from awareness to realisation to actualisation.

- » <https://linkedin.com/in/caridtaylor/>
- » https://instagram.com/one_living_system/

Moran Wiesel

Moran Wiesel is an ecotherapist, musician, and wordsmith. As Earth Enspiralled, Moran offers earth-connection, holistic counselling, collective healing, and sound therapy sessions. As an award winning storyteller, spoken word poet, and editor of Chain Reaction, Moran is passionate about the power of words and ideas in tangling our relationship with Earth.

- » <https://www.moranwiesel.com>
- » <https://facebook.com/earthenspiralled>



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