

PAPER
UNIVERSE
THE BOOK AS ART



Exhibition captions

PAPER UNIVERSE

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Large print captions:

This booklet contains caption text for individual items in *Paper Universe: The book as art*, printed in a larger font to assist with visibility in the low light exhibition environment.

Paper Universe: The book as art is a free exhibition
from 13 August to 3 May 2026

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Introduction

Artists' books are artworks that reimagine the concept of the traditional book form and turn it into a dynamic canvas for artistic expression. Each artist's book challenges conventional and physical ideas of what a book can be, using innovative design, structure and materiality to create an experience that goes beyond just reading the written word for meaning.

With artists playing a significant role in the production of books since the illuminated manuscripts of medieval Europe, it was in the 20th century that artists' books emerged as a distinct art form, pushing the boundaries of traditional book making and its relationship to art.

As complex and varied as human experience itself, artists' books offer new ways of engaging with art and inspiration. With unique and rarely seen examples from the Library's collection, *Paper Universe* explores how artists approach creativity and meaning using the idea of a book.

Artists' personal reflections on their works have been included where possible. Some touch on sensitive or challenging themes.

The art of inspiration

Art is seldom created in isolation — artists often find their biggest sources of inspiration in the works and ideas of other artists. Poetry, music, visual art and every art form in between have long captured the imagination of artists, propelling the connection and creation of an ongoing artistic dialogue.

Artists' books are their own distinct and unique art form. In these works, we are presented with artists responding to classics of literature, writers and music, from Australia and abroad. Works are fuelled by concrete poetry, texts from ancient civilisations, and connections to visionary modern poets and mythologies across cultures and languages. Through them, the artists are connecting us and themselves with other worlds and times outside of our own.

Art affords us the endless chance to connect with ideas and experiences, to transform and reinterpret our own humanity over time, cultures and geography — in as many infinite combinations and expressions as there are in colours, musical notes, or letters of an alphabet.

Jim Pavlidis

Seven Stories, 2012

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

In 2011, I asked seven writers I knew to provide a short story for which I would create an image. There was no brief, so the stories are not linked thematically, each reflecting a different demographic. Read as a group, however, the link that emerges is our shared humanity.

Seven Stories was first shown at the 2012 Melbourne Writers Festival. With the authors' permission, a 64-page booklet of the stories was given away for free at the festival.

- *The story fleshed out* by Anson Cameron
- *In Copenhagen* by Susan Johnson
- *Saturday afternoon* by Tom Petsinis
- *Ooh la la* by Stephen Cummings
- *The light in winter* by Tony Birch
- *Divide by four* by Chrissie Keighery
- *Open for inspection* by Jacinta Halloran

Melbourne, Vic; edition 2/20; pigment inks on archival paper; acquired 2012; Q702.81/35

Dave Wood

The Man from Snowy River, AB (Banjo) Paterson, 2014

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

This classic poem has been a favourite for many 'true-blue' Australians. When I had a calligraphy gallery in Batemans Bay numerous men would recite the poem word for word to me (having learned it at school). Being from the UK I find this description of an electrifying chase / descent by a very brave young horseman enthralling. I have endeavoured to bring a 21st century calligraphic interpretation to this classic tale and can only admire Paterson's creative genius.

Pomona, Qld; unique state; concertina, calligraphy in wooden box, acquired 2016; HQ 2016/568

Des Cowley and George Matoulas

Listening, 2022

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

The illustrated book *Listening* developed out of its creators' shared love for jazz. It features writings by Des Cowley on 12 jazz musicians, including Australians Bernie McGann, Sandy Evans, Mark Simmonds and Allan Browne, alongside international musicians, such as Mary Lou Williams, Pharoah Sanders, Carla Bley and Albert Ayler. For each musician featured in the book, artist and printmaker George Matoulas created a collagraph portrait depicting a member of the audience listening to the music described in the accompanying text.

Messofa Press; Melbourne, Vic; collagraphs, text;
acquired 2023; HF 2023/0039

**Various artists; Alex Selenitch
and Petr Herel (editors)**

Australia Poet, 1989

The Graphics Investigation Workshop at the Canberra School of Art (1978–98) was a space for artistic exploration and collaboration. With the curriculum focused on drawing, the printed image, papermaking and typography, students were encouraged to experiment with diverse media and collaborate on projects — leading to the creation of hundreds of artists' books.

Australia Poet brings together 29 experiments with print, poems 'by poets who have found that print is not a nuisance but a language' and 'artists who know something about print'.

Graphics Investigation Workshop, Canberra Institute of the Arts, ACT; edition 31/40; mixed media (paper, ink, linen, glass, bubble wrap, clay); Q700.92/1

Wall case

AT TOP, FROM LEFT:

- Thierry Bouchard
- *Woven women* by Karen Cherry, Geoffrey Hinchcliffe
- *Two ladders* by Alex Selenitsch, Brian Hincksman
- *Pretext* by П. O., Jennifer Hawkins

AT BOTTOM, FROM LEFT:

- *For Jane Eyre* by Peter Murphy, Gustavo Geissbuehler
- *Try poetry* by Ruth Cowen, Thierry Bouchard
- *Amuse a muse* by Ruth Cowen, Peter Finlay
- Gustavo Geissbuehler

Case (right)

FROM LEFT:

- *Words are letters* by Richard Tipping, Paul Uhlmann
- Colophon and introduction by Alex Selenitsch
- Geoffrey Hinchcliffe
- Petr Herel
- *Correct* by Peter Murphy, Francis Rhodes

David Frazer

Love Letter: An interpretation of the song Love Letter by Nick Cave in 18 wood engravings, 2021

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

I interpreted Nick Cave's song 'Love Letter' as a continuation of my fascination for hopeless men dreaming of the time they once had a girlfriend, how they blew it and spent the rest of their lives torturing themselves with regret. It's a celebration of a sensitive man, basically decent, but inadequate, lost and emotionally stunted. Nick Cave kindly gave me permission to interpret his song anyway I saw fit.

Unstable Press, Castlemaine, Vic; wood engravings, typeset, linocut cover; acquired 2021; HQ 2022/1399

Ted Hopkins

Teledex: Poems, 1980

Teledex is a collection of poems organised alphabetically and presented in a format resembling a telephone directory. Housed in a metal box, featuring tabbed, ruled card inserts, the work creates a tactile, everyday object that invites regular interaction with poetry. This design choice encourages a practical interaction between the reader and the poems, showing the ease at which art can be simply integrated into daily life.

Champion Books, Melbourne, Vic; steel box, index cards; acquired 1981; 821/H796/1

Garry Shead

Ern Malley, The Darkening Ecliptic, 2003

Garry Shead's work draws from Australia's infamous Ern Malley hoax of 1943. Malley's poem 'The Darkening Ecliptic' was published in the 1944 autumn issue of *Angry Penguins* and praised for its literary merit, despite being a creation of Sydney poets James McAuley and Harold Stewart. They fabricated the poem to expose the Melbourne literary scene's inability to distinguish between great poetry and inferior work. This hoax has been a significant theme in Shead's paintings and drawings.

Basil Hall Editions, Darwin, NT; edition 30/50;
etchings, drawings, ceramic container; acquired 2015;
MRB/Q108

Mike Hudson and Jadwiga Jarvis

Ockers: A poem by Pi O, 1999

Wayzgoose Press, founded in 1985 by Mike Hudson and Jadwiga Jarvis in Katoomba, became internationally renowned for its embossed leather bindings, decorative boxes, and limited-edition fine press books and broadsides. The press was inspired to create *Ockers* from Pi O's 1983 poem, which critiques the stereotypical Australian man of the 1970s. Using vibrant pop art, linocut and graphics, the work challenges nationalistic language like 'Aussies', 'mates', 'winners' and 'battlers', reshaping them through the voice of a poet celebrating the lived experience of language.

The Wayzgoose Press, Katoomba, NSW; edition 2/40; letterpress, leather and cloth slipcase, cloth-covered solander box; donated by Dr Geoffrey Cains, 2007; MRB/F28

Tate Adams

Gesture, 2005

Irish-born Tate Adams (1922–2018) taught printmaking for over two decades at RMIT in Melbourne, establishing the first diploma of printmaking in Australia. In his 80s, Adams transitioned from woodblock printing to gouache, focusing on high-contrast, dynamic and organic gestures. He published over 30 artists' books through Lyre Bird Press, which he founded after retiring. *Gesture* is a collection of seemingly spontaneous, expressionistic ink exclamations, carefully planned and composed to flow across each stepped page of thick rag paper, a balance of freedom and precision.

Lyre Bird Press, Townsville, Qld; Zimmer Editions, Melbourne, Vic; edition 10/15; gouache, screen-print; acquired 2015; HF 2015/19

Theo Strasser

In Ecstasy, Franz Kafka, 2013

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

Using the back of ceramic floor tiles to create a series of relief prints along with my hand painting process throughout, Franz Kafka's aphorism is both the instruction and inspiration:

'It is not necessary that you leave the house. Remain at your table and listen. Do not even listen, only wait. Do not even wait, be wholly still and alone. The world will present itself to you for its unmasking, it can do no other, in ecstasy it will writhe at your feet.'

It's a text I keep remembering when I'm in the studio, facing a blank canvas or paper waiting for the call.

Anajah Press, Melbourne, Vic; handpainted acrylic, paper collage, handpainted boards and jacket; acquired 2015; MRB/X22

Lenore Bassan

Cornerstone, 2022

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

Cornerstone incorporates a series of collagraphs, lino and wood block prints. Making an artist book extends and gives purpose to my printmaking practice. The book references objects both animate and inanimate from my grandmother's house, a house built on poetry*. My grandmother sometimes played with the idea of the inanimate object housing the spirit. Similarly, this book while being an inanimate object contains and invokes the essence of things that I remember about her and her house.

* The artist's grandmother, Australian poet Minnie Agnes Filson, wrote under pseudonyms including 'Rickety Kate'. The Library holds her papers.

Sydney, NSW; collagraphs, linocuts, woodblock prints;
acquired 2023; HQ 2023/0840

Bronwyn Rees

Night into Day, 2009

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

My book uses Judith Wright's poem 'Night' from *Woman to Man* published in 1949. Her poetry has always inspired awe within me with her way of describing humanity's connection to nature.

Her constant comparison of the female body and the earth I always felt so deeply as a young woman, like I could lie down and grow directly into the cool dirt:

'So deeply goes its root
Into the world's womb,
so high rises its stem
it leaves for death no room.'

Melbourne, Vic; edition 2/3; etchings and text on rag paper; acquired 2013; H 2013/3854

Sara Bowen
North, 2019

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

Shorebirds fly along the invisible lines of the Earth's magnetic field, from the fragile estuarine and beach habitats along Australia's eastern seaboard to Asia, Russia and beyond. *North* unfolds part of that route across a Black-tailed Godwit's wing, printing the aerial view of the coastline between Sawtell and Boambee in northern NSW across the feathers. Part of BookArtObject 6, a collaborative artists' book project, *North* was inspired by John Bennett's poems on The Overwintering Project.

Coffs Harbour NSW; reduction lino print; NSW;
acquired 2022; H 2022/3323

Susan Allix

Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, 1973

In 1859, Edward FitzGerald translated a selection of quatrains (rubaiyat) attributed to the Persian polymath Omar Khayyam (1048–1131). The book quickly became immensely popular across the English-speaking world, inspiring numerous artistic interpretations and illustrations of the poems. This volume, created by English artist Susan Allix, brings the verses to life across 27 copper-etched, richly coloured designs in geometric and abstract forms and intricate borders and vignettes. The book is one of 25 bound by the artist in red goatskin, featuring gilt latticework made of small stars.

Quadrat Press, London, UK; edition 4/75; MacPherson Collection of Art and Literature; embossed prints, etchings, gilt; MacPherson/Q0141

Martin Ware

Rimbaud — Six Poems by Arthur Rimbaud, 1972

English artist Martin Ware pays tribute to the livre d'artiste tradition, an early form of artists' books popularised in early 20th century Paris, by illustrating the works of French poet and symbolist Arthur Rimbaud. Almost a century after Rimbaud abandoned writing at the age of 20, Ware carefully selects six of his poems, presenting them in both English and French. Accompanying these poems, the etchings of solitary figures rendered in acidic, saturated colours emphasise the intensity and emotion of Rimbaud's writing.

World's End Press, London, UK; edition 24/50; Donald MacPherson Collection of Art and Literature; etchings and text, batik fabric cover; MacPherson/F0090

RIGHT:

David Hockney

Fourteen Poems by CP Cavafy, 1966

British artist David Hockney was drawn to the unapologetic themes of gay love and desire in the work of Greek poet Constantine P Cavafy, which he first encountered in his youth.

Between 1963 and 1966, Hockney travelled to Cairo, Luxor, Alexandria and Beirut, seeking an atmosphere reminiscent of Cavafy's life in Alexandria. The series of 12 full-page line etchings is inspired and named after Cavafy's poems, with all but a few depicting Hockney's life in London. This series was published in 1967, the year Britain decriminalised homosexuality.

Editions Alecto, London, UK; edition 382/500;
Donald MacPherson Collection of Art and Literature;
copperplate etchings, letterpress, magenta cotton silk
boards; MacPherson/F0096

FAR RIGHT:

Bill Henson

Kindertotenlieder: Mahler, Henson, Rückert, 2017

This collaboration spans 183 years, starting with German poet Friedrich Rückert in 1833, whose grief-driven poems inspired composer Gustav Mahler to create *Kindertotenlieder* in 1901. Tragically, Mahler's eldest daughter died of scarlet fever, mirroring the loss in the poems. In 1976, Bill Henson began a photographic series inspired by both Rückert's poems and Mahler's song cycle, capturing dreamlike images of a young girl and the Maiernigg landscape of the Mahler family home. Together, these works form a profound meditation on longing and loss across three artists and centuries.

Stanley/Barker (publisher), London, UK; edition 138/150; letterpress, 32 offset photographs, 12-inch vinyl record; acquired 2018; HF 2018/0023

G.W. Bot

‘Requiem’ by Anna Akhmatova, 2020

ARTIST’S STATEMENT:

In Anna Akhmatova’s ‘Requiem’ the poet transforms her personal grief at the loss of her husband and imprisonment of her son during the Stalinist great terror of the 1930s — into a universal lament. G.W. Bot presents a visual evocation of the poems in a series of finely worked linocuts. One of the most sacred images of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Deesis, shows the Virgin and John the Baptist on either side of Christ the judge, their hands extended in the gesture of intercession. These same hands open and close ‘Requiem’, holding the landscapes within — the ones destroyed and the ones regenerating.

Polar Bear Press, Tamarama, NSW; linocuts;
acquired 2021; HF 2021/0009

G.W. Bot

‘Requiem’ by Anna Akhmatova, 2020

ARTIST’S STATEMENT:

В «Реквиеме» Анны Ахматовой поэт трансформирует свою личную скорбь по поводу потери мужа и заключения сына в годы сталинского террора 1930-х годов — во всеобщий плач. G.W. Bot представляет визуальное воплощение стихотворений в серии искусно выполненных линогравюр. Один из самых священных образов Русской Православной Церкви — Деисус — в центре которой располагается икона Иисуса Христа Пантократора, слева икона обращенной к Нему Богородицы, и справа образ Иоанна Крестителя, их руки в традиционном жесте молитвенного обращения, ходатайства. Эти же руки открывают и закрывают «Реквием», удерживая внутри себя ландшафты — разрушенные и возрождающиеся.

Polar Bear Press, Тамарама, Новый Южный Уэльс;
линогравюры; приобретено в 2021 г.;

NF 2021/0009

Julie Green and Nicholas Pounder

The Buried Book, 2022

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

When Nicholas visited my studio in 2020, we discussed making a book together. I was interested in working creatively with the Epic of Gilgamesh. Nicholas researched Assyriologist George Smith, who cracked the cuneiform code in the early 1870s and first translated the epic. We placed fragments from Smith's translation into a series of folios, along with images created by each of us. Nicholas made the book, conceiving its form, including type selection, paper choices and printing. It was a true collaboration, with every step discussed.

Polar Bear Press, Sydney, NSW; archival pigment inks, special papers (Saint-Armand, Velin d'Arches, Kozo); acquired 2022; MRB/F118

Angus Fisher and Nicholas Pounder

A Book of Imaginary Creatures, 2017

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

Imaginary Creatures was inspired by Jorge Luis Borges, the great Argentinian fabulist, storyteller and librarian. Borges drew widely from the records of antiquity and popular lore: bringing together a magical bestiary of familiar and obscure enduring creatures. Nicholas Pounder traced his acknowledgments and bibliography, making a shortlist of his own and writing his own versions of the fables and myths from which they derived. The copper engravings realise each of these phantoms in a schematic yet lifelike detail.

White Bear Press, Tamarama, NSW; text and printing by Nicholas Pounder; acquired 2017; HQ 2018/0206



Early documentary on David Hockney

The natural world

The influence of nature continues to be one of the most enduring themes and inspirations in art across the centuries. Artists have always been drawn to the natural world, using its beauty and complexity as fuel for their creativity. Artists' books continue this tradition while also presenting the profound impact of human activity on the environment.

Artists' books from the Library's collection depict the intricate wonders of Australian flora and fauna, exploration of the vast land in historical contexts and contemporary urban experiences, introduced threats to habitats and ecosystems, catastrophic bushfires, nature's resilience, and landscapes grounded consciously or unconsciously in our ideas of home.

These observations and details are recorded on both grand and intimate scales. The unforgiving harshness of nature and its vulnerability, as well as its capacity for destruction and renewal are dualities the artists highlight — alongside reconsidering the decisions, attitudes and responsibilities that define our ongoing relationship with the environment.

Dianne Fogwell

I thought I was in a war zone, 2019

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

'I thought I was in a war zone' is a quote from a victim on the news during the Black Summer fires. This work came from those words, and thinking about the rolling in and unstoppable connectedness of the fire causing so much damage in between the small spaces of trunk to trunk. Small and bound by wooden covers, when extended it has much more than what you hold closed in your hand — unfolding and reshaping itself both front and back into many configurations.

Canberra, ACT; unique state; wooden cover, linocuts, burn drawings; acquired 2022; H 2022/4112

Dianne Fogwell

Ashes to Ashes — Dust to Dust: Ash Wednesday 16th February 1983, 2018

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

This is a memorial to the Ash Wednesday bush fires of 1983, loaded with dense linocut and woodcut images printed with many layers of ink and finally laid to rest in a tall heavy solander box, a kind of coffin for all the disturbing content inside. I burnt my pages to show homage to those who lost everything, and, in that process, I almost lost the many pages I had laboured over for months. Fire is a natural enemy of paper. The book gave me a sense of disquiet, a confirmation of knowing that fire is endured but not truly understood.

Canberra, ACT; unique state; linocut, woodcut, burn drawing, chemical transfer, solander box, rag paper; acquired 2022; HX 2022/0009

John R Walker

Corrigans Bay, 2002

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

In 2002 I stayed at a house on the shores of one of the northern Myall Lakes and meandered around the magical shoreline and tiny islands in a small outboard boat, pulling into coves as the moment took me. This book is a response to those days. I noted down the 1:25,000 map coordinates of some of the main points of the lake that I visited, which have helped me to remember how these places were arranged in space.

Shoalhaven, NSW; unique state; gouache and ink on Chinese paper; acquired 2012; Q759.9944/7

Tara Axford

Stories from the Neighbourhood, 2022

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

A collection of 12 small books, held in a book-size case. These volumes represent a year.

The covers are created from paperbark found in my neighbourhood, while the palm-sized pages — made from discarded works — echo the textures of the landscape. These wordless volumes invite touch, reflection and interpretation, offering space for personal narratives to emerge. Fragmented yet cohesive, they embody memories collected over time, capturing the essence of place through material and mark-making.

Sydney, NSW; unique state; paper, card, fabric, bark, thread; acquired 2023; MRB 357

Liz Jeneid

A Braidwood Walk, 2006

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

Some drawings I made of the paddocks around my friend's place on the outskirts of Braidwood became the subject of some prints I made. It was a beautiful day, and the pines that some landowner had planted years ago, became a metaphor for the things I loved about the landscape, the shapes and shadows with a wild assortment of greens surrounding them.

Mt Kembla, NSW; intaglio and monotype printing;
acquired 2013; H 2013/5055

Liz Powell

Southern Ocean, 2021

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

This work was generated by research I'd done about the Southern Convergence, the ocean currents which encircle Antarctica. The resulting separate ecosystem is complex and subtle. Though the sea appears empty and featureless this is deceptive. Using indigo dye on paper softened the paper, a long-bound spine around a spar creates an appropriate ocean swell. Each page is different and subtly changing like the water, the book form interacting with its content, an important element in my practice.

Tenterfield, NSW; acquired 2021; Japanese paper, indigo dye, silkscreen printing, stitch, collage;
MRB/F110

Rachel Dun

FROM LEFT:

Fused Contours; Blended Grounds; Integrated, 2022

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

A constant inspiration of my art is our local coast of Brunswick Heads, yet my history in the Byron hinterland would unconsciously reappear in my artwork. Over time these two lives have morphed into a unique landscape. The use of an artist book tells a layered story to be deciphered by the viewer.

Brunswick Heads, NSW; monoprint, etching, embossing; acquired 2022;

H 2022/3759

H 2022/3760

H 2022/3758

**Charlotte Clutterbuck and
Victoria Clutterbuck**

Parlement of Birds, 1992

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

This work was created in memory of our mother, Suzanne Clutterbuck. The poem, written by Charlotte, was inspired by our mother's love of birds. Victoria's creation of the book came from memories of her and our nanny, Birthe Halm, folding paper and cutting strings of stars and angels for Christmas decorations when we were four and six years old. It was printed with guidance from Les Petersen (Raft Press) for an exhibition he had organised.

Raft Press, Canberra, ACT; linocut, movable type,
Japanese mulberry paper, cardboard; acquired 1995;
700.92 2

Gracia Haby and Louise Jennison
**With Wings Outstretched and
Quivering, 2021**

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

If we were to construct a bower: where would we begin? What piece would we put where, to twig by twig create a bower? Lined with trinkets of personal meaning and featuring bowerbirds from Elizabeth Gould's hand-coloured key plates from *The Birds of Australia* (1840–48), this bower is an avenue of optical illusion, fashioned with the intention of changing the point of view of the reader. A gentle curve around you, with the emphasis upon maintaining hope through perspective. Give a loud descending whistle!

Arten printers, Melbourne, Vic; edition 2/2; archival pigment print, housed in a box with original watercolour; acquired 2021; H 2022/3762

Paul Uhlmann

New Insecta, Queensland: AA Girault, 1989

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

This work creatively responds to fragments of select entomological self-published papers by Alexandre Arsène Girault (1884–1941), who described over 3000 taxa from Australia in the early 20th century. Frustrated by his employers' financial focus, Girault would include poetic fragments within legitimate science, such as his invention of '*Shillingsworthia*'... an 'airy species'... 'viewed on Jupiter, August 5th, 1919'. Each of the three etchings are developed through blind chance, with new layers of cancellations or revisions overtaking the initial layer, allowing free rein to the imagination.

Canberra, ACT; Donald MacPherson Collection of Art and Literature; etchings, fawn handmade paper, typeface pressed into paper; MacPherson/0208

Various artists

Natural Collection, 2017

This collaborative collection features 29 prints depicting species, habitats and ecological communities at risk in the Pittwater, Warringah and Manly areas of Sydney's Northern Beaches. The prints, accompanied by artists' statements and scientific descriptions, utilise various techniques such as etching, waterless lithography, linocut and woodcut. The unbound format allows for a range of diverse papers and layouts. The project was published to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Warringah Printmakers Studio and supported by local environmental groups, North Head Sanctuary and the Australian Wildlife Conservancy.

Warringah Printmakers Studio, Sydney, NSW; acquired 2017; HX 2017/10

**This item has changeovers.
On display from August:**

TOP FROM LEFT:

- *Gang-gang cockatoo* by Richard Bauhof; linocut, hand printed, hand coloured with acrylic ink
- *Captivate* (magenta lillypilly) by Brenda Livermore; multiple plate linocut, chine collé, handmade mulberry paper

BOTTOM FROM LEFT:

- *Large eared pied bat* by Rosanna Jurisevic; Moku Hanga traditional Japanese woodblock carving
- *Actual size* (eastern pygmy possum) by Robin Hundt; intaglio, pencil, Charbonnel ink, Somerset and Kozo paper

**This item has changeovers.
On display from October:**

TOP FROM LEFT:

- *Sunny girl* (Rosenberg's goanna) by Sandra Williams; aluminium etching, inked à la poupée, collage

BOTTOM FROM LEFT:

- *Salt* (coastal erosion) by Wendy Morrison; collagraph, intaglio and relief printing, salt
- *That was I, you heard last night* (barking owl) by Negin Maddock; direct-to-plate photopolymer etching, hand coloured

**This item has changeovers.
On display from February:**

TOP FROM LEFT:

- *Our soul bird has flown away* (broad-billed sandpiper) by Marguerite de Fondaumiere; intaglio photopolymer, à la poupée

BOTTOM FROM LEFT:

- *Grevillea caleyi* (Caley's grevillea) by Annie Day; waterless lithograph — four plates, intaglio, various inks
- *The red crowned toadlet* by Helen Clare; woodcut, two fibreboard plates, embossing, Charbonnel inks, Chinese translucent linen paper

Avril Makula

Green, 2013

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

The parkland near my house holds a significant place in my daily life. I love the pre-dawn light, the birdsong, the changing light as day emerges. I love the curved path where I walk, the openness, and the surprising sense of peacefulness, sanctuary and connection to nature I feel, while simultaneously I hear traffic and glimpse the city. Combining my choice of materials with the strange poetry of botanical classification, *Green* pays homage to this coexistence of nature and human-made.

Alphabet City Press; Sydney, NSW; unique state; pigment inks, handmade endpapers, astroturf, bookcloth, linen thread, street sign; HF 2018/0033

Monica Oppen

Do Not Lament (Song of the Axe), 2018

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

Reading the poem, 'Song of the Axe' by Marie Pitt, I was impressed and alarmed by the joy Pitt expressed in chopping down trees and clearing the land! Since 1925, when the poem was published, extreme land clearing and deforestation has been recognised by ecologists as an environmental disaster. I have written my response to Pitt's poem lamenting this destruction. I look to the regrowth forests, nature's resilience, as a partial salve and the possibility of the landscape healing.

Ant Press, Stanmore, NSW; edition 2/7; transfer-printed text, offset printing, drypoint printed intaglio, transfer-printed photographs; acquired 2018;
HF 2018/0032

Theo Strasser

Ghost Bones: An artist book, 2017

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

Ghost Bones is a book and a folio of tactile handpainted pages made in 2017, in an edition of six copies with one artist proof. It's a book of physical gestures that uncovers a landscape, environmental spaces and abstract thoughts on paper. I draw with the brush and camera, of the vanishing bleached, tinder-dry country that's been left vulnerable and fragile ... it's a book of subtle textures and chants ...

Melbourne, Vic; handpainted pages, collage, digital printed images, Lokta tissue; acquired 2021; MRB/F115

Geraldine Rede and Violet Teague

Night Fall in the Ti-Tree, 1905

The artists met as students at the National Gallery School in the late 1890s before collaborating on two unique books. Written in haiku style, this story of rabbits in the Australian bush features 16 woodcuts flowing from one page to the next, with Japanese influences evident in both its printing and format. This work is significant for several reasons: as one of the first examples of Japanese woodblock techniques in Australian printmaking; as the first coloured woodblock printing in Australia, and as the first Australian artist's book, marking a major milestone in print culture.

Sign of the Rabbit Imprint, Melbourne, Vic; first edition; hand-bound, colour woodblock prints with letterpress text; acquired 2015; H 2014/4103

Sigrid Noack

‘The Vast Silence’ based on the diary entries of Ludwig Leichhardt, 2012

German artist Sigrid Noack was commissioned to create this work for the bicentenary of Ludwig Leichhardt’s arrival in Sydney on 14 February 1842. It offers a contemporary visual interpretation of his 1844–45 expedition journals. The German text with an English translation highlights their shared heritage. Leichhardt’s grasshopper (*Petasida ephippigera*) is found only in a few areas on the Northern Territory’s western border. Kundjeyhmi speakers refer to it as ‘alyurr’, believing it to be the children of the Namarrkon lightning man.

Guben, Germany, artist’s proof; acrylic, casein on cardboard or paper; silk-screen on self- or hand-tinted cardboard or paper; cover: Kahari handmade paper from Nepal, palm fibre; acquired 2018; PXE 1755

Kathy Boyle and Glenda Orr

Paradise Lost, 2020

An artists' book exploring the status of threatened and iconic plants from Australia and New Zealand, collected by Daniel Solander and Joseph Banks during Captain Cook's 1770 voyage

Artists Kathy Boyle (New Zealand) and Glenda Orr (Australia) were inspired by the collaboration between Joseph Banks (England) and Daniel Solander (Sweden), who collected plants during the Pacific voyage of the *Endeavour*. Ironically, pages from John Milton's 1667 epic poem *Paradise Lost* were used by Banks and Solander to press plant specimens, prompting Boyle and Orr to focus on endangered plant species in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, threatened by introduced species and habitat loss.

Brisbane, Qld, and Napier, NZ; bookcloth, chamois leather, inkjet prints, etching, embossing, drawing, rag paper, rice paper, abaca paper, tarlatan, water colour, coloured pencil, gouache, graphite, tea staining, gesso, Indian ink, shellac, found stamps, brass rivets; acquired 2021; HQ 2022/0715

Jörg Schmeisser

Lord Howe Island: zum Beispiel = for example, 1984

German-born artist Jörg Schmeisser created this collection after two visits to Lord Howe Island in the early 1980s. The nine plates, using various intaglio techniques, highlight his meticulous attention to detail and expertise as an internationally renowned printmaker. The works reflect Schmeisser's personal and vivid interpretation of the island's landscapes, showcasing his keen observation and artistic depth. Through his printmaking skills, he captures the essence of the environment, offering a nuanced portrayal of the island's natural beauty.

Jörg Schmeisser printer and Studio One, Canberra, ACT; edition 19/40; soft ground, aquatint printed in black ink on ivory wove paper; acquired 2022; HQ 2022/1438

John R Walker

A Book of Trees at Bombay on the Shoalhaven, Tallaganda, 2003

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

From my first year of living in Braidwood, this was a kind of 'mapping' of country that at the time was a place I hardly knew. I visited several places that were on the edge of mostly cleared granite country of the plateau, parts graded off into woodlands made of trees in mallee form. Many trees bear the scars of termites, windstorms, extreme cold, and of fire. The book is a record of my first attempts at getting to know this part of the country where I live.

Shoalhaven, NSW; unique state; gouache and ink
on Chinese paper; acquired 2012; 759.9944/3

The civil condition

Art's powerful function in society is to reflect and respond. It offers commentary, asks questions, and creates a lens providing insight into societal values and issues. The artists, through creating these books, invite viewers to engage with and reflect on their own roles and responsibilities as citizens within society and the civil condition.

These thought-provoking works examine ideas and complex realities about being citizens in today's world and the post-colonial legacy of Australia. Themes and issues involving democracy, war and pacifism, government policies towards First Nations people, refugee and asylum seekers, land rights, domestic violence, and the treatment of children in institutional care — are all considered with raw honesty and sensitivity.

Art helps us navigate complex social challenges, morality and justice, pushing us to confront uncomfortable truths and prompting us to reconsider not only what society values, but what must change. It also critiques politics, laws and policies, raising awareness of inequality and injustice. In these instances, art does not merely mirror society — it challenges it.

Deidre Brollo

Unsettled, 2022

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

Unsettled draws together thousands of placenames, to reflect on the many acts of imagination or memory that collectively wrote over this landscape. It explores how language was used as a colonial and bureaucratic tool to shape, control and 'settle' zones of upheaval.

In pulling against the organising principles of cartography, the work seeks to disconcert, discomfort and disorganise a 'settled' view of place. Visually unstable and cartographically disrupted, *Unsettled* speaks to the unfinished, restless nature of Australia and its history.

Canberra, ACT; screen prints, archival pigment prints and laser cuts; acquired 2022; HF 2022/0075

William Kelly

Fellow Travellers, 2015

The artist has documented the work of visual artists over the last 100 years whose creations have been shaped by their views aspiring to peace rather than conflict. The intention was to produce an unfolding and connecting narrative using the form of an accordion artists' book, celebrating and linking the works of these artists. *Fellow Travellers* was completed in 2014–15 by the artist while on a State Library of Victoria Creative Fellowship and residency at the Baldessin Press.

printed and bound in Melbourne, Vic; edition 1/5;
acquired 2015; MRB/262

Judy Watson

a preponderance of aboriginal blood, 2005

a preponderance of aboriginal blood by Queensland artist Judy Watson, confronts the legal discrimination against Aboriginal Australians and Torres Strait Islanders in the 20th century. Commissioned for an exhibition marking the centenary of women's voting rights in Queensland, it features copies of electoral enrolment statutes that categorised people based on racial classifications, denying many Indigenous people the right to vote. The title refers to the term once used to justify exclusion. The work reflects on institutionalised racism and highlights the historical struggles for voting rights, compelling reflection on Australia's colonial past and ongoing issues of racial justice.

Numero Uno Publications, Grahame Galleries + Editions, Brisbane, Qld; edition 5/5; etching with chine collé; MRB/F15

Gwen Harrison and Sue Anderson,
Peter Lyssiotis

Dancing Over Dark Waters, 2012

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

1830s Cockatoo Island. Surrounded by shark-infested waters, hope was as distant as the shore. *Dancing Over Dark Waters* delves into the island's grim past — first as a brutal convict prison, then as an Industrial School for Girls — where punishment was law and escape was nearly impossible.

Prose poetry by Peter Lyssiotis intertwines colonial history with contemporary themes of marginalisation, incarceration, and Australia's shifting treatment of asylum seekers. The soul-crushing rule of Superintendent Charles Ormsby saw prisoners chained, entombed in cliffside cells, gasping for air behind iron grates. This book confronts the inhumanity of the past and its haunting echoes today.

Sydney, NSW; edition 5/7; multi-plate intaglio prints using hand-cut, etched, found and manipulated steel plates, chine collé, letterpress, kangaroo and goatskin, silk thread; acquired 2014; HX 2014/3

Gwen Harrison and Sue Anderson

FROM LEFT:

Howl for a Black Cockatoo, 2015

**Phantomwise Flew the Black
Cockatoo, 2017**

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

An unspoken chapter of Australia's history: Cockatoo Island, once a convict prison, became the Industrial School for Girls, 'Biloela', where orphaned and neglected girls — some mere babies — were confined for the crime of being in 'moral danger'. A public inquiry in 1873 exposed the brutal mistreatment they endured from those in authority, leading to the school's relocation to Parramatta's Female Factory. *Phantomwise Flew the Black Cockatoo* exposes the ongoing vicious abuse in orphanages, asylums and prisons. Survivors describe the hopelessness of punitive regimes where cruelty persisted, and those responsible were simply moved on when their actions were exposed.

sugarlift and aquatint etchings, 100% cotton rag paper,
letterpress printing, kangaroo leather

Sydney, NSW; edition 1/25; acquired 2015; HX 2015/4

Impediment Press, Sydney, NSW; edition 3/25;
acquired 2018, HX 2018/0005

Fiona MacDonald

Practical Democracy: Parking for People, 2012

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

A concertina book made using renditions of a photo in the Jack Munday archive in Trades Hall Association Collection showing Green Ban heroes Tom Uren, John Mulvenna, Joe Owens, Bob Pringle, Gerry Leonard, Mick Fowler, Nellie Leonard, 1975 and a photo of a wall painting at 19 Harmer St, Woolloomooloo, by Marion Marrison, 1974. Green Bans action taken by the Builders Labourers Federation (BLF) and local communities saved many of the historic buildings and precincts of the city of Sydney we know today.

Big Fag Press, Woolloomooloo, NSW; edition 1/3; two colour offset lithograph; acquired 2013; Q702.81/40

Jan Davis

Democracy Counts, 2012

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

Democracy Counts plays on two meanings of 'count', (i) to be significant, and (ii) the act of determining the total number of something.

Democracy Counts highlights the fundamental contribution to democracy that we make when we mark the electoral paper with those stumpy graphite pencils provided by the Australian Electoral Commission.

Tucked inside the back cover is a photograph taken in Paris during the 2012 French Presidential election — not everyone believes in the power of the vote.

Tullera, NSW; edition 3/5; watercolour, graphite pencil, stamping; acquired 2013; Q702.81/37

Stephen Dupont

Panorama Volume 1, 1999–2005, 2006

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

Panorama is a collection of the artist's personal favourites from six years of panoramic photography. A visual diary and cinematic journey... *Panorama* is war, chaos, revelation, entrapment, isolation and peace... it is Humanity and Inhumanity.

Sydney, NSW; edition 1/50; 80 photographs, printed on acid-free archival art paper, pure archival pigment ink; concertina measures 41.15 m when fully extended; acquired 2015; HF 2015/25

Peter Ward

Caravan of Despair, 2021

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

Caravan of Despair was created during Victoria's Covid lockdown. The enforced isolation allowed ample time to work through ideas and to realise a larger and more complex work than what I had previously been used to. The book deals with my thoughts on the crisis facing our natural environment and on a deeper level it forms part of an ongoing endeavour to give visual expression to the non-visual ideas of quiet desperation and existential foreboding.

No Shyacking Press, Vic; edition 1/3; linocuts; acquired 2021; MRB/Q142

Sarah McConnell

Lost Directions, 2019

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

On 19 March 2019, police moved in to evict a protest camp on Djab Wurrung country, where traditional owners had been standing in the way of a proposed road development on the Western Highway for 11 months. Hundreds of culturally significant scar trees, including the 'Directions Tree' were at risk of removal. Protestors came out in force that morning and police were unable to remove them. *Lost Directions* is my account of that day as a white settler and ally.

5 Press, Northcote, Vic; edition 5/5; hand-coloured sugarlift, aquatint and etching, monotype covers; acquired 2023; HQ 2024/1238

Nathalie Gautier-Hartog

Looking for Paradise, 2020

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

The work creates a parallel between Australian government policies and their consequences on refugees' quest in looking for a better place to live, searching for paradise and dreaming of finding refuge. Central to the theme of the work, I am bringing the stories of these immigrants, relegated to the margin of society, to the centre page. The 12 books look at how past and present policies were instigated to help, or to deny entry to, people in need of a safe haven.

The books are presented in a barbed wire cage, alluding to the restriction of movement imposed on refugees.

Sydney, NSW; unique state; collage, gouache drawings and digital prints on raw cotton handmade paper, barbed wire; acquired 2022; MRB/X27; LR 131



The 12 volumes are available to view as PDFs from the artist's website

Looking for Paradise (animation)

Animation by Broken Yellow in collaboration with
Nathalie Gautier-Hartog

Made with the assistance of the Asylum Seekers
Centre, featuring the voices of people seeking asylum.

Duration: 2 minutes 58 seconds

Liz Jeneid

Freedom where is it?, 2013

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

The book centres on the experience of refugees looking for sanctuary.

At the time I was making this book there were articles in the newspapers with photographs of the overloaded fishing boats, some adrift without a functioning engine, turned back, being boarded by coastguards while others were being dashed on the rocks with loss of life — men women and children. They were being demonised and I felt ashamed of our inhuman response to their suffering.

Mt Kembla, NSW; watercolour; acquired 2013;
MRB/257

Liz Jeneid

What is? 2013

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

This book was made as a response to the way the Australian Government reacted to asylum seekers arriving in boats with a lack of empathy and generosity.

I was interested in the similarities of words used to describe weeds and asylum seekers, such as: in the wrong place, displacing native species, taking up valuable space, opportunistic and a threat to the natural (our) environment.

Mt Kembla, NSW; watercolours, sepia ink, stamped text; acquired 2013; H 2013/6402

Avril Makula

A World View, 2020

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

A World View is constructed from discarded atlases. Employing the structure of a rotating concertina, its closed position echoes the full circle of the globe, a world yet to be revealed and explored. One continuous page opens partially or fully to reveal a roving, winding path of discovery. On one side, handwritten, is a series of insightful musings by travellers on travel. I wanted to evoke the sense of wanderlust, and our relationship to places we imagine or long for.

Alphabet City Press, Sydney, NSW; expanded concertina measures approximately 588 cm; acquired 2022; HQ 2022/1447.

Anne Twigg

Our Home, 2013

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

An asylum-seeker is someone who is seeking international protection. War, persecution and human rights violations force people to flee their homes. *Our Home* is my response to the Australian government turning back the boats and my horror at the inhumane treatment of these people. I felt we as a country were not meeting our international obligations.

The book is structured around a conversation with my grandson. I wanted to give voice to these desperate people, not remain silent.

Ant Press, Stanmore, NSW; Anne Twigg, Melbourne, Vic; edition 11/20; acquired 2017; HQ 2017/323

Louise Whelan

FRONT LEFT TO RIGHT:

States of Repair, 2023

Why Didn't She Leave, 2021

REAR:

Resistance, 2023

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

This collection of books is a collaborative witnessing of disclosure at many scales, making way for a different way of communicating and representing people's experiences of intimate violence. Like waiting for the right words to express an experience or an assemblage of experiences, this project acknowledges the silence that often surrounds such narratives.

Throughout history, women's experiences, especially those affected by gendered violence, have been underrepresented, overlooked, marginalised, or even erased from art and cultural narratives. This work seeks to challenge that erasure, offering a space where these voices can be heard and recognised.

Sydney, NSW; sheep leather, book binding thread, book binding fabric, archival photographic prints; acquired 2023; MRB Q146 Box 5/7; MRB Q146 Box 6/7; MRB Q146 Box 7/7

Unveiling identity

When artists look inward, they offer insights into how our understanding of our place in the world is shaped by cultural identity, family influences, language, traditions, grief, collective and individual memory, and even our physical environments. These elements shape who we are and how we see and define ourselves, or how in turn we are defined.

Through these artists' books, themes such as culture, mental health, death and loss, intergenerational memory and trauma, and the relationship to place are explored. These works reflect how the histories we inhabit and the societal forces that surround us influence our identities. By focusing inward, artists process their personal experiences, often acting as a bridge between past and present, offering new perspectives on self and society.

Art allows us to reflect on the many ways our identities are formed, navigating the complexities of who we are and how we interact with the world around us. They highlight the deep connections between personal history, collective experience and the spaces we occupy.

Maryanne Coutts

Saturated Solitude, 2018

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

I love the way the small scale and immediacy of touch in a handmade book invites an intimate and immersive experience. The pigments are embedded in the paper of *Saturated Solitude* through seeping watercolour and melted crayon so that the imagery is deeply embedded into the material of the book. Inspired by the power of crowds where boundaries between solitudes are blurred, the book evokes a sense of connection that is intense in solitude, where the interplay between isolation and common experience are a rich and fluid space.

Sydney, NSW; unique state; watercolour, gouache, ink, pastel, enamel and spray paint on Kozo paper; acquired 2022; HX 2022/0013

Penny Evans

Proof, 2015

Proof is a heavily collaged and sewn artist's book, incorporating cloth binding, digital prints, stitching on paper, and long loose threads.

It reflects the artist's family's journey of piecing together their history before and after the invasion of Australia, drawing from her Gamilaroi, Welsh, Irish and German heritage. Penny's 2D mixed-media works often focus on more recent histories, examining personal narratives and connections between culture and country. The book serves as a tactile exploration of memory, heritage and identity.

Lismore, NSW; unique state; collage, cloth binding, digital prints, stitching, thread; acquired 2016;
HF 2016/15

Deanna Hitti

Artbook Volume Arba'ah, 2016

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

Using cyanotype, a historic method of photographic reproduction, I transformed more than 100 images from French Orientalist paintings made during the early period of colonialism. The rich indigo blue was employed to reproduce high resolution scans from art books of 18th and 19th century French Orientalist paintings. Inspired by the long history of books and printing, I engaged this process to recontextualise distorted depictions of Middle Eastern people.

Through the printing process I erased and reprinted my collection of images and, in turn, repackaged the very same ideas on both a personal and cultural level back into a book.

Melbourne, Vic; cyanotype images hand printed on watercolour paper; acquired 2016; HX 2016/2



Look through the pages of this artist's book (no audio)

Deanna Hitti

Artbook Volume Arba'ah, 2016

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

باستخدام تقنية السيانوتايب، وهي طريقة قديمة لاستنساخ الصور الفوتوغرافية، قمت بتحويل أكثر من 100 صورة من اللوحات الاستشراقية الفرنسية التي تم رسمها خلال الفترة الأولى من الاستعمار. تم استخدام اللون الأزرق النيلي الغني لإعادة إنتاج نسخ عالية الدقة من صفحات كتب فنية، تضم لوحات استشراقية فرنسية من القرنين الثامن عشر والتاسع عشر. استخدمت هذه العملية المستوحاة من التاريخ العريق للكتب والطباعة لترميم الصور المشوهة لشعوب الشرق الأوسط. من خلال عملية الطباعة، قمت بمسح وإعادة طباعة مجموعتي من الصور، وبدوري أعدت جميع نفس الأفكار على المستويين الشخصي والثقافي في كتاب.

ملبورن، ولاية فيكتوريا. تم الاستحواذ عليها عام 2016؛ HX 2016/2

John Hinds

This ferral Australis!: how terra Australis (a utopian terra nullius) became Ferral Australis (a dystopian terra numbskullius!), 2014

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

This *Ferral Australis* toys with ideas of language and history following the colonisation of Australia.

How a so-called Utopian Terra Nullius was ruined by Ferral animals, Ferral humans and Ferral climate.

- Animal skulls printed on facsimiles of the *Sydney Gazette* 1805.
- Fake 'Shakespearean' Sonnets by colonial forgers printed onto facsimile First Fleet Journals.
- Antique suns printed onto 20th century history texts.

All branded, shot through and aged, wrapped in maritime canvas covers, with sealing wax.

Enjoy!

Fairfield, Vic; collaged and altered pages, facsimiles, hand printed and bound by the artist at the Firestation Print Studio, Melbourne; acquired 2015; HF 2015/37

Sara Bowen

Un/folded, 2018

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

I spent a year living with a friend in a London apartment, until he killed himself in a place where only I could find him. My grief and anguish lasted for decades until I made this book, which enabled me to see past his death to the man he was and the friendship we had, and to wonder whether, finally, he trusted me?

Coffs Harbour, NSW; relief, monotype and trace monotype printmaking with hand cutting and hand-set text; acquired 2022; H 2022/3742

Caren Florance

DisRemembering, 2022

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

I set words in letterpress but printed the back of them, allowing their meaning to exist unread. Their weighty materiality helped me to reflect on my mother's almost willing relinquishment of her PTSD as she descended into trauma-based (eventually cheerful) dementia, caused by the suicide of my brother. The slips in the back are taken from her diary-keeping, where emotions are scant and often hidden amongst factual notation. I now think that forgetting is not always a negative action.

Ampersand Duck; Canberra, ACT; edition 3/10;
letterpress and watercolour, typewriter carbon
on bond paper; acquired 2022; H 2022/3726

Deanna Hitti

Towla, 2017

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

Towla is based on the instructions to the board game backgammon, a game I played daily with my father during my childhood. The instructions represent a cultural exchange between my father, a migrant from Lebanon, and myself. They are written with phonetically translated instructions in both English and Arabic. Starting from the left-hand side of the book (printed in grey), Latin letters spell out the instructions in Arabic, while the right-hand side (printed in golden yellow), features Arabic letters spelling out the instructions in English.

Melbourne, Vic; screen-printed text and images;
acquired 2018; HF 2018/0037



Look through the pages of this artist's book (no audio)

Deanna Hitti Towla, 2017

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

تستند لعبة *Towla* إلى تعليمات لعبة الطاولة، وهي لعبة لعبتها يوميًا مع والدي خلال طفولتي. تمثل التعليمات تبادلًا ثقافيًا بيني وبين والدي، الذي هو مهاجر من لبن. تمت كتابتها بتعليمات مترجمة صوتيًا بكل من الإنجليزية والعربية. بدءًا من الجانب الأيسر من الكتاب (المطبوع باللون الرمادي)، تظهر الحروف اللاتينية، المقروءة، لتهجئة التعليمات باللغة العربية، بينما يظهر الجانب الأيمن المطبوع باللون الأصفر الذهبي، بحروف عربية لتهجئة التعليمات باللغة الإنجليزية.

ملبورن، ولاية فيكتوريا. تم الاستحواذ عليها عام 2018؛ HF 2018/0037

Peter Lyssiotis and George Matoulas

Bridge, 2021

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

Bridge pays respect to the publisher Teriade and the book he commissioned from Pablo Picasso and Pierre Reverdy: *Le Chants des Morts*. *Bridge* begins in a monastery in Cyprus which is a stone's throw from the Green Line separating the Greek and Turkish communities.

The handwritten text is bilingual and is unique because both the Greek and the English run on from each other. The images are lithographs and together with the text explore notions of homeland and the journey of the spirit, as well as looking back on our parents' lives and therefore on our own past.

Masterthief and Messofa Press, Melbourne, Vic;
lithography, screenprint, collagraph, handwriting;
acquired 2021; HX 2022/0011



A walk through the book with the text read as it appears in English and Greek (audio)

Peter Lyssiotis and George Matoulas Bridge, 2021

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

Το *Bridge* (Το Γιοφύρι) αποδίδει σεβασμό στον εκδότη Teriade (Στρατής Ελευθεριάδης) και το βιβλίο που ανατέθηκε από τον Πάμπλο Πικάσο και τον Πιέρ Ρέβερντι: *Το Τραγούδι των Νεκρών*. Το Γιοφύρι ξεκινά σε ένα μοναστήρι στην Κύπρο που βρίσκεται σε απόσταση αναπνοής από την Πράσινη Γραμμή που χωρίζει την Ελληνική και την Τουρκική κοινότητα.

Το χειρόγραφο κείμενο είναι δίγλωσσο και είναι μοναδικό, καθώς τα Ελληνικά και τα Αγγλικά εναλλάσσονται και συνεχίζονται το ένα από το άλλο. Οι εικόνες είναι λιθογραφίες και μαζί με το κείμενο διερευνούν έννοιες της πατρίδας και του ταξιδιού του πνεύματος, καθώς και κοιτάζοντας πίσω στη ζωή των γονιών μας και επομένως στο παρελθόν μας.

Masterthief και Messofa Press, Μελβούρνη, Βικτώρια; λιθογραφία, μεταξοτυπία, κολλαγραφία, χειρόγραφο. αποκτήθηκε το 2021; ΗΧ 2022/0011

Bruce Chatwin and
Christian Ide Hintze
**Dream-Time /
A Rainbow-Travel, 1993**

Austrian artist and poet Hintze (1953–2012) employed typographical design on hand-dyed Japanese papers to visually interpret text from *The Songlines* by British writer Bruce Chatwin (1940–1989). Chatwin's bestselling work was first published in 1987 and blends travelogue, narrative and anthropology, exploring First Nations culture and its profound connection to the land in Australia. Through encounters with elders, Chatwin learns about the spiritual significance of songlines — stories passed down as both maps and guides, highlighting the deep relationship between language, land and culture.

Alinea-Press, Berlin, Germany; edition 28/60;
hand-set letterpress, hand-dyed Japanese Tenjin
paper; acquired 1995; Q769.994/25

Vivienne Dadour

Syrian Mary Make No Delay, 2022

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

This collection of artist books is inspired by and documents the extraordinary physical and spiritual life of my ancestor Syrian Mary. Between 1890 and 1920, Syrian Mary was a hawker of haberdashery, walking along bush roads to isolated farms in the Lithgow, Bathurst and Mudgee Shires. But the culture, tradition, and customs of the late 19th and early 20th centuries relegated rural hawkers to the dark (unseen) corners of our past. Syrian Mary's life is used as a metaphor to examine how oppressive racial attitudes, harsh economic conditions and power structures influenced working conditions for immigrant women hawking in rural NSW.

Sydney, NSW; unique state, archival digital prints on Japanese calligraphy paper; acquired 2022;
HF 2022/0033



Artist's site with more information

FAR LEFT:

Various artists, Craig Alan Huber (ed)

The Spirit within Australia: The land and the people, 2017

This collection features original photographic prints by Australian artists, showcasing 11 historic photographic printing methods. Responding to Australia's unique landscapes, culture and history, each print is crafted using a distinct technique. The book serves as both a visual and conceptual exploration, offering a unique perspective on the country through the lens of the photographer's creative process, and highlighting the richness of Australia's natural and cultural heritage.

Veritas Editions, Woodinville, Washington, USA; edition 3/15; letterpress, photographic printing methods: casein/chrysotype, cyanotype, hand-coloured platinum/palladium gelatin silver photogravure, Vandyke; acquired 2017; HX 2017/8

This item has changeovers.

On display from August:

- *Outward Appearances* by Maxine Salvatore;
cyanotype.

On display from December:

- *Boabs in the Kimberly I* by Kim Sinclair;
Van Dyke process.

LEFT:

Irene Sibley

Once Upon a Time, 2016

Once Upon a Time is Irene Sibley's (1943–2009) final children's story and artist's book, produced by Robert Littlewood. Autobiographical in nature, it touches on refugee migration and environmental preservation. The story follows Australian animals rescued from drought and bushfires, airlifted to a country in northern Europe (Sibley was born in Lithuania) where they struggle with unfamiliar customs and language. Despite these challenges, the animals ultimately find harmony, happiness and love, symbolising successful migration and adaptation to new environments.

The Lytlewode Press, Stoke-on-Trent, UK; edition 3/10;
hand-coloured linocuts, typeset; acquired 2016;
HF 2016/39

Barbara Davidson

Centrepont, 1993

Barbara Davidson (1928–2022) was a versatile artist who worked in etching, lithography, collagraphs and artists' books, often drawing inspiration from her domestic life, nature, travels and home town of Sydney. Her work captures the essence of her surroundings and reflects both the simplicity and complexity of everyday life, creating visually rich pieces that offer a deep connection to observations of her environment and experiences.

Double Bay, NSW; edition 10/10; colour lithographs, hand-printed covers and endpapers; 769.92/13

Liz Powell

Walking the Ancient Sea Wall, 2021

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

This section of ancient sea wall is on Curtin Springs Station, Northern Territory, where I did an artist's residency. It's one of several works I did prompted by the strong landscape. I travelled the paleolithic seashore in an old LandCruiser, jumping in and out, taking photographs for reference, gathering clay to make printing ink. The concertina book form refers to the traditional Japanese landscape scroll. The viewer walks the landscape from one end to the other, moving through the space.

Tenterfield, NSW; mono printing using ink made with hand-ground ochres from Curtin Springs, NT, drawing ink, pastel pencils, silk-screen print, found sticks; acquired 2022; MRB/Q134

Liz Powell

Homestead Dig: Tenterfield Station, excav site no. 1503 dig leader, 2022

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

Archaeology has always been an interest, interlocking with other sciences and history. The tunnel books here, nested in a concertina form, deliberately restrict the view. Looking down the tunnels produces short but progressive journeys into the site of the original Tenterfield Homestead, from the front gate through the door and the hallway. From the side view one can only see the paddocks. At an archaeological site it's necessary to peer through layers, you don't see everything at once and not without excavating.

Tenterfield, NSW; mono printing, drypoint, drawing, watercolour; acquired 2022; MRB/Q135

Claire Bolton, Katie Clemson and Anne Bell
**Corrugations: Some
speculations on Australian tin,
2005**

Corrugations was conceived by Claire Bolton in collaboration with printmaker and painter Katie Clemson (1949–2007) to highlight the uniqueness of corrugated iron in the Australian built vernacular. Through vibrant colours and intricate linework, paired with poet Anne Bell's verses, the work captures the searing heat and bright atmosphere of the country, while emphasising the poetic qualities of this everyday material. Blending art and poetry, the project celebrates the cultural and architectural significance of corrugated iron, reflecting its integral role in shaping Australia's landscape.

Alembic Press, Abingdon, UK; linocuts, hand-set type; acquired 2020; HF 2020/0037

Gwen Harrison and Sue Anderson

Quaranta Australis, 2008

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

The work responds to the built environment of the Quarantine Station at North Head in Sydney, a stark reminder of other internment camps and the overwhelming dread of contagion. An evocation of desolation, discomfort and exposure, the haunting shower blocks and fumigation stalls reflecting the desperation of those facing waves of epidemic disease. The lack of compassion for the sick is evident in the burial grounds placed in front of the flimsy structures that were third-class buildings. The official view at the time was that the living standard should be the same as steerage class cabins on the quarantine ships.

Sydney, NSW; multi-plate intaglio prints, chine collé, letterpress; acquired 2014; HF 2015/12

The artist's eye

If artists' books by their very nature challenge the idea of what a book is, they are equally skilled at questioning what a book can be made from. Materiality expands the limits of what is possible with paper, design, structure and perspective — emphasising the physicality of interacting with the object itself rather than just its content.

Unique examples here span several metres, contain constellations of tiny pinpricks or tessellations of precise geometric folds, pages are fused together into a monolithic form, separated into a gallery of polite strangers, appear ghostlike on translucent paper, encased in gleaming metal, or lead the viewer's eye through tunnels of visions.

Artists' books continue to redefine form, material and concept. By exploring new physical and conceptual realms, artists' books transform the idea of a book into a dynamic, multidimensional experience that transcends traditional definitions.

They show us that our experience of the book, a form we have lived with for over 2000 years, has yet to be exhausted.

Katharine Nix

The Uluru Book, 1994

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

The rusted wire is symbolic of the devastating effect that the cattle industry has had on the arid interior. The bones piercing through the covers and pages suggest how people and landscape intersect and are in fact indivisible. Uluru is now one of Australia's main sites of pilgrimage for both tourists and Australians. It was always sacred to the original inhabitants of this country. Embossing of scallop shells, in Western cultures a symbol of pilgrimage, reference this, as well as reminding us that this arid land was once a sea.

Winged Dog Studio, Canberra, ACT; unique state, handmade paper, Stipa grass, recycled mat board, bone, metal wire; acquired 2003; RB/F0435

Sara Bowen

Lossed, 2022

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

'Lossing' is the mathematics behind digital images — enough information to understand the picture, but some is discarded. It is also a metaphor for my parents: they seem so in love, but the layers of the reduction print fade, leaving only a ghost trace on the final image, the only print to be 'whole'. On every other page they are separated by the book's structure, gazing across at each other as the shades of grey bleed out of the images.

Coffs Harbour, NSW; artist's proof; six colour reduction lino print on Fabriano Tiepolo paper; acquired 2022;
H 2022/3743

Gracia Haby and Louise Jennison
**Salvaged Relatives, Edition I,
2014–15**

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

There you were, in an open shoebox beneath the radio. A handsome, if motley, selection of cabinet cards, purchased as a plan for restoration formed. In the space of rustled make-believe, perhaps collectively you said you longed to take to the stage, to be part of Sergei Diaghilev's 'restless, physical slideshow', steeped in the exotic, flanked by nymphs darned and patched. To be reimagined with a ruff around your neck and pants chequered yellow, pink, and perspiration, you'd be ready for dance's ephemerality. The effect, kaleidoscopic!

North Fitzroy, Vic; unique state; collages on cabinet cards, pencil and paint additions by Gracia Haby, housed in a three-colour cloth solander box bound by Louise Jennison, with inlaid collage; acquired 2015; H 2014/2396

Deidre Brollo

Doubtful Sound, or, the lure of gravity that we cannot refuse, 2017

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

In 1789, Alessandro Malaspina embarked on an expedition to measure variations in the force of gravity, thereby to determine the true figure of the world. One destination was a location called *Doubtful Sound*. He reached this destination but failed to complete his test — drawn there by ambition, he was repelled by the weather. In seeking to fathom the attraction of gravity, this book explores narratives that pull in multiple directions, from cellular biology to the origins of the universe.

Hamilton, NSW; edition 2/8; archival pigment on cotton rag, linen solander box, inlaid meteorite; acquired 2022; HQ 2022/1413

Lyn Ashby

Twenty Minutes, 2018

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

This work is made with translucent material. Images appear within incremental, rotating 120° arcs, or 20 minutes on a clock face, perhaps my own limited attention span. With the normal turning of pages, images spiral progressively around the pages, clockwise through the book block. Because of this translucency, the images rise up hazily from the right side (the future?) as they recede dimly into the depths on the left (the past?). What is time? Is each open spread the only pure moment?

This too press, Adelaide, SA; printed on translucent paper, handmade, hardcover, Chicago screw binding; acquired 2018; HF 2018/0014

Darren Bryant

Fold, Volume 2, 2020

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

Fold is an artist's book associated with haptic printed overlays and stacked paper folds. Influenced by early fluxus boxes, this bookwork combines screen-printing and paper folding, exploring the potential of hand-printed halftone dots onto the pages of childhood encyclopedias. Further examining how printed palimpsests* and paper folds change the viewer's reading of the original print ephemera. As a paper stack housed in a clamshell box, the pleating and halftone patterning create a play of light and shadow on each altered book page.

* Something reused or altered that still bears visible traces of its earlier form.

Lismore, NSW; unique state; haptic screen-printing on 82 sheets, altered book, fold, buckram fabric cover; acquired 2022; MRB/343

Peter Ward

Heartbeastfactory, 2021

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

The concertina book format of *Heartbeastfactory* allows the pages to form a continuous visual narrative. In this work I have submerged darker imagery under a layer of playful pattern and colour to create a tension between the attractiveness of the surface and the underlying existential foreboding.

No Shyacking Press, Geelong, Vic; unique state;
concertina book, woven linocuts; acquired 2022;
HQ 2022/1396

Teresa Pankratz

Into the Night, 2016

Into the Night lures the viewer on a fantastical journey through a year of vignettes and visions captured in the artist's dreams (or perhaps nightmares). Seven hand-cut lithographs form the dizzying tunnel book with words serving almost as incantations inscribed into the windows:

‘we sleep, we dream ~ flying long and fast
and deep into the night ~ eyes closing on the tick
of the clock to open on endless shores.’

Theodora Press, Chicago, Illinois, USA; edition 5/15;
hand-printed and hand-cut lithographs; acquired 2021;
RB/2899

Micky Allan

My Trip, 1976

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

My Trip began by recording a mundane personal journey over time and became an exploration of people's attitude to photography and a woman travelling alone. I published it in newspaper form and sold it in newsagents.

Micky Allan, 2009

Melbourne, Vic; printed newspaper, 20 sheets,
each 45.5 x 28.5 cm; acquired 2016; HF 2016/12

Wendy Sharpe

Gold Chinese Scroll (State Library), 2017–18

This is one of 13 artists' books created by Wendy Sharpe during her Drawing in the Library residency in 2017–18.

'I have worked entirely in artists' books, I have drawn in the fascinating rabbit warren part of the Library the public never gets to see, with its layers of architectural style. And the ... collection of work I have done, they're either a panorama of what you see, but others are a diary of this happened or that happened — like a film. The format makes lovely links with the Library itself and objects too.'

Q&A with our Artist in Residence, Wendy Sharpe 2018

Sydney, NSW; unique state; pencil, ink, watercolour, charcoal and gouache on paper, fabric box; acquired 2018; PXE 1738/no. 2

Stephanie Balchin

The Library of Firsts, 2016

The Library of Firsts explores the collection of the State Library of New South Wales, using the theme of 'firsts' to collage narratives behind the objects. The book features 27 unique 'firsts' from the Library, each accompanied by a description and full-page illustration. Created by the artist as part of her honours degree in Visual Communication, it offers a glimpse into the rich treasures within the Library's collection and its 200-year history as the oldest public library in Australia.

Sydney, NSW; edition 3/3; digital print; acquired 2017;
H 2017/515

Edward Ruscha

Every Building on the Sunset Strip, 1966

In 1966 American artist Ed Ruscha mounted a motorised Nikon camera on the back of a pick-up truck and photographed every building along the 2.7 kilometre Sunset Strip in Los Angeles. These photographs are presented here in order, labelled with street numbers in a non-judgmental, almost anthropological way, documenting previously unexplored details of the urban experience. Ruscha deliberately used inexpensive offset printing, standard paper and simple paperback bindings, creating a new genre of art book for commercial distribution. This influential work (preceding Google Street View by 40 years) remains iconic in contemporary art.

Los Angeles, USA, first edition, first printing; 1000 copies; 54 pages (folded), black and white photographic illustrations, accordion fold; original slipcase, silver paper over boards; measures 750 cm extended; acquired 2017; RB/2832



Interview with Ed Ruscha, V&A Dundee, 2024

Philip Quirk

Oxford Street Profile, 2011

This artist's book documents every building along both sides of Oxford Street, Sydney, from Queen Street, Woollahra, to Taylor Square, Darlinghurst, photographed between 2009 and 2011. Using black and white film in a 4 x 5 inch view camera, the images were captured during clearway hours to avoid obstructions. The southern side was photographed on winter mornings, and the northern side on summer afternoons. The book is a 733-centimetre-long digital print, echoing the spirit of Ed Ruscha's *Sunset Strip* (1966).

Sydney, NSW; pigment ink digital print; acquired 2012;
Q702.81/36

Mike Parr

The Rise and Fall of Civilisation: Blacked-out-book: Mike Parr 1971–72, 1974

‘I had this idea that I would like to get another copy of this book (same edition etc etc) and do the same to it as I have done to this copy, except that I would paint everything out white this time. This way I would have black/white copies of the history of Western Civilisation.’

— Mike Parr, May 1974

(artist inscription inside front cover)

The Rise and Fall of Civilisation, the book which has been blacked out, was written by the economist Shepard Clough in 1951. The text is an inquiry into the relationship between economic development and civilisation.

Sydney, NSW; unique state; printed book, Letraset paint; acquired 2016; MRB/276

Francis Osowski
No-White, 1995

Inspired by the Buddhist text *Milinda Pañha*, this photographic series explores the idea that things are made of parts and don't truly exist on their own. Set in a junkyard on the edge of a city, the work questions what makes something real. Divided into three parts, it uses broken objects and overlooked spaces to suggest that what we see as whole or meaningful may not be as solid as it seems — even something as familiar as a city.

Kensington, Vic; edition 1/7; metal book, leather, aluminium pages, 19 colour photographs; acquired 1997; Q779.092/O83.2/1

Nicole Hayes

Flow, 2022

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

This work is all about the paper. Its strength and fragility. Its opaqueness and translucency. Its utility and beauty. *Flow* is a work of meditation created over a one-year period by using a dressmaker's straight pin and piercing over 140,000 pin pricks from both front and back revealing an incredible texture as the nuances of the paper become part of the work. The love affair with paper continues!

Sydney, NSW; unique state; 100% recycled rag paper; acquired 2023; H 2023/0337

Caren Florance

WYSIWYG, 2013

CURATOR'S STATEMENT:

This book served as both talisman and inside joke for me as the curator of this exhibition, years spent thinking about the paradox of exhibiting artists' books.

How do you display something which is at once dynamic and static — an artwork deliberately created to be held, turned, touched and explored? *WYSIWYG* is a wry but generous show of empathy from the artist who understands this difficulty and has shown mercy on collecting institutions tasked with the impossible.

Ampersand Duck, Canberra; edition 1/3; hand-set letterpress, custom bookbinding; private collection

