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Artists' Information

PREFACE

Prof. Pat Hoffie

When Sally Molloy, one of the artists on this project, mischievously sent me this image, the coincidence was hard to put to one side. She knew that I planned to retire on December 23, 2016, and that this would be the last project I would undertake as a full-time artist/academic at the Queensland College of Art.

I began teaching at the QCA in 1980, after returning from two years travelling the 'overland route' between Istanbul and Delhi and back. The kind of travelling I've done since then has been different, but just as interesting. It's been a long journey. The projects that have been most rewarding have been the collaborative ones, and this one - *Drawing Water* - is no different.

Projects like this can't happen without buckets of goodwill and energy and the expectation that it's very likely you'll encounter more than a few shoals and shipwrecks along the way. Every profession has its scrapes, and mine has been no different. But if I'd ever been unlucky enough to be caught by the Umi Bozu doing the wrong thing at sea, I'd never have gotten away with it — I wouldn't have been able to lie like Kawanaya Tokuzo. For this stroke of good luck, I have my colleagues to thank, and I have the artists — always the artists, to thank as well.

Prof. Pat Hoffie, December 21, 2016.



Tokaido gojusan tsui, Utagawa Kuniyoshi (Japanese, 1798-1861) (Artist), Kojima of Horiecho (Publisher), ca. 1845 (late Edo), woodblock print on mulberry paper. Image available at <http://art.thewalters.org/detail/11711/tokaido-gojusan-tsui/> under a Creative Commons Attribution 1.0.

The Sea Monk (Umi Bozu) is a sea monster with a smooth round head, like the shaven head of a Buddhist monk. This woodblock print illustrates the story of the sailor Kawanaya Tokuzo, who decides to go to sea on the last day of the year, which other sailors consider unlucky. A violent storm breaks out, and the Umi Bozu appears. In a ghastly voice the apparition demands, "Name the most horrible thing you know!" Tokuzo yells back, "My profession is the most horrible thing I know!" The monster is apparently satisfied with this answer and disappears along with the storm.

Foreword

ADD WATER & STIR

Prof. Julianne Schulz

Drawing water.

Only an artist could come up with such a beguiling, deceptively simple idea: Take a group of young artists and their teachers from island countries at opposite ends of a great ocean, young artists who do not speak the same language, with different traditions, histories and world views, and challenge them to create together. To, metaphorically, add water and stir. The simplicity was, of course, deceptive.

To draw water first demands that you imagine water, experience water, reflect on water, interrogate its origins, its limits, its flows, whether it is fresh or saline, frozen or evaporating, old or new, essentially how it is both the source of life and has the power to destroy.

Fittingly Mother Nature lent a hand, sending three typhoons at once to greet the artists as they gathered in Japan. Dumping torrents of water into cities, churning the oceans, breaking the banks of rivers, flooding the land.

Even the most brilliant artist mother professor could not have orchestrated such an intervention. It was unprecedented, but the creative purpose was served, the challenge underlined, and the artists did not just *know*, but *felt* the power of water.

Water is the essential element, the source of life on earth, and as we now know, present on other planets as well. It lies at the core of myths and imaginings in every culture, its presence brings land and creatures to life and provides pathways for movement across countries and between continents. Its absence devastates and destroys, rendering vast tracts of land barren, destroying species and lives, forcing adaptation and innovation. Artists have sought to capture it for millennia, its elusive shimmer and power challenging even the very best.

Water preoccupies biologists, physicists, chemists, economists, engineers, social scientists, philosophers and historians. Each has a particular perspective and frame, such is the multi faceted complexity of water.

This collection disrupts predictable ways of seeing; the scientists are poetic about their obsessions, the curators analytical, social scientists passionate, historians engage with myth and artists interrogate history.

Such is the lot of the artist – to interrogate, synthesise and then to create.

It is easily overlooked when the jargon of the day is swamped by talk of innovation, that creative people actually *create*. They make something that

wasn't there before, fill a void that was invisible until it was no longer empty. To do that demands inquiry, knowledge of the past, curiosity, cultural insight, technical skill, discipline, empathy and a willingness to be stretched.

There is no magic formula for this. It depends on individuals, on their obsessions and capacity, on circumstances that cannot be controlled.

But if you can get the ingredients right sometimes it is just a matter of adding water and stirring.

As this collection shows, that happened in Japan, when a group of young artists gathered to 'draw water'. And as these pages demonstrate, it has also happened in the lives and imaginations of the scientists, curators, artists and professors whose words follow.

Opportunities like this are not whimsy, they are tools to power new ways of seeing that can last a lifetime with unpredictable, sometimes inspiring, outcomes.

December 2016

Prof. Julianne Schultz

Prof. Julianne Schultz AM FAHA is the founding editor of Griffith Review. She chairs the Australian Film TV and Radio School.

INTRODUCTION

Prof. Pat HOFFIE

As Caroline Turner describes in her essay, *The Spirit of Water: Flows of Art in Cross-Cultural Connections and Collaborations between Japan and Australia*, interest in visual art from both countries has flowed in both directions for a number of decades, and through a number of tributaries – through scholarly and creative exchanges that were carried deep and wide by major institutions, and via smaller, more nimble currents. This project is part of those latter currents in that two-way flow, and grew from a number of exchange projects between staff and students from the Queensland College of Art (QCA), Griffith University, and those from Tokyo University of the Arts (TUA) and Joshibi University of Art and Design. Looking back, it's probably been the smaller, intimate nature of the ongoing exchanges that have built the strongest links. In turn, those small exchanges have generated a range of outcomes of lingering significance. Those outcomes include artworks, art projects, exchange students, art exhibitions, writing, catalogues, and, importantly, friendships.

This project also grew from a research initiative focused on drawing supported by the Griffith Centre for Creative Arts Research (GCCAR).

In 2015, the focus was developed into the *Drawing International Brisbane* symposium. For the second iteration of DIB, in 2016, the idea of an international focus on a cross-cultural collaborative exchange laboratory in Tokyo promised to both reinforce the bonds built through previous interactions, as well as to extend the DIB research platform into artist-lead, studio-based approaches. This cross-cultural exchange was facilitated by co-curator Dr. Linda Dennis via her organization Touch Base Creative Network. Over the years, travelling between Japan and Australia, Linda has been instrumental in a number of exchange projects between QCA, TUA and Joshibi.

The project grew in three stages – (1) in the months before the collaborative workshop in Tokyo held in September 2016, students from all three institutions began the process through a series of online communications. Their arrival was followed by on-site collaborative research endeavors in or around Tokyo. These research trips then segued into a workshop situation that culminated in an exhibition at AIR 3331 in Tokyo. After the Australian students returned home, online communications between the

artists followed, and the Joshibi students wrote their responses to the projects to be used in this catalogue.

(2) Back in Brisbane, new work was designed for the lightboxes and banners of the Brisbane City Council's *Vibrant Laneways* project for five sites where the work will be exhibited between December 2016 and March, 2017.

(3) This online catalogue is another essential aspect of the *Drawing Water* collaborative research project, and extends the visual arts focus through drawing together writers from museum studies, from curatorial expertise, from science and medicine, together with Indigenous cultural experts and members of Griffith University's Australian Rivers Institute. Ideas and responses flow through both words and images, through suggestions and assertions, through facts and dates as well as through imaginative propositions. The passion and poetic resonance about the necessity of water and its denizens flow through each of the essays and across all disciplines.

The 'drawing' aspect of the research project relates first and foremost to that activity that lies at the heart of all visual art practice. It's an activity that's provisional and speculative rather than definitive, and it's not contained by any specific medium. The fluidity of drawing – its capacity to change artistic and conceptual directions

together with the fact that it's embedded in the riskier, experimental aspects of art practice - makes for much of its mercurial appeal. When linked to the inconstant element of water, the tenuous challenge to 'draw water' magnifies the slippery possibilities even further. The project's aims seek continuities between disparate voices and experiences; it is launched as a research experiment that seeks for connections that might lie somewhere 'out at sea', beyond the determined boundaries and coastal edges of separate disciplines.

Water is mutable, capricious, fluid, as is the process of drawing. The invitation to 'draw water', therefore, has invited all kinds of mutations and transformations and possibilities. In the two terms embodied in its title, it doubly defers the definitive. Instead of delineations, demarcations, classifications or categorisations, it stakes out sites for more open-ended possibilities. *Drawing Water* is a project that entertained the idea that all kinds of navigations might be possible; all kinds of outcomes are probable. It was launched in the hope that rafts lashed together from unlikely beginnings can often be sailed towards promising new connections.

Pat HOFFIE, 2016
(editor, *Drawing Water* catalogue; co-curator, *Drawing Water* exhibitions and projects)

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EDITORIAL NOTES

While it was anticipated that the theme *Drawing Water* might draw a fluidity of interpretations, it's resulted in rich wells of written and visual essays, from scientists, artists and individuals with a range of other interests, many of which are surprising in terms of the delightfully idiosyncratic way each writer has chosen to deal with the subject. Unlike so many themed 'academic journals', in this collection of essays it is often difficult to determine the background experience from which each writer draws their ideas. Ideas liquefy to cross boundaries into a range of disciplines - scientists have contributed essays that are at times moving and poetic, and at other times passionate and personal; artist-writers have drawn from scientific information as well as from history and literature. And the currents that run between the essays move from Australia and Japan and across the Pacific to touch on subject matters that range from ecological concerns, to art, to off-shore detention, to the sex trade and that then set sail to further critical cays and atolls to raise questions in compelling and intriguing ways.

1. The Spirit of Water: Flows of Art in Cross-Cultural Connections and Collaborations between Japan and Australia.

Dr. Caroline Turner begins by raising the question about the extent to which our globally interconnected world has actually managed to bridge cultural differences. She talks about the value of cross-cultural collaboration as a way of "seeing and re-making the world anew" and traces a number of exhibitions and exchanges in the visual arts between Australia and Japan since 1989. Dr. Turner's extensive experience in curating and managing a range of internationally significant exhibitions has forged the basis of her understanding that communication between individuals is "an essential element of cross-cultural exchanges".

2. Circulation

Professor Hirotohi Sakaguchi, artist and Professor at Tokyo's University of the Arts, draws from his presentation made at the *Drawing Water* workshop in September 2016, to reflect on the microcosmic and macrocosmic influence of circulation. He gives a brief overview of changes in the way Tokyo city has moved its relationship to its own waterways and refers to aspects of his own practice to reflect the importance of water as an ongoing theme in his work.

3. Interview

Masato Nakamura responds to questions about the fluidity of his own role as an artist – as someone who has established a professional basis for exchange

programs and projects for artists, while continuing to produce work as a 'solo artist' represented in leading international focus exhibitions and galleries. His role as founder of AIR 3331, the workshop/residence where the *Drawing Water* collaborative experiment took place, is a vital node to his practice.

4. Commingled Streams

Dr. Linda Dennis draws inspiration from a poem about a place in the mountains in Gifu Prefecture where "water flowing from Mt Dainichi separates into two streams, one flowing to the Sea of Japan, and the other to the Pacific Ocean" to reflect on the currents of her own life spent between Australia and Japan, and describes how her research interests have continued through projects that bring people into contact with each other and with their environment.

5. Death by Water

Reuben Keehan, writing from a residency at Yokohama, reflects on how ports and waterways remain vitally important to global connectivity, despite the seemingly smooth, seamless invisibility of the digital age. Beginning from his reflections on the view of Yokohama port from an exquisite nineteenth century garden, Keehan ponders on the immensity of water in determining who we are as individuals, and as nations. He writes: "Water, like love, is a concept of such consequence to human existence that it cannot be reduced to a simple emotional register," and traces the terrors, taboos and temptations of watery associations.

6. Drawing on Water, Redrawing History

Masako Fukui follows the historical path of the 'water trade' between the two countries – Australia and Japan - that are home to her. Her essay argues that prostitution was part of the integration of Japanese women into the global work force in the 19th century, and suggests that "the *karayuki-san* were the 19th century equivalent of today's mobile global citizen". The essay's conviction that this is "a narrative that belongs to all Australians", cheekily and convincingly argues that the 'water trade' should be considered an important part of the bilateral relationships between the two countries.

7. Old Water

Dr. William Platz' series of drawings on lighthouse keepers was created in response to two historical sites – the remains of the original Bulwer Island lighthouse in Brisbane, and that of Jotomyodai in Tokyo. The puppets he creates to serve as extensions of the past (through their role as miniature representatives of the lighthouse keepers), and of the present (through their role as extensions of the artist's own persona and skills as a draughtsman) become the participants in a reenactment Platz performs at the sites in each country. His essay interweaves with these images in a meditation about the passing of time, dislocation and obsolescence.

8. The Drawing Water Journals

Professor Pat HOFFIE follows the *Drawing Water* project through a series of journal entries. As she watches the students develop their art projects

while typhoons lash a topsy-turvy world outside, she wonders about the strange inner pull of art. Via looping references to biology, bits of history and a smattering of psychological references, the essay continues its way towards resignation to the fact that, in the end, art is all that matters.

9. What Real Heroism Looks Like

Professor Ned Pankhurst responds to the watery theme through describing some of his early field work in marine biology. He begins by explaining how and why his research passion moved him to eschew "flashy biological extravagances" in favour of "the more restrained heroes of piscine migration", and tells how his focus on one small species of fish lead him into a sequence of adventures and discoveries. In this tale, all the pitfalls and pleasures of field research are described as crucial aspects that contribute to the development of often deceptively simple interests into life-long research passions.

10. Follow the Water

Dr. Anne W. Beaumont draws from recollections of her travels in various parts of the world to detail the vital importance of water that flows beneath us, above us and around us. Her essay moves from peripatetic musings on the grandeur and wonder of these watery sites to consider the dire impact of development on water resources, and returns to focus on domestic worlds, only to spiral out to a final consideration of what the planet's ultimate galactic future might be.

11. Drawn to Water

Dr. Liz O'Brien's essay describes a typically energetic

outdoor North Queensland upbringing where all kinds of water experiences have soaked under the skin to influence her adult years. From creeks to coral cays, from one wet season to the next, her story traces how water has continued to be an enduring passion on all levels for her, and for the generation to come.

12. Connecting People and Country

Associate Professor Sue Jackson's essay looks at the connections water establishes for notions of country for Australian Aboriginal people. She describes how the rich religious and symbolic traditions that are core to Indigenous culture complement the material uses of water. Through a number of references to culture, the essay traces how Indigenous land and waterscapes are conceived of as living entities responsive to human actions and behavior, to argue that "social and cultural dimensions are integral considerations in water management governance, (and) water resource developments" in future management of water in this country.

13. A Cycle of Connection; Australian Aboriginal Artists and Water

Adjunct Professor Margo Neale (with **Professor Pat Hoffie**) traces a cycle of connection that follows Australian Aboriginal relationships to water. Beginning with descriptions of the works of internationally recognised artists Lin Onus and Emily Kngwarreye, the essay delves into the flow of interpretative responses in the interpretation and influence of their work in both Japan and Australia. The essay then draws on

much older stories - the Wagilag Sisters and the Rainbow Serpent, and the Djang'kawu Sisters and the stolen dillybags, to flow into the present, to the "cultural streams still run deep beneath and within all aspects of contemporary Indigenous life in this country."

14. The Memory of Water

Dr. Samantha Capon contributes a poetic paean to drought – a succinct essay where the 'memory of water' provides a powerful life force that drives all sorts of living beings forward in hope during the most barren, dry times.

01 THE SPIRIT OF WATER:

FLOWS OF ART IN CROSS-CULTURAL CONNECTIONS AND COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN JAPAN AND AUSTRALIA.

Dr. Caroline Turner

Art historian Michael Sullivan, author of a ground breaking book which examined the long history of mutual artistic influence between what he called 'East and West', noted that the rapid flow of art and ideas from culture to culture today is now so extensive that it is no longer regarded with surprise¹. Sullivan was writing in 1989 and the exchange of ideas that he referred to has become more extensive as we all know, especially as new technologies, including the internet and social media, greatly expand connections. Yet some scholars have pondered whether these new modes of connectivity can bridge cultural differences.

Professor Sullivan's comments are especially relevant to cross-cultural collaborations, such as this joint art initiative between three institutions in Australia and Japan, which are critical to building bridges. As Alison Carroll has noted, personal communication is vital in the success of such an endeavour². Cross-cultural collaboration can contribute to our understanding of our own societies and thus to what scholars refer to as 'world-making'³, that is, a process of seeing and remaking the world anew, often amid forces of rapid and dynamic social and cultural change as has happened in both Japan and Australia in recent decades.

When I first heard the poetic title of *Drawing Water* - this intensive art workshop/ laboratory collaboration, the image that came into my mind immediately was a collaborative artistic project between two artists in 1989 - twenty five years ago - which perfectly reflects the fluid boundaries of cross-cultural exchanges. The project in question was part of an exhibition exchange between the Museum of Modern Art Saitama, Japan and the Queensland Art Gallery (QAG) in Brisbane Australia. I negotiated the exhibition as Deputy Director of the Gallery while on my first visit to Japan in the early 1980s, and it was the beginning of my personal discovery of Japanese art. Forty Australian artists had their work shown in Saitama in 1987 and

forty Japanese artists in Queensland in 1989, and the latter exhibition was the first major survey of Japanese contemporary art undertaken by any Australian Gallery.⁴

Akira Komoto from Japan and Pat HOFFIE from Australia created a collaborative set of art works exchanged back and forth over several hours on a fax machine. There was no internet in those days. I can vividly remember standing in the Gallery's rather cramped back office filing room and watching excitedly as the first artwork by Komoto emerged from the fax machine - a drawing of rocks in water which printed out in rather watery grey ink. Komoto referred in his artist statement to his inspiration being both 'infinity' and the 'deep, dark, changing surface of ... water'⁵. Pat HOFFIE then drew on the work and re-faxed it to Japan. HOFFIE's image was a female water spirit inspired by Japanese manga. The process went on for some time. The various states of the drawings were displayed on a glass external wall in an area dominated by the Gallery's large interior pool of water where dancing light from sun and water flickered through the thin fax paper. And the works also resonated with a large multi-coloured print installation of a rainbow by the Japanese artist Ay-o which hung above the water.

I begin with the Saitama exchange because it was very important to the QAG and a prelude to the Asia-Pacific Triennial (APT) which began in 1993. The inspiration of the idea of co-curatorship in the early APT exhibitions developed from this collaboration and was suggested by Masayoshi Homma, the Director of the Saitama Museum. It was an enormously exciting exhibition and included experimental artists from such critical movements as *Gutai* and *Mono-ha*. Reiko Tomii and Alexandra Munroe have both shown how unique avant-garde post war Japanese art was and its influence on Western artists.⁶ Japanese art is deeply inflected by nature, but the exhibition also exposed Japan's rapidly changing postmodern present. QAG was later

able to acquire work by some of these artists for the collection, including Lee U-Fan, Yayoi Kusama, Shigeo Toya, Hiroshi Sugimoto and Yasumasa Morimura. The QAG's 2014/15 exhibition *We can make another future: Japanese art after 1989* had 100 works by over 40 contemporary Japanese artists purchased since 1989. These include Shigeo Toya's *Woods III* (first shown in APT 1993) – an eerie forest reminding one of drowned trees, consisting of large wooden blocks carved with a chainsaw and painted a ghostly grey, Hiroshi Sugimoto's *Sea of Buddhas*, photographs of the 1001 gilded sculptures of Kannon, the goddess of mercy, at the Sanjūsangen-dō temple in Kyoto (APT 1999), Yayoi Kusama's *Narcissus Garden* (1966, APT 2002) and *Soul under the Moon* (APT 2002). In Kusama's ethereal *Soul under the Moon* water plays a major role – the viewer stands on a platform surrounded by water in a darkened mirrored room hung with coloured balls. These are reflected in the mirrors creating a sense of 'infinite space'.

In 1982 the QAG had also exhibited an extraordinary exhibition of masterpieces of historical art from the renowned Idemitsu Museum of Art in Tokyo as the key exhibition for the opening of the new Gallery building in that year.⁷ It is interesting looking at the catalogue of that exhibition to note the strong theme of water in the works – paintings showing poets and other travellers viewing cascading waterfalls, golden screens depicting flowing rivers and the sea, ceramic tea bowls and water containers for the tea ceremony. The QAG collection now also contains Neolithic jars from Japan's ancient Jōmon and Yayoi cultures, later ceramics from the Six Old Kilns and from the Muromachi and Azuchi–Momoyama periods and by Zen practitioners of ceramics and calligraphy, as well as paintings, folding screens, and *Ukiyo-e*, or 'pictures of the floating world'.⁸

Europeans were exposed to Japanese aesthetics from the 18th and 19th centuries and *Ukiyo-e* woodblock prints were collected by 19th century avant-garde artists such as the Impressionists. In Australia many artists were influenced by the fashion for *Japonisme* and were able to experience Japanese decorative arts in 19th century expositions in Sydney and Melbourne. The National Gallery of Victoria (NGV), Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, Art Gallery of NSW (AGNSW), Art Gallery of South Australia and later the National Gallery of Australia (NGA) and other institutions

formed collections, including through donations from individuals – for example a Japanese brass Meiji incense burner gifted to the NGV in 1883. In the twentieth century, Japanese design, decorative arts and later popular culture were again immensely influential in Europe, the US and Australia. Australians interested in the superb traditions of Japanese crafts started to go to Japan, for example potter Peter Rushforth in the 1960s. David Williams, then Director of the Crafts Board of the Australia Council, attended the World Crafts Council conference in Kyoto in 1978 and the Crafts Board began to facilitate links between individuals and institutions.

While there were some art exchanges earlier, connections became much more extensive in trade, education, tourism and culture from the 1950s. In that decade Australian State Galleries showed an exhibition of modern Japanese painting, an exhibition of Japanese decorative arts, and the Hiroshima Panels, anti-war paintings by Iri and Toshi Maruki depicting the terrible effect of the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Asialink based in Melbourne has been a critical conduit for Australia's engagement with Asia since 1990 across a broad range of activities including business, government, education and culture. The arts programme, directed for many years by Alison Carroll, has focussed on contemporary arts and cultural collaborations, including exhibitions in 21 countries. There have been many residencies, workshops, symposia and professional exchanges with Japan through this programme. The Australia Council, Australia-Japan Foundation (the Australian Government's bilateral cultural body) as well as the Japanese Government's Japan Foundation have undertaken many cultural projects between our two countries.

Memorable recent art exhibitions at major institutions include *Art of Japanese Package*, 1979; Jackie Menzies' exhibitions at the AGNSW *Modern Boy Modern Girl: Modernity in Japanese art 1910-1935* (1998) and *Buddha Radiant Awakening* (2001); the QAG's Yayoi Kusama *'Look Now, See Forever'* (2011/12); the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney's *Zones of Love: Contemporary Art from Japan* (1991); Yoko Ono *War Is Over! (if you want it)* (2013) and Tatsuo Miyajima *Connect with Everything* (2016). The Sydney Biennale has shown Japanese artists since the 1970s.

One extraordinary work of many in the Biennale was Hiroshi Sugimoto's installation at Cockatoo Island in 2010, based on photographic experiments imaging static electricity and lightning. In the centre was a thirteenth century Japanese sculpture of Raijin, the god of thunder.

One of the most exciting exhibitions Australia has sent to Japan was *Utopia, the genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye* curated by Margo Neale from the National Museum of Australia and Akira Tatehata, Director of the National Museum of Modern Art, Osaka. Professor After Tatehata had seen Neale's 1998 Australian retrospective of the artist's work, he had been determined to have an exhibition in Japan. The exhibition took place at the National Museum of Modern Art, Osaka and the National Art Center, Tokyo in 2008⁹. It had a huge attendance and was visited by Her Imperial Majesty, the Empress of Japan. Emily Kngwarreye was an Aboriginal artist and elder from the central desert of Australia. She never attended art school and only painted for eight years, beginning in her late 70s, but has been recognised as one of Australia's most important artists. Her art remains true to the traditional spiritual concerns of Aboriginal people over many thousands of years. Her paintings are maps of inner and outer worlds and reflect a cosmology and way of looking at geography that encapsulates the sacred. Australia is the driest continent on earth, but the desert community where she lived, known as Utopia, after rain falls is transformed by water with new plants and brilliant colour, all reflected in her large scale abstract paintings. As one Japanese visitor commented in a documentary film made about the exhibition, Japanese could feel the deep affinity with nature in her art and understand the concept of art as a spiritual landscape.

Major exhibitions and initiatives such as I have described often generated a flotilla of people-to- people projects. Art Schools and individual artists have been involved in ever increasing numbers. The role of individuals in fostering such links cannot be understated. An example is Emiko Namikawa at Lunami Gallery, Tokyo, who organised an important exchange between Australian and Japanese artists in Melbourne and Japan in the 1980s. Another major example is that artists from the Queensland College of Art and artists from Gedai (Tokyo University of the Arts) and Joshibi University of Art and Design have a ten year history of exchange. The

Japanese archipelago is separated by over 7000 kilometres of the Pacific Ocean from its antipodes of the island continent of Australia but the flows of contacts have been extensive.

I will end with some examples of works by younger artists that speak to issues relevant to both Japan and Australia. Mayu Kanamori, who was born in Japan but now lives in Australia, has created an immersive performance, video and exhibition telling the story of a Japanese photographer Yasukichi Murakami living in Northern Australia in the first part of the twentieth century, including in Broome, a major centre of the Australian pearling industry in which Japanese have long been involved. Ken and Julia Yonetani in a recent installation at the NGA showed *Crystal Palace: The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nuclear Nations* (2013) a series of chandeliers made from uranium glass representing nuclear-powered nations and created in response to the horrific Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident in Japan following the terrible 2011 tsunami.¹¹ *The Last Supper* (2014) in the same exhibition is a nine metre table that resembles a lavish Renaissance banquet where every item, including the table, food, plates and glasses, is made from white salt from the Murray Darling River system – Australia's greatest river system covering an enormous area in three States and which has long sustained Aboriginal people and European settlers. The main rivers are supported by thousands of interconnected creeks, waterways and underground aquifers.¹² Their art work is a commentary on the increasing salinity of the water endangering these vital eco systems that support life.¹³

The themes adopted by the Japanese and Australian artists collaborating in this exhibition also open up fascinating ways of contemplating history as well as issues facing us all in the present and the future and are thus immensely relevant to cross-cultural collaboration. They touch on ancient links between nature and spirituality, forms of negotiation between cultures, and show that water can be both life sustaining and destroying. They also demonstrate the strength of cross-cultural collaborative projects in creating ways to understand our shared world. Yet such crossings are not necessarily easy. In the 1999 APT Chinese-born artist Cai Guo-Qiang, who had spent many years in Japan, created a work to reflect on this concept - a bamboo bridge similar to those seen in historical Japanese paintings and prints.

As two people crossed the bridge coming from different directions and met in the middle, a shower of water descended on them. In a very hot Brisbane summer this became a major attraction to visitors trying to stay cool in the heat!

An essential element of cross-cultural exchanges is communication between individuals. As Masayoshi Homma wrote in the Saitama catalogue: 'a balance of give and take in international cultural exchange today is the key to creation of bonds between peoples who must co-exist in the future.'¹⁴ Akira Tatehata put it this way: 'But isn't trying to understand another culture a way of recognising the productive significance of the connections between two cultures, and an attempt to integrate another context into one's own?' The art works in this exhibition seem to me to do this very effectively. We need to live together in the future, as Homma suggests, and to understand each other's cultures and ways of seeing the world and, ultimately, to work towards creating better futures for the world.

Dr. Caroline Turner

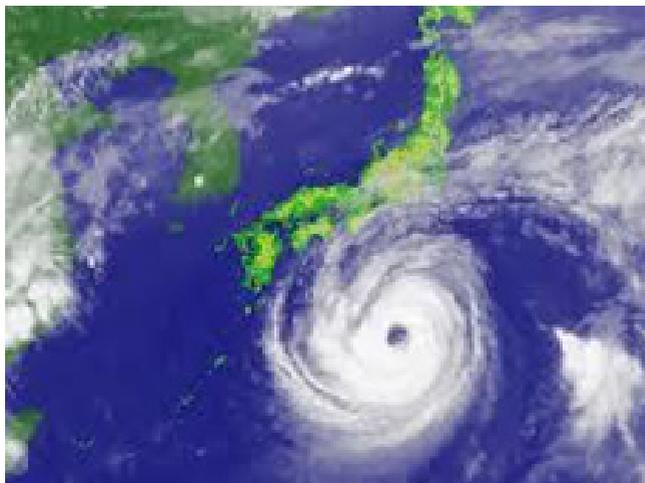
Dr Caroline Turner AM FRSA is an Adjunct Senior Research Fellow in the College of Arts and Social Sciences at the Australian National University. Prior to joining the ANU in 2000 she was Deputy Director of the Queensland Art Gallery and Project Director for the Asia-Pacific Triennial exhibitions in 1993, 1996 and 1999. She has published widely on contemporary Asian art. Her most recent book, co-written with Jen Webb, is *Art and Human Rights: Contemporary Asian Contexts*, Manchester University Press, 2016.

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02 CIRCULATION

Prof. Hirotochi Sakaguchi
Translation: by Sachiko Suzuki



The typhoon counterclockwise, the circulation of the heat.

Circulation

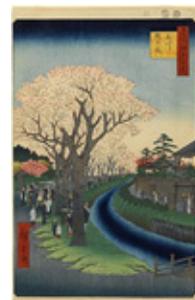
As the Tokyo workshop phase of the *Drawing Water* project drew closer, three typhoons struck Japan. This was an unusual weather pattern. Due to the earth's rotation, typhoons rotate clockwise in the southern hemisphere, and counterclockwise in the northern hemisphere. Typhoons circulate water and stir up air and water temperatures. These factors are not only important for Japan, they are also vital to the planet; the circulation of water plays a big function in the circulation of solar heat.

1. The history of Tokyo's water

The contemporary city of Tokyo is built on the historical city of Edo. Between 1603 and 1868, during what is known as the Edo period, the city held 2,600,000 residents. It was unique in the world as the first metropolis to use urban sanitation before the Industrial Revolution. In order to achieve this, city planners had changed the flow of the river and transformed Edo in the process. The river had an abundance of clean water, and huge construction programs were used to



The blue lines near the Edo-castle are the former river. The hill was dug and became the artificial river, Ochanomizu-station. The red line is the present river. It was taken away the water and became the residential area.



Ando Hiroshige, *Tamagawa-Josui*



The waterway and bridge, they influenced impressionism like Manet. It was completed in 1653. Total length of 43km.

build waterways such as Tamagawa-Josui that could draw the drinking water to the center of the city. Canals such as this became pathways for water transportation. The reconstructions of the river also changed the flow of the river. The area around Edo castle, was divided into land for the fortifications and a residential area that were separated by the diverted pathways of the river. In this way the 'lungs' of the city were recirculated and a new relationship between land and water was restored.

2. The problems about water in the future

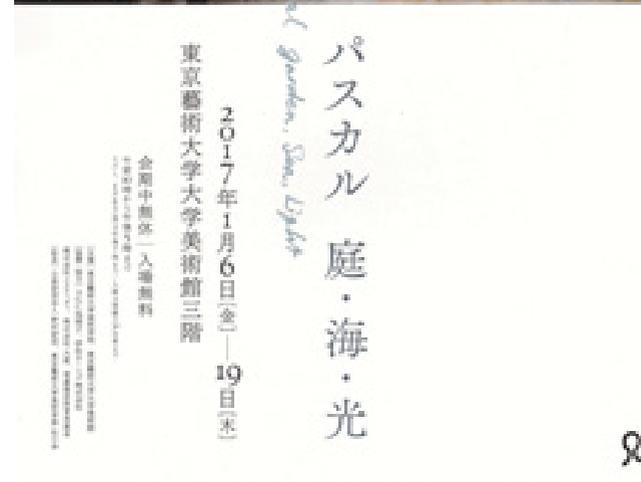
However, history warns us that man-made attempts to redirect or harvest water-flow come at a price. In 1971, when the Aswan High Dam was completed in the Nile, in Egypt, water resources in Egypt were more able to be reserved and controlled, especially for the thirsty urban metropolises. However, the supply of nutrition-rich water became inadequate for other assets and fishery resources suffered as a result. Similar problems arise for agriculture when drawing the groundwater is used for controlled mono-cultural plantations. Outcomes such as these make it clear how vital it is that we pay careful heed

to caring for the health of this watery planet, Earth, through scientific approaches informed by macroscopic perspectives.

3. The ongoing theme in my work

I am currently preparing for a solo exhibition that will be held at The University Art Museum, Tokyo University of the Arts from January 6th to 19th in 2017.

For this, twelve new big paintings and sixteen glass plates will be used in the center of the exhibition space for the installation of the work. By putting 50 works together with the theme of birth and circulation, I want to construct a space through which audiences can stroll through, slowly discovering linked aspects in the work.





Garden of Pascal,
Obihiro 2014



Sea of Pascal,
2006



Water Circulation Earth
2006

4. Three past artworks using the theme of water.

Garden of Pascal—Obihiro 2014

This artwork was exhibited during a severe winter in the windbreak art exhibition in Hokkaido.

People have grown the windbreak over time and with great care to protect crops from cold winds. Some protective suits were hung between each gap in the trees. The figures flapping by the winds clearly show the connection between human life and nature.

Sea of Pascal, 2006 (290cm×220cm)

An image that is overwhelmed by a range of matters and references makes it impossible for the viewer to respond; it is a dead image that cannot be 'moved'.

Conversely, imagining a rich space filled with the potential for birth, where it is possible for almost anything to come into being, is a space where circulation of energies is possible. In considering decisions for making paintings, artists need to be mindful of the circulation of the energy through the painting's spaces.

Water Circulation Earth 1989

Halfway to the summit of a mountain path, an installation appears to walkers like a sudden surprise. From amidst a clearing in the forest, the contours of a truck are completely and closely covered with moss. Above it a woven structure is suspended, slowly dripping water. Inside the cab of the truck small trees are taking root. It is unclear about the extent to which this has been constructed by the artist, or reclaimed by nature.

For this work I was interested in expressing how even industrial products are connected to the cycle of nature, and how, through time such products can be released from their original function to be returned to nature.

03

INTERVIEW WITH PROF. MASATO NAKAMURA

Artist, Associate Professor of Painting, Tokyo University of the Arts;
Director of AIR 3331 Arts Chiyoda, Alternative Art Centre;
Founding member of Command N artists collaborative;
Director of Arts and Urban Regeneration NPOs Zero-date in Akita and Himing in Himi, Toyama.

Q: Nakamura-san, you are recognised internationally as a leading Japanese contemporary visual artist. You've participated in a range of leading international survey exhibitions, you are a professor at Tokyo's leading tertiary art education institution (Tokyo University of the Arts) and yet you are also a busy and committed artist-worker who seeks to establish art-networks, art-laboratory residencies and art-projects. How important are your activities as an 'artist-worker' to your own practice?

A: The concept of my work goes beyond the domain of art. My work is not only material based artwork, but also takes on socially based intangible forms, where the creation of value through activities, and existence can also be called artwork. Recently, by developing my artwork to be enterprise based, I am putting emphasis on creating direct messages in socially sustainable ways. Arts Chiyoda 3331 is one example of this. Developing an enterprise can produce a creative field that brings about an intersection of art, industry, and community.

I do not completely understand the meaning of "artist worker", because it is the first time for me

to hear it, but if the meaning refers to work other than the making of artwork, I think that it does not apply to my activities in this case.

Q: Do you see working with the broader community an important aspect of the contemporary artist's role?

A: Not only the work of artists, but also work of any kind is related to the broader community. As for the expression of the artist, their message is built through various mediums. Community as a medium becomes the motive of expression too. It doesn't need to be said that, in contrast to artistic mediums, in community, awareness can be voiced and there is power in communication itself

Q: What aims did you have in mind when you established AIR 3331 and its sister-projects?

A: To absorb the charms of Tokyo and Japan and pursue the possibilities of diverse expression to the fullest. It is aimed that AIR 3331 runs autonomously, and be an open door to artists of any kind. In addition, one vision is to make a place where around 30 artists a month can stay and produce works. This is because I think that



On entry to 3331 Arts Chiyoda

by establishing an AIR program of such a scale, a new cultural synergy could be brought about. A big problem regarding the AIR program are the high land prices of Tokyo. In order to solve this problem, it is a necessity to reduce risk by increasing the scale, I think.

Q: Have you been achieved yet?

A: Not yet.

Q: To what extent do the demands of running these initiatives make on your role as a 'conventional' gallery-exhibiting artist?

A: Please imagine a time and place before the system of art was born, where there were no galleries, art museums, or markets. I think that artists were desperate to challenge things, and to realize their imaginings. I want to challenge all things, in the image of this kind of primary artistic activity.

Q: AIR 3331 provides possibilities for cross-cultural and, sometimes, collaborative art practices. How important do you feel that cross-cultural art practices are in an increasingly globalised world?

A: In the current time, rather than multiplicity, we see aspects of bias and polarization of thought. Political and nationalistic rivalries are moving in a direction contrary to multiculturalism.

In terms of that meaning, how you bring about cross-cultural experience is an important action. The problem is that no matter how much increased experience is achieved in art, it does not have very much societal influence. In Japan, I think it is broadly necessary to include programs that address multicultural values in educational programs.



Organic rooftop gardening on the rooftop of 3331 Arts Chiyoda

04 COMMINGLED STREAMS

Dr. Linda Dennis

The crispness
of the water
at the divide
as it parts
toward the Sea of Japan and the Pacific.

- Toshiko Kawai / English translation: Linda Dennis

I felt an element of sadness as the groups parted after the intense ten-day *Drawing Water* workshop. It made me recall the poem above, that I was given earlier this year. I had asked friends for help to interpret it, and we imagined the warm and cold pockets of water in the ocean, and the wonderment you feel when you come across these while swimming.

As an Australian artist living in Tokyo, I flowed from the Pacific into this Sea of Japan. On occasion, I experience pockets of difference, and sometimes the surprise is as welcome as a refreshing splash of water on a hot summer's day, while at other times it is less comfortable. These sudden instances of realization of other realities are such valuable experiences for artists, and I looked forward to bringing together groups from different backgrounds for this *Drawing Water* cross-cultural collaboration.

The project came about after GCCAR (Griffith Centre for Creative Arts Research) contacted me regarding the possibility of developing a program in Tokyo, extending on the 2015 activities of Drawing International Griffith. Drawing Water (DIG Tokyo 2016) was born of discussions with co-curator Pat Hoffie, and through the independence gained by the joint initiative of GCCAR and Touch Base Creative Network, we were able to bring together faculty and students of three universities for a ten-day workshop and exhibition at AIR 3331 in central Tokyo.

I could not have hoped for a better result for this project. The positive collaborative attitude of the participants was unprecedented in my experience. Was this because AIR 3331 Nishikicho Artist Studio and Residence provided the perfect base for everyone to gather and work? Or did the abundance of water brought by the

three typhoons that passed through Tokyo help the groups bond? I cannot be sure. I witnessed such a high degree of goodwill, and interest in finding ways to work together. The resulting artworks show evidence of the collaborations, through investigations into commonalities of culture, friendships born from random encounters, the magnetism of exploration, and analysis of the creative process itself.

I am looking forward to seeing how these new friendships will develop in the future. In my experience, random encounters can have far reaching effects. In 2000, as a QCA Honours student, I had the chance to do an exchange program in Tokyo at Tama Art University. At this time, I developed a series of artworks based on the theme of 'Touch', which has remained central to my work. This experience led me to undertake postgraduate studies at Tokyo University of the Arts, and later to teach at Joshibi University of Art & Design. As part of my creative activities, I combined my theme of 'Touch' with my wish to link the two countries I am deeply indebted to, and in 2006, with the encouragement of faculty of QCA and TUA, I initiated a student-led project, Inter Image Art

Exchange between the institutions. This led to an official exchange agreement being signed in following years, followed by a number of faculty led projects. I have also been fortunate to be involved in programs held between Joshibi and QCA such as the 'Spring School' programs held for Joshibi students by QCA's Russell Craig for five consecutive years. The first-hand realization of the value of cross-cultural experiences led me to establish Touch Base Creative Network in 2014, to enable me to extend my activities into an independent flexible structure. Touch Base organizes art-related meetings (Tokyo 2014 & 15) with the aim of bringing together people of various backgrounds, and projects (Mie Prefecture 2015 & 16). In this instance in 2016, it is very exciting for me to work with Pat Hoffie to bring together students from three institutions for the first time.

But finally, returning to the poem above. I had the chance to meet the poet, and to ask about her inspiration. Surprisingly to me, she told me about a place in the mountains in Gifu Prefecture, where it is possible to look down on a water divide. People can stand and view the point where water flowing from Mt Dainichi separates

into two streams, one flowing to the Sea of Japan, and the other to the Pacific Ocean. She told me of her fascination regarding the randomness of this. How the water from one source, on encountering certain rocks, soil formations, was diverted in opposite directions across Japan to flow into geographically distant seas.

Just as at the water divide, I believe that this *Drawing Water* project is a significant formation, and will work as a catalyst of change in the lives of the participants. I am very interested to see the directions of the various flows from here on. The richness of friendships born of the collaborations leads me to think that the streams will come back together to intermingle in the future.

Dr. Linda Dennis

Dr. Linda Dennis is an Australian artist based in Tokyo. For over a decade she has focused on touch as a way of apprehending and understanding the world we live in. Her research interests include collaboration and international exchange. After doing undergraduate studies at Queensland College of Art, she completed a Masters and Doctorate at Tokyo University of the Arts. She has shown work domestically and internationally, including solo exhibitions at Mie Prefectural Art Museum, and Sea-Folk Museum, Japan. In 2014 she established the Touch Base Creative Network. Since 2016, she has been working as an Associate Professor at Joshibi University of Art and Design.



Drawing Water project members on a visit to Hamarikyu Gardens, Tokyo.



سوسمار

05 DEATH BY WATER

Rueben Keehan

Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight dead,
Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep seas swell
And the profit and loss.

A current under sea

Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose and fell
He passed the stages of his age and youth
Entering the whirlpool.

Gentile or Jew

O you who turn the wheel and look to windward,
Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you.

—TS Eliot, *The Waste Land*

On the southern bluffs of Yokohama lies the exquisite garden of Sankeien, created at the turn of the twentieth century by Hara Tomitaro, a local businessman whose family made its fortune in raw silk. Formerly an unremarkable fishing village, Yokohama boomed in 1859 when it became one of the first treaty ports to be opened to widespread Western commerce after over two hundred years of sakoku, Japan's rigorously enforced policy of national exclusion. With the establishment of a silk warehouse and government-backed financial institutions in the 1880s, the city fast became a central hub for

Japan's aggressively promoted silk trade, whose peak saw almost half of the country's farming families engaged in sericulture. Hara directed his largesse toward design and construction of the garden, which he filled with a remarkable array of historically significant buildings, purchased from as far afield as Kyoto, Wakayama and Gifu and reconstructed piece by piece inside the garden, which opened to the public in 1906.

With its skilful landscaping and convivial teahouses, Sankeien became a haven for leading artists and thinkers of the day, among them

Akutagawa Ryunosuke, who composed a memorable haiku in a humble arbour that served free barley tea, and Rabindranath Tagore, who made repeated visits to the Nihonga painter Arai Hirokata, in residence there during the Bengali poet's 1916 Japanese sojourn. The ambience of the garden is compelling in its tranquility and beauty, yet can be suddenly broken when one ventures too far to the garden's southern limit. For there, on ascending a bluff a short climb from an especially gorgeous eight-century Nara pagoda, one is confronted with a panorama of unrivalled ugliness, a skyline of container stacks, hulking warehouses, gantry cranes and flame-belching chimneys that constitutes the modern port of Honmoku.

Our cities have become skilled at concealing the architecture of trade that fuels them. In the spectacle of the urban picturesque, the infrastructure of logistics is carefully consigned to littoral zones rarely seen by the bulk of the citizenry, usually only as glimpses on take-off or landing for those privileged enough to avail themselves of the convenience of air travel. As if to perform this convention at the scale of the Tokyo-centred agglomeration of 40 million people - of which Yokohama constitutes the southern part - a bus ride to Narita airport follows a stretch of freeway departing just north of Sankeien through the contiguous ports of Yokohama, Kanazawa and Tokyo. This arc is completed at either end by the ports of Yokosuka and Chiba, taking in a landscape of structures whose relentless monstrosity in terms of scale and of indescribability is at remarkable odds with the intricate, atmospheric spaces of the cities merely a few minutes inland. For all the slick rhetoric of the information age, an era supposedly driven by the clean lines and incomparable spatial economy of the microprocessor, the infrastructure of seaborne trade and heavy industry remains essential - the engine room of the much vaunted innovation economy turns out to be nothing more than an engine room.

I make these observations because of a specific contingency. As I sat down to write this essay, the Australian Government announced a bill that would not only refuse entry to the country for any asylum seeker arriving by boat (backdated to 2013), but that would amount to a lifetime ban. Social media commentators were quick to point out the incommensurability of the proposed legislation with a line from the second verse of the national anthem – ‘for those who’ve come across the seas we’ve boundless plains to share’ – while Aboriginal activists drolly asked if the law could be backdated to 1788, when the four ships of the ‘first fleet’ of British colonists first arrived in Sydney Harbour. Should the bill be successful, it will formalise the notion that water is no longer a legitimate means of transit to the fatal shore. Sea travel is supposedly a thing of the past, a remnant of a darker, slower, more dangerous age before flight lounges and smart phones.

Water, like love, is a concept of such consequence to human existence that it cannot be reduced to a simple emotional register. Most immediately, it can be considered a means of sustenance and a mortal threat, often in the same moment - as anyone who has ever coughed on their drink will know. It abounds in these dualities, and the Federal Government’s assumptions are no exception. For while the sea is apparently no longer an option for bodies fleeing war and persecution, in these days of transit by that other classic element, the air, it remains the primary medium for the exchange of goods that politicians are so anxious to prioritise. The truth is that in this era of prosperity, of convenience and speed, of frequent flyer programs and data bundles, Australia is utterly reliant on maritime transit. No less than 99 per cent of the country’s international trade is carried by water – an even greater proportion than the already substantial global average of 90 per cent – not to mention a sizeable portion of domestic freight. One rule for goods (and capital accumulation), another for bodies.

Trade, as Karatani Kojin argues, has shaped human society since prehistory, a dynamic in which water has played a central role. On leaving Africa, homo sapiens hugged coastlines, following land bridges between continents and archipelagos to arrive in Australia and Japan, each of whose populations were well entrenched by 40,000 BCE. With the end of Ice Age, the great beasts hunted by nomadic tribes

diminished in number, and humans turned to fishing, a means of subsistence whose unwieldy hardware required the establishment of the first fixed settlements. Because of the ease of transportation that waterways offered, these settlements were typically located at the mouths of rivers, as the new, sedentary lifestyle, enabled structured, systematic trade between communities.

For Karatani, these developments required new types of social formations based around exchange: a reciprocal, gift-based economy among community members that typically limited the power of the community leaders; and contracts between communities that regulated access to food sources, particularly the most essential resource, water. Conflicts initiated by breakdowns in these contracts led to the establishment of the first states, which turned to large-scale irrigation agriculture precisely in order to enhance exports to other states. As these states expanded to the scale of countries, they required still newer forms of social organisation, based less on reciprocity than the control of populations and resources, typified, in Karatani’s account, by the bureaucracy developed in Egypt to regulate the water economy.

The vital importance of water to trade and statehood, now embodied in the form we call nation, should not, therefore, surprise us, and yet it does. Such is the efficiency with which urban geography, like the exquisite garden of Sankeien, conceals its own machinery. The enormous volume of maritime transactions only become visible, paradoxically, at precisely the moment we participate in the fantasy of a world linked purely by air. It should, therefore not be surprising that the opening of Japan’s ports precipitated a court revolution and period of unprecedented modernisation in the form of the Meiji restoration. Nor should it surprise us that the introduction of the city, state and finally national forms to Australia would place extraordinary strains on the subterranean water that had been managed with great skill and respect by the continent’s Indigenous population for tens of thousands of years. Nor, even, that arguably the greatest source of diplomatic tension between these two trading partners should be the use the fishing waters between the two countries. Nor should we be surprised, then, that the refugee policy of a nation created through dispossession, appropriation and exploitation is being driven by those who would impose another version of anthropocentric isolation in Australia.

The proposed law is an extension of current government policy, officially supported by both major parties, aimed at stemming the unarguably horrifying rates of drowning by asylum seekers being smuggled to Australia in unsafe, overcrowded craft. And yet rather than invest in improving access to refugee processing facilities in conflict zones, the current policy lavishes billions of dollars on a double concealment. Rescued asylum seekers are subjected to prolonged detention in facilities hosted by third party Pacific nations, while the navy is employed to 'turn back' intercepted vessels, whose true numbers are obscured by the convention of 'operational security'. A lifetime ban would constitute a further punitive measure that is justified by claims that it will discourage attempts to cross the sea to the safety of the Australian shore. The absence of investment to create a means of safe passage for refugees, together with the refusal to increase intake numbers in proportion to the global rise of peoples fleeing violence and persecution, suggest that political decisions are driven by anti-immigration sentiment fuelled and exploited for political ends.

While this policy is a development of the cruel logic of incarceration that has persisted within Australian politics since the early 1990s, its militarisation and substantial hardening can also be seen within the context of establishment centre-right responses to the rise of far right populism in democracies across the world. While Australia has yet to encounter anything as unpredictable as Brexit or the election of Donald Trump, the re-emergence of certain extremist discourses has seen establishment conservatives push policy harder and harder to the right in order to maintain vote share – and social democrats move closer and closer to the centre – to the detriment of the country's commitments to current human rights conventions. And, like the vast infrastructure of its economy, the ugly details are further obscured from public view.

Novelist and Nobel laureate Oe Kenzaburo is no stranger to the dynamics of right-wing extremism, nostalgic for militarism and imperial divinity, that has constituted a vocal margin of Japanese politics since the end of the Second World War. His 1961 short story, *A Political Youth Dies*, based on the suicide of Yamaguchi Otoya, the seventeen-year-old assassin of Japan Socialist Party leader Asanuma Inejiro,

has seen the author hounded by ultranationalists to this day. The text has never been republished or translated. In his later works, Oe has sought to understand the political mentality of the immediate postwar period, casting its martial romanticism as tragedy obscured by memory and folklore, the ultimately ungraspable dimensions of which continue to guide political formations and human actions in the twenty-first century. Named for the moving, humbling fourth section of Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Oe Kenzaburo's 2009 novel *Suishi*, recently translated as *Death by Water*, follows the attempts of Oe's alter ego Choko Kogito to grapple with the obscure drowning death of his father, a right-wing activist, in the execution of a hopeless plot to bomb the imperial palace. In Oe's novel, water serves as a symbol of passage, but one that offers no guarantee of arrival, only promise and risk. These mirror the contradictions – or 'ambiguities' as Oe famously described them in his Nobel lecture – he perceives within Japanese social discourse after World War II.

Attempting to discern the reasoning behind his father's fatal decision to raft down a swollen river in the midst of a storm, Choko recalls his father reading aloud a text on fervent Buddhist pilgrims, who would drown themselves in a dense forest as a way of taking a shortcut to heaven. The absurdity of drowning in a forest is explained by his father's confusing two similar archaic kanji compounds: '淼淼', meaning an endless body of water, for the more familiar '森森', meaning dense forest. Within the structure of the story, this misunderstanding serves a double function. Firstly, it points to the possibility of small confusions that can compound to result in an apparently illogical tragedy, as Choko's aging character begins to recognise his own failings and diminishing capacities when he contemplates his mortality. It also presages the events that rapidly bring the novel to an end. Briefly, a theatre group with which Choko is associated provokes the ire of local extremists by daring to explore Japan's wartime 'comfort women' system of sexual slavery. The violence that follows is expunged by one of the novel's central characters, who plunges deep into the forest in a terrible storm, seeking out a dense cluster of leaves laden with rain, and drowns himself standing up.

This realisation in acts of a simple linguistic confusion affords water a transcendent capacity to end life beyond the bounds of the bodies that might contain it. But the

true danger in Oe's novel is the whirlpool of human relationships through which we pass the stages of our age and youth. Water, despite its apparent contradictions, its profound indifference and cruel caprices, its capacity to drown in the process of giving passage, and to do so in the most unexpected circumstances – deep in the woods, far from the sea – is only ever the representation of our own ambiguities. It is an unwilling metaphor, whose violence is only ever a consequence of our own confusion and violence. The violence touched on by Oe is of an institutionalised nature, whether through wartime slavery systems or excesses tolerated and legitimised by the political mainstream, the kind of monopoly on violence established with the origins of the state system analysed by Karatani. As in the fragment of Eliot evoked several times in Oe's text, it is true that water and the dead alike care neither for profit nor loss. These things are forgotten. Yet they are central to the monopoly of violence exercised by the state, with its laws and bans and militarisations. The mechanics of profit and loss – or rather the vastness of their infrastructure, the enormous degree to which they underpin our daily relationships and the management of conflict within and between our societies – may be largely invisible to us as we go about our business, but that precise moment they are exposed to us – whether in the passage of transit, or at the edge of the exquisite gardens of our lives, demands that we who are witness can never forget them. Nor should they be forgotten; not even at the limits of our mortality. And for those of us who may attempt to choose to 'turn the wheel and look to windward' from our own exquisite garden, the spectre of Phlebas, as 'handsome and tall' as our very selves, calls us from below to remember.

To Eliot, again:

I sat upon the shore
Fishing, with the arid plain behind me
Shall I at least set my lands in order?

Reuben Keehan

Reuben Keehan is Curator, Contemporary Asian Art at Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane. Recent projects for the gallery include 'We can make another future: Japanese art after 1989' and 'Time of others', a collaborative group project between the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; National Museum of Art, Osaka; Singapore Art Museum and QAGOMA. He is currently in residence in Japan with the support of Asialink and the Australia Council for the Arts.

06 DRAWING ON WATER, REDRAWING HISTORY

Masako Fukui

Water, river, ocean are metaphors for the feminine in nearly all cultural traditions.

Water is elemental, free moving, unrestrained. Some have compared these descriptions to the notion of womanhood—the mysterious ‘other’ to the rational, solid, grounded image of the masculine.

Women, like water, can sustain us, give birth to us and, at the primordial level, water connects us to each other.

Water is also what connects, rather than separates, Japan and Australia, my two homes. Drawing on this feminine realm to rethink the nexus between the two countries leads to the construction of new narratives.

So while trade and commerce have always been the focus of Australia’s relationship with Japan, I want to suggest that the most enduring connection between the two nations is, in fact, the gendered flow of people. After all, nearly seventy per cent of Japanese people living in Australia today are women. This is rather intriguing. But even more intriguing (and little known) is the fact that the first ‘flows’ of Japanese women to Australia were prostitutes.

What if we were to rethink the Japan Australia connection by exploring the history of Japanese prostitution? Where will we end up?

The water trade

Prostitution is part of the pleasure sector of Japan’s economy called *mizushobai*, literally: water trade. Like many Japanese words that defy exact translation, *mizushobai* has a rather amorphous meaning, encompassing a broad array of

entertainment services like restaurants, nightclubs, ‘hostess bars’, geisha, even the peculiarly named ‘pink salon’, featuring fellatio as the main menu item. Often uttered in hushed tones, *mizushobai* has an inbuilt adult-only rating because it intersects with sex. But feminists, prone to calling a spade a spade, often rail against using this word to refer to the sex industry because it’s imprecise, and at best a coy euphemism.

But I’m going to diverge from Japanese feminists on this point. While the term ‘sex industry’ unequivocally declares sex’s commercial intent, the water trade is a more liquid concept that releases sex from its narrow definition as a mode of capitalist exchange, thereby releasing women engaged in sex work from the burden of always being perceived as vulnerable to exploitation. De-emphasising the value of sex as a commodity invites new ways of understanding sexual power relations, even introducing the notion of women’s erotic power.

These ideas have important implications for me as a woman, but even more so as a Japanese Australian woman. Our ethnic history is dominated by stories about men at war or men in industries like mining, pearling, wool, even sporting heroes. Women’s contributions remain conspicuously silent. This is partly because women’s stories tend to be subsumed into victim discourses. Asian women are often seen as vulnerable, submissive and in need of (white) rescue. Even in recent years, stories about Japanese women reported in Australian media are more likely to be about murder victims ending up in wheeler bins. That’s why the idea of reimagining the history of Japanese prostitutes in Australia without retrospective moralizing or unnecessary victimisation is crucial.

But to gain some insight into the lives of Japanese prostitutes, it’s worth exploring the appeal of *mizushobai*. As Japanophile author Donald Ritchie explains in his book of



Karayuki in Vietnam (images in the public domain).

essays *A Lateral View* (Stone Bridge Press, 1992), 'the world of the mizushobai offers occupations to millions who, underprivileged in various ways, cannot find proper and fitting work.' And so it was for the many women from impoverished regions of southern Japan in the late 19th to early 20th century.

Globalisation, sex labour, women's agency

This was the era of Meiji Japan (1868-1912), the energetic burst of Japanese industrialisation, modernisation, and globalisation that followed a long period of self imposed feudal isolation. The outward looking Meiji oligarchs actively encouraged Japanese men to leave the country and seek employment overseas. The first emigrants ventured to Hawaii in 1868, and many followed soon after to

work as mostly indentured labourers in many locations, including North and South America, China, south-east Asia and Australia. Places on Australia's coastal north like Darwin, Broome or Thursday Island in the Torres Strait attracted significant numbers of Japanese men who mainly worked in the pearl shell industry, on sugar plantations or in domestic services like laundries. This was the first significant wave of Japanese emigration to Australia.

Women were discouraged, even prohibited from travelling abroad, but for many who were unskilled and poor, crossing borders to work in brothels servicing Japanese men was often the only pathway to economic self-actualisation. So some women stowed away on boats to travel afar, while some were trafficked. Collectively, Japanese prostitutes of this period are called *karayuki-san*, meaning women 'going to China'. In Australia, authorities mostly accepted the existence of *karayuki-san* as providers of essential sexual services for Japanese men. But perhaps more accurately, their presence was tolerated because they kept the white prostitutes 'safe' from the pesky sexuality of the Japanese and the 'coloureds'.

According to Yuriko Nagata's important social history of Japanese settlers in the Torres Strait published in *Navigating Boundaries* (Pandanus, 2004), there were already 54 Japanese prostitutes working on Thursday Island alone in 1897, and by 1906, some 20,000 to 30,000 Japanese women were estimated to be working as prostitutes outside Japan. As Bill Mihalopoulos states in his detailed history of Japanese prostitution, *Sex in Japan's Globalization, 1870-1930* (Routledge, 2011), 'prostitution was one form of labour in the integration of Japanese women into the global work force'. In other words, the *karayuki-san* were the 19th century equivalent of today's mobile global citizen.

Yet a number of prominent Japanese feminists insist that *karayuki-san* were merely exploited, forced to work in conditions of 'oppression and harsh circumstances'. While the intention is not to downplay any effects from the dehumanising political economy of sex work including trafficking of women and girls, Mihalopoulos and other researchers point to compelling evidence suggesting that not all Japanese women endured lives of 'abject domination and exploitation', or considered

themselves oppressed. In fact, many women from southern Japan claimed that earning money in brothels to support their families was more important to them than avoiding the stigma associated with sex work. This sounds to me like women exercising their agency rather than passive exploitation, albeit under not so perfect circumstances.

Reimagining karayuki-san's story

The problem with trying to reconstruct the story of karayuki-san is that so little is known about their lives. What's worse, there seems to be even less desire to know more. Many descendants of servicemen who never returned home from World War II still continue to seek details of their ancestor's demise, trying to fill in the gaps in their family narrative. But grandchildren and great grandchildren of karayuki-san are more likely to bury their ancestor's personal histories out of shame. This is understandable. Today's more prosperous Japanese may be more eager to attach stigma to sex work than a century ago when women's options were severely limited.

That's why the painstakingly collated research by historians like Brisbane based Nagata is so precious. From her work in the Torres Strait, we know that after retirement, older Japanese prostitutes continued to make significant contributions to the vibrancy of community life on Thursday Island, running 'water trade' businesses of a slightly different flavour like boarding houses, eateries, soda shops, laundries and even a Japanese bathhouse. The Japanese were one of the largest ethnic groups living on Thursday Island, which was a richly colourful mix of indigenous Australians, Malays, Filipinos, Europeans, Chinese and other races.

These insights allow us to appreciate a more nuanced view of karayuki-san's milieu. To remember, or worse still, to forget them as merely prostitutes who came all the way from Japan is not only tragic, but is also to neglect a rich narrative vein in our shared multicultural history. The karayuki-san story is not a Japanese story or even a Japanese-Australian story, but a narrative that belongs to all Australians.

Unfortunately, Nagata laments that almost nothing of the karayuki-san's material lives now remain on Thursday Island, except for 'a handful of graves in the cemetery'

and a Japanese bathtub, excavated in 1999. The tub belonged to Onobu san, a former prostitute who ran the local bathhouse.

The excavated bathtub though is surely an artifact that ignites the imagination. It does mine. What did the Japanese bathhouse look like at the turn of the 20th century? How hot was the water? Were non-Japanese allowed access to the bath given the Japanese are more pedantic about bathing etiquette than they are about chopstick manners? My imagination runs wild, which is not a bad thing. Imagination helps recreate history.

University of Wollongong researcher Julia Martinez claims that she too relies on a dose of creative lateral thinking in her attempts to reconstruct karayuki-san's historical narrative. She is picking up where Nagata left off, investigating the lives of older Japanese prostitutes who worked in Queensland frontier towns after the introduction of the White Australia Policy. So far, studying Queensland state police records has revealed that a more than expected number of Japanese prostitutes travelled between ferociously arid inland towns like Winton and Cloncurry, staying for periods of time presumably to work in the towns' brothels. And far from being submissive or vulnerable, Martinez believes the prostitutes were more likely to be quite assertive and 'worldly'. And far from being ostracised by the locals, she conjectures that they were probably treated quite well, maybe welcomed. The arrival of a Japanese prostitute in dry, sparse, Winton would've felt a bit like a 'good watering' had arrived, suggested Martinez.

What's interesting is that some of these women travelled back and forth to Japan from time to time, which raises numerous questions about why they chose to come back to Australia. What did these women come back to given most of them didn't have families? Perhaps they enjoyed a measure of freedom or a varied and interesting life in Australia than back home in their rural village. Did they feel a sense of belonging in Australia, or did they feel out of place back in Japan?



Karayuki-san and me

I too travel to Japan from time to time. I return to Australia because this is now my home, but I also have significant ties still in Japan. Whenever I'm in Japan, I miss Australia, and whenever I'm here, I miss Japan. And I wonder if this is how the karayuki-san felt. I suspect some of them did. This sense of constant flux or 'fluidity' in our sense of self is common to transnationals like the karayuki-san and me.

The reason why I'm so keen to tell this history of Japanese prostitution in Australia is not just because most people are unaware of it, but because many Japanese Australians refuse to acknowledge that these stories are part of our ethnic heritage. This is a form of willful dispossession. The reasons are fairly obvious—karayuki-san were part of a dark period in Japanese history that most contemporary Japanese are keen to disavow. This makes me even more determined to incorporate these stories into my/our Japanese Australian narrative.

I'm also rather fond of the word mizushobai. I like how it forces my mouth to pucker when I say it and how it sounds like a whisper even when shouted. I like its subversive-ness, its capacity to complicate the meanings of sex, money and power. But most of all, I'm attracted to its liquid potential. Like water, mizushobai is unstable and unruly, dampens and erodes hard, upright things like social norms and regulations. And I'm keen to elevate the importance of the water trade by including it in the list of 'trade' links that define the bilateral relationship alongside wool, coal and iron ore. Our trade ministers would love that.

Masako Fukui

Masako Fukui is a writer and award winning radio/podcast producer and audio storyteller. She is a regular contributor to ABC Radio National (RN). Previously, Masako was a radio and print journalist in Tokyo and Sydney working for major Japanese, American and Australian news organisations.

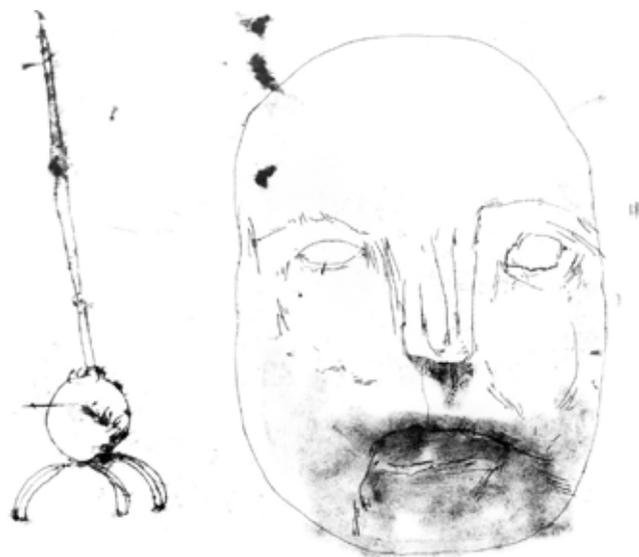
Young Japanese prostitute, Kalgoorlie, ca late 1890s.
Courtesy Outback Family History. Source: <http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/wikb/sexwork.html>

07 OLD WATER

Dr. William Platz

‘What strikes me here is the need for a made thing to tell a story, to become a vehicle for a voice, an impulse of character—something very old, and very early.’

—Kenneth Gross, *Puppet*¹



Old Water folio. 2016. Ink on Hosho paper. 40cm x 55cm. Image courtesy of the artist.

This is a project about dislocation, obsolescence, and loss amplified by re-enactment. It's not a hopeful project.

Two puppets are propped on an old Polaroid copy stand in my studio. Their carved heads dangle from their rubber-ball necks and their pea coats (just felt and thread and the buttons I pinched from my daughters' play baskets) are crumpled and frayed. The puppets—the lighthouse keepers—are strange here. Lighthouse keepers take a Benedictine oath of obedience and stability². A keeper displaced from tower and lantern is adrift—anachronistic and alien. The Keeper of the Bulwer Light (Brisbane) rests with his mouth agape. The Keeper of Jotomyodai (Tokyo) has her hands crossed over her chest, as if by an undertaker.

I began this work with the aspiration that narrative and the strange circumstances of two lighthouses (Brisbane, Tokyo) could combine to create meanings crossing between Australia and Japan, and illuminate shared stories over shared waters. The work has uncovered something far different. An absence. Melancholia. Old water. *Old Water* is the name I put to those waters that lay just outside memory and history. They are constant and remote—impervious to ecology, hydrology and politics. I see them in Albert Pinkham Ryder's old black seas cracking and sagging off his pictures in the Brooklyn Museum.

It was my intention to engage solidarity and fantasy in this work, but instead I am pointed to dimensions of water more mythic and opaque, and bound up in reliquaries such as lighthouses. What insights into our common bonds with the water may be gained from these esoteric studies? What can the obsolete and irrelevant monuments of old water disclose about the circulation of water and our understandings of it? I decided to draw two lights, to sit at the bases of them with



Old Water folio. 2016. Ink on Hosho paper. 40cm x 55cm. Image courtesy of the artist.

pen and page, and to fathom out what went dark when they were dislodged and recast.

Drawing is a peculiar theatre, and for this project, I cast peculiar players. As a means of approaching these old lights obliquely and disrupting constraints of memory and personality, I made two puppets, each a lighthouse keeper, and each sculpted as a draughtsperson. In these re-enactments of lighthouse keeping over the old waters, the puppets became vehicles to locate spontaneous theatres on the sites of the old beacons. They are lightweight and only half the size of a human actor. They fit inside suitcases and shopping bags. I didn't know what it would mean to let the puppets draw—they aren't automata but just wood and clay and simple mechanisms that rotate and flex. The method of drawing—stabbing, pulling, twisting a wooden rod attached to the puppet's pen-clutching hand—magnifies the re-enactment at the heart of this folio. Re-enactment is an eccentric strategy. It intensifies the absence it seeks to mitigate and the limits of whatever medium carries it. Whereas I would always sit outside of the time and space of these old lights, the little puppets aren't attached by culture or history to Brisbane or Tokyo. They are mercenary creatures. They can inhabit and transmit the Bulwer Island Light and Jotomyodai without the contrivances of human actors. They also provide a stark analogy for water as a thing outside our selves, both lifeless and teeming with life, a dummy commodity and an animating force.



Old Water folio. 2016. Ink on Hoshō paper. 40cm x 55cm. Image courtesy of the artist.

The Bulwer Rear Lead Light had a purpose once, maybe. It stood with its twin on Bulwer Island signalling passage through the bar cutting from Moreton Bay, past Luggage Point and into the mouth of the Brisbane River. The lighthouse stood while Bulwer Island ceased to be an island, reclaimed by dredging, and the bar cutting became a wide channel framed by rough rock walls. Bulwer Island spawned a vast oil refinery and the oilmen built storage tanks that dwarfed the obsolete and now invisible Bulwer light. Imagine the Keeper still there, lighting the lantern that couldn't be seen by ships in the bay, the dimmest thing in the refinery's array of metal halide lamps. In 1983, the Queensland Maritime Museum petitioned to shelter the old light, and now it stands amongst the scattershot collection, adjacent to a pedestrian bridge, in the urban centre of Brisbane and in the shadow of the Queensland College of Art, its Keeper replaced by an old department store manikin hanging in a cargo basket.³

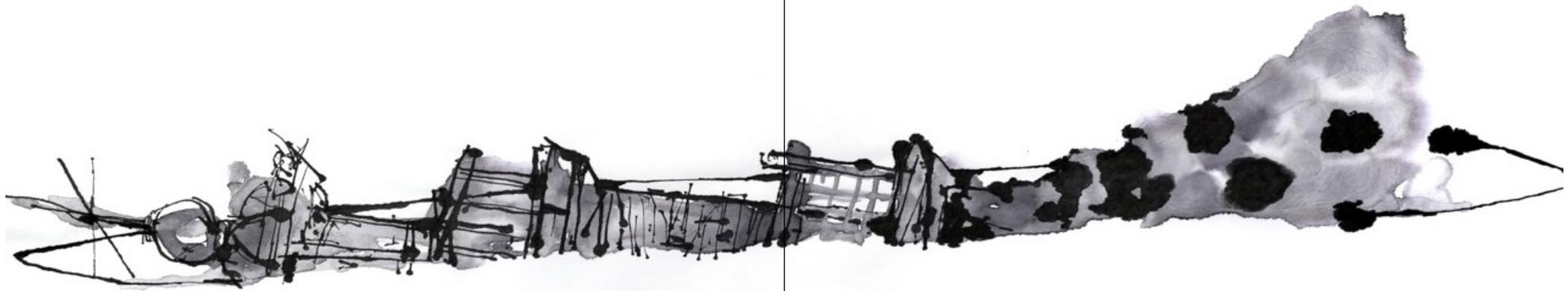
Jotomyodai had a purpose once, maybe. It stood atop Kudan Hill, an emblem of Meiji era progress, lighting the way to the mouth of the Arakawa River from Tokyo Bay. It stood while the Arakawa was dredged and diverted, the Sumida River was created and the Tokyo waters were channelled, managed and drained. It survived the Great Kanto Earthquake but was soon removed from its site beside the Yūshūkan. The Kudan light migrated across the Yasukuni-dōri to a little plot of long grass outside the Kitanomaru Gate, adjacent to a pedestrian bridge, in the urban centre of Tokyo, its Keeper replaced by an electric circuit that controls a soft nightlight—the dimmest thing amongst the high-rises and heavy traffic of Chiyoda.⁴ A map of Kitanomaru Park installed for tourists less than thirty metres from the lighthouse doesn't bother to mark its name or location, and it's a mystery to Google Maps. Visitors to Yūshūkan, however, can spy in a back hallway, in the far corner, a strange little two-metre scale model of the Kudan Hill Light. It has a small placard and features a cool electric glow behind the plastic lantern. Perhaps they imagine the Keeper still there—1:6 scale—unable to see out through the frosted sheets of acrylic installed to obscure the fluorescent light fitting.



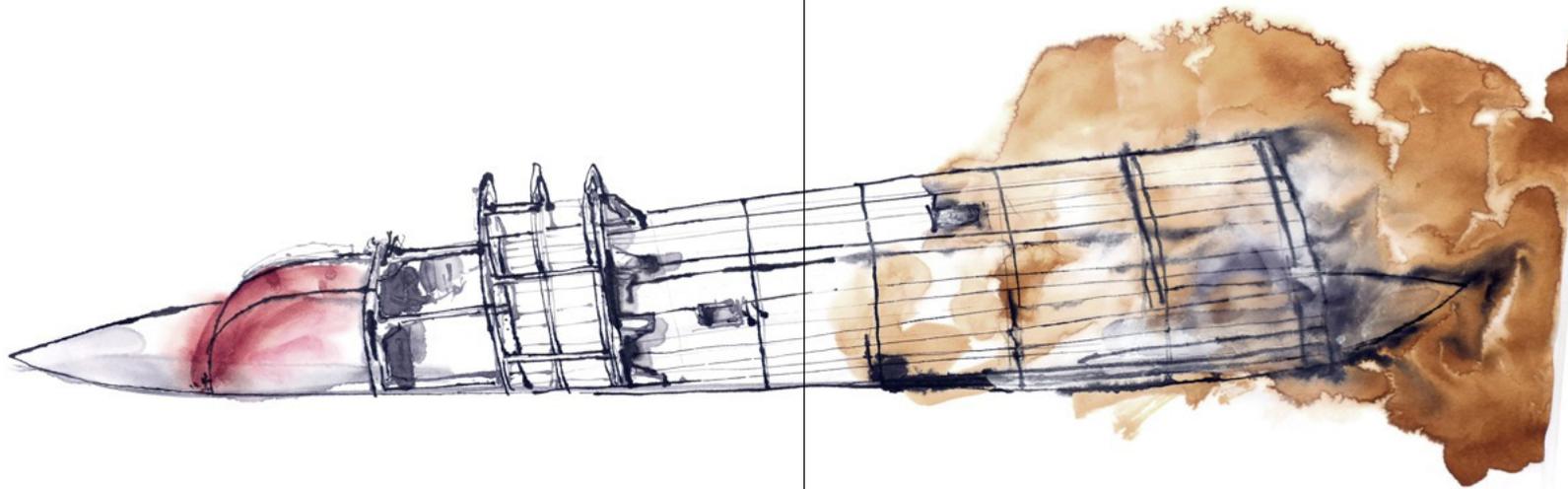
Jotomyodai Puppet after drawing. Sept 2016. Tokyo. Image courtesy of the artist.

Tokyo. September. I have the puppet in a plastic Tokyū Hands shopping bag. All of our drawing gear is in a knapsack over one shoulder and my other arm is slung around the large clamshell box I've made to hold the *Old Water* folio sheets. The best place to work is appropriately enough a little elevated cement platform a few brick steps up from the footpath, running parallel to the Yasukuni-dōri and only a few metres from the base of Jotomyodai. It feels a bit like a stage. Beyond is a fence and steep drop to the murky water of the moat skirting the Imperial Palace grounds. I've moulded the Keeper's right hand so that she can firmly grasp a flat pen. We've tried a few nibs, but the best is a strong, sharp comic nib of the type preferred by Japanese illustrators. It works well for drawing in ink and for pressing on the back of the page when pulling a trace monotype. Fewer passers-by than I anticipated wander over to observe the Keeper drawing. Ours is a subtle theatre, and, when doing the monotypes, the drawings are invisible.

We returned to the same spot for ten days—each time responding to the obsolete migrant tower. On the fifth day, a strange sight—a little peddle-boat with a blue and white canopy slowly made its way around the bend and all the way up to the dead end in the high stone wall of the moat. It stopped, drifted, pivoted, and slowly peddled back out of sight again. I don't think the captains ever noticed the old beacon light perched above them. An ignominious chapter for the Thomasson Jotomyodai,⁵ unable even to warn the peddle-boat that it was headed for the rocks.



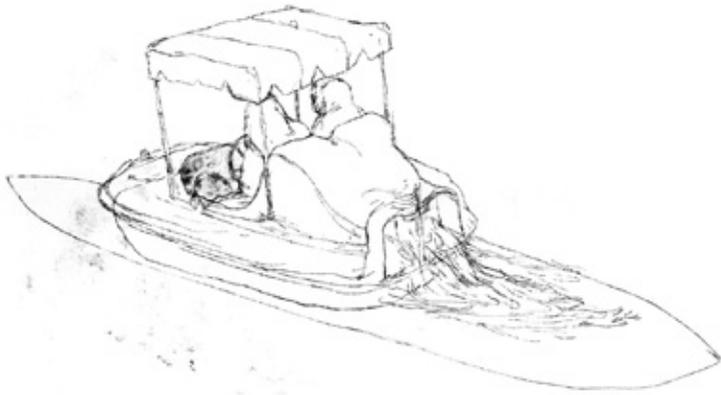
Old Water folio. 2016. Ink on Hosho paper. 40cm x 55cm. Image courtesy of the artist.



Old Water folio. 2016. Ink on Hosho paper. 40cm x 55cm. Image courtesy of the artist.



Old Water folio, 2016. Ink on Hoshō paper. 40cm x 55cm. Image courtesy of the artist.



Old Water folio. 2016. Ink on Hoshō paper. 40cm x 55cm. Image courtesy of the artist.

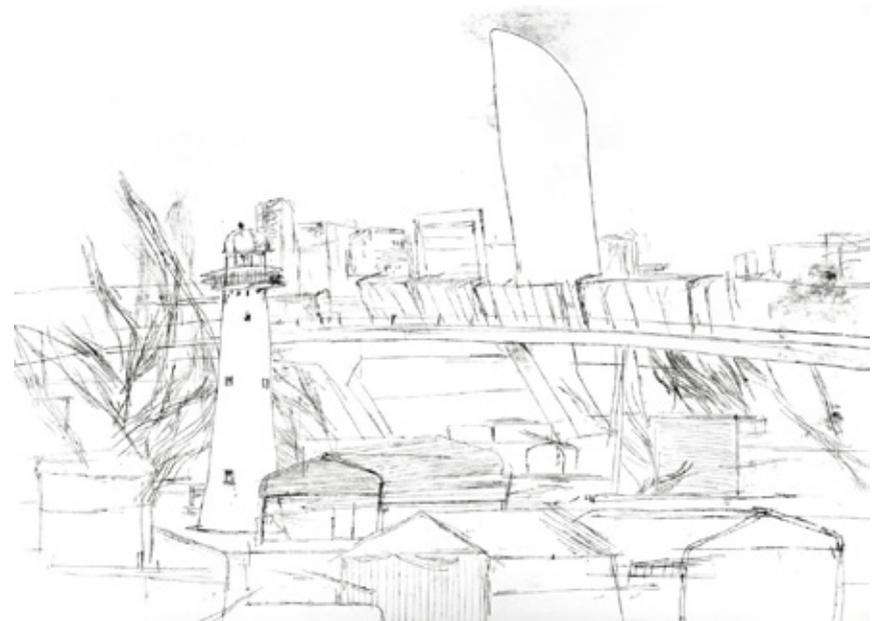
Brisbane. October. 'These lights connect the whole world,' Jeanette Winterson's blind keeper Pew is recalled to have said at the moment his old lighthouse is to be automated and its keepers evicted.⁶ Connection is what I sought as well, but it's an ambivalent term, prone to bureaucratisation. Pew was telling the stories of the lighthouse and the search for a signal home. But these defunct lights only signal their de-function. I was thinking of Pew when I carved the Bulwer Keeper. He has small eyes, far too widely spaced, and his few teeth punctuate the soft mass of his mouth (always open). His mechanism is a bit stiffer and a bit twitchier than his other's, and he too ably handles a pen and a stiff steel nib.

There's a wide footpath and bicycle lane that follow the Brisbane River on the South side. It winds over the pedestrian bridge and around the Maritime Museum allowing for a panoramic view of the Bulwer light. To the East of the Museum,

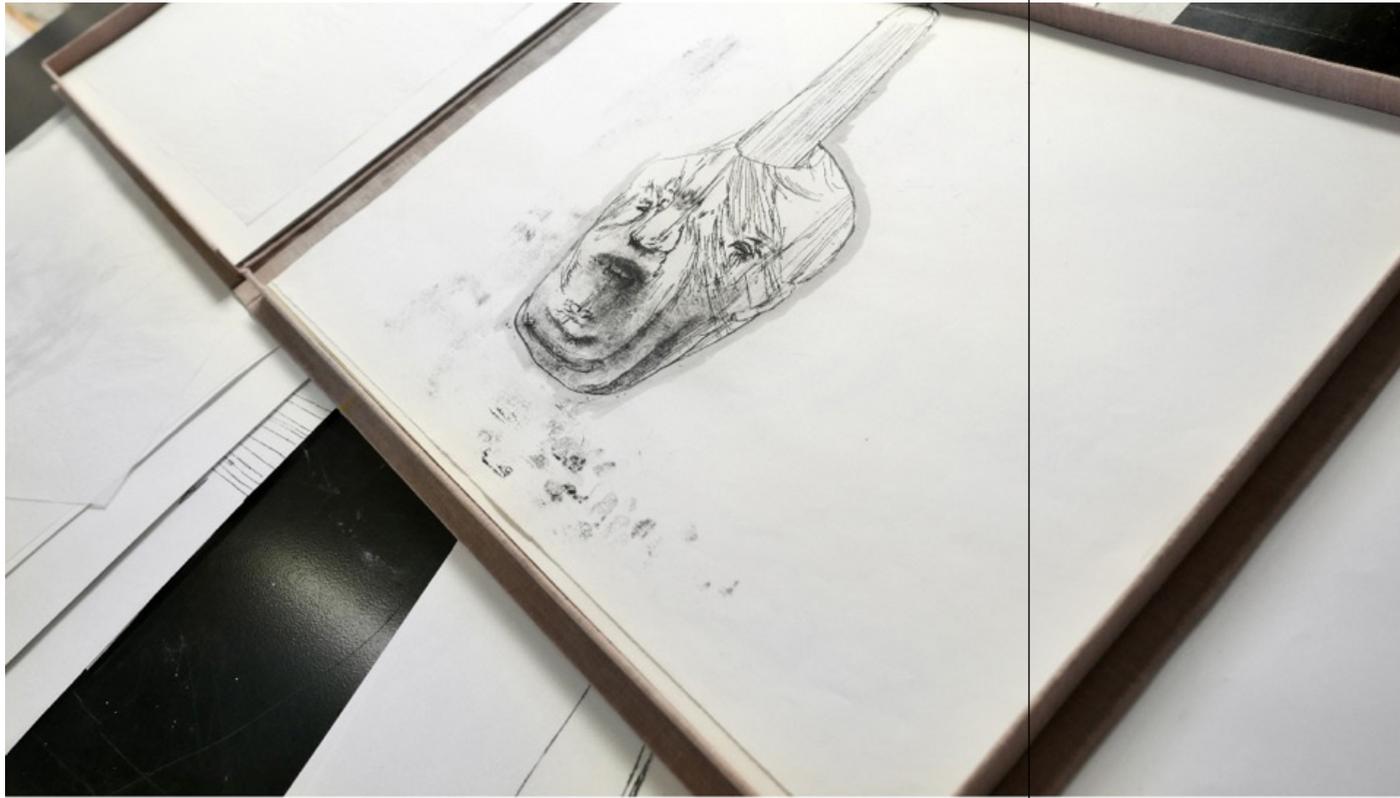
under a motorway bridge and at the tail end of the Kangaroo Point cliffs, there is another little platform perfectly suited for puppets and drawing. The first drawing is a self-portrait. The Keeper's head floats mid-page with the lighthouse sprouting up like a horn. Another line from Winterson asserts itself, "Pew: Unicorn. Mercury. Lenses. Levers. Stories. Light." Other portraits follow. A few onlookers linger. Our puppet theatre is an ersatz reminiscence. We don't probe what may have pulsed out over Tokyo Bay and Moreton Bay at a time of openings and crossings. Rather, we probe what has been dismantled and embalmed in each city—old water that no longer flows between things. As I said, this is not a hopeful project.



Old Water folio. 2016. Ink on Hoshō paper. 40cm x 55cm. Image courtesy of the artist.



Old Water folio. 2016. Ink on Hoshō paper. 40cm x 55cm. Image courtesy of the artist.



Old Water folio. 2016.
32 bound drawings in a clamshell folio box.
Image courtesy of the artist.

Most of what I know about lighthouse keepers I've learned from my puppets, and from visiting their lights. Puppets operate in a space of confusion. They are inanimate things, dead things and mistaken things. In Joe Cornish's film *Attack the Block*, a hulking gangster sees the corpse of a little hairy alien being carried along by its killer and cries 'He's got a puppet! You got mad skills for puppets.'⁷ It's an odd scene, the character mistaking the (real) alien's body for a puppet, but of course it is a puppet—a movie prop. Czech filmmaker Jan Svankmajer often composes his puppets of dead, decaying and discarded things. This makes their pantomime of life all the more grotesque.⁸ Witness Svankmajer's Little Otik, the rotting tree stump brought home as a surrogate for an absent infant, gently suckling at his adoptive mother's breast.⁹ Kenneth Gross, in an essay on puppets' hunger and self-consumption, describes the puppet's 'power of survival...the more it is exposed to death, the more life it has, the rawer and stranger life it has'.¹⁰ Puppets can act as mediums for what is past—a past exempt from nostalgia. They can tell stories without reminiscing because a puppet has no life prior to its performance. In *Old Water*, the puppet Keepers watch and record and attempt to recover something of which they have no memory. They are dislocated from everything except from one another, and the puppeteer.

This is a project about the waters that have been dredged, diverted and disconnected from their lights. It's a project about lighthouses and their keepers travelling from the mouth of the Brisbane River to the Kitanomaru Gate and back again—and what may be learned from drawing *Old Water*.

Dr. William Platz

Dr William Platz is a lecturer in Fine Art at the Queensland College of Art, Griffith University and a member of the Griffith Centre for Creative Arts Research. Dr. Platz convenes Interdisciplinary Drawing, the Drawing International Griffith research initiative, and co-convenes the biennial Drawing International Brisbane symposium. He completed his undergraduate and graduate studies in New York and his doctoral studies in Australia. His research, teaching and practice concern life drawing, portraiture and pedagogies of drawing, with an underlying focus on the studio transactions that occur between artists and models.

References

¹ Gross, Kenneth. 2011. *Puppet: an essay on uncanny life*. Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press.

² The Rule of St Benedict calls for 'obedience and stability' and founds the order on the piety of discipline and labour—all qualities quite pertinent to the ascetic lifestyle of the lighthouse keeper.

³ This information is collected from the Queensland Maritime Museum and a report authored by P.R. Crawford, Executive Engineer for the Dept. of Harbours and Marine, Queensland. Crawford, P.R. 1986. 'Bulwer Island Lighthouse'. *Third National Conference on Engineering Heritage*, Adelaide, 1986.

⁴ Special thanks to Nat Koyama and Miyuki Inagaki for help in translating the information provided by the Yūshūkan on the history of Jotomyodai.

⁵ A 'Thomasson' is an invention of Japanese artist Akasegawa Genpei. Named after an American baseball player in the Japanese league that kept playing even though he could no longer play, the name came to represent something in the urban environment that was preserved but had lost its function, such as a staircase that is being cleaned and maintained but leads nowhere. Akasegawa, Genpei & Fargo, Matt, (translator,) & Sand, Jordan, 1960-, (writer of added commentary.) & Tomii, Reiko, (writer of added commentary.) 2009, *Hyperart: Thomasson*, U.S Edition, New York, NY Kaya Press.

⁶ Winterson, Jeanette. 2004. *Lighthousekeeping*. Orlando: Harcourt.

⁷ Cornish, Joe, Nira Park, Jodie Whittaker, John Boyega, StudioCanal Limited, FilmFour (Firm), UK Film Council, Big Talk Productions, Screen Gems (1998-), and Copyright Collection (Library of Congress). 2011. *Attack the block*. United States: Screen Gems.

⁸ Hames, Peter. 2008. *The cinema of jan švankmajer: Dark alchemy*. 2nd ed. London: Wallflower.

⁹ Švankmajer, Jan, 1934- & Illuminations (Firm) & Zeitgeist Films 2002, *Little Otik = Otesaaneek*, Zeitgeist Video, [S.l.].

¹⁰ Gross. 2011.

08

The *Drawing Water* journal

Prof. Pat Hoffie



#1. JOURNAL. THURSDAY

The work of the painter, the poet or the musician, like the myths and symbols of the savage (sic), ought to be seen by us, if not as a superior form of knowledge, at least as the most fundamental and the only one really common to us all....

(Claude Levi Strauss, 1996, *Saudades de São Paulo*, Instituto Moreira Salles)

From the beginning of the residency, the title of the project seemed prescient: while typhoons Mindulle and Lionrock sat off the Japanese coast on Monday, more than 380 flights and 105 express trains had been canceled. The planes that carried the Australian artists to the *Drawing Water* residency project arrived just in time before flight paths were closed. With wind speeds of up to 180 kilometers per hour, typhoon Mindulle made landfall on Monday at about 1 p.m. local time on the country's east coast, while on the opposite side of the country, tropical storm Lionrock was forecast to develop into a typhoon by today, even though its effects were predicted to avoid much of Japan as it headed for Okinawa in the East China Sea. The second storm's landfall came less than 24 hours after typhoon Kompasu hit the Japanese island of Hokkaido late Sunday night, forcing thousands of locals to evacuate after the Tokoro river flooded. But in the studio/apartment at AIR 3331, as the

traffic hissed past in the relentless rain, the artists were bent to their tasks, oblivious to the irony that their project, titled *Drawing Water*, had been triangulated from the outset by three severe and very watery weather patterns.

Two months beforehand, artists from three institutions – one in Australia, two from Japan – had commenced the workshop/laboratory process via online communication. Language gulfs were forded by images and a makeshift raft of ideas to set afloat on. The idea was to work together on notions about water – that mercurial element that makes up so big a part of our physical selves, and that is so big a part of our everyday lives.

Four teams were formed – each artist from the Queensland College of Art, Griffith University worked with one from the Tokyo University of

the Arts (GEIDAI) and two or three from Joshibi Women's University. Online conversations had already been prompted in the months leading up to the event by questions about personal relationships with water; about dreams of water; about local water and about the Pacific waters that joined the two coastlines between Australia and Japan.

Beyond that there was an expectation that in a short ten days, each team would collaborate to create an artwork that responded to the theme, and a promise that the work, or aspects of it, would be exhibited in Brisbane later in the year. Not much of an incentive, you might think, to call people away from their families, their responsibilities, their routines, to work together on a project that could only be identified as having been outlined by a frustratingly limitless liminality.

So when the fourth morning of working together dawned after the long days and nights beforehand, I woke up, made a coffee, and blearily made my way down to the floor below where the group of artists were already hunched over at their tasks like somnambulists. I slouched

against the door jamb, drinking in the scene and the coffee in bitter draughts. Framed in that doorway, I might have been a voyeur, maybe an anthropologist: the scene before me seemed so not-of-this-world, and I became engulfed by a slow wonderment about what exact race these people – these artists – might belong to. A race – or perhaps a species apart – that remained completely dedicated to their task despite that fact that there was so little promise of reward, or income, or recognition, or even the satisfaction of a good job being well done. Art wasn't like that. It was never 'done'. Artists have often appeared like a race that's had a kind of spell cast upon them, one that's doomed them to forever dwell in a parallel realm in a process that's called 'art practice'. The term itself suggests a perpetual deferral of satisfaction – a lifetime of critically evaluating your production to search for the irritating flaws; the grains around which the sticky thinking for the next pearl might be spun. Because you're 'practicing' all the time, it's assumed you're never the expert, you're never really fully in control, no matter what critics or historians might like to write. But it's actually the fact that you're NOT in control that's a big part of the appeal for artists; the fact that you have to



View from the window at AIR 3331 Nishikicho Studio

trust materials, instinct and a modicum of skill set against a finely tuned self-criticality and an ocean of awareness. Artists inevitably always set out for uncharted waters; head into deep, dark submarine crevasses where they have to feel their way blindly along the trench-slopes if they're ever to find their way back to the surface again. The process is like a scary, irresistible immersion; one where you feel drawn magnetically to produce things in an endless cycle of response, engagement, critical response and back again.

Each of the artists were undergoing tertiary training, so they weren't naïve about the fact that their chosen 'calling' was going to offer little in the way of either recompense or fame. Right across the world – including in Australia and Japan – galleries were closing. There were too many problems at hand to warrant buying

the kind of stuff that might flag 'difference' or criticality. The world was hungry for simple solutions in easily digestible bytes. And the fact that the art they were engaging in was post-object art – or at least, a kind of art that had ephemerality and site-specificity built right on into it, as if the work's work lasted only as long as the issue remained pertinent – moved their art production one step further from being 'practical' in terms of the kind of managerial audits the world was currently measuring itself against.

I stood hunched over while the coffee turned cold and watched as these young people continued to silently work, silhouetted by the crepuscular gloom of the Tokyo morning rain-light outside. It was early, early, but the realization crept upon me, as it had once done on Levi Strauss, that I too was part of the *mise en scene*. For a moment

the sixty-or-so years since he'd written *Triste Tropiques* eclipsed into the present. At that moment it seemed as if the mood of the treatise's English title, *The World on the Wane*, was gloomily evident in the weather patterns that surged and sucked and clung sullenly to once-familiar coastlines.

'No Future' – in graffiti on city streets, in popular music, in the post-historical malaise, that was the mantra of the moment. Endless data spat out details in sound and image-bytes about the global ecological and cultural Armageddon the world was facing. Since Levi Strauss penned his memoir, journeys and exploring had become re-branded and reduced into 'travel plans'; curiosity had been contained and controlled by the irrelevant indicators measuring academic research. So much of the fuzzy crepuscular fumbling towards ideas and thoughts and small discoveries had been forced to the edges by the hard-edged glare of quantitative indicators and managerial justifications. "I hate academics and I hate travel," I sighed, and was immediately hit by the realization that I was mimicking the first lines of Levi Strauss' declarative: "I hate traveling and explorers" all those years ago.

"So what am I doing here?" The question formed like gastric reflux. During the forty years I'd been enlisted in formalized education, it had morphed into a mutation of its former

self: shriveled, flat-packed, more add-water-and-go and more risk-averse. For artists, institutional training offered less and less likelihood of offering the time and space so essential to experimental, engaged studio exploration. The capacity for risk taking and the possibility of audacious ideas and images felt as threatened as the polar ice-caps.

I looked at the young artists, quietly dedicated in their attempts to understand each other, struggling with languages and nuances and cultural misunderstandings as they focused on the process of their production like migratory animals following an inner urge. It was the making, I thought, that made things possible – the blind, instinctual urge to make. And the process of getting there – the journey itself, that drove them, was its own end. The coffee I held had turned bitter and cold, but I sucked it back like a penance. I'd started the thing. I'd see it through to the end. "Maybe that's why artists are driven to do what they do", I thought. And maybe that's what sets them apart in a world that's temporarily drifted away from its sense of mystery and magic.

#2. EELS.

Eels remain mysterious creatures. Despite science, despite technology, despite Attenborough, the pattern of their lives remains elusive. Driven by an inner urge, each eel, no matter how far inland it may have lived its eely life, seeks the sea from which it once came in which to spawn. There are approximately 800 species of eel, but because the majority of them are nocturnal, they are rarely seen. Some of them lie inland, some species live in the deeper water slopes of the continental shelves.

Although Aristotle was one of the first to be interested enough in the eel to write about it, he made the mistake of thinking that the species was born of earthworms. He made yet another mistake in thinking earthworms were born of “the guts of wet soil” - mud. I guess in a sort of a way he was wrong. Probably in a very fundamental way he was wrong. But in a poetic way there seems to be a sense to it. Especially if you’ve ever watched an eel tunneling through mud: they *do* seem to be born of the earth itself. But then again, the furtive eel in the freshwater pond also seems to be supremely suited to its velvety black watery world. And who could forget those rare images of the eel on its way seaward,

silver and single-minded, a creature transformed.

But the fact that the eel can live in fresh water as well as in a marine environment is only part of the deeply contradictory complexity of the creature – it’s also true that the eel’s life progresses through a number of stages. In their larval stage they live in the open ocean; drifting along like clouds of miniature leaf-like shapes or carried along by currents, they long seemed to scientists like a separate species. It wasn’t until 1896, when some of these little shapes were harvested in a French laboratory tank by zoologist Yves Delage, that the surprising truth was realized, when these leaf-like forms miraculously transformed into tiny little transparent eels.

Later on again, Italian scientists confirmed the transformation, and realized that the saltwater of the open ocean was necessary for the metamorphosis to occur. It’s little wonder that this discovery took many centuries to occur – so many eels spend most of their lives in freshwater environments – in lakes, streams, rivers and waterholes – some of them far inland. It’s a big ask to expect scientists to have made the

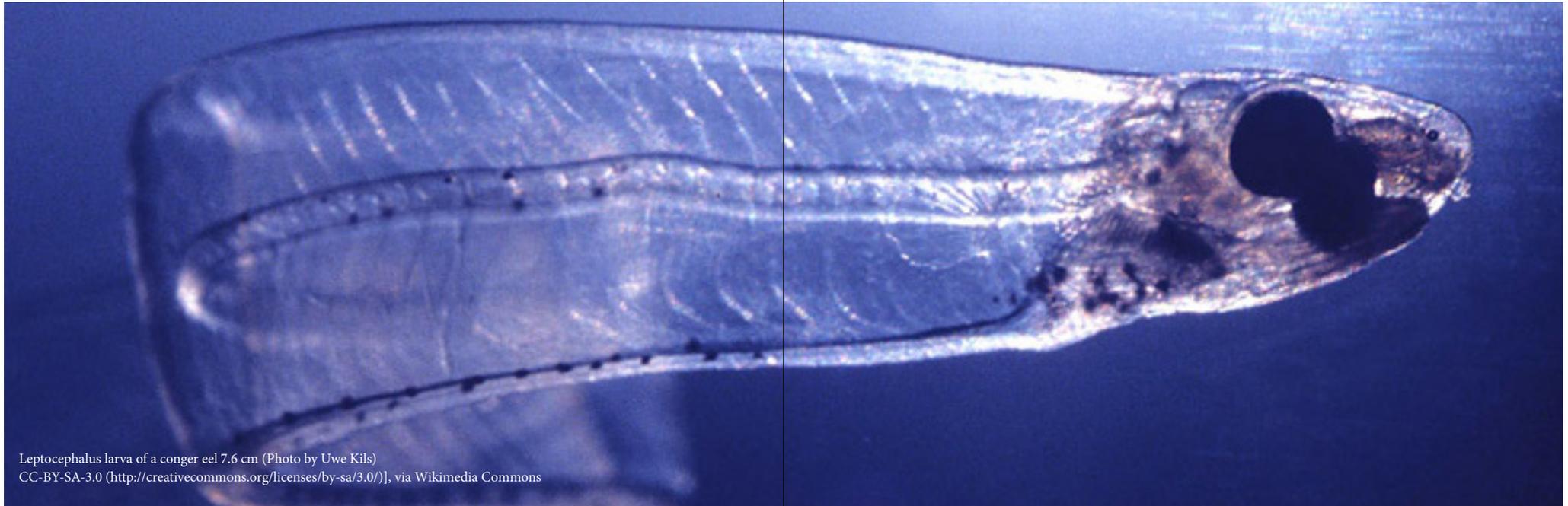
connection between the marine eels and the freshwater eels, let alone the fact that the life cycle of the eel is one of continuous shape-shifting. It’s a creature that’s a fish, but a fish that lives in freshwater and in saltwater, and that often spends quite a deal of time travelling over land. “How many rules can you break and still be called a fish?” I wondered. Even today much of what’s known about the life cycle of the eel has come from the study of only three individual eels. “Amazing”. I thought, and wondered whether they’d been given names.

Once they hatch from their eggs, eel larvae take some time out to drift around in the warm surface waters of the sea, feeding on the nutritious marine snow that floats like a blizzard of suspended light around them. At this stage their transparent jelly-like body is held together with a thin layer of muscle that suspends their forward-pointing, fang-like teeth. Their gut is little more than a simple tube, but they are agile swimmers with dorsal, anal and caudal fins. After lives devoted solely to feeding, these larvae then transform into tiny glass eels that follow the warm onshore currents for thousands of miles to arrive on shorelines, and then begin their journey

upstream like mighty little transparent warriors. I imagined them in their droves like those thin translucent noodles in Japanese soup, all headed in one direction, writhing and pulsing together in their fight against the currents.

However the image is only partly true – at this stage the glass eels lack sufficient biomass to undertake an active migration on their own; their progress depends on the tidal movement of the water mass. On the rising tide they are carried upstream, and when the tide retreats, the little eels rest in the bottom of the estuaries. Gradually their tiny strength grows. I’d read that they take on all obstacles in their path, at times heaping themselves on top of each other in the tens of thousands to climb over any impediments to their various freshwater destinations. In their doughty urge to colonise the continents, they will wriggle their way over wet grass and slither through sand and bluntly plough their way through mud: tiny explorers nonplussed and inexhaustible after the thousands of sea miles of travel they’ve endured to get to land in their young lives.

And as they travel upstream, the exertion and freshwater environments change their



Leptocephalus larva of a conger eel 7.6 cm (Photo by Uwe Kils)
 CC-BY-SA-3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>), via Wikimedia Commons

appearance; their skin turns to yellow, and then to black, and they become known as elvers. Now they seek out ponds and rivers, streams and billabongs and lakes. Each of them knows where they're going, and each of them is called to their own secret ecosystem by a miniature inner magnet. Once the elvers find their growing environment, they're content to stay put for anything between twenty and a hundred years, blending in with the local scenery, looking for all the world like any other domestic resident, happy in their home. Who would ever guess the miles they've traveled and the risks they've taken? Who would ever guess that once, floating upwards from their lives as eggs laid in the deep oceanic crevasses, they'd transformed themselves first for a period when they floated like microscopic golden leaves, until they were ready for their next transformation into transparency? Who

would have guessed the time since then, when platoons of these elvers set off on their maritime adventures? Eels make you think quite a bit about the outward appearance of domesticity – about the 'normality' of neighbors whose own magnificent journeys can also be just as easily overlooked.

There's still a lot of mystery that surrounds where eels go to spawn. The Sargasso Sea has been pinpointed as the major spawning destination for European eels, while New Zealand eels head somewhere a couple of thousand miles out towards Tonga, American eels head off the Yucatan Peninsula into the Gulf of Mexico, and Japanese eels head for a place called the Suruga seamount. I knew that eels were a luxury item in terms of Japanese cuisine. I'd seen them all sliced up and shiny, featured in the glossy food

halls of the Idemitsu Department Store. I doubted whether anyone paid too much heed to the incredible awe-inspiring journeys each eel had to go through to preserve its little eely spirit by heeding its inner call before it reached the plate.

After the years of living a domestic life as adults, all eels must once again respond to the call to return to the seas from which they come. By now the eels are strong and healthy. They need to be. Again the call means they will have to traverse thousands of land-miles followed by thousands of sea-miles in order to return to the place from which they were formed as eggs. At night, the eels leave their rivers and streams and waterholes to begin the journey home. They sliver and slide and shimmy their way across wet grasslands, they team over barriers, they furtively follow the paths only they know that lead back to the sea. Once

they reach the sea, journeys of some six thousand kilometers confront them. Again they take on remarkable transformations. Throughout the process of overland travel, the tissues of their gut has slowly dissolved. Feeding is no longer possible, and they must now rely only on stored energy for their final journey. Their open ocean voyages demand that they must develop a swimbladder – an organ that stores energy and that makes up between three and six percent of the eel's total bodyweight.

How the adult eels might manage this inward physical transformation is mind-boggling, as are the outwardly visible changes to their appearance: their eyes begin to enlarge, and in order to cope with the changing conditions of the marine light, the pigment of the eyes changes to a strange pale colour for optimal vision. Their sleek fat black

bodies transform to silvery hues, making their sinuous undulations elusive in the flickering sub-aquatic light-shafts. Their enlarged eyes stare as they swim, each focused on their own inner vision, so that the migrating eels are often referred to as 'big eyes'.

Biologists and fisheries departments have done their best to follow the adult eels with transmitters to trace where they go to spawn. Experts estimate that European eels travel at approximately fifteen kilometers a day, and that their journey to the Sargasso Sea takes approximately 150 days from Britain. But the research has only been able to trace their journey so far and no further. At a certain point the eels begin to head downwards along the continental shelf. Deep, deeper, deepest they go, until all transmission signals are gradually lost. There, in the unfathomable inky blackness, their silvery bodies finally come together. Deep in the ocean trenches, finally in the place to where they were irretrievably drawn, the eels surge and slither and dance their final spawning dance. Who can imagine what happens? Who could tell of those velvety depths where the sea itself is alive with the turning urge of eel-bodies, each from different points of the compass, churning and turning, silver and black and silver? Finally they come to rest. Their spent bodies die in their ultimate dance. It is as if it has all finished. All eeldom. Forever gone.

But later, much later, after the last motes of energy after the flurry fury has passed, tiny eggs begin to spiral upwards towards the light. Towards the sun. Towards the currents of the warm waters, and the cycle starts again.

Eels have been remarkable in holding close to their secrets and their secret pathways. To humans, they may be categorisable as fish, but their habits more closely resemble those of mythical creatures. They live in the saltwater of the oceans, and in the freshwaters of the earth, and they use the land to provide pathways that network between their realms. So many aspects of their lives remain undisclosed, guarded by their furtiveness and shapeshifting. Eel blood is toxic to humans and other mammals; only cooking and digestive processes can destroy the toxic protein. It would be easy to believe they are of another realm; that they operate according to another calling; that they are there to remind us that the land is webbed by waterways all of which lead to the sea, to the deep sea trenches that scientists still cannot fathom; to dark limitless mysteries that only dreamers and somnambulists may follow.



#3. YAWKYAWK/NINGYO

(A MEDITATION ON THE PERSISTENT PERMEABILITY BETWEEN THE RATIONAL AND THE IMAGINARY)

The fact that mermaids are creatures of fable is indisputable. The world knows well that the grizzled torso of Barnum's 'Feejee Mermaid' had once been tooled in Japan. Fine fingers and steady concentration had secured the monkey's upper body to the folds of fish-flesh with stitches as flawless as a geisha's hairline. The twisted contortions of the diminutive sideshow darling did nothing to diminish the fascination of those who queued to see her. She must have appeared so desiccated and tinily terrifying, especially after the alluring pastel plump softness of the mermaids featured on Barnum's banners outside. Yet despite the gulf between seduction and the consummation-via-witness, the trade in mermaid hoaxes flourished. None of the *wunderkammer* cabinets across the world were complete without them.

But the fascination for mermaids had begun way before the nineteenth century interest in the curiosities of the discoverable worlds – images of fish-creatures go back to at least 5,000 BCE, when the Assyrians worshiped a fish-tailed god called Oannes. Images feature him in what might be a tall helmet. One look and you can't help thinking about how awkward it would prove to

be for maritime travel, so there's a chance that it may instead be a kind of ancient bathing cap beneath which much of his thick, ringletted hair has escaped. His equally ringletted beard has been cut chiseled and precise, a style that seems to have been favored by Assyrian gods in general. But if the beard emphasizes Oannes' bellicose capabilities, his hands are raised in front of him suggest magical prestidigitation.

Pliny the Elder also mentions mermaids in the first century CE, asserting that they were indeed real. With impressive scholarly authority, Pliny stated, "And as for the Mermaids called Nereides, it is no fabulous tale that goeth of them: for looke how painters draw them, so they are indeed: only their body is rough and scaled all over, even in those parts where they resemble a woman." Not much room for doubt with this level of stentorian authority, I wouldn't think. And since then, all through western imagery, mermaids abound – they're depicted romping as if suspended above rubbery seas, they're taking time to pose in the margins of illuminated manuscripts, and they're featured in a range of forms in treatises like Conrad Gessner's 16th century book titled *Historia Animalium*, where a 'sea satyr' with a

strong facial resemblance to Maurice Sendak's Max stands on the edge of a rocky outcrop on stubby finny legs as if about to direct maritime traffic. And Gessner takes pains to mention, just in case there may have been any doubters about the veracity of his illustration, that a little man-fish, about the size of a five-year old boy, had been spotted, at the time, in Rome.

But there are images of mer-people that pre-date even that of the the Assyrian Oannes. For at least 40,000 years Australian Aboriginal people have included the mysterious yawk yawks as part of their pantheon of spirit-people. The yawk yawks change in shape and detail, but they're inevitably rendered with very sharp teeth and predatory hand gestures. The strange thing is that so many of them are found so far inland, in billabongs and springs far from the sea. And apparently they're able to also live in underground waterways, swimming through the network of aquifers and subterranean artesian passageways that form the invisible lungs of this old, old continent.

The yawk yawks are older than the mermaids who have shimmied their way into the margins of medieval illuminated manuscripts, and they

look a lot less accommodating. No matter what kind of medium they're created in – cross hatched on bark, painted onto ancient rock faces, woven from pandanus leaves – they possess an authority underpinned by the way they draw energy from the very materials they're constructed. Like tales of mermaids right across the world, stories vary and are as elusive as the creatures themselves, and they proliferate to this very day.

There are mermaids that swim off-shore, too. In 1719 Samuel Fallours' compendium of illustrations featuring table fish of the Pacific were copied and transformed into hand-coloured engravings for a book published by Louis Renard. Fallours' drawing was accompanied by handwritten details of the mermaid's capture, what she looked like, how she sounded, and how she died. The combined image and description are very moving; she somehow seems very familiar, which makes Fallours' graphic notes describing what happened to her during her last awful days after capture all the more chilling.

Fallours was cashing in on the general public's interest in creatures, species and peoples from other realms. And the hunger for such discoveries had shown no sign of abating when PT Barnum's

American Museum opened in New York in 1842. The public's ongoing craving for 'curiosities' was milked by Barnum's ingenious entertainment founded on an admixture of science, art, invention and wonder. And the apogee of this brew was the 'Feejee Mermaid.'

Barnum was an entertainer who understood just how far to stretch the truth; he had a sixth sense about how to generate a collective will to suspend disbelief and he understood that the appeal of being held in a state of wonder outweighed the cold hard facts. Not that the two were mutually exclusive. When the museum burned down for the second time he fled into politics with a little circus work on the side. It sounds like it was the perfect work/lifestyle mix for a man who'd had plenty of training for both. It's a blend that's held currency to this very day.

Barnum brought his skills in stretching credibility to bear on exhibiting strategies for the 'Feejee Mermaid'. Barnum knew the public were not naïve Pollyannas, and he also knew, as we know now, that mermaids have never existed. So he devised a marketing plan that revved up curiosity and controversy around the mermaid well before exhibiting the. A carefully planned launch of the mermaid harnessed scientific impartiality, limitations on public access, and spread lots of hints about the large sums of money that had changed hands in order to acquire his specimen. Barnum linked the mermaid's biological lineage

to other hybrid species. These included the platypus, the flying fish, the intriguing 'paddle tail snake' and an irresistible invention described as "THE PROTEUS SANGUIHUS, a subterranean animal from a grotto in Australia". Even today that mysterious grotto saturates me with curiosity.

Barnum's spruik hyped up the value of the mermaid – he advised that she was "en route to the Lyceum of Natural History in London". The public were "respectfully informed" that the proprietor of the mermaid, a "scientific gentleman" named Mr. J. Giffin, had agreed that the specimen could be made available for "the gratification of the public" for "*positively one week only!*" The ruse worked, the press was in a pickle about the extent to which the shriveled specimen was true or not, and the public was fired up enough to want to pay to see it. As a consequence, the mermaid was one of the American Museum's most popular exhibits.

Barnum's American Museum was a cross-disciplinary hotch-potch that styled itself as a genuine place of scholarly knowledge. It incorporated a lecture hall, a zoo and museum collections alongside a theatre and freak show. This synthesis garnered enormous popular appeal; the total US population was under 32 million, and the museum was drawing 15,000 people a day over 15 hours a day opening hours. You could only hope the workers took it in shifts.



Ningyo from the *Konjaku Hyakki Shūi*. Image in public domain, source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:SekienNingyo.jpg>

The type of work was varied; ventriloquists and magicians worked alongside scientists, Indigenous peoples, theatrical people and so called 'freaks'. The animals were wild as well as both tamed and trained, and the specimens were both true and invented.

In the long run it was probably best that the mermaid was a mummified specimen rather than a live exhibit, because when the museum burned to the ground on July 13, 1865, most of the animals were killed in their pens. It's likely that the mermaid, if she'd been alive at the

time, would have been housed in tanks in the basement alongside the two beluga whales. During the fire they boiled to death. As for the mummified Feejee Mermaid, legend has it that she escaped from the inferno being even more shriveled, and turned up later in other side-show tents and freak shows right across the country.

Outside the museum, Barnum's eight-foot-high banners had featured an image of an alluring, curvaceous sea-siren whose long hair undulated all the way down her pristine back to her lithe tail. As described, the gulf between that image

and the grizzled remains whose right hand was held against her forehead as if contemplating an unimaginable problem was unfathomable, yet this did nothing to shake the public interest. In fact, the gap between the advertisement and the reality had come to be *expected* by the public. It was almost as if they relished the fact that Barnum possessed the chutzpah to stretch their imagination to extraordinary lengths. A critic at the time wrote that the mermaid “is either altogether nature’s handiwork, or altogether the production of art - and if it be indeed artificial, it is the very perfection of art, imitating nature in the closest similitude,” Here the writer expresses unconcern either way about whether it was created by nature or whether it was simply very convincing art. Nothing could be taken away from the impact of the mermaid. She existed, and that was enough.

The fact that the mermaid has persisted across cultures and across time is even more impressive. She (and, to a lesser extent, he) is an icon for creatures that are very much like we are, but that have learned to exist in other elements in a range of destinations. Perhaps that capacity to cross into different realms has been the key to the mermaid’s longevity. Whether depicted navigating the dark winding tributaries of underground caverns, or in lakes or streams or rivers, or whether following the great open sea currents or taking time out on land, images of mermaids remind us that there are still great

journeys that are being made by species or humanoids that we will never fully understand, even though we may have temporarily forgotten the wonderment of the world. And they remind us that, those few who are capable of traversing different territories with ease and grace, remain enigmas to us – they teach us that what seem like rational barriers are no impediments for imagination and ingenuity.



4. ARTIST JOURNEYS

Water Followings

Vanghoua Anthony Vue; Rubii Miyoshi

Each of the artists' groups had set themselves a 'destination venue' — a place associated with water that they'd travel together to, as an initial excursion that would give them the opportunity to develop a shared focus and a way to hurdle language barriers. Vanghoua Anthony Vue and Rubii Miyoshimade the decision to visit an *onsen* outside Tokyo. It took two changes of train, a winding bus ride and a considerable hike by foot — a total of approximately three hours to get to. It was set in a mountain area with natural water springs.

"What did you do there?" I asked Anthony.

"We just sat there. In individual baths. There was one for men and one for women."

"You just sat there?" I asked.

"Yes, I just sat there. That's what you're supposed to do. You strip off your clothes, then you clean and scrub yourself sitting on a little stool, and then you get into the water and you just sit there."

"Oh." I said, and thought, then, "was there anyone else in there with you?"

"There was an old man", Anthony said, "but I could see from the hair floating on the surface of the water that there'd been other people there."

I took that in too. "How long did you sit there for?" I asked him, thinking about how boring it must have been.

"About a half an hour", he said, "It was good".

I was beginning to realize that this was the kind of thing you had to experience yourself in order to understand so I remarked on the duration of the trip — how it had taken them six hours there and back — in comparison with the comparatively short amount of time actually spent in the *onsen*.

Anthony and Rubii ended up thinking about this quite a lot. In fact, it became the core to their project. There were difficulties. Difficulties of language — but those had been expected. But there were also difficulties in the fact that each of them had a very different idea about how to approach art. Rubii liked to get the idea right before she got started. Anthony was the 'dive-in-and-start-swimming-and-see-where-the-current-will-take-you' kind of artist. It got pretty harrowing watching them day in/day out, night in/night out caught in a mental headlock. Both of them were hard workers, and they were bent over their computers well after midnight every night, wrestling with interpretations and stalemating about how to progress. In the end



Sulphur puddles near the *onsen* house in Nikko, Japan.



Studio views of Rubii and Anthony.

they'd inevitably crash from exhaustion, and Rubii frequently ended up curling into a sleeping bag on the floor of the upstairs living room. She'd be there in the morning, her sleeping bag zipped up right around her like a cocoon. But no matter how hard the yards, both of them would eventually emerge smiling and dedicated again – over and over, but without any actual production, while all around them the other three teams were sizzling with busy-ness.

Rubii began bringing in works she'd been working on at College – photocopied maps of Tokyo that she'd attached tiny square colour images of places she knew, stuck down to the relevant points in the map. Somehow these, and the trip they'd taken to the *onsen*, began to weave together. They bought two large pieces of plastic and began tracing the journey they'd made to get there.

After that they started google-mapping all the trips they could remember having taken in order to get to some kind of water-site. The sites ranged from beaches to river banks to dams and swimming pools, and the maps they traced out together on the pieces of plastic started to look like a navigation campaign. They traced the journeys from wherever they'd been living in at the time and documented how long each trip had taken. Then they searched back through their i-photos to salvage a memory image of each of the places.

Rubii works part-time in an antique store, and some of the images of the water sites she'd brought in were hand-painted photographs that had been made into postcards. They looked great – all wistful and yester-year as if the places had disappeared or were disappearing. Which of course, in most cases, they were. So Rubii and Anthony decided to render all their images in this way – all the family camping trips, all the images of posing in front of waterfalls, all the images of bland empty swimming pools.

Lots of the traveling to the various destinations had been undertaken on camping trips. Rubii had ended up bringing in her own camping kit with her, because she'd given in to the routine of working so late on the project every night and camping on the floor of either the studio or the apartment. So in time the camping equipment became part of the work, and the plastic maps got refashioned into a transparent tent.

By this stage the team was on a roll – keen to bring their work up to speed and to draw it towards resolution. The postcards of each of the sites were suspended from the ceiling of the studio so that they looked like so many raindrop-memories secured to the floor by a flotilla of clear plastic water bottles. There were more than enough plastic bottles. Every day the studio seemed to fill up with a high-tide wash-up of different sizes and varieties of plastic bottles that had once held a range of drinks.

The point of Rubii and Anthony's project was how water draws us to it. How there is some kind of magnetic pull that draws us in so many ways – to sit in an *onsen* and just – sit; or to witness the beauty of a waterfall. Or to swim in a pool. Or the sea. Or to canoe in a lake or a river. It seemed endless. All that travelling to water just to be in it or near it. As if it had once been part of our realm.

Tokyo Protocol;the Water Monsters' Summit

Sally Molloy; Miyoko Ozaki; Misuzu Kanda

Miyoko and Sally and Misuzu had begun their conversation about the project online and had made decisions about what they wanted to produce during the residency well before the Australian group ever arrived in Tokyo. Several weeks prior to the Tokyo residency the conversations had gradually moved towards the idea of water monsters. Miyoko introduced Sally to the mythological creature called the *kappa* – a dweller of smelly ponds, and one of dubious motivations. The *kappa* is one of the traditional *yokai* spirits – a kind of imp or lesser demon who's snuck into everyday situations throughout history right up to the present. In Shinto they're counted as one of the important water spirits. There's a huge difference in how they're represented. Often they're portrayed as something like a cross between a mutant human and a toad, but with a tonsure lining a little dish on top of their head. The dish carries water, a symbol of the source of life, and if the *kappa* is tricked into spilling that dish he loses quite a deal of his trickster potency.

When Sally thought about what kind of creature this might correspond to in Australian mythology, her first thought was the bunyip - that large,

lumbering creature that lurks in waterholes and billabongs and creeks. Surrounded by Aboriginal accounts and folklore, the bunyip's shape is as amorphous as that of the *kappa*, who's also a shape-shifter. But she decided instead to go for the crocodile – the northern Australian reptile had a 'bad-ass' signature style that appealed to her. Inevitably, whenever politicians were cornered by the Queensland press to declare a particular dubious ethical quandary, there was a rush of headlines about the errant deeds performed by yet another outlaw crocodile 'up North'. Crocs had been used throughout the decades of conservative government as a kind of political smokescreen – their aberrant and lawless behavior had provided a handy justification that there was good reason for law and order to be heavy-handed in the deep North. So the croc seemed to Sally to be the perfect character for the task – one who was on his best ambassadorial behavior when meeting with his new friend *kappa* on a shoreline near Tokyo.

Their first days working together in the studio involved a lot of drawing and working out just what these two ambassadors should look like. By the time I arrived the drawings were pinned up



The ambassadors at Sagami Bay, Kanagawa, Japan.



Studio views of Miyuki and Sally.

all over the wall near their work station, covered with notes in Japanese and English that pointed out the special features of these creatures. For some reason the two key protagonists were also accompanied by a very self-confident looking salamander.

On the third day the girls - Miyoko, Sally and Misuzu - decided they'd head off through the pouring rain to the Nippori Fabric Market. They returned with a range of materials with which to make the ambassadorial outfits, and somehow Miyoko lugged a heavy-ish sewing machine from the train station through the interminable squalls into the studio and they started the process of cutting and stitching the work. Miyoko's outfit turned out to be a beautifully hand-dyed *shibori* in greens, and she made a practical decision to paint her face white with some odd graphic marks which she then, for some strange reason, covered with black netting. Sally's croc outfit

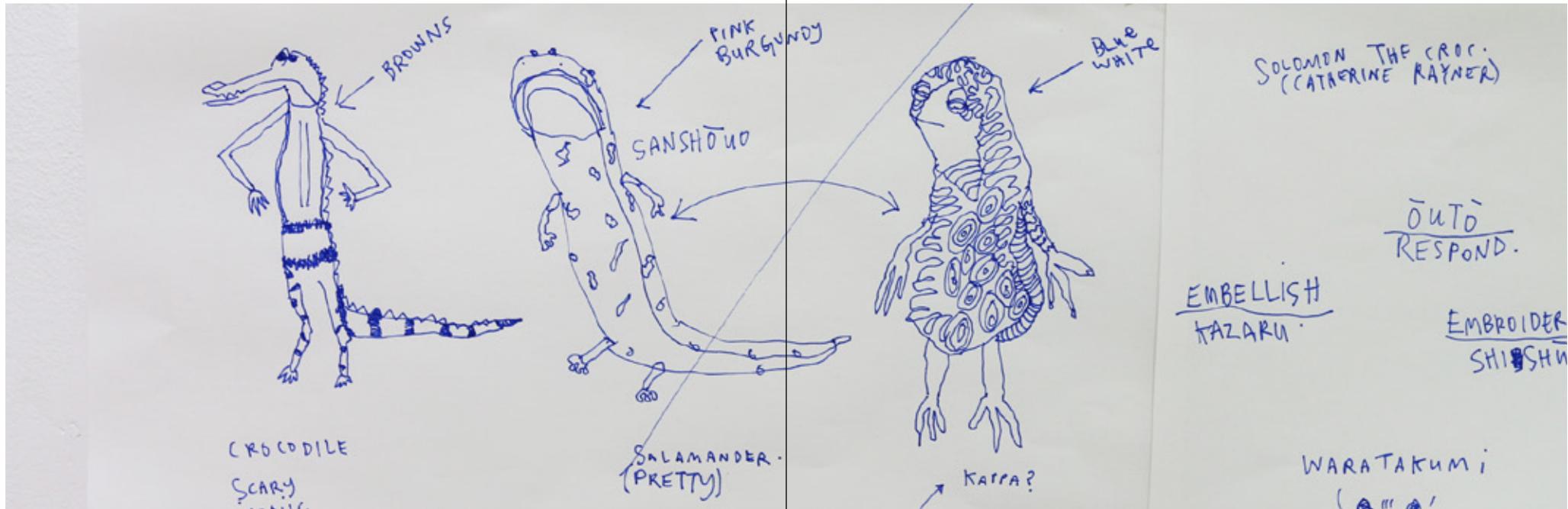
looked a lot like a scaly-tummied 'one-sy' with a handsome tail. The croc-head was a very DIY affair fashioned with gaffer and some cardboard waste that had been left in the studio.

The team traipsed off to shoot their scenes, with Misuzu doing the camerawork on her mobile phone — one day on the beach in drizzling rain, and another inside Miyoko's parents' house where they performed a tea ceremony. The long, grey strip of the beach and the sea provided the perfect muted ambience for a series of sequences that were simultaneously solemn and sensationally silly. As the takes went on in the interminable drizzle, the cardboard jaws of the croc's head grew progressively more soggy until in one sequence the bottom jaw just drops off. However, even this did nothing to diminish the ambassadorial spirit of the two characters and the actors who played them.

One of the first scenes involves the sharing of a cucumber. When I first saw the rushes, this struck me as an odd choice for a formal diplomatic offering. But I hadn't made the connection that in sushi stores right across the world, the *kappa maki* refers to a cucumber sushi, and that's linked the legend that the cucumber, for some strange reason, is the favorite food of the *kappa*. In the video the croc appears to be on his very best behavior even when partaking of what he surely must have felt was very unsatisfying fare, taking the proffered gourd and bowing deeply. But, as it turns out, the croc is probably aware of more than we think in terms of *kappa* weaknesses: there is another disturbing sequence in the video when it becomes unclear whether the *kappa* might in fact be attempting to lure the croc into the water. As water monsters, *kappa* are known to lure people into water to wrestle them down and drown them, after which they drink their blood or eat their liver, or, even worse,

steal their *shirikodama*, their mythical ball of soul-ness that's apparently located (where else?) inside the anus. Luckily the croc escaped that indignity, and cannily kept the *kappa* involved in ongoing rituals of politeness. For legend has it that the *kappa* is a complete obsessive about politeness, and every time the ambassadorial protocol necessitated that he bow, a little of the water in the in-built bowl in his head spilled and consequently, he must have lost a little of his strength. I watched the video several times during the long editing process in the studio and slowly became aware of the fact that the croc, who appeared every bit the buffoon with his long, soggy head slowly disintegrating in the rain, may ultimately have been a cunning strategist.

The second part of the video features a tea ceremony and a 'draw-off' where each protagonist has a go at making a portrait of the other. With nary a trace of caricature, the



Preparatory drawings for the ambassadors.

line drawings are, perhaps, the ultimate ambassadorial gift to each other. Each poses solemnly, satiated and calm after the tea ceremony, while the other bends in concentration to produce an observation of minimalism. Simple, clear, lacking in any pretension whatsoever, the drawings have the directness of children's drawings. The resultant collaborative video has a similar directness, with a childlike dream quality that is both simple and evocative, and where the enormity of the earth's environmental plight is momentarily suspended on an impassive, sullen horizon while the two characters play and dream and float out further imaginative possibilities.

shared Pacific

Carol McGregor, Sachiko Suzuki, Yuki Sawaoka; Mana Ishimoto; Masumi Iida

The beach was also the destination for another of the groups. Two of the Japanese members had never been to the beach – ever – and two of the other members had only been twice. So, as an Australian, where most of the population are coastal dwellers, Carol naturally assumed she had a kind of ‘advantage’ in beachy-type experience.

However she hadn’t quite prepared herself for the effects the three cyclones had brought. From the shoreline, it all looked like a regular expanse of watery horizon. But perhaps the thick black line-up of wet-suited surfers that bobbed all the way beyond the breaks as far as the eye could see should have been a clue – those breaks were deep and muscular and primed by off-shore cyclonic weather.

The girls had left for their outing well prepared with lunches, cameras, and bags to store any field work specimens they came across. When they eventually embarked from their long interlinked train journeys and walked to the edge of the sand they paused, surveyed the expanse of sand and considered what might be the best approach. Carol, however, was into it, and strode forward purposefully to the water’s edge. The wave-

rush was rolling roots of kelp, odd nuggets of oyster-growth and shells onto the sandy shore. The members of the group gazed at them with interest. That was enough for Carol. “I’ll go get them’, she announced.

But the water was a lot more determined than it looked from a distance. Carol was only shin-deep and bending for the detritus when the next wave broke over her. She was drenched and so was her back-pack. Her thongs floated off in different directions. She grabbed at them just before the next wave hungrily sucked them back. Momentarily successful, she waved back encouragement to her colleagues. But then another wave hit her, pulling her top up and her skirt down. It was an unceremonious introduction to the other shoreline of the Pacific and Carol made a hasty decision to get out as soon as possible. Waterlogged, she trundled forward, weighed down by the sodden backpack.

On the shoreline her Japanese team-mates stood in a neat line, politely avoiding any mention of Carol’s state of saturated dishevelment, although she had picked up the disbelief and shock that had crossed their faces when the first wave



Sagami Bay, Kanagawa, Japan.



Studio view of Sachiko, Yuki, Carol and Masumi in AIR 3331 Nishikicho Studio.

struck. They checked that she was OK and she responded with a matter-of-fact reassurance she hoped would cover over her personal Ozzie horror at how things had transpired. She took an “on with the mission” mien, and did her best to get on with things. But there was an added complication — for some reason the wet sand stuck like glue. It felt like she had legs of concrete. The sand clung like a crust, and later on she had to be hosed down outside a seaside café before she could sit down to eat while everyone turned a polite blind eye.

Nevertheless, back in the studio the intrepid adventurers set out their seaside booty like biology specimens. Separated out on the white paper, the shriveled black contortions of the kelp roots appeared like an ancient script. One of the team members, Masumi Iida, was a calligraphy expert; she began to soak the paper with elegant black kanji script describing Australian Aboriginal

words for water. Later in the sessions, Sachiko worked with two photos — one Carol had taken of a Pacific shoreline at Currumbin, and the other of the beach they visited together in Japan - and joined them in a single image that looked like a blue bowl carrying the currents of the entire Pacific Ocean.

Talk turned to vessels. One of the girls was wearing an amulet featuring a vessel from Japan’s ancient Jomon culture. Carol drew from her Australian Aboriginal heritage to explain the water-carrying capacities of the coolamon and about the similarities of the dillybag shape and that of the Jomon vessel. Earlier on, the group members had bought a roll of cotton printed with the traditional Japanese water pattern. They decided to weave a large dillybag from wire bound in long ‘bandages’ of the water patterned cotton. At the same time, Carol began the process of stitching a Jomon style vessel from rope, an

ancient technique that was a feature on the surface of the clay pots. These pointy-bottomed vessels had been used to hold household water and were held upright by being semi-submerged in sand. The group members decided on two installations for the final exhibition — one featured the rope-bound Jomon standing in a small dark circle of beach sand, above which they suspended the water-patterned space-frame of the large dilly-bag-like form. Behind these they suspended the image of the third vessel — the bowl containing the Pacific that had forever joined the two cultures together.

For the second installation, the artists hung a selection of the rice paper that had soaked up the calligraphic kanji script. Beneath these minimal script/images bearing Turrbal and Jaggera words for water, Carol laid a hand-stitched possum skin cloak she’d brought with her from home.

Tokyo/Brisbane Identity Disassembly Centre

Nat Koyama, Miyuki Inagaki, Tomohiro Kubota, Madoka Sugino, Maho Saito

In the months leading up to the beginning of the workshop, compelling family reasons caught Nat in a state of ongoing transit between Brisbane and Kyoto. This had prevented him from any face-to-face contact with the Tokyo based members of the group, and only brief encounters with the Brisbane based members of the group. But the fact that all members of this group spoke Japanese - and that some spoke English as well as Japanese - helped a great deal in terms of preparing the grounds for taking risks with the theme. Nat embarked on the project's capacity for fluidity with gusto, mixing up the names of the participants. His own online persona became 'Thommasen Longmarch' and to outsiders reading the blogs, just who was who was pretty confusing. But this did nothing to hinder them in their capacity for making plans and getting on with things as soon as they met together, and only added to the sense of play involved.

For their exploration of the waterways the group eschewed the possibilities of more scenic destinations and instead headed for two educational sites: the Tokyo Waterworks Historical Museum and the Tokyo Sewerage ("Rainbow") Museum. They'd decided they'd look

at the network of subterranean underground pipes that had kept Tokyo more or less clean for centuries. And the focus on sewerage had the potential for the kind of ironic metaphorical twists that appealed to the group members. Here they could study in detail the elaborate, complex and intertwining network of underground water services that have kept the city functioning from the Edo period (17th century) to the present.

They returned to the studio with data-a-plenty in the form of images, numerics and videos, but this surfeit of quantifiable material did nothing to block their flow of wild imaginings. The installation grew day by day, stretching from a contained space behind their work desk to eventually take over the whole wall. It started with a cast of cut-out, hand-drawn characters with labels and names invented from a flotsam of references. To the outsider, there seemed to be an arcane system in place that was impossible to fathom without the keys to the code. But the sense of 'flow' was continued in a network of flows mapped out in gaffer tape with directional markers, straws, lines that found their way off the wall to run along thin bamboo skewers and back again and to eventually seem to tumble into little



View of the sewage before the purification process at the Tokyo Sewerage Museum "Rainbow", Tokyo.



Studio view of Nat, Tomohiro, and Madoka in AIR 3331 Nishikicho Studio.

three dimensional baskets and holding-systems suspended from the wall.

Although the original wooden pipes laid down during the Edo period had been replaced, much of the original basis of sewerage planning was still intact. The succession of subsequent environmental and human disasters has required a successive rebuilding of Tokyo's plumbing, and the interconnected web of water that ties Tokyo to its river courses and to Tokyo Bay make the city a 'water city' in many more ways than one. I, like everyone else who has travelled in this city, was well used to the underground network of railways with their tunnelling interconnected walkways and shopping malls. All too often in Tokyo you could feel that you spent more of your day underground than you did above it. It made me wonder what kind of underground spaces had been left for all that plumbing that would have to dodge and divert around all the human

transit tubes down there. All those tourists who look down from the Mori Tokyo Tower Observation Deck to gasp at the immense sprawl of the city are only seeing a fraction; so much of it actually lies UNDERNEATH what they look at.

The above-and-below-ground framework for Tokyo's operations is based on organisation and efficiency. But this installation, that grew by twists and contortions into new channels of connection every day, mocked that efficiency to irreverent and contradictory ends. It featured a role-call of alternative characters and names re-cast in fluid and playful ways. A sense of mischievous anarchy bordering on chaos reigned. For this work, the harnessing of urban waterways offered a metaphor for circulating and recycling ideas instead of detritus and waste. And as the looping characteristics of the work turned back and emerged in new ways, a sense that 'nothing ever dies' emerged as both satirical as well as

hopeful. As it grew, the work confirmed one of the central tenets of art - that the most surprising possibilities can often come from the most controlling of systems.

5. JOURNAL: OCEAN/CANOE (MEDITATIONS ON A PROCESS)

In between spending time with the artists in the studio and preparing food I'd wander back upstairs to work alone in my room. There was a big IKEA desk against the window that looked into the street below, so I could stare out into the interminable rain and down at the glossy zebra crossing. I'd either draw or write or I'd trawl the internet for articles. The mood brought in by the endless rain had settled like an emotional fug. But then again, there were reasons for optimism: the way things were developing one floor below looked like a whole lot more things were being achieved than those that occurred in everyday studio situations.

I'd been growing increasingly disenchanted with the news from back home, where the government seemed to be looking for every opportunity to cut funding to almost anything associated with the arts. But it wasn't just the government that seemed to be losing faith in the arts – the contagion was spreading. When students from Sydney College of the Arts had barricaded themselves in the building to protest the closure of the campus and courses by Sydney University, 4 Triple J's *Hack* had run a feature on it. I'd expected a flood of solidarity, but instead the news was met with a wave of cajoling not

only from fellow students, but also from the relatively youth-based listening audience of the national broadcaster. The host of *Hack*, Tom Tilley, sounded as mystified as I felt. As the host read out the tweets and took caller responses, the mood was ugly. The prevailing sentiment was one of ridicule against the art students' stance – callers poked fun at the idea that barricading would be capable of making any difference at all to the university's decision, and others berated the art students for not enrolling in 'real courses'. I wondered what those real courses might be.

As I listened to the vitriol and ridicule I wondered why any stronger grassroots support for the arts had failed to materialize in Australia. The planet was moving towards increasingly globalized ways of operation, and with that, a corresponding need for people who could straddle a number of cultures and who could work in cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural ways. The arts were a highly efficient way of bridging differences while at the same time celebrating them.

And downstairs there was a group of artists working 'at the coal face' of those very issues. It occurred to me that they were doing a number of

very difficult things simultaneously - they were dealing with language barriers; they were unpicking cultural assumptions; they were involved in digging and delving into local histories in (for the Australian artists) a different country; they were working with limited resources and they were working to an extreme deadline to build new visual codes and languages. So what was privileged about that?

I thought about how to articulate the kind of outcomes, other than objects, that this way of working might produce. In the process of trawling the internet, one thing led to another, and my attention drifted to an article with a title that seemed pertinent to the whole idea of the *Drawing Water* project. It was the way the acronyms sat together that attracted me first: a psychology article titled OCEAN/CANOE. I liked the inference that the same letters that could be used to describe a small boat for one (or at the most two) to float on, could also be shifted to describe a huge body of water. I knew nothing about psychology, but I'd been born into a generation where most had managed to convince ourselves (but not each other) that we all knew a little bit about it. So I read on.

The acronym spelled out the five considerations for what psychologists referred to as "The Big Five Personality Traits", a claim that sounded like a lurid clickbait ad. According to the article, the five factors are present to a greater or lesser extent in all individuals – the degree to which individuals are 'balanced', depends on where their temperament lines up in each category. As if the 'OCEAN' or 'CANOE' acronym wasn't enough, the personality trait model was also known as the 'FFM' – the Five Factor Model: 1. openness to experience; 2. conscientiousness; 3. extraversion; 4. agreeableness and 5. neuroticism.

Four of the categories sounded like they'd be very good attributes for anyone involved in a cross-disciplinary, cross-cultural, collaborative art project based on water. But the last one – neuroticism – sounded less useful. However, as I read on, the 'neuroticism' category was not as simple as it seemed. Although a high need for 'stability and impulse control' at one end of the spectrum seemed desirable, the article outlined how these characteristics could 'also be seen as uninspiring and unconcerned'. Too much confidence and self-conviction, the article warned, might not always be the best mix for



Lake Chūzenji, Nikko, Japan.

collaborative enterprises.

The other end of that “neuroticism” spectrum listed traits related to reactive and excitable personalities that reflected a much lower need for stability. These often resulted in very dynamic individuals - the sensitive, nervous types who aren’t even expecting stability. This, in turn, becomes another *kind* of strength, even though it comes with tendencies to be susceptible to vulnerability and anxiety or anger and depression. Up the other end of the spectrum, highly valued stability and calmness come with a degree of predictability that is less than interesting: both ends of the spectrum had its own good bits.

I could see that some of the artists had gone into the project full of an ebullient confidence that had become steadily eroded as they encountered blocks and surprises and contradictions in contexts with which they were not familiar. But

as that confidence had slowly eroded, there was a corresponding openness to the ideas and approaches of the other people in the team.

The first letter in the OCEAN acronym, the ‘O’, referred to ‘openness to experience’ - a primary consideration for the artists working one floor below. It described a roll-call of characteristics: “appreciation for art, emotion, adventure, unusual ideas, curiosity, and variety of experience”. Perfect. And yet push it too much that way, the article read, and you end up craving novelty to the extent that you eschew the importance of routine and self-discipline. The parameters for the category ran between inventive/curious all the way to consistent/cautious. “Well there’s not going to be too much achieved without a little consistency”, I thought, “especially with the days leading up to the exhibition opening growing shorter and shorter.”

The ‘C’ in OCEAN, also referred to conscientiousness, a trait that seemed like a definite advantage in terms of achievement. Certainly the ‘efficient/organised’ characteristics that formed one pole of the continuum looked more promising than the ‘easy-going/careless’ down the other end. But then again, there were surprises in store: low conscientiousness could produce flexible, spontaneous approaches to experiences. I thought about it: It was like when you watch someone who just starts goofing around and the artwork starts making itself; it was like those loose-as-a-geese types who make things seem like they just run like honey - the kind of automatic cool that reduces dutiful self-discipline and responsibility to so much petty house-keeping. Yes while it was true that low conscientiousness could be perceived as sloppy and unreliable, the obsessive routine of high conscientiousness was often a killer for rambling ideas and energy.

The ‘E’ for extraversion spectrum ran from outgoing and energetic all the way to solitary and reserved. It occurred to me that the role of an artist required a capacity to run up that spectrum and back again depending on what aspect of the artistic role you were engaging in. For the artists one floor under me, it had taken a generous serve of extraversion to get them over the hurdle to make contact with the group members they’d never met before. Sociability was an integral aspect of the high end of the extraversion spectrum; if the collaborating artists were naturally shy, they’d had to overcome it to break the ice with their team-mates. But by the time the real work for the project had to simply be crashed through, individual members were pretty well just hunkering down and focusing on what had to be done. In the last days in the lead-up to the exhibition opening, the ambience in the workshop/studio felt a long way away from upbeat energy. Rather, each individual was

proceeding in a solitary and reserved way. Even when they were working together on the same object, each artist paid more attention to the object and the process of working on it than they did to each other. The assertiveness and energy related to extraversion had slid away to a quietly meditative silence.

'A' for agreeableness was the next category: a key trait for working collaboratively. The 'friendliness and compassionate' qualities that stand at one end of the spectrum are admirable for anyone in any walk of life. However, 'analytical and detached' approaches are essential to critical awareness; one of the first risks of the 'trade' is that, once artists train to be critically reflexive, they are doomed to perpetual self-criticality and, as a result, to a kind of perpetual discontent. But it's that discontent, in part, that's the driver that's always pushing artists on to make the next work. Artists are always on the lookout for new possibilities or alternative approaches. There's always a "what if?" in the wings. And as a result, there's always another artwork to be made, in order to test other waters; to try out other options. In that sense, artists could be described as exhibiting 'low agreeableness'; a trait that goes hand in hand with a competitive and challenging disposition.

According to the on-line article, if individuals were able to swim nimbly up and down the spectrum of all five characteristics they were

more likely to be adaptable, moderate and reasonable personalities: the kind of personalities that were in short supply and high demand - the kind of personality types that were going to be absolutely essential if the world was to be steered into some kind of equilibrium again.

Outside beyond the computer screen, squalls kept making feints at the window. I thought of the huge ocean out there, buffeted and bruised by those typhoons. I thought of that ocean stretching all the way to Australian shorelines. I thought of the title of the article I'd read; the canoe/ocean anagram, and imagined a flotilla of tiny canoes bound together with little more than good will and hope being launched off into the massive gloomy, brooding ocean of the world's problems; each of them a little courageous act of faith. Those canoes would probably have about the same odds of survival as artists' new ideas, new images, new propositions about new ways to work together and think together in the world-that-might-be.

I went downstairs and stood in the doorway again to watch the artists working. They'd been at it for over a week, working together wordlessly, bent to task, well and truly ensconced in the kinds of processes that, according to the article, were moving them towards being more 'adaptable, moderate and reasonable' - perfect for the kind of challenges the globalized world might throw at them. And yet their enterprise was exotic to the

work-a-day world beyond who regarded them much like it's always regarded mermaids — partly human, partly imaginary, sometimes fascinating and often frightening. Not that such responses altered the artists too much — they were drawn by a pull to make that was as inner and as ancient as the pull of the eels to the deep-sea trenches.

It crossed my mind that, as the project drew to a close, I could choose whether to slump down into the enervation and despondency I'd felt earlier in the week. But looking at those artists working, a kind of phlegmatic hope slowly dawned again - if this practice of art *is* purely folly in the face of the tides of strife, then it is the best hope we have.

Art calls to us; it draws us, just as water does. It's there as an urge somewhere inside us, just like water is. We're all — each one of us - subliminally aware that it's there beneath the surface — shifting, changing, fluxing with the seasons, the moon, the time and tide. We're drawn to it, we always have been, like we're drawn to water.



WHAT REAL HEROISM LOOKS LIKE

Prof. Ned Pankhurst

Many species of animals undertake migrations at some stage in their life cycles and many of these migratory excursions are, in terms of human capacities, nothing short of heroic. Fish, my not so secret passion, are well represented in the legion of heroic migrators with the added frisson that some of these also carry an element of tragedy. Many people are familiar with the life-ending spawning migrations of pacific salmon, and freshwater anguillid eels where, the scientific argument goes, the productivity of the shallow ocean basins, and freshwater lakes and rivers and lakes, respectively, are transferred to the apparent 'safety' of the reproductive and nursery environments of the deep sea and, yes, freshwater lakes and rivers. 'Wait!' one might exclaim; how can rivers and lakes be a productivity reservoir but too dangerous for reproduction in eels but a nursery space for salmon? A fair question that might suggest some artfulness in the anthropocentric process of interpretation; perhaps we should instead be asking how fish undertake these migrations rather than why, and be considering the effects of migrations as outcomes set in train by processes that may never have had a 'design' component.

But salmon and eels represent flashy biological extravagances. I have never been that keen on showy biology and perhaps that might be why I was also drawn to some of the more restrained heroes of piscine migration. My own research adventures started with exploration of the confusing and cryptic world of eel migration and came full circle to rest on the final stages of salmon migration and the interesting and scary things that climate change holds in store for migrating salmonids world-wide. But somewhere in the middle there was a diversion, or perhaps the unrecognised main game of the enjoyable study of species that migrate, and do it repeatedly over a lifetime, and without the pretentious drama of mass mortality to celebrate that they had been out for a bit of a swim.

Enter the goldeye *Hiodon alosoides*. This beautiful, biologically primitive but less well-known species inhabits the large prairie rivers of Canada and northern USA, and in softer times was a staple on the trans-Canadian railroad, and was served smoked to diners as the delicacy Winnipeg goldeye. Decades of industrial assault on the prairie river systems has left the long-lived goldeye with a legacy of progress in the form of dangerously high heavy metal concentrations. Advice to anglers suggests that goldeye should not be eaten more than once a week and never by pregnant women. This is not all bad news. Discouraging fishers from eating their catch is the first of many steps to sustainable recreational fishing and fear of illness and death is as useful a motivation as any. My interest in goldeye was not; however, in how they tasted, but what they did.

Goldeye don't content themselves with a single migration. Each year as the river flows increase with the spring ice melt, goldeye populations move hundreds of kilometres upstream from their winter holding waters in lakes and deep downriver refuges from the winter freeze. At some stage near the peak of their upstream migration they spawn in the middle of the surging freshes of melt water and the buoyant eggs are carried back downstream to hatch in the waters the adults have just left. Freshwater fish rarely have floating eggs; this is normally a device of marine species where floating in the currents aids the process of egg dispersal. But goldeye do it too, and it has the same effect of using the connectivity of water currents to disperse fertilised eggs into nursery ranges. The technical description of the separate evolution of similar solutions to the same problem across broad geographical ranges and geological epochs of time is 'very cool stuff'. After spawning, the adults hang around and feed on the summer parade of insects and assorted aquatic fauna and then in autumn, retreat with the downstream current to the winter range. And they do this every year for 12-15 years. No fuss. No mass death on the shore, no parade of



feeding grizzly bears, no clogs of migrating glass eels on power station intake screens. This is what real heroism looks like. The youngsters get in on it too. Juveniles also migrate upstream in the spring but initially not that far. Each year they make it a bit further up-system and by the time that they are old and large enough to spawn, they also have the stamina and energetic reserve to complete the full migration to the spawning grounds.

My introduction to this lovely fish came from fly fishing mad colleagues at the University of Alberta. Goldeye surface feed at dusk on floating terrestrial insects, and summer evenings would see a small flotilla of canoes heading up the North Saskatchewan River to Fort Edmonton bend to spend an hour or two beaver spotting and fishing to splashy goldeye rises. Huge fun and after having several of these large-eyed primitive silver fishes in my hands, I was the one who was hooked. “What do we know about spawning, when do they move, what do the eggs look like, how is reproduction regulated, what happens over summer?” were the questions in my head (and around every kitchen table in Edmonton I am sure). “Well we don’t really know but we think...” Was the typical response. Red rag to a bull. And the best part was that to get the type of information that I needed, I had to catch live fish. Netting is impractical in large fast flowing rivers like the North Saskatchewan and that meant I would have to fish for them.

That was the easy part. Explaining why I needed to be out at dusk fishing (and dusk in Edmonton in summer is late, very late) to an apartment-bound partner with a new baby was unexpectedly difficult. Sometimes I happily caved in to obligations of domestic responsibility. The reality of fishing for science is that you have to catch fish whether you feel like it or not, seventeen species of mosquito bred in the river valley and the only effective protection was a waders and canvas parka combination that was also unbelievably hot, and fish sampling of any type involves lumping a lot of gear along muddy river banks. Combine this with the cumulative effect of late nights fishing followed by sampling in the lab, small hours baby duty and then the requirement to be back in the lab bright and early (the lab boss was a physiologist and not that impressed with this silly fieldwork business) for my day job and I wondered whether I would be able to finish what I had started.

There were compensations. The deep-cut river valley of the prairies have heavily vegetated banks and act as wildlife corridors that run for a thousand kilometres. Fly-fishing is a generally quiet pastime punctuated by profanity, with the result that you get to see stuff. Beavers were regular visitors and would pull out on the bank apparently unaware (or unconcerned) that I was there; bats experimented with artificials and would taking the moving fly in mid air as I cast. This was a bit disconcerting at first as I wasn’t anxious to hook one but it became clear that their dexterity in catching the fly in mid-flight extended to understanding that it was not food and also not getting impaled on a hook. Mule deer often came out of the brush to look, and then look again (the ‘second look’ that makes mulies favourites of hunters and wildlife photographers alike) and less frequently a whitetail deer would glide through, but without a look. One evening a cough brought my head round to see a coyote sniffing in my direction. Canadians are generally dismissive of coyotes as being on the vermin side of a real wolf but I found being separated from an interested canine by only 9 feet of flimsy carbon fibre rod a little unsettling. I was relieved when it sniffed again, found me unworthy and melted back into the foliage. On another occasion the rustle in the scrub morphed into what I was sure was a cougar. “Nonsense” said my Canadian colleagues – they would never come this far east. They do now. I wonder if I saw the vanguard? “Where?” one might ask was the corroboration of my mandatory health and safety partner? Different rules then. The world appears to have become more dangerous.

The appearance of goldeye in the spring was masked by the unpredictable and sometimes violent flows of the spring fresh. Sometimes weeks of bank-to-bank chocolate brown flows masked the exact date of appearance of fish in the river at Edmonton. Not so in the fall. As summer wears on the water becomes lower and slower and by October there is the clear-water prettiness of a New Zealand stream. The fish get harder to catch and then one day about the time the first pancakes of floating river ice appear, they are not there anymore. Migration in action. I wonder what they do in winter? Considering this over a few beers one night, fieldwork-hardened colleagues said it might be possible to net goldeye from under the lake ice of one of the large downstream lakes in mid-winter. This, like many things seemed like a good idea at the time and resulted in an expedition to Tobin Lake on

the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border in January. There I was introduced to the black art of under-the-ice fish netting, and experienced the rigours of sampling fish in a blizzard of fine ice crystals at minus twenty Celsius. Fish were caught and the science became clearer but the main lesson for me was a practical one in migration and some chastened reflection on how little the practical windows that we get to look at the biology through, actually are.

Goldeye turn out to do some really interesting things. They have retinal morphology that looks like what you would find in a deep sea fish; they spawn like marine fish, they build all of their egg mass over summer well before they migrate back downstream, hold it over winter and all during the upstream migration again, and they use different hormones to regulate egg development from 'typical' fish. Half a world away, I would find the same things in real deep sea fish, the orange roughy. Spooky coincidence, the result of conserved evolution from common primitive ancestors or the parallel evolution of physiology to solve different but also remarkably similar problems? Connected threads through evolution, biological possibility and chance.

Twenty years after I had caught what I thought was my last goldeye, I was back in Edmonton for a visit and I took the opportunity of a spare evening to scramble down the same muddy bank at Fort Edmonton bend with a fishing rod and faint hope in my heart. The river was muddy and a bit too high to fish, there were line breaking tree trunks coming down with the main current and looming thunderheads kept reminding me that graphite is a pretty fair conductor of electric current. I cast for an hour, the water rose a foot and the storm was crackling in the suburbs behind me. "A last cast", I promised myself. It was a shocker but the lure is always fishing if it is in the water I told myself; then the characteristic 'grab grab take' and I had a fish on. Not a monster but a glorious silver ghoul-eyed silver goldeye. I held it with reverence for a few seconds and then let it flick back into the muddy current and knelt in the mud awash with memories of being younger. Back with my hosts (the same fieldwork-intolerant lab boss) we celebrated with single malt. We all knew something significant had happened but quite what it was, we were unsure. I think it was mostly about connections.

Prof. Ned Pankhurst

Ned started fishing at his Dad's elbow in New Zealand, followed paths of least resistance to a career in marine biology through degrees in Zoology at the Universities of Otago and Bristol and then postdoctoral fellowships in Canada and New Zealand again. There then followed an extended period of not being able to hold down a job with employment at the Universities of Auckland, Tasmania and James Cook University before a restful decade at Griffith. In all these places there were wonderful opportunities for studying, watching and catching fish. His Dad saw his job was done.

10

FOLLOW THE WATER

Dr. Anne W. Beaumont

So much terrestrial water spends a great deal of its time underground – gaining and losing all sorts of chemicals – mineral, organic and mixed debris. These flows host a vast microcosm; though certain life takes the form of larger fish, some blind and white, most team in invisible hordes, swept along wriggling and squirming in this rich, life-sustaining medium.

All of my life – as a European derived, first generation Australasian - has been experienced through a 'science of life'-rinsed curiosity, and a sense of being able to belong to everywhere or nowhere. My literary heritage and history is boreal, but most of my 'sensed' life, in comparison, has taken place on rugged, raw islands, between rivers, lakes and seas. Like a starry-eyed scientist, I look, feel and compare – joining the dots of understanding about how life ebbs and flows – and where secret, life-giving water currents are always coursing.

I have spent variable amounts of time in a number of countries, and read about others, each with their own particular water systems. Throughout these wanderings, images of, and experiences with, waterways have been inked

indelibly as pathways for stories mapped and networked into my mind.

Recently, when in the UK, I wondered why people would have originally settled, (and have continued to increasingly settle in such large numbers) in England's historically wet, cool, 'green and pleasant land'. Then I found out that for many tens of miles, obliquely from the north-east to south-west of the country, long tongues of limestone lick underground. Into these water-worn river-caves and tunnel-tributaries, rainwater seeps in, made fertile as it flows and dissolves the compressed carbonate bodies of myriads of shellfish that used to grow prolifically on the shallow, ancient warm sea beds in past epochs. The canals and waterways that bathe the southerly Thames basin, rinse down the famous chalk – the soft seams that are all that is left of crushed single-celled and shelled beings.

Many other countries have these eroding fertile limestone areas, although often they are just around the sink holes. In the central North Island of Aotearoa-New Zealand, these pockets of limestone are scattered between dormant, active and extinct volcanoes. They include the

well-known 'glo-worm' caverns of Waitomo, near the flood plains of the Waikato. Here the land is steeped by frequent drizzle that trickles and drips until the meeting-in-the-middle, where stalactites and stalagmites are one. These wondrous rock-rods of 'marble' are made by 'gravity feed', but they also defy this force by inching upward.

But the volcanoes rule. Within the deep magma-heated craters, water accumulates in hot conical bubbling, toxic mud lakes. This mud erupts unpredictably, sending steaming hot, flowing mud 'lahas' that slide down the solidified, old lava-flow gorges. Elsewhere, the rain-water percolates through the basalt vents, only to gush out in all sorts of places. In Rotorua water turns into hot, sulphurous mud-puddles. Occasionally geysers blow spectacularly, but mostly they only manage to sputter. Close by, steam vents are harnessed to drive turbines for power generation. Among the ancient extinct and much flatter volcanic mounds, water finds its way down to the old irregular 'pipes' and bubbles out as clear water springs. In Auckland it apparently takes fifty years for the *Western Springs* Mt Eden-sourced, clear cold water to empty into the ponds, out into the light.

There are massive, deeply bushed, momentarily deep limestone sink holes at the Nelson region at the north end of the Southern Alps, the back bone of the South Island, or on Te Waka a Maui, the canoe of Maui. Tectonic plate upthrusts form high, jagged, Greywake mountains, most with disrupted layers of fine sand or mudstone that make it barren, with few life-promoting minerals. Their brushing and scrubbing by the restless, warm and moist north-west winds, and the grinding and carving by frozen-river glaciers, as well as from expanding-ice-in-crevice-melting-water-erosion, create vast shingle fans across the Canterbury plains.

As they discharge from the flood-prone gorges, accompanied by rolling and rumbling boulder sounds, the great beaded, turquoise-opaque, glacier-cold (Waimakariri) rivers are always changing their course. Here at last, the vast quantities of water are flowing out of sight within the bedrock in their deep, dark, once-secret artesian channels.

Early last century, the great melted-glacial lake-bowls at the foot of the New Zealand Alps were also dammed for the generation of hydro-

electricity, causing dramatic reductions in water flows downstream and effects on the hydrology, aquatic life and climate of the area. The surface rivers and the inhabitants that depend on them are disappearing. More, recently, those wide open High Country and Canterbury plains have been irrigated from the man-made canals, draining the aquifers and leaching the nutrients, for industrial dairy farming. There is no balanced ecology here – the process is one of high input, always on the verge of falling prey to pests that predicably decimate monocultures, or that implode if artificial agribusiness and industrial trade systems are incapable of supporting such inefficient, expensive systems. This is yet another unnatural syphoning off of rivers' waters and their meagre nutrients, draining and quieting the flows to within an inch of their lives.

But just as humans keep on engineering, they keep on ravaging, all the more desperate, in the few higher altitude areas of Australia. The extensive, famous/notorious Snowy River Scheme for hydroelectric generation and irrigation involves re-routing huge river water volumes through cavernous tunnels and racing via valley-flooded lakes (such as those in the

Eucumbene), in the mountains of the Great Divide. River-life sustaining (a 96% theft) upland rapids are drawn away from the Snowy River catchment into the extensive South Australian human habitation-supporting, Murray Basin catchment. Whereas the ever-controversial issues surrounding stolen life-giving flows remain current in the political news; the water itself has gone.

But many forms of water never manage to get so far, and are channelled before they have become so much as a stream. Even high up in Italy, little terraces support tiny vineyards. In more fertile areas, places like Japan and India, water crops are grown in rice paddies stepped up and down the hills. Although these pond-type aqua-cultures are highly modified and often irrigated by a sludge of aged farm compost that is efficiently and safely recycled, such places have maintained fairly stable, long lasting ecologies. Another reason the English canals and farmlands worked together well was a result of a process that literally eliminated waste by recycling; the waste of both human workers and the great barge-hauling horses was deposited on the local canal margins, so that the limewater and

sewerage irrigation could be used to produce healthy crops.

In the hot inland areas of the earth's continents, support for the living, breathing land can become too difficult, resulting in true deserts. At the pathway to one of the royal tombs in Egypt stands a petrified stub of a stump, sanded blasted and worn to ground level. This ancient tree remnant (reputedly thousands of years old) remains in an area now so dry that not even lichens survive. There is no possibility for drawing water here –even though the floods and ebbs of the Nile lie not so far away.

Denizens of the often waterless, wide, and worn-down Australian continent knew this and adapted – amazing damp skinned toads store one and a half times their weight in their bladders, survive in their mud lairs deep under dried-out pond-bottoms. In the hot, dry spells the fruit bats hang around, conserving water and energy by slowing down in torpor to the point where they are barely alive. Koalas cling to the trunks of the eucalypt trees – cooling their almost hairless bellies on the tepid water slowly being

drawn up through the roots and trunks. Then, via the vessels in the bark, the water travels up to be reluctantly exhaled, through evaporation, via the leaves. Some of the small desert mammals make sure they do not lose any water from their lungs. As they slowly exhale their moist air; the bronchial and nasal linings draw water back into the body. These little creatures can get enough water from the chemical reactions of food, and so never drink: biological water conservation to the max! The local people knew, and knew how to extract these resources. They also stored water, as honey mead in fermented brews, within the cruxes of trees.

But the graziers of the great inland dry area failed to recognise such adaptations. They brought foreign stock that grazed away at their imported grasses, but, ironically, not at the exotic weeds - the delicately balanced native herbs had little chance!

The finely balanced water catchments formed by rainwater filling up creeks that are later dried up and evaporated away has changed forever, as have the soil coverage, the herbs, scrub and trees. Even after it was realised in the 1930's that

the dust bowls of mid-American grain farms had been hollowed out by the spiralling movements of the harsh winds, few lessons were carried into the management of Australian grain belts, and in the cattle and sheep stations.

Long years of out-back drought were followed by flash-floods that carried along the burnt-orange dust exposed through the lack of leaf litter. These poured for tens of kilometres through dry beds and canyons – as with the Fink River, Northern Territory, Australia - where now only a few billabongs remain. Occasionally, a whole wet season allows water to fan out over old salt lakes for a few weeks, or revives the desert flower beds for long enough to produce seeds.

Drawing water is such a physical thing to do. For many across the world, collecting water is a daily task performed at rivers, lakes, springs and wells all with varying standards of cleanliness. Interestingly, in many countries this heavy work used to be, and still is, most often performed by women. Aid programs and geographic documentary television channels have provided abundant images of women hoisting great weights in urns onto their heads – a feat that

we have marvelled at in some African groups. Women are by far the better 'gatherers', it seems - it's the young fit women who are the ones pumping and drawing water at village wells. When I was a child, my favourite myth featured a girl who dropped her urn in wonder when she chanced upon Pegasus, the winged horse, as he alighted and drank from the magical waters of the Spring of Myrsene. Images associating women with wells and drawing water have persisted across cultures and history.

Throughout my life I have always engineered water systems in our gardens – making ponds and little near-horizontal canals, catching rain water off roofs or using town supplies. In urban Brisbane, I carry back the water I've used to rinse veges down in steel buckets to water the herb garden bed. Then, off the pontoon in our local creek, (how lucky am I, under the kookaburra's watchful eye?) I sluice the buckets clean, and haul the brackish water up and out to slowly flow it around the base of my circle of baby mangrove seedlings that are struggling to grow in a low patch at the creek-end of the garden. This grove may be irrigated 'naturally' sooner or later, when the tides of global climate change

morph the creek deeper via higher and higher sea-creep, permanently inundating the old flood plains of this suburban 'garden'. Perhaps the cell machinery that allows these amazing mangrove shrubs and trees to thrive in water of such varying salt concentration helps manage the water pollutants that humans pour into the waterways.

This is a problem in most urban ecosystems - the rice paddies in Japan have gradually become squeezed in between towering, smoke-billowing factories where minerals released from water guzzling industries, such as cadmium and mercury, are too concentrated, too toxic for the waterways, environment and humans. Human cadmium poisoning causes a terribly painful bone destruction condition. The name of the disease says it all - '*itai-itai*' disease is translated as 'it hurts, it hurts'. The leaching of contaminated surface-applied superphosphate fertilizers releases the poisonous cadmium mineral traces even in the lush Waikato flood plains. Even before this this toxin cadmium is sluiced and sinks down underground, the pasture levels have become too toxic for the hungry and thirsty dairy herds to graze.

And mercury (which flows, but not like water) or its methylmercury compound, was pumped by Chisso industrial giants into the bay of Minamata, Kumamoto prefecture, Japan, poisoning the fisheries in as far back as 1956. Notoriously, it has caused irreversible brain damage in children (and other shell fish eating mammals) who continued to eat their staple diet drawn from the sea. Even in America, and in Australia today, where efforts had been made to stop other means of pollution, towns with known seriously toxic water still exist. In the city of Flint, Michigan, USA, named after a tough and resistant stone, the town supply of water was switched to a different river source. This river water, already allowed to be acid-polluted due to lack of council attention, was routed to flow through old lead pipes to markedly increase lead exposure - a serious neurotoxin for children. But potable water from plastic bottles will not be the answer. South of Darwin, in Catherine, and in twelve other towns near RAAF defence sites, fire-retardants had been hosed out of their equipment and into outside drains. Time will tell whether the demands of the townsfolk to protect their children will be met. It remains remains doubtful whether the reluctant, recalcitrant 'government authorities' will meet



them to discuss the problems arising from the toxins that have leached in the subterranean drinking water supplies, as are questions about whether a fair fight for remediation and health restoration in America can be resolved.

The geographical names that label various parts of the earth's surface belie what's happened before. Are they harbouring clues – often ominous – of the planet we are moving towards? I have long been intrigued by the name – the 'Siberian Traps' or steps – that feature remarkable lava flows formed by a much more spread out process, formed like vast hillocks of writhing molten rock. In appearance, they resemble the tailings left after open cast mining – the hummocks and hollows. Gradually the rain leaches the toxins into unusable and poisonous, sterile ponds and into underground water bodies that rarely stay still, but that rise to the surface during earthquakes.

Mining is encroaching on the littoral areas such as the edges along Canadian shale sands near lakes, and on black-purple iron ore-bearing sands of the sea beaches on the West Coast of Auckland. These too are in the firing line. Will

these too, in time, be formed into mining 'traps' - 'environmental entrapment processes' of another kind?

In our oceans, vast, doubly polluting oil mining and rigs and wells are constructed off the shoreline. And here the chemicals used to clean up the oils spills are causing widespread pollution. The world waits to see whether drilling under the frozen Arctic ice sheets will commence. But meanwhile plastics made from oil-derivatives slowly whirl around over vast square kilometres to form 'foaming' plastic-bottle-rafts that continually deteriorate into nanoplastic particles that are foreign or xenobiotic to sea creatures. Changed heating gradients, altered sea gyres, carbonic acidification, pollutants, and excess harvesting have all combined to affect perceptible declines in many species of marine life.

Yet there are also small oases of hope. In India, a whole province has adopted a state organic policy called the Sikkim Organic Mission Project. The inhabitants have carefully chosen to become organic through keeping much of the old waterways in their remote mountain lands. They aim to produce just enough for people and

environs to survive and hopefully thrive. Imagine the delight of the local insects! Pollinator bees are now offered the prospect of plentiful non-toxic nectar and water, lots of choices of nutritious pollen with no bee-addictive nicotinamides or gut microbe killing fungicides!

All of life depends on that weird water molecule that cycles in and out of bodies, ecologies, volcanoes, land and sky, waterways and seas – recycling above and below ground, 'drawn' hither and thither.

But perhaps the time for all this water recycling has run its course. Perhaps it is time that Earth's water stopped doing all the thankless work of supporting human food and sustenance, moving the rubbish and transport, rinsing off but redistributing our life-killing toxins, driving our energy machines and erratic climates. Perhaps this water may change its course and just decide to 'do a Mars' – evaporating itself out into space. It is possible that this life, as we've come to understand it, is done. And it was wonderful, all of it - even the inquisitive, but disruptive human. Conceivably, it's time for our planet to send, in mineral water form, the giver of life back to

where it came from. Space might just draw Earth's water for the last time, leaving our planet lifeless, stark and beautiful - no longer a rare sparkling, watery gem in the universe, but another rocky planet, like so many others.

Post Script.or possibly Mars has hidden its own small cache of water away for now – perhaps it's stashed it in frozen reserves for some purpose ... or perhaps not ...

Dr. Annie W. Beaumont

Dr. Annie W. Beaumont has lived in New Zealand and Australia. She describes herself as a 'naturalist' of the old sort, interested in the science and the wonders of the world. Her biology and design studies have taken her to many countries, and she believes that while creative and science thinking could improve the fate of the world, commodity technology and its funders will not. She currently lives in Queensland.

11

DRAWN TO WATER

Dr. Liz O'Brien

I have always been drawn to water.

As young girl growing up in North Queensland, my days ranged from exploring rainforest creeks to immersion in vibrant reefs. I have happy memories of fossicking in the creek looking for stones which had been polished smooth by the tumbling of the flowing waters. I'd watch the delicate dance of dragonflies as they dipped and soared across the creek. I'd catch tadpoles and native fish with my home-made net made with a bent wire coat-hanger and an old stocking.

I have memories of rowing my little boat in the crystal blue waters that surrounded the small coral cay of Goat Island in the Great Barrier Reef. The island's shoreline chimed with music as each wavelet rolled the stark white skeletons of long dead branching corals. I remember diving in to swim with the fish and the reef, the revitalising seawater relieving me from the sun's heat and letting me fly and soar in my underwater playground.

Back on land I have memories of the summer wet season bringing heavy rains and tropical storms. As the waters rose, my house would become an

island and I would play in the knee deep water, rescuing the drowning worms as they emerged from the flooded soil.

Even on moving to Brisbane I sought out water. I discovered an abandoned sand quarry which was filled with life. I marveled at the sundews, magical plants that thrived in the damp soil and whose lure of sweet liquid trapped small insects. I would spend hours exploring the small creeks that veined through the quarry and sustained communities of fish, tadpoles, insects and turtles.

The choice was easy when it came to my career - it had to involve water. I studied marine biology as an undergraduate and then chose to complete a PhD in molecular biology. My research home was the reef on Heron Island and this time I experienced the reef at night. My study animal was the beautiful (and delicious) tropical abalone which only emerged in darkness to graze the succulent red algae that lived amongst the corals. I would encounter other reef life in my search for these cryptic animals. These included magnificent tropical rock lobsters and bright orange octopus who were also out feeding, colorful parrot fish dozing in their protective mucus cocoon, green

sea turtles sleeping under coral ledges, and fleeing lemon sharks shocked awake by my presence.

My career then took me to Bribie Island to run an aquaculture research team, working with industry to grow delicious saucer scallops, oysters and abalone. Then I left the world of water for a time. After several years working in industry policy and investment I sought out water again. I found an incredible group of brilliant and passionate researchers who studied water in the environment, from source to sea. I was fortunate enough to take up a strategic research management role to support them to make connections, secure funding and develop and maintain partnerships. I am surrounded by discussions of water every day and I feel my connection to water grow stronger the more I learn.

My water story will not finish with me, it continues with my children. Like a lot of Australian children, they are water babies, drawn to the water of local freshwater creeks, ocean beaches and island bays.

Dr. Liz O'Brien

Dr Liz O'Brien is the Associate Director of Research with the Australian Rivers Institute, Griffith University. She brings together her experience as a research team leader, Government policy officer and communicator to facilitate the establishment and development of large scale, strategic research collaborations. She also works to build the capability of researchers to secure funding, communicate effectively and develop their careers, resource rights, and Indigenous capacity building for improved participation in natural resource management and planning, as well as the social and cultural values associated with water.



12 WATER: CONNECTING PEOPLE AND COUNTRY

Assoc. Prof. Sue Jackson

Water is a key feature of Australian Indigenous cultural landscapes, invested with meaning and significance and crucial for the survival of all life (Jackson 2006). Water is not only important for subsistence livelihoods - as an underlying source of sustenance for the foods and medicines that Indigenous people rely upon (Jackson et al 2012) - it also plays an important role in shaping identities. An affiliation with a waterscape, such as a river or spring, may play a key role in the formation of Indigenous group and individual identity (Langton 2002). Throughout Australia there are numerous Indigenous nations who define themselves as freshwater or river people. The Barkindji of western NSW, who recently protested over the poor state of the Darling River, describe themselves as 'people of the river'. Barkindji artist Badger Bates describes the strength of his connection to the 'Barka' in an interview with anthropologist, Lorraine Gibson:

I was reared up on the river, that's where we get our name from. Barka means 'river', Barkindji means 'river People'. Without the river we lose our culture, we lose our identity (2012).

For another language group, whose country is found between the Fish and Moyle rivers west of the Daly River in the Northern Territory, their very name refers to the riparian world where language relates people to place. Ngan'gikurunggurr' means Deep Water Sounds (Ungunmerr 2003: vii). It is described as the language of the swamp people who live in the lower reaches of the Moyle River.

Rich religious and symbolic traditions relating to water complement its material uses (Merlan 1987; Bradley 2010; Strang 2005). Water is understood as an integral part of the world created by the ancestral beings during what is colloquially known as the Dreaming, and those beings are still present in current land and waterscapes. This means that the land and waterscapes are living entities responsive to human actions and human behaviour (Rose 1996; Barber & Jackson 2011). Indigenous

people frequently describe water as an element that lives or embodies a life force (Yu 2000; Jackson 2006). Yu describes how water is understood as a living entity in Kimberley Aboriginal cultures:

'Living water' is an Aboriginal English expression that requires translation as it refers both to the physical properties of water sources and their cultural significance. Living water sources are permanent water sources characterised as *kunangkul* - everlasting - and are a defining element of an individual's country (2000: 20).

Stories like this are represented in myth, painting, film and dance and local customary practices, beliefs and ideas (Toussaint et al. 2005). In origin stories, or myths, accounts of poor water management by ancestral beings consistently serve as ecological parables; pointing to a strong and enduring awareness within Indigenous societies of the need to cautiously manage and share water resources (Jackson 2006; Toussaint et al 2001; 2005).

Whilst the stories change across the Australian landscape, there is a consistent belief in water as a sacred and elemental source and symbol of life (Langton 2006), a belief that is shared with other indigenous populations around the globe.

Aboriginal groups in Cape York share with other Australian Indigenous communities a cosmology in which the landscape and its waterway are the products of ancestral creativity, in what is locally known as the Story Time. Having formed all the water sources, as well as other features of the land, the ancestral beings 'sat down', remaining in the land and water as sentient forces with the power to provide (or withhold) resources for the human inhabitants of the area. In doing so, they defined the spatial and social organisation of Aboriginal clans, providing each with totemic links to particular places and tracts of country, and to each other (Strang 2005).

The ancestral beings also created the cultural institutions governing Indigenous peoples' systems of rights and interests - rights and responsibilities in relation to places under Indigenous law. Possession of knowledge of the environment, its natural features and vitality, its spiritual dimensions, is a prerequisite to exercising rights to land and water. The

crucial sustaining role of culture and country, and of the laws and practices associated with them, also place a heavy obligation on its current custodians to protect and pass on as much knowledge as they can to subsequent generations. Rapid loss of knowledge is a source of concern and motivation to many Indigenous elders and to those belonging to community-based organisations that undertake environmental management activities to maintain or restore their vibrant relationships with place.

Phillip Sullivan from the Darling River region laments the state of his river country and sees in it a reflection of societal relations:

The environment is a reflection of who we are as human beings, and the environment is in a crappy way. And you know why it's in a crappy way? Because we're in a crappy way. That's the bottom line. The environment is terrible. The river is terrible. The water's still there, but the river's terrible. And it's in a crappy way because we as a people are in a crappy way. And when we get that right, when we get that relationship right, without forcing our issues on each other, I believe that the river will be right. (cited in Muir et al. 2010)

Partly in response to numerous environmental threats, but less so the despair expressed by Indigenous peoples (see Weir 2009), Australia's system of water governance has slowly been transformed over the past 25 years. Reforms to water governance, particularly to the institutions that allocate water, have focused on sustainability of water use, particularly on the needs of ecosystems.

Although Indigenous groups were not involved in the national water reform agenda until it had been underway for more than a decade, more recently they have been increasingly active in both articulating their values and interests in water and highlighting the difficulties created by inappropriate water developments and management systems, including scientific techniques (Jackson 2017). Australia's premier water policy, the National Water Initiative (NWI), explicitly recognizes Indigenous interests in water, although the rights acknowledged are limited (Jackson and Altman 2009). It refers to the *Native Title Act of 1993* which recognised the legal right to water for Aboriginal people for customary or traditional purposes. In signing on to the NWI, all Australian jurisdictions agreed that their water access entitlements and planning frameworks will provide for Indigenous access to water resources through planning processes and inclusion of Indigenous customary, social,

and spiritual objectives in water plans. However plans prepared to date have rarely specifically addressed Indigenous requirements.

The main approach being trialled is incorporating Indigenous objectives into the consideration and allocation of water resources to maintain (or recover) environmental flows. Environmental flows are intended to protect the quantity, timing, and quality of water flows required to sustain freshwater and estuarine ecosystems *and the human livelihoods and well-being that depend on these ecosystems* (Brisbane Declaration 2007; emphasis added).

But the policies and practices of environmental water management tend to divorce aquatic ecology from social relationships, cultural practices, belief systems and wider social context (Jackson 2017). New approaches are needed to widen the scope of environmental assessments to include Indigenous knowledge and valuations and account for the social, cultural and environmental benefits that Indigenous groups derive from water, as well as the obligations to care for waterscapes.

Some Indigenous advocates in the Murray Darling Basin are closely examining the various policy options developed to acquire water to improve environmental water regimes for their social justice potential. Some feel that instruments that deliver water to the environment might serve as model institutions through which to redress the historical neglect of Indigenous water rights and interests and the transparently inequitable distribution of water in rural Australia. With this goal in mind, Indigenous organisations like the Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations has developed the notion of a 'cultural flow'. Cultural flows are defined by the MDB's Indigenous water alliances in the following terms:

Cultural Flows are water entitlements that [would be] legally and beneficially owned by the Indigenous Nations of a sufficient and adequate quantity and quality to improve the spiritual, cultural, environmental, social and economic conditions of those Indigenous Nations (Weir, 2009).

The counter-strategies currently being promoted and enacted by Indigenous groups represent key sites for experimentation in alternate forms of water resource governance. They also represent a challenge for professionals in the field of

environmental water management to develop more inclusive processes and give greater priority to Indigenous water management objectives in their water purchases and management programs. Environmental researchers can assist by partnering with Indigenous communities to explore methods and means to derive water and other requirements to sustain the valued associations and customary relationships Indigenous people maintain with their rivers and waters. Unless social and cultural dimensions are integral considerations in water management governance, water resource developments will continue to significantly threaten local livelihoods and ways of life.

Assoc. Prof. Sue Jackson

Assoc. Prof. Sue Jackson is a Principal Research Fellow with the Australian Rivers Institute, Griffith University, and an Australian Research Council Future Fellow. She is a geographer with 20 years experience researching the social dimensions of natural resource management in Australia, particularly north Australian community-based conservation initiatives and institutions. Her research interests span systems of resource governance, including customary Indigenous resource rights, and Indigenous capacity building for improved participation in natural resource management and planning, as well as the social and cultural values associated with water.

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13

A CYCLE OF CONNECTION; AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL ARTISTS AND WATER

Adjunct Prof. Margo Neale & Prof. Pat Hoffie

Story #1: Lin Onus: what's beneath the surface¹

“trouble with you fellas...is you only paint what's on the surface – you gotta paint what's beneath the surface”.²

In 1989 Australian Aboriginal artist Lin Onus took up a residency at the Fujin Kaikan and Kyobun Centre in Japan through the Yokohama City Board of Education. At the time he was also there to launch the hanging of *Suns and Waters*, a tapestry made from his design, at the Yokohama Art Museum.

Onus' residency in Japan was fruitful and transformative. Like many residencies, it offered him an opportunity to think with a little critical distance about his own place and situation. That same year he'd been invited by Clyde Holding to take up the position as Chair of the Aboriginal Arts Committee of the Australia Council, a role he undertook with the promise that he would hold the interests of artists paramount in all decisions made .

At that time the Australia Council flew delegates to committee meetings across the country . It was during one of these 'pilgrimages' that Onus met Maningrida man John Bulun Blulun and Ganalpuyngu man Jack Wunuwun, who befriended him. Later Lin told how the men would seek counsel with each other, comparing accounts of where things were at, swapping stories, trading critical responses and just generally 'chewing the fat'. At that time Aboriginal representatives who came up from 'down South' were dubbed by some in community as 'yellow fellas' – Indigenous people without language and ceremony who were often 'adopted' when they shared their stories. On one occasion, Jacky Wunuwun, who adopted Lin and his family, gave frank critical advice to Lin: “trouble with you fellas,” he said, “is you only paint what's on the surface – you gotta paint what's beneath the surface”. Lin took on the advice literally as



well as metaphorically, and when he arrived for his residency in Japan he discovered ample opportunities for putting it into practice.

Kyoto is known for its beautiful shrines and gardens with their meticulously tended trees and shrubs, bamboo brakes, walkways, shrines, ponds and waterways. It was here that Lin came upon koi –decorative carp – swimming in water so clear that they seemed suspended in air. These passages of water reflected the landscape above, the sky beyond, and beneath the transparent meniscus on which occasional leaves floated , an underwater world through which beautifully coloured fish moved . These became the subject with which the artist dealt for many years to come. However, into this magical Japanese world Lin Onus introduced clues of his own Indigenous heritage and vision – fish swimming against a background of rarak, some seen from above with cast shadow, others as X-ray visions against backgrounds of rarak, and blowing bubbles reminiscent of Aboriginal dot paintings. The rarak he used were not the moiety defining version, but an infill that flagged his culture and testified to his identity, just as the dots were a playful iteration of what had become the identifier of Western

Desert Painting and later of Aboriginal art in a more general sense.

In *Idea board for commission – fish* (1994 – 95), for example, three dimensional fish are treated with rarak against a black background. There's a stillness to this work – one where time and place seem frozen and familiar. There's a sense of simultaneously being in at least two or perhaps three places – of gazing into the cultivated, acculturated pools of Japan while recalling the crystal-clear waterways of Arnhem Land, and, possibly, of being in a kind of shadow-land of dreams, a floating world where the role of things is no longer governed by their outward appearances.

Lin Onus painted *Arafura Swamp* in 1990, after he'd returned from the residency. To all intents and purposes it's a more-or-less realistic view of the swamp where a ringbarked tree is reflected on its surface. But the gaze of the viewer is taken and twisted through and past any rational processes of observation in the physical world, and carried between a number of multiple perspectives – in and beyond and under a succession of planes – so that the divisions

between the separate worlds of sky and land and water seem continuous and interchangeable.

By 1996, in *Reflections: Barmah Forest*, the realistic ambience has been replaced by a kind of atmospheric ennui. The reflection of a long, lithe, bleached tree limb stretches from the top to the bottom of the canvas, lit by a cold grey light from the right, outside the frame. Beyond it, other trees are similarly silhouetted, gathered like witnesses against a cold grey mackerel sky. Beneath the impassive surface of the water, white, transparent fish drift and turn. Yet some of their tails catch the reflection of the tree and overlay it, contradicting any rational spatial reading. As a result, the eight spirit fish seem more akin to wraiths than aquatic species, suspended in some kind of otherworldly numen.

Lin Onus' commitment to going 'beneath the surface' through his painting continued until his death in 1996. His time in Japan introduced him to an understanding of the ukiyo-e "pictures of the floating world" that had flourished between the 17th century to the 19th century in Japan, and these worlds had an almost elegiac resonance with the advice he'd been given by

his fellow artists Johnny Bulun Bulun and Jacky Wunuwun. The influences from 'here' and 'there' overlaid to produce a kind of painterly imagery – a haunting reminiscent of a layered consciousness where Benedict Anderson's "spectre of comparisons"³ – might hover and flit. It's a fluid, watery world that captures air and land, past and future, traditions and stylistic transitions. This 'whole-lot-ed-ness' – the capacity to envision the interconnectedness and fluidity of all life-energies, was what Lin Onus glimpsed in Japanese cultural forms – in the imagery, the poetry, and in the gardens. It was also that sense of interconnectedness that captured Akira Tatehata's imagination with such force during a time of travel when he encountered for the first time imagery by a Central Desert woman that so took his breath away that he felt compelled to respond.

Story 2: Emily Kngwarreye; the whole lot

In 1998, Japanese critic and academic Akira Tatehata saw the retrospective exhibition of Emily Kngwarreye (c.1910-96) held at the Queensland Art Gallery⁴. He was transfixed and deeply moved by the work; so much so, that he felt he had to bring an exhibition of Emily's to Japan. Later, when he was appointed Director of the National Museum of Art in Osaka, he realised the opportunity to make his aim a reality together with another Emily fan, Seiichiro Sakata, who, at the time was the Australian correspondent for the newspaper group, Yomiuri Shimbun. Together they sought out curator, Koori woman Margo Neale, who by then had moved from QAG to the National Museum of Australia (NMA) which did not have an Emily in its collection. However, through ministerial representation, Margo Neale was released to deliver the exhibition, where it opened at the National Museum of Art in Osaka on 25 February, 2008, and later that year at the National Art Centre in Tokyo.

This was an audacious undertaking in every sense – with a total of 150 works, not only was it the largest solo exhibition by an Australian artist to travel outside the country, it was also the first official introduction of mainstream Japanese audiences, not only to contemporary

Australian Aboriginal artists, but also to contemporary Australian art in general. Margo Neale anticipated that there would have to be significant adjustments in the presentation of the work for Japanese audiences. She knew that prior to this, the only large exhibitions held in the new building by artists outside Japan had been by recognised the European 'masters' Monet and Modigliani. There was, therefore, some irony in the fact that this exhibition, titled "*Utopia: the genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye*" was being billed as a modernist exhibition, while the concurrent exhibition of works by Italian modernist Amedeo Modigliani was billed as representing the 'primitive'.

There was some justifiable trepidation about how Japanese audiences might respond to the fact that this 'genius' artist, as Tatehata and others insisted on referring to Emily, did not conform to any of the characteristics of European male artist stereotypes that dominated the canon. On the contrary, the fact that she was (a) a woman, who was (b) 'elderly', (c) Aboriginal, and had

lived and worked in the central desert of Australia confounded the very idea of a 'canon' of 'genius'.

Curator Margo Neale was aware of the need to recontextualise the work through a very different installation than that in the Brisbane hang, and configured it to themes that would have immediate recognition within Japanese audiences: (1) rituals and ceremony; (2) sites of significance (which in Japan are marked by shrines); (3) age and wisdom; (4) reverence for nature, and (5) calligraphy and mark making.

For Japanese audiences, who recognize the calligraphic mark as a visual representation of the conduit of energy; Emily's seemingly effortless command of line was evidence of the the artist's synthesis of complex processes of energy-interconnection through imagery of understatement and power. Tatehata has described how, on first seeing *Big Yam* (1996) in Australia, he was moved to tears, and how, ten years later when the works were hung in Japan, that emotional response had retained its impact.

Margo understood that the exhibition had to first unsettle the prevailing view of Aboriginal cultural

production as 'primitive', so the proposition that an Aboriginal artist from remote Australia was being heralded as a 'masterful' artist of the contemporary was initially unfathomable.⁵ This counter narrative could only be 'initiated' by placing an epic work of grandiose gestures - the powerful *Big Yam Dreaming* (1995) - at the entrance. This 3 by 8 metre black and white calligraphic masterpiece features a maze of interconnected white lines that traverse a long horizontal black space with an undulating, looping dynamism. This force-field of energy is simultaneously a reflection on the land above as well as below the ground. The surface representation is evocative of the crazed patterns caused when the earth's crust cracks open, as the water-saturated ripened yams swell and expand. And from beneath, the lines follow the sinuous roots of the finger yams (Anooralya) as they blindly search their way towards tiny tributaries of water in the deep earth. In this sense the painting can be seen as a kind of hydrographic map - a subterranean network of capillaries that nourish the earth and the plants it produces. The yams are akin to little tuberous water reservoirs, and their interlinking root systems trace the invisible network of water that is the lifeblood of

a land that, on the surface, may appear dry and barren. The painting, then, is continuous with the painter and with the act of painting. During the last years of her life, when she took up painting, Emily's images both reflected as well as drew from a powerful cycle of energy that feeds all in an interconnected matrix. When pressed for an explanation of what her work was about, the artist famously replied it was about the "whole lot" - a Dreaming cycle that connected the vitality of the water that fills the yams with life, to the point that they burst through the earth and can be reclaimed by those who understand that cycle and know how to tap into it.

Emily's yam-track tributary paintings are featured in many of her works; these linear networks were often the first thing she'd lay down when beginning a painting. The artist's middle name - Kame - is the Anmatyerre word for the yam, and the yam story on her ancestral place Alhalkere is Emily's. As she would say "I am Kae, I am yam". She literally embodied this through a piercing in her septum in which she was known to carry a yam seed. When she painted this deceptively simple story - the story of the conversion of water to food, to flowers, to sustenance for that

part of the desert in which she was born and lived at Alhalkere in the Utopia community 250 kms north east of Alice Springs, she was painting the cycle of connection in which land and sky and creatures are drawn together by watery pathways of sustenance .

Story 3: The Wagilags and the Rainbow Serpent

Thousands of kilometres north east from Emily's country other creation-water stories are told. Like all creation stories, the story of the Wagilag sisters has a range of versions depending on the place they are describing as well as by whom and when they are told. One version says that there were two Wagilag sisters and a child or children who were conceived in incestuous circumstances so that they had to leave their community. This story narrates the creative acts of the sisters as they travelled from south east Arnhem Land westward, where they arrived at a camp at Mirramina water hole after an exhausting and treacherous journey. They didn't realise that it was a male site and the home of Witiitj a giant ancestral python more commonly called a rainbow serpent and taboo for them. During their travels they created, named, hunted and collected yams and berries, and decided they'd take a break from the travelling and wash in the waterhole. However, one of them was menstruating at the time. This sullied the waters, offending the rainbow serpent Witiitj, who, unbeknownst to them, dwelt below the surface. The fact that they were breaking code and sullyng the waterhole was a sure sign that there were going to be consequences. And

consequences there were: in front of their very eyes an enormous Rainbow Serpent reared up out of the water. He was terrible to behold – from his tongue came lightning; the spittle issued from his rage issued a torrent of water, and his deep, growling rumbles of discontent and fury rolled into a supernatural thunder.

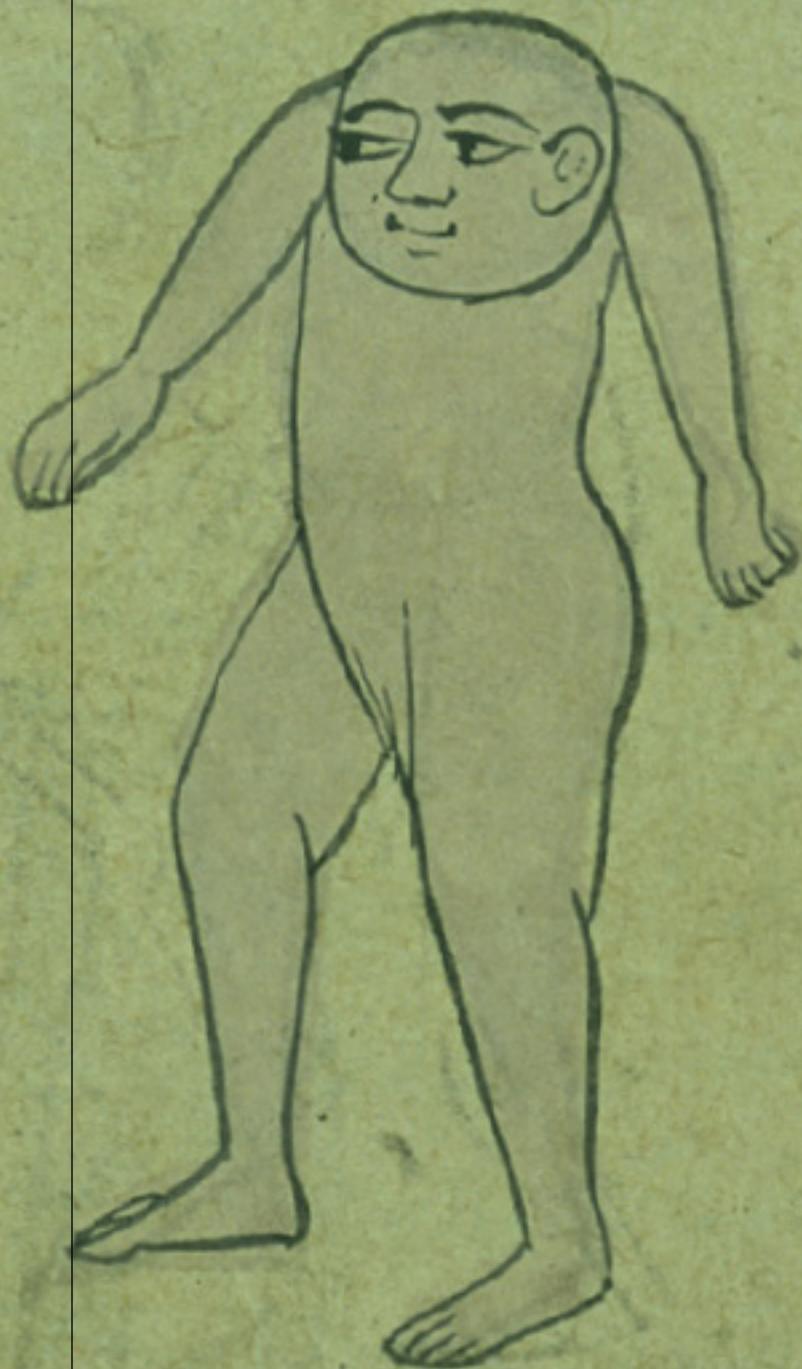
The women were understandably terrified, but they gathered their wits together as best they could and began to sing and dance in an effort to appease him. He stopped for a second, momentarily transfixed. But then sheer turmoil erupted again – the order of things had been completely disrupted. Codes had been transgressed; the world turned topsy-turvy, and the sun came out at the same time as the moon and the sun shone while it rained. The Rainbow Serpent reared again, and again the Wagilag sisters danced and sung. They danced and sung furiously, so that momentarily the creature, terrifying in its rage, became calm.

But not for long. His mood eclipsed and again he spun into a rage that arched his back from the waterhole to the heavens and back down again, whereupon, overcome by disgust, he swooped in

to swallow them. He stopped. He went still. And then began a cycle of violent upheavals where he repeatedly vomited them out followed by an attempt to engulf them over and over and over, like a cosmological chaos of gorge and puke.

All this maelstrom brought floods to the land. Understandably the commotion brought all the creatures of the area to gather together by the waterhole and the ancestral pythons chastised him for swallowing members of his own moiety – also taboo. And so the cycle continued – he'd stop, listen to the remonstrations of the animals that surrounded this crazed performance at the waterhole, he'd regurgitate the sisters, they'd begin dancing and singing their won protestations and defence, then it would all begin again. These dancing and song cycles became the beginning of one of the Creation Stories of Arnhem Land – stories where land demanded its particular codes of behaviour be established between genders and taboos that must be followed; land that depended on the regeneration of sacred water, and land that was dependent on the cyclic fury of water movement to rejuvenate its balance. The humans were all bit-players in these stories, along with forces of nature of which

they were a part. Instead of stars and heroes, leading characters were transformed into cycles of interdependence - patterns of destruction and renewal where land and water and spirits were one.



Story 4: Djang'kawu and the stolen dillybags

The Djankawa moiety have their own Creation Story, and like all Creation Stories, each telling adds another layer, suggests another nuance. As a result the tales are fluid in nature – they flux and weave and shape-shift like mirages.

One version of the Djang'kawu sisters creation story tells of how two sisters paddled from the east from the Baralku, the Island of the Dead, in a canoe with one brother. Other versions do not have a male member. . When they arrived on the shores of north-east Arnhem Land they leapt ashore and immediately went to work with their digging sticks looking for food, plunging them into the ground, bringing forth water, and giving birth to the clans, populating the country with people, animals and sacred waterholes, and laying down the laws. When these Djang'kawu women were done with their creative activities, tired from their paddling and food-hunting, they hung their sacred dilly bags in a fork of a tree while they went for a swim, according to some versions. It was then that the men, descended from the brother, stole their sacred dilly bags, knowing that they contained the power of the ceremonies that would ensure the cycles of knowledge and management of the land/

waterways. To this day the men of the region take on the role of women in ceremonies, performing the stories and replicating birth. But the women of the region know well that only they have the creative power to give birth, to give life. They are the ones who understand where the power lies, and know well that the sacred waterholes of Arnhem Land are part of their birthright and that they, like the men, have complementary cultural obligations to these places of significance.

Story 5: Water now

Like water, Australian Aboriginal rituals merge and mutate, flow and flood, altered and adjusted by those who use them to keep alive the connections with each other and with place. This year, Carriageworks in Sydney featured *Winyanboga Yurringa*, written by Yorta Yorta/Kurnai woman Andrea James. The play features the tale of five contemporary Aboriginal women who spend a night together at a campsite on the banks of an inland river. It's a comedy that's deadly serious: because of their busy urban lives, each of the women is pressed to find the time to spend that night together, and all but one are deeply ambivalent about the reason for being there. Only Neecy - Auntie, sister and cousin to the various group members, understands the necessity of camping together on the Yorta Yorta country they share as heritage. She understands that connection to country runs deeper than the trivial issues that chatter away on the surface of their everyday lives. From the beginning, traces of the women's urban lives erupt like angry bubbles to prevent any smooth flow to their time together. But gradually, almost imperceptibly, the river-land seeps into their awareness of what they share, submerging the inconsequential chatter of their surface communication.

The play's humour draws from shared concerns – frivolous apprehensions about appearance, sexuality, jobs, relationships. The banter is familiar – banal and bitchy, good humoured and conciliatory. The easy familiarity brings home the emerging awareness of attachment to land in a way that is strong and evocative, and the audience comes slowly to its own awareness about the profound connection that flows from the deep past to tie each of the women to its rituals of belonging. The rituals are matter-of-fact rather than arcane – everyday rather than other-worldly. But for all that, they remain no less powerful.

Waterways, water holes, rivers, streams, billabongs, estuaries, underground artesian tributaries, the sea – each and every form that water takes is also recognised as a spiritual reservoir – a vessel for the souls of the ancestors to return to and for the spirits of those-yet-to-be-born. But the possibilities for that returning relies on proper rituals, proper ceremonies. Part of the proper ceremony for death, according to Warrubirlibirl, a Kuninjku man from Western Arnhem Land at the Top End of Australia, requires that the sweat of the dead person – the water of

their person-hood – must be washed back into the waterhole from whence it came. Then the relatives are rendered unrecognisable to avoid the spirit of the dead returning. Doused in ochres and smoked to drive the spirit away, they engage in rituals of singing and chanting and dancing. And, in those same waterholes, the spirits of the yet-to-be-born can enter the womb of pregnant women during their time of quickening.

Water is central to the regional diversity and cultural complexity of Australian Aboriginal cultural values. The element is an integral feature of Indigenous social, economic, political and cultural life. Indigenous relationships to waterways and water usage and respect for water in all its manifestations are identified through law, history and custodianship protocols. The power of water to transform itself as well as the life-forms it sustains forms a powerful metaphor that links all aspects of life. And as a result, any interference with traditional water sources disturbs cultural, as well as ecological, systems.

In desert ecosystems water is particularly scarce, and the capacity for understanding where it lies is crucial for survival. Complex dreaming

stories or songlines provide maps that navigate pathways to water - to where edible plants grow, where grasslands and sand dunes and salt lakes lie, and who the ancestral spirits that belong to these places are. In turn, these spirits dictate the protocols of preservation that must be observed, so that the entire territory is governed by a meshwork of law and lore. Margo tells a story that casts light on how this is realised in practical everyday terms:

“When my husband Bruce was driving in the area of the Canning Stock route in August 2012 with two local Aboriginal people aged in their early to mid 50s, they would periodically spot a land feature that cued them into song. At one point Yandjimi excitedly asked the driver to stop the car and indicated that over to the left side of the road, claiming that there was a waterhole on the other side of the escarpment. On asking Yandjimi if he had been there before, he said he hadn't. “Then how do you know it is there?” Bruce asked the men. Yandjimi said he knew it was there because it was in the song his Aunty had taught him. With some scepticism the driver agreed to walk several hundred metres and scale the rubbly escarpment to find the waterhole located in the song. To his

amazement it was exactly where the song said it was. This was no surprise to Yandjimi.”⁶

For Aboriginal people across the western and central deserts, the Seven Sisters Dreaming stories or songlines (Minypuru or Kungkarangkalpa) function as corridors of knowledge about how to survive physically, socially and spiritually. They are arterial networks of lines that criss-cross beneath the surface of the continent, surfacing in waterholes and soakages. Like an epic game of join-the-dots, these dreaming tracks follow the life-giving water sources both above and below the ground, and the food and animals they support. The epic tales that join them together and tell of their connection operate like a mnemonic that enables Aboriginal people to remember the stories imprinted in the land, and to know where to find water and food. Epics like the Seven Sisters Stories have multiple purposes, including instruction about appropriate and inappropriate codes of behaviour between genders. In this case the seven sisters flee the endless advances of a lustful old man who culturally had no rights to these women. In their flight from their relentless pursuer, the sisters travel along subterranean

water courses, popping up in waterholes hundreds of kilometres away. The pursuer is also a shapeshifter, and at times transforms himself into the foods they need to consume at various places, thus revealing knowledge of food sources through this story. While Indigenous values are regionally diverse and culturally complex, they share a holistic approach in which water is an integral feature of Indigenous social, economic, political and cultural life. As an Anmatyerre elder from the central desert stated,

“Our cultural values of water are part of our law, our traditional owner responsibilities, our history and our everyday lives. Everyone and everything is related. They are the rules for men, women and country. Anmatyerre Law is strong today, but it is invisible to other people.”⁷

The holistic relationship to water can be seen in the impact it has on the social and legal systems of Aboriginal society. In Arnhem Land, where water sources are permanent and abundant, there is an enduring, clearly-defined clan-descent-based system of ownership of land, whereas in desert regions, where water is less permanent, land ownership systems and

boundaries are more fluid. Because access to water is less predictable in desert areas, many other factors determining custodial rights and responsibilities have to be continually negotiated between groups. These include considerations such as where you were 'conceived', where you were born, and initiated or where kin have passed away.

Australian Aboriginal people make a strong distinction between saltwater and freshwater as identity markers. And although one may define oneself as a saltwater person or a freshwater person, since the processes of colonisation Indigenous people can also inherit both. The meeting of fresh and salt waters that come together in estuarine turbulence and crosscurrents can be both creative and destructive. However, this destruction has been no more turbulent than the colonial clashes with Australian Aboriginal people at coastal sites around the rim of the continent, where the fresh water of the rivers run into the salt waters of the sea. A more contemporary clash, believed by some to be associated with the turbulence of the Murray River waters as they meet the sea, occurred in 1994, in what

is remembered as 'the Hindmarsh Island Bridge Conflict'. At that time, a group of Ngarrindjeri women Elders claimed the site was sacred to them when developers planned to build a bridge (to replace the existing cable ferry) and a marina development near Goolwa in South Australia.

But the confluence of saltwater and freshwater can also be creative; it can manifest in the generative contemporary events like the annual festival run by the Saltwater Freshwater Arts Alliance in the central and northern rivers region of New South Wales. Here, where rivers meet the sea and where colonisation has had enormous impact, cultural regeneration is taking place.

In urban Australia, where the vast population of Australians live, including some 80% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, interaction with water also often occurs in water-holes of another kind – the concrete and plastic swimming pools that dot suburban backyards. Where do these pools, which mix the salt of chlorine with freshwater from the concrete dams and reservoirs, fit in with Indigenous water stories? Given the holistic nature of the Indigenous cosmology they are

part of, rather than separate from, they are also often situated on sites with ancestral power. They are, therefore, also places that are part of that ongoing and developing cosmology. For Aboriginal Australians, the power of this land is unlimited – it has flowed for tens of thousands of years, as have the sacred waterways and sacred story-telling. And the deep cultural streams still run deep beneath and within all aspects of contemporary Indigenous life in this country.

Adjunct Prof. Margo Neale

Adjunct Professor Margo Neale (ANU) is of Irish and Aboriginal descent – from the Kulin nation with Wiradjuri and Gumbayngirr clan connections. She is the Indigenous Advisor to the Director and Senior Indigenous Curator at the National Museum Australia.

Prof. Pat HOFFIE

Pat Hoffie is an artist who writes. She lives in Brisbane.

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⁵ Discussions with the curator Margo Neale, 2016.

⁶ Conversations with the curator, Margo Neale, October 2016.

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14

THE MEMORY OF WATER

Dr. Samantha J. Capon

Australian Rivers Institute, Griffith University

Dry earth crumbled over a waterless landscape. On endless plains, brown and broken stalks stake their territory, footloose roly polys skipping through their ranks. Sunken mats of golden, rotting rushes bow across small depressions, hiding rare emerald jewels in their barely moist embrace. A maze of dirt channels crisscrossing around islands of huge and brittle lignum ghosts, sentinels at their posts. Along the edges, crowded battalions of weary gums, their thinning foliage drooping over peeling curls of papery bark, cling to the banks with their gnarled, exposed roots. All hold the memory of water.

Deeper now. And in the soil, a concealed promise. Tiny parcels, in their hundreds, in their thousands, each enclosing their own unique gift. Seeds, patiently awaiting the word to extend their curious radicles, unfurl their delicate cotyledons and express their vibrant splendour above the surface. Tubers, bulbs, rhizomes, stolons – a myriad of vegetative fragments, poised to establish new outposts of lush growth. Eggs of fairy shrimps and other exotic minutiae eagerly anticipate their chance to dance. All listening for their cue. All holding the memory of water.

A lone pool in the dry river bed. Stagnant wads of decaying leaves. Mysterious scum, an impenetrable gleam, elusive flashes of scaly bodies writhing in the murkiness. Miniscule wisps of ethereal creatures darting across the shimmering surface. A cauldron of possibility. Waiting for connection. Holding the memory of water.

This dryness is not the tragic aftermath of battle nor the silence of a graveyard. It is the space between heartbeats. A vital period of rest between vigorous movements in the desert's ancient song. Water - its rhythm, its time signature and its conductor; its memory counting the beat. The dryness is a resting phase in which to whisper lines known off by heart.

The expectant audience unable to contain their excitement as the sky darkens...

The expectant audience unable to contain their excitement as the sky darkens...

Dr. Samantha J. Capon

Dr. Samantha Capon is a Senior Research Fellow with the Australian Rivers Institute, Griffith University. She has over 15 years' experience researching the ecology and management of riparian, floodplain and wetland vegetation in inland Australia. Her research explores the diversity and dynamics of these ecological systems and informs their conservation and restoration. Her research contributes to improving on-ground water resource management, particularly in areas of restoration and climate change adaptation. In addition to her high quality research, Sam is a gifted designer, teacher, facilitator and network coordinator. Her contributions were recognised in 2016 when she received the Australian Society of Limnology's Early Career Excellence Award.



The background of the entire page is a monochromatic, teal-colored illustration in a woodblock print style. It depicts a crowded boat on a body of water. In the foreground, a large, bearded man with a wide-brimmed hat is shown in profile, looking towards the right. Behind him, the boat is packed with many other figures, some wearing hats and traditional clothing. The water is rendered with fine, rhythmic lines, suggesting movement and texture. A large, white number '15' is superimposed on the left side of the image, set against a dark teal rectangular background.

15

Drawing Water
The Tokyo Installations

AIR 3331 Nishikicho Studio, Tokyo, Japan. Exhibition 26 - 28 Sep 2016

SHARED PACIFIC & TIED CLOSE TOGETHER

Sachiko Suzuki, Yuki Sawaoka, Carol McGregor, Masumi Iida, & Mana Ishimoto

1. *shared Pacific*, 2016. Ink, tarpaulin, cotton, rope, thread, wire, sand, clay. Installation, dimensions variable.

2. *tied close together*, 2016. Sumi ink on hanshi paper and silk, possum skin. Installation, dimensions variable.

1.
sharing same ocean
where sea meets land
polar pull
carriers of freshwater
doki
dilly bag
new horizons

2.
where cultures meet
saltwater/freshwater
water flowing
drizzly rain
high waves
lowtide
bridge

the vessels of our Jomon in the doki and
Aboriginal peoples in the dilly bag
freshwater saltwater
we look at our uses of the ocean and freshwater.





151 Drawing Water (DIG Tokyo 2016)



ドローイング ウォーター (DIG東京2016) 152

Handwritten Chinese characters in cursive script (caoshu) on a horizontal strip of paper. The characters are dark and expressive, with some lighter, faded strokes visible. The paper shows signs of wear and discoloration.

Handwritten Chinese characters in cursive script (caoshu) on a horizontal strip of paper. The characters are dark and expressive, with some lighter, faded strokes visible. The paper shows signs of wear and discoloration.

Handwritten Chinese characters in cursive script (caoshu) on a horizontal strip of paper. The characters are dark and expressive, with some lighter, faded strokes visible. The paper shows signs of wear and discoloration.

TOKYO PROTOCOL; THE WATER MONSTERS' SUMMIT

Miyoko Ozaki, Sally Molloy, Nonoko Kanke & Misuzu Kanda

2016, hand-made costumes, video projection and tea ceremony performance.

During *Typhoon # 17*, the Australian Water Monster Ambassador (Crocodile) and Japanese Water Monster Ambassador ('Kappa') come together in Sagami Bay for a meeting. Crocodile ("the saltwater badass" from northern Queensland rivers) and Kappa (a much feared pond-dwelling character from Japanese mythology) share takes, rituals, and dilemmas relating to their respective monster ecosystem. Playing out scenes like those from a deep dream, Crocodile and Kappa navigate unfamiliar waters using a compass of trust and an almanac of artistic tools and techniques to forge a friendship.







WATER FOLLOWINGS

Rubii Miyoshi, Vanghoua Anthony Vue, Sayuri Furukawa & Hanano Sakamoto.

2016, wood, tape, perspex, bottles, water, photographic prints, pen, string, clips, and camping gear. Installation, dimensions variable.

As avid travelers, artists Rubii and Vanghoua have journeyed to many places to see, be near, be in, or on water. This installation draws out past journeys they have taken to water, and to journeys they have since embarked upon together in Tokyo and Nikko. These routes trace the artists' long distance travels across oceans, to short bike rides through the suburbs and countryside. What underlies these travels is the potent ability of water sources to draw us to them, even in the face of our fears of being overwhelmed and absorbed by them





163 Drawing Water (DIG Tokyo 2016)



ドローイング ウォーター (DIG東京2016) 164



TOKYO/BRISBANE IDENTITY DISASSEMBLY CENTRE

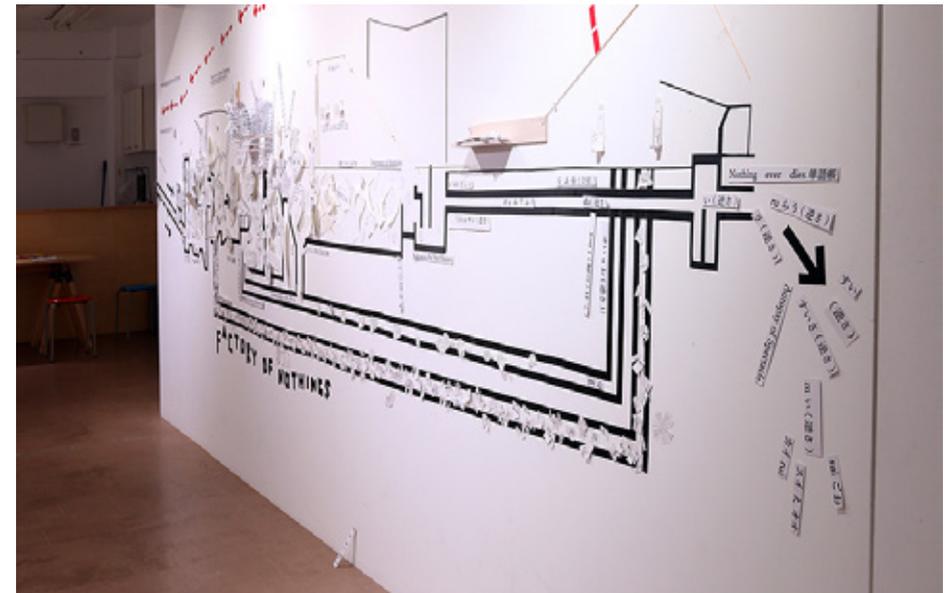
Miyuki Inagaki, Tomohiro Kubota, Maho Saito, Madoka Sugino, & Nat Koyama

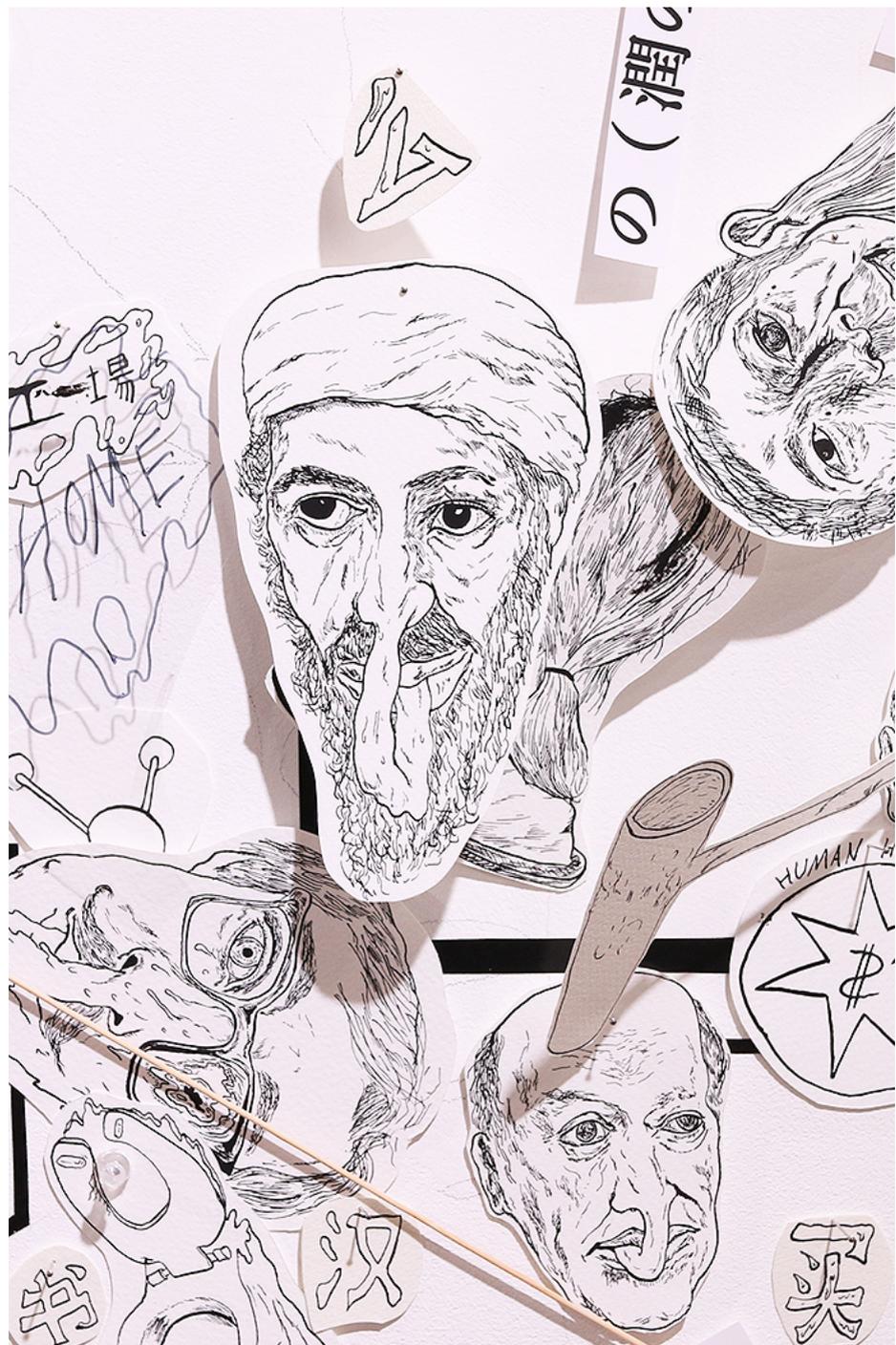
2016, mixed media installation.

A sewerage treatment plant is a facility that changes dirty water into clean water and sludge. The device you see here was made based on this thinking, and has the aim of disassembling symbols one by one and reducing them to zero. We would be happy if it would function as a path of escape out of our present state of drowning in relentlessly onrushing meaning.

Purpose:

1. To make daily life convenient
2. To protect the mental environment
3. Storing superficialities underground, thereby allowing us to forget them at just the right moment and prevent their renewal.

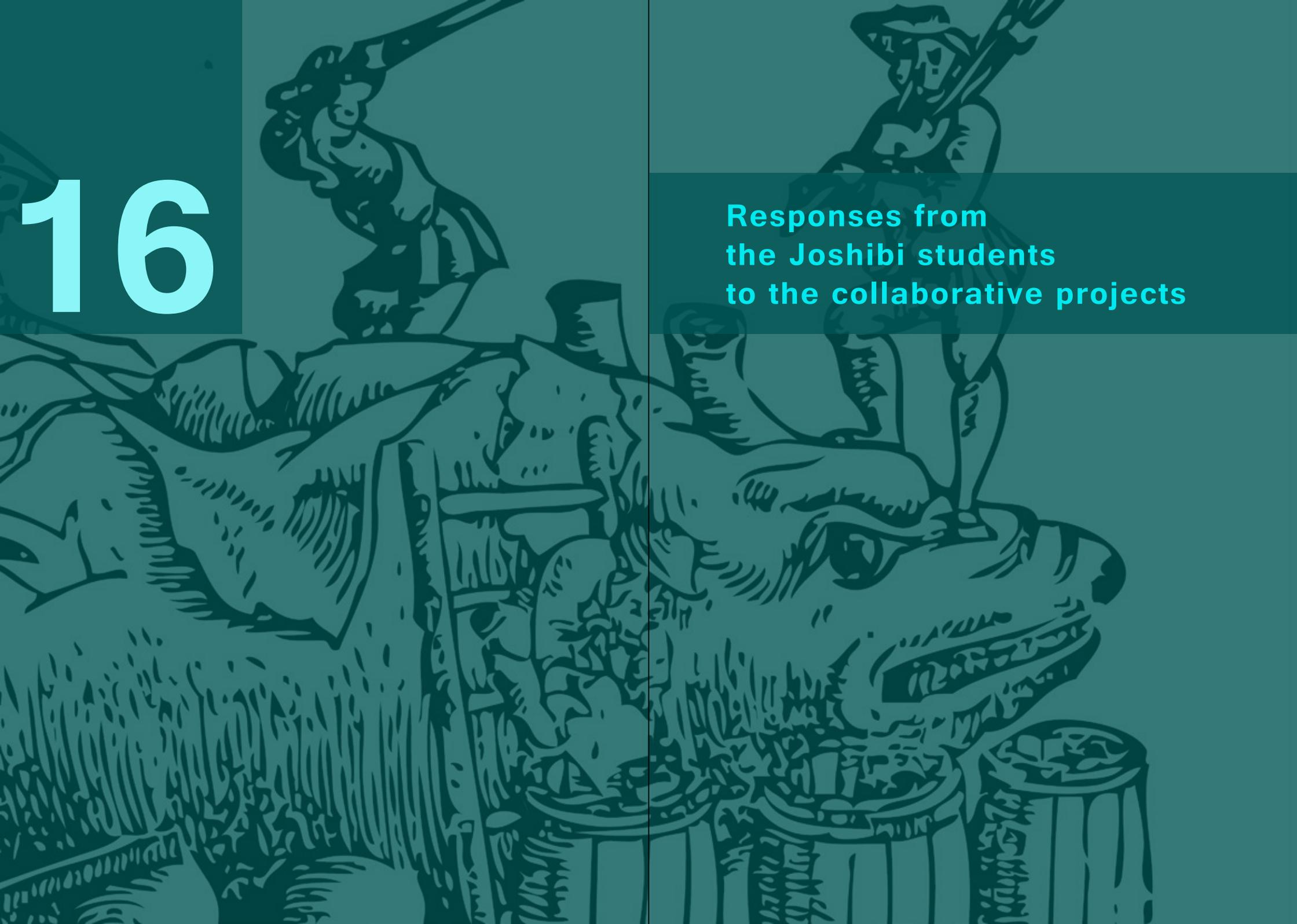






16

**Responses from
the Joshibi students
to the collaborative projects**



ENCOUNTERS, CONNECTED BY THE SEA—TIED CLOSE TOGETHER, SHARED PACIFIC

Written by Masumi Iida & Mana Ishimoto

shared Pacific

Sachiko Suzuki, Carol McGregor, Yuki Sawaoka, Mana Ishimoto & Masumi Iida

This collaboration can be described as joined by an ocean, the friendship of members, and matching cultures. We were inspired by the realization that Australian rivers and Japanese rivers are connected by the Pacific Ocean, and by the similarities that Aboriginal baskets and Jomon-doki share. We incorporated elements of these connections between the two cultures into the installations.

When some of the group members contributed some pictures of the ocean to the group blog, our group chose 'connection' and 'sea' as keywords for our artwork, in the realization that Australia and Japan are not distant countries, but are 'land masses which are connected by sea'.

We visited the ocean of Japan at Shichirigahama Beach on Sagamiwan Bay to search for research materials. Here we examined the direction of

Australia from that point, and imagined the possible connections. When we returned to the studios of the 3331 Residence loaded with jetsam and sea sand, we began discussion about a guiding principle for the work.

We realized that the dessicated roots of seaweed that we'd picked up and laid out on the table-tops resembled letters written in Japanese ink, so we decided to use techniques of calligraphy in our work. The lines drawn using Japanese ink on silk and *hanshi* paper had a manner of bleeding which looked like trickles of water and the flow of a river.

The materials we used in our installations - *hanshi* paper, silk, Japanese ink, and possum skin, are attributes that are affiliated with either Australia or Japan. The letters on the silk traced out the Japanese, English, and Aboriginal words



that describe aspects of the sea and water. Even if the languages are different, Australian people, Japanese people, Aboriginal people and perhaps Jomon people knew the same sea, waves, tides, and water.

Our works were made using each member's particular skills. For example, Carol's knowledge of Aboriginal culture informed her suggestion that we use traditional techniques for the installation. Masumi has expertise in the traditions of calligraphy; Sachiko took particular note of the shared Pacific Ocean of Australia and Japan - she combined pictures of the Pacific Ocean at both Australia and Japan to express the connection of the two countries. Yuki drew from her experience of traveling abroad to help us communicate with each other, while Mana offered information about Jomon-doki and

traditional Japanese water patterns. The chance combination of common interests, hobbies, research subjects and experiences of each group member informed the collaboration for the work. Although each person's ideas and imaginings regarding the keyword of 'water' is different, we agreed that collaborative processes take their form from the flows that pass through the different countries, different cultures, and different people that are finally brought together in the same space.

* Jomon-doki : a vessel made of clay in Jomon Period in Japan 15000 years ago. Jomon means rope pattern. According to another report, Jomon-doki was a tool for making pure water.

* Possum : An indigenous animal of Australia.

* Hanshi paper : A kind of Japanese paper made from mulberry bark.

FRIENDSHIP AND FEAR: THE WATER MONSTER SUMMIT

Written by Misuzu Kanda & Nonoko Kanke

The Water Monster Summit

Sally Molloy, Miyoko Ozaki, Misuzu Kanda, & Nonoko Kanke

In the process of using our group blog to post research on projects and experiences related to water, a Japanese water imp called 'kappa' emerged as a topic of interest. This led on to monsters of the water in Japan and Australia as a developing theme for our production. We then uploaded information about various monsters living in the waters of Japan and Australia, and sourced opinions about places to visit while the team were together in Japan for the research.

During the Tokyo residency period we visited places related to kappa, such as Kappa Bridge Tool Street and Sogenji Temple that is also known as Kappa Omijin. In discussions about the production of the artwork, we realized that both artists - Sally Molloy and Miyoko Ozaki - loved sewing, and also that Miyoko's hobby was cosplay. A proposal was made to make monster costumes and subsequently the artists

were transformed into monsters! We developed the design of the costumes and the imagery for the video of the work through processes of brainstorming.

The storyline follows a crocodile, a monster feared in Australia, as (s)he arrives in Japan, to encounter kappa, a monster feared in Japan and shares experiences until a growing friendship is nurtured.

The tea ceremony with its image-swapping ceremony represents the moment when a strong bond between kappa and crocodile is sealed. Aspects of each resonate with the other as those who are similarly feared by people. In addition, the performance of the tea ceremony that was held as a live experience in front of the video during the exhibition period may be interpreted by the viewer as a means of exploring the



relationship between water and people, through the exchange between water monsters and people.

During the production of this work, Typhoon 17 crossed the coast of Japan. Water sometimes causes enormous harm to people. Although water is indispensable to our daily lives, it is also a terrible thing. This work expresses the relationship between water and people, not from a person's point of view, but from the viewpoint of creatures that people are afraid of. As such it expresses a sense of water's fearful properties.

It is our wish that people think deeply about issues regarding water through this interchange between kappa and crocodile. The continuation of the story of these monsters may be spun on in the minds of viewers, in the hope that they will continue to communicate respect and fear of

water to people into the future.

DRAWN TO WATER: WATER FOLLOWINGS

Written by Sayuri Furukawa & Hanano Sakamoto

Water followings

Rubii Miyoshi, Vanghoua Anthony Vue, Sayuri Furukawa, Hanano Sakamoto, & Misaki Nakatsuji

Why are people attracted by water? Why are we always being drawn by water? This artwork shows one answer to such questions.

Our group decided to go to Nikko in Tochigi Prefecture to do research for an artwork based on the topic 'drawing water' together with an additional subtheme of "travel" that we added. This began from our experience visiting Asakusa in Tokyo, and discussions about the trips that Rubii and Anthony had separately experienced. The plan for the artwork was completed with generalized elements about travel through Japan and Australia both as apt of this project and prior to it.

The artists decided to use photos that were altered to look similar to the colouring of old photos of postcards from the Meiji Period in Japan. This idea came Rubii, who has a deep

understanding of antique artifacts, and who brought part of her collection of old postcards to the studio. Anthony's expertise in use Photoshop and advanced this work quickly, as he recomposed and re-coloured photos of trips that each of them had made. The altered photos were then printed, and explanations of the locations were written on the back of each photo. The altered photos, were exhibited with a simple map that was comprehensively marked with the travel routes taken by Rubii and Anthony. They then decided to give the installation a feeling of being part of a camping trip, with relevant equipment and a makeshift tent.

The sense of the presence of water was suggested by placing a range of recycled plastic bottles of water on the floor as a means of securing the suspended photographs to the floor through threads. Finally, this artwork was showing signs



of becoming an installation work. Much lengthy discussion took place about how to install the work in the Nishikicho studio of AIR 3331. A proposal to hang the map from wire between the walls was trialed first, but it was finally decided to install it as a tent-like structure on the floor. A travel blanket was used as a floor to the tent and the photos fixed from floor to ceiling by thread gave a sense of the little tent in a forest or perhaps a downpour of images

During this project, we discovered the difficulties of working through translations; there were many difficulties in conveying our opinions correctly. But through such processes we learned about differences, such as culture and language, and ways in which they could be incorporated into the artwork. The artwork gives clues about many many paths of Rubii and Anthony's journeys and some points of crossing. As viewers we are

invited to imagine the encounters when we follow paths and find these points. It expresses the encounter of different cultures, and can also be said to be a metaphor of water.

PROCESS OF CIRCULATION: TOKYO/BRISBANE IDENTITY DISASSEMBLY CENTRE

Written by Madoka Sugino & Maho Saito

Tokyo/Brisbane Identity Disassembly Centre (A Sewerage Treatment Plant, or Alchemy, or a Body, or an Artistic Process)

Miyuki Inagaki, Tomohiro Kubota, Maho Saito, Madoka Sugino, & Nat Koyama

This artwork expresses the circulation of disassembly and reassembly based on the process of sewage treatment. We went to Tokyo Sewerage Museum for research, and focused on concepts that surround the emphasis on process rather than result that occurs where something is newly reborn. In this sense the process involved in the production of artwork is similar to that of sewage treatment, where a thing in a state of having no value is reborn as something of value. Furthermore, as a group we were conscious of things which are usually 'un-seeable' but that are nevertheless precious, and gave considered attention to the relationship and circulation between the surface and the inner surface of things such as rivers, clean water supplies, sewage water, and skin and nerve systems.

To roughly explain the process of our artwork making: we wrote the names of the project

participants on vocabulary flash cards, which were then torn and combined to become new words. Also people's faces were drawn by Nat Koyama and put up on the wall. Attached to the wall as an addition to the artwork was a reaction tank, which is an important part of sewage treatment. We drew the outline from an underground facilities map of the water reproduction center to become the framework of the work on the wall.

The English and Japanese University names in which the project members were enrolled were decomposed and recomposed, and added to written information in the artwork. More external sewerage facilities were depicted, and the circulation of water was shown more clearly. Using three iPads, we added video to the artwork, changing from handwriting to digital lettering for



ease of reading. The final decision was the title of the artwork.

Our group's focus on process placed importance on all of the processes from talking on our blog, meeting in reality, artwork making, until completion. All conversations on our blog are reflected in the artwork. The artwork we made reflected all content of conversation on the blog, each person's thoughts about water, topics we discussed while meeting face to face, things gained from practical observation related to water, and also each other's previous artworks. In the collaboration, people from differing backgrounds gathered together, and the ways of thinking and abilities of each person were analyzed and decomposed for the generation of something new.

This new thing is our artwork. Furthermore it is

the common point between our artwork and our group. Consciousness of the process itself that is evident in the artwork expresses the process of sewage treatment such as separating out the impurities of the water leading to the rebirth of something new. We also consider analysis and reconstruction as important processes in collaboration and also artwork making.

Moreover, this artwork visualizes the process of making the artwork. Usually the process cannot be known just by looking at the artwork. We can't see the artwork process, and it is difficult to explain in a foreign language. But here the process itself is communicated through visual language. This is our concept, and we were delighted to convey this feature to people.

Unlike other groups, our group communicated solely in Japanese. As a result, we were able to

talk in detail about many difficult topics. Members discovered common fields of interest, and the form of the artwork was based on the layering of many complex conversations. In that way the artwork gained more depth. Through the group activity, we felt that language is a very important means of communication for us. Although we were able to do this, we realised it would have been much more difficult to do using different languages. A consciousness about the importance of written information was also one of the points of awareness within our group.

The ideas and skills of each other were dismantled and mixed in the collaboration, and the creation of new things influenced everyone. Even after the collaboration is finished, we will continue to support each other as the parts of us live on as part of that person: this is a chemical reaction that cannot be obtained except through collaboration. That is exactly what the benefit of collaboration is. By collaboration, we absorb new things that we didn't have before, and develop the artwork through the sharing of each other's thoughts. New knowledge and great experience cause us to grow. If a collaboration is between people of foreign countries, we gain so much from previously unknown cultures and values, and this enables more growth. The advantages to individuals given by collaboration are so many as to be immeasurable.



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DRAWING WATER VIDEO POEM

Sally Molloy

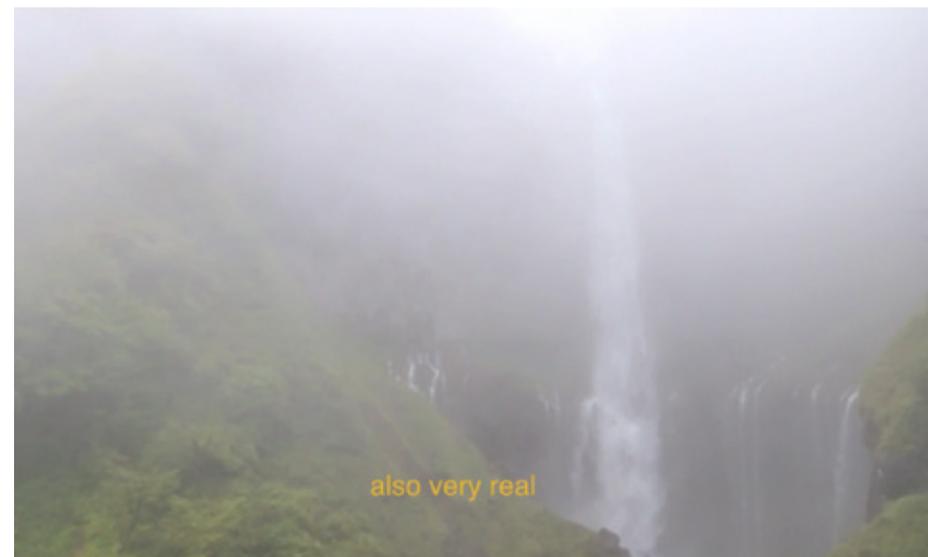


Drawing Water Video Poem (still), 2016. Image courtesy of the artist.

Drawing Water Video Poem is a poetic “documentary” aimed at illuminating a sense of the exchanges, observations, and processes that emerged during the cross-cultural collaborative art-making project called *Drawing Water* (a Drawing International Griffith initiative). For ten days four groups of Australian and Japanese artists traversed the city of Tokyo (and beyond), carved out common ground, shared customs and memories, battled with language, and made art. This video is a memento of this exchange.

To view *Drawing Water Video Poem*, visit:

<https://vimeo.com/196566742>



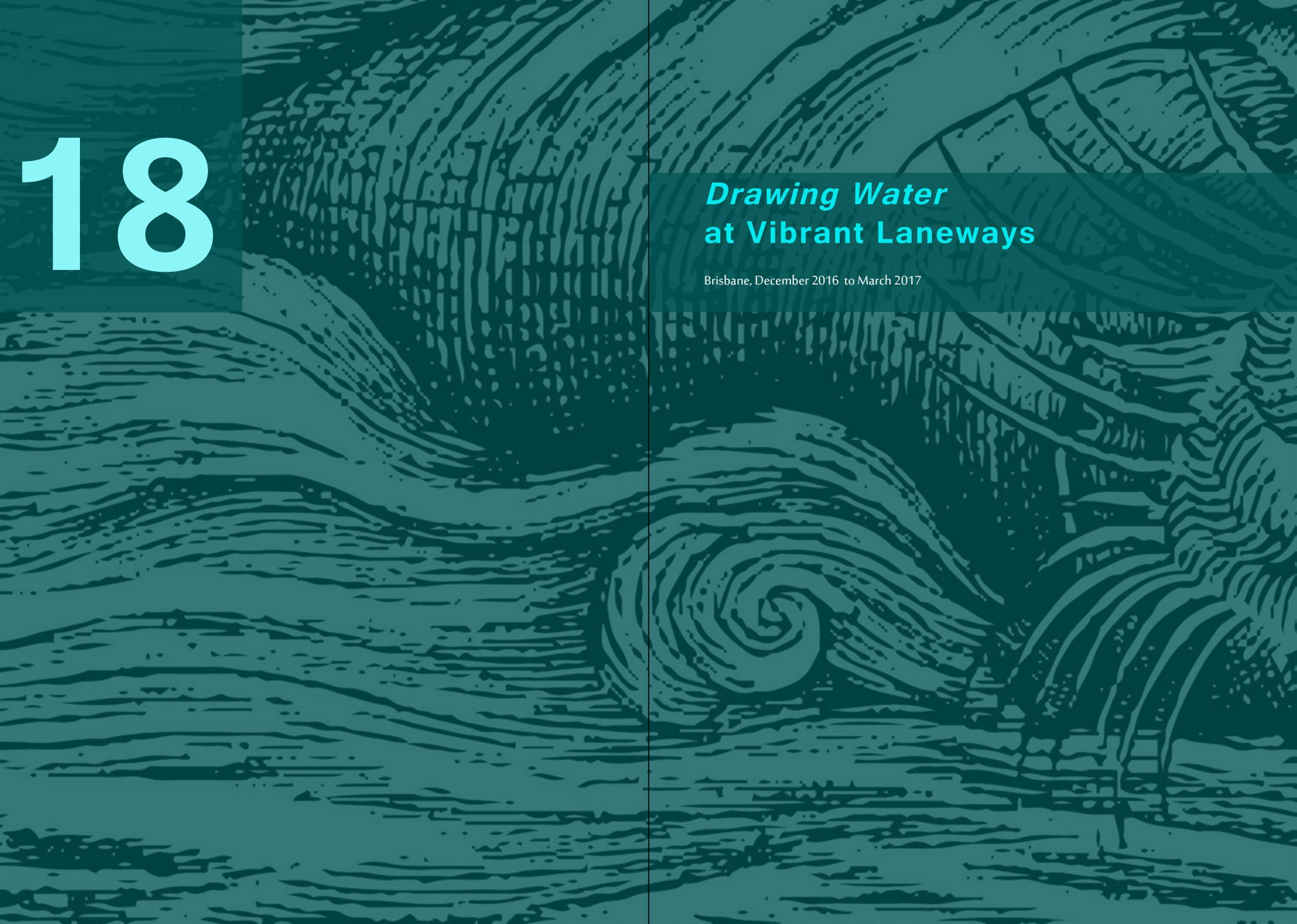
Drawing Water Video Poem (still), 2016. Image courtesy of the artist.

Sally Molloy

Sally Molloy is a Brisbane-based artist whose practice aims to critique invisible and unspoken colonial legacies, particularly the ‘everyday’ manifestations of colonialism that characterised her white Australian suburban upbringing, and continue to shape her life and practice. Working fluidly across disciplines such as painting, video, sculpture, composition, needlework, collage, and poetry, Sally questions the implied hierarchy of media with her naïve aesthetic and enthusiasm for play. She is currently a PhD candidate at the Queensland College of Art, where she is investigating the relationship between fiction, respect, and representations of non-Indigenous ‘connections’ to the Australian landscape.



make toes

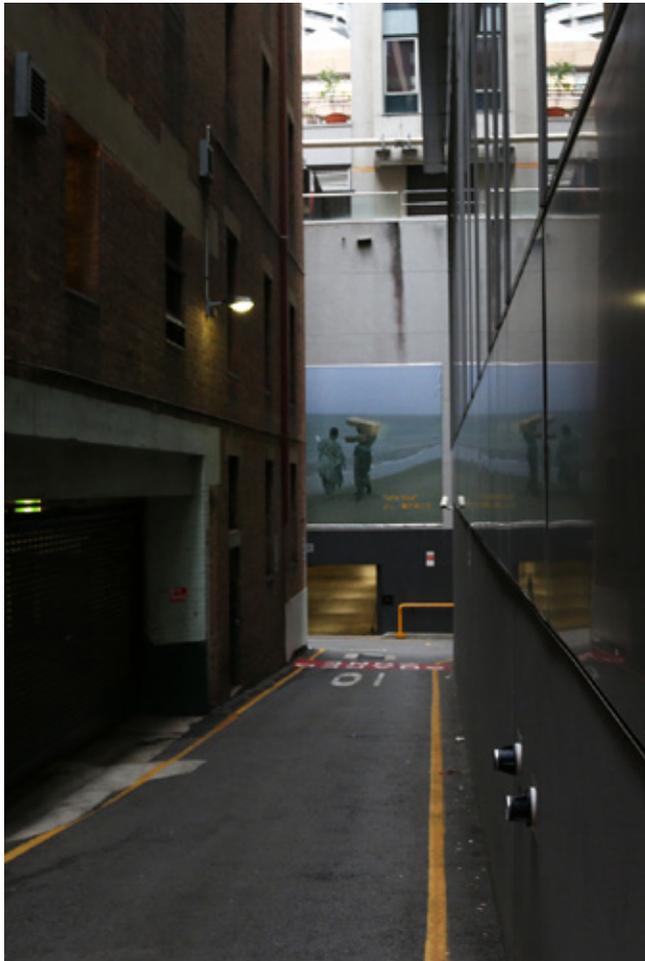


18

Drawing Water at Vibrant Laneways

Brisbane, December 2016 to March 2017

GIFFIN LANE



HEROES

TALES FROM THE WATERY MARGINS

ONE ocean

TWO shorelines

TEN days

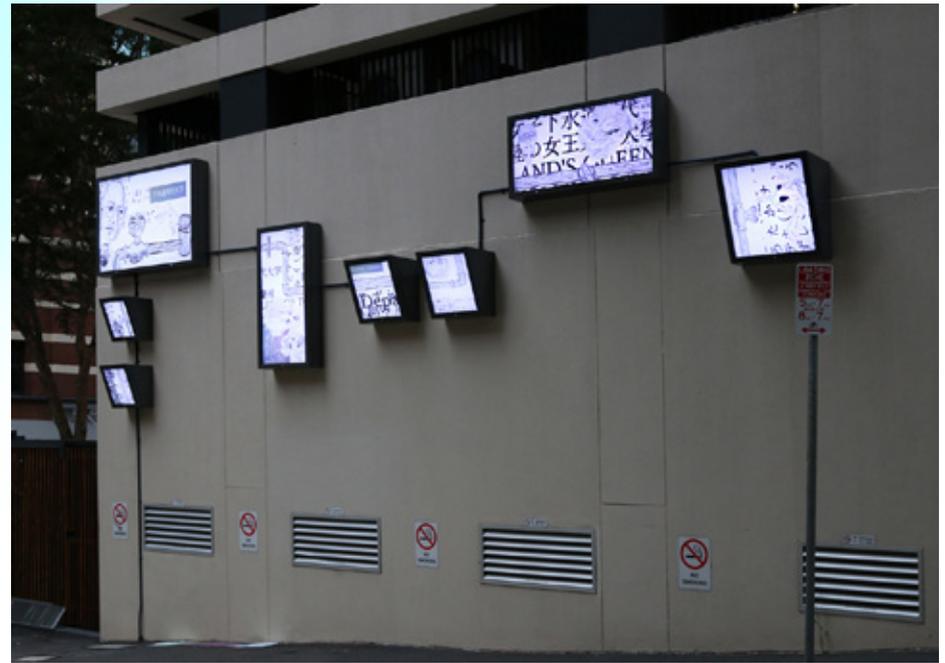
TO collaborate

FOLLOW the tributaries
in Vibrant Laneways
to discover the
Drawing Water Project



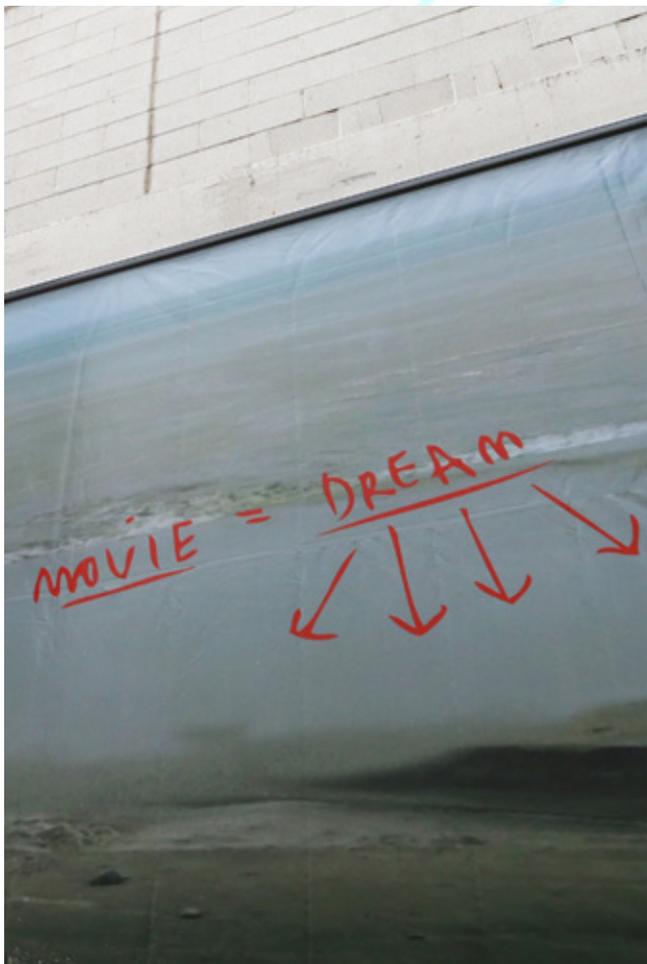
"let's float"
よし、海で泳ごう

HUTTON LANE



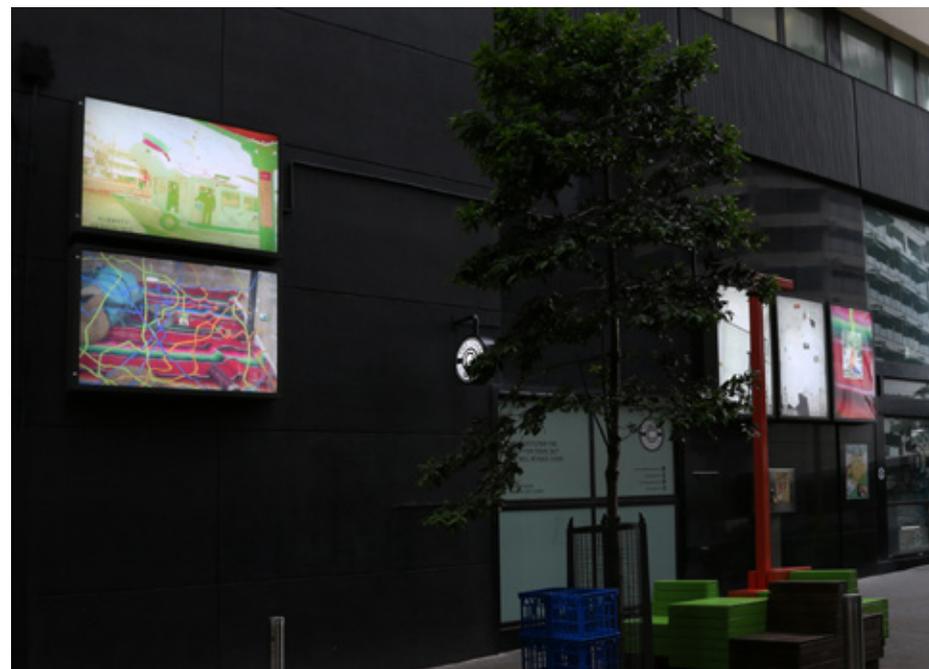
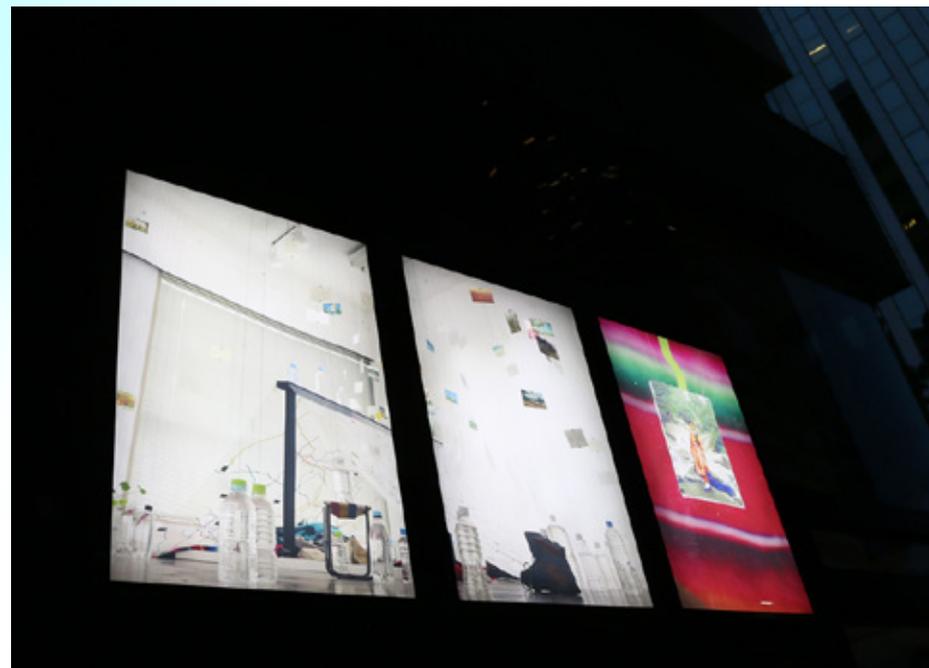
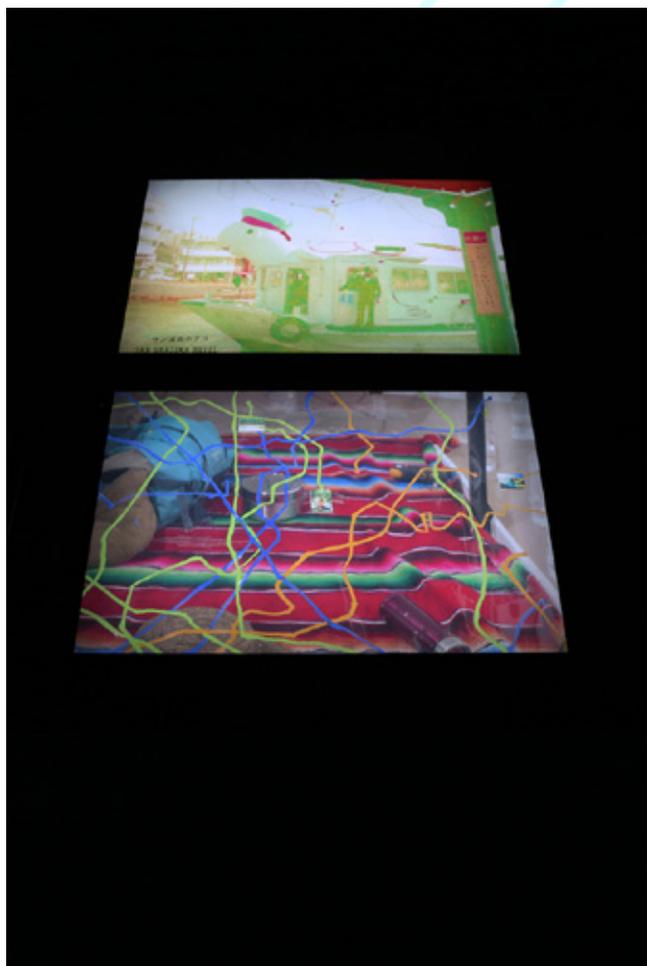


IRISH LANE





EAGLE LANE





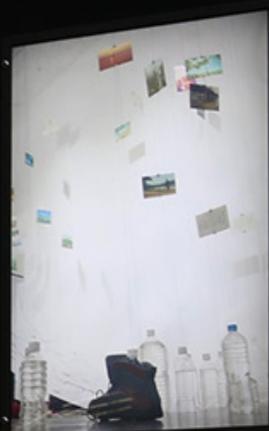
WE HAVE FLOWN THE
COOP FOR TODAY BUT
WE WILL BE BACK SOON



TRADING HOURS
MONDAY - SAT. 10AM - 6PM

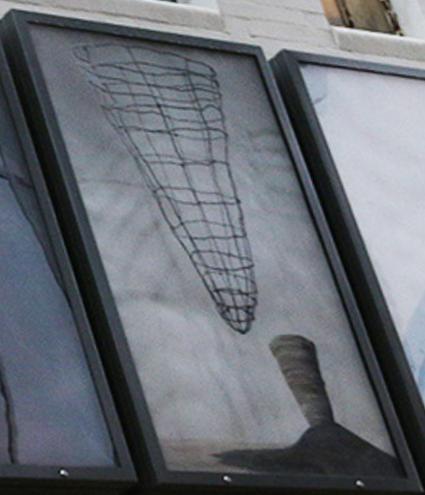


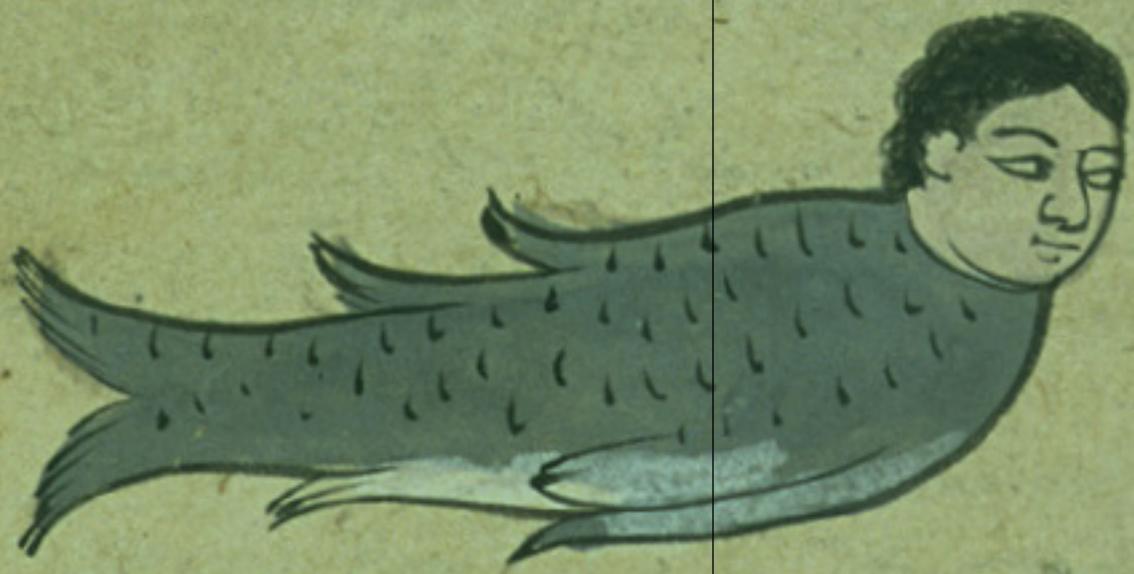
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FISH LANE







Artists' Information

CAROL MCGREGOR

Stage of Candidature:

Third year of PhD, Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, Australia

Recent Exhibitions/Projects/Community Based Work:

- 2016 *Lighting the Fires*, Bundanon Trust, New South Wales
- 2016 *Drawing Water*, AIR 3331 Nishikicho Studio, Tokyo
- 2016 *Souvenirs From Elsewhere*, Woolloongabba Art Gallery, Brisbane
- 2016 *Art of the Skins*, State Library Queensland, Brisbane
- 2016 *Gathering Strands*, Redland Art Gallery, Cleveland
- 2016 *Wirrunga Community Cloak*, Conondale Queensland
- 2015 *My Story*, The Gold Coast Arts Centre, Gold Coast
- 2015 *Blak, Art from the Margins*, St Andrews Hospital, Brisbane
- 2015 *Warriors, Sorcerers and Spirits*, KickArts Contemporary Arts, Cairns
- 2015 *Reconciliation Week*, Judith Wright Centre, Brisbane
- 2015 1854 Scholar, Museum Victoria, Melbourne

HANANO SAKAMOTO

Stage of Candidature:

Third year of BFA, Concentration in Art & Culture, Joshibi University of Art & Design

Other Related Skills/Activities:

2013-6

Concentration in craft
2016 Chromatics in animation studies

MADOKA SUGINO

Stage of Candidature

Third year of BFA, Concentration in Art and Culture, Joshibi University of Art and Design

Recent Exhibitions/Projects/Community Based Work:

- 2014 Joshibi High School of Art and Design Graduation Exhibition, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum
- 2016 *Enigma*, curatorial project, Loughboroug University, UK

MANA ISHIMOTO

Stage of Candidature:

Third year of BFA, Concentration in Art and Culture, Joshibi University of the Arts and Design

Recent Exhibitions/Projects/Community Based Work:

- 2016 *Enigma*, curatorial project, Loughboroug University, UK
- 2015 Received an incentive award of Joshibi
- 2015 Acted in "Apartment Blue Rose Zhuang"
- 2014 Exhibited in Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum
- 2014 Graduation exhibition
- 2014 Joined X Detective Agency theatrical company, acted in "Record of the dream ~ We saw the picture-story show in total lunar

eclipse"

Other Related Skills/Activities:

- 2015 Lead of the artistic features of a theatrical production (settings theatrical stages, scenic art)
- 2016 Report writing about handmade glasses for a specialist store's blog

MASUMI IIDA

Stage of Candidature:

Third year of BFA, Concentration in Art & Culture, Joshibi University of Art & Design

Recent Exhibitions/Projects/Community Based Work:

- 2016 *Enigma*, curatorial project, Loughborough University, UK
- 2014 *Joshibi High School of Art and Design Graduation Exhibition*, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum

Other Related Skills/Activities:

- 2016 Member of the International Kakyou Calligraphy Association
- 2016 Chairperson of Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly Prize in the 29th International Kakyou Calligraphy Exhibition
- 2015 Art Newspaper Prize in the 28th International Kakyou Calligraphy Exhibition
- 2014 Japan Prize TV for work in the 50th All-Japan Calligraphy Practice New Year Exhibition

MISAKI NAKATSUJI

Stage of Candidature:

Third year, BFA, Concentration in Art & Culture, Joshibi University of Art & Design

Recent Exhibitions/Projects/Community Based Work:

- 2016, *Enigma*, curatorial project, Loughborough University, UK

MISUZU KANDA

Stage of Candidature:

Third year of BFA, Concentration in Art & Culture, Joshibi University of Art & Design

Recent Exhibitions/Projects/Community Based Work:

- 2016 *Enigma*, curatorial project, Loughborough University, UK
- 2013 Graduation Exhibition of high school

Other Related Skills/Activities:

Art museum volunteering and collection work management

MIYOKO OZAKI

Stage of Candidature:

First year of MFA, Oil Painting Department, Tokyo University of the Arts, Japan

Recent Exhibitions/Projects/Community Based Work:

- 2016 *Drawing Water*, Gallery AIR 3331, Akihabara, Tokyo
- 2016 *Art in Yujuku*, Minakami, Gunma

- Prefecture, Japan
- 2016 *Honeycomb Catalogue*, Gallery Senbyakudo, Ueno, Tokyo
- 2016 *Graduate Exhibition*, Tokyo University of the Arts
- 2015 庭遊ぶ人々 (*People are playing in the Garden*), The University hall in Tokyo University of the Arts

MIYUKI INAGAKI

Stage of Candidature:

Second year of MFA, Oil Painting Department, Tokyo University of the Arts

Recent Exhibitions/Projects/Community Based Work:

- 2016 Collaborative project with Asahi Glass Company, Tokyo
- 2016 *Art in Yujyuku*, Yujyuku Hot Springs, Gunma
- 2016 *Honeycomb Catalogue*, Senbyakudo Gallery, Tokyo
- 2016 Upward View Scholar of Ishibashi Foundation Report, Tokyo University of the Arts, Tokyo
- 2016 *IN/OUT*, Tokyo University of the Arts, Tokyo
- 2015 *Kameyama Triennale 2017 pre exhibition*, Kameyama, Mie
- 2015 *Kumano Kodo Art Exhibition in Kii-Nagashima*, Kii-Nagashima, Mie

Other Related Skills/Activities:

- 2015 Ishibashi Foundation TUA Oil Painting Grant Program Scholarship student
- 2016 Master First course in Department of Oil Painting (DNSEP) option Art Nantes University of the Arts

(France), Foreign exchange student, (Sep. 2015 – Jan. 2016)

NAT KOYAMA

Stage of Candidature:

First year of PhD, Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, Australia

Recent Exhibitions/Projects/Community Based Work:

- 2016 *Graduate Exhibition*, Kyoto University of Art and Design
- 2015 *SPURT*, Galerie Aube, Kyoto
- 2014 *HOP*, Galerie Aube, Kyoto
- 2011 *The Churchie Emerging Art Prize*, Griffith University Art Gallery, QCA, Brisbane

Other Related Skills/Activities:

Japanese to English Translation at realkyoto.jp

NONOKO KANKE

Stage of Candidature:

Third year of BFA, Concentration in Art & Culture, Joshibi University of Art & Design

Recent Exhibitions/Projects/Community Based Work:

- 2016 *Enigma*, curatorial project, Loughborough University, UK

Other Related Skills/Activities:

Eiken Foundation of Japan 3

RUBII MIYOSHI

Stage of Candidature:

First year of MFA, Oil Painting Department, Tokyo University of the Arts, Japan

Recent Exhibitions/Projects/Community Based Work:

- 2016 *Art in Yujyuku*, Yujyuku-onsen area, Minakami-town, Gunma
- 2016 *Honeycomb Catalogue*, Senbyakudo Gallery, Tokyo
- 2016 *Graduate Exhibition*, Tokyo University of Art
- 2015 *TERRADA ART AWORD 2015*, T-Art Gallery, Tokyo
- 2015 *Inu ka Hachi ka*, Hakkendo Gallery, Tokyo
- 2014 *Muthumu*, Yuumeria, Tokyo
- 2013 *Huginamikoro*, Shian Gallery, Tokyo

SACHIKO SUZUKI

Stage of Candidature:

First year of MFA, Oil Painting Department, Tokyo University of the Arts, Japan

Recent Exhibitions/Projects/Community Based Work:

- 2016 *Art in Yujyuku*, Yujyuku-onsen area, Minakami-town, Gunma
- 2016 *Honeycomb Catalogue*, Senbyakudo Gallery, Tokyo
- 2016 *Highlight*, Tokyo University of the Arts, Tokyo
- 2016 *The 64th Graduation Works Exhibition*, Tokyo University of the Arts, Tokyo

SAITO MAHO

Stage of Candidature:

Third year of BFA, Concentration in Art & Culture, Joshibi University of Art & Design

Recent Exhibitions/Projects/Community Based Work:

- 2016 *Enigma*, curatorial project in Loughborough University, UK

SALLY MOLLOY

Stage of Candidature:

First year of PhD, Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, Australia

Recent Exhibitions/Projects/Community Based Work:

- 2016 *Drawing Water*, Brisbane City Council Vibrant Laneways
- 2016 *Drawing Water*, 3331 AIR (Tokyo), curated by Linda Dennis & Pat HOFFIE
- 2016 *Souvenirs From Elsewhere*, Woolloongabba Art Gallery, curated by Pat HOFFIE
- 2016 *23 Degrees*, Woolloongabba Art Gallery
- 2016 *The Alien Show*, Fake Estate ARI
- 2016 *Resonance: The Pearl King*, Newstead House
- 2016 *Solid Gold*, Corflute ARI
- 2015 *EXIT*, POP Gallery
- 2015 *Gas Leak Graduate Art Prize* (Finalist), The Laundry Artspace
- 2015 *The Laundrie Art Prize* (Finalist), Laundry Artspace
- 2015 *What's Out There*, The Laundry Artspace
- 2015 *Everything is Connected* (curated by

Pat HOFFIE), The Hold Artspace
2015 *Dog Show* (curated by Bob Mercer)
Woolloongabba Art Gallery

Other Related Skills/Activities:

2016 Drawing Water DIG Tokyo
Residency, 3331 Air Tokyo
2014 Broken Images: A symposium on
early American Photography in the
Asia Pacific, 1850—1950,
Queensland Art Gallery, (volunteer)
2012 Contemporary Australia: Women,
Pistil Hiromi Tango, GOMA, 2012
(participant)

SAYURI FURUKAWA

Stage of Candidature:

Third year of BFA, Concentration in Art &
Culture, Joshibi University of Art & Design

**Recent Exhibitions/Projects/Community
Based Work:**

2016 *Enigma Exhibition* (as a curator),
Fine art gallery at Loughborough
University, UK
2014 *Graduate Exhibition*, Tokyo
Metropolitan Art Museum

Other Related Skills/Activities:

2015 The 31st Takamadonomiya Cup
Nippon Budokan Publishing
Calligraphy Great Exhibition Brush
Part: Gold Award

TOMOHIRO KUBOTA

Stage of Candidature:

Fourth year of BFA, Oil Painting
Department, Tokyo University of the Arts,
Tokyo University of the Arts

**Recent Exhibitions/Projects/Community
Based Work:**

2016 *Ueno Geiyu Award Exhibition*,
Tokyo University of the Arts
2016 *Art in Yujuky*, Gunma, Minakami
2015 *The Floating Arts*, Chiyoda
3331, Tokyo
2013 *Toride Art Path*, Tokyo University of
the Arts, Toride

VANGHOVA ANTHONY VUE

Stage of Candidature:

Second year of PhD, Queensland College
of Art, Griffith University, Australia

**Recent Exhibitions/Projects/Community
Based Work:**

2016 *Drawing Water*, Brisbane City
Council Vibrant Laneways
2016 *Ci-Lines*, Canberra Contemporary
Art Space, Canberra
2016 *Paj Khoom*, KickArts
Contemporary Arts, Cairns
2016 *Drawing Water*, AIR 3331
Nishikicho Studio, Tokyo
2016 *Souvenirs From Elsewhere*,
Woolloongabba Art Gallery,
Brisbane
2016 *23 Degrees*, Woolloongabba Art
Gallery, Brisbane
2016 *Qhia Dab Neeg Film Festival:
Photo Exhibit*, Metropolitan State
University, St. Paul
2016 *Dis-order*, Jugglers Art Space,
Brisbane
2016 *Pa Kor Day*, community project
with young people in Logan,
installations at Logan Art
Gallery, Logan Hyperdome

Library and Logan Central Library.
Supported by RADF fund
2016 *TAPE ON: a Temporal Collision
of Line*, live tape drawing
installation performance with artist
Kellie O'Dempsey on the windows
of Griffith University Art Gallery
2016 *Paj Theem Ntaiv*, AusAsia Festival,
Metro Arts stairwell installation,
Brisbane
2016 *Weaving Our Heritage*, BrisAsia
Festival, Eagle Lane. Curated and
produced by Engage Arts
2015 *Paj Qhov Rais (Ob Txhiab Ib—
2001)*, Drawing International
Symposium, South Bank
2015 *Paj Phabnsta (Arcadia—South
Bank)*, Brisbane Festival, Arcadia—
South Bank
2015 *14,600*, Cairns Festival, Cairns
Botanic Gardens Visitor Center,
Cairns
2015 *Paj Qhov Rais*, Site specific
installations, various locations.
Brisbane and Cairns.
2015 *Paj Hoob # 2*, Gallery Ten,
Tasmanian International Arts
Festival - Hobart. Working with
Hmong Hobart young people
2015 *Hmong Crafts: Remixed
Entities*, Artisan, Brisbane.

YUKI SAWAOKA

Stage of Candidature:

First year of MFA, Oil Painting
Department, Tokyo University of the Arts

**Recent Exhibitions/Projects/Community
Based Work:**

2016 *Föhn No. 3 Laboratory Exhibition*,

Tokyo University of The Arts, Tokyo
2016 *Now, whether directed to the
people*, The Senbyakudo Gallery,
Tokyo
2016 *Keiichiro Kume-Medical arts and
Illustration*
2016 *Trans Arts Tokyo*



AIR 3331, Nishikicho Studio, Tokyo, during the *Drawing Water* project

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Co-curators *Drawing Water, Tokyo*

Prof. Pat HOFFIE & Dr. Linda DENNIS

Co-ordinators, *Drawing Water, Vibrant Laneways*

Prof. Pat HOFFIE and Dr. William PLATZ with Dr. Dan TEMPLEMAN (BCC)

Drawing International Griffith

Dr. William Platz

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Drawing Water, Tokyo exhibition dates

Exhibition/ Event/ Open Studio: 26 – 28 Sept 2016
AIR 3331 Nishikicho Studio

Drawing Water, Vibrant Laneways dates

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Catalogue Photography (*Drawing Water, Tokyo* exhibition & *Drawing Water, Vibrant Laneways*)

Vanghoua Anthony Vue

Catalogue design

Vanghoua Anthony Vue

Drawing International Griffith
(DIG Tokyo 2016)



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【一緒に海に入るモンスターたち】