

OUTPUT Art after Fire: A Folio provides an insight into the work of ten visual artists and creative writers who have faced and addressed the wild fires that devastated southeast Australia and western United States of America in 2019-20.

Electing to participate in the international pilot project, *OUTPUT Art after Fire*, artists Alice Ansara, Karen Sedaitis, Karyn Thompson, Katherine Boland, Lee Grant and Rhonda Ayliffe from Australia together with Cara Despain, Kelly Ramsey, Emily Schlickman and Daniela Naomi Molnar from the United States have generated new work arising from their personal experiences augmented by remote engagement with selected mentors who are knowledgeable in creative art field research techniques. The Project mentors are: Kate Cole-Adams, Caren Florance and Heather Burness (AUS); Erika Osborne and Richard Saxton (USA).

This publication is a showcase of the new work the artists have made and is intended for distribution in the artists' respective communities or, as an electronic file, anywhere in the world.

OUTPUT Art after Fire is a bilateral, international pilot project facilitated jointly by South East Arts and FieldScreen International. The project was supported financially by the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade under the Australian Cultural Diplomacy Grant Program.

**SOUTH
EAST
ARTS**

SNOWY MONARO/ BEGA VALLEY
EUROBODALLA

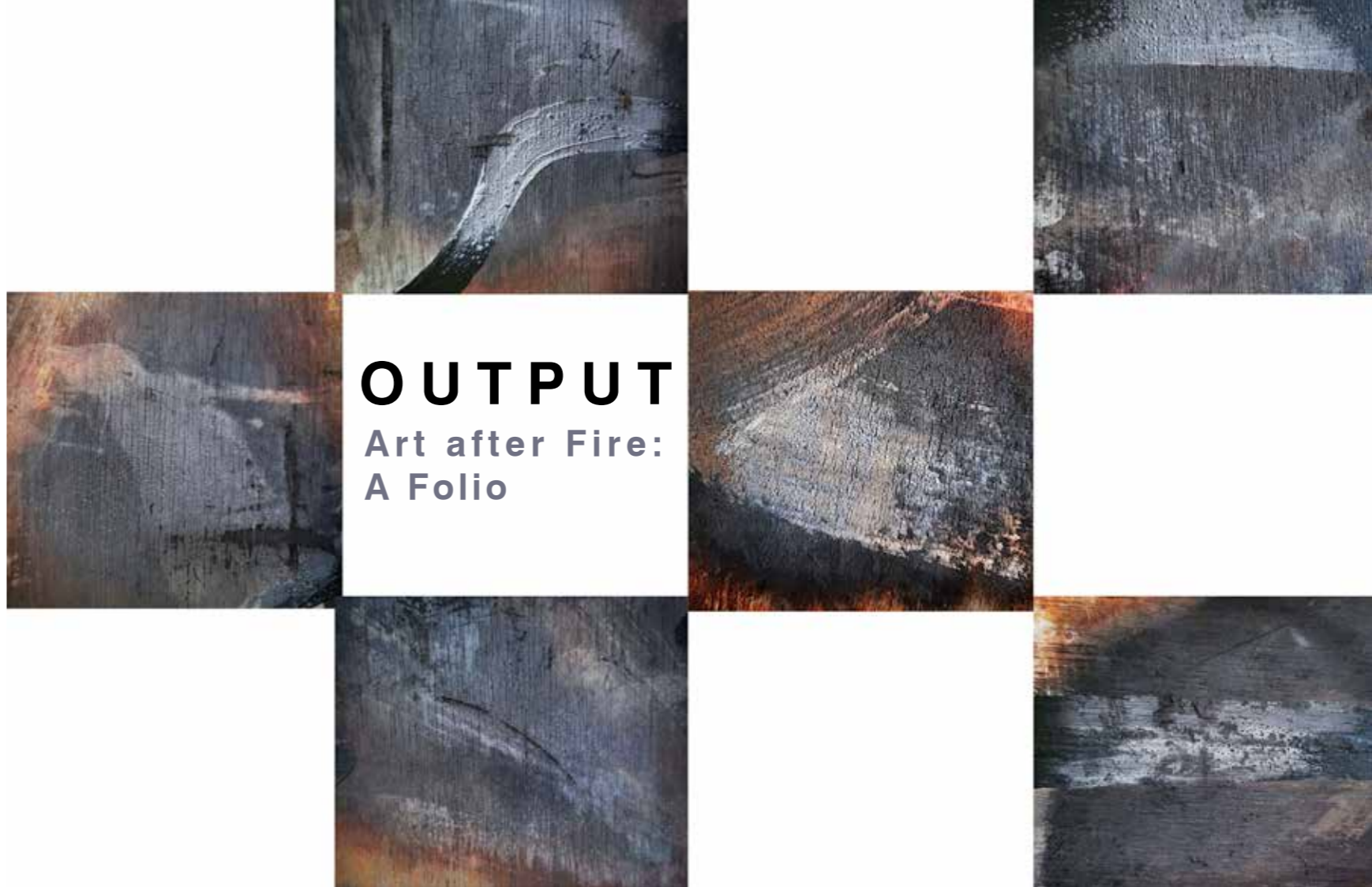


Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

FieldScreen
INTERNATIONAL

Katherine Boland *Crime Scene (detail)* 2021 Acrylic, scorching on timber



OUTPUT
Art after Fire:
A Folio

OUTPUT



Emily Schlickman *Distilling the Pyrocene II* 2021 Digital Print 142 x 106cm

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A Folio

South East Arts / FieldScreen International
June 2021

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

OUTPUT Art after Fire is a project managed by South East Arts and supported financially by the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Australian Cultural Diplomacy Grant Program.

Project Team

Dr Johanna Hoyne, Dr Amanda Stuart, Mr Andrew Gray, Ms Amelia Zaráftis, Prof Bill Gilbert, Prof Yoshimi Hayashi, Mr John Reid, Mr Charles Tambiah, Ms Heike Qualitz

Administering Organisation

South East Arts (NSW) Inc

Project Facilitation

South East Arts: Andrew Gray
FieldScreen International: John Reid

Project Webinars

Host: Monica Davidson, Creative Plus Business
How do people respond to natural disasters and emergency events, at the time and over the long term?: Dr Margaret Moreton, Principal, Leva Consulting

Field Research Techniques: Mr John Reid, Assoc Prof Erika Osborne, Ms Heather Burness, Assoc Prof Richard Saxton, Ms Kate Cole-Adams, Dr Caren Florence

Project participation by Heather Burness, Katherine Boland and Karyn Thompson funded by South East Arts

OUTPUT Art after Fire: A Folio

First published in 2021 by South East Arts

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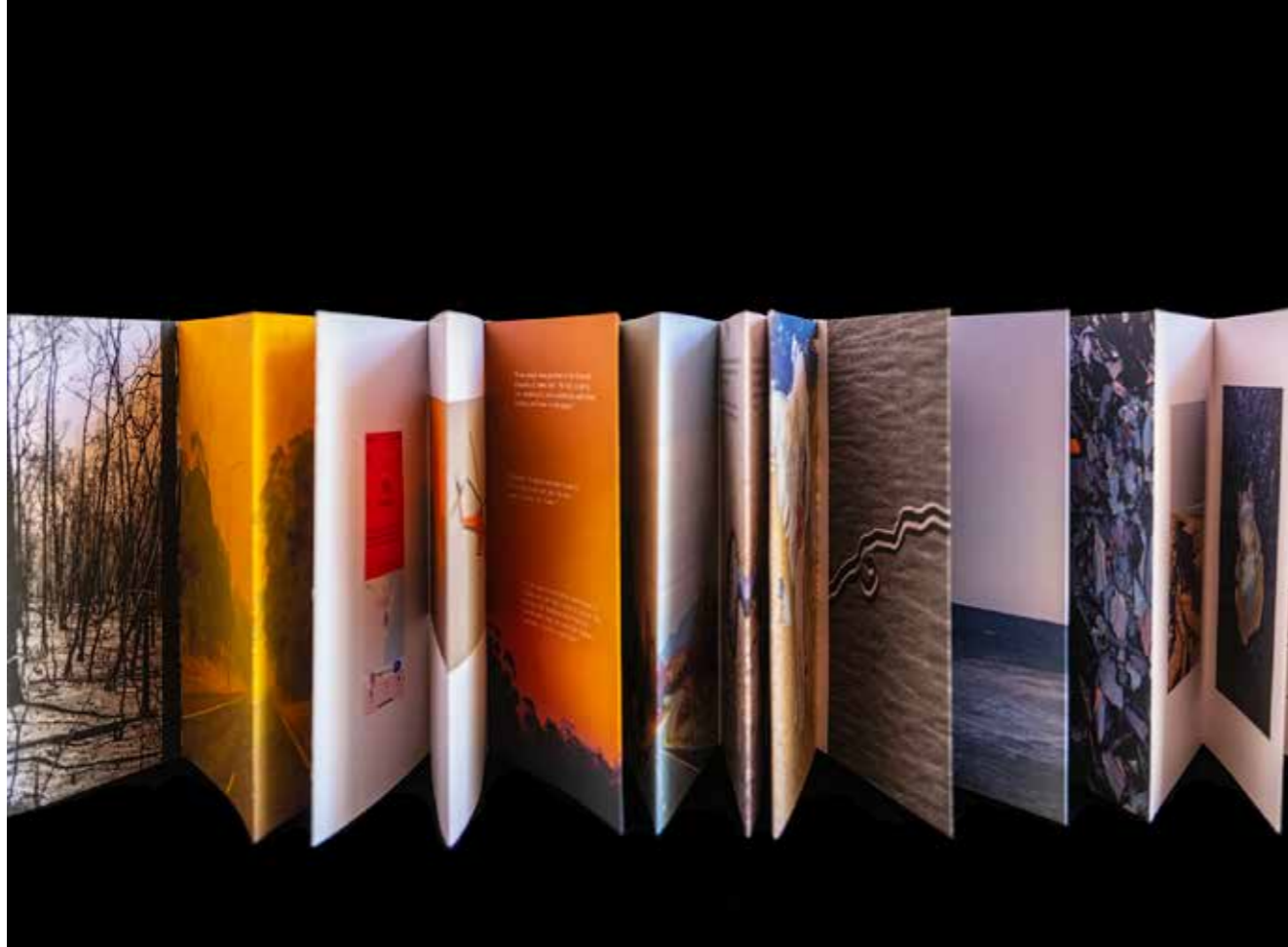
Editorial: Johanna Hoyne, John Reid, Andrew Gray

Project Evaluation: Charles Tambiah
Folio Design: Heike Qualitz

For more information: www.artafterfire.com.au

Cara Despain *It doesn't look like paradise anymore (Camp Fire)* 2019-20
Carbon residue from burnt debris 244 x 426cm





Lee Grant *All the world is here* (Opened concertina book) 2021
15 x 21cm closed, 385 x 21cm open

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PROJECT BACKGROUND / MENTORS AND ARTISTS

OUTPUT Art after Fire arose from the desire of artists to help artists whose creative practice was severely disrupted by the wild bush fires that swept southeast New South Wales, Australia, and the western regions of the United States of America in 2019-20. The disaster was compounded by the COVID19 pandemic that intensified for all the isolation and the diminution of access to social or environmental healing.

Support was immediately provided by artists who were materially unaffected by the crisis such as contributions of artwork to benefit-exhibitions and cash to relief agencies. To complement this, John Reid established FieldScreen International (FI) in March 2020 offering artist expertise. Conceived as an online, international mentoring network, FI would offer to artists impacted by fire related trauma collegiality, empathetic focus, and field-based methodologies to scaffold new work about their experiences.

In April 2020, an opportunity to realise this initiative came from the combined intel of artists Amelia Zraftis and Amanda

Stuart who brought South East Arts Executive Director, Andrew Gray, into the picture with his reach into fire affected communities; and artist Hanna Hoyne who, having identified the Australian Cultural Diplomacy Grant Program (ACDGP) as a funding body for bush fire themed applications, gathered a working party. Contact was made with artist colleagues in the United States: Bill Gilbert (NM); Yoshimi Hayashi (CA); Erika Osborne (CO); Ryan Henel (NM); and Ryan Pierce (OR) to explore international involvement.

Good news came in August 2020. AUD 30,000 had been granted under the ACDGP sufficient for a one-year pilot project to proceed as envisaged. Excitement on both sides of the Pacific centred around: the international sharing of artist experiences; the reinvigoration of networks and the establishment of new ones; insights to be gained into various modus operandi for creative responses to place; the combined power of visual image and creative text to instigate emotional reflection as a precursor to shared understanding and concerted action; the

provision of funds to promote new artwork (75% of grant directly to artists); and the project's capacity for a grounded historical account of unprecedented environmental destruction by fire.

New work for potential exhibition in the artists' communities would be the main project output equally matched by a project publication, *OUTPUT Art after Fire: A Folio*, for international electronic distribution. Charles Tambiah, an independent project evaluator, would assess the project to guide an expanded and enduring iteration in the future founded on participant feedback about their pilot experience. Accomplished graphic artist and sculptor, Heike Qualitz, in Berlin, would design the project publication.

By October 2020 under the banner of FI, 44 visual artists and creative writers from the United States and Australia accepted a request to offer their expertise as mentors experienced in field research techniques to artists who might benefit from collegial assistance to regain the momentum of their creative practice. 33 fire affected creative artists from both countries responded to a

call from South East Arts for Expressions of Interest (EoI) to participate in the project. Every EoI made compelling reading. Artists were invited to make a choice of 3 mentors with whom they would like to work from a FI prospectus of mentor curricula vitae.

Constrained by the budget, yet made possible by contributions of labour from mentors and partners that exceeded project recompense, 10 artists were selected by a panel drawn from the Project Team to join the project in mixed country and disciplinary pairs with a mentor from either the United States or Australia. Satisfyingly, selected artists were paired with a preferred mentor. Work began in earnest from January to May 2021 with intermittent work-in-progress Zoom sessions with mentors that followed two preparatory project webinars on trauma sensitivity and field research techniques, delivered in December 2020, to which all 44 mentors and 33 artists were invited. *OUTPUT Art after Fire: A Folio* delivers an insight into the project's pilot methodology and the extraordinary artwork it generated.

Lee Grant
Psychoterratica
(Cover) 2021. Zine 4
Other Landscapes
15 x 21cm



MENTOR

RICHARD SAXTON (USA)
Visual Artist & Writer

ARTISTS

CARA DESPAIN (USA)
Visual Artist

RHONDA AYLIFFE (AUS)
Visual Artist



RICHARD SAXTON

Richard Saxton is an artist, designer, and educator whose work focuses primarily on rural knowledge and landscape. Saxton's work is conceived through an interdisciplinary cultural framework and can be contextualized through social and site-based art practice. Saxton's work has been described as contemporary vernacular, non-heroic, and an art infused with rural experience without subscribing to any one genre or culture. Saxton is the founder of the M12 Collective, an interdisciplinary group that develops projects through dialogical and collaborative approaches. M12 creates and supports new modes of art making in often rural and remote areas, and focuses on experiential practices that explore community identity and the value of often under-represented rural communities and their surrounding landscapes.

m12studio.org

CARA DESPAIN



Cara Despain is an artist working in film and video, sculpture, photography and installation addressing issues of land use and ownership, climate change, visualizing the Anthropocene and toxic frontierism. She was born in Salt Lake City, Utah and currently lives in Miami, Florida and works between the two. Taking from well-worn artistic lineages such as landscape painting and western cinema, she exploits the power of romantic images and how notions of paradise mislead or let us down. Writing, fieldwork and research play a major role in her work.

caradespain.com

RHONDA AYLIFFE



I was born, raised and remain in the small community of Cobargo, Yuin Country, Far South Coast NSW. I am a process-oriented artist with a mixed-discipline practice that includes books arts, photography, sculpture, installation, collaborative and socially-engaged art working. On New Year's Eve 2019 my community was devastated by the Badja Forest Rd firestorm. I am currently undertaking a PhD with the University of Canberra, examining the capacity of creative practices to deliver practical outcomes for community recovery in the aftermath of trauma.

rhondamayliffe.com

MENTOR

KATE COLE-ADAMS (AUS)

Writer

ARTISTS

ALICE ANSARA (AUS)

Writer

KELLY RAMSEY (USA)

Writer



KATE COLE-ADAMS

Kate Cole-Adams is a Melbourne-based writer and journalist. Her 2017 book *Anaesthesia* won the Mark and Evette Moran Nib Literary Award and was shortlisted for the 2018 Victorian Premier's Literary Award (non-fiction category) and Melbourne Prize Best Writing Award. It is a personal, journalistic and philosophical exploration of what happens when we go under. Her current project is a creative non-fiction exploration of her London childhood, female friendship, identity and the self. She is fascinated by unconscious processes and other things she can't understand. She writes slowly.

katecoleadams.com

ALICE ANSARA



Alice Ansara is an actor across film, TV, theatre and radio. She was part of the Sydney Theatre Company's Actors Ensemble and there began work in script development and dramaturgy. Alice has also written poetry, co-founded the Bass Coast Poetry Slams and was a Victorian finalist in the Australian National Poetry Slam. Since moving to the Far South Coast, Alice has begun writing and producing radio documentaries and podcast series including the award winning *The CWA* and the *F-Word* and *From the Embers* about the Great Fires of 2019/2020.

nickygluyas.com.au/FemaleArtists/

KELLY RAMSEY



Kelly Ramsey's writing has appeared in *The Washington Post*, *American Short Fiction*, *Electric Literature*, and *The Mississippi Review*. She has an essay in the forthcoming anthology *Letter to a Stranger* (Algonquin, 2021). She co-founded the artists' residency program *The Lighthouse Works*, and she is a MacDowell fellow. She works as a wildland firefighter on a hotshot crew in Northern California.

kellylynramsey.com

MENTOR

ERIKA OSBORNE (USA)

Visual Artist

ARTISTS

EMILY SCHLICKMAN (USA)

Visual Artist

KAREN SEDAISIS (AUS)

Visual Artist



ERIKA OSBORNE

Erika Osborne's artwork explores cultural connections to place and environment. She has exhibited extensively, with over ten solo exhibitions and 80 group exhibitions in recent years - including shows at the Carnegie Museum of Art, the Nevada Museum of Art and the Chautauqua Institute. Erika has been the recipient of numerous grants and awards, including a recent Fulbright fellowship. Erika's work has been highlighted in numerous publications and she is also a contributing author for books and journals on environmental art and pedagogy. Erika is currently an Associate Professor at Colorado State University.

erikaosborne.com

EMILY SCHLICKMAN



Emily Schlickman is an assistant professor of landscape architecture and environmental design at the University of California, Davis. Her research focuses on the intersection of digital representation, urban futures, and climate change adaptation. She holds a Master in Landscape Architecture from Harvard Graduate School of Design and a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies and Environmental Studies from Washington University in St. Louis.

humanecology.ucdavis.edu/people/emily-schlickman

KAREN SEDAISIS



Karen Sedaitis is a visual artist and fiction writer living in Bega on the SE coast of NSW, currently working predominantly with paint and ink drawings. Her horticultural and Landscape Designer background has significantly influenced her visual approach with a strong, lavishly detailed perspective.

Karen has an interest in all facets of interconnection; particularly the meshing of the natural and inner worlds through immersive experience. She has a diverse practice concerned with the translation of an emotional tone or experience through detailed mark-making and close observation.

karensedaitis.com

MENTOR

CAREN FLORANCE (AUS)
Visual Artist & Writer

ARTISTS

LEE GRANT (AUS)
Visual Artist

DANIELA MOLNAR (USA)
Visual Artist & Writer



CAREN FLORANCE

Caren Florance is an Australian typographic artist and writer. Her work is cross-disciplinary, spanning visual arts/writing/design, and her favourite medium is handset letterpress. She exhibits and publishes solo work, but also undertakes collaborative projects with writers and other artists using methodologies that allow skill-sharing and encourages equal value to each contribution, rather than being in service to each other.

carenflorance.com

LEE GRANT



Lee is a photo-artist based on the South Coast of NSW. She works on commissions and longform projects dealing with themes of community, identity and belonging and how landscape (both natural and inhabited) relates to these concepts. Working across media, Lee's practice combines photography, video, sound and text in projects that are often underpinned with institutional and found archives. Her practice has a strong focus on bookmaking as an outcome, as both published and limited-edition artist books. Lee continues to work on projects in Australia, Korea and Japan.

leegrant.net

DANIELA MOLNAR



Daniela Naomi Molnar is an artist / wilderness guide / educator / activist / eternal student working with the mediums of language, image, and place to explore issues of social, political, and ecological justice. Her work aims to shape and nurture generative new ideas, ethics, and cultural change. She founded the Art + Ecology program at the Pacific Northwest College of Art, and is an all-around integral part of Signal Fire, providing opportunities for artists to learn about environmental justice by engaging with public wildlands. Her work has been shown nationally.

danielamolnar.com

MENTOR

HEATHER BURNES (AUS)
Visual Artist

ARTISTS

KATHERINE BOLAND (AUS)
Visual Artist & Writer
KARYN THOMPSON (AUS)
Visual Artist



HEATHER BURNES

Heather Burnes lives and works on the unceded land of the Yuin Nation in the rural town of Bega in New South Wales, Australia. She has a Master of Philosophy from the ANU School of Art and has exhibited nationally and in group exhibitions internationally. Her work focuses on ephemeral and transient phenomena and the experience of being in 'place and time', the marks of water, rain, vapors and mists, shorelines, rivers, atmospheric conditions, soils and wind. She is influenced by local First Nation knowledge, Western scientific thinking and Abstraction.

heatherburnes.com

KATHERINE BOLAND



Katherine Boland lives on the Far South Coast of New South Wales. Seeking to distil classical interpretations of the beauty of the natural world in an organic, abstract space, she incorporates non-traditional media and processes in her work, often using fire itself as a drawing medium. Katherine has been the recipient of numerous art prizes and grants, including the Heysen Art Prize for Interpretation of Place in 2009. She has a Graduate Diploma in Therapeutic Arts Practice and her memoir, *Hippy Days, Arabian Nights* was published by Wild Dingo Press in 2017.

katherineboland.com.au

KARYN THOMPSON



Karyn Thompson has a degree in Architecture from UCAN and a Visual Arts degree (with Honours) from the ANU school of Art. Karyn worked as an architect for 18 years, however, since moving to the Far South Coast (NSW), she has focused on her art career. Working in both 2D and 3D mediums, Karyn's work seeks to explore and challenge perceived boundaries between conscious and subconscious worlds. She has exhibited both locally and interstate, and was recently selected as a finalist in the Wyndham (2019) and Basil Seller's (2020) Art Prizes.

karynthompson.net

CARA DESPAIN

For the last two years, I've been collecting burnt debris from wildfires in the western United States and using them to create "carbon paintings" that serve as markers of a changing climate and sustained forest mismanagement, existing in memoriam of the consequences of human habitation on the planet. Collecting from sites such as the Woolsey Fire in Malibu, and the Camp Fire in Paradise, California, among many others throughout the mountain west region of the United States, each piece in the series corresponds to and memorializes a specific fire. Using the debris as drawing tools, I saturate large-scale canvases with pure charcoal to create overwhelming visualizations of a large-scale systems change. The works are meant to conceptually inhabit the lineage of landscape painting, but represent spent/wrecked vistas and places rather than pristine wilderness. The reduced, fundamental material end result of these devastating events is the same as the cause—carbon—and this implicates each of us and our collective role as a *part of*, not *apart from*, the natural world.

Western approaches to thinking, settling, managing and exploiting vast swaths of the Earth is oppositional and has precipitated untenable circumstances. Though I have not yet been directly affected by loss of property or family, or a notion of home, as someone born and raised in the region (Utah), fire is an ever-accelerating seasonal constant. Tracking and conveying this change, and chronicling the gravity of each loss with a wide lens feels important to me. The valleys of the Wasatch Front trap smoke from the entire west coast, as well as from wildland fires in the state. As a cocktail of displacement, development and economy brings more and more people to settle in the mountain west, it is only a matter of time before the magnitude of impact from these fires events follows. What happens to one happens to all, and we are easily myopic. After living half-time in a region where the imminent threat is sea level rise (Miami) for nearly a decade, communicating and connecting causal dots at a macro-level has become my mission.

Cara Despain

2020: a year in flames 2021

Multi-channel video installation, loop.

Fires and source, left to right: El Dorado Fire, CA (OC Hawk); Troublesome Fire, CO (CBS4 Denver); Australia Bush fires (Four Corners); Brazil Amazon fires (Al Jazeera); Wendy's fire in Atlanta, GA after the death of Rayshard Brooks (Bloomberg); Bobcat Fire, CA (OnScene.TV); police van fire after the death of George Floyd in New York, NY (AFP TV); Creek Fire, CA (OnScene.TV)





left side:

Cara Despain

It doesn't look like paradise anymore
(exhibition view) 2019

Carbon residue from burnt debris on
muslin, melted acrylic fencing
152 x 213cm, 213 x 305cm, 122 x 244cm

also see page v

Cara Despain

Erasing paradise 2020



RHONDA AYLIFFE

Palinopsia - (Greek: *palin* for "again" and *opsis* for "seeing") - the persistent recurrence of a visual image after the stimulus has been removed.

Night and day all my thoughts are filled with this site: 70 Princes Hwy, Cobargo. The shop silhouette a ghostly afterimage. The debris; the months of hiatus; the weeks of clean up where big excavators and trucks came, packed up the mess that was once our town and took it away to be buried in a hole in the ground; the months of town meetings: ideas explored and discarded; the long wait for regeneration. Despair and hope intermingle daily.



Rhonda Ayliffe

Palinopsia 1 & 6 2021

Laser cut clear acrylic forms with charcoal, soil and ferns
26 x 41 x 3.5cm each



Rhonda Ayliffe

Palinopsia 2-5 2021

Laser cut clear acrylic forms with lights, tapes, toy vehicles, discarded paper
26 x 41 x 3.5cm each



I have stared at the page for the longest time. Trying to summon words. New Years Eve 2019. Badja Forest Rd Fire. But I don't have the words. The noise. The smell. The fear. The grief. Over 300 homes in my small region were destroyed. Over 300. And Robert and Patrick and Ross. Funerals for friends. And the relief. My family is safe. My home has survived. Survivors guilt. It's all too big and too terrible to squish into this small space.

It's not something I want to make art about. I can't.

In the aftermath of the fire I turned all my creative energy to one site: 70 Princes Highway, Cobargo - this space on the Main Street of town has been owned by the Ayliffe family since the early 1940s. 70 Princes Hwy Cobargo could never be considered an overly important site - it contained a large (by Cobargo standards) weatherboard shop and a wonky old shed at the rear. Its architecture wasn't anything important either - it was just distinctive enough with its decorative stepped facade to set

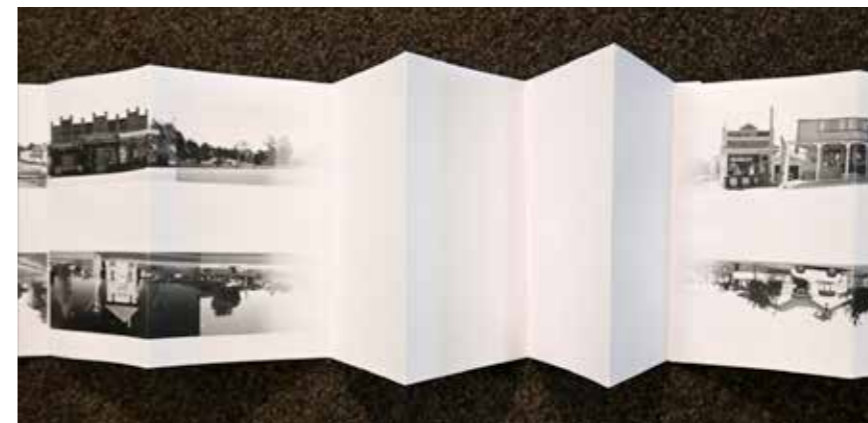


Above: street view pic of the shop on 70 Princes Highway, 2018
Below: Rhonda Ayliffe sitting on the steps of the site circa 1969

a style for the streetscape (a style that hasn't always been appreciated). But it was an important place for me. This old shop was bought by my grandparents and they ran the town's general store for over 3 decades. In the 1980s my father operated a motorcycle dealership here and by the 1990s it was my turn to reinvent the space - as my studio/gallery. On NYE this shop and shed containing all our great-grandparents strange keepsakes were razed to the ground, along with my father's childhood home next door and a huge swathe of the Cobargo Main Street.

In the aftermath of the Badja fire my parents decided they would donate the shop site to the town to build something for and with the community to lead the recovery of our town's main street. This is the simple genesis of the Cobargo Bushfire Resilience Centre.

70 Princes Hwy, Cobargo was the logical site. Creating Art after Fire is not easy - but it's oh so necessary as it can bring hope and healing to a traumatised community.



Every Building and Empty Space... has been created as a homage to Ed Ruscha's iconic 1966 artist book *Every Building on the Sunset Strip*. With my open edition artist book I captured the main street of my village, but presented the space where all our town's historic and quirky buildings were lost as a clean and crisp blank slate - where the future is

yet to be determined. *Every Building...* was conceived not only as a discrete artist book made by my little hands, but also as an ongoing, open ended space for collaboration, extending the parameters and participants of the *OUTPUT* project. Everyone is invited to offer artwork, images, words, ideas, even lists (if that's your thing) to fill the

empty space and to create their own unique artist book using downloadable PDFs of my *Every Building...* files. These PDFs essentially provide the scaffold or framework for contributors to interact with. All collaborators / contributors will also have their creative work shared on a dedicated online space : output-artistbook.blogspot.com

Rhonda Ayliffe

Every Building and Empty Space on the Main Street Cobargo 2021
Laser print on various papers
21 x 13 x 1cm closed, 21 x 330cm open

A LICE ANSARA

DEPLETED

I'd carried two babies inside my body. Fed them from the minerals that composed me. In utero, I'd sung and sustained them, rubbed and ripened them. Growing in there, they made me swollen and weepy and vomity and when they finally emerged it was through a cutting of my flesh, a slicing through 7 layers of stomach.

Each of the two extractions left its own ragged scar across my belly. The first bled me almost to death. When I came to, startled to be alive, I found a puny, furry mammal draped across my chest. The tube down my throat had scratched out my voice, "Baby!" I silently mouthed, "My baby?"

The second birth was also a caesar. This time an 'elective' chopping through my sphere. So I was awake and I saw them, the masked medicos in blue polyester. I watched them drilling and pushing and uprooting a being from within my guts. And this time, the babe was able to crawl herself to my nipple and guzzle my milk. Which made me thin, attenuated, in no time.

The both of them, they sucked me dry. Not just the milk feeding, which at first was through raw and bloody nipples, sacrificially yielded on demand. It was the sleep deprivation verging on psychosis. It was the constant need. The sudden, blinding severance from my old life, and from myself. I became ragged, depleted, unnurtured and unkempt. I didn't have the time or care to notice a lump the size of a golf ball below my navel. I was so busy – changing nappies, pumping milk, mushing solids, pushing prams, tummy timing, play-dating, hanging on to the shreds of a career, keeping up with the world as it strode on past me, attempting to engage with ideas, make connections, be productive, innovate, endeavour, strive, supply.

I was busy, doing those things that mothers do. Like taking kids to have their jabs. During one immunisation, with a hand out to restrain the bouncing child and a tit pre-emptively exposed for when the needle pierced the baby, I asked the doc what he thought the golf ball could be doing in my stomach. A hernia, he

diagnosed with a brisk prodding of the region. A protrusion of my internal organs and tissues, strained and stretched from the growing of one body inside another. Repairable. The town's vascular surgeon could push it back in, tie it off and stitch it up at our small local hospital. Booked me in for late December.

By the date of my day surgery, a pall of bushfire smoke had been blanketing the town for weeks. The Currowan Fire had begun to our north and on its first day of life, had gobbled up 2,500 hectares of forest, of animals, of homes, of air. Ravenous, a week later it had gorged itself on 11,500 hectares, had made its first sprint over the Princes Highway and had hungrily consumed two small coastal villages. I charted its speedy growth on the Fires Near Me app, inhaling its acrid smog and readying my daughter's asthma puffers. I ceased going out into the garden in the unrelenting heat. I couldn't bear to witness the liquid amber drop all its leaves to stand skeletal in distress. Or see the plants wilted and cringing, almost in foetal position; their

arms around their heads in fruitless self-protection. I forsook my veggies; we had no water to spare. Like a guilt ridden adult child who cannot stand to visit an ailing mother, I turned my back on the entire garden and let it die. Fear began to ferment in my stomach and rose like bile to sting my throat.

"Aren't you fucking worried?" I hurled at my husband as he drove me to the hospital. "This fire is growing by thousands of hectares a day and we haven't done anything to prepare!" The wiper fluid sputtered and drought dust and ashen gum leaf grit scoured the windscreen. "It's just another bushfire, love. We've always had fires in Australia, just gotta deal with them". He was on his way to work, so there was no time for me to quarrel that those fires had lasted single days, not weeks upon desiccated weeks. He dropped me at the entrance to the hospital and I walked its corridors alone, following a trail of laminated arrows down into its bowels. The intake secretary, ushering me into the pre-op room, sniffed at the smell of smoke. I'd

dragged it in on my body and it was getting up her nose.

The hit of sterile, icy air-conditioning made me still. I soaked it up; the cold relief, insulated in a freezer chest from fears, demands and endless things to do. The nurse, a rugged bloke in a colourful scrub cap, gently beckoned me to sit. He spoke in a low, sandy voice and took my vitals as if he were readying me for a manicure. "Mate, your oxygen levels are a bit low," he smiled up at me, "but that'd be the same for everyone in this smoke right now I reckon". He presented me with a cotton gown to change into and in the toilet cubicle I removed my clothes. The fluoro lights revealed me to myself; aged and worn and uncared for. I peeled off my underpants, and instantly I begin to bleed, as if menstruation had been hiding out, waiting for a quiet moment to let go. "You're not gonna bloody believe this-" I called out, "I've just gotten my period..." I wondered if I'd have to free bleed on the surgery bed. Or if this kind of blood was different from the one the medics would get on their hands when they cut me open

again. If it was too dirty and they'd have to schedule me to come back another, cleaner day. "Oh that's not a problem, mate, this happens. I've got just the thing-" and the nurse handed me giant, shapeless scrub undies through a small opening in the door, and menstrual pads.

He perched beside me for a moment as I dropped onto the starch sheeted hospital bed. "I can't believe how tired I am," I told him, "it's like I could crash for a hundred years". "Well you do that mate" he softly sanctioned, "you lay down and have yourself a well deserved rest." And so I did, I fell into a beckoning sleep, waking only to see the surgeon draw an X on my stomach and the anaesthesia mask go over my face and, delighted, I fell back into an even deeper slumber.

I was discharged with strict instructions – to not lift anything heavier than 2 kilos; not toddlers, not washing baskets, not shopping. My mother arrived to help with the children and the lifting chores and ordered me to go to bed. I found it excruciating to be still, inactive, the

overhead fan pushing moistureless heat from one end of the room to the other and back again. I lay on top of the bed, checking and rechecking the Fire App. I called out to my husband to please get up on the goddamn roof and clean the gutters out. In the garden, a giant pile of logs from a felled coral tree menaced me; it was large and spiky and flammable and I wanted it gone. I cajoled, nagged and pleaded but it didn't get done. I wanted to get up and do it myself but was told if I did, I'd irreparably rip open my newly basted stomach. On the Fires Near Me App the thick, grey tentacles of the fire's reach spread in all directions like blood on a sheet.

I googled 'bushfire emergency survival kits' and made lists and into bags I filled medicines, passports, chargers, cans of beans, photos, museli bars and water bottles, which I dragged slowly to the front passageway. Out of the kids' wardrobe I chose spencers, cotton pants, woollen socks, beanies and boots and arranged them on tiny clothes hangers on the back of their door. We didn't have enough

of the prescribed woollen blankets for our kit and I beseeched my husband to go to the op-shop to find some. Instead he went fishing, at our beach filled with burnt trees from the north, and I could not eat his catch, could not stare that creature in its dead eye. Rebelliously, I took the car keys one roasting afternoon and drove myself to town, manoeuvring with one hand, the other pressing into my still swollen stomach. At Vinnies, I found two large plaid blankets; dark orange and thick wool and laboriously got them to the car. I felt I'd been shortened and stapled back together, unable to quite stand upright. The air was bone dry hot and the near distant fires made the light the same colour as the blankets.

Driving home, I passed the Rural Fire Services Control Centre and slowed right down, long enough to see a volunteer Firie, dressed in the golden suit, sitting in his car. Three kids and the dog were in the back and in the front, the wife, sobbing into his neck. She was clutching his jacket around his shoulders, she wouldn't let him go. I began to cry myself, and only

two blocks from home I had to pull over for weeping. The pain in my guts was rage but all I had too, was tears.

Now bedridden again, I stayed up late while my husband slept hot and clammy beside me. I began obsessing over the meteorological forecasts. I cracked open the vault of climate change predictions and with dread I dived in deep – I sank in further than the worst case IPCC reports, I dredged the peer reviewed data of horrified scientists, I became subsumed by Energy Descent futures and I gagged on Deep Adaptation ideas. At midnight I did the final checks on the children – first the little one in the cot, naked except for a puffy cloth nappy, hair stuck to her neck in puddles of sweat. Then the older girl; clinging to a doll, grinding her 4 year-old teeth and creasing her brow in dream land. I kissed them and my tears smudged their faces and dripped into damp sheets. I wept on my sleeping partner who, when awake, turned away from me, from my deepest fears, "The earth has always been changing" he says, "it happened to the dinosaurs, it'll happen to humans

one day, honey, but not soon". I shouted at my visiting mother who shouted back at me that my climate change talk was tedious and annoying and to have an attitude of hope and optimism above all else. "Hope is futile, faaaaaaark," I screamed, and slammed doors like an adolescent. I started going crazy over the recycling - barking at anyone who made a sorting mistake, combing through the dust pan collections to salvage compostable matter, shaking with fury at the plastic stars that fell off the children's daycare craft and landed up in the sweepings. I put buckets and pots and cups under every tap and spout, and raged at those who poured them down the sink rather than on the garden. My husband told me that he no longer wanted to come home after work, my foul mood and climate collapse talk was suffocating him, was asphyxiating the house. My mother had enough of me and my apocalypse rants and returned north on the Premiere Bus before Christmas. The Nativity Day itself was a sweltering, sad and faithless affair. I had refused to buy presents; instead I obstinately made

reusable beeswax wraps for everyone, our children included. My husband purchased paint sets and scooters for the kids and wrote 'from mummy and daddy' on the wrapping.

And then, ash starts to bear down on our gardens. Charcoal gushes into the river. Small birds are thrust, dead, from the sky. The fires have possessed entire weather systems. I'm attached to a portable radio, I'm monitoring the local coverage; siren sounds and 'watch and act', 'watch and act' they say. My husband gets on the roof and he's clearing; he's out with the chainsaw, lopping at overhanging trees and dragging their limbs to the tip on the hill. He's scouring chip mulch off the garden and he knows it's coming and it feels too late.

We're told to shelter in place.

The power's gone.

The comms are dead.

The moon is burnished orange.

The Fires are furious.

My husband and I sit down to have the conversation - where will we go if

it comes to us? The showground in the middle of town is the official evacuation point but it's bursting with people and dogs and horses and cats and gastro. Perhaps then we should run to the river. Even though I've been told not to lift anything, I imagine myself in the tepid cool of that water, pressing my children once again to my breasts, holding them against the wound they came from, shielding them with my own frail form. To our north and south and west; the Fires are incinerating structures, killing every mammal, invertebrate, reptile and bird that they catch, they're turning vegetation to gasses and stripping back layers of soil and microbes until earth is bare and wounded and wrecked.

My mouth is dry, my eyes sting, my stomach is scarred and the skin on my hands parched, as I hurriedly dress my children in their woollen fire resistant outfits. It's New Year's Eve and the dark night is glowing. I can't see the Fire, but I smell it, taste it, feel it and I know it, in my innards, that a mother's body will give until it's gone.

KELLY RAMSEY

from *IN A TIME OF FIRE*

September 8

We'd been warned about the wind. It was in every morning briefing for a week, a weather situation arriving Tuesday into Wednesday, a real watch out situation, the East Wind Event. When they called it "event" it sounded funny, and someone made a joke about it. Everything was a joke to us. Chew spit fell with little spattering sounds into the circle. I can't remember what the joke was but one of the guys muttered under his breath, toeing the dirt, and we snickered and Dan said, or said with his eyes, This is serious guys, come on.

The lot where we had the briefing was a dozer push off the corner of two dirt forest roads. You had to wade through a dirt berm and dozens of upended manzanita bushes to find a pee spot. That morning I rinsed my hair with bottled water behind the buggy, placing my brush on the bumper which was covered with dirt, always, no matter how often Kline tried to sweep, even if he tried a night sweep to keep from pissing Jack off with the dust cloud.

No matter when you do it, Jack said, it'll always be the wrong time.

Jack was Rawlings, lead saw, but he was Jack to me because of the books he read and because of his secret dream to have a dairy farm and his aching blue eyes, which reminded me of my dad.

The dirt on whatever forest this was, the Plumas maybe, was stupid, fine and soft as sifted flour. Every line we walked, we sunk in up to our knees. Dust rose in clouds and choked us. You couldn't see the next person in line. Hiking in was like coming down a ski slope in deep powder -- dirt powder. Dust filled our mouths and nostrils and lungs. Somebody said it was worse than the smoke and I thought, it's a tossup.

Usually I let my hair go the whole fourteen, but it was so crusted with dirt I couldn't even mash it into a ponytail. I dumped two bottles on my head. The cold coated my scalp and ran into the collar of my yellow, which would lie plastered to my neck until the day or the fire's heat dried it, but by then I'd be soaked with sweat anyway.

I asked Flinch, Hey will you hold my

phone, so I could use the camera as a mirror to get the part right. He agreed but grinned and looked away from me towards the engines lining up for the shift, not wanting to watch, maybe he thought it would be weird or inappropriate to watch the only girl brush her hair. Thanks, I said when I was done, How's it look? Flinch hunched deeper into his bony frame, blinking rapidly. It l-looks g-g-good, he said.

Got it! Johnny hooted. He got a video of the whole thing, Flinch holding the camera and me brushing my wet hair and the green forest and the column of smoke in the distance. Fuck you, I laughed, let me see it.

Johnny was eating something, and Ben was sour behind his Heat Waves (not Pit Vipers, Heat Waves), and Campbell hadn't left yet for paternity but wanted to, his pale out-to-sea eyes pleaded to be any kind of elsewhere. Bobby's feet must hurt, he never said, but he walked with a side to side keel, like a rocking boat, like my friend's mom whose leg had been shortened by a childhood case of Polio. That's what 18 years of this would do to you.

We could already feel the wind pushing into our faces and creaking in the Ponderosas and tickling up the dust, and you could tell this wasn't the half of it. A little chill ran down my arms, and I knew something was coming, but I had no idea it would be what it would be or mean what it would come to mean for my home and everyone I loved.

And Buckett called "load up" and I collected my hairbrush and stuck a boot on the bumper and pulled myself up, and the back door of the buggy clanged like a lid closing on a can of toy soldiers, and we were wheels rolling toward the black.

September 9

The other day, an afternoon in February, I was driving home from the grocery store and someone was burning a pile, as someone always is in Happy Camp, and for a brief moment as my truck hummed by, the smoke blotted the sun and the light took on an orange cast, just for half a second, and my heart jumped and did a backflip. No. And I knew that it was the ninth of September I

was remembering, or trying not to.

I can't remember the morning, where we slept or how early we took off, but I remember driving, riding in the back of the buggy with the world rushing by. We were leaving the North Complex and its fantastic intergalactic column, and I half-expected clear skies leaving the fire, but there were no clear skies in California.

The sky was orange, it was orange and milky-dark, we were all taking pictures and videos because it was insane, 0900 and it looked like the middle of the night. Mile upon hundreds of miles it was dark and orange and there were fires in every direction and roads closed for fires and the news of what was happening filtered back from Bobby and Buckett or appeared on my phone.

The Slater fire had crossed over Grayback. It jumped Indian Creek east to west, then the wind shifted and it jumped back again, then spread in two directions, the fire had gone everywhere at once and made a hundred thousand acre run up and over the ridge towards Oregon. The ridge where there had been an undivided stand of Brewer Spruce. The drainage

where there had been so many homes.

Chris and Tara's home was gone. Jason's. Phil and Tammy's home in tribal housing. Jossie and Elvis's trailer. The whole trailer park. Ken's Cabins, all those historic cabins, part of an old lumber outfit at Luther Gulch, a place I had almost rented last winter from Ken, a rascally old schemer with a sweet wife named Sherrie whose brain was slowly succumbing to dementia -- their whole property with its nine rentals, gone. Serena's parents' place, which I had always wanted to see, a house reached only by a hike in that the old folks had built themselves on the edge of a bluff. Three quarters of the Meadows. All of Doolittle Creek.

We drove under the orange sky and the air was oddly cool under the inversion and it felt like night and the news came pouring in and I sat as still as possible trying to keep the knot in one place in my throat.

In one direction the Slater was headed for Gasquet, they were evacuating there. So my home was evacuated and our station was evacuated and there was no place I could go when we got back, no place was safe. On the other side, the fire

was moving west, towards our property. I could not get Kevin on the phone and for all I knew our house was already gone.

Happy Camp isn't a valley town. Valley towns are nice and safe, flat plains sown with corn or grasses, strewn with fat shiny cows and stocked silos. In a valley town, the whole community is laid out neatly on straight streets on the green sheet of the valley, and in the distance a mountain range hangs like a backdrop, the white-dripped peaks little more than a picturesque addendum to the bottom margin of the sky.

In a piece about the fire, a journalist called Happy Camp a "mountain town," and that felt to me terribly inaccurate. A mountain town, to my mind, sits perched on the edge of or halfway up a mountain. Like Telluride, there's a mountain town. But Happy Camp is a canyon town. There's a little scrap of flat near where Indian Creek flows in a knee-deep riffle into the silty waters of the Klamath, the flat where the tribe's offices are, and the lower FS station with its green engines, and a few houses (and now, after the fire, rows on rows of white travel trailers). But

aside from the flat, there is no flat, in fact someone once told me that if you find a flat spot on the Klamath you can be sure it's man-made.

This is a river canyon, carved by the Klamath's progress home to the Pacific. The roads squiggle and meander up the hills, and each gorge feeds into the narrow next, little creek gullies into the cliffed chasm of Elk Creek, with its bluffs called Whooping Devil, which pours into the river; Clear Creek, flowing out of the Siskiyou Wilderness fed on snowmelt from Preston Peak, opening into the river at a beautiful ranch; East Fork and South Fork and Doolittle into Indian Creek's slot canyons and thence into the river, just a series of steep gouges into the earth, with people living in or on the edges of these gulches in houses they built themselves with or without permits, usually the latter, and water drawn from a creek, and firewood stacked in a shed and in winter, smoke spiraling cozily out a chimney, little puffs of it rising among the endless wall of conifers, notations of human life in a ceaseless woods.

So funny how different smoke is by the season: in winter a comfort and in

summer a harbinger of the end.

It was too much to picture our house in flames. Instead I thought of the apple trees, which were heavy with the round red crop of early fall, trees the previous owner of the house had planted decades earlier, not just apple but cherry, peach, pear, and fig. I thought of the orchard burning, then turning to blackened skeletons, how long it would take to start over, the charred fruit on the ground in sticky black lumps, in piles of ash.

On we rode, now nearing Redding, and occasionally Johnny looked back and I tried to hide my tear-streaked face and he gave me a smile of great sympathy and I thought, Johnny, you are the best of them, I will love you forever for this. For kindness was what I desperately needed and everyone else was afraid to look at me, as if fear and sorrow were a virus they could catch.

We stopped at a store and they said Mask Up and I thought, pull it together, hold it together, and I pulled on the mask and it felt good, like an armor over everything but my eyes. I jumped out of the buggy into the smoke.

Kelly Ramsey
writer and wildland firefighter



EMILY SCHLICKMAN



Distilling the Pyrocene

4,300,000 acres of charred ground emerged across the state of California in 2020.
350,000 acres encircled Lake Berryessa in the Northern Inner Coast Range.
30,000 acres of the Vaca Mountains were consumed by the Markley Fire.
638 acres of interior chaparral marked the initial point of ignition.
74 acres along a trail became the primary site of my fieldwork.
35 specimens told stories about what was no longer there.
1 root mold held the entire landscape.

left & page ii:

Emily Schlickman
Distilling the Pyrocene I 2021
Digital Print, 142 x 106cm

right page:

Emily Schlickman
Distilling the Pyrocene II 2021
Digital Print, 142 x 106cm

page 32:

Emily Schlickman
Distilling the Pyrocene III 2021
Digital Print, 142 x 106cm

page 33:

Emily Schlickman
Distilling the Pyrocene IV 2021
Digital Print, 142 x 106cm





KAREN SEDAITIS

In 2001 my family bought 1300 acres of forest and creek in Rocky Hall, NSW. The general idea was to protect our forest from logging and degradation by maintaining its diversity of flora and fauna as a wildlife corridor to State Forest, farming land and National Parks.

In 2020, severe drought dried up the creek. By the end of summer, the forest floor crackled with bone-dry bark and leaf. Many shrubs died from lack of water and the wildlife was desperate.

On February 1st, three large uncontrollable fires converged in the Towamba Valley and tore through our land in a pyrocumulus event. Our forest was engulfed. We lost our loved, hand-built house, all of the infrastructure surrounding and supporting it and, most affecting, all of the property's diverse vegetation. Every tree shrub and blade of grass was engulfed in hot flame and reduced to ash or torched.

After the fire, what I saw was an open, revealed landscape; the skeleton which lay beneath the flesh of vegetation. Every curve, dip, gully, slope and rise was bared and what trees stood blackened in that

smoke-wreathed swathe of white ash spoke to me of a mystical alchemy and transformation.

What had once been a diverse, dappled, mysterious forest with a pristine waterway running like an artery through vegetal flesh was now a vast white ashscape radiating a hushed and potent sense of epic majesty and stoicism.

OUTPUT Art after Fire is an opportunity for me to express the majestic beauty and alchemic transformation brought about by fire and dynamic living matter.

The standing trees are speaking to me of the cycle of life, growth, death and rebirth through dynamic, vital elements intrinsic to all of us who live on the skin of Planet Earth. New life is surging at Rocky Hall but the old trees are dead and dying, bearing wordless witness to their experience of sudden, explosive transformation.

This body of work is a devotional act of translation conveying my own journey through shock, disbelief, grief, awe, wonder and hope. I've created 12 ink drawings and 7 paintings on canvas of the dead and dying trees. Creating these

images has been a process of framing trees with my camera before studio work using ink and brush in simple, gestural marks on the way to painting larger works on canvas.

Each stage has evolved in a process through the filters of my eyes, feelings, tools and imagination to convey the beauty and grandeur of a loved landscape undergoing an ultimately life-affirming metamorphosis.

Karen Sedaitis

Portal 2021

Acrylic on stretched canvas

45 x 60 x 1.5cm

pages 36 and 37, left to right:

Karen Sedaitis

Portal #4 2021

Totem & Sacrifice 2021

Beelzebub 2021

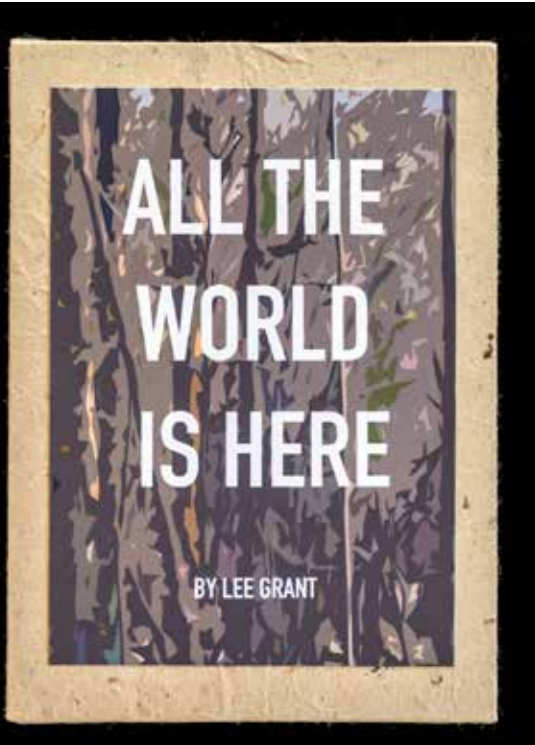
Birth, Death, Rebirth 2021

Acrylic on stretched canvas

90 x 60 x 1.5cm each







Using maps, photographs, satellite imagery, photographs, screengrabs, news quotes and scientific data *All the world is here* is a cartography of lament that responds to a range of emotional after-effects from the 2019-20 Summer fires. It is a personal meditation – an after-fire landscape observation if you like – that poetically considers the biophobia induced by such an event.

But rather than just a conveyance of doom it also notes moments of awe and wonder in the natural world and that in the grand scheme of things, just how vulnerable and insignificant we really are.

Lee Grant

All the world is here (Cover) 2021
Concertina book
15 x 21cm

As I stood in contemplation of the garden of the wonders of space," Milosz writes, "I had the feeling that I was looking into the ultimate depths, the most secret regions of my own being; and I smiled, because it had never occurred to me that I could be so pure, so great, so fair! My heart burst into singing with the song of grace of the universe. All these constellations are yours, they exist in you; outside your love they have no reality! How terrible the world seems to those who do not know themselves! When you felt so alone and abandoned in the presence of the sea, imagine what solitude the waters must have felt in the night, or the night's own solitude in a universe without end!" And the poet continues this love duet between dreamer and world, making man and the world into two wedded creatures that are paradoxically united in the dialogue of their solitude.

Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*

There is a deeply human need for belonging. This is especially so in regards to "place", from which arises a sense of tribal kinship and identity.

A key factor in this attachment is the landscape within which one might find oneself and how we determine and express identity both from that place and carry that to the realms beyond.

Landscape therefore is not simply what we see in the space around us, but rather, it is a way of seeing that is determined in different ways: socially, culturally and individually. We may see landscape with our eyes but we interpret it with our minds and ascribe values to it for intangible reasons.

Landscape can therefore be viewed as a cultural construct in which our sense of place, memories and imagination reside. It is in this context that this series of small zines and one artist book have been created. They have been crafted around various actual and imagined landscapes, both internalised and externalised.

Humans have had a longstanding need to conquer the landscape as a way of

expressing their dominance, over the flora, fauna and even their own kind. This notion of supremacy is deeply attached to place and a sense of a common identity. This unspoken understanding is implicit in our nature and examples of this is littered throughout human history.

Landscape is not a genre but a medium... It is a natural scene mediated by culture. It is both a represented and presented space, both a signifier and a signified, both a frame and what a frame contains, both a real place and its simulacrum, both a package and the commodity inside a package.

(Mitchell, W. J. T. (1994) *Landscape and Power*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pg 5)

Initially, my idea was to examine the role of the landscape where I reside in the context of last Summer's bushfires as a uniquely traumatic event. The premise from which was to study how landscape sets conditions and affords particular opportunities for local memory practices in response to traumatic events. Indeed, rural landscapes can be 'wounded' by

events, both man-made and natural, and remain unsettled as sites of trauma.

Certainly both 2020 and 2021 have been a testament to these 'wounds', personally and for the inhabited community in which I live. However, my ideas began to shift with the desire to examine landscape as an imaginary and conceptual space, with obvious links to the natural world around me. Through an experimental making process of a small series of zines and one handmade book, my aim was to explore graphic ways of expressing my own ideas, research and responses to eco-induced trauma and to my own ongoing relationship with the landscape. This "cartography of place" has enabled both a healing and a morbid realisation of my own insignificance in the grand scheme of things. The act of making and collecting thoughts and ideas into a bookish format has, in this instance, allowed me to think about and express my own experience of landscape ie. an experience of mapping my imagination and of reading the landscape around me, of observing not just what is there but what is not there and

most importantly to find some meaning in the seeming chaos.

In receiving the grant, the gift of time and space to experiment, and creation without pressure (though the latter is questionable!), I was able to spend more time than usual making experimental 'mistakes', and most importantly, engaging intently with the process of bookmaking, design and creation.

This process has been critical in allowing me to consider how to sequence ideas in a poetic and non-linear way – something not always undertaken in the realm of the 'truth-telling' medium of photography. Rather than employing a linear narrative, I have jotted down a jumble of visual vignettes that reflect the anxious state of my own mind – and seemingly of the world today.

Initially, I wanted to embrace the chaos of my anxiety about the fires and to see this reflected in the work I made – hence the choice of making zines, as a casual, throwaway object. Ironically there was nevertheless an order in this chaos. The act of making, employing certain design

choices, of cutting paper to size, of stapling or stitching, taping and gluing and most brain bendingly, mathematical calculations for printing double-sided pages! These basic – kinetic – approaches to tangibly realising my research and ideas have been both fun but more importantly satisfying. And for every mistake I have made throughout the process (there were a lot), I have learned a new skill and/or bookmaking application which I will certainly use in my overall practice.

I am grateful to Caren, my mentor, and also to Daniela for sharing the creative process of undertaking a new project in such a short timeframe (anathema to how I normally work and engage in the artmaking process.) If I am being honest, the outcomes which I have created are not necessarily ones that I am fully satisfied with. However, the act of making these has pointed me firmly in the direction of bookmaking as an integral element of my work. Whilst I already understood this to some degree in a commercial sense (I have published 2 books), it has been affirming to my practice to fully

understand that the artbook is an area that I am interested in further exploring. To this end I also created a book dummy for an altogether different project – a project that conversely addresses trauma, but in an altogether different capacity. This handmade artbook, titled *Mnemosyne*, is divided into two parts with a separate booklet for text and an index. It is based on work created for a commission for the Australian War Memorial in 2018. The process of making this book will I hope inform the publication of a limited edition of 4 plus 1 AP artist books, from which I hope I might eventuate a trade version of the publication. To be given the time, space and financial support (ah, the bliss of solitude!) to realise a raft of ideas and to experiment accordingly has been profoundly enriching for my practice. And for this, I am deeply grateful.

right page:

Lee Grant

Other Landscapes (Zine Covers) 2021

Series of 6

15 x 21cm

i. Percussit lunam / Moonstruck:

uses images from the NASA archive, as well as portraits of space trackers and photos of interstellar paraphernalia I made as part of the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing. Landscape as alien, heroic and conquerable.

ii. Deflagro / Destroyed by fire:

explores the shock effects of landscape destroyed by fire and echoes the emotional trauma derived from such a catastrophic event.

iii. Pantheos / All of everything is divine:

is a meditation on nature and biophilia and the sacred connection between humans and the world in which we live.

iv. Psychoterratica / Nature deficit

is a series of sequenced photographs of TV imagery that explores human disconnection from the natural world. It is a visual lament of the modern world and the unfolding horrors of climate change, war, famine and the current pandemic for which we are ourselves responsible.

v. Prima gentes / Yuwinj dahri-bulwal:

is a series of Yuin portraits made on the set of the documentary film Yuwinj dahri-bulwal (Yuin Stand Strong) and reflects the pride of some of this country's First Nations people.

vi. Hotel regem / The Monarch Hotel:

explores one of Moruya's landmark pubs, The Monarch Hotel. Using archival documents and photos alongside portraits of local punters and details of pub materiality, this zine celebrates the pub as a central meeting place for social cohesiveness in regional communities.



D ANIELA MOLNAR

HOW TO BUILD A KITE

It's 2 am and I'm sitting cross-legged on my living room floor with my cat on my lap, squinting at my laptop screen, trying to build a kite. The kite is a large circular construction that, when flown, will hover and dip, write a tubular script, lasso invisible to visible. My kite will be bright orange — safety orange — and have a poem written on its inside. I want to see the poem fly.

The plans for the circular kite were hand drawn by a kite enthusiast thirty years ago and uploaded to the internet in the early days of html. They haven't been updated since. Apparently, there's a sort of mythology about this kite and its history that kite enthusiasts have declined to meddle with for decades. I respect this type of idiosyncrasy. I'm also befuddled by the plans, blurry scans of eccentric iconography. Around 3 am, I find a kite-specific glossary in the internet's innards that allows me to begin to decipher terms like spar, bridle, trailing edge, leech line, ballast. But my mind still stutters over the translation of virtual to actual, idea to airborne, part to whole.

In one ontology, our material world can be understood as a vast array of isolate parts that together function like a machine, each part necessary to make the machine work. For example, cells are understood to be the building blocks of life — tiny self-contained entities that coordinate to create larger self-contained entities called bodies.

Behavioral psychologist B. F. Skinner wrote, "When we have discovered the laws which govern a part of the world about us, and we have organized these laws into a system, we are then ready to deal effectively with that part of the world." This is an orderly system of microcosm and macrocosm: laws of the part extend to larger systems (which consist of functionally organized parts) which extend, in turn, to ways of being and knowing.

Indigenous activist Jimmie Durham puts it this way: "Western society is divided in non-connecting squares. Each square represents an area of human activity or knowledge." Picture an infinite grid of tiny squares — cells, parts — that make

themselves available for arrangement and rearrangement by those who understand the systemic laws of matter. This systemic, mechanistic view of the world forms the basis of dominant Western ideology. It is an essential, vestigial skeleton inside the body of capitalism, enabling its every move.

In other worldviews, this system, with all its inherent divisiveness, is supplanted by an understanding of the world as an undifferentiated, living process. This version of the world is composed of verbs rather than nouns. A verb is a relationship, not a thing. It cannot, therefore, be subdivided. This type of worldview prioritizes effect and affect over entity. This is a world of incessant interactivity. Another Indigenous activist, Vine Deloria, Jr., builds on Durham's image of non-connecting squares: "When new things come into our circle it expands. When new things come into Western society another square is added." This expansive circle is a set of processes, ever-changing and alive, growing and contracting like a ripple or halo of light.

This world-as-process ontology aligns with the skepticism some contemporary thinkers feel towards objectivity. Objectivity is a necessary precursor to the version of the world that exists as isolate units. In that version of the world, there are subjects (you and I) who have the ability to objectively observe objects (the rest of the world). Scientific philosopher Donna Haraway's notion of "situated knowledges" is one of many philosophies proposing that this subject/object relationship is suspect. She proposes that what we perceive and label as truth is a made thing, a living circle of exchange. This means that a scientist in a laboratory doesn't simply observe or conduct experiments on a cell, for instance, but actively co-creates what a cell is by seeing, measuring, naming and manipulating it. What if cells are not actually self-contained entities but processes? What if cells are not "building blocks" but are, rather, stormy becomings — verbs, not nouns — that cannot be stilled in any meaningful way?

Robin Wall Kimmerer has written about

how the language that her ancestors spoke reflects this process-based world where subject and object blur: "The language that my grandfather was forbidden to speak is composed primarily of verbs, ways to describe the vital beingness of the world. ...There is no it for nature. Living beings are referred to as subjects, never as objects, and personhood is extended to all who breathe and some who don't. I greet the silent boulder people with the same respect as I do the talkative chickadees." She goes on to assert that this "grammar of animacy" is a vital tool of world-making, not just world-reflecting.

It's 2 am again, the following night, and I'm sitting on the same spot on my living room floor, cross-legged with my cat. The laptop screen offers bright, unwavering white light and the apparent invitation to simply locate then purchase the correct parts with which to construct my kite. The internet triumphantly declares: "Behold the material world! It has been splintered into a billion constituent forms for you! Each form has been monetized, codified,

and spread across the immaterial world to appear on your glowing screen for your immediate consumption!"

But something's not working. Every time I begin to approach the purchase of the kite's component parts, credit card plastic slick in my sweaty hand, crippling self-doubt takes hold and I double back, increasingly lost with each hairpin turn through this obtuse loop. Why can't I make the thing I want to make?

In Alice Notley's epic poem *Descent of Alette*, Notley's speaker, Alette, wakes one day having fallen into an underground dystopia, a NYC subway-ish place where drab gray and black form the preponderance of the world, symbolizing the chokehold "the tyrant," an all-powerful man who represents capitalism and patriarchy, has upon the world. Early in the book, Alette encounters an artist, a woman, who is dirty, exhausted, crying quietly, standing against a dark wall. Alette asks her what is wrong and the woman replies:

[...] "I" "am a painter" "I have been trying" "to find"

"a form the tyrant" "doesn't own—" "something" "he doesn't know about" "hasn't invented, hasn't" "mastered" "hasn't made his own" "in his mind" "Not rectangular," "not a sculpture" "Not a thing at all—" "he owns all things,"

"doesn't he?" "He's invented" "all the shapes" "I'm afraid he's" "invented mine," "my very own" "body" ("she was hysterical") "Did he invent me?" "I want" "to do something like paint air" "Perhaps" "I even want to" "invent air" "I've

painted" "thin transparent" "pieces" "of plastic" "They—" "the pictures on them—" "always turn" "rectangular," "circular" "I once painted" "on a bat's wings" "I caught a bat" "painted colors on" "let it loose &" "watched the air change..."

"He owns form," "doesn't he?" "The tyrant" "owns form"

Material form will never be available to this woman, belonging as it does to a tyrannical force which does not share what it owns. In her despair, she reaches instead for a way to change the air itself, air being perhaps the very definition of formlessness, and therefore available to her to temporarily alter.

I want to build the kite so I can see it fly above my burnt home.

The forests burnt last summer, wind-driven, heat-driven, climate-chaos-driven, driven by the motor of late capital's lost mind. Flames singe my memory, my home, turn it all to ash.

It's late August and I'm poised and ready to flee, almost eager. My car is packed. My house is a tinderbox on the precipice of the flames.

Certainty is ridiculous.

Flash bangs and copters blight the acrimonious air. Federal agents, unmarked cars. Virulent orange nights. Battalions of Trump trucks slither through town, hissing menace and venom into the forests' airborne ash.

I snap a photo of myself at my writing

desk, gas mask on. The air is so thick with ash I can't see across the street. The end-of-summer heat has gone clammy and cold in the dense gray air. The gas mask allows me to breathe through the ash but won't filter out the deadly, invisible pandemic that also lives in the air. The air is wrongly visible yet still conceals its deadly power.

Birds fly into windows, confused. A coyote sits on the curb outside my house one morning, seeming to stare at me through my windows, utterly bewildered.

Air itself, gone poison. Air, that most elemental of connectors.

Animal denotes, simply, breathing.

"Perhaps" "I even want to" "invent air"

Philosopher David Abram asks whether our minds, our consciousness, might be considered something that lives not inside individual, isolate bodies "but is rather a property of the earthly biosphere — a property in which we, along with the other animals and the plants, all participate." If this is true, the mind would cease to be a separate entity and would

become, instead, a sort of node in a pervasive field of consciousness: "Mind, in this sense, is very much like a medium in which we're situated, like the ineffable air or atmosphere."

What if the air is our shared consciousness, our larger mind? What if the awareness we place within our bodies — bodies which we imagine to be isolate, boundaried entities built of smaller isolate, boundaried entities — is actually not contained in any meaningful way? What if we're verbs, always in the midst of a shifting circle of consciousness which is itself a verb, constantly shaped and reshaped by our shifting?

Lyn Hejinian: "One is several, incomplete, and subject to dispersal."

Alice Notley: "Do you even know / what part of you you are?"

Bayo Akomolafe: "In this epoch of porous boundaries, our bodies cannot be considered apart from the stories we tell of them."

A very old cedar once grew by a pale turquoise river. The river was a restless

thing, endlessly convexing the banks' red clay. The banks' red clay was made from the soft, fragrant duff of the cedar's body. The river's volitions yielded yellow-green dicots and white trillium in spring. The river's volitions yielded the very old cedar who drank those riverine logics her whole functionally endless life. Together, the river and the cedar made and breathed air.

Many times over many years, this cedar held me in her lichen-frosted buttressed folds. I'd lean my body into her body, offer her my salt and carbon dioxide while she offered me her oxygen and sturdy red heft, her dense accrual of living time. I'd rest my head on her body and listen to the roar of sap through cambium.

The fires that threatened my house and burnt vast areas of my bioregional home began in close proximity to this tree.

I watch helicopter footage of the burnt areas. What once was green is gray. "Salvage" logging has begun in full force. There is no "salvage" and certainly no salvation in this practice. It is a euphemism wrought by disaster capitalists who seek

to maximize their own profits by quickly extracting as much as possible from public lands after those lands have been damaged by the aggregate consequences of capitalism.

The helicopter flies over the area where the cedar once lived. I stop breathing; my body rejects the air.

The safety-orange kite still has not been made. No parts have been purchased. The form that I want to construct cannot yet be made because the fires are still burning in me. The air is still thick with ash in me. My body is still being breathed by the smoke-choked air. The cedar is still burning in me. The river is still burning. The memory is still being made, the map is still being drawn, the dream is still being dreamt. The circle is expanding.

Every time I put the key in the ignition, and push, and twist, my capacity to care slips a little bit.

Every time I shove my words in, and push, and twist, I wonder a little bit about what the things we cannot see or say become.

Species, people, lands cloaked in silence or euphemism.

The things we cannot see or say become our voice, our name, careful as an acronym.

How did we come to dream this wrong dream.

How did we come to dream someone else's dream, how did this dream begin to dream us.

How did this dream con us into begging love from illness. Within the dream vein, swift clarity is swapped for sturdy premise. The dream vein, sapped by logic, swaps its liquid dream for a thick foundation made by the emperor's arrogant slaves.

A dream is a bad brick. It's foundational only in the way that the emperor's slaves are still slaves.

Our entire life stays with us. We echolocate. The entire world is our larger body.

Our entire life stays, echoing through and in us. Outsourced suffering is still of one's larger body.

The wrong dream is still of our larger body and we are dreamt by it.

The wrong dream stills the most blameless

bodies first. As we are dreamt by it.

"One day the distant ice shelf will come ripping through the tissue of my body — through every body."

Each day, the wrong, distended dream is ripening in the tissues of my body, every body, bloating veins to highways, converting living sieves to cells.

Each day, our distended farce blots stars. Converts cellular to salvific, though we know it's not true. Starlings murmurate in groups of seven through unknown means.

The wrong dream says they do it for safety. Maybe they do it to show how the thickness of the world isn't visible. Can't be locked. The dream vein breathes itself, breaks the map.

Notes:

"One day the distant ice shelf will come ripping through the tissue of my body — through every body." is from Daisy Hildyard's book *The Second Body*.

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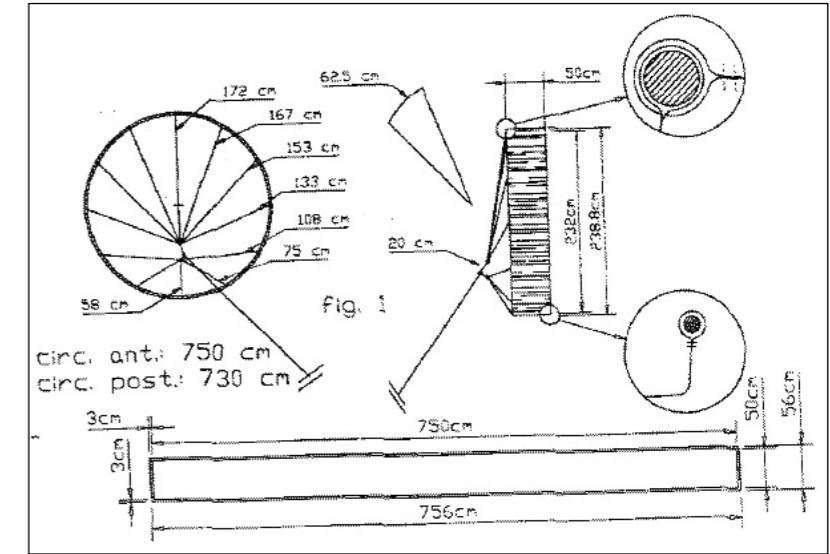
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How to build a kite...

KATHERINE BOLAND

Fuelled by my own terrafurie at “those who command the forces of Earth destruction”, I created *Crime Scene*—a three metre facsimile of the blue and white chequered tape police use to designate a location associated with a committed crime. In this case, human beings have committed an environmental crime against Earth. The ‘tape’, composed of charred and distressed squares of timber, perhaps remnants of an incinerated forest or a burnt-out building, cordons off the corner of a room. As we step into the space to inspect the work, we become part of the crime scene. To some degree we are all, with our unlimited and incessant wants and desires, environmental criminals exacting a devastating toll on Earth’s finite natural resources.

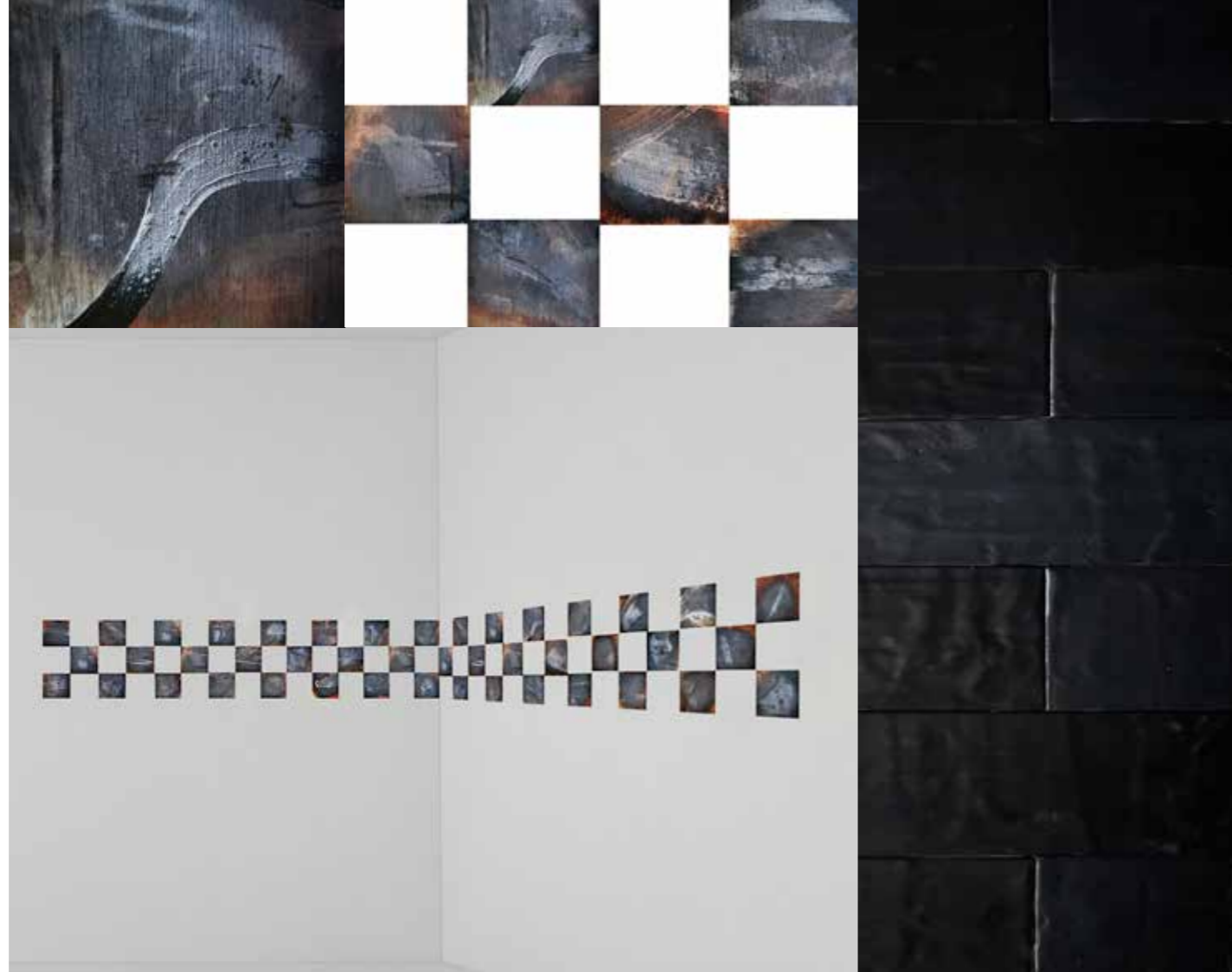
Katherine Boland

Crime Scene (Details/documentation) 2021
Acrylic, scorching on timber panels
30 x 300cm

right page, left, top and bottom:

Katherine Boland

January 4th, 2020 Triptych (Documentation) 2021
Encaustic on timber panels. 70 x 90cm x 3



On January 4th, 2020 massive out-of-control fire fronts to the north, south and west raced towards the seaside town of Merimbula and I evacuated with my family to a motel in the main street, hoping we’d be safe there surrounded by swathes of concrete and masonry. That afternoon, as smoke seeped under the front door into our room, I stood in dread at the window, watching and waiting for the coming apocalypse—the sky a hellish vision, sickly orange bleeding into luminous red and then a petrifying pitch-black. The sense of safety and security I usually feel inside a building evaporated, and, at that moment, I felt very afraid, supremely aware of my human frailty and lack of protection in the face of that diabolical and inescapable force of nature.

The *January 4th, 2020 Triptych* simulates individual encaustic wax bricks. The word *encaustic* originates from the Greek word *enkaustikos* which means to burn. Encaustic wax is a painting technique in which wax, damar resin and pigment is heated to form a liquid which is then applied to a surface—usually timber. The oldest surviving encaustic paintings, made in Egypt around 100–300AD, are the Romano-Egyptian Fayum mummy portraits housed in the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities in Cairo.

I learnt the technique during an artist residency in New York and subsequently used it during a residency in a medieval village in France where I sourced beeswax from a local honey farm, and again in the ancient city of Luxor in Egypt where I haggled for large saffron-coloured wheels of raw



wax in a neighbourhood souq. Although it’s a long-lasting medium, encaustic is subject to variations in temperature—too cold and it cracks; too hot and it melts. I wanted the medium in this work to reflect the tenuous nature of human existence and a sense of instability and transience. The flimsy, wafer-thin orange (4.45pm), red (5pm) and black (5.15pm) panels of brickwork reference human development which is intrinsically linked to climate change and the proliferation of devastating wildfires and cataclysmic weather events raging across the planet.





In mid-January 2020, the sails of the Sydney Opera House glowed with images of firefighters who were battling fierce bushfires across Australia. In our hour of need, firefighters were our heroes and saviours and, if I ever saw one in the supermarket or down the street, I wanted to run up and hug them in gratitude.

The commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service, Shane Fitzsimmons, became a household name, making headlines when he claimed that climate change had contributed to the unprecedented number of blazes burning around the country.

The Firefighter #1 explores themes of colonial overlay and land/nature and culture dichotomies. As one with the landscape, a smoke-enshrouded firefighter jacket, sleeves outstretched in a Christ-like manner, is overlaid with European-style wallpaper, pointing to the deleterious and climate-change inducing farming and land management practices employed on the Australian continent since colonisation.

Katherine Boland

The Firefighter #1 2021

High resolution digital file

I made this work after a harrowing drive through hundreds of hectares of burnt bushland not far from where I live. I used to know that stretch of road like the back of my hand but now it is an alien landscape, once-familiar tracts of bush changed beyond recognition forever. I was overwhelmed with grief for the loss of our native forests and wildlife. Climate grief has been defined as “a depth of realisation of that recognised loss of what will never be again.”

Australian philosopher Glenn Albrecht coined the term *solastalgia* to describe a form of emotional or existential distress caused by environmental change. It's what happens when you stay in the same locality, but your sense of home or place is lost due to the destruction of the landscape—a feeling experienced by millions around the world as local environments are impacted by globalisation, population growth and climate change.

In *Unfamiliar Territory*, I have tried to capture, in digitally manipulated imagery and video, the strange and haunting quality of the landscape I filmed and photographed that day.

Unfamiliar Territory video link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mazlo0PR70>

Katherine Boland

Unfamiliar Territory #3 2021

High resolution digital file



KARYN THOMPSON

This work has evolved from a personal need to process my experience of the bushfire we faced on New Years Eve 2019. Since the fire, I have struggled with memories and dreams of not only fighting the fire but also fighting my overwhelming instinct to flee. In response to this, I began to think of ways to be better prepared. Sometimes concocting elaborate imaginings of ways to escape with our beloved house, if it ever happens again.

My fear fed these fantasies because a house, this house, is so important to my psyche and sense of self. These memories and subsequent reflections on self, and the house as a symbol of self, led to the evolution of this body of work. I began by making a rough model of our house and as the work progressed, the houses became more simplified while retaining the proportions of the front façade, windows and roof pitch.

I read that in total there were 3000 houses lost in Australia during the 'Black Summer Bushfires'. 460 of these were lost in the Bega Valley, where I live. On the 3rd of

March 2021 (the anniversary of the 'end' of the fires), only 90 plans for rebuilding had been received by council.

I have long been interested in the Jungian theory of the house as a symbol of the archetypal 'self' in a 'universal unconscious'. My experiences of the bushfire reawakened this interest. I asked myself why? Why did we place so much importance on our house and potentially risk our lives to defend it? What is a house? Is it more than a place we feel safe and secure; a shelter to protect us from the elements; a place where we store our precious mementos? Is it more than a place to eat, to sleep, to dream, to think, to grow, to exist? Is it also an extension of our self, a significant part of our identity?

As I progressed through the project I began to ask, what of our wider environment? It could also be seen as our house; as could country, planet, universe. In future work I hope to explore these concepts further.



Karyn Thompson

Wheeled House 2021
Balsawood, plywood, paint, recycled steel and rubber wheels, glue, wax
18 x 16 x 11cm

Karyn Thompson

Self Portrait as a Fire Extinguisher 2021
Air dry clay, plywood, paint, ink, wax, vintage copper fire extinguisher
75 x 22 x 20cm





Karyn Thompson

Baggage (Self portrait in a suitcase) 2021
Mixed Media on Plywood, Balsawood,
recycled steel, roots Glue, white wash,
vintage suitcase, burnt leaves, paper
leaves cut from text in journal, wax
45 x 55 x 35cm

right page:

Karyn Thompson

Legged House 2021
Balsawood, plywood, paint, recycled steel,
vintage cast iron cobbler stand, glue, wax
30.5 x 15 x 20cm

right page:

Karyn Thompson

Winged House 2021
Balsawood, paint, recycled steel, glue, wax,
burnt timber, bird nest, chicken feathers
32.5 x 38 x 15cm



PROJECT EVALUATION

Contents:

1. Evaluation notes
2. Broad observations
3. Creative journeys
4. Mentoring clusters
5. Networks
6. Recommendations

1. Evaluation Notes:

a. Definitions used:

- project = the pilot activities conducted during the period October 2020 to May 2021 under *OUTPUT Art after Fire*.
- participants = the ten artists and five mentors engaged for this project.
- cluster = the one mentor plus the two artists who were grouped together.

b. An independent and confidential evaluation of the project was conducted during 3-14 May 2021, and focused on the ten artists and five mentors.

c. Responses were received from all ten artists and five mentors – a 100% response rate. Their timely and insightful contributions were greatly valued and appreciated.

d. The summary provided below is de-identified, and incorporates opportunities and challenges experienced by participants, the lived-experience of participating in the project's implementation, Australia-USA dimensions of the project, and the project's potential to foster networking.

e. Participants were also invited to provide recommendations for future iterations of the project, beyond the 2020-2021 pilot.

2. Broad Observations:

a. The theme of bushfires, and the opportunity for creatives to focus on such a specific topic, was well received and celebrated. Such an emphasis was viewed as timely and necessary for rebuilding affected lives.

b. Overall, the project was a valuable learning experience for participants. The project not only developed new works, it inspired future works, and seeded advances in new mediums, innovative thinking, and revised learning ventures.

c. Overall, grouping artists with mentors was a valuable learning experience; guidance, feedback, insight, and inspiration were noted benefits. Participating in group conversations after COVID19 isolation was also valued.

d. There were significant differences in the project experiences across artists, mentors, artist-mentor interactions, and artist-artist interactions. Expectations also varied across participants.

e. The project assisted with connecting creatives who were working on similar topics or have had similar lived-experiences.

f. Despite the design of the project to be undertaken virtually and the output produced digitally (as an electronic catalogue), there were sentiments of yearning for a physical embodiment of group meetings, the artworks and catalogue produced, and an exhibition for artworks produced during the project.

g. It was acknowledged that this project began under the COVID19 pandemic, when uncertainties prevailed over participant schedules, and their

professional/personal lives. This led to some limitations in and impacts on the execution of plans and activities.

h. Overall, the project's implementation worked for many participants. Opportunities and challenges posed by the process varied considerably; some valued the fluid design, others preferred more direction and structure. Sentiments of periodic confusion, lack of clarity, and absence of clear communication were reported.

i. The timing and timeline of the project, time zones, and seasonality, impacted on how the project unfolded for many participants.

j. There were positive endorsements for continuing the project, maintaining networks established between participants, expanding networks to include future projects, and perhaps including interested collaborators and wider audiences.

3. Creative Journeys:

a. Overall, the artists benefited from having time, space, and funding to

explore a topic of importance to them.

b. The participatory experience of artists varied; some focused on the journey, others aimed to deliver a specific outcome and/or output. These differences can be attributed to practice styles, prior experiences, perceived expectations, and project implementation.

c. Expressing lived-experiences, trauma management, building confidence, kickstarting creative inquiry, work-life balance, and time management, were some of the ways artists found professional development and value through this project.

d. While outcomes and outputs from artists varied, all artists reported creative progress; some reached unexpected results, some exceeded planned results, and others were drawn to new horizons.

e. Reported challenges include time commitments, the project's timeline, and aspects of project implementation. Some highlighted their lived-experience through bushfires.

f. Communications about the creative journey under this project also varied;

some posted work-in-progress and/or experiences during the project. Social media being one such portal. Others reported intentions to continue developing works after the project concluded, and communicating results when outputs were finalised sometime in the future.

g. Artists acknowledged the level of funding offered in order to devote time to explore a specific theme, without negative impacts on other financial demands.

h. Overall, responses indicate that the full value of the project, as embodied in outcomes and outputs, would only be realised well after this project ended.

4. Mentoring Clusters:

a. Overall, the mentoring process was productive and contributed to the creative outcomes of the project.

b. Some cohorts reported shared learning that benefited both artists and mentors alike. This was especially noted where interests and practice styles overlapped.

c. The services provided by mentors and the levels of “exchange” were diverse. Mentor engagement ranged across academic theory, field practice, creative focus, project management, professional development, counselling, and critical review.

d. There were differing frequencies of interaction between artists and mentors, and with communications across geography and time zones. Where applicable, organising meetings across time zones was a reported challenge.

e. There were mixed benefits and challenges to meeting compositions. Meeting as a full cluster (mentor plus two artists), versus meeting one-on-one between one artist and the mentor varied; preferences for group or individual meetings with mentors were based on creative practice style, personality, and lived-experience.

f. A variety of communication channels were used in these clusters. ‘Zoom’ was highlighted as a successful tool for pursuing this project. Discussing visual artworks virtually was a reported concern.

Where it occurred, meeting in person was a significant highlight.

g. Mentors noted the different levels of creative practices of the artists and the different styles of mentoring required. Differences between mentoring emerging versus more advanced artists were reported.

h. Clarity on the exact role of mentors and artists at the very outset of the project timeline, and expectations of each other, would have enhanced the artist-mentor process. While flexibility was left to participants, the initial introductory proposal to participants, and what transpired in actuality, indicated the need for a more defined and facilitated mentoring framework.

i. Many participants highlighted inadequate compensation for the professional input delivered by the mentors. Given the time commitments mentors made to their clusters, and the level of interaction that benefited artists, the mentoring that was delivered during this project was reported as undervalued. Time commitments made by mentors

were well beyond estimates established under the project’s design.

j. There were positive intentions among many artists and mentors to continue communications and collaborations between them, beyond this project.

5. Networks:

a. Where it occurred, pairing artists from both the USA and Australia were beneficial to many, and valuable for both the lived-experience through bushfires, as well as the creative practice.

b. The shared-learning and peer-support were especially beneficial to those artists that explored a “buddy” system, and where cross-pollination was integral to the respective project outcomes and creative journeys.

c. Artists reported gaining deeper understanding of bushfires, first-hand perspectives, and how bushfire affected communities on opposite sides of the world. Deeper awareness of universalities and differences in creativity, creative life, work-life balance,

and fieldwork locations, were also recognised and valued.

d. Where it occurred, some artists found the international connections exciting, stimulating, and integral to making this project special. Some mentors described the international exchanges as vibrant, satisfying, moving, and a rich part of the experience.

e. Some participants plan to continue the partnerships developed beyond this project, including potential visits to corresponding locations where respective practices and lives occur.

f. The need for more time than what this project allowed to develop collegiality was reported, implying that the full benefit of the Australia-USA connections initiated by this project may only be realised in the long-term.

g. Participants felt that there were lost opportunities in the project design to have not virtually met as an entire group of artists and mentors during different stages of the project. This would have enabled a broader understanding and appreciation of how different artists,

mentors, or artist-mentor clusters were progressing, including shared learnings from opportunities and challenges, and the periodic sharing of progress made in art production.

6. Recommendations:

The following recommendations were identified for consideration in future versions of the project (pending adequate levels of funding for implementation). Furthermore, there are several recommendations implied in the previous sections of this evaluation summary, which have not been repeated below.

a. A wrap-up video meeting at the end of this pilot project, with all current artists, mentors, and the project team.

This would enable sharing, closure, and networking, well beyond what the electronic catalogue can provide.

b. A refined project design and implementation to provide clarity and buy-in from the outset.

It needs to be communicated and agreed upon by participants, and include more

detail on methods, timelines, benchmarks, assessments, responsibilities, and expectations. Such a “guide” needs to have some flexibility, adaptability, and experimentation built into it to cater for uncertainties and differences.

c. A separate “guide” for artist-mentor interactions, expectations, the mentoring process, and milestones.

Such a guide would place both mentor and artist on the same page, while also empowering cohorts to cater for specific individual needs. The Zoom session on trauma management was helpful, and needs to be followed with an ongoing resource.

d. A longer project timeline that took into consideration international dimensions and seasonality.

e. Planned opportunities for the entire group of participants to meet at periodic stages during the project, including meetings consisting of only the mentors, to learn/share experiences and knowledge.

f. Future meetings after this project for both participants and wider audiences to

continue developing the bushfire theme through the arts.

g. Explore clusters consisting of two artists and two mentors, one each from USA and Australia.

This would enable greater cross-pollination of ideas, cross-cultural engagement, as well as more variety in mentoring and communication styles.

h. Greater project management and facilitation.

This would assist with paying additional attention to timely communications, communication channels, and checks/balances against timelines and milestones.

i. Revised process for transferring funds from host organisation to participants. *This would avoid financial losses to recipients.*

j. Financial compensation for participants must accurately reflect the time, demands, and value associated with their professional commitments for meeting the project outcomes.

This is especially critical for attracting quality participants, and at a time when arts/artists are undervalued.

k. An ongoing *Art after Fire* project network.

To initially include current participants, to which new groups of artists and mentors can be added from future project iterations, and where experiences, resources, webinars can be shared on themes explored through the project.

Acknowledgements: Many thanks to the artists, mentors and project team for their dedication, commitment and collegiality for making *OUTPUT Art after Fire* (2020-2021) a shared learning experience. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this project as an independent evaluator. I look forward to seeing this innovative project develop further.

Evaluated by:
Charles Tambiah
ARTS research | facilitation | evaluation

Cara Despain Process



FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

The Australian Cultural Diplomacy Grant Project's financial support for the *OUTPUT Art after Fire* project was met with much appreciation and excitement. The project had the essential ingredient for something to happen – funding! A model for online mentoring in the creative arts, applied in the field where trauma prevails in both hemispheres of the globe, could now be tested.

It took moments to reconfigure the project's aspirations for a three-year process of cyclical development to a one-year production cycle on a 50% reduced budget. *OUTPUT Art after Fire* would be a pilot project. To the credit of the artists, mentors and members of the Project Team a very successful pilot it has been. It has trialed the remote mentoring of artists by artists who shared online their experience of place-based research techniques to assist in the generation of fine art in the context of trauma recovery.

Apart from the artwork itself and the pan-continental community

benefits that it promotes, testament to a successful pilot can be found in the quality of the recommendations that permeate the Project Evaluation by Charles Tambiah (see previous pages). Feedback of the kind it delivered does not emanate from the solitary occupation of an armchair.

Possibly the most obvious omission in the pilot (admittedly also omitted in the original AUD 180,000 over three years version of the project) was the provision of a paid, part-time project coordinator to facilitate the implementation of the mentoring process. Much of the feedback about fostering a greater sense of participant cohesion across the project and participation in its procedural development points to it.

Time does not permit the survey of the current Project Team's views on future project aspirations. However, from informal comments along the way to South East Arts and FieldScreen International from artists, mentors and project team members, there is a collective impetuous to deliver

ongoing iterations of the project with much larger artist/mentor subscription to a more responsive procedure, a more geographically diverse artist involvement, longer in duration, with a substantial output of works of art and a more supportive exposure of them to the communities of which participating artists are an integral part.

The specific focus of the *OUTPUT* project extends the scope of previous scholarly action research projects that involve the creative arts in delivering desirable outcomes for community mental health and wellbeing. An *OUTPUT* 'Project Team v02' will convene to build upon this track record. As Margaret Moreton, who facilitated the webinar on trauma sensitivity stated, "Trauma recovery is long term". As cultural diplomats are no doubt aware, economic recovery is dependent on community resilience and wellbeing.

South East Arts' Andrew Gray is intending to host in July 2021 an online conference for all *OUTPUT Art after Fire* participants to "wrap-up" the pilot.

No doubt it will be an opportunity for the forum to canvas prospects, such as:

- Project artists ("I now have a body of artwork that I never imagined I would have produced") planning exhibitions in their local regions

- FieldScreen International expanding its mentor list (Mentor: "I've spoken about this project several times to colleagues. I think it was inspired, and SO needed at this moment in time.")

- South East Arts exploring an *OUTPUT* project exhibition in the southeast region of NSW to profile the international aegis of the project and its enduring relevance. With commensurate funding, such an exhibition could tour other regional centres including Canberra.

And a dream with which to end – post-pandemic and when international travel can be justified in terms of carbon emission – there could be artist exchanges to further articulate trans-global perspectives and consolidate relationships.



Lee Grant
Deflagro (Cover)
2021. Zine 2
Other Landscapes
15 x 21cm

EPILOGUE

Letter from Cobargo Saturday 12 June 2021

I was in Bega today at a poet's reading/ music event at Spiral Gallery where my mum Doris is having a show of her prints with another painter called Glenda May. 5 local poets presented their responses to the artworks which in themselves are responses to the fire experiences.

Turns out it was a really powerful moment in that room. Room filled with grey haired, white skin elders in handmade felt and comfortable shoes nodding and making noises of accord to harrowing but beautiful articulations of the devastation and grief. A memorial service for the forest; reckoning with their own life's early hopes that they have watched be destroyed by bad politics; grief at being somehow complicit in the

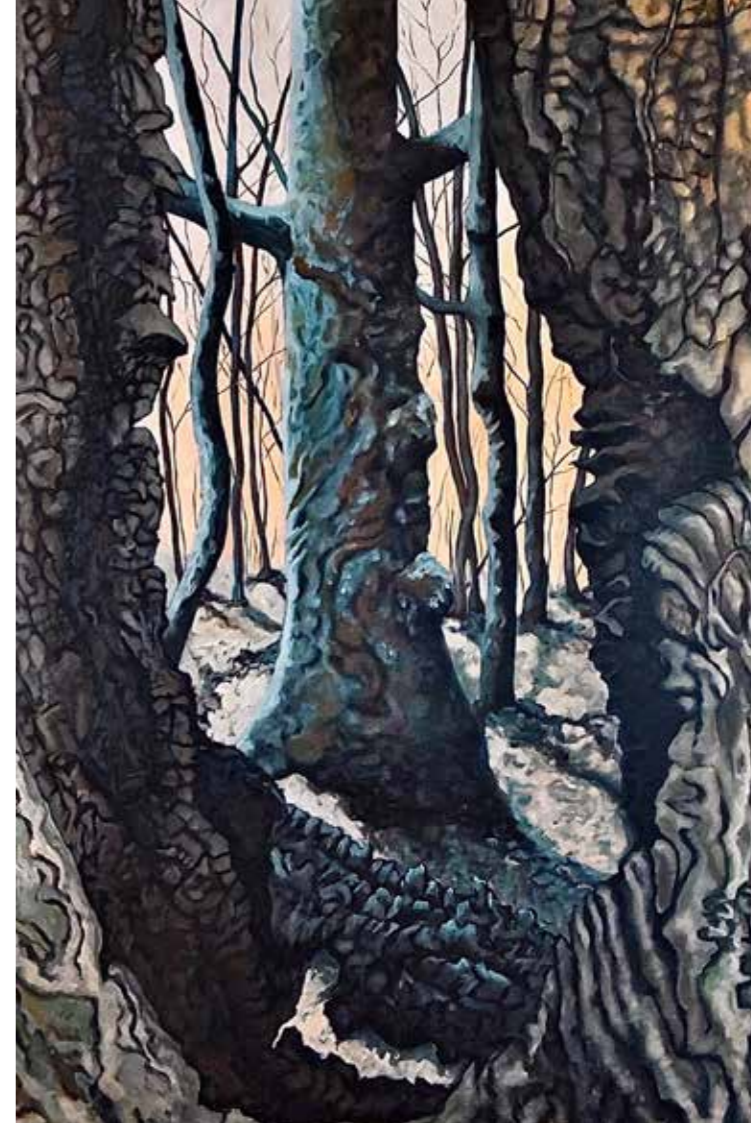
loss; a kind of pleading allegiance to the first nations Elders and spirit of the forest and Earth and begging forgiveness. Looking for healing in a really hard time.

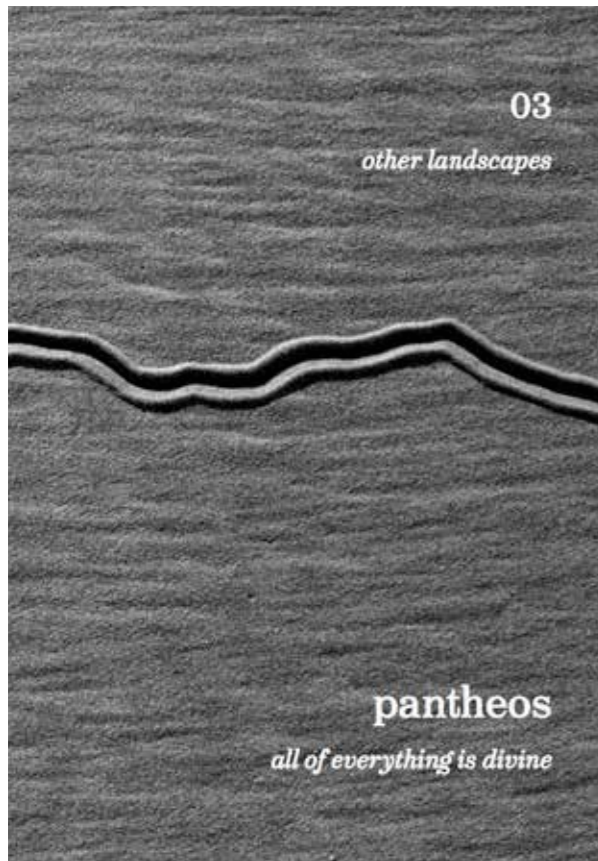
It was a very moving thing and testament to the need for more *OUTPUT* down here. I might see if I can reach those poets and see if they can connect-up to *OUTPUT* somehow, at least put them on the map for Andrew Gray. The works were excellent and need to be toured around this country in a growing caravan of grieving lefties.

It was certainly a powerful space to be in – inside that small rural gallery with not a dry eye in the house.

X Hanna Hoyne

Karen Sedaitis
Portal #2 2021
Acrylic on stretched canvas
90 x 60 x 1.5cm





Lee Grant
Pantheos (Cover) 2021
Zine 3
Other Landscapes
15 x 21cm