



Endless Horizons

An exhibition exploring connections to place

Christine Beardsley | Jax Isaacson | Sue Michael
Wendy Muir | Suzie Riley | Jane Skeer

Curated by Sonya Unwin



Women's &
Children's Hospital
Foundation

Endless Horizons features the work of six dynamic artists who explore an emotional attachment to place through their work. Christine Beardsley, Jax Isaacson, Sue Michael, Wendy Muir, Suzie Riley and Jane Skeer all take a different approach to understanding the significance of the landscape in their lives. The places they represent in this exhibition extend across the rich agricultural lands of The Riverland in regional South Australia to the ethereal shifting ice of The Antarctic. The artists' interpretations of the landscapes are as diverse as the landscapes themselves, and span painting, textiles, mixed media, resin, pastels and photography, yet the practice of all six artists converge with an ethos of sustainability and an attitude of exploration.

Many of the artists have incorporated objects found in the landscape into their practice. Jax Isaacson creates wearable art closely connected to family and place from the offcuts of timber from her father's woodcarving practice. The timbers are sourced from the region surrounding her home and the family's pistachio farm near Waikerie in the Riverland. She combines the wood with resin into blocks and then carves them into jewellery or artworks. The resulting works recall topographical views of the coastline and underwater visions, and the blocks themselves resemble small landscape paintings. Her wearable artworks enable other people to share in her experience of connection with The Riverland. Isaacson's emotional connection to her geographical place and inspiration is deeply embedded in her family's way of life. Christine Beardsley similarly draws on the local landscape to create her work.

The process of re-vegetating her property has enabled Beardsley to develop an intimate understanding of her environment. She creates her works through dying textiles using handpicked leaves and diverse indigenous plants found on her property on the Fleurieu Peninsula. She dyes the textiles by wrapping the cloth around the trees that surround her home. She collects rusty nails from the area to use as a mordant in the dye, and uses the environment to create chemical reactions for an artistic outcome. More traditional print and stitching elements are often added later. The way the landscape changes is mirrored in the way the colours and dyes develop over time in Beardsley's textiles. Her processes are both environmentally friendly and sustainable.

Jane Skeer also re-purposes objects found in her environment to create her installations. Her works commonly include waste and debris re-purposed to create engaging artworks about utility and place. Skeer holds great respect for the materials used in her practice and as an artist acknowledges the history of those materials in the outcome. As Artist-in-Residence in 2017 at The Festival Theatre, Skeer collected and re-imagined the theatre flyer's as distant Australian landscapes. In these works, the printed material, originally from paper and trees, is re-purposed into languid Australian landscapes from where the original materials had come. Her methodology involves repeated actions or patterns to create artwork with a significant emotional impact.

A more traditional approach is employed by the other artists in Endless Horizons. Riley, Michael and Muir employ paint and pastels to enable the viewer to experience place through colour, shape, light and topographical depictions.

Suzie Riley's practice is entwined with her local landscape. Her work is ultimately reactive and inspired by daily observation of the local Fleurieu landscape she traverses daily. What starts as representational often leads to an abstract quality in her work, imbued with balance and harmony which she sees as important elements to her practice. Understanding the landscape through the paths we traverse daily is an integral part of Riley's artistic practice and methodology.

A physical interaction between the body and the landscape is a daily ritual for many people, but the lens of memory and emotion is also a way to gain an understanding of our world. Sue Michael considers place to be a location that has been 'ascribed meaning'. Her artistic practice is that of artist-as-geographer and the home is a rich source of inspiration and enquiry. Her field trips explore and survey the outer environment and her practice interprets the inner sense of place with imagination and philosophy. Her paintings are imbued with domestic details and familiar elements such as hills hoists, a chair on the verandah, or a familiar coastal view from the shack. Emotions, memories, actions and rituals are projected metaphorically onto Michael's landscape.

Wendy Muir's work is inspired by her experiences and research during a recent expedition to East Antarctica on a Russian ex-research vessel. Her practice is embedded in the sublime, navigating an emotional place between imagination and experience. Muir employs mixed media in her paintings to better reflect her layered experience of place. Her practice involves a high level of experimentation and skill development; combining colour, energy, painting, stitching, printing and sometimes sequins on her canvasses. This body of work is concerned with the interpretations of historical events and Muir has framed her work with ornate vintage frames as a reference to the historic texts of Antarctic explorers, particularly Mawson's writings of East Antarctica.

The works in Endless Horizons are predominantly landscapes. Riley, Muir and Michael encourage the audience to re-imagine the familiar and foreign places they have so passionately painted. Isaacson, Beardsley and Skeer enable the viewer to decipher a topography through colour, shape and light. Both of these approaches are aligned closely with a very human understanding of place where memory and emotions overlay the landscape.

Sonya Unwin



Christine Beardsley, *Rusty Fasciculosa* (2016), rust and Eucalyptus bark stain on cotton, 105 x 173cm.



Jax Isaacson, *Wood Study in Blue* (2017), reclaimed wood and eco-resin, 46 x 49cm.



Sue Michael, *Beach Shack with Tanks* (2018), Acrylic on canvas, 40 x 80cm.

Christine Beardsley

Christine Beardsley is a visual artist with a sustainable practice in textiles. Her work revolves around natural dyeing and imprinting processes on natural fabrics. Her affinity to the land is embedded in the property she shares with her husband on the Fleurieu Peninsula, which they continuously re-vegetate. Christine translates her knowledge and love of eucalypts and other indigenous plants gained in re-vegetation to her work with natural textiles. This process, along with the workshops Beardsley has undertaken with leading textile artist Kirsten Ingemaar, have informed her studies and her design processes. Her making process involves various surface design and construction using stitching, print and collage. Her work reflects a desire for a 'sustainable practice in all aspects of our lives'.

Jax Isaacson

Jax Isaacson is an artist based in the Riverland at Waikerie. Her practice has evolved from using the offcuts of wood-carving and resin to create unique wearable art and jewellery. The process has an industrial nature and she can often be found in the shed at the back of the house using the saws and sanding machines. The polished final pieces reflect the original materials with a new vision and beauty. As a pistachio farmer her connection with the land is strong and sustainable.

Sue Michael

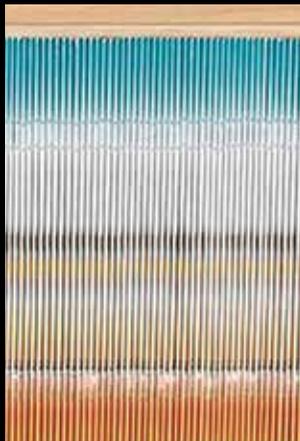
Sue Michael is an Adelaide artist currently undertaking her PhD in Visual Arts at the University of South Australia. Her art practice is concerned with the notion of 'Artist-As-Geographer' documenting the domestic world around us. Her paintings depict familiar scenes — with dogs in backyards, hills-hoist clothes lines and far off beach views from the corrugated iron shack. She heads up a group of artists who research place through discussions, field trips and combined artistic talent. They are interested in 'considering the widest possible understandings of place'. Her belief in the concept of place encompasses 'atmospheres, history, memory and sensory perceptions' which all play a part in her own interpretation and understanding of place.



Wendy Muir, *And the water flows below so darkly* (2018), acrylic and drawing ink on oil sketch paper, 53 x 75cm.



Suzie Riley, *Dusty Rose* (2017), acrylic on paper, 91 x 91cm.



Jane Skeer, *Of Nature 14b* (2018), discarded festival flyers, 26 x 67 x 4.5cm.

Wendy Muir

Wendy Muir is a visual artist and arts educator. Her studio practice is grounded in studio experimentation and skill development, linked to focused research on contemporary interpretations of historical events. Most recently, Muir traveled via ship, to East Antarctica, to undertake research to inform her latest body of work. Muir connects the scores of contemporary Japanese composer Takashi Yoshimatsu's *White Landscapes*, post Renaissance Mannerist sculpture and the verb 'flourish' to respond to the vastness of The Antarctic and the sublime in the resulting body of work. For the artist, 'the sublime can be seen as transitional, a representation of the 'betweenness' of imagination and experience.' Her aim is to convey aspects of the human condition within the landscape.

Suzie Riley

Suzie Riley's practice is entwined with her local landscape. Her work is ultimately reactive and inspired by daily observation of the local Fleurieu landscape she traverses regularly. What starts as representational often leads to an abstract quality in her work, imbued with balance and harmony, which she sees as important elements to her practice. Understanding the landscape through the paths we travel often is an integral part of Riley's artistic practice and methodology.

Jane Skeer

Jane Skeer is an emerging contemporary artist who is heavily involved in South Australia's arts community. She works predominantly in sculpture and installation, creating work in response to her observations of people, objects and materials. In 2015, Skeer graduated with a Bachelor of Visual Art (First Class Honours) from the Adelaide Central School of Art. She regularly exhibits her work throughout South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia. Most recently, she was chosen to represent South Australia at BOAA - the Biennale of Australian Art in Ballarat. Skeer uses processes that re-purpose and re-present discarded objects, sometimes considered waste and debris. Through the materials, Skeer's intention is to prompt us to rethink our relationship with the redundant, seeking to prove that the unwanted is in fact useful.



Children's Activities

Some of the artwork has been made from collected wood and resin and can be worn as jewellery when it is finished.

Have you ever made anything with something you have found in your garden or the local park?

Could you wear it after it was created?

See if you can find the artwork that has been made from chopped up brochures.

What do they remind you of?

Can you make a pattern from the books on your bookshelf at home?



Some of the paintings feature clouds.

Are there any clouds outside today?

What shapes can you see?

There are two artworks that have rusty things in them.



Can you spot the rusty tank?

Can you see the rust in the fabric artwork?

Are there any rusty things in your garden or outside your window?



Sonya Unwin

Sonya Unwin is an Adelaide-based visual artist and curator currently working from Collective Haunt Inc. Studios and Gallery, Norwood. She holds a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Honours) from the University of South Australian (UniSA) and is currently undertaking the Helpmann Academy Arts in Health Gallery Mentorship with the Women's and Children's Hospital Foundation. Her practice is gently aligned with the horizon, and she currently has an interest in large format watercolours. She was the inaugural Artist in Residence at SAHMRI and has been involved in numerous solo and joint exhibitions. She is a picture framer by trade and has a strong belief in the positive outcomes of Arts in Health programs.

Endless Horizons was planned and exhibited on the lands of the Kurna People, we pay our respects to the Kurna Elders past and present and to the Elders of the lands this brochure reaches.

This exhibition is the outcome of a curatorial mentorship supported by the Women's & Children's Hospital Foundation (WCH Foundation) and the Helpmann Academy. The curator would particularly like to thank Jill Newman and Saskia Scott from the WCH Foundation for their outstanding mentoring, the Gallery Management Committee for their support and advice, Jane MacFarlane and the team at Helpmann Academy and the creative posse of artists, Christine Beardsley, Jax Isaacson, Sue Michael, Wendy Muir, Suzie Riley and Jane Skeer.

The WCH Foundation raises funds in support of the Women's and Children's Hospital in Adelaide, South Australia. Founded in 1984, the WCH Foundation is committed to ensuring that mums, children and their families have access to the very best in medical care, hospital facilities and support services at a time when they need it the most.

The WCH Foundation's Arts in Health program aims to integrate art into the life of the Hospital to improve people's health and wellbeing. From providing pencils and colouring books in waiting areas, to managing the gallery spaces in the Hospital, and working closely with the Play Therapy Team, the Arts in Health program delivers smiles and laughter throughout the Hospital.

The Arts in Health Exhibition Program provides a space away from the stresses of treatment to distract, entertain and inspire, improving the visual environment. We try to make the environment more 'child-friendly', making it look better and to help make the time spent in hospital 'feel better'.

This exhibition is part of the Arts in Health Gallery Mentorship Project in partnership with the Helpmann Academy.

Cover image: Suzie Riley, *Blush* (2018), pastel on paper, 50 x 40cm.

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