



Northern Rivers Community Gallery
& Ignite Studios

TIME & TIDE

GROUP EXHIBITION

Diana Orinda Burns

Marian Crawford

Jan Davis

Dianne Longley

Jan Palethorpe

Penny Peckham

Olga Sankey

Northern Rivers Community Gallery
44 Cherry Street Ballina NSW 2478
www.nrcgballina.com.au

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Because we must rely entirely on internal capacities to generate meaning, ourselves are basically the sum of the ever-changing relationships between mind and world. Our challenge is to observe and know these representations—without delusion—even if this scrutiny necessarily reopens the tender underlying wound.

—Tim Carpenter

Jurate Sasnaitis

TIME & TIDE

mapping coincidence

And this I dreamt, and this I dream,
And some time this I will dream again,
And all will be repeated, all be re-embodied,
You will dream everything I have seen in dream.

—Arseny Tarkovsky

RENOWNED cinematographer Andrei Tarkovsky was inspired by his father's poetry. You can see it in his films. In 'And this I dreamt, and this I dream', papa Tarkovsky goes on to speak of 'being' in the world, of waves breaking against the shore, the inevitable cycle of life and death, reality and dream. Reflecting on cities and seas, the mundane and the mystical, the poem conjures notions of time, memory, and the nostalgia inherent in an exploration of the past. I cannot think of a better introduction to *Time & Tide* (*T&T*).

This exhibition began as a conversation between seven friends and continues as a 'conversation' between their older and newer artworks, their younger and older selves. *T&T* afforded the opportunity to reflect on a past work, to comment on it directly or indirectly; to invoke the past and

engage with the concept of 'progress' (if that's what moving forward in time is). That the artists involved in *T&T* are all experienced practitioners who happen to identify as women is less by design than the result of mutual admiration and long-term relationships.

When asked to write something for/about/around *T&T*, my first thought was the idiom 'time and tide wait for no one' (originally, 'no man'); that the processes of decay and rebirth continue without regard to any delays we might hope to impose. To make an artwork may be an attempt to halt time, but to make a work that reflects upon the past, paradoxically admits to stasis and the inevitable flow. Although we now think of 'tide' in relation to the sea, the back and forth of repeated erasure, the word originates from the Old English *tīd*, and is related to the German for time, *Zeit*. *T&T* might, therefore, be thought of as 'time and time again'. And it occurred to me that printmaking is a process of reproduction, repetition, and re-embodiment, which involves layering, stratification, excavation, and erasure. My second thought was how to encapsulate the practices of seven printmakers whose works engage with a variety of media, from digital reproduction to hand colouring. And whose explorations have such disparate outcomes. So...

I thought of a conceit: a walk through an imaginary white cube.

Miraculously (after much planning and consultation), this space fills with images, objects, text, and colour; with whispered comments and the echoes of many shoes. Our tour will be random, criss-crossing the gallery as if mapping subconscious connections between artists and artworks. So, I begin...

I ran and picked up the indians [sic] and their horses.
Now I keep them as pets.

—Jan Davis


Steeped in sepia tones, the horse stands passively surveying the viewer, his shadow as black as the dog (a kelpie?) behind him. He is not life-size but in the distant pictorial space he appears life-size. Yet when I move closer, he doesn't grow. The arid landscape, the sparsely leafed eucalypts shimmering at the horizon line, the bleached cyan sky are unmistakably Australian. The word 'horse' hovers and casts a shadow over its namesake. Parts of the horse are named, as if it were a child's school project awaiting completion. I assume this image is derived from a high contrast black and white photograph taken during the height of summer, sometime in the late 1950s or early 1960s. Davis says the horse in *Horse* (1996) doesn't matter. But it does. Trigger is her sister's horse and testament to Davis's long-term use of images derived from her family's archive and imbued with longing for a deceptively more innocent world.

In *The day our TV came to life* (2024) and *The mouse that roared* (2024), Davis explores the resonance between image and text. This hybrid form – the word in visual art or the image embedded in writing – corresponds with my own research interests and, I believe, is capable of conveying more than either form can alone. Davis doesn't explain that she found the shirt and the bathing suit in a pile of mouldering clothes on her family's farm or that the accompanying stories are her own primary school forays into story writing. She allows viewers to make their own connections. Much is implied; little directly stated. I can see myself nodding; that looks just like my handwriting when we were learning 'joined-up' script. And maybe I earned a 'good' or an 'excellent', a star stamp, an elephant, or a kangaroo. And that triggers (forgive the pun) other memories: playing cowboys and

Indians with the spiffy rifle (fake gun, real plastic) that Dad gave me for Christmas; the bathers Mum wore to Elwood beach; or our matching mother/daughter terry towelling robes. And even if you didn't grow up in the 1960s and you don't have memories of that period, surely, as we wander through this shared picture space, you too respond to the humour and to the bittersweet yearning for a past long gone, lost, decayed?



Tuesday 26th Febr 1963
The day our T.V. came to life
Bang Bang went the guns of the cavalry, as they charged the Indians. It was an interesting western until the Indians came racing out of the set. Many horses fell because of their long jump to the floor but the Indians were not hurt. But they got to their feet, picked up their bows and arrows, waited for the cavalry to jump out but they stopped for the glass had formed again. I ran and picked up the Indians and their horses. Now I keep them as pets.



Jan Davis, *The day our TV came to life* (2024)

waiting at the edge
weathering reaction
I remain
unchanged
yet altered.
Inviting the waves,
I beckon my nothingness.

—Jan Palethorpe

Jan Palethorpe's earliest piece *Legacy* (2019) repurposes a range of earlier works, including etchings, linocuts, screenprints, and one egg tempera painting, each image digitally reduced – 'unchanged yet altered' – and printed onto heavy card. From these, Palethorpe constructs a towering house of cards. Sturdy enough to withstand the winds of time or teetering on the edge of extinction? Both. What presents as the cross-section of a rainforest's understorey is Palethorpe's paeon to endangered species. The sculptural form encourages the viewer to bend low, to look up, and through triangular window spaces – *seeing* with heart and mind – to glimpse what is usually hidden: orchids, snakes, insects, birds, amphibians, an abundance of flora and fauna that we are fast destroying.

Change is integral to Palethorpe's practice, often a combination of the visual and poetic, elements of voice and music, the monumental and minute. Her style is elusive. Seemingly dictated more by subconscious response than rationalised decision-making, she utilises whichever medium or technique is emotionally apt. Dare I say, her work has something of the mystical about it – think William Blake. Her artist's book *We Just Are* (2023) resonates between image and word, the real and surreal, expressionism and allegory: anthropomorphised creatures encompass landscapes; human faces appear in shifting sands and seas. With persistent reading, meanings

accumulate: our fears and hopes; our alienation from the natural world, other creatures, and ourselves; our tenuous hold on existence. The large-scale lithograph, the multicoloured *Inside Me* (2023) is reprised as *Diamond Bog* (2024), *Kittakittaooloo* (2024), and *Inside Me: Perigundi* (2024) with motifs from other works: the listening ear; the decapitated human-tree symbolic of our disconnection from the land. These head shapes are printed on fragile maps of the Strzelecki Desert that Palethorpe inherited from her father-in-law, an intrepid explorer, whose routes across the desert are traced in red. In another form of mapping, the X-rayed heads seem to mimic human and arboreal circulatory systems, a point of connection to the land we treat with unwarranted disrespect.

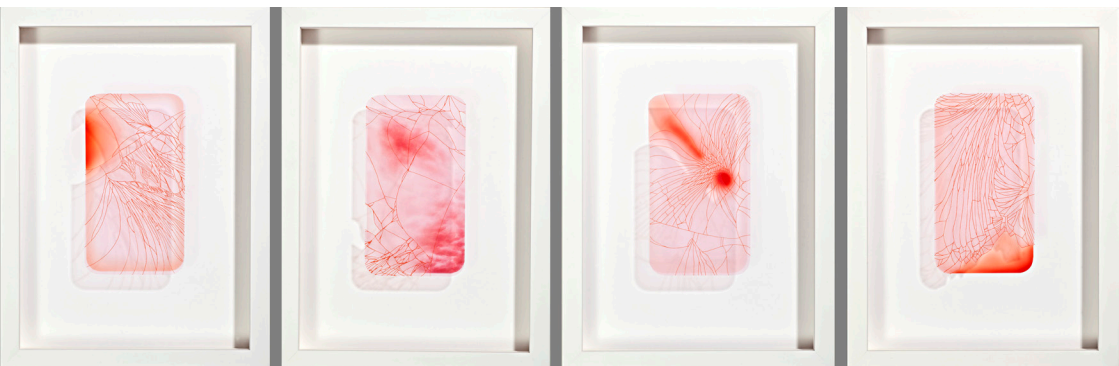


Jan Palethorpe, *Kittakittaooloo* (2024)

I AM: able above average active adventurous
confident cute down to earth easy-going educated
generous good-looking handsome hard-working inexperienced
intense passionate rugged trendy uncomplicated

— Olga Sankey

Who dares reveal the truth about themselves? Isn't everyone tempted to pad a CV, to present ourselves in a better light – at least less flawed – than we are? Olga Sankey's foundational piece *Wish you were here* (2002), an unscrolled testament to human foibles, makes me wonder about desperation. The almost indecipherable script with words circled, underlined, and scratched out looks like drafts for the text running down the left-hand side of the images. Garnered from Personal ads in a pre-app age, their purpose is not so very different from profiles on rsvp.com. 'Find your ideal mate' is the message, overlaid with scans of distorted human bodies, angels or muscle-bound Goliaths, and ghostly, skeletal faces. Despite its carnival colours, *Wish you were here* is redolent of tragic self-delusion, loneliness, and alienation; a sad lack of companionship, intimacy, and sex, of course. Of course!



Olga Sankey, *Heartline* series (2019)

Sankey's more recent works echo the earlier body scans. Her *Heartline* (2019) series might be mistaken for images of human veins or the translucent, sclerotised wings of insects. In fact, these images are derived from cracked mobile phone screens. Printed on glass and paper, they shimmer; an example of the artist's capacity for transmuting mundane 'accident' into a more esoteric kind of beauty. Similarly, her *Ghost story* (2024) series reads like both brain scans and the growth rings of trees (which they are). Both speak to the materiality of life, mortality, the past recorded in our bodies, and our fragile connection to nature.

black sun of melancholia:
darkness flashes
as a solar light
... dazzling
with black invisibility

—Marian Crawford (from Julia Kristeva)

Witness deep black rectangles on white paper, images of the abyss, three of twelve 'pages' that are Marian Crawford's response to her foundational image *Carbon* (2011). An early indication of her environmental concerns, *Carbon's* finely detailed and textured shapes reference the bark of trees once common to East Gippsland and, by implication, artists' materials: pencils, charcoal sticks, paint and printers ink, the colour Carbon Black.

Reading from left to right, horizontally, vertically, or randomly – the direction is discretionary – Crawford's new prints include photo-etchings, letterpress printed quotes, and relief prints. Her preoccupation is environmental, but also touches on the dissemination of news – fake or true? – and how those articles and images are digested and regurgitated. *Briquette* (2024), *A piece of coal* (2024), and *Pieces of coal* (2024) hover innocuously on a pure white ground, as devoid of dust and dirt as an

advertisement for the mining industry. *Scott Morrison's coal* (2024) is more ambiguous. As our ex-Prime Minister gazes down at his lump of coal, is he staring into his own abyss? Is his demeanour melancholic or bored? Mournful or phlegmatic? Are his hands dirty? The archival photo-prints *Brown Coal Mine, Yallourn Power Station 1 and 2* (2024) are stunning in their depiction of a bygone era and the ongoing devastation wrought by open cut mining: 'dazzling with black invisibility', the surface landscape has almost disappeared. I don't know why 'trepanning' keeps popping into my head, and then it hits me: boring a hole in the skull, yes, but did you know, a trepan is also 'a rock-boring tool used in mining for sinking shafts'? And if we see the earth's crust as a skull protecting what lies below, then coal mining is the equivalent of invasive surgery.



Marian Crawford, *Brown Coal Mine, Yallourn Power Station 2* (2024)

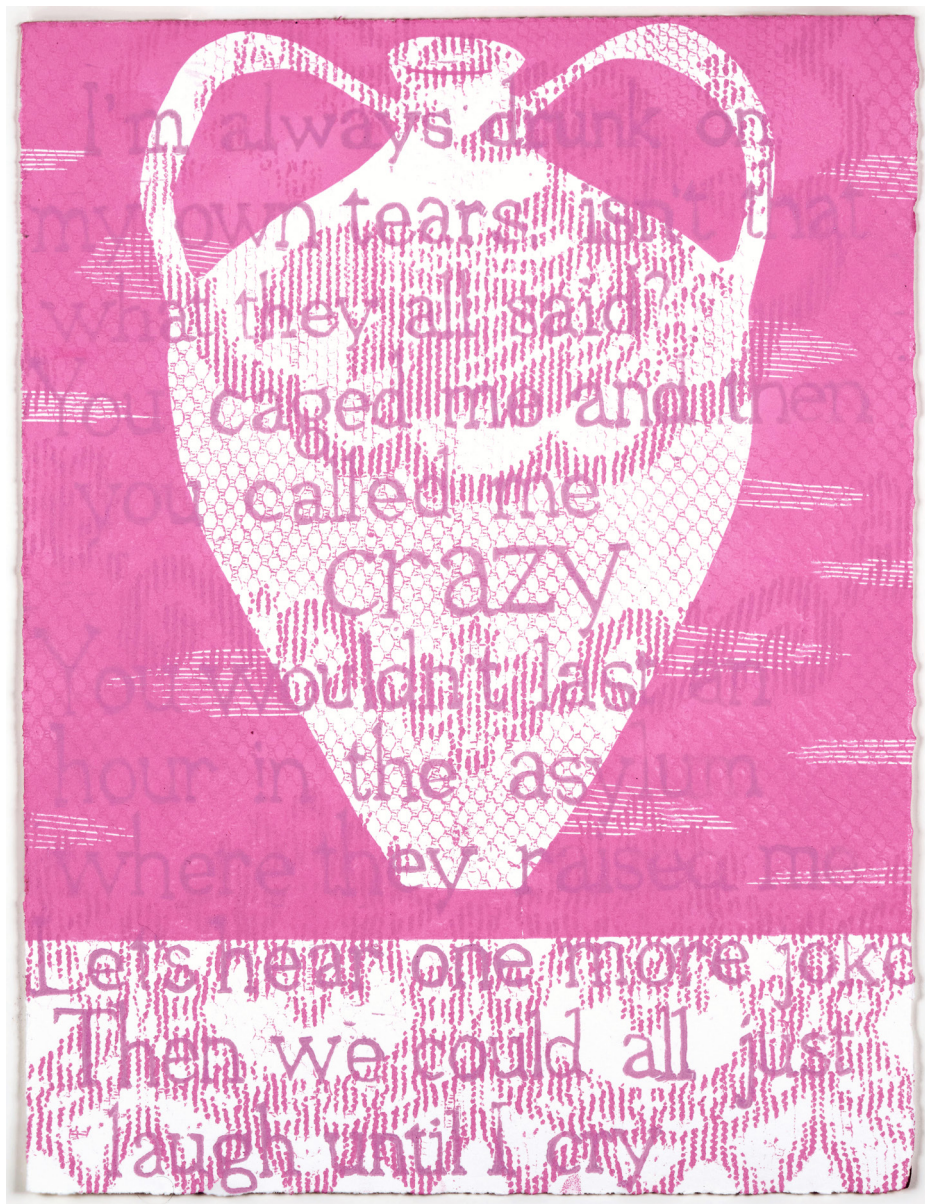
Je suis tombée dans la gouffre. Je vis dans un monde si curieux,
si étrange

—Penny Peckham (from Camille Claudel)

The full quote is ‘I have fallen into the abyss. I live in a world so curious, so strange. Of the dream that was my life, this is my nightmare.’ Is this paranoia, depression, desperation? Or something worse? The fate of so many women through the centuries: to be [mis]diagnosed with ‘hysteria’ if they did not fit societal (patriarchal) norms; to be incarcerated indefinitely without recourse; to lose their self-determination, their independence. Framed by a window, Claudel’s despairing cry resounds against a lattice of bare, gnarled branches against an empty sky and a fretworked brick wall too high to see over. In Penny Peckham’s *I have fallen* (2019), the pane of glass between the viewer and the outside world is palpable. The other linocut from her *Camille Claudel 1915* series, *A woman of genius* (2019), shows a figure disappearing down a long corridor. Watched by a heavy figure, perhaps her darker self, she makes a bid for freedom.

Peckham’s ongoing feminist concerns and interest in literature, women artists, and the depiction of the female form in art is apparent from her foundational linocut *In the eye of the beholder* (2009) and the two panels of her *Nude as Wallpaper* (2011) series. In the former, conventionally editioned print, the Palaeolithic Venus of Willendorf is juxtaposed with Sandro Botticelli’s *Birth of Venus* (mid 1480s). In the latter, female nudes recognisable from the history of art – Titian’s *Venus of Urbino* (1534) and a statue based on the *Aphrodite of Knidos* by Praxiteles of Athens (c. fourth century BC) – are pared back to their essential form and repeated like stamps over a text from Kenneth Clark’s classic study, *The Nude* (1956). According to Clark, the objects of the (male) artists’ gaze are not naked but ‘nude’: ‘not of a huddled and defenceless body, but of a balanced,

prosperous, and confident body: the body re-formed.' By whom, asks Peckham, for whom? In her most recent works, *Not now, not ever* (2024) and *Little old me* (2024), the female form has been replaced by the amphora, a shape not unlike that of the Willendorf Venus. As both a symbol of fecundity and of emptiness, it is a vessel into which the vitriol directed against contemporary women, like Julia Gillard and Taylor Swift, can be poured, contained, and disarmed.



Penny Peckham, *Little old me* (2024)

And if you find her poor, Ithaca won't have fooled you.
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
you'll have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.

— Diana Orinda Burns (from C. P. Cavafy)

In ancient Greek mythology, Ithaca was the island home of Homer's Odysseus. Taking Ithaca as her casting off point, Diana Orinda Burns begins her exploration of the hero's journey: typically, a story of adventure, crisis, and transformation; psychologically, a journey towards self-discovery. *Ithaca I and II* (2022) have two layers. Underneath, a sepia toned image of a computer circuit board suggests the synaptic mapping of an inner journey, an aching towards wholeness. Over that, the starkly black relief prints suggest abstracted maritime forms – lines of waves, trade winds, and tidal patterns; triangular sails, flags, islands, sea monsters – a topographic map of the outer journey.



Diana Orinda Burns, *Resonances* (2024)

As I look at Burns' most recent versions of Ithaca – *Rib Cradle*, *Sailing Arcadia*, *The Waves Beneath*, *Resonances*, *The Cosmic Secrecy of Stars*, *Sailing the Seas Within* (all 2024) – I am listening to Eleni Karaindrou's soundtrack to *Ulysses' Gaze* (1995), the film by Theo Angelopoulos. The boats, waves, sails of Burns' monoprints have been further schematised, the ecstatic cyans, indigos, the cobalt blues dancing like the Greek sun reflected off waves and white walled villages; the talisman to ward off the evil eye painted on Greek boats appearing on becalmed seas. Karaindrou's haunting score mirrors the Ulysses character's journey through memories: his artistic quest, wars, and, finally, to a kind of peace and beauty. This then is the meaning of Burns' Ithaca inspired works: that the journey is more important than the arrival; that 'home' changes with acquired experiences; that there is no guaranteed homecoming.

To Chance
And Seek
To Love
The Spirit
The Light
As Death
Through Time
A Crown

—Dianne Longley

In 1989, Dianne Longley received a haiku in the mail. Sadly, the original was lost. Her response, the poem that appears as titles of eight boxed lithographic prints, is the springboard for many subsequent works. *Aberrant Observance* (1989) exemplifies Longley's signature iconography: a central image framed by theatrical curtains, columns, borders featuring finely detailed symbols and abstract patterns; a checkered floor leading the eye into the picture space. In 'To Chance', an odd little jester / joker floats

somewhere above the proscenium arch scattering playing cards to the dice table below. But where are the players? Setting sail for a looming Tower of Babel in 'And Seek'. In search of the metaphoric key to unlock the mysteries of language, life, and love (of course!), another hero's journey begins. 'To Love' is the star on the horizon, the ultimate blessing. 'The Spirit', a blinding explosion, is prefigured in the dove illuminated by love's star. Curtains closing on flickering candles in 'The Light' are an intimation of life's fragility. In 'As Death', hourglasses mark time's passing, Horus guards a pharaonic casket, skeletons step from Dia de los Muertos, and winged skulls symbolise physical death and spiritual resurrection. 'Through Time' the wisdom of the elephant marches; the ticking clock and ringing chimes keep time. The destination, the crowning glory in 'A Crown' is self-revelation.

From a *mélange* of disparate sources – games of chance, children's board games, circuses, pantomime, the tarot deck, Egyptian hieroglyphs, Christian and classic symbols – Longley weaves intricate fable-like images (*Lotteria*, 1995). In her most recent reworking of *To Chance* (2024), she takes a technical chance herself, printing a photopolymer plate onto wet dental plaster. What this 'aberrant' ground achieves is a textural quality quite distinct from prints on paper. What we see is a reprisal of playing cards and dice, the acrobat and the feral dancing girl, and Anubis sitting in judgement, the lines of fate written on our palms.

What are our chances, do you think?



To Chance Dianne Longley

Dianne Longley, *To Chance* (2024)

How light, how loose, how unprepared and unpreparable is the web of connections between any thought and any thought.

—Anne Carson

... to reproduce the image [of a city] speaks of other, deeper motives—
motives characteristic of one journeying into the past
rather than over a distance.

—Walter Benjamin

Don't imagine this is the end, seven extraordinary artists ticked off like tourist attractions, done and dusted. What I find most fascinating are not only the artists' diverse outcomes but how much their thinking and practice overlaps. Resonances continue, motifs echo and recur, dichotomies collide: reality and dream (if 'dream' is also 'hope'); loss and remembering; decay and metamorphosis (the phoenix rising); the journey and arrival; excavation and erasure. It seems that time and tides both erase *and* accrete. The past plays out repeatedly in their work, ideas and processes continually refined. Literature informs and inspires, whether in their own writing or quoting from others. These are not flibbertigibbets leaping from one grand idea to the next but artists of considerable maturity with a lifetime of searching, exploring, and experimenting behind and before them. They have sent the contemporary print onto banners and wallpapers; onto paper, card, plaster, and glass; as part of three-dimensional works, installations, and refashioned into artists' books. But printmaking in all its many guises remains deeply embedded in their practice. Why? Why this form and not some other? Because the process is unpredictable and exciting and, sometimes, if you're lucky, the result can be a revelation.

In her treatise *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing* (1993), H el ene Cixous says that ‘writing, in its noblest function, is the attempt to unerase, to unearth, to find the primitive picture again, ours, the one that frightens us.’ I would substitute ‘art’ for ‘writing’ and say that the *Time & Tide* artists are fearless and unflinching, metaphorically mining themselves to expose a deeper, often perturbing truth. The abyss into which they stare might provoke the fall or the leap; drowning or floating; despair or redemption.

—Jurate Sasnaitis, 2024



left to right: Dianne, Marian, Penny, Jan P, Jan D, Diana, & Olga discussing *Time & Tide* at Agave Print Studio, Trentham, Victoria, 2024

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BIOGRAPHIES

DIANA ORINDA BURNS is a printmaker whose works explore the connection between the made world and life's inner journey. Her work over the last thirty years has incorporated the use of printed circuit boards, themselves emblematic of connectivity. She now works full time as an artist and educator in printmaking, and her work is held in major Australian and international Institutions.

MARIAN CRAWFORD is a visual artist whose artworks explore the relationships between the book, fine art printmaking processes, and the printed image in contemporary culture. She has presented her creative works and writings publicly for over twenty years, and is a Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at Monash University Art Design and Architecture.

JAN DAVIS studied printmaking in Melbourne from 1978 to 1981 and held her first solo show in 1988. Seventeen solo shows followed including four at grahame galleries + editions, Brisbane. Her works are held in the National Gallery of Australia, the British Library and Tate Gallery London, the National Library of Australia, the Parliament House Collection, Canberra, and in many State, Regional and University collections. She won the Fremantle Print Prize in 1996, a Siganto Creative Fellowship at the State Library of Queensland in 2014 and the Swan Hill Drawing Award in 2018. She lives near Lismore after teaching printmaking for twenty years at Southern Cross University.

DIANNE LONGLEY has been an exhibiting artist for over four decades and has held over thirty solo exhibitions and exhibited in scores of group exhibitions in Australia and abroad. Her work is held in major public collections in Australia including the NGA, NLA, SLV, AGSA, numerous regional galleries and overseas in Space International Miniature Art Collection, Korea and Aberdeen Art Gallery, Scotland. The production of artist's books has been an ongoing practice in her oeuvre, ranging from unique hand-painted books to limited edition hand-printed books. Dianne is currently master printmaker at Agave Print Studio, an access print-making studio that she established in 2014 at Trentham, Victoria.

JAN PALETHORPE: My first mural... I'm about 3 years old. My mother let us draw in coloured chalks on the laundry walls. Drawings as long as a wall but naturally only as high as I was then. I can't remember, but I think at the time I was concerned with food, animals, and the people around me. We also drew giant mazes on the road outside our house.

A fascination grew from this freedom to make large works that viewers could roam through, to become fully immersed in, like a film. I built ships, too, as a child. These were simply outlines in scrap wood of a boat shape around our old swing. The boat has emerged over the years in various guises in my work. And though I love big, I also love small and minute worlds. Living in the remote North West Kimberley and central Victorian bushlands has inspired my ongoing concern for all life forms: animal, human, and plant.

PENNY PECKHAM completed a Diploma of Art in 1998, followed by a Bachelor of Arts(Hons) and a PhD in Art History at La Trobe University in 2008. She has been a committee member of artist-run-spaces Synergy Gallery in Northcote and 69 Smith Street, Fitzroy. In 2014 she relocated to Castlemaine and became a founding member of Castlemaine Press. She has been a member of the Goldfields Printmakers group since 2015, contributing to portfolios that have toured internationally. She has been finalist in the Silk Cut Award and the Manly Library Artist Book Award.

Adelaide artist OLGA SANKEY has been making and exhibiting print-based works for more than 40 years. Her work is held in major public collections in Australia including the Australian National Gallery, the Art Gallery of South Australia, Artbank and Australian Parliament House, and overseas including the National Museum of Modern Art – Seoul/Korea and the Bureau of Artistic Exhibitions, Lodz, Poland.

JURATE SASNAITIS was born in Naarm | Melbourne and named after the goddess of the sea in Lithuanian mythology. Her first degree was in Fine Art from RMIT (1978) and she holds a PhD in Creative Writing from UWA (2020). Her artwork and writing explore ideas around family, memory, myth, exile, alienation, and the transmission of transgenerational trauma. In collaboration with visual artist Marian Crawford, she has produced several limited-edition artists' books, including *Gintaras – Amber* (2019).