



TALKING PLACE: UNFOLDING CONVERSATIONS

Monika Lukowska, Annette Nykiel, Sarah Robinson, Jane Whelan
Invited artists: Ryan Burge, Tracy Hill

Talking Place: Unfolding Conversations

Alcoa Mandurah Art Gallery

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Talking Place: Unfolding Conversations is a collaborative exhibition between Monika Lukowska, Annette Nykiel, Sarah Robinson, Jane Whelan and invited artists Ryan Burge and Tracy Hill, that explores the significance of wetlands with particular focus on Lake Walyungup—a shallow, ephemeral salt lake in the Rockingham area sometimes referred to as the place where (Noongar) people talk. Lake Walyungup is a seemingly forgotten, empty space in the midst of a growing urban community which offers shelter to migratory birds and wildlife. It has a deep history embedded in stromatolite remains, links with the Noongar community and various historical uses by the passing groups of settlers as well as the armed forces.

We would like to thank the Elders of the Wadjuk and Pindjarup people Theresa Walley, Trevor Walley and Cheryl Martin; who have recently given us significant insight into the meaning of the name of this Lake. The word *Walyungup* is not contextualised as just ‘talking’, in the Western sense. As part of the unfolding conversations that have emerged, in this project, it is felt important to acknowledge the full meaning of this naming word. *Waly* is crying or wailing, *ung* is inflected as ‘yes’ or ‘understand’, while *up* means ‘place of’. Lake Walyungup relates significantly to Lake Cooloongup situated a little further North. *Cooloong* meaning “Calling children of the land (we are all children)” and again *up* as ‘place of’. Lake Cooloongup calls while Walyungup wails. “Why crying? and over there is the calling of the ancestors” (T. Walley, personal communication, March 28, 2019). A becoming between two lakes and the sea as the wind in the she-oaks is the sound of the land’s ancestors.

The artists would like to acknowledge that this exhibition is being held on the traditional lands of the Noongar people and we pay our respects to the Elders past, present and future.



Gary Aitken: Introduction

The Mandurah Performing Arts Centre is more than a performing arts centre. It's a hub for extraordinary, dynamic and creative ideas—a centre for the arts. A leader in the initiating and presenting of high quality arts and cultural experiences. The Alcoa Mandurah Art Gallery is an integral part of the Mandurah Performing Arts Centre with a focus on providing opportunities for artists to connect to our community through diverse, engaging and enlightening art forms. Being involved in a dynamic arts environment is a privilege that enables unique opportunities for you to be immersed in life changing arts experiences. This is one of those special moments when you find yourself enthused by the extraordinary synergy of artists and subject that you become part of something inimitable.

Talking Place: Unfolding Conversations is an exhibition of works by artists Monika Lukowska, Annette Nykiel, Sarah Robinson, Jane Whelan and invited artists Ryan Burge, Tracy Hill—where art transcends language and becomes more about conversation, a journey that you become part of and where extraordinary things can happen and do. What is so important about collaboration? Collaboration is quintessential for human development; collaborating artists who are essentially like-minded will rapidly develop their own individual artistic practice beyond single mindedness and achieve beyond the extraordinary. When the motivating subject for this creative collaboration is our local wetlands, a primal landscape with its beneficial and essential ecosystem of which we are bound through evolution and ultimately our future survival.

We invite you to become part of *Talking Place: Unfolding Conversations*, an opportunity I hope you accept.

Gary Aitken, Curator at Alcoa Mandurah Art Gallery, Mandurah Performing Arts Centre.



Talking Place: Unfolding Conversations. Stories of Place Re-imagined and Retold

The way in which we interact with our land is often a marker of our maturity as a nation. To this point it could be argued that in Australia this has been a relationship of imbalance, evidenced in extreme times when the warming of our planet exposes our mismanagement of this wonderful and unique place on earth. The flaw in our attempted assimilation with this land and its traditional peoples can be traced back to our early settlers, who interpreted the Australian landscape through European eyes, transporting the lands they had left behind and superimposing their values as an imaginary space that was both out of time and out of place. In retrospect, the first anthropologists, photographers, ethnologists and artists all contributed to a construct of history that has formed the basis of hegemony and division in Australia. It is time for this story to be re-imagined and retold.

The classic Eurocentric interpretation of Arcadia was relatively static, and was formed on a mythological and monocultural vision that reflected a golden age formed through nostalgia as a “longing for a home that no longer exists—or never existed”.ⁱ Restorative nostalgia still exists of course, woven tightly into the fabric of our social and political landscape, which in turn has helped shape the construction of our national identity. But as we mature as a multicultural nation, we now expect to see a very different response to this land, and one that pays more respect to our traditional owners who have managed this place so efficiently for over 60,000 years.

As we slowly shed our dominant European traditions, visual artists, poets, writers and musicians share the responsibility to interrogate these spaces with a new and shared ideal in the search for truth, a truth untainted by our imaginary past. Scientific definitions of truth often fail to translate into visual language where images do not always share the same meaning, often requiring a deeper and somewhat subjective reading of context and narrative through which they can be interpreted and understood. Visual interpretation therefore takes on its own

language beyond that of logical analysis about what we know, but rather what we might think, or as Stephen Scrivener suggests, “artworks provide both ways of seeing and ways of being”.ⁱⁱ

The visual artists in this exhibition approach place and space with open eyes, some taking an analytical approach, others more poetic, but all with the common goal of representing the land through a respectful and embodied engagement with place, its history and its people. Through this approach, the artists situate the mind and body not as two separate entities; rather they are one unified substance within which “the human mind is not contained within the body but emerges from and co-evolves with the body”.ⁱⁱⁱ Neither are these artworks made with the intention to construct a national identity in which anyone can enter and walk through as a “journey of nation”.^{iv} As Richard White comments: “There is no ‘real’ Australia waiting to be uncovered...a national identity is an invention. There is no point asking whether one version of this essential Australia is truer than another because they are all intellectual constructs, neat, tidy, comprehensible—and necessarily false”.^v

What we now see is a re-imagining of place from a position of the mind and body, individual and sensitive responses to this moment in time in which six unique versions of a truth can emerge. *Talking Place: Unfolding Conversations* involving Ryan Burge, Tracy Hill, Monika Lukowska, Annette Nykiel, Sarah Robinson and Jane Whelan focuses on the wetlands of Lake Walyungup in the Rockingham area, known by the local Noongar people as a place where people talk. Each of the artists in this exhibition has their own professional practice and each of the highest order. They come together to this place to listen and to talk, to discuss and to share their own experiences of this important site, and to share these experiences with you. Collectively, they utilise a variety of traditional and contemporary techniques that add colour to their stories, each extending their language through which a deeper and more personal understanding of the significance of this place can be reinterpreted.

To involve an external point of view for this project, the group have invited Ryan Burge, a WA sound artist, and Tracy Hill from the UK to participate. Hill’s work is closely related through her interest in the wetlands both in Australia and the UK. With this international perspective, her voice is a welcome addition to this conversation by offering a more global view of the value of wetland ecosystems worldwide. Hill’s practice uses digital mapping technology to create large photopolymer etchings, her work occupies a hybrid space where technological control meets emotion and memory. Hill’s act of walking follows the traditions of the wayfarer; the adoption of commercial mapping technology offers a connection to the western traditions of mapping landscape inviting a readjustment of perceptions and connection to place.

Lukowska has also been investigating Lake Walyungup through walking. Her process involves taking photographs, recordings, and rubbing drypoint plates against the ground. Her works, originating from the tactile knowledge and experience of place, combine digital and traditional print techniques in her aim to capture the unique materiality and atmosphere of the site. Nykiel responds to the wetland ecology with risk-taking bricolage interventions, ephemeral installations of found objects and vessels made from materials gleaned from the Lake environs or left over from fieldwork. The bricolages tell stories in the many voices of those who relate to the Lake, both human and non-human. Robinson’s response to this place is through digital means; drone flying, a swipe of an iPhone and laser cutting technology. Human existence is momentary. Ultimately, the dark engulfing surfaces of traditionally prepared etching plates, allude to the destruction and manipulation of significant geological and historical boundaries within this fragile place. Whelan, on the other hand, reacts to the lived experience of this place by relying on the spontaneity of the drawn mark to share her experience of being in this landscape; its forgottenness, its space and the fragmented perceptions of this natural environment. The scale of her work encourages a physical engagement with her subject.

I would imagine that the traditional owners of this amazing land would acknowledge this sensitive and articulate re-imagining of place, and also the respect these artists show to this small remnant of wetland, hiding in plain sight of Perth's urban sprawl. Their responses are both poetic and deeply profound. I hope you enjoy this wonderful exhibition and that you take from it a new way of seeing and understanding this significant and most beautiful place on earth.

Professor Clive Barstow
Executive Dean Arts & Humanities Edith Cowan University
10.02.2019

ⁱLegg, Stephen. 2004. "Memory and Nostalgia. University of Cambridge England." *Cultural Geographies* 11 (1): 99–107. doi: 10.1191/1474474004eu296ed. (page100).

ⁱⁱScrivener, Stephen. 2002. "The Art Object Does Not Embody a Form of Knowledge." *Working Papers in Art and Design* 2: 1–14.

ⁱⁱⁱJohnson, Mark. 2007. *The Meaning of the Body: Aesthetics of Human Understanding*. Chicago: London: University of Chicago Press. (page 279).

^{iv}Gunner, L., Nuttall, S. & Darien-Smith, K, eds. 1996. *Text, Theory, Space: Land, Literature and History in South Africa and Australia*. London: Routledge. (Rowley, page 135).

^vGunner, L., Nuttall, S. & Darien-Smith, K, eds. 1996. *Text, Theory, Space: Land, Literature and History in South Africa and Australia*. London: Routledge. (White, page 131).





The Story: History and Science

Glimpsed by commuters as a flash of salty white and sparkle of water between dips in the heathlands, Lake Walyungup forms part of the Rockingham Lakes Regional Park, Western Australia. Nestled between ridges of sand dunes that mark the coastline receding over the last 6000 years; a white expanse of limestone borders two small lakes sheltering fossilised stromatolites and is fringed by reeds, paperbarks and she-oaks. Tuart trees provide shade from the morning sun, standing tall in the afternoon sea breezes that ripple lake surfaces and give trees voice.

Recent History

This enduring landscape has been a backdrop for movies, fashion shoots and books in Noongar and English.¹ Lakeside Deli, famous for its burgers, made the news in September 2016 when its roof landed on the road, adjacent to the Lake, during a storm. A Cessna aircraft successfully landed on the dry lake bed after suffering engine trouble in January 2018. Notably, the area was used as an artillery range by the Department of Defence around the time of World War II, unexploded ordnance (UXO) are still found. However, strategic fire access tracks have been surveyed and ‘made safe’ and are popular for dog walking and bird-watching. The flat lake bed suits land sailing, model aeroplane and drone flying.

In the 1960’s, a family waterskiing club could use the Lake for waterskiing between the 1st January and Easter (outside duck breeding season) each year. A groyne and landing facilities and a private road to access the lake were built but the club was prevented from purchasing the land deemed as Public Open Space. There were issues with the deli owner who wanted public access to the Lake for waterskiing. During the second reading of the

Fauna Protection Act Amendment Bill in State Parliament in October 1967,ⁱⁱ the ski club was used as an example to highlight issues between the Fisheries and Fauna Department and the Harbour and Lights Department about the control of inland waterways and the potential adverse effects of skiing on wildlife. However, this was in the context of maintaining game numbers for duck shooting rather than conservation.

Scientific Study and International Protection

After 11 years of detailed scientific study by Christine Semeniuk,ⁱⁱⁱ Lake Walyungup as part of the Becher wetlands, were designated as Wetlands of International Importance, and nominated for protection under the Ramsar Convention in 2001.^{iv} The depth of this study is rare and has become a model for wetland science globally. These valuable wetlands are shrub swamps and seasonal marshes located in beachridge swales and show a continuum of geomorphological development which is rare anywhere in the world and considered a threatened ecological community and worthy of protection.^v

The Noongar people recognise six seasons^{vi} including *Makuru/Djilba* when most of the rain falls re-charging the water table and inundating the lake basins, and the hot dry months of *Birak/Bunuru* when the Eucalypts flower and fauna feast. The Lake levels have dropped by 0.5-1m since 1975 and 2m since the 1920's^{vii} as industry and encroaching residential subdivisions infill adjacent wetlands and draw down on aquifers. Conversely, in the Winter (*Djilba*) of 2018, the water level rose high enough to form a single body of water; a once in a lifetime occurrence.

Around the Lake, diverse plant communities range from sedgelands to open heath and threatened tuart woodlands. These support microfauna, insects, amphibians, reptiles, marsupials and over 40 species of bush birds. Migratory shore birds fly in along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway during the Summer months (*Kambarang/Birak/Bunuru*) to join local ducks and swans who flock to the Lake as it fills. Hooded plovers lay their eggs on the salty lakeshore while wrens, honeyeaters and other small bush birds make their homes in the paperbarks^{viii} and wattles (*Acacia*

spp.). Iridescent damsel flies and dragonflies, bright orange Monarch butterflies and creamy Cabbage moths flit in patches of sun light, while mosquitos and midges swarm and whine as the weather warms (*Kambarang*). Keep a wary eye out for ants, particularly in late summer (*Bunuru*) and Autumn (*Djeran*) when they like to swarm and fly on warm nights. Autumn (*Djeran*) is the time of red flowers.

The cooler months of Winter (*Makuru/Djilba*) are marked by the purple petals of spiky *Hovea spp.* And climbing *Hardenbergia spp.* before the creamy masses of clematis and the vibrant yellow *Acacia spp.* and *Hibbertia spp.* overshadow the delicate pink fairy and donkey orchids. Mosses and fungi fruit. *Kambarang*, leading up to Christmas, is marked by the *Banksia spp.* flowers and the vivid orange of *Nuytsia floribunda* (WA Christmas Tree). The gum trees—tuart and marri—flower, cream and white, in the hot months of *Bunuru* (late Summer).

Weeds, invasive spiny rushes and feral orchard trees are a legacy from the market gardens, stock grazing, rubbish dumping, and some rehabilitation attempts in the north east where gravel and limestone extraction have been undertaken. However, the fruit and seeds are welcome additions to the diets of the local fauna, particularly in the early Spring (*Djilba*) and late Summer (*Bunuru*). The Monarch butterflies blanket the invasive cotton bush (*Gomphocarpus fruticosus*) while breeding.

These fragile wetlands are threatened by urban development, declining watertable levels, invasive and feral pests. However, spending time wandering through this environment shows just how important and special they are.

Dr Annette Nykiel

ⁱ<https://thewest.com.au/news/sound-southern-telegraph/below-feature-film-shooting-in-rockingham-ng-b881103396z>, 15/02/2019. <https://thewest.com.au/news/peel-rockingham/elders-story-on-screen-ng-ya-110070> 24/06/2016. Theresa Walley has published her stories of the Lake and books on Noongar language <http://batchelorpress.com/search/node/walley>

ⁱⁱ[http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Hansard%5Chansard1870to1995.nsf/vwMainBackground/19671010_Council.pdf/\\$File/19671010_Council.pdf](http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Hansard%5Chansard1870to1995.nsf/vwMainBackground/19671010_Council.pdf/$File/19671010_Council.pdf)

ⁱⁱⁱSemeniuk, C. (2007). *The Becher wetlands-a Ramsar site*. Dordrecht: Springer.

^{iv}Semeniuk, 2007. "A wetland should be considered internationally important if it contains a representative, rare, or unique example of a natural or near-natural wetland type found within the appropriate biogeographic region" www.ramsar.org

^vSemeniuk, 2007.

^{vi}South West Land and Sea Council. (2014). *Nyoongar Calendar. Indigenous Weather Knowledge*. Retrieved from <http://www.bom.gov.au/iwk/nyoongar/>

^{vii}Department of Water (2008) *Rockingham—Stakehill groundwater management plan. Water resource allocation planning series*. Report no. 23, November 2008.

^{viii}(*Melaleuca spp.*)



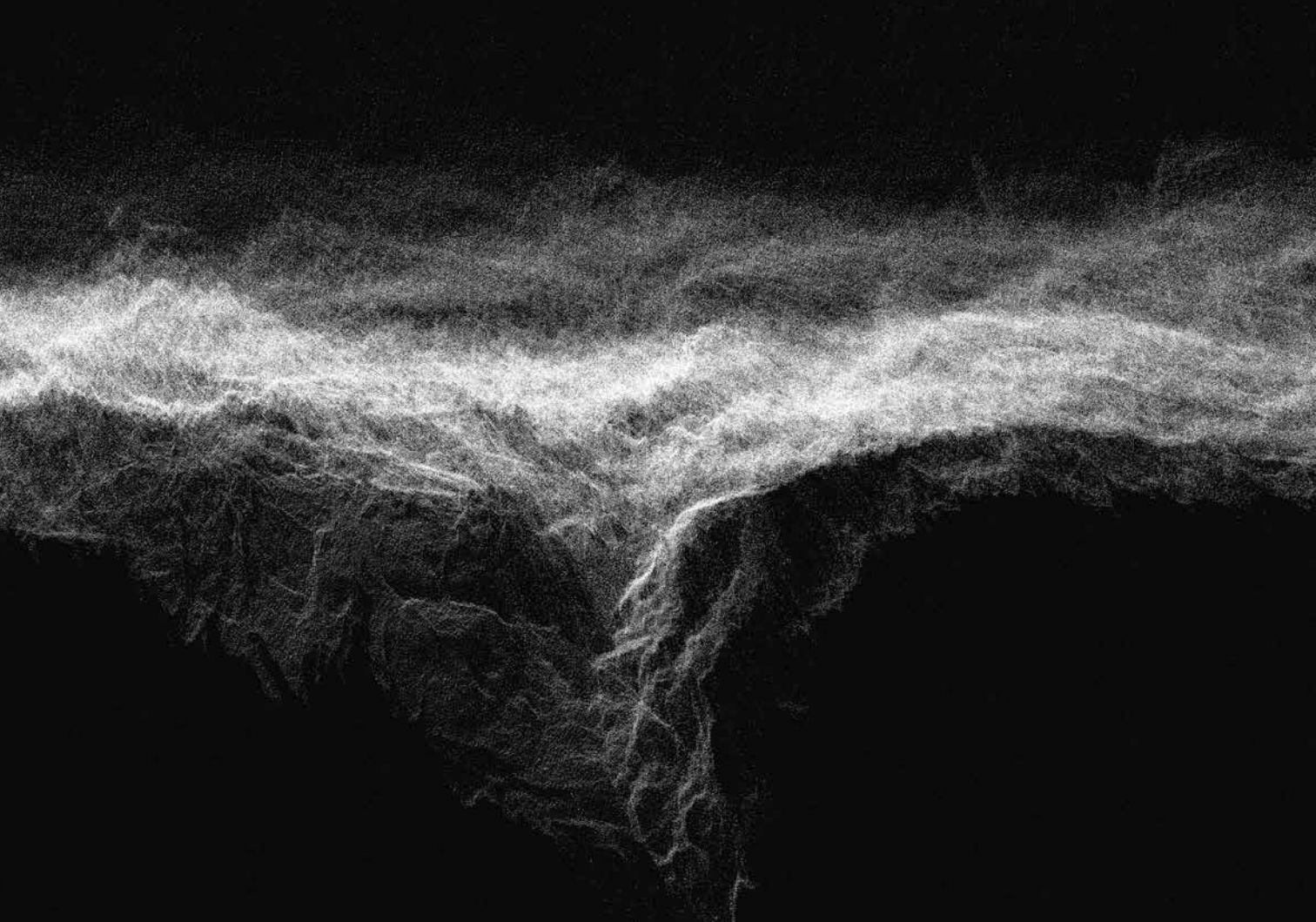
Birds Nesting at Walyungup

Place of the Ancestors Crying Wailing

(Trevor Walley, 23 November 2018)







Tracy Hill: Matrix of Movement

The works included in this exhibition are taken from *Matrix of Movement* (2016-18)¹ a project considering the opposing ideas existing between Northern and Southern hemisphere cultures on wayfaring, navigation and connection to Place.

The intersection between our digital and aesthetic worlds is where I situate my art practice: a hybrid space where technological control meets emotion and memory of the human experience of landscape and walking. My research specifically investigates the dynamic relationship between developing mapping technologies and the traditions of the hand created image, with a focus on walking post-industrial wetland landscapes. Apparently featureless ancient wetland landscapes have long been represented as places of darkness, disease and death within Western culture. Despite an increasing recognition for the need to readjust our perceptions of these spaces and to acknowledge their environmental importance as living landscapes there is, as yet, little imagery to promote this new way of seeing.

My artworks seek out the hidden narratives, exploring how trans-disciplinary engagement combines to offer new ideas and ways of seeing unique landscapes. Re-imagined images create immersive installations showing how increasing dependence on digital technologies changes our human experience and engagement with Place. For me walking is the constant activity enabling my connection to Place, a complete immersion leading to a deeper understanding; walking not to escape, but to enable thinking and seeing.

Tim Ingold observes that walking is a way of feeling, being and knowing. He goes on to suggest that Wayfinding is a movement in time akin to playing music or storytelling, that our world is one of experiences suspended in movement. Through our own movements we contribute to its formations and connections “along paths of action and perception”.ⁱⁱ Through the consideration of existing understanding from geographers, philosophers and anthropologists the work I make explores the human connection to place as not just being about locations for us to passively observe, but actually a way of understanding our place in the world, as landscapes to be active participants within. In order to achieve understanding one must connect with the many different multi-sensory elements within it.

The act of walking follows the traditions of the wayfarer. The adoption of commercial mapping technology for the collection of data offers a connection to a western mode of mapping and measuring landscape.ⁱⁱⁱ Finally, the act of performative drawing and the production of hand-printed art works re-engages with a human aesthetic and encourages audiences to acknowledge their own human responses and memory of Place.

Disrupted and re-imagined digital data is transferred from the computer and recreated as a drawing or etching, making images which provide an opportunity to explore what is beyond a two-dimensional surface. By communicating the forgotten possibility of a deeper and more intuitive understanding of the earth beneath our feet, my artworks seek to become a visualisation of the point where our physical and digital worlds overlap; the edge between the world, and how we feel to be a part of it.

ⁱHill, T., *Matrix of Movement*, <http://tracyhill.co.uk/matrix-of-movement-2/>

ⁱⁱIngold, T., *Ingold, T. (2000). The Perception of the Environment Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. London: Routledge. Page 242.

ⁱⁱⁱ<http://tracyhill.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/FARO-article-2015-1.pdf>







Finding Place

Talking Place: Unfolding Conversations is a collaborative exhibition initiated by Monika Lukowska, Annette Nykiel, Sarah Robinson, and Jane Whelan. It was a common interest in landscape which emerged so clearly and to which led to a decision to respond in their different voices to a specific wetland space.

Lake Walyungup, in the Rockingham area was chosen; although accessible and familiar by sight, none of the artists had previously visited the locality. Together, in the heat of the Summer (January 2018) they went together to spend time at the Lake. What they saw was a shallow, ephemeral salt lake; a seemingly forgotten, barren space in the midst of a rapidly growing urban community. Initially, it seemed so empty, what might they find to say about this place? What they found, however, was a place of deep history evident in the remains of stromatolite formations. Exploring further, they found that the Lake offered shelter to a multitude of migratory birds and wildlife and is known by the local Noongar people as ‘the place where people talk’. Researching the local history, revealed that this place has had a variety of intended uses and purposes, reflecting the changing needs, and perhaps the values, of the local community since European settlement impacted on the area.

The exhibition interweaves etching, and drypoint; traditional techniques of printmaking, with drone technology, and Lidar survey scanning in a synthesis of techniques that expand the boundaries of contemporary print. In dialogue with multidisciplinary works that include drawing, sound and bricolage, the aim, through collaborative exploration is to unfold personal experiences of this place; its characteristics, atmosphere, meaning and significance. Each artist has found a different focus, finding a language to respond to their perceptions of Lake Walyungup through the voice of their own practice.

Monika Lukowska: ***The textures of place***

Cultural geographers consider walking as a reflexive practice generating thoughts and experiential knowledge through which mind and body are connected and embedded in the world.ⁱ For example, Tim Edensor points out that a walker is not an onlooker but a person who experiences the world as “tactile and taste-full”.ⁱⁱ He echoes Henry David Thoreau’s words: “walking returns the walker to his senses”.ⁱⁱⁱ The experienced sensations have the ability to “free the mind and generate reflexivity”.^{iv} This reflexive aspect of walking, which involves sensorial and physical encounters with place, generates a level of engagement necessary to gain empirical knowledge about place. Harriet Hawkins^v points out that walking is a means of research and being-in-place, mapping the land and most of all experiencing its essence. During the walks the “researchers’ bodies became their research instruments”.^{vi}

My encounter with Lake Walyungup started with a walk on a hot, intensely sunny day where the blinding glare of the sun seemingly bleached the vast and flat landscape. I remember the sensation of the crusted, ‘cracked from the heat’ earth under my shoes and an overwhelming feeling of stillness at the site. Gradually, after repeated visits to the Lake, walks, wanders and moments of reflection the multiple facets of the place slowly unfolded; the glittering brackish-to-salty water containing remains of stromatolites that bear significance to a scientific understanding of the first known form of life on earth and equally are of cultural significance to the Noongar creation stories. I became aware of the variety of native plants and the environmental significance of wetlands both locally and in the global context. The involvement with Lake Walyungup through walking resulted in attuning myself to its details and atmosphere and assisted in understanding the specificity of the site.

The tactile experiences resulted in gathering reservoirs of materials (both physical and intangible) from which my artworks emerged. The intention was to convey the sense of place while underlining its materiality and my involvement with the environment. The work *Memory of Place I* (2019) a digital print, is a combination of drypoint marks created by rubbing the plates against the ground overlaid on photographs of the textures of the ground, the patterns of mud and the porous texture of stromatolite formations. The surface of the print encapsulates

hand-made marks and a sense of touch, while emulating the close connectivity of the body and place. In a way, the process of layering reflects the sediments of place and its geological past embedded within the Lake’s surroundings. Through this work, my aim is to flesh out the relationship between the body and its surroundings by engaging with the materiality of the site and by enhancing the tactility of place; to sense the coarse surface of stromatolites’ remains and the crusty, dry texture of the ground.

Annette Nykiel: ***How do I language this place?***

As a geologist: Lake Walyungup^{vii} is a groundwater-fed depression on the eastern margin of a Holocene beachridge and dune system.^{viii} Less than 3m deep, two permanent shallow brackish water bodies and lakesides harbour well preserved fossil stromatolites—nonmarine microbial structures,^{ix} but no living thrombolites or stromatolitic structures.

Perhaps in describing rambunctious pasture plants, invasive weeds—*Juncus acutus* and feral fruit trees—*Ficus carica* and *Olea europaea*.

Perhaps in gathering essences of those inhabiting this meeting place^x—eucalyptus, balga, sedge, reptile and insect, somnolent stromatolites. In the calls of migratory avian visitors.

As arabesques of rusty fencing wire? Rem(a)inders of market gardens, grazed paddocks and revegetated lime/gravel pits.

By the traces of people passing?

Tyre tracks and a detritus of car parts and rubber—coagulated pool of melted gunk—baby’s dummy, tennis balls, broken glass and bottle tops. Scraps of multi-coloured plastic, a rag of navy drill. A bricolage interweaving comings and goings.

In sharing a cuppa and yarning with local Noongar women. Cautionary tales about disturbing *Waakarl’s*^{xi} eggs nested in salt water. A yarn to encourage contemplation under the she-oaks—a fount of wisdom and inspiration; the Elders whispering in the wind that blows away the cares of the day.

Noticing

Sirens wail, trains rumble, throbbing helicopter overhead, cicadas fall silent as the sougning breeze pauses—carrying drifting wafts of acacia, fecund dampness and earthy fungi.

Wanderer and cabbage moth flit through a sky, glaring grey. Dragonflies burst from cover, disturbing small bright butterflies and iridescent damselflies. Ever present mosquitos whine above undergrowth rustling with lizard, ant, beetle, bandicoot.

Pairs of pelicans drift, pas de deux, on the thermals. Galah, sentinel in a hollow tree, screeches warning to parrot neighbours. Wrens scold in alarm, unseen in sedges. Fantail chatters interrupted by honeyeater. Whistler's call is answered from the canopy. Raven, cawing, glides overhead. Cormorants and ducks alarmed, alight, wings clattering on lake surface.

Water floods salty grey limestone; sapling casuarinas shallow rooted and unstable, topple on the soggy ground, reshooting, after Winter (*Makuru/Djilba*)—the wettest seen for years.

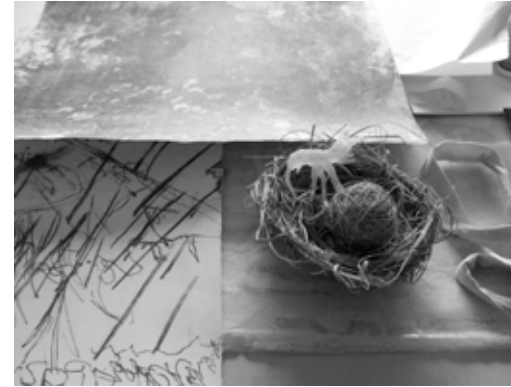
Djilba—time of yellow flowers. Splashes of purple and russet amongst the yellows—oxalis, dandelion and euphorbia compete with hibbertia, acacia, banksia and diminutive orchid. Puffballs and toadstools drop golden spores amongst the moss and decaying wood.

Wondering

Wondering about relating language—embodied, visual, English, Latin, Noongar, weather-world, botanical, birdsong?

In the gap between language and relating amidst the wetlands, I forage materials to express colour, texture, form. In the palette of the field botanist and artist's eye; the textures of this maker's hand, melody of birdsong, and tracks marking sand and burrowed grass. A bricolage emerges in the gallery space—collected bits and pieces, fibres retted from rushes, stitches in recycled cloth dyed with the colours of becoming this place.

From embodied experiences of the artist in the midst of the landscape, Sarah Robinson's "human-technology-nature"^{xii} relation investigates the impact of human interference on the landscape.



*Sarah Robinson: **Unlaying the Mega-visual***

Driven by the impact of digital technologies on how we view the world, I investigated data and temporal dimensions of human interference at Lake Walyungup. The Lake became my natural prompter; initially revealed through using my iPhone; data theorist Luciano Floridi's "first-order technology" in a relational "humanity-technology-nature"^{xiii} interaction. For Floridi, "the digital is deeply transforming reality"^{xiv} alluding to technology's capabilities of taking over, while artist Mike Phillips supports digital data's "potential as a material for manifesting things that lie outside of the normal frames of reference"^{xv} to reveal hidden aspects of the World in his work '*So Mote it be...*'^{xvi} On approaching Salt Lake (nomenclature for Lake Walyungup on historical maps) for the first time, I was confronted with a warning sign: *Unexploded Ammunition Risk Area*, subtly designating where to tread. Inevitably, my eyes turned from digitally recording the 360-degree surrounding environment with the fixity of representation and instead, focused on the ground. Drone technology honed my response to being in this place, provoking a different way of thinking; asking what might be the significance of digital data informed by Lake Walyungup mean in the material sphere?

When the Lake water was at its lowest, it revealed a cratered limestone surface and protruding remains of 'dead' stromatolites. I queried whether the cratered lake surface might be in some way a result of the Lake falling within the WWII Rockingham Artillery Range impact area? Deep scanning to determine Unexploded Ordinance (UXO) boundaries has left the Lake potentially, and perhaps conveniently an un-scanned area for UXO. Questioning these localised 'craters' in the land led to the uncovering of political interventions and bureaucratic red tape, obscuring the 'below ground' with the multiple shifts of the physical and historical control of the Lake's land use.

The land became a protagonist as it was impossible not to consider the significance of seemingly mundane objects retrieved from the desiccated limestone surface; fragments of model airplanes, radiator hosepipe and a brick with a hole drilled through its centre. In particular, a parched bird breast bone was salvaged for digitally reimaging. As Floridi said of the digital "it splits apart and fuses the "atoms" of our experience and culture..."^{xvii} indeed in an attempt

to convey that existence is momentary, but our impact in and on a unique wetland site is not, a sudden and serendipitous reforming of the original occurred (*Arid Bone* 2019), through adopting photogrammetry's autonomy in digital processing.

In *Exclusion Zone (I)* (2019), the unstable blackened smoked surface treatment of multiple laser-cut steel plates alludes to the imagined scatter patterns of dropped ordinance leaving its trace over the Lake. Visiting this now UXO polluted land, had revealed what might be absent or present underground; this work becomes a metaphor for conflict, with its ever changing surface and subsurface, undetected, where unknown 'secret' information exists in a coded form. Ultimately, the dark engulfing surfaces of traditionally prepared etching plates, insinuate the destruction and manipulation of significant geological and historical boundaries within this fragile place. Given the presence of the stromatolite-fossil remains of the oldest life form on earth, how could it be appropriate to drop destructive rounds of ordinance purposelessly and unrecorded in this place?

*Jane Whelan: **Pathways***

As an immigrant of some years, I find my art practice has become enmeshed in a sense of place and the natural environment. The catalyst for my current focus was a prolonged stay in China which challenged my familiar interpretation of the way I saw the world. A key area that intrigued me was the cultural response to space, encrypted in the use of pictorial space. As well, there is a traditional focus on landscape. In order to make meaning of my experience I investigated, through my practice, their traditional philosophy which provided valuable insights—by being at the nexus of two cultures, the questions I asked of Chinese culture reflected back at my Western paradigm, providing me an opportunity to re-view my own familiar Western assumptions.

While I have found knowledge of the Lake's recent history, as well as the conversations with the traditional owners, of great interest, it has been the experience of being there that resonates and encourages my embodied response. My first impression of this place was of a lonely forgetfulness in the midst of the 21st Century. Surrounded



by the daily traffic hum of urban life, this wetland area seemed a pocket of spatial stillness. A sense of deep time in which “man is not the measure”^{xviii} emerged; with the vestiges of stromatolites, and the silent presence of natural change; it was impossible to ignore the ephemerality of all living things.

The summer landscape, in the glare of its bleached surfaces appeared almost without life but walking amidst it, small plants were revealed, fiercely seeking the moisture amongst the gravel, creating seemingly deliberate patterns that invited the eye to read them. In the winter, came the rains. Over time I became aware of multiple narratives seemingly dominated by space and sky reflected in the water. However, in the same way that a “host of small noises” can “reveal the silence”,^{xix} so it was that even the minutest details of surfaces and sparse plants seemed to reveal the importance of the horizontal scope of this space.

Drawing with charcoal gives me the freedom for my marks to flow across surfaces, and reach into empty spaces. In its simplicity and immediacy, charcoal has the capacity to respond to the moment creating a dialogue with the paper’s surface whether it’s the heavier cotton rag paper or the semi-transparency of rice paper. When relevant, the soft colours found from natural sources, such as soaked leaves from the Lake site, can stain the solid whiteness of the paper and support the charcoal conversation with the surface.

These drawings are reflective, based on perceptions and experience of this place. Acknowledging that fragments “sometimes trigger emotions or realisations that the so-called whole cannot”.^{xx} I allow breathing spaces to create room for an active engagement of the imagination and completion. The larger works extend the drawing beyond the drawing paper’s frame acknowledging the contemplative nature of suggestion; stopping at the edge of the idea rather than that of the paper.

This exhibition combines, printmaking that challenges normal frames of reference, an emerging language of things relating embodied experience and drawing surfaces that respond to the moment in unfolding conversations about a place—Lake Walyungup.

ⁱEdensor, T. (2000). Walking in the British countryside: reflexivity, embodied practices and ways to escape. *Body & Society*, 6(3-4), 81-106.; Wylie, J. (2005). A single day's walking: narrating self and landscape on the South West Coast Path. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 30(2), 234-247; Solnit, R. (2001). *Wanderlust: A history of walking*. Penguin.

ⁱⁱEdensor 86.

ⁱⁱⁱibid.

^{iv}ibid.

^vHawkins, H. (2011). Dialogues and doings: sketching the relationships between geography and art. *Geography Compass*, 5(7), 464-478.

^{vi}Hawkins 467.

^{vii} formed 6-7000 years BP. Coshell, L., Rosen, M. R., & McNamara, K. J. (1998). Hydromagnesite replacement of biomineralized aragonite in a new location of Holocene stromatolites, Lake Walyungup, Western Australia. *Sedimentology*, 45(6), 1005-1018.

^{viii}Semeniuk, C. (2007). *The Becher wetlands-a Ramsar site*. Dordrecht: Springer.

^{ix}Coshell et al.

^xWalyungup is the Noongar name for this place where people (mainly adults) meet and talk. Trevor Walley pers.comm.

^{xi}See also <http://noongarboodjar.com.au/product/mardang-waakar/>

^{xii}Floridi, L. (2013). Technology's in-betweenness. *Philosophy & technology*, 26(2), 111-115.

^{xiii}ibid.

^{xiv}Floridi, L. (2017). Digital's cleaving power and its consequences. *Philosophy & Technology*, 30(2), 123-129.

^{xv}Phillips, M. (2011). 'So Mote it be...'. *Technoetic Arts: A Journal of Speculative Research*, Volume 9, Numbers 2-3, pp. 97-103, Intellect, https://doi.org/10.1386/tear.9.2-3.97_1

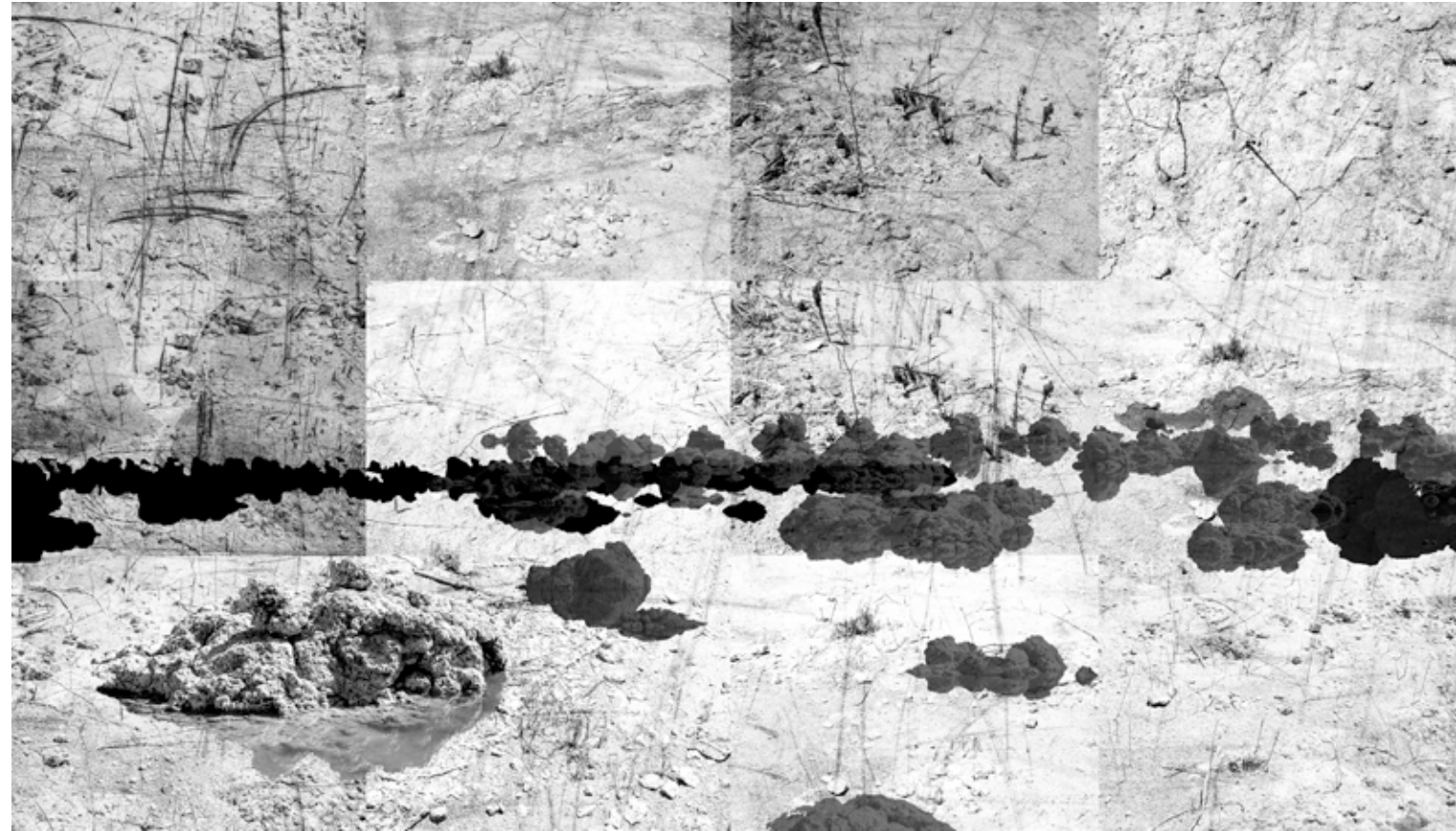
^{xvi}Phillips, M. *So Mote it be...* Retrieved from <http://www.mike-phillips.net/blog/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/So-Mote-it-be-MikePhillips-Paper.pdf>

^{xvii}Floridi 2017, 123.

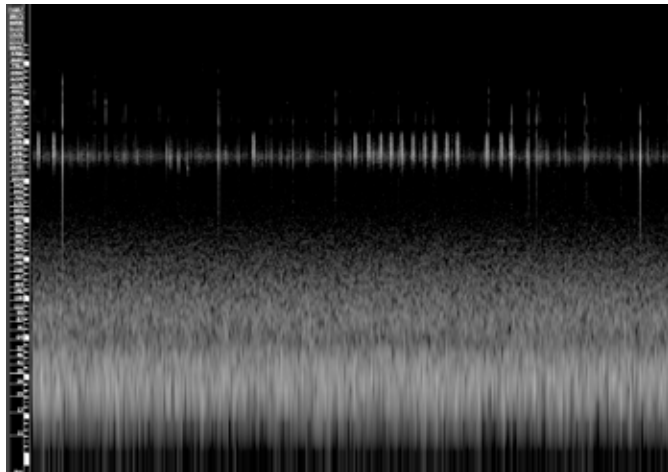
^{xviii}Rothwell, N. (2016). *Quicksilver*. Melbourne, Australia: The Text Publishing Company.

^{xix}Corbin, A. (2018) *A History of Silence*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

^{xx}Duxbury, L. (2007) The eye (and mind) of the beholder. In Duxbury, L., Greirson, E., & Waite, D. (Eds.). *Thinking Through Practice: Art as research in the academy*. (pp. 17-27). [electronic resource], Melbourne, VIC: School of Art, RMIT University.



Ryan Burge: Salt, Two Wrens, and a Knock at the Door



For the *Talking Place: Unfolding Conversations* work, I have investigated the acoustic ecology of, and the anthropological relationship to, Lake Walyungup by using several recording techniques and devices. Samples collected from the site have been used in conjunction with digital processing and synthesis to create an immersive work that prompts the listener to reflect on the site.

Three ten minute compositions have been created that function as a kind of audio triptych that can be heard separately, or as a seamless whole. Three areas of the site have been explored for their unique sound characteristics: the perimeter of the lake, below the surface of the lake, and the external and overhead sounds. Lake Walyungup is surrounded by a thin nature strip and is triangulated by roads, with Warnbro Train Station but a few hundred metres away. Considerable time spent recording in the area revealed the high volume white noise created by traffic to the sides and planes overhead. From within, the thin layer of bush lightly filters the white noise of vehicles and is rich in bird and insect life, echoing in the flat expanse of the site. From under the Lake, short bursts of noise allude to the awakening of stromatolites breathing again after thousands of years.

As predominantly visual creatures, we rely heavily upon our eyes for ways of knowing and those familiar with the Lake will already know their relationship to it, whether this simply as driver passing by or as a frequent user of the site by foot. Soundscape composition challenges the audience to new ways of listening to the world through recontextualisation of sound and through appealing to our innate musical sensibility. And with new ways of listening, are new ways of knowing.



Artist Biographies

Ryan Burge is a composer, sound artist, studio producer and performer. His compositions explore the relationship between culture and nature using field recordings and studio processing techniques. Parallel to this, he releases contemporary electronic music under different monikers that explore sonic aesthetics and emerging sub genres. Drawing on ecoacoustic and ecostructuralist approaches, he works with natural sounds or 'ecological data' and combines them with studio techniques such as digital editing, synthesis and spatialisation, often transcribing the data for live instrumentation. His soundscape compositions frame environmental sounds by taking them out of context and directing the listeners' attention to what might otherwise go unnoticed with the aim to enhance our understanding of the world.

Burge's multidisciplinary approach to composition has enabled a concurrent and diverse output. He is a multiple West Australian Music Industry nominee for Best Electronic Producer and won Electronic Song of the Year in 2012. In 2017, he was one of four emerging composers selected for *Breaking Out: Totally Huge New Music Festival* and in 2018 was invited to work with *Ensemble Offspring*, a leading Australian chamber music ensemble. Recent sound installations include a solo exhibition *Hyperreal 2.0* at PSAS, a collaboration with Warrick Palmateer *Confluence: Meridian Arc* at John Curtin Gallery, *Built To Last* with Jenn Garland at PSAS and *I am Sitting in a Simulacra* at the Australian Computer Music Conference.

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Born in Birmingham UK, **Tracy Hill** studied Fine Art at Bournville School of Art (1990), Birmingham; Sheffield Hallam University (1991-1993) and The University of Central Lancashire, Preston (2013-2015). Hill is a trans-disciplinary artist and research associate at Artlab Contemporary Print Studios at University of Central Lancashire Preston, UK. Her work is regularly shown nationally and internationally with works held in multiple collections including: *International Print Triennial Krakow*, China Printmaking Museum, Shenzhen, Painting and Sculpture Museum Istanbul and the Fine Prints and Drawings archive, Houses of Congress, Washington DC. Hill has taken part in several international residencies since 2012 and has recently been awarded The European Printmaking prize (SMTG Krakow International Printmaking Biennial 2018); the Awagami Paper Award (Flourish 2017) Grand prize (WCAF 2017) and the Printmaking Today prize (RBSA print biennial 2016).

Hill's research and practice has been regularly presented at International conferences and symposiums including most recently Impact10, Santander and *Northern Light, Critical approaches to proximity and distance in Northern Landscape photography*, SHU, Sheffield and has been published in *Dark Mountain* Terra issue 14 Autumn 2018; *Polymer Photogravure: A Step-by-Step Manual, Highlighting Artists and Their Creative Practice* (Contemporary Practices in Alternative Process Photography) Paperback–7 Dec 2018 as well as on line at www.nontoxicprint.com - essays on print, *Unmapping the World* (2018).

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www.a-n.co.uk/blogs/haecceity

Dr **Monika Lukowska** is an artist and academic from Poland currently based in Perth, WA. She obtained her MA from the E. Geppert Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Wroclaw, Poland in 2011, MFA in Printmaking from the San Francisco Art Institute, USA in 2014 and PhD from Curtin University, Perth in 2018. Lukowska's artworks were exhibited internationally in China, Poland, Romania, Sweden, the United States, Germany, Spain, Japan, Turkey and Australia. She is a recipient of a Minister of Culture and National Heritage Award for the Best Graduate Diploma in Poland (2011), Fulbright Graduate Student Awards (2012), Murphy and Cadogan Contemporary Art Awards for the Best Graduate Students in the Bay Area (2013), and Curtin Strategic International Research Scholarship (2015). Lukowska presented her research both nationally and internationally including AAANZ Conference (2017), Southern Graphic Council International (2014) and Impact9 and 10 (2015, 2018). Lukowska participated in several residencies including Kala Art Institute, Berkley, USA, Fremantle Arts Centre, Fremantle, and at the Australian National University in Canberra.

In her research, she examines the ways in which the materiality of place can inform art practice and explores how printmaking methods might be deployed to develop artworks that embody the experience of place. Through her practice she questions how the sense of place, atmosphere, and sensations can be embedded within the printed surface. She specialises mostly in lithography and digital print, investigating the potential of merging digital and traditional printmaking processes.

She currently works as a sessional academic at Curtin University and is a co-founder of Print Lab Australia.

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Dr **Annette Nykiel** is a slow maker, and a practice-led researcher, wondering about questions of becoming in the Country and the interdependence of ecological systems including the near coastal wetlands and the ancient salt lakes of the arid lands. She is interested in raising the awareness of the value and importance of relating to the materiality and non-human agency of non-urban spaces. These spaces include the regional places in which she lives and works, noticing the ground between her feet as she wanders gleanng material and found objects for fibre and textile works. She makes do with natural fibres, pigments and discarded materials to create woven vessels and site-specific installations relating to her embodied experience of place.

Nykiel wanders between urban, regional and remote areas in a variety of roles as a geoscientist, arts worker, maker and workshop facilitator. She continues to develop her practice through solo and group shows, residencies and the artist collective *Destabilising Walls*. She shares her skills as a maker in a variety of regional settings, most recently at the 2018 York Festival where she worked with textile artists on the *Wara* sculptures, learning to weave straw using a technique seen for the first time outside Asia and facilitating community workshops for adults and children. She has broad arts management experience including facilitating women's art projects in remote communities (*Marlu Kuru Kuru* 2008-9), and co-curating exhibitions like *field working slow making*, Spectrum Project Space (2016). Recent shows include *Thresholds and Thoughtscapes*, Bunbury Regional Art Galleries (2017) and *Destabilising Walls* PSAS (2018). For many years, she has exhibited in different spaces in urban and regional Australia and internationally. Her work is held in the John Curtin Gallery, Artspace Mackay and a number of private collections in Australia and overseas. Her solo show, *meeting place*, was awarded the FRINGEWORLD Visual Art Award, 2018. Her PhD in contemporary art was conferred by ECU in 2018.

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Since studying printmaking at Royal College of Art in London, Dr **Sarah Robinson** has lectured in colleges and universities, run artist-led community workshops and was a founder member of ArtLab Contemporary Print Studio, UK. Exhibiting internationally, awards include a Highly Commended, Print International (2013), Oriel Wrexham, UK, and a Fremantle Print Award finalist (2014). In 2017, her PhD was conferred by Edith Cowan University. Robinson has developed a research curiosity that is drawn to the possibilities invigorated by the divisive relationship between digital and traditional printmaking. Intrinsic to her creative practice-led research she endeavours to ask complex questions that challenge our ways of seeing in an overly digital world.

Solo exhibitions include *Eyes Open(i) Drawing in The Dark* (2014), Crystal Cave, Yanchep National Park, and *Imperceptible Realities* (2015) Spectrum Project Space, WA. Recent group exhibitions: *Thresholds and Thoughtscapes*, Bunbury Regional Art Galleries and *Destabilising Walls*, PSAS Fremantle, supported by a group DLGSCI Research and Development Grant. *Talking Place* group show was installed at The Palacete del Embarcadero, aligned with Robinson's academic paper, *Bothersome Possibilities in Using 3D Print to Copy the Past* for Impact10 International Printmaking Conference, Spain (2018).

Robinson completed an ECU Fold Residency in 2017 exploring digital and traditional methods of etching alongside her current role as a founder member of *Destabilising Walls*, an arts collective based in Perth. Her current writings and prints focus on contemporary discussions in the field of digital technologies, print and non-toxic printmaking –having received a DLGSCI, *Creative Development Grant*, to attend *A Green Dream?* International Symposium on Safer Printmaking in Japan. A forthcoming solo exhibition, *Potentially Dangerous* at The Lobby, Perth, Western Australia, opens in November 2019.

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Originally from the UK, **Jane Whelan** studied art in both London and Leeds. She emigrated to Australia in 1976 and worked in the field of Visual Arts Education. In 2013 she stepped back from teaching to focus full time on the development of her own art practice completing a Master of Visual Arts degree through Edith Cowan University (2016). On arrival in Australia, Whelan found a way of managing the initial disconnection of immigration by turning her focus towards the landscape. It was a means of making connections with this very different environment through her artwork. Now an Australian citizen of many years the landscape continues to be her deep and abiding interest and source of inspiration.

The catalyst of her current research focus was initiated by time spent in China subsequently supported by an *Asia Bound Research Travel Grant* (2014). Intrigued by China's cultural response to emptiness and use of pictorial space as well as a differing traditional response to landscape, Whelan's work seeks to express the lived experience of landscape investigating the physicality of drawing on paper with charcoal, to authentically express the embodied experience. The artist's drawn works assert the continued relevance of drawing for contemporary art practice. As open-ended, contemplative works they seek to share the experience of an immersive space, allowing the viewer to complete the experience and find their own meaning.

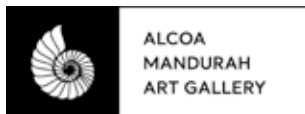
Whelan's work has been exhibited both nationally and internationally, including *Third Space Project* (2015); a collaborative Arts project with the University of Shanghai for Science and Technology (Exhibited both in Perth and Shanghai). She is the recipient of the 2016 Spectrum Project Space Artist-in-Residence, leading to a solo exhibition *Drawing Breath* (2016) as part of the FRINGEWORLD Festival in Perth. Other exhibitions include *Thresholds and Thoughtscapes* Bunbury Regional Art Galleries (2017), and most recently *Talking Place* at Impact10, Spain (2018).

Acknowledgements

We would especially like to thank Theresa Walley, Trevor Walley and Cheryl Martin for introducing us to the Lake and its surrounds, allowing us onto their land and sharing stories with us. We would also like to acknowledge the Lake environment and its flora and fauna that are the inspiration for this project.

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Image list

All photographs and artworks courtesy of the artists.

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P.38. Ryan Burge, Left - Simultaneously capturing audio above and below the lake. Right - Spectrograph of hydrophone recording from under the surface showing short bursts of noise at approximately 1200Hz.

