

**Frey Micklethwait**



Noetic science is the study of how beliefs, intentions and thoughts have influence upon and are influenced by the physical world and may encompass ideas such as the reciprocal maintenance required with the wider world (we look after our environment, the environment looks after us). Newly arrived immigrants may have a particularly challenging time when first they experienced South Australian heatwaves, as suggested by accounts from adults; for children the transition may have been easier.

Frey Micklethwait's family emigrated from England in the 1960s, settling in a small timber framed asbestos house in the sawmill town of Nangwarry. This area was surrounded by pine forests intermingled with swamp. The children, barefooted and keen for adventure, often disappeared into the woods to explore all day long, their mother often unaware of their whereabouts. It was a large family with few furnishings in the early years; tea chests served for tables when they first arrived. His father made birthday presents, like bicycles, fashioned from materials found at the local rubbish tip. His father worked maintaining and repairing machinery in the local wood mills in various towns and his long hours required Frey's mother to attend to the practicalities of family life. Frey's mother was very prolific in preserving fruit and vegetables by bottling and drying stone fruits; she made ginger beer, jam, chutney, and pickled onions and baked all the family's bread and scones. Both his parents shared with their family a remarkable capacity to use what materials were available, in creative and practical ways, whilst living in a balanced equation with nature, rather than solely taking resources.

Frey's earliest memories of heatwaves were of the dramatic lightning storms that would finally break the heat. They lived without a fan, as he explained, "we just put up with the heat". When the summer nights were very oppressive, they would sleep outside. A favourite treat during the heat were lemon iceblocks made in those aluminium ice trays that can still be found in opportunity shops. It is as if the challenges of Australian summers only brought Frey greater connections to the natural world.

Frey has also been shaped by the resilience and inventiveness of his humble beginnings, with the added capacity to share those intuitive connections to the natural world with any potential art viewer. His current artwork is about his internal vision that guides his work, a willingness to act as a sort of magnifying glass, and to provide enriched contexts to information. He feels that art can be too 'heady' and can lose connection to intuitive or sensorial signals that are available to artists; he suggests we may need to reengage with those quiet voices within, in a sort of 'attunement' similar to a band of Jazz musicians who improvises during their performances. Perhaps living an unmaterialistic life, close to nature also allows for a different sort of art practice.

Like his parents, he likes to use what resources are around him in an inventive, intuitive and amusing way. Furthermore, he can potentially connect previously unrelated ideas. He feels he can make art from any found object, much like his father... and so it is no surprise that he uses paint, drawing, clay work, music composition, and digital videos, for they all carry infinite possibilities to transform thoughts into forms. Frey often works on the veranda of his residential unit. It is a humble studio space but filled with nature's presence.

Heatwaves, that time of challenge from the natural world, that permeates all lives here, brings an opportunity to reassess our actions. Nature's power can take precedence in our activities, and requires planning, use of appropriate resources, alertness to atmospheric conditions, and perhaps promotes a quieter time where more thought is possible. For Frey, his puzzlement at the materialist values of the world encourages him to commune more so, searching for advice, from a metaphysical source.

**Sue Michael**



So many of my school report cards mention “quiet and conscientious,” and these same indicators could be said of my adult art practice, despite these qualities being critically overlooked. Let me tell of my very first memories as a child, for they were of a heatwave when the family was stationed at Whyalla in a modest house on the edge of town. I clearly remember standing in my cot, crying loudly, with tears that dried to a powder very rapidly in the furnace-like temperatures. I was dressed in only a cloth nappy. My brother and sister were also in their beds in the room, and perhaps frustrated at my endless complaining. Mum had left a fan circulating, as well as providing wet towels for their transpirational cooling capabilities. The dry, dusty air was stifling. The view outside the north facing window was bleak with only blinding glare to be seen shimmering off the hills just over the railway line. All was not well in my world, for I instinctively knew I was trapped and had to learn to adjust to these living conditions. When researching the reach of early childhood memories, it suggests I would not be capable of remembering events under my first two years, but on the contrary, I remember all phenomenological aspects of this accosting weather event.

Sensitivity can be the artists’ strength and I have applied this personal trait to geographical field work as a way of furthering the usefulness of visual art. Complex webs of ideas, longitudinal observations, and triangulated connections can be brought into a tangible, more graspable, organized form through artworks. After decades at various art schools, I have had to later learn the ways to dismiss concepts, and to, instead, tune into what constitutes a lived experience of places. This ties in with Goethe’s ‘quiet empiricism,’ a more immersive and holistic approach that can be utilized by the artist. I am opposing the wholly imaginative, less concerned with materiality, and

instead motivated to clearly show evidence of interface with the natural world. They are merciful scenes that have been found to paint as an archive. The geographical thought that lies behind the artworks has been given priority over any sense of visual novelty for the viewer; geographical thought was thought a radical positioning in itself. A 'herd' of small works was thought to be a way that a viewer could make their own ideas settle within, where new patterns could be seen and understood concerning human behaviour, or contrasts could bring new perceptions to potentially, previously overlooked cultural practices. South Australian regional scenes are side by side with my home suburb of Prospect, not as starting points of conflict, but to use the contrasts as a way to be inclusive. In the end, the natural world is intertwined with people and their dwellings; there is no harsh partitioning of the natural world, and all, and potentially presumed 'ugly' aspects of its presence, can be also located. No order has been displayed, although systems thinking lies within the foundation of my approach, only the moveable complexity has been cemented. Perhaps the usefulness of my approach to observations may be the ability to take such vantage points and apply them to any other place...even to space settlements. Space is not so far removed from the lonely plains of South Australia, and the wider world may find inherent understandings in the adjustments we have made to environmental challenges here. Perhaps it is the free thinking and ability to find solutions that I celebrate the most, no matter the location or available resources.

**Maxie Ashton**



Messengers can be quietly spoken and unobtrusive, yet still have the capacity to reach beyond lifetimes or over great distances. Maxie is standing next to a small piece of cloth that was embroidered by her aunt, Jean Ashton, during her incarceration as a prisoner of war during World War 2. Clothing was undone and threads procured to then stitch this small landscape scene; it would have been a long process of its making. It would have had to be hidden, and only savoured in quiet moments. The same sort of landscape touchstones occupy Maxie's thoughts at this time, and she has a clear aim to share the joy that can be experienced from the natural world.

Maxie grew up on a (mostly) sheep farm near Naracoorte, along with her two brothers and four sisters. She has a happy memory of lying on a ground sheet under the shade of trees during a heatwave, with her siblings. Her Dad made a sort of swimming pool for them out of canvas and wooden props; she says they had so much fun. Dinner was served picnicking in the evening when the cool could be enjoyed. Despite it being remembered as very hot, she cannot recall being in bed 'all hot and bothered'. The children slept in the sleep-out without a fan; it was also challenged by the cold during winter, but life was accepted as it was. Watermelon was a treat in heatwaves, and home-grown cold lamb, tomato and cucumber, beetroot salads graced those evening picnics.

Her father was a veteran of the Kokoda Trail during World War II, indeed, their farm and community were part of the soldier settlements after the war. The children were not overly aware of the suffering that her father endured during war time events. Her parents had sadly lost their first child

through polio. Maxie says her mother had a saying that one should question “What can help push the business on?” Her background, thus, shared a sort of hopeful, practical consideration to life, and was alert to pathways to ‘small mercies’. Maxie’s art could be said to be quietly furthering an appreciation of landscape as a way to extend our cultural life, in the same way.

Beyond her childhood experiences on the land, she has also been shaped by travels to the interior desert country around Lake Eyre about fifteen years ago. Now seems to be the time that the full influences of that landscape and its animal life, requires her attention. Her paintings have been painstakingly made, with a handful of thin layers of similar scenes underneath their surfaces. She is unapologetic about the slow process of selectivity in her work, for it has brought so much useful thinking and self-knowledge as to what representation is intuitively required by that very landscape, itself. She makes little effort to represent an actual landscape, instead her work suggests a memory of place and a visual representation as expressed through colour and dashing marks, of a deep joy that can be experienced in Australian landscape. Deserts, like heatwave conditions, can carry the connotation of death, but Maxie’s paintings suggest neither harshness nor threat. Instead, they are imbued with ephemeral suggestions of her positive feelings, in much the same way as her muses Fred Williams and John Wolseley. The emotion rather than the details are more important to her...as perhaps was so of that little cloth piece of her Aunt Jean.

Her landscapes are not recognizable, but she hopes for others to see their own favoured landscapes, not necessarily hers, in the similar perceptive ways. Maxie is a patient person. She has work experience counting fish and birds for hours on end. This is not easy work, she states. She often weeds hillsides for four hours at a time. These long slow interactions with the natural world have informed these works. The desert is full of life!

*To see blue and red dragonfly,*

*To see a field of flowers in the hot desert sun and the branches of the coolabah reaching down to the water,*

*To see the dingoes watching and the tufts of soft cane grass,*

*To see sand twisting in a willy willy, and the nest of an eagle almost as big as the tree that holds it.*

*To see a bustard strolling, beak pointed skyward and the swifts gliding and turning.*

*To see the bee-eater bashing its dinner on a branch and a flock of black swans taking off from the water.*

*To see a stretching plain of round red varnished gibber rocks and to watch the yellow brown of the gibber bird.*

*To see a hundred pelican spiralling high in a thermal of rising air, and to see an island of pelicans breeding.*

*To see a tiny black-fronted dotterel pretending to have a broken wing to draw me away from its nest of three brown eggs.*

*To see the rippling sand of the red dune and the criss-cross of fresh tracks in the morning.*

*To see the sky of endless stars.*

*To see all this, to hold these pictures within me.*

*This is a joy.*

- Maxie Ashton

**Mary-Jean Richardson**



Photo courtesy the artist

Some people can be like guide-ropes, providing a sort of surety and confidence prior to our adventures (possibly of an aesthetic nature) within the world. These are people we can trust to be with us in our tentative actions and preliminary, rudimental thoughts. It seems apt that Mary-Jean, with such unassuming, yet guiding, interpersonal qualities as this, could be Head of a fine art, painting department.

Mary-Jean grew up close to Henley Beach's shoreline. Even now she can wind down the window of the car and sense a particular summer perfume that issues forth from the Western suburbs. As children, the two sisters, Susan and Mary-Jean, were reminded how lucky they were to live by the sea, with its gentle breezes and cooler temperatures. They each were given a small personal fan, the sort that had no wire guards, but would be harmless if fingers strayed in the path of the circulating blades. The lounge, only in the later 1970's, had one of those sort of rattling box air-conditioners, that competed with the cricket test matches with its noise. It is interesting that her father, a fireman, held a guiding role in the family with anecdotal stories concerning public safety, as well as to lead them into watery activities, as perhaps a counterbalance to tinder dry dangers. Mary-Jean's mother accompanied her two daughters to frequent swims at the local beach, despite not being able to swim, herself. In a way she called upon the saints to protect her ocean bound daughters by pinning small religious medals to their bathers. Mary-Jean recalls a chilled



Tupperware jug (with those small sliding openings) of iced water, with squeezed lemons and a little sugar, prepared by her mother, being in perpetual supply.

Perhaps in the same way Mary-Jean is providing aesthetic experiences, where the general viewer has been guarded and provided safe passage to explore the haptic. These small works in *Heatwave* are a newer direction, where the compositions — using layers, interpretation of lived experiences, and examination of her inner ‘summer’ life are shared. She has relished time alone in her own home studio and has ‘closed the door’ on outside influences in the process, instead, concentrating on the recall of her own bodily experiences of summer — the splashes of colour in the summer fruit, blinding lights filtered through windows, and the feeling of swimming in well-known stretches of beach. As she says, vision and touch are connected, and these *Heatwave* works ask us to follow her path. She has provided a metaphorical guide rope to her beachside information, and even if such information has been organized in new ways for us to contemplate, there is nothing to fear.

There is a cluster of Francis family graves to be found in cemetery of the ghost town of Gordon in the Flinders Ranges; these are Mary-Jean’s ancestors. The early experiences of these pioneers would have been marked by the cycles of drought and plague and intermittent floods. It is a far different experience from the regular holidays Mary-Jean has when staying at the coastal town of Port Elliott every summer. And between these historical markers, there can be found Mary-Jean’s mother’s dedication to supply continuous refreshments to her family. This is a sort of schematic model for Mary-Jean. It is fitting that the portrait, above, includes art books, for they are like the woven and intertwined strength behind Mary-Jean’s metaphoric rope from which to extend our pathway to aesthetic experiences...and it is given in comforting assurance as though our aesthetic analysis is like precious, yet infrequent water, itself.

## Lucy Turnbull



There is a difference between stories and lived experience, and we can assume stories have the potential capacity to 'step forward within a line-up' with an accompanying extroverted confidence, escorted by potential exaggeration, a rehearsed flow of information, or a certain degree of ennoblement to deliver a more interesting narrative. These facilitated representations in art are well known and are, indeed, useful, but there is also a need for documenting the subtle signs of the gentleness of actual life experience. It is as if the fullest emotions are also secondary when documenting lived experience, in line with the sort of remote viewing techniques where analysis and interpretation are not initially required. Lucy is seen in the above photograph, with a small painting on board made on the rooftop of her previous Brooklyn, New York studio. It is an example of the plein air techniques, using observations of lived experience, that she is committed to.

Lucy comes from a family background where fixing challenges was the norm, but done so, in what I suspect, is an unfussy manner. When enquiries were made about family cultural practices during heatwaves, Lucy had no entrenched memories of certain behaviours, adjusted home routines, special recipes, nor precautions, aside from the humble routine of replenishing the water supplies to the mobile evaporative cooler in the lounge room. It was one of those machines with the fibrous back beneath its grid, with fondly remembered gurgling sounds made whilst hand pouring the required water.

Her father had numerous sheds where all manner of repairs and adjustments were and are still being made. Any problems were seen as interesting challenges; no fuss, nor high emotion, or

added drama was accompanying these repairs. During heatwaves, the windows and doors were kept open. Summer was seen as just another season. Perhaps a cloth covered the wilting vegetables in the garden. The richness in being 'no fuss', grounded and willing to help problem solve has infused Lucy's art practice, that has, in recent years, spanned the globe. The ability to stay thoughtful and observant, wherever she is living, matched with her commitment to paint on location, makes Lucy's capacity to archive unnoticed aspects, her strength.

Lucy, concurrently, holds full awareness of the complexities of politics, the different treatments of domestic culture within art, and an appreciation of fresh viewing positions, and arts role in environmental change. Still, she is called back to street views, interiors and backyards, to perhaps sketch the lemon trees bowing in the breeze, or light shimmering through the window to illuminate a chair. It is as if those understated daily moments, without dramatic 'thunderbolts' of piercing emotion are just as powerful for her. Her careful compositions hold objects on the viewing planes that facilitate her aims to just purely compose images, unaffected by other art trends, such as those that value disruptions or justifications, that may disagree with such actions.

Look for Lucy on roof tops, in empty blocks of land, walking through yards, or seated on the streets, for she will be documenting 'the everything' of big chunks of sky, with all the screens of middle ground and foreground elements that would lead to a composition. Within the nothingness, is the everything...and perhaps it requires the opposite of fussiness to grasp this.

**Cassie Thring**



Life can change in the 'blink of an eye'. The spiritual teacher, Gautama Buddha, illuminated the difficulties of enduring these potentially drastic and possibly unfathomable 'present moments,' but also the precious worth in being adaptive and resilient in the face of these shocks. How do people apply such spiritual knowledge to cope...to put wisdom into action? Every decision is a calculation. Cassie Thring has remembered one particular line from a conversation with a budgerigar breeder, sharing how heat so intense during summer had caused an apocalyptic scene where the birds fell dead to the ground. The idea of this scenario is not easily seen or shared and suggests even native animals are not able to survive all encompassing, heatwave disasters.

Cassie feels she is a 'summer person,' forged by happy childhoods freely roaming the beach, or playing under the backyard sprinklers in, what seemed to be, a set wardrobe for the season of red Speedo bathers, all without the protection of sunscreen. Life was not always so carefree in her ancestral line, and Cassie delicately tells of her South African grandmother, who upon being widowed with two small sons, moved from the South East to Adelaide and was kindly taken in, and given a screened porch in North Adelaide for her small family to dwell in. The boys, from their beds, could hear lions roaring from the nearby zoo...perhaps a reminder of dramatic potential shifts, to fuel these young boys' imaginations. There is a sharing of important cultural information that her grandmother used to drive to the beach, park on a crest, and cry as she looked across the sea to

the horizon. Her young boys, the witnesses to loss, sat silently in the back. And then they returned home, and the normal rhythms of daily life resumed.

Perhaps moments of great transformation require the loss of something before the new can arrive. Perhaps Cassie is just stating these facts in her representations, in simple yet enormously metaphorically complex ways, for those who are aware/ curious of such pathways. She feels no need to justify her ideas. The budgie breeders would perhaps not freely share their misfortune. Things may have been beyond their control; perhaps provisions and planning had not been adequate. There have been notions of perfection in animal clubs...witnessed by the plucking of budgie feathers that were deemed the wrong colour. Such pathways are not investigated directly, instead Cassie has forensically examined the simple idea, the bottom line, that summer can bring death.

Since childhood, Cassie has been making mud pies, or objects reconfigured from cardboard boxes, and explored the delights of cutting things. It is the process of 'pushing things around,' similar to her childhood play, that has now been applied to a simple yet smouldering, transformational experience. As she explains, when you cook a crayfish it is set within a cold water filled pot, and may not know it is getting hot, until it is too late. This is how the ideas surrounding the budgie's death scene attached itself, surreptitiously and over time, to her. This further suggests she invites viewers to participate in this slow but deep-thinking process, where an idea can be juggled, rotated, repositioned and placed alongside new ideas, to suit the viewer's preferences. There may not be quickly seized resolutions, and plans may go astray in the thinking (or art) process, as it does in the everyday events in our daily lives in the wider world. To begin to work through catastrophic changes, this process is necessary, though...before the new can arrive.

**Brianna Speight**



There can be particular citizens who have embraced a commitment to the concept of the lived environmental ethic, where sensitive considerations may possibly require a sort of magnifying glass, knowledge of the forgotten, and a consideration of cultural blind spots. In regard to the natural environment and people's interactions within it, some families have promoted a search for such ethics, without the formal academic foundations of deep ecology, feminism, disenchantment theories, bioregionalism, or simply humanistic geography considerations. Instead, there may have been an intuitive, unforced search, often as a family group, into their surrounding lifeworld, that then facilitates the formation of archives...beyond their own personhoods. Brianna comes from a rich family heritage of archiving everyday life, where writing as well as analogue photo-documentation were used, and in these early influences, she has learnt more comprehensive and experiential approaches, rather than relying on problematic dualisms and hierarchical thinking.

Brianna is fortunate to have experienced a childhood close to the sea, with holiday stays camping behind rows of sand dunes, snorkelling, the setting of lobster traps, and swimming adventures within kelp forests. Perhaps these could be considered as naturally sacred summer landscapes. Her South Brighton childhood home required attunement to the natural cycles of gully winds and the waiting on hot evenings for the shifts in sea breezes. She remembers the hotness of the bed linen, with the homespun advice to take a tepid shower before retiring and to keep a wet flannel close by, during heatwaves. These anecdotes point to an early comprehension of the atmospheres that the

natural world extends. Her great grandmother collected decades of cultural information in her town of Lucindale, in daily diary entries. These have become influential in Brianna's artistic life, with the understanding that in art making, ideas that were previously hidden or forgotten can resurface. The earlier family records also present a portal to past lives, collapsing time, and sharing insights to considerations previously felt and lived. Ways of memorising and archiving are of interest to Brianna, with the understanding that not all narratives and perspectives are told.

Brianna worked in collaboration with Rosina Possingham for this Heatwave exhibition, and together they documented how people made recreational use of Port Noarlunga with various summer activities such as kayaking, fishing, and diving from the jetty; they observed the body as these activities were enjoyed. As field researchers, they endured the heat, became 'frazzled' on some hot days, but rewarded themselves with tidal swims at the mouth of the Onkaparinga River, for example, as a way to reward their efforts. Some of the observed people seemed content to use nature for their own uses, they had no regard for nature's point of view. If you are formed in your thinking during childhood by the finer details that are held when considering the interactions with the wider world, this anthropocentric impetus becomes less probable, may I suggest. There is a further hope that cultural information, some already in danger of being lost or hidden, would potentially provide pathways to follow in this moral development of our relationship with the natural landscapes of Australia. By producing artworks that may be a record or archive in itself, she may replicate the capacity her great grandmother had as a go-to source when knowledge was required to be verified, triangulated or examined in new viewing positions.

**Margie Sheppard**



There can be strength in fluidity. This can be counter to carefully planned lines of controlled arrangements, where an obvious and measured order hopes to present an accompanying atmosphere of security. Margie was fortunate to experience a sort of gentle freedom in her childhood days at Mt Gambier. Summer holidays were a time to look forward to, where groups of neighbourhood children loosely congregated in daily adventures. They were joyous, 'endless days' for her, over the summer holidays, spent with 'whoever was around'. No activities were structured, and plans were often made on the day. Perhaps a group would arrive at a certain home to find a friend had conjured a new idea for the group to test. Perhaps there were negotiations on that morning, and activities were changed and directed towards another activity for that day. This speaks of careful social transactions and impulse control, learnt from an early age. There was a territorial range that these groups held, that could encompass a wide area of the town, and activities both indoors and outdoors were sought. Forts were made, tunnels dug, and outdoor campfires made. Margie remembers wearing little cotton shorts...like some sort of uniform for the season, and being tanned 'as brown as berries,' from the summer sun.

Some holidays were spent at the family's beach shack in the more pristine landscape of the Christies Beach of earlier times. Several families stayed together during the summers there. The children were directed to have a rest after lunch, but Margie fondly remembers the vibrant



discussions that replaced any need for actual sleep during these siestas. Structured time brought intellectual fluidity.

The hot weather brought no particular provisions, or precautions. Margie does not remember particular recipes made by her mother, a very accomplished cook, nor special adaptations made to the house by her father, a veteran of World War Two. It would seem there was little to 'fuss about' within her family's culture, instead, a gratitude abided for the gifts that ongoing education, socializing, and creativity brought to daily life.

The sort of independence, to be left to yourself to manage your days as children, has led to a resilient, and more independent adulthood for Margie...with a sort of 'let's sail along' principle of social continuity. Margie has a deep appreciation of current climate challenges and has an uncommon knowledge of renewable energy. This foundation lies quietly within, but it is the joyous convivial atmosphere of past summer activities that she brings to these Heatwave paintings. Her abstract shapes on her canvases are a little different this year. There are graced with very lively shapes, jostling and almost skipping off the canvas. Their colours are bold and contain the warm tones of summer throughout. Some works have a suggestion of symbols for summer, with red discs, and guitar shapes suggesting the delights of a summer adventure.

Margie's abstract forms seem to mirror that sort of happy independence of her childhood; there are no tight, too tight, formal stiffness in her abstract shapes, nor, by contrast, any uncontrolled and haphazard gestures to mark the canvas. They have a loose, gentle and (sensibly) unrestricting structure to them. It is as if she is asking us to link arms and to join her for a summer adventure.

**Rosina Possingham**



Artists can have an urge to share thoughts, ideas, newly made objects, atmospheres or even their own energies, and this may be what fuels their activities. Activities assumes actions will be taken. At times, there may not be an external call-out for what they know; they may have to remain full of unspoken ideas, or unmade projects. As artists still in a forming stage in their childhood, it can be this flow of communication that is unconsciously sought. Rosina's first response to a question about her earliest memories of heatwaves was to relay her happy days of imaginative experimentation when she spent many happy hours swimming like a mermaid, with feet together, underwater, at Henley Beach, near her grandmother's home. Not all people endeavour to experience life as a mermaid, but some may be prompted to look through other 'lenses'.

Her upbringing was one where the connections to nature were matched with a love of sharing representations. Her Mum was a committed environmentalist in the 1970's, having been involved in Tasmanian protests, including the chaining of herself against a tree in efforts to stop environmental destruction. She was an eco-warrior and a feminist. Rosina's Dad, too, had interests in this care for the natural world. He was also a sculptor and a painter, alongside his domestic duties that he enjoyed. He would volunteer to attend the local Auburn primary school to show children intricate art processes, to normalize these creative ways in those young minds. 'Give things a go,' was a family mantra.

Heatwaves, in Rosina's childhood experience, brought a quiet time at home, with a soundtrack of the test cricket to accompany the long days. Special shade cloth shelters had been made for the family home, and these were brought out to provide extra shade, then packed away when cooler weather eventuated. The plants close to the house were carefully misted as well, and regularly sprayed with water to help them in the hottest part of the day. Summer also brought the ripening fruits, with native quandongs amongst her favourites. They had native plants everywhere in their garden.

Her grandmother, at Henley Beach, by contrast, had a vital interest in and a planted collection of practical, 'everyday' plants that could be recognizably found on the Adelaide Plains. Rosina was witness to her quiet joy and admiration of plants such as Morning Glory... that some would consider a pest. It was if she had an open communication with their nodding blooms. Rosina's grandfather was well revered for his scientific work with plants, but the sort of informal research efforts of her grandmother showed an alternative sensitivity and proclivity when engaging with the natural world.

The same depth of engagement with the natural world that was passed down to her within her family was cemented when working with Brianna Speight at Sauerbier House at Port Noarlunga, in early 2020. It was the private observations of a true artist that came to the fore, where life was observed for the life-force it presented, as people engaged with the natural surroundings. Any previously planned angles to investigate were left behind when on location. Instead, an enthusiasm for shapes, patterns, lines and anchoring points were discovered, discussed and analysed, in an almost scientific way, to uncover why people moved about that shoreline. It was as if Brianna and Rosina released all expectations and let that place 'speak to them'.

Rosina's early childhood trips to the seaside, her favoured locations, filled whole days. She remembers coming home with the family somewhat dazed and exhausted. Perhaps that would be a normal condition after such deep and involving research...all dedicated to the intellectual journey to begin to perceive the natural world on its own terms.

**Alice Blanch**



Holism assumes that people do not exist as independent entities, separated from their surroundings, or thought of as above other concerns that veer from the self. Some sections of our society have normalized a sort of distance from the natural world, that perhaps requires explorers to find traces, verifiable evidence, 'deposits' of the earth's connection to us. To interface with these areas where the bonds are felt strongly by the artist, it requires a toughened and selfless commitment. This may be in keeping with the long tradition of the image-makers who accompanied historical expeditions. Alice may be thought of as an explorer, unafraid to literally have dirt under her fingers, so she can share nature's gifts with us.

Both Alice's parents worked in dedicated ways to assist the wider community with practical and reassuring ways to make life more comfortable. Her father still runs his own business, and as is the norm in many small businesses, only one brief holiday was taken each year, after Christmas, during her childhood years. The sheltered bay at Port Elliot thus became a regular destination during summer. Back in the Adelaide suburb of Hawthorn, Alice's bedroom was on the hottest side of the house. During heatwaves her mother would wake her early in the morning, and move her to the lounge, which was slightly cooler, so she could sleep more soundly for a little while longer. Her mother also designed and made cloth covers from old towels for the drink bottles kept in their school bags; if kept wet, these towelling cloths would cool the drinks through the process of

transpiration. The leather lounges were draped each summer, to minimize the sweating discomforts that the heat brought.

It is with these same caring and thoughtful ways that Alice has approached art photography. She says the family always had cameras at hand when she was growing up, and the children were given turns to shoot some of the 24 exposures on the rolls of film. A different sort of consideration in composing and relaying visual information, when compared to the copious images of the digital age, was formed in her earliest years as a photographer. In Year 6 she was assigned a project that required much discussion with her Nan. A large collection of black and white family photographs, mostly taken on box brownie cameras, became a turning point for her in her creative life. Despite her teacher's insistence on the importance of the written word, Alice had prepared her first photographic essay in primary school.

The subject of Alice's previous photographic series often show landscapes, or seascapes that hold a timelessness, as if she has peaked a hill into the past. The stylistic device of using low technology in the capture of her images also pushes past any human vanity and pride in technology...so we are left to exchange with the energy of the earth itself. It is a softened gaze, but it is deep. Alice recently stepped away from urban living, and coincidentally became part of her regional Victorian communities as they grappled, indirectly, with the tragic destruction caused by their bushfires, and later, the eight-month pandemic lockdown. She has been radically affected with reassessed theoretical perspectives, has joined new interlinked groups, and now is considering new ways of expressing her creativity that does not rely on art as objects. She works in market gardens, part time, as a way to strengthen her connections with the earth.

The ocean is her favoured sacred landscape for the hot weather, but it also affords the opportunity to interface with the natural world in a fully immersive experience. She found it a "whole new world that we can truly immerse ourselves in, which is something that is greater than ourselves." Gravity can alter, we can be physically touched by this 'other world' on every surface of our body, and the thundering surf can block out all urban sounds. These are practical pointers, and an invitation for deeper thought that Alice raises. Beaches are the edges between 'our world' and that of the greater cosmological forces that are at work in the natural world. Edges are a completely different consideration to boundaries, for they suggest they are open, ever-moving and non-partitioning. As Alice quietly suggests, "The world is a beautiful place, and we are part of it...and that means we are part of that beauty."

**Tara Rowhani-Farid**



There is a flow of grace that runs all through our lives, originating from our interpersonal ties, the surrounding environment, and other worldly forces that we are yet to fully understand and account for. Tara's family have been instrumental in teaching her from an early age to be curious, to try out and apply new ideas, and to think in a deeply philosophical way even if events seem 'everyday'. She has also been witness to the ongoing connections that place holds, where the natural environment not only directs sentiments and decisions, but also does so over time and distances.

Tara spent formative childhood years in Cooper Pedy, where one can suggest that heatwaves are clustered through the majority of days. Although she did not live in a dug-out, the adaptive underground dwellings that the region is famous for, she had no memory of being overwhelmed by the heat, despite their home's simple gyprock construction. People were found outdoors there, more so than an emphasis on being cosy, indoors, in colder climates. The wide variety of ethnographic groups in the town shared a common focus in gathering at school and its shared community library. The local swimming pool welcomed students for a lunchtime swim for \$1, except on the days when the pool was carpeted by thousands of 'stink bugs'. These seasonal insect visitors were simply scooped up and placed in any one of the four green garbage bins at the corners of the pool, to later be driven to an unknown site. These were occurrences that had to be accepted and adapted to in this vibrant and diverse town.

Adaptions are a little easier if you have key leadership within the family, that delights in exploring new ideas. Her mum had to be an avid cleaner of dust in her rooms filled with her carefully chosen ornate furniture and rugs. In a later move to the cooler climate of Millicent, her father rigged a sort of home-made ducted heating system in the roof, that extended from the lounge-room hearth. It was as if the bone-warming sun of Cooper Pedy had been too sadly missed by the family. Some aspects of heatwaves were not of a wholly human making and, again, in Millicent, Tara's mother's abundant stock of spices used in Iranian cooking issued a startling perfume, to those unaccustomed to such delights, from the pantry, only during a heatwave.

As a young person, Tara suggests she had no thoughts of any ramifications concerning heatwaves. Now she feels a concern for what may be happening through droughts and potential ice melting events. It was a different earlier time when, instead, the hot desert air brought the realization that you were insignificant in the wider view of our earth. It may be only through those lived experiences in what many urban dwellers perceived as a 'hostile' natural environment, that the relentless heat reshapes the humans' thoughts. Perhaps it is these reshaping processes we can see brought into form in Tara's playful canvases? Living in a dugout (within the earth), would be one way to actually enhance that sort of engagement with the natural world, despite the earth not really responding in a tangible way for many. Even the practice of slow careful walking, through the dust and glare, may be enough to secure a sort of reciprocal relationship with the natural world, notwithstanding the humans' distances and time away from the desert's hot soil.

In the vacant block of land at the back of Tara's Cooper Pedy's house grew a small string of Sturt's Desert Pea, with its bold, red, glistening shield, and central black eye. Tara's mother told her to leave that plant to grow; she must never pick it. This may be valuable metaphorical advice for us all.

**Gerry Wedd**



Photo courtesy the artist

To bring about cultural shifts requires clear intentions that configurate after a wide assessment, then a dedication to any efforts required to bring those ideas into form. Gerry is part of esteemed clusters of designers and potters who have birthed alternative artifacts than those made with the old, old traditions of other continents, remnants of the colonial world. He has helped to forge an Australian aesthetic style, that has forwarded surf culture, in particular, as an important theme. Seaside living began in his earliest years at Port Noarlunga, where the Onkaparinga River meets the sea, where remnants of portside buildings still stand, a giant dune, once used for sledding, is being revegetated, and the reef at the end of the jetty still lures both fishermen and recreational scuba divers.

The mention of heatwaves brought memories of shelter in the family's modest lounge room with blinds pulled down, and the test cricket turned up, with "eight members of the family moving around slowly deciding whether to make the trek to the beach". Gerry often spent his summer days in shared outdoor adventures in this historic town, jumping from the jetty, collecting soft drink bottles for their refunds, or watching Abbott and Costello movies beneath cooling, wet sheets. Coupled with his additional, later fame as a competitive surfer, Gerry has held a strong appreciation and reverence for dedicated but overlooked surfers. It was as if they had found some sort of purpose in



this simple act of entering the sea, whatever the conditions, over decades. This was also a way of accumulating understandings of the tides, wave movements, and awareness of other ocean dwellers, akin to a farmer's knowledge that they accrue of the land.

This same devoted 'work ethic' could be said to have been imbued in his childhood, particularly from his mother. Her life was very busy, with six children, and the home to run whilst her husband worked long hours. Gerry said she, remarkably, set aside time to still make practical, sellable items in ceramics, write literary works, and was a participant in a public speaking group. Her need to be expressive was squeezed into her busy days. Her ceramic pursuits took place in her kitchen, rather than a dedicated studio. Gerry began helping her from an early age, with an assigned free choice as to how he added decorative elements to her pots.

Counter to his mother's commercial sense of applied art and design, Gerry also was influenced by his creative peers from his teenage years. Some of his fellow surfers from this time came with more expressive or experimental, counter-culture influences. It is as if Gerry was able to synthesize people's allure of the sea, with steady skills in fashioning 3D objects, whilst forwarding the moods of simple and grateful living.

Not everyone sat quietly watching the cricket during the hottest days; others would walk under the blazing sun, across the hot bitumen, only to leap into (sometimes) shark infested waters from the high jetty pylons. It would be potentially hard work to return to the sea's surface. Your nose and lips may be sunburnt, there may be a sting on the skin from the dive, you may have water up the nose...and then there is that pull from the ocean...that literally does not want you to return to the air and earth; all this on a hot, hot, airless day.