

## CONFLUENCE: 2021 Artists-in-Residence Artist Statements

### Harriet Schwarzrock

My inter-disciplinary artistic practice predominantly traverses blowing glass and making responsive luminous forms. Drawing upon the traditions of glassblowing and the neon trade has offered me a way to activate the interior of my glass forms, encasing a mesmerising phenomena within. Referencing cycles of breathing and circulation within my work locates me in the present moment. I am fascinated by transmutation, flux, and interconnectivity, in seeing materials, systems and matter change in relation to energy, the atmosphere and each other.

### Valerie Kirk

#### **time, place, evolution, past present and future**

Central to Valerie Kirk's work is her investigation of time, place and culture as a Scottish migrant to Australia. In this body of work, fossils, seasons, night and day, texture and details of the natural environment are used to explore our place in a changing world.

As preliminary research for the residency, Kirk studied Mary E White's books on Australian plant fossils tracing the 400-million-year evolutionary history from submerged life in water to our present plant diversity. White said, "By entering the world of fossils, one gains a new and humbling perspective". For Kirk the plant fossils provide a tantalising view into the immensity of time and a perspective on delicately balanced ecosystems and their vulnerability to changing conditions in our present time. *Australia's Prehistoric Plants* with its photographs and illustration and viewing Mary E White's plant fossil collection in the bulk storage area 17113 Bay 2 was an inspiration and became a reference for drawings and imagery in tapestry.

At Namadgi National Park, Kirk was drawn to the surfaces of the Grandiorite seen in dramatic forms and weathered boulders known as Tors. The rocks, exposed through the process of uplift, are weathered and shaped by fire and rain –solid but ever-changing. On the ground the texture and colour of plant life withering in autumn, the changing weather and light, rhythm of night and day reflect the cycles of time passing. Exploratory drawings/collage/tapestry were produced to distil the experience, explore observations and experiment with visual forms.

Later in the studio decisions were made about ideas to develop into the designs for tapestries. The graphic compositions and colour schemes of vintage educational charts from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century were referenced. They provided the format and visual style to tell the story of deep time, the land under foot and the large scale view into the distance – past present and future, here and now, moving and changing. The collage designs were scaled up and woven with selected plied fine yarns, blending colour and using the material qualities of wool, cotton and linen.

The residency has allowed Kirk to change direction and embrace new ways of working - incorporating found objects, colour and texture – expressing the feeling of a place and sense of time..... organic, illusive, the experienced and the unknown.