

CRAFT ACT: CRAFT + DESIGN CENTRE

ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE:

arts, heritage & the environment

2006-2016



RESIDENCIES

2016 ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

Sione Maileseni, Kingdom of Tonga
15 September – 14 October 2016

Cathy Franzi, Canberra
4 October – 31 October 2016

Location: Gudgenby Ready-Cut Cottage, Namadgi
National Park, Australian Capital Territory

2016 RESEARCH PARTNER

National Arboretum Canberra

PUBLIC PROGRAM

10 Year Anniversary Celebration Day
Saturday, 17 September 2016
Namadgi National Park Visitors Centre

10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION DAY PARTICIPANTS

Ruth Hingston 2015
Mary Hutchison 2015
Sally Blake 2014
Annee Miron 2014
Christine Atkins 2012
Marilyn Cintra 2012
Marian Hosking 2012
Bernard Morris 2006 - 2011
Kirstie Rea 2009
Zsuzsi Soboslay 2009
Paul McKee 2009
Joanne Searle 2006

EXHIBITION

7 April – 13 May 2017
Craft ACT: Craft + Design Centre Gallery



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Work in progress by 2014 resident Sally Blake. Image: Andrew Sikorski - Art Atelier

INTRODUCTION

Anniversaries are a good time to reflect on the changes brought about by the passage of time.

In 2016 we proudly celebrated the ten-year anniversary of the Craft ACT: Craft + Design Centre annual artist-in-residence program that gives a leading craft artist, designer or writer the opportunity to immerse themselves in the environment of Namadgi National Park. This remarkable collaboration allows artists to translate the beautiful and infinitely variable qualities of both craft and nature to the contemporary world.

Craft ACT and the ACT Parks and Conservation Service established the residency as a symbol of resilience and optimism in the wake of the 2003 bushfires that swept through the landscape west of Canberra and into our city. In the decade since it was set up, the program has become as rhythmic as the seasons in the annual offerings of Craft ACT: a ritual that reveals surprise and inspiration. We are as happy to be its caretaker and witness as our friends at the Parks Service are to care for the Ready-Cut Cottage in the Gudgenby Valley, where the artists reside.

Time is relative. This program is ten years old, Craft ACT is more than 40 years old, craft practice in the Namadgi area is as old as its habitation by the Ngunnawal people, and the landscape itself is much older still. When an artist accepts our invitation to stay in the park as part of this program, they are traversing these timelines and these histories, their intersections and diversions. The residency brings precious stillness, solitude and space: artists have found, time and again, that their practice is profoundly altered by the experience of nature, as you will see in the work in this catalogue.

The anniversary is an opportunity for us to thank the ACT Parks and Conservation Service for their continuing collaboration and energetic advocacy of this important program for the Canberra community. I would also like honour the many people who have shaped the program over the years: the research partners, artsACT, former directors of Craft ACT, current and former staff and, of course, the artists themselves.

Rachael Coghlan • CEO / Artistic Director
Craft ACT: Craft + Design Centre
February 2017

ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCY

TEN YEARS OF COLLABORATION. CRAFT AND DESIGN

On a devastatingly hot summer's day a firestorm swept across the mountains of the bush capital, lives were lost, impacted, and altered forever. Recovering from the ashes, a simple conversation led to a unique relationship, an affiliation between the Parks Service and a pool of gifted arts practitioners. The genesis of collaboration grew out of a desire to weave an engaging narrative, a storyline that captures in the imagination the intrinsic natural and cultural values of this primordial landscape.

The eminent naturalist, environmentalist and astute observer of the natural world John Burroughs once declared 'I go to nature to be soothed and healed, and to have my senses put in order'.

In an era of digital dependence, where screen time dominates and green time is a precious commodity, Burroughs' powerful insight speaks to the influence that nature has in simply connecting us with our environment. When you venture into the majestic Brindabella Ranges, there is little wi-fi connectivity but you have a much better connection with nature.

With a generational shift to a sedentary lifestyle, a predominantly indoor existence has been linked to a range of contemporary health issues. This trend towards physical inactivity has been attributed to a number of influences including the dawn of screen-based technologies and increasing risk-aversion. The implications of this change for our health system will have far-reaching consequences for our community.

The artist-in-residence philosophy is underpinned by values that we instinctively appreciate. We are not separate from nature but a part of it. This is not an innovative concept, but a revival of what our forbearers understood. Spending time in nature and

connecting with nature is good for the mind, the body and the soul. Nature can indeed nurture.

Here in the bush capital we find ourselves absorbed by nature's artistic endeavours. The ancient mountains are a place of sheer splendour, where nature flourishes, evolves with the seasons, where clear water flows, where people can find insight, purpose and meaning.

Today, the artist-in-residence program has created a diverse catalogue of creative artistic interpretation born from a spiritual and emotional connection to these mountains. These supremely talented craft practitioners have successfully connected people with parks, inviting a broader community audience to immerse themselves in this serene environment.

The residency program is designed to accentuate the light, sounds and seasons of this distinctive environmental landscape. This is achieved through artistic interpretation utilising mediums as diverse as textiles and wood, and techniques as distinct as weaving, engraving and sculpture. The result invites us to pause and contemplate an artistic reflection of the inherent values of this landscape.

Achieving national prominence through local and international acclaim, the artist-in-residence program is without parallel in its contribution to a community conversation that captures this unique landscape as being one of outstanding natural significance to the national capital, the city and people of Canberra.

Brett McNamara
Regional Manager
ACT Parks and Conservation Service
February 2017



2012 resident Christine Atkins with ACT Parks and Conservation Service rangers Image Andrew Sikorski



THE IMPORTANCE OF TREES

The National Arboretum Canberra hosted its first artist-in-residence in 2016, in partnership with Craft ACT: Craft + Design Centre and ACT Parks and Conservation Service.

The National Arboretum is home to 44,000 rare and symbolic trees from Australia and across the world. Communicating the importance of trees, tree conservation and scientific research is one of our key goals. Visual art is able to communicate all of these elements in creative and accessible ways.

Local ceramics artist Cathy Franzi immersed herself in the National Arboretum's living collection of forests and gardens. She turned the light-filled Terrace Room into her studio and soaked up her surroundings, spending time outdoors walking, observing, touching, drawing and photographing the plants.

The work she produced mirrored the landscape, combining strength, botanical precision and tranquillity.

Inspired by the wide range of tree species growing in the Arboretum, Cathy shared her imagination and skills with the public by offering a printing workshop using leaves, seeds and nuts gathered in the forests.

She held a workshop for eight-to-15-year olds and explored the diversity of leaf shape and texture through the print medium. The participants enjoyed learning new printing techniques and the workshop was a great success.

The Arboretum was fortunate to also host Sione Maileseni from the Kingdom of Tonga, an artist who weaves coconut fibre. Sione's complex and intricate weaving, using fibre sourced directly from coconut trees, proved to be fascinating for visitors to the Arboretum. For two weeks Sione sat among the visitors in the Village Centre, drawing inspiration from the views and natural environment to create fine weavings.

He generously shared his skills and knowledge, showing visitors his weaving techniques and explaining the connections between his current work and traditional Kato Kafa weaving techniques from the 1700s, which is a revered thread in Tonga's social history. Children were particularly attracted to, and enchanted by, Sione's unique weavings and his warm and engaging way of communicating.

A key element of the residency program is to further build the artists' knowledge and understanding, which in turn enriches and expands their experience and abilities to foster collaborations across artistic networks and cultures.

While in Canberra, Sione was inspired by an exhibition of work by the Fibre Basket Makers of ACT at Strathnairn Gallery, Holt. At the same time, an Arboretum staff member serendipitously loaned Sione a British Museum exhibition catalogue of South Pacific weavings. The exhibition and catalogue inspired new ideas and motivated Sione to employ different ways of making, combining traditional weaving techniques with contemporary designs.

The artist-in-residence program was a natural fit for the National Arboretum and, not surprisingly, Arboretum staff found that they shared many traits and perspectives with the artists – they are inspired by curiosity and driven to seek knowledge and solve problems.

We were delighted to see how Cathy and Sione interpreted the Arboretum's living collection through their art, and we thank the artists and the artist-in-residence program partners for a fruitful shared experience.

Scott Sadler
Executive Director
National Arboretum Canberra

THE ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM AND GUDGENBY READY-CUT COTTAGE STORY

PROLOGUE

During my time as the ranger-in-charge at Namadgi National Park between 2006 and 2011, I had the opportunity to work with colleagues and partners on two major developments, the refurbishment of the Gudgenby Ready-Cut Cottage and the initiation of the artist-in-residence program in collaboration with the Craft ACT: Craft + Design Centre.

THE ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM – GENESIS

The artist-in-residence program is an enduring collaboration between Craft ACT: Craft + Design Centre and the ACT Parks and Conservation Service. In its formative stages in 2005, Brett McNamara and I, of the Parks Service, collaborated with Barbara McConchie and Diana Hare of Craft ACT. The first residencies were themed 'Memories in Place' (2006) and 'Artists in Place' (2009).

How did the residency idea start, though? I recall that a spontaneous period of positive and creative energy led to a partnership between two disparate art and place entities. Meetings took place where ideas were exchanged and good will, a sense of experimentation and humour formed part of the mix. But this was little without the enthusiasm of the fabulous craft artists who were willing to spend their time and energy in periodic residence in our wonderful 'Namadgic' places, sharing their skills and perceptions.

Being different entities in expertise and practice, there was naturally some separation of ideas

and priorities. The Parks Service saw an artistic residency as a fabulous opportunity to invite a new section of the community into the Namadgi space – with which rangers and park workers already had a great and privileged intimacy – to witness the magic and wonder and share their response to the landscapes they found themselves in. Our view was that Namadgi is a whole-of-community asset and our job was to open the door to it more widely and broaden its relevance and appeal. This has worked wonderfully thanks to the ongoing efforts and commitment of both Craft ACT and the Parks Service, and the generosity of the many creative craft artists who have participated through the years.

MEMORIES IN PLACE

The first residency, ‘Memories in Place’, was based at three huts on the ‘Settler’s Track’ in far southern Namadgi – Waterhole Hut, Waterman’s Homestead and Brayshaws Hut. The recently developed ‘Settler’s Track’ passes each of these huts through stunning and beautiful landscapes. Each hut presents information that tells their stories: why they are there and why they are important. Paull McKee, Joanne Searle and Daniel Maginnity were the pioneering craft artists under the new artist-in-residence program. Paull at Waterhole, Daniel at Waterman’s and Joanna at Brayshaw’s each produced different interpretive works from these locations. The huts are rudimentary and the artists were unable to live in them during their residency, which limited their capacity to immerse themselves in place. Nonetheless the artists produced thematic and insightful work that the public were invited to view on-site, travelling by bus to and from Brayshaw’s Hut. From Brayshaw’s, the visitors explored on foot, walking between the huts

and meeting the artists. Despite our professional familiarity with the huts and their landscape settings, as staff, we were surprised and enlightened by the perceptions of the artists. It was a lesson in the breadth of world views and how a person’s response to place and history is deeply personal.

ARTISTS IN PLACE

‘Artists in Place’ moved the location for the artistic residency to the Ready-Cut Cottage in the Gudgenby Valley. The comfortable accommodation and a stipend provided through Craft ACT made it possible for Paull McKee (as a continuing artist) and Kirstie Rea to reside individually for five weeks. This initiated an emerging artists-in-residence tradition at Gudgenby Ready-Cut Cottage. Like Paull, Joanna and Daniel from the first residential project, new material emerged from this residency that reflected the artists’ sense of the Gudgenby Valley in the midst of Namadgi – illuminating, pondering, reflective, notional and specific. Their work arose out of thorough immersion in the environment and was based on profound personal reflective experience. Paull donated a tapestry from this time that hangs in the cottage to this day.

THE GUDGENBY READY-CUT COTTAGE

The Gudgenby Cottage is a ‘ready-cut’ kit home manufactured by George Hudson Limited in Sydney in 1927. It sits on a low rise south-east of the intersection of the Gudgenby River and Hospital Creek. This location is in the south-eastern corner of the larger than 600-hectare Gudgenby Valley, an area that was last farmed by the Bootes family in the lead-up to the ultimate declaration of Namadgi National Park in 1984 (extended in 1991).



Pauli McKee-Hobart Wagga detail, textiles.
Image: Andrew Sikorski - Art Atelier

Hudson's opened in Sydney in 1846 and became one of the major east-coast timber and hardware suppliers. Some of Hudson's early projects included the construction of Sydney's first horse-drawn trams, the supply of prefabricated timber buildings, and the production of 1,000 railway carriages for the State Railways Department. Curiously, in 1914, Hudson supplied timber from a 100-year-old sugar pine to the famous Hawaiian surfer Duke Kahanamoku, who then shaped it into his 'longboard'. Hudson promoted its prefabricated 'ready-cut' homes as the 'latest original designs of beautiful bungalows at small cost'. Hudson became a major supplier of prefabricated construction and the company's online history refers to 'an excellent example' being the 'Gudgenby Ready-Cut Cottage which has been restored by the ACT Parks and Conservation Service and is open to the public'.

In an isolated landscape without established transport links, a 'ready-cut' approach to housing was a sensible solution that provided all the necessary materials and a system for quick establishment. The improving track access to the Gudgenby Valley enabled sufficient transport capacity for pre-fabricated housing to be considered. It was for similar portability and quick establishment qualities that Mawson's Hut in Antarctica is a modified version of the same type of pre-fabricated structure at Gudgenby.

Prior to the 'Artists in Place' residency, the Gudgenby Cottage was gradually deteriorating, despite the best efforts of the Namadgi park rangers. With tremendous collegiate and caring support

provided by the Kosciuszko Huts Association (KHA), led by their Namadgi huts officer of the time, Richard Stanley, and aided by a fortuitous ACT Heritage Grant, the Gudgenby Cottage was brought back from the brink of collapse and restored in 2008. The refurbishment was a major achievement. In those days Richard, with typical enthusiasm and commitment, would phone me and with a raspy voice and ask directly 'what are we going to do about ...?', galvanising me to do something, anything, to keep the project progressing. Through KHA's dedication, love of the huts and Namadgi landscapes, and sense of duty and responsibility, the Gudgenby Cottage is now a key feature of Namadgi that is available, appropriately, for community use.

The Parks Service subsequently substantially enhanced KHA's restoration initiative with expensive investments in water, firefighting, electricity and sewage systems. The cottage's interior was thoroughly refurbished with polished timber floors and other homely accessories, including beds, sofas, chairs, curtains, a fridge, a slow combustion heater and a new fuel stove (the latter heaved into place and flued by the Parks Service's dedicated field officers). Even the ceiling was insulated with fibreglass batts! (This was a lonely, sweaty and dusty job, I recall). The kitchen cabinet was salvaged from a former shearing shed near Majura and many bits and pieces came from local antique outlets. We unfortunately made the mistake of not consulting Trish Bootes, a former farming family resident of the Gudgenby Homestead and a member of staff, who could have helped inform the fit-out endeavours.

EPILOGUE

The artist-in-residence program has been, and continues to be, a resounding success for Namadgi National Park and the region's craft artists. I congratulate everyone involved in its inception and continuation. I greatly look forward to spending future days in the landscapes I love at Gudgenby and to visiting and witnessing the interpretive skills of tomorrow's craft artists. With good will, the insights and creativity of the craft artists will continue to inform us for generations and help us achieve a more unified and profound sense of identity and belonging.

Bernard Morris
Formerly Ranger-in-Charge
Namadgi National Park
December 2016



ART WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO EXIST WITHOUT NATURE.
PIERRE BONNARD

It's night in Namadgi National Park. Cold. Clear. No moon. I'm out here alone, layered in thermals, frost forming on my hair, chilled fingers tucked under armpits. I'm supposed to be radio tracking kangaroos, but the sky stops me with its scattered curtain of flung stars. I lie on the silver grass and gaze into the universe, listening to the crackle of the bush, the snipping teeth of kangaroos grazing nearby, tiny creatures rustling in tussocks. In the distance I see the faint outline of domed granite peaks. Everything is old and new, miniscule and large, near and far, magical. I feel whole. Alive. By day, it is different, but the same. Instead of sound and shades of grey, it is light and texture and colour that speak. Patterns. Shadows. Smell.

This is the space in which creativity begins. When a soul is moved, a seed germinates and art may be born. For me, the wide grassy valleys of Namadgi and the surrounding granite crags triggered the idea for my novel, *The Grass Castle*. The first fronds of story came from the sound of wind in the eaves of the old Orroral Valley homestead. I thought about the settlers who had lived there, and the Indigenous moth-hunters who roved the mountains before them, connected to country. Place, light and air gave rise to story, along with the loneliness of the valley, hints of the past in the newspaper-lined walls of the hut, other ruined buildings and old fences laced with lichen. I wanted to use my writing to explore the way history and the environment are interwoven. The way the natural world shapes us in contrast to the ways in which we change the world.

My ecologist husband derives inspiration from nature in a different way. As a scientist, he seeks to measure and understand the environment, to explore links between habitat and animals, and gather data to help explain ecosystems. He has strong spiritual bonds with the natural world too and, when we walk in wild places, while I am





thinking of words to create pictures, he is looking at patterns in landscapes and thinking about how it all fits together, how to test ideas and develop hypotheses. The environment as stimulus for science. For word artists like me, it's all about mood.

The urge to represent nature through art stretches back through millennia. At Yankee Hat in Namadgi National Park, Indigenous artists, who lived in the region prior to white occupation, used natural pigments to paint images of people and animals on granite rock. Art as a form of expression and passing on story. Art as a way of relating to the world.

Nature's powerful influence on art may come from a primal connection to landscape through our ancestors. Perhaps we carry memories buried in our DNA because, when we leave the urban environment and take pause in nature, when we stop to breathe, when we linger long enough to rediscover our true selves, peace, gratitude and inspiration can be found. In this space, we can locate our inner flame of creativity. It doesn't matter whether we use this energy to develop art that reflects nature, or whether we use it to motivate other projects. What matters is recognising opportunity and capitalising on it. While the muse burns we must tap into it and channel this force into our work.

NATURE GETS INTO OUR SOULS AND OPENS
DOORS TO HIDDEN PARTS OF OURSELVES.
PAMELA HEYDA

Why are nature and landscape so important as a source of inspiration for art? And what motivates us to create art? Who do we speak to? Why do we do it? The answers to these questions are as complex and varied as the many forms of art we use to convey our responses to nature. We may strive to capture what we see in a real or abstract way, through painting, photography, poetry or craft. Or we may want to share our experience with others and show them how we have been moved. In this busy world of increasingly urban existence, we may wish to remind people of our origins, of the country around us, of places where we can find peace and beauty outside the madness of our daily lives. We may work to motivate people to care about natural places because, if we care about country, then we value it and we may also fight to save it, especially as the climate changes, human populations increase and we continue to expand our impact on the Earth.

A POET OUGHT NOT TO PICK NATURE'S
POCKET. LET HIM BORROW, AND SO
BORROW AS TO REPAY BY THE VERY ACT OF
BORROWING.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

The natural environment can be the muse or it can feed the muse. It can be the trigger for art or it can be a space where art is made. Artists find a place that speaks to them, and they work within it, responding to scale, story, patterns, light. Sometimes all of these. There is also the communion with others that can be found in nature: the multiplicative effect that arises when shared passion exists between artists – a bright form of energy that not only motivates work, but also lends

confidence to tackle new things. It's no surprise that most retreats for artists are in quiet places, close to nature.

Now it is daytime and I am driving south of Tharwa beneath a cloud-strewn sky through parched landscapes and into straggly forest, country that has recovered from wildfire. The road changes to gravel and winds through shady gullies fragrant with lemon and peppermint. It traverses a stream and switches and climbs, rising over contours.

I take the turn to Gudgenby, driving through open country, up past the shadowy homestead and on to the smaller rustic weatherboard Ready-Cut Cottage – a place where artists come to work. Stepping outside, I inhale mountain air tangy with the rich aroma of grass. Already, tension is fading and lightness is settling on my skin – that lovely sensation of the soul expanding.

This is a place where art is made.

ART IS AN ABSTRACTION: AS YOU DREAM
AMID NATURE. EXTRAPOLATE ART FROM
IT AND CONCENTRATE ON WHAT YOU WILL
CREATE AS A RESULT.

PAUL GAUGUIN

Karen Viggers
Author of *The Stranding*, *The Lightkeeper's
Wife* and *The Grass Castle*

ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE: ARTS. HERITAGE AND THE ENVIRONMENT
TEN-YEAR CELEBRATION EXHIBITORS





Back row Left to right: Mary Hutchison, Zsuzsi Soboslay, Annee Miron, Sally Blake, Paull McKee, Sione Malleseni, Marian Hosking, Bernard Morris, Barb McConchie. Front row Left to right: Ruth Hingson, Marilly Cindra, Cathy Frentz, Kirstie Rea, Joanne Searle
Image: Madeline McGuigan - Edge Light Photography



Cathy Franzi, Flora Survey, Reclaimed Boboyan Pine Plantation, 2017. Porcelain, stoneware, sgraffito, 10.5h x 36w x 31d cm. Image: Andrew Sikorski - Art Atelier

I was delighted to have the opportunity during my month-long residency to experience and research two different but equally fascinating environments, the National Arboretum Canberra and Gudgenby Valley in Namadgi National Park. The residency was particularly suited to my art practice in that I aim to communicate values of natural heritage and how they are intrinsically linked to scientific and cultural knowledge.

In preparation for making, I researched the vegetation of the Gudgenby Valley as a way to reveal and express cultural, historical and environmental values. I selected three areas that I felt exemplified the valley's environmental history and then established a flora survey by walking, observing and identifying the plant species that are currently growing in each site.

The first artwork is based on Boboyan Pine Plantation, the land for which was first cleared and planted in the 1960s and subsequently logged, burnt and its environmental values reconsidered. From 1998, volunteers in the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group have restored a remarkable biodiversity. My 'plot' depicts many of the plants that are making a comeback amongst remnant *Pinus radiata* stumps.

The second area addressed by my work is the natural vegetation of Yankee Hat, a peak to the south-west of the valley and known for its Indigenous rock art. This area is less impacted by European settlement and contains many species that the Ngunnawal people utilised for their properties as food and for cultural practices. Dharaban or yam daisy, and dhulwa or silver banksia, are just a few examples.

Gudgenby Ready-Cut Cottage was built in the 1920s for landholders who utilised the rich grassland of the valley to graze livestock. This area reveals a different story of land use, evidenced by introduced plants, many of which are now weeds. I based my tea set design on European styles of the time and the decoration is drawn from the cottage garden in which purple iris and broom flourish.



Malo e lelei! And I bring warm & friendly greetings from my Island Kingdom of Tonga.

My name is Sione Maileseni and I am a full-time coconut-fibre artist and also one of the participants in the Craft ACT artist-in-residence program for 2016.

I became involved with my so called 'Coconut Industry' as the breadwinner for my family after my dad died in 2003. My oldest brother and sister were still at the university in New Zealand so, being the third child of six children, I had to assist my mom in taking care of our little family while I was working for a telecommunication company.

To date I note that not only do I financially benefit from being a coconut-fibre artist but, at the same time, I am contributing to preserving our traditional craftsmanship. One of my weaving is known as the Kato Kafa in which more than 100 metres of braided coconut fibre are used. I always thought that it's my new innovation. Later, I was given a book called the Pacific Collection by Captain Cook from 1700 – this weaving technique was already practiced back then, but was no longer practice in Tonga.

After attending the artist-in-residence program last year it makes me appreciate nature more; not only that, I also learned new techniques of weaving from various Australian weavers and books. The source of my raw material derives from nature and the uniqueness of my traditional way of weaving specifies that it is of Tongan origins. As part of this program I have successfully completed a Kato Mosikaka Kafa handbag with a modern twist.

Let me tell my story through our traditional weaving of the Kato Mosikaka Kafa – modern twist. Kato Mosikaka was created specifically for our royal family in the olden days. Because there were high-ranking ladies employed to make these specific handbags for our royal family only, when they died no one would know how to make it anymore, like how other traditions, like making tapa, weaving or fishing, were passed down for how many generations now. The reviving of this technique was from reading a book.

SHELTER

1. TEXTURES

On my first visit to Gudgenby Cottage for the anniversary residency it's a cold, grey day in early spring. Rivulets of water run across the deep gouges in the track down to the cottage. Unlike the homestead on the other side of the Gudgenby River, the cottage is invisible for most of the descent. It comes into view only after the last bend, a neat weatherboard building on a levelled patch below a protective rise. It's already catching any break in the clouds. Inside, 'bogs and fens' artists Sally Blake and Annee Miron are in residence. The bedrooms are open to the different landscapes offered by each window and the lounge room is a cocoon of warmth from the fire, domesticity and artwork.

In the clearing weather we set off for a walk. First we drive through the seemingly raging torrent of Hospital Creek on Old Boboyan road to get to the Yankee Hat car park. From there we start out on the rock shelter walk. Sally and Annee show me the fen that spreads out over the lowland, the Bogong Creek crossing and the boardwalk leading towards the mountains. And then they head off to the boggy world of Middle Creek and I'm on my own in a tussocked, soggy expanse with different parts of the frog orchestra tuning up around me. Groups of lichenised granites are my companions as I climb through remnant woodland into the realm of a wide bare plain. In the distance, there's a single huge rock I take as a landmark.

The path bends away from the rock. I'm climbing again. The plain gives way to eucalypt country. The bird song is in a higher register of whistles and brief melodies. The vegetation becomes denser. I'm less exposed to the wind. The visitors' book plinth suggests I must be on the final stretch but

nothing is in view except the bush and the winding track which only reveals itself as I walk. It's very still. Just me stepping through this grey-green environment of rock and bush. Suddenly I'm on the threshold. The nose of a massive boulder bulges against the path. A few steps to the left a granite overhang tilts upwards like a cresting wave. Right under the crest, a high platform rises from the slope below. At ground level there's a narrow passage between the facing walls of the overhang and the platform.

The drama of the rock formation all takes place above. Within the walls it's an intimate space; the canvas on the inside of the overhang, barely visible from without, spans human reach from ground level. The red-orange and white colours of ochre and clay seem at once to blend into and stand out from the dark striations of the rock. I immediately think of Matilda House's memories of listening to her Ngambri grandfather's stories by flickering candlelight, so absorbed in the telling that she often drew close enough to the flame for it to catch a strand of her hair – and almost break the solemnity of the occasion. Here I imagine a similar sort of family gathering. Not candles but firelight animating the figures. A seamless connection between people and the shimmering forms.

The outside walls of the rock are splodged with colour created by the variations in their surfaces. There are cracks and splits, ledges and grooves, ripples and indentations, stud-like patterns of pits, ancient lichens and new mossy growth. There are rough dark recesses and smooth panels washed by sun that are almost white. There are depressions where water gathers and a ground level opening like

a small cave entrance. The high platform above the canvas is comfortably weathered and broad. It's a natural place for sitting around, for sharing a meal, for discussing important matters, for watching the stars ...

On the last leg of my journey back, the sky lowers over the mountains and a fine mist of rain comes in over the path behind me.

2. ECHOES

The sky is clear. The usual kangaroos are grazing leisurely in the paddock opposite the cottage – perhaps, even 30 odd years later, they are still enjoying Bill Bootes' improved pasture. I'm walking down the track in the warming sun, ticking off familiar landmarks; the kangaroos, the new tanks, the bend around the rise that hides the cottage and the cottage yard. The Welcome Swallows are dipping and diving across my path. They have perches on convenient posts and ledges around the galvanised shed next to the cottage. There they rest, consult and keep expert watch until suddenly they're off - plunging to catch the minute insects disturbed by my progress, sweeping up, taking a wheeling survey and diving down again or landing on a perch to discuss the catch.

Set snugly under the western eaves above a water tank on a stand, there's a nest. And on a high branch of a tree just beyond the cottage yard, within easy distance of the nest and with a good view of the ground down to the river, there's a row of little plum pudding bodies each with a sprig of holly on top. A couple of elders are in conversation on the

tank, there's some rearranging of perches in the tree, a kangaroo takes a stroll towards the river and then bounds down the slope below the tree – a flash of movement and a couple of birds are in place, now hovering in its path, now closing in on quarry, now flying high to the watching zone. There's a bit of head twitching and jostling in the crèche. Its occupants still look like plum puddings.

It was Bill Bootes' father who put the cottage up. 1927. A Hudson 'ready-cut' frame. He only had to nail it together... cost him about 900 pounds. The family stayed at the cottage in summer and autumn for branding and calving. Tom Oldfield, the manager, who lived on the property full time until 1934, lived in the old slab and shingle homestead on the other side of the river. There was a blacksmith's works nearby where you could touch up the shoes of the bullock wagon team.

Bill lived at the cottage when he took over the property in 1954. No insulation in it of course at all, ugh it was cold ... When he and Joan moved into the homestead, the cottage became a station hand's residence. They rebuilt the homestead in 1964 and left it in 1989 when the Gudgenby pastoral lease was revoked. It was our home.

From 1984, when the Namadgi National Park was declared, the cottage was unoccupied. Photos before the Kosciusko Huts renovation in 2008 show it sagging and peeling, bushes straggling around its verandah posts. It seems to be sinking into the layers of drying pasture grasses at its feet. Now there are a few trim shade trees and shrubs back and front and flag irises rising sturdily from their bed of mulch at the base of the verandah.

Perhaps Bill's mother planted them too - in between housekeeping, cooking and taking part in the seasonal activities - looking forward to their greeting the following spring.

The verandah offers morning sun and a wide view. The cleared paddocks are dotted with clumps of eucalypts. The river has spread over the ground beyond its banks, becoming a wide meander. Up close there's the sound of bees in the flowering shrubs and weeds. From all quarters the chirp and gulp of frogs. Further away the occasional crow.

I feel rather than notice the changes in the rhythm of the swallows' activity. It's as though it's embedded in the fabric of the cottage. I imagine they spied its possibilities as soon as it appeared in the landscape and charmed its human occupants into acceptance. It's hard to resist a Welcome Swallow on the wing, poised, eager, swift – each catch a joyous beginning of the next.

3. LAYERS

The bush regeneration trail leads me along the Old Boboyan road and up the lower slopes of Hospital Hill on a barely visible path that folds through banksia marginata and slender grasses until it turns onto a rocky fire trail that takes me up and then looping back towards the road, down, down - nearly at the point I started from - to the Boboyan Pines forestry hut. From the outside, it's a shed that looks as though it might have something to do with Park management. Pine uprights and horizontals support sheets of galvanised iron. The front section has the appearance of a partly enclosed verandah.

There's a framed doorway at the open end of the back wall and, extending into the enclosed end, a wooden bench.

A length of a pine tree trunk holds up the unsheeted end of the verandah. You could imagine stiff *pinus radiata* branches splayed out above the roof. But the growth around the hut is eucalypt green. Open branches and narrow leaves make space for the sky. Dappled shade below.

Multiply the imagined needled branches by thousands and you might have a sense of the shed's origins in a small clearing of the Boboyan Pines. It was the forestry gang's lunch room and shelter from the weather – mainly during the planting years of the late 1960s. They planted the slopes and valley floor west of Hospital creek, across the spine of the old road towards Bogong Creek, and south beyond Frank and Jack's. After that, the small pines were left to themselves. Twenty years of growth later, under National Park management they were progressively taken out. There's a photo on the internet of the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group gathered around the felled forms of 'the last of the pines' in about 1997.

A step through the doorway leads into a small floored room with a massive fireplace. There's a table shaped from a pine log, a couple of stools to match, and a straw broom. A wooden shelf serves as a mantelpiece – gladwrap, a tin of tomatoes, paper towel. A piece of graffiti on the wall reads 'chopping mall'. Like the tree trunk post, the iron has weathered. Where its wavy pattern rises, its original finish has rubbed away leaving white streaks and daubs. At the back of the fireplace the

metal has browned like the stones that encircle the ashes.

There's a visitors' book with a carefully stored pen. Like the blogs and photos posted on the internet of walks and work in the Park, it provides a personal glimpse of the contemporary Park community. Here, as might be expected, domestic detail is a strong theme - sometimes quite intimate: the resident possum got into the beers; had cheese and wine then kangaroo stew; tidy and well stocked; fabulous hideaway - needs coffee machine; we made babies!

The rock with its dancing canvas and high platform is three kilometres or so west on the other side of Bogong Creek. The cottage in the crook of Hospital Creek and Gudgenby River is north along the Old Boboyan Road and not quite so far.

This essay draws on Namadgi National Park Plan of Management 2010; Matthew Higgins, "That's Bugged the Cotter" or European Heritage in Namadgi', in B Scougall (ed), *Cultural Heritage of the Australian Alps*, 1992; Bill Bootes interviewed by Matthew Higgins in the Namadgi oral history project, 12 June 1990, National Library of Australia; 'History of Gudgenby Ready-Cut Cottage' (Namadgi National Park website), and conversations with Sally Blake, Matthew Higgins, Ruth Hingston, Matilda House and Annee Miron.

RUTH HINGSTON
MIXED MEDIA
2015



Ruth Hingston - Frosty Morning Hospital Creek
(detail), 2017, an embroidered orthon - linen,
cotton, polyester on silk - H x W: 10 x 62 cm,
image: ILM Brock

SALLY BLAKE
TEXTILES
2014

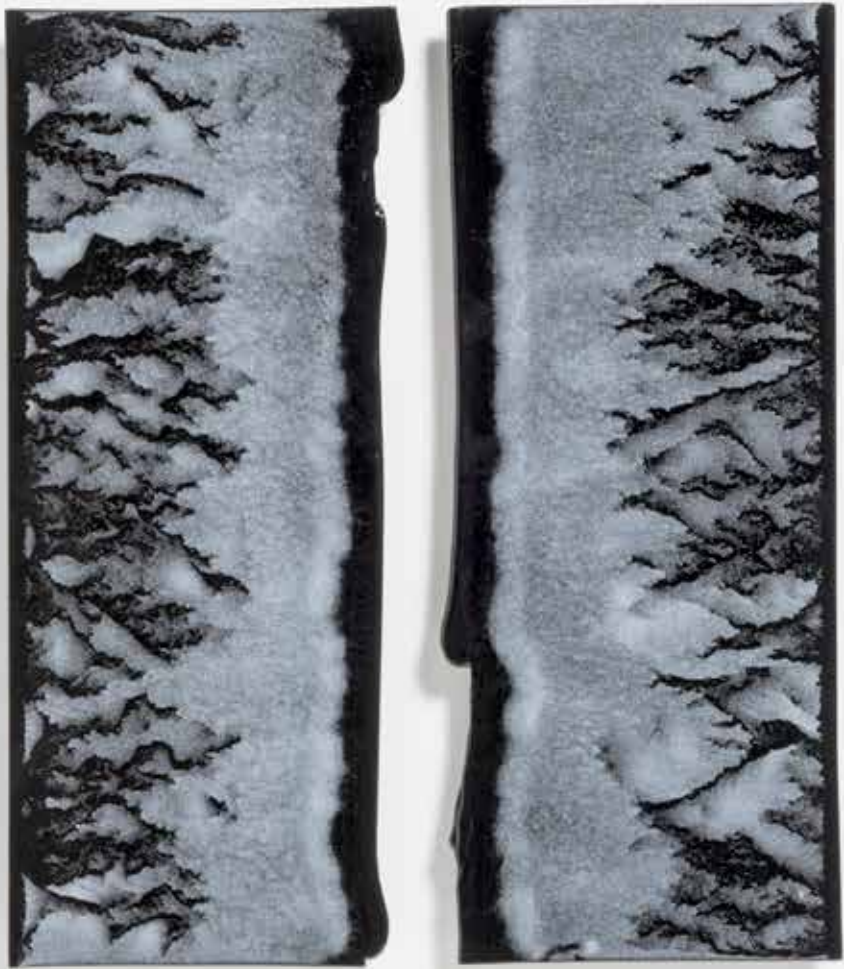


Sally Blake. Flow. 2017. Copper and aluminum wire. 202 x 70 cm. Image courtesy of the artist

ANNEE MIRON
SCULPTOR
2014



CHRISTINE ATKINS
GLASS
2012



Christine Atkins. Traces pair, 2012.
Sheet and powdered glass, 26x 33cm.
Image: Greg Piper

MARILY CINTRA
MIXED MEDIA
2012



Marilyn Cintra, Via Lactea I, 2017. Glass, light, fly
wire, felted wool, Christmas beetles, 300mm
height x 190mm diameter. Image: Malcolm Cooke

MARIAN HOSKING
METAL
2012



KIRSTIE REA
GLASS
2009



JOANNE SEARLE
CERAMICS
2006



ZSUZSI SOBOSLAY

WRITER

2009

CONVERSATIONS WITH GUDGENBY

WHERE ARE WE TO PUT THE LIMIT BETWEEN THE BODY
AND THE WORLD. SINCE THE WORLD IS FLESH?
MAURICE MERLEAU-PONTY. THE VISIBLE AND THE
INVISIBLE

Dawn.

I wake in the creaky wooden envelope of the Ready-Cut. I hold preconsciousness in the fuzz of the room. My teenage daughter holds sleep in the other room.

Outside, the humming places of the landscape, its vegetation, are just coming-into-form. It is the brittle world before it really chatters, before it really bristles into its call.

I move the latch, the screen door squeaks; the air is fragrant with dusty eucalypts. My foot steps frugally onto the dry verandah boards.

I move from humanscapes towards scapes I must disarm to hear.

What is speaking? – an ethical dialogue. Do not crush another as you progress. Include more, and more. To Spinoza, this is hilaritas (joy).

Post-structuralists (Deleuze, Braidotti) argue we are the proliferative forces that drive us (zoë, Eros), as if these thrusts compel us on, on, until the clash with an-other defines our limits. Conscience only arises retrospectively, as we lick our wounds. Certainly, human history shows this can be so.

But there are other recipes. I can cooperate.

Show me where to tread. Teach me how to listen.

This place is apart from me, yet I am part of it. An inadequate partner, maybe. I must also keep my self warm and nourished by foods I have brought from

elsewhere, and burn local wood that becomes a sacrifice to my presence. I do not want to interfere, to assert, to intervene, yet I also have to be, to survive, to exist.

I cannot solve this contradiction.

For the anniversary exhibition, I will perform from within one of Annee Miron's woven 'costumes'. I will explore what it is to inhabit someone else's interpretation of Gudgenby's bogs and fens. Annee's eye, and her handcraft, will become my new skin. Her object will become a garment that will teach me as I investigate it. I will have several skins – my own, which has its own intertwining with this landscape, and Annee's, as represented in her weaving.

I think backwards, through memory, to what has made this moment, transcribed this information. I think forwards, into a dance, that becomes a new unfolding.

All this, whilst my daughter is still sleeping ...

30 January 2017

BERNARD MORRIS

WRITER

2006-2011

CREPUSCULAR. NOCTURNAL. DIURNAL - WHITEFELLA.
BLACK LANDS - ARRIVING AND ARRIVAL
(24 HOURS AT THE GUDGENBY READY-CUT:
REFLECTIONS ON PLACE AND TIME)

The night's fade is upon us
Crimson's fade to grey
The Cottage looms amidst the valley
And the birds, their final chorus

Against the void, the Cottage holds fast
Inside I am cosseted and warm
At peace with the world as it now stands
At distance from a bittersweet past

The hills and trees all speak to me
Of time and timelessness
Our imprint fading, our legacy thin
Through this immersion, I am made free

In the darkness, the transgression is made real
From city hardness to country softness
Loneliness and fear, communalism and comfort
Stars and frogs, and creeks and freshness, make me feel

Morning presses against the pane, trying to get in
Stillness and silence penetrate the interior
Welcome swallows greet the opening curtain
And the fog in the valley greets the fog within

Out on the Gudgenby, nature takes its course
Wedge-taileds flanked by flocks of ravens
Kangaroos mobbing where times are good
Within my bones as space traversed, a force

My heart is bereft of how to respond
Overwhelming as the Gudgenby is
A momentary consciousness enlivened
I could easily fade here, and go beyond

Western men, central in their doing and froing
These moments remind me that life is life
I am either with it or without it, a part or apart
Without becoming and being, we'll be gone or going

Across the plains of Aboriginal-made Australia
The scattered trees and open grasslands tell the story
Here I will wait-a-while amongst the rock art
Depicting immense success and somewhat our failure

We can't afford forlorn but can engender our hope
As willing new craft artists come and tell us our story
The contemporary interpreters of myth, place and fact
The tradition of rock art with a new scope

With this nexus, in the paddock I sit
The strands of time and space coalesced in the breezes
High drama and peace, harshness and gentleness
Can we achieve a now identity where we all fit?

Arriving and arrival, this is all new
We are not one but many, distant and lensed
This land our mother, our commonality, our home
Will teach us as students, those yearning for true

The Cottage sits quietly, awaiting, awaiting
Diminutive and small, gravitational and mighty
Its rooms and spaces surrender the traces
Of where we are at and who we are, amaking

Back in the folds of the Cottage's walls
A cup of tea and a seat by the fire
The night's fade will soon be upon us again
Where the dingoes howl and the owl calls.

CELEBRATION DAY
SATURDAY. 17 SEPTEMBER 2016
NAMADGI NATIONAL PARK VISITORS CENTRE

Craft ACT celebrated the 10th anniversary of its artists-in-residence program by presenting, in partnership with ACT Parks and Conservation Service, a special community event at Namadgi National Park Visitors Centre. The attendees enjoyed the beautiful spring weather and gorgeous views, whilst listening to the creative processes and experiences of past artists-in-residence and the 2016 artists-in-residence – Cathy Franzi and Sione Maileseni.

The afternoon was spent with Indigenous Ranger Kei Barratt, who presented and demonstrated bush craft, tools and artefacts.



Indigenous Ranger Kei Barrett at the 10 year Celebration Day event image: Madeline McGuigan - Edge Light Photography



CREDITS

Artists-in-Residence by Year

2016

Cathy Franzi, Canberra
Sione Maileseni, Kingdom of Tonga
Catalogue Writer – Karen Viggers
Research – National Arboretum Canberra

2015

Ruth Hingston, Canberra
Jodie Hatcher, United Kingdom
Catalogue Writer – Dr Mary Hutchison
Research – National Archives of Australia, Canberra

2014

Sally Blake, Canberra
Annee Miron, Melbourne
Satoshi Fujinama, Japan
Catalogue Writer – Rosanna Stevens
Research – Australian National Botanic Gardens,
Canberra

2013

Ceretha Skinner, Canberra
Michael Brennan-Wood, United Kingdom
Catalogue Writer – Valerie Kirk
Catalogue Writer – Ian Wilson
Research – National Museum of Australia and
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

2012

Christine Atkins, Canberra
Marilyn Cintra, Canberra
Marian Hosking, Melbourne
Antonia Aitken, Canberra
Catalogue Writer – Maurice O’Riordan

2009

Kirstie Rea, Canberra
Paull McKee, Canberra
Catalogue Writer – Zsuzsi Soboslay

2006

Joanne Searle, Canberra
Paull McKee, Canberra
Daniel Maginnity, Canberra

Thank You ...

To all Craft ACT staff, past and present, who have worked to create, curate and care for the Artist-in-Residence program, particularly former CEO’s Barbara McConchie and Avi Amesbury, curators Diana Hare, Mel George and Anne Radimin and manager of public programs, Gwentyth Macnamara.

To all the wonderful Rangers and field staff involved in the residency program at Namadgi National Park and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve who have supported a simple concept of connecting people with parks. With special thanks to Brett McNamara and Bernard Morris.

To the Research Partner institutions who have added new dimensions to the residency since 2013: National Museum of Australia, National Gallery of Australia, Australian National Botanic Gardens, National Archives of Australia and National Arboretum Canberra.



Nils Desperandum at Tidbitilla Nature Reserve
Image: Andrew Sikorski - Art Atelier
Back Cover: Gudgenby Valley Image, Bernard Morris

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We thank ACT Parks and Conservation Service for their support in producing the artist-in-residence catalogue. We thank the National Arboretum Canberra for supporting the artists to undertake research within their facilities as part of the 2016 residency.

International resident artists have been supported by the ACT Government through artsACT and the Arts Residencies ACT initiative over the ten years of the Artist in Residence program.

CRAFT ACT: CRAFT AND DESIGN CENTRE

Rachael Coghlan, Craft ACT: Craft + Design Centre
CEO / Artistic Director
Mel George, Curator
Julian Hobba, DESIGN Canberra Creative Producer
Richilde Flavell, Membership Coordinator
Ged Jones, Gallery Coordinator
Sara d'Alessandro, Public Program Coordinator
Kate Nixon, Curatorial and Executive Assistant

ACT PARKS AND CONSERVATION SERVICE

Brett McNamara, Regional Manager
Lisa Hogan, Visitor Services Manager
Mel Barton, Visitor Services
Jess Enge, Visitor Services
Ben Stevenson, Ranger In Charge
Bernard Morris, former Ranger in Charge
Adrian Brown, Indigenous Ranger
Dave Whitfield, Ranger
Ollie Orgill, Ranger
Ben Obrien, Ranger
Amanda Carey former Ranger



Artist-in-Residence Program Partner



2016 Artist-in-Residence Research Partner



Craft ACT: Craft + Design Centre

Supported by



Craft ACT: Craft and Design Centre is supported by the ACT Government, the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy - an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments, and the Australia Council for the Arts - the Australian Government's arts funding and advisory body.

