

*'S/He to whom Nature
begins to reveal
her open secret
will feel an irresistible
yearning
for her most worthy
interpreter
Art'
-Goethe*



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Statement

'For me painting is an exploration - a discovery. With no preconceived plan of the outcome I try to allow the intrinsic 'accidental' occurrences of paint to influence the direction of the work. As the work matures through various stages of layering, a narrative simultaneously evolves allowing me to engage in a 'conversation' between elements in the work. Each painting develops like a personal relationship: sometimes as a close friend, sometimes a distant acquaintance; often developing into a long-term relationship while at times requiring only a quick spontaneous visit. The imagery can change with my mood, the music I hear and the influences of light, the weather and the seasons. The natural environment is the key to my creativity. It provides me with texture and interesting forms, it inspires emotion through its nuances of colour, light and shade and it invokes memory of situation and place.

The works in this exhibition are an example of my passion for natural elements and can be enjoyed for their richly colorful and visually tactile imagery, subconsciously referencing the Australian landscape. Some works are purely an expression of the beauty found in natural detail or observations of the interplay between micro and macro parallels, but most works contain symbols of other aspects of life. An obvious example is the seedpod as a symbol for my experiences of womanhood (*Origin*). In recent works though, rather than symbolic references I use the tension between elements to examine themes not often visually depicted, such as verbal communication (*Crowded Conversation*) or the inability to verbally express an experience (*Unspeakable Unspoken*).

The title work for the exhibition *A Snake at My Feet* depicts a childhood memory.

'One summer when I was about nine or ten years old, while picking blackberries in a dry paddock on the fringe of Melbourne's semi-rural outer suburbs, as I reached for berries I noticed a reptile had gently come to rest on my bare sandaled foot. At first I thought it was a lizard. We'd had blue-tongued lizards often come into our backyard and had tried to make pets of them. So my first reaction was to reach down and try to pick it up. But I hesitated. I couldn't make out lizard feet as I peered down through the bramble maze. Maybe it was a snake. It was already resting against my foot so I kept still and watched to see what it would do. I became fascinated by the look of the scales and their bronze sheen in the sun, the spiraling pattern they made encasing the body. Before I knew it the moment was over, it moved on, slithering away as snakes do, probably having gained enough warmth from my foot.'

The image of the snake emerged in a recent artwork prompting me to question its significance and symbolic relevance. This memory demonstrates my ongoing pursuit of learning from Nature. Even at a young age I was more absorbed in observing the beauty and detail of this potentially dangerous creature than fearing it. Having no artistic background and although I received encouragement, had few creative influences while growing up, so observing and recording nature was something I was instinctively compelled to do, leading to my present art practice.

The snake is such a potent symbol in art, most often associated with evil, betrayal or as a phallus, yet here aspects of the snake's physiognomy - its grace and perfect structure, its twisting and winding movement, its ups and downs, its beauty juxtaposed with deadly potential - can be seen to reflect my creative journey. Creativity is a strange but tantalising beast; it lies at your feet, tempting but promising nothing.

Through art practice my aim is to evoke a sense of the beauty and mystique of the Australian environment while expressing a personal depiction of life's experiences. Of the many artists who have inspired my art appreciation I have the greatest admiration for those who explore their own 'truth' of expression. I will list a few Australian Artists I admire: Sidney Nolan for his mastery over his medium, Mandy Martin for her exploration of psychology within the landscape, Imants Tillers for his richly textured fragmented surfaces, Fred Williams for his intimate relationship with the landscape, John Olsen for his playful exploration of Nature, Bruno Leti for his contemplative qualities, Aida Tomescu for her rich emotive surfaces, Fiona Hall for her innovation and passion, Rosalie Gascoigne for her concise and intuitive interpretation, Emily Kame Kngwarreye for her intricate pure expression, John Mawurndjul for his superb compositions.'

-Janine Good, August 2008

*'The value of the greatest art
consists not in its power of becoming a part of common existence
but in its power of taking us out of it.'*

-Clive Bell, *Art*, 1914