The Lachlan: Blue-Gold

Edited by Mandy Martin and Sarah Ryan

Environment Studio, National Institute of the Arts, Australian National University

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THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN COMMISSION

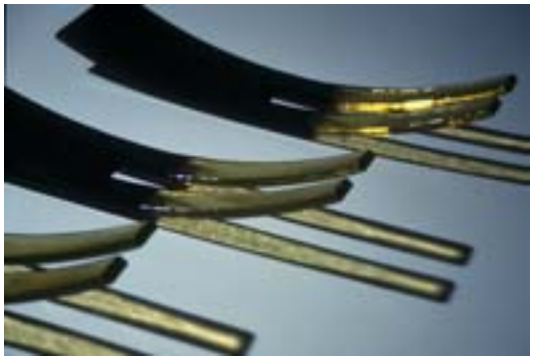
THE SOURCE
Sara Beavis

The Lachlan: Blue-Gold is an exhibition celebrating the complexity of a river, its catchment and people. Its beginnings were founded in the Environment Studio at the National Institute of the Arts, ANU, where opportunities are provided for students and staff to explore environmental issues through art. Field trips associated with the Environment Studio produce artworks that are responses to regional landscapes. It is believed that these works to strengthen the identification of people with the regions in which they live, with positive outcomes in terms of contributing to a sense of, and pride in, place. The exhibition gathered momentum through the financial support of the Murray-Darling Basin Commission (MDBC) and the National Institute for Environment, ANU.

The Lachlan: Blue-Gold is part of a larger landscape of work evolving out of the Australian National University this year through the collaborative initiative $H_2$003. For this, scientists, artists and social scientists are creating art, delivering lectures and workshops, engaging in dialogue and generating public education opportunities around the theme of water.

Meanderings and confluences

Water flowing across landscapes is a force that entrains, mobilises, erodes, transports and deposits. From a single storm, rills and gullies can be carved into hillslopes, delivering sediment-rich waters to small streams into which others flow, and grow. Although our school based understandings of rivers generate images of bubbling mountain brooks developing into large, meandering and sluggish rivers that flow into the sea, streams and rivers can be many things. They can be short, ephemeral channels that simply deliver water from high on a hillslope to its base. They can be dry, ill-defined channels fingered in the sands of deserts that lead further inland. They can, indeed, be ever widening rivers that flow through changing landscapes and finally debouche into the sea. But, whatever forms they take, one thing is certain. Rivers are dynamic - geomorphic chameleons that change form and colour and substance from place to place and through time.



Kirstie Rea

Tuning the Till 2003

Detail
Kilnformed glass, wheel cut.

This work echoes the form of the tine or pronged implement used in agriculture since white occupation. The colour and pattern of the landscape, once an amazing marbled mosaic of biodiversity now appears as clearly defined areas directly related to landuse.

Kirstie works with issues relating to landscape and landuse. She balances her time between work in the studio, research in the field and teaching in the Glass Workshop, NITA, ANU.

Just as rivers change and evolve, so too does the landscape through which they flow. The Lachlan has its source in the humid hillslopes of the Great Dividing Range, then flows through rocky, outcropped granite hills to the ever-widening Lachlan Valley, where scrolls and terraces have been carved into the deep alluvium, which merges into wide and wider alluvial plains of the arid west. Colours and textures of banks and beds and hillslopes include red, brown, grey, gley, yellow, black and tawn - sands, clays, gravels, and cobbles overgrown and embedded in myriad greens. And this is just the natural composition, for along the river are the wildlife, the people and all the changes wrought by human endeavour.

Each of us sees and experiences and describes a river differently, using unique languages and

knowledges. Some may describe a river's flow, quite alarmingly, with exclusive little squiggles:

$$\mathbf{Fr} = \frac{V}{\sqrt{\Delta\gamma L/\rho}}$$

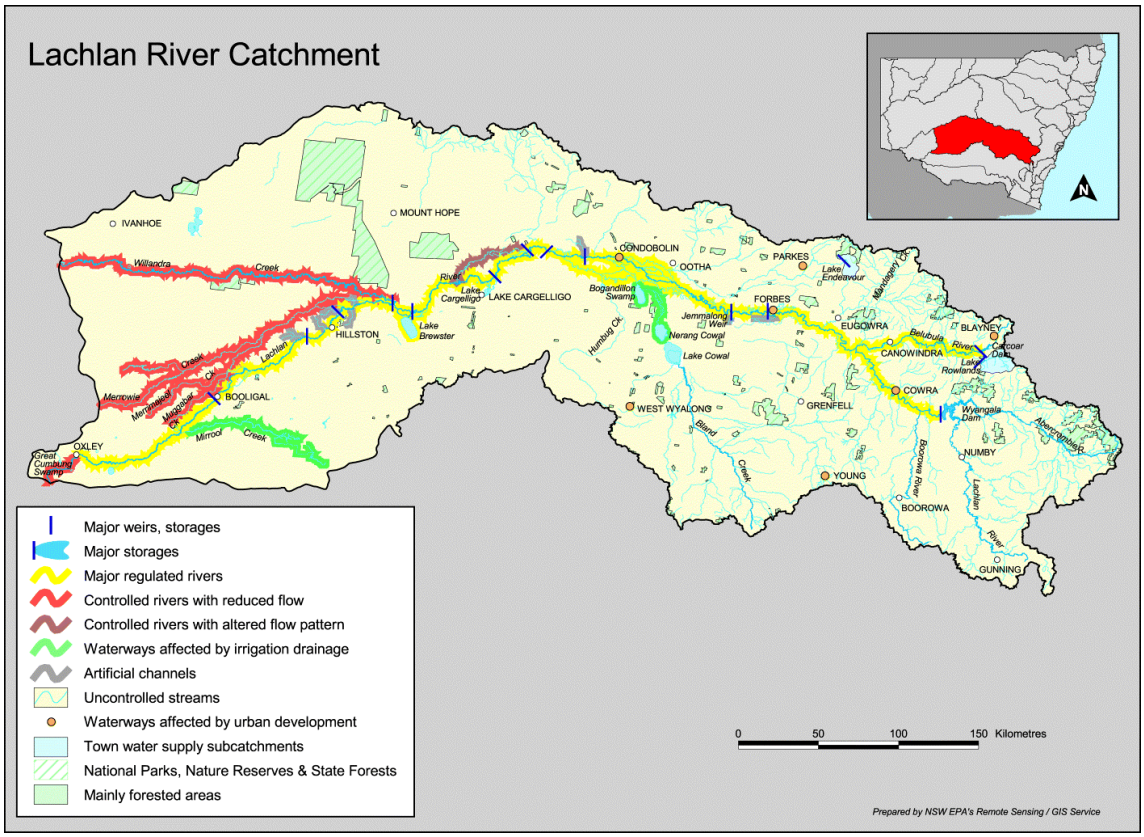
Others may conceptualise the complex layerings of change and modification through data and maps, like the one below, which become tools for further change and management.

Yet others draw on the visual, aural or oral imageries that rivers provide to record, describe and understand the interactions between water, landscape, flora, fauna, and the individuals and communities that inhabit the river and towns along its course. Artists working within such a setting bring with them diversity of experience and perceptions, producing imagery that encompasses natural minutiae, human infrastructure, histories and detritus, and broad brushings of landscape elements.

The mouth

Over a number of weekends of intense and varied activity, the contributors to this exhibition have explored and documented their own personal experiences of the river. Some have lived in the valley for all or part of their lives. Others come from valleys further afield. Forms, processes, people, histories, land and water quality have all been translated into works of visual art and prose.

These artists and scientists, like the processes and influences of a river, have gone beyond defined disciplinary boundaries to share knowledges, perceptions and understandings. By doing this they have created a unique record of one part of a major river of inland New South Wales, the Lachlan. ■



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Trish Freeman
Protecting the Gathering
87 x 108 cm
Acrylic on particle board.

I am Trish Freeman, born in Grenfell and my maiden name was Trish Carroll. My passions are music and school education and art in that order. I am Waradjuri and now live in the village of Billimari. *Photo: Ken Hutchinson*

Ken Hutchinson
Kevin Hutchinson 2003

64 x 56 cm
Acrylic on canvas.

The portrait of Kevin Fitzgerald is one of ten from the series "Facing Out of the Mainstream". This series of portraits explores people that don't fit the dominant demographic of communities surrounding the Lachlan River. People living with mental illness, intellectual disabilities, cultural and drug and alcohol issues are included.

Ken is an artist living at Wattamondara close to Cowra. He works with young people with intellectual disabilities and also at the Weigelli Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Unit. Graduate of the Faculty of Human Inquiry "Social Ecology", UWS. *Photo: Ken Hutchinson*

Marzena Wasikowska

Bruce Robinson, President of the Grenfell Historical Society, in T Stanley Williams' dentist chair, Grenfell Museum, School of Arts Hall, Grenfell, NSW. 2003

50 x 50 cm. C type print.

This body of work is part of a series of photographs portraying members of the Grenfell community.

Marzena is a Canberra based visual artist. She works with the photographic medium in portraiture and in the landscape both in Australia and Europe.

A RIVER IN TIME
John Chappell

Prologue

Machinery rattles and sunlight reflects whitely from sand-heaps in the pit; beyond, cattle graze a long, fair paddock curving away towards the river. After moving gratefully into the shadow below the north wall, one's eyes trace out sandy stratification - roughly horizontal in the lower cliff; dipping and cross-bedded, above. Figures move back and forth around the pit in zig-zags: geologists at play, deciphering traces of a previous landscape.

Ancestor rivers

From the air, one sees a quilted plain festooned with broad loops and scrolls, through which a brown winding thread makes its way: the Lachlan amidst relics of a larger past. Chequered paddocks are separated by fence-lines but traces of ancestral channels straggle across the plain, never mind the fences. Here and there, tracts of river gums stray away from the river and meander away over the plain, following traces of yesteryear's channels, broader and more generously curved than the tight bends of today's narrow river. From this bird's-eye view it doesn't take the onlooker long to discover the remains of not one, but several series of ancient channels; returning to ground level, it becomes evident that most of these lie not on the floodplain of the present river but wind across ancient floodplain surfaces, which form terraces somewhat higher than the present floodplain. Together, terraces and ancient channels show that the Lachlan River has not always been the narrow creature with deep, steep banks that we see today, becoming smaller as it proceeds downstream. As with most other rivers of inland Australia, where evaporation many times exceeds precipitation, the Lachlan diminishes down-river because more water

John Chappell

Dammed rivers 2003

Detail of construction. Jarrah and other timbers, perspex, neon light, metal rods.

The work concerns water management and the issue of environmental sustainability. Rivers, symbolised by neon light flow from earth-mother, spring to the floodplain, where the water is captured in a dam and distributed for agriculture and other uses.

John is professor of environmental geoscience at the Research School of Earth Sciences, ANU. His field research has encompassed many parts of Australia, including the Lachlan River.

Photo: John Chappell

Matt Higgins

agritriptytch 2003

Detail 25 x 32 cm. Digital photographic print.

The images that make up *agritriptytch* interpret the overwhelming power of human intervention. The source is paramount not only for seasonal production but for generations to come. Awareness is the beginning of making our waterways an inspiration and not a commodity.

Matt graduated with honours in photomedia in 2003 and was awarded the Centre for Resource and Sustainability Environmental Award. He lives and works in Canberra with a close association to the Environment Studio, NITA, ANU.

evaporates away than is gained from rainfall and runoff. The river leaves the hills as a substantial stream but its channel becomes smaller and splits into anabranches as it struggles across the plains, and eventually peters out in a skein of feeble creeks that goes under the anomalous name of the Great Cumbung Swamp. But it has not ever been thus. Relict channels and floodplain terraces invite the onlooker to develop images of the past: through steady consideration, aided by radiocarbon dating, images of a changing riverworld emerge.

Let us start at a point some 30-40,000 years ago, when the ancestral Lachlan flowed between sandy banks in a spacious and sinuous channel. At bankfull flow, the river then carried about five times more water than it can today and, instead of dying away in the Cumbung swamp, the river joined the ancestral Murrumbidgee and Murrey systems, themselves equally larger than today. In this altogether different and wetter riverine landscape, a branch of the Lachlan flowed westward, following today's almost disused Willandra Creek. Here it supported large freshwater lakes around which people lived, loved, fished and thrived - the Willandra Lakes, the most famous of which is Lake Mungo - lakes that today are dry and grazed by livestock (when the saltbush vegetation is sufficient to allow it). And, both before and since that time as traces of the changing channels of the Lachlan tell us, climate and environment in the region have been anything but constant, shifting in concert with great climatic changes that reverberated across the globe.

A different world

Viewed on a time-scale that embraces the prehistory of our species rather than that of our brief colonial history, climatic shifts have repeatedly driven massive changes in the landscapes and ecosystems throughout the world. Only 20,000 years ago, for example, when galleries of rock art were being created by human artists and many species of animals were being decimated by human hunters, the last ice age was at its climax and ice sheets, kilometres thick, covered northern North America and Europe. In Australia, the interior was deeply arid and dune-fields were on the move. The climate in the south was cold and glaciers draped the mountains of western Tasmania. Twelve thousand years later, all had changed. The world had warmed, ice sheets in America and Europe had gone, forests advanced thousands of kilometres in the wake of the retreating ice, sea level flooded the continental shelves as the icesheets melted and, in Australia, desert dunes became vegetated and corals re-established their Great Barrier Reef.

Dramatic though it was, this shift from ice-age to present-day conditions is not all that has happened, climatically speaking. Within the

Carolyn Young

Lachlan River near Narrawa Bridge 2003

18 x 12 cm.
Black and white fibre base print.

This photograph is part of a series on rivers that are relatively undisturbed. I focus on large woody debris because of the misguided belief that they cause channel erosion and flooding. Scour pools formed behind the woody debris provide refuge for animals such as turtles waiting out the drought.

Carolyn is a fluvial geomorphologist with the NSW Department of Sustainable Natural Resources and the CRC for Catchment Hydrology. She is completing a graduate diploma in photography at the School of Art, ANU.

compass of the last ice age but before its arid climax, much of Australia experienced a better-watered period - more accurately, a complex period of changing rivers and lakes, as the ancient Lachlan river channels and ancient lake shorelines from Mungo teach us. Indeed, a comparison of evidence from the Willandra lakes and Lake Eyre shows that the patterns of change differed between our southern regions, dominated by winter rain, and the monsoonal north. Moreover, the last ice age is but the most recent of a long series of such episodes: ice sheets repeatedly advanced and retreated across the northern continents, every few tens of thousands of years throughout the last few million years, punctuated by climatic events and shifts so large that our global agriculture would be thoroughly disrupted, should such an event occur now. It is notable, therefore, that before the rise and rise of our species and our technologies, from those of the hunter to the industries of today, the world's biota and ecosystems had weathered these changes.

Only a fragment of the extraordinary prehistory of our climate and landscape - to say nothing of the prehistory of our flora and fauna - can be gathered from the ancient channels of the Lachlan River. However, even that which can be glimpsed from a few days wandering through it or seen fleetingly from the air, suffices to inform one that the past has been different from the present. Once informed, one comes to see that it is important to understand this past as completely as possible, for only thus can we come to know in full the measures of fragility, of resilience and of the rates of renewal of all that comprise the natural environment. These things we need to know because ultimately we must live with it sustainably. ■

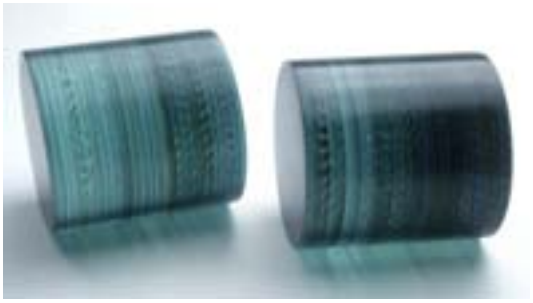
Bridget Nicholson

Home 2003

300 x 16 cm
Bed spring, Casuarina needles and baling twine.

This is an explorative piece for a larger work. My interest is in investigating the idea of the river as a metaphor for the journey through life. Materials both natural and man made are found and often collected in rivers. Homes are built along the way and we feed into and out of the river.

Bridget is doing a Masters in Sculpture at the National Institute of the Arts, ANU. Her background is in urban design and architecture.



Gabrielle Heywood

Environmental Flow 2003

7 x 47 cm (6 modules). Float glass, low fired enamels, cold fused, linished, wax medium.

Flood plains, wetlands and unpredictable weather patterns characterise the inland river systems of NSW. The term *Environmental flow* describes the replication of the natural variability in water flow. Where this is altered by competing claims for water, waterways may become little more than pipelines for both fresh supplies of water, agricultural runoff and environmental disruption.

Gabrielle is completing an honours degree in visual arts (glass) at ANU. She is from a fifth generation farming family in NE Victoria.

FRAGMENT
Sarah Ryan

Our group stood on the bank of a languid Lachlan on a warm afternoon. From John Chappell, we'd been hearing how the Lachlan, over the last 50,000 years, had carved out terraces like tiers in a grand theatre, decorating it with baroque scrolls as the river meandered around over that time. Then, seeking shade, we moved beneath the fringe of a benevolent redgum. Coloured map in hand, I explained how it had been produced by the conjunction of modern mathematical techniques, sound ecological knowledge and sophisticated mapping and database software.

The map predicts how the native trees of the central Lachlan catchment might have been spread across the catchment if they hadn't been so exuberantly cleared. The map is a patchwork of colour. In large swathes to the east, feathery red lines on an orange background reveal gullies dominated by black cypress pine and mugga ironbark. Upslope, the black cypress pine remain, welcoming red stringybarks and fringe myrtles to their drier soils. North west of Grenfell, bright yellow swathes represent yellow box and grey box, trees that signify better soils and open grassy plains.

Heading now towards Condobolin, a chequerboard of blue sees the grey box sustain but the yellow box disappearing as the rainfall fast diminishes. Here, large bulloaks accompany the grey box, occupying the rises in this barely undulating landscape. Punctuating the blue chequerboard are small patches of cream. These represent bimble box and white cypress pine, harbingers of a full third of the map in the warmer, more northern part of the catchment. Other accents are scattered in smaller quantities around this quilted landscape while a scrumpled ribbon of blue cuts east to west across it. Here is the river red gum tracing the Lachlan River itself.

John Reid

Ancient Horizon. Shadow of Jemalong Ridge, Lachlan River Valley, NSW. 2003

38 x 90 cm
Digital print from 8 x 10 inch negative.

John is a visual artist at the School of Art, Institute of the Arts, Australian National University. He works with the media of photography, collage and performance to address issues of human rights and to visualise landscape as a contribution to the construction of regional identity.

Ancient Horizon is one of a visual couplet reflecting on influences that shape the landscape. *Ancient Horizon* references the passage of time and the effect of weathering on the land. *Contemporary Horizon* addresses human impact through land clearing.

For a moment we paused and looked up at the fringe of leaves above us and out to the thin strip of redgums lining the Lachlan. Some afternoon sounds penetrated, a breeze rustled and screeching cockatoos dipped in and out of the trees. From a river terrace drifted the rhythmic sound of a tractor raking lucerne.

But this is only theoretical, this map. What is the picture today? I flipped the map over. Breaths caught as if winded by physical blow, then a shocked moment of utter stillness. A map bleached of most of its colour, tiny pinpricks all that remain over most of its area. Not the same impression received by driving through this landscape, sideways glancing through the roadside trees and remnants of bush that appear more substantial than they really are when viewed across a long flat distance.

Standing out in the blankness of this map are just a few patches of colour. There are still the same red and orange glows of black cypress pine, mugga ironbark and red stringybark. These are national parks now, Weddin Mountains, Conimbla, Nangar and Goobang. Like many national parks in Australia, this was land that nobody wanted, land left over after settlement because it had no economic value. As a soil conservation office put it the next day, land capability class SH 1 T.

And like the marks left by a tracing wheel and carbon paper, blue pinpricks still trace the Lachlan across the map. Scientists estimate that perhaps ten percent of the original river red gum communities in this catchment remain today. But flying low above the river on a later trip, we saw how precariously they now cling to the banks of the Lachlan. The rim of trees is so narrow that it's transparent, fully revealing agricultural land creeping to the very edges of the river bank on the other side.

People leant in to search more closely for remnants of the coloured swatches on the reverse map, but closer looking is nearly as bleak. Perhaps five percent of the original yellow box communities in the central Lachlan, for example, remain today. We talked on about our inheritance of such a transformed map. The voids might be empty of native vegetation but they are filled with agricultural activity which has bequeathed to Australians a share in one of the highest standards of living in the world. On the other hand, the over exuberant clearing has bequeathed us problems like erosion and dryland salinity, as well as loss of many native plants, birds and animals. The void sometimes aches and there is mending to do. ■

Thanks to John Chappell and to Mike Austin and colleagues for scientific assistance. The maps and accompanying report can be found at http://www.cse.csiro.au/Research/Program2/vegmapping.htm.

Sarah Ryan

Mending Country 2003

Detail from series. Each image 9 x 6 cm.
Digital prints from colour slides.

Trees cover, warm, protect and decorate the land's surface. These images are from a series about the need to do some landscape mending because of the damage caused by our over exuberant clearing. The images are displayed like family photos on an old mantelshelf, below which women once diligently mended clothes. Black frames express sadness at the loss of biodiversity due to widespread tree clearing.

Sarah is a scientist in CSIRO, interested in exploring ways of connecting scientific and emotional views of landscapes.

Jessica Leskela

Cutlery 2003

Set of three pieces. Knife, fork and a spoon for left handed people. A production finished from several prototypes and test pieces. Stainless steel.

These pieces of cutlery are designed and made of the impressions of trees along the Lachlan river. The beautiful pure lines taken from the trees of the native forest gave the designs a free and moving form, which also makes them delightful and elegant.

Jessica is a third year student at Lahti Polytechnic Institute of Design in Finland. She is an exchange student at the School of Art, ANU.

Rebecca Dowling & William Bennett

Sheep Tracks to the Back Scrub 2003

45 cm. Reduction fired stoneware.

The platter is not just a canvas for glaze. Thrown with steeper sides and irregular rim it is a form in itself and has assisted with the flowing glaze patterns, echoing the environment. The branching lines are from aerial views of sheep tracks coming together and apart again. The iron oxide used to draw the fence has leached to the surface to form an appearance of rusty wire.

William manages his family property on the Lachlan River near Cowra. He has come together with wife Rebecca for this collaboration of ideas about the landscape he knows so well and she has come to enjoy. Rebecca has a Master of Arts in ceramics from ANU.

Nicola Dickson

Sweet Briar 2003

Left panel of diptych, each panel 90 x75 cm. Acrylic and oil on canvas.

The ability of weeds to overwhelm other plants is due to their inherent biological superiority in that specific location. It is this ability that I attempt to represent in my work and which needs to be addressed in their management. Sweet Briar is an example of such a weed in the Lachlan River Catchment.

Nicola is currently completing a Bachelor of Visual Art at the Australian National University.

STORY TREES
Joy McCann

The road roughly traces the sinuous channels of the Lachlan River. On long drives 'out west', I stop to boil a cup of tea alone in the quiet greyness of a remnant box woodland. Precious island in a milling ocean of agriculture. In the Lachlan valley I see the trees as storytellers, unravelling the threads of our cultural relationships with this landscape. Trees are the genealogists of the valley, linking generations and holding the sounds of human lives and the river's ebb and flow in their veins.

Bedgerebong. As legend has it, the name of this tiny hamlet was adapted from the Wiradjuri word Budgera Bong, 'old man tree by the water hole'. The tree in question is a giant River Red growing on the banks of the Lachlan west of Forbes. The tree became part of the folklore of Bedgerebong when the forebears of local farming families moved their stock into this river country in the 1850s. Generations grew up with its stories. When a bushfire threatened to destroy the tree in 1976, local people gathered to save their village namesake. According to the *Forbes Advocate*, the old tree was the community's 'living legend', a thousand years old. Its giant root system, exposed by the ravages of the river, still flow right down the bank like solidified lava. Settler stories speculate that, before Europeans came to this country, Indigenous people from the Bogan River would gather here for ceremonial occasions. Longevity commands respect in this landscape of changing ecologies and shifting lives.

At dusk I walk down to the place where the river bends in its crazy meander, the cliff edge worried away by the big floods that used to come this way. The yellow waters of this inland river cast an ochre warmth on grey trunks as they lean heavily over the channel, their great root systems delicately binding the shifting grey floodplain into mud-slick banks. I have a view over the channel and into the trees. A birds' eye view of a disturbed ecology. The Lachlan's wild eccentricities have long been regulated and controlled by the Wyangala Dam upstream. Over time, regulated flows have made the river banks soften and slump. Some people blame the European carp that scavenge and churn amongst tree roots, quietly burrowing beneath the giants of the river. On the Lachlan, scientific theories and local mythologies abound, mixing and swirling around the carcasses of trees lying prostrate across the river's bed, oblivious to the root cause of their demise.

Joy McCann

Story Tree 1, Lachlan Valley, NSW 2003

42 x 30 cm. Black and white photograph.

Trees reveal to us stories about our relationships with this landscape. They have the ability to engage us emotionally. They open us up to a deeper understanding of ecological change, and how the destinies of people and landscape are closely interwoven. This photograph is part of a series called 'Story trees of the Lachlan Valley'.

Joy is a historian with the Australian Heritage Commission and also a PhD student at ANU. She has a deep interest in the cultural dimensions of rural landscapes. Her project focuses on the Lachlan valley.

Ecologist Dave Bowman talks about the 'message trees' that dot his northern landscape in the Dry Tropics. Altered burning regimes have been the death knell for the once dense stands of cypress pine. The trees are now burnt too frequently, too fiercely. A forest of matchsticks. They are Bowman's message trees, and they spark an awakening, a reassessing, of how settler land uses have changed things.

Here, below the Jemalong Weir, the river moves sluggishly and a wind works hard to push it back upstream. A massive splash near a half-submerged giant gum signals the churnings of a large fish,

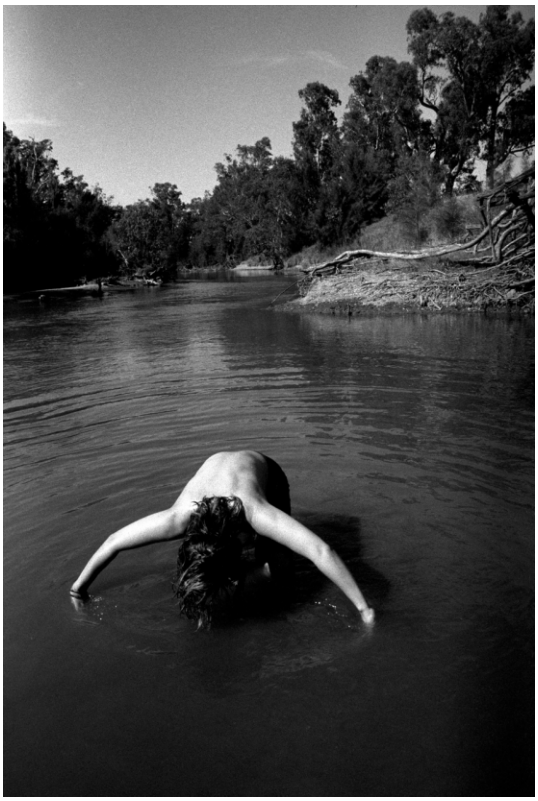
probably carp. These are fishing places. Tracks criss-cross the banks for miles. Favourite spots are marked with the charred remains of camp fires, and inscribed in the local vernacular - Eight- Mile, Twelve-Mile, Twenty-Mile - deep waterholes harbouring bunyips and the elusive Murray cod, or perhaps a yellow-belly. When Oxley camped on the river near here during his 1817-1818 expedition to the region, he found the river teeming with life. In an hour, one of his men caught eighteen large native fish. Now, the large fish are mostly carp, and everything is caked in a scum of grey river mud.

In a local museum, amongst the jumble of settlers' lives, I find remnants of carved trees for which the Lachlan is renowned. Such trees once marked the graves of respected clan members, carefully selected and inscribed with intricate designs. I visit Yuranigh's grave in the middle of a paddock near Molong to see a group of carved trees, in their proper setting. They have been saved from the fate of so many others by virtue of Yuranigh's fame as 'guide and companion counselor and friend' to Major Thomas Mitchell, the New South Wales Surveyor-General. Yuranigh accompanied Mitchell on his fourth and final 'expedition of discovery' in 1846.

Back in the museum the carvings, hacked away from their senescent hosts, are on display. Specimens, categorised and labelled to commemorate those who have 'discovered' them. Silently, however, they continue to bestow honour on an ancient Indigenous past in this colonised landscape of silences. In the gloomy recesses, I locate a fence post propped between the cabinets. It has the same delicate carvings, now skewered with wire holes. An incongruous collaboration of Indigenous ceremony and settler practicalities.

North of the Lachlan, I walk out along a red earth track edging the grey floodplain. In the vast wheat paddock, trees are swept to the sides leaving a stout, elegant kurrajong in silent contemplation. Drought fodder, the browse lines clipped with neat precision by drought-hungry cattle. Trees make quite an impression in the wheat country. Along indistinct horizons, a dark green blur separates land from sky, heralds a watercourse. One farmer told me that as long as there were trees on his horizon, he felt reassured that the country was in good shape.

A line from Michael Meehan's book comes to mind: 'the country shaved and broken and submitted to the square'. In the paddock to my left, freshly ploughed furrows gape open, red throats waiting for rains that won't come. On my right, stunted mallee trees line up to break the wind with feeble limbs, clinging obstinately to ancient dunes. Rolled and crushed and burnt, indestructible mallee. When historian Paul Sinclair wrote about the mallee country of South Australia, he described it



Nazanin Moradi

In and Out

Detail 10 x 15cm. Black and white photograph. One of a series of 450 photographs installed as a single work measuring 1.65 x 3 m.

Dearest I will build a boat and cast it
on the river
Dearest I will grow distant from this
strange soil
Where not a single soul awakens heroes
in the thicket of love.

Nazanin was born in Iran in 1978. She is studying printmedia at the NITA, ANU. She is a performance artist and also works with video and photography.

as a hard country to love. For much of the 20th century, mallee trees have suffered from bad press. Early attempts to clear them in the central western plains of New South Wales were tentative. Most prospective farmers avoided them if they could. Scrub country, they said. When closer settlement schemes enticed farmers from Victoria and South Australia after the First World War, it was a different matter. Hardened by experience, these sand-country farmers brazenly advanced onto the mallee plains.

Trees and settlers have had a volatile marriage, their relationship born of practicalities and necessity. But their destinies are entwined, and both are embedded in the fate of this landscape. Ring-barked, rolled, felled, canonized, cultivated, and ignored, the trees of the Lachlan valley, in all their diversity, bear mute testimony to a deeply cultural history. ■

References

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Glossary

Kurrajong	*Brachychiton populneus*
River red gum	*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*
Mallee	Dry-country *Eucalyptus* species with several stems growing from an underground lignotuber.
Box woodland	White box or *Eucalyptus albens*, found on fertile soils, have been widely cleared for agriculture.
European carp	*Cyprinus carpio*, an exotic fish first introduced to the Murray Darling river system in 1962.
Murray cod	*Maccullochella peeli*, a native fish and one of the world's largest freshwater fish.

Belinda Jessup

Land Marks 2003

26 x 300 cm approx. Wool, monofilament linen, stainless steel. Natural dye of mushrooms and eco print/marks.

The woven landscape of *Land Marks* is in response to the gridded landscape of farming land around the Lachlan River. The uneven patterns used in the weaving process reflect the fenced lands of the agricultural and horticultural industries that the Lachlan supports.

Belinda is doing a degree in visual arts (textiles) at ANU. Growing up in western NSW gave her a love of landscape which is expressed in her textile work.

Photo: Trish Freeman

Photo: Sarah Ryan

Melissa Egan

Shifts in the Land - Works in Process 2003

Each painting 120 x 120 cm
Found sands, pigment and egg tempera on canvas. *Photo: Mandy Martin*

These two images are works in process - meticulous layers of sands, pigments and egg tempera applied until I achieve a momentary impression. Travelling through the environment I experience different appearances and shifts of the landscape which, in each brief moment, evoke different aesthetic qualities. These qualities become impressions of what has passed by.

Melissa is completing an honours degree in print media at the National Institute of the Arts, ANU.

Mandy Martin

Private Prospect, Public View 2003

Detail 20 x 30 cm.
Found and natural pigments and acrylic medium on found tin.

Mandy lives in the Lachlan Catchment and commutes to Canberra where she is a lecturer in the Environment Studio, NITA, ANU.

This detail is part of series of 20 pieces of flood-gate tin painted in a linear arrangement to represent the Lachlan River. These are interspersed with smaller images of the less celebrated fauna of the riparian zone; common, vulnerable and endangered insect species. They are painted on cake-tins to signify second settler habitation.