



Peta West
PRINTMAKER. ARTIST.

ARTIST CATALOGUE

COLLECTION *I*

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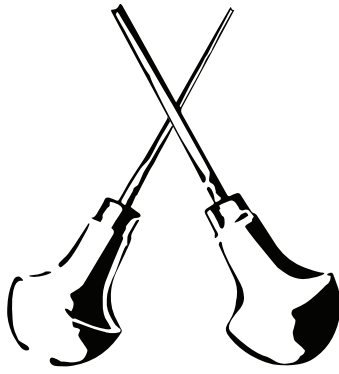
Photography by Peta West

Graphic Design by Michelle Lorimer

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INTRODUCTION

The reproductions contained in the pages that follow showcase the work of printmaker Peta West. Black Cockatoos, Bowerbirds and Magpies are but a few of the creatures portrayed in her epic monochrome prints. With a unique sensibility, West endows these animals with character. Despite the expansiveness that typifies her printmaking style, she treats her subjects with an intimacy that invites viewers into the secluded universe of the bush and of fauna that inhabit it.

Living on the South Coast of New South Wales, West draws inspiration from the surrounding coast and bushland, specifically that of Lake Conjola. A place where the lake opens to the ocean, where stoic Banksias and Gum trees hug the shoreline and where the peak of Didthul (Pigeon House Mountain) silhouettes the Western skyline. To walk through this area, the presence and energy of the birdlife is palpable. Despite the realism with which West portrays her subjects, it is rather her ability to capture an experience of sublimity that is most affecting in her work: a feeling of complete immersion within a living ecosystem.

Printmaking in Australia is a relatively modern creative endeavour. The early 20th century ushered in what historians have dubbed as the 'Australian printmaking boom.' For the first time, printmaking was considered for its merit as a form of fine art. Previous conceptions as a form of mass communication or part of a planning process for larger works were superseded. Compositions became more elaborate, as did different expressions of line and form. Tapping into the visual complexity developed during this time, West's prints evoke that of large scale genre paintings with distinct elements directing the viewer's eye around the canvas.

During this time, prints by Australian artists such as Lionel Lindsay and Margaret Preston received increasing critical recognition as they established themselves within the canon of Australian art. Both artists have been prevailing creative inspirations for West. *Banksias at Lake Conjola (2018)* draws clear parallels with Preston's images of native flora, whose economical use of line was emblematic of trends in early Australian Modernism. However, it is Lindsay's uninhibited use of darkened negative space and microscopic detail that has most clearly influenced her practice. Evoking Lindsay's intense detailing, West sculpts the linoleum to create images that teeter on three-dimensional. By considering her subjects with such precision, the images become characterised by a dramatic visual immediacy.

This Is Yuin Country (2021), features two Black Cockatoos that have been depicted to scale, their enormity directly transposed onto the work. The birds are positioned in the foreground, as if guardians of the sweeping landscape behind them. With their permission, we are invited to glimpse the cacophony of living entangled with one another. As viewers we stand in awe of the creatures and plants before us. Through West's tenderness and realism the birds appear ethereal. Exploring similar ideas, Spirit Bird Watching Over Green Island (2020) was created in the aftermath of the catastrophic bushfires that ravaged the east coast of Australia in the summer of 2019-2020. West describes the mass exodus of birds from the area as the fire approached. Flocks frantically flying over head, signalling the impending fire front. This, she states, was one of her most vivid memories from that time. Conjola was hit hard by the fire, with many houses lost and some parts of the bush irreparably burnt. Yet, despite the damage, the birds returned. For West, their return was both symbolically and ecologically connected to the environment's healing process. Through their presence, they care for the area as innate parts of its spirit.

Each catalogue marks a progression in conceptual and technical scope. Collection I was made in the time before and after the bushfires. They are images that celebrate the abundance of the natural world, and then its ability to heal in the face of unimaginable disaster. Collection II integrates new visual elements such as colour, whilst continuing to experiment with depth, carving intricacies further into the linoleum. This collection also embodies a series of personal moments for West. They are visual collages of her experiences throughout the year, marked by specific interactions with the surrounding flora and fauna.

Ultimately, West's prints and their expansive detailing perhaps speak to the similarly expansive connectivity between all living things. Yet, there is an undeniable sense of vulnerability to them. Despite the appearance of abundance, the bush relies on a fragile balancing act, which we humans are inextricably tied to. West's works are deeply empathetic to the natural world, inviting us to reconsider our place within it, rather than distinct to it.

This linocut art was inspired from and created on Yuin Country. In the spirit of reconciliation I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land that I create on, the Yuin People. I would like to pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging.





ARAGUNNU, MIMOSA NATIONAL PARK

Completed in the year 2019
Hand printed on Japanese paper 46gsm
Hand carved on silk linoleum
60 X 60cm image size
Prussian blue ink
Limited edition of 50 prints



ALONG A COASTAL TRACK

Completed in the year 2020
Hand printed on Japanese paper 46gsm
Hand carved on silk linoleum
60 X 60cm image size
Prussian blue ink
Limited edition of 50 prints





SPIRIT BIRD WATCHING OVER GREEN ISLAND

Completed in the year 2020
Hand printed on Japanese paper 46gsm
Hand carved on silk linoleum
45 X 61cm image size
Prussian blue ink
Limited edition of 50 prints



THE LYREBIRD

Completed in the year 2020
Hand printed on Japanese paper 46gsm
Hand carved on silk linoleum
45 X 61cm image size
Prussian blue ink
Limited edition of 50 prints





KING PROTEA

Completed in the year 2018
Hand printed on Japanese paper 46gsm
Hand carved on silk linoleum
30 X 45cm image size
Prussian blue ink
Limited edition of 50 prints



BANKSIAS AT LAKE CONJOLA

Completed in the year 2018
Hand printed on Japanese paper 46gsm
Hand carved on silk linoleum
30 X 45cm image size
Prussian blue ink
Limited edition of 50 prints





*Clockwise from top,
ALONG A COASTAL
TRACK and SPIRITBIRD
WATCHING OVER GREEN
ISLAND*



Clockwise from top,
GANG GANG and
REDTAILED BLACK
COCKATOO



*Clockwise from top,
ARAGUNNU, MIMOSA
NATIONAL PARK
and WHERE THE
SHOREBIRDS NEST*





THE LYREBIRD

*All prints in Collection I
are framed in a Weathered Ash frame*





THE JOURNEY

Completed in the year 2020
Hand printed on Japanese paper 46gsm
Hand carved on silk linoleum
45 X 61cm image size
Prussian blue ink
Limited edition of 50 prints



ROCKPOOL

Completed in the year 2020
Hand printed on Japanese paper 46gsm
Hand carved on silk linoleum
45 X 61cm image size
Prussian blue ink
Limited edition of 50 prints





RED-TAIL BLACK COCKATOO

Completed in the year 2020
Hand printed on Japanese paper 46gsm
Hand carved on silk linoleum
45 X 45cm image size
Prussian blue ink
Limited edition of 50 prints



GANG GANG

Completed in the year 2020
Hand printed on Japanese paper 46gsm
Hand carved on silk linoleum
45 X 45cm image size
Prussian blue ink
Limited edition of 50 prints





WHERE THE SHOREBIRDS NEST

Completed in the year 2020
Hand printed on Japanese paper 46gsm
Hand carved on silk linoleum
60 X 60cm image size
Prussian blue ink
Limited edition of 50 prints

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Peta West is a practicing contemporary Australian printmaker whose work taps into the sublimity of her surrounding environment on the South Coast of New South Wales. Working primarily with linoleum, West creates immersive large-scale prints that beguile audiences with their intricate detailing and depth. West's prints are worlds unto their own, each a self-contained universe, where plants and animals appear in abundance. They are odes to the natural beauty and resilience of the Australian bush.

Prior to printmaking, West was a photographer for over two decades, a medium which allowed her to develop an eye for composition, depth and balance. This initial training in darkrooms forever instilled in her a love for monochrome, as well as the tactile process of working an image out of a medium.

Since taking up printmaking in 2016, her work is increasingly gaining the attention of galleries and collectors alike. Her recent exhibitions including: Peta West, Milton WorkHub, NSW, 2020; Group Exhibition, White Wall Projects, Berrima, NSW; Group Exhibition, Laurison Press, Kyneton, VIC and a near sell-out show: Songs of the Earth at Van Rensburg Galleries, Milton, NSW, 2021.

In 2021, West was a finalist in the Burnie Print Prize, Tasmania. In the year prior, she was a finalist in both the Arts in the Valley Art Prize, Kangaroo Valley, NSW and the Ravenswood Australian Women's Art Prize, Sydney.



THANK YOU



Thank you for taking the time to view
my work! To learn more about what I do
please visit petawest.com.au

Peta West



