



Walk

SENIOR EDUCATION RESOURCE



Portland Arts Centre (VIC)
5 November 2007 – 2 December 2007

Horsham Regional Art Gallery (VIC)
11 December 2007 – 3 February 2008

Hamilton Art Gallery (VIC)
12 February – 23 March 2008

Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery (NSW)
4 April – 4 May 2008

Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale (VIC)
31 May – 29 June 2008

Burnie Regional Gallery (TAS)
15 August – 14 September 2008

Riddoch Art Gallery (SA)
18 October – 30 November 2008

Flinders University Art Museum (SA)
23 January – 28 February 2009

Bunbury Regional Art Galleries (WA)
2 May – 16 June 2009

Shepparton Art Gallery (VIC)
6 July – 21 August 2009

Counihan Galery (VIC)
28 August – 27 September 2009

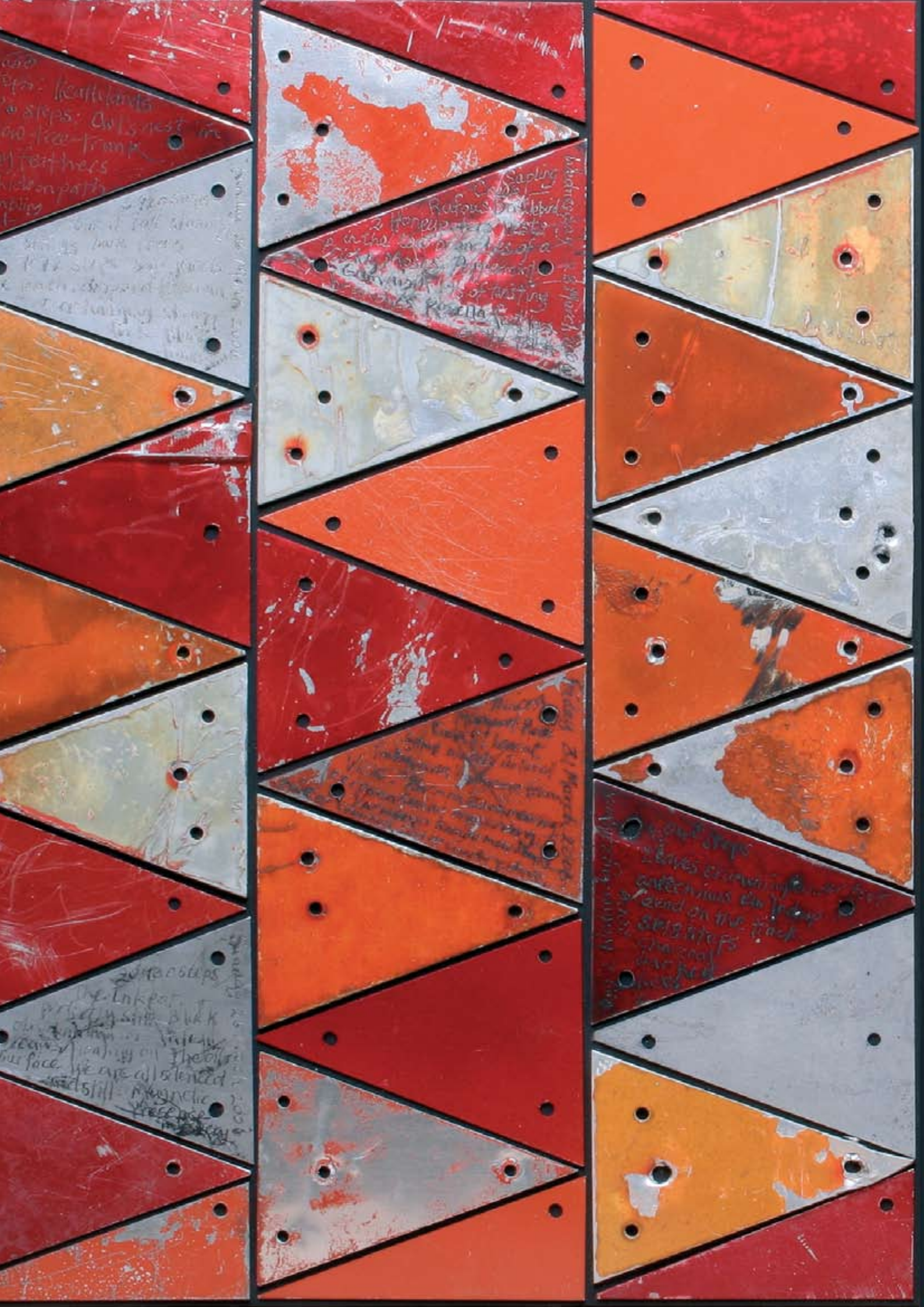
COVER
John WOLSELEY
*Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater –
Lake Monibeong* (detail) 2006
carbonized wood, watercolour
on paper
Courtesy the artist, Roslyn Oxley9
Gallery (Sydney) and Australian
Galleries (Melbourne)
Photographer: Terence Bogue

OPPOSITE
Lichen collected by John Wolseley
Cobboboonee Forest, 2006
Photographer: Terence Bogue

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and still

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This education resource is designed to be used as a starting point for generating ideas and classroom activities before, during and after a visit to *Walk* and is intended to complement and be used in addition to information provided in the exhibition catalogue, gallery wall texts and on the NETS Victoria web site <www.netsvictoria.org>. The resource includes an introduction to the exhibition for the teacher followed by a senior level education kit comprising suggested points for discussion and practical activities. The resources have been designed to be used by both teachers and students.

Curriculum links and connections

As this exhibition is touring nationally, teachers are encouraged to adapt the curriculum links given in the list below to suit their school's state curriculum. Use this list to generate ideas, activities and points for discussion, and where suitable, contact education staff at your local gallery for further ideas and suggestions.

Visual/Creative/Studio Arts

- Artist's practice: ideas and inspiration, innovative ways of working.
- The changing role of the artist.
- The diversity and range of media, materials and techniques used by contemporary artists.
- Postmodernism: use of non traditional art practices including collaboration.
- Art and science: the way that artists can respond to and represent current issues deriving from environmental science.
- Responding to artworks: analysis and interpretation using appropriate language.

English

- Responding verbally to visual images.
- Creative writing and responding.
- Critical essays and reviews.

Studies of Society and the Environment

- Artworks as commentary about interconnectedness between humans, society and environment.
- Environmental issues including land use and conservation of natural resources.
- Visual arts as a reflection of contemporary culture and society.

Australian History

- Early exploration of Australia.
- Native title.

Science

- Habitat.
- Biodiversity.
- Endangered species.
- Climate change.



ABOVE
Vicki COUZENS -
Gunditjmara Keerray Wurrong
koorrookee koorramook
(Grandmother Cloak) (detail) 2007
possum skin, waxed linen thread, wattle
seed sap, ochre, pokerwork designs
Courtesy the artist
Photographer: Jeremy Dillon

Introduction to the exhibition

Walk is a contemporary arts project that encompasses more than just an exhibition. At its heart is a three week walking expedition undertaken by eight artists in March 2006, through the wilderness area of Victoria's South West near the city of Portland. Together, the artists embarked on the 250km Great South West Walk, traversing the Cobboboonee Forest, the Glenelg River, and the ocean and estuaries of Discovery Bay. As they walked the artists explored their responses to the landscape using photography, sound recording, drawing, journal writing and collecting. Inspired by the experience, the artists created new works which are featured in this exhibition. Their creative output is vibrant and diverse, and reflects the artists' desire to respond as part of the landscape and to communicate a sense of immersion.

Artists

Peter Corbett, video.
Vicki Couzens, possum skin cloak, painting, printmaking.
Nicky Hepburn, jewellery and precious objects.
Brian Laurence, soundscape.
Jan Learmonth, sculpture.
Carmel Wallace, mixed media.
Ilka White, textile-based sculpture and installation.
John Wolsley, drawing / painting.

BELOW

Carmel WALLACE
Beached Forest (detail) 2007
cargo wedges on plywood
Courtesy the artist and
Gallery 101 (Melbourne)
Photographer: Terence Bogue





Peter Corbett

Peter Corbett

Lives and works in Portland/Melbourne, Victoria. Filmmaker with over 20 years experience. Won over 45 international awards for media production, Gold medal winner at New York Festival and at the national awards for the Australian Cinematographers Society. Numerous commissions, including Melbourne Zoo and open range zoo at Werribee Park. Travelled and worked for extended periods overseas on feature films and documentaries.



Vicki Couzens

Vicki Couzens

Lives and works in Warrnambool/Portland, Victoria. Received the inaugural Deadly Award in 2003. Group exhibitions at major public galleries and museums in Australia and New Zealand. Numerous commissions, including a possum skin cloak for 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games. Represented in public gallery and museum collections in Australia.



Nicky Hepburn

Nicky Hepburn

Lives and works in Melbourne, Victoria. Diploma Art/Design, Bachelor of Education. Received awards from Craft Australia, Victoria Crafts Council and Jewellers and Metalsmiths Group of Australia. Solo and group exhibitions at numerous gallery and exhibition spaces in Australia and overseas.



Brian Laurence

Brian Laurence

Lives and works Victoria. Sound Designer, Producer, Director and Consultant with over 30 years experience. Numerous commissions, including Melbourne Zoo and open range zoo at Werribee Park, and various museum and cultural spaces in Australia and overseas.

Jan Learmonth

Lives and works in Gippsland, Victoria. Fine Art, National Gallery School. Solo and group exhibitions at numerous gallery and exhibition spaces in Australia. Represented in public gallery and private collections in Australia and overseas. Represented by Gallery 101 (Melbourne).

Carmel Wallace

Lives and works in Portland, Victoria.
 PhD, Bachelor of Arts, Diploma of Education, Bachelor of Fine Art Honours.
 Received both academic and art awards.
 Residencies in Australia, United States and Italy.
 Solo and Group exhibitions at major public galleries.
 Represented in corporate and private collections in Australia and overseas.
 Represented by Gallery 101 (Melbourne).



Jan Learmonth

Ilka White

Lives and works in Melbourne, Victoria.
 Associate Diploma of Arts (Studio Textiles), Currently completing a Bachelor of Fine Arts.
 Received awards from Flinders Quarter and Winston Churchill Memorial Foundations.
 Emerging Artist residency in Portland.
 Solo and group exhibitions at numerous gallery and exhibition spaces in Australia.
 Represented in the National Gallery of Victoria and in private collections in Australia and overseas.



Carmel Wallace

John Wolseley

Lives and works in Whipstick Forest, Victoria.
 Received numerous awards including the State Library of Victoria's Creative Fellowship.
 Award and five time winner of the Art Gallery of NSW Watercolour Prize.
 Creative Fellowship residency at the State Library of Victoria in 2006, which resulted in the exhibition, *Travels in the Library*, curated by Clare Williamson.
 Solo and group exhibitions at major public galleries in Australia.
 Represented in public gallery and private collections in Australia and overseas.
 Represented by Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery (Sydney) and Australian Galleries (Melbourne).



Ilka White



John Wolseley

1. THE COBBOBOONEE FOREST

This section of the walk is through classic Australian eucalypt forest. The track is flat and even with nice valleys and river crossings. It explores the headwaters of the Surry and Fitzroy rivers where ferns flourish in the gullies. Birds include Gang gangs, Cockatoos, Crimson rosellas and endangered species such as the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo. Kangaroos and emus abound.

Tuesday 21 March 2006**DAY 1 Portland to Cubby's Camp (20km)**

Bam Nun's Beach Portland: Special send-off event, including 'smoking-ceremony' to be presented by local indigenous community (coordinated by Damein Bell).

Wednesday 22 March**DAY 2 Cubby's Camp to Cut-Out Camp (15km)**

10am - 11am: Field Naturalists to join walk and share knowledge.

Thursday 23 March**DAY 3 Cut-Out Camp (Surry Ridge)**

Doug Phillips to lead an off-track excursion to sites of special significance for culture, flora and fauna, including powerful owl & yellow-bellied glider.

Friday 24 March**DAY 4 Cut-Out Camp to Fitzroy Camp (22km)****Saturday 25 March****DAY 5 Fitzroy Camp (Jackass Fern Gully)****2. THE GLENELG RIVER AND GORGE**

The trees grow shorter and more rugged as the track approaches the banks of the Glenelg River. The track winds alongside the river and then up along the rim of the gorge with spectacular lookouts. The river is tidal, and the estuary widens considerably as it approaches the sea. Wildlife is in abundance and includes platypus, ducks, moorhens, emus, kangaroos, wallabies, possums, koalas, wombats, and kingfishers. More than 700 species of native plants bloom in the bush.

Sunday 26 March 2006**DAY 6 Fitzroy Camp to Moleside Landing (22km)****Monday 27 March****DAY 7 Moleside Landing to Pritchards by canoe (10km)****Tuesday 28 March****DAY 8 Pritchards to Forest Camp North by canoe (11km)****Wednesday 29 March****DAY 9 Forest Camp to Hutchessons by canoe (10.8km)**

10am - 11am: Field biologists led walk – impact of land clearing upstream on the life of the river. Birds Australia biologists to discuss endangered species – Red-tailed Black Cockatoo.

Thursday 30 March**DAY 10 Hutchessons to Princess Margaret Rose Caves (6km)**

Canoe Hutchessons to Sandy Waterholes 2.7km. Walk from Sandy Waterholes to Princess Margaret Rose Caves 3.2km.

Friday 31 March**DAY 11 Princess Margaret Rose Caves**

Explore the great limestone formations of the caves and gorge.

Saturday 1 April**DAY 12 Princess Margaret Rose Caves to Nelson by boat (13km)**

6pm: Slide presentation by Prof. John Sherwood, Deakin University, Warrnambool, on 'The Evolution, Behaviour, and Ecology of the Estuary'.

Sunday 2 April**DAY 13 Nelson**

Glenelg estuary, small riverside town. Field Officers from Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority – history of the river and environmental problems currently being addressed. Field Naturalists' led excursion to explore the estuary environs. Evening dinner includes community invitation to 'meet the artists'.



Carmel Wallace, Ilka White and John Wolseley walking with Glenelg National Park Ranger

3. DISCOVERY BAY BEACH AND MOUNT RICHMOND

This section of the walk is wild, exposed and exhilarating. Few beaches in Australia run for 55 kilometres on open sand facing such gigantic surf as the beach of Discovery Bay. There are huge mobile sand dunes around Swan Lake and beautiful deep water just inland at Lake Monibeong. Mount Richmond is an extinct volcano with ocean views, tall forests, open heath land, dense wetlands and abundant wildlife, including the uncommon Southern Potoroo. Mount Richmond National Park claims 450 species of plants in its diverse habitats.

Monday 3 April

DAY 14 Nelson to Lake Monibeong Camp (22km)

Tuesday 4 April

DAY 15 Lake Monibeong to Swan Lake (16.5km)

Wednesday 5 April

DAY 16 Swan Lake

Explore the dunes and lake surrounds. 10 - 11am: Field Naturalists' led walk – explore the huge mobile sand dunes and local plant and animal life.

Thursday 6 April

DAY 17 Swan Lake to Tarragal Camp (20 km)
(via Mount Richmond National Park)

Friday 7 April

DAY 18 Tarragal to Bridgewater Bay (18km)
(via Whites' Beach, Blow Holes and Petrified Forest)
Meet Marine Park expert at White's Beach.

4. THE THREE CAPES AND BAY

Cape Bridgewater has some of the highest coastal cliffs in Victoria and protects a bay that stretches in a perfect crescent around the rim of a huge, ancient volcano crater. Swell lines echo the circle of the caldera. Lookouts offer breathtaking views over coves towards Cape Nelson. Cape Grant has a large gannet colony. Blue whales, Southern Right whales, seals and dolphins are abundant around the capes.

Saturday 8 April

DAY 19 Bridgewater Bay

Visit the seal colony by boat. Evening dinner includes community invitation to 'meet the artists'.

Sunday 9 April

DAY 20: Bridgewater Bay to Mallee Camp (21 km)

1pm: Lunch stop at Murrell's Beach. Local resident will share his knowledge of the history (cultural and natural) of this area, as well as his experience of walking the whole of the Victorian coast last year. Visit to lighthouse at Cape Nelson and one night accommodation at the lighthouse keeper's cottage.

Monday 10 April

DAY 21 Mallee Camp to Portland (17.5km)

Visit Yellow Rock, a site of special significance for aboriginal people.

12 noon: Meet local park ranger at Point Danger for guided visit to the gannet colony.

Note: Reasonable walking, including rests = 4kms / hour



Artists travel along the Glenelg River by canoe



Carmel Wallace collecting flotsam



ABOVE
Jan LEARMONTH
River Boat 2006
wood, metal, fish line
Courtesy the artist and
Gallery 101 (Melbourne)
Photographer: Terence Bogue

OPPOSITE
Jan LEARMONTH
Journal extract
*(river boat drawing, Glenelg
National Park)* 2006
Courtesy the artist and
Gallery 101 (Melbourne)
Photographer: Terence Bogue

1. WAYS THAT ARTWORKS REFLECT PEOPLE, SOCIETY, CULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The eight artists involved in the Walk project were invited to participate because their practices display a connection with the landscape. One of these artists John Wolseley, stated that the walk would provide a wonderful opportunity to 'meditate on how we use and experience land'. As can be seen in the artworks, this theme of people and the landscape resonated with the eight artists in different ways, including a deep concern for the preservation of the environment, and the need to explore personal connections with the land.

How people use the land

The artists interested in the environmental impact of people on the land include **Jan Learmonth**. Her works address issues such as extinction and endangerment of local flora and fauna and the importance of preserving our natural resources such as water. She stated 'My work relates to the Glenelg River and Gorge section of the walk. . . It comments on the environment and how it is being used, especially in these times of water shortage'.

Jan Learmonth's works *River Boat* and *River Story* both reflect on the health of the Glenelg River and catchment area that she believes has been 'drained by use and extreme seasonal change, this fragile environment has

been left – the bones to dry; the mud to crack and curl'. According to the Wilderness Society, the Glenelg river catchment area has suffered greatly from people's use of the land for farming, wood crops, pasture and industry.¹ As a result, the natural habitats of plant, animal and bird life have been reduced to unsustainable spaces. To represent this, Learmonth's *River Boat* is no longer floating. It has been cast aside with the detritus of water-life left clinging to its surface.

Similarly in *River Story*, Learmonth reflects on the fragility of the river ecosystem. Using symbolism she depicts various signs of life that the river and its estuary sustain. She has incorporated representations of landings, canoes, rock faces, pine forests, spider's nests, and shells, together with bird, plant and animal life including the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, an endangered species that is only found in this area.

Questions

1. What is the significance of suspending *River Boat* from the ceiling of the gallery?
2. What concerns about the Glenelg River and catchment area is Jan Learmonth trying to express in *River Story*? Consider her use of symbolism and choice of materials and techniques in your answer.





OPPOSITE
Vicki COUZENS -
Gunditjmara Keerray Wurrong
meerreeng leerpeen (Earth Song)
(detail) 2007
acrylic on canvas
Courtesy the artist

How people experience the land

The experience of being immersed in a wilderness area for three weeks evoked feelings and emotions in the artists as they began to make personal connections with the landscape. These personal encounters were often felt on a spiritual level. This was true for **Vicki Couzens** as the land covered by the walk was her Grandmothers' country; part of the Dharwurd Wurrong – Gunditjmara.

Reconnecting to the land of her ancestors, Vicki Couzens was inspired to create works linking the past, present and future of the region. Her painting *meerreeng leerepeen* (Earth Song), celebrates the recent revival of some of the indigenous languages in the area that had been unspoken for generations. She has hidden text in the layers of the painting representing the names of the fifty-four clans of the Gunditjmara Dharwurd Wurrong language groups.

In March 2007, the Gunditjmara of south-west Victoria were granted native title rights by the Federal Court after an agreement was reached acknowledging their deep connection to the land and pledging to protect the cultural significance of the area.²

Questions

1. How does Vicki Couzens link the past, present and future of the region in her work *meerreeng leerepeen* (Earth Song)?
2. Vicki Couzens stated that her work is 'about the unseen, what is above and below the surface, in a literal way and also a metaphorical way, relating to the spiritual'. Choose one of her works to discuss what you think she meant by this statement.

Post-visit Activities

1. Create an artwork or write a poem inspired by a landscape, place or environment that is significant to you.
2. Vicki Couzens' series of etchings are representations of creatures, places and customs that are not always visible. *ngayook leerrpeen* (White Cockatoo Song) is a visual interpretation of Brian Laurence's sound recording. Make your own recordings of your local/ school environment and translate these into a visual medium.
3. Discuss the following statement with reference to two artworks in the exhibition.

'At a time when many natural systems are on the verge of collapse it is important to reconnect with the fabric of the world'.³

John Wolseley – *The South Project*
4. What is native title? Find more information about the landmark court case that granted native title rights to the Gunditjmara of southwest Victoria in March 2007. You might also like to research the painting *No Title*, 1998 by Stephen Bush that deals with the issue of native title.



2. IMAGINATIVE AND NEW WAYS OF MAKING ART

The artists in the exhibition have used a diverse range of materials, techniques and processes to express their individual encounters with the landscape including the use of collaboration. Here are three examples.

John Wolseley is an artist who paints and draws out in the Australian bush. He is interested in exploring how landscape is a dynamic system of which we are all a part. His way of working has been described as idiosyncratic. During the past four years, he has developed a particular type of drawing which he calls 'frottage'. It involves moving sheets of paper over trees and branches that have been blackened by bushfire. This approach can be seen as a collaboration between artist and landscape.

As he made his way through the Cobboboonee Forest, he wrapped and rubbed sheets of paper over and around charred trunks and branches, lightly and slowly in a kind of dance. Washes of pigment were then poured over the sheets of paper and they were left to dry resting on the ground and sometimes by the heat of the campfire.⁴ Bruised by the colours and textures of the landscape, the paper was then worked on in the studio where detailed paintings, often deriving from observation drawings in the field, were added. For example, a Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater seen at Lake Monibeong features in one of his works in the exhibition. These frottage drawings attempt to capture in a broad sense the experience and tactile nature of the forest as Wolseley's body moved through it.

Questions

1. What is 'frottage'?
2. How do Wolseley's works capture the experience of walking through the Cobboboonee Forest?
3. Sonograms are sound waves which have been converted to electric impulses that are processed to form an image displayed on a computer monitor. How has Wolseley made reference to sonograms in these works?

OPPOSITE

John WOLSELEY

The Sound of the Forest –

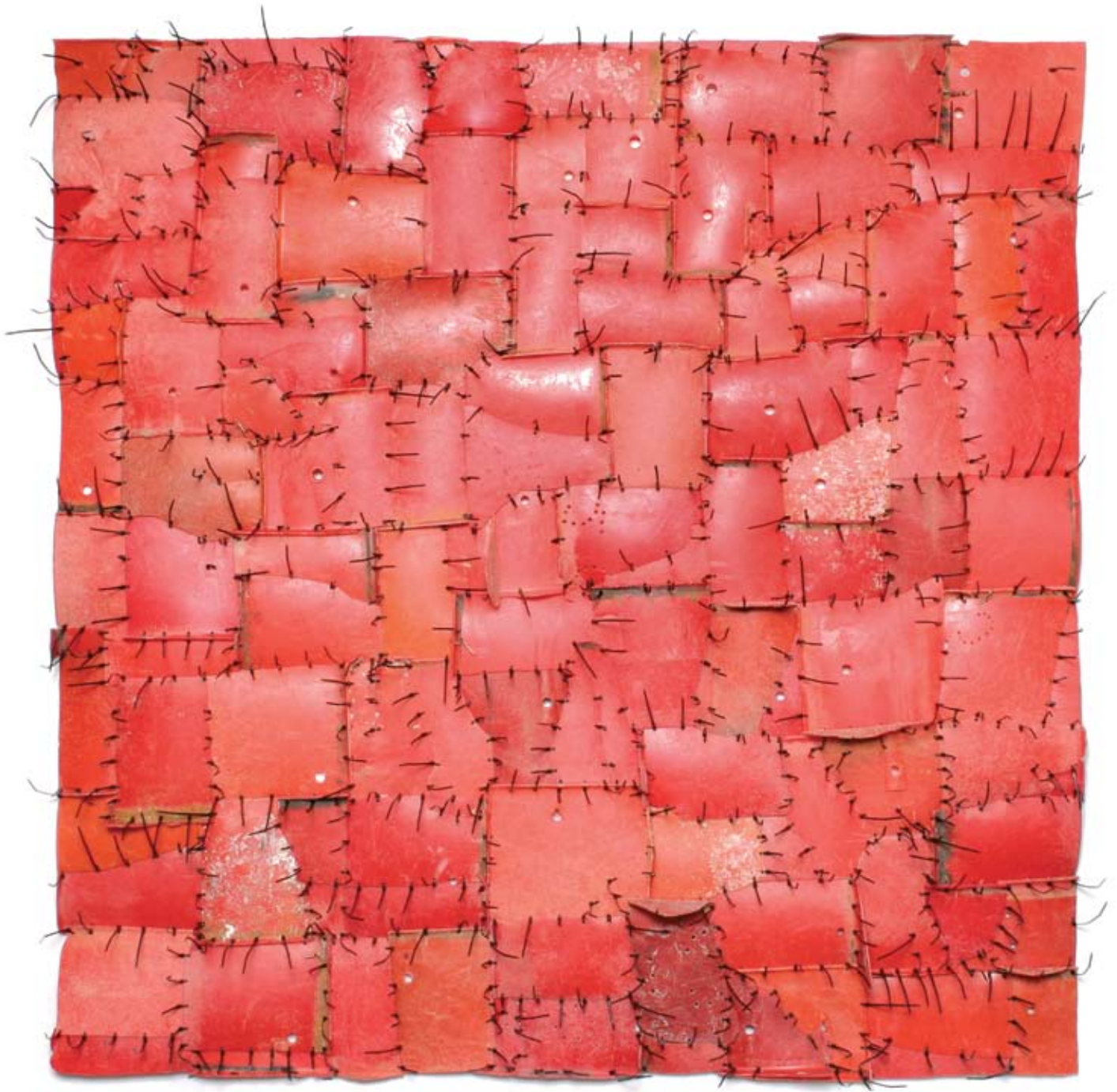
Cobobobonee Sonograms (detail) 2006 - 2007

carbonized wood, watercolour, graphite, paper

Courtesy the artist, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery

(Sydney) and Australian Galleries (Melbourne)

Photographer: Terence Bogue



ABOVE
Carmel WALLACE
Red Sea 2 2006
beach-found plastic, cable-ties
Courtesy the artist and
Gallery 101 (Melbourne)
Photographer: Terence Bogue

Carmel Wallace also employs some unconventional methods and materials in the creation of her mixed media and sculptural work. Passionate about the environment, her home territory of Portland has become her main source of inspiration in recent years and a collecting ground for the unusual materials she employs in her art making.

She is primarily concerned with the human need to make a connection with landscape and place in her work. To achieve this she collected found objects and materials during the walk that indicated some form of human interaction with the area, such as the detritus remaining from fishing, forestry and shipping industries. Her description of her collection and use of materials is below.

'Discovery Bay offered me materials on its tide-lines: plastic broken free from cray-pots, and jettisoned cargo wedges once used to hold logs, including those from local forests, on ships bound for the paper mills of Japan. These materials collected from Discovery Bay and the weathered triangular motifs that signpost the walk, became my palette, their repetition of form echoing the rhythm and cadence of walking. They speak of the way nature is negotiated by people in these particular environs: of the local fishing and forest industries and the movement of ships to and from the Port of Portland. Time spent in the elements, at sea and on the beach, is encoded in their shapes, colours and surfaces: the marks of human crafting modified by this environment, telling tales of a particular place over time.'

My verandah is groaning with red plastic cray-pot throats, fishing ropes, floats, and other strange industrial objects that defy definition. The sea continues to purge itself of these foreign bodies. I continue to relieve its tide-lines of them. There seems no end in sight, but we work together, the sea and I, in a continuous cycle of purging and collecting'.
Carmel Wallace, 2007

Questions

1. Carmel Wallace brings high-art into an everyday situation by making art from found objects rather than expensive materials more traditionally associated with art making. Does this affect the value of her art?
2. Carmel Wallace's work comments on the need to protect the area of the Great South West Walk and its biodiversity. The region has suffered decades of intense logging which has wiped out great ancestor trees, broken the connected canopies that once kept the forest floor cool, wet and less fire-prone and threatened rare flora and fauna such as the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo.⁵ How is this reflected in Carmel Wallace's work?
3. Carmel Wallace stated, 'The presence of red may signal not only danger, violence, and sacrifice, but also vitality, passion and transformation. It is therefore a colour to be reckoned with'. Choose one of her works to discuss her symbolic use of the colour red.



Collaboration – Nicky Hepburn and Ilka White

The use of nontraditional art practices in order to question and challenge traditional understandings of art and its significance can be seen as a characteristic of postmodern art practice. Collaboration in art questions the convention of single authorship associated with traditional art practice. For example, in this exhibition, the individual artistic styles of the artists Nicky Hepburn and Ilka White have been merged in their collaborative work *Weather Vanes*, 2007. In the words of the artists, 'the work has morphed and evolved between us – its authorship indistinguishable'.

Prior to the walk, Nicky Hepburn and Ilka White previously collaborated on numerous projects. Although specializing in different areas, Hepburn in metal and White in textiles, they found they were drawn to similar forms and textures, and had a very compatible approach to art making. Much of their collaborative work has been based on the 'strange beauty of flotsam and jetsam'.

In *Weather Vanes*, both artists were equally involved in the design, making and installation of the work. In the past they had preferred to keep to their own mediums but since the walk they have been more inclined to become involved in each other's processes. For example, both artists constructed the metal stems and attached the feathers for this work.

Questions

1. Look at the collaborative work by Nicky Hepburn and Ilka White, *Weather Vanes*. What do you find interesting about this work. Think about the design, making and installation processes in your response.
2. Why is collaboration considered part of postmodern art practice?

POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

1. Imagine that you are John Wolseley out in the bush. Make your own frottage drawing by taking rubbings from the landscape (this could be your school landscape or local parkland) and do some detailed observation drawings. Combine these to create an artwork inspired by John Wolseley's way of working.
2. Research Surrealist artist Max Ernst who first used the term 'frottage'.
3. Carmel Wallace collected objects and materials she found washed up on the shore to use in her work. Find an everyday object or material such as plastic bottles and use it in the creation of a new artwork that is based on an environmental issue.
4. Other artists who have used everyday objects and materials in their art include Marcel Duchamp, Mike Brown, Rosalie Gascoigne, and Lucia Usmiani. Research one of these artists to compare and contrast with Carmel Wallace's work. Consider the rationale behind the artists' choice of objects/materials and the concerns they address in their art.
5. Mike Brown collaborated with fellow artists Ross Crothall and Colin Lanceley in the early 1960s. They were known collectively as the Imitation Realists. Research their collaborative work and compare it to more recent collaborations such as the work of artist collectives like Damp and the collaborations of Nicki Hepburn and Ilka White in the exhibition.
6. Collaborate with someone to make a work of art that is based on natural forms that you have both collected from the landscape.



ABOVE
Nicky HEPBURN
Xanthorrhoea (detail) 2007
fine silver, sterling silver, copper
Courtesy the artist
Photographer: Terence Bogue

3. ART AND SCIENCE

There are links that can be drawn between art and science in the Walk art project. As has been mentioned, many of the artists were inspired to make art addressing issues related to environmental science. Also the artists' process of collecting information through research and investigation in the field can be seen to echo scientific methodology.

Many of the artists were inspired to address issues relating to the environment in their art. In particular, Jan Learmonth, Carmel Wallace, Vicki Couzens and John Wolseley were all interested in focusing on environmental change in the area and the affect it has had on forest, river and coastal habitats and biodiversity.

Another correlation between art and science in the walk project was the importance of research and analysis to the artists. The process of undertaking a three week investigative journey was just as important as the final exhibition. During their time in the field, the artists sought to discover what they wanted to express about the landscape and its inhabitants in their art. Their research methods included annotated drawings from observation, selective sound recordings and photography, soil samples for colour matching and the collection of found materials to be used in the making of their final works. This investigative process can be likened to scientific methodology, their artworks being the artists' findings or hypotheses.

Like scientists, the artists in this exhibition attempt to understand the self and the world around us. However, artists are not expected to find the answer or final truth as in science.⁶ Rather, they are interested in communicating their experiences and personal responses to others. As art is subjective, the artworks in this exhibition present a number of different possible meanings rather than one final conclusion.



Jan LEARMONTH
Journal extract
Courtesy the artist

Questions

1. Choose one artist and discuss how his or her inspiration and/or methods are closely related to science.
2. Find one artwork that could be used as a springboard for discussion in a Biology or Science classroom. Explain.
3. Look at the images of artist journals below. Are they artworks in themselves or pure research diaries?

POST-VISIT ACTIVITY

1. Research other artists who have used science as their inspiration or art making methods. For example, Patricia Piccinini, Stelarc and Vera Möller. Choose one of their artworks and propose a number of different interpretations as to what their work is about.



Carmel WALLACE
Journal extract
Courtesy the artist



ABOVE
Peter CORBETT
Journey into Light
(Discovery Bay) 2007
stills from DVD
Courtesy the artist

4. THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE ARTIST

Throughout history the artist has played many roles. Prior to the invention of the camera, one of the key roles of the artist was to be a recorder of information. For example, the artists who travelled with the early explorers needed to be able to record what they saw in a realistic and accurate manner to preserve a true account of what was seen on an expedition.⁷ These artists, such as Ferdinand Bauer, who accompanied Matthew Flinders on his voyage of discovery to Australia (1801-1803), specialised in the drawing of plant and animals and often worked en plein air.⁸

The artists from the Walk art project also carefully recorded what they saw, heard and felt during their expedition. Working out in the field, their thoughts often turned to the explorers as they encountered the unique landscape and wildlife and indigenous people for the first time. Some of their final works appear to be realistic reproductions of the environment such as Peter Corbett's video recording, Brian Laurence's soundscape, and John Wolseley's *Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater – Lake Monibeong*. However, their artworks are more than just records.

For example, while John Wolseley's paintings record the minutiae of plant, bird and insect life, they are also about the bigger picture – encompassing environmental issues such as the poetics of fire, habitat and a sense of cyclic time. Wolseley says: 'As I move my paper against and within the burnt trees I am part of the physical structure of that particular habitat and also within the dimension of the sound of it.'⁹ Similarly, Brian Laurence and Peter Corbett's media works are highly personal portrayals of the Walk capturing the essence of being there and the feelings and emotions experienced by the artists.

The role of the contemporary artist is no longer limited to recorder of information. Rather, artists today see their work as an open ended activity which is about expressing a statement, portraying emotions, and asking questions. When we look at the work of the artists in this exhibition we might consider that some of them have taken on the role of social commentator as they express their feelings about human society and our relationship with the environment.

Questions

1. Both Peter Corbett and Brian Laurence have not exhibited their work in an art gallery setting before. Their work has been primarily presented in a museum environment including the Melbourne Zoo and the open range zoo at Werribee Park. What do you think is different about their work for this exhibition? Is it documentation, art or both?
2. The role of the artist has changed and the boundaries distinguishing what is art have become blurred. Choose either the work of Nicky Hepburn or Ilka White to discuss this statement. Is their work art, design or both?
3. Choose one artist that you believe has taken on the role of social commentator? Explain why you think so.

POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

1. Imagine that you are the Assistant Curator of this exhibition and you have been asked to research the work of British artist Richard Long. Find out how his oeuvre relates to the Walk exhibition as a whole and how his work questions traditional notions of art.
2. Take part in a landscape painting master class with John Wolseley by following his instructions below:

'Remember to look at the patterns and minute detail of the landscape. You will find that the patterns on a grasshopper's outer wing case says as much about the nature of the place as the broader shapes of the whole view. In fact they can lead you into an understanding of the dynamic of the particular landforms you are in. Often in a painting it is good to 'particularise' - that's to say paint the minutiae of plant, insect or feather, and then to try to link and relate these passages to the bigger more generalised shapes of the landscape. Or visa versa. Allow time to be in a place before starting painting. Let the landscape sink into you. Move within it, investigate and don't forget to daydream'.¹⁰

detritus

any disintegrated material; debris.

catchment

a drainage area, especially of a reservoir or river.

literal

in accordance with, involving, or being the natural or strict meaning of the words or word.

metaphorical

a figure of speech in which a term or phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable, in order to suggest a resemblance.

native title

the right to land or water enjoyed by indigenous people who have maintained their connection to the land or water and whose possession under their traditional law or customs is recognised by Australian law.

idiosyncratic

any tendency, characteristic, mode of expression, or the like, peculiar to an individual.

pigment

a colouring matter or substance.

tactile

having to do with the sense of touch.

cadence

the beat of any rhythmical movement.

encoded

to put into coded form, as a message, etc.

postmodern

art/postmodernism any of a number of trends in art or literature which developed in the 1970s as a reaction to the idea of modernism with its emphasis on individual expression, progressing through a sequence of styles.

flotsam and jetsam

wreckage floating upon the sea or washed ashore, odds and ends.

weather vane

device fixed upon a spire or other elevated object in such a way as to move with the wind and indicate its direction.

artist collective

a group of artists working together to create art. Their work challenges the traditional idea that art is created by one individual.

methodology

a systematic approach to scientific inquiry based on logical principle, employed in various special sciences.

hypotheses

set of propositions suggested as an explanation for the occurrence of some specified group of phenomena, either to guide investigation or accepted as highly probable in the light of established facts.

annotated

with the addition of written notes.

minutiae

the small intricate detail.



LEFT
Ilka WHITE
Casting (detail) 2007
nylon monofilament, cotton,
silk, linen, viscose, rayon
Courtesy the artist
Photographer: Terence Bogue

- 1 'In far South-West Victoria the changes to the land, its forests, woodlands and wetlands are some of the most severe in the whole state. In the main river basins, the Glenelg-Hopkins and Wimmera, native vegetation cover is down to less than 13%. This means over 86% of the land is now used for food and wood crops, pasture and other industrial activities. In this situation many wild animals have become locally extinct and others are declining'
www.wilderness.org.au/regions/vic/south-west-victoria
- 2 In March 2007, in a landmark court case, the Gunditjmara of southwest Victoria were granted native title rights. An agreement was reached between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples acknowledging the significance of the cultural history of the area and pledging to protect it. The case was in the court system for 11 years. The turning point was a hearing in 2005 when the 'Federal Court travelled to the claim area to hear evidence from Gunditjmara elders. There, the Gunditjmara's connection to the land became clear: the court heard of the existence of fish traps used to catch eels and fish for thousands of years, and the remains of ancient stone huts that marked the Gunditjmara as a group of settlers rather than nomads.'
Kenneth Nguyen, 'Tears of joy as land struggle comes to an end', *The Age*, Saturday March 31, 2007, News section, p. 7.
- 3 John Wolseley, www.southproject.org/speakers/wolseley
- 4 Martina Copely, curator of Walk, correspondence with writer, October 2007.
- 5 Geraldine Ryan, The Wilderness Society, Victoria, specialist presenter on the Walk.
- 6 Annette Lewis, Is the Gap between Science and Art Closing?, www.artelaide.com.au
- 7 www.abc.net.au/navigators/naturalists/bauer_print.htm
- 8 www.abc.net.au/navigators/naturalists/bauer_print.htm
- 9 *Land Marks II*, exhibition catalogue, Australian Galleries, Melbourne, 2007.
- 10 www.abc.net.au/tv/paintingaustralia/stories/bendigo.htm

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NETS Victoria is the peak body for visual arts touring in the state of Victoria. We provide opportunities for regional Victorians to access and engage with the best contemporary art, craft and design.

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Winda Mara Aboriginal Corporation



Cape Bridgewater Coastal Camp



Macs Hotel Portland



Nelson Hotel



Glenelg River Cruises

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