notes and further comments

1. The exception being the first two prints which are set in Wolli Creek and were produced in the latter half of the 1990s.

2. With the Three Sisters one can perceive a direct relationship between land and the cosmos. The Three Sisters are all that remains of the seven stone towers that once arose above the grand valley at Katoomba, the seven stone sisters were a geographical feature mirroring the Seven Sisters that still hover in the night sky, a link that can only be imagined by the human mind. The Ancient Greeks and the Aboriginals share a similar theme when it comes to the legends associated with the Seven Sisters Dreaming. This star cluster is called by Europeans the Pleiades while in Aboriginal Australia they have been labelled the Meamai. To the Greeks they are the daughters of Atlas and nymphs to Artemis. They were also Nysaiades or nursemaids and teachers to a young Dionysus. In Aboriginal culture many identities also exist around them such as being female attendants to an eagle who is now Sirius after being taken away by a crow who is now the star Canopus. Yet, curiously, what is common with both sets of sisters – Ancient and Aboriginal – is that they are often chased by a young man who lusts after them, but fortunately for these maidens, are turned into birds and fly to the constellations – as they do not desire him - he never catches up. He is represented by Orion - the hunter. Death chasing. Yet, not succeeding. This is the ‘final hope.’ One could speculate that the Ancient Greeks envisaged a deeper eternity that at the wheeling edge of the waters of Oceanus that swirl around this disc we know as Earth, there is amidst the threat of plunging into a nether world where sea and sky meet there are also beautiful islands where the gods dwell, of which the pure in spirit can join them. The universe is vast. Filled with many ‘islands’, which this Earth is yet one of them.

Billions of years ago – according to what Australian astrophysicists have shown - light may have travelled at slightly different speeds. The inference is that light may refract through little extra dimensions affecting its speed. Theories are developing that other dimensions with their yet unknown physical properties may exist which are like splinters brought into being the moment the universe was created. Apparently, the speed of light may keep changing as the universe changes in size, as it gets remarkably bigger as the volume of the universe grows; we live in a curved universe, where an unseen reality will always exist, like the unseen reality that lurks within our memory, which unconsciously affects our point-of-view; changing speeds of light, (along with changing refractions of forgetfulness and reminiscence) leads me to think that our perception of physical reality has to take into account a cosmic darkness of unknown dimensions that may never see ‘the light of day’ – so to speak.

To continue the mythological allegory with the Three Sisters one could also compare them to the Three Fates and the string which is used by these mythical women to determine the length of a human life can be compared to the thread used by Theseus to preserve his life in the labyrinth; thread is a symbol of life, yet its length determines the span of life available and this length is determined by the fates, they have the final say, yet we are determined to live, to make deals, negotiate with fate, to be like Penelope who kept spinning thread to fend off fate.

4. On the matter of labelling – whether it be to a whole continent or to a single object – I would like to also consider Marcel Duchamp’s interest in the relationship between language and art. Duchamp was interested in an ‘art for the mind’ - rather than for the eyes – and saw how an artwork’s title could directly affect the way an art piece was viewed, studied and interpreted. Thus I am aware that when I apply allegorical/mythological and ‘cosmic’ titles to a print I could be affecting the way the viewer approaches the image and any denoted mental concept. Marcel Duchamp’s idea of found objects is also to my liking as I consider that when I go bushwalking and come across a particular terrestrial feature which grabs my attention (mountain, tree, stream, rocks etc) I can assume I have ‘discovered’ a natural ‘found object’ to which I can respond too whether it be linguistically, artistically etc. Found objects which may also be envisaged as ‘totems’ for the mind to actualize concepts.

Archangel. Big Marley Beach. (Nature’s Sculpture-by-the-Sea).

Angel Wings’. Bondi B&W. 6’X4”. copperplate

Down from the cliffs as one approaches Bondi while walking along the coast from Bronte there used to be this sculpture made with corrugated iron and old bicycle parts jutting out from the rocks by the sea. This endearing iconic ‘home-made’ art work existed well before the more well-known mainstream annual sculpture-by-the-sea exhibition. It is a great shame this sculpture no longer exists.

far left: ’Three Fates’ rocks at Little Marley. Royal National Park.
left: ’Pillar of Time’ tree at Minnammorra Rainforest. Jamberoo.

Satan’.
Bobbin Head National Park. B&W. 6”X 4”
sugarlift.
aquatint zinc plate.

’Judas in the Mouth of Lucifer’. B&W. 6’X4”. copperplate & Zeus throwing
’Prometheus down the Fissure’. B&W. 6’X4”. copperplate. Wolli Creek.

- 4 -
The top row of photos & the first in the middle row were taken at Macphersons Beach along the walk from Bronte to Bondi. The two rocks in the last image remind me of cells that form the building blocks of life. The other photos were taken in Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park & Bobbin Head. The rock wave in the middle row seems as if time has been fossilized – ‘captured’ - which can also be said for rock flow. At Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park there is a rock engraving of an emu that references a collection of star gatherings, clouds of dark cosmic dust & constellations in the night sky labelled by differing Aboriginal groups as the ‘Emu in the Sky’. For an interpretation of the night sky from an Aboriginal perspective look at ‘Emu Dreaming. An Introduction to Aboriginal Astronomy’ by Ray and Cilla Norris. Also try their website: www.EmuDreaming.com which is very informative.
5. In regards to *Sunset. Greenpatch. Jervis Bay* two sketches and two photos of the Jervis bay environs. The first sketch is of an extinct volcano on the other side of a stretch of water at a bay where a local Aboriginal community is situated. It – along with the photo of the eroding rock pillars - reveals to me the paradox of undetectable ‘eternal time’ intersecting with the visible physical world which perhaps leads to or influences mortal decay; one could surmise what erodes ends up disappearing to the wind, air, earth and water – to the elements of the universe; this dispersed material that is forgone is a sort of a spiritual growth as this ‘lost physical property’ resides anew in perhaps an unseen quantum realm.

6. See the next page for some basic information about the etching process.

7. On the plane were five other Arunda women who were being transported to various communities. It is easy to see how such outback terrain from the air references so much Aboriginal Central Australian desert painting. On Youtube is an uploaded digital version of the Super 8 film and you can go to the website to find the link. There are also Youtube links to a video of a visual montage Australian landscape and coastal etchings called *Mother Earth, Father Sky* interspersed with several remarks by philosophers and writers (as diverse from Marcus Aurelius to Jack Kerouac) as well as some short films looking at the ‘light of God’ on Cooks River. The whole trip to Amata from Sydney was taken in the early 90s possibly 1993 or 1994 and was in May, June or July as it was winter like weather conditions in Central Australia.

8. Cliff face in the Blue Mountains near Sydney. NSW and other similar Flow of Time etchings (to form a triptych. See above).

9. The Pinnacles. W.A. which are several hours north of Perth and which I visited on a daytrip.

10. To coin a phrase from John Berger re: ‘Ways of Seeing’ by John Berger. Published in 1972. Penguin Books & based on his celebrated BBC TV documentary series. It could be said the German photographer Karl Bossfeldt (1865-1932) with his celebrated close up somewhat sculptural shots of plants has also affected the way Nature – through the prism of art – is viewed by humanity.
middle row: Notes of the Universe. Royal National Park.
above: La Perouse craters. La Perouse rockpool serpentine line. Sydney.
Left to right: Grand old tree in park neighbouring Central Station. Sydney. Dinosaur rock. Wolli Creek.
Above are several triptychs and diptychs as they would be displayed together (printed on the one piece of paper). It is to be noted the option available to the Alpha and Omega diptychs of the wide white space between the two prints. With the Mt Purgatory diptych I look at a Curramoors cliff as an outcrop of Mt. Purgatory. Such is the way the mind wanders while resting during a long bushwalk. To also imagine that on top of this rock face may have once laid Prometheus; chained by Zeus for giving humanity the gift of fire. His liver was eaten away everyday by an eagle; finally the ‘fire-giver’ was rescued by Hercules. The hope of all the purgatorial: from unbearable endurance can come eternal release.
On a bushwalk in May 2012 through Garigal National Park in northern Sydney certain ‘found’ natural features invigorated my mind once more with the notions of the cosmos such as a ‘keyhole black hole’; radiant sparkling sunlight on the river; rock formations that reminded me of nebulas and asteroids; a row of trees akin to cosmic waves and the soft contrast a bark tree seemingly growing out of a hard boulder as if to allude to the notion of how matter can defy our preconceptions of it and for me how that which is ever growing and organic can prevail over what is more or less a static material substance; (it is almost akin on a metaphysical level to life prevailing over death, a positive thought belying to hope).

On the next page is some information rudimentary information about the etching process in regards to the use of metal plates but here are some other images of a Cooks River riverbend (photo) treated in different mediums: a. plastic drypoint; b. linocut; c. sepia ink drawing.
**the etching process** - ink is captured in grooves on a metal plate and then pressed onto wet paper to leave an image. I often use nitric acid to prepare the plate and this involves placing a syrupy brown wax over it which then hardens. I then scratch lines into the wax with a needle until I have exposed the metal plate underneath. The acid eats into the exposed metal to leave a groove to capture the ink.

**Drypoint** - it should be noted that the needle can be used to directly scratch into the plate without any wax on it and this is called ‘dry point’.

**Aquatint** - aquatint is when a fine powder rosin powder is melted over the plate that allows for an area of dark to black tone to be produced.

**Sugarlift** - sugarlift is a substance that looks like ink and has sugar inside it. The sugarlift is usually brushed onto the plate and then it is dipped into luke-warm water. The sugar particles expand & lift off the plate so the positive space that is formed can be exposed to the acid.

**Combinations of etching methods** - one can combine drypoint, aquatint & sugarlift on the same plate. The printmaker can also use any other technique; the textural effects on Trojan Wall was achieved by brushing nitric acid directly onto the plate with a brush; this is a spit bite which I first read about in regards to etchings by Jasper Johns. There is also an open bite which refers to leaving a wide space on the plate for the acid to work on without applying an aquatint.

**a passing comment on sketching** - although photography is convenient and very useful sketching can also have an immediacy to readily capture the ‘life force’ of a subject (even if the object being drawn is inanimate); the drawing can also be a reflection of what is going on ‘psychically’ inside the artist. Sketching can be a ‘spiritual exercise’ exploring not only the visual but the immaterial. Drawing often subjectively expresses what is seen but it can also lead to a vivid awareness of what is ‘unseen’.

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**‘Forming Galaxies’. Bulli.**

**‘Kandinsky Tree.’ Cooks River.** This is a sketch with which I later did an etching whereby I looked at the underlying linear structure of a river tree. Cezanne-like perhaps but I reference Kandinsky as I was reading about his art at the time & thus thinking of his ideas including the spiritual in art when I produced this image. By way of Kandinsky’s ink drawings in particular I have had reinforced a somewhat dual ‘microscopic/cosmological tendency’ to viewing nature. To me it seems the likes of Mondrian, Kandinsky, Georgia O’Keefe, Cezanne shifted in various degrees towards abstraction through their study of the underlying structure in nature. In particular I think of Mondrian’s famous tree series where we see the development of his tree studies from a naturalistic approach to one that is purely abstract.

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seed of the universe gordon’s bay; rock of sisyphus. wolli creek; prometheus rocks botany bay national park; prometheus rocks (bbnp); (wc); seed of the universe (gb) two drawings of: chromosome reeds. (cooks river).
A zinc and copper plate followed with etching needles, charbonnel ink, a tube of easy wipe gel which is mixed into the ink on the plate to make it easier to wipe off, a file, spatula, nitric acid bottle, an ink dabber, a black wiping rubber, gauze known as tarlatan), nitric acid bottle, brown powder rosin that is sprinkled onto the plate using a sieve covered in stocking as can be seen in the first side image (you place some powder in the sieve with a teaspoon and then slightly shake and tap the sieve with your finger as the powder spreads over the plate. When finished the powdered plate is placed on a hot plate so it melts. The light coloured powder goes a much darker hue when it sufficiently melts. In this photo is also a magnifier that can be used to see if the grooves have been bitten to a sufficient depth; as well a small sugarlift bottle. The plastic cylindrical pourer contains the acid that has been mixed with water which is then placed into the acid bath tray. The tool with the flat curved top is a burnisher which is used to rub down the plate to make grooves and other plate areas lighter. (A groove or area can be made darker by further acid biting ). The second side image has a plate in an acid bath and a nitric bottle beside it. The feather is used to wipe away bubbles that form as the nitric acid bites into the metal. The bubbles have to be wiped away so the acid can still bite the metal. Many printmakers these days also use ferric chloride as a safer option to nitric acid.
Fallen Angel triptych. Jervis Bay. South Coast.

Jervis Bay with eroding rocks.

Conception of Life. 6"X 4". sepia. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.


Conception of Life. Wombarra. South Coast. 6"X 4". sepia. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.

Mangrove. Cooks River. Sydney. 10cm X 7cm. sepia. aquatint. zinc plate. 


Reeds of Life. Cooks River. Sydney. 10cm X 7cm. sepia. aquatint. zinc plate. 


The River is Calm. Cooks River. Sydney. 10cm X 7cm. B&W. aquatint. zinc plate. "...still the sky is blue..." Cooks River. Sydney. 10cm X 7cm. Blue & black on white. aquatint. zinc plate. 


Introduction (excluding prints in the main gallery).


Mother Earth, Father Sky the flow of time and Heraclitus’s river called reality. Flow of Time. Blue Mountains. Sydney. 10cm X 7cm B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate. 

Dance of the Pinnacles. Pinnacles. Western Australia. 10cm X 7cm B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate. 

Appendix


Satellite Plant. Cooks River. Sydney. 10cm X 7cm. sepia. aquatint. zinc plate. 

Road to Mullumbimby. Mt Chincogan. North Coast. 8"X6". B&W. zinc plate. 

White Ox. Dorrigo. North Coast. Sepia on cream. aquatint. 9"X 10". 

Bronte. Bronte. Sydney. 2cm X 6cm. drypoint. copperplate. 


Looking into the Future.

8"X 8". B&W. aquatint. zinc plate. drypoint. aquatint. zinc plate. 

Sunset Greenpatch. Jervis Bay. 8"X 4". Black on grey. drypoint. zinc plate. 

Minnamurra Tree. Jamberoo. 6"X 7". B&W. drypoint. zinc plate. 

Minnamurra Falls. Jamberoo. 6"X 4". B&W. drypoint. zinc plate. 

Ulysses & the Sirens at Bronte. 6"X 4". B&W. drypoint. copperplate. 


Angel Wings. Bondi. 6"X 4". B&W. drypoint. copperplate. 

Omega. Central Australia. 8" X 6" B&W. sugarlift.aquatint. zinc plate. 

Omega. Ibid. 


Dance of the Pinnacles. Pinnacles. Western Australia. 10cm X 7cm B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate. 

Dance of the Pinnacles. Pinnacles. Western Australia. 10cm X 7cm B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate. 

Dance of the Pinnacles. Pinnacles. Western Australia. 10cm X 7cm B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate. 


Mangrove rhythm universe. Cooks River. 10cm X 7cm. B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate. 

resurrection series

‘Fabric of the Universe.’
8”X8”. B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate.
‘Black Poles’.
8”X8”. B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate
‘Resurrection’.
8”X8”. B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate
‘Cosmic Tracers.’
9.5” X 7”. B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate
‘Reed Tranquility.’
11” X 8”. sepia. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate
‘Galaxies Swirling Towards a Black Hole.’
Middle Head. Sydney Harbour.
8” X 6”. B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate
‘Shell Nebula.’ Gordons Bay.
9.5 “ X 7”. B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate
‘Dark Matter Nebula.’
6” X 4”. sepia. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate
‘Ghost Nebula.’
6” X 4”. B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate
‘Note of the Universe.’ Royal National Park.
7” X 2”. B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate
‘Chord of the Universe.’
7” X 5.5”. B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate
‘Pillar of Time.’
9.5” X 3”. B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate.

Two experimental etchings based on mangroves with reference to linear ‘cosmic’ patterning.
10cmX7cm. B&W. Sugarlift.Aquatint. zinc plate

Mt.Kozsiousko landscape

Cooks River sunlight

Cooks River

Rockpool. Jervis Bay.

Cooks River winter light

Pinnacles