

THE UNIVERSE

IS ON LOAN FROM THE ARTIST

the universe as landscape as well as a human cosmos

the etchings of the printmaker *nicholas nicola*



leichhardt library sydney february 2016

opening evening monday february 8pm to 7.45 pm

Introduction

This exhibition mainly includes Australian landscape and coastal etchings which have been given a ‘cosmological accent’ by the artist. Many images – but certainly not all – will be selected from the online catalogue for display in the library. It is a matter of what space permits and this will not be finally determined until the exhibition is set up well after the completion of this online catalogue.¹ Many of the prints that will be on display will belong to the artist thus the subtitle of the exhibition; the etchings being ‘on loan’ for the purposes of this public display.² Many prints have frames found at weekend markets or generously given by friends to then be hand stained and professionally fitted up although there are also quite a few images which have been professionally framed or purchased ‘readymade’. All prints are personally printed, signed and titled by the artist along with the marking initial A/P. A/P stands for Artist’s Proof. Although this is an etching exhibition there is a five-photos-series of Cooks River as the Five Ancient Greek Rivers of the Underworld. Although not essential one may consider viewing these photos in conjunction with the Cooks River series of etchings. It should also be pointed out that *Goolay’yari* is the Aboriginal name of this inner Sydney river. There are also other etchings in this exhibition which are not landscapes and involve a ‘human cosmos’ that focuses on Australian suburbia, overseas images and iconography which is both ‘cross-cultural’, mythological and ‘divine’. It is hoped that some of the ‘icons’ at least maybe viewed with humanity’s ongoing perception/relationship to the cosmos in mind. (A point-of-view that may also be specifically applied to the Indonesian series). Many of these prints are the artist’s early work which never cease to be seen ‘afresh’ by a new audience. Although some of these prints maybe viewed as quirky/comical/personal there are also other images which are more social/historical/political in their nature. The titles of all images follow this introduction with all details in the Appendix.³ Footnotes, other information, source photos and drawings can also be found in various sections of the Appendix. Further writing in the way of articles that relate to particular etchings and etching series can also be discovered in the Appendix. The art reflects many notions that are certainly still maturing; (one assumes only time will tell if they are even at the moment only at an embryonic stage). The online catalogue begins with an ‘exhibition within an exhibition’ with ten etchings that were specifically uniformly framed for a previous exhibition at Bungendore Woodworks Gallery. July-August. 2011. Followed by a wide range of Australian landscape prints which eventually lead to abstractions initially based as a response to nature. As previously mentioned other works then follow dealing with different subject matters with many works actually being figurative. Apart from articles the etching process itself is also covered along with a few essays which have been initiated due to the many ideas that have come to the fore through many years of art practice - ideas, one should note, that are still developing. Visual essays especially accompany after the musings about Marcel Duchamp and found objects and were placed in when it was recently realized that February 2016 is the 100th anniversary of the initiation of that somewhat anarchic art movement known as Dada.

PART TWO & PART THREE OF THE ONLINE EXHIBITION CAN BE ACCESSED FROM THE FOLLOWING MAIN LINK:

nicholas nicola etchings leichhardt 2016 website page: <http://nicholasnicolaetchings.synthasite.com/leichhardt-2016.php>

Part Two contains the APPENDIX and the ETCHING PROCESS and Part Three contains the ESSAYS section of the catalogue which are all mentioned at the beginning of the online catalogue in this first part after the listing of the etchings. It is due to technical limits that there are three parts to the online catalogue but also one maybe only interested in just the images rather than in any accompanying material. Lastly, it should also be noted that the artist's 'homemade' website contains a wider range of etchings as well as moresource images and information:

nicholasnicolaetchings.synthasite.com (or simply type in *nicholas nicola etchings* into your search engine. Thank you).



All the best. NN.

1. Apologies that not all images will be on display. Nevertheless, at least an online catalogue allows for an extended display of more images. It should also be mentioned that this is a photo friendly exhibition so any viewer may feel free to take photographs of the prints. Thank you. 2. Nevertheless, the acquisition of various prints (some of those that are fully professionally framed and unframed versions) should become possible. 3. As this catalogue is being prepared far ahead of the physical establishment of the exhibition it should be made clear that the order of the listings of the etchings on the following pages may not necessarily be the order in which they are displayed. It is also hoped by means of Q reader barcodes that information of the etchings by way of the online catalogue (as well as on the website) can be accessed at the exhibition by people's use of their smartphones

PART TWO (APPENDIX & the ETCHING PROCESS) & PART THREE (ESSAYS & Catalogue List) OF THE ONLINE EXHIBITION CAN BE ACCESSED FROM THE FOLLOWING MAIN LINK:

nicholas nicola etchings leichhardt 2016 website page:

<http://nicholasnicolaetchings.synthasite.com/leichhardt-2016.php>

Thank You.

PART I

Main Galleries

LIST OF IMAGES

I

TEN ETCHINGS

the dance of the dead

well of life

rockface

early morning. coledale.

angel rock

heart of the universe

archangel

mangrove souls (awaiting to go to paradise)

last judgement (apocalypse)

fallen angels

COOKS RIVER/WOLLI CREEK

cooks river as the five rivers of the underworld: acheron, coctycus, lethe, phlyegethon, styx

river of lethe

mangrove

dance of the dead

fallen angel

...the sky is blue...

reeds/reeds/reeds/reeds

the river is calm

riverbend

*rhythm of life
under the shade
hades
mangrove rhythm
it will pass
beulah
old mangrove
supernova
zeus's cave (the eye of god)*

GORDONS BAY

*nebula
emergence of life/emergence of life
raveling of life
cosmos (corpuscles of the universe)
angel rock, rings of time, emergence of life (gordons bay triptych)
dark matter nebula, ghost nebula (gordons bay diptych)*

SYDNEY

*that tree, the universe
our canopy, the universe
ulysses & the siren at bronte
angel wings (the original sculpture-by-the-sea)
fallen angel/fallen angel
birth of zeus
galaxies swirling towards a black hole*

NATIONAL PARKS

three fates
falling angel
cosmic currents
tree womb/tree womb/tree womb
hydra
tree life rhythm flow
misguided angel
burnt angel/ burnt angel/ burnt angel
fallen tree galaxy
trojan wall
tree couplet
note of the universe
evolution of the universe
flow of time/flow of time/flow of time
dance of the pinnacles
black galaxy
eagle rock. curramoors.(mt.purgatory 1)
curramoors
symphony of the universe

NORTH COAST NSW/SOUTH COAST NSW/VICTORIA

road to mullumbimby
white ox
rockface, misty bluffs, early morning. coledale (coledale triptych)

*conception of life
forming galaxies
pillar of time
wisdom & youth
time totem
pillar of time
eternity
minnamorra waterfall
eroding rocks, eroding rocks (jervis bay diptych)
sunset. greenpatch. jervis bay
minnamorra tree
apostles of the universe*

CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

*alpha, omega (central Australian diptych)
alpha, omega (central australian diptych)
alpha, omega (central australian diptych)
embryo of the universe
pendulum of time
mother & child
conception of the universe with cosmic egg*

CURRENTS

*this god the river & this river the cosmos
this river, a strong brown god
white matter, dark matter*

river rhythm
currents of the universe
parallel universe
cosmic flow
cosmic tracers
reed universe

RESSURECTION

fabric of the universe, black poles, resurrection (resurrection triptych)
resurrection tree
dark matter stems of the universe
parallel universe
multiverse
looking into the future
eroding universe
accelerating universe

II

INDONESIA

nirvana
creation of the world
tree of life
adam & eve
anu krakatau is angry
borobudur

AUSTRALIANA

*kite flying. sydney park. st.peters
sydney voodoo (kings cross street festival dancing dolls)
suburban dream
speed's milk bar
black deaths in custody march. eveleigh st. redfern
zorba the greek
the swimmer
with water and courage
an angel at my park
resurrection night
indian magicians*

ICONOGRAPHY/FIGURATIVE

*the angel
manjustri
achilles
hector
eurydice mourns
flute player
the human spirit rests
luna park
neo-platonic form
shiva the cricketer
berlin orpheus
backgammon*

CENTRAL AMERICA

*guatemalan couple
nicaraguan boy
schoolhouse.solentiname
voodoo cross. havana. cuba
festival. bluefields. st.jerome's day. nicaragua
fire eater. palenque. mexico
fiesta. el salvador*

APPENDIX

*notes/sketches/images
etching process/artist information/statement*

ESSAYS

*some further introductory remarks
'...this god, the river & this river, the cosmos.'
cooks river & the light of god
nature & humanity: from the renaissance to the present
dark matter nebula & jasper johns
a question asked by suzi gablik in 1984: has modernism failed?
marcel duchamp & found objects & seventeenth century dutch art & dada & how the universe doesn't need us
(but we certainly need the universe) - followed by related visual essays: found objects; travel mementoes; johnny
cash & the innate meaningfulness of each individual life in a thousand worlds (christmas hats) & start*

CATALOGUE LIST

final image/s



EXHIBITION

I



TEN ETCHINGS

the dance of the dead

well of life

rockface

early morning. coledale.

angel rock

heart of the universe

archangel

mangrove souls (awaiting to go to paradise)

last judgement (apocalypse)

fallen angels

‘The Dance of the Dead.’ Wolli Creek.

B&W. 6”X 4”. drypoint. copper plate.

I did a somewhat abstract drawing of leaves strayed by the wind on the Mexican Day of the Dead thus the title. Whenever I go for walks through Wolli Creek I often go with a sketchbook or camera. On this particular day this natural vibrant pattern gained my special attention.

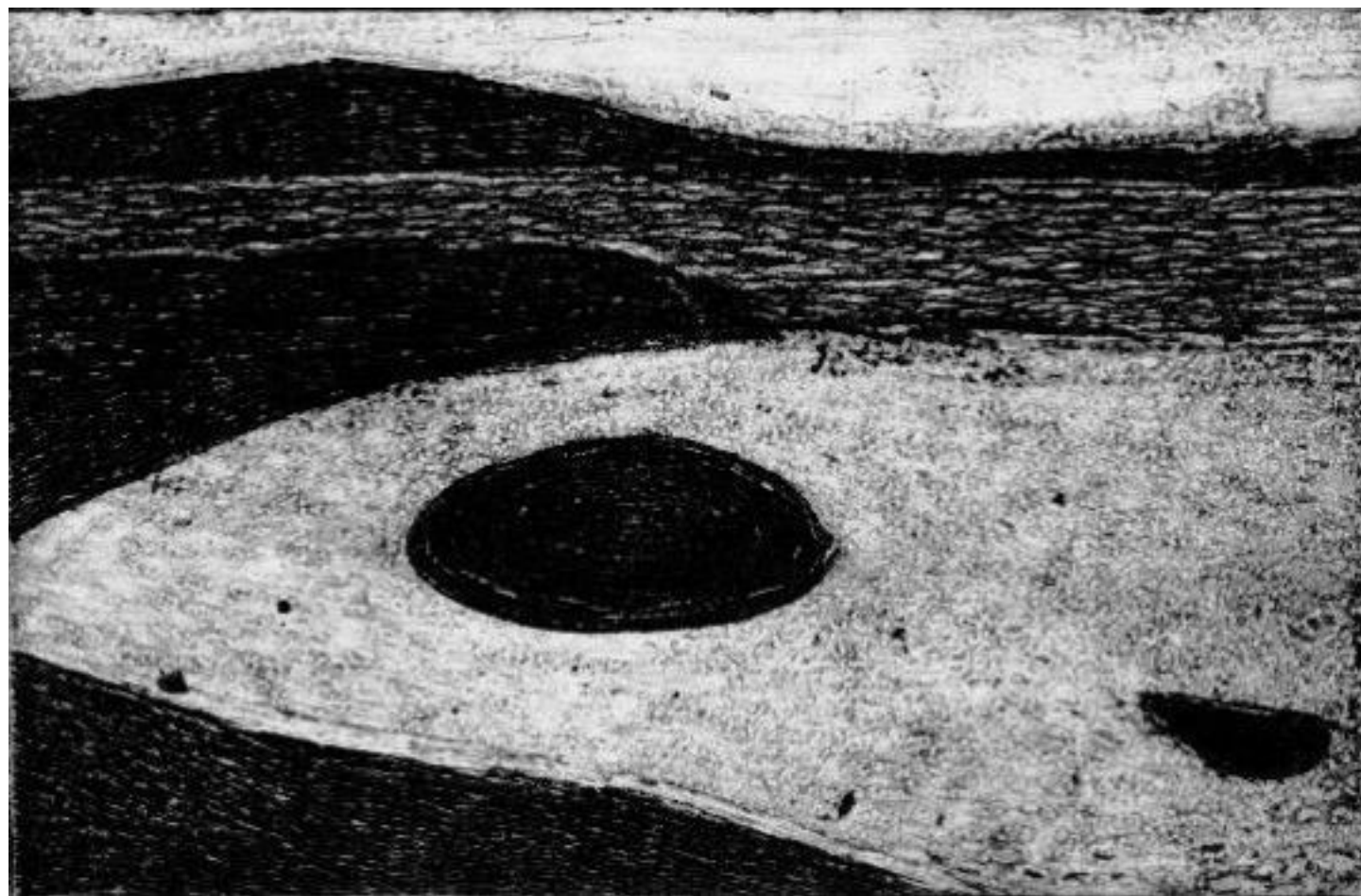


‘Well of Life.’ Shelley Beach. Cronulla.

B&W. `6”X 4”. copperplate.

I was attracted by this large dark hole in this rock formation that I came across on the way to Shelley Beach at Cronulla. Residing within it the sea water that undulated around the contours of the rocks, shaping them. Movement; life within a still darkness.

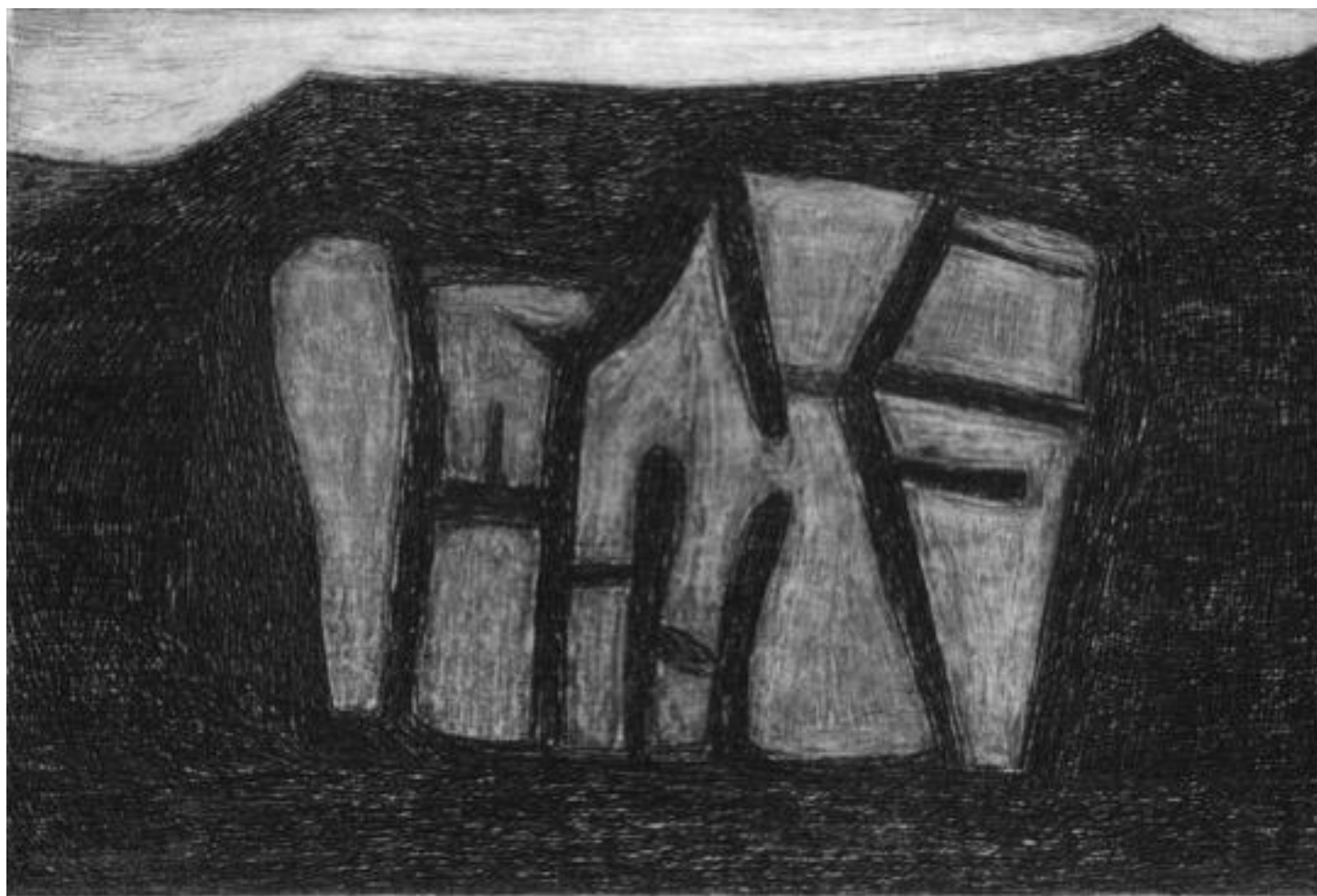
Henry David Thoreau once remarked that a lake is the ‘earth’s eye’ it is a description which I feel also befits this smaller body of water.



‘Rockface.’ Coledale.

B&W. 6”X 4”. drypoint. copperplate.

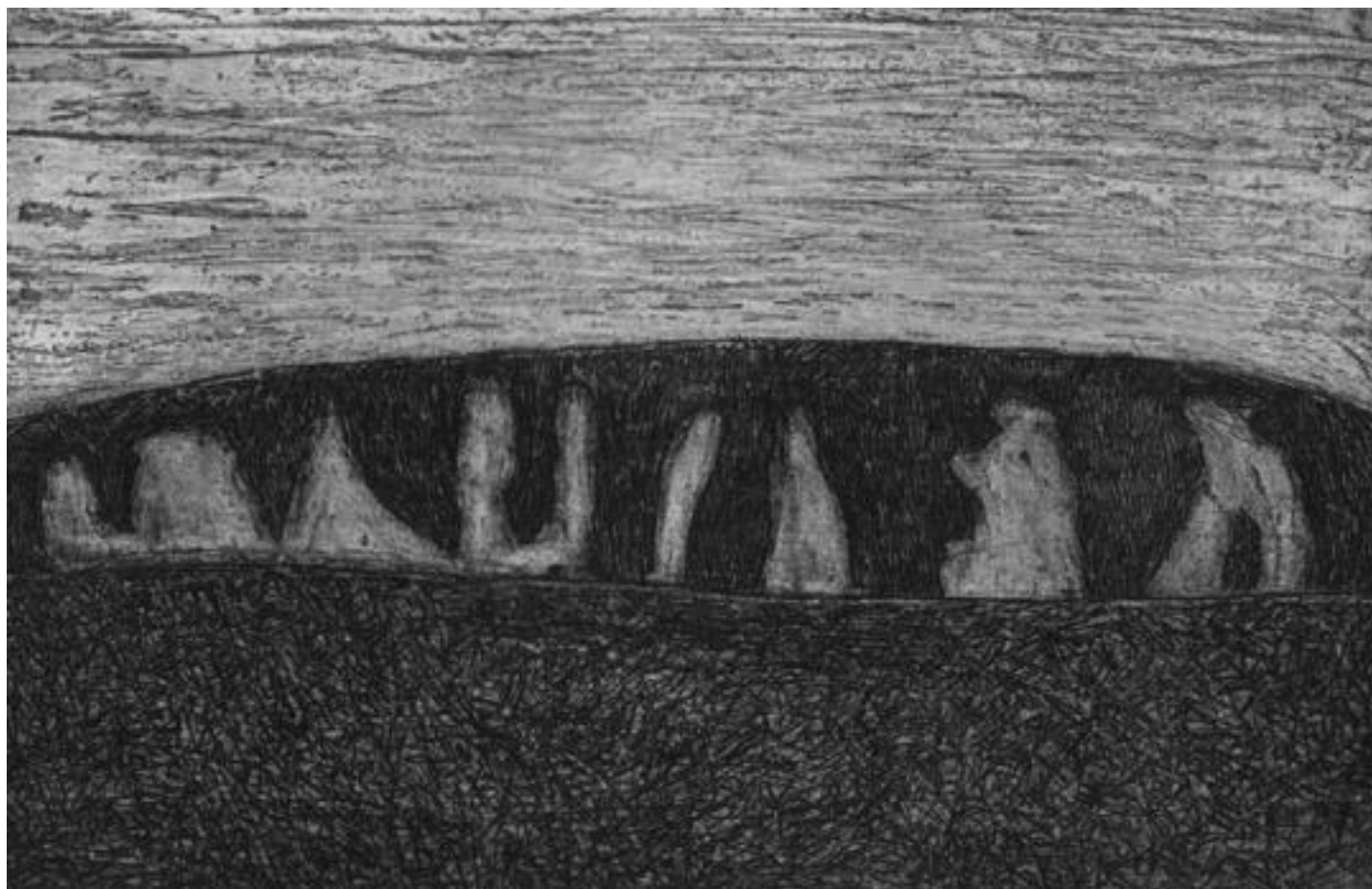
This work is based on one of many sketches which I had done in the early morning of the long grand escarpment behind the beach. I was struck by the sculptural quality of the rock face and of the interplay that existed between it and the translucent light falling on the cliffs. On a metaphysical level I equated what I saw with the equivalent interplay that I mindfully see happening between the spiritual and the material in our physical world.



‘Early Morning. Coledale.’ Coledale.

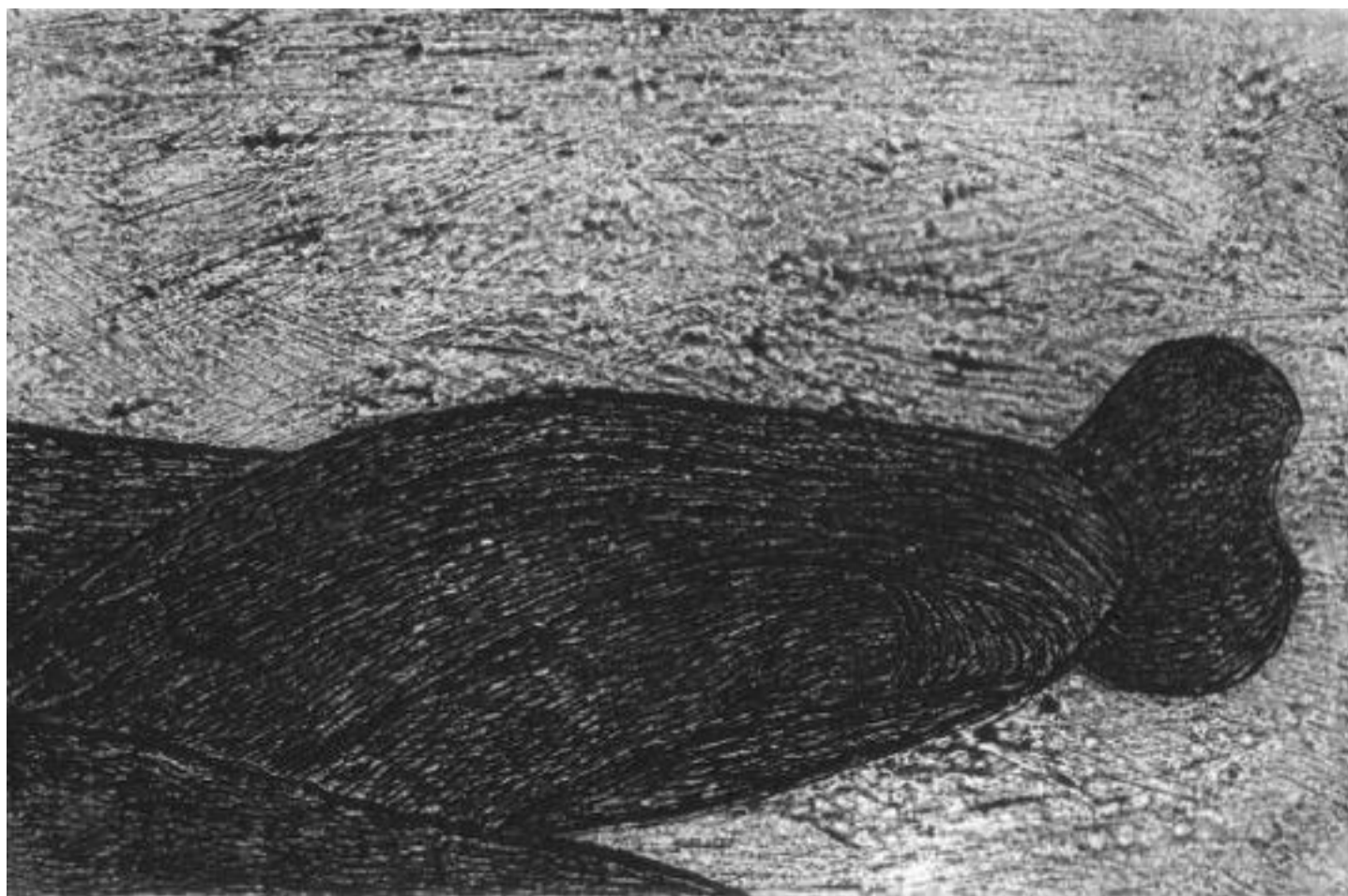
B&W. 6”X 4”. drypoint. copperplate.

Translucent immaterial, unseen light filtering over the texture of hard, dark form: this notion is what first came to my mind when I produced this image of this stretch of the Coledale cliff face at sunrise. The constant contrast of light and dark is a subconscious element which we are always aware of in our primal memory. I was staying, one weekend, long ago, at a friend-of-a-friend’s spacious light-filled house in Coledale (on the coast south of Sydney); to wake up early one Sunday morning, and - in the meditative silence - drew a series of sketches of the large protruding misty coal cliffs directly behind me. I have an ambition to capture the rather unique interplay that seems to exist to me between the spiritual and the earth (re: ‘earthiness’) that bears over the Australian terrain, especially in the bush. This work is one attempt towards this quest. A friend once commented to me that the light areas reminded her of Stonehenge and I could immediately recognise what she meant by this remark (and the connection that also exists between spirit and earth in this noble megalith structure with its monumental strutting lintel & pillar rings of weighty ‘cairns’). The Australian landscape – in particular this enormous length of rock - also as megalith.



‘Angel Rock.’ Gordons Bay. *B&W. 6”X 4”drypoint. copperplate.*

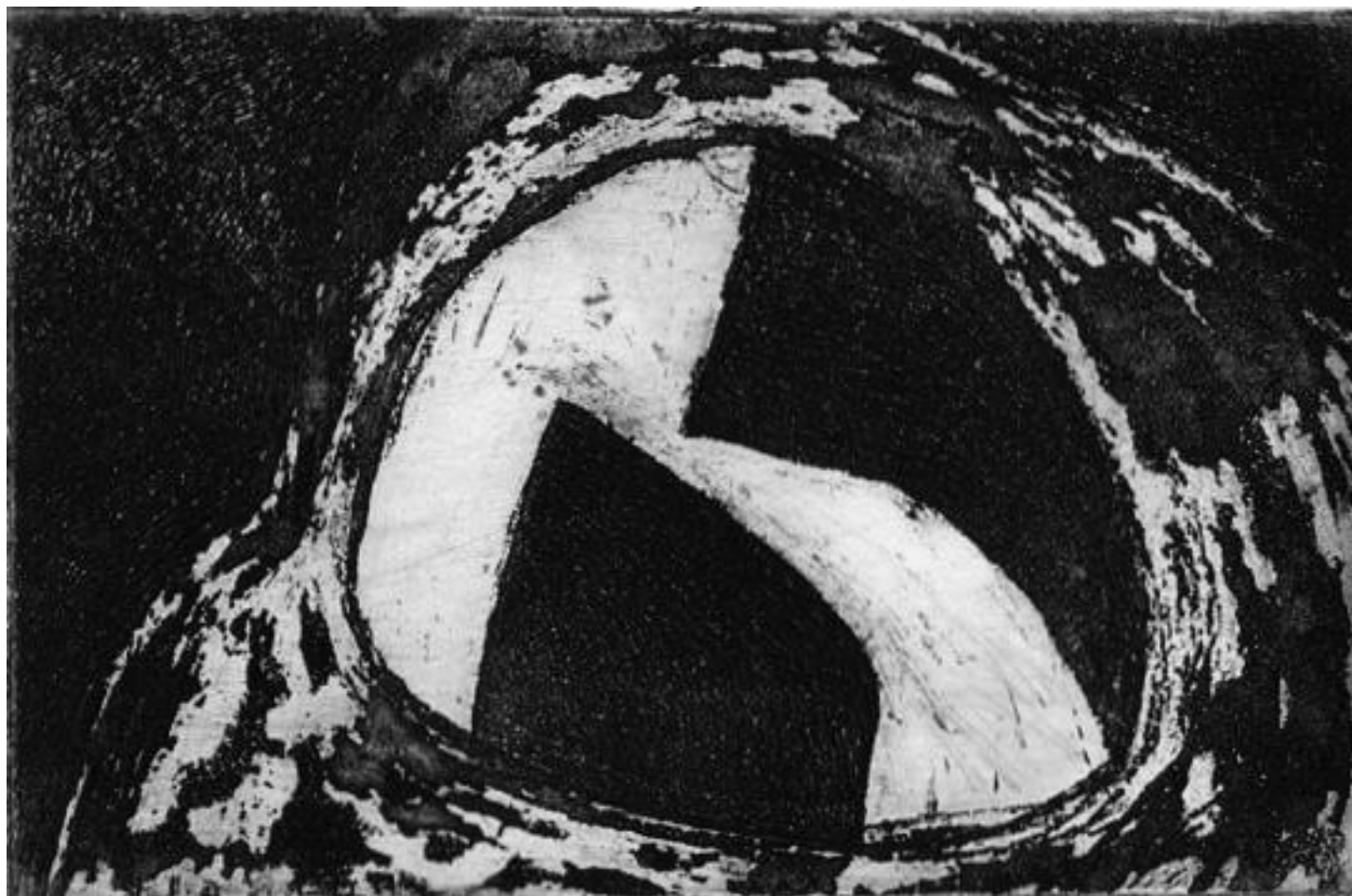
This is a strange rock at Gordons Bay which is situated between Clovelly and Coogee beaches. It juts out of the rocks near the beach and has always fascinated me. I like going to Gordons Bay as it is a tranquil spot squeezed in amidst the more crowded areas of Sydney’s eastern suburbs coastline. Although some locals disagree I have found that at this sparsely populated inlet there is always the space to be alone. A person can pretend they are many miles down the coast and for me – in my own offbeat way of thinking – often feel that this enclosed coastal spot is not only paradise but a microcosm of the whole universe. I have done many sketches here with this somewhat ‘cosmic’ attitude in mind. Thus it is appropriate to find an angel in this bay. I should also mention that many locals call this inlet Thompsons Bay.



‘Heart of the Universe.’ Gordons Bay.

B&W. 6”X 4” sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.

Gordons Bay is squeezed in between Clovelly and Coogee beaches. I like going to Gordons Bay as it is a tranquil spot amidst the more crowded areas of Sydney’s eastern suburbs coastline. A person can pretend they are many miles down the coast and for me – in my own offbeat way of thinking – often feel that this enclosed coastal spot is not only paradise but a microcosm of the whole universe. I have done many sketches here with this somewhat ‘cosmic’ attitude in mind. I should also mention that many locals call this inlet Thompson Bay.



‘Archangel.’ Wolli Creek.

B&W. 6”X 4” sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.

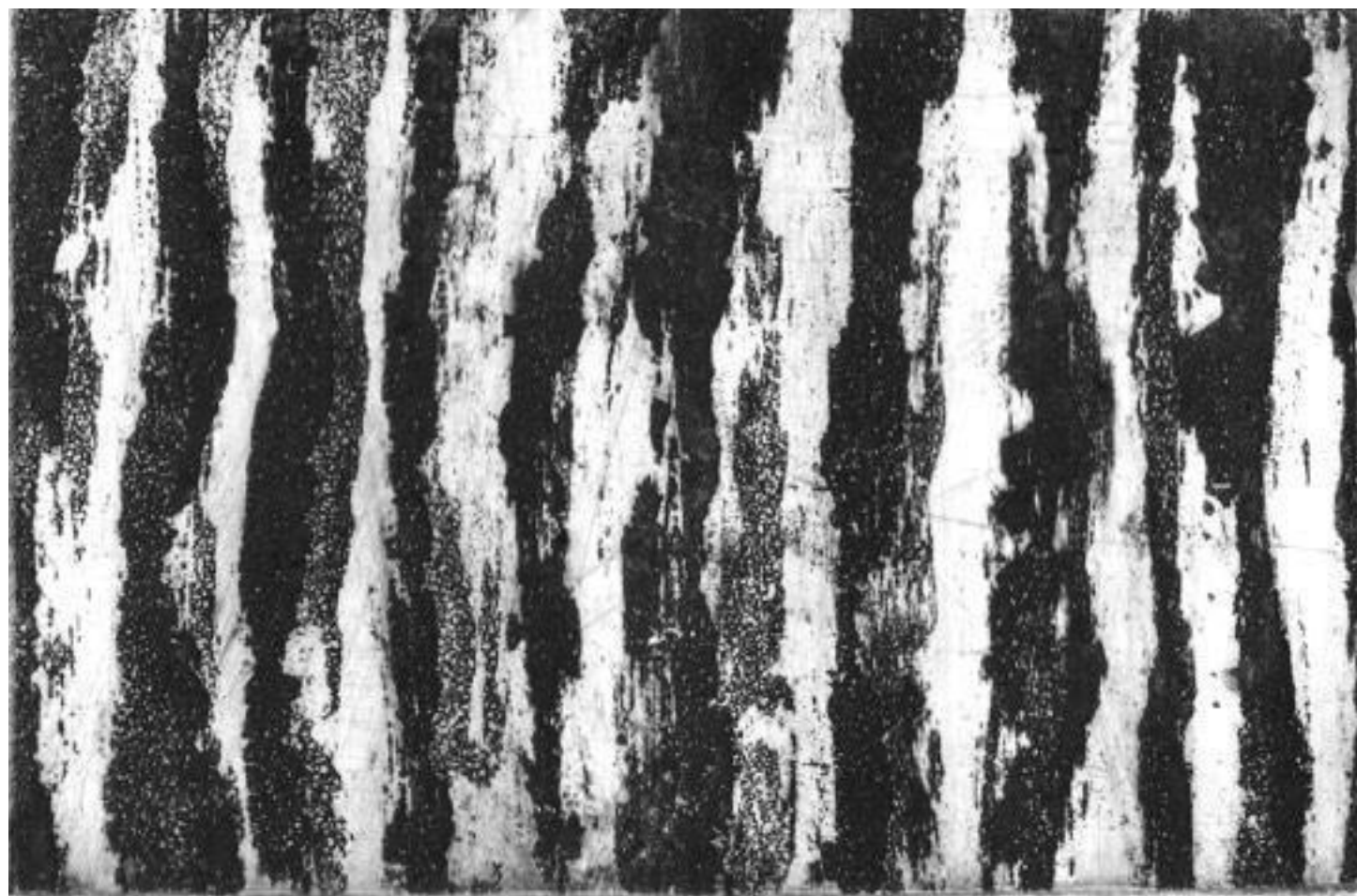
Wolli Creek is a major natural bushland reserve in the inner south-west of Sydney. The etching is based on the sketch of a small tree in Wolli Creek. The tree caught the artist’s eye as the main trunk opened upwards to two main branches like welcoming outspread arms.



‘Mangrove Souls.’ (Awaiting to go to Paradise). Cooks River. Goolay’yari.

B&W. 6”X 4” sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.

Cooks River is near where I live and there is a pathway alongside it to walk along. I have done a series of sketches of the river including the mangroves that line its banks. In the afternoon a gloriously splendid orange sunlight falls on the mangroves giving them an almost unearthly almost heavenly appearance; yes, it certainly gives them a spiritual quality thus the title.



‘The Last Judgement.’ (Apocalypse). Wolli Creek.

B&W. 6”X 4” sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.

This etching - which to me is filled with much drama and movement - is based on a dead leafless bush whose mangled ball shape was akin to an explosion burst strikingly ‘busting out’ from the track that goes through Wolli Creek; a bushland reserve near where I live. The title is in accordance to the spiritual/metaphysical/cosmological interpretations which I have given to many of the images produced by me of the Australian bush.



‘Fallen Angels.’ Wolli Creek.

B&W. 6”X 4” sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.

This image is based on one of many sketches based on Wolli Creek. There are several naturally fallen trees, some of them burnt out by back burning and naturally enough I have viewed them as fallen angels.



COOKS RIVER/WOLLI CREEK

*cooks river as the five rivers of the underworld: acheron, coctycus, lethe,
phlyegethon, styx
river of lethe
dance of the dead
...the sky is blue...
reeds
reeds
mangrove
fallen angel
reeds
reeds
reeds
reeds
the river is calm
riverbend*

rhythm of life
mangrove rhythm
it will pass
old mangrove
mangrove rhythm
zeus's cave (the eye of god)



ACHERON. In Ancient Greek mythology this ‘river of woe’ flowed through Hades. Shades would be ferried across these waters by Charon.



COCYTUS. In Ancient Greek mythology, this was Hades' 'river of lamentation' along whose banks the unburied would wander.



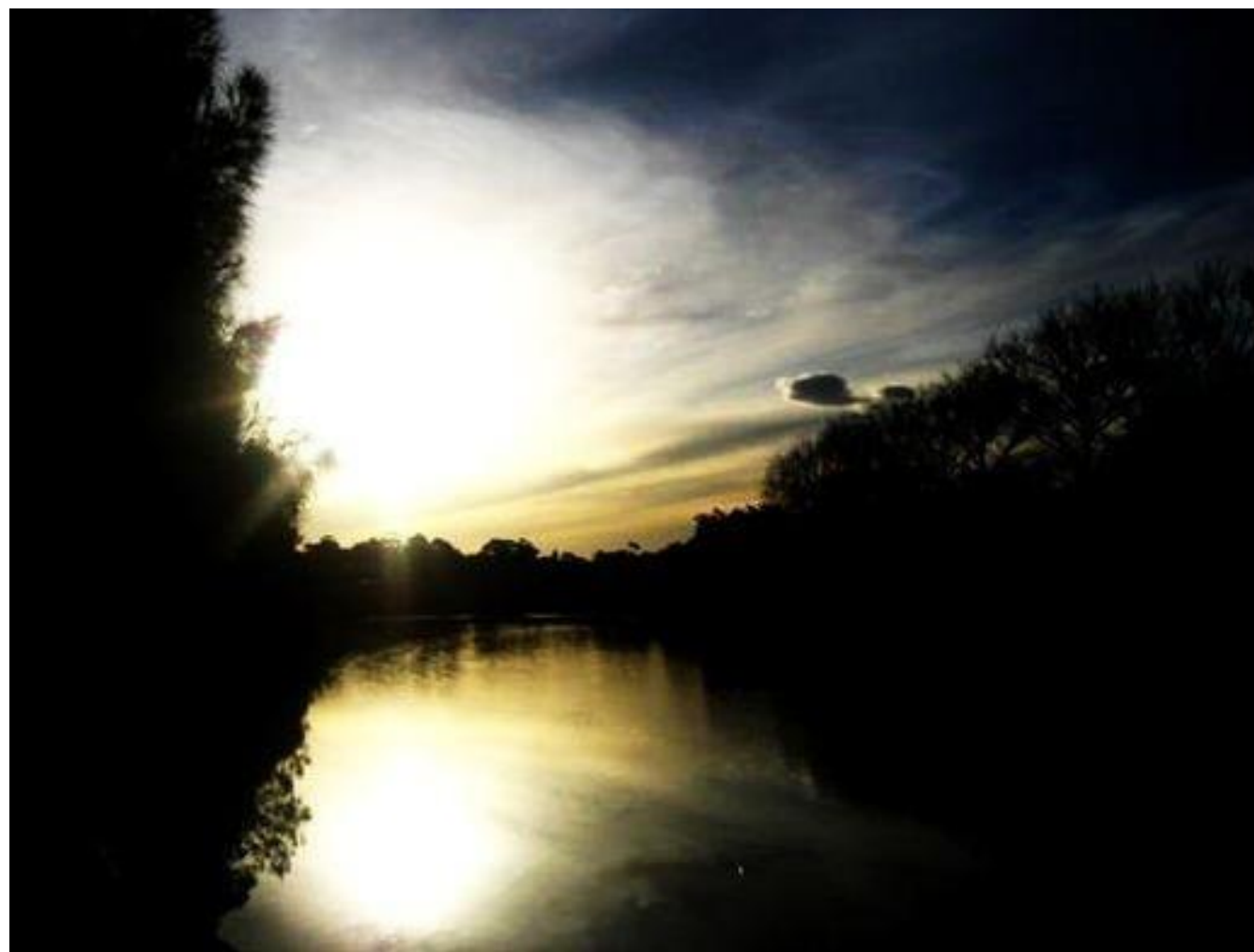
LETHE. In Ancient Greek mythology this was the river by which one could drink of its pure waters to forget all sadness.



PHLEGETHON. In Ancient Greek mythology this is the river of fire which burns but does not consume.



STYX. In Ancient Greek mythology this river flowed in between the world of the living and the Underworld.



‘River of Lethe.’ (River Scene). Cooks River.

B&W. 20 cm X 5 cm. plastic plate.

The Aboriginal name of this river is *Goolay'yari*.

The River Lethe is the mythical Ancient Greek river of forgetting. Nevertheless, I make mention of the Aboriginal name of this river when it can be considered its present artificial European name is a reminder of the English discoverer of the eastern coastline which eventually led to the colonial take-over of the land and near total destruction of Aboriginal society. Cooks River is in the Earlwood-Marrickville environ where I reside. It's a common past time to go for a walk beside this suburban river. The following small Cooks River etchings are based on sketches and photos which I have taken of this waterway. With the smaller squares I have taken to experimenting with aquatint and sugar lift. I think it is fair to say there is the influence of the renowned Australian painter/printmaker Fred Williams in these smaller pieces. Fred Williams is one of my favourite printmakers. There is an increasing abstraction in my landscape etchings – notably in some coastal works - which I became conscious of while doing the Coledale series. With this increasing abstraction and move towards the simple over the complex I should also acknowledge the influence of Aboriginal art - especially the flat forms of Rover Thomas. What also interests me is to perceive the extraordinary and metaphysical in the everyday and ‘ordinary.’ As for this etching in which I experimented with plastic most of the tonal effects were brought about by first melting the plastic.



‘Mangrove.’ Cooks River.

sepia. 10 cm X 7 cm. aquatint. sugar lift. zinc plate.



‘Dance of the Dead.’ Cooks River.

sepia. 10 cm X 7 cm. aquatint. sugar lift. zinc plate.



‘Fallen Angel.’ Cooks River.

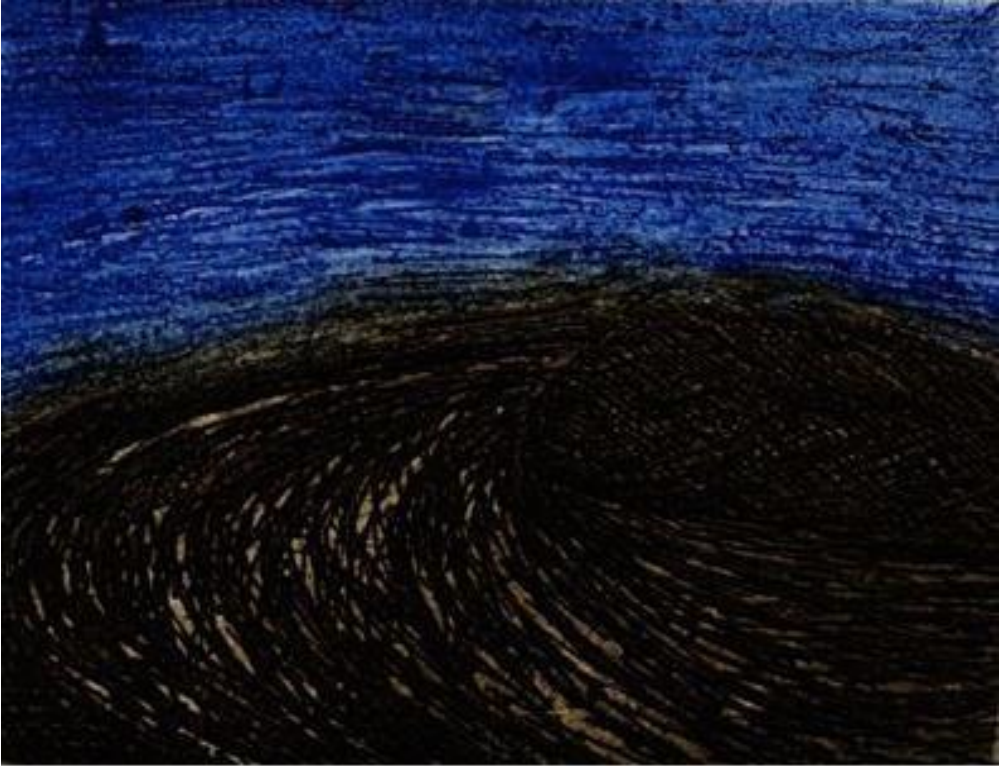
sepia. 10 cm X 7 cm. aquatint. sugar lift. zinc plate.



‘...still the sky is blue...’

Blue & B&W. 10 cm X 7 cm. aquatint. sugar lift. zinc plate.

This two tone image is based on a remark in Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*. The woods may be dark (as at the end of one's life when it feels as if death is closing in) but one can still clearly look heavenwards for inspiration and hope.



‘Reeds’ Cooks River.

B&W. 10 cm X 7 cm. aquatint. sugar lift. zinc plate.



‘Reeds’ Cooks River.

B&W. 10 cm X 7 cm. aquatint. sugar lift. zinc plate.



‘Reeds’ Cooks River.

B&W. 10 cm X 7 cm. sepia. aquatint. sugar lift. zinc plate.



‘Reeds’ Cooks River.

B&W. 10 cm X 7 cm. sepia. aquatint. sugar lift. zinc plate.



‘The River is Calm.’ Cooks River.

B&W. 10 cm X 7 cm. aquatint. sugar lift. zinc plate.



‘Riverbend.’ Cooks River.

B&W. 10 cm X 7 cm. aquatint. sugar lift. zinc plate.



‘Rhythm of Life.’ Cooks River.

B&W. 10 cm X 7 cm. aquatint. sugar lift. zinc plate.



‘Under the Shade.’ Cooks River.

B&W. 10 cm X 7 cm. aquatint. sugar lift. zinc plate.



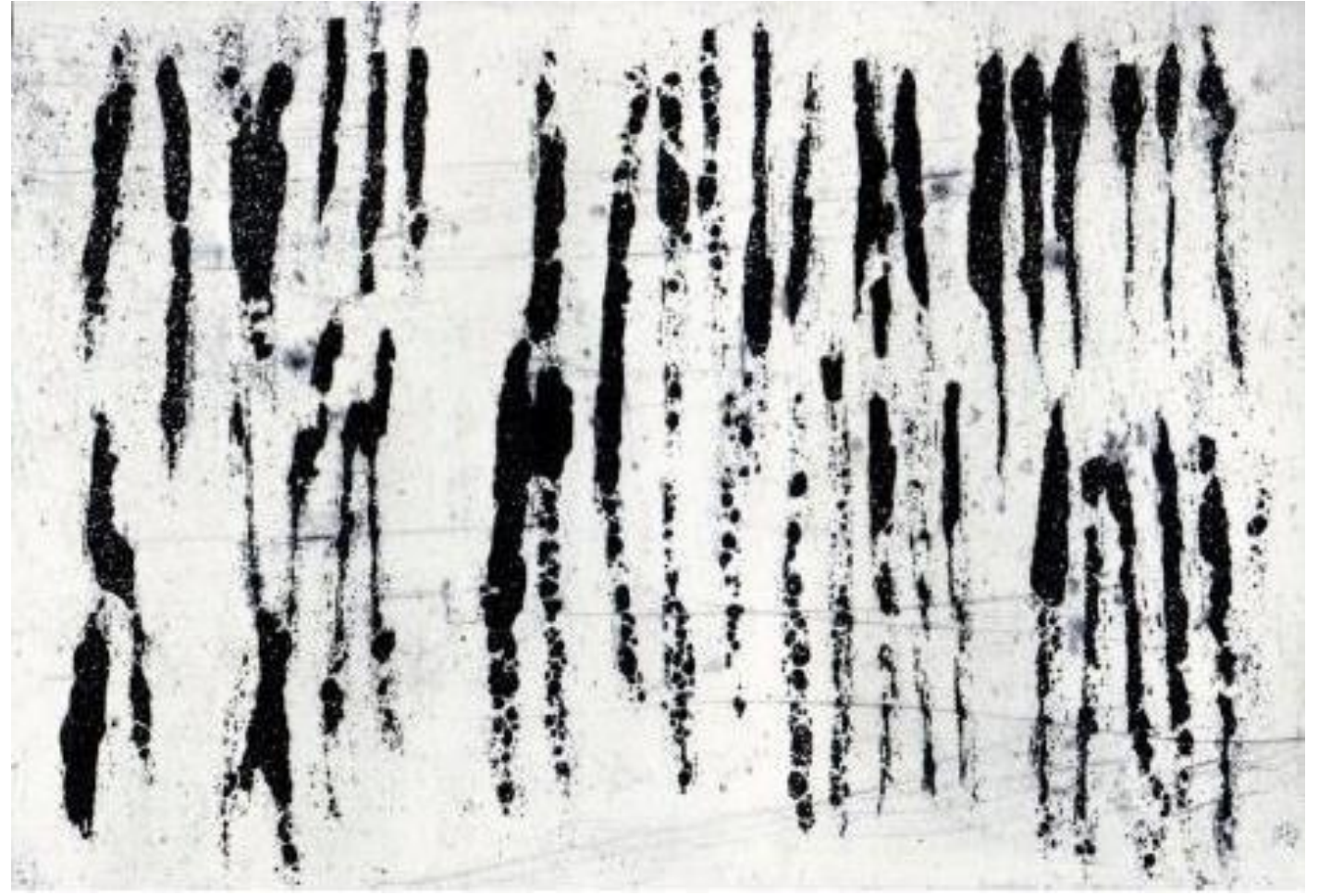
‘Hades.’ (Twisted tree). Cooks River.

B&W. 10 cm X 7 cm. aquatint. sugar lift. zinc plate.



‘Mangrove Rhythm.’ Cooks River.

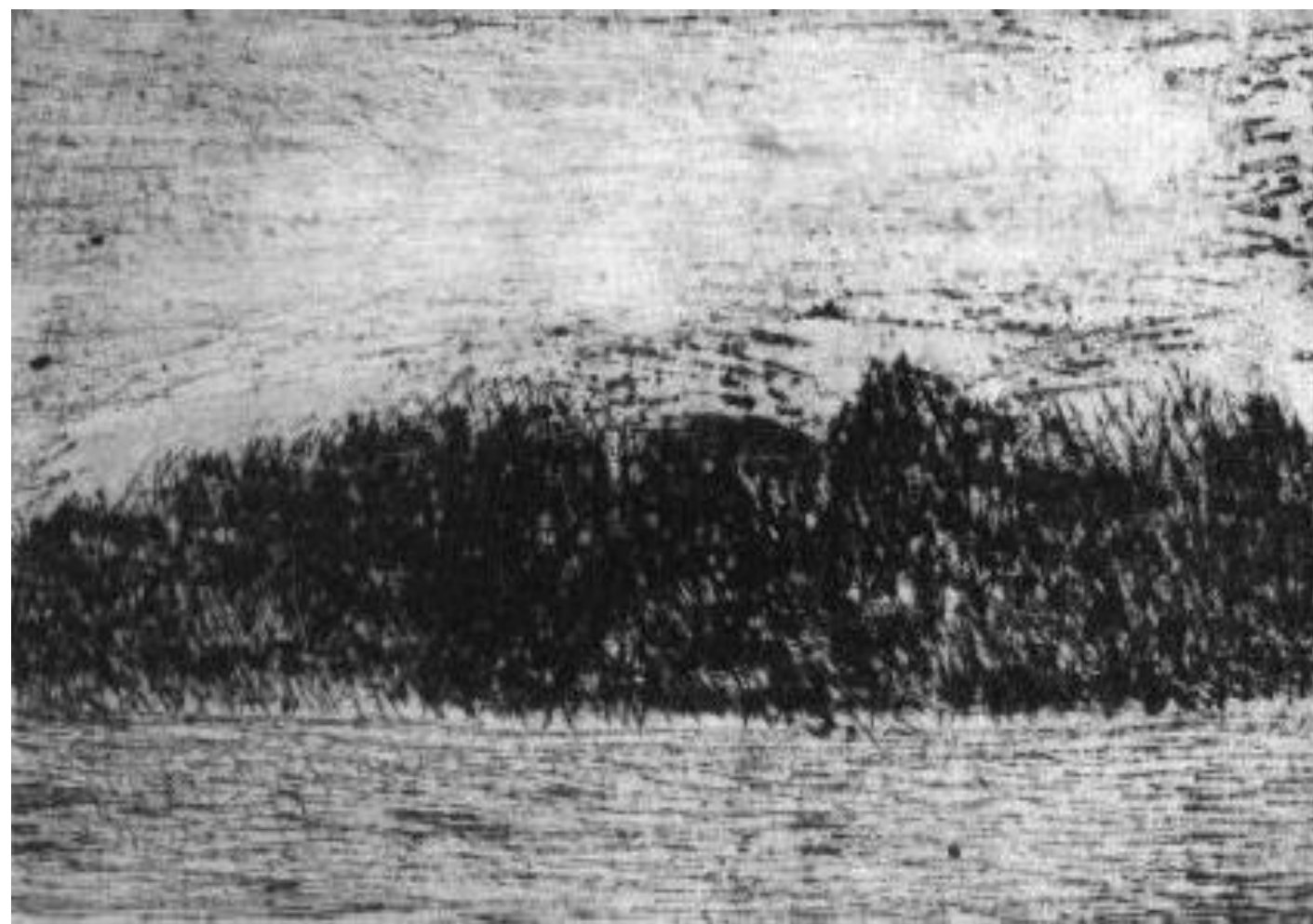
6”X 4”. B & W. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.



‘It Will Pass.’ Cooks River.

6” X 4”. B&W. drypoint. copperplate.

Walking beside the calm water I imagine the ceaseless flowing river in Herman Hesse’s Siddhartha with its ‘thousandfold song’...the river’s voice of experience is full of both sadness & desire; yet the current is always leading towards its goal...thus I silently consider how any personal tribulation in this existence can eventually be overcome by entwining one’s mental, spiritual and physical self with an over-riding, life-enhancing sense of a perfect ‘eternal unity.’



‘Beulah.’ Cooks River.

6” X 4”. B&W. drypoint. copperplate.

Beulah in Blakean terms is a dream-like subconscious or nocturnal realm where there is no conflict and opposites can peacefully co-exist. The tranquility of the river can mirror such soothing peacefulness.



‘Old Mangrove.’ Cooks River.

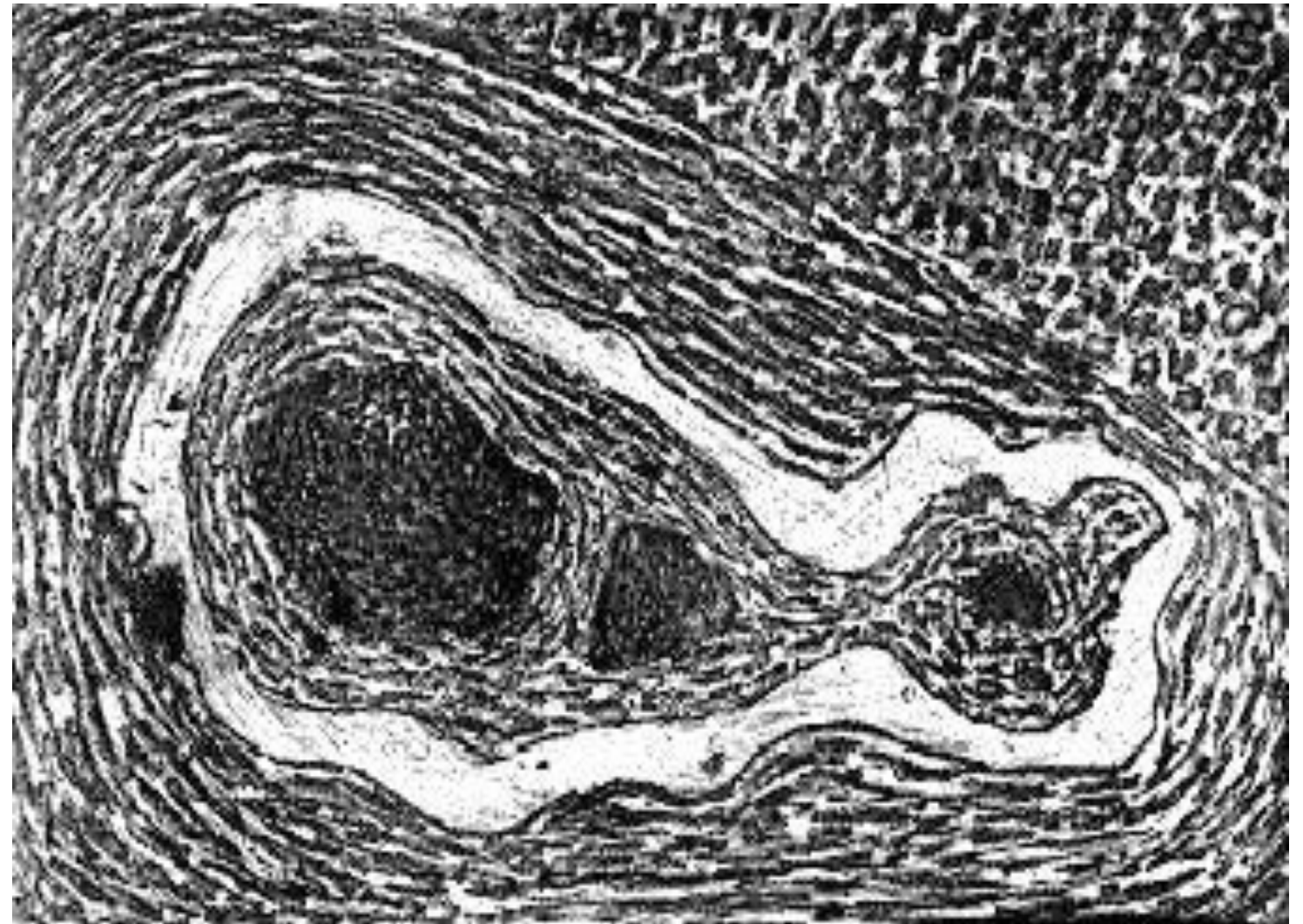
6” x 6”. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate.



‘Supernova.’ Wolli Creek.

B&W. 6” X 4”. drypoint. copperplate.

This etching which is an early work is based on a sketch of a very small shallow rock pool at Wolli Creek, a large area of bush in inner-south Sydney. One can go for a bushwalk going close to the railway line between Bardwell Park and Turrella which at times you can pretend that you are right out of the city. At one point is a little old rectangle-shaped pool that looks as if it was built in the earlier days of the twentieth century.



‘Zeus’s Cave.’ (The Eye of God). Wolli Creek.

6” X 4”. B&W. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.





GORDONS BAY

nebula

emergence of life

emergence of life

ravelling of life

cosmos (corpuscles of the universe)

angel rock, rings of time, emergence of life (gordons bay triptych)

dark matter nebula, ghost nebula (gordons bay diptych)

‘Nebula.’ Gordons Bay.

6”X 4”. sepia. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.



‘Emergence of Life’. Gordons Bay.

6”X 4”. *sepia. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.*



‘Emergence of Life’. Gordons Bay.

6”X 4”. sepia. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.



‘Raveling of Life.’ Gordons Bay.

6”X 4”. sepia. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.

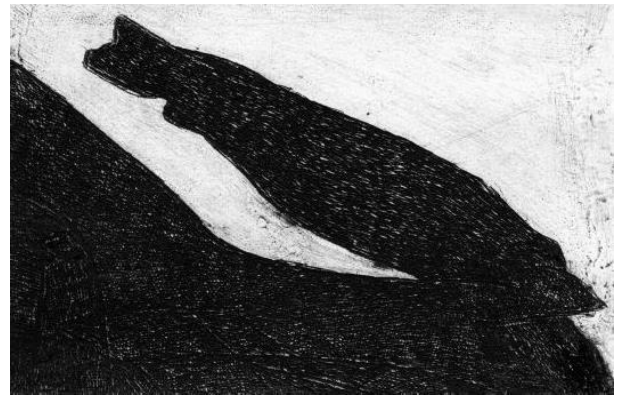
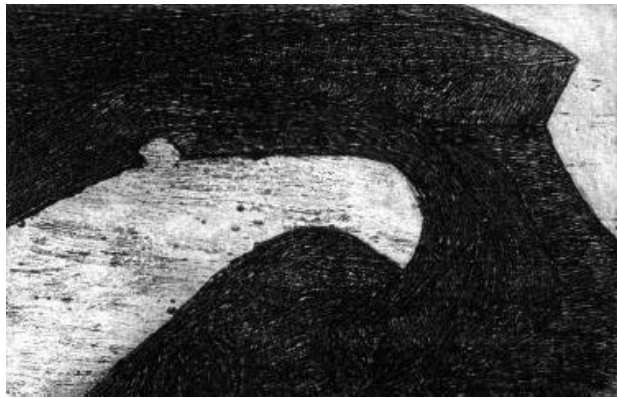
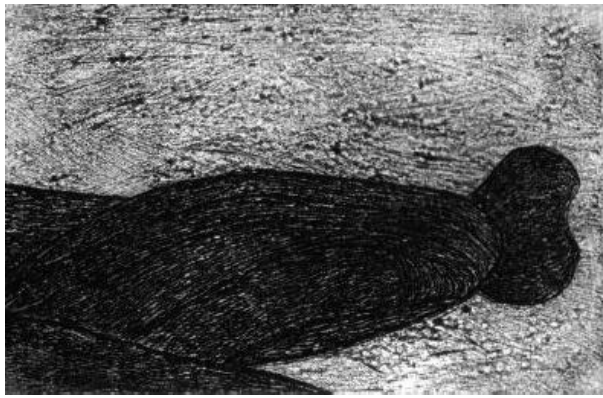


Gordons Bay triptych

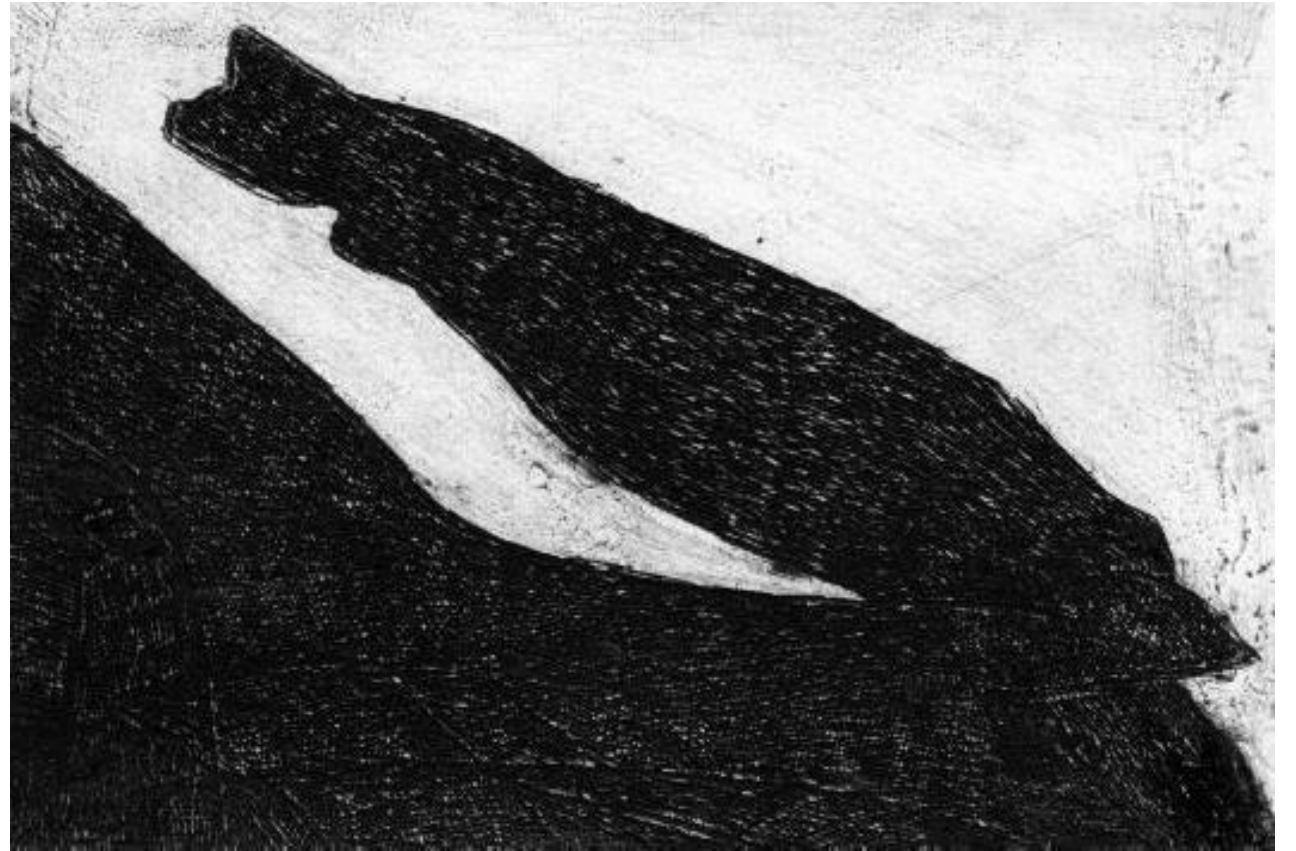
‘Angel Rock.’ *‘Angel Rock.’* Gordons Bay.
B&W. 6”X 4”drypoint. copperplate.

‘Rings of Time.’ Gordons Bay.
B&W. 6”X 4”drypoint. copperplate.

‘Evolution of Life.’ Gordons Bay.
B&W. 6”X 4”drypoint. copperplate.







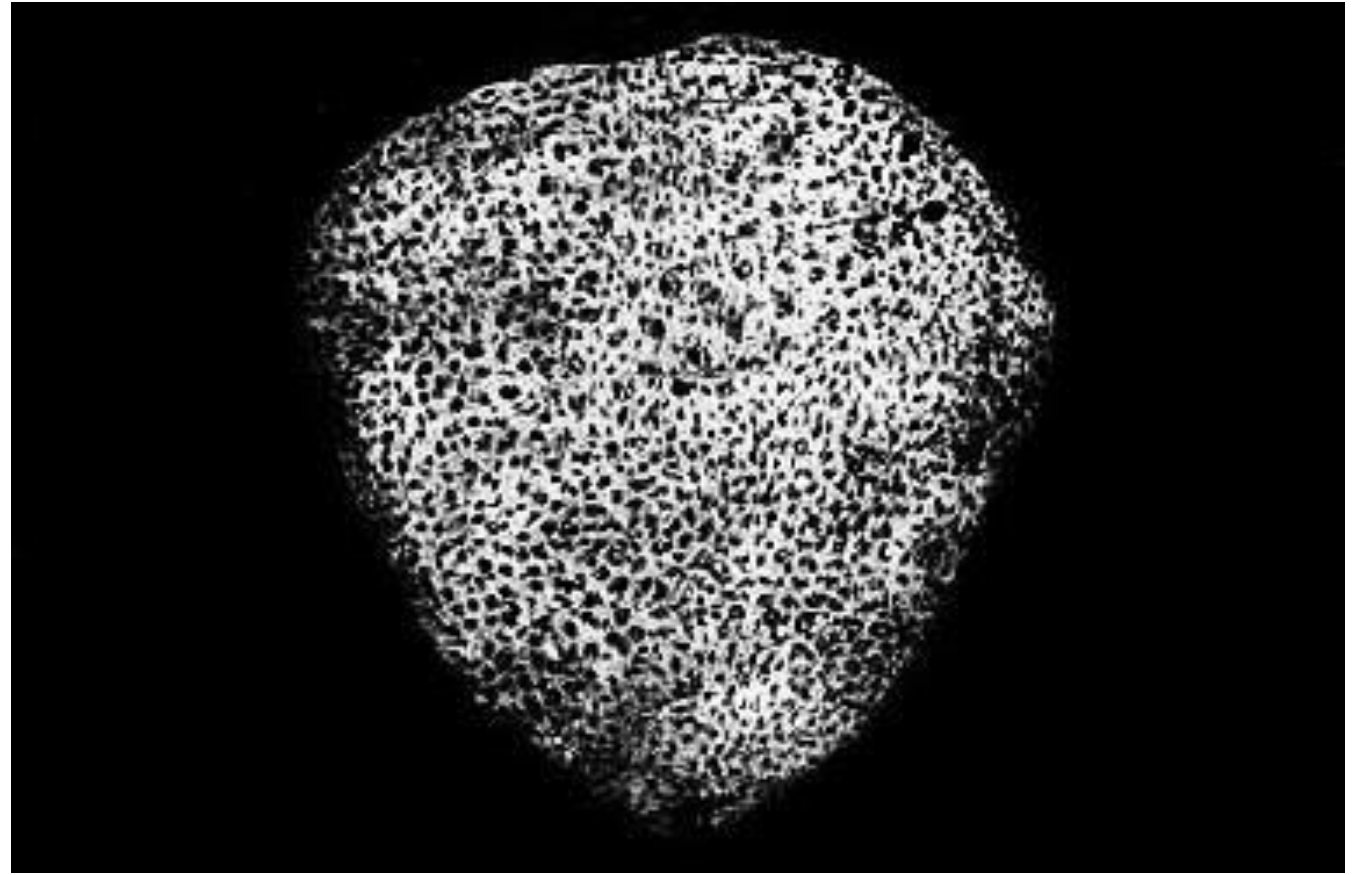
‘Cycle of Time.’ Gordons Bay

6”X 4”. B&W. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.



Cosmos. (Corpuscles of the Universe). Gordon Bay.

6"X 4". B&W. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.



Gordons Bay diptych

‘Ghost Nebula.’ Gordons Bay

6”X 4”. sepia. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.

‘Dark Matter Nebula.’ Gordon Bay

6”X 4”. B&W. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.

Certainly one can view these two etchings separately yet have been placed together as a diptych as it can be seen that the ‘nebula’ (based on a sketch) in both images is the same shape although it has been treated very differently in each work. There is meant to be a play on the viewer’s perception partly dealing with what is actually ephemeral or somewhat solid in what is being viewed. A nebula is gaseous and results after the death of a galaxy. However, I envisage it visually as if it is a hard shell and this conception results from my understanding that the American artist Georgia O’Keefe saw shells as typifying eternity due to their long lasting hardness. (In turn flowers were seen by her as expressing the fragility and mortality of life seeing their very beauty was transient). A nebula will pass away but compared to the miniscule life span of an individual – or even of the whole human race – this glowing cosmic cloud exists for an eternity. Thus the duality of the thought of something ephemeral as appearing hard and stable resides comfortably in my mind without any semblance of inward conflict with this metaphysical contradiction: ‘reality’ is sometimes more applicably suited to exist within the mental realm.





SYDNEY

that tree, the universe
our canopy, the universe
ulysses & the siren at bronte
angel wings (the original sculpture-by-the-sea)
fallen angel
fallen angel
birth of zeus
galaxies swirling towards a black hole

That Tree, the Universe. Royal Botanical Gardens.

6" X 4". sepia. aquatint. sugar lift. zinc plate.

This etching is based on an idea that the universe is like a tree with the cosmos made of galaxies as its branches and stars as leaves. I think of ancient traditions of the cosmic tree and so forth. I was struck one day by the large old trees one finds in the Royal Botanical Gardens which for me typify this idea of universe as tree. There is also an old grand tree in Prince Alfred Park beside Central Station that also leaves me in awe. Lastly, I should mention that I have read in an old school science text book how the tree pattern often occurs in nature such as in an electrical discharge; in the human body's blood circulation as well as in the 'tree chart' that outlines the evolution of life on this planet.



‘Our Canopy, The Universe. Blackwattle Bay.

B&W. 6” X 4”. aquatint. sugar lift. zinc plate.



Ulysses & the Siren. Bronte.

B&W. 6" X 4". drypoint. copperplate.

This work is rather dark but deliberately so to evoke a mysterious mood. It may not be to many people's taste but I appreciate it as a work that compels you to meditate upon the inner tensions taking place - rather than only giving this drama a quick visual/mental glance. I was also interested in playing around with texture which explains the rough-edge scratchy surfaces. This image is based on an ancient illustration whereby Ulysses is tied to the mast as he listens to the entrancing but deadly sounds of the beautiful Sirens who were half-bird half- female. In the background is the headland jutting out at Bronte which has been whimsically added to somewhat give this legendary scenario an Australian context. Thus I coyly include it in this coastal landscape series.



Angel Wings. (The Original Sculpture-by-the-Sea). Bondi.

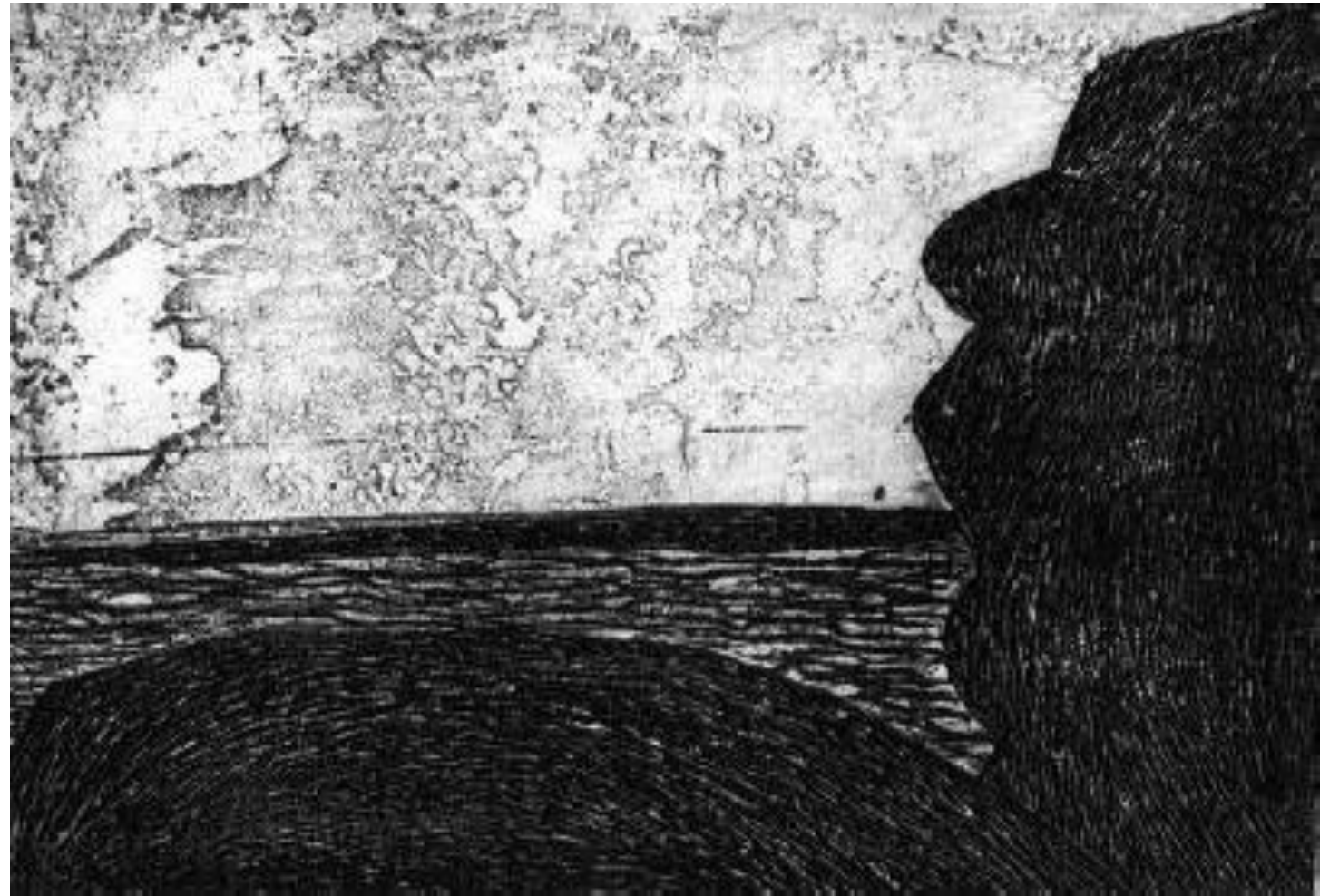
6" X 4". drypoint. copperplate.

Down from the cliffs as one comes close to 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 outdoor exhibition. I think it is a great shame that this sculpture no longer exists.



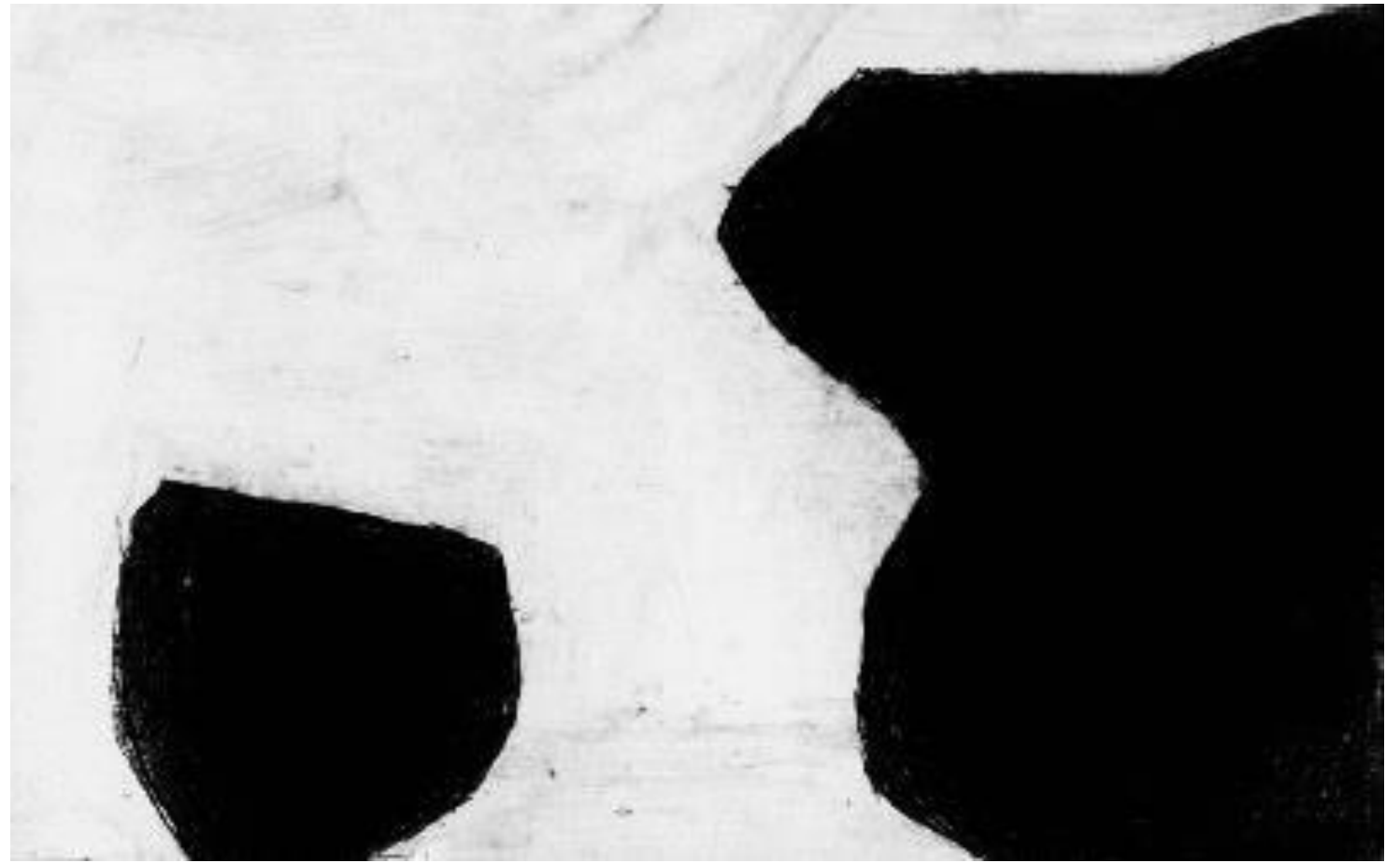
“Fallen Angel.” Shelley Beach. Cronulla

B&W. 6”X 4”. drypoint. copperplate.



“Fallen Angel.” Shelley Beach. Cronulla

B&W. 6”X 4”. drypoint. copperplate.



“The Birth of Zeus.” Nielson Park.

B&W. 6”X 4” sugarlift.aquatint.zinc plate.

Ancient Greek legend has it that Zeus was saved from being devoured by his father the Titan Cronus by Rhea his mother who used a disguised rock to replace him. When Cronus swallowed the rock he did not suspect anything. Rhea secretly gave birth to her son in Crete. Cronus ate his children as he had been forewarned that one of them would attempt to dethrone him. As it turned out it was Zeus who achieved this feat to become lord over all the other gods. Thus I have Zeus as this grand rock which appears to be emerging from the waters off Nielson Park in the harbour at Sydney. It seems to be thrusting out.

I should add that whenever I went to Nielson Park years ago it was usually with a school group from an IEC (Intensive English Centre) where upon refugee/migrant students were introduced to the beach and water in a safe, calm context. Such days were always joyous.



Galaxies Swirling Towards a Black Hole.' Middle Head. Sydney Harbour.

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

I noticed this white speckled pattern on some rocks around a black hole and I envisaged them as swirling galaxies caught up in the gravitational pull of a black hole that would suck them into nothingness. Is death too merely an inevitable black hole whose 'gravitational pull' we call age take each being over into its 'event line' to a new mysterious dimension?





NATIONAL PARKS

three fates
falling angel
cosmic currents
tree womb
tree womb
hydra
tree life rhythm flow
misguided angel
burnt soul/burnt soul/burnt soul
fallen tree galaxy
tree couplet
evolution of the universe
note of the universe
flow of time / flow of time / flow of time
dance of the pinnacles
black galaxy
eroding universe
eagle rock. curramoors (mt.purgatory 1)
curramoors
symphony of the universe

‘Three Fates.’ Little Marley. Royal National Park.

6”X 4”. sepia. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.

The three fates refers to the sister deities who determined the destinies and lives of both gods and mortals. It was Clotho who spun the thread of life; Lachesis would draw the lot to see how long would live while Atropos inevitably chose the manner of one’s death by actually cutting the thread of life with her scissors.



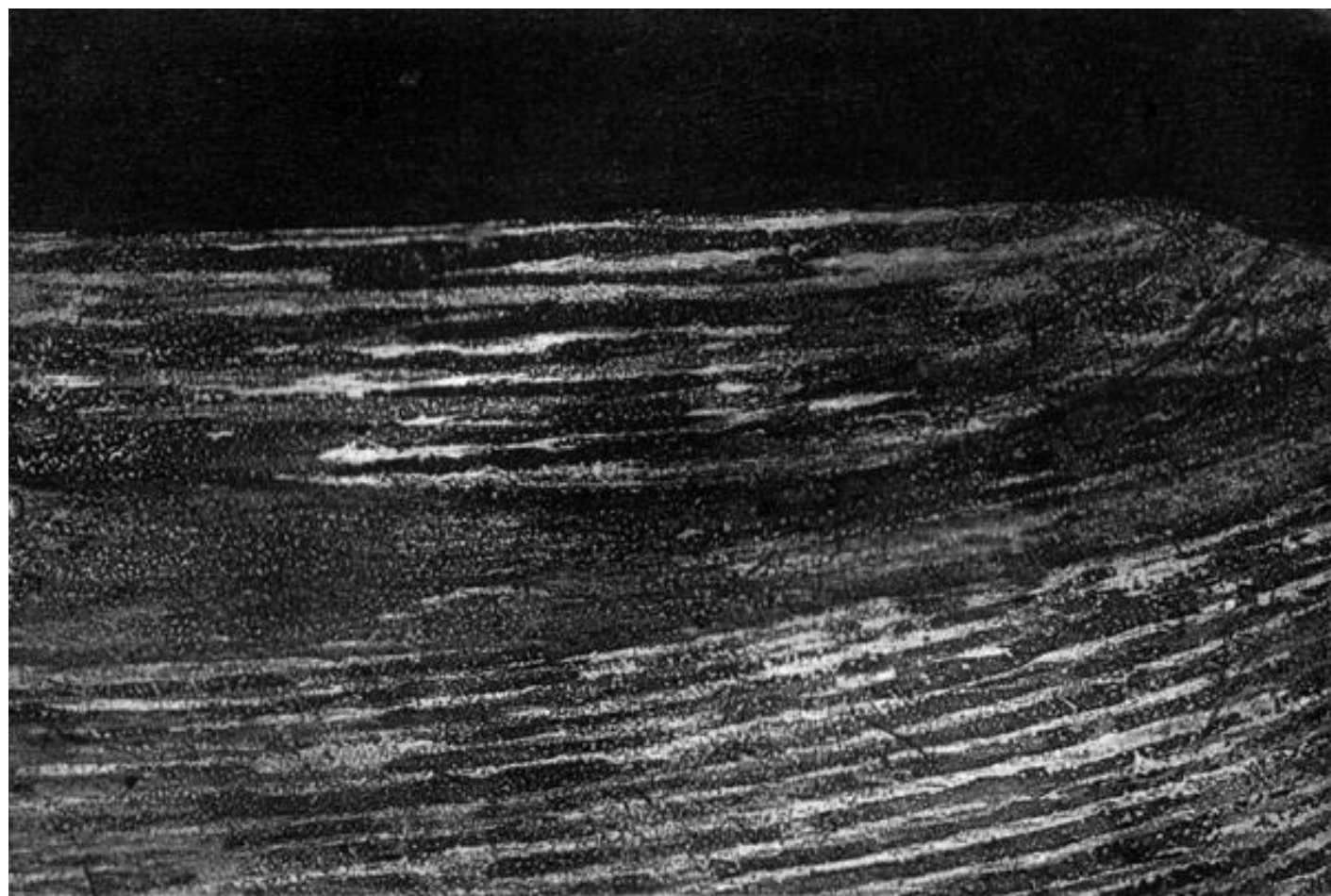
‘Falling Angel.’ Bobbin Head National Park.

6” X 4”. sepia. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.



‘Cosmic Currents.’ Botany Bay National Park.

B&W. 6” X 4”. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.



‘Tree Womb.’ Hawkesbury River.(Mougamarra Reserve. Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park).

6" X 4". sepia. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.

The tree womb images are based trees on ‘discovered’ while on a visit with friends who graciously took me to Mougamarra Reserve in Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park right by the Hawkesbury River (spectacularly viewed from high vantage points). ‘Mougamarra’ is Aboriginal for ‘preserve for the future’ (an apt expression to soberly consider when one learns that since the European takeover 200 odd years ago up to 90% of rainforest/native forest vegetation has been cleared). Mougamarra is only open to the public for six weekends a year at Spring in August & September when many colourful, diverse, beautiful wildflowers blossom. (From an Ancient Greek point of view these wildflowers could be welcoming Persephone’s visit to the surface – Demeter’s daughter emerging from the unwelcome grasp of Hades in the Underworld - which ritualistically occurs every Spring). It is a magnificent treat to see these wildflowers. It is valid that the reserve is off-limits to human beings for most of the year. (As it is property rights should be established to the wildlife rather than to us). Furthermore, along with Mougamarra Reserve it should be mentioned that 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 and constellations in the night sky labeled by differing Aboriginal groups as the ‘Emu in the Sky’. For an interpretation of the night sky from an Aboriginal perspective it is advisable to look at *Emu Dreaming. An Introduction to Aboriginal Astronomy* by Ray & Cilla Norris.



‘Tree Womb.’ Hawkesbury River.(Mougamarra Reserve. Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park).

6” X 4”. sepia. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.



‘Tree Womb.’ Hawkesbury River.(Mougamarra Reserve. Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park).

6” X 4”. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.



‘Hydra’. Botany Bay National Park.

B&W. 6” X 4”. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.



‘Tree Life Rhythm Flow.’ Hawkesbury River.
(Mougamarra Reserve. Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park).

6” X 4”. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.



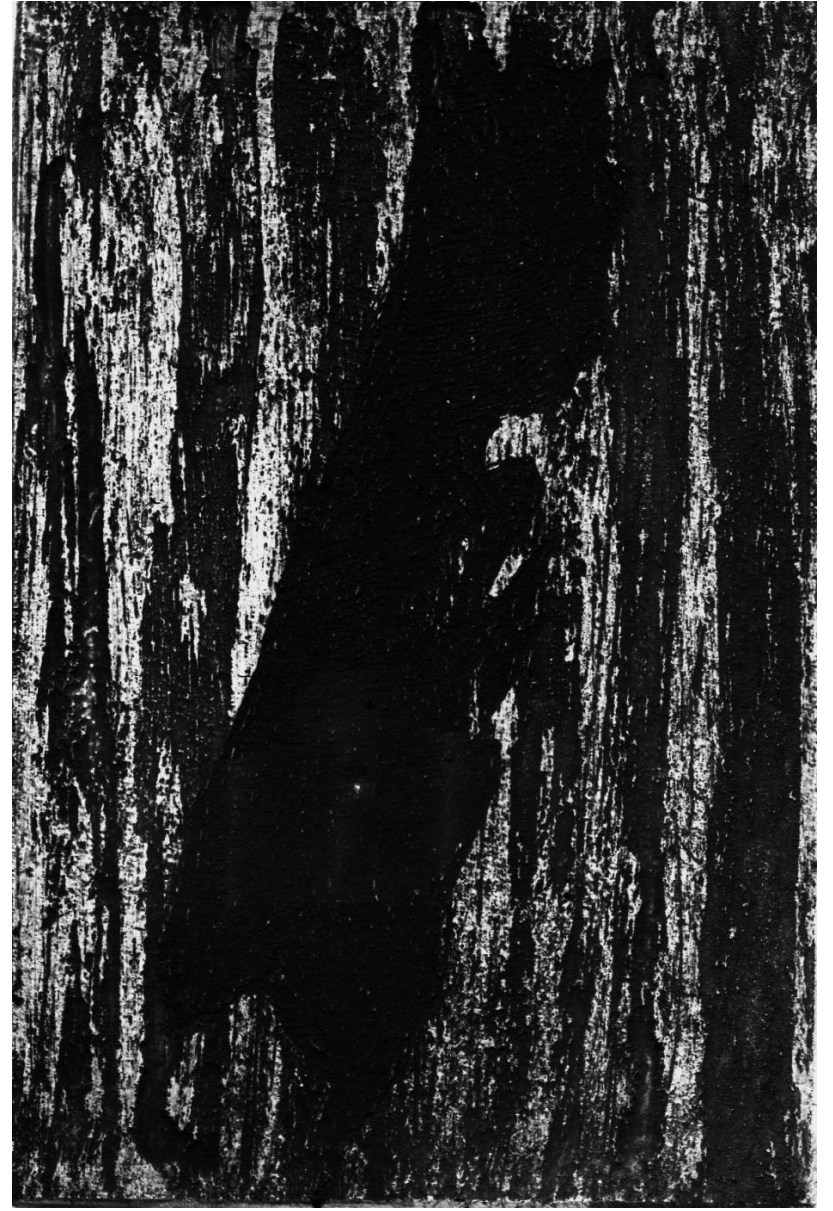
‘Misguided Angel.’ Hawkesbury River.
(Mougamarra Reserve. Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park).

6” X 4”. B & W. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.



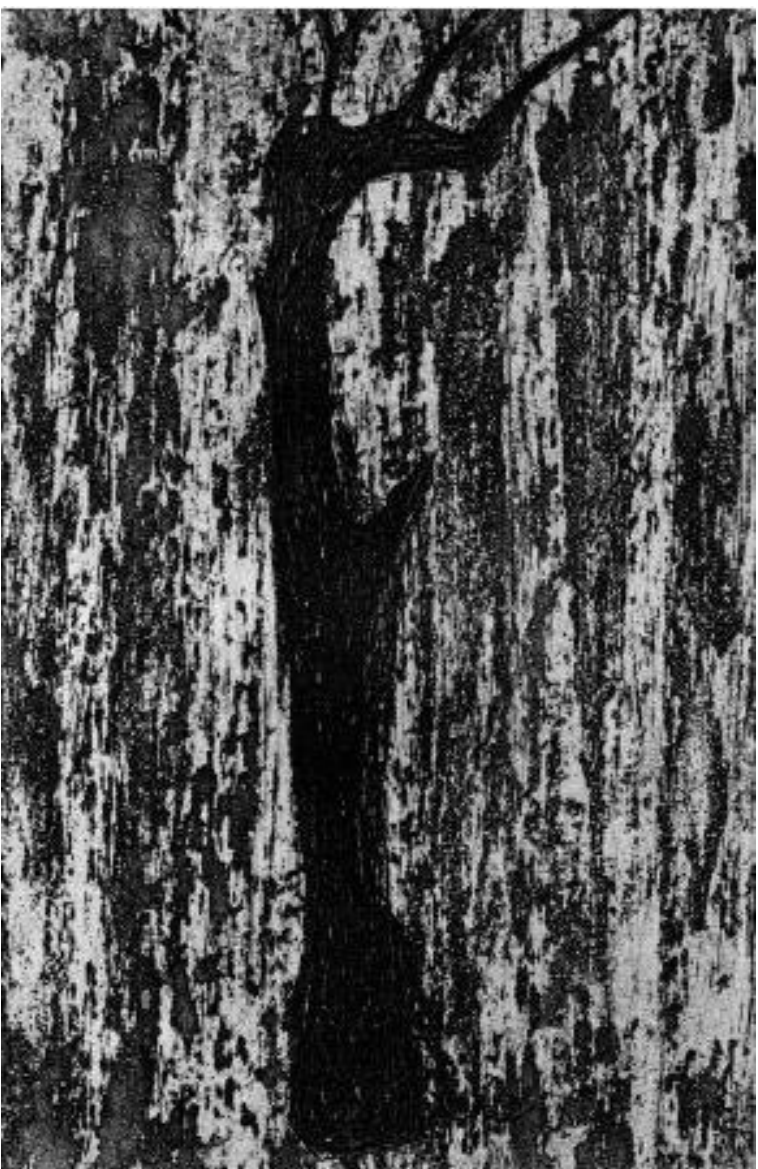
‘Burnt Angel’ Mougamarra Reserve. Ku-ring-ai Chase National Park.

6”X4” B&W/sepia. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.



‘Burnt Angel.’ Mougamarra Reserve. Ku-ring-ai Chase National Park.

6”X4” B&W/sepia. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.



‘Burnt Angel.’ Mougamarra Reserve. Ku-ring-ai Chase National Park.

6”X4” B&W/sepia.. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.



‘Fallen Tree Galaxy.’ Mougamurra Reserve. Hawkesbury River.

6” X 4”. sepia. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate

This image is based on a large fallen tree beside a bush track. Despite it lying on the ground this trunk still had a majestic quality about it.



‘Trojan Wall.’ Mougamurra Reserve. Hawkesbury River.

6" X 4". sepia. aquatint. sugarlift. spit bite. zinc plate

A spit bite involves directly brushing on undiluted nitric acid onto the etching plate; thus directly creating the textured effects as seen in this image with its wall of rocks.



‘Tree Couplet.’ Minnamorra Rainforest. Jamberoo.

6" X 4". B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate.

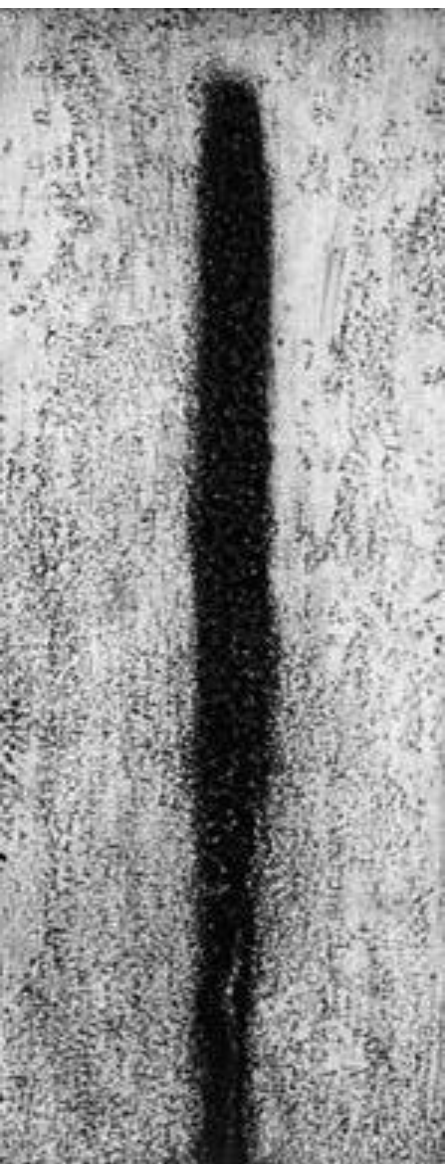
To perceive things beyond the exclusive binary logic of Aristotle (up/down, in/out. etcetera) is to see the endless possibility of multitude combinations that could exist. Quantum mechanics allows us to take a more lateral approach to reality and so it intrigues me how these two tree trunks have emerged from the ‘another organic mental plane’. I do not dismiss binary logic (as it does have its role to play) but I see how a more dynamic reasoning is also boundlessly available so as to fully open those Blakean ‘doors of perception’ – our eyes – which in such Blakean terms are those two ‘windows’ to our soul.



‘Note of the Universe.’ Royal National Park.

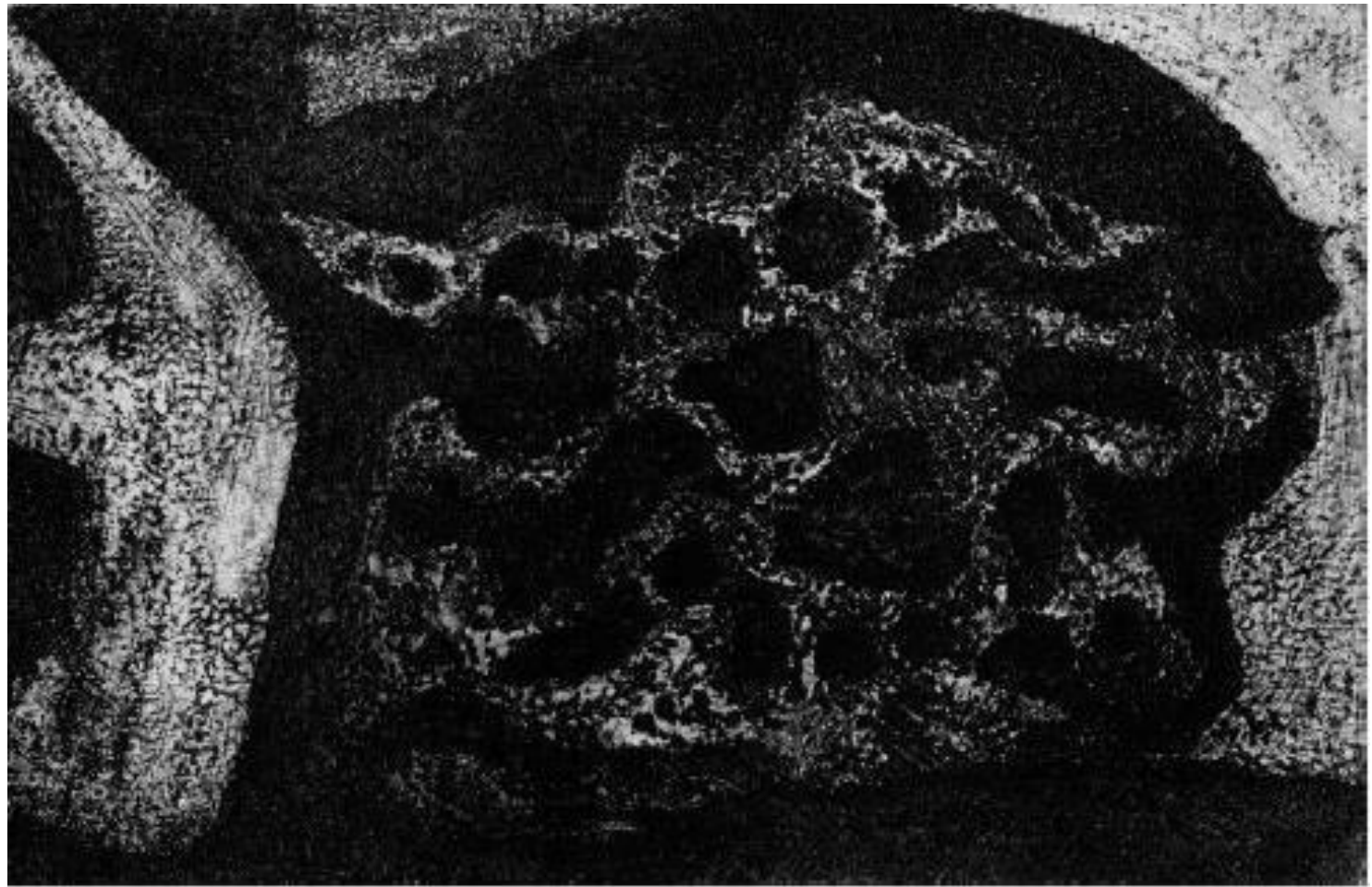
7” X 2”. B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate.

Walking back from the Curramoors these long very dark brown long stalks were sighted on a scrub plain as if stabbing the sky. I was reminded of musical notes and thought how an ancient astronomer such as Ptolemy thought of the solar system and stars aligned on a series of musical spheres and of a modern artist such as Kandinsky corresponding colour harmony to an underlying musical structure of the universe to create ‘visual music’ that would eventuate in spiritual, life enhancing ‘vibrations of the human soul’. A cosmic symphony for each individual being. (The Lithuanian musical composer and mystical nature painter M.K. Ciurlionis also crossed my mind who it is said influenced Kandinsky).



‘Evolution of the Universe.’ Royal National Park.

6" X 4". B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate.



‘Flow of Time.’ Blue Mountains.

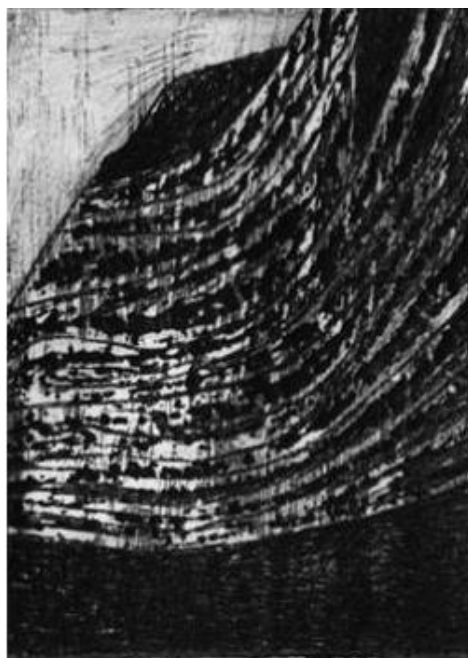
B& W. 10cm X 7cm. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate.

The geological evolution of the Earth's surface is often about very slow movement. The geographical features of its terrain are continually shifting without us realizing it as these topographical contours are gradually and ceaselessly being reshaped. Nothing is really as it seems as what appears stable is not necessarily so in much the same way as we already know that what seems physically solid is really an ‘apparition’ of billions of bustling particles undulating on a microscopic quantum level. It brings into philosophical question our perception of reality and of life itself as we discern for instance between what is real to what is metaphysical.



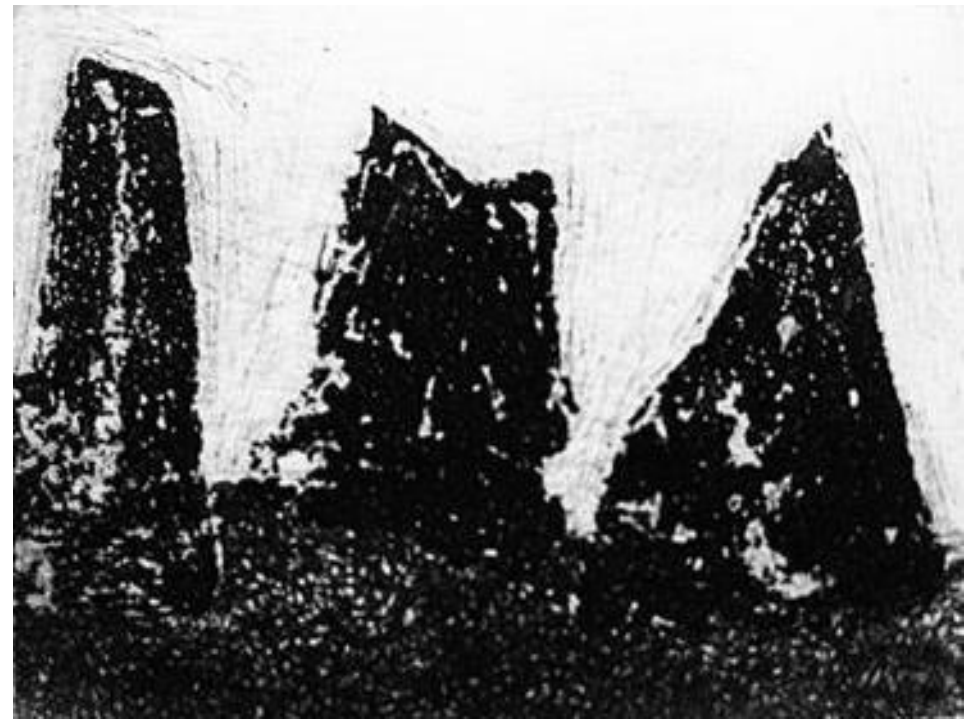
‘Flow of Time.’ Triptych Blue Mountains.

B& W. 10cm X 7cm. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate. (x 3)



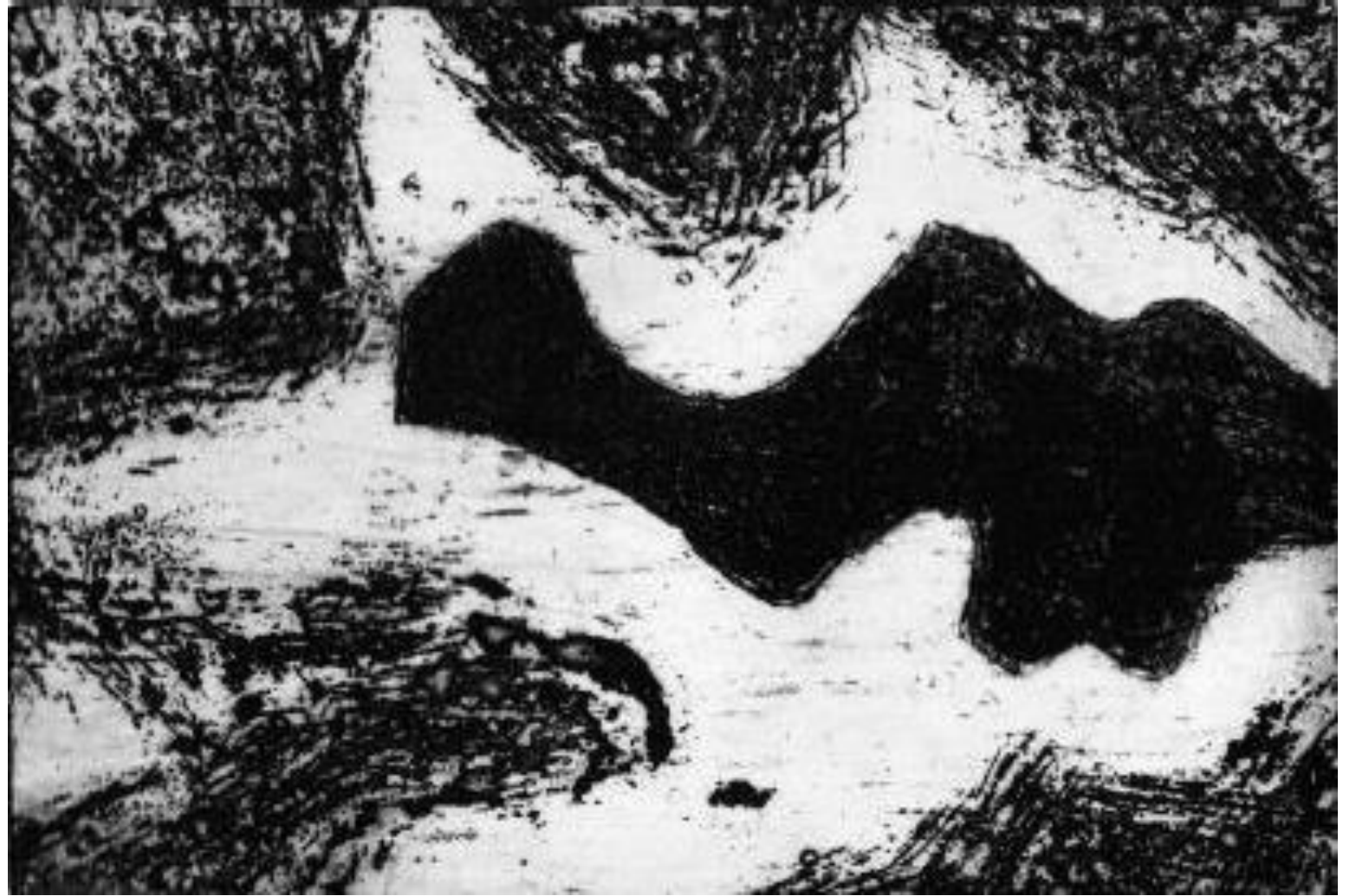
‘Dance of the Pinnacles.’

B& W. 10cm X 7cm.aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate.



‘Black Galaxy.’ Rock pool. Bundeena. Royal National Park.

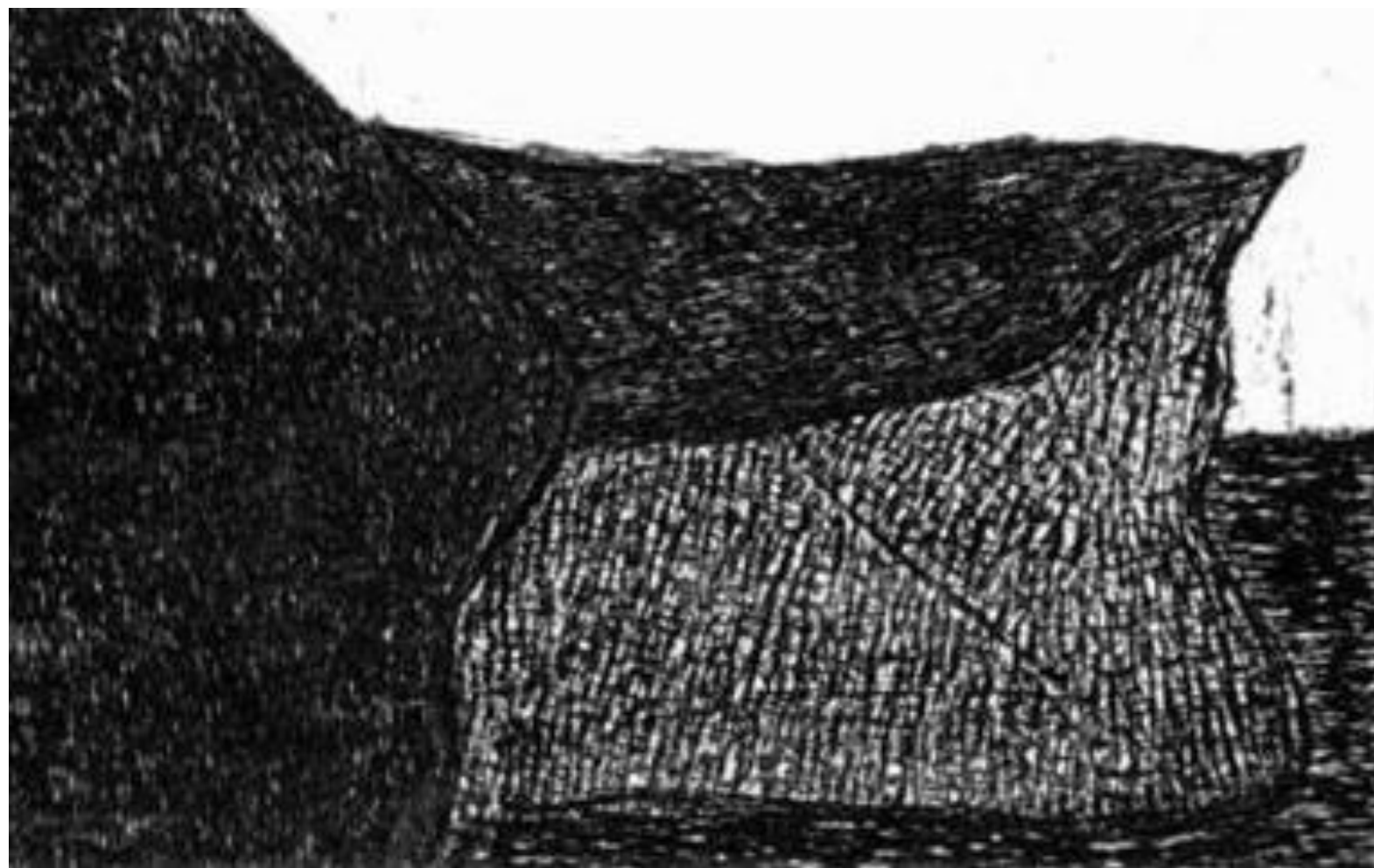
B&W. 6”X 4” sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate



‘Eagle Rock.’ Royal National Park. Mt. Purgatory.

B& W. 6” X 4”.drypoint. copperplate.

I look at these cliff as outcrops 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.



‘Curramoors.’ Royal National Park.

B& W. 6” X 4”. drypoint. sugarlift.aquitint. zinc plate



‘Symphony of the Universe.’ Botany Bay National Park.

10” X 6”. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate.

Symphony of the Universe is based on scraggly trees emerging from the thick scrub at Botany Bay. The series of wavy lines intimate the rhythmic ‘notations’ of the universe which echo the cosmic gravitational currents that uniformly sway through the cosmos to continually signal the first creative explosion of its long existence.





NORTH COAST NSW/SOUTH COAST NSW/VICTORIA

road to mullumbimby

white ox

rockface, misty bluffs, early morning. coledale (coledale triptych)

conception of life

forming galaxies

pillar of time

time totem

pillar of time

wisdom & youth

minnamorra waterfall

eroding rocks, eroding rocks (jervis bay diptych)

sunset. greenpatch. jervis bay

apostles of the universe

‘Road to Mullumbimby.’

B&W. 8" X 6". drypoint. zinc plate.

Mt. Chincogan appears spectacularly as you round a bend on the way in to Mullumbimby after you turn off the main highway. In the Byron Bay environ there is not much public transport and while staying with friends in Bangalow I found that the most convenient way to get around is to hitch-hike. Interestingly enough it is mainly locals who pick you as they appreciate the difficulties of there not being an adequate public transport system. However, I have a vivid memory of being with a young Tasmanian guy - who had driven up all the way from Victoria in his minivan and whose ambition was to go as far north as he possibly could and then simply turn around and head back south - who was overawed when he saw this great mountain. I'm not sure if it is Mt. Chincogan or Mt. Warning but I have been told that one of them is associated with an Aboriginal women's sacred site. The etching is based on a sketch. I met a lot of 'drifters' while hitching. On my return trip to Sydney I had a long lift (I had decided to simply hitch home after all the buses were full due to many people going home during a very torrid bushfire season) with this middle-aged Queensland moustached, black-haired olive-skinned guy with a cockney accent in his Gemini and his sick pig dog in the backseat who had 'escaped' from his wife - "she had been 'brainwashed' by the religious people" - as he put it and - knowing only the local surroundings of a small township since childhood - was heading south to 'Mexico' (as he called NSW) to eventually go all the way to WA. "As far away as possible." He thought Taree and Newcastle were incredibly large places. As I caught a close to midnight train from Newcastle back to Sydney I still think to this day what his reaction was when he headed into the grand sprawling metropolis that is Sydney and how he would have simply been overcome by the gigantic sight of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the skyscrapers of the CBD.



‘White Ox.’Dorrigo

sepia on cream. aquatint. 9”X10”. zinc plate.

At the end of the seventies an old school friend and his girlfriend impulsively hopped into their little Freeway sedan car one day and left Sydney to start a new life up the coast. They were not sure where they would end up but it happened to be in an old shack at the back of Dorriggo. They rented it cheaply off a local farmer. When I visited this ‘sea change’ couple they were in the middle of renovating their place to make it a real home. This rather ‘Rembrandt-like’ etching (which is my first ever accomplished print - done in 1980 while still an art teacher student at Sydney Teachers College¹), is based on a photo taken of a window that looks through to the spacious tranquil green property that was all around them. White Ox is the brand of the tobacco on the table.



Coledale Triptych

‘Rockface.’ Coledale.

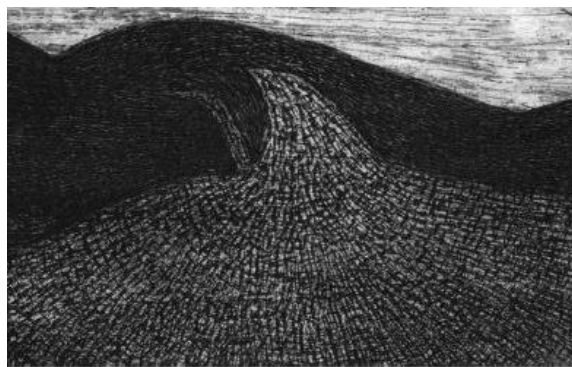
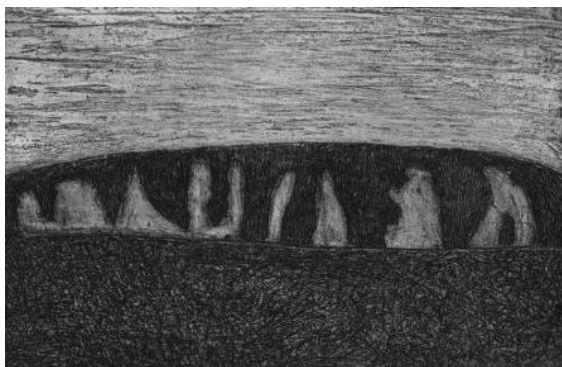
6”X 4”. B&W. drypoint. copperplate.

‘Misty Bluffs.’ Coledale.

6”X 4”. B&W. drypoint. copperplate.

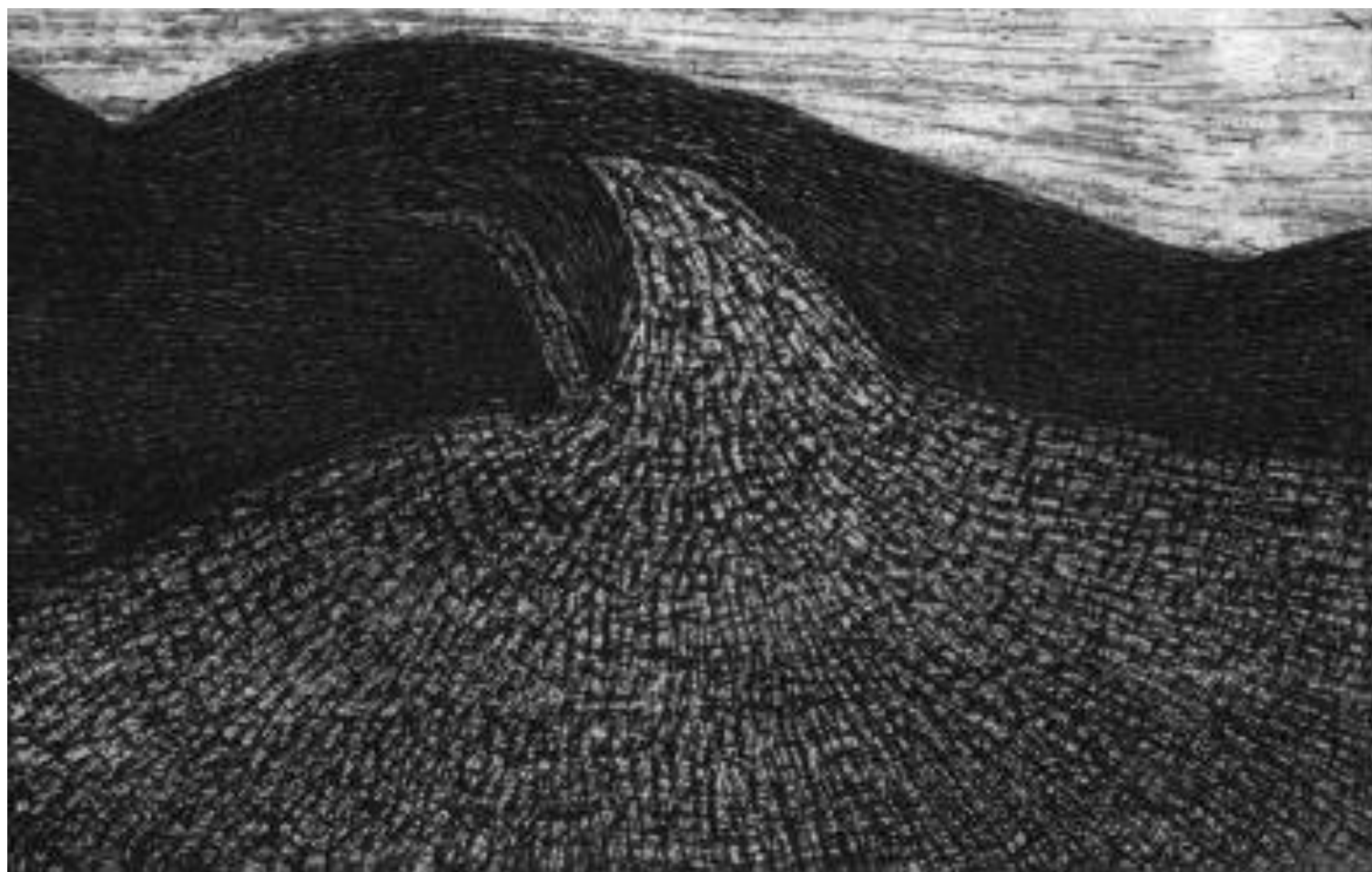
‘Coledale. Early Morning.’ Coledale.

6”X 4”. B&W. drypoint. copperplate.



‘Misty Bluffs.’ Coledale.

6”X 4”. B&W. drypoint. copperplate.



‘Conception of Life.’ Wombarra

6”X 4”. sepia.. drypoint. aquatint. sugarlift, copperplate.



‘Forming Galaxies.’ Bulli Beach.

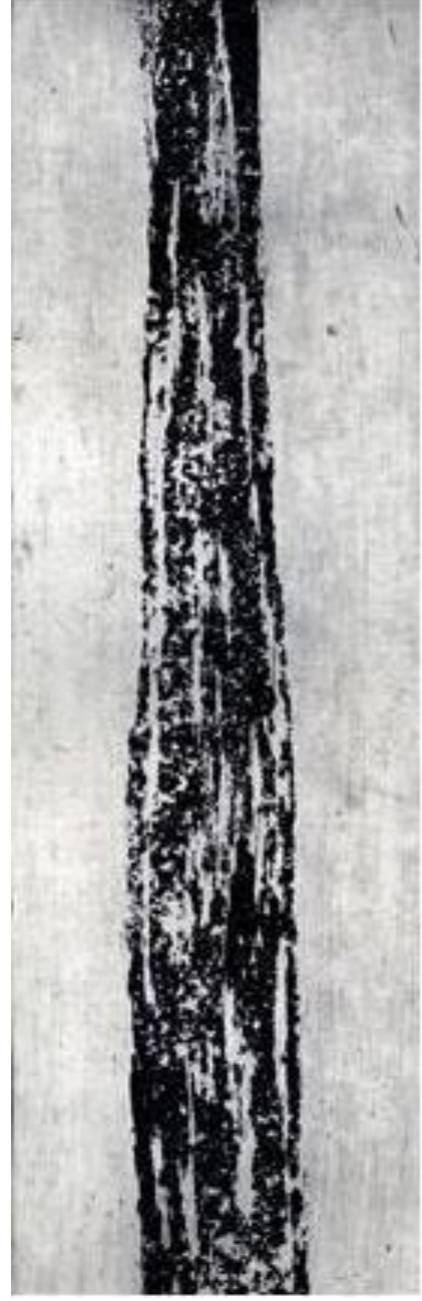
B&W. 6”X 4” drypoint. sugarlift.aquatint.zinc plate.



Pillar of Time. *Minnamorra Rainforest. Jamberoo*

9.5" X 3". B&W. aquatint.sugarlift. zinc plate.

This image of a tree was achieved with one mindful calligraphic brushstroke using sugarlift. A few seconds of time passing to initiate an 'icon' to which one may focus the mind on time eternal.



‘Time Totem.’ Minnamorra Rainforest. Jamberoo.

8" X 4". sepia. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate.

As I walked through this rainforest I considered it how it was a ‘living installation’ as it is hemmed in by the agricultural lands that surround it and how it is only due to a conscious human decision making process that it still exists. The whole region was once rainforest but it was all logged away and this ‘ecological sanctuary’ is all that remains. Marcel Duchamp considered that the artist’s ‘discovery’ of a ‘found object’ was a sort of *rendezvous* between it and the artist who has by chance sighted the object (as if to have ‘met it’) and there upon chosen to confer a cultural validity upon it which overrides any previous purely utilitarian meaning. A new ‘higher mental dimension’ is ‘entwined’ into the physical attributes of the object to allow it serve a fresh cultural function. To be a ‘new creature’ spiritually so-to-speak. As far as I can perceive there is no artistic rationale in Duchamp’s thinking that the object always has to ‘necessarily’ be industrial and thus as I walked through this rainforest I came across many natural ‘found objects’. (It is simply a matter of fact that Duchamp lived in an urban setting in which he found his readymades). Thus when I ‘met’ this impressive tree trunk as it came across my path I naturally enough consciously deemed it as a ‘totem of time’. As it was I was reminded of the totem poles that are associated with indigenous culture. Interestingly enough, on an artistic level this rainforest is a living, growing ‘nature installation’, which will change form over the years and which could be recorded with every new visit.



‘Eternity.’ Minnamorra Rainforest. Jamberoo.

4” X 2”. sepia. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate.

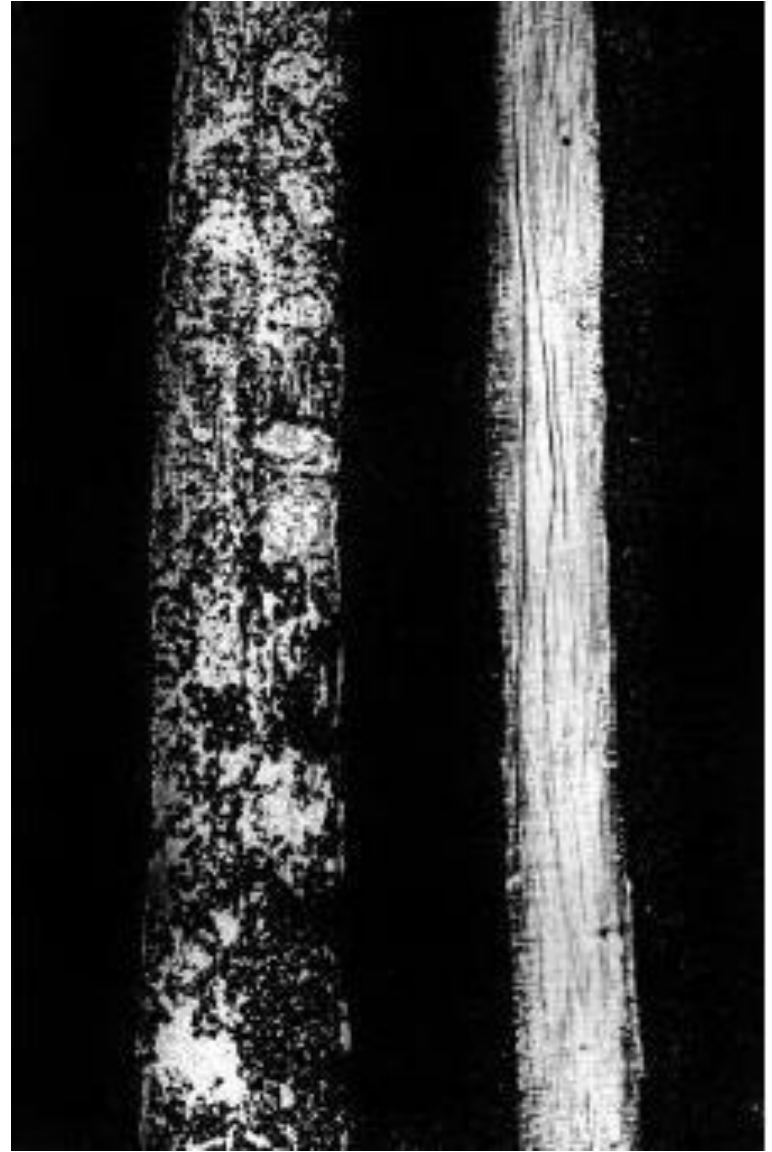


‘Pillar of Time.’ Minammurra Rainforest. Jamberoo

6”X 4”. B&W.. aquatint. sugarlift, copperplate.



‘Wisdom & Youth.’ (Pillars of Time).’ Minammurra Rainforest. Jamberoo
6”X 4”. *B&W.. aquatint. sugarlift, copperplate.*



‘Minnamurra Falls.’ Jamberoo

Black on Grey. 6” x 4”. zinc plate.

In the 1980s at the end of the walk through the rainforest one came to this waterfall. It is a tranquil setting but the walk now takes you to the top of the waterfall where one may now view another waterfall in the same area. This rather impressionist work was mainly accomplished by scratching steel wool over the hard ground that was applied to the zinc plate which was then placed in an acid bath



Jervis Bay diptych.

‘Eroding Rocks.’ Jervis Bay.

6” X 4”. B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate

‘Eroding Rocks.’ Jervis Bay.

6” X 4”. B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate

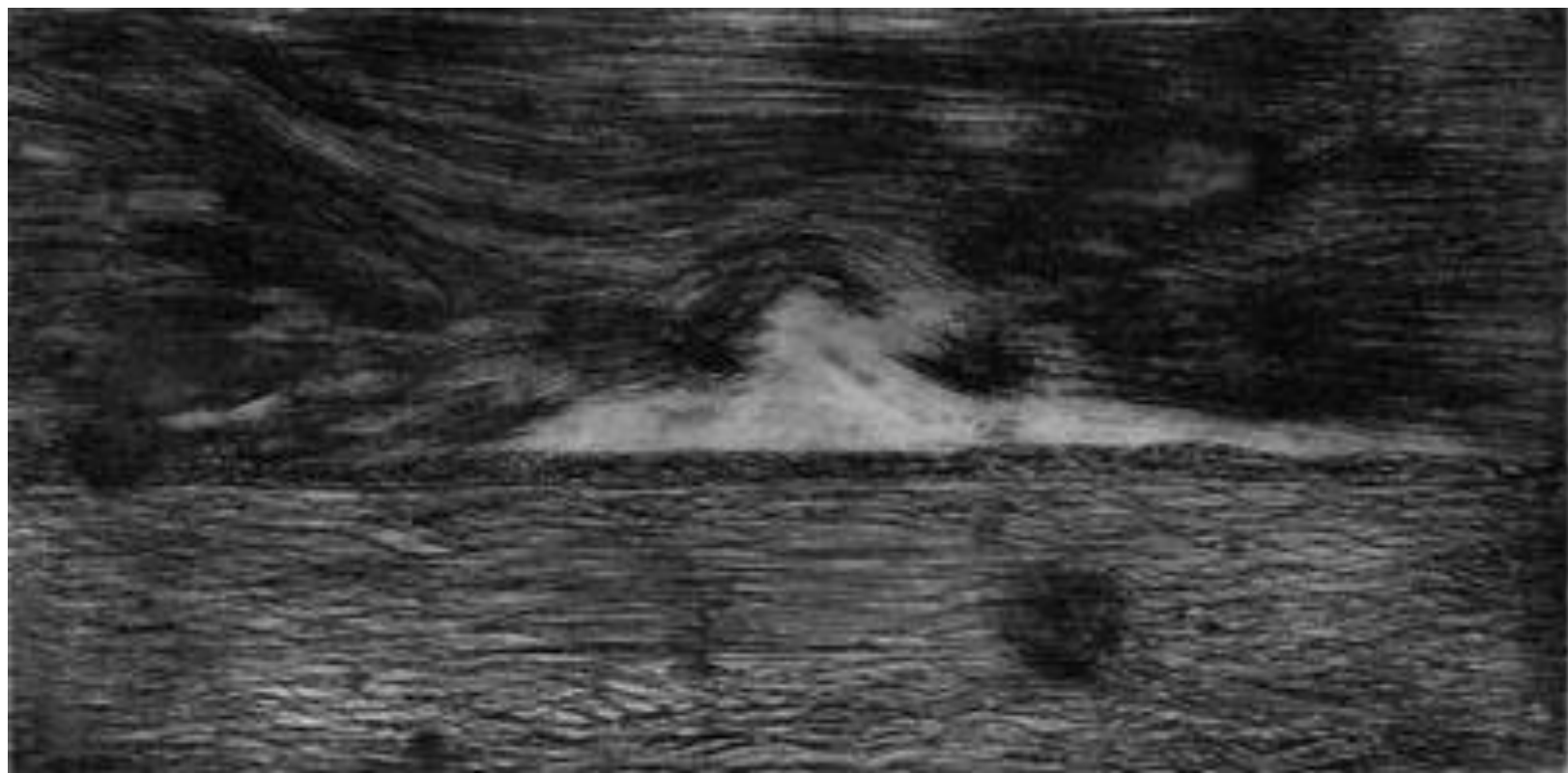
Eroding rocks are the measure of ‘time eroding’ on the physical plane



‘Sunset. Greenpatch. Jervis Bay.’

Black on Grey. 8"X 4" drypoint. zinc plate.

Greenpatch is a popular spot at Jervis Bay and it was wondrous looking at the water at sunset as the sun's rays glided over the smooth water of the inlet. I have always liked the south coast - especially in winter - due to its wild quality but on this night it was the serenity of Nature which inspired me to also consider the enormous beauty of this coast line. The dark sky whose movement contrasts with the stillness of the sea was done by streaking steel wool over the hard ground wax on the zinc plate then placing it in the acid bath.



‘Minnamurra Tree. Jamberoo

B&W. 6”X7”drypoint.zinc plate.

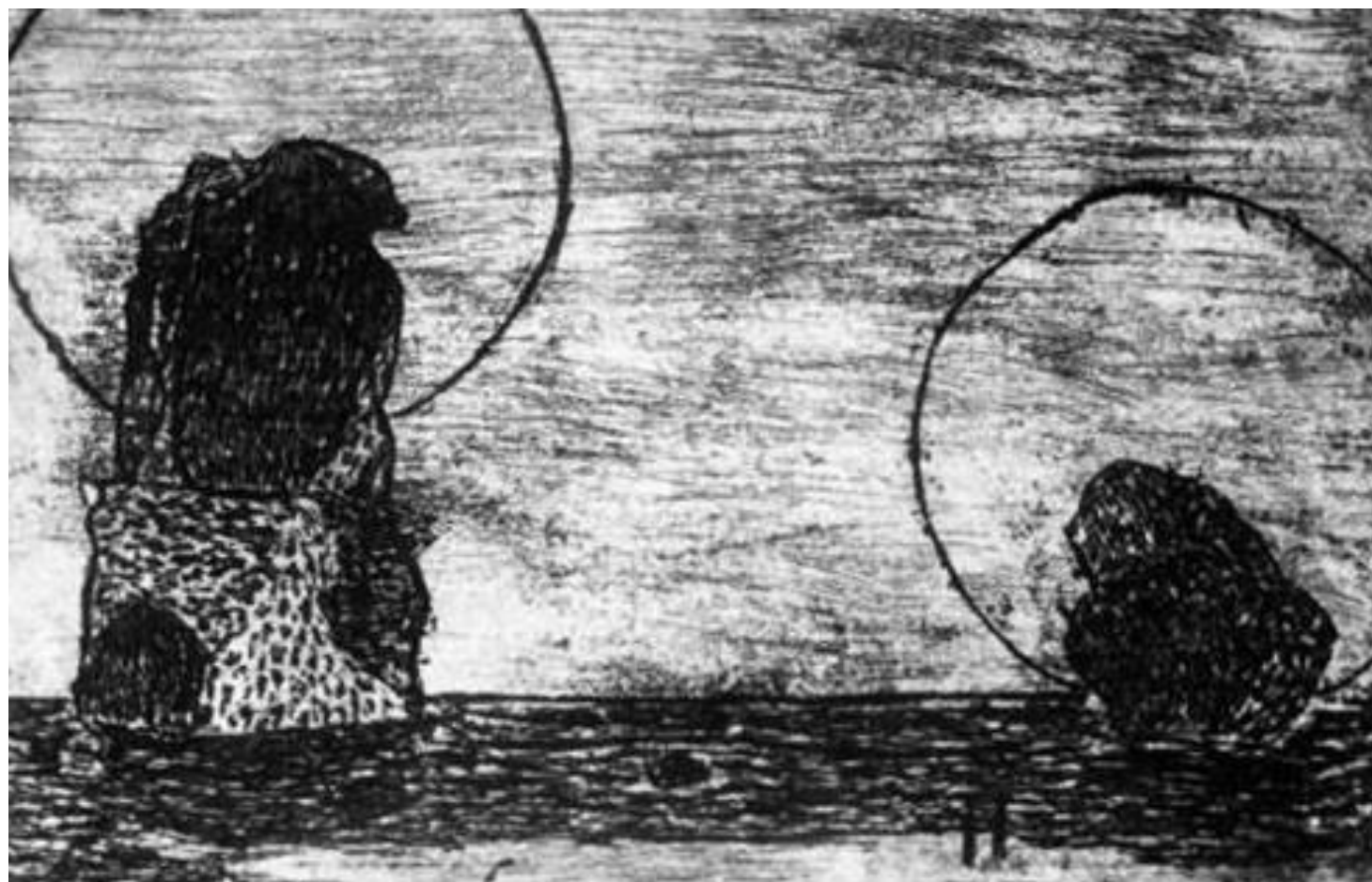
An exercise in tonal contrast: another early work which is a study of one of the many beautiful rainforest trees that can be viewed in Minnamurra Forest near Jamberoo.



‘Apostles of the Universe.’ Great Ocean Road. Victoria.

B&W. 6”X 4”. drypoint. copperplate.

This playful image with its touch of magic realism with the included halo rings is more or less self-explanatory as these two pillars belong to the well-known natural feature known as the Twelve Apostles along the Great Ocean Road in Victoria. This particular image is based on a photo of these two ‘Twelve Apostles’ which I took with two friends standing by them. They are the two tiny figures in the foreground on the beach. In the photo these two rock pillars look monumental. It was only ‘natural’ that halos were added in this depiction of these two Apostles which help to emphasize their spirituality; it was also only natural that the title relates these two large natural forms to the monumentality of the whole cosmos. By the way I was amazed how at sunset the apostles really did look as spectacular as they do in all the postcards. In fact, I was so impressed I bought one.





CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

alpha, omega (central australian diptych)

alpha, omega (central australian diptych)

alpha, omega (central australian diptych)

embryo of the universe

pendulum of time

mother & child

conception of the universe with cosmic egg

‘Alpha, Omega.’ (*Central Australian diptych*)

6" X 4". sepia. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.

6" X 4". B&W. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.

‘Alpha, Omega.’ (*Central Australian diptych*)

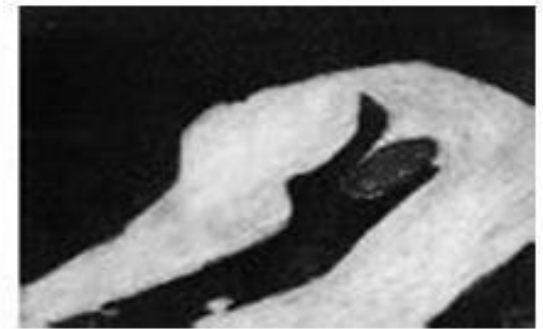
6" X 4". sepia. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.

6" X 4". B&W. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.

‘Alpha, Omega.’ (*Central Australian diptych*)

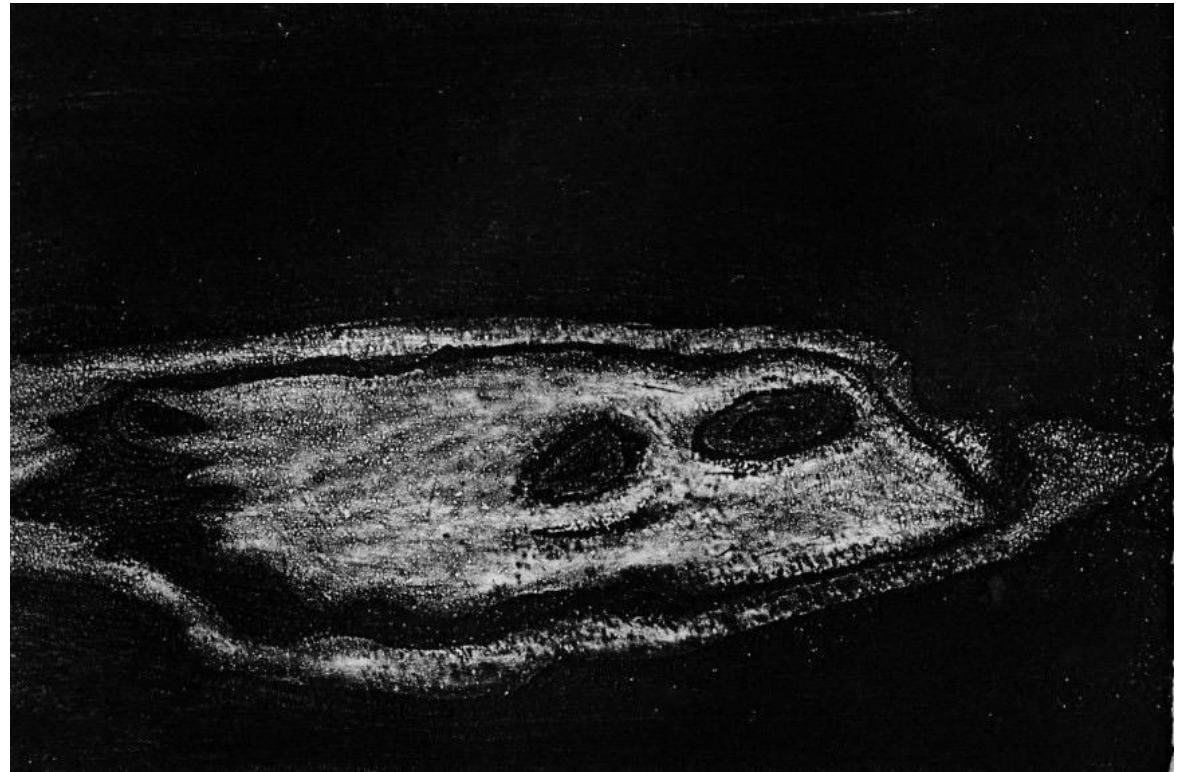
6" X 4". sepia. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.

6" X 4". B&W. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.



‘Embryo of the Universe.’ *Central Australia.*

6” X 4”. B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate



‘Pendulum of Time.’ *Central Australia.*

6” X 4”. B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate.

This particular triptych of etchings (*Embryo of the Universe, Pendulum of Time, Mother & Child*) of which this image is the second is based on aerial Super 8 footage taken from a Cessna while flying over Central Australia. I was on the way to visit friends working as doctor and nurse at the Arunda community Amata.

These images have turned out to reference for me the idea of ‘return’ and ‘time’ as considered by T.S. Eliot in his poems the ‘Four Quartets’. Most significantly there is paradoxical idea of returning to a previously visited place to see it ‘for the first time.’ This is partly due to the technical decision of wanting to introduce a more textured background as seen in the ‘Alpha’ etchings of the same central Australian landscape after originally producing these etchings in the simple black & white contrast way they are presented here. The textured appearance was unsatisfactory and so I returned to my original presentation with an increased appreciation of this format. In any case, I never imagined that when I filmed the landscape nearly twenty years ago I would ever use it as the subject matter of a series of etchings; especially for a set of prints that have taken on a rather contemplative edge to them. To meander to a more philosophical level I could state that for each individual there is between the ‘first time’ and the ‘second time’ there has been the passage of events that allows the ‘second visitation’ to resonate with an increased awareness that perhaps was lacking in the original visit.

One’s ‘getting of wisdom’ is perhaps brought about by time weathering on the mind through memory which is a ‘mental residue’ of physical experience. Human comprehension leads to spiritual revelation and thus in turn human vision is renewed to allow a supposed known reality to appear ‘anew’. It is not necessarily so much that what was perceived before is to be negated but rather that any ‘truth’ that has earlier been envisaged is deepened. With that said it seems Eliot saw time as somewhat contesting with eternity but rather once could see time as leading to a union with eternity: through the immateriality of the human mind consciously striving to be in contact with a spiritual realm beyond any physical dimension; that is ever constant and beyond any ongoing degradation. To perceive the invisible in the visible. Human memory can work as a bridge between what is seen and not seen and time and experience – those so called temporal qualities of reality – form the basis of human reminiscence. Thus in the same way we do not know what is ‘white’ without also knowing what is ‘black’ then we will not know the timelessness of ‘eternity’ without first understanding the mortal condition we presently live in.

As to measuring any emerging insights this could be evaluated by revisiting by way of the cycle of time the different starting points – both physically and mentally – that have served as consequential ‘life markers’ in one’s existence. The notion of a ‘pendulum of time’ thus resonates with me as the mind swings back from the present to past memory that can seem as equally real as the ubiquitous ‘eternal now’ to then through prophetic vision to envisage the future yet to come.

Life’s trajectory may not need to bend along some fatalistic, locked in course but can be manoeuvred by taking in what has become before to help us make today a differing, unpredicted response. Thus through what were originally temporal images such as this one I have through the evaluative process of human thought come to meditate on a few universal realisations as to be perceived through these works. In this particular etching I can easily imagine the almost smoke like ‘arm of time’ wafting back and forth across the deep dark hues of a mindful immeasurable connecting synaptic landscape between human experience and human memory and human realisation.

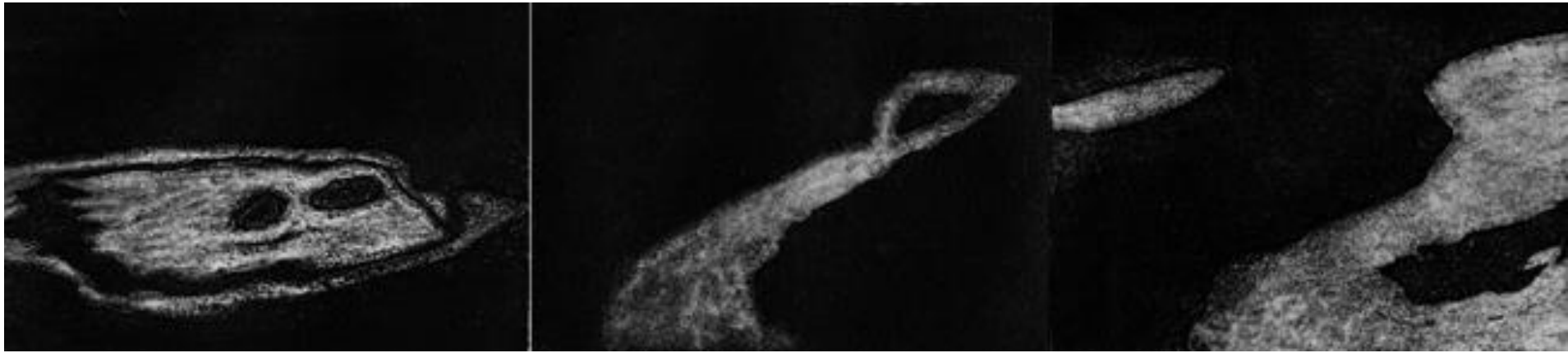


‘Mother & Child.’ *Central Australia.*

6” X 4”. B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate.

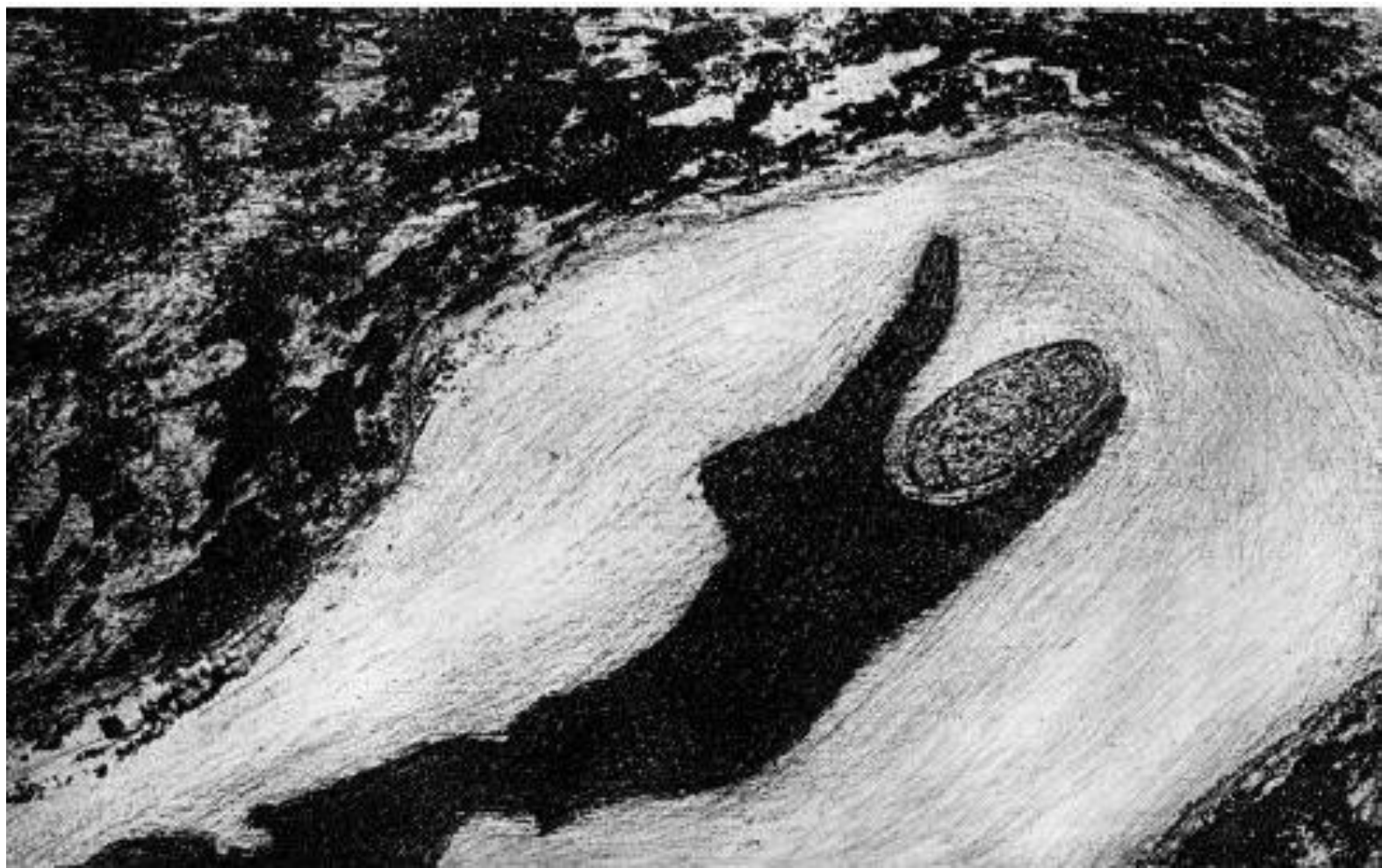


Central Australia triptych



‘Conception of the Universe with Cosmic Egg.’ *Central Australia.*

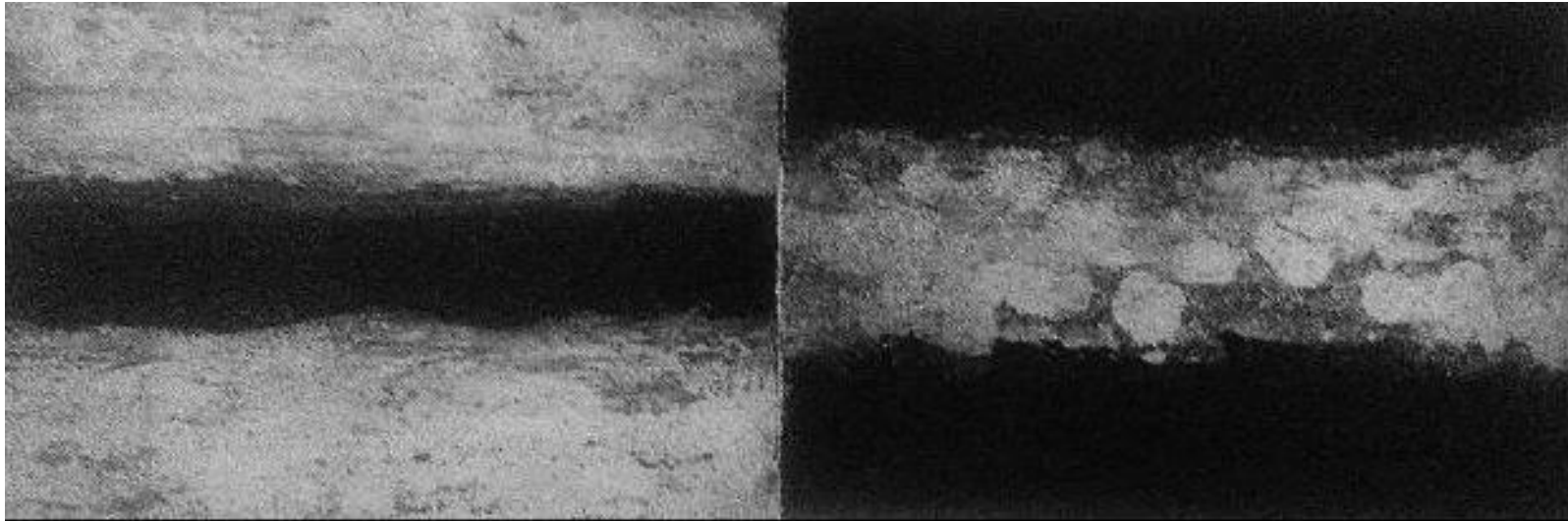
8” X 6”. B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate.





currents

*this god the river & this river the cosmos
this river, a strong brown god
white matter, dark matter
river rhythm
currents of the universe
parallel universe
cosmic flow
cosmic tracers
reed universe*



‘this god the river & this river the cosmos.’

12" X 4". B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. Two copperplates.

this god the river refers to the first plate while *this river the cosmos* refers to the second plate. This image has culminated from Cooks River sketches.



‘This River, A Strong Brown God’. Cooks River. (After T.S. Eliot's The Four Quartets). *Four square etching plates all adding up for an image that is 29 cm X 8 cm. sepia. aquatint. sugarlift. drypoint.*

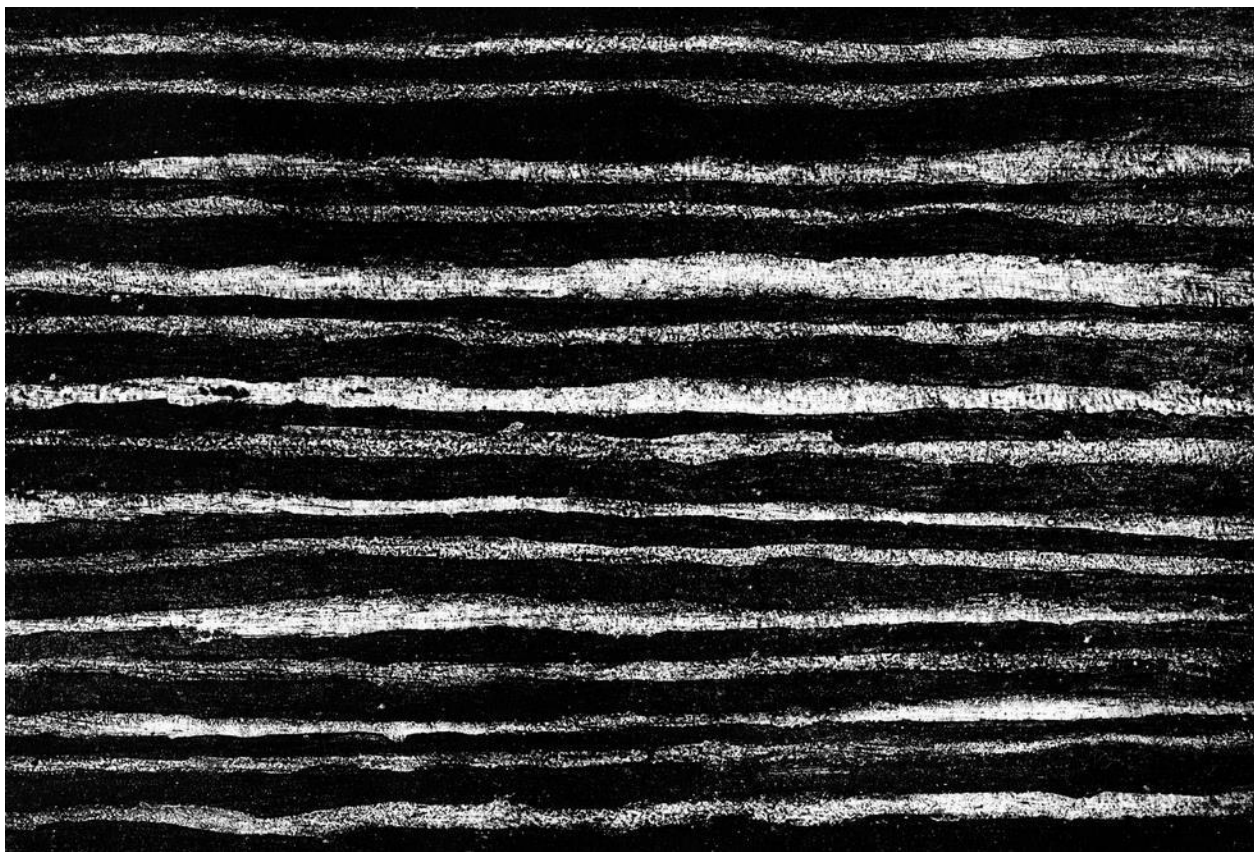
In the third poem of the Four Quartets titled 'Dry Salvages' T.S. Eliot writes of the river being a 'strong brown god'.



‘WHITE MATTER, DARK MATTER.’

40 cm X 15 cm. sepia/B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. Two zinc plates.

The first state for this etching was too flat and one-dimensional so I aquatinted again the whole surface areas of the two plates as well as burnish the white areas to create a softer, meditative appearance which with the extra darkened contrast gave the work more depth. A sense of the eternal is thus better reflected especially when in the title I make reference to the Universe. Although, I should point out I was also thinking of river currents (as in Cooks River) when I initiated this work. It was commented that the white areas seemed like ‘bone’. I thought that was a very good observation as the white areas can be seen as solids in interplay with the dark areas which in this interpretation could be viewed as shadows. In any case, the viewer may wish to discern what areas are ephemeral and what is ‘touchable’ for if one was to view physical reality on a microcosmic quantum level it would seem to be like a multi-dimensional mirage.. White Matter, Dark Matter was settled upon as the title of this print befitting the notion of how so much of the known Universe is actually ‘unseen.’ A dark mass that still remains a mystery.



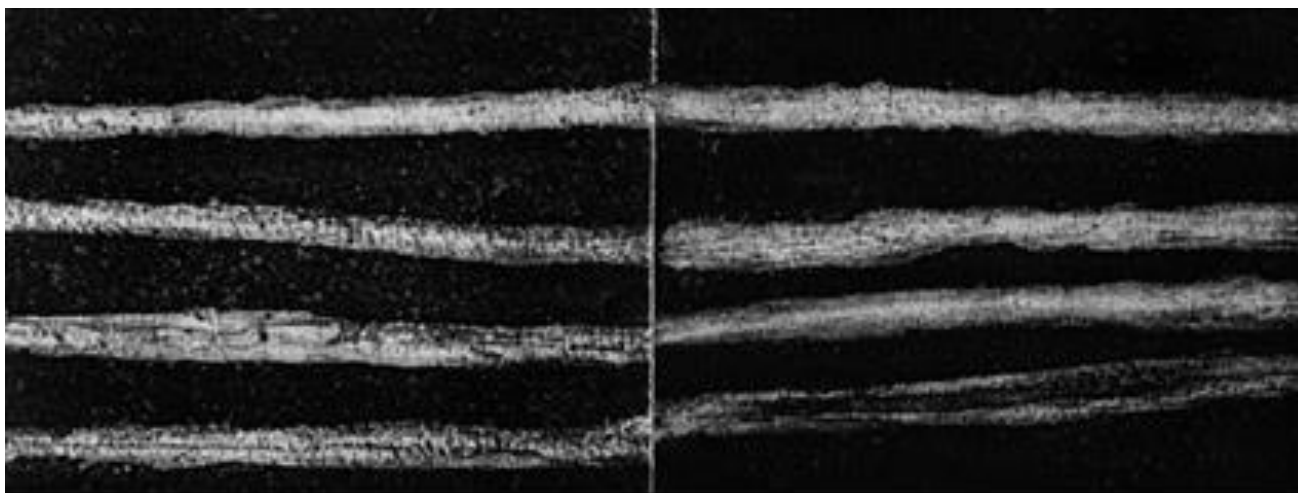
‘River Rhythm.’(Cooks River. Sydney).

B&W. 20 cm X 30 cm. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate



‘Currents of the Universe.’

sepia. 13" X 23". cm. drypoint. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate.



‘Parallel Universe.’

sepia/B&W. 11" X 4". Aquatint. sugarlift. Two zinc plates,



‘Cosmic Flow.’

sepia. 12" X 8". aquatint. sugarlift. copperplate.



‘Cosmic Tracers.’ 9.5” X 7”. B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate

These bands can be viewed as giant rhythmic columns of white laser light which, like tracer bullets, mark out the furious celestial forces of the initial creative explosion as they continually shoot outwards in this ever expanding universe. On a more ‘earthly level’ I had a friend comment to me that this image reminded her of the birch trees that can be found in the forests of Lithuania and Russia.



sepia version



‘Reed Universe.’

*11" X 8". B&W. aquatint.
sugarlift. zinc plate (reworked).*

This image harks back to an earlier much smaller print of reeds based on a Cooks River mangrove. However, the first impulse for this print was to consider the cosmic pulses that infiltrate that much grander ‘river’ which we call the Universe. Whether one wants to focus on river reeds or streaks of celestial light I find there is a sense of peace about this image; a certain stillness that allows one’s mind to meditate on life and creation.



sepia version.



resurrection

fabric of the universe

black poles

resurrection

cosmic flow

cosmic tracers

resurrection tree

dark matter stems of the universe

multiverse

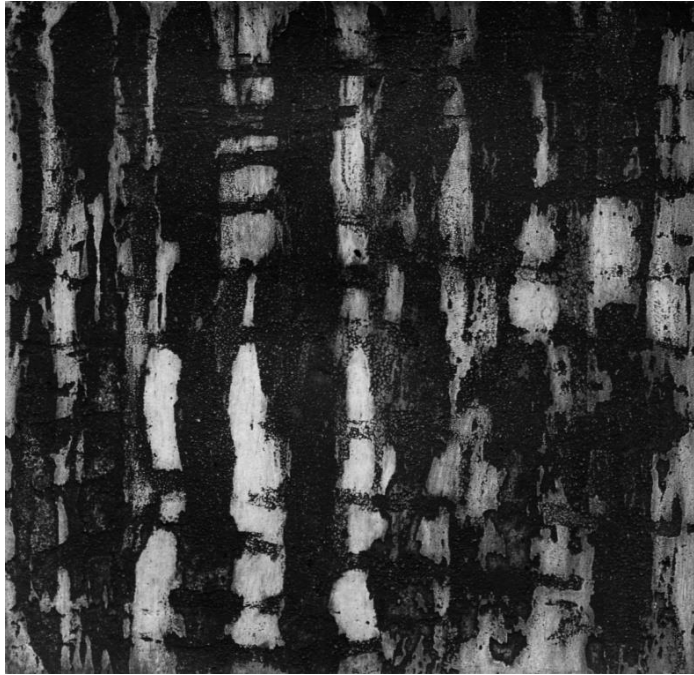
eroding universe/eroding universe

accelerating universe

Resurrection series

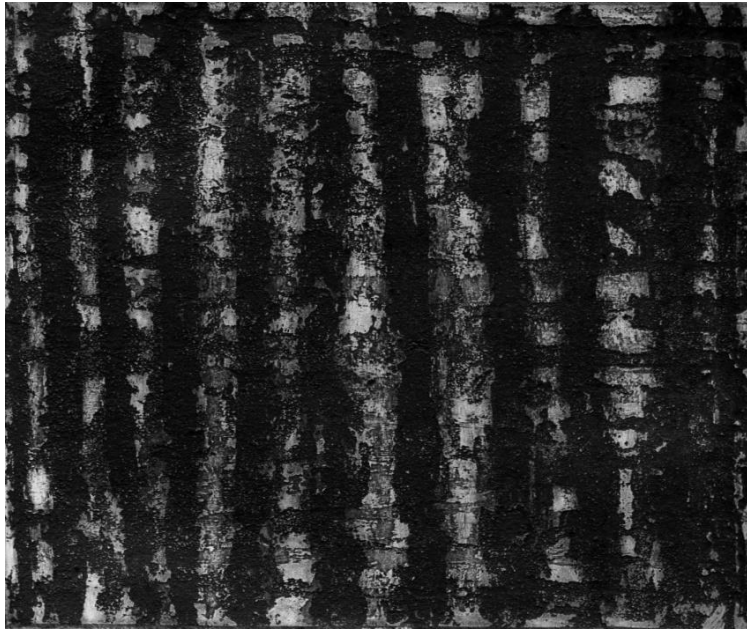
'I do not etch the plate I erode it...'

Initially inspired by William de Kooning's 'black and white paintings' with their striking tonal contrasts this series of etchings produced in early 2012 are now more so identified with 'resurrection' as the first three images along with a handful of other prints in this series were made from old zinc plates that had been put to one side by the artist. Over many years the plates had been gathering dust and dirt being part of a pile of failed or not very successful attempts at etching; their surfaces already 'sculpted' with grooves to print other images which often did not hold the artist's attention. Creativity involves much exploration and often leads to experimental ends with the knowledge gained in the process applied at a later time to conjure a more resolved, finished image. Many of the zinc plates had to be sanded back creating unexpected textures which intrigued the artist and which were often outside of his direct control. With new layers of aquatint as well as much time in burnishing the plates the paradox occurred that by such 'weathering' of these 'eroded' surfaces the plates were revived to form new, fresh 'regenerated' images. Although some of the works are pure abstractions they are included in this overall collection dealing with the Australian landscape as the rough-hewn textures remind the artist so much of the grainy, pocketed surfaces of this ancient continent's rock. Below are some examples of these renewed 'eroded' etchings which it must be said are also intermingled with some other etchings that were produced more or less at the same time with a similiar renewal theme as the more overt 'resurrected works.'



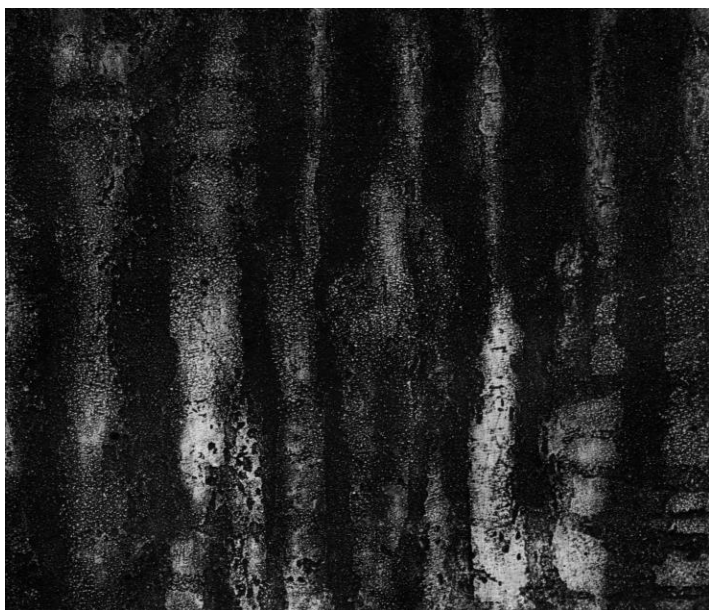
‘Fabric of the Universe.’ 8” X 8”. B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zincplate.

This plate along with the following two were first roughly covered with two cross hatch rows of sugartint which would then emerge through the thin layer of hard ground that would cover it to reveal bare zinc that would be covered with rosin and exposed to nitric acid to make a black impression: one row of vertical lines going across the plate and another row of horizontal lines going down the plate. A somewhat primal attempt to express the ‘cosmic mesh’ as well as make some reference to the stellar currents that oscillate through the universe as echoes to the original creation explosion. Eventually after repeated reworking of the plate there is only an intimation of the original crosshatching as the rocklike texture attempts to capture the essential binding fabric of the universe which both shapes reality into a coherent body as well as allow it to be fluid at the same time: to flow and be firm simultaneously. I understand how the universe can be perceived as a river.



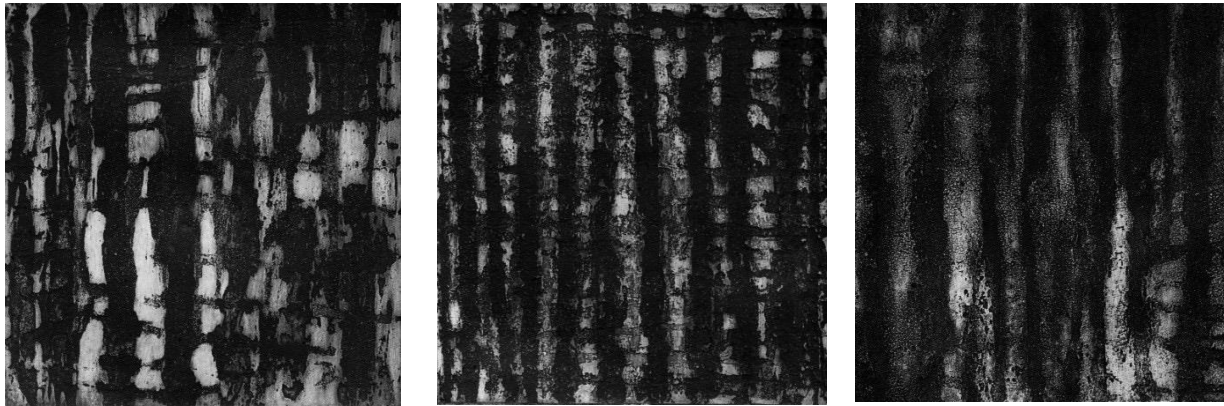
'Black Poles'. 8" X 8". B&W. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate

The title is in reference to Jackson Pollock's *Blue Poles*. Pollock was an artist whose large canvases visually epitomised the underlying co-ordinated structure of the universe. The artist would often be annoyed that viewers saw a pre-eminence of chaos in his work as he himself desired to comprehend the beautiful order of nature. I do likewise. I also venture to suggest the idea that the 'poles' are each like the axis of the Earth whose magnetic properties allow gravity to occur which in turn allows an atmosphere and therefore also allows life to occur. Perhaps, the overall gravity of the universe is underpinned by cosmic 'magnetic poles' to allow it and its creative forces to fully throb.



‘Resurrection’. 8” X 8”. B&W. *aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate.*

In my first attempt to rework the plate the patterned image was rather flat and lifeless and so I came up with the idea of covering the whole plate with aquatint to make it all black. As if working on a mezzotint I then burnished the plate to revitalise it and give it life leaving the various degrees of lighter areas to produce a mysterious quality. Light emerging from darkness to overcome it: as it was Easter I was immediately drawn to the parallel of the Resurrection thus the title. To make an afterthought remark the contrasting tonal shades in an abstract way hark all the way back to the dramatic spirituality of Caravaggio’s *chiaroscuro* which pleases me.



Resurrection triptych

These three images form a triptych loosely based on the overarching idea of the first image in this series looking at the notion of the very material substance of the universe. It is as if a microscope has been able to zoom in to the very crevices and cracks that have resulted over time as the basic molecular structure of the cosmos ‘ages’ with the passing of so many billions of years. Yet, despite such stellar erosion the universe maintains a tight order and rhythm that allows it to exist as a single entity which will not suddenly dissipate and shred into a trillion parts. Within this organic structure there seems to be always ever new forms of existence birthing into material form and within this mystery called the cosmos is the even more extraordinary mystery called life.

In nature regular patterns such as those known as fractals can be discerned to give credence to the notion that there is an underlying organised order to creation. In the case of Platonism natural regular forms are mere attempts at imitating the ethereal ‘Absolute Forms’ from which visible reality corresponds too. What at first sight appears chaotic and random in natural phenomenon is actually the playing out of natural forces that work at shaping Nature as if doing it in a conscious way. Unless I am mistaken it is possible to design mathematical models to even predict what such natural energies can do and to comprehend what they have done. The universe has the equal contributions of the ‘randomness’ of quantum theory and the ‘predictability’ of the theory of relativity mysteriously working upon it in an intertwine way by which humanity is yet to understand and which is equally a micro as well as cosmic ir/regular process that leads the artist, musician, philosopher, architect, mathematician, scientist, astronomer as well as the theologian to consider worthy to explore. Nature is a mystery. The human soul is a mystery. A relationship between the two entities seems to exist and as for myself one is motivated to at least attempt in an artistic way to consider its ultimate significance – so as to more fully perceive what it means to be human, yes to be fully human as finite physical beings in an infinite universe which allows us to also be ‘infinite’ through the human imagination as soulfully reflective of nature’s earthly and cosmic dimensions.



'Dark Matter Stems of the Universe.' Wolli Creek.
8" X 6". sepia. sugarlift. aquatint. zinc plate.

This textured image also explores the boundaries of human perception. The dark columns are based on three trees in Wolli Creek; in this etching they can be viewed either as enclosed foreground masses or as 'open-ended infinities' of a cosmos beyond the other galaxies in the 'positive spaces' around them. It is a continuum of the issue of the way we view the visible world; to process it, so as to (subjectively/objectively) comprehend 'what *is* reality' (as first hinted at in *Dark Mass Nebula*). Although originally based on trees I have used the term stem (rather than trunk) in the title as *stem* is a word that more readily implies organic growth (such as in the term 'stem cells') and to imply not only the infinite celestial growth of the universe but also the mental 'growth' of the human mind that is also without end - like the cosmos. It should also be noted that our human imagination can be envisaged as multi-dimensional; which on a conceptual level supersedes our known three-dimensional universe. The three stems may also be considered as referencing the number three which is a number commonly implicated with the divine. The texture for this image belongs to a scratched up etching plate that was sanded back to reveal and accentuate the multiplicity of textures which initially emerged from the natural process of the plate gradually eroding over time. Sugarlift was then brushed on to form the three dark strokes on which eventually an aquatint was applied.



‘Resurrection Fallen Tree.’ Royal National Park.

B&W. 15cm X 22cm. aquatint. sugarlift. copperplate.

Although this tree has fallen I was struck by the many branches springing up to the sky.



‘MULTIVERSE’.

B&W. 14cm X 19cm. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate.

The original concept devised from Australian banksia pods placed side by side as observed in clusters in banksia trees while bushwalking. Consider the following passage:

*‘Look at the clusters of banksia acorns in banksia trees (one is reminded of clusters of stars in the universe). Then look at the rows of many dark oval pods of a single banksia acorn and imagine a series of universes which ours is but one. Consider then the innumerable multiverses that exist in a single tree and then multiply the innumerable abundance of universes there must be in the broad sweep of a whole national park. How can one human mind comprehend such an eternity? When one thinks of what William Blake said that even in one flower you can view forever?’**

**From LISA. Novel manuscript by the artist.*



‘Eroding Universe.’

6” X 4”. sepia. aquatint. copper plate.

Following on from doing images of eroding rocks such as those at Jervis Bay it seemed feasible to consider the whole universe as one singular form that was eroding due to its lengthy age. This etching was actually done by nature which I facilitated as the plate had naturally weathered over time in my backyard cedar shed studio. In true ‘Duchampian’ artistic ‘tradition’ once discovering the nature affected plate rather than cleaning it up I chose to view it as a ‘readymade’ ripe for ‘artistic hatching’. I placed the eroded etching plate in a bath of copper sulphate salt solution for over an hour or so until I was satisfied that a ‘deep bite’ had been achieved. Like a photographer recording light particles falling on a physical object I have merely ‘captured’ what nature had ‘created’ on a slice of copper. This small image intimates the many galaxies that exist in the stellar flux that is our universe; all of which may eventually dissipate into nothingness. Lastly, there is almost an X-Ray – perhaps, somewhat solar negative – quality to this image in inference to the ‘astronomical mapping’ that presently occurs of the Universe – the ultimate ‘readymade’.



‘Eroding Universe.’

10” X 6”. B7W. aquatint. copper plate.

This etching is also a product of nature being another weathered, eroded plate. There is a softness to this work which perhaps echoes the ultimate ephemeral quality of the Universe.



‘Accelerating Universe.’

10" X 6". B&W. aquatint. copperplate.

This image is very interesting as it is also produced by Nature with me simply being the facilitator of it. It is another etching plate that has simply been lying around in my dusty, dirty wooden cabin studio. It may even have spent some time in a stack of etching plates of failed etched images. With etching one never quite knows what is to eventuate until the etched plate is actually printed. It is a source of both joy and frustration to lift the paper up off the plate to see an image meet – or even surpass all expectations or not be ‘quite right’ or even worse – be a disastrous smudge of greys, whites and blacks. I work more from ‘experimental instinct rather than follow any particular guaranteed technical approach – as formulae means death to me – especially the death of creativity. (Art is not craft). Art should always be the *living* expression of a *living* human spirit. (Otherwise a machine is more beneficial). Consequently the ‘hazards’ of human emotion and human decision come into play leading naturally enough to a degree of failure through unexpected results but also to a degree of success through unexpected results. As artist I can also choose to look at a naturally eroded etching plate and consider that the scratches, marks on it can convey the artist’s intention as in the case of this etching (and other ‘eroded etching plates). I simply placed the copperplate in a bath of ferric chloride for a while – maybe up to two or so hours – until I felt the plate had been sufficiently bitten to produce an adequate image – an image by the way I had only guessed at as to what it

would be. However I must admit to some human intervention as I did place an aquatint over the plate to guarantee some contrasting black areas would emerge. In any case the image above is what was achieved. I feel it contains a certain level of dramatic movement amongst the many textures, shapes and patterns which immediately reminded me of artist's impressions of the celestial galaxies and supernovas. I had heard on the radio of the recent discovery that – contrary to what astronomers had expected – measurements of the speed of expansion of the Universe - after its initial creation

- were showing that the Universe was actually accelerating rather than slowing down! It was a cosmic result that defied all previous human assumption. Thus, the Universe is reaching its supposed 'endpoint' much quicker than originally thought. What the endpoint of the Universe will actually be is still open to conjecture as it may reach a final expansion point and then contract in on itself like an elastic band or it may continue to expand to the extent whereby one day every star will be so out of reach of every other star that there will be no light – only a deathly black cold darkness will ensue. However, by then the Earth will have been swallowed up a gigantic red Sun going through its death throes – perhaps in another four billion years from now.

As the Universe accelerates I think of Jackson Pollock with those 'swirling visions' depicted in his drip paintings which unconsciously reflect the vibrating ordering of the Universe. There is not chaos in Pollock's canvases but a psychological 'tuning in' with the underlying gravitational pulse of the cosmos that binds all reality together into a patterned, fluctuating methodical mass that follows its own internal logic as instigated by nature. "*I am nature.*" Pollock once forcefully proclaimed. It is said that in the development of the Universe there was the final step of attaining consciousness through the birth of life; humanity is an 'eye' of the Universe looking back on the Universe.* Yet, looking back on itself through Pollock's eyes there is a manic imagination who drunkenly chose to end his own tortured life by speeding into a tree killing with him one of the two women also in the car. I wonder what sort of tumultuous future – or end - may also be in store for the Universe if Nature chooses to press down on the accelerator even harder as this cosmic conflagration with its 'terrible beauty' continues to expand at an ever increasing rate.

* See '*What is Post-Modernism?*' by Charles Jencks. Academy Editions. 1996

II



INDONESIA

nirvana

creation of the world

tree of life

pennies from heaven

adam & eve

anu krakatau is angry

borobudur

‘Nirvana.’ Indonesia. Java.

sepia on cream paper. 6” X 4”. drypoint. copperplate.

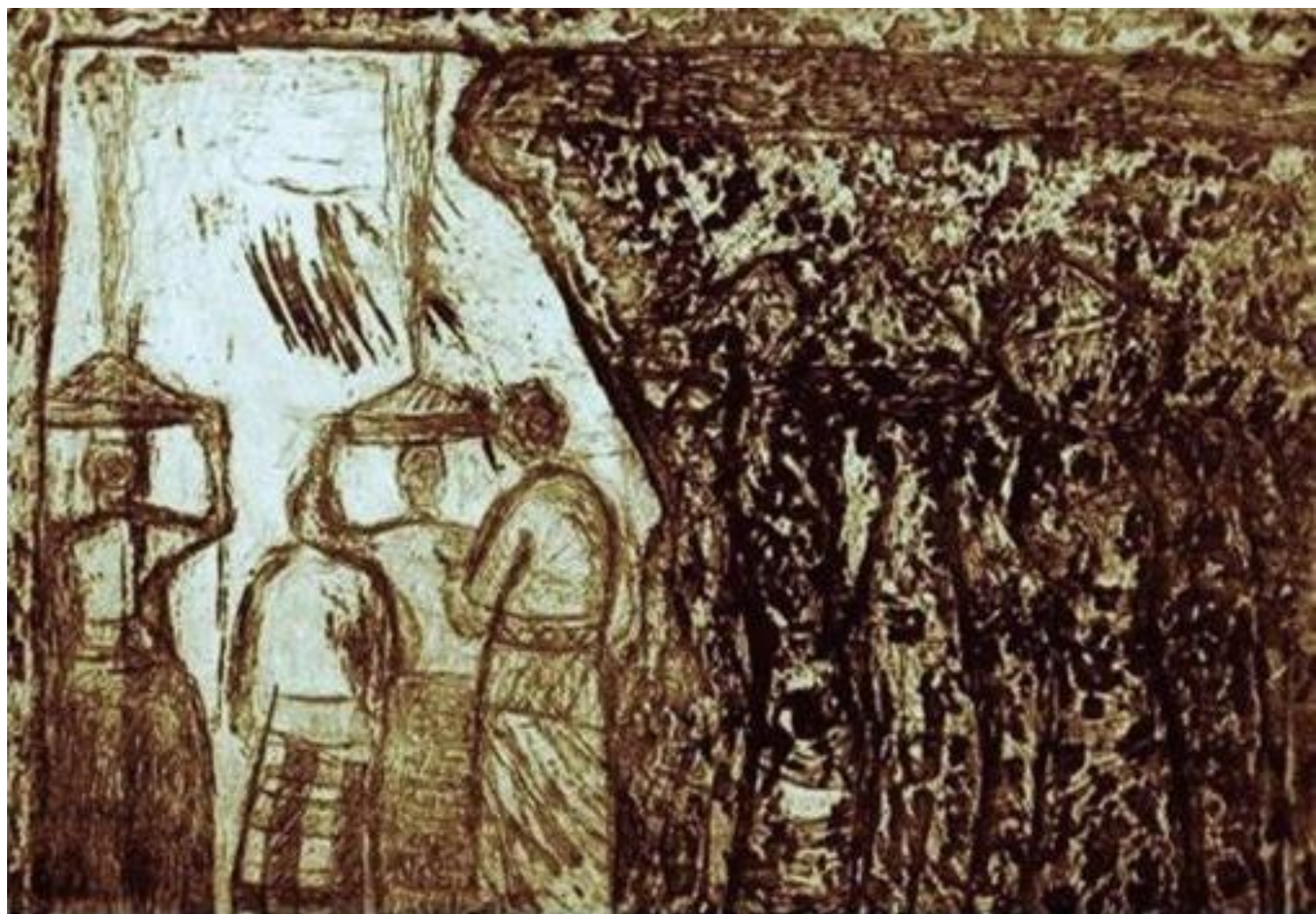
Mt. Merapi which hovers here above a blanket of mist is an active volcano. I and a male friend from Lithuania spent a night walking up to the summit of Mt. Merapi with the hope of seeing it spout red lava just before sunrise. We did not see any lava but viewing the blanket of white cloud over the surrounding landscape made me feel we had reached nirvana. This experience was accentuated by the feeling that as we climbed this steep mountain - through a windy rainy night - I felt we were akin to the spirits of Virgil and Dante travelling through the Underworld. In the morning we had passed from the cold darkness of Hades to the warm dawn light of Paradise. Mt. Merapi is the volcano on which the nearby grand Buddhist complex of Borobudur is based on. The top of this divine temple is meant to resemble nirvana itself; seeing Mt. Merapi at dawn and its mystical surrounding environ I can well understand how it was from here that the ancient architects of Borobudur gained their original inspiration.



‘The Creation of the World.’ Ubud. Bali.

sepia on cream paper. 6” X 4”.drypoint. copperplate.

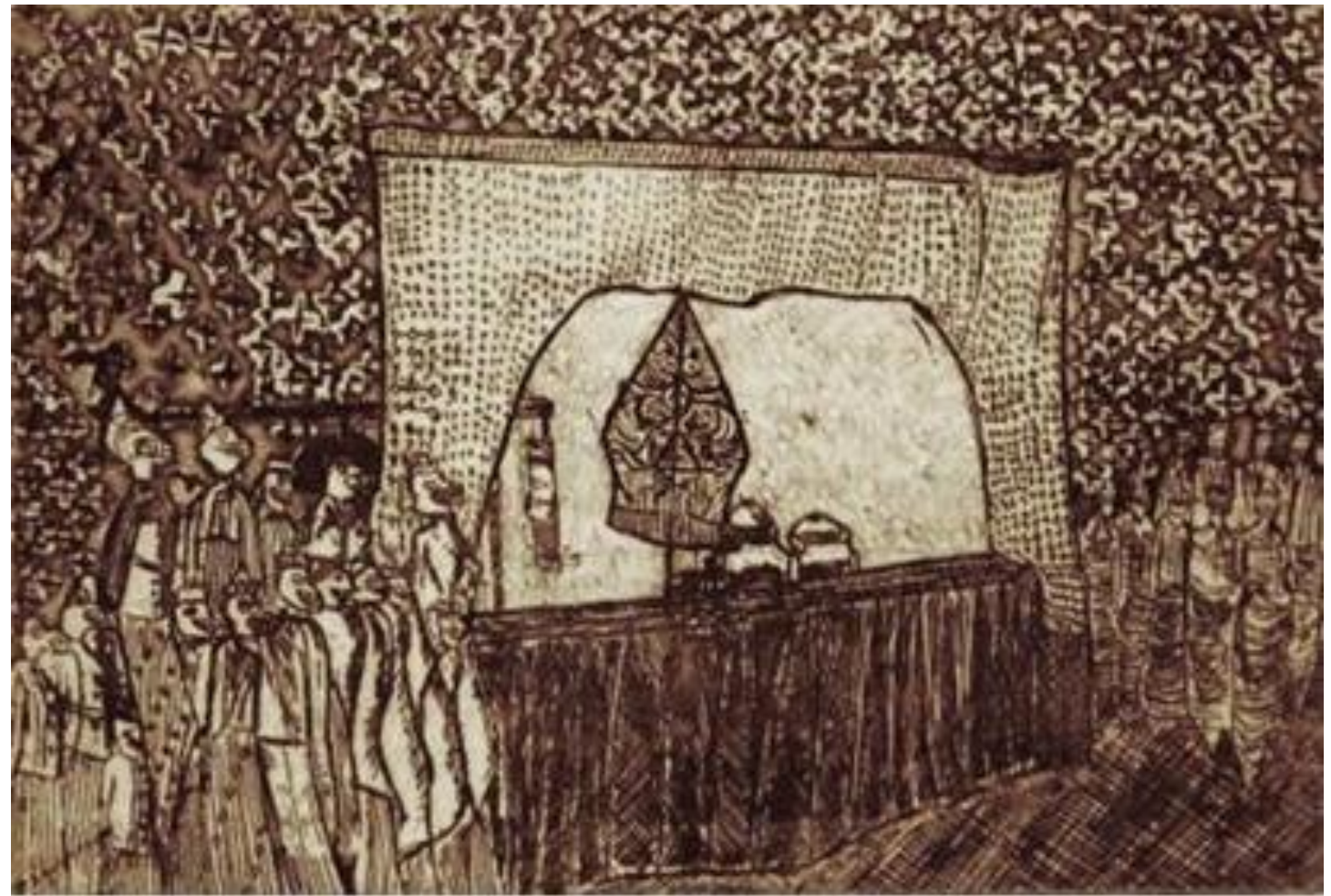
Around July each year in Bali is a big Hindu festival that commemorates the creation of the world. Families go to the temple in the morning to worship this event. Food is brought before the gods who come down to visit earth on this special day. After the food is blessed by priests women usually carry it away on baskets they place on their heads. Families have a big feast akin to our Christmas lunch. In this etching you can see beings that still wait to be fully formed in the shadows of the temple. While in the light are fully shaped women taking the food of the gods to their homes.



‘Tree of Life.’ Java. Indonesia.

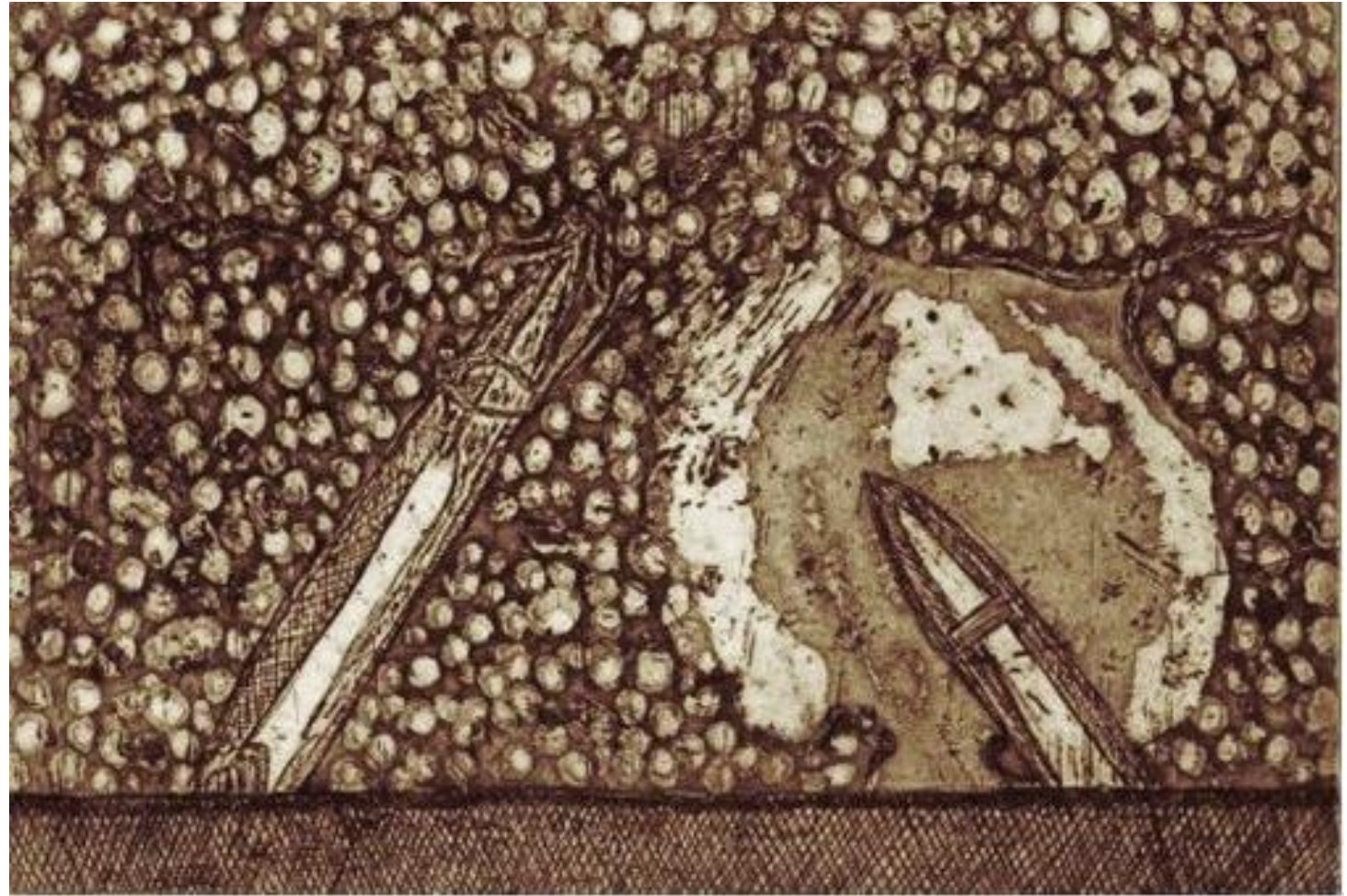
sepia on cream paper. 6” X 4”. drypoint. copperplate.

An Indonesian puppet theatre; on the left side are rows of wooden puppets used during the play. The play was viewed during the day and differed from the usual shadow puppet play which has the puppets behind a curtain. The large leaf in the middle of the stage is known as the tree of life and is displayed before a play begins and also at the end of the play to signal to the audience that it is finished.²



‘Pennies from Heaven.’ Flores. Indonesia
sepia on cream paper. 6” X 4”. drypoint. copperplate.

Leaving Flores island Kristina & I caught one of the large PELNI ferries which cruise the whole of the Indonesian archipelago. These ferries usually follow a two-week course stopping at different ports for about two hours giving just enough time to disembark and board their human cargo. These large passenger boats, which hold up to 1,000 people impeccably keep to their timetable. Sometimes there is a carnival atmosphere at the wharf when the PELNI ferry comes in as people wait to meet visiting relatives or farewell departing ones. (I still have a strong memory of two large middle-aged women in their splendid ‘Sunday dresses’ each holding a colourful little umbrella in one hand and waving little hankies as the PELNI left. While we waited for the PELNI to leave Flores several canoes approached the large white ship. I looked far down over the rail to see boys in these canoes call up at the passengers to drop coins; after doing so I watched as they dived into the water to collect their ‘treasure.’ Looking down at these industrious boys from the high vantage point of the top deck one felt like a god; I was so high up I really did feel that I was in heaven dropping coins to mortals below.



‘Adam and Eve.’ Rinca. Indonesia.

sepia on cream paper. 6”X 4”. drypoint. copperplate.

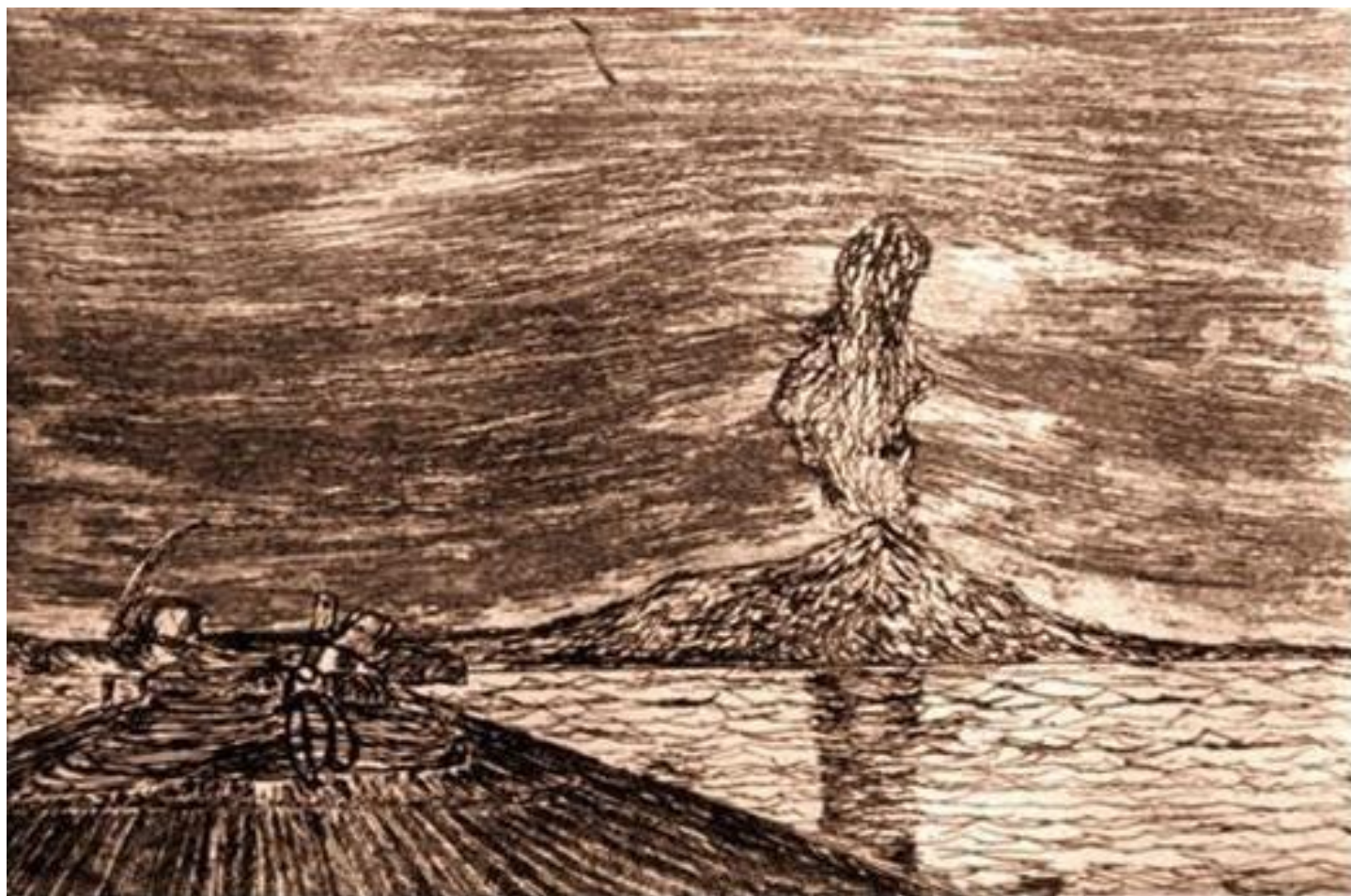
Travelling through the islands of the Indonesian archipelago can be a real trial filled with many days of tedious waiting for small ferries which had broken down or for buses which only come once a day and so forth. However, there is the occasional magnificent day which makes it all worthwhile. Six of us travelled on a rickety boat to the island of Rinca near Flores to see the Komodo dragons. There is a sense of pre-history amidst the Indonesian islands which can make one feel that you have gone back to the dawn of time. We had a great day looking for the dragons and walking around Rinca and on the way back to Flores on the boat we saw one of those picture postcard sunsets that take your breath away. Amidst us six were a lovely Australian couple; here they are as Adam and Eve on the boat enjoying paradise.



‘Anu Krakatau is Angry.’ Sumatra. Indonesia

sepia on cream paper. 6" X4".drypoint. copperplate.

Anu Krakatau is the child of Krakatau which blew up in the late 1800s causing thousands of deaths. One guidebook stated the sound of the eruption could be heard in Alice Springs. Thus my travel companion Kristina and I paid homage to this ancient power of nature by going out to it on a small fishing boat. The foredeck can be seen in the foreground. A boy on the craft could speak some English and so was our guide; the volcanic island erupted large plumes of black dust into the sky every ten minutes and so he informed us that on this day ‘Anu Krakatau was angry’. We spent a half hour on the island where we continued to view the blasts of Anu’s temper. It seemed as we touched the warm black sandy soil we had connected with the centre of the earth itself. The trip to a nearby island - where we were going to stay overnight before heading back to the Javanese coast - was very wild, the sky suddenly becoming grey and accompanied by a strong tempest. I feared as the boat steeply swung from side to side in the stormy seas there was a good chance it would capsize. However, we safely reached the sanctuary of the next island which - along with several others - was probably a remnant of the previous Krakatau; during the night we watched Anu Krakatau continue its tantrums - which regularly appeared as small orange glows on the dark horizon. Our eventful sojourn to this volcanic island was another highlight having the same sense of journeying into a world which preceded human time; comparing favourably to our much earlier visit to Rinca. To finish on a ‘technical note’ I should add that the sky was devised by simply scratching steel wool over the wax which was on the copper plate.



‘Borobudur.’ Java.

B&W. 8”X5”. drypoint. zinc plate.

These are some of the large bells at the top of the massive Buddhist monument known as Borobudur in Java. This cosmic monument echoes the nearby holy mountain of Mt. Merapi. You have to walk on an ascending pathway of this stone structure which somewhat resembles a relatively square ziggurat; as you do you may meditate on events in the life of Buddha which are carved into the high walls. At the spacious platform-like top you will have reached nirvana and from this open air heaven you can view the splendid surrounding countryside and Mt. Merapi itself – which in the far distance – along a bumpy mountain horizon. It should be stated that within each bell is a statue of Buddha which may be touched and by which I presume the healing power of this spiritual figure may have its effect upon you.





AUSTRALIANA

kite flying. sydney park. st.peters

suburban dream

sydney voodoo (kings cross street festival dancing dolls)

speed's milk bar

black deaths in custody march. eveleigh st. redfern

zorba the greek

the swimmer

with water and courage

an angel at my park

resurrection night

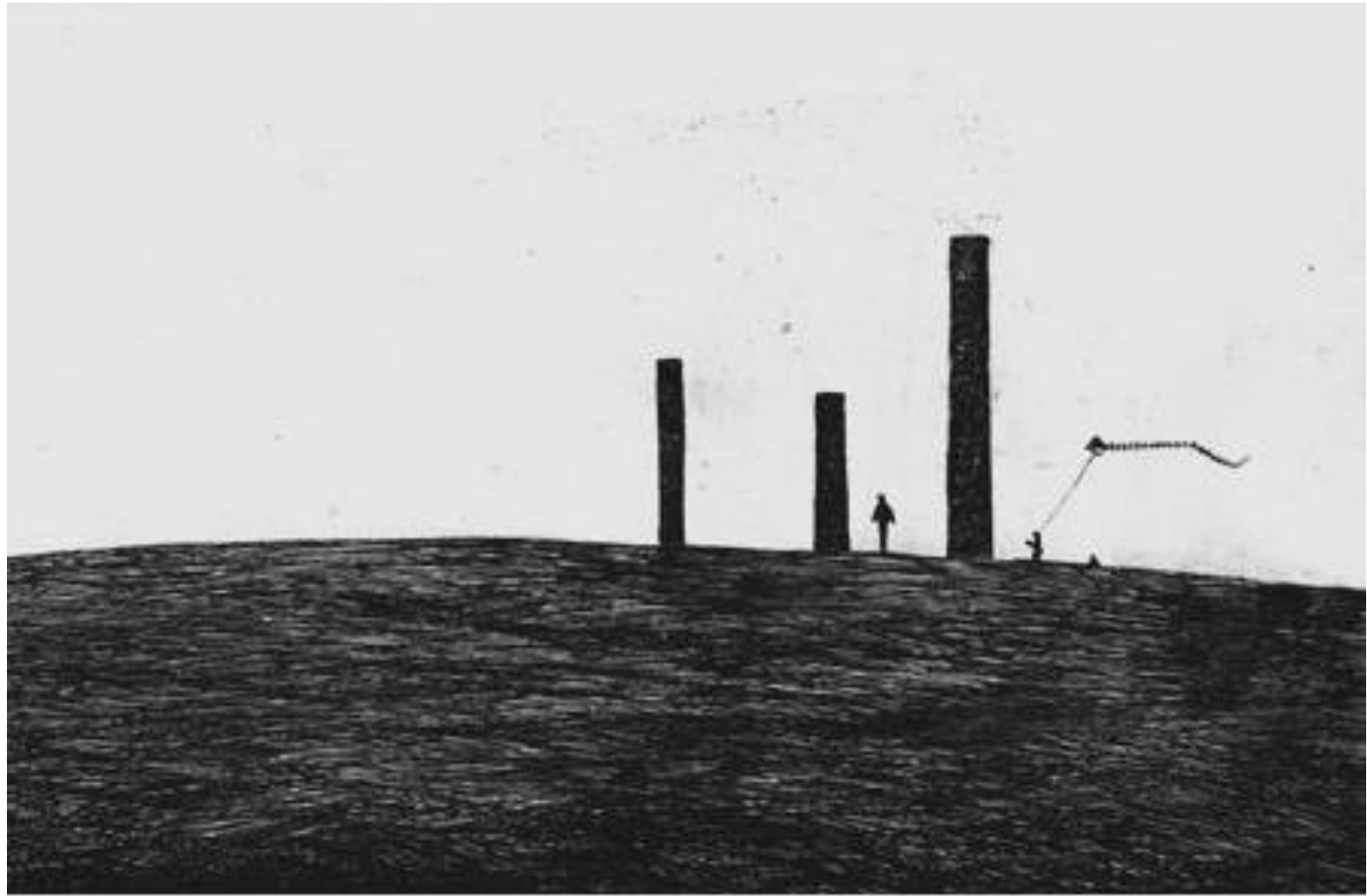
herr baker and frau bishop on the way to stalingrad to give herr nicola his two t-shirts

indian magicians. brunswick heads

‘Kite flying.’ Sydney Park. St. Peters.’

B&W. 11.5”X 8”. zinc plate

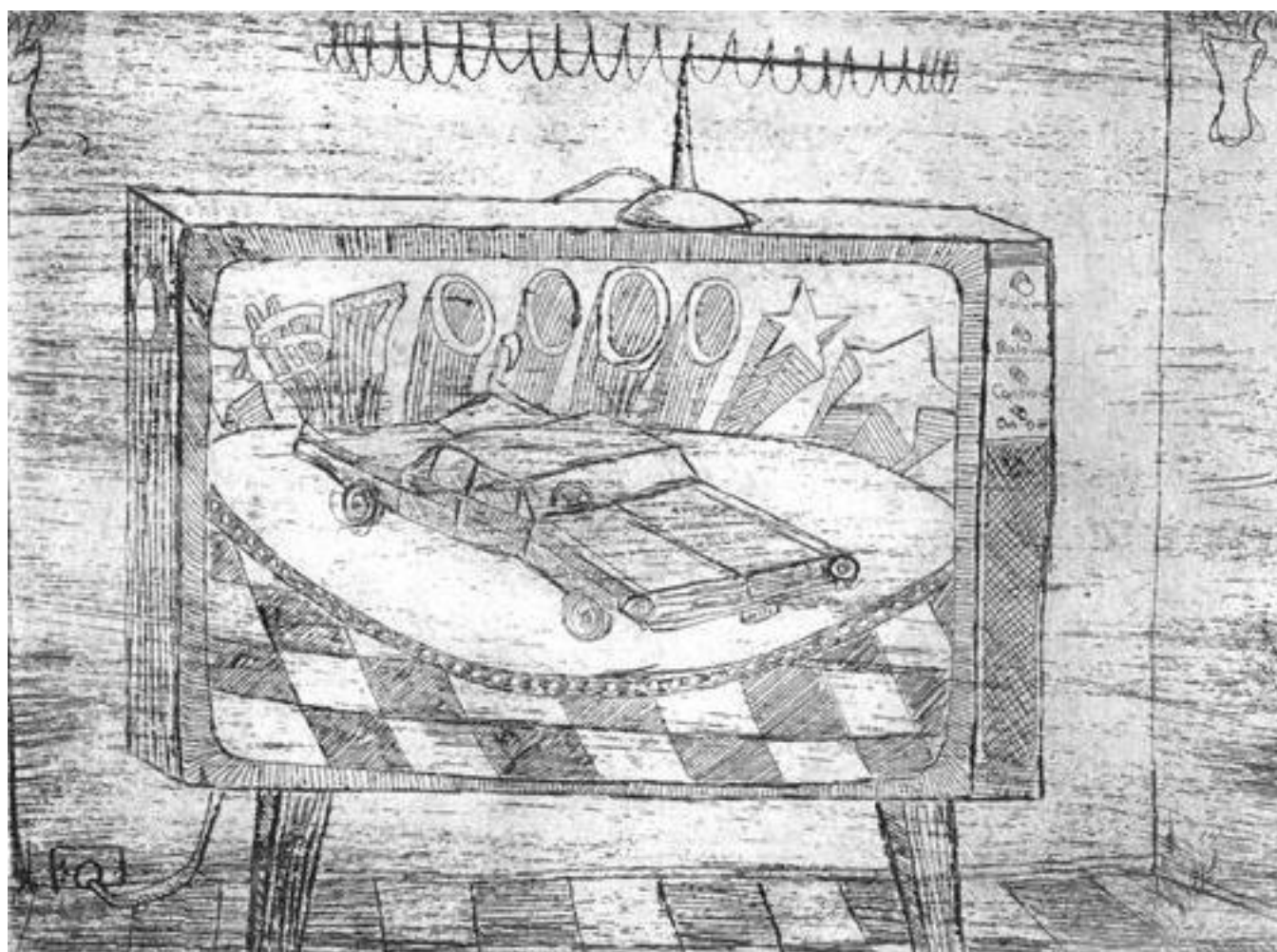
In the local area these tall chimney stacks of a now disused brick factory have a very iconoclastic quality to them as they are so dominating. There is a large park behind the stacks which is in regular use by the community. Every Christmas the stacks are decorated by the council. The small rooms within the brickworks are also sometimes used such as for exhibitions or plays. Many years ago I once went here to see a production of Samuel Beckett’s play Happy Days.



‘Suburban Dream.’

B & W. 8” X 6”. dypoint. zinc plate

This image recalls the past time of watching late afternoon games shows. The Wheel of Fortune was a favourite of mine.



‘Dancing Puppets. Kings Cross Street Festival’. (*Sydney Voodoo*).

B&W. 6”X 4”. zinc plate.

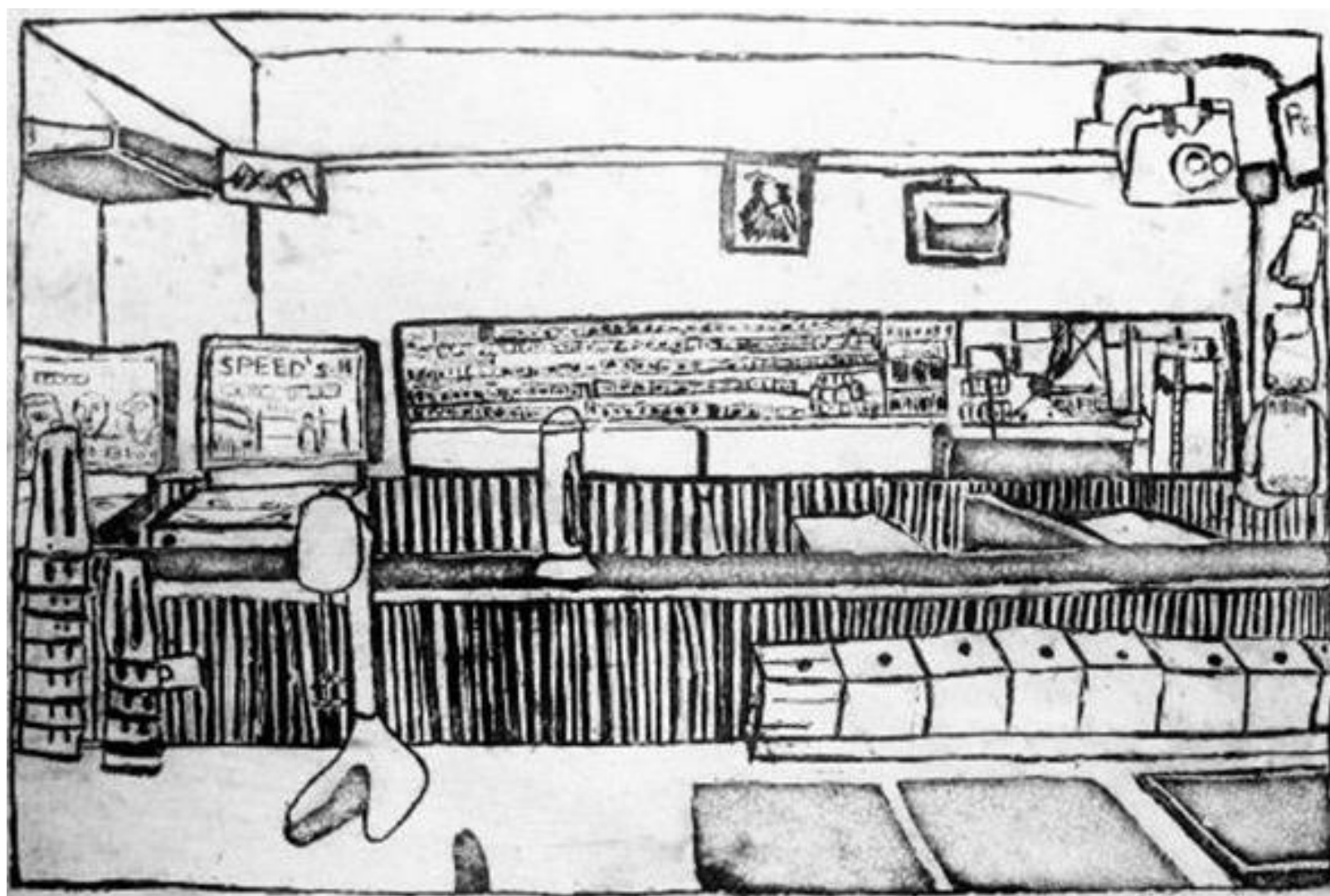
One time at the Kings Cross street festival I came across this peculiar sight of a dancing puppet on a little stage. (I have considered ‘*Sydney Voodoo*’ as an alternative title for this print). I did a quick drawing on scrap paper. I asked one of these two women how the puppet could dance and it was cheerfully explained that the mystery would be solved if I bought one – which I duly did. As it turns out a piece of fishing line is strung on a little hook on the back of the puppet. It is a simple matter of lightly shaking this fishing line to make the puppet bounce up and down to make it appear as if it is dancing. Very clever.



‘Speed’s Milk Bar.’ Earlwood.

B&W. 5.5”X 8.5” drypoint. zinc plate.

I grew up in a milk bar for nearly twenty years from the 60s to the 80s and my late father was known famously as Speedie as he was considered very slow in serving customers. (Although it was noted that Speed was very quick when he had ever raced off to the TAB across the road). My late mother was ‘Mrs Speed’; while their children were all ‘Little Speeds.’ It was also a never-ending source of curiosity as to why the siblings had auburn hair. This etching is based on a classic sepia photo of the milk bar which I have since ‘misplaced.’ The milkshake maker in the foreground a ‘family totem’. Despite the very long hours of tough labour it was a very lively, interesting way to spend one’s youth. Yet the racism was rife (with my father having a few brawls with bullying customers) and we bore the brunt of such racial malice until Australia finally became a more tolerant society (on the surface at least) when the ‘social accent’ thankfully shifted to multiculturalism. Yet, there are also many good memories such as nostalgically playing the pinball machines and Space Invaders. The shop was also a little bohemian with a lot of suburban and political philosophy being espoused by a varied assortment of regular customers from all walks of life with even the occasional sport star or celebrity popping in to buy ciggies. I should add that although my extremely hardworking mother had to also raise her children my very temperamental ‘larger than life’ father was definitely the ‘star of the show’ being both ‘tyrant’ and witty ‘comical satirist’ and thus I leave you with the following poem:



ZEUS

I sometimes envy the family cordiality of the Anglo - Australian middle classes
when I compare it to the psychological upheavals of my Grecian family history
Which nevertheless goes back to the beginning of time
To the time when Prometheus stole fire for humanity
To the time when chaos was replaced by the universal order of the gods
Who fight and debate amongst themselves

shifting the fates of both men and women

according to their whims

according to their lusts

according to their jealousies

according to their drunken states

States of mind

States of body

States of soul

and other Aristotelian dichotomies

(tri-chotemies?)

States of divine judgment

States of human error which do not guess correctly the divine moods

To the moods of my father who has the temper of a thunder god

I understand now he is none other than Zeus

I his son

The son of Zeus

Doomed to deal with a god who has the gruffness of a Spartan warrior

(How I envy the apparent civil manners of Anglo-Australian society)

Hey there's Zeus studying the racing form guide

with the discipline of a university academic studying the mysteries of

quantum mechanics

Hey there's Zeus picking oranges and lemons from the backyard

Hey there's Zeus taking out the garbage
 Hey there's Zeus shouting at everyone in sight
 Hey there's Zeus curiously watching what everyone is doing
 Hey there's Zeus at his dinner table singing old folk songs from the village
 Hey there's Zeus on his knees exhorting against the injustices he sees
 Hey there's Zeus who feeds my mother whose body has totally been worn down by disease and by the hours of hard work and emotional pain inflicted upon her over the long years
 Hey there's Zeus watching the footie
 Watching the share
 market
 Watching the parliament
 debate
 Watching endless episodes of American sitcoms
 Watching John Wayne kill all those bad men
 from out of town
 Watching his grandchildren who play in the backyard created from the life force of his soul which contains enough energy to explode and tear apart the known universe from the suburbs of Sydney through to Circular Quay
 It is a mystery to me
 as I play with my sister's twin three year olds

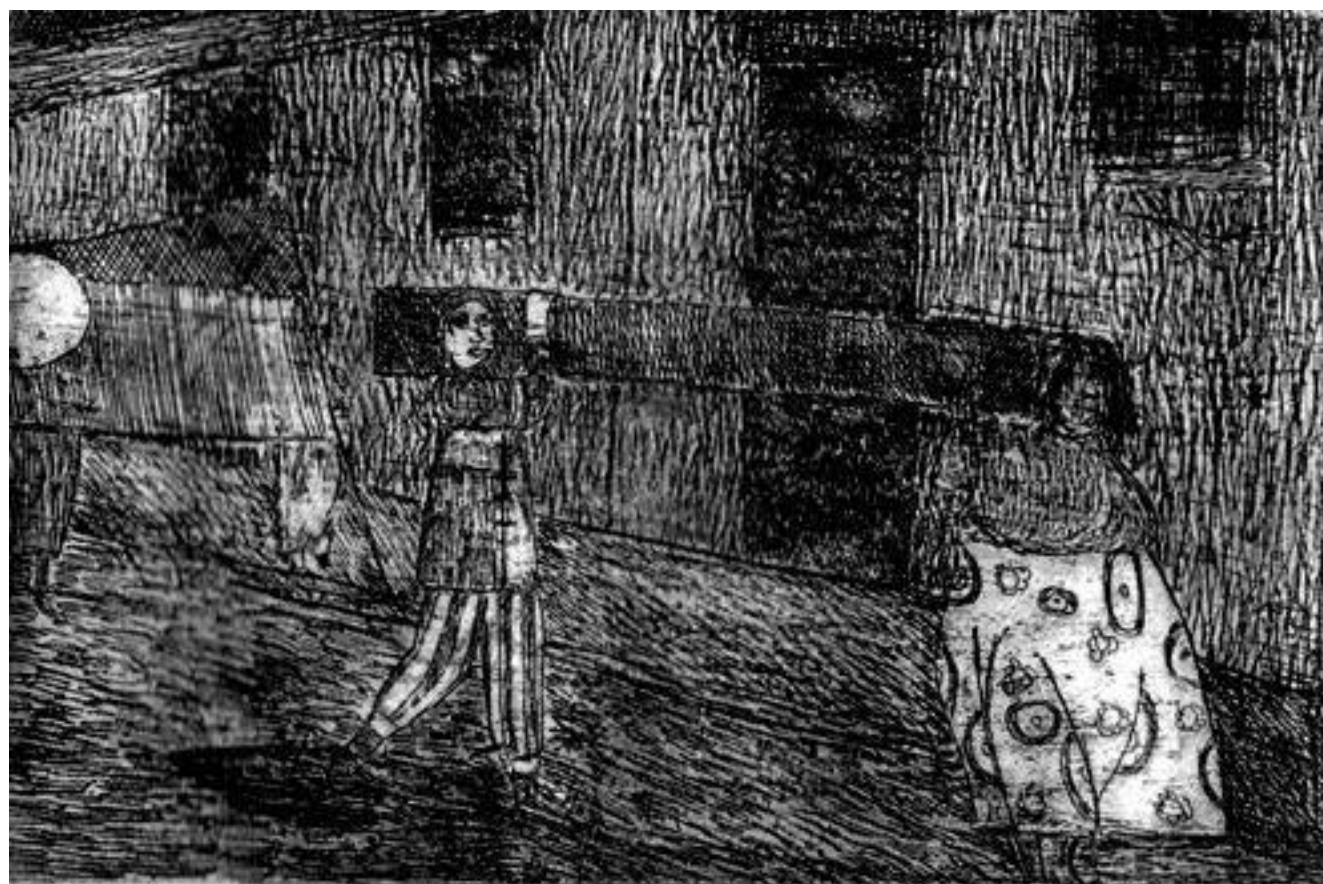
My nephew
 My niece
 on the swings
 (There I am pushing them to and fro in time with the rhythm of the universe)
 to think of the push and shove and determination of my father who had his family working for twenty
 years in the milk bar
 I'm still on the swing with my nephew and niece
 We are all three silent enjoying the midday sun
 In a paradise made from harsh toil

Yes it is still a strange realization to me that from the endurance tests foisted upon us by life can sometimes come such tranquility

‘Black Deaths in Custody March.’ Eveleigh St. Redfern

B&W. 6” X 4”.drypoint. zinc plate.

In the late eighties there was a big push for a Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Custody. This Commission finally occurred and although many recommendations were made many still need to be put into practice. This image is based on a photo I took while this protest march I was in went down Eveleigh Street, Redfern. I was shocked by the derelict condition of many of the buildings.



‘Zorba the Greek’. Llewellyn.St. Balmain.

‘After Matisse.’ B&W. 8” X 6”. drypoint. zinc plate.

This image is based on an evening with friends who used to live in this beautiful old house in Llewellyn Street, Balmain. I was driving over to the house one September on a Saturday night many years ago and I heard *Zorba the Greek* on the radio. At the house one of my friends mentioned *Zorba the Greek* and it was decided to play this tune and other folk songs from around the world. It is hard to explain but there was a dream like quality to the evening for me as we absorbed ourselves in dancing to these songs. The house had a rustic feeling to it and the magical overtone of the night was accentuated by dancing in the near dark - I think there was only a lamp lighting the room. The work itself displays the cluttered living room of this old house and the composition of the dancing figures - which includes myself and three other female friends - is based on Henri Matisse’s *The Dance*.



‘With Water And Courage.’

B&W. 8" X 6". drypoint. zinc plate

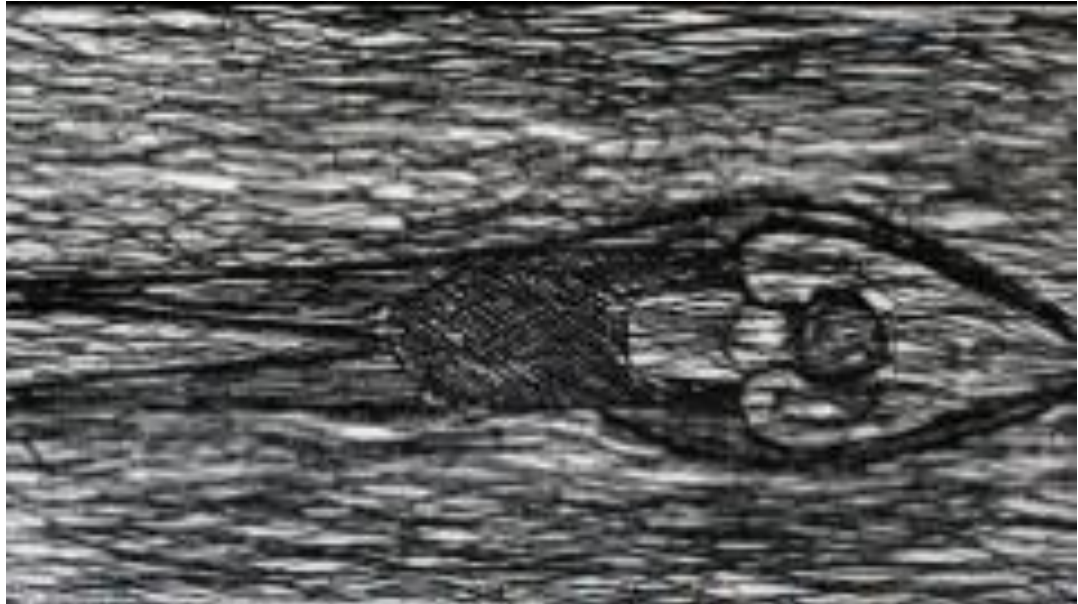
Roslyn, an old friend, has performed in much street theatre and was a member of a famed troupe named Icarus. I once saw her in a spectacular fire performance outside the Supreme Court at Taylor Square on the Sunday evening of the Taylor Street Fair. At her former place in Darlington - where on the wooden floor was a painting of the sun iconography you can dimly make out in the background - I asked Roslyn how she went about practising her fire breathing (she also often walked on stilts in her street performances). “With a lot of water and courage.” came Roslyn’s understated reply.



‘The Swimmer’

B & W. 4” X 2”. drypoint. zinc plate.

Here is an image of a typical Australian summer pastime which tugs at our memories to so many relaxing meditative lazy, sunny days by water.



‘An Angel At My Park.’ Burwood

Black on grey paper. 6”X4”. drypoint. zinc plate.

I taught mildly intellectual disabled primary age students for a year and once a week the class – which consisted of anything between five or six children - was taken to Burwood’s Westfield. The students were shown how to independently shop in a supermarket. Afterwards there was lunch in the nearby park as well as a chance to feed the ducks before going back to school. A friend interested in psychology once came along. She had an immediate rapport with the children in my care – ‘Rain Class’ - not baulking at their ‘differences’. Her calm natural empathy throughout the day led me to believe that I had spent these hours with an angel. This image is based on a photo of her being on a see-saw with the kids. The photo has three of my former students dancing Zorba the Greek - which I taught to them.



‘Resurrection Night.’ Earlwood.

B&W. 6”X 4”.drypoint.zinc plate.

At the stroke of midnight on the Saturday night of every Greek Easter people light their candles and hold them up and proclaim ‘Christ is Risen!’ It is an inspiring moment and visually these flames of light overcoming the surrounding darkness accentuates for me the deep mystical quality of the ‘eastern hues’ of the Orthodox faith.

However, in a postmodern way I am also reminded of the notion of resurrection whenever I have been to a candlelight event for refugees. Recently in Hyde Park there was a gathering of 10,000 people for a Light Up the Dark event. As the multitudes raised candles into the air for refugees and for their right to seek safe refuge, for compassion, for a return to humane values I was reminded of the midnight ritual of Greek Easter. Whether one believes in a Creator or not we can all aspire to uphold a belief in a common humanity that aspires towards a social magnanimous generosity triumphing over any cynical malevolent prejudice.



‘Herr Baker and Frau Bishop on the way to Stalingrad to give Herr Nicola his two t-shirts.’

Commemorative etching to the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Stalingrad. 1943-1993.

sepia on white. 8”X 10”. drypoint. zinc plate.

A wry reflection amongst friends on the human absurdities that are within our ultimate absurdity: war. ‘Herr Baker’ owns a Valiant thus its ‘valiant use’ in this ‘rescue mission.’ The two t-shirts which read *Free Cyprus & Suburban Boy* - is in reference to the *Wehrmacht* not supplying its soldiers with any winter clothing due to their cockiness that the Soviet campaign would be won before the onset of the bitterly cold Russian winter. The etching is meant to be a comment on the human absurdity that war is which sadly causes so much human misery. T-shirts and an old suburban car is the ‘Australia’ of this image.



‘Indian Magicians. Brunswick Heads.’

B&W. 10”X 4.5”. zinc plate.

These two Indian guys approached me in Byron Bay at a time when I was staying with old friends in Bangalow. They had spotted me with this clunky SLR camera and asked if I would accompany them to Brunswick Heads where they would be performing magic tricks on the main street. Although I only had black & white film in the camera – I agreed. The photos would eventually be sent to their Newcastle address. Along with taking photos of them performing rope tricks, having silver balls mysteriously coming out mouths ecetera, etcetera I also took a couple of shots – from the backseat – of the back of their heads and the ‘antique dashboard’ of their old ‘sixties something’ black Valiant sedan. This rather obtuse image which probably doesn’t mean anything except to me is the final result of those two joined photos. However, I thought the whole experience had a tinge of ‘magic realism’ to it which I think most people would appreciate.





ICONOGRAPHIC/HUMAN FIGURES/CROSS-CULTURAL

the angel

manjustri

achilles

hector

eurydice mourns

flute player

the human spirit rests

luna park

neo-platonic form

elite restaurant

the melbourne cup was reaced on the mexican day of the dead

shiva the cricketer

berlin orpheus

russian shaman

tibet prayer wheels

winter trees

‘The Angel.’ . Moscow. Russia.

sepia on cream paper. 6”X4” copperplate

This angel is based on one of the three heavenly figures of Andrey Rublyov’s ‘*The Trinity*’ (c. 1411). Rublyov was Russia’s master iconographer. His icons have an inner spiritual *psyche* which strongly appeals to my Greek Orthodox sensibilities. Icons are not seen as works of art but rather as religious objects for holy worship. Icons are perceived as open ‘windows to eternity’; thus the spectator meditates on ‘heaven’ so as to allow one’s soul to transcend the mortal dimensions of this physically bound world. Hopefully, an inner revelation of the ‘Divine Love’ shall occur. At the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow I had the good fortune to see Rublyov’s ‘*The Trinity*.’ Yet, it was in St. Petersburg - at the Hermitage - I was especially intrigued to see a young well-heeled woman meditate and pray in front of another Rublyov icon. I found such mystical reverence quite moving and further emphasised, for me, the sublime spirituality of these beautiful religious images. It is my hope I may have also been able to convey this same sense of a ‘divine serenity’ with this particular image. I should also mention that angels are seen as messengers from God. Thank you.



‘Manjustri.’ Bodhivista of Transcendental Wisdom’. Tibetan

sepia on cream paper. 6”X4”. copperplate.

Firstly, I would like to state that a bodhivista is an enlightened divine being. A bodhivista serves to lead others to enlightenment in their progression towards nirvana. Manjustri is a bodhivista who is depicted here as a young prince. The flaming sword in the top left hand corner of the etching is used to cut through human illusion.. Manjustri holds a flaming double-edged sword with his right hand while in his left hand this diety holds a stem which eventually leads to a blooming lotus of wisdom. *Manjustri* is portrayed as a young man to point out the Buddhist notion that wisdom does not necessarily result from the mere experience of living many years. Wisdom - which is seen in Buddhism as the Mother of all Buddhas - can result from a perceptive intellect which can see right through to the foundations of all reality Why is this mental power known as wisdom so cherished? Because wisdom is seen as the major virtue which can lead a pilgrim to the sort of total freedom needed to emancipate us from human suffering and human desire. These mortal virtues impede us from reaching nirvana. Thus this Buddhist diety is one of the most pre-eminent in the Buddhist cosmos. As iconography interests me I was attracted to the idea of portraying an Eastern divinity. It seems appropriate to etch *Manjustri* for it surely appears to me to be a worthwhile goal in this life - which many times seems like ‘looking through a glass darkly’ - to seek out the wisdom of the gods. This *Manjustri* is a detail of an eastern Tibetan image possibly painted in the early nineteenth century. It is entitled the ‘*Pure Land of Manjustri.*’ My interest in Tibetan Buddhism comes from experiencing Tibetan New Year in the Tibetan monastery town of Xiahe in Gansu province, western China (in Chinese-occupied Outer Tibet). I was impressed by the many mass rituals which I saw as well as by the cheekiness of the Tibetan people; they portray an incredible human resilience which defies both the adversities of nature and the harsh political obstacles which are presently being placed before them. Ignorant of much that I saw I am naturally curious to find out the meaning of these new year rituals. Thus, along the way, to discover such a *bodhivista* as *Manjustri* has been enriching.



‘Achilles.’

B&W. 10cm X 7cm. dypoint. aquatint. sugarlift. zinc plate

Achilles the hero of the Hellenes was the perfect killing machine. A self-absorbed demi-god who it can be argued was compelled more so by battle lust than by any noble cause to wreak his violence on the battlefield.



‘Hector.’

1”X2” B&W. drypoint. copperplate.

Hector is our symbol of a just humanity against the tyrant. Hector the favoured son of Priam the King of Troy. Hector the noble defender who rallied the Trojans to stand up to the Greek invaders. Hector who would never leave his post and who knew he was facing death when he honourably took on Achilles by himself. Tragic was his slaughter. No honour was there for Achilles who desecrated Hector’s corpse – refusing to bury it and dragging it around the walls of Troy from the back of his chariot- as further revenge for Hector killing his dearest friend Patroclus. In Hector we see that it is surely a worthy cause to fight for freedom even when it may mean the sure sacrifice of one’s life.



‘Eurydice Mourns.’

B&W. 4”X5”. drypoint. zinc plate.

This image intimates Eurydice in the Underworld playing her flute while meditating on love lost - a too common melancholy human reflection. Orpheus is gone, ‘doomed’ to return to the surface without his lover - due to his own careless forgetfulness. What is also forgotten is Eurydice herself as the narrative of this tragic story focuses on Orpheus’s misery. Yet, what is soothing is the legacy of his music for Eurydice which I like to think provides a beautiful solace for her sad, imprisoned soul.



‘Flute Player.’ Kaunas. Lithuania.

B&W. 5cm X 8cm. drypoint. copperplate.

This image of a flute player is based on a statuette outside the Devil’s Museum in Kaunas. Lithuania. There is a small park dotted with statues and this one took my particular attention. Lithuania was only christianized by the Teutons roughly six hundred years ago and throughout the country there is still a strong undercurrent of paganism in its national culture. Lithuania is now a devoutly Catholic country but even on top of the crosses on the magnificent roofs of its soaring cathedrals there are metal circles with swerving sunrays jutting from them - harking back to a worship of the sun from pre-Christian days. The Devil’s Museum itself is very interesting filled only with figurines of the Devil throughout the whole world. It is not surprising to come across such a museum in a country that has a strong sense of nature worship and interest in pagan traditions. It can be said that such a mythic observation of nature is often the case throughout most of Europe but it does seem to me more so in Lithuania. After all, near a coastal town called Nida next to the Baltic Sea (a place where you can visit Thomas Mann’s holiday house) is Witch’s Hill. A forested area filled with large wood carvings of witches, devils, gods and goddesses. However, it is all rather playful. As a Lithuanian woman once cheekily commented to me: “The Devil is our friend. We can ‘trust him’. He always keeps his promises.” The flute player reflects the more mythic, sublime semblance of nature and it is an image I find especially enriching.



‘The Human Spirit Rests.’

B&W. 4”X2.5”. drypoint. copperplate.

This ‘spirit’ (along with *Achilles*) is based on charcoal drawings I have made from attending a life drawing class which a friend had encouraged me to go to; while she elegantly drew accomplished likenesses of the model before us I ‘scratched away’ with charcoal. I have a strong interest in Ancient History & Ancient Mythology especially as it shows me the consistency of both the folly, horror and goodness of human nature, fate and the gods. I highly recommend reading *Meditations* by the Stoic Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius.



‘Neo-Platonic Form’

B&W 6” X 3.5” zinc plate.

This image is an outline of an Aboriginal boy from a stock photo. In Plato’s ‘perfect society’ (*Republic*) children would be deliberately separated from their mothers and brought up by the state. A similar fascist attitude was adopted by white Australian government authorities who forcefully separated Aboriginal children from their mothers so they could be brought out of their ‘primitive state’ to become ‘perfect beings’ once these stolen generations were assimilated into white society. It was officially hoped that the Aboriginal race would die out; it could be argued: a sort of genocide by stealth.



‘Elite Restaurant.’ Taree

B&W. 8” X 6”. drypoint. zinc plate.

On a trip up the north coast with several friends we stopped off for lunch at this large, elegant café in Taree. I was struck by the paternalistic irony of this image and words on the table napkins which I abhorred; thus this ‘reproduction.’

Elite Restaurant



Tamworth - an Aboriginal word meaning Wild Fig Tree - is situated on the beautiful Manning River and is the centre of a rich agricultural area. With a population of approximately 24,000, it is a large coastal town between Newcastle and Grafton. Handy to many fine beaches, the town is a "jump-off point" to such attractions as Forster, and Ellenborough Falls, the longest single-drop waterfall in Australia.

"Tis there where the green and gold is... secure from the storms
and the sea, where never of white winters cold is the beautiful quiet Taree."
- Henry Kendall

‘Backgammon.’

(After Matisse)

B&W. 3” X 4”. drypoint. zinc plate.

I simply chose to copy a small, delightful sketch by Matisse of two figures who in his work are actually playing draughts. I like the fact that the two figures are wearing caps which brings up the suggestion that they may be sailors - re: travellers - as it is a game I have often leisurely enjoyed playing while ‘on the road.’



‘The Melbourne Cup was raced on the Mexican Day of the Dead.’

B&W. 8” X 5”. drypoint. zinc plate.

I was inspired to do this image when I heard on November 1 a racing commentator on the radio confidently state that the whole world’s attention was on Australia’s ‘nation-stopping’ race. I knew in Mexico that on this particular day people had another festivity foremost on their minds. The musicians with the skull heads are based on colourful cut-out designs that are familiarly used on skeleton sugar dolls that are also made for the Day of the Dead.



‘Shiva the Cricketer.’ S.C.G. To commemorate India’s innings of 7-705 (declared) at the S.C.G. New Year’s Test. January. 2004.

B & W. 9” X 5”. drypoint. copperplate.

As I understand it Shiva ‘the Auspicious’ is the Hindu god of both creation & destruction. It is what is intimated in the words from Rabindranath Tagore’s poem *Brahma, Visnu, Siva* where he talks of the great Siva awakening to give new form to our bodies that grow weary on a ‘law-fixe path’; Siva to sing of our destruction so that we may obtain new life. This print commemorates India’s 7-750 (declared) at the New Year’s Test. January. 2003. S.C.G. An awesome score by which India’s creativity was destructive to the Australians. I loved it. It certainly seems the Indian team did have this multi-limbed divinity miraculously aiding their batting. The Shiva is based on a bronze sculptural piece called *Shiva as Nataraja (The Lord of Dance)* which I saw at the Vision of Kings exhibition at the ANG. Canberra. The four dancing dervishes behind Shiva (& the S.C.G stands) are from an Indian image of dancers & musicians also in this exhibition. *Shiva the Cricketer* In a ‘backdoor way’ also wonderfully commemorates the liberating, exuberant life spirit of Bollywood! A ‘fantastic’ film genre/style which I truly appreciate & marvel.



‘Luna Park.’ Bayon. (Ankor Wat). Cambodia.

B&W. 8” X 6”.drypoint.zinc plate.

This smiling Buddhist face is based on a stone carved image at the temple complex at Siem Reap known as ‘Bayon.’ These temples are in the same area as Ankor Wat - one of the marvels of Khmer architecture. When I first saw this smiling Buddha I was immediately reminded of the smiling face of Luna Park and consequently on either side of the face are the towers which can be found on the facade of Luna Park. It was an extraordinary day for myself and for my travel friend Julia as we were in Cambodia in 1990 while the country was more-or-less still closed off to individual travel. A guide T.T. took us and two middle-aged Frenchmen on a tour of the whole Ankor Wat complex. We had flown in from Phnom Penh and would fly out four hours later as it was too dangerous to go overland or to stay. As we enjoyed our tourist day government troops were passing by in a truck convoy on a long winding dirt road going off to fight the Khmer Rouge. In the distance we could hear the rumblings of battle and the ground would shake from artillery fire. A sight that will stay with me forever is two very young soldiers with Kalashnikovs over their shoulders languidly walking beside two Buddhist monks in orange garb walking through the Khmer ruins - as a shortcut to their village - all sharing a cigarette. At lunch one of the Frenchmen explained to us how he had come back to visit Cambodia as he had been there before as the child of a French diplomat father. He explained that on his first visit to Ankor Wat the jungle had fully surrounded it; when we were there it still had a very remote out of the way feel to it. As for T.T. he worked as a guide in the day and the work was good for improving his English and to supplement his meagre income. At night T.T. said he was often a guard helping to stop Khmer Rouge incursions into the local town Siem Reap. I shall also never forget the \$US100 Admission Price for our visit to Ankor Wat which also included a lunch at a nearby government restaurant. There was also a \$1 photo charge. We had to tip T.T. when we realised that he was going to see very little of the admission money.



‘Berlin Orpheus.’ Berlin. Germany.

black on grey. 3”X 8.5” drypoint. aquatint. zinc plate.

The well-known Berlin landmark: the Victory Column (made more famous by the German movie *Wings of Desire* directed by Wim Wenders) is surrounded by a roundabout and there are underground tunnel walkways that pedestrians can take to get to it. I was meandering along the footpath circumference of this road circle when I heard this haunting saxophone sound; it was very clear and crisp and was like a movie soundtrack such was the surreality of this music. (I couldn’t help but think of the worldly black woollen coated middle-aged male angels in *Wings of Desire...*). It was inconceivable to comprehend to work out where it was coming from; at first I wondered if it was coming from a car circling around the Victory Column and then it became somewhat clear that it was arising from one of the underground causeways. Like some apparition I saw a saxophone player playing in the darkness. It was explained to me that the pedestrian tunnels had excellent acoustics and that ‘Orpheus’ was a regular visitor to these subterranean passages; I was entertained to my own private concert. Afterwards I was driven by ‘Orpheus’ to his flat and I was given a cassette tape of his saxophone music which I still have to this day. Finally, this wistful movie-like travel vignette came to an end as I was driven by my host to the Berlin *bahnhof* where I was catching an overnight train to the east.



‘Russian Shaman.’ Ethnographic Museum. St.Petersburg. Russia.

B&W. 6”X4” drypoint. plastic plate.

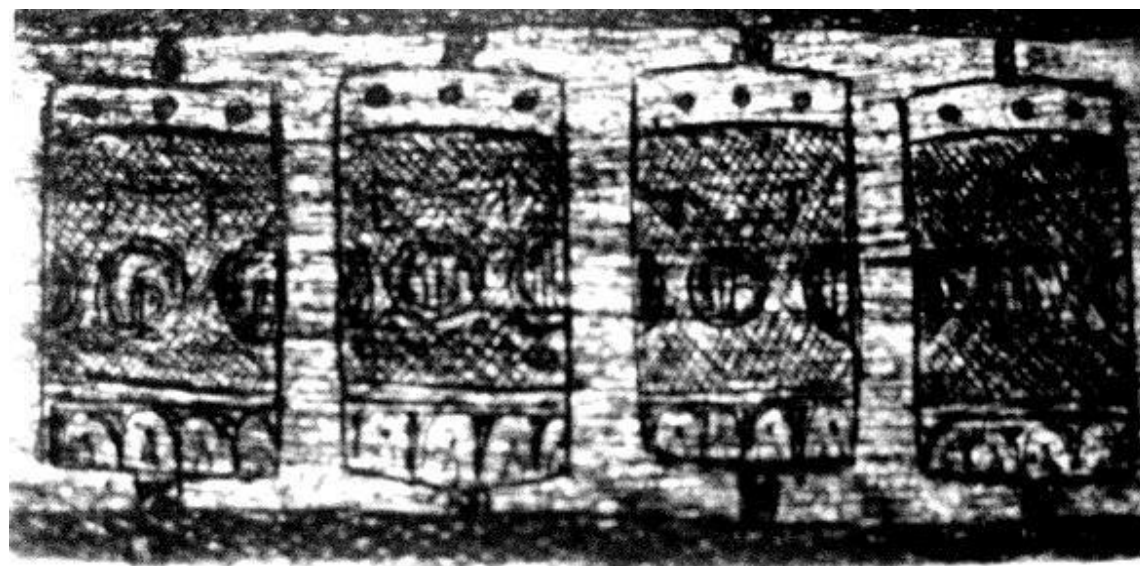
This image is based on a full size model of a Russian shaman from Siberia in the Ethnographic Museum in St. Petersburg. As I see artist as shaman I am very intrigued by the role of the shaman who often serves as a human conduit between the spirit and the material. Kandinsky was also very much interested in the ethnography of Siberia and his so called abstract paintings are often filled with shaman patterns and symbols.



‘Prayer Wheels.’ Xining. Ghansu province. Outer Tibet. Ghansu province. China.

B&W. 2X4”. drypoint. copperplate.

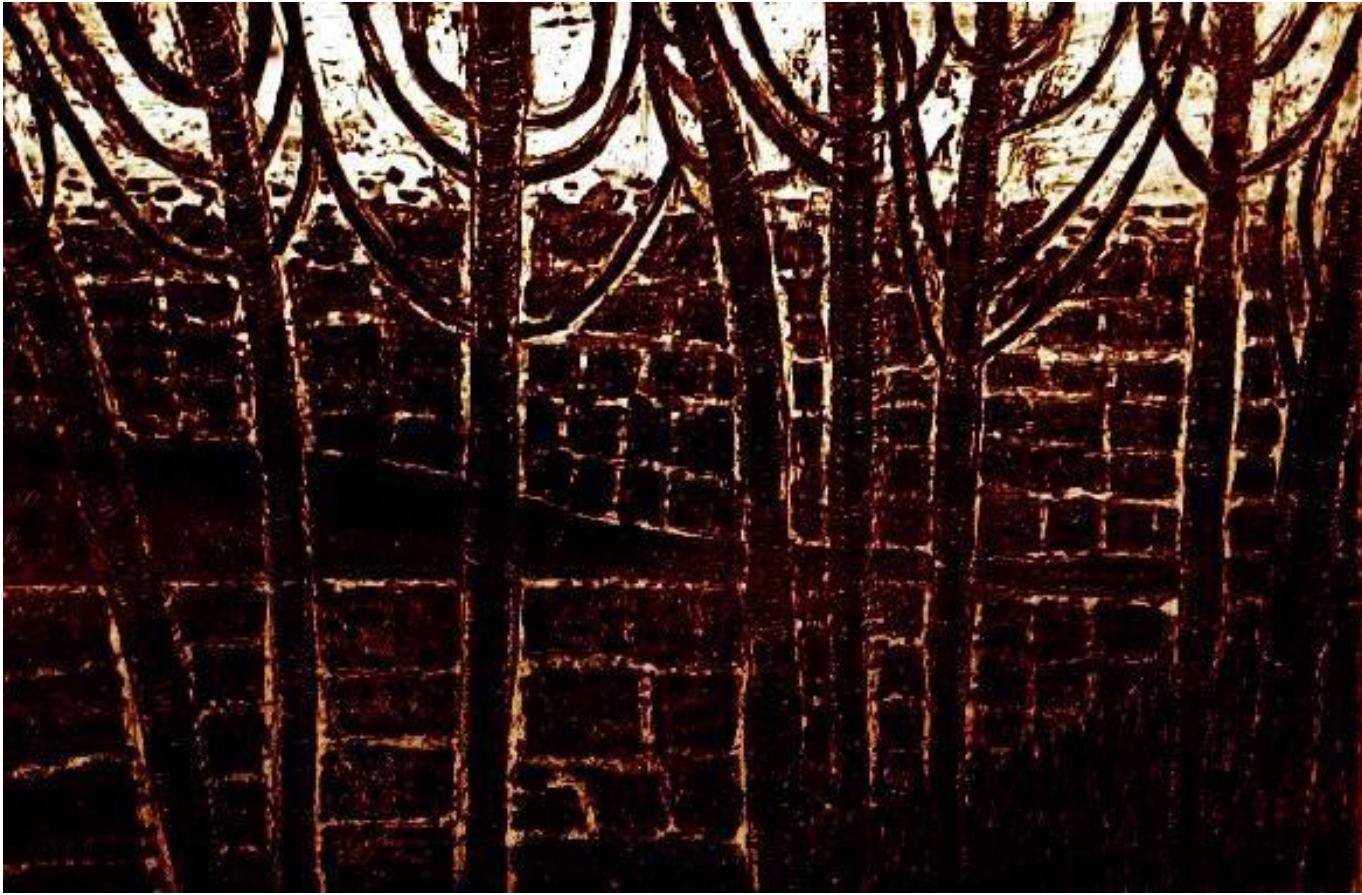
This work is based on a photo I took at a faraway remote Tibetan monastery in Ghansu province. China. This part of China is actually a part of Outer Tibet. All that is to be said is this monastery was large, very isolated and surrounded by a grand and vast snow-covered mountainous terrain. From what I understand prayer wheels serve the spiritual function of being spun to aid the pilgrim’s prayers rising to the divine; twirling drums which also typify for me the circling life drama entwined in the law of return which is labelled as karma.



‘Winter Trees.’ Druskininkai Lithuania.

sepia on cream paper. 6” X 4”. copperplate.

This etching is based on a sketch I did of some winter trees in the Lithuanian forest. Druskininkai is a town in southern Lithuania where the national icon of Lithuania - the mystical painter and composer M.K. Ciurlionis (1875 - 1911) - spent his childhood. I could feel the spiritual sense of nature which Ciurlionis himself would have experienced while walking through these beautiful woods. On a more poignant level before going to Lithuania for a short stay I had been in Krakow with Kristina - the Australian-Lithuanian friend that I was visiting – another Lithuanian friend and an Australian couple who were living in Frankfurt (and who we had met in Indonesia). We had celebrated the coming of the new 2000 millennium in this Polish city. It had been a great night enjoying the festivities in the large famous town square. However, during our few days in Krakow we also visited the nearby extermination camp of Auschwitz. Amidst the snow we walked amongst the derelict wooden huts, the guard towers and the concrete remains of the crematorium and death chambers. In the museum section were the piles of shoes and other garments of the many victims in small cubicle rooms behind large glass walls. Thus, when I drew these winter trees I was struck by the way the branches were all spread out in the manner of the many pronged Jewish candle candelabras which I had also seen; and which reminded me of the human reality of maintaining one’s faith at a time of insurmountable tragedy.





CENTRAL AMERICA

nicaraguan boy

voodoo cross

guatemalan couple

fiesta. el salvador

schoolhouse. solentiname

fire eater. palenque. mexico

festival. bluefields. st.jerome's day. Nicaragua

macandel

‘Nicaraguan Boy.’ Nicaragua.

B&W. 8" X 6".drypoint. zinc plate.

This image is based on a common scene which I saw during my second visit to Nicaragua: the beggar child selling chewing gum, cigarette lighters or other such small product. Having been to Nicaragua in 1986 when the Sandinistas were at the zenith of their power you could sense the empowerment of a whole nation which had overcome the Somoza dictatorship. Though the contra war was taking a great toll on human life there was a sense that this bloody trial would be overcome and an everlasting peace would soon be achieved. In 1992 a peace of sorts had been achieved but it had come at the cost of a war weary population voting out the Sandinistas in order to end a conflict which had taken the lives of 10,000 innocent people. However, Nicaraguans were no longer in control of their lives having to face up once more to the usual ills of third world impoverishment. This is a melancholy portrait of a young boy struggling through his day; yet I hope - through the iconoclastic quality which I have given the work - that I have instilled him with a sense of dignity which he and his people deserve.



‘Voodoo Cross.’ Havana. Cuba.

B&W. 6”X7”. drypoint. zinc plate.

‘An Afro-Cuban man asks me for the time; I give it and then end up in his place. A blackout, so candles are lit. The darkness illuminates this tall, wiry man with the flat-top haircut who speaks Creole English, taught to him by his great-aunt. Thus the family does not understand what is being said, the wife the grandparents walk about, prepare dinner. It feels like sitting on a dream stage as the host explains it is his daughter’s birthday; she is turning one, shares it with Havana’s own founding day. In this inextricable way the destiny of a city is seen in the fortunes of a child. He needs help to organise a party. The monthly ration books do not offer enough provisions. The grandmother chooses to show the voodoo dolls behind a door. Black market rum. A black market cake are stealthily organised during the week. Socks with wings for the birthday girl are bought at a U.S. dollar shop. At last in the alleyway outside the house the party proceeds with the neighbourhood children. The neighbourhood gossip asks: is the stranger an angel from heaven? A boat piñata is smashed. A shower of sweets and presents. Reggae music, dancing, voodoo rituals in the late evening,(including touching a wooden cross in a glass of water, surrounded by other glasses of water a fingertip dipped into each one then touching the cross; placing an ash cross on the father’s forehead). The smiling father with his wife beside him proudly holds up his baby birthday girl. Her winged socks a brilliant white. A Caribbean Holy Family.’⁵



‘Guatemalan Couple.’ Guatemala City. Guatemala. 1985.

B&W. 4.5” X 3”. drypoint. zinc plate.

This is a work based on a small painting in the rustic room of a cheap hostel in Guatemala City which - for purely monetary reasons - also doubled up as a brothel.



‘Fiesta.’ El Salvador.

Black on grey paper.drypoint. zinc. 5” X 6”. (after Diego Rivera)

In 1992 - the year of the 500th anniversary of the discovery of the Americas by Christopher Columbus - I was in El Salvador for several days with other Australians from our little El Salvador Human Rights Committee. We were with an El Salvadorian friend who was back in El Salvador for the first time. As a resistance fighter against the regime he had to leave El Salvador after escaping from a death squad torture centre. It was like being with a dead man who had come back to life visiting his memories of San Salvador street battles he had had with the regime, pointing out spots on footpaths where friends had been shot down; and the notion of a resurrection literally seemed to be the case when he joyfully met other comrades who assumed he had been ‘disappeared’. Interestingly enough these ‘companero-in-arms’ still only knew their friend by his cover name which was Raul. As a delegation we visited guerrilla camps, government people, NGOs, villages that had been devastated by war, massacres etcetera and essentially like a lot of other international solidarity members at the time were making it felt that ‘international eyes’ were on El Salvador so that the peace process would continue to proceed successfully. This image is based on an outdoor fiesta the people of an El Salvadorian village had put on for us as well as to celebrate a soccer win over a neighbouring village. In the little square while we were all dancing a ‘cloud’ of fireflies descended upon us and created a typically remarkable scene of Latino magic realism. I should acknowledge the dancing couple are directly based on an image by the famous Mexican artist Diego Rivera.



‘Schoolhouse. Solentiname.’ Lake Managua.’ Nicaragua.

B&W. 10” X 6.5”. drypoint. zinc plate.

There are a community of artists that live in this region of Lake Managua known as Solentiname. However, I also consider this simple image of a schoolhouse rather remarkable in a third world region where education is typically regarded as a luxury. In my first visit to Nicaragua during the Sandinista period one could not help but appreciate the genuine efforts being made to empower the populous after so many years of dictatorship.



‘Fire-eater.’ Palenque. Mexico.

B&W.. 3”X4.5”.drpoint. zinc plate.

On the way to going to the Palenque ruins from the station I witnessed a man putting on a fire breathing performance in the main street of the town. Naturally enough a crowd had formed around him. As the man ‘drank’ more petrol from his can to breathe out ever more fire I couldn’t help but sense a certain quiet desperation in his manner, a tragic figure unromantically compelled to perform a dangerous feat to earn some money for himself and family



‘Festival. Bluefields.’ Nicaragua. Mosquito Coast. St. Jeromes Day. October 1992.

B & W. 8” X 6”. drypoint. zinc plate.

‘...devils were running down the muddy street. The heavy rain was not deterring them. Intrigued by the gradually increasing numbers of demons I walked down to the main intersection of Bluefields. Many young men were dressed as old women wearing dresses that came down to their feet and sprawling over large padded behinds. These men were also wearing colourful face masks and carrying long sticks in their hands. From the intersection the road inclined gradually until it reached the market sheds which were beside the wharves. To the right on this last stretch of the road was a restaurant bar which was filled with ‘old women’ and blaring Carib music. A crowd of spectators was building up and hovering over Bluefields was a grey sky spitting water drops. I stood beside the women selling bread on a corner and watched the ‘old women’ who were coming out of the shop. They were running up to the young girls in the crowd and hitting them with their sticks. Amongst these ‘old women’ was the one wearing the dress of the U.S. flag. The crowd, filled with trumpeters, drummers and men shooting off skyrockets which they were holding in their hands, started to venture down past the wooden buildings of the main street of Bluefields. I looked over from where I stood beside the restaurant bar and noticed the lone ‘old woman’ who was tightly gripping his stick and standing to one side of the large stone warehouse which was behind him. Along the front of the warehouse was the name SOMOZA with the part of where the Z of the stone lettering broken away. I thought of the ex-dictator, of the past contra war and of the old woman whose body was covered by the United States flag and who had resumed striking several spectators...’⁶



PART TWO (APPENDIX & the ETCHING PROCESS) & PART THREE (ESSAYS & Catalogue List) OF THE ONLINE EXHIBITION CAN BE ACCESSED FROM THE FOLLOWING MAIN LINK:

nicholas nicola etchings leichhardt 2016 website page:

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Thank You.