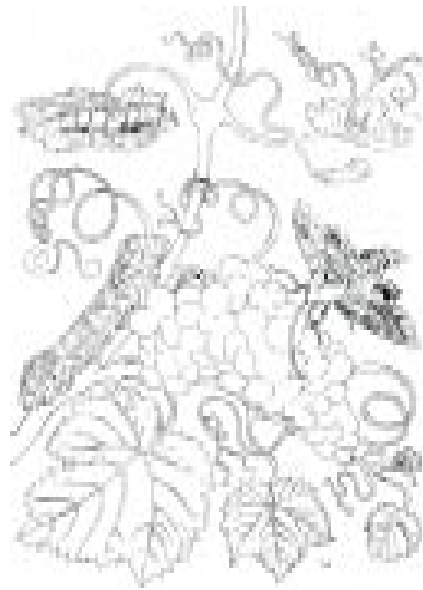


mary rosenngren

prints installations artists books 2000-2003

Re imaging
nature:



*hidden
visions*

Mary Rosengren

glass cabinets installation 2003
Long Gallery, FCA University of Wollongong NSW

Re imaging nature: *hidden visions*

Hidden Visions explores the relationship between art and science in the representation of plants. The images, objects and texts in the cabinets refer to the status and significance of visual knowledge in botanical science.

The contents of the cabinets reference the tension between differing accounts of nature from the 17th century to the present.

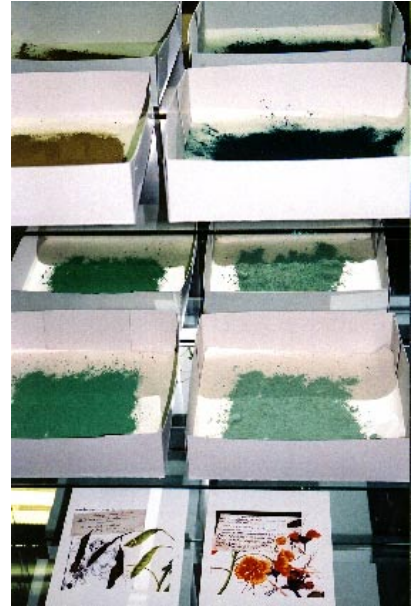
Within these *cabinets of curiosities* an ecological view of nature is expressed through to the work of the artist and entomologist Maria Sibylla Merian (1647-1717) and her study of European and South American plants and insects. These and other images are situated alongside the grid, pigments, ribbons and herbarium boxes to reflect subsequent developments in the systematic study and classification and mapping of nature that took place in the following centuries.

The graphic conventions of analogue and digital imagery are central to this installation, and the cabinet mirrors reflect the changing status of visual knowledge in science and the colonization of *new worlds*.



Cabinet 1. Cabinet & mirror 530 x 133cm.
“Let us...”, Artists book 3 pages, printed on archival rag paper, size unfolded ea. 100 x 100cm.
Printed text and images can be read in the cabinet mirror.

“Let us ransack
the globe,
let us with greatest
accuracy inspect
every part thereof,



Hidden Visions - Cabinet 2 detail

Reflected in its mirror and punctuated by the stacked herbarium boxes, are items which reference the relationship between the *new* observations of nature's botanical subjects, and their representations for the purposes of both aesthetic and systematic study.

Here the selections of porcelain, printed silks, multi coloured ribbons, the *problematic* green pigments, icon types (boxed drawings of botanical subjects) and magnifying glass ~ are underscored by the imagery and observations of the developing botanical science.



Cabinet 2. Cabinet & mirror 530 x 133cm.
“Secret visions & iconotypes”. Herbarium boxes, ribbons,
porcelain, silk, green powder pigments, botanical drawings,
magnifying glass, digital inkjet prints.

.... let us with greatest accuracy inspect every part thereof, search out the innermost secrets of any of the creatures,



let us examine them with our gauges....pry into them with all our microscopes and most exquisite instruments, till we find them to bear testimony to their infinite workman.”

William Derham Physico-Theology (1711-12)

hidden visions

Maria Sibylla Merian & Reimagining nature

Maria Sibylla Merian (1647-1717) worked on the cusp of the changing images of nature - images claimed by science and art. Her observations and representations of *the real thing* had significance for the reimagining of nature and the agenda of natural history over three centuries. This radical shift resonates with the *new worlds* of biological science revealed by contemporary digital technology.

Her earliest publications *Florum fasciculi tres* 1675, known by 1680 as *Neues Blumen Buch* (New Flower Book), recalls ribbon tied plant subjects and symbolic insects of 16th and 17th century Dutch flower paintings. These decorative assemblages of garden flowers were ideal references for embroidery patterns.

By contrast Merian's engravings in the three volume work *Der Raupen wunderbare Verwandlung und sonderbare* (The wonderful transformation of Caterpillars and Their Singular Plant Nourishment) 1679-1717 & *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium* 1705, were acclaimed by the scientific community. Of the latter, its 63 images with textual descriptions resulted from two years in Surinam. Merian's observations and representations of plants and Lepidoptera became influential for subsequent artists, and contributed to the systematic study of nature and the developing sciences of botany and entomology of the 18th and 19th centuries.



Cabinet 2 detail from top to bottom. Four boxes of porcelain, printed silk, ribbons, & their reflections, 2 inkjet prints.



Its seeds are used by women who are in childbirth in order to promote labour quickly. Indians, who are not well treated in their servitude by the Dutch, use it to abort their children so that they will not become slaves like them....so they instructed me out of their own mouths.



Re imaging nature: Hidden Visions
 Selected prints from the series (1-6), The Real Thing:
Caesalpinia pulcherrima, peacock flower . 2002-03. Ink jet
 prints on archival paper, 18 x 18 cm.
 Darwin Australia 2002 & College of Science Poona 1890 (top);
 Merian 1705 (below);
 Flora of Bombay VM Tilek "worship of Hindu gods" 1889; Nth
 Western India 1856-57 (right); Tobago, West Indies 1909 [not
 shown].
 Specimens documented are from collection of Herbarium
 Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh 2002; Quote from Maria Sibyl-
 la Merian (1647-1717). *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surina-
 mensium* (Amsterdam: Maria Sibylla Merian and Gerard Valck,
 1705.); Merian's Suriname *sketch book* watercolour on vellum
 the Royal Collection British Museum.



“...one aspect of our reading (of works of art) is based on notions of the power of representations to mirror or simulate reality itself. This is associated with the privilege of sight over the other senses in western philosophical discourses on knowledge. To see, fully and accurately, is to know; consider the enormous significance granted to seeing bodies, cells and atoms in our scientific understanding of the world. To represent the objects in the world correctly is to know and understand them. Representation is inextricably linked to the power of knowledge”

Marsha Meskimmon, *The Art of Reflection*, Scarlet Press, London 1996.

mary rosenngren

groundcover

installation 2000

wall & floor

To engage with this installation it is necessary to traverse a floor of coloured canvas, silk and other natural materials to see and read the contoured wall panel. Together the wall and floor pieces refer to experiencing, reading and knowing the environment of Lake Mungo in NSW, Australia through the eyes of an ecologist.

Crossing the canvas and silk floor grid refers to the method of ground-truthing, measuring and recording areas of ground cover (soil and vegetation) for comparison to remotely sensed data. A process used for reading the landscape by the late Dr. Toni O'Neill in her fieldwork at Lake Mungo.

A distant horizon is recalled by the 5 meter strip of inkjet prints, and closer examination is aided by magnifying glasses. At one end, electron microscope images of plant cells give way to botanical illustrations, then topographical drawings, SLR photos of landscape and plant specimens and finally those of the satellite. The text woven through the images (and repeated on the silk of the floor piece), discusses the reflectance* properties of plants found in this region.

As in the prints of the artist's book *fruitingbodies* the combination of these images refers specifically to the process of identifying Lake Mungo's ground cover and it's contribution in the developing picture of this and other environments.

groundcover (2000) at FCA Gallery, University of Wollongong NSW Australia, dedicated to the memory of Dr. Toni O'Neill (1945-1999).

Dimensions & Materials

Wall panel: (H) 10 x (W) 500 x (D) 2-7 cm, 17 wooden panels with inkjet prints on archival paper, magnifying glasses.

Floor area: (W) 500 x (L) 700 cm, variable configuration of canvas, silk, dry leaves.

*As explained by Lesley Head in the essay "Lake Mungo in space and time", catalogue Lake Mungo Revisited 2000, touring exhibition, Goulburn Regional Art Gallery, NSW Australia.

"Reflectance of electromagnetic radiation from the surface of the earth, as picked up by orbiting satellites, varies with 'type, cover and spacing of vegetation, the colour and composition of soil, topography, angle of the sun and pattern of shadows' O'Neill (998:26)."

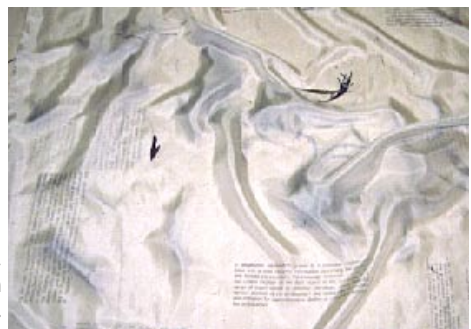
mary rosen gren

groundcover

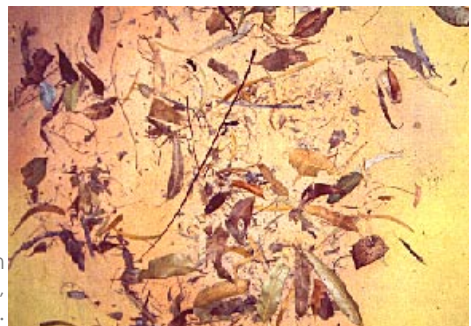
installation 2000



groundcover 2000, FCA Gallery, University of Wollongong, NSW Australia
floor: canvas, silk, sand, dry leaves, 500 x 700 cm
wall panel: digital prints 10 x 500 x 2-7cm & 3 magnifying glasses



floor detail,
100 x 100 cm
canvas & printed silk.

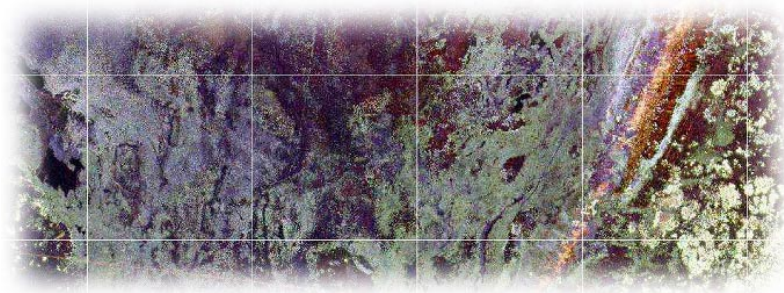
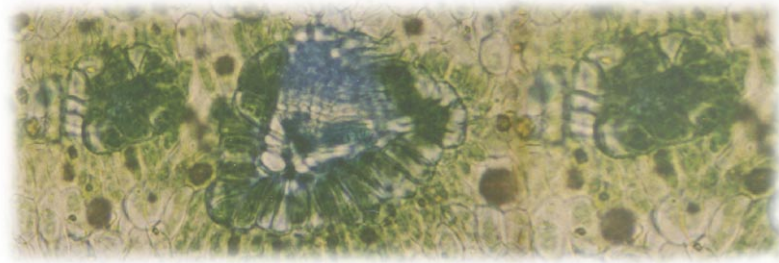


100 x 100 cm
canvas, paint, sand,
dry leaves.

mary rosenngren

groundcover

installation



groundcover, details from wall panel digital prints showing electron microscope image of plant cells (top), SLR photo of plant sample and other vegetation & text, satellite image Lake Mungo NSW (above).

mary rosenngren

fruitingbodies

artist's book 2000

book

A hard bound three section concertina book with printed silk cloth cover containing 15 digital inkjet prints on archival paper. Each of the concertina sections displays 5 prints, these are viewed through the incised surface of the alternate page.

Size : folded 29.5 (H) x 22.5 (W) x 4 (D) cm.

prints

The prints are based on the fruiting bodies of plants found in the Lake Mungo region* NSW, Australia.

In this work botanical illustration, SLR photographs, electron microscope and remotely sensed satellite images are integrated.

The combination of these images refers specifically to the process of identifying Lake Mungo's ground cover and it's contribution in the developing picture of this and other environments.

The incisions, from organic to grid, are a reference to viewing, documenting and recording with microscope, naked eye and remotely sensed data.

fruitingbodies is part of "Lake Mungo Revisited", the touring exhibition 2000-01, curator Jennifer Lamb of Goulburn Regional Art Gallery, Australia.

*Lake Mungo is part of the Wilandra Lakes System in western NSW, it was declared a World Heritage Area in 1981.

mary rosgren
fruitingbodies
artist's book 2000



fruitingbodies three section concertina book, 15 inkjet prints on archival paper,
size folded 29.5 (H) x 22.5 (W) x 4 (D) cm, (display size variable).

mary rosenngren
fruitingbodies
artist's book 2000



Atriplex stipitata (bitter saltbush), 1999.



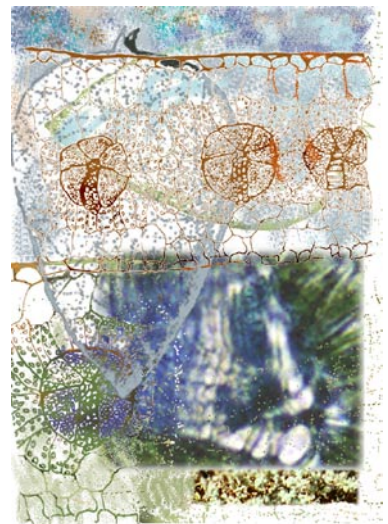
Bassia divaricata (pale poverty-bush), 2000.

Selection of prints from series *fruitingbodies* 2000.
inkjet prints on archival paper,
image size (approx.) 180 x 140mm.

mary rosenngren
fruitingbodies
artist's book 2000



Bassia patenticuspis (spear-fruit copperburr), 2000



Atriplex holocarpa (pop saltbush), 2000.

Selection of prints from series *fruitingbodies* 2000.
inkjet prints on archival paper,
image size (approx.) 180 x 140mm.