

Cathy Franzi

"In making this new body of work I focus on the remarkable plants and landscape of Wollemi National Park, a remote wilderness area west of Sydney and sadly last summer, the centre of Australia's largest ever bushfire.

Present in my mind throughout my studio making process are memories and imaginings of precious microclimates and ecosystems that give home to our plant companions. Amongst the sandstone plateaus and gorges of Wollemi Wilderness live common and rare species, perhaps not ones I will ever see in situ, but the knowledge of their existence expands my world.

My aim is to capture what I feel; an emotional connection to and wonderment of nature. This year much of this has been in the imagination as we stay home and appreciate small snippets of garden, park or reserve. I remember back to experiences of long bushwalks, fieldtrips and exploration to visualise what was and to imagine what might return.

Ceramics is an expressive medium, allowing form, surface and material to describe an idea. At first, I study each plant in detail considering its structure and how I might respond in ceramic form. Each piece is wheel-thrown and altered allowing unexpected movement in which to respond with surface imagery. The decorative process entails making marks through a black coating to reveal white porcelain below, in effect to draw by reduction with line and texture. The joy of colour comes from a pop of glaze or ceramic material, to bring one's eye from graphic black and white to delightful flower."

Dr Cathy Franzi, 2020

Dr Cathy Franzi is an artist engaged with ideas of nature and the environment, exploring ways to express cultural values attributed to Australian plants, including scientific ones. Her interdisciplinary approach is informed by a first degree in Science and has led to numerous science - art projects including the prestigious Vice-Chancellor's Artist Visiting Fellowship with the Research School of Biology at the Australian National University and the NSW Office of Environment & Heritage funded project 'Art of Threatened Species'. This year she is a finalist in the Waterhouse Natural Science Art Prize at the South Australian Museum.

In 2015 Franzi was awarded a PhD from the ANU School of Art and Design for her research into ways to express botanical and environmental knowledge through the representation of Australian flora on the ceramic surface. Franzi's work is held in public collections including Canberra Museum & Gallery, Manly Art Gallery & Museum, Parliament House Art Collection and most recently Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. She contributes to the ceramics community through her role as President of The Australian Ceramics Association, the national peak body for the ceramics art sector in Australia.