

Human: Nature

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"To see the world in grain of sand
and heaven in a wild flower

Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
& eternity in an hour"

WILLIAM BLAKE

- these are the words that set the group on a creative journey...
- a journey that was deeply personal for each of us
- when you initially view these artworks you may well ask several questions:
 - ① how do they relate to William Blake's quote?
 - ② they are so diverse - how do they relate to each other?
 - ③ where is the meaning in what appears to be just a "pretty picture"?

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- I've watched the artists & the development of their work throughout the last year... & what follows are some of my thoughts that, I hope, will bring clarity, & do justice to their work.

- there are two main trains of thought at work here:

① THE NATURE OF BEING HUMAN

② NATURE AS A BATH OR HEAVEN

some works fit neatly into one theme or the other, but many fit both.

- two artists who explore the nature of being human in very different ways are SUE BUTLER & MERCEDES MANGNUK.

Sue uses reconstructed textiles as a metaphor for the human obsession of collecting... objects, heirlooms, photos, memories, people. Her evocative poem says it all! Mercedes, however, digs deep into the part of human nature that helps us survive the trials & trauma that

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that life brings. Her figures are a deeply powerful reflection of this.

- Two more artists who look at trauma & nature are husband & wife ERWIN JANER &

BELINDA BROUGHTON, who lost almost everything in the Cudlee Creek Bushfires. Both discuss the trauma, effects of that loss, along with the recovery through their relationship with nature.

Belinda through the Japanese poetry form of haiga - words & picture combined. and

Erwin with woodblock prints that show the interconnectedness of human & nature.

- Anne Griffiths also highlights this connection with her organic forms & nests. Through these forms she poses many questions, encouraging us to look past the obvious...

- ~~the~~ In stark contrast to Anne's muted earthy tones, ^{motifs} DANA LAUENANT's floral still ~~lives~~ are a riot of colour & form. They depict resilience & vibrancy in the face of life's dark moments.

- the last three artists SARAH BOB, JANE MANT & myself BARBARA MILLWARD depict nature in all its glory. At first glance they are "pretty pictures", but look deeper & there is much more to find. SARAH's landscapes are places of memory, places of solace, places of dark memories, places of escape. Now reclaimed by reimagining

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to find redemption & peace.
A balm for the soul.

- likewise Jane points nature to show healing & renewal, hope & resilience.
- And as for myself, I have a fascination for the overlooked, the inconsequential, the minutia of nature.
- Sarah, Jane & Barbara all find peace & hope in the greatest of things & in the smallest of things. Even in the darkest of moments, nature bring solace & when life is at it's brightest, nature brings joy.
- When you look closer, ^{all} these artworks share so much common threads of thought & yet the works are all so different, all unique. I hope they speak to you as they have spoken to me.

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Finally, I want to thank a few people.

[Staff of 1855]

- Niki for her help during the majority of the process of putting on an exhibition
- Kelly for the final stages
- John for presenting our work so beautifully

[FAMILY] - we couldn't do it without your support
[members of the group]
GATHER CREATE & GROW

To Jane, Sarah & Dana for all your help & for lending an ear when I needed it.

And everyone in the group. We've had quite a year! Life has thrown a lot at us... And yet we have managed to put together an outstanding exhibition.

Congratulations to you all!
I declare the EXHIBITION OPEN!!!!