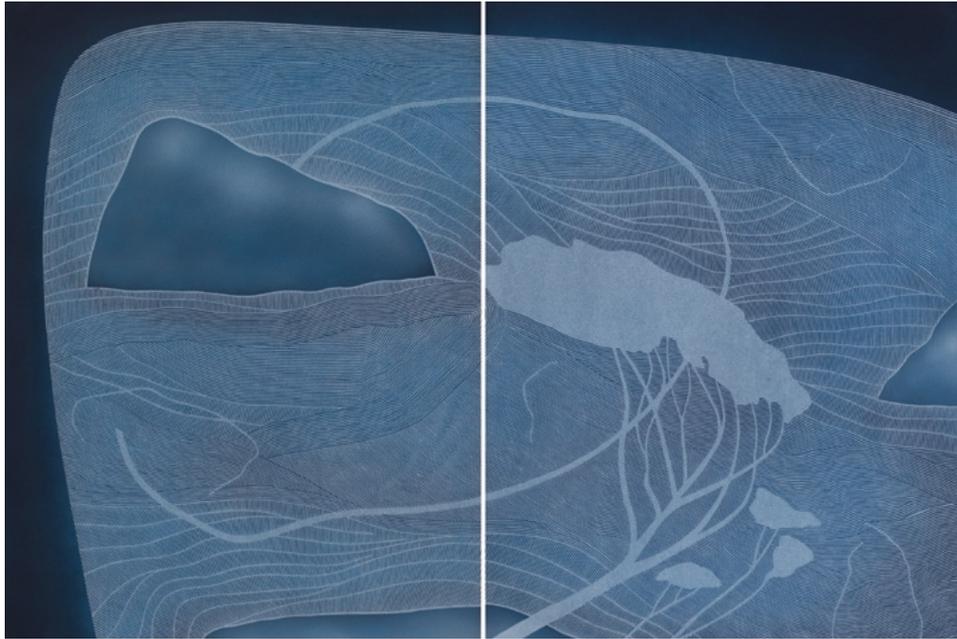


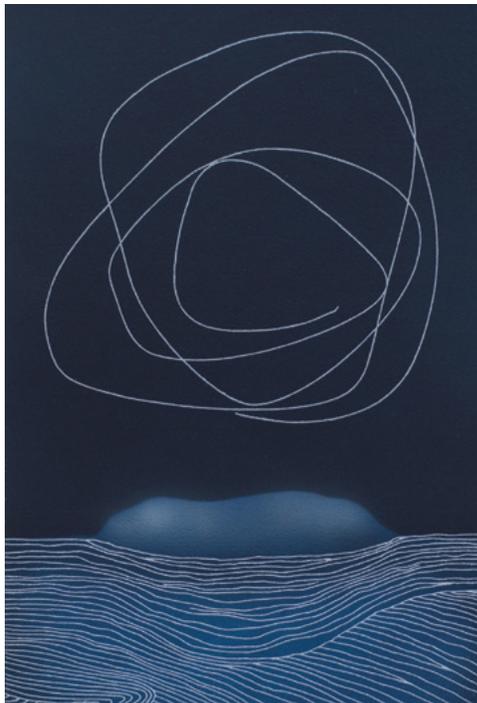
Scratching the Surface

MELISSA SMITH

14 October - 7 November 2016



Tidal Sweep 2015
linocut (diptych), 65cm x 90cm



AFTERNOON WITH THE ARTIST
Saturday 22 October, 2 - 4pm

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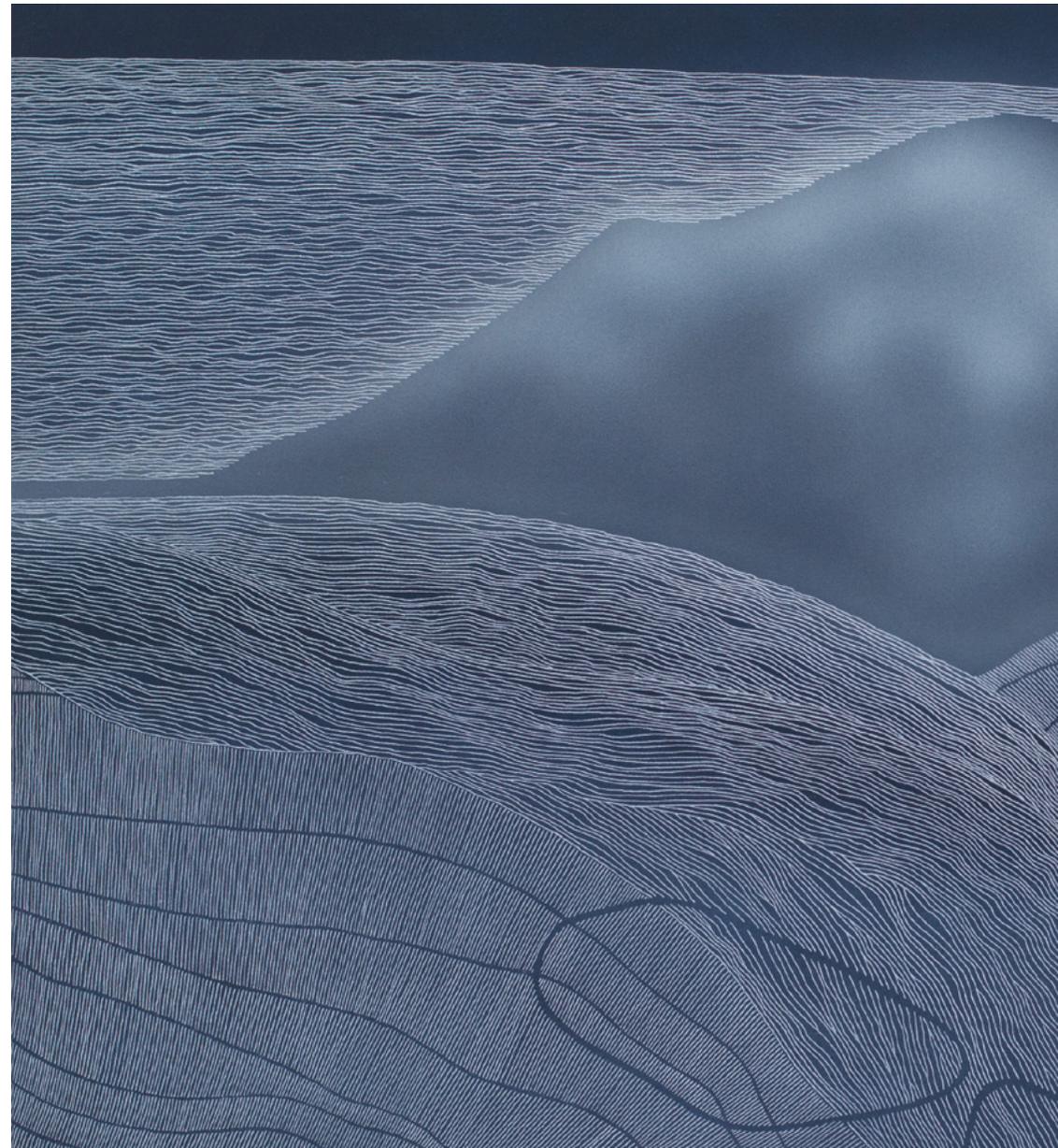


Cover image
Between Islands (detail) 2015
collagraph (diptych), 56cm x 152cm

Image left
Current (Beneath the Winds) 2015
collagraph, 38cm x 22.5cm

Graphic Design
Marisa Molin

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Between Islands

MELISSA SMITH

Places have a way of grounding us. They *locate us*, both geographically and emotionally. In the childhood home we might find memories forged from frequency, familiarity, experience, and discovery. Elsewhere, we might find connection, friendship, knowledge, or even love. It is the idea of place that amplifies our association with being in the world, where we go, who we are, and what we do. Places are the map pins documenting our lives, collecting our traces, building our recollections, and telling our stories. Place speaks to here and now, there and then, and we as place-makers speak back. What unfolds is a dialogue of intersecting histories across time - breadcrumbs that provide the way forward, but also allow us to find the way back.

Between Islands is a body of work that encapsulates presence and adventure with distance and longing. Through printmaking, Melissa Smith extracts elements from a personal and influential journey and weaves them into an insightful narrative linked by the remote Kent Group of islands in Bass Strait. It was there on Deal Island particularly where Smith would feel a resonance that would be separated by a decade, firstly in 2004, and again in 2014. Her time on the island informs her new works, and allows us to imagine the isolation and beauty of being on and among a cluster of small specks of land protruding from the sea.

Smith recounts these observations through line and form with the

omission of detail in some works that act as invitations to discover our own adventures, of realms where we can, and do, exist on un-compromising patches of earth. A land bridge rises and recedes as dictated by the tides, the waters of which converge and collide around the sea cliffs and beaches creating a chaotic elegance.

In the landscapes, we see carefully toned formations, contour-less, almost unwritten. In the waters we find energy and movement that Smith captures with careful consideration to convey a type of inhalation and exhalation all at once - the very thing that provides context and separation from all that is comfortable and familiar - the inescapable *otherness* of the sea that entices and frightens.

Adaptability, resilience, and endurance are not lost to Smith either who

continues to explore the natural environment and our relationship to it. In the work she celebrates the signifiers of human habitation and willingness to be in such a place - a stone cairn, a net, a feather, a chart; the things created, documented, and collected to build a diary of a unique and magnificent location.

Between Islands is a notebook re-invented, a memory projected, and a story being told. In Melissa Smith's work we can find the privileged perspective of not only being observer, but listener. We might also feel the lure of the islands, and desire to locate ourselves remotely for just a while, or maybe longer, in order to tell some stories of our own.

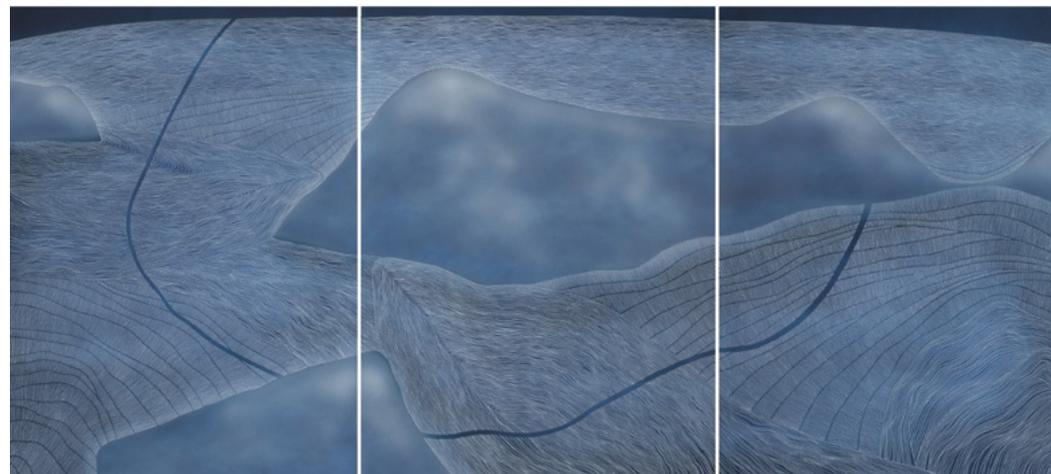
Patrick Sutczak
Director, Sawtooth ARI
Launceston, Tasmania



Beacon II 2015
collagraph, 76cm x 57cm



Driftnet 2015
collagraph, 76cm x 57cm



Bass Strait Circles III 2015
collagraph (triptych), 76cm x 171cm