

Scenes from Gadigal and surrounds: Tahlia Henderson

Strathfield Library & Innovation Hub
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Growing up in South-East Queensland, the bush was always close by for Tahlia, her childhood was enriched by nearby bush reserves and nature-filled camping outings. Since moving to Sydney in 2012, the bush has continued to be something she naturally seeks out. These vibrant landscapes are a detailed record of the bushland explored within and surrounding suburban Sydney, Gadigal. Tahlia encourages the viewer to pause and focus their gaze on the detail. This may be unique layers of foliage, rocks, an abundance of colours, or textures and the creatures that live within these diverse environments. It is the biodiversity of each place that is forever changing; either seasonally or with the intensity of fires and floods that have increased with climate inaction. These battered landscapes remain resilient for now and continue to provide and protect inhabitants away from suburbia.

With every bushwalk Tahlia is focusing her gaze through the lens, taking countless photographs of what catches her eye. A compilation of these have been selected for a slideshow that is part of this exhibition; allowing the Gallery visitor to get a glimpse of the artist's creative process. It could be flowers, the way bark is peeling off a scribble gum, a shiny beetle, or a twisted clifftop tree. These photographic images are reference material when back in the studio.

Tahlia's preferred artistic medium is paper and watercolour. *"I like the fragility of working on paper and not having to fill and clean a paint palette every time I work. I use watercolour in a very untraditional 'heavy' way. I love that I can build upon colours and still have transparency in other parts."*

"The landscape composition will always be built as I work. There is usually an idea or key element I want to paint first. I take photographs while bushwalking and form a collection for the area I want to paint. I work in layers, always starting at the bottom of the page. I like to play with perspective and really enjoy pushing the detail. It is really satisfying watching it all come together. I am frustrated that photographs will often only focus on one part while blurring the background – The paintings are a bit of a rebellion against that. All the elements share the stage. I find that even my very small works can take up to 15 hours to finish. It is a methodical process, but I enjoy getting lost in it." - Tahlia Henderson.

Scenes from Gadigal and surrounds is an exhibition that vibrantly captures the detail and beauty of Sydney's bush landscapes. It is a celebration of the richness, abundance, diversity, and beauty of these sites. Take the time to stop and soak up these vistas. Acknowledge the land on which we stand and do not take this for granted.

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