



The bold red waratah is the symbol Jenny Kee believes most reflects her own nature. Red is the trademark of her career and the waratah is her totem. For the last 40 years Jenny has painted and designed this ancient Australian flower in its many forms and moods and like the waratahs, these paintings make an intense statement – they proclaim their existence. Above: Vincent & Me.

THE GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS

MOUNT TOMAH

is home to the only botanic garden in the world in a World Heritage area, the Blue Mountains. This cool climate garden—just 100 kms from Sydney and 1000 metres above sea level—is home to 21,000 plants and 900 species and lies on 252 hectares.

The land is in Darug aboriginal country. It was originally granted to Susannah Bowen in 1830 and the garden—which is managed by the Botanic Gardens Trust (a division of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage)—was established in 1972.

Half of the land is dedicated to conservation with many ongoing projects where ecologists study such subjects as the distribution of Australian native plants, particularly those of New South Wales, the evolution and conservation of native flora, temperate highland peat swamps, rainforest diversity and the ecology of the Cumberland Plain Woodland.

THE GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS

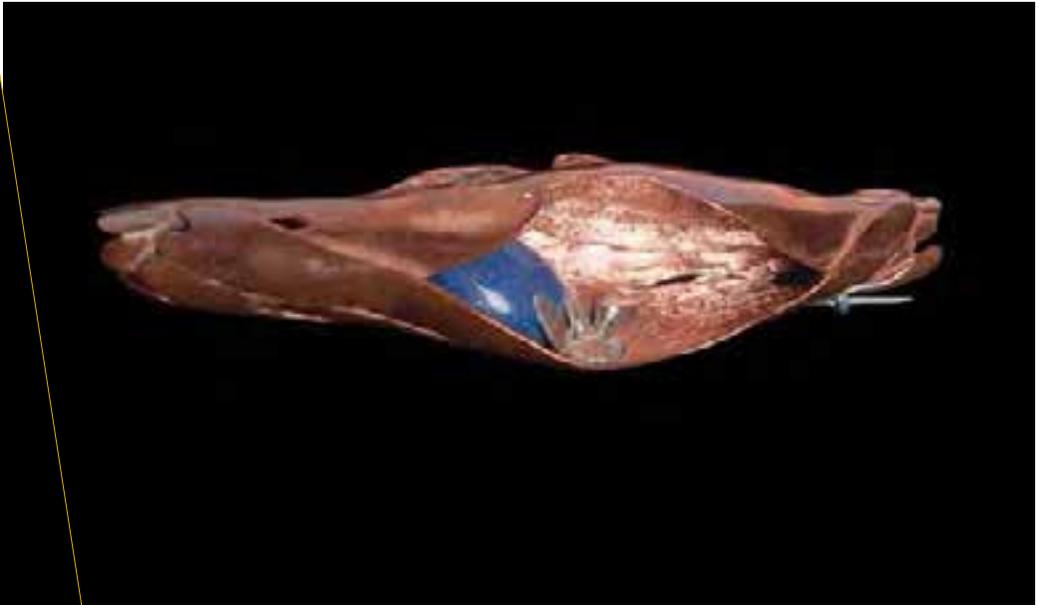
is a multi arts festival held for the first time in November this year at Mount Tomah, with a program of art and music titled 'Botanica and Birdlife' curated by Susan Cochrane and celebrated throughout the gardens.

Participants in this year's program included Jenny Kee, an artist who has famously painted the waratah and used it in her designs for the past 40 years. She describes it as her totem and her images of this ancient Australian flower are iconic.

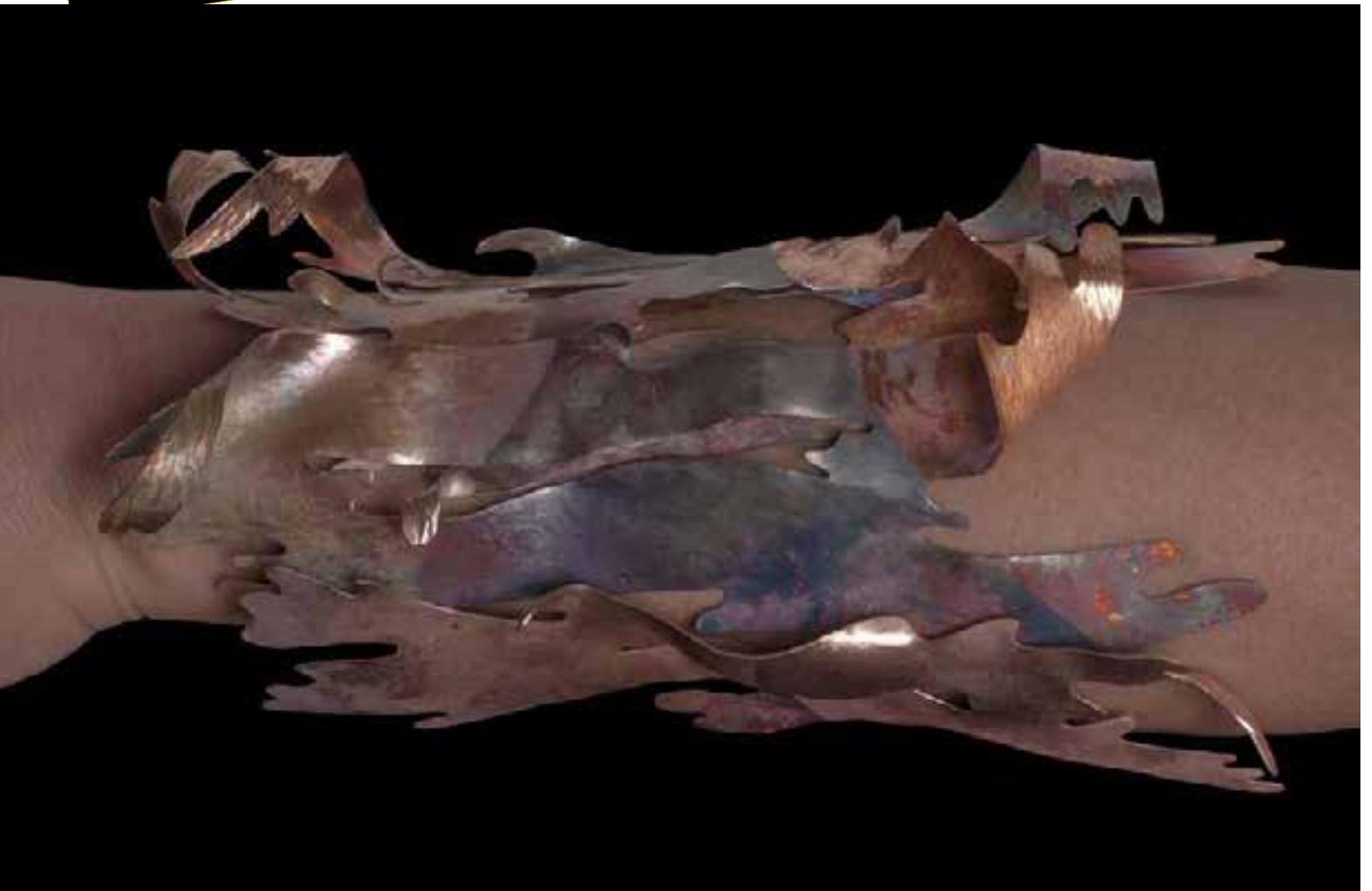
Other participants featured in this article are artist Michael White and actress and artist Rachel Szalay who created a large multi-panelled work reminiscent of Japanese screen paintings reflecting aspects of the changing seasons. The Botanical Expressions Jewellery Collective created works for body adornment and as sculpture. They were: Megan Turton, Valerie Aked, Christina Mija and Jane Tadrist.

www.bluemountainsbotanicgarden.com.au

JENNY KEE is a pioneer of Australian style and internationally acclaimed artist and designer, her vibrant art and design reflects her passion for the unique and precious Australian environment. Jenny's work has appeared on silk, paper, wool, cotton, ceramics and on canvas. Her creativity has been shaped by an eclectic mix of global influences, from Aboriginal Australian to early European, and the exotic arts of Africa, India, Asia and South America. Jenny's distinctive style has evolved, steeped in a passion for nature, to reflect a "strong, spontaneous, bold and optimistic" Australia. Her designs are world renowned, exhibited at the Art Gallery of NSW, the Australian National Gallery, London's Victoria & Albert Museum, the Marimura Museum in Tokyo and Sydney's Powerhouse Museum, which has an extensive archive, covering decades of Kee's design career.



Megan Turton's jewellery compositions are inspired by miniscule details. Rich textures, shadows, depth and movement can be observed from a single leaf to a giant, ancient gum.



MEGAN TURTON graduated from California Polytechnic State University's Architecture program where she enjoyed bringing an artistic approach to design and construction, creating relationships between the buildings she designed and the people who would inhabit or interact with them. With her long-time passion for engaging the senses, she favoured using textiles, metal, paper and design to create an illusory 3-D experience.

After moving to Australia, Megan met renowned jewellery-maker Sondi who became her teacher and mentor and Megan's love of art, structural design, kinetics and interconnectedness was rekindled.

'I am intrigued by kinetics as a part of design and I wanted to create pieces that amplify and enhance the wearer's experience and movement. ... pieces that encourage—almost require—interaction and ownership through touch and movement.

'This desire to engage and draw the wearer into the art became even more imperative with my introduction to phenomenology, where an idea is only fully expressed by stimulating multiple senses. The emphasis of design is placed not only on how a piece looks, but on how it feels and sounds. Creating sculptural hollow work is beautifully surprising to experience with its substantive appearance and soft light touch.

'My new work, created for Mt. Tomah's *Garden of Earthly Delights*, builds on another of my passions, nature, and nowadays this is experienced in the Australian bush. Being an avid bush walker, canyoner, and climber I am able to interact with nature in a fully immersive way. The external environment, nature, provides a rich palette of textures and colours, serving as a perfect conduit to unify aesthetics, connections and senses.'



Right: Leaf Curling Spider Pendant
Hollow hinged silver spider with married metal eyes, hammered copper leaf 100mmx50mm



Opposite page:
Top left: Scribbly Gum Brooch
Hollow hammered copper & rolled patterned silver, 150mmx180mm
Top right: Curled Bark Brooch
Hammered copper; lapis lazuli, 80mmx20mm
Below: Ribbon Gum Bark Cuff
Hinged hammered copper & silver, 150mmx180mm

This page top:
Wattle Seed Pod Brooch with back
Handmade bimetal copper & silver pod with real amber, copper & silver back, 70mmx100mm





VALERIE AKED has been a practising silver and goldsmith since the 1970s. From then to the present, she has participated in numerous group shows as well as solo exhibitions, both nationally and internationally. Her work reflects her love of Australian land and seascapes.

Valerie has taught at many levels since 1980 and during her time in her own Sydney-based silver studio, had many renowned Australian and international artists conduct masterclasses.

Valerie Aked's pieces have been featured in numerous publications. She is a member of Craft NSW and a Fellow of the Silver and Goldsmiths Guild of Australia and is represented in Craft NSW, Sydney, the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, the Carmelite Order, Canberra and the Australian National Gallery, Canberra.



This page:

Blown in the Wind Earrings

Top: Cane Grass

Below: Common Wheat

Sterling silver of Keum-Boo

Towards the Sun, sculpture, fine silver, sterling silver, vitreous enamel, plique-a-jour, base 300mmx120mmx50mm, sculpture 280mmx50mm

Opposite page: *Lost then Found Neckpiece*, Sterling Silver, 18ct gold, fossil leaves of Wollemi Pine, 207mm x 183mm

For *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, Valerie Aked created a series of botanica-inspired brooches (entitled *Exotica 1* and *2* opposite page) featuring **Mokume Gane**, a procedure which produces a mixed-metal laminate with distinctive layered patterns, and earrings (this page) of **Keum-Boo**, an ancient Korean gilding technique.





CHRISTINA MIJA qualified as a fashion designer before a move to the Blue Mountains in 2004 became the catalyst for a change in creative direction. Mentored initially by silversmith Valerie Aked, Christina has succeeded in establishing a career as a jewellery artist. Her pieces have an emphasis on simple but elegant forms that highlight the natural beauty of the materials used.

This page top:
Pixie Cup Earrings
Bronze, formed and heat patinated, Sterling Silver
80mm x 80mm
Left:
Pixie Cup Neckpiece
Bronze, formed and heat patinated, Sterling Silver
350mm x 200mm

Opposite page:
Lace Lichen Collar
Fine Silver wire, crocheted then manipulated to create a random look, Sterling Silver, reticulated,
300mm x 250mm
And: Lace Lichen Brooch
Bronze, formed and heat patinated, Sterling Silver,
80mm x 80mm



Christina Mija has drawn inspiration for the Botanical Expressions collection from the diverse growth forms of lichen. The centerpiece is a collar constructed from fine silver wire, crocheted, then stretched and manipulated to indicate the movement and texture of fruticose lichen.

Her additional pieces incorporate patinated bronze and explore other growth forms.

Left: Sterling Silver Neckpiece, formed and patinated. 100mm x 30mm



JANETADRIST is a UK qualified jeweller and silversmith with over ten years' experience. She has also recently qualified as an art therapist. She has participated in numerous exhibitions and large-scale community arts projects and won awards and grants for her work. Her art practice is an ongoing exploration of a sense of place and identity.

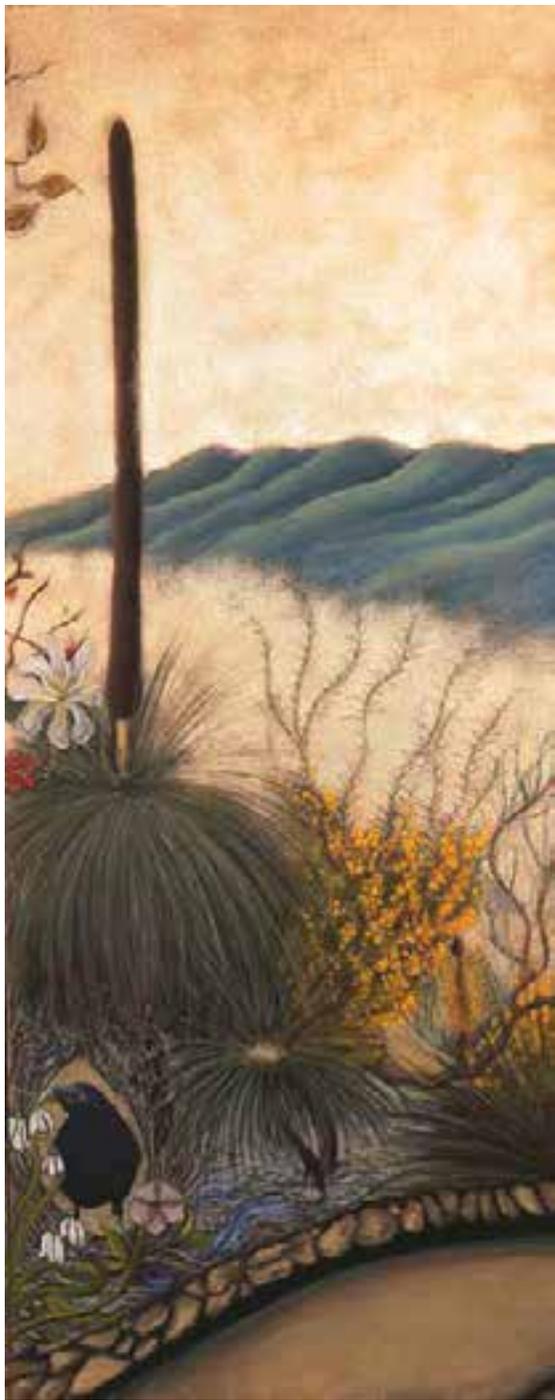


Top:
Jane Tadrist:
Bowerbird bower, brass

Right:
Feather brooch, sterling silver & serpentine
Bread tag brooch, sterling silver
Bread tag pin 1, sterling silver, plastic bread tag & lapis lazuli
Bread tag pin 2, sterling silver and glass 'evil eye'
Shell rotating brooch, sterling silver & acrylic

The male bowerbird creates an intricate performance arena of twigs, which is surrounded by blue or eye-catching objects, both natural and manmade, in order to attract a mate.





RACHEL SZALAY

Rachel's creation for *The Garden of Earthly Delights, The Seasonal Moods of Mt Tomah*, is a large, multi-panelled work reminiscent of Japanese screen paintings. The panels are movable and exist as one complete work or twelve individual panels, each reflecting an aspect of the changing seasons throughout the year, and illustrating flora and fauna found in the Botanical Gardens. The overall composition of the birds and plants of the Blue Mountains shows nature in harmony and flux. The work is mainly in pastel and charcoal.

Below:

Spring to Summer - 6 panels

Rachel Szalay closely connects with the natural, human and psychological environment through her artistic practice as an actress and, in the last decade, as a fine artist. She completed a degree in Visual Art before successfully auditioning for NIDA and starting her acting career. In the last few years she has contributed to a number of exhibitions and has had solo shows in Sydney, Victoria and the Blue Mountains. Examples of her art are published in books, *Artists Observed* by Carole Hampshire and *Luminous Colour* by Linda Hibbs.

Her commissioned work extends to private and commercial collections in Australia and overseas. Szalay's creations combine traditional materials, their cultural history with her deep sensual and psychological response to the mythic Blue Mountains landscape as well as to the small town human communities inhabiting it.





For *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, Mt. Tomah Botanic Garden offered a magical natural setting for the exhibition of contemporary sculptural works—from sculptures woven from natural fibres, made from aluminium or from copper wire, ceramic, stitched works and fabric banners. Here are two.

RAE BOLOTIN

Seed Forms 1 and 2

Rae Bolotin's opalised steel *Seed Forms* were inspired by tiny seeds found at Mt. Tomah.

These works were fabricated from stainless steel formed by hand using an ancient Chinese technique of metal beating that dates back thousands of years. The colours derive from a chemical modification occurring on the surface of stainless steel in a vacuum chamber when various gases are pumped in at different intervals—a technology invented by scientists working on the Russian space program.

The works reflect Bolotin's fascination with juxtapositions: between art and science, organic and steel, contemporary and ancient, simplicity and complexity.

Bolotin is artistic director at BigCi (Bilpin international ground for Creative initiatives) and is represented by Stella Downer Fine Art where she has had many exhibitions over the years. Six times entrant in Sculpture by the Sea, her work has also been a finalist and has won prizes in numerous sculpture awards, including winner of the Willoughby Art Prize in 2006, and finalist in 2007 in the Helen Lempriere National Sculpture Award and the Wynne Prize at the AGNSW.



Orly Faya is an innovative multi-media artist and internationally recognised body painter whose work has expanded into film-making and photography. Orly has founded a project called Emerging Earth People, celebrating indigenous people and their wisdom. In partnership with film makers, this is an organic work in progress.

Top: The Light in Love is part of the Gaia Series, Orly Faya's original compilation of works representing humanity's connection to country. This piece represents the merging of culture: two people, Ginou and Wolf, from vastly different places come together on shared earth to be one with all life. The two move through the beauty and challenge of their Merging Ceremony.

Below: Against a background of jacarandas, this Merge, Cara, speaks of healing, self-love and peace. The brilliant colours of nature are reflected on the body of a woman, strong and centred, reminding humanity of our inherent origins as children of the earth, returning to source through the powerful medium of body paint and photography.



ORLY FAYA
Mergings of Australia

Multi-media: Body painting and photography.



MICHAEL WHITE was born in 1967 and grew up in the Blue Mountains and began painting from a very early age. A fascination with his immediate bushland surroundings combined with an inclination to draw and paint started him on a continuous artistic journey. Michael has had fourteen solo exhibition and taken part in several group exhibitions during the past fifteen years. His paintings hang in private collections throughout Australia, as well as the UK, USA, Europe and Asia.



Michael White developed his own unique and sensitive language with colour. The majority of his landscape portrayals and images of flora are painted from life, outside, in natural light. These studies also form the basis for larger—and at times abstracted—works in the studio. Working this way parallels some of the elements within his work, between light and dark, warm and cool, and the intrinsic harmony between them. He tunes his colour, mixing extensively, not to a predetermined formula, but toward something that is his own to discover; “to learn from the humility of nature and the sun that shows it to us”. Above: Iris.