

SUSAN RYMAN

IN & OUT THE WINDOWS

much of the last decade in coloured pencil

19 JULY - 6 SEPTEMBER



In and Out the Windows: much of the last decade in coloured pencil is a selection of artworks made during the last ten years which trace the evolution of my practice. All of the pieces share the same means of making - an eye for the unlikely, reference to my trove of collected specimens and use of the humble coloured pencil on paper.

Works Include single fixed images using rectangular and square formats, that mimic a sense of looking through a window onto the outside world. These more traditional compositions sit with multi panelled works and accordion books, which are closer to the way we actually see. They reflect on the way we understand and recall as we move through space and time using movement and our peripheral vision. By including these extended formats, I hope a more natural and expansive experience is possible, where meanings are open to personal experience and memory.

My tools are simple coloured pencils on rag paper. Their application is complex and intuitively developed for over 45 years now. Each panel is sealed with multiple layers of varnish. This stabilises the surface, prevents foxing and prolongs the life of the work. It also lures the viewer into the immediacy of the image itself.

A strangeness lingers in my work that I hope is an invitation to contemplate the fragile and inevitably transient nature of being. Frail minutiae, people, moments, shadows and seemingly banal objects such as refuse are transformed into surreal dancing ghosts.

Colour saturated light and layers of contour conscious texture are the visual elements that form strange and sumptuous new worlds. Depictions of moth eaten tapestry, ancient mosaics, fruit bursting with ripeness, fish, feathers, houses and domestic objects all move out of context with each other under brooding skies, bringing past and present together in new worlds that are entirely imagined.

This whole process mirrors our world - for better or for worse.

Biography

My initial training in the late 1970's was in Sydney at the National Art School, and later continued at the University of Newcastle, where I was awarded a PhD in Natural History Illustration in 2015.

Since 1989 I have exhibited multiple times in Maitland, Manning and Mac Yarang, Grafton Regional Galleries, and the University Gallery, Newcastle. Touring exhibitions include the Jacaranda Acquisitive Drawing Prize, The Weeds Drawing Project, Manthel van Reijn Studio, Auckland, Art out of Water - the fish of art, and Hungry Man's Exhibition which travelled from Manning to Gloucester, Hastings Grafton and Orange Regional Galleries.

Independent gallery solo shows at Von Bertouch Galleries, Art Systems Wickham, Newcastle Art Space, Gallery 139 and now Straitjacket Gallery are testament to the defiantly distinct place that regional art continues to have in the Hunter.



Breathe

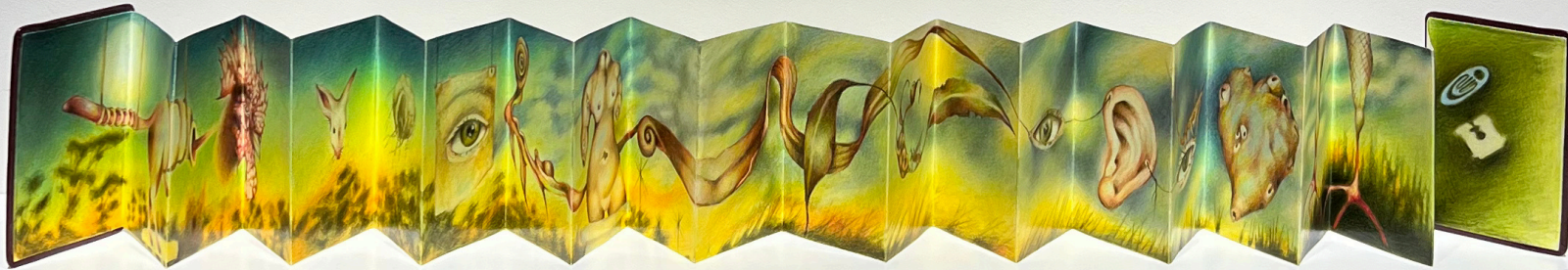
2017 - 2025

coloured pencil on rag
paper, hand varnished
42 panels each 14.8 x 21
cm

overall image
dimensions: 105 x
128cm

\$6,000

Breathe in, breathe
out....look to the sky on
this occasion and float
with the passing
notions on the wind.



What did you say?

2025

concertina book - coloured pencil on rag paper varnished

14.5 x 168cm

\$3,000

Please be patient with us who have poor hearing. Our understanding of what is said can be amusing, or devastating, depending on the white noise, situation and topic.

Whispering Pillars

2017 - 2025

coloured pencil and watercolour pencil on Fabriano paper, hand varnished

15 panels each h100 x w35cm

\$2,000

Whispering Pillars is a large body of work where a stage has been created on which refuse is transformed into surreal dancing ghosts. These rhythmic harbingers mark our long-term lack of concord for so many exquisite earthly complexities. Each drawing quietly mourns how fragile life is. Our trajectory to the reality of a self-made and very real dystopia is echoed in each confronting pillar.

Whispering Pillar: 4th Earl of Sandwich

This image is from a portrait of John Montagu, the Fourth Earl of Sandwich which was commissioned in 1740 at the age of 19. He was known to have interest in 'the exotic' particularly after having taken the traditional Grande Tour.

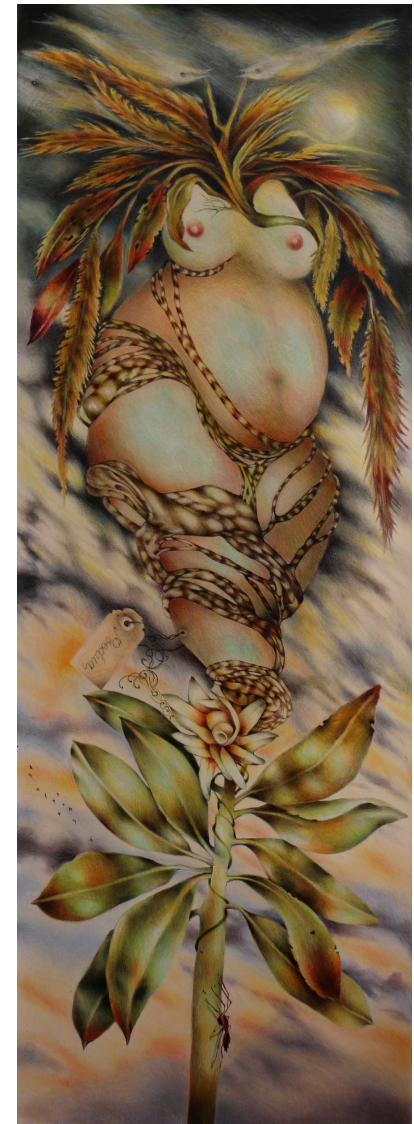
Whispering Pillar: Poedua

Made as a companion piece to *Whispering Pillar: 4th Earl of Sandwich*, this piece is based on a portrait painted c1784 by John Webber (1751 – 93). Poedua was the 19-year-old daughter of Orio the chief of the Haamanino district Ra'iatea (Ulietea), a neighbouring island to Tahiti, and was shown wearing jasmine blossom in her hair and holding a 'fly whisk' to denote her chiefly status. In her 'Whispering Pillar' she is depicted as the curiosity of colonial eyes, being presented on a stake, headless and bound by her symbols of superiority.

***Whispering Pillar:
4th Earl of Sandwich***



***Whispering Pillar:
Poedua***





Whispering Pillar:
Sineaere



Whispering Pillar:
Irae (renewal)



Whispering Pillar:
Chrysanthemum matris Calistaamine

Whispering Pillar: Sineaere (without air)

Whispering Pillar: Irae (renewal)

***Whispering Pillar: Chrysanthemum matris Calistaamine (mothers' chrysanthemum
with bottlebrush)***

(these three panels have specific Latin references which are reminiscent of a museum cataloguing process).

Having choked the earth with plastic and toxic waste, our avaricious behaviour has delivered the terrifying ferocity of fire such as we have never seen followed by the suffocating fear of an insidious pandemic ('Sineaere'). Yet, our beautiful earth, given half a chance, responds so quickly with restored clean water, air and growth ('Irae'). 'Chrysanthemum matris Calistaamine' depicts the flower we associate with motherhood and love, with an Australian bottlebrush, the Callistemon which embodies the essence of the Kookaburra, with the joy of its laughter. Both flowers possess life filled symbolism, and in this context, its fading flush in the face of reality, as they move towards the end of their life cycle.



***Whispering Pillar:
Seering Sky***



***Whispering Pillar:
Moonrise***



***Whispering Pillar:
The Gloaming***

Whispering Pillar: Searing Sky

Whispering Pillar: Moonrise

Whispering Pillar: Gloaming

The passing of all things is inevitable - people, civilisations and minutiae from the natural world. In these Whispering Pillars, the day is nearly past, and the dance moves on into the night.

My fascination with collections of objects that humans have touched, echoes in much of my work, as does it with so many museum holdings. Unlikely and often ignored motifs in contemporary Australian life including frail minutiae, people, moments, things hiding in the shadows and, conversely, seemingly banal objects, all find their way into new worlds where the mythical and mundane mix.

Depictions of moth-eaten tapestry, ancient mosaics, fruit bursting with ripeness, fish, feathers, industry roads spanned by powerlines and domestic rubbish all dance out of context with each other under brooding skies.



Whispering Pillar: Present (v.,n.,adj.)

The English language is a duplicitous beast. Simple words are often complicated by context, tense, punctuation to name a few. Consider the word 'present' as a verb, a noun and an adjective.

Whispering Pillar: Urban Pursuits

Whispering Pillar: Live Epergne

The central vessel in these works (based on an epergne) moves between both past and present, the animate and the inanimate.

An epergne is a largely useless and overly ornate Victorian centrepiece designed for formal dining tables. Imagine the conversations that these pieces must have witnessed?

Using their format is a timely reminder of the price of the industrial revolution and colonial global expansion, which was a time when invention and curiosity burgeoned. The enthusiasm for progress and growth which still sluggishly underpins our financial structures....



***Whispering Pillar:
Urban Pursuits***



***Whispering Pillar:
Live Epergne***

Whispering Pillar: Prancing

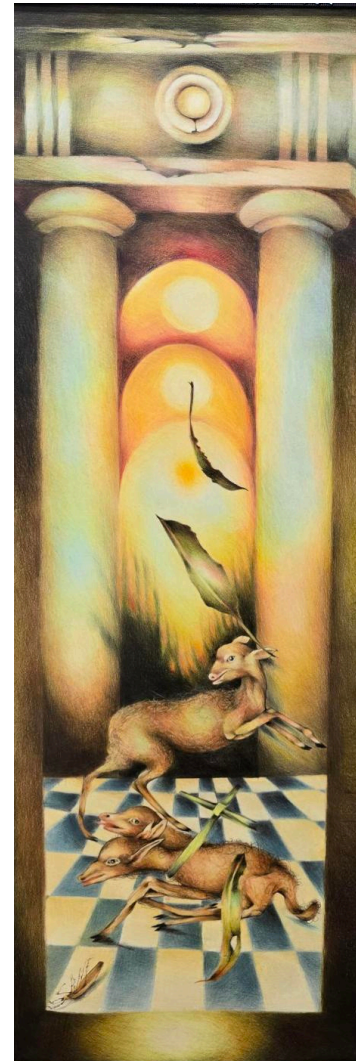
Whispering Pillar: Wordless Prayer

Whispering Pillar: Silent Slaughter

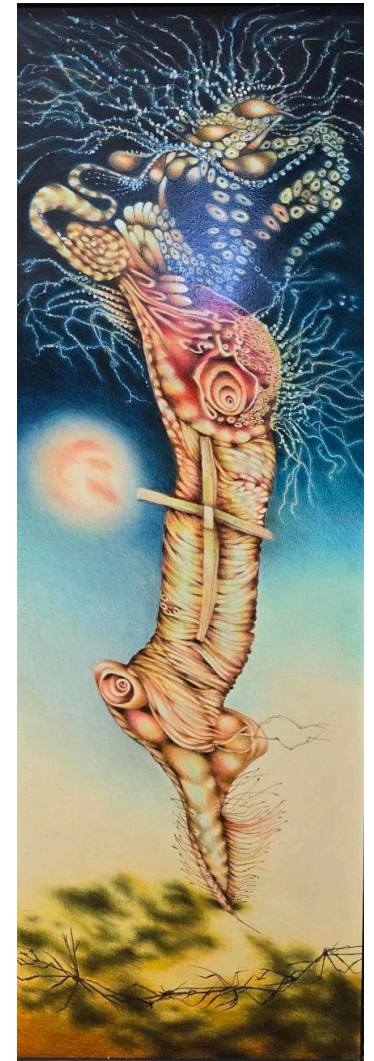
Completed in the months prior to this exhibition, these are the last of the Whispering Pillars suite. They are a reminder that there is beauty in tragedy, as there is in all parts of the cycle of life on this earth.



***Whispering Pillar:
Wordless Prayer***



***Whispering Pillar:
Prancing***



***Whispering Pillar:
Silent Slaughter***

Whispering Pillar: Urban Goddess

The 'Urban Goddess' here dances on an architectural stage in a strange world where the past and present merge, echoing the ancient Hellenistic Greek 'Nike of Samothrace', - an enduring symbol of victory. However, this version wears all of her wounds and imperfections with magnificence.

She stands as an upright vessel, moving between myth and reality, testament of our continuing disregard for life.



***Whispering Pillar:
Urban Goddess***



The Way We (really) Were
2017

coloured pencil on rag paper, hand varnished

106 x 65cm

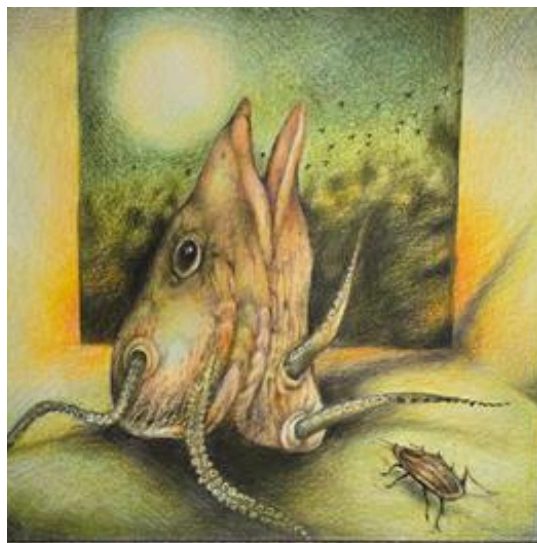
\$2,500

This work is a simple response to the truth of Valentines Day, past and present, rather than its commercial understanding.

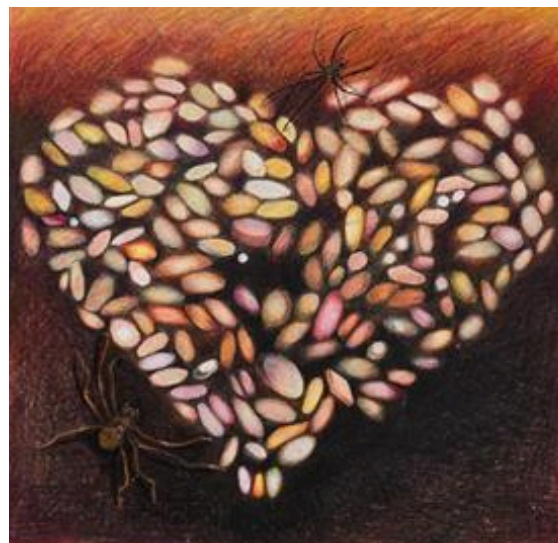
Small Windows suite



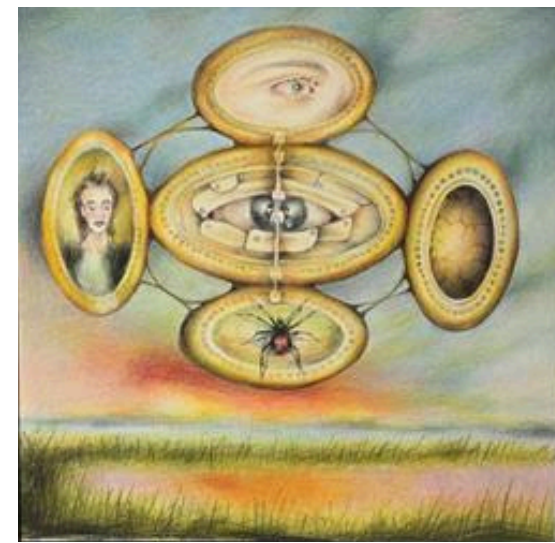
Pedestal



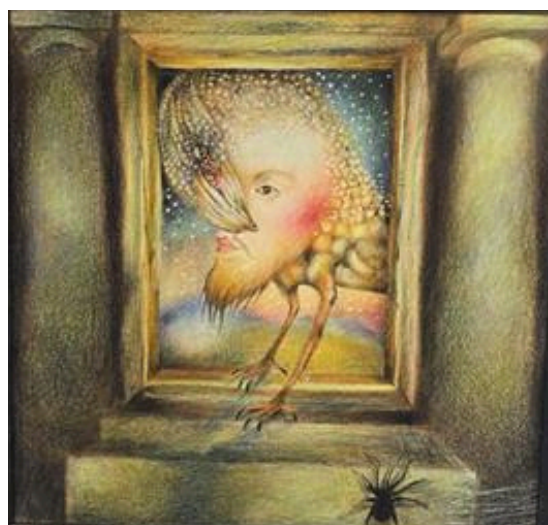
Gutted



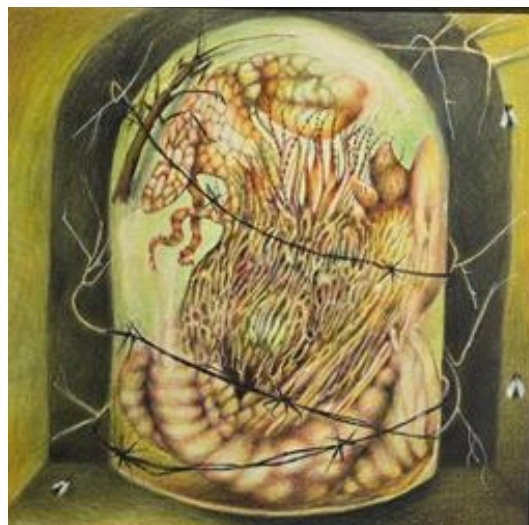
Heartache



Looking



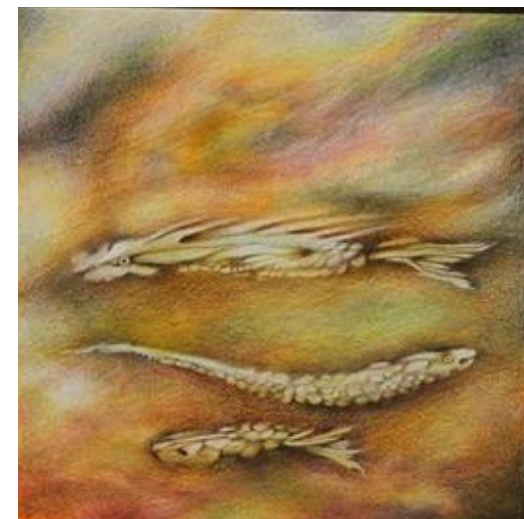
Renaissance Man



Specimen



Grounded



Flying Fish

Small Windows suite

2019 -2022

coloured pencil on rag paper, hand varnished

8 panels, each 25 x 25cm

Installation dimensions variable

\$450 each

These are little stages which circle and feed the larger more complex works. Their titles are quips, so they are open to personal associations. In these works, battery chickens, specimens contained to be observed are featured while other works turn the observer into the observed.

Mother and Son suite

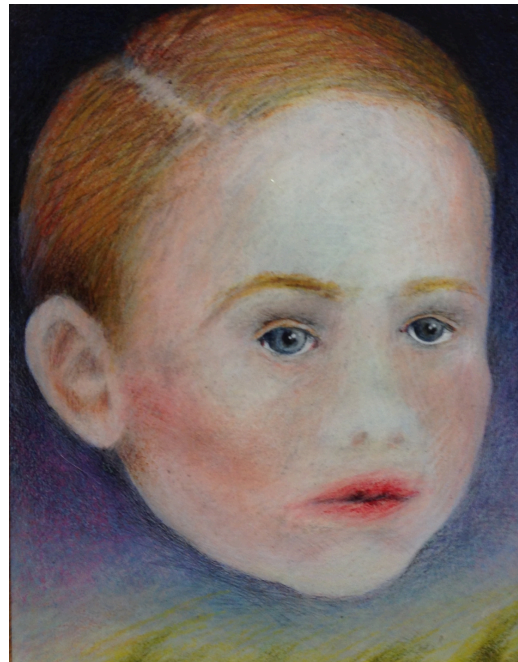
2015 - 2018

coloured pencil and ink on Fabriano paper, hand
varnished

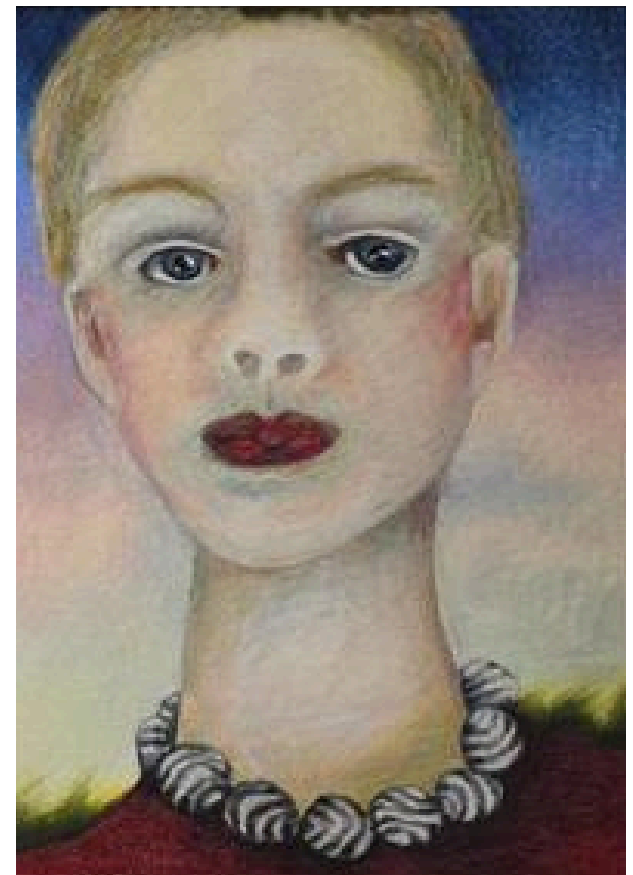
7 panels installation dimensions variable

\$2500

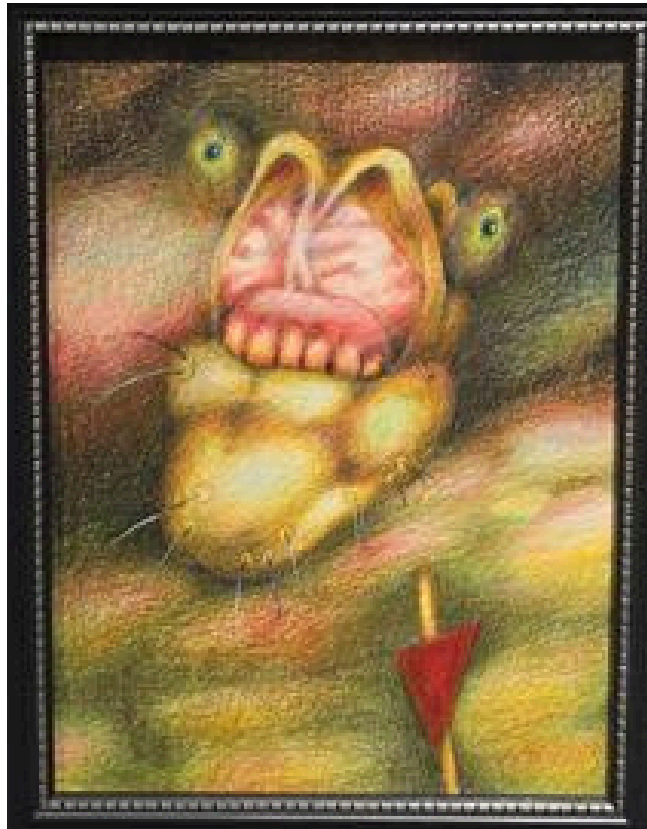
Most of us have some experience of painful results
stemming from Family Law Court decisions. I can't
even begin to put words to mine.



Mother and Son (details)



Mother and Son (detail)



Mother and Son (3 part detail)



Pushing Buttons

2019 -2022

coloured pencil, watercolour pencil
and ink on Fabriano paper, hand
varnished

18 panels, each 20 x 18cm

Installation dimensions variable
each panel \$420

Each work pushes a different button,
each of us respond in different ways.



Pushing Buttons (detail 1)



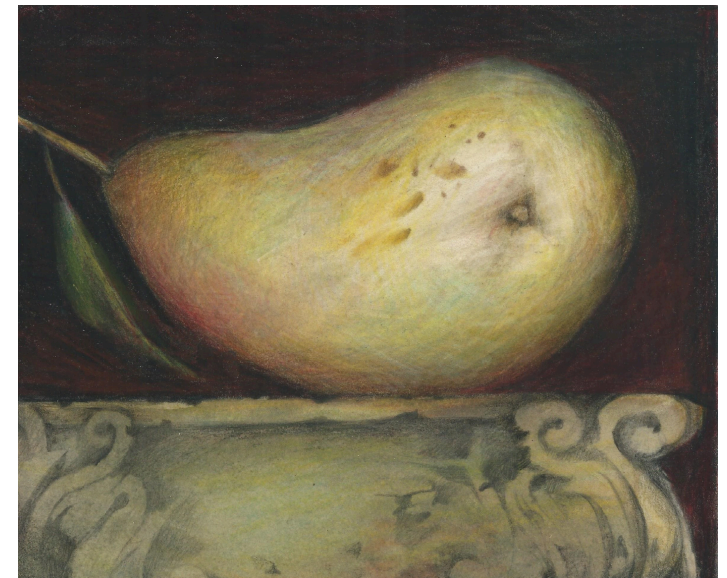
Pushing Buttons (detail 2)



Pushing Buttons (detail 3)



Pushing Buttons (detail 4)



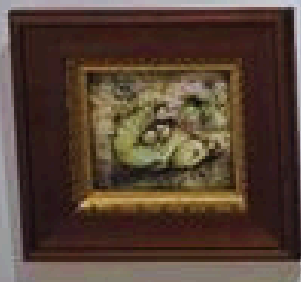
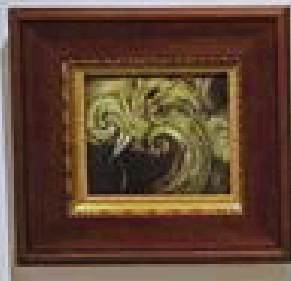
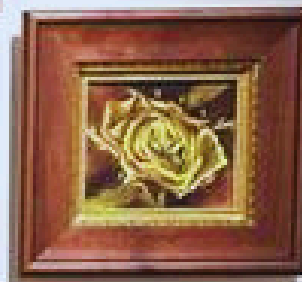
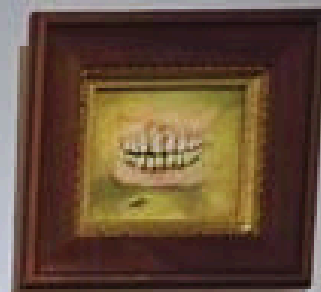
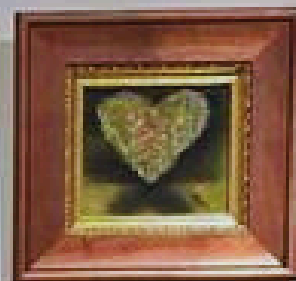
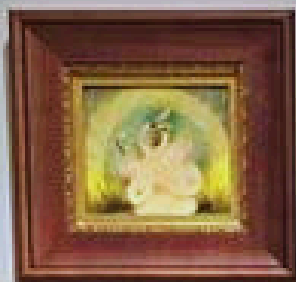
Pushing Buttons (detail 5)



Pushing Buttons (detail 6)



Pushing Buttons (detail 7)





Quod Insania Macarthur (triptych)

Quod Insania Macarthur (the Macarthur Madness)

2020

watercolour, gouache, ink and coloured pencil on rag paper, hand varnished

triptych - each panel h25 x w20cm

\$1,800

Michelle Scott Tucker has recently revealed another side to the history of John Macarthur in her biography ***Elizabeth Macarthur: A Life at the Edge of the World***. In 1788 Elizabeth married John Macarthur, a handsome and penniless army officer, leading this young English gentlewoman from the rural vicarage she was raised in, to a rudimentary colony in distant Australia. Despite many brutal challenges, she became a farming entrepreneur, diplomat, and indefatigable survivor as mother of six children.

Featuring on the two-dollar note of the past, John is credited with establishing the Australian wool industry. During her 83 years, the more practical Elizabeth managed their holdings while dealing with the results of her husband's manias including duels, quarrels, court cases, a military coup, long absences overseas, grandiose construction projects and, finally, his descent into certified insanity.

The triptych includes portraits of both Elizabeth and John, references to early colonial artists Richard Browne, Joseph Lycett and 19th-century natural history illustrators Harriet and Helena Scott. Symbols include the venomous brown snake, a distorted pigeon with its traditional link to love, zipping smiling lips and museum tagged folded and bound letters. Less sane images of the human eye, a full moon and other flora and fauna unique to the new colony hint at the strange, and what must have been often seen as bizarre, new reality faced by a remarkable woman.



Baroque Crash

2024

concertina book - coloured pencil on rag paper varnished

21 x 112cm

\$2,250

The Baroque world was one which found spiritual and physical life in light. Moving from the darkness of the mediaeval world to enlightenment, science and reflections on Renaissance ideals were realised in developments of precincts such as the Palace of Versailles and Bernini's contributions to St Peter's in Rome.

This is a small meditation on that notion.





Still trying to fly

2016 - 2025

coloured pencil on rag paper, hand varnished

21 panels each 21 x 14.8 cm

overall image dimensions: 65 x 105cm

\$4,000

The youthful notion that freedom and flying are synonymous seems to lose its appeal as we age as crashing becomes more likely. We seek change in ourselves rather than in our surroundings and become grounded by necessity, with the occasional desire to burst free.



Murky Depths

2015 - 2023

coloured pencil, watercolour pencil and ink on Fabriano paper, hand varnished

126 panels each 14.8 x 21 cm

overall image dimensions: 104 x 3780 cm

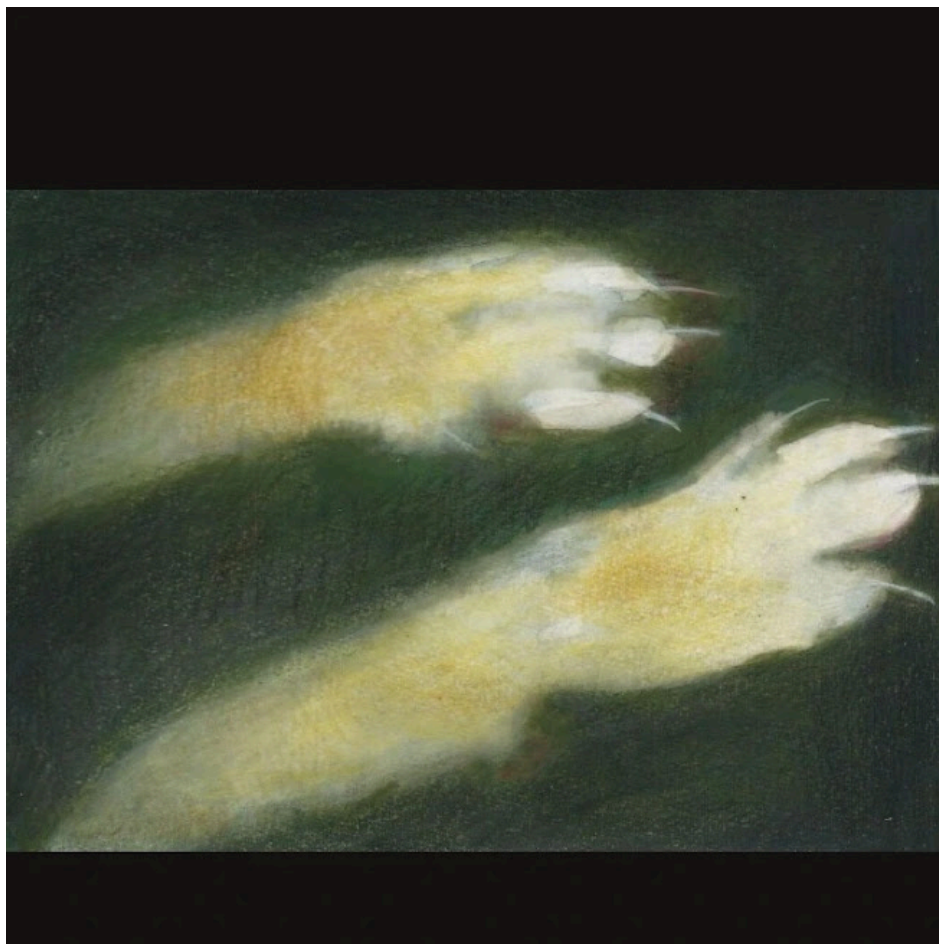
\$15,500

Murky Depths is a reflection on some of life's emotional twists and turns that we all seem to be faced with.

Comprised of 126 hand drawn panels which interconnect as a whole, the work in its entirety is physically nearly four meters long, allowing the gallery visitor to move past and through an underwater intrigue.

Float over the surface of this river and be enticed into its green depths to be drawn into the entanglements.

Each of the panels have a larger projection, rotating in a different sequence, so that the viewer can transition between the two media versions of details that can tap into and release unexpected memories and experiences.



Murky depths (detail 1)



Murky depths (detail 2)



Circling

2024

concertina book - coloured pencil on rag paper varnished

210 x 178cm

\$3,500 framed

This is my first attempt at a concertina book. Because the paper is cold pressed, it was extremely difficult to work on (I normally use hot pressed papers of at least 300gsm). I also worked on the image as a whole, much as the single panelled works in the exhibition. This changed as is the type of paper I work on in the books, so a tumble of images are connected on different panels on each page - much as the multi panelled works are developed, allowing for a less predictable outcome.



Video by John Cliff Murky Depths and Other Places - 3:21

Our Bit

2018 -2025

coloured pencil on rag paper, hand varnished

15 panels each 21 x 14.8 cm

overall image dimensions: 106 x 46 cm

\$3,000

These three multi panelled works are extensions of the Whispering Pillars suite of works but clearly move away from the staged fixed view to a more fractured stacking of associations and memory triggers. They acknowledge different events through associated objects.



Floating

2018 -2025

coloured pencil and ink on Fabriano paper, hand varnished

15 panels each 21 x 14.8 cm

overall image dimensions: 106 x 46 cm

\$3,000





Comings and Goings

2018 - 2025

coloured pencil on rag paper, hand varnished

15 panels each 21 x 14.8 cm

overall image dimensions: 106 x 46 cm

\$3,000

Letting Go 1

2016 - 2025

coloured pencil on rag paper, hand varnished
30 panels each 21 x 14.8 cm
overall image dimensions: 107 x 90cm

\$5,000

These two panels are considerations
of what happens after breathing in,
then out.....let go if you can, by all
means. We can only keep trying.





Letting Go 2

2016 - 2025

coloured pencil on rag paper, hand varnished

30 panels each 21 x 14.8 cm

overall image dimensions: 107 x 90cm

\$5,000



Staying Afloat

2025

concertina book - coloured pencil on rag
paper varnished

210 x 237cm

\$3,500

From the density of intellectual and
emotional controls to a place of
clarity....ever the struggle that is racing to
survive against new altered realities.



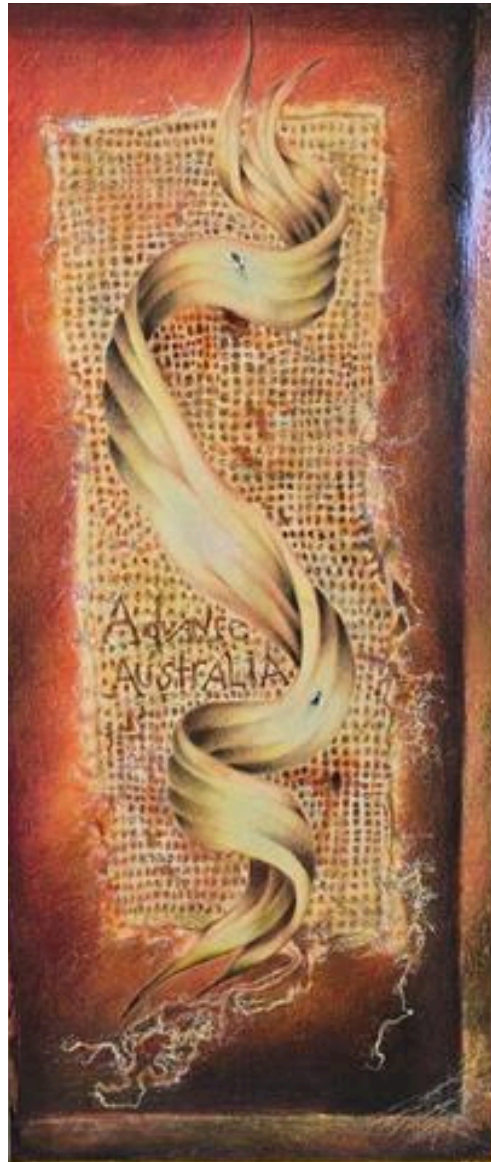
Corridor of Curiosities suite

2016 -2018

coloured pencil and ink on Fabriano paper,
hand varnished

19 panels installation dimensions variable

In these unobtrusive works, narratives are an undefined whisper to explore without the hindrance of lengthy explanatory text. Unspoken places are hinted at - questions are asked rather than answers given.



Corridor of Curiosities Suite \$320 Each

Corridor of Curiosities Suite

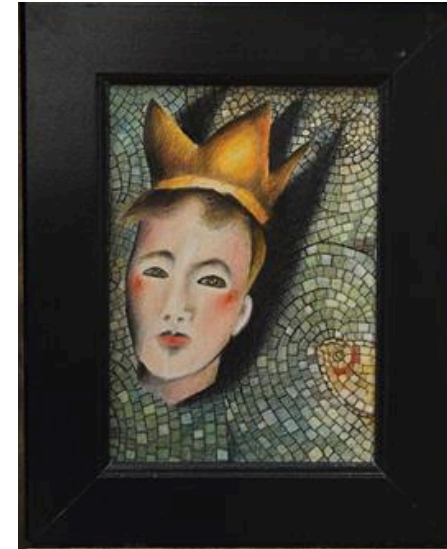
\$280



\$180



\$280



\$250



\$150



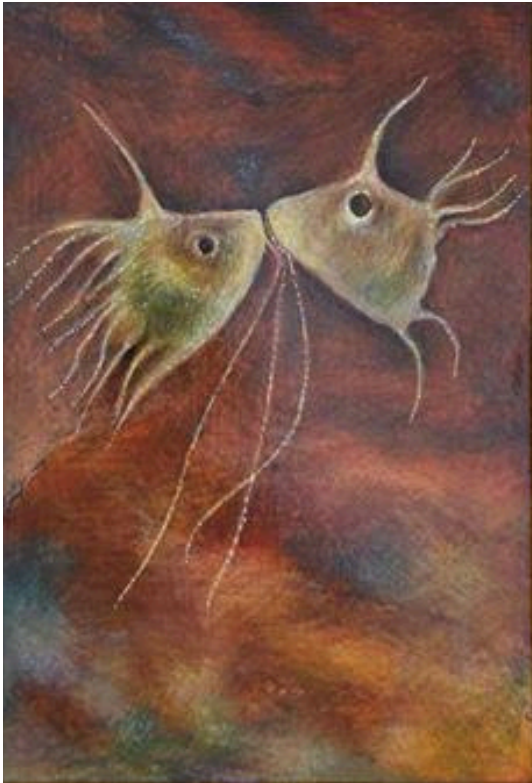
\$320



\$150



Corridor of Curiosities Suite



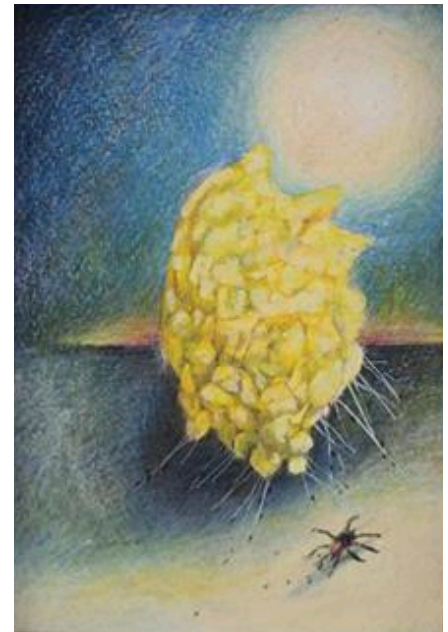
\$280



\$280



\$180



\$180

Corridor of Curiosities Suite



\$320

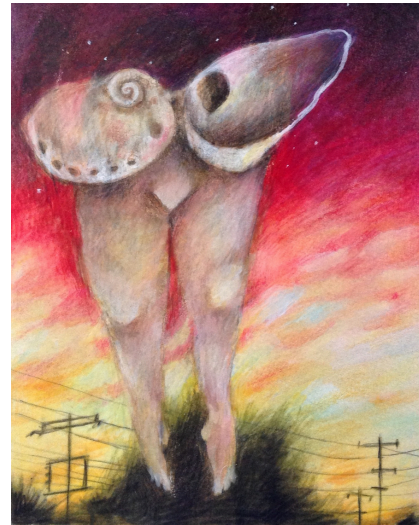


\$120

\$450



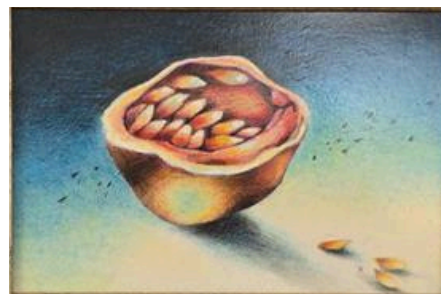
\$250



\$180



\$120



Corridor of Curiosities Suite

As you died

2024 - 5

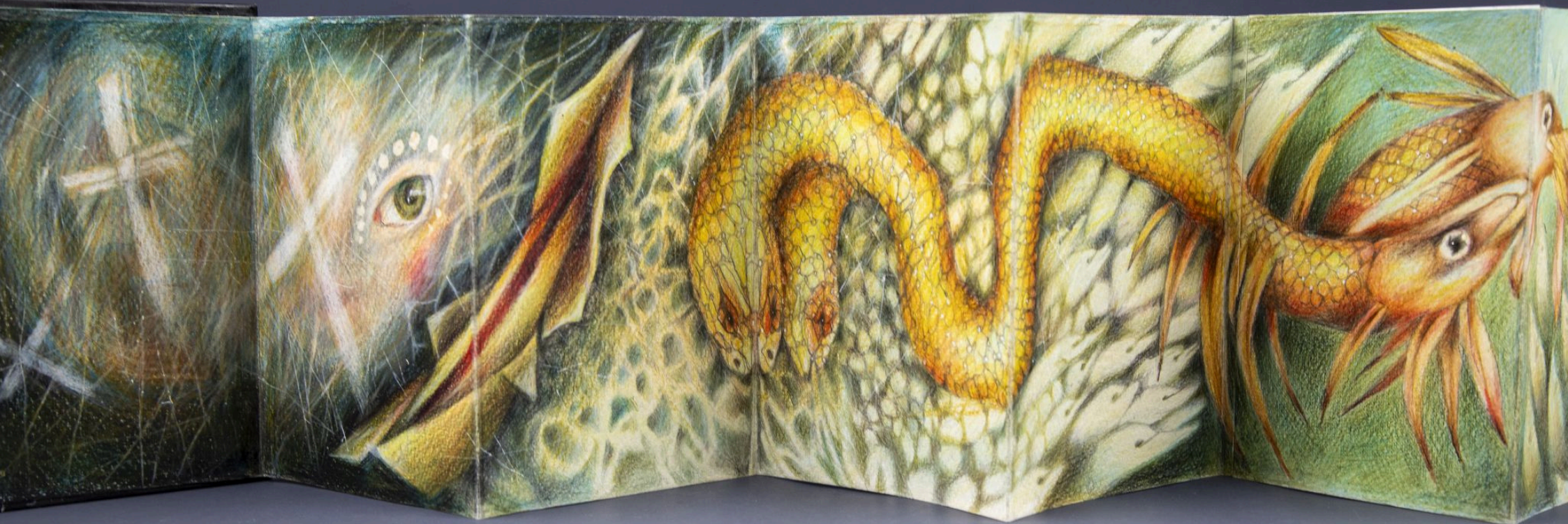
concertina book - coloured pencil on rag paper varnished

17 x 252cm

\$3,500

Grief is an unravelling, a space where something once lived but is now gone. It carves through you, bringing a flood of intricate memories.

This specific work was made over a period of time being with my Mother, Beryl (Betty) Ryman as she approached the end of her life. Her final breath was so gentle after so much pain. She passed from us in the late morning of 7 May, 2024.





Looking suite

2016 -2018

coloured pencil and ink on Fabriano
paper, hand varnished
12 panels installation dimensions
variable

Uncomfortable and unlikely 'the gaze' is
everywhere. People, artwork,
publications, screens....

Who is the voyer?

\$320



\$250



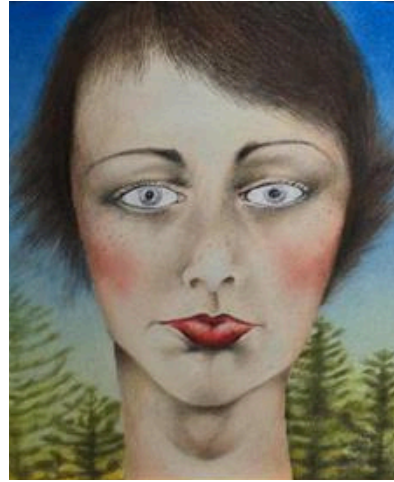
Looking Suite (details)

Looking Suite (details)

\$250



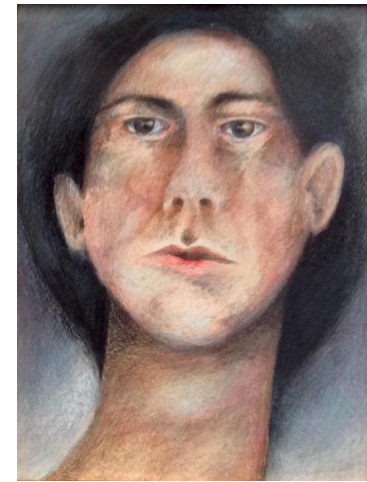
\$450



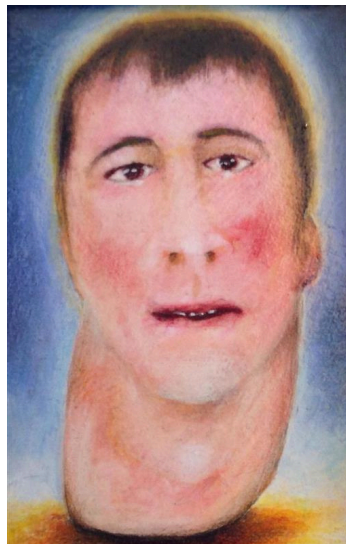
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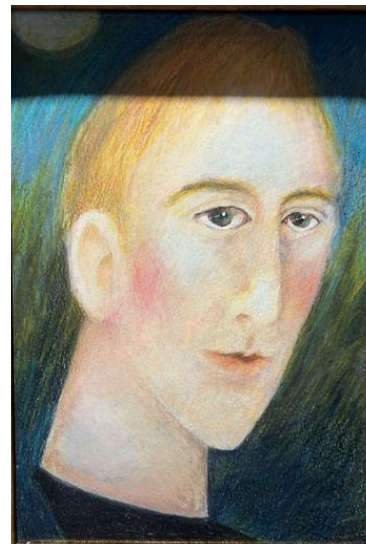
\$280



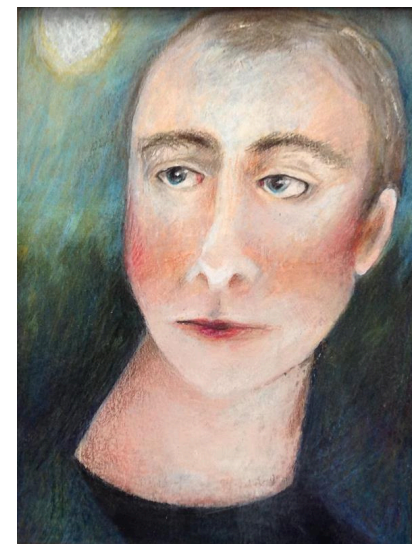
\$280



\$280



\$320



\$320

Looking Suite (details)

\$320



\$320



video by John Cliff shining a light on the darkness
13:47