



Janis Lander

CROW CALL IN THE MORNING HUSH





## FOREWORD

Not long after the first fleet sailed into Sydney harbour in 1788 one core theme of profound disappointment germinated in almost all of the pages of the settlers' diaries. This eventually coalesced into the narratives of our art and literature, expressing the harsh reality of life and learning how to survive in an alien environment, while contemplating 'isolation, entrapment and a fear of the unknown'. Have those concerns really changed? Today more than 85 percent of Australians continue to live within 50 kilometres of the coast, on a thin strip amounting to 3 percent of the landmass of the country. This familiar reassuring ribbon provides a soothing psychological against the harsh interior of the vast continent, a region scientists classify as the Arid Zone.

Janis Lander was enrolled as a PhD Candidate at the New South Wales University in 2003 during my first printmaking class at that institution. I was impressed by Janis' obvious intelligence, the ideas and experiences that were informing her practice and in painting and drawing. For two years her curiosity to learn about expanding her practise she immersed in the complex medium of etching, a way of artmaking requiring very different working routines to her subject of choice - painting. Portraiture seemed to be her preferred approach as many of the etchings featured friends and family. This perception was reinforced when asked, along with my partner the jazz singer Nicky Crayson, to sit for portraits to be entered into popular national competitions like the Archibald prize.

Witnessing Janis' method first hand was interesting. She started with a series of drawings, a useful approach to observe and think about the subject at hand. Part way through this drawing process there was a moment of recognition, a realisation that she had found what she was looking for and that was enough. She commenced work in the privacy of her studio. It was almost as if she needed to both think through, as well as feel for, a potential solution in the search that is presented by the challenge of these creative ventures.

To define her as a portrait painter was a mistake as her practice is much broader. The paintings in this current exhibition reflect an ongoing interest in landscape painting. The subject in this instance is about a long relationship that commenced in 2006, on a site first introduced to her by the celebrated landscape painter Idris Murphy. One of the gems of UNSW is Fowlers Gap Arid Zone Research Station, a teaching and research facility located about 112 kilometres north of Broken Hill. It occupies an area of about 38,000 hectares and has been used by scientists from universities and government organisations around Australia, in fields ranging from zoology to agriculture, palaeontology and environmental science.

Staff at UNSW have been taking art students on field trips to conduct their own research using purpose-built studios, providing a unique opportunity to study the outback and unlock its mysteries from the inside-out. The station is a base for understanding the physical and ecological processes that define the arid zone, and the behaviour and evolution of the organisms that call it home. Over 70 percent of Australia falls within the arid zone, which, due to its harshness, remains less than well understood. And this cannot be more evident when city-based art students first arrive, for the initial reaction, an echo of the familiar disappointment, is often “there is nothing here”. It takes time and experience to unlock the majesty of this remarkably distinct environment. Learning how to look is an important lesson for artists and lander’s trusted strategy of making preliminary drawings is the perfect way to get acquainted with unfamiliar territory.

Lander has spent considerable time coming to terms with what this environment has to offer. This has involved walking, watching, and working at all times of the day and into the night. When given the privilege, the evidence is in her sketch books, which are laden with frenetic drawing, recording a fleeting moment. How the light ebbs and flows and the colour shifts and shimmers. The feel of how the heat sears. How the wind shears. And the cold cuts.

The fear of the unknown is a relevant issue in places as isolated as Fowlers Gap. While you might bring with you the baggage of a busy hectic life, the experience of being there can slow you down and reveal a state of existence at its rawest. The reality of its remoteness can be frightening because even the slightest wrong decision can have serious consequences. It is a place that you must respect, and you need your wits about you.

In the same instance, and maybe because of the inherent danger, Fowlers Gap can be enthralling. It is a place where you feel exhilarated and humbled at the same time. Lander knows and loves this country and each work captures a sensation, without being analytical or overly descriptive, the experience of which however she can recount in detail. How the permanent fixtures that offer sanctuary from the weather sit on the site in Outback Studio. The blush of wildflowers in After Rain. The incision into the land of the parched watercourses in Dry River Bed. The skeletal scaffolding of the eucalypts with Ancient Land. The calling of the day and the ascension of new light in Sunset Looking South East and Early Morning 1 and 2. The chill of the night in Moonrise Arid Country. And a particular favourite Morning Hush, which, in depicting the lay of the land, masterfully balances the rhythms and angles of the trees as they search for light with the soft shifting vermilion hues of the earth.

As an authority on matters spiritual, Lander has an affinity with belief systems and how they pertain to country. In her artist's statement she acknowledges and pays respect to the First Nations people of the region. Janis is in a position, with all the practical lived experience and intellectual knowledge she possesses, to comprehend and appreciate the depth and significance of the relationship the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders of our country have with this land. It is a connection, like that of their culture, that reflects the oldest continuous civilisation in the known world. Janis' exhibition, in part, pays homage to this relationship, and her extensive and faceted practice reflects her genuine interest in people and place, her boundless energy and her responsive and generous spirit.

**Michael Kempson**

Retired Academic

Master Printer



**Janis Lander**

CROW CALL IN THE  
MORNING HUSH

8 - 22 APRIL 2023



12 Daniel Street  
Botany NSW 2019  
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Fowlers Gap is located on Gondwana land, the oldest part of the early formation of Earth, in the central part of Australia, 1 ½ hours north from Broken Hill. It is humming with subtle energies, made perceptible by the arid desert atmosphere. At night there is no pollution to block the blazing stars of the Milky Way or distant galaxies. The weight of 80,000 years of Indigenous footprints has been etched into the ochres, leaving a tangible presence. You are noticed.

Fowlers Gap is a UNSW Research Station, a destination for science students researching kangaroos, rocks, birds, and native fauna and flora. There are a few university buildings, and the property functions as a working sheep and goat station. Upon arriving I always performed a small ritual to the guardians—asking permission and giving thanks. I did the same upon leaving. I was respectful and in turn I felt welcomed. It is a profoundly spiritual place.

I made the trip to every winter from 2006-2018—to write and meditate and make art. I took long walks, stopping frequently to make alla prima studies of the property —mostly along the dry riverbeds decorated with serpentine formations of ghost gums, lustrous rocks, and fallen vegetation in every shade of green glowing against the red ochres. I climbed the low Ranges snaking around the property to draw the flattened perspective. I walked at all times of the day—offered spectacular opportunities to create fresh impressions just by turning my stool 180 degrees.

The daytime weather is unpredictable, and I often wore 3 hats at once when trekking the property— comical but practical—a baseball cap to keep the midday sun out of my eyes, topped by a Russian squirrel trapper hat against the bitter wind blowing from snowy mountains to cut through the heat, and a fly net covering my head to keep the fly swarms out of my eyes when the wind drops.

My hope is that viewers will become immersed in these paintings and get an idea what it's like to ramble this beautiful place, to feel the rocky terrain underfoot, the changing weather conditions, the time of day, the shifting light, the land formations—and to feel the exhilaration that I feel when I am out there.





Sunset Looking South East

Oil on Canvas  
41x51cm





**Dry River Bed 1**  
Oil on Canvas  
61x45cm





**Encounter**  
Oil on Canvas  
46x51cm





**Red Earth**  
Oil on Canvas  
46x60cm





Ranges  
Oil on Canvas  
62x45cm



**Outback Studio**  
Oil on Canvas  
46x61cm





**Leopardtree Ridge**

Oil on Canvas

61x45cm





**Dry River Bed 2**

Oil on Canvas

76x39cm





**Climbing Rocks**  
Oil on Canvas  
46x56cm





**Ancient Land**

Oil on Canvas

46x56cm





**After Rain**  
Oil on Canvas  
90x75cm





**Late Afternoon Walk**

Oil on Canvas

61x92cm





Evening Star  
Oil on Canvas  
61x38cm





**Early Morning 1**  
Oil on Canvas  
46x56cm





**Early Morning 2**

Oil on Canvas  
45x61cm





Fowlers Gap Research Station  
Oil on Canvas  
48x96cm



**Morning Hush**  
Oil on Canvas  
75x107cm





Cloud Form  
Oil on Canvas  
106x91cm





**Scorched Earth**  
Oil on Canvas  
46x61cm





**Moonrise Arid Country**

Oil on Canvas

93x123cm





Sunset Looking East

Oil on Canvas

46x56cm





Afternoon Walk Fowlers Gap  
Oil on Canvas  
122x122cm





**Drought**  
Oil on Canvas  
70x90cm

## CURRICULUM VITAE

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## EDUCATION

2012 – Doctor of Philosophy in Art Education,  
College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales

2002 – Master of Art & Design Education, College of Fine  
Arts, University of New South Wales

1990 – Diploma of Painting, Julian Ashton Art School

1972 – Bachelor of Arts, Sydney University

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2023 —Crow Call in the Morning Hush, Art Atrium,  
Botany, Sydney.

2006 – Time Out, Aquarelle Gallery, Crows Nest, Sydney.

1995 – Life Studies, Eaglehawk Gallery, York St, Sydney.

1992 – Tree Pieces, The Wall Gallery, Paddington, Sydney.

1991 – Conversation Among The Gods, Opera Walk, The  
Rocks, Sydney.

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

### 2022

'Summer Sojourn' – Art Atrium, Botany, Sydney.  
Semi-Finalist, Doug Moran National Portrait Prize

### 2021

Summer Show, Project Gallery 90, 90 Oxford St. Sydney

### 2018

Semi-Finalist, Doug Moran National Portrait Prize  
'Summer Sojourn' – Art Atrium, Surrey Hills, Sydney.

### 2017

Finalist, Archibald Salon de Refuses, SH Ervin  
Finalist, Doug Moran National Portrait Prize

### 2016

Finalist, Black Swan Portrait Prize, Perth WA.  
'Summer Sojourn – Art Atrium, Bondi Junction, Sydney.

### 2015

Semi-finalist – Doug Moran National Portrait Prize.  
Sydney.

Group Exhibition - Project [505], Pacific Highway, St  
Leonards, Sydney.

### 2014

Finalist, Portia Geach Memorial Award-S.H. Ervin Gallery  
Sydney.

PAA Group Exhibition - The Embassy of Australia,  
Washington DC

'Australians at Work' – Victorian Art Society Galleries,  
Melbourne.

'Art x 2k' – Art Atrium, Bondi Junction, Sydney.

### 2013

'Multicultural Australia' — NSW Parliament House,  
Sydney.



**2012**

“Celebrating Innovators” — Federal Parliament House, Canberra

Exhibition of Selected works from The Artists' Book - Portrait Artists Australia Ten Years, The Arthouse Hotel, Sydney.

**2011**

Group Exhibition, NSW Parliament House, Sydney.

PAA Group Exhibition – ‘All the World’s a Stage’ Victorian Art Society Galleries, Melbourne.

**2010**

‘Face Off!’ – Group Exhibition, MLC Gallery, Sydney.

‘The Artist’s Muse’ - The ArtHouse Hotel, Pitt St Sydney

**2009**

Finalist, The Broken Hill Outback Art Prize – Broken Hill Regional Gallery, NSW.

‘Unsung Heroes’ – Federal Parliament House, Canberra.

**2008**

Finalist, Plein Air Parliamentary Prize – NSW Parliament House, Sydney.

Group Exhibition – ArtHouse Hotel, Sydney.

Works on Paper – Marianne Newman Gallery, Sydney.

**2007**

Finalist, The Doug Moran National Portrait Prize – State Library Sydney.

Group Exhibition- NSW Parliament House, Sydney.

**2006**

Finalist, Portia Geach Memorial Award – S.H. Ervin Gallery Sydney.

PAA Group Exhibition – ‘Court Faces’ NSW Supreme Court Building, Sydney.

Fowlers Gap Field Trip Exhibition – College of Fine Arts Exhibition Space.

Mixed Exhibition: Sarah Roney Gallery, Sydney

Works on Paper: Marianne Newman Gallery, Sydney.

‘Icons & Idols’ – ArtHouse Hotel, Sydney.

**2005**

The Thai-Australian Contemporary Printmaking, Chiangmai University, Thailand

Exhibition of Printmaking, College of Fine Arts, UNSW. Macquarie International Portrait Artists Australia

Exhibition, Embassy of Australia, Washington D.C. USA.

PAA Group Exhibition – ‘Fur and Feathers’ ArtHouse Hotel, Sydney.

**2004**

Group Exhibition – ArtHouse Hotel, Sydney.

**2003**

Printmaking Exhibition, College of Fine Arts, Sydney. PAA Group Artists— ‘Artists by Artists’ – ArtHouse Hotel, Sydney.

**2002**

‘The Body’ – College of Fine Arts, UNSW.

**2000**

The Bay Landscapes – Rushcutters Bay Gallery, Sydney.

**1998**

Mixed Exhibition, Style Galleries, Sydney

**1997**

Mixed Exhibition, Duke of Wellington Gallery, Mosman  
Mixed Exhibition, Art Link, Sydney.  
Mixed Exhibition, Double Bay Galleries, Sydney.

**1995**

Sydney University Performance Space.

**1990**

Centenary Exhibition, JAAS. S.H.Ervin Gallery, Sydney.  
Graduating Exhibition, Julian Ashton Art School, Sydney.

**1987**

Finalist, The Woollahra Prize Exhibition, Holdsworth Galleries, Woollahra, Sydney

## **PUBLICATIONS**

2020 – Art and Philosophy of the Spirit, Atropos Press, ISBN 978-1-940813-33-2

2013 – USA – 2014 UK – Spiritual Art and Art Education, part of Routledge Advances in Art and Visual Studies Series, Routledge Taylor/Francis Group ISBN 978-0-71262-0

2012 – A Discursive Study of Art and Education in Contemporary Spiritual Systems, Doctoral Thesis, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales

2012—The Artists' Book: Portrait Artists Australia – Ten Years ISBN 978-0-646-57130-0 CIP No 704 9420994 - Contributing Editor

2003 – 2012 – Contributing Editor: The College Voice, online Art Journal, College of Fine Arts, ARC, University of New South Wales (Interviews and articles)

2007 – “Introducing Papunya Tjupi” Imprint, Volume 42, Number 3 pp. 24-25 (Article)

1995 – Spiritual Art —Clairvision School of Meditation

## **ACADEMIC CONFERENCES**

2017 – Notre Dame University, Conference,

2015 – ACU Conference, Australian Catholic University, Sydney

2014 – NAEA Conference, San Diego, USA

2011- NIEA Conference, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales

2007 – ILIRI Symposium, Fowlers Gap Research Station, University of New South Wales

2006 – Colloquium – Departmental Seminar, Sydney University

2013—2019 — Art and Philosophy of the Spirit Sydney University

## **TEACHING**

2013—2019 — Art and Philosophy of the Spirit, Sessional Lecturer, CCE, Sydney University

## **PROJECTS**

2002 – 2014 Committee: Portrait Artists Australia. President 2008-2014

2008 –2021 Woollahra Council Public Art Advisory Committee.

2006 - 2007 - Member of ILIRI: Imaging the land International Research Institute, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales

## **PUBLIC COLLECTIONS**

Prince of Wales Hospital  
Nelson Meers Collection  
Kincoppal Rose Bay Library  
Westmead Children's Hospital

## **GRANTS**

2008 - UNSW ARC/GAS Grant

2007 - UNSW Post Graduate Research Support Scheme

2007 – UNSW ARC/GAS Grant

2005 - COFA SA Post Graduate Award

## **RESIDENCIES**

2008-2012 –UNSW Research Station, via broken Hill, NSW.



## JANIS LANDER — ARTIST AND AUTHOR

Janis Lander is a figurative artist and has been exhibiting and selling her work since her early teens. In the youth section of regional exhibitions like the Royal Easter Show. Her family and her school friends acted as her models. At fifteen she was the youngest student of the Bakery Art School in Paddington, run by John Olsen, where she was introduced to the principles of abstract figuration through the philosophy of the Tao. Her Major Work was featured in the Sydney Morning Herald coverage of Art Express in 1968.

The next four years were spent at Sydney University and painting took a back seat. Lander graduated with a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in English Literature and minoring in Art History and Theory. During that period the Power Institute was established on campus with Donald Brooke, Bernard Smith, Terry Smith, and Virginia Spate researching and lecturing. The Power Research Library (now the John Schaffer Fine Arts Library) and the Tin Sheds Gallery (run by Guy Warren) were inaugurated. With the advent of Two Decades of American Painting showing at the AGNSW and NGV in 1968 the stage was set for Australian artists to explore the many faces of Modernism—Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art, Op Art, Colour Field Painting, and Action Painting. For emerging artists it was an intoxicating time.

While Lander's work has always reflected what is going on in her life from decade to decade, there are ongoing themes and concepts. In the 1990s while Lander was studying Meditation practices with Samuel Sagan, she produced images of energy flows in the subtle bodies, which were featured in a video for the Clairvision School. These experiences became the basis of her 2012 Doctoral dissertation—A Discursive Study of Art and Education in Contemporary Spiritual Systems, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales. After graduation Lander taught a sessional class at Sydney University CCE for seven years, which became her book *Art and Philosophy of the Spirit*.

Landscape has been a recurrent subject, changing according to where she was living—coastal landscapes in the sixties; Californian beach scenes in the seventies; Sydney harbour scenes in the nineties; and from 2006 onwards, the Outback. She has made annual artists' trips to the arid zone in far western New South Wales and works from these trips have been hung in the Plein Air Parliamentary Prize in NSW Parliament House Sydney, and the Broken Hill Regional Art Prize. Her solo exhibition in 2006 showed Outback works in pastels, charcoals, oil paintings and etchings from the arid zone; she has created a series of portraits of the other artists who work in that part of the world, which have hung in group exhibitions in Federal Parliament House, Canberra, and NSW Parliament House, Sydney, as part of the national organisation Portrait Artists Australia. Other portraits have hung in in the Archibald Salon, the Portia Geach Memorial Award, the Doug Moran National Portrait Prize, The Black Swan Prize, and in the Australian Embassy in Washington D.C.

Lander works primarily in oil on canvas or linen, and she has produced a large body of work on paper, in pastel and charcoal, and in intaglio etching. Her landscapes and her portraits have hung in selected exhibitions in Australia and travelled overseas. Her art is represented in collections in Australia and overseas, including Germany, France, and the U.S.A. on themes around portraits, meditation practices, and landscapes.









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