

LEA KANNAR-  
LICHTENBERGER

COLLIDING  
WORLDS





LEA KANNAR-  
LICHTENBERGER

COLLIDING  
WORLDS

Curated by Lisa Sharkey

**Hazelhurst**  
REGIONAL GALLERY & ARTS CENTRE





## EVOLUTION: PLUS AND MINUS

Suzanne Anker

### *Adhesive force*

Common Dandelion seed parachute  
frond stained blue under compound  
microscope  
Pigment print on metallic photo paper  
90 x 70 cm

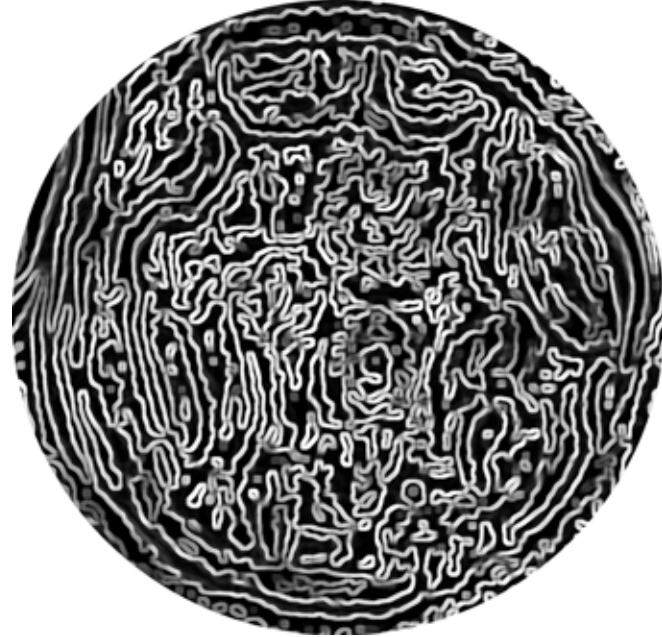
The Anthropocene is upon us, causing extreme distress to our planet and its inhabitants. Some of our most stunning animal species are being destroyed: the glorious felines, the majestic hippo, to cite a few. We are also being overwhelmed by numerous invasive species, which have been reproducing with local ones and chemical contaminants to produce super weeds. Against all reason, this careless destruction of animal and plant habitats continues as an economic practice whereby deforestation ruins the landscape and destroys its living soil. Genetically modified fish infiltrate our rivers and have produced salmon twice as large as their “wild type” others.

On the other hand, however, every day new species are being discovered. Some don’t even rely on sunlight or oxygen. Some are found underwater, in thermal vents. Several of the deep-sea creatures are quite glorious to look at as German filmmaker Werner Herzog has captured in real time. There have been a number of discoveries of new species recently and there have been extinctions before, but we are still here. As a species, we are developing novel

ways to help combat our problems. Plants are beginning to be grown indoors, which do not require poisonous pesticides. Hydroponic roof gardens have become part of urban farming. In some cases, even seeds are not required to produce vegetation while bacteria are being genetically engineered to clean up toxic waste.

If what is going on in laboratories as I have described as ‘*inspiring, dangerous, but inspiring,*’ can scientists diminish the effects of the Anthropocene? Ecologists and environmentalists are focusing on significant research in our wetlands as well as the giant continent of Antarctica. As far as the biological sciences are concerned, many new “products” are being produced: individualized pharmaceuticals, health care devices and sensors, and food applications to name a few. For molecular biologists, the cell has taken centre stage, a key player in synthetic biology where cellular parts are rearranged.

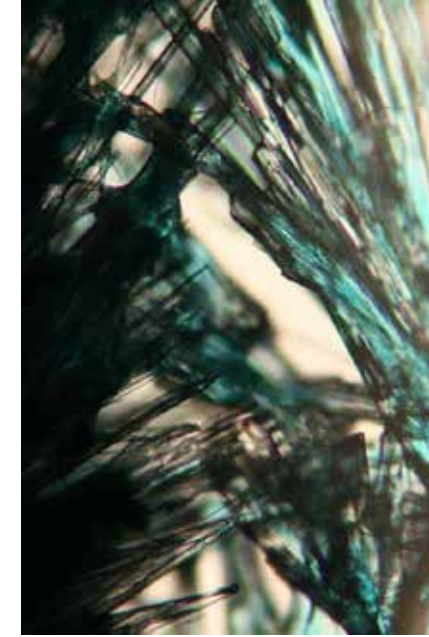
The School of Visual Arts’ state-of-the-art Bio Art Lab in New York City was created to explore novel examples of visualizing the intersection of the arts and biological sciences.



*Transmutation I*  
Transformed Tree Dandelion Cell  
Pigment print  
59 x 59 cm



*Transmutation III*  
Tree Dandelion Cell with Human DNA  
Pigment print on metallic photo paper  
59 x 59 cm



*Shifting Perspectives – Life*  
from *Shifting Perspective* series

Here we use the tools of science to make art. The visual arts, along with film, literature, dance and theatre are playing the role of the cultural conduit between the advances in science and technology and the society at large. Tapping into what one can call the cultural imaginary, these art forms address society's fears and hopes concerning alteration of life and its forms.

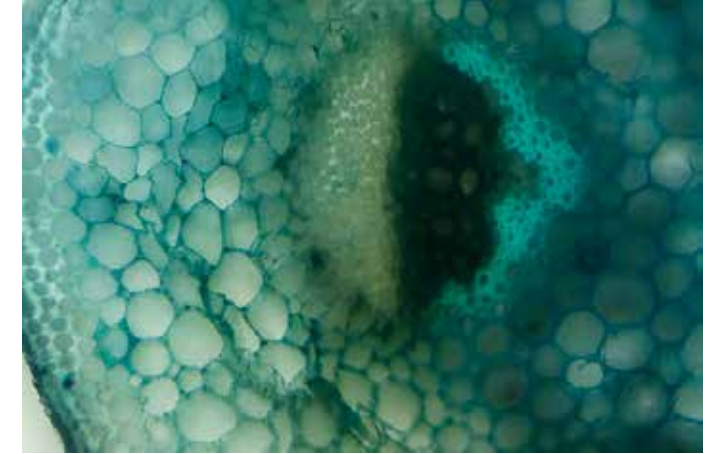
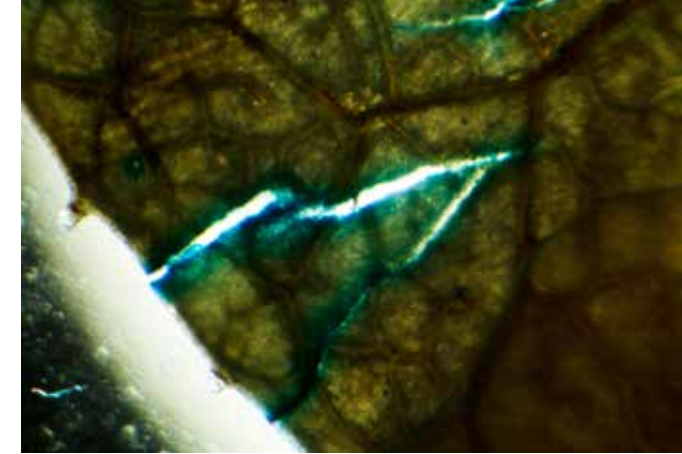
Lea Kannar, who was part of our Bio Art Residency, knows all too well, what we as a planet are up against. Her work continues to explore concepts in evolution through visual art practice, bring to pictorial delight the complexities of the natural world. Working in the tradition of Bio Art, Lea's output in the realm of microscopic photography results in large-scale prints of minute matter. Her reversal of scale is an optimistic point, perhaps letting the viewer know all is not lost. In her work, what is not seen by a naked eye is projected as an inner world, which grants us access to our own imagination.

Her portraits of cells and crystals reference our sense of origins, our primeval home from which we all

evolved. In viewing these portraits of wonder, one is taken away by nature's mysterious awe and complicated architecture. Adaptation is a mechanism that functions as an external device to an organism. If Darwin were alive today, I wonder what he would have to say about this "golden age" of biology, which carries along with it, a morphing twin of global warning? I think he would be very anxious about the disregard for nature, but at the same time intrigued by what was going on in the laboratories: bio-printing, face-transplants, synthetic chromosomes, and robotic surgery. He would be amazed to know that space exploration is underway to grow plant life and microbes in anti-gravitational conditions.

Lea Kannar's work and her investigations into the ways matter matters, is part of an international practice by artists, designers, architects, scientists and philosophers who are trying to frame this era with projects that are an antidote to bleakness. Matter's extraordinary resiliency is something not to forget.





*Death Begins* (left)  
Dandelion Flower  
Pigment print on metallic photo paper  
90 x 70 cm

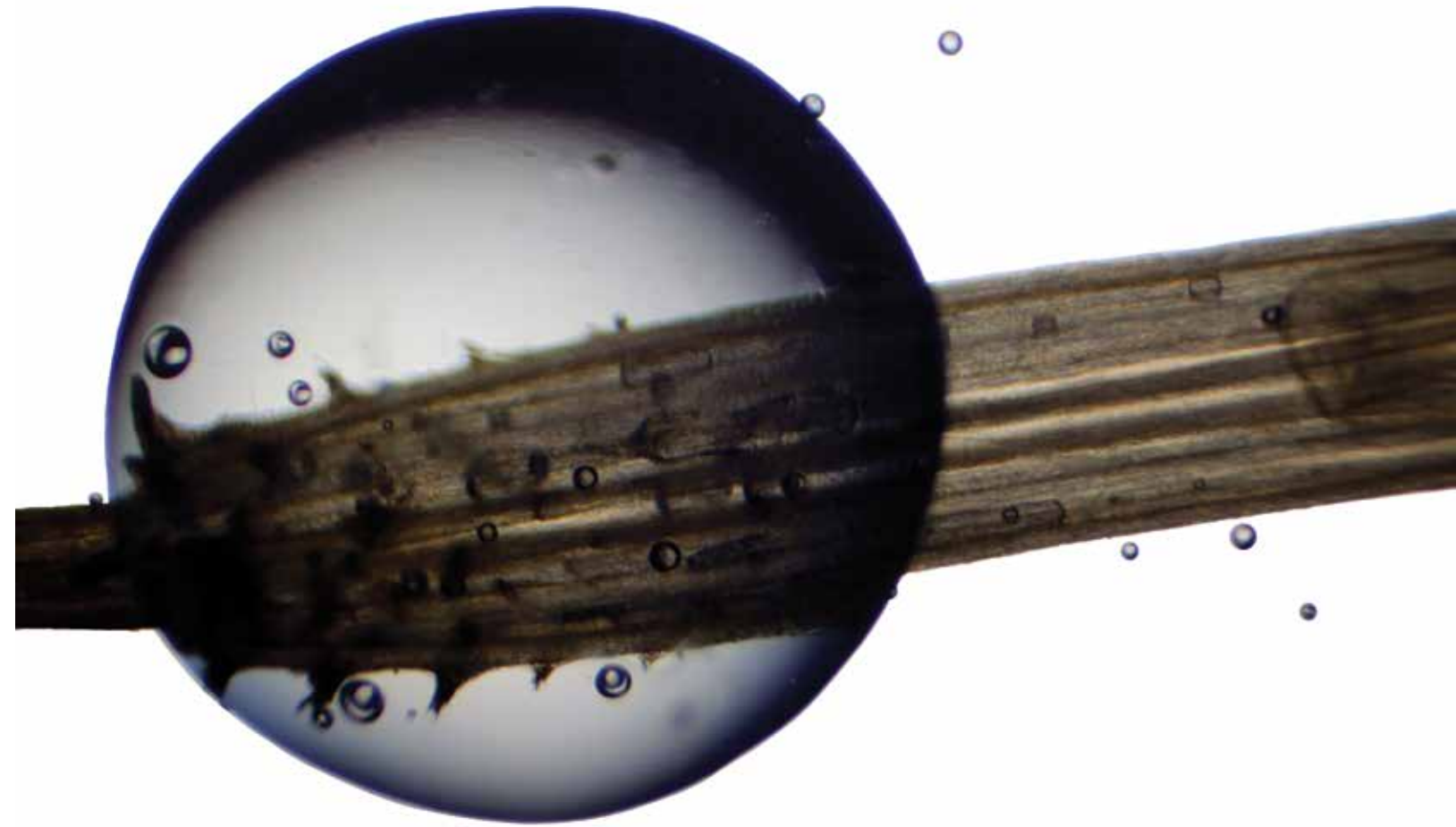
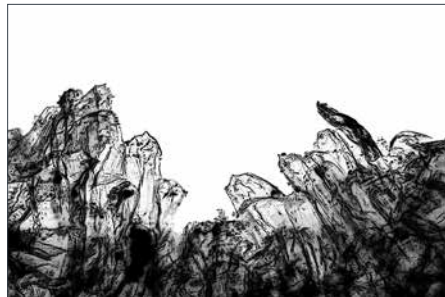
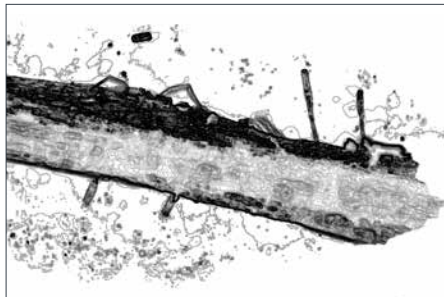
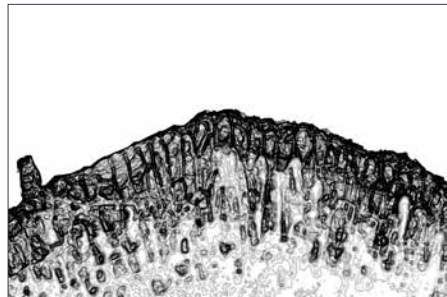
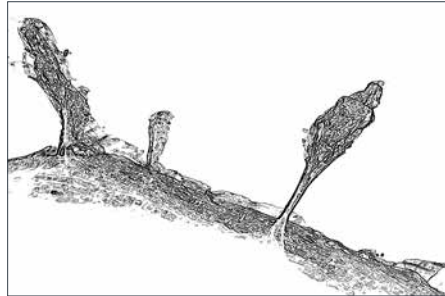
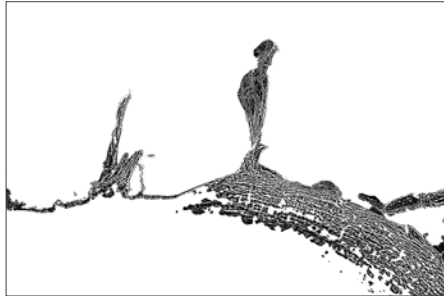
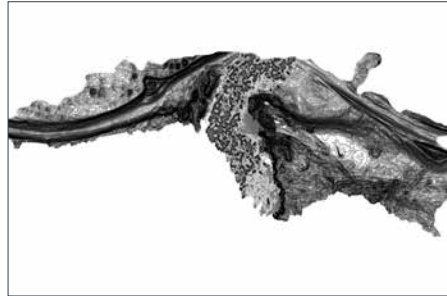
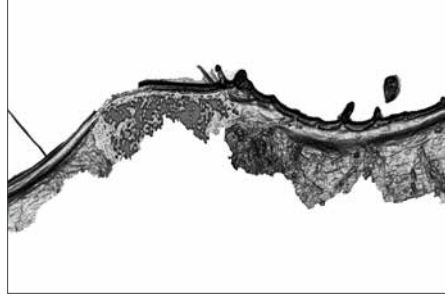
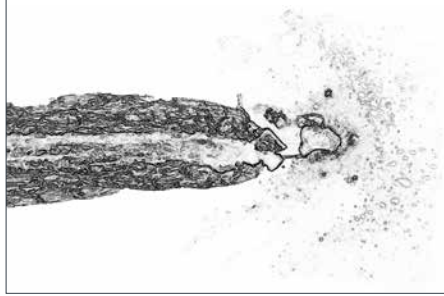
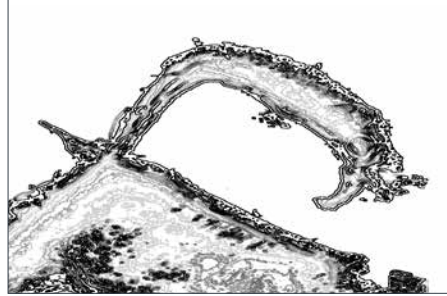
*Fulguration* (above left)  
Tree Dandelion leaf stained blue under  
dissecting microscope  
Pigment print on metallic photo paper  
90 x 70 cm

*Secrets Revealed* (above right)  
Tree Dandelion transverse sectioned stained blue  
droplet under microscope 40x ul  
Pigment print on metallic photo paper  
90 x 70 cm



**Suzanne Anker** is a pioneer in Bio Art working at the intersection of art and the biological sciences. She works in a variety of mediums ranging from digital sculpture and installation to large-scale photography to plants grown by LED lights. Her work has been shown both nationally and internationally, including the JP Getty Museum, the Pera Museum in Istanbul, and the International Biennial of Contemporary Art of Cartagena de Indias, Colombia.

Her books include *The Molecular Gaze: Art in the Genetic Age*, co-authored with the late sociologist Dorothy Nelkin, published in 2004 by Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press, *Visual Culture and Bioscience*, co-published by University of Maryland and the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C. Chairing SVA's Fine Arts Department in NYC since 2005, Ms. Anker continues to interweave traditional and experimental media in her department's new digital initiative and the SVA Bio Art Laboratory.









# ARTIST STATEMENT

These Colliding Worlds are metaphors for the process of evolution in the Anthropocene.

This exhibition of works brings together ideas that explore the impact of humans on nature, and the eternal cycle of life and death. Visually I have chosen the humble Dandelion as a signifier for our future in the monoculture our modern society is creating through deforestation and agricultural practices.

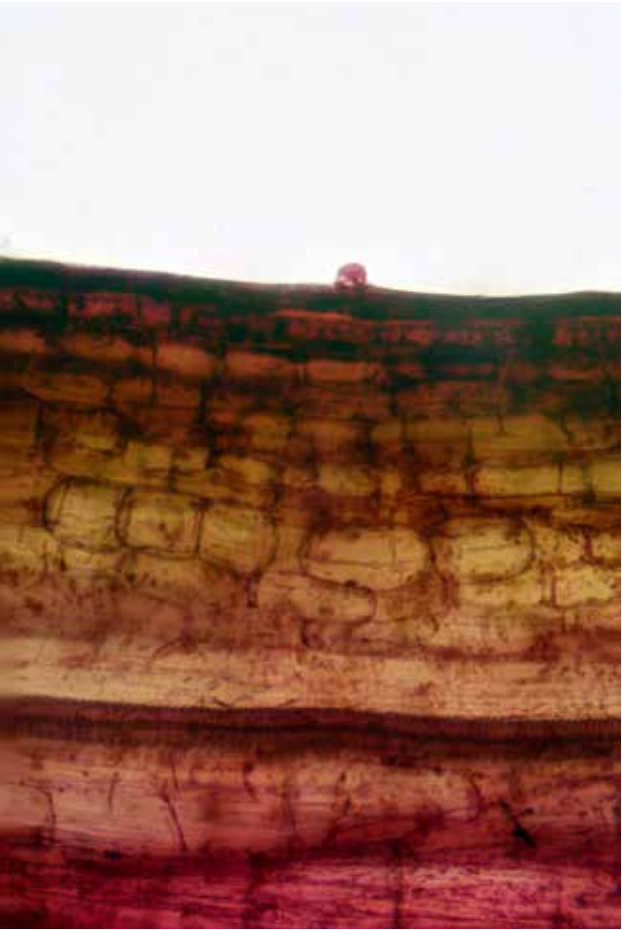
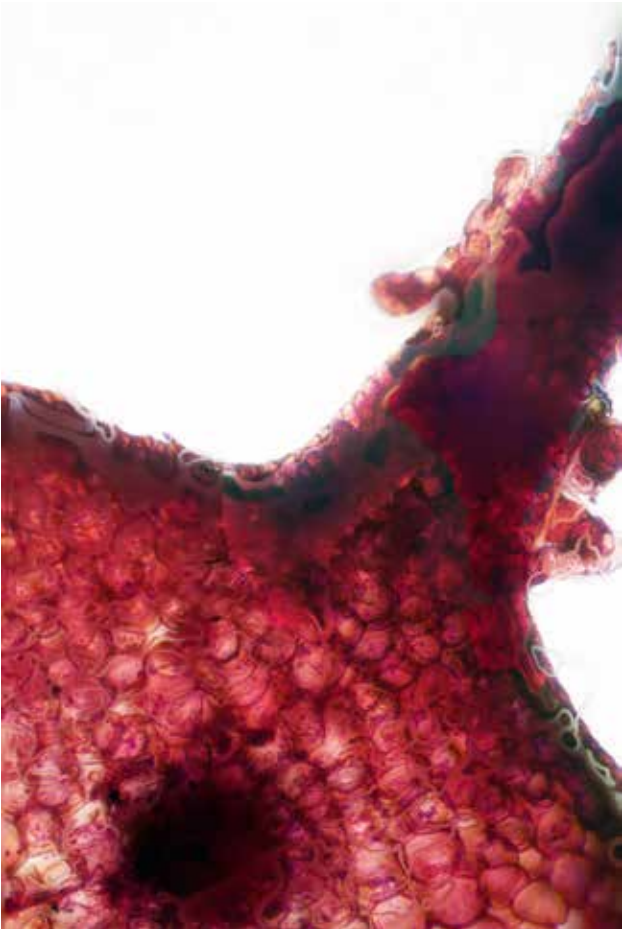
I use images of the Common Dandelion (and Tree Dandelion) in my analysis, with images and installations exploring through art the connections between the effects of human life and science. Known for its food and medicinal uses, the Dandelion is now notorious as a bane for gardeners everywhere. This change of attitude embracing the “modern” outlook stands as an example of death, and potential transformation into the unknown future. This plant is emblematic of our current thinking.

When looking at the Dandelion what enigmas does its evolution hold? In all its guises are we seeing Adaptive Radiation first hand, the future of the Anthropocene ... One possible outcome for a lack of biodiversity ... Maybe!

images (L to R)  
*Glimpse Beyond*  
4 sandblasted glass  
plates, PNG Rosewood  
40 x 25 x 15 cm

*Milieu*  
Weed Dandelion  
longitudinal sectioned  
stained red under  
microscope 40x ul  
Pigment print on metallic  
photo paper 90 x 70 cm

*Complexities Unnoticed*  
Weed Dandelion  
longitudinal sectioned  
stained red under  
microscope 40x ul  
Pigment print of metallic  
photo paper 90 x 70 cm



# CURRICULUM VITÆ

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS INTERNATIONAL

- 2014 *NYABF – MoMA PS1* Long Island – SVA (School of Visual Arts)  
*Things are NOT Cooperating* – SVA (School of Visual Arts) Bio-Art Residency Exh NY
- 2013 *Semi Living* – SVA (School of Visual Arts) Bio-Art Residency Exhibition New York  
*MGC – Manhattan Graphics* Juried Print Exhibition – New York  
*Portrait in Print* – Centre for contemporary Printmaking Norwalk Connecticut USA
- 2012 *Exploring a Medium* Centre for Arts Evergreen Colorado USA  
*Irish Connection* Lorg Printmakers Ireland
- 2008 *Red Cross Summer Exhibition* The Hague (The Netherlands)

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS AUSTRALIA

- 2014 *InkMasters* – Cairns  
*Swan Hill Print & Drawing* – Swan Hill Art Concerning the Environment – Scope Gallery VIC  
*Bending the Truth* – Verge Gallery  
*2088* Mosman Regional Art Gallery NSW  
*Lethbridge Small Scale*  
*Under Pressure* – Gallery Red Glebe NSW
- 2013 *Graduate Exhibition* SCA (Sydney College of the Arts) University of Sydney  
*Verge Art Awards* Verge Gallery  
*SCAP* – Sunshine Coast Art Prize QLD
- 2012 *Kenilworth Art Prize* QLD  
*Wilson Visual Arts Award* NSW  
*Print & Works on Paper* – Swan Hill

- Environment AP* Scope Galleries VIC
- 2011 *30:30 Vision Touring Exhibition*  
*Flannagan Art Prize* – Ballarat VIC
- 2010 *Print & Works on Paper* – Swan Hill  
*Gallery Adagio Group Exhibition* Glebe NSW
- 2009 *'The Studio' Art Sydney 09*  
*30:30 Vision Touring Exhibitions*  
*Waterhouse Natural History Art Prize* SA
- 2008 *Taylor Galleries* NSW  
*Mosman Art Prize*  
*Waverley Art Prize*  
*Adelaide Perry Prize for Drawing*  
*Small Works* Brunswick Gallery VIC

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2013 *Coding the Future* GAFFA Gallery (Clarence St Sydney)
- 2010 *Focus on Print* Invitational exhibition Fitzroy Library VIC
- 2009 *Memories of the Landscape* BSG Brunswick St Gallery VIC
- 2007 *Landscapes* CUSP Gallery VIC
- 2006 *Renewal* Lane Cove Cultural Centre NSW
- 2003 *Discovering the Centre* Newspace Gallery NSW
- 2002 *New works by Lea Kannar*  
Breewood Gallery – Leura NSW  
*Grand Opening Exhibition*  
Breewood Gallery – Richmond NSW

## PUBLIC WORKS & COMMUNITY PROJECTS

### Facilitator on:

- Mosman Community Mosaic Project – Mosman Council 8m Mural Project (2008 – Completed 5th Sept 2011)
- Hawthorne Canal Community Project – Leichhardt Council 44m Mural Project (2008 – Completed July 2011)
- IGS (International Grammar School – Glebe) Student Duke of Edinburgh Award – Mural Project (2008 – Completed 2010)
- Community Bubbler Project – Leichhardt Council disabled bubbler park project (Completed 2007)

## PUBLICATIONS

### Conference Papers:

- 2014 *Metaphor for Evolution: From Weed to Tree and exploration of the Dandelion* – Affective Habitat - Humanities Conference – ANU 19-21 June 2014 Canberra
- 2009 *Hundertwasser and his Mosaics* – MAANZ Symposium Biennale Brisbane

### Books and Articles:

- 2014 *Photographing your Art Work* MAANZ Opus Oracle E-mag – December Vol 6 p12
- 2014 *Article Original Art Work* MAANZ Opus Oracle E-mag Vol page
- 2010 Writer of Exhibition Program and Judging criteria for MAANZ
- 2009 Craft Arts International Magazine issue no. 76
- 2008 MAANZ Symposium Open Exhibition book Author – covering 2007 Symposium Exhibition Salamanca Gallery Hobart

# NOTES

## Exploration I, II & III

In this series of works I explore the human impact on our world through evolution on a cellular level, the circle acting as a memory of perfection. Silkscreens of human DNA code transposed into a tree dandelion cell tell a symbolic message. Visually strings of Human DNA are embedded in the images of the Tree Dandelion plant cell creating a layering of life that speaks to the disposable human societies with their disposable plastic treasures.

## Transmutation I & III (page 6)

I have initiated my analogy for evolution using the cell from a Tree Dandelion *Sonchus canariensis*. Our world, our green and blue planet is reflected in the guise of a Dandelion cell covered with human DNA. Vital to this understanding is that we and all in nature are in flux. This is life in its basic, raw state; the building blocks are mutating, infused with our material world.

## Connections of Life (back cover)

Water and life are synonymous. Our species plays with the natural world; we feel we control nature through genetic mutation; our intentions are transparent. Thus pathos evokes a truth. The spirit of all natural things will survive manipulation, and emerge changed but undefeated.

## Death Begins (page 8)

Through death begins a new process. Death, life and rebirth, the conscious and unconscious way we deal with our world; the overriding impact of human behaviour on the environment changes our understanding of the world we inhabit.

## Complexities Unnoticed (page 15)

At the core of the cell lies an unseen world; translating these pictorial qualities into a different visual story. Perhaps ironically, I have changed the whole image to enhance and explore the Nucleus, Mitochondrion and Lysosome shapes within the cell walls. Like *keep sake boxes that preserve fragments of the past*<sup>1</sup>, cells store the dialogue of our lives. I explore the cell that reflects a nexus between life and death; drawing on the bridge between the organic and the inorganic, the way all life is connected.

## Glimpse Beyond (page 14)

Cells, DNA and the g-nome are commodities a 'bio-archive' that is extracted, garnered, patented and registered. Glimpse Beyond speaks to the human condition, our constant 'tinkering' with nature, the way we leave our fingerprints on domesticated plant life at a cellular level, creating our triumphs of genetically modified plants. This is a call for action to alter a future that is quickly descending on our species.

## Colliding Worlds (page 13)

The corner stone to this exhibition is a series of engraved petri dishes that represents a bridge between science and the spirit, embracing life and death; science and the history of discovery. Contrary to early reactions, evolution does not discount God or the spirit, revealing the complexity and layers of meaning within all living things. Now the Anthropocene<sup>2</sup> is a stage of evolution in motion, our present, in which we witness rapid environmental change that is that bridge.

## Complexed Arrangements I to XI (page 10)

From the microscopic to imagined life-size visions, our minds can take in and interpret ambiguous signs. At the start, I saw through the microscope the surface of a plant where a myriad of forces are at work ... cell changes some of which result in roots, leaves and other building blocks for growth. These images are forces we know but when pared back can be seen quite differently, as if looking into the future, as if alien to this world.

1 Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space*. Translated by Maria Jolas. Vol. 330: p76 Beacon Press, 1994.

2 The Anthropocene is widely accepted as describing this current geological age with its start point being the Industrial Revolution. Where the human race has emerged to play a significant role in the current global climate change as well as the current mass species extinction creating changes that significantly alter our biosphere.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Thank you Hazelhurst Regional Gallery for supporting and showing my art in this wonderful Community Gallery, especially Carrie Kibbler and her staff.

A big thank you to curator Lisa Sharkey M.A. without whom you would not be seeing the exhibition as it stands. She has helped keep things on track, shared fun, and had patience in selecting and placing the works.

Suzanne Anker for her insightful essay to this catalogue.

Professor Vaughan Macefield – Deputy Dean and Director of Research in the School of Medicine University of Western Sydney, for opening this exhibition.

Completing these works would not have been possible without the help of all the staff at SVA (School of Visual Arts – Manhattan) especially Suzanne Anker (chair of SVA) her assistants Tarah Rhoda and Sebastian Cocioba (onsite botanist).

Jan Guy my Masters supervisor who has supported me in my artistic journey.

Botany staff at University of Sydney for welcoming me into their classes.

Staff at SCA particularly Janet Parker-Smith for helping me with technical issues in printmedia.

Megalo Studios and Canberra Glass works for introducing me to printing with glass techniques.

Adele Kannar whose skill and knowledge were instrumental with machine stitching *Exploration I*.

Warren Macris of High Res Digital Australia who gave invaluable advice and development with printing the photographic works.

Sharyn Raggett of Brilliant Things for her skill and intuition in developing this catalogue.

Lastly those who suffer in isolation giving me support and encouragement to achieve my goals, Jens Lichtenberger (husband and best friend) Jas and Luna, our furry companions who are always ready with a purr and a cuddle after a long day.

**Lea Kannar-Lichtenberger**

P: 02 9810 8830 | M: 0417 130 560 | E: leakannar@bigpond.com | Web: www.leakannar.com

**Lea Kannar-Lichtenberger**

**Colliding Worlds**

7 – 17 March 2015

Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre

782 Kingsway Gympie NSW 2227 Australia

T: 61 2 8536 5700

E: hazelhurst@ssc.nsw.gov.au

www.hazelhurst.com.au

## **Additional image credits**

**Front cover: *Labyrinths*** Tree Dandelion transverse sectioned stained blue droplet under microscope 40x ul Pigment print on metallic photo paper 90 x 70 cm

**Back cover: *Connections of Life*** Tree Dandelion transverse sectioned stained blue with water droplet under microscope 40x ul Pigment print on metallic photo paper 180 x 120 cm

**Inside front and back covers: *Genetic Memories*** Silkscreen on rice paper 9 m x 30 cm

**Page 10: *Complex Arrangements I-IX***

Pigment prints on Arches Cotton Rag 48 x 30 cm

**Page 11: *Journey*** Dandelion seed and water droplet under dissecting microscope Pigment print on metallic photo paper 90 x 70 cm

**Page 12: *Life I*** Dandelion Flower and Laser engraved petri dish under dissecting microscope Pigment print of metallic photo paper 90 x 70 cm

**Page 13: *Colliding Worlds*** 42 laser engraved petri dishes, Dandelion flowers, seeds and seedlings 10 x 10 x 2 cm x 42

All images, except page 13, © Lea Kannar-Lichtenberger. Page 13 installation view of *Colliding Worlds* by Marah Weston.

**Hazelhurst**  
REGIONAL GALLERY & ARTS CENTRE  
A facility of Sutherland Shire Council

**Sutherland Shire**  
COUNCIL

