



Hidden Places – Bush and Beach

Sue Kalab
8 January to
26 January 2025

Sue Kalab, *Sandpipers (detail)*, 2024, watercolour, 55 cm x 75 cm framed



Sue Kalab, Pt Mornington, Leschenault Estuary.
Photo courtesy of Ann Reeves

About the Artist

Sue is a watercolour artist specialising in the natural world of Australia. She celebrates the seeming messiness, the layers and beautiful complexity.

Earth colours best express Sue's love of nature and represent warmth, endurance, calmness and mystery. Her preferred media is Arches 100% cotton-rag rough watercolour paper with Winsor and Newton artist-quality paints. The watercolour medium with chiaroscuro gives a fresh edge.

In wanders near her Bunbury studio, Sue enjoys the glorious interweave of ancient eucalypts, banksias and lichen from the forest floor, sunsets over the Indian Ocean, and the songs of birdlife. She enjoys knowing that others care too. There are hidden places where bush birds, beach-nesting birds and migratory shorebirds can be discovered with just a little patience and careful watching – or listening.

Our interconnectedness with all that is around us, and the sacred balance.

Exhibition information

Sue Kalab's immersion in the remnant nature of the Tuart-Jarra-Marri coast is reflected in the balanced, elegant and cultivated rusticity of the paintings in the exhibition. Sue takes you to her world of nature and the beauty in this world in which we find ourselves.

A magpie carolling, finding the first bush orchids of the season, a pristine shell washed on the beach, pelicans in flight across an azure sky, or the annual return of the Siberian migratory shorebirds to our summer shores and our mysterious sea birds - characteristic fragments of the Australian coastland's scene.

The exhibition is an invitation to wander through the forest or take an amble along a beach. It is dedicated to our irreplaceable World Biodiversity Hotspot: that is Southwest Australia.

Sue is known for both her art and nature conservation. This dual passion has added a precision and an intriguing dimension to her art. Her paintings instill a sense of contemplation and timelessness coupled with knowledge and a call to conserve nature that is both universal and contemporary.



Sue Kalab, *Bathed in Ancient Music (detail)*, 2023, watercolour, 70 cm x 105 cm framed

Acknowledgements

This exhibition is dedicated to all those who champion nature, those who see nature as a blessing, and to all those who lament its loss.

Rockingham Arts Centre
11 Kent Street,
Rockingham

Gallery opening times:
Wednesday – Sunday
10am – 4pm

Contact:
(08) 9527 0734
artscentre@rockingham.wa.gov.au
rockingham.wa.gov.au/exhibitions

Acknowledgement of Country

The City of Rockingham acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land, the Binjareb and Whadjuk Nyoongar peoples and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of Aboriginal communities and their cultures, and to Elders past and present.

The City of Rockingham values your feedback. Please scan the QR code to complete a short survey. Thank you.





Little Gems

Sowden's shack, Careening Bay, 1962, enhanced colour photograph, 594 mm X 420 mm.
Original image courtesy L. Edwards

Richard Seale
8 January to
26 January 2025

Richard Seale



Richard Seale. Photo courtesy of T Certoma

About the Artist

I am an artist with an interest in multi-medium and digital storytelling. My career footprint is wide, covering science and engineering, education and creative arts, and I previously lectured in corporate/community media production for the School of Media, Culture and Creative Arts at Curtin University. This is my first exhibition.

Garden Island holds special memories for me, perhaps because it was here that I spent holidays for the first ten years of my life; a time and place that is both timeless and fleeting. Images of Dad filleting fresh fish on the kitchen table, Mum warming her feet inside the Metters stove on a cold July night, the smell of hot, buttered toast every morning, or falling asleep to the sound of the generator puffing slowly, are just some of the many memories etched into my mind.

I invite you to reflect upon impermanence in a world that often moves too quickly to hold on to what really matters, and how these special times and places shape our identities long after they are gone.

Exhibition information

The story of Garden Island and its shack community has an almost *Brigadoon* feeling about it - an idyllic, if only temporary, respite from the routines of suburban life.

Dotted along the sheltered coastline, under melaleucas and half-hidden in thickets of acacia and sword sedge, the 150 or so hand-built timber, iron and asbestos shacks were modest yet intimate - carrying marks of many generations enjoying the simplicity of an off-grid existence.

For thirteen blissful years, my family stayed in the shack which Dad had built us overlooking Careening Bay. Every morning us kids would get up with the sun, and be roaming and exploring to our hearts' content, while he and Mum were playing cards over a few beers with the Cockos next door, knowing we were completely safe - apart from 'tarantulas' in the dunny, and the occasional snake that couldn't outrun our thundering herd.

But the utopian existence was not to last. By the early 1970s, the Royal Australian Navy's expansion led to the displacement of the shack dwellers and in a few years all the shacks, including ours, had either been bulldozed or dismantled and carted away, and with them the holiday community scattered.

Now almost half a century on, I am reconnecting with those whose memories of Garden Island still burn bright, and in doing so revisiting a very special time in my life and a place which has come to define me probably more so than any other.

Little Gems are but a small selection from memories shared by members of the Garden Island community. Ranging from small adventures and quiet moments to portraits of carefree family life, they speak of the powerful draw of nature and people, where bonds are formed not just between individuals, but to the landscape itself.



Kids with pike, Luscombe Bay, 1962, enhanced colour photograph, 594 mm X 420 mm. Original image courtesy L. Radford

Acknowledgements

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My Place myplace.org.au and Garden Island Fishing & Aquatic Association (Inc.) gifaa.com.au, and the awesome support of my 'Northern' friends Barbara Jeffries, Ken Reynolds and Susan Hartley.