



Image credit: Karin Wallace

Vanessa Wallace

About the artist

Vanessa Wallace is an artist living and working in Boorloo (Perth), Western Australia. Wallace's practice is predominantly print based with book making forming a central component. Since 2000, Vanessa has had an ongoing project of compiling an archive of images relating to the ground underfoot. Images are developed as the result of walks that are either time-based, one image collected per day, over a number of days or multiple images are collected from one walk. The resulting works examine moments of the everyday and investigate the intersection of public and private space, the use of text often forming an intrinsic layer.

Completing a Bachelor of Arts (Visual Arts) at Edith Cowan University in 2003 and an Advanced Diploma in Fine Arts at North Metropolitan TAFE in 2001, Vanessa has exhibited works in solo and group shows, locally, nationally and internationally since 2001. In 2022, Transmedial – Technology's Touch in Print, curated by Dr Sarah Robinson and Dr Monika Lukowska, PAPER, Sydney Contemporary and Impact 11 – International Printmaking Conference in 2021 (held online). Wallace's work is held in various public and private collections including the Shire of Mundaring, Print Council of Australia Archive, Edith Cowan University and the State Library of Victoria.



Rockingham
Arts Centre
City of Rockingham

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Gallery opening times:

Wednesday – Sunday
10am – 4pm

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Vanessa Wallace, *Bunny Tree: 04: 05: 2023: 806AM*, (detail), 2024, digital pigment print, drypoint, chine-collé, chalk transfer and coloured pencil on archival rag paper, 47 x 40 cm. Image credit: John Wallace

Look left, then right ... then left again

Vanessa Wallace
3 October – 20 October 2024



Vanessa Wallace, *back in the moment thursday* (detail), 2024, UV print, digital pigment print, chine-collé and cut outs on various archival papers, 15.3 x 46 x 1 cm. Image credit: courtesy of the artist

Exhibition information

The Radial Walking practice of artist Vanessa Wallace's travels of ground trod underfoot might be visualised as patterns likened to the structure of an iris of a single eye. The conceptual similarities to iris lines, which are coloured paths radiating from the pupil, reflect designs of Wallace's noticing eye revealed in her prints. The artist's walking path aligns with the idea of iris lines, while the pupil lets light in as the centre locale for the walks radiating from her home in Boorloo (Perth), Western Australia. Wallace is mindful that her heritage comes from those who have been in the Swan River area for less than a hundred years; she is conscious of respecting the land and collecting images only through processes that leave little or nothing behind. Wallace is an artist who does not travel far because, in her own words, "in this restricted walking radius, the speed of walking allows you to remember." Wallace's visually poignant prints navigate various educational boundary postcodes within a 1.5 km radius of the artist's home, walked over three years.

A profound human consciousness of mother and childhood memories is revealed in this exhibition, as Wallace accompanied her young daughter on "everyday" walks to and from school. Drawing from author Rebecca Solnit's response to the history of walking,¹ Wallace's interpretation of "remembering" gives the mother-child relationship agency to her twelve prints. Wallace's daughter, a significant influence, becomes an art critic, and collaborates in titling *Bunny Tree*. In this body of work, the child has been acutely present throughout the making; artists' memories lie within measured, layered, and meticulously executed oval interrogations of the ground taken with an iPhone throughout their walks. Each oval is determined by sizing the mother's feet, one placed in front of the other, vertical, and the child's horizontal.

There is always a reason for numerical sets in Wallace's prints, twelve prints, an edition of five for each print, or seven artist books that link to linear time.

The forty-eight pages in each book navigate through simple to complex snapshots of the ground, with increasingly cut-out interventions. These holes reveal complex, layered surfaces and different memories by rendering duotone techniques to separate the Polaroid/Fuji Instax film images collected on her radial walks. Therefore, as memories shift and change, visual clues to the reality of the ground underfoot are physically removed from the photo taken with a Lomo instant camera, leaving two colours.

In many of Wallace's prints and artists' books, selected snippets of memory are meticulously hand-coloured with the full colour spectrum. As Latvian-American artist Vija Celmins said, "I believe if there is any meaning in art, it resides in the physical presence of a work."² Indeed, seen in the flesh, Wallace's complex process and highly aesthetic rendering of her layered world underfoot reminds us to look down and notice the earth under our feet.

by Dr Sarah Robinson 2024



Vanessa Wallace, *Bunny Tree: 28: 02: 2022: 259pm*, 2022, digital pigment print, etching, chine-collé, chalk transfer and coloured pencil on archival rag paper, 47 x 40 cm. Image credit: John Wallace

1. Solnit, R. (2021). *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*. London, England: Penguin Books
2. Retrieved from: <https://matthewmarks.com/artists/vija-celmins#>