

## TANJA RIESE - ARTIST STATEMENT

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My intention is to create a substantial body of work that focuses on the theme of our connection to our environment.

Underpinning the work will be an investigation of historical, current and symbolic ways of viewing 'the landscape', looking at how we engage (or disengage) with it intellectually and emotionally. I am interested in how events that take place over time are imprinted on the energetics and physicality of our environment. I hope to use words and phrases that come out of this research to inform the works either as separate texts, titles or incorporated into the images themselves.

For many years I have looked at minute natural objects reveling in their precise and complex beauty. Recently, I have begun to make prints of trees and forest scenes often making the plates on location. In the coming year I would like to extend this practice by continuing to shift my view outwards, building on ideas that I began to develop during the 'Valley to the Sea' mentor-ship in 2006; looking at issues around history, development, interdependence, sustainability and belonging.

The tree is symbolic of growth and decay, conscious and subconscious realities. Throughout history the tree has shown itself to be nature's best gift to humanity providing food, shelter, tools, medicines, warmth, shade and beauty. Around the tree there is a wealth of symbology that has developed from the tree of life, the tree of knowledge, to the tree of memory.

The forest in western culture represents the limits of civilised cultivation. Into the shadows of the forest our civilisation has projected it's secrets and innermost anxieties. I wish to explore these dichotomies of light and darkness, order and chaos.

Growth of technology has made forests around the globe increasingly a commodity and decreasingly an archetype. While the Bega Valley is known for its unspoilt and picturesque environs the old growth forest in the area is limited to remnant patches in inaccessible gullies whose ecosystems are compromised by what has taken place all around them. As the oldest living things on the earth I enjoy the idea that they are witness to that which goes on around them. The tree therefore represents a direct connection from the present time to the distant past.

I am interested in the concept of the journey through the landscape as a metaphor for transformation and hope to incorporate some of these strands of thought into the work produced over the scholarship year.

Tanja Riese 2009



TANJA RIESE at work in her studio