

Captivated with the Unfamiliar

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This artwork explores the emotional connection I felt towards a landscape I visited in Tasmania. It contains several components from topography, abstractions of local flora, standing to bird's eye views. In this unique and seemingly inaccessible plateau I felt separated, far away from all the little distractions. I was in awe of the natural flora and the sheer enormity of the cliff faces. I wanted to express my wonder at this uninhabited and untamed landscape in a wildly abstract form.

A primarily monochromatic colour scheme unifies the composition. Each aspect has a tonal shift from strong bold movements to organic abstractions that link across the piece. I employed light texture within the scraped paint areas and beaten aluminium contours to suggest the harsh landscape. Balance was a constant consideration to ensure the varied components could all work together while keeping the three 'cliffs' as dominant features.

Jose Parlá and Helen Wells' watercolour techniques taught me to appreciate the importance of layering and how contrasting aspects can work together. Another technique that I was inspired by was the bold effects created with a palette knife by Raphael Vicenzi.

Incorporating the fine flora-based designs provided an organic aesthetic but lacked details of the rock faces themselves and the topographical nature of the edge of the plateau. I resolved this by incorporating rock inspired designs with the floral ones and used beaten aluminium to represent further texture and topography.

I was challenged when I painted the textured 'cliffs' as one of the pillars appeared too angular, disturbing the organic flow. I used a white opaque medium to smooth the harsh corner. This caused another problem, the medium stood out as a pure white 'smudge' against the off-white background. I painted a washed background which partially offset this tonal difference, but when the final ink designs were drawn over the top, the area was fully resolved. This taught me the importance of practising on the same scale beforehand.

Its very nature as an abstract artwork and my own intuitive way of working determined that the initial composition would only ever be a gateway to the final piece. Even the final composition was a mere guide for the shapes and positions of the 'cliffs', from which all the other aspects grew. The entire process from pushing the painted cliffs along the board, to bending and shaping the aluminium, to the flow and growth of the line work was an intuitive process that flowed from the various inspiring aspects of the landscape.

In retrospect I wish I had put more detail into some of the ink designs. Regardless I am pleased with how the aspects have formed together creating this organically flowing piece. It communicates the feelings of peace and wonder that I had aimed to elicit. Between the calm colour scheme, the contrasting bold to delicate features and their entanglement provokes such emotions. In it's now completed arrangement, with all of its numerous aspects, it does have the complex and abstract yet balanced aesthetic I envisioned it to be.

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