

Balancing the mountain Flying crane, Running deer

'This exhibition brings together two ideas, one relating to the Qigong practice of the five animal frolics, and the second of rock drawings from the summit of Kunyani, or Mt Wellington, in Hobart.

Though seemingly different these ideas share concepts relating to spirit, transformation, change, balance and counterbalance, strength, weight, and time.

Qigong translates as 'life energy' and comprises a diverse set of practises that coordinate the body, breath and mind based on Chinese philosophy. The five animal frolics has been attributed to Wu Qin Xi (between 145 - 208AD), who developed a poetic series of movement practises that mimic the motion of five animals — the crane, deer, monkey, bear and tiger. Each set of movements per animal relates to one of the five elements (wood, earth, fire, water, metal) and five yin organs (kidney, liver, heart, spleen, lungs) and five yang internal organs (bladder, gallbladder, small intestine, stomach, large intestine). For example the two movements for the deer are called "Running like a deer" and "Colliding the antlers" and relate to the element of water and the kidneys and bladder.

The aim of practising the five animal frolics is to achieve optimum good health, strength and balance. Each movement also helps unblock meridian channels in the body.

I started learning Qigong with Nicole Lee in her Balaclava studio called Chi-space in 2017 and continue the practice. One year earlier, I embarked on a quest to draw rocks on the summit of Kunyani/ Mt Wellington. Kunyani is the traditional name given by the Palawa people. The mountain has an elevation of 1,271 metres and sits above Hobart, so wherever you are in the city it is visible. The mountain is a predictor of the weather, if there's cloud covering it you know there is rain coming. It has a powerful presence and is sacred. I have lived in Hobart since 1979 and looked up at the mountain many times.

For years I wanted to find out more about the mountain, it's a wild place as it is exposed to the elements, especially on the summit. I went with my friend and fellow artist Sue Lovegrove on my first drawing trip and we took paper, inks and charcoal to the summit. We walked until we found rocks we wanted to draw. Then I continued the drawing trips on my own. I chose to draw rocks which had almost human and animal like qualities and tracings of journeys.

To me the rock drawings are portraits and testaments to time and the forces and energy in nature. The rocks rely on each other for stability. They are also integral to the Palawa people. Some rocks are balanced precariously, others are wedged or weighted, counterbalanced next to a mass which gives support. They have been altered, thrown, butted against other rocks, appearing unmoving but have moved and continue to change. The concepts of change, balance, spirit and inner transformation are also intrinsic to the Qigong practise and philosophy.'

- Barbie Kjar, 2021