

## Raymond Arnold - Elsewhere World Etchings

*The mined and engineered wild landscapes of the Tasmanian West Coast, with their scars and their splendour, are deeply emotional places. None more so than Queenstown. With binocular vision we see both the destruction and the ever-present life force, and we are drawn like moths to the flame.*

*Jill Davis, Landscape as Depth: A Reflection on Painting and Queenstown - Raymond Arnold Catalogue 2022 /Elsewhere World - To see the bones and tombstone at once*

Raymond Arnold's Elsewhere World panorama (10 panel etching) has been developed over a decade and has 'shape-shifted' from a small 'en plein air' etching fragment of a rocky landscape to a large panoramic swathe of sooty black and glacial whites. From depiction of random/erratic forms to a symbolic flow of environmental churn! Weather, fire, mining impacts and climate change impacting country and leaving it's bones i.e. the rock and the tree stumps exposed as textural elements within a graphic ossuary.

From that simple beginning of the small copper plate etching, a total of 214 further etching 'fragments' were developed to encompass a swath of environmental feelings and factors about the Western Tasmanian mined landscapes. The components of the panorama and its attendant fragments have been shown together a number of times under the rubric of 'Expanded Field'.

The kaleidoscope of 'light mass' and 'shadow mass' in the etching array creates a world of micro and macro insights into this rocky world beyond 'maps and atlases' as a section of the Seamus Heaney poem *The Herbal* that inspired the piece testifies.

*Where can it be found again  
An elsewhere world, beyond*

*Maps and atlases  
Where all is woven into*

*And of itself, like a nest  
Of crosshatched grass blades*

Seamus Heaney, *The Human Chain*, Faber & Faber 2010

*Elsewhere World* encapsulates many years of my work as an artist. I moved to Queenstown on the West Coast of Tasmania and gave up a peripatetic life of work in Hobart and France in order to develop my landscape etchings and paintings.

In 2011, an English painter friend John Lendis sent me the book of Seamus Heaney's poetry, *The Human Chain*. I was, at that time, developing prints of some terrain on Mt Lyell which is still heavily scarred from historic mining impacts. Plants are re-colonising the area, however, with the White Waratah, Christmas Bells, Celery-top pine, Sassafras and even King Billy pine in evidence. It is in this sense of the possibility of another (elsewhere) world, i.e. one that is lost but one that might be reclaimed, that I speculate on in my etchings.

For many years I researched the intaglio print medium in Europe. I originally went to Paris and the Atelier Lacourière et Frélaut, in particular, to connect to the tradition of making etchings. My great-grandfather's experiences of the First World War as a soldier in the AIF, Commonwealth War Grave sites, and body armour are concepts that have been played out in tandem with my investigation into the print and identification with a type of 'figure' as much as ground!

In Queenstown I established LARQ or Landscape Art Research Queenstown in 2005 with my partner Helena Demczuk. LARQ was a small art centre involving both a gallery and a print studio which was set up to encourage artists to visit Western Tasmania and for them to contribute to its environmental repair and community development. LARQ closed in 2015 after its ten year 'shelf life' expired. We are now contributing to a community based art workshop titled PressWEST which we helped to set up in the aftermath of COVID.

The terrain of Western Tasmania has been tempered and shaped by exposure to forces of nature and man. A prevailing westerly air-stream with two and a half metres of rain per year and a hundred years of mining have sculpted the hard rock landscape.

Large tracts of wet rainforest nearby give way to more settled and pastoral areas to the east of me and eventually the MONA-centric Hobart. This dynamic natural environment has shaped Tasmanian identity and culture. The toxic mine sites, degraded landscapes, and abandoned cemeteries are testimony to these natural forces, the passage of time and the transience of life.

Raymond Arnold June 2024

Link - <https://artguide.com.au/artists-have-a-role-in-restoring-damaged-landscapes-raymond-arnold-and-helena-demczuks-ode-to-queenstown/>