***Glimmers***

There is something about the Australian bush that is unique, at least different from the landscapes of Europe and Asia. The Australian bush generally lacks a pictorial focus, an easily defined vanishing point, repoussoir trees that conveniently frame a composition or the gentle tonal gradations on which the picturesque tradition of European art has been built.

At first glance, the Australian bush appears messy and featureless. The trees, shrubs and grasses do not appear to follow an orderly path but seem to grow in a random pattern and paths that weave throughout the bush follow the tracks of animals as they follow the scent of water rather than some scenic pattern or orderly logic. Simultaneously, as one is struck by the monotony of sameness and the dull subdued tones, when you glance at any specific detail under your feet, there is a myriad of precious detail and immense fragile intricacy. It is this mix of the macro and micro that is so peculiar to the Australian bush.

Danielle Creenaune had been away from Australia for many years before she returned to her birthplace of Wollongong (Dharawal land) and the contrast between the European landscape and the Australian bush was overwhelming. Her present body of work, predominantly lithographs, strongly bears witness to her rediscovery of the Australian bush. Her walks in the bush, both in Dharawal land and Gundungurra land (Southern Highlands), involve an exploration of country that she had known since childhood, but now being seen with fresh eyes.

Her prints are full of tiny precious discoveries – tracks, glimpses of water and the enchanting detail of the bush. When you walk in the bush, it is sometimes akin to meditating in a sacred space where your innermost thoughts and memories combine with the newly discovered elements in nature. It is this sense of intimacy and visual excitement that characterises Creenaune’s art. Like few other artists, Creenaune manages to combine the sense of messy vastness of the bush, the intricacy of detail and personal melancholy that borders on a sense of nostalgia. Although her imagery is never literal, it is anchored in a specific reality.

Creenaune’s lithographs, including *The Lookout, Haptic Conversation, The Embrace (triptych), The Black Pool* and *Bullawarring Track,* all made in 2024, are masterly, evocative prints that combine a consummate technique with a truly lyrical and meditative content. She has also developed a language that is distinctly her own, independent of the mark making found in the etchings of Fred Williams and other artists. If you spend some time with these prints, you become gradually seduced by Creenaune’s sensibility – it is like embarking on a very personal conversation, where you sense an intimacy, a vulnerability, a sensuousness and a quiet wistfulness. It is like a longing for something beautiful but forever lost, however, there is just a glimmer of hope.

Emeritus Professor Sasha Grishin AM, FAHA

Australian National University, 2024