

Jazmina Cininas

Straying towards the scenic route

"Straying Towards the Scenic Route" features new and previously unexhibited works that were made while - and in response to - travelling around Japan, Australia, and the Baltic States. Together, the works explore the phenomenon of 'straying' from my known worlds and encountering the unfamiliar phenomenon of being a tourist, alongside my more familiar conceptual terrains of migration, transformation and re-invention. Simultaneously, I explore the phenomenon of being a 'tourist' to pencil frottage, collage and botanical prints, of straying from my established mediums and ways of making in response to the limitations and opportunities of making work on the road, while maintaining my commitment to leaving a small environmental footprint.

The Japan works, made up of frottages from utilities' covers, found surfaces and woodblocks, as well as collage, botanical prints and rubber stamps, were created over the course of two visits, one in 2023 and again in 2024, while co-leading study tours for RMIT School of Art students. It was following the Japan trip that I became aware of *tataki zome* (flower pounding) as an environmentally sustainable artmaking method with the capacity to respond directly to place.

The modestly scaled Japan works provided clues as to how I might respond to challenges of making work while travelling around Australia in a caravan in 2025. Over the course of twelve months, I took pencil frottages from signage, footpaths, memorials, street furniture, plastic waste and other textured surfaces that I encountered throughout my antipodean odyssey. These have been bound together in an album that maps the vernacular landscape of the 'grey nomad' as well as the way different Australian destinations present themselves to their visitors. The exhibition includes a small album of *tataki zome* landscapes created from the flora that I encountered on the trip, a series of vernacular souvenir postcards made entirely from the consumer waste and print ephemera that we generated in the course of a year on the road, alongside a multi-plate frottage that I edited for an exchange portfolio. Ironically, I first began to engage with frottage - a lightweight, low-tech, portable medium that so naturally lends itself to capturing impressions while travelling - during the COVID lockdowns, when I was forced to consider ways of making when I (or my students) couldn't go anywhere at all.

The works that were created the furthest away geographically speaking traverse the most familiar conceptual domain. Mid 2026, I undertook a short artist residency at Umela in Prangli, Estonia before travelling to my ancestral homeland, Lithuania. The artist book, "Dreaming of Midsummer at Kalli's" is a direct response to the physical surroundings of Umela, which I had visited on multiple occasions prior to the residency. While in the Baltic States, I continued my explorations with botanical prints and frottage, sewing these into paper blouses on my return to Melbourne. These, and additional frottage and botanical print work, draw from the Lithuanian folk tale, "Eglė the Serpent Queen", in which a young woman is taken from her forest home to live beneath the ocean.

as the bride of a sea snake. Eglé ultimately finds herself torn between competing alliances to her birthplace and her new home, her tale redolent with pictorial metaphors for migration, transformation and re-invention as well as cultural hybridity.

- Jazmina Cininas 2026