

Hazelhurst Arts Centre

Caroline Rothwell *Horizon*

Secondary Education Kit – Stages 4 & 5



Caroline Rothwell *Horizon* (detail), Hazelhurst Arts Centre 2021. Images: Silversalt Photography

Hazelhurst

SUTHERLANDSHIRE
ARTS
CENTRE

Developed by Hazelhurst's Public Programs & Education team, 2021



Caroline Rothwell: *Horizon*

Until 28 November 2021
Hazelhurst Arts Centre

About the exhibition

Horizon looks at the relationship between art and science through sculpture, collaged historical prints and digital animation and photographs. The artist looks at the past using historical engravings and records of plant collections, also the present state of humans and the environment, and possibilities for the future. The title comes from the idea of looking to the horizon to consider future possibilities of our symbiotic relationships between botanical, human and industrial systems.

The sculptural works are made through a method of casting, where gypsum and concrete are poured into canvas moulds in one pour and reinforced internally with metal armature. The works are then painted and finished with an epoxy resin.

The botanical drawings are made from prints taken from the engraving plates created from Sir Joseph Banks botanical collection during his voyage with Cook in the Pacific, 1768-1770. The prints are hand coloured and have the artist's addition of a long pink tongue, like a toxic, greedy collector of the exotic, its sinuous form disrupting the prints and their historical significance. Rothwell's digital animation, *Carbon Emission* uses carbon collected from exhaust emissions from cars. The collected carbon was mixed with a binder medium to make a pigment, which the artist then painted onto glass. This was then turned into a digital animation.

The large digital prints on Canvas, *Primal Plant* uses plant species from around the world to create new hybrid species which are in a constant state of flux. This is also seen in the work *Plant Library*, where the artist has collaborated with Google Creative Lab, to use botanical plants continually morphing together to create hybrid forms, and in *Infinite Herbarium* where the artist invites the audience to create their own hybrid morph using a QR code.

Directions for use:

Step 1: view the video

Caroline Rothwell in conversation about her exhibition *Horizon*: [Caroline Rothwell Artist Video](#)

Step 2: Looking at artworks engage in discussion questions

Step 3: Select an artmaking idea and make an artwork

Curriculum Objectives and Outcomes:

Students develop knowledge, understanding and skills to:

- Make artworks
- Critically and historically interpret art

With the following outcomes:

Stage 4 Outcomes:

Art making: 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6

Critically and historically interpret Art: 4.7, 4.8, 4.10

Stage 5 Outcomes:

Art making: 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6

Critically and historically interpret Art: 5.7, 5.8, 5.10



Untitled 317, 7, 72 and 335 2019

Watercolour on Arches paper, on Joseph Banks Florilegium a la poupee print from copper plate engraving, Plates 317, 7, 72, 335, 300gsm Somerset mould made acid free paper

The artist acknowledges and pays respects to the Gadigal people of the Eora nation and Bidjigal and Gweagal people of the Dharawal language group, the traditional owners of the Sydney and southern Sydney regions.

In recent years, Rothwell has been making regular site visits to Kurnell in Sydney's south. *Untitled 317, 7, 72 and 335* is a series of works that look to the history of the place and its ecology while recognising it as the first site of invasion or colonisation.

Rothwell has sliced and collaged into original engravings from *Banks' Florilegium* which documented specimens collected at Kamay (Botany Bay) in 1770. Into each engraving she has inserted a pink tongue, where its sinuous form disrupts the prints and their historical significance. The works remain untitled, so as to not repeat the processes of colonisation.

Banks' Florilegium is a set of engravings of plants collected by Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander on Cook's first Pacific voyage (1768 – 1771). Over 30,000 plant specimens were collected, of which 1,300 species were unknown to European science. Artists and engravers were commissioned to create over 700 copperplates. The first complete edition was printed between 1980 and 1990.

Questions for Discussion

- What was the significance of *Banks' Florilegium* prints when they were made?
- Why has the artist used Joseph Banks' *Florilegium* prints to collage onto rather than produce her own?
- What stands out? (consider colour and movement). Why has the artist inserted a pink tongue into each print?
- Describe the feeling these works with a pink tongue create.



Symbiosis (bluebeard orchid) 2020/21

canvas, gypsum cement, aluminium, steel, paint, epoxy glass

This sculpture represents an Australian bluebeard orchid, sometimes known as a blue fairy orchid. The word **symbiosis** relates to the way in which plants and other living things live together in a close relationship, so that they both benefit from one another. An example would be plants and bees. The blue beard orchid is endangered.

This special relationship is explored further with the relationship humans have with exotic and rare plants. But in this case the relationship for the plants and their environment may not be so beneficial.

Interwoven through the orchid are a long red curvy tongue and 3 small round mirrors. The human desire to collect and possess the exotic and rare is present in the work.

This work was created by sewing a canvas mould, inserting metal armature then pouring in a mixture of gypsum and concrete into the mould. Once hardened the sculpture was painted then finished with a resin coating. The result is a soft squishy looking sculpture that belies its hard rigidity.

Questions for Discussion

- Describe the colour scheme in Symbiosis (blue beard orchid). How does the artist use of line and colour add to the sense of fragility of this flower?
- What supports and entwines it? Why would the artist include tongues? What do tongues do?
- Can you see a mirror? What happens when you look into a mirror?
- Research the size of the blue beard orchid? How large do you think this sculpture is? Why would the artist choose this size to represent the orchid?
- What is the artist saying about our relationship to the blue beard orchid?
- Why did the artist title it *Symbiosis (blue beard orchid)*?
- Rothwell explores peoples' obsession with the rare and exotic. How has the artist shown this in this work?



Blue Cabinet 2019

canvas, hydrostone, aluminium, steel, paint, epoxy glass.

This work explores the idea of a display cabinet holding collections and curiosities like those of 18th century museums. A native Australian orchid is displayed, classified and recorded in *Banks Florilegium*-(a set of botanical engravings showing plants collected by Joseph Banks on Cooks first Pacific voyage). The orchid's colours emphasise its exotic beauty. The unnatural colours emphasise this imagined exotic nature, a rare collector's item. The warped sculpture bends our perceptions and reflects on the traditional museum display of rare "trophies" from distant lands.

Rare cultural objects, natural curiosities and artefacts were particularly important in the 18th century at a time where new scientific discoveries were being made and exploration and colonisation was expanding across the world. This era was known as the Age of Enlightenment. Many museums collected rare and exotic objects from around the world for the education of the general public. This was a time when scientists were beginning to classify animals and plants and naturalist and botanist Charles Darwin put forward his ideas on the Theory of Evolution.

Many of these artefacts and cultural objects were highly sought after and often taken without permission to be traded and displayed in private collections or grand museums. These items were often displayed in a way that conveyed a Eurocentric view or understanding of the object.

Questions for Discussion

- How has the artist use of colour emphasised the appeal of the exotic?
- Describe the use of line and perspective in this work, is it disorientating? Why?
- What is the artist trying to tell us about the way exotic curiosities are displayed?
- Do you like this work? How does it make you feel?
- What items have you seen in a museum? How were they displayed? For example, were they arranged and displayed by place or region, chronologically - the oldest to most recent?
- There are museums today that still hold stolen artefacts, e.g. the British Museum has the Gweagal Shield from Cook's landing party in 1770. These cultural treasures have rarely been given back to the tradition owners. Museums often argue that they retain these items to preserve them for history. Do you think museums have a right to keep these precious items?



Primal Plant 2011 – 2021

digital print on canvas

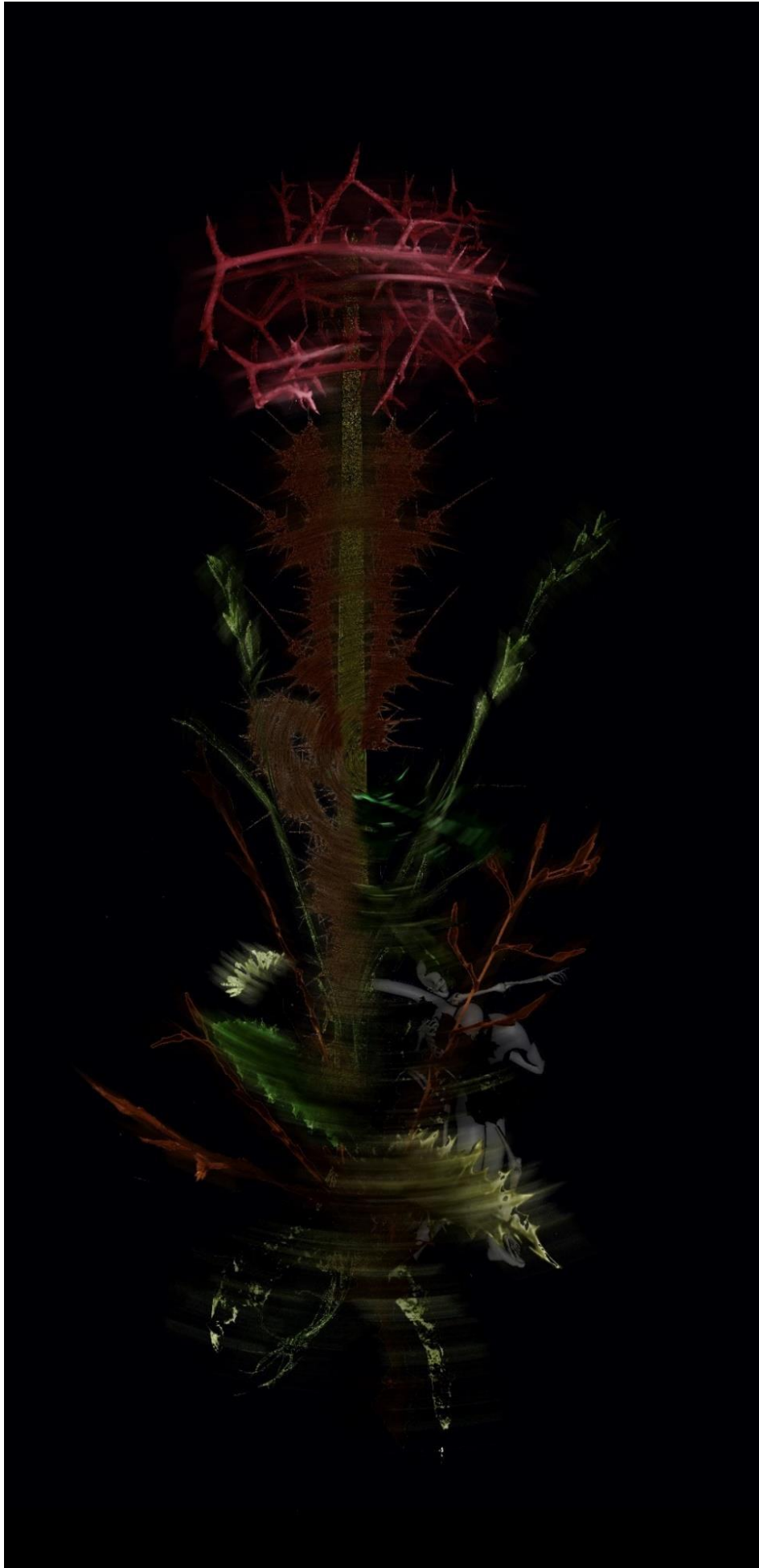
Left to right:

Pearl Beach, New South Wales; Tarinkot, Afghanistan ; Pilgrims' Way, England; London, England; Beijing, China

This series of five large scale, digitally manipulated photographs of weeds plays with ideas of hybridity and beauty. The morphed forms are based on weeds found in a 5 x 5 metre site from different parts of the world including Australia, Afghanistan, the United Kingdom and China.

The weeds were photographed against a white background by the artist and others on her behalf. For example, the photographed weeds for *Tarinkot, Afghanistan* were taken by artist Ben Quilty in 2011 while he was there as an official war artist for the Australian War Memorial.

The weed species become new plant forms of monumental beauty, with whispers of human presence hidden amongst their leaves. The artist considers weeds as colonisers, they go wherever we, humanity, go.



Primal Plant 2011-2021, Tarinkot, Afghanistan, digital Print on canvas.

Questions for Discussion

- Describe what you see. Consider colour and tone.
- Discuss the effect of movement. How do the plants look?
- What has happened to these plants? How did the artist manipulate them?
- Where do these plants come from?
- What sort of plants are these?
- Why are these plants hybrid?
- Why do you think the artist is interested in weeds?
- Has this photograph made you look at them differently?
- How large do you think this artwork be? What effect does size have?
- Why does the artist consider weeds as colonizers?



Carbon Emission 1 2019

Digital animation, Edition of 8+1 AP. 2:17 min

Carbon Emission 1 is part of a series of digital animations developed by Caroline Rothwell after looking at the high amounts of carbon currently present in the atmosphere compared to earlier times.

Rothwell explores the issues around climate change and our dependence on fossil fuels by using carbon emissions from car exhausts. Rothwell mixes the carbon with a binder to form a pigment to create paintings on glass plates, which she then animates.

The smoke like form in the animation moves gently, pulsating and breathing, this is both incongruous and yet still imitating its material. Rothwell invites the audience to reflect on how history leads to the present and then potentially affects the future.

Questions for Discussion

- View the animation by watching the Caroline Rothwell *Horizon* interview. Describe what you see?
- What materials and processes have been used to create this work?
- Why do you think the artist used these materials rather than traditional paints?
- What idea is the artist trying to communicate to the audience?
- What does this work remind you of? How does it make you feel?
- What role do you think artists play in influencing society to take action on important issues such as climate change?

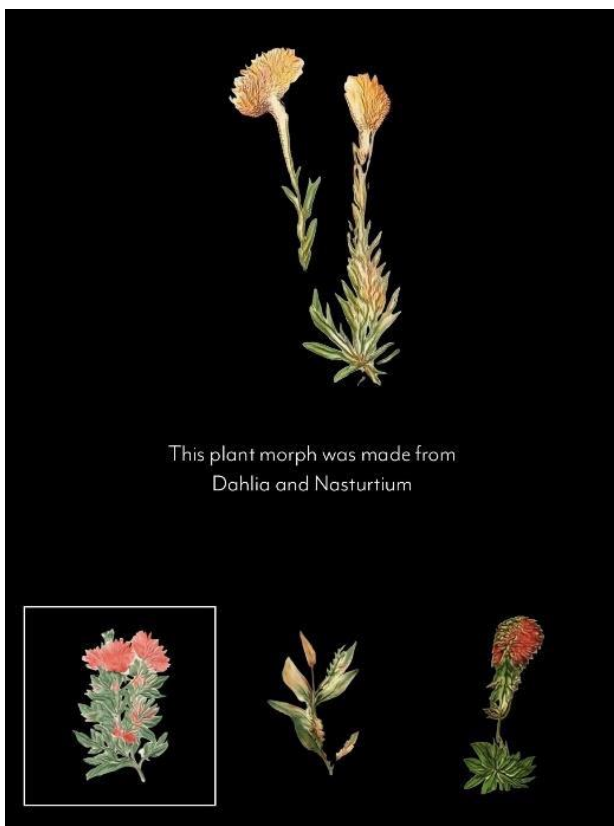
Infinite Herbarium 2021



Infinite Herbarium 2021, was developed by Caroline Rothwell in collaboration with Google Creative Lab for The National at the MCA and Royal Botanic Gardens.

A botanical experience across art, science and Machine Learning, *Infinite Herbarium* aims to expand our experience of the vast, diverse botanical world – creating connectivity to plants and their threatened ecosystems.

Through a process of interactive learning and art production, participants' encounters with real world plants are filtered through data sets and historical archives from the open source Biodiversity Heritage Library, creating curious new hybrid forms. The artist invites the audience to create their own morphed hybrid plants using the QR code.



Create your own hybrid plant

- Scan the QR code with your smartphone and follow the instructions to create your own morphed hybrid plant.
- What two plants did you select?
- What characteristics does the new hybrid plant take from each of the original “parent” plants? What does it look like?
- The artist has enabled participants to be actively involved with this artwork. The artist wants the audience to experience the vast diverse botanical world. How has our own input, as part of the viewing audience, widened our understanding of this work?
- What did you learn about plant diversity in our environment? Do you think humans will have to do more to save threatened plant species or create new ones to cope with the changing environmental conditions?

Art making

Art making ideas to try with your students

Plant Collage

- Imagine two or more plant species combined with everyday objects you might find in a hardware shop, such as plumbing, taps, drains.
- Create a collage using photos of plants from your own home or at a local park. You could use some images of unusual or threatened plants too. Choose one or two of your man-made images to include and extend the meaning of the work, such as plumbing parts (ie a mirror means we see ourselves reflected and implies our involvement, a drain or plug implies down the sink)
- Look at your finished collage. What does the inclusion of hardware pieces convey to the audience? What meaning is created?

Create a new species

- Create a new species of plant by creating a composite of two or more plants you collect.
- Start by collecting flowers and plants, or if unable to do this then photograph plants. You may wish to press and dry any plants you collect.
- Create your new plant species by selecting and rearranging parts of your plant.
- Draw your new plant to look like a botanical specimen of a newly discovered species. You may wish to add watercolour.
Create a name for your plant and write it underneath your drawing. Don't forget to sign and date your artwork in the left -hand side.
- Does it look like a botanical artwork of a rare and exotic species? Yes / No? Why?

Threatened Species 3-D artwork

- Think of an animal or plant species threatened by pollution or our contemporary lifestyle.
- Collect images and consider how you can display this species to look like a museum specimen. How can you make it three dimensional? What materials can you use? Can you place it in a cabinet or display box?
- Create a museum label, called a tombstone, to display with your threatened or extinct species artwork that displays name (and Latin name if you can find it), date, place of origin, Gift of ...
- Display your artwork with this label.
- Does your work look like it belongs in a museum? How will the viewers respond?

Vocabulary

A la poupee print	A method of inking intaglio plates where many colours are applied at the same time
Collage	A technique of assembling an artwork with different parts, usually paper or photos
Colonization	The act of setting up a colony away from one's place of origin; sometimes seen as a negative act as it can involve an invading culture establishing control over an indigenous population
Emission	The production and discharge of something, especially gas or radiation
Engraver	an artist who etches into materials, such as metal plates or stone
Eurocentric	interpreting the world through European values or viewpoints
Exotic	of foreign origin, not native
Hybrid	combining two different elements such as species to create a new variation
Morph	to change from something to another
Sinuous	having many, curves, turns or bends; winding; like a leaf
Symbiosis	the living together of two dissimilar organisms
Theory of evolution	The theory of natural selection was first formulated in Charles Darwin's book 'On the Origin of Species'