

A NETS VICTORIA TOURING EXHIBITION

Walk

Peter Corbett Vicki Couzens Nicky Hepburn Brian Laurence
Jan Learmonth Carmel Wallace Ilka White John Wolseley

EXHIBITION REPORT



NETS
VICTORIA

www.netsvictoria.org/walk

Walk

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Walk

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Exhibition title	Walk	
Curator	Martina Copley	
Exhibition development	Initiated by artists Carmel Wallace and Ilka White Supported by Glenelg Shire and managed by NETS Victoria	
Tour management	NETS Victoria	
Works of art	30	
Tour venues	Portland Arts Centre (VIC)	5 November 2007 – 2 December 2007
	Horsham Regional Art Gallery (VIC)	11 December 2007 – 3 February 2008
	Hamilton Art Gallery (VIC)	12 February 2008 – 23 March 2008
	Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery (NSW)	4 April 2008 – 4 May 2008
	Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale (VIC)	31 May 2008 – 29 June 2008
	Burnie Regional Gallery (TAS)	15 August 2008 – 14 September 2008
	Riddoch Art Gallery (SA)	18 October 2008 – 30 November 2008
	Flinders University Art Museum (SA)	23 January – 28 February 2009*
	Bunbury Regional Art Galleries (WA)	2 May – 14 June 2009
	Shepparton Art Gallery (VIC)	18 July – 23 August 2009
	Counihan Gallery, Brunswick (VIC)	28 August – 27 September 2009
Tour supporter	Visions of Australia	
Exhibition supporter	Arts Victoria – Arts Development (Creation and Presentation); Australia Council (New Work); NETS Victoria's Exhibition Development Fund; Gordon Darling Foundation; Glenelg Hopkins Catchment; Management Authority; Portland Aluminium; Friends of the Great South West Walk; Glenelg Shire Council Tourism Fund	
Exhibition admission	Free	
Tour venue attendance	22,386	
Viewing days	378	
Public programs	26	

EXHIBITION OBJECTIVES

Through developing and touring this exhibition, NETS Victoria aimed to:

- > Create **access for audiences** across regional Australia to the best contemporary art, craft and design, through the presentation of the exhibition at outstanding public galleries complimented by a range of interpretive publications and learning programs.
- > Provide **support for leading Australian artists** to develop new works in response to the Great South West Walk and presenting these works in the context of a high quality exhibition that is presented to a diverse audience across the country, increasing their profile and creating opportunities for expanding professional networks.
- > Deliver a valuable **service for regional galleries** through the provision of a quality exhibition in all respects, complimented by an array of interpretive publications and learning programs, marketing support and installation assistance.
- > Ensure the **promotion of the Great South West Walk**, through the exhibition within each gallery and in supporting publications and programs.



Jan LEARMONTH *River Boat* 2006, wood, metal, fish line
Courtesy the artist and Gallery 101 (Melbourne). Photographer: Terence Bogue

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ORIGINS

Less than three years ago, Ilka White and I were walking along a section of the Great South West Walk discussing the benefits of spending extended time in nature and the effects such experiences may have on the creative practices of artists who do so. Ilka had recently returned from an artists' trip organised by Birds Australia to their Central Australian property, Newhaven. She was brimming with enthusiasm for the immersive process of experiencing nature by being truly in it, unencumbered by extraneous structures and routines.



The artists on the Great South West Walk, 2006

We discussed the precedent of such trips to an interior wilderness, both geographical and metaphorical, often made by people in search of spiritual enlightenment and well-documented throughout history and across cultures. In the words of A.D. Hope, 'From the deserts the prophets come.' Many such trips to the interior of the continent have been made by Australian artists, and the outcomes of such journeys have not only helped us visualise these remote areas, but have also added greatly to an understanding of the complexity of our country.

Yet, as Ilka and I walked along the track skirting the Bridgewater Lakes in my own 'backyard', I thought that the downside of this tendency to prioritise 'the centre' as our spiritual core was that it encouraged a feeling of being foreign or 'other' in places that are said to epitomise the essence of their country. It could be said that Australians are essentially a displaced people and as such often feel a lack of personal integration into the landscape they occupy. Such alienation makes destructive processes more likely. The development of a sense of connection to the land we actually live on is vital to our sense of belonging to the land. Ilka and I decided to focus on the land that was literally beneath our feet and develop a project that would totally immerse artists in this precious pocket of wilderness environments.

The ensuing Great South West Walk Art Project was intended as a celebration of the unique beauty and increasingly endangered natural environments cradled in the far south-west corner of Victoria, and of walking as an all-encompassing method of experiencing such environments. The 'archive' of creative description and interpretation the artists would develop for the area would complement that of scientists and land managers, contributing to non-arts solutions and a cross-fertilisation of ideas about the valuing of this land. The interest already shown by local and national environment, tourism, historical, business, art and cultural interest groups is indicative of the project's scope.

Numerous partnerships and grants, both locally and on a state and national level, have enabled the project to develop. I can't thank enough the many people who generously shared their expertise and resources.

Carmel Wallace

Artist and joint coordinator of the Great South West Walk Art Project

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The Great South West Walk

The Great South West Walk is an important part of the traditional country of the Gunditjmara people who have a recorded history of over 10,000 years on the southwest coast. Before embarking on their journey, the artists featured in Walk were given a traditional smoking ceremony by the local indigenous community to keep them safe and to help them view the landscape with a broader vision and enhance their senses.

In 1980, the founders of the Great South West Walk, Sam Bruton and Bill Golding, conceived plans for a 250 kilometre track that would feature four contrasting environments – the Cobboboonee Forest, the Glenelg River, the beach of Discovery Bay, and the cliffs and capes of Bridgewater and Nelson.

The area is one of extraordinary beauty and diversity and is rich in wildlife and native vegetation. This visionary project was developed with the support of the local community and the Great South West Walk was opened to the public in 1983. Today, the Friends of the Great South West Walk play an integral role in protecting, conserving and enhancing the Walk and its environs.

In March 2006, the artists featured in Walk journeyed for three weeks, spending about five days navigating each of the four distinct environments along the Great South West Walk.



Artist and joint coordinator Ilka White's journal from the Great South West Walk, 2006. Photography Terence Bogue

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1 . THE COBBOBONE FOREST

This section of the walk is through classic Australian eucalypt forest. The track is flat and even with nice valleys and river crossings. It explores the headwaters of the Surry and Fitzroy rivers where ferns flourish in the gullies. Birds include Gang gangs, Cockatoos, Crimson rosellas and endangered species such as the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo. Kangaroos and emus abound.

Tuesday 21 March 2006

DAY 1 Portland to Cubby's Camp (20km)

Bam Nun's Beach Portland: Special send-off event, including 'smoking-ceremony' to be presented by local indigenous community (coordinated by Damein Bell).

Wednesday 22 March

DAY 2 Cubby's Camp to Cut-Out Camp (15km)

10am - 11am: Field Naturalists to join walk and share knowledge.

Thursday 23 March

DAY 3 Cut-Out Camp (Surry Ridge)

Doug Phillips to lead an off-track excursion to sites of special significance for culture, flora and fauna, including powerful owl & yellow-bellied glider.

Friday 24 March

DAY 4 Cut-Out Camp to Fitzroy Camp (22km)

Saturday 25 March

DAY 5 Fitzroy Camp (Jackass Fern Gully)

2 . THE GLENELG RIVER AND GORGE

The trees grow shorter and more rugged as the track approaches the banks of the Glenelg River. The track winds alongside the river and then up along the rim of the gorge with spectacular lookouts. The river is tidal, and the estuary widens considerably as it approaches the sea. Wildlife is in abundance and includes platypus, ducks, moorhens, emus, kangaroos, wallabies, possums, koalas, wombats, and kingfishers. More than 700 species of native plants bloom in the bush.

Sunday 26 March 2006

DAY 6 Fitzroy Camp to Moleside Landing (22km)

Monday 27 March

DAY 7 Moleside Landing to Pritchards by canoe (10km)

Tuesday 28 March

DAY 8 Pritchards to Forest Camp North by canoe (11km)

Wednesday 29 March

DAY 9 Forest Camp to Hutchessons by canoe (10.8km)

10am - 11am: Field biologists led walk – impact of land clearing upstream on the life of the river. Birds Australia biologists to discuss endangered species – Red-tailed Black Cockatoo.

Thursday 30 March

DAY 10 Hutchessons to Princess Margaret Rose Caves (6km)

Canoe Hutchessons to Sandy Waterholes 2.7km. Walk from Sandy Waterholes to Princess Margaret Rose Caves 3.2km.

Friday 31 March

DAY 11 Princess Margaret Rose Caves

Explore the great limestone formations of the caves and gorge.

Saturday 1 April

DAY 12 Princess Margaret Rose Caves to Nelson by boat (13km)

6pm: Slide presentation by Prof. John Sherwood, Deakin University, Warrnambool, on 'The Evolution, Behaviour, and Ecology of the Estuary'.

Sunday 2 April

DAY 13 Nelson

Glenelg estuary, small riverside town. Field Officers from Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority – history of the river and environmental problems currently being addressed. Field Naturalists' led excursion to explore the estuary environs. Evening dinner includes community invitation to 'meet the artists'.

3 . DISCOVERY BAY BEACH AND MOUNT RICHMOND

This section of the walk is wild, exposed and exhilarating. Few beaches in Australia run for 55 kilometres on open sand facing such gigantic surf as the beach of Discovery Bay. There are huge mobile sand dunes around Swan Lake and beautiful deep water just inland at Lake Monibeong. Mount Richmond is an extinct volcano with ocean views, tall forests, open heath land, dense wetlands and abundant wildlife, including the uncommon Southern Potoroo. Mount Richmond National Park claims 450 species of plants in its diverse habitats.

Wednesday 5 April

DAY 16 Swan Lake

Explore the dunes and lake surrounds. 10 - 11am: Field Naturalists' led walk – explore the huge mobile sand dunes and local plant and animal life.

Thursday 6 April

DAY 17 Swan Lake to Tarragal Camp (20 km) (via Mount Richmond National Park)

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Monday 3 April
DAY 14 Nelson to Lake Monibeong Camp (22km)

Tuesday 4 April
DAY 15 Lake Monibeong to Swan Lake (16.5km)

Friday 7 April
DAY 18 Tarragal to Bridgewater Bay (18km)
(via Whites' Beach, Blow Holes and Petrified Forest)
Meet Marine Park expert at White's Beach.

4 . THE THREE CAPES AND BAY

Cape Bridgewater has some of the highest coastal cliffs in Victoria and protects a bay that stretches in a perfect crescent around the rim of a huge, ancient volcano crater. Swell lines echo the circle of the caldera. Lookouts offer breathtaking views over coves towards Cape Nelson. Cape Grant has a large gannet colony. Blue whales, Southern Right whales, seals and dolphins are abundant around the capes.

Saturday 8 April
DAY 19 Bridgewater Bay
Visit the seal colony by boat. Evening dinner includes community invitation to 'meet the artists'.

Sunday 9 April
DAY 20: Bridgewater Bay to Mallee Camp (21 km)
1pm: Lunch stop at Murrell's Beach. Local resident will share his knowledge of the history (cultural and natural) of this area, as well as his experience of walking the whole of the Victorian coast last year. Visit to lighthouse at Cape Nelson and one night accommodation at the lighthouse keeper's cottage.

Monday 10 April
DAY 21 Mallee Camp to Portland (17.5km)
Visit Yellow Rock, a site of special significance for aboriginal people. 12 noon: Meet local park ranger at Point Danger for guided visit to the gannet colony.

Note: Reasonable walking, including rests = 4kms / hour



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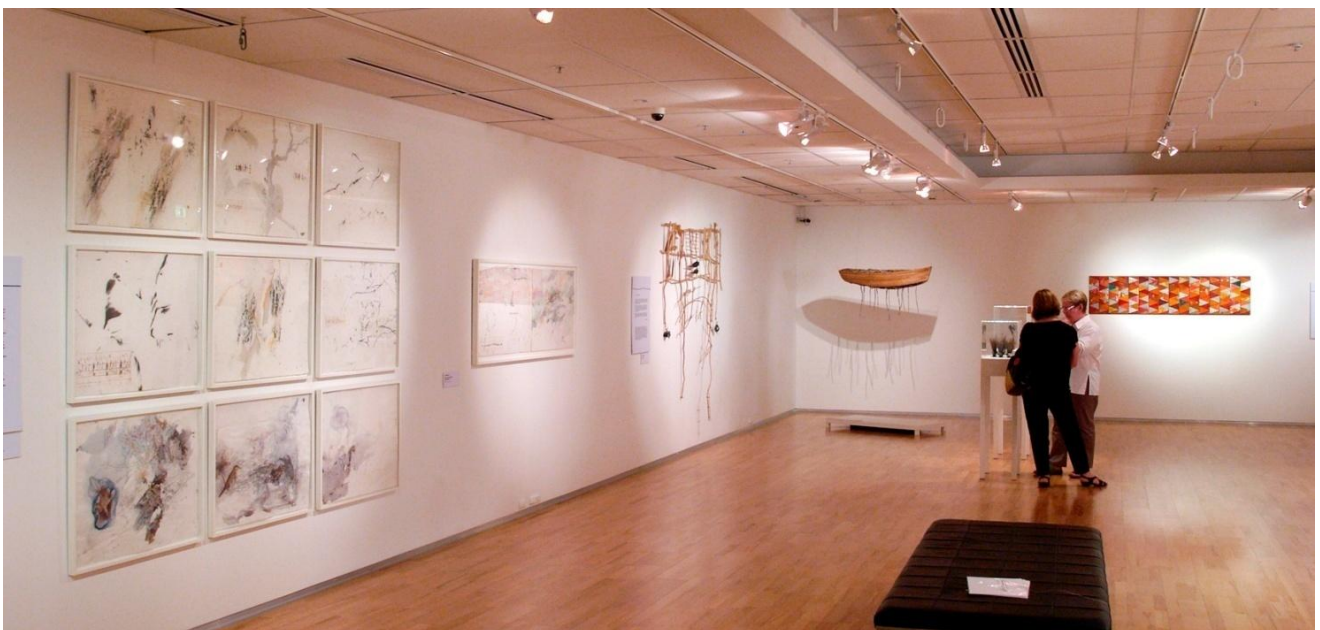
Peter Corbett Vicki Couzens Nicky Hepburn Brian Laurence Jan Learmonth Carmel Wallace Ilka White John Wolseley

THE EXHIBITION

Walk presents the work of eight Australian artists – Peter Corbett, Vicki Couzens, Nicky Hepburn, Brian Laurence, Jan Learmonth, Carmel Wallace, Ilka White and John Wolseley. At the heart of this exhibition is a 250 kilometre trek along the Great South West Walk, an increasingly endangered natural environment cradled in the far south-west corner of Victoria.

For three weeks, this seemingly diverse group of artists walked through forest and river, estuary and bay to create work in response to their experience of an ever-shifting environment. Caught in the movement of the landscape, the artists followed a path that took them far from the familiarity and isolation of the studio. They sought to collaborate with nature and with one another – not to make the landscape meld with some ideal of representation, but to inhabit it, embrace the unexpected and be open to an infinite number of possible creative enquiries. Along the Walk, local specialists including field naturalists, scientists and indigenous spokespeople joined the artists to share their expertise and passionate engagement with this ancient land.

Walk reinstates a sense of empathy towards the natural world. It is a space in which to reflect on the fragile state of habitat and its increasing vulnerability – a meditation on this precarious relationship between nature and world. Art expressing its relation to land, this exhibition is an invitation to discover what new meanings we are making of this place – to figure our relationship to the land and understand how the connections between inhabitant and eco-system may be meaningfully re-established.



Installation photograph of 'Walk' at Flinders University Art Museum, 2009. Photographer Michal Klivanek

LIST OF WORKS

Peter CORBETT**Journey into Light**

2007

high definition video

8 minutes duration

Vicki COUZENS**meerreng leerpeen (Earth Song)**

acrylic on canvas

150 x 120cm

ponponpoorramook (Red-tailed Black Cockatoo Feather)

2007

copperplate etching, one colour with aquatint

framed, ed. 1/25

38 x 27.5cm unframed

kapang (Spotted Quol)

2007

copperplate etching, one colour with aquatint

framed, ed. 1/25

38 x 27.5cm unframed

ngayook leerrpeen (White Cockatoo Song)

2007

copperplate etching, one colour with aquatint

framed, ed. 1/25

27.5 x 38cm unframed

mootpa leempeeyt (Midden / Camp Site)

2007

copperplate etching, one colour with aquatint

framed, ed. 1/25

27.5 x 38cm unframed

moornong yaweetj (Yam Basket)

2007

copperplate etching, one colour with aquatint

framed, ed. 1/25

27.5 x 38cm unframed

ngoongala yoolooween (Unseen / Unacknowledged)

2007

copperplate etching, one colour with aquatint

framed, ed. 1/25

38 x 27.5cm unframed

koorooke koorramook (Grandmother Cloak)

2007

possum skin, waxed linen thread, wattle seed sap,

ochre, pokerwork designs

175 x 140cm

Nicky HEPBURN**Xanthorrhoea**

2007

fine silver, sterling silver, copper.

20 pieces, 14 sterling silver (some oxidized), 6

copper patina finish

1.5 x 0.2 x 17cm each, Installation 12 x 16 x 22cm

Canopy, Reflection and Inkpot

2007

sterling silver, chrome plate, oxidation

3 pieces

Dimensions variable. 3.3 x 3.3 sphere; 4 x 4

sphere; 2.3 x 5.3 x half sphere

Mulloway Scales

2007

sterling silver, fine silver

2 necklaces, linked

1 x 0.2 x 50cm each, installation 1 x 0.2 x 100cm

Seed Case

2007

sterling silver, 18ct gold, silk thread

necklace

2 x 2 x 40cm

Kelp, For Lynn Murrell, Galls I, Banksia, Cuttlefish, Seed Pods, Galls II, Bark.

2007

sterling silver oxidized; shell grit and resin; leaf;

sterling silver oxidized; cuttlefish; found seed pods;

steel & sterling silver; sterling silver bleached; tree

bark.

8 rings

Dimensions variable.

Knobby Club Rush

2007

sterling silver bleached

10 stick pins

1.7 x 20cm to 1.1 x 14cm each, Installation 2 x 15 x 20cm

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NICKY HEPBURN AND ILKA WHITE

Weather Vanes

2007

sea bird feathers, sterling silver

Dimensions Variable. Installation 30cm x 20cm x 120cm

Pale Pale Day

2007

sterling silver, nylon monofilament, cotton, linen, silk, viscose-rayon

Dimensions Variable. Installation 5cm x 40cm x 110 cm

BRIAN LAWRENCE

Sonic Magnifications

Cobboboonee Dawn

Moleside Middy

Lower Glenelg

Discovery Bay

10 minutes duration each

MP3 player, speakers

JAN LEARMONTH

River Story

2006

wood, metal, feathers, shell

200 X 175 X 10cm

River Boat

2006

wood, metal, fish line

Height Variable x 50 x 110cm

Nest II

2006

Metal

25 x 6 x 6cm

Three Boats

2006

Casuarina leaves, metal

19.5cm x Width & Depth Variable

CARMEL WALLACE

Beached Forest

2007

weathered cargo wedges

4 panels

45 x 45 x 40cm each,. Installation 45 x 180 x 40cm

Marking a Walk

2007

triangular walking direction markers

4 panels

45 x 45cm each. Installation 180 x 45cm

Red Sea 2

2006

beach-found plastic, cable-ties

120 x 120 x 10cm

ILKA WHITE

Dune

2007

sea bird feathers, silk, cotton

140 x 200 x 10cm

Casting

2007

nylon monofilament, cotton, silk, linen, viscose, rayon

6.5 x 14 x 43cm

Sheath

2007

fish scales, silk, cotton thread, monofilament

6 x 6 x 18cm

JOHN WOLSELEY

The Sound of the Forest - Cobboboonee

Sonograms

2006-2007

carbonized wood, watercolour, graphite on paper

9 pieces, 56 x 76cm each (paper), Installation 168

x 228cm (180 x 240 approximate wall space with

6cm gap)

Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater - Lake Monibeong

2006

carbonized wood, watercolour on paper

2 pieces, 77 x 56cm each (paper), Installation 77 x

118cm

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TOUR SUPPORTERS



A NETS Victoria touring exhibition

TOUR SUPPORTER



Australian Government
Visions of Australia

This exhibition is supported by Visions of Australia, an Australian Government program supporting touring exhibitions by providing funding assistance for the development and touring of Australian cultural material across Australia.

EXHIBITION SUPPORTERS

The creation and presentation phase of this project was supported by the Victorian Government through Arts Victoria and the Community Support Fund.

**ARTS
VICTORIA**



Winda Mara Aboriginal Corporation

Cape Bridgewater Coastal Camp

Macs Hotel Portland

Nelson Hotel

Glenelg River Cruises

CATALOGUE SUPPORTER



National Exhibitions Touring Support (NETS) Victoria is supported by the Victorian Government through Arts Victoria and the Community Support Fund, by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body; and through the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments. NETS Victoria also receives significant in-kind support from the National Gallery of Victoria.

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DESTINATIONS

The tour began in the region of the Great South West Walk, travelling to galleries across the country which have demonstrated an interest in the environment and landscape.



Portland Arts Centre (VIC)

Horsham Regional Art Gallery (VIC)

Hamilton Art Gallery (VIC)

Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery (NSW)

Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale (VIC)

Burnie Regional Gallery (TAS)

Riddoch Art Gallery (SA)

Flinders University Art Museum (SA)

Bunbury Regional Art Galleries (WA)

Shepparton Art Gallery (VIC)

Counihan Gallery, Brunswick (VIC)

5 November 2007 – 2 December 2007

11 December 2007 – 3 February 2008

12 February 2008 – 23 March 2008

4 April 2008 – 4 May 2008

31 May 2008 – 29 June 2008

15 August 2008 – 14 September 2008

18 October 2008 – 30 November 2008

23 January – 28 February 2009*

2 May – 14 June 2009

18 July – 23 August 2009

28 August – 27 September 2009

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DESIGN

BRANDING

Marianna Berek Lewis of 5678 Design developed a visual identity for the exhibition. Her brief was to respond to the following:

- The spirit of place – both in the sense of the frame of mind which is evoked when you are immersed in nature, and in regard to the environment, its biodiversity and its history, and the sense of one's place in the realm of things.
- The experience of walking – including the project being a collaborative experience with both shared experiences and a solitary sense of intimate relationship to the landscape or the natural world.
- The creative process as a journey (from experience and feeling to idea and making).

The brand utilises handwritten typography and a meandering line which moves across the page throughout the print and electronic publications and across the signage within the space. The palette of blue/green and white are evocative of the natural world, particularly referencing the marine vegetation of Discovery Bay.

No single work by one artist was favoured above the others for the catalogue. We chose to use a photograph of a page of Ilka White's journal created during her experience of the Great South West Walk for the invitation to convey a sense of the origin of the exhibition and what the project was aiming to encapsulate – the experience of the artists' journey through the landscape which informed these important works of art.



Installation photograph of 'Walk' at Flinders University Art Museum, 2009. Photographer Michal Klivanek

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EXHIBITION DESIGN AND DISPLAY FURNITURE

Erik North of LEV Design was commissioned to produce the exhibition design and display furniture for this exhibition. Erik works regularly with Craft Victoria on their exhibition design and is also an artist and furniture maker. Erik spent significant time meeting with the artists in their studios and working with the exhibition curator and NETS Victoria in determining our requirements and developing an overall aesthetic for the exhibition.

Given that many of the works were small and subtle, the exhibition furniture needed to be light and elegant. As the exhibition was touring nationally, we also needed for the furniture to be compact, durable and easy to install. Erik designed a new system for NETS Victoria whereby the legs of each display case are removed for packing.

To protect many of the delicate works, NETS Victoria worked closely with Erik and the crating company TED Fine Art Australia to secure the works of art to the 'dress' panels for the duration of the tour. These dress panels were then packed into compartments within crates for travel. This system ensured that the works of art were presented to the highest possible standard throughout the tour and arrived back to the artists in the condition in which they were provided.

Erik's design solution was extremely thoughtful and complimented the works of art perfectly.



Installation photograph of 'Walk' at Flinders University Art Museum, 2009. Photographer Michal Kluvanek

ENGAGING AUDIENCES

INTERPRETIVE MATERIALS

Strategies for engaging audiences comprised a range of publications and learning programs, including:

Catalogue: A 38 page full-colour catalogue was produced by the NETS Victoria. The catalogue included a curatorial essay by Martina Copley, an essay by the initiating artist Carmel Wallace and an essay by guest writer Kit Wise from the Faculty of Art and Design, Monash University. The artists each provided a short text on the experience of the walk and how it informed their work which accompanied the colour reproductions of a number of their works photographed by Terence Bogue. The catalogue also included artists' biographies, acknowledgements of supporters and tour information. 1,000 copies were produced in 2007, and a second reprint of 500 copies was produced in 2009.

Room brochure: As such a significant number of people within the community of the Glenelg Shire had supported and contributed to this project, the artists, curator and NETS Victoria had sought to include their 'voices' in the catalogue in some way. The curator was overwhelmed with text and images from the community. Within our limited print budget, it was apparent that it would be difficult to include these submissions in the actual catalogue. Instead we chose to develop a free PDF publication which included more substantial information about the Great South West Walk and the artists' experiences, and the significance of the walk to the local community. Copies were provided free in the exhibition space for audiences.

Website: A website dedicated to the exhibition was developed by NETS Victoria with links to each participating venue. The site included introductory information about the exhibition, the tour itinerary, interviews with the artists, a short essay from the curator and the education resource. The website also linked to all exhibition partners and sponsors.



Installation photograph of 'Walk' at Flinders University Art Museum, 2009. Photographer Michal Klivanek

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PROMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Media kit and advertising: all receiving galleries were provided with a digital media kit, prepared by NETS Victoria's Communications Manager which included media releases, supporting information, sponsor logos and quality digital reproductions of artworks for promotional purposes prior to the exhibition's arrival. NETS Victoria placed a range of advertisements throughout the tour in arts publications including Art Almanac, Art Gallery Guide Australia, Art Monthly, Trouble and Object magazine. NETS Victoria undertook a state-wide publicity campaign and with the assistance of the media kit, each venue also successfully promoted the exhibition within their local media.

Postcard: A coloured postcard featuring images of the four regions of the Great South West Walk was produced in partnership with the Friends of the Great South West Walk. The postcard included the website and was used to promote the tour at venues and other tourist locations.

Invitation: A full colour double DL invitation was produced featuring a reproduction of Ilka White's journal, a short blurb about the project and the web address and acknowledgements and logos of all stakeholders in the project. The invitations were overprinted by host galleries with their opening and other event information as well as their own stakeholder logos. A VIP mailing list which included NETS Victoria's Board, staff and funding representatives, was provided to each of the galleries. The invitations, sent direct mail, were used for promotional purposes. A digital invitation was also distributed by some host galleries via email.



*Nicky Hepburn and Ilka White
'Weathervanes'. Installation
photograph of 'Walk' at
Flinders University Art
Museum, 2009. Photographer
Michal Kluvanek*

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LEARNING PROGRAMS



Above: John Wolseley speaking at Horsham Art Gallery, 2008. Photography Horsham Art Gallery.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Walk inspired a series of outstanding and innovative public programs over the course of the tour. Through the support of Visions of Australia, NETS Victoria was able to facilitate talks and workshops at each of the host galleries. Rather than dictating the format of the programs, NETS Victoria offered a range of ideas for various audiences and assisted through liaising with the artists, arranging travel and promoting the events.

Programs were extremely creative and varied in their structure. The curator Martina Copley gave a number of floor talks. Artist and instigator of the project Carmel Wallace gave a large number of talks and workshops throughout the tour to great interest. She is also an accomplished lecturer in a range of media and was very proficient at developing specific programs for a range of age groups.

Right: Shepparton Art Gallery's public program held in conjunction with 'Walk', 2009. Photography Shepparton Art Gallery.



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We were extremely pleased that a number of the galleries initiated a 'walk' outside the gallery space in their own community, engaging their local artists and bringing to attention the area's unique landscapes. John Wolseley and Nicky Hepburn both guided various walks to great success.

Host galleries also capitalised on the relationships established with the supporters of the exhibition including The Wilderness Society and the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority, marketing to their networks and inviting key individuals to participate in programs.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

NETS Victoria is committed to supporting host galleries engage education audiences. NETS Victoria commissioned education consultant Louise Hall to develop a two part Education Resource for this exhibition. The aim of the Resource was to assist staff at each host gallery and teachers in their respective region to develop ideas and activities for students prior to, during and after a visit to the exhibition *Walk*. The

Resource was divided in to two discrete publications for Junior and Senior levels. Fully illustrated, the Resources were used in conjunction with the suite of other publications produced in support of this exhibition and were available free to download from NETS Victoria's website.

Host gallery staff responded very positively to the resource. Gippsland Art Gallery stated "*The resource was provided to ten schools who attended the exhibition. Many discussed the concept of the exhibition and the works within prior to the visit and then provided the students with the worksheets post-visit. The*

resource also proved invaluable tool for Gallery guides". Horsham Art Gallery added "In particular the student and teacher notes were used to open discussion about artworks with the various tour groups – extremely helpful with school students' discussions."



Above: Artist Carmel Wallace presenting a workshop for school students at Hamilton Art Gallery. Right: a student's finished work of art.

TOUR EVALUATION

VISITOR EVALUATION

In mid 2008, NETS Victoria partnered with Ticketmaster to develop a Visitor Evaluation program, designing a DL card and developing a spreadsheet within which information could be recorded and analysed. A feedback box to hold the cards was designed and manufactured by Erik North. Feedback is both quantitative and qualitative and cards were collected from visitors to Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale; Burnie Regional Gallery; Riddoch Art Gallery; Bunbury Regional Art Galleries; Shepparton Art Gallery; Counihan Gallery, Brunswick. Overall findings and data are detailed in the report provided in the Appendix.



How visitors found out about the exhibition

37% of visitors cited word of mouth as the main way they found out about the exhibition. This is a reflection that people tend to come to an exhibition if they hear and trust that it is a quality exhibition that is worth their time. With 32% of visitors attending the exhibition because of some form of advertising it is a reflection of the importance of maintaining good local media coverage.

Duration of visit

The exhibition received a good viewing time with 34% staying longer than half an hour. These findings were very pleasing considering the scale of the exhibition.

Exhibition interpretation

There were a range of interpretive materials offered to the audience in this exhibition including interpretive signage and a room brochure detailing the origins of the project and information on the Great South West Walk. Visitors were asked to rate the quality of the exhibition; how easy it was to read the labels and the amount of information and the exhibition presentation. Almost 90 percent of visitors across all venues reported that they found the interpretive material either 'very good' or 'excellent'. This was really fantastic result and shows the depth of material available was both sufficient and pitched at the right level for the audience.

Attitude towards contemporary art

The vast majority of visitors reported either 'love it' or 'interests me' for their response to contemporary art. The *Walk* exhibition was a blend of contemporary art and craft practitioners, and therefore was very well received by the demographic who attended.

Comments

Visitor's qualitative feedback was overwhelmingly positive - people responded to the contemplative and atmospheric space that the exhibition provided and were very impressed with the overall quality of the exhibition. Many comments centred on how beautiful and inspiring the works were and were very pleased to see such an exhibition travel to regional areas. One repeat comment was that there

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was no seating provided for viewers to be able to sit and watch the whole of the video work. For an indicative selection of the range of comments left by visitors see below.

Amazing, inspiring for me as I am doing art at school and it helps me realise there is more to art than painting and drawing well. Natural material is used to great effect. Well done to the artists.

A privilege to view a collection of such quality in your home town. Great stuff.

This is a lovely exhibition-nice diversity of media. Thanks for bringing it to Bunbury.

As a writer (poetry and prose) whose focus is 'place'? I found 'the walk' a profoundly satisfying exhibition-inspirational and relevant in the best of artistic tradition. Thank you.

Beautiful subtle and poetic responses to the natural environment.

Very special for a foreigner like me (Holland).

The exhibition was as well paced as a walk. Would have been enhanced with some smartly placed seating near TV. This would have complemented the pauses one likes in nature.

It's beautiful, pleasant and makes you wish to be out walking in our magnificent country

Excellent choice of artists to work together. One of the best 'environmentally' orientated exhibitions have seen

Visiting companions

62% of visitors attended the exhibition with family or friends. Whilst it was an exhibition that required reflection and contemplation this group visitation is strong reflection that attending the exhibition perceived as a fun activity.

Frequency of visit

37% of visitors were visiting the gallery for the first time, which is a very good indication that the exhibition was bringing in a new audience for the galleries. However the same percentage also reported repeat and frequent visits to the gallery indicating that they are a loyal audience base.

Demographic

Unsurprisingly, a large percentage of visitors were female, but with 33 percent of visitors being male it presented a good gender cross section of the population. A common finding with gallery visitation is often the disproportionate amount of visitors over 45. Less young people visited the exhibition than might have been expected. With only 29% of visitors being under 34 years of age, it indicates a need to develop targeted programs and marketing strategies to attract youth audiences.

Postcode

It was found with most of the galleries that a strong contingency of the local communities visited the exhibition, especially Burnie and Bunbury which recorded the majority of their visitors coming from their local regions. Shepparton Art Gallery had many visitors travelling from Melbourne and other areas in Victoria, and being a metropolitan venue the Counihan Gallery recorded audiences travelling from the most diverse regions and many reporting that they already knew of the exhibition.

Summary

On the whole, the evaluation program generated insightful feedback about the exhibition and venues. The exhibition inspired people to leave extensive feedback and was extremely well received by those who made comments. Future exhibitions will be developed in light of these findings, particularly in relation to providing seating any time based media art. The visitor feedback initiative is managed by NETS Victoria and data is also provided to each tour venue.

VENUE EVALUATION

The exhibition received positive feedback from receiving venues and their visitors, a summary of which is provided below. Copies of Venue Evaluation forms are provided in Appendices.

Portland Arts Centre, Victoria

5 November 2007 – 2 December 2007

No. of exhibition days: 20

Total attendance: 275

Publicity: Media release to local newspapers/ radio/ television, newsletter, direct mail out to members, schools and community groups

Programs: Opening with talks by Ilka White and Carmel Wallace, and curator Martina Copley.

Artists' talk by Carmel Wallace and Peter Corbet

Filmmaking masterclass workshop with Peter Corbet

Venue comments: *The partnerships (established by the artists within the Glenelg Shire during the development phase)... engendered a high level of community participation; the predominant response was very positive, not only about the content of the exhibition,... the way in which it led them to look at aspects of the local environment in a new light.*

Horsham Regional Art Gallery, Victoria

11 December 2007 – 3 February 2008

No. of exhibition days: 48

Total attendance: 2527 (increased attendances by 32%)

Publicity: Media release to local newspapers/ radio/ television, brochure, newsletter, direct mail out to members, schools and community groups

Programs: Artist talk with John Wolseley – 34 attended

Children's workshop – 10 attended

Venue comments: *Professional packaged and presented exhibition that presented quality contemporary art practice that showcased a variety of forms – these are very hard things to achieve through using our own collection or self generating our own exhibition using locally based artists; one of the touring crates was too big to fit in our crate store and had to be housed in the exhibition space for the duration of the exhibition.*



Nicky HEPBURN

Cuttlefish, Seed Pods, Galls II, Bark 2007

cuttlefish, found seed pods, steel, tree bark

Courtesy the artist

Photographer: Terence

Bogue



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Hamilton Art Gallery, Victoria

12 February 2008 – 23 March 2008

No. of exhibition days: 41

Total attendance: 3108 (increased attendances by 5-10%)

Publicity: Media release to local newspapers/ radio/ television, advertising, newsletter, direct mail out to members, schools and community groups

Programs: School workshops with artist Carmel Wallace – 45 attended

Artist talks with Carmel Wallace – 90 attended

Venue comments: *The exhibition promoted partnerships with the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority and attracted a new audience of people specifically interested in the great South West Walk. The education kits were a bit too long; The programs were a great success because of the enthusiasm they engendered*

Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery, New South Wales

4 April 2008 – 4 May 2008

No. of exhibition days: 26

Total attendance: 2072

Publicity: Media release to local newspapers/ radio/ television, posters, advertising, newsletter, promotional displays, direct mail out to members, schools and community groups

Programs: Opening and Artist Talk with artists Nicky Hepburn and Ilka White

Kids activity corner focusing on drawing with graphite

Bushwalking storytime by library service for pre-school children

Children's drawing kits for use in the grounds surrounding the gallery

Venue comments: *Complementary exhibition (developed by Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery) 'To the point of Marmong' was developed in conjunction with this exhibition; Audience response was very favourable – many people spent a great deal of time in the space; The exhibition fee was good value for money in that it included exceptional work; good support material.. good exhibition furniture; artists available for public programs at no cost and good support from the touring organisation.*

Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale, Victoria

31 May 2008 – 29 June 2008

No. of exhibition days: 30

Total attendance: 1937 (an increase in visitation by 20%)

Publicity: Media release to local newspapers/ radio/ television, brochure distribution, promotional displays, direct mail out to members, schools and community groups

Public programs: Curator's talk – Martina Copley – 24 attended

Venue comments: *Audiences for the talk felt the curator spoke eloquently and informatively; many people commented on the wonderful catalogue essay; the exhibition met our expectations in regard to attracting our target audience – many tourists and outdoor enthusiasts came to see the show; There was a beautiful synergy to this exhibit... a sense of discovery, poetry and an intimate relationship with the natural environment. It was a fantastic show and a joy to install*

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Burnie Regional Gallery, Tasmania

15 August 2008 – 14 September 2008

No. of exhibition days: 30

Total attendance: 1323 (an increase in visitation by 8%)

Publicity: Media release to local newspapers/ radio/ television, media interviews, advertising, newsletter, direct mail out to members, schools and community groups

Programs: Opening speech by Patricia Sabine, President Museums Australia.
Curator Martina Copley gave a talk which was well attended.

Venue comments: *While the subject matter and actual exhibits were considered too contentious by a minority to be 'art' it greatly promoted contemporary practice to the majority of the audience. The exhibition helped raise the profile of our venue in that the Gallery's regular supporters could see at once that the art works and the exhibition design itself were special and of an excellent standard. In addition, it was the only venue in the entire state where this unique exhibition could be seen.*

art



Carmel WALLACE *Marking a Walk* (detail) 2007, aluminium signpost markers on plywood, engraving, Courtesy the artist and Gallery 101 (Melbourne). Photographer: Terence Bogue

Riddoch Art Gallery, Mt Gambier, South Australia

18 October 2008 – 30 November 2008

No. of exhibition days: 41

Total attendance: 1502

Publicity: Media release to local newspapers/ radio/ television, posters, advertising, newsletter, direct mail out to members, schools and community groups

Programs: Opening with artist talk by Carmel Wallace
Workshop with Carmel Wallace

Venue comments: *Audiences responded "Brilliant exhibition", The exhibition drew a more diverse audience due to the background of the exhibition. The exhibition fee equated to good value NETS always provides good support with their travelling exhibitions.*

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Flinders University Art Museum, Adelaide, South Australia

23 January – 1 March 2009

No. of exhibition days: 38

Total attendance: 1914

Publicity: Media release to local newspapers/ radio/ television, media interviews, advertising, direct mail out to members, schools and community groups, free listings.

Programs: Opening event and launch of the 2009 exhibition program
Artist floor talk with Carmel Wallace

Venue comments: *High level of repeat visits by interested people; excellent response from visitors – very enthusiastic; positive response from tertiary sector students and teachers; teachers made own activities based on website information; great show and great support.*

Bunbury Regional Art Galleries, Western Australia

2 May – 14 June 2009

No. of exhibition days: 43

Total attendance: 1536

Publicity: Media release to local newspapers/ radio/ television, e-newsletter, direct mail out to members, schools and community groups

Programs: Artist's floor talk with Carmel Wallace at opening - 49 attended
Workshop run by Carmel Wallace with TAFE students – 10 attended

Venue comments: *The exhibition highlighted similarities between here and the east coast – reduced the sense of isolation; It attracted the attention of a number of metro-based artists; the exhibition was very well received and highly appreciated; all feedback from the public was positive*



Vicki COUZENS - Gunditjmara Keerray Wurrong koorrookee koorramook (Grandmother Cloak)
2007. possum skin, waxed linen thread, wattle seed sap, ochre, pokerwork designs.
Courtesy the artist. Photographer: Jeremy Dillon

Shepparton Art Gallery, Victoria

18 July – 23 August 2009

No. of exhibition days: 37

Total attendance: 4926

Publicity: Media release to local newspapers/ radio/ television, brochure distribution, advertising, newsletter, direct mail out to members, schools and community groups

Programs: *Walk the Edge, Shepparton* – a weekend long program exploring the environment in the area for locally based artists hosted by Walk artist Nicky Hepburn. A virtual exhibition of the work of participants coincided with the *Walk* – 25 people participated

Venue comments: Friends Morning talk with curator Martina Copley – 23 attended
The exhibition met our expectations as the art works were highly innovative and provided a range of responses to the environment; Although it was a complex show, the support material enabled us to install and demount the show without a problem. Not many teachers brought in students to view the exhibition as part of the curriculum; the programs were a success as they were well attended and brought new people to the gallery.

Counihan Gallery, Brunswick, Victoria

27 August – 27 September 2009

No. of exhibition days: 24

Total attendance: 1266 (an increase of 15% in visitation)

Publicity: Media release to local newspapers/ radio/ television, advertising, newsletter, promotional displays, direct mail out to members, schools and community groups

Programs: Opening event with talk by curator Martina Copley – 250 attended
Public forum chaired by the exhibition curator featuring several artists from the exhibition and a speaker from the Wilderness Society's Wild Country campaign Richard Hughes – 70 attended
Art Walk and talk along the Merri Creek guided by local artist Penny Algar and Friends of the Merri Creek representative Ann McGregor – 27 people participated
A presentation about Al Gore's Climate Change Project and Art by Guy Abrahams – 25 attended

Venue comments: *Walk was an extremely well received exhibition that attracted a wide range of visitors and a lot of positive feedback; the exhibition raised awareness about the Counihan Gallery because of the diverse and new audience it attracted; several visitors told gallery staff they had travelled from interstate to see the exhibition; The exhibition met and exceeded our expectations – it was well curated and presented and all the artworks were highly refined and sophisticated; The NETS Victoria staff were very friendly, knowledgeable and helpful.*

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EXHIBITION CURATOR'S COMMENTS

From its impetus, *Walk* was about community and collaboration. The project involved a diverse group of artists working in different media who came together to make new work and to share in the experience of a local environment in the south west of Victoria. They collaborated with the landscape, local community and each other in expansive and responsive ways.

The exhibition presented a gentle invitation to reflect on the fragile state of habitat and its increasing vulnerability and it was important that it speak in a tone that invited introspection and inspired creative thinking. Looking and going slowly were emphasized. *Walk* explored the relation of art and land to promote a broader conception of landscape as a creative social, cultural, ethical and aesthetic relation to place. Artists' individual understandings of landscape threaded across disciplines and cultures to link science, industry, environment and country. *Walk* moved beyond the conventional paradigm of concern about human impact on environment, to evoke issues of individual responsibility and mindfulness. The strong material emphasis of much of the work encouraged a direct sensual and emotional response – a personal connection not unlike that felt by the artist in the landscape.

Walk was distinguished as an exhibition that is as much about the creative process as an exploration of our understandings of landscape. The exhibition catalogue, wall texts and workshops responded to people's curiosity about how and why the works were made, and the ways in which artists can contribute. *Walk* provided the artists with an opportunity to extend their current professional practice and the somewhat unpredictable nature of the project allowed for shifts which led to new work for exhibition, new projects and commissions with an environmental and community focus. In the interim after the walk and prior to the launch of the tour several artists made new work for exhibition; including Jan Learmonth, *Fragile Story*, Carmel Wallace, *Red Sea*, both at Gallery 101, Melbourne and *Driven By Form*, Riddoch Art Gallery.; *Sea*, John Wolseley, Australian Galleries, Melbourne; and Vicki Couzens, *Nguurramban: From Where We Are*, Linden Centre for Contemporary Art. Carmel Wallace and Vicki Couzens are currently working on the *Stony Rises Project 2011*, RMIT, Melbourne, and collaborated on a dry stone wall for *Fresh and Salty 2007* in South West Victoria. Ilka White and Nicky Hepburn exhibited together at EG et Al, Melbourne, 2007.



John WOLSELEY *Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater – Lake Monibeong* 2006 carbonized wood, watercolour, paper
Courtesy the artist, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery (Sydney) and Australian Galleries (Melbourne). Photographer: Terence Bogue

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Early participation and support from local and national tourism, historical, business, art and cultural groups continued to manifest through the exhibition phase. The exhibition tour, managed by NETS Victoria, extended the notion of 'community' from one defined by place to one formed by groups of people with a common link. Public programs were an opportunity to promote partnerships, community participation and extend dialogue. Forums, workshops and presentations were held in association with The Wilderness Society, Guy Abrahams' The Climate Project and the Arts, and local groups such as ALCOA, the Portland Field Naturalists, Friends of the Great South West Walk and the Windamara Aboriginal Corporation. Contributions from key local groups to the associated publications and website encouraged a sense of participation and promoted the project and the surrounding region to a broad audience.

As a model for other ventures, *Walk* inspired many of the regional exhibition venues to create their own *Walk* project with groups of local artists leading walks through local landscapes. At Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery curators developed a complementary exhibition, *To the Point of Marmong*, involving local artists responding to contested landscape. At the Counihan Gallery, Melbourne local artists guided the *Merri Creek Nature Walk*, and the Riddoch Art Gallery held a *Creative Interpretation of Local Environments Workshop*. The initiating artists of the *Walk* project have presented papers to new audiences via conferences with Education Victoria and WALK 21 and written for associated publications. *Walk* added impetus to lobbying by the Wilderness Society for a substantial reduction in logging of the Cobbobonnee Forest and 18,400 hectares (70%) of the forest is now zoned as National Park.

The project more than fulfilled my expectations. Being part of the group of artists walking the land encouraged discussion and meant that we formed trusting relationships based on a deep understanding of thinking and making. The entire project was a journey and a learning endeavour that has extended my thinking about the curatorial process and my professional practice. From pragmatic concerns; such as how to shape an exhibition for tour to a number of different venues, to the balancing of elements of storytelling and encounter, the broad interconnecting themes and finely woven threads of *Walk* translated into a rich and intriguing exhibition.

Working within a supportive framework of experienced professionals who generously shared their knowledge, my collaboration with Georgia Cribb and NETS Victoria staff; designer Erik North; writer Kit Wise; photographer Terence Bogue; education resource writer Louise Hall, and many others, allowed us to manifest a significant exhibition, publication and program. As an independent curator, I gained professional confidence and knowledge about arts and environmental networks along with a deeper understanding of audience. It was a pleasure and to publicly represent the artists and exhibition. I presented several floor talks at regional venues, chaired an artist forum, wrote a *Walk* catalogue essay, exhibition wall texts and other promotional material including an article for Insite Magazine, Museums Australia (Victoria). I formed significant positive relationships with many of my collaborators and have since been invited to speak at other environmentally focused exhibitions and write about new contemporary work. Among other arts-based projects, I am currently working on an exhibition about endangered Australian insects for possible tour in 2011.

Martina Copley
Exhibition curator



Artist's comments

Artist Ilka White and I shared a vision. With our complementary skills, we developed a plan and set about securing adequate resources. We were so lucky to have skilled and interested support at all stages of the project: organisations and individuals who ensured we had the necessary funding and administrative support to get the project up and running; local experts who happily shared their knowledge and expertise; local businesses who contributed in-kind support; a talented and very hard-working curator; gallery staff at the various venues who wholeheartedly supported the exhibition and hosted enriching complementary programs; and very importantly the team at NETS Victoria who worked so hard to ensure the exhibition was beautifully presented: from elegant display cases to quality publications - including a catalogue and on-line educational materials - and a variety of public programs at each venue. It was this input and support that ensured the exhibition reached its potential.

The outcomes of the *Walk* project, exhibition and tour have been numerous and extremely positive on many levels. The project was embraced and supported by many people and developed beyond our most extravagant dreams!

One of the reasons for instigating the project with Ilka was to bring other artists to this part of the world not only to create a multi-levelled interpretation of the environments traversed by the Great South West Walk (GSWW), but also to invigorate the local arts community. Living and working as an artist in the country can be an isolating experience and I imagined the project as a vehicle that would entice other artists to this area. This happened directly through the artists associated with the project itself, and continued as a result of the exhibition tour with many other artists visiting and working in the area. For example, I just received an email this week from Lesley Jackson, the president of the Arts Company community arts facility in Portland, who states, "We have had a fabulous artist in residence at The Arts Company - Angie Russo from Shepparton she is a sculptor, you may have heard of her? She works at the gallery and decided to come here after the 'Walk' was shown there. She is planning to come back to do some ceramic workshops."

The heightened profile of the GSWW as a result of publicity generated by the touring exhibition has been noted by the Friends of the GSWW and is evident in the increase in visits, inquiries, and website traffic generated by the *Walk* project. The Friends of the GSWW valued the project and especially the focus on community-based knowledge of the environments of the walk. As a way of acknowledging this, they nominated me for the 2007 Regional Arts Victoria Contemporary Cultural Development RAVE Award, which I received and accepted on behalf of Ilka White and the team involved in getting the project off the ground.

Other awards to come out of the *Walk* project include an Australian Cinematography Award bestowed on Peter Corbett for his filming of the environments of the GSWW. This film is an edited version of the work he did for *Walk* and was used to accompany the Discovery Symphony, a musical interpretation of the GSWW composed by Dindy Vaughn and performed at the BMW Edge Theatre at Federation Square, Melbourne, earlier this year.

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Benefits of the project include a heightened awareness of the unique environments of the south-west. The push to give the Cobboboonee Forest national park status was reinforced by the Walk project and the achievement was celebrated as the exhibition toured around the country

One of the most positive outcomes of the *Walk* project for me was a realisation of the power of local community and the strength that is felt when many layers of expertise and knowledge are given a voice and focus. The fact that an art-based project can facilitate such a response is confirmation of the value of art in an environmental and community context.

The experience of *Walk* consolidated the direction of my own art practice and was the impetus behind the body of work that I subsequently created for a solo exhibition *Red Sea* at Gallery 101 Melbourne in 2007. It led me to help develop other projects with community and environmental priorities, such as the *Kurtonitj* stone sculpture for the *Fresh & Salty - Statewide Project*, Regional Arts Victoria (collaboration with Vicki Couzens) in 2007 and the *A Seat for Vida* sculpture sponsored by the Historic Buildings Restoration Committee in Portland.

It has been great too to have my artwork presented to new audiences in a variety of places. At the end of the exhibition tour I was fortunate to have one of my pieces acquired by collectors who otherwise may not have been introduced to my work.

In 2007 Ilka and I attended WALK 21, an international conference on walking held at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre. A paper I gave on the project, *Walking & the Creative Archiving of Local Environments*, was added to the WALK 21 website. At the conference Jesse Sherwood from the Department for Victorian Communities who invited me to write an article on the project for the *Australasian Parks and Leisure* magazine which featured one of my photographs on the cover.

It has been an extremely valuable experience for me to be able to talk and give workshops at various exhibition venues and I am thankful to NETS Victoria for enabling that to happen. As a result of the *Walk* project, I have been invited to address various groups of artists interested in the environment and the role art might play in developing appreciation and respect for the natural world. In mid 2008 I was invited by Jenny Peterson from the South Gippsland Shire Council to conduct an arts forum in Leongatha. Some great discussions ensued. Jenny also took me to visit a number of artists in their studios, which was a wonderful introduction to some art practices in the region. My network of artists and others related to my practice has thus increased considerably as a direct result of the project.

All this on top of the wonderful and invaluable experience of getting to know the other artists involved in *Walk* and seeing my special home environment through their amazing eyes.

Carmel Wallace

Artist and joint coordinator of the
Great South West Walk Art Project

Peter CORBETT *Journey into the light* 2007
still from DVD high definition video, 14:00 mins. Courtesy the artist





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NETS Victoria comments

It is extremely fulfilling to bring this exhibition report together to quantify the many positive outcomes of the *Walk* exhibition. It was a privilege for the NETS Victoria team to be able to support the artists and deliver this exhibition to audiences of major public galleries across Australia.

When the artists Carmel Wallace and Ilka White approached NETS Victoria early in the development phase, they vividly described their idea to bring together eight leading Australian artists working in range of media to share a three week journey through the Great South West Walk. The artists had built relationships with key individuals from the community of the Glenelg Shire in order to bring together the resources and expertise needed to undertake this walk. In addition to the many local organisations including Portland Aluminium, Arts Victoria supported this phase of the project, with the Walk taking place in April 2006.

Significant funding was achieved for the development of new work from the Australia Council, for the presentation of the exhibition from Arts Victoria and for the production of a substantial catalogue from the Gordon Darling Foundation. This funding ensured that the artists had the freedom to develop substantial and highly resolved bodies of work in the months following the walk.

NETS Victoria worked with independent curator Martina Copley to bring the exhibition together, which was a rewarding experience. This was also the first occasion that the NETS Victoria team had worked with a number of these artists – we enjoyed the opportunity to build relationships and support their practice in presenting their work in this touring exhibition.

Our organisation was introduced to exhibition designer and manufacturer Erik North of LEV, who designed and manufactured beautiful display furniture to compliment the works of art in the exhibition. We have worked with Erik on a regular basis since then, as he has a deep understanding of the complexities of touring as well as a sensitive and refined aesthetic.

Walk was the first national tour our organisation had undertaken in many years. The scope of the tour, covering five states, was ambitious which enabled NETS Victoria and the artists to build relationships with major public galleries in regional Australia and share this outstanding exhibition with new and diverse audiences.

The generous support from Visions of Australia allowed us to achieve best practice in all aspects of the presentation, supporting publication and promotions and the tour. Host galleries were extremely pleased with the content of the exhibition and the services NETS Victoria provided. These relationships established through *Walk* will be built on in the coming years.

Audience response has been overwhelmingly positive. Visitor comments from across the country, as gathered in Visitor Books and through NETS Victoria's visitor evaluation program really have verified the success of this exhibition.

Georgia Cribb
Director

CONCLUSION

The tour of the exhibition *Walk* was an outstanding success, fulfilling our aims and surpassing all expectations. With the support of Visions of Australia, Arts Victoria and the Australia Council as well as many other community organisations, we:

- > created **access for audiences** of more than 22,000 people in regional areas across five states of Australia to an outstanding exhibition of contemporary art, craft and design by eight of Australia's leading artists. The exhibition was complimented by a series of beautiful and scholarly publications, creative and informative educational and public programs and a suite of on-line resources which enhanced visitor's engagement with the exhibition.
- > provided **support for leading Australian artists** to develop new works in response to the Great South West Walk. Artists were paid substantial fees for the creation and loan of their works of art, for the reproduction of the works in publications and for presenting public programs throughout the tour. All works were presented to the artists' specifications to the best possible standard to a very diverse audience across the country. Through the publications and an extensive marketing campaign throughout the tour, the artists profiles were increased and many opportunities for expanding professional networks were created.
- > delivered a quality **service for regional galleries** through the provision of an outstanding exhibition in all respects, complimented by an array of interpretive publications and learning programs, marketing support and installation assistance. Venue feedback confirms that we more than fulfilled this aim.
- > ensured the **promotion of the Great South West Walk**, through the exhibition within each gallery and in supporting publications and programs, which can be measured through an increase in enquiries and visitation to the region and from audience feedback.



Ilka WHITE *Casting* 2007, nylon monofilament, cotton, silk, linen, viscose, rayon, Courtesy the artist. Photographer: Terence Bogue