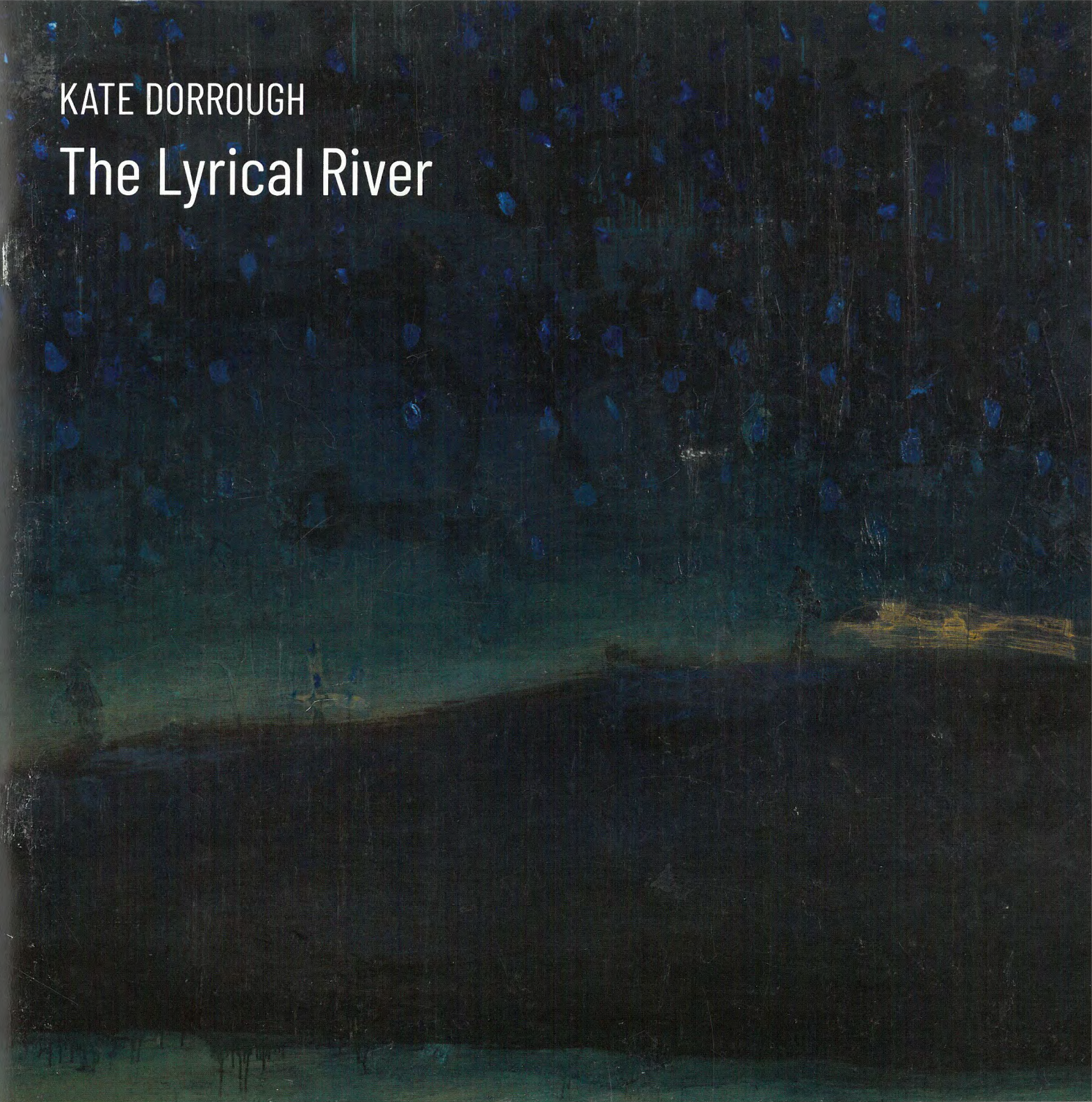
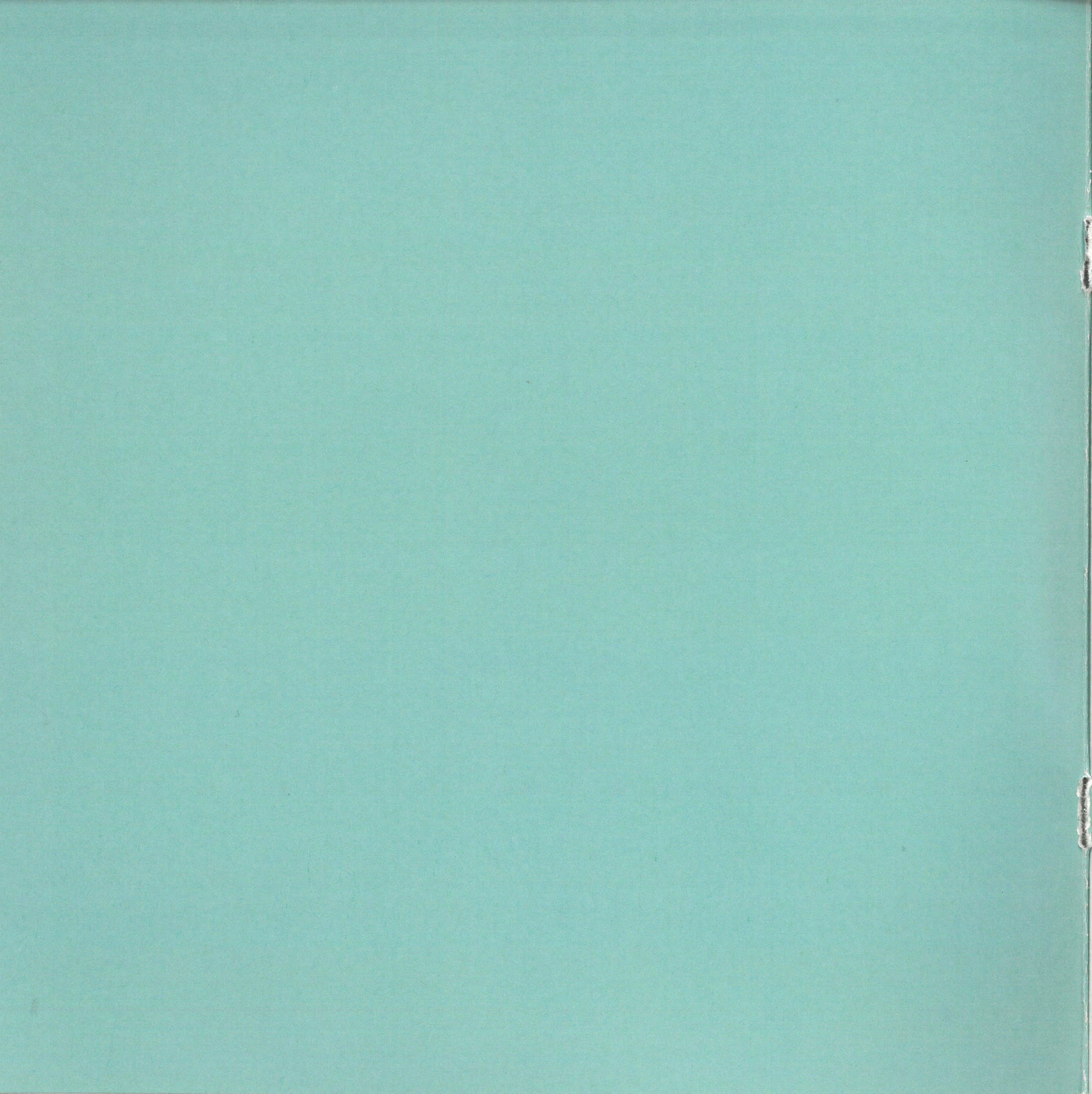


KATE DORROUGH

The Lyrical River





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The Lyrical River



The Mighty Manning River, acrylic on linen, 169 x 214 cm, 2019

Effigy of a river, concrete, foam, ceramic shards and shells, 81 x 52 x 57 cm, 32 x 28 x 32 cm, 50 x 84 x 69 cm, 40 x 37 x 40 cm

The fertile life of rivers and streams has always stirred the human imagination. Throughout western history, poets from Coleridge and Tennyson to Emily Dickinson have waxed lyrical about the force of a river flowing out to the sea, or the quietude of a gentle brook or trickling stream. Late last century Australian painter Arthur Boyd based his final suite of paintings around his beloved Shoalhaven River. For nearly a decade, contemporary Sydney artist Kate Dorrough has inherited this fascination with the landscape of Australia's inland rivers.

With childhood memories of swimming in the deep river waters of the Wollomombi brook (lower Hunter Valley, NSW) embedded in her psyche, Dorrough has long been drawn to the symbolic quality of rivers as a powerful source of life.

The river landscape has also provided the artist with the opportunity to expand her art practice. Since the 1980s she has primarily been known as a figurative painter, but in recent years Dorrough has increasingly diversified her work, paring back her landscapes to reductive abstract compositions, as well as turning her talents to hand-built ceramic vessels and objects, that resemble essentialised organic forms.

In 2011 she spent a month in Mildura, Victoria, capturing the changing moods of the Murray river, which formed the basis of her series 'The Enduring Landscape' at the Catherine Asquith Gallery in Melbourne (2011), followed by a solo show at Arthouse Gallery in Sydney (The Enduring Landscape and the Inland River, 2012).

For this exhibition at Manning Regional Art Gallery, the artist has expanded her ambitions to create a mixed media theatrical presentation of river life, specific to the Manning River environment of the northern tablelands and the Mid North Coast. To create this multi-faceted interpretation of the river, she has incorporated abstract paintings, rustic ceramic and concrete sculptures, video projections and fabric hangings, to build up a multi sensory experience of the river environment. The common link between all these forms is a rich materiality that evokes a visceral experience of the environment for the viewer.

This series has developed over several field trips to the Manning River region; undertaking plein air sketching, which was further developed and expanded back in her Sydney studio. She was inspired by the diversity of the area, with its inlets, deltas, tidal flats, lagoons and islands. The artist explored the Harrington and Saltwater National Park, where the river meets the sea and

observed the abundant fish and bird life of the Cattai wetlands.

Employing acrylic paint on linen, her layered paintings possess a rough hewn texture that suggests hidden depths, with calligraphic lines floating on the surface like some kind of primeval markings on the land; this is echoed in the tactile surfaces of her ceramic vessels.

Wandering from room to room through the exhibition is akin to meandering along a winding riverbank – the large scale acrylic paintings are stained with deep pigments – sea green, turquoise, golden yellows and deep amber. Concrete rocks tinted salmon pink and ochre are embedded with oyster shells and ceramic fragments, like ancient fossils from the rivers depths. Ceramic vessels resembling water jugs of classical antiquity are transformed into aquatic naiads, personifying the varied river systems – Channel, Tributary, Islands and Wetlands.

Scattered among these works are water birds coarsely assembled from branches found along the river bank, as well as loosely constructed emblems of river fauna and sources of human industry – fish and dairy cows, oysters and fishing boats which sit on rough timber and ceramic plinths. In exploring the river's long history, Dorrough's materials and forms reference the farming of the Manning region, as well as the timber industry that thrived by the river. Underlying all of this commercial history, she acknowledges the long history of the Biripi people upon this land.

Sounds of rushing water fill the exhibition rooms, alongside a video footage of the flowing river itself. The mystical aspects of the river are addressed by a series of ceramic water 'sprites'; simplified bleached forms with human like features. Like primordial spirit totems, they bear witness to the layered history of these changing waterways.

Dorrough's gestural works also reference the elemental forces of the river, as a source of fecundity and life, with its constant movement and elemental cycles of creation and erosion, renewal and destruction. According to the artist, her abstract markings suggest a kind of primal language of the land. It is only through some form of communion or connection with this environment that we can decipher and interpret its meaning.

Through this poetic and immersive visual experience, Kate Dorrough aims to steer the viewer's perception towards an almost animistic understanding of river life; in order to appreciate the uniqueness of this complex yet fragile ecosystem, which requires our respect and protection.



The River is our Mother, acrylic on linen, 169 x 214 cm, 2019



The Mighty Manning River, acrylic on linen, 169 x 214 cm, 2019



Running river
acrylic on linen,
152 x 167 cm, 2019



River rock and fragments
concrete, paint, ceramic
shards and snells,
13 x 17 x 12 cm, 32 x 28 x 32
cm, 40 x 37 x 40 cm, 2019



The Big Blue, acrylic on linen, 169 x 214 cm, 2019



Totems of a river
acrylic on canvas,
137 x 153 cm, 2018

Oyster, 100 x 44 x 20 cm,
Shell, 76 x 59 x 20 cm,
Cow, 73 x 46 x 19 cm, 2019
Stoneware ceramic with
glaze, concrete, foam,
timber, paint, ceramic
shards and shells



Relics of Industry, (left to right)

Cow, 73 x 46 x 19 cm,

Oyster Man, 72 x 19 x 20 cm,

Oyster, 100 x 44 x 20 cm,

River boat, The Myra, 61 x 42 x 16 cm, Shell, 76 x 59 x 20 cm, Everything came by boat, Morning Star, 61 x 88 x 27 cm, Wharf & Bridge, 74 x 36 x 17 cm

Stoneware ceramic with glaze, timber, concrete, foam, paint, wire, ceramic shards, shells



Language 2,
acrylic on linen, 137 x 153 cm, 2018

Where the river meets the sea, north,
stoneware ceramic with glaze,
55 x 30 x 30 cm, 2018

Where the river meets the sea, south,
stoneware ceramic with glaze,
40 x 36 x 22 cm, 2018





detail, *The Manning River*, video installation,
Double delta, stoneware ceramic with glaze and concrete, paint,
ceramic shards and glass, 89 x 70 x 32 cm, 2019
Fabric hangings with shells, 330 x 150 cm



River Birds,

timber, paint, fabric, plaster, (left to right, back row) 22 x 70 x 25 cm, 57 x 37 x 24 cm, 38 x 84 x 21 cm, (front row) 63 x 33 x 26, 38 x 84 x 21 cm



ARTIST STATEMENT

'The Lyrical River' is in response to a specific environment, the Manning River, the Mid North Coast, NSW.

My exhibition focuses on the importance of this river system to both its community and as an iconic cultural symbol. The river is a source of fertility with its cyclical nature of renewal and destruction. It is a potent historical and cultural emblem embedded in our literature and inherited visual language. In our nation's psyche, limited water resources, droughts and floods mark our consciousness. In its role as both caretaker and provider, the river is political and its essential ecology needs protection.

It has been a liberating experience creating this exhibition for the Manning Regional Art Gallery. It has provided me with the opportunity to extend my art practice and experiment with new mediums, such as concrete based sculptures combined with ceramic forms overlaid with video projection and fabric hangings that incorporate stitching and paper sections.

The gallery space itself, four rooms and a corridor within the original building of the Manning Regional Art Gallery, has influenced and informed the exhibition. Each room has become a site of discussion, exploring historical, social and ecological aspects of the Manning River.

As I worked and visualised the space, the exhibition evolved and became an installation that is akin to a theatrical or experiential museum experience.

Like a river, the exhibition traverses from room to room. Two-dimensional paintings and fabric hangings work as a stage set, echoing the symbolic three-dimensional ceramic and concrete sculptures. Objects are placed in dialogue with video and sound and hanging sculptures cast shadows to create an all-encompassing conversation between different mediums, forms and ideas

A participatory element invites the audience to contribute; chairs, two desks and drawing materials offer an intimate space for personal response and recollections.

I undertook several field research trips for the exhibition and loved getting to know the local towns of the Manning Valley and their history. I followed the meandering river with its unique double delta system, islands, tributaries, catchment areas and its two entrances, where the river meets the sea at Harrington and Saltwater National Park. The parks essential role in protecting estuarine habitat, fish and migratory birds was also evident at the Cattai Wetlands, a habitat sanctuary for bird life and the Wingham Brush Nature Reserve with remnant subtropical lowland rainforest.

Creating plein air sketches on site at various river banks offered the opportunity to just sit and observe the river flow, deep and strong; the meandering blue ribbon amongst fields, fresh water trickling and bubbling; and the wide and shallow salt water tidal flats with their glittering white sands. These sketches, along with research of historical accounts and stories, provided the foundation for my work back in the studio.

In referencing and acknowledging the history of the Biripi people, their river management and fishing skills, the subsequent timber clearing, dairy and oyster farming, ship building, wharfs, ports and trading, these works evolved to become symbolic totems of the life on the river and its evolution over time.

This work is a personal interpretation, a reduced and abstracted essence of the river, where gestural calligraphic marks on canvas, are an inferred language or musical denotation of the river, and direct hand built stoneware ceramic forms and rudimentary cement, wire and plaster sculptures become a series of signs or totems.

The materiality and tactility of clay, with a layers of slip, glaze and numerous firings, the layering of cement, revealing and disguising shells and ceramic shards, and wrapped wire with torn cloth soaked in plaster, echo a layering of stories and collected memories of the river.

The river becomes a place of remembering, broad and strong; it is a region of our mind, a unifying and iconic symbol.

KATE DORROUGH

2019



River fishing hooks, concrete, wire, fabric, plaster, paint (left to right) 161 x 48 x 21 cm, 110 x 42 x 14 cm, 145 x 66 x 19 cm, 132 x 56 x 16 cm

Fish, concrete, foam, shells, paint, 73 x 113 x 26 cm, 2019

Bird, timber, fabric, plaster, paint, 93 x 68 x 57 cm, 2019



Estuary, 56 x 33 x 18 cm, stoneware ceramic with glaze, 2019



Wetland, 38 x 36 x 22 cm, stoneware ceramic with glaze, wire, 2019



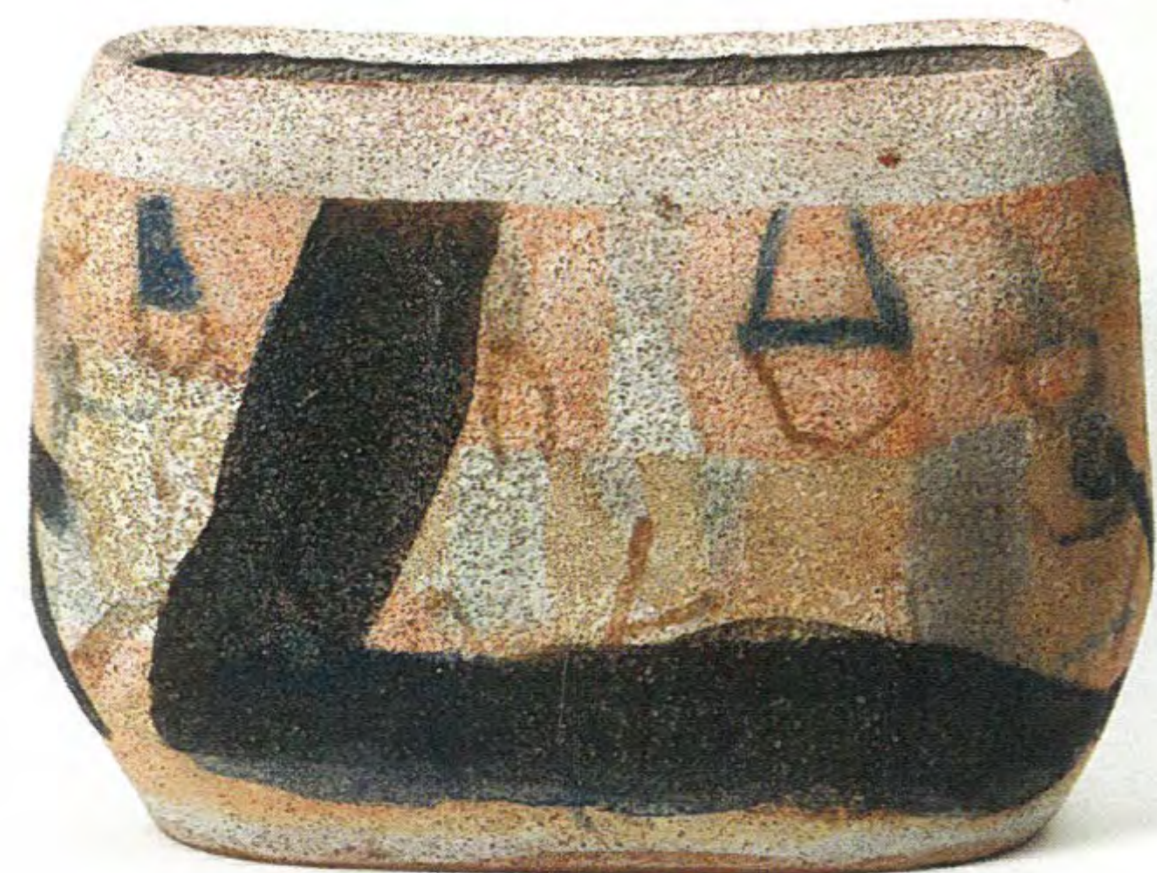
Islands, 47 x 32 x 23 cm, stoneware ceramic with glaze, 2019



Lagoon, 49 x 38 x 21 cm, stoneware ceramic with glaze, wire, 2019



Tributary, 53 x 38 x 27 cm, stoneware ceramic with glaze, wire, 2019



Soliloquy, stoneware ceramic with glaze, 53 x 38 x 34 cm, 2019 (top)
The enduring echo, stoneware ceramic with glaze, 36 x 49 x 20 cm,
2019 (bottom)

detail, *Calligraphic Scrolls*, fabric, paper, ink, acrylic paint, stitching, 150 x 330 cm, 2019



Recollections of the river, Calligraphic scrolls, Installation, fabric, paper, ink, acrylic paint, stitching, stoneware ceramics with glaze 330 x 460 cm, 2019

CURRICULUM VITAE

Born Sydney, NSW

- 1994 Master of Art, COFA, UNSW, Sydney
Sydney University Archaeological Expedition, Drawing team,
Tarone, Greece
- 1987 Bachelor of Visual Arts (Dist), Canberra School of Art

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2019 *The Lyrical River*, Manning Regional Gallery, NSW
- 2018 *Pieve di San Cresci of Domesticity, The Archaeological Museum of Domesticity and the Everyday*, La Macina di San Cresci, Italy
- 2012 *The Enduring Landscape and the Inland River*, Arthouse Gallery
- 2011 *The Enduring Landscape*, Catherine Asquith Gallery, Melbourne
Landscape paintings, near and far, Art Vault Gallery, Mildura
- 2010 *Pants Off*, Arthouse Gallery, Sydney
- 2009 *In Stillness*, Edwina Corlette Gallery, Brisbane
- 2008 *Ode to light and slow Time*, Arthouse Gallery, Sydney
- 2006 *The Cup*, Melbourne Art Rooms, Melbourne
- 2005 *The Garden*, Beaver Galleries, Canberra, ACT
- 2005 *Hearts Are Trumps*, Arthouse Gallery, Sydney
- 2004 *Fetes Galantes*, Arthouse Gallery, Sydney
- 2002 *Whims and Fripperies*, Arthouse Gallery, Sydney
- 2000 *Café*, Arthouse Gallery, Sydney
- 1999 *Suburban Scene*, Access Contemporary Art Gallery, Sydney
- 1997 *Side Show*, Access Contemporary Art Gallery, Sydney
- 1996 *Bronte Bathers*, Access Contemporary Art Gallery, Sydney

MIXED EXHIBITIONS

- 2019 *The North Sydney Art Prize*, Sydney
Calleen Art Award, Cowra Regional Art Gallery, NSW
Muswellbrook Art Prize, Works on paper, Muswellbrook Regional Gallery
- 2018 *Greenway Art Prize*, Small Sculpture Prize, Inner West Council
Paddington Art Prize, Sydney
Hidden, Rookwood Cemetery Sculpture Walk, Sydney
Calleen Art Award, Cowra Regional Art Gallery, NSW
- 2017 *Land*, Manly Art Gallery & Museum
Chippendale World Art Residency Prize
- 2016 *Drawing Conversations: Exhibition*, National Art School, Sydney
- 2015 *30 Years/30 Artists/30 Works*, Brenda May Gallery, Sydney
Finalist NSW Parliament Plein Air Painting Prize
The Gallipoli Art Prize, Sydney
43rd Muswellbrook Art Prize, Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre
- 2014 *29th Gold Coast International Ceramic Art Award*, Gold Coast City Gallery

- The Course of Objects: the fine lines of inquiry*, The Australian Ceramic Association, Manly Art Gallery & Museum, Sydney
Portia Geach Memorial Award, S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney
- 2000 *Salon des Refusés*, S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney
Mosman Art Prize, Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney
Redlands Westpac Art Prize, Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney
Art Fair 2000, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne
- 1998 *Salon des Refusés*, S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney
Australian Contemporary Art Fair•6, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne
Doug Moran National Portrait Prize, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
- 1997 *Salon des Refusés*, S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney
Redlands Westpac Art Prize, Redland School, Sydney

AWARDS/PRIZES

- 2018 *Cooks River Small Sculpture Prize*
Artist Residency, La Macina di San Cresci, Italy
- 2011 Art Vault Residency, Mildura, Victoria
- 2005 Hill End Artists Residency, Bathurst Regional Gallery, Hill End, NSW
- 2003 Ceramic Residency, Fusions Gallery, Brisbane
- 1999 Artist in Residence, Bundanon Trust, Bundanon Artists Centre, NSW
AGNSW Denise Hickey Studio Residency, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris

PUBLISHED/REPRODUCED

- 2017 *Kate Dorrough*, Artist Profile magazine, Issue 41, Process, p130 – p132
- 2015 *Worlds within Worlds*, Stepping Up Exhibition, The Journal of Australian Ceramics, Vol 54 No 3 Nov 2015, review by Anne Brennan, p69
- 2014 *The Course of objects: the fine lines of inquiry*, The Journal of Australian Ceramics, Vol 53 No 3, Nov 2104, review by Jan Guy, p53 – p55
- 2013 *Gallery Section*, The Journal of Australian Ceramics, 521 April 213, p 16
- 2012 *The Enduring Landscape and the Inland River*, Exhibition Reviews, Art Almanac, Diane Mah, Nov, p32 –33
Artist interview: Kate Dorrough, Australian Art Collector, Alexandra Djurichkovic, 6 Nov

COLLECTIONS

- Campbelltown Art Gallery, NSW
Grafton Regional Gallery, NSW
Bathurst Regional Gallery, NSW
Melbourne Casino, Victoria



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Art House Gallery
Jeni Carter, Photographer

Front cover, detail, *The Mighty Manning River*, acrylic on linen, 169 x 214 cm, 2019

Back cover, detail, *Recollections of the river*, Calligraphic scrolls, Installation, fabric, paper, ink, acrylic paint, stitching, 330 x 460 cm, 2019

