

Statement on drawing by Talitha Kennedy, September 2014:

My drawing style has developed from my frustration with pictorial representation. When I am fascinated by natural forms that I observe, I feel the need to do something with it. For many years this has meant sketching and outline drawing, mainly plants and objects. My undergraduate degree was in Interior Design where I learnt traditional rendering and drafting techniques. With this background in drawing as a communication tool for imagined spaces, it sort of 'does my head in' to think about what it means to draw nature from observation. I wonder "what does it communicate to capture a natural form in a simulated way?" Does it idealise the natural world into my own aesthetics; is it Colonial to render Australian landscape through European techniques; does it demonstrate the Visual as the only way to know a thing; and on and on. All these Subject – Object problems rattle about in my brain so that I have always had a struggle seeing my 'Realistic' drawings as Art, instead I sort for a way of representing my wonder for natural forms in relation to personal experience and cultural concerns.

Personally I feel to to get to know something, like a plant or rock, by holding it in my hands, touching the surface, sensing the properties, look all over it from many angles and try to comprehend its make up. The wonder has something to do with how it formed itself out of all the chaos and possibilities of becoming, to be something that gives me joy at that moment. The experience of appreciating is personal, it reveals as much about myself as it does about the thing I perceive. All the forms and sensations I am attracted to and experience form my vision of the world; I think of it as collecting natural forms into my memory that build into an internal landscape, inside my mind and body.

These recent drawings are a means of (excuse the pun) drawing out that inner world to communicate my experience of engagement with the world as I feel it, from the personal to other people. The starting point is to simply start making little looping scratches on the paper. I follow the loops to build up forms. I try not to have much ambition for the finished drawing besides filling the paper and portraying a kind of mood or tone. I try to move my hand quicker than my eyes and brain can keep up so that the drawing is automatic and, in a way, forms itself. I think of this drawing process as like running over rocks, where if you look at your feet you stumble but you can move competently if you keep your eyes ahead and trust that your feet will follow. Similarly if I watch and think about every mark I make on the paper it will be awkward and self conscious, and doubt will fill me and I stop, but if I trust that whatever comes out of the pen will be something, it just is. As I go along thoughts and interpretations come in and out of my mind and the drawing shifts and forms in response. I may start to see shapes as suggestive of things and then such things come into perception from the drawing.

I see these drawings as made up of tiny cells that all have the potential to be read as any kind of surface or form. The skin on my hands or any part of my body has those tiny creases that shift shape as my muscles move beneath. When I shape leather into sculptures I feel that my skin is so similar to the pores and wrinkles on the material I shape, so that this type of drawing is more like sculpture for the eyes. My inner landscapes are sketched out, the accumulation of the way my hands work and what I see and what I dream. I end up interpreting my drawings as a psychological state, like Rorschach Tests. It is as much pictorial as process – an endurance test in control of the creating and surrendering to the creation. Likewise the entropy of the world, whether constructed or organic, all things are made up of other things and are in constant transformation. If you look deep into the micro you get a glimpse of the universe. Anyway, they are drawings that are suggestive and open to interpretation but communicate what I see and feel and think as objects of optical illusion.