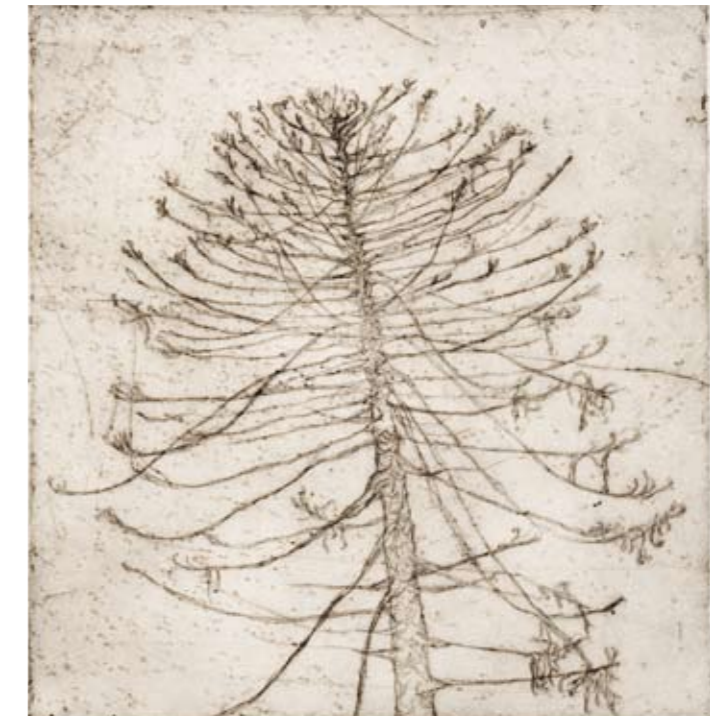




## Ilka White

My recent work is strongly influenced by time spent in the natural world. Working alongside artists in central and coastal Australia has re-inforced my experiential approach to making. I remain in awe of wonders like the night sky, the tide line and the composition of trees.



Bunya Pine (2005)  
drypoint etching on cotton paper  
28 x 27cm

left:  
Bunya Embroidery Sample (2004)  
digitised machine embroidery,  
viscose thread on silk cloth  
15 x 10cm



left:  
Sea Grass Wreath (2006)  
sea grass stems, sterling silver  
hand-woven  
40cm diameter, 12cm high

Shoreham Beach is often covered in washed-up sea grass. I sometimes walk the tide line, collecting stems coated in the calcium deposits of sea creatures, then seated under the cliff to weave, I listen to the low roar of the tide water coming in and going out.

Much of my recent work is circular in shape. In the desert one is keenly aware of the cyclic nature of the sky; life is always there alongside the round sweep of the horizon.

At the edge of the Tanami Desert I camped with a group of seven artists to produce work about the Newhaven Reserve for Birds. Far from being barren, there is an awe-inspiring presence in this subtle country. The land elicits a receptive, reverential response – a blend of watching and feeling; it rewards close observation. There are tubers under the surface and feathers in the leaf litter of the mulga. I felt aware of life all around me. Above, through and below me, and also throughout time.

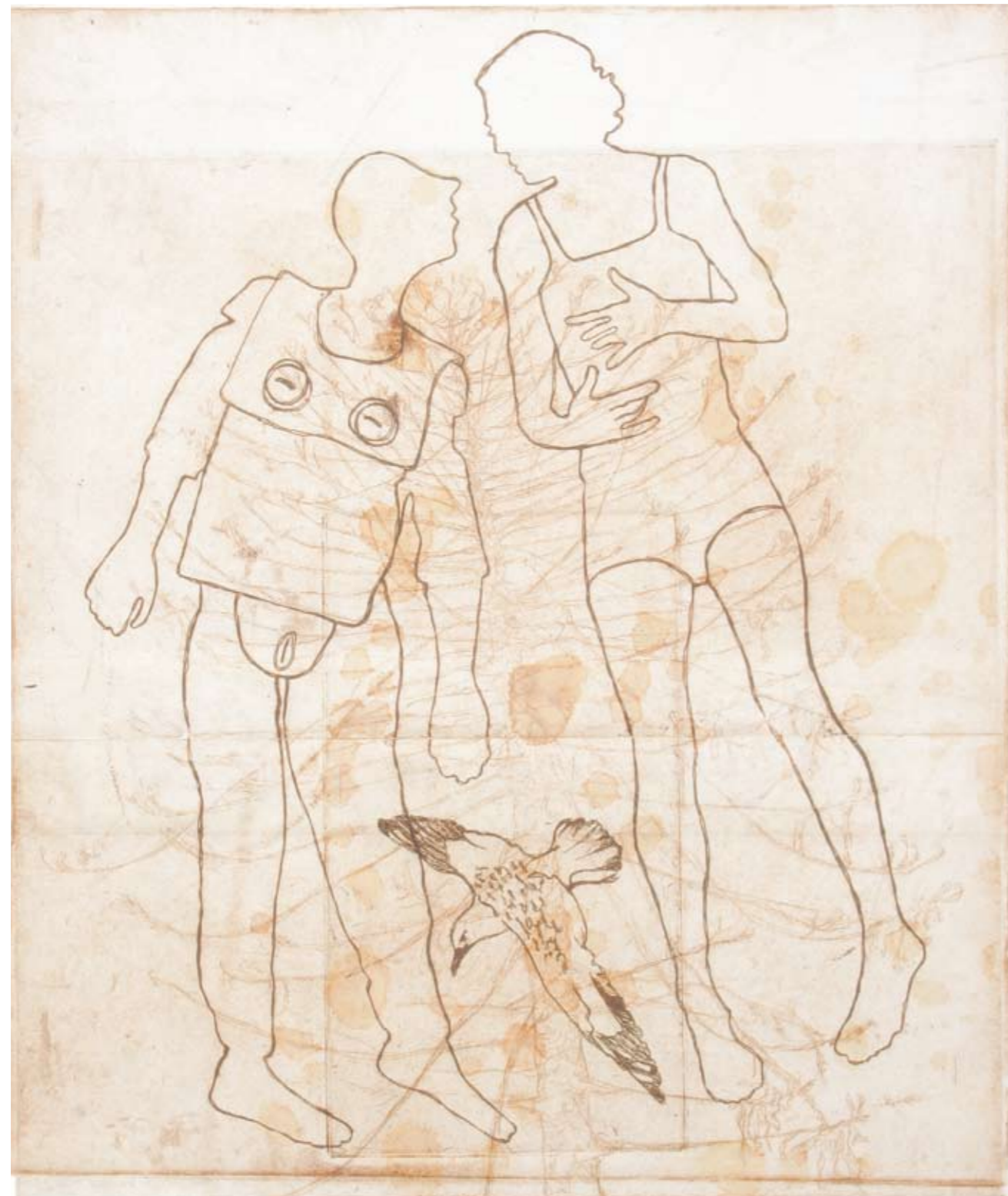
The desert quieted us. I was quiet too in the old desert oaks, laying in the sand, drawing cones under the darkening sky, listening to



right:  
Sea Grass Bandolier (2003) (detail)  
sea grass stems, sterling silver  
mixed cotton and linen yarns  
44cm diameter

below:  
And The Land Was Formed (#2)  
(2006)  
batswing coral (ininti) seeds  
thread, drilled and stitched  
29cm diameter





Desert Life  
(under, inside, all around...)  
(2006) (detail)  
spinifex, budgerigar feathers, silk, camel  
hair, cloth, paper, thread hand-stitched  
3-10cm in diameter

left:  
Felt Sense, Little One & Bird  
(2005)  
drypoint etching on sketchbook leaves  
32 x 27cm



the magnificent wind in the Casuarinas. A simultaneous hush and reverberation, the high and low thrum of desert's breath through the jointed needles. I felt like the earth was exhaling and I was truly breathing in the world.

I let symbols emerge to try and express my relationship with myself and the world. The images in these prints were present in my exhibition 'Whitework' as stitched or woven symbols. The figures in the print [left] are aspects of myself conversing: one is nurturing the other. The native Bunya Pine is a wonderful tree with an edible nut, once an important indigenous food source. For me it represents sustenance and family.

When the Commonwealth Games were held in Melbourne  
I wove work for an exhibition that meddled with the idea of medals.

The red sash carries the aesthetics of the pomp and splendor  
historically associated with such decoration, but it honors quieter  
qualities. This sash rewards strength and self-discipline  
above raw ambition and individualism.

I chose compassion (the full word is woven though not visible from  
the front) as it is so obviously in short supply at the moment, particularly  
in relation to refugees and in international relations. Honoring a quality  
so rare and yet essential seemed appropriate at an international  
gathering purporting to value fair play.

I think we can all do with some compassion tempering our passion!



For Compassion (2006)  
commissioned by  
Festival Melbourne, 2006, and  
XVIII Commonwealth Games  
hand-woven mercerised cotton,  
viscose, wool  
9 x 240cm



Ilka White

Born

1972 – Melbourne

Education, Grants and Awards

2006 – Australia Council Visual Arts Board: New Work  
2004-2006 – Arts Victoria Development: Creation and Presentation  
2004 – Flinders Quarter Inaugural Hand Worked to Wear Award  
2000 – Winston Churchill Memorial Fellowship  
1995-1996 – Associate Diploma of Arts (Studio Textiles),  
Melbourne Institute of Textiles

Selected Exhibitions

2006 – 'In the World: head, hand, heart', 17th Tamworth Fibre Biennial (tour)  
'Lexicon', City Library, Melbourne  
'Poetica', Object Gallery project space, Sydney  
'34th Alice Prize', Araluen Centre, Alice Springs  
'The Presence of Things: Sense, Veneer, and Guise' (tour)  
'Medalling... Eight Designers on a Quest', R.M.I.T. Gallery, Festival Melbourne  
2005 – 'Exhibition for Birds Australia', Uber Gallery, St Kilda  
'Senini Fine Art Award: Textiles', McClelland Gallery and Sculpture Park  
'After Fashion', Gallery 3, National Wool Museum, Geelong  
2004 – 'Pins and Needles', National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
'Whitework', Craft Victoria (solo, tour)  
'Anunun', with Sam Grigorian, Uber Gallery, St Kilda  
2003 – 'Unwrapped: Australian Fashion and Textile Design', Bendigo Gallery (tour)  
'Fuse', (Textiles/Jewellery), Mezzanine Gallery, Ivy Hopes, Melbourne  
2002 – 'Australian Fashion and Textile Design', FCK, Daegu, South Korea  
'Innovative Textiles', Ararat City Gallery

Professional

1999-present – Lecturer, Weave Design & Textile History, RMIT University  
1999-2003 – Weave research, development and production, Scanlan & Theodore  
1992-1993 – Costume construction, Melbourne Theatre Company

Collections

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
RMIT University, Melbourne