

Ebb and Flow – the Overview Effect

Wall Texts

Somnium – Kepler's Dream.

Johannes Kepler was a 17th century German mathematician and astronomer noted for establishing the revolutionary theory of the elliptical orbits of planetary motion. He was also the founder of modern optics and his scholarly texts still remain prescient today. It was Kepler's overriding desire to demonstrate that by observing the physical world and the movements of the cosmos about them, humans would come to realize the odds against them in the grip of the vast forces shaping their environment. So to support the *Copernican* heliocentric view of the universe, regarded as heresy at the time by religious zealots, Kepler wrote a fictional narrative titled *Somnium, (The Dream)*, now considered the first known 'science fiction' text.

In Kepler's narrative, an Icelandic boy and his witch mother learn of an island named *Levania* (the Moon) from a 'daemon'. From Iceland a journey to the Moon unfolds during an eclipse, imagining from his observations and calculations what humans might encounter during the journey and the lunar-scapes they might discover. Kepler reasoned that by taking people to the moon vicariously, and having them stand stationary there, he could show them the Earth in motion. Kepler's *Somnium* brings the physical universe to life, its perpetual transition, impermanence and mystery revealed by movement and change in the cosmos.

I use photography as a tool to experiment and play with light and its relationship with other subjects and forms of expression. I often take photographs of the moon using a simple hand held camera, a Canon Power Shot SX50HS. The images I captured for *Somnium – Kepler's Dream* include the total Moon eclipses, from Queensland – April 2014, from Victoria – April 2015, Uluru -Northern Territory , Svalbard Archipelago, coastline and glaciers - European Arctic, Montgomery Reef and cave in the Kimberley - Western Australia.

Svalbard – 77° 50' N - 13° 19' E

1 The Recession 2 Tipping Point 3 Feedback Loop

In 2013 I visited the Svalbard Archipelago above the Arctic Circle, a Norwegian territory situated on the edge of the North Pole. A stark and beautiful place where, as global warming bites, numerous glaciers are melting and receding. I have created fragmented visual narratives from the images I captured there during the twenty four hour daylight cycle during July. They reflect the transformations occurring at a material level as the glaciers retreat, while exposing the pathos embedded in the destructive power of nature, including 'human nature'. Moreover Svalbard, in spite of its isolation, is emerging as one of the most strategically important regions on the planet. Deep in the heart of an icy mountain near the main town of Longyearbyen lies the Global Seed Vault. It aims to protect against the localized destruction and threats facing gene banks all over the world and holds the world's largest collection of agricultural biodiversity. In an age of heightened geopolitical tensions and uncertainty, the Svalbard vault is an unusual and hopeful exercise in international cooperation for the good of humankind.

Bipolar II (from the UK exhibition *Which Way is Up?*)

This crossing of the eye and data helps to structure an image not only of the sky and beyond, but also of the way we make images. It confirms that science looks for the measurable in the unmeasurable, while art looks for the immeasurable in the measurable.. (These works) ... point to how all of Felicity Spear's work is to be read. Her work shows how we search and navigate through information, whether that information is in a recorded format or is in our sense intake of the world around us.

Quote from 2005 the essay *Crux* for the UK exhibition *Which Way is Up* by Alex Selenitsch a Melbourne-based poet and architect.

The source material for *Bipolar II* was created from an ultraviolet x-ray of a polar projection of an historical globe which I've stretched out into an ellipse. This globe was being restored in the Paper Conservation Dept. of the National Maritime Museum Greenwich, U.K. where, while on a travel scholarship I spent some time doing research. *Bipolar II* references the Sloan Digital Sky Survey, one of the largest, most detailed, and most often cited astronomical surveys that has ever existed. A polar projection lies over the stretched surface, and beneath the x-rayed globe lies an image of star trails looking towards the South Celestial Pole. This image was provided by David Malin, pioneering photographer and astronomer and the Australian Astronomical Observatory . Beneath the star trails lie partial images of the rings of the planet Saturn captured from the Cassini-Huygens spacecraft's mission to Saturn and made available courtesy of NASA .

Sentience

This drawing expresses the power held within the River Red Gum. I encounter this tree on my daily walk. It is ancient. As the two trunks rise upwards they merge together as one before branching out and reaching skywards. Some say this tree has significance for indigenous Australians in the region. It certainly has a presence evident in its living form. It is connected to its surroundings through its materiality. It is alive with life, giving, receiving and giving. In a 'tree' way sensitive and aware of its surroundings. Sentient.

On reflection – ebb and flow

Over a number of years I have developed a habit of photographing the moon. I sometimes capture its reflections in the water on a small dam at my place. Water, the mediator between life and death, where seasonally wildlife visit and pond life thrives. After rain I find myself drawn to the dam's edge to record the strange and diverse repetitions of frog conversations. The reflection of the Moon's light is disturbed by this life, creating ripples and patterns across the surface like the ebb and flow of lunar attraction, mirroring time and life itself.

Core Sample

I have photographed coral remains found on the coast of the Kimberley region of Western Australia. Imprinted on these images are chemical equations representing carbon concentrations at levels now found to contribute increasingly to the warming and acidification of the oceans. Combined with other paleoclimate records, ice cores are revealing that after more than ten thousand years of stable conditions human activity has rapidly warmed Earth's climate in less than a few centuries, impacting all life on the planet.

Four Paintings

Luminescence

In 1832, on board *The Beagle* off the coast of Tenerife, Charles Darwin wrote in his notebook: *The sea was luminous in specks and in the wake of the vessel, of a uniform slightly milky colour. When the water was put into a bottle, it gave out sparks...* In the myths of the lore of ancient seafarers stories of mysterious lights or fires seen over water, fields or mountains, were often ascribed to dragons or the gods. This emanation of light is now described as bio-luminescence. Recently a marine scientist spoke to me about diatoms. These microalgae, described as photosynthetic plankton, are indicators of change living in the oceans and waterways. Ancient in origin, they are vital organisms, intricately patterned and coated in silicon. Taking carbon dioxide from the atmosphere they enable the return each year of a quarter of the oxygen the Earth produces. The air we breathe from algae made of glass.

Resonance

Everything in the universe vibrates with a rhythmic motion which holds them in form.

Inhale – exhale

With each breath we exchange parts of ourselves with the wider world.

Symbiosis

We are a web of connections.