



Image: Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

#### **Onespace and the artists would like to thank:**

Burl by Design, Tamika Grant-Iramu, Derek Besant, Louise Martin-Chew, Worldwide South Brisbane.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Brisbane region, the Turrbal and Jagera peoples.

We acknowledge their continuing connection to the lands, waters, culture and community. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present.

Onespace is a trusted gallery for quality artists, contemporary art exhibitions and public art commissioning services. Our gallery work is part of a valuable conversation with curators, institutions and collectors that draws a wider audience towards the cultural and environmental narratives that shape our era.

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Cover: Jo Lankester, *Anthraquinone Lichen II/III (detail)*, 2025, Unique state multi-colour plate lithography, ink, drypoint and hand-stitching, diptych, image: 85 x 120cm, frame: 89 x 125cm. Image:

Maddie Bleakley. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

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Jo Lankester is a printmaker who lives and works in Townsville, North Queensland, Australia. She completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Printmaking in 1994 at the Victorian College of the Arts and subsequently moved to Townsville in 1998. In 2000, she established Jo Lankester Limited Edition Print Studio T/A Brush & Press Studio, which she still operates today. She has held various employment roles in Townsville including in the Printmaking Department at James Cook University; Casual lecturer, James Cook University; and several positions at Gallery Services, Townsville City Council, including her current position of Collection Management Officer. Lankester has had several solo exhibitions throughout her artistic career, has been the recipient of numerous awards and grants and has undertaken over ten commissions, residencies and curatorial projects.

For Lankester, the natural environment is a constant source of inspiration providing an endless supply of subjects including found objects, natural forming patterns, textures and colours that translate beautifully through a multitude of printmaking techniques. Lankester seeks out the many stories the landscape has and expresses them in detailed and multi-textured unique state prints. She explores ideas of experience, recollections, and elements of the landscape which convert to colour, line, texture, and form. Her work is specifically inspired by her local regions' dry and wet tropical landscape, extending west of Townsville to Charters Towers, Magnetic Island, and as far North as Weipa.

She is represented in the National Gallery of Australia Prints and Drawings collection, Art Bank, Artspace Mackay, Canson, Camberwell Grammar School, Grafton Regional Gallery, Lake Macquarie Art Gallery, Presbyterian Ladies College, Perc Tucker Regional Gallery, Print Council of Australia Archive, Shelford Girls Grammar, State Library of Queensland, State Library of Victoria, Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery, Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, Westbourne Grammar City of Yarra, Douro Museum Printmaking Collection Portugal as well as in private collections throughout Australia and overseas.

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**Jo Lankester**

**Topographia: harmonies of place**

11 April - 10 May 2025



Jo Lankester is known for her abilities to create surfaces that echo rock façades and fields of tactile flora and for her unerring eye for subtle blends of colour across the picture plane. Her newest body of work for the exhibition *Topographia: harmonies of place* sets up a visual play between the microcosm and the macrocosm for the viewer to engage in.

Lankester frequently walks along the Coral Sea edge of the Strand and up along the Jezzine Barracks in her home of Townsville. These walks have turned into a type of research, where she gathers the leathery fallen leaves of fig trees and observes the black cockatoos who ravish the fruit of beach almond trees growing there. It is said that “the longest journey begins with the first step”, and by tracing the hands-on process that Lankester takes in her approach to this new work, we are invited to accompany her on this journey.

Fig leaves’ colour ranges from bright green to subdued ochre, crimson reds, and even darker tones towards charcoal black. These variations in hues are purposefully tacked up on the wall beside the paper grounds the artist incorporates as her palette resource. The earth tones reference Lankester’s coexistence with the landscape she lives within and knows well.

Her paper surfaces become blended topographies that bring together pale turquoise with pinks, into army greens obscured by bitter orange. These surfaces are further worked into with hand-stitching linear drawing whose threads match up with the fig leaf colourations. Together, the articulated paper grounds are at once akin to close-up textural interplays of what local types of lichen impose upon natural surfaces along the interior landscape and to aerial mappings of a much larger territory viewed from far above. This dichotomy pulls the viewer into examine the intimate details of the work, then causes them to step back, with their focus widening to embrace what stories this part of the world holds within its humid density.

Lankester’s manipulations of liquid pigments, lithography, and Mokulito experiments combine to create these rich, tapestry-like organic surface treatments that beckon the viewer’s eye to follow where her hand has wandered across the page. Introducing a large-scale branch from a beach almond tree, capturing its crooked finger-like movement, as well as larger delicate leaf matter—some fully rendered, others only sketched out—and species of birds adds new narratives to this ground cover.

Combinations of paper-forming grids, diptychs, and triptychs extend range and scale, whereby larger depictions of black cockatoos printed in black/purple ink from plastic

engraving plates “occupy” these environments, giving a richer context to the artist’s observation of her surroundings. These collaged birds demarcate a landscape of ridges, latitudes, ancient paths, no man’s land, and weather patterns become the colouration of feathers simultaneously.

The strong association to format, ground, sparse composition, and nature draws upon the history of Japanese screen works on paper. Though Edo Period Japanese screens dissected an image across several sheets and folds into becoming screens, they also used the ground to have fragmental parts of trees, branches or shorelines, which appear to dissolve into the background, leaving raw areas as spatial tension in the overall composition.

Whereas Japanese Edo screens were devices to bring nature into temples, dwellings and grand halls, creating a harmony that is inherent in Zen garden design, Lankester’s contemporary versions of recording her intimate surrounding nature comes with warning signs recounting climate impact on those same systems of nature. By juxtaposing a vast implied landscape with only a handful of bird images, there is an apparent plea for species preservation.

Are those aerial perspectives measuring distances of migration? Are the few bodies of lakes or rivers still flowing during a drought? Or conversely, will cyclones destroy breeding grounds and devastate tree cover across the boundaries and borders the artist traverses with her mark-making?

Lankester’s reference to science books with illustrations of birds also beckons another reference to how time is relative and how we translate the same subject matter differently over time. With these new approaches, the artist is increasingly conscious of intersections and the connective integration of her subject matter. These are images wrought from the Southern Hemisphere. While the artist externalises her identity to place, she underlines a global demographic sense. If the longest voyage begins with a single step, then walking into the exhibition means you have begun wherever these images will take you next.

**Derek Besant**

