

Portfolio



SUSAN TINGAY

THE SCIENCE OF ART



WHAT is a small girl to do when she grows up observing her mother, the artist, and her father, the scientist?

Susan Tingay chose a creative combination, and became a natural history artist.

Her powers of observation, sharpened by rigorous scientific training culminating in a doctorate in Animal Behavioural Ecology, stand her in good stead. Tingay's works are meticulously detailed and scientifically correct, but they rise above being 'scientific records' and capture some essence of the living creature or plant: 'it's really not worth it unless you catch the life of the animal itself.'

'I am very lucky,' she said, 'because my work as a scientist takes me out into the field a lot. It gives me the chance for many encounters with our native animals. Because the mammals are often nocturnal and rather secretive not many people have that opportunity. I like to think that my art draws people's attention, perhaps for the first time, and gives them the chance to appreciate the special qualities of our native fauna.'

This beautifully composed painting emphasises the movement of the Barn Owl (above). To get the optimum results, pencil sketches are cut and pasted until the composition is perfect.

The Pygmy Possum (right). As with most of her work, Susan uses a fine rotring pen before applying the various layers of colour. As to be expected, only heavyweight, top quality watercolour paper is used.



There is no doubt that Tingay's work has offered that chance to many people. She has had several exhibitions, and won awards, and particularly enjoys producing commissioned works for natural history publications.

Although Tingay gains her original inspiration in the field, her follow up research is thorough and sometimes

even unpleasant. But perhaps natural history artists get used to collecting road kill specimens, and keeping dead birds in the freezer! It must help to have a husband who is also a scientist, and might be expected to understand such things.

It was a chance encounter with a wildlife illustrator, Kay Breeden, that inspired Tingay's career. She liked





Susan's fastidious approach and keen observation is evident in this illustration of firewood banksia (left).

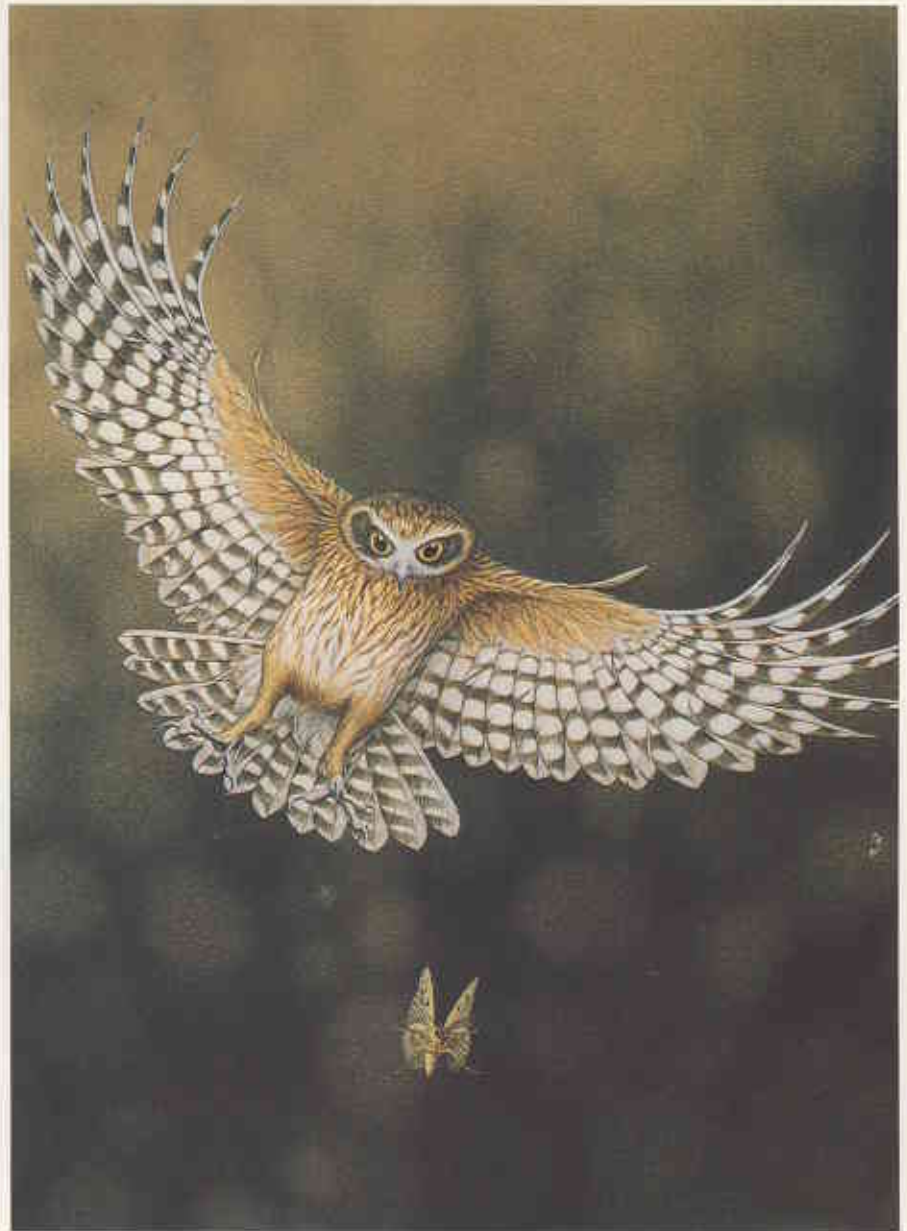
A gangly frog creeping up on an unsuspecting prey is captured in this finely detailed but uncluttered drawing (below left).



Breeden's work, and asked about her technique. After being given a fifteen minute 'crash course', Susan Tingay, wildlife artist, was on her way. her metier remains water colour and ink.

'I also have a great admiration for William Cooper,' she said. 'I regard him as the best Australian wildlife artist, and I would certainly like to follow in his footsteps. It would be great to develop, as he has, one of those special relationships between a writer and an artist who share the same vision.' Tingay's work is highly regarded, itself, and she's already well on the road to fulfilling her ambition.

TEXT - Liana Christensen



This portrait of the Boobook Owl focussing on its prey is typical of Susan's work. First the foreground is masked and the background airbrushed. Then layer upon layer of water colour is painstakingly applied to the subject until a suitable depth of colour is achieved. To finish off, white gouche is used to highlight and contrast.

29 DEC 1988

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

LANDSCOPE

EDITORIAL

It is difficult to remember a time when our daily news did not feature some environmental controversy. To people involved in environmental research and management, the popularity of 'the environment' is a mixed blessing.

Greater public consciousness of environmental issues has meant increased funding and, to some extent, greater prestige. But many scientists working on ecosystems are uncomfortable when their work is placed in the political spotlight.

The knowledge that a scientific observation that once would have been tucked away in a scientific journal to be read only by a few colleagues could become the centre-point of a political controversy is daunting.

Retaining objectivity in any research area is difficult. For those engaged in research on the natural environment it is even more difficult. Unlike the physical sciences in the natural sciences the truth is often camouflaged by interactions between factors which vary over time and space. When the results of this type of research are placed in the political arena, the mixture is often volatile and the truth a casualty.

To enable scientists to better seek the truth and communicate it, the scientific community has adopted what has been called "the scientific method". The scientific method is a code of conduct with rigid requirements. An offshoot of that code is a set of rules which scientists must follow, at least in reputable scientific journals, if they are to have their research published. Unfortunately, a byproduct of this is that scientific articles are not the easiest to read and are often plain boring.

Given that the environment has become a major political issue, it is important that those involved in the debate are fully informed. But scientists are faced with a dilemma. They need to popularise their work to reach a wider audience. On the other hand, they cannot afford to lose objectivity.

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NATIVE CREATIONS



Nouvelle jardins, multiculturalism or laissez-faire; which garden fashion will you choose? Turn to page 22.

WILD MARRON



Do our wild marron have a future or will local gourmets keep catching them to the point of extinction? Find out on page 4.

KARRI MAGIC



What is really going on in the karri forest? On page 32 we take a look at the system of conservation reserves that have been established to preserve this awe-inspiring forest.

STRANDED!



Relive the euphoria of the Augusta whale rescue on page 18.

BACK TO BASICS



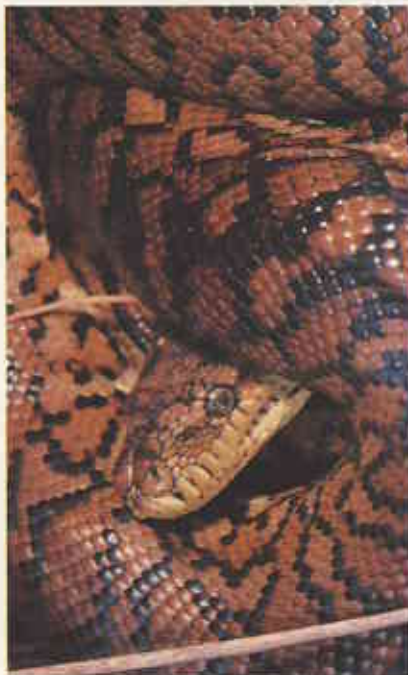
With today's massive land boom it's hard to imagine that the State once couldn't give land away fast enough. Now the government is buying back our valuable conservation areas. See page 43.

DESERT GEM

The Gibson Desert Nature Reserve covers over 1.8 million hectares. It is a desolate but subtly beautiful landscape. Read about this unique area and the management problems it presents on page 48.



SNAKES & ADDERS



Slim and active snakes have emerged hungry from their winter hibernation. But they're not all venomous. See page 51 for tips on living with snakes.

AFTER THE FOX



Foxes pose a major threat to native mammals and other fauna. Can we outfox them? See page 12.

A SIGHT TO BEHOLD



'Its pouch can hold more than its belly can', goes the popular rhyme. Find out more about this awkward but graceful bird on page 39.

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Cover Photograph

One of our natural wonders - the beaches of Hamelin Pool (Shark Bay) consist of billions of small shells.

Photo by Bill Bachman.



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