



MUNDARING
ARTS CENTRE

TALES FROM THE BUSH

JOHN EDEN

5 February - 3 April 2022

FOREWORD

Prior to 2020, I was primarily an art teacher, having been at Kalamunda Senior High School for most of my career. My own art was a sideline. Then, with COVID-19, the world went mad. I was on long service leave in Patagonia at the time. The trip home was fraught, to say the least, but I managed to get back to Perth earlier than many and was allowed to self-quarantine in my studio. I was super anxious and a bit broken if I'm to be honest. It was at that moment that I started working with bush charcoal from the fire pit, feeling it was the right expressive medium to depict the stress of my journey and my concerns for our future. This body of work *Between Borders* was shown at the Nyisztor Studio in 2021. It kick-started my art practice and now I see myself primarily as an artist and my role as an art teacher, not as a sideline, but as a complementary activity.

Since ending that project, which Ron Nyisztor described as "dark tourism", I have turned my eye and hand to other travels through this place I love more than ever now, the bush, the hills, my home. I joined Kalamunda Open Studios, a forum I really enjoy. I have a passion for telling tales. After that fortnight in quarantine, I have been prolific. New work led to another solo show in 2021 at Paper Mountain with a focus on car wrecks I have found in the bush, drawn with charcoal, dirt, rust, and resin collected at each site. There was also my largest works to date, the Hasluck's pool series of four large drawings on cement sheeting. I did these plein air, on-site, again using mainly found materials. This process creates a direct physical connection with the subject matter.

These things I find are the result of an innate thirst for adventure. For many years, I have explored the Perth Hills on my mountain bike, from Mundaring to Darlington, John

Forrest, Sawyers, Pauls and Bickley Valleys, Kalamunda, Karragullen, Mount Dale, and the Monadnocks. This is my playground. I am interested in the way a discovered landmark punctuates the landscape. These objects fascinate me with their unknowable, but partly guessable, histories. It is a recent thing to revisit them for art purposes, and there are always more out there to find.

I appreciate the beauty of this place I have the privilege to inhabit, Whadjuk Noongar Boodja. I respect the land as I move through it, endeavouring to leave no trace. However, I constantly find evidence of the movements and activities of others who have gone before me and it is their stories that I depict. I bring *Tales from the Bush* to Mundaring Arts Centre. Mahogany Creek's car graveyard, the last of the King Jarrahs, Sir Paul Hasluck's abandoned swimming pool, and the forgotten story of Barton's Mill Prison.

In order to maximise your connection with these tales from the bush, I have provided QR codes to the geolocations so that you can actually go and see these places for yourself. Some are easy to get to, some require a full-scale expedition, preferably a 4WD, and lots of water, but like those that went before us, it's all in the spirit of adventure.

John Eden 2021



IMAGES

Cover: John Eden, *Sawyers King* (detail), 2021, mixed media on board, 92 x 62cm.

1. John Eden, *Barton's* (detail), 2021, spray paint, acrylic and wax crayon on board, 49 x 64 cm.
2. John Eden, *Sun Hub* (detail), 2021, oil, dirt and charcoal on board, 75 x 75 cm.
3. John Eden, *Out to Pasture XIX* (detail), 2021, bush charcoal and dirt on paper, 41 x 58 cm.



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Mundaring Arts Centre respectfully acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we operate, the Whadjuk people, as well as other First Australians connected with this land. We pay our respects to Elders both past and present.