

**PENRITH  
REGIONAL  
GALLERY**  
HOME OF THE LEWERS BEQUEST



# *line work*

Rivers of the Basin

Sue Pedley & Phaptawan Suwannakudt



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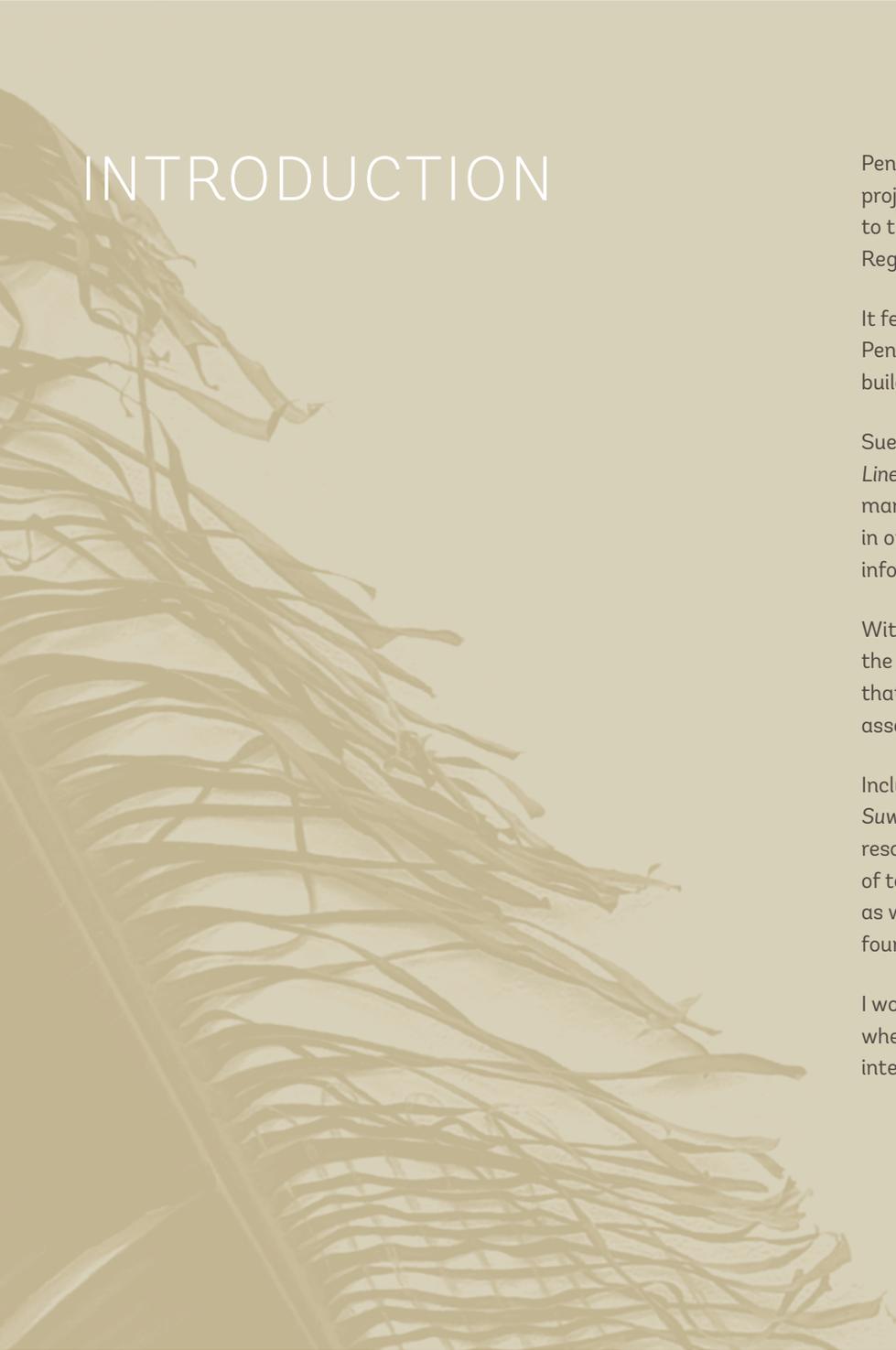
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Left: Sue Pedley, Line work: *Rivers of the Basin #6*  
(2021), casuarina seeds, mandavilla seeds,  
mandavilla pods, willow leaves, banana  
flowers, glass containers and platters.  
Courtesy the artist.

Cover: Phaptawan Suwannakudt, Line work:  
*Rivers of the Basin #7* (2021), banana string,  
dyed rope fabric, flagon, glass punch set.  
Courtesy the artist.



# INTRODUCTION

Penrith Regional Gallery is pleased to present *Line Work: Rivers of the Basin*, a collaborative project that has been developed by artists Sue Pedley and Phaptawan Suwannakudt in response to the layered and interwoven histories of the area that surrounds, and indeed engulfs Penrith Regional Gallery.

It feels as though one is never far from the legacies of Margo and Gerald Lewers when you are at Penrith Regional Gallery. Their works are situated throughout the heritage garden and Modernist buildings, but perhaps even more apparent is the sense of creative vitality that they embodied.

Sue and Phaptawan have been making art together and for one another, under the title of *Line Work*, since 2019. The process is almost diaristic, and often involves a back and forth of mark-making across the same material. This exchange is informed both by a shared interest in organic and ephemeral materials, but also a sense of how personal histories and legacies inform our contemporary experiences.

With this exhibition, our contemporary experiences are both specific to our site, situated on the banks of the Nepean River, as well more global. It is impossible to consider the artworks that Sue and Phaptawan have produced without the context of the global pandemic, and the associated lockdowns and restrictions.

Included in this catalogue is an essay by curator and writer, Julie Ewington, *Phaptawan Suwannakudt and Sue Pedley: Wind, Water, Fire, Earth* that provides much insight into the resonances between each artist's approach and practice. In addition, there is both a reading list of texts and essays that have informed the development of this project for Sue and Phaptawan, as well as a segment, *Making Line Work*, which provides an insight into the studio practice that is foundational to how Sue and Phaptawan collaborate.

I would like to thank Sue and Phaptawan for their resilience and enthusiasm for this exhibition, when faced with so many uncertainties. Although this exhibition arrives slightly later than intended, I am sure our audiences will resonate with the artists' powerful, and elucidating works.

**Toby Chapman, Manager, Curatorial Programs, Penrith Regional Gallery**



Sue Pedley and Phaptawan Suwannakudt,  
*Line work: Rivers of the Basin (2021)*,  
installation view, Lewers House Gallery.  
Courtesy the artists.



Left: **Sue Pedley**, *Line work: Rivers of the Basin #5* (2021), bamboo and wire. Courtesy the artist.



Right: **Phaptawan Suwannakudt**, *Line work: Rivers of the Basin #8* (2021), graphite and pen on bamboo with silver thread. Courtesy the artist.



PHAPTAWAN SUWANNAKUDT  
AND SUE PEDLEY: WIND,  
WATER, FIRE, EARTH

JULIE EWINGTON



## BANANA, BAMBOO, MANDEVILLA, CASUARINA

First Phaptawan Suwannakudt and Sue Pedley visited the house and garden at Emu Plains. Invited to work collaboratively, they started by investigating the history of European cultivation since 1902 when the original house was built, and especially after Margo and Gerald Lewers and their daughters Darani and Tanya moved there in 1951. Shayne Roberts, the Heritage Gardener, had banana leaves and bamboo stalks to show them; soon seeds were gathered from the Mandevilla vine shrouding the old water tank, and samples from the ginger plants, and the big willow tree. These were gathered—as evidence, as material—while the artists explored the garden and its surrounds over more than a year: you will find a delicate bamboo blind filtering northern light in what was once Margo Lewers' studio; look for dried seeds and pods offered on dainty cut-glass plates and cake-stands, a tribute to Margo's famous hospitality, as well as the living work of art that is her garden.

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That garden was once sustained by water pumped up from the Nepean River to the tank; even today its survival is unthinkable without the River's bounty. And once at Emu Plains, Phaptawan and Sue saw that stories from the garden are inextricably bound up with the River: its vegetation, uses, and histories both Aboriginal and European. The Nepean drew them out from the garden, across River Road. It will not be ignored. Casuarina seeds from the river banks joined domestic offerings, as well as a wild green Phaptawan knows by its Thai name *plung*; and Phaptawan's skeletal boat is partly made from bamboo from this garden, as well as her own. (The wind rattles the bamboo blind inside the house, it shakes the casuarinas on the banks nearby.)

**Sue Pedley**, *Line work: Rivers of the Basin #5* (2021),  
bamboo and wire. Courtesy the artist.

*Now each has made a boat in tribute to this third river on the Cumberland Plains where they have both settled.*

## BOAT

The great Nepean is the flowing soul of this Country. As it happens, both Sue and Phaptawan are river people. Sue Pedley's family has lived alongside the Tamar, running through Launceston to Bass Strait, since her convict forebears landed there in the early nineteenth century; she recalls stories about her great-grandfather, a ship's captain, and family holidays at Low Head at the Tamar's mouth. Phaptawan grew up beside the majestic Chao Praya, which sustains Bangkok; as a child she played in its tributary canals, where her father taught her to swim. Hence both women come to the Nepean understanding the River's constancy, but also its fragility and volatility, which was reinforced by the River's flooding in March 2021, when their project was well advanced.

Now each has made a boat in tribute to this third river on the Cumberland Plains where they have both settled. Phaptawan's slender bamboo craft remembers the Aboriginal canoes once so numerous on the Nepean, and it connects her, by the magic of substitution, back to the long shallow crafts that were once essential for navigating daily life on the Chao Praya. Sue's full-size rubbing, from a painted wooden dinghy fortuitously sourced at Reverse Garbage at Addison Road Community Organisation in Marrickville, where both artists have studios, testifies to the sturdy utility of generations of ordinary Australian dinghies, whether in Tasmania, or on the Nepean. And all these boats float on the serendipitous continuities and connections across time, place and culture that make up the great river of life.

A sense of that powerful flow is summoned by the given name of Margo and Gerald Lewers' older daughter, the jeweller Darani. In Thai language the word darani means boat, or vessel, especially one carrying *dharma* or Buddhist wisdom, with additional connotations of energy; it is a popular name for girls. It seems the Lewers' choice was prescient. When Sue and Phaptawan interviewed Darani in May 2021, she told them about swimming in the River as children, pumping water from it for Margo's garden. (Water is gentle as well as terrible.)



Phaptawan Suwannakudt, *Line work: Rivers of the Basin #9* (2021), bamboo, banana rope, wire. Courtesy the artist.



## BOOKS, SCROLLS, PAPERS. AND CHARCOAL

This project at Emu Plains is part of *Line Work*, an on-going collaboration between the artists with and through drawing. Phaptawan and Sue have sourced various paper supports—Thai Sa paper, books, Thai silk, rice paper from both Thailand and Vietnam, piano rolls from the recycle store—all suggesting different opportunities. Each artist brings her own history, sources, and impulses to these choices: Phaptawan says, 'Sue's objects reflect memories while my work reflects the process of making.' These separate practices are shared in interactive studio drawing sessions where first one leads, then the other, in a process suggesting call and response field songs that mark the age-old rhythms of work. Phaptawan says 'Through the process we each become a practitioner, a producer, and an audience.' 'Books and scrolls—the one with glass vessels and boat seat rubbings, for instance, which builds on Sue's long affinity with direct transcription onto paper of objects in the world—were passed back and forth, like a cumulative journal. Each other's markings defined directions, to an extent, but also opened up fresh possibilities in a procedure where trust is based in shared attitudes: the layered rubbings and marks on these collaborative drawings eventually speak a language that is all their own.

One wonderful book, out of all the artists' research into both Thai and Australian sources, was crucial to this shared undertaking: Grace Karskens's *People of the River: Lost Worlds of Early Australia* was published in 2020 and quickly became the artists' guide to thinking through the region. In successive sessions Phaptawan and Sue selected passages to read to each other, as a way of fuelling their drawing. Karskens's generous approach to natural, Aboriginal, and European histories, her respect and restraint, resonated with them. In one drawing Karskens's revelations about Aboriginal cultivation along the River's edge is explicitly noted: look for drawn yam leaves on a piano roll drawing, which remembers the singular importance of Aboriginal women's yam gardens, long gone, as a steady food source.

**Sue Pedley and Phaptawan Suwannakudt**, *Line work: Rivers of the Basin #1* (2021), paper piano rolls, ink, paint, graphite, mixed media. Courtesy the artists.

Part of the gift of Karskens's scholarship is her attentiveness to the River's continuing histories. In the same spirit, Phaptawan led a working session where she inscribed plant names in Thai on a pineapple fibre cloth scroll, listing various species of banana, berries, several types of basil, even herbal ingredients used by her maternal grandfather, a herbalist from Chiang Mai in northern Thailand, which her mother told her were accompanied with chanting.

And the charcoal the artists use, whatever its sources, was once a living plant, and now furnishes another form of life. Fire is productive as well as destructive.

## WEAVING, BINDING, SHARING, GARDENING AGAIN

Shared lives and histories are often subterranean, in every sense. Thinking through how the Lewers' former home at Emu Plains gathers together many lives, life forms, and narratives over time, Sue read Melvin Sheldrake's captivating *Entangled Life* (2021), which argues for the importance of fungi to the health of the biome; she was struck by his potent image of branching fungi, often living unseen underground. More, the inter-connecting growth of mycelia suggests unseen parts of the River's history, signals all that we do not understand, can never know. So here are mycelia hiding in plain sight in a glass jar, in mushroom soil gifted by fellow artist Jan Fieldsend.



**Phaptawan Suwannakudt**, *Line work: Rivers of the Basin #7* (2021), banana string, dyed rope fabric, flagon, glass punch set. Courtesy the artist.



**Phaptawan Suwannakudt**, *Line work: Rivers of the Basin #8* (2021), graphite and pen on bamboo with silver thread. Courtesy the artist.

This page and next page:  
**Sue Pedley**, Line work: *Rivers of the Basin #6*  
(2021), casuarina seeds, mandavilla seeds,  
mandavilla pods, willow leaves, banana  
flowers, glass containers and platters.  
Courtesy the artist.



Every artist brings part of their past to present work, often with unexpected consequences. When Phaptawan decided to make offerings to the Nepean River, she found inspiration in the histories of her Thai families. The medicinal plants included here have been dug from the earth of her Sydney garden but her familiarity with them is inherited from her grandfather; in using these plants, Phaptawan signifies her reverence for the spirits



of this River. And the cloth vessels holding her offerings acknowledge another revered family member: her paternal grandmother, a skilled silk weaver from north-eastern Isaan, whose wisdom reaches the Cumberland Plain today. Thus the mandala of silken ropes, its pattern sourced from research by cultural historian Susan Conway, weaves together past lives and future hopes; and writing in Thai makes the presence of the language palpable here, now.

This gathering of plants and materials, histories and names means, says Phaptawan, that she has a place here, in Sydney, in Australia. What Sue Pedley and Phaptawan Suwannakudt offer here started with the open attitude to location that is essential to gardening; now they contribute, in their turn, to the narratives that bind all of us, in the end, to the earth. For the many lines that inscribe, re-inscribe, weave, tie, and bind beings, whether microscopic, animal, or human, are always grounded in Country.

## NOTE

All comments by the artists are from interviews and emails with the author, May-September 2021.

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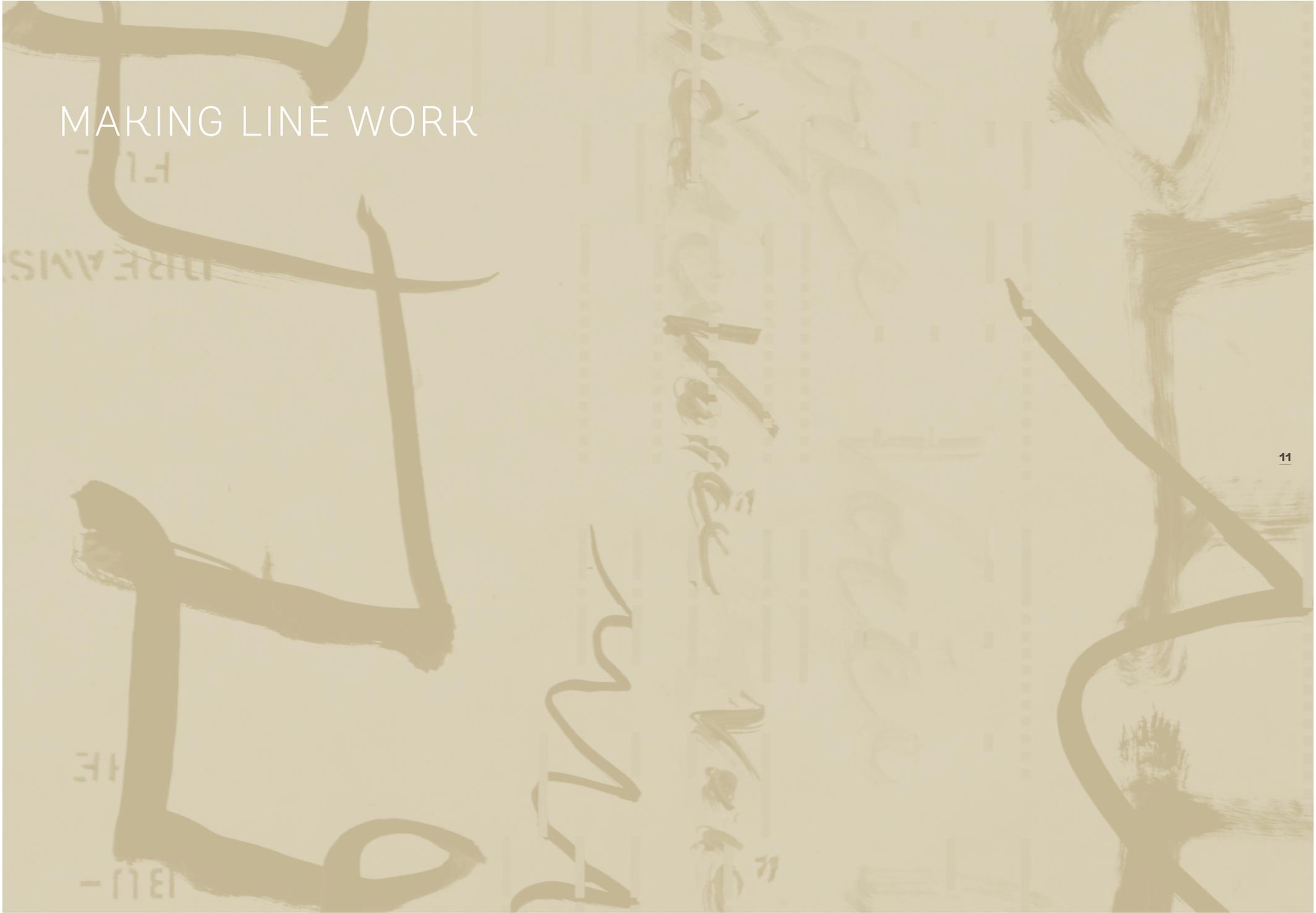
Gina Plate, <https://www.penrithregionalgallery.com.au/about-us/our-story/>, especially 'The Garden'.

Marilynne Robinson, *Housekeeping*, 1980, New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, a story of two sisters living by a river near a railway station, in the American Midwest.

Merlin Sheldrake, *Entangled Life: How Fungi Make Our Worlds, Change Our Minds and Shape Our Futures*, New York: Random House, 2020.

Phaptawan Suwannakudt, 'Reflection on collaborative project with Sue Pedley Line Work: Rivers of the Basin, unpublished text, 2021.

# MAKING LINE WORK



Since early 2019, Sue and I started our studio collaboration with no aims and projects in mind except to continue to meet weekly. We explored the practice of mark-making during the two-hour sessions we had together. We alternated our roles to construct the work around materials, objects, medium, sizes and subjects. Sometimes we read, sang, listened, walked, and visited places while we continued making marks on the materials we prepared. In addition to the weekly session, we prepared and exchanged two sets of materials, including drawing books, piano rolls, pieces of fabric which we each brought home to work on and brought back to discuss. We would then take another piece to continue, where one another had left off each week, until we finished the book or the roll.

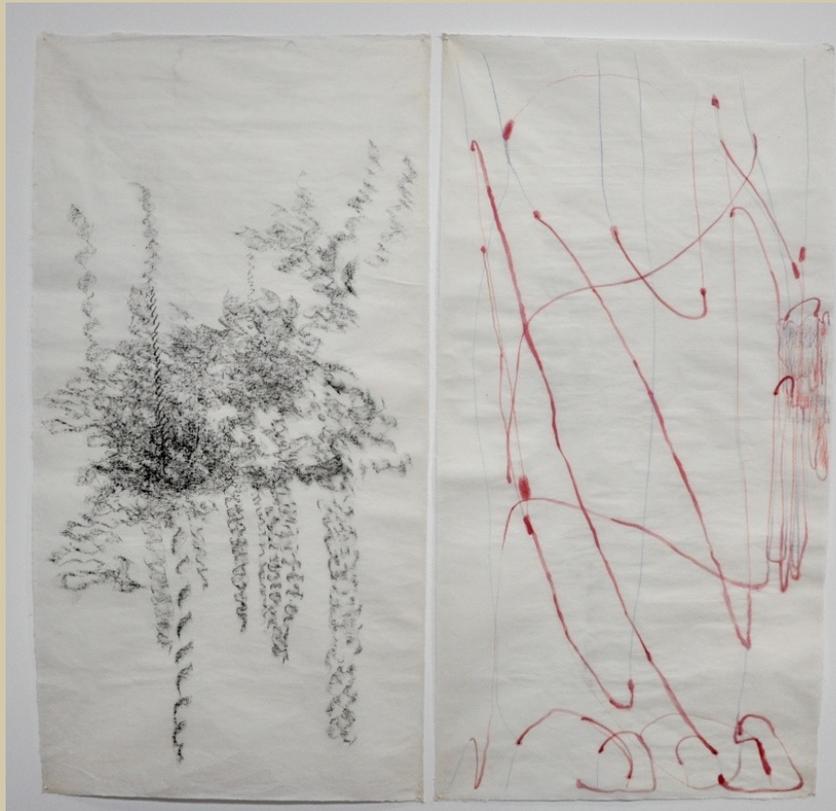
Through the process we each become a practitioner, a producer, and an audience. We used this collaborative practice as a point of departure to approach the project for the exhibition at the Lewers House Gallery at Penrith Regional Gallery. Sue and I explored the artwork created by Margo and Gerald Lewers, the architecture, and the garden, while we continued the regular sessions. We explored different varieties of plant and seed on site and by the riverbank nearby. We talked to people who are involved with the Gallery, including Shayne Roberts the Heritage Gardener employed by Penrith Regional Gallery and Darani Lewers Larsen, the daughter of Margo and Gerald who grew up and spent time at the house. I extended to explore plants in my own backyard garden, in parallel to the site garden. Each of our reading lists grew during the development for the project *Line Work: Rivers of the Basin*.

The following works are the results of the sessions.

— Phaptawan Suwannakudt



*We listened to the ambient sound of Thai music, which added to the pleasure of exploring our favoured materials.*



This work was made in the early days of our collaboration in Phaptawan's studio which looks onto the garden at her home. We drew individually on large sheets of rice paper. Phaptawan worked with charcoal whilst I used coloured ink and brushes. We listened to the ambient sound of Thai music, which added to the pleasure of exploring our favoured materials. I enjoyed the lightness and fluidity of the ink and brush, a sense of connection working alongside Phaptawan.

— Sue Pedley



**Sue Pedley and Phaptawan Suwannakudt**  
*Line work #2*  
2021

Before the COVID-19 outbreak started, we alternated our collaborative setting between Sue's studio and my study room at home. This work was done in Sue's studio where we explored the rice paper. Mine was purchased from Thailand (left), and Sue's was from Vietnam (right). I noticed the line work I produced started to reflect the background stories concerning Thai politics. I had just finished reading the book *Bangkok Wakes to Rain* and my memory came through the impression, which I made when we alternated working on the two pieces of paper.

In 2020 we continued working regularly as we practiced social distancing through the first wave of the pandemic. I now sublet a studio space in the Ultimo Project studio complex from which Sue has worked for over fifteen years.

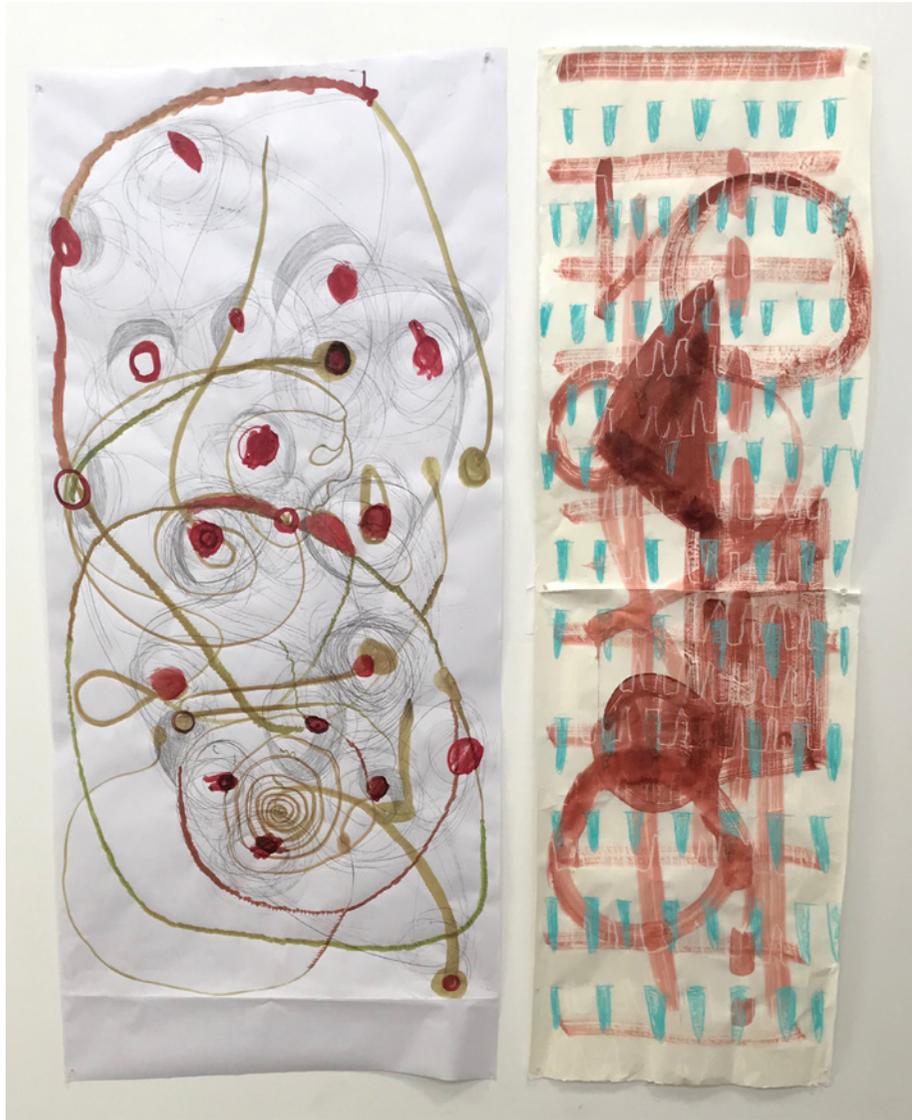
We could not go into each other's studio to work, so we discussed our plan at an outdoor meeting point, and we then continued working together a corridor apart speaking across studio walls.

These works were the instruction given by Sue on rubbing impressions from found objects in our respective studios. Objects from Sue's studio are mostly objects of memory, from places she had visited, from Asia, (Japan, Vietnam, Sri Lanka) to Europe. Sue worked the rubbing from bamboo blind and rope she had collected from her trips. In contrast the objects I found in my studio are functional and include palette knives, coin rings, a fan, and a sponge. We then discussed our experience and the materials we chose. Sue's objects reflect memories whilst mine reflect the process of making.

— Phaptawan



Sue Pedley and  
Phaptawan Suwannakudt  
Line work #16  
2021



Sue Pedley and Phaptawan Suwannakudt  
Line work #17  
2021

*Lewers made artwork and objects inspired by the surrounding space from her home studio.*

Sue's instruction during social distancing was to look for patterns in our respective studios to draw as *Line Work: Rivers of the Basin* was in development. I was also thinking through Margo Lewers' wide range of practice and her interest in abstract art. Lewers made artwork and objects inspired by the surrounding space from her home studio. This was the context in the catalogue of the Margo Lewers retrospective exhibition curated by Pamela Bell at the National Trust S.H. Ervin Gallery in 2002.

I looked up and found the circular pattern of the studio ventilation, then the geometrical forms from the box, in which I keep brushes and tools and I thought of Margo's abstract forms in her many works.

— Phaptawan



The Black Lives Matter demonstrations in 2020 inspired us to make a banner. The SURFACE is the FACE SHAPE & SKIN and Look into the HEART & BLOOD are the English translations of words written by Phaptawan.

By this time, we had established a method of collaboration where we alternated as to who set the premise of our weekly two-hour session, including the choice of materials. I suggested to Phaptawan that we make a banner to carry on the Black Lives Matter march scheduled for the week ahead. Phaptawan spoke of her experience of participating in demonstrations in Thailand in the 1970s and her reluctance to participate in this demonstration. Phaptawan wrote text in Thai language and we overlaid the text with the English translation. It was important for me to listen to Phaptawan's experience in Bangkok surrounded by so much political turmoil.

— Sue

Sue Pedley and Phaptawan Suwannakudt  
Line work #21  
2021



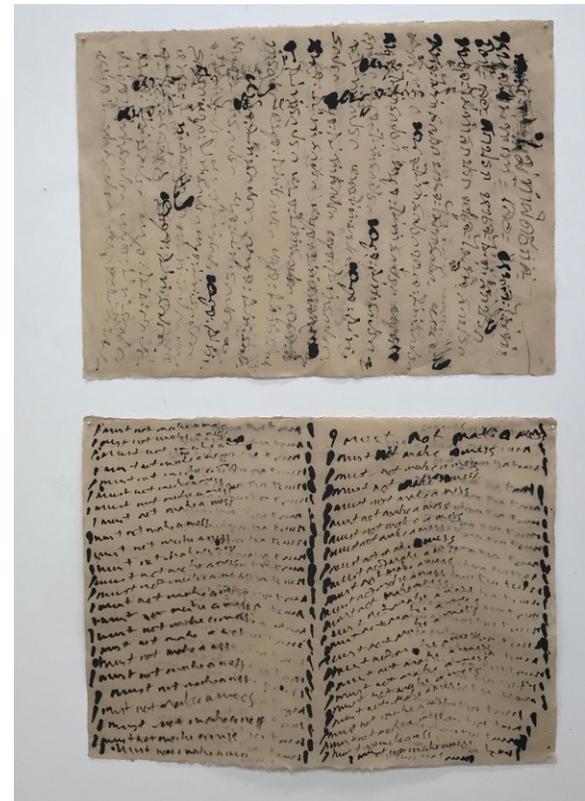


Sue Pedley and  
Phaptawan Suwannakudt  
Line work #21  
2021

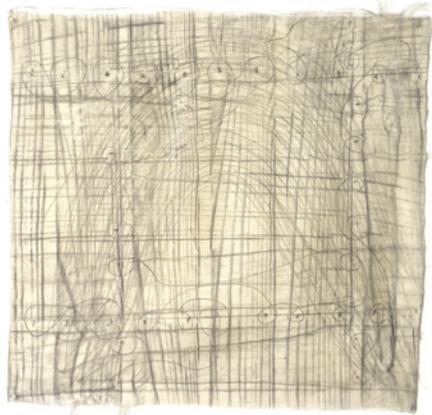
Sue and I found the discarded objects from the studios where we worked which included two boards and two packaging cardboard blocks. Using leftover fabric from my previous work we made a collage on boards and painted them over with black ink and white paint. We worked on the boards while we observed and used the references from the form of the packaging blocks. Sue cut the fabric pieces to the form which reflects the map of places, while my cutting reflects the visible and invisible shape and shadow from the packaging blocks. We wrapped and sewed muslin cloth on a packaging block during the following sessions. I noticed one of the methods of mark making which I used more frequently at the later stage was marking the reduction of the marks, rather than making the mark. This was evident in the work *Line Work #27* diptych. The underpainted masking fluid dried off after we each painted. It revealed its marks as blank when we peeled the layer off the ink paint. We then painted over it with another layer on top of it.

This work was made under the pergola of the community garden nearby our Marrickville studios. Using black ink on porous Vietnamese kozo paper, we created marks with sticks and other objects found in the garden. Due to the porosity of the paper we eventually had pages with images on both sides forming the potential for a book. One of the memories that surfaced for me was from being at school on detentions where I had to write a hundred times - "I must not talk in class". I was fascinated to hear about Phaptawan's early education in Bangkok which was so different from mine.

— Sue



Sue Pedley and  
Phaptawan Suwannakudt  
Line work #22  
2021



*When we swapped places we each intervened the shapes and lines with our own interpretation of the four elements.*

I primed raw Thai silk with acrylic which was the method my father used during the 1970s. The primed silk resulted in a smooth papery texture. I brought the material to work with using graphite and charcoal to draw on it. During the collaboration we discussed the four elements being Earth, Wind, Water, Fire which I adopted from my father's approach to his painting subjects. I drew curved lines which represents waves and bubbles. Sue rubbed the surface of the gallery floor in the studio. We made marks with drawing and rubbing processes over two sessions. When we swapped places we each intervened the shapes and lines with our own interpretation of the four elements. I drew the bubbles which carry or wrap around the void, while filling the in-between gap through the line which Sue drew with dark patterns.

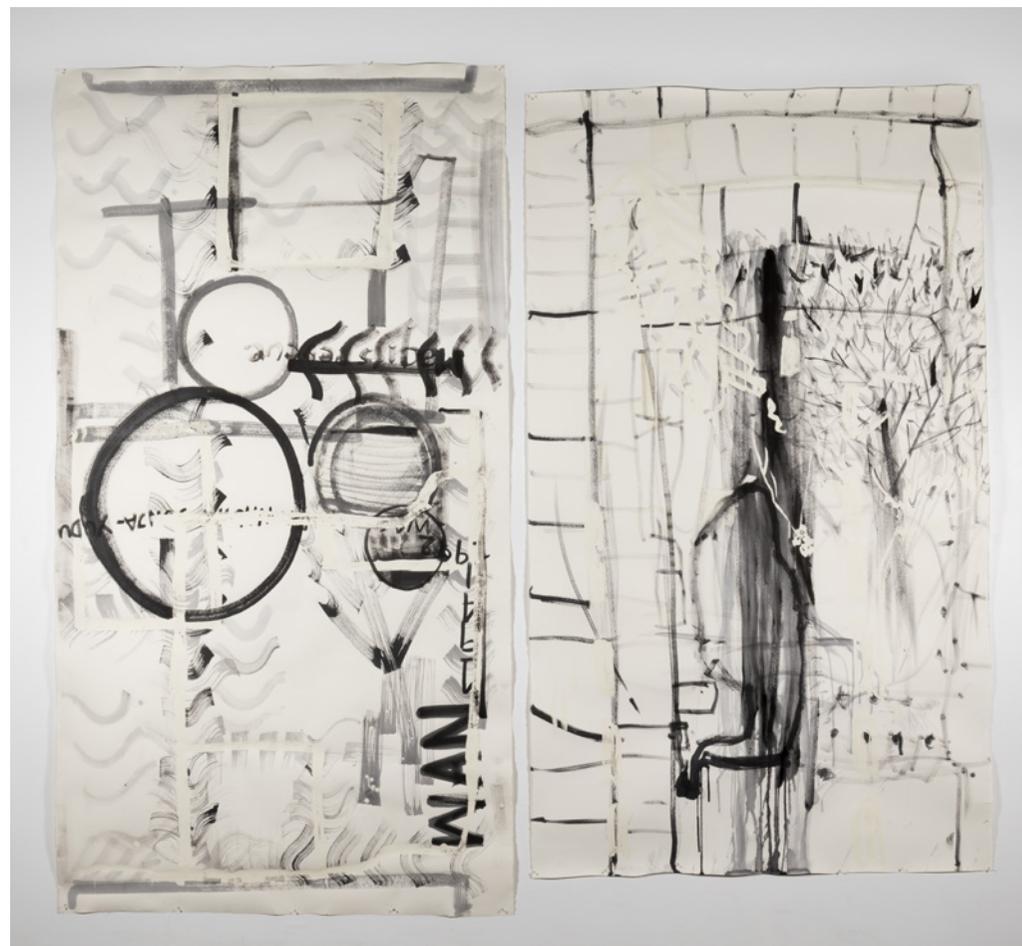
— Phaptawan

At this stage, we were exploring drawing as a way of mapping, walking and movement. The specific prompt for *Line Work #25* was a series of walks taken near our Marrickville studios. We recorded our memories of those walks on the twin sheets of paper – using layers of masking fluid and ink – while repeatedly swapping the sheets between us. Finally, we removed all the masking fluid and the sum of our shared experience was revealed.

I enjoyed seeing how differently we responded to visualising the same walk. Phaptawan and I worked with lines drawn by walking, observing, storytelling, singing, drawing, and writing. Together our interweaving and interconnecting lines weaved a path between our past and the present.

– Sue

*Together our interweaving and interconnecting lines weaved a path between our past and the present.*



## READING LIST

### **Gerald and Margo Lewers, Denise Hickey**

Margo Lewers created the garden at Emu Plains and considered the plants, the layout and design as an integral part of her creativity. She shared the produce from her garden with family and friends and took great care in the presentation of food and flowers in her home life, including entertainment. Phaptawan and I created collaborative drawings inspired by excerpts from this book in the development of our proposal and work. – *Sue Pedley*

### **People of the River: Lost Worlds of Early Australia, Grace Karskens**

Our interest in the garden created by the Lewers expanded into researching the geological and colonial history of the land on which the garden is situated including the Nepean River. Grace Karskens works closely with the local Aboriginal people and provides deep insights into the evolving relationship between Aboriginal people and the white settlers. – *Sue Pedley*

I have read the *Secret River*, Kate Grenville which is a fiction book about ten years earlier. The book is based on the dark history of the atrocities done to the Aboriginal people by the settlers. However, *People of the River* on the other hand, is a non-fiction book with factual details of names and places. The book reflects dynamic exchanges between the settler and the first nation people which nevertheless created the later generations of cultural dispossession. When Sue and I developed work for the exhibition *Line Work: Rivers of the Basin*, we each took turns reading the pages with the names, places, histories, incidents during the settlements in the river areas. Some of these names appeared as scripts in the collaborative sessions we worked together. We also commuted to the Home of the Lewers Bequest to explore and collect materials and ingredients from the garden through the guidance of Shayne Roberts, to reflect the history of the place by the river. I utilised the bamboo, the banana trees from the garden and one of the plants found by the river.

Phaptawan Suwannakudt, Line work: *Rivers of the Basin #9* (2021), bamboo, banana rope, wire. Courtesy the artist.



Sue was informed by her Vietnamese friend that it is widely used as a home remedy for minor symptoms of bodily discomfort. The latter two also grow in my own home garden in the Inner West. This informed the direction of how I relate to the place and the river with my own stories and cultural perspectives.

– *Phaptawan Suwannakudt*

### **Housekeeping, Marilyn Robinson**

The story is of two sisters growing up in the home built by their grandfather in a lakeside town in Idaho (USA) close to a railway line. The book resonated in its environmental themes and its location and proximity to floods and fires. The family history within the home and its surrounds is deeply evocative exploring themes of transience and impermanence, loss and abandonment, memory and nature. – *Sue Pedley*

### **Entangled Life: How Fungi Makes Our World, Changes Our Mind & Shapes Our Future, Merlin Sheldrake**

An inspiring book about fungi allowed me to think about the unseen aspects of a garden and landscape. The Lewers garden has large old trees and during the winter we saw evidence of fungi in the garden. I am interested the unseen aspects of nature and our family histories and the potential for change if they are acknowledged. – *Sue Pedley*

### **Bangkok wakes to Rain, Pitchaya Sudbanthad**

Bangkok is a city by the Chao Phraya River, my birthplace in Thailand. In the past, the city was named the Venice of the East with the networks of Klong (canals) being utilised as the main channel for transportation where people commuted and traded daily. I had an intimate relationship with the river. I lived near the water where I bathed, shopped for food and groceries from boats, offered alms to monks and commuted during my childhood. The book *Bangkok wakes to Rain* depicts the stories of different people including a missionary from New England, a jazz musician, a swimming teacher, from different generations

for two centuries, in an old house in Bangkok, which morphed and transformed into an underwater landscape where people adapted and continued living an amphibian life. The collapse of time and the tales in the book reflect the cultural context of family relations, beliefs, political conflicts, extensive habitat destruction, and environmental issues. I was finishing reading the book when Sue and I started the weekly meeting for drawing together during late 2019. I took Sue to the Cooks River near my house during one of the first meetings. The regular meetings continue to form the collaborative drawing *Line Work* series together. I consciously and unconsciously, with the context of this book in mind, made marks on the prepared materials through the instructions Sue and I alternate the role to give each other. – *Phaptawan Suwannakudt*

### **The Art of Time Travel; Historians and Their Craft, Tom Griffiths**

When my partner, an English art historian saw how transfixed I was in reading *The People of the River*, he then introduced *The Art of Time Travel* to me. I did not have to go further than chapter one, the Timeless Land: Eleanor Dark, to learn how important this book is to the project we were dealing with. In the first chapter of the book, Griffiths contextualises how Dark reimagines the history in her fiction by relating to the engagement of the writer and Varuna, now the writer's centre in Katoomba, when she writes her book *The Timeless Land*. The chapter begins with the powerful image when Bennelong and his father gazed out to sea from the clifftop, searching the horizon for the boat with wings. I further select the later chapters in this book to my own list of preferences which include: - *The Cry for the Dead*; Judith Wright, *The History and Fiction*; Inga Clendinnen, *The Feel of the Past*; Grace Karsken and *Dr. Deep Time*; Mike Smith. – *Phaptawan Suwannakudt*





Right: Sue Pedley and Phaptawan Suwannakudt, *Line work: Rivers of the Basin #3* (2021), ink, from cotton and pineapple fibre. Courtesy the artists.



Left: Sue Pedley and Phaptawan Suwannakudt, *Line work: Rivers of the Basin* (2021), installation view, Lewers House Gallery. Courtesy the artists.

# LIST OF WORKS

**Sue Pedley and Phaptawan Suwannakudt**

*Line Work: Rivers of the Basin #1*

2021

paper piano rolls, ink, paint, graphite,  
mixed media

500 x 30cm each (3 pieces)

**Sue Pedley and Phaptawan Suwannakudt**

*Line Work: Rivers of the Basin #3*

2021

Ink, acrylic on fabric made from cotton  
and pineapple fibre

150 x 50cm each (4 pieces)

**Sue Pedley**

*Line Work: Rivers of the Basin #4*

2021

graphite and paper

150 x 500 cm

**Sue Pedley**

*Line Work: Rivers of the Basin #5*

2021

bamboo and wire

150 x 500 cm

**Sue Pedley**

*Line Work: Rivers of the Basin #6*

2021

casuarina seeds, mandavilla seeds,  
mandavilla pods, willow leaves,  
banana flowers, 13 glass containers,  
10 platters

dimensions variable

**Phaptawan Suwannakudt**

*Line Work: Rivers of the Basin #7 a,b*

2021

a, fabric, banana string, dyed rope

b, flagon, glass punch set

dimensions variable

**Phaptawan Suwannakudt**

*Line Work: Rivers of the Basin #8*

2021

graphite and pen on bamboo  
with silver thread

1 x 100cm each (3 pieces)

**Phaptawan Suwannakudt**

*Line Work: Rivers of the Basin #9*

2021

bamboo, banana rope, wire

240 x 50 x 30cm

All works courtesy the artists.

# BIOGRAPHIES

**Sue Pedley** is a visual artist recognised for her multimedia installations, large scale drawings and collaborations. She exhibits her work across outdoor locations, galleries and museums. Responsive to the contingencies of the sites where she works, her recurring themes include the environmental degradation of water and its impact on communities and the natural world; colonisation, including addressing her family history as settlers in Tasmania; and the intergenerational hurts of war.

Sue has worked in the Asian region for over twenty years – in Japan, China, Vietnam and Sri Lanka. She has created works that respond to Australia's military and trading histories with Japan and with Vietnam. She has participated in the Echigo Tsumari Art Triennial (2006 & 2018) and Setouchi Triennial (2010), working closely with rural communities and volunteers.

She has also facilitated reciprocal projects between Australia and the Asian countries where she has worked. In China she has exhibited in Ningbo and Guangzhou and was a recipient of a Redgate residency in Beijing.

Sue has collaborated with artists, architects, musicians, film makers and sound artists. For the 2018 Echigo Tsumari Art Triennial in Japan, Sue collaborated with architect Iwaki Kazuya and the Aramachi community to create *Tracing Water*. One hundred woven spheres mapped the route of a former watercourse that had been diverted by dam construction.

Professionally trained in Australia and Germany, Sue has been making and exhibiting work in this country and elsewhere since 1984. She has received Australia Council residencies in Vietnam (2008), London (1993), France and Germany (1985); and an Asia Link residency in Sri Lanka (2001). Other residencies include Tokyo Wonder Site (2012), Redgate Studio Residency, Beijing (2011), Banff Art Centre, Canada (2007) and Bundanon Trust, NSW (2016). Her significant exhibitions include *Patches of Light – Sue & Peggy Pedley*, Queen Victoria Art Museum and Gallery, Tasmania (2019); *Tracing Water*, Echigo Tsumari Art Triennial 2018, Japan; *Orange-Net-Work*, Ningbo Art Museum, China (2019) and Mosman Art Gallery, NSW (2017); *Spare Room*, Elizabeth Bay House, Sydney (2007); *Blue Jay Way*, Heide Museum of Contemporary Art and Penrith Regional Gallery (2007).

**Sue Pedley**, *Line work: Rivers of the Basin #5* (2021), bamboo and wire. Courtesy the artist.



**Phaptawan Suwannakudt** works in interdisciplinary forms that include painting, sculpture, and installation. Her work is based on lived experience and informed by socio-political issues through telling stories and intersections between different human experiences. It has often dealt with issues of empathy and commensurability informed by Buddhism, women's issues, and cross-cultural dialogue. She trained as a mural painter in her father's workshop, the late master Paiboon Suwannakudt who was a writer, poet, dancer, and choreographer. Her early childhood involved reading her father's manuscripts and learning Thai mural painting and drafting skills. In her teens she was sent

to read Thai poetry with the late poet, artist Chang Sae Tang. Phaptawan worked on a year contract as an ESL teacher to Vietnamese, Lao and Khmer refugees for UNHCR at Nongkhai Refugee camp on the border of Thailand. Later she became the first woman to lead a temple mural painting team in Thailand in 1990. Earlier work outside Buddhist temple schemes examined some of the gendered restrictions that have both shaped and limited her art practice. This has since expanded to a multi-layered structure that includes elements which produce visual distortion such as mirror, sheer fabric, and Perspex sheets. They have often involved the use of Thai text, sometimes with sensorial elements such as sound and smell.

She was born in Thailand, 1959, and graduated from Silpakorn University, Nakhon Phatom, with a degree in English and German. She later led a team of painters that worked in Buddhist temples throughout Thailand during the 1980s-1990s. She was also involved in the women artists' group exhibition *Tradisexion* in 1995 and in *Womanifesto*. Phaptawan relocated to Australia in 1996 and completed an MVA at Sydney College of the Arts, Sydney University. She has exhibited extensively in Australia, Thailand and internationally including *the 18th Biennale of Sydney: All Our Relations* (2012); *Traces of Words: Art and Calligraphy from Asia*, Museum of Anthropology, UBC, Vancouver, Canada (2017); the inaugural Bangkok Art Biennale, Thailand (2018); *Asia TOPA*, Art Centre Melbourne (2020); *The National* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales (2021); and an installation work *Sleeping Deep Beauty* for ESOK in Jakarta Biennale 2021. Her works are in public collections including the Art Bank Sydney, the National Art Gallery of Thailand, Art Gallery of New South Wales, and the National Gallery of Singapore. Phaptawan is also engaged in a collaborative project *Leave It and Break No Hearts* with Samak Kosem and curated by Patrick Flores at 100 Tonson Foundation, Bangkok Thailand, a six-month program during March – August 2022.



**Phaptawan Suwannakudt**, *Line work: Rivers of the Basin #7* (2021), banana string, dyed rope fabric, flagon, glass punch set. Courtesy the artist.

**Julie Ewington** is a curator, writer and broadcaster based in Sydney. An authority on contemporary Australian art, and on contemporary Southeast Asian art, for three decades she worked as a curator in Australian galleries and museums. Between 2001-2014 she led the Australian Art department at Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art; and she was a contributing curator to the Gallery's Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art between 1996-2012, with special emphasis on Southeast Asian and Australian artists. Recent curatorial projects include *The Sculpture of Bronwyn Oliver*, TarraWarra Museum of Art in Victoria (2016); *Unfinished Business: Perspectives on Art and Feminism*, at ACCA, Melbourne (2017); and *The Housing Question: Helen Grace, Narelle Jubelin and Sherre DeLys*, for Penrith Regional Gallery. (2019).

Since the early 1970s Julie has written widely on the visual arts and also on the crafts, particularly contemporary jewellery. She has published monographs on Fiona Hall (2005) and Del Kathryn Barton (2014); has contributed essays to numerous exhibition catalogues and anthologies; has edited major publications on both Australian and Asian art; and has published a wide variety of essays and reviews in journals including *Art and Australia*, *Artforum*, *Art Monthly*, *Australian Book Review*, *Eyeline*, and *The Monthly*.

Currently Julie is Chair of 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney and a member of the Board of Samstag Museum, Adelaide. In 2014 she was awarded the Emeritus Medal from the Australia Council's Visual Arts Board for her work as a writer, curator and advocate.

**Sue Pedley and Phaptawan Suwannakudt**, *Line work: Rivers of the Basin #1* (2021), paper piano rolls, ink, paint, graphite, mixed media. Courtesy the artists.



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Sheona White who introduced the book *The People of the River*.

### *Phaptawan*

Darani Lewers Larsen who generously gave her time and engaged with the discussion about the prospect of the Lewers House and the garden, her childhood memories of the place and the river. Darani is a common name in Thai for women and means 'boat' or 'vessel', which inspired the work *Bamboo boat*, and the offering bowls I developed for the exhibition. To me they are the vessels that contain the narratives which transmitted the memories and histories of the people and the place of time passed.

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### *Sue*

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Installation documentation by Zan Wimberley.