

How do you keep a wave upon the sand? Or, rather, how do you capture the turbulence of the ocean in a static image? ROAR | RAW asks this question in multiple mediums, with no set answer. Through experimental and stylised depictions of nature, artists Grace Herrmann and Shyanne Clarke navigate their way to a subsequent question: how can depictions of nature reflect an inner, human landscape?

It is unsurprising that artists working on Kabi Kabi/Gubbi Gubbi land on Queensland's Sunshine Coast might be directly inspired by the surrounding coastal landscape. Such is clearly the case here in Grace Herrmann's *Break-Through*. The work responds to the storms that carved a channel in Bribe Island in late 2021, separating Woorim Beach into two distinct parts. The artist kayaked to the island from the mainland and captured footage of uprooted trees and the drastically changed land mass.

Contrary to this personal depiction of the local landscape, other works in the exhibition resist being located to one place. Shyanne's charcoal series *Subtle* presents us with brooding, dark scenes perhaps more reminiscent of a stormy night on the west coast of Scotland, or the gloomy Wuthering Heights-wilderness of the Yorkshire Moors. This is no accident, both artists being openly influenced by the Romantics.

The Romantic era of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, remembered through paintings by Caspar David Friedrich and J. M. W. Turner, and the poems of Blake, Byron and Shelley, rejected the rationalism of the preceding Enlightenment. Although not one united movement, these artists shared a value for imagination, and for personal emotion and freedom. Another common concern was the sublime, the awe often inspired by vast or dramatic landscapes. Imagery and descriptions of nature were often used as metaphors for the mind and emotion, with the landscape expressing ideas of human experience, power, and in/significance. For the most part, these were dramatic, turbulent images. The same visual language, and an interest in the meeting points of nature and human, continue in Grace and Shyanne's works.

The dialogue between internal (mind/emotion) and external (landscape) is most literally visible in Grace's installation *Shut-In*, a freestanding set of louvres made from thick paper board which Grace has cut and peeled to produce the intricate surface design. This process, which Grace has been perfecting in her recent practice, subverts traditional printmaking practices such as lino and woodblock prints, by presenting the carved surface as the final image rather than the printing tool.

The work's title, *Shut-in*, intensifies the air of confinement established by the louvres. Uprooted trees, cyclonic wind and waves adorn the louvres, perhaps chaos that can be kept somewhat at bay if they are closed. However, with no clear front to the work, *Shut-in* plays with the static and the movable, the solid and the transparent to disorient any sense of inside and out.

Shyanne's gessoed timber panels overlaid with rich charcoal layers are rendered not in a traditional landscape format, but in the vertical format we usually associate with portraiture. Perhaps, in this instance, self-portraiture. Her titles, words like *Whelm* and *Surge*, also indicate the connection between emotional and environmental states, specifically the fluid turmoil that lies below the surface. These works are the newest in a series of the artist's experiments in drawing and printing, with other recent works exploring soymilk underlays of charcoal, and monoprints layered with inks and acrylics.

It seems, in these works, that both artists use material process as a form of emotional processing.

They are finding new ways to depict nature that is capable also of articulating something of their personal experience. We can feel them striving more and more urgently to capture an undefined *something*: a feeling, a sense, a place, a time. Traditional drawing and printmaking techniques are not enough to do this, they seem to find, so in ROAR | RAW they've pushed their experimentation further still through experimental collaborations.

The collaborative works combine the frenetic detail of Grace's carving with Shyanne's ambiguous mood scenes. *Spindrift* incorporates reclaimed gauze and pushes the exhibition beyond the 2D. The fabric reflects the dichotomy of the solid, static image of the ocean that the 2D works necessarily employ, with the simultaneous soft, moveable, fluid nature of water that they aim to capture.

Historical references to Romantic imagery is most familiar in the second collaborative work, *Experiments 1 and 2*. To produce the base images for these works, Grace and Shyanne fed a prompt into the AI software Mid Journey: *imagine a monotone artwork with a wild ocean and tree branches, in the style of Friedrich, Goya or Turner*. Based on the AI outcomes, Shyanne created monoprints layered with charcoal that Grace has subsequently carved into.

Both the processes and the subject matter in ROAR | RAW are layered, moveable, uncertain. They embrace moderation through AI, desaturation, experimental mark-making and disrupted print processes. Ultimately, they are depictions of the impossibility of capturing the sea, and the internal landscape that that sea might represent.