

PATTERNED PAPERS

The elephant as a cultural and decorative graphic icon has inspired a series of artworks I refer to as the Patterned Papers.

In researching the Asian elephant I encountered numerous depictions of the elephant as a decorative and decorated symbol, as a decorative element in textiles and wall friezes, as statues, and as a ceremonial centrepiece. This image of the elephant was in stark contrast to the majority of imagery I had been focused on developing for my research. The prevalence and significance of the elephant depicted this way required investigation, not investigation of the role of the elephant in culture, but of the elephant as the subject of decorative artworks. My patterned papers are response to seeing the elephant as subject for decorative works and have been influenced by wallpaper design, textiles design and by M.C.Esher's theory of the regular division of the plane.



TRA-DIGITAL ILLUSTRATION

Tra-digital is the title I have given to a style of art practice I have developed during my studio-based enquiry. The term Tra-digital simply reflects the practice of combining traditional art making techniques and digital media in the production of a single artwork. The weighting of each practice approach, digital or traditional in the execution of an artwork depends on the requirements of that artwork. My goal in combining these two practice approaches is to provide flexibility in the development and execution of artworks, although using digital media in the illustration process my focus is still on achieving a traditional aesthetic for the final artworks.

The development of this series of work was an opportunity to explore tra-digital practice and to depict the elephants in a completely different way to that of the more structured illustration I had been focused on. Elephant's swimming is one of the

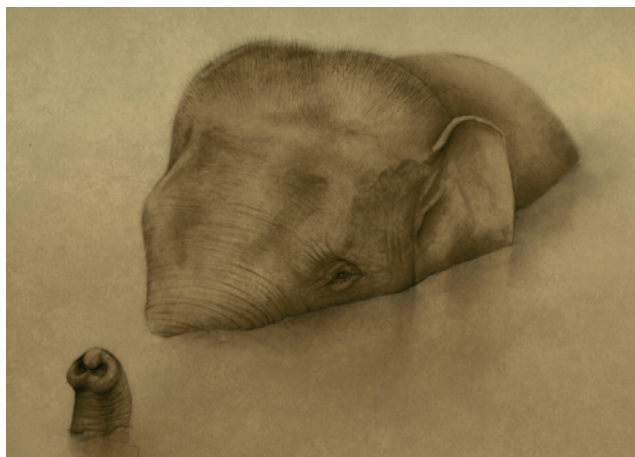


IMAGE LEFT Andrew Howells *Elephant Motif 3*, 2010
ink outline artwork digitally rendered and composited, printed on fine art paper, 49 x 39 cm

IMAGE RIGHT Andrew Howells *Minding Animals - Tra-Digital Art*, 2010
watercolour wash and graphite pencil drawing digitally rendered and printed on Canson digital fine art paper, 59 x 69 cm

more endearing memories I have of my time spent watching the elephants at Taronga Zoo. When the elephants enter the mote at the zoo they become very playful, squirting, pushing, submerging and chasing each other around in scenes reminiscent of a children's pool party. Witnessing this behaviour and the elephants playful interaction with their keepers is what stopped me seeing the elephants just as subject for artwork and when I began to appreciate their nature, personality and ultimately their need to be the focus of conservation efforts.

ELEPHANT ARTWORK AT SCALE

Scale was an unavoidable consideration in my depiction of the elephant. The scale of the

Elephant as a subject was something that was lost in translation in the development of my smaller elephant artworks, especially considering their removal from any reference of scale in my BCS illustration sets.



The craggy, wrinkled skin that we associate with elephants was something that was crucial to capturing a believable depiction. The two aspects, scale and texture, had a connection when approaching the development of artworks. This connection was in the quality, texture or density of papers, canvas or any other artwork surface used. Works developed on a small scale, requiring a high level of detail needed to be developed on a smooth surface so that the level of texture could be built up and controlled for the outcome of that finished artwork. Small artworks of the elephant on relatively textured surfaces dictated the control I had over the textural surface quality of the elephant and my ability to render sharp detail. In contrast to this, developing artworks at scale meant that the textural quality of the paper could contribute, or in some cases direct the depiction of the surface quality of the elephant. This relationship of scale and texture was a focus in the development of my larger scale elephant artworks.

IMAGE ABOVE
Andrew Howells *The Baby Elephant March*
2011
mixed media – wash pencil and digital media on fine art paper, 25.4 x 61 cm

IMAGE RIGHT
Andrew Howells from *Body Condition Scoring (BCS)*, illustrated reference
2009
ink, digital render, graphite on Arches watercolour paper, screen based animation

BODY CONDITION SCORING (BCS) ILLUSTRATED REFERENCE

Body condition scoring (BCS) is the process of visually assessing a number of regions of an

animal's body and assigning a score or index value based on that assessment. BCS is effectively identifying a particular individual animal's body condition in relation to the body conditions of its species broader population.

BCS forms one component of the multi-institutional research study titled 'Understanding the interaction between nutrition, activity and reproduction in captive Asian Elephants'. The study is being undertaken by researchers at Fort Worth Zoo (Texas), the University of Sydney, Fossil Rim Wildlife Center (Texas), Washington State University, Missouri State

University and the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Center for Elephant Conservation.

One aspect of my research has been on developing a method for illustration BCS reference.

I have developed my illustrations based on the scientific methodology documented by researchers from the above mentioned research group. I have used traditional animation principles in developing sequential registered illustration sets and rendered them using a method for illustration I have been developing that incorporates several traditional and digital development phases. The illustrations were developed with the intention of being viewed as static reference images and also as moving interactive content in a screen-based reference tool.

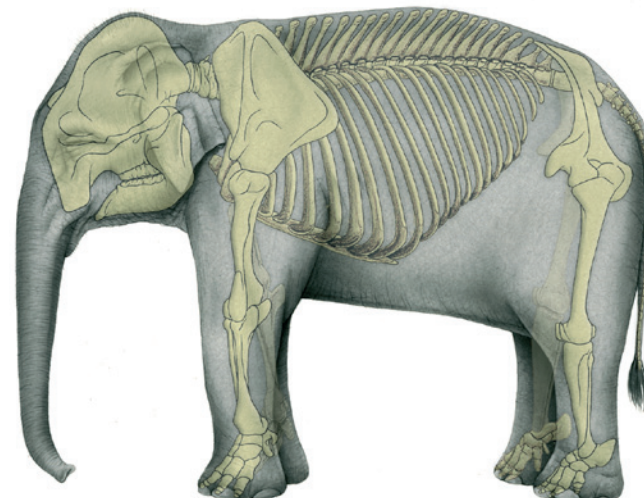




IMAGE ABOVE
Andrew Howells
Minding Animals - Tra-Digital Art
2011
watercolour wash and graphite pencil
drawing digitally rendered and printed
on Canson digital fine art paper
59 x 69 cm

COVER IMAGE
Andrew Howells
Golden Elephant (detail)
2011
acrylic on canvas
100 x 159cm

Elephant: Art and Science continues until 24 September

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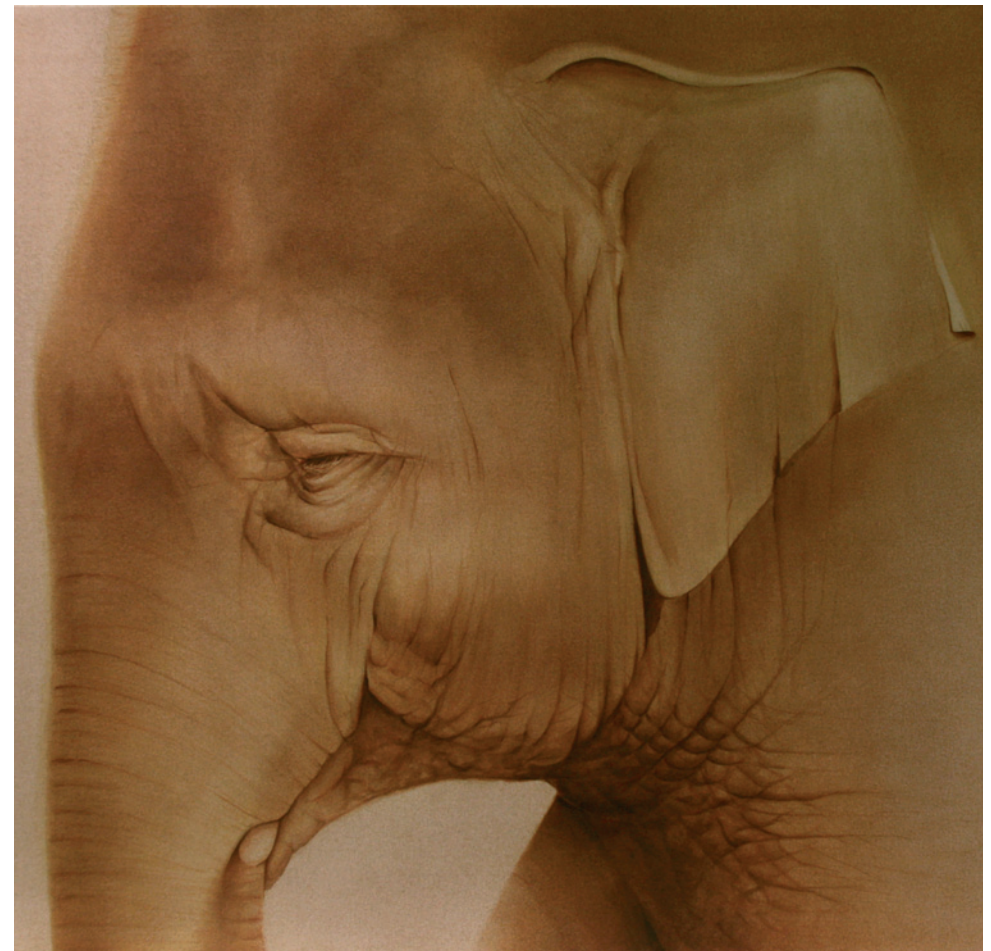
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