



## SANDRA BURGESS

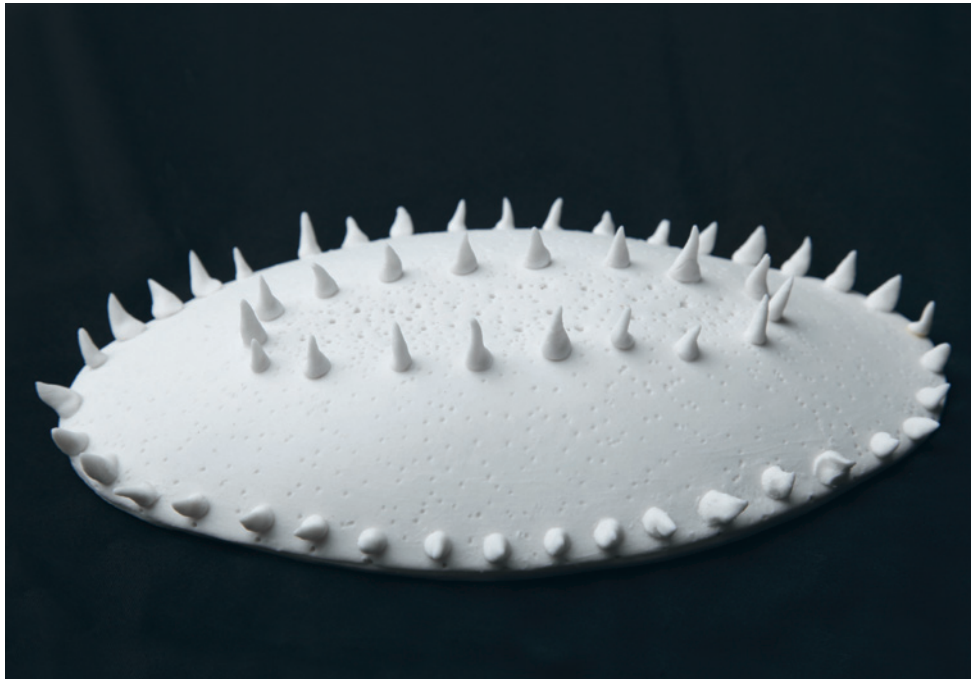
Plexus

PhD EXHIBITION DATES 28 August – 14 September 2013



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**NEWCASTLE**  
AUSTRALIA





ABOVE  
**Sandra Burgess**  
*Diatom (detail of Wall pieces)*  
 2009 - 2013  
 porcelain clay  
 30 x 160 x 100 mm

RIGHT  
**Sandra Burgess**  
*Sunset vessels I - V*  
 2012, ceramic, 200 x 420 x 420 mm each



The country surrounding Hanging Rock, near Nundle NSW, is rugged and wild in places. The Indigenous people used the country for hunting and gathering during the warmer periods but moved away during the inhospitable winters. It was shared country, and groups such as the Biripi people would have accessed it at various times when travelling overland for trade and large ceremonial gatherings. The land was sacred and carefully managed to sustain all that was there.

After settlement, claims were staked for gold mines, fences were erected to keep stock in, and land was divided into lots and claimed by the newcomers. The original people became increasingly alienated from their country, eventually reduced to living on the fringes of white settlement. Within a short time, the change in the way that the land was perceived led to the degradation of the environment. Gold mining left scars on the land and these are still visible today. Agriculture and stock grazing also made a mark. Introduced weeds such as prickly pear, blackberries and scotch thistle took hold once the land was cleared. Native forest was destroyed to accommodate swathes of plantation pine.

This degradation affronts me; I care deeply about the environment and perceive Hanging Rock differently from many people who go there to fossick and hunt. There are times when I am so full of joy and awe at the beauty to be found that I can hardly contain it. At other times I am saddened by the way in which parts of the area have been degraded, particularly by logging. I wanted to share a different perspective; through my art practice I hope to convey the importance of valuing all of life and to show the fragility and beauty in those life forms. By using the remnants of previous human endeavour, such as shards of ceramic and metal objects as inspiration for some of the work, the impermanence of all things is demonstrated.

The methodology used for the project, titled *Plexus*, meaning matting or plaiting shows how illusory intersecting threads matt over the landscape which is in turn layered with physical matter rotting back into the earth to support life. History is layered as well; lives being spent in a particular area leave traces that may be detected many years later by those who care to search. I am cutting through the layers to find meaning which will be communicated through art.

- Sandra Burgess, August 2013



ABOVE  
**Sandra Burgess**  
*Ceramic forms (detail)*  
 2008 - 2013  
 porcelain clay  
 40 x 100 x 90 mm

FRONT COVER  
**Sandra Burgess**  
*Ceramic forms (detail)*  
 2008 - 2013  
 porcelain clay  
 25 x 100 x 100 mm

BACK COVER TOP  
**Sandra Burgess**  
*Seed pods (detail)*  
 2012  
 fibre and porcelain clay  
 variable sizes

BACK COVER BELOW  
**Sandra Burgess**  
*Paper cuts (detail)*  
 2009 - 2010  
 Arches paper  
 variable sizes

**SANDRA  
 BURGESS**

Plexus