

Dianne Longley, *Remember to Die, Remember to Live* 2008 concertina book, ink jet prints  
closed 21 x 21 x 1.5 cm, open 21 x 378 cm, edition 12 + 1 AP

## 2008 SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY ACQUISITIVE ARTISTS' BOOK AWARD

### This year's Southern Cross University

Acquisitive Artists' Book Award and exhibition was held in Barratt Galleries, Alstonville, Northern New South Wales. When visiting this part of the country one is struck by the warmth, freshness and life of the region and its people. It is green with a sense of growth and potential. The air is warm, wet and alive — far from the dry parched inland plains. It is in this atmosphere that artists' books have found a home in which the medium can grow in variety and stature.

Each year this award has produced a selection of books that provide an insight into the contemporary environment of the artists' book. This year's selector Robert Heather, Manager of Events and Exhibitions, State Library of Victoria, acknowledged the diversity contained within the show. He said, 'visitors will engage with the craft, skill and vision from a broad range of practising artists.'

As a preliminary to the judging Robert Heather viewed the SCU collection. Recognising its value as a teaching and research resource, he selected books that would complement the SCU's growing and important collection of Australian artists' books.

Heather's selection ranged from 7 *Disrupted Interviews with History*, a political work by renowned book artist Peter Lyssiotis with insightful montage and text, to Dianne Longley's complex layered and deeply symbolic *Remember to Die, Remember to Live*. Other conceptual works were included: Clyde McGill's inspired moments of metaphor and performance in *Inside/outside (ii)* and Monica Oppen's *Botanikos*, which is an entire package — all brought together by a deep passion for the concepts contained within the book. *Laundromatic*, by Michele Vandermeer, refers to the narrative of the laundromat through images and text printed onto textile and is both whimsical and

deeply poetical. Lyn Ashby's *Lost and Found* is a finely constructed concertina book with slipcase that contains personal reflections on the sentimentality of our material existence. Spowart and Cooper produced a small hand-stamped book, *#2 Artists survey — A Regional Arts Business*, which is the second in the series of *Artists' Survey* books that investigate through humour and irony the concerns of a regionally based artist.

Sculptural and unusually structured books were also considered as part of the selection. These included Gail Stiffe's playfully constructed *Sand Stories* and Sara Bowen's delicate book, *Gossamer Bridge*, where the added dimension of shadows created a different perspective for engaging with the page.

Heather also made special mention of the following works: John & Alison Brebner's *At The Edge*, Martin King's *Book of flight*, Nadja Poljski's *Poke Me*, Sheryllyn Piccone's *Chapters* and Steve Monk's *Bohemian Rhapsody*.

The exhibition of the works in Barratt Galleries created a departure from the humble but thoughtfully presented space of the university's Nextart Gallery. This new venue brings the award closer to a larger and more diverse audience. Barratt Galleries is a warm and inviting place to sit and spend time with books. Its intimate rooms provide ample space for the books to be shown without the austerity of a white walled traditional gallery.

This acquisitive exhibition is always worth the journey to see. This year 30% of the books were purchased by the award as well by institutional and private collectors on opening night, demonstrating a growing interest in the medium. On show were books that could be unfolded and spread out across a large space; others enticed the reader into a puzzle of reading space and perspective or were about idiosyncratic experiences; and some utilised visual symbolism or presented a view on personal politics. Also on show were altered books, sculptural books, simple hand bindings and beautifully crafted bound productions, most of which were available to be held and 'read'.



Clyde McGill  
*Inside/outside (ii)*  
digital images  
edition: 100

There were handmade papers, examples of both traditional printmaking and digital output, and painted, drawn or laser copied images on a variety of surfaces and materials.

The SCU Artists' Book Award brings together a community of creative thinkers, designers and makers of ideas and objects — a community that is passionate about communicating their ideas and beliefs through their artists' books.

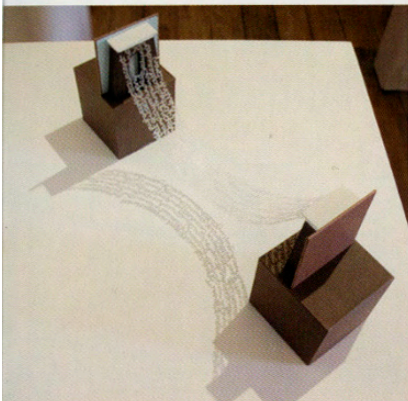
**Victoria Cooper** has been an artist, photographer and sessional teacher for 18 years, working within the artist's book genre for the last 10. She is currently working towards a PhD at James Cook University, investigating the alliance of mythopoesis with science to inform current issues about freshwater. This will be resolved as site-specific artist's books.



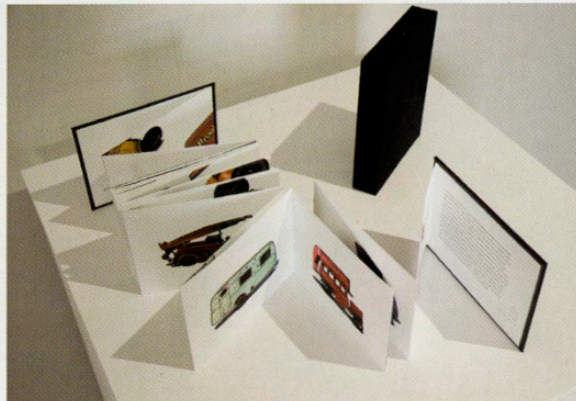
Monica Oppen, *Botanikos*  
(little red book detail)

The 2008 SCU Acquisitive Artists' Book Award was shown at the Barratt Galleries, Alstonville, NSW from 9 August – 10 September 2009.

See the online catalogue at:  
[www.scu.edu.au/schools/sass/visarts/next](http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/sass/visarts/next)



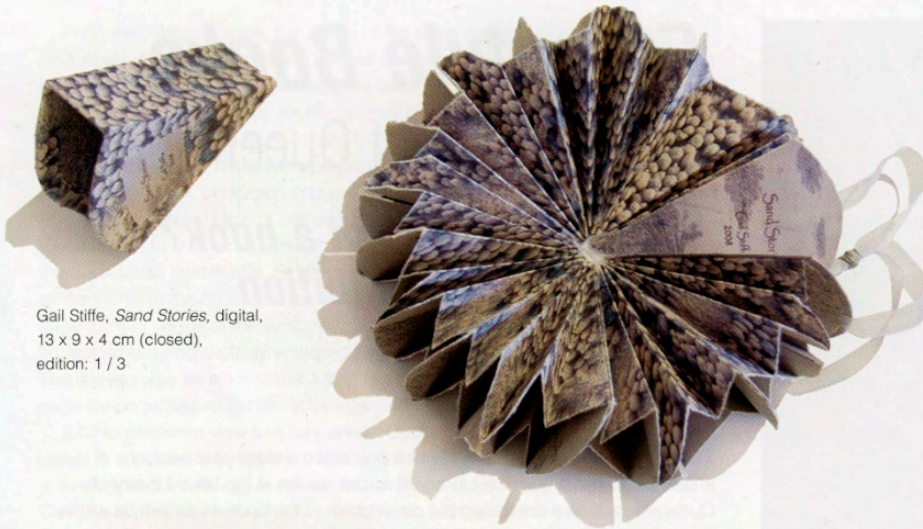
Sara Bowen, *Gossamer Bridge*, card, plastic film



Lyn Ashby, *Lost and Found*, concertina book, archival prints, edition: 50



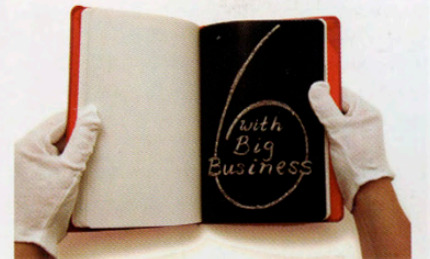
Michele Vandermeer, *Laundromatic*, white cotton, thread, fabric, ink, edition: 1 / 50



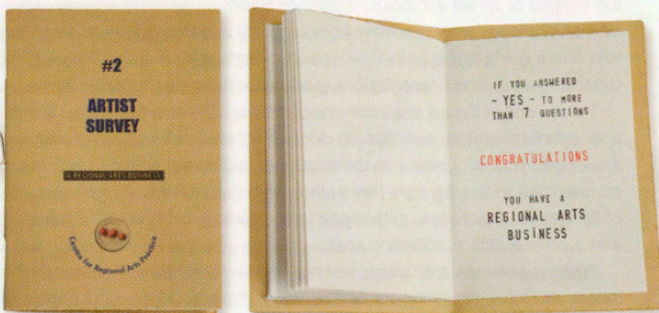
Gail Stiffe, *Sand Stories*, digital, 13 x 9 x 4 cm (closed), edition: 1 / 3



Peter Lyssiotis, *7 Disrupted Interviews with History*, offset, edition: 25



Spowart + Cooper, *#2 Artists survey - A regional arts business*, stamp book: 12 pages & cover, 3 note stitch, edition: 25 + 5 artist's proofs. Printer/publisher: Centre For Regional Arts Practice



Monica Oppen, *Botanikos*, photographs / text, edition: 10



## Andrew Townsend

Limited edition prints from Andrew's recent major work "19 Deities". 12 images to choose from, \$330.00 + p&p each.

Contact fYRE Gallery 02 4842 1142 or visit [www.hannahfyre.com.au](http://www.hannahfyre.com.au) for details.

