

# NATURE'S FOLLY

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Tiffany Titshall is a fine artist currently working in charcoal inspired by the broadly scaled landscape and diverse climate of central Victoria, Australia with some perspective gained from recent travels in landscapes and gardens in Europe.

## **Nature's Folly, 1st June - 14th July, 2013**

In Nature's Folly Tiffany Titshall delves into the architecture of gardens, exploring our natural desire to build monuments, stitch landscapes and re-shape our surroundings. Images stretch between structures and paths, along roads and beyond the garden to the field.

“A garden path can become the thread of a plot, connecting moments and incidents into a narrative. The narrative structure might be a simple chain of events with a beginning, middle, and end. It might be embellished with diversions, digressions, and picaresque twists, be accompanied by parallel ways (subplots), or deceptively fork into blind alleys like the alternative scenarios explored in a detective novel.”

*The Poetics of Gardens, Charles W. Moore, William J. Mitchell, and William Turnbull*

### **Artist Statement; Further exploration into Nature's Folly:**

The work in this exhibition deliberately ranges from sharp and structured images to partially-cleared soft-focus landscapes, travelling and exploring the contrast between the architecture of the 'tamed' land and 'the garden', and the wilderness that is ravaged, eroded or drought-stricken.

In this there is a suggested battle between nature and man, and yet a complicity - that as much as we consider 'Nature' as a foreign entity and a thing to be controlled and conquered, we are, in every instant, part of that nature and directed by it. The more effort we use to make a 'natural' world, the greater our sense of isolation and distance when we are confronted with the true wilderness, and our colonial sense of righting the 'unnatural' disorder is affronted. We fence, align, straighten and cut. We mow, divide and place ourselves at the centre. We impose our ancestry like a child's blanket, securing our tenuous and easily-broken grip on a fragile and ancient land, closeting our fear of a foreign nature that seems to seek retribution.

What is 'the garden'? Why do we desire it so much? How can we hope to shape a garden in a dry, damaged environment? Gardens, parks, vistas - they seduce us with their theft of views, their artful rearranging of perspectives, their denials of an expected space. They trick us with follies and grottos that speak with a seeming ancient tongue, that promise dark spaces whispering of long-disappeared worlds. Castles of chicken wire and concrete, plaster and paint, populated with statues of maidens and heroes, promising an exciting journey.

These monuments, fountains, porticos and grottos remind of us our mortality as much as marble gods are immortal. Keats tells us of the sweet heard and sweeter unheard melodies - these imagined worlds fill our minds with their silent melodies, allowing us to, however briefly, escape the clutches of time. Reverie overtakes us in the garden; we are swallowed by our own thoughts. Histories, real and fabricated, have their home here.

Some of these works focus on silhouettes, skylines, outskirts, fringes, remembered spaces and forgotten dwellings. The fountain represents the harness of nature, a combination of engineering and an artistic expression of beauty, with particular reference to the perversity of a fountain in a place where there are floods and droughts beyond our control.

The stitched panoramas were inspired by the 360-degree views from our home. In the panoramas the monuments and grounds are recomposed into an imagined world like a still life. We are constantly struggling with our desire to tame, shape, adorn and inhabit our patch. An interest in old maps and garden plans arises from this. Here there is also a reaction to detritus, longing for beauty in a place where the traditional response has often been to clear, to grade and to build over the unwieldy and fence the desirable.