



Museum and Art Gallery of the  
Northern Territory presents

WINSOME JOBLING  
**the nature of paper**

11 MARCH – 21 AUGUST 2016

**EDUCATION KIT**

Winsome Jobling, *Vine* 2012, handmade paper from gamba grass and cotton, created as honeycomb while wet, 172 x 160 x 2 cm, Collection of the artist. Photo by Fiona Morrison © the artist.

**MUSEUM  
AND ART  
GALLERY**  
NORTHERN  
TERRITORY

# EDUCATION KIT

WINSOME JOBLING  
the nature of paper

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The education kit focuses on three strands of the National Curriculum F–10 through

- **SCIENCE**
- **HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**
- **THE ARTS – VISUAL ARTS**  
General capabilities of Literacy,  
Critical and creative thinking,  
Personal and social capability,  
and the cross-curriculum priority of Sustainability

The education kit can be applied to the South Australian Certificate of Education

- Visual Arts – Art and Visual Arts – Design
- 

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# INTRODUCTION

Winsome Jobling offers insights into Northern Territory life and culture through her unique fibre based art. A renowned paper-maker, Jobling sources and harvests plants from across the Territory, transforming natural materials into tactile and sensual images and installations that explore the natural and cultural history of our environment.

*Winsome Jobling: the nature of paper* is about the work of one artist over many years of art making. The education kit enables students to explore the art of Winsome Jobling and learn about her influences, ideas, techniques, methods and art.

## ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Making paper from plants is the primary focus of Winsome Jobling's artwork. Jobling uses her plant knowledge to provide a fascinating glimpse into the people and environment of the Top End of Australia.



Winsome Jobling studying spear grass during the Replant project in 2006.  
Photo by Peter Eve.

# THE ARTIST

## A JOURNEY INTO ART

Winsome Jobling grew up in NSW on the edge of the Blue Mountains. Much of her childhood was spent in the bush exploring her surrounds through walks, horse riding and creative play. As a result she has developed strong connections to the natural environment and an independent creative spirit.

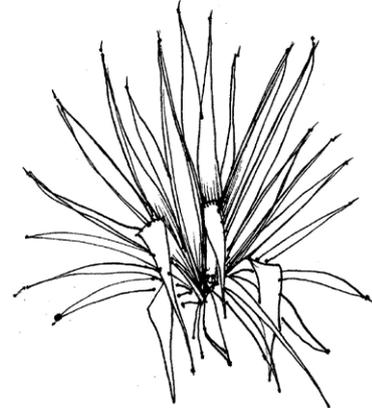
After secondary school Jobling moved to Sydney. She first tried her hand at advertising, then industrial and graphic design. But finally she decided to study as an artist at Alexander Mackie College, graduating with a diploma in painting and textiles in 1981. Soon after she was offered a Graduate Diploma of Education position at Darwin Community College (now Charles Darwin University) with a guaranteed job 'out bush'. Jobling thought this offer too good to refuse so made the near 4000-kilometre journey to Darwin where she has remained ever since!

Towards the end of the course, Jobling began a teaching practical at Belyuen, a small Aboriginal community on the Cox Peninsula west of Darwin. Belyuen was a welcome change after living and teaching in Darwin. She was well accepted by the community and as a result was asked to continue as art teacher at the school for the next three years.

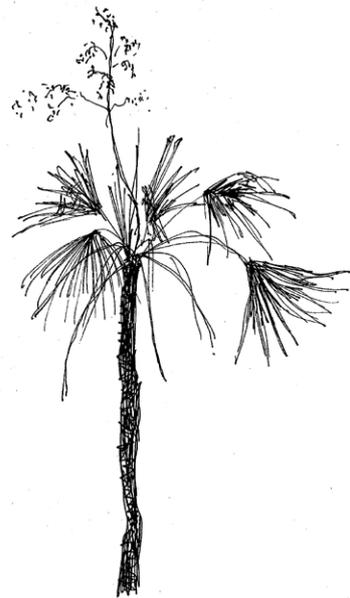
Living and working in Belyuen was a life-changing event for the young artist. She learned to make dilly bags and baskets with the women and to extract natural dyes from plants. She went hunting and fishing and attended ceremonial events. Jobling is grateful for her experience at Belyuen and acknowledges this cultural education as an important point in her art career.

The experience at Belyuen marks the beginning of a lifetime of exploration for Jobling and provided a foundation in cultural awareness, social history, bush knowledge and skills.

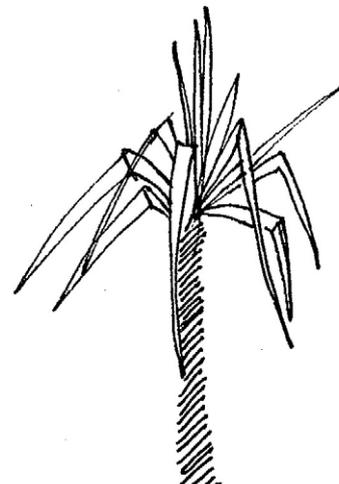
Although she had begun studying papermaking at art school in Sydney, it was at Belyuen that Jobling first experimented with making paper from plant fibres. The first papers were created from species used for making dilly bags and baskets—including sisal (*Agave sisalana*), sand palm (*Livistona humilis*), pandanus (*Pandanus spiralis*), banyan (*Ficus virens*), beach hibiscus (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*) and sedges (*Cyperus spp.*)—all prepared in different ways.



Sisal (*Agave sisalana*), pen and ink drawing by Winsome Jobling.



Sand palm (*Livistona humilis*), pen and ink drawing by Winsome Jobling.



Pandanus (*Pandanus spiralis*), pen and ink drawing by Winsome Jobling.

# THE ARTIST

In 1985 Jobling moved from Belyuen back to Darwin where she continued to experiment with plant fibres, keeping careful records of the processes and results. It was a productive and exciting time for the young artist. Thirty years on she still refers to her early trials, confirming the qualities and longevity of the papers she produced.

Jobling participated in many local and interstate exhibitions from the late 1980's. These exhibitions were important for the development of her art career, continually building a reputation as a unique artist and paper maker. Jobling stresses the importance of persistence in developing an art practice. Her success is the result of countless hours of hard work and experimentation. This approach has enabled Jobling to find her artistic voice, she has developed her own visual language for making art and her work is now distinctive and original.

Jobling continued to exhibit nationally and internationally from the 1990's, participating in residencies, workshops and papermaking symposia throughout Australia, in West Timor, the Philippines and USA. In 2006 she took part in *Replant*, a significant cross-cultural project and related exhibition exploring the scientific, cultural and social aspects of Indigenous plant species in the Daly River region.

In 2006 Jobling acquired a permanent workshop space in the light industrial suburb of Woolner, which she calls her 'shed'. The artist loves nothing more than being in her shed, making art and experimenting. She loves the process and the physical nature of papermaking. She loves exploring philosophy and ideas. The shed is a place where Jobling can plan, experiment and make art without disruption.

In 2008 Jobling was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to investigate hand papermaking and specialist papers for printmakers, and has since experimented extensively in combining printmaking with handmade paper. In 2012 she presented at the prestigious International Association of Hand Papermakers and Paper Artists (IAPMA), Watermarks Conference in Cleveland, Ohio.

Despite her hard work and success Jobling's art practice does not earn Jobling a fulltime wage and she has maintained her career in education, becoming an award winning and highly regarded art teacher.



Working in the studio. Photo by Peter Eve.

# THE ARTIST

## METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

Jobling's art is experimental and varied. She is continually moving from one idea to another, negotiating the technical restraints and challenges of papermaking, creating problems and seeking solutions.

Jobling often makes her paper by pouring thin layers of coloured pulp and then pressing them into a finished sheet (see papermaking section). By using liquid paper in this way Jobling can apply the pulp by pouring, spraying or painting with various colours and effects.

Another technique is the incorporation of watermark impressions. Watermarks are images that sit within the paper like secret marks, only to be seen when held up to the light. Watermarks are created by a resist technique, where the paper pulp is applied in a thinner layer and is therefore transparent. They are often used as security features of banknotes and are incorporated by Jobling to add layers of meaning and visual complexity to the work.

Jobling also uses the skills of her industrial neighbours, a sandblaster, industrial engraver, sheet metal worker or others for various experiments. One technique incorporates the use of perspex printing plates, applying a textured surface to hold the inks by engraving with a Dremel rotary tool, sandblaster or by using solvents. The marks are then printed onto paper (*C. armstrongii* 2011, page 12).

This combination of methods creates endless variations and possibilities, which are often combined and repeated. In this way the papers are encouraged to have lives of their own, meaning that the artist does not always seek to have rigid control, allowing chance happenings to enter the process.

While Jobling works in the Northern Territory her artworks are about many places and many aspects of life. She has a deep rapport with the landscape and culture with which she lives and is firmly connected to the world around her through the plants, which are in turn the physical matter of her art, yet her philosophy and subject matter is universal.



Watching an etching come off the press during the Replant Project in 2006.  
Photo by Peter Eve.

# THE ART

As part of this exploration into the art of Winsome Jobling we will look at a selection of her works more closely.

## 1. HANDMADE SHEETS OF PAPER

Over the last 30 years Jobling has experimented with many different plant fibres while keeping careful records of the processes and results.

Thirty years on she still refers to her early trials, ascertaining the qualities and longevity of the papers. Her experiments produced papers from banana stems, pineapple tops, gamba grass, heliconia, sugar cane, phalsa, turpentine mangoes, local grasses, seagrass matting, old mooring ropes and more.

This work was developed into a journal of experimental trials, which was acquired by the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) in 1996.

This collection includes *Handmade sheets of paper* 1995 (comprising 24 sheets) as well as the scientific name, family and common name of the plant, fibre type, location, date, preparation, recipe and paper characteristics. The combined documents are a reference bank of information for the artist and are the foundation of Jobling's technical practice. They are also beautiful and meticulously prepared objects in their own right and trace some of the history of Jobling's papermaking journey.

### ART ACTIVITY

Make your own paper from plants (see papermaking section, page 21).

Make a journal of the process and your observations; include the scientific name, family and common name of the plant, fibre type, location, date, preparation, recipe, process and paper characteristics.



*Seaweed paper*, 1995, 40 x 50 cm. Photo by Fiona Morrison.

## THE ART

### 2. PLAID DRESS 1996, BROCADE GOWN 1996 AND PLAYSUIT 1996

These works were part of an exhibition Jobling held at 24 HR Art in 1996 entitled *Dress Ups*. The original installation consisted of twelve larger than life dresses made from banana paper patterned with watermarks and stencils. These oversized paper patterns as seen in *Plaid dress* 1996, *Brocade gown* 1996 and *Playsuit* 1996 combine two- and three-dimensional elements and play with the seeming paradox of something that is both fragile and strong at the same time.

*Dress ups* demonstrate the artist's love of dress and childhood dress-ups, when children clamber into oversized and exotic clothing. These large costumes dwarf the viewer, yet are fragile and delicate. Through these works Jobling explores costume as human façade, masking the inner feelings of the wearer. At the same time they are larger than life and symbolise the independence and strength of womanhood.

#### ART ACTIVITY

Think about the idea of making an object either much bigger or much smaller than it actually is. How can scale change the meaning of an object? I.e. over sized military uniforms could make us feel threatened and vulnerable, or conversely miniature objects can become cute and playful, or make us feel big and powerful.

#### WRITTEN ACTIVITY

Write a story about dressing up in a costume. What did you look like? How did it change the way you felt? How did it change the way others interacted with you? What was it like to become someone else? Did it help you to understand new things?



*Playsuit, Plaid dress and Brocade gown (detail)* 1996, watermarked banana paper, 2.2 metres high. Photo by Fiona Morrison.

## 3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS 2010

Jobling's flair for ironic and political satire became evident with her winning installation entitled *Nests in Sculpture in the Park 2006*. *Sculpture in the Park* was an outdoor art exhibition, held in Darwin's Civic Park. The work consisted of a series of bird nests made from strips of recycled pink development signs placed around trees and gardens of the Park.

*Nests* were the first of a series of related works Jobling made using Northern Territory Government pink planning notices. The signs are placed on sites earmarked for development by the Development Consent Authority under the Northern Territory Planning Act. The artist gathers the signs from sites around Darwin (only after the submission date has passed) and uses them to construct the sculptures.

*Proposed developments 2010*, is a response to what the artist considers the ill-considered development of Darwin City. Critical of the ugly and inappropriate architecture around Darwin, Jobling deplores the lack of vision to create what she thinks could be an innovative modern tropical city.

As part of the installation Jobling has created architectural structures that parody Darwin's high-rise developments. She uses the same pink development signs to reconstruct natural habitats (*Nests*) that are being destroyed by urban growth.



*Proposed developments 2010*, twin-walled polypropylene sheeting (recycled signs), cable ties, rivets, wire and light 300 x 370 x 240 cm (overall). Photo by Fiona Morrison.

### DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

Discuss the notion of political satire. What does the word parody mean? Can you think of any actors, comedians or artists that use political satire and parody to make points about things they disagree with or wish to highlight?

### DESIGN ACTIVITY

- 1 What do you think of the development and urban planning of Darwin City? How would you like to see our city develop? What should Darwin look like in the future? What are the main considerations for building a modern tropical city? What problems might you encounter and how could they be accommodated or overcome?
- 2 What is your ideal Darwin home? How would you build it? What kind of materials would you use? Make a model of the ideal tropical home – start designing from the inside and work your way out. Think about airflow, heat distribution, shelter from the rain and cyclone preparation. Invite a Darwin architect in to your classroom to discuss your ideas and models.

# THE ART

## 4. BUSH VANITAS: VINES 2011

The theme of natural habitat destruction is also expressed in the introductory work in the exhibition entitled *Bush vanitas: vines* 2011.

This large veil of paper-formed vines hangs like a curtain from the gallery wall. The word *Vanitas* comes from the Latin and is found in the bible, (Ecclesiastes 1:2): *vanitas vanitatum omnia vanitas – vanity of vanities; all is vanity*. The passage is about death and the meaninglessness of worldly pleasures and objects we may acquire through the journey of life.

*Vanitas* is also a genre of art in which artists use morbid symbolic objects like skulls, rotting food and fading flowers. The art is made to remind the viewer of the transience and brevity of life and the inevitability of death. This style of art became important in the 16th and 17th century Europe, especially in the Netherlands and France.

In this case Jobling's *Bush vanitas: vines* 2011 evoke the struggle of nature through the small pockets of bushland that survive within the urban environment. These pockets of 'wild' nature are home to animals and plants and create breathing places amongst high-rise and urban developments. *Bush vanitas: vines* 2011 is also about the invasion of rampant weeds and vines as they choke out natural habitats – a reminder of how unchecked human development affects the world in which we live.

### ART DISCUSSION

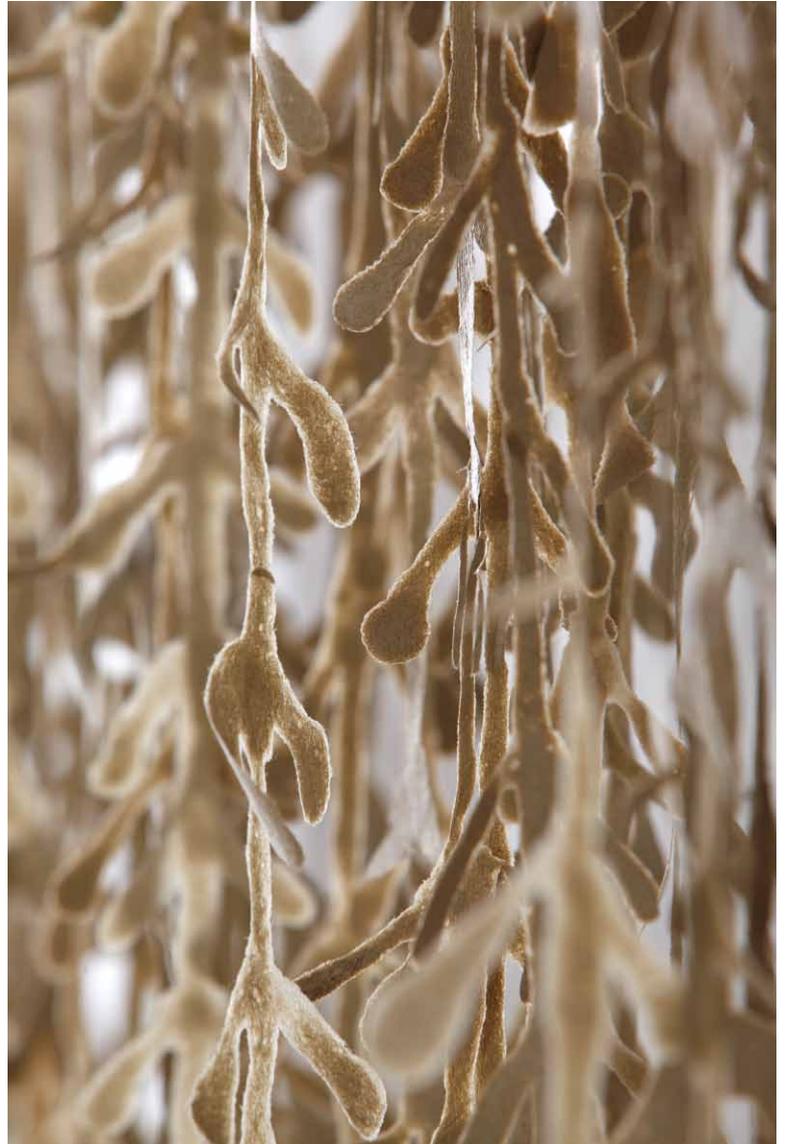
#### ART SPEAK

Discuss the definition of the following words, which are some times used to discuss art works. Add others to the list. Write down their meanings in a workbook.

#### GLOSSARY OF TERMS:

- Genre
- Installation
- Symbolic
- Theme
- Metaphor
- Art elements

How do some of these words and concepts relate to Jobling's art? Discuss using specific examples of her work.



*Bush vanitas: vines* 2011, (detail), handmade gamba grass paper installation, 300 x 240 cm. Photo by Fiona Morrison.

## THE ART

### 5. *C. ARMSTRONGII* 2011

*Cycas armstrongii* is a species of cycad which is endemic to the Northern Territory. It is found from Gunn Point to Hayes Creek, west to within 50 km of the coast and east to the Wildman River catchment, and also occurs on the Tiwi Islands and Cobourg Peninsula.

In 2011 Jobling exhibited *C. armstrongii* as part of an exhibition entitled *Mesozoic: the age of the cycads*. The Mesozoic Era was the time from 248 million to 65 million years ago and included the Jurassic Period and the Cretaceous Period. It is a time when cycads developed and thrived throughout the world and were grazed by herbivorous dinosaurs. Jobling produced works depicting cycads, celebrating them as the world's oldest living seed plants. Cycads have survived three mass extinction events in the earth's history, including the *Permian Extinction*, the world's largest mass extinction. But today some species are again facing a growing threat of extinction.

Works such as *C. armstrongii* 2011, *Aeons* 2011, *Iconic* 2011 and *Burn* 2011 portray cycads in various stages of growth and in different seasons. These images evoke prehistoric origins of the plants through layers of paper made from gamba grass, cotton and banana and pigmented with bush charcoal. Other works emanated a glow by incorporating phosphorescent materials, referring to the biological soup in which cycads grew from 300 million years ago as well as effects of fire.



*C. armstrongii* 2011, monoprint drypoint on handmade paper from gamba grass, pigmented abaca and cotton, watermarked and stenciled, 59 x 42 cm. Photo by Fiona Morrison.

### NATURAL SCIENCE ACTIVITY

- 1 Take a look around the Museum and Art Gallery Natural History display. Walk along the prehistory time line. Look at the *Ancient Plants and Ancient Beasts* display and the kinds of plants and animals that lived during that time. What other species have endured from the Mesozoic Era to the present day? Why do you think some plants and animals have survived while others have perished? Use specific examples in your answer.
- 2 Look up the definition of the word *Anthropocene*. Discuss the meaning of the word in relation to changes to the natural environment and impacts on the planet induced by human actions.

# THE ART

## 6. LUNAR GLOBE – RES COMMUNIS 2009

*Lunar globe – res communis* 2009 is a large, flat pattern that can be folded to make a spherical shape that represents the Earth's moon.

The title *Res communis* is a concept derived from Roman law meaning the property of all, and is the basis for the Outer Space Treaty of 1967. It is also the guiding principle for the Antarctic Treaty System and Law of the Sea Treaty guarding the common heritage of natural resources.

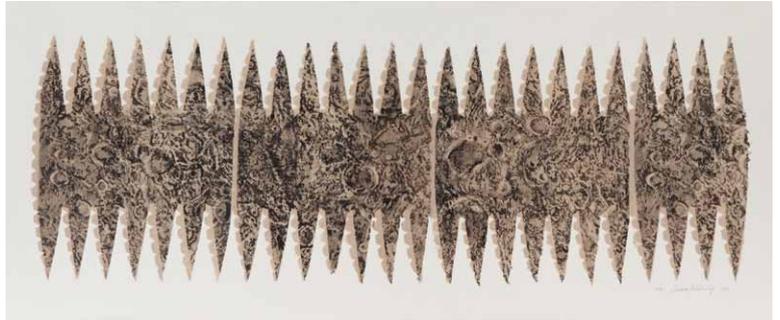
The *res communis* doctrine advocates that space belongs to all mankind. The work hints at extra-terrestrial real estate and the commercialisation and exploitation of the moon by mining 'rare earth' elements. The segmented sheets were made using a laser-cut deckle to keep the integrity of the handmade sheets.

### SOCIAL SCIENCE ACTIVITY

Why do you think Jobling entitled this work *Lunar globe – res communis*? What point is she making? What elements of our earth do you think should be subject to *res communis*? Expand on your answer by providing other examples of her work on a similar theme. How would you describe Jobling's worldview?

### DESIGN ACTIVITY

The template pattern of *Res communis* is called a *net* (pattern for a 3D shape) – can you make a *net* for another shape, like a cube, a triangular prism, or a square based pyramid? Print or paint a design on your *net* to enhance the representation of the object.



*Lunar globe – res communis* 2009, drypoint on handmade paper from recycled mooring rope of Manila hemp (*Musa textilis*) using a laser-cut shaped deckle, 70 x 171 cm. Photo by Fiona Morrison.

## 7. BREATHE 2012

Continually exploring new ideas Jobling created a series of works based on the word *Breathe*. In this series she explored the monsoonal climate of the tropical north focusing on the rhythms of seasonal change. Here Jobling applied her knowledge of plants and papermaking to reflect the cycles and re-cycling rhythms of the living earth and every living cell, or, as the artist wrote in her exhibition statement:

*The air we breathe in is taken into the lungs; we inhale oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide. This exchange of gases is the respiratory system's means of getting oxygen to the blood. Plants breathe in carbon dioxide, absorb energy and release oxygen through photosynthesis. The oceans and other waters are like life's bloodstream conveying nutrients, heat and the elements, while the atmosphere protects, supplies and recycles. Life is interconnected on every level.* Winsome Jobling 2012.

The work *Breathe 2012* shows a map of suburban development superimposed onto a leaf. The lines look like the life supporting veins of the plant, but they also represent the roads that have been constructed as part of new urban developments. Constant urban growth destroys mangroves and other natural habitats. The work emphasises the need for us all to breathe, to be well balanced and healthy. The work is also about the way plants and animals (including humans) exchange carbon dioxide for oxygen.



*Breathe 2012*, monprint drypoint on handmade abaca (*Musa textilis*) paper with stencilled cotton (*Gossypium hirsutum*) pulp, 63 x 63 cm. Photo by Fiona Morrison.

### NATURAL SCIENCE ACTIVITY

Read the Place section of this document from page 18.

Read the following and write a one-page response.

- What do you love most about the Top End environment?
- What are your favourite plants and animals?
- Why are they important?
- What do you think the artist means by the title *Breathe*?
- Look at one of the works from this series. Describe it. What is it about? Why is this subject important to the artist.
- How does she demonstrate her knowledge and love of the plant world?
- Find out about the way plants breathe.
- Make a drawing of your favourite plant to illustrate your report.

## THE ART

### 8. CYCLONE 2013, DOWNPOUR 2013 AND MONSOON 2013

The theme of climate and the environment reoccurs in Jobling's art. This body of work focuses on the Darwin built environment with reference to the hot climatic conditions of the Top End.

*Cyclone 2013*, *Downpour 2013* and *Monsoon 2013* are a series of works depicting city buildings being buffeted by cyclonic weather. They represent the vulnerability of Darwin City developments, while the yellow scribble patterns on *Cyclone 2013* show the pathway of past cyclones that have affected the Top End.

Another work entitled *Sweat 2013* consists of watermarks made using undergarments dipped in layers of coloured paper pulp. The works parody the insufferable clammy heat of the build-up, a period of intense heat and humidity prior to the onset of the wet season. In the words of the artist:

*It's the wet, your underwear is clingy; it may be all you have on. Mould is growing on the walls and your clothes. The air-conditioners are heaving and gasping on high rises. The city is ugly. Focus is here and now, built environment, build-up and rain.*  
Winsome Jobling 2013

#### WRITTEN ACTIVITY

Write a poem that describes what it is like when you are really hot, or when the weather is threatening as in a bad fire day, or during large storm. Describe how you feel and what is happening around you. Make a drawing to illustrate your poem.

#### ART / SCIENCE ACTIVITY

Imagine the future with continued effect of climate change. Think what it might be like in ten years or 50 years from now. Make a drawing of what Darwin or Arnhem Land may look like in the future. Lower lying areas will be affected by rising sea levels. Much of the flood plain of Arnhem Land could be under water. What will happen to the people, plants and animals? Research climate change through sites like the Bureau of Meteorology, or other science based research institutes to support your drawing.



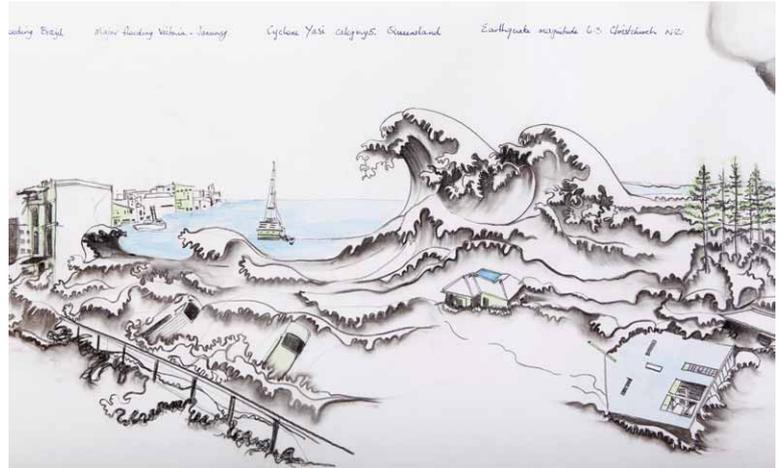
*Cyclone 2013*, drypoint on handmade pigmented banana (*Musa spp.*) paper chine-collé on Hahnemühle paper with cotton (*Gossypium hirsutum*) pulp painting and pinned paper elements 124 x 60 cm. Photo by Fiona Morrison.



## 9. A YEAR OF NATURAL DISASTERS 2011

*A year of natural disasters 2011* is a 10-metre-long charcoal, pencil and watercolour scroll drawing. It is a response to a number of earthquakes and weather events that took place in 2011, including the Fukushima earthquake in Japan, Christchurch earthquake in New Zealand and the Queensland floods.

These events and others like them highlight the increasing occurrence and severity of natural disasters in the region. During these events Jobling became aware of the unbalanced way the media reports disasters that occur in wealthier economies as opposed to the more passing response to events like Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan), which devastated the Philippines in 2013 with authorities estimating at least 10,000 dead on one island alone.



*A year of natural disasters 2011*, plus detail, pencil, charcoal and watercolour on Dessin paper 61 x 1000 x 10 cm. Photo by Fiona Morrison.

### ART ACTIVITY

Make a drawing of a journey or event using a long scroll. It could be about your journey to school showing all the places and people you pass. Or it could be a familiar place, like tracking your day at school.

### SCIENCE ACTIVITY

Climate change is one of the most significant issues for our planet. Rising global temperatures are attributed to human activities which have dramatically increased the levels of heat trapped in the atmosphere. As a class, discuss human activities that contribute to climate change. List the activities on a white board. Secondly discuss human activities that counter climate change. Discuss the idea of a carbon footprint. Ask students to write down ways they can reduce their carbon footprint.

Imagine extreme climatic conditions like ice age or extreme heat. What would the initial impacts be? What would be longer-term implications for food production, water resources, human displacement and the natural environment?

## 10. BARREN 2014

In works such as *Barren* 2014, *Earth* 2014, *Ground* 2014 and *Cataclysm* 2015 Jobling reflects ownership and exploitation of the earth's resources and questions the increasing imbalance of the human–nature relationship.

Using a combination of landscape imagery printed on organic pulp layered paper, Jobling explores the nature of landscapes that have been disemboweled by human activity, leaving scars and wounds that may never be healed.

These works consist of handmade paper and earth pigments sourced from across the Northern Territory. Including red sand from the central desert, grey mud from Cahills Crossing in Arnhem Land (*Crossing* 2015) and purple-brown mud from an abandoned mine near Tennant Creek.

Plant materials include phalsa (*Grewia asiatica*), stringybark (*Eucalyptus tetradonta*) and kapok (*Cochlospermum fraseri*), which were locally sourced and processed.



*Barren* 2014, monoprint drypoint on handmade phalsa (*Grewia asiatica*) paper with stencilled earth pigments, 42 x 60 cm. Photo by Fiona Morrison.

### ART ACTIVITY

Make an art work using natural materials. Think of good places to find clay, mud, ochres or charcoal. Or try making juices from plants. Once collected mix or grind them into a paste. Add a small amount of PVA glue and water to make a painting solution. Make a brush from a stick or hair. Use the ochre colours to make a painting of your playground or garden using dots, lines, patterns and marks to show different aspects of your landscape.

# THE PLACE

## THE TOP END OF AUSTRALIA

To understand Jobling's art you also need to understand the place, or natural environment in which it is made.

The combination of a monsoonal climate and the varied landscapes of northern Australia create a unique environment for abundant and diverse plant and animal life.

The landforms, plants and animals of the Top End have evolved over millions of years. The different soils and geology combine to provide a range of diverse landforms. This rugged mosaic includes the vast sandstone plateau escarpment of Kakadu National Park, rivers, gorges, waterfalls low-lying tidal plains, wetlands, savannah woodlands and the coast. Each provides habitats for a vast array of plants and animals.

In recent times this complex ecosystem has been overlain by another dimension, *Homo sapiens*. Aboriginal people have lived as part of the land for at least 50,000 years. In very recent times settler Australians have expanded the human dimension. Now mining and pastoral industries are changing the nature of the Top End environs once again.

### NATURE POEMS

Visit a botanical garden or go to a national park or bush land. Find a place on your own to just sit and quietly observe the environment.

- 1 Make two lists.  
One: external observations, using all your senses.  
Two: internal feelings and reactions. Combine the two lists into a poem about your experience.  
Illustrate the poem by making a drawing of one of the external observations.
- 2 Imagine yourself as something in the garden/bush: an ant, a butterfly, a creeper, or a tree. Write what it's like to be that thing. What do you see? What do you do? What do you feel? What are the threats? Make an artwork from the same point of view.



Studying carnivorous plants on the Howard sand plains, near Darwin.  
Photo by Angus Cameron.

# THE PLACE

## THE SEASONS

Winsome Jobling is acutely aware of the changes in seasons in terms of collecting and processing plant fibre.

The natural cycle of the Top End is largely dictated by an annual monsoon. There are two main seasons, a relatively cool dry period from May to September and a hot, humid wet season from October to April.

Many people will identify more subtle changes in the seasons like the period known as the 'build up' during November and December, when temperatures and humidity increase before the onset of the rains. Another phase is the appearance of dragonflies, or the gusty 'knockemdown' winds that signal the start of the dry season.

Aboriginal groups in the Top End recognise a calendar of up to six seasons. The awareness of season change is critical to the traditional lives of Aboriginal people as they travel through their country. Seasonal changes are indicated by the natural cycle of plants and animals.

## SIX SEASONS

October – November is the pre-monsoon storm season, when the clouds and humidity start to build and the first rains arrive. A new flush of green grass stirs insects into life and fruits like black plum appear. As the rains increase barramundi are flushed out of waterholes, streams are transformed from isolated bead-like pools into rapidly flowing waterways.

December – February is the wet season when the monsoon delivers relentless rain, cyclones, winds and lightning. Water cascades into waterholes, swamps and waterways. As the lowlands fill, a massive inland reservoir is created. It is time for the long yam, magpie geese and the many fruits, that make this a season of plenty. Soon broilgas and the whistling ducks hatch.

In March the young chicks signal the beginning of the transition from turbulent water to the stillness of the inland waterways. The water levels drop on the plains and rivers. It is the time to find fresh water turtles that live in the mud, feeding on the insects first stirred up by the rains. The last storms go overhead. The temperatures and the humidity are still high, while the water now trickles from the sandstone aquifer.

Around April the rain clouds disperse and there are clear skies again. The floodwaters recede and streams start to run clear. Most plants are fruiting and animals are caring for their young. Windy storms early in this season flatten the spear grass—they are called 'knock 'em down' winds. It is a good time to catch barramundi as the runoff into waterways slows.

During May the nights become cooler, the winds swing to the southeast as the early dry season approaches. It is a good time for hunting kangaroos, fat and easy to get to after the abundance of *the wet*. The grevilleas, acacias, eucalypts flower and water lilies are everywhere. The Top End starts to burn as hunting fires and mosaic burning spread across the drying land.

June – August is the heart of the dry season and there is still plenty of food around. Sugar bag is abundant and the stringy bark is harvested to make string bags. Slowly the wetlands become dry and cracked, turtles dig deeper into the moist earth and the water birds flock around the remaining water holes. Later thunderclouds build again, signalling the cyclic return of the build up.

## NATURAL SCIENCE ACTIVITY

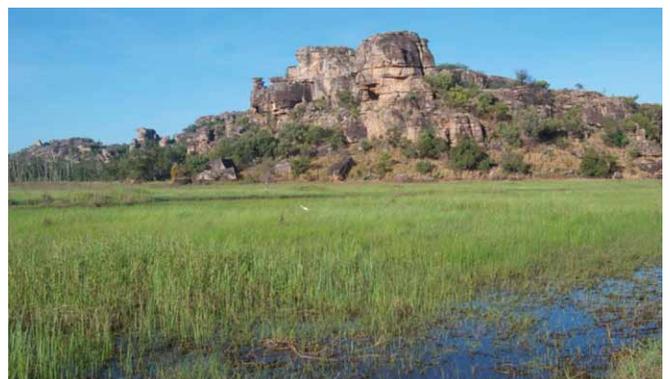
### THE SEASONS

- 1 Discuss the changes in the seasons with the class. Identify the changes that occur.
  - Find out about the Aboriginal calendar of six seasons
  - Talk about the idea of six seasons with your class.
  - Divide the year into a calendar of six seasons; give each season a name; describe what happens in each season.
- 2 Look at the natural science display at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory

Discuss what is meant by the word habitat. Describe some of the different habitats that can be found in the Top End of Australia.

Discuss the following habitats: describe where they might be found, what they look like and what animals and plants live there.

- Mangroves
- Floodplains
- Savanna woodlands
- The sea



Kakadu National Park after the rains. Photo by Angus Cameron

# THE SCIENCE

## NAMING AND IDENTIFYING PLANTS

Winsome Jobling uses the scientific system of naming plants to clearly identify the kinds of plants she uses to make paper.

Taxonomy is the science of classification. Every known plant species on Earth has a single scientific name by which it is identified.

Having a standard method of naming plants means scientists can communicate clearly and understand which species they are referring to no matter what language they speak. The scientific way of naming plants is called the binomial system because it has two words, the genus name and a species name. The genus is like the family name, while the species name often describes a characteristic of the plant.

The scientific name for pandanus for example is *Pandanus spiralis*. Pandanus is the genus and comes from the classical Latin name for this large group of plants. The specific name, in this case, spiralis indicates that the pandanus leaves grow in a spiral formation.

Species often have other variations such as a different flower colour, leaf shape or height. This variation may be sufficient to name a new species, but if the variation is minor or there is lots of overlapping features; a subspecies may be named.

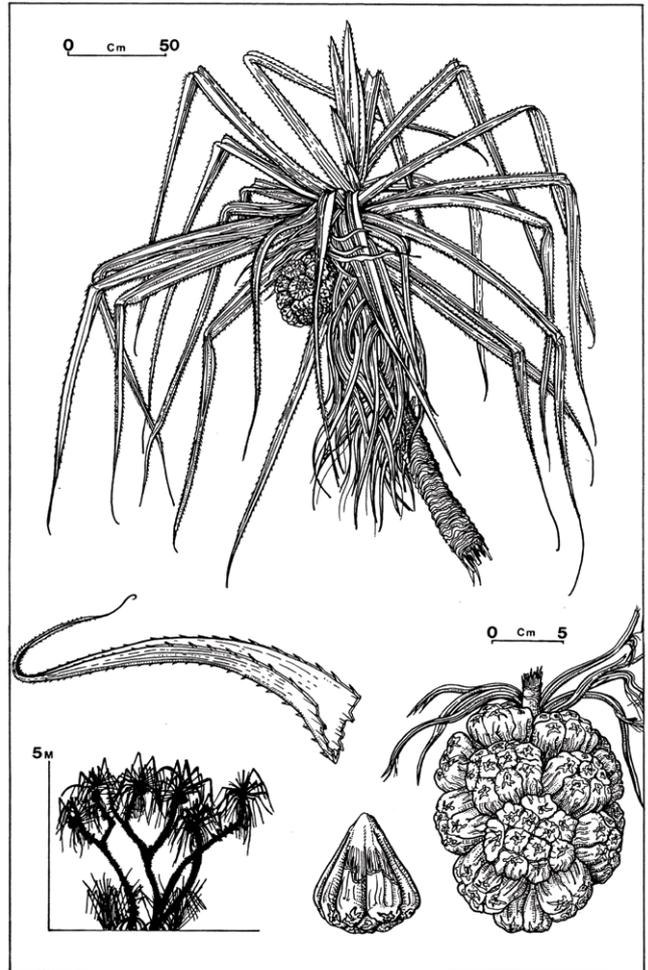
### NATURAL SCIENCE ACTIVITY (complements following art activity)

Divide into pairs. Go out into your school grounds. With your partner identify some of the different plants you see. Write a description in a notebook; photograph them with your phone, ipad or camera. Use a field guide or the Internet to identify your plants, write down the common name and scientific name next to the description in your dairy.

### ART ACTIVITY

Draw a tree in your garden. Name and label all the parts of the tree. Find out how trees live and breathe. Make notes about the life system and the roles different parts of the tree plays. i.e. Roots draw up water and nutrients from the soil.

Re-visit your tree regularly. Draw the animals and insects that inhabit the tree. Make notes about the animals you see and what they are doing. Tell a story about the tree and its community. Write from the point of view of a bird, insect or group. How do you live and thrive? Who are your friends? Who are your enemies (predators)?



# THE ART OF PAPERMAKING

## A SHORT HISTORY

The history of papermaking stems back thousands of years as people experimented with all kinds of portable writing surfaces ranging from stone and wood to cloth. About 5,000 years ago, ancient Egyptians began layering strips of a wetland plant called papyrus (from which the word paper is derived) and pounding them together to make flat sheets. It wasn't until 105 AD that the papermaking process was perfected in China. Fibres were mixed from the shoots of bamboo, bark of the mulberry tree, (and other sources) with water to form a pulp that was then poured onto woven screens. As the water drained through the screen, fibres adhered to the surface and made paper.

The Chinese remained the prime papermakers for about 500 years, but the craft eventually spread to Japan and across central Asia and the Middle East via trade routes. By the mid-15th century, paper was well established in Europe. Old rags and clothing (made from plant fibres such as flax, nettle, and hemp) were the main ingredients. Today, newspapers, boxes, and other low and medium grade papers are made from wood pulp. The finest papers still have a high proportion of linen and cotton rag pulp.

## PLANTS FOR PAPER

All plants have fibre, but some have enough to provide strength and elasticity to paper and other items such as cloth, rope, and baskets. Leaves and shoots of many common garden plants including rice and grass have been used to make paper. Cotton fibres are used in some of the highest quality papers.

While it is possible to make paper from most plants, some are more suitable than others. Fibres can be too short to bond into a strong sheet or too difficult to extract from the plant without expensive equipment.



Winsome Jobling making a sheet of paper. Photo by Winsome Jobling.

## MAKING PAPER FROM PLANTS

Winsome Jobling makes paper in much the same way as first discovered by the Chinese 5000 years ago. Her paper is made from cellulose fibre which comes from green plant material, sourced part processed, or collected from recycled materials like old rope.

After harvesting, Winsome cooks the material in a mild alkaline solution for at least two hours, then thoroughly rinses and beats the material into a pulp. Beating abrades the fibres, engorging them with water and increases the dry strength of the paper.

These fibres are again mixed with water to form a watery pulp in a large tub. Then comes the fun part, a sieve-like screen called a mould with a surrounding deckle is used to scoop up a layer of pulp. The sheets of wet pulp (or paper) are then transferred from the mould to a flat, absorbent surface (like Chux kitchen cloth). Multiple sheets can then be stacked alternating between sheets of porous fabric and pressed to remove the excess water. Finally the sheets of paper are dried. This process sounds simple but there are endless fibre variations and techniques that can alter the result.

Winsome uses a variety of tools and techniques to adjust the qualities of her paper. Coloured pigments such as natural ochres, dyes or commercial colours can be added into the pulp or later in the process. A single sheet can be produced with fine layers of different colours. Wet sheets can be manipulated, into different shapes or embossed. The paper can be opaque or translucent, strong or fragile, textured or smooth, or a single paper can incorporate a number of these qualities.

Particular fibres can impart an intrinsic meaning to Winsome's art works by historical associations or environmental impact. For example *old manila hemp mooring rope* may reference discovery, voyages and mapping while the noxious weed *gamba grass* can be about our impact on the environment.

Each plant fibre has its own quality which varies depending on the environment, the season, how and when it is collected and how it is processed. These different properties can be blended to achieve desired results.

## MAKING PAPER - ACTIVITY RECYCLING OLD PAPER TO NEW

### Materials needed

- Scrap paper (office paper is good)
- Mould and deckle (can be made or purchased from an art supply shop)
- Plastic tub (large enough to immerse mould when flat)
- Blender (for making pulp)
- Old blanket, loose weave fabric such as curtain netting or 'chux', thin polystyrene foam or curtain netting
- Sponge

### 1 Collect paper scraps

Many kinds of paper can be used. Keep in mind that each will have different qualities that can affect your final product.

### 2 Making the pulp

Tear the paper into pieces about two cm square. Consider separating different types and colours of paper at this stage so you can have more control when it's time to blend them.

If you want a product light enough to write on, consider using mostly light coloured paper. You may want to limit paper with black ink, which can impart a greyish hue.

### 3 Soak the paper

Put the torn paper in a tub or bucket of warm water with two drops of detergent and let it soak overnight. This begins to break down the fibres so the mixture is easier to mash in your blender.

### 4 Blend the paper

Add soaked paper and water to your blender in a ratio of one cup of paper to two or three cups of water. It's good to start with a light colour and add other colours bit by bit, so you can see the emerging hue. Blend the mixture on medium high until it has the consistency of thin oatmeal.

If you want to write or paint on the paper, you can blend in a tablespoon or so of white glue, cornstarch, or gelatin (dissolved in hot water). These additives, which are called "sizing," will make the paper less porous to ink and paint.

### 5 Make a mould

A mould is simply a screen-covered frame. A homemade frame or old picture frame is fine. Cut the screen five cm larger than the frame on all sides, hold it taut, and staple it to the back of the frame. The deckle is a frame (without mesh). The deckle sits on top of the frame (like a fence) so the pulp does not run off the edges.

### 6 Making a sheet of paper

Fill the plastic tub with 5 - 15 cm of water. The aim is to put the pulp in a watery suspension so it can be evenly distributed on the screen. Add about one blender full of pulp for every 5 cm of water. The amount of the pulp in the water will determine the thickness of the paper, so you may have to experiment with different ratios once you see how the sheets turn out.

Stirring the mixture well and gently lower the mould at an angle, screen side up, into the tub. Starting with one edge slide it to a horizontal position near the bottom. If you're using a second frame (deckle), place it on top of the screened frame. Lift the screen straight up, allowing fibres to cover it and the water to drain through. Drain excess water back into the tub.

### 7 Couching

Have two boards, a thin piece of foam and an old blanket, slightly larger than the mould (all should be wet). Place a piece of curtain netting or 'chux' on the blanket. Gently tip the mould over the mesh. By pressing and rocking the mould you will transfer the wet sheet onto the chux. Cover the wet sheet with another chux. Repeat the process to form a post of about 10 sheets.

### 8 Drying

Place a board on top of the post and press using bricks or other weight for about 10 minutes. Then either hang the paper (still on the chux) to dry or transfer the damp paper to a clean smooth wet surface like glass where it will peel off once dry.

# THE ART OF PAPERMAKING

WINSOME JOBLING  
the nature of paper

## PAPERMAKING INVESTIGATIONS

### REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

Hundreds of acres of timber are cut to produce just one edition of a newspaper. Consider using your papermaking project as a way investigating and/or promoting recycling and the potential it holds for reducing the loss of valuable forests.

Older students can find out about efforts to use sources other than trees, such as hemp, for making paper. They can also research some of the environmental issues associated with the paper industry and learn about some of the “environmentally friendly” measures that have been instituted. These include a decrease in the use of chlorinated bleaching agents and an increase in the amount of recycled paper used to make new products.

## MAKING PAPER FROM PLANTS (CELLULOSE FIBRE)

The process of turning plants into paper is similar to the method described previously, but there are additional challenges. Live plant materials need to be cooked in an alkali solution for three to twenty hours, depending on the variety. The safest solution to use in a classroom is washing soda. After cooking, the fibres must be thoroughly rinsed to a neutral pH - the process takes quite a bit of time and water.

Next you will need to beat the fibres into a pulp. Beating or blending the fibres enables them to intertwine and water to penetrate them. The fibres are then floated in a vat of water and scooped up onto a papermaking mould in a thin layer as described previously.



Winsome preparing to beat the paper fibre in her Hollander beater.

# THE ART OF PAPERMAKING

WINSOME JOBLING  
the nature of paper

## ILLUSTRATED PROCESS OF PAPERMAKING



- 1 Collect and prepare plant material for cooking, cut into 5cm lengths, and soak dry fibre overnight. Boil fibre in caustic solution for about 2 hours, use a stainless steel pot, add ¼ cup of caustic soda per 10 litres.



- 2 Beat fibre in small batches in a blender or by pounding with mallets or use a mortar and pestle.



- 3 Rinse cooked fibre in water until the water runs clear. It should be neutral ph.



- 4 Add pulp to the vat and form sheets with a mould and deckle add about 20% pulp to 80% water.



- 5 Transfer each wet sheet onto pieces of fabric in a stack this is called couching. Paper can also be dried on the mould.



- 6 Press the stack of sheets (called a post) to remove excess water.

Hang the sheets of paper to dry on a flat surface or they can be left to dry on the felts or mould.

There are many different ways to make prints including stamping, etching, screen prints and linocuts.

Following is a simple method which can be applied in the classroom and does not need specialist equipment (although a printing press will result in better quality images).

## MAKING A COLLAGRAPH

A collagraph is a print made from a collage to create a relief surface of different levels and textures. Pablo Picasso, Juan Gris and Georges Braque were famous for the collagraphs they made.

The collage plate is made by sticking, gluing and painting items such as textured paper, fabric or organic materials to the plate. When the collaged elements are dry the plate is sealed with varnish or shellac so multiple prints can be made.

The plate can be printed intaglio, which means ink is pushed into the grooves on the plate with the use of a brush or a piece of card and the excess ink then wiped away. It can also be inked for relief printing like a linocut by applying ink to the surface of the plate. Even more interesting results can be achieved when both intaglio and relief inking methods are used together often with inks with different consistency or tone.

### Materials Needed:

- Masonite, plywood, mat board or any thin and durable material that can have items glued to its surface
- Acrylic wood glue or craft glue
- Water based varnish
- Printers ink
- Cloth
- Print press alternatively use a spoon or rolling pin
- Paper suitable for etching

Begin by looking at collagraphs and discussing how they are made.

Discuss ways of gathering plant materials around you (see science activity page 20). Gather natural materials from your schoolyard, near by bush land or garden. Each student should choose a different plant so the outcome is a class survey of plants from your surroundings. Find out the scientific name of your plant if possible. Gather different parts of the plant like the leaves, fruit, flowers and stem. Use components of the plant to make a natural arrangement on the plate. Note: The plants may need to be pressed and dried first.

Each student will need a piece of pre-cut Masonite, plywood or stiff cardboard that will be used for the printing plate. Make the plates around A4 or A3 to match paper sizes, and to be in proportion to the plant material.

Arrange the leaf and plant material on a sheet of paper the same size as the plate. Paint or pour a film of PVA glue onto the printing plate. Transfer the objects onto the glued surface.

Sand or other textured material can also be adhered to the surface of the collagraph plate. Press down firmly to make sure the materials are permanently and firmly pressed onto the glued surface and wait for it to dry. Once the plate is dry, brush or roll a coat of shellac or PVA glue over the material you pasted on the plate to make a waterproof surface.

The collagraph plates can be printed in relief (the ink is placed on the highest parts), or intaglio (the ink is placed in the lowest parts) or both. The collagraphs will work best if the materials used are roughly even in thickness.

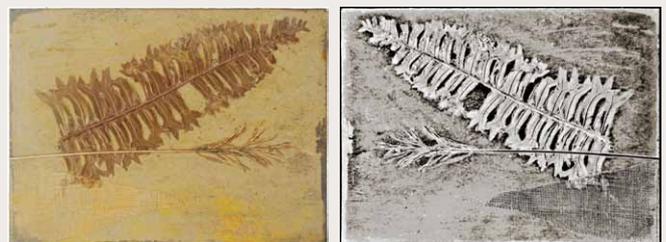
To print the image apply ink to the top surface with a roller or wipe on with a soft cloth or stiff brush. Wipe the edges and remove any excess ink.

Take the inked and wiped plate and place your printing paper on top of your printing plate. Or if using a press place it on the bed of the etching press face up. A sheet of newsprint under the plate will keep the bed of the printing press clean and help deter the spread of unwanted ink onto the print.

Apply pressure with a roller or spoon or run through the printing press. Remove the paper, by slowly peeling it from one side. You may need to adjust the printing pressure to achieve the desired result.

If you like your design, you can re-ink the collagraph plate and make another print. You can add further detail to your print by hand painting or drawing designs.

Finally number the prints, name and sign them. Make a class display showing all the plants and the information you have found out about them.



Winsome Jobling, plant collagraph. Photo by Angus Cameron.

This is a collagraph plate made by Winsome Jobling from a fern leaf. Winsome glued the dried plant material onto a piece of mat board and coated front and back of the board in shellac before applying ink and printing.

## Articles by Winsome Jobling

Jobling, Winsome, 'Recognising Indigenous knowledge when sourcing plant fibres for papermaking', *Hand Papermaking International*, vol. 28, no. 2, pp. 3–8

Jobling, Winsome, 'Playing with plastic plates', tech talk, *Imprint*, vol. 50, no. 3

Jobling, Winsome, 'Earth: Mined impressions' in A Price (ed.), *International Association of Hand Papermakers and Paper Artists Bulletin* 54, pp. 36–37

Further reading can be found in the Artists' Biography on page 90 of Winsome Jobling: the nature of paper exhibition catalogue.

## Papermaking with children

Papermaking

<http://www.papermaking.net/how-to-make-paper/papermaking-for-preschoolers/>

Paperslurry – How to Make Handmade Paper from Recycled Materials

<http://paperslurry.com/2014/05/19/how-to-make-handmade-paper-from-recycled-materials/>

Tinker Lab – Making paper with Kids

<http://tinkerlab.com/how-to-make-paper/>

Wiki How - How to Make Paper With a Group of Kids

<http://www.wikihow.com/Make-Paper-With-a-Group-of-Kids>

## Papermaking associations and organisations

International Association of Hand Papermakers and Paper Artists

<https://www.iapma.info/>

Papermakers of Victoria

<http://papermakers.org.au/>

Paperslurry

<http://paperslurry.com/>

## Papermaking books

The Complete Book of Papermaking by Josep Asuncion

Papermaking Techniques Book: Over 50 Techniques for Making and Embellishing Handmade by John Plowman

300 Papermaking Recipes Paperback by Mary Reimer

Papermaking with Garden Plants & Common Weeds by Helen Hiebert

The Papermaker's Companion: The Ultimate Guide to Making and Using Handmade Paper by Helen Hiebert

## Papermaking Publications

Hand papermaking magazine

<http://magazine.handpapermaking.org/>

And free articles for beginners

<http://newsletter.handpapermaking.org/beginner/>

World map of hand papermakers [https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=zJ2\\_Y4p8qWfo.kPWTC50iUkfs](https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=zJ2_Y4p8qWfo.kPWTC50iUkfs)

## More internet paperlinks

<http://paperslurry.com/links/>