



g.w. bot the long paddock  
A 30 YEAR SURVEY

## Education kit

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A Goulburn Regional Art Gallery Touring Exhibition



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# Contents

Introduction	3
G.W. Bot – “Thoughts about my work”	5
Works in Focus	6
Conversation with the Artist	12
Preschool Connections	16
Primary School Connections	17
High School Connections Stage 4 & 5	18
High School Connections Stage 6	19
Conversation with the Curator – Peter Haynes	19
Questions	21
Cross Curricular Connections: Journeys – Real and Imagined	22
Glossary	23
Selected Reading	24

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## How to Use the Education kit

This education kit has been designed to accompany the Goulburn Regional Art Gallery touring exhibition *g.w. bot the long paddock A 30 YEAR SURVEY*. The kit includes an introduction to the exhibition through the personal thoughts of the artist G.W. Bot. 'Works in Focus' identifies two examples of her work, including questions and activities for both primary and secondary students. G.W. Bot's works are divided into themes though works can belong to several. 'Works in Focus' is followed by a 'Conversation with the Artist' aimed to offer students information regarding the artist and her work. The kit is then divided into learning stages of preschool, primary school, high school stages 4, 5 and stage 6. This section focuses on the exhibition as a whole. Lastly the kit contains a cross-curricular activity aimed at upper primary and stage 4 high school students, a glossary and a list of selected readings.

## Tour Dates

Grafton Regional Gallery	15 December 2010 – 23 January 2011
Hawkesbury Regional Gallery	11 February -27 March 2011
Mosman Art Gallery	4 June – 17 July 2011
Wagga Wagga Art Gallery	23 July – 18 September 2011
Orange Regional Gallery	7 October – 20 November 2011
Tamworth Regional Gallery	28 January – 10 March 2012
Stanthorpe Regional Art Gallery	12 April – 13 May 2012
Artspace Mackay	25 May – 8 July 2012
Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery	27 July – 8 September 2012
Perc Tucker Regional Gallery	24 September – 4 November 2012
Maitland Regional Art Gallery	16 November 2012 – 20 January 2013

# Introduction

*g.w. bot the long paddock: A 30 YEAR SURVEY* is a collection of works that span from 1981 to 2010. G.W. Bot is an internationally renowned artist, a printmaker, painter, sculptor and graphic artist, who has exhibited extensively nationally and internationally. She has had over 40 solo exhibitions, including shows in Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, London, Paris, New York and Los Angeles. She has participated in over 180 group and invited exhibitions. She is the recipient of numerous awards and has been awarded residencies in Europe, Asia and Australia. Her work is held in over a hundred public art collections nationally and internationally.

For many years G.W. Bot has been recording the Australian landscape as a language - in the form of glyphs. These have found expression in her work as relief prints, drawings, paintings and bronze sculptures. In part the language is drawn from the grasslands of the Lower Molonglo Valley, close to where she lives, and in part it deals with the vastness of Lake George (Weerewa) which is roughly midway between Canberra and Goulburn. She has also explored the glyphs as found in coastal locations. In a way her glyphs are universal, the language of life that surrounds each and everyone of us – at once familiar and seemingly instantly legible, but on closer encounter, indecipherable and unknowable. These glyphs take on a metaphysical nature and become metaphors for language and landscapes within all of us.



44. *Molonglo glyphs* (2009)  
Watercolour and graphite on Colombe paper  
105 x 198 cm  
Beaver Galleries Canberra

# G.W. Bot

According to Aboriginal totemic belief, each member of a clan inherits a totemic relationship with a particular plant or animal of the region. I like this idea of oneness with the environment. Where I live wombats are especially prevalent and they have become my totemic animal. The earliest written reference to a wombat occurs in a French source where it is called "le grand Wam Bot," and hence my exhibiting name - G.W. Bot.

I was born in Quetta, Pakistan, of Australian parents and studied art in London, Paris and Australia and graduated from the Australian National University in 1982. My drawings were first published in a book in London in 1980 and since 1985 I have worked as a full-time artist. I am represented by Australian Galleries in Melbourne and Sydney, in Brisbane by Noreen Grahame Galleries, in Canberra by Beaver Galleries, in London by Hart Galleries and in New York by 5+5 Gallery. In 2005, 2006 and 2009 I have been voted as one of the 50 most collectable artists in the Australian Art Collector.

- Christine Grishin

Information courtesy of *g.w. bot the long paddock A 30 YEAR SURVEY* exhibition catalogue



33. *Field of Glyphs* (2004)  
Oil on Belgian linen  
81 x 158cm  
Private collection

# G.W. Bot

## Thoughts about my work

"All of my work is intimately interrelated thematically and essentially deals with questions of environments - personal and public - and an individual's path through these environments as an allegory for a person's passage through life. While I do not subscribe to a tragic view of life, there is an awareness of the finality of human life and of eternal Nature. Much of my world view has been shaped by circumstances of my life - my childhood divided between Europe and Australia, my independent practice as an artist working outside the network of art school institutions with their orthodoxies, privileges and limitations, my family and working for over three decades in a landscape which I have allowed to pass through me until it has formed its own language which I employ intuitively.

While I consider myself primarily as a printmaker, I move into painting and drawing and bronze sculpture as each individual body of work requires. The thematic clusters below can be thought of as indicative groupings which are in no way watertight and individual works can easily be moved between these clusters. However the groupings could serve as useful points of departure for the educational side of this travelling exhibition."

Works are grouped under the titles of:

- Gardens and landscapes
- Intimacy and sacrifice
- Prophets and poets
- Urbanscapes
- Calligraphy

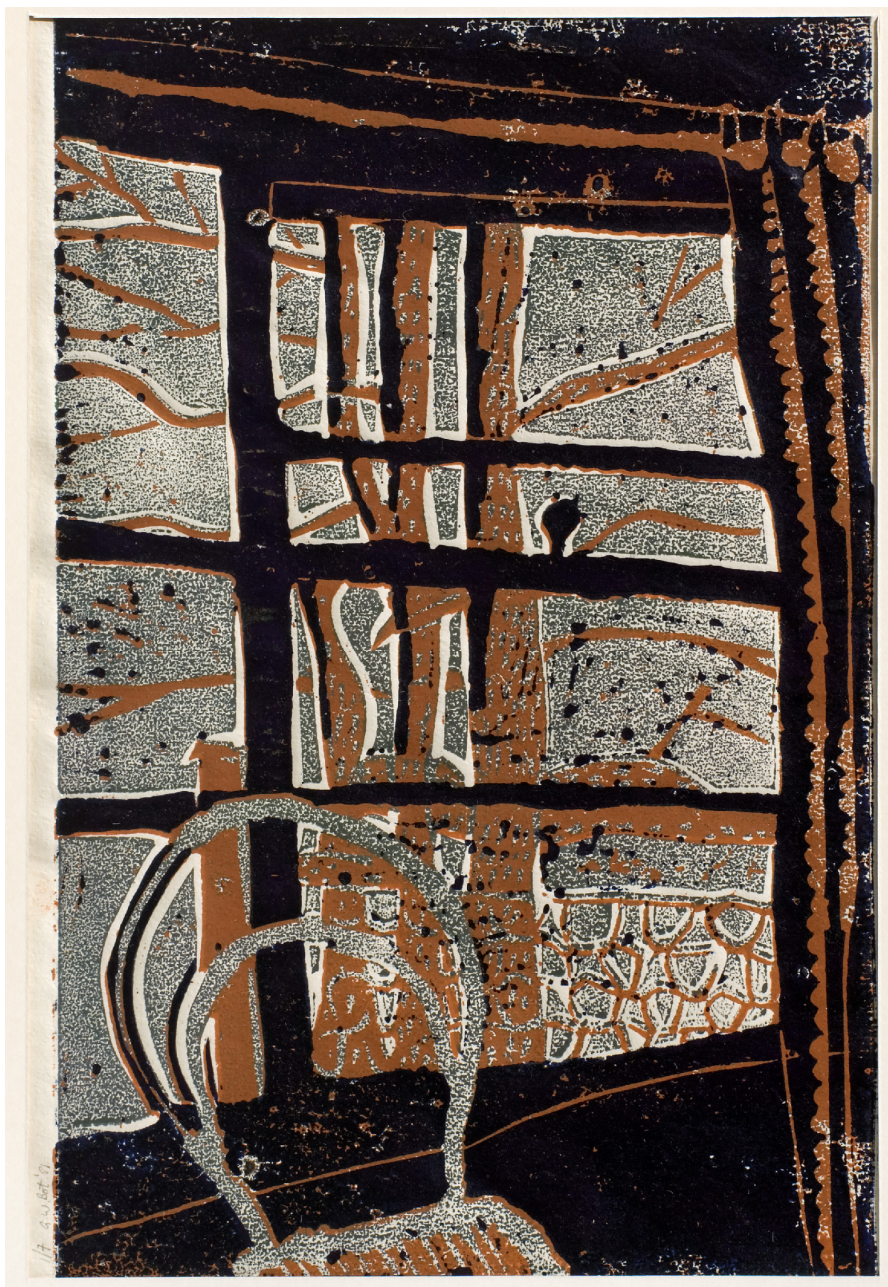


# Works in Focus

As G.W. Bot discusses in her thoughts about her work, art works can be clustered into thematic groupings though they are not static. They can easily move between themes and fit into more than one simultaneously.

*Window* (1981) acts as an entry point to the exhibition. It is through this window that we view the environment and the passage through life, capturing one's thoughts and emotions. Our journey begins with 1. *Window* (1981), the earliest work in the exhibition.

*Step through G.W. Bot's window.*



*"Window (1981) is an early image which explored life beyond an intimate space."*

*– G.W. Bot*

1. *Window* (1981)  
Linocut on  
photographic paper  
30 x 23cm  
Private collection

## Gardens and landscapes

"Wilderness, enclosed gardens, 'hortus conclusus', drought, paddocks. Much of my work is involved in a dialectic between private landscape - cultivated, enclosed, full of possibilities and the wilderness - infinite, wild and unpredictable. The paddock forms a curious middle ground. I am particularly interested in 'entrances' into the landscape as a passageway between worlds."



36. *Engraved Poem* (2006)  
Linocut on Magnani paper  
71.5 x 102cm  
Private collection



6. *Persian Garden* (1992)  
Linocut on BFK paper  
28.5 x 38cm  
Private collection

### Primary

Look at the artwork, what can you see? What shapes have been used? What colours have been used?  
Create an image of the landscape using lines and shapes.

### Primary

What does the work *Persian Garden* (1992) remind you of? Research Persian carpets, what sort of images do they normally display? What kinds of patterns have been used?

### High School

G.W. Bot states that her landscapes are a dialectic between private landscapes and the wilderness. How has G.W. Bot composed her artwork to demonstrate the landscape? Is the type of landscape easily identifiable? Explain.

### High School

"I am particularly interested in 'entrances' into the landscape as a passageway between worlds."- G.W. Bot.

How could you explain this quote with reference to the work *Persian Garden* (1992)? Considering the history and the use of Persian Carpets do you think that G.W. Bot makes reference to them, how?



## Intimacy and sacrifice

"Mother and child (1985),... Tree of life (1990). Ever since I was a child I spent much time looking out from a closed, intimate world into the broader canvas of life. There is much to be explored in a much loved, intimately known space."



2. *Mother and child* (1985)  
Linocut on BFK paper  
62 x 55.5cm  
Private collection

### Primary

Look at *Mother and child* (1985). How do you think the mother feels about her child? What do you think the circles around their heads means? Create a portrait using only earth tones.

### High School

G.W. Bot uses many signs and symbols in her work. Research the signs and symbols in *Mother and child* (1985). Compare *Mother and child*, (1985), to *Tree of life I* (1990). What are the similarities between the works? Use your research on symbols to help in interpretation.



3. *Tree of life I* (1990)  
Linocut, embossed, watercolour on BFK paper  
38 x 28cm  
Private collection

### Primary

What are the main colours in this art work? Use a colour wheel to locate the colours. Research complementary colours and create an artwork using only two complimentary colours. Collect images of and research stained glass windows, do you think this art work is similar, how?

### High School

The tree of life has a long history in many cultures. Research the idea of the tree of life and discuss how G.W. Bot has used it in her work. Has G.W. Bot portrayed the tree of life in a similar manner to another culture? Is the concept of the tree of life culturally specific?

## Prophets and poets

*"The Russian poet Pushkin wrote of the poet as a prophet, a sacrifice, one who fulfils a socially essential role in society. My poets and prophets play a central role in my art. Sometimes like Charon (1995) they are found in nature, but more often than not they are cast as curious characters who through the image and the world will bring light to peoples' lives."*



14. *Charon* (1995)  
Linocut on BFK paper  
92 x 52cm  
Private collection

### Primary

What can you see in the artwork *Charon* (1995)? Make a list and compare with others in your class. Create a night scene using black and white only. What feelings do you get from looking at the image?

### High School

Charon appears in Greek mythology and is an important entity in the Greek afterlife myths. Describe how G.W. Bot has interpreted the myth in her work *Charon* (1995). What emotions does the work express?



17. *The poet* (1996)  
Linocut on Rives BFK paper  
60 x 42cm  
Private collection

### Primary

Research the word 'texture', what does it mean? Write down as many different textures you can think of. Look at the artwork *The Poet* (1996) what textures can you see? With a pencil do some sketches of textures from the artwork. Use your pencil to make rubbings on paper of various textures.

### High School

Discuss *The Poet* (1996) in terms of the elements and principles of art. How have they been used in the artwork?

## Urbanscapes

"The urban landscape is central to my practice. It is not a space from which I wish to escape but one which is fraught with dangers and challenges. Works, including *Washing* (1996) ... and house images all belong to this cluster."



1. *Window* (1981)  
Linocut on photographic paper  
30 x 23cm  
Private collection

### Primary School

Look at *Window* (1981), what can you see out of the window?  
What kind of day do you think the artist is portraying?  
Create an image of your own, looking out of a window, use the same colour tones as G.W. Bot.

### High School

"*Window*, 1981, is an early image which explored life beyond an intimate space." – G.W. Bot  
What do you think G.W. Bot means by this statement?  
How does the work express an intimate space?  
How has G.W. Bot shown tone and texture in her work?



15. *Washing* (1996)  
Linocut on Rives BFK paper  
60 x 42cm  
Private collection

### Primary School

How has the artist shown weather in the image *Washing* (1996)?  
Collect a series of pictures of people doing ordinary things, describe what makes them interesting.

### High School

"The urban landscape is central to my practice. It is not a space from which I wish to escape but one which is fraught with dangers and challenges." – G.W. Bot  
Discuss this statement in relation to *Washing* (1996), how does the image express the urban landscape, fraught with dangers and challenges?

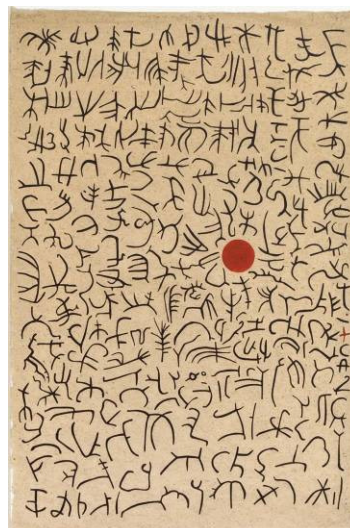


## Calligraphy

"I make literally thousands of very rapid, instantaneous sketches from nature capturing a particular shape, shadow, outline, patterns on scribbly barks or of the wind through grass. This is the basis for my personal language of glyphs and permeates many works including runes, morphic languages, engraved poems, manuscript, elegies."



22. Shoalhaven glyphs (1999)  
oil on canvas  
75 x 61 cm  
Private collection



45. Earth, glyphs and the sun (2010)  
Linocut on Korean Hanji paper  
94 x 64cm  
Private collection

### Primary School

What do you think *Shoalhaven Glyphs* (1999) is a painting of? Discuss with your class. Create some quick sketches of the landscape using only lines to make symbols of the things you see. Paint a canvas or board in colours you wish, with a pointed tool scratch in your symbols while the paint is wet.

### High School

What techniques has G.W. Bot used in her work *Shoalhaven glyphs* (1999) to evoke personal responses from the audience?

### Primary School

Research the Runic Alphabet. Make a table with the alphabet and draw the Rune to match. Make up your own symbols for the letters. Using G.W. Bot's art work for inspiration, make an artwork using your new alphabet.

### High School

Read the statement by G.W. Bot above, and look at the image *Earth, glyphs and the sun* (2010) how do you feel and understand the image using the reference material? How do you think the signs and symbols in the art work are understood by the audience?



# Conversation with the Artist

**GRAG:** Do you think that being born in Pakistan has an influence on your artworks?

**G.W:** I was born in Quetta, Pakistan which is an area of Baluchistan, near Afghanistan and what is known as the Kyber Pass. I came to Australia as a baby. Many generations of one part of my family have lived and worked in India - a long time before Pakistan became a country. Just as each one of us has grown up on family stories the degree to which one is influenced by it all is perhaps not one to measure. What I did learn is that many borders of countries are man made and are constantly shifting and that families and generations of families are not bound by borders - one's own spirit is borderless, and as an artist one reaches beyond the borders of a sheet of paper to suggest something more in life than what at first seems apparent.

**GRAG:** What have you learnt from studying in London, Paris and Australia?

**G.W:** In London I lived near the Thames River, in Paris near the Seine River and in Canberra, Australia near the Murrumbidgee River. These rivers are like pathways through life; they come from somewhere and are going somewhere. For me they are reminders of our passage through life - we come into the world and we leave the world. There is richness in the world whether it is London, Paris or Goulburn, Australia. I do find a unique freedom working as an artist in Australia - I think it has something to do with the vastness of the landscape that allows for a vastness of thought and approaches of creativity - it is a garden of possibilities.

**GRAG:** Do you have an art studio where you create your artwork or do you create art in your domestic space?

**G.W:** My printing press is firmly standing on the concrete floor of what was the garage downstairs in our house. It is my printing studio. The rest of the house, the garden, and the side of the road down the valley behind me are all my studios - one of my favourites is a park bench by the Murrumbidgee River.

**GRAG:** Do you carry a sketch pad to record ideas or do you prefer to create artworks from memory?

**G.W:** The Bot is always scribbling in a sketch book - what I see around me. These sketches help keep alive for me the memory of how the light fell on the mountain side late in the winter afternoon, how a certain tree seemed to bend towards me saying something, how the wind reminded one of thousands of generations of people who have looked and seen and felt what I just had.

**GRAG:** Why do you create artworks under the name G.W. Bot?

**G.W:** According to Aboriginal totemic belief, each member of a clan inherits a totemic relationship with a particular plant or animal in the region. I like this idea of oneness with the environment. Where I live wombats are especially prevalent and they have become my totemic animal. The earliest written reference to a wombat occurs in a French source where it is called "le grand Wam Bot", and hence my exhibiting name - G.W.Bot.

**GRAG:** G.W, many of your artworks are based on earthy colours or worked in black, is there a reason for your limited colour pallet?

**G.W:** Perhaps "limited" is not the word I would use for the colours I work with. Perhaps I use colours symbolically - red is for the earth, yellow for the grass that grows on the earth - pale blue is the celestial sky as everlasting as the blue of my children's eyes. Dark blue is as deep as one's mind can reach and black is a reminder of ourselves.

**GRAG:** You work in many mediums, printmaking, sculpture, watercolour and drawings. Is there a medium that you enjoy using the best?

**G.W:** As an artist one chooses to work in a medium that one feels at the time may best express what it is one has to say. Painting with watercolours is like working with the earth having been soaked after rain, most of the colours come from earth pigments and it is a delight to mix these in water. Working with bronze is an exciting, elemental, tactile process - the metals come from within the earth rather than paper which comes from the different plants growing on the surface of the earth.

**GRAG:** How do you choose the various papers to print or draw on? Do the textures of the paper influence the medium you place on them?

**G.W:** Paper is like the soil. Just as different plants are grown in different soils so to do certain images grow on certain papers. Paper for me is a metaphor for life - it is a once very fragile and very strong just as we are in one moment fragile and in the next amazingly resilient. Each paper has its own character just like us and the artist needs only to respond to this and let the images grow.

**GRAG:** The titles of your artworks sometimes give the audience an idea of what your works are about, how do you go about choosing titles?

**G.W:** Titles grow with the work - when you name your children you are letting them know who they are as well as letting the world know who they are - so too with titles of one's work - titles are entry points into the character of the work.

**GRAG:** What are your artworks about?

**G.W:** For me this question is like "What is life all about"? Perhaps an entry point into this will be to refer to a few themes in the work in the

exhibition which I would like to address after responding to the next questions.

**GRAG:** In what ways does the environment influence you in your art making?

**G.W:** Dogen Zenji once wrote, "The green mountains are always walking; if you do not know the green mountains are always walking, you do not know your own walking". This in many ways sums up my inspiration - oneness with the landscape. I am inspired by the environment that surrounds me. Over the past few years I have thought of the landscape as a language that I call "Glyphs". Glyphs constitute a language suggested by the markings found in the Australian landscape. Back in the 1870's Marcus Clarke wrote of the peculiarity of the Australian bush as "the strange scribblings of Nature learning how to write". I find these strange scribblings on the weathered fence posts of the paddocks that have witnessed many bushfires, floods and the scorching sun of many summers. Elements of this language I find on bark and trees and encoded within the shrubs, eroded gullies and fields of grass. It is highly lyrical and profound, dramatic and tender, timeless and ephemeral. After having spent more than two decades working in the landscape, at times I feel almost like a medium through which the scribblings of nature are recorded. The relief prints at first glance have a striking boldness but if one pauses for a second there is also a great subtlety eg. *Resurrection glyphs - midday* (2009). Glyphs are never literal, but are born of a real and specific experience in the landscape. I feel that over the years I have increasingly learned to listen to the landscape and to learn from its subtle forms. The artwork possesses a sense of order, a natural structure and a metaphysical presence, yet it never loses sight of its origin as a handmade artefact. It is complete, but boundless, suggesting endless possibilities.

**GRAG:** Are you inspired by different cultures?

**G.W:** When one is moved by something - an artwork - it is something inherent in the artwork that spoke to you - things made by other human beings are of all of us - our responses to love, beauty, death, sorrow, the morning, the moon, the earth and the sea. We speak different languages but they are all about this life common to all of us - I think the culture of civilization is the sharing of all things we as human beings experience - this fascinates me.

**GRAG:** Do you have a favourite artist? Does the work of other artists influence your art making?

**G.W:** Our shaping as artists is made up of all sorts of observations and feelings - this usually includes experiencing the works of other artists. I have never belonged to a particular style or trend in art, possibly reflecting my non-institutional training. I have looked very closely at the

work of the Aboriginal artists of Australia. They seem to have their own particular language and system of mark-making. I've also found inspiration in the medieval icon painters - I've always been fascinated by the question of how to encode spirituality in the visual arts. Of the more contemporary European artists there have been many who have inspired me including Morandi, Matisse, Miro, Tapies and Samuel Palmer. In all instances I have been drawn more to their graphic work and the endless possibilities of their mark-making.

**G.W:** *Now to what my art is all about?* There is a linocut in the exhibition called *The Poet* (1996). It refers to many things in life - passage - a slightly anxious face looks skywards where hands denote another existence while the body is earth coloured and denotes being part of this life. One of my favourite poets Pushkin, refers to the poet in a number of his poems as the creator - and acknowledges that the path of the poet is a solitary one as is this journey through life at some stage for all of us but a noble one. As an artist in her creative garden I grow images of gardens and landscapes, intimacy and sacrifice, prophets and poets, the domestic urban lot as with the linocut *Washing* (1996) and a personal language of glyphs which permeates many works including runes, morphic languages, engraved poems, manuscripts and elegies.



27. *Passage I* (2001)  
Linocut and chine  
collè on BFK paper  
92 x 52 cm  
Private collection



# Preschool Connections

## Theory – in the Gallery

Ask children to discuss the artwork. What can they see in the artwork?

- What shapes can you see?
- What is the texture of the work? Is it rough or is it soft?
- What colours can you see?
- What do you think the artwork is about?
- How does the artwork make you feel?
- What do you think the red circles mean in the artworks?

## Activity in the Gallery

Look at all the artworks in the gallery count how many circles you can see. Are they all the same colouring?

## Practical – in the Gallery

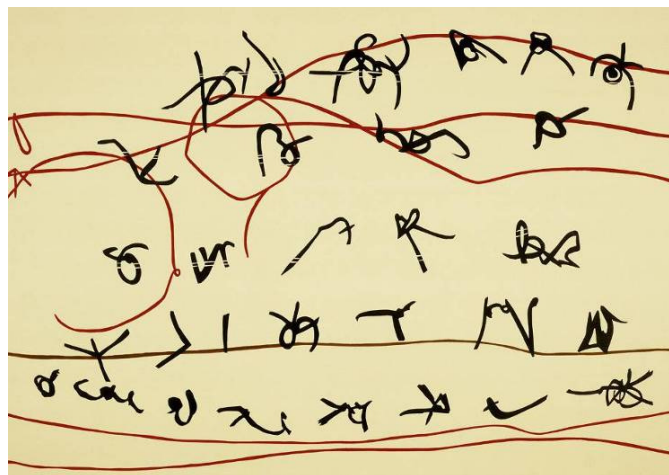
\* Ask children to stand in front of a work and look at the shapes they can see in the image. Ask them to imitate the shapes with their hands or whole body.

\* Give children some textured paper and pencils or crayons. Ask them to make up their own shapes and lines to fill the paper.

## Practical – at Preschool

\* Use sticks as printing tools to create artworks. Dip the sticks into paint and press onto paper to leave natural markings.

\* Glue sticks and twigs onto textured paper to create 3 dimensional works.



37. A traveller's tale (2006)  
Linocut on Magnani  
paper  
69 x 100cm  
Private collection

# Primary School Connections

## Theory – in the Gallery

\* Artworks tell a story through images. Choose an artwork by G.W. Bot and write your own story about the work.

What can you see?

What is happening in the artwork?

How does the artwork make you feel?

\* Look at the sculptures by G.W. Bot. Sculptures are 3 dimensional, what does this mean? What do you think the sculptures represent? Do they look similar to any of the 2 dimensional artworks? How?

## Practical – in the Gallery

\* Students use charcoal on textured paper to create their own glyphs artwork.

\* Students work on a large piece of paper to make a collaborative artwork containing glyphs from G.W. Bot's work. The collaborative artwork allows students to view various interpretations to artworks.

## Practical – at school

\* Students create their own plants to go in a garden. Students plan their artwork by drawing plant shapes on paper and cutting them out individually. The images are arranged on paper to make an interesting composition. Once the garden is constructed students place their paper over scratch foam and transfer their garden to the scratch foam. Students then roll ink onto the scratch foam and make prints of their garden.

# High School Connection

## Stages 4 & 5

### Theory – in the Gallery

- \* Choose an artwork in the gallery. Without reading any text about the work, write down what you think the artwork is about. Describe the elements that indicate your interpretation. Read the information text panel. What does this tell you about the artwork? Does the title or materials change your original ideas about the work? Explain the work using the new information. Compare your two interpretations. Do you think that the text panel is important in interpreting the artwork?
- \* Explain one artwork in terms on the elements and principles of art. How does the artist use these principles and elements in her artwork?

### Conceptual Framework

- \* Read 'conversation with the artist', identify which questions and answers relate to artist, artwork, audience and world.
- \* Choose two artworks by G.W. Bot, explain how she has explored the world through her art making.
- \* "titles are entry points into the character of the work" (G.W. Bot). Discuss how the use of a title can influence the audience's interpretation of an artwork.

### Frames

**Structural Frame** – How does G.W. Bot use signs and symbols in her artworks? What messages do they convey to the audience? Use 3 examples of her work.

**Subjective Frame** – How does G.W. Bot express her personal experiences through her art? Use examples.

**Cultural Frame** – Does culture play an important role in art making for G.W. Bot? Read 'conversation with the artist' and use imagery to demonstrate your response.

**Postmodern Frame** – Do you believe that the work by G.W. Bot is postmodern? Discuss your reasoning.

# High School – Stage 6

The curator plays an important role in the art world. It is the curator who selects work and organises exhibitions. They have the ability to choose what is and is not exhibited and how it will be exhibited. Most importantly the curator has direction over what and how an audience views an art work. Peter Haynes, curator of *g.w. bot the long paddock A 30 YEAR SURVEY* sheds some light on his role in this exhibition.

## Conversation with the Curator

### Peter Haynes (PH)

**GRAG:** What are the main responsibilities of a curator when organising an exhibition?

PH: A curator is mainly responsible for initiating and developing the exhibition concept; selecting the works for the exhibition; writing a catalogue essay and overseeing production of a catalogue including selection of works to be illustrated, lists of works and artist's CV; overseeing installation of works; floor talks/lectures associated with the exhibition.

**GRAG:** How do you develop an initial concept for an exhibition?

PH: As curators normally work within institutions with clearly defined exhibition policies, the starting point for any exhibition will be its relevance to those policies. The curator's own research interests will also play a role in determining what directions exhibitions concepts may be directed. "Directions" could be:

- solo/group exhibition
- Thematic eg. landscape
- media-based or variety of media
- survey/recent work

**GRAG:** What issues are you confronted with as a curator?

PH: Issues that are constant include: budget constraints; availability of works; timing issues; curator's working relationship with artist (s) selected for exhibition; ensuring that works selected for exhibition help to articulate and/or express the exhibition's curatorial premise.



**GRAG:** When organising G.W. Bot's exhibition how did you go about selecting works to be put into the show?

PH: G W Bot exhibition- the selection process is a long one.

1. Gather together as much material as possible from the artist's exhibition history
2. Edit this material to complement the exhibition rationale
3. "Star" those works which the curator believes are essential to the telling of the exhibition's story
4. Edit the "starred" items to include only those works that the curator knows will be available for the exhibition
5. Fine-tune the "starred" items- in a sense "star" the "starred" items- so that the final selection creates a coherent and conceptually and aesthetically relevant body of work that clearly showcases the artistic and conceptual development of the artist.

**GRAG:** How much does the curator influence the audience interpretation of the works?

PH: The curator's choice of work should do what I have said in the question above. It should also point to ways of looking at the artist's practice that will prompt the viewer to ask questions about eg. Why the artist has elected to make works in the particular ways she does? How the themes of the work are made available to viewers through the artist's stylistic and aesthetic choices? How the works relate to one another and to the whole exhibition in helping viewers to access the curator's exhibition rationale. The curator has of course made a selection based on his/her own understanding of the artist's practice and how that selection helps to create a particular "story". I believe that galleries/museums are interrogative space and as such should offer their audiences a range of questions which will prompt those audiences to establish their own dialogues with the works in an exhibition. Exhibitions should not be about "answers" or definitions- they should be vital and dynamic and able to be an active part of the dialogue with the viewer. In a sense, an exhibition is "an option" (presumably an educated one) that is one of many that constitute the "exhibition experience".

**GRAG:** As G.W. Bot's exhibition is a touring exhibition does your role as a curator differ from curating an exhibition that is a single gallery exhibition?

PH: as a curator normally operates within the known confines of a particular gallery/museum it is very difficult to provide the optimum exhibition for a range of venues when that exhibition travels. In the case of the Bot show the choice of works is such that individual galleries will be able to edit the original selected works to suit their own spaces without losing the exhibition's overall thematic thrust.

# Questions

- After reading Peter Haynes' interview, assume the role of a curator. Select at least 10 works from the G.W. Bot exhibition, consider your selection process and describe how the chosen works portray a theme to the audience.
- Compare G.W. Bot's *Mother and Child* (1985) to *Tree of Life I* (1990). Discuss the use of symbolism as a form of communication.
- Explain, using examples from the exhibition, how G.W. Bot uses visual language in her works.



25. *Entrance I* (2000)  
Linocut on Rives BFK  
paper and tapa cloth  
92 x 52 cm (irreg)  
Private collection

# Cross Curricular Connections

Activity - primary and stage 4 High School

## Journeys – real and imagined

Every day we go on a journey, whether it is a real journey or an imagined. Our journeys, even as simple as a trip to school or a walk in the playground, are full of signs and symbols that help us find our way or make our trip more interesting. G.W. Bot finds these symbols an important way to tell us about her own personal journey. Now its time for you to do the same, what symbols can you create?

Go for a walk around your classroom or playground. Look for signs or symbols to represent what you see. Draw these on your map in their correct positions. If there is something you see that you don't have a symbol for, make one up. Look at a globe or atlas, what symbols are used there? Think about mathematical symbols, can you use them to show things on your map?

In groups, look at each others' maps. Look at the symbols others have used. Are they the same as yours or similar? Use someone else's map and see if you can find the areas represented.

Turn your map into an artwork, using just the signs and symbols. This artwork represents a **real journey**.

Next, write a short story of an imagined journey. It can be an imaginary world or somewhere you would like to go. Write down what you would see there. Think about the environment, what would it look like? As this world is imagined there are no symbols that represent things. Make up a series of symbols or signs for things on your journey.

Create a map and turn it into an artwork, using the symbols you have made up. Look at the symbols of other students, what similarities are there? Each student can describe their map to the class and show their artwork representing an **imagined journey**.

### Connections

**Visual Arts** - creating artworks, using visual language

**Geography** – reading maps, looking at geographical locations, culture, people

**English** – reading, writing, discussion, group work, speeches, storytelling

**Maths** – using mathematical symbols and problem solving.

**Science** – looking at ecology, the environment.

# Glossary

**Artefact** - an object made by a human being, typically one of cultural or historical interest

**Artist's Books** – a collection of works often displayed in a book format that is often too complex for a single art work. It is a collaboration of ideas and art making processes. Books can be in any format, from loose leaf pages to three dimensional works.

**Colombe Paper** – handmade paper from France. Made from 100% cotton with natural deckled edging.

**Dialectic** – any formal system of reasoning that arrives at the truth by the exchange of logical argument.

**Elegies** – a poem or other piece of writing expressing sadness, usually about someone's death

**Glyph** – a hieroglyphic character or symbol

**Handmade** - made by hand, not by machine, and typically therefore of superior quality

**Hanji paper** – traditional handmade paper from Korea, made from the bark of the Paper Mulberry tree.

**Hieroglyph** - a stylised picture of an object representing a word, syllable, or sound, as found in ancient Egyptian and certain other writing systems, a secret or incomprehensible symbol

**Icon** – a person or thing regarded as a representative symbol or as worthy of worship

**Linocut** – a picture carved from a Linoleum block.

**Manuscripts** - a book, document, or piece of music written by hand rather than typed or printed

**Metaphor** - a thing regarded as representative or symbolic of something else

**Metaphysics** - the branch of philosophy that deals with the first principles of things, including abstract concepts such as being, knowing, identity, time, and space

**Poet** - a person who writes poems, a person possessing special powers of imagination or expression

**Prophet**- a person regarded as an inspired teacher or proclaimer of the will of God

**Runes** - small stones, pieces of bone, etc, bearing marks and used in divination. Runes were used by Scandinavians and Anglo-Saxons from about the 3rd century. They were formed mainly by modifying Roman or Greek characters to suit carving, and were used both in writing and in divination.

**Scribble** – to write or draw (something) carelessly or hurriedly

**Sign** – a notice on public display that gives information or instructions in a written or symbolic form

**Symbol** – picture or shape used for representing something

**Totem** – an animal, object or plant serving as an emblem for a group of people, sometimes revered as a founder, ancestor or guardian.



# Selected Reading

## Websites

Australian Galleries <http://www.australiangalleries.com.au>

Beaver Galleries <http://www.beavergalleries.com.au>

Gadfly Gallery [http://www.gadflygallery.com/artist\\_view.php?ArtistID=6](http://www.gadflygallery.com/artist_view.php?ArtistID=6)

## Books / Articles

Gilmour, Pat. "G.W. Bot: Poetry of Line", *Art and Australia*, 1998/2 pp 518-21

Gray, Anne. "G.W. Bot – Enclosures" in *G.W. Bot: The Australian Wilderness and Garden: Language, calligraphy and semiotics*, Hart Gallery, London 1999, 36 pp

Grishin, Sasha. "G.W. Bot", in *Grapheion: European review of modern prints, book and paper art*, vol 15-16 3/4 2000, p 74

Haynes, Peter. "Anima and essences: The art of G.W. Bot", *Craft Arts International*, No 61, 2004, pp. 30-35

Haynes, Peter. "G.W Bot: Gardens", Canberra Museum and Gallery, Canberra 2003, 32pp.

Murray Cree, Laura. "G.W. Bot: Gardens of fire", *State of the Arts*, April-June 2004, pp. 42-43

Ryan, Anne. "G.W. Bot: Paddock Glyphs", *Art and Australia*, vol 46, number 1, 2008, p.145

For Further reading please see *g.w. bot the long paddock A 30 YEAR SURVEY* exhibition catalogue.

