

FILOMENA COPPOLA *Fish out of Water – Murray Cod*

Fish out of Water – Murray Cod is a development from an intervention project that began at summer solstice, 2013 and continued through summer solstice 2014. I have been painting a lone sardine on a river pebble – the sardine is a reference to the waters near Sardegna and the Port of Napoli – the port where my parents began their journey to Australia. I then released a pebble at each of the eight sabbats. These represent the earth changes of the summer and winter solstice, the equinoxes and the four cross quarters of Lammás, Samhain, Imbolc and Beltane. Often associated with pagan festivals, I am acknowledging this history as well as connecting with the earth changes through out the year; the seasons, light and my own connection to place.

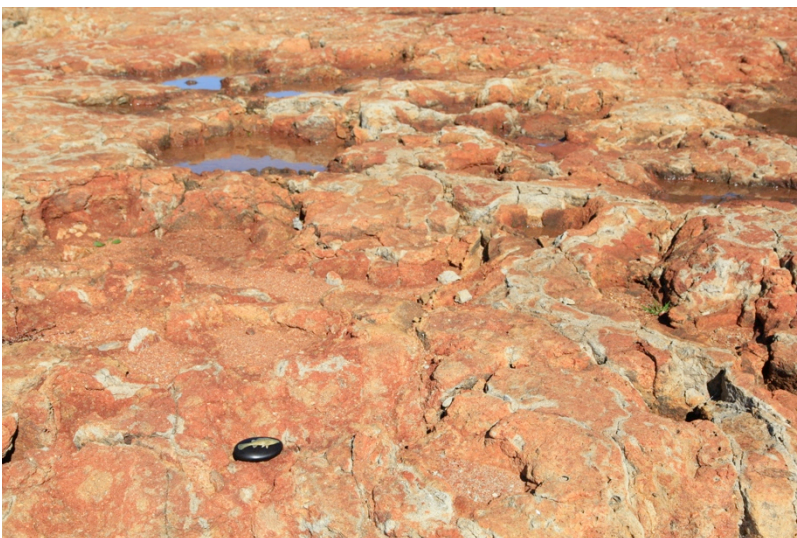


Imbloc, Port Melbourne, 2 August 2014



Beltane, Monsalvat, 31 October 2014

The first fish was released on summer solstice, 21 December 2013 at Elwood Beach. It was released at the edge of the breaking waves and then left behind to be either, swallowed by the sea or picked up by a beachcomber. The second was released at the Greco Roman columns near the Old Exhibition Buildings on Lammás, 1 February 2014, this was a reference to my Italian heritage. The sixth release was at Station Pier, Port Melbourne on Imbloc, 2 August 2014, this is where my parents arrived in Australia. There have been nine releases in total and the final fish in this cycle was released on the summer solstice, 21 December 2014. This project has been extended into a nine year project, *Fish out of Water – Summer Solstice* where I will release a sardine painted pebble at the summer solstice for each year ending 21 December 2021.



Fish out of Water – Murray Cod, Bonegilla Victoria, 2015

This work *Fish out of Water – Murray Cod* is a continuation of this project. Working with petrified red gum, which is between 5000-9000 years old and sourced from the Murray River, I made nine organic forms – grinding and sanding the wood into forms that are beautiful to hold. The petrified red gum carries within it stories of the Murray River, this continent, its cultural history, and the floods, droughts, fires that have affected this landscape. I feel that each organic form vibrates with the history that it carries. On each, I have painted a Murray Cod – a fish out of water – a comment on this changing continent, its climate, culture and demographic. I then travelled the length of the Murray River and selected nine locations beginning at Cudgewa Creek and ending where the river runs to the ocean at Goolwa.

There are two separate bodies of work in this project – one sculptural and the other a photographic documentation. The nine Murray Cod painted forms all participated in the journey along the length of the Murray. At each of the nine selected locations, I photographed the landscape, which forms part of the sculptural component of this project. In the sculptural works each of the nine painted forms are placed in front of the landscape photograph on a shelf made of contemporary red gum – a contrast of history and colour. The location of each photograph is etched into the face of the red gum shelf. The shelves are placed along the gallery wall at one metre intervals so the viewer has to journey with the work from Cudgewa Creek, Bonegilla, Boomanoomana, Barmah, Swan Hill, Boundary Bend, Kings Billabong, Lyrup Flats to Goolwa. In the second part of this project is a series of nine photographs. At each location I documented the specific fish represented in the sculpture in the environment showing a detailed perspective of each location, an experience of the different environments, textures and colours along the journey.

The repetition of the nine works in each project creates a journey for the viewer and symbolically repeats the yearly cycle of the preceding *Fish out of Water – Sabbats* project.

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Fish out of Water – Murray Cod, Lyrup Flats South Australia, 2015



Above: *Fish out of Water – Murray Cod Barmah*, petrified red gum, gouache, red gum, colour photograph, 23h x 30w x 25d cm
Below: *Fish out of Water – Summer Solstice 2013 – 2021*, photographs, gouache and pebbles.



With special thanks to the following for their support, encouragement and belief that I could learn to shape wood, take photographs and travel over 2500 kilometres to realise what was initially a very small idea. Corinna Berndt, Mark Chapman, Mark Jackson, Ross Lake, Alice Russell, Theodore Russell, Macka Smyth and Helen Vivian.