

# Poetic, beautiful and personal



CHARLY SMITH

## G.W. Bot: A morphology of glyphs

Beaver Galleries, 81 Denison Street, Deakin, until May 25.

Returning to Beaver Galleries for her first show in Canberra since 2007, G.W. Bot is an artist who has developed a remarkably complex and distinctive visual language in her work. The concept of the glyph has been Bot's focus for a number of years, giving her a unique alphabet with which to explore emotion, spirit, land, and life. The amorphous forms of the glyphs merge with the sinuous interpretation of the artist's hand to dance across luscious papers leaving a trace of lyrical beauty and visceral truth. Her work is instinctive and subjective, a visible rendering of Bot's response to the ineffable qualities of spirit, the sacred and the beautiful.

In Bot's assured hands, the glyph has become human, animal, and plant; it transforms the paper into cave painting, manuscript and illumination. The artist's affectionate and intimate connection with the natural world is evident as she explores various surface effects to reveal her vision of life and creation. *Cliff spirits* is a monumental work in which glyphs fill the white spaces, almost seeming to be carved into the exquisitely rendered surface of paper which has been transfigured into waterstained rock. *Earth glyphs* and *Sky glyphs* show a heightened sense of gestural freedom as the artist fills her surfaces with a myriad of small

G.W. Bot's *Muses*, watercolour and graphite on Colombe paper, is part of *A morphology of glyphs*.

forms interspersed across a colourful ground. In *Muses* and *Totemic glyphs* the marks of the graphite have been built up into quasi-sculptural forms on the paper, the colours and texture emulating the surfaces of her bronze works.

*Crucifixion* is a powerful bronze relief sculpture that demonstrates Bot's increasingly deft mastery of the three-dimensional. Heavy with the emotional weight of its religious inspiration, this five-piece sculpture brings together the symbols of faith in a distinctly Australian expression as twisting metal becomes at once cross of crucifixion and curve of burnt out eucalypt. Bot's allusion to religion is distilled and envisioned with a simultaneous sense of the universal and the achingly personal. *Resurrection glyphs – midday* reads as the linocut sequel to *Crucifixion* and again reflects the sense of the spiritual and the eternal through the regenerative metaphor of the bush, littered with the debris of death, yet emerging bold and powerful with renewed strength and resurrected life.

Although Bot is an international artist, having lived, trained and worked in London and Paris, Canberra can proudly claim her as a local. The bushland surrounding her Canberra home has provided much inspiration and consolation for this sensitive and gifted artist, and the convergence of influences upon her work produces something truly poetic.



CANBERRA TIMES

Tuesday, May 18, 2010 Times2