

Capturing the living world through an artist's eye



Dianne Fogwell, "Community".

*Art / "Reflection: works on paper and paintings", Dianne Fogwell. At Beaver Galleries, to June 17. Reviewed by **ROB KENNEDY**.*

VISUAL dreamscapes through layers of poetic content that express the natural world. This is one way to describe the artworks of Dianne Fogwell.

Canberra local and the 2021 "CityNews" Artist of the Year Dianne Fogwell captures the flora and fauna of the world around her through the power of water in this exhibition.

Birds, birds and more birds. Birds in landscapes, portraits, and almost as models. Their number is too large to count in Fogwell's exhibition titled "Reflection", which is on at Beaver Galleries. Magpies, crows, currawongs and others are all perfectly captured as the quirky characters they are. Any bird watcher will tell you that birds are the most animated creatures, and in this exhibition that individual nature is on full display.

Fogwell has them owning the landscape. They are not just part of the panorama; they make it a picture worth capturing. The 27 circular linocuts, titled "Flock series", in one space, depicts birds in different phases of flight and rest. It's like a catalogue of local birds. They are also studies of form and character. Most are mid-flight with wings spread, you can feel their power and grace.

The work titled “Community”, oil on board, has dozens of different birds situated on a wetland that looks like it is around the National Arboretum. Yet it’s an imaginary setting of many local birds just being themselves. But it’s the crows that stand out because she captures them with such lifelike resemblance: they look as they do in nature.



“Darker Waters” linocut, pigmented ink on hanji paper.

The largest work in the exhibition, “Darker Waters”, linocut, pigment mix on Hanji paper, is a spectacular work of art. The splendid colour balance, perfectly punctuated by a bright sunlight cloud, or is it a reflection of the moon, it’s hard to tell, but this one with its strong all-encompassing water-blue, pulls a viewer in; it’s like a magnet. It’s just like being there.

There’s a different pallet for many of the works. But it’s the strength of and connection to water that invades every work. It is calm lake water, in many shades and tones. It supports the flora and fauna. It’s resilient as it is radiant, it’s everywhere.

There may not be a strong philosophical statement in these works, but it’s a capturing of the living world through an artist’s eye. Everyone can feel that this is what it could be like if we could all see as an artist does.