Interzone by Ilona Schneider

31 January – 5 March 2015

ISBN 978-0-9875380-7-9

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BURNIE REGIONAL ART GALLERY, BURNIE ARTS & FUNCTION CENTRE
Wilmot Street Burnie Tasmania.
Ph: 03 6430 5875  F: 03 6431 4114
E: gallery@burnie.net  W: www.burniearts.net

Mt. Lyell, 2012, Archival Inkjet Print, 914 x 1374 mm

On the Way to Butlers Gorge, 2013, Archival Inkjet Print, 840 x 560 mm

On the Way to Butlers Gorge, 2013, Archival Inkjet Print, 840 x 560 mm

Mt. Lyell Highway, 2014, Archival Inkjet Print, 840 x 555 mm

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The image is an expression of truth, a glimpse of the truth permitted to us in our blindness. The incarnate image will be faithful when its articulations are palpably the expression of truth, when they make it unique, singular— as life itself is, even in its simplest manifestation.

Andrey Tarkovsky, Sculpting in Time

Interzone is the space where industry and nature, technology and landscape, past and future meet. I am intrigued by the aesthetic dissonances created by altered landscapes, the sublime embrace of labour, power and nature, the strange beauty of decay and exhausted earth, the cold, blue light reflected on the winding roads into the land, the endurance of past remnants in the present.

I was born in Switzerland and grew up in Austria. I spent a great part of my childhood traveling between these two countries. Both are known for their beautiful mountainous landscapes. These landscapes, however, have been heavily cultivated over hundreds of years, although this is often referred to as natural. Signs of dwellings, buildings, agricultural and industrial activities are everywhere.

I became interested in the man-altered landscape after returning from Europe in 2010, where I did several train trips throughout Austria, Germany and Switzerland. Train tracks lead through industrial landscapes, past villages and industrial suburbs before entering the dense domains of the cities. I noticed many things that had changed: empty factories, villages that clearly had seen some better times, quarries, mines, forestry, old and new infrastructure such as bridges, roads and tunnels. I was once more reminded of what “place” meant to me.

Colours, tones and luminosity play a particular role in my prints. I try to portray the unique light that exists on this island. For instance, after heavy rainfall, the wet rocks of Mount Lyell show pure watercolors. The land reflects cool coloured tones. Its textures are ancient and its surface worked over and over again. Time has no meaning for nature and is there long after we are gone.

Ilona Schneider, 2015

Ilona Schneider was born in Switzerland and grew up in Austria, where she completed an apprenticeship as a photographer at a renowned portrait studio in Salzburg in 1985. Over the next few years she worked for studios and photographers throughout Europe until she immigrated to Australia in 1994.

Ilona worked as a freelance photographer in New South Wales and Queensland. In 2001, she moved to Melbourne, where she produced a body of work consisting of black & white cityscapes and street portraits. Drawn to the seasonal climate and the European-like landscape of Tasmania, she moved here in 2007.

Ilona graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from The Tasmanian College of the Arts, Hobart in 2013, majoring in photography and e-media.

After coming back to Tasmania I followed the roads here, winding within the hilly landscape and leading me through dense rainforests and rocky highland mountains. I found whole valleys filled with water to generate energy, power lines stretching through a rugged mountainous landscape, pipelines using the slopes for gravity, mines, quarries and villages that had once existed leaving their traces.

In the south-west I found vast regions of man-altered landscapes cut into the ancient rocks and lakes that are dammed. At the end of the road, the Gordon Dam, a massive concave shaped concrete wall stretching over an enormous gorge, blocking the water on one side leaving the other side like a steep open cut. Along the rock walls are buildings, tunnels and concrete blocks that once had a purpose but are now mere remnants of the time when the dam was built. There are stories in these walls. The stories are inherent in the land and its people. Landscape is cultural. It speaks of our dwelling on the land. It also speaks of our history on the land. The land forms us and we form the land. The imprints on the landscape, which result from our human occupation, leave me with a sense of wonder — what it is or what it has become.

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