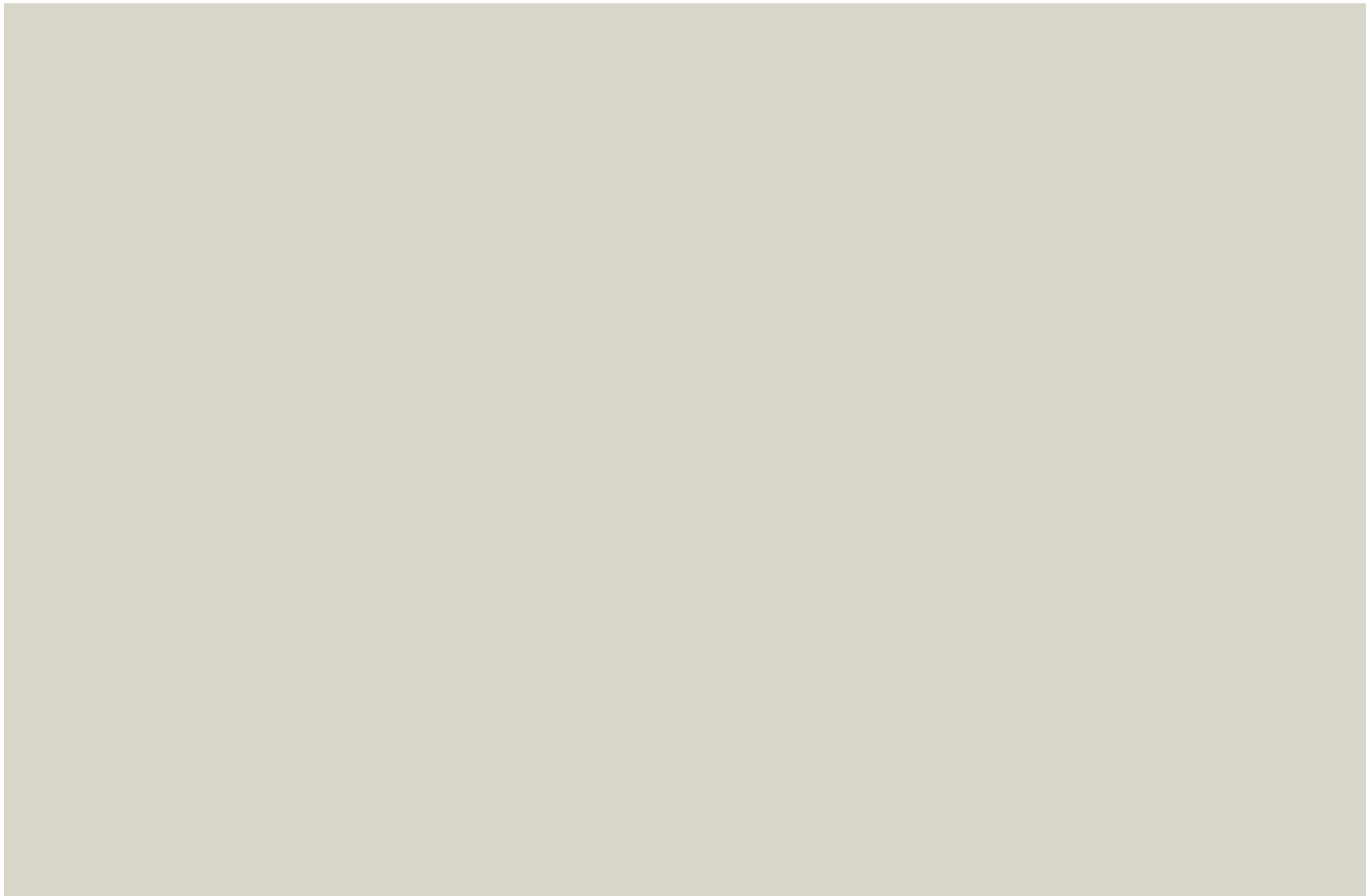


an exhibition of ink on paper works by

Carol Archer

**Drawing Breath**  
*through branches* **Desenhar. Respirar.**

*Por entre árvores.*



Drawing Breath

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**Carol Archer**

Gallery of Modern Art Pintor Fernando de Azevedo  
National Society of Fine Arts (SNBA), Lisbon.

5 June – 14 July, 2017

Monday to Friday 12 noon – 7 pm

Saturday 2 pm – 8 pm



# Drawing Breath

*through branches*

## Desenhar. Respirar.

*Por entre árvores.*

by  
Carol Archer

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Special thanks to Bernardo Silva Pinto for initiating and organising this exhibition.

Catalogue of an Exhibition of Ink Drawings held at  
Gallery of Modern Art Pintor Fernando de Azevedo,  
National Society of Fine Arts (SNBA), Lisbon.  
5 June – 14 July, 2017.

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## Drawing Breath - an introduction *Sheri Wills*



Carol Archer, *Drawing Breath*, 2016.  
Ink on watercolour paper, 21 x 14.8 cm.  
Installation of eighteen drawings, 75 x 122 cm.

Carol Archer's ink drawings perform an act of translation. An interpreter of place, Archer absorbs the physical qualities of her surroundings and filters them through her interior world, before reinterpreting the experience in her drawings. She draws the place into herself, as one would a breath, before drawing it with a brush. In this way, Archer collapses some of the gaps between places, people, and things in her life – and for the viewer, as well. These exquisite drawings are modest in scale (21 x 14.8 cm) and range from detailed renderings to loosely gestural abstractions. They embody a quiet and profound authority that is acquired through the repetition of ordinary activities, deeply considered.

During a series of artist residencies in rural locations throughout Europe in 2015 and 2016, Archer developed a daily practice of walking, while taking pictures of the landscape. The trees are ostensibly the subject matter, but her focus is on light and shadow and the density of patterns in the natural world. She then makes her drawings back in the studio, referencing the photographs and using Chinese ink and brushes on heavy watercolor paper.

The spiritual connotation of engaging in a daily practice, seeking out the transcendent potential of the everyday, is an aspect of this work that runs throughout Archer's practice. Her series *Time with the Sky* (2009-10) is a group of charcoal and watercolor drawings that look at the ever-changing sky, as framed by tree branches. She depicts the sky as a portal to a larger realm, as seen from one particular vantage point. Archer's work blurs distinctions between personal and universal, between large and small, and between absence and presence.

Archer has been living in Hong Kong and Macao for most of her adult life, and she studied Japanese ink painting and woodblock printing for several years in Kyoto.



*Time with the Sky* series (2009-10).  
Charcoal, pastel, watercolour on paper, 56 x 76 cm.

She has a deep understanding and respect for Asian art and culture, while she is equally steeped in the Western genres of watercolor and landscape painting. In Archer's work these divergent traditions intertwine and influence her approach to materials, process, and subject matter in effects that are apparent, both formally and conceptually. Her palette is limited to shades of grey, the format is small, her brushwork loose and assured. In many of the compositions, the unmarked paper is as powerful a part of the composition as the inked areas. In other instances the shadows are more prominent than the things that cast them. These are attributes often associated with Asian art traditions. Yet in this work there is such a palpable sense of her hand and eye — of the individual — that one senses Archer must also be in the room with us, just outside of our field of view. She blends several traditions, both Eastern and Western, but the work is uniquely her own.

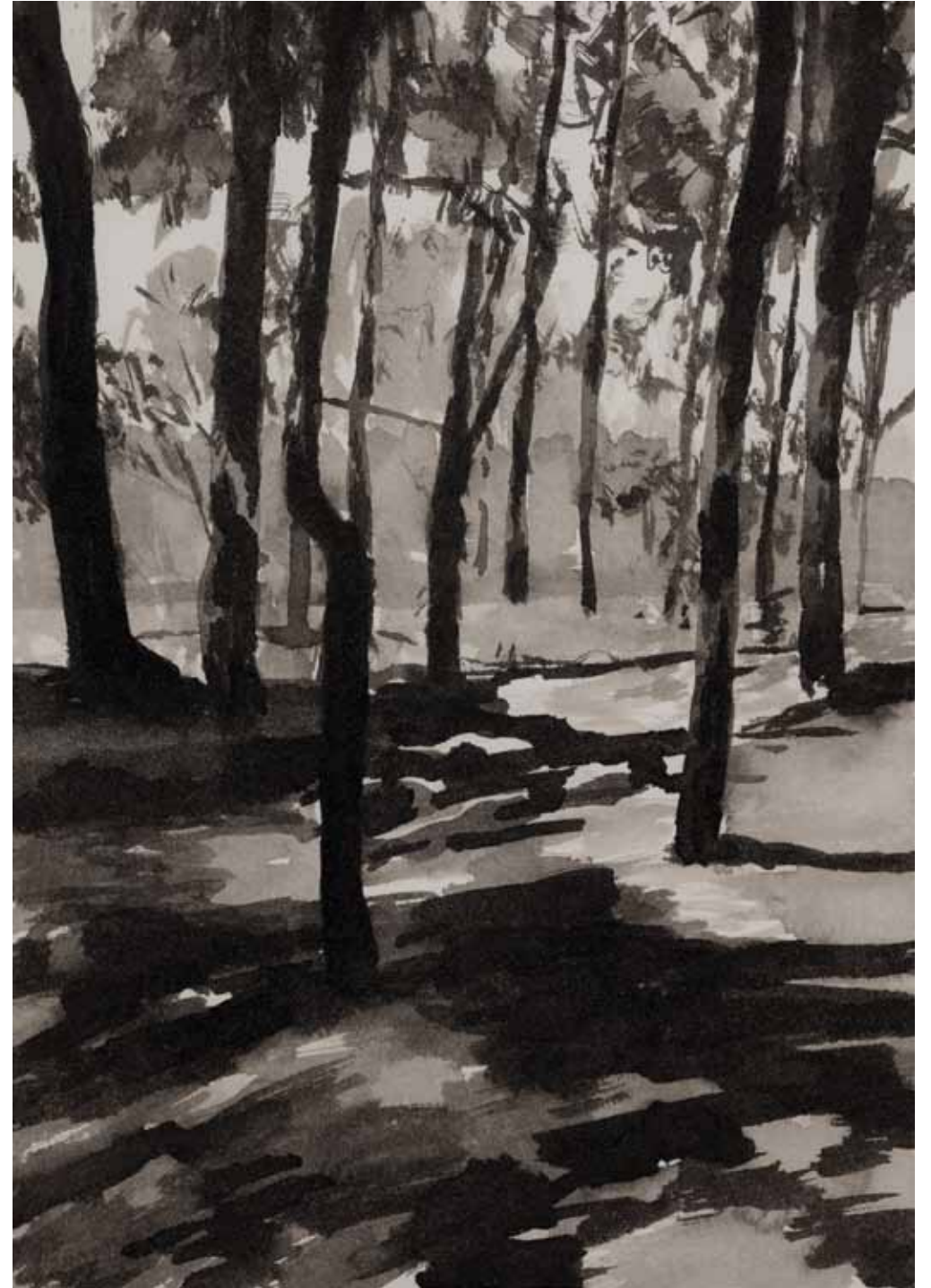
Having spent much of her time away from 'home,' Archer returned to her native Markwell, in New South Wales, this year. One can imagine it is a place that is at once familiar and strange to her; it is where she made most of the work in this show. While the idea of returning home often marks a sense of closure, if this work is any indication, for Archer 'home' is as full of mystery as an unknown location. *Drawing Breath* brings to mind Susan Mitchell's line (from the poem 'Havana Birth'): 'the world is wily, and doesn't want to be held for long.' With this work, Archer translates the experience of place through her individual perspective to render small slivers of the wily world.

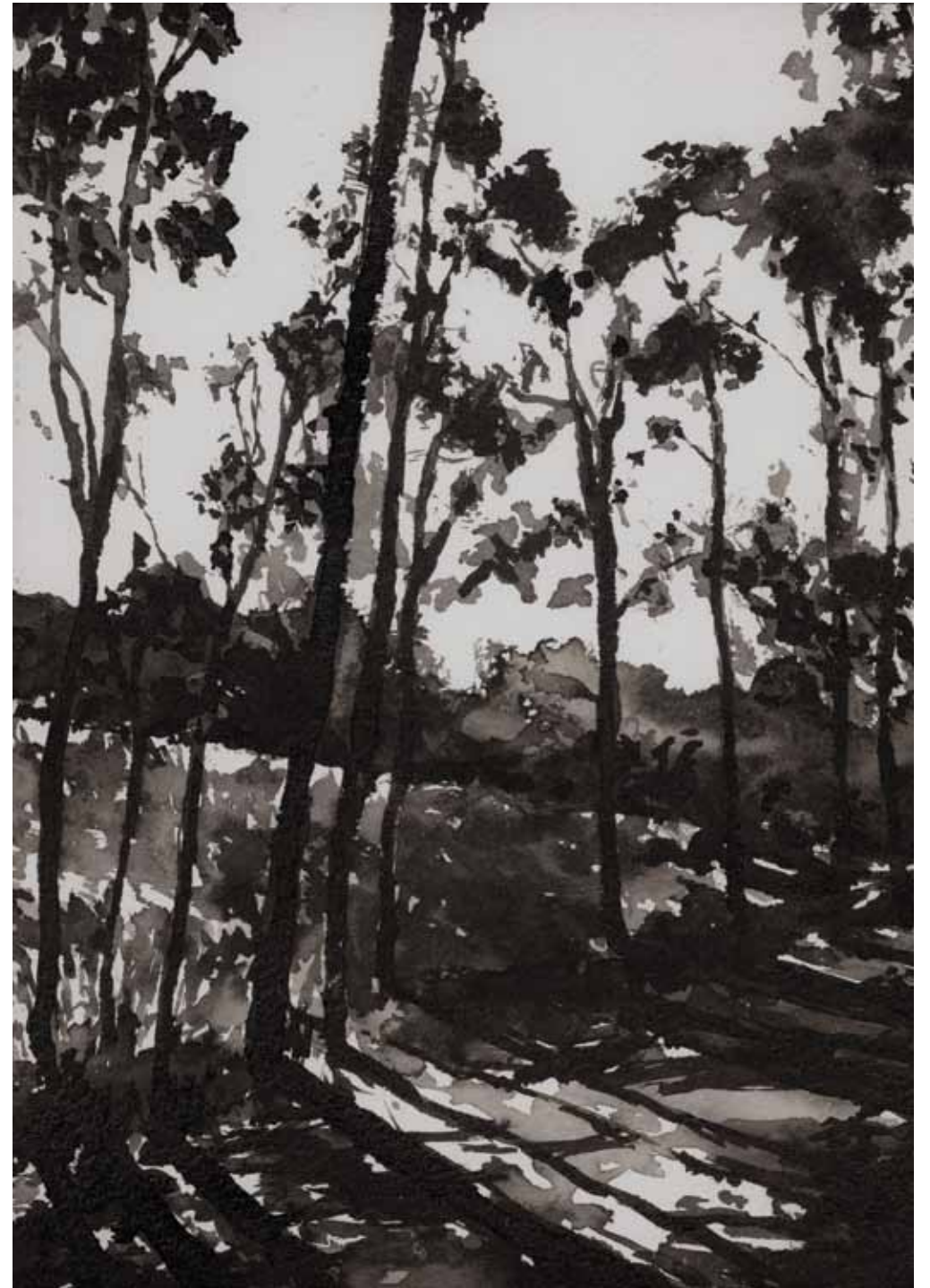


*Drawing Breath* #D13, 2016.  
Ink on watercolour paper, 14.8 x 21 cm.

*Sheri Wills* is an artist who works with film and video. She is a professor of Film/Animation/Video and the Dean of Fine Arts at the Rhode Island School of Design in the USA.



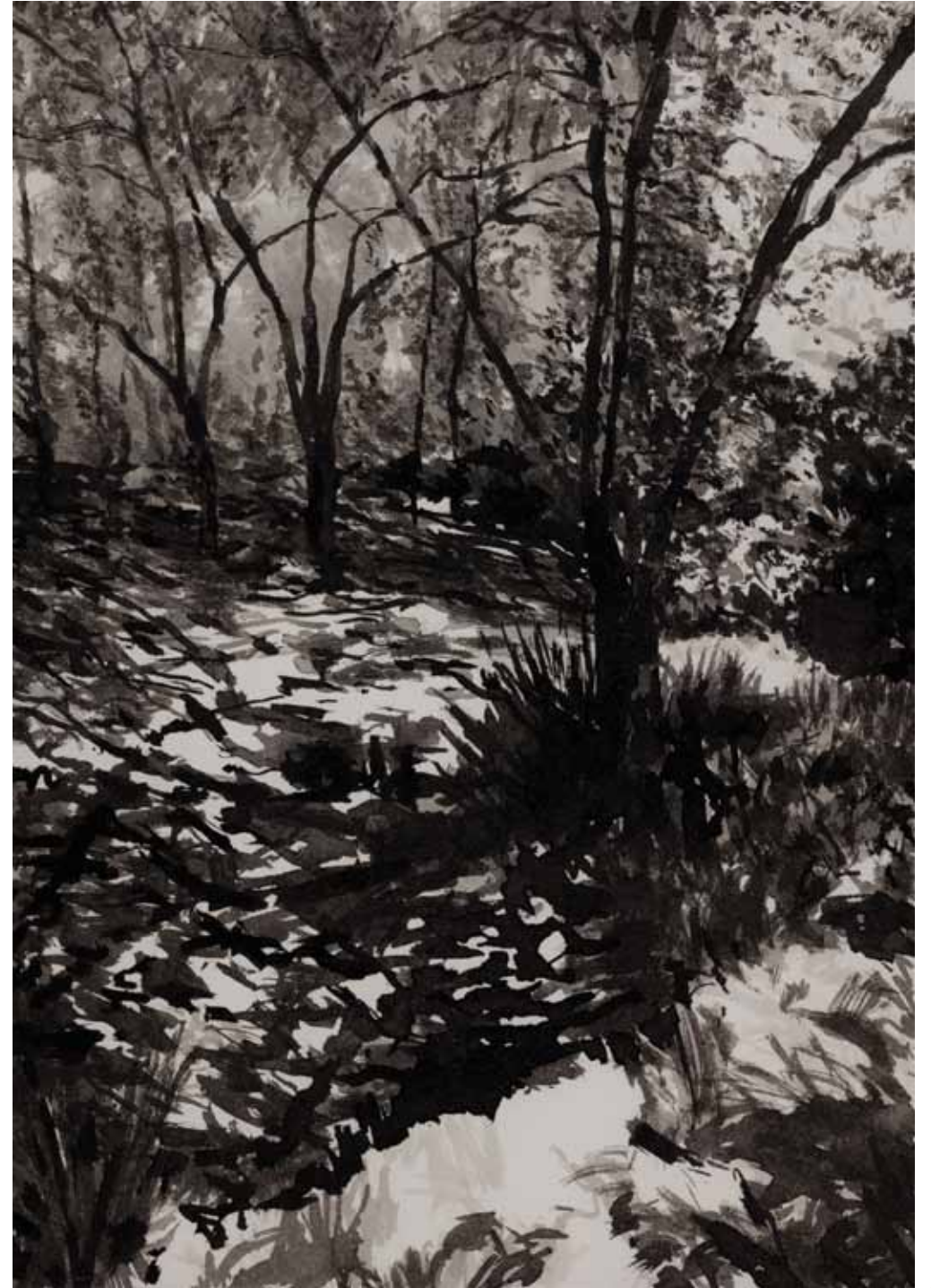








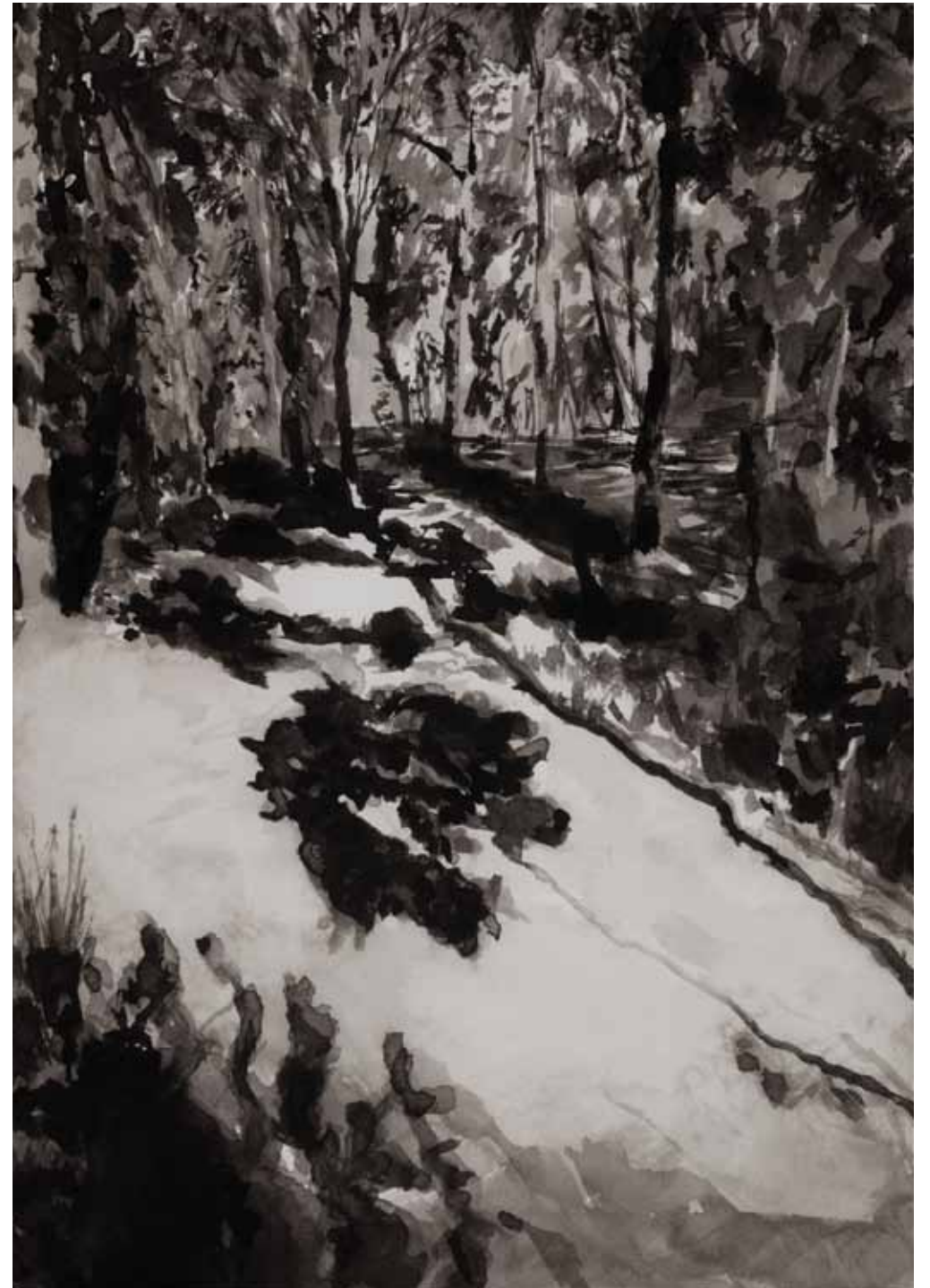




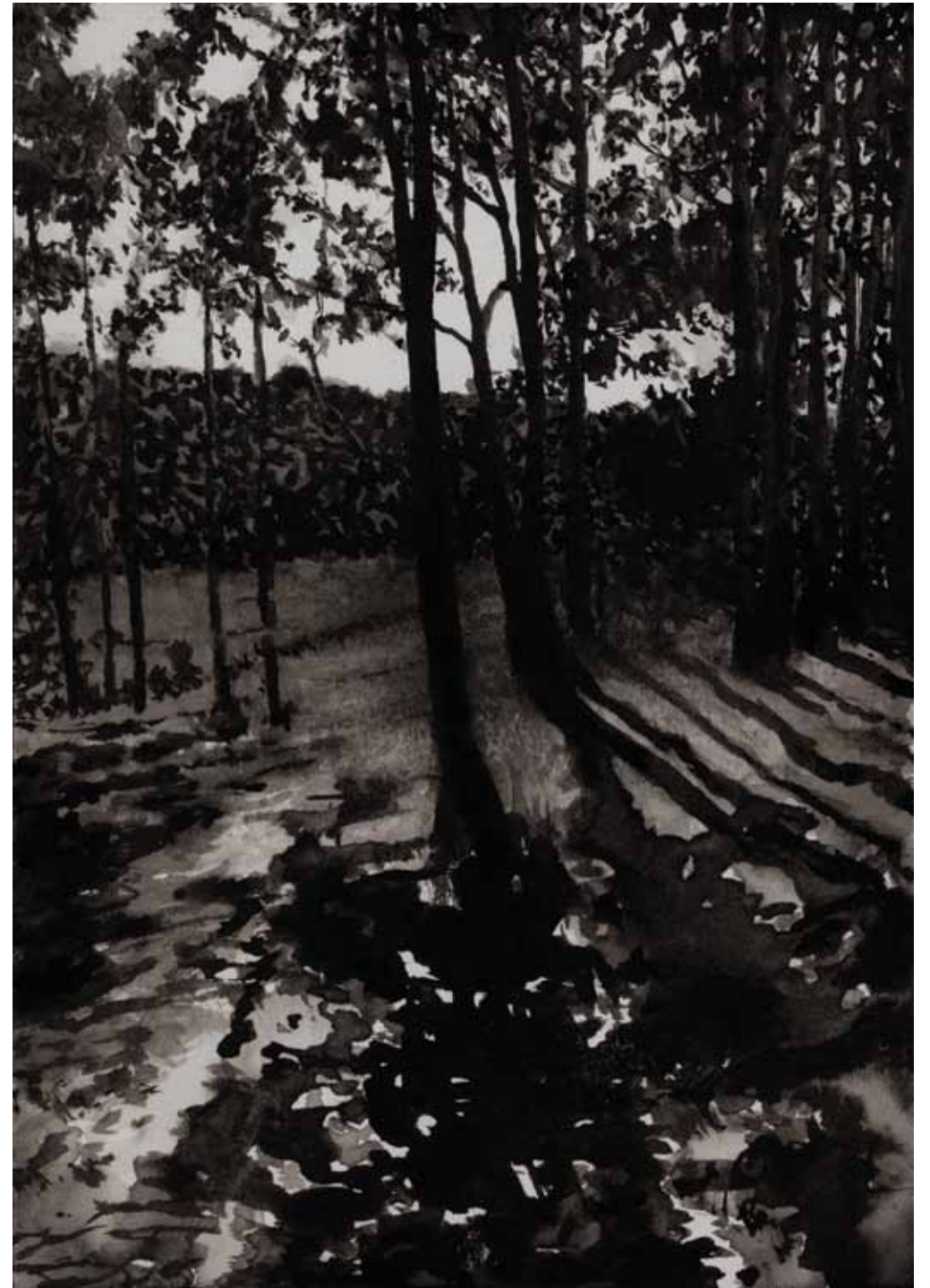


















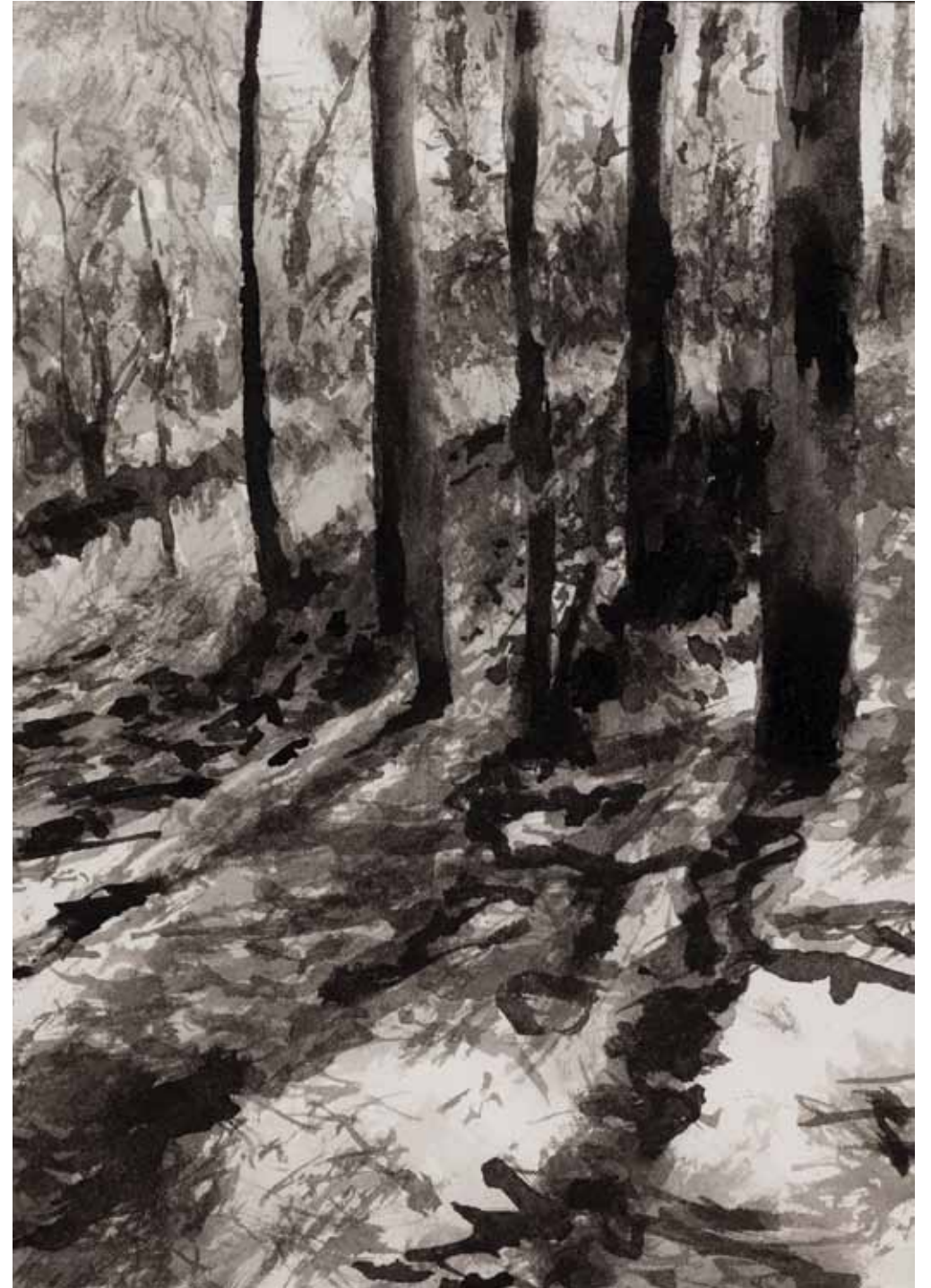
















## Selected exhibitions, Residencies, Grants

- 2016: *Tree Studies*, Gallery Estudio Nomada, Gothic Quarter, Barcelona, Spain.
- 2016: Awarded artist residency at Mas Els Igols, Penedes, Barcelona, Spain.
- 2016: Return to Sender, The Shop Gallery, Glebe, N.S.W., Australia.
- 2015: Awarded artist residency at Boubouki Cottage, Mesana, Cyprus.
- 2015: Awarded artist residency at Messen Kunstnarhuset, Ålvik, Norway.
- 2015: Awarded artist residency at A.R.N.A., Art and Nature, Harlösa, Sweden.
- 2014/15: *Postcards between Friends: collaborative drawing and creativity pedagogy*, 友愛明信片：協同繪畫與創意教學法, K11 Showcases, Tsimshatsui; Lingnan University Fong Sum Wood Library, Hong Kong.
- 2014: Awarded artist residency at Messen Kunstnarhuset, Ålvik, Norway.
- 2014: Cards Between, Galleri Rostrum, Malmö, Sweden.
- 2010: *Time with the Sky* 與天度日, Cattle Depot Artist Village, Hong Kong. Supported by Hong Kong Arts Development Council project grant.
- 2010: *Out of Thin Air: collaborative and solo works* 憑空而來一個人及合作畫展, Lingnan University, Hong Kong and Sun Yat Sen University, Guangzhou, China.
- 2009: Awarded artist residency, Bundanon Trust, Bundanon, N.S.W., Australia.
- 2009: *Near and Far and Mostly Macao*, University of Macau Library Gallery, Macao.
- 2008: Reciprocal Interference, Podspace, Newcastle, N.S.W., Australia.
- 2008: 23rd *Asia International Art Exhibition*, Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, Guangzhou University Town, Panyu District, Guangzhou, China.

- 2007: *Knot, Touch, Trace. Nó, Tacto, Traço. 結、觸、跡*, Creative Macau, Macao Cultural Centre, Macao.
- 2006: *Work of Macao Hands*, University Gallery, Library, University of Macau, Macao.
- 2001: *Sleep to Dream/ Shui Yi Meng*, Montblanc and Nokia Galleries, Fringe Club, Hong Kong. Supported by Hong Kong Arts Development Council project grant.
- 2000: *Tai Mo Shan/ Big Hat Mountain*, Montblanc Gallery, Fringe Club, Central, Hong Kong. Supported by Hong Kong Arts Development Council project grant.

Carol Archer's website: [www.carolarcher.com](http://www.carolarcher.com)

Contact: [cararcher@gmail.com](mailto:cararcher@gmail.com)



Carol Archer is an Australian artist and scholar who has taught for many years in East Asia. Her solo and collaborative works have been exhibited in Australia, Macao, Hong Kong, China, Japan, Sweden, Norway, Spain and Italy. Archer returned to Australia in early 2016 after a series of European art residencies. To read more about her work visit: [www.carolarcher.com](http://www.carolarcher.com)

The work in *Drawing Breath: through branches* originates from a series of artist residencies – in Sweden, Norway, Cyprus and Spain – each focussed on the depiction of trees in rural locations. The artistic research undertaken during these residencies marks the start of a new phase in an ongoing artistic engagement that began with Archer's *Time with the Sky* (2010) series. Most of the works in the *Drawing Breath* exhibition were completed in Australia in 2016 and refer to the trees encountered on daily walks around Archer's two-hectare home on the mid-north coast of New South Wales. The materials used in the *Drawing Breath* works are simple – ink on watercolour paper. The separate works that are chronologically arranged into large grids on the gallery walls are each 15 by 21 cm. Together they present a sustained and multi-faceted meditation on specific arboreal environments.

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