



LISMORE
REGIONAL
GALLERY

STUDENT WORKSHEET

SECONDARY

Shelagh Morgan

Herbarium Vivum- A RICH CONFUSION

20 July- 25 August 2013 Galleries 1 & 2



Plants

Beauty

Weeds

“ Ever notice that?
Weeds are generally
greener than grass.”

Dr Murray Patterson



All About The Artist

Shelagh Morgan was born in 1955, Malawi (formerly Nyasaland) Africa. She came to Australia in 1972 and moved to the Northern Rivers New South Wales in 1982. Shelagh studied printmaking at Southern Cross University and completed a PHD, 'Unpacking my library – stories of how we have understood the world', in 2000.

Shelagh is a mixed media artist who uses drawing, printmaking, painting, collage, cut outs, photography, digital print and video to create her artworks. Her work is included in state and regional collections including the National Gallery of Australia, The Queensland Art Gallery and the Queensland State Library, Brisbane, as well as many private collections.

Shelagh's artwork is about nature, the environment and the effect of different plants on the landscape. She has made artworks about the weeds growing around her home at Eureka, in the Northern Rivers of New South Wales.

Shelagh Morgan's artwork investigates the beauty and peril of plants in our environment and explores how we feel about weeds. Weeds can take over ecosystems and change them dramatically but they can also be very beautiful.

What is a Herbarium?

It is a collection of dried plants especially one in which the plants have been mounted, systematically classified, and labeled for use in scientific studies. The first herbarium was established in Kassel, Germany in 1569.

Shelagh Morgan has used the model of a Herbarium to collect and record the weeds on her property.

Her process for creating her artworks began with these following rules ' A) Each plant must be found by me growing within the fence of the land that I live on. B) Each plant must in the first instance be documented with a water colour sketch that is as accurate as possible in terms of form and native colour.' Shelagh Morgan, 2013.

As she collected and researched each weed her artwork grew and grew into the collection of mixed media artworks that make up her exhibition.

Weedy Themes

The Artist Shelagh Morgan is asking 'You' to think about:

What is a weed?

Native plants and introduced plants.

Where have these introduced plants come from?

How do different plants change our ecosystem?

How has the history of introduced plants affected the Australian landscape?

Can our ecosystem ever be returned to its natural state?

The ways we use plants to make our homes and gardens look beautiful.





Some of the themes in in the artwork in Shelaghs Morgans exhibition

Herbarium Vivium- A Rich Confusion are :

The Environment

Collecting

Scientific Classification
&
Display.

Introduced
Plants

Botanical Drawings

Native Australian Plants

The Journey of Plants

Weeds

Plants

Decoration

Ecosystems

Home

Weeds

Plants grow all around us some of them are native to Australia and some of them have come from overseas. Introduced in many different ways, from seeds people have imported to grow a particular flower, to a seed that might have been hiding in the wool of a sheep when it came to Australia on the First Fleet ship in 1788. Introduced plants can sometimes grow out of control and take over areas of land, like the noxious weed Lantana in the Northern Rivers, NSW. Or the Cats Claw Vine often called the Transformer plant as it can totally transform land by covering it with its vine tendrils, stealing nutrients, land and sunshine from pre-existing plants. When Plants become out of control and threaten our natural ecosystems or overtake our gardens we call them weeds. **A weed can be defined as a wild plant growing where it is not wanted and in competition with cultivated plants and native plant species.**

Some Questions to think about?

Do you have a favourite plant or flower? What is it?

Is it a native Australian (Indigenous) plant or has it come from somewhere else?

Do you have a Garden where you live? Yes No

What kind of plants grow in your garden?

Are there weeds in your garden? Yes No

What kind of plants do you think might have grown there before?



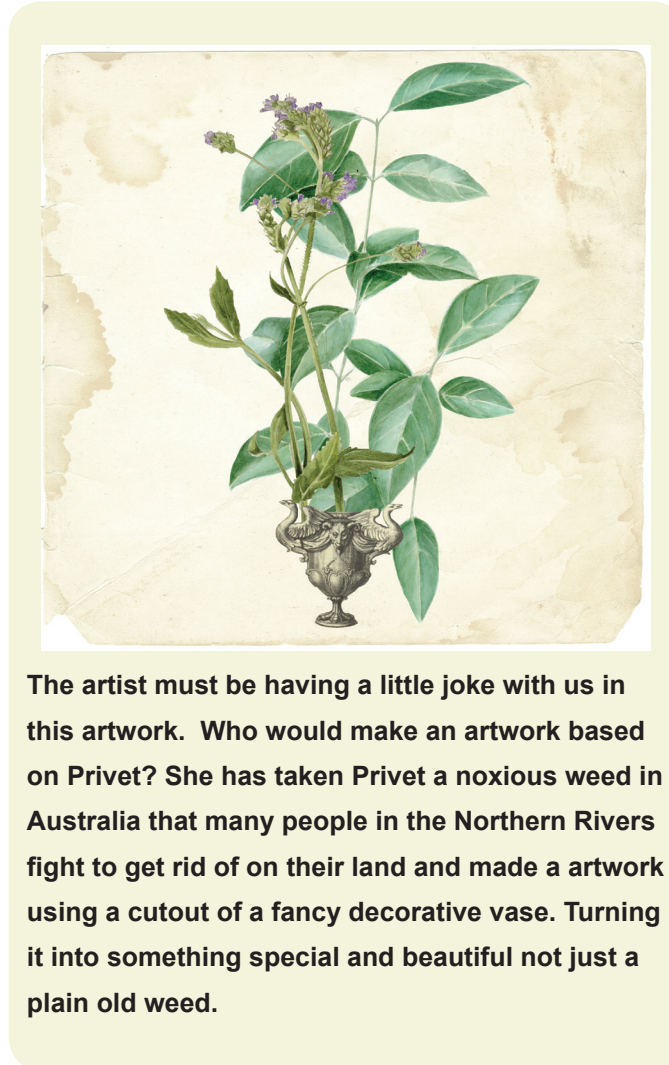
Can Weeds Be Beautiful?

The Artist Shelagh Morgan said her artworks in Hebarium Vivuim started as a little bit of a joke. She thought it would be funny to make delicate botanical watercolours and research the ordinary weeds around her property. Shelagh has made drawings, prints, collages, sculptures and decorative objects inspired by the weeds. She has turned simple weeds into images of beauty, decoration and scientific value. She has made the simple weed into the crowning glory of her artwork.

Nature and Decoration in our Homes

People often decorate their houses using flowers in vases, or have cushions, furniture and crockery with printed pictures of plants or flowers. People love to bring the beauty of nature into their houses to create a beautiful home.

In the **Parlour Room** of Shelagh Morgans exhibition, Shelagh has created a sitting room with furniture, cushions and objects you can find in the home. There are tea cups and different ornaments, on these objects you can see she has printed, drawn, collaged and painted different weeds that grow around her home. She is being humorous by making the weeds that we would usually over look or weed out of our gardens the important subject matter of her artwork. She has given them a second life as beautiful decoration on the domestic household objects and scientific botanical artefacts in her exhibition.



The artist must be having a little joke with us in this artwork. Who would make an artwork based on Privet? She has taken Privet a noxious weed in Australia that many people in the Northern Rivers fight to get rid of on their land and made a artwork using a cutout of a fancy decorative vase. Turning it into something special and beautiful not just a plain old weed.

Do you have things in your home that are decorated with flowers or patterns of different plants?

Yes No

What are they?

What kind of flowers or plants are they?

What country do they originate from?



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An Artist who has inspired Shelagh Morgan



Margaret Preston (1875–1963) is one of Australia's most celebrated artists, and is Australia's most famous woman artist. Her colourful paintings, prints and drawings have delighted the Australian public since the 1920s. Margaret Preston loved the Australian bush and its many beautiful plants. She often created artworks that used Australian Flora (plants) as its subject matter. And was a strong supporter of Australian art and artists at a time when many people thought of Europe as the only place Australia should look to for art and culture.

Compare and Contrast
these different works of art by
Margaret Preston and Shelagh Morgan.



*Situate - In conversation with Margaret Preston-
revision one & two*

Shelagh Morgan borrowed from Margaret Preston's print *Mixed Native Flowers*, when she made the artworks *Revision I and Revision II*. She is using woodcut printing techniques like Margaret Preston, however Shelagh has added noxious vines to the the first image and collaged pressed leaves to the second one and left the native flowers uncoloured as though the vines are somehow removing or strangling the colour from the flowers.



Activity

Start your own Herbarium or make artworks using pressed plant material

How to Press Your Own Plants

Just follow the easy instructions below.

Materials Needed:

- *Your favorite flowers or plant picked and ready to press.
- *A large phone book or dictionary.
- *A sheet of newspaper.
- *More books or heavy objects - about 10 Kilograms worth.

Instructions:

Step 1. After picking your favourite flowers and foliage, put them in the refrigerator or an ice chest to keep them from wilting while you prepare your pressing materials.

Step 2. Place the flowers or foliage on the inside fold of the sheet of newspaper. Make sure there is no overlapping of leaves, petals, stems, etc. and fold the top half of the newspaper sheet down over the flowers.

Step 3. Open the dictionary or phone book and place the newspaper in the middle at about letter M.

Step 4. Close the dictionary and place the other books or heavy objects on top.

The drying process takes about 3 days. Once the flowers are pressed and dry you can use them, in arrangements, art work, as gifts, to make a collection of different plant species for a science project, or whatever you like.





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Find a plant you consider a weed, identify it and then choose from the following activities below.

1. Make a pressing of the plant you find. Use it to create an artwork within the frame or in your art diary.
2. Draw or paint a detailed picture of the weed you find.
3. Design a household object with decorative patterns inspired by a plant you find around your school or home.



Key Words

Painting: an artwork that uses paint or ink to make an image. Usually paint is applied with a paint brush but sometimes people use their hands, sticks, spray cans or other tools to apply the paint.

Print: a form of visual art in which a mark or impression is made in or on a surface by using pressure. Artists put ink onto the surface of a piece of wood, lino or metal etching plate that has been scratched or cut into, then press onto paper to make a print. We can also make prints with our hands or our feet they are called handprints or footprints.

Smoke Print: This is a printmaking technique that Shelagh Morgan uses to make her artworks. This is how they are made. Take a sheet of ordinary paper and grease it very well with butter or lard. Then hold this over a candle grease side down so that the flame touches the paper-move it about quickly to keep the paper from burning until it is everywhere smoked black. Lay this black paper on a flat surface, black side up, and the leaf on it. (Usually the underside of the leaf prints better than the upper)cover with a clean sheet of paper and press or rub all over this with the finger tips till every part of the leaf has been pressed against the black paper. Then lift the leaf and lay it, black side down, on a clean white sheet of paper with another piece of paper on top. Hold it steady with one hand and press or rub all over with the finger tips as before. Lift the leaf up by the stem and you have a beautiful print of the leaf.

Drawing: a form of visual art that uses of any number of drawing instruments to make marks on a surface such as paper. Tools you could use to draw include graphite, pencils, pens, charcoal, chalk and pastels.

Sculpture: a three-dimensional work of art made by carving, modelling, casting, building or constructing with various materials.

Mixed Media: Refers to an artwork in which more than one medium has been employed. Such as an artwork that combines collage and drawing and cutouts like shelagh Morgan uses in her artworks.

Collage: A picture with pieces stuck on surface: a picture made by sticking cloth, pieces of paper, photographs, and other objects onto a surface.

Weed: is a wild plant growing where it is not wanted and in competition with cultivated plants and native plant species.

Noxious Weed: is a term used for especially difficult to manage weeds. These typically are invasive species that may be difficult to control, or may be health hazard to humans or stock animals or wildlife, or may damage the environment.



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STUDENT WORKSHEET SECONDARY

notes & scribbles & artworks



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STUDENT WORKSHEET

SECONDARY

Notes For Teachers

Welcome to Lismore Regional Gallery

We are committed to supporting students and educators to further enhance their learning skills in critical thinking, self-expression and applied knowledge whilst embracing new ideas relating to arts and culture. We want to build and nurture a love of arts and culture in our community and foster an educational environment that seeks to explore the joy of life-long learning through art.

These education resources have been created for Shelagh Morgan's exhibition **Herbarium Vivum- A Rich Confusion** at Lismore Regional Gallery, July/August 2013. Created and Compiled by Learning Officer: Claudie Frock and Curator: Kezia Geddes and volunteers of the Lismore Regional Gallery. All images of Shelagh Morgans artworks are property of artist Shelagh Morgan, Copyright 2013.

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Lismore Regional Gallery website has an archive of past and current exhibitions and educational resources associated with the exhibitions, that can be accessed to support your students educational needs.

Here is a link to our online Image Archive:

http://www.lismoregallery.org/cp_themes/default/4col.asp?c=497

Here is a link to our online Education Resources Archive:

http://www.lismoregallery.org/cp_themes/default/page.asp?p=DOC-ZGZ-08-72-54

Thank you for visiting Lismore Regional Gallery.