

*JOURNEYS TO CYPRUS*  
ARTISTS AT THE PAPHOS THEATRE EXCAVATION  
1995-2025  
Nicosia and Paphos



Kay Lawrence. Detail of woven tapestry *Aphrodite's Gold*. Wool dyed with crown daisy growing on the Paphos Theatre site.



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SYDNEY



Australian High Commission  
Cyprus

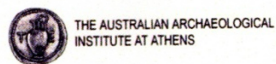
---

Published in April 2025 for the exhibition:  
Journeys to Cyprus: Artists at the Paphos Theatre Excavation

Centre of Visual Arts & Research (CVAR), Nicosia  
29 April 2025 – 13 May 2025

Published by the Australian High Commission to Cyprus.

Supported by:



## **Prologue from Australian High Commissioner H.E. Fiona McKergow**

Kalimera, welcome!

As Australian High Commissioner in Cyprus I am often asked about the difference between the Eastern Mediterranean island of Cyprus and the great southern island continent of Australia. More often than not my response ends up focusing on the similarities between the two islands, and the strong and historical connections that exist between Cyprus and Australia. Both islands have a wealth of history and ancient artefacts, have a history of inhabitants experiencing displacement and disconnection, and have a strong history of migration and new arrivals.

It often surprises people to know that Australia has for over 100 years welcomed Cypriot migration and for thirty years, Cyprus has hosted an enduring presence of Australian archaeologists excavating on Cyprus, such as at the ancient Paphos Theatre at Fabrika Hill in Kato (upper) Paphos.

So, in 2023 when the Australia High Commission was reflecting on some key milestones – 50 years of diplomatic relations, and over 100 years of migration – it was a natural inclination to focus on Sydney University’s Hellenistic-Roman excavation project in Paphos which begun in 1995 and continues a longstanding involvement of Australians scholars – and artists – in the island’s remarkable history.

This art exhibition, *Journeys to Cyprus: artists at the Paphos theatre excavation*, is the culmination of many months of creative input and artistic expression spent in the dusty warmth of the excavation site. It is a beautiful exhibition showcasing different mediums and interpretations of the history that exists in one small corner of Cyprus, and I am delighted we are able to showcase these pieces in Cyprus in 2025 as part of the High Commission’s cultural diplomacy program.

While we had hoped to exhibit this collection in late 2023, global forces and regional dynamics in the Eastern Mediterranean dictated otherwise. In some ways, it is the same historical regional dynamics and geopolitical influences which provide for the rich archaeological finds found not only at the Paphos Theatre excavations, but across the whole of Cyprus.

This exhibition could not have occurred without the strong support received from the Director of the Paphos Theatre excavation Dr Craig Barker, the curator Professor Diana Wood Conroy, and all the talented artists whose creations form this body of work. Their patience and commitment to bring this exhibition to Cyprus has been unwavering. I would like to thank and acknowledge them all for their input and continued enthusiasm. I also wish to express our sincere gratitude to the Republic of Cyprus’ Department of Antiquities for their continued support of Australian archaeologists in Cyprus.

I hope you enjoy the exhibition as much as I have.

H.E. Fiona McKergow  
Australian High Commissioner  
Nicosia

## Foreword by the Director of the Paphos Theatre Excavation, Cyprus

After a long break from the field because of Covid travel restrictions, it was inconceivable that the return of Australian archaeologists to Paphos in April 2023 would take place without artists accompanying the project. The artist's eye working in conjunction with the archaeologist's is now one of the hallmarks of this particular project. The works created by the artists in the lead up to and during the 2023 field season reflected in *Journey to Cyprus* provide a new way of looking at an ancient past, beyond study of text, or study of fragmentary artefact.

Cyprus has a long and complex history and a unique tradition of dynamic engagement with materials, and you will see those complexities and dynamism threaded through the works in this catalogue; uniting two ancient lands and the old with the new.

Dr Craig Barker 2025  
Director of the Paphos Excavation



The Hellenistic Roman theatre at Paphos, Cyprus. Photo Guy Hazell 2017

### From the curator

Artists have been essential as topographers and recorders of the site since the beginning of systematic archaeology in the nineteenth century. When the excavation of the Paphos theatre began in 1995, Professor Richard Green, the founding director, wanted artists to be part of the project from very start. He saw that artists provided an imaginative dimension, another way of reflecting on the materials and processes of the past that might dovetail with the ardour and curiosity of archaeologists, and engage wide audiences in the present. Dr Craig Barker has enthusiastically continued the inclusion of artists in the team.

Australian artists coming from the southern hemisphere, from a country inhabited by First Nations people of vast antiquity, have a particular viewpoint. As part of a European emigrant diaspora, the Australian team, invited by the Department of Antiquities in Cyprus, come to the island to reach back into the origins of cities, law and language, that still underpin our contemporary democracy. The idea of Country as an active force of being in a place has been learned from the cultures of Indigenous Australians, so that the theatre becomes an almost living entity, seeming to welcome our presence on the site as we return year after year. We find new conjunctions of meaning in its stony arc embedded in the hill of Fabrika as we grow older and Cyprus itself changes.

The artists in 2023 absorbed the ruined architecture of the theatre beside the ancient road, and came on site every day, watching the archaeologists digging, sifting and recording in all weathers, or spreading finds out on sorting mats for analysis overlooked by olive, terebinth and carob trees. The participants in *Journeys to Cyprus* tell fervent stories of their work and their relationship with the Paphos theatre and Cyprus. The word

“theatre” is derived from a Greek word “to see”; it is a place for seeing in all its forms, encompassing art, performance and archaeology.

Professor Diana Wood Conroy, 2025

ANGELA BRENNAN  
*Journeys to Cyprus 2025*



*Paphos Theatre 11*, 2023. Oil on canvas board.  
20.5 x 25cm.



*Poppy*, 2023. Oil on canvas board. 20.5 x 25cm.

### Artist statement

My suite of nine oil on canvas board paintings is inspired by places visited on my University of Sydney Archaeology artist residency in Cyprus. These include the Paphos Archaeological Theatre site, the mosaic floors of the excavated houses in the Archaeology Park, and Petra tou Romiou (Aphrodite’s beach, where I made a short film with collaborative contributions from artist friends, including fellow Cyprus artists-in-residence, Diana Wood Conroy and Madeleine Kelly). Returning to the Theatre site after six years or so, what struck me was the panoramic curve of stone, arranged across the hill, and the red poppies a-burst all over the site. The fragile and ancient building fabric juxtaposed with the transient, seasonal flora is irresistible!

Certain sections of the mosaic floors at the House of Aion and the House of Dionysus, inspired three small figure paintings. The mosaics are remarkable because taken as individual units they appear still, but assembled side-by-side, through pattern and colour, into the figurative, they have vitality and movement that motivate my paintings.

I enjoyed re-visiting the re-furbished Paphos Archaeology Museum. I especially love Cypriot Geometric Bichrome ware, as well as Early Period terracotta vessels with feet, handles, spouts and white painted surfaces. These objects possess an animate quality; the cross-hatching and linear patterns span artistic eras and resonate for me in my abstract painting practice today.

### Artist Biography

Angela Brennan has worked as a professional artist for over 30 years and has exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Australia and internationally. She is represented by Niagara Galleries in Melbourne and The Commercial Sydney. Angela has had major solo exhibitions at the Monash University Museum of Art (MUMA), and the Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne. Her several international artist’s residencies, include being artist-in-residence at the University of Sydney Archaeological excavations in Cyprus. During this residency Angela made a short film incorporating works by several Australian artists in Cypriot settings. Her work is represented in major public and private collections throughout Australia and overseas. Angela holds a BA, Painting, RMIT, a BA, University of Melbourne, and a PhD, Visual Arts, Monash University.

## ROWAN CONROY

*Journeys to Cyprus 2025*



Rowan Conroy in the Paphos Theatre with drone, 2019. Video: *Fabrika: patterns of the Paphos theatre* produced and directed by Rowan Conroy, 2023-25.

### Artist statement

I first attended the Paphos theatre excavations in 1996 at the age of fourteen. I went on to attend the dig in 1997, 2001, 2002 & 2006. Being exposed to archaeology and Cyprus at an impressionable age has had a lasting and profound impact artistically and academically. In 1997 I worked with the site photographer, Bob Miller. I recall the guerrilla darkroom, constructed in a dilapidated farm building, leaky and mouldy. This was combined with the magical results of analogue photography – a fantastic memory to have and a formative experience. In later seasons of “the dig” I worked as an archaeological illustrator. Drawing gave me an intimate and meditative exposure to the material culture of the site. One season, when drawing an exquisite sherd of *terra sigillata* Roman ware, I discovered a perfectly preserved fingerprint of an ancient potter on the base of the fragment. This formed a memory that I have returned to many times. It was moving to see the only remnant of a human presence physically etched in an object, and to feel a sense of continuity with the ancient artists associated with the site. Looking back over two decades of my involvement in the Paphos theatre excavation I can see that it has had an indelible influence on my artistic practice. I continue to be interested in landscape history and the intersection of material culture and the built environment as a means of reading deeper patterns of use and occupation.

### Artist biography

Rowan Conroy first joined the Paphos theatre excavations in 1996. In 2012 he was awarded a PhD from the University of Sydney for his research into photography, re-photography and archaeology, called *Archaeologies of the Present: Rephotographing the William John Woodhouse Photographic Archive*. He has exhibited widely in Australia, China and Cyprus. As a freelance artist he has worked as an archaeological illustrator and photographer, which complemented his interest in urban and industrial sites of contemporary landscapes. In

2019 he made an extensive record of the Paphos theatre using drone technology, supported by an artist grant from Create NSW. His work is held in national collections: The Australia Council for the Arts, University of Wollongong Art Collection, Goulburn Regional Art Gallery and the Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly, as well as in many private collections in Australia.

**KORALY DIMITRIADIS**

*Journeys to Cyprus 2025*



Koraly iriades in the Paphos theatre, 2023.

*Yiayia mou (my grandmother)*, 2023. Poetic short film, performed, produced, written and directed by Koraly Dimitriadis. Cinematography by Ellpetha Tsivacos (Paphos) and Rosie G (Limassol). Music Brendan Bonsack. Poem from Koraly's poetry book, *Just Give Me The Pills*.

#### **Artist statement**

Observations: I remember when we filmed on site that there were these angry weeds that kept attaching and clawing onto my dress. The site itself seemed angry, harsh. According to what Dr Craig Barker told me, few people had performed on the site in a thousand years. The heat was bearing down on us and I felt it was a struggle to perform the poem, as if the site didn't want me to, and I wasn't sure if my performance was any good, but my cinematographer Ellpetha reassured me it was. I had to try harder than usual when we were making the film, as if I was fighting some kind of ancient element, and I wondered if it was the first time a feminist poem had echoed in the space. It was like patriarchy had a hold on the space and I was trying to break or scream through it. Initially we thought to only film at the theatre, but after we did, I felt that we also needed that juxtaposition with the cool and calm sea. Since so many Cypriot migrants had left for foreign lands via sea, it made sense.

#### **Artist biography**

Koraly Dimitriadis is an Australian-born poet, writer and performer who writes from the feminist standpoint of the complexities of being the daughter of Cypriot migrants. She is the author of the poetry books *Love and Fck Poems* (also translated into Greek), *Just Give Me The Pills*, *She's Not Normal*, and the short story collection *The Mother Must Die*. Koraly also makes films and theatre with her poetry. Koraly's fiction manuscript, *A Goodbye Never Said*, set in Melbourne and Cyprus, was awarded the UNESCO City of Literature residency in Krakow. Her opinion articles/personal essays have been published widely, including international publications in *The Washington Post* and *The Today Show*. Koraly is the digital writer-in-residence for the Paphos Theatre Dig. Fascinated by the idea that the ancient theatre had seen few performances in over 1000 years, Koraly wanted to echo her grandmother's story in the space, mark poetry in the stone, of her grandmother having to endure sending her daughters to foreign lands to be married not knowing if she will ever see them again. Collaborating with her daughter and with Cypriot-American filmmaker Ellpetha Tsivacos, the poem *Yiayia Mou (my grandmother)* depicts the struggle of three generations of women and how their lives were affected by patriarchy and marriage. *Yiayia mou* was a finalist at the Victorian Multicultural Film Festival, received a bronze medal in scriptwriting (poetry) at WRPN Women's International Film Festival, and was shortlisted for

the Woollahra Digital Literary awards. It was screened on Australian and Cypriot television and various international film festivals.

AGNIESZKA GOLDA

*Journeys to Cyprus 2025*



*For all that is*. Three works, 2023. Merino wool, silk, cotton with knitting, crochet and felt techniques. 54cm x 120cm x 5cm.

#### **Artist statement**

A fossilised marine creature discovered in the Paphos theatre's ancient well brings attention to the extraordinary resident within the hidden depths of the Mediterranean seabed – the *Pinna Nobilis*, known as the noble pen shell or fan mussel. This giant marine bivalve plays a vital ecological role, acting as a water filter enhancing sea clarity and offering refuge to countless benthic species. Within its imposing, 1.2-meter-long hinged shell lies a treasure – sea silk. *Pinna Nobilis*, a skilled thread-maker, uses its delicate byssus fibres to anchor itself to the seabed. Once hailed as more precious than gold, these fibres transformed into a golden hue. The resulting cloth surpasses silk in lightness and warmth. Sea silk textiles reflect intricate human and non-human symbiotic relationships, serving as a reminder of our capacity for both destruction and conservation. Today, *Pinna Nobilis* is listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List. 'For All That Is' responds to the archaeological discovery and the remarkable creature, emphasising its fragility, resilience, and the interconnectedness of all life. Together, art and archaeology have the power to foster a deeper connection and stewardship of the sea and its inhabitants.

#### **Artist Biography**

Dr Agnieszka Golda is an Associate Professor in Visual Arts at University of Wollongong. She is an artist-researcher who explores the intersection of art, feeling and place in ecological and socio-cultural contexts. Through image making, materiality and creative arts/science collaborations, her artworks contemplate the questions related to our symbiotic relationship with living creatures and non-living forms. Central to her work is the exploration of storytelling, sustainable materials, and 'slow making' for addressing climate action, migrant encounters, and self-care. She has exhibited in numerous solo, group and collaborative exhibitions in Australia and internationally. Golda's artworks draw from her field studies in Australia, Cyprus, Hong Kong, Japan and Poland, personal experiences of migration, as well as studies in anthropology, archaeology, ethnography, environmental studies, and cultural geography. Her work has been featured at the Museum of

Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney; Run Run Shaw Creative Media Centre, City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong; Museo Textil de Oaxaca, Mexico; and Art and Design Centre, Nagoya University of Arts, Japan. Golda completed a PhD (Creative Practice) at University of Wollongong; MVA (Research) at University of South Australia, and a BA (Textile Design) at RMIT University.

## PENNY HARRIS

### *Journeys to Cyprus 2025*



Left: *The Sherds* and *The Carpet Tablets* 2023, clay and underglaze, variable sizes up to 30 cm. Right: Dr. Harris on the sorting mats at the Paphos Theatre.

This collection responds to the fragments of pottery I observed when working on the sorting mats where all the ceramic finds are laid out. My work responds to the clay marks left by the potter on the clay body. These clay objects are a response to the fragments of traditional Cypriot pottery excavated from the theatre site. These traditional pots are still being produced in communities in Phini, Agios Demetrios and Kornos.



*The Carpet Tablets* 2023, detail, clay and oxides, variable sizes up to 25 cm across.

These works used a fragment of carpet collected, from the site adjacent to the excavation site, to make impressions in the clay and leave a trace. The work explores the value of the fragments of discarded objects given their context. The rubbish excavated on site was recorded, drawn and catalogued while the rubbish that sat outside the fence deemed insignificant.

#### **Artist statement**

On the 2023 season at the Paphos theatre site I spent my time between the pottery sorting mats and studying the metal small finds. As a metal caster and someone who also works with clay, I found it interesting to think about the potter artisans that made the work excavated from the theatre site and to consider Fabrika Hill as an industrial site during the Medieval period. When handling the many kinds of ceramic sherds from all areas of the site, in particular, I shared a material experience with the original artisan, enjoyed the ceramic fabric of the sherds, the weight and texture of the clay pieces, and considered the processes they would have used in manufacturing these domestic and architectural objects. It is such a privilege being able to handle this ancient material.

#### **Artist biography**

Dr Penny Harris has been a bronze sculptor using “lost wax” casting of found objects, underpinned by an interest in excavation fieldwork and research. Travelling to the Paphos theatre site in 2010 engendered evocative pieces cast from ephemeral objects. In the 2023 Paphos excavation, she examined the many different fabrics of clay sherds as they lay on the sorting mats waiting for identification. She is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Wollongong in Australia, exhibiting in Canada and Australia. Her work is held in national collections.

JANIS JEFFERIES

*Journeys to Cyprus 2025*



*Extinction is to Extinguish, 2023.* Collage with textile print (yellow sky bursts from Australia, 2013), on linen with photographic images of Paphos archaeological site, ceramic fragments, sea explosions, text of extinct species, drawn and rephotographed and printed on Japanese paper. Folded to unfold. 72 cm x 148 cm.

### Artist statement

Climate change archaeology combines the study of environmental conditions and archaeological information. Changing temperature is a threat to archaeological sites. More warmth increases evaporation, affecting artifacts and site stability. Dry sites face threats from wind and water erosion and even burning, which can ruin site context. Think of jet, a seemingly overlooked mineraloid, derived from decaying wood, considered a mourning stone and known to help grief and loneliness, guarding the bones of the dead. In the Middle Ages (UK) jet was used by fisherman’s wives to protect loved ones at sea. At the site of Agia Solomoni near the Paphos theatre, seven sleepers awake and on a traumatic night the sacred tree and strips of garments/handkerchiefs can be seen, left by those who suffer. One by one the fibres snap between the immense cold pressure of earth and then the last storm comes, the highest branches are driven back deep into the ground again. There is a vast upheaval of matter.

### Artist biography

Janis Jefferies is emeritus professor of Visual Arts, Goldsmiths, London. With a long-standing engagement in how fibre intersects with feminist practice and art-based textiles, Jefferies’s work considers issues of gender and identity subjectivity. For 22 years she was a research collaborator with Barbara Layne at Concordia University in Montreal on several projects, focusing on digital and haptic technologies and publications culminating in *The Enchantment of Textiles* (Beijing and Madrid 2019). Recent publications include *Philosophy of Weaving (as a practice / techne and/or as political metaphor)* (2017) and “Textiles and Politics. Histories, tendencies, debates” in *Textile Textures. Multithreaded Narratives* (2024). Her work, ‘Double Labia’ (1979-1980) was shown in *Women in Revolt! Art, Activism, and the Women’s Movement in the UK, 1970-1990*, Tate Britain, National Galleries Scotland Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, 2024-2025. She exhibited ‘Oceans for a

Wounded Planet 1, 11, 111' in *Art for A Wounded Planet*, Larnaka Art Gallery, Cyprus, October -November 2024. She is co-chief editor of the ten-volume Bloomsbury *Encyclopaedia of World Textiles* with Dr Vivienne Richmond, due 2026, Chief editor with Hazel Clark and Diana Wood Conroy of *The Handbook of Textile Culture* (Bloomsbury 2018). She has had a long and vibrant association with universities and other institutions in Australia, notably the University of Wollongong.

**MADELEINE KELLY**  
*Journeys to Cyprus 2025*



*Birds of the Archaeological Park* (detail), 2025. Encaustic on cardboard, paper. 13 pieces ranging from 5 x 5 x 9 cm to 23 x 20 x 6 cm, individual dimensions variable. Birds spotted at the Paphos archaeological site: Hoopoe, Black Cap, Red-throated Pipit, Common Stonechat, Common Chiffchaff, Crested Lark, Northern Wheatear, Robin, Black Redstart, House Martin, Cyprus Coal Tit, and Masked Shrike

**Artist statement**

My time as artist-in-residence at The University of Sydney Paphos Theatre Archaeological Project (PTAP) continues to inspire me. Emeritus Professor Diana Wood Conroy, the Paphos Theatre Archaeological Project's Artist-in-Residence since 1996, explained how the shapeshifting figure of Dionysius is embedded in the theatre, located alongside the Archaeological Park of Paphos. Here the intricate mosaic floors of four Roman villas (the houses of Dionysos, Theseus, Aion and Orpheus) framed my conceptual universe for three weeks. The mosaics offered incredible patterning and iconography. I appraised them alongside bursts of inflorescence, red poppies glowing in the sunset with flitting birds. Together, they spoke to the rhythms of the mosaics: their geometries inspired a new imaginative dimension to my work, building on previous research into the scintillating patterns in Ravenna, Italy, in 2022. Byzantine art fuses pagan and Christian iconography through illusionism and geometry, reflecting its neo-platonic origins. I noted their remarkable formations, always within circular and gridded foundations, and put them in my paintings. For me, the mosaics represent the current ambiguity and complexity within the world of translation and communication. Aphrodite too, is an appropriate subject in a world of struggles against nature.

**Artist biography**

Australian artist Madeleine Kelly works across different forms including painting, writing and curation to explore visual approaches to art, science and conservation as a way of reimagining futures. She is senior lecturer at the Sydney College of the Arts and hold a PhD from Griffith University, Meanjin/Brisbane. Kelly has

won the Churchie Art Prize (2004) and Sunshine Coast Art Prize (2018). Recent commissions include: *The National 4: Australian Art Now*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, curated by Beatrice Gralton (2023), and her solo exhibition *Entangled Flashes* (2024) at Archiv Massiv, Leipzig Spinnerei, Germany, supported by a CREATE NSW grant. Her work 'Spectra of Birds' (2014-15) will feature in QAGOMA's 2025 winter blockbuster *WONDERSTRUCK*. In 2025 Kelly will attend the acclaimed artist-in-residence program at Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, Germany.

## KAY LAWRENCE

### *Journeys to Cyprus 2025*



*Aphrodite's Gold 2023*. Three woven tapestries 3 warps/cm. Each approx. 55cm x 1.23cm. Wool dyed with Crown Daisy from the theatre site and alum, copper, and iron with commercially dyed linen yarn.

*Photographic panel 2023*. 43cm x 1.23m A series of 13 photographs (3 x A4, 10 x A5) hung in two vertical lines, that illustrate the dye-making process and refer to artefacts found on the archeological site at Paphos.

### **Artist Statement**

Textile fragments rarely turn up on an archaeological site. Unlike stone, metal, ceramic, and glass, they perish under the forces of climate, geology, and time. Textiles are ephemeral, like the wildflowers that bloom in the spring and die over winter. But like the wildflowers that return each year, textiles can persist, pictured in images that remain when cloth has long decayed. There is a small stone sculpture in the Archaeological Museum at Paphos, that is thought to depict two aspects of Aphrodite: Celestial and Chthonic. It was found in the remains of the House of Theseus in Nea Pafos, constructed during the Roman period 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. In her Celestial form Aphrodite wears a cloak covered in stars, that resemble the daisies that grow on the Archaeological Park at Paphos and may have bloomed there for centuries. In April 2023, crown daisies, poppies and convolvulus were growing amongst the stones of the ancient theatre on Fabrika Hill. Each morning I picked daisies to dye woollen yarn brought from Australia in my luggage. When dyeing with plant material, mordants are used to chemically bond the dye to the yarn. These chemicals – alum, copper, and iron – modify the colour of the dye as they fix it to the yarn. Crown daisies dyed with alum give a rich range of yellows, while copper produces shades of olive green and mustard, and iron, a delicate grey green. These dye colours, specific to the plant, season and place are also found on shards of pottery unearthed across the site. The earth of Cyprus is rich in the minerals iron and copper, producing distinctive clay bodies and glazes on pottery since Medieval times. These two tapestries were woven from wool dyed with Crown Daisy to celebrate the colour so magically produced by such a commonplace plant... and to hint at riches lost to the passage of time.

### **Artist Biography**

Kay Lawrence AM is Emeritus Professor at the University of South Australia where she had a distinguished career as an educator in the visual arts, becoming the first woman appointed to head the South Australian School of Art in 2002. She

has an international profile as a tapestry weaver and her work is held in many public collections in Australia and overseas. In her visual art and writing practices she critically engages with matters of personal and community identity, exploring ideas of loss and connection through the materiality of textiles. She has completed major commissions for public spaces in Australia and overseas and was made a member of the Order of Australia in 1989 for service to the arts as designer of the Parliament House Embroidery in 1988. She recently completed an oral history project with the National Library of Australia interviewing 24 of the 498 women who embroidered this major artwork. In 2024, four of her collaborative and personal artworks spanning forty years of practice were featured in the major exhibition *Radical Textiles* at the Art Gallery of South Australia. Her writing on contemporary craft practice has been published in catalogues, scholarly journals, and books. She lives in South Australia in the Adelaide Hills.

## DIANA WOOD CONROY

### *Journeys to Cyprus 2025*



Left: *Blossoms everywhere* 2018. Centre: *All the earth will dance* 2018. Two fragments of woven tapestry representing actual painted fresco from the Paphos Theatre. Wool, silk, cotton and metallic thread on linen warp mounted on a wooden panel. Texts from Euripides' play *The Bacchae*. 15 cm x 24 cm; Panel 30 cm x 30 cm. Right: *Theatre* 2023, gouache on gesso on paper, 30 cm x 84 cm, with detail.

#### Artist statement

After completing a degree in classical archaeology at Sydney University I learnt the systematic drawing of objects first with the archaeologist of Crete, Sinclair Hood, in Knossos in 1966, where I drew a collection of Hellenistic terracotta figurines. The archaeologists who taught me in Athens at the British School of Archaeology included Arthur Dale Trendall (1909-1995), and Peter Megaw (1910-2006). My teacher Alexander Cambitoglou (1922-2019), Professor and Head of the Nicholson Museum at Sydney University, set up the Australian Archaeological Institute in Athens in 1981. I am on the Council of the AAIA in Sydney and have initiated artist residencies at the AAIA in Athens. I went on to be 'disegnatore' at the Gabinetto di Restauro, Archaeological Museum in Florence, Italy (1967-69), and subsequently to be 'illustrator' in the Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities at the British Museum (1969-70). Scrutinising the texture and materiality of objects in all their subtlety allowed deep familiarity with, for example, Etruscan gold jewellery, Anglo-Saxon Sutton Hoo swords, or ceramics of all periods. This knowledge fed into my long work as a weaver and a painter, combining a love for documenting what is seen with symbolic patterning. Combining art and archaeology, and collaborating with artists and archaeologists for both exhibition and scholarship have been a lifetime project. The website *Images & shadows: Artistic outputs from the ancient theatre at Nea Paphos* (<https://www.imagesandshadows.org>) documents artists at the theatre since 1996.

#### Artist biography

Diana Wood Conroy is an Australian tapestry weaver, artist and scholar. Since the 1970s she has woven tapestry commissions for architects and exhibited widely. Her research interests combine archaeology and contemporary visual cultures in many publications, such as *The fabric of the ancient theatre: journals from Cyprus* (Moufflon Publishing 2007), *The Handbook of Textile Culture* (editors Janis Jefferies, Diana Wood Conroy and Hazel Clark, Bloomsbury 2018) and *Tiwi textiles: design, making and process*, with Bede Tungutalum (Sydney University Press 2022). She has published journal articles on ancient fresco and textiles in the *Report to the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus*. As artist-in-residence, and archaeologist at the Paphos Theatre Excavation in Cyprus since 1996, her artwork explores classical and personal worlds and is held in

national and international collections. In 2024 she had a retrospective exhibition of tapestries and drawings *An archaeology of woven tapestry* at the Wollongong Art Gallery. She is Emeritus Professor, Visual Arts at the Faculty of Law Humanities and Arts, University of Wollongong, NSW, Australia.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our great appreciation to Her Excellency Fiona Mc Kergow, Cyprus Australian High Commission, for instigating and sponsoring this exhibition, with the support of her staff especially Lang Robson and Costa Gavrielides.

We warmly thank Dr Georgios Georgiou, the 2025 Director of the Department of Antiquities in Cyprus, for facilitating the exhibition at the Visitors Centre in the Paphos World Heritage Archaeological Park. We are indebted to the many former Directors of the Department of Antiquities in Cyprus who have given the Paphos Excavation team essential and generous guidance over thirty years.

Deepest regard for Dr Rita Severis at the Centre of Visual Arts Research in Nicosia, for her knowledge and long fostering of the historical arts of travellers to Cyprus.

Warmest thanks to the team at the Paphos Theatre; to Emeritus Director Richard Green and to the current Director Dr Craig Barker who provided crucial advice and support.

We are very grateful to the Permsew Foundation in New South Wales, who funded Madeleine Kelly as the 2023 Paphos Theatre artist-in-residence.

Create NSW supported Rowan Conroy's 2019 drone project.

The University of Wollongong supported Penny Harris, Agnieszka Golda and Diana Wood Conroy through grants for travel and research.

Our thanks to Professor Tamar Hodos, Director of the Australian Archaeological Institute in Athens for her support of the Paphos Theatre Excavation, and to the Chau Chak Wing Museum at Sydney University.

And most importantly, my greatest thanks to the artists for their self-funded trips from Australia to Cyprus and their making of intricate and beautiful work at the Paphos site through their own resources.



Archaeologists and artists in the Paphos theatre, May 2023. Photo: Bob Miller.



Kay Lawrence. 2023. Detail of woven tapestry *Lapithos Green*. Wool dyed with Crown Daisy growing on the Paphos Theatre site.

