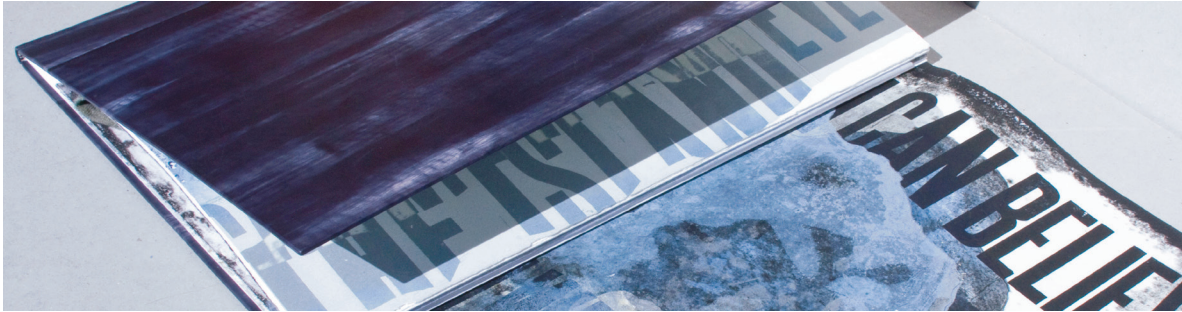


Dancing Over Dark Waters

Sue Anderson & Gwen Harrison
2012



Dancing Over Dark Waters is the fifth book series respectively, produced by Gwen Harrison and Sue Anderson.

Sue and Gwen collaborated with Peter Lyssiotis, a Melbourne based writer and artist, to produce *Dancing Over Dark Waters*.

Peter had been aware of, and sympathetic to previous books *Someone Somebody Run* and *Quaranta Australis*, two of Sue and Gwen's previous books. Both books expressed a drama that he appreciated, and so after meeting over coffee at Annandale in Sydney and some discussion, Peter produced the beautiful text that formed the inspiration for a poetic group of images used in the book *Dancing Over Dark Waters*.

The large book is written in prose poetry with a colonial narrative text reflecting the research Sue and Gwen had been working with. It overlays early Australian history with contemporary issues involving marginalisation, incarceration, and Australia's shifting attitude to asylum seekers.

The book begins with the history of Cockatoo Island in Sydney Harbour that was used from 1839 as a convict prison.

The prisoners were used to quarry the sandstone rock on the island, building the prison barracks, a military guardhouse and an official residence. In 1850 prisoners also worked on Fitzroy docks and a workshop to service Royal Navy and other ships.

In 1871 the prison became an Industrial School for girls, and a reformatory.

The large book is bound in hand dyed kangaroo leather. It contains full page (52cm by 70cm) multi-plate etchings with fully handset letterpress text and takes the form of a double narrative, "one giving humanity to this harsh place, and the other throwing up questions of our treatment of asylum seekers" (Monica Oppen, Imprint, volume 48 2013)

When we began the printing of the major book, Peter contacted us from Melbourne and asked if we could produce a number of small chapbooks. We were using handset type that could be re-configured, as a result an edition of 30 were made, hastily printed because of a deadline to exhibit all of our works in the Manly Art Gallery and Museum, Sydney, in September and October 2012. The chapbook "*Dancing Over Dark Waters*" includes new relief prints produced by Gwen instead of the comparatively labour intensive monumental etchings she prepared for the main book.