



Shan Turner-Carroll

The Snake, The Rock and The River

COMA Darlinghurst

15 July - 20 August, 2022

COMA

A dark, moody photograph of a snake's head and body in a natural setting, with a large rock in the foreground. The snake is coiled on a dark, textured surface, possibly a log or a rock. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the snake's scales and the texture of the rock. The background is dark and indistinct, creating a sense of mystery and depth.

COMA is pleased to present a solo exhibition, titled 'The Snake, The Rock and The River', by Sydney-based artist Shan Turner-Carroll, on view 15 July – 20 August, 2022 in the Darlinghurst Gallery. This is the artist's second solo presentation with COMA.

The new body of work marks Shan Turner-Carroll's dynamic and continuing solicitude and response to the notions of land, environment and history, comprising a group of works on paper, photographs, sculptures and installations. Drawing on the action and intervention of his artistic practice, Turner-Carroll tends to connect nuanced ecology-based relationships and symbiotic logics across time and sites, as to seek the possibility of communication, exchange and transcend.

Through the processes of working with seven psychics, the exhibition developed around three important and poetic ideas, all of which are relevant to the region where the suite of work started to emerge – Bundanon, in southern NSW Australia is where the work was produced during the artist's residency at the end of 2021. Interwoven with personal experience, local tale and geographical background, the three main elements, in which the work grounds itself, provide an autobiographical focus with multiple narratives in the exhibition. These can be readily interacted with and trailed, and would be combined into a contemporary interpretation of grand propositions.

A huge serpentine skeleton immortalizes with the local woodiness and patterned structures while retaining its sharp jawbones. At the same time, a snake installation was born to the ground with an anthropomorphic body shape, accompanied by the background music produced by the artist – as a love song, calling for some kind of spirituality. The stereotypical impression of a stone has been eliminated in the photograph, replaced by a supernatural microcosm that becomes metaphysical and sophisticated, in an abyssal darkness, or in the energy-inspired splashes. In the hands of nature, the artist groups his approaches to complete a challenging abstraction practice one after another. The marks on paper from the flowing water and spreading branches become both the ingredients and threshold into a specific site. Meanwhile, an empathic vibration is organically shared and accumulated in the process of collaborating with 7 psychics and of telepathically communicating with the artist's companions. The "conversations" were archived and published, like a waterfall coming down in a torrent, to inspire further resonance.

Shan Turner-Carroll (b. 1987) is an Australian artist of Burmese descent. Deeply fascinated with unearthing tacit knowledge, his practice integrates mediums including photography, sculpture, performance and film. The artist's practice interrogates both human and non-human nature, alternative forms of social exchange and interactions between art, artist and viewer: sending and receiving signals. His work can sing to snakes, serenade and signal with aliens, and barter with islands, rivers, and oceans. Looking towards the multiplicity of connections between body and landscape, site-specificity is key to his practice, not only in making, but rather in how an embodied methodology of making emerges upon each site and location. Turner-Carroll sees art-making as ritualistic and transformative, using play, humor and experimentation as key elements within his current practice.

Shan Turner-Carroll has recently finished a residency at Bundanon Trust. He will be exhibiting new and old work with Verge Gallery, Sydney College of Art Gallery, Grafton Regional Gallery, Abbotsford Convent and Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre. Recent selected solo exhibitions include: *Edge of The Garden*, COMA, Sydney, 2021; *Bodies On A Rock*, Maitland Regional Art Gallery, NSW, 2020; *Poems To The Poems*, Matsushima Bunko Museum, Japan, 2019. He was included in numerous group presentations recently include: *From Impulse to Action*, Bundanon Trust, NSW, 2022; *The Blake Art Prize*, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Casula, 2022; *Edge of The Garden*, Murray Art Museum Albury, Albury, 2020.



Shan Turner-Carroll in his studio in Sydney, Australia 2022



Shan Turner-Carroll

*Bushfire tree drawings/rubbings, Bundanon,
No.1, 2022*

charcoal on paper

76 x 56 cm / 29 15/16 x 22 1/16 inches

86 x 67 cm / 33 7/8 x 26 3/8 inches (framed)

COMA





Shan Turner-Carroll

*Bushfire tree drawings/rubbings, Bundanon,
No.2, 2022*

charcoal on paper

76 x 56 cm / 29 15/16 x 22 1/16 inches

86 x 67 cm / 33 7/8 x 26 3/8 inches (framed)

COMA





Shan Turner-Carroll

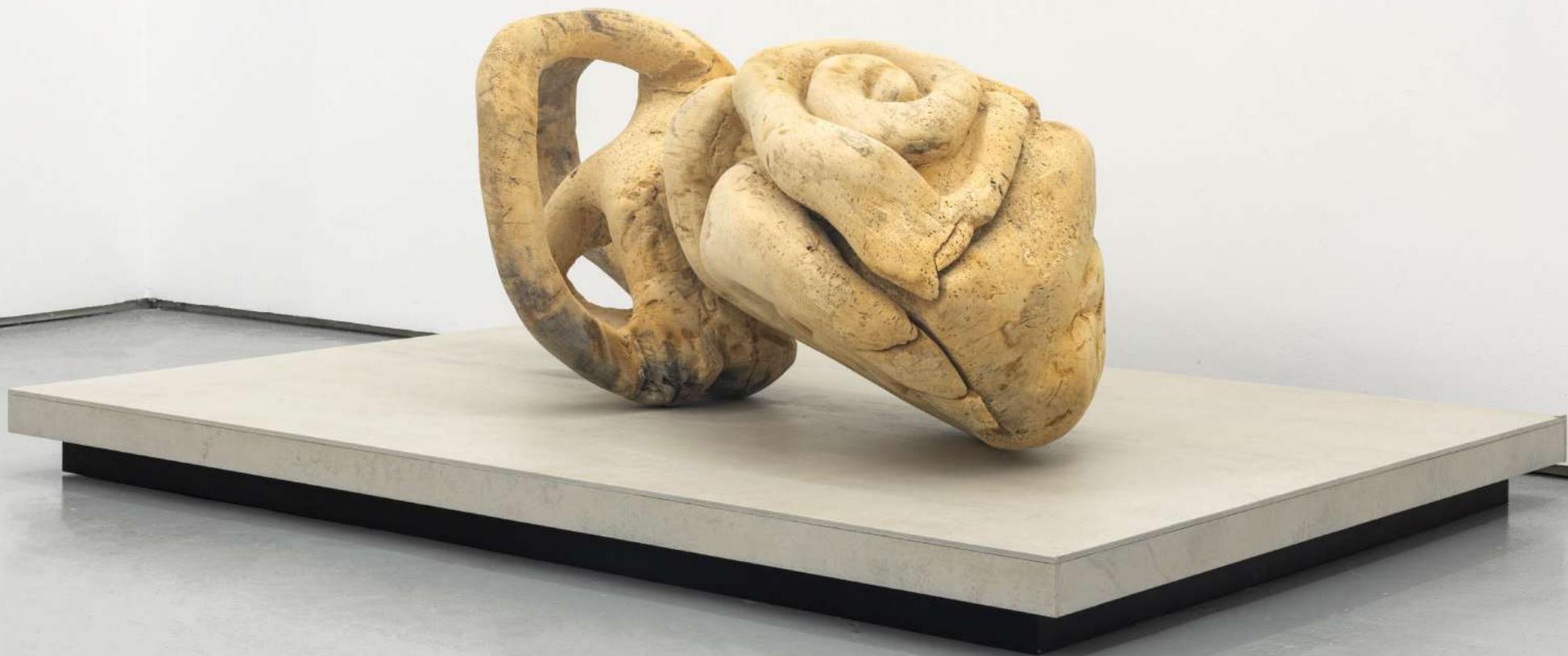
In The Ear, 2021

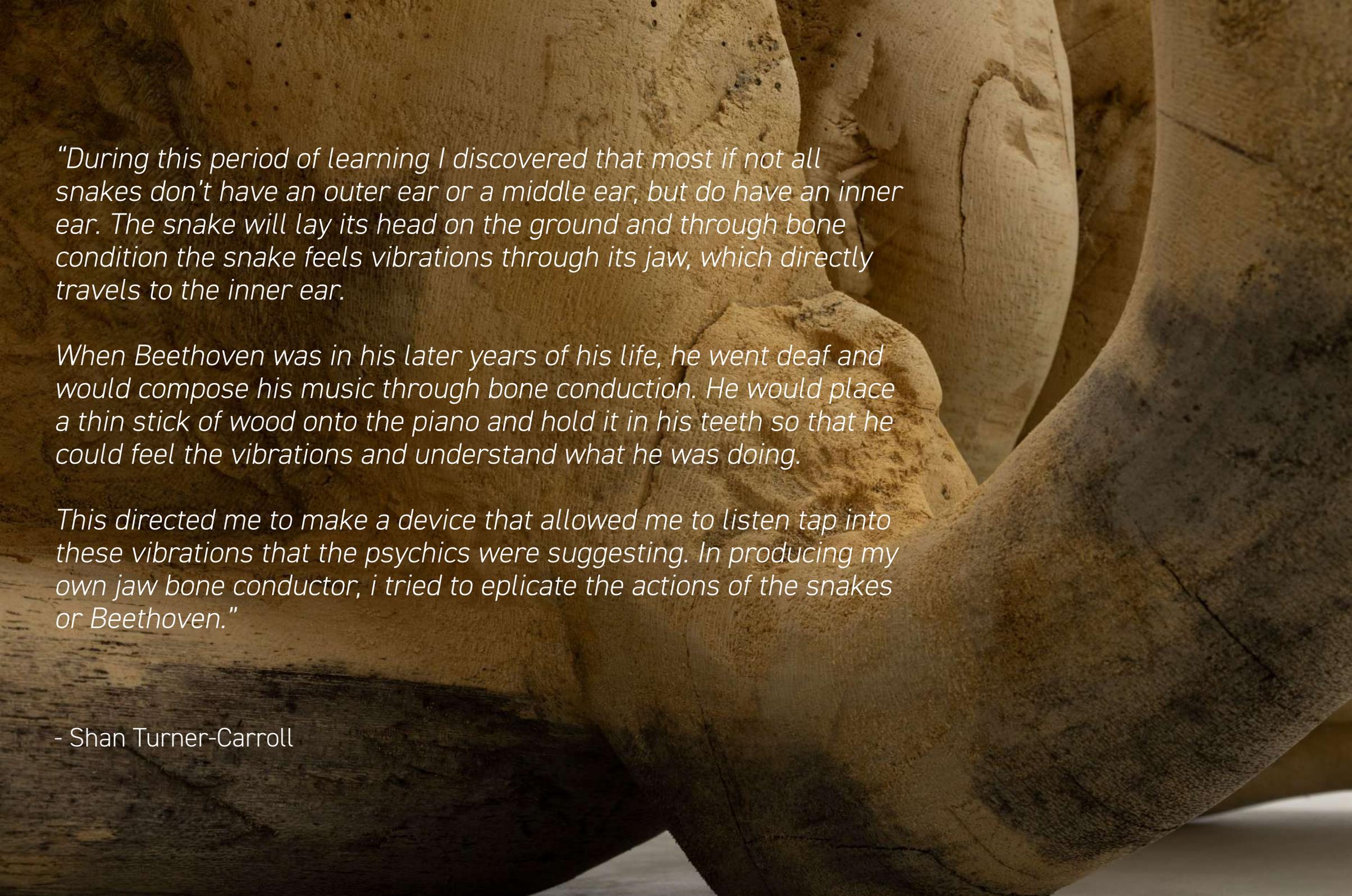
coral tree wood, concrete plinth

48 x 110 x 50 cm (overall sculpture)

18 7/8 x 43 5/16 x 19 11/16 inches (overall sculpture)

COMA





“During this period of learning I discovered that most if not all snakes don’t have an outer ear or a middle ear, but do have an inner ear. The snake will lay its head on the ground and through bone conduction the snake feels vibrations through its jaw, which directly travels to the inner ear.

When Beethoven was in his later years of his life, he went deaf and would compose his music through bone conduction. He would place a thin stick of wood onto the piano and hold it in his teeth so that he could feel the vibrations and understand what he was doing.

This directed me to make a device that allowed me to listen tap into these vibrations that the psychics were suggesting. In producing my own jaw bone conductor, i tried to eplicate the actions of the snakes or Beethoven.”

- Shan Turner-Carroll





Shan Turner-Carroll

Orange creek, Bundanon, No. 1, 2022

iron-oxidized on paper

58 x 41 cm / 22 13/16 x 16 1/8 inches

69 x 52 cm / 27 3/16 x 20 7/16 inches(framed)

COMA





Shan Turner-Carroll

Bushfire tree drawings/rubbings, Bundanon,

No.5, 2022

charcoal on paper

76 x 56 cm / 29 15/16 x 22 1/16 inches

86 x 67 cm / 33 7/8 x 26 3/8 inches (framed)

COMA





Shan Turner-Carroll

Orange creek, Bundanon, No. 2, 2022

iron-oxidized on paper

58 x 41 cm / 22 13/16 x 16 1/8 inches

69 x 52 cm / 27 3/16 x 20 7/16 inches (framed)

COMA





Shan Turner-Carroll

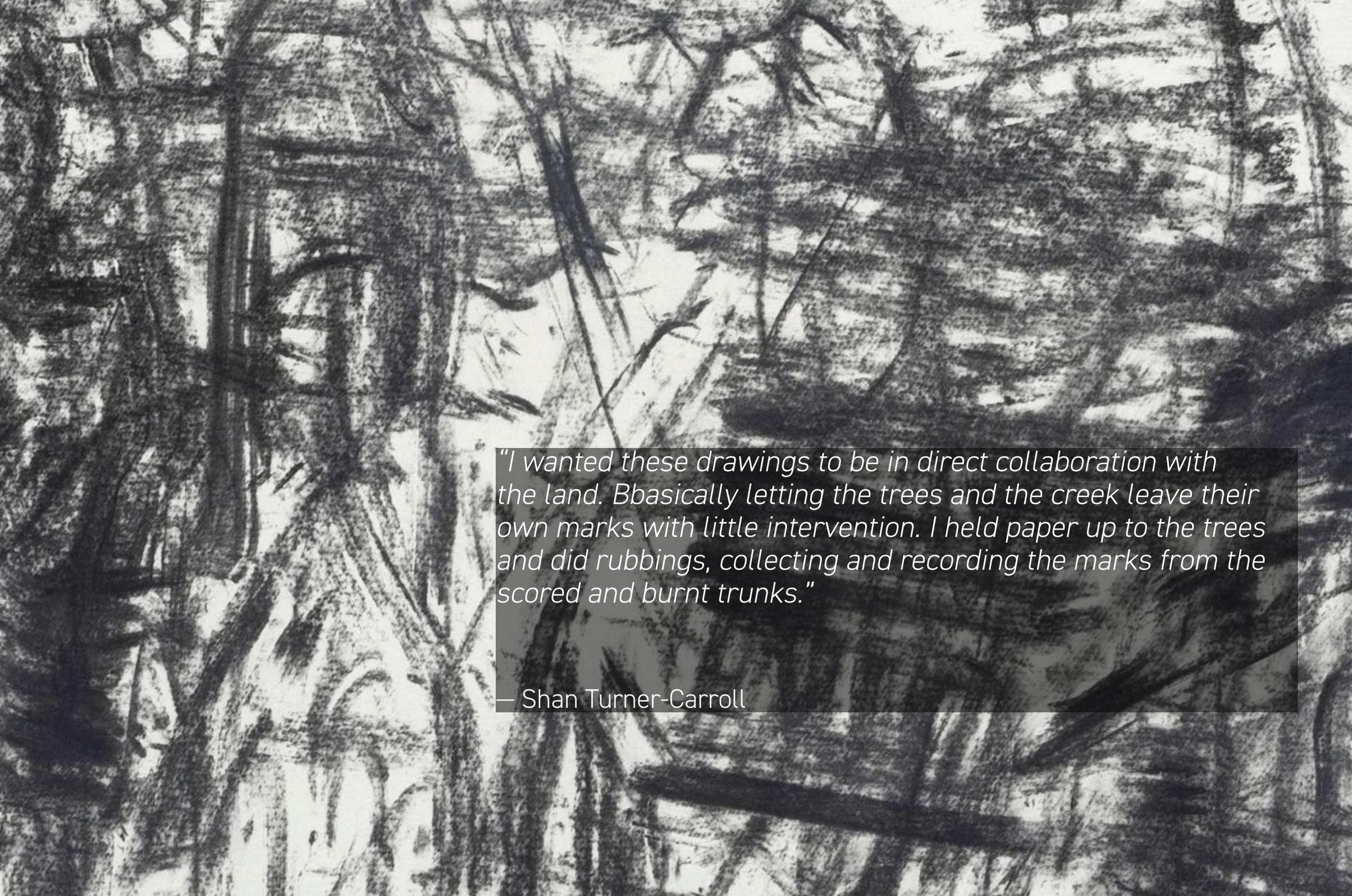
*Bushfire tree drawings/rubbings, Bundanon,
No.3, 2022*

charcoal on paper

76 x 56 cm / 29 15/16 x 22 1/16 inches

86 x 67 cm / 33 7/8 x 26 3/8 inches (framed)

COMA

A black and white photograph of a dense forest with a creek. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark rectangle containing text.

"I wanted these drawings to be in direct collaboration with the land. Basically letting the trees and the creek leave their own marks with little intervention. I held paper up to the trees and did rubbings, collecting and recording the marks from the scored and burnt trunks."

— Shan Turner-Carroll



Shan Turner-Carroll

Jawbone Conductor, 2021

hand carved wood, plaster mouth cast, quartz stone,
concrete plinth

62 x 124 x 24 cm (overall sculpture)

24 7/16 x 48 13/16 x 9 7/16 inches (overall sculpture)

COMA







Shan Turner-Carroll

*Bushfire tree drawings/rubbings, Bundanon,
No.4, 2022*

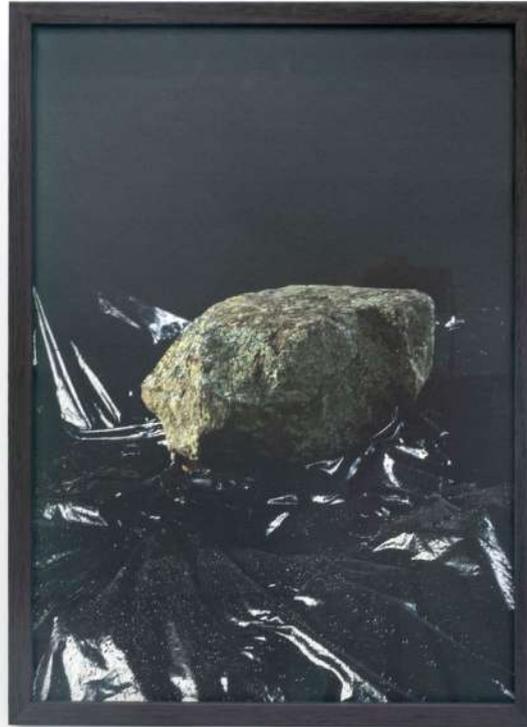
charcoal on paper

76 x 56 cm / 29 15/16 x 22 1/16 inches

86 x 67 cm / 33 7/8 x 26 3/8 inches (framed)

COMA





Shan Turner-Carroll

Telstra Rock, 2021

archival pigment print on cotton rag art paper

59 x 42 cm / 23 1/4 x 16 9/16 inches

62 x 45 cm / 24 3/8 x 17 3/4 (framed)

edition of 3

COMA







Shah Turner-Carroll working during the residency in Bundanon, Australia 2021. Photo by Zan Wimberley



Shan Turner-Carroll

Jawbone, 2021

hand carved wood

253 x 38 x 8 cm (overall sculpture)

99 5/8 x 14 15/16 x 3 3/16 inches (overall sculpture)

COMA





"I learnt about a snake handler called Dusty, who often was called to remove them from populated areas. I became interested in the relationships between Dusty and the snakes and the act of removing or relocating them from one place to another. This gesture, this act of intervention sparked my intuitive interest."

- Shan Turner-Carroll



Shan Turner-Carroll

Bushfire tree drawings/rubbings, Bundanon,

No.6, 2022

charcoal on paper

76 x 56 cm / 29 15/16 x 22 1/16 inches

86 x 67 cm / 33 7/8 x 26 3/8 inches (framed)

COMA





Shan Turner-Carroll

Orange creek, Bundanon, No. 3, 2022

iron-oxidized on paper

76 x 56 cm / 29 15/16 x 22 1/16 inches

86 x 67 cm / 33 7/8 x 26 3/8 inches (framed)

COMA

"The many objects and photographs in The snake, the rock and the river are connected by Turner-Carroll's intuitive investigation into the poetic and physical effects of waves, vibrations and ripples. Interacting like notes in a musical composition, the components of this installation reveal the transmission of energy between all things-animal, human and landscape alike."

— Boe-Lin Bastian, Assistant Curator, Bundanon Trust, NSW Australia



Shan Turner-Carroll

Antenna, 2021

iron-oxidized on paper, hat, tape, bamboo,
concrete plinth

25 x 25 x 28 cm (overall sculpture)

9 7/8 x 9 7/8 x 11 inches (overall sculpture)

COMA







Shan Turner-Carroll

Orange creek, Bundanon, No. 4, 2022

iron-oxidized on paper

76 x 56 cm / 29 15/16 x 22 1/16 inches

86 x 67 cm / 33 7/8 x 26 3/8 inches (framed)

COMA





Shan Turner-Carroll

Splash, 2021

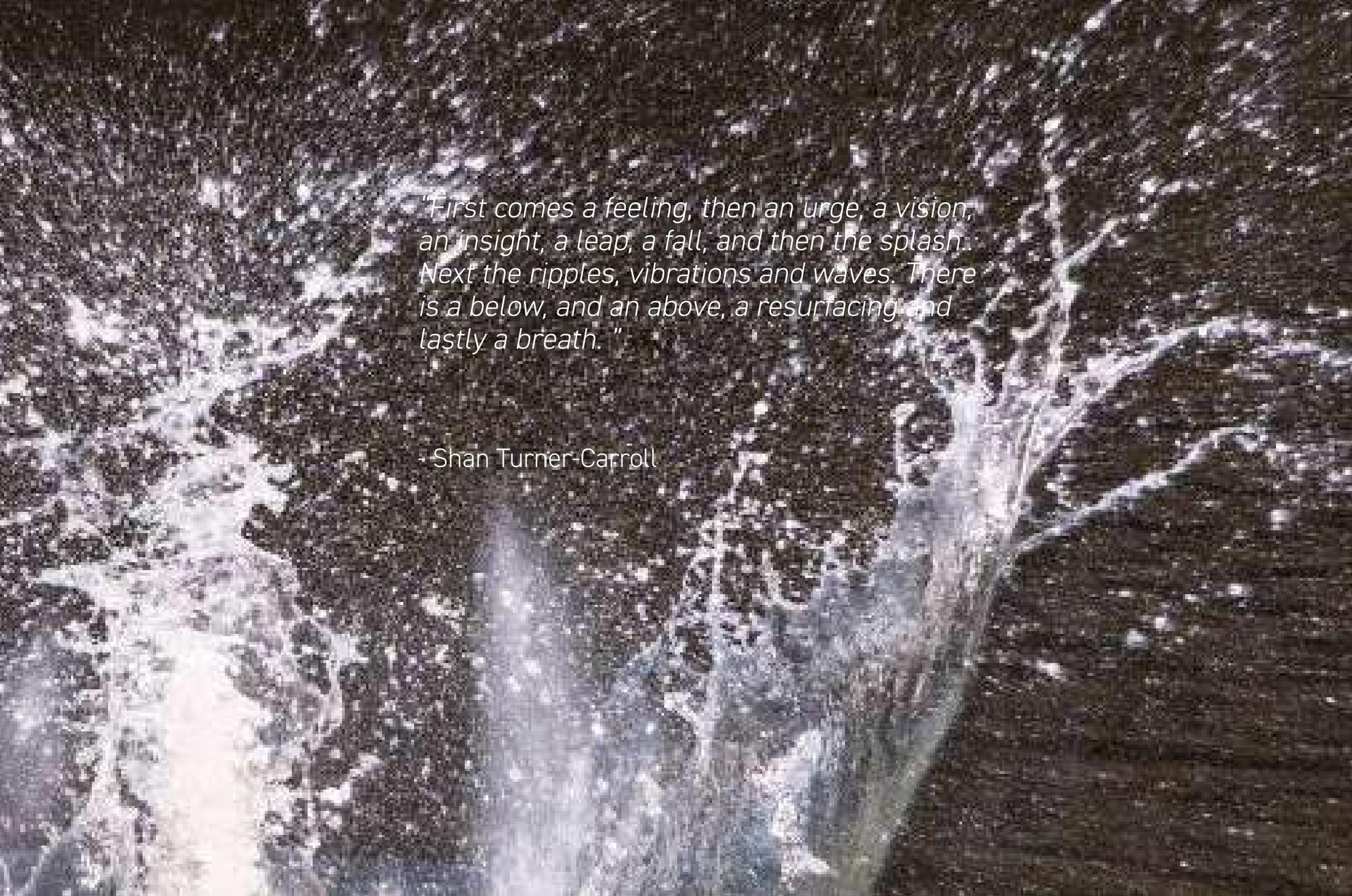
archival pigment print on cotton rag art paper

80 x 120 cm / 31 1/2 x 47 1/4 inches

84 x 124 cm / 33 1/16 x 48 13/16 inches (framed)

edition of 3

COMA



*"First comes a feeling, then an urge, a vision,
an insight, a leap, a fall, and then the splash.
Next the ripples, vibrations and waves. There
is a below, and an above, a resurfacing and
lastly a breath."*

- Shan Turner-Carroll



Shan Turner-Carroll embodies the role of the trickster, magician or pilgrim. His practice encompasses photography, wearable sculpture, installation and the documentation of subtle performative gestures that see him interact with his environment and the objects and people around him. Site-specificity is key to his work, as he seeks to uncover multiple connections between the landscape and the body.

Turner-Carroll's recent projects have combined dramatic tableau photography with installation and sculpture. His portraits evoke a sense of the magical, depicting family members in wearable apparatuses created from household detritus and objects from childhood. The sculptural components of his installations roam from makeshift constructions of discarded trampolines, boogie boards and sports paraphernalia complete with duct tape, to impeccable trompe l'oeil renderings of rock formations carved from hand-painted polystyrene. This pairing of the detailed with the loose, the dramatic with the funny, underscores Turner-Carroll's disinterest in any demonstration of technical prowess. Instead, his practice prioritises opportunities for his art to merge and cohabit with life.

For his commission for From Impulse to Action, Turner-Carroll began by consulting with seven psychics for guidance. He received various overlapping messages, the most prominent of which emphasised the surge of energy throughout the Bundanon landscape and encouraged him to engage his intuition as a working methodology. At the site, Turner-Carroll was struck with three primary ideas: a splash in the river; a red-bellied black snake (*Pseudechis porphyriacus*); and Telstra Rock, a familiar staff reference for the location at which mobile-phone reception is best. On a second, longer visit as a part of Bundanon's Artist in Residence program, these initial sketches formed a constellation of ideas, actions and topics for investigation.

Research into the red-bellied black snake revealed the animal's mechanism for hearing. Like a ship navigating the waves, a snake's jawbone rests on the ground, receiving sound waves transmitted through the earth. Tapping into the folklore of Telstra Rock, Turner-Carroll conducted twenty telepathic conversations with friends and family, and, in plunging himself into the Shoalhaven River to act out his 'splash', the artist's body became the apparatus, sending waves through the water. The many objects and photographs in *The Snake*, *The Rock* and *The River* are connected by Turner-Carroll's intuitive investigation into the poetic and physical effects of waves, vibrations and ripples. Interacting like notes in a musical composition, the components of this installation reveal the transmission of energy between all things-animal, human and landscape alike.

- Text by Boe-Lin Bastian, Assistant Curator, Bundanon Trust, NSW Australia



COMA

info@comagallery.com
+61 2 8316 3592
www.comagallery.com

CHIPPENDALE, SYDNEY
2/27-39 Abercrombie St
Chippendale NSW 2008
Australia

DARLINGHURST, SYDNEY
First Floor, 71-73 Stanley Street
Darlinghurst, NSW 2010
Australia