

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**1 April - 8 May 2021**



## Ruth Burgess *The Music of the Planets*

The Grace Cossington Smith Gallery presents an exhibition by Sydney printmaker Ruth Burgess, a leading force in the Australian printmaking scene. Through the medium of large format multi block woodcuts, engravings and poetry, *The Music of the Planets* reveals the amazing breadth of her work.

In *The Music of the Planets* Burgess draws inspiration from music composed in response to the astronomer Johannes Kepler's discovery of planetary motion and the sounds that exists between the planets. His 'Harmonicus Mundi' (The Harmony of the World, 1619), describes the movements of the planets and the speed of their elliptical paths transcribed into tones. Through imagination, which is also the tool of scientists, Burgess evokes the images of the planets and other planetary bodies through her medium of woodcut.

This exhibition includes six distinct series of works:  
*The Music of the Planets*, 2019-20, large scale woodcuts  
*Voyager*, 2020, 5 multiblock woodcuts  
*The Milky Way*, 2020, 3 multiblock woodcuts  
*We are all the Universe*, 5 multiblock woodcuts from 1994 to 2004  
A series of 7 wood engravings  
Space poems

Burgess has worked in the Japanese method of printmaking inspired by Japanese post war creative printmakers working with wood blocks and hand printing on Japanese paper. Her coloured woodcuts are large and multilayered and drawn on her experience to visualise how the blocks and colours will evolve. Her prints are based on a spiritual rather than pictorial approach which evolved from her experience of the Chinese approach to landscape. In contrast her distinctive wood engravings are smaller, and meticulous in execution, with the subject matter drawn from her many explorations of the forest landscape where she has lived and worked for many years.

Ruth Burgess states:

*So immense are the dimensions of space that I found my mind was extended into explorations of the known and unknown and I was visually inspired by the messages from the Hubble telescope and the recent space craft such as Voyager sending back to earth extraordinary images, and the wonders always evolving in the Milky Way.*

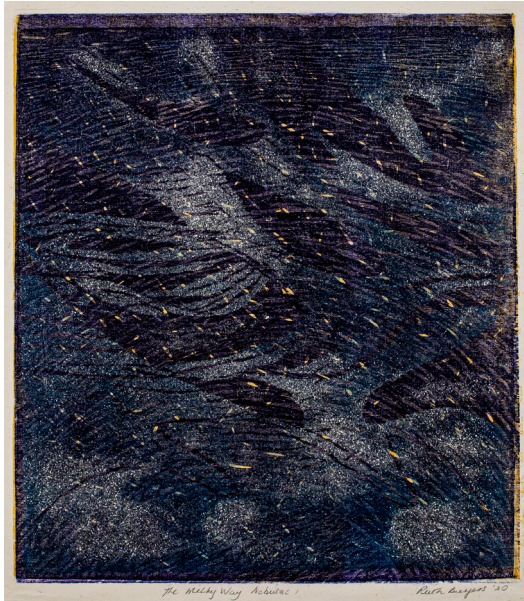
*As I travelled through these images in 2019 and through the earthly restrictions of 2020, I have experienced one of the most productive periods of my work as an artist and I have been able to source techniques and experience from my many years as a printmaker.*

Ruth Burgess  
*The Music of the Planets*

1 April - 8 May 2021

The artist will be present on Saturday 10  
April between 2-4pm

Saturday 17 April 2021  
Forum with Katrina Cashman and Anne Ryan  
<https://events.humanitix.com/music-of-the-planets>



Ruth Burgess studied painting with Desiderius Orban. She studied Arts/Music at Sydney University and spent a year studying music composition at the Paris Conservatoire. However, it was her experience learning the medium of woodcut, at the Willoughby Art Workshop from 1976-1979, that ignited her passion for printmaking and inspired her to establish her own printmaking studio.

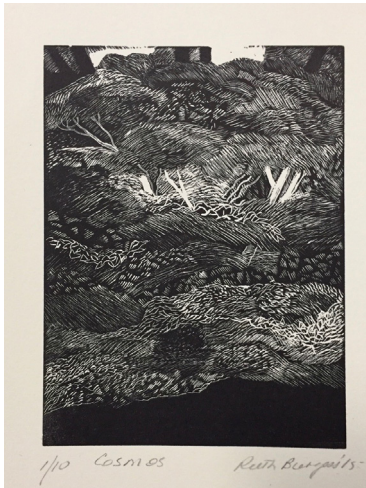
Under the auspices of the Print Council of Australia and the Department of Foreign Affairs, and through various Grants and Residencies, Burgess established connections, exhibitions and cultural exchange with Chinese artists, and was instrumental in facilitating the collection of Chinese prints for the Art Gallery of NSW. Burgess has held many solo and group exhibitions and in 2013 Mosman Regional Gallery held a major retrospective of her work. Her work is held in the collection of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, National Gallery of Australia, Queensland Art Gallery, Sydney University Collection and numerous other collections.

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Short statement:

Ruth Burgess *The Music of the Planets* 1 April – 8 May 2021.

Ruth Burgess is a leading force in the Australian printmaking scene. Through the medium of large format multi block woodcuts, engravings and poetry, *The Music of the Planets* explores the wonders of the universe and reveals the amazing breadth of her work.



*Harmonies from Space*, 2019, Multi-block woodcut on Shinano/Kozo paper, unique state  
*Milky Way, Nebulae*, 2020, Multi-block woodcut on Shinano/Kozo paper, unique state  
*Cosmos*, 2015, wood engraving on Arches 88 paper

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High resolution images are available.

The Grace Cossington Smith Gallery is a not-for-profit gallery, run by Abbotsleigh, serving the public through free admission and a changing exhibition program. Enter via Gate 7, 1666 Pacific Highway Wahroonga.

Visitors to the gallery are asked to abide by current social distancing and mask recommendations