





Toni Warburton

*catchment*

*a field of beakers for St Hedwig of Silesia and for Wingecarribee Swamp*

31 January – 24 February 2001

The austerities of Saint Hedwig (d1243), Queen and patron saint of Silesia, were assisted by her moulded and cut glass beaker. The Hedwig beaker attained the status of a relic as it had the miraculous property of making ordinary water taste so pure that it seemed like an exquisite wine.

Peat, an ancient and essential purifying filter for wetlands, was dredged from Wingecarribee Swamp in the Southern Tablelands of New South Wales under the cynical jurisdiction of a mining lease, despite ten years of public outcry. This removal of part of its structural fabric weakened the entire peatland and in 1998, after heavy rains, most of the swamp collapsed. This ecological disaster also compromised the local drinking water.

Wingecarribee Swamp is the habitat of the giant dragonfly, *Petulara gigantea*, as well as rare and endangered species of wetland plants. These have so far managed to survive, and the swamp has been recognised as a wetland of national significance.

Transparency is air and potable water; emerald green, living plants. Indigo is the colour of reed filled water and the night; rose, the calm dawn light. Amber is dried grasses and tea tree stained swamp shallows. All five colours are in the iridescence of sunlight on the wings of dragonflies.

"In mechanics, 'the smaller dominates the larger,' says Aristotle. This is *atopon* and *thaumasion*: having no place, and giving surprise. The reversal of forces opens a pathway through the impasse of a relation of forces that is unfavourable to man and favourable to nature. A trap that cannot be used twice. Machination opens up a capricious temporality, made of opportunities, discontinuous and ephemeral ones, a temporality that the Greeks named *kairos*, the right moment, the favourable instant. The opportunist machine is necessarily a soft machine."

From *Machinations in Duchamp's TRANS/formers*, John Francis Lyotard pp 42-43

The mould itself is a kind of trap into which the molten glass is folded. I conspire with the gaffer to snare objects in small cones of material and time, to catch *the muse*, an energy that mobilises matter in response to intention. Vectors of *chora*, elusive muse of becoming, digress and converge, veil and illuminate penumbrations of matter, technique and catchment. However, once matter is mobilised, extra things, other things beyond the scope of intention happen. These are what the traps are for. Such moments present the unfolding of pragmatic reality. Interception of such moments closes the trap in acts of mindful craft. Each time a new trap is set a mould imprints its particular pattern and shatters into fragments.

Toni Warburton, January 2001

Photograms by Jane Calthorpe

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