

Some writing for *in the gardens at Suzhou* in the exhibition Common Ground.

Something reminds me: At *Hill End* the sensation of being high up on a plateau that drops away to a valley, reminds me of being in other special places: *Sanchi* in Central India, *Pavagath Mountain* in Gujarat, *Montserrat* in Spain, *Pigeon House Mountain* on the South Coast of New South Wales. At the edge, a stillness where sounds delay a moment from their source and are carried upwards on the breeze below. Driving in the country, one may have a sense of portent as one approaches such places. Seen from quite a distance, or due to prior knowledge, they loom large and draw one in.

To really get a sense of a place you need to walk around, follow tracks, stay awhile, find yourself there. Depending on the time of day, the land might reveal points of focus: living things, tiny things, a pebble that looks like a mountain to put in your pocket, shade, welcoming rocks, water, questions, nostalgia, sensations of approach and insertion. (My interest in a notion of *insertion* into place derives, in part, from insights provided by John von Sturmer in accounts of his experiences of situations in which indigenous Australians welcome, induct, in fact *insert* a newcomer into country, creating a place for them within a place. I note specifically his talk *In the Footsteps of the Buffalo...* given at the *at the Art Gallery of NSW 22 November 2004* .in association with *crossing country: the alchemy of Western Arnhem land*). A local might guide you.

a garden recalled. In 1958 in China, the painter Margo Lewers strolled in the gardens of Suzhou, *Venice of the East*. Borrowed views. Across the road from the Nepean river, in the Lewers' eclectic garden there are walls, ponds, rocks and pathways; edges, but no horizons. Perhaps a place that one occupies within land in the present doesn't have horizons either. Home in Penrith, at Gerald Lewers' birthday party, Margo and artist guests collected pebbles and driftwood from the Nepean River for still life, and painted landscapes with ink and brush in the Chinese manner. [Margo Lewers letters post 1958]

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