

Steps was a group exhibition by the contemporary photographers of the Australian Photographic Society.

This exhibition was shown in the Waratah Room of the Commercial Club in Albury from 20 to 25 October 2007 in conjunction with Apscon 2007. The Waratah Room was the venue for all exhibitions shown at Apscon this year.

16 members of the Contemporary Division of APS contributed to the *Steps* exhibition. Each interpreted the theme in their own way and each decided on their own form of presentation.

Phil Schofield's prints were unframed, unmatted. Audrey Shoobridge, Geoff Sherrington and Margrit Wendt presented their prints mounted in cardboard mats. Jane Horton and John Teague showed groupings of smaller prints edge-mounted on foam-core.

Framed prints included sets of work by Barbara Bryan, Carol Drew, Kay Mack and Melinda Finnigan. Melinda also provided a player and headphones so that viewers could remind themselves of the inspiration for her work.

Warren Stone's large print was framed. Anne O'Connor's four canvas prints were set in wooden frames. Audrey Crawford's selection of prints were mounted onto a canvas display board. Glynis Pogson's were face mounted to acrylic, two having double layers of work - a small print mounted over a larger background image.

Gillian Turner's book, with its slate paving stone cover, and Paul Truslove's presentation of images mounted into an old ladder completed the exhibition.

The following colour images are a record of the way the exhibition appeared, with prints hung or otherwise attached to cloth-covered stands provided at the venue. Thanks to John Mack and John Teague and for this record.



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The following pages reproduce the pages of the catalogue.

In its printed form the catalogue is an A5 booklet.

Steps

a group exhibition
by the contemporary photographers
of the Australian Photographic Society

presented in association with Apscon 2007

Commercial Club
Albury

20 – 26 October 2007

Steps

a group exhibition by the contemporary photographers of APS

For this year's exhibition we selected a relatively simple theme. Yet each photographer has brought a different interpretation of this theme to their work.

We explore the mystery of life and death; take a look at the steps needed to arrest global warming; step back into the past; journey to the steppes of Mongolia; remember influences as diverse as a bush ballad, a Bible story or a funky disco dance; and find beauty and inspiration in all manner of steps, stairs and ladders in our everyday lives.

The styles of presentation have been chosen by each exhibitor to suit their own work. Framed and unframed prints in the main, but also a couple of installations. Contemporary photographers are not restricted by a set idea of the way their images should be presented.

This is our eighth group exhibition and we look forward to many more.

Kay Mack (Chairman)
APS Contemporary Division



The theme of “steps” conjured up for me an image of a bush ballad by John O’Brien, *Ten little steps and stairs*, that had a lasting impression on me from school.

John, a pseudonym, born Patrick Joseph Hartigan at Yass in 1890, was a Catholic Priest from 1903 - 1954. He wrote and published two volumes of verse. They were stories of the Irish families in Australia, known to him during his time in the priesthood. His work was intended to be read around a campfire at night, as most bush ballads were. Instead my introduction was via the St. Josephite nuns at an all girls' Catholic school, who believed “the art of speech” was important to a young female. Assumedly it was safe, as the author was a priest, to learn off by heart, his poetry. As you can see, it stuck.

John’s poetry was very colourful, about life in the bush. Each stanza contains myriads of images. I have selected four images in total that to me, have the colour he portrays. They have been taken in the bush, all in-camera from Australian plant life with the concept of ten and steps in each. One image represents the title of the poem and three others a tiny segment of the story from each stanza. I hope you enjoy the images I have created.

My first impression, when I heard that the subject for our Contemporary exhibition was to be Step/s: I felt at a loss to know how to approach it so I turned to my trusty Oxford Dictionary to find its true meaning, only to be surprised how extensive it was.

e.g.

Shift of set down foot or alternate feet, go or come in a specified direction by stepping once or oftener. Perform (dance) esp. of slow formal kind. Complete movement in walking or running or dancing. etc.

These people were stepping out at my local shopping centre and they seemed to fit this definition of steps in a contemporary style.



Audrey Shoobridge

Interpretation of an image is up to the viewer, and can be understood at many levels.

Stairs can symbolize those levels of our lives going up or down depending on which way they are viewed.

A spiral or circular staircase can represent our progression in life.

In these images, I have concentrated on the decorative aspect of the design, keeping them minimal and as simple as possible. It is for you to make of them what you will.



Barbara Bryan

Stepping Out in Remembrance

Having thought about steps through life, and other interpretations of this theme, I settled on depicting the steps of those who had served this country in conflicts, by capturing their very steps during the Sydney Anzac Day march.

By viewing their steps, we can reflect on where they have been in serving this country, and how that has affected their ability to 'step out' or 'step forward' at the present time. Some are veterans of long ago wars whilst some have served as recently as this year in very diverse regions and programs.

By also using blur in some images, I aimed to illustrate a feeling of movement which gives the message of progress, moving on, remembrance, determination, survival, ablebodied etc. Included in the series are also the steps of those providing the music for these former military personnel to step out in unison.

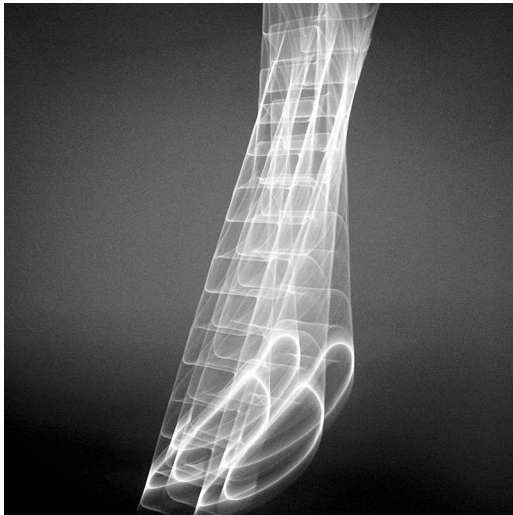


Carol Drew

Jacob's Ladder

"He (Jacob) had a dream in which he saw a ladder resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it."

Genesis 28:12



Influences: Genesis, Yayoi Kusama, Bridget Riley.

Geoff Sherrington

SNOW STEPS: Near the Swiss Mountains Castor and Pollux, looking to the Matterhorn about noon. There is a puzzle. The footsteps seem to have no start and no end. Two sets of steps go away from a gully, to behind a tree, then one set comes back. We can only wonder at the reason, which seems to involve privacy. We were moving past too fast to find the answer.

SAND STEPS: Roaming the low tide sands of the Sunshine coast just before sunset gave many steps, but these two are similar, though not matching. Just by coincidence, one person put a left foot next to an existing right foot while walking. It was the simplicity and the texture that finally appealed to me. Robinson Crusoe material, finding he was beside himself by Friday.

CASTLE STEPS: What scenes have these steps seen at the entrance to Edinburgh Castle. Kings and Queens have come and gone, some voluntarily, some because of the porridge, some to be beheaded, whichever is worse. A gloomy, rainy day and slow film gave movement to the lady coming down the steps. Again, it was the variety of texture that led to this choice. The wear on the steps attests to their age, which is far greater than the youngsters who go there for a tattoo.



Gillian Turner

Stepping Stones: A Book of Pavers

My initial response to this year's exhibition theme was that it was all too hard. Granted, I was in the midst of a real estate flurry: packing, moving and trying to set up a studio. But, I watched in awe as the tilers worked on putting down the new slate flooring, and I realised that this had to be my subject.

From the beginning, I had documented the changes to the house, and recognised that I was experiencing a 'journey': steps along the way to a different life in a new place. The slate pavers took on symbolic meaning, and I discovered that each square contained its own unique 'landscape'.

My 'book' celebrates the beauty of the surface upon which I walk daily. The form of the pages hints at a small set of steps, while the back cover is a piece of slate, one of the special few reserved for art works. The Book of Pavers is the first of a series of responses to these miniature landscapes, and I'm certain that I shall never tire of their luminosity and sometimes unearthly colours.



Materials - digital manipulated photographic prints on water colour paper, adhesives, threads and natural slate

Glynis Pogson

On the Edge

My photography addresses the urgent need for steps to be taken to arrest rising sea levels. Due to global warming, the oceans have already started to rise and are expected to rise at a faster rate than previously predicted.¹

The encroaching water's edge equates to globally diminished land space. These images are based on my own interpretation of the line: "They learnt to live in a space the ocean had left."² . . . [untouched].



1 *Climate on the edge: Arctic Mission*, The Weather Channel, Foxtel, July 2, 2007.

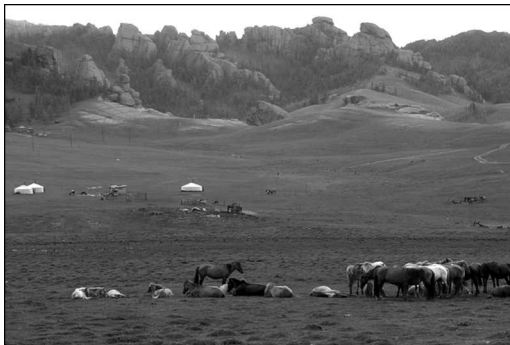
2 *In my father's den*, a film written and directed by Brad McGann, 2004.

Jane Horton

In the Steppes of Chinggis Khaan

Mongolia, the birthplace of Chinggis Khaan is known for its steppes. A steppe is an expanse of land without trees. Steppes can be either semi-desert or covered with grass and shrubs. The Eastern Mongolian steppes comprise the biggest area of unspoiled grassland in the world, a sea of knee-high grass nearly 250,000 square kilometers, primarily without fences and few settlements. Approximately half of Mongolia's population lives on the steppes, living in gers (yerts) and tending their livestock. Their life is one of a nomad, moving their camp up to 4 times a year.

I visited these Steppes in August this year. It was a beautiful and peaceful surprise for me. The Mongolian people are very proud of their hero Chinggis Khaan and still live a fairly traditional life, although the sight of satellite dishes attached to nomadic camps is cause for a smile. My images in this exhibition are a glimpse of some of the sights to be found on the steppes of Mongolia.



John Teague

Steps a Journey

For my secondary schooling I was fortunate in attending Bendigo High School where Geology was taught by Horrie Sargeant. This provided a lifelong interest in rocks, minerals and fossils and the environment in general.

A feature of the construction of "Federation Square" in Melbourne's CBD is the colourful, patterned Kimberley sandstone facings on courtyards, steps and pathways; I had made a collection of macro shots which I added to almost every time I came to Melbourne.

There are stages in the formation of the material - from being first laid down as sand grains into sedimentary bedding planes, then subsequent hardening by pressure, movement and uplift. Different amounts of mineral oxides such as iron and manganese provided interesting line, shape, colour, pattern and texture. In contemporary times this material has been recognized for its hard wearing and decorative qualities, quarried and transported to the site.

The last stages for me were the conceptualisation and production into its final form - it has been a lot of fun!



Kay Mack

In the Steps of the Pioneers

In the City of Manningham, Victoria, on the site of the original Doncaster Lutheran Church and Waldau cemetery you can now find Schramm's Cottage and Orchard Museum. A number of buildings significant to the history of the district have been relocated to this site. They are maintained as a museum by the Doncaster and Templestowe Historical Society to which I belong.

I recently found a set of old bootmaker's lasts in storage at the Cottage. Upend these and they look just like disembodied feet. So I took a pair of them for a walk around the museum – in the steps of the pioneers –

along a garden pathway constructed of hand-made bricks that carry the thumb prints of those who made them.

to the wheelwright's shop, important in the days of horse-drawn transport and farm equipment.

and to the original Waldau cemetery, closed in 1888, and sadly vandalised due to anti-German feeling during the second world war.



Margrit Wendt

'Time is a bankless River' was the theme of my first solo exhibition, a theme that increasingly fascinates me. It is its intangibility, its fluidity, its mercilessness, but also its intrinsic beauty and healing powers.

Over the last years, this fascination expressed itself in many of my photographs like in **'Ephemera'** – my footsteps on a snow-white high rising sand dune gone within the hour. Looking back, I saw the amazing play of light and shadow and the texture my steps left in the sand.

Time is also present in the weathered **'Garden Steps'** as well as in the dropped bougainvillea blossoms, one of which I gave back its colour.

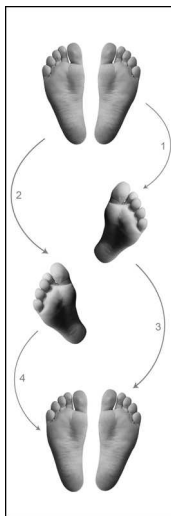
'Wheatbelt Scapes' shows a huge modern wheat silo taken on the way to our friends' wheat farm. But what really caught my eyes were the outside steps leading up to the roof. After having been to the farm (photographing the harvesting) and looking at this image, I suddenly thought with mixed feelings of all the bushland that had to be cleared before placing the silo in this spot. So I superimposed the bushland back into the image as a sequence in Time – clearing, building and earning a living.



1975 was an exciting year for the development of disco music and disco dance. It was the year for hits like *The Hustle* and *(Are you ready) Do the Bus Stop*. These two songs were written and performed by the Fatback Band who were synonymous with funky disco. When this band played, you felt the need to tap your feet and shake your bootie to the Fatback Band's funky disco sounds.

In the 70's, people used to dance together to groovy disco music, similar to line dancing of today. When *(Are you ready) Do the Bus Stop* was played people would get up out of their seats and dance the Bus Stop steps. Incredibly *(Are you ready) Do the Bus Stop* is said to have contributed to the development of the line dancing of today.

My contribution to the Steps Exhibition is the dance steps of the *The California Hustle* (aka *the Bus Stop!*) with written instructions on how to get you started. Maybe this might inspire you to dig out your old vinyls and listen to some of that ol' great 70's groovy music - my favourite!



Paul Truslove

We find steps in our everyday lives, they are always there to help us ascend or descend to various levels by our own movement. How often do we notice them?

Steps come in all forms, sizes and materials. You find them in parks, beaches, structures and ladders.

My display shows all of these with the use of a well-worn ladder, bought cheaply from an antique shop. The images in between the steps are from a trip along the National Highway No. 1 from Adelaide to Geelong in March.

Without such a simple design we would all be stuck on one level unable to ascend or descend when moving to different heights.

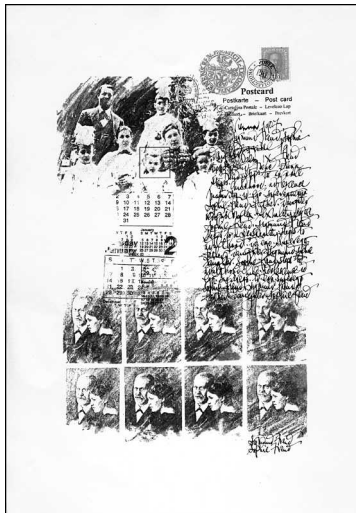


Phil Schofield

Vienna, 1900. Freud is formulating the basis of psychiatry .. the manner by which the personality or the psyche develops, the steps from childhood to maturity. The first inklings of the "nature vs nurture" debate. Are we moulded by our familial environment, or by some inbuilt, inherited construct?

2000: The human genome is deciphered. The genetic code, the alphabet of life, had been deciphered 50 years previously. Now we have the complete "book of life", with all the codes for all the steps of "being", from conception to death. In principle, we have the complete code for all the genes for all the steps of our physical life, our genetic inheritance. We can resolve once and for all the "nature vs nurture" question?

My work references these issues, and mirrors the steps of "being", with overlaying of the factors in the steps of life, from conception to maturity, with particular reference to Freud's Vienna and to the genetic code.



Warren Stone

Beyond Life's Gate

Beyond Life's Gate is an image that involves the mystery of life and what awaits us at the end of our time (yep, morbid I know). I've had to face my own mortality a couple of times and this image arises out of my own experiences.

It involves a line of stone steps rising to a metal gate. Nothing shows beyond the gate - though a mysterious shaft of light crosses the image just near the gate. The image derives much of its mood from being black and white with darkened edges, guiding the eye up the steps to the gate - the path has been relatively easy to follow so far; but what lies beyond?

