

lost & FOUND

From the *abstract in nature* to man-made refuse, artist and florist ALISON COATES finds *inspiration* where others may fail to look.

IN ALISON COATES' SYDNEY STUDIO, HER NEW WORK, WITH AN ABSTRUSE TABLET (LEFT), ITS HIEROGLYPHS MADE FROM CHOPPED BONE ON TIMBER VENETIAN SLATS. WIRE AND BARRAMUNDI SCALES ON TIMBER BLOCKS (PARTLY SEEN, RIGHT). BELOW IT IS LINO WITH FORMBOARD, CORRUGATED FIBREGLASS AND WIRE. COATES CHOOSES NOT TO NAME HER WORK.





MEMO TO ANYONE searching to bring more quiet intrigue and something quite lovely into their life: consider the art of Alison Coates. Her new work can be tracked down to NG Art above Mission Restaurant and Bar in Sydney's Chippendale, where Nicky Ginsberg shows the newest evolutions of found matter.

Coates has worked her dark materials into ideas of translucence, light and water in abstract construction, composed of the natural and man-made, sometimes tuned to phases of the moon. She is as free, considered and poetic as ever, more so I believe. This brilliant florist now finds natural and man-made detritus, interesting to her if no-one else, and with rhythmic precision, as if she can hear as well as see it, takes it into her art. She's been working with barramundi scales, they're big enough, scrubbing them until they transmit more of the light, and she stores them in the fridge so her teenage children say, "Oh yuk, Mum" again.

There is abstraction composed of chopped, chiselled bones, the finely sliced marcelle waves of a luminous corrugated fibreglass, and the thin timber slats from old blinds. She imagines how, at certain times of day, light might penetrate the holes through which their cords once slid. She is at home in skips as in estuaries. It is the estuarine which she loves, in the shallows, the mudflats in places such as Wattamolla National Park in Sydney. She makes calligraphic wide looping whiskers of old rubber and cane, uses industrial and fencing wire, zinc, gauze and she-oak, slate, and wax straws. With these she sometimes creates tablets of a new language as mysterious as rosetta stones. All this as she carries on obsessively through her chosen landscape groove "trying to catch the dream, to reach something intangible." ANTONIA WILLIAMS

Alison Coates is showing from 28 October–15 November at NG Art Gallery, 3 Little Queen Street, Chippendale NSW, (02) 9318 2992.

COATES FINESSES HER FOUND MATERIALS INTO ABSTRACT SCULPTURES THAT PLAY WITH THE PASSAGE OF LIGHT. ABOVE: HERE, THE ARTIST IS SEEN IN HER STUDIO WITH WIRE AND BARRAMUNDI SCALES, SHE-OAK NEEDLES AND GLAZED WIRE, BOTH ON FORMBOARD, AND WIRE AND SCALES ON OLD TIMBER BLOCKS. LEFT: A FRINGE OF WISHBONES ON BOARD. BELOW: LINO ON FORMBOARD. BELOW RIGHT: KITCHEN ABSTRACT, LINO ON FORMBOARD WITH THE TRESSES OF CORRUGATED FIBREGLASS ROOFING LOOPED WITH WIRE.

