

Annique Golderberg :: *LIVING WATER: the river hid*

>> essay by Travis Paterson

*“Maps are already fetishes of a type ... they draw up associations of home and abroad, the known and unknown, belonging and longing”*¹

*“The map is not the territory”*²

Annique Goldenberg’s relationship with water has a long history. As a child she spent a lot of her time on the south coast of England. There she learnt to sail with her father, an accomplished sailor and wartime British naval man, on her grandmother’s wooden scow. As an adult she lived for eleven years, on and off, on a yacht sailing the world, initially just with her husband and, eventually, with her daughter and son. She is familiar with a language that most of us do not understand (or have not yet learnt). It is a language of sea-based navigation, exploration and of finding one’s place

¹ Harmon, K 2003, *You Are Here: Personal Geographies and Other Maps of the Imagination*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York.

² Korzybski, A 1958, *Science and sanity: an introduction to non-aristotelian systems and general semantics* 4th edn, The Inst. of Gen. Semantics, Lakeville, Conn.

safely in and about the world. It is a language learnt through curiosity and necessity. Not only is it a verbal language but it is also one of maps and charts. An essential language if one is to try to exert some measure of control over that which does not want to be ordered.

LIVING WATER: the river hid began as an investigation of Lismore’s river system: a study of its forms, histories and the relationships people have with it. Goldenberg began by taking small journeys on the river by kayak. She explored its pathways, revelling in the Japanese garden-like nature of the river as it revealed hidden worlds around bends. As well as being a force of destruction the river has gifted many opportunities to people over the years and for Goldenberg it offered space and time for remembering and contemplation. It reconnected her with her past and offered an escape from the physical to the imagined world.

To be on a river is to inhabit a liminal space, a space of transition between locations. The tangential tributaries of her subject slowly transformed a project that had started out from

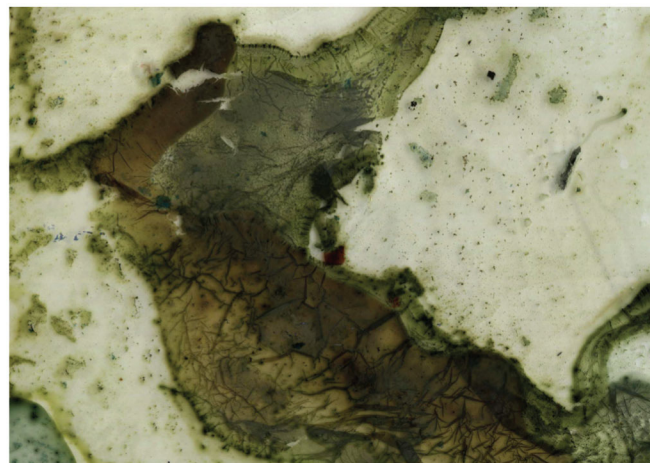
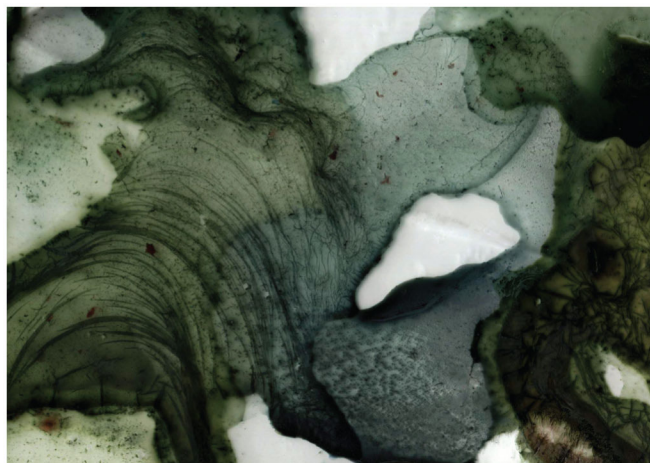
a place of control and certainty to one which allowed itself to be guided. The outcomes of this project can be seen as a series of metaphorical map-like drawings, digital prints and an artists’ book. They are an exploration of representation of the internal and external territories the artist has encountered.

A major part of Goldenberg’s broad arts practice is an engagement with the aleatoric: the incorporation of chance into the creative process. She is able to surrender attempts at control and allow chance and the nature of her materials to guide the construction of her imagery. During her trips on the river she collected water samples that she then mixed with inks and froze. Selecting from her palette of coloured ice she then placed them on glass and allowed them to melt like glacial forms, slowly moving across the glass, creating new landscapes in their wake. Finally she seals the work with beeswax. Her choice of substrate, glass (considered by some to be a slow moving liquid), and her drawing materials have a harmonious working relationship. The drawings sit upon the glass as opposed to being embedded if the substrate were to be one such as paper. This separation gives the sense of a

specimen of a territory as much as the mapping of one.

Her glass-based drawings are presented in this exhibition in two distinct divisions: the suite of individual, larger freestanding vertical panels and the smaller, horizontally installed *Folio of Seven Survey Drawings*. There is an increased sense of intimacy to these latter works that comes from scale and “head-down” viewing. They are page-like and of a size that can be easily held, suggestive of a book about to be constructed. Laid out together they are like the secret studies of an explorer charting conjured lands of lagoons and islands, seas and continents, littorals and hinterlands. The metaphorical geographies created here read like cartographies without a key except for those provided by the viewer.

Accompanying the drawings is a series of digital prints comprising modified scans of the ink drawings on glass. The act of scanning, enlarging and subtle manipulation of these drawings renders them increasingly cartographic and scientific. They offer an attempt to study, measure and chart that which does not easily yield to such interrogations. The



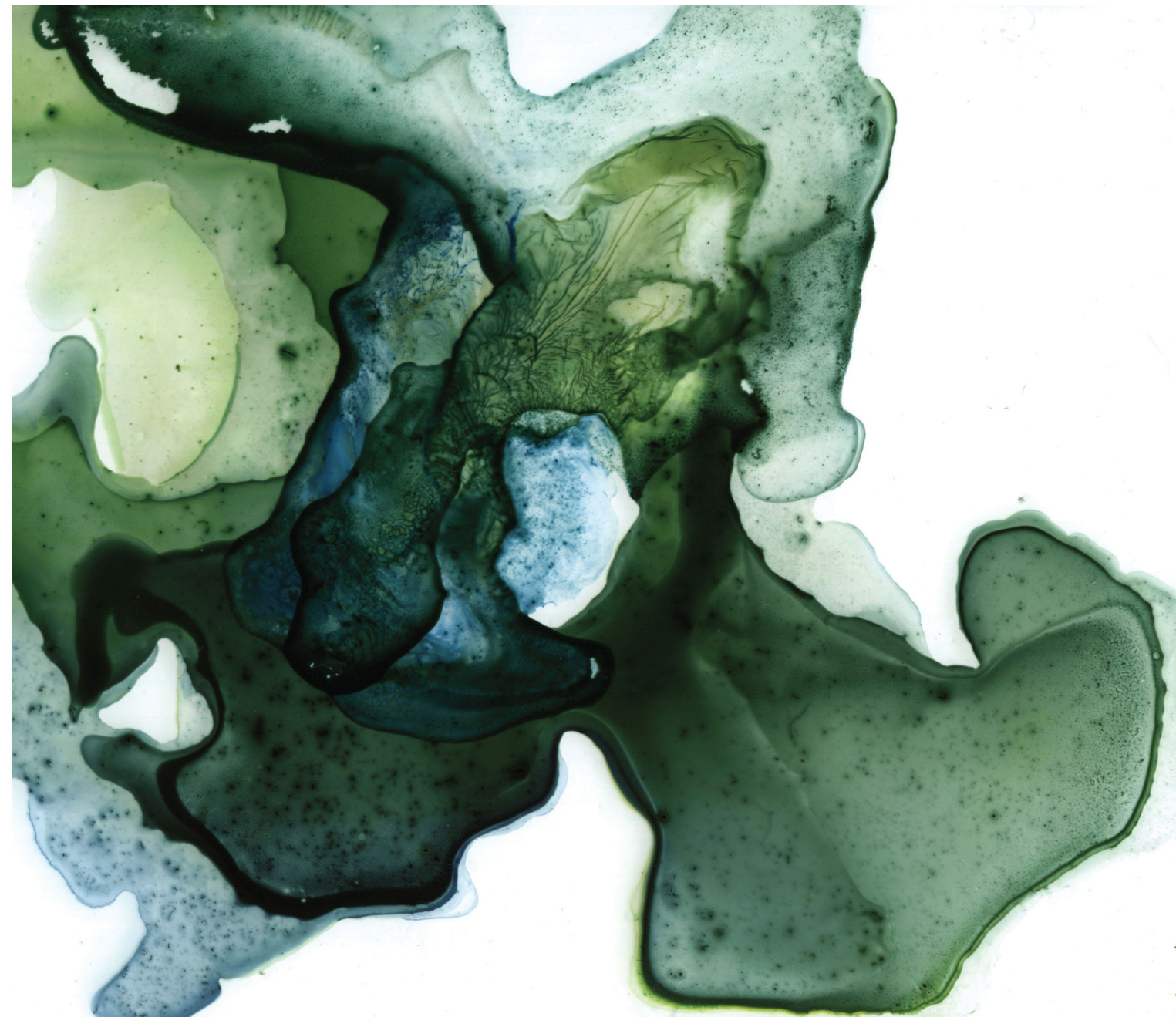
artist refers to these prints as *Moments*, suggesting smaller details of time and place than those represented in the drawings. Maps, by their nature, can never provide a full account of that which they represent. However, it is through the interrogation of maps, an examination of what is told and hidden, the implicit as well as the explicit, that the stories begin to emerge.

There is nothing *surface* about the works shown here. They do not offer themselves up readily but instead invite the viewer to study them both for their materiality and their content. Considering these works is like studying a series of territories and maps. There is a seductive fluidity between representations here. As one moves between the large and small drawings, the digital prints and the artists' book a question emerges. Which is the map and which is the territory? Can one find a clear distinction? Or are they maps of maps of maps of...

To hear another speaking a language we do not understand can be both mesmerising and isolating. Viewing the work in *LIVING WATER: the river hid* is indeed mesmerising and with it Goldenberg has provided us with her version of a Rosetta Stone. A tool with which we can linger and explore, decipher and attempt to understand. Nothing is lost in translation here. Instead the language is transfigured.

images
 above: *I* and *II*, from folio of *Moments* 2014
 digital print on Cotton Rag, 29.7 x 42cm
 cover: *Delicato*, from folio of seven *Survey Drawings* 2014
 ink, glass, beeswax, handmade banana/kozo paper, 21 x 29.7cm
 inside: spread from *Logbook*, 2014
 artist's book of digital prints on Belgian Linen, 12 x 42cm
 all courtesy the artist

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