

The Artist and the Scientists Exhibition

An exhibition about the illustration of scientific ideas and creativity. Featuring the works of Melbourne artist Peter Trusler.

The works featured are primarily illustrations works that present a body of information and ideas in pictorial form. They are the presentation of intellectual enquiry rather than the expression of the personal experience.



Peter Trusler

Peter Trusler is an artist and illustrator from Melbourne, Australia. He has always held an interest in the natural world with birds and animals featuring in much of his art. His favoured media are the traditional painting and drawing media of oil painting, water colour, pastel, charcoal and graphite. Realism is his preferred style and it may vary from a tonal impressionism to something approaching photorealism or hyper-realism. While he paints a wide range of subjects, his style is suited to illustration, and his natural history subjects are frequently commissioned for books, popular and scientific journals.

The Australian fauna is unusual. It is the product of a changing, and at time, a harsh environment. Both past and present serve as a rich and inspiring source for artistic expression. A variety of Trusler's bird and animal images will show both his commissioned illustrations and his more personal and emotive forms of expression.

One aspect of Trusler's illustrations has been his special interest in palaeontological research in reconstructing extinct animals. Bring extinct animals to life in paintings is a complex and lengthy process, requiring close

co-operation with a variety of scientists covering a range of disciplines. The artist needs to be skilled in three dimensional representations, have a good biological and scientific understanding and be familiar with live animals and their behaviour and be cognizant of the detail of the environments in which they lived. The artist needs to be a good communicator and have a very enquiring mind!

Trusler holds a special interest in biological illustration. His work in this field is highly regarded internationally and has featured in numerous popular and scientific publications. The combination of these artistic interests with his scientific background has ensured that his reconstruction illustrations of prehistoric life have a unique insight. This work is always done in close consultation with a wide range of scientific experts and often involves the Monash Science Centre. He has been twice awarded the Lanzendorf Paleo Art Prize by the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology; for scientific illustration in 2001 and for two-dimensional art in 2005, and one painting captured the cover of Time Magazine in 1993.

Trusler works in a variety of media, but oil painting occupies the greater part of his creative time. An all absorbing interest in various forms of realism has enabled him to explore a great diversity of subjects.

GOGO REEF RECONSTRUCTION

1991 A reconstructed underwater scene from the Late Devonian of North-Western Australia;(360 million years before the present.) Featured are the 'Duck-billed Lungfish', *Griphognathus whitei* and the predatory Arthodire Placoderm, *Eastmanosteus calliaspis*.
Alkyd Oil on Linen over Hardboard



Notes from the Artist

Everyone seems to be curious when they see the remains of a strange creature; especially, when the remains have become fossils. That is when they have become mineralized and turned to stone. You can bet they are old, but how old? You might wonder what type of animal it may have been. Was it a dinosaur? What did it look like? How did it live and what did it eat? How did it die? You might even wonder what other animals and plants were part of its ancient world?

The answers to such questions are often quite complicated and difficult to discover. Throughout the last two centuries of seeking these answers, scientists (most particularly palaeontologists), have put together a reasonable 'picture' of life in many prehistoric times. Increasingly, they are able to make more accurate estimations about the appearance and probable life styles of long extinct animals. They are finding out how environments and life on Earth has changed over time and perhaps the reasons for the change. Many kinds of animals and plants have become extinct while others have lived on and slowly changed through successive generations. All things living today have come from some point, descended from those that lived in the past.

My job as an illustrator is to turn scientific information and ideas into pictures. If I do it well, the illustrations can be an efficient way to summarize a great deal of complex knowledge.

I certainly need to look at the fossils, but I also need to understand the scientific writing, measurements and graphic data about the fossils before I can easily and reliably show everyone the scientist's specialized understanding. I need to work closely with the scientists, ask them questions, make my own observations and ask them questions! It is an interesting process. My reconstructions of extinct animals and extinct environments actually become time machines. They move us back in the past and help us imagine what the past was actually like. By understanding the past, it gives us, one and all, some hints about what the future could be. The illustrations can also share something of the curiosity and excitement so many of us feel about our past, and incidentally make us look closer at the present.

KOOLASUCHUS CLEELANDI
2002 Preliminary study for South-eastern Australian Early Cretaceous
Oil on Linen



Costing for Artist and the Scientists Exhibition

Rental fee of \$US 25,000 per month

Setup fee of \$US 35,000

All costs for Freight and customs charges from Melbourne, Australia and return

Provision of adequate personnel for movement of crates from truck, to storage area and reloading at end of the exhibit.

Storage of crates.

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LEAELLYNASAURA AMICAGRAPHICA; SPRING RIVER SCENE
1992 Reconstructed Scene of the Otway Basin Early Cretaceous of Victoria, Australia.
Alkyd Oil on Linen