

Kar ij i n i

Stephen Best

It's a touch ironic that a master of digital imaging and printing should turn to the most primitive capture medium for inspiration. But perhaps Stephen Best's foray into pinhole photography should have been expected.

In the informative Artist Statement for his 2007 HUW DAVIES GALLERY exhibition, *Coast*, Best said:

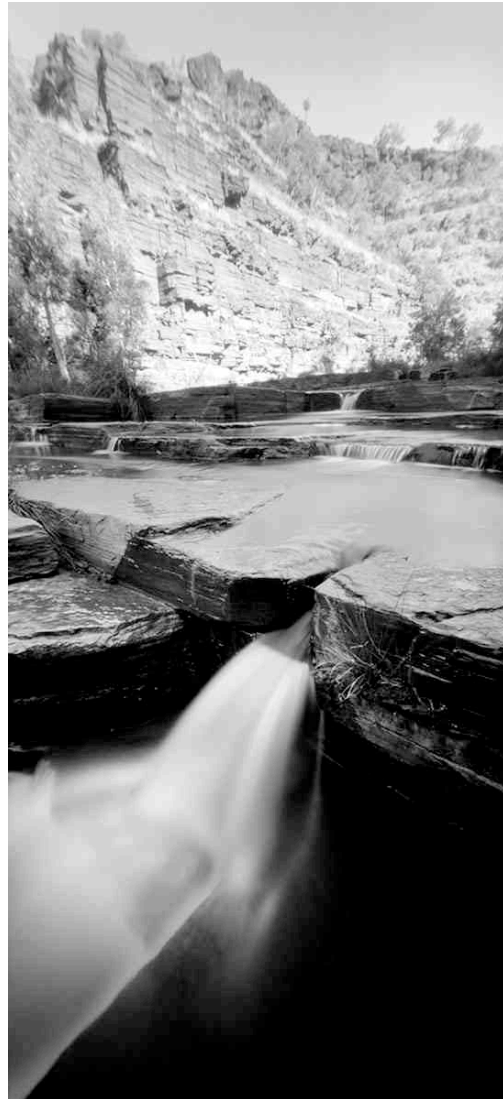
Rather than seeking grandeur, I find that I'm drawn more to vignettes or details as these hold most in my visual memory. I strive foremost for beauty of form and the pleasure of just looking at the richness of the natural world. Eschewing cleverness or artifice, my goal is simply to have the viewer share in this moment of stillness ...

That approach to creating images has followed through in all of the images I have seen from Stephen Best, including the *Kar ij i n i* work made in 2013. But, as with the *Coast* images, here Best has created a body of work that has a magnificence transcending particular locations and intimate landscape details. Employing the pinhole camera seems to have allowed him to drill down to the essence of the landscape of Kar ij i n i National Park in Western Australia's Pilbara region. *Kar ij i n i* makes a convincing case for the preservation of this and similar astonishing places.

I said in my introduction to *Coast* that 'Best's judgement of what makes an engaging image is finely tuned'. This judgement is perfectly expressed in *Kar ij i n i*. I hope he succeeds in his plan to show the work in venues outside Canberra but, for now, we are delighted to share *Kar ij i n i* with visitors to the HUW DAVIES GALLERY. We are also delighted to accept his offer to donate the proceeds from exhibition sales to PhotoAccess to assist us in our ongoing work for the Canberra community.

Stephen Best has made an outstanding contribution to the visual arts in Canberra as a digital printmaker, assisting countless numbers of photo artists to achieve the best possible results from their images. PhotoAccess and the photo arts community generally is deeply in debt to him.

David Chalker
Director



Dales Gorge, Kar ij i n i National Park I



Knox Gorge, Kar ij i n i National Park I

Artist statement

Fifteen years ago I made it to within 1000km of Karijini National Park in Western Australia's Pilbara region but the extra distance was just too much at the time. In July 2013 the opportunity arose for a small group trip of two weeks duration to the region, camping in the park nearby and sharing 4WD hire costs. The intention was seeing the sights and photography, the park's famed gorges being the main attraction. Because the park is well represented in overly colourful picture books and other things I decided to shoot with a 6 x 12 pinhole camera in black and white.

A pinhole camera is very easy to use, the only decisions being where to point the camera (a wooden box with a tiny hole as fixed aperture) and the exposure time. This simplified approach, while somewhat haphazard, does however allow one to concentrate more on the subject and lighting: the quintessence of a photograph. The resultant images have infinite depth of field but an overall softness and distortions at the periphery which are intrinsic to the pinhole medium and only add to their charm, I feel. These are surprisingly minor shortcomings given the primitiveness of the means.

January 2014

Biography

Stephen Best has shown in group exhibitions at PhotoAccess and presented two solo exhibitions: *Coast* in the HUW DAVIES GALLERY at PhotoAccess in 2007 and *Sandholes Road* at Altenburg Studio, Braidwood in 2011. His work is represented in the *PhotoAccess 25th Anniversary Print Portfolio* and *100 Views of Canberra*, published by PhotoAccess as a project to mark the Centenary of Canberra supported by the Centenary of Canberra Community Initiatives Fund.

He runs a digital printmaking business from a studio attached to his home in Braidwood.

More information about Stephen Best and his work is at www.stephenbestphotography.com and www.macquarieeditions.com.au

Solo exhibitions

- | | |
|------|---|
| 2011 | <i>Sandholes Road</i> , Altenburg Studio, Braidwood, NSW |
| 2007 | <i>Coast</i> , HUW DAVIES GALLERY, PhotoAccess, Manuka Arts Centre, Canberra, ACT |

Group exhibitions

- | | |
|------|--|
| 2013 | <i>100 Views of Canberra</i> , HUW DAVIES GALLERY, PhotoAccess, Manuka Arts Centre, Canberra |
| 2013 | <i>PhotoAccess 25th Anniversary Print Portfolio</i> , PhotoAccess, Manuka Arts Centre, Canberra |
| 2009 | |



Kalamina Gorge, Karijini National Park IV



Kalamina Gorge, Karjini National Park I



Dales Gorge, Karjini National Park II



Environs, Karjini National Park

List of works

Inkjet prints on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Ultra Smooth (toned)

		mm (paper size)
1	<i>Dales Gorge, Karijini National Park II</i>	480 x 330
2	<i>Environs, Karijini National Park</i>	480 x 330
3	<i>Hancock Gorge, Karijini National Park</i>	330 x 480
4	<i>Knox Gorge, Karijini National Park II</i>	330 x 480
5	<i>Kalamina Gorge, Karijini National Park IV</i>	330 x 480
6	<i>Kalamina Gorge, Karijini National Park II</i>	330 x 480
7	<i>Knox Gorge, Karijini National Park I</i>	330 x 480
8	<i>Kalamina Gorge, Karijini National Park I</i>	330 x 480
9	<i>Weano Recreation Area, Karijini National Park</i>	330 x 480
10	<i>Weano Gorge, Karijini National Park</i>	480 x 330
11	<i>Kalamina Gorge, Karijini National Park III</i>	480 x 330
12	<i>Dales Gorge, Karijini National Park I</i>	480 x 330



Hancock Gorge, Karijini National Park



Weano Recreation Area, Karijini National Park