



MEDIA RELEASE

11 August 2021

For immediate release



Laura Wills and Louise Flaherty: *Plant Notes*

15 August – 31 October 2021

Guildhouse and the Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium of South Australia are delighted to present *Plant Notes*, an intervention by South Australian artists Laura Wills and Louise Flaherty developed in response to The Collections Project.

South Australian artists Laura Wills and Louise Flaherty have been investigating the personal and environmental effects of losing vulnerable flora through research in the SA Seed Conservation Centre and Adelaide Botanic Garden, culminating in a collaborative intervention at the Santos Museum of Economic Botany

The artists have delved into collection at the Museum of Economic Botany along with the Garden's living collection, library and the seed collection archive during a period of vital field-work in the aftermath of Australia's bushfires in early 2020. Integral to the artists' understanding and experience of the collection has been access to the caretakers and researchers of the collection; fieldtrips and robust conversation



Botanic Gardens
and State Herbarium

COPYRIGHT AGENCY
CULTURAL FUND

guildhouse

created a generous environment for meaningful, valuable research. The result is a reflective and celebratory project that comments on destructive colonisation and the beauty of nature by looking closely at the plants and their relationships.

Plant Notes highlights human and plant relationships with a focus on vulnerable and threatened South Australian native plants. It is accompanied by an ephemeral art tour and [sound work](#) developed with Belinda Gehlert and Naomi Keyte, designed to be experienced within Adelaide Botanic Garden and encourage movement and thoughtfulness within the natural environment.

Artist Laura Wills reflects, *'The Collections Project enabled us to not only meet the SA Seed Conservation Centre team, but interview them, join them on field trips and spend time absorbing their work to inform the artworks we created. It was a great insight into the world of native plants, their conservation status and how knowing them closer is the way to strengthen our relationship with them and their survival.'*

Her collaborator Louise Flaherty adds, *'Being able to meet and talk and share with the staff and volunteers has been inspirational. It confirms for me why I make the work that I do and drives me to continue to create this work. The Collections Project has been like planting a seed for future work of mine, this expense will continue to inspire the work that I make for many years to come.'*

The layered outcomes of this project are born of the crucible of this time of great challenge, global and local upheaval and desire for community connection. Flaherty and Wills' Collections Project has seeded new connections, ideas and creative outcomes throughout its development, spanning new collaborations and exciting new directions. This has included ephemeral community projects with Vitalstatix, Nature Festival and a digital music/visual experiential project supported by The Australia Council for the Arts.

Public Programs Manager at the Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium, Christine Schloithe, says, *'Having access to the scientists at the SA Seed Conservation Centre, as well as its collections, gave Flaherty and Wills a deep window through which to view these life-giving seeds. Their delicate art works are presented through a lens of loss, but also of hope. It shows the important work of the Seed Conservation team, and how our own individual actions can have an impact on local flora.'*

Guildhouse CEO Emma Fey adds, *'The Guildhouse Collections Project is the result of true partnership and demonstrates the value of creating new and ambitious environments for artists, scientists, collections and audiences to coalesce. The work that Wills and Flaherty have created as a result, is sensitive and evocative, gently inviting audiences to spend time to consider lost plant species and their own role within the cultivation and colonisation of the South Australian flora and fauna eco-system.'*

ARTIST TALKS AND WORKSHOPS

Plant Notes: Artist Workshop

Saturday 21 August, 10.30am – 12pm

Santos Museum of Economic Botany, Adelaide Botanic Gardens

Bookings: <https://guildhouse.org.au/plant-notes-artist-workshops/>

Plant Notes: Artist Talk & 2021 Call Out Information Session

Wednesday 25 August, 1pm

Santos Museum of Economic Botany, Adelaide Botanic Gardens

Bookings: <https://guildhouse.org.au/plant-notes-artist-talk-2021-call-out-information-session/>



Government of South Australia
Arts South Australia



Australian Government
Visual Arts and Craft Strategy
South Australia



Botanic Gardens
and State Herbarium

COPYRIGHTAGENCY
CULTURAL FUND

guildhouse

Plant Notes – Artist Workshop (Botanica Lumina)

Thursday 16 September, 6pm

Schomburgk Pavilion, Adelaide Botanic Gardens

Bookings: https://www.botanicgardens.sa.gov.au/BotanicaLumina/Plant_Notes_Artist_Workshop

ARTIST BIOS

Laura Wills

Laura Wills is an Adelaide-based multidisciplinary artist based at Central Studios. Traversing the boundaries of drawing she explores social and environmental themes through found materials, collaborative processes and community-based projects to create hybrid works that are communicative in nature and connect us to the environment.

With a Bachelor of Visual Arts and Applied Design from Adelaide Centre of the Arts (2003), and a Bachelor of Visual Arts Honors from South Australian School of Art (2011) she has exhibited nationally and internationally and has worked collaboratively with many artists including Anna Dowling during a residency at SAHMRI; Elisabeth Close as part of an artist in resident at Flinders Medical Centre and Louise Flaherty in the creation of *Grassy Shadows* workshops for Nature Festival 2020. In 2017 she was awarded the Fleurieu Art Prize and in 2019 the National Works on Paper prize both for her collaborative work with James Tylor.

Recent projects include *Parklands Project* and a 4-week Country Arts SA residency at Palace of Production, Kangaroo Island. Current Wills Projects works with William Cheesman include *Tiny Gems*, for City of Port Adelaide Enfield, installing a mural in Clare with Rosina Possingham and developing public art for Rural City of Murray Bridge.

Louise Flaherty

Louise Flaherty is an artist and arts worker based in Adelaide. Informed by quiet reflection on the natural environment, her current practice spans drawing and installation with a focus on community driven projects.

Founding Director of Downtown Arts Space, she has worked at the South Australian School of Art, was Arts Program Manager at Barkly Regional Arts in the Northern Territory and studied Visual Arts at the South Australian School of Art, receiving first class Honours.

She has exhibited widely and in 2019 was the winner of the Tatiara Art Prize at Walkway Gallery. During a residency at The Mill in Adelaide CBD she created work based upon research of local native plants which was expanded upon in a later residency at Sauerbier House Cultural Exchange, Port Noarlunga. In 2018 she was recipient of a Guildhouse LimberUp mentorship with artist Laura Wills, focusing on community engagement and participatory practice. In 2019 she was Artist in Residence at the Women's and Children's Hospital and more recent projects include presenting a new collaborative work for OSCA's Parklands Project, participating in Vitalstatistix's Adhocracy program; and creating an collaborative audio-led workshop for Nature Festival.

Louise is a studio resident at Post Office Projects, Port Adelaide.

The Collections Project is a collaborative project between Guildhouse, the Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium of South Australia, Flinders University Museum of Art, South Australian Museum, and the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.



Government of South Australia
Arts South Australia



Australian Government
Visual Arts and Craft Strategy
South Australia



Botanic Gardens
and State Herbarium

COPYRIGHT AGENCY
CULTURAL FUND

guildhouse

This unique project provides artists the opportunity to research an area of one of the institution's collections and develop new work for exhibition. Championing the art and artists of our time while celebrating our cultural, historic and scientific heritage, The Collections Project has the demonstrated ability to provide new audience experiences while delivering long-term benefits to the artistic and career development of participating artists.

Guildhouse is the leading South Australian organisation supporting and creating connections for South Australian visual artists, craftspeople and designers for 54 years.

Image: Laura Wills and Louise Flaherty, *Threatened Night* (detail), 2021. Photograph: Grant Hancock.

For more information or interviews, please contact:

Ayesha Aggarwal

Communications and Marketing Coordinator, Guildhouse

T 08 8410 1822 E communications@guildhouse.org.au,

Lizzy Ray

Media and Communications Coordinator, Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium

Department for Environment and Water

T 08 8222 9345 E lizzy.ray@sa.gov.au

Media images and captions are available here

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/dr1gwvcduog0hui/AAA421UQlu6OiKsuhTSvI060a?dl=0>

Guildhouse is supported by the South Australian Government through Arts South Australia and by the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments.



Government of South Australia
Arts South Australia



Australian Government
Visual Arts and Craft Strategy
South Australia