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Karen Balderson
Journeys
Artist Statement

I have been working on my series of photographic mandalas since 2009. I began creating them to reflect my own personal journeys in the landscape. I started with my trip to Antarctica where I explored ways in which to illustrate a whole journey rather than a moment in time captured in a single photographic image. I wanted to move away from the idea of the photographic snapshot.

Some of my mandalas depict a day's journey, others a number of weeks or some, several seasons in a year. While the majority of my photographic collages relate to my own journeys, I also experiment with ways of creating mandalas which reflect some of my ancestor's journeys. In 2014, while participating in the Hill End Artist-in-Residence Program, I created two mandalas which showed, not only my personal journey, but also that of my mining ancestors from Devon and Cornwall and the journeys they undertook from Mudgee and Bathurst to Hill End during the gold rush period of the 1860s-1870s.

One of the reasons for creating my photographic collages in a circular format is that I am influenced by the Buddhist idea that the mandala symbolizes the cycle of life, although I don't think life is quite as ordered as traditional mandala designs indicate and so have chosen, in general, not to design them symmetrically. The layering effect of my mandalas relates to how all things are interconnected in life, either now or with the past. So although, according to Buddhist belief, existence is impermanent, a connectedness to what has gone before still continues.

PREVIOUS EXHIBITIONS

2006	Group Exhibition	*ACT Photography Teachers' Exhibition*	Canberra School of Art	Acton, ACT