

# EARTH SKINS

THREE DECADES OF DRAWING BY SUSAN WOOD





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SUSAN GIBSON GARVEY, CURATOR

Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery,  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
and

Owens Art Gallery, Sackville, New Brunswick



33. *They Fade Quickly* 2006

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18. *Letting Go* 1995

## PREFACE

*Dress No. 16* (1990), a work monumental in conception and subtle in execution, entered the MSVU Collection in 1994 as a gift from Susan Wood. It has appeared in numerous themed group exhibitions since then. I have often thought, from my curatorial perspective, that such versatility in a work of art indicates its broad signifying range and historical relevance. Interestingly, Susan Wood produced her dramatic series *Devil's Purse* (1985) and *Dress* (1989-1990), depicting skates' egg cases and clothing as surrogates for the female body at the same time as the noted feminist artist Mary Kelly was occupied with *Interim* (1984-1989), in which garments also represent stand-ins for women's bodies.

Susan Wood's attentiveness to women's corporeal experience, and her status as an accomplished if under-recognized Nova Scotian artist, make this retrospective exhibition a "good fit" with the MSVU Art Gallery mandate. In Susan Gibson Garvey the exhibition has its ideal curator, a thoughtful art professional who has engaged in the making and interpretation of drawings throughout her dual careers as a visual artist and curator. I am of course deeply grateful to Susan Wood for the privilege of exhibiting her work. It has been a delight to collaborate with both Susans!

My gratitude also extends to the many lenders (listed elsewhere) for allowing their drawings to travel for the duration of the tour. MSVU Art Gallery Technician Stefan Hancherow, succeeded by David Dahms, devoted innumerable hours to assembling the exhibition, installing it and preparing its contents for the tour. Their efforts were complicated by our decision to exhibit the drawings in all of their vulnerability, without frames or other mounts. I salute our Technicians' resourcefulness in this regard. Administrative Assistant, Traci Steylen, and Program Coordinator, Katie Belcher, capably handled the loans correspondence and animation activities. Our co-publisher Owens Art Gallery, together with the Canada Council for the Arts and Nova Scotia Communities, Culture and Heritage, helped to make this publication a reality.

Mount Saint Vincent University has supported its Art Gallery for forty years. This book makes a fitting tribute to our milestone anniversary, and to the Mount's 138-year commitment to the education of women.

*Ingrid Jenkner, Director*  
MSVU Art Gallery

## FOREWORD

It is a great pleasure to be involved in this project to present three decades of work by Susan Wood. I would like to congratulate Susan on the occasion of this exhibition which represents her commitment to drawing, the central component of her practice.

Susan is a graduate of the Fine Arts program at Mount Allison University, and an artist with whom we have had a long relationship. I would like to welcome her back to Mount Allison and to the Owens. Mount Allison has a long-standing commitment to the fine arts in Atlantic Canada and to the education of women artists. It is also fitting to note and highlight Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery's engagement with Atlantic Canada's women artists through collecting and through exhibitions such as this one.

I would also like to acknowledge the important support of Mount Allison University and the Canada Council for the Arts in the presentation of our program of contemporary Canadian art at the Owens.

*Gemey Kelly*  
Director/Curator  
Owens Art Gallery  
Mount Allison University



39. Morning Shadows 2010

Sewall '10

## ARTIST'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

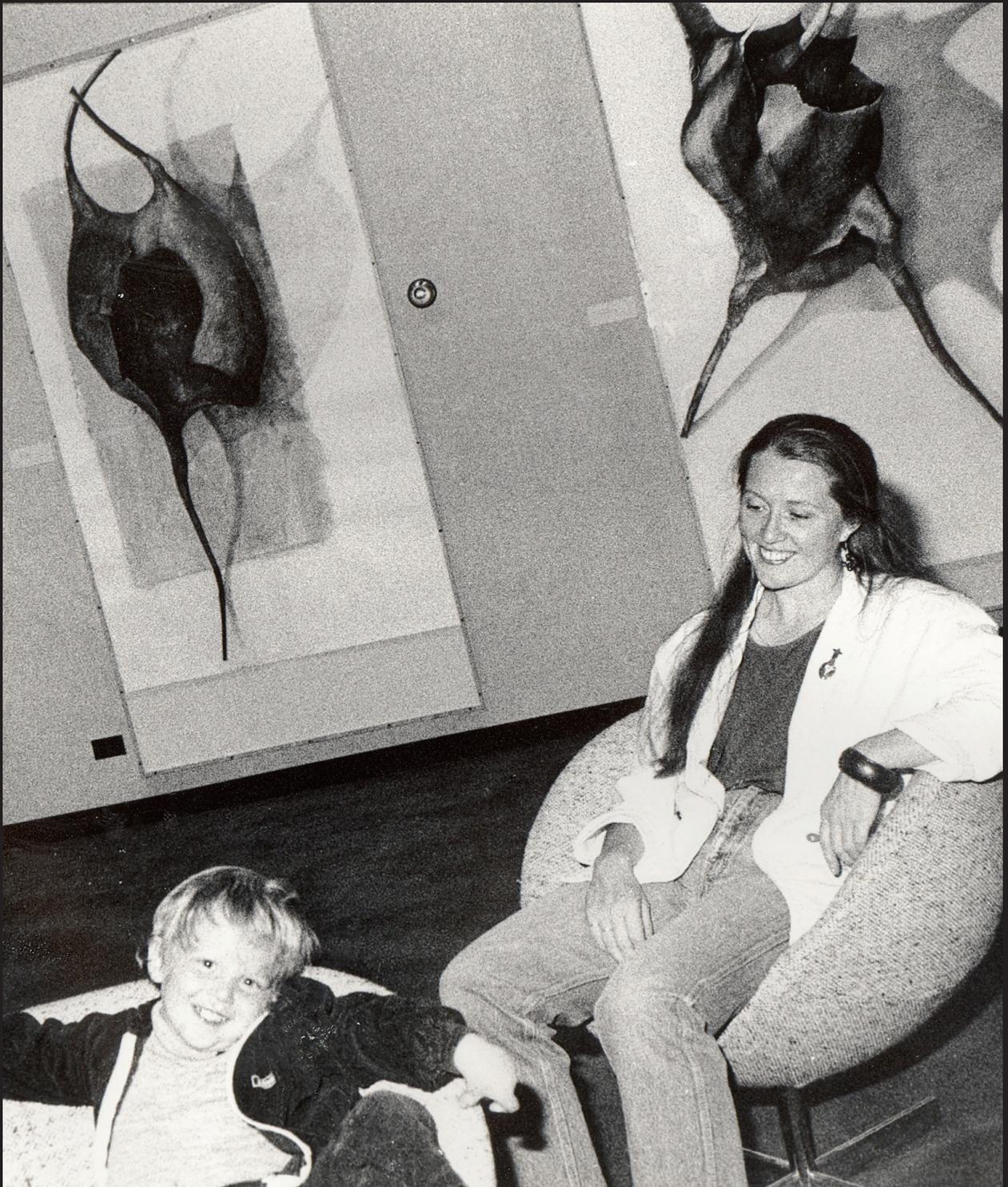
The nature of a survey show is that you see the path an individual artist has followed over a particular period of time. When you are that artist, you are reminded of the many family members, friends and colleagues who have given advice, support and encouragement along the way. Recognizing that there are many more people to thank than space permits, I would like to acknowledge the following: my parents for the support they gave me through art school and beyond; my sisters Mary Jane Henderson and Nancy Wood; my late husband, Stephen Fudge, who was always there for me in so many ways and who understood the importance of my studio time; my three sons, David, James and Aiden simply for being who they are; the late Stephen Andrews who was a friend, teacher and mentor for close to twenty years and who taught me so much about art and life; Ineke Graham of Studio 21 for her unstinting support of all the artists she represents; Ingrid Jenkner, Director of MSVU Art Gallery, for her commitment to *Earth Skins* and its tour; the MSVU gallery staff for being a joy to work with; Gemey Kelly of the Owens Art Gallery for her ongoing support and her contribution to this publication. It has been both a pleasure and a privilege to work with Sue Gibson Garvey; our conversations have spanned a difficult time in my life, and I can't thank her enough for her generosity, depth of understanding and the clarity of her writing.

*Susan Wood*

## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this exhibition to the memory of my husband, Stephen Mills Fudge, 1951-2010.

SW



Susan Wood with son David and *Large Devil's Purse* drawings, Memorial University Art Gallery, 1985.

# EARTH SKINS

Three Decades of Drawing by Susan Wood

## INTRODUCTION

For thirty years, Susan Wood has carried on a studio practice rooted in the principles of observational drawing. Atlantic Canadian audiences are probably most familiar with her recent work: elegant and elegiac drawings of decaying flowers, dead birds and insects created over the past dozen years or so. Meticulously rendered in a variety of graphic techniques, often on sumptuously textured handmade papers, these works embody the idea of finitude, reflecting the poignancy of brief lives and the fragility of temporal existence. They have been presented in solo and group exhibitions, including *Taxonomies* (1999) and *Florilegium* (2003), both curated by Gil McElroy, whose discussion of the works begins within the frameworks of geography, museology and scientific illustration and broadens into an appreciation of their metaphoric potential.<sup>1</sup> If these exhibitions were all we knew of Susan Wood's works, we would find much to admire in their exquisite technique and poetic resonance. Digging a little deeper, we might trace a complexity of feeling and purpose that reaches back to her earlier dramatic series: the *Devil's Purse* (1985) and the *Dress* (1989/91). These boldly expressive works originate in a woman's corporeal experience. A reassessment of Wood's recent work in the light of these discloses stronger ecological insights and a deeper connection to the pain and passion of living within one's own skin (and one's own earth) than just the inevitable melancholy of shedding it.

The conceptual frames of scientific illustration and museology are not irrelevant—after all, Wood's renderings of entropic nature connect directly with those historical artworks known as *Vanitas* and *Memento Mori*, as well as with contemporary ecological concerns—but additional perspectives are needed to uncover the range and depth of her studio production. The repetition of vessel forms, for example, and the prevalence of female body surrogates and skin tropes in Wood's images suggest that some aspects of feminist theory will provide useful contexts for discussion. In addition, there is the frame of the medium itself—the relevance, for this artist, of choosing drawing as her primary practice, and the way in which the material, tactile processes of mark-making and collage contribute to such affecting metaphors of incarnation.

## STAND-INS AND SURROGATES

Susan Wood began working on the *Devil's Purse* series in the early 1980s while she and her husband Stephen Fudge were completing graduate studies in Calgary (she in Fine Art, he in Geography). Soon after she finished her MFA program (and despite some encouraging exhibitions and purchases) a chance encounter compelled Wood to shift her practice from painting back to her first passion, drawing.

1 *Taxonomies*, Gil McElroy, curator, organized and circulated by the Confederation Centre Art Gallery & Museum, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, 1999; *Florilegium*, Gil McElroy, curator, organized by the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 2003



Susan Wood, *Gifts from Paradise 1988* (handmade paper, wax, etc.)

2 Artist's statement from the brochure accompanying the exhibition *Susan Wood: Devil's Purse Series*, organized and circulated by Memorial University Art Gallery, St. John's, Newfoundland, 1985.

3 From conversations between the artist and the curator February, 2011.

The discarded skate-egg cases known locally as “devil’s purses” are found among the natural debris along the Atlantic shoreline. They are not very large—about the size of your palm—but with two spindly “arms” and two “legs” at the corners they look remarkably like tiny headless human bodies. As Wood tells it:

“... I rediscovered the Devil’s Purse at a time when I was living far from the ocean, during an annual summer trek back to the beaches of childhood. A chance finding, something picked up out of the seaweed... the sand shaken out of its punctured belly, a glazing and crusting of salt over the black, brittle skin—I collected all that I could find.

It was not an arbitrary decision to use that image... It was and is for me a marvelous albeit sinister metaphor; it spoke of femaleness, fecundity, inside/outside, containment, stretching and tearing—it was a torso, a vessel and eerily human.”<sup>2</sup>

In 1983 Susan and Stephen moved back East to Newfoundland, where she intensified her explorations of the devil’s purse through drawing, collage, and cast paper sculpture, seeking the appropriate form that might embody the connections she intuited. She remembered the rows of classical and Renaissance marble figures on the avenues and buildings of Rome (first encountered during a trip to Italy with her father in 1974) and realized that her drawings required a similar scale, slightly larger-than-lifesize, in order for the allusion to the human body to be, as she put it, unavoidable.<sup>3</sup> The resultant series of oversized drawings were rendered in carbon, collage and dry pigment—a row, not of idealized white classical figures, but of the broken, black purses, some with twisted or missing limbs, their “torsos” ruptured to reveal blood red or grey interiors, often harbouring a subtly drawn stone or shell in the once soft incubating chamber.

Arguably her first significant solo exhibition, the nationally touring *Devil’s*

*Purse* series included twenty one drawings (of which five have been selected for this survey exhibition [catalogue numbers 1-5]) as well as mixed media collages and cast paper assemblages. The works announced an artist who was not afraid of large-scale drawing or of the raw emotions elicited by her anthropomorphized subject. “Her purses hang... like so many giant discarded skins, split, desiccated and sub-human. Disconcertingly, this is what devil’s purses are in nature—discarded breeding apparatus,” wrote reviewer Peter Gard, cogently identifying the works as “stand-ins for birth rituals.”<sup>4</sup> Vita Plume was even more explicit: “These works, while exploring the imagery of menstruation, incubation, and reproduction, are in no way a celebration of fecundity... [Wood’s] images speak of brittle vulnerability... In their vacuous hollows one feels the echoes of painful contractions and the inevitability of death and decay.”<sup>5</sup>

The *Devil’s Purse* series was the first time Wood showed work that referred so directly to the gendered body and the potential violence of reproduction; but her obsession with the cycles and processes of the natural world has been with her since childhood. Among her lesser-known works of this period are two sets of drawings on delicate *washi* (handmade Japanese paper) titled *Nest Cycle I* and *Nest Cycle II* (both 1986/7) [cat. nos. 6, 7]. They have not been exhibited before, and I include them here because they act like a kind of rebus in which images stand for a range of ideas—not only different methods of graphic mark-making but also the themes to which this artist has returned again and again: the cycles of birth, growth, reproduction, decay and death; the vessel-forms, such as nests, that imply containment and nurturing (but also, when empty, absence and loss); the strong material sensibility—surfaces and textures that suggest skin, feathers and bones, twigs and grass, both tough and fragile.

Soon after launching the *Devil’s Purse* exhibition, Wood exhibited *Beach Refuse/Studio Debris* at Contemporary Graphics, St John’s, and prepared an installation called *Gifts from Paradise* for the innovative *City and Sea* exhibition in 1988,<sup>6</sup> which led directly to its inclusion in curator Joan Borsa’s memorable *Maskunow: A Trail A Path* (along with internationally-known artists such as Marlene Creates, Hamish Fulton, and Tomiyo Sasaki).<sup>7</sup> Borsa’s curatorial essay dissected the attitudes towards nature implicit in the installations. She aligned Wood’s work with the tricky woman-nature/man-culture debates of the time, interpreting it as making parallels between the treatment of nature and the treatment of women in patriarchal structures,<sup>8</sup> a position that, while not untrue, was felt by Wood to be somewhat too specific for her subtler intentions.

Central to her *Maskunow* installation was a trio of kimono-like sculptures made of hand-cast paper. Like the *Devil’s Purses*, these earth-toned dresses with outstretched sleeves hung empty and torn, their rubbed and pigmented surfaces encrusted here and there with shells, twigs, pebbles, and even a nest—an embroidery of natural detritus, as it were. Wood used these sculptures as models for her next major series of drawings: the *Dress*. Over a period of five years she made more than twenty of these larger-than-lifesize images, of which seven [cat. nos. 8-14] are included in this exhibition—but not the original sculptural trio. They, along with many of her three-dimensional paper casts, are either destroyed or too fragile to travel.

As I have written elsewhere, the *Dress* drawings are “layered out of skin-thin leaves of paper on which the drawn, rubbed or spattered marks record various

4 Peter Gard, review of *Devil’s Purse Series*, *ArtsAtlantic*, No. 25 (Spring, 1986), p. 3.

5 Vita Plume, review of *Devil’s Purse Series*, *Vanguard*, Vol. 16, No. 5 (November, 1987), p. 40.

6 *City and Sea*, curated by Marlene Creates, was housed in a large old bank building in downtown St. John’s rather than in a traditional gallery, and involved room-sized installations by Newfoundland-based artists.

7 *Maskunow: A Trail A Path*, Joan Borsa, curator, organized by Memorial University Art Gallery, St. John’s, Newfoundland, 1989. Installations by Marlene Creates, Hamish Fulton, Pam Hall, Reinhardt Reitzenstein, Tomiyo Sasaki, Michelle Stuart and Susan Wood.

8 Joan Borsa, exhibition catalogue for *Maskunow: A Trail A Path* (see above), p. 9.

9 Susan Gibson Garvey, exhibition catalogue for *The Tenth Dalhousie Drawing Exhibition* (Halifax, Nova Scotia: Dalhousie Art Gallery, 1990), p. 17. The exhibition included four *Dress* works. The almost complete series was shown in *Dress Fragments* at Eastern Edge, St. John's, Newfoundland, and Anna Leonowens Gallery, Halifax, Nova Scotia, and in *Fragments of Refuge* at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College Art Gallery, Corner Brook, Newfoundland, all in 1991.

10 Born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in 1922, Andrews' long career as an artist, teacher, designer and writer included studies in Winnipeg, London and Paris, and exhibitions in North America, Europe and South Africa. His work is in Canadian and international public and private collections. The Stephen Andrews fonds is in the University of Calgary collection.

11 Ingrid Jenkner, exhibition catalogue for *Too small too big* (Halifax Nova Scotia: MSVU Art Gallery, 2004), p. 4.

histories. Some are pale and gauzy as if laced with cobwebs; others appear to be covered in dark wiry hair or caked mud. Many show evidence of violation. Some have a kind of carapace delineated over the abdomen, like a protective shell (which, in others, resembles a ruptured womb).<sup>9</sup> While the body is usually only inferred, not explicitly depicted, in most of these drawings, a few body parts do occasionally appear, especially hands: hands cover breasts, lift the edge of a leathery skirt, or part fleshly curtains to reveal a network of inner vessels. In other drawings dry sticks pierce empty, flapping skirts like scarecrows. As with the *Devil's Purse* series, a larger-than-lifesize scale and judiciously rendered shadows give these "bloodied earth-skins" (as Wood calls them) a compelling three-dimensional presence. Some commentators have noted that both series have a strangely religious aura, their repeated cruciform shapes, isolated like icons against uninflected backgrounds, resembling rows of martyrs or the Christian stations of the cross—or at least connoting sacrifice. Wood, however, claims no religious affiliation, and has never indicated that the works have a spiritual content beyond their earthy materiality.

The original catalyst for the sculptural dresses was an antique Palestinian wedding dress that Wood saw in 1978 while visiting her mentor, artist Stephen Andrews, in the home that he shared with his partner, Willem Wasserman, in Southern Spain. Wood had first met Andrews during a studio residency at the Banff Centre for the Arts in 1976/7, beginning a lifelong friendship with the expatriate Canadian artist, whose work, like hers, included the gathering and collaging of paper and debris (in his case owing much to Kurt Schwitters and *Arte Povera*).<sup>10</sup> An ongoing correspondence and frequent visits between her family and Andrews' provided a constant inspiration over the years for Wood, to whom, upon his death in 1995, he left his home in Spain, much of his art work and materials, and the antique wedding dress.

While not visually replicating that particular dress, Wood's *Dress* drawings allude to the rituals and processes of fertility, marriage and motherhood, as well as to maturing and aging. If they are surrogates for bodies, then these are less-than perfect bodies, bearing the marks of accumulated histories and offering sharp contrast to the unblemished skins of, say, Vogue or Penthouse models. They represent an attempt to come to terms with a woman's body in all its fecundity and changeability—engorging, then releasing blood, water, milk—and to prompt empathic engagement, especially from those who are repulsed by such messy biology. When Wood first embarked on the *Devil's Purse* series, she was unaware that she had become pregnant with her first child. By the time she began the *Dress* series, she had two young sons and was pregnant with a third. To say that her personal experience of motherhood informed these drawings would be to state the obvious. What is more interesting is to locate the works within some of the artistic and socio-political concerns of the period in which they were made.

1980 to 1990 was not an auspicious period for artists to focus on explicit representations of the female figure. If Wood's dresses have something of "a quality of indirection—that is, of not depicting their content explicitly," curator Ingrid Jenkner comments, perhaps this is because they were made "in the wake of the feminist iconoclasm of the 1980s"<sup>11</sup>—an iconoclasm based on the assertion that female biology itself was the detestable cause of women's subjugation, and that to emphasize or celebrate it was to threaten the social and political gains that feminism had achieved in the previous decades. Wood was only too aware of the stigma of essentialism (or biological determinism) that might attach to her work, and carefully

sought to counter it: “My work... has dealt with issues of the female body and its links with nature and other aspects of social and cultural life... [T]he work has been about a woman’s voice giving form to a range of female bodily experiences. My intention has never been a celebration of biological destiny and I’m nervous about the woman-nature equation. What I have struggled with is the notion that one’s body is a personal resource and not a handicap and the drawings and installations have been my attempt to understand what those corporeal connections might be.”<sup>12</sup>

If Wood had been acquainted with the work of Belgian philosopher and feminist Luce Irigaray, she might have found some comfort in Irigaray’s promotion of “strategic essentialism” in the construction of a female subject-position. Contrary to much feminist thinking of the period, this strategy was not based on minimizing the differences between men and women (or “same-ing”), in order to achieve equality and justice, but rather on deliberately assuming the feminine—on *asserting difference*—and thereby converting a form of subordination into an affirmation and a source of power.<sup>13</sup> Irigaray would have had no difficulty with Wood’s representations of the multivalent experiences of female sexuality: “My critique,” writes Irigaray, “is accompanied by the beginnings of a woman’s phenomenological elaboration of the auto-affection and auto-representation of her own body.”<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, translations of Irigaray’s major works only began to appear in North America in the latter half of the 1980s, just as essentialism was receiving a bad rap from North American feminists, resulting in delayed appreciation and significant misreadings of her contribution.<sup>15</sup>

It is important to emphasize that while Wood’s work may be interpreted as feminist, it is neither polemical nor primarily activist in intent; rather it is rooted in the phenomenal—the experiential. Wood’s chosen task has been to present subjective female bodily experiences as well as experiences of the natural world without overt theoretical framing. (Interestingly, her works are presented without physical framing, too—i.e. simply pinned to the wall—so that as little as possible intervenes between the viewer and the sensuous experience.) Wood turns naturally not to theory but to poetry, prose, and letters. At the time she was making the *Dress*, however, she did find similar sentiments to her own in the writings of American poet, essayist and feminist Adrienne Rich, who, like Wood, was the mother of three sons. In *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*, Rich writes “The feminist vision has recoiled from female biology... It will, I believe, come to view our physicality as a resource, rather than a destiny. In order to live a fully human life we require not only control of our bodies, we must touch the unity and resonance of our physicality, our bond with the natural order, the corporeal ground of our intelligence.”<sup>16</sup> This “bond with the natural order”, also defined by Irigaray as a “non-phallic” relationship with the natural world,<sup>17</sup> has informed Wood’s work beyond its preoccupation with body surrogates.

Of course Wood was not the only one to employ the image of clothing as a stand-in for the body in this period. Feminist artist Mary Kelly (who tended to regard any visual self-representation by women as politically non-viable) included actual baby vests and diapers in her *Post-Partum Document* (1973-79) and employed images of clothing in her *Interim* series, (1984-89). Curator Nina Felshin’s survey exhibition *The Empty Dress, Clothing as Surrogate in Recent Art* hit the North American circuit in 1993 and included work by thirty international artists.<sup>18</sup> In Canada, Glynis Humphrey’s fabulous yet monstrous giant pink *Prom Dress* and Ruth Schueing’s

12 Susan Wood, unpublished artist’s statement c. 1985, included in a letter to Susan Gibson Garvey, 20 December 1988.

13 “The difficulties women have in gaining recognition for their social and political rights are rooted in this insufficiently thought out relation between biology and culture. At present, to deny all explanations of a biological kind because biology has paradoxically been used to exploit women is to deny the key to interpreting this exploitation...in order to obtain a subjective status equivalent to that of men, women must therefore gain recognition for their difference.” From Luce Irigaray’s *Je, Tu, Nous: Towards a Culture of Difference*, Trans. Alison Martin (New York, NY: Routledge, 1993), p. 53, first published in French in 1987.

14 Ibid. p. 53

15 See Jayne Wark’s *Radical Gestures: Feminism and Performance Art in North America* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009), especially “Cultural Feminism: The Essence of Difference,” pp. 58-61, and “Embodiment and Representation,” pp. 165-168.

16 Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*, (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Co., 1976), p. 39.

17 *Je, Tu, Nous*. Ibid., pages 19, 41

18 *The Empty Dress: Clothing as Surrogate in Recent Art*, Nina Felshin, curator, organized and circulated by Independent Curators International, New York, NY, 1993.



16. *Shadow* 1992



17. *In Memory of SA* 1995

19 *Dressing Down*, Robin Metcalfe, curator, Oakville Galleries, Oakville, Ontario, 1998.

20 Three of Mira Schor's lifesize dress pieces were selected by curator Bob Berlind for *The Seventh Dalhousie Drawing Exhibition* (Halifax, Nova Scotia: Dalhousie Art Gallery, 1984).

21 For example, Gregor Erhart's wooden sculpture *Vanitas* c.1500, (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna).

aluminum dress for *Rosie the Riveter* were among curator Robin Metcalfe's choices for his 1998 exhibition *Dressing Down*.<sup>19</sup> Many other examples could be furnished, suggesting a zeitgeist of body surrogates. However, while acknowledging similarities of genre and morphology among the works of these "dressmakers", it would be a mistake to assume that they all have similar intentions. In this regard, I think some of Canadian artist Betty Goodwin's early graphic works (her 1970s *Vests* and *Nests*, for example), and especially Mira Schor's 1977 piece *Dress Book (Angel)* and subsequent dress pieces,<sup>20</sup> are more relevant to Susan Wood's work, not least because they, too, favour the materiality of the drawn, written, rubbed or printed mark on paper as an exploration of skin, fragility, memory and female corporeal experience.

I would also mention Canadian/Czech artist Jana Sterbak's alarming dress sculptures of the late 1980s made of live wires or raw meat. Sterbak's *Vanitas: Flesh Dress for an Albino Anorectic* (1987) arose in discussion with Wood (when I visited her St. John's studio in 1988, while researching *The Tenth Dalhousie Drawing Exhibition*) and was subsequently mentioned in my catalogue essay. It was not merely the fact that the *Flesh Dress* was made of meat, and Wood was then calling her dress images "bloodied earth-skins" with obvious references to the flesh, but also because of its reference to the late mediaeval *Vanitas*.<sup>21</sup> This moralistic warning presented images of fleshly decay, often of lovely maidens disintegrating into haggard crones, a misogynist precursor of the better-known *Vanitas* (or *Memento Mori*) of the Little Dutch Masters (among others) who placed images of skulls, insects, rotting fruit and other reminders of mortality in their still life paintings. Both varieties of *Vanitas* may be counted among

the many threads of reference that weave their way through Wood's accumulated production. However, Wood's images act more as a *reverse* kind of *Vanitas*, since they offer no moral or spiritual nostrums in preparation for an afterlife, but focus instead on inhabiting and valuing more fully the physical richness of *this* life, however brief.

### ELEGIES, SKIN TROPES AND OTHER METAPHORS

On the wall of Wood's studio is a photograph of bentwood chairs gracefully rotting in a field. In the early 1990s, she used this image in a suite of drawings prompted by the death of her father. She says she found the woven bentwood sticks appealing: fragile structures similar to bird bones and the stems of withered flowers, intertwining like roots or blood vessels (which often receive similar graphic treatment in her drawings). They can be seen in *Shadow* (1992) [cat. no. 16] where an empty chair signals absence. In fact, over the past two decades Wood has endured the loss not only of her father but also of other close family members and friends, prematurely succumbing to disease: her brother Harold (1994), her mentor Stephen Andrews (1995), his partner Willem (1998), and most recently her own life-partner Stephen Fudge (November 2010).

While we can trace an elegiac tone in much of Wood's imagery of recent years—and in some cases, as with *In Memory of SA* (1995) [cat. no. 17] and *The Bouquet* (2011) [cat. no. 41], a specific memorial function—there is nevertheless in her work a clear-eyed, somewhat pragmatic approach to the inevitability of death (whether human, animal or botanical) as part of a natural cycle. There is also a consistent valuing of the material remnants that signal each individual life. In *Spanish Letters* (2002) [cat. no. 31] for example, Wood combines various papers from Stephen Andrews' studio, drawings of lilies culled from her garden, and handwritten statements from his last letters to her, in affirmation of his once vital presence and continuing significance. There is a similar honouring of non-human biota in her work. The vulnerability of living vessels runs through all of Wood's depictions: we infer the absent life—the blood, sap, viscera—in the wilted blooms, the desiccated insects, and the feathered corpses of birds.

Part of Wood's studio practice involves daily observational drawing, somewhat like the pianist's five-finger exercises. In the mid-1990s, she began visiting the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History to draw the bird specimens—not the “Audubon-style” stuffed and mounted birds with their glass eyes and “natural” poses that a visitor might encounter in the public display cases, but the hundreds of eyeless, eviscerated, dry carcasses, lying on their backs in the museum's storage boxes, their feet tied together and labeled like so many tiny traffic accident victims. Interestingly, in the museum business, such hollow, unmounted specimens are formally called “skins.”

Eventually, Wood's dead bird drawings encompassed not only the museum specimens but also those found and brought to her by friends, or those she picked up herself from time to time. Using pen and ink, watercolour, carbon pencils and a range of collaged papers, Wood examines the multiple forms and textures of these “little deaths” (as she calls them), addressing their fragility with empathy and, occasionally, macabre humour. Often, stories of their finding contribute handwritten notes to the drawings, which take on a life of their own beyond their carefully observed facts. During this same period, Wood developed her floral sketches of daffodils, lupins, tulips, irises, coneflowers, and lilies, mainly culled from her own back yard, following their natural cycles from bud to bloom through withering to bud again. The flower

22 colour images by Roger Peterson and John Crosby, and drawings by John Dick, 1961.

23 Gil McElroy, from the catalogue for the exhibition *Taxonomies*. Op. cit., p.2.

24 Pan Wendt, review of *Taxonomies*, *ArtsAtlantic* No. 64 (Summer/Fall 1999), p. 16

25 Claude Mongrain: "Le dessin errant" catalogue essay for *The Ninth Dalhousie Drawing Exhibition* (Halifax, Nova Scotia: Dalhousie Art Gallery, 1988) p. 3.

and bird studies were combined in the exhibition *Taxonomies* (1999).

Ornithological and botanical drawings have an important place in the natural history of Nova Scotia—as exemplified by the contributors to Robie Tuft's *Birds of Nova Scotia*<sup>22</sup> or the wildflower drawings of the early nineteenth-century artist Maria Morris (the first named female Nova Scotian artist). Wood, too, can "do botanicals" with the best, and has produced fine renderings of plants in the style of Dürer, among others. But, as Gil McElroy observes, the drawings in *Taxonomies* may "find their root source in the scientific image. But they do not find a home there."<sup>23</sup> Indeed, unlike the orderly scientific and museological processes of collecting, observing, and cataloging to which they refer, these lyrical drawings—in their rich materiality, progressive iterations of subject (as in *Janet's Heron* [cat. nos. 21-24]) and open-ended arrangements—have an expressive power that transcends facticity. "She seems to propose a whole new model for classification," comments reviewer Pan Wendt, "grounded in... the existence [of the birds and plants] as subjects: a personal and transitory taxonomy, one that displays its own fragility and fallibility."<sup>24</sup>

The works in Wood's exhibition *Florilegium* (2003) also diverge from scientific illustration, being as much about the material processes of drawing as they are about image. Paper—heavily textured watercolor paper, fragile Japanese *washi*, paper pulp, blotting paper, writing paper, graph paper, found paper—has played an active role in the composition and construction of Wood's drawings. Paper has the metaphorical inference of skin (and literal too, if we recall that vellum was originally made from the skin of young goats); it is also a ground for writing and, until very recently, was the main component of books. The word "Florilegium" meant a collection or folio of writing long before it acquired its sense as a catalogue of bulbs or botanical images, and in the eponymous exhibition all these aspects have their references. The series *Leave-ings* (2000), for example, is folio-size, layered with found papers from a sample book for engineers and draughtsmen and sections torn from her own floral drawings, loosely arranged in interchangeable sequences. (If *Leave-ings* suggests leave-taking, perhaps from friends or family, in addition to botanical leaves, leaves of paper, or even left-overs, it surely demonstrates how layered the resonances can become). *Italian Letters* 2002/3 [cat. no. 30], presented as a series of nine diptychs, is equally concerned with its own material processes. Each left-hand sheet carries detailed renderings of flowers (and one bird) on exquisite Fabriano writing paper—actual letterhead taken from the Hotel Parco del Principi during her memorable trip to Rome with her father (and hoarded for decades until it found a purpose here); the right hand sheets comprise abstract markings, drips and stains (including coffee stains) and scribbled notes, cut from the paper that covers the table on which Wood works. Each evocative image is carefully twinned with its associated abstract mark-making in a way that calls attention to the process of drawing while maintaining its allusive potential.

Most of the works in *Florilegium* incorporate fragments of printed and handwritten text, not so much for their actual meaning (although it is often *à propos*) but as visual elements. While one could hardly say that Wood's work is text-based, I am reminded of a statement by Canadian artist Claude Mongrain, discussing his choices for the *Ninth Dalhousie Drawing Exhibition*: "Like writing, drawing is an act of inscription which manifests a thought, and the formation of this thought is inseparable from the gesture that produces it."<sup>25</sup> The partial texts in *Florilegium* reinforce the impression of a temporary gathering of thoughts and meanings already

suggested by the layered papers and provisional arrangements. Wood's emphasis on the transitory, accidental and contingent (also noted in exhibition titles such as *Dress Fragments*, *Fragments of Refuge*, *Book of Fragments*) reflects her acute consciousness of the physical world as constantly in flux. The work of nature is not passive; it builds up and tears apart, recombining its elements in new cycles of growth and disintegration.

Wood has continued to make flower drawings, despite the tendency of some critics to regard floral subjects as merely decorative—something, it seems to me, that her works' underlying darkness belies; their personifying titles—*Bruised Tulip*, *They Fade quickly*, *Iris over Time*, *Tulips Then and Now*, *Collapsed Tulip* (to name a few)—underscore their metaphoric intent. Moreover, dismissive attitudes towards detailed or ornamental motifs have been discredited by critics such as Naomi Schor, who identifies such prejudices as leftovers from the academic and formalist aesthetics of the previous century (where men have “the sublime vision” and women “take care of the details”).<sup>26</sup> The signifying potential of flowers is manifest in a range of important art, whether the Little Dutch Masters' fateful tulipomania, the sexual resonance of Georgia O'Keefe's images, or Van Gogh's manic sunflowers; and one can make the case that “the detail” has become so much a part of the postmodern lexicon that there is almost nothing else *but* detail. Recently, Wood has incorporated insects into her designs—small, jewel-like bees, dragonflies with translucent wings, brown moths and black beetles. Their ornamental charm is undermined by the fact that they are all, in some way, broken. A fragile wing is torn, a leg is missing, the wasps are crushed and beginning to mould. These, too, are skin tropes of a sort.

Insects and flowers come together in the stark five-part suite *The Bouquet* [cat. no. 41]. These largely monochromatic images are sequential views of dead flowers strewn on the ground, occasionally interspersed with insects. They are drawn in pen and ink over very thin hand-dyed *washi*, collaged onto large sheets of fine Spanish watercolour paper. The *washi* (the last sheets of now obsolete stock that Wood was saving for an appropriate occasion) has the physical appearance of skin. The pen and ink drawing has the quality of engraving. “I was thinking of the Bouquet drawings and the Dress drawings and how they both speak obliquely to marriage, yet are so different in their realization,” comments Wood.<sup>27</sup> This hauntingly beautiful suite, in memory of her late husband, joins a selection of her latest floral works, such as *Morning Shadows* [cat. no. 39] and *Present/Absent* [cat. no. 40], as evidence of mature, accomplished drawings, balancing precision against gesture, freshness against decay, solid volume against ephemeral shadow, and the piercing particularity of individual deaths against the banal generality of all deaths.

### UNLESS I CAN TOUCH SOMETHING...

“My work is rooted in the convention of drawing and in the discourse of what constitutes drawing,” says Susan Wood.<sup>28</sup> She remembers her rigorous academic training in drawing at New Brunswick's Mount Allison University in the early 1970s, at the same time that the teaching of drawing at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design had been virtually abandoned in favour of less conventional methods. She was aware then of the dichotomy between the programs of these two venerable Maritime art schools, and the inevitable questions about relevance that this posed for students in both institutions—there was curiosity and envy on both sides (despite the stories that NSCAD was “the only” place to be).<sup>29</sup> Although Wood went on to do

26 “To focus on the detail and more particularly on the detail as negativity is to become aware... of its participation in a larger semantic network, bounded on one side by the *ornamental*, with its traditional connotations of effeminacy and decadence, and on the other, by the everyday, whose “prosiness” is rooted in the domestic sphere of social life presided over by women... [T]he normative aesthetics of the Academy and its members is not sexually neutral; it is an axiology carrying into the field of representation the sexual hierarchies of the phallogocentric cultural order... The detail is gendered and doubly gendered as feminine.” Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail* (New York, NY: Methuen, 1987) p. 4.

27 Susan Wood, from an email to Susan Gibson Garvey, 20 April, 2011.

28 Susan Wood, from an interview with Sean Flinn, *Artichoke* Vol. 16, No. 1 (Spring 2004) p.12.

29 Mount Allison University hired its first professor of fine arts in 1869 and introduced Canada's first BFA program in 1939 under Stanley Royle's leadership. The Victoria School of Art was founded in 1887 and began its radical transformation into NSCAD under Garry Kennedy's leadership in 1967.



15. "To touch something..." I 1991

her MFA in painting, she made the switch back to drawing quite abruptly when she began the *Devil's Purse* series. "I always think of the *Devil's Purse* drawings as being the beginning of making work that was mine..." she says, "I also realized that I was more a draw-er than a painter and it seemed to suit me that I had chosen a practice that underlies so much of what artists think and do but has never had a terribly 'loud' voice of its own... it is the niche that I found for myself and it is where I have felt most at home for thirty years."<sup>30</sup> Ironically, Wood now teaches drawing at NSCAD.

Throughout her practice Wood has emphasized the physical and tactile aspects of drawing, (in contradistinction, perhaps, to the virtual imagery of electronic media). Depictions of hands appear often in her work, underscoring the importance of touch. In the early 1990s, Wood produced a suite of monotypes titled *To touch something...* incorporating overlays of paper, handwriting and images of hands [see cat. no. 15]. The suite was prompted by a statement by one of Virginia Woolf's characters that so resonated with Wood it became a kind of mantra: "Unless I can touch something I shall fall down and die."<sup>31</sup> In her lifetime Virginia Woolf was celebrated for her stream-of-consciousness, *anti*-materialist literary innovations, but recent critical re-readings demonstrate the central role of the physical in her novels, particularly of touch and texture, and of the skin as a mediator between the internal feelings and external expressions of her characters.<sup>32</sup>

Wood laughingly calls herself a "material girl", meaning that her work is about the concrete and temporal, rather than the abstract or spiritual. Its metaphors point, not to morals or metaphysics but to the value of lived experience. "To perceive is to render oneself present to something through the body," says the phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty.<sup>33</sup> Wood's materialist, sense-based practice clearly places it within that phenomenological tradition. Rendering oneself present to something through the body is the essence of Wood's drawing. The eye informs the hand and the hand informs the eye; and the body to which the eye and hand belong is not neutral. It is as a woman that Wood embraces the physical and sensuous realities of her world, and the world that her drawings in turn embody for us is one in which each small detail is touched and valued. If there is a message here it is to be found in the contrast of Wood's literally "down to earth" practice as compared to current preoccupations with the *virtual* world—for example with video gaming and Second Life avatars—where time spent in the electronic world threatens to become more real than one's own body and one's own earth, and where one can easily forget how to "touch something" (or someone) in the actual world.

*Susan Gibson Garvey*

30 Susan Wood, from an email to Susan Gibson Garvey, 30 March, 2011.

31 stated by Rhoda in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*, from *The Waves: The two holograph drafts*, p. 1/62, as quoted in Louise DeSalvo, *Virginia Woolf: The impact of child sexual abuse on her life and work*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989) p. 184.

32 Maureen Curtin, *Out of Touch: Skin Tropes and Identities in Woolf, Ellison, Pynchon and Acker* (London: Routledge, 2003) pp. 15-40.

33 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Primacy of Perception*, Ed & Trans. James M. Edie (California: Northwestern University press, 1964) p. 42.

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## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Susan Wood was born in 1953 in Saint John, New Brunswick, and grew up in Amherst, Nova Scotia. She studied fine art at Mount Allison University, Sackville, NB (BFA 1976), attended the Winter Studio Program at The Banff Centre, Banff, Alberta (1976-77), and completed graduate studies at the University of Calgary, AB (MFA 1981). From 1981-83 she taught at the Alberta College of Art, and exhibited her work in solo and group exhibitions in Alberta, notably at the Walter J. Phillips Gallery, Banff (1978), the Nickel Arts Museum, Calgary (1979), the Edmonton Art Gallery (1982), and in *New Image Alberta* (a nationally touring exhibition organized jointly by Lavalin Corporation and Alberta College of Art, 1982-84). In 1983 Wood returned to the Atlantic region, first to St. John's, Newfoundland, and, in 1989, to Halifax, NS, where she has lived and worked ever since. While in St. John's, Wood taught Fine Art at Memorial University. Since 1990, she has taught at NSCAD University, Halifax, where she is an Associate Professor.

Wood's drawings have been exhibited in numerous solo exhibitions, including *Devils Purse* series (Memorial University Art Gallery, 1985, nationally touring), *Dress Fragments* (Anna Leonowens Gallery, Halifax, NS and Eastern Edge, St. John's NF, 1991), *Fragments of Refuge* (Sir Wilfred Grenfell Art Gallery, Corner Brook, NL, 1991), *Unless I Can Touch Something* (Anna Leonowens Gallery, Halifax, NS, 1992), *Taxonomies* (Confederation Centre Art Gallery & Museum, Charlottetown, PEI, 1999, nationally touring), *Florilegium* (Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, NS, 2003), and *Collections* (Station Gallery, Whitby, ON, 2009). Selected group exhibitions include *New Found Artists Land* (Artspace, Peterborough, ON, 1986, touring to artist-run centres in Ontario), *25 Years of Newfoundland Art* (Memorial University Art Gallery, 1986, nationally touring), *Maskunow, A Trail A Path* (Memorial University Art Gallery, 1989), *Notions of Environment* (Eastern Edge, 1989, nationally touring), *Atque Ars* (Owens Art Gallery, Sackville, NB, 1989), *The Tenth Dalhousie Drawing Exhibition* (Dalhousie Art Gallery, Halifax, NS, 1991, nationally touring), *St. Michael's Bestiary* (Eastern Edge, 1991,

nationally touring), *Enigmas and Anecdotes* (Marion McCain Foundation/Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton, NB, 1994, regionally touring), *Contemporary Nova Scotia Printmaking* (Seagate Gallery, Dundee, Scotland, 1996), *Paperilla-Paperista* (Kuopio Academy of Crafts and Design, Kuopio, Finland and Pforzheim, Germany, 1996), *In Passing/en passant* (Dalhousie Art Gallery, 1998), *Artists in a Floating World* (Marion McCain Foundation/Beaverbrook Art Gallery, 2000, regionally touring), *Wallworks* (Saint Mary's University Gallery, Halifax, NS, 2003), *Too Small Too Big* (MSVU Art Gallery, Halifax, NS, 2004), *Nice to Meet You!* (University of Ulsan, Ulsan, Korea, 2004), *Field Studies* (Varley Art Centre, Unionville, ON, 2005), *States of Being* (Dalhousie Art Gallery, 2005), *Elegies and Effigies* (MSVU Art Gallery, 2007), *InHereOutThere* (Cape Breton University Art Gallery, Sydney, NS, 2007), *Beneath the Surface* (MSVU Art Gallery, 2010), and *4 Konur* (Fljotsdalsherad Culture Centre, Egilsstaðir, Iceland, 2010). In addition, Wood has often participated in the juried exhibitions of Visual Arts Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Printmakers Association. Since 1993, Wood has been represented by Studio 21 Fine Art, Halifax, NS, with solo and two-person exhibitions in 1993, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2000, 2003, 2004 and 2006. She is also represented by Ingrid Mueller Art + Concepts in Fredericton, and Virginia Christopher Fine Art in Calgary.

Susan Wood's work has been reviewed in national and regional arts journals, and is represented in numerous public, private and corporate collections across Canada. She was a founding member of Eastern Edge Gallery (and Board Chair from 1987-89). She has also served on the Board of Nova Scotia Talent Trust and on the Advisory Committee of the Dalhousie Art Gallery (Chair 2007-10). She has received grants from the Canada Council, the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council, and the Nova Scotia Arts Council. In 2005 she was elected to the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts. Visit the artist's website at [www.susanwood.ca](http://www.susanwood.ca) for further information.

## LENDERS TO THE EXHIBITION

*MSVU Art Gallery gratefully acknowledges the individuals and organizations whose generous loans made this exhibition possible.*

Dalhousie Art Gallery, Halifax, Nova Scotia  
Pat Grattan, St. John's, Newfoundland  
Toni Laidlaw, Halifax, Nova Scotia  
Donna Jean-Louis Livingston, Montreal, Quebec  
Renée MacKay-Lyons, Toronto, Ontario  
Owens Art Gallery, Sackville, New Brunswick  
RME Capital Corp, North Bay, Ontario  
The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery, St. John's,  
Newfoundland & Labrador  
Studio 21, Halifax, Nova Scotia  
Susan Wood, Halifax, Nova Scotia

## EXHIBITION ITINERARY

MSVU Art Gallery  
Mount Saint Vincent University  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
21 August through 2 October 2011

Owens Art Gallery  
Mount Allison University  
Sackville, New Brunswick  
13 January through 26 February 2012

Acadia University Art Gallery  
Wolfville, Nova Scotia  
18 June through 11 August 2012

The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery  
St. John's, Newfoundland & Labrador  
8 September through 18 November 2012



1. Large Devil's Purse No. 4 1985



2. Large Devil's Purse No. 5 1985



3. *Large Devil's Purse No. 9* 1985



2. Large Devil's Purse No. 10 1985



3. *Large Devil's Purse No. 11* 1985



6. Nest Cycle I 1986-1987 (top)



7. Nest Cycle II 1986-1987 (bottom)



8. Dress No. 1 1989





- 9. Dress No. 4 1989 (far left)
- 10. Dress No. 6 1989 (left)
- 11. Dress No. 8 1989 (right)
- 12. Dress No. 9 1989 (far right)



13. Dress No. 12 1989



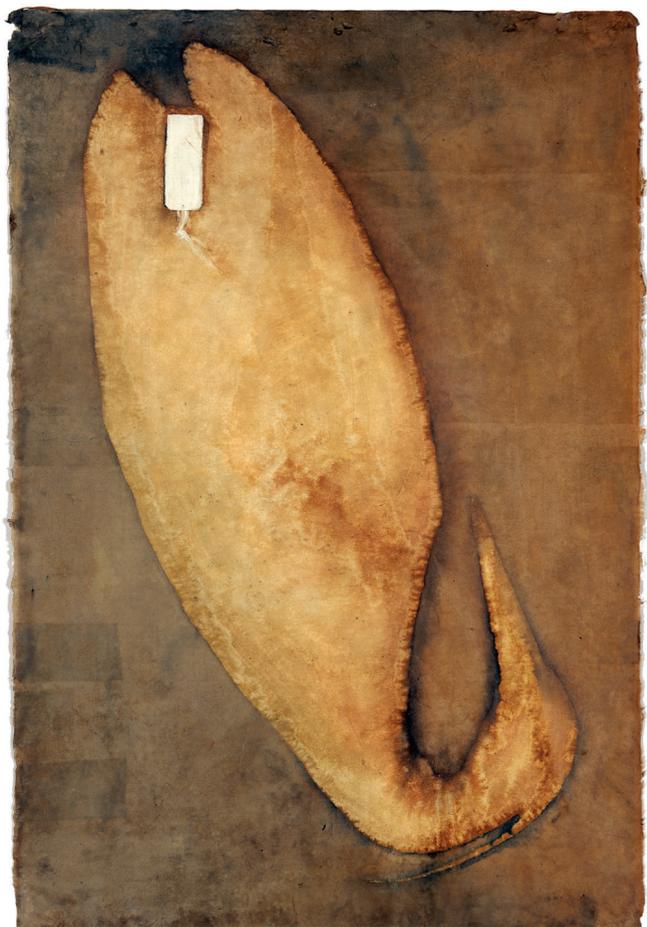
14. Dress No. 16 1989



19. Yellow Crowned Night Heron 1997

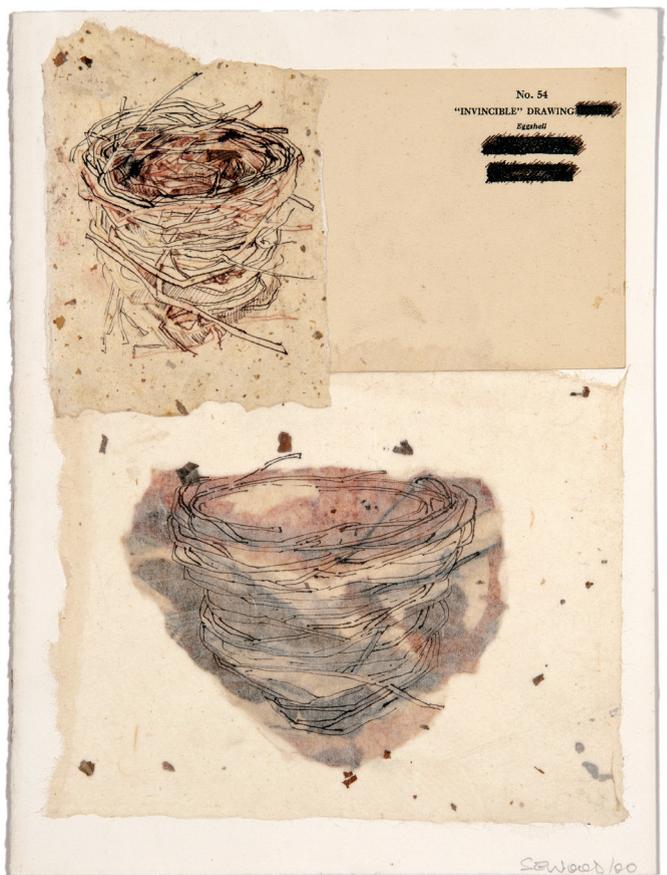
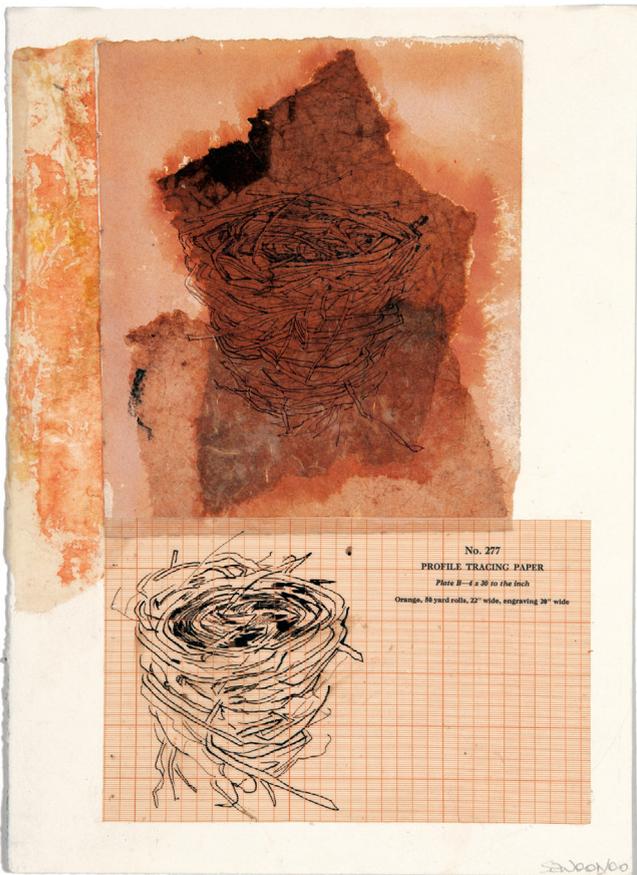


20. *Scarlet Tanagers 2* 1997

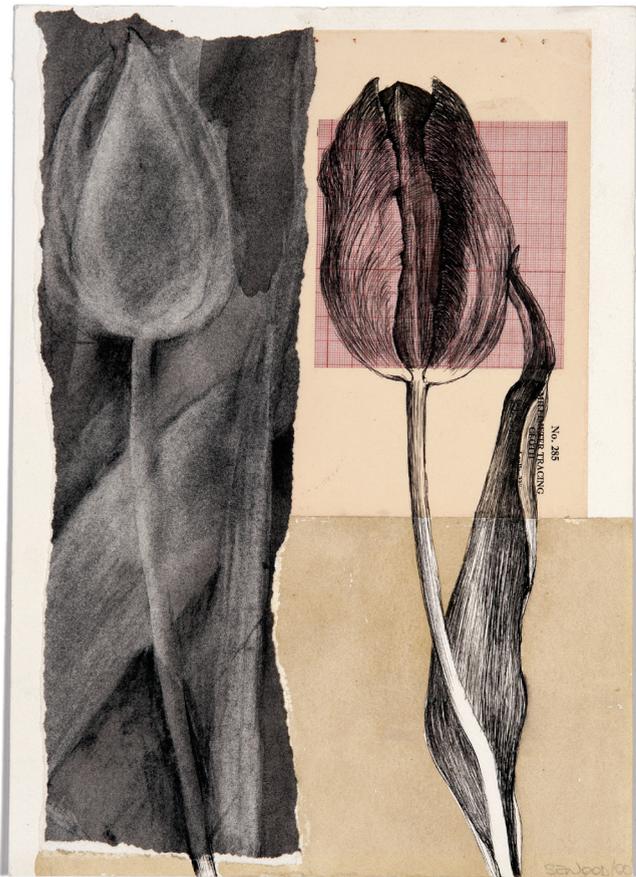




- 21. *Janet's Heron* 1997 (far left)
- 22. *Janet's Heron No. 2* 1997 (left)
- 23. *Janet's Heron No. 3* 1997 (right)
- 24. *Janet's Heron No. 4* 1998 (far right)



25. Leave-ings Nos. 17, 28, 29, 31) 2000





26. *Found Bird No. 2* 2002 (far left)  
27. *Found Bird No. 3* 2002 (left)  
28. *Found Bird No. 6* 2002 (right)  
29. *Found Bird No. 5* 2002 (far right)

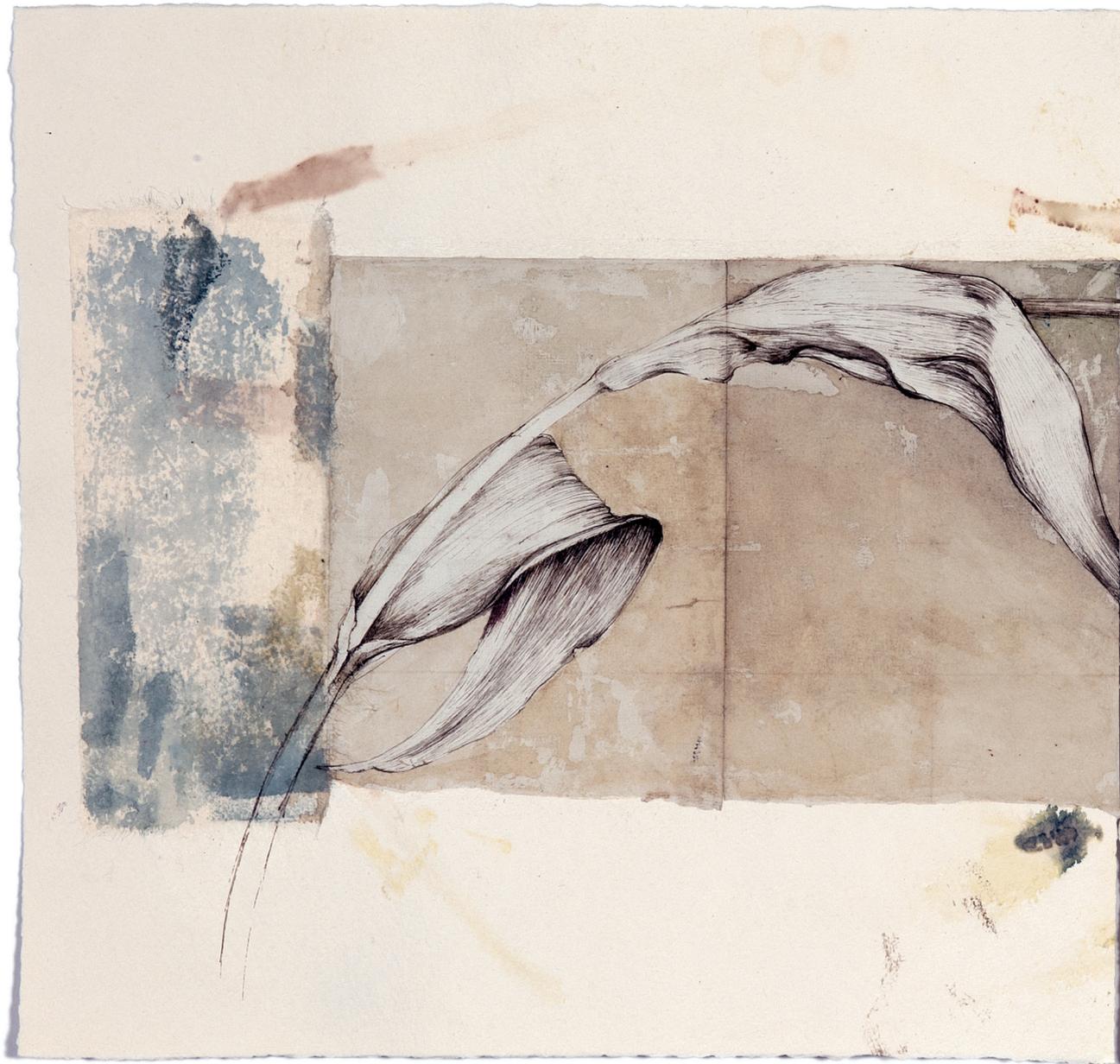




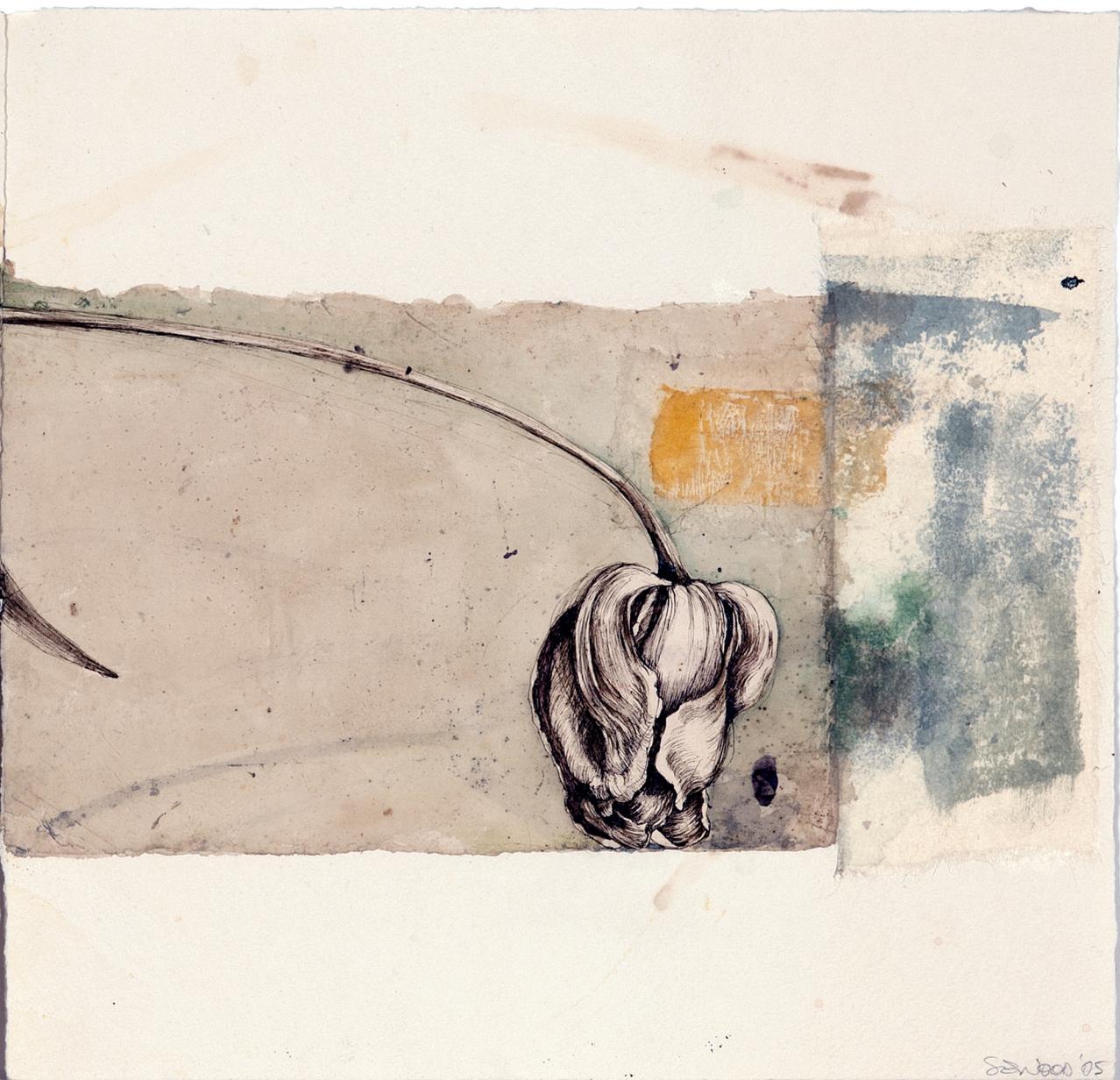
30. Italian Letters (detail) 2002/03



31. Spanish Letters (Nos. 9, 3) 2002



32. *Collapsed Tulip* 2005



S. W. '05



34. Tulips Then and Now 2006





36. Orchre Dragonfly and Moth 2008



37. Bug on a Letter 2009



38. *Catalogue of Insects* 2009





40. Present/Absent 2010



41. *The Bouquet* (Nos. 1, 3, 4, 5) 2011

## WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

Height precedes width, all dimensions in centimeters.

1.  
*L.D.P (Large Devil's Purse) No. 4* 1985  
208.0 × 118.0  
carbon, dry pigment, watercolour, washi collage on paper  
Courtesy of the artist
2.  
*L.D.P. No. 5* 1985  
214.0 × 118.0  
carbon, dry pigment, watercolour, washi collage on paper  
Courtesy of the artist
3.  
*L.D.P. No. 9* 1985  
228.0 × 118.0  
carbon, dry pigment, watercolour, washi collage on paper  
Courtesy of the artist
4.  
*L.D.P. No. 10* 1985  
222.0 × 118.0  
carbon, dry pigment, watercolour, washi collage on paper  
Courtesy of the artist
5.  
*L.D.P. No. 11* 1985  
227.0 × 118.0  
carbon, dry pigment, watercolour, washi collage on paper  
Courtesy of the artist
6.  
*Nest Cycle I* 1986/7  
graphite, watercolour, ink, dry pigment, collage on washi  
80.0 × 158.0  
Courtesy of the artist
7.  
*Nest Cycle II* 1986/7  
Graphite, watercolour, ink, dry pigment, collage on washi  
80.0 × 158.0  
Courtesy of the artist
8.  
*Dress No. 1* 1989  
dry pigment, watercolour, pastel, carbon, washi collage on paper  
199.4 × 129.5 (irregular)  
Collection of The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery
9.  
*Dress No. 4* 1989  
dry pigment, watercolour, pastel, carbon, washi collage on paper  
200.0 × 122.0 (irregular)  
Courtesy of the artist
10.  
*Dress No. 6* 1989  
dry pigment, watercolour, pastel, carbon, washi collage on paper  
198.1 × 121.3 (irregular)  
Collection of the Dalhousie Art Gallery  
Purchased from The Tenth Dalhousie Drawing Exhibition with funds donated by Dr. John A. Scrymgeour, 1990
11.  
*Dress No. 8* 1989  
dry pigment, watercolour, pastel, carbon, washi collage on paper  
194.5 × 118.0 (irregular)  
Courtesy of Studio 21
12.  
*Dress No. 9* 1989  
dry pigment, watercolour, pastel, carbon, washi collage on paper  
191.3 × 112.5 (irregular)  
Collection of Dr. Ian Bowmer and Patricia Grattan
13.  
*Dress No. 12* 1989  
dry pigment, watercolour, pastel, carbon, washi collage on paper  
196.0 × 122.0 (irregular)  
Courtesy of the artist
14.  
*Dress No. 16* 1990  
dry pigment, watercolour, pastel, carbon, washi collage on paper  
210 × 123 (irregular)  
Gift of the artist, 1994  
Collection, Mount Saint Vincent University
15.  
*"To touch something..." I* 1991  
monotype on handmade paper with chine colle, watercolour and pencil  
45.7 × 61.0  
Collection of Toni Suzuki Laidlaw
16.  
*Shadow* 1992  
carbon, dry pigment, watercolour, washi collage on paper  
187.0 × 115.0  
Courtesy of the artist
17.  
*In Memory of SA* 1995  
ink, watercolour, collage, handmade paper  
56.0 × 338  
Courtesy of the artist
18.  
*Letting Go* 1995  
ink, watercolour, collage on paper  
2 parts, each 56.0 × 37.5  
Courtesy of the artist
19.  
*Yellow Crowned Night Heron* 1997  
watercolour, ink, charcoal, collage on paper  
64.0 × 49.0  
Collection of the Owens Art Gallery  
Gift of the Artist in memory of her father

20.  
*Scarlet Tanagers 2* 1997  
watercolour, ink, collage on paper  
23.8 × 31.5  
Collection of the Owens Art Gallery  
Purchased with funds from the Canada  
Council Acquisition Assistance Program  
and the Friends of the Owens Art  
Gallery
21.  
*Janet's Heron* 1997  
watercolour, ink, collage on paper  
89.0 × 61.0  
Private Collection (RME Capital Corp)
22.  
*Janet's Heron No. 2* 1997  
watercolour, acrylic on paper  
95.2 × 64.1  
Courtesy of the artist
23.  
*Janet's Heron No. 3* 1997  
watercolour, ink, dry pigment, collage  
on paper  
95.2 × 64.1  
Courtesy of the artist
24.  
*Janet's Heron No. 4* 1998  
watercolour ink, dry pigment, acrylic on  
paper  
97.8 × 66.0  
Courtesy of the artist
25.  
*Leave-ings (Nos. 17, 28, 29, 31)* 2000  
watercolour, ink, charcoal, collage on  
watercolour paper  
4 parts, each 49.3 × 39 cm  
Courtesy of the artist
26.  
*Found Bird No. 2* 2002  
dry pigment, acrylic, ink on paper  
20.0 × 25.0  
Courtesy of the artist
27.  
*Found Bird No. 3* 2002  
dry pigment, acrylic, ink on paper  
21.5 × 25.0  
Courtesy of the artist
28.  
*Found Bird No. 6* 2002  
dry pigment, acrylic, ink on paper  
29.0 × 20.0  
Courtesy of the artist
29.  
*Found Bird No. 5* 2002  
dry pigment, acrylic, ink on paper  
30.0 × 20.0  
Courtesy of the artist
30.  
*Italian Letters* 2002/03  
ink, watercolour, coffee stains on  
Fabriano paper and blotting paper  
27.0 × 315.0 (18 sections)  
Collection of the Dalhousie Art Gallery  
Gift of Stephen Fudge in honour  
of Dalhousie Art Gallery's 50th  
Anniversary and the artist's 50th  
birthday, 2003
31.  
*Spanish Letters (Nos. 9, 3)* 2002  
Ink, watercolour, collage on paper  
2 parts, each 44.0 × 323.0  
Courtesy of the artist
32.  
*Collapsed Tulip* 2005  
ink, watercolour, collage on paper  
2 parts, each 41.5 × 39.5  
Collection of Renée MacKay-Lyons
33.  
*They Fade Quickly* 2006  
ink, watercolour, collage on paper  
127 × 88.9  
Courtesy of Studio 21
34.  
*Tulips Then and Now* 2006  
ink, watercolour, collage on paper  
77.0 × 58.5  
Collection of Donna Jean-Louis  
Livingston
35.  
*Bird with Bees* 2008  
ink, watercolour, collage on paper  
49.0 × 34.0  
Courtesy of Studio 21
36.  
*Oebre Dragonfly and Moth* 2008  
ink, watercolour, collage on paper  
42.5 × 51.0  
Courtesy of Studio 21
37.  
*Bug on a Letter* 2009  
ink, watercolour, gold leaf, collage on  
paper  
49.0 × 33.5  
Courtesy of Studio 21
38.  
*Catalogue of Insects* 2009  
monotype, watercolour, ink, collage on  
paper  
2 parts each 52.0 × 76.0  
Courtesy of Studio 21
39.  
*Morning Shadows* 2010  
ink, watercolour, collage on paper  
56.0 × 76.3  
Courtesy of Studio 21
40.  
*Present/Absent* 2010  
ink, watercolour, collage on paper  
77.5 × 55.5  
Courtesy of Studio 21
41.  
*The Bouquet (Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)* 2011  
ink, washi collage on watercolour paper  
5 parts, each 97.0 × 69.0  
Courtesy of the artist

Published on the occasion of the exhibition *Earth Skins: three Decades of Drawing by Susan Wood*, held at MSVU Art Gallery from 21 August through 2 October 2011.

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