

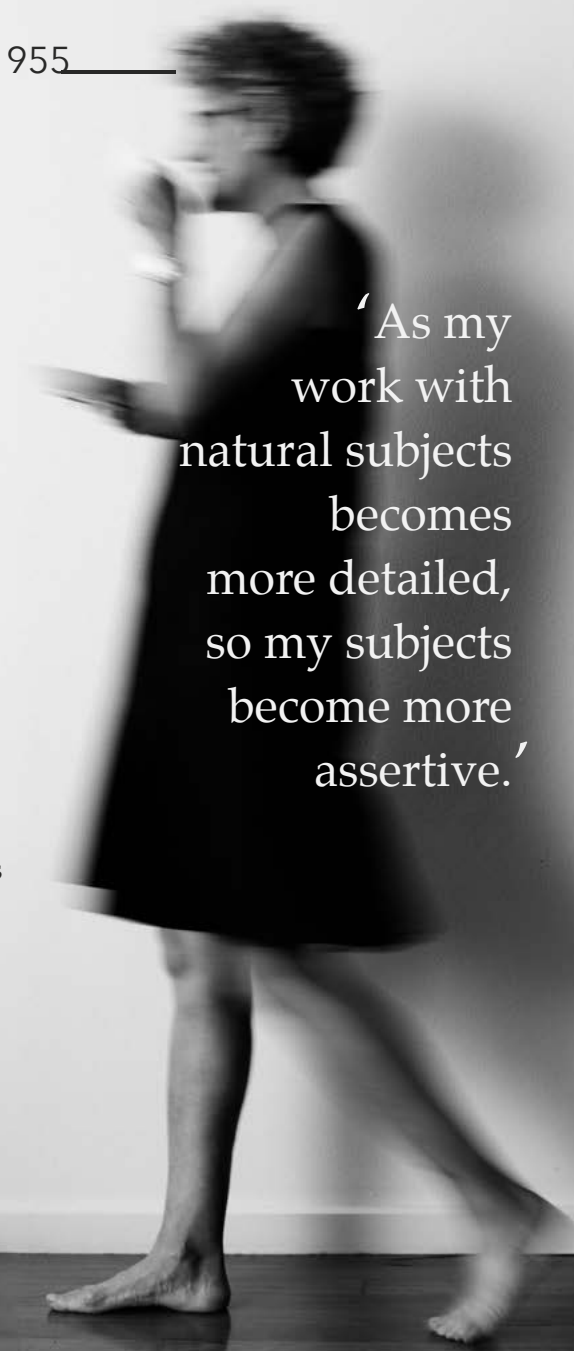


This page and opposite
Susan Hipgrave in her Studio Date?
Photograph: Craig Wall

Susan Hipgrave b1955

Graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design and with two decades of art direction in advertising behind her, Sydney based artist Susan Hipgrave has discovered a true passion, that of painting on porcelain – her preferred ‘canvas’. “Victorian ornithologists and botanists would have heartily commended Susan Hipgrave’s remarkable series of hand-painted plates. The meticulous execution (each extra-fine brushstroke adding an important detail), the resulting life-like renditions and the consistent format (monochromatic black on white; identical one-size ceramic plates) adhere to the ethos of scientific study. Susan’s ability to focus is well matched by her possession of a steady hand. However, it soon becomes clear that all is not quite as it seems. Susan departs from a straightforward replication of flora and fauna by concocting strange hybrids or by exaggerating features, such as piercing eyes to convey the extreme visual acuity of an eagle. For spectators, an interactive experience awaits: birds, caught in the moment, watch us,

‘As my work with natural subjects becomes more detailed, so my subjects become more assertive.’



ready to strike or to fly away; clusters of twisted vines and treacherous spikes draw us inside. 'As my work with natural subjects becomes more detailed, so my subjects become more assertive,' the artist states. 'When I'm contemplating a new piece, I start by going through my collection of natural history books until I find something that "speaks" to me. I work with it in terms of size and placement, and then begins the slow and meditative practice of putting paint to porcelain. I obsess about how fine a line I can do; ultimately, I love seeing all the little black lines that I've painted come together to create an image.' Despite the striking maturity of her work, Susan has been working in ceramic art for less than a decade. For many years she worked as an art director / designer in advertising. Then, in 2005, 'I walked into a shop that was running ceramic painting classes and it was immediately obvious that it was something I had to do'. While she has worked with earthenware as well as porcelain, her medium has always been the plate. 'My art is contained, so I can pack it up and

travel easily,' Susan notes. 'We have a house on the south coast, so I spend much of my time there, painting in daylight.'
Olivier Dupon

P216, Encore! The New Artisans by Olivier Dupon, Thames & Hudson, 2015



Susan Hipgrave hand-painted plates
black underglaze on porcelain
Photograph: Craig Wall



Susan Hipgrave
Cactaceae, cactus 1 2014
Hand-painted, black underglaze on porcelain d28cms
Photograph: Craig Wall



Susan Hipgrave
Araceae Colocasia Odorata 2014
Hand-painted, black underglaze on porcelain d28cms
Photograph: Craig Wall



Susan Hipgrave
Caltha Palustris Flore Simplicis 2014
Hand-painted, black underglaze on porcelain d28cms
Photograph: Craig Wall



Susan Hipgrave
Asclepiad 2010
Hand-painted, black underglaze on porcelain d28cms
Photograph: Craig Wall



Susan Hipgrave
Carpinus Betulus, the Hornbeam 2012
Hand-painted, black underglaze on porcelain. d28cms
Photograph: Craig Wall