

EDITORIAL

Chameleons are able to rotate each eye independently, focusing on two different objects simultaneously. They have amazing clinging and climbing ability with their didactyl toes. They are able to see ultra-violet light. They can trap large insects with a sticky elastic tongue that travels faster than the human eye can follow. And, of course, many species are able to change colour, making them experts at camouflage and at expressing their social and physiological condition. So it is no surprise that they have come to symbolise the most changing and elusive attributes of human behaviour.

Etchings 7 is truly a chameleon in outlook—colourful, playful and particularly creative, with contributions that flourish with ideas of change, disguise, mixed identities, and purely ephemeral moments of beauty.

In essays, Theresa Mason evokes startling imagery with her creative non-fiction personification of the Australian bushfires, while Jean-François Vernay probes the complex relationship between fiction and psychoanalysis.

In art, Gabriel Garcia's fictional viewer takes us on a retrospective journey through *The Water Hole* exhibition of Swiss artists Gerda Steiner and Jörg Lenzlinger, held at the Australian Contemporary Centre for the Arts in Melbourne earlier this year. Inga Walton invites Melbourne-based Thai artist Bundit Puangthong to speak about the cultural fusion in his artwork featuring the bright colours and iconography of traditional Thai paintings. Pattern and narrative are explored in Douglas Kirwan's intricate paintings which stir 'an optical whirlpool that obstructs the isolation of a single shape' (Claudia Terstappen).

The strength of the fiction abounds throughout this issue, including a preview from Nobel laureate J.M. Coetzee, offering a pre-release glimpse into his fictional biographical new novel, *Summertime*. Sallie Muirden creates a vivid and eccentric female character who has a sheep as a companion. Heather Fowler shows us familiar human traits, emotions, and attitudes through characters with wings, and others with eyes on their backs. And a beautiful moment between two old ladies sharing their memories in the opening story by A. S. Patric.

The poetry ranges from short, intense and quirky pieces to longer reflective and thought-provoking works, all creating a mysterious, haunting and delightful play on the theme of Chameleons.

Enjoy this latest issue of *Etchings*, which also marks the debut of our new editors, Glenys Osborne (fiction) and Tim Collins (poetry). Come with us as characters shift and stories do about turns, as personalities and appearances change, morphing into an infinite array of possibilities.

THE EDITORIAL TEAM