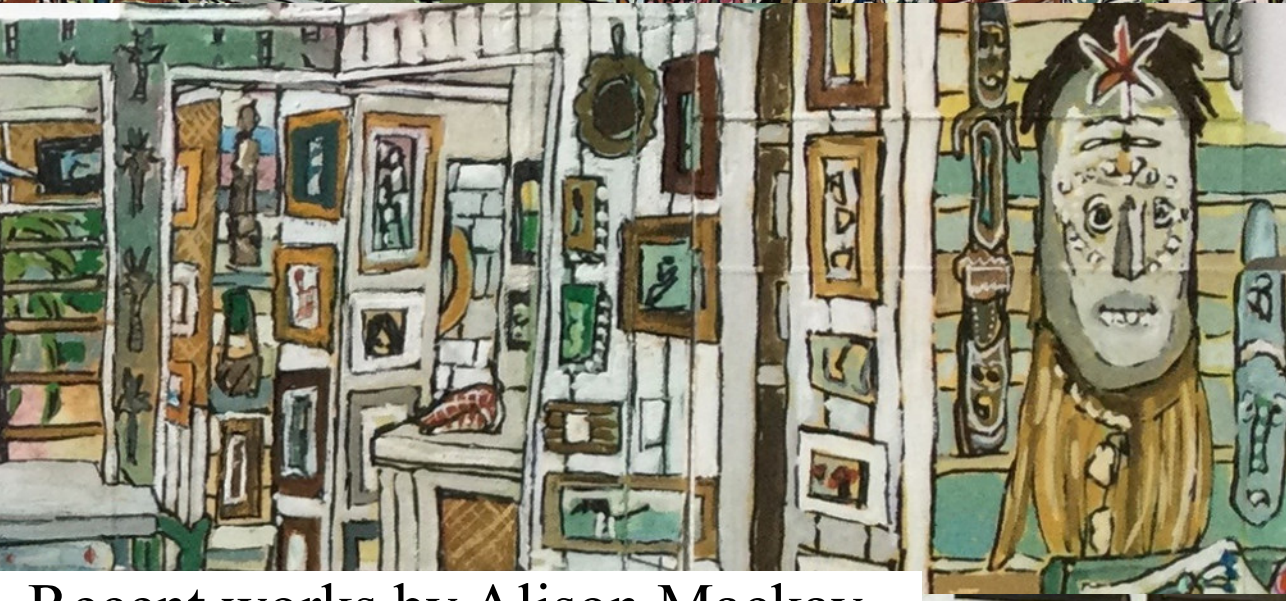


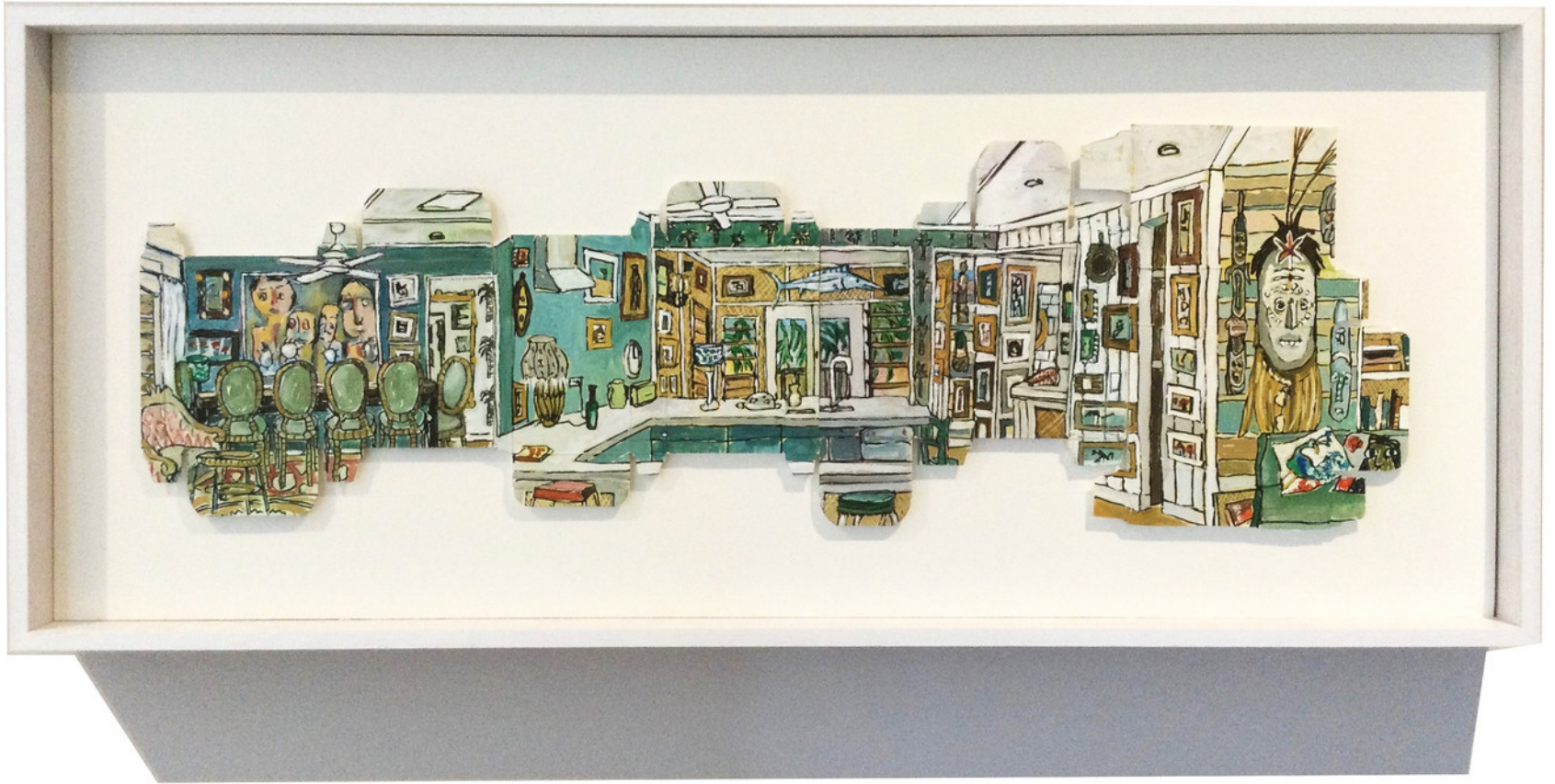


*Thinking
Inside
The Box*



Recent works by Alison Mackay





Thinking Inside the Box

Recent works by Alison Mackay

I've been making paintings and drawings on recycled cardboard boxes for nearly a decade. A trip to the Larapinta, where we had to carry out all our rubbish, sparked the process of drawing on cardboard boxes. Further work came as a result of a residency at Tweed Regional Gallery where I painted the interiors of Margaret Olley's house on unfolded packaging.

More recently, on my trips to Far North Queensland, I have used the unfolded boxes as a substrate in a series of interior drawings made in 'The Artists' Houses'. These dwellings are uniquely and eclectically decorated by their artist owners using a variety of wallpapers, patterned fabric, travel souvenirs and art works, often made by the owners themselves. These houses are a feast for the eyes and I enjoyed the conundrum of fitting a meandering interior onto a small and irregularly shaped packet.

Over the last 2 years these works have expanded in their subject matter to include a remote beach dwelling (Kulki), its surrounding rainforest and nearby reef.

The recycling of the packaging into art is integral, mostly because of the importance of sustainability in our world but also because it tells a further story of the place and the experience of being in that place. Covid test packs, Panadol and strepsils packets tell of my brush with Covid; tea packets, cereal packets and other mundane packaging simply speak of the everyday and of the consumer qualities of our current lives.'

Alison Mackay 2023

Previous page: **The Artists' House FNQ** Sharpie and gouache on unfolded drug packets 22cm x 70cm

Opposite page: Works in progress at The Artists' Houses



"One of the most beautiful parts of owning our homes is the like-minded people we meet and the stories of how our homes have ignited ideas, stories, drawings, songs and rethinks.

Alison Mackay has stayed at most of our homes now, and Alison's drawings of our homes are so beautiful and elegant and inspirational. The wonderful and slow art of just drawing your surroundings, I just love - it's like a soft meditation into the simple beauty of 'now'.

Last year's drawing of our Wonga Beachfront house was shortlisted for the Dobell Drawing Prize. And her drawing of the Artist's Nook was shortlisted for The Muswellbrook. This year she stayed at the Cottage and the Treehouse and was awarded a grant from her regional arts' council to draw our homes.

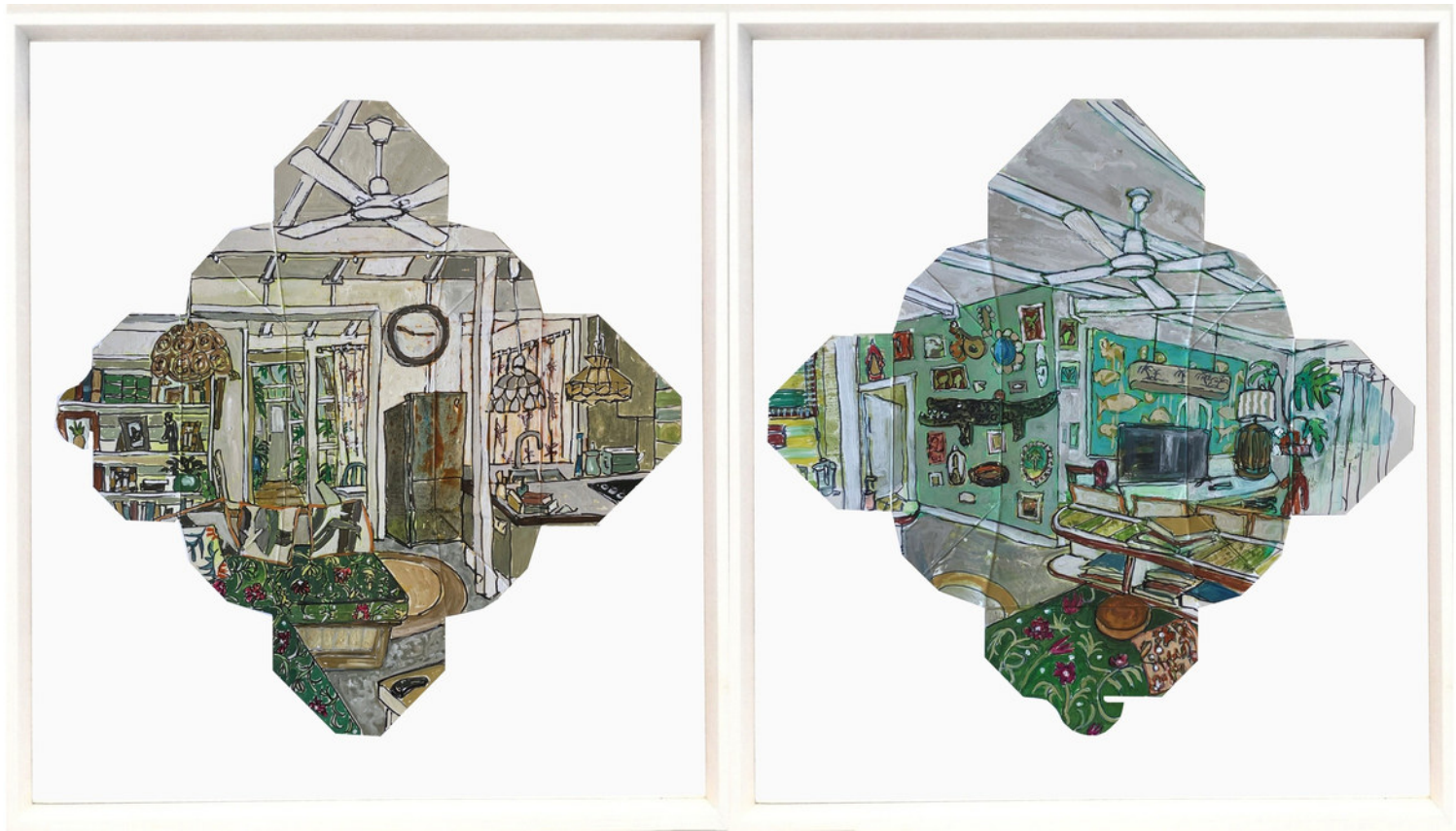
I can't tell you what a privilege it feels to see our homes through her eyes. And these delicate beautiful drawings, drawn on the packages of the tea they drank and the food they ate, feels like a long slow performance piece taking place over years".

Tina Gonsalvez, Owner, The Artists' Houses.

Right: **The Bird Shelf (The Artists' Tree House)** Sharpie, gouache and collage on unfolded tea and printer ink packets 29cm x 60cm







Above: **The Artists' Nook (diptych)** Sharpie and gouache on unfolded takeaway containers 38cm x 38cm each
Opposite page: **Kulki Beachhouse** Sharpie and gouache on unfolded tea packet 29cm x 32cm
Following page: **Kulki (Rainforest Clearing)** Sharpie and gouache on unfolded tea and drug packets 33cm x 80cm











Opposite page: Detail from **The Bird Shelf (The Artists' Tree House)**

This page: Above left: Detail from **The Bird Shelf (The Artists' Tree House)**
Above right: Detail from **Balcony Birds**





'I want to give the viewer the experience of wandering their way through the interior landscape in each drawing. A feeling that you can look up and notice a painting as you go past; that perhaps there is someone preparing a meal just round the corner out of sight in the kitchen; that the stairs or doorway lead to another place just out of reach; that you feel the light and the summeriness of the place.'

Left: **The Artists' Beach House (Wonga)**
Sharpie and gouache on unfolded tea and drug packets 29cm x 53.5cm





Opposite page: **Balcony Birds** Sharpie and gouache on unfolded tea and drug packets
Above left: **Rainforest Clearing** Sharpie and gouache on unfolded tea packet 29cm x 32cm
Above right: **White Tip (GBR)** Sharpie and gouache on unfolded drug packet 23cm x 27.5cm



'These works are deliberately wiggly. They're not intended to be architectural drawings, they're rather more a drawn experience. I was asked how I begin the process – do I use pencil to map things out? Or perspective lines to stay on track?

I don't, as I feel that these strictures would deplete the experience of 'making the drawing' for me.

I choose a point in the space that grabs my eye and begin. I use a Sharpie pen – I don't want to be distracted with an eraser as I go, so each mark or line is deliberate and permanent. It's about the experience for me, as the maker, of wandering through this place with my eyes and translating that directly and indelibly onto the surface. It is, literally, 'taking a line for a walk'.

The works grow organically as the line of one object or surface meanders into the next and the next.'



Opposite page:

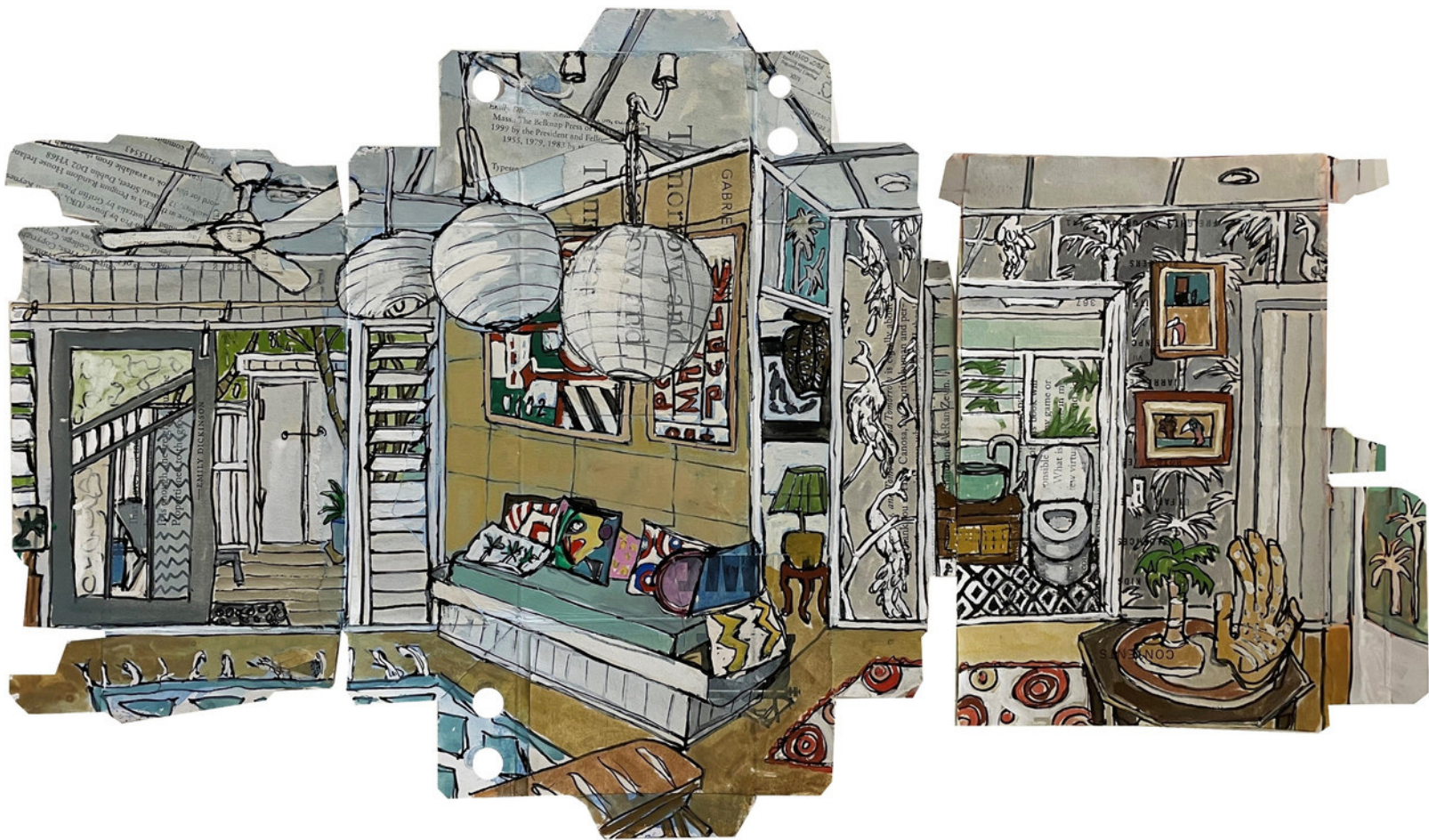
The Artists' Tree House FNQ Sharpie, gouache and collage on unfolded tea and drug packets 29cm x 69cm

Above: **Kulki Rainforest** Sharpie and gouache on unfolded champagne boxes 55cm x 75cm





Opposite page: **The Artists' Cottage (kitchen)** Sharpie, gouache and collage on unfolded tea packet 29cm x 47cm
Above: **The Green Sofa (The Artists' Cottage)** Sharpie, gouache and collage on unfolded drug packets 34cm x 48cm



Above:

The Peacock Wallpaper (Artists' Tree House) Sharpie, gouache and collage on unfolded tea and drug packets 29cm x 48cm

Opposite: **Bathroom (Artists' Cottage)** Sharpie and gouache on unfolded tea packet 29cm c 47cm



'These interior drawings tell more than just the story of a place. Like all artists' works they're also autobiographical – they hold the unique marks of how I, as the artist, experienced that particular place and time. And, in this case, even the substrates - the unfolded and recycled packaging - hold clues to my wider experience whilst creating the drawings. Tea and drug packets along with takeaway containers were all part of the works made whilst I had Covid but continued, in isolation, to draw and paint, balancing pain killers, throat lozenges, cups of tea and takeaway treats.

Some of the works also include pages from books – the books that were a part of my mental landscape as the drawings were made. Collaging torn pages from these books into the works was a small homage to other creatives and the way in which inspiration from diverse places feeds into the making of any artwork.'



Above:

Kulki (Inside/Outside) Sharpie, gouache and collage on unfolded tea and chocolate packets 29cm x 54cm

Opposite page: **Strangler Fig - Kulki** Sharpie and gouache on unfolded packaging 44cm x 40cm





Above: **Sweet Lips (GBR)** Sharpie and gouache on unfolded drug packet 31cm x 42cm
(Great Barrier Reef works were inspired by visits to Opal and Mackay Reefs FNQ)



Above left: **On the Deck (Kulki)** Sharpie and gouache on unfolded drug packet 23cm x 24.5cm
Above right: **The Elephant Curtain (Artists' Nook)** Sharpie and gouache on unfolded tea packet 29cm x 32cm

Alison Mackay Biography:



Born in the UK, Bachelor of Law LLB (Southampton University)

Now lives and works in Jervis Bay, NSW as a painter.

Painting over the past 20 years has predominantly focused on the still life genre but also includes portraiture, landscapes and interiors.

12 Solo and 2-person painting exhibitions throughout NSW and the ACT

20+ group exhibitions throughout Australia

50+ finalist places in major art prize exhibitions including the Archibald, Portia Geach, Dobell Drawing Prize and NSW Parliament's Plein Air Prize

7 prize awards including the 2020 Gallipoli Art Prize

Included in public and private collections throughout Australia, Asia and Europe.

Website: www.alisonmackay.net

Instagram: [@alisonmackayartist](https://www.instagram.com/alisonmackayartist)

The works in this catalogue were shown at the Shoalhaven Regional Gallery in Nowra under the title "Comfort Zone" from 9 March - 4 May 2024.

Thanks to Tina Gonsalvez, Matt Wild and family for the inspirational Artists' Houses that they have created.

Thanks also to Mary-Ellen O'Hare and Robert Pozzi for sharing their rainforest property Kulki Beachhouse at Cape Tribulation.

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Recycle, Reuse, Repurpose

