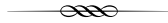


Chapter 12

Ellis Rowan, Extinction and the Politics of Flower Painting

Jeanette Hoorn



Since the beginning of the Darwinian revolution, there has been a particular interest among educated women from many different countries and a diverse range of communities, in botanical illustration. The recording of plants and flowers is part of the process of naming and identifying characteristic features of ‘unknown’ species, as well as preserving the memory of plants through the capture and safe storage of seeds, in response to the increasing possibility of future extinctions. There has always been an aesthetic dimension to botanical illustration that transcends the purely scientific, and places the making of visual images among the highest form of artistic production in which art and science are entangled.

In colonial settings, the classification of plants has played a significant role in the exercise of power. Naming means owning, and although male botanists did most of that, the female artists who recorded the features of plants and flowers understood that they were contributing to Western science and to the ‘empire’ in a significant way.¹ Most of the women who became involved in this enterprise stayed close to home. Not so with the Australian artist Marian Ellis Rowan, who like her mentor Marianne North travelled vast distances on many expeditions to find rare plants, many of which today are either endangered or extinct. Ellis travelled to some of the remotest of locations in Australia, including Far North Queensland, Cape York in the Torres Strait and Albany in Western Australia, where the rates of extinction are now among the highest in the world. It is estimated that she executed more than three thousand paintings and drawings over

her lifetime.² The National Library of Australia's holdings of her work is the largest of any artist in their collection, placing Rowan in a similar class to Marianne North, whose work is held in a special gallery named for her, The Marianne North Gallery at Kew.³ The two met in Australia, North having apparently made the journey on the advice of Charles Darwin, to whom she sent a drawing on her return.⁴ Rowan painted in New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Himalayas and the Caribbean. She also spent four years seeking out rare species in the southern states of the US with the American botanist, Alice Lounsberry. In the preface to their jointly authored *Southern Wild Flowers and Trees*, Lounsberry wrote:

To see rare ones growing in their natural surroundings, Mrs. Rowan and I travelled in many parts of the south . . . Through the mountainous region we drove from cabin to cabin, and nowhere could we have met with greater kindness and hospitality . . . [the] variety and beautiful, luxuriant growth the southern field is perhaps unrivalled.⁵

The Flower Hunter

In Australia, Ellis Rowan made daring forays into country which were not without political baggage. She was exceptionally well connected, always moving in the most elevated circles, bringing into play her extensive contacts. I will endeavour to reveal here the precise circumstances that made Marian Ellis Rowan one of the most powerful members of the Anglo-Australian elite, making it possible to undertake the tasks that enabled her to forward so much plant and other information to the Crown. Wherever she went, Rowan relied upon her contacts, be they scientists, government and vice-regal officials, British naval officers, pastoralists or the leaders of Indigenous communities. Her letters make clear the extent of her personal networks. She 'talked snakes and flowers' with a doctor while travelling with the Bishop of Northern Queensland to the Herbert River.⁶ Sir Ferdinand von Mueller wrote to her in 1894 when she was in London, hoping that she might use her influence to convince the Colonial Office to open Antarctica for exploration: 'Now dear madam, can you with your intellectual power and lady's grace give us also some help?'⁷ Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer, the foundation professor of biology at the University of Melbourne, included her in newspaper articles in which he recognized the role that women played in collecting material for science.⁸ In England, she received many commissions to paint floral panels in the homes and landed estates of patrons.⁹

During her expeditions into tropical Queensland, she accepted the hospitality of frontier pastoralists, such as the Caseys and the Jardines, in order to gain access to the rare specimens she was looking for. She confided in a

letter to her husband that she was ‘ready for everything’ and that her ‘visit to Mr Casey’s station at Normanby had made “such a man of me”’. The Mr Casey to whom Rowan refers was Reginald Gardiner Casey, a pastoralist and miner who was a member of the Queensland Legislative Assembly for Warrego (1888–93). His son, Sir Richard Gavin Gardiner Casey, Baron Casey (29 August 1890 – 17 June 1976) was the eminent Australian statesman who served as the sixteenth governor-general of Australia from 1965 to 1969. He was a distinguished army officer, long-serving cabinet minister, ambassador to the United States, member of Churchill’s War Cabinet, and viceroy of Bengal. In 1926, he married Ellis Rowan’s niece Ethel Marian Sumner (Maie) Ryan – later Baroness Casey. The RG *Casey Building* in Canberra, headquarters of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, is named in his honour. Her line could hardly be more notable or more closely aligned to high public office.¹⁰

Rowan had lengthy stays and undertook long journeys with Francis and Sana Solia Jardine, whose family held extensive pastoral landholdings set up by the Scottish-born patriarch John Jardine when he was appointed by the Queensland Government to establish a British outpost in Cape York in 1864. The resistance of local people to the drive into Far North Queensland over the following two decades met with violent retribution from Jardine, who as a police magistrate appointed colonial law enforcement agents, including native police, to remove Aboriginal owners from what the state considered to be his family’s property. In 1896 in a report to the government of Queensland, it was estimated that in the 1870s the Indigenous population between the County of Newcastle and Cape York was over three thousand. By Ellis’s arrival the population was well on its way to falling to less than three hundred. Whether it was through the introduction of disease, the exclusion of Aboriginal owners from traditional hunting grounds, or the day-to-day killing of resistance fighters as well as large-scale massacres, the numbers of First Nations people that Rowan encountered during her trip to the Torres Strait in 1991 were greatly reduced.¹¹ Several groups are believed to have occupied this region prior to the arrival of the British, including the Atambaya, Gudang, Yadhaykenu, Ankamuthi, Wuthathi and the Kaurareg people.¹²

Rowan was introduced to Frank Jardine on her first trip to Thursday Island in 1891. On her arrival, she was met by the governor of Queensland, Sir Henry Norman, and by her brother-in-law, Admiral Lord Charles Scott, who at the time was commander in charge of what was termed ‘The Australian Station’. Admiral Scott was the fourth son of the fifth Duke of Buccleuch, the second largest landholder in the United Kingdom. Ellis’s sister, Ada Mary (Lady Charles Scott), became his wife in 1883. As a member of one of the best-bred families in Britain, Rowan was able to

exert her authority, giving her access to material she would not otherwise have been able to reach. This included the labour of local people who collected plants for her to paint. On trips to Jervis Island, for example, Rowan was able to organize children from the community to collect flowers for her.¹³ She was guided to inaccessible spots by local trackers while working on Chillagoe Cattle Station:

I spent one day with a little native boy on a flower-hunting expedition. We went in search of a particular plant that grows only on a certain ridge of these limestone rocks . . . Round the base of the rocks I found innumerable pods, berries and flowers that were new to me. My little guide, with his bare feet, skipped over the rocks like a goat familiar with every feature; while I, left behind, toiled wearily over [them], half-baked with the scorching heat.¹⁴

Rowan put in tremendously long hours herself, and her labours are truly worthy of admiration. There are frequent accounts of the exhaustion she suffered. From Rockhampton she wrote: 'I sat up painting until well into daylight next morning – how shocked you would have been at my burning the candle at both ends!'¹⁵ On her departure she noted: '[M]y cabin was already filled with flowers, and there and then, between my qualms of sea-sickness, I painted them in'. Speaking of two weeks spent in Cooktown: 'My eyes wore out sometimes painting from daylight till dark, for I couldn't keep pace with the flowers that came, and while I spent hours with wet bandages on them, Mrs Bauer [her host] sat beside me and read aloud'.¹⁶

Not only did she 'paint in' plants, she dried specimens on the spot, which she carefully enclosed in sheets of paper and brought back to Melbourne. We do not know, however, if she tried to establish the native names of the plants she collected or whether she inquired into their medicinal uses. This information was not included in the naming and classification that Sir Ferdinand von Mueller, the government botanist for Victoria (1853–73), and Frederick Manson Bailey, the colonial botanist for Queensland (1881–1915), undertook following her delivery of specimens.¹⁷

Her prose is full of rapture as she described the physical features of the landscapes through which she travelled, and engaging anecdotes of life on the properties of the pastoralists with whom she stayed. Accounts of First Nations communities she encounters are redolent with spectacle. Rowan comes upon large and well-organized communities, and an abundant and fertile nature, which today no longer exists. Her descriptions of Murray Island in her letters are ravishing:

We were awakened at six next morning, when a buxom maiden came up the hill with gourds of water for our baths. I had mine in a very primitive dish. The sun had just risen but the landscape was still drowned in

vapours, while the heavens above were roofed with a sapphire blue; as the mists rolled away the view each moment grew more beautiful, and how often I wished that some fairy godmother, by reason of her wand, could have wafted you to me. Each leaf sparkled with dewdrops, the sea without a ripple, lightly spreading over shallow sands, was of that peculiar shade of green that is only seen in tropical waters.¹⁸

But the majority of remaining members of Aboriginal communities were, in the following decades, removed from their lands and placed into missions. Rowan described the South Sea Islander communities, who were brought in at this time under conditions of slavery for labour in the sugar and pastoral industries, under the heading of ‘happy darkies’, assuring the reader that ‘[t]hey have a very happy time of it on these plantations, and all seem very jolly with the wives, children and those belongings most precious to them, including fowls and pigs’.¹⁹ Alongside such troubling descriptions, her prose has sublime passages in which she is overcome by the beauty of what she sees before her. At many points, however, she reveals her experience of abjection as she encounters people (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) whom she considers to be inferior, backward and at times dangerous.²⁰ In one such instance, Ellis informs the reader that she wears gloves when shaking hands with local people, describing her relief that she has a pair at hand. Her accounts of the Australian wilderness are full of awe and wonder, but are also peppered with tales of head-hunting, cannibalism and other manifestations of White fantasy.²¹

Rowan’s career as a botanical illustrator was intimately bound up with the project of Empire and the damage it inflicted on Australia’s First Nations peoples and its flora and fauna. This destruction is invisible in her botanical drawings. The works of twenty-first-century artist Lucienne Rickard, which I will discuss later, are important in this context, forming a powerful counterpoint as they foreground the violence of erasure.

Disgust and disdain are nevertheless tempered by enthusiasm, as Rowan’s fascination for the beauty of the plants, birds and fish that come across her path outweigh her fears. No effort is too great for the intrepid Ellis Rowan to capture on paper the material generously made available to her. With the help of local pastoralists and Aboriginal assistants, Rowan contributed raw material from this new frontier for botany and the science of Empire. In doing so, centuries of Indigenous knowledge and practice went unrecorded.

Her ability to engender support at the highest levels and to make friendships with like-minded people, gave her entrée into powerful circles and the support needed to travel over large distances, and in doing so, she was able to bring vast landscapes under ‘scientific’ control, making her a link in the chain through which First Nations Australians were dispossessed of their country.²²

Extinction, botanical illustration and flower painting are entwined in colonial settings, bound together in the process of capturing territory for Empire and for science. Botanical illustration and flower painting are usually seen to be distinct but related minor genres that are not broadly thought about in relationship to conquest. But in the circumstances that confront us today, in which many plants are threatened with extinction, attempts by art historians to continue to argue for a separation of the two genres and to attempt to exclude artists, predominantly women, who mix genres from the canon, are unhelpful. Nor is it useful to read their endeavours as something that had nothing to do with the politics of dispossession. Rowan's primary aim was to record new specimens in remote places, but when the governor of New South Wales, Sir Walter Davidson, opened an exhibition of her paintings in 1920, he noted that her paintings provided a record that was 'instructive to future generations . . . before many of the beautiful birds become extinct . . . and the flowers disappear beneath the heels of civilisation'.²³ While Rowan was recording plants against possible extinction, she was part of the process that facilitated a completely new regime of land management, which, in the years to come, resulted in the destruction of whole economies, human, plant and animal, creating extinctions in far greater numbers than she could have envisaged.

Chrysanthemums in the Picture

Recently, the representation of plants and flowers has emerged in dramatic form in a celebration and remembrance of the plant world that so many of us have been unable to access – a reminder of what life could be like without our immersion in the natural world. One of the most striking has been a particular performance of *Crisantemi, Elegy for String Quartet*, written by the great Italian composer, Giacomo Puccini.

This enduring piece of music is regularly performed today; but never before like this. On 24 June 2020, the UceLi Quartet, led by conceptual artist Eugenio Ampudia, performed *Crisantemi* as part of his 'Concert for the Biocene' to celebrate the opening of the city's Gran Teatre del Liceu, which had been closed since mid-March due to COVID-19, with a performance of Puccini's hauntingly beautiful piece to an audience made up only of plants – 2,292 of them. Speaking in the context of COVID lockdowns, Ampudia made a plea for humanity to reconnect with nature, writing: 'I heard many more birds singing, and the plants in my garden and outside [were] growing faster and without a doubt. I thought that maybe I could now relate in a much more intimate way with people and nature'.²⁴ In his article, 'Cybercene or Biocene: Which Future Will We Choose?', Mark

Sommer argues that the human species is now living in the ‘twilight years of the Anthropocene’ and in the age of the planet’s human-made sixth mass extinction. He calls for a Biocene future, one where we reject the values of the post-human for our humanity and nature. Ampudia has these values in mind when he performs ‘Concert for the Biocene’, choosing for it the Chrysanthemum, whose classic varieties are now threatened.²⁵

Chrysanthemums are flowers of commemoration and mourning. Today many species traditionally grown in the UK are threatened with extinction, due to the encroachment of human populations in areas where they used to grow wild, and to their susceptibility to disease through neglect.²⁶ Puccini wrote his piece in memory of his friend, Prince Amadeo, Duke of Savoy. The Barcelona performance of *Crisantemi* memorialized the deaths of thousands of Catalans caused by COVID-19, and the plants, which were the audience, were given to Barcelona’s medical workers as a recognition for their work during the first wave of the pandemic.²⁷ Puccini’s choice of the chrysanthemum took place at a time when academic artists from all over Europe had joined in the rage for chrysanthemums. In Australia, many of the country’s most celebrated colonial painters, such as Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton, Charles Condon and Jane Sutherland, all known for their landscapes and portraits, began to honour the chrysanthemum.

While Ellis Rowan is best known for her wild flowers, she holds a special place in Melbourne’s history for the controversy that arose surrounding her *Chrysanthemums* (Fig. 12.1), the picture for which she won the Melbourne International Exhibition of 1888, the most sought-after accolade of the day by Melbourne’s fledging community of academic artists, against whom she competed and over whom she triumphed.²⁸ Ellis’s choice of chrysanthemums as a subject, two years before Puccini named his piece for his friend Amadeo, created a debate that lasted several months and bears comparison with some of the most notable scandals in the Australian art world, such as the one that surrounded Emmanuel Frémiet’s gift of his bronze *Gorilla carrying off a woman* to the National Gallery of Victoria in 1906, and the purchase of Jackson Pollock’s *Blue Poles* for the National Gallery in Canberra in 1973.

When Rowan won at the Melbourne International Centennial Exhibition of 1888–89, she was selected over both local and international artists.²⁹ The Victorian Artists’ Society led by senior artists Julian Ashton and John Mather, lodged an appeal against Rowan’s award. Most of the Australian artists had trained at the National Gallery Art School in Melbourne, and some were also returned from popular French and British academies. Ellis had not attended an art school, taking lessons privately in Melbourne and in London.³⁰ Rowan was the only artist to win gold for the academy’s high art category, outclassing everyone in every class, including

a vast array of European artists. Ellis won the competition partly on account of her very large painting of a blazing bouquet of *Chrysanthemums* painted in a style quite unlike those she had submitted elsewhere in the competition. In doing so, she joined a group of elite artists then painting chrysanthemums. Claude Monet and Vincent Van Gogh painted literally dozens of the Japanese blossoms, each work larger in size and more breathtaking than the preceding one. Rowan's large oils do not look an unworthy offering in their company. She also entered two folios of wild flowers into the Queensland and New Zealand galleries, for which she received orders of merit. While most of her paintings are watercolours of modest size, her two known works of *Chrysanthemums* were substantial oil paintings whose dimensions are much larger than her standard work, and also much bigger than the bush pictures, genre paintings or portraits submitted by her fellow artists into the competition.³¹ Pictures of this scale, usually thought to be suitable for subjects of serious import, were most often paintings about national life, such as Tom Roberts's *Shearing the Rams* (1890), which today has a two-page entry devoted to it in Wikipedia.

Little discussed is the fact that among the eight paintings offered for the competition by the then upcoming artist Tom Roberts was his own flower painting, *The Glory of Chrysanthemums*.³² Roberts and fellow artists submitted paintings that today are considered to constitute the nation's patrimony, among them Frederick McCubbin's *Lost*, and Roberts's *Summer Morning Tiff* and *Reconciliation*.³³ All were overlooked. The judges had works before them that documented the rise of British colonial culture in Australia – now priceless. But they were all disregarded in favour of *Chrysanthemums*!

Although Roberts, throughout his career, also painted several works of roses, poppies and pelargoniums, his paintings of flowers are relegated into the background of his oeuvre. Andrew Montana is the only one who has suggested that Roberts's paintings of *Chrysanthemums* are of interest, albeit within the context of decorative art, noting that the artist 'exploited the flower's potential as a fashionable subject' using 'vigorous brushwork and deep rich colour to achieve his glowing autumnal effect'.³⁴ Like Rowan's splendid pictures of chrysanthemums, albeit of smaller dimensions, Roberts's works compare well to those painted by other Belle Époque artists, decorative and fashionable or not.

In 2022, I would argue that these paintings of chrysanthemums by Roberts and Rowan, and indeed those painted by so many artists of that age, gain new significance and are no longer usefully relegated to a minor genre of painting. *Chrysanthemums* were one of hundreds of non-native species introduced to Australia by settler-colonists in the nineteenth century. Some of these species have, over time, damaged the natural ecosystem

and threatened native-plant diversity, contributing to the extinction of indigenous flora. While Rowan was carefully recording the rich native plant life of Australia, her statement piece at the centennial exhibition portrays a non-native ornamental species popular in Britain, Europe and America as an exotic, then linked to orientalist fantasies of East Asia.³⁵ Rowan's work, along with Roberts's painting of the same subject, indexes how the inter-



Illustration 12.1 Marian Ellis Rowan, *Chrysanthemums*, oil on canvas, 119.5 × 91.5 cm, private collection, 1888.

national horticultural trade encompassed Australia. This trade contributed, and continues to contribute, to many species extinctions through competitive exclusion, niche displacement, and the spread of disease.

Chrysanthemums indicates that Ellis was able to work outside of the framework of botanical illustration, and that the boundaries between science and art may not have always been as fiercely observed as we believe today; whether she realized it or not, the flower subjects of Rowan's art were intimately bound up with fate of the native flora she recorded. The boundaries of botanical illustration and flower painting were crossed by Rowan and North, both of whom developed a style that integrated elements of art and science, creating a new genre of painting. Ellis Rowan had an international reputation and was more visible than that of any other Australian artist at the time. Travelling extensively, she successfully took part in numerous exhibitions all over the world, and her flowers entered many private and public collections, including the Royal collection in London following the purchase by Queen Victoria of three of her works.³⁶ Art historians have failed to grasp just how elevated a role Rowan occupied in both the national and international art world. Bernard Smith did not believe her to be sufficiently important to include her in any of his survey histories of Australian art. In general, art historians have also failed to understand how mainstream flower painting actually was, or how widely it was practised by both male and female artists. The remarks of the critic of *The Argus* in reviewing the Victorian Artists' Society spring exhibition of 1888 are indicative:

Mrs Ellis Rowan's basket of fruit blooms and Mr Tom Roberts' fine group of roses . . . A panel of maiden's blush roses by Miss Williamson; Mr A Streeton's chrysanthemums; a cluster of daffodils *in situ*, by Mrs Anderson; two panels of irises, by Miss R.C. Atterley; some yellow and crimson chrysanthemums by Miss Jane Sutherland; and some cloth of gold rosebuds by Miss F.A. Fuller, serve to heighten the general attractiveness of the exhibition.³⁷

It is worth a thought that Marion Ellis Rowan may have actually won the Melbourne international competition, not because she was so well connected and knew some of the members of the panel of judges – only one of whom was an artist and which included scientists and prominent businessmen in their ranks – but because it was the best picture of the show. Perhaps one of the reasons that Roberts was so offended was that the judges preferred her *Chrysanthemums* to his? In any case, three years later they were painting on the beach together on Murray (Mer) Island in the Torres Strait. Rowan, clearly a good sport, showed concern over a portrait of a Meriam man completed by Roberts *en plein air*, in which she provides

us with the only account in existence of the making of Roberts's extremely important cycle of portraits from Cape York:

He made a splendid study of his model, who had an ornament of feathers stuck in his woolly head and a big scarlet hibiscus in his ear-ring . . . Just as the forty-guinea finishing touches were being put on the picture, the whole thing fell, butter-side downwards, into the sand. It looked hopeless but the next day the oils had dried, and we carefully wiped off the sand, after which it was re-touched, and looked as well as ever.³⁸

Conclusion: The Importance of Plants

In this concluding section, I want to come back to Rowan's botanical illustrations, before turning to the work of the contemporary Australian artist Lucienne Rickard. As noted earlier, a number of the plants Rowan drew are now endangered or extinct. The Cooktown orchid (*Dendrobium bigibbum*), which she painted several times, is classed as 'vulnerable'. This orchid is now the Queensland State floral emblem. In a work from 1891, which combines a depiction of the Cooktown orchid with one of the native bee orchid (*Dendrobium bifalce*), it is clear from the white spot in the centre of the labellum that the variety she depicts is native to the Cape York Peninsula.³⁹ Rowan's attentiveness to the individual characteristics of the Cooktown orchid, her careful recording of the specifics of the orchid's labellum, speaks to her engaging with plants as subjects. Her way of seeing plants was inspirational, especially at a time when we are largely 'plant blind' when it comes to their conservation. The performance of Puccini's *Elegy* reminds us that diverse plant species are now under threat of disappearing for ever, through extinctions brought on by changes to the climate, the intrusion of introduced plants into native landscapes, and the pressure of human and exotic animal habitation. Performing to an audience of plants, like Rowan's careful and sensitive illustrations, works to affirm plants as subjects, and to counter a tendency to see plants simply as greenery, in the background and unimportant.

Seeing and not seeing are central to Tasmanian graphic artist Lucienne Rickard's concern with species extinction. Her drawings barely emerge before they vanish, becoming afterimages, rubbed out for ever (see Illustration 12.2). Her project, *Extinction Studies*, is an installation of twelve-months duration, which at the time



Illustration 12.2 Lucienne Rickard, *Hibiscus*, Extinction Studies project, Hobart, 2020.

of writing is being performed at the Tasmanian Gallery's Link Foyer in Hobart, stretching from September 2019 to December 2020 and now extended to run until 24 January 2021. So far, she has completed thirty-seven drawings of animals and plants, now gone forever. Her performance consists of representing on paper, with an HB pencil, plants and animals and insects from all over the world that are now extinct. When she has completed a drawing, which usually takes at least a week to finish and sometimes several months, she then erases the drawing and begins to draw a different extinct species on the same sheet of paper.

It has taken Rickard months to record in painstaking detail, for example, some of the scales on the wings of the Xerces blue (*Glaucopsyche xerces*) butterfly of San Francisco, which number some 112,000. Her works are exquisite. When the drawing is complete, she rubs it out. There is always ghosting remaining on the surface – an uncanny glimpse of an afterlife. This process of drawing and erasure, of evolution and extinction, is repeated in full knowledge that the paper will deteriorate and eraser shavings will accumulate.⁴⁰ Many of those who watch her work, beg her not to erase the completed picture. Rickard is herself a force of nature as she demonstrates, with a visceral power, the terrifying reality of extinction.

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Notes

1. Gates, *Kindred Nature*.
2. Morton-Evans, *Ellis Rowan: A Life in Pictures*, 3.
3. 970 works by Rowan are held in the National Library of Australia in Canberra and 108 works are housed in the collection of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. There are 832 works by North in the Marianne North Gallery at Kew.
4. A letter written to North by Darwin thanked her for her drawing of the shrub, *Raoulia eximia* 'Australian Sheep'. Letter from Charles Darwin to Marianne North, 2 August 1881. Letter no. DCP-LETT-13269A. Darwin Correspondence Project, Cambridge University. Retrieved 6 January 2021 from: <https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/DCP-LETT-13269A.xml>.
5. Lounsbury and Rowan, *Southern Wild Flowers and Trees*, ix–x.
6. Rowan, *A Flower Hunter*, 11.
7. Morton-Evans and Morton-Evans, *The Flower Hunter*, 206.
8. In an article in *The Argus*, Baldwin Spencer named Rowan among a number of Australian women, including Emily Peloe and Louisa Meredith, as women 'who have notably tried with pen and pencil to reveal to the ordinary nature lover the beauty and interest of Australian wild flowers'. Quoted in Moore, *The Story of Australian Art*, xviii.
9. Montana, 'Constance Roth and Ellis Rowan', 213.
10. Rowan's writings are replete with references to her friends, family and professional contacts. See for example, *A Flower Hunter*.
11. Sharp, *Footprints*, 55–58.
12. *Ibid.*, 85. See Liddell, *The Savage Frontier*, 98; Richards, *The Secret War*.
13. Clarke, cited in Maroske, 'A Taste for Botanic Science', 75.
14. Rowan, *A Flower Hunter*, 65–66. For a discussion of the often overlooked but crucial role of Aboriginal Australians in the nineteenth-century botanical 'discovery' of Australia's plant life, see Clarke, *Aboriginal Plant Collectors*.
15. Rowan, *A Flower Hunter*, 6.
16. Morton-Evans and Morton-Evans, *The Flower Hunter*, 98.
17. Rowan was a prominent member of a group of over two hundred female artists and collectors of specimens who collected for von Mueller. Maroske, 'A Taste for Botanic Science', 73.
18. Rowan, *A Flower Hunter*, 157.
19. *Ibid.*, 17.
20. *Ibid.*, 84.
21. *Ibid.*, 161.
22. Her travels brought her into direct contact with frontier violence such as that which took place during the same trip to the Torres Strait, when she was hosted by the government resident, John Douglas, on board the steamer *Albatross*. On this occasion, she was brought into public controversy when a newspaper report from Thursday Island complained that the murder of Indigenous people at the Seven Rivers had not been properly investigated. According to the report this was 'because the *Albatross* was absent, escorting Mrs. Rowan, the artist, around the islands'. The matter was taken up in the Queensland parliament by the member for Ipswich, AH Barlow, who sought a parliamentary enquiry into the government resident's conduct. Queensland Parliamentary Debates of the Legislative Assembly, Vol. 64, 30 September 1891, p. 1295, quoted in McKay, *Ellis Rowan, a Flower-Hunter*, 16.
23. Morton-Evans, *Ellis Rowan: A Life in Pictures*, 5.

24. Neira, 'Barcelona Opera House'.
25. Sommer, 'Cybercene or Biocene'.
26. Louise Gray, 'Unfashionable flowers in danger of dying out'. *The Telegraph*, 20 March 2009. Retrieved 6 January 2021 from: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/5023101/Unfashionable-flowers-in-danger-of-dying-out.html>.
27. Agence France-Presse. 'As Lockdown Lifts, Barcelona Plants Enjoy a Day at the Opera'. *Yahoo! News*, 22 June 2020. Retrieved 6 January 2021 from: <https://news.yahoo.com/lockdown-lifts-barcelona-plants-enjoy-day-opera-174357136.html>.
28. This victory in 1888 followed on from another major public protest over her success at the Melbourne International Exhibition of 1880.
29. Jordan, 'Tom Roberts, Ellis Rowan'.
30. She did, however, have a family background in scientific illustration. Her maternal grandfather, John Cotton, published two books on British birds: *Resident Song Birds of Great Britain* and *The Song Birds of Great Britain*. He was one of the first ornithologists to record the birds of Victoria. Cotton's manuscript is found in the 'Sketchbook Belonging to John Cotton, with Sketches and Descriptions of Birds of the Port Phillip District of New South Wales [1844–49]'. State Library Victoria. Retrieved 6 January 2021 from: <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/210587>.
31. Dimensions for both are 119.5 x 91.5 cm. Morton-Evans, *Ellis Rowan: A Life in Pictures*, 61, 170.
32. *Ibid.*, 121.
33. Centennial International Exhibition, 119–21.
34. Montana, 'The Chrysanthemum', 114–17.
35. For a discussion of chrysanthemum culture in Victorian Britain, see Chang, 'Chrysanthemums and Cultivated Visions', 178–203.
36. Ellis won many medals in international competitions, including at the World's Columbian Exposition at the World Fair in Chicago in 1893. Rowan painted two large oils of Chrysanthemums at around this time, and Roberts three or four smaller works; we cannot be absolutely sure that those claimed to have been the ones exhibited in 1888 were indeed the pictures the audiences came to see.
37. *The Argus*, 16 November 1888, 6.
38. Rowan, *A Flower Hunter*, 159 cited in McQueen, *Tom Roberts*, 363.
39. This painting is reproduced in Clements, *The Allure of Orchids*, 115.
40. Each extinct species is sourced from the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) *Red List of Threatened Species*, widely recognized as the authoritative list of extinct and threatened species used by scientists globally. See 'Exhibitions: Extinction Studies', TMAG, Retrieved 6 January 2021 from: http://www.tmag.tas.gov.au/whats_on/exhibitions/current_upcoming/info/extinction_studies.

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