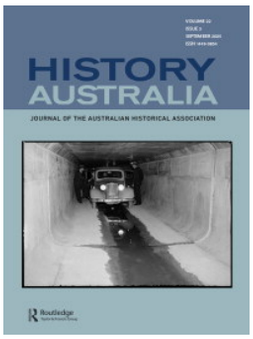


History Australia

ISSN: 1449-0854 (Print) 1833-4881 (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/raha20

Botanical women artists in northern Queensland: science, art, and entanglement, 1880–1999

Janine Evans

To cite this article: Janine Evans (28 Oct 2025): Botanical women artists in northern Queensland: science, art, and entanglement, 1880–1999, History Australia, DOI: 10.1080/14490854.2025.2569486

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/14490854.2025.2569486

Published online: 28 Oct 2025.

HISTORY AUSTRALIA
https://doi.org/10.1080/14490854.2025.2569486

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group

RESEARCH ARTICLE

OPEN ACCESS Check for updates

Botanical women artists in northern Queensland: science, art, and entanglement, 1880–1999

Janine Evans

James Cook University, Cairns, Australia

ABSTRACT

This article explicates the contributions of two women botanical artists, Marian Ellis Rowan (1848–1922) and Vera Scarth-Johnson (1912–1999) to botanical science in northern Queensland. Despite the perception of botany as more accessible to women than other scientific fields, formal botanical institutions during the late Victorian era and early twentieth century remained male dominated. Within this context, Rowan's privilege enabled her to navigate colonial and botanical networks, facilitating her access to the colonial frontier where she encountered and painted rare and newly identified plants. By contrast, in the late twentieth century, Scarth-Johnson expanded the scope of botanical illustration to encompass environmental activism and the inclusion of Indigenous ecological knowledge. Although Rowan and Scarth-Johnson operated in different historical and political contexts, collectively their work showed the entanglement of botanical science with broader environmental, cultural, and social issues specific to the Endeavour River valley in northern Queensland.

KEYWORDS

Botany; gendered botany; botanical illustration; northern Queensland

The Endeavour River valley in northern Queensland has been a particularly significant site of botanical curiosity and colonial exploration in Australian history. Since the *Endeavour* voyage of James Cook arrived in 1770, the region has been known for its ecological richness and presence of unique plant species unknown to European science. Men of science onboard the *Endeavour* were regarded as traditional authorities on botanical knowledge about the region, but much subsequent knowledge came from the work of a combination of professionals and amateurs, many of whom were women. This diversification of contributors ensured the region remained an important botanical frontier well into the late twentieth century, attracting botanists, collectors, and artists who documented its unique flora for scientific and public interest.

The history of botanical illustration at the Endeavour River valley has included the remarkable achievements of Marian Ellis Rowan (1848–1922) and Vera

CONTACT Janine Evans janine.evans1@my.jcu.edu.au College of Arts, Society, and Education, James Cook University, Cairns, Australia

Scarth-Johnson (1912–1999). Their experiences demonstrated how artistic talent, social connections, and determination contributed to the botanical survey of the region, and therefore greater understanding of Australian flora. However, their successes did not occur in isolation. They benefitted from influential botanical networks that were dominated by male botanists, and were supported by elite public officials, who acted as both gatekeepers and patrons. From Britain's Royal Gardens at Kew, to the remote frontiers of northern Queensland, such powerful structures determined who could contribute to science, and whose contributions were valued.

In this context, women such as Rowan and Scarth-Johnson established influential careers. Their work not only contributed to the scientific documentation of Queensland's plant life, but also challenged the boundaries imposed by gender and the structures of colonial science in subtle ways. Both women navigated these constraints and left lasting legacies in botanical science, art, and environmental advocacy. The following sections establish the context of Australian colonial collecting and illustration, before examining and comparing the careers of Rowan and Scarth-Johnson in turn.

Historical and gendered foundations of botany

When Professor of Botany John Lindley delivered his inaugural lecture at London University in 1829, he stressed that botany was suited to the 'serious thoughts of man', in contrast to the mere 'amusement of ladies'.[1] Lindley's remarks reflected the gendered tensions within the foundations of science. Since the introduction of Linnaeus' *Sexual System* in 1735, botany had been entangled in moral debates over its suitability for women, as it metaphorically aligned plant reproduction with human sexuality.[2] These uneasy debates persisted well into the nineteenth century, as philosophers such as Friedrich Hegel reinforced the view that the physical sciences were too abstract for women, who were deemed inherently unsuited for intellectual rigor.[3] Botany, by contrast, was linked to observation, classification, and aesthetic appreciation; qualities considered non-intellectual, and hence, feminised. Women's participation in botany was therefore ambivalent. While botany was framed as naturally feminine, it was also viewed as potentially corrupting to the virtue of young women. Lindley, meanwhile, encouraged young men to study botany as a serious scientific pursuit.

Young men were not exempt from these debates either. In 1887 the provocative question, 'Is Botany a Suitable Study for Young Men?' was posed by the influential physician J.F.A. Adams, who answered it with a resolute *yes*. He defended botany 'as one of the most useful and most manly of studies', emphasising its character-building

[1] John Lindley, *An Introductory Lecture Delivered in London on Thursday April 30, 1829* (J. Taylor, 1829), 17, https://www.google.com.au/books/edition/An_Introductory_Lecture_Delivered_in_the/nlAOAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1.
[2] Nurseryman James Lee explained the thinking of Linnaeus' classification system: James Lee, *An Introduction to the Science of Botany: Chiefly Extracted from the Works of Linnaeus: To Which Are Added, Several New Tables and Notes, and a Life of the Author* (F.C. and J. Rivington, Wilkie and Robinson, J. Walker, White and Co., 1810), 49, https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/45438809. A short explanation of the 'Sexual System' is provided at: 'Methodus Plantarum Sexualis – Linnaeus's Sexual System', *Uppsala Universitet*, last modified 30 May 2024, https://www.uu.se/en/linnaeus-garden/our-plants-and-attractions/our-plants/sexual-system.
[3] G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, Trans. by S.W. Dyde (Batoche Books, 2001), 144, https://historyofeconomicthought.mcmaster.ca/hegel/right.pdf.

potential.[4] As historian Ann Shteir has shown, this period witnessed the gradual delineation of botany into professional, utilitarian science for men, and a polite, amateur accomplishment for women, with both arrangements enforcing gendered binaries.[5] As the field professionalised, men were increasingly encouraged to undertake research tasks such as taxonomy, while women were excluded from scientific societies and professional pathways. This system, as historian Ann Standish has noted, legitimised male authority over scientific knowledge production, and safely distanced women from challenging its dominant gendered foundations.[6]

While such conclusions accurately described structural barriers faced by women, they did not account for the ways in which women botanical artists navigated, and subtly contested, such constraints. Some women succeeded in carving out prominent roles within botany, using their artistic expertise to produce visible forms of scientific knowledge. Their contributions demonstrated scientific legitimacy and elevated a practice that was often dismissed as mere flower painting.

Botanical collecting in the Australian colonies

In the Australian settler-colonial context, women were essential to the progress of botany, although its gendered division was evident. As historian Jane Carey has argued, male botanists relied heavily on women's skills in collecting and illustrating plant species in landscapes newly traversed by Europeans.[7] For example, in 1836 horticulturalist James Mangles of the Royal Society in London requested seeds collected by Georgiana Molloy of the Swan River colony.[8] The seeds she sent were in high demand for private gardens as well as public botanical gardens in England, where the peculiar native plants of the western Australian colony had become familiar additions.[9] Furthermore, her 'discriminating, painstaking collections formed the basis for [John] Lindley's *Flora of the Swan River*'.[10] Botanising was therefore both a rewarding retreat from domestic work, and integral to documenting the flora of the western Australian colony.

A similar situation confronted new settlers in the colony of Van Diemen's Land. Mary Morton Allport and Louisa Ann Meredith emigrated with their husbands in 1831 and 1840 respectively, who intended becoming gentleman-farmers.[11] When these ventures failed, the families relocated to Hobart Town, where the women's artistic skills became essential in supplementing the family income.[12] Both women made significant contributions to Tasmanian natural history through a shared passion for art.[13] While Allport

[4] J.F.A. Adams, 'Is Botany a Suitable Study for Young Men?', *Science* 9, no. 209 (1887): 116–67.
[5] Ann Shteir, 'Gender and Modern Botany in Victorian England', *Osiris* 12 (1997): 33.
[6] Ann Standish, *Australia Through Women's Eyes* (Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2008), 75.
[7] Jane Carey, *Taking to the Field: A History of Australian Women in Science* (Monash University Publishing, 2023), 16–17.
[8] Ibid., 17.
[9] 'Molloy, Georgiana (1805–1843)', Council of Heads of Australasian Herbaria, last modified January 8, 2008, https://www.anbg.gov.au/biography/molloy-georgiana.html.
[10] Claire Hooker, *Irresistible Forces: Australian Women in Science* (Melbourne University Press, 2004), 13.
[11] Leonie Norton, *Women of Flowers: Botanical Art in Australia from the 1830s to 1960s* (National Library of Australia Publishing, 2009), 10; Patricia Grimshaw and Ann Standish, 'Making Tasmania Home: Louisa Meredith's Colonising Prose', *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* 28, no. 1/2 (2007): 1.
[12] Hooker, *Irresistible Forces*, 25; For a full account of Meredith's life, see: Vivienne Rae-Ellis, *Louisa Anne Meredith: A Tigress in Exile* (Blubber Head Press, 1979).
[13] Norton, *Women of Flowers,* 10.

specialised in miniatures, Meredith successfully wrote and illustrated several books on wildflowers, thereby adapting her botanical observations to literary genre.[14] For many women, botany was far more accessible than other scientific disciplines, offering a way to engage, and make meaningful contributions to society.[15]

Collaborating with botanists provided an intellectually stimulating incentive for conducting such work, while allowing women to remain within acceptable social boundaries. Contributing to knowledge seems to have been a motive in the production of *The Wild Flowers Around Melbourne* by Fanny Ann Charsley in 1867.[16] She enjoyed the patronage of Victorian Government Botanist Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, and her collecting and illustrations provided him with species he could name and classify.[17] After spending 10 years in Melbourne, before returning to England, Charsley received the rare compliment of having an everlasting daisy, Asteraceae *Helipterum charsleyae* named after her by von Mueller.[18] Together with other botanical artists, Charsley maintained a reciprocal relationship with botanists such as von Mueller, enhancing their own work while simultaneously contributing to the botanical knowledge of the colonies.[19]

While women's knowledge was valued, its recognition was often contingent upon approval by male authorities. In New South Wales, for instance, the Scott sisters, Harriet and Helena, were amateur naturalists and collectors who specialised in butterfly and moth paintings.[20] Their collaborations with naturalists earned them praise from eminent New Zealand natural history illustrator and entomologist William Swainson in 1855. Swainson emphasised their paintings were valuable 'not merely in reference to local feelings and associations, but also to the far higher and more enduring interests of entomological science throughout the civilised world'.[21] By framing their work as contributing to the advancement of entomology, Swainson explicitly challenged the conventional assumption that women's art was simply sentimental or decorative. Yet, women's contributions to colonial science were frequently dependent on male endorsement to gain legitimacy within scientific establishments.

Women also worked with male partners on natural history projects. Although Elizabeth Gould, née Coxen, contributed her skills to collecting and painting for the seven-volume *The Birds of Australia* (published between 1840 and 1848), credit for the publication has usually been attributed to her ornithologist husband, John Gould.[22] Gould's patronage was extensive to many collectors and, as historian Patrick

[14] Hooker, *Irresistible Forces*, 25; Grimshaw and Standish, 'Making Tasmania Home', 2.
[15] Shtier, 'Gender and Modern Botany', 29.
[16] Helen Hewson, *Australia: 300 Years of Botanical Illustration* (CSIRO Publishing, 1999), 135.
[17] Ibid., 135.
[18] 'Fanny Anne Charsley: A Legacy of Flowers', State Library of Victoria, last updated 1 September 2022, https://blogs.slv.vic.gov.au/arts/fanny-anne-charsley-a-legacy-of-flowers/.
[19] See, for example: Sarah Maroske, '"A Taste for Botanical Science": Ferdinand Mueller's Female Collectors and the History of Australian Botany', *Mulleria* 32 (2014): 86. Other botanical artists included Dorothy English Paty (1805–1836), Susan Fereday (1810–1878), Margaret Cochrane Scott (1825–1919), Marrianne Collinson Campbell (1827–1903), Louisa Atkinson (1834–1872) and Ida McComish (1885–1978). See: Norton, *Women of Flowers*.
[20] 'The Scott Sisters Collection', *Australian Museum*, accessed 20 September 2023, https://australian.museum/learn/collections/museum-archives-library/scott-sisters/.
[21] W. Swainson, 'Review', *Sydney Morning Herald,* 30 August 1851, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article12929906.
[22] Ecologist Penny Olsen states in her book on bird art that 'when Elizabeth died, she was the primary or sole artist for all of Gould's illustrated works, including Charles Darwin's seminal *The Zoology of the Voyage of H.M.S. Beagle,* for which Gould described the birds': Penny Olsen, *Feather and Brush: A History of Australian Bird Art* (CSIRO Publishing, 2022), 103.

Noonan observed, was an 'enthusiasm for natural history that spanned the otherwise rigid divides of class and gender'.[23] William T. Cooper, along with his botanist wife Wendy Cooper, produced many publications in the late twentieth century. Most notably, their combined talents illustrated birds, mammals, landscapes, seascapes, and plants of Australia, as well as fruits of the north Queensland rainforest. Their era coincided with challenges to gender norms that had long influenced botany.

Women and botanical illustration in Northern Queensland

From the time of the *Endeavour* voyage in 1770 until 1880, the botanical records of the Endeavour River valley remained largely inaccessible or obscured. Although the voyage included some of the earliest European observations of the region's flora, most notably by the botanical illustrator Sydney Parkinson, his work was not without limitations. For instance, his depiction of the 'beautiful *Nymphea* (*Nymphaea violacea*) with blue and white petals' remained unknown, likely due to the challenge of pressing cumbersome and large aquatic plants like water lilies.[24] Consequently, although Parkinson's drawings were integral to the scientific documentation of the voyage, some logistical limitations meant that much of the tropical flora of far northern Queensland remained unknown to European botany.

Herbarium records show that von Mueller collected a specimen of *Nymphaea violacea* in 1856.[25] However, von Mueller's collections, held at the National Herbarium of Victoria, contained dried, colourless specimens. Furthermore, the Herbarium only contained specimens from areas where exploration had extended. In north Queensland, that area stretched as far north as Rockingham Bay, present-day Cardwell, about 200kms south of Cairns. Much of this material was collected by settler-botanist John Dallachy, whose collecting activities for von Mueller continued up until 1871.[26] Despite this, the geographical range of Dallachy's collecting did not include the more remote Endeavour River region.

From 1880 onwards, the botanical record of the far northern tropics began to be filled in, this time through the efforts of women botanical artists. These artists brought not only an aesthetic, but also a scientific sensibility to the task of documenting flora. They captured plants in situ, and in colour, and thus provided vital visual records that gave a fuller picture of the botany of the Endeavour River region. Their work played an essential role in bridging the gap left by earlier by scientific expeditions and colonial botanical collections. Hence, botanical art provided crucial early records of both botanical science and the patterns of colonial-settler movements in far northern Queensland. They helped document a previously neglected flora,

[23] Patrick Noonan, '"Sons of Science": Remembering John Gould's Martyred Collectors', *Australian Journal of Victorian Studies* 21, no. 1 (2016): 28.
[24] Sydney Parkinson, *A Journal of a Voyage to the South Seas* (Caliban Books, 1984), 142.
[25] 'Occurrence Record: MEL 2208226A', *Australasian Virtual Herbarium*, accessed 12 May 2025, https://avh.ala.org.au/occurrences/46380c48-5c0b-4d62-9f0b-f90faf3d35d5.
[26] 'Biographical Notes: Dallachy, John (1808–1871)', *Council of Heads of Australasian Herbaria*, last modified 27 September 2021, https://www.anbg.gov.au/biography/dallachy-john.html.

extending botanical knowledge beyond the limits of earlier exploration, and added to previously held herbarium collections.

The history of women botanical artists in northern Queensland began in 1880 with a visit by English woman Marianne North. North primarily made a name for herself in England, and with the encouragement of family friend and mentor, Charles Darwin, she yearned to go to 'some tropical country to paint its peculiar vegetation'.[27] As she travelled on the steamer *Normandy* from Singapore, through the Torres Straits, and south along the Queensland coast, she recorded her initial impressions. The colours of the coral reefs, and the 'wooded hills and islands' captured her attention as she wrote 'a day to be remembered, that first day along the shore of Australia'.[28] When the ship arrived at *Cookstown*, she regretted not spending more time there.[29] Her destination was Brisbane, where she painted Queensland flora, before moving on to the other Australian colonies. She later met fellow colonial artist, and friend, Rowan in Albany in the western Australian colony.

Rowan received art instruction from North, and was similarly inspired to paint tropical vegetation. She specifically sought out the far reaches of colonial Australia, including northern Queensland, the Torres Strait islands, and Papua New Guinea to botanise for her artwork. Rowan was excited to paint the 'fascinating, unique, rare, and unknown specimens' in the 'remotest parts' of Australia.[30] Her comments reflected a passionate woman, with an ambition to document Australian botanical diversity up close.

This commitment to botany and fieldwork was later shared by Scarth-Johnson, whose work extended to environmental activism. Scarth-Johnson regularly visited Cooktown before settling there permanently in 1972, where she painted local flora with attention to scientific detail. Scarth-Johnson counted naturalists Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander among her inspirations, which led her to paint the same plants that had been scientifically important to the naturalists on board the *Endeavour* 200 years prior.[31] Her love for the native vegetation and 'her river', the Endeavour River valley in Cooktown, was the source of her environmental activism.[32] She successfully lobbied governments for an extension of the initial Endeavour River National Park area, eventually achieved in 1995.[33]

[27]Marianne North, *Recollections of a Happy Life: Being the Autobiography of Marianne North*, ed. John Addington Symonds, 2 vols (McMillan and Co., 1893), 1:39, 87, https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/181235-page/57/mode/1up.
[28]Ibid., 105.
[29]Cookstown was renamed Cooktown on 22 April 1874, and the Endeavour River declared a customs port on February 19, 1874: 'Queensland Government Gazette', Vol XV. January 1, 1874–June 30, 1874, 818, 366, accessed 20 October 2023, https://www.textqueensland.com.au/item/journal/729066b135ab519af1bfa561b1650334.
[30]Ellis Rowan, *The Flower Hunter: The Adventures in Northern Australia and New Zealand of Flower Painter Ellis Rowan* (Collins/Angus & Robertson, 1992), v.
[31]John Clarkson, 'A Fascinating Life', in *National Treasures: Flowering Plants of Cooktown and Northern Australia*, ed. Vera Scarth-Johnson, 2nd ed. (Vera Scarth-Johnson Gallery Association Inc., 2024), xiv.
[32]John Clarkson, Interview with the Author, 19 April 2025.
[33]The initial section was gazetted in 1975, and further sections were added in 1995 and 2009: 'Management Statement, 2013', *Department of Environment, Science and Innovation*, last modified 23 November 2024, https://parks.desi.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0023/167423/endeavour-river.pdf.

Like Rowan, Scarth-Johnson demonstrated a commitment to documenting species of plants that were endemic to the tropics. As such, northern Queensland was a compelling location to demonstrate her commitment to observation in the field, a specific methodological choice that meant plants could be depicted more accurately in their natural environments. Moreover, these women worked in an environment that produced distinct and often unique species that influenced the history of botanical science. Although Rowan and Scarth-Johnson operated in different historical and political contexts, they shared characteristics, practices, and goals: to explore tropical environments, record their observations through art and writing, and contribute to the botanical understanding of north Queensland flora.

Comparison of the careers of Rowan and Scarth-Johnson

Rowan and Scarth-Johnson were separated by nearly a century, but both made significant contributions to botanical art and science. However, their work must be understood within vastly different social, political, and historical contexts in which they operated. While both women shared privilege and elite connections, colonial and post-colonial circumstances influenced their artistic practices, relationships with Indigenous peoples, and the legacies they left behind.

Rowan was born Marian Ellis Ryan at Port Phillip in 1848, and died in 1922, at the age of 74. She married Captain Frederick Charles Rowan in 1873 and hence became Ellis Rowan.[34] The Rowans' circumstances mirrored that of other colonials and settlers across the British Empire. Shteir has noted that colonial women's positions in life were often defined by the imperial careers of husbands and fathers as members of elite circles of power.[35] Through her influential family ties, Rowan was able to connect with prominent figures, particularly men of the same class in science and colonial governments. Included in her class sphere were political officials, aristocracy, leading intellectual thinkers, and prominent men of science.

Rowan had influential botanical and government contacts. Her husband was a prominent business man when he wrote to the Queensland Premier, Sir Samuel Griffiths. Griffiths then introduced Rowan to the government botanist and curator of the Brisbane Botanic Gardens, Frederick Manson Bailey.[36] These contacts led to her illustrating the *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia* in 1886.[37] Besides the Queensland connection, Rowan was already acquainted with von Mueller through his association with her father. Von Mueller, together with his rival and renowned colonial landscape gardener, William Guilfoyle, had been consulted about the plants and design of the extensive gardens at the Ryans' Victorian acreage, Derriweit Heights.[38] Von Mueller was also in constant

[34]Ellis was used as her first name to distinguish her from her mother who was also named Marian.
[35]Ann Shteir, *Flora's Fieldworkers: Women and Botany in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022), 16.
[36]Michael Moreton-Evans and Christine Moreton-Evans, *The Flower Hunter: The Remarkable Life of Ellis Rowan* (Simon and Shuster, 2008), 89.
[37]Judith McKay, 'Ellis Rowan: Flower-Hunting in the Tropics', *Queensland Review* 10, no. 2 (2003): 90.
[38]Ibid., 47. In 1873 Mueller was replaced as Director of the Botanic Gardens of Victoria by William Guilfoyle: Penny Olsen, *Collecting Ladies: Ferdinand von Mueller and Women Botanical Artists* (National Library of Australia Publishing, 2013), 141.

contact with the botanists at Kew Gardens, and hence the connections of influence overlapped continents, and were entangled in colonial networks.

Australian colonial networks could not have been more committed to maintaining British class structures, according to historian Jeanette Hoorn, nor contained more distinguished people through which Rowan accomplished her work.[39] For example, on a visit to *The Australian Station* on Thursday Island in 1891, Rowan was greeted by Admiral Lord Charles Scott, its commander, and her brother-in-law.[40] Scott facilitated Rowan's botanising and artwork with the provision of a vessel and crew to escort her to the plants she was determined to find, and wanted to paint.[41]

Pastoralists regularly accommodated artists during their travels. During two of six trips Rowan made to Queensland, she enjoyed the hospitality of pioneers of sugar cane farming, and friends of von Mueller's, the Bauers.[42] On her second trip in 1891, she stayed with mutual friends the Hislops, who ran a sugar cane farm, *Wyalla* at the Bloomfield River (Wujul Wujul in Kuku Yalanji). The purpose of that visit was to track down a rare orchid which grew at altitude on Mount Macmillan.[43] Unfortunately, the orchid was growing in an inaccessible habitat, but the story reflects the resources that were available to privileged women in their attempts to acquire unusual plants to paint.[44] On this occasion, she was aided by Indigenous guides.[45] (Appendix 1 visualises the geographic range of Rowan's collecting).

Further north, Rowan could call on pastoralists, the Jardines, for hospitality and guidance. At their residence at Somerset, at the tip of Cape York, she observed plants she had not encountered previously, and she wondered if they were new to botany, including a new species of palm.[46] Later in her trip she was escorted by the Jardines to the government steamer, the *Albatross,* which took her touring the Torres Strait islands under the command of another notable colonist Charles Savage, Chief Inspector of Police.[47] Besides well-connected people, other resources such as navy gunboats and crewed steamers could be called upon and used as transport.

Travelling through northern Queensland in the late nineteenth century, Rowan found herself at a volatile intersection of botanical discovery for science, colonial expansion, and often-lawless settler world views. While she was heavily involved in the colonial process to document and classify the world's plants for botany, there is

[39] Jeanette Hoorn, 'Ellis Rowan, Charles Darwin, and the Search for Nature's "Endless Forms"', in *Ellis Rowan: Colonialism and Nature Painting,* ed. Janet Parfenovics (Cairns Art Gallery, 2023), 33.
[40] Moreton-Evans and Moreton-Evans, *Flower Hunter,* 114. See also: Jeanette Hoorn, 'Ellis Rowan, Extinction, and the Politics of Flower Painting', in *Animals, Plants, and Afterimages: The Art and Science of Representing Extinction,* ed. Valérie Bienvenue and Nicholas Chare (Berghan Books, 2022), 261, https://www.jstor.org/stable/jj.5590564.17.
[41] McKay, 'Ellis Rowan: Flower-Hunting in the Tropics', 91.
[42] Judith McKay, *Ellis Rowan: A Flower Hunter in Queensland* (Queensland Museum, 1990), 17.
[43] The Hislops were settlers who grew tropical fruits, and sugar cane at their homestead at Wyalla: 'The North-East Coast – Its Cultivators and Cultivation – VIII', *Brisbane Courier,* 25 November 1887, 3, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article3484264.
[44] Rowan, *The Flower Hunter*, 104. The packer's track to Mount Macmillan that Rowan took was described in: 'The Mount Romeo Tinfield', *Queenslander,* 19 November 1887, 831, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article19928627.
[45] Rowan, *The Flower Hunter,* 120, 124.
[46] Ibid., 113.
[47] Ibid., 127, 133.

no evidence she witnessed the frontier violence being perpetrated around her. However, she did adopt a sense of colonial victimhood when mentioning the violence in the letters she penned to her husband. For instance, her stance was revealed when she wrote: 'I only hear of [Frank Jardine's] brave and daring deeds from outside sources, [and] you would be amused to see the number of guns, pistols, and other weapons hanging against the walls, many of them being kept ready loaded in case of sudden attack'.[48] Apparently it was the well-armed Jardines who were vulnerable.

The Jardines were known to launch retributive attacks on Aboriginal people from Somerset, a remote station at the tip of Cape York, including a confirmed massacre of 10 turtle hunters belonging to the Gudang language group in 1869.[49] Another massacre took place near Cooktown in 1874; that site has retained the name Battle Camp.[50] The Jardines were responsible for numerous other brutal deaths of Aboriginal people. Historian Mark McKenna has researched the 'relentless war of extermination' that took place between the years 1873 and 1900, and those events have persisted in local people's memories well into the twentieth century.[51] The ruthless and inhumane treatment of Aboriginal people was part of an ideology that justified their subjugation and promoted a forceful, so-called 'civilising' mission. The consequences were 'both a single-minded determination to dispossess and a spirited Indigenous defence' according to historian Raymond Evans.[52]

Colonialism was based in a hierarchical and Eurocentric ideological social order that endorsed European culture as superior, and Indigenous peoples as physically and politically inferior. A typical colonial mindset was insensitive to Indigenous world views, particularly in the context of art and science. Numerous accounts document colonial artists' lack of understanding of the complexities of cultural difference.[53] Pejorative statements described Indigenous people in wildly exaggerated and profound demonstrations of ignorance and hubris.[54] Yet this sense of superiority was contradicted by the colonial appropriation of ethnobotanical knowledge by settlers and naturalists from the earliest points of contact with Indigenous peoples. In the Australian context, Indigenous art predated colonial art by thousands of years and has employed an explicit visual language, embodying deeply complex cultural connections to Country and ecological understanding. This was explained in artist Tulo Gordon's book about the Endeavour River region, *Milbi: Aboriginal Tales from*

[48]Ibid., 115.
[49]'Pabaju Albany Island', *Colonial Frontier Massacres in Australia, 1788–1930*, Centre for 21st Century Humanities, University of Newcastle, accessed 20 October 2023, https://c21ch.newcastle.edu.au/colonialmassacres/detail.php?r=656; See also: Timothy Bottoms and Raymond Evans, *Conspiracy of Silence: Queensland's Frontier Killing Times* (Allen & Unwin, 2014), 128–30.
[50]'Battle Camp, Normanby River', *Colonial Frontier Massacres in Australia, 1788–1930*, accessed 20 October 2023, https://c21ch.newcastle.edu.au/colonialmassacres/detail.php?r=671; Bottoms and Evans, *Conspiracy of Silence,* 119.
[51]Mark McKenna, *From the Edge: Australia's Lost Histories* (Melbourne University Publishing, 2006), 142, 147, quoting W.R, Rodd, 'Hell's Gate: A Sinister Portal', *Sydney Morning Herald,* 9 May 1936, 13, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article17334422.
[52]Raymond Evans, 'Across the Queensland Frontier', in *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience,* ed. Bain Atwood and S.G. Foster (National Museum of Australia, 2003), 65.
[53]See, for example: Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific* (Harper & Row, 1984).
[54]See, for example, references to cannibalism without any evidence in: Rowan, *The Flower Hunter,* 84.

Queensland's Endeavour River (1980).[55] Botanical art was therefore an ahistorical colonial narrative, marked by marginal input, or denial of Indigenous ecological knowledge.[56]

Although working on the periphery of colonialism, artists such as Rowan rarely questioned the logic of its denial of Indigenous knowledge. While Rowan was one of the first colonists to document aspects of Indigenous life in north Queensland through an ethnographic lens, her work remained deeply embedded in the visual and ideological conventions of Western science and empire. Her illustrations, like those of many of her contemporaries, reflected the aesthetic values of Victorian naturalism, but often lacked any critical engagement with Indigenous ways of seeing and knowing. As such, she contributed, whether intentionally or not, to the colonial processes unfolding around her, and the visual reinforcement of a Eurocentric worldview that marginalised Indigenous perspectives.

For around a century after Rowan, the practice of botanical art was redefined by economic botany. Economic botany was necessarily prioritised to establish primary industries such as food crops, particularly in tropical Queensland. The applied sciences therefore served utilitarian functions, and scientific illustrations supported those aims by documenting useful species. The introduction of photography also began to influence the role of botanical illustration by assisting with photographic documentation. The twentieth century presented different opportunities, however, for botanical illustrators such as Scarth-Johnson, who could use their skills in more leisurely ways, and expand scientific evaluation with environmental and cultural awareness.

Scarth-Johnson was born in England into a wealthy family that ran a wool manufacturing business, and like Rowan, was from a privileged background.[57] Scarth-Johnson's father was a concert pianist and her uncle, Sir Charles Scarth, was a wool producer and local mayor for many years.[58] Her heritage was also linked to the British elite through her maternal grandfather's familial ties to Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith.[59] In 1947 she decided to emigrate to Australia under the Assisted Passage Migration Scheme.[60]

The historical accounts of naturalists Banks and Solander formed part of Scarth-Johnson's choice and motivation to illustrate plants.[61] Approximately 384 plant species were collected by Banks and Solander in 1770 when they botanised around the Endeavour River valley (Waalmbal Birri in Guugu Yimithirr).[62] Scarth-Johnson moved to the Endeavour River valley with the ambitious goal of completing around

[55]Tulo Gordon, *Milbi: Aboriginal Tales from Queensland's Endeavour River* (Australian National University Press, 1980).
[56]Aboriginal people were involved in collecting, see: Maroske, 'A Taste for Botanic Science', 75.
[57]Scarth-Johnson, *National Treasures,* 3.
[58]Judith McKay and Gordon Guymer, *Significance Assessment of the Vera Scarth-Johnson Collection*, Assessment Report (Vera Scarth-Johnson Gallery Association, 2013), 2.
[59]Ibid., 2. Scarth-Johnson's maternal grandfather and his brother were second cousins to British Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith.
[60]Ibid., 3.
[61]Bob Johnson, 'Vera Scarth-Johnson, A Tribute', in Scarth-Johnson, *National Treasures,* 6.
[62]Darren Crayn and Robert Jago, 'Banks and Solander Search for Plants in "New Holland"', in *Captain Cook in Queensland*, ed. Rod Kirkpatrick et al. (Royal Historical Society of Queensland, 2022), 102–103.

200 individual portraits to make up her own folio of Banks' plant collection.[63] Unfortunately, by 1995, her health deteriorated and the *Endeavour River Series* she was working on numbered 147.[64] Eventually, she could not continue painting, but retained her passion for botanising.

In addition to her artistic practice, Scarth-Johnson's botanising played a significant role in scientific documentation. (Appendix 2 visualises the geographic range of Scarth-Johnson's botanising.) She regularly collected and sent specimens to major herbariums around the world, particularly Kew, at the Royal Botanic Gardens in London. A cursory data yield estimates the number of specimens at 1,810.[65] This direct connection with world-leading botanists involved active networks of botanical exchange that included requests and feedback. Her specimens were often accompanied by illustrations, further enhancing their scientific value. In his initial letter to Scarth-Johnson, Kew's director, George Taylor, emphasised the importance of her work, guaranteeing her paintings would be 'used and appreciated by botanists of all nations', especially depictions of plants that deteriorated quickly. This further highlighted the important scientific contributions of artists working in remote locations, particularly in documenting the ephemeral characteristics of plant species.

Being in such remote locations also brought the artists into direct contact with Indigenous people. Living and working in late-twentieth-century Cooktown, Scarth-Johnson navigated shifting attitudes toward Indigenous knowledge and the colonial legacy. Her lived experience during this era in Australia meant she formed different views from earlier colonial botanical artists. Perhaps she was influenced by what historian Henry Reynolds has discussed as the censored versions of Australian historical memory, which were founded on a 'cult of forgetfulness' in historical accounts.[66] In contrast to the colonial attitudes and adversarial relationships that Rowan often witnessed, and tacitly approved of, Scarth-Johnson cultivated friendships with the Traditional Owners of Guugu Yimithirr Country. As a result, Scarth-Johnson approached her subject matter with a greater awareness of Indigenous culture and ecological knowledge.

The Guugu Yimithirr clans brought intimate Indigenous knowledge of the terrain and local flora to their relationship with Scarth-Johnson, and were prepared to share it. As senior elder of the Gamay clan, Eric Deeral recalled, a collaborative fieldwork effort resulted in 'identifying plants, collecting various specimens, comparing information, and checking their names in Guugu Yimithirr, Latin, and English.'[67] Scarth-Johnson often went on collecting and painting trips with friends from the Guugu Yimithirr clans. An anonymous source provided anecdotal evidence of such a scene:

> My husband … first met [Vera] when he was driving between Bamaga and the Jardine. He came across her in a bush clearing, seated in a cane chair, in front of her easel set up under a tree. Beside her was a cane table complete with tablecloth and china tea service. The [A]boriginal friend who drove her there was boiling the billy to make the

[63] Clarkson, 'A Fascinating Life', 3.
[64] McKay and Guymer, 'Assessment Report', 12.
[65] Yield of basic search for all extensions of 'Scarth-Johnson and V' at: Global Biodiversity Information Facility, accessed 9 December 2023, https://tinyurl.com/37puv89c.
[66] Henry Reynolds, *Forgotten War* (New South Publishing, 2022), 10–11.
[67] Scarth-Johnson, *National Treasures,* 5.

> tea. Vera was dressed in an ankle-length cotton frock, wearing a broad-brimmed white hat and smoking a small cigar. He thought for a moment he'd entered a time-warp.[68]

Scarth-Johnson's notes recorded the scientific, common, and Language names for plants where possible. Notably, the Guugu Yimithirr recognised genera by giving the name Wan-arr to Grevillea, and Yayruun to Acacias, demonstrating their own classification techniques and knowledge base.

Scarth-Johnson's work can be read as an acknowledgement of the presence of Indigenous ecological knowledge rather than echoing settler narratives of empty and exploitable lands. While botanical illustration has rarely conveyed overt social or political commentary, her work showed a consciousness of Australia's botanical history in its twentieth-century cultural context. By diverging from the colonial framework of her predecessors, Scarth-Johnson took a more inclusive approach. Her cooperation with the Guugu Yimithirr clans revealed not only intent to address cultural representation in her work, but as her notes have shown, a close engagement with the cultural complexity of the Australian landscape and its Traditional Owners.

Comparative analysis of the artists' skills and characteristics

A range of technical skills and stylistic choices were on display within each individual artist's work. They reflected their individual abilities, and the social and scientific contexts in which they worked. Both depicted a variety of plant species, often focused on specific parts, such as the flowers, and sometimes incorporating insects or butterflies to highlight ecological relationships.[69] Rowan worked within the Victorian tradition and under the constraints of male-dominated botany. However, she engaged with creative licence, using an expressive technique to assert her presence and resistance to the gendered conventions. Hoorn described her style as 'an uncomfortable mixing of genres', upsetting the purists of that era.[70] Similarly, art critic Stephen Naylor, observed Rowan's 'disregard for convention' as characteristic of her approach.[71]

By contrast, Scarth-Johnson's work was more aligned with scientific illustration but raises some questions about her failure to acknowledge apparent influences. She adopted a more conservative visual style based on the traditional methods of earlier, male-dominated illustrations, such as those by Sydney Parkinson. Notwithstanding her focus on the same geographic region (the flora of the Endeavour River valley), she never acknowledged Parkinson's influence. This omission has been puzzling given her ambition, and the historical relevance of Parkinson's work. It is possible that she was simply unaware, or lacked access to his illustrations. According to personal accounts from her friends, she considered herself primarily a botanical illustrator rather than an artist, such that her work adhered closely to the scientific

[68] Anonymous, Email Correspondence to Author, 15 April 2025. Bamaga is an Aboriginal community, and the Jardine likely refers to the Jardine River, both near the tip of Cape York.
[69] Hoorn, 'Ellis Rowan, Charles Darwin, and the Search for Nature's "Endless Forms"', 29.
[70] Ibid., 51.
[71] Stephen Naylor, 'Ellis Rowan: Colonialism and Nature Painting, Cairns Art Gallery, 9 September 2023–18 February 2024', *Australian Historical Studies* 55, no. 22 (2024): 396.

techniques of the genre and not any individual. This perspective may explain her conservative style and the absence of explicit acknowledgement of personal or historical influences.

These differences were clearly exemplified in Rowan's and Scarth-Johnson's respective representations of Deplanchea *tetraphylla*. In Figure 1, Rowan painted the flowers and foliage in large, showy displays of colour, using watercolour and gouache, while depicting the companion butterfly (Dainty Swallowtail; *papillo anactus*). Influenced by North's unorthodox methods, she allowed herself the agency to diverge from the traditions of conventional botanical illustration. Her dense compositions made full use of positive space, filling the frame with contrasting colours, hues, and as much variation of the plant as possible. By focusing the viewer's attention, she created a striking visual impact. The inclusion of butterflies in the picture further signaled she had ecological processes in mind, thereby extending her work beyond purely taxonomic focus.

Figure 1. Ellis Rowan, *Deplanchea tetraphylla* (R.Br.) F.Muell., family Bignoniaceae, Queensland, 1891 or 1892, showing Rowan's style and technique using watercolour and gouache, and depicting allied butterflies.
Source: National Library of Australia (NLA), PIC Solander Box C23 #R2379, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-138819614.

Figure 2. Painting of *Deplanchea tetraphylla* by Vera Scarth-Johnson in gouache on toned background paper showing inflorescence, leaves and reproductive structures.
Source: Vera Scarth-Johnson, *National Treasures: Flowering Plants of Cooktown and Northern Australia*, 2nd edn. (Vera Scarth-Johnson Gallery Association, 2024), Image No. 115 Deplanchea tetraphylla. Used with the kind permission of the Vera Scarth-Johnson Gallery Association.

Scarth-Johnson, on the other hand, depicted the same plant in a manner typical of botanical illustration. Her use of a colour-contrasted background helped to showcase different parts of the inflorescence with greater effect (see Figure 2). Her skills required a deep understanding of plant anatomy, attention to detail, accuracy in portraying botanical features, and technical knowledge of scientific illustration. Her purpose was to distinguish plants at the species and morphological level. Unlike Rowan, her primary goal was identification and documentation with less artistic flamboyance.

The purpose of botanical illustration has never been to produce pretty pictures, but to record plants with a commitment to scientific accuracy. While Rowan and Scarth-Johnson exhibited different styles, they both prioritised the depiction of a complete inflorescence. Their illustrations often included the fruit, seeds, and flowers within a single painting, capturing the full cyclical stages of plant metamorphoses.[72] Flowers in bloom were selected not only for their beauty, but also to highlight characteristics such as colour and form, crucial for accurate identification. The

[72]Patricia Fullerton, *The Flower Hunter: Ellis Rowan* (National Library of Australia Publishing, 2002), no pagination. Native tropical plants will strive to produce flowers and seeds in reaction to their environments: for example, they will induce flowering in the dry season with unseasonal rain. See: Crayn and Jago, 'Banks and Solander', 103.

distinctions between the work of the two artists demonstrated the range of options that were available to the artists, and the varied choices they made, based on detailed observation and understanding of botany.

Employing a variety of media also brought different perspectives to botanical understanding and artistic expression. Most of Rowan's work utilised watercolours, a medium known for faster drying time, which was convenient and practical for her industrious work ethic. Her choice sustained productivity without compromising artistic quality. Scarth-Johnson, on the other hand, executed her paintings using gouache. Gouache is characterised by its opacity and matte finish, allowing for clarity and precision in the leaf edges, for example, a key priority in botanical accuracy. Their individual approaches highlighted how different materials served varying artistic and scientific objectives, which lent authority to the work and subtly reinforced scientific credibility.

Such assessments, however, have overlooked the artists' intentions, motivations, and circumstances. While Scarth-Johnson's illustrations have been critiqued by historian Judith McKay as 'fairly crude' and 'lacking in design' compared to the aesthetic standards of Rowan, such judgements may have not considered the artists' individual motivations.[73] Rowan's 'excitement of seeking, and the delight of finding rare or even unknown specimens' contrasted with Scarth-Johnson's desire to make people realise the importance of conservation of the region's flora through the production of pictures.[74] As she demonstrated in the introduction to her book, *National Treasures*, 'for those who don't know any botany, pictures are better than words'.[75] These differences reflected their personal aspirations and environmental concerns, and demonstrated engagement with broader issues and specific circumstances.

The differences between the artists also reflected their own personal circumstances. For Rowan, botanical illustration was not only a creative goal, but also a means of financial security following the untimely death of her husband in 1892.[76] As a woman seeking financial independence in the late nineteenth century, her illustrations were a commercial incentive, often aimed at primarily middle-class consumers who valued images of nature as both educational and decorative. Her illustrations balanced scientific observation with aesthetic appeal for her intended market. Painting tropical plants gave her an advantage because their stunning displays of striking and colourful flowers could appeal to prospective buyers. Additionally, Rowan's success in botanising and painting meant she could flout social convention and market her skills independently of others, which she did successfully.

Scarth-Johnson operated in a less restrictive, multifaceted era marked by growing ecological consciousness and individual advocacy. She was driven by personal passion, rather than economic necessity, or the gendered politics that influenced the work of her predecessors. She was instead motivated by a strong environmental ethic. Her work illustrated a shift in the function of botanical art that expanded to include broader issues, particularly environmental advocacy.

[73] McKay and Guymer, 'Assessment Report', 26–28.
[74] Rowan, *The Flower Hunter*, v; Scarth-Johnson, *National Treasures,* xi.
[75] Ibid., xi.
[76] 'Death of Captain F.C. Rowan', *Argus*, 12 December 1892, 6, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article8491635.

Scarth-Johnson's conservation efforts emphasised how botanical illustration could be used as a tool for activism. While Rowan anticipated 'flowers [would] disappear beneath the heels of civilisation' in an inevitable process, Scarth-Johnson insisted on valuing non-human species to restrain what she called 'injudicious developments and pollutants'.[77] Mining and the clearing of large sections of the landscape were some of the activities slated for the region before the Endeavour River National Park was declared in 1975.[78] As a regular contributor to the *Cooktowner*, she often wrote discouraging people from pilfering native species from the natural environment.[79] In a letter to a friend, dated 1977, she stated: 'Truly, I don't give two hoots whether anyone knows of me or not, it's the flowers I want known.'[80] By 1994, a letter from the then Queensland Premier Wayne Goss bore witness to her 'valuable contribution to the quality of life' through her conservation efforts.[81] Her desire, but also her fear was on display in these contexts.

The emotional dimension of Scarth-Johnson's work mirrored the motivations of earlier botanical artists, but with a notable shift in expression. While nineteenth-century artists documented nature often with romanticism or imperial motives, Scarth-Johnson's work was characterised by urgency. Yet despite these differences, the artists grappled with the demise of species. There was a clear historical continuity about concern for larger environmental, cultural, and social issues that was reflected in their artworks. Their shared concerns have demonstrated how botanical art has functioned not merely as a scientific or aesthetic practice, but as a mirror to evolving relationships between the human and natural worlds.

Conclusion

The Endeavour River valley had a profound influence on botanical science when in 1770, the all-male crew of the *Endeavour* botanised and illustrated its unusual flora for the first time for European eyes. The exploits of botanists Joseph Banks, Daniel Solander, and to a lesser extent, artist Sydney Parkinson, have been well documented. Those men set a pattern for the history of science and that history had a significant gender component. Historians of science have concerned themselves with the culture of botany and have previously described that culture in gendered terms. However, further analysis has achieved more nuanced ways women have contributed to science. The gendered aspect has recovered the stories of who participated in science and how that altered the development of the discipline.

Ellis Rowan and Vera Scarth-Johnson were both attracted to northern Queensland by its flowering plants. They came to paint the region's flora and extend its presence within

[77]Hoorn, 'Ellis Rowan, Extinction and the Politics of Flower Painting', 264; Scarth-Johnson, *National Treasures,* xi.
[78]'Management Statement, 2013', *Department of Environment, Science and Innovation*, accessed 23 November 2024, https://parks.desi.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0023/167423/endeavour-river.pdf.
[79]Vera Scarth-Johnson, 'Letter to the Editor', *Cooktowner,* 28 September 1981, 2, Cairns Historical Society, Ref: GO2328.
[80]Vera Scarth-Johnson, 'Letter to J. Spicer', 4 November 1977, 2, Vera Scarth-Johnson Gallery Archives, Nature's PowerHouse, Cooktown (VS-JGA), Documents; Letters; Invoices, Box 2.
[81]Wayne Goss, 'Letter from the Premier of Queensland to Ms V Scarth-Johnson', 15 August 1994, VS-JGA, Documents; Specimen Labels, Box 3.

European botanical records. As a result, their contributions to Australian botany have been substantial. Rowan was productive during an era of aggressive colonial expansion and Indigenous dispossession. And, in Scarth-Johnson's case, during its destructive aftermath and movement towards reconciliation. As botany was processing the substantial numbers of specimens coming back to Europe, so too were the women who took advantage of their positions to enthusiastically document new species for science.

Regardless of her own embellished narratives of her adventures, Rowan was a trailblazer who fostered a greater acceptance of women involved in scientific exploration. Rowan's celebrity was associated with an increasing awareness of Australia's distinct flora (and fauna) during the late nineteenth century. Natural history illustrators played a large part in educating the public about Australia's flora and fauna throughout Australia's colonial history and Rowan capitalised on the public's appetite for botanical knowledge. By travelling to remote locations, she brought previously unknown species to the attention of the scientific community. In return, the authority of nineteenth-century science added credibility to her paintings, and her intentions. She added over 3,000 works to those records and remains Australia's most prolific artist.

Scarth-Johnson demonstrated that women botanical artists were able to transcend a single purpose. She went beyond just painting plants and flowers for pleasure. In addition to her painting, she promoted the recognition of the Endeavour River valley's significance to science through its unique landscape and flora. This meant building on the scientific adventures of Banks and Solander on the *Endeavour* voyage around 200 years earlier. Their experience provided a pattern for later scientific investigations. Scarth-Johnson's work with the Indigenous people and her determined attitude has helped preserve the river and its distinct environment for ongoing scientific study of its complex plant ecology and the culture that surrounds it.

Rowan and Scarth-Johnson continue to enhance public appreciation for the diversity and complexity of flora endemic to the Endeavour River valley. Rowan's artworks received an extended showing at the Cairns Art Gallery in 2023. In recognition of the cultural, educational, and historical value of Scarth-Johnson's work, her artwork is on permanent display at a purpose-built facility, Nature's PowerHouse in Cooktown. The Gallery is adjacent to the Cooktown Botanic Gardens, where the plants she painted can be seen in their natural state. That juxtaposition makes manifest her connection to the botany of the region. These dedicated spaces facilitate ongoing public engagement with the natural world, while also supporting the legacies of the two artists, and their contributions to both art and science.

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank Dr Claire Brennan and Associate Professor Don Garden for their generous feedback and helpful suggestions, as well as Professor Darren Crayn from the Australian Tropical Herbarium for his generous time and help accessing herbaria data, and the anonymous peer reviewers of *History Australia* for their comments on this article.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

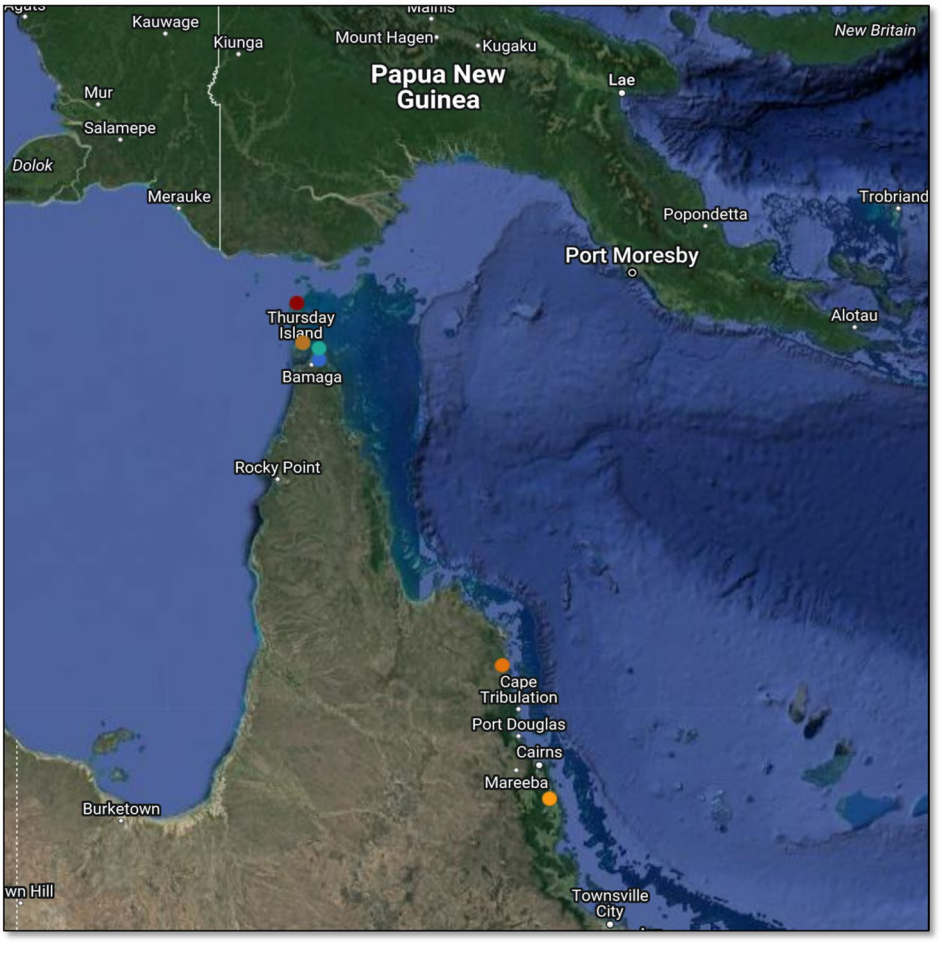
Funding

The author acknowledges the receipt, support, and contribution to the production of this article through the Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship (RTPS). This study was supported by the Department of Education, Australian Government.

About the author

Janine Evans is a PhD candidate in History at James Cook University, Cairns, where her doctoral research examines the history of botanical illustration at the Endeavour River valley, northern Queensland. Her thesis explores how this specific geographical region became a significant site for botanical documentation, tracing the artistic and scientific traditions that developed there from early colonial encounters to 1999. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in History.

Appendix 1: Image of species specific and range of collection sites by Ellis Rowan. Courtesy of Australasian Virtual Herbarium (AVH)



Source: AVH, https://tinyurl.com/4sh2esdj, accessed 14 November 2024.

Appendix 2: Image of species specific and range of collection sites by Vera Scarth-Johnson. Courtesy of Australian Virtual Herbarium (AVH)

Source: AVH, https://tinyurl.com/2ad9rwsn, accessed 14 November 2024.