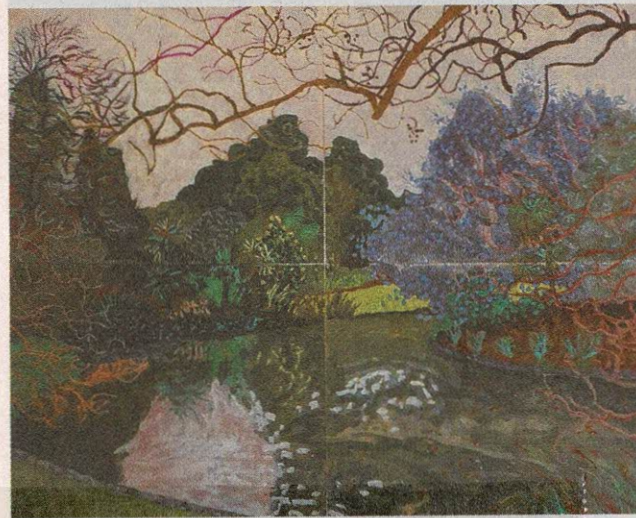


# Nature inspires artists



Work by Mark Dober at Warwick Art Gallery (ABOVE) *Nymphaea* (Summer sunshine) and (BELOW) *Nymphaea* (Winter, overhanging branch).



AROUND THE GALLERIES  
SANDY POTTINGER

THE creation of botanical gardens to preserve plant life, introduce exotic species, and protect native flora has a long history that is also associated with herbal remedies and early medical practice.

Today the gardens retain the healthy vibe as sanctuaries of tranquillity that inspire artists with the colours and textures of nature.

The Warwick Art Gallery is featuring the work of Victorian artist Mark Dober in his exhibition, *Nymphaea*, based on studies made in the serene setting of the *Nymphaea* Lakes area of Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens.

The large-scale paintings, pinned to the walls in sets of four, shape a spare and elegant installation that allows plenty of room for the viewer to escape into the pictorial landscapes.

Dober practices a plein air

approach to his subjects which gives the immediacy of being there in the moment of observation.

An awareness of the presence of the artist as translator of the scene before him is central to the appreciation of his work.

The reality of the location with its exotic spiky foliage, softly draped leaves, glimpses of water reflections, and recumbent waterlilies, has a value-added essence enhanced by the artist's specific mark making and his free interpretation of colour to evoke mood.

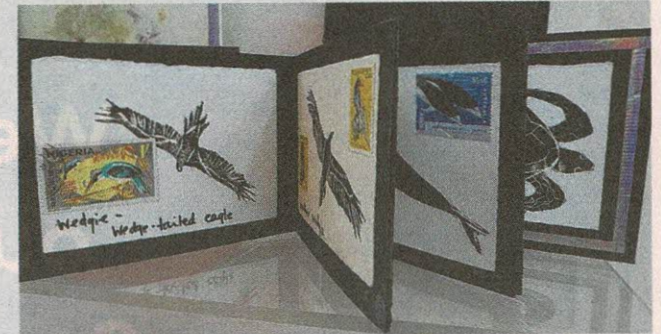
The series of paintings trace the seasonal transitions in which sky and shadow become changing patterns of light.

Spatial interactions play an important role in defining distance.

Skeletal winter branches allow peeks to infinity while the luscious density of summer foliage gives a compacted perspective.

Spring taunts with furred new shoots while an overcast autumnal scene broods on the edge of the lake.

The surfaces are intense, busy with implied movement and the subtle camouflage of



ANIMAL WORLD: From Wings, fins and legs by Mo Skett at Warwick Art Gallery. Pictures: Contributed

light and shade, dappled and patterned to create a personal and symbolic visual language.

Sturdy watercolour paper is the chosen support and Dober has used translucent watercolour washes combined with roughly textured gouache to block in forms that are overlaid with linear detail in oil pastels.

The Orange Wall Gallery at the Warwick Art Gallery is the setting for *The Eagle Spoke*, an exhibition by Mo Skett.

The artist has a profound respect for the animal world and believes that animals can provide us with guidance throughout our lives.

Thus, nature becomes the stimulus for this body of work which includes drawing, painting, and printmaking.

The three disciplines have also been combined to create a number of small artist books.

The interaction between human and animal is seen in the solar etching, *The Tuareg* and his family, and in the dry point etchings based on Saharan cave paintings.

There is a series of pen and ink drawings of seed pods, and the drama in the painting, *Soaring raptors* gives way to a more domestic familiarity in the watercolour and pen studies of geese.