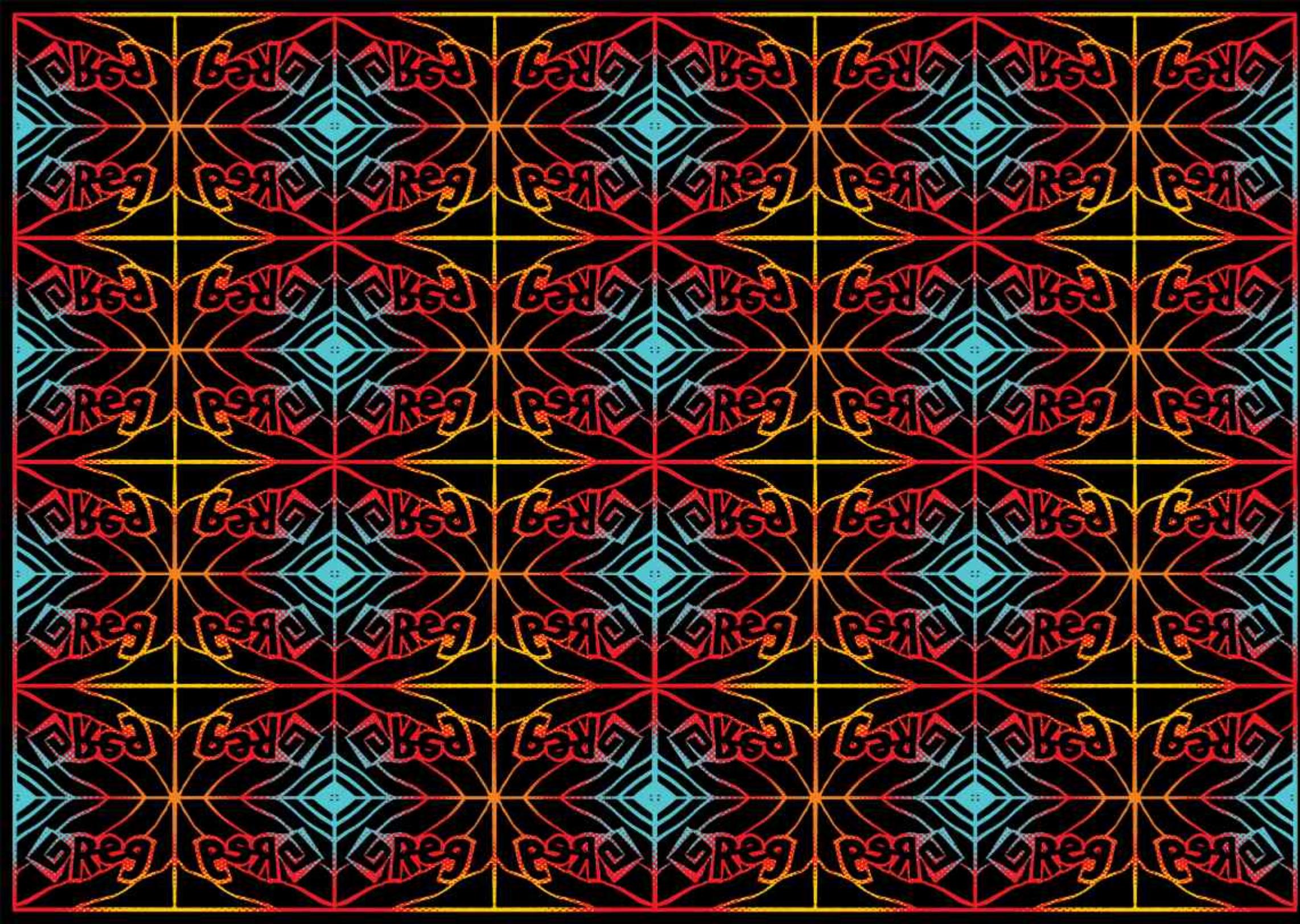




The Rogue Pop-up Gallery Presents
CREATURES: LOSING THE WAR ON NATURE



This exhibition is a collaboration between
Reg Mombassa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith





THANKS HEAPS - Nathan Lees for videography.

Pamela and Ross Griffith for printing support at the Griffith Studio and Graphic Workshop, Young Henrys for the opening day beverages, Rickie Swain for the generosity and professional quality printing of everything digital at Wombat Grafx, Diane and all at Rogue Gallery, Mambo for supporting the production of the making of CREATURES - see the documentary on youtube - especially the time and effort of Nathan Sheahan. Gina for the video interviewing x. Photographic Portraits by George Fetting. Essay by the erudite rock-pig Clinton Walker. Bernie at POME. Stephanie and Mark at Publisher Textiles. Edward at Pigment Lab for paper stock and lino. Instagram glennoart and regmombassaofficial to follow the intrepid adventures of these two artists.



**The Rogue Pop-up Gallery (130 Regent St Redfern)
5th to the 30th of October
Opening on Saturday the 9th of October from 11am to 6pm.
diane@roguepopup.com.au • www.roguepopup.com.au**



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Because I'm a music person as well as an art person and/or vice-versa, perhaps I should start with a song: "Love and marriage, love and marriage, go together like a horse and carriage." Now of course that may not seem very rock'n'roll, in either style or sentiment, but hey, hopefully it's thrown out a bit of a curve ball because that's (just) one thing this show's about... But then I always liked the theory that Frank Sinatra was the first prototype rock star, and to take the sentiment to its universal conclusion, what it's all about is the perfect union...

And that's what this show – CREATURES: Losing the War with Nature – is indeed mostly about, or where it starts on first-principles: a perfect union, and 'union' not in the singular but plural, of the artists themselves, and of art and music, and the art itself...

Of course, it's one of the very tropes of rock history, how so many musicians started out in art school, from John Lennon, Keith Richards, Pete Townshend and Ray Davies, to David Bowie, Brian Eno and Bryan Ferry, to Nick Cave, David Byrne and in fact all the members of the Talking Heads and the Clash; to our stars here, Reg Mombassa and Glenno Smith, who both have long histories as musicians as well as jobbing artists, to – daresay, me too! Reg is a couple of years older than me and so I figure that when I was just starting at Brisbane Art College in the mid-70s, he was just finishing at East Sydney tech, Paddington, at around the same time he was starting on the first stirrings of what would become Mental As Anything. I dropped out to take up writing, about music mainly, greatly inspired by the then-nascent punk movement, into which the Mentals sometimes got roped. Glenno is quite a bit younger again but got bitten by much the same bug – punk/rock and art. And if it's not needless to add, not just all the same-old same-old canonistic highbrow fodder, nor its official alternative in the contemporary conceptual avant-garde, but all sorts of the art that's sometimes now lumped under the label 'lowbrow' – comics, B-movies, daytime TV, crass advertising, psychedelic poster art, album cover design, all things apparently 'kitsch' as the outmoded discriminatory term used to have it; same as Reg was always smitten by too, and me as well. When Glenno fled his native Orange to enter the same Paddington circle that was Reg's alma mater, the snooty teachers there told this boy from the bush that his 'surfie art' would never cut it, and that maybe, if he was lucky, like Reg (as if luck has had anything to do with Reg's sustained success!), he might get a job at Mambo... And this as recently as the early 90s!

So, fuck that, Glenno thought, and kept on doing what he was doing, forming his first band Lawnsmell and continuing to hone his skills as an illustrator, not least in doing gig posters, record covers, T-shirts and pet-portrait commissions. It was inevitable, then, that he and Reg would cross paths...

Glenno is not only an artist and musician but also something of an entrepreneur, if that tag's not too lofty for someone to whom the concept of DIY is fundamental and almost sacrosanct. After numerous exhibitions of his own and collaborations with the likes of Neil 'Birdhat' Tomkins, Glenno hatched the idea of a sort of mini-festival alternative to the Sydney Biennale, called Bein'Narly (geddit? many didn't). This wasn't with any funding underwriting it, grants doled out for applications drowning in all the requisite theory/politics, it was driven by nothing but Glenno's sheer zeal for a lot of great art that is its own community in Sydney but which seems to be completely beneath the orthodox art world's notice.

One of the artists Glenno approached to be in the first Bein'Narly group show at the start of 2016 was Reg, and the pair were like two peas in a pod, not only due to sharing similar roots but also an attitude that's anti-careerist and includes a refusal to take anything too seriously, least of all themselves; along with "other preoccupations," as Glenno says, "that were big last century." I went to the show's opening night, and it was great – lots of people, great art, warm beer, good vibes; not a 'creative' or curator in sight, no arts hub or precinct necessary... Just do it! But then of course the pandemic hit...

But as it was for so many artists, this was an opportunity to dig in on work without any distractions. And that's how this collaboration began.

To add to his mastery of linework and cross-hatching, Glenno had started experimenting with lino-printing. He collaborated with another great Sydney musician/artist Ray Ahn, adapting drawings by Ray to this mass-production medium and getting beautiful results. And so it was during lockdown that Glenno and Reg got together – as GReg, pronounced 'gredge', not 'Greg' – and started on so many of the works included in this show.

They would shuttle piles of lino between each other, Reg would draw on them, and Glenno would interpret and carve, later adding digital colour until, as Glenno put it, "we found a happy medium. Some colours get changed and some ideas go further than expected, until we both say, Done. It's fun."

The show is comprised of not only these new products of this perfect union, but also works by the individual artists that may or may not be related. And so it becomes, for me, like this one great big giant monster mash-up, this aesthetic, this narrative, like a form of suburban surrealism, and it's just really unique and bold and strong. And if not without its vulnerabilities, crucially with a broad iconoclastic sense of humour. I mean, to me that's all you need to say about the work, it's just this seamless union, of good and good. It's fun.

Of course, Glenno did end up working with Mambo, like it was a reverse graveyard for the actually imaginative/talented, and if the next best union of he and Reg might be a double-header tour by their respective, current bands – Dog Trumpet and the Hellebores – then that's just something we've still got to look forward to.

CREATURES: LOSING THE WAR ON NATURE

This exhibition is a collaboration between Reg Mombassa and Glenn "Glennò" Smith.

Reg and Glennò are both artists and musicians. The show will consist of linocuts and some digital reproductions based on the linocuts. Reg has drawn some of his images onto the lino blocks and Glennò has carved them in his unique style.

The subject matter consists of a variety of the native animals and hybrid creatures that Reg often features in his work. It is fortunate for the natural world that the human race is failing miserably in its pathetic war on nature.

The exhibition will be on at Rogue pop-up Gallery (130 Regent st Redfern) from the 5th to the 30th of October. The opening will be on Saturday the 8th of October from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Thankfully, I've had some real "breaks." I've been advised to make room for them and enthusiastically absorb them into whatever plans I'd made. Even though we tend to view a lot of life's "wins" as random luck, it always seems a good plan either way. I've realised that wonderful people really do come along and you should always be an appreciative human when it happens. Only a fool (or serial killer) forgets to enjoy love when it shows up and lets it go unappreciated.

My intention to encourage other artists at the monthly art shows I organise (as well as the Bein' Narly Festival events I curate) are less to do with the artists that get involved and more about honouring the people that have helped me out when I needed it.

When there is no-one to help, it can be a very lonely, useless feeling. I wish this for no-one and anyone can honour this spirit of mentoring by making things happen that many people assume "just happen." That "pay it forward" idea is a righteous D.I.Y. ideal especially when artistic life is hard on all sorts of levels. Collaboration is also a great antidote, especially when the threat of creative block is an ever-present one. It's a weirdly satisfying experiment with each attempt.

I'd been inspired by Reg as an artist from a very early age – on both graphic and musical levels– and I was over the moon when he threw in for the first Bein' Narly fest. It's a wonderful feeling when someone you admire supports your little idea, like a full circle of encouragement no "arts funding" can equal.

I'd been getting back into carving Lino, after falling out of love with the intense, highly detailed illustration I found myself ploughing through day after day. This new lino-love affair led to collaborations with artists like Birdhat, Gina Monaco (xo) and Ray Ahn. The idea to do something similar with Reg was met with an unexpected YES. I've had a great time interpreting Reg's illustrations into the binary fun of the raised/carved.

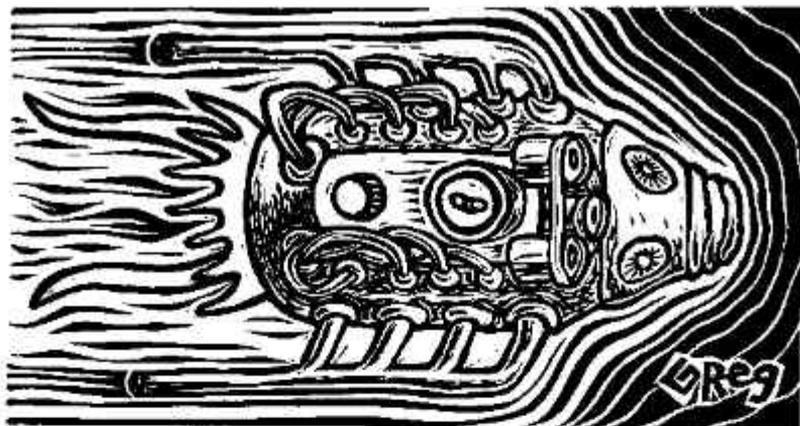
As mentioned, I've had some real breaks – I had met Pamela Griffith (an incredible painter and print-maker) through a friend and now, years later, I feel like part of the Griffith family – both Pamela and Ross are true enablers and have invited me to come to their home and studio – The Griffith Studio and Graphic Workshop - at any-time, to use the most magical beast of a hydraulically operated etching press. This studio has been the centre of the print universe in this country (in my humble opinion) and it is this humble person that feels like a real master once I get into the rhythmic dance with this silver machine. I've printed all sorts of ideas here – album covers, mambo designs, my own big and small blocks, collaborations and all the gREG (gredge) blocks. Thank you Pamela and Ross!

Originally I was going to have a solo show at Rogue Gallery but covid turned lemons into lemonade. The themes present in Reg's work are as deep and esoteric as the fabled suburban backyards of Australian childhood mythology, as ugly as modern politics, as funny as the stuff that is worth laughing at and as weird as the crypto-zoology that slinks between the car graveyards and fossil fuel dig sites – koalas driven to terrorism – actual anti-mainstream humour and a mutated landscape bristling with tension and apathy. I hope your adventuring is as rewarding as mine has been and you enjoy this initial Sydney jaunt at Diane's wonderful Rogue gallery. Have a giggle, buy some yardage, make some cushions, sit on our art, dribble on our designs as you sleep off a couch-bound hangover and thanks for supporting this friendly little collaboration

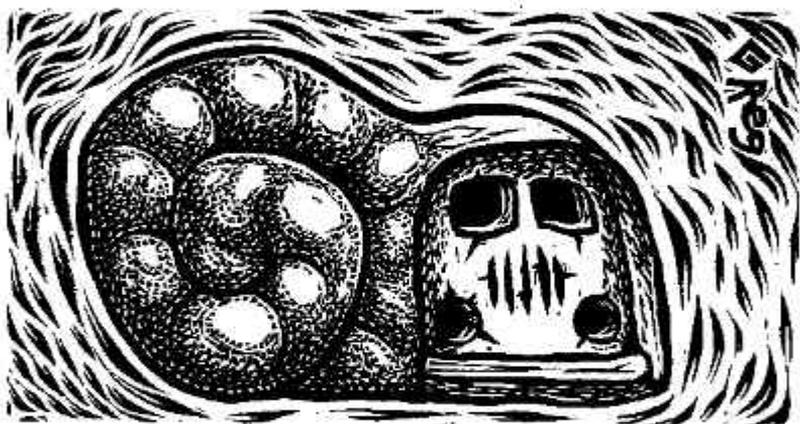




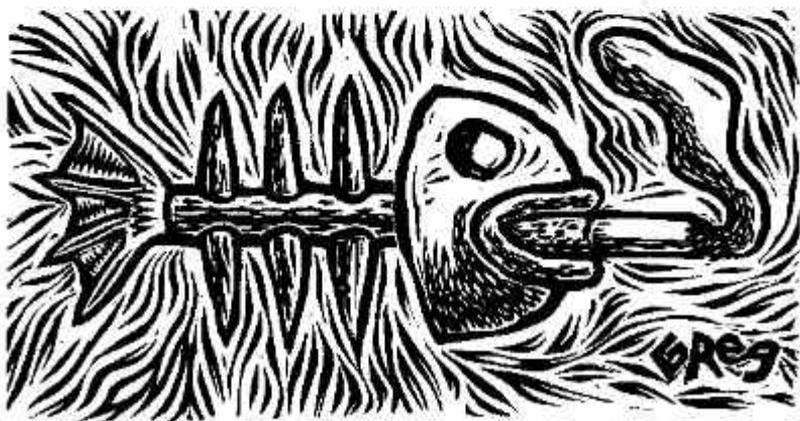
Electric Robot - Lino-print on Magnani 310 paper - 42 cm x 42 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombassa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022



V8 Trilobite - Lino-print on Magnani 310 paper - 35 cm x 28 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombassa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022



Truck Snail - Lino-print on Magnani 310 paper - 35 cm x 28 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombassa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022



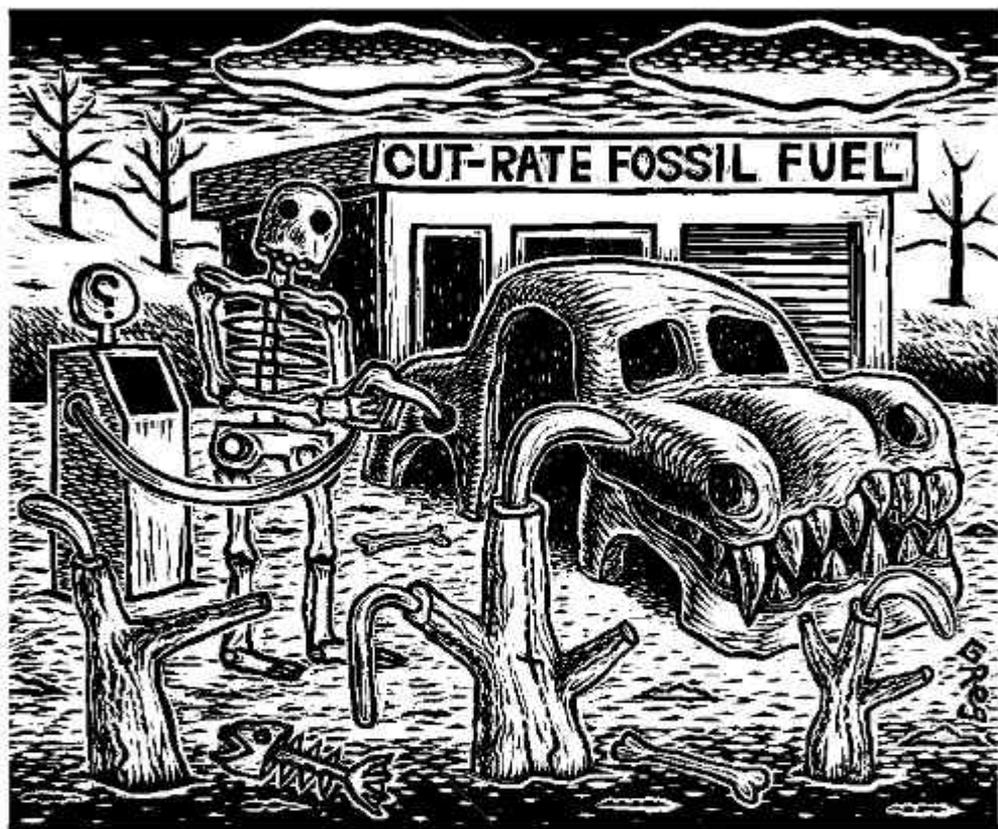
Smoked Fish - Lino-print on Magnani 310 paper - 35 cm x 28 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombassa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022



Patriarohal God - Lino-print on Magnani 310 paper - 25 cm x 44 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombassa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022



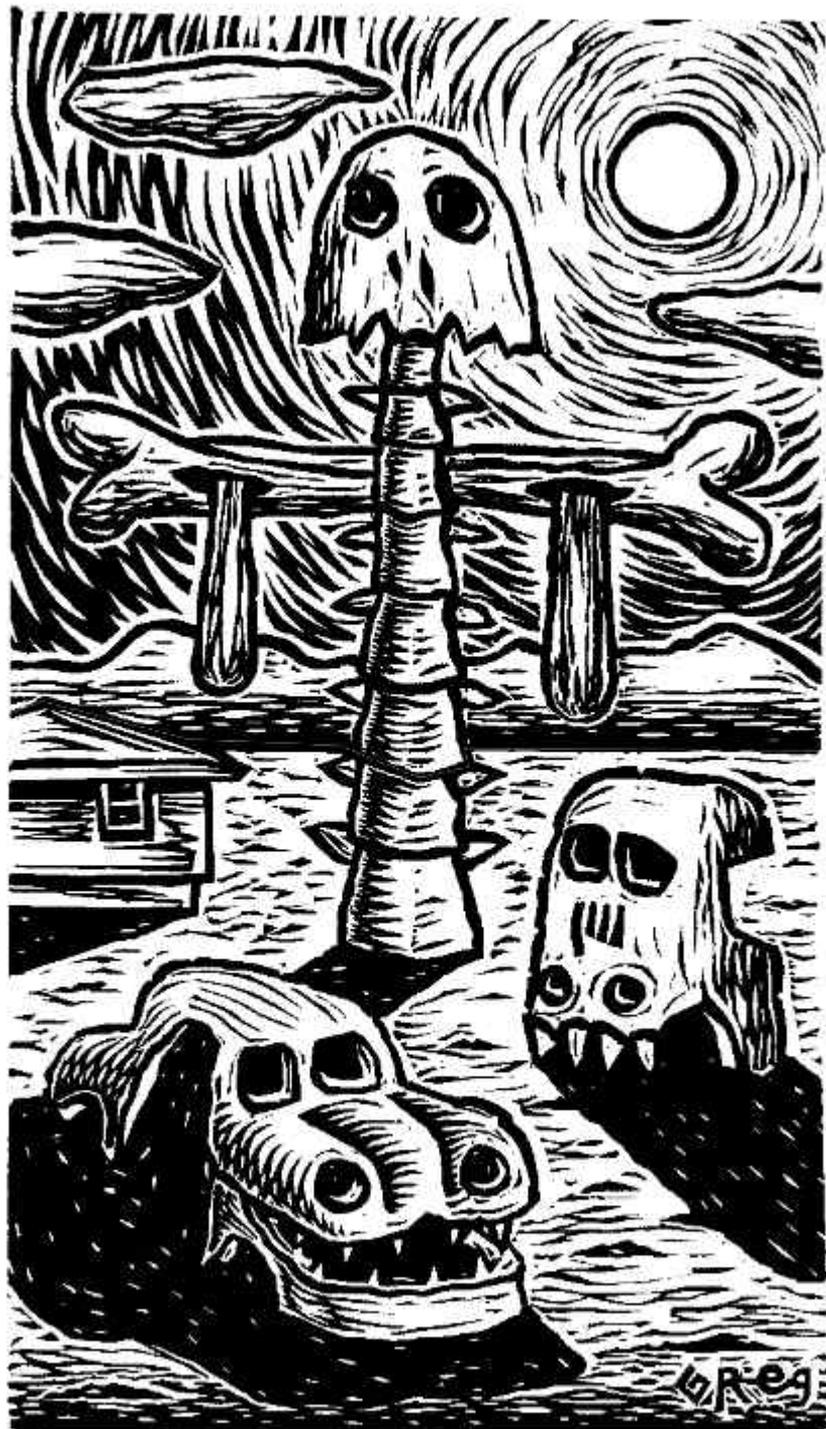
Mouse Ornament - Lino-print on Magnani 310 paper - 25 cm x 26.7 cm - edition of 17 -
Reg Mombassa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022



Cut-Rate Fossil Fuel - Lino-print on Magnani 310 paper - 50 cm x 47 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombassa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022



Standing Business Horse - Lino-print on Magnani 310 paper - 29,2 cm x 46 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombassa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022



Cruciform - Lino-print on Magnani 310 paper - 25.5 cm x 38 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombassa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022



Koala in Tree - Lino-print on Magnani 310 paper - 42 cm x 42 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombassa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022



Kengarewe- Lino-print on Magnani 310 paper - 42 cm x 42 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombassa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022



Gumscape - Lino-print on Magnani 310 paper - 58 cm x 44.5 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombassa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022



Fire and Water - Lino-print on Magnani 310 paper - 45 cm x 38.2 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombassa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022



Guitar Pencil - Lino-print on Magnani 310 paper - 25 cm x 35 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombassa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022



Cut-Rate Fossil Fuel - 4 colour screenprint on natural cotton drill - 145 cm x 100 metres - Publisher Taxtiles - Reg Mombassa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022



Electric Robot - Giclee Print on Acid-free paper - 43 cm x 45 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombassa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022



Truck Snail - Giclee Print on Acid-free paper - 43 cm x 29.7 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombasa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022



V8 Trilobite - Giclee Print on Acid-free paper - 43 cm x 29.7 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombassa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022



Smoked Fish - Giclee Print on Acid-free paper - 43 cm x 29.7 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombassa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022



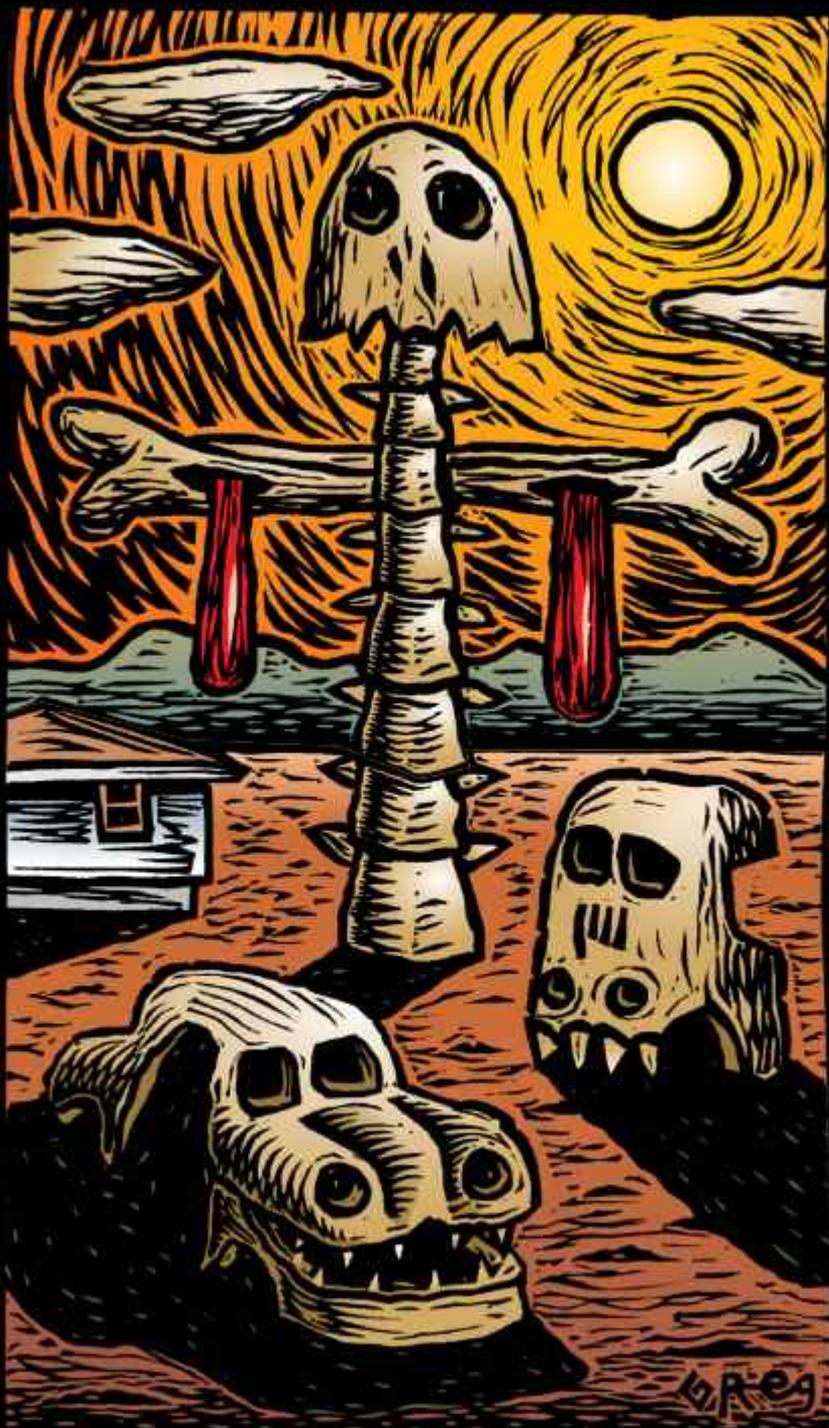
Patriarchal God - Giclee Print on Acid-free paper - 43 cm x 45 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombassa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022



Mouse Ornament - Giclee Print on Acid-free paper - 43 cm x 45 cm - edition of 17 -
Reg Mombasa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022



Standing Business Horse - Giclee Print on Acid-free paper - 24.5 cm x 43 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombassa and Glenn "Glennie" Smith - 2022



Cruiform - Giclee Print on Acid-free paper - 25.7cm x 43 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombassa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022



Koala in Tree - Giclee Print on Acid-free paper - 43 cm x 45 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombasa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022.



Kengarewe - Giclee Print on Acid-free paper - 43 cm x 45 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombassa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022.



Gumscape - Giclee Print on Acid-free paper - 43 cm x 66 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombasa and Glenn "Glenno" Smith - 2022



Fire and Water - Giclee Print on Acid-free paper - 43 cm x 33,7 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombasa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022



Guitar Pencil - Giclee Print on Acid-free paper - 28.7 cm x 43 cm - edition of 20 -
Reg Mombasoa and Glenn "Glenn" Smith - 2022



Reg's Backyard - photography by George Fetting



Reg's Kitchen - photography by George Fetting