



GILLIAN CONDY
Tswalu: A New Beginning



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An exhibition in collaboration with Everard Read and the
Tswalu Foundation AiR Program

2 February – 13 March 2021

***all prices include South African VAT of 15%**

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TSWALU
FOUNDATION

EVERARD READ | JOHANNESBURG

Tswalu Kalahari Reserve is a magical place with its ancient landscapes characterized by the magnificent Korannaberg mountains and rolling dunes. The clear night skies, pristine landscapes, and desert-adapted fauna and flora all combine to make Tswalu a spiritual experience that only the unique Kalahari can create. The vast areas of red sand, shrubs and tall trees are home to an amazing variety of wildlife, specially adapted to survive in harsh, dry conditions. The property significantly contributes to conservation of species and ecosystems in the Northern Cape, including numerous rare and endangered species.

The reserve has a strong community and conservation ethic, with numerous research projects that have been sanctioned by the Oppenheimer family. The Tswalu Foundation was created in 2008 to develop a platform upon which local and international visitors could contribute and become involved in community work and environmental research on the reserve. The Foundation has been fundamental in developing a greater appreciation for the beauty of the Kalahari and its diverse and abundant wildlife. Although Tswalu Kalahari and the Oppenheimer family support numerous research projects, the Foundation ensures that more researchers are afforded the opportunity to study this unique land.

One of the programs managed through the Tswalu Foundation is the Artists in Residence Program (AiR), which was initiated in 2015 with the idea of further supporting research on Tswalu through the generation of income for research as well as providing artists an opportunity to be inspired by Tswalu. The selection of the artists to join the Tswalu Foundation AiR program is guided by Mark Read and his incredible team at the Everard Read gallery in Johannesburg. Together we are showcasing the depth and talent of South African artists as well as uncovering new artistic talent. The importance of artists portraying and depicting this vulnerable landscape should not be underestimated. Art portrays the natural world in varying forms, from the intimate to the majestic, and evokes the mood and feeling of a place. The beauty, magnificence and, in some cases, hardships of an area are clearly reflected through art.

AiR is important to the family as it broadens the depth and scope of the foundation beyond pure science and adds hugely to the long-term sustainability of the foundation. Gill is no stranger to the art world. She worked for 34 years at the Botanical Research Institute, now the South African National Biodiversity Institute as the resident botanical illustrator. Gill has been an active freelance artist for 40+ years and botanical teacher for 25. She has participated in over 140 exhibitions worldwide, including the Royal Horticultural Society, London, where she has received seven Gold and four Silver-gilt Medals.

Soon after retirement in December 2017, Gill curated the South Africa leg of the first Botanical Art Worldwide Exhibition at the Everard Read Gallery in Johannesburg, where 26 countries across the world held simultaneous exhibitions. That November she was appointed AiR at the Tswalu Kalahari Reserve and made eight trips to the reserve to illustrate the plants over the next 14 months. The Covid lockdown proved to be a blessing as it offered the perfect opportunity to focus on completing artworks begun at Tswalu, and then moving on to other works. A very productive time with an exciting new chapter ahead.

Nicky Oppenheimer

COVER DETAIL

Nerine laticoma – gifbol, vleilelie

Watercolour on Arches 600 gsm hot press paper

73 × 53 cm

R28 000

BELOW DETAIL

Felicia muricata – wild aster; bloublommetjie

Watercolour on Arches 300 gsm hot press paper

24 × 31 cm

R11 000





"Retirement is a time for new opportunities" - the saying goes.

Soon after retiring from the very fulfilling post of senior botanical artist at the South African National Biodiversity Institute, which I held for nearly thirty-five years, I was offered the extraordinary opportunity of spending many weeks resident at Tswalu Kalahari Reserve.

Here was my dream of a new beginning with the opportunity and freedom to spend time exploring this new area of South Africa, with its wide range of plant species, in an unspoilt and protected wilderness. I was able to draw and paint whatever subject I chose, and to enjoy the inspirational Research Centre which brings together a variety of people, all keen to share their passion and knowledge for their specialist subject and to learn from others. The energy and creativity of the Centre was a memorable experience, and I was humbled by the knowledge, the love and respect for the reserve which I saw in the team who worked there and showed me round.

This exhibition is my chance to share the beauty and intricacy of the plants I found and recorded in this amazing place which is Tswalu.

I would like to thank the Oppenheimer family, Duncan MacFayden and Dylan Smith for the wonderful opportunity to spend time at Tswalu. Such an unforgettable time which has changed me forever.

Gillian Condy

LEFT AND PAGE 2 DETAIL

Putterlickia pyracantha – false spike-thorn

Watercolour on Arches 300 gsm hot press board

40 × 24 cm

R18 500





ABOVE AND PREVIOUS PAGE DETAIL

Elephantorrhiza elephantina – dwarf elephant-root, eland's bean

Watercolour on Arches 600 gsm hot press paper

53 × 71 cm

R32 500



ABOVE

Suricata suricatta – meerkat

Watercolour and graphite on Arches 300 gsm hot press paper

38 × 38 cm

R21 000

For some years I have had a fascination with underground (suffrutescent) tree species and I have illustrated quite a few. *Elephantorrhiza elephantina* is one of the most widespread species occurring from south of the equator. At Tswalu the extensive canopies can make the veld look lush from a distance. Unfortunately, the leaves are not palatable to the herbivores. Clustered racemes of pale yellow to golden flowers appear from September to November and do not depend on rainfall. They are most frequently pollinated by the African honeybee, *Apis mellifera*. For a moment I did regret trying to do the see-through section, but eventually had to tackle it. One of the guides shared the photo of the gecko.

RIGHT

Nerine laticoma – gifbol, vleilelie

Watercolour on Arches 600 gsm hot press paper

73 × 53 cm

R28 000

BELOW

Ammocharis coranica – ground lily

Watercolour on Arches hot press board

49 × 66 cm

R23 000



BELOW AND NEXT PAGE DETAIL

Smutsia temminckii – Temminck ground pangolin

Watercolour on Arches 300 gsm hot press paper

33 x 43 cm

NFS Donated to The African Pangolin Working Group to raise funds.

Limited signed prints will also be made available through the artist, all proceeds to the working group.



'Temminck's ground pangolin is currently the most trafficked mammal in the world. It is an elusive animal, largely owing to its nocturnal habits and occurrence at low population densities. Researchers at Tswalu have used radio telemetry for the past five years to pry into the secret lives of these scaly anteaters. Understanding how ground pangolins in the Kalahari cope in their current environment, provides a sneak peek into the future about their fate in the face of climate change.' Wendy Panaino





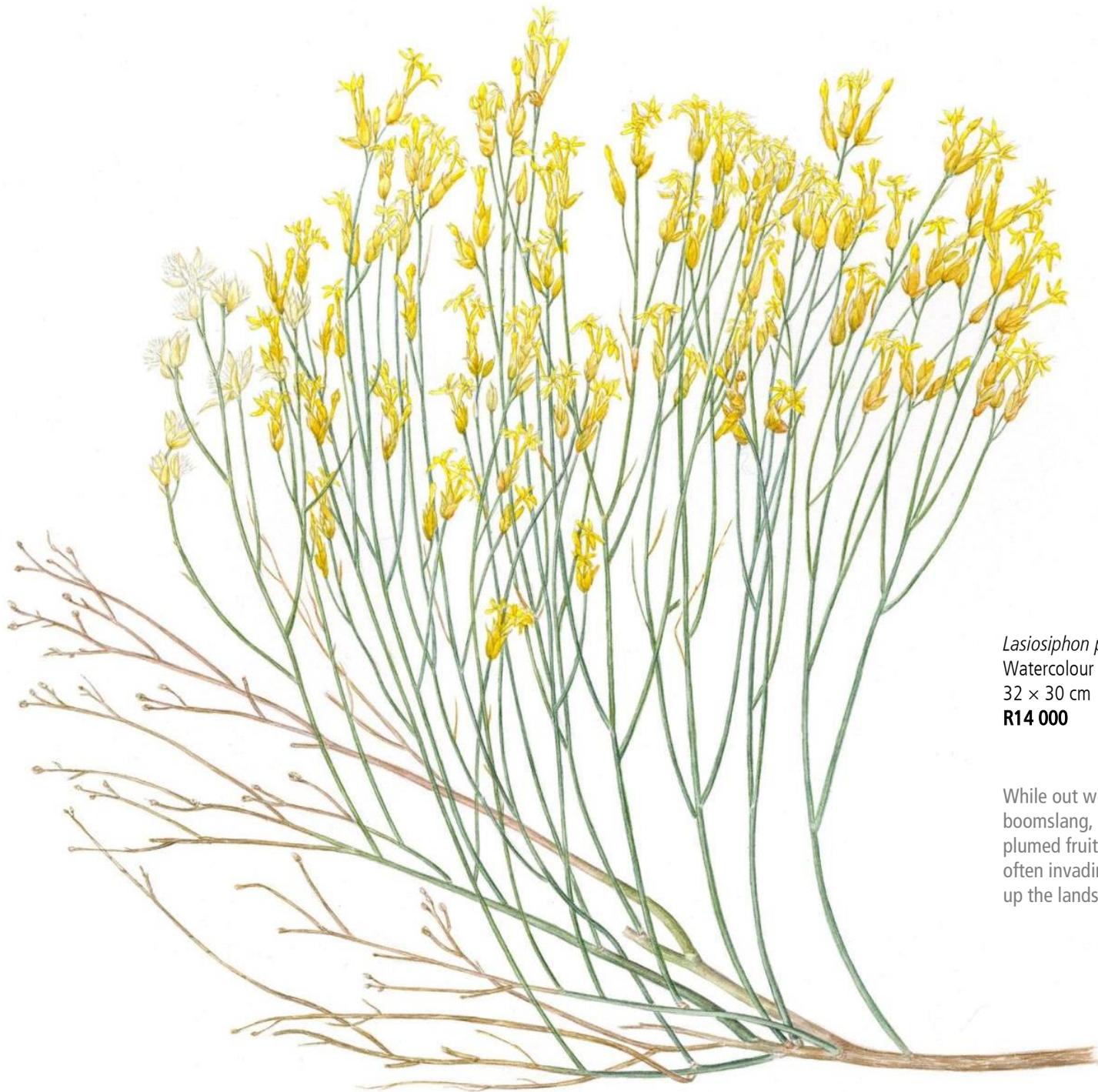
Soon after good rain, the submerged bulbs of this large *Nerine* push their way up through the sand to put on a magnificent display. Along the approach road and across the reserve the beautiful soft pink inflorescences transform the dunes, but the most spectacular display is around the staff village where they appear in their thousands for as far as one can see. Attracting a variety of butterflies, the area is alive with life. Blossoms are short-lived and only last for around four days. In January 2020, after a period of minimal rain, only a few bulbs were in flower.

Nerine laticome – *gifbol, vleilelie*

Watercolour and graphite on Arches 600 gsm hot press paper

33 × 70 cm

NFS Painting gifted to the Tswalu Foundation



Laiosiphon polycephalus – besembossie
Watercolour on Arches 600 gsm hot press paper
32 × 30 cm
R14 000

While out with Thilo Beck and friends to witness the release of a couple of boomslang, I noticed the *Laiosiphon polycephalus* plant, covered in plumed fruit. It is widespread and occurs in sandy and calcareous soils, often invading overgrazed veld. When in flower, these dwarf shrubs light up the landscape with their clumps of rich, yellow flowers.



ABOVE LEFT

Boscia albitrunca – shepherd's tree; *Belenois aurota* -butterfly
Watercolour on Arches 300 gsm hot press board
35 × 23 cm
R14 000



ABOVE RIGHT

Dipcadi platyphyllum – crinkle-leaved poison onion
Watercolour on Arches 600 gsm hot press board
30 × 13 cm
R8 500

Senna italica subsp. *archoides* – eland's pea
Watercolour on Arches 300 gsm hot press paper
40 × 65 cm
R28 000

During the summer months the roadsides from Kuruman to the Kalahari are awash with the rich yellow flowers of the eland's bean as it creeps along the sandy soil. On the dunes, the plant help stabilise the sands. The pods are quite large with a ridge along their centre. This was the first subject I selected and felt so inspired and excited with the possibilities of this project.





ABOVE LEFT
Rhigozum obovatum – Karoo gold, yellow pomegranate; *geelberggranaat*
Watercolour on Arches hot press board
58 × 47 cm
R28 000



ABOVE RIGHT
Rhigozum trichotomum – three-thorn rhigozum
Watercolour on Arches hot press board
68 × 49 cm
R28 000



Dune composite: *Vachellia haematoxylon* – grey camel thorn; *Grewia flava* – velvet raisin; *Orphanthera jasminiflora* – jasmine creeper; *Senna italica* subsp. *archoides* – elands pea; *Dicerocaryum eriocarpum* – devil's thorn; *Dicoma schinzii* – vaalplatblaar; *Stipagrostis amabilis* – duinekweek; *Elephantorrhiza elephantina* – dwarf elephant-root; *Crotalaria orientalis* – besembossie

Watercolour and graphite on Arches 600 gsm hot press board

49 × 69 cm

R28 000



ABOVE LEFT

Coccinia sessilifolia – wild cucumber on *Grewia flava* – velvet raisin

Watercolour on Arches 600 gsm hot press paper

74 × 53 cm

R21 000



ABOVE RIGHT

Tapinanthus oleifolius – mistletoe on *Senegalia mellifera* – black thorn

Watercolour on Arches 600 gsm hot press board

56 × 47 cm

R20 000



DETAIL AND NEXT PAGE

Cadaba aphylla – leafless wormbush

Watercolour on Arches hot press board

47 × 65 cm

R23 000

Often found growing beneath trees, this unusual shrub or tangled bush grows up to 2 m tall, with semi succulent blue-green branches. The flowers are fascinating, they have no petals and the ovary is held on a stalk projecting beyond the stamens. When the worm-like fruits ripen, they split to reveal sticky red seeds. I started drawing this plant without having seen the flowers, just a photograph, but on a walk near the gravesite behind Dedebe, months after the normal flowering window, I found flowers on two of the lower branches of two plants. Fruits were not plentiful, but eventually found some whilst accompanying a puff adder release program in the reserve.





RIGHT

Boophone disticha – bushman poison bulb
Watercolour and graphite on Arches hot press board
47,9 × 68 cm
R28 000



RIGHT AND DETAIL NEXT PAGE

Varanus albigularis – rock monitor, leguaan;
Watercolour on Arches 300 gsm hot press paper
32 × 50 cm
R28 000

One Sunday morning before sunrise, a group of researchers and I climbed the hill behind Dedebeen Research Centre. Spectacular views of the Kalahari plains were framed by the Korannaberg Mountains in the distance. Nestled among the rocks were numerous *Boophone disticha* bulbs, many of them severely damaged, or destroyed by baboons that had ripped bulbs from the soil. Piles of their dried protective sheaths were scattered to the wind, evidence to the destruction and pressure on the local population. Early the following morning I retraced our path up the animal track to draw the bulb in situ.





Boscia albitrunca – shepherd's tree
Watercolour and graphite on Arches 600 gsm
hot press board
54 × 73 cm
R28 000

Boscia albitrunca is one of the iconic trees in Tswalu and every twisted, contorted stem is worthy of being drawn. This protected tree has many medicinal uses and features in African folklore and superstitions. I drove around for days searching for the right shaped tree for my painting. As I drew outside, I would sit watching the animals slowly trekking towards the nearest waterhole, looking extremely emaciated due to the drought. It was heartbreaking to witness.



ABOVE

Dispholidus typus Boulenger – boomslang exiting
a weaver nest

Watercolour on Arches 300 gsm hot press paper
20 × 33 cm

R14 000

RIGHT

Naja nivea – Cape cobra

Watercolour on Arches 300 gsm hot press paper
25 × 43 cm

R18 500





ABOVE AND NEXT PAGE DETAIL

Albuca seineri – bushveld chinchinchee

Watercolour on Arches 300 gsm hot press paper

39 × 73 cm

R18 500

RIGHT

Albuca seineri – bushveld chinchinchee

Watercolour on Arches 600 gsm hot press paper

47 × 32 cm

R20 000

The clean fresh line of these conical, faintly scented inflorescences is wonderful to paint, but the colours and textures in the sculptural form of the fruiting head are quite stunning. Seed can remain underground for years before the conditions are right for germination. Easy to overlook, this bulb is worthy of being featured in a solo role. In the late spring of 2019 there was minimal rain, seriously stunting their growth.



gCandy



On my bucket list for around fifteen years, I longed for the chance to see the *Pancratium tenuifolium* flowers open. Colleagues from the National Herbarium found five large buds emerging from the sand and said they would keep an eye on them, as I was leaving next morning. I insisted that we go late that same afternoon, just before sunset. I made my first drawing, then patiently waited. Ten minutes after the sun had sunk behind the western dune, the buds started to swell. Ten minutes later the first clip released. Slowly the petals unfurled revealing the delicate inner cup-shaped corona. It was well worth the fifteen-year wait!

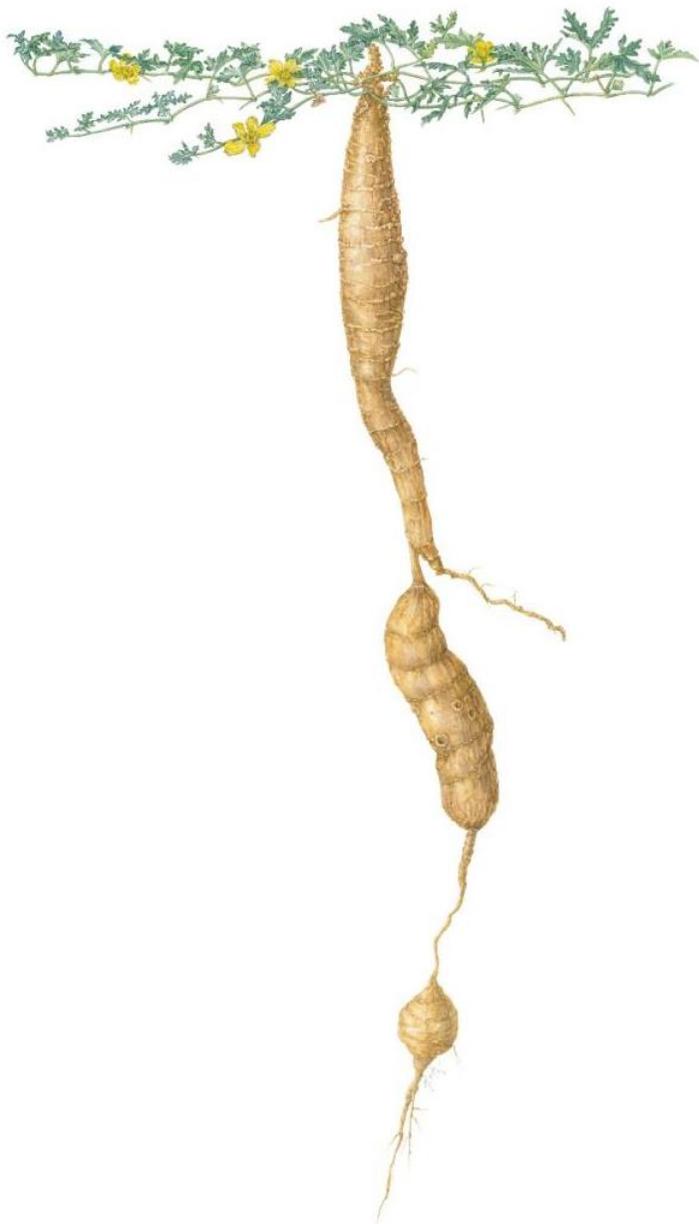
Pancratium tenuifolium – aandblommetjie
Watercolour on Arches 600 gsm hot press paper
30 × 47 cm
R 18 500





No botanical artist visiting the Kalahari can avoid painting this beautiful creeper. Plants have extremely long, trailing stems, often tangled with the equally long stems of the creeping jasmine. The deeply divided palmate leaves are a lovely warm blue-green and covered in stiff hairs. I searched hard for the spiny fruit, which turns yellowish-green when ripe, as these tend to be eaten by animals.

Acanthosicyos naudinianus – gemsbok cucumber, wild watermelon
Watercolour on Arches 300 gsm hot press paper
26 × 116 cm
R18 500



ABOVE LEFT
Acanthosicyos naudinianus – gembok cucumber, wild watermelon
Watercolour on Arches 300 gsm hot press paper
107 × 58 cm
R18 500



ABOVE CENTRE
Justicia divaricata – wild lucerne
Watercolour on Arches 300 gsm hot press board
50 × 22 cm
R13 000



ABOVE RIGHT
Jatropha erythropoda – blood root
Watercolour on Arches 600 gsm hot press paper
48 × 20 cm
R14 000



Winding its way up through the lower branches of the three-thorn rhigozum, this wild morning glory made for a dramatic splash of colour as the flower greeted the first morning sunrays. The large underground tubers are well-adapted to the temperature extremes, lack of moisture and uncertain rains and they are a great source of medicinal remedies. It was exciting to see them flowering in the wild as I had only seen them in nurseries before. I brushed some of the sand away from the stem to see how deep down the tuber was, and soon realised someone had done this before as the sand was much looser. Sadly, I watched beetles devour the flowers soon after they opened.

Ipomea bolusiana – wild morning glory; *seakhoe*
Watercolour on Arches 600 gsm hot press paper
26 × 52 cm
R16 500





ABOVE LEFT AND PREVIOUS PAGE DETAIL

Jamesbrittenia megadenia

Watercolour on Arches 600 gsm hot press paper

29 × 22 cm

R11 500



ABOVE RIGHT

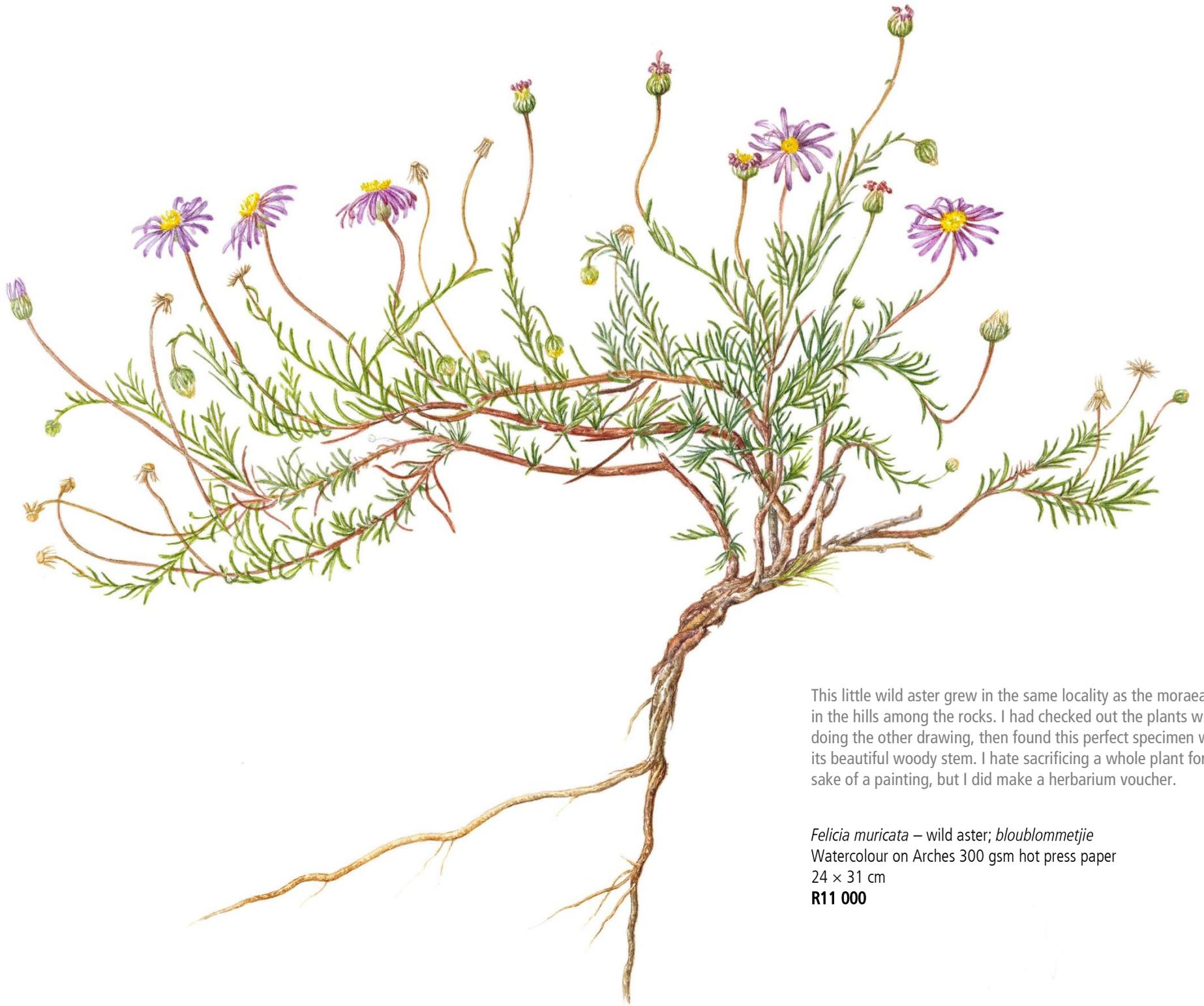
Dimorphotheca zeyheri – *kleinbietou*

Watercolour on Arches 300 gsm hot press paper

21 × 11 cm

R5 000

Really too small to be included in an exhibition, but far too cute not to paint.



This little wild aster grew in the same locality as the moraeas, up in the hills among the rocks. I had checked out the plants while doing the other drawing, then found this perfect specimen with its beautiful woody stem. I hate sacrificing a whole plant for the sake of a painting, but I did make a herbarium voucher.

Felicia muricata – wild aster; *bloublommetjie*
Watercolour on Arches 300 gsm hot press paper
24 × 31 cm
R11 000



ABOVE LEFT

Moraea polystachya – bloutulp

Watercolour on Arches 300 gsm hot press paper

54 × 34 cm

R18 500



ABOVE RIGHT

Cleome angustifolia – yellow mouse-whiskers; *Cleome kalachariensis* – Kalahari spindlepod; *Cleome hirta* – sticky purple spindlepod;

Cleome rubella – pretty lady; *Cleome gynanda* – African cabbage

Watercolour on Arches hot press board

55 × 73 cm

R28 000





ABOVE AND PREVIOUS PAGE DETAIL

Hermannia burchellii

Watercolour on Arches 600 gsm hot press paper

35 × 66 cm

R14 000



ABOVE LEFT
Aloe grandidentata – bontaalwyn
Watercolour on Arches 300 gsm hot press paper
74 × 54 cm
R23 000



ABOVE RIGHT
Lessertia frutescens – cancer bush
Watercolour on Arches 600 gsm hot press paper
53 × 40 cm
R14 000

This was the fruiting stem of a flower that I had photographed next to the plant I chose to draw (See page 7). It was a delicate maneuver to bring it back to the studio in one piece to paint. I loved the soft, subtle colours and the polished surfaces of the seeds. A few of the seeds were planted in Dedebe, so hopefully there may be some stunning flowers in a few years. Other were 'planted' back in the original locality.

BELOW

Ammocharis coranica – fruiting stem of ground lily

Watercolour on Arches 600 gsm hot press paper

23 × 45 cm

R16 500



ABOVE

Euphorbia avasmontana – dead stem of slender candelabra euphorbia

Watercolour on Arches 600 gsm hot press paper

18 × 50 cm

R20 000





ABOVE LEFT

Euphorbia avasmontana – flower and fruiting stem of slender candelabra euphorbia

Watercolour on Arches 300 gsm hot press paper

43 × 25 cm

R16 500



ABOVE RIGHT AND PREVIOUS PAGE DETAIL

Euphorbia avasmontana – young plant of slender candelabra euphorbia with *Gerrhosaurus flavigularis* – yellow-throated plated lizard

Watercolour on Arches 300 gsm hot press board

42 × 57 cm

R23 000

Many of the rocky hills have healthy populations of this elegant euphorbia. While climbing around the lower slopes of one such outcrop, I noticed this beautiful young plant nestled among the rocks. Early on the fifth consecutive morning out drawing, I took the twigs and leaf litter back to the studio to add. As I had sat motionless for hours on each visit, the lizard had become used to me and would creep around unafraid of my presence. During the last visit I was interrupted when I happened to glance round to see three buffalo grazing 20 m away, just past my parked car. Slowly packing up my art materials, I crept back to my vehicle under the watchful gaze of the large bovid.





ABOVE LEFT

Sansevieria aethiopica – bowstring hemp under *Lycium*

Watercolour on Arches 300 gsm hot press board

61 × 45 cm

R16 500



ABOVE RIGHT AND PREVIOUS PAGE DETAIL

Barleria rigida – scorpion thistle

Watercolour on Arches 600 gsm hot press paper

44 × 59 cm

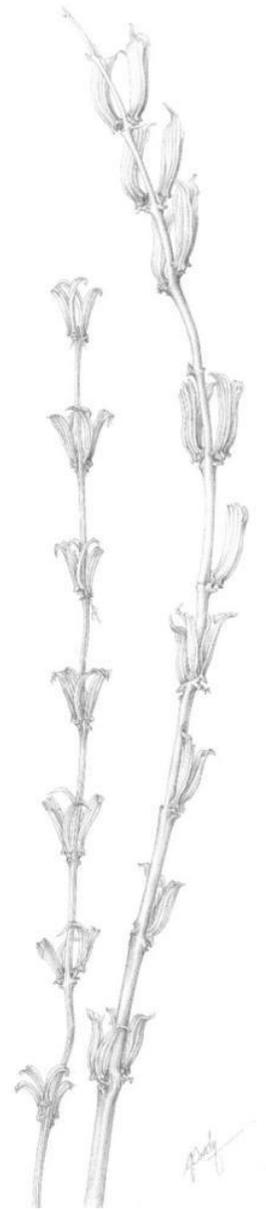
R28 000



ABOVE LEFT
Polihierax semitorquatus – African pygmy falcon
Watercolour on Arches 600 gsm hot press paper
70 × 45 cm
R28 000



ABOVE CENTRE
Polihierax semitorquatus – pygmy falcon chick
Watercolour on Arches 300 gsm hot press paper
17 × 22 cm
R7 000



ABOVE RIGHT
Sesamum capense – wing-seeded sesame and *Sesamum triphyllum* var. *triphyllum* – fruit of thunderbolt flower, wild sesame
Graphite on Arches 600 gsm hot press paper
72 × 16 cm
R10 500

Harpagophytum procumbens subsp. *procumbens* – devil's claw

Watercolour and graphite on Arches 600 gsm hot press paper

45 × 70 cm

R28 000





Smutsia temminckii – Temminck's ground pangolin

Watercolour on Arches 300 gsm hot press paper

35,5 × 44 cm

R32 500

Handwritten signature

Gillian Sara Condy. MA RCA

Born in Kenya, Gillian went to primary school in Uganda before her family moved to the UK. She trained as a scientific illustrator with a Masters in botanical illustration from the Royal College of Art, London. Longing to return to Africa, she came to work in Botswana for four years, working for the International Voluntary Services and Dept. of Education. She was offered a job by The Botanical Research Institute, now the South African National Biodiversity Institute as the resident botanical illustrator in 1983 and retired in December 2017 after 34 wonderful years.

Gillian has been an active freelance artist for 40+ years and teacher for 25. She has participated in over 140 exhibitions worldwide, including the Royal Horticultural Society, London (seven Gold, four Silver-gilt Medals); the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation 1992; Kirstenbosch Biennale (four Gold, four Silver medal); Shirley Sherwood Gallery, Kew; 21st World Orchid Conference, Johannesburg 2014 which she also curated. Five works are represented in the Shirley Sherwood Collection; in *The Highgrove* and *Transylvania Florilegium* for The Prince of Wales's Charitable Foundation; the Sydney Florilegium and Botanic Endeavour - Banks and Solander Collection; Chelsea Physic Gardens, London and Grootbos Florilegium; Brenthurst Library and Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Gillian was awarded the prestigious Jill Smythies Award - Linnean Society of London 1990; Cythna Letty Award 2001; and Certificate of Merit from the South African Association of Botanists in 2018.

She illustrated *Geophytic Pelargoniums* (2001); *Grass Aloes in the South African Veld* (2005) and contributed to *Peeling Back the Petals: South African Botanical Art*. She has designed 14 sets of postage stamps for Botswana and three for South Africa. She is a founding and Honorary Life member of the Botanical Artists Association of Southern Africa and has been an active member of the Gauteng committee for 21 years. She is also a member of the American Society of Botanical Artists.

Soon after retirement in December 2017, Gillian helped curate the South Africa leg of the first Botanical Art Worldwide Exhibition at the Everard Read Gallery in Johannesburg, where 26 countries across the world held simultaneous exhibitions. That November she was appointed 'Artist in Residence' at the Tswalu Kalahari Private Nature Reserve and made eight trips to the reserve to illustrate the plants over the next 14 months. The Covid lockdown proved to be a blessing as it offered the perfect opportunity to focus on completing artworks begun at Tswalu, and then moving on to other works. A very productive time with an exciting new chapter ahead.

Photographers:
Anthony Lowney
Gillian Condy
Melissa Goephert
Reinier Terblanche
Thilo Beck

