

ZOONOSSES

DR NICOLA HOOPER

“There are many animals, who though far from being large,
are yet capable of raising ideas of the sublime,
because they are considered as objects of terror.
As serpents and poisonous animals of almost all kinds.
And to things of great dimensions,
if we annex an adventitious idea of terror,
they become without comparison greater.”

—Edmund Burke¹ 1757

¹ Burke, Edmund. “Terror: A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful.” In *The Gothic*, edited by Gilda Williams, London: Whitechapel and The MIT Press, (1757) 2007, 22.

Cover image: Nicola Hooper, *The Giant Horse Fly*, 2018. Digital print of hand-coloured lithograph on rubber, fishing line, suspension springs and printed Perspex wings, 120 x 100cm.

Logan Art Gallery and Logan City Council are delighted to partner with Museums & Galleries Queensland to tour this exciting and topical exhibition by Logan artist Dr Nicola Hooper: *ZOONOSSES* was first exhibited at Logan Art Gallery in October 2018, supported by the Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF). RADF is a partnership between the Queensland Government and Logan City Council to support local arts and culture in regional Queensland.

The *ZOONOSSES* exhibition derived from Nicola Hooper's doctoral research *Zoonoses – a visual narrative*. Exploring the relationship between humans and animals, particularly in fairy tale and historical rhyme, this artist's practice comments on our contradictory perception of animals in relation to fear of disease. While some species are inherently dangerous to humans by way of predatory behaviours or toxicity, others elicit an irrational fear or revulsion unrelated to their potential for harm. While contemporary scientific knowledge has abated many of our superstitions about animals, an unknown danger we still fear are diseases, or zoonoses, that could potentially spread from animals to humans.

Entering *ZOONOSSES* is an immersive experience with hand-coloured lithographs, artist books and oversized suspended creatures, set against highly decorative wallpapers designed by the artist. Closer inspection of the appealing wallpaper pattern, with a distinctive green background, reveals an intricate design comprising those animals most likely to spread disease. The green colour itself is a reference to the vivid arsenical pigment used to colour Victorian wallpapers.

Somewhat prescient, this exhibition will engage and delight visitors as it tours regional communities continuing to navigate the ongoing global pandemic.





A zoonosis (zoonoses pl.) is classified as an infection or infectious disease that is transferred from an animal host to a human. Up to seventy per cent of all new diseases have their genesis in animal hosts. My exhibition *ZOONOSSES* uses drawing as a narrative tool to consider human fear of animal hosts in the context of their association with zoonosis, and draws parallels to the representation of animals in fairy tales, myths and rhymes.

Three main areas of investigation inform and underpin the work. Firstly, the exploration of zoonotic diseases. In doing this, I reference human culpability in the spread of these viruses in association with our representation of animals in popular culture, and the resulting perception of animals in the context of fear of disease. This is explored through theorist Steve Baker's ideas of animal-endorsed and animal-skeptical,² and sociologist Kay Pegg's perceptions of 'good' and 'bad' animals.³

Secondly, the role of fairy tales and rhymes, both historically and as a tool to subversively relay information in the present is referenced.

The third area addresses sociologist Stanley Cohen's concepts of moral panic, social anxiety and states of denial as outcomes of the media's representation of zoonotic outbreaks.⁴

This research conducted during study for my doctorate has resulted in the creation of lithographic diptychs, sculptures, artist books containing created rhymes and a number of zoonotic wallpapers. These works use fairy tales, myths and rhymes as metaphor to discuss zoonotic outbreaks in a non-threatening and restrained manner. I employ these tropes within my studio practice, focusing on the narrative possibilities associated with various host animals,

With this work I suggest that we can use fairy tales and rhymes and associated anthropomorphism to both discuss and educate about zoonotic viruses and various animal hosts in a way to generate greater understanding of the natural world.

Dr Nicola Hooper

- 1 Stephen Love, "Zoonoses - Animal Diseases Transmissible to Humans," 2010, 1, https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/334001/Zoonoses-animal-diseases-that-may-affect-humans.pdf.
 - 2 Steve Baker, *The Postmodern Animal* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2000), 9.
 - 3 Kay Peggs, *Animals and Sociology* (New York: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 2012), 76-80.
 - 4 Cohen, Stanley. *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*. 2002 ed. Oxon, New York: Routledge, 2002. book. 2002. 1972.
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Nicola Hooper, *James the Rat King Diptych*, 2016.

Hand-coloured lithograph, 115 x 115 x 5cm.

Nicola Hooper, *James the Rat King Pop-Up Book*, 2019.

Hand-coloured lithographic artist book,

13.5 x 35.5 x 3cm (folded), 30cm diameter.

ZOONOSES

A Visual Narrative

Dr Jess Berry



Fairy tales, myths and rhymes are as old as humanity, originating in oral traditions. Their later dissemination mediated through manuscripts and print allowed these stories to traverse locations and generations. In some ways they might be thought of as the first cultural memes, replicating and transforming stories predicated on the human communication of shared experience, propagating like a virus, undergoing transformation through innovation and transmission across cultures and societies. As anthropologist and neuroscientist Melvin Konner argues:

The fairy tale, as a memetic genre that retains its roots in oral traditions, has formed distinct patterns of action, employing other media such as print, electronics, drawing, photography, movies, and digital technology to create

counterworlds and gain distance from our world of reality so that we can know it as well as ourselves.'

Artist Nicola Hooper engages with these elements of the fairytale—its virus like replication and its representation through illustrated prints—to explore themes of morality in our understanding of human/animal relationships as they relate to the spread of zoonotic disease. Traditional fairy tales, myths and rhymes have been dominated by anthropomorphised animals as both hero and villain protagonists in narratives of death and danger. As such they are the perfect vehicle to convey Hooper's investigation into how we humans both despise animals for their role in spreading disease across species, yet also revere them as they provide us with the means of vaccination through scientific testing and discovery.

Hooper brings to bear her significant technical skills to present a unique drawing style reminiscent of both natural history and children's book illustration. Her attention to detail is borne out of careful study of animal specimens in museum collections, fittingly applied to archival and current newspaper stories of zoonotic diseases that have had devastating effects on human life. Hooper cleverly adapts familiar stories, such as *Puss in Boots*, along with myths, fables and rhymes to present real-life tales of death and danger in ways that help us to better understand our changing environment. In doing so, she demonstrates how this narrative form continues to remain relevant to contemporary culture and society, and indeed art.

In this exhibition, the artist not only reinvents age-old parables to convey her zoonotic tales, she also extends the possibilities of print to sculpture and installation. Engaging with aesthetics associated with Victorian gothic revival interiors, Hooper's wallpaper installation alludes to a time when both fairy tales and art were concerned with the effects of the industrial revolution on the environment. The tales of Hans Christian Anderson, for example, *The Fir Tree* showed humans as abusers of the natural

environment, commenting on the real threat to the English landscape. The artist and designer William Morris—famous for his decorative patterned wallpaper—similarly celebrated nature, plants and animals at a time when the ravages of factory smog plagued the health of society. In engaging with these associations, and through the language of the tales themselves, Hooper asks us to reflect on our own complicit actions in the spread of zoonotic diseases; whereby our impact on the degradation of animals' natural habitats and our contribution to climate change is increasing the risk of diseases such as malaria, dengue fever and Hendra virus spreading to humans. In this way, through her meticulously rendered drawings and prints, Hooper makes clear current moral quandaries of humanity. Yet they also inspire the viewer with a sense of awe and wonder, just as traditional fairy tales intended.

¹Melvin Konner, 'The Cultural Evolution of Fairy Tales', available 12 September 2018: <http://assets.press.princeton.edu/chapters/s9676.pdf>

²Victoria Tedeschi, 'How 19th Century fairy tales expressed anxieties about ecological devastation', *The Conversation*, available 12 september 2018: <https://theconversation.com/how-19th-century-fairy-tales-expressed-anxieties-about-ecological-devastation-73137>

Nicola Hooper, *Horse Fly study*, 2018. Watercolour drawing.



Nicola Hooper, *The Giant Mosquito*, 2017. Digital print of hand-coloured lithograph on rubber, fishing line, suspension springs and printed Perspex wings, 300 x 80cm. Nicola Hooper, *Ross River Zoonotic Wallpaper*, 2018. Digital print of hand-coloured lithograph, size variable.



Nicola Hooper, *The Giant Flea*, 2017. Digital print of hand-coloured lithograph on rubber, fishing line and suspension springs, 130 x 140 x 2.5cm. Nicola Hooper, *Ode to Morris Zoonotic Wallpaper*, 2017. Digital print of hand-coloured lithograph, size variable.



Nicola Hooper, *Ross @ the River Citronella Artist Book*, 2016. Two-colour combined ink and citronella oil lithograph with citronella encaustic cover, 21.2 x 16.8 x 1cm. Nicola Hooper, *Murray @ the Valley Citronella Artist Book*, 2017. Hand-coloured lithograph printed with citronella oil with citronella encaustic cover, 25.9 x 13.3 x 2.2cm.



Nicola Hooper, *Ode to Morris Zoonotic Wallpaper*, 2017. Digital print of hand-coloured lithograph, size variable.

Nicola Hooper, *Ross River Zoonotic Wallpaper*, 2018. Digital print of hand-coloured lithograph, size variable.

Nicola Hooper, *Tularaemia Zoonotic Wallpaper*, 2018. Digital print of hand-coloured lithograph, size variable.

Nicola Hooper, *Lady Wilde's Toxoplasmosis Wallpaper*, 2019. Digital print of hand-coloured lithograph, size variable.



Nicola Hooper, *Rat 'O' Rat*, 2022. Porcelain, waxed washi paper, rusted metal, timber and horse hair, 56 x 22 x 30cm (body), 30 x 16 x 1.5cm (tail).

Nicola Hooper, *Love Potion*, 2019. Hand-coloured lithograph, 79.4 x 62.9 x 5cm.

Nicola Hooper, *Methodology*, 2019. Hand-coloured lithographs, paper cut and stitched together with red thread, 78.5 x 21.2 x 10.2cm.

Nicola Hooper, *Lady Wilde's Toxoplasmosis Wallpaper*, 2019. Digital print of hand-coloured lithograph, size variable.





Nicola Hooper, *Rats with Wings Diptych*, 2015. Hand-coloured lithograph, 115 x 115 x 5cm.



Nicola Hooper, *Puss in Boots*, 2018. Hand-coloured lithograph on Arches Aquarello paper, 75 x 65 x 5cm.
Nicola Hooper, *Ross River Zoonotic Wallpaper*, 2018. Digital print of hand-coloured lithograph, size variable.



Nicola Hooper,
Little Peter Rabbit,
2018. Hand-coloured
lithograph,
114 x 86.5 x 4.7cm.



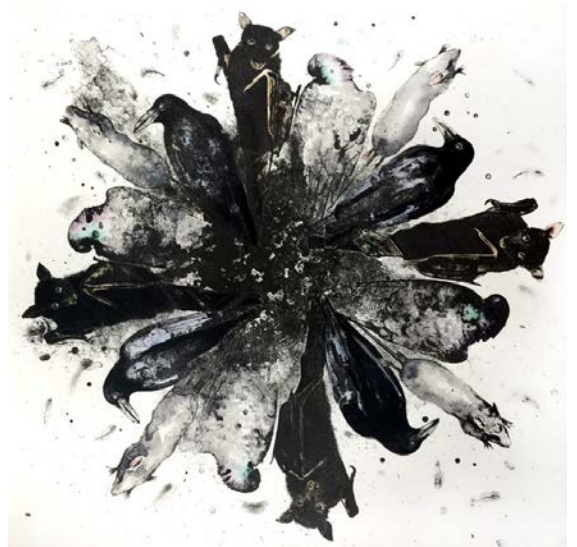
Nicola Hooper, *Kiss, Scratch, Bite*, 2016.
 Hand-coloured lithograph, 78.1 x 73.6 x 3.1cm. Nicola Hooper,
Kiss, Scratch, Bite Artist Book, 2016. Digital print of hand-
 coloured lithograph with encaustic cover, 10.8 x 7.6 x 1cm.



Nicola Hooper, *Sing-a-song-of Sixpence*, 2018. Hand-coloured lithographs on Arches, mulberry and washi paper with fimo and thread, 26 x 45 x 30cm.



Nicola Hooper, *Weapons of Mass Destruction I*, 2015.
Hand-coloured lithograph, 60 x 60 x 2.2cm.



Nicola Hooper, *Weapons of Mass Destruction II*, 2015.
Hand-coloured lithograph, 60 x 60 x 2.2cm.



Nicola Hooper, *Run Rattus Rattus Run*, 2019. Single-channel video installation on wall contained in 2 x 2m frame. Print and digital animation, HD video with stereo sound, continuous loop digital animation. Animation by Dr Zeynep Akcay, Griffith Film School. Created using hand-coloured lithographs by Nicola Hooper.



Nicola Hooper, *Ixodes Canis* (tick/dog), 2018. 3D-printed tick combined with dog fur and glass specimen dome, 27 x 14.3cm diameter.



Nicola Hooper, *Tabanidae Leporidae* (horse fly/rabbit), 2018. 3D-printed fly combined with rabbit fur and glass specimen dome, 27 x 14.3cm diameter.



Nicola Hooper, *Xenopsylla Rattus* (flea/rat), 2018. 3D-printed flea combined with rodent fur and glass specimen dome, 27 x 14.3cm diameter.



Nicola Hooper, *Culicidae Macropus* (mosquito/kangaroo), 2018. 3D-printed mosquito combined with kangaroo fur and glass specimen dome, 27 x 14.3cm diameter.

Original 3D design patterns *Flea*, *Mosquito*, *Dog Tick* by Scintilla and *Fly* by Yahoo-JAPAN is licensed under the Creative Commons - attribution - non-commercial license.

ZOONOSSES TOUR

Gympie Regional Gallery, QLD
Coalface Art Gallery, Moranbah, QLD
Gladstone Regional Art Gallery & Museum, QLD
Bundaberg Regional Art Gallery, QLD
Grafton Regional Gallery, NSW
Manning Regional Art Gallery, Taree, NSW
Bayside Gallery, Brighton, VIC
Devonport Regional Gallery, TAS
Signal Point Gallery, Goolwa, SA
Hurstville Museum & Gallery, NSW
Gosford Regional Gallery, NSW
Warwick Art Gallery, QLD

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I wish to acknowledge the support and assistance of my family, friends and menagerie, along with my doctoral supervisors Dr Jess Berry and Dr Glen Skien, in developing the research and work for this exhibition. I would also like to thank Dr Tim Mosely and Griffith Print Studio, along with Michael Wardell and the team from Logan Art Gallery, Logan City Council and Museums & Galleries Queensland. With Special thanks to Dr Zeynep Akcay, Andrea Higgins, Prue McComish, and lastly, to Robyn Daw for her unwavering support of 'Logan artists'.

For more about the
artist and exhibition



ZOONOSSES is a touring exhibition of works by Dr Nicola Hooper presented by Logan Art Gallery, Logan City Council, in partnership with Museums & Galleries Queensland. This project has been assisted by the Australian Government's Visions of Australia program, and is supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland, part of the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy. Proudly sponsored by Haymes Paint.

LIST OF WORKS

Nicola Hooper, *The Giant Horse Fly*, 2018. Digital print of hand-coloured lithograph on rubber, fishing line, suspension springs and printed Perspex wings, 120 x 100cm.

Nicola Hooper, *The Giant Tick*, 2018. Digital print of hand-coloured lithograph on rubber, fishing line and suspension springs, 100 x 100 x 2.5cm.

Nicola Hooper, *The Giant Mosquito*, 2017. Digital print of hand-coloured lithograph on rubber, fishing line, suspension springs and printed Perspex wings, 300 x 80cm.

Nicola Hooper, *The Giant Flea*, 2017. Digital print of hand-coloured lithograph on rubber, fishing line and suspension springs, 130 x 140 x 2.5cm.

Nicola Hooper, *Ode to Morris Zoonotic Wallpaper*, 2017. Digital print of hand-coloured lithograph, size variable.

Nicola Hooper, *Ross River Zoonotic Wallpaper*, 2018. Digital print of hand-coloured lithograph, size variable.

Nicola Hooper, *Tularaemia Zoonotic Wallpaper*, 2018. Digital print of hand-coloured lithograph, size variable.

Nicola Hooper, *Lady Wilde's Toxoplasmosis Wallpaper*, 2019. Digital print of hand-coloured lithograph, size variable.

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Nicola Hooper, *Weapons of Mass Destruction II*, 2015. Hand-coloured lithograph, 60 x 60 x 2.2cm.

Nicola Hooper, *Puss in Boots*, 2018. Hand-coloured lithograph on Arches Aquarello paper, 75 x 65 x 5cm.

Nicola Hooper, *Rats and Fleas across the Tasman Sea*, 2018. Hand-coloured paper cut lithographs, 62.5 x 62.5 x 2.6cm.

Nicola Hooper, *Kiss, Scratch, Bite*, 2016. Hand-coloured lithograph, 78.1 x 73.6 x 3.1cm.

Nicola Hooper, *Kiss, Scratch, Bite Artist Book*, 2016. Digital print of hand-coloured lithograph with encaustic cover, 10.8 x 7.6 x 1cm.

Nicola Hooper, *Rats with Wings Diptych*, 2015. Hand-coloured lithograph, 115 x 115 x 5cm.

Nicola Hooper, *Rats with Wings Artist Book*, 2016. Digital print of hand-coloured lithograph with encaustic cover, 10.8 x 7 x 1cm.

Nicola Hooper, *James the Rat King Diptych*, 2016. Hand-coloured lithograph, 115 x 115 x 5cm.

Nicola Hooper, *James the Rat King Pop-Up Book*, 2019. Hand-coloured lithographic artist book, 13.5 x 35.5 x 3cm (folded), 30cm diameter.

Nicola Hooper, *Giardia Budgies*, 2016. Hand-coloured lithograph, 104.4 x 104.4 x 3cm.

Nicola Hooper, *WNV Crows Diptych*, 2016. Hand-coloured lithograph, 105 x 105 x 3cm.

Nicola Hooper, *The Apple and the Crook Crows Citronella Artist Book*, 2018. Digital print of hand-coloured lithograph with citronella encaustic cover, 10.8 x 7.6 x 1cm.

Nicola Hooper, *Dicky Ducks Diptych*, 2016. Hand-coloured lithograph, 104.8 x 104.8 x 3cm.

Nicola Hooper, *Ross @ the River Citronella Artist Book*, 2016. Two-colour combined ink and citronella oil lithograph with citronella encaustic cover, 21.2 x 16.8 x 1cm.

Nicola Hooper, *Murray @ the Valley Citronella Artist Book*, 2017. Hand-coloured lithograph printed with citronella oil with citronella encaustic cover, 25.9 x 13.3 x 2.2cm.

Nicola Hooper, *Sing-a-song-of Sixpence*, 2018. Hand-coloured lithographs on Arches, mulberry and washi paper with fimo and thread, 26 x 45 x 30cm.

Nicola Hooper, *Love Potion*, 2019. Hand-coloured lithograph, 79.4 x 62.9 x 5cm.

Nicola Hooper, *Nora's Fate*, 2019. Hand-coloured lithograph, 79.4 x 62.9 x 5cm.

Nicola Hooper, *Methodology*, 2019. Hand-coloured lithographs, paper cut and stitched together with red thread, 78.5 x 21.2 x 10.2cm.

Nicola Hooper, *Concerning Cats and Toxoplasmosis Artist Book*, 2021. Hand-coloured lithographic and digital print artist book, 21.5 x 21.5 x 2.5cm.

Nicola Hooper, *Little Peter Rabbit*, 2018. Hand-coloured lithograph, 114 x 86.5 x 4.7cm.

Nicola Hooper, *Peter Rabbit and Tularaemia Artist Book*, 2019. Digital print of hand-coloured lithograph with encaustic cover, 10.8 x 7.8 x 1cm.

Nicola Hooper, *Rat 'O' Rat*, 2022. Porcelain, waxed wash paper, rusted metal, timber and horse hair, 56 x 22 x 30cm (body), 30 x 16 x 1.5cm (tail).

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Nicola Hooper, *Peter's Horse Fly*, 2018. Watercolour drawing, 25 x 25 x 5cm.

Nicola Hooper, *Ixodes Canis (tick/dog)*, 2018. 3D-printed tick combined with dog fur and glass specimen dome, 27 x 14.3cm diameter.

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Nicola Hooper, *Xenopsylla Rattus (flea/rat)*, 2018. 3D-printed flea combined with rodent fur and glass specimen dome, 27 x 14.3cm diameter.

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