



Reflections of a Philosophical Voyager



NICOLAS BAUDIN

Letter to Philip Gidley King

24 DECEMBER 1802



EDITED AND TRANSLATED
BY JEAN FORNASIERO



Purchased from the Friends of the State Library of South Australia by the NSW Guild of Craft Bookbinders, 25 copies of the special edition (18 of which form this exhibition) have had a cartoon by Australian cartoonist Bruce Petty added. The cartoon captures the interaction between French commander Nicolas Baudin and the Governor Philip Gidley King – a depiction of land grabbing and letter writing within a world view. The cartoon was provided by Peter Boehm who knew Bruce personally and introduced him to Baudin's letter to King. On seeing Bruce's response Peter wanted the cartoon included.



The books were exhibited at the following venues:
Sutton Village Gallery 3 to 20 August 2023
Corner Gallery, Stanmore, Sydney 29 November to 5 December 2023

E-catalogue produced by
New South Wales Guild of Craft Bookbinders 2023
The electronic catalogue is available.



SPONSORSHIP
NSW Guild of Craft Bookbinders
Canberra Craft Bookbinders' Guild
Hilary Wardhaugh PHOTOGRAPHY
Avril Makula CATALOGUE DESIGN
Monica Oppen
Joy Tonkin





Introduction

AUSTRALIA'S LONG-TERM ANGLOCENTRIC historical narrative masks a more complex European involvement with, and exploration of, the Southern Oceans. Slowly more interest is being taken in the voyages of the French. Language is less of an excuse for the lack of interest than the British Empire's long running conflict with their neighbour across the channel and a broader desire to dominate the world history. Yet the French 'voyages de découvertes aux Terres Australes', with their focus on anthropology and science, enriched the European view of the world hugely.

Nicolas Baudin's letter to Governor King at the centre of this exhibition of design bindings is one small example of English and French rivalry and difference in focus. Nicolas Baudin, his ships and crew, had been in the colony of Sydney guests of Governor King before sailing on south, through what was to become known as Bass Strait to King Island. After his departure there was panic and consternation at the French commander's intentions. Hastily and with poor preparation an armed ship was sent in pursuit. In a personal letter to 'his friend' King, Baudin expresses his disappointment. He goes further, questioning the colonial project, the impact on the natural environment and the dispossession of the indigenous peoples with whom he sympathises. The volume contains Baudin's letter in French and in translation, with introductory preface by Jean Fornasiero, published first in 2016, and again in 2021 for this special edition.

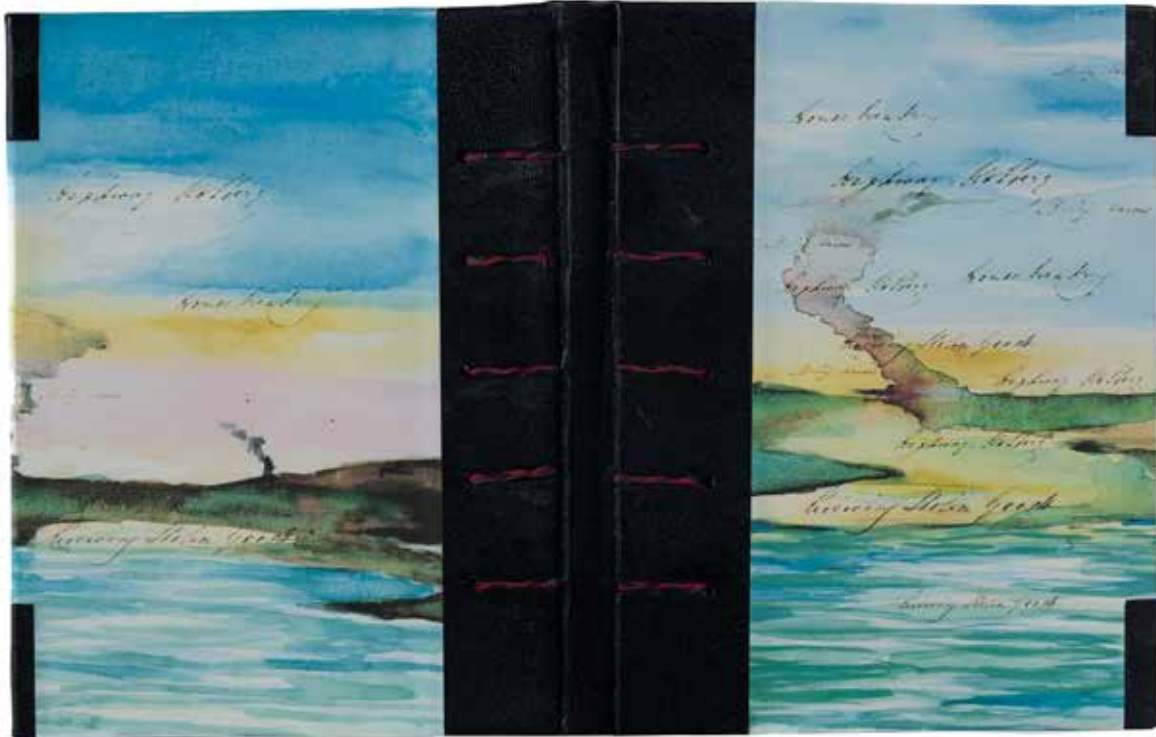
In this exhibition the binders respond to the text with complex interplays of land, ocean and Franco-British national rivalry. We would like to thank them all for their engagement.

Monica Oppen
Sydney 2023



Nicholas Beckett

NSW



A variation of a half leather binding with black Morocco leather and sewn with plaited cords which are exposed onto the boards. Sewn headbands. Endpapers and boards are an original watercolour with images that incorporate convict records of the 'America', a ship transporting female convicts to Tasmania.

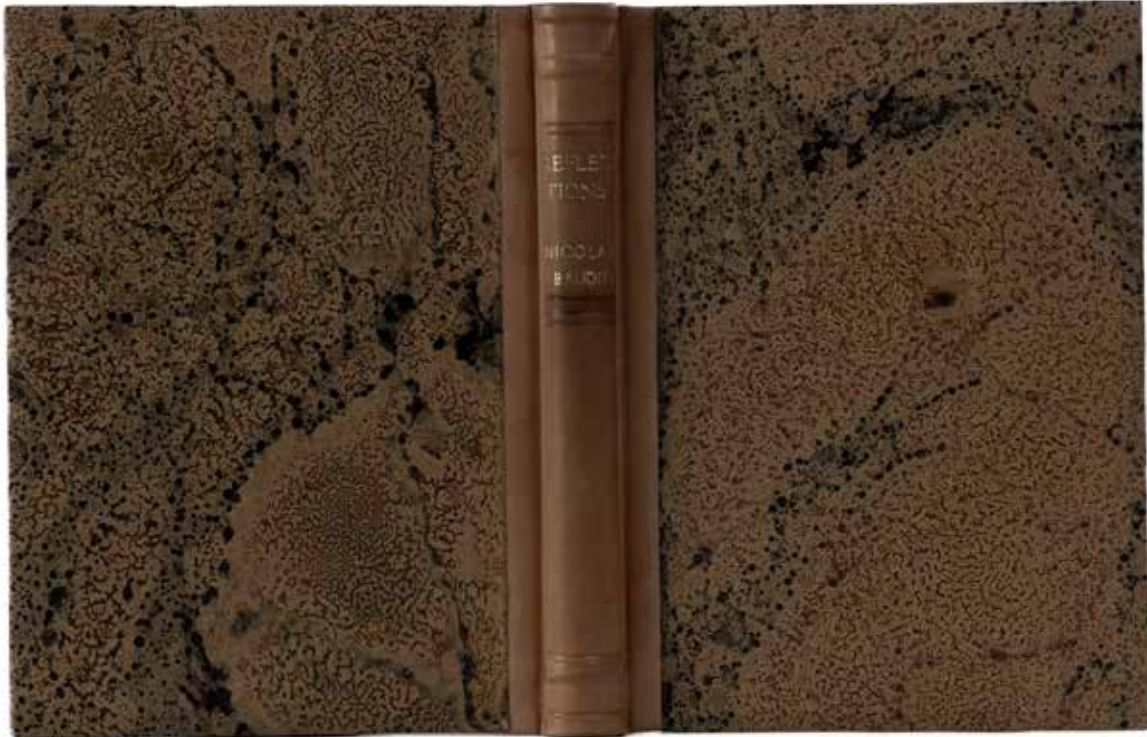
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Dario Castello

ACT



To conflate the old and the new. A historical document bound today. A leather spine, raised bands and gold title point to a past age, and the integrated continuous single sheet endpaper and board covering reflect modern innovation. The materials are eclectic. Spine and headbands from kangaroo. Endpaper from Florence. An original watercolour print by Cecile Galiazzo is included as a frontispiece – a Pope cartoon appended to the text.

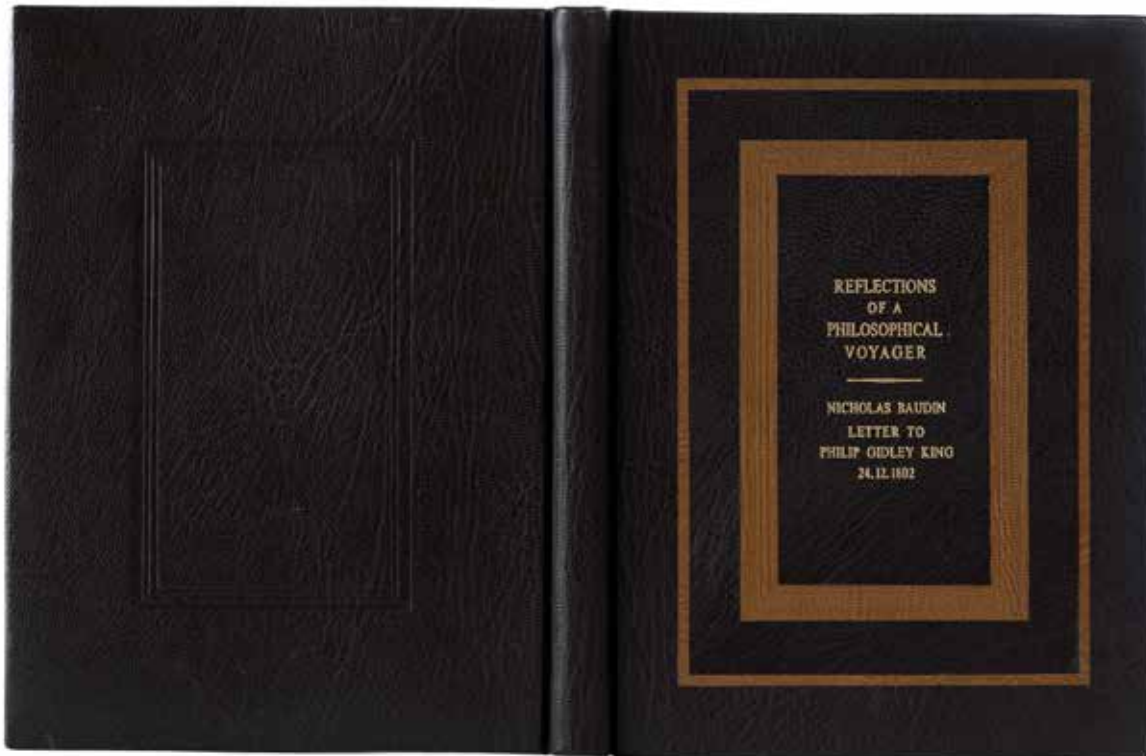
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Ted Chapman

NSW



Case bound binding in chocolate oasis goatskin leather with oasis inlays.
Blind blocking and genuine gold blocking of title.

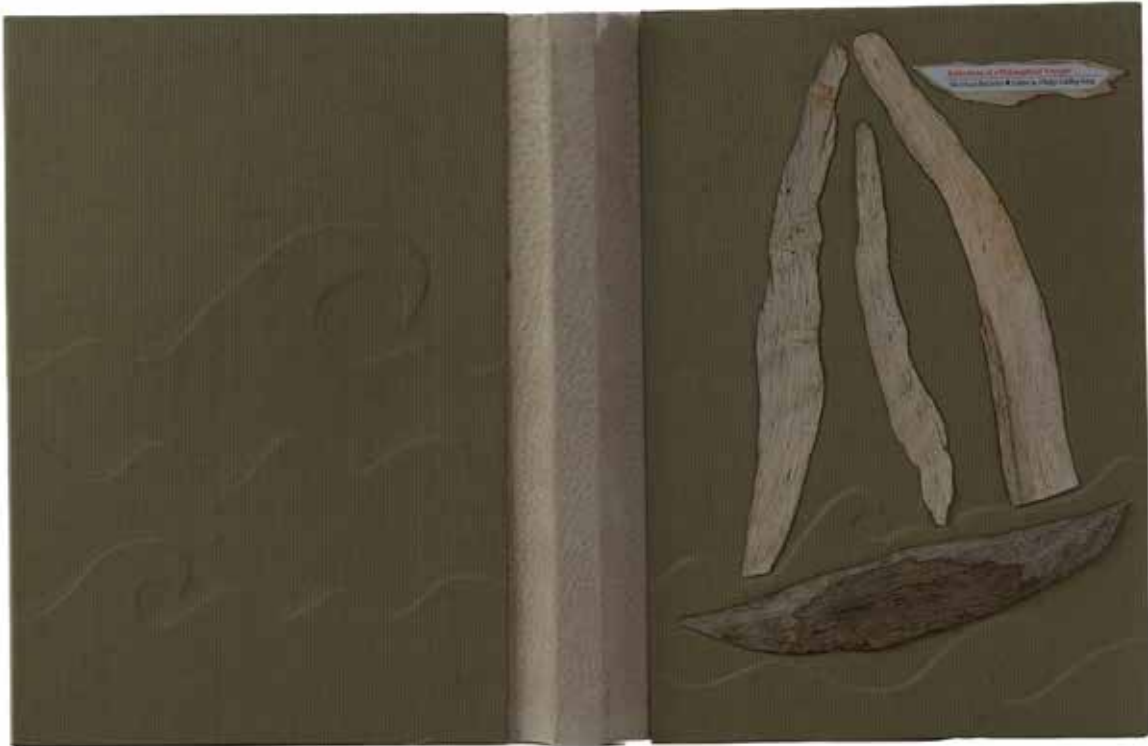
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Edith Csontos

NSW



Sewn board binding with leather spine, Cockerell marbled endpapers. Multi-layered boards covered with book cloth, decorated with gumtree bark. The cover design is inspired by the image of a ship in rough waters.

NFS





James Elwing

NSW



A half leather binding in red and blue Niger goatskin and decorative papers, contrasting rapacious competitive colonialism with Baudin's Enlightenment personal opinions. The text is sewn onto three cords and supported kettle stitches, attached via extended linen spine lining, as a tongue into split boards. Spine leather is loose. Petty folio tissue guards are a cyanotype fancy on aged image offsetting.

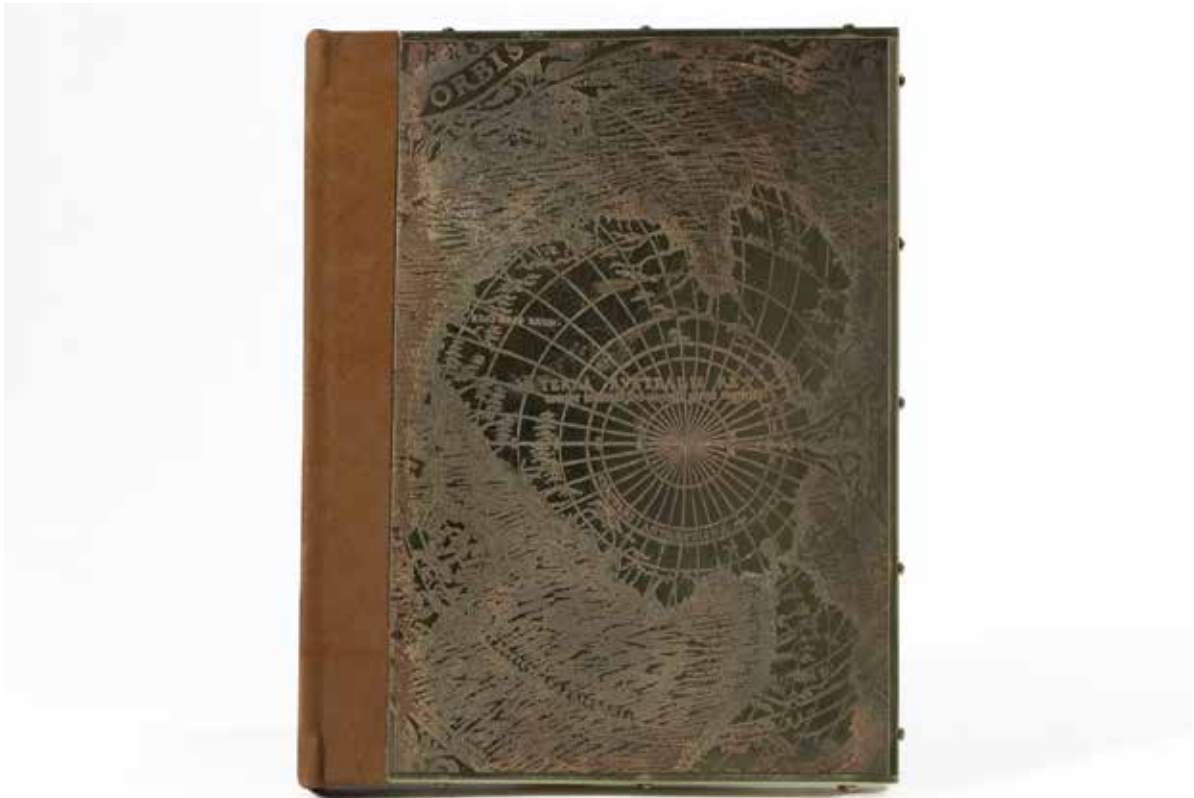
\$2200





Simon Grimes

NSW



Baudin wrote his letter 270 years after Orontius Finaeus published his world map which showed Terra Australia, the first printed depiction of Antarctica. 170 years after Baudin, the Carl Sagan inspired plaque was launched into stellar interspace on Pioneer 10. Bridging the imaginary and the unknown, Baudin's letter is bound between these two images.

Case binding with etched brass boards and leather spine.

\$800





Jill Gurney

NSW



Baudin's Christmas 1802 voice evolved haltingly slowly. Comments, marginalia, fantasy-coloured landscapes appeared on the leaves. A sprinkled goatskin leather spine covers a volume sewn onto five cords. All are laced onto the boards emerging as part of the design, moving towards 'what' destination, amid collaged leather scraps and pieces of old oil marbled kraft paper. Box construction by James Elwing.

\$2200





Chris Johnson

ACT



One volume with colours separating the four parts: introduction, English text, French, cartoon. Simplified binding style on Tyvek tapes, hand-marbled endpapers by Joan Ajala. Covered in canvas and mixed black, blues, and greens ox and goat leathers. The design reflects the sea voyages, ships' sails, and the islands in contention.

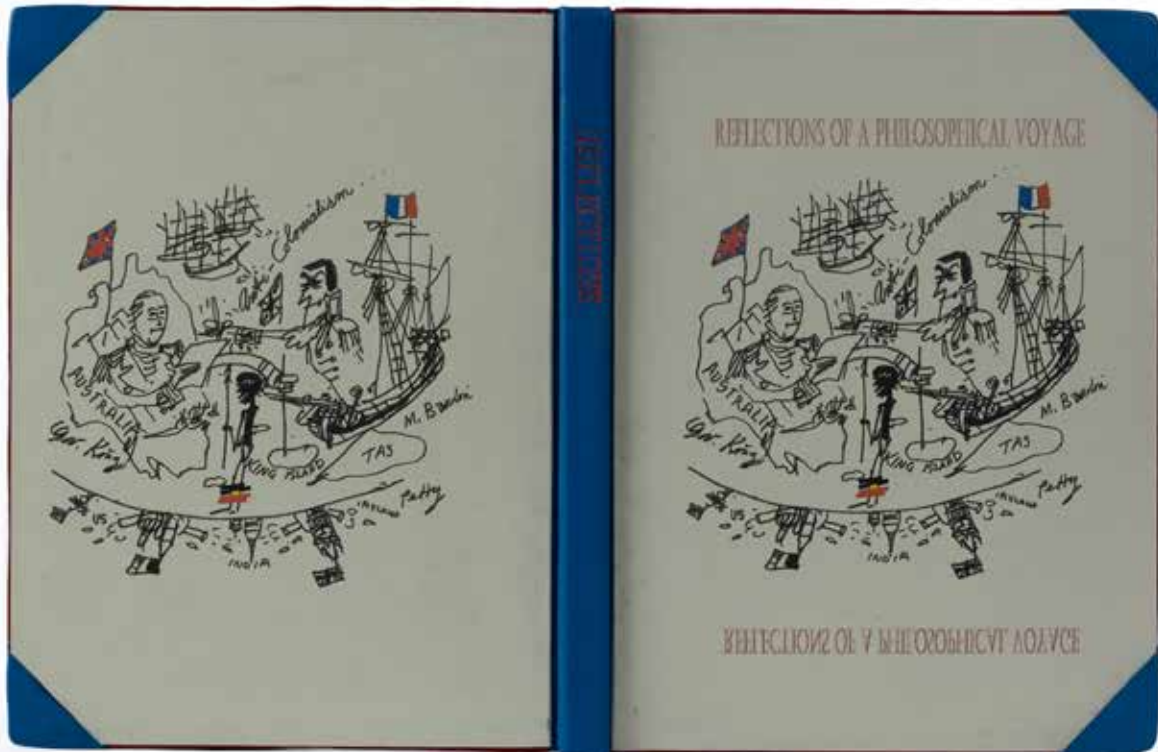
NFS





Ken McKeon

QLD



A Bradel binding with reinforced edges and corners in leather. Edge colouring reflects the French flag on top, the converse British flag on tail, and incorporating the 'forgotten voice' in the aboriginal owners colours on the fore-edge. The decorative cover is taken from the lone illustration in the text and highlighting the three combatants with flag colouring.

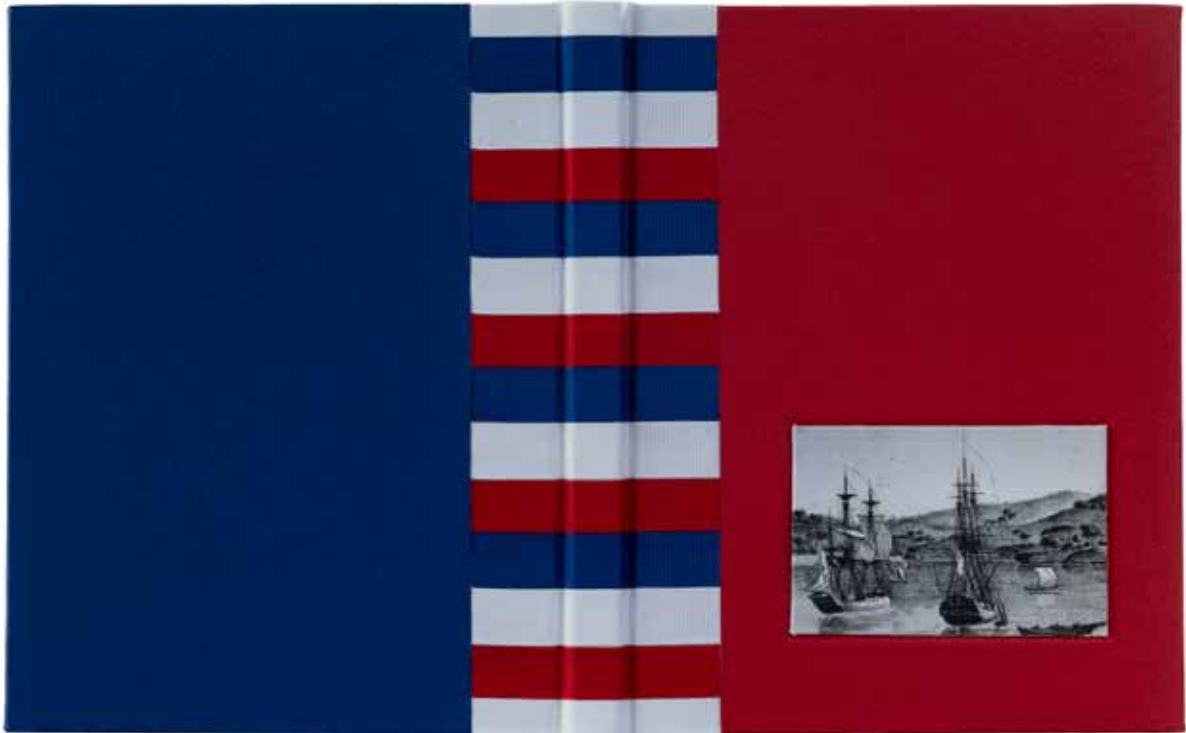
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Avril Makula

NSW



Flat back case binding, double blue and red Canson endpapers, tricolour spine constructed from grosgrain ribbons on rice paper, buckram on front and rear. The slightly raised inset is printed on canvas-like paper in reference to the sails of Baudin's ship.

NFS





Monica Oppen

NSW



Modified simplified binding with bookcloth and brown calf suede. Original handmade paste papers by the binder.
Housed in a brown leather 'pocket'.

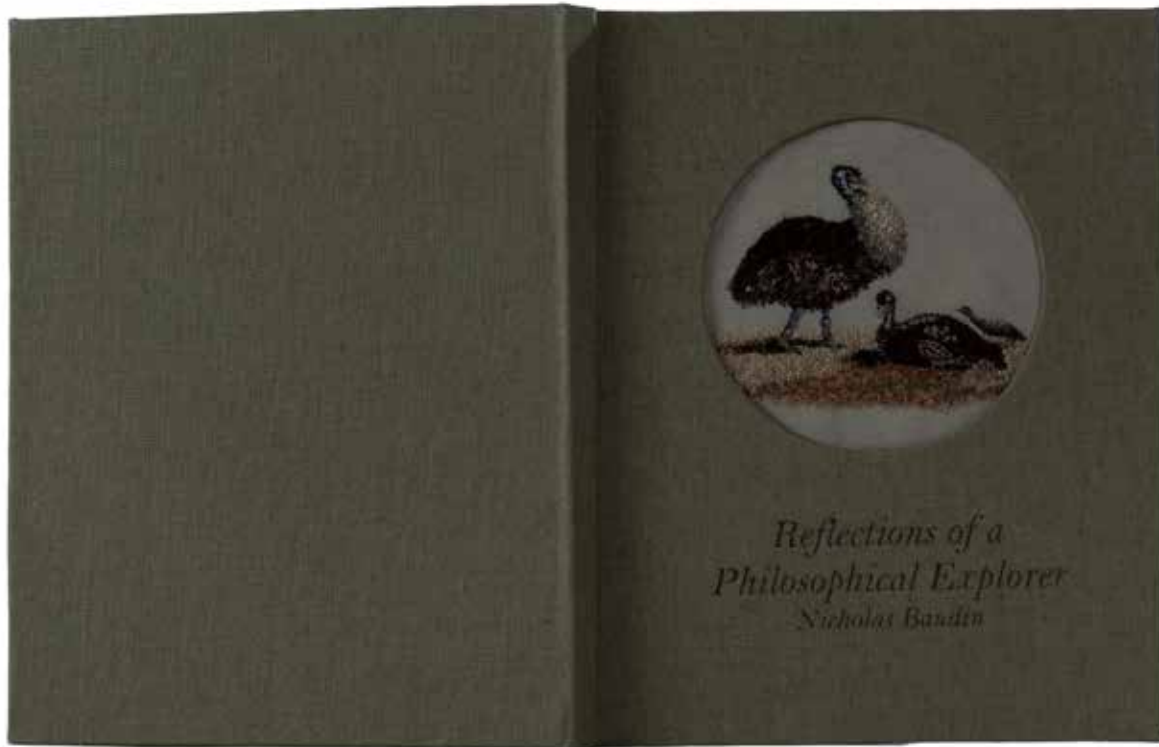
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Sharon Peoples

ACT



Case binding with decorations of hand embroidery. Housed in a clamshell box with hand embroidery. Baudin's expedition included Francois Peron who documented the only detailed description of the life history of the birds of the island. Artist Charles Alexandre Lesueur made the only visual record of the sub-species of the King Island emu dwarf. The dwarf Kings Island emu was extinct a year after Baudin's visit.

\$1200





Fred Pohlmann

QLD



Bradel binding. Emu leather and white linen on the boards with a spine of blue Oasis leather. Multi coloured edges of the textblock in acrylic. Title in gold. Images of English and French flags printed by Bernard Milford.

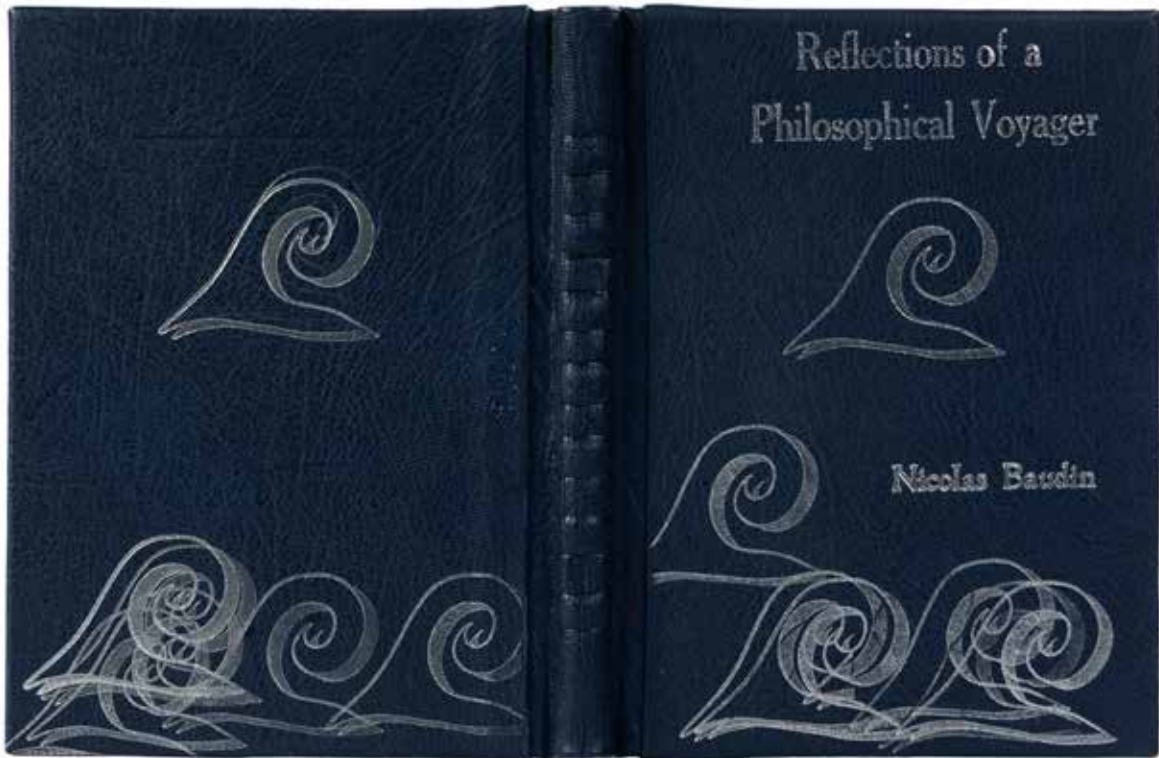
\$1800





Lee Rolph

SA



Case binding with boards covered in Indigo Nigerian goatskin with silver embossing. Unique hand-made endpapers from Vintage Paper Co, Orkney Isles, UK. Blue Chromo covered presentation box.

\$500





Barbara Schmelzer

NSW



Open joint binding covered in coloured Japanese paper.
The design represents an abstract mixture of the French and British flags.
It is referencing the strained relationship between the countries following
Baudin's visit to Sydney and subsequently sailing to Tasmania.

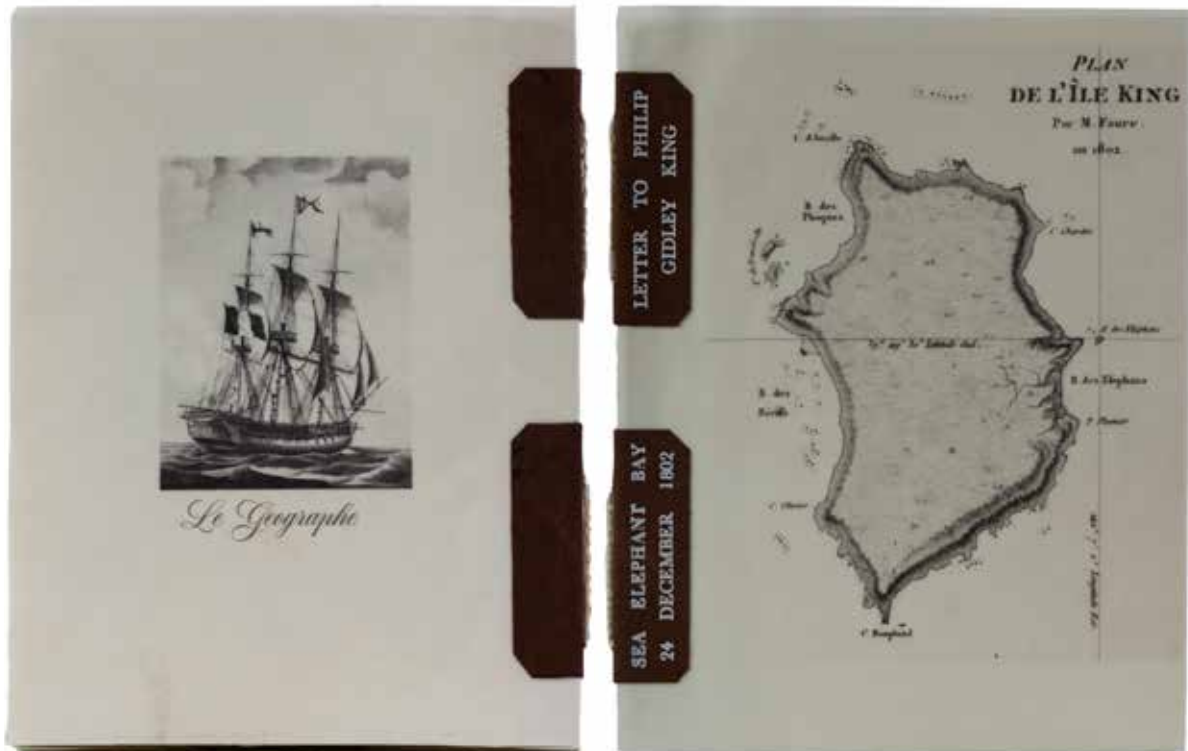
\$1800





Margaret Scott

NSW



The printed vellum cover is attached to the sewn textblock by tacking thongs through eight sections, the vellum and leather printed overbands.

The thongs were twisted around each other, the damp vellum acting as glue. Part of the original letter, photographs of Baudin and King were added to the text. The book is protected by a wraparound cover and canvas mailbag.

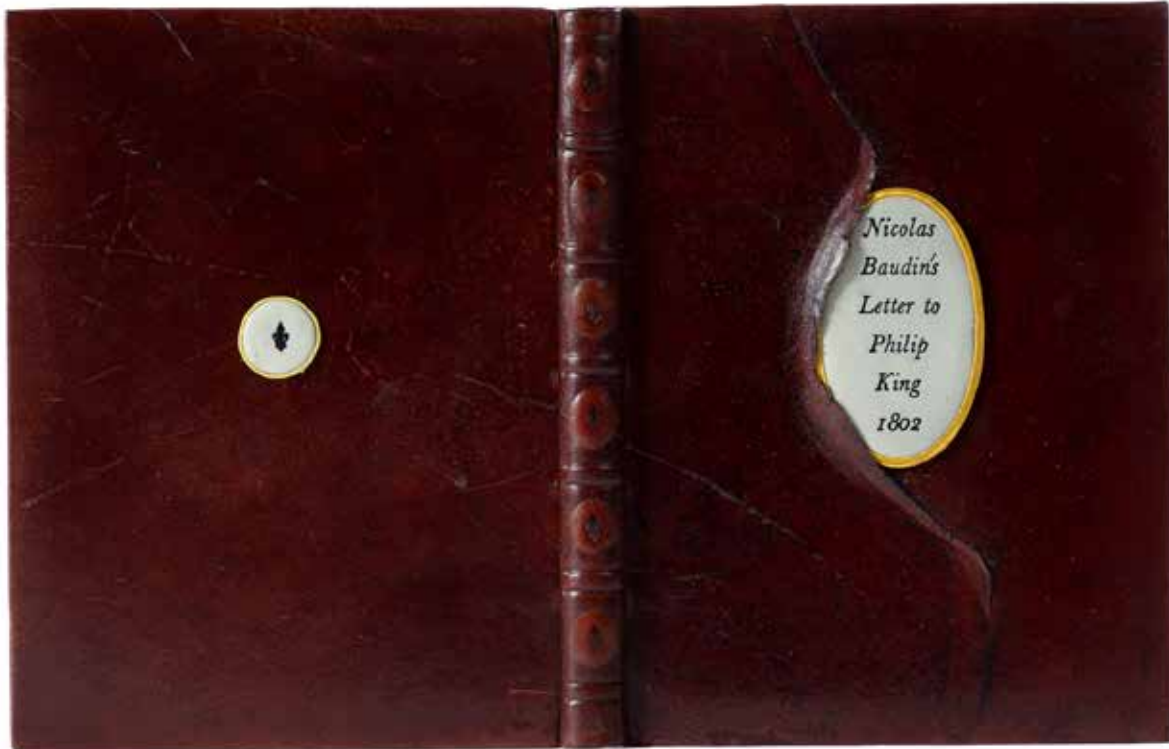
\$800





John Tonkin

ACT



French tradition binding style. Conditions were basic and relationships were a little bit strained in 1802 thus the book is covered in well-marked old man fighting kangaroo. Leather headbands in tricolour blue, white, red. Original marbled end papers by Jemma Lewis, UK.

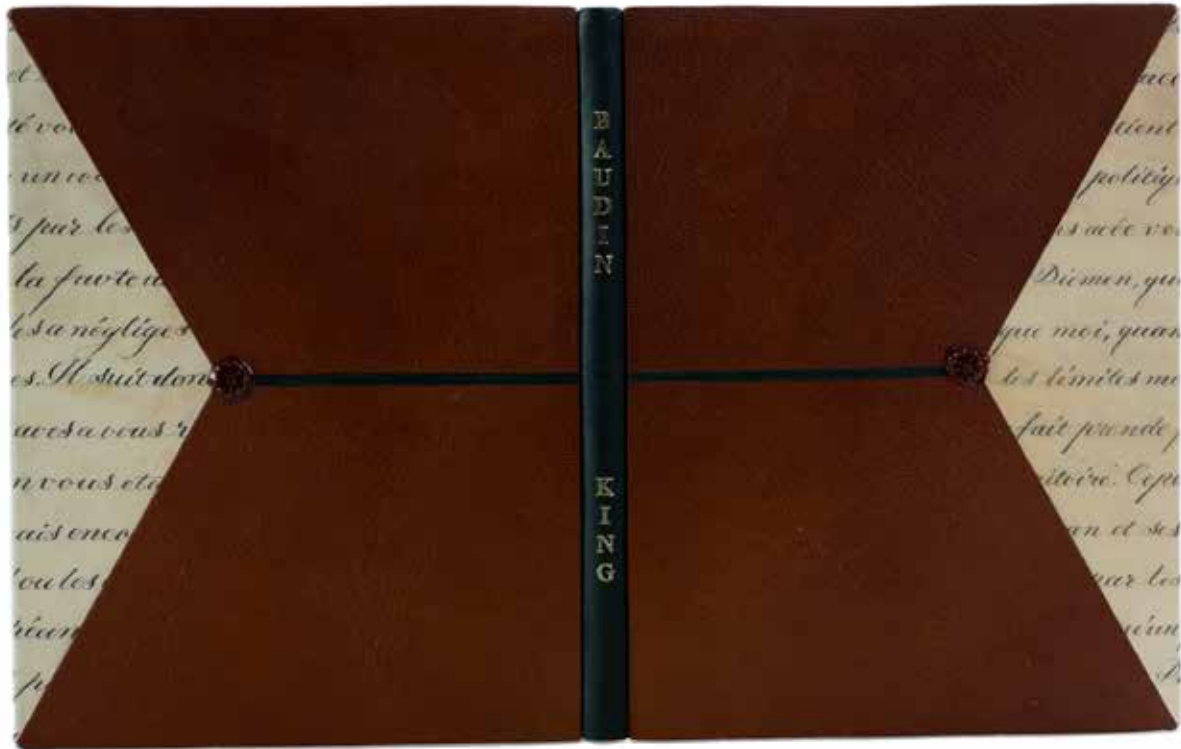
\$900





Joy Tonkin

ACT



Simplified binding. Brown oasis on the boards with an inlay of vellum with a section of Baudin's letter in French inscribed by Australian calligrapher, Gemma Black. Green calf spine. Wax seal. Housed in a Japanese cloth covered presentation box with vellum onlay.

\$1500



