



Photographer: Angela Rivas

WORDS Lindy Schneider in conversation with Elly Laughton | PHOTOGRAPHY Supplied

Meet Our Contributors

AN INTERVIEW WITH LINDY SCHNEIDER

Lindy Schneider is one of our well-known and much-loved contributors who has been working with Yarra Valley and Ranges magazine for many, many years. A highly respected and talented public speaker, Lindy is passionately involved with our regional community on many levels. Her words have been published widely; she is a natural story-teller and intuitive creative, whilst having a background that informs her intelligence and understanding of the commercial needs of all her clients. We love working with Lindy – she's hardworking, super reliable, unique in her style and fun to be with. We are privileged to have her as part of the team. Elly Laughton asked her about her practice.

Can you tell us a little about yourself and how you came to be a writer?

Writing is the one thing that has been a constant in my life. From the moment I published my first book at age eight for my primary school library, it's been part of my bones. But it took me until I was 40 to really embrace my writing – I went back to school and did a diploma and then a post grad and that was the beginning of me owning my writerly Self.

In terms of genre, I love creative non-fiction and biography. I am interested in telling real stories, especially the untold stories of women.

How did your career begin and evolve?

I am blessed to be able to make a living out of what I love to do. It's taken a few careers – marketing manager, art and equine therapist, teacher, mother – to find my groove but every career has led to, and informed the next, and enriched what I can offer. I have been self employed and freelanced for the past twenty years. It gives me a sense of much needed freedom and lets me become inspired and immersed in project work.

I love that writing is as much about the researching as it is getting words on the page. When I start a piece, it feels like I am attempting a complex puzzle but each piece unlocks the next. That's satisfying.





What brought you to the Yarra Valley?

I relocated from St Kilda yearning for a life in nature. It was a big transition, much bigger than I anticipated, as I soon found myself single and finding my own path. But once I found my way into the community in Warburton, the valley wrapped her arms around me and helped me heal and recreate myself. Part of that process was finally calling myself a writer.

What is your favourite part about living in our region?

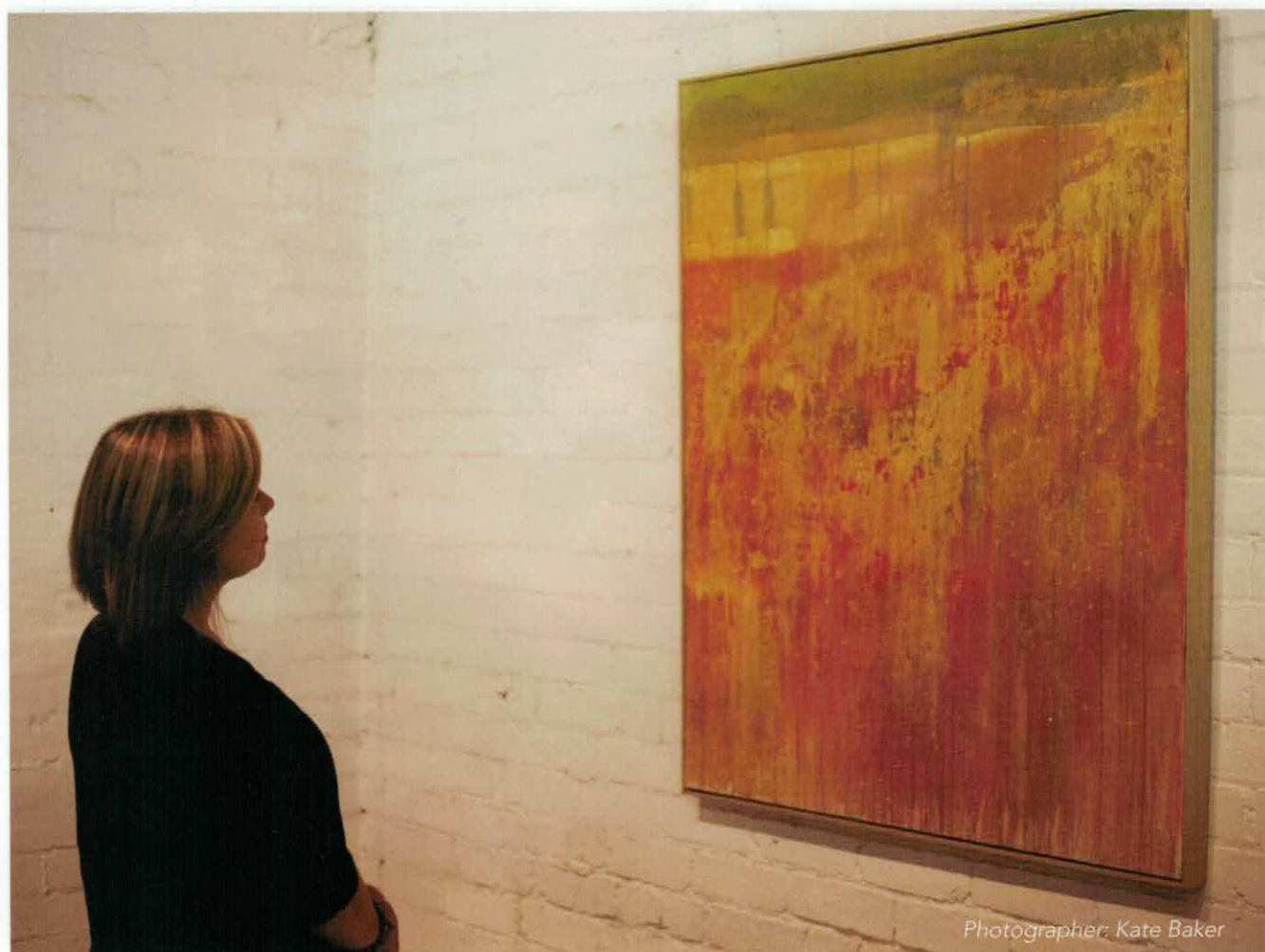
This year marks my 20th anniversary of living in the Yarra Valley. I've had a family here and love that I know the trails and tracks of the forests as intimately as the lines on my hand. Of course I love the food and wine, but living close to the Yarra River in real beauty, with a ring of mountains to protect us embeds me in a sense of home that is of the earth and the elements.

My writing life has taken me into the homes, the studios, the lives of many interesting local people, and I value my role as a storyteller of place.

What led you to writing From This Place-Inspiring Women artists of the Upper Yarra Valley?

This book was a heart call with my dear friend photographer Angela Rivas. I'm so proud of it as an artefact that brings the stories of 14 local women artists to life.

It was a learning curve to write and publish that book and a beautiful process to be part of because it had meaning and purpose that was in true alignment with my values.



Photographer: Kate Baker

What does a standard week look like for you?

I have one partner Tex, two teenagers Hannah and Jonah, two dogs, three cats and three horses and we are a special needs family, so life is full. This is about my own discipline and devotion to the craft, and something I am focussed on changing this year. I have too many books I've started writing and never finished!

What did COVID mean for you?

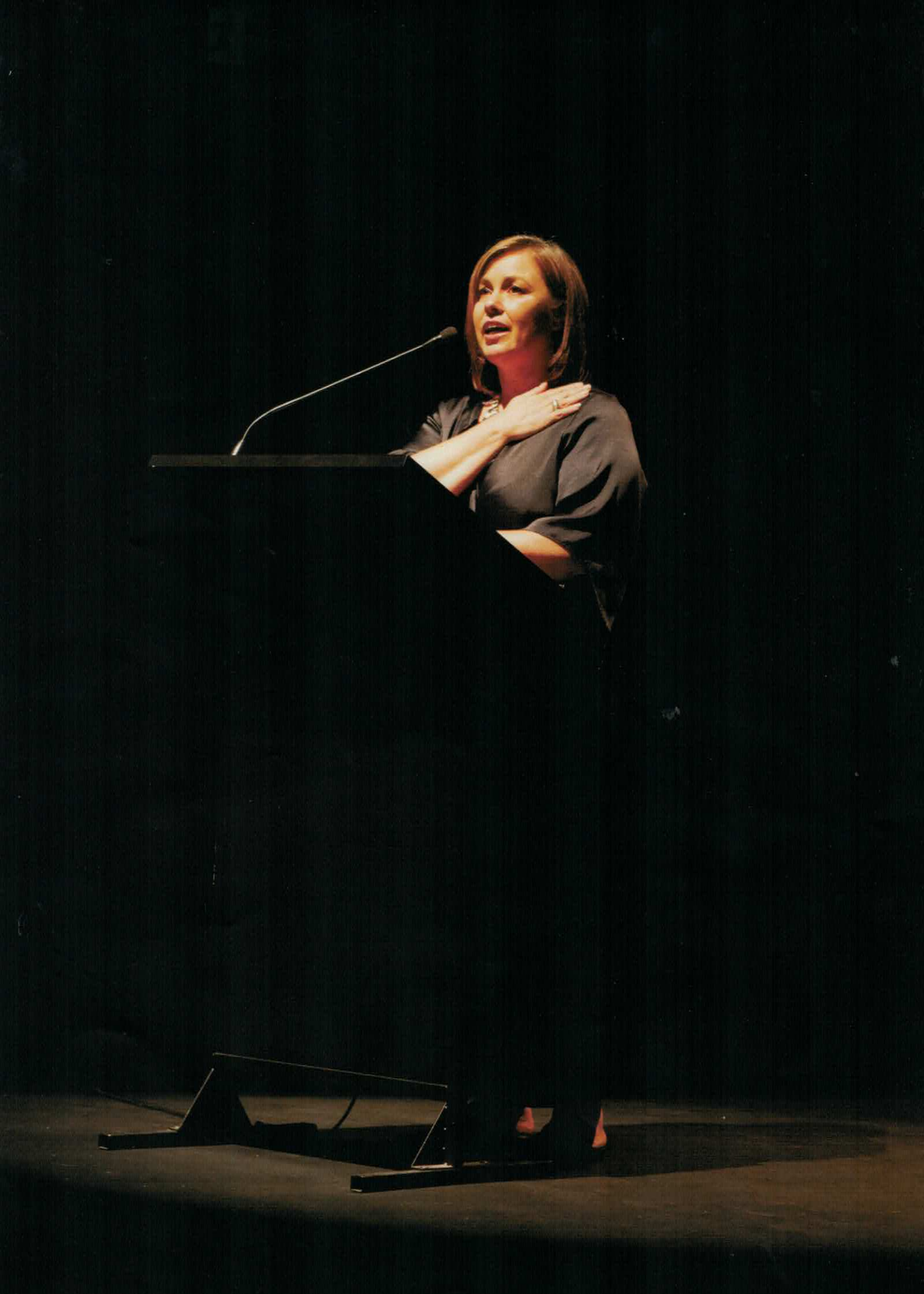
During the first lockdown I wrote daily humorous observations about lockdown life. But in second lockdown I didn't cope so well. While I continued to work (and was lucky that way) it was difficult to be creative and I found the extra demands of homeschooling and holding space for my family all I could manage.

"My weeks vary depending on the client work I have, but one thing is constant – I am always lamenting I don't have enough time for my own writing."



Photographer this page: Kate Baker







*“I often ask myself ‘If not now, then when?’
It’s a great question to burst through procrastination
and makes me feel courageous...”*

What’s the most important lesson you’ve learnt throughout your career?

I often ask myself ‘If not now, then when?’ It’s a great question to burst through procrastination and makes me feel courageous when I have doubts. I’ve also learnt to embrace a patchwork style career full of many different threads.

What project are you working on at the moment?

I always have a magazine article or two on the go, and I’ve been writing exhibition panels for a project about women in the Yarra Ranges who have contributed to our community [see page 19 for more details]. I have a biography commission and a range of clients that I create ongoing content for, such as blogs, website content and communication pieces. I’m also relaunching a series of ‘writing in nature’ programs where people can explore writing as a healing practice. It’s varied and all part of being a versatile writer.

Where do you pull your inspiration from for your work?

Nature, art, horses, cinema. the river, reading – inspiration is wherever you are. I feel a personal mission in writing the stories of women so those opportunities are always inspiring. Words fascinate me – the way they come together to create meaning. The right word can change everything. ■

For more information, visit www.lindyschneider.com.au

