



Australian style that drew on and respected local culture. The following year, Jackson was invited by the prestigious Neiman Marcus store in Dallas to participate in its 'Australian Fortnight'. Honoured with a dedicated boutique space, Jackson was able to showcase her lavish taffeta and tulle gowns which had become a hallmark of her couture work. These had first appeared in her *Bush Couture Blossom* collection in 1983, one of which was the black silk taffeta and organza *Sturt's Desert Pea* evening gown with a décolleté of red pea blossoms and matching headpiece or necklace.

As Jackson's work became more widely known and sought after, she consciously kept her production and creative centre in Australia. In 1985, she reflected, 'Australia is an artist's paradise. For me it's an endless source of ideas and influences'.<sup>9</sup> Working from her studio in Sydney, Jackson remained very hands-on in her work, producing commercial and private orders and hand-produced fabric in small runs. As a sustainable creative model, this is still a path chosen today by independent fashion designers in Australia who wish to retain their creative integrity.

Following on from the Bicentennial celebrations in Australia in 1988, the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney organised the exhibition *Australian fashion: the contemporary art*, which was shown at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London in 1989. Fifty-two fashion innovators were showcased; Jackson was represented by *Rainbow opal outfit* created from a swirling printed fabric in riotous green, blue, red, pink, purple, yellow and orange.

Over the years, Jackson has continued to travel widely, feeding her creative curiosity. A visit to New Zealand led to the creation of works such as *Paua kimono*, 1984 (p. 18); iridescent multi-coloured arching lines handpainted by David McDiarmid onto a rich purple taffeta ground. In 1988, Jackson travelled



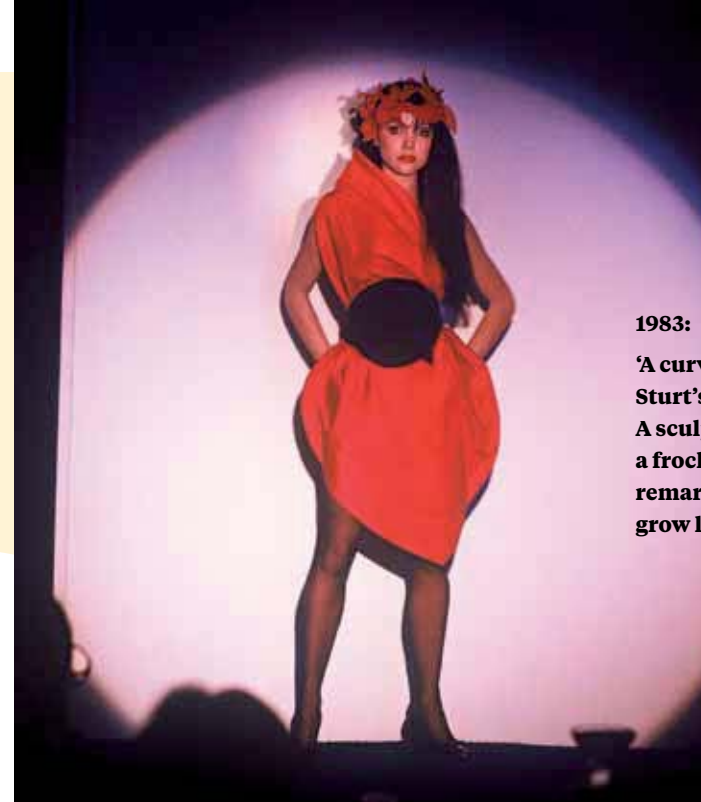
1982:

**'The romance of the swag: we were so excited to visit the artists at Utopia station near Alice Springs with their beautiful batik that I had to make my own swag, complete with bush-print cover. There is nothing quite like sleeping out under the desert stars.'**



1983:

**'Opal is a living treasure, a glittering rainbow in stone, the art of the universe reflected in a tiny gem. Of course, when I rediscovered opal in the 1970s, I had to travel to the source: Lightning Ridge, Yowah, Coober Pedy. Where do the colours come from? I wanted to see the remote mining towns and photograph the opal frock in the landscape. Black opal hand-painted with fluorescent colours is revealed in the ultra-violet light.'**



1983:

**'A curve of red taffeta and a Sturt's desert pea is born. A sculptural form that creates a frock reflecting these remarkable flowers, which grow like an exquisite carpet.'**

1984:

**'These were special times of inspiration, filled with meditative walks in the burnt bush at Blackheath in the Blue Mountains. Jenny was the bushfire woman, wrapped in metallic gold and copper taffeta. There was extraordinary beauty in the sooty ground and black trees waiting for regeneration.'**

