

**CAIRNS
INDIGENOUS
ART FAIR
2010**

Teacher Resource

This resource has been developed for teachers and other educators to help support learning in the visual arts and specifically to learn about the Indigenous artists represented at CIAF. It is consistent with the aims of Education Queensland to embed Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum.

A better understanding of, and respect for, Aboriginal cultures and Torres Strait Islander cultures develops an enriched appreciation of Australia's cultural heritage, and can lead to reconciliation. This is essential to the maturity of Australia as a nation and fundamental to the development of an Australian identity.

<http://education.qld.gov.au/schools/indigenous/>

INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES IN THE CURRICULUM

The **early** years of education are a particularly important time for children to build strong foundations in learning and relationships with others. In the early years, children learn about the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. They engage with a variety of stories, languages, beliefs and cultural practices of Australia's Indigenous peoples.

In the **middle** phase of schooling, students develop an understanding of the perspectives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and how these are influenced by personal experiences, cultural backgrounds and knowledge. This understanding helps students gain a better appreciation of Australian history and contemporary issues.

In the **senior** phase, learners gain an awareness of the contributions of Indigenous Australians at local, regional, national and global levels. They engage with a variety of cultural protocols when working with Indigenous communities within their local area and in the sourcing of Indigenous knowledges. This helps them develop a greater understanding of their own country of origin and of the cultural, social and political beliefs that influence Australian identity and society.

<http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/577.html>

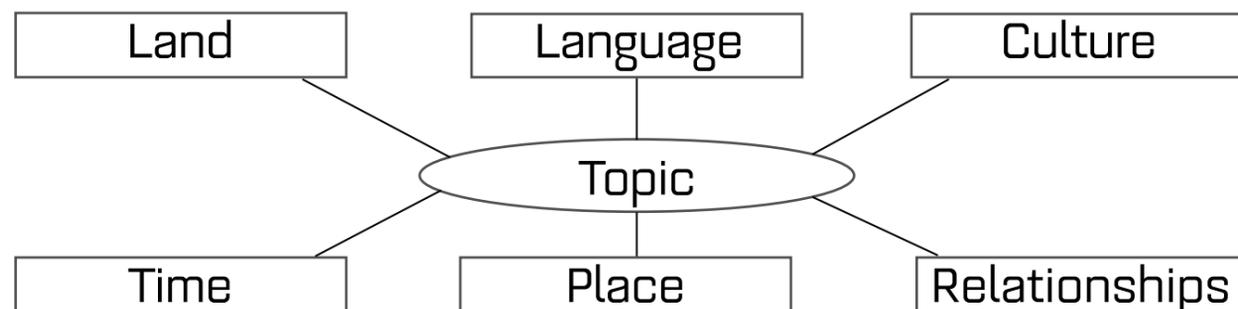
DR ERNIE GRANT'S FRAMEWORK

One very useful method to work on embedding indigenous perspectives in the curriculum is *My Land My Tracks: A framework for the holistic approach to indigenous studies*, developed by Dr Ernie Grant, Djirabal/Djirabal Elder and statewide cultural Research Officer, and published by the Innisfail and District Education Centre. According to Dr Grant, "Indigenous communities have a holistic view of their world which incorporates the vital link between Land, Language and Culture."

This framework uses this holistic approach and can be a useful strategy for teachers and students to gain a deeper understanding of Indigenous subject matter. According to Dr Grant, "Indigenous culture reflects an oral as opposed to a written tradition; it relies largely on observation; it is closely aligned with nature and the environment - with particular emphasis on cycles, patterns and the effect each has on the other; and of course it is based on an undeniable link between Land, Language and Culture."

When discussing or writing about Indigenous artists we include, as protocol, information about where the artist is from, who their people are and often the language group they belong to. This acknowledges the importance of this information and that it should be considered part of a holistic approach to discussing that artists work.

Dr Grant's framework uses the three elements of Land, Language and Culture and contextualises them into the domains of Time, Place, and Relationships. Linking these six components together can provide a flexible framework for organising and presenting a range of topics, including contemporary Indigenous art and artists.



Please click on the link for the full version of Dr Ernie Grant's framework, My Land My Tracks <http://education.qld.gov.au/schools/indigenous/educators/cultural-aware-localstory.html> or go to the Learning Place to register for the on-line Learning Place course.

CONTEXTS

There are a number of ways that we can discuss, view and make art. These are called **CONTEXTS**.

Contexts are frames of reference that inform the concepts and focuses, allowing intended and suggested meaning to evolve. These contexts include, but are not restricted to, historical, geographical, sociocultural, technological, philosophical, spiritual, political and personal perspectives.

Visual Art Syllabus 2007 © The State of Queensland (Queensland Studies Authority) 2007

Four contextual frames outlined here may assist teachers unfamiliar with a Visual Arts syllabus to form focus questions and discussion starting points.

CULTURAL - explore the cultural environment in which the artist has developed subject matter, style and technique.

Ways to open dialogue :

- Can you tell what time period or culture the piece belongs to?
- Describe what the work reveals about that culture or society.
- What style or movement does the work belong to?
- Describe stylistic influences. (Describe means to give a detailed account of the subject)

POST-MODERN - explore how the artist in contemporary times uses the non-conventional, the appropriated and the recontextualised to present art meaningful to a technologically sophisticated audience. Appropriated means borrowed; to take an image from one source and use it elsewhere with a new meaning. Recontextualised means given a new context or meaning by changing the surroundings of an image or word.

Questions to prompt observation and discussion:

- Have any images been appropriated and re-contextualized?
- Elaborate on the meaning the work has today, or in the context of recent news.

SUBJECTIVE - explore how personal, emotive and aesthetic qualities are examined, or how the artist has used the elements and principles of design to convey feelings, personal responses or imaginings to the audience.

Dialogue to tap aesthetic responses:

- Describe what you see in the artwork.
- Describe how you feel.
- What does it remind me of?
- What do others see in the piece?

STRUCTURAL - examine the form, media, techniques; how the work is composed using the elements and principles of design. From the structural viewpoint or frame we look at what, where, when, why and how an artwork is made.

Ways to prompt dialogue and discussion:

- Describe the elements and principles used in the composition.
- Describe the materials and techniques used in the creation of the work?
- Elaborate on how the materials and techniques contribute to the meaning of the work.

PROTOCOLS

Protocols outline the roles and relationships expected of teachers and students working with Indigenous communities and Indigenous knowledges within an educational context.

<http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/3035.html>

Other useful sites for protocols are;

State Library of Queensland

http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/64599/SLQ_-_Protocols_for_Indigenous_Collections.pdf

ATSILIRN - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library and Information Resource Network

http://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/atsilirn/protocols.atsilirn.asn.au/index6df0.html?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=0&Itemid=6

Reconciliation Network

<http://reconciliation.org.au/nsw/education-kit/protocols/>

How to use this Resource

The CIAF 2010 Teacher Resource defines three key phases for teachers - EARLY (P - 5), MIDDLE (6 - 9) and SENIOR (10 - 12). Each section is informed by and refers to Indigenous Perspectives in the Curriculum. The DISCUSSION, LOOKING and ACTIVITY are to be seen as starting points and are not exclusive or finite. Please adapt and extend these ideas with your students.

Mirdidingingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori



"Dibirdibi Country"
synthetic polymer paint on linen
121 x 91cms
Image courtesy of the Artist, Mornington Island Art, Queensland and Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne

Mirdidingingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori



Language: Kayardild
Country: Bentinck Is
Born: circa 1924

Sally Gabori is a senior woman of the Kaiadilt tribe from the South Wellesley Islands in the Southern Gulf of Carpentaria, Queensland. She speaks the Kayardild language. Her tribal name is Mirdidingingathi Juwarnda. Juwarnda means 'dolphin', which is her totemic sign, and Mirdidingingathi means 'born at Mirdidingki', in her country on the south side of Bentinck Island.

She was born around 1924 and lived a completely traditional life, with practically no contact with non-Kaiadilt people, fishing and gathering shellfish and vegetable foods and maintaining the stone fish walls around the shores of Bentinck Island.

This changed in the early 1940s when missionaries transported the entire Kaiadilt population from their tribal lands to the mission on Mornington Island. She then lived on Mornington until the late 1980s when the Kaiadilt began to re-establish themselves on their ancestral lands, building a number of outstations on Bentinck Island.

Mother and grandmother to a large family, and the living repository of a wealth of tribal lore, she now lives on Mornington Island. Throughout her life she has been an accomplished producer of traditional handicrafts made from bush products such as pandanus fibres and hibiscus bark woven into string.

Nicholas Rollo David Evans, for Sally Gabori

<http://www.morningtonisland.com.au/index.php?id=1>

After a lifetime of weaving and producing fibre craft, Gabori, aged in her early eighties, took up painting and had her first exhibition in 2005.

Gabori's work reflects the intimate places of her homeland. We can see the rich, vibrant colours of the tropics and the sea that she is so closely connected to. With her expressive brushstrokes, tactile layering of paint and expert use of colour, her work is a glorious celebration and exploration of her country, life and memories.

"Gabori's paintings have been acclaimed for their articulation of country, although her technical skill is considered equally important. Her paintings have a colourful presence, with fluid brush strokes overlaying solid masses of colour that represent the land, sea and sky. Her brush strokes and colour combinations bring movement and texture to the flat plane of the canvas, representing and replicating the life that surrounds the artist."

Carly Lane <http://www.artgallery.wa.gov.au/index.asp>

Sally Gabori's application of paint, in various states of drying, creates striking and interesting clashes of colour and transition and, although produced quickly, her works are carefully planned. Her paintings convey a combination of vitality, immediacy and supreme confidence. The working of paints into and over each other at different stages of the drying process has created differing visual effects — colour fields meet, with wet paints blending together to create soft transitions; and painting over dry sections has created harder and bolder transitions.

(Bruce McLean, 'Sally Gabori: Intimate country', in *Contemporary Australia: Optimism [exhibition catalogue]*, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, 2008, pp.94-).7

EARLY

DISCUSSION

What colours can you see in Sally Gabori's painting? Which colour do you like most? Why?

LOOKING

Sally Gabori's painting is called "Dibirdibi Country". What land forms can you see in this painting?

ACTIVITY

Create a painting using only three colours.

MIDDLE

DISCUSSION

Do you think the colours have been selected carefully or do you think it is random? Why?

LOOKING

What type of country do you think this represents?

ACTIVITY

Research Mornington Island Art and the Indigenous peoples' connection to their land and stories related to Country.

SENIOR

DISCUSSION

Is Gabori concerned with the concept of abstraction or is her work a reflection of other concerns?

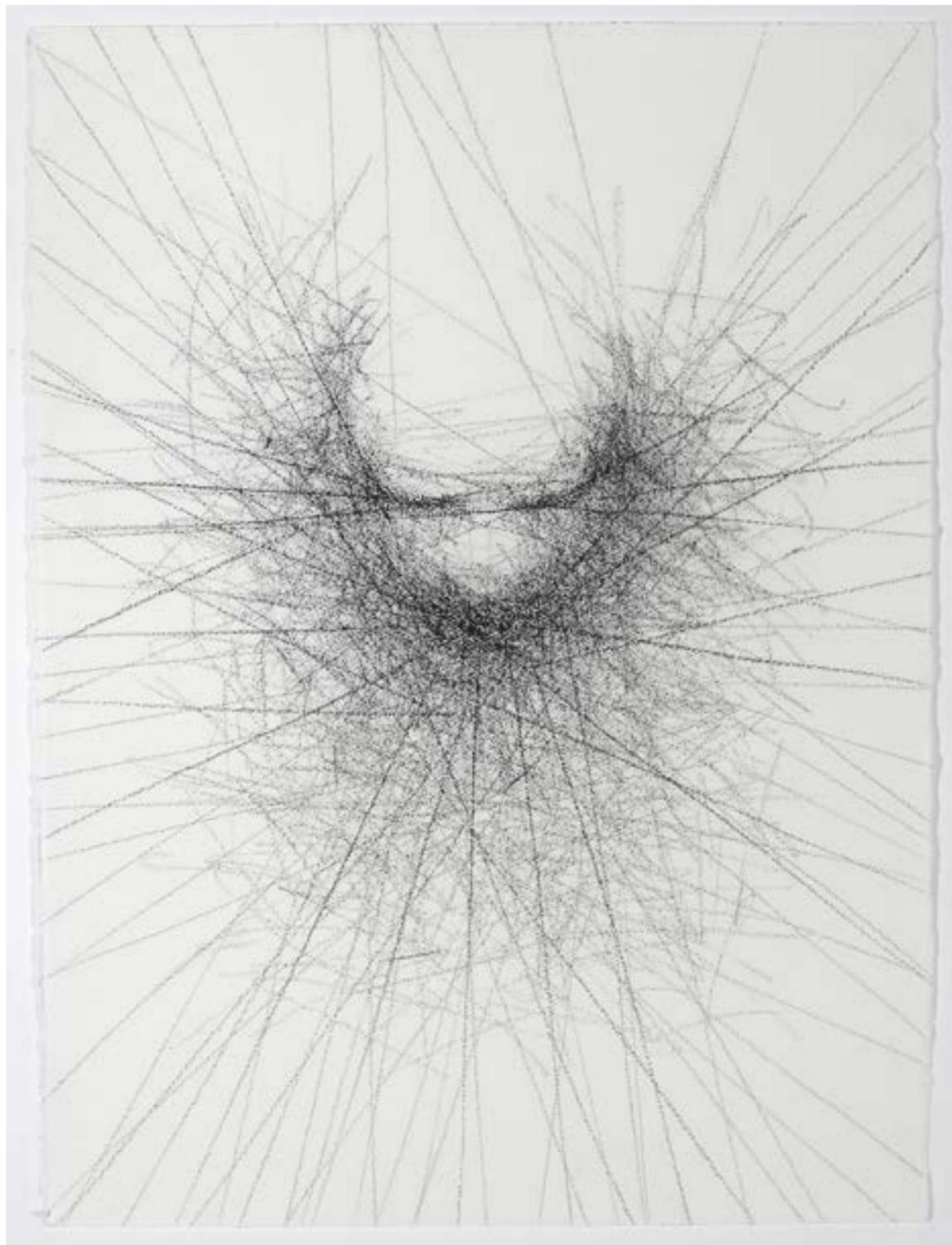
LOOKING

How do you think this painting has been constructed? Has she painted it all in one sitting or has she worked back over dry areas?

ACTIVITY

Create an artwork that responds to your environment in terms of colour and light.

Vernon Ah Kee



Vernon Ah Kee
unwritten 2009
Charcoal on paper
76 x 56 cm each
Courtesy the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane.

Vernon Ah Kee



All images are courtesy the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

Kuku Yalandji, Waanji, Yidinji and Gugu Yimithirr people

Born: Innisfail, Queensland, 1967

Lives & works: Brisbane.

Vernon Ah Kee's work has been shown nationally and internationally. He represented Australia at the 2009 Venice Biennale in the exhibition *Once Removed*. Other recent group exhibitions include *Revolutions: Forms that turn*, Biennale of Sydney (2008); and *Putsch, proppaNOW* group, Tandanya National Aboriginal Cultural Institute, Adelaide (2010). Recent solo exhibitions include *talkwalktalk*, Mackenzie Art Gallery, Canada (2009), and *cant chant*, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane (2007) and touring (2009-10). In 2009, the Institute of Modern Art published *borninthisskin*, the first major publication devoted to Ah Kee's practice. Vernon Ah Kee holds a Bachelor of Visual Arts from Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, Brisbane, where he is currently completing his Doctor of Visual Arts. His work is included in public collections including the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; and the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane. Vernon Ah Kee is represented by Milani Gallery, Brisbane, Australia.

unwritten, 2009

Although mouthless and mute, the elusively rendered figure in Vernon Ah Kee's *unwritten* speaks to the misrepresented or suppressed histories of indigenous nations. Ah Kee, a member of the Kuku Yalandji, Waanji, Yidinji and Gugu Yimithirr peoples, is recognized for his unapologetic and candid explorations of the treatment of Aboriginal people in Australia. In 2009 Ah Kee represented Australia at the Venice Biennale in the exhibition *Once Removed* and was included in *Revolutions: Forms that turn*, Biennale of Sydney (2008).

The loosely executed black-on-white charcoal lines of *unwritten* trace the ominous impression of a face on the verge of perception. It is unclear as to whether the eyeless, earless and mouthless face is moving into or out of visibility and Ah Kee describes the face as depicting a state of 'becoming human' in the eyes of white settler society. In its irresolute form, *unwritten* speaks powerfully and clearly to the struggle between existence and erasure within imperial perceptions of Aboriginal people.

Milani Gallery, <http://www.milanigallery.com.au/artist/vernon-ah-kee>

"Ah Kee's artistic practice has a valuable role in the discourse that is contemporary Aboriginal art. Asserting the authenticity of urban Aboriginal identities and therefore the authenticity of urban Aboriginal cultural production, connects Ah Kee with a proud history of urban Aboriginal activism, a role that arguably has facilitated enormous developments in the awareness and recognition of Aboriginal rights nationally and internationally. Aboriginal art should be as varied as Aboriginal people, and the political strength of Aboriginal art today may be that it is an expression of contemporary Aboriginal sovereignty in action."

Gary Jones, 'Vernon Ah Kee: Sovereign Warrior' in *Artlink: Blak on Blak* vol.30 1-2010, pp.50-51

EARLY

DISCUSSION

Describe the lines that Vernon Ah Kee has used.

LOOKING

Look for the face in Vernon Ah Kee's drawing. What parts can you see? What parts are missing?

ACTIVITY

Start with a line in the middle of a page and 'take it for a walk' to every corner and space on the page.

MIDDLE

DISCUSSION

Is the face becoming or dissolving? What can you read from this image?

LOOKING

How has the artist created a sense of depth in this work?

ACTIVITY

Create a mechanical line portrait using a ruler to create repetitive fine lines.

SENIOR

DISCUSSION

What does Vernon Ah Kee's description that the face is "becoming human" in the eyes of white settler society" mean? Who are the "white settler society"?

LOOKING

What effect do the radiating straight lines give? What do you think Ah Kee's intended message could be?

ACTIVITY

Using this image as a starting point recreate it in other mediums.

Judy Watson



Judy Watson
pisonia with acidification graph 2009
acrylic and chinagraph pencil on canvas
214.5 x 191.5 cm
Courtesy the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane.

Judy Watson



Photo Patrick Hamilton

Waanyi People

Born: Mundubbera, Queensland 1959

Judy Watson is an Indigenous artist whose matrilineal family is from country in North West Queensland. She co-represented Australia in the 1997 Venice Biennale and won the Moët & Chandon Fellowship in 1995. In 2006 she won the Clemenger Contemporary Art Award held at the National Gallery of Victoria and the NATSIA works on paper award at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. Her work is included in major Australian and International collections. Her public art commissions include; Wurreka, a fifty metre etched zinc wall for the Melbourne Museum; Walama forecourt, a sculptural installation of woven steel screens and upturned bronze dilly bags at Sydney International Airport; Ngarrn-gi Land/Law, a fifty metre etched zinc wall at the Victorian County Court, Melbourne. Her work, heart/land/river 2004, is in the foyer of the nearby Brisbane Magistrates Court. She is one of eight Australian Aboriginal artists commissioned to make work for the Musee du Quai Branly in Paris. Judy Watson's work was included in the National Indigenous Art Triennial 07 Culture Warriors exhibition at the National Gallery of Australia. In 2009 Culture Warriors: Australian Indigenous Art Triennial travelled to the American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center, Washington DC, USA.

Judy Watson is represented by Milani Gallery, Brisbane.

pisonia with acidification graph, 2009

pisonia with acidification graph is from a body of work made by Judy Watson following her 2009 residency at The University of Queensland's Heron Island Research Station in February 2009. These works draw upon elements of the natural environment of the island, while also engaging with the scientific research being undertaken at the station. In doing so, works such as pisonia with acidification graph extend Watson's ongoing engagement with the landscape, to reflect increasing ecological and environmental concerns.

The large central image is of a pisonia, the tropical plant found on Heron Island, and is based on numerous drawings completed by Watson during her residency. Underneath the image of the pisonia, Watson has included a graph measuring ocean acidification. One of the key areas of research for scientists on Heron Island is investigating the link between ocean acidification, coral bleaching and global warming.

In bringing together this imagery, Watson reflects on both the uniqueness and the fragility of the Great Barrier Reef. In the wake of the oil tanker spill on the Great Barrier Reef earlier this year, Watson's work takes on greater currency, underlining for viewers the vulnerability of the reef to human activity.

<http://www.milanigallery.com.au/artist/judy-watson>

"Recurring themes in Watson's work are shells, middens, termite mounds, vessels, fossils, plants, islands and maps, and these are frequently rendered in a manner that evoke the corporeal: bones, hair, scarred skin and blood. Through this treatment of the body, Watson explores both the human presence within the land and the impact of the malevolent structures of the State upon Indigenous Australians".

Laura Fisher <http://www.daaq.org.au/main/read/6971>

EARLY

DISCUSSION

In this work, Judy Watson used the background and the foreground to tell two stories about the Great Barrier Reef.

LOOKING

Look at the background. What materials did the artist use? What colours can you see? Do you see the pattern on the bottom? What does it mean?

Look at the foreground. What material did the artist use? What colour can you see? What does it mean?

ACTIVITY

Look closely at a leaf or plant and draw what you see.

MIDDLE

DISCUSSION

What makes this an artwork rather than a scientific illustration?

LOOKING

How has the artist created the background, the foreground and the graph in this work?

ACTIVITY

Using acrylic paint create a monochromatic background then, in the foreground, do a black felt pen observational drawing of a plant significant to the area you live in..

SENIOR

DISCUSSION

Discuss the links between art and scientific endeavour both in a contemporary and historical setting. E.g. botanists as artists

LOOKING

How has this image been constructed? How does Watson's approach to the different layers of this work reflect her intent?

ACTIVITY

Do observational drawings of a native plant in your area and research it's significance to the local Indigenous people. Include this in your artwork.

Alick Tipoti



Alick Tipoti
"Apu Kaz" 2008
Linocut Hand Coloured on Hahnemühle paper
2200 mm x 1140 mm
Printer: Theo Tremblay
Studio: Editions Tremblay NFP Cairns, QLD
photo courtesy of Australian Art Print

Alick Tipoti



Photo courtesy of Australian Art Network

Language: Kala Lagaw Ya
Island: Badu Island (TSI)
Born: 1975c
Works: Cairns Qld

Alick Tipoti is a Torres Strait Islander who is guided by the traditional cultural practices of his people. He believes in the Zugubal who were spoken about for many years by his ancestors. He is most diligent about what he sees as his responsibility to document the stories, genealogies, songs and other aspects of his culture so that it is available for future generations to learn, understand and practice.

He speaks his native language, Kala Lagaw Ya of the Maluilgal nation of Zenadh Kes. Alick believes that language is the vital ingredient that binds all cultures in the world today. 'Without your language you become a foreigner, lost in another person's culture. One of my favourite English words is analyse. In my language we call it Ses Tham or Thapul. Singing and dancing are forms of art that branch out from the centrepiece called language. Everything you do, traditionally or culturally, evolves from a language. When you know the language, you know your culture.'

Alick has researched the genealogy of Zenadh Kes. He says that when you practice something about your culture, it is important to know your roots and your identity as this will help you choose your path in life.

He has been given the traditional name of ZUGUB which enables him to relate to the spirits of his ancestors, the ZUGUBAL. This provides him the insight and ability to translate the words of these ancestors into the beautifully delicate and complex imagery of his linocuts. 'When I work late at night carving traditional designs, I can sense the presence of the spirits who I verbally acknowledge and thank in language for their guidance and help in visualising the words they have given me. I vividly remember an unusual event late one evening where I was guided to resketch and change the interperation of a block I was about to carve. This was just one of the many occasions when I have connected with the Zugubal who have instructed me on the proper ways of our cultural traditions.'

"In my life I have come to a level of understanding that I pray to the Zugubal of my culture"

The artist holds an Advanced Diploma in Arts, Thursday Island TAFE College and a Bachelor of Visual Arts, Australian National University, Canberra.

The artist's linocuts derive from his wood-carving experiences on Badu Island. He is inspired by coastal life, family, traditional plants and medicines, the constellations and the myths and legends of the Torres Strait.

Apu Kaz

Apu Kaz is a term commonly used for a dugong mother and calf. The hunters of Zenadh Kes (Torres Strait) know many secrets about the dugong and have a very special relationship with these marine mammals. Very little of this information is shared with people outside of Zenadh Kes. The calf depicted in this print is at the stage in its development when it is about to feed on its own and fend for itself. The mother is showing the calf how to dive deeply in the strong current. The patterning represents the many different currents that flow through the islands of which the people have intimate knowledge and respect.

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"That's the pattern, the triangle of how it was preserved and passed down. There's oral tradition and the written records of a foreigner, and that all has come down to me and helped me in my task of documenting culture."

(quote from When Alick Tipoti dreams, a hidden world of images appears, Nicolas Rothwell, May 29 2009, The Australian)

EARLY

DISCUSSION

The dugongs and the background are treated differently. Discuss what this tells us about dugongs and what it tells us about the sea.

LOOKING

Look at the direction of this work and the flow of the patterns in the background.

ACTIVITY

Make a picture of an animal mother and child in the forefront. Fill in the background with a pattern that tells us something about where they live.

MIDDLE

DISCUSSION

The dugongs and the background are treated differently. Discuss what this tells us about dugongs and what it tells us about the sea.

LOOKING

Look at the direction of this work and the flow of the patterns in the background.

ACTIVITY

Translate an information report on an animal into an artwork. Consider repetitive designs to show aspects of that animals habitat or food.

SENIOR

DISCUSSION

Is Tipoti's work art or cultural anthropology? Discuss in relation to the quote from Nicholas Rothwell's article.

LOOKING

How has he created the texture on the dugongs? Why has he used a different approach to the background?

ACTIVITY

Combine lino printing with another technique to add meaning to your work.

Samantha Hobson



Samantha Hobson
Flat Calm 2008
acrylic on canvas
170 x 107cm
image as courtesy of the artist and Hogarth Galleries.

Samantha Hobson



Language: Kuuku Y'au
Lockhart River, Cape York
Born: 1981
Works: Cairns and Cape

Samantha Hobson was born in 1981 at Lockhart River, Cape York, the northern most settlement of Eastern Australia. She belongs to the Kuuku 'Ya'u (Sand Beach people) who live

between the sub-tropical rainforest of the Cape and the Coral Sea. She began painting with the Lockhart River Art Gang at the age of 17. Today, Samantha paints independently.

"I paint about my country...our land and our sea country... the patterns and colours and the stories. My grandmother tells me stories from the old days...I paint these stories. I paint things that happen in the community...sometimes what I see really upsets me. I paint. It makes me feel better inside." (quote from Australian and Oceanic Art Gallery)

http://www.australianart.info/pages/artistspgs/lockhart/hobson_samantha/hob_sama.html

"Her early paintings of visceral abstraction represented the violence and dysfunction of remote communities, while her follow up series of fire paintings, although literal, also engaged as a metaphor regarding the cataclysmic effects of violence in her community seemingly located on the edge of paradise. More recently, the land and reef of spawning coral surrounding Lockhart River have been explored, together with traditional stories or Old Times; although all themes continue to be explored in her practice today."

http://www.vivienandersongallery.com/artists/samantha_hobson/bio.html

Samantha's work is close to abstract expressionism and challenges the accepted traditions of Aboriginal iconography (what Aboriginal art should look like). She is a complex artist as her paintings are often confronting either in subject matter or through the clashing boldness of her colours and marks. Her works capture, not only the features of her land but also the feel of sunlight or wind and the effects these have on the self and the environment.

EARLY

DISCUSSION

What do you think the title "Flat Calm" means? What does the repetitive white line make you think of?

LOOKING

Look at the colours Samantha has used. Why do you think she has chosen these colours?

ACTIVITY

Use finger paint to make patterns you might see on the water such as flat + calm; rough + choppy; smooth + ripply.

MIDDLE

DISCUSSION

What does the title of the work "Flat Calm" refer to? How has the image conveyed a feeling of calm?

LOOKING

Look at the colours Samantha has used. Why do you think she has chosen these colours?

ACTIVITY

Create a work that depicts the wind on the water.

SENIOR

DISCUSSION

Compare and contrast the intent and approach to landscapes between Samantha Hobson and Sally Gabori

LOOKING

At the way this painting has been constructed. Has she reworked over a dry background or completed this work in one sitting?

ACTIVITY

Create large scale abstract expressionist landscapes that uses expressive arm gestures and working with your hands.

Ellarose Savage



Artist: Ellarose Savage

Monkey ene Tortol – (Monkey and the turtle) 2009

woodfired ceramic

49cm x 35cm x 10cm

Monkey ene Tortol

Monkey ene tortol

Em two go

Em two pinde one banana

Monkey spek por tortol

U stap ya

I go nekeh banana por youme e

Tortol wile

Foolish monkey foolish monkey

River is my om e

Boss e cum ene shoote em two

Em two pall down belly up e

U sabe slop tin

U sabe damper

Mata bulli fly

Fly bulli e

Traditional Lyrics, Torres Strait Creole

Ellarose Savage



Photo and information courtesy of Erub Erwer Meta

Traditional Language: Erub Mer

Island: Darnley Island, TSI

Born: 1969

Works: Erub Erwer Meta (Darnley Island Art Centre)

Ellarose is currently working as a member of Erub Erwer Meta (Darnley Island Art Centre) and would be considered as an emerging artist. Ella has always enjoyed art, making things and collecting from the traditional stone fish traps and reef that circle her island. She began her artistic journey in 2003 when, as the art teacher aide at the primary school, she had the opportunity to work with the 'Green Turtle Dreaming' national project.

As a female Torres Strait Islander Ellarose is interested in expressing her close relationship with the sea, currently exploring the links between a woman's surroundings, everyday objects and childhood stories and memories. Clay is a medium Ellarose is comfortable with, modeling and building, bringing her ideas to life in three dimensions. This year she has been selected in the Telstra Awards with a 2 metre ceramic form of Zab (garfish).

Sea creatures have always been part of her life and heritage. She loves their graceful beauty and the environment from which they come. Since childhood, growing up on Darnley, the marine environment has been her life, culturally connecting her to 'place'. With her father, a pearl diver and fisherman to guide her, Ellarose learnt how to hunt, dive, eat and respect all things from the land and sea.

Artist Statement

"Fired in Australia's most northerly kiln, this woodfired ceramic piece has been wrapped in seaweed generating its unique markings.

This version of the foolish monkey and the turtle story is the one I remember from my childhood on Erub. It's a popular story with a moral about sharing. It's also a Torres Strait song that has many different versions including a hit song by Christine Anu. I am interested in how stories travel, how they are told and passed on. Researching this story I found that it is originally a folk tale of the Ilocano people from the Philippines.

Even though this version is speaking about a freshwater turtle, growing up I always pictured a saltwater turtle as the character. The story is modeled on the back of the turtle, the foolish greedy monkey is in the banana tree while the turtle is waiting patiently for him to share. The monkey eats all the bananas and throws only the banana skins down to the turtle. Turtle gets very disappointed at the greedy monkey and says 'you foolish monkey the river is my home'. However he is still doing the wrong thing being with the monkey. The boss comes and shoots the monkey and the turtle dead."

EARLY

DISCUSSION

Identify the characters of the story and retell the story in your own words.

LOOKING

Look for the story in the design on the back of the turtle.

ACTIVITY

Using clay or playdough, model an animal from a fairy tale or nursery rhyme.

MIDDLE

DISCUSSION

Discuss the different methods of relief (where an image is raised from a flat plane) or sunken relief (where the image is carved from the surface).

LOOKING

Look at the different methods Ella has used to add designs and the story. One method adds on to the clay and the other method is subtracted.

ACTIVITY

Roll out a slab of clay and use modeling and subtraction to build a relief telling a story or song.

SENIOR

DISCUSSION

What effect has the wood firing given to the clay and why does wrapping it in seaweed affect the surface?

LOOKING

Look at the shape of the turtle. Is it important to the artist to create realistic elements of the turtle? Why?

ACTIVITY

Translate a narrative that has meaning to your life into an 3D artwork. Consider the importance of the audience understanding this story.



James Savo
Self Portrait
Erub, 2005
Dr Barbara Piscitelli AM Children's Art Archive, State Library of Queensland.



Lynnette Griffiths and children from Erub during the Children's Picture Diary Project, 2005. Photo by Barbara Piscitelli.

Using a powerful mix of art and writing, the Children's Picture Diary project aims to describe childhood – from the inside, through children's pictures and stories.

The project started in 2005 with a group of children from Erub, and has grown over time to gather images and stories from Brisbane (2007), Ipswich (2007), Poruma (2007), Cherbourg (2007) and Hope Vale (2009). Indigenous children form a key group of storytellers and artists in the Children's Picture Diary project.

During intensive workshops, The Children's Picture Diaries project team collects stories about childhood, as told by children in drawing, painting, printmaking and writing. The picture diaries focus on three key concepts:

Creating the Picture Diaries

Children work with a team of artists, parents, teachers and volunteers on a three-day program. During this time, they paint portraits, draw and paint local landscapes, and make prints of their favourite activities. Story telling and writing is often a group activity with shared authorship outcomes. Children make their art and tell their stories in the company of adults who guide and support them.

- Who I am
- Where I live
- What I do

Collecting the Picture Diaries

During the picture diary project, children are asked if they would like to participate in the workshops, and if we may collect their work. Family permission is also sought, plus other relevant organisational permissions. Thorough documentation is completed on each child's artworks and stories prior to accessioning into the Dr Barbara Piscitelli AM Children's Art Archive at State Library.

Digital images are available to view on the State Library of Queensland website:

www.slq.qld.gov.au

Exhibiting the Picture Diaries

Original art from the project usually stays in the archive in Brisbane and visitors may look at it in the John Oxley Library at State Library of Queensland. From time to time, the children's original work goes out for exhibition. The work has been exhibited at the Australian Embassy's Gallery 1601 in Washington (2006) and at the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (2009 & 2010).

Check out virtual books for some of the children's picture diaries

<http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/find/virtualbooks/children>

Thanks and Acknowledgements

Exhibiting artists

Thank you to the children, families, schools and Indigenous Knowledge Centres in Hope Vale, Poruma and Erub. Your work has inspired many people.

Presenting organization

The project has been fully supported by the State Library of Queensland.



**CAIRNS
INDIGENOUS
ART FAIR
2010**



What is REACH?

Regional Excellence in Arts and Culture Hubs

REACH is an Arts (all strands: Visual Arts, Drama, Dance, Music and Media) strategy being implemented by Education Queensland to connect and bring together people at primary and secondary schools all over FNQ (local, rural and remote) to:

- Improve Arts teacher practice by identifying existing strengths and skills and sharing these curriculum and classroom practices
- Identify talented Arts students and improve their learning and career pathways
- Develop and run school-based excellence courses for students using Artists in Residence
- Exhibit and celebrate successful outcomes of Arts students
- Build up a range of resources to support practical implementation of Arts in schools throughout FNQ.

The REACH Goal

Focus on improving consistency, balance and excellence in Arts Education delivery to Indigenous students, non-Indigenous students and teachers including all phases of learning in rural and remote contexts.

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Visual Art Strand Leader
REACH
Dr Barbara Piscitelli AM
Children's Art Archive
State Library of Queensland

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