Welcome to the 2011 CIAF Teacher Resource

This resource has been developed by REACH (Regional Excellence in Arts and Culture Hubs) and CIAF (Cairns Indigenous Art Fair) to assist teachers and other educators support learning in the visual arts with an emphasis on contemporary Indigenous artist and their work.

How to use this resource

The CIAF 2011 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 Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools (EATSPIS). The Discussion, Looking and Activity are to be seen as starting points and are not exclusive or finite. Please adapt, adapt, share and extend these ideas with your students and your peers.

A better understanding of, and respect for, Aboriginal 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/

What can we learn from contemporary art?

The integration of contemporary art into school and community learning enables educators to actively engage with issues that affect our lives, provoking curiosity, encouraging dialogue, and engaging debate about the world around us. Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists address both current historical events and policies. These references help educators and students make connections across the curriculum and support interdisciplinary thinking. As artists continue to explore new technologies and media, the work they create encourages critical thinking and visual literacy in our increasingly media-saturated society.

We want students to understand that contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is part of a cultural dialogue that concerns larger contextual frameworks, such as personal and cultural identity, family, community, and nationality. Curiosity, openness, and dialogue are important tools for engaging audiences in contemporary art. Instead of questioning whether a work of art is good or bad, the study of contemporary art requires an open-ended methodology and an inquiry-based approach. Asking questions that stimulate discussion is an integral step in the process towards appreciating contemporary art.

Looking at contemporary art is an investigation and an exploration; an opportunity to consider ideas and different perspectives, to learn something new, and eventually to create a personal sense of meaning and understanding.

Discussions around contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art

• What makes a work of art a work of art? Is contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art defined by particular boundaries?
• Who decides what an artwork means? Is it the artist, the critic, the viewer, or history?
• Where do Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists find their inspiration?
• What are the most important skills an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artist working today can have?
• What materials and tools are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists using to create art?
• What is the difference between working alone and collaborating with fabricators, audiences, others?
• In addition to museums and galleries, what are other venues where art is exhibited?
• What subjects, issues, and themes are important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists? What subjects, issues, and themes are important to you and what connections can you make between the two?
• Does a work of art need to be beautiful? Why or why not? Who defines beauty?
• Does contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art have a purpose, a role, a responsibility?

Disussions about contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art

• Identify the context of the work. What are the circumstances in which an artwork is made, as well as when, where, and how the artist was thinking, what choices have they made, and what process have they used.
• Describe the artwork. What are the artworks formal qualities: colour, composition, style, mood, media and materials, etc.
• Consider the artist's concept. What is the artist thinking, what choices have they made, and what process have they used.

Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is the art of today, produced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists living in the in a range of urban and remote communities.

Contemporary Indigenous art is the art of today, produced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists living in the in a range of urban and remote communities. Their art is a dynamic combination of materials, methods, concepts, and subjects that often challenge traditional boundaries of both Western and Indigenous art and defy easy definition. Diverse and eclectic, contemporary Indigenous art as a whole is distinguished by the very lack of a uniform, organising principle, ideology, or style.


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


This text was paraphrased and developed with the support of Art21 http://beta.art21.org/ (accessed 4 August 2011), a non-profit contemporary art organisation.)
Bianca Beetson

Bloodlines 2006

Bianca Beetson

Run, Run, Run. Run Catch me if you can, you can’t catch me you can’t catch me cos I am the nigger breadman 2010, Photograph – trpich 100cm x 100cm.

The Chocolate Warriors and the Ginger Bread men photographs articulate my own personal struggles with identity and authenticity in relation to skin colour. It critiques the notion of percentages, a question I often get asked being a fair skinned Aboriginal person. However, I tell those who ask “it doesn’t matter if you are 70%, 40% or 15% as long as you are strong in your culture and proud to be an Aboriginal you are authentic”. The Chocolate Warriors and Ginger bread men become a metaphor for the answer as they are still chocolate no matter the cocoa content or ginger bread men no matter what their flavour is. It’s ironic that no one questions their authenticity. Just a spoonful of sugar helps the metaphor go down.

Beetson comments that her work explores her own struggle with authenticity in relation to skin colour. What does she mean by that and authenticity in relation to skin colour. What does she mean by that and how does the work communicate this to audiences?

Furthermore the utilization of humour in the work Beetson sees as being a necessary tools for survival and self determination, the ability to laugh at ourselves, and to laugh at the times we find ourselves in, a spoonful of sugar makes the metaphor go down, an Ironic sensibility, and overall sense of the ridiculous and the absurd.

In 1987 Beetson was selected for the Primavera exhibition at the MCA in Sydney. She had work in Black Humor and Saltwater, Freshwater, Borewater and Transvisual national touring exhibitions. In April 1987 Bianca won her first art award; The Anglican Church Grammar school Old Boys Association Encouragement Award. As a member of the Campfire Group, Aboriginal Artist’s Co-operation, she has had the opportunity to be involved in many projects based on cultural collaboration. Including All Stock Must Go which was a part of the second Asia Pacific Triennial at the Queensland Art Gallery in 1997.

Beetson has had a number of solo exhibitions in Queensland and Brisbane, and her work has been included in numerous group exhibitions through out Australia and overseas. In 2002 Beetson was commissioned by Leah Purcell and GAPT to create an art work for the “Black Chic’s Talking” project. She currently has a solo exhibition touring around Queensland titled “The other Arty Beetson and is a member of the prestigious ProppahnOW artist collective. Beetson has work in public and private collections around Australia and overseas including Queensland Art Gallery. In 2010 Beetson exhibited at Tandanya National Aboriginal Cultural Institute as a part of ProppahnOW’s Adelaide Festival Exhibition and was a finalist in the 2010 Telstra Art Awards in the New Media Category.

Kabi Kabi & Wiradjuri people

Born: Roma, Western Queensland

Lives and works: Brisbane

Bianca Beetson is a Kabi Kabi (Sunshine Coast) & Wiradjuri (Central NSW) woman, born in Roma Western Qld. She studied a Bachelor of Arts, Visual Arts at the Queensland University of Technology from 1993-95 and completed her Honours degree at the same University in 1998.

Beetson draws her inspiration from real life experience. Often many of her ideas being triggered by conversations she has with people. Additionally, Beetson says many of her best ideas have come to her in dreams and whilst performing mundane activities such as vacuuming, although Beetson believes, she can’t underestimate the power of Television and popular culture to bring ideas to fruition.

Beetson’s work is concerned with her individual identity as an Indigenous Australian, as well as the identity of Australia as a nation in terms of its history and its concept of itself. Beetson’s work is loaded with layers of meaning and numerous reference points. That is the co modification of Aboriginal Culture; the demarcation of Art, artifact and kitsch; critique of the social structure; and the critique of the feminine. Reflected through the eclectic structure of the work are apparent reference to the dot paintings of the central desert artists, the stencilling technique of the Arnhem Land cave painters, blended with references to the work of twentieth century artists such as Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Lin Onus, Rover Thomas and Andy Warhol.

The work falls between painting and sculpture, the performative and the static, the real and the fake; the finish is garish, slightly deraigned, but always intense and alluring, a tension which functions as a metaphor for the work as a whole. A combination of elements are used within the work to suggest the interconnectedness of cultures, markets and the media. The work demands a constant process of the reinvention of self and place, as there is a cultural ambiguity surrounding the symbols used. The symbols function as vehicles for understanding the world, for reconstructing the ways in which cultures overlap, traditions are translated and meaning is recreated.

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DISCUSSION
What does the artwork Bloodlines make you think of?

LOOKING
What are the ginger bread men dressed as?

ACTIVITY
Bake a cake or biscuit. Decorate it so that it takes something sweet and sugary and turns it in to an art work that comments on a social issue.

R.E.A.C.H. Teacher Resource

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A pivotal factor in the Islanders’ subsistent lifestyle was mastery at fishing using the various implements and tools on-hand. Hand-line Ngurupai Wharf depicts one such method – the hand-line. Traditionally fishing was done from the shores or around the reefs either by the use of fish-lines made from vine or vegetable fibre, with hooks fashioned from turtle shell, or with spears. In the eastern islands, where large schools of sardine are found along the shoreline a bamboo scoop was used.

Brian Robinson’s upbringing in the rich and diverse culture of the Torres Strait has given him a strong identity and essential knowledge that continues to inform his artistic practice today. His ease at translating the environment and ancestral stories into visual form in exciting, stimulating and creative media can be seen from his earliest linocut prints, through to his prints, paintings and sculptures today.

He commenced art studies in 1992 at the Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE. After graduating he undertook numerous art residencies throughout the Pacific including printmaking workshops in the Solomon Islands (1995) and New Caledonia (1997). He commenced work with Cairns Regional Gallery in 1997 as a trainee curator through the Museums Australia Curatorial Internship program, the first Torres Strait Islander to be appointed through the program. The result of this internship has been a major achievement: the co-curation and tour management of ILAN PAGIN: Torres Strait Art, the first major touring exhibition and catalogue of the traditional and contemporary material culture of the Torres Strait Island people. Since then, he has worked on numerous exhibitions, locally, state-wide and nationally.

In 2004, Robinson completed internships with both the National Museum of Australia and the National Gallery of Australia. In 2008 he was appointed Exhibitions Manager and Deputy Director of Cairns Regional Gallery. Despite the demands of these positions, he has continued to develop a strong arts practice. He is represented in numerous state, national, international and private collections.

Robinson is a multi-skilled contemporary artist, whose practice includes painting, printmaking, sculpture and design. The graphic style in his practice combines his Torres Strait Islander heritage with a strong passion for experimentation, both in theoretical approach and medium, as well as crossing the boundaries between reality and fantasy. The results combine styles as diverse as graffiti art through to intricate relief carvings and construction sculpture echoing images of Torres Strait cultural motifs, objects and activity. Robinson’s art reflects the tropical marine environment surrounding Wabia and the inhabitants of that environment. It is an essential part of his life and culture, imbued with the customs, traditions and lifestyles of Torres Strait Island people. The animals from ancestral stories and their presence today are an integral feature of Robinson’s work. The spirit and natural world are so intertwined that one influences the other, and is essential to the everyday existence of the Torres Strait Islander people, their culture and their beliefs.

Robinson’s sculptural practice stems from the discipline of constructivism, a style of sculpture that emerged in the 1950s and 1960s based on carefully structured modules which allow for intricate and in some cases infinite patterns of repetition, sometimes used to create limitless, basically planar, screen-like formations, and sometimes employed to make more multidimensional structures. These designs have proved useful and attractive for use in eye-catching architectural walls and screens, often featuring complex patterns of undulating, tissue-like webbing, with apertures, which transmit and filter light, while generating delicate patterns of shadow. His approach to printmaking in both etching and linocut is linear in composition and appearance. These prints illustrate Robinson’s depth of connection to his heritage paired with his aesthetic and intellectual exploration of Western art iconography.

Robinson’s work has contributed significantly to the environs of Cairns where he lives through a number of major public art installations, including the signature five stainless steel woven fish sculptures and fountain installed on the Cairns Esplanade in 2003. In September 2010 Robinson began a 12-month Artist in Residence at Djumbunji Press KickArts Fine Art Printmaking Studio located in Cairns.

Brian Robinson

Born: 1973
Language: Kala Lagaw Ya / Wuthathi
Lives and works: Cairns

All text and images are courtesy of the artist and KickArts.
Shannon Brett

Born: Brisbane 1973
Wakka Wakka, Budjula and Gurang Gurang Clans.
Lives & works in Cairns.

Shannon Brett is a descendant of the Wakka Wakka, Budjula and Gurang Gurang clans which surround the vast coastal outskirts of South East Queensland; clans who were later scattered throughout the north during the mission days.

Local to North Queensland, Brett is a multi-disciplinary artist, who is technically trained in fashion design, graphic and web design, music production, animation, theatre and film. Her practice has encompassed film, photography, painting, drawing and sculpture. Brett holds a Bachelor of Contemporary Australian Indigenous Art and is currently undertaking a Master of Arts Management.

Celebration of a Nation
The six images exhibited via her recent NEWflames artist residency are a tongue in cheek gaze at society’s ability to evolve and to recreate stereotypes as new culture. Each of the photographs forms a deliberately staged, cinematic scenario to illustrate these stereotypes and to reveal concerns of naivety and race-less-ness. The works are purposefully emotional, forcefully creating a wondering by the onlooker. As the title of this series indicates Celebration of a Nation presumes the definition of the word Australian. The general consensus supplied by various dictionaries state that an Australian is either: Of or relating to Australia or its peoples, languages, or cultures. Or a member of any of the Aboriginal peoples of Australia. The series provides a slap-in-the-face admittance of stereotypes who call themselves ‘Australian’ and seeks to reinforce respect for those who remain divided. While clearly exploring past and present events that have affected Indigenous people and culture, Brett’s work engages with the universal issues of identity, power and history, transcending cultural and sequential boundaries.

SHANNON BRETT

Un-Titled 2011, Colour pigment photograph on paper. 82 x 65cm (From the series Celebration of a Nation), produced for NEWflames artist residency at Canopy Artspace, Cairns

SHANNON BRETT

Mrs Jones 2011, Colour pigment photograph on paper. 82 x 65cm (From the series Celebration of a Nation), produced for NEWflames artist residency at Canopy Artspace, Cairns

SHANNON BRETT

Celebration of a Nation 2011 Colour pigment photograph on paper 82 x 65cm (From the series Celebration of a Nation) produced for a artist residency at Canopy Artspace, Cairns

E.A.C.H Teacher Resource
Roderick Yunkaporta

**Early Discussion**

What is a clan? What is a totem?

**Looking**

The colours Yunkaporta used are called ‘ochres’. What colours are they? Where did he get those colours?

**Activity**

Make animals out of a clay (or dough). Use sticks, leaves and twigs for the details such as teeth, feathers, spines etc.

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Roderick Yunkaporta

Born: 1948
Clan: Mother - Apalech
Father - Apalech
Language: Mother - Wik Mungkan
Father - Wik Mungkan
Homeland: Mother - unknown
Father - Knox River
Totem: Mother - unknown
Father - Brolga, Dog, mud shells

Roderick was born in the Presbyterian Mission of Aurukun and was separated from his family and raised in the dormitories. When he was a young man Roderick worked in labouring jobs around the State.

Carving has always been a part of Roderick’s life, learning the traditional ways by watching the elders make carvings for ceremonies.

Roderick first started making his own carvings in the early 1990’s and was one of the artists selected to work with Urban Art Project “Old Way – New Way”, reworking the traditional ceremonial sculptures in bronze and aluminium.

Roderick has exhibited work nationally and internationally, France, Germany and the United States. His work is held in public and private collections including the National Gallery of Australia, The Brisbane Gallery of Modern Art, Queensland Art Gallery, Nick Harsch Collection and Aime Proust Collection.

**Artists Statement**

"I was out there with the old people when they carving. I sat there with old people and took notice. I see all the old people to carving for the dance festival. Ready for the festival. They start teaching me. And painting it the proper way. The right paints on the carving. They told me to sit down I sit down with those old people. Don’t just carve anything that doesn’t belong to you. Do your own dogs or brolga my totem. And I start learn you know bit by bit each day everyday. Then I knew what to do what to carve what paints ochre. Use white paints. They even taught those other boys too."

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**Middle Discussion**

Yunkaporta was raised in a dormitory. What is a dormitory? How would your life be different if you lived in one?

**Looking**

Look at how Yunkaporta constructed his animals. How has he joined the materials? Where does he get his colours from?

**Activity**

Make small papier mache sculptures of dogs. Paint and create a class dog pack.

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**Senior Discussion**

Research the missions of Far North Queensland. Discuss the impact of this system on Aboriginal life, art and culture.

**Looking**

Are Roderick’s animals realistic? What qualities do they possess that bring his animals to life?

**Activity**

Create sculptures of animals significant to you. Consider the qualities of the animal that you wish to highlight.
Emily Ngarnal Evans

Born: 1975
Language: Lardil
Country: Dungurru

Emily Ngarnal Evans has lived all her life on Gununa, Mornington Island. Educated in her culture and heritage by her father, Kulhanger Kenneth Jacobs, her grandfather, the late Lindsey Roughsey and great Uncle, the late Dick Roughsey; all senior men, accomplished artists and custodians of their traditional country on Mornington Island.

Evans father, Kenneth Jacob passed away in 2003. She began painting from traditional stories and body painting during workshops held at Mornington Island in February 2005. Her father’s stories and mark making inspired her to paint. The workshops were designed for senior men of Mornington Island as a continuum of “Paint Up”, a book on Mornington Island Dody stripes and designs published in 2002. Evans asked to participate so her father’s stories could also be painted. She produced a work of great detail by borrowing her father’s delicate mark found inside the broad body marks of the Balibal, or spotted stingray.

Since these workshops Evans has dedicated herself to becoming a painter. Her intricate mark making abilities have developed into a language that binds her with her father’s memory and represents the designs associated with the stories of the Balibal-spotted stingray and wurruku-brown shark.

This new mark, born of her father’s wisdom coupled with her rich cultural heritage, has created a contemporary dialogue for her father’s story. Evans work is both a personal metaphor of her everlasting relationship with her father and a contemporary expression of her traditional beliefs, culture and country.

Artist Statement

“I’ve got four brothers and one sister and I’m the second eldest. We always used to go fishing and camping when I was growing up. Mum and Dad would take us out bush, out to our country. School was good when we were young, we learnt dancing in culture class and that was fun. I grew up watching old Goobala, that’s short for Dick Roughsey. We used to watch him paint a lot, me, my brothers and sisters. My father used to paint and taught me a little bit. In 2003 he passed away, so that’s why I started in the art centre following on from my father and keeping my family’s stories alive in my painting. I like painting, it is gives me peace. I’ve painted Balibal, the Spotted Stingray, Wurruku the Sharp Nose Brown Shark. I like to relax with painting, I enjoy the quiet time I get when I paint.”

In 2005 Evans was selected as a finalist in the 22nd Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award, held at the Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin. This special award aims to showcase the very best Australian Indigenous art from around the country. Alcaston Gallery first exhibited Evans’ work at the 2006 Melbourne Art Fair. Also in 2006 she was one of 10 finalists in the inaugural annual Xstrata Coal Emerging Indigenous Art Award, held at the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane. The Xstrata Coal Emerging Indigenous Art Award Exhibition celebrates new work by emerging Indigenous Australian artists. Evans held her first solo exhibition, Balibal Country, at Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne in 2008. She has recently been featured in the All About Art Annual Collectors exhibition at Alcaston Gallery.

As a teenager Evans watched her parents’ significant contribution in community performances and cultural ceremonies. Her mother Juliana Roughsey is a member of the Mornington Island Dance group and continues to tour. She is also a teacher of Lardil culture.

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This story is told by Napau Pedro Stephen, a descendent from the Meriam Samsep, to his nephew, artist, Ceferino Garcia Sabatino. Characters and places are explained in Meriam Mir.

This story begins with a Papuan traditional black magic man named Said who travelled throughout the Torres Strait and arrived at Mer. At Mer he planted Kaplewer tree (species of palm or Pakarar) and a banana species Neis Kerim Kerim Caba (the banana tree is able to throw 2 bunches at the same time).

One day whilst walking around, he noticed that the front village of Mer was deserted and he met a local man who told him that everyone had gone to Las (village at the back of the island) to witness the ‘asking’ of a young Las virgin girl named Pekari (Pakarar means virgin).

Said went with the local Mer man to Las. On the way they challenged each other’s magic to win the young virgin from Las. Said’s magic was too strong for the Mer man and he won Pekari. His spirit went with Pekari and the next morning decided to leave for Erub because Pekari was only another trophy for Said’s magic.

As Said a descendent from the Meriam Samsep was about to leave Mer he saw a woman fishing off the reef named Kudar, she was the mother of Kos and Abob. Said grabbed Kudar and took her to Erub with him. Kos and Abob quickly learnt of their mother’s abduction whilst building Sai (traditional fish traps) at Dauar and they pursued Said in their canoe. When Said saw Kos and Abob approaching he pulled out a Waumer (frigate bird) feather from his magic woven bag, stuck it in his hair, turned into a Waumer bird and flew with Kudar in his carry basket to Erub.

Kos and Abob had magical powers as well and were catching up with Said. Kos peared through a hole in Said’s woven basket and saw her sons. She decided to escape from Said and fell through the hole she made in his basket, landing in the sea. The location where she landed between Mer and Erub, became a reef called Aum Kep.

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Said arrived at a place on Erub called Sadi (means glad/very happy), because he thought he had escaped Kos and Abob. The Saisarem clanmen of Erub met Said and accepted him into their tribe. Said lived at a place called Sadi, which was named after him. Sadi is next to Egru village. Said used Gou point as his fishing base.

When Said learnt that Kos and Abob arrived at Erub he then fled to Ugar from Gou point, so the two sons followed him to Ugar. But before they could catch him on Ugar Said flew back to Papua New Guinea. Because Papua New Guinea was a taboo or sacred land the brothers remained on Ugar. During their stay on Ugar they built the fish traps around the island as well as a road along the beach front at Tag (man’s hand). At the end of the road Kos and Abob placed two stones which are named after them to this day. After completing their work on Ugar they returned to Mer via Erub building the fish traps around both islands. These Sai fish traps are visible on the islands of Ugar, Erub and Mer to this day.

The fish traps on Mer were physical traditional land mark boundaries which were used as land ownership evidence in the 1892 Historic Australian Malo High Court Native Title Decision for the people of Mer Island. This High Court decision set an unprecedented indigenous land claim for Traditional Owners both nationally and internationally.

**Story Of Kos And Abob**

This artwork could be seen as a map of family connections. Create your own family and friend map that symbolically links those connections.
I was born and raised on St Pauls. I had 7 brothers and sisters, our life was tough because we had to survive from day to day, no hot water. We started having our baths in the creek. We had no fridge or electricity, we fished everyday for food and grew food by the seasons, hauling water for the gardens.

I was 14 before I left, and we went to Thursday Island for the week. We went because I was in the choir. My mum had to cut my hair because I hadn’t brushed it for ages. I thought Ti. was deadly, it had 4 or 5 cars and a couple of taxis, everybody used to walk. It was my first time to see shops, I didn’t like icecream it was too cold.

My Mum used to weave, to maintain the houses which were woven coconut. I learnt from watching, sitting next to her and copying. When we had sports at school we used to weave balls to play with. I had to make my own baskets when I started fishing. The baskets were for food and for bringing home the fish.

I am one of the only women left on St Pauls who knows how to make our traditional baskets.

I see turtle caught in the nets when they go out in the dinghy. These are big turtles, not little ones, they need to come up for air and when they are caught in the nets they drown. Before we move had nets now I see many drowned turtles. If this many turtles drown just in my patch of sea how many are drowning everywhere else? I’ve seen sharks tangled in nets until the water. The turtles are attracted to small fish that hang around the nets, when the turtles get caught and drown they are washed up onto dry reefs.

I would like to know why the nets are floating around our sea? Are they washed over from other ships or is it rough weather that makes the nets come loose?

It is good that the things made from ghost nets are being exhibited. It will make people aware of what is happening in the oceans.” (Angela Mahnah Torenbeek)

One of Torenbeek’s ghost net baskets has recently been exhibited and purchased by the British Museum.

Text and images are courtesy of the artist and Sue Ryan.

ACTIVITY

What rubbish is destroying your environment? Where does it come from and what creative solution can you think of to use it?

LOOKING

Look at the basket carefully. How do you think it was constructed? How long do you think it was constructed?

DISCUSSION

Consider what skills and artistic choices the artist has made to create the basket.

MIDDLE

ACTIVITY

Create art works or craft objects out of discarded waste that you find around your school or home.

SENIOR

ACTIVITY

Create an artwork or craft object out of discarded waste that you find around your school or home.

DISCUSSION

What are the differences between art and craft and are these distinctions valid in a contemporary setting?

LOOKING

Consider what skills and artistic choices the artist has made to create the basket.

EARLY

DISCUSSION

Brainstorm all the different things you could make out of ghost nets.
Napoleon Oui

EARLY DISCUSSION
What do you think the shields were used for?

LOOKING
What do you see when you look at the painting Yaln.giri?

ACTIVITY
Draw your backyard using a thick black outline and the three colours yellow, red and white.

MIDDLE DISCUSSION
How is Oui’s style different from other forms of Aboriginal art that you know of?

LOOKING
When looking at Oui’s work can you recognise elements of the landscape?

ACTIVITY
Create a weapon that will mesmerise your enemy with it’s design.

SENIOR DISCUSSION
Discuss Oui’s stylised designs and colour and how it relates to his rainforest environment. What elements create visual appeal?

LOOKING
Look at the way Yaln.giri is composed. What considerations has Oui made in regards to composition?

ACTIVITY
Design a repetitive leaf motif based on the rainforest. Use bold, stylised shapes, deep colours and black outlines.

Napoleon Oui

Born: 1972
Country: Djabuganydji
Language: Djabugay

Napoleon Oui’s country is Djabugay and his traditional name is Weika (quiet one). He has worked for over 14 years as a senior cultural performer, presenter, tour guide and educator at Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park in Cairns.

“It is my strong connection to the traditional culture that inspires my paintings,” he says.

Through his art, Oui explores his connection to the rainforest and his culture. The paintings on canvas evoke, in an abstract style, art found on the ancient traditional rainforest shields. These shields are the largest found in Australia and traditionally provided a wide, flat ‘canvas’ for designs that were unique to the different groups. Historically the shields were valuable possessions and traded throughout the region. The art incorporates bold stylised shapes, strong ochre colours such as white, red and yellow with highlighted black outlines creating a style that is found only in the rainforest region of Far North Queensland. The shield designs are a direct inspiration for Oui’s contemporary interpretations onto canvas.

Since his initial solo exhibition with UMI Arts in 2008 Oui has gone on to do a further six group and four solo exhibitions, in addition he has been selected into two artist in residency projects and a print workshop. Oui has also received a number of grants and commissions. In brief, Oui has come a long way in a short time and he is proving himself as one of the emerging artists practicing in the unique rainforest art movement.

About Yaln.giri (Crystal Cascades)

Oui created this artwork reflecting the unique rainforest art style of his Far North Queensland ancestors. It depicts the Crystal Cascades (Yaln.giri) which are not only culturally significant to all Djabugay people, but also holds a very special personal connection to Oui as this was his grandmother’s birthplace. His grandmother, whose birth name was Ngyl meaning only one, was born on the banks of the Crystal Cascades just metres away from the waterfall. Blue quondong, blackbean and fish are significant food sources from this area. These are represented in the painting. The fire sticks represent the camps and the people along the river.

NAPOLEAN OUI Yaln.giri (Crystal Cascades) 2011, Acrylic on canvas.
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.

Resource: Sally Donald
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REACH
www.reacharts.com.au

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Notes on the publication

The spelling of Aboriginal and Torres Strait words and names varies. They generally appear in the text according to the artists' text or the conventions of accepted usage. In most instances, artists' birth, language groups, clans and information has been supplied by the artists or their representative organisation.