

Bijang Slabb and Benjamin Allmon paddling the canoe - gundal - on the second evening of their three day journey.



Toby and Hannah, Tweed Coast cafe operators of Baked at Ancora, Kiosk Casuarina and Pastry Bread Espresso Tweed Mall, invite you to enjoy their newest offering, Apex Dining at the Gallery.

Opening Hours

Wed - Sun, 8:30am - 4pm,
Breakfast until 11.30am
Full lunch from 12pm
All day 'Baked' savoury & sweet menu. To book please call 02 66 725 088

THE GALLERY SHOP has a beautiful range of wares in a wide range of prices. There are many new lines, some of which use images of Margaret Olley artworks and are ideal for gifts and souvenirs. Purchases at the shop help boost the Friends' contributions to the Gallery.

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Editor: Janice Jones



In The Grey: The Saltwater Story

"We're in the grey," Bundjalung canoe-maker Kyle Slabb told me one summer evening in the 2018, as we carved traditional *gundals* that would soon make the three-day journey from the Gold Coast to Minjerribah: a journey not made in over a century. It was a journey that connected mobs – Bundjalung, Yugambah, and Quandamooka – but also whitefellas and blackfellas, young and old, land and sea and sky. It was the basis for *The Saltwater Story* - a film, book, and now an exhibition. But it wasn't a straightforward journey...

I stopped carving and looked up at Kyle, who continued his work in the deepening twilight, waves crashing on Fingal Beach the soundtrack to our work... we could have been at any time in history. I knew he was referring to the space between black and white, the complex realm that we had to navigate together, with mutual respect and contribution, to reach our destination. In the grey is not always an easy place to be, and as David Kelly's beautiful photographs reveal, can only be traversed by getting the small things right.

Initially Kyle and I had different objectives for *The Saltwater Story*. My goal was to share the story of his people and engage the outside world with his culture. His was to share and secure cultural knowledge in the next generation... the outside world is the problem, constantly threatening to distract the younger generation from their culture.

Kyle's brother Josh told me, "Our old people did their job, secured the knowledge in us, but Kyle carries the most, and worries the most about passing it on."

So how did we resolve it? I asked Kyle once why he agreed to do this with me when so few get a yes from him – some had been trying for twenty years to no avail. He told me it was because I got the small things right. Bringing food when asking for knowledge. Saying little, looking and listening instead. Being humble. Helping with things in the community unrelated to the project. Sitting and yarning.

Our culture goes for the big things when dealing with Mob – huge sums of money, national policy rollouts, large-scale programs... but like this tiny stone blade

Kyle is holding, it's the little things that matter to Mob, that lead to the big things. This stone is the start of a process that creates a bark canoe that can take you a long way indeed. It was through canoe making, and the subsequent journey, we achieved the most important aspect of the project – sharing knowledge across generations.

"In your culture knowledge is power,"
Kyle told me, "in ours, knowledge is responsibility."

I paddled with Kyle's third son, Bijang, whose name means "little", appropriately enough. If we tried to do anything other than little movements, one of us would go overboard, as we did on the first day in Shark Bay, so named for the sheer number of bull sharks that hunt stingrays there. Needless to say, we were good at getting back in quickly.

Our vessel became a metaphor for the two cultures living in this country. It isn't always easy paddling together, and a successful journey relies on trust, communication, mutual responsibility. When we get it right, as Bijang and I eventually did, the feeling of our vessel moving through the water is sublime.

We were able to do so due to the concept of *gogaun* and *banaam* – older and younger brother – that is at the heart of the Mob's culture. *Gogaun's* job is to teach *banaam*, *banaam's* job is to give *gogaun* the tools he needs to do that. It's not a hierarchical structure, both have equal importance. Despite being half my age, Bijang was *gogaun* who steered our canoe; as *banaam* I simply had to paddle - provide strength to help him do his job. It is why another meaning of the word *banaam* is 'strong'.

"This project is a microcosm of what can happen in this country," Kyle said, "if people will binnangu and nyalangi...if they will listen, and see."

I encourage everyone to come to this exhibition, to *binnangu*, and *nyalangi*. **Benjamin Allmon**

In The Grey: The Saltwater Story, Benjamin Allmon and David Kelly, The Boyd Gallery from 2 December 2022 to 26 February 2023



TWEED artifacts

FRIENDS

Tweed Regional Gallery and Margaret Olley Art Centre Inc.
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FROM THE DIRECTOR

For those of you who are able to visit the Gallery, there's so much to see over the next few months, I know you'll enjoy your time here. The Gallery, and our beautiful Tweed region really is a destination, so take a little time to enjoy all that the Gallery, Murwillumbah and its surrounds have on offer.

Over 250 guests enjoyed the opening and the announcements of the winners of the Gallery's inaugural Wollumbin Art Award (WAA) and the Wollumbin Youth Art Award (WYAA) last weekend. It was such a happy atmosphere, excitement and anticipation in the air, the finalists and guests all knew to hear from our judges with their announcements of winners. The guest judge of the biennial non-acquisitive prize was curator, and editor of VAULT magazine, Alison Kubler.

Byron Shire-based artist Amber Wallis was awarded the \$15,000 prize in the WAA with a richly complex painting of her daughter entitled *Ivy With Eyes*. Amber also won a two week residency at the Gallery's Nancy Fairfax Artist in Residence Studio.

Alison awarded the \$10,000 WAA Bundjalung Award to Tweed-based Bundjalung artist Michael Philip for his painting *Pearly Shells*. This work honours Michael's mother, aunty and grandmother. As part of his award, Michael will also exhibit in a solo show at the Gallery during 2023. The Bundjalung Award was sponsored by the Tweed Regional Gallery Foundation Ltd.

Artist Mia Forrest from the Byron Shire took out the \$5,000 Emerging Artist Award for her video *Red Flowering Gum, in motion*, a mesmerizing work that plays with the tradition of still life. This Award was supported by Foundation members Leanne and Greg Tong-Lyon.

The WYAA was wholeheartedly supported by the Friends of the Gallery, and looks wonderful exhibited in the entrance to the Gallery. There's no doubting the creativity of young artists living in our region. The Friends of the Gallery acknowledge that it is so important to encourage young people in their art practice and creativity.

The WAA and the WYAA attracted nearly 700 entries from across the region, with 105 artworks selected for the finalist exhibitions. Congratulations to all the finalists and winners! The WAA is on exhibition until 20 November, the WYAA until 27 November.

Artist Michael Cook's work is well-represented in the Gallery's collection. His series *The Mission* is one series which we have not shown before in its entirety, so I am delighted that we will show this stunning suite in the Anthony Gallery from 21 October 2022 through until 30 April 2023. *The Mission* traces the journey of an Aboriginal woman from her homeland to a Christian mission where she arrives in handcuffs. At the mission, she is introduced to Western clothing, food rations, tobacco, and a husband. This powerful series tells her story through beautiful photographs. In the final work in the series, she is represented returning to Country, which the artist says is a symbol of 'the hope for a future in which the resilience and dreams of Aboriginal people remain unbroken against the odds'. Michael generously donated this suite to the Gallery's collection in 2016.

The Gallery's summer holiday program Art Making for Everyone will see the Gallery Foyer filled with flowers, inspired by the paintings on display in the Margaret Olley Art Centre's *The Art of Flowers: Margaret Olley*. Families and visitors can draw, cut and colour flowers inspired by Olley's beautifully colourful flower paintings. Stay tuned to the Gallery's website to keep up to date with the events, exhibitions and learning activities that all add to the Gallery's dynamic programs.

Until next time, **Susi**



Amber WALLIS
Ivy With Eyes 2021
oil on linen
Artist represented by
Nicholas Thompson
Gallery, Melbourne



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Once again the Friends Committee is enjoying meeting other Friends at Gallery openings and providing the drinks service. We've also resumed New Friends Morning Teas and it is a delight to meet new members, introduce them to the Committee

and invite them to participate in our service. The highlight of the morning is Susi's tour of the Gallery including a visit to the storeroom. The size of the Gallery's collection is not obvious to the general public and this special treat exposes the collection's depth to new members.

We also hosted a morning tea for members of the Lismore Gallery Friends in September. This was a very valuable sharing of experiences and issues faced by both galleries. These meetings will continue as part of our ongoing support for Lismore Gallery Friends. Janice Jones will liaise on our behalf with the Lismore Friends.

Twenty-two Friends enjoyed a delightful time in Canberra in October. The Cressida Campbell exhibition at the National Gallery is not to be missed. The National Portrait Gallery's collection is impressive, its variety of subjects, styles and techniques made it well worth the visit. Thanks to Gay Taylor we were met by the General Manager of the Arboretum, who explained the history and technical details of operating such an amazing gift to the Nation. An unexpected trip to the Glassworks was interesting, and we were all moved by the Sunset Ceremony of Remembrance at the National War Memorial. This visit took a lot of organising and with the help of Kylie from All About Travel at South Tweed Heads, all went smoothly.

We were very happy to support the new Wollumbin Youth Art Awards and it was with great pleasure that we presented cash prizes to the winners. How satisfying to know we have such talented and inspired young artists developing their talents in our community.

The Friends raffles are a great means of fundraising, and we owe our thanks to Committee member Martin Sullivan who spends hours at the Gallery selling raffle tickets. A framed print of Margaret Olley's *Hawkesbury Wildflowers* was our most recent prize which was won by Stuart Manley of Port Stephens.

On behalf of the Friends' Committee, a happy and safe Christmas and New Year to you all. **Penny Hall** – President



Lindy LEE
Moonlight Deities 2019 – 2020
paper, Chinese Ink
image courtesy the artist, © the artist

Flowing Everywhere and Always

Lindy Lee (b. 1954, Brisbane) is one of Australia's leading contemporary artists whose practice explores her Chinese ancestry through Taoism and Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism – philosophies that see humanity and nature as inextricably linked. Her upcoming exhibition in the Temporary exhibitions space, *Flowing Everywhere and Always*, mediates on the concept of the rain in Lee's adopted home of the Northern Rivers.

"It wasn't until moving to the Northern Rivers almost 8 years ago, that I finally felt as though I had arrived home. The majesty of this region proffers daily observation of the horizon — that mysterious liminal realm that exists between heaven and earth. A practice which has become paramount to my work, and also my life."

Moving away from the personal and representational to abstract compositions with cosmic reference, Lee's practice has continually evolved over the years. Her painterly techniques and experimental processes yield impressive sculptural forms that create immersive experiences for viewers.

"Although I started out examining issues of identity and belonging, my practice has since expanded into the examination of one's place within the Cosmos — that inextricable matrix of being to which we all belong. When I invoke the rain and the fire in my work, I am calling forth this very profound connection of reciprocity and interdependence".

Using fire and water as mark-making tools, Lee transforms her materials organically by burning holes or allowing the rain to saturate paper. These processes emphasise her presence in the moment and create synergies between her artistic process and the immediacy of now.

In 2020 the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney held a survey exhibition of her work titled *Moon in a Dew Drop*, curated by MCA Director, Elizabeth Ann Macgregor OBE and supported by Associate Curator Megan Robson. The retrospective exhibition spanned 40 years of Lee's extensive career, drawing on her experience of living between two cultures and showcasing key works alongside recent installations and sculptures that explore physical expressions of Buddhist spiritual practices. The large paper-based work *Moonlight Deities* (2019) included in the retrospective will feature in her upcoming exhibition at the Tweed Regional Gallery in December.

Made up of 31 perforated paper discs with moon crater-like shadows falling across the floor, the immersive sculpture has an otherworldliness to it that creates a sense of liminality and connects back to Ch'an Buddhism - themes of continual interest to the artist in recent years.

'The work I've been doing for the past decade invokes the more elemental aspects of existence', says Lee, whose symbolic use of the moon references birth and death and reminds us the duality of devastation and beauty co-exist.

Her exhibition is an important celebration of one of Australia's leading artists who draws inspiration from, and calls Northern NSW home.

Tina Wilson - Curator – Exhibitions

Flowing Everywhere and Always, Lindy Lee, Tweed Regional Gallery, from 2 December to 26 February 2023.



Shanti DES FOURS
Stories I've Been Told 2022
digital print on archival paper.

Stories I've Been Told

Shanti Des Fours is the first student to be awarded the Tweed Regional Gallery - Byron School of Art (BSA) 3rd Year Graduate Award, and *Stories I've Been Told* is the artist's first solo exhibition. Yet whilst Shanti is an emerging artist, she is also an artist who brings a lot of life experience and knowledge to her practice. As well as completing three years of study at the Byron School of Art, Shanti holds a Bachelor's degree in Art History from the University of Queensland.

In *Stories I've Been Told* Shanti explores themes of cultural identity and belonging through an examination of the artist's memories of a childhood growing up in an alternative religious community in rural NSW. Twenty-five years later, Shanti is seeking to understand how this formative experience has shaped who she has become.

Shanti's early memories of temple rituals began as an entry-point for both examining and unravelling aspects of the 'self'. When she realised there was an affinity between visual arts and ritual, she knew she had found the visual language she was looking for to communicate this grappling process.

"In religion, rituals allow the faithful to express and affirm their beliefs. And there I was as a little girl, questioning whether I believed the dogma I was performing. For thousands of years they've helped us define our place in the world, and yet my experience of ritual is my earliest memory of feeling like an 'outsider'. A western girl with a Hindu prayer for a name being ushered to the front of the temple to take my turn - throat tight, eyes wide, back tense, doing it all wrong. Questioning whether or not I had a right to these gods, to my own name".

To investigate these themes Shanti works across multiple disciplines including photography, painting, video, printmaking and installation. In *Stories I've Been Told* Shanti presents a series of self-portrait photographs in which the artist has captured herself performing half-forgotten religious rituals by rote. The resulting images present an uncertain and fragmented version of self. Her form is frequently lost entirely, leaving nothing but the visual echoes of the costumes and paraphernalia of her past.

Whilst Shanti had a general idea of what work she wanted to produce for this series, the process involved a lot of trial and error using borrowed equipment in her living room before finding another setting for the photographs that will be on display at the Gallery.

"It was important to me that I be the subject as well as the photographer, so that added some challenges", Shanti notes. This required her to operate the lights and the camera, alone on stage in an empty theatre, dressed in clothing she hadn't seen in decades. "I'm running back and forth between the camera and my 'mark' on the floor, slipping and sliding on the fabrics and drapes. I spent about a week there, shifting between 'under-qualified photographer' and 'uncertain ritualist'". Shanti describes this process as a "constant oscillation between a profound meditative therapeutic process and a slightly hysterical *What am I doing?*! comedy skit".

Meredith Cusack - Public Programs Curator

Stories I've Been told, Shanti Des Fours, Tweed Regional Gallery, from Friday 25 November 2022 to Sunday 26 February 2023.

Wollumbin Youth Art Award – 2022

We have been delighted with the talent and creativity of young people in our region seen in this year's inaugural Wollumbin Youth Art Award.

The Award is generously sponsored by the Friends of the Tweed Regional Gallery and Margaret Olley Art Centre. It includes four age categories 5–8 years with prize money of \$100, 9–12 years with prize money of \$150, 13–15 years with prize money of \$250 and ages 16–18 years, \$500.

This year we were so pleased Murwillumbah artist Tamsin Ainsley was able to bring her expertise to the judging after artist Hiromi Tango had to decline due to unforeseen circumstances. Tamsin Ainsley is an award winning and internationally published illustrator. Tamsin gave insights and words of encouragement when selecting the works. Thank you to President of the Friends, Penny Hall for presenting the certificates and awards on the night. Thanks also to Janice Jones, Vice President for being on the pre-selection panel. Janice provided clarity and insight in the pre-selection of artworks, advocating for important issues including gender identity and climate. The Award attracted 196 entries, we pre-selected 45 finalists, and the winners are...

5-8 years: Clara Polson, *Best friends, rainbows and cane fires* 2022, oil pastel and watercolour. Tamsin Ainslie commented on Clara's thoughtful placement of elements and use of colour, creating a beautiful painting full of joy.

9-12 years: Kya Lansom, created *Muppet in the garden* 2022, watercolour on watercolour paper. Tamsin observed that the artwork was very striking with a good use of colour, composition and painted with careful consideration.

13-15 years: Ava Berry Voce, *Nanna* 2022, coloured pencil on paper. Tamsin remarked that Ava's artwork was highly skilled and well thought out, exhibiting a high attention to detail.

16-18 years: Elsie Biles, *The Bird Bonnet* 2022, acrylic, watercolour and pencil on paper. Tamsin noted that Elsie's work exhibited a very clever use of colour, showing a good knowledge of colour theory.

Highly Commended young artists were: Leonardo Ruby, 5-8 years category with *Leo's World* 2022. 9-12 years, Sadie Eddy, *The place of pelicans* 2022. 13-15 years Naomi Jeffery, *Rare Royalty* 2022, and 16-18 years, Emma Dillon-Lee, with *Man's Best Friend* 2021.

In my role as Education and Audience Development Officer I asked the young finalists to share their thoughts on a range of topics. A selection of the responses are as follows:

What was the highlight for you about being in the award?
~ 'The joy of being 20 in 400 to be picked as a finalist.'
~ 'It was a privilege for my artwork to be hung in a gallery, where the public can see my work.'
~ 'The highlight for me was seeing other young artists' works. Being a

Anti-clockwise from top left:

Clara POLSON
Best friends, rainbows and cane fires 2022
oil pastel and watercolour



Kya LANSOM
Muppet in the garden 2022
watercolour on watercolour paper



Ava Berry VOCE
Nanna 2022
coloured pencil on paper

Elsie BILES
The Bird Bonnet 2022
acrylic, watercolour and pencil on paper.

finalist meant I was able to come and meet other young people and how they interpret the world around them.'
~ 'People appreciating my drawing.'

Choose an artwork (not your own) and tell us why you like it?
~ 'Relics of Anagapesis' 'The depth of their work is amazing, and they convey dark and more Taboo topics.'
~ 'The animation 'Sadness' because it has Lego in it.'
~ 'I choose Muppet in the Garden' because I remember drawing with the artist when she was younger. It was amazing to see how far she has come from the two-year-old I knew.'

Have you been to the Tweed Regional Gallery before?
What do you like about it?
~ 'I love the views and the atmosphere, the diverse art styles, every turn or room has a new style (Although I particularly love the paintings of people.)'
~ 'I loved the Animals as Object section and its comment on its complex relationship with animals and conservation.'
~ 'I have visited the Galley before. I like how the house of Margaret Olley is a perfect replica.'

What type of things would you like to see or do here?
Tell us your favourite art style, medium, artist and tell us what activities you would like to do at the Gallery?
~ 'I would like to do a Margaret Olley inspired painting workshop.'
~ 'I like digital artworks and I would like to see more in this genre.'
~ 'Performance art, sculptures, contemporary challenging art'

Who did you most want to see your artwork and why?
~ 'Nanna and Poppa because I knew they would say "Wow, that is amazing."
~ 'My grandma, who has a passion for art'
~ 'The person I really wanted to show my work to is my sister, who was the subject of my piece. I wanted to show her, she has always been exuberant and excitable, and I find this one of my favourite qualities in her. She is my favourite person and I wanted it to be a tribute to her.'

After seeing the youth art award, what stands out to you as an important message that young people are saying to the audience?
~ 'That we should care for our environment.'
~ 'That we need to take notice of the little things that bring us joy.'
~ 'The theme I recognise across a few works is that family and self-awareness is important to young people. I think this is a very important message that shows the high emotional intelligence in youth.'

There is no doubt that the artworks have been well received at the launch of the Wollumbin Youth Art Award (WYAA) and the Wollumbin Art Award (WAA). Tweed Shire Mayor Chris Cherry made note in her speech that 'it was inspired to have both awards together,' seeing the work of young people being celebrated side by side with the adult artists showed 'aspiration and inspiration going both ways' in our community. We would like to thank The Friends of the Gallery for the support in making this award possible.

Claire Conroy - Education and Audience Development Officer
WYAA exhibition, Tweed Regional Gallery, ends 27 November 2022

