Reconciliation Week Exhibition

Presented by

The Birrunga Gallery CCDP Cohort

J E M M A
S T E W A R T

Referendum
2024
acrylic on canvas
40.6 x 121.9cm
$675

This artwork shows a broad, sunlit mountainside with strewn trees scattered throughout. This image is a representation of Australian land and culture, and symbolism of the community. On the bottom of the painting is a pit, this pit serves as a metaphor for the tension that arose during the referendum and illustrates how it can negatively impact a community, similarly to how an entire ecosystem is affected by change.

J E M M A
S T E W A R T

Unity
2024
acrylic on canvas
30.5 x 30.5cm
$395

This painting depicts the value of communal cohesion. The bright colours are a symbol of light and comfort that can be seen within a strong unified community, and the circles scattered throughout the painting are representations of individuals and their different roles in society. The relationships and connections between these individuals, represented by the black line, show how everyone can help provide for and benefit from each other.

J E M M A
S T E W A R T

Connection
2024
acrylic on canvas
60.9 x 91.4cm
$795

This piece of art illustrates the relationship between ancestors and their descendants. The artwork's central lines reflect a flowing river of connection that enable us to speak with or interact with our ancestors. The circles that are dispersed across the artwork symbolise the ancestors themselves and their constant presence.

J E M M A
S T E W A R T

Action
2024
acrylic on canvas
30.5 x 30.5cm
$490

This picture is a visualisation of the action that took place in order to protect sacred Aboriginal land and traditions from colonisation. The circle in the centre of the canvas represents the elders and ancestors who acted against the invasion of sacred Aboriginal places to protect the 60,000-year-old sites and traditions.

J E M M A S T E W A R T

Strength
2024
acrylic on canvas
60.9 x 91.4cm
$830

This painting represents the strength that being on country can give, and the deep connection that gives a sense of peace. The flowing water depicted in the centre of the painting symbolises growth and life, while the scattered fiery orange/ red patches on the canvas serve as depictions of aboriginal traditions and culture. The yarning circles dispersed on the canvas represent community and the support they provide.

T I E S H A M A R T I N

Growth
2024
acrylic on canvas
62x46cm
$1500

This painting tells the story of the spirits taking care of country. On the painting you can see the outlining of the Clarence River, which is a significant place for our Mob down south. You can also see the emu nests representing emu country. The circles in the middle represent the islands along the Clarence River. You can also see the spirits and their shiny eyes, they are our protectors creating new waterways, protecting animals and tree, and guiding us through life. Butterflies tell us and let us know about growth, birth and death.

TIESHA MARTIN

Recuperate
2024
acrylic on canvas
40.5x51cm
$1750

This piece was painted while I was in quite a dark place. My mind kept going to the spirits and our connection to them and how they can guide us through our darkest moments. Having that connection to my ancestors is what keeps me accountable and connected to culture. This piece symbolises my ancestors guiding myself and my family through tough times. The symbols represent guiding spirits and watching over us and protecting us.

TIESHA MARTIN

Jacaranda Festival
2024
acrylic on canvas
91x121cm
$1950

This piece is in celebration of the Jacaranda season in Grafton. This festival is held each year and held a special place in my heart for the Jacaranda Festival in 2023. The community came together and celebrated the season of the Jacaranda and the Grafton streets were filled with purple. In the painting it speaks about the community coming from far and wide to attend this day and holds cultural significance each year. When people think of Grafton they usually first think of Jacaranda trees.

T I E S H A
M A R T I N

Ochre Rings
2024
acrylic on canvas
46x46cm
$1850

This piece is in celebration of Ochre. This piece is story of the Ochre colours and their significance in colours and ceremonies. During ceremony Ochre is often used. You can find all different colour Ochre around Australia, depending on the land you stand on different colours are more prosperous in certain areas. The ochre rings represent the celebration into becoming a women.

T I E S H A
M A R T I N

Stolen Tradition
2024
acrylic on canvas
91x121cm
$2500

This piece is about weaving. A stolen tradition. This was not allowed to be practised by our older generation as a way to wipe out our traditional ways. The practise has come back strongly and more of our women are wanting/needing to learn. It is important to teach weaving to our future generation to hold that strong cultural connection to our culture and keep connected to our Elders and our ancestors. Weaving is such a beautiful part of our culture. The colours I see in these baskets are what inspired me with these colour choices.

J E S S I C A
S K E E N

Back to Roots
2024
acrylic on canvas
101.6 x 152.4cm
$4900

"Back to Roots" is a captivating artwork that serves as a visual reminder to the timeless wisdom and cultural heritage of our living elders. Through rich symbolism, vibrant colours, and intricate detailing, the painting evokes a deep sense of reverence for the knowledge and traditions passed down through generations.

Embedded within this piece are subtle motifs that speak to the importance of intergenerational knowledge exchange. Through gestures of storytelling, teaching, and listening, the elders impart their wisdom to the younger generation, who receive it with open hearts and minds. This exchange symbolises the continuity of cultural heritage and the profound impact it has on shaping identity and community resilience.

"Back to Roots," encourages viewers to reflect on their own connections to their heritage. By embracing our roots, we strengthen not only ourselves but also the coming generations.

In essence, "Back to Roots" celebrates the enduring legacy of Indigenous knowledge.
Through this artwork, we are reminded of the timeless wisdom that resides within our elders and the profound impact it can have on shaping our collective future ensuring that Indigenous culture continues to thrive and evolve in the modern world.

J E S S I C A
S K E E N

Change
2024
acrylic on canvas
54.5cm x 69.5cm
$5200

"Change" delves into the profound, yet often overlooked, loss experienced within our society—the loss of an unborn child. Through this artwork, the artist brings to light the unspoken grief that accompanies such a loss, acknowledging the magnitude of its impact.

The piece serves as a poignant exploration through this sorrow, encapsulating the essence of what might have been—a cherished "what if?" that lingers in the heart. Through delicate strokes and emotive imagery, the artwork invites viewers to contemplate the complexities surrounding this often-taboo subject.

The narrative behind "Change" underscores the importance of recognizing and addressing the various circumstances that lead to such losses. By openly discussing this issue and integrating it into our collective dialogue, the artist advocates for deep healing and communal support during what is undoubtedly one of life's most challenging experiences.

Through this artwork, the artist aims to initiate conversations that foster understanding, empathy, and solidarity, offering solace to those who have experienced this profound loss and encouraging society to embrace the journey toward healing and acceptance.

J E S S I C A
S K E E N

Crying out Loud
2024
acrylic on canvas
92x92cm
$4500

"Crying Out Loud" is a profound artistic representation that embodies the imperative to vocalize messages of healing, renewal, and progressive strategies, urging us to not only speak these words but also to take concrete actions that bring about tangible and transformative change for our indigenous peoples and broader communities.

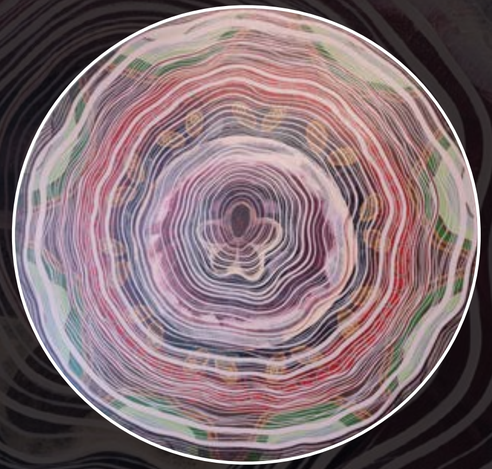
J E S S I C A
S K E E N

Renewal
2024
acrylic on canvas
101.6x152.4cm
$6900

Renewal is an artwork that exemplifies the profound wisdom of Aboriginal Elders and their communities, showcasing their deep understanding of slow burns and meticulous techniques aimed at nurturing and safeguarding our land from avoidable disasters. This piece invites a dialogue on the integration of such strategies into broader discussions, fostering collaboration among diverse cultures to collectively steward and enhance our natural environment.

J E S S I C A
S K E E N

Solid / Grounded
2024
acrylic on canvas
120cm
$8300



This artwork embodies a profound narrative of interconnectedness, rooted in the pursuit of reconciliation. At its heart lies a potent symbol: a small eucalyptus seed, epitomizing the transformative potential inherent in even the most modest beginnings. It serves as a testament to the collective power of listening, speaking, and unified action, even amidst formidable challenges.

The concentric rings within the tree carry dual significance. Firstly, they serve as a stark reminder of the consequences of neglecting our environment, illustrating the dangerous path of exploitation devoid of consideration for the delicate balance of life around us, a legacy that rumbles across future generations. Secondly, they symbolize the intricate journey of growth, reminiscent of the repetitive rhythms of nature's seasons. Delving deeper into these rings reveals a profound beauty, a testament to the resilience and perseverance required to withstand the tests of time and nurture a shared purpose.

As we contemplate the rich tapestry of lessons woven into this piece, we are challenged to recognize our capacity to effect change, no matter how modest our beginnings. Just as a small seed holds the potential for monumental transformation, so too do we possess the power to sow seeds of positive change along our journey.

K A N E
B R U N J E S

State of mind
2024
acrylic on canvas
40x60cm
POA

With a definition of healing being "the process of making or becoming sound or healthy again", this work gives an insight to moments of navigating a rollercoaster like mind frame and ending up at some point down the track back on a steady roll.

This alludes to working through what feels like a slip of control on the mind that might seem long lasting and analysing this in the process to come to an understanding that aims to bring about a healthier mindset.

The artwork captures aspects of this journey; from feeling composed, to spiralling out, and then back to being of sound mind again.

BIRRUNGA
WIRADYURI

Bubil (Feather)
2024
acrylic on canvas
152cm x 61cm
POA

Feathers have always been a constant in my life. I've heard people saying that they find feathers. It's my experience that feathers find us. They are a series of reminders that our Ancestors walk with us and always accompany us on our Cultural journeys. In this instance I've produced a work that speaks to many aspects of my Cultural journey, that includes our sacred trees and the Cultural practices of we Wiradyuri in regard to our trees.

It speaks also to our Cultural practices with crystals and stones as well as our sacred ochres. It speaks to the connection to 'yirung', my Totem the Sky and to my personal Lore as well as referring to our central Wiradyuri Lore, Yindyamarra. It includes some of our Spiritual colours and references the red and yellow tailed Black Cockatoo's who hold significance to us in matters of when we head home to Ancestors.

Mostly though, this piece honours the memory of a beloved Elder and senior Loreman who I was blessed to know and learn from in this life, who has gone home to Ancestors but who's humour, patience, kindness, wisdom and example remains with me and helps me daily as I navigate my own Cultural journey. The five band crosshatch running counter clockwise around the edges of the canvas refers again to Yindyamarra as well as to the sacred smoke of ceremony.

THESE CULTURAL WORKS ARE PROUDLY PRESENTED BY BIRRUNGA GALLERY.

All works are produced by the cohort of Indigenous Australian artists who make up Birrunga Gallery's Cultural Creative Development Program, now in it's 5th year.

We practice Cultural Story Telling; All works communicate Cultural Narratives. We encourage you to consider and immerse yourself in the powerful stories and symbolisms behind each piece.

The artworks displayed are available to purchase through our online shop.

BIRRUNGA GALLERY