



**LOOKING
FORWARD
LOOKING
BACK**

150
years
of
Mackay

1862 - 2012

Donna Robinson
Donnielle Fatnowna
Heather Walker
Irene Coburn
Kelvyn James Cunnington
Leo Scott
Leonie Wood
Lesley Kane
Margaret Burgess
Ngaio Lenz
Rosemary Payne
Ryan Vella
Tony Druery
Tracey Johnson
Wanda Bennett

Aerial view of Mackay
taken from a box kite, 1915
by Andrew Brough Milne.
Courtesy of Mackay Regional
Council Library Service





14 July - 25 August
2012

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Greenmount was named by Captain John Mackay in 1862 when he camped on site, the first European to do so. Fifty years later in 1912, settler Albert Cook bought the land to breed cattle, and built Greenmount Homestead in 1915. Albert Cook was the first permanent resident on the historic property. Albert Cook established the first Aberdeen Angus cattle stud in Queensland and son Thomas Albert Cook carried on the business.

**FOREWORD BY
ANNA THURGOOD**

Artspace Mackay is very proud to present the exhibition *Looking forward, looking back: 150 years of Mackay* in this, Mackay's sesquicentennial year. Whilst it may have seemed an easier option to present a chronological journey through Mackay's visual art history from 1862 until the present day, I feel that a more innovative way was required to explore the myriad stories of the unique individuals who have contributed in great and small ways over the years, as well as events that impacted so heavily upon our region.

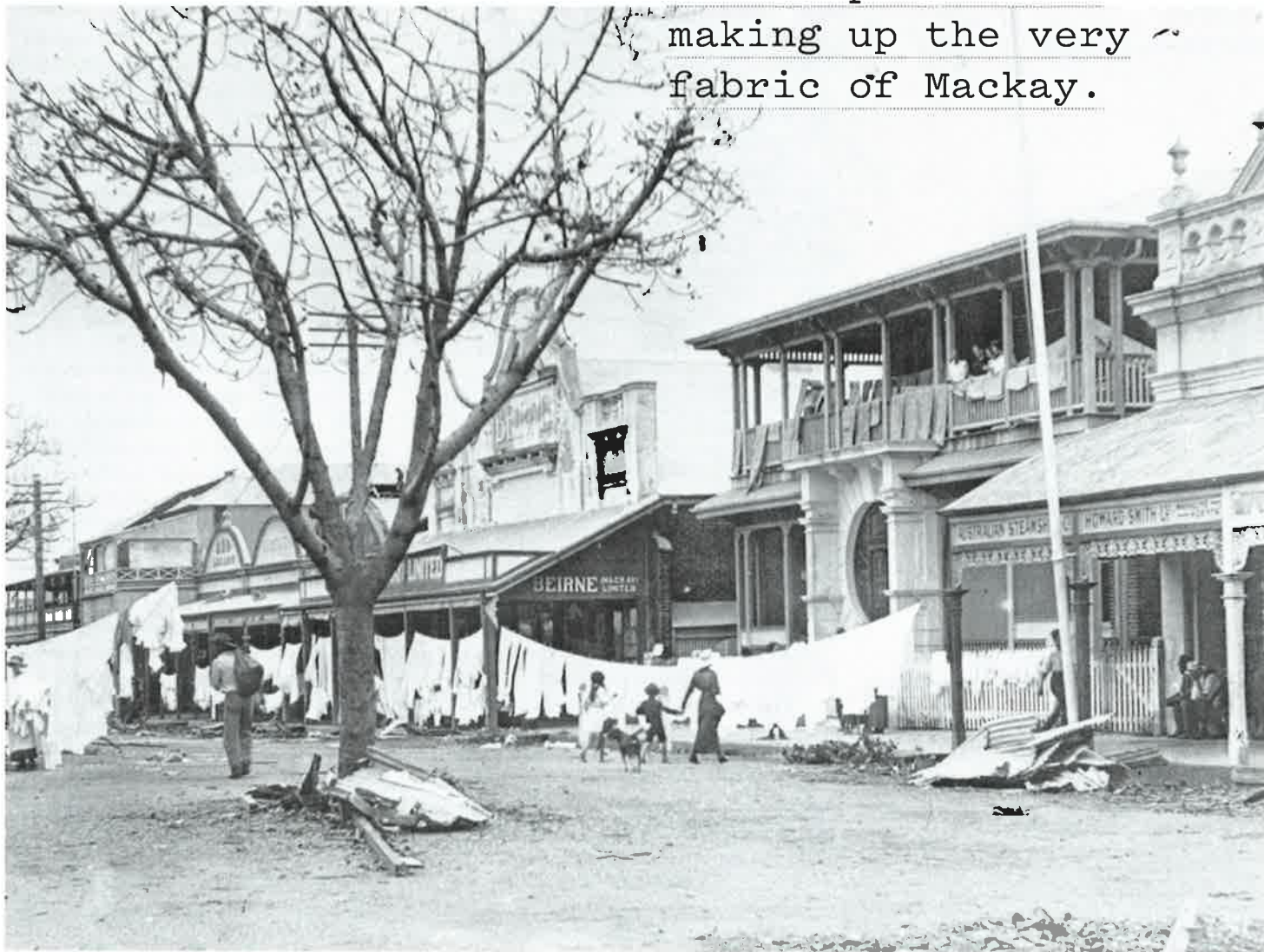
It was curator, and Mackay local, Tracey Heathwood's idea to find objects, artefacts, photographs and paintings that would adequately represent these stories, and then to match each piece of the city's history to a local artist. This innovative approach enables the bringing together of the past, the present and the future, and offers great insight into the thriving and vital community that Mackay was, and will continue to be. These stories are the warp and weft making up the very fabric of Mackay. Just as these threads give fabric its substance, strength, and beauty, so too the people, places and events depicted in this exhibition add texture and complexity to Mackay's unique history.

There are many acknowledgements and thank-yous to make. Firstly, Artspace Mackay acknowledges the lenders of all the artefacts: Mackay Museum, Pioneer Valley Museum, Sarina Historical Society, Mackay Maltese Club, Greenmount Homestead, Rockhampton Grammar School and Mackay Regional Council. We also wish to acknowledge the State Library of Queensland, and Ms Donnielle Fatnowna for the loan of a significant personal item.

Artspace Mackay would particularly like to thank all fifteen artists who have worked with us to make this exhibition a reality. Each of them have taken the project to heart, producing meaningful works of art in a personal response to each artefact, photograph or painting. To the exhibition's curator, Tracey Heathwood, I would like to convey Artspace Mackay's deep admiration and appreciation. Tracey has created a rich and fascinating exhibition with her keen eye for the authentic, the quirky, and the heartfelt. By doing this, she has authored a kind of love letter to Mackay, to which she is so deeply attached. Her love for this city and its surrounds shines through and reminds us all what a wonderful, yet complex, place we live in.

I sincerely hope you enjoy the exhibition.

These stories are
the warp and weft
making up the very
fabric of Mackay.



**ESSAY BY
TRACEY HEATHWOOD**

On the 11th January 1862 an expedition party from northern NSW, led by John Mackay, drove a herd of cattle on to 'Green Mount Knoll' (now known as Greenmount Homestead) and established the first settlement in the Mackay District.

The camp was initially comprised of two tarpaulins on poles and a single gunyah¹. From these humble beginnings as an isolated rural outpost, the township of Mackay has certainly 'come a long way down the track', exploding into a humming, vibrant regional city, which is home to more than 120,000 residents today.

In developing an exhibition to mark the 150th anniversary of Mackay's settlement, I wanted to reflect on the past and pay homage to those persons and events that have shaped our cultural identity. But, I also felt the need to 'look forward' and envisage a future for the Mackay region, built on lessons learnt from the past. The exhibition concept that emerged was this: 15 local artists would create new artworks, especially for Artspace Mackay's exhibition, taking inspiration from and reflecting on 15 historical artefacts, sourced from both private collections and those housed by the region's museums and historical societies.

The results are what I present to you in the exhibition *Looking forward, looking back: 150 years of Mackay*. It is a wonderful collaboration between 15 talented local artists and 15 eclectic, beautiful historical objects, each one telling a unique story of Mackay's past, present and/or future. Each artist's current practice and their areas of interest were carefully considered when 'matching' them with a historical artefact to respond to. And the historical objects themselves were chosen for their ability to both inspire creativity and to convey perhaps some of the quieter, lesser-known stories that shaped Mackay.

The impact of Western settlement on Indigenous/Aboriginal inhabitants is touched on in the work of Heather Walker (p16), a local Aboriginal/Australian South Sea Islander artist. In her work entitled *Mireum*, Heather tells us of a practice not widely known, where Aboriginal children were left by the cane fields for South Sea Islander workers, or Kanakas, to take into their families. Many of these children went back to the South Pacific islands with the families who were deported in 1910.

Danielle Fatnowna's (p14) work *Fractured* also references the fallout for South Sea Islander families, after the initial 'black-birding' practices of the late 1800's and the ensuing deportation of Kanakas and their families in 1910. It is interesting to note that 2013 will mark the 150th anniversary of 'blackbirding' in Australia (the first Kanakas arriving in Mackay in 1865, just three years after Mackay's settlement).

Migrant communities have played a significant role in the shaping of this region. The Mackay Maltese community remains today one of the largest concentrations of Maltese descendants in Australia², after Maltese immigrants settled in the area in the 1920s to work in the sugar cane farms, alongside Kanakas. Artist Ryan Vella (p34), himself of Maltese descent, presents us with a unique interpretation of an exquisite 'Baby Jesus' wax icon, which belongs to the Mackay Maltese Club. The icon beautifully conveys the importance of the Catholic religion to the Maltese community.

Mackay's strong ties with sister city Matsuura, Japan are also represented in this exhibition, with local artist Leonie Wood (p24) responding to one of a pair of traditional Japanese kites, presented as gifts to Mackay City Council in 2001 by a delegation from Matsuura. For over 20 years, delegates from both Mackay and Matsuura have travelled to their respective sister city, to strengthen relationships between the two regions and to learn more about each other's culture. The kites are said to provide protection from evil and good luck in life.

Many of the stories encountered in researching this exhibition were of individuals who contributed in some way to their communities. The state-wide 1911 sugar industry strike saw as many as 400 striking sugar industry workers and their families camping out in schools and makeshift tents in the Finch Hatton district. In 1915, Mrs Burke (proprietor of the Royal Hotel in Finch Hatton) was presented with a hand-painted certificate by strikers, in recognition of her generosity towards the striking families. Pioneer Valley artist Lesley Kane (p26) pays homage to this local identity and reflects on the 'fighting spirit' of the strikers involved in the campaign for better work conditions.

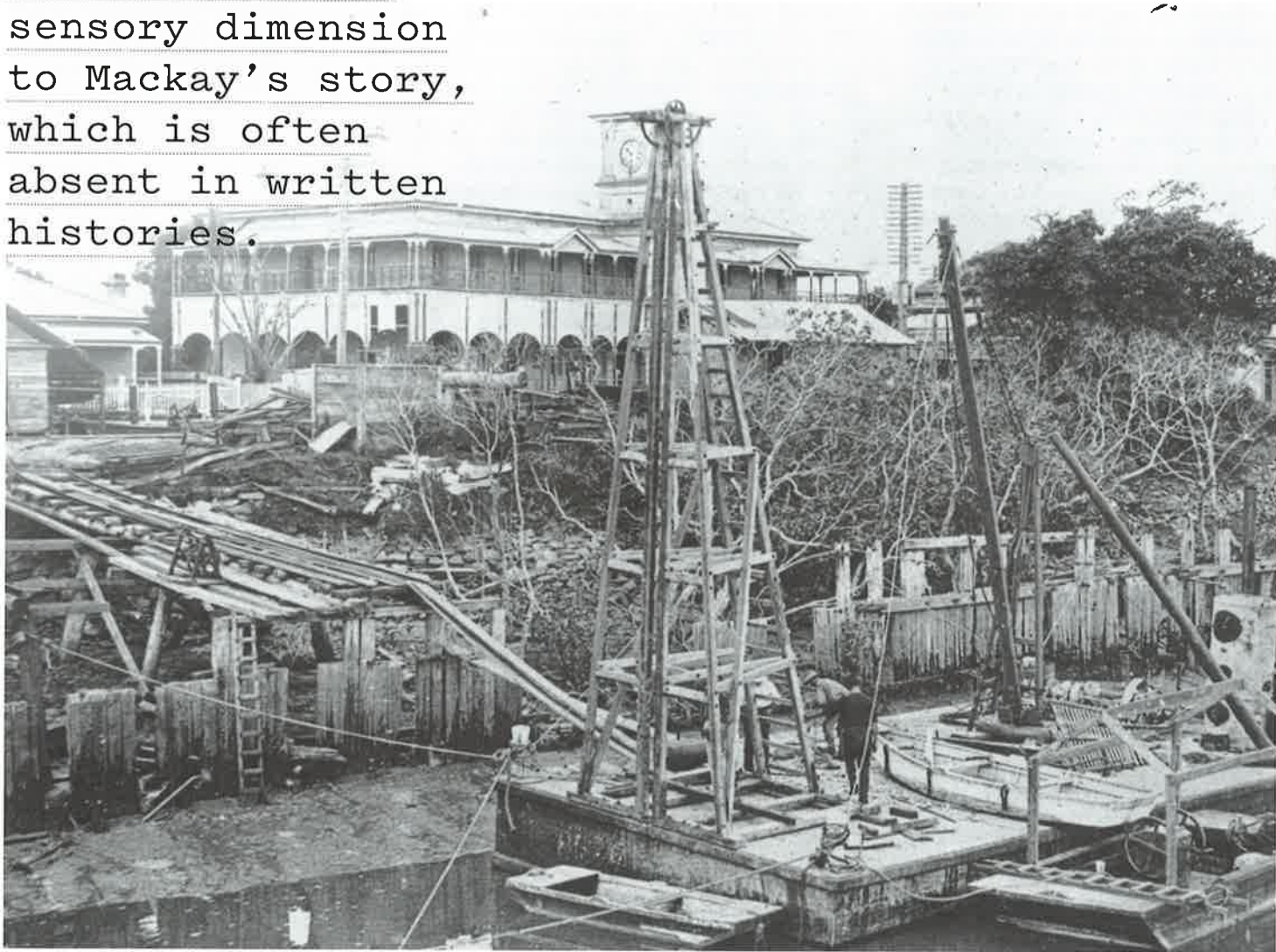
Bob Campbell was a bootmaker in Sarina in the 1900s. He was also the local SP Bookmaker and ran a two-up circle from the back of his bootmaking store. Described as a loveable larrikin, Bob's two-up circle provided the men of Sarina with a place to socialise and to tell 'tall tales'. Sarina artist Donna Robinson (p12) has created a piece of video art that takes the audience on an imaginative, non-literal journey of discovery into the life and times of Bob Campbell.

The story of Ram Chandra, a well-known local identity who dedicated his life to the research of snakes in our region, particularly the taipan, is encapsulated in the work of local artist Tracey Johnson (p38). Ram Chandra passed away in 1998. Tracey was particularly taken with the story of Ram Chandra riding his bicycle to Mackay Sugar to have his freshly-milked taipan venom processed in the centrifuge, so that it could be sent to Melbourne for the making of antivenene.

Local 'living treasure' Gloria Arrow joined the Cook household, at Greenmount Homestead, as a maid/housekeeper in 1958 and she still resides there, although retired from duties. In responding to the original sewing machine of the Cook household and accompanying table and chair, artist Rosemary Payne (p32) pays homage to the many hours Gloria spent sitting at the sewing machine, mending clothes for the Cook family.

Mackay has had its share of adversity and disasters to overcome. In 1918, a cyclone (referred to as the Great Cyclone of 1918) swept over the district, bringing much destruction to the fledgling town. Local artist Irene Coburn's (p18) mother was just five years old when the cyclone hit but the event remained with her throughout her life. Irene investigates the intensity of these natural disasters through the medium of glass.

The artists have added a visual, sensory dimension to Mackay's story, which is often absent in written histories.



Courtesy of John Oxley Library,
State Library of Queensland.
Image no. 37423

The crash of the Trans Australia Airlines flight 538 – Fokker Friendship *Abel Tasman*, on June 10, 1960, off the coast of Mackay, is still considered the deadliest civilian Australian aircraft accident in history. All 29 persons on board the flight (including 9 school children from Rockhampton Grammar School returning home for holidays) were killed and an investigation was not able to determine a probable cause of the accident. Artist Kelvyn James Cunningham (p20) was enlisted to respond to one of the most evocative artefacts in the exhibition, a Rockhampton Grammar School blazer, which was removed from the *Abel Tasman* air crash site.

Changes to the built environment and the advancement of technology are perhaps the most evident markers of change in our society. In responding to the delicate watercolour *Drawing room, Winterbourne* by Annie Pring Marten, artist Margaret Burgess (p28) decided to paint her own, modern ‘drawing room’, highlighting the immense change that new technology has brought to the way we spend our leisure time.

In response to the historical photograph of the residence of Dr Vince Perry c.1904, artist Ngaio Lenz (p30) reflects more directly on the way buildings have changed, by collecting, using and re-creating worn and aged surfaces that seem to carry with them a sense of history. Similarly, printmaker Tony Druery (p36) responds to a historic photograph of the building of the Sydney Street Bridge c.1889 and reflects on the development that has occurred along the Pioneer River since then.

There were as many as 12 softdrink manufacturers in Mackay and Sarina at its production peak in the 1930s. Early manufacturing methods included bottling by hand, mostly in ceramic bottles with trademark stamps to differentiate brands and to denote the place the softdrink was made. In responding to a selection of ceramic ginger beer bottles from the local area, artist Leo Scott (p22) humorously comments on the contemporary city of Mackay by depicting newer suburb names in the bottles’ painted labels.

The Dalrymple Telephone Exchange c.1936 and its ‘party line’ method of connection offered a lifeline to many of the strong women who helped forge our region. The use of the telephone, whether for emergency calls to doctors, exchanging of recipes or the planning of annual social outings, played an important role in improving the physical and emotional wellbeing of rural families. Pioneer Valley artist Wanda Bennett (p40) reflects on the importance of communication technology in rural communities.

Looking back on the journey of putting together the exhibition, I am reminded of the incredible depth and diversity of our region’s stories as well as the depth, diversity and sheer talent of our arts community. Through their re-interpretation of historical artefacts, the artists involved in this project have added a visual, sensory dimension to Mackay’s story, which is often absent in written histories.

I hope you enjoy this exhibition.

¹ *Mackay Revisited*, K.H. Kennedy. Published December 2002, Mackay City Council. P 19.

² *Mackay Revisited*, K.H. Kennedy. Published December 2002, Mackay City Council. P 199.

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15 artists

15 artefacts

15 artworks

**BOB CAMPBELL 'BOOKIE'S BAG'
AND TWO-UP STOOL
C.1930S**



**DONNA
ROBINSON**

**BORN:
MT ISA, QLD 1968**

**RESIDES:
FRESHWATER POINT, QLD**

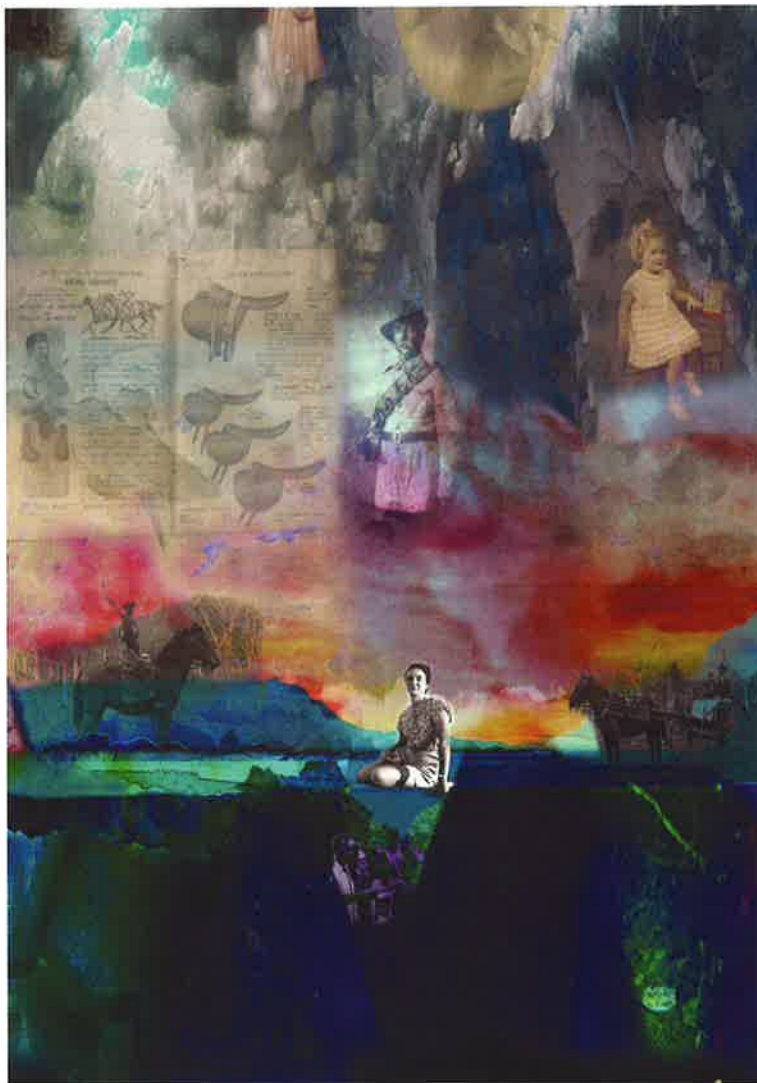
This stool was one of three owned by Mr Bob Campbell, who was a boot maker in Sarina during the 1900's. Mr Campbell was also the local SP Bookmaker who ran the local two-up from the back of his boot making store. The stool was used as part of the two-up circle.

Courtesy of
Sarina Historical Society

**VESTIGES: BOB CAMPBELL
2012**

Responding to the artefact Donna Robinson has produced a video exploring the life of identity Bob Campbell, an SP Bookie, saddler and boot maker from Sarina. With the use of altered footage, soundscapes and still photographic images, the video paints a portrait of a man in an imaginative and non-literal journey of fact, fiction and the memory of those who were around him.

Donna works as a multimedia artist and photographer. She has a Master of Contemporary Art from the University of Tasmania and in 2010 was a mentoree of renowned Queensland new media artist Craig Walsh. Donna has exhibited in New York, Sydney, Brisbane and Mackay. In 2011 Donna was commissioned to create public art for the Mackay Base Hospital redevelopment and is presently working, in collaboration with other local artists, on a new media project called 'Memory Paths'.



Video and sound installation
(still image)
4 minutes 7 seconds continuous
loop, aspect ratio 16:9
Courtesy of the artist

**TAFULIAE-BRIDE PRICE
DATE UNKNOWN**



The *Tafuliae* is used in many aspects of life in the South Pacific Islands. It can be used in the negotiations of a bride price, for bartering or compensation. The different shell colours each carry weight in terms of value and importance. This *Tafuliae* was given to the artist as part of compensation for telling of the tribal genealogy. The descendants from the female line had to pay compensation to the descendants of the male line during the family reunion in 2006, where the gathering of each descent group was represented.

The artist was part of the Queensland family representation and is a direct descendant of one of the male descent lines. This was the first time that all the tribal families had gathered since the fracturing practice of blackbirding. The Queensland family had been 'lost' from this gathering for at least one hundred and thirty-two years when the artist's great grandfather, Kwailui, was lackbirded and brought to Mackay in the 1870s.

**DONNIELLE
FATNOWNA**

**BORN:
MACKAY, QLD**

**RESIDES:
MIRANI, QLD**

FRACTURED
2012

Donnielle Fatnowna's family descendants are interwoven into Mackay's history like the patchwork quilt of sugarcane fields. Since the 1960's and early 1970's her family has been searching for their origins and welcoming people from the Solomon Islands searching for 'lost' relatives. Donnielle's artwork is thus a very personal one. This work explores the old bartering tradition and its significance in terms of Mackay's blackbirding history. She makes the point that "history is subjective and that whoever has the power writes history from their point of view." *Fractured* contrasts the Western, written historical record of events with the artist's own recollection of a personal, family oral history passed down from generation to generation. The timeline of dates represents significant moments in the history of Mackay's South Sea Islander population: the measured out portions of processed flour, sugar, tea, money represents the payment given to those workers deported back to the South Pacific Islands between 1901 and 1910; and the coconut shells represent the 'old ways', paying homage to this most versatile nut and plant, used to make houses, rafts, oil, milk, crockery and medicine.



Coconut shells, flour, sugar,
tea, currency, vinyl (detail)
330 x 70 x 122 cm (overall)
Courtesy of the artist

**GROUP IN FRONT OF PALM LEAF
CHURCH, MACKAY DISTRICT
DATE UNKNOWN**



This photograph depicts a group of South Sea Islanders, dressed in Western clothing of the day, gathered in front of a palm leaf church, on the Kanaka Mission in the Farleigh district just north of Mackay.

Missionaries brought Christianity to the cane fields and converted the majority of South Sea Islanders. Christianity came to be embraced and today is an important part of many Islander communities.

**HEATHER
WALKER**

**BORN:
ROCKHAMPTON, QLD 1942**

**RESIDES:
MACKAY, QLD**

Courtesy of John Oxley Library,
State Library of Queensland.
Image no. 24462

**MIREUM
2012**

Heather Walker's people are from East Ambae, situated on one of a group of islands known as Vanuatu. History tells us that in 1906, many of the South Sea Islanders were returned to their islands. Thirty years ago, after lengthy research, Heather's sister found their small family group still living in their village in Vanuatu. Mireum is a family member. She is a descendant of Australian Aboriginal heritage. What is not generally known to the wider community is that aboriginal children were left by the cane fields for South Sea Islanders to take into their families. They were absorbed into a different culture, and went to the islands with the families who were deported and had to go home. Heather's work is in response to this and she feels it is an important story to tell.

Heather has had a long career as an artist, and is best known as an established printmaker in the Mackay region. She loves creating images and seeing the wonderful surprises that can happen within the printmaking process. She also knits socks and dabbles with free-form knitting and crochet. Experimenting and creating with paper, paint and fibre brings much joy. Heather is a founding member of Printbank Mackay Inc., and works from a studio at home with a printing press she shares with her printmaker friends. Heather is passionate about working at a local level with her art—what happens where she lives, is important to her.



Fabric, wool, found objects,
clay, grass skirt (detail)
140 x 110 cm (variable)
Courtesy of the artist

1918 CYCLONE



IRENE COBURN

BORN:
MACKAY, QLD 1948

RESIDES:
MACKAY, QLD

Beirne Mackay Limited hangs its manchester supplies out to dry, and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney does likewise with the carpets after the great cyclone of January 20-21, 1918 which devastated Mackay.

Courtesy of Mackay Regional
Council Library Service.
State Library of Queensland,
Image no. qmc01930

THE STRENGTH OF RECOLLECTION 2012

At five years of age, living near Illawong Beach, Irene Coburn's mother survived the 1918 cyclone which dragged a catastrophic tidal wave behind it. Strongly affected by the experience, Annie had a life-long fear and wariness of both wind and ocean. Cyclone time is recollection time for Irene. The ghostly names of these storms refuse to go away, they become part of local folklore. Nature's ephemeral madness is community-shattering, followed by a bright new day, transparent blue skies and a glassed-out ocean. After a period of intense horror, life recoups its normality.

Irene Coburn's art practice is a mixed media, mixed method one. She has always been drawn to the sculptural form and as a result, printmaking in conjunction with book arts are personal favourites amongst the multiple genres with which she works. A discovery in 2011 of the art of glass fusing led her to explore this colourful media, which she likens to 'painting with glass', using a free-form cutting technique to create imagery rather than employing a crafted, pre-determined, pre-sketched pattern.



Fusible glass, Mackay Cedar
144 x 66 x 37 cm
Courtesy of the artist

**SCHOOL BLAZER
C.1960**

The crash of the Trans Australia Airlines flight 538 – Fokker Friendship *Abel Tasman*, on June 10, 1960 off the coast of Mackay, is still considered the deadliest civilian Australian aircraft accident in history. All 29 persons on board the flight were killed and an investigation was not able to determine a probable cause of the accident. This aviation disaster was critical in the development of the flight recorder, or ‘black box’, which records parameters to aid investigations of airline accidents.

This school blazer was removed from the *Abel Tasman* air crash site. It belonged to Edgar Leslie Dowge, student of Rockhampton Grammar School, one of 29 people killed in the crash, nine of whom were from the school. The blazer was donated to Rockhampton Grammar School by Audrey Camilleri and Tyra Wales, sisters of Edgar.

Courtesy of
Rockhampton Grammar School

**KELVYN
JAMES
CUNNINGTON**

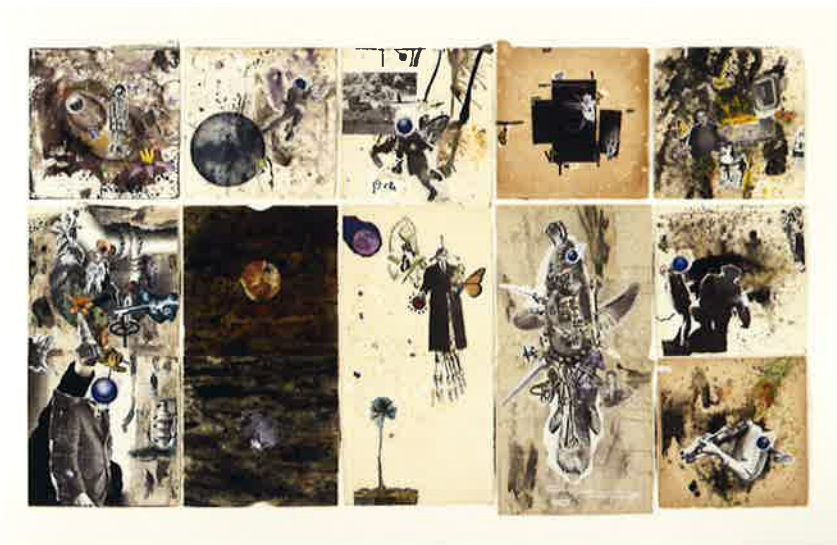
BORN:
BRISBANE, QLD 1961

RESIDES:
MACKAY, QLD

THE DISASTER OF LOST POTENTIALS 2012

The disaster of lost potentials. Sixteen children and thirteen adults perished in a matter of seconds when the *Abel Tasman*, carrying students and teachers from Rockhampton Grammar School, went down off the coast of Mackay in 1960. Kelvyn has drawn information from The Daily Mercury historical archives and imposed his own emotional responses on to this work. Mystery, emotional atmosphere, and sorrow have been imbued into the works to express the 'loss of potentials' that this disaster caused. Nine boys from Rockhampton Grammar School ceased to exist that night. William Golding's novel *Lord of the Flies*, written in the very early 1960's, correlates with this story, where the boys go down at sea off a tropical island.

For Kelvyn, collage is 'visual dynamics' at the highest level. In combining original mixed media works, paintings and drawings with found images, disparate shapes and forms, images congeal and morph into new 'entities'. Kelvyn's emotive response to the *Fokker Friendship* plane crash imagines a visual dialogue of the night and events afterward. "To those affected by this disaster, you have my utmost respect and sympathy" Kelvyn says.



Mixed media (detail)
95 x 440 cm (overall)
Courtesy of the artist

**CERAMIC SOFTDRINK BOTTLES
VARIOUS DATES**

**LEO
SCOTT**

**BORN:
MACKAY, QLD 1977**

**RESIDES:
MACKAY, QLD**



The way we buy our beverages has changed immensely since the first settlement of the Mackay district in 1862. In the early days, if you wanted a drink it was either water, liquor (particularly rum), or fresh milk from a cow or goat. Cordial was also brought in with supply ships. The first locally produced aerated water, or 'softdrink' as we know it, was manufactured by Edmund Barron as early as 1869. Early manufacturing methods included bottling by hand, mostly in ceramic bottles with trademark stamps to differentiate brands. Many manufacturers used their own secret recipes for different flavours.

There were as many as twelve softdrink manufacturers in Mackay and Sarina at the area's production peak in the 1930s. The last local manufacturer Harrup's closed in 1993, when competition from large southern companies became too much. This selection of bottles kindly loaned to us by the Mackay Museum includes examples of bottles used by Rae Bros., who operated from 1933-1939; A.L. Nielsen, whose drinks were purchased from 1916-1933; Roberts Bros., 1927-1934 and Eyles & Son from Sarina, which also operated during these early years.

GINGER BEER BOTTLE NOS. 1-3
2012

Undamaged, ceramic soft bottles, especially pertaining to a location, are rare collectable items of significant value. Intrigued by the history and motivation for the large residual of broken-neck bottles unearthed around Mackay, artist Leo Scott discovered that the desire for the marble 'stopper' inside was an irresistible attraction for local children. For generations, the marbles themselves became collectible items for both their aesthetic and nostalgic value.

The ginger beer bottles are labelled with the town names pertaining to the area in which they were made. Leo humorously comments on the contemporary city of Mackay by depicting newer suburbs in the bottles' painted labels. This, he states, will be the home to a new generation of children who will no doubt be playing marbles in the backyards of yet-to-be-built family homes.

A descendant of local pioneers, Leo Scott is a well-established local artist. Known for depicting local, cultural and historical imagery, his paintings are regularly exhibited and have achieved numerous awards throughout Australia.



Oil on canvas (triptych) (detail)
 40 x 40 cm (each)
 Courtesy of the artist

ONIYOCHO KITE
2001



This kite, called *Oniyochi*, is one of the traditional craft items from the Hirado region in Japan. It is said that these kites have been assisting sailors since ancient times with safe sea passage by helping to determine wind direction. The design is a painting of the scene in which the samurai Watanabe-no-Tsuna chases away the demon of Rashomon Gate in Kyoto.

According to historic documents, Watanabe-no-Tsuna is a direct ancestor of the Matsuura family, who ruled over the Hirado Domain up until the Meiji Period. This folk craft is said to provide protection from evil and good luck in life.

Courtesy of Mackay Regional Council. Gift from Mackay's sister city Matsuura, Japan
Mackay Regional Council
Collection.

LEONIE
WOOD

BORN:
MELBOURNE, VIC 1944

RESIDES:
MACKAY, QLD

FLIGHTS OF FANCY 2012

Flights of fancy is a response to and interpretation of the Japanese aesthetic. Working in traditional sumi ink, Leonie has created a harmonious composition whilst combining elements such as the subtleties produced when blending sumi and water, and the line variation achieved with different brush strokes. Placement and space both have equal significance within the picture plane. The psyche 'takes flight' with the depiction of iconic Japanese elements on the stylised kites, which reference this exotic, oriental culture.

Leonie Wood's works are strongly gender influenced, with the use of curvilinear line reinforcing the female essence. Her previous art practice involved design and application of imagery onto ceramic surfaces, which she undertook with her late husband Rick Wood, a renowned potter, in the gallery shop and art studio Earth Sea Pottery. Life drawing remains a passion for Leonie, along with the love of intricate pattern, often coupled with the nude and its relationship with line.



Sumi ink, watercolour, pencil,
pen on paper (triptych) (detail)
76 x 56 cm (each)
Courtesy of the artist

**CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION
PRESENTED TO MRS BURKE
OF FINCH HATTON
1915**



This certificate was presented to Mrs Burke, the proprietor of the Royal Hotel, in 1915 when she left Finch Hatton. It acknowledges her generosity and community spirit during her years in the township. The certificate was found behind a piano when a local family was cleaning up prior to moving house. It is unknown how it came to be there. The Royal Hotel, Finch Hatton, burned down in the 1960s.

As many as 400 striking sugar industry workers were camped out in schools and makeshift tents in the Finch Hatton district during the state-wide 1911 sugar industry strike, where both field and mill workers were demanding better pay and conditions. This certificate was presented to Mrs Margaret Burke of the Royal Hotel after the strike, in recognition of her generosity in caring for the distressed and starving families of the striking workers, at a time when no government benefits were available.

**LESLEY
KANE**

**BORN:
SYDNEY, NSW 1943**

**RESIDES:
PIONEER VALLEY, QLD**

HOSPITAL HOTEL 2012

In responding to the hand-painted certificate and information about the sugar cane workers strike of 1911, Lesley's work evokes the sense of despair felt by the families of the striking sugar industry workers.

Artist Lesley Kane currently works from a studio on her sugar cane farm in the Pioneer Valley and dedicates most of her days to her art practice. Lesley likes to allow the images in her mixed media works to emerge through the many layers and glazes of colour, line and tone. She has exhibited many times throughout Queensland, and in 2011 presented a solo exhibition *Who minds the shells* at Artspace Mackay. Lesley was the Curator of the Pioneer Valley Museum from 1986 to 1998 and owned and operated the Gargett Gallery from 2004 to 2001.



Mixed media on canvas
69 x 85 cm
Courtesy of the artist

DRAWING ROOM, WINTERBOURNE
ANNIE PRING MARTEN
c.1872/3



This delightful watercolour titled *Drawing room, Winterbourne* painted around 1872–1873 by Annie Pring Marten, is one of a series which is part of the Mackay Regional Council art collection. Annie Pring Marten lived at ‘Winterbourne’ on Branscombe Plantation near Mackay, which was built in 1872. Annie and her husband George Nisbet Marten had two children at Branscombe, a daughter Winifred, and a son who died at an early age. His grave is located on the property.

The paintings she produced during this time depicted Annie’s life at Branscombe, and were most likely sent home to England. It wasn’t long before the family (including life-long servants Foster and his wife Agnes) were to return to Great Britain, selling the property to George Henry Maitland Long.

‘Winterbourne’ was demolished in 1880 after being attacked by termites. The site of Branscombe Plantation is marked today by a line of old mango trees along the Mackay-Eungella Road, about one kilometre east of Pleystowe Mill.

Watercolour on paper,
 Mackay Regional Council
 Collection, Artspace Mackay

MARGARET
BURGESS

BORN:
MACKAY, QLD

RESIDES:
MACKAY, QLD



**MY SITTING ROOM AT MARIAN
2012**

My sitting room at Marian depicts Margaret Burgess' home today. The visible, stark contrast between the sitting room of Annie Pring Marten and Margaret's own living room clearly demonstrates how technology has impacted on our living spaces—books replaced by Kindle, singing around the piano replaced by an iPod, and the fireplace now replaced by the television. The social changes that have influenced the female role, the electronic revolution, and modern day design have all impacted on Margaret's response to Annie Pring Marten's work *Drawing room, Winterbourne*.

Since 1990, Margaret's work has represented a personal, visual dialogue and a desire to communicate her own experiences to her audience. Her work often addresses issues of gender, family dynamics and the ubiquitous social, economic and environmental changes and challenges that happen in a lifetime. Margaret has exhibited her paintings both locally and further afield.

Acrylic on paper
48 x 102 cm
Courtesy of the artist

**RESIDENCE OF DR VINCE PERRY,
DENTIST, MACKAY
C.1904**



The residence of Mackay dentist Vince Perry and his family was situated at the north-west corner of Sydney and Albert (Gordon) Streets. Built in 1904 by Charles Porter to the design of architect Arthur Rigby, the house was one of a number of residences which graced the inner-city area, and on which Rigby and Porter collaborated. Vince Perry, an early Mackay dentist, first had the house built on the south east corner of Brisbane and Albert streets which later became the home and

practice of R. Donnan (dentist), and then of Dr Paul Hopkins. Perry's home was bought by Dr Henry Taylor, who occupied it until his death. In 1940 the Taylor family had the Civic Theatre constructed on half the allotment on Gordon Street. It was demolished in 1983 to make room for commercial premises.

Courtesy of Mackay Regional
Council Library Service.
State Library of Queensland,
Image no. qmc02115

**NGAIO
LENZ**

**BORN:
TOWNSVILLE, QLD 1964**

**RESIDES:
MACKAY, QLD**

FROM WHERE WE SAT 2012

Ngaio Lenz's work celebrates an aesthetic of imperfection and the well-worn surface, the imagined history of an object and the history of a room. The photographic image of the residence of Mackay dentist Vince Perry and his family led Ngaio to contemplate the lives of the inhabitants and the aesthetics of the early 1900s. It was the 'objectness' of the individual pieces and their placement which became the focus of this process. Ngaio has attempted to locate a poetry in the relationships, combinations and interactions between materials and objects.

Ngaio works easily with found objects, vintage papers and wallpapers, paints and inks. She particularly enjoys collage and recreating aged surfaces that seem to have a sense of history. She has held several exhibitions in Mackay, Townsville, Brisbane and most recently Melbourne, and has completed a Masters of Contemporary Art through the University of Tasmania.



Installation of found timbers,
paint and vintage wallpaper
on board (detail)
130 x 500 cm (irreg.)
Courtesy of the artist

**SEWING TABLE AND
BENTWOOD CHAIR
C.1906**



**ROSEMARY
PAYNE**

**BORN:
LEEDS, UNITED KINGDOM**

**RESIDES:
FARLEIGH, QLD**

Vida Atherton married Albert Alfred Cook in the drawing room of Howard Park on 11th April 1908 (the Atherton's property near Mackay). They moved into their newly constructed homestead at Greenmount in December 1915. It is believed that Vida purchased the sewing machine second hand, prior to her marriage to Albert. She would have used the machine to make clothes for herself and possibly other members of the Atherton family.

Vida continued to use the machine to make clothes for the children (Tom, John, and Althea). Gloria Arrow joined the Cook household as a maid/housekeeper in 1958. She used the machine to make clothes and other items up until 1969, when the Cooks purchased a new electric sewing machine for her to use.

Courtesy of Mackay Regional
Council Collection,
Greenmount Homestead

THROUGH THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE 2012

The dainty black sewing machine sits proudly, yet humbly, in the tiny sewing room at Greenmount Homestead. Despite its meagre dimensions, the intricate bobbins, threads and gentle motion of the treadle created clothes and also repaired, embellished, made and maintained many essential, everyday household items. Without it and the skills of the clever, nimble fingers that operated it, life would have been extremely difficult. However, compared to the large imposing carts, buggies and eventually motorised vehicles, the tiny sewing machine was overlooked for its contribution to the annals of history. The large amount of material spilling out of the tiny machine emphasises the contribution it made to Greenmount Homestead. Images of Gloria Arrow who spent many hours working the machine (chatting happily to her boss Mr. Cook as he sat next door working in his office) are featured throughout the fabrics.

Rosemary studied at Birmingham College of Art and Southampton University. Her art practice is based in her Farleigh studio, surrounded by beautiful bushland and an abundance of wildlife. Portraits and animals feature predominately in her work; responding primarily to colour and texture and using a variety of media and installation. Rosemary facilitates workshops for adults and children, working with many different community groups. She has held numerous group and solo exhibitions locally and state-wide, and has won many awards and prizes for her work and teaching.



Clay, fabric, paint and thread
(detail)
240 x 120 cm (irreg.)
Courtesy of the artist

**'BABY JESUS' ICON
DATE UNKNOWN**



The wax Maltese icon of baby Jesus, surrounded by hand moulded coloured wax flowers, is encased in a glass dome. This icon has been in Australia since the 1940's and was a gift to Andrew Frendo from the Maltese Catholic nuns of Mosta, Malta, on one of his many visits to his homeland.

Baby Jesus took pride of place at Andrew and Gene Frendo's house *Windermere* in Hamilton, Brisbane, for many years and was donated to the Mackay Maltese Club Inc. by their daughter Andrea Frendo after the death of her parents. It is currently housed in the Chapel of the Francis of Assisi Home, in West Mackay. In Birkirkara, Malta, over 2000 different wax icons of baby Jesus are displayed in a museum in the town.

**RYAN
VELLA**

**BORN:
MACKAY, QLD 1975**

**RESIDES:
MACKAY, QLD**

**SWEET BABY JESUS
2012**

Ryan Vella's whimsical interpretation of sweet, baby Jesus strips away the stereotypes and brings little baby Jesus into the 21st century. In this contemporary painting, Ryan references western pop culture and transforms him into a super-powered, God-child, crackling with endless power.

Ryan has been making art and comics since an early age. Some of his comic works include *Turbo Supermax* and *The Terminal Myriad*. He has contributed art to dozens of publications and in 2004 he illustrated the graphic novel version of John Birmingham's *He died with a felafel in his hand*. Ryan has also taken part in numerous exhibitions nationally and internationally. He currently lives in Mackay and plays guitar in the band *Viper Syndicate*.



Acrylic and spray paint on canvas
122 x 91 cm
Courtesy of the artist

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE
SYDNEY STREET BRIDGE
C.1889**



**TONY
DRUERY**

**BORN:
BRISBANE, QLD 1964**

**RESIDES:
MACKAY, QLD**

A floating dock bearing a wooden crane assists in the construction of the Sydney Street bridge. A dilapidated wooden fence acts as a dividing wall between the river's edge and the town buildings of Mackay. Decorative work on the verandah of a double storey building is visible in the background.

Courtesy of John Oxley Library,
State Library of Queensland.
Image no. 37423

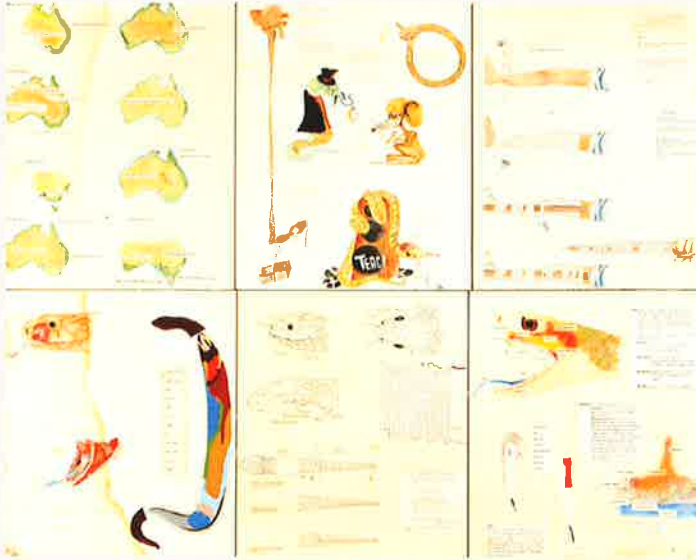
**MOVING OVER
2012**

There are always many viewpoints on the advantages or disadvantages of development in any situation. Do we create an attractive waterline or do we leave a grubby watermark? Most of Tony Druery's artworks are not intended to be judgemental but rather to help foster memories and discussion of a period in Mackay's history. Tony is particularly interested in the coastlines of Mackay, and the areas of new development that are springing up on our foreshore. Much of his work, using reduction linocut techniques, depicts iconic places and subject matter that can be identified by the local community. Tony has been an artist and art teacher in Catholic schools in the Mackay region for the past 24 years.



Reduction linocut
38 x 62 cm
Courtesy of the artist

**RAM CHANDRA
EDUCATIONAL CHART
DATE UNKNOWN**



Edward Royce Ramsamy (Ram Chandra) was born on 24th May 1921, and passed away at Mackay Base Hospital on 31st July 1998. He was a well known local identity who dedicated his life to the research of snakes in our region, particularly the taipan, and to educating children and adults in the treatment of snake bites. He travelled extensively to schools and shopping centres around the state, bringing with him live snakes to be milked for their venom and an extensive knowledge of his subject.

On one occasion in 1956, he was bitten by a taipan multiple times whilst demonstrating to a conference of Queensland Ambulance servicemen. The servicemen saved his life by administering the antivenom manufactured partly from the venom of the very snake that had struck him.

His life's work and dedication to finding and producing an effective antivenom for the taipan, the mapping of a survey to chart the localities in which the snakes live, and ensuring that the antivenom would be held in emergency supply in those areas has undoubtedly saved many lives.

**TRACEY
JOHNSON**

**BORN:
GLOUCESTER, NSW 1961**

**RESIDES:
MARIAN, QLD**

THE GIFT 2012

Ram's story is one of a passionate and unconventional hero, persistently challenging an unresponsive establishment as he fought to have the taipan antivenom made widely available across northern Australia. Tracey Johnson was captivated by the story that epitomised his quest. Ram Chandra would ride his bicycle to Mackay Sugar to have his freshly-milked taipan venom processed in the centrifuge, so that it could be sent to CSL in Melbourne for the making of antivenom. Tracey's artwork explores the chaotic process of experimentation and discovery embarked upon by ordinary people, a process common to both art and science.

Tracey's art practice revolves around the themes of transformation and regeneration. She is interested in the natural world and our place in it, and the way our fractal selves are deeply connected to that world. The flux of fracturing and re-making in nature seems to be mirrored in our own human experience and in the art-making process itself. Tracey loves working with all kinds of media: painting; printmaking; drawing; photography; installation; ephemeral and light-based work. Tracey has held solo exhibitions in Melbourne, Townsville and Mackay, and has a Masters of Visual Arts from Monash University.



Cyanotypes, lab equipment,
mixed media (detail)
150 x 150 x 15 cm
Courtesy of the artist

**THE DALRYMPLE
TELEPHONE EXCHANGE
C.1936**



The manually operated Dalrymple Heights telephone exchange was presented to the Pioneer Valley Museum by the then district telecommunications manager, Mr Dave Bowman on behalf of Telecom Australia in 1988. There are no records of when the exchange at Dalrymple Heights commenced operation, however the Pioneer Valley Museum has records that list eight subscribers from Dalrymple Heights in 1936.

Mrs Betty Clark operated the exchange from 1956–1979. Her daughter, Mrs Del Cunningham notes that it was quite a busy exchange, especially when construction of the Eungella Dam commenced in 1965. One of the ‘party’ lines serviced the cattle stations west of Eungella. The line was draped from tree to tree in most places and would often be out of order. Subscribers’ phones had a coded ‘ring’ and thus only answered calls identified by their own code.

**WANDA
BENNETT**

**BORN:
HAMPSHIRE,
UNITED KINGDOM 1971**

**RESIDES:
MACKAY, QLD**

THE HUMAN THREAD 2012

Communication has always been an essential part of our existence, and is probably one of the greatest areas of technical advancement this century. The early pioneers of Mackay would have shuddered at the sight of our emails and iPhones. Despite huge differences in the technology and appearance of telephones over time, the essence and topics of conversation, particularly for women living in rural communities, were the same in the 1950's as they are today.

The Dalrymple Telephone Exchange and its 'party' line method of connection offered a life line to many of the strong women who helped forge our region. The use of the telephone, whether for emergency calls to doctors, exchanging of recipes or the planning of annual social outings, played an important role in improving the physical and emotional wellbeing of rural families. Sometimes just the knowledge that there's a sympathetic ear or a person to laugh with at the end of the phone line was, and still is, a simple yet essential way of improving the daily lives of people living in isolated communities. Artist Wanda Bennett reflects on this in her work.

Wanda's art practice is varied and includes textiles, sculpture, set design, puppetry and the facilitation of an array of community-based art projects. She draws much of her inspiration from the ever-changing environment, and explores both the subtle and profound ways in which we as individuals and communities adapt our lives to accommodate those changes.



Calico, perspex, thread,
printed acetate, inkjet prints,
paper fasteners (detail)
139 x 83 cm
Courtesy of the artist

LIST OF WORKS

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ROBINSON | VESTIGES: BOB CAMPBELL, 2012
Video and sound installation 4 minutes
7 seconds continuous loop, aspect ratio 16:9 |
| 14 | DONNIELLE
FATNOWNA | FRACTURED, 2012
Coconut shells, flour, sugar, tea,
currency, vinyl
330 x 70 x 122 cm (overall) |
| 16 | HEATHER
WALKER | MIREUM, 2012
Fabric, wool, found objects, clay, grass skirt
140 x 110 cm (variable) |
| 18 | IRENE
COBURN | THE STRENGTH OF RECOLLECTION, 2012
Fusible glass, Mackay Cedar
144 x 66 x 37 cm |
| 20 | KELVYN JAMES
CUNNINGTON | THE DISASTER OF LOST POTENTIALS, 2012
Mixed media
95 x 440 cm (overall) |
| 22 | LEO
SCOTT | GINGER BEER BOTTLE NOS. 1-3, 2012
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Sumi ink, watercolour, pencil,
pen on paper (triptych)
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KANE | HOSPITAL HOTEL, 2012
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- 28** **MARGARET
BURGESS** **MY SITTING ROOM AT MARIAN, 2012**
Acrylic on paper
48 x 102 cm
- 30** **NGAIO
LENZ** **FROM WHERE WE SAT, 2012**
Installation of found timbers, paint
and vintage wallpaper on board
130 x 500 cm (irreg.)
- 32** **ROSEMARY
PAYNE** **THROUGH THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE, 2012**
Clay, fabric, paint and thread
240 x 120 cm (irreg.)
- 34** **RYAN
VELLA** **SWEET BABY JESUS, 2012**
Acrylic and spray paint on canvas
122 x 91 cm
- 36** **TONY
DRUERY** **MOVING OVER, 2012**
Reduction linocut
38 x 62 cm
- 38** **TRACEY
JOHNSON** **THE GIFT, 2012**
Cyanotypes, lab equipment, mixed media
150 x 150 x 15 cm
- 40** **WANDA
BENNETT** **THE HUMAN THREAD, 2012**
Calico, perspex, thread, printed acetate,
inkjet prints, paper fasteners
139 x 83 cm

All artworks are courtesy of the respective artists.

LOOKING FORWARD, LOOKING BACK:
150 YEARS OF MACKAY
14 July-25 August 2012



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The disaster of lost potentials (detail) 2012,
Kelvyn James Cunningham.



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Mackay Maltese Club and Francis of Assisi Home,
Gloria Arrow and Brian Osborne
(Greenmount Homestead),
Donnielle Fatnowna and MaDASSIA,
Edna Lynch and Ian Heathwood.



Aerial photograph of Mackay
and the Pioneer River
looking east, 2012



Artspace
Mackay

