



Remapping **Mitchell**

Artists:

Renata Buziak

Felicity Chapman

Clare Cowley

Bill Dodd

Deena Dodd

Vernessa Fien

Helen Hardess

Michelle Hobbs

Donna Malone

Merete Megarrity

Saraeva Mitchell

Sue Saunders

Vicki Saunders

Jude Taggart Roberts

Anastasia Tyurina



Yimbaya Maranoa is a First Nations-led project initiated through conversations with Indigenous and non-Indigenous Maranoa residents and artists in 2018. **The project has continued with Traditional Custodians Vernessa Fien, Vicki Saunders, Saraeva Mitchell, Aunty Lynette Nixon, in conjunction with artist Jude Taggart Roberts, and realised through Yimbaya Maranoa, formerly known as the Remapping Mitchell Arts Collective.**

The creative group formed a connection through their memories to the Maranoa and Indigenous families in the region whose stories continue to inspire and draw them back to the river. Yimbaya Maranoa Arts Collective has evolved through the continued dedication, support and development of established and emerging artists and creatives. This includes Gunggarl, Bidjara, and other Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists who live in the Maranoa or share a connection to the region. The group numbers vary, depending on participants' availability and skill sets and the project's requirements.

The project revolves around the theme of the and the collective stories of living on, being on, and listening to this unique country. Through an ongoing series of immersive gatherings on Country, the collective is producing a living archive of arts related works, stories, and perspectives currently absent or at least less visible in contemporary and historical accounts of the region. The Yimbaya projects have demonstrated the capacity of the arts to connect communities and to allow stories to be told and shared in purposeful, creative, and engaging ways. **Camping residencies are held at the intersection of places of significance to First Nations Custodians and European histories. The sites follow water courses along the Maranoa River and are also part of the route taken by Major Thomas Mitchell's expedition team and Wiradjuri guide Yuranigh on Mitchell's 4th surveying journey in 1846. The first camp was held on the confluence of the Maranoa, Womalilla and Amby Creeks during NAIDOC week 2018. In keeping with the theme 'ngulalma ngalinda Because**

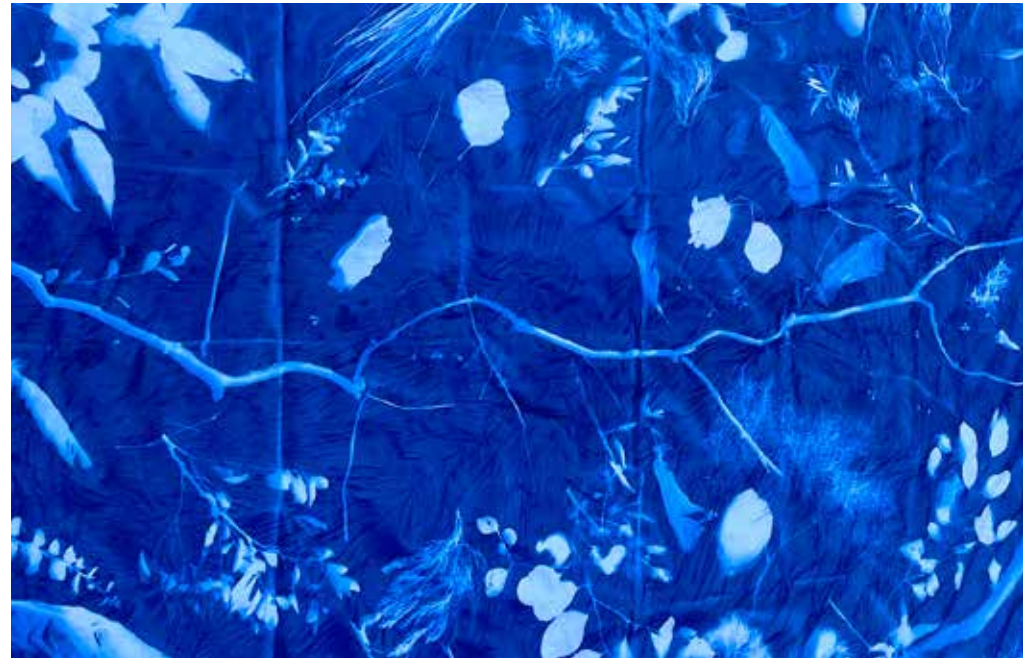
of her we can' the project recognized, acknowledged, and celebrated the contributions of Aboriginal women and in relation to the spiritual and physical connections of the river. The Maranoa is a region of cultural, spiritual, and environmental significance linked to Booringa ('place of fire' in Gunggari language).

The projects provide a rare opportunity for audiences to experience unique and culturally active interdisciplinary collaboration. The collective of artists work both in **traditional artmaking mediums and innovative technology to deliver artworks** inside and outside the gallery spaces. Taking a multi-media approach, the

collective highlights, celebrates and revises the Maranoa's layers of history and story, through video, audio, works on paper and canvas, weaving, textiles, sculpture, and photography. The project's uniqueness lies in its core values of meeting, creating, sharing, collaborating on Country, and the bringing together of participants from diverse backgrounds to form a one-of-a-kind project.

A "living archive" (Rhodes, 2014) is a collection of materials presented in a way that allows for the expression, exhibition, documentation and preservation of a sentiment or movement in a particular community.

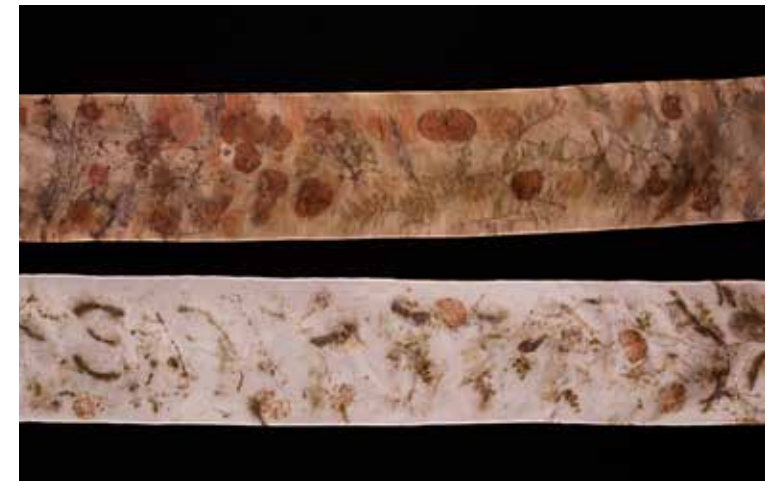




Instagram: Fien_ness

Vernessa is an artist based in the Maranoa and descendant of both Gunggari and Bidjara from the Maranoa District in Southwest Queensland. The artist has been involved in the facilitation of many community events and curatorship of exhibitions at the Injune Creek Gallery, Injune Information Centre, and Maranoa on Mitchell Gallery. She was coordinator and curator for the NAIDOC Art Exhibition at the Roma Bungil Gallery and Bamba Gii Festival. Vernessa worked

Vernessa
Fien



with artists and artworkers at GOMA for the Internship program in 2021 and facilitates a women's cultural group, 'Wandering Spirits'. Art is a significant part of the Aboriginal culture, and she is passionate about using this to help promote the importance of understanding and acknowledging First Nations people, and custodians of cultural heritage of the area.

Instagram: jude_taggart_roberts

Jude Taggart Roberts is a visual artist and facilitator of arts related projects. She completed a Doctor of Visual Art in 2015 to research drawing and print methods to visualise the watersheds in Western Queensland and the connections to the artesian waters such as the Great Artesian Basin. From 1984 to 2005 she lived and worked within the Maranoa region, tutoring drawing, creating public art, and facilitating the Mitchell Fire

Jude Taggart Roberts



and Water Festival in 2000 before moving to Brisbane. Jude has tutored across the mediums of drawing and print media at Qld College of Arts, Southbank TAFE, and privately run classes Draw4all beginning in 2008. Since moving to Brisbane, the artist has continued to make direct encounters with the land and people of Western Queensland through various arts programs which include One River arts project, staged as a part of the Centenary of Canberra in 2013, and currently with the arts collective Yimbaya Maranoa. Collaborating and working with others outside the studio space has strengthened her understanding of the terrains and water interconnections and imbues her work with a deep sense of history and place.

Dr Vicki Saunders, Indigenous arts researcher and story builder uses poetic inquiry and other arts informed research methods to listen to our evolving relationships with Country and to promote well-being and resipiscence with First Nations researchers, organisations, communities. She is currently research fellow with the Jawun Research Centre, Central Queensland University and the Centre for Research Excellence-Strengthening Systems Strengthening

Dr Vicki Saunders

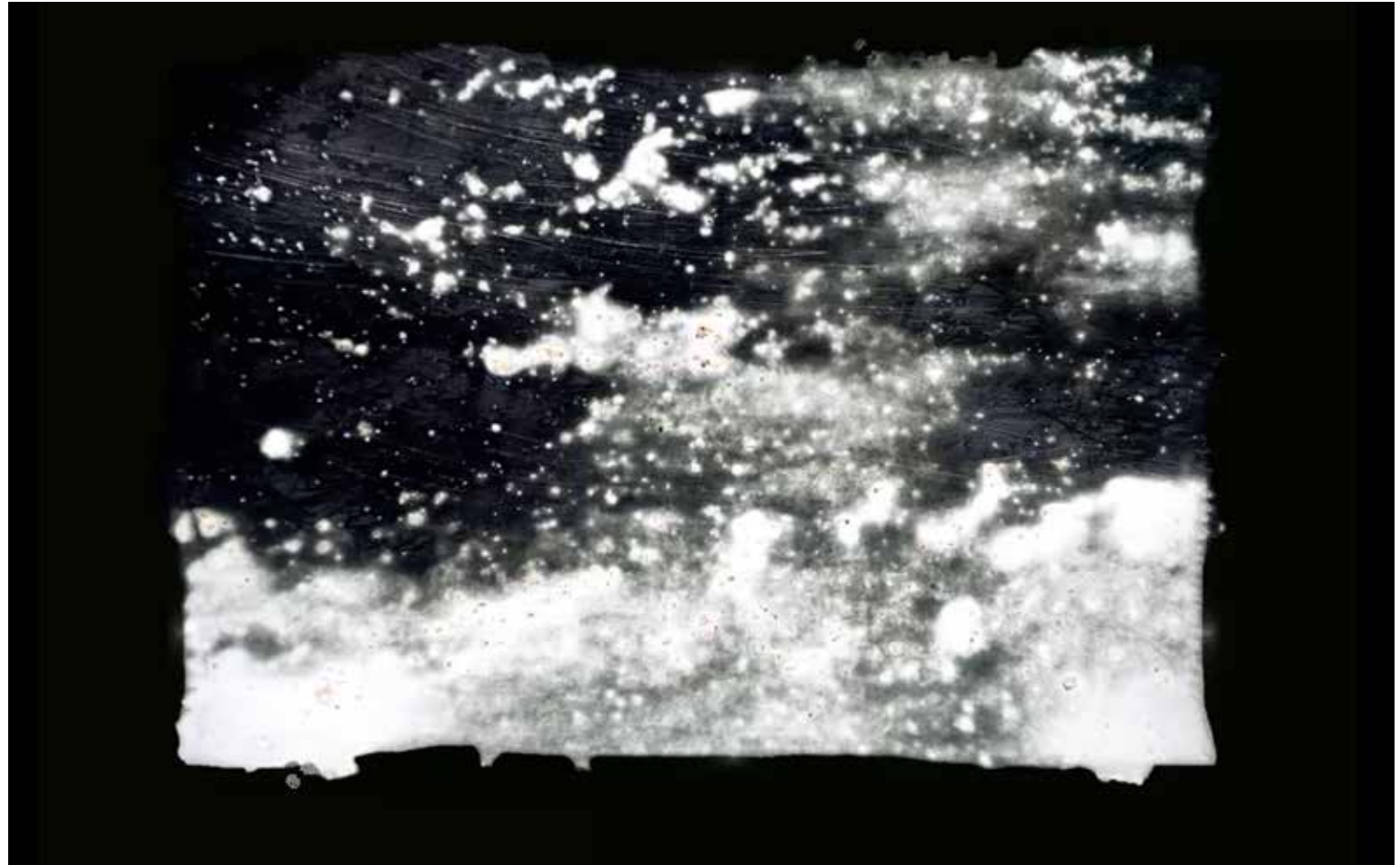


systems for Indigenous health care Equity (CRE-STRIDE). She brings expertise in building First Peoples research capacity, public health research and arts-based, Indigenist and poetic inquiry. She is also Adjunct Research Associate with the Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre through the Listening to Country project. She has published in mostly health related journals and 2 book chapters on arts informed research methods. With an extensive background in social emotional wellbeing, psychology and public health research, she has been involved in a range of creative health and wellbeing research projects with Indigenous and community-based organisations.

Instagram:
weatherforecaster
email: anastasia.
tyurina@qut.edu.au

Dr. Anastasia Tyurina, currently serving as the Academic Lead Learning and Teaching and Senior Lecturer in Visual Communication at Queensland University of Technology. With a substantial tenure of 20 years in teaching and industry roles, Anastasia is recognised for her contributions as a design researcher and new media artist. Her expertise spans

Dr Anastasia Tyurina

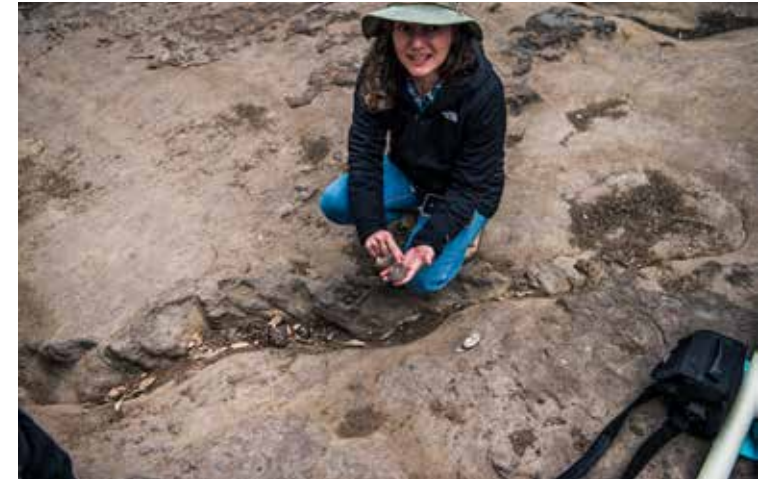


various domains, including emerging technologies, visual communication, interaction design, scientific imaging, photography, and creative coding.
About the artwork: Title: The River Flow, The River Flow, Mixed media (photography, creative coding) 2018. The River Flow is an experimental artwork that captures the author's experience of the deep-rooted history and intricate ecosystem of the Maranoa River. By using natural elements such as sand, water, and the elemental force of open fire, the print captures the river's essence, establishing a connection that enables us to appreciate the river's significance and the beauty of its habitat.

Instagram: mishypossum

Michelle is a proud Indigenous scientist, a descendent of the Bidjara people of Central Queensland with ancestry from Dunghutti, central coast NSW, and lives on Turrbal country in Meanjin, Brisbane. She is an Associate Lecturer and PhD candidate with Australian Rivers Institute, Griffith University. Michelle's area of research includes freshwater ecology of inland and tropical rivers, and Indigenous ecological knowledges. Michelle's arts

Michelle
Hobbs



practice draws on both Indigenous and scientific observations of water processes and plant-animal-human-place interactions, drawing on Indigenous philosophies of interconnectedness and deep listening to explore our role as humans as part of nature. Michelle's mediums include natural pigments (ochre and mineral watercolours) using water and gravity as central forces in the painting process.

www.revivalart.com.au/
donna-malone/
instagram: _donnamalone

Donna Malone is a Meanjin based full time visual artist. She has been represented by Lorraine Pilgrim Gallery for nearly 20 years. Her practice depends upon the persuasion and engagement of available materials and the environment. The interplay of breath/spirit through the physical acts of drawing and paper collage informs her practice. This work has been made through the process of listening, inspired by the

Donna
Malone

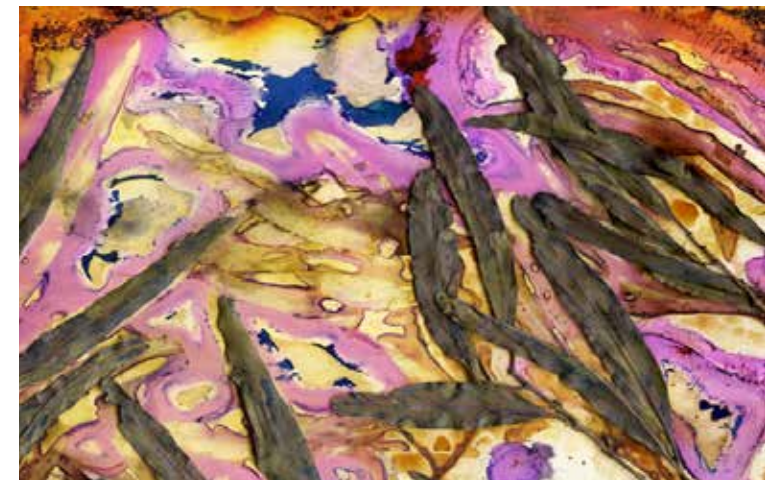


title of our show 'Yimbaya Maranoa'... 'listen to the river'.
I am guided by that which calls to me to be heard, be it the materials around me (inks, collage, graphite) or past drawings /marks or stains created on the Maranoa, over many years.

Renata is a biochrome photo-media artist, researcher, educator and ECO Harmony Guide helping people to reconnect with nature through art & science. Her PhD research focused on medicinal plants of Minjerribah / North Stradbroke Island, in consultation with the Quandamooka Peoples (2011-15).

In 2022 Renata was the inaugural Artist-in-Residence at Binna Burra Qld, where her studio research focused

Dr Renata Buziak



on Gondwanan lineage plants. She also developed and led the Art. Nature. Science. (ANS) Program; managed a group of volunteers; and delivered 30 events, Art. Nature. Science. at Binna Burra book and podcast.

Renata's recent exhibitions include the Gondwanan Biochromes at Binna Burra (solo), A Thread Through Time group exhibition at COMA Gallery in Sydney; and 50 Years of Photography at QCA in Brisbane.

Her experimental biochrome work has been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions, nationally and internationally; awarded several grants, scholarships, and prizes. Renata's work is held in private and public collections. Renata also facilitates cyanotype workshops for adults and children, including a mural making group activity for the Yimbaya Maranoa exhibition.

Helen Hardess is a Meanjin-based artist. In 2022 she completed a Bachelor of Visual Art (Honours) at Queensland College of Art (QCA), Griffith University. Her spatial practice works at the intersections of non-human agencies, the “age of humans”, and colonial legacies. She develops work through studio-based material processes, and observations and investigations carried out in the field. Using a multi-media approach, she preferences speculation,

Helen
Hardess



playfulness, and a light touch, even in the discussion of the serious. Helen is active in Meanjin’s contemporary art community and has shown her work in BLINDSIDE (Naarm), Sydney University, as well as Meanjin’s STABLE, Redland Art Gallery, Springhill Reservoir, and POP, Webb, and Project Galleries, QCA.

instagram:
clarecowleymusic;
clarecowleyar

My formative years on a dairy farm in Allora, Regional Queensland, nurtured a relationship with the natural environment, an early foundation for my art and music practice. After completing a Bachelor of Fine Art with Honours in 2014 from Queensland College of Art, I have continued to develop my arts career which includes painting, drawing, print media and performance. I have participated in

Clare
Cowley



exhibitions overseas and in Australia, taking part in group projects including arts immersion camp 'ngulalma ngalinda Because of her we can' 2018 and Booringa Water Festival in 2019. I have recorded two Alternative Country Albums of my own compositions and collaborated with various artists and musicians in galleries and venues throughout Southeast Queensland. Additionally, I have written, directed, and performed in Cabaret shows and toured them to local and National Festivals.

meretemegarrity.com
Instagram: Merete
Megarrity

Merete (she/her) is a visual artist and Doctor of Visual Arts candidate at the Queensland College of Art, Meanjin. Her practice explores the intersection between sculpture, installation, sound, video, ecology, and art history and focuses on how an installation practice can help an audience make kin with the more-than-human world in the context of environmental breakdown. Merete has held solo

Merete
Megarrity

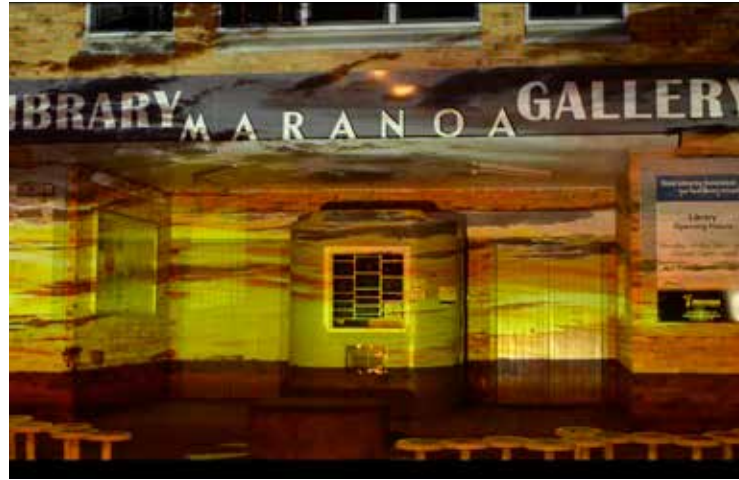


exhibitions and been in various group shows across SE Queensland and her work has been shown at the State Library of Queensland, Parliament House in Canberra, Metro Arts, QUT Art Museum, Redland Art Gallery, Springhill Reservoir, Brisbane Powerhouse and QCA Galleries. She has been the Winner of the Queensland Regional Art Award (2011), finalist in the Redland Art Award (2014) and the Churchie National Emerging Art Prize (2017). She is an active member of the AELA Earth Arts collective - Australian Earth Laws Alliance.

Instagram: saraeva_mitchell

Saraeva has worked with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for the past thirty-one years through Local, State and Federal Governments as well as Aboriginal Community Organisations such as, legal service, domestic violence, health, housing and youth services. She was Chairperson of Nalingu Aboriginal Corporation and is a Board Member of Gunggari Native Title Aboriginal Corporation and the Queensland Murray Darling Basin Aboriginal

Saraeva
Mitchell



Committee. Saraeva holds a Diploma in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family and Community Counselling, Certificate III in Primary Health Care, Mental Health Certificate, and Indigenous Mental Health Certificate. Her achievements include: Department of Communities 2008 Indigenous Domestic & Family Violence Prevention Award “Myalla Booboghun” (Big Talking Women) for a CD featuring songs Aboriginal women wrote themselves recorded in 2014, Australia Day Award: Cultural - Maranoa Regional Council. She is a storyteller and cultural keeper of knowledge.

Saraeva is a proud Gunggari Woman who uses photography to convey her deep spiritual connection to the Country she belongs to. Her photography often depicts the Maranoa River evoking the beauty and powerful spirit of the river.



Deena
Dodd



I am a descendant of the Gunggari people around Mitchell, SWQ. We are connected to the river system of the Maranoa. I am number 11 of 12 children to Anne and Alf Dodd. I am forever thankful to have had the honour of being one of my mother's children and for my family of sisters, brothers, aunties; blood or other. "I use paint so that my creative side has an outlet, it is therapy for my restless mind. I love colour and the opportunity to mix and mesh colour, textures, lifting images up of the canvas."

Mitchell is my hometown. I lived there as a child and moved away with my family, returning again to stay in 2017. I have never called myself an artist, though I have had several creative pursuits. I came to weaving (or it came to me) when I came back home to Gunggari Country. My weaving now connects me to Country in the strongest way. My purpose is to research and revive this ancient craft for our people and share it with as many

Susan
Saunders

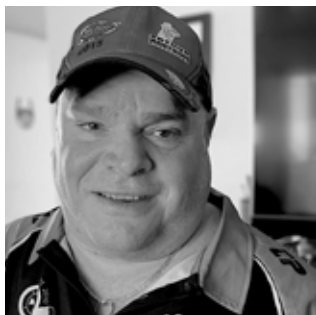


of my community as possible. I hope there will always be Gunggari weavers, and that this is part of our culture remains strong and vibrant. When I have more time, I would like to work on larger works that I like to call (Am)bush Art, using materials found on Gunggari Country and installed in the landscape, to be discovered by the wandering hiker or camper.

m.facebook.com/people/
Bill-Tracy-Dodd-
Brock/100009342457067



Bill
Dodd



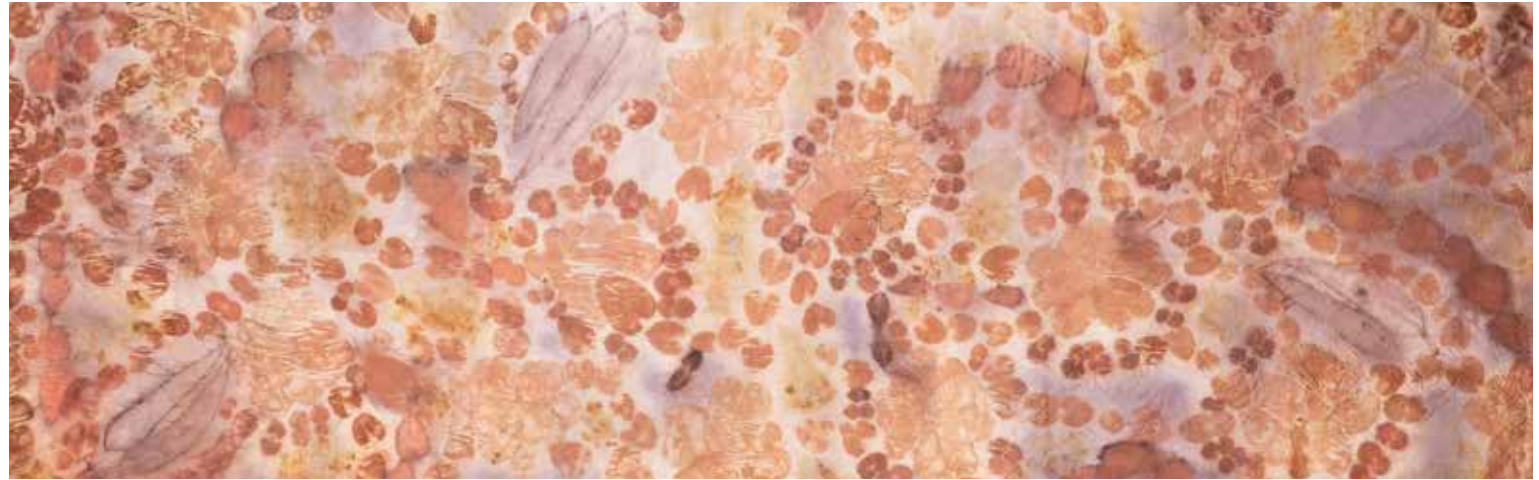
Bill is a Gunggari man who grew up in Mitchell. As a young adult he worked as a stockman before an accident on the Maranoa River forty years ago. Bill has come to love art through poetry and drawing and uses his mouth to hold his drawing tools. The artist finds inspiration from the bush, the river, and memories of his life as a stockman and sportsman.

Bill is the longest surviving First Nation person in QLD with Spinal Cord Injuries (SCI) and longest currently living First Nations person with quadriplegia in QLD.

Felicity is a proud Aboriginal woman living on Ngaro country and is committed to learning, honouring, and preserving the ancient Aboriginal culture. Felicity is passionate about supporting individual Indigenous people, their families and mobs and finding opportunities for them to share their gifts and culture with the wider community.

In 2017, Felicity suffered a life altering brain aneurysm bleed. Since being released

Felicity
Chapman



from hospital in July 2017, weaving, eco-dyeing and photography has been an integral part of her rehabilitation and healing journey. Weaving has been essential in helping Felicity manage life with her disability. Felicity believes in advocating for improved access and accessibility for people with a disability.

Felicity is focused on weaving together her gifts for innovative thinking, connecting people, storytelling, advocacy, traditional Aboriginal weaving, photography, healing, and inspiring others to build culturally strong, healthy, vibrant, resilient and financially independent Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities.

email: madeleinecobb,
artworks@gmail.com

I am a self-taught artist from New Zealand, living in Australia since 1977. Self-employed as an artist since 1981, I came to Mitchell in 1999 at the express invitation of the old Booringa Council to base myself here and carry out my artwork. Work during this time can be viewed at Mitchell's Council Chambers. I stayed here not only because I liked Mitchell itself and the people, but also particularly because of a deep attachment to Mt Moffatt and the scenery and presences I see there. Following an always independent art career and

Madeleine
Cobb



various self-created projects has led to many adventures in my life. This included travelling with Willie Cooma, his eight camels and flat top wagon for nearly a year, and later with Fred Brophy and the Boxing Tent on tour up North. Bring the paints, said Fred (trapping a cook), to name just two adventures. Since 2017 I became deeply involved with the International Quantum Science Art Movement (IAMAQ) and stereoscopic 3D painting, as well as the Australian Science Art Research Centre. It is through IAMAQ I have works shown overseas, as well as having won their international competition for both painting and poetry in 2018.

Being part of the Remapping Mitchell group with its aims and friendships is very important to me and matters very deeply. So does the acknowledgement of our local, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, past, present and future Traditional Custodians of the land and water where I work and live.



Remapping Mitchell
Collaborative Works



Circular listening works

Facilitated by Vicki Saunders

“Yimbaya maranoa – echoes of notes from a song, the sounds of where we belong..”

These circles of khadi paper were gifted as part of a listening exercise at Warong, near Mt Moffatt, framed around Listening to Country and yimbaya – Listening for healing. These circles represent what each of the artist’s ‘heard’ during their time on and in the Maranoa. While individually these images speak to different experiences On Country, on Gunggari Country, collectively they speak to something else - simply inexpressible in English. Yantel our ou.



Fluro Booth collaborative installation.

Facilitated by Jude Roberts, with booth created by Helen Hardess and Stewart Kruger installed with works on paper by the collective.

Yimbaya Maranoa Using mediums highly revealed with UV light, artists embed textures from the Maranoa riverbanks onto Japanese paper.

By allowing the transfer of marks, the papers absorb the surface terrains and forms of the watershed exposing histories and site-specific marks. Using ultraviolet light in a darkened environment brings fluorescent drawings to life. To facilitate this visual transformation the exhibition provides a pop-up “Fluro Booth”. The works extend the ideas of connections and orientating ways of country both through an Indigenous and Visitor lens.



Cyanotype textile

Facilitated by Renata Buziak in collaboration with Saraeva Mitchell.

Spirit of the River and Country where the East and West branches of the Maranoa meet.

This was a multiple-step process for making a collaborative cyanotype artwork on fabric with Renata Buziak. Through the guidance of Gunggari mentor Saraeva Mitchell, the group was informed by the variety of plants used that are found on the Maranoa, and their significance in Gunggari knowledge systems. The cyanotype session was a result of Indigenous, scientific and creative knowledge working together.



Remapping Mitchell
Essays

Emeritus Professor Pat HOFFIE AM is an artist and writer who writes regularly for a number of Australian based journals including Artlink, Griffith Review and Art Monthly. She has produced ten books and her “When Paintings Whisper” published by the Museum of Brisbane will be released in July.

The Yimbaya. Maranoa Project

This essay offers a kind of imaginative circumambulation around a collaborative project that’s grown from love of and respect for Country. I call it a circumambulation because, as an outsider to the project, I can only walk around it gently, searching for the clues of what’s transpired. As I’ve take those steps around it – speaking with the artist, looking at the work they’ve produced, it seems that there’s an invisible core to the objects, events and activities that are each part of the project’s outcomes. A sense of shared veneration coalesces around that core. Country is sacred to the Gunggari people who are its custodians; their sharing of age-old traditional knowledge is sacred; at a deep level, all friendship is sacred, and the non-indigenous participants each come with their own level of respect and willingness to learn.

The word circumambulation implies a ritual element – a process of returning. Revisiting. Re-connecting. And that’s what the participants have done.

To listen.
To learn.
To share.

From a ‘funding speak’ point-of-view, the project is ostensibly about artmaking. But like many of the most effective art projects taking place in this Country at the moment, Yimbaya Maranoa has extended a long way beyond the standard bureaucratic parameters for art-making. The outcomes can’t be adequately assessed by quantitative analyses; the full extent of its successes won’t be able to be measured by the exhibition outputs alone. Rather, this project, like so many that are better analysed through the frameworks of relational aesthetics, is one that grows rhizomatically, binding those involved to each other, to place, to changed approaches of being and perception; to generating socially and culturally rich tributaries that flow into new initiatives.

It’s the kind of project that meanders and wanders and flows deeply and invisibly below the surface of everyday life, just like the Maranoa River flows the landscape it sustains. It’s a project born in the strength of conviction that there are ways through which we can overcome the ongoing scarring of colonial pasts in this Country. It’s carried forward by shared belief that personal, social, cultural and ecological healing can be worked towards through love, respectful sharing and radical listening. In many individual voices and as one, this group shares a conviction that through this restorative process, individuals and communities can develop new visual, spoken and written languages through to reconnect with each other and with the land we share.

Small focused projects like these feed local communities and affect the lives of all who are touched by the generosity of their outputs. They are part of a cultural movement driven

by the perceived need to make meaningful change in a contemporary climate that faces critical challenges for the future. It is no wonder that this project draws its inspiration from the Maranoa. For most months of the year, the tributaries of the Maranoa flow silently, invisibly, relentlessly beneath the dry sand-beds. But when she swells up to her full force in the wet seasons, she becomes a formidable current for change and replenishment. Culture works in similar ways, gathering momentum to bring changes in seeing, thinking and imagining that replenish us all.

1. memories/dreams/pathways to listening and sharing

There's a husky calmness to the voice of Dr Vicki Saunders. Vicki's a Gunggari woman and scholar with an extensive background in Indigenist, creative and public health research (<https://staff-profiles.cqu.edu.au/home/view/26027>).

Vicki leans in towards me to explain that while she doesn't really define herself as an artist, she is convinced that 'arts informed Indigenous research' and Indigenous art and storytelling have the power to suggest novel responses and to create the necessary conditions for addressing 'wicked social problems.' She talks about the centrality of Country and listening to Country as a means of responding to old wounds, and as offering ways to reconnect families and kin; to reconsider pleas to be listened to. Vicki's principles are academically as well as culturally informed, and she delivers them with an up-close and personal directness that's seductive and mesmerising.

So it's no surprise that Vicki's commitment leads her out beyond the offices of Central Queensland academic communities into initiatives that respond to Country and its kin.

Yimbaya Maranoa is one of those initiatives; part of an ongoing series of projects that has gathered artists together on the banks of the Maranoa River to meet, to make, to recall and revisit ideas and images conjured in response to this tract of Country. This project is the most recent iteration of an ongoing cycle of artist-directed revisitations to Country.

The project's video opens to a scene where members of the Remapping Mitchell Arts Collective are gathered in a circle around a fireplace. Vicki's voice-over weaves through a collage of imagery; her words rise upwards and drop; repeat and return as she harvests the statements of each member and plaits them together into an intertwined monologue.

There's a circularity here; an overlaying of phrases and terms, sounds and cadences that intertwine with a gentle complexity; as if this indirectness, this going around - rather than directly into - the focus of things weaves ideas and images into a helix of interdependence. This pattern of repetition offers a curious method of coaxing ideas and images to intersect at points where new correspondences suggest alternate pathways to perceiving, being and becoming.

A similar pattern of returning, revisiting, reconnecting has driven much of the work of non-indigenous artist Jude Roberts. Jude lived in the Maranoa region for twenty-one years while she and her husband Harry raised her three children and co-managed the ongoing seasonal demands of the grazing property. Lussvale had belonged to Harry's family since 1907; it's a tract of Country that's continued its steady pull on Jude's subconsciousness since they sold the property in 2005. Images of that Country reappeared throughout her formal, city-based art school studies, and since then, Jude has returned again and again to the call of this unique, ancient and often unsettling place.

In 2013, the Centenary of Canberra's One River Project lured Jude back again to make work in Maranoa River Country. And as these reconnections continued, her long-held interest in tracing the steps of Major Mitchell steadily increased. In 1845, the explorer and surveyor had been given the role of seeking out and mapping lands suitable for potential pastoral initiatives as part of the country's fourth expedition into inland Australia. Mitchell's journal describes the abundant lands around the Murray Darling River system as 'champagne country'; Country that was fed not only by riverine systems, but also by Australia's most extensive groundwater system - the Great Artesian Basin.

The surface of this tract of Country reveals only part of the story; beneath its lush rolling plains, alluvial aquifers criss-cross its length and breadth. In the upper and mid-catchment area, basalt and sandstone substrates collect the rainfall, while sand beds and gravel layers filter the water in the mid

to lower-catchment. This is Country fed via a continuous and ongoing process of replenishment - a naturally systematic circularity that has continued to nurture this old land for thousands of years.

In 2018, a Gunggari-led project that coincided with the NAIDOC theme that year - *ngulalma ngalinda* - Because of Her We Can, connected Jude and Vicki for the first time. The camp emerged from a core desire to continue a legacy of shared custodianship. For many years, Jude had been deeply inspired by the cultural and social leadership of local Gunggari woman, Aunty Irene Ryder. After her passing, Jude broached an idea she'd been brewing to Irene's niece, Elder Aunty Lynette Nixon and her daughter Saraeva Mitchell. The location of their first discussion was apt - the three women met together at the Mitchell Spa, and as the hot groundwater bubbled upwards to fill the cement swimming baths around them, the three agreed that the NAIDOC theme that year would coincide perfectly with a river camp centred around the celebration of Aunty Irene's legacy.

Fifteen artists were invited from both metropolitan as well as local regions - most had links with Mitchell or the Maranoa. Saraeva had suggested a perfect location for the three-day camp - at a place where the river is joined by the Womalilla and Amby creeks. The confluence of these three waterways offered a flawless dry-season site for artmaking: a large flat white sand-bed beneath which the water runs silently. In flood times, the scene is altogether different: the rushing water breaks the banks, pulling logs and rocks in its path and sending wildlife scurrying up for higher ground. The memory-

scars of those watery ‘mood swings’ are perceptible even during the quiet months of the dry.

The planned format they decided to adopt for the camp was deliberately and deceptively ‘unstructured’ – everyone contributed food and an experienced camp cook prepared meals that brought them all together every night to listen, to talk, to dream up new possibilities under the fathomless expanse of the night sky. The days were filled with experiences that lead to deeper understandings of the area’s botany, and expeditions that pointed out traces of Aboriginal artefacts, tree markings and evidence of land custodianship. And in between, the times that were set aside to simply sit within Country and respond to its silence and soundscape, fostered many rich images and stories.

Vicki remembers how that camp harvested memories that rose to the surface and settled back down again in many different layers. She’d recently returned to Mitchell along with her cousins, drawn back together by the promise of a future in which new inter-relationships with Country had started to seem possible again. Jude’s stories had come from altogether different experiences living on and with the land; and each person who attended brought their own responses to and memories of that place. Even the river itself, the Maranoa, is known by a number of different names, each one resonant with its own different stories and associations, so that the confluence-place chosen by Saraeva provided the perfect site for weaving these stories and images, experiences, memories and dreamings together. And so it was, that on that sandy river-bed campsite, Jude and Vicki’s separate dreams of

revisiting and reinvestigating the diary entries of Major Mitchell began their tentative flow, framed by the tract of Country suggested by Saraeva’s insightful understanding.

2. Country calling

In Australia, the search for new possibilities of rebuilding our relationships to each other and the Country and creatures we share is amplified by a growing awareness that tens of thousands of years of Aboriginal custodianship have created the places, stories, silences and spaces we share. The boundary-lines that separate the familiar from the uncanny in everyday life in cities and towns dissolve and fade away during times spent together on Country. The major highways that run through this region may cover the ancient Songlines in tarmacadam, but they’re still following the same paths. And the routes through this ancient Country drawn up by Major Mitchell, the first non-Indigenous explorer in the region, followed the lead of his Aboriginal guides. And those guides too were following the footsteps of their ancestors. The continuities are always there – the age-old connections, the silent whisperings of what’s gone before, are often just beneath the surface. Recognition of them takes time to listen and an open responsiveness to place.

Vicki Saunders describes the principles of *dadirri*, a deeply active Aboriginal way of listening, to guide her approach to what she refers to as ‘acoustic ecology’. She describes a process of “listening to the sounds below the sounds; to the stories below”, and recognises the capacity of art to bring silent and silenced stories to the surface, even in a region that

earned dubious national recognition as being the “NO’ voting capital of Australia” in the 2023 Voice referendum.

And yet it is from this same region that so many rich streams of collaborative Aboriginal/non-Indigenous creative initiatives have been springing up at a grassroots level: the Wandering Spirits, a group of Aboriginal women who refer to themselves as ‘creatives’, have continued to meet and make art together on Country together for the past five years, led by Gungarri artist Vernessa Fien. Their core conviction stems from a shared responsibility to care for the sites of the region and beyond through tapping into their cultural yearning and artistic talent.

3. Yimbaya Maranoa artists:

One of the most pleasantly surprising aspects of this project is the diversity of experiences, skills and approaches that each of these artists brings to their role as part of a collaborative group. While it is true that most of them have been drawn to work in this way through their shared love and respect for the region, it is also true that their individual experiences with Country are massively divergent. The following offers the briefest glimpse into the work each of them produced for this Yimbaya Maranoa project, and as already mentioned, the work of Vicki Saunders is commented on throughout the general text.

Helen Hardess

A sense of gentle whimsy runs through the work of Helen Hardess. Her tall, slim, elegant sculpture titled *Horse Over Cliff* is constructed from found objects: a long metal rod runs up from a heavy horse-shoe-shaped metal floor plate across which small nuggets of gibber stone lie scattered. Part way up that long rod, a suggestion of scrub spikes out from a cluster of short, jagged wires, and from its fluoro tip a long fine thread suspends a little handmade horse, as if caught in the act of falling. The work evokes a dream-like state – an endless falling into the void of the unknown. And yet it also references a specific historical incident recorded in Major Mitchell’s diary, when a pack horse stumbled and was lost. And for those initiated into Australian art history, the work recalls a work from Sidney Nolan’s Ned Kelly series. Titled *The Slip* (1970 – 1).

Her nearby installation photographically documents and parodies an impromptu event that took place one night nearby the campsite, when the artist came across a contraption of which she could make no immediate sense. The artist’s partner Stewart and her friend Merete are rendered as almost unrecognisable characters sporting fluoro sunglasses and purple skin. Together these characters work with paraphernalia ‘discovered’ running along a fence-line – a makeshift DIY gizmo used for camp drafting training comprised of a cardboard horse attached to a looped run-line operated by a stationary bicycle.

The artist’s wonder at finding herself in a Country that retains its strangeness is reflected in references to Major Mitchell’s diary entries, where the explorer refers to the local bottle

trees as ‘droll’ Helen’s Droll Dreams Diary repurposes the ‘drollery’ in a wilfully eccentric cosplay of history-meets-the present. In this work she raises questions about how best to deal with history in a place that seems reluctant to give up its hidden clues. Her responses lampoon the ways in which ideas of ‘progress’ are inevitably manifested through a litany of mistakes and mistranslations.

Sue Saunders

You could say that in 2017, when Sue Saunders was encouraged by another artist to try weaving, she took to it like a duck to water. But perhaps a more appropriate metaphor would be to describe how the processes and materials of weaving fed Sue’s creative spirit in the same way subterranean springs feed the toolee – or freshwater mussels. Sue had recommenced her creative journey when she returned to her hometown of Mitchell that same year, to reconnect with the Gunggari Country she’d been yearning for. Her works incorporate a range of materials – hand-dyed raffia woven through with local grasses and selected objects Sue’s collected from around shell middens. Sue’s response to Country comes through a celebration of the creatures and landforms there that she knows so well – from the eastern and western branches of the Maranoa River that spring up so magically from beneath the sand to journey together towards the Murray-Darling Basin system, to creatures like the indispensable tiny fresh-water mussels – or toolees – that filter waterways. Sue acknowledges these little invertebrates through delicately coloured and strongly woven discs that she composes into appealing small-scale wall and

floor installations. But Sue has ambitions to up-scale her productions, and to re-position them in site-specific locations far from the traditional frameworks of art galleries. Instead, she wants to take would-be viewers of the work by surprise – installing her woven works like visual traps for the unwary in selected outdoor sites. Her wry plan to call this forthcoming series of works (Am)bush Art is as impressive as it is amusing – installed on Country, her visual messages that respond to the fragile beauty of this place literally reconnect her own creative spirit to the land, its forms, and to the experiences of those who make their way through its pathways.

Donna Malone

Donna Malone is a prolific artist who works devotes full-time work to the production of her images and forms. All the more surprising, then, is the fact that so much of what she produces still manages to appear so fresh, at times even childlike in their immediacy and simplicity. Yet this is no small feat – Donna is an artist who takes on each new experience spent making ‘on Country’ as if it was the first. Instead of relying on a familiar, well-worn collection of tropes and approaches, she manifests the images and forms she produces through processes of soaking and layering and piercing, ripping and abrading the substrates with which she works. This results in images that appear to have emerged as if of their own volition – fugitive apparitions that are indistinguishable from the materials, tones and colours from which they draw form. The artist claims her subject matter as “that which call me to be heard”. Her resultant images demand ‘the slower look’; where viewers are called to pay attention to zones beneath surfaces of wash and mark-

making so that other subtleties emerge. Through harnessing processes of listening and intuitive working that align with Aboriginal responses to place, Donna willingly disrupts her work-a-day studio approaches in ways that extend and deepen her artistic experiences.

Vernessa Fien

Vernessa Fien uses the hand (marda) as a form that signifies the river system of the Maranoa. It is a zone at which five major geographical features come together: the Dawson, Fitzroy and Maranoa rivers, Mount Moffatt and Carnarvon Gorge. The handprints she makes today recall those that have been etched out in sprayed blasts of breath, ochre and water for tens of thousands of years – ancient signifiers that this place belongs to a “whole lotta tribes”. Rich in water sources and food, Vernessa’s Country around Mt. Moffatt is the headquarters of the Maranoa and a place of great cultural significance for Gunggari people. Its sandstone cliffs rise to a towering thousand metres above the eastern branch of the Maranoa River.

Today, the principal threat to the area’s fragile ecology and custodians comes through the relentless trail of tourist visitation. Although carefully protected by the mandates of National Parks rules, regulations and management, the effective closure of some areas of the National Park to local Aboriginal custodians has disrupted the interactive co-dependencies between this place and the peoples who are the inheritors of age-old legacies. Vernessa sees her role as offering new ways of reconnecting with country; advocating

for her fellow Gunggari women through processes she describes as akin to ‘creative healing’. Vernessa’s choices of particular subject matter are driven from deeply cultural as well as personal connections. Above and beyond simple likenesses, such imagery – like that of the kookaburra – resonate with associations that bind creature to place, and to connection with Vernessa’s own creative agency.

Merete Megarrity

Merete Megarrity is an artist whose work has long addressed the precarious balance between practices of land management and their accompanying impact on habitat. Her work cannot be restricted by tidy categories and genres; rather, Merete engages processes of sculpture and assemblage to create forms that are at times vehemently ‘handmade’, and that at other times seem to have been gleaned directly from nature. Her small sculptural form for this exhibition, titled Rethinking Habitat, features what she describes as “a make-believe tree” – an eight-branched hand-made form that’s encrusted with plastic globules. No leaves may sprout from such plastic-compound-covered branches, so that the tender bird’s nest the artist gathered from Country appears all the more exposed and precarious. And in this little nest, a carefully wrought, tiny hand-formed, life-like egg has been placed, as if to raise questions about what kind of ‘cuckoo chick’ this hybrid species might be capable of hatching into. There’s a quizzical poetry to Merete’s work – a gentle questioning that suggests that the simplicity of the form raises far weightier questions that can’t easily be answered. In this work, implications that our capacity to either

tenderly nurture or blindly destroy our environmental future is presented as balancing on a fragile fulcrum.

Saraeva Mitchell

Saraeva Mitchell's skills in working with participants and keeping things running so that others can avail of the best benefits while on Country are also evident in her imagery of the flooded Maranoa that's overlaid by the quiet words of Aunty Lynette and Aunty Irene. Bird-calls pierce through the rush of water; the spoken words of people rise up then fall again, submerged beneath the vast passages of stillness and silence. Saraeva's respect for the river's many moods and for the Country she flows through is palpable in all she creates. Her extensive knowledge of Country is as broad and deep as her generosity: a very special part of this project's experiences on Country is centred around the walks, where Saraeva points out aspects of the flora that might otherwise go un-noticed. It's for good reason that group-members take her teaching seriously. Her own bush-knowledge has been augmented by that of her husband Ross, who's the Bush Heritage Aboriginal Partnership Manager for Queensland, Western New South Wales and the Northern Territory.

But Saraeva leavens her impressive authority with a mischievous wit; she's quick to disassemble any implied hierarchies: one morning, as she commandeered a collaborative bush-knowledge walk for the group, she pulled up to take rest under the dry desiccated branches of an old tree. "This is a been tree" she announced with solemn gravitas. The group gathered around her, earnest, solemn at

the significance of the moment, and eager to hear more of her wisdom, "Been here a loooong time" she said, and broke apart at the situation, her laughter scattering the sense of respectful teacher/pupil sombreness into the morning light.

A proud Gunggari woman who's worked for the past thirty-five years in a range of organisational and government representative roles, Saraeva is driven by the capacity of cultural projects centred on bush medicine as a way of working with healing that strengthens purpose, pride and positive planning for better futures.

Clare Cowley

For this exhibition, artist Clare Cowley has used a large, stretched canvas as the substrate for a sprawling, evocative landscape she's worked on with acrylic paint mixed with sand from the campsite. Clare's experiences growing up on a dairy farm at Allora in regional Queensland has made her acutely interested in the intertwined relationships we share with Country. She began this work in 2018 and continued to add memories and references through layering. Titled Three Waterways Crossing, the image references and overlays a number of sites: the mossy bore drains at Charlotte Plains, shadows cast by a grapevine at Dunkeld, and aspects observed at the junction where the Amby and Womalilla Creeks meet the Maranoa River. Clare seeks to "accomplish a sense of transience, like in a dream or memory" through her work; imagery is blurred, forms are fugitive, disappearing, mutating from one form into the next. Rather than depicting Country in a traditional landscape format, Clare focuses on

incidentals and minute details, using painterly gestures and mark-making to produce a surface that is simultaneously a psychological mindscape and a personal response to a fragile and fugitive environment.

Michelle Hobbs

Michelle Hobbs is an aquatic ecologist whose research interests specialise in freshwater mussels. As a Bidjara descendent with connections to the Warrego area, she draws from traditional knowledge and weaves it together with scientific methodologies. For this exhibition, a long, suspended roll of cotton rag paper is traced with striated linear forms. Carefully applied mineral watercolour shimmers with a subtlety that evokes landscape forms – the downy softness of paperbark; water running down a rock face; the close-up details of a moth wing. Michelle uses haptic processes to produce forms: the effect of using water caught by gravity that is an important aspect of her approach here evokes the interconnectedness of our roles as humans within place and to the animals and plants that co-habit with us. In this subtle suspended surface, a simple round form emerges and then disappears from the tawny background – as if the moon itself emerges from within, rather than from above, the landscape.

Deena Dodd

Deena Dodd is a Gunggari woman – the youngest of twelve children. Although her artworks first appear to be referencing landscape imagery, Deena uses the deep roots and spreading

branches of trees as metaphors for the capacity of family to shelter and protect. The surfaces of Deena's colourful tondos are so rich with impasto that the circular forms are almost transformed into shallow three-dimensional objects. Perhaps it should not be surprising that Deena's family trees have become transformed into landscape imagery in these works – the Gunggari people have long recognised the interconnection between their own lineage and that of Country.

Madeleine Cobb

Madeleine Cobb describes herself as a self-taught artist who moved to Australia from New Zealand in 1977. She's lived in Mitchell since 1999, where she continues to draw inspiration for her art production from Country around Mount Moffatt and from a range of highly idiosyncratic and varied experiences travelling through the state. Although Madeleine was unable to play an active role in the processes of the Remapping Mitchell Project, her installation included drawings that map historical events and stories and feature the large pink parrot commonly returned to as the Major Mitchell cockatoo as part of the exhibiting aspect of the Yimbaya Maranoa Project.

Jude Roberts

For many years now, the work of Jude Roberts has traced the ebb and flow, the cyclical circularity of water courses within the Australian landscape. At times these fluid bodies of sustenance remain invisible, below the surface, until they

burst through the dry surface in the gush of artesian spouts, or bubble upwards from mysterious hidden underworlds into the basins and waterholes that surround the Maranoa River.

Roberts' work is often minimal, gestural, keenly responsive to the specific material demands of the media with which she chooses to work. Her long decades of living on the land have made her acutely aware of the effects of human enterprise on these precarious ecosystems – she draws from her personal experiences to reflect on history and to bring this to bear in another layer of reference transformed by her capacity to evoke the evocative and poetic.

For this exhibition, her animated drawing respond to the 1845-6 journal entries of Major Thomas Mitchell. The hand-made simplicity of the scratchy imagery lends a great deal to its poetic charm and as a metaphorical current that floats the dry historical data downstream into a surging celebration of seasonal river floods, and their effects on the land and creatures that respect it and depend on it.

The works on paper map the interrelationships of the watersheds that we cannot visibly experience: the artesian basins and waterholes of the Maranoa River. Other works in this exhibition include a substrate the artist has made through a process of breaking up and reconstituting one of her mother-in-law's cotton dresses. The work is a tender posthumous eulogy to a woman who worked this tract of land for most of her life.

Anastasia Tyurina

Anastasia Tyurina, a new media artist, communication designer and researcher, contributes to the collaborative efforts of the group, through drawing from her experiences in sciences and technologies. She uses emerging technologies as a means through which to make sense of changes in our relationship to ecosystems.

Anastasia often explores aspects which are invisible to the naked eye through photomicrographs of tiny water droplets that are magnified to suggest inner microscopic ecosystem. These images are further manipulated and projected onto landscape forms, gallery structures, and walls. In this project, Anastasia uses natural elements to create moving and still images that are digitally manipulated by creative computer code. Anastasia states that her aim is to reveal “the invisible and recognise the presence of what is valuable yet often overlooked, contributing to a broader understanding of our environment.”

Felicity Chapman

The gentle shadows of petals, pods and leaves spiral their way across the opulent lustre of silk with all the formal delicacy of a Victorian trousseau. These images are so diaphonous, it's as if their presence has been magically breathed onto the surface. Yet these tiny details of local vegetation tell a story much more complex than any antique decorative motifs; each plant that the artist has laboriously eco-dyed into the silk surface has been selected from either saltwater Country, or freshwater Country. The fabric, therefore, is a kind

of memento to the preciousness of different eco-systems. Their maker, Felicity Chapman, is a proud Aboriginal woman living on Ngaro Country; she's a creator whose skills with eco-dyeing, weaving and photography provide her with the means through which to build advocacy and cultural resilience through story-telling. Felicity has also taken on a role as a teacher who supports others in her community and beyond, in learning about the skills she has worked so hard to perfect. She's also an artist with first-hand experience about art's capacity to heal and empower. The strength with which she devotes herself to sharing these powers with the wider community is magnified by the delicate power of the work she produces.

Renata Buziak

For this exhibition, photomedia artist Renata Buziak led collaborators in the making of a large, richly blue cyanotype featuring foliage from the local area. Those in the know can identify budgeroo – a bark used by Aboriginal people in the area to wrap the bodies of the dead; black cyprus, hop bush, emu apple and a range of other local species.

Renata's other projects involve projections of photographic biochromes she produces from setting up plants on photographic paper and photomechanically capturing the breakdown of their tissue structure. Renata has produced her biochromic work in a number of other sites across South-East Queensland, and states her interest as "helping people to reconnect with nature through art and science research."

Renata's contribution to the collaborative audio-visual installation work that centres around the Umbi Umbi Gumby Gumby story shared by Aunty Lynette Nixon and Saraeva Mitchell acknowledges the conviction of the Gunggari women's commitment to the power of deeply attentive listening as a means of healing.

Bill Dodd

A group installation of works by Gunggari man Bill Dodd offers a hypnotic, almost transcendent experience. Individually, each relatively small work has been meticulously worked on, centimetre by centimetre, to produce a visual surface that buzzes with electrifying life. And together, these works create an optic field that multiplies the energy. Individual works feature creatures and land-forms from Bill's local Mitchell landscapes, from the Mount Owen Country where he once worked and from his imagination. Yet the space between each of these features buzzes with an uncanny life-force across which white 'roos and emus or horses romp; or through which a banded snake or fat goanna slowly slither, while rainbow lorikeets perched on bleached branches peer straight back out at us.

Bill transforms these landscapes according to his own terms – local mountain-tops may suggest snow; a sky may be blood red; a spatial field may resonate with checkerboard complexity – the results are always images that speak of the surging force of life.

Forty years ago Bill suffered an accident on the Maranoa that

left him unable to continue his work as a stockman. But since then, Bill has turned to writing, painting and drawing as tools to transform his world and ours. There's a powerful visual magic to this work – a testimony of his capacity to harness energy and reconnect others to the world around them in uniquely compelling visual ways.

4. Futures/pasts – turning turning

The group that has formed around this Yimbaya Maranoa project has grown through friendships, working partnerships and the strong support of a series of collectives. Moves are currently underway to name this iteration of artists as an identifiable collective of its own, with a proposed title for the group that draws from the core tenet of listening to the sounds and origin stories of Country.

Today the Collective is guided by Vernessa, Vicki and Jude as the group continue to flourish through processes of interactive support. While most of the initiatives have been undertaken via self-funding supported by modest injections of grant-moneys, the demands of increasing success are pushing the collaborative initiative towards the need to search for further support funding. While this is a marker of the projects' successes, it is also a potential burden on those who take on the principal roles in seeking for grant applications and who shoulder the time-and resource loads for governance and the general management of outcomes.

It would be short-sighted to assess the value of initiatives like these by exhibiting output alone. While some of the members have worked professionally in the visual arts for decades,

others have been drawn to the group through their long commitment to social and community initiatives and land care – together their active dedication to finding new roles for visual art practice is a vital process that is better analysed through the framework of relational aesthetics than through more traditional and conservative parameters. The practice they are involved in is forging new, interactive communities that communicate across great cultural and geographic distances, and that are based on shared experiences of listening and responding to Country.

And in turn, off-shoots of this process of working invests a range of different skills and understandings in those who participate. These range from knowledge of Aboriginal custodianship, histories, contemporary technologies, and ancient crafts that are shared around the circle of food-sharing and story-sharing. Gallery exhibitions are one node of introducing broader audiences to their shared ideas and interests, and mark celebration-events for collective achievements. But the projects have been driven by a keen curiosity fostered by a radical hospitality that creates ties that bind. This approach is born in the recognition that shared time on place remains as vital and as transformational to our understanding of each other and our changing relationship with the land, its features and creatures, as it has always been.

The campfire smoke entwines around itself as it swirls upwards into the night sky. Looking down from above, the circle of artists who share food, swap conversation and music and quiet laughter is another circle of light in the vast land. From time to time this group of artists stop, listening

together in the velvety dark of the night to the mute cadence of Country. Together they feel its pull. They are transformed by its taciturn music. They are moved by its massive silence.

Pat Hoffie 2024

Recording poetic transcription

Vicki Saunders

listening to the words

this is what I heard

Dunthe/Country is:

Being home,

belonging where I'm known

knowing I'm in the right place

knowing the prints left behind

and those that have come before

are not quite erased

being here is healing my body spirit mind

where the river water is living, life giving. kind

kind of like listening to Country evoking a feeling

Like being made full, filled up almost staggering, reeling

Something here has made me think about being human – hu-
manity

It has bought me back to myself

Dunthe/Country always was will be something else

Like the maranoa, the most precious baroo

the river that runs through,

Me and you

it runs through my veins

Like the flow of colours of country

in my memory remain

the relief

my belief

To come back to the place I belong

The maranoa is a renewal song

like the river constantly changing day by day,

permanent always there, they say

reliable, we keep coming back

To something holding us together

disappearing into this landscape I can sit here forever

Dunthe/Country

It's privilege to be here

a fulfilment a heartfelt fulfilment

of a belonging held dear

being in a circle here

being welcomed in an unimagined way into this space.

It's taken me to a deeper place

Where Dunthe/Country will be:

Listening

Which is a new thing for me

once you listen you feel

a different kind of real

that locates

how we relate

this place

Where some here were born

on the maranoa that reveals life in different forms

mapped from different perspectives

Dunthe/Country is

where we are still connected

we've heard lot of stories about the Maranoa river

Live giver

Where the forms of the river

are echoed/and reflected

reflecting different perspectives.
in the group like a confluence of rivers coming together
we flowed into a different sense of time/forever
Like memories of Kids playing in the river a river of sand
Without worry that's a memory that helps me understand
This place of beginnings
where my love of environment began
here at the place where river systems begins still stands,
at the source.
always coming back
back and forth
to experiences that are always new
even though they're deeply familiar too
The richness of the people here
Are part of
a longing
It even seems to grow that be-longing
Where time moves in a circle
Seemingly adrift
Where the silence is it's biggest gift
where you can lie in and watch it all flowin
For a moment we've experienced a little window of this feel-
ing growing.

Dunthe/Country is
Like a poem
An invitation to keep expanding
the Maranoa baroo flows through without
beyond understanding
Like lying in a bed in a land that is so old
listening to sleeping stories being told

I associate tears with it a lot of tears – rising waters
Yet for our sons and daughters
it's a blessing – the riverwater cleans and heals.
And restores my faith in humanity.
And to feel
Dunthe Country is
A feeling always with me now
since the first gathering at the 22 mile somehow
Our time
a framework that reorients my place,
My existence, somehow someplace
Like I grew up with this one paradigm, one view
Not knowing when you encounter another it also changes you,
this time has been a way back from that
From feeling my way through acknowledging this fact
time in visual form is a circle
and yet something else
Highlighting a fullness,
a different understanding of myself
Dunthe/Country
unspoken
Is the silence we each came here to seek
That has always, still, always will, speak

Saraeva Mitchell wrote the following for the 'ngulalma ngalinda Because of her we can'

3 day arts immersion on the Maranoa River during NAIDOC week, July 2018.

Land stands at the heart of everything; it is the foundation of our Culture, from the land comes Identity, Culture, Dreaming, Sacred Sites and Language. Language is very significant to the Gunggari People as an important ancestral being called the Mundagudda (Rainbow Serpent) travelled through this country creating all our waterways, rivers, creeks and water-holes as he travelled through he flicked his tail creating banks along our waterways and filling them with water, it was during this time he embedded our language into the land, naming all of our waterways, sacred sites and country. We are Gunggari people because that is the name of the language given to us by the Mundagudda during creation time. Munda means snake and gudda means belonging to the water. The traditional Gunggari song "Illmargan" is a Dreaming Story/Song line that celebrates the Spirit and Power of the Maranoa River and its association with the Mundagudda, the Rainbow Serpent. We have named this project ngulalma ngalinda in Gunggari Language means "Because of Her We Can" The Maranoa River is used by Gunggari Women for Physical, Social and Emotional, and Spiritual wellbeing.

In this project we will deliver a Gunggari Cultural presentation, so participants have a deeper understanding of the importance of the River and Land and its meaning to us as Gunggari Women. There are rules we must abide by for the protection of the Rivers and Waterways.

We will be collecting bush medicine and bush food be it the bark, roots, leaves or twigs in particular gummy gummy which

is used for physical health, sandalwood for spiritual wellbeing, emu bush for social and emotional wellbeing and wild orange for women's healing, we will look at sites of significance to Gunggari Women along the River. Our waterways and artesian basin is universal to our munamurra, it is not just a story, nor a myth, for munamurra contains our Spiritual connection, our traditional lore, our culture, our heritage and the stories, songs and dances associated with the land. It contains the reasons for how and why things such as water, fire and the landscape exist. This project will allow artists to create with an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the importance of our land, fire and waterways.

Vernessa Fien

Footprints “Walking together in harmony on country”, “Footprints” – what does this term signify? To me, it represents the impact or impression we make on a space, be it a physical surface, a landscape, a verbal expression, a feeling, a knowing, a digital application, or a technical platform, and an auditory path.

This project traces the exploration path of Major Mitchell and the site-specific aspects of First Nations along the Maranoa River. Through this exploration, we aim to build knowledge and relationships, gaining a deeper understanding of both literal and metaphorical footprints to walk together in harmony. Within the camps and projects, each artist reflects on their personal connection to the land, making it highly relevant to the collective project. It conceptualises the emotions experienced when connecting with country – listening, feeling, sensing, seeing – and understanding the beauty that envelops them on their journey. It is only through these experiences that one can truly comprehend the significance of connection to country.

For me, expressing these footprints through art is a spiritual practice crucial to cultural revival and preservation. It serves as a platform for communities to reconnect with their roots, revive traditional practices, and assert their cultural identity. Art acts as a bridge across time, allowing the celebration of heritage, maintenance of connections to the lands and waters, and the sharing of stories.

Art, as a spiritual practice, plays a vital role in cultural revival and preservation. It becomes a conduit for communities to rediscover cultural knowledge and ancestral pathways.

Through the creation of art and its therapeutic power, we have reconnected with the wisdom of our ancestors and elders. Accepting and learning this knowledge becomes a transformative journey, leading to the evolution of our identity and self-expression.

These footprints symbolise not just our own but those of our Ancestors, encompassing both First Nations and European legacies.

Warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewers are warned that the video contains voices and images of deceased persons.

Yimbaya Maranoa is a First Nations led project initiated by Traditional Custodians Vernessa Fien and Vicki Saunders, in conjunction with Jude Taggart Roberts, and realised through the Remapping Mitchell Arts Collective.

With special thanks to Gunggari Elder Aunty Lynette Nixon and Saraeva Mitchell, knowledge holders and mentors.

The project has evolved with the continued dedication, support and development of established artists and creatives, with acknowledgement to participants of previous camps.

Artists in Yimbaya Maranoa include:

Renata Buziak
Felicity Chapman
Madeleine Cobb
Clare Cowley
Bill Dodd
Deena Dodd
Vernessa Fien
Helen Hardess
Michelle Hobbs
Donna Malone
Daria Maeva
Merete Megarrity
Saraeva Mitchell

Sue Saunders
Vicki Saunders
Warren Saunders
Jude Taggart Roberts
Anastasia Tyurina

With video/audio content from
Clocked Out: Vanessa Tomlinson and Erik Griswold
Greg Harm; Tangible Media
and Darcy Foott Photography
With thanks to camp assistant Harry Roberts.

Projection video/audio work was created by:
Video editor: Keith Armstrong, Embodied Media
Videographer: Greg Harm, Tangible Media
Sound Edit and Design: Clare Cowley & Adrian Diery
Sound and video designer: Helen Hardess
Artist facilitator: Jude Taggart Roberts

Video and sound contributions from the artists and Stewart Kruger.
Thanks to Aunty Lynette Nixon and the families of Aunty Irene Ryder
for permission to use sound archives recorded in conversation with
Jude Roberts in 2013.

The exhibition includes an audio- visual installation;
Yimbali, Listening is a form of healing is an installation work in which
Gunggari Elder Aunty Lynette Nixon and Saraeva Mitchell share the
Umbi Umbi Gumby Gumby story
and its power to heal through listening.

Created by
Photo-media: Renata Buziak
Ecoacoustics: Leah Barclay
Composition: Tanja Bruggemann

Poetry: Vicki Kelleher

Through long standing relationships between various organisations and the collective arts group we have ongoing support and project partners with:

Injune Arts Inc.
Gunggari Native Title Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC
Maranoa Regional Council
Injune Creek Gallery
Mitchell on Maranoa Gallery
Wandering Spirits Workshop
Booringa Action Group
Australian Earth Laws Alliance (AELA)

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Special thanks to:

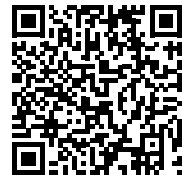
Dr Anastasia Tyurina and School of Design, and The-more-than-human Futures Research Group, Queensland University of Technology (QUT)
Dr Vicki Saunders and Jawun Research Centre, Central Queensland University (CQU)

The Remapping Mitchell Collective and Injune Arts Inc. acknowledges the Gunggari as Traditional Custodians of Country in which the project is situated and recognises the continuing connection to land, water, and community.

**The collective pays its respects to the Elders, past, present,
and emerging.**

**Note that the Collective will be changing their name
to Yimbaya Maranoa (Arts Collective) after the Injune
exhibition in March 2024.**

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Instagram

