



THIS
IS
A
RIVER



THIS IS A RIVER

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Country Arts SA acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land upon which these events take place and respect their spiritual relationship to country

A SERIES OF ARTIST RESIDENCIES IN TOWNS UP & DOWN THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN STRETCH OF THE MURRAY RIVER

Amongst these pages are artists, thinkers and do-ers, all with their own interpretation of what cultural life along their stretch of the river is and how they see themselves in relation to that. In compiling this magazine we thought it would be interesting to attempt to de-emphasise the idea of art and culture as “a project” with a beginning and an end and instead re-emphasise the idea of cultural life as a continuum; a practice of tried and true methods, generational lineages, with punctuation marks for injections of new people and ideas.

In working with the artists to establish their residencies, we began to realise how much they were simply interested in using what and who was around them, taking advantage of what was available at the time whilst being incredibly creative and resourceful. Therefore the work you might witness when you visit the residencies might not look like art as you perceive it. The artists are slipping in alongside what is already happening, almost trying not to cause disruption or attention, and instead working deeply in tandem with people.

Through each residency each artist is responding to the theme ‘Resilience as Process’. Resilience is a capacity that develops over time in the context of person-environment interactions. It involves the act of looking back to the recent past and preparing for the near future. This theme has direct reference to the effects of the recent drought on Murray River towns and populations which ended around 2010. The choice of theme has given the artists room to explore the processes that communities and individuals may have gone through and the lessons they have learned in order to prepare for next time. We are at an opportune time to discuss this as the waters have returned, to an extent ... but what does it take for us not to forget?

In curating the residencies we weren’t necessarily interested in the works addressing the theme to the letter – instead encouraging the artists to use it as a starting point. We were however interested in the residencies having the guiding principle “Same Place Different View” and the projects stretching the participating regional communities and artists’ concept of what they, art and creativity is capable of.

The magazine you are holding is a one-off publication that is an adjunct to a series of artist residencies in towns up and down the South Australian stretch of the Murray River.

It presents you with a small window of opportunity to glimpse the present and grab a little understanding of the past as we head into the future.

Please treat it as three opportunities;

- 1 **A guide to when and where the residencies are taking place so you can visit them**
- 2 **Something akin to a catalogue that you might find accompanying a visual art exhibition**
- 3 **A keepsake that you might want to pick up and flick through later when you have the time to reflect**

2015 marks the point where lots of these artists are just at the beginnings of their investigations. We envisage that the artists will return over a number of years to keep the conversations growing and ongoing. We propose that this very practice of art making in and amongst the community might help us reflect on the myriad questions that the theme “Resilience as Process” presents us with.

Ephemeral Sculpture, Performance, Music, Video Projection, Film, Website design, Poetry, Photography and Costume are just some of the art forms that the artists will employ whilst in residence.

Finally we were also struck by the unshakable modesty in the people we asked to contribute to these pages. It is they, in their various roles, often as volunteers, who are the large contributors to a culture. It is they, who are slowly creating connections between people and forming a sense of resilience amongst their own communities.

Steve Mayhew
Creative Producer
Country Arts SA

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THIS IS THE RIVER

IN CONVERSATION WITH

VERNA KOOLMATRIE

Verna lives in Raukkan, where she was born. As an Aboriginal Education Officer with the SA Education Department she teaches Ngarrindjeri language at the school, and is a member of the Raukkan Community Council.

Raukkan is the home of the Ngarrindjeri people, it means 'ancient meeting place'. It is my birthplace, or Ngatjurtul, and my Ngatji or totem is the huntsman spider.

I started my schooling here and over the years I have left and then come back again, many times. When I was young my dad had a job on the railways, so we moved around a lot, but we always came here for holidays. All the families did the same thing; it didn't matter where you were, you always came home for holidays. This continued when I married and had children; my kids now live here or in Adelaide and they also come back and forth. Sadly people often return for funerals and most Ngarrindjeri come home to be buried. Those connections are very strong.

Traditionally art was just part of telling your story for Ngarrindjeri, whether through body adornment, decorating belongings, traditional ceremonies or weaving. You wove bags for everyday living, for a purpose, then added designs that showed your Ngatji so that others knew the bags belonged to you. You decorated your spears and shields in this way, using feathers for head dresses or around the body. Even possum cloaks which were a part of our tradition at one stage - you'd tell your story on your cloak. And they were such an important aspect of your life, if you owned one you might actually be wrapped in it when you died. So we didn't separate art from culture - it was all part of the same thing.

As time moved on and we didn't need to make those objects anymore, the art also started to die out - if you don't practice those ways, you lose them. In about the 1980s the community started to revive the art of weaving. We've always known about the weaving, we'd seen the elders weaving, I remember my grandmother was a weaver until she got arthritis in her fingers. It was something that they had



just always done, mostly sitting in groups so that you'd have conversation at the same time. So the elders started teaching the younger ones again and now some people weave all the time, while others do so every now and then. But they all know how to weave, whether they choose to do it or not.

Its revival has been very valuable for people. It's rare to have a group where we're weaving or making feather clothes, and people don't say afterwards: "oh, this is so good, I feel so good doing this work". We've known all along that it's not just the weaving or the painting or whatever, but the getting together. It's not lost on us that we're doing something our people did for thousands of years, and we're very much aware that we're continuing on our culture. We understand too that we get something out of it for ourselves, that there's a sense of achievement.



There are some people in the community who are regarded as artists, who do those things on a daily basis, and who are making their living from it. They have an importance based on that: everybody knows who the painters are, who the weavers are. They tell their own stories in their own way through whatever art form they use.

It is similar for language. Traditionally we were oral speakers and didn't tend to write things down. Our people would sing as they travelled from place to place - telling about the environment, where they were coming from and where they were going to. The children would hear these songs over and

over again from an early age and if one of them got lost they could find their way because they remembered the directions. So learning was all about being with your elders, with your family group, singing, having fun, exploring, looking around, and remembering things. This is a completely different way of doing things, of learning, and your memory is really important.

Today the young ones must learn to speak and write English, but it is also important to respect the ancestors and the culture. The more you learn language and work with it, the more you appreciate its value. Last week I had the kids at the school making Mother's Day cards using language, and they were just so excited to be able to give a card written all in Ngarrindjeri. They were proud of the fact that they could read it and - because they weren't too sure that their parents could read it too - they would be able to say, "that says Happy Mother's Day"!

I grew up using language interspersed with English and not realising the difference - they were all just words to us. But that made it hard when you went into a mainstream school and you talked a combination of English and language, wondering why you got blank stares. So when I teach I make sure that they know the difference. I'll get the kids to say a sentence to me, and then I'll get them to say which words are English and which Ngarrindjeri. They're only young kids, but they have already caught on, and are proud that they can speak both. And most importantly they are having great fun.



RESILIENCE & VISION <

MIKE TYE



Raukkan is an Aboriginal community of about 150 people on the shores of Lake Alexandrina. Most people have no idea where it is, even though it's featured on our \$50 bill. The two short films presented intend to show Raukkan as both a place like any other and a place like no other.

The first work, *Resilience*, is a short film based on the artist's experience of residing in Raukkan and engaging with the community through conversations. It is a deeply spiritual community, reflecting a long history of connection to the lands and waters of this region. The recent drought deepened the great sadness and frustration felt by Ngarrindjeri people, and many others who share their concerns. It also reinforced the importance of caring for land to the broader community. *Resilience* is about bouncing back; back to where we were. *Resilience* questions if where we were is where we want to be.

The second work, *Vision*, indulges the emerging filmmaker in Mike and presents the beauty of Ngarrindjeri country as a unique cinematic experience.

Vision is perhaps more accurately described as projection art than film. Images of the natural beauty around Raukkan are abstracted, intensely coloured and manipulated. Beauty is found both in obvious places and not so obvious ones.

TAKE
PART

See the films!

'Resilience' and other
short films

Friday 10 July, 2pm
Raukkan Community Hall

*This screening will occur during
NAIDOC Week 2015*

'Vision'

Sunday 27 September
Wellington Courthouse



IN CONVERSATION WITH
—
JANE HYLTON

*Jane is a visual artist and curator.
She has lived at Clayton Bay, in the heart
of the wetlands and waterways of Lake
Alexandrina, for twenty years.*



Jane Hylton, *Nest*, 2015, oil pastel on paper, 13 x 17cm

How does where you live and work inform your art?

I've always been really interested in the environment, and a lot of my artwork has been based on things that I found at the beach even when we lived in the city. My work is a response to the environment, and interacting with my surroundings, and I am especially fascinated by this estuarine, riverine environment I live in. But even if I'm away, I still tend to engage with nature. The only time I have trouble is in the city – I don't have a rapport with nature when it's stifled in a backyard. So as long as I'm in a natural environment, then I am inspired to make artwork. And I collect things I find – what fascinates me can often seem quite gross to other people!

I am particularly interested in how the physical environment works, and this gets distilled down to an intense focus on the way things are constructed in nature. I love making very detailed drawings and often use maps with botanical-style drawings over the top of them. Years ago I had a job at the Lands Department making maps, and that still informs my work. But as part of my curatorial background I also explore colonial art, and relate what I am doing now to what I know about the artists and people who worked in, and wrote about, this area. So there's a kind of blend, I suppose, of my own history, the history of this colony, state, and then the natural history of my environment.

Do you think you see your environment differently because you are an artist?

I think that there is a particular way I physically look at and see the environment and I don't recall ever not seeing in this way. I've always been hopeless working in three dimensions – my mind tends to organise things two dimensionally. So as I look out the window now I visually pull what's going on in the foreground, middle ground and background into flattened planes. If you asked me to recreate it with any physical depth – in three dimensions – I couldn't do it. I also interpret colour almost immediately, pulling out the subtleties of shades in anything that I'm looking at. Sometimes this is so absorbing I'll just do straight colour studies.

Perhaps in those ways I do actually physically look at my environment differently. There are bits which will interest me in great depth, and bits that just don't interest me at all. If I go out with a group of people into the field, drawing, I'm the one that sits on the stool right next to the bush doing a focussed study, rather than looking outward.

I think one of the saddest things to happen as we become adults is that we lose the innate, confident creativity we had as children. A couple of times I have run days in my studio when I get a small community group together to do some weaving, make paper or sketch outdoors. People come along saying, "Oh, I don't know how to do anything", then they surprise themselves. I remember one woman arriving really stressed because of her job. At the end of the day she just floated out of the studio. She just got into that creative zone and nothing else mattered for that time. Her response is one of the reasons I call these get-togethers 'Creative Daze'. Creativity has so much to offer in terms of mentally relaxing people – it's as good as meditation. I enjoy seeing people find that space.

Is there a rich cultural life in your community?

In Clayton people can be quite reclusive, but every now and again everyone comes together, and suddenly they're quite happy to expose their creative, artistic side. I think it's wonderful when this happens. Last year there was a community bonfire for the winter solstice. The local council put a pad down to build the bonfire on, and two local artists created a fantastic giant yabby (which is a local icon for various reasons I won't go into here) out of twigs and cuttings. It was raised with great ceremony to the top of the bonfire pile as a kind of community "tribute". Clayton itself is a physically beautiful place and its natural qualities enhanced the spectacle: the line of candlelight and flames marking a path from the cliff top down the hill, and barrels ablaze with fire. The night was spectacular: people came in droves, it was brilliant, and it had this wonderfully spontaneous artistic element to it – the fabulous yabby. The community just can't wait for the next one.



MEETING OF THE WATERS <

MICHELLE MURRAY

WITH

OWEN LOVE - RICHARD HODGES - KYLIE KAIN
HEATHER MILLAR - PAUL GALLASCH



Actor and playwright, Owen Love will take us on a journey into his country, Ngarrindjeri country. He will trace the ancestral story of Ngurunderi as he chases Pondi, the great Murray Cod, into Lake Alexandrina transforming the waters, the land and the people.



Meeting of the Waters is a physical residency at Wellington with a virtual and online presence that is building into a series of short films, research, journals, profiles and interviews. The artists are exploring how lore and law have helped make the people of the Wellington region who they are today through a series of interviews with farmers, fishers, and traditional owners.

Writer and storyteller Michelle Murray will consider her own story as a white woman in an Aboriginal family by marriage, and what impact both European and Aboriginal law and lore have had on her life. She will create a mythical poetic monologue from the parallels of this and the stories she discovers on the Murray.

Photographer Richard Hodges will capture the changing moods of the people and landscape with his Nikon D3s. He will be there to chronicle Owen's story in film format and to respond creatively to Michelle's poem with enigmatic images of the region.



Songwriter Kylie Kain will craft and record three original songs inspired by stories, people and place.

Writer Heather Millar will develop online portraits from a selection of interviews and of the artists at work.

Filmmaker Paul Gallasch will help pull the works together into a series of short films.

People are invited to join in the online conversation by sharing an image with a short description in response to the phrase, 'Meeting of the Waters: two worlds become one'. It might be a slice of family history; it might be about the meeting of different bodies of water;

how science alongside Ngarrindjeri knowledge is trying to restore the system; how laws and lore have impacted life on the Murray; or any local story you have that sheds light on what happens when 'two worlds become one'. These will join the Facebook page to help weave the complex story of life at Wellington and the Lower Lakes.

TAKE PART

Attend the launch event

WHEN

Sunday 27 September, 4.30pm

WHERE

Wellington Courthouse
678 Mason Street, Wellington

CONTRIBUTE YOUR STORY

Facebook

meetingofthewaters

Website

meetingofthewaterswellingtonsa.wordpress.com

Contact Michelle Murray

spinbird@live.com.au
0428 100 436

WATERMARK <

MELINDA RANKIN

DIRECTOR

MURRAY BRIDGE REGIONAL GALLERY

Sometimes towns nestle along the edge of a river, nudging up to the water's edge, using the banks as their borders. In Murray Bridge the river flows through the town, creating an east and a west side, with the all-defining bridge joining the two.

For the Ngarrindjeri people, with their culture formed over many thousands of years, this land and these waters are a living body, "our Ruwe, our Country as it was created in the Kaldowinyeri (the Creation)¹. This connection to Country is profound and also simple: "the lands and waters must be healthy for Ngarrindjeri people to be healthy"².

This is something that at some level, we all know. Life in Murray Bridge - work, school, shopping, sport - often happens away from the river. And yet when the river's health was waning in the Millennium Drought, the town was worried. One community member expressed it with poignancy: "I felt despair. I felt that the river would never be the same again."³

Rivers etch their way into peoples' lives, creating an invisible watermark of memories: of school camps and misadventures with the long drop dunny, family holidays in the shack and weekends spent water skiing, canoeing or fishing. Some marks - especially those of flood levels - are made public. Playing the part of memorials, they ensure we don't forget the river's capacity to expand and take all.

The river - and the bridge - invites pilgrimage: the annual NAIDOC march from one side to the other; the wedding party that walks from vows taken on one side to reception on the other; the morning walkers, with dogs on leads, tracing the river's edge in the fog. Even for those whose lives lead them to face away from the river, the crossing of the bridge is still an occasion, an opportunity to check out what's happening on the river.

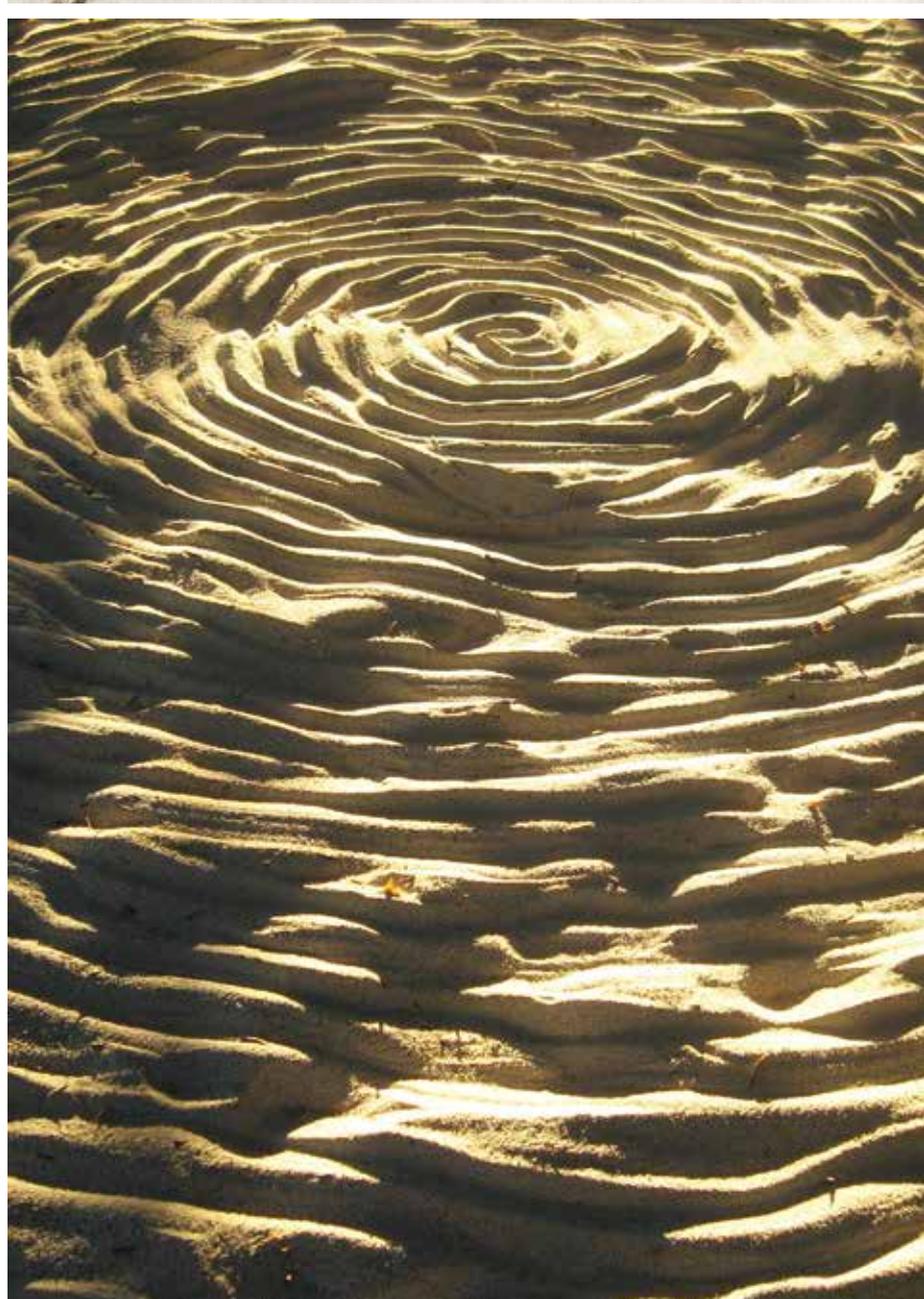
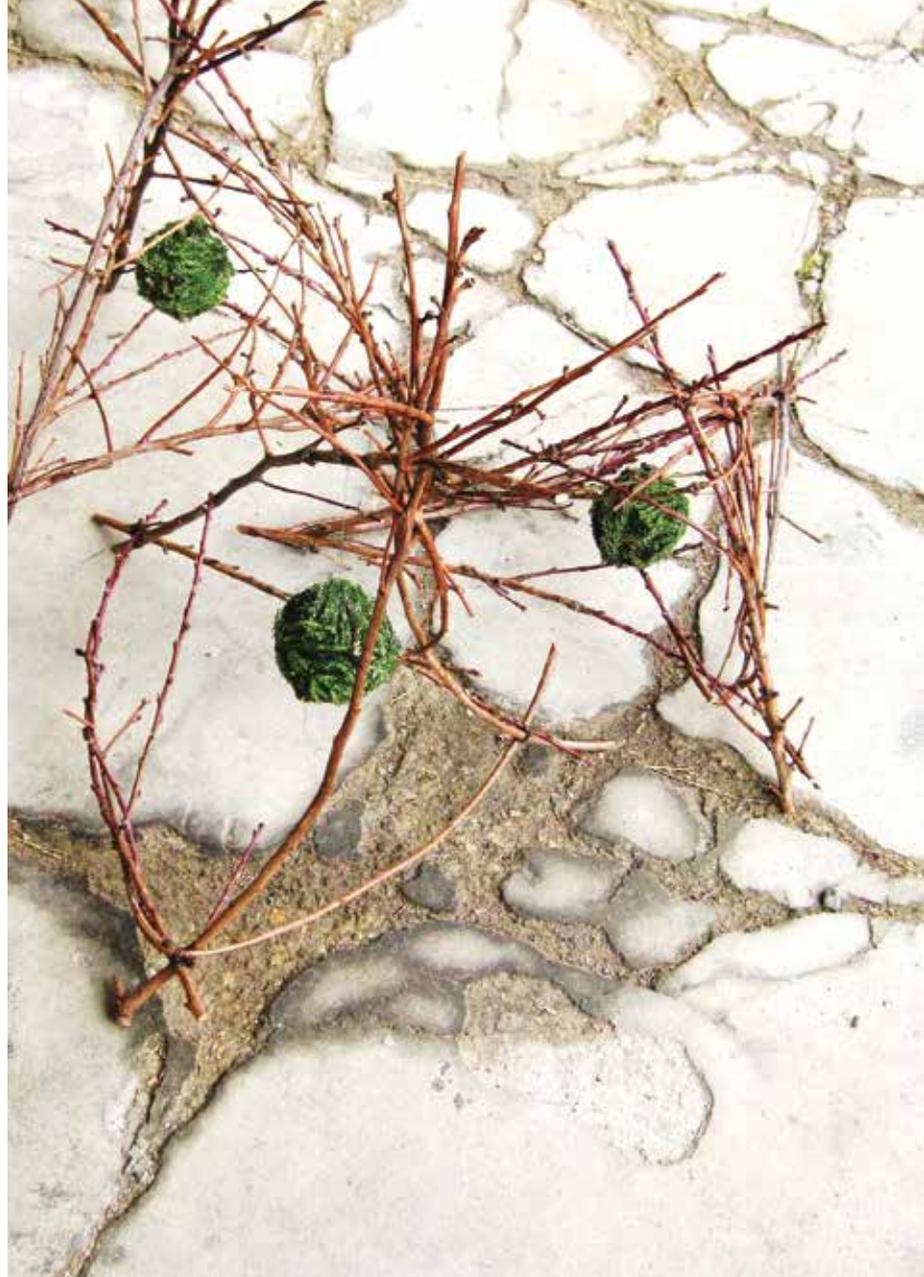
For a regional gallery, the river is a rich carrier of culture: there are so many stories that a river can tell. It carries the memories and stories of a community; it whispers a warning of degraded land; it grows food for the nation and sates the needs of a thirsty city. The arts bring these stories to the surface, spread them out to be shared, and, after a time, allow them to slip back again as life flows on.

¹ Ngarrindjeri Nation Sea Country Plan, 2006, Ngarrindjeri Tendi, Ngarrindjeri Heritage Committee and Ngarrindjeri Native Title Management Committee, SA

² *ibid*

³ Community contribution to Heidi Kenyon's One River artist residency, *Turning Back to the River*, 2013





THE RIVER'S WAY <

EVETTE SUNSET

Quietly making sculpture out of found natural materials in an exquisite outdoor setting, is like trying to hear the song of the nightingale only just glimpsed as a faint dot high above in a blue sky. You strain to grasp and connect with something at first only fleetingly glimpsed - you stand there flying."

Evette Sunset

Environmental sculptor Evette Sunset notices subtle but significant things. The marks a broken reed makes as it scratches on the soft surface of the river bank; the small shifts in water levels brought by tide and wind.

The River's Way is a site-responsive residency based in Murray Bridge, where the artist will immerse herself in the local community and explore the natural environment of the river. The residency will culminate in an exhibition at the Murray Bridge Regional Gallery, where the works created during the residency will be returned to the community as a gift, and a surprise.

Evette is particularly interested in how the river, as a natural system, is dynamic, multi-layered, continually evolving and incredibly resilient. Through her research - observations, conversations, sculpturemaking - Evette will explore how the River embodies multiple laminar layers of living energies and histories.

Once installed the exhibition will continue to be evolved by the artist in the gallery from 28 July - 1 August; 7 - 8 August and 14 - 15 August.

TAKE
PART

Exhibition Opening

WHEN

Sunday 26 July, 2.30pm

WHERE

Murray Bridge Regional Gallery
27 Sixth Street, Murray Bridge

CONTRIBUTE TO THE EXHIBITION

10 - 14 & 17 July

12 - 2pm

at the street studio opposite
Murray Bridge Regional Gallery

SEE THE COMPLETED EXHIBITION

24 July - 20 September



ARTIST LYN WOOD



Lyn Wood, *After Rain I*, 2014, oil on canvas, 153 cm x 122 cm





Lyn Wood, *After Rain II*, 2014, oil on canvas, 153 cm x 122 cm

WHOLE OF THE MOON <

SUSIE SKINNER

Susie Skinner is a storyteller who works with theatre and music. She is an artist who wants to be useful.

Susie and Banjo the Jack Russell will journey the river, from Cadell to Caloote, by boat, mapping it over the duration of a moon cycle whilst uncovering and celebrating the connections of the river to its inhabitants. Through oral tradition, local jargon, folklore, and legend, Susie will explore many concepts including ancestry, ownership and territory in connection with the local artists she has located along this particular stretch of the river. She will stage unique events that breathe creativity between new collaborations, as well as sidling up to existing launches and creative community activities.

The *Whole of the Moon* is five events connected to the phases of the moon, all of which the public are invited to attend.

NEW MOON JOURNEY BEGINS

The project will launch on Friday 14 August, under a new moon at the Cadell River Front with the community of Cadell celebrating the “life and the death” of the Murray River with original songs.

FIRST QUARTER

Next port, Swan Reach where a collaboration with local Sedan writer Joe Carli will celebrate the waxing moon through poetry and song and a 20 minute live theatre performance written by Joe and performed by Susie. Plus Beverly Loveday’s book launch.

FULL MOON

Just a little way down the Mighty Murray under the full moon Susie will be welcomed to country by the traditional owners, the Nganguraku People at their homeland land of Ngaut Ngaut. She will then be a guest at the opening of the Ngaut Ngaut mooring posts by Mid Murray Mayor Dave Burgess, in honor of the late Richard Hunter.

LAST QUARTER

Further on down the track at Walker Flat, visual artist Lyn Wood will work with the local community to write homages to the river that float away in the form of tiny paper boats whilst Susie serenades the last quarter of the moon with a song.

NEW MOON JOURNEYS END

Caloote under the new moon; another song; another celebration of the “life and the death” of the Murray River with original songs, and a book launch for local writer Rosemary Faehrmann.

TAKE PART

Join Susie on her journey



NEW MOON

Friday 14 August

3pm - sunset

Cadell River Front



FIRST QUARTER

Saturday 22 August

3pm - sunset

Swan Reach Landing



FULL MOON

Sunday 30 August

3pm - sunset

Ngaut Ngaut



LAST QUARTER

Saturday 5 September

3pm - sunset

Walker Flat



NEW MOON

Sunday 13 September

3pm - sunset

Caloote Landing





"It starts on June 3, 2011 when like a beautiful autumn leaf, my mum fell from a ladder while cleaning the gutters at home and died five hours later.

Then we were sleeping together; death and me. When the undeniable tug of fate takes a turn in our lives sometimes only the primal things count; like rivers and mothers. In these complex times where rivers are pitted in battle against mining companies and profiteers, where the umpire is for the most part capitalism, I had something important to throw in to the ring.

We sat together the river and me and wrote a couple of songs. Whole of the Moon is an adventure honouring the cycles of life, death and rebirth."

Susie Skinner



COLLECTORS / COLLECTIONS <

NADIA CUSIMANO & PAUL GAZZOLA

“Our intention is to unearth the knowledge associated with specialised collections and the histories that they speak of. To develop a project that explores the interests and personal cultural perspectives of each individual through a collaborative process of exchange and shared fascination.”

TAKE PART

Exhibition Opening

WHEN

26 & 27 September, 10am - 5pm

WHERE

Waikerie Institute

Cnr White & McCoy Streets,
Waikerie

Sunday performance, 3pm

*River Songs from Warren
Hardeman and guests*

What defines a collection of things? Is two enough or is it maybe 10? Or even more?

What stories are connected to the objects and how long have you been collecting them for?

Artists Nadia Cusimano and Paul Gazzola are returning to Waikerie to collectively explore the larger collections of objects and associated stories that accompany them that were unearthed during the successful Temporary Art Gallery project in 2014.

Focusing on the personal resources and interests of a number of local collectors, COLLECTORS/COLLECTIONS, explores the parallel and similarities between the high-art collector and those whose fascination lie within the everyday. Engaging with notions of local identity and regional aesthetics through the eyes of a number of individuals and their personal collections.

Initial collections and collectors include - Trevor Kleeman and his specialised set of tractors, Pamela Warner's expansive set of sea horses and Warrren Hardeman's knowledge of unrecorded songs of the river. Plus the search is on for more participants as well as the young boy whose bottle collection totalled over 400 items!

ATTENTION COLLECTORS OF WAIKERIE!

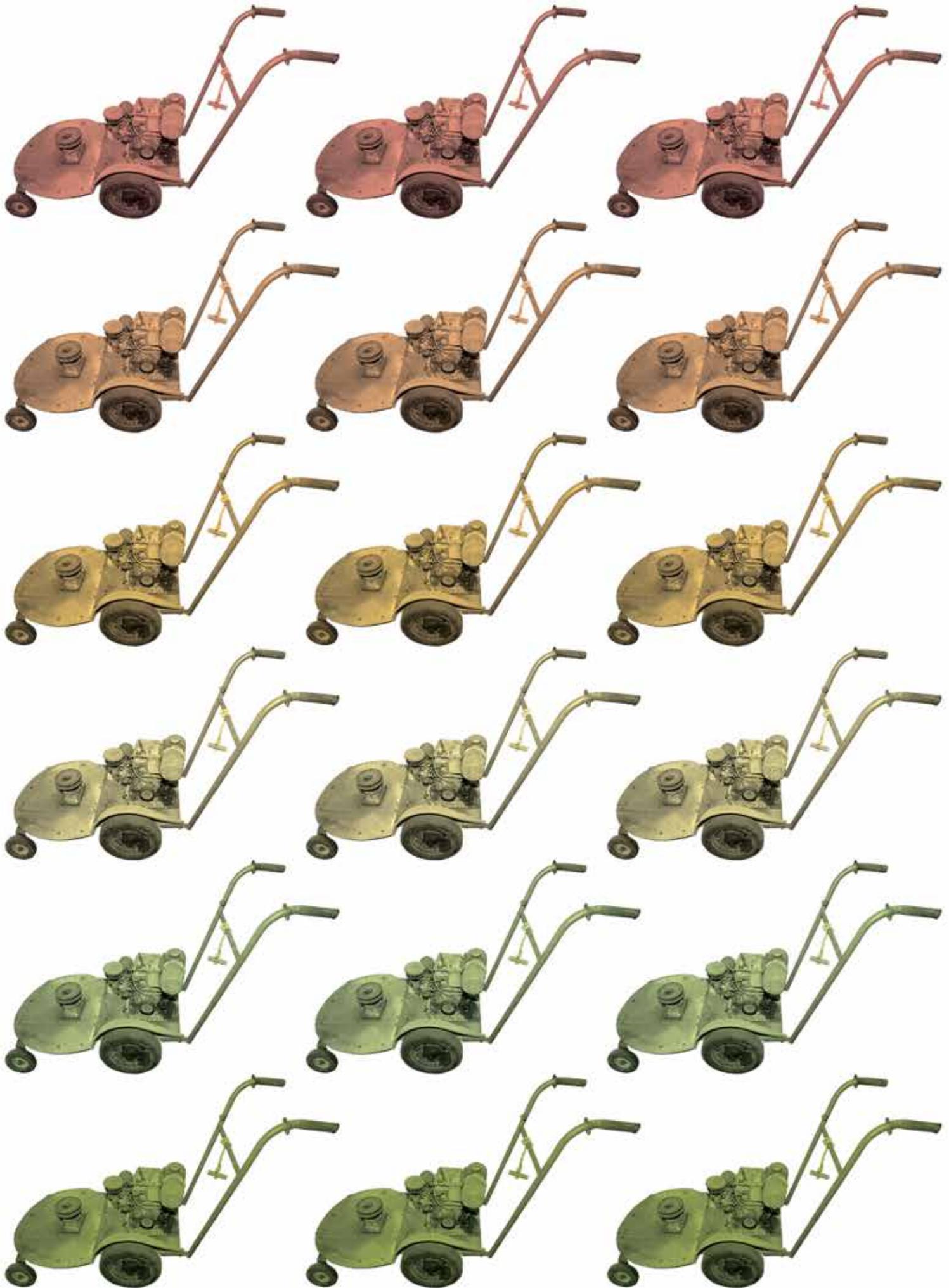
Do you have a growing number of objects and a story to tell of how you got that many?

Want to be involved in a project with the artist team of Nadia Cusimano and Paul Gazzola that brought the Temporary Art Gallery to Waikerie in 2014?

We want to hear from you!
Call or text Paul on 0403 959 716
or for more information go to
www.waikeriecollectors.blogspot.com

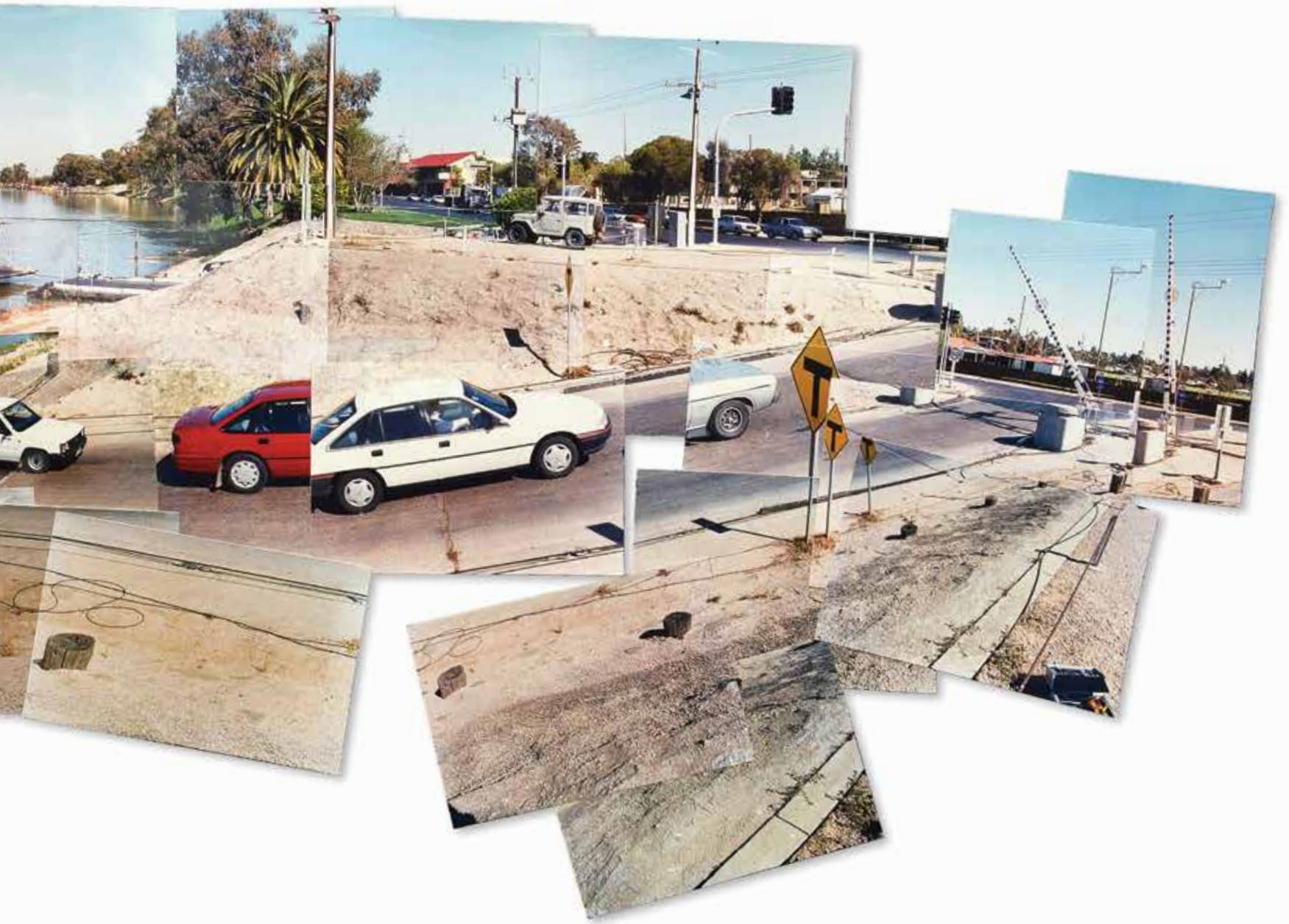
Spring-boarding from Temporary Art Gallery - Waikerie, COLLECTORS/ COLLECTIONS builds upon the established relationships and heart warming genuine interest of the local community to take part in this type of art, where those who participate generate the project outcome.

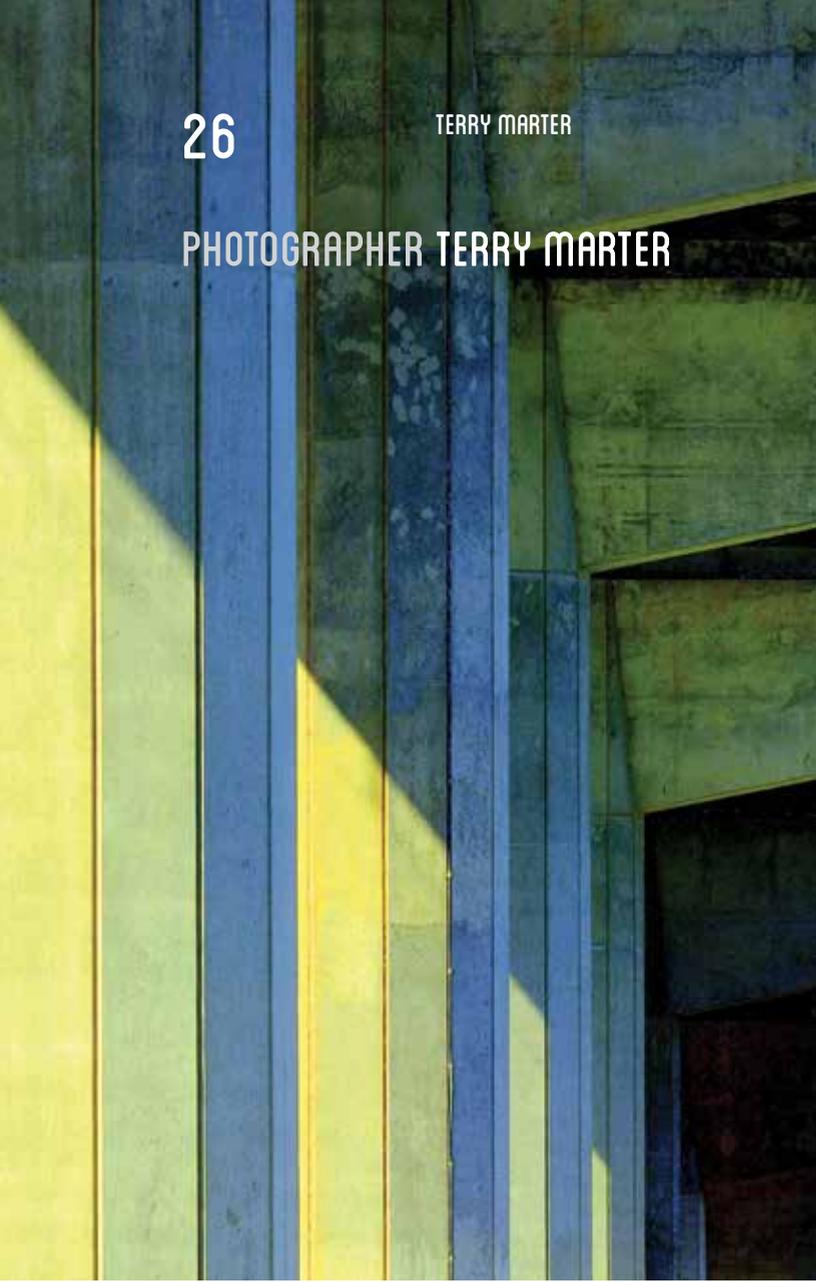
Over the next two years COLLECTORS/ COLLECTIONS continues with a series of ongoing works by Nadia and Paul in regional Australia that research and develop new models of engagement based on a collaborative process of reciprocal exchange and shared interests. Where knowledge, specialisation and the personal become the key motivators and catalysts for cultural discourse and visibility. Giving value to the often under-represented rural populations and the individuals that define these communities.

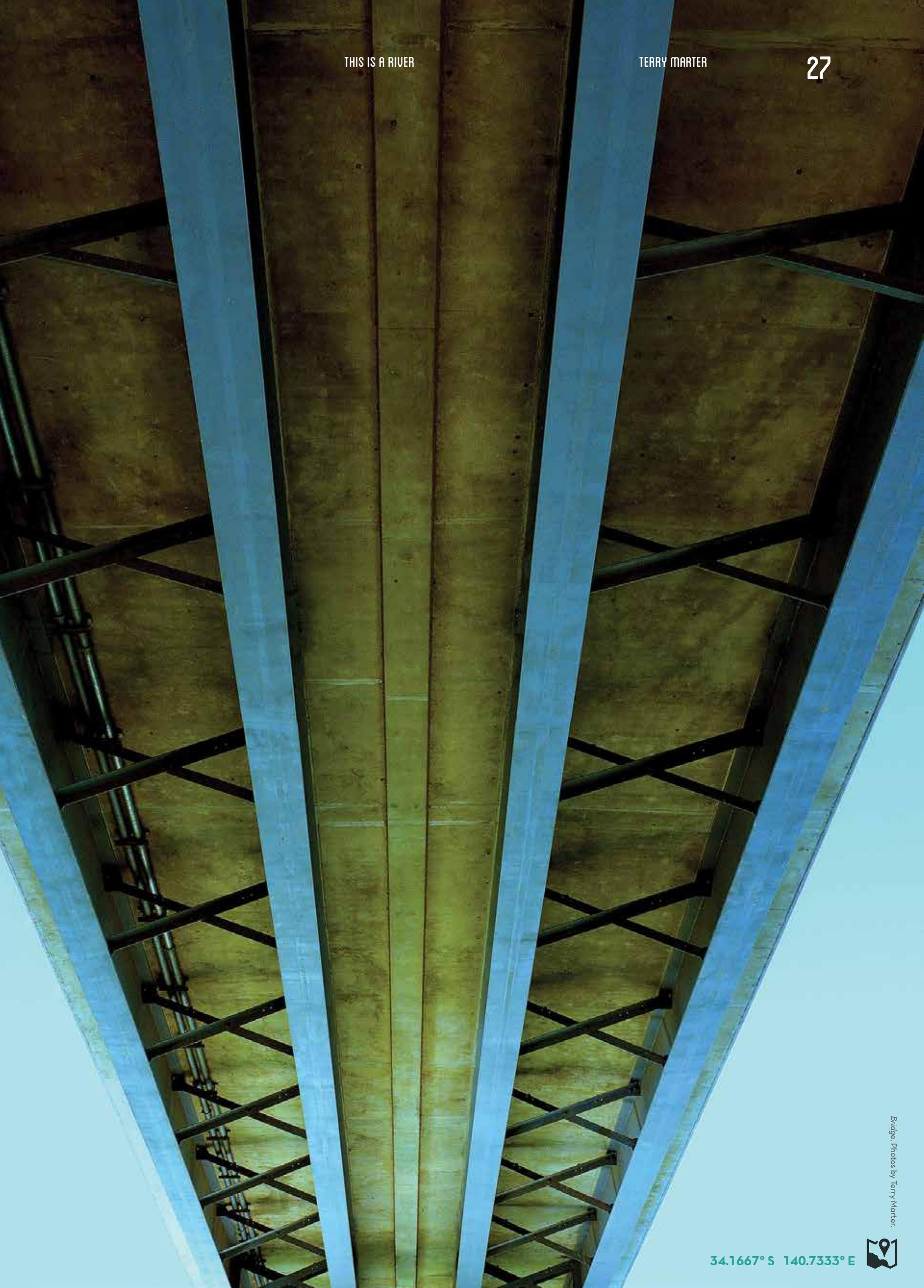


PHOTOGRAPHER TERRY MARTER









RIVER RITES <

PUNCTUM INC



*Is it a bird, is it a plane?
Is it a bunyip, mulyawonk,
wilder man, yeti, boogie man,
nuuttipukki, urati, cerbul,
merdules, urtzu or domadores?*

A celebration of our cultural connection to country, River Rites combines extraordinary disguise making from repurposed materials found on Berri/Barmera farms and natural environs to create 'Creatures of Havoc' who will be filmed, photographed and perform.

In 2015, these 'Creatures of Havoc' will move from the Berri central streets to the Riverland Field Day in Barmera and culminate in a participatory installation at the River Lands Gallery.

River Rites celebrates the 'spirit of place' for Murray River communities - its geographies, time cycles, stories, cultures and people.

It draws on the worldwide cultural tradition of exhibitions and performances tied to seasonal revolutions, cyclical change and folklore in the form of elaborate disguises and publicly celebrated rituals. These rites link residents to their past and a future where their resilience is feted and their spirit of place is 'unleashed'.

River Rites is such a gathering - a contemporary and localised invention of a rural rite that allows the imagination to run wild. It resists the industrialisation of human spirit while joyfully honouring the resilience of Australian rural communities.

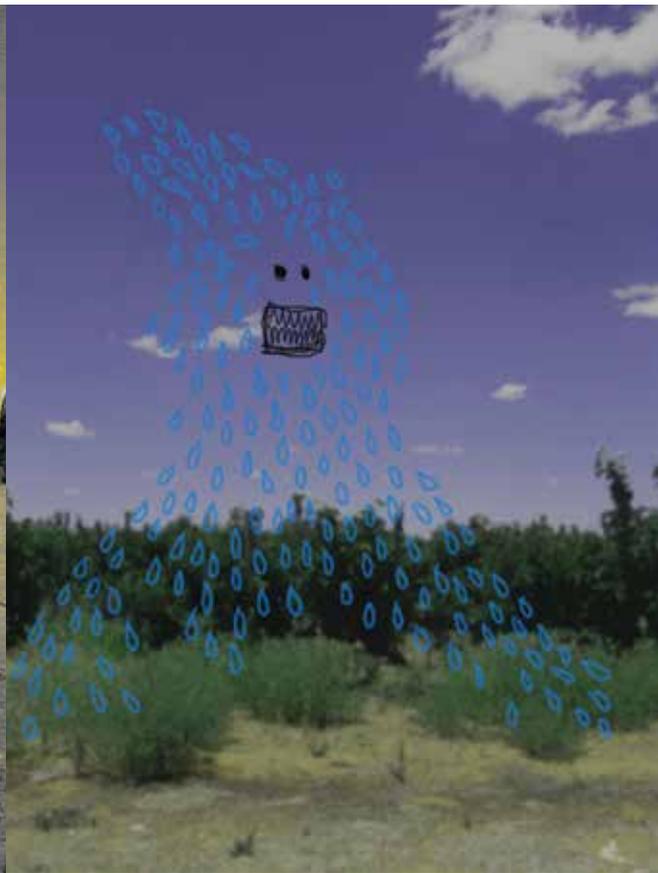
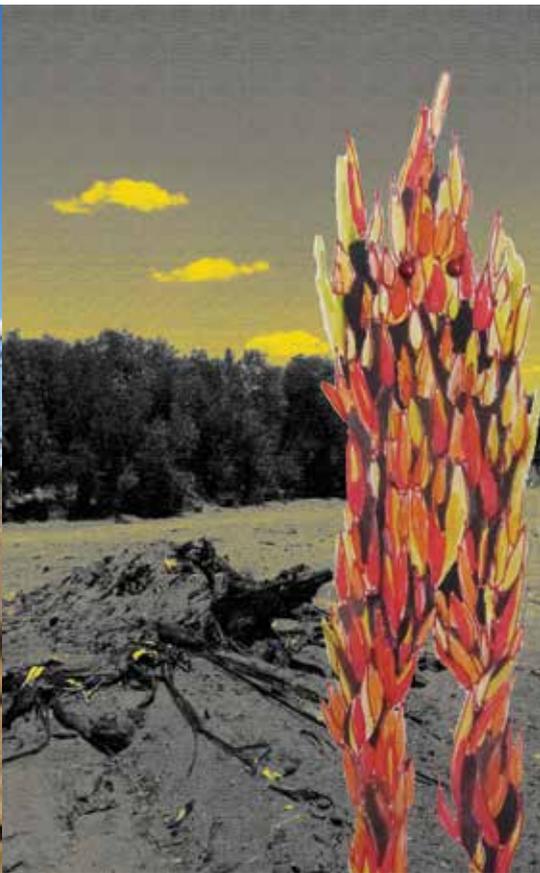
HOW YOU CAN HELP US

Help us by hoarding materials such as nylon string fruit bags, industrial wrapping plastics, strips of plastic drip irrigation piping, tyre inner tubes and old canvas water bags.

You can also share your 'story of change' with us.

Email your contact details to robyn.andrews@tafesa.edu.au and we'll organise collection of your items and stories.





OPEN WORKSHOP 1
RIVER LANDS GALLERY

With Robyn Andrews, Lorraine Marter, Glenys Leske & Ruth Pech

Work with top designers, fibre artists and disguise makers to design and construct a 'Creature of Havoc' disguise with fibres, fabrics, farm materials and a whole lot of fun whilst sharing your story of change.

OPEN WORKSHOP 2, 3 & 4
RIVERLAND FIELD DAYS

With Nici Wright, Robyn Andrews, Lorraine Marter, Glenys Leske & Ruth Pech
Help make incredible disguises and wearable art at the Field Day with top designers, fibre artists and disguise makers.

With Jude Anderson and Jessica Foster
Model incredible disguises and wearable art for photo portraits and others' selfies in our studio at the Field Day with top performance directors.

With one of Australia's top photojournalists, Julie Millowick.
Photograph incredible disguises and wearable art in our photo studio.

TAKE PART

Free open workshops

Be part of one or all four open workshops to help create, model or photograph these 'Creatures of Havoc'

OPEN WORKSHOP 1
10, 11 & 12 July

Anytime from 1 - 5pm

*River Lands Gallery,
23 Wilson Street, Berri*

OPEN WORKSHOP 2, 3 & 4

Saturday 19 September
Anytime from 9am - 5pm

*Marquee Pavilion,
Riverland Field Day,
Sturt Highway, Barmera*

INSTALLATION & EXHIBITION

Come to the Creatures of Havoc interactive installation and exhibition opening. See the results of the paparazzi, be part of the havoc, interact with the people and poses that have been brought together for the River Rites *Creatures of Havoc* exhibition opening.

TAKE PART

Interactive Installation & Exhibition Opening

WHEN
Friday 25 September, 6pm

WHERE
River Lands Gallery
23 Wilson Street, Berri

Exhibition open:
26 September - 4 October

Gallery open:
Tuesday - Friday, 10am - 4pm
Saturday, 10am - 1pm

SNAPSHOTS SHARED

—
JUDY & ED COTTAM

Ed and Judy have lived in the Riverland for 25 years and have been cooking together for 45. They currently run a business cooking roasts for parties in a mobile oven! Both were originally primary school teachers, and it was a natural progression from teaching art and drama to children, to working with adults in the community. They continue to be involved in performing arts and musical theatre as well as supporting youth theatre, while visual arts in particular are part of their daily lives. Here they share some highlights in a pictorial diary.



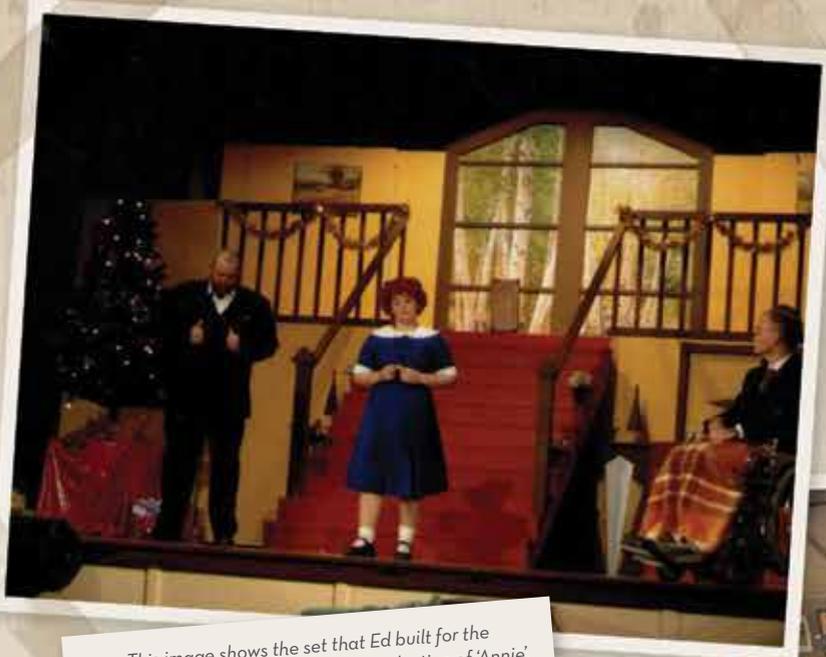
Also part of the 'River Festival', Yvonne Koolmatrie demonstrated traditional weaving techniques while informing people about the significance of the river and its plants for Aboriginal people. Participants collected grasses and reeds from along the river bank then learnt to weave with them as they talked about their importance for Ngarrindjeri life and culture.



Some years ago Ed left his teaching job to work for the Department of Environment, running projects to raise awareness in the community. He is a great believer that art can be a powerful tool for changing people's views about the world around them. With this in mind, for one week in 2002 and again in 2003 the 'River Festival' was launched on the banks of the Murray. The Festival was supported by the state government and comprised a series of workshops conducted by different artists using a variety of art forms, including puppet-making as shown here.



'Night mosaics' was another of the 'River Festival' workshop series. Held in the evening, it was designed to enable the public to learn about their environment and express their knowledge creatively. In this image they are exploring the fragile flora and fauna of the region by making mosaic flagstones depicting the threatened species of plants and animals along the river.



This image shows the set that Ed built for the Riverland Musical Society's 2014 production of 'Annie'. He likes constructing 'big things' and in this example, one of his favourites, he used large folding doors to change from one scene to another. Here Annie is standing against the backdrop of a grand room in 'the Mansion' - by folding back the doors a very different scene of a school room in the orphanage was revealed.



Judy is involved with 'SplashPaint', a visual arts group that meets regularly at Ruston's Rose Garden. This picture was taken at the opening of the group's first exhibition held at the garden in 2013 and their art works can be seen hung around the walls. Meeting in this space works well as visitors to the garden sometimes stop to chat to members about their art. In 2014 the group progressed to being part of SALA, the celebration of South Australia Living Artists. Their exhibition at Angove's winery was the first SALA experience for both the venue and the artists.



As well as bringing enjoyment from making art, 'SplashPaint' has grown into a supportive group for the women. The occasion depicted here is a small gathering held to honour one of their members who had died that same morning, lighting a candle in her memory. She was a policewoman and although she had been interested in making art for some time it was not until she developed cancer that the chance presented itself. Judy thinks it is a measure of the kind of person she was that she left a legacy in the form of her extensive 'wig library' for the benefit of other women having treatment for cancer.

The link between arts and the environment has been a strong theme in Ed and Judy's community involvement, as this 'River Banner' shows. Made for the 'Friends of the National Park' conference opening at the CWA rooms in Berri, Ed drew a map of the river on the backdrop then women from the Berri art circle added illustrations of flora and fauna from the region. The Friends' badge is featured at the centre of the banner.



MANIFOLD PORTRAIT <

ALYSHA HERRMANN

WITH

RENEE COX - ADRIAN LITTLE
LORRAINE MARTER - TERRY MARTER - CAROLINE REID
NIC TUBB - JESSICA WEIDENHOFER

Beginning in 2015, *Manifold Portrait* is a conversation between professional artists and the community living around Rotary Park in Manifold Crescent, Berri. It's a conversation exploring local stories of place, resilience, hope, connection and frustration through the creation of artistic 'things'. Songs. Poems. Theatre. Photographs. Film. Projection. Sculptures. Moments. Experiences.

Riverland writer and theatre-maker Alysha Herrmann will be spending time creating in Rotary Park on the first Sunday of every month in 2015 and nurturing opportunities for local and visiting artists to join the conversation in July and September.

Community currently residing near Rotary Park will be continually offered opportunities to collaborate in ideating, making and testing. Everyone else is invited to share their memories and experiences of Rotary Park using #manifoldportrait or contacting Alysha at pressurelands@me.com

Anyone and everyone is invited along to join the community of *Manifold Portrait* as the sun goes down on Sunday 6th September for an informal evening of art, food, conversation and questions in Rotary Park. Artists and collaborating residents will be sharing insights into the process and the 'things' they've created together during *Manifold Portrait* in 2015, along with some of the ideas and dreams that might (or might not) develop in 2016.

TAKE
PART

**Art exhibition
meets street party**

WHEN

Sunday 6 September, dusk

WHERE

Rotary Park

Manifold Crescent, Berri

BYO chair and imagination

Alysha was the recipient of the Australia Council 2015 Kirk Robson Award which recognises outstanding leadership from young people working in community arts and cultural development, particularly in reconciliation and social justice.

Alysha is contributing a percentage of the award towards the development of Manifold Portrait in 2015 and would like to thank the Australia Council and the family of Kirk Robson for their support.





IN CONVERSATION WITH

JOHN DAWES

John is a theatre performer and an active supporter and board member of Riverland Youth Theatre since it began in 1985.



John became involved with arts in the Riverland when he first moved to Renmark in 1975, joining the Renmark Arts Council as well as the Theatre Group and Musical Society, then later the Regional Cultural Trust. John says he has always been interested in theatre:

Don't ask me to design a set, but I will help build one, I can certainly slap on a coat of paint. I had done quite a bit of theatre in Adelaide with a lot of the amateur groups, and I came from a musical family which certainly fostered my interest in the musical side of things.

In the early 1980s a group of school teachers and other local people began talking about the lack of opportunities for young people to get involved in drama. Some schools offered programs, but they varied greatly depending on the availability of specialist drama teachers or staff with a particular interest in the field. The group approached the Board of the Regional Cultural Trust and the model of a 'theatre-in-education' company for the region gained traction. In 1985 when the Riverland Youth Theatre started up, however, there was funding for just one person:

He was everything. No facilities, no office, no nothing, and we're 30 years old this year! I reckon that is not a bad achievement for a youth theatre company in a country area. In that time we've gone from being part of the Trust to being independent, we've had our funding halved and topped up again, we've been reviewed and re-structured, and who knows what will happen to us in the future. All part of life for a regional theatre company.

Having been part of this remarkable journey since the beginning, John explained that his motivation comes from seeing the development of young people – some who 'won't say boo to a goose' when they arrive, but after a few years have grown into 'really confident young people'. He tells inspiring stories of those who went on to make a career in theatre after their start in RYT, but for most it is not a case of 'teaching them to be famous actors':

That's not the thing. The important thing is to be involved. But with the involvement, I think if you can help people to improve what they're doing, to do it really well, then they get more satisfaction out of it.

John describes the ways in which the challenges for young people growing up in the country are at least as great, and possibly more so, compared to their city counterparts:

I think you certainly notice a difference between city kids and country kids, though possibly the difference is becoming more and more blurred with things like mobile phones, Facebook and that sort of thing. I think country kids feel the isolation, plus the lack of facilities, lack of opportunities and lack of jobs are often an issue.

For this reason he believes that the value of youth theatre is in providing alternatives for young people, especially those who are not interested in sport. Over the years there has been a trend towards telling stories from the kids' points of view with productions focusing on subjects that resonate in their lives:

We've done shows on mental health, drugs, hoons... young people and cars. There was one called Random Girls which was developed about young mums, often single parents, and the sort of struggles they have had, both in the community and in their personal lives, of finding themselves pregnant and then with a young baby. And it told their story of how their lives were and how they worked out.

Of course young people are also affected by general community concerns – so there have been many 'river orientated productions, and water orientated productions, because that's the lifeline of the river communities. If we didn't have the river – well it would just be desert!'

Reflecting on cultural life in his community, John credits the depth of arts and cultural opportunities to the many skilled and gifted creative people in the Riverland:

...there are a lot of very, very talented people, whether it be musicians, singers, dancers, actors, artists, and if you want you can be involved in a whole lot of different cultural activities. I always say that there are more people involved in arts activities than in sport, if people bothered to count them up.

He recognises that groups like RYT rely on volunteers, but that it is a lot to ask of people to get involved when everyone is already working long hours to supplement the family income. Much of the credit due surely goes to the likes of John himself, whose sustained commitment is the lifeblood of the community and the backbone of groups like RYT, going some way to explaining its resilience:

... to have lasted that long in what is a fairly haphazard industry seems pretty good.

IN CONVERSATION WITH

YOUSRA ZEHRELDEEN

Yousra arrived in the Riverland from Lebanon as a young wife with her farming husband in 1979. Over time she became very involved in the community, in particular as coordinator of the Riverland Multicultural Festival (funded by Arts SA, Local Councils and sponsors) which reflects the region's diverse population groups including Greek, Italian, Middle Eastern, Indian and South East Asian.

Yousra talks about her experiences...



At first it was hard work - I had a big culture shock when I came here. I had lived in an (admittedly) small city in Lebanon where we had a lot of activities and I was leader of the Scouts from a very young age. We would organise events on a major scale and receive a lot of community acknowledgement, so I think I caught the 'community bug' at an early age.

In the Riverland my husband was a farmer and we had what are called 'fruit salad' blocks growing just about everything. Although his father had been in farming overseas, it was different here and they had to go to TAFE to further their knowledge about the use of chemicals on the land including information sessions on mechanical harvesting and the like. Farm life is not everyone's cup of tea and I guess I needed something a bit more. So when I had my children I began meeting other parents and going to school to learn English. That's how I became involved in activities like the multicultural forum and the arts projects such as dyeing silk to make rugs. You're learning new skills, you're learning new ideas, you're seeing other people - the way they express themselves through art or cultural traditions. That's just an aspect of humanity, we all love learning and looking at something different that we hadn't seen or heard or thought of before.

One time everyone had to bring a dish, their traditional dish, and then we talked about them and saw the similarity between cultures and the differences – maybe they were flavoured and spiced, plated or presented slightly differently. This diversity enriches the community as a whole, firstly by reducing boredom, which is not good for any community but especially one that's a bit isolated like the Riverland. Put it this way, looking at a bowl of fruit with just one type of fruit in it, eventually you get bored seeing one shape, one colour and so on. But then you see another that has all kinds of fruit – pears, peaches, bananas, oranges and so on – it becomes much more colourful and far more interesting and exciting. That's how I see these creative multicultural activities in the Riverland, they spark it up, spice it up, so it enriched all of us – in knowledge, information, artistic skills and new friends.

And we got along better as a community as a result. When you get to know someone on a personal level and understand why they do things in a certain way, I think you develop tolerance. It was like the Riverland was reinvented, brought to life. You could see that it was one way of getting people out of depression, by



encouraging them to be involved, it makes them happier. People with different skills and arts backgrounds were on that multicultural forum and we became a community voice. As a legal entity, a not-for-profit organisation, we were heard and listened to, so we were able to help to protect people, to eliminate discrimination. So yes, we actually were the voice of the Riverland.

And for myself, I felt that I made a contribution though I couldn't have done it without the support of the Arts Officer Danyon De Buell. I used to get the ladies together, notifying them of events, meetings, anything new. If anyone had an issue, I'd talk it over with them and then help them to deal with it, maybe take it up at a broader level. I cared about them a lot, and I felt cared about in return, which encouraged me, motivated me. I met a lot of people and their stories helped to develop my passion for language and led to the work I am doing now as a medical and legal interpreter. They're not all happy stories – sometimes they are very sad and touch you deeply – but they are always moving.

In 1999 I left the Riverland for Adelaide, which was another cultural shock. The Riverland is the place my children knew from the time they first opened their eyes, where they went to school and met their best friends. That memory is still strong, and they have warm, fuzzy feelings about it. When we moved my older son was just 18, and the baby was not quite 11, so by that age you've developed friendships and at first they actually found it very hard to adjust. Even now, they're still in touch with their friends in the Riverland and still go camping and fishing there.

During my time in the Riverland I didn't envy anyone living anywhere else. They were the best days of my life. And it was the right environment for my two children as well.

RIVERSCIENCE Æ LANDART <

—
CHARLES TAMBIAH



The Riverland is held together by a mosaic of environmental-webs and cultural-networks, rooted in the Murray River. This mosaic embodies what we know about the river and how we interact with it.

Critical to this mosaic is river-science, which includes our extensive knowledge, experience and study about how the river functions and responds. Such science is often complex, distant and polarised – yet vital to community and environmental resilience.

River-science needs river-art to effectively engage with and communicate our diverse river-based knowledge and experiences. Linking them forms the SCIENCEÆART nexus, which is the focus of Charles' river-art project. This project seeds longer-term SCIENCEÆART partnerships and explorations in the Riverland.

The public is invited to a visual showcase launched in Renmark, consisting of SCIENCEÆART photography created at Calperum Station where wetlands and floodplains vital to river health are found. After Renmark, this showcase will travel to other river locations, as well as to Canberra.





Charles is also facilitating group activities and collaborative partnerships to increase SCIENCE&ART in landscape management and community engagement. Volunteers, staff and scientists working with river-landscapes are developing SCIENCE&ART practices and SCIENCE&ART works, for use in their work and for communicating science with the wider public.

Participants will produce a collaborative SCIENCE&ART photography eBook and a second showcase celebrating community resilience. Details will be announced through thedirtsa.com.au

Charles comes to the Riverland with an international and interdisciplinary background in community engagement, environmental research and photography. His current research and practice focuses on the SCIENCE&ART nexus, and includes embedded photography in collaboration with staff and volunteers at Calperum Station.

TAKE
PART

Photographic Exhibition

WHEN

1 - 30 September

WHERE

The McCormick Centre
Ral Ral Avenue, Renmark

THE CULTURE CONVERSATION

BETWEEN CELESTE CODY, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF RIVERLAND YOUTH THEATRE & RYT THEATRE CLUB

PARTICIPANTS

ASHA (5) – NATALIE (13) – MADDIE (12) – MADALYN (12) – ELLA (9) – OLIVER (8)
EMILY (9) – ERIN (11) – MILLIE (11) – BELLA (10) – MIREYA (9) – LAYLA (10)

Starting at the beginning: “What is culture?”

Many thoughts flew around the room and the group decided that culture is about people and it's what people create. The group came to discuss that almost EVERYTHING is a part of culture and that a lot of different factors play into the creation of culture.

When school came up, the young people discussed their own situations at school:

- Asha** *My school only has two classrooms and two people in the office.*
- Celeste** *How many people are in the classrooms?*
- Asha** *I don't know, but there is one with a really cranky teacher and one with a really nice teacher.*
- Celeste** *OK, do you think the people in each room feel different?*
- Emily** *Yes, because there would be different teachers and they might feel happy with the nice teacher and sad with the cranky teacher.*
- Asha** *Excuse me, can I please tell you that our teacher, she used to be called Miss Hussler and then she got married.*
- Celeste** *So what do you think marriage is?*
- Ella** *We know her too! She got married and changed her name.*
- Celeste** *And is marriage a part of culture?*
- Ella** *Yes! It's different in different cultures.*
- Layla** *Asha, do you have the nice teacher or the cranky teacher?*
- Asha** *I have the nice teacher!*

EVERYONE CHEERS!

After a long discussion, which included a lot of chatter about how much someone's mood can affect the culture of a group, the collective decided on a simple breakdown of culture: Food, Clothing, Religion, Customs, Work, Family, Shelter, Tools, Government, Values and Recreation.

I posed a question to the gang: “What would life be like if there was no culture?”

- Mireya** *We'd be dead!*
- Celeste** *Why would we be dead?*
- Mireya** *Because there would be nothing!*
- Maddie** *Life would be boring, because everyone would be exactly the same, everything would be exactly the same!*
- Asha** *You would have to be naked!*

LOTS OF GIGGLES...

- Celeste** *Well, that's right I suppose, because no one would have invented clothes.*
- Natalie** *No, I would have.*
- Millie** *Towns wouldn't be made.*
- Ella** *You wouldn't be able to do anything.*
- Oliver** *Pillows wouldn't have been made.*
- Emily** *Religion wouldn't be made.*
- Asha** *Shoes. No Shoes.*

ASHA SHOWS HER GORGEOUS SPARKLY SHOES

- Celeste** *Well especially not sparkly ones like this!*
- Maddie** *We wouldn't be here.*
- Celeste** *Ah, now that's a tricky one, because making children might be biological, rather than cultural. There's a difference between cultural understanding of life and what your body does automatically. But then again, the details of why we are here are not known!*

Asha There would be no grass!

Madalyn No there would be, but maybe not where it is!

Oliver There might not be any animals.

Celeste Well, there might be, but not as our pets?

Asha My kitten is cute, I go crazy for my kitten. It has a weird looking face and when it wants to go outside it has the cutest face in the world.

Mireya The world would be pretty much flat, except for nature and mountains and hills.

Maddie This is a weird one to come up with, but there would be no toilets!

Celeste Why would there be no toilets?

Maddie Because someone has to make the plumbing and everything and connect together. There are also fancy toilets and I really want one.

Asha I also have two turtles and Ryan has a green tree frog

WE SPENT SOME TIME CHATTING ABOUT OUR ADORABLE PETS AND THEN THE CONVERSATION FOUND ITS WAY BACK TO MARRIAGE

Maddie No one would even get married, because there would be no one to create the rings, or the party or anything.

Erin Yeah! Because marriage is a part of culture. People get married at different ages all over the world.

Maddie Some people don't want to get married because it takes too much time and too much money!

Erin Some people just get engaged.

Maddie My mum said she wasn't going to get married, but then my dad asked. So then they did!

Celeste And now you're a family. What about family? Would that exist?

Bella Nope, there be no families just individual people and there would be no schools, so no education, and no income.

Erin Well there would be nothing to buy anyway!

Asha I know what I thought of! There would be no Theatre Club!

Bella No acting!

Natalie No theatre at all!

With this terrifying thought and in the interest of keeping the theatre alive, the gang then split into smaller groups and started creating short scenes on the topic of: "Where to begin if the world had no culture!"

Over a boisterous ten minutes of playing the room was a buzz with revelations of what the scenes could be. Each of the groups tackled the basics of food, clothing, shelter and language. They all tackled the idea of a group of people working together and one of the groups even included the idea of creating humour.

Group One decided that two very confused people argued over what everything is! "This is a rock... no, this is a stone... no ROCK... no STONE." They decided that the two people "made things" and "made names for the things". At the end of their scene they revealed that one of the culture creators in the scene was from Africa and one was from Alaska and that made them different.

After seeing Group One's performance the collective discussed the idea of arguing about what is right, when it can only be an opinion anyway. We decided that if everything has come from nothing, it's very hard to say what is right and wrong as it was all "created".

Group Two also dealt with the concept of basic needs and how it can develop into culture. They started hungry, cold and stuck in the rain and with biscuits, socks and a house they remedied everything very easily. Group Two's performance, made us all start to realise that culture is an extension of our basic needs. As everyone is different, many different types of things we need gets created and is a reflection of who we are as a person or a group of people.

Group Three continued on need, but they included the concept of trial and error. In an attempt to bust boredom and to fill their empty bellies two low-language characters cook up all kinds of things they can find until they come across what "tastes good". Not leaves, not dirt, not worms, but peeling a pumpkin and stirring it over a stove works a treat!

We chatted about this idea of trying out various things until we hit upon something we like! Creating culture isn't as easy as picking something up and handing it to someone else. It takes time and an understanding of who you are working with. The collective realised that we all had different tastes just within that room, but the conversation of what we like and don't like in itself was enjoyable.

We decided that there are a lot of options for us within our own lives to engage in all different areas of culture and that is pretty awesome!



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MAJOR PARTNERS



ARTIST RESIDENCY PARTNERS



THANK YOU

Country Arts SA *This Is A River* project team:

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THE ARTIST & THE RIVER <

*Take a wise mind down to the river
and they will tell you not to swim for fear of snags.*

*Take a mechanical mind down to the river
and they will tell you how fast the river runs.
But take a creative mind down to the river
and they will feel the way the rivers flows.*

*How the flowing of the river
is the same as the creative process.*

From the clouds to the ocean.

From the mind to the page.

Remy Catchlove

Aged 16

*RYT participant Acting Club and
RYT Assistant Tutor Movie Club*

