

ARTIST STATEMENT On Creative Process - Mia Hacker & Kilagi Nielsen

Leaves, Sheoak Shadows & Soil

Embarking upon this collaborative piece started with finding the right place. Knowing the breeze on Brian's Country like the back of my hand, we followed the airline away from the gusty wind. Then spotting Dipi Dipi (willy wagtail) as a guiding messenger bird, we found ourselves setting up on the little shore with the perfect view looking to the north of Lake Cootharaba.

Emerging ourselves in place saw us wandering the shoreline gently wading through the shallow water, twisting and turning through the trees and shrubs and low lying leafletter. Observing the high tide line finding treasures of colours that we can process to use to make marks on paper.

Some large eucalyptus leaves that were harvested on Kabi Kabi Country, that had been dried and flattened, were used to make lines and shapes on the cold pressed paper.

We then floated the surface of the paper on top of the gentle ebbing waves on the edge of the shoreline. The paper was then gently submerged so that the surface could fully absorb the brackish water that fills this lake.

Kilagi then found a variety of tones of green in the different floral species that were surrounding us. She tested the different leaves with a technique she learnt as a child in PNG. She then found an old mangrove seed pod. We tested the different ways we can extract colour from these leaves and pods. The decision was made to use the dark green edge of the mangrove pod. Using the dried out log that Dipi Dipi once rested, we roughed up the edges of the mangrove pod to release deeper tones of green that we could use to give texture to the leaves in the artwork.

Mia was enjoying the shadow play of the Sheoak branchlets as the sun danced between the clouds. Watching the changes brought memories to the changes in one's life and to the cultural learnings that her relationship with Peter has grown from. This species of tree is a special part of her story.

We then went further to revisit our paths together and decided to embed a rich orange colour that we'd found together whilst driving on another journey. Using a small scooped out amount of water from the lake we dissolved some of the rich pigmented soil to create a tone that pleased us.

Using this colour we added movement and energy using a feather from Wah wah (Crow). A delicate magic of repelling liquid and colour but somehow allowing a spread and collection of texture to emerge on the paper.

Adding some final touches of bushfire harvested charcoal to ground the piece to place and give outline with a soluble effect.

Collaboration can be about walking barefoot along the beach.