



NGANA US

OUTER
SPACE

Ivy Minniecon

12 August - 2 September 2023

Ivy Minniecon was born in Cairns and spent a significant part of her childhood in Lowmead, a rural town located on her father's Country. However, she frequently travelled to her Mother's Ancestral home and land of the Kuku Yalanji People, this was always where she felt most connected to Country and where her healing journey started.

Ivy is a descendant of the Kuku Yalanji, Kabi Kabi, Gooreng Gooreng and South Sea Islander Nations, with an art practice that is deeply intertwined in a sense of place, connection, and belonging to Country.

Ivy works across several mediums but primarily focuses on the Yalanji weave of the balji, a traditional bag made from the kakan of the duwar (Black Palm), native to the Daintree Rainforest. Ivy also creates serigraphic prints of the baskets created with this weave. Her current weaving practice utilises lomandra to create the baljis for this body of work. As a Yalanji Weaver, the art of weaving must be first learnt using this grass, before accessing the traditional fibres of the black palm. These baljis speak to cultural processes and protocols - the importance of respecting Elders and Country and the consultation that must take place when producing traditional cultural tools for any purpose.

'Ngana us' (family) pays homage to her family and Country, using the traditional Kuku Yalanji weave from Country and indexical prints. This body of work reflects Ivy's exceptional weaving and printmaking skills and carries a deep connection and profound insight into her Indigenous heritage and healing journey. Ivy's exquisitely woven traditional baljis represent Ancestors and family, acting as a conduit to form connections to land, Country, family, community, spirit, and Ancestry. They respond to Ivy's lived experiences and holistically speak of art and culture being intrinsically linked to identity and healing. These vessels are not empty, they are a collection of memories and historical pain refashioned into a receptacle of healing.

As with other First Nations peoples, Ivy Minniecon's story is multi-layered and complex with many generational narratives, certainly not just monochromatic, and this reflects in both her prints and baljis. Some are printed in faint ghost-like shades of pearl, pale sepia and greys, each basket leaving light, ghost-like images on paper, responding to underlying chronological sadness. The stories are faded and subtle but if you look closely, still visible. The repetition of the prints speaks dichotomously of family and the multiplicity of First Nations trauma.

The baljis are displayed, grouped and suspended within the centre of the gallery space, aged, through colour change with the newer green fresh baljis acting as a metaphor for the newer members of her family, sitting beside and protected by the Elders, reinforcing Ivy's perspective that her family support is imperative for her practice, as hers is a shared journey. Each vessel is tagged, with its date of creation, much like a Western birth certificate. The materiality of the fibres from Country holds the unseen stories—as the fibres intertwine, they weave together their past traumas, fostering a sense of healing and restoration.

These stories inform the shadows of the balji that whisper across the walls and the floor of the gallery space.

These shadows are intimately connected to Ivy's family and her descendants and as light filters through the woven fibres, delicate patterns emerge, dancing and transforming on the surface, revealing their stories of generational trauma and pain.

This interplay of light and shadow creates an additional layer of meaning within the works, becoming part of the journey of healing for future generations. The gently moving shadows remind viewers of the ever-revealing stories from the past being uncovered and acknowledged in the present. These vessels speak to the indexical prints hung within the eye line of the vessels; these prints encapsulate the 3D object in a 2-dimensional form and are a contemporary response to cartography and mapping that highlight mark-making and printmaking as methods of storytelling, this, in turn, becomes part of the journey of healing for future generations. This being an intrinsic part of First Nations culture, the basket of trauma becomes a vessel of acknowledgement and repair.

For Ivy, collecting the fibres on Country, weaving the baljis and exploring the indexical print are all cathartic, spiritual practices that allow connection to her cultural identity. By preserving and practising traditional weaving techniques, Ivy ensures the continuation of her Ancestors' untold stories, inflicted trauma, dispossession, stolen artistry, and wisdom are returned as part of her and her community's renewal.

'Ngana us' is a testament to the resilience and strength of her Indigenous heritage, bridging the gap between past trauma and the present. Moreover, Ivy's baljis and prints represent a connection to family. The process of weaving is often communal, with family and community members coming together in a safe space to share their stories, knowledge, and skills. This collaborative process not only strengthens the bonds within the community but also reintroduces and preserves the cultural traditions that have been passed down through generations. Ivy's baljis are tangible manifestations of the intergenerational knowledge and love that was shared within her family and community that was removed because of colonisation, but one which Ivy is lovingly reinstating.

— Dr Nicola Hooper, 2023

Ivy Minniecon is a Contemporary Australian Indigenous Art program graduate, Queensland College of Art. In 2022 she won the Iain Turnbull prize for printmaking and was a 'Hatched' National graduate finalist. Ivy's work has been exhibited nationally and her artworks held in many collections. Ivy's work speaks to the importance of traditional cultural practices being revitalised, rejuvenated and continued for many generations.

Dr Nicola Hooper is a Meanjin/Logan-based printmaker and educator who lives and works on the land of the Yuggera people. She completed her Doctorate in Visual Arts from QCA Griffith University in 2019 and tutors through Griffith Uni's CAIA program. Hooper has exhibited extensively and her ZONOSSES solo exhibition is currently touring to 12 venues nationally.