



Mirdilyayanthi to Shine Bright

Grace Bennett, Elizabeth Yanyi Close,
Shane Kooka, Thomas Readett
and Jackie Saunders

Presented by the Women's & Children's
Hospital Foundation, Arts in Health program

Mirdilyayanthi – to Shine Bright

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Arts in Health program*

In this exhibition, five contemporary Adelaide-based artists responded to the theme of *Mirdilyayanthi*, a Kurna word meaning 'to shine bright'. Grace Bennett, Jackie Saunders, Elizabeth Close, Shane Kooka and Thomas Readett reveal how the process of art-making helps them to express their personal stories and connect with their Aboriginal heritage.

As part of the Art Gallery of South Australia's *Tarnanthi 2021 Festival*, this exhibition, at the Hospital, seeks to enrich and inspire experiences for young patients during their own wellness journey. Each artist started making art at a young age, developing their art career by maintaining a strong work ethic and creating their own unique style. All share a keen drive to keep learning and mastering their craft through mentors, peers and their family stories.

Grace sustains her strength and creativity by her connection to the land and culture. *'I often yarn with my family about their experiences and stories they share, as well as talking about my painting ideas and incorporating my own stories into my artworks. I use it as fuel'.*

Jackie draws on her strong sense of family and culture and reflects her connections to both the human and natural world. *'I've got my own style. It's colourful. It comes from the heart. My mum and my dad live on through me'.*

Elizabeth explores the concept of 'wealth' and challenges the notion that the landscape is only the sum of its parts. *'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people view country not as something to exploit, but rather something profound and immeasurable, something ancient and invaluable, something that shines far brighter than any precious metal'.*

Shane spent time in hospital as a twelve-year-old and remembers his mother by his side, teaching him their family stories while making small dot paintings. He wants his artworks to provide hope for young patients. *'As an Aboriginal we need to keep going – there is no finish line'.*

Thomas uses self-exploration and personal narratives as opportunities to reflect on the wider world, through themes of love, loss and grief. *'Everybody is equal and is worthy of happiness and love. Find things that give you strength, keep strong'.*

Each of the artists are keen to share their artworks with the young patients, families and staff, creating positive pathways for themselves and for others for the future.

To read the full essay, visit wchfoundation.org.au/arts-in-health/mirdilyayanthi



Elizabeth Yanyi Close

Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people,
South Australia



*Keep pushing, speaking, advocating, creating
- we are the sum of our stories and we need to
keep sharing them with the world.*

elizabethclosearts.com

detail of 'Let The Shadows Fall Behind You' - mixed media on canvas, 2021, 150 x 60cm



Shane Kooka

Wulli Wulli/Guwa (Koa) people,
Queensland



*Don't be so hard on yourself, everyone goes
through hard times, we all struggle. Find someone
who makes you feel good to be around.*

shanekooka.com

detail of '#2' - aerosol and acrylic on canvas, 2021, 100 x 76cm



Grace Bennett

Ngadjuri people,
South Australia



All my painting within this exhibition have been inspired by the first painting I ever created and my journey throughout learning about my culture and heritage and will represent how encouragement, support and family allowed me to 'Shine Bright' in my future painting and aspirations.

Instagram @gnbartss

detail of "Country" - acrylic on canvas, 2021, 120 x 90cm



Jackie Saunders

Kaurna/Kokatha/Ngarrindjeri/Wirangu people,
South Australia



INCLUSIVE
EXTRAORDINARY
ART

*Jackie uses her painting to keep her memories
alive, taking them forward with her into the future.*

Instagram @jackie_deadly_designs

detail of 'Before the Sun Rises' - acrylic on canvas, 2021, 50.5cm x 76cm



Thomas Readett

Ngarrindjeri/Arrernte people,
South Australia/Northern Territory



Making artwork for me is compulsory to the way I live. It is a therapy to help me work through things and keeps me staying strong.

trvisualarts.com

detail of 'Hold onto Hope' - acrylic and oils on board, 2021, 130 x 60cm

Special Event:

Mirdilyayanthi Artist Gathering, a Tarnanthi artist forum for the Women's and Children's Hospital community

Artists will discuss their artworks in Mirdilyayanthi - Shine Bright - an exhibition which aims to project positivity, self-worth and cultural awareness, especially for the young patients and visitors in the Hospital. The artists will also talk about the strength they have received from mentoring support systems and the power of art making within a paediatric hospital.

Date + Time: Friday 26th November 2021, 12.30 – 2.30pm

Register Interest: artsinhealth@wchfoundation.org.au

The Women's & Children's Hospital Foundation (WCH Foundation) raises funds to support the health and wellbeing of women, children and their families who rely on the Women's and Children's Health Network. The WCH Foundation is committed to ensuring that mums, children, and their families have access to the very best in medical care, hospital facilities and support services at a time when they need it the most.

The WCH Foundation Arts in Health program creates an interactive and vibrant hospital environment that improves the health and wellbeing of the hospital patients, their families and staff. Through art, play and music, we encourage curiosity and creativity and reduce the stress of being in hospital.

The Arts in Health Exhibition Program provides a space away from the stresses of treatment to distract, entertain and inspire by improving the hospital environment. The artworks displayed in the exhibition spaces come from a range of sources – internally from hospital staff, patients (women & children) and their families, through specific Arts in Health activities and externally from local artists and art collectives.

This exhibition was planned and exhibited on the lands of the Kaurna People, we pay our respects to the Kaurna Elders past and present and to the Elders of the lands this brochure reaches.

This exhibition runs 15 October 2021 – 31 January 2022

Learn more here: wchfoundation.org.au/arts-in-health/mirdilyayanthi/

For more information contact:

Lauren Simeoni, Arts Officer, Women's & Children's Hospital Foundation
T 08 8464 7900 | artsinhealth@wchfoundation.org.au | wchfoundation.org.au
55 King William Road | North Adelaide | SA 5006

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AGSA **tarnanthi** **BHP**

