

**Lines in The Sand North Stradbroke Island Festivals 2011-2014:  
Chronicling a curatorial philosophy in response to an ecology of change.**

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## **Keywords**

Ecological art, curatorship, Minjerribah, North Stradbroke Island, Quandamooka, RAMSAR, Toondah Harbour, Mining, Festival, Uncle Bob Anderson.

### Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

**Signed:** QUT Verified Signature

**Dated:**

September 17, 2020

## Abstract

Island culture, the environment and politics of Minjerrabah (North Stradbroke Island, Queensland, Australia) set the context for the ecological arts Festivals that are the foundation of this research study. *Lines in the Sand* North Stradbroke Island (LITSNSI) collective delivered four Festivals 2011-2014 in response to an ecology of great change for Minjerrabah. The curatorial rationale was to invite artists to work in residence and respond to the shifting lines in the sand of Native Title determinations, announcements concerning national parks, camp grounds and an end to sand mining on the Island, and to work in collaboration with environmentalists, scientists and community people. LITSNSI contributed to a rich structure of ideas and ensuing artful actions, and led to the inaugural *Quandamooka Festival* in 2015, a celebration of Aboriginal culture, Country and community, delivered by the new Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation (QYAC).

This study reflects on the *Lines in the Sand Festivals* 2011-14 context, and establishes a curatorial philosophy that is deeply embedded in a complex interconnected local narrative of cultural respect, environmental responsiveness and hope. The curatorial philosophy developed through LITSNSI and analysed within this study identifies and describes nine principles of practice that are not exclusive, but encompass approaches that reflect and contribute to a theory of curatorial practice in relation to ecological arts. Terry Smith refers to such practice as the “third current”, which is concerned “with tentative explorations of temporality, place, affiliation, and affect - the ever-more uncertain condition of living within contemporaneity on a fragile planet” (2012, p34).

The outcomes of this study led to a presentation of ecological curatorial philosophy and practices at the International Small Islands of the World conference, Kangaroo Island in 2016, and the application of this curatorial philosophy to inform two exhibitions; *Two Island Tribute* and *Islands of Innocence* that were created and critiqued against the proposed philosophy.



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Much respect to the peoples of the Quandamooka on whose Country this research work was undertaken, and where I call home since 2001. I am privileged to have had my children grow up on the island and myself to have lived as a community woman and amidst culture. Thank-you to the community and particularly Elders of Minjerribah who have shared their stories, have taught me much about belonging and family; for their generosity and acceptance. In particular ‘old man’ Uncle Bob Anderson Ngugi Elder and a traditional owner of the Quandamooka Cultural Estate says that the island welcomes those who come with good spirit. A deep gratitude is here expressed for the generosity of spirit Uncle Bob has shown me since our first meeting on the water taxi from Goompee (Dunwich) to Nandeebie (Cleveland) in 2003, where he instructed me to flip open my lap top and fill him in on the collaborative work Creative Democracy Homelessness I was doing in Brisbane or as Uncle Bob more correctly says in Meginchin. We have been creative collaborators ever since.

I am privileged to have worked with many remarkable artists, culture workers and collaborators under the broad umbrella of Lines in the Sand Minjerribah and this research work. In particularly longtime colleagues Sharon Jewell and Pat Zuber whose skills and commitment to the arts is forever and inspiration. Also Elisabeth Gondwe, North Stradbroke Island Museum on Minjerribah (NSIMM) ‘musarian’ who has provided unequivocal support and access to resources. Thank-you to my QUT supervisors Dr. Victoria Garnons-Williams and Dr. Leah King-Smith. I am supported by my mother, daughter and son in all that I am and all that I do. Thank-you.

This document encapsulates a body of work that articulates a remarkable window, to the complex and living culture of those of and living on Quandamooka country; both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. The ecological art and curatorial philosophy chronicled here bespeaks of reconciliation in action in Aboriginal

and non-Aboriginal relations and in our collective relationship to Country – be it the homelands of our ancestors or those of others.

## **List of Abbreviations and Placenames**

ARIs means Artist Run Initiatives

Canaipa, Russell Island

ETS, Economic Transition Strategy

Goompee, Dunwich

Gheebelum, meaning Mulgumpin sand hill and Uncle Bob Anderson's traditional name

IBA, Indigenous Business Australia

ISISA, International Small Islands of the World Association

Jandai is the language of Quandamooka Country, Queensland. spoken by the Noonuccal, Goenpul and Ngugi people

LITSNSI, Lines in the Sand North Stradbroke Island

MBRS, Moreton Bay Research Station

Meginchin, Brisbane

Minjerribah, North Stradbroke Island

MMEIC, Minjerriba Moorgumpin Elders in Council

Moongalba, Myora meaning sitting down place

Mulgumpin, Moreton Island meaning place of sandhills

Nandeebie, Cleveland

Naree Budjong Djara, meaning my mother earth

NSIMM, North Stradbroke Island Museum on Minjerribah

Ngugi, meaning people of the dugung and Aboriginal people of Mulgumpin

Ngugi, Noonuccal and Goenpul, are the three tribes of the Quandamooka

OAM, Order of Australia Medal

Pulan Pulan, Amity Point

Tangalooma, meaning where the fish gather

Terku, Peel Island

QYAC, Quandamooka Yoolooburabee Aboriginal Corporation

Yulu Burri Ba, meaning people of land and waters

Yura Yalingbila, meaning welcome the whales.



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## Chapter One: Introduction

### Background and Overview of the Research

**Beyond Centralised Gallery Paradigm: a Personal History.** ‘Artist-run’ is a loose term that can be applied to a physical gallery space, a conceptual project, a collective, or any combination of the above. Simply put, artists are in charge of the decision-making. (Dwyer, T. & Palmer, D., 2007, p13). As an art school graduate, as Jo kaspari my early years of studio-based practice and exhibition were defined by the artist run initiatives of the 1990s and included the regional Butter Factory studios and Gallery in Dayboro, Queensland.

Residencies were a cornerstone for my then creative practice, involving mostly figurative works, both two-dimensional and sculptural. Arts residencies with health services in Toowoomba, Cairns and Brisbane, Queensland, were concerned with taking art outside of traditional gallery context and embracing a new kind of audience and engagement. In collaboration with Sally Clifford in 1997 I founded the then Australian Network for Arts and Health. Delivering information and training across the country we also undertook projects such as *Creative Democracy Homelessness* which was a nine-month project I co-facilitated which aimed at finding community solutions to homelessness in Brisbane using creative processes. One of the outcomes was large outdoor projection on to buildings to include the Queensland Performing Arts Complex and Commonwealth Bank, King George Square, Brisbane.

In 2000, I moved to Minjerribah in 2000, and into the special interest area of arts and environment. As artist-in-residence large outdoor projection events ensued at the Moreton Bay Research Station (MBRS), I soon found myself facilitating or curating creative projects like the MBRS Public Arts Project with Arts Queensland Public Arts Funding, and the multi-year initiative Lines in the Sand. Along the way, I enrolled in various undergraduate electives in commu-

nity welfare, environmental advocacy, visual analysis and critical reflection. Aforementioned projects for which I was artist and or curator were collaborations that established enduring relationships.

Overall, I have worked for more than 20 years across health, welfare and the sciences sectors, with unassuming collaborators to include community people, healthcare workers and scientists, using a wide range of artful media such as projection, sound, film, design, fire, sand, glass and light. My work reflects a dynamic and sensitive integration of contemporary art practices into the environment - be it built or natural- from the intimacy of galleries to colossal cliff faces and beaches. *Lines in the Sand* North Stradbroke Island (LITSNSI) collective, was an extension of the collaborative nature of my work of which I was a founding member and collaborator. Built around artists working in residence, the collective has created significant inroads into a post-mining cultural and environmental landscape.

This current study analyses and summarises the curatorial practices surrounding and associated with *Lines in the Sand arts festivals* in Quandamooka Country and culminates in two exhibitions that illustrate the curatorial philosophy developed herein.

**Situating Myself Within the Political and Cultural Landscape.** The consultative process for the Redland City Council *Our City Our Culture A Cultural Plan for the Redlands 2008-2018* under the former Mayor Melva Hobson was a springboard for me. Memorably, in 2008 I visited the tiny library at the back of the Point Lookout Hall on Minjerribah to find butchers paper and fat marker pens on a table, beckoning responses from community people to formulate questions about arts, culture and community. With my opinion being sought, I felt my twenty years' experience as an artist and collaborator was being validated. The Redlands 2020 Cultural Policy addressed culture, environment and residencies. It legitimated my earlier arts and cultural practice of sev-

eral decades that spanned Australia and Europe, as well as my experience in community cultural development and cross-sectoral partnerships, such as culture and wellbeing in the 90s. A second generation Scot, I moved to Minjerribah with a young family in tow, and turned my creative attention to my community and remarkable land and seascape of which I was part. I reflected on a Cross Cultural Awareness training workshop I had with Aunty Lilla Watson and Mary Graham and Queensland Community Arts Network in the 90s, in which participants were asked where were they from? I identified that I was a second generation Australian, residing on Aboriginal land in the place known as Meginchin. Not that I was simply “from Brisbane”. In the ensuing years I was witness to Native Title determinations on the island in 2011 and the emergence of the *Quandamooka Festival*, 2015.

I instigated and was subsequently commissioned to curate public art in the University of Queensland's Moreton Bay Research Station, which showcased among others, Quandamooka woman Belinda Close's work. I built festivals, and as a multi-media artist, I collaborated with island people from the sciences and education as well as rangers, and attracted funding from Arts Queensland, Australia Council for the Arts, philanthropic monies and artists from around the country to the Redlands. The collaborators and I created stories of local significance that were also relevant to audiences globally. These were recognised in the international ephemeral or nature art movement for example profiling with Korean Nature Artists' Association; Yattoo. Despite a change to conservative local, state and federal government in 2012 and a downturn in arts funding, LITSNSI inspired a new generation of artists and cultural workers, seeding and nourishing ideas and building ecologies of creative possibility across the diverse geographic and cultural scapes of the Redlands. The LITSNSI collective hinged our hopes for funding on the tick box option ‘festival’ in government arts grant programs.

### **Research Questions**

The research work was conducted on Minjerrabah and informs a philosophy for curating ecological art. The subsequent exhibition and installation applying the established curatorial principles explore current environmental issues facing Moreton Bay. The research questions that were generated for the study are:

1. In what ways can a small island's ecological arts festival achieve goals of environmental and social significance?
2. What key factors provide the basis for defining and applying a philosophy for curating ecological art?
3. What significance do the project outcomes have in a global discourse on curatorial practice?

This thesis attempts to map an ecology of great change between the years of 2011 and 2014 using the experience and understanding of the LITSNSI collective and Festivals 2011-2014. The various aspects of the festivals have been analysed to formulate key factors and aspects of curating public art events and exhibitions that can be defined as ecological. The study culminates in two events that exhibit contemporary concepts of ecological curatorial philosophy. The curation of the exhibition *Two Island Tribute* and installation of *Islands of Innocence* employ scholarly research into content and context of each, as well as environmental, social, cultural and economic impact.

### **Structure of the Research Paper**

With respect to the traditional Aboriginal place names the Jandai and Gowar language names have been used throughout this research. These are listed on List of Abbreviations and Place Names and are sourced with permission from Uncle Bob and also the Jandai Language Dictionary (2011) published by the Minjerrabah Moorgumpin Elders-in-Council.

Chapter 1 is an introduction to this study outlining my background experience in the arts and the cultural landscape of the Quandamooka, culminating in the formation of research questions.

Chapter 2 discusses the research design and methodology namely practice-led research, reflective writing, creative practice and material research, the curatorial as methodology, Two-Eyed seeing, journaling, ethical clearance and data storage.

Chapter 3 is a contextual review of relevant literature and historical practices namely artist, curator, collaborator, ecological art and islandness.

Chapter 4 addresses outcomes of the study namely the formulation of nine principles of curating ecological art as illustrated by the diagram and table. Application for this, is fleshed out in the exhibition *Two Island Tribute* also the geographical and historical context, methods and artifacts used, design of exhibition, analysis and discussion. *Islands of Innocence* is described, as is the environmental, also cultural and political context for the installation in relation to the nine principles of a philosophy for curating ecological art.

The conclusion, Chapter 5, answers my research questions and charts a future application for this philosophy for curating ecological art.

## Chapter 2: Practice-led Methodology and Research Design

### Methodology

This project employed a practice-led methodology, which establishes a relationship between visual arts practice and research that is cyclical and reflective. A reflective practice attempts to unite research and practice, thought and action into a framework for enquiry (Gray and Malins, 2004, p22). Methodological rigor is achieved by thorough critical reflection methods consistent with practice-led methodology, including systematic process and material analysis and peer review. One of the methods is digital journaling, which employed critical analysis and reflection of the material over the three years of this study. The exhibition and installation milestones and documentation include: photo, film, audio recordings and interpretative statements that are archived at [linesinthelandminjerribah.wordpress.com](http://linesinthelandminjerribah.wordpress.com) and [jofayduncan.wordpress.com](http://jofayduncan.wordpress.com)

Research methodologies also utilised historical research methods, such as a traditional literature and database research, as well as action research or fieldwork. Historically working as artist, curator and collaborator, my practice for this study was informed by early career involvement in artist run initiatives. Mapping and archiving the arts and cultural landscape of 2011- 2014 on Minjerribah has proved substantive and significant in formulating a theory of curating ecological art. Using reflective methodology, empirical data was used to map curatorial content and the immediate context of LITSNSI 2011-2014. Data included a collation and review of existing artifacts/ephemera such as posters, maps, catalogues from the archives of LITSNSI and North Stradbroke Island Museum on Minjerribah (NSIMM), a review of web and social media sites, as well as two years of audio recording with Ngugi Elder Uncle Bob Anderson (Dr. Robert Anderson OAM), Quandamooka Traditional Owner.

## **Methods Specific to this Research Study**

**Reflective Writing.** The four key features of reflective writing of LIT-SNSI were:

- i. Describing the artful content of LITSNSI 2011-2014, and its context; namely the historical, environmental, cultural and political context. This has been achieved by reviewing empirical data to include existing archives of LITSNSI and NSIMM. The process was one of deductive reasoning, explanatory and qualitative.
- ii. This analysis was then related to my own skills as artists, curator, and collaborator and other areas of expertise in the field of environmental advocacy culture and wellbeing.
- iii. Re-presenting the aforementioned showed different perspectives to include; historical, cultural, environmental, and political context and organisational aspects of this time.
- iv. Reconstructing an understanding to inform a philosophy of curating ecological art and practice-led research project work and outcomes.

**Creative Practice and Material Research.** Creative practice involved getting around the islands of Minjerrabah and southern Moreton Bay with small recreational water vessels that include dinghy, hobi, kayak and canoe. I visited Lord Howe, Kangaroo and Marovo Lagoon Solomon Islands with camera in hand, along with paint brush and sketch book. New skills were nurtured in identifying migrating and resident birds, open water diving, understanding under water geologies of the Bay, digital blogging and software capabilities of ADOBE and iMovie. I participated in a creative writing forum with the Australian Writers Centre, general meetings of local council, the University of

*Queensland Quandamooka Moreton Bay and Catchments* conference, marine sciences forums, a course on gallery curating with the Flying Arts Alliance, held placards at local activist group gatherings, presented and published with the *15th Islands of the World* conference at Kangaroo Island, Australia convened by the International Small Islands of the World Association (ISISA). *Two Island Tribute* exhibition and *Islands of Innocence* installation (subjects of this study) were each scheduled as part of the 2017 and 2018 *Quandamooka Festivals*. *Virtual Oceans* was a community forum and public presentation the author gave of research into contemporary virtual depictions of underwater realms at the North Stradbroke Island Museum on Minjerribah. The Lines in the Sand website was renamed Lines in the Sand Minjerribah in keeping with the renaming of North Stradbroke Island as Minjerribah and shifted from Squarespace platform to Wordpress. (Appendix One). The outcomes of this research work is archived at both this website and new website about the author. (Appendix Two). A four-page PDF entitled Curating Ecological Arts was also self-published by the author in 2019 on both websites. (Appendix Three).

**The curatorial as methodology.** Terry Smith is an art historian and among his many accolades in 2010 was named Australia Council Visual Arts Laureate by the Australian Government. In his book *Thinking Contemporary Curating* he devotes a chapter to defining contemporary curatorial thought, artist-as-curator and curator-as-artist. Curating has moved beyond a traditional focus of care of collections. In conversation with Jens Hoffmann, Maria Lind (2011, para 17) states

“The curatorial” goes further, implying a methodology that takes art as its starting point, that then situates it in relation to specific contexts, times, and questions in order to challenge to conventional curatorial practices. And it does so from various positions, such as that of curator, an editor, an educator, a communications person, and so on. This means that the cu-



ratorial can be employed, or performed, by people in a number of different capacities in the ecosystem of art.

The exhibition milestones in this research project challenge the status quo of artist and curator as separate disciplines, and singular authority.

**Two-Eyed Seeing: Contributions of Ways of Knowing.** Martin (2012) describes Two-Eyed Seeing is a theoretical framework that embraces the contributions of both Indigenous and Western "ways of knowing" (world-views). Theorists insist that Indigenous perspectives and customary practice should inform the design of every step on the research process (Drawson et al., 2017). Aboriginal Australian academics Yunkaporta and Moodie (2019) presenting at the Australian Institute of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies National Indigenous Research* conference in Brisbane spoke about their Ritual Thought Theory, a methodology for collecting and compiling Aboriginal data to include the intangible. They support Kovach's claim (2010) who asserts that Indigenous research paradigms should shape not only the choice of methods, but how the data is analysed and interpreted. Embedded into the process of this research are the principles embodied by Indigenous theorists, in particular Two-Eyed seeing, through self-reflective action and via collaborative and responsive work with Indigenous people.

Canadian Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall's Two-Eyed Seeing is the bridging of Indigenous and participatory methodologies, and is meaningful, respectful, reciprocal and responsible research derived from Indigenous world views. This research is a model of reconciliation in action and the foundation of new research agenda. And this research journey embodies Kovach's (2010) concept of 'researcher-in-relation', namely myself the researcher being a second generation Scot living on Quandamooka Country who has a personal relationship with Elder Uncle Bob which has a seminal place in the creative outputs herein.

**On-line Journal and Blog.** In 2016 an Island Blog was established at [linesinthesandminjerribah.wordpress.com](http://linesinthesandminjerribah.wordpress.com) (Appendix Four). An online journal, it is an archive that diarises the local environment, culture and politics in the island community and captures location-specific details of Minjerribah and Southern Moreton Bay Islands relevant for the making of art; it is a dynamic feed of articles, videos, audio files, quotes, galleries and links; ‘chronological’ in its content 2016 to the current day. It aims to capture broad representation of Quandamooka Traditional Custodian voices.

The aim of the blog was to publish material that informs practice-led research art-making, and create a resource to inform artists’ work. It also aimed to generate digital information archive about the islands and be an enduring document that provides ongoing fodder for artfulness on the small islands of Quandamooka, Moreton Bay. Archives must be both actively appropriated and initiate action in order to remain culturally relevant as a medium of transmission, according to a statement presented in studies with Node, Berlin *Documenting and Archiving the Ephemeral*. The online blog is an archive of research, reflection and reporting art making during this study. It lays bare a process that is concerned with the now, is transparent and available for all to see at [linesinthesandminjerribah.com](http://linesinthesandminjerribah.com).

**Ethical Clearance.** Ethical approval was granted from QUT in order for research work to commence the interviews with Uncle Bob. The traditional method of oral communication was used throughout this research work. The intellectual and moral rights of Aboriginal peoples’ story and knowledge are vital to cultural continuation. This project is embedded in a long-standing relationship between self (the researcher) and place (Minjerribah) and Uncle Bob. QUT granted ethical approval for the work (Appendix Five), as did the QYAC. (Appendix Six).

Milestones in this curatorial process of trans-disciplinary arts concerning the small island/s of the Quandamooka included *Two Island Tribute* at the Frank Moran Gallery at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and *Islands of Innocence* at the NSIMM These projects and methods used are fully outlined as part of the findings of this study in Chapter 4.

## **Chapter Three: Contextual Review**

### **Relevant Literature**

After graduating from art school, my early years of studio and exhibition practice was defined by ‘artist run’ initiatives and include the regional Butter Factory studios and gallery, Dayboro, Queensland, in the 1990s with longtime collaborator Sharon Jewell. These were the days before digital documentation, social media marketing and websites, but proved the breeding ground for innovation, collaborations and locating my practice in regional locations.

### **Artist Curator Collaborator**

Dwyer and Palmer in their book *Making Space* state that the ‘Artist-run’ or ARIs is a loose term that can be applied to a physical gallery space, a conceptual project, was a collective, or any combination of the above. Artists are in charge. Rebellious overtones often accompany the DIY (do-it-yourself) ethos of the artist-run initiative which often advocates for change and will often generate new and emergent practices.

Other unifying factors include a community of peers and a distinctly local identity. While politics, styles and practices may differ from one space to another, a shared sense of community remains constant”...“With artists in control, traditional definitions between artist and curator, individual and institution are broken down. Artists become administrators, curators, writers and bookkeepers, while theorists, designers and musicians are encouraged to fuse disciplines and enter the nebulous world of contemporary art. Such fluidity significantly adds to the experimentation and innovation of the contemporary art scene. (Dwyer, T., Palmer, D., 2007, p13).

In interview with Saloni Mathur, Terry Smith writes that contemporary art can be understood “through the lens of the local, that is, through the processes specific to different regions and different societies around the world” (2014, p. 166). The aesthetic forms of *Lines in the Sand* which were generated on an island accessible only by boat, informs this philosophy of curating ecological art.

In interviewing the author June 2, 2019, Paul Bishop asks, “That notion of emergence and attunement to place through the lens of different people seems quite critical. Also uncontrollable. Does it need curation?” This response follows...

Curation, as a practice, has become something quite different from what it was understood as being in bygone years. The artist, curator and collaborator roles have merged.

The role of curator is many things now. There is multiplicity or plurality to the practice. I stand in my boots as artist informed by a deep understanding and being a part of the rich ecology of here and now. So whilst I am not an authority I am part of the ecology. So the art that is born of bottom-up phenomena has emerged rather than being imposed.

The local narrative that has informed my practice as artist, as curator and as collaborator has seeded so much in the way of ideas, initiatives, enterprise, festivals I think there is much merit to the practice of ecological art. I have endeavoured to define it by nine principles. One of them is aspirational.

Rather, than being oppositional or reactionary, I find my creative practice works to respond to the local ecology, to express and bolster an ecology. and aspires to a better world. (Duncan, 2019).

## **Ecological Art**

In the 1970's the arts came out of galleries and moved away from being about objects to being a process that included performance, installation and new and online media. Art reached out to and redefined the notion of audience to include participants or collaborators in the production of creative and aesthetic endeavour. In sighting a chronological development of ecological arts practice, due respect must be given to leading pioneers of the eco-art movement, the collaborative team of Newton and Helen Mayer Harrison who have worked since the 1970s with

biologists, ecologists, architects, urban planners and other artists to initiate collaborative dialogues to uncover ideas and solutions which support biodiversity and community development... Their work involves proposing solutions and involves not only public discussion, but extensive mapping and documentation of these proposals in an art context". (n.d. Helen-Mayer-& Harrison Newton Harrison).

So too, that creative endeavour responded to a more complex and idiosyncratic world, more open, diverse and changing, a world of political, social and inter-related parts that are continuously evolving.

Academic Sacha Kagan (2014, para 1.) writes...

The genre of " ecological art " , as originally conceived in the 1990's on the basis of practices that emerged from the late 1960's onwards, covers a variety of artistic practices which are nonetheless united, as social-ecological modes of engagement, by shared principles and characteristics such as: connectivity, reconstruction, ecological ethical responsibility, stewardship of interrelationships and of commons, non-linear (re)generativity, navigation

and dynamic balancing across multiple scales, and varying degrees of exploration of the fabric of life's complexity.

The exhibition *Two Island Tribute* and installation *Islands of Innocence* consider that the arts have an instrumental role to play in bringing various discursive elements together, namely political, cultural and environmental ecologies.

### **Islandness**

A group of scholars and researchers, professionals and others from around the world met in Victoria, BC, Canada, in 1986 and in Tasmania, Australia, in 1988, and the International Small Islands Studies Association (ISISA) was established in 1992. Its “objectives are to study islands on their own terms, and to encourage free scholarly discussion on small island related matters such as islandness, smallness, insularity, dependency, resource management and environment, and the nature of island life” (n.d. Objectives). Thomas (2007) in her article *Littoral space(s): Liquid edges of poetic possibility* says, “Islands represent a microcosm of the universe – they thrive in a co-existence of autonomous and relational zones, in a mingling of universality and particularity”. Australia comprises some 8222 islands. This research paper explores in particular the ecologies of Minjerribah in relation to nearby tiny islands of Sandy and Cassim in Queensland and additional islands of the Asia Pacific known for the ecological integrity, Lord Howe island in New South Wales, Australia and the Marovo Lagoon in the Solomon Islands.

An overview of the history of Quandamooka, its land and waters and those residing upon and within, their industries and undertakings will set the context for the issues that helped formulate the curatorial philosophy delineated in this study.

## **Quandamooka: Site for this Study**

In my time on the island as a community woman, I sought to understand its people and culture. I brought with me a rich history of art making with a strong social justice focus. I was deeply affected by the remarkable diversity of the Bay environment and its geological formation and my art making turned to having an environmental focus. The isolation of island life saw me reach out to unlikely collaborators in artful undertakings. The colonial history of the island beguiles its beauty and the effects of colonisation; the frontier wars, its mission, leper colonies and shipwrecks all add a unique character to the island community. I became a curator of relationships in pursuit of art making. Industry provided opportunity and enabled continuous occupancy of the island by Aboriginal people which in turn resulted in Native Title determinations in 2011 and a series of interconnected events that culminated in the Festivals of 2011-2014.

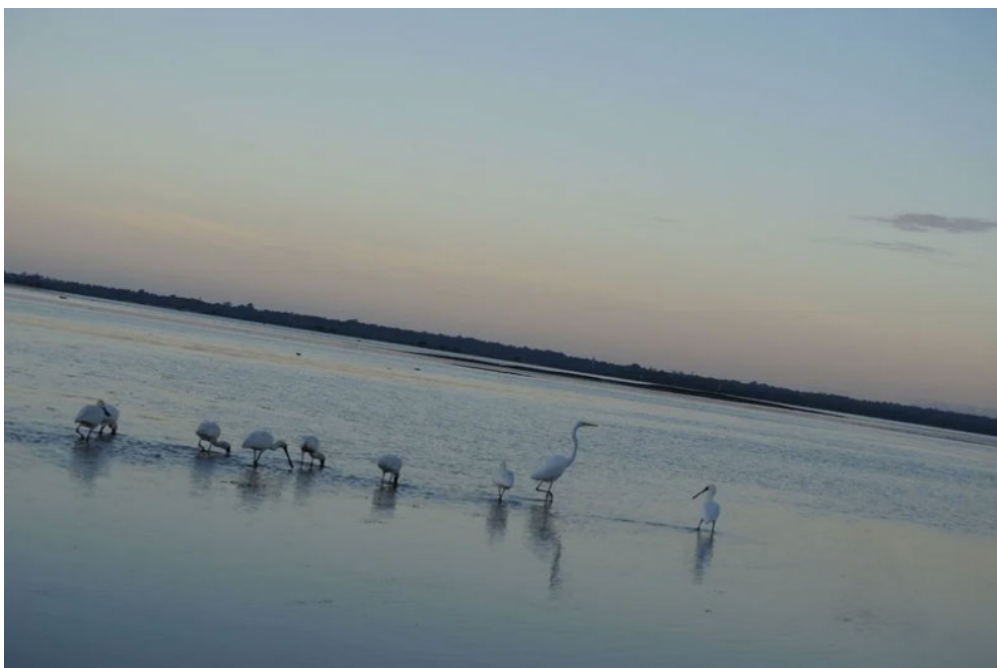
**Geology.** Between the two vast barrier islands of Mulgumpin and Minjerriba and the mainland, is Moreton Bay that formed over 6,000 years ago as sea levels rose and inundated what was then the floodplains of the Brisbane River (Hall & Hiscock. 1988). With a tidal range between 1.5 and 2 metres, the mostly shallow waters of Moreton Bay filters light through to the seafloor, allowing flora and fauna to proliferate. The bay itself contains around 360 islands in total, only four of which are populated.

**Culture.** The Aboriginal name for Moreton Bay is Quandamooka, and its three tribes are the Ngugi, Noonuccal and Gorenpul peoples who have lived there since time immemorial. Gleaned from interview with Uncle Bob, pre-colonisation Quandamooka Country was a thriving metropolis of trade, transport and ceremony.

**Environment.** Following the international Ramsar Convention held in Brisbane in 1977, 110,000h was deigned a Ramsar site; its ecology is extreme-



ly varied, ranging from perched freshwater lakes and sedge swamps on the off-shore sand islands, to intertidal mudflats, marshes, sand flats and mangroves next to the Bay's islands and the mainland. The Australian Government Department of Environment and Energy reports that this variety enhances the Bay's biological diversity with an overlap of wildlife species normally considered tropical or temperate (2018, para. 3). The extensive Mangrove and tidal flats provide a nursery for fish and crustaceans, and also support birds and other marine life. The sand flats provide roosting sites for migratory birds.



*Figure 1: Resident and Migrating Birds at Cassim Island, Two Island Tribute at QUT Frank Moran Gallery, Nette.*

More than 50,000 migratory waders pass through the Bay during their non-breeding season annually. At least 43 species of wading birds use the intertidal habitats, including 30 migratory species listed on international conservation agreements (2018. para 5.).

**Frontier Wars.** Cameron Atfield reports on research, presented at the Australian Historical Association's *Conflict in History* conference in 2014 at the University of Queensland. It is estimated that 66,680 Queensland deaths hap-

pened between 1788 and 1930. Of those deaths, 65,180 were considered Aboriginal. Captain Matthew Flinders (16 March 1774 – 19 July 1814) (2014, para 3.). English navigator and cartographer led the first circumnavigation of Australia. After his arrival in the Bay in 1799, island life was to change forever, as convicts and soldiers arrived in significant numbers in the ensuing 20 years. Historian Ray Kerkhove gave a public presentation *Reconstructing the Battle of 'Narawai (Moongalba)* at NSIMM August 24, 2018 part of the *Quandamooka Festival*. He spoke of the resistance made by Aboriginal peoples across Quandamooka and that death toll of the Frontier Wars at least equaled Australian casualties during World War I. Furthermore, it is estimated that there were more than 700,000 Aboriginal peoples in the Country at the time of European settlement. That number began declining rapidly from 1789, and by 1900 numbers were just 93,000 (n.d. Smallpox epidemic).

**Missions, Leper Colonies, Ship Wrecks.** Goompee, known as the Dunwich township, on the eastern side of Minjerribah, became the site of various European settlements, including a military/stores depot and convict outstation (1827-1831), a Catholic mission for Aboriginal people (1843-1846), quarantine station (1850-1864) and benevolent asylum (1866-1946) (2014, Dunwich Asylum Mess Hall is 100). The Asylum operated at Goompee from 1865–1946 and served the whole of Queensland as a public institution for the poor and destitute. The Aboriginal of Queensland were dispatched and confined there. Goompee also became a lazaret for “white” patients and place of confinement under the Inebriates Institutions Act 1896. These two functions moved to Terku, also in Moreton Bay, in 1907 and 1910 respectively (2014, *Dunwich Asylum Mess Hall is 100*).

Moongalba, or sitting down place as articulated by Benice Fischer (1997), was the location of the new mission on Minjerribah for the next 53 years. After dissolving of the mission, many Aboriginal families returned home, but some mission families, who were not allowed to live in Goompee, set up camp at One Mile on the northern outskirts. The nearby Moongalba cemetery is the burial

place of people from the Mission and South of Dunwich is the Lazaret or Leper's Cemetery (those exiled to nearby Terku) set up in the late 19th century (2014. Dunwich Benevolent Asylum).

Almost 50 years after Flinders sailed in the Bay, 54 people, crew and passengers of the 'Sovereign' schooner-rigged paddle steamer perished at sea. Traveling from Pulan Pulan, Minjerribah in rough waters, the ship foundered on a sand bar and capsized. The Queensland Museum notes that only ten survived thanks to the efforts of five Aboriginal men of the Quandamooka (n.d. para 11). A victim of the shipwreck was interred on the island and the first of the Dunwich Cemetery's estimated 10,000 (8500 of which are unmarked) burials, making it one of the earliest surviving cemeteries in Queensland (n.d. About).

**Industry and sustainability.** For thousands of generations, the Quandamooka people cared for the lands and seas to maintain a sustainable and abundant fishery. In addition to the devastating social upheaval after British colonisation of the Quandamooka, Aboriginal people lost custodianship of their vast resources of land and sea. Colonisation saw the commercial exploitation of these marine resources. North Stradbroke Island Museum on Minjerribah is, as Philipp Schorch would call a 'reflexive museum', one that conceptualises exhibitions: from products to be presented to processes to be revealed (2008). In 2013, Redland City Council Project Support Grant supported the museum in researching and recording, and made accessible the fishing industry history of Minjerribah. This grant made possible the recording of eight substantial oral history interviews, which were recorded with retired commercial fishermen and people associated with the sector.

The dugong industry operated in Moreton Bay from the 1850's. The Oyster Act 1871 made provision for the licensing of oyster banks. From the late 1870's until the 1920's the biggest operating entity in Queensland was the Moreton Bay Oyster Company. The ocean beach and inshore fisheries have operated

since the late 1800's and prior to the Queensland Fisheries Act 1877 and the prawn fishery commenced in 1849 (2013. Fishing on North Stradbroke Island).

Unlike the earliest inhabitants of the Bay, the operatives of the whaling industries were not exercising sustainable practices. In 1950 the Australian Company Whale Products Pty Ltd was formed and Tangalooma on the south side of Mulgumpin, was chosen as the site for the largest land-based whaling station in the southern hemisphere. In the 10 years of operation 6,277 humpback whales and one blue whale were killed and processed. The operation seriously decimated the east coast's population of humpback whales from an estimated 15,000 to be less than 500. (n.d. Tangalooma Flensing Deck Queensland's Old Whaling Station). In 2015 a new ceremony welcoming the whales and their passage through the waters of Quandamooka, Yura Yalingbila, is part of the *Quandamooka Festival*.

In the Lines in the Sand publication funded by the NSI Economic Transition Strategy of the Queensland State Government entitled *Culture + Country/ Art + Ecology*, Jackie Cooper comments that sand mining has been a part of the Minjerribah history since 1949. Mining is now set to end with the island's largest sand mine, Enterprise, ceasing operations in 2019. Three-quarters of the island is to become national park by 2021 (2012. p37). (Appendix Seven). The smallest mine, called Vance, would close in 2025 and 80 per cent of the island would be protected the following year. The new national park jointly managed by QYAC and National Parks, is named as *Naree Budjong Djara*, meaning "My Mother Earth". The national park declaration followed with an announcement that sand mining will end on Minjerribah.



Figure 2: Jan Aldenhoven, Virtual Bushwalking, Lines in the Sand Arts Festival 2011, Point Lookout Parkland, Duncan.

The sand dredging site on Main Beach is now a camp ground managed by Minjerribah Camping – initially a partnership between the QYAC as shareholders, trustee and Traditional owners of the land, and Indigenous Business Australia (IBA), a Commonwealth Statutory Authority. Minjerribah Recreation Area, established in 2012, covers the township campgrounds of Adams Beach, Bradbury's Beach, Amity Point, Adder Rock, Home Beach and Cylinder Beach, the designated beach camping areas at Flinders Beach and Main Beach and the foreshores at Flinders Beach and Main Beach.

**Native Title (Queensland) Act Determination.** In 2011, the time frame for the Festivals in this study, “The Federal Court recognised the Quandamooka Peoples exclusive native title rights over about 2,264 hectares of land. The group therefore has exclusive rights to possess, occupy, use and enjoy the area to the exclusion of all others”. (Quandamooka Peoples Native Title determinations North Stradbroke Island 4 July 2011). QYAC is also in the process of making an application for World Heritage listing of the Bay, further

protecting its natural resources. From an environmentalist perspective, Native Title determinations of 2011 were a win for the interconnected habitats of the Quandamooka, a region of vast ecological diversity. Fifty per cent of Minjerribah is now National Park. Quoting from *Lines in the Sand Arts + Environment/Culture + Country* (2012) further increasing protected areas will safeguard natural diversity and culture for the future.



*Figure 3: Craig Tapp's sand ochre art, Lines in the Sand Arts Festival 2011, Cylinder Beach, Duncan.*

That same year State legislation was passed in 2011 to end mining on the island. But as Tony Moore reports, mining company Sibelco spent \$91, 000 to advertise in Premier Campbell Newman's Ashgrove electorate during the 2012 state election (2013, para 1.). His subsequent election in 2013, extended Sibelco's mining leases. The Quandamooka peoples formed in July 2011 an In Aboriginal land use agreement with the Bligh Government, when the Bligh Government shortened the mining leases. That 2011 agreement was recognised under the Federal Government's 1993 Native Title Act. However in 2013, Camp-

bell Newman's LNP government extended the timeframe of sand mining company Sibelco's mining leases. The Quandamooka people say the LNP spoke with mining company, Sibelco, but not with them. In 2014 Aunty Evelyn Parkin and her sister Grace Graham, Quandamooka Elders lodged High Court legal action against the Queensland Government on the basis that the Newman Government's 2013 legislation - to extend sand mining leases, "contravenes the 1993 Native Title Act."

The island is moving away from sand mining towards being "Australia's most sustainable island economy", a quote taken from *Minjerrabah: Building Australia's most sustainable island community*, which was published by QYAC June 2015. QYAC is a Registered Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC), which was created under the Native Title Act 1993, to manage the recognised Native Title rights and interests of the Quandamooka people following the determination on the 4 July 2011. Work on an economic transition strategy (ETS) for Minjerrabah to create new economic and employment opportunities is back on track after more than three years disruption following the Newman Liberal National Party Government's introduction of the controversial North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability Act, 2013.

The various histories of the Bay and its islands corroborated to bring about the events of 2011, a year of great change for Minjerrabah; Native Title determinations, state government announcements about national parks, campgrounds and the phasing out of sand mining. It was also the year of the LITSNSI genesis.



*Figure 4: The green lounge, Lines in the Sand Arts Festival 2011, Point Lookout parkland, Duncan.*

### **Responding to Shifting Lines in the Sand: Interconnected and interdependent ecologies as a festival platform**

With a population hovering around 2000, and according to Cox (2011), holiday season brings in excess of 200 000 vehicles to the island. The island hosts an intense hot bed of differing groups and competing agendas; Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, pro and anti-mining groups, those who are pro-Native Title and those who seek recognition of their sovereign rights, those who are pro land rights and those who are potentially racist. There are environmentalists and vast numbers of seasonal tourists.

Art making set within a small regional and island setting, necessitates a form of artmaking initiated by artists and a grass roots theory of practice. Rather than infiltrating centralised art world structures we were interested in creative practices that responded to our environmental and community context, and in so doing evolving ways of living together attuned to what's happening to the planet.



## Residencies.

The long-standing relationship between arts and science found expression on Minjerriba in 2009 with an artists' residency at the MBRS, a Queensland University island outpost in the harbor town of Goompee. This research and projection event resulted in permanent public artwork facing the Bay by Belinda Close, artist and Quandamooka woman, achieved with the support of renowned Aboriginal artist Judy Watson and then curator of the University of Queensland Art Museum, Nick Mitzevich. Incidentally, the battleship grey paint colour of the Dunwich Research Station, a hub of scientific research into the bay habitat, was indelibly eroded by the projection event and subsequent permanent public artwork installed at the facility.

There were two further artist residencies on the island in 2009 and 2010.



*Figure 5: Spirit Spine artist Belinda Close, part of the Moreton Bay Research Station University of Queensland Public Art Project 2011, Howe.*

Embedded in the 2008 artists' residency and public art at MBRS in 2009, was an art form that responded to the unique habitat of the island and was to be an expression of its culture. A likewise response was applied to the residency work in the outdoor studio of South Gorge, 2009 and 2010. Artists gathered and created and this process informed the residency work of *Lines in the Sand*. In 2011, artists were invited to work in residence and respond to the shifting lines in the sand of Native Title determinations, announcements concerning national parks, camp grounds and mining through multimedia practices that encompassed outdoor ephemeral art installations, video projection, performance and sound, film, and creative workshops. We named this artist run initiative *Lines in the Sand*.

### **LITSNSI Festivals: A Walk Across the Cultural Landscape**

*Lines in the Sand Arts Festivals*, 2011 to 2014. (Appendix Eight) responded to social, political, cultural changes on the island. Festival events brought together island and visiting artists, the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community, residents and visitors alike, creating a space for new conversation and sharing of ideas. Experiences at this time were indelibly etched in the island's intangible narrative and the memories of those who participated.

The online documentation of these fleeting and ephemeral happenings remain an important archive of these enduring narratives. In 2013 a newly elected conservative local council, coupled with conservative state and federal governments, saw a downturn in financial support for the arts - especially those that challenged the status quo. Photographer and writer Charles Zuber, at a dinner gathering of artists and community later that year, reflected that artist Paul Klee once said, 'Drawing is like taking a line for a walk.' It is time for *Lines in the Sand* to take a walk across the cultural landscape; to consider re-imagining itself as an organisation (2013, para 5.).

In recognising the volatility of the cultural landscape and also island fires, we named the Festival theme in 2014 *Hot Island*. The Lines team decided to remain a collective of creative people respectfully committed to the island's community and its ecology and to developing new and existing cultural forms in devolved and divergent ways, but essentially to walk away from the Festival. Rather than being a driver we aimed to work as a vehicle enabling projects that include new and existing cultural forms; taking inspiration from our Festival successes, its highlights, our partners and the artists. *Lines in the Sand 2014 Arts Festival* successfully brought different people together; islanders, visitors, artists, scientists, families, and especially children.

The Festival promoted respect for the island's environment, peoples and culture. It has provided creative employment opportunities for locals. We have invested in ideas, passion, wisdom, skill, curiosity, innovation, wonder and creative change, inviting people to connect with real stories locally and to share globally through the digital realm.

In 2015, the Festival discontinued and deferred to the inaugural *Quandamooka Festival*. In 2016 and 2017, Mudlines at Canaipa (Russell) Island extended the art and environment program of Lines in the Sand to the Southern Moreton Bay Island region. As such, Lines in the Sand could be perceived as an art form in its own right which was experimental, communicative and relational, creating a living social phenomenon in that it communicated something of the complex island ecology of the time.

### **Examples of Interconnected and Interdependent Ecologies**

The following activities are testament to the contribution LITSNSI has made to the eco-system of art in Moreton Bay. This list is not exhaustive, but gives an overview of multi-various connections.

In partnership with the Dunwich Primary School Parents and Citizens Association, LITSNSI delivered *Quandamooka Celebrating and Sharing Culture* in 2011 (Appendix Nine). This aimed to celebrate Native Title determinations on the island. The island witnessed a cultural renaissance of island reed harvesting and traditional weaving, along with workshops in language and song. The story of Aunty Margaret Iselin's grannies and their weaving is told in the Lines in the Sand publication *Culture + Country/ Art + Ecology*. (Appendix Six). For the ensuing *Lines in the Sand Festivals* weavers wove magic, stories were told, children busied themselves in art workshops, and we enjoyed good food and company and hearty discussions. Local women have continued the practices as part of the *Quandamooka Festivals*.

Wild Life Stories was a project created by Josephine Ellis and Barry Brown with support by local Jandai Language custodians, and with contributions by community nature photographers. The end result of the project was a poster featuring 50 animals found in the North Stradbroke Island-Moreton Bay environment and their traditional names auspiced by LITSNSI. (Appendix Ten).

Mullung Art is an Aboriginal business initiative whereby artist and Quandamooka Man Craig Tapp uses coloured sand for art and ceremony on Country across south east Queensland.

Group exhibitions *Convolution* in 2014 (Appendix Ten) and *Stone, Water and Living Earth* in 2015, at the Redland Regional Art Gallery (Appendix Eleven), Cleveland involved LITSNSI artists who worked in residence on the island. Included in *Stone, Water and Living Earth* was a retrospective a kind of mapping of LITSNSI, which attempted to profile connectivities, issues and ideas at play and pinpointing milestones to the then present day.

The Clean Straddie collective who undertake beach and foreshore clean-ups across the Bay as part of the *Quandamooka Festival*, found its origins in the Festivals of 2012, 13 and 14 and with the support of Reef Check Australia.

Migaloo Press is a collective of printmakers who came together during workshops part of the *Lines in the Sand Festivals*.

Sharon Jewell states “Canaipa Mudlines which extends the art and environment program of Lines in the Sand to the Southern Moreton Bay Islands. Canaipa (Russell) Island is the geographical starting point for a traversal of this region through responsive and ephemeral art interventions”. (2014).

*Singing up the Sun* by island musician Clara Durbidge was a part of *Lines in the Sand Nature Art Actions* in 2015. Durbidge went on to present this at *Swell Sculpture Festival*, Currumbin and both *Island Vibe* and *Island Elements Festivals* on Minjerribah.

Ultimately, LITSNSI provided the foundation for the next generation of festivals, the inaugural *Quandamooka Festival* in 2015, a celebration of Aboriginal culture, Country and community delivered by the new QYAC. Lines in the Sand is indelibly woven into the eco-systems of art in the Bay.

## **Chapter Four: Outcomes of the Study**

The research questions that were generated for the study are:

Question 1. In what ways can a small islands' ecological arts festival achieve goals of environmental and social significance?

Question 2. What key factors provide the basis for defining a philosophy for curating ecological art?

Question 3. What significance do the project outcomes have in a global discourse on curatorial practice?

### **Formulating a Curatorial Philosophy: Nine Principles of Practice**

A curatorial philosophy of ecological art was born out of the interconnected and interdependent ecologies, which are here distilled into nine principles or philosophical positions that reflect the outcomes of this research study. This list is neither comprehensive nor exclusive but is a philosophical starting point for curating ecological art. Each principle has been distilled from and is illustrated by actions and episodes that occurred as part of the Lines in the Sand Festival programs.



*Figure 6: Diagram 1: Aesthetic form existing within the Nine Principles of Curating Ecological Art.*

1.	<b>Ephemeral and Ineffable</b>
2.	<b>Ethical</b>
3.	<b>Enduring, Accountable and Sustainable</b>
4.	<b>Process-Orientated</b>
5.	<b>Collaborative</b>
6.	<b>Relational</b>
7.	<b>Trans-Disciplinary</b>
8.	<b>Aspirational</b>
9.	<b>Intensely, Intimately, Deeply Local and Ultimately Global</b>

*Figure 7: Table 1: Nine Principles of Curating Ecological Art.*

**Ephemeral and ineffable.** Ephemeral art forms can include installations and performance, works on paper, working with sand or rock, wind and or rain. Modes of art making are united in a commitment to local ecology and narratives. The works are transient and fleeting, so the experience of them is either in-situ, on location, or through its documentations, articulating a contemporary ecological art that is discursive in nature.

Whilst memory of an ephemeral art happening lingers long and a photo may remain as documentary evidence, its social, cultural and environmental outcomes are intangible as with its economic value or worth. Ultimately valuing art that can't be easily commodified is a more sustainable practice.



*Figure 8: Gorge walk leaves artist Sharon Jewell Lines in the Sand Arts Festival 2012, Point Lookout, Ellis.*

**Ethical.** With endorsement from island Elders and traditional owners of the Quandamooka, *Lines in the Sand* 'nature art actions' successfully brought different people together, involving Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, island residents and visitors. Ecological art has the capacity to create dialogue around contemporary issues such as Native Title, national parks and mining, nature and the built environment.

Permission to enter the sovereign lands of the First Nation peoples of Australia was never sought by European arrivals in 1770, let alone to occupy. With an intention to correct the wrongs of the past, consulting with Aboriginal people before undertaking work on their Country is a deeply respectful protocol.



With permissions and endorsements of individual Elders, families and Aboriginal organisations such as the Minjerriba Moorgumpin Elders in Council and Yulu Burri Ba Aboriginal Housing artists' residency work was undertaken. Festivals had the endorsement of QYAC.

The *Lines in the Sand Arts Festivals* brought people together and celebrated the island environment with an interwoven program of art, dance, music and culture.



*Figure 9: Uncle Bob Anderson, Tangalooma, Mulgumpin, Duncan.*

**Enduring, Accountable and Sustainable.** Within any given community context be that human or non-human (for example within nature or the built environment), creative process reflects and observes the Aboriginal principles of respect and caring for Country. The creative practice is a democratic process and embedded within a framework of good governance and responsible resource management.

The current art of the environment almost always is sustainable. By that, we mean it is non-toxic, often working with

organic systems and materials, found or re-cycled objects, no objects at all, and/or 'ready-made' sites. The material is more often than not the context: the neighbourhoods, the community, the ocean, a forest (Blanc and Benish, 2017, p17).

**Process Orientated.** The process of art-making takes place over time, and is embedded in a complex narrative woven, potentially, over a period of years - like a story unfolding. The art process threads the association and collaboration of individuals, communities and organisations. The documentation of that process is what remains. Glenda Hobdell and Catherine Schoch work with light, moving image, shadow, human intervention and the drawn mark. The light installation is a result of time spent on island in residence undertaking site specific research. Its outcome involves the original collaborative South Gorge projection work, made during the *Lines in the Sand Festival*, 2012.



*Figure 10: Stone Water Living Earth by Catherine Schoch and Glenda Hobdell, Redland Art Gallery 2015, Duncan.*

**Collaborative.** Rather than being a human-centric art form, or about any one individual artist or object, creative collaborators and their creations are often multiple. Curators, environmentalists, scientists, the young, the old are equally considered artful contributors, with multiple interests and expertise working collaboratively with nature. The redefining of centrality allows for free-flowing collaboration because the spaces between roles are themselves porous.

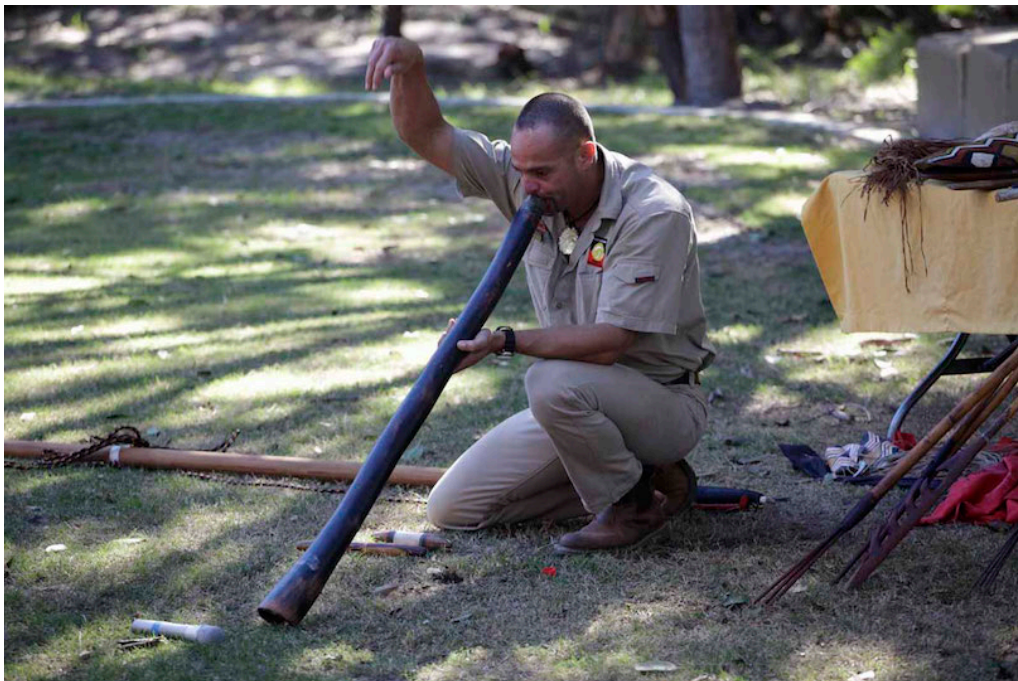
**Relational.** A complex interconnectedness of people generating an art unique to place and its collaborators, defines ecological art; an art form not about individuals nor career paths, instead embedded in collective production – not concerned with consumption but rather enduring memories. Relationships themselves are not just part of the process but an artform itself.



*Figure 11: Flux Performance, Point Lookout with Vanessa Thomlinson, Renata Buziak, Nickolis Ng, Jan Baker-Finch, Shane Thompson Architects, Vicki*

*Kelleher part of Lines in the Sand Arts Festival 2014, Mooloomba Reserve, Ellis.*

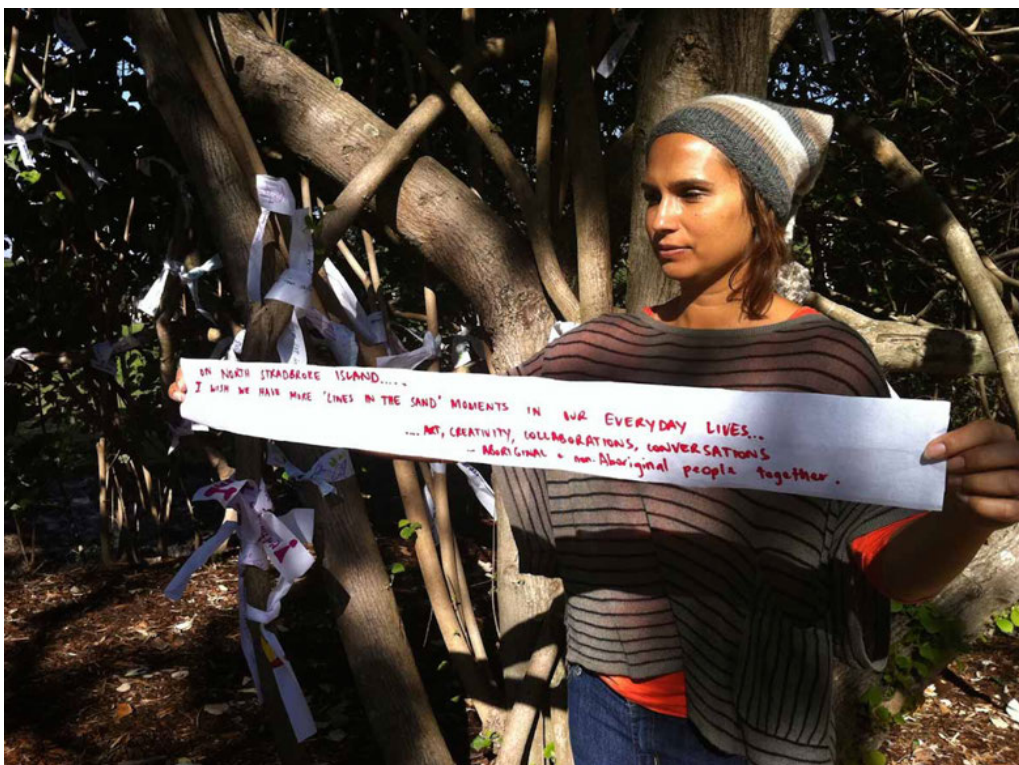
**Trans-disciplinary.** As prefix trans- is defined by dictionary.com as “across; beyond ... on or to the other side”. It denotes so much more; transatlantic, transformative, transcending, transgender and trans-disciplinary. Artists work across many media; across cultures, generations and any singular arts discipline. Creative mediums are innovative and wide-ranging and included digital technologies, light, sound, dance, poetry and fora.



*Figure 12: Matthew Burns at the Point Lookout Hall, Lines in the Sand Arts Festival 2014, Bunce.*

**Aspirational.** This curatorial philosophy creates moments of imagining and micro utopias – a form of art that might initiate social change by creating open and democratic social structures within the aesthetic realm. Quandamooka woman and *Wishing Well* workshop participant Delvene Cockatoo-Collins writes “On North Stradbroke Island...I wish we (could) have more ‘Lines in the Sand’ moments in our everyday lives...art, creativity, collaborations, conversations... Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people together” as seen

in Image 13 (Duncan, 2012). From a platform of recognising and celebrating the Quandamooka people and their custodianship of the land and waters of South Moreton Bay, LITSNSI built understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal culture. New research into the curation of ecological art has the capacity to not just communicate environmental imperatives such as foreshore development, dredging, pollutions, tourism but bring into play an ecology of change enabling restoration and ultimately regeneration; environmentally, economically, socially and culturally.



*Figure 13: Lisa Behan's Wishing Tree Workshop, Lines in the Sand Arts Festival 2012 with Delvene Cockatoo Collins, Point Lookout Hall, Duncan.*

**Intensely, Intimately, Deeply Local and Ultimately Global.** Ecological art involves individuals with a deep connection to place working over a long period of time undertaking artful endeavours, working intimately and intricately often in-situ with local environs and with issues relevant to audiences globally such as environmental degradation and global warming.



Figure 14: *Singing Up the Sun with Clara Durbidge, Lines in the Sand Arts Festival 2015, Point Lookout Headland, Bunce.*

### **Summary of Principles**

Since its inception in 2011, *Lines in the Sand North Stradbroke Island* invested in ideas, passion, wisdom, skill, curiosity, innovation, wonder and creative change, inviting people to connect with real stories locally and to share globally through the digital world”...“in its dynamic manifestation, built not just ephemeral sculpture but the space and the capacity for personal actions. *Jackie Cooper (2014)*. A one-time festival, a living online archive of artful actions in Quandamooka Country, but perhaps the greatest legacy of LITSNSI is a curatorial philosophy of an ecological art.

### **Current Applications of Curatorial Philosophy of Ecological Art**

There were two exhibitions in 2017 and 2018 that employed the curatorial principles and were subject of this research. Both were part of the *Quandamooka Festival*.

Art activities involving nature spawned by Lines In the Sand continued in the 2017 *Quandamooka Festival*, with Canaipa Mudlines artists residency, Miga-

loo Press printmaking workshops and exhibitions, and the *Two Island Tribute* arts exhibition. The six-day Canaipa Mudlines residency on Russell Island in October 2017, proved to be something of a micro utopia, where art making, food, shelter, conversation and a comradeship between people and with nature were shared and celebrated. “Utopia is not a kind of place but a kind of time, those all-too-brief moments when one would not wish to be anywhere else”. (Sontag. 2001, p 175).

LITSNSI, in its dynamic manifestation, built not just ephemeral sculpture but the space and the capacity for personal actions. Terry Smith (2012, p.30) states that to exhibit is to bring “art into a shared space (which may be a room, a site, a publication, a web portal, or an app)” ... or in this case a festival ... “with the aim of demonstrating, primarily through the experiential accumulation of visual connections, a particular constellation of meaning that cannot be made known by any other means.”

From island Gorge Walk, cliff faces and beaches to the Frank Moran Gallery and NSIMM, sites for ecological art exhibitions are not defined by venue or limited to any one discipline.

**Two Island Tribute.** July 2017, *Two Island Tribute* multimedia exhibition curated by Jo Duncan was held at the Frank Moran Memorial Hall Gallery, QUT-KG-Z11 Gona Parade, Kelvin Grove (Appendix Twelve).

Cassim and Sandy Island have sands that travel east to west. Both are tiny and vulnerable islands due to their proximity to potential shoreline developments. The unique ecologies of each island sustain a myriad of organisms above and below water and are eco systems critical to the interconnected habitats of Quandamooka, Moreton Bay. The accumulation of visual connections (Smith, 2012, p30) included photographs, film and audio recordings in a mixed media exhibition that elucidated the environmental, economic, aesthetic and cultural value of these islands. Photographic images of Cassim Island included in *Two*

*Island Tribute* were taken at dawn by a 15-year-old boy, whose feet were buried deep in a mud so rich in microbes only a water bird would know how to truly love it. Central to the exhibition is its curatorial philosophy, which articulates a contemporary ecological art that is discursive in nature and communicates local environmental imperatives.

***Toondah Harbour: curatorial process & methods.*** The implementation of a Toondah Harbour redevelopment (revised or otherwise) would see this intertidal zone of Nandeebie under concrete.

As stated in March 7, 2018 Redland City Council general meeting minutes at Redland City Council, The Council Chambers 91-93 Bloomfield Street Cleveland,

Toondah Harbour was declared a Priority Development Area (PDA) under the Economic Development Act 2012 (Qld), on 21 June 2013. This was in response to a joint Queensland State Government and Council commitment to reinforce Toondah Harbour as the regional gateway to Moreton Bay and the islands. On 29 May 2014, the Toondah Harbour PDA Development Scheme was adopted by the State Government.

The proposed master plan for the redevelopment of Toondah Harbour was first released on 25 November 2015 by Walker Group. The release coincided with an application under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 to determine whether the project will be assessed and controlled under the Act. A revised master plan was later released on 11 May 2017, by the Walker Group - which had a 100m setback to Cassim Island roost site. On 9 June 2017, the project was declared a controlled action under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth), which will allow the project to progress to the environmental impact assessment stage.



The A4 photos part of *Two Island Tribute* exhibition were taken from Cassim Island looking to the mainland's bunya pines and the lights of current Toondah Harbour such that it is. Also photographed were waking birds in flight, a gathering of local perennial inhabitants- spoonbill and heron. The understanding of the Bay as having many islands was elucidated in the little peaks of muddy islands in the still water looking to the dawn sun rising over Minjerriba, the broken shell sand, and mangrove soldiers standing tall; mangroves and the channel coursing between the two land masses of Cassim.



*Figure 15: Two Island Tribute, at QUT Frank Moran Gallery, 2017, Nette.*

Audio recording of Uncle Bob was included in the exhibition. A dignified man of gentle resolve, Uncle Bob is a Ngugi Elder and Traditional Owner of the Quandamooka Cultural Estate (Moreton Bay) He is an articulate spokesman for his people and spirit of the land and states “Long before the tall shadows of the ships of the first English fleet cast their shadows on shores in 1788 we were a thriving culture with our own customs, laws and beliefs”.

During the course of 2017 audio recordings with myself, the researcher and Uncle Bob reflected on his 86 years and being a part of and witness to some of the most significant milestones in Aboriginal Australia's move to self-determinism. These include the Aboriginal right to vote in 1967, the dissolution of Brisbane's black borders and Boundary Streets under Jim Soorley's government, 2011 Native Title determinations over Minjerriba and surrounds and the 2015 Welcome the Whales ceremony part of the *Quandamooka Festival* heralding their safe passage through the Bay.

This is in addition to Uncle Bob's work as a trade union delegate and State Organiser for the Building Workers Industrial Union from 1951 to 1978. Native Title Claims are also under way over Mulgumpin, Uncle Bob's homelands and the Quandamooka Coast Claim. He is the custodian of matters spiritual "no gammon. No lies. Straight-up". He says "The Land will always embrace people of goodwill and spirit."

***Geographical and historical context.*** 1 000,000 years ago fluctuating glacial sea levels, deposits of silica and heavy mineral sand formed two vast barrier islands Mulgumpin and Minjerribah homelands to their Aboriginal inhabitants for at least 40 000 years. The last glacial palaeo – topography of Moreton Bay 17,000 years ago indicate low sea levels and eroded fresh water stream valleys from the ancient Brisbane River.

Including Norman Tindale's 1940 map, showing the distribution of the Aboriginal tribes of Australia, goes some way to recognise the cultural history of Aboriginal connection to the lands and waters of Australia. Furthermore, in *Rethinking Tindale* 2012 exhibition at the State Library of Queensland curated by Michael Aird "Tindale's data was given both new physical form, as well as engendering fresh social meanings and relationships" (Lydon, 2016).

In 1799 Matthew Flinders sailed into the Bay. His chart of Moreton Bay: "A voyage to Terra Australia". London: G. & W. Nichol, 1814 is part of the actual archive projected in the gallery, as is Joshua Peter Bell's navigation map from his 1950 publication *The Yachtsman's Guide, Moreton Bay and How to Fathom It*. Also included are imagined archives.

*Cassim Island*. Uncle Bob, Gheebulum speaks about the colourful cultural history of Cassim Island and archived in the writings of Thomas Welsby in his *Recollections of the Natives of Moreton Bay. Customs of Living* delivered before the University Historical Society in 1967 states that

At that time, i.e., about 1879, there were many natives at Amity, some of the real dark old-day men, and as the moon was at its full, an improvised corroboree was given by the men and their gins. One comical native—and one, I daresay, well remembered by many boating men—was living there at the time, his gunyah being very close to the beach, not far from where the present test-house stands. He had a deformed arm and leg, and could not take part in the more active games and dances of his comrades. He was a born actor and a wonderfully clever mimic, and as cunning as the veritable rat. His name was Cassim, or, as he himself would ever put it, John William Cassim, Esquire. He was not the Cassim who kept the hotel at Cleveland. (p.115).

Billy Cassim, who sang a fairly decent song, English and black words intermingled, as he deemed it necessary, was also the author of many Amity Point corroborees. His native name was "Nyoryo" supposed to mean "rope hauler." How often have I heard him sing, "We won't go home till morning," and "Rule Britannia." It has been said that Billy was the composer of two comedies, "The Chinaman Corroboree" and "The South Passage Corroboree". (p.116).

Billy Cassim died in 1890, and lies asleep not far from his namesake, Cassim of Cleveland, the burial being made in the native quarter in the Dunwich cemetery, (p.117). But an Indian national, by the name of Johnny Cassim was transported to the Island of Mauritius for the term of his natural life in 1828. After transport again to Moreton Bay he obtained a Ticket of Leave in 1843, and Cassim went onto own boarding houses and died in Cleveland in 1884 a property owner and respected businessman.

Aboriginal man John William Cassim Esquire (Billy) was one of the men who rescued survivors of the Sovereign in 1844. It is assumed he took his name after 1855 when Johnny Cassim came into contact with local people. Patrick J Tynan in his book Johnny Cassim Coolie - Convict - Catchumen - Colonial Entrepreneur 1814-1884 suggest that Billy Cassim would have "taken on Cassims' name" as "It often happened that Aboriginal people took the name of one of the non-aboriginal arrivals in their area, out of admiration" p.71.

Cassim Island was named after one or perhaps the other of these gentlemen.

*Sandy Island.* Action research undertaken in the development of this research paper involved time spent out on canoe and kayak paddling the riparian zones of Nandeebie. Troy Robbins a long time resident and seaman in audio recording dated June 9, 2017 states ...

The channel that runs between Cassim Island and Sandy Island is critical because it feeds all the nutrient and food source down in the Cox Bank green zone. And the reason that that Cox Bank green zone was anointed was because it is known as a spawning ground ... it is critical that nothing disturbs the natural flow of the Sandy Island Cassim channel, because without that nutrient it will comprise the micro bio diversity of the Cox Bank green

zone and jeopardise the spawning of six or seven species of fish...

The symbiotic relationship between the mangroves, the sea grass meadows, the coral reefs, the spawning grounds it will just collapse and all of those species will be displaced...This Bay has struggled to deal with the developmental impacts over the last four decades, and with the scope of this twenty year dredging project"...(for the proposed Toondah redevelopment)... "will be the death knell of the Moreton Bay Marine Park as we know it.

Cultural and aesthetic value of these two islands are elucidated through the *Two Island Tribute* exhibition and online. The poetic, spiritual and archaeological value of these are communicated through the methods and artefacts of *Two Island Tribute* narrative by Jo Duncan (Appendix Thirteen). Exert from this text reads as follows

*"He summons:*

*Degga ... balga. Nonayi yina yinylia. Mil Binung. Strangers ... Come. Sit. Look. Listen.*

*Or tomorrow will be dark for us all".*

Uncle Bob says "language is the voice of the land" and that the use of language words sing up spirit of the land and its people. The reclamation of language and traditional renaming of the landscape is an important action of decolonisation.

*Community Action.* Redlands2030 community action group was born out of resident objection to the Toondah Harbour Redevelopment. Their website (and social media platforms) state

Redlands2030 Inc is an incorporated not-for-profit association. We are Redland's only community run, ad-free, information source on all things that matter in the Redlands. We bring you news, views, interviews, videos, photos and more. From the people, for the people of the Redlands. (n.d. para. 1)

The 3D rendering of the harbour development *Toondah Fly Over* generated by Tom Toranto of Redlands2030 is an alarming testament to its excess, with 3600 units to be built on riparian zones of Nandeebie, Cleveland an internationally deigned Ramsar site. Archived within the Redlands2030 website it is here re-curated as part of the exhibition and juxtaposed with fluid drone footage over island and ocean ecologies. Drone footage over Cassim and Sandy Island by young local filmmakers Mooncog Creative Media team capture the proximity of each to each other, their diversity and ecology. (Appendix Fourteen).



*Figure 16: 3D Toondah Fly Over by Tom Toranto of Redlands2030 part of Two Island Tribute, at QUT Frank Moran Gallery, 2017, Duncan.*

Still images of Cassim, contrasted with drone footage of the area metaphorically represent both aerial and ground level perspectives of the issue. The young contrasted with the entrenched activist. The fluid drone footage is contrasted with hard edge 3D animation of the proposed development site. Visuals are coupled with audio; the Elder, the recreationalists and bird watchers.

***Analysis and Discussion of Curatorial Principles.*** *Two Island Tribute* exhibition and documentation is archived at [linesinthesandminjerribah.com](http://linesinthesandminjerribah.com) website with hashtags #toondahharbourredevelopment #coxbank, an aesthetic digital arm to the community action against Toondah Harbour redevelopment.

Moreton Bay Foundation was established in 2017, to support community initiatives that work to preserve and protect the habitat of Quandamooka. Founders John and Meta Goodman who attended the exhibition commented that this

footage in particular, shown in this context was a shocking indictment of government irreverence for the environment. The Queensland Wader Study Group (QWSG) was established in 1992 as a special interest group within Birds Queensland, to monitor wader populations in Queensland and to work towards their conservation. Robert Bush and Sheryl Keats are articulate advocates for preservation of the ecological integrity of Moreton Bay and Cassim Island rebuke the community consultation process for the Toondah redevelopment. Recordings of their insights are shared in the exhibition. Both talk about the Ramsar convention.

In 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar, representatives from 18 nations signed the Convention on Wetlands of International Significance (known as the Ramsar Convention) to stop global loss of wetlands, and to conserve and sustainably manage remaining wetlands. Moreton Bay is one of Australia's largest sites listed under the Ramsar Convention. (2019. Nature Culture & History). Ramsar stands for Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat.

110,000 hectares in size, the site supports more than 50,000 migratory waders during their non-breeding season. At least 43 species of wading birds use the intertidal habitats, including 30 migratory species listed on international conservation agreements. Existing cartography of the Bay is extensive. Their selective inclusion here serve to not only geographically locate these local issues, but also point to the multiplicity of values and interpretations associated with the region.

*Re-curating the Colonial Archive - Cartography of Moreton Bay.* The past 6500 years of the of the Holocene “stillstand” period have seen relatively stable sea levels in the Bay, a subsequent proliferation of life and in the last 70 years a proliferation of mapping. Beyond the one eyed economic rationalist approach by developers to Toondah Harbour, the map projections part of *Two Island*



*Tribute* reflect the Indigenous research methodology of Two-Eyed Seeing to better understand the region. Counter-maps of Toondah Harbour redevelopment plans were included. These were from the 2014 *Redlands2030* Toondah Harbour urban design workshop which was attended by “more than 20 senior urban, master and environmental planners, civil and marine engineers, architects and landscape architects who took part pro bono” presenting alternative location, planning principles and strategies. (Appendix Fifteen). Terry Smith in interview with Saloni Mathur states... “installations evoking actual or imaginary archives are so common these days: they are ideal format for enabling us to imagine being with time (*con tempus*), that is to say, with many times at the same time” (2014. p168).

Projections **respectfully** included the Quandamooka Native Title and also Language Map by NSIMM. (Appendix 16). A world view is indicated by inclusion of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway which sees Moreton Bay’s some migrant shorebirds weighing as little as 30 grams travelling 25,000 km annually. International conventions such as RAMSAR have mapped the Bay and are included in the exhibition.

Local, state and federal governments map electoral, environmental, marine park zonings also storm and flood waters of the Bay. In relation to the nine principles of curating ecological art this undertaking illustrates the interconnectivity or **relational** aspects of the Bay, **ethical** considerations and also the **collaborative** nature of land and sea use and understanding.

*Understanding via the Exhibition Process.* The audio and visual media included in *Two Island Tribute* were taken from the research blog; included were ideas, images, concepts and conversations that furnished the walls of the Frank Moran Gallery. Irene Muller states that while Foucault sees the archive as a method of constantly restructuring, transforming and constructing knowledge through agents grounded in specific discourses, online archival projects

place the emphasis on accessibility or “re-using” rather than storage. (2013, p24).

In terms of curating, *Two Island Tribute* helped inform an idea for curating ecological art, one that is dynamic, ephemeral, intangible, fleeting, it's value non-quantifiable. Rather than present at just another arts project at the *15th Islands of the World* conference on Kangaroo Island Australia in 2016, I was motivated to reflect on the *Two Island Tribute* as part of a process extending from the residencies and festivals of LITSNSI. A philosophy of curating ecological art was germinated. In interview with Paul Bishop Monday June 2 2019 at Nandeebie Park, the author states,

I wanted to contextualise what has happened through my time connecting with artists and the community on the island as not being just about project, project, project. It was an art form; a complex ecology, complex ideas. It brought people together which manifested as aesthetic forms. It was deeply, intimately local but those messages that we explored, those ideas are relevant to audiences globally... Ecological art isn't defined by one discipline, nor one creative medium, it is defined by a range of ecologies unique to place, so the place here defines this creative practice. (Duncan. 2019).

### **Islands of Innocence**

**A Description in Context.** Some 12 months after *Two Island Tribute*, a more conceptual or artful installation of media took place at the institute on Minjerribah entitled *Islands of Innocence* (Appendix Seventeen). Still and moving imagery from Quandamooka, Lord Howe, Cassim and Solomon Is-

lands were projected onto the internal walls of the North Stradbroke Island Museum on Minjerribah for one night only. The multimedia installation included audio recordings of Elder Uncle Bob and elucidated emotive regard for these islands.



*Figure 17: Innocence, Islands of Innocence, North Stradbroke Island Museum on Minjerribah: Duncan.*

The fluid movement of marine organisms contrasted with the very linear built environment of the replica of an old mission ward. Human centric histories from earlier colonial days remained affixed to the wall whilst the projection moved across their frames, pins and glass. The south wall also held saws from the old days when trees were felled with two men either side of the trunk. The two cut into the projection, it's shadows dark and forbidding. Symbolically or metaphorically representing how tree felling presents one of the greatest threats to the world's oceans - their disappearance from riparian zones means erosion and mainland silts travel into our water ways and out onto reefs. Deforestation is contributing to an ever-increasing temperatures and severe weather conditions, and ocean bleaching a direct result of this.

Marovo Lagoon was at the time of the filming as yet untouched by ocean bleaching due to its underwater geologies and currents. Accompanying this was an original composition for the film by 16-year-old musician Leon Duncan Nette. The video file was shared through his social media networks. Looped music synced to video. Musical composition was overlaid with audio recordings of Uncle Bob's words. He spoke of his first experience of walking Country as a boy with Uncle Fraser Brown. The significance of walking Country is repeated time and time again in audio recordings of the Elder. "The mining company Sibelco has stolen the footprints of my ancestors and with their departure in 2019 island people will perform Wadama, will dance and sing and replace the footprints of the ancestors and go where they have been forbidden by the mining company".

Accompanying audio recordings of Uncle Bob, North wall projections included stills of maps, Oodgeroo's poem *Time is Running Out* (for which eldest grandson Raymond Walker gave permission to use), Uncle Bob's ghostly figure walking Country across island where under mining leases have historically forbidden them (and drone cameras) to go - where he has been forbidden to walk. Short propaganda film generated by the mining company in 2011 at the height of its challenge to political decisions to shut it down, was irreverently appropriated from the internet, re-edited and used as background to the ghostly figure of Uncle Bob walking Country once more. The media was followed by images depicting the essence of childhood, innocence and wonder, and a sense of oneness with nature.

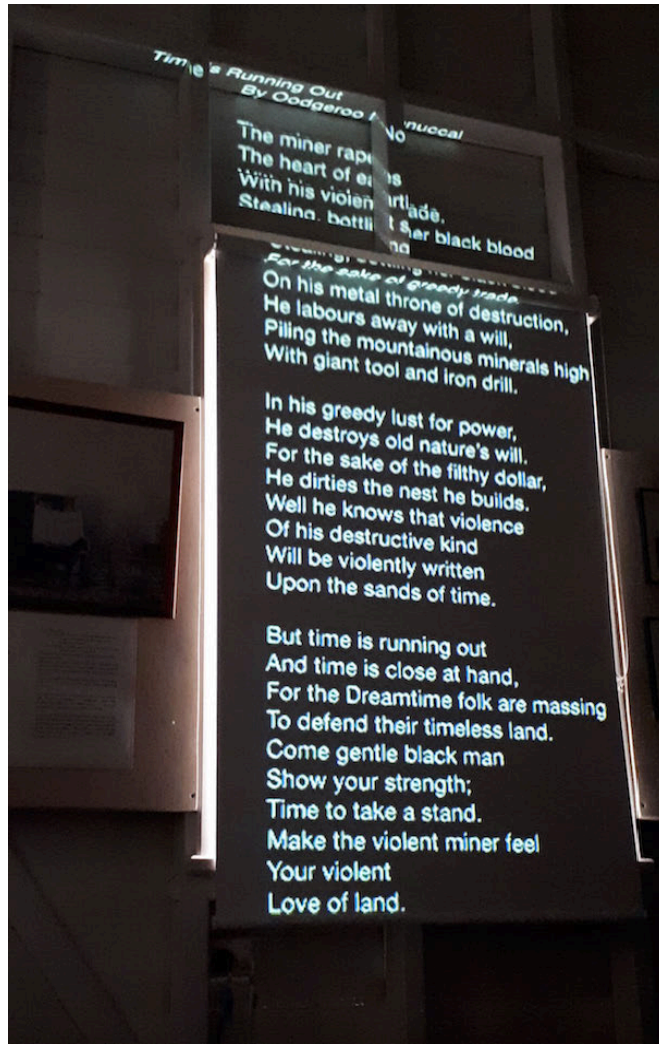


Figure 18: Projection of Oodgeroo Noonuccal's poem *Time is Running Out*, *Islands of Innocence*, North Stradbroke Island Museum on Minjerribah, Duncan.

Maps, part of *Two Island Tribute*, were re-curated to be part of *Islands of Innocence*, as was the Toondah Harbour 3D Fly Over. Whether they are concerned with political zoning, national parks, Native Title or lands for sale, they bespeak of how mapping is a distinctly human-centric undertaking. Also present was Norman Tindale's map of Aboriginal Australia and under water geologies from the last glacial period some 6500 years ago. Both are testament to the thousands of years shaping the island and its intricate and complex environmental and cultural significance.

To the museum visitors who happened across the installation on August 12, 2018 the islands many layered histories, values and environments came as somewhat of a surprise. For example, drone footage of the Mine revealed its shocking and devastating impact on fragile ecologies. The end of mining symbolises an opening up of their once hidden activities to public scrutiny; similarly, the Toondah Harbour flyover outs or lays bare the extent of proposed Walker Corporation development upon reclaimed land and fragile bird habitats. The Walker Corporation is one of Australia's largest private development companies across all areas of the property spectrum. The contrasting media, still and moving, layered and worked, animated and visceral, immersive and audible provide a sensory immersion in the aesthetic, itself a conversation or questioning.

**The Exhibition in Relation to a Curatorial Philosophy.** Whilst the art itself was **ephemeral** and leaving no trace, ironically the works were created using a vast array of digital hardware which included; cameras, recorder, thumb drives, computers, keypads and keyboards, with thumb drives, media players, leads and projectors.

A plane took me to Lord Howe Island and the Marovo Lagoon, Solomon Islands, a car drove me to Brown Lake to record little bird sounds and to Uncle Bob's home to record his stories. Boats shimmied me between islands and headed dive gear took me beneath the water's surface. Whilst there was no commodification of the art-works themselves, the use of electronic hardware and our dependence on it begs for its own review in terms of sustainable practices.

The installation itself was visible for one day only. Its intention was never going to be about large number of people, ticketing or calendar time. A multimedia installation in a small museum in a tiny harbour town on an island, is not going to attract large numbers of people, generate art work sales or income by

way of ticketing. Nor is this an intention. Rather to reflect on contemporary issues and provide a space to see the bigger picture of things playing out on the island and aspire to something unashamedly utopian. It is a fluid and aesthetic interruption, in a heavily laden political landscape. An overlaying of sights and sounds in one small room, held/embraced/encapsulated for one afternoon in one small regional museum, a synthesis of ideas insights and perceptions where growth/change/seeding happens.

NSIMM is a keeper of stories. ‘Musarian’ there Elisabeth Gondwe states...

In the small museum context oral histories are a great way to share history and stories in an interesting way. And it moves us away from the outmoded notion that objective reality exists and there is a singular truth.

And local stories are many instead of singular rather than any singular patriarchal European model of history. *Islands of Innocence* contributes to the idea of museums being a place of living history, shared through oral history and in this case original music composition and projection.

Another installation visitor comments

I have never seen a picture of the sand mining... I have never seen one image, it is like they” ... Sibelco Mine...” have suppressed that imagery. If people come and people see the decimation, whether the masses come or not. if it is made available, it is still an important thing to do.

**Ethical** approval was granted from QUT in order for research work to commence. However, this project is embedded in a long-standing relationship be-

tween the author and artist, place (Minjerribah) and Uncle Bob. QYAC approved the process and individual permission and approvals were embedded into the process. Uncle Bob provided permission to use Aboriginal place names in this research paper and spelling.

As curator, but also as an island community woman, I had to take responsibility for ethical practice beyond the parameters provided by QUT. For example, after ethical approval Uncle Bob asked that audio recordings remain with the NSIMM rather than the University. QYAC provided a letter of endorsement for the study and *Quandamooka Festival* endorsed the *Two Island Tribute* in 2017 and 2018 *Islands of Innocence* by including them in their program.

The process of granting permission and approvals was and is multiple and ongoing, rather than singular and exclusive.

Themes of mining, development and human impact on the Bay are enduring and are issues facing much of the planet. The themes explored in this data although intensely local speak to a much greater post mining narrative about the restoration and rejuvenation of the land both culturally and ecologically. *Islands of Innocence* speaks of **enduring** themes such as preservation of oceans, deforestation, population growth and **accountability** to future generations.

In Contemporary Art World Currents, Terry Smith writes;

Anthropocene era: a period in the Earth's history in which human impact will override all other forces. To mitigate global warming, the universal adoption of renewable sources of energy is an urgent necessity, along with other measures such as the shared management of water and control of population growth. (p.274).



The research undertaken in this work reflects a rich ecology of ideas, experiences and interactions. The Island Blog is an archive of this **process-orientated** research; fodder for art making.

The *Islands of Innocence* multimedia installation reflects a rich layered research process and is not limited to one medium, idea or centralised gallery space - essentially it represents a **re-defined centrality**. *Islands of Innocence* installation was housed neither in a gallery, nor inner city urban environment. It happened in a small regional museum and on an island. It provides a template for crafting the curation of ecological art. The media portrayed here was not specific to a white western patriarchal paradigm of art making. It contrasted a humancentric history of life on North Stradbroke Island; Minjerribah, with imagery of a natural world. It contrasted imagery of innocence with structures and systems violating the natural world.

Both a history and future were explored in *Islands of Innocence*. Imagery of the islands mining operation was contrasted with a future conjured where continuous, looped footage of Uncle Bob is seen walking the lands still under mining lease. He is here, replacing the footprints of his ancestors.



Figure 19: Video still Uncle Bob Anderson Walking Country once more, from

*Islands of Innocence, North Stradbroke Island Museum on Minjerribah, Duncan.*

The exhibition was the outcome of a **collaborative** process, in that children, Elders, musicians, filmmakers, sound engineers and film editors were part of the installation creative team. The maps represent the work of cartographers, geologists, corporations and birdwatchers.

The installation happened at the NSIMM. The installation was seen by museum patrons over a weekend. The curators talk was programmed the same afternoon as the book launch *Beneath the Mother Tree* by D.M. Cameron and Virtual Oceans presentation and discussion with Ocean Ark Alliance.

All was scheduled and part of the *Quandamooka Festival* which happens each year between June and August. It brought together threads of times past and the future, the young and the old, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal; an aesthetic based of **relationships**. *Islands of Innocence* was a **trans**-disciplinary and **trans**-generational installation, its pictorial content was specific to the Elder Uncle Bob and ancestors of the Quandamooka, also the innocence of childhood. In writing on ‘world pictures’, Terry Smith notes Chinese artist Chen Zhen concern about “the health of the planet, and realising that imagined solutions needed to transcend national boundaries and the limits of ideologies, Chen Zhen articulated in 1998 a condition that he shares with many of his generation: “transexperience” (2011, p 259).

Care for Country is everyone’s responsibility. The title *Islands of Innocence* itself is **aspirational**, and the mirth of children amidst wind, with birds on water’s edge projected onto the north wall also bring attention to the emotion of innocence. If as adults were to re-acquaint ourselves with these qualities the world would be a better place.

*Islands of Innocence* installation is a direct response to pending development of Toondah Harbour in Nandeebie, and the long struggle to end sand mining **locally**. It was concerned with timing, change, challenge, its timing a direct response to imminent **global** threats of ocean bleaching and global warming.

Audio recording of exhibition visitor feedback made on the day said

This footage of Uncle Bob walking through different spaces I think it is just beautiful, he is persistent, he is just there persistently he comes back and he comes back. He just comes back he comes back, and that is the attitude we have got to have.

With mining's end in 2019, Uncle Bob's words speak of cultural celebration, Wadama. Cultural ceremony involving water blessing sees it become consecrated land.

Specific to a time, and island locations the installation has messages of universal relevance. Threats of mining, development and ocean bleaching and our human impact on nature's interconnected ecologies are of immediate concern.

The broken people and the thriving reef ... this reef was thriving whilst these broken people were struggling. And then the flip side has almost happened now. Now we've got the reef broken and dyeing and people prospering ... in some shape or form. That is land clearing for me, which is the main problem for the reef. That is why those tools are so powerful there, the shadows of them there. On the reef.

states Toni Houston who attended the installation.



*Figure 20: Video still of South Wall projection by Ocean Ark Alliance, Islands of Innocence, North Stradbroke Island Museum on Minjerrabah, Duncan.*

### **Conclusion**

The aforementioned curatorial philosophy is tested herein with *Two Island Tribute* and *Islands of Innocence*. These, along with the online blog and archive establishes a process, in itself building an ecology of ideas. “It is no wonder that installations evoking actual or imaginary archives are so common these days: They are ideal format for enabling us to imagine being with time (*con tempus*), that is to say, with many times at the same time”. (2011, p168)

In response to the question ‘In what ways can a small islands arts festival

achieve goals of environmental and social significance?’ one might say that the length and breadth of ideas and collaborators part of this process respond to an extremely complex local ecology. Festivals were just one part of the art ecosystem spawned during this time of great change. They attempt to conjure a world-view of environmental issues facing us all. Both environmental and social ecologies are furnished with new allegiances and inspiration on the ways we as individuals react and respond to environmental imperatives.

What significance do the project outcomes have in a global discourse on curatorial practice? The process and milestones of this research work are intensely, intimately deeply local and specific to Quandamooka. However, each is a living and dynamic archive online, they are ultimately accessible and usable by a global community. Additionally, understandings of islands as incubators of ideas for global survival, ecological restoration and celebration suggests a contribution to worldview narratives. This curatorial philosophy was presented at the *15th Islands of the World* conference on Kangaroo Island Australia, July 2-7 2017 organised by the ISISA. Its themes included; empowering people, the world of tomorrow, human spirit, protect nature and developing solutions. Models of diplomatic activism and active citizenship brought into focus the global threats to the environment and the need to invest in local solutions.

The arts provide a visual and alternative language around these issues, a poetry – something optimistic as with the conceptual response *Islands of Innocence*. The contributions to knowledge with *Two Island Tribute* and *Islands of Innocence* is trans-disciplinary information and its communication to new audience.

Laid bare here is scholarly research into island generated content and context. This research project’s environmental, social, cultural and economic impact is far reaching, empowering people, conjuring a world of tomorrow, investing in the human spirit, working to protecting nature and developing an ecology of ideas for a way forward.

Uncle Bob talks about how when mining ends in 2019 people will sing and dance and rejuvenate the spirit of the land. These are concepts explored through the images part of *Rejuvenating Spirit of the Land* exhibition April 2019 and allow for the intangible outcomes potentially generated by a land healing ceremony involving Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples scheduled for 2020.

The ideas behind curating ecological art is one where its genesis is embedded in permission, its process inclusive as opposed to exclusive. It is process orientated as opposed to prioritising outcomes, it is accountable and environmentally sustainable and its legacy enduring/with enduring meaning. It is not concerned with galleries nor individuals and objects, but rather brings nature and relationships into focus. Its emphasis is trans-disciplinary, intergenerational and cultural. Aspirational in nature, it is concerned with moments of utopia, making the world a better place by way of its timing, prioritising change and challenge to dominant paradigms be they the centralised art institute or the political and economic structures at odds with the sacredness of Quandamooka Country, its ancestral and living people.

Subsequent to this research, the authors relationship with Uncle Bob Anderson has deepened and for him it has provided a poetic adjacent to the remarkable shifting lines in the sand of native title determinations in the Quandamooka. Native title determinations over Mulgumpin, homelands of Uncle Bob Anderson was achieved November 29, 2019. This research is a tribute to him and the continuing relationship between them both.

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## Appendices

**Appendix One:** Link to artists' website <https://jofayduncan.wordpress.com>

**Appendix Two:** Link to Lines in The Sand Minjerribah website <https://linesinthesandminjerribah.com/>

**Appendix Three:** Curating Ecological Arts PDF

Waters of the Queensland (Moreton Bay), looking to Cassim Island from site of the Toombah Harbour redevelopment (Nete, 2017).

# CURATING ECOLOGICAL ART

A curatorial philosophy of ecological art was born out of the interconnected and interdependent ecologies of *Lines in the Sand Nature Art Actions 2011-2014*, on Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island, Australia). Here distilled into nine principles, this list is neither comprehensive nor exclusive but is itself a starting point for curating ecological art.

BY JO FAY DUNCAN  
ARTIST CURATOR COLLABORATOR

SWIRLS  
DIVERGENCE OF  
THE POLYGON

VECHAD 10/15



## 1. EPHEMERAL AND INEFFABLE

Ephemeral art forms can include installation and performance, works on paper, working with sand or rock, wind and or rain. Modes of art making are united in a commitment to local ecology and narratives. The works are transient and fleeting, so the experience of them is either in-situ, on location, or through its documentation, articulating a contemporary ecological art that is discursive in nature.

Ephemeral art lingers in the memories of its audience, as well as in documentation such as photographs. However, its social, cultural and environmental impact is intangible, its value ineffable.



Artist Craig Tapp's sand ochre art at Home Beach part of Lines in the Sand Arts Festival (Zuber, 2013).

## 2. ETHICAL

With endorsement from island elders and traditional owners of the Quandamooka, *Lines in the Sand Nature Art Actions* successfully brought different people together, involving Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, island residents and visitors. Ecological art has the capacity to create dialogue around contemporary issues such as native title, national parks and mining, nature and the built environment.

## 3. ENDURING, ACCOUNTABLE AND SUSTAINABLE

Within any given community context be that human or non-human, creative process reflects and observes the Aboriginal principles of respect and caring for Country. The creative practice is a democratic process and embedded within a framework of good governance and responsible resource management.

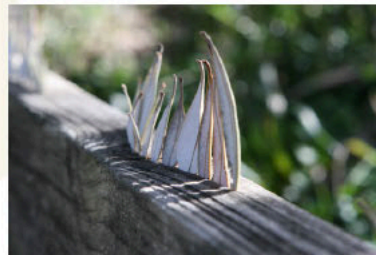
## 4. PROCESS-ORIENTATED

The process of art-making takes place over time, and is embedded in a complex narrative woven, potentially, over a period of years - like a story unfolding. The art process threads the association and collaboration of individuals, communities and organisations. The documentation of that process is what remains.

## 5. COLLABORATIVE

Rather than being a human-centric art form, or about any one individual artist or object, creative collaborators and their creations are often multiple. Curators, environmentalists, scientists, the young, the old are equally considered artful contributors, with multiple interests and expertise working collaboratively with nature.

The redefining of centrality allows for free-flowing collaboration because the spaces between roles are themselves porous.



Gorge Walk Leaves. Point Lookout artist Sharon Jewell (Ellis, 2012).



Flux night time performance and in Mooloomba Reserve, Point Lookout. Installation by Shane Thompson Architects. (Bunce, 2014).

## 6. RELATIONAL

A complex interconnectedness of people generating an art unique to place and its collaborators, defines ecological art; an art form not about individuals nor career paths, instead embedded in collective production – not concerned with consumption but rather enduring memories. Relationships themselves are not just part of the process but an artform itself.

## 7. TRANS-DISCIPLINARY

As prefix trans- is defined by dictionary.com as “across; beyond, “transcontinental” – on or to the other side”. It denotes so much more; transatlantic, transformative, transcending, transgender and trans-disciplinary.

Artists work across many media; across cultures, generations and any singular arts discipline. Creative mediums are innovative and wide-ranging and included digital technologies, light, sound, dance, poetry and fora.



Welcome to Country at Lines in the Sand Arts Festival 2014 (Zuber, 2014).

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### 8. ASPIRATIONAL

This curatorial philosophy creates moments of imagining and micro utopias – a form of art that might initiate social change by creating open and democratic social structures within the aesthetic realm.

New research into the curation of ecological art has the capacity to not just communicate environmental imperatives such as foreshore development, dredging, pollution, impact of tourism, but bring into play an ecology of change enabling restoration and ultimately regeneration; environmentally, economically, socially and culturally.

Islands of Innocence installation, North Stradbroke Island Museum on Minjerribah (Duncan, 2018).



### 9. INTENSELY, INTIMATELY DEEPLY LOCAL AND ULTIMATELY GLOBAL

Ecological art involves individuals with a deep connection to place working over a long period of time undertaking artful endeavours, working intimately and intricately often in-situ with local environs and issues relevant to a global audience.

“Since its inception in 2011, *Lines in the Sand North Stradbroke Island* invested in ideas, passion, wisdom, skill, curiosity, innovation, wonder and creative change, inviting people to connect with real stories locally and to share globally through the digital world” ... “in its dynamic manifestation, built not just ephemeral sculpture but the space and the capacity for personal actions” *Jackie Cooper (2014)*.



Green Lounge, Point Lookout Headland Park (Duncan, 2011)



CURATING ECOLOGICAL ART BY JO FAY DUNCAN 2019

Appendix Four: Link to Island Blog <https://linesinthelandminjerribah.com/island-blog/>

Appendix Five: QUT Ethical Approval

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From: Human Ethics Advisory Team <humanethics@qut.edu.au>  
Sent: Friday, March 10, 2017 12:29 PM  
To: Leah King-Smith; Victoria Garnons-Williams; Joanne Kaspari  
Cc: Human Ethics Advisory Team  
Subject: Ethics application - approved - 1600001121

Dear Dr Victoria Garnons-Williams and Ms Joanne Kaspari

Project Title: Mil Binnung: Welcome and Blessings to the land and waters  
of Quandamooka

Ethics Category: Human - Low Risk  
Approval Number: 1600001121  
Approved Until: 2/03/2018  
(subject to receipt of satisfactory  
progress reports)

We are pleased to advise that your application has been reviewed and  
confirmed as meeting the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical  
Conduct in Human Research.

I can therefore confirm that your application is APPROVED.  
If you require a formal approval certificate please advise via reply email.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

Please ensure you and all other team members read through and understand  
all UHREC conditions of approval prior to commencing any data collection:

- > Standard: <http://www.orei.qut.edu.au/human/manage/conditions.jsp>
- > Specific: None apply

Decisions related to low risk ethical review are subject to ratification at  
the next available UHREC meeting. You will only be contacted again in  
relation to this matter if UHREC raises any additional questions or

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concerns.

Whilst the data collection of your project has received QUT ethical  
clearance, the decision to commence and authority to commence may be  
dependent on factors beyond the remit of the QUT ethics review process. For  
example, your research may need ethics clearance from other organisations  
or permissions from other organisations to access staff. Therefore the  
proposed data collection should not commence until you have satisfied these  
requirements.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any queries.

We wish you all the best with your research.

Kind regards

Janette Lamb / Debbie Smith  
on behalf of Chair UHREC  
Office of Research Ethics & Integrity  
Level 4 | 88 Musk Avenue | Kelvin Grove  
+61 7 3138 5123 / 3138 4673  
humanethics@qut.edu.au  
<http://www.orei.qut.edu.au>

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## Appendix Six: Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation Letter



QUANDAMOOKA YOOLOOBURRABEE ABORIGINAL CORPORATION  
RNTBC  
ICN: 7564

26 October 2016

To Whom it May Concern,

RE:- Letter of support

The Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation (QYAC) is the prescribed Body Corporate to manage the native title rights on behalf of all Quandamooka native title holders for its traditional land and waters including Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island).

I understand Jo Kaspari is undertaking higher degree research project with QUT Creative Industries with the working title *Mill Binnung; Welcome and Blessings to the land and waters of Quandamooka*. The purpose of this project is to curate an interdisciplinary arts project involving film footage.

The project will generate original footage of the unique and endangered habitats of the small islands of South Moreton Bay (Quandamooka) with Emmy Award winning cinematographer Dave Hannan of Ocean Arc Alliance who resides on Minjerribah.

Underwater footage will be accompanied by an audio overlay of Uncle Bob Anderson's words as Ngugi Elder and Traditional Owner of Quandamooka.

Audio recording of Uncle Bob's welcome and blessings over the land and waters of Quandamooka will be digitally archived with QUT. This is particularly appropriate given that Uncle Bob has an honorary doctorate with this institution.

This project will contribute to a broader understanding of the ecological and cultural significance of the Bay and records Uncle Bob's welcome and blessings in perpetuity.

We write to offer our support for *Mill Binnung; Welcome and Blessings to the land and waters of Quandamooka*. And recognize this to be a wonderful opportunity to increase appreciations of Quandamooka culture and country amongst the broader community.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for further information on 0488499571

Yours sincerely

Cameron Costello  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

ABN: 30 457 275 826  
Street Address: 100 East Coast Road, Dumwich  
Postal Address: P.O. Box 235, Dumwich Qld 4183

**Appendix Seven:** Link to *Lines in the Sand Culture + Country/ Art + Ecology*

<https://linesinthesandminjerribah.com/lines-in-the-sand-book/>

**Appendix Eight:** Lines in the Sand Arts Festival 2011- 2014 link [https://](https://linesinthesandminjerribah.com/festivals-2011-2014/)

[linesinthesandminjerribah.com/festivals-2011-2014/](https://linesinthesandminjerribah.com/festivals-2011-2014/)

**Appendix Nine:** *Quandamooka Celebrating and Sharing Culture* link <https://linesinthesandminjerribah.com/quandamooka-celebrating-and-sharing-culture-2012/>

**Appendix Ten:** *Convolution* 2014, at the Redland Regional Art Gallery, Cleveland link:

<https://linesinthesandminjerribah.com/new-page-4/>

**Appendix Eleven:** *Stone, Water and Living Earth* in 2015, at the Redland Regional Art Gallery, Cleveland link:

<https://linesinthesandminjerribah.com/art/2015-stone-water-and-living-earth/>

**Appendix Twelve:** *Two Island Tribute* exhibition Invitation and link <https://linesinthesandminjerribah.com/two-island-tribute/>



Looking to Cassim Island photo by Leon DN

Two Island Tribute  
 Curated by Jo Fay Duncan  
 Frank Moran Memorial Hall Gallery, QUT-KG-Z11 Gona Parade, Kelvin Grove QLD Australia  
 EXHIBITION / 17 July – 22 July 2017, 10am-5pm

CLOSING EVENT / 21 July 2017, 6pm

Cassim and Sandy Island have sands that travel east to west. Both are tiny and vulnerable due to their proximity to potential shoreline developments.

The unique ecologies of each island sustain a myriad of organisms above and below water and are eco systems critical to the interconnected habitats of Quandamooka, Moreton Bay.

The photo, film and audio recordings in this exhibition elucidate the environmental, economic, aesthetic and cultural value of these islands and include audio recordings of Uncle Bob Anderson. Central to the exhibition is its curatorial philosophy, which articulates a contemporary ecological art that is discursive in nature and communicates local environmental imperatives.

[www.linesinthesand.com.au/two-island-tribute](http://www.linesinthesand.com.au/two-island-tribute)

**QUANDAMOOKA FESTIVAL**  
 Celebrating Culture, Country & People  
[www.quandamookafestival.com.au](http://www.quandamookafestival.com.au)



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**Appendix Thirteen:** Narrative by Jo Fay Duncan gallery projection part of *Two Island Tribute*

*Between skyways and seaways, ancient spirits of the land run deep and vast.*

*1, 000,000 years ago fluctuating glacial sea levels, deposits of silica and heavy mineral sand, formed two vast barrier islands. Then between these and main-*

*land shoreline, freshwater stream-valleys incised into the surface of floodplain lagoons forming sand, gravel, mud and coral islands a plenty, channels and deep waters proliferating with flora and fauna a many.*

*Today, two island fingers of sand run east to west, seemingly separate in high tide, like lovers, nearly touch as water slips away to the north. His bare-course earthy sand drops to sea through valleys cut into his southern face. Dressed with mangrove dense and lush, her sands are encircled with rich silts. Between them flow living waters to spawning grounds before them.*

*In the still of night he whispers Biaime Bing Bege Pa. Biaime Bing Gelen Pa. Biaime Bing Mirrigan Pa. Father of sun, moon and stars. Moogarah. Ganging. He called thunder and lightning. She sings: Yoolooburra be, Gunabi Gubbi, buran winjiya. Sand, sea, waters and south east wind. He warns: A storm comes that brings no rain.*

*Who will sing and dance in our name? she sounds. For tomorrow will be dark.*

*Birds lift in the night from their roost. Their cacophonous screams sound the alarm. How can it be that she is expendable and he invisible?*

*Incantations of these ancients warn of machines that come from the west to violate her. To the south, waters and tributaries, intertidal and subtidal zones, sandy channels, marine areas and sandbanks, mangrove and wetlands, sea-grass meadows and spawning grounds will be washed with the muddy tears of her loss. Suffocating life.*

*He summons: Degga ... balga. Nonayi yina yinylia. Mil Binung. Strangers ... come. Sit. Look. Listen.*

*Or tomorrow will be dark for us all.*



Note: Special thanks go to Uncle Bob Anderson for inspiration for this piece. Uncle Bob says the use of language words sing up spirit of the land and its people and he has provided permission for use of language in this exegesis and spelling. Also, thanks to the Jandai Language Dictionary by the Minjerribah Moorgumpin Elders-in-Council.

**Appendix Fourteen:** Link to Redlands2030 website:

<https://redlands2030.net> fly over

**Appendix Fifteen:** Alternative Plan Toondah

<https://redlands2030.net/alternative-plan-toondah-harbour/>

**Appendix Sixteen:** *Islands of Innocence* installation Invitation and link <https://linesinthesandminjerribah.com/islands-of-innocence/>



Innocence, artwork by Jo Fay Duncan

**Islands of Innocence** - a multi media installation

Curated by Jo Fay Duncan  
North Stradbroke Island Museum, Minjerribah  
15/17 Welsby St, Dunwich

6-9pm Sunday August 12, 2018

Still and moving imagery from the Quandamooka, Lord Howe and Solomon Islands will be projected onto suspended screens in North Stradbroke Island Museum's Benevolent Asylum ward for one night only. The multi-media installation includes audio recordings of elder Gheebulum, Uncle Bob Anderson and elucidates emotive regard for these islands.

[www.linesinthesand.com.au/islands-of-innocence](http://www.linesinthesand.com.au/islands-of-innocence)

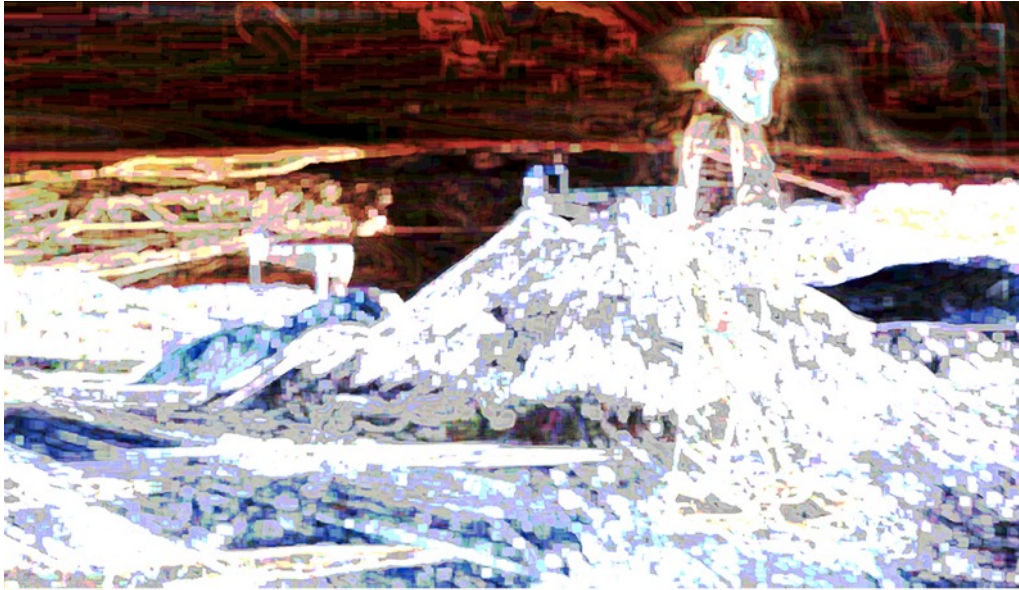
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[www.quandamookafestival.com.au](http://www.quandamookafestival.com.au)



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**Appendix Seventeen:** *Rejuvenating Spirit of the Land* invitation and link

<https://linesinthesandminjerribah.com/rejuvenating-spirit-of-the-land>



Walking Country Once More series by Jo Fay Duncan

## Rejuvenating Spirit of the Land

Jo Fay Duncan  
Artist Curator Collaborator

Frank Moran Memorial Hall Gallery  
QUT-KG-Z11 Gona Parade, Kelvin Grove QLD Australia  
Wednesday April 24 - Saturday April 27 by appointment 0418729822

2019 marks the end of sand mining on Minjerrbah (North Stradbroke Island).

A complex ecology of cultural, historical and environmental change is captured in this exhibition, inspired by audio recordings of Uncle Bob Anderson (Nughi elder and Quandamooka Traditional Owner). These along with still and projected imagery celebrate this momentous date in Queensland's post colonial history.

[linesinthesandminjerrbah.com/rejuvenating-spirit-of-the-land](https://linesinthesandminjerrbah.com/rejuvenating-spirit-of-the-land)



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