

Family Tree

Ashley Beck

The first practical piece of stage 2 Visual Studies was an aboriginal work of a tree, using colours that resemble Luritja country and techniques of First Nations people. The intention for this piece was not for the purpose of the viewer but for myself and the desire to learn about my culture. My inspiration for this piece includes our family trip to Luritja country. This was my first exposure to the land that my Great grandmother Linda grew up on. The colours of the land led to the colour incorporation of the artwork, with the dead tree in the centre. Personally, I had never created an Aboriginal art work before, I looked towards Belinda Bonnies work, a local Boandik artist, for some technical inspiration. Belinda taught me some traditional dot painting techniques in primary school and was a good source of research moving forward with this design.

There was a lot of deconstructions and thought processes behind this artwork, with a mock design and trials of techniques, as well as the incorporation of trial and error, and last-minute changes to the design. The meaning behind this artwork is very interpretational, to begin with the roo prints on the bottom section connect me to the native wildlife of Australia which I am very passionate about, the campsite symbol symbolises my Nana in the artwork and her obsession with bonfires at home. The earth and soil in the third section represent my deeper connection to the earth, my passion for the environment and the land I was raised on. The green represents nature and all living things as well as the fresh pasture and trees I am constantly surrounded by at home on the farm, and the sky connects us to all of Australia. Finally, I interpret the tree to represent my family, branches and roots connecting everyone and bringing us together as one.

The decision to use moulding paste and acrylic was intentional as I wanted it to really stand out and making it 3 dimensional would enable that wow factor appeal. I put forward my idea to Pariya Ziakas and she helped me with the techniques and procedures required. Gloria Petyarre uses brush strokes with acrylic paint in her work to implement a floral resemblance, I used a similar technique but with moulding paste to separate it from the background and make it stand out as the centring feature in the artwork. Gloria Petyarre and Emily Kame Kngwarreye both use acrylic paints to achieve the detail and precision in their artworks, so I created the background with acrylic.

The connection to country has significant meaning to me because I have a passion for the environment driven by my farming experience and upbringing. Visiting Luritja country for the first time was such an overwhelming amazing experience for me and I wanted to extend that perspective into my artwork by capturing the colours that were surrounding me along that journey, and merging those elements with my cultural art.