

RESEARCH STATEMENT

Original Creative Work

Citation: CroftWarcon, P. 2013. Red Dog Dreaming too. *Dingo Exhibition. ARTiculate Queensland Regional Arts and Cultural Conference*, 21-23 August 2013, Yeppoon Town Hall, Queensland, Australia.

Research Background

This work is response by the artist to her connection and relationship with the Dingo.

- Field – Indigenous Studies
- Context – Indigenous political and social history
- Research Question – How can the pride of the dingo be embodied within a mixed media artwork?

Research Contribution

The artist story for this artwork is about the Dingo and the connection this animal had with Aboriginal peoples. The border is painted with red ochre which is the life source for Aboriginal culture and people. It represents 'Mother Earth'. The background is paperbark which was collected from my property near the beach. I have always loved paperbark trees since I was a little girl. Paperbark trees can filter salt water for ten years to turn it into fresh water which humans need for survival. Many people treat these trees as weeds and continue to destroy their swampy habitats so that the areas can be redeveloped into residential suburbs. The paperbark used is the same species and shows the different colours and includes bark after a bushfire. Paperbark is also used as a 'steamer' for cooking fish giving a flavoured and moist meal. The symbol in the top right corner represents an Aboriginal community. Dingos were highly regarded by us and made wonderful blankets to keep us warm. The symbol in the bottom left hand corner of the artwork represents a waterhole as Dingos always live close to water. The paw prints are from my dog 'Goorranghi' (meaning red ochre). The red cattle dog species includes the dingo DNA. The dingo should continue to be part of our environment and not treated as a pest in need of extermination.

Research Significance

The artwork has significance for research as it encapsulates the essence of the dingo but also the vital role that the dingo played for Aboriginal people. Colonisation drastically changed the role of the dingo and has situated the species as the 'tyrant' within biodiversity. The dingo to the land is portrayed by mainstream media exactly as the great white shark to the ocean and as the crocodile to the saltwater creeks and billabongs. The element of menace has infiltrated dimensions of Aboriginal culture by positioning the dingo as having no place.

This exhibition was part of the ARTiculate Queensland Regional Arts and Cultural Conference. The exhibition opening was attended by some 150 people.

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