

Artwork by Rohin Kickett acquired by
Shire of Mundaring Art Collection

Mundaring Weir, acrylic on canvas by Ballardong Noongar artist Rohin Kickett is the latest work to be acquired by the Shire of Mundaring for their Art Collection.

Rohin Kickett is a contemporary Aboriginal artist who works predominantly in paint and whose artwork often depicts aerial landscapes.

Kickett undertook an arts residency at the Midland Junction Arts Centre in 2019 where he developed a process for recording imagery with a drone and translating key elements onto canvas. Kickett's work highlights and reflects the beauty of the region, while also recognising the degraded state of the land.

In his recent solo exhibition, *Beautiful Dead* at Japingka Gallery (July 2022), Kickett recorded the country around Lake Grace, the Wheatbelt region, and the Southwest of Western Australia, drawing attention to the 'deathly state' of what was important life sources.

The new work, *Mundaring Weir* presented to the Shire of Mundaring (Sept 2022) also portrays the aerial topography of the land, this time focusing on Kickett's connection to the country surrounding the Mundaring Weir.

The artwork was commissioned by the Shire of Mundaring and Mundaring Arts Centre as part of the development of the Shire of Mundaring's (SoM) Reconciliation Action Plan. Kickett was invited to create a work that would reflect his connection to the region and the qualities and intentions of reconciliation.

At the presentation of the work to Council, Kickett explained, *"I started with exploring the connection I have to the area. When I was younger, I spent a lot of time riding through the area, really fast, on my motorcycle. The Mundaring Weir Road was always my favourite ride... often riding home at 2/3am, this ride was always something special, seeing the Weir coming up over the road... it gave me so much pleasure, it was energising to be around this area.*



Artist Rohin Kickett with Shire Deputy President Cr Paige McNeil and Acting CEO Shane Purdy

Looking through my family history within the Mundaring Shire, way back in in the 1920's and 1930's, before the York Reserve was open, my pop and my great grandfather would travel, avoiding authorities and living off the land. They would come down as far as Lake Manaring just out near the Lakes Roadhouse. That is where they would camp... on their way... going through. I wanted to pick up these tracks.

When Jude and I first looked at the maps, we spoke about the tracks and how awesome they were, the patterns and the shapes they make, and how they referenced the tracks my family would have made coming down here and through the bush. I couldn't fly the drone, like I normally do, because it is a water source, so I had to do everything from Google Maps.

I wanted to capture the colours of the dam, and the earth, from when you are walking and what you see, in the flowers and everything, but then present it from such a high altitude to capture the whole area. It was quite challenging, but I used many different reference photos to paint from, I put the painting aside for a little bit, when it wasn't behaving itself, bringing it back out when it was good, and continue on.

I wanted to capture a lot in one piece... I wanted to capture the story of the country - how it is now, and the areas that have been cleared for different reasons, but also highlight the beauty of the area."

Kickett's respect for the land and drive to invite the viewer to take a closer look at how we create stories around place and people resonates through his work. He often uses unconventional media to create - a trowel to apply paint or a gun to explode materials, Kickett utilises the medium that best tells his story in a manner that is approachable, and often humorous, but retains the weight of the intention.

His recent digital work (video and photography) created for the Fremantle Biennale project *In Our Shoes* (March 2022) explores the dialogue around the Stolen Generation, clearly defining that he is telling Aboriginal history from an Aboriginal point of view.

Kickett's latest work, *Mundaring Weir* is now on display in the Shire of Mundaring Council Chambers and will feature in the Shire Reconciliation Action Plan publication. His work joins a diverse collection of over 190 artforms created by West Australian artists as part of the Shire of Mundaring Art Collection.



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