

CAIRNS
ART
GALLERY

8 JUN –
1 SEP 2024

JANET FIELDHOUSE
MATERIAL CULTURE

ARTWORK LABELS

Janet FIELDHOUSE

b. Cairns, Queensland, 1971
Kala Lagaw Ya/Meriam Mir

Turtle Charm

2023

Buff Raku Trachyte, clay, raffia, wire
Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

This ceramic sculpture with a woven neckpiece is both a charm to attract beneficial forces and a work of art. *Turtle Charm* can also be read through the museum term 'material culture'. Janet is aware that Western collecting institutions have their language limitations, but by using *Material Culture* as an exhibition title, she injects her own meaning. *Turtle Charm* seems to emanate an allure informed by tradition and contemporary exploration alike.

Canoe Paddle

2023-2024

Buff Raku Trachyte, raffia, feathers, wood, wire
Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

In a contemporary re-imagining of the carved canoe paddle, six wall-hangings are shaped in clay, fibre and feathers. Recalling the traditional waters through which paddles are plied, narrow clay tiles are inscribed with suggested journeys. Janet also used incised carving techniques in her early lino prints.

Idogi Spirit

2023-2024

raffia, wire, feathers
Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

Idogi Spirit

2023-2024

raffia, wire, feathers
Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

The artist translates 'Idogi' as 'evil spirit'. Three pairs of eyes encased in their woven masks and feather adornments stare ahead. They summon up Janet's childhood fears when stories of evil spirits were told.

Time Watch Cairns

2023-2024

Buff Raku Trachyte, raffia, feathers, wood, wire
Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

Time Watch Melbourne

2023-2024

Buff Raku Trachyte, raffia, feathers, wood, wire

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

Time Watch Flying over Melbourne

2023-2024

Buff Raku Trachyte, raffia, feathers, wood, wire

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

Time Watch Flying over Water

2023-2024

Buff Raku Trachyte, raffia, feathers, wood, wire

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

Modern life is arguably cursed by our constant watching of time. With almost a chuckle, Janet conceived these outsized wristwatches to mark her 'time watch' while travelling from the rainforests of Cairns to urban Melbourne in 2023. The purpose of her trip was an extended artist-in-residency at RMIT University, where Janet led ceramic workshops, mentored students and created new works. In bringing together the materials of clay and fibre, Janet's innovations draw on traditional stories and in this case, the watching of time.

Bird in the Hand

2023-2024

Cool Ice clay, raffia, feathers, wood

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

Paper Bird

2023-2024

paper, raffia, feathers, wood

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

Bye Bye Bird

2023-2024

Cool Ice clay, raffia, feathers, wood

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

Kingfisher

2023-2024

Cool Ice clay, raffia, feathers, wood

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

Janet says these bird sculptures capture her idea of the Kingfisher. The creatures are shaped in cool ice porcelain and express a quirky essence of the birds captured in mannequin hands.

Silent Dancer (Raddle)

2020

clay, jute rope, raffia

Purchased Cairns Art Gallery and Cairns Art Gallery Foundation, 2021. Commissioned by Cairns Art Gallery

Freely claiming she has “two left feet”, Janet states this is a personal work about her inability to dance. Instead there is knowledge and appreciation of dances named for shark, turtle and bird. Unlike the lively sound of dance rattles made from seed pods called Kulaps, the large suspended rattle is silent.

Silent Dancer is dedicated to imagined dances with works chosen from the Cairns Art Gallery Collection for this installation.

Memory Marks (Scarification)

2020

set of two

clay, feathers, jute string

Purchased Cairns Art Gallery and Cairns Art Gallery Foundation, 2021. Commissioned by Cairns Art Gallery

Dogai (Evil Spirit) 1 & 2

2020

Cool Ice porcelain, feathers, hemp string

Purchased Cairns Art Gallery and Cairns Art Gallery Foundation, 2021. Commissioned by Cairns Art Gallery

Crab Claw (Scarification)

2020

Buff Raku Trachyte, raffia, feathers

Purchased Cairns Art Gallery and Cairns Art Gallery Foundation, 2021. Commissioned by Cairns Art Gallery

Like body adornment, scarification is among the traditional practices Janet interprets. A tender basket is supported by powerful clay claws while the feathers underneath suggest scars that morph into softness.

Museum of Contemporary Art Australia

Producers: Jean-Pierre Chabrol and Marcus Wright

Artist Studios: Janet Fieldhouse

2022

single channel, colour, sound, 6:03mins.

Collection of Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney

Marriage Vase

2023

Buff Raku Trachyte, clay, raffia, wire

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

Separate from the traditional joining of a husband and wife, Janet's *Marriage Vase* is inspired by the merging of two cultures: First Nations from Virginia USA and her own Torres Strait Island culture. Janet met Indigenous ceramic artists on a residency in Charlottesville and adapted their black-fired clay to her preferred firing method. The Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney acquired Janet's original vase. Here *Marriage Vase* is a second interpretation of the same theme.

Turtle Dance

2024

Buff Raku Trachyte, raffia, feathers, wood

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

Bird Dance

2023

Buff Raku Trachyte, raffia, feathers, wood

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

Shark Dance

2023

Buff Raku Trachyte, Cool Ice clay, raffia, feathers, wood

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

Dance

2023

Buff Raku Trachyte, clay, Cool Ice clay, raffia, feathers, wood

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

As they move, Torres Strait Island dancers are accompanied by percussive instruments and wear striking adornments. While not participating herself, Janet deeply reverses her dance traditions. Here with their graceful feather embellishments, the dancers' armbands are elevated from adornment to art.

Fishing Net Pendant

2023-2024

Buff Raku Trachyte, raffia, feathers, wood, wire

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

Clam Pendant

2023-2024

Buff Raku Trachyte, raffia, feathers, wood, wire

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

Summer Season Pendant

2023-2024

Buff Raku Trachyte, raffia, feathers, wood, wire

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

Spring Season Pendant

2023-2024

Buff Raku Trachyte, raffia, feathers, wood, wire

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

Winter Season Pendant

2023-2024

Buff Raku Trachyte, raffia, feathers, wood, wire

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

Autumn Season Pendant

2023-2024

Buff Raku Trachyte, raffia, feathers, wood, wire

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

Understanding seasons means knowing the food varieties abundant in each, for example, the best time to collect clams and to hunt for turtles. Such is the Indigenous knowledge that Janet embeds in her pendant works.