

CAIRNS  
ART  
GALLERY

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31 AUG -  
3 NOV 2024

**MODERNIST  
CONNECTIONS**

*COLLECTION IN FOCUS*

ARTWORK LABELS

# Ray CROOKE

1922–2015

## ***Untitled*** ***(Thursday Island landscape)***

2007

oil on canvas

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Garry Shirvington, 2010

## ***Islanders***

c.1972

oil on canvas

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Les Fallick, 2020

The outbreak of World War II saw a young Ray Crooke embarking on art studies in Melbourne. By 1944 as a Royal Australian Air Force recruit, he was transferred to Thursday Island in the Torres Strait, where Islanders and their lives became the engrossing subject of his art. After military service, Crooke eventually relocated permanently to Cairns and continued to draw, paint and print Torres Strait and Pacific figures and island landscapes. A patron of this Gallery, Ray Crooke collected works by artists he regarded highly. His purchase and donation to Cairns Art Gallery of Ian Fairweather's *Mother and Child* affirms his respect for Fairweather as an artist, and his commitment to assisting the Gallery to build a significant Collection.

# Ian FAIRWEATHER

1891–1974

## *Mother and Child*

1970

synthetic polymer paint and gouache on paper  
on board

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program  
by Ray Crooke, 1999

Between 1938 and 1941, Ian Fairweather lived in Malaytown, the Cairns fringe settlement that was home to a mix of diverse ethnic groups, including Malays, Chinese, Javanese, and Torres Strait Islanders. During this time, he befriended the Nicols family from the Torres Strait and rented a boathouse from them. His landlady Mrs. Nicols and her daughter Lala became the painted subjects of one of his early mother and child compositions in *Landlady and daughter, Cairns* 1941. The subject of mother and child continued to be a recurring motif in the work of Fairweather.

# Tony TUCKSON

1921–1973

## *Untitled*

undated

watercolour and gouache on paper

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program  
by Margaret Tuckson, 2000

# Roy JACKSON

1944–2013

## *Untitled*

1994

## *Untitled*

1994

gouache and crayon on paper

Gift of Professor Ian Gough AM and Dr. Ruth Gough, 2022

“I was 15 and 16 when I saw Fairweather’s work in the (old) Macquarie Galleries, Sydney... I had never seen paintings like this before. Most painting I had seen was made with sensual and meaty oil paint and felt European. These paintings resonated with heat and the dryness of distance. There was no yearning for ‘green fields’. They were made in Australia.

I think that it must have been a defining moment in my commitment to working in a water-based medium where the earthy pigment is exposed to view.

Tuckson’s work I saw much later in the exhibitions of the early seventies ... Again there was the earthiness and dry-light and a challenging rawness ... As with Fairweather, line and rhythm were integral to the structure but the scale was enlarged. The calligraphy of the hand and arm in Fairweather had here become the whole body. Everything was stripped back to the bones with a strong sense of land and place ...

One of my ‘Meccas’ in Sydney was the collection at the Art Gallery of NSW of Aboriginal and New Guinea art that Tuckson had so much to do with establishing ...

I’m sure Fairweather was aware of Aboriginal painting, primarily in the form of bark painting, and appreciated the paint quality, earthy colour, directness of imagemaking and (secret) spirit in the work. He would have recognised the language of primal mark making.”

# Margaret OLLEY

1923–2011

## *Islander musicians*

1963

oil on hardboard

Gift of the Estate of Margaret Olley, 2012

Fellow artists Donald Friend and Margaret Olley were close for many years, sharing insights and ideas in art. It was Friend's stay in Malaytown on the edge of Cairns in 1932 that led to Olley later visiting and meeting the Sailor family, who had 'adopted' a young Friend. Her double portrait, *Islander musicians* was likely to have been painted years later in Brisbane where Islander families visited Friend. In 1955 Olley and her friend Pam Bell visited Fairweather on Bribie Island. Fairweather recorded the event with a box brownie camera and the photograph probably served as a source for a painting to commemorate their visit, even though Fairweather typically abstracted the setting and figures, in a similar way to the Gallery's *Mother and Child* painting.

# Lawrence DAWS

b.1927

## ***View of the Himalayas from the Glass House Mountains***

1978

aquatint, drypoint etching on paper

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Ray Crooke, 1999

In 1970 when Laurence Daws moved to Bribie Island after living in Europe for ten years, he encountered Ian Fairweather. Both artists were intrigued by the Glasshouse Mountains, visible at a 45-kilometre distance from the island. Daws and his family were to move to the locale of Owl Creek in the Glasshouse Mountains three years later. His friend Brett Whiteley stayed as a guest in 1976, both working in Daws' studio. Among Whiteley's points of connection with Fairweather was meeting him on Bribie Island with Daws and, the inspiration both Fairweather and Whiteley drew from trips to Bali: Fairweather stayed there in 1928 and Whiteley made three trips six decades later. The latter's work, *Garden at Sanur, Bali* from a screen-printed edition, was produced the year after his last visit in 1989.

# Brett WHITELEY

1939–1992

## ***Garden at Sanur, Bali***

1980

screenprint with offset lithography on paper

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Ray Crooke, 1999

# Noel WOOD

1912–2001

## ***Bedarra Island***

undated

oil on hardboard

Purchased Cairns Art Gallery, 2018

## ***Portrait of Yvonne, Timara Island, Nth Queensland***

c.1945

oil on canvas on hardboard

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Yvonne Cohen and Valerie Albiston, 1999

Melbourne artists Noel Wood, Valerie Albiston and Yvonne Cohen were intrigued by the potential of travelling north after first seeing the work of Ian Fairweather. To the admiration of a small group of modernists, Fairweather's 1934 Melbourne exhibition reflected his immersion in the cultures of China and Bali. Noel Wood departed first to explore and paint in North Queensland, establishing a rudimentary base on Bedarra Island, one of several in the 'Family Island' group south of Cairns including Dunk, Bedarra and Timana Islands. Following in 1938, sisters Albiston and Cohen visited Wood and settled on Timana Island where they built a studio-home. They were to live and work alternately on the island and in Melbourne for 40 years.

# Yvonne COHEN

1914–2004

## 1. *Untitled (Bedarra Island hut)*

c.1945

oil on canvas

Purchased by Cairns Regional Gallery, 2010

## 2. *Queensland Beach*

c.1945

oil on canvas on hardboard

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by the artist and Valerie Albiston, 1999

## 3. *The Catch*

c.1945

oil on canvas on hardboard

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by the artist and Valerie Albiston, 1999

## 4. *Going Netting, Timana*

undated

oil on canvas on hardboard

Purchased Cairns Art Gallery, 2018

## 5. *The blue crayfish*

c.1945

oil on canvas on hardboard

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by the artist and Valerie Albiston, 1999

# **Valerie ALBISTON**

1911–2008

## ***To the islands, Timana***

c.1950

## ***Windy morning, Bingil Bay***

c.1950

## ***Along the track, Bingil Bay***

c.1945

oil on canvas on hardboard

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by the artist and Yvonne Cohen, 1999

# **Fred WILLIAMS**

1927–1982

## ***Rainforest, Bedarra Island IV***

1973

gouache on paper

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Rosemary Goodsall, 2012

# Joseph BROWN (designer)

1918–2009

## Deanna CONTI (weaver)

### *Untitled*

1988

hand-woven wool

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Dr Joseph Brown, 1993

In 1973 Fred Williams arrived on Bedarra Island off the coastal town of Mission Beach and met Noel Wood. After returning to Melbourne Williams produced a series of paintings from the notes, photographs and gouache sketches he made during his trip. Williams then travelled to Timana Island at the invitation of Bruce and Joanna Arthur, to visit their tapestry studio. Unusual in a tropical setting, the studio was filled with large looms and hand-dyed spun wool. Williams' gouache drawing, *Rainforest Bedarra Island IV* records his landscape experience and was the basis for a large tapestry woven by Bruce Arthur the following year. Artist-weaver and glass artist, Deanne Conti had trained in Melbourne under an Edinburgh Tapestry master. She had originally moved to Timana Island with Bruce Arthur in 1962 where they set up a weaving atelier, Brudea Studio. The tapestry in Cairns Art Gallery's Collection was designed by collector and patron Dr Joseph Brown and was woven by Conti in 1988 under her own enterprise, the Timana Tapestry Atelier.