

disturbance and harmony coincide, that relational tension is never neutralised but necessarily sustained.

*Kin'O'Centrism* is more than an exhibition; it is an invitation into the centre of shared existence. By recentring Indigenous philosophies of coexistence, Harrison exposes a crisis internal to Western thought: the belief that the individual stands separate from others. In his cosmological model, the 'I' is never independently sovereign, but inescapably relational. The 'I' belongs to the collective 'we' that emerges from a kinship entangling human and more-than-human worlds within cyclical time.

To be kin'o'centric, then, is to recognise that 'we' takes in people, ancestors, Country, animals, plants, the stars, and all of life itself. It is to understand that our relationality is never fixed but continuously tested and negotiated through unending cycles and contact.

If I was to ask Harrison whether the stand-alone starting point of existence is the individual, his answer would be clear. No. To be is always already to belong.

**Adam Ford (Nyoongar)**  
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COVER IMAGE:

Sam HARRISON  
*Moon Crossing* 2026  
laser cut wood light box and  
acrylic paint  
80 x 52 x 7cm  
Edition of 10  
Courtesy of the artist  
and Onespace  
Image: Louis Lim

INSIDE IMAGE:

Sam Harrison  
Courtesy of the artist  
and Shannon Brett

   

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## mantle

we oscillate  
from gravity  
to dark energy  
we are celestial  
suspended like dust  
we are magnetic  
fizzling and fusing  
we are light

we expand  
we draw tides  
sun and moon  
we are revolutionary  
gravitationally unbound  
we are infinite  
vibrating with spirit  
we are special relativity

we generate  
fusing with our kin  
nitrogen  
oxygen  
we gather us in  
beyond the Kármán line  
we are boundless

we are sky  
roiled and weightless  
we conjure storm  
sunlight and tempest  
we are cloud  
rising windward up the  
mountains

we are rain

we are fluid  
nimble as air  
we fall  
we soak  
we seep  
welling and infiltrating  
we are terrestrial

we journey  
along the floodplains  
rivers, ridges  
we are memory  
set in rhythm  
voice and learning  
we are Songline

from core to crust  
we are energy  
mantle  
to mountain range  
we bring forth  
tectonic, seismic  
we are Country

Cheryl Leavy is a Kooma writer  
from southern inland Queensland



27 Jun –  
22 Aug 2026

**SAM HARRISON**  
Kin'O'Centrism

**CAIRNS  
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# Being Kin’O’Centric Adam Ford

The question of selfhood—Who am I? What am I?—has persisted since the dawn of thought. It is one of our most enduring attempts to define the nature and essence of our humanity. In his 1996 book *Being Singular Plural*, French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy asks, “Can there be an ‘I’ without a ‘we’?” In other words, is the individual subject—the ‘I’ of you and me—the stand-alone starting point of existence, or is existence fundamentally relational? Is ‘I’, in fact, always already ‘we’?

For Wiradjuri/Kamilaroi artist Sam Harrison, the question of selfhood exacts a collective answer. It is a question that concerns the entanglement of the self not simply with others, but with the world, and indeed existence in its entirety. For Harrison, existence is never isolated; it is always already coexistence. The title of his exhibition, for which I write this text, frames its relational premise matter-of-factly: kin’o’centrism. We.

In *Kin’O’Centrism*, Harrison proposes an Indigenous cosmological model of kinship, where relations unfold across multiple orders of Being: the human, animal, botanical, celestial, spiritual, and beyond. It is a model grounded in non-linear time that exceeds geocentric or heliocentric worldviews. Here, time is cyclic and immemorial—at once patterned and patterning. It is the endless recurrence of

relations themselves. Kinship, then, is not something that simply happens across time, but deeply with, and within, time. Harrison refuses the civilising narrative that the ‘modern’ supersedes the ‘primitive’, which linear time has imposed upon First Nations peoples. He instead foregrounds Indigenous understandings of time where the past, present, and future ceaselessly commingle.

Central to the exhibition is the *Eclipse series 2026*, an assemblage of tessellating lightboxes where scenes of secular and cultural life are rendered within cosmological cycles. The lightboxes are uniformly hexagonal (save those cut into halves and thirds) and are installed within the Cairns Art Gallery Court House Building as a modular wall system. This series articulates a universal Indigenous understanding of relationality and responsibility—the ‘we’—where care for Community and Country is mutually realised.

One lightbox, *Biblically Correct Yam*, shows bush yams spun by directional arrows, with seasonality implied through harvest, while *Knowledge Sunrise* discloses an affinity with the earth as healer, restorer, its hexagon overcome by medicinal plants. Not too dissimilarly, *Waterways: Connecting from the, to the* illustrates fish traps described in Bruce Pascoe’s 2014 publication *Dark Emu*. The

traps are designed so that fish can swim both upstream and downstream, ensuring equitable access for neighbouring communities.

One lightbox particularly imparts another important aspect of kin’o’centrism, understood at the level of community. *Clarity in Conscience* shows several children gathered around a senior man, who points at the intersection of two circular lines as the kids watch intently. Harrison names what the man points at: the convergence point of cosmological cycles in their current state of relation called ‘Place’. Place is not geographical or even spatial; it is the living convergence of relations that endlessly cohere. Rather than preceding relation, Place emerges through it in the same way that ‘I’ emerges through ‘we’. Place, too, is where morality forms. Harrison’s model simultaneously conveys a set of relational ethics for best practice living. The senior man does not passively gesture at a site, but to subjectivity, with the ‘we’ enacted through the teachings of Elders who are the bedrock of our communities. If selfhood is inherited responsibility, then Place is the relational horizon upon which those responsibilities rise and set.

Equally central to Harrison’s cosmology is the interplay—rather than opposition—between lightness and darkness. It is one of the exhibition’s two core motifs.

For Harrison, darkness affirms light’s momentary presence, and is generative and embodied. (The universe is, after all, composed largely of invisible dark matter.) Darkness is an absence that presents itself. Absence and presence are allied in the same way that heads and tails belong to the same coin: neither can exist independently of the other. Night recurs throughout the *Eclipse Series* precisely because it is an interstitial space that holds the contradiction of knowledge and unknowability. Our struggle to fully perceive the deep dark reveals both the limits of understanding, and our relation to what exceeds it.

Two figures introduce tension into *Kin’o’centrism’s* relational fold. They are Harrison’s second motif: Wahn (crow) and Bahloo (moon). The pair symbolise relational disturbance. Wahn and Bahloo reject moral binaries—good vs evil, right vs wrong—as relational cosmologies do not organise the universe through absolute oppositions. Tension is rhythmically tested and negotiated; the duo ensures that the ‘we’ remains adaptive, that our relations don’t harden into essentialist truths. The trickster bird, Wahn, disturbs relational fixity. Though he tempts wrongways relations with cycles, his disruption is transformative. Bahloo, similarly, communicates conflict at the level of cosmic law and cyclical order. He interacts with mob through episodic



misunderstandings. Death becomes him. Death, however, is not a punishment, but a necessary transition into another relational state. Every eclipse births a new dawn.

Wahn and Bahloo appear not only in the *Eclipse series*—such as crows flying westward past Big Ben or constellations rolling over moon-soaked rivers—but also in satellite works installed within the exhibition’s blackened ‘void’. Here, Harrison places two circular video projections on opposing sides of the space, triangulated by the lightboxes.

The first projection, *Cosmic Mirror*, renders a lunar cycle that ends in an eclipse cast by bodily shadow. The second, *Kin’o’centric Model 1*, abstract and atomistic, renders a perpetually shifting particle simulation as it moves between cycles of order and disorder, endlessly passing through a convergence point. Above and between the two projections, Harrison suspends a murder of laser-cut crows titled *Darkness: Absent x Present*. Hung in an imposing arch, the crows cut a slick path across the exhibition’s immersive void. Both crow and moon remind audiences that