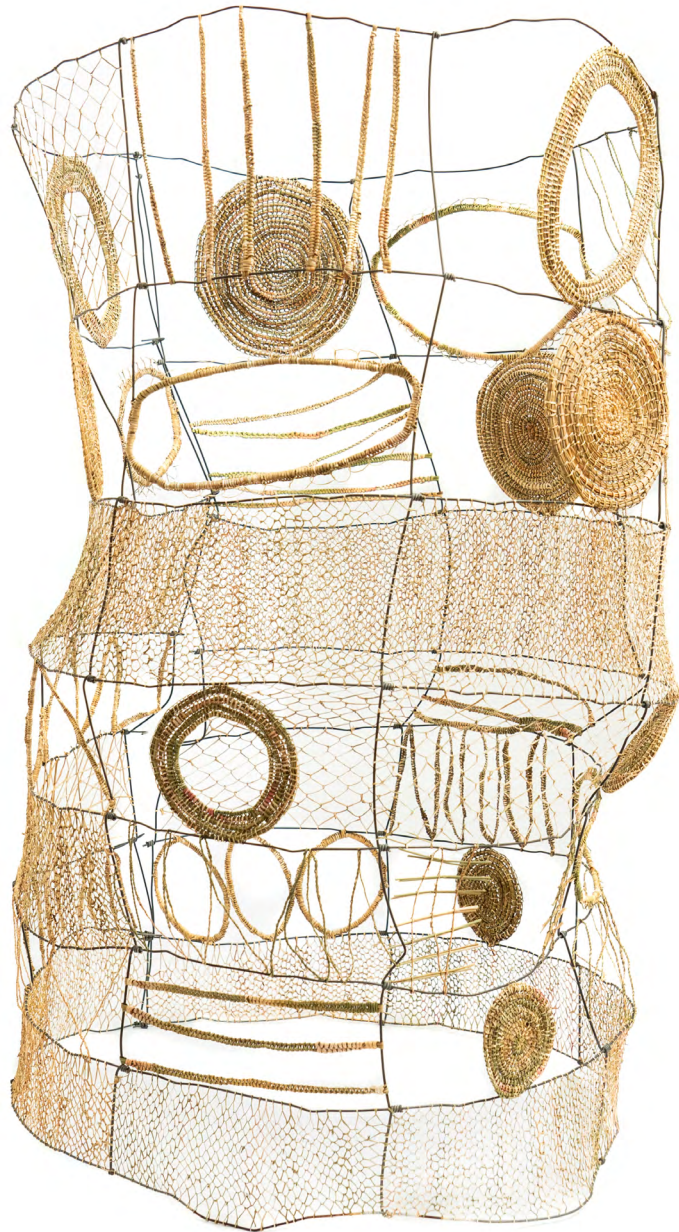


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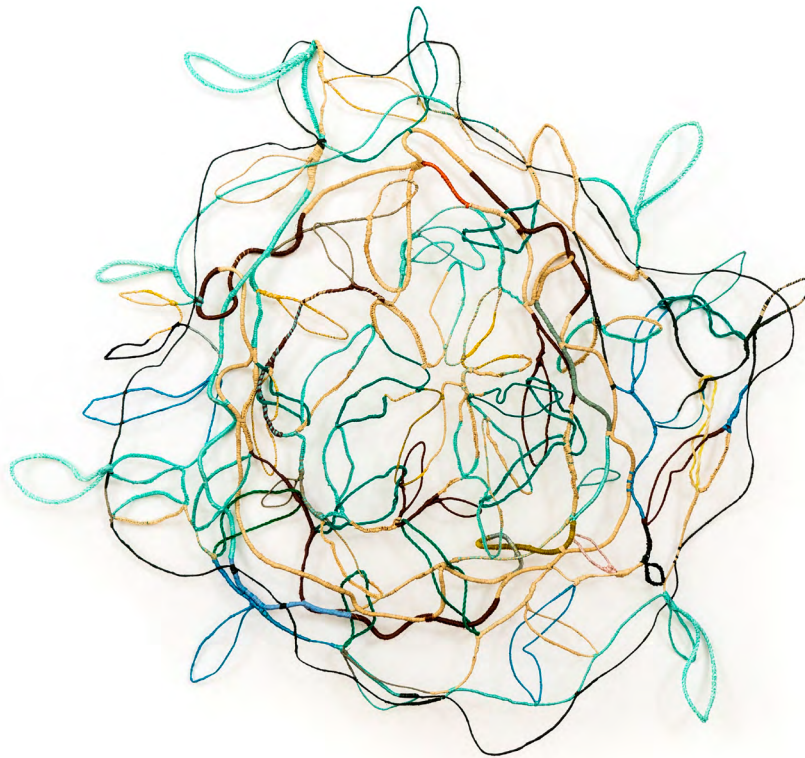
**Will we swim together tomorrow
through the Saltwater waves?**

Elisa Jane Carmichael

7 November - 1 December 2018

***Will we swim together tomorrow through the Saltwater waves?*¹**

Elisa Jane Carmichael's second solo exhibition builds on the regenerative spirit featured in her 2017 body of work, but amplifies the sense of moving back and forth through time. In her poem titled "Ngayigany, Ngayiganya, Ngayigawa" [Saw, Seeing, Will See], written to accompany the exhibition, the artist describes spiritual connections with her Quandamooka ancestors and homeland as being *woven through the sands and waves of time*. Words, images, and sculptures overlap as lines of verse become titles of artworks and share a 'time travel' conversation between artist, ancestors, and country. As viewers, we are embraced by the exchange. Art that is so deeply invested in sharing and connecting is infectious and inclusive. It celebrates one of humankind's most utterly precious qualities: togetherness. Even the most isolated souls must struggle to resist this spiritual vortex of people, place, and time.



So it's no longer sleeping from colonisation

While circular time—as opposed to linear time—is a powerful feature of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island art, there is something special in witnessing it re-emerge in cultural practices such as weaving that have been, in Elisa's words, "resting since mission times". Elisa is part of a new era of Quandamooka artists who have regenerated traditional weaving techniques along with expressing their culture through a diversity of new media, forms, and ideas. The Quandamooka community as a whole celebrates this new generation of creativity at the annual Quandamooka Festival on Minjerribah (Stradbroke Island).

Circular time is at the heart of Elisa's artistic practice, the trigger that pulls strength from the past and finds hope in the future. A key example is the woven piece *Time has passed and pieces are missing*, a basket adrift from its function. In this work, a gaping void seems to advance off the wall and act like an eye, or a lens, that penetrates through absence into presence. As we look into this void, we can feel the woven world stirring, no longer sleeping. *From then and now #5* uses a painted approach to translate absence into presence. Elisa describes this image as telling the story of how, when she started to work with Ungaire (freshwater swamp reeds), she called on her ancestors to guide her towards the woven string used for Guylai (women's looped bags used to carry shells and food). The painting is composed of fragments of a weaving process that seem to float through time, like a snapshot of a dynamic cultural memory.

¹ All italicised lines are from Elisa Jane Carmichael's poem "Ngayigany, Ngayiganya, Ngayigawa" [Saw, Seeing, Will See].

Indeed, the entire series of *From then and now* traces a process of learning about and experiencing the world of Quandamooka weaving. Elisa and fellow weavers were excited to regain knowledge that Ungaire reeds are most pliable for weaving when they boast a rosy pink hue at their base (as seen in #1). These reeds are picked seasonally, treated, and finally woven into Guylai (as seen in #6). In the series of three Guylai, *We see your hands guiding us to bring our weaving alive*, Ungaire fibres are replaced by oven wire rolled in silk pieces.

We see your hands weave with us

Circular time creates focus on the process of art as opposed to outcomes. As we look at Elisa's works, we are motivated to consider where things come from and how they change as they move through time. Weaving is an artform that celebrates process, and the partnership between woven and painted artworks in this exhibition shows art as a dynamic creative exchange—responsive, reactive, and relative. In this sense, the large woven sculpture titled *We see your hands weave with us* is literally a pillar of creative and cultural process. Elisa speaks of this sculpture as a composite of all of the weaving techniques and experiences she learnt. When we look into the eye of *Time has passed and pieces are missing*, we see a transparent circular world that oscillates between absence and presence.

Ancestors guide the weaving, and weaving seems to guide the painting in this exhibition. Five of the large paintings share a title with woven sculptures closely related to them. The woven sculpture titled *Can we see the burst of colours of wildflowers amongst the landscape?* was traced seven times onto the canvas of the same name. They are two- and three-dimensional versions of the same idea. *Can we watch the sunlight and moonlight dance across the rolling currents together?* is a particularly beautiful dialogue between woven and painted form. Delicate fibres hanging from the sun/moon form absorb the illusion of movement and flux generated by the painting.

Rain from the heart

Elisa's previous solo exhibition included several photographic portraits of her taken by Freja Carmichael and Jasper Coleman. The current exhibition includes a woven self-portrait that conveys how much of her life is invested in her art. *Rain from the heart* consists of 31 raindrop-shaped wall sculptures woven from wire, Ungaire, sea rope, and delicately iridescent red emperor fish scales. Each sculpture represents a year of Elisa's life, and the materials express the substance of her existence as a Saltwater Quandamooka woman. Indeed, her art and life remain *woven through the sands and waves of time...*

Sally Butler, University of Queensland



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Elisa Jane Carmichael is a Ngugi woman from Quandamooka Country (Moreton/Moorgumpin and Stradbroke Island/Minjerribah, Queensland) who creates across a breadth of media, including painting, weaving, textile design and fashion using acrylic paints, natural fibres, found and synthetic materials.

In 2017, Onespace Gallery presented Elisa's solo exhibition *Connecting Waves: a saltwater woman living on desert country* that showcased woven and painted works inspired by the stories of her connection to the sand, sea and home country from her Alice Springs *Gilimbaa* Artist Residency. *Connecting Waves* was featured in the 2017 Quandamooka Festival's program and the exhibition was officially opened by special guest speaker and Festival Curator, Avril Quail. Elisa's *Saltwater Footprints Collection* of woven and sculptural fabrics were concurrently exhibited at the 2017 Cairns Indigenous Art Fair Fashion Performance *WANDAN (Future)*.



In November 2018, we present our second solo show with Elisa, *Will we swim together tomorrow through the Saltwater waves?* - which will coincide with her inclusion in APT9 at QAGOMA. This exhibition honours the natural and seasonal elements of Quandamooka country which have formed the environment for thousands of years. Through paintings and woven mediums, Elisa reflects on visual ancestral experiences of Quandamooka Bujong Djara (Mother Earth) to share the beauty, power, and importance of Minjerribah yesterday, today and tomorrow, *ngayigany, ngayiganya, ngayigawa* (seen, seeing, will see.)

Elisa was a finalist this year in both the Redland Art Awards (Redland Art Gallery) and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards (NATSIAA) held at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. Elisa is very passionate about nurturing and preserving her strong connection to the sand and sea, Yoolooburrabee. Her practice visually explores the beauty of nature and surrounding environment, drawing inspiration from her cultural identity and heritage. Elisa holds a Bachelor of Fine Art from Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, and a Master of Fine Art (Research) in Fashion from QUT.

Elisa Jane Carmichael would like to personally thank: My Grandma (Aunty Joan Hendriks), Mum (Sonja), Dad (Glynn), Brother (Simon), Sister (Freja), Jasper Coleman and our Quandamooka Elders, family and friends.

Elisa Jane Carmichael and Onespace Gallery would also like to thank: Associate Professor Sally Butler (University of Queensland), Evie Franzidis, Louis Lim, Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation, Quandamooka Coast (*Experience Aboriginal Culture on Brisbane's Doorstep*), Cameron Costello (CEO, QYAC), Simon Suckling, Worldwide Printing Solutions - South Brisbane, Symons Signs.

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands, winds and waters on which this gallery stands.

We pay our respects to Elders, past, present and future.

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Wed to Fri: 10am – 5pm
Sat: 10am – 3pm

Image (cover): Elisa Jane Carmichael, *We see your hands weave with us*, 2018, Discarded wire and Ungaïre, Approx. 110cm x 65cm diameter. Photo: Louis Lim.

Image (above): Elisa Jane Carmichael. Photo: Mick Richards.

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