

Wednesday 22 March 2023

Students are sharing their personal stories at the 2023 SACE Art Show

Artist Cheylen Wanganeen tells a story on canvas significant to his culture with *The Totems That Wander The Land*, one of 141 art and design pieces selected for the Art Show.

Cheylen from Kadina Memorial School painted the Yorke Peninsula with four totems representing animals that wander Nharangga country. He sought permission from his Elders to use the local totems in the artwork.

Among the works on display this year:

- Tyler from Brighton High School shared their passion for the LGBTQIA+ community with a digital print comic book
- Jasmine from Cornerstone College used oil painting to express a journey of self-love
- Bonnie from Nuriootpa High School redesigned the Nuriootpa War Memorial Pool.

Of the 1,051 Stage 2 SACE students studying Visual Arts in 2022, 141 were selected for the 2023 SACE Art Show, held at Adelaide College of the Arts Light Square Gallery from Tuesday 21 March until Friday 14 April 2023.

The exhibition includes representation from metro and regional South Australia, as well the Northern Territory. Works include a broad range of oil and acrylic art, brand and marketing projects, architectural work, and digital designs.

SACE Board Chief Executive Michaela Bensley said the annual event is another example of students bringing their passions to life:

“The SACE Art Show never fails to amaze us with the incredible creativity showcased by the students every year. It’s fascinating to delve into the ideas that inspired each artwork and see how these young artists have given shape to their unique perspectives and experiences.

“Our art and design students set a high standard and brings to life their understanding of the communities around them.”

The event is hosted by the SACE Board and TAFE SA, and supported by the Minister for Human Services, Australian Education Union, Eckersley’s Art and Craft, Flinders University, Adelaide Central School of Art, and the Independent Education Union.

The Minister for Education, Training and Skills Blair Boyer will present a series of community awards at a closing event. “I am thrilled our SACE students are given an opportunity to showcase their work in this way. I commend their creativity and unique artistic perspective.”

The exhibition at the Light Square Gallery is open to the public now and runs until Friday 14 April 2023. School bookings to attend are essential. There is an online gallery option for those unable to attend in person. For more information about the 2023 SACE Art Show [visit](https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/events/art-show) the SACE website [sace.sa.edu.au/events/art-show](https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/events/art-show).

Media Contact:

Chris Hutchings, Media & Communications Specialist
0448 671 050 | chris.hutchings@sa.gov.au



Background

The Totems That Wander The Land – Cheylen Wanganeen

The artwork is an Aboriginal painting done by myself, I created the main subject being the Yorke Peninsula leg with the dots being colour of the sea and the four totems in black. With the eagle flying high and the shark near the ocean, this is where the animals are mostly seen. The inspiration was from Tony Wilson, as he designed the figures of the totems representing North, South, East and West, and the local Yorke Peninsula NAPA organisation owns it. I asked for permission to use the local totems from my group and the elders agreed for myself to use them within my design. The Yorke Peninsula - leg has a brighter ochre colour surrounding it, showing the beach like texture, and making it more realistic and stand out to the eye.

I used a dot painting technique where it shows some clear signs of ocean movement and pattern in the piece. The Yorke Peninsula has an earthy ground texture making both patterns of the ocean and land blend. Using the end of a paint brush to do my dots I was able to keep a consistent flow for most of it, I had to switch brushes as the first one I used was too large. Tony Wilson was a big inspiration to my piece as I saw the way his dots are placed and produced, I tried to copy the same techniques. I also gained some inspiration from the Aboriginal artist, Cedric Varcoe who helped me with pattern placement and storytelling.

Having patterns, movement, texture, contrast in my piece, really helps it tell a story which is a key factor to creating Aboriginal art. In all my pieces, I try to tell a story significant to me and my culture, in this case it's the four totems that wander Nharangga country. These painting elements and principles help tell a story visually, without having to say anything, this has made the art piece successful in bringing a beautiful meaning to canvas. These principles made it successful because the movement, pattern, and textures are key ingredients to telling a story on canvas, making Aboriginal art amazing.

Having to switch brushes at the start impacted my piece as you can see the difference in some dots, I didn't mind too much for it as they were only small circles. I overcame this by using my final brush to do dots a lot more times than the last brush. Having the totems in black with a white shade around it really shows the significance of them, the glow shows the spiritual connections to the land. This is a big part of my piece, as the totems are the main story, and having them glowing works well. I would have more patterns inside the ocean instead of just having the dots, it looks like there's something missing with the negative space, I would plan it better next time.