

Spirit of the Maranoa

Jude Taggart Roberts, Helen Hardess, Anastasia Tyurina

Affiliation (s): Yimbaya Maranoa Arts Collective; Queensland University of Technology.
Location, Country: Meanjin (Brisbane), Australia.

Abstracts

The action of drawing or mark making has been used for tens of thousands of years to trace human perceptions of surrounding environments, to make sense of or make evident what is physically there, and to imagine other geographical or historical perspectives. The human need to link, connect and find relations to things, even though they may be disparate, are core to this project's investigations. Such an analogical application ties together the phenomena that are both visible and invisible to the human eye, a way to express ourselves in relation to familiar and unfamiliar experiences. Drawing is a way of seeing these interconnections through the methodology of chance, such as the technique of frottage which reveals a surface that can be interpreted physically, historically, and culturally. The action of embedding marks across a paper surface is a visceral, physical, and gestural method using both haptic and auditory senses. It allows the drawer to absorb the echoes, sounds, and tactile experiences from their environs.

Frottage was therefore used by Yimbaya Maranoa (Arts Collective) formerly known as the Remapping Mitchell Arts Collective in a collaborative session during its camping residency at Mt Moffatt in 2023. The area is a profoundly significant place for Gunggari People and is part of the Carnarvon Range, headwaters of the Maranoa River and a recharge site for the Great Artesian Basin.

Keywords

Interdisciplinary, Mediations, Transformative Impact, Aesthetic, Cultural, Scientific, Educational Practices, Immersive Arts, Country, Gunggari Nation, Historical Accounts, Knowledge Domains

Introduction

Yimbaya Maranoa: Creating resonant echoes from Country is the name of the symposium and exhibition for Country is the name of the symposium and exhibition for Yimbaya Maranoa (Arts Collective) formerly known as the Remapping Mitchell Arts Collective in 2023.

The First Nations-led project, showcased at the More-Than-Human Maker Symposium for Sustainability Week at Queensland University of Technology, featured the art installation *Spirit of the Maranoa*. This immersive experience captivated audiences, depicting a collaboration of diverse creatives mapping the Maranoa region of Western Queensland, while contributing to a continually growing arts-related and mainly digital archive.



Figure 1. A group photo of some members of the Collective and attendees of the exhibition held at QUT in 2023. ©Photo by Catalina Giraldo

Spirit of the Maranoa

The participants of Yimbaya Maranoa, Gunggari, Bidjara, Maranoa and visiting artists, reveal and acknowledge layers of place through circulatory processes and collaborative creative sessions. Both structured and informal exchanges at the camp residencies provide immersive, embodied, haptic, auditory, and performative experiences.

The interconnecting collaborative projects at the 2023 Mount Moffatt residency in the Carnarvon Ranges, included (i) Circular listening, framed around Listening to Country and yimbaya – listening for healing, (ii) Cyanotype printing informed by the variety of plants found on the Maranoa, and their significance in Gunggari knowledge systems, and (iii) Fluro earth drawing, a rubbing technique using fluorescent drawing materials, revealed with ultraviolet lights captures the past (geological surface) and the present (the drawer connecting body and mind to the earth's surface). It was in this latter session, fluro earth drawing, that Spirit of the Maranoa evolved.

Using graphic mediums highly visible under ultraviolet light, artists embedded textures from the Maranoa riverbanks onto Japanese paper. By allowing the transfer of marks, the papers absorbed the surface terrains and forms of the watershed exposing histories and site-specific marks. The works extend the ideas of connections and orientating ways of country both through an Indigenous and visitor lens. Connecting and manipulating the papers during photographic documentation, vivid sculptural forms came into view, suggesting for example, spirit creatures or the sinuous

flow of ancient waters. Future extensions into image-making are envisaged, for example large scale outdoor projections on Country, and projections onto three dimensional forms.

Preparing the Spirit of the Maranoa art installation for the Sphere involved consideration of the unique characteristics of this extraordinary display. The Sphere, a pioneering five-meter diameter LED globe suspended over two floors, boasts a 4.8-meter interactive digital LED video wall screen. Comprising 12.7 million individual LED lights, this innovative structure operates seamlessly in full daylight. Given its spherical nature and the potential distortion for images not created in an equirectangular projection, the artwork underwent a tailored adaptation. The preparation involved meticulous calibration and adjustments to ensure a captivating and immersive experience for the audience during the screening at the More-Than-Human Maker Symposium for Sustainability week at Queensland University of Technology.

The spherical form created an enveloping and all-encompassing space, echoing the principles of circular listening where the audience is invited to engage with the artwork from every angle. This immersive quality resonates with the circular motions inherent in drawing and artistic expression, providing a holistic and dynamic encounter. The spherical experience, therefore, becomes an integral part of the artistic narrative, harmonising with the interconnected themes of circularity, listening, and the overall multisensory experience intended for the Spirit of the Maranoa.

Yimbaya Maranoa Project for the Maranoa Artist and Writers List Participants 2023/2024.

Vernessa Fien
Jude Taggart Roberts
Dr Vicki Saunders
Helen Hardess
Dr Anastasia Tyurina
Michelle Hobbs
Donna Malone
Renata Buziak

Clare Cowley
Merete Megarrity
Felicity Chapman
Saraeva Mitchell
Deena Dodd
Susan Saunders
Bill Dodd
Daria Maeva

Acknowledgements

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Figure 2. The collective meet and exchange reflections around the fireplace, Marie's Farmstay, Warrong, Mt Moffatt.

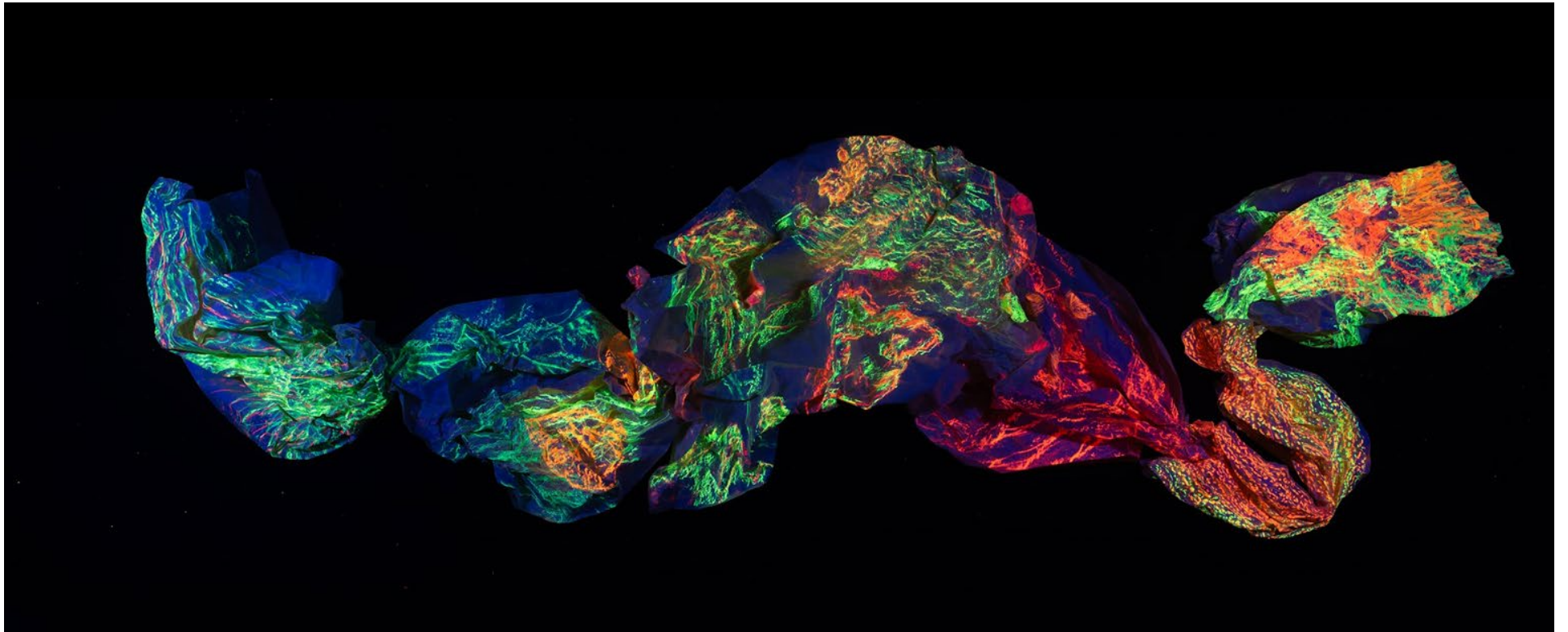


Figure 3. Final images used on the Sphere.
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Figure 4. Jude Roberts creates a layer of rubbings on the rock surface.
©Photo by Greg Harm @Tangible Media



Figure 5. Viewing the cartographic maps, Warrong, Mt Moffatt.
©Photo by Greg Harm @Tangible Media.



Figure 6. Viewing the works under the UV lights at the shed,
Marie's Farmstay, Warrong, Mt Moffatt.
©Photo by Greg Harm @Tangible Media.



Figure 7. Testing the artworks on the Sphere and Data Wall.
©Photo by Anastasia Tyurina.



Figure 8. Testing the works under the UV lights at the shed, Marie's Farmstay, Warrong, Mt Moffatt.
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Figure 9. Inside the Fluro booth at the Yimbaya Maranoa exhibition.

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