About Onespace Gallery

Onespace Gallery is a Brisbane shopfront that showcases contemporary art and design. It is an innovative gallery initiative developed by art consultancy CREATIVEMOVE and its directors, John Stafford and Jodie Cox.

“Our program embraces a dialogue between gallery practice and investigations into public space and platforms. We aim to stimulate an entrepreneurial conversation between like-minded and diverse practitioners.” — John Stafford and Jodie Cox

Onespace is a flexible, mixed model gallery that:

• Presents and sells work by local and interstate artists;
• Curates exhibitions around thematic issues;
• Invites other independent curators to present exhibitions;
• Collaborates with artists to present their own work; and
• Facilitates collaborative artist opportunities for ‘Onsite Projects’.

Limited Edition Prints

Brian Robinson is one of the most influential Australian artists of his generation. Robinson’s dramatic linocut prints, describe the unique cultural fusion in which he works.

This lively and imaginative aesthetic has marked Robinson’s mature artistry, which combines mythology from all over the world with Marvel super heroes. It is compelling viewing, dark, exuberant and alive. Its undercurrent is suggestive that, in a period of division, peoples all over the world share more than they don’t. Eclectic sources render the power of popular culture a curious equal to that of the traditional legends that have defined us.

Robinson says, “I draw on mythology worldwide and make parallels that cross different cultures. Objects and themes from Torres Strait myths are mixed with other well-known narratives, and legends like the Noah’s Ark and the great floods, Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea and Adam and Eve.” Another constant in Robinson’s practice is an insistence on being seen as an artist (rather than an Indigenous artist). “I absorb from the entire spectrum of visual paraphernalia that the world offers.” Louise Martin-Chew, 2016.

*Full print range available at onespace.com.au/Brian Robinson

Brian Robinson, Feeding the family pets, 2017, 45cm x 65cm, linocut printed in black ink from one block. Edition of 20. Photo: Fanny © artwork courtesy of the artist and Onespace Gallery, Brisbane
Brian Robinson is a celebrated Indigenous artist of his generation, a leader in his field in Australia and his community and, in recent years, is developing a strong international reputation. His work is considered highly innovative, with a unique blend of the organic and manmade. It speaks to popular culture (for example drawing on the influence of Lego and Marvel comics) and to more traditional art historical concerns, but is also informed by his Torres Strait Islander heritage and familial experience. Robinson said, "My creations are seemingly incongruous concoctions where motifs and characters are co-opted into the spirit world of the Islander imagination, which are then intertwined with historical narrative, personal history and humour."

Robinson has been recognised with awards and grants both within the arts and in a mainstream arena. He received the national Western Australian Indigenous Art Award in 2013 ($50,000). Earlier he was awarded Arts and Culture Recognition Award from Cairns Corroboree (2001), was recognised with funding from the Australia Council (1998, 2003, 2007), and received Professional Development monies from Museums Australia (1997). His leadership has also been recognised outside his industry with the award of Young Australian of the Year (2001).

Robinson’s sculpture is also visible in the urban environment with high profile public art projects in many Australian cities, spanning Perth to Mackay. It has been acquired for the collections of national and state institutions in Australia, and is consistently supported when exhibited at commercial galleries.

In 2016 Robinson was one of six Australian Indigenous artists invited to participate in an international exhibition held at the Musée Océanographique de Monaco on the topical themes of oceans, biodiversity and environmental preservation. On this occasion, Robinson’s sculptural installation Malu Githalayl, which used a traditional incised design (seen in Torres Strait Islander lino prints), over three colourful crabs, featured on the exterior of the Musée Océanographique. This image was broadcast, through the exhibition publicity, all over the world.

Also last year, Robinson was directly commissioned to develop the master work, Citizens of the Great Barrier Reef. This large public artwork will be sited at the Esplanade in Cairns and act as an iconic gateway to the Great Barrier Reef. This commission has offered an opportunity for Robinson to develop an extravagant aesthetic and gravitas, drawing international attention to the fragile environmental situation of the sea.

In 2017 Robinson will be included in the prestigious National Indigenous Art Triennial, hosted by the National Gallery of Australia (26 May to 10 September). He will create new work directed toward the exhibition theme, which acknowledges the 50th Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum (which resulted in the removal of Australian constitutional provisions that discriminated against Aboriginal people). His work will also be shown in Australia: Defending the Ocean at the UN Headquarters in New York, New York City, USA and later on at the Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection @ Charles L. Brown Science & Engineering Library, USA.

Through this editioned sculpture, Ocean Guardian, I relay the creation story of the Great Barrier Reef ‘Gunya and the Sacred Fish story’ as told by Gimuy Walabura Yidjing elder Gudju Gudju (Seith) Fournie in his recent documentary David Attenborough’s Great Barrier Reef.

I acknowledge the local mythic importance of this graceful creature and its primacy in this creation story and the connection it has to my own Aboriginal ancestry as this animal is one of Nara Jiro Para’s clan totems from the white silicon sand dunes of Shelburne Bay, Eastern Cape York Peninsula (the Wuthathi people). Nara Jiro Para is the mother of my grandfather, Ali Drummond.

The back of the stingray is covered in hand-carved miniral, the distinctive graphic traditional patterning of the Torres Strait that has its origins in Melanesian artistry, in the rhythmical forms of pattern and dance. This style that has come to the fore in recent years through the medium of printmaking (linocuts).

The Torres Strait print movement’s arabesque patterning loosely conforms to a combination of rhythmic attributes full of liveliness and shimmering movement. The patterns are also used to disguise discernible shapes and motifs further alluring the viewer to spend ever-increasing amounts of time uncovering the intricacies of texture, shape and meaning.

The effect provides emphasis to the importance of an orderly system representing the complete world, full of wisdom and mythology, where all its parts and motifs are contained, having their time, space and place. The stingray element, in this instance is extracted from the holistic installation and is given the status of its own standalone unique character. Suspended in space and hovering as real stingray might — acting as a guardian of the reef as it continues its annual migration. The stingray does not make contact with the reef or coral, preferring to move only with the sway of the tide, therefore underlying its benevolent presence as an ocean guardian.

Title: Ocean Guardian Artist: Brian Robinson

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