

Artists Profile - Elizabeth Johns

I have always been a traveller. I have recently moved to Cooktown, where Captain Cook set down after being shipwrecked in 1770. This historic coastal town in far north Queensland is the last stop before the wilderness of the Cape York Peninsula. I am busy absorbing my new surroundings and working on a new series of local images.

I came to Cooktown expecting to be inspired by the spectacular geography of the region. Instead, I became fascinated by the habits of the quirky, hardy folk living in and around this historic town.

Paintings that have been inspired by this include:

Gone Fishing - this is the cap that fits the boys gone fishing. It also fits the boys driving their 4-wheel drives up and down the dusty unsealed roads of Cooktown.

Louisiana - this is a detail of the new pediment of the recently renovated exterior of Louisiana. The petals are from a tropical tree which blooms in spring, the Poinciana.

Boxed In - isolated by the geography, everyone relies heavily on the post and waits anxiously for it to defy the weather and arrive on time. This is also the signature look of Louisiana, the oldest shop in town, where people shop out of the boxes.

Holiday - these are awnings adorning a wall of the fanciest resort in Cooktown, the Sovereign Resort Hotel.

Stepping Out - Cooktown has a love affair with thongs, fancy or plain, these are the ideal footwear for the climate.

Cooktown Pyramid - there's a story that ruins of an ancient 8 stepped Bronze Age pyramid was found in 2003 north of Cooktown, but has since been lost to the undergrowth. My version has glimpses of the architectural detailing adorning some recently renovated shop fronts of Charlotte St., the main street in town.

Recent Art Work Series:

Paintings From Cape York 2009

These paintings are about location, in this case Cape York Peninsula. Location usually implies environment and climate. The circle is the symbol I used for this environment, and for aspects of its climate. The circle is the symbol of eternal motion, a point moving at constant distance from a given point. Ancient and modern cultures regard it as a symbol of the spirit, of harmony and renewal. The circle is also associated with the cool harmonies of the colour blue. Repetition, order, unity and patterning mirror nature's laws. Because nearly six months of the year are humid and, eventually, wet, the circle is an ideal visual metaphor for rain drops. Their overlapping and sequencing patterns signify extreme humidity on the one hand, and the torrential rain of the wet season on the other.

Paintings: Summer and Winter (92 x 112 cm), Morning, Afternoon, Evening, Night (all 62 x 62 cm) Profile (62 x 77 cm), Narrative (61 x 46 cm), Reflection (51 x 67).

Art Education:

Post Graduate:

2005-2006 Master of Art, College of Fine Arts, Sydney, NSW.

Undergraduate:

2002-2004 Bachelor of Fine Art, National Art School, Sydney, NSW.

1999-2001 Painting and Drawing classes, Workshop Arts Centre, Willoughby,
1981 Graphic Design and Advertising course, Art Institute of Philadelphia, USA.
1970 Graphic Design, East Sydney Tech., Sydney, NSW.

Exhibitions:

2006 COFA Annual, College of Fine Arts, UNSW
2006 Experimental Drawing, Quantum Computing Centre, UNSW.
2005 Iliri Field Trip Exhibition, COFA Space.
2006 NAS Graduating Exhibition
2003 Icons ? the Stairwell Exhibition, NAS.
1995-2000 Sydney City Council Art Prizes at: Drummoyne, Hunters Hill, Mosman and Willoughby.
1996-1998 Group shows at the Watch House, Balmain.

Collections:

Private collections in Sydney, Zurich, New York, New Jersey, California.

Art Exhibitions

2008 Newport Artworks, NSW.
2011 July Solo Art Exhibition at Elizabeth Guzely Gallery Cooktown