

An abstract painting with thick, expressive brushstrokes in various colors including blue, green, yellow, orange, and purple. The composition is dynamic and colorful, serving as a background for the text.

Our Gadigal Home


Explore & Develop
Annandale
The Possums
2017

The background of the entire image is a close-up photograph of a forest floor. It is covered with a thick layer of dry, brown leaves and twigs. Some leaves are still green, providing a contrast to the mostly brown tones. The lighting is natural, creating soft shadows and highlights on the organic matter.

Acknowledgement to Country

We would like to acknowledge and pay our respects to the Gadigal people, of the Eora nation, who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we live, work and play. We acknowledge Elders past, present and emerging. We would also like to acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people here today.

Photograph by Sofia (4.8 years)



We would like to acknowledge and thank Aunty Kathy (Kathryn Dodd-Farrawell) for her encouragement, guidance, and friendship. Aunty Kathy is a Kunja Birri woman and well known artist and member of the Glebe community.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank Jessica Staines, a proud Wiradjuri woman for her teaching, support and commitment to embedding authentic Indigenous perspectives in early years education.

We would like to honour and acknowledge the Possum children who made all of this possible.

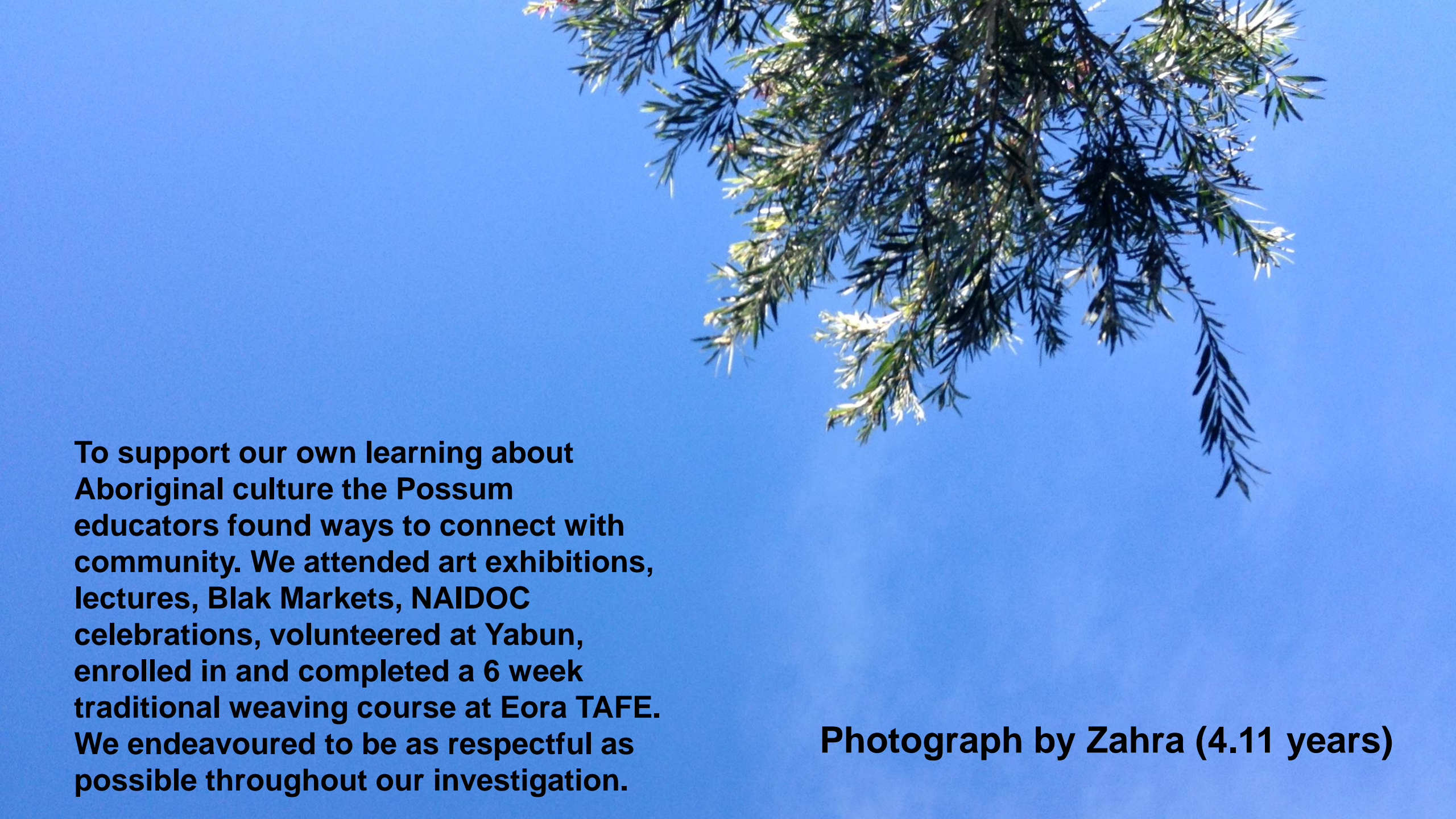
This project began in January 2017, when many of the children were just beginning to settle into a new environment with new teachers and friends. We watched the children's confidence in their ability grow throughout the year as they formed their identity as artists and discovered their place in the world.

The Possum children remind us every day how lucky we are to live on Gadigal land and how important it is to take care of our home. We will forever be grateful for this journey they allowed us to take with them, and all of the wonderful things they have taught us along the way.



Melanie and Jessica

- Both wanted to authentically apply Indigenous perspectives in curriculum.
- Share a passion for learning alongside children.
- Are both creative, so art was the obvious “way in”.



To support our own learning about Aboriginal culture the Possum educators found ways to connect with community. We attended art exhibitions, lectures, Blak Markets, NAIDOC celebrations, volunteered at Yabun, enrolled in and completed a 6 week traditional weaving course at Eora TAFE. We endeavoured to be as respectful as possible throughout our investigation.

Photograph by Zahra (4.11 years)

Why art?

Ursula Kolbe taught us that “children use visual language as a means of inquiry, as a playful way to imagine new possibilities and make their ideas visible” (Kolbe, 2014, p2).

Photograph by Kathryn, (4.9 years)

“Young children’s sense of awe and wonder is a way to anti-bias. And for those educators striving for anti-bias principles, it is through arts pedagogies that entrenched biases and prejudices can be disrupted. Power relations that send the wrong messages can be embedded in taken-for-granted approaches to pedagogy. Arts pedagogies open up possibilities for every member of the community to find recognition and respect. Through creativity and imagination, young children can grow their sense of self, and sense of others.”

(McArdle and Ohlsen, 2016, p205)

Photograph by Kurtis (4.5 years)



Research alongside the children through both books and the internet gave children and adults context for the artists and their art practice.



Some children were heavily involved in all areas of the project while others were very interested in one area but not the others. No child was ever pushed to be involved.



The different provocations, artists, movements and interests, featured in this project unfolded in an organic way that followed the children's lead. They did not happen consecutively in the sense that one thing happened after another, rather, they were unfolding at different times and overlapping.



We were intentional in the way new art works were introduced. Part of the research process included finding out where the artist was from, which Country or language group.

As Dr Yunkaporta writes; “Aboriginal culture has not been lost - just disrupted. Our ways of knowing, being, doing, valuing and learning remain in an ancestral framework of knowledge that is still strong.” (Yunkaporta, 2009, p1).





The environment was intentionally set up in ways to support the children's art making in response to the provocations.





“There is a fundamental way in which the arts pedagogies can actively teach children important lessons about social justice, democracy, power distribution, and their own agency. This is through the relationships and positionings of the teacher and child.” (McArdle and Ohlsen, 2016, p210)





**A pedagogy
of place.**

Photograph by Javier (4.11 years)

**“If we open our doors to allow community involvement we are opening our minds to culture at holistic level. If we can do this we will be building a bridge to reconciliation by creating footsteps in children’s acceptance of First Nations people.”
(Cedric, Barber, Page and Callinan, 2014, pp11-12).**



Terreni writes that “children have the right to freely enjoy the dimension of citizenship that involves access to, and participation in, the rich opportunities for leisure, education, and cultural experiences the arts provide.” (Terreni, 2013, p3).





Excursions to the Australian Museum





Excursions to The Art Gallery of NSW



Building relationships



Jessica Staines Koori Curriculum



**Auntie Kathy (Kathryn
Dodd-Farrawell)**



Documenting the Process

- Kinderloop (online platform)
- Photographs of the creative process and finished art pieces
- Children's art
- Children's voices
- Children's photographs
- Reflection (as teachers and with children)





Our Gadigal Home project



Dot Art

Dot Art Provocations



An interest in landscape



*"It's a spotty dotty art
about a storm."*

Benjamin 3.11 years





Sofia (4.5 years)



"I'm painting a map of triangles. If people need to get anywhere they can just go up the street. The big dots are the paths that the people can walk, there isn't enough room for a road. I gived the houses all different dots so that they know which one to go to. This one is two, this one is three, and this one is four. So they know which number they are."

Keringke Arts Centre



Skateboard
Lucille Young



Laughing Lady
Tiffany Alice



Untitled
Sharon Williams

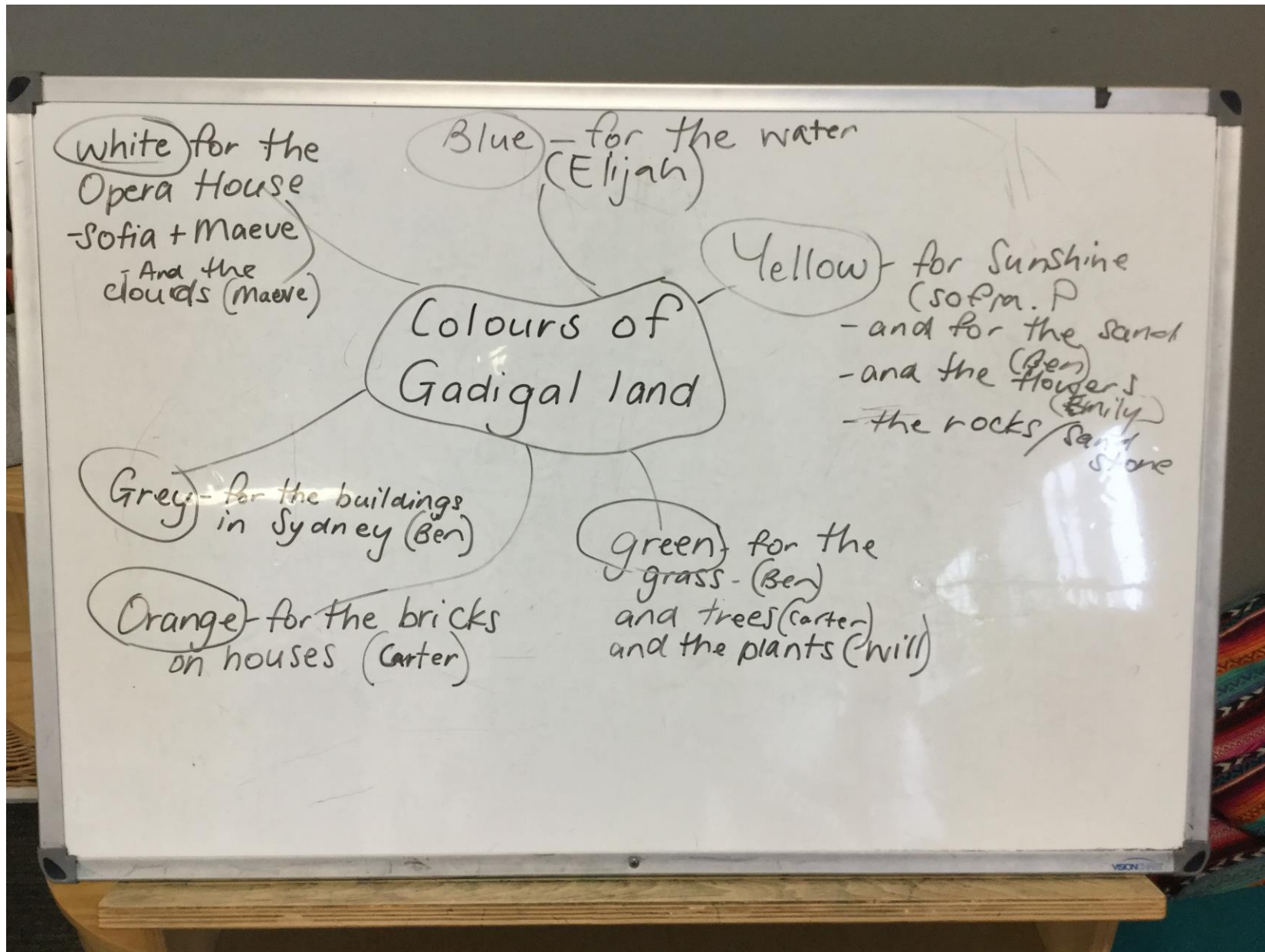


The importance of colour

Daily Curriculum Reflection (Excerpt)

We have watched videos and read books that taught us that the colours chosen and mixed are very important as they represent the artists Country and tell stories of the Land and the peoples relationships with it. This has prompted the children to investigate colour and gain understanding of how colours mix and interact. It prompted us to begin conversations about how different colours are in the desert compared to the colours we see in the Sydney landscape. We began to think about what colours we could use to represent Gadigal country.



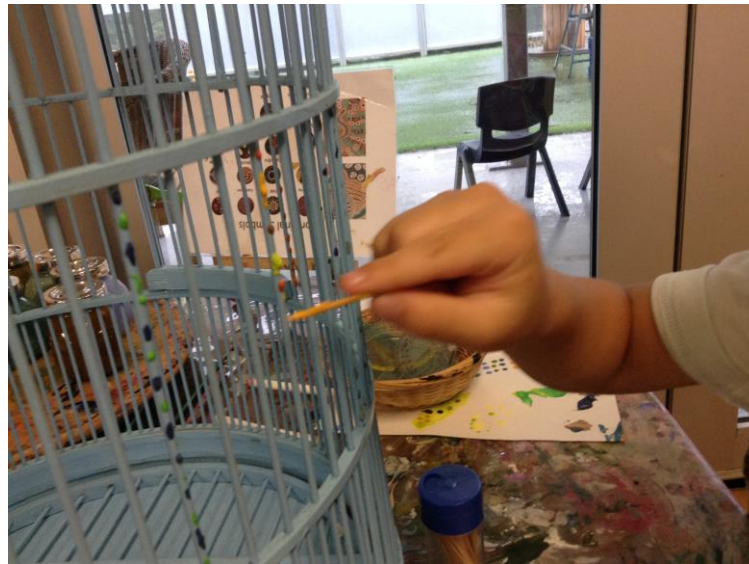


The children felt that it was important that their art work used what they termed 'Gadigal colours'. Olivia felt it was important that all the children know what colours to use on the birdcage. Kathryn suggested that a teacher help them to make a mind map so all the ideas can be seen. We had to take a photo of the words so we all could remember which colours were important and why.

(Mind-mapping the Possum's ideas and having a teacher write their words happens a lot in the Possum room.)



The Bird Cage



Observation 15-1-2017

Olivia's words about the design on the base of the birdcage.

Olivia: "I'm going to do a big circle in the middle here. Does it mean meeting place? It's going to be the same colour as the Possum room, I can see white. And black. And this colour... grey? We've got grey paint. The big circle can be grey like the wall in this room. And the symbols on the outside I want to do lots of colours, for lots of children. Yellow, blue, green, orange, brown, and red"

Olivia created a pattern on bottom of our birdcage art piece using the Indigenous symbol chart as a guide.

Olivia's art tells the story of children sitting around a meeting place. She was inspired by her world and chose colours to represent the Possum room and the Possum children.

Olivia also explained how because all of the Possum children are different, she wanted to use different colours to represent each of them.

What next?

Once the circles are dry Olivia is planning to incorporate dots into her art.



"If we leave the door open maybe some birds will come and live in the bird cage."

Charlotte (4.6 years)



"I know, lets put the lights inside the birdcage so the birds will know it's a safe place. It will be beautiful for the birds."

Pippa (4.4 years)

Arranging (Transient Art)





*"Platypus arranging."
Claudia 3.10*



*"A map to get to my house."
Will 3.9*



A person is seated in a workshop, working on a large, colorful, beaded necklace. The necklace is made of many small, multi-colored beads and is draped over a wooden frame. The person is wearing a striped shirt and is focused on their work. The background shows a wooden chair and a table with various items on it.

The Tjanpi Forest



Weaving Art Package from Koori Curriculum



Imitjala Pollard



Dannicka Collins



Educators weaved alongside the children and together; figuring out techniques, problem solving, and learning from each other.

The children recognised 'experts' in the group and turned to them for help rather than the adults.



The Possums continually revisited the idea of making a place for their sculptures to live. They began to imagine a forest for their creatures and animals. How could they create this? What would the Possums need to make their own trees? The educators were unsure; so alongside the children we began by researching Tjanpi trees and added several to our weaving area.

Images of *Minyma Punu*

***Kungkarangkalpa (Seven Sisters Tree Women) 2013*, by Nyurpaya Kaika, Ilawanti Ken, Niningka Lewis, Mary Pan, Tjungkaya Tapaya, Carlene Thompson and Yaritji Young, captured the children's imagination.**



Image Reference

Museum of Contemporary Art Australia. (2013). Minyma Punu Kungkarangkalpa (Seven Sisters Tree Women). [Image]. Retrieved from <https://www.mca.com.au/collection/work/2013.63A-G/>

G/





Navigating the Space Between
the Real and the Imagined;
Where Photography and
Drawing Meet.





Ngarigo Nulla Goongee

Sally Lavallee, 2017

Daily Curriculum Reflection **4.7.2017**

"Melanie, come and look at your new art work."

Olivia (5.1) had been pondering an art work I bought on the weekend at the NAIDOC Blak Markets.

It is a photograph overlaid with drawing called Ngarigo Nulla Goongee by Sally Lavallee. I explained to the children that I had met the artist and she told me that she took the photo when she was on Country, Ngarigo Country (Snowy Mountains region), and that the black lines represents the spirits of ancestors and her connection to the land. The white lines on the boulder represent the marker stones the ancestors would leave as messages for each other or to mark important sites.

Olivia had been thinking about this and the work and the language we use when talking about art like 'represents' and 'connects'.

"If you look here I think you can see snow. See here? On the trees? I think this line represents the snow clouds that made the snow. See? I think the artist connects to the snow because she is from the Snowy Mountains. Right?"



"This is my family. The lines are about how I love this place."

Kathryn 4.9





"The black lines are about the children playing. The white lines are the fairies that fly up and over here and over there."

Maeve 4.6



We make the
drawing art pretty - Maisie

We make

Tjampis

because we
like them - Pippo

We want other
people to see
our work - Sofia P.

Drawing things to make them
into books to tell people how
we know things - Angus

We love the Tjampis art
so we wanted to make
some Tjampis art too.
Olivia

We make the weaving
cool like Tjampis trees and
submarines. - Eddy

Possum Artists

Your text here

We make the pictures to send
to people so they know and
we write our names so they
know who made
the art. - Jacob

We make jewellery
and we build
because we like to
make things look
pretty and cool. - Olivia

We want the people to
know that we are artists.
- Kathryn

I want the people
to see my art because it is
really good. Violet

We want all the artists in
the world to be happy. Lachlan







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