

# Hazelhurst Arts Centre

# Young At Heart

Artists: Julie and Markeeta Freeman



Julie Freeman and Markeeta Freeman, *Mee Lee Mah and Murra*, 2013, Silversalt Photography

Hazelhurst

SUTHERLANDSHIRE  
ARTS  
CENTRE

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

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### Julie Freeman and Markeeta Freeman

Julie Freeman is a Gorawarl wandandiandi woman and a prominent cultural leader and story teller. Julie and her daughter Markeeta engage with the cultural practice of storytelling to spread the knowledge and continuation of their culture. Julie's mother is of the Gurawarl Gewgal (Wonga pigeon) clan from



Botany Bay (Kamay). Born on the La Perouse Aboriginal Reserve her mother comes from a long line of shell workers and storytellers. Julie's father was a Wreck Bay fisherman of the old tradition, born on a significant local mountain, Cullungutti. Bound by tradition and cultural practice, he was a wandandiandi man and his totem was the bumberang (jacky lizard).

Julie is inspired by family, country, culture, tradition, history and life. She and her family use the materials of country to tell the stories of country gathering reeds, shells and ochre from the shores of Wreck Bay, on the New South Wales South Coast. She says "art is how culture continues and is maintained into the future. It strengthens connection to country. It's my life; it's in the blood, its family and its forever."

Markeeta Freeman is a proud Aboriginal woman who was born and grew up in the Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community. Markeeta is very strong in her culture, and has gained significant knowledge from her mother Julie Freeman, a Gurawarl- wandandiandi woman of the Yuin nation, and her father a Wogal man of the Wiradjuri nation.

With her Environmental Science degree Markeeta has found a harmonious mix of modern science and traditional cultural perspectives. This has allowed her to develop her artistic talents in a unique way. "Art is a way that we can look after our country. Country can't talk for itself, we have to talk for it, and we do this thought art."

**Image:** Artists Julie Freeman and Markeeta Freeman conducting a yarning circle at Hazelhurst Arts Centre. Photograph by Silversalt Photography, 2021

## ABOUT THE WORK

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### Julie Freeman and Markeeta Freeman, *Mee Lee Mah and Murra*, 2013



**Image:** Julie Freeman and Markeeta Freeman, *Mee Lee Mah and Murra* (detail) 2013. Silversalt Photography

'*Mee Lee Mah and Murra*' is a hanging installation featuring a "mee lee mah" also known as a mermaid. Swimming around the mermaid are fish, "murra". The artists have used natural materials found in wetlands and waterways. Palm seed fronds make the flowing hair and small shells known as "cronullas" adorn her neck. These shells were traditionally worn by women during ceremonial dancing. The body is made with tree branches and her tail is from a trunk of a bangalow palm.

*Mee Lee Mah and Murra* was exhibited in *Wuliwulawala: Dharawal Women Sharing Stories* at Hazelhurst Regional Gallery in 2021.



Julie Freeman and Markeeta Freeman, *Mee Lee Mah and Murra*, 2013, Silversalt Photography

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

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- Look at the Mee Lee Mah (mermaid). Does she look like she is swimming? How have the artists created a feeling of movement?
- The artists used natural materials found in wetlands and water ways. How does the use of these organic materials make you feel about the work?
- The placement of the many fish around the mermaid lets us in to this underwater world. Have you ever been swimming in the ocean or rivers and seen fish and other sea creatures? What was it like?
- Tales of mermaids, the mythical sea dwelling creatures can be found in many cultures. Do you know any stories about mermaids?

## ART MAKING

### Create your own underwater world

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#### You will need:

- Collect leaves of various shapes and sizes, you can use fresh or dry ones but make sure they are not brittle or too fragile.
- Black or a dark coloured crayons or oil pastels.
- Thin paper- copy paper works well.
- Paint brushes
- Watercolour paint or watered down acrylic paint.



## STEPS

**STEP 1:** Select various leaves and place them on the paper. Think about the shapes and how they could be used to create fish or other marine animals and sea weed or coral. Arrange them to create an underwater scene.

When you are happy with the arrangement, place the leaf vein side up **under** the paper.



**STEP 2:** Using a black or dark coloured crayon or oil pastel, rub gently but firmly over the leaf. It works best if you use a small piece of crayon and rub on the side, you will have to tear off any paper around the crayon. At this stage you can add details such as eyes or tails.



**STEP 3:** Adding colour- using water colour paints or watered-down acrylic paint. Use a thin brush for details and larger brushes for the water.



## FINISHED EXAMPLE:



## REFLECTION

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### Display and view

- What worked well?
- Did you like the process of making the artwork?
- What do you like most about these works?