

Dr Ross Ingram Memorial Prize 2012

The Gap

Winner Original Artwork

Since 2008, the Bouverie Centre, a family therapy and healing centre, in association with La Trobe University, has provided training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family workers through a postgraduate certificate in family therapy. This landmark educational program is offered throughout Victoria and is delivered within the students' communities.

There are two training teams, each consisting of one Indigenous cultural consultant (family therapy-trained) and one non-Indigenous trainer (a family therapy-trained academic). The trainers travel to each rural centre to deliver 26 days of training over a 1-year period, followed by a further 2 years of professional supervision. By December 2012, seven cohorts of students will have completed the postgraduate course in family therapy in Victoria, with two graduates having attained a Master in Clinical Family Therapy.

The effects of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have resulted in intergenerational trauma, grief, loss and familial dislocation. The subtle and gentle work these graduates are now achieving within their communities is healing families and significantly protecting our children from further intergenerational trauma and dislocation.

"The Gap" is an egg tempera painting on canvas (2070 mm × 930 mm). Egg tempera is a 14th century



Robyne Latham

MFA, GradDipEd,
Research Officer

The Bouverie Centre,
La Trobe University,
Melbourne, VIC.

r.latham@
latrobe.edu.au

doi: 10.5694/mja12.11012

method of making paint by mixing earth pigment with egg yolk and water. Many cave paintings would very likely have employed this method. The painting is dedicated to all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates of the family therapy training program. It depicts the locations of the first five training cohorts — Shepparton, Geelong and Ballarat, Gippsland, Mildura and Melbourne.

These centres are signified by the round motifs. The lines radiating from each centre refer to the impact of the family healing that these graduates are effecting within their communities. The dot patternation connecting all five locations identifies the professional statewide links, networking and communication that now thrive between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family therapists and the families they work with and for.

I am primarily an artist, and have also been the Indigenous researcher connected with this training program. I painted this work to draw attention to the program as we struggle to secure permanent funding for it. I believe this successful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tertiary training program should continue to be supported, as it is truly closing the gap in Indigenous health and education.

I do hope you enjoy the work.

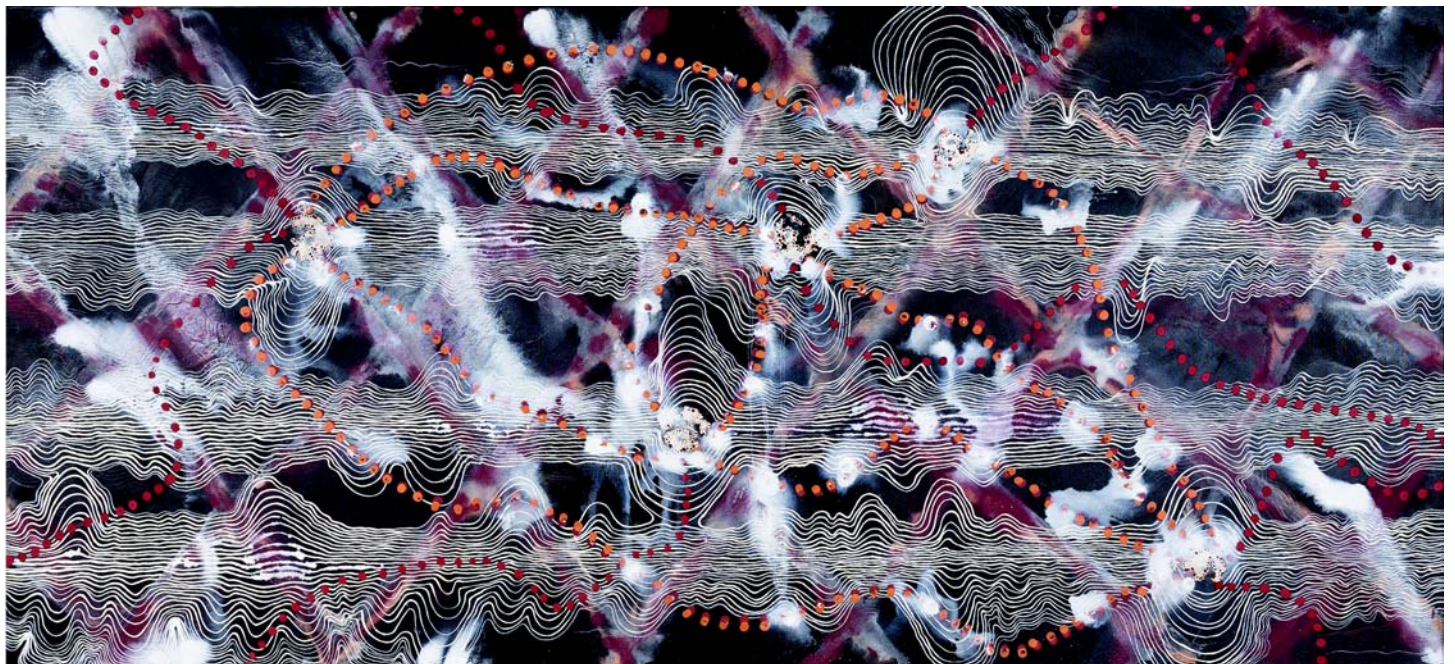


Photo courtesy: Steven Rhall, Indigenous photographer