



**David Jones**

**Banderlain Titchelen-gai Marim: An Exploration of Personal Symbols of Freedom**

**Opening event: Friday night, 6 September 6pm – 9pm**

**Exhibition dates: 6 September – 28 September 2019**

Since beginning printmaking, the idea of Butterfly Woman has been a developing idea and visual narrative recorded in a very few prints and drawings. The first etching was entitled *Pull the Pin* and completed in 2003. The butterfly symbolized the myriad Indigenous people's artefacts impounded over time in government collections and displayed in museums. 'Pulling the pin' alluded to releasing these artefacts, stopping the practice, and returning those items, and Butterfly Woman was the protagonist.

As further prints were completed, Butterfly Woman came to embody the enduring spirit of freedom, and her 'pulling the pin' broadened in meaning to include the dream of release from the inequality faced by Indigenous people. Butterfly Woman, a purely fictitious entity, represents several memories of my family. My father's mother taught me to recognise the black butterfly as a sign of good fortune. There were other bearers of news too, like the Willy Wagtail and Mopoke. Granny still had many words from our language and *banderlain titchelen-gai marim*, literally dancing coloured light, or in translation, butterfly is one of a few phrases and words I can remember from our talks.

My grandmother and father endured many hardships due their Indigenous heritage. Granny brought her two sons up in a Brisbane during WWII, a strong independent Indigenous widower, working three jobs to make ends meet. Dad wound up in Brisbane again after an adventurous life in far north Queensland. His fight for our Dalungbarra lands consumed the remainder of his days. Their endurance, resilience and determination to retain culture is a legacy that drives my art practice today and underpins this exhibition.

Around three hundred butterflies have been cut out with a jewellery saw in order to give them all an individuality, and then etched and aquatinted, incidentally during NIADOC week. 249 will be printed in black and presented in a grid, pinned to the wall, to represent the time of Anglo-European invasion and continuing oppression of Indigenous cultures. Before and after this grid of butterflies will be over 675 butterflies printed in a kaleidoscope of colours that represent our past freedom and future dreams of autonomy and cultural assertion.

*Dr David John Jones, DVA, MAVA, BVA Hons 1st Class, Dip. VA*

front image: David Jones, *Butterfly Lady Pulls the Pin* 2012, A la Poupee etching on rag paper, AP, 20 x 25 cm

**Woolloongabba Art Gallery**

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