

H e a r t L a n d

Exhibition dates: 4 October – 29 October 2016

Woolloongabba Art Gallery

Katina Davidson

Artist Statement

Revealing a vivid childhood memory of wild flowers and a macabre family history, *Heart Land* explores narratives deeply rooted in the artist's inherited connection to the Purga and Deebing Creek Missions, near Ipswich, Queensland.

"*Down the back where the most wildflowers are, that's where their [our family's] huts were*", are the words from an Aunty many years ago that sparked the body of work in Heart Land. She's referring to the shanty's that residents of the Missions (established under the *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act* of 1897) were forced to build from found materials for themselves and their families to live in, and the wildflowers that surrounded them.

Through intricate hand-moulded clay sculptures, a video work and oil paintings, Katina explores the flowers found on the Mission sites in memory of the oral histories that aren't widely shared or acknowledged.

Katina Davidson's artistic practice explores concepts of genetic memory and its relationship with places of significance and her identity.

Her work pays homage to Western landscape painting traditions while conceptually exploring the complexities of finding a middle ground between both her Aboriginal and Australian cultures.

Connections

Katina Davidson identifies as a Kullilli and Yuggera woman and a descendent of the Purga Mission with maternal non-Indigenous Australian heritage.

Her father's mother, Georgina Margaret Thompson OAM's family were originally from the Ipswich area (Yuggera Country) and were residents at Deebing Creek Mission in the early days under the *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act* of 1897 and its amendments, commonly referred to as *The Act*. Her grandfather, Donald Davidson's family were taken 1000kms by carriage from Thargomindah in the early 1900s to Deebing Creek Mission before being transferred to Purga Mission, after Deebing Creek closed.

A portion of the original Purga Mission property was handed back to its Elders and descendants in the early 1990s. There is a cemetery onsite that is for Elders and descendants of the original Purga occupants to be buried. Her grandfather was born under the birthing tree at Purga Mission in 1933, and buried there in 1993.

She has consistently visited this site since childhood and holds fond memories of camping and playing, as well as heart felt memories of funerals and the long procession between the property and the cemetery across the road.