

2023 - 2028 Strategic Plan

UMBRELLA STUDIO CONTEMPORARY ARTS





ABOUT UMBRELLA

Umbrella is a leading independent platform for contemporary and experimental arts practice operating on Wulgurukaba and Bindal Country (Townsville, North Queensland).

We have a four-decade legacy of bringing art and audiences together. We amplify critical and creative voices, support communities, incubate creativity and collaboration, and advocate for new models and investment in the arts.

OUR VALUES

Environmental and company sustainability
We adapt business practices that create minimal impact on the natural environment.

Community
We nurture members by listening to their needs and developing sincere and meaningful relationships.

Inclusivity
We tailor services and approaches to ensure accessibility for all parts of our community, focusing on closing the gap for our Indigenous members and community.

People and Relationships
We build strong and enduring relationships internally and externally, prioritising collaboration to help us work smarter and achieve more together.

Integrity
We are honest and ethical facilitators of arts and cultural experiences for our community.

We respectfully acknowledge the Wulgurukaba of Gurambilbarra and Yunbenun and our region's surrounding groups: Bindal, Gugu Badhan, Nywaigi, Warrgamay, Bandjin and Gudjal as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather, share and celebrate local creative practice. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the first people of Australia. They have never ceded sovereignty and remain strong in their enduring connection to land and Culture.

We believe in the power of commune, bringing together diverse voices and perspectives of our region and beyond. In dialogue, through creative arts practices, we transgress traditional hierarchies of centre and periphery, which are place-based. We nourish curiosity, exploration, and more profound experiences with the region and all its peoples. We acknowledge the beauty of the in-between spaces. We invite partnership and collaboration to create encounters and meaning in a complex world.

This strategic plan lays out the roadmap for the coming years with the passion which has long been part of our story and openness to enable us to leverage the work of our expanded community over the last 37 years. Key to our direction is inclusivity, relationships, and conversation - locally, nationally and internationally. The specificity of place is essential and provides the context of the artistic dialogue we platform both within the gallery and beyond the strict white walls. This is a critical period for solidifying our relevance and unique contribution to global dialogue.

Our agility and resourcefulness are assets we take forward, engaging new audiences in deeper ways and nurturing creative expression in a more volatile world.

- Kate O'Hara, Director
- Alan Carpenter, Chairperson, Management Committee



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CREDITS

IMAGES: Front cover and p.2: Gail Mabo, *Wer (Star)*, 2022, Installation featuring cast bronze forms with tortoise shell patina (set of 3) and multimedia installation, dimensions variable; presented by Umbrella at Cairns Indigenous Art Fair, 2022. This work was developed by Gail Mabo with support from Umbrella following a residency at Urban Art Projects (UAP). Front cover image: moving image still; p.2 image: courtesy UAP. | **p.1:** Ron McBurnie, Catherine Parker and Stephen Spurrier, *The ghosts sleep beneath our feet and dance above our heads*, Cosmic Witness series, 2020-2022, Mixed media on paper, 42 x 29cm; exhibited in POSTWORLD, 2022 (co-curated by Kate O'Hara and Daniel Qualischefski of Umbrella and commissioned by NAFA). | **Right:** Alison McDonald, *Home Sweet Home*, 2022, Discarded flood parquetry, aluminium, silk cord and key, brass fixings (from Alan Valentine) and steel, 26 x 14 x 13cm. Photograph: Alison McDonald. Alison McDonald's 2023 exhibition *Belonging: Memory and Loss* will engage with a personal response to the floods and will be presented at Umbrella in 2023. | **p.4:** Audiences participating in a PUNQ 2021 *Glow Land* experience on Yunbenun (Magnetic Island) led by artists Kit Colvin and Karen Williams. Photograph: Aaron Ashley.

TEXTS: courtesy the artist/s and Umbrella Studio Contemporary Arts unless otherwise noted or quoted. | **DESIGN:** Daniel Qualischefski.



VISION

To be an inclusive platform for independent, experimental contemporary arts practice in a globalised dialogue.

MISSION

To express and amplify our distinctive and authentic North Queensland voices.





Exhibition visitor viewing *Pandini4Life* by Keith Deverell (Blue Screen of Death) in *POSTWORLD, 2022* (co-curated by Kate O'Hara and Daniel Qualischefski of Umbrella and commissioned by NAFA). Photograph courtesy Through the Looking Glass Studio.

2019 - 2022 ACHIEVEMENTS AND MILESTONES

1,428,181

People reached (overall attendance, participation and reach, including PUNQ festival)

96%

of respondents rated the overall quality of our program good or excellent (2019 – 2021)

164

Umbrella exhibitions (onsite, offsite and touring)

1,995

Artist participations in our programs

26%

of participating artists identified as First Nations (2022)

2019

- Relocation of the Umbrella premises into the heart of the Townsville CBD in response to the major flooding event in Townsville, resulting in larger spaces for the gallery, studio facilities and gallery shop, and higher visitation
- Touring exhibition *Legacy: Reflection on Mabo* began its five-year national tour
- Dedicated exhibition by First Nations' artist/s built into every exhibition round
- \$31,800 – largest art sales to date for Umbrella at Cairns Indigenous Art Fair
- Finance, Audit and Risk sub-committee introduced into Umbrella's governance structure
- Umbrella's 2016 exhibition *Wanton, Wild & Unimagined* by artist Alison McDonald finished touring nationally in partnership with Museums & Galleries QLD

2020

- New director recruited with experience in growing arts organisations in South East Asia and Arnhemland and brokering international partnerships (having delivered projects across Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, Myanmar, London and USA)
- Digital pivot of programs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including professional artist development sessions, innovative digital art programs and children's activities created by NQ artists, and *At Home Artist In Residency* program
- Expanded research into online audiences resulting in 13,519 digital engagements
- Umbrella's digital pivot published as an Arts Queensland Case Study
- *Transitions* mentorship program launched in partnership with Townsville City Galleries

2021

- Investment in new digital infrastructure (including new website, audio visual equipment and transition to digital point-of-sale system) via successful funding
- PUNQ festival expanded across North Queensland with a new artistic vision, major site-specific commissions and partnerships with Indigenous Traditional Owners, Cultural organisations and artists through major *Spaces and Places* funding
- PUNQ reached 997,633 people, delivered \$307,424 in income for artists and arts organisations, and delivered an indirect economic impact of \$801,760 to Queensland
- Umbrella presented work again by North Queensland First Nations artists at the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF), having participated annually since 2009; one of Umbrella's participating artists, Susan Peters Nampitjin, won the 2021 CIAF Innovation Award
- Umbrella's touring exhibition *Legacy: Reflections on Mabo* was awarded a GAMAA (see Case Study for details)
- \$215,516 paid to artists - the highest annual income to artists in Umbrella's history

2022

- \$172,088 - Umbrella's highest annual sales of artists' work in the organisation's history
- \$38,000 - Gallery shop sales achieved, justifying increased retail space footprint and investments
- The Studio (re)launched as a comprehensive multi-arts space and workshop program, with specialised silversmithing and analogue photography facilities joining printmaking
- Umbrella's *Discover, Dive, Draw* was launched as a new, partnered cultural tourism experience, with Umbrella artists leading participants to draw underwater on the Great Barrier Reef
- Umbrella toured audience-favourite exhibition *House of Cards* by Gail Mabo to Rockhampton Museum of Art

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OUR STRATEGIC CONTEXT

EXTERNAL ANALYSIS

North Queensland is home to rich, distinctive cultural and artistic voices, landscapes and histories. It offers diverse and enriching perspectives for people from other parts of Australia and the world. The geographical proximity to the larger Indo-Pacific provides international opportunities for collaborations. Growing community interest in these partnerships will continue to realise such relationships, building on the success of the Townsville Pacific Festival (1970-1991).

The precious and diverse local environment of both land and sea is unique and treasured, from the Great Barrier Reef to the tropical rainforest of Paluma of Nywaigi Country. James Cook University’s strong focus on marine biology and tropical science is a huge asset and grows the region’s place-based research, knowledge, and critical discourse. Climate change provides significant risks to these landscapes and the larger ecology, as demonstrated by the 2019 major monsoonal event and the coral bleaching of the reef. Gurambilbarra (Townsville) is also Australia’s largest garrison city.

Gurambilbarra is home to both Traditional Owners of the Countries of the region and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from Countries across Australia. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples represent 8.3% of the total North Queensland population compared to the national average of 3.1%.¹ Historically, the region has been a hotbed of racial tension and First Nations activism. Townsville was one of two local LGAs to vote against the 1967 referendum, symptomatic of the racism in the local community at that time. It was also the mainland home of Eddie Koiki Mabo and his family during their historic Indigenous land rights claim, resulting in the 1992 High Court Mabo Decision. From Umbrella’s founding by a small group of artists (including revered Waanyi artist Judy Watson), it has provided a platform to share Indigenous art, Culture and voices in concert with non-Indigenous voices. The platforming of arts and culture from Umbrella’s beginnings has been significant in the slow and ongoing process of addressing both cultural and structural disadvantages.

Sports hold a large space in the internal and external

public’s imagination of Townsville – the home of the Cowboys, V8s and the newly built stadium. While less recognised, it is essential to note that art and culture deliver very similar economic value as sporting events to the region. Articulating the value of the arts in social and economic metrics is a challenge for the local government. Investment in Umbrella from all levels of government will empower the opportunity of tri-governmental support to deliver significant outcomes which would exponentially leverage the economic value of the arts and culture and the ripple effect of social cohesion and wellbeing.²

The arts ecology is strong and growing in the North. The local collaboration of arts organisations across art forms is vital to finding true momentum. Recent government and private sector investment have facilitated a growing maturity and a tipping point at which the cultural and economic potential can be realised, as demonstrated in Far North Queensland and Cairns. The future investment opportunities lie in supporting the growing capacity of independent arts organisations, cultural tourism and purpose-built infrastructure commensurate with the high levels of art and culture output. Arts Queensland’s increasing attention and investment in our region is tangible, with an AQ staff member permanently based in Townsville for the first time (2022) and an additional position added in 2023. At the federal level, the Labor government recently launched its National Cultural Policy for 2023–2028. Particularly relevant to our region is the commitment to doubling regional arts funding through the Regional Arts Fund and the commitment to “Invest in local arts and cultural infrastructure across Australia. The government has avenues, including the Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program to provide a strategic, nationally consistent mechanism for funding and coordinating projects that transform a place, benefitting communities in regions, regional cities and rural Australia — the program could fund arts and culture precincts.”³

The changing political landscape and its impact on higher education in the arts across Australia has been acutely felt locally with the closure of a bachelor’s degree in visual arts at James Cook University in 2017. It is encouraging to see a TAFE Certificate 3 and Diploma in Visual Arts beginning to rebound after a downturn during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Footnotes: 1. Population of North Queensland 237, 452, 2021 (<https://dbr.abs.gov.au/region.html?lyr=sa4&rgn=318>). | 2. <https://newapproach.org.au/insight-reports/transformational-impacts-of-culture-and-creativity/> | 3. <https://www.arts.gov.au/publications/national-cultural-policy-revive-place-every-story-story-every-place>



Kerrie Everett Horrocks drawing underwater at the Museum of Underwater Art (MOUA) for Umbrella’s partnered *Discover, Dive, Draw*, a two-day cultural and artistic tourism experience.

Also encouraging is that courses were offered free in 2023. However, the ‘brain drain’ phenomenon is real and felt locally with high school graduates heading south for tertiary arts education. This, in turn, affected the retention of artists and recruitment of qualified local staff for arts organisations. In the absence of a bachelor’s degree in visual and performing arts, local arts organisations, including Umbrella, have sought to fill the gap. Still, it is acknowledged that they cannot replace the rigour of an educational institution with current resources.

Underpinning state government arts and cultural policy is the path to Treaty and the 2032 Brisbane Olympics with leveraging of the event planned state-wide, specifically in regard to new infrastructure and through cultural tourism with a strong focus on First Nations voices. Umbrella sees this as an opportunity to showcase emerging and established visual arts practitioners to tell the narrative of North Queensland, especially given our access to rich First Nations images and stories.

North Queensland was relatively sheltered from major impacts of the pandemic. The Queensland government and federal government COVID-relief funding supported the loss of earned income and provided opportunities to ensure business sustainability and continuity.

Umbrella is the largest independent organisation dedicated to the expanded visual arts in the North Queensland region. We take a natural leadership role in advocating for our sector. We partner with other organisations of various sizes and reach, sharing our resources and skills in a non-hierarchical peer exchange model.

INTERNAL ANALYSIS

Umbrella is conceptually and intellectually engaged with global, national and local thinking and practice. We present a strong and extensive program, engaging diverse audiences and supporting artists at all stages of their careers. We service multiple stakeholders across local and national audiences, emerging to established artists, and age demographics, including young people. Future growth is further deepening our current program’s experiences and expanding our reach to new audiences and markets, growing income for artists and cultural workers.

Umbrella has a robust financial management and governance history tested through significant flooding events and the COVID-19 pandemic. Under stress, Umbrella grew our digital and physical business infrastructure, solidifying our sustainability. We have dedicated resources to diversifying our income, with a particular focus on reaching expanded private sector income. This has resulted in an income increase and successful participation in the Creative Partnerships Plus 1 program for 2023 intended to provide legacy outcomes in this area.

Over the last four years, we have grown our program and reach, whilst the core team has grown incrementally in experience level and quantity through investments from earned and private income, Arts Queensland core funding and project-based contracts. However, it is clear the current output is not commensurate with the number of staff.

As we advocate for crucial arts infrastructure for North Queensland, we acknowledge the internal challenge of the perennial premises leasing for our gallery and studio business operations. Over our 37 years, we have leased and fitted out numerous buildings, and due to reasons beyond our control, we have been forced to move, losing the capital investment each time. A permanent home, ideally purpose-built, is necessary to provide ongoing security and sustainable growth to meet market demand.

Umbrella has a critical role in expanding our national and international narratives, leveraging our local cultural output to grow the local economy and reaffirming our position as a leading regional platform for art and culture in Australia. Over the last few years, considering the external environment, we have taken the opportunity to look to the future, grow our business, and produce a distinctive program. We take audiences on journeys inside and outside the gallery – (re)defining what is possible with a larger platform and through meaningful partnerships. Now is the time to cement this good work.



Umbrella's Studio member Wing Hong Leung's photograph reel of local ceramicist and upcoming exhibitor Baylee Griffin with her work, 2022.



Susan Peters Nampitjin, *Travelling around waterholes along sturt creek*, 2021, Mulberry dyed hessian, wool, jute and cotton string, 45 x 69cm. Presented by Umbrella at Cairns Indigenous Art Fair, 2022.

STRATEGIC GOALS





1. INCUBATE

creative practice

We act as an incubator for new creative voices and critical discourse; commissioning new work, providing arts education and career pathways for artists and artworkers.

We believe in the centrality of artists and arts in contributing to the larger critical dialogues of our contemporary society.

walk-with
slow-travel
strong-silence
deep-listen
weak-existence
positive-failure

un-know
de-landscape
un-learn

ART & POLITICS

STRATEGY 1.1

ARTISTIC DIRECTION

Develop and program projects that break new ground and are not constrained by history or industry conventions and standards to empower innovation, new creative practice and critical discourse.

STRATEGY 1.2

COMMISSION ARTISTS

Support the development of new work for exhibitions, arts festivals, art in public spaces and art fairs that introduces artists' work to new audiences, including CIAF, NAFA, AFCM and our very own PUNQ Festival. Promote a thriving culture by increasing economic opportunities for artists.

STRATEGY 1.3

STUDIO PRACTICE

Provide a creative hub for hands-on experimentation and collaboration through an onsite studio, with residency opportunities, unique workshop experiences and membership offering 24/7 key access.

STRATEGY 1.4

STIMULATE CREATIVITY AND EXPERIMENTATION

Display contemporary art by artists from outside our region in our programs and projects, to provide opportunities for North Queensland artists and community to engage in broader conversations with arts practice.

STRATEGY 1.5

PROVIDE ARTS EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL BRIDGING PROGRAMS

Provide high quality art programs which complement the school curriculum, along with programs that encourage school leavers to continue their arts practice and pursue careers within the North Queensland arts industry. Address the lack of local tertiary art courses by providing access to resources, formal mentoring and support to encourage TAFE students to continue pursuing a career in the arts after graduation.

STRATEGY 1.6

CAREER PATHWAYS FOR ARTS WORKERS

Provide entry-level career opportunities for arts workers in North Queensland to open doorways into a career in the arts, including but not limited to curating, exhibition display and installation, marketing and design and business management.

The creative publication for Umbrella's 2022 curated *POSTWORLD* exhibition, featuring artwork and text by Keith Deverell (Blue Screen of Death). Artwork: *Surface Tension*, 2016, Compressed concrete sheet, 56 x 100cm. Photograph: Amanda Galea.



Lava Rising (The Red Chador, series), 2019. Performance by Anida Yoeu Ali, Photography by Masahiro Sugano, image courtesy of Studio Revolt. Anida Yoeu Ali's practice and work will be showcased during a residency and solo exhibition at Umbrella, 2023.

2. AMPLIFY voices

Our artistic direction focuses on providing platforms for expressing and amplifying our distinctive and authentic contemporary North Queensland voices both in and outside our region.

North Queensland is home to situated knowledge, creative practice and storytelling of global significance, which we platform.

STRATEGY 2.1 ARTISTIC DIRECTION

Prioritise platforming North Queensland artists in conversation with their national and international peers.

STRATEGY 2.2 FIRST NATIONS

Prioritise opportunities to acknowledge, uncover, showcase and grow the rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island arts and culture in North Queensland.

STRATEGY 2.3 EXPANDING THE REACH OF OUR VOICES

Showcase contemporary art from North Queensland through exhibitions, PUNQ Festival, art fair participation and tours in other parts of Queensland, Australia and internationally. Attract and retain new and existing audiences through engaging storytelling and innovative visitor experiences, including public events and cultural tourism.

STRATEGY 2.4 INVEST IN MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Invest in a new marketing and communication strategy to deliver the organisation's goals; further investigate and provide a new contemporary brand identity and dedicated human resources in this area.



Kirwan State High School students admiring the Bagu and Jiman in Philip Denham's *Gayjal Gunjuy* exhibition at Umbrella, 2021. This exhibition was the first in a renewed partnership with Giringun Aboriginal Art Centre to present solo exhibitions annually by emerging First Nations artists at Umbrella. Photograph: Kerrie Everett Horrocks.

3. ENGAGE

audiences and communities

We enrich a thriving culture, using art to create connection, inspiration, inclusion and expansion of our communities.

We believe art is for everyone and seek to create new audiences to enjoy and appreciate our region's contemporary arts experiences.

STRATEGY 3.1
COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Program activities, exhibitions and workshops that strengthen the sense of inclusion and connection in our community by including themes that resonate with the experience of diverse groups.

STRATEGY 3.2
ENGAGING EXPERIENCES

Engage audiences in new and exciting ways, keeping the experience of the gallery, The Studio and public programs relevant, inspiring and accessible. Use digital technology to extend the experiences of our program into the online realm. Provide opportunities to deepen the understanding of contemporary art and the exhibitions on display through high-quality public activities and workshops.

STRATEGY 3.3
RELATIONSHIPS THAT KEEP NORTH QUEENSLAND CONNECTED TO THE WORLD

Through collaborative initiatives and projects centred on exchange, strengthen relationships and engage in dialogue with artists, communities and organisations from elsewhere in Australia and internationally, with a particular focus on the Indo-Pacific region.



(L to R) Katina Davidson, Judy Watson, Gail Mabo, Kate O'Hara and Auslan interpreter Candace during a panel discussion about *Legacy: Reflections on Mabo*, Umbrella's touring exhibition, at the hosting gallery State Library of Queensland. Photograph courtesy of Museums and Galleries QLD.

4. ADVOCATE
for new models and investment communities

We advocate for equity in the valuing of art, destabilising traditional notions of centre and periphery.

We see the arts as an ecosystem with all parts related – a shifting constellation of entities which are intimately connected and nourish each other.

STRATEGY 4.1
SOFT ADVOCACY THROUGH OUR ARTISTIC DIRECTION

Produce an extraordinary and unique program, which affirms regional art and culture's position of importance in the national and international arts landscape.

STRATEGY 4.2
LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Operate in North Queensland in a networked model, partnering, sharing resources and knowledges with other arts organisations; embracing opportunity and navigating challenges together. We grow and deepen our engagement and collaboration locally, in Australia and internationally.

STRATEGY 4.3
COLLABORATE TO GROW MARKET

Work with our peers and find innovative ways to build local and international markets and draw new markets to engage with North Queensland creative practices.

STRATEGY 4.4
BOLD ADVOCATE AND ACTIVIST

Advocate to all levels of government and the private sector for greater investment in the arts in North Queensland.

STRATEGY 4.5
ARTS INFRASTRUCTURE AND A PERMANENT HOME FOR UMBRELLA

Work with all three levels of government to deliver arts infrastructure for North Queensland that is commensurate and worthy of our region's unique artistic and cultural voices. Address the cycle (over the last 37 years) of lost investment in leasing, fitting out premises and moving, by delivering a permanent home for Umbrella.

CASE STUDY

Legacy: Reflections on Mabo Touring Exhibition

Legacy: Reflections on Mabo was an Umbrella touring exhibition which celebrated the life and legacy of Eddie Koiki Mabo, the late Indigenous Australian land rights activist. It commemorated the 25th anniversary of the landmark Mabo v. Queensland (No. 2) decision, while also examining and celebrating Mabo as a multifaceted, personal and political man with strong connections to place and the preservation of Culture.

Co-curated by Gail Mabo, Dr Jonathan McBurnie and Kellie Williams, the exhibition brought together a selection of 22 works by 25 Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists in the spirit of reconciliation. Each artist responded to an aspect of Mabo’s life that they were drawn to, whether it was his life, politics, activism, or legacy. The works came together in surprising ways with reverence, compassion, anger, sadness and respect.

The high profile exhibiting artists from North Queensland and Australia all fostered and promoted cross-cultural conversations through their works, providing insights into Eddie Koiki Mabo’s legacy, his significance to North Queensland and broader reconciliation. The extensive reach of the tour to so many galleries and viewers in regions around Australia has meant that these outcomes and wider conversations deeply engaged and enlightened audiences.

Legacy: Reflections on Mabo won the ‘projects by organisations with paid staff’ category in Museums & Galleries Queensland’s 2021 *Gallery and Museum Achievement Awards* (GAMAA). The exhibition toured to 9 Australian venues after Umbrella, amidst 2 natural disasters and the pandemic. It received over 52,000 total visits.

Audience feedback
“A profound reminder that Aboriginal history needs to be taught in schools as a core topic.”

“I felt so moved by this show. It had me in tears. There should be more exhibitions like this. I’m going to have to see it again as there is so much to take in.”

“It is important that we continue to reflect, learn and listen in order to make change.”



Tour venues
State Library of Queensland, QLD
Rockhampton Museum of Art, QLD
Bundaberg Regional Art Galleries, QLD
Nautilus Arts Centre, Port Lincoln, SA
Port Pirie Regional Art Gallery, SA
Burrinja, Dandenong Ranges Cultural Centre, VIC
Hawkesbury Regional Gallery, NSW
Maitland Art Gallery, NSW
Redland Art Gallery, QLD
Umbrella Studio Contemporary Arts, QLD

Exhibiting artists
Sonja Carmichael and Elisa Jane Carmichael
Toby Cedar
Dian Darmansjah
Katina Davidson
Blak Douglas and Adam Geczy
Shane Fitzgerald
Hayley Megan French
Marion Gaemers
Patricia Hoffee
David Jones
Ian Kaddy
Talitha Kennedy
Jo Lankester
Veronica Lulu and Kim Mahood
Ronald McBurnie
Arone Meeks
Jim Paterson
Tommy Pau
Obery Sambo
Anneke Silver
Ken Thaiday Snr
Judy Watson

Legacy: Reflections on Mabo was presented by Umbrella and toured by Museums & Galleries Queensland. It was generously assisted by the Australian Government’s Visions of Australia Program and the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments. It was supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland and the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.

Images p.21-22: Toby Cedar, *Headress (Dari)* (detail), 2019, Bamboo cane, twine, feathers, pearl shell, kulup bean, 65 x 45cm; Anneke Silver, *Euphemism*, 2018, acrylic paint and chalk on stretched canvas, 91.5 x 122cm. Both works exhibited in *Legacy: Reflections on Mabo*. Photographs: Carl Warner.



CASE STUDY

PUNQ 2021 Festival

Pop Up North Queensland (PUNQ) festival grew in 2021, from a series of pop-up art spaces in the Gurambilbarra (Townsville) CBD in previous iterations, to a North Queensland wide dynamic visual and performance art festival. With a newly defined artistic vision, we presented an immersive journey across and upon Countries – including Gurambilbarra (Townsville), Yunbenun (Magnetic Island), Warrgamay, Nywaigi & Bandjin Country (Hinchinbrook) and Gudjal Country (Charters Towers). PUNQ 2021 celebrated the distinctive landscapes of NQ, inspiring cultural exchange and transforming perceptions, providing unique creative experiences for locals and visitors.

In 2021 we introduced a site-specific ephemeral art program. Leading Queensland and national contemporary artists and arts organisations were invited to choose a NQ site and engage with its histories, present and / or futures. This resulted in a truly unique, challenging, and sometimes playful program of work that drew audiences across the region to engage with ‘place’ in new ways.

David Rowe’s crop circles installation in the sugar cane fields of Ingham, *Site #272*, reimagined otherness and the alien through satirical devices. A ‘tin foil hat’ was mandatory to enter the work and defend against ‘thought excavation’. Jill Chism’s meditative salt printing direct on the Pallarenda beach in *Preserve/Conserve* engaged audiences in local environmental challenges for the reef and its sealife inhabitants. *Both Ways*, a First Nations artists’ billboard exhibition connected our program on the mainland from Warrgamay, Nywaigi & Bandjin Country (Hinchinbrook) to Gudjal Country (Charters Towers) whilst illuminating often unheard stories of the Traditional Owners of Australia. On Yunbenun (Magnetic Island), Jenny Mulcahy invited us to explore the early quarantine history of the island in her immersive installation *The Mark*, while Jan Hynes’ *Drop Bears* offered a playful journey to spot mythological drop bears on the Forts Walk. On Gurambilbarra, Dancenorth asked festival goers to step into the unknown in their mysterious new site-

specific performance *World Interior*. The iconic secret location was revealed to be a derelict Queenslander home. Pleasingly, a number of the commissions will be remounted for new audiences in the near future.

Working on Country in this way saw the PUNQ team consulting with Traditional Owners across the region to provide Indigenous agency in the projects and to ensure that Umbrella followed cultural protocols. The team also worked alongside Townsville City Council to achieve site permissions and developed connections with conservation park specialists (including rangers of Pallarenda and Magnetic Island) for information about sustainable practices whilst working in these locations. It was important that Countries were nurtured in these commissions.

Audience feedback
“*Pandemics aside, this biennial festival is undoubtedly its most ambitious thus far. While it was impossible to view and experience everything, what I did manage to see was interesting, unusual, and remarkable, and hats off to Umbrella for creating such an event by partnering with local arts and cultural organisations across the four locations in the region.*”
- Review by Trevor Keeling, ArtsHub, 12 Aug 2021
www.artshub.com.au/news/reviews/performance-and-exhibition-review-pop-up-north-queensland-punq-2021-townsville-and-surrounding-regional-towns-2494716/

“*Different locations were the best. It was nice to travel and see the variety and get familiar with nature and the environment. It was great seeing the event expand to other regions! PUNQ is representing regional NQ in a meaningful way.*”

“(At) ‘PUNQ 2021’ there is a deliberate sense of commitment to honour and welcome First Nations and Australian collaborations to engage with the distinct landscapes of North Queensland and to ‘reimagine expectations, transform perceptions and provide unique creative experiences for locals and visitors alike.’”

“*It’ll certainly intrigue people’: roadside art tells hard truths about Indigenous history.*”
- Article by Lorena Allam, The Guardian, 7 Aug 2021
www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/aug/07/itll-certainly-intrigue-people-roadside-art-tells-hard-truths-about-indigenous-history

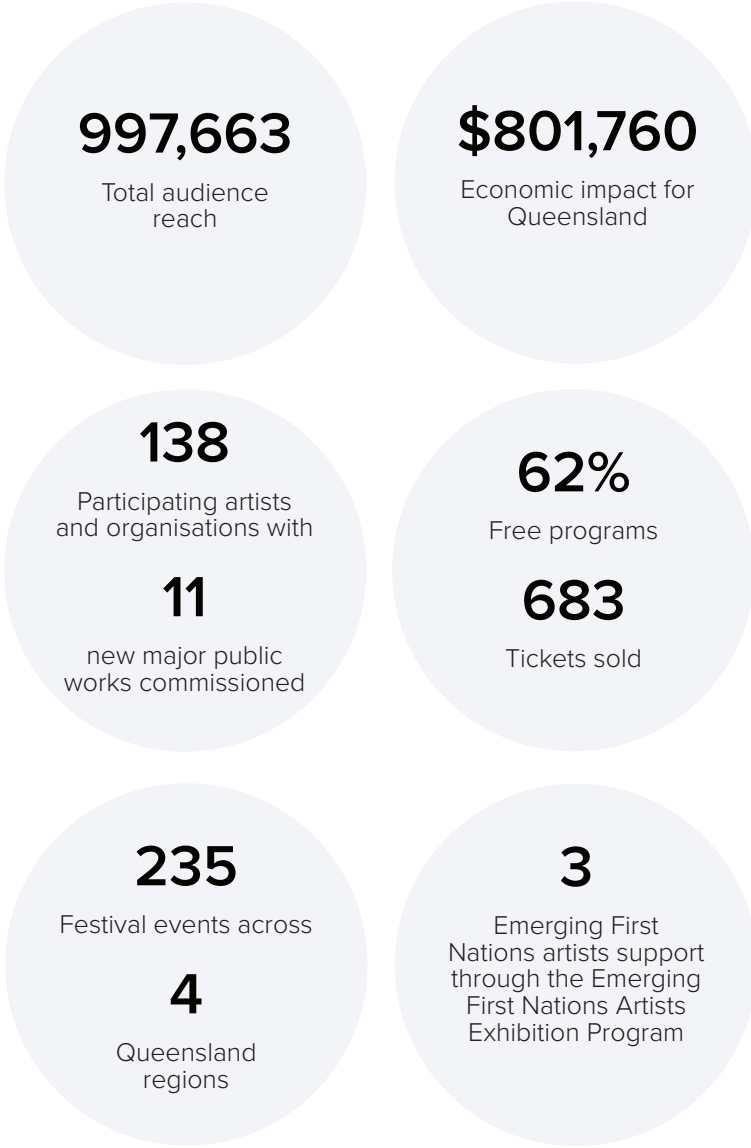


Image p.24: Jill Chism, *Preserve/Conserve – Invocation #3: Openness – Going with the Flow*, 2021, Ephemeral salt-printing performance in situ Cape Pallarenda on Wulgurukaba & Bindal Country (Townsville). PUNQ 2021 Commission. Photograph: Aaron Ashley.



CASE STUDY

Transitions Mentorship Program

Run in partnership between Umbrella and Townsville City Galleries, the *Transitions* program supports emerging artists (including recent arts graduates from high-school and TAFE) to develop their skills and confidence to begin forging a career in the arts.

External factors, including the closure of the local university fine arts course, have led many young people moving from North Queensland (NQ) to larger cities to study visual arts in recent years. *Transitions* has begun addressing gaps in professional development and arts education for emerging artists. The program aims to foster the NQ arts ecology and the development of future professional artists.

One of the key features of *Transitions* is the personalised mentorship component, which provides early career artists with individualised support and guidance. Mentors work one-on-one with participants to help them develop their artistic practice and to provide guidance on navigating the art world.

Emerging artists apply to be mentored, with the successful artist mentees able to self-define their projects and work with galleries to achieve an established North Queensland artist mentor. The mentees benefit from studio practice time, group session intensives, and artwork critiques with their peers, guest mentors, and galleries' staff. The established artist mentors have included Alison McDonald, Anneke Silver, Ron McBurnie, Jane Hawkins and Laura Castell. The individualised mentee projects have spanned digital illustration, green-screen videography, mould-cast ceramics, etching, free-motion stitching and textiles, oil painting, kiln-formed glass and projection mapping.

Legacy outcomes have included a group exhibition of mentees' work at Perc Tucker Regional Gallery, mentees successfully applying for innovative solo exhibitions, and continued networking relationships between the artists. There has been resounding appreciation from the participants.

Participant testimonials

"The most beneficial part about completing the Transitions program was that I am creating a new body of work that is unexpected, fresh, and much further advanced than my previous work."

"I am immensely grateful to have been included in the Transitions program. It has given me support to develop my ideas and skills. It has also broadened my knowledge of emerging and experienced artists in the Townsville area... it has given me confidence to progress my artistic career."

22

Participating artists
(11 emerging artist
mentees and 11
mentors from 2021-
2022, not including
guest mentors
and staff)

193.5hrs

of mentorship
and professional
development
(2021-2022)



2022 *Transitions* mentee Sonia Ward with her mentor Alison McDonald experimenting together at the Aitkenvale Library using their green screen equipment. Upon completion of the *Transitions* program, Sonia applied for her first solo exhibition at Umbrella which is now programmed to be part of Umbrella's 2024 program.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS (EVALUATION FRAMEWORK)

STRATEGIC GOAL	STRATEGY/ACTIVITY	QUANTITATIVE	QUALITATIVE
1. INCUBATE <i>creative practice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- We continue to act as an incubator for new creative voices, critical discourse, experimentation and innovation.- We commission new work, providing arts education and career pathways for artists and artworkers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Number of creative developments.- Number of participants in our studio programs.- Attendance of our public programs.- Number of partnership collaborations.- Number of participants in our vocational pathway opportunities.- Income delivered to artists and artworkers in the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Feedback from audiences, peers, partners and stakeholders via critical reviews and surveys.
2. AMPLIFY <i>voices</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Our artistic direction focuses on providing platforms for expressing and amplifying our distinctive and authentic contemporary North Queensland voices both in and outside our region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Number of people reached by our programs locally, nationally and internationally.- Percentage of participation of North Queensland creatives in our programs.- Number of First Nations creatives in our programs.- Number of programs platformed outside the region and digitally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Feedback from artists- National recognition of NQ voices
3. ENGAGE <i>audiences and communities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- We continue to enrich a thriving culture, using art to create connection, inspiration, inclusion and expansion of our community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Number of new partnerships developed in the region and beyond.- Number of new people reached by our programs locally, nationally and internationally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Feedback from audiences, peers, partners and stakeholders via critical reviews and surveys.
4. ADVOCATE <i>for new models and investment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- We advocate for equity in the valuing of the arts, destabilising traditional notions of centre and periphery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Economic value of arts in North Queensland in comparison to other regions.- Number of ne or maintained partnerships.- Value of art sales.- Value of funding to regional arts.- Income from private sector.- Progress of art infrastructure developments in North Queensland.- High level talks with government about Umbrella's future infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- North Queensland recognised critically for its contribution to the arts by audience surveys and critical reviews.



Warren Ogden, *Striped pot*, 2021, BRT buff raku with glaze; Stoneware firing, 15 x 15 x 10cm. Exhibited in *Presence* by Catherine and Warren Ogden at Umbrella, 2022. Photograph: Amanda Galea.

HIGH LINE RISK ASSESSMENT

RISKS	OUTCOME	LIKELIHOOD	IMPACT	MITIGATION STRATEGY
OPERATIONAL	Loss of board/staff knowledge and stability	Medium	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Consideration of succession planning- Excellent handover provisions and procedures- Professional development opportunities- Flexible working environment- Continue to invest in our people to grow our culture of positivity, engagement, passion, expertise, and accountability, providing a great place to work and volunteer
	Over-commitment / burnout of staff	Medium	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Monitor workloads and staff levels- Make work plans sustainable and realistic- Increase funding to maintain salary growth of the core team roles at industry standards- Management to regularly review human resource capacity concerning programs and operations- Review job descriptions and duty statements and respond where appropriate- Invest in mental health support program by certified provider accessible by all staff
	Challenges in recruiting qualified, experienced staff	Medium	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Continue to build local capacity by offering traineeships- Offer competitive salaries to attract talent to the region
FINANCIAL	Cut in / loss of operational funding	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Maintain reserve base and diversify revenue base- Board leadership in fundraising and profile building
	Failure to attract project-based funding	Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Present innovative dynamic projects; have a strong rationale for the project and match with funding body- Meet or exceed all funding requirements and guidelines for previous projects- Do not proceed with the project and cut back on core expenses if project is contributing to core income
	Government priorities alter	Medium	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Broker partnerships and alliances with a wide range of funding bodies, including philanthropic- Link activities and outcomes to government funding priorities- Common vision and a strong base- Adapt and allow for the organisation to expand and contract in response to funding
	Self-generated income targets do not realise projections	Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Consider researched market projections- Conservative approach for the first couple of years- Responsive to changes within the marketplace
	Economic recession	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Organisation expands and contracts in response to economic climate- Grow diversity of income sources
	Financial irregularities	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Implementation and adherence to financial procedures and organisational policies- Timely financial and artistic reporting, including bimonthly financials provided to the Board and quarterly meetings of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee- Two signatures required for all payments and external annual audit of financials- Pay particular attention to liabilities, including provisios for staff leave.
	Rapid inflation causing major expense increases	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Allow for at least 5% (CPI as at June 2022) in all forward budgeting- Monitor costs of key elements: fuel, accommodation, freight, flights for higher-than-CPI increases



Room view of *Accretion: Mapping the Landscape* by Jo Lankester, the first major solo exhibition held in Umbrella's new gallery space at 408 Flinders St in 2019.

RISKS	OUTCOME	LIKELIHOOD	IMPACT	MITIGATION STRATEGY
NATURAL DISASTER	Major flooding affects premises and operational capacity again	Medium	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Store items of value including artworks and electrical equipment off the floor - Check the premises during the wet season for minor leaks that worsen - Work with landlord to maintain building drainage - Engage in climate-related discussions at state and national levels to ensure our region's unique context is represented
PANDEMICS (INCLUDING COVID-19)	Artists or staff are sick or test positive and are required to isolate	High	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - COVID-safe policy in place - Work from home accommodation of staff - Work plans of all staff to enable handover and business continuity - Infection control training for staff and volunteers
	Regional and remote communities lock down	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use learnings from previous lockdowns to move program digital where appropriate
MARKET	Decrease in audience attendance or satisfaction	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of a communications strategy and implement the marketing action plan - Develop innovative quality NQ work which has the potential for national and international engagement outcomes - Deliver a well-marketed and promoted program through social media, venue engagement and traditional promotional strategies - Offer a diverse and dynamic program - Develop new audiences and consolidate existing relationships - Respond to feedback where appropriate

Lynnette Griffiths & Marion Gaemers, *Estuarine Still Life*, 2019-2020, Abandoned shopping trolley, ghost nets (reclaimed fishing net and rope), 210 x 135 x 120cm, in Lynnette Griffiths' and Marion Gaemers' *Final Curtain* exhibition at Umbrella, 2020.





PERSONNEL AND COLLABORATORS

STAFF

KATE O'HARA	Director
ALAN MARLOWE	Business and Partnerships Manager
DANIEL QUALISCHEFSKI	Gallery Manager and Curator
JASMIN GÜNTHER	Arts Program Manager
AMANDA GALEA	Administration and Marketing Officer
ERIN RICARDO	Public Programs & Retail Assistant (role share)
MARGARET ROBERTSON	Public Programs & Retail Assistant (role share)

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

ALAN CARPENTER	Chairperson
SARAH SULLIVAN	Deputy Chairperson
PROF. STEPHEN NAYLOR	Secretary
BRIAN TUCKER CPA	Treasurer
SUSAN PETERS NAMPITJIN	Member
LYDIA RIGANO	Member
INEKE DANE	Member

ONGOING *program partnerships*

Townsville City Galleries
Townsville City Council
Grand Hotel
PressNorth Printmakers
Museums & Galleries QLD

NEW *program partnerships*

(2019-ongoing)

QAGOMA
Big Eye Arts & Cultural Centre
Girringun Aboriginal Art Centre
Mike Carney Creative Industries Centre
Museum of Underwater Art
James Cook University Special Collections
North Australian Festival of Arts
Regional Art Services Network
Institute of Modern Art
Maningrida Arts and Culture
Australian Festival of Chamber Music
Museums & Galleries NSW
Dancenorth

Image p.33: David Rowe's sculptural stretched canvas works in his crop-circles installation *Site #272* in situ in a cane field, commissioned by Umbrella for PUNQ 2021. Photograph: Gav Rossetti.

UMBRELLA STUDIO CONTEMPORARY ARTS

408 Flinders St, Gurambilbarra (Townsville), Queensland 4810

07 4772 7109 | admin@umbrella.org.au | www.umbrella.org.au

Gallery open Tues-Fri 9am-5pm | Sat-Sun 9am-1pm | Closed Mon, public holidays & during exhibition install weeks.

Follow our social media pages for updates | IG: @umbrellastudiotsv | FB: UmbrellaStudio

Umbrella Studio Contemporary Arts respectfully acknowledges the Wulgurukaba of Gurambilbarra and Yunbenun and the surrounding groups of our region - Bindal, Gugu Badhan, Nywaigi, Warrgamay, Bandjin and Gudjal - as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather, share and celebrate local creative practice. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the first people of Australia. They have never ceded sovereignty and remain strong in their enduring connection to land and Culture.