

# healing ways

## ART WITH INTENT

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## Kopi: building an intercultural understanding of grief and loss

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**Date:** 17 September, 10am-4pm, 18 September, 10am-1pm

**Audience:** Mental health professionals, art therapists and artists (Maximum 16 people)

**Where:** The Dax Centre, Kenneth Myer Building, University of Melbourne, Genetics Lane off Royal Parade, Melbourne, Vic, 3010

**Cost:** Full \$395, Concession \$350 (lunch, refreshments and materials included)

### *Grief and Loss*

We all know the feelings of mad, sad, bad and glad, yet little is done to address the huge emotions that embraces all of these – grief and loss. Join artist Maree Clarke and artist and researcher Robyne Latham in an experiential workshop exploring art making for healing within both Aboriginal and non Aboriginal cultures. Participants will be guided through a process of building and decorating clay head ware (Kopi) to support a deepened understanding of Aboriginal culture and the connections between arts and emotional wellbeing. The workshop will address 'Sorry Business', with the greatest respect.

*This workshop takes courage on the behalf of the participants and the facilitators.*

Participants should expect the following outcomes;

- Strengthen cultural competencies and capacity to work effectively in cross-cultural contexts.
- Develop understanding of the application of art for wellbeing through experiential engagement in a process of art for healing.
- Integrate understanding of grief, loss and intergenerational trauma.
- Produce your own Kopi, which you can take home with you.

Although it is requested that participants do not attempt to replicate the Kopi making process in their individual practice, it is intended that facilitated engagement with this process will inspire ideas for the delivery of art for wellbeing.

### *The Kopi mourning cap*

The Kopi mourning cap represents loss, sorrow and grief. Aboriginal women would cut off their hair, weave a net of emu sinew and place the sinew on their head. They'd then cover it with several layers of gypsum, a white river clay, forming the Kopi. These Kopi could weigh up to 7kg and were a signifier of the wearer being in a state of grief. There is documentation of men also wearing the Kopi mourning cap. Women wore the Kopi from two weeks to six months depending on their relationship to the deceased. At the end of their mourning period the Kopi was taken off and placed on the grave of their deceased loved one.

In this workshop the making and decorating of the Kopi will be done with respect and reverence for the revitalization of this mourning practice, within a contemporary context.

*Men and women are encouraged to attend.*

Catering for lunch and afternoon tea on the first day and morning tea on the second will be provided. Please advise of any special dietary requirements.

For further information contact Kate Richards  
E [kate.richards@daxcentre.org](mailto:kate.richards@daxcentre.org)

Bookings: <http://healingways.daxcentre.org>  
**Wednesday 3 September.**



## Healing Ways: Art with Intent

15 May – 17 October 2014

While the cultural, aesthetic and economic benefits of the Australian Aboriginal art industry have been well documented, this exhibition seeks to explore contemporary Indigenous arts practice as a site of healing and a resource for emotional wellbeing. Artworks will be revealed as a source of resilience and cultural strength, as well as a medium to address the intergenerational effects of trauma experienced by Aboriginal people throughout a history of colonisation and dispossession.

The exhibition is presented as part of a larger project investigating the emotional aspects of Aboriginal art and its potential for healing among Aboriginal communities. The exhibition, along with a symposium and web-based resource, have been developed through extensive consultation with community leaders and experts in the field.

Included will be artworks and projects by **Maree Clarke**, Bindi Cole, **Robyne Latham**, **Sally M Mulda**, **Yhonnie Scarce**, **Dennis Thorpe**, **Patsy Smith**, **Peter Waples-Crowe** and **Lisa Waup**, along with works from community art workshops in Victoria, Papunya and the Kimberley.

**Maree Clarke**, a Yorta Yorta, Mutti Mutti woman with connections to BoonWurrung country, is from Mildura in northwest Victoria. Along with mentoring, nurturing and promoting a diversity of contemporary southeast Aboriginal artists Maree's career has pivoted around the reclamation of southeast Australian Aboriginal art practices. More recently her work (along with fellow artists, Vicki Couzens, Lee Darrock and Treahna Hamm) has explored the reclamation of possum- skin cloak making and decorating.

**Robyne Latham** is a Yamatji woman, originally from Western Australia who has lived in Melbourne for the past 35 years. Her art practice seamlessly traverses a number of mediums, from clay, to copper fabrication and bronze, to egg tempera and installation. Latham describes herself as a social sculptor with an emphasis on aesthetic action. Much of her more recent artwork is, and has been, dedicated to the Stolen Generations of Australia.

Facilitators Maree Clarke and Robyne Latham hold Masters in Fine Art and their artworks are represented both nationally and internationally in private and public collections.

The Dax Centre promotes mental health and wellbeing by fostering a greater understanding of the mind, mental illness and trauma through art and creativity. It incorporates the Cunningham Dax Collection, a collection of over 15,000 works created by people with an experience of mental illness and trauma.

The Dax Centre's activities include: an annual program of exhibitions, as well as touring exhibitions that travel interstate and internationally; an education program for secondary and tertiary students; public programs, professional development and research.

<http://healingways.daxcentre.org>

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Image: Maree Clarke wearing her own Kopi cap.  
Robyne Latham photographer.

