

Two community focused artist in residency projects situated at Myuna farm Dandenong.

Cheryle Bannon: Cheryle Bannon is a practicing artist and a part time teacher at Dandenong High School. In 2008 Cheryle worked on two artist in residency projects at Myuna Farm with two very different groups. One group involved working on the creation of a totem pole for the new friendship garden at Dandenong learning Centre Myuna which is an alternative setting for disengaged youth. This involved working with a small group of eight students and the Myuna staff. The other project involved working with five Doveton and Endeavour Hills primary schools: Chalcot Lodge Doveton Heights, Doveton North, Eummemering Primary School and James Cook, Schools and one secondary school, Endeavour Hills SC, on the School Community Approaches to Drug Education (SCADE) mosaic pathway project. This is a Doveton Endeavour Hills Cluster Schools initiative: Part of the SCADE project:

One project involved a small group of students who the artist worked closely with. This mosaic project was completed using the direct method. The other was a large groups of students that rotated through five week cycles. This mosaic project was completed using the indirect method. This is part of a growing body of community art works at Myuna farm in Kidds Road Dandenong, Victoria.

Artist in Residence: Project 1- Cheryle Bannon.

Second term 2008: Dandenong Learning Centre Myuna- Myuna Totem Pole Friendship Garden (with ongoing mosaic additions).

Cheryle Bannon work as an artist in residence with the Dandenong Learning Centre, Myuna for disengaged youth during term one 2008. The job was to coordinate a mosaic piece for the Myuna Totem Pole Friendship Garden.

My involvement as artist in residence enabled me to work on a powerful collaborative project. DLC, Myuna offers a 12 week program for students not experiencing success in mainstream schools within the Southern Metropolitan Region that helps connect them to peers, adults and the community. The Totem Pole project is about providing the young people with a lasting reminder of their time at Myuna. This project went for twelve weeks and involved a large time commitment for all involved.



This project was initially developed by Carol Tocknell who is a teacher at Dandenong Learning Centre. As artist in residence Cheryle worked with the Myuna team on the mosaic project with Carol Tocknell, Simon Stokes, (unit teachers), Bernadette Broersen, (social worker) and Karen Stranger (Vice Principle of Dandenong High School), and Myuna farm staff. Much outside assistance was given by from John Tait (construction of the metal armature, attaching and installing final totem pole), and A.J Tocknell (sign design). Bunning's contributed some plants for the friendship garden.

It was a large project and challenging project for these students. The impact was that the students would be leaving something permanent behind that they had made and could be proud of. They learnt to stick to a large project through to completion and to have the sense of fulfilment of leaving a lasting piece of quality work at Myuna.

Design process.

Cheryle worked with a group of eight students. The initial design ideas were developed through group discussion and the idea of a totem pole was agreed upon by the group. Ideas were brainstormed for the final designs and form of the totem pole. During the project students communicated, negotiated and interacted. A scale model of a 3 sided winged totem pole was made so students could get an idea of the shape the totem pole would take.

Cheryle led a discussion on the idea of power animals and each student developed an animal symbol they identified with. These panels would



become the basis for the individual sections that would be placed on the two back panels of the three sided totem pole. Students created rough designs that were then drawn up to scale using an overhead projector and coloured in. Colour contrast and the use of simple shapes was emphasised at this stage.

The hardiboard panels were cut into individual squares and students undercoated each board to seal the boards as they were for outside use. Drawings were transferred to the panels using an overhead projector. Students used their scale drawings to work out size and placement of mosaic tiles. Tiles were cut to size with mosaic cutters before attaching them to the final panels with tile adhesive.

The front panel was a group based design that incorporated large tin sheet wings. The scale model was used as the basis for John Tait (our engineer) to build a steel framework for the mosaic pieces to be attached to. A Maori influenced design was developed by one of the students for the head section of the mosaic. The Myuna Learning centre tree was incorporated into the front panel. Students learnt the basic mosaic skills and techniques. A pattern of curved lines was decided on to visually link the body section on the front panel the head section. The principals of mosaics were taught as students integrated the knowledge into the designs. Colour contrasts were emphasised as the head section was primarily cool colours and the body warmer colours. Strong simple shapes were used, and pattern elements such as border designs helped to link different sections of the panels together. As students finished their individual panels, they helped complete the mosaic front panel.

John attached each panel to the frame with screws and liquid nails. No-more-gaps was used to seal the seams along the edges of the panels to make it watertight. Once the panels were attached the final black and white square tile boarder were added. When the panels had dried overnight, black

grout was applied and rubbed back. The final piece was sealed with a spray sealant while the piece was vertical. The final installation required the totem pole be securely bolted to a cement block. The black grout created a strong contrast to the colourful tiles and created a powerful 'Guardian Angel' piece that became the centre piece to the friendship garden.

In conclusion

The long term plan is that future groups will add new mosaic pieces to the garden as a growing part of this valuable learning initiative. I look forward to seeing the garden evolve. The totem pole was nick named our 'Guardian Angel' as the wings spread out across the entrance to the garden. It was truly a project of friendship and community spirit that was celebrated with an opening ceremony May 28th, 2008. Since the opening the second group created a series of smaller mosaic paving stones. The 3rd group went on to create a bird bath. Each group will add to the garden over time. I look forward to seeing the garden evolve with future groups.



Term 3 and 4, 2008 and term 1 2009: Doveton and Endeavour Hills Cluster Schools initiative: Part of the SCADE project: Five primary schools and one secondary school working together to create a mosaic pathway.

Mosaic Pathway Project

Cheryle Bannon is an artist in residence who is currently working with five Doveton and Endeavour Hills primary schools and one secondary school, to complete a mosaic project as part of the SCADE project as a drug education initiative.

As part of a Doveton cluster initiative, Cheryle has been working closely with teachers from all schools led by Karin Dudley and Amy Wahid, as the artist in residence for this mosaic pathway, community initiative. This is part of the Doveton Endeavour Hills Cluster drug education project.

The five local Doveton Primary schools include:

- Doveton North Primary School
- James Cook Primary School
- Chalcot Lodge
- Eummernering Primary School
- Doveton Primary School

And Endeavour Hills SC

Who participated?

Students from the five primary schools developed initial ideas for the mosaic pathway based on the theme of healthy lifestyles and drug education. The idea was to keep a positive feel to the image and encourage affirmative approaches such as healthy choices, friendship and exercise rather than focusing on drug images. Cheryle selected images from these designs to use to draw up a colour scale image of the pathway in term 3, 2008.

During late term 3 and term 4 the 5 groups cycled through half and whole day sessions that ran one day a week. Myuna Farm had given the school access to the tractor shed so students worked in a sheltered environment using an



indirect mosaic technique. Groups of ten year four to six students came to Myuna for half day or full day sessions.

This unit of work encompassed both individual and group work and allowed for a variety of skills to be developed and students from most levels of the school to participate. Principles of mosaics that include, spacing, colour, shape and pattern were focused on as students learnt to work with tools and equipment to create this school community based collaborative pathway.

Grade one and two students were involved in making clay hand imprints that were then delivered to Endeavour Hills SC to be fired and glazed. The plan is to incorporate the hands into the border design of the mosaic pathway.

Grades three and four were involved in developing images based on the theme of a healthy lifestyle and friendship.

Year five and six students were involved in designing symbols and power words for the healthy choices topic to be placed into the design.

Mixed groups of students from grade four five and six spent a day a week on the mural in late term 3 and mid term 4, 2008 and mid term 1, 2009.

The aim is to complete the pathway by the end of term 1 and lay the mosaic pathway at the start of term 2. Photographs for this project are of a work in progress where the indirect technique can clearly be seen.

Indirect Technique

Cheryle drew up the pathway design to scale based on the drawing from the year three to six students. Once the final design was drawn up the drawing was enlarged to scale and students from the Doveton North Primary school coloured in the sections to be used as the guide layers for the indirect mosaic method. Firstly the design was cut into smaller working panels that were then taped onto MDF boards. The design was then covered with a sheet of clear plastic. Fibre glass mesh was taped over the plastic covered design. The base boards were ready to start placing the tiles.

The tile colours were separated into small plastic ice-cream containers. Icy-





pole sticks were used to sort through tiles to select size and shape. All students wore safety goggles and as an extra precaution, the tiles cutters were placed on the tile in the correct cutting position and then the student would cut the tile inside a plastic bag. Any small bits of tile would be caught inside the bag rather than flying loose.

Students started working on sections of panels. They worked in small groups of two or three. The first step was to cut out the black outlines by using a tile cutter to cut out black strips from small black tiles. These black mosaic tile strips were used to outline the main shaped in the design to simplify the process for the students who were mostly new to the process. The more confident students moved on to cutting coloured and glass tiles with the tile cutters to fill in the coloured sections and patterns in the design. A focus was placed on the patterns made by like tile colours when filling in areas of the mosaic. The spacing between the tiles was also emphasised.

Once students had worked out tile placement, an icy-pole stick was used to apply PVA to the back of the tile and attach the tiles to the mesh...

Students then filled in the design with a focus on filling in the areas with tiles in like coloured tile patterns. Large tiles were placed between sheets of newspaper and broken with a hammer and then cut into the correct size. The students were told to keep a minimum gap of one icy-pole stick and a maximum of two icy-pole sticks between tiles as the spacing was emphasised. Students filled in the coloured areas from the edges to create

an even spacing. A mixture of glass tiles, ceramic tiles and pebbles were used in the design to create variety and interest. The major challenges for these young students was the spacing and continuing patterns between separate panels and like sections of the design so this was highlighted.

The Endeavour Hills Secondary School art teacher, Lesley Donnelon, was involved in the process of preparing, glazing and firing the ceramic hand tiles made by the Doveton Endeavour Hills Cluster Primary Schools. These tiles will be used as part of a border design around the mosaic pathway which will be laid directly onto the concrete once the main pathway design is completed and laid. Areas such as the rainbow were filled with glass tiles using a triangle pattern and wishing stones.

Once all the mosaic tiles have been glued onto the mesh the panels can be laid. The sections that have been glued onto the fibreglass will be carefully cut off the plastic and laid into position on the concrete pathway using tile adhesive. Once the adhesive is dry, black grout will be applied to complete the mosaic pathway. Sealant will then be applied after the mosaic grout has dried for at least 24 hours. The completed pathway measures approximately 180 cm wide X 1000 length. The boarder will be laid directly onto the pathway after the main section has been laid

This pathway is due to be completed by the end of term 1 2009 and is part of major curriculum innovations within the Doveton Endeavour Hills Cluster Schools initiative as part of the SCADE project.

Co-ordinating the changing groups and the different teachers involved from each school was both a challenging and positive experience. Students ranged in capability and interest level and the challenge was to find tasks that fitted the students. Individual students brought their own unique ideas to the design and formed effective groups. Younger students needed to start at the basic level of outlining the shapes but quickly progressed to the more complex pattern areas.

Artist in residence Conclusion

As a secondary based artist teacher, Cheryle took on the facilitation role of an artist in residence with the five primary school groups and one secondary school. This was a very different setting and was about collaboration and flexibility in approach. Powerful learning stories emerged throughout the project. One student, who struggled with continuing a random pattern, was asking "when can I go home?" With discussion with his teacher (who informed me that this student was disengaged and did not like anything), Cheryle shifted him to the task of outlining shapes. He excelled and worked very well for the rest of the day. At the end of the day he turned to his friend and said "that was the best day". Another student who volunteered to do work closely with Cheryle on the sun section demonstrated a focused, skilful approach to the task and was the best worker in the group. At the end of the day, the teacher informed me that she was surprised because this student was ADHD. It is these alternative learning experiences that can offer success when approached in a flexible

student centred way. The pathway at the time of writing is incomplete as the project is in process and the learning continues.

Conclusion: Collaboration, community and teams

These two very different mosaic artist in residence projects offered vastly different challenges in mosaic techniques and technical issues that needed to be resolved along the way. The team approach taken within these two major projects has created a deep learning platform for all involved. The most powerful part of this learning was the relationships that were built between the students as they worked through a range of processes. A dialogue of understanding developed between the students through the collaborative student centred journey. The students learnt to work in a focused community based projects. This learning experience went beyond normal classroom experiences. The power for me as an artist in residence was to be part of a much larger team of teachers and students who were working together for a common goal. The finished projects reflect the passion and commitment offered by all those involved in this project. Both the 'Guardian Angel' and the Healthy Choices pathway hold positive messages that help build the students self esteem as they look at what they have achieved and can now share with their community.

Cheryle Bannan

Artist and Teacher