

Some People are Stories

# VINCENT SERICO



**EDUCATION RESOURCE**

***Some people are stories* is a touring exhibition in partnership between FireWorks Gallery and Museums & Galleries Queensland. This project is supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland. This project has also been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body, and supported by the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian Federal, State, and Territory Governments.**

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Front cover image:

Vincent Serico, *The Road to Cherbourg*, 2009. Folio print reproduction, 62 x 87 cm. Archival inks on 300gsm Hahnemuehle rag paper. City of Ipswich Collection, Ipswich Art Gallery. Photographer: Mick Richards. Courtesy FireWorks Gallery.

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# HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This Education Resource supports the touring exhibition of Vincent Serico's artworks, *Some people are stories*. There are **two sections** to the Resource:

**Section 1** is aimed at Years 7–10. This section is organised under three themed areas:

- Traditions and Customs
- Contemporary Social Issues and Daily Aboriginal Life
- Massacres / History / Conflicts












**Section 2** (from page 53) comprises activity sheets aimed at Primary students.


















**Both sections** reference reproductions and stories from a Folio of prints by the artist Vincent Serico which is travelling with the exhibition, *Some people are stories* (see pages 11 to 34).

The contents in this first section align with the *Australian Curriculum*, specifically Years 7–10. Key Ideas from each of the **Learning Areas** – English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities and Social Sciences, The Arts, Technologies, Health and Physical Education, Languages – are implemented throughout this Education Resource. Suggested questions and tasks integrate one or more of the **General Capabilities** and/or **Cross-Curriculum Priorities**.

































The following Content Descriptions, sourced from the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts – Visual Arts*, have been used to formulate questions and tasks in this Education Resource.

## Years 7 and 8 Content Descriptions

- Experiment with visual arts conventions and techniques, including exploration of techniques used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, to represent a theme, concept or idea in their artwork (ACAVAM118)    
- Develop ways to enhance their intentions as artists through exploration of how artists use materials, techniques, technologies and processes (ACAVAM119)    
- Develop planning skills for art-making by exploring techniques and processes used by different artists (ACAVAM120)   

- Practise techniques and processes to enhance representation of ideas in their art-making (ACAVAM121)    
- Present artwork demonstrating consideration of how the artwork is displayed to enhance the artist's intention to an audience (ACAVAM122)    
- Analyse how artists use visual conventions in artworks (ACAVAR123)   
- Identify and connect specific features and purposes of visual artworks from contemporary and past times to explore viewpoints and enrich their art-making, starting with Australian artworks including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (ACAVAR124)  
     

## Years 9 and 10 Content Descriptions

- Conceptualise and develop representations of themes, concepts or subject matter to experiment with their developing personal style, reflecting on the styles of artists, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists (ACAVAM125)      
- Manipulate materials, techniques, technologies and processes to develop and represent their own artistic intentions (ACAVAM126)      
- Develop and refine techniques and processes to represent ideas and subject matter (ACAVAM127)   
- Plan and design artworks that represent artistic intention (ACAVAM128)    
- Present ideas for displaying artworks and evaluate displays of artworks (ACAVAM129)  
  
- Evaluate how representations communicate artistic intentions in artworks they make and view to inform their future art-making (ACAVAR130)    
- Analyse a range of visual artworks from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their visual art-making, starting with Australian artworks, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider international artworks (ACAVAR131)      








Educators are invited to select and modify the questions and tasks in this Education Resource to provide opportunities for different levels of engagement for both phases of learning. Whether the suggestions are employed before, during or after a visit to the exhibition, is at the discretion of the individual teacher.

#### PLEASE NOTE:




Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students should be advised that this collection contains names and images of deceased people. Additionally, visitors should be aware that the exhibition may contain culturally-sensitive materials and certain aspects may not be seen as appropriate in today's climate. However, the artist's words and images reflect the times embodied in these artworks.

## ICONS USED IN THIS RESOURCE


### GENERAL CAPABILITIES

-  literacy
-  numeracy
-  information and communication technology capability
-  creative and critical thinking
-  personal and social capability
-  ethical understanding
-  intercultural understanding

### CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES

-  Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures
-  Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia
-  Sustainability

### TEACHERS' HELP

-  This Helping Hand icon will appear when notes or answers are deemed to assist educators.

# GLOSSARY

WORD	MEANING
Bora ring	A marked circle of ground, sacred to Aboriginal Australians, where tribal ceremonies are conducted.
Bush tucker	Food collected from the natural environment, typically native plants and animals.
Corroboree	A traditional Aboriginal Australian dance ceremony. It may be an informal gathering or a sacred ritual, where participation is restricted.
Jiman	An Aboriginal Australian tribe living in the Upper Dawson River region near Taroom and Carnarvon Gorge, eastern Central Queensland. Also referred to as: Yiman, Yeeman, Eoman, and Iman. Artist Vincent Serico's father and grandfather were Jiman.
Mandananyi	An Aboriginal Australian tribe from the western district of Queensland, around Roma. Their involvement in this area dates to 9,000 years ago.
Map legend or key	The map legend, or key, provides essential information to assisting understanding of the map. Often symbols or colours are used to represent items on a map.
Native police	An Indigenous police force selected from Aboriginal tribal groups who occupy territory far from that in which they work. This is done in the hope that these police will remain neutral in their interactions with local Aboriginal Australians.
Squatter	Colonials who settled on government land to run stock, initially without permission, but later with a lease or licence.
Trooper	A low-ranked policeman or soldier during colonial times in Australia.
Yumba	An Aboriginal camp usually located on the edge of towns.

# FROM THE EXHIBITION CURATOR

## MICHAEL EATHER

In the early 1990s when I first encountered the extraordinary body of work by Queensland artist Vincent Serico, I was immediately impressed by his vision and commitment to ‘painting the stories’, but even more so, by his vivid interpretations of our shared social history. Vincent’s art touches people with an exceptional grace. For those who subscribe to any idealised egalitarianism, Vincent’s images may signal a challenge to them that this can often mask the ‘real life’ of Aboriginality. For others, more cynical and dismissive of Aboriginal culture and history, Vincent’s paintings provide salient visual testaments of a robust, holistic culture that has been, to a great degree, left in ruins. Vincent paints the mask but he also lifts the mask. His personal history combined with skill, his experiences and artistic perspectives, made him the ideal narrator.


Vincent, at four years of age, was separated from his immediate family by the white administration. During the 1950s he grew up on the Cherbourg ‘mission’, when the policies of segregation and assimilation were at their peak. Surprisingly, Vincent seemed comfortably resigned to his lot in life. He always retained a deep fascination of the stories, customs and spiritual beliefs of his forbears, and ultimately saw it as his mission to paint about it all.

After growing up in Cherbourg dormitories, Vincent recounts: “When I was about 14, I lived with the Old Fella for a couple of years in Brisbane. I was painting Aboriginal and Islander paintings for, they used to call them, the DNA, Department of Native Affairs. They used to do all the tourist stuff... When I was sixteen I started travelling, ring-barking. Took off, me and the Old Fella couldn’t get on.”<sup>1</sup>

Vincent endured many struggles in his own life — with poverty and with alcohol. Yet, as an artist, Vincent didn’t take the moral high ground. More often he chose to recall typical scenes of rural work, but he always fell back on his artwork, painting on canvas, board, boomerangs, skins, shells and occasional murals — usually opting to work in a classical ‘Cherbourg style’. The aesthetic of this period required the product to ‘look Aboriginal’. Prominent examples were executed in cross-hatched, mainly ochre hues, elegantly ‘tribalised’ drawing and patterning. Paintings such as *Lightning Man* (1992) were defiantly romanticised scenes, illustrating ‘known’ Aboriginal stories, depicting the yearning that displaced people feel about loss and longing.

By late 1992, Vincent rarely painted solely in the ochre palette, preferring a cross-over genre of bright primary and pastel colours — enmeshing Aboriginal motifs within a European perspective. This began a series of pivotal ‘cultural collision’ works which earned Vincent significant national recognition, culminating in acquisitions by the National Gallery of Australia, the National Museum of Australia, Queensland Art Gallery, Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery and Singapore Art Museum. During 1993–1995, Vincent began painting even more picturesque, though often melancholic and sombre scenes from his childhood, such as *Baramba Creek*, *Deaths In Custody*, *Be Your Own Man* and the memorable *Pension Day* series. Amidst these





depictions, Vincent also painted the conflict, massacres and reprisals that ultimately led to a resignation of his people's fate to the missions. Many of these are not romantic pictures, but rather bittersweet.

As the 20th century closed, Vincent's artistic imaginings wandered further back through the history of cultural conflicts as he sifted the personal and political reservoirs. This led to the Carnarvon suite, the home of his Yiman grandfather in south-west Queensland. Between 2001–2006, Vincent's work largely centred on grand landscapes of the Arcadia Valley.


In 2007, Vincent began a new series on Cape York and Laura (far north Queensland) imagery out of respect to his Kuku-Yalanji grandmother. Key works from this *Cooktown Miners* series, portraying the Palmer River gold rush, were acquired by Queensland Art Gallery at Vincent's 2007 solo show at FireWorks Gallery, which formed the genesis for the 2009 print folio featured in *Some people are stories*.

Beneath the surface of Vincent's astonishing visual combinations, we see an artist willing to cross the divides of both time and cultures, in order to extract the hidden tales this country still holds for many. *Thomas Mitchell looking for Leichhardt* and *Black Policeman meets the Jiman* take on gentle and sensitive treatments of the Queensland bush amidst Aboriginal and colonial figures crossing the 19th and 20th centuries. Meanwhile, Vincent's cultural lifestyle works employ distinctive regional designs, announcing his own accumulated 'troubadour' experiences; depicting an essential pride in the peculiar Indigenous perspective, the macro and the micro of land and life.

Vincent was never afraid to tell it like it was. Whilst he never questioned his Aboriginal identity, he certainly questioned where his culture was heading. Epic paintings lampooned the social problems he was ensnared within, setting his work apart from many of his peers unwilling or unable to cut through the politics, let alone grapple with a necessary technical prowess. The 'real life' issues he explored included the rorting of government funding (*A.T.S.I.C.*), the bitter dependence on welfare, the duplicity of black and white politicians, debates and political fallout, or the treacherous role historically played out by the black-troopers and others in the colonisation process.

Vincent was always quick to acknowledge that his peculiar visions were gleaned from watching people, judging folks from the same rule book. He would just as quickly condemn greed and injustice from either side of the racial fence. Yet, over a painting journey spanning 40 years or more, Vincent never lost his humour or his humility.

In August 2007, we were travelling back from Darwin where his epic work *Carnarvon Collision (Big Map)* was awarded Highly Commended in the national Telstra prize, and acquired by Queensland Art Gallery. Vincent was excited about his future, however he felt frail. I took him to hospital the next morning but he never recovered. Within a week he was transferred back to Toowoomba to be with his family. Vincent died in March 2008 with many blank canvases around him.



Vincent's compelling and diverse body of contemporary artworks are held in public collections and scattered across the world in private homes. Unsurprisingly, his images are still finding resonance with new audiences today. For an outsider looking in, Aboriginal culture — as a matter of public debate — may often appear to be wallowing in political quagmire, but will we ever fully comprehend the personal dimension of this great divide upon which Vincent's paintings shed their gentle and graceful light?

<sup>1</sup> Vincent Serico in conversation, 2005.

Some People are Stories

VINCENT SERICO

## FOLIO

The following pages 12–34 are taken from the 2009 limited edition Folio, *Some people are stories*, created by Vincent Serico, which is travelling with the exhibition. The Folio includes an essay by Djon Mundine OAM, print reproductions of Vincent's original paintings, and a number of stories, interview notes and quotes by Vincent collected between 1993 and 2007.

Folio image credits:

Archival inks on 300 gsm Hahnemuehle rag paper.

Dimensions either 62 x 87 cm or 87 x 62 cm.

Folio print reproductions produced 2009 (dates at the top of each page refer to the dates of the original paintings).

Photographer: Mick Richards. Courtesy FireWorks Gallery.

# FROM DJON MUNDINE OAM

Some people are stories.

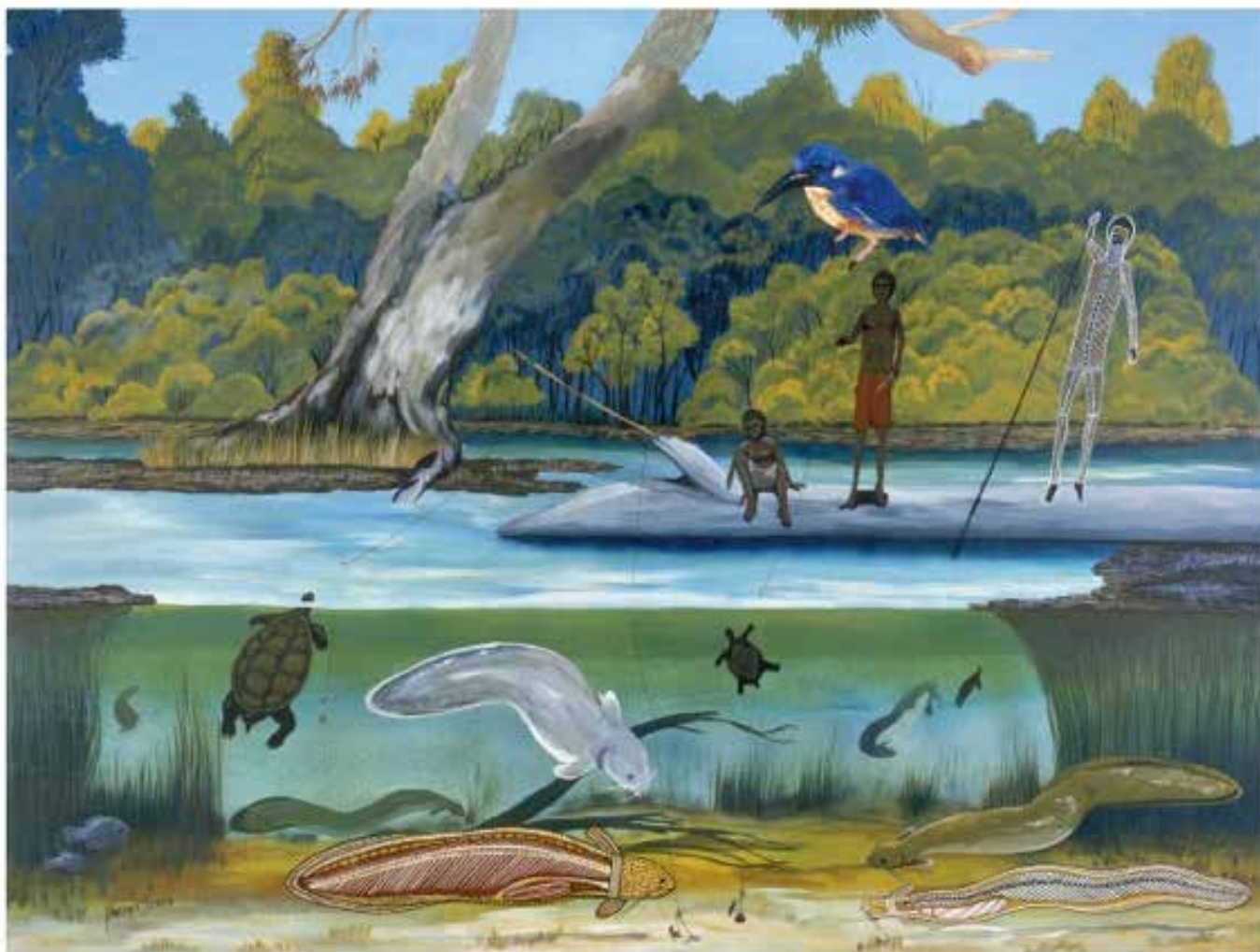
The paintings of Vincent Serico come out of two deep wells – the history of Aboriginal people and their aspirations to live their daily lives as honest free people, and the history of the Australian nation, its origins, legacy, and responsibility. If a 'black armband' view of history can be claimed, so can a 'white blindfold' view, together in co-existence. Nowhere is this more evident than in the state of Queensland.

It was no accident that, after a first book dealing with the history of contact in Tasmania, historian Henry Reynold's second dealt with the same subject in Queensland. Further back, in 1968, W.E.H. Stanner in his influential Boyer Lecture of that year, 'After the Dreaming', spoke of the 'great Australian silence' about the 'river of blood' running through Aboriginal and colonial history. These are the rivers of Vincent Serico.

The rivers that brought us life also brought death in the cavalcade of colonial explorers, squatters, troopers, native police, and government officials who followed them to claim, conquer and massacre. The consequent re-drawing of physical and social borders brought the 'shadow' reverse side to every official history embodied in the official, 'white blindfold' view of history – the vexed obsession of the revisionist 'history wars' of the Howard years (1996–2007).

The artist's art is to acknowledge Aboriginal existence in a way that gives comfort, while recognising past pain, sorrow, longing and loss, and leaving a trace of them in the hearts of others. The artist's central attribute is to make the art 'sing' in a positive winning stroke, rather than creating a resigned memorial.

## ***Baramba Creek 1994***

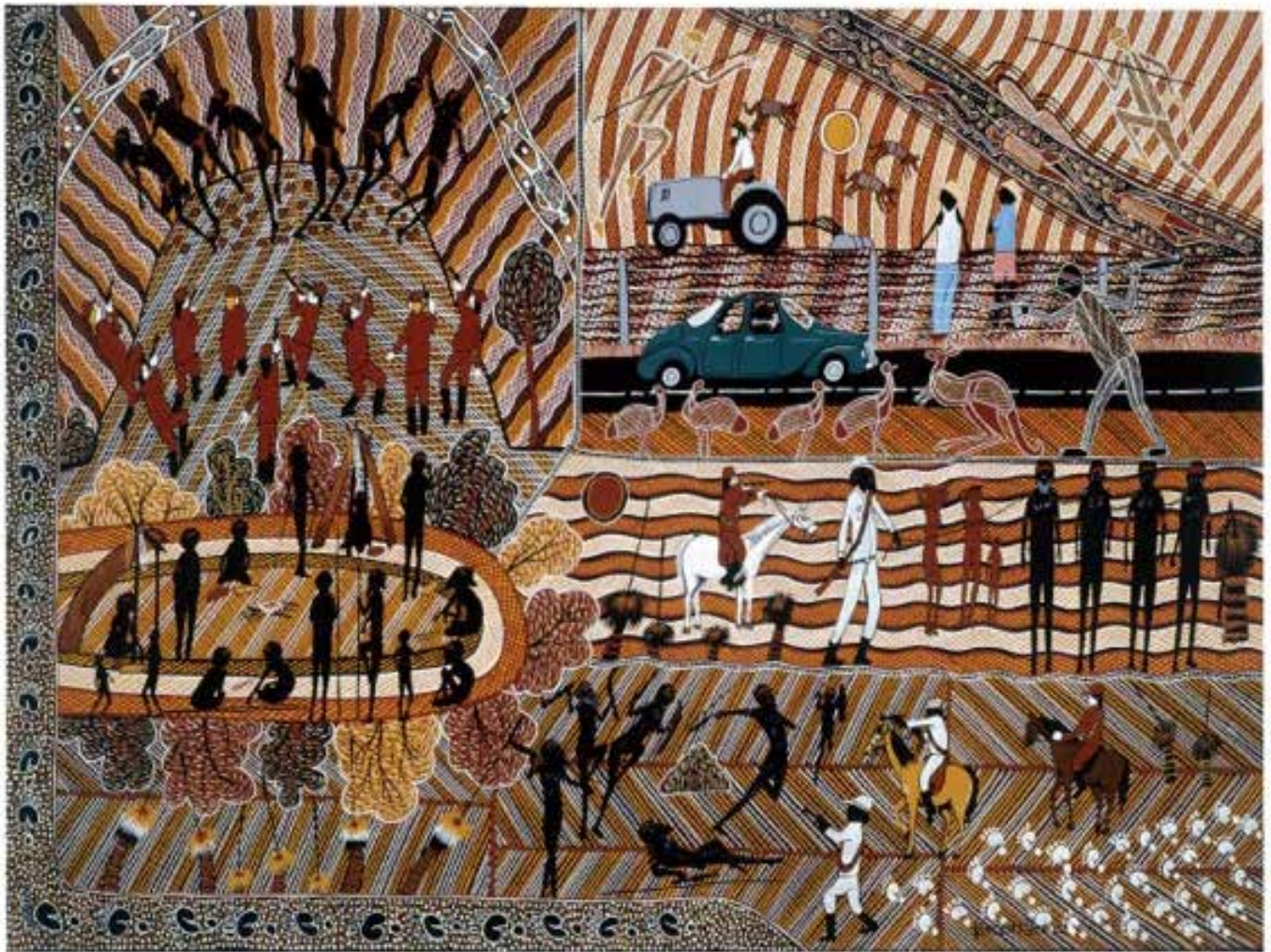


**I remember the days when I was young, of fishing and swimming at Baramba Creek. We learnt to catch fish in the traditional way with the barbed spear and waited for the catfish to build his stone nest in the shallow water. We cooked the fish and the turtle in the coals on the bank while the kingfisher watched over us. Every time I was looking in the water I was looking for the shadows of the old-fellas behind them because word was said that when it was dark, you can see the blackfellas in the water. The memories are of carefree days. Now another group of children are there and they too are learning the ways of Baramba Creek, in the sunshine and the shadow.**

Vincent Serico, brochure text, *Baramba Visions* 1994



## Toowoomba 1993



This is about the settlement of Toowoomba. First the bullocks and the early farmers. The people fight for their land, but troopers and the trackers come. The trackers are brought in from down south, the troopers know not to use local trackers. The young men make a stand on the Table Top, at the top of the hill. They escape for a while but the troopers bring them back in chains. The red sun is for the blood on the land, the people are dispossessed. All the local tribes are forced to march to Taroom. Some are sent to Woorabinda, Cherbourg, Baramba and mixed up with the Waka Waka people. Now the sun shines on the white man. The black people are gone but the land is waiting.

Vincent Serico, brochure text, *Baramba Visions* 1994



## Lightning Man 1992

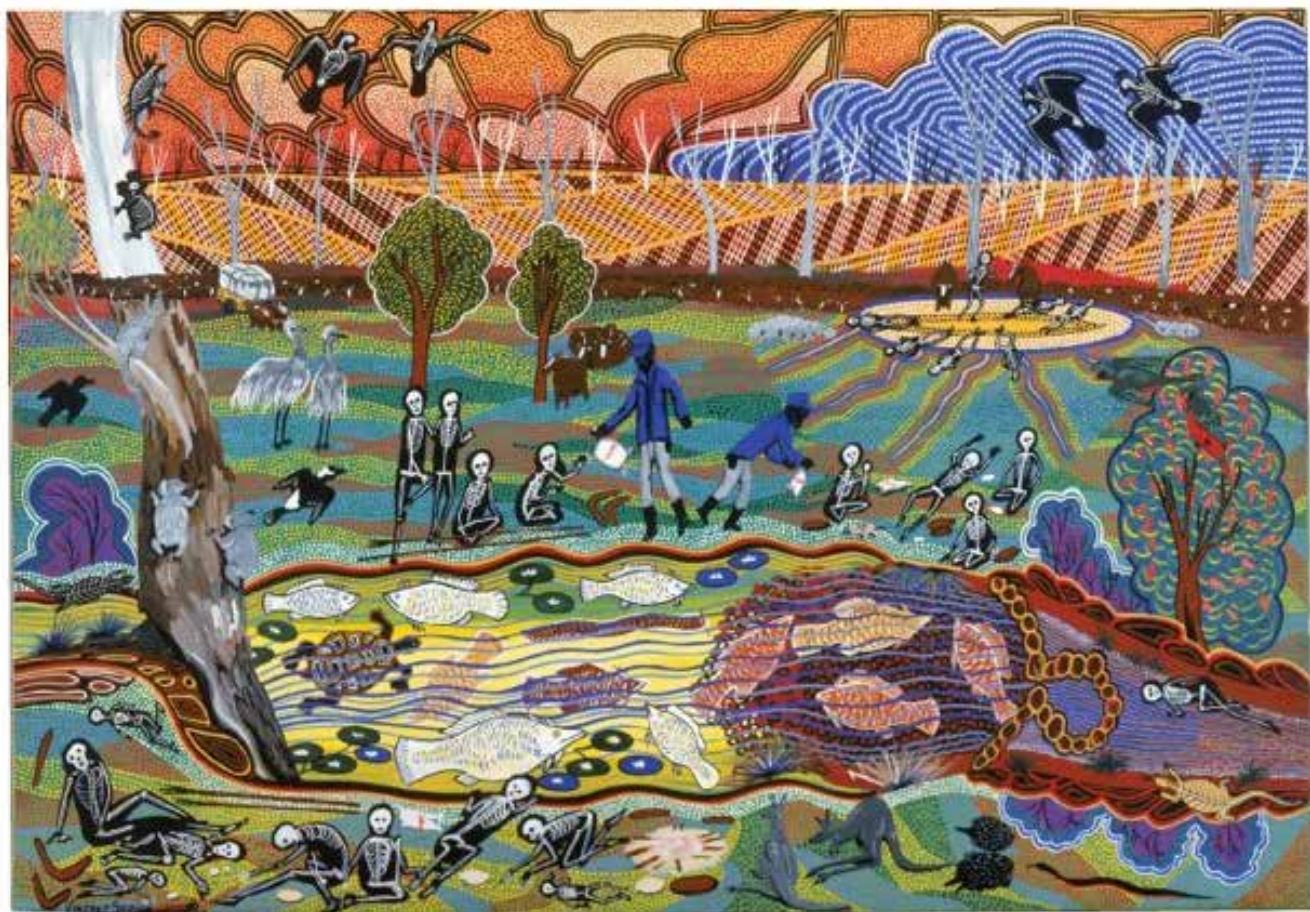


There are many stories of the Lightning Man I've heard all around the country. The spirit of the Lightning Man lives in deep waterholes. Much of the time he lives peacefully. The people of that area know he is easily angered. Then he leaps out of the water into the sky, creating ferocious storms and sends down lightning to frighten the people. In creation-time, the Lightning Man had two daughters who were promised to two old men of another tribe. These old men were too old for the daughters so they decided to run away and look for younger men who were more suitable as husbands. Their Father, who was missing the daughters, went looking for them, so he came as the lightning man. He came with thunder, striking the ground and trees with lightning (the lightning and thunder before the rain). Their Mother, fearful of what the lightning would do ran after him crying. This became the rainy season.

Vincent Serico, brochure text, *Baramba Visions* 1994 and

Vincent Serico, gallery notes, FireWorks Gallery 2006

## **Kilcoy Massacre 1 1993**



I get a lot of stories by reading history books and a lot of stories from listening to old people. This painting tells the tragic tale of guilt and betrayal by some trackers of their own people at Kilcoy in South East Queensland around the 1840s. Trackers were brought down from different tribes to hunt and trap those people who were fighting for their land. This was seen as causing trouble for the police and the white settlers. The tracker was responsible for giving the people rations of flour and sugar laced with arsenic. These deaths continued after the Kilcoy Massacre and caused revenge and resentment from everyone.

Vincent Serico, brochure text, *Baramba Visions* 1994 and  
Vincent Serico interview with Michael Eather 1996



## ***Deaths in Custody 1994***



**When a person is confused or anxious, full of guilt and remorse, at odds with his Mother's love and Father's teachings, to place him alone in his anxiety brings despair. Mopoke the owl comes, he watches and calls to the lost one, then he is gone. All is quiet. Life is quiet.**

Vincent Serico, brochure text, *Baramba Visions* 1994

***Some people are stories – Vincent Serico***

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## A.T.S.I.C. 1994

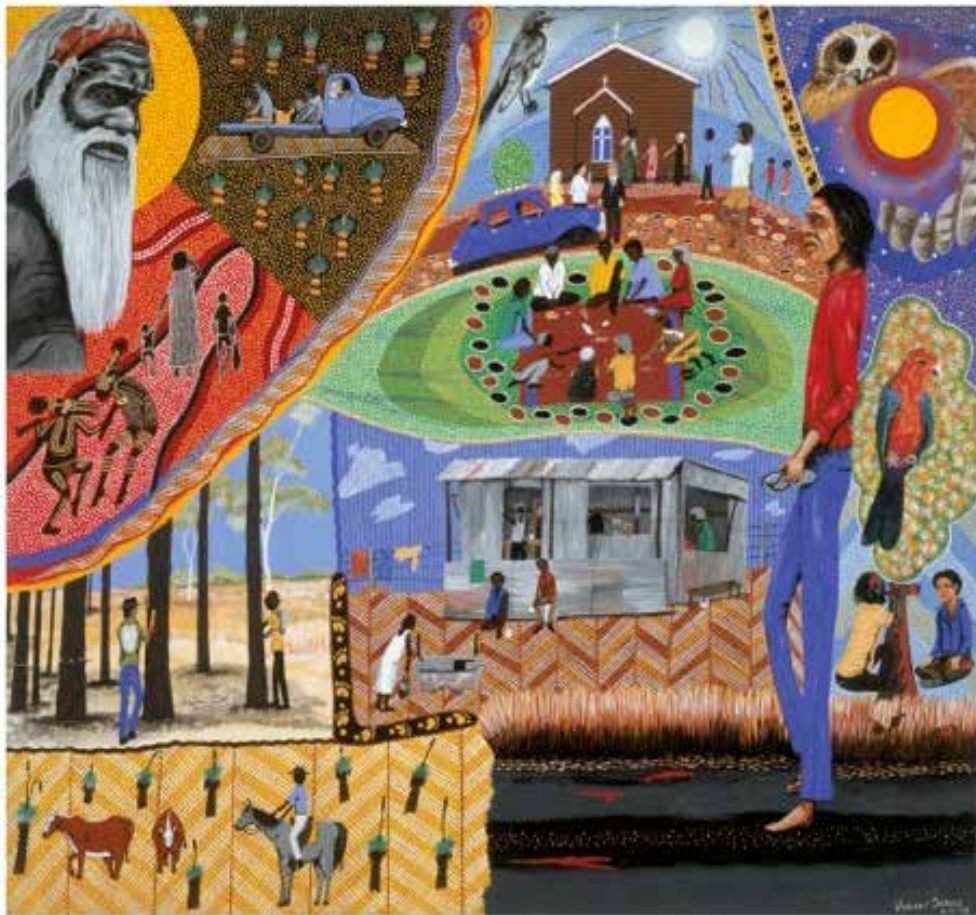


I painted this after watching a TV program where I saw Charlie Perkins and Lois O'Donoghue arguing about Aboriginal politics, leadership and money. They've got boxing gloves around their necks like prize fighters but are fighting over a trophy full of toilet paper! That's what the budgets are worth. Graham Richardson is holding one he promised. Many of our people live in 'Third World' conditions. Some people have no running water and A.T.S.I.C. bureaucrats drive past us in flash cars. I like to paint the old Aboriginal people and the current leaders of our country today. Some have let us down, some are trying hard to go forward.

Vincent Serico interview with Michael Eather 1996



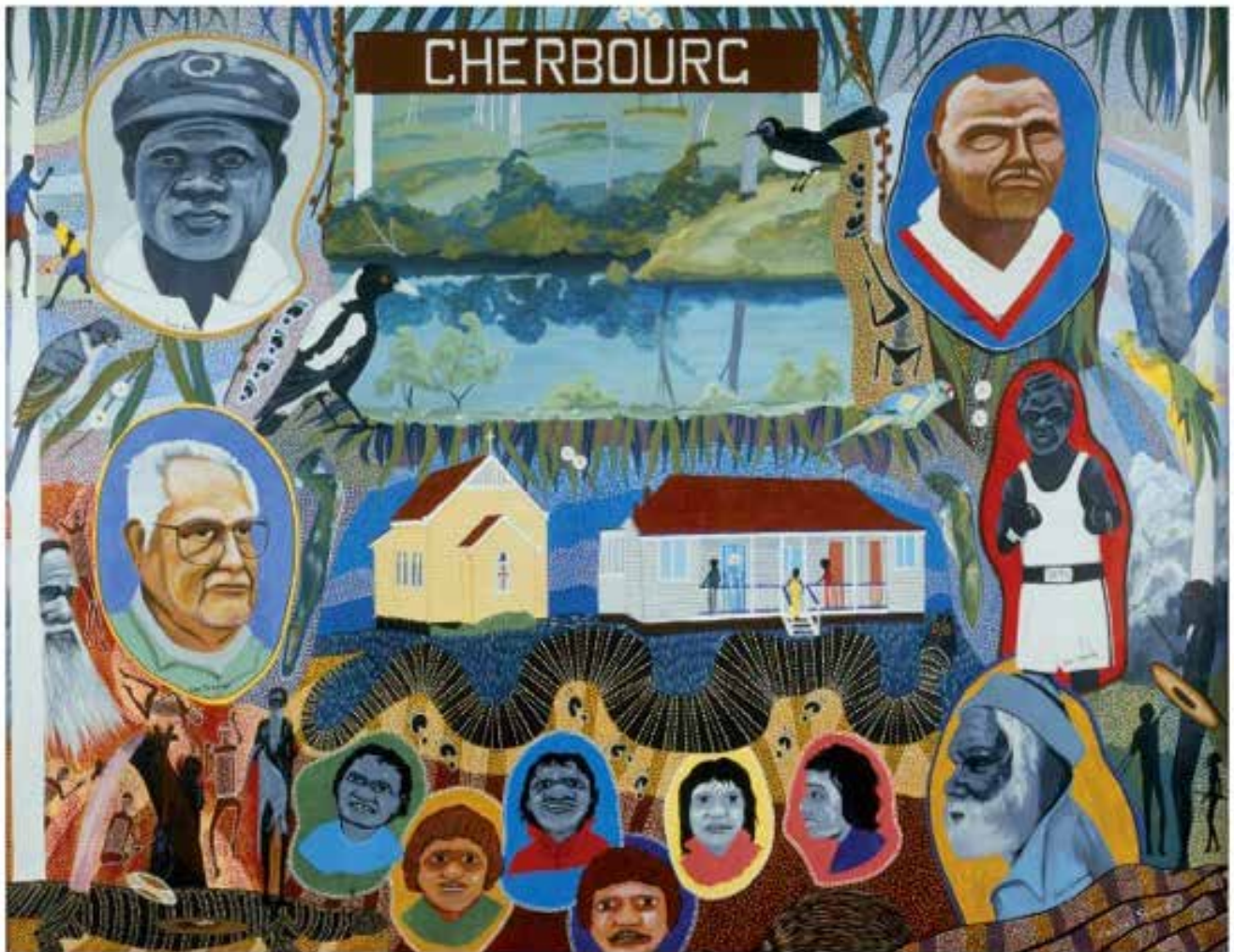
## *The Road to Cherbourg 1993*



These are the people getting taken away from out west, put on the cattle trucks, taken to the railway station and moved to Cherbourg. That's the church there. We spent more time gambling than we did going to church, because in those days you weren't allowed to go off the reserve. The white man, he did go to church with us but why did he keep us all under lock and key? This is our life cycle on the reserve: captivity, arrival, adapting and mock release. The wagtail is the messenger, the owl is death and the parrot represents happy times. [Actually] it's not the road to Cherbourg; it's the road to Murgon. That's a mate of mine, his thong was broken and it was about daybreak. We have the pine trees and that's where we used to sit down under the trees. We'd have a good laugh. But it was killing us, the alcohol. When we left the mission, some went to cattle stations. We were ring-barking; we'd end up in Charter's Towers, or down New South Wales, wherever the truck took us. Most of the time we slept in 'yumbas' and shanty towns.

Vincent Serico interview with Danica Eather 2007

## ***Cherbourg 1994***

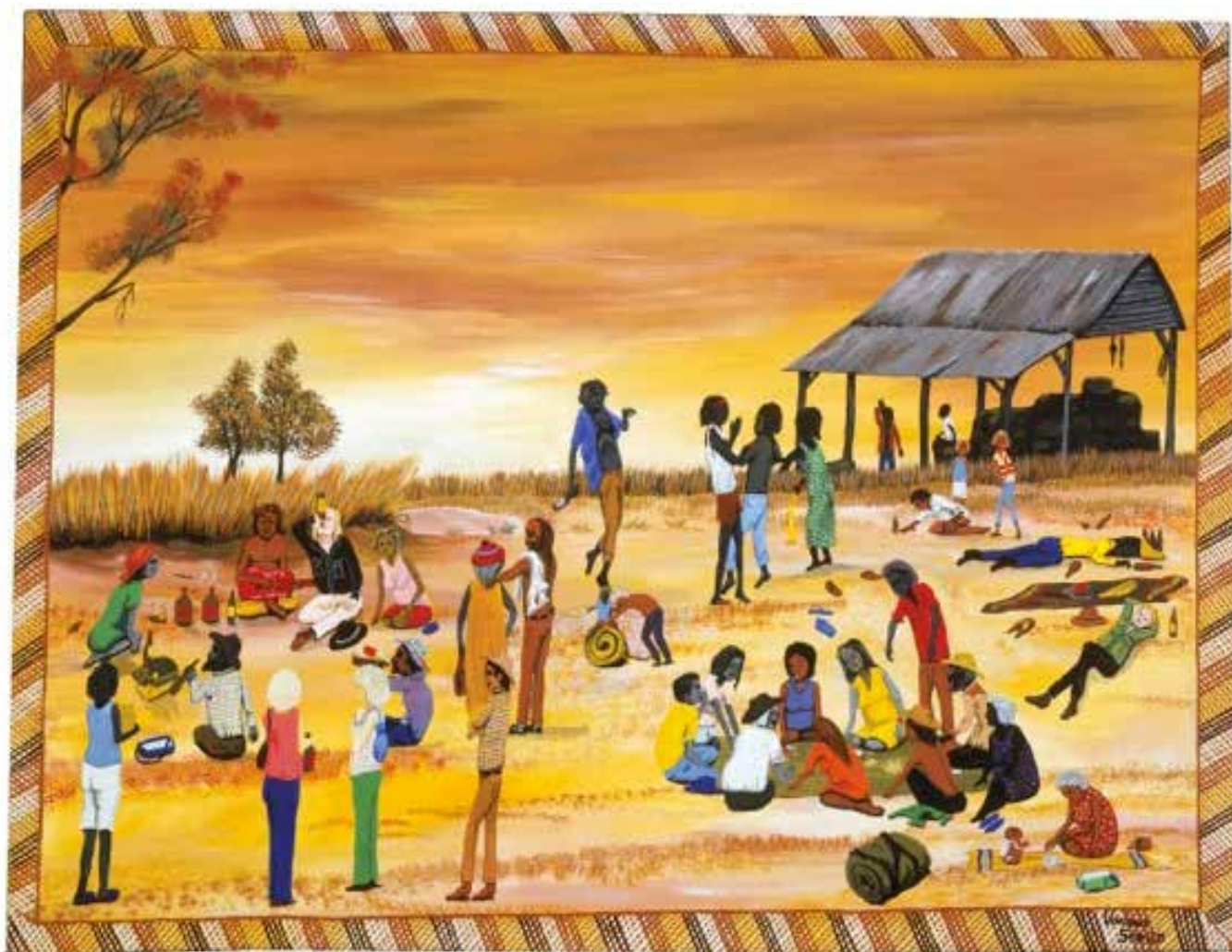


I was born in Brisbane and Dad took us back to Cherbourg when I was a baby. When my Dad got back to Cherbourg and they found he had leprosy he had to go to Phantom Island off Palm Island. This painting is about Cherbourg the mission as a place full of different people and families. We were all mixed up and looking for our mob. We were raised in dormitories and times were hard but we had our heroes, sporting heroes like Eddie Gilbert and story tellers who reminded us of life before the mission.

Vincent Serico interview with Danica Eather 2007



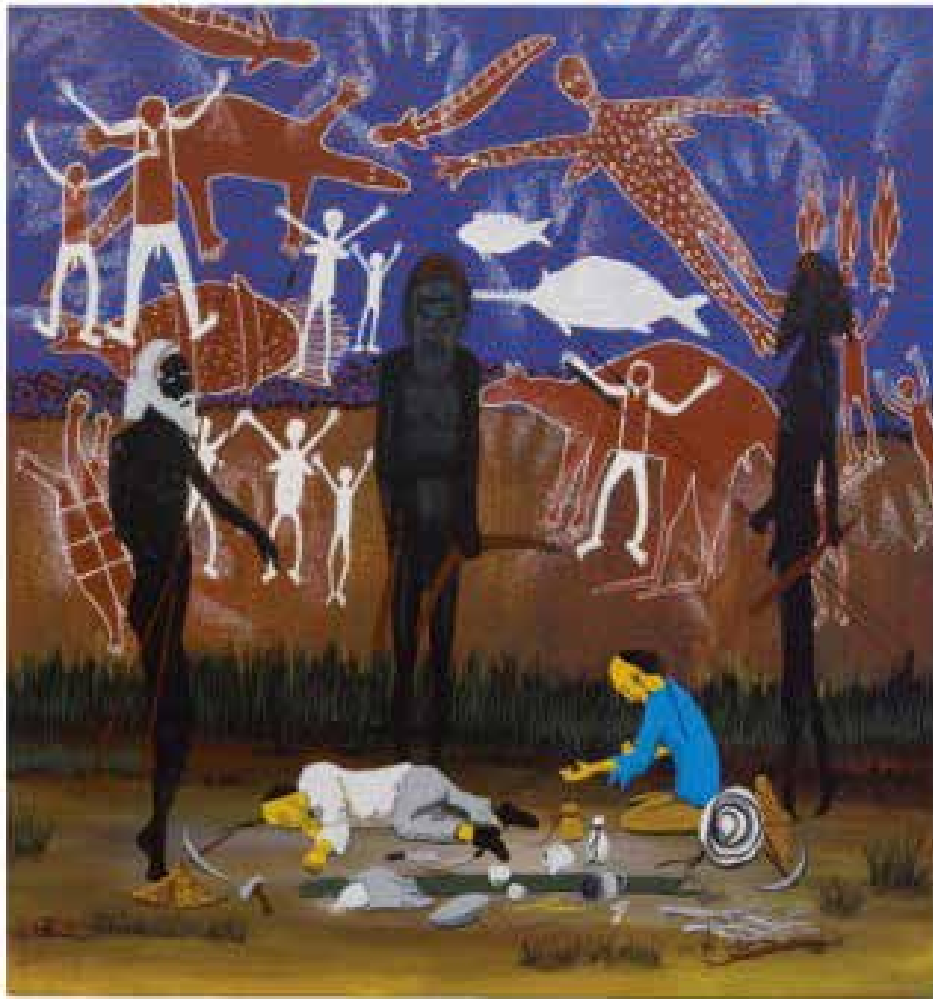
## ***Pension Day Corroboree 1993***



I call this painting “Pension Day Corroboree” because every pension day it was pay day for our women. They’d always have a card game going; someone would have a drinking party going, always a fight over women. You always see some blokes spewing up and the kids trying to roll him. Drunks lying around and if you look hard enough you always see a couple of boys on their own having a ‘smallie’. It could be in Mornington Island or it could happen anywhere traveling around Queensland. That is what it was like in most of the towns that had ‘yumbas’ in them.

Vincent Serico interview with Danica Eather 2007

## ***Cooktown Miners I 2007***



You see when the miners left Cooktown to go up to the Palmer River, the troopers went first, the Aboriginal troopers and then the white miners and they made sure the Chinese were behind them because it was easier for the Aborigines to pick the Chinese off. Some of the Aborigines there were cannibals, so the white man said, 'you go behind us', because they knew the Aborigines were after intruders. The white man did not want to get eaten so he let the Chinese come behind them walking up those tracks. They were easier targets. When the Aborigines got the Chinese they used to break their arms and legs and tie them by their pigtail to trees or leave them in a cave to eat them later on. It was like a fridge, they would eat one today and tomorrow another one. That's why they broke their arms and legs, so they could not get away. I am only painting the truth.

Vincent Serico interview with Danica Eather 2007

## ***Cooktown Miners II 2007***

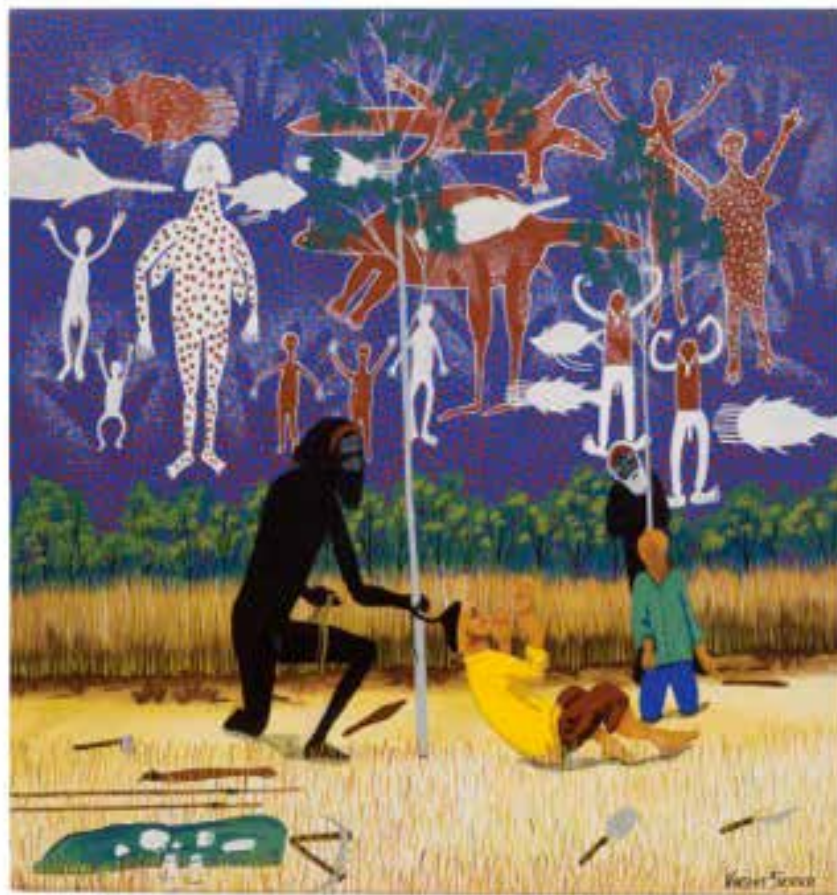


That painting is about the miners going to the goldfields. The troopers they saw too much smoke on the escarpment and he told the white man that there were Aborigines around. They were up near the Laura River to get water and found a big mob of Aboriginal footprints. Something's going to happen, they could see too much smoke on the horizon so they say to the Chinese, "carry out all the logs and build a barricade". Just before daybreak the Aborigines attacked them and they fought. In the background are Quinkan paintings. They are all around the Quinkan caves, paintings from the local Kuku Yalanji tribe.

Vincent Serico interview with Danica Eather 2007



## ***Cooktown Miners III 2007***



**The Aborigines from there have tied the Chinese to the tree for tomorrow's meal ... legs broken, arms broken.**

Vincent Serico interview with Danica Eather 2007

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## ***Cooktown Miners IV 2007***



**They are coming back from the goldfield when the gold ran out. They did not make it. They did not find the gold. On the way back some were crawling on their hands and knees, no pick and shovel. They just wanted to get back to Cooktown but the Aborigines were still there. Some of them befriended the white miners and helped them get back to Cooktown.**

Vincent Serico interview with Danica Eather 2007

## ***Black Mountain 1995***

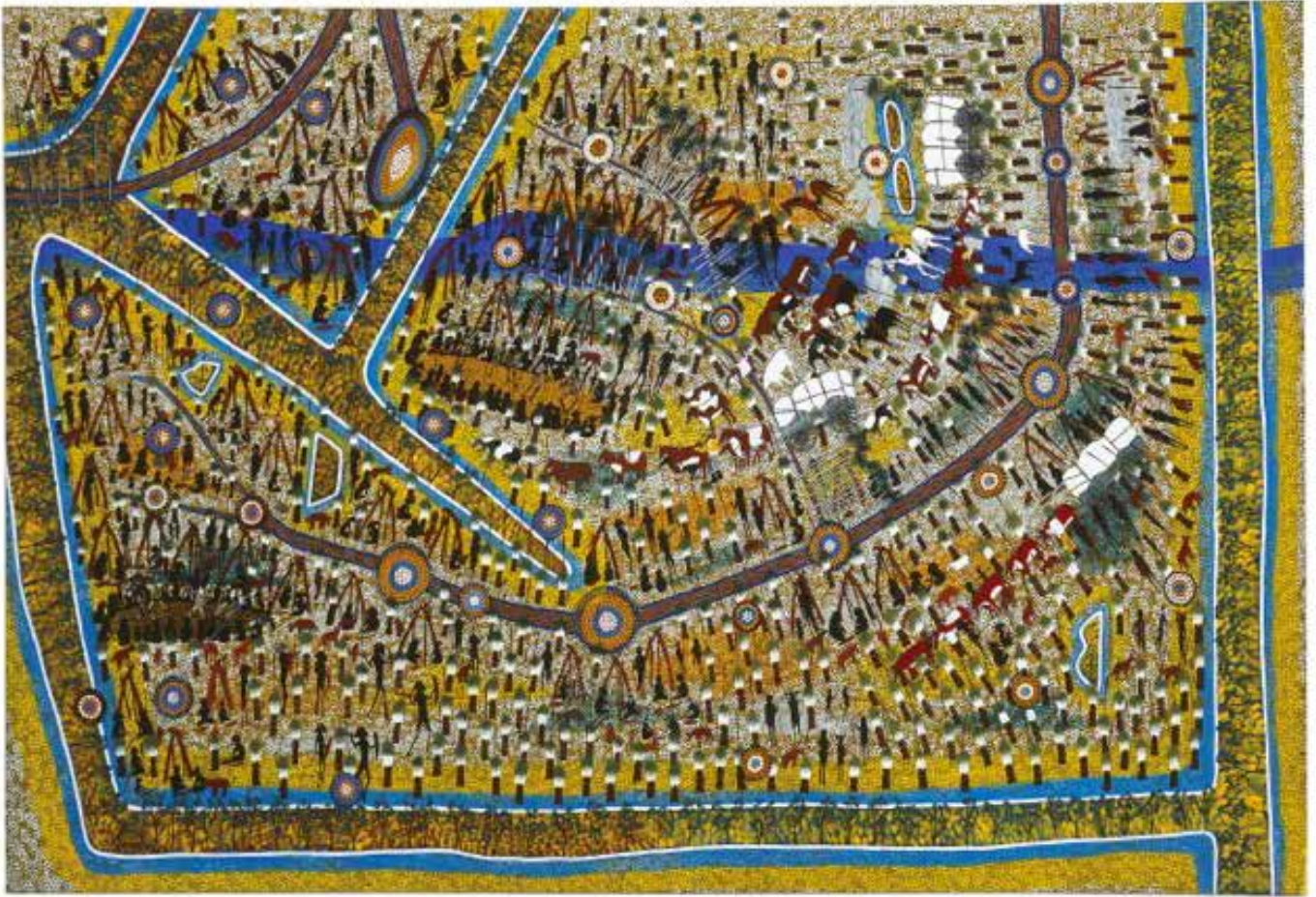


The mountain is certainly significant for the Aborigines. Kalkajaka is what they call it, the name meaning “the place of the spear” or more loosely translated as “mountains of death”. The Aboriginal stories of how it evolved certainly add to the mystery of this incredible mountain range. The Aboriginal belief is that the mountain originated in the dreamtime with a man, being similar to a medicine man and also a chameleon, who had the taste for human flesh. He killed and ate a young chief and so was banished and fled to the mountains, occasionally surfacing to eat a human or two from his own tribe. On his last venture out of the mountains he turned into a goanna to escape his angry fellow tribe members and had the misfortune of being struck by lightning. Being no ordinary goanna he exploded and left large piles of charred rock everywhere.

[www.castleofspirits.com/blackmount.html](http://www.castleofspirits.com/blackmount.html)



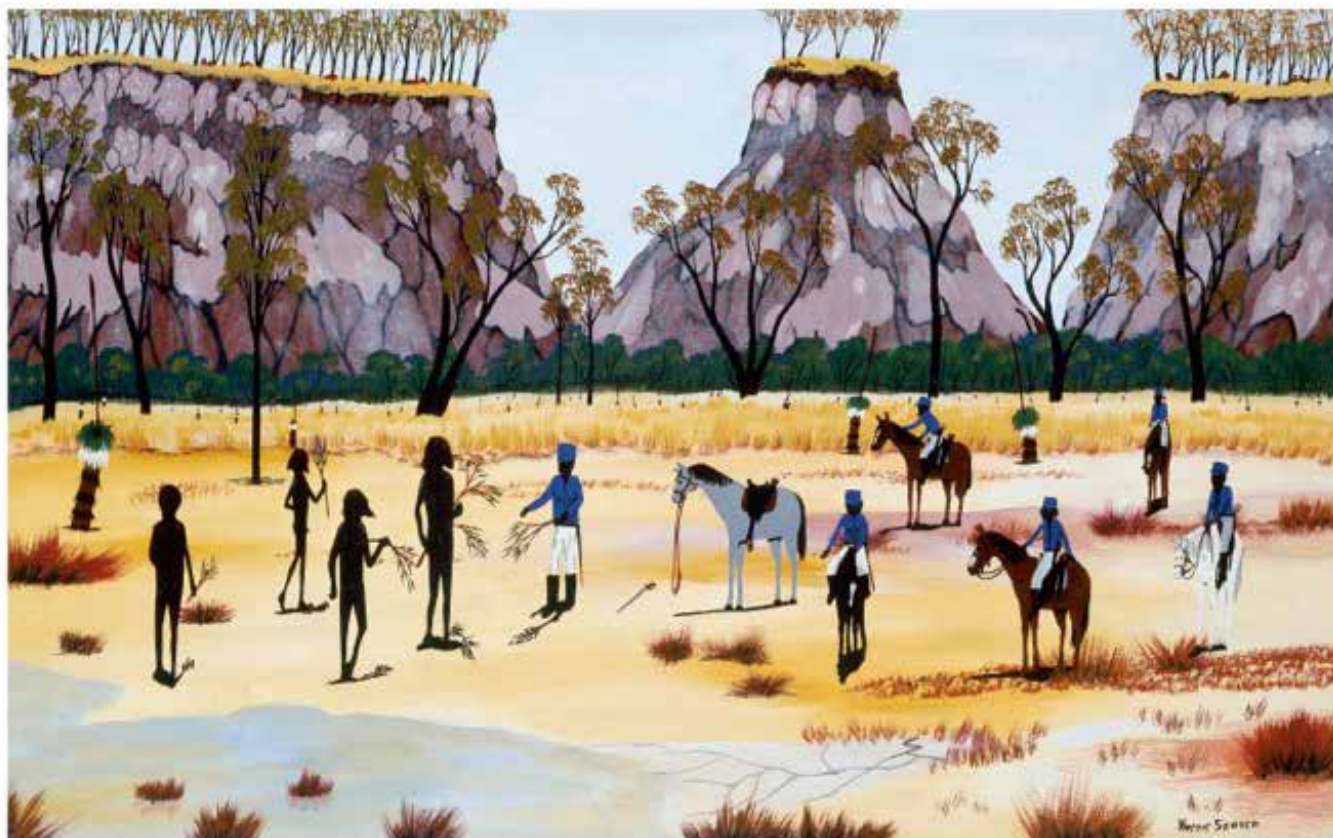
## ***Carnarvon Collision (Big Map) 2006***



In “Big Map” I wanted to paint all the sites that I’ve been thinking about and heard about. It’s my Grandfather’s country. This is about how the white man first came down onto Jiman country. He came down along the Dawson and followed the path of where the Aborigines always camped. He settled into the Dawson, he brought cattle and sheep with him. The Aborigines found that they were easier to kill than the kangaroos. Most of these dots [concentric circles] represent different campsites along the Dawson. If you stand up from the escarpment and you look down on Arcadia Valley and look at the Dawson River flowing through it, you can see palm trees, grass trees, you can see all types of trees. This painting is like an Aboriginal map, and where the Jiman and Mandanangi tribal boundaries are.

Vincent Serico interview with Danica Eather 2007

## ***Black Policeman meets the Jiman 2003***



When the black troopers went to my country, my old Grandfather's country, he came peacefully first. He came with the green leaf in his hand and a sword on the ground. The Aborigines did the same. He came with only bush in his hand, no weapon. They were friends. This painting is about that time. After the Hornet Bank massacre – or Hornet Bank payback – everything changed. They came with the sword in their hand and club in the other hand. They came to kill each other.

Vincent Serico interview with Danica Eather 2007



## ***Thomas Mitchell looking for Leichhardt 2003***



**When Thomas Mitchell came onto Mandanangi country, the first Aboriginals to meet him were old Bussamarai and his seven sons. Thomas Mitchell had two more riders with him and that was the first time Thomas Mitchell and Bussamarai met. It was peaceful because Thomas Mitchell wasn't staying in the country, he was only passing through, and so they gave him permission to pass through. They weren't bringing sheep and cattle and going to live there forever. So they thought.**

Vincent Serico interview with Danica Eather 2007

## ***Myall Creek Massacre 2002***

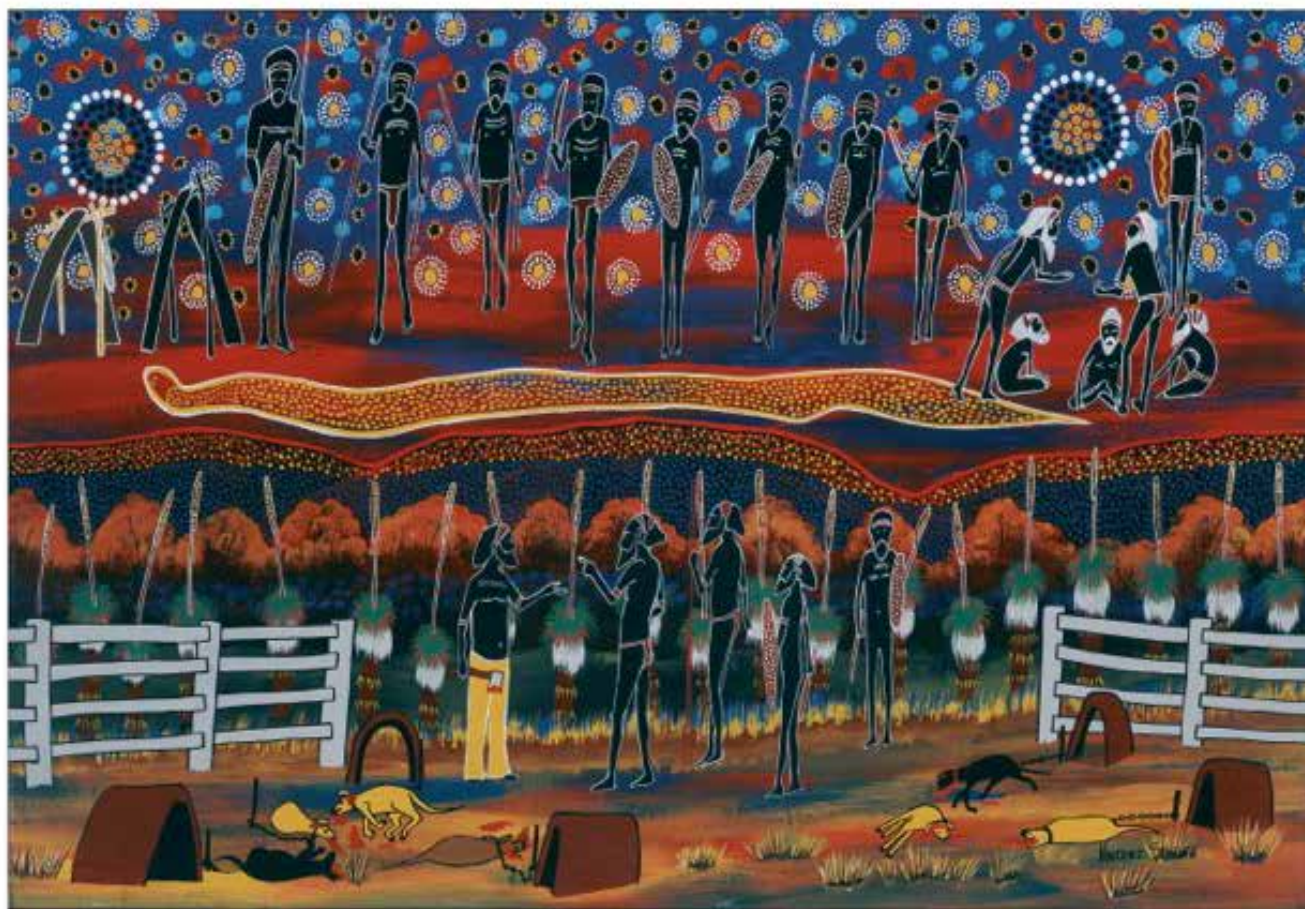


There were many massacres that we know something about, some we know nothing about. The massacre at Myall Creek down in New South Wales in the 1830s was reported and you can read about it as well. Everyone knew about this. It shows the dead Aborigines lying around, women and babies cut down by swords. It shows the white men who were found guilty and were hung for their crime.

Vincent Serico in conversation with Michael Eather 2004



## ***Hornet Bank Payback 2006***



This story is about the massacre at Hornet Bank station in 1857. You see, the Fraser brothers, or Fraser family, they owned Hornet Bank. After work they would go down and take one of the young women, drag them back to the stock yard and rape her. So, after a while, the Jiman people couldn't take it. They told the boy, who worked on Hornet Bank, they warned him to keep his mouth shut and to kill all the dogs. The boy went and killed all the dogs. The Aborigines came then. It was not an all out war, it was just payback time and they killed the family that lived there, the Fraser family. They raped the women too! Only one boy got away. He rode back and he told people. I think it was Ipswich where he came from. That's how come they massacred most of my Grandfather's people, the Jiman people. So with just one payback and they called it a massacre? It was a real massacre, they massacred us. It was just payback to us.

Vincent Serico interview with Danica Eather 2007

## ***Min Min Light 1995***

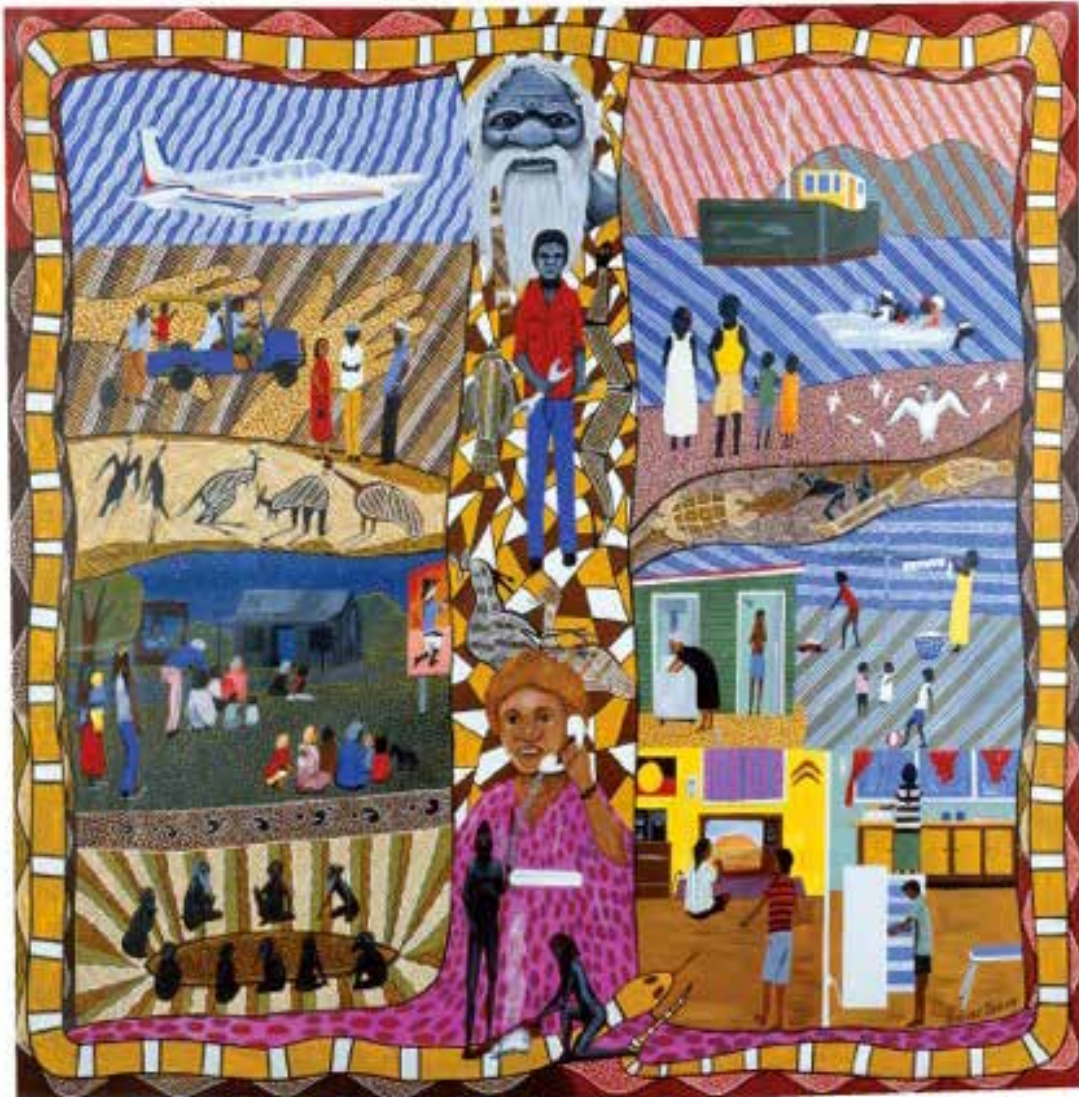


Some Aborigines up around the Mt. Isa area that I was talking to came from Lake Nash and they were telling me about the Min Min light. I'd never seen one but a man told me that the Min Min light is looking after us and he said that's why we don't run. He said when you walk towards the Min Min light it's got figures around it dancing. The Aborigine and his missus are looking at the dance of the Min Min light – the hand and the eye represents the Min Min light that you're looking at. Nobody can hold him but he's looking at you all the time.

Vincent Serico interview with Danica Eather 2007



## Technology 1994



This is about how lifestyle has brought on so many changes for us. We used to have natural ways of living and now mechanisation has taken over. We use it, and we all live in this world of today and we talk about tomorrow but sometimes we are thinking of other worlds that belong to yesterday.

Vincent Serico in conversation with Michael Eather 1999

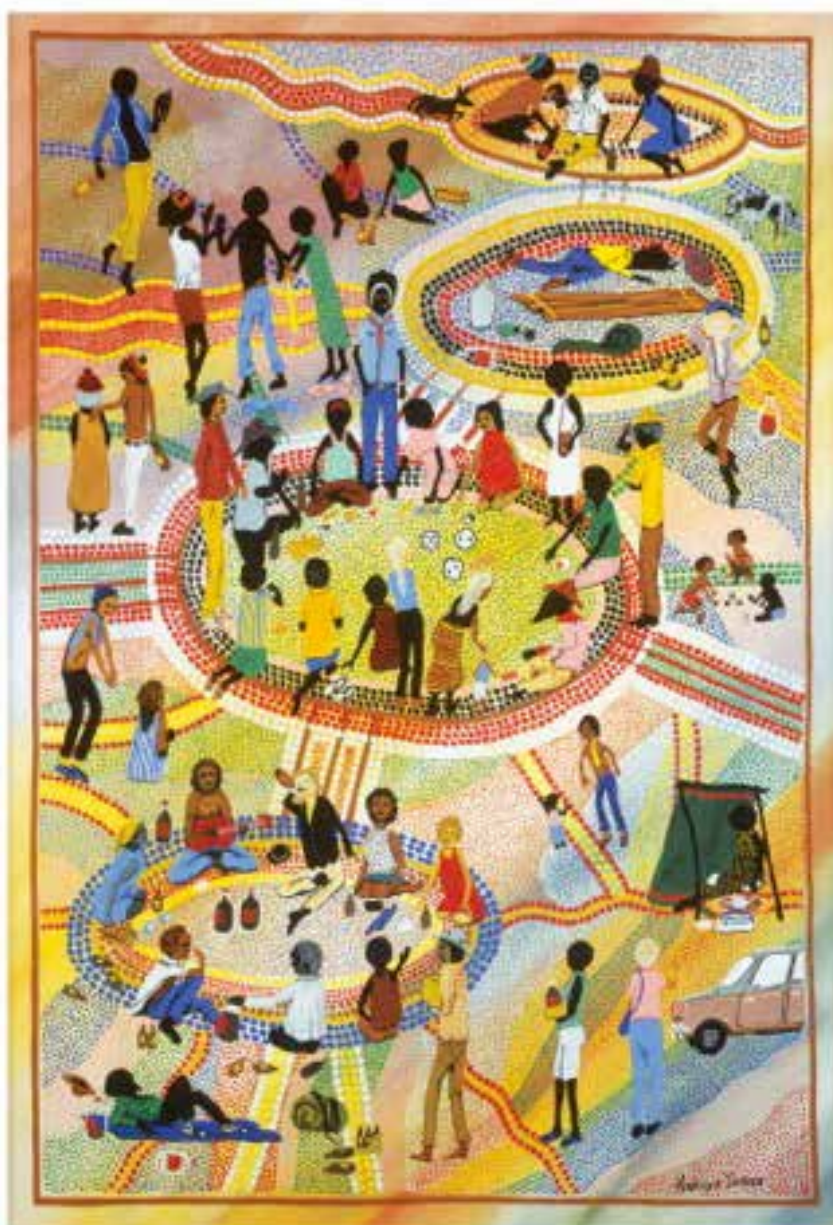
*Some people are stories* – Vincent Serico

Education Resource

Page 33



## ***Pension Day Bora Ring 1994***



**When I was travelling around the communities and towns I saw how ancient ceremonial sites, the bora rings, are sometimes being used for drinking, gambling and fighting. Once these places celebrated meaning in our culture, now they are meeting places on pension day when cheques are cashed, grog and gambling are organised and this becomes the shared experience, the welfare ritual.**

Vincent Serico, brochure text, *Baramba Visions* 1994

# ACTIVITIES

## YEARS 7–10

Some of these activities refer to the 2009 limited edition Folio, *Some people are stories*, created by Vincent Serico, which is travelling with the exhibition. Copies of the Folio print reproductions and stories can be found on pages 11–34 of this Resource.

FireWorks Gallery and Museums & Galleries Queensland  
invite teachers and students to email activities, artworks, or other  
responses to the exhibition or to this Education Resource to  
E: [exhibitions@magsq.com.au](mailto:exhibitions@magsq.com.au)

# SOME PEOPLE ARE STORIES

The following activities relate to pages 11–34 of this Resource, which are reproduced from the *Some people are stories* Folio which is travelling with the exhibition.

1. This exhibition is titled *Some people are stories*. Consider what you might include in an essay or an artwork based upon your own personal story/history. Make notes then share them with your peers. You may wish to extend this task by creating your own essay or artwork.
2. Refer to the essay on page 12 of this Resource. Speculate as to what the writer, Djon Mundine OAM, means by the “white blindfold” view of Australia’s history?













If students are unable to give a considered response, refer them back to the first paragraph of the essay. Discuss answers.

3. The essay states, “These are the rivers of Vincent Serico”. Explain what this means to you.



Encourage students to discuss W.E.H. Stanner’s comments regarding the “great Australian silence” about the “river of blood”.

# TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS

QUESTIONS AND TASKS	GENERAL CAPABILITIES							CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES		
										
	LITERACY	NUMERACY	ICT CAPABILITY	CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY	ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING	INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES	ASIA AND AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA	SUSTAINABILITY
1	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
2	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
3	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
5	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
6	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
7	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
8	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
9	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
10	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
11	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
12	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		



# TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS

1. Complete the table below to suggest how the artist has differentiated between the areas above and below the waterline in his artwork *Baramba Creek*.

VISUAL DESIGN ELEMENTS	HOW THE ELEMENT HAS BEEN INTEGRATED INTO THE ARTWORK
line	
colour	
shape	
texture	
space	
form	



NOTE: “Baramba” is sometimes written as “Barambah”.

Answers may include:

Line: Roughly-horizontal lines delineate the bank from the water and the surface of the creek from the water below.

Colour: The creek water is more reflective, incorporating lighter shades above the waterline. Below the waterline is less reflective and uses darker shades.

Shape: Some of the fish have twists or bends in their bodies, suggesting movement.

Texture: A sense of texture emerges through a variety of brush strokes – their length, thickness and directionality.

Space: The projection of the turtle’s head, the weeds and the fishing lines through a seemingly-impenetrable line provides the illusion of breaking through a liquid surface.

Form: This reproduction print is two-dimensional but because the artist has illustrated the marine animals as larger than life, the resulting perspective gives a sense of depth to the artwork.

2. The artwork, *Baramba Creek*, depicts a waterway from the artist’s childhood. Many waterways today, especially those near towns and cities, do not support the same level of wildlife. Consider why this might be.



Answers may include: pollution/contamination; drought; over-fishing.

3. Why do you suppose that Vincent Serico has painted the kingfisher on a disproportionate scale in the artwork, *Baramba Creek*?



Perhaps he's attempting to bring it to the foreground; maybe the kingfisher signifies something important to the artist; it could be an untold part of his own story; it's possibly drawn from the artist's perspective (that is, as a child).

4. Recall a story from your past that might be unique amongst your peers. Tell your story, accompanied by one of the following:
- an A3-size painting or drawing
  - a storyboard consisting of at least four frames
  - a photographic collage
  - a live performance (may be solo or partnered)



Some students may have difficulty starting this activity. You may need to:

- Provide story starters, e.g. "When I was 9 ..."; "The worst day of my life began with ..."; "I have a collection of ..."
- Elicit specific responses with focused questions, e.g. "Do you have any scars?"; "Have you met anyone famous?"; "What's the most unusual thing you have tasted?"; "What happened on the best day of your life?"

5. Vincent Serico's *Lightning Man* story is reminiscent of other Dreamtime stories published in recent decades. Can you add to these titles?
- The Rainbow Serpent*
  - Tiddalik the Frog*











Have you read any of these stories? If yes, retell one of them to your peers.

6. Write a collaborative play based upon Vincent Serico's story of *Lightning Man*. Included scripted dialogue, stage directions and a list of audio-visual effects. When complete, make a digital recording OR present a live performance to your peers.
7. Vincent Serico represents his vision of a well-known Dreamtime figure in the 2001 artwork *Lightning Man, His Wife and Her Sister*. How does this portrayal differ from that in his 1992 artwork *Lightning Man*?
8. *Lightning Man, His Wife and Her Sister* is the only painting in this exhibition in which Vincent uses synthetic polymer paint. Is the texture or finish any different from the paintings using acrylics on canvas? How?
9. *Black Mountain* is the only story in the Folio which has not been narrated by Vincent. Compare the narrative here to that of the story accompanying the artwork *Min Min Light*. What do you notice? Share with others.
10. Aboriginal Australians traditionally had a strong belief in Creation spirits and non-human entities. Do you think contemporary Aboriginal people believe stories such as those recounted by Vincent Serico in *Black Mountain* and *Min Min Light*? Why or why not? Discuss.

11. Give your opinion regarding how the artist has used colour in the artwork *Min Min Light*.
12. Stories abound regarding sightings of the Min Min lights, not just around Mt. Isa but Australia-wide. Use digital or print resources to read accounts from those who have witnessed the lights. Illustrate one of these stories in a medium of your choice.



# CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL ISSUES AND DAILY ABORIGINAL LIFE

QUESTIONS AND TASKS	GENERAL CAPABILITIES							CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES		
										
	LITERACY	NUMERACY	ICT CAPABILITY	CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY	ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING	INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES	ASIA AND AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA	SUSTAINABILITY
1	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
2	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
3	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
4	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
5	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
6	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
7	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
8	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
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10	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
11	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
12	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
13	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
14	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
15	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
16	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
17	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
18	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
19	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
20	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
21	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
22	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
23	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
24	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
25	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
26	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
27	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
28	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
29	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
30	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

# CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL ISSUES AND DAILY ABORIGINAL LIFE

1. What do you know about “deaths in custody” in relation to Aboriginal Australians? Share your knowledge with your peers.
2. What do you believe to be the artist’s intention with the artwork *Deaths in Custody*?
3. What is the role of the Mopoke in *Deaths in Custody*? Why is it depicted so disproportionately?



Some Aboriginal people believe that the call of the Mopoke is a portent to death. Perhaps the artist has portrayed it as larger than life to create a focal point, or as a visual comment about the owl’s relationship with Death.

4. Imagine yourself as one of the inmates in the artwork *Deaths in Custody*. Write a diary entry to record how you came to be in jail, what you have seen during your time in custody, your expectations for the future.
5. Study the foreground of this artwork. Share your interpretation of the scene.
6. Vincent Serico titled one of his artworks, *A.T.S.I.C.* What does the acronym stand for? Read to discover the role envisioned for this agency and why it no longer operates.



The **A**boriginal and **T**orres **S**trait **I**slander **C**ommission was a government agency established in 1990 to provide an officially-recognised channel for Aboriginal Australians and Torres Strait Islanders to be involved in those government processes which directly affected their lives. It was dissolved five years later, amidst allegations of corruption, embezzlement of funds and unrelated legal action against the agency’s chairperson in 2003.

7. Every frame of the artwork *A.T.S.I.C.* tells a story. Select one to research and then share your interpretation with your peers.
8. Discuss the style/s used by Vincent Serico in his artwork *Cherbourg* (not to be confused with the artwork, *The Road to Cherbourg*). Reflect upon the hint of ‘cut out’ images layered over a painted background, the latter providing a cohesive structure for the cameos.
9. Research the purpose of the mission at Baramba (sometimes written as “Barambah”), later known as Cherbourg, which had its beginnings at the start of the 20th century. Share your thoughts on its merits and its shortcomings.

10. Study the cameos in the artwork *Cherbourg*. Some of them have been labelled. Find out who they are and why the artist has included them in his artwork.



All the men depicted in the labelled cameos are past residents of Cherbourg and may have been the artist's heroes. Clockwise from top left: Eddie Gilbert (1905–1978) was an Aboriginal Australian cricketer. He was a superb fast bowler and is most famous for bowling Sir Donald Bradman for a duck in 1931. Frank Fisher (1905–1980) was a professional rugby league player who, in 2010, was named as a member of the Indigenous Australian Rugby League Team of the Century. Jeffrey Dynevor (1938–2008), AKA 'Mitta', was the first Indigenous Australian to win a boxing gold medal for Australia at the British Empire (now 'Commonwealth') Games in Perth, Australia, 1962. The next portrait is also of Jeffrey Dynevor, later in life. Les Stewart (Senior) was a notable rugby league player. NOTE: There may be difficulty finding information regarding this person.

11. Use digital and/or print resources to identify an Indigenous Australian who has gained notoriety in the sporting world, either past or present. Assemble a display of images and text to introduce this sporting legend to your peers.
12. Using a format inspired by Vincent's artwork, *Cherbourg*, make a digital artwork based on your current topic of study. Be sure to unite the images with a relevant background.
13. The artwork *Pension Day Corroboree* can be seen in this exhibition as an original painting (acrylic on canvas board) and a folio print reproduction. Compare and contrast the two artworks. Choose a graphic organiser to record your notes. Your teacher will guide your selection.



A variety of graphic organisers can be found online. With your proposed outcomes in mind, select the organiser most suitable to the age and capabilities of your student/s. Suggestions: Venn diagram, Comparison/Contrast essay planner, Compare/Contrast matrix.



14. Draw an 'emoji' to depict how you feel about the subject of *Pension Day Corroboree*. Write a paragraph, or make a voice recording, to explain why you feel this way.
15. Speculate as to why Vincent Serico has used the word "corroboree" in the title of his artwork *Pension Day Corroboree*.



If students are unfamiliar with the term "corroboree", refer them to the Glossary on page 7 of this Education Resource.

16. Which character depiction do you like best in *Pension Day Corroboree*? Why? Share your thoughts.



17. As you study the artwork *Technology*, consider the broad meaning of technology as the ways in which humans seek to change or manipulate their environment. Identify at least three ways in which technology influences each of the following:
  - a. your day-to-day health;
  - b. your choice of what to wear each day;
  - c. your knowledge of the world.
18. Write a list of at least 5 positive aspects of life before the 1950s, when technology as we know it today was unavailable to the general population.
19. Create a 'then' (pre-1950s) and 'now' (post-1970s) visual commentary of one aspect of daily life, such as food, housekeeping or communication. Present your ideas as an artwork based upon Vincent Serico's *Technology*.
20. Do you think that Vincent's intention is to make a social comment with his artwork *Technology* or is it just a record of the artist's observations and recollections? Discuss.
21. Traditionally, what role has the bora ring played in the life of Aboriginal Australians? Does this continue to be the same in contemporary life?  
 If students are unfamiliar with the term "bora ring", refer them to the Glossary on page 7 of this Education Resource. To give a considered answer about the changing role, students may need to do some relevant research.
22. Investigate how Vincent Serico has applied the paint in the original painting *Pension Day Bora Ring*. Which tools do you think he may have used? Are the tool marks evident in the print reproduction?
23. One of the characters in the artwork *Pension Day Bora Ring* bears a striking resemblance to one in the artwork *Pension Day Corroboree*. Can you find him?  
 Top left corner.
24. Identify some of the activities depicted in the artwork *Pension Day Bora Ring*.
25. In the story accompanying the artwork *The Road to Cherbourg*, read and consider the artist's comment about the life cycle on the reserve. Suggest why he uses the term "mock release".
26. *The Road to Cherbourg* offers a two-dimensional slice of Vincent Serico's personal history. From what you know of the artist so far, join with your peers to create a timeline of his life (1949–2008).

27. The subject of Vincent's artwork, *Be Your Own Man*, is Eddie Barney, who was both a Queensland and an Australian flyweight boxing champion. He was also one of three Indigenous Australians to compete in the 1962 British Empire and Commonwealth Games (now known as the "Commonwealth" games) in Perth, Australia. What is a flyweight? What are the other categories in boxing? Research to discover more about Eddie Barney and then write a paragraph about his sporting life and/or his personal story.

28. Eddie Barney's father was Eddie Gilbert, an infamous Aboriginal Australian cricketer. In which other artwork in this exhibition does Gilbert appear?



*Cherbourg.*

29. In the story accompanying the artwork, Vincent Serico recounts how Eddie Barney's mother 'clouted' him all the time saying, "Grow up, grow up". Reflecting upon this comment, how has the artist used irony in his artwork?













The artist has painted Eddie as much larger than any other figure, suggesting that he has truly grown up.

30. What medium has Vincent used for the artwork *Be Your Own Man*?



Acrylic on canvas.

# MASSACRES / HISTORY / CONFLICTS

QUESTIONS AND TASKS	GENERAL CAPABILITIES							CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES		
										
	LITERACY	NUMERACY	ICT CAPABILITY	CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY	ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING	INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES	ASIA AND AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA	SUSTAINABILITY
1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
2	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
3	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
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24	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
26	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
27	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
28	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
29	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
30	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
31	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
32	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

# MASSACRES / HISTORY / CONFLICTS

1. Vincent Serico tells his story of the settlement of a large south-east Queensland city in the artwork *Toowoomba*. Find out when Toowoomba was settled by Europeans.



During the 1850s.

2. Suggest possible outcomes of the Jiman tribe being “mixed up with the Waka Waka people”, as recounted by the artist in his artwork *Toowoomba*. Consider both positive and negative possibilities.



“Waka Waka” is sometimes written as “Wakka Wakka”.

3. The events pictured in the artwork, *Toowoomba*, occurred long before Vincent Serico was born. How has his knowledge been gained?



The artist has read histories of the area but more importantly, his knowledge has been passed down orally from family relatives, including his father and grandfather.

4. Vincent portrays the troopers driving the tribes forward along the track to Taroom in the artwork *Toowoomba*. In 2018, the distance from Toowoomba to Taroom by road measures approximately 338 kilometres. It is generally accepted that the average person walks at about 5 kilometres per hour. Departing the city of Toowoomba today, approximately how long would it take the average walker to reach Taroom? To calculate the journey time for the troopers and tribes on their walk from Toowoomba to Taroom, you would need to be aware that tracks, not roads, were used. What other factors might determine the duration of the walk?



The average walker today, following the roads, would require around 68 hours for the journey, plus rest breaks. The troopers and tribes would have followed tracks and shortcuts through the vegetation. Journey time may be impacted by many elements, including: each walker’s age, height, weight, health status, length of stride, fitness level and/or the amount of effort applied. The terrain, track surface, loads carried and weather conditions may also have had an effect on the length of the journey.

5. “The black people are gone but the land is waiting.” Explain your understanding of this statement which appears in the artist’s story of the artwork *Toowoomba*.
6. Two artworks in this exhibition capture a tragic event which occurred in Kilcoy, Queensland, in 1842. *Kilcoy Massacre III* is an original painting (acrylic on canvas) and *Kilcoy Massacre I* is a folio print reproduction. Try to picture yourself at the scene. Endeavour to explore the emotion and gravity of the incident. In response, make a voice recording, write a diary entry or give a live performance for your classmates.



7. Reading like the synopsis of a contemporary horror film, Vincent Serico's retelling of the Kilcoy massacre almost sounds like a work of fiction. However, it is widely accepted that frontier violence occurred in many regions of colonial Australia. Suggest likely causes of conflict between settlers and the Indigenous inhabitants.



Answers will vary and may include some of these issues, any of which could be apportioned to both sides of the conflicts: differing values and beliefs; disputes over land ownership/water supplies/food sources; perceived violations of human rights; disruptions to daily life; fear of the unfamiliar; distrust; ignorance; intolerance.

8. Vincent Serico painted a series of artworks titled *Cooktown Miners*. The story accompanying the print reproduction, *Cooktown Miners I*, refers to the miners leaving Cooktown and going up to the Palmer River, where the goldfields were located. Speculate as to why the miners were in Cooktown.



Cooktown was an entry and exit point for the Palmer River goldfields. Miners would go to Cooktown to stock up on supplies, drown their sorrows, celebrate their finds, sell their gold, rest and recuperate.

9. Which aspects of the artist's story are depicted in the artwork *Cooktown Miners II*?
10. It is generally accepted that Quinken country (also written as "Quinkan" or "Quinkin") is an area around the small town of Laura in North Queensland. This is Vincent's Grandmother's country. Write a paragraph or make a voice recording to describe the Quinken rock art shown in the artwork *Cooktown Miners II*.
11. Speculate as to why Vincent Serico has allocated so much space in the artwork *Cooktown Miners III* to the rock art? Which colours dominate the rock paintings?
12. Consider the relative postures of the Aboriginal men and the white men in the artwork *Cooktown Miners IV*. What might the artist's intention be here?



Perhaps Vincent has painted the miners as small, closed body shapes to hint at their desperation, loss of confidence and/or feelings of utter defeat. The Aboriginal figures, however, have been depicted as tall and looming, emanating power and self-assurance.

13. The "Jiman" of the title of Vincent Serico's *Black Policeman Meets the Jiman* is a tribal name that has also been recorded as "Yiman", "Yeeman", "Eoman" and "Iman". Discover the location of Jiman country by reading the essay in the back of the Folio.



Jiman country is Vincent Serico's father's and grandfather's country. It is near the Dawson River, in the region of the Carnarvon Ranges in Western Queensland.

14. Vincent refers to “black troopers” in the story accompanying the artwork *Black Policeman Meets the Jiman*. Refer to the Glossary on page 7 of this Education Resource to read the meaning of “trooper”.
15. What did the artist imply by depicting the Aboriginal policeman with “the green leaf in his hand and a sword on the ground”? How and why did the situation change with subsequent interactions?
16. In the artwork *Thomas Mitchell looking for Leichhardt*, Vincent Serico has recorded one of the many peaceful encounters between Aboriginal tribes and white men in colonial Australia. Who was Thomas Mitchell and why was he looking for Ludwig Leichhardt?



During his own expeditions as an explorer and a government surveyor, Thomas Mitchell was also charged with ascertaining the whereabouts of Ludwig Leichhardt, who had not returned from an 1844–45 expedition.

17. The story which accompanies the artwork *Thomas Mitchell looking for Leichhardt* ends with the sentence, “So they thought”. Share your interpretation of this comment.
18. Imagine yourself as one of Bussamarai’s people as depicted in the artwork *Thomas Mitchell looking for Leichhardt*. Write a 200-word report (minimum) or make a two-minute voice recording of what you saw, heard, thought and felt during this meeting.



White travellers and settlers were moving through Mandananji country, probably without seeking permission. Some of Bussamarai’s men may never have seen white men, horses and the paraphernalia which accompanied them. It was also highly likely that there was no common language.

19. Imagine yourself as one of Thomas Mitchell’s team as depicted in the artwork *Thomas Mitchell looking for Leichhardt*. Write a 200-word report (minimum) or make a two-minute voice recording of what you saw, heard, thought and felt during this meeting.



Interactions with Aboriginal Australians were probably uncommon in the 1840s. There would have been great uncertainty about whether their reception would be peaceful or hostile. Communication could have been quite difficult.

20. Using art media of your choice, illustrate a contemporary meeting of two disparate groups. Consider the emotional temperature between the groups and plan how to represent it.
21. The artwork *Myall Creek Massacre* is significant as it records the artist’s perspective on the first in a bloody history of killings of Aboriginal Australians where legal action was taken against the white perpetrators. Seven of the offenders were arrested, charged and hanged. How might the legal outcome of this tragedy have helped to shape future values in Australia?

22. Research to discover the documented story of the Myall Creek massacre. Write a paragraph, make an audio statement or illustrate what you have learnt and present to your peers.
23. To where is your eye first drawn in the artwork *Myall Creek Massacre*? How has the artist achieved this?
24. Why do you think Vincent Serico has inset his portrayal of the hanging men? Do you think that the background colour is significant?
25. *Carnarvon Collision (Big Map)* was the last artwork completed by Vincent Serico. This is not a map in the conventional, geographical sense. Discuss.
26. The artist states, “I wanted to paint all the sites that I’ve been thinking about and heard about”. He has done so in his artwork *Carnarvon Collision (Big Map)*. His map covers a large area of land including the Expedition Ranges (Queensland Central Highlands), Auburn Range (west of Bundaberg, near Theodore), Carnarvon Gorge, and the south-western Queensland towns of Taroom, Injune and Isla. Read the legend accompanying the illustration on the next page.

Plot each of these on the regional map below.



Refer to Question 26 on the previous page:



1. Carnarvon Gorge
2. Expedition Range
3. Auburn Range
4. Great Dividing Range
5. Dawson River
6. Theodore
7. Glebe
8. Nathan
9. Bundella
10. Taroom
11. Campsite near Taroom
12. Hornet Bank
13. Three campsites towards Carnarvon
14. Hole in the wall
15. Glenhaughton
16. Injune
17. Cockatoo Station
18. Isla
19. Palm Tree Creek
20. Palm Tree Valley
21. Three campsites at Lake Nugga Nugga



27. Is the map to scale? How do you know?



Relative distances between the campsites and between the ranges are inconsistent. People and objects are shown as larger than some of the natural features.

28. Create a map legend, or key, for Vincent Serico's artwork *Carnarvon Collision (Big Map)*. It should include symbols for campsites, shelters, waterways, grass trees, palm trees, dilly bag, Corroboree participant, white man, Aboriginal Australians.

29. Reinterpret a small section of Serico's artwork *Carnarvon Collision (Big Map)* to depict a multi-point perspective of what is happening in that fragment of the scene.

30. Describe how the artist has created a sense of symmetry in his artwork *Hornet Bank Payback*.



There is a hint of horizontal symmetry in the placement of the fences and the large circular 'campsite' icons. There's also a vertical symmetry suggested by the warriors above the serpent and the grass trees below the serpent.

31. Historians label this event as a "massacre". Vincent Serico declares "it was just payback to us". What is "payback" in this context? What does history record that suggests it was a retaliatory act?



Twelve Aboriginal Australians were shot for spearing cattle in the vicinity of Hornet Bank station, which had been leased to the Fraser family. There were also allegations by Aboriginal people that the Fraser men were taking Aboriginal women who lived and worked on their property. Some nine months later, twelve occupants of Hornet Bank station (11 British colonists – including 8 from the Fraser family, plus 1 Aboriginal station-hand) were brutally attacked and killed by the Jiman.

32. Speculate as to why the invading party wanted the dogs killed.



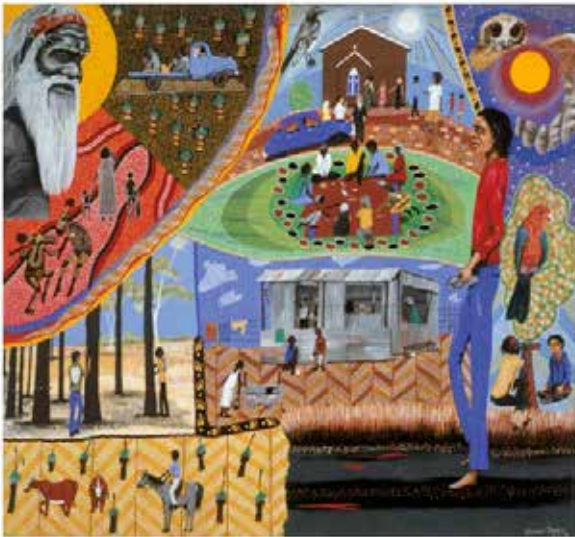
The dogs would have barked, alerting the residents to the imminent attack.

# **ACTIVITIES:**

## **PRIMARY**

**The following pages can be printed out  
as individual activity sheets**

**FireWorks Gallery and Museums & Galleries Queensland  
invite teachers and students to email activities, artworks, or other  
responses to the exhibition or to this Education Resource to  
E: [exhibitions@magsq.com.au](mailto:exhibitions@magsq.com.au)**



Vincent Serico, *The Road to Cherbourg*, 2009  
 Folio print reproduction  
 Archival inks on 300gsm Hahnemuehle rag paper  
 62 x 87 cm  
 City of Ipswich Collection, Ipswich Art Gallery  
 Photographer: Mick Richards  
 Courtesy FireWorks Gallery



Vincent Serico, *Cherbourg*, 2009  
 Folio print reproduction  
 Archival inks on 300gsm Hahnemuehle rag paper  
 62 x 87 cm  
 Private Collection  
 Photographer: Mick Richards  
 Courtesy FireWorks Gallery

Find the artworks *The Road to Cherbourg*, 2009 and *Cherbourg*, 2009. What does the artist convey about mission life in these paintings?

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Discuss how Vincent Serico integrates traditional and European painting techniques/styles in these works?

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Read the transcripts of the interviews between Vincent Serico and Danica Eather, 2007, that accompany each of these works (a copy of the interviews can be found on pages 19 and 20 of this Resource). How does this enhance the meaning of these two works?

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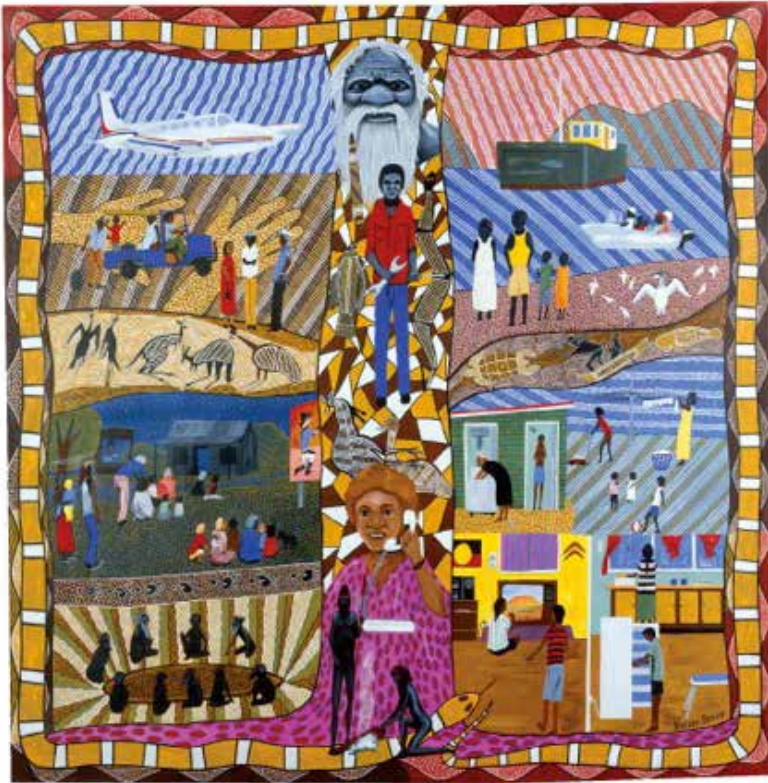


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Vincent Serico, *Technology*, 2009  
 Folio print reproduction  
 Archival inks on 300gsm Hahnemuehle rag paper  
 87 x 62 cm  
 City of Ipswich Collection, Ipswich Art Gallery  
 Photographer: Mick Richards  
 Courtesy FireWorks Gallery

What symbols or metaphors from contemporary culture are evident in this artwork?

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Vincent Serico says, "Painting gives me confidence in myself". What is something you do that gives you confidence?

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Vincent Serico's work is about the history and life of his people in Queensland. What does Queensland mean to you?

Make a list below of all the things you think of when you think about Queensland (e.g. places, icons, activities, symbols, historic events, or people). Create a collage of 'your' Queensland by pasting drawings and pictures within the outline of the state below. (You may wish to enlarge this template for collage.)



**YOUR LIST:**

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## WORD FINDER

Vincent Serico drifted around Queensland, painting artworks and doing odd jobs such as ring-barking and fruit picking. Can you find the names of communities he has a connection to or visited below?

PALM ISLAND

MITCHELL

CHERBOURG

YARRAHBAH

CARNARVON

CHARTERS TOWERS

DOOMADGEE

MT BILBAH

DAWSON RIVER

MURGON

TOWNSVILLE

ARCADIA VALLEY

KINGAROY

KILCOY

TAABINGA

L	C	A	N	E	E	G	D	A	M	O	O	D
A	H	R	C	M	U	R	G	O	N	E	F	A
S	A	M	A	T	W	B	R	Y	Y	H	I	W
H	R	I	R	B	O	I	U	O	O	A	J	S
A	T	S	N	I	C	N	O	C	R	G	P	O
B	E	P	A	L	M	I	S	L	A	N	D	N
H	R	O	R	B	O	T	A	I	G	I	W	R
A	S	O	V	A	U	G	M	K	N	B	A	I
R	T	L	O	H	N	D	I	V	I	A	N	V
R	O	W	N	S	V	K	T	A	K	A	T	E
A	W	M	I	T	C	H	E	L	L	T	U	R
Y	E	L	L	A	V	A	I	D	A	C	R	A
E	R	C	H	E	R	B	O	U	R	G	E	S
R	S	A	T	O	W	N	S	V	I	L	L	E





Vincent Serico, *Carnarvon Collision (Big Map)*, 2009  
 Folio print reproduction. Archival inks on 300gsm Hahnemuehle rag paper. 62 x 87 cm  
 Collection of Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art  
 Photographer: Mick Richards. Courtesy FireWorks Gallery

*Carnarvon Collision (Big Map)*, 2009, is a map of Vincent Serico's Grandfather's country and tells the story of how white man came down onto Jiman country and settled, bringing with them sheep and cattle. Can you find:

- A man riding a brown horse?
- Three covered wagons?
- Five brown cows walking in a line?
- A campsite near two water holes?

Most of the concentric circles (painted with dots) on this map represent different campsites along the Dawson River. How many can you see?

Are we looking down on this map, or across it, or both? On the back of this sheet, draw a map of your own backyard or community, using different perspectives.