

# Euraba Papermakers

*"Euraba is a special place. Euraba means 'place of healing'.*

*My dream and vision is to see our young people come to work at Euraba so we can be mentors for them to help them build up their self esteem and just feel good about themselves"*

**Aunty May Hinch, founding member**

## About the Euraba Papermakers

In 1998, the women graduating from Boggabilla TAFE College, expressed an interest in re-learning their lost cultural practice of weaving using the reeds and the grasses that grow along the Macintyre River. Other students in West's class tried their hand at making paper using the same grasses and reeds that the weavers were utilising. Aunties May Hinch, Marlene Hinch, Joy Duncan and Adrienne Duncan along with Margi Duncan, Stella O'Halloran, Gloria Woodbridge and Isobel Karkoe became the founding members of this new community art practice. 1

The company received the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships in 2000. The Euraba Paper Company invested in two

huge electronic beaters to replace the back-breaking work of pulping the cotton fabric by hand, freeing the women to concentrate on the more artistic aspects of creating paper; colour and design.

Work from the Euraba Paper Company has been included in exhibitions at the Moree Plains Gallery, Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre and at the Noosa Regional Gallery in Queensland. In 2009 Euraba Paper was included in the Melbourne Art Fair.

Every year but one since the inaugural Parliament of NSW Aboriginal Art Prize in 2005, the Euraba Paper Company and its artists have entered work for consideration (collaborative work as well as individual pieces) and every year they have been shortlisted. In 2010 the eight-panelled Gaduu – Murray cod won the Prize.

WATCH this video : <https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/channel/clip/524/>

### About the artwork:

#### **Gaduu – Murray Cod, 2010 [reprinted in 2017 on commission]**

In 2010 the eight-panelled Gaduu – Murray cod won the Parliament of NSW Aboriginal Art Prize. This beautiful cast work depicts a cod swimming through the Macintyre River. Each of the eight panels contains images and stories that belong to the eighteen collaborators, three of whom in this case were men.

Euraba Artists and Papermakers is an Aboriginal artists' collective based in Boggabilla, in the cotton belt of north-western NSW, Australia. It is owned and operated by the Goomeroi people of Toomelah of the region, and has been making paper by hand since 1998. Euraba has a soul and its story is about art, community, resilience, healing and cultural leadership. Many hands make our paper. Euraba paper captures our touch, our thoughts and our culture. Our hand-made paper is unique and is the foundation for our artwork and giftware. It is chosen by many artists for its high quality. <http://eurabapaper.com.au/our-story/>

*Euraba artists and papermakers Gaduu - Murray cod 2010 (detail), plant fibre and rag paper, 93 x 124cm, (8 panels, irregular overall), winner of the 2010 Parliament of New South Wales Aboriginal Art Prize. A collaborative work by Thelma Bartman, Leonie Binge, Lola Binge, Michelle Binge, Adrienne Duncan, Alin Duncan, Aunty Joy Duncan, Christine Dumas, Nerida Hinch, Marlena Hinch, Aunty Marlene Hinch, Aunty May Hinch, Garry McGrady, Leah McGrady, Tim McIntosh, Stella O'Halloran, Anita Swan and Lenice Swan. Courtesy the artists and Euraba Paper Company, image courtesy Campbelltown Arts Centre and Parliament of New South Wales. Photo: Ian Hobbs.*



### **Artist Practice**

Euraba's paper and art are unique. It is made from local materials and pigments in a remote part of Australia, by a small community with strong Goomeroi cultural traditions. Euraba was founded on the artistic skills of nine senior Goomeroi women, who commenced art classes in 1996 at the Boggabilla TAFE and became Euraba's first lead artists. Our artists and members use their own handmade paper as a creative canvas on which they express their stories and ancient culture. The first audiences to see their work are always the Goomeroi people, for whom it is a celebration of their unique cultural identity. Artists and members have access to the papermill to create their own work, and learn from artist Elders and visiting professional artists: this has included Bronwyn Bancroft, Katherine Nix and Sabine Pierard. To keep our practice vibrant, we collaborate and experiment with a diversity of artists and practices.

**Conceptual** Artists and members use their own handmade paper as a creative canvas on which they express their stories and ancient culture. The first audiences to see their work are always the Goomeroi people, for whom it is a celebration of their unique cultural identity. The designs are of significant to the Goomeroi people and to individual artists. Prominent images are the Murray River cod, the fresh water turtle, the grubs used for fishing and the river itself. The papermakers often collaborate with professional artists, such as Monika Grzymala, Bronwyn Bancroft, Jonathan Jones, Katherine Nix and Sabine Pierard. They find this process invigorating and inspiring.

**Material** The papers are formed from either cotton rag waste or natural reeds and bulrushes. The designs are either embossed into the wet paper during the papermaking process or are painted on, or in it - the paint actually penetrates the paper making the image an integral component of the paper.

### **Art Critique – Tess Allas 2011**

*"Their dream is to pass their knowledge on to the youth of Boggabilla and Toomelah and, in doing so, instill in them a sense of pride which in turn will help them to overcome some of the obstacles they will face.."*

## Other relevant works

Papermakers May Hinch, Lola Binge and Donald Cubby with David Jarrett, 7. Photo: Edwina Pickles



"Illuminate" was a major work commissioned to be part of the Corroboree Sydney Festival in 2010 in collaboration with Jonathan Jones. The work represents a makeshift humpy and every element has significance, from the cotton rag made of local produce to the eura leaves and bulrushes embedded in the papers.

*The video projections were inspired by a comment from Hinch, who said community members respected their elders so much they would not cross their shadows.*

*"Projecting the images outward, this can never happen, the images are being projected on to the paper and then onto the viewer," Cara Pinchbeck, AGNSW says.*

*"The work really speaks about the past and the history of the community, the present and offers knowledge and meaning for the future generations," she says.*

<http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/aunty-may-hinch-illuminates-the-past-of-an-indigenous-community-20131126-2y7bt.html>

## World

Boggabilla and its nearby Aboriginal community, Toomelah, are situated on the banks of the Macintyre River. Across the river is the more affluent Queensland town of Goondiwindi, famous for its locally-owned champion racehorse Gunsynd. Goondiwindi businesses do not provide local Aboriginal people with many employment opportunities.

Tess Allas, Artlink, Feature, June 2011

<https://www.artlink.com.au/articles/3627/euraba-paper-company-boggabilla/>

AGNSW Home Education resource