

The MABO Decision

Living Colour Magazine acknowledges and pays respect to Australia's past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this feature contains images or names of people who have passed away.

The High Court 1992 decision in the Mabo case recognising Native Title

On June 3, 1992, the High Court of Australia delivered a landmark decision in *Mabo v Queensland (No. 2)*, recognising the Meriam people's traditional ownership of Mer (Murray Island) in the Zenadth Kes (Torres Strait). This ruling acknowledged that Indigenous Australians held native title to their lands, effectively overturning the doctrine of *terra nullius*—the notion that the continent was uninhabited at the time of British colonisation.

The case originated in 1982 when Eddie Koiki Mabo, alongside fellow Meriam plaintiffs David Passi, Sam Passi,

Celuia Mapo Salee, and James Rice, initiated legal action to assert their land rights. Over a decade, they presented more than 4,000 pages of transcripts of evidence demonstrating their enduring connection to the land and the continuity of their customs.

In response to the case, the Queensland Parliament enacted the *Torres Strait Islands Coastal Islands Act 1985*, aiming to extinguish any native title claims. However, in *Mabo v Queensland (No. 1)*, the High Court found this legislation invalid as it contravened the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*. ➔



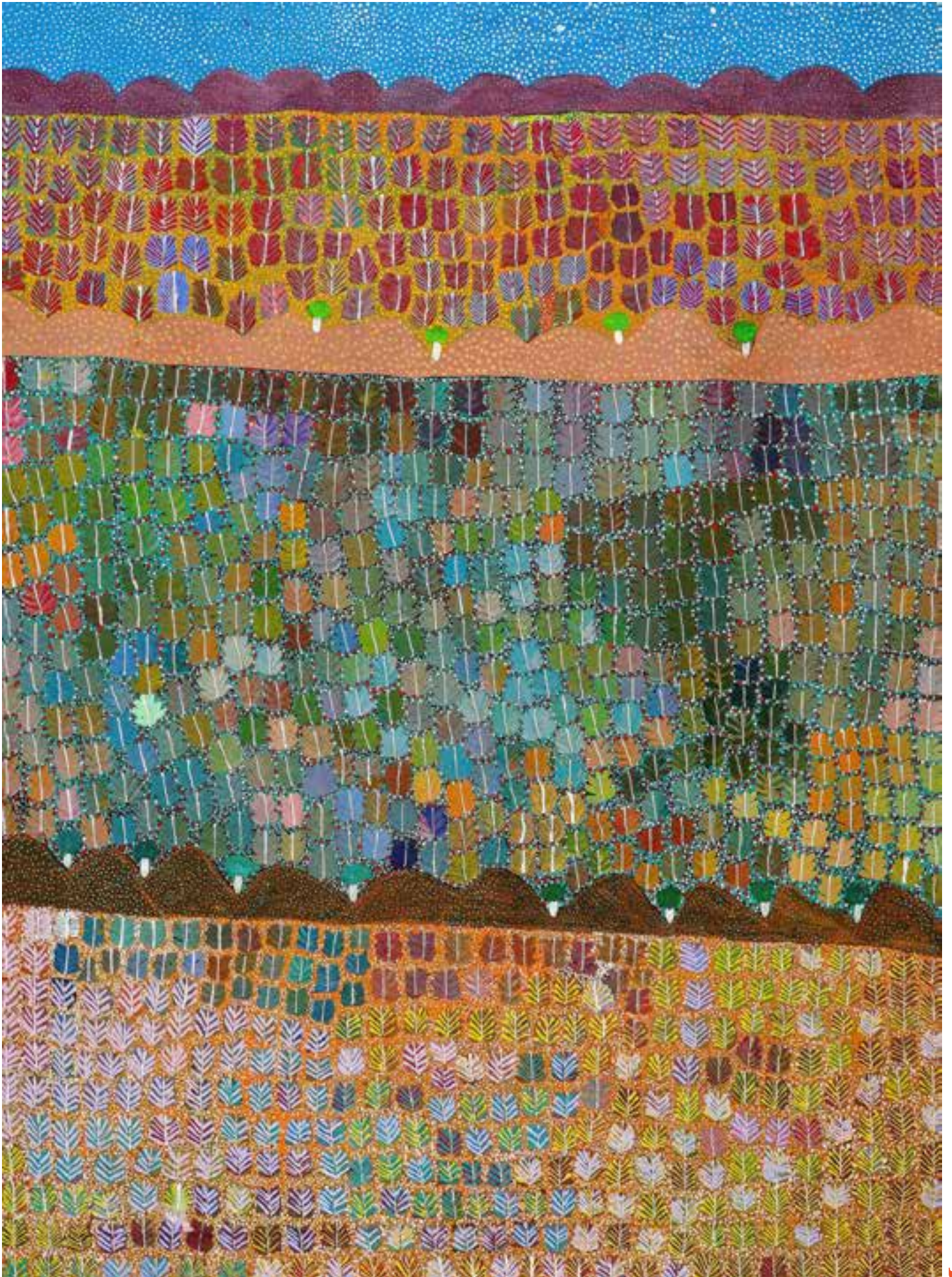
Plaintiffs in the case of *Mabo v Queensland (No 2)* (1992) 175 CLR 1 in 1989, at the Supreme Court in Brisbane with barrister Bryan Keon-Cohen and some of their supporters. From left are Father

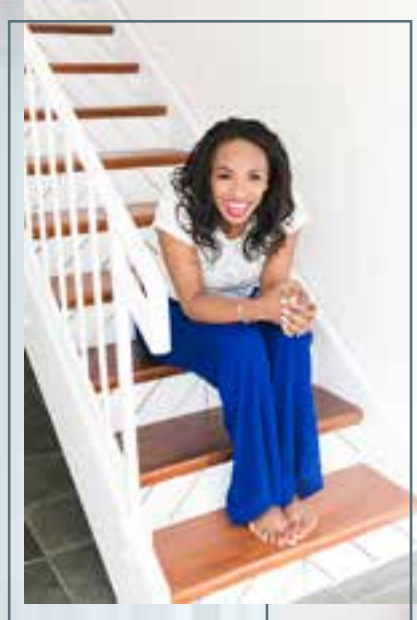
Dave Passi, Eddie Koiki Mabo, Bonita Mabo, Bryan Keon-Cohen, James Rice, Eddie Mabo Jr and Henry Kabere. Photo by Jim McEwan — courtesy of Trevor Graham and Yarra Bank Films.



“In the gentle curves of their smiles and the depth of their gaze, we find a treasure trove of wisdom. Our elders are living libraries, each wrinkle a chapter of resilience, each grey hair a testament to a life full lived.”

#TheElderSeries





My clients are the reason
I do what I do.
Their satisfaction isn't
just a goal—
it's my top priority. ➤

Images: Supplied.



➤ Continued overleaf.



A Dance on the Wind—Bird of Paradise

In this piece, the Bird of Paradise isn't just blooming—it's moving. Brushed with rich orange, deep purple, and vivid blue, it rises in motion, kissed by hues of gold and white to evoke the soft breeze that carries it.

Native to South Africa, now thriving in Australia's warmer states, this striking bloom symbolizes freedom, grace, and vibrant life. It reminds us that beauty doesn't stand still—it flows, it flies, it dances.

Bird of Paradise by Dure Shahwar. Image: Supplied.



La Rosa Regina
(Italian for The Queen Rose)
by Dure Shahwar.
Image: Supplied.



The Floral Empress

Australian native peony
by Dure Shahwar.
Image: Supplied.



Eucalyptus leucoxylon by Dure Shahwar. *Image: Supplied.*

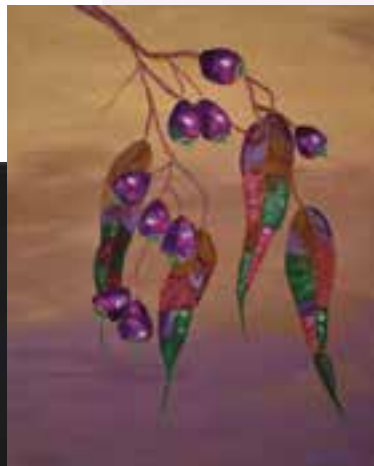


Image: Supplied.

Twilight Hymn to the Gumnut Trees

O golden sun, in tender fall,
Thy last light weaves a mystic call—
Across the land, so wild, so free,
It finds the arms of gumnut tree.

Their silver limbs in silence sigh,
Bathed in the blush of ember sky;
Each nut, a spell of sunlit grace,
Each leaf, a kiss upon Earth's face.

No temple holds such sacred glow
As where these dusky branches grow.
And in their hush, I seem to hear
The heartbeat of the dreaming sphere.

So linger, light, and softly gleam—
You turn the bush to living dream.

Eucalyptus leucoxylon, also known as South Australian blue gum or yellow gum, is a medium-sized tree native to south-eastern Australia. It features smooth, pale bark and striking flowers in cream, pink, or red that bloom mainly in winter and spring, attracting pollinators like birds and bees. Drought-resistant and ornamental, it is widely used in urban landscapes and revegetation projects, offering shade and habitat for wildlife, and playing a key role in Australia's native ecosystems.

The oil on canvas painting portrays a serene midnight scene where moonlight softly illuminates a tranquil landscape. Deep blues and blacks set a luminous backdrop, while pink eucalyptus blossoms glow ethereally in the breeze. Through delicate, expressive brushstrokes, it captures the quiet beauty and mystery of night, evoking a sense of living stillness and poetic wonder.





Iltja Ntjarra, Show 1, Country to Couture, 2024. Photos: Michael Jalaru Torres.



Nagula Jarndu, gujarra yangarrjin' (two coming together), Show 2, Country to Couture, 2024. Photo: Dylan Buckee.



MumRed by Samala Cronin, Fractured Country, Show 1, Country to Couture, 2024. Photo: Dylan Buckee.



Photo: Dylan Buckee.

Northern Peninsula Area Art Centre, Big Colours, Show 2, Country to Couture, 2024.



Sonya Coleman, Amna Qureshi, Melanie Sarantou, Eleraze, Show 2, Country to Couture, 2024. Photo: Dylan Buckee.



Sarrita King x Edition, Show 1, Country to Couture, 2024. Photos: Michael Jalaru Torres.



Yarrenyty Arltre Artists, Show 2, Country to Couture, 2024. Photos: Michael Jalaru Torres.





The Mayoress of Logan's portrait, by artist, Yumin Yang.

Right: Mayoress Ali Raven holding her self-portrait at Logan Council Chambers, celebrating creativity, identity, and civic pride.

Photos: Lewis Lee OAM.



Presentation of the Mayoress of Logan's Portrait. Unveiled at Logan Council Chambers on April 24, 2025, this oil painting of Mayoress Ali Raven by artist Yumin Yang stands as a tribute to community leadership and cultural recognition. Pictured with Mayor Jon Raven, Lewis Lee OAM, and embroidery artist Jenny Gao. Photo: Lewis Lee OAM.



The HEART of Community

A rare gift within The Heart of Community

Words by Lewis Lee, OAM

A Portrait of Unity

It was a profoundly moving and rare occasion — one that spoke to the power of art, humanity, and cross-cultural respect. The moment was made possible by the generosity and vision of 80-year-old Chinese artist **Yumin Yang** who — after meeting and listening to **Beny Aterdit Bol OAM**, president (past) of the Queensland African Communities Council, in 2023 — felt inspired to paint his portrait.

This remarkable gesture culminated in the official unveiling of the portrait at *The Art of Embroidery* exhibition, held at the

Queensland Multicultural Centre, Kangaroo Point, on August 10, 2024. Hosted by the gracious **Jenny Gao** and **Peter Zhuang** of the Rotary Club of Sunnybank, the event reflected the true spirit of inclusion, cultural harmony and mutual admiration.

Yumin Yang's tribute — a finely crafted oil painting — goes beyond artistry. It is a powerful symbol of what is possible when communities listen, honour, and uplift one another. Her rare gesture represents not only an act of deep personal recognition but also a profound commitment to genuine multiculturalism.