

Our Infinite Imprint

An exhibition by the Friendship Circle

Narrandera Arts Centre

5 December - 10 December 2016

**Doreen Angrove, Layla Bacayo, Julie Briggs,
Victoria Dyer, Kathleen Foster, Marilyn Manning,
Sarah McEwan, Vic McEwan, Josie Middleton,
Lindee Russell, Joyce Spencer, Tim Wilson**

About the Artworks

The Friendship Circle has been exploring nature, animals and human's in the landscape. Through our research trips to Altina Wildlife Park and our curator's talk for the exhibition Land Dialogues at Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, we have questioned our perception of what nature actually is. Is anything 'natural' anymore?

No part of the world remains untouched. Human's impact the environment in every way. Our relationship with animals has been romanticised, with many living in captivity in order to survive.

We wonder about what our future holds when our need for control has effected the non-human world in such a negative way. What is the consequence of this when we consider that nature is bigger than us and doesn't necessarily need us?

This project is a partnership between Riverina Community College, The Cad Factory and Narrandera Arts and Creative Network, that has been developed by Accessible Arts, the peak body for arts and disability in NSW. The Friendship Circle is one of eight Artist Run Initiative's Accessible Arts is supporting by providing business skills development, professional artist talks, peer-reviewed practice, along with connections to local arts communities and organisations.





Exhibition view



Exhibition detail of floor artwork



Exhibition detail of floor artwork



Print created by Tim Wilson,
Layla Bacayo and Sarah McEwan



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Layla Bacayo and Sarah McEwan



Opening



St Joseph Narrandera Year 1 and 2 students exploring the exhibition



**Workshop Process at the
Narrandera Arts Hub**



Altina Wildlife Park Research Trip



Wagga Wagga Art Gallery Reserach Trip

A Life in Craft

Joyce Spencer

Narrandera Arts Centre

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JOYCE SPENCER – A RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION

Deborah O'Brien

For over twenty-five years I've had the honour and pleasure of being Joyce Spencer's friend. We met through our mutual interest in all things artistic. Even then, I was struck by the innovative nature of Joyce's work and the scope and diversity of the art forms and techniques she embraced.

As an artist, maker and craft practitioner, Joyce has been active in spinning and weaving, ceramics, folk art and decorative painting, mosaics, metalwork and sculpture. In each of these fields she has taken traditional techniques and turned them into something ground-breaking and unique. Two decades ago, I recall Joyce showing me some faux relief pieces she had created using dimensional T-shirt paint on hard surfaces. To my knowledge, no-one had ever done this before. Being Joyce, she most generously explained the technique and encouraged me to use it in my own work.

Even though Joyce often pushes the boundaries in the way she uses paint, fabric and other materials, she also has a deep respect for past traditions. For example,

she has adapted the styles of traditional folk art such as Bauernmalerei and Rosemaling and made them her own.

Joyce's enthusiasm for life and art is infectious. That's what makes her such an outstanding teacher. She is the consummate mentor, both talented and generous of spirit. In fact, passing on the traditions and techniques is as important to Joyce as creating her own artworks.

For years Joyce taught folk art and decorative painting and became renowned for her accessible 'Light Airy Fairy' style which was showcased in several books in the Milner Craft Series including *Folk Art Cards* and *Folk Art Weddings*. She is the author (along with me) of *The Art of Teaching Craft* which was published internationally and became an influential book in helping artists to share their techniques effectively with others. By the way, Joyce is a fine writer too and was active in Sydney poetry circles before moving to the Southern Highlands and then Narrandera.

Joyce has been involved in a number of collaborative projects including the iconic Cod Fish she designed for last year's 'On Common Ground' festival, an initiative of Sarah and Vic McEwan of the Cad Factory. The fish was cut out of wire mesh by the Men's Shed and woven with textiles by many helpers.

Even in her late eighties Joyce continue to be a prolific creator. She has often said, 'Nothing is safe from my paintbrush,' and she has upcycled and decorated many an item that other people might have consigned to the tip – hat boxes, watering cans, even a bowls' bag and a pair of cowboy boots – turning them into heirlooms of the future. Melding function and decoration is at the heart of Joyce's work. In that respect, she follows in the tradition of William Morris who said:

'Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful.'

I encourage you to linger over this exhibition and to reflect on the long and wonderful artistic career of an amazing woman.

