

Rhoda Roberts

“THE CIRCLE”



ILLUSTRATION: CECELIA FAUMUINA

Author:



Source: [The Australian](#)

Rhoda Roberts

As the founder of the successful Dreaming Festivals, Rhoda Roberts AO is a significant force on the Australian arts scene. A member of the Bundjalung nation, Widjabul / Wia-bal clan of Northern NSW and Southeast QLD, she was recently appointed as the First Nations Consultant for NIDA (National Institute of Dramatic Arts) and Elder in residence with SBS TV. Rhoda is the former Head of First Nations Programming for the Sydney Opera House. She is the Festival Director of the Boomerang Festival / Bluesfest, Festival Curator for the Parrtjima Festival, NT (Northern Territory), Senior Advisor for Welcome to Country and Creative Director First Nations Programming for NORPA (Northern Rivers Performing Arts).

She has been appointed by Voyages as a consultant undertaking a number of cultural and creative projects based at Uluru NT and Mossman George in far North Queensland. With a diverse range of international and national industry experience within commercial, community and non-profit organisations, Rhoda is a practicing weaver, a sought-after speaker, writer, Director and performer in theatre, film, television and radio.

Rhoda has worked on a number of touring collaborative Music Projects across the Pacific, including dramaturgy for the Spirit of Churaki and the award-winning Boomerang Project, a tri-nations ensemble of first instruments and mother tongues with New Zealand and Scotland. She was also engaged to work on the Solomon Islands host nation for the Festival of Pacific Arts.

Rhoda is renowned for coining the term Welcome to Country “establishing a focus on protocol manuals and welcomes by local custodians for the arts and media industries.”

Front image caption & credit



Name: The Circle

Artist: Rhoda Roberts, 2019.

Description: Made with Lomandra grass, grown beside our waterways and harvested from and on Bundjalung Country, 'The Circle' is about our knowledge system. In the circle everyone has a place and a voice.

Artist Statement: My practice is one that could have disappeared but there has been a tenacious revival across our Homelands for the last two decades. Many years ago when I learnt the rudiments of the craft of weaving I decided to focus on wall hangings and mats. The material, Lomandra, is organic and is about working with country. The plant fibres are associated with oral story, they are ancient - they are edible and used for medicinal purposes. I have only sold a few pieces in exhibitions and I don't often sell my work. It doesn't cost me anything to make, just the labour. When I get to sit with the aunties and hear their stories, listening to the knowledge they impart – it's a healing - it's a gifting – so my weaving is what I often gift to the artists and performers I work with.

Credit: Caption text and image for the illustration was provided by the artist and author Rhoda Roberts.