

Creative Message Exchange between Children and First Nation Artists

Curator Dr Laura Brearley



Supported by Bass Coast Shire Council

More information about the Phillip Island Conservation Society's *For Our Future* project is available on the PICS website ...

<https://picsvictoria.org.au/for-our-future/>



This collection of images were drawn by Grade 4 students at Newhaven College on Millowl (Phillip Island) in response to the Launch of the Eco Arts project *For Our Future*. With thanks to Grade 4 teacher Fiona Smart for facilitating this and to Boonwurrung Elder Aunty Fay Stewart-Muir for her support.

Three First Nation artists have responded to the children's artworks:

Uncle Steve Ulula Parker (Boonwurrung), Matua Arnold Thema (Maori), and Aurelio Denasha (Ojibway).

The images and responses are part of a Creative Message Exchange within the *For Our Future* project. Deep thanks to all involved. Creative responses to this Message Exchange are warmly welcome.

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We honour the Boonwurrung/Bunurong of the Kulin Nation who have cared for this Country for thousands of years. We recognise First Peoples' continuing connection to lands, waters, and community. We pay our respects to the Ancestors and Elders who carry the memories, traditions, cultures, and aspirations of First Peoples here and across the world, who are leading the way.

Message from Boonwurrung Elder Aunty Fay Stewart-Muir

Could you please pass on to the students the gratitude and love I felt when I looked at their drawings? Their art had so much meaning in them. I feel that Milowl will be taken care of by this next generation of deep thinking young activists!!

Well done to all involved.

My love to you all

Aunty Fay



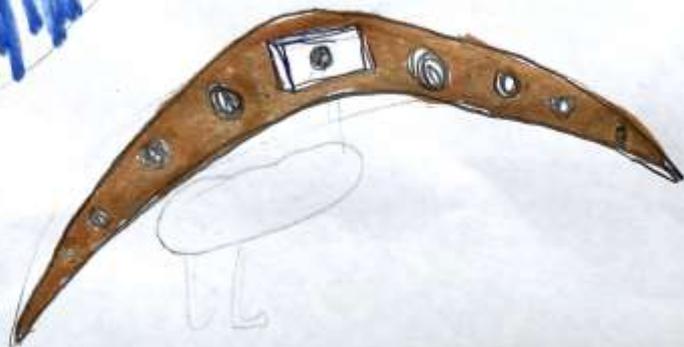


Children's Drawings

WELCOME TO COUNTRY



CARE
FOR THE
COUNTRY





Smoking
Ceremony

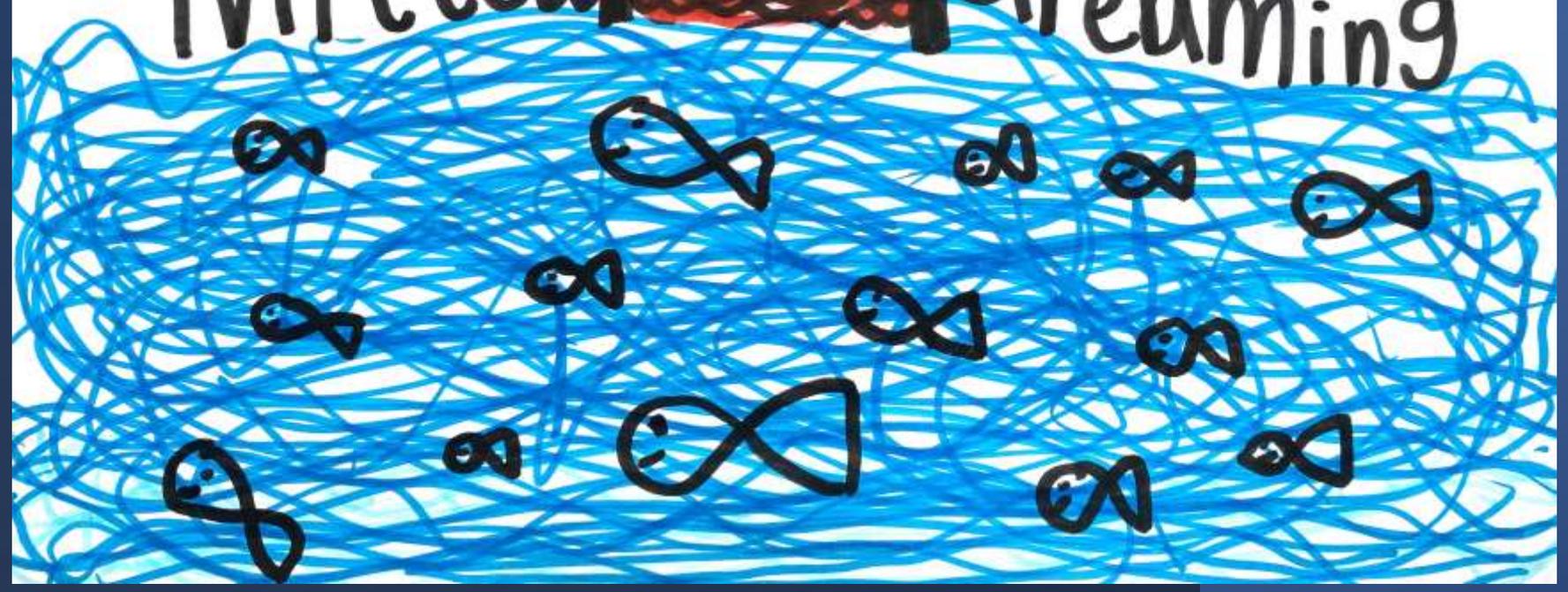
Luna?



Scarlett



Mi llow dreaming





Alice

WELCOME TO CONTRY



laura Breatly

Alice



Pip Steve
Rev laura
Thank
you

Penguin



Bandicoot



Moulinetkizic.





The choir
sang boom
boom bandicoot
we all sing
together.



We
did a
Smoking
ceremony with
Steve Parker.





Welcome to the Country



pool

welcome to COUNTRY!



Lo ka Lirsing
opens country







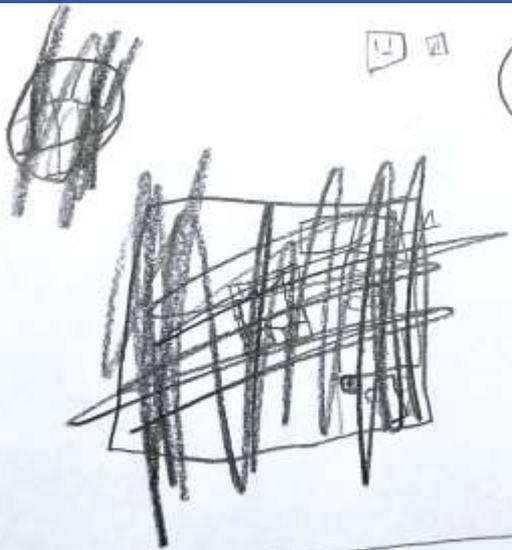
WELCOM
TO
COUNTRY

Two simple human figures, one in a red dress and one in a yellow shirt, holding hands.



Welcome to
Country

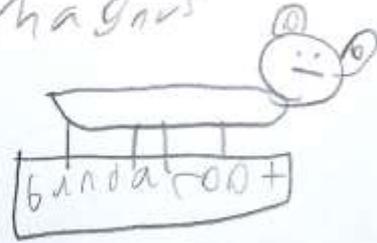




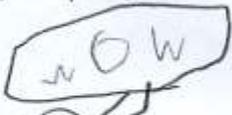
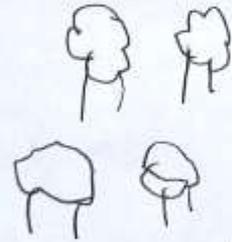
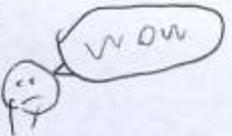
clone shots
magnus



magnus



this could
↓ be one





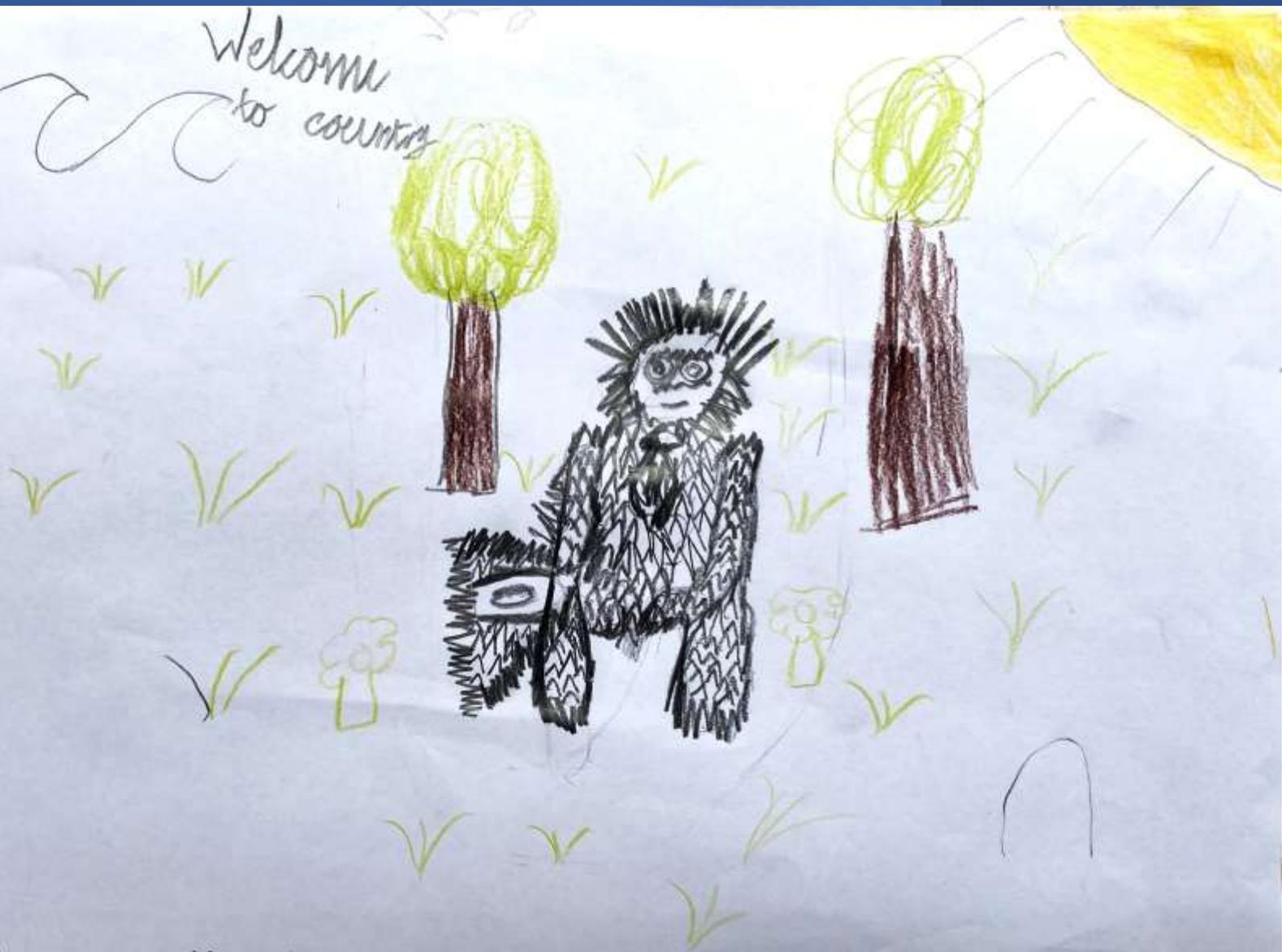
welcome

to

country

Ryan

Welcome
to country



all perry's allowed





Welcome to country

Culture



Womanijaka

kuarong

land



Country

Waradgarri

banwarra







Maggie

LOOK AFTER
THE COUNTRY

WELCOME
TO
OUR
LAND



First Nation Artists' Responses

WELCOME TO COUNTRY

As a First Nations Boonwurrung man
I have been moved by the way the images show
the impact the Ceremony has had on young people.
I see them understanding it in a visual way.

The younger generation are understanding First Nations' culture
Our culture
Our Country
That's what it's all about.

We can tell the truth of what has happened.
We can pass that on down to non-Indigenous people
and embed it in generations to come.
It can change our ways of thinking.

It's a way of moving forward



MOLY-MACKENZIE.

I am quite amazed at what the
Bubup (children) are seeing.

The beautiful sunshine
that was out that day.

Waa (Crow) in the sky and
Bunjil (Eagle) in the trees

Footsteps on the land
A meeting place around the campfire.

Bunjil was there before everybody
came out to that ceremony.

Bunjil was flying around above us
Watching, listening, connecting.

*Uncle Steve Ulula Parker
Boonwurrung*



People around a big fire

Different faces

Bodies of different colours

A Djeembana Space

A Meeting Place

Community is all around

*Uncle Steve Ulula Parker
Boonwurrung*

Welcome to
Country

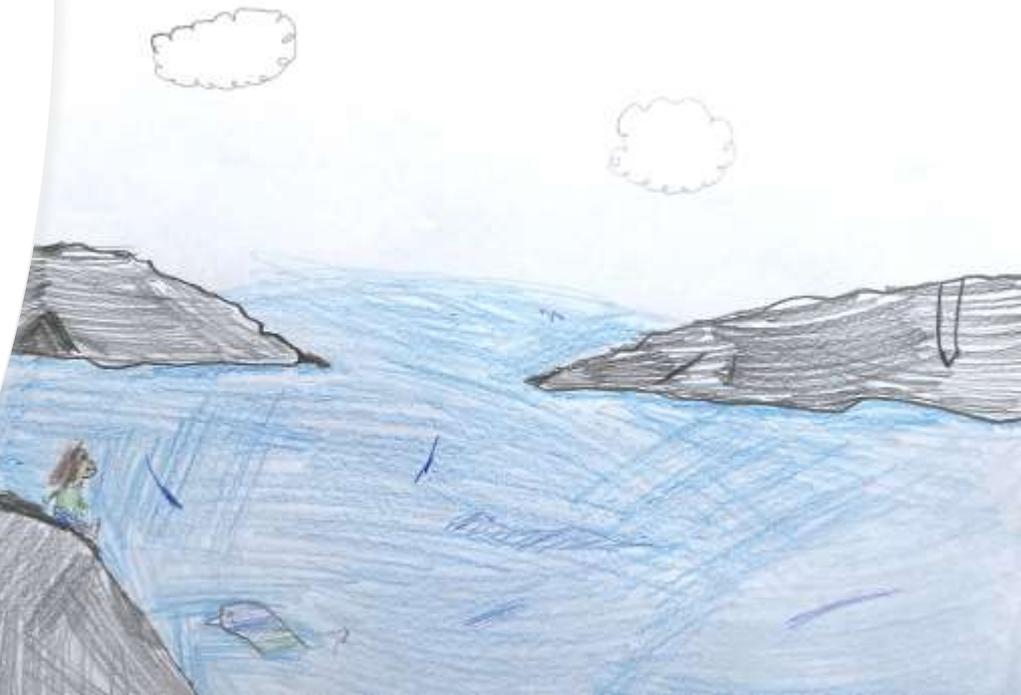


A quiet moment sitting on Country
Beautiful Country
Sun, bird, sky, water
Connecting

Earth meeting water and water meeting sky
All of the elements
And the colours of Earth
A deep sense of connection

Connecting to all of the world's cultures
Across the whole of the Earth

*Uncle Steve Ulula Parker
Boonwurrung*



The artworks show an
incredible range of ideas
The vibrancy of the dance
The spirit of the penguins
Lots of sky

I see a lot of interconnections
between things
Connections with the water
Waves, sun and the sky
Fire, coolamon and the circle
Ceremony and singing
A strong kinship with animals
The colours of our Country



*Uncle Steve Ulula Parker
Boonwurrung*

Country and culture
Beautiful and protective
All encompassing
A Meeting Place
There's a fire at the heart of it all

*Uncle Steve Ulula Parker
Boonwurrung*



This image has a spiritual quality
It's ambiguous
Is it someone swimming
or a fish or a tadpole?
It's an egg shape
The beginning
A birth



*Uncle Steve Ulula Parker
Boonwurrung*



So many of the pictures have water in them

I love the waves

It's what Millowl is known for

A penguin in the waves

Heaps of fish there in the water

Millowl Dreaming

*Uncle Steve Ulula Parker
Boonwurrung*

I appreciate these images.

A younger generation has understood the need to care for Country.

There will be a continuation of what we have started.

Their interpretations say things in ways that words can't.

They are a response from the heart.

We need to appreciate what they've done
and give them encouragement to go further into it.

*Matua Arnold Tihema
Maori*





The Deep Listening Ceremony was the opening of the invitation to engage

There was story, song, language, dance and poetry

There was such generosity

There was a sense of First Nations people connecting to offer this invitation

We pay respect to each other

Respect lies at the heart of Ceremony



Maoris have a special name for First Nations people of Australia.

They call them Tāngata Moemoea.

Tāngata means people.

Moemoea means Dreamtime.

It gives a dignity to the people who have been around here for thousands and thousands of years.

They have survived and they are still here.

It's up to us to learn from what they have discovered over all those generations.

*Matua Arnold Tihema
Maori*

Alice

WELCOME TO CONTRY



laura Breatly

Alice



Penguin



Bandicook



Pip Steve
Rev laura
Thank you

Penguins, bandicoots and
people singing together
There's the sea, the sun
The clouds

*Matua Arnold Tihema
Maori*

The images bring together activities
and an elemental sense of the world.

That was what we were trying to do that day ...
Showing another generation what they need
to do to preserve the natural world.



The drawings tell me that the children were involved.

They were listening to what they saw.

There was full engagement and they felt welcomed.



*Matua Arnold Tihema
Maori*



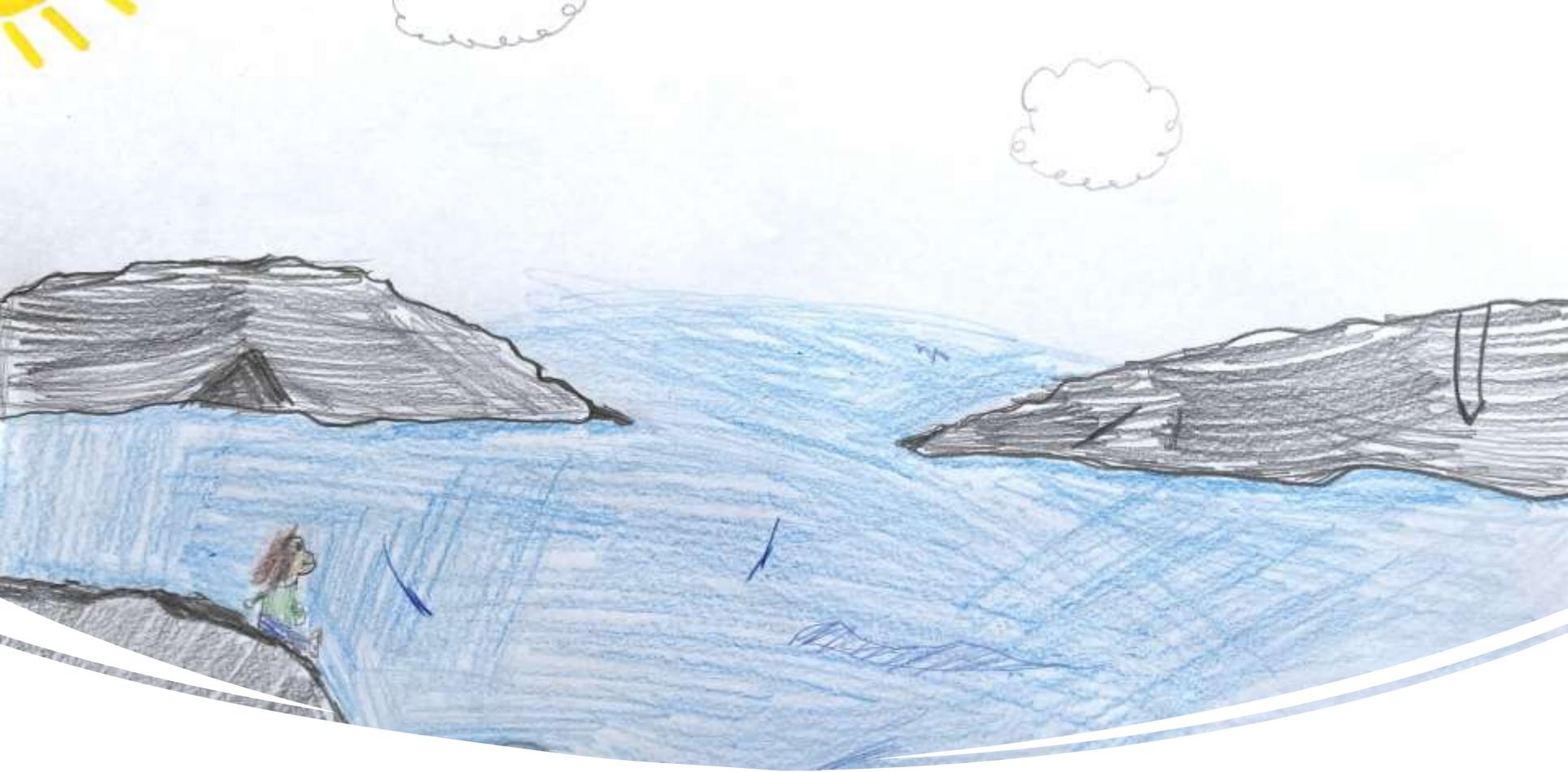
Different people
Different nationalities
Different colours
Different languages

A strong sense of
connecting in community
When it comes down to it
we are all human beings

It doesn't matter
what religion you have
what colour your skin is
or what language you speak

We are all under the same sky

*Matua Arnold Tihema
Maori*



There is the land and the sea and the person here appreciating what they see in front of them. To tell you the truth I've done that lots of times. You sit on a rock or a beach and look at the ocean. You don't need money to enjoy that. Anybody can.

Every time I come to the ocean, I pay respect to the God of the Sea, Tangaroa. I pay homage to the living creatures and all the flora and fauna that live in the sea.

*Matua Arnold Tihema
Maori*

In this image, we see water and land.

It could be the planet.

This image takes us out of the immediacy of the event
to a broader appreciation.

You pull back and you see the whole perspective

A broader frame.

We can also see some kind of living being.

There is depth and ambiguity to this one.





The drawings tell different narratives within one image.



Here, the sun is going down.
It's a beautiful way of
showing the sunset
with the moon in the sky.

*Matua Arnold Tihema
Maori*

Scarlett



Mallow Dreaming ...
It's a beautiful place
and we understand this.

There is a strong sense of life
and vitality of the sea
and the fish within it.

The water, the trees, the birds
and the people appreciating
what they are seeing.

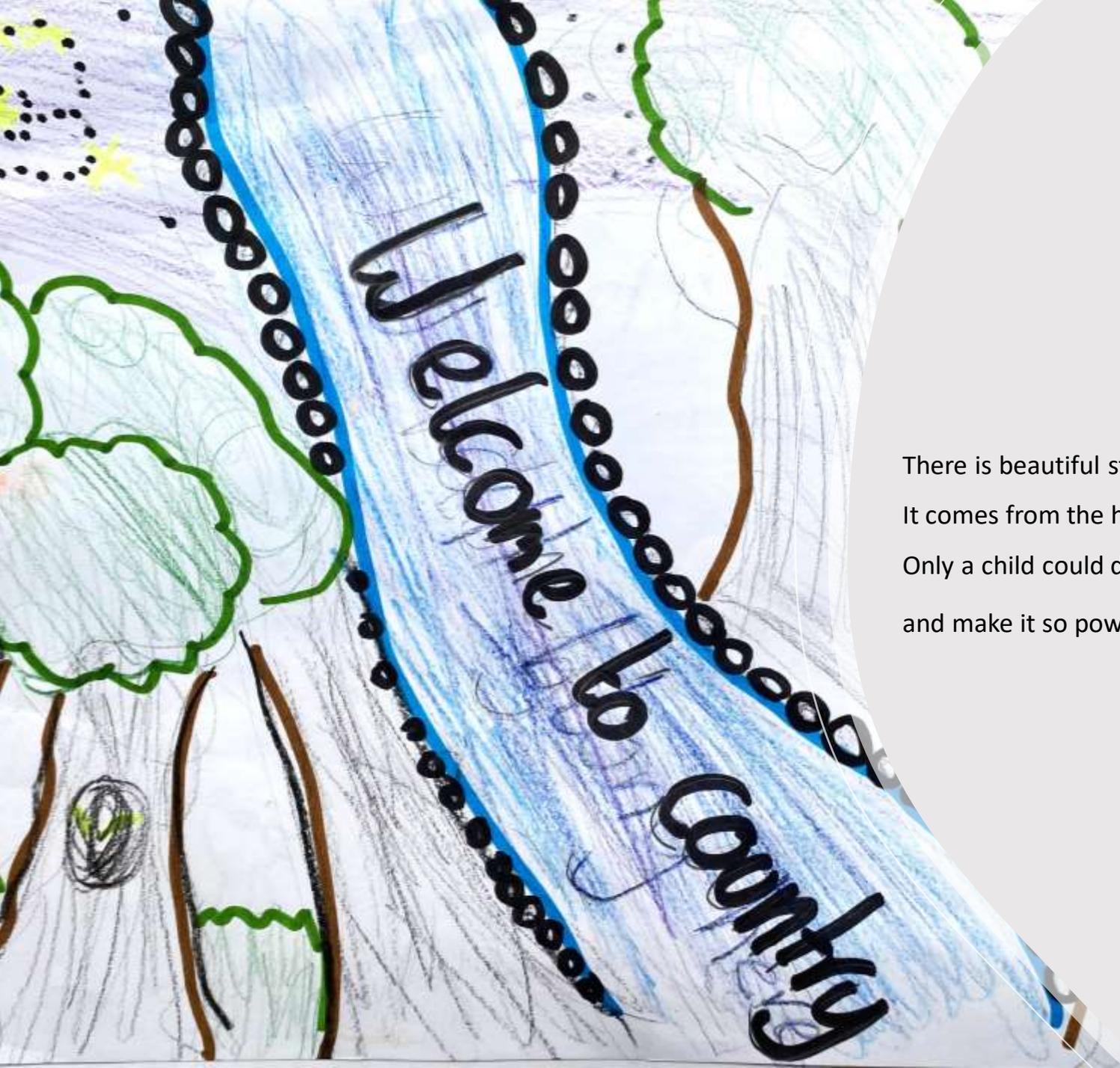
*Matua Arnold Tihema
Maori*





When you come onto this land you need to be welcomed.
We come from different cultures
With these flags we are connected to this land.
Community is connection.

*Aurelio Denasha
Ojibway*



There is beautiful storytelling in these images.
It comes from the heart of a child.
Only a child could draw with this simplicity
and make it so powerful.

*Aurelio Denasha
Ojibway*



I'm seeing the elements
of fire, sky and home
and the connections between them.

These children took the time to see this.

We are raising a generation and some
of them are getting that understanding.

We get welcomed by Country -
not just the people but the
animals welcome us also.

*Aurelio Denasha
Ojibway*



I see Bunjil the Eagle there

We call him Migizi

The Eagle can fly the highest in the world

And is the closest to the Creator

When we have ceremony, there is energy there.

The Eagle witnesses that and takes it up to the skies

When we are doing ceremony

When we are singing songs

When we are dancing

We understand the sun will shine on Creation

Prayers are being answered

Shining down

Lighting up the fire

*Aurelio Denasha
Ojibway*



People are dancing around the fire
We are welcomed in
We create community

When we sing, we are connected to the land
We are so connected that all the animals listen
They can hear that everybody is connected

*Aurelio Denasha
Ojibway*



The rising of the sun is a powerful time.

Our ceremonies often start early in the mornings.

When the sun starts to rise that's when the power comes.

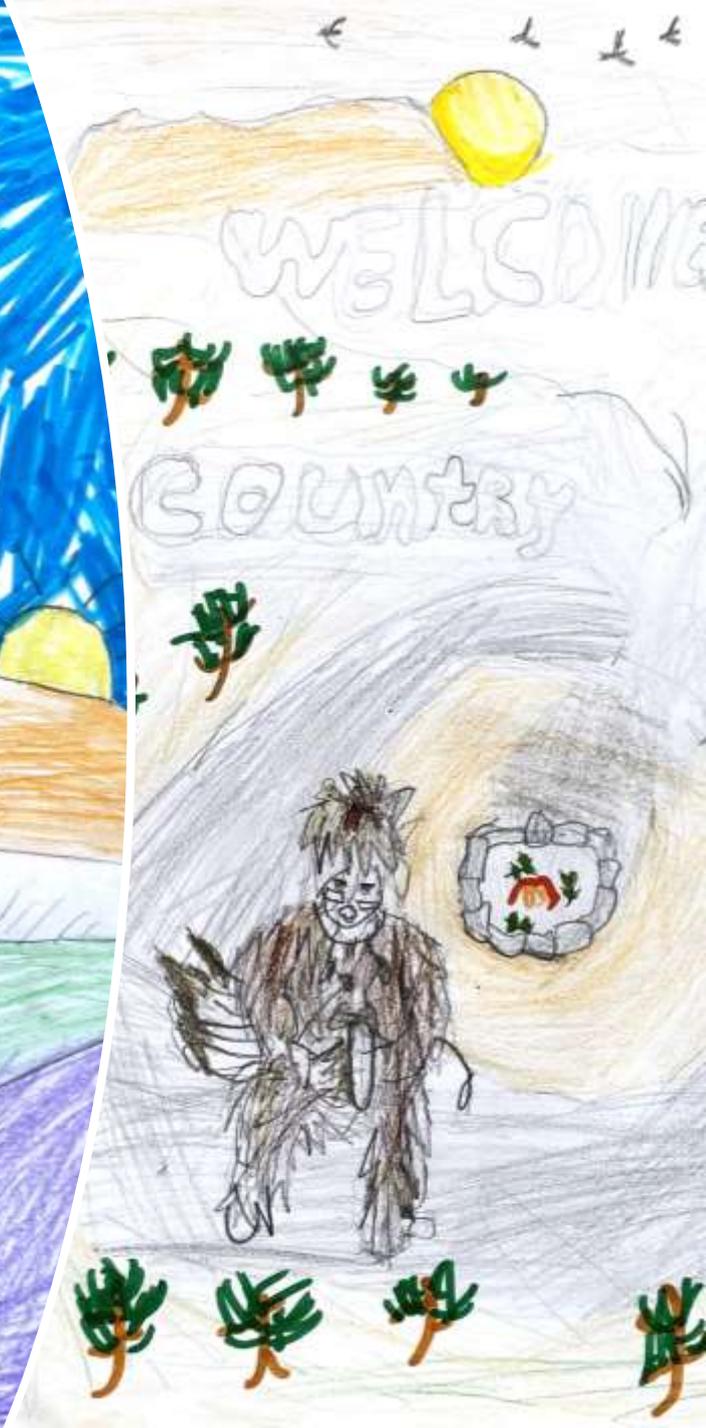
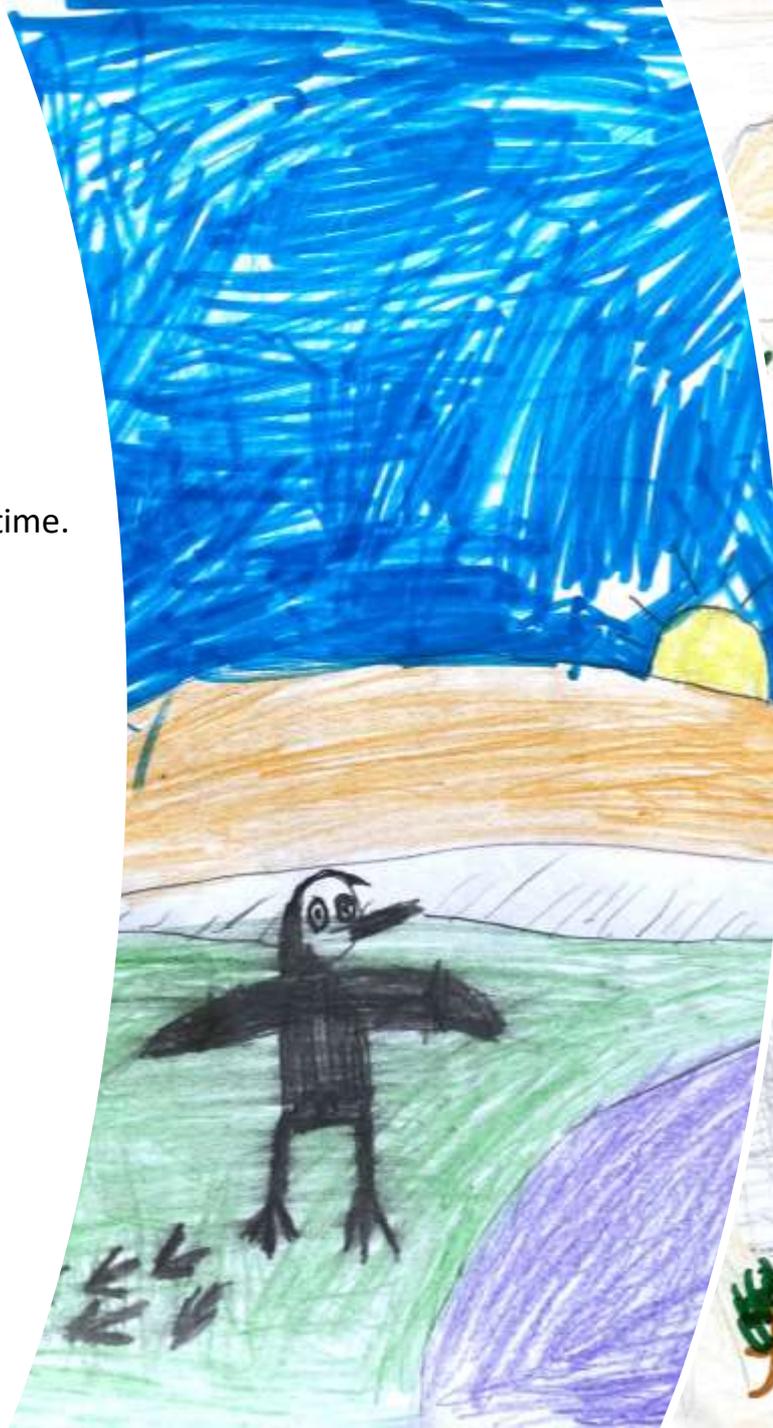
At home we have a sweat lodge

We put rocks on the fire

We tell stories

We're telling stories all the time

*Aurelio Denasha
Ojibway*



There is a river flowing with many tribes.
It is flowing from the centre of the Earth.
The trees are the strength by the rivers.
Their roots are connected
Don't damage this tree

The roots go out all around the world
The trees are all connected
The forest is all around



There is a boomerang there
What you say comes back to you

In the rainbow
There is a promise
And a protection

*Aurelio Denasha
Ojibway*



I see life giving life
Being ready for birth
The birth of a new generation

A new generation is coming up
There are choices to make
We have to be careful
What will we choose?

There is a sense of potential
about to burst through
There is a message here

It is beautiful

*Aurelio Denasha
Ojibway*

People have walked this land
for 60,000 years
They welcome us
They ask us to look after Country
The Nations are coming together
around the fire
There is the shelter there



Something special is happening

*Aurelio Denasha
Ojibway*

The strength is connected to the Earth
The Aboriginal people put their feet on the ground
They make a connection
They walked this Earth a long, long time ago
Their footprints are still here



We are being welcomed
and given strength
here on Country

It's the welcome
to this beautiful land
that we are living on

You can see the power of the elements
As the sun comes up
It warms the fish



We are here on this Earth
And in the centre of centres
There is a fire

It is igniting right now
We come from the circle
And we venture out

*Aurelio Denasha
Ojibway*

Children are pure of heart

They are so creative

They have just come in from the spirit world

The children are explaining the Dreaming



It's about love and understanding

That is all I know

The drawings are beautiful.

Thank you.

*Aurelio Denasha
Ojibway*



Short Films

‘For Our Future: The Launch’

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1vCa-tObeGo&t=7s>

‘Eco Arts in Action’

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1PNOb8-b3jo&t=4s>