

## *Totems that wander the land*

### **Cheylen Wanganeen**

The artwork is an Aboriginal painting done by myself, I created the main subject being the Yorke Peninsula leg with the dots being colour of the sea and the four totems in black. With the eagle flying high and the shark near the ocean, this is where the animals are mostly seen. The inspiration was from Tony Wilson, as he designed the figures of the totems representing North, South, East and West, and the local Yorke Peninsula NAPA organisation owns it. I asked for permission to use the local totems from my group and the elders agreed for myself to use them within my design. The Yorke Peninsula - leg has a brighter ochre colour surrounding it, showing the beach like texture, and making it more realistic and stand out to the eye.

I used a dot painting technique where it shows some clear signs of ocean movement and pattern in the piece. The Yorke Peninsula has an earthy ground texture making both patterns of the ocean and land blend. Using the end of a paint brush to do my dots I was able to keep a consistent flow for most of it, I had to switch brushes as the first one I used was too large. Tony Wilson was a big inspiration to my piece as I saw the way his dots are placed and produced, I tried to copy the same techniques. I also gained some inspiration from the Aboriginal artist, Cedric Varcoe who helped me with pattern placement and storytelling.

Having patterns, movement, texture, contrast in my piece, really helps it tell a story which a key factor is to creating Aboriginal art. In all my pieces, I try to tell a story significant to me and my culture, in this case it's the four totems that wander Nharangga country. These painting elements and principles help tell a story visually, without having to say anything, this has made the art piece successful in bringing a beautiful meaning to canvas. These principles made it successful because the movement, pattern, and textures are key ingredients to telling a story on canvas, making Aboriginal art amazing.

Having to switch brushes at the start impacted my piece as you can see the difference in some dots, I didn't mind too much for it as they were only small circles. I overcame this by using my final brush to do dots a lot more times than the last brush. Having the totems in black with a white shade around it really shows the significance of them, the glow shows the spiritual connections to the land. This is a big part of my piece, as the totems are the main story, and having them glowing works well. I would have more patterns inside the ocean instead of just having the dots, it looks like there's something missing with the negative space, I would plan it better next time.