

MUDDPICKERS



The term 'mudpickers' has a long history within the Townsville region. Residents of the South Townsville area are affectionately known as 'mudpickers', from the bygone era when people would cross the mudflats to get to town and then have to pick out the mud from between their toes.

The title can be deconstructed, looking at the action of picking (picking up, picking apart etc), which relates to many current arts practices.

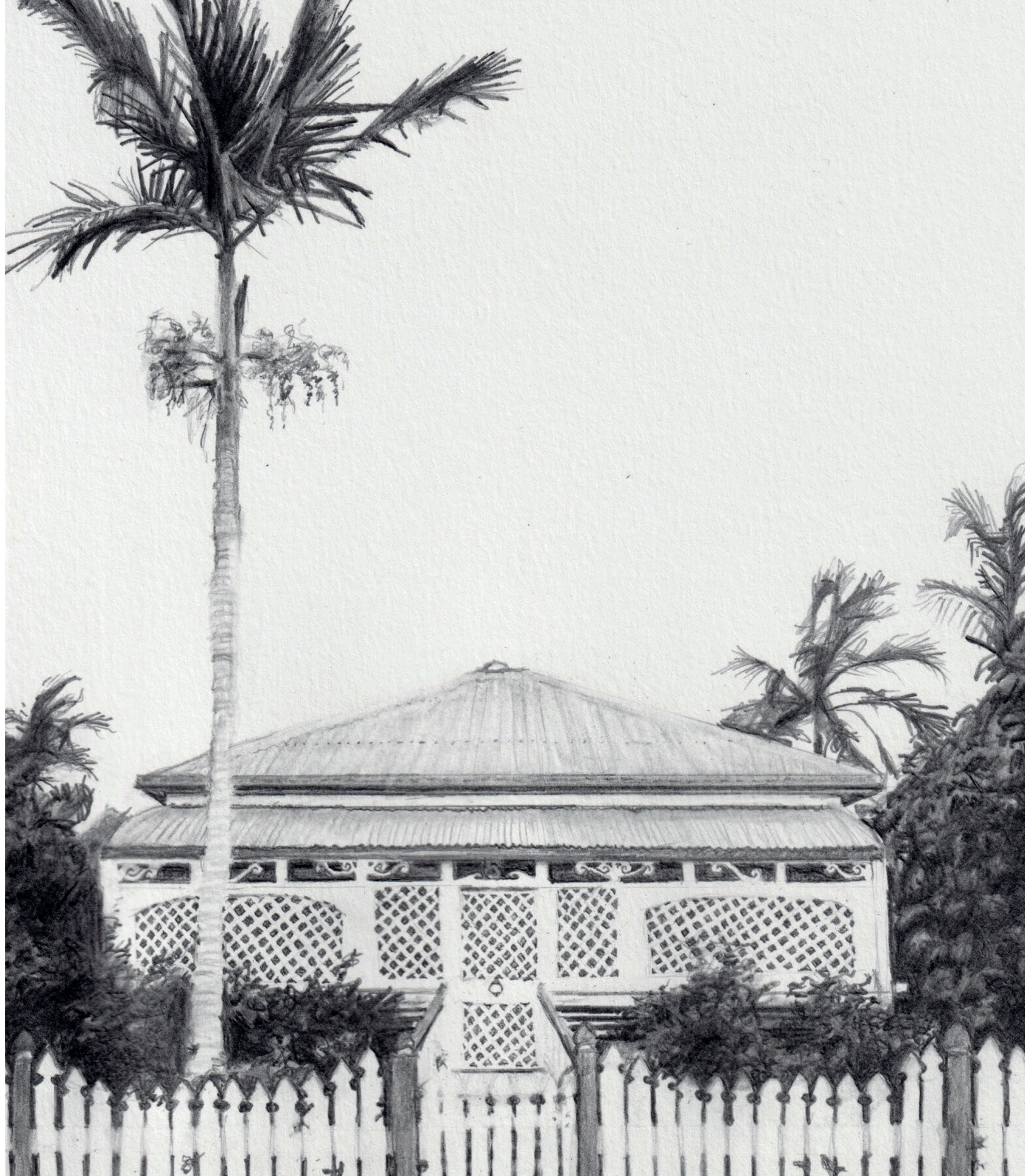
The group exhibition features recent works by artists Suzannah Babicci, Lauren Jaye Carter, Jane Hawkins, Hannah Murray, Rhonda Payne, and Bronwyn Smith, including drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture and mixed media.

Mudpickers is a collective mapping of our experience with place, and an investigation of memory and history. The works reflect a shared interest in trawling across the mudflats of Townsville to find hidden treasures in the layers, colours, textures and botanical forms.

Image front cover: Jane Hawkins and Suzannah Babicci, *Remnants 2 – Mud bubbles (satin)* (detail), Digital print on satin, acrylic yarn, thread, stainless steel wire, 25cm x 35.5cm x 0.8cm.

Image back cover: Bronwyn Smith, *Rowes Bay 3* (detail), 2021, Charcoal and graphite on Lanaquarelle 185gsm paper, 56cm x 76cm.

Image right: Hannah Murray, *Feels like home* (detail), 2021, Graphite on paper, 30 x 21 cm.



The mudflats are unique places which I now associate with North Queensland, after living in Townsville for several years. They became a part of my daily unwinding, walking our dog on their cracked pavement in the dry, and other times scoping out how wet they were in between tides.

They have a distinct motion, though it takes time to see this. The birds, animals, bugs, mangrove trees and the mudflats saltbushes, paired with the expanse of the sky and vivid outline of Castle Hill; particularly in the evening twilight as the heat of the summer day finally begins to fade - all mesh with the ever changing surface of the flats; sometimes crisp white with salt residue, other times soggy, ridden with evidence and impressions of life and movement documented for the season and beyond, as slow weathering of rain and tides returns a deep crevasse foot print to a soft mound.

Mudflats and mangrove ecosystems are facing a number of changes, from encroaching urban development and noise - to transformed water systems, shifting temperatures and hindered wildlife access. Making work for *Mudpickers* became about capturing the experience of this place over time, the textures, and fragments that make up a broad ecosystem.



Drawing on my own personal collection of photographs of the muddy banks of the Ross River - combined with elements taken from an aerial map of South Townsville and Railway estate, I have developed a series of altered and abstract maps: *Stuck in the mud*. The works are an exploration of colour and texture. Using relief printmaking processes, each layer of silt, sand and mud was printed with an almost squelching viscosity- reminiscent of times spent walking through these mudflats.

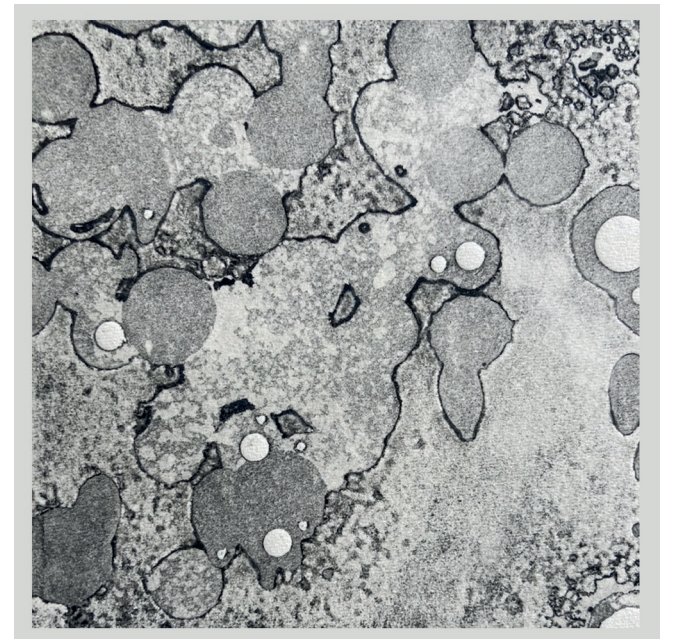


Image left: Suzannah Babicci, *Mind your mudflats* (detail), 2021, Digital print on satin, tape, 80.1 x 106.86cm print (dimensions vary on installation).

Image above: Lauren Jaye Carter, *Stuck in the mud I* (detail) 2021, Reduction and etched lino print, 23 x 76cm.

BRONWYN SMITH

Rowes Bay is a place of calm that I have known all my life, beginning in childhood. From the macro to the micro views of the mangrove landscapes there – another world becomes evident. The act of drawing feels primal and brings relief from this world, filled with digital screens and drama.

Image: Bronwyn Smith, *Rowes Bay 1* (detail), 2021, Charcoal and graphite on Lanaquarelle 185gsm paper, 56 x 76cm.





One of my favourite dog-walking haunts of the nineties was the mudflats at Oonoonba. I loved the textures it offered: soft bubbles of wet mud, later dry and cracked and curled; bird and animal tracks; and the myriad of slowly degrading detritus of human civilization that found its final resting place there. The works created for Mudpickers reflect a complex multi-layered response to this wasteland.

Image: Jane Hawkins, *Detritus 1 - Rust*, 2020, 69 x 52.5 x 3cm.



These artworks are a direct reflection of many childhood years spent sailing in and around Ross Creek. My starting point for these works was historical photos from the 1800s before the Yacht Squadron clubhouse was built in Palmer Street. I revisited the site of my childhood to create a record of memories of my time as a mudpicker against a backdrop of change from the creek of the 1880s to the 1970s clubhouse to the mangroves of the present day.

Image above: Rhonda Payne, *Sailing Club Site* 2021, 2021, Mixed media (watercolour, gouche, ink) on Rains watercolour paper, 30 x 23cm.



I have had the delight of calling South Townsville home at least five times spanning almost a decade. It is a very special pocket of the city that holds many precious memories and personal milestones. The artworks created for this exhibition attempt to capture this affinity and love for the suburb. Working from both memory and photographs, the small drawings rendered in graphite pencil serve as an intimate collection of familiar places and spaces.

Image: Hannah Murray, *Dog beach on dusk*, 2021
Graphite on paper, 15 x 21 cm.

MUDPICKERS | 5 MAR - 11 APR 2021

SUZANNAH BABICCI | LAUREN JAYE CARTER | JANE HAWKINS
HANNAH MURRAY | RHONDA PAYNE | BRONWYN SMITH

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