



## Brian Robinson Biography

Brian Robinson has literally carved out a distinctive presence within a remarkably talented generation of Indigenous Australian artists. Born on Waiben and now Cairns-based, he has become known for his printmaking, sculpture and public art in which he uses a variety of techniques to produce bold, innovative and distinctive works.

Like the tidal currents that course through the Straits, a myriad of cultural influences run through my ancestry and own lived experience. His family are fisher folk whose Roman Catholic faith exists in synergy with traditional spirituality. Robinson's ancestral lineage extends back to the Western Island people who reside on the deep passageway near Mabuig, Badu and Moa, the Maluyigal of Torres Strait; the Wuthathi from the silicon sand dune country at Shelburne Bay on the eastern side of Cape York Peninsula; a descendant of the Dayak people of Sarawak on Borneo; the Villaflor family of the Philippines and the Salmon family of Scotland.

Robinson's artworks present an intoxicating worldview. Graphic prints and contemporary sculptures read as episodes in an intriguing narrative, revealing the strong tradition of storytelling within his family and his community.

Look deeply into Robinson's imagery and you begin to lose your footing. A constellation of details absorbs you into spaces that are at once foreign and familiar, and a gentle but liberating sense of disorientation takes hold. Disorientation and surprise punctuate the seemingly pre-ordained rhythms, and subtly draws attention to various ways that humankind perceives order in the world. The imagery navigates pathways in a familiar system of signs, and then suddenly tumbles you out into another.

There is a multitude of recurring motifs and characters that appear, co-opted into the spirit realm of the Islander imagination. Masked figures reference performative and ceremonial traditions; the canoe, symbolic of travel and exchange, and the floral bloom, symbolic of fertility, abundance, harvest and regeneration often take emblematic forms.

Robinson's work has contributed significantly to the built environment of numerous cities across the country through a number of major public art commissions since 1998 including his iconic stainless steel Woven fish (2003) sculptures installed in the Cairns Esplanade Lagoon and Reef Guardian (2017), a monumental sculptural work that focuses on the Great Barrier Reef. In 2018 he was commissioned to design the athletes parade track for the Commonwealth Games that was held on the Gold Coast as well as one of the first underwater sculptures to be placed in the Great Barrier Reef in the Whitsundays.

His work has featured in many exhibitions nationally and internationally, including galleries in Germany, New Caledonia, Washington DC, New York, The Netherlands and his work is held in major collections including National Gallery of Australia; the Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art; National Gallery of Victoria; the Australian National Maritime Museum; the Tjibaou Cultural Centre in New Caledonia and the Kluge-Ruhe



Aboriginal Art Collection in Virginia, USA.