

## Grace Lillian Lee



### Yellow: Empowerment 2016

cotton webbing, goose feathers, beads, timber cane, cotton and wool thread  
Courtesy of the Artist

## Grace Lillian Lee

Born: Cairns Queensland 1988

Body Sculpture presents a body of new works created by Cairns based artist, Grace Lillian Lee. Vivid colours and striking sculptural forms explore how contemporary fashion and performance intersect with traditional artistic and cultural practices to create a new cultural dialogue.

For the artist, fluidity of water - being the source of life - is a current theme and is reflected through repetition, texture and movement of the design. The intricate weavings draw inspiration from techniques used to create adornments for ceremonial purposes in the Torres Straits Islands.

I am celebrating these techniques in a contemporary form, utilising materials, which would not usually be used. I heavily use the prawn weaving techniques, which I learnt from Uncle Ken Thaiday in 2010. I have adapted and developed this technique through exploring different fabrications and playing with scale, shape and form. These forms I have created are a reflection of me exploring my identity, the diverse mix of who I am and where I come from. It's a way to celebrate, share and be proud of being a multicultural Australian woman.

*Grace Lillian Lee, May 2016*

Lee's background and study in fashion has led to appearances in major fashion shows and cultural events, including the 2016 Melbourne Fashion Festival. Specifically for this exhibition, Lee worked with acclaimed artist, Greg Semu, to produce a series of dramatic photographs.

*Body Sculpture is at the Cairns Regional Gallery 24 June - 4 September, 2016*

"The six pieces of body adornment that make up her Body Sculpture collection reference ritual performance and traditional crafts, drawing upon and deepening Grace's ongoing explorations into palm-leaf weaving techniques—affectionately referred to in the Torres Strait as "prawn-weaving". The practice is common in the Torres Strait, used for practical basketry, and more decoratively for hanging ornaments and children's play objects—such as toy prawns [hence its nickname, prawn-weaving]."

"For Body Sculpture, Grace takes a departure from the geographically available materials usually associated with palm-weaving such as coconut leaf, banana fibre or pandanus, to explore the more processed fibres of contemporary fashion such as pre-dyed cotton webbing, "Metres and metres and metres of it!" laughs Grace, then reintroducing traditional elements such as wood cane and decorative goose feathers."

Quoted from Nature and beyond – the artistic fashion of Grace Lillian Lee written by Michelle Boyde [www.boyde.com.au](http://www.boyde.com.au)  
<http://garlandmag.com/article/nature-and-beyond-the-artistic-fashion-of-grace-lillian-lee/>

### EARLY

#### LOOK

Look at the art work. What does it look like to you?

#### TALK

Talk about what is jewellery and why do people wear it.

#### DO

Design your own headdress based on an animal or sea creature.

### MIDDLE

#### LOOK

Look closely at the how Grace Lillian Lee has made this work. What has she used to make it?

#### TALK

Would you wear this work? Is it wearable art or is it a sculpture for a wall? Is there a difference?

#### DO

Try plaiting different materials to create a long rope. Create a hat or headdress by twisting the rope around each other. Use string to tie it together.

### SENIOR

#### LOOK

Look at the colours and materials used. What do you think her inspiration for this piece was?

#### TALK

Talk about the blend of contemporary materials and colours with the traditional skills and motifs. How important are your links to your ancestry and history? Are there skills passed down in your family?

#### DO

Research a particular skill used in the past (e.g. french knitting, making fishing lures). Create an artwork based on that skill set.