



Eat Dirt Workshop Bibi Barba

Reimagining Education

What's possible when we think outside the square?

Bellingen Showgrounds | 15th & 16th June 2023

Intro

Internationally renowned artist Bibi Barba has been working with local schools in Sydney, on a voluntary basis for the past 7 years, embedding Aboriginal culture through storytelling, art and language. This has led to the development of this curriculum resource.

Bibi is a Saltwater woman. In a first for NSW schools, Bibi is co-creating murals of local dreaming stories and totems with the students. Bibi refers to the murals as knowledge papers. They connect the school children to Country and nature and to our shared history.

Bibi shares her own story of her grandmother saltwater women from the Darumbul and Darkinjung in Queensland. Her name. Lulu-Jiji – or water lily with the green tree frog and the snake as totems. Her father, from present day south coast - (Yuin country), tells how his ancestors watched Captain Cook's Endeavour for a long time – believing the ship to be a large pelican.

The linking of the totem through the cultural lens of her father's country, from Byron to the Gulaga Mountain or Mother Mountain, is Galwa - the whale.

As Bibi tells us of her growing and learning, she looks to a future where artists, elders, teachers and school children:

- **Think:** that they can learn about ancient knowledge
- **Feel:** that they belong to culture and so connect to country, and
- **Do:** by participating in Aboriginal communities.

This cross-curriculum resource has been produced for all schools in NSW, both primary and secondary and covers the following subject areas:

- Aboriginal Studies
- Art
- Science – Evolution, Ecology
- Australian History
- English.

It is a complete package with support provided throughout the duration of the project.

How does it work.

1. School secures the funding to roll-out the program.
2. School contacts Bibi Barba.
3. School decides on which teachers will be involved.
4. Bibi and school liaise regarding best place to hang the work.
5. Bibi provides the school with a list of local Indigenous artists.
6. Bibi provides the fact sheet to selected schools.
7. Bibi provides a list of local elders for the cultural totems of the area and briefs the elders of the program.
8. Bibi selects the artists on their skillset and makes recommendations.
9. School contacts the artist and provides them with the following information (Bibi provides fact sheet)
10. Once artist is confirmed, school will liaise with the artist.
11. Bibi goes through the process with the artist via an online tutorial for a 2-hour session.
12. We'll provide permission slips – parent info on the project – all they must do is add the information on the artist and elder who will be engaged.

Artist

- Research totems and provide to Bibi.
- Need to know what the local language is and the words for hello and goodbye.
- Get materials together or the school can do this.
 - o Includes A3 and A4 paper, water colours, brushes and pastels – oil pastels and acrylic paint.
 - o Artist will need to photograph each children's artwork in each art workshop.
 - o Artists need to upload as Jpeg image for digital decoupage.

School

- Need to check Working with Children Check.
- Permission notes for each child to participate and for school communications and newsletter.

Bibi

- Get the totem from the artist.
- Choose designs that will work and send to artist. Copy.
- Liaise with contractor who does the cutting (CNC Cutting Machine).
- Weatherproof - PVC versatile board - 16 mil thick for signage.
- CAD design is produced – the shape of each totem and welcoming and goodbye language in the local Aboriginal

Language

- Package gets sent to school and includes:
 - o Laser cut letters signage with digital decoupage children's artworks from the artwork shops.
 - o Lettering for signage for the laser cutting and how many.
 - o Hanging apparatus.

Benefits to local indigenous community

- Employment for artist, artist assistant and local storyteller.
- Puts money in the local community.
- Raises the profile of the artist through procurement.

How it works in the school

Depends on size of school.

- Class sizes are no bigger than 20 pax.
- This will also determine the number of classes the artist holds.
- Based on 300 students.
- Teachers choose 80 students.
- Students put in groups of 20.
- Lessons are 4 hours in length.

Lesson plan

Students will be informed about the program before they do it. Teachers and parents are encouraged to talk to students about what they will be doing.

Students preferably sit in a yarning circle and listen to dreaming stories told from a local elder.

- Elder gives a welcome or acknowledgement to country.
- Smoking and ochre ceremony for whole school to start the program.
- Students who are part of the program gather and sit in circle outside (where possible).
- Dreaming stories need to relate to the chosen totem.
- Artist and students draw totems together.
- Make sure the students' names are on all the artworks, so they can be returned.
- Artist and students draw symbols.
- 4 hours art lesson over 5 weeks.
- Art hung up to dry.
- Next session artists collect the art works.
- Returns art works to the school.
- When all students have participated, artist chooses a design from every student to be layered on the letters in digital decoupage.
- Once in-situ, the mural is transported back to the school for completion.
- Whole school assembly –
 - o Elder tells the dreaming stories to the school.
- Once completed, the work will be installed and mounted.



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