

## INTERVIEW WITH TOM MOSBY (KOORIE HERITAGE TRUST) - 17 SEP 2020

**Connection Matters Radio (CMR):**

Connection to culture is, for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, especially those who are disconnected, a very difficult journey. For children, it can be particularly difficult. Slowly but surely the Koorie Heritage Trust is introducing online resources that can help children with cultural connection and understanding. Joining me today once again to discuss this is the Trust's CEO, Torres Strait Islander man, Tom Mosby. Tom, welcome back to Connection Matters Radio.

**Tom Mosby:** Charles, my pleasure, and happy to be back.

**CMR:** Tom, let's talk about the Koorie Youth or the Koorie Kids' Club on Koorie Heritage Trust website. Give us a little bit of background to it, and where you and the rest of the trust team envisage that it might go in the future.

**Tom:** Yeah, for sure. Look, we've spoken before, we've talked before on your program about our KHT online initiatives. So when COVID happened, we had to quickly look at how do we continue to engage with our friends and supporters online. So we created KHT online, which includes KHT Voices and a range of other online activities.

Then coming out of that, we thought, actually, we need something for our kids as well, acknowledging that a lot of families are at home, isolating at home, you have young kids that need activities, and while there's range of other activities out there, we wanted to actually bring in a uniquely indigenous, First People, Victorian flavor into our kids' activities. So we created the KHT Kids' Club, and

it's all about engaging with our young people online. So at the moment, if people actually go onto our website, they'll see a range of activities online that they can actually engage with.

**CMR:** You've got some amazing artists who've contributed some works, especially for the coloring-in. There are some amazingly beautiful pieces, and I must admit I've attempted one of them in particular, one by Josh Muir, called Psychosis, which I believe is the latest one that you've uploaded. I think that just lends itself to some real almost psychedelic Koori artwork there.

**Tom:** For sure, and part of this has also been a way of continuing to engage with our creative community. So we've commissioned emerging, mid-career, established artists to produce these color-in sheets, with stories attached as well. So some of the early sheets you'll see, we have artists like Deanne Gilson, who's provided coloring sheets and stories attached. We have Mick Harding, and like you said, the latest is by this young artist from Ballarat, Josh Muir, and he does ... He's amazing, and they are quite psychedelic artwork, coming out of a very street art aesthetic. He comes from that sort of street art background.

**CMR:** Okay.

**Tom:** So we did an exhibition with him back in, actually, it's in 2018. People can actually see that exhibition still online, and you'll see the way he actually uses color. I think if people actually download the sheet by Josh Muir, have a look at the exhibition, they'll get an idea of the type of artwork that Josh actually

produces and the use of color.

**CMR:** I think it really does quite seriously signify the strong emergence and presence of contemporary Aboriginal art. I think that's important, for the community to fully understand that these different styles are melding and developing entirely new styles, almost.

**Tom:** Yeah, exactly, and when you see these colour-in sheets, you'll see Mick Harding who is more, if I can use the word in inverted commas, traditional style, whereas you compare that to Josh, with this very sort of young contemporary street art aesthetic, it's a very interesting comparison, but it also reflects the way that our artists are producing and how they're working within their practice today.

**CMR:** It's not just, of course, colouring sheets. You've got some activity sheets as well, where children can print these out, or mums and dads can print them out, and start doing patterns and the hatchwork patterns on boomerangs and shields. What I do love about this, once again, as we saw with the art and it's particularly evidenced, I think, with the one piece there that I recall seeing, where they're talking about Bundjil and Waa, which was amazing. But this particular activity sheet with the boomerang has information about the various patterns, the wave pattern and the hatching pattern. So it's not just activity, it's always learning as well.

**Tom:** It is. It is about education. It is about learning. It's about cultural education, because the other activity sheet by Deanne is about shield patterning, and down here in Victoria,

we have a very distinct style, because people, when they think of Aboriginal design, they usually think of the sort of cross-hatching dot painting that you see up north, in Central Desert, Arnhem Land. Whereas, in Victoria, we actually have our own unique design, and you see them on traditional 19th century shields. So the activity sheet by Deanne Gilson is about educating our people, and also the general public as well, about the design that you find down here in Victoria.

**CMR:** Let's stay with children, and of course stay with art, because we were having a little yarn earlier on and something about which I'm particularly excited, and that is, we've got the Koorie Art Show happening, but it's opened up a little bit more than just for the artists 17 years and older.

**Tom:** Yeah, that's correct. So we've talked before about expressions of interest now open for the Koorie Art Show for 2020. Now, the Koorie Art Show is generally for artists 17 years old and over. But about two years ago, three years ago now, VACCA approached us with a partnership around doing things with our community kids, and how do we actually get our kids engaged with culture through art.

They decided to sponsor the Koorie Art Show component for kids specifically, and so we've continued that each year, and this year we're presenting the third Koorie Art Show for kids and young people, and it's open to ages between five and 16. We accept entries from all kids that are wanting to produce an artwork.

We put them on as a separate display from the adult Koorie Art Show, but we also have prizes as well. So we have a range of art pack prizes for different age categories for the kids and young people show. So it's an exciting way of actually getting our young people involved in

culture, but also in creativity and in art as well.

**CMR:** And listeners, you heard it here first on Connection Matters Radio, because Koorie Heritage Trust has yet to put up the information on this. When it does get up there, and we expect that within a few days, Tom?

**Tom:** In a few days. It will open on Monday, and we'll be accepting entries. It's just an entry form that you ... a basic entry form, so we can actually just collect details of the kids who are hoping and wanting to enter at this stage, and then artworks to be delivered to the Trust in November. Hopefully, restrictions will be eased at that time.

**CMR:** We can cross fingers on that one, my brother. But we will have all the information on the Connection Matters Radio website, on the page that actually has this particular interview. So we will definitely keep you up-to-date, and also when we do hear about it going online, so next Monday, we'll provide you with information during that show.

Tom, we've reached the end of our time, I'm afraid. There's always so much to talk about on what's going on at Koorie Heritage Trust, even during coronavirus.

**Tom:** Even during coronavirus.

**CMR:** Thank you so much indeed for your time again. I wish you all the best and we'll chat again, or maybe someone else in the organization, within the next week or two.

**Tom:** For sure. My pleasure. Thank you, Charles.