

# The Jimmy Pike Trust

## reflections on the imperceptible transference of knowledge

by Paul Uhlmann, artist and lecturer, Coordinator of Printmaking Studios, Edith Cowan University, WA



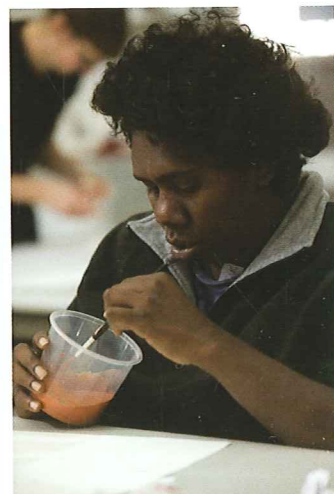
Jimmy Pike Trust scholarship-holder **Roseleen Park** in the ECU print studios. Photography: Tungsten

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**Jimmy Pike Trust:**  
[www.wyemando.org.au/jimmypiketrust.html](http://www.wyemando.org.au/jimmypiketrust.html)



Jimmy Pike Trust scholarship-holder **Lorraine Daylight** mixing ochre pigment from Turkey Creek. Photography: Tungsten

**Sometime during a residency** in the print studios of Edith Cowan University, in April 2010, Indigenous artist Edwin Lee Mulligan began to imperceptibly change into a bird. His body rose up and his voice began to telegraph the topography of landmasses and forms of his homeland. The crowd of students stood transfixed as Edwin twitched and danced before his prints and in-progress paintings. There were many pauses and spaces between his movements, which compressed the intensity of his message, so that a series of vivid mental images conveyed layers of story and meaning to his work.

It gave me pause to wonder how knowledge too is a transformative experience, which may be gradually transferred during artist residencies of this kind. What kind of knowledge is passed on and exchanged, I wondered, and how does this occur?

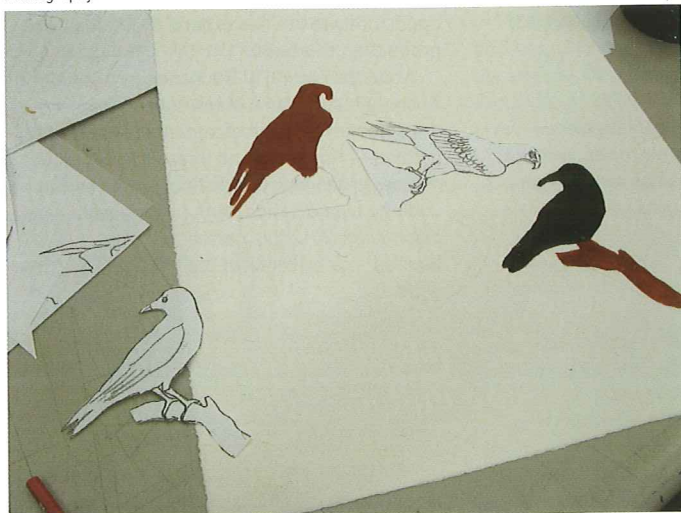
Edwin together with his father, Pampirla Boxer Hanson, were both artists-in-residence in 2010, through the Open Bite<sup>1</sup> program which runs out of the print studios at Edith Cowan University. Their residency was made possible by a scholarship provided by the Jimmy Pike Trust. Not long before he died internationally regarded artist Jimmy Pike, together

with his wife Pat Lowe, set up a foundation which aims to assist the education of emerging Aboriginal artists. One result has been a fruitful and engaging collaboration between ECU and the Jimmy Pike Trust, which thus far, has enjoyed two paired residencies over two years.

Part of the benefit of these exchanges has been the uniqueness of each situation. The artists have all commented that it is a delight for them to work among interested students and to pass on their stories, while at the same time also learning themselves. In a way, there is a gap between the students and the artists, which has as its tension the deep curiosity to understand not only culture but aspects of the 'material imagination'. To breathe the imagination into materials, is for philosopher Gaston Bachelard, a key concept for creative practitioners. It is as if certain materials act on the mind in a universal way, which not only ignites wonder, but embodies the history of its associations. The pigment that the 2011 Jimmy Pike Trust scholarship holders, Roseleen Park and Lorraine Daylight, brought with them from Turkey Creek is a prime example of this, for all were fascinated to hear about how the pigment was locally sourced and was traditionally used as a body paint in ceremonies — a tradition which continues. Some were surprised to experience that the earth can have such a range of colour and that this colour, too, has diverse weights — the charcoal appeared weightless and brittle, while the white fine ochre was slightly oily and heavy.

Bringing these artists into the studios and assisting them to transform their paintings and sculptural ideas into prints seems to encourage open dialogue around print processes. Students were often casually engaged in these discussions at the very moment a fresh print was being revealed. Over the period of the residencies, as the proofs were being displayed within the studios, there was therefore a deepening of knowledge about the iconography of the works. For example, I was intrigued to hear from a student that Roseleen Park spoke to her about the importance of dreams within the creative process. Just before coming to Perth a deceased uncle appeared to Roseleen in her sleep and said that she must paint owls. Within the retelling of this story the student conveyed a sense of wonder, even though the message was not necessarily about happiness. But, this is something that I have noticed too — that learning something new, and transferring that to others, carries along with it an internal lightness — of joy. •

Studio documentation of work in progress by Roseleen Park and Lorraine Daylight, 2011. Photography: Paul Uhlmann.



**Note**

1. Open Bite Australia, was founded in 1998 by Professor Clive Barstow as a research platform to develop printmaking and to work creatively with Indigenous Australians.