

## Chapter 5 Adelaide's Aboriginal Cultural Markers: Phases 1 & 2

### Chapter Outline

This chapter documents and contextualises public space Aboriginal representation (or lack of it) in Adelaide in Phases 1 and 2 in more detail to document the Markers found and demonstrate the characteristics of and delineation between the phases. Phase 1, termed *The Silence*, is characterised by the overall lack of Aboriginal representation and covers the period from colonisation in 1836 to 1960. The discussion of this phase examines why this absence of representation existed. It also draws attention to an early, and unusual, possible Aboriginal inclusion. Phase 2, termed *Breaking the Silence*, is the initial phase of public space Aboriginal representation in Adelaide and covers the period from 1960 to the early 1980s. The phase is characterised by the pattern of individual artists choosing to include Aboriginal acknowledgement or recognition in their public works. There was not generally a request by commissioning authorities for them to do so. The discussion of this phase contains the detail of the provenance of the Markers to provide an historical context, reveal how the Markers came about and examine the role of individual artists in bringing about the first Markers, as it was mainly artists who initiated Aboriginal public space inclusion. Tracing how, and perhaps why, individuals contributed to this social change and public space representation, and to outline their influences and motivations for including Aboriginal culture in their public works in Adelaide provides an historical overview not elsewhere documented or discussed.

### Phase 1. The Silence: 1836 to 1960

The lack of Aboriginal representation in this period is not surprising; it reflects and supports the general attitude of the period in that Aboriginal people were excluded from mainstream society and thus from the public space and popular memory. In terms of public space memorialisation and commemorations, Adelaide, as a colony, and as a former colony of Britain, was mimicking the 'mother country'. As Pickles (2006:16) pointed out in the case of New Zealand but equally applicable to Australia and to South Australia in particular:

*It is also significant that with striking uniformity, all forms of memorialisation evident in Britain were copied outside of Britain. Colonial mimicry was at work, with settler societies such as New Zealand taking their lead from the metropolis, attempting to build national identity out of a strong attachment to the imperial centre.*

She further pointed out that:

*... white settler societies formed national identities out of their imperial pasts. These were hegemonic identities that asserted the superiority of British-influenced cultural, political and economic structures. For settler societies proving colonial worth came from imposing imperial standards (2006:14).*

This is supported by Milner (1994:223) '... these colonies of European settlement were imagined precisely as overseas extensions of Europe itself, as "Self" rather than "Other", as new Britannias all'.

As the Indigenous peoples of the British Empire were not included in the public identity or mainstream commemorations in Britain, there was no precedent at that time for Aboriginal people being included in commemorations in the colony. This is confirmed in Adelaide's public statues and commemorations erected in the two main cultural precincts, North Terrace and Victoria Square from 1890 to 1960 (Table 7).

<b>Adelaide's Public Statuary, North Terrace and Victoria Square 1890 - 1960</b>
<b>1890s</b>
. 1892 Venere di Canova (Venus statue). Unveiled 3 <sup>rd</sup> September, North Terrace
. 1894 Robert Burns (poet). Unveiled 5 <sup>th</sup> May, North Terrace
. 1894 Queen Victoria (monarch). Unveiled 11 <sup>th</sup> August, Victoria Square
<b>1900s</b>
. 1903 Sir Thomas Elder (pastoralist, mining magnate and philanthropist). Unveiled 29 <sup>th</sup> July, University of Adelaide, North Terrace
. 1904 John McDouall Stuart (colonial explorer). Unveiled 4 <sup>th</sup> June, Vict. Square
. 1904 South African (Boer War) Memorial. Unveiled 6 <sup>th</sup> June, North Terrace
. 1906 Col. William Light (founding Surveyor-General). Unveiled 27 <sup>th</sup> November, Victoria Square (Moved May 1938 to Montefiore Hill)
. 1906 Sir Walter Watson Hughes (pastoralist, mining magnate and philanthropist). Unveiled 28 <sup>th</sup> November, North Terrace
<b>1910s</b>
. 1916 Rt Hon C. C. Kingston (colonial Premier and Q.C). Unveiled 20 <sup>th</sup> May, Victoria Square
. 1916 Captain Charles Sturt (colonial explorer). Unveiled 21 <sup>st</sup> December, Victoria Square
<b>1920s</b>
. 1920 King Edward VII (monarch). Unveiled 15 <sup>th</sup> July, North Terrace
. 1924 Sir Samuel J. Way (Chief Justice 1876-1916). Unveiled 17 <sup>th</sup> November, North Terrace
<b>1930s</b>
. 1931 South Australian National War Memorial. Dedicated 25 <sup>th</sup> April, North Tce.
. 1934 Capt. Mathew Flinders, R.N. (colonial explorer and navigator). Unveiled 12 <sup>th</sup> April, North Terrace
<b>1940s and 1950s</b>
. Nil

Table 7 Public Statuary, North Tce. & Victoria Sq. 1890-1960

The statuary is overwhelmingly of men and as Osborne (2001:10) pointed out ‘... monumental public statuary in the western world has constituted what Hobsbawm (1995:13) has called, “an open air museum of national history as seen through great men.”’

The colonial and then the state government were not the primary commissioners of public statuary and commemorations of this period; they were mainly sponsored by peers, the influential and the well-to-do as outlined in Table 8<sup>16</sup>. According to Cameron (1997:ii) statues were often planned and promoted in the close confines of the Adelaide Club, a prestigious men's club. The Adelaide City Council was also

<sup>16</sup> Cameron (1997) is the source of this information in conjunction with personal investigation.

influential and during that period it essentially represented those interests. Aboriginal people were not included in this grouping of civic elites, and given their lack of political and economic power their exclusion can be readily understood. It is not surprising that they were not recognised.

<b>Adelaide's Public Statuary, North Terrace Cultural Precinct and Victoria Square, 1890 – 1960</b>		
	<b>Initiated by</b>	<b>Funded by</b>
1892 Venere di Canova	William Horn	William Horn
1894 Robert Burns	Caledonian Society	Caledonian Society
1894 Queen Victoria	Sir Edwin Thomas Smith	Sir Edwin Smith
1903 Sir Thomas Elder	Peers, Committee	Peers
1904 John McDouall Stuart	Peers, Committee, Caledonian Society	Caledonian Society, Public Subscription
1904 South African War	Public Committee	Public Subscription
1906 Col. William Light	The Citizens	Public Subscription
1906 Sir Walter Hughes	Family	Family
1916 Hon C. C. Kingston	Peers, Committee	Peers, Public Subs.
1916 Captain Charles Sturt	N.K.	Public Subscription
1920 King Edward V11	Adelaide City Council C/tee	Public Subscription
1924 Sir Samuel J. Way	Peers	Peers
1931 National War Memorial	Government Committee	State Government
1934 Capt. Mathew Flinders	Public Committee	Public Subscription

Table 8 Public Statuary: Initiators and Funders

In this phase the state government only sponsored one commemoration directly, the National War Memorial on North Terrace, a major public monument (Figure 5-1). As will be discussed, it was only much later that governments became involved in addressing social equity and inclusion of Aboriginal peoples.



Figure 5-1 National War Memorial, 1931, North Terrace, Adelaide

The absence of Aboriginal representation is also part of what Taylor (2000:30) has described for the Australian city of Perth as ‘the process of selective social memory ... in the 1960s’. Seddon (1995:76) reinforced this absence in stating that ‘All unpleasantness, both past and present, was screened from consciousness.’ Aboriginal issues and the more violent and inhumane aspects of colonisation of Aboriginal peoples were part of an ‘unpleasantness’ that did not concur with the dominant colonising narrative.

There are however two infrastructure projects, a century apart, in this phase which have an incidental reference to Aboriginality. They are the grotesques at the Adelaide Gaol (1841) (Figure 5-2) and a plaque on the Adelaide Bridge (1931) (Figure 5-3): both are indicative of the social placement of Aboriginal people in the period.

### ***Grotesques, Adelaide Gaol, 1841***

Within the first five years of colonisation there is one possible representation of Aboriginal people, the grotesques at the entrance to Adelaide Gaol. The grotesques are reputed to be of an Aboriginal man and woman, a bizarre inclusion. If true, this is the first inclusion of Aboriginal people or culture in the symbolism embedded in the colonising buildings, and the public space in Adelaide<sup>17</sup>. In 1840, just four years after the founding of the free settler colony, which had no convicts, Governor Gawler embarked on the construction of a gaol designed by colonial architect George S. Kingston to replace a temporary stockade located in what is now part of the Government House grounds (Slee, 2010).

Adelaide Gaol was of elaborate proportions for a fledgling colony and at a cost of £34,000 was an extravagance that contributed to the recall of Governor Gawler and the near bankruptcy of the colony (Langmead, 1997:47). At the entrance to the Gaol there is a sandstone arch capped by a coat of arms, the insignia of the power and law of the Crown and its colonial administration. Supporting the base points of the arch are two grotesques (Figure 5-2), the architectural ornamentation depicting human faces, often in anguish or distortion.

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<sup>17</sup> Whilst the construction of the gaol has been much studied, most of the original documentation has been lost over time. I have talked to several people; architectural professor Donald Langmead studied Kingston’s career and whilst he knows of the story, has been unable to locate any evidence either way. Deanne Hanchant-Nichols, a former Manager of the Old Adelaide Gaol has heard the story but believes it to be an urban myth. Sue Scheffeirs, another former Manager also knows of the story but is neutral as to its validity. Heritage architect Lothar Brasse, who first told me of the grotesques, heard about them some decades ago and believes it a possibility.



Figure 5-2 Grotesques, 1840, Adelaide Gaol, Adelaide Parklands

The facial features of the grotesques do have an Aboriginal semblance but that could also be said of other grotesques where the face is distorted from a European norm. They would have been carved by a stonemason rather than a sculptor, and would not be expected to be fine facsimiles. The form of a grotesque can also be an imaginative flight of fancy by the carver, freed from the restrictions of other stone carving. There are several other grotesques on a tower at the Gaol but they do not have the same look. The Gaol is located on the opposite bank of the River Torrens (Karrawirraparri in Kaurna, the Redgum forest river) to the former Native Location *Pilta wodli* and Kaurna people were part of the fabric of the early settlement. Could the stone carver have chosen to represent the Kaurna, perhaps as a curiosity for someone just arrived from Britain?

One function of grotesques on architecture is to provide a warning. Could these be a warning to Aboriginal people that colonial law also applied to them whether they subscribed to it or not? The enforcement of British law on the Aboriginal peoples was a prime colonising objective (Pope, 2011) so their representation in the symbolic nature of the gaol's architecture is a distinct possibility. The first female prisoner in the Adelaide Gaol was the (Kaurna) Aboriginal woman Wariato who in 1841 was convicted of stealing potatoes from a farming property at the Reedbeds and sentenced to 14 days hard labour (Old Adelaide Gaol, n.d.). Less than ten years earlier, the Reedbeds, or Wittonga in Kaurna, were a prime habitation area for Kaurna. The second and third persons executed in the fledgling colony were Kaurna men. They were executed for murder by public hanging on 31 May 1839 in the North Parklands, near to the Native Location *Pilta wodli* before the construction of the gaol. Many Kaurna and other Aboriginal people were required to be onlookers (Slee, 2010:40).

There is no documentation to support these possibilities but the Grotesques are included to document them in case further evidence comes to light.

### ***Plaque, Adelaide Bridge, 1931***

The other incidental Kaurna reference in this period dates from 1931. A plaque on the Adelaide Bridge (Figure 5-3), the main bridge in the city over the River Torrens/Karrawirraparri on King William Road, depicts Kaurna life adjacent to the river, a woman and child in a shelter (wurlie) and a man looking towards the river,



with an early wooden bridge in the background. The plaque is one of a series of four outlining the history of bridges in the locale.



Figure 5-3 Plaque, 1931, Adelaide Bridge, King William Road, Adelaide

Whilst the river in the city area was a prime habitation area for Kaurna, they were dispossessed of the area within the first decades of settlement. The inclusion of Aboriginal people in this particular plaque is not likely to be a deliberate acknowledgement of the value of Aboriginal culture. It is more likely to serve the purpose of locating the early time period of the bridge it commemorates and to locate Aboriginal people as part of the past.

In line with the period of this phase thus far, there is an apparent absence over the next thirty years. The narrative of Aboriginal inclusion now moves to 1960 and the first more deliberate recognition of Aboriginal culture in the public space.

## **Phase 2. Breaking the Silence: 1960 to early 1980s**

*The first inclusions of Aboriginal culture in public space artworks; the artworks are predominantly by non-Aboriginal artists.*

Ten Markers illustrate this phase. Nine are by non-Aboriginal artists and one, a mural, had an Aboriginal involvement. To provide an overview of this important introductory phase of Aboriginal public space inclusion, all Markers are discussed and the genesis of several of the Markers is elaborated to explore who was involved and the history, motives and outcomes of these early Markers. Sculptor John Dowie and architect/artist Geoffrey Shedley, who were lifelong friends, were responsible for five of the Markers in this phase, including the first two in the 1960s.

### ***Piccaninny Drinking Fountain, Rymill Park, Adelaide, 1960***

The earliest work located dates from 1960. It is the *Piccaninny* drinking fountain (Figure 5-4) by sculptor John Dowie, in Rymill Park, part of the parklands on the eastern edge of the city of Adelaide. The modest scale sculpture depicts a crouching Aboriginal girl with a coolamon-like bowl on her head acting as the water container for the drinking fountain.



Figure 5-4 Piccaninny Drinking Fountain, 1960, Rymill Park, (John Dowie)

In early 1960 Dowie had travelled to Alice Springs in the Northern Territory with the South Australian Museum ethnologist Charles Mountford. From there they went to Jay Creek Aboriginal Reserve, west of Alice Springs in the MacDonnell Ranges. There Dowie modelled busts of three Aboriginals named Nikachilpa, Uanie and Tim (Lock-Weir, 2001:83; Palmer, 1999:114,115). About that time the Adelaide City Council (ACC) commissioned him to develop a sculptural base for a drinking fountain. The resulting work, *Piccaninny*, was installed in Rymill Park in October 1960 (ACC, 1983:112). No evidence has been located that suggests that the Adelaide City Council dictated the theme of the ornamental drinking fountain and it is reasonable to assume it was at the initiative of Dowie, given his visit to Jay Creek just a few months earlier. The Council was a conservative body (as reflected in discussions about the design of the *Three Rivers Fountain* later in this chapter) and was most unlikely to have specified an Aboriginal representation. Dowie's decision to represent an 'Aboriginal' person in his drinking fountain sculpture appears to have been a personal one, based more on artistic and cultural than political reasons.

### ***The Rainmakers, Lohmann Park, O'Sullivan Beach, 1965***

The first major public artwork with Aboriginal content located in greater metropolitan Adelaide is *The Rainmakers* (Figure 5-5) by Geoffrey Shedley, an artist and an architect with the South Australian Housing Trust. The sculpture was unveiled on 21 May 1965 by the then Premier of South Australia, the Hon. Frank Walsh, M.P. The design and casting process of *The Rainmakers* probably took place over several months, meaning Shedley's concept dates from 1964.

*The Rainmakers* is located in Lohmann Park, O'Sullivan Beach, which in the 1960s was a newly developing outer metropolitan suburb of mainly public housing. The sculpture was a gift from Eugen Lohmann, Governing Director of Wender & Duerholt, a West German company that supplied prefabricated timber housing to the South Australian Housing Trust in the 1950s. The Trust was a government statutory authority charged with designing urban developments and supplying housing to the booming post-war population. Scottish migrant Mrs Ruth Murphy is pictured with the statue in 1965 (Figure 5-6).

The dedication plaque includes the following explanation of the Aboriginal figures:

*The Rainmakers*

*Before the dawn of history  
The Australian Aborigine  
Became isolated from all men  
And roamed this continent  
Creating his own arts and culture*

*Two old men of the tribe  
Squat over the sacred rain stone  
And chant their age old songs  
To bring water for the people  
And food for the creatures*



Figure 5-5 The Rainmakers, 1965, O'Sullivan Beach (Geoffrey Sheldley)



Figure 5-6 The Rainmakers in 1965 (Photo courtesy NAA, A12111)

It is believed the idea to represent Aboriginal mythological figures came from Sheldley rather than Eugene Lohmann who had commissioned the sculpture 'to commemorate his good feelings for the [Housing] Trust and South Australia' (City



of Onkaparinga, 2005:8). According to Shedley's daughter, Mrs Josephine Lawrence (2009, pers. comm.)<sup>18</sup>:

*The subject matter of the Lohmann commission probably came from Geoff, not from Eugene Lohmann. Lohmann was building houses for workers to settle at Christies Beach so maybe Geoff wanted to commemorate the first occupiers of this land ... He always knew that the Aboriginal people were the original owners of the land at Christies Beach and were one of the oldest civilizations, well before Egyptian, Greek, Roman, etc. ... Another reason for using Aboriginal figures could be that he wanted something very different from the Windsor Green Fountain<sup>19</sup>, but still incorporating mythology and relevance to place.*

His daughter also remembers going with her parents to Hallett Cove and Red Ochre Cove (significant sites in the Tjilbruke Dreaming), collecting Aboriginal flint flakes in the dunes at Moana, a beach south of Adelaide, and visiting ethnologist Charles Mountford's house.

As his daughter stated, the sculpture was intended to acknowledge the local Aboriginal people who had once lived in the area. The name of those people, the Kaurna, was not often used and was possibly unknown to Shedley as with the broader public at that time, there was not the specific knowledge of Kaurna people and their culture. The sculpture is a de facto recognition of Kaurna people.

*The Rainmakers* was to have one immediate impact or influence. In 1966, a year after its dedication, when Dowie's design for the proposed Victoria Square fountain was being considered the Adelaide Town Clerk said 'It is hard to visualise how it [the fountain] will turn out. I shouldn't compare sculpture but the one down at Christies Beach [O'Sullivan Beach] I like and so do the kids because they climb all over it' (ACC, VSFC Minutes, 21.12.66). The kids (children) continue to climb all over the *Rainmakers*. Several Aboriginal people who grew up in the area have related to me how they played on the sculpture and felt secure and protected tucked into the cavity formed by the two Aboriginal mythological figures.

In summary, Shedley took the initiative to provide Adelaide with its first major public space representation of Aboriginal culture, *The Rainmakers*. This statue also represents the commencement of the process of non-Aboriginal artists attempting to represent Aboriginal mythology through Western art conventions.

### ***Mural, Shedley Theatre, Elizabeth, 1965***

In his role as an architect with the Housing Trust, Shedley was also involved in the planning and design of the new satellite city of Elizabeth, north of Adelaide. Part of this was a civic centre and a theatre, now named after him. Simultaneous to *The Rainmakers* he painted an Aboriginal themed mural, 23 metres by 1.8 metres in size, (Figure 5-7) for the auditorium of the Theatre, opened on 25 August 1965. The Shedley mural was demountable and was removed from the Theatre during

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<sup>18</sup> Mrs Lawrence made contact with me after becoming aware of my research through a paper published in 2007. She volunteered personal information on the artworks and the friendship between Shedley and Dowie.

<sup>19</sup> The Windsor Green Fountain, sculpted by Shedley, was part of the Elizabeth, civic precinct development. In the mid 1960s Elizabeth was a greenfields development, a new city expanding the metropolitan area to the north of Adelaide, with a mainly British migrant population

renovations in 2002 and is now held by the City of Playford awaiting a potential new display opportunity. The theme of this work was inspired by a visit to the Aboriginal rock peckings (engravings) in Chambers Gorge in the northern Flinders Ranges (Figure 1-2), which Shedley visited as a young man in 1938 (Josephine Lawrence, 2009, pers. comm.). The dynamic figures in the mural appear to be based on the Mimi figures from Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory.



Figure 5-7 Mural, 1965, Shedley Theatre, (G. Shedley) (Photo City of Playford)

Little is known of the circumstances in which this work was instigated but it is presumed that it was at Shedley's initiative as part of his role as a design architect for the new Elizabeth civic precinct. The Housing Trust had a major role in post-war social and civic development in the provision of housing and urban infrastructure. This provided individuals such as Shedley with the opportunity to present two early Aboriginal themed works through the public benefit outcome program of the Housing Trust. The Trust was later to have an ongoing role in the commissioning of Aboriginal themed public artworks as part of urban developments.

#### ***Howie Memorial Aboriginal Statue, Walkerville, 1967***

A work concurrent with Shedley's was the Howie Memorial Aboriginal Statue (Figure 5-8), commenced in 1964 but not unveiled until 1967. The statue, located in the Howie Reserve, Walkerville, was commissioned to honour Lawrence Howie, Principal, South Australian School of Art and Craft from 1920 to 1941 and President of the Royal South Australian Society of the Arts from 1928 to 1932.



Figure 5-8 Howie Memorial Aboriginal Statue, 1967, Walkerville (Q. Harris)

The prime instigator of the work was local Walkerville resident Mary P. Harris, an artist, teacher and writer who was an early advocate and admirer of Aboriginal culture, as well as a conservationist. Harris knew of the use of the River Torrens at Walkerville by Aboriginal people (Kurna, to whom the river is Karrawirraparri, the Redgum forest river) and she referred to the area as 'an old aboriginal camp at a bend in the river' (*The Advertiser*, 24<sup>th</sup> April, 1964). The area was also referred to as a burial ground (Brown-Parker, 1969:2). Her home in Victoria Terrace, Walkerville, overlooked the river and the park, and was named 'Bundilla' meaning 'meeting of the waters or meeting place' (Aboriginal language group unknown). Her garden contained several sculptures of Aboriginal people by the Victorian sculptor William Ricketts, whose sanctuary in Mount Dandenong, Victoria, with a large collection of sculptures of Aboriginal people is well-known.

With the assistance of Ricketts, she hoped to establish another such sanctuary at Walkerville. A flora and sculpture sanctuary on the banks of the River Torrens was first proposed to, and considered by, Walkerville Council in 1962 (*The Advertiser*, 5 January 1962). It would have formed an extension to Harris's garden but unfortunately did not eventuate. The area developed as a suburban park, the Howie Reserve. Ricketts did however donate the terracotta sculpture *Pmara Nuka My Country* in 1970 for the Reserve (discussed below).

Harris was an advocate for the conservation of the River's natural beauty. As a teacher at the South Australian School of Art and Craft from 1922 to 1952, she had been part of a group led by Howie, who used that section of the river at Walkerville for teaching painting and drawing. She was instrumental in the formation of the L.H. Howie Memorial Appeal Committee in 1964 to commemorate his work. Members included linguist T.G.H Strehlow and noted Adelaide artists Ivor Francis and Ruth Tuck (*The Advertiser*, 23 April 1964). The Howie Committee also wished to commemorate Aboriginal people and their relationship to the river as part of the intention of the Howie Reserve.

The statue of an Aboriginal was carved from Stawell stone by Mary Harris' nephew Quentin Harris, also an artist. Although not installed until 1967, carving of the statue had commenced by April 1964 (*The Advertiser*, 23 April 1964). In relation to the concept for the statue, Quentin Harris had said (Bosio, 1964):

*I saw an aboriginal whom I shall never forget. He was walking with a straight back and quiet dignity toward the camp and in his hand was a pitchi of water covered with fresh leaves. He reached the camp and put down his pitchi and the young children drank first. It is this man.*

Quentin Harris had not witnessed the incident first hand but drew inspiration from films and photographs by noted anthropologist Norman Tindale (Barbara Mather, 24 October 2007, pers. comm.)<sup>20</sup>. Harris was a model-maker at the South Australian Museum from at least 1954 to 1959 where he worked under the guidance of Tindale in the production of miniature dioramas.

In summary, Mary Harris recognised the cultural significance of the river to Kurna and, along with William Ricketts, sought to establish a sanctuary to preserve the river and commemorate the Aboriginal (Kurna) people. Again the name Kurna was not

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<sup>20</sup> Barbara Mather was Quentin Harris's wife before he died.

used and was probably unknown to the instigators. The statue is a notable early work in the inclusion of Aboriginal people in the public space and, as with *The Rainmakers*, a de facto recognition of Kurna.

### ***Three Rivers Fountain, Victoria Square, Adelaide, 1968***

The *Three Rivers Fountain* in Victoria Square<sup>21</sup> (Figure 5-9), commonly known as the Victoria Square Fountain, is the first major civic artwork in the City of Adelaide to recognise Aboriginal people and culture via an Aboriginal man representing the River Murray. Commemorating the 1963 Royal visit of Queen Elizabeth II, the Fountain was set in operation by the Duke of Edinburgh, on 28 May 1968. It is a notable public artwork in terms of the recognition of Aboriginal people in a highly symbolic public space. The commemorative purpose of the Fountain, the February 1963 visit of Queen Elizabeth II, and its location in a major civic space, add to its value.



Figure 5-9 Three Rivers Fountain, 1968, Victoria Square (John Dowie)

The inclusion of an Aboriginal figure (Figure 5-10) was an initiative of Dowie and, as discussed below, this inclusion was not endorsed by some City of Adelaide councillors. The reasons the work came about and the historical context of that time are therefore of note. The Aboriginal themed inclusion in a major civic space may easily have not come to fruition but for Dowie's vision and persistence.

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<sup>21</sup> As of May 2003, Victoria Square is also known as Tarndanyangga, a Kurna neologism meaning the place of the red kangaroo, under the dual naming provisions of the *South Australian Geographical Names Act, 1991*. I therefore refer to the Square by the English language only until after that date.





Figure 5-10 Three Rivers Fountain, 1968, (detail)

A commemorative fountain was first proposed by the Adelaide City Council in July 1962, prior to the 1963 Royal visit, and in February 1963 a Council Fountains Committee was established with co-opted members, A. F. Sierp, Principal of the South Australian School of Art and sculptor John Dowie (ACC, 1963:33). On 19 December 1963 Council adopted a recommendation by the Fountains Committee that the design of the fountain be supervised by the Lord Mayor and that Dowie be appointed sculptor.

An initial concept design by Dowie, dating from circa 1963, was baroque in style and located in the centre of a boulevard style roadway running along the north - south axis of the Square. A redesign of the Square had also been initiated at the time and on 22 July 1964 Council approved a report on the design of the Square and the inclusion of a fountain. For the next two years the fountain commission went into abeyance during the ongoing process of redeveloping the Square, which caused considerable public debate and controversy. Of this period Dowie said:

*The Victoria Square project was hanging fire, it was going on and on, there were debates whether it should go on or not, and all the rest of it, and eventually I thought 'Nuts, I'm going overseas' (Palmer, 1999:65).*

No detailed further work was undertaken on the fountain until November 1966 when the Victoria Square Fountain Committee (VSFC) was appointed comprising the Lord Mayor, Walter Bridgland, Alderman Glover, Alderman Irwin, Councillor Esther Cook (Chairman, Parks and Gardens Committee) and, by invitation, John Dowie. The Committee considered two new design proposals by Dowie. One was dismissed because of potential cost<sup>22</sup> leaving the (preliminary) design for the now existing fountain. The three figures proposed for the fountain were not fully elaborated in the design sketch considered by the Committee, but Dowie stated 'If I could show you something I have sketched ... The River Murray is an Aboriginal figure and he has river fish moving through his legs ...' (ACC -VSFC Minutes, 8 November 1966).

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<sup>22</sup> The budget and final cost for the fountain project was \$60,000. Staying within budget was an ongoing consideration.

Dowie based the fountain design on the three rivers that supply Adelaide's water. He outlined the concept for the fountain in an article in *The Advertiser* in February 1967 (Riddell, 1967), a year before its completion, stating that:

*"It's an ancient tradition for fountains to honour the gods of the rivers that feed it. We have no river gods, but the water feeding this fountain will come from the Murray, the Onkaparinga and the Torrens and I decided to make it symbolic of this. I made the two lesser rivers female figures (a woman and a black swan for the Torrens and a woman with a heron for the Onkaparinga). These are the more cultivated areas, so I made the women European. But the old substantial Murray is male and had to be aboriginal." (An aborigine with an ibis).*

*Just why Mr. Dowie decided this he can't tell you.*

*"There's not always a reason. Perhaps if I could understand my subconscious there is a reason, but I'm just happy to have the result."*

During the three years 1963 to 1966 Dowie's thinking and concept had evolved from one which was Eurocentric and almost Victorian in design to one which was connected to the indigenous nature of place, the three rivers which supply Adelaide's water and three associated indigenous water fowl. Importantly, there was also a connection to Aboriginal culture. Dowie had travelled overseas extensively during 1964 and 1966 (McCulloch, 1968:294). This appears likely to have influenced his thinking to design a fountain specific to the place. At the first meeting of the Committee in November 1966 he stated (ACC-VSFC Minutes, 8 November 1966) that the fountain should be:

*Something that is our fountain, that it is a trade mark of Adelaide .... There are so many fountains around the world that are anonymous because they are so alike. This at least is unlike any other fountain.*

The VSFC met over the period November 1966 to February 1967 to develop the design proposal with Dowie. From the minutes, the Committee can be described as supportive but amateur and meddling in its artistic knowledge and skills. The main objective was to achieve 'a display of water which can be seen as far as possible along King William Street', Adelaide's main north-south axis on which the Square is located. The inclusion of sculptural features was secondary and their deletion, or inclusion at a later stage, was considered. Some comments within the Committee reflect its approach, for example, 'If you had a Thinker sitting on it I think it would be really good, but these 'airy fairy' figures are out of character' (ACC-VSFC Minutes, 5 December 1966). And discussion after Dowie had left the meeting, 'We think he has been carried away with these three rivers. We think that an artistic approach is more important' (ACC-VSFC Minutes, 5 December 1966).

There was also some opposition in the Committee to the inclusion of the Aboriginal figure. In the meetings Dowie was always circumspect about its inclusion, as he was about other critical comments during the design process. One member stated:

*Now I don't want to hurt Mr Dowie. He is a sculptor and an artist and I am only speaking as an ordinary layman. I like the middle column of it. I feel we ought to have something here too. I don't agree that we want to go into anything symbolic – an Aboriginal or something. The less symbolic the better if*

*it is a beautiful display of water. I think we should have the column a bit higher and smaller sculptures on the side (ACC-VSFC Minutes, 8 November 1966).*

And another:

*I don't admire the Aboriginal figure. I think it is a thin figure and one sees so many pictures and originals of them. Personally I am not an admirer of the Aboriginal as something to be produced as far as art is concerned. My idea was a more solid one sitting or something. I like the idea of holding that bird up but not the Aboriginal (ACC-VSFC Minutes, 21 December 1966).*

And another:

*We have been deprived of Ald. Gerard's opinion. He did not want an Aboriginal figure. He was for the fountain but not for an Aboriginal figure (ACC-VSFC Minutes, 13 February 1967).*

In response to the Committee's comments Dowie was evolving the overall design and slightly adjusting the detail but not the symbolism. Overall he maintained the integrity of his original design and his decision to include the Aboriginal figure as symbolic of the River Murray. If not for his singular determination, meaningful sculptural representation of Aboriginal culture in the City of Adelaide would have been absent until 1995, nearly another thirty years, when the first commissioned sculptural work (*Yerrakartarta*) was dedicated. The VSFC endorsed the design and submitted it to the Parks and Gardens Committee on 13 February 1967, which in turn recommended it to Council, receiving approval on 20 February 1967.

### **Relationship of the Fountain to the Kurna Creator Being, Tjilbruke**

The bird used in association with the Aboriginal man is the ibis, which in Kurna mythology is the Creator Being Tjilbruke's spirit. In an article, *The Art of John Dowie*, Gaynor Genders (1979:81) stated:

*When John Dowie used this Aboriginal and the ibis in this theme, he unknowingly incorporated part of the legend of the people who originally inhabited the Adelaide coastal plains, the Kurna Aboriginals.*

The basis of this statement is not elaborated on in the article. In March 1999 Dowie stated that the fountain 'does not represent a story from the Dreamtime' (Williams, 1999). This statement, in the sense of the whole fountain design, would be correct. However, Dowie was an acquaintance of Mountford who knew of the story of Tjilbruke because in 1936 Mountford and Norman Tindale co-published an account of the excavation of Kongarati Cave, near Wirrina Cove, as a senior (Kurna) woman's burial place, and this article included an account of aspects of the Tjilbruke narrative (Tindale & Mountford, 1936). Wirrina Cove, south of Adelaide on the Fleurieu Peninsula is part of the Tjilbruke Dreaming Track. Between 1928 and 1964 Tindale, who is the acknowledged anthropological narrator of the story, had collected diverse material on the Tjilbruke Dreaming and he published his full account in 1987 (Tindale, 1987).

Whether Mountford shared his Tjilbruke knowledge with Dowie is unclear but it appears most likely and whether Dowie's use of the ibis, Tjilbruke's spirit, is a happy coincidence or a deliberate recognition remains uncertain. I discussed the matter with

Dowie in early 2007 (Jan – Feb) but, as he had suffered a stroke in 2001, he was unable to specifically recollect detailed aspects of the fountain concept. It may have been a subconscious decision by Dowie to associate the ibis, rather than another bird, with the Aboriginal figure. The Adelaide City Council files do not contain information which elaborates the matter. However, within four years Dowie was officially representing Tjilbruke in the monument at Kingston Park (see below).

### **Summary of the Fountain's Social Significance**

In late 1966 to early 1967 Dowie developed the concept and design for the *Three Rivers Fountain* which included a figure of an Aboriginal man to represent the River Murray symbolically, the first major civic artwork in the city of Adelaide itself to include an Aboriginal reference. Dowie used the commemoration of a Royal visit, not to restate the role of the Crown but to reflect a broader social movement that was occurring here; the respectful recognition of Aboriginal people and culture, and their inclusion in the broader citizenship of the nation. It was in 1967 that the Commonwealth referendum on Aboriginal issues was held. Dowie was part of a small group of artists advancing the inclusion of Aboriginal culture within mainstream culture. While he has stated that the fountain as an overall design is not meant to represent the Dreamtime there is a public perception of there being an Aboriginal influence or theme in its design. This perception is demonstrated by the use of the descriptor 'Dreamtime' in the heading of an article in *The Advertiser*, in December 1999: *Springing back to life: New heights for Dowie's Dreamtime fountain* (Haran, 1999:8). The *Three Rivers Fountain* is a significant item of Adelaide's cultural heritage, it was at the forefront of change over forty years ago and an outstanding Marker of Aboriginal inclusion. It can also be understood as a precursor to the reconciliation process between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.

### ***Pmara Nuka My Country, Walkerville, 1970***

The terracotta sculpture of an Aboriginal man and children, *Pmara Nuka My Country* (Figure 5-11), was donated to the people of the Town of Walkerville by the Victorian sculptor William Ricketts, who had established a flora sanctuary at Mount Dandenong, which contained numerous Aboriginal representations. The statue was originally located in Howie Reserve, Walkerville, in conjunction with the *Howie Memorial Statue* as part of a plan to develop a collection of Aboriginal sculpture in the Reserve. The sculpture was damaged by vandals in the 1980s and removed from the Reserve. It was later repaired and since 1992 has been displayed in a courtyard of the Council offices. The name of the sculpture, *Pmara Nuka* (Aboriginal language group unknown) is the first use of an Aboriginal language in naming public artworks in Adelaide.





Figure 5-11 Pmara Nuka My Country, 1970 (William Ricketts)

### ***Tjilbruke Monument, Kingston Park, 1972***

Another major work of the period is the 1972 *Tjilbruke Monument* (Figure 5-12), again by John Dowie. It is located at Kingston Park on a promontory overlooking a Dreaming site, a coastal fresh water spring known as Tulukudangga in Kaurna. It was commissioned following a series of articles in the local weekly newspaper the *Sunday Mail* in 1971-72 by journalist William Reschke about the Tjilbruke Dreaming to ‘remind South Australians of the Kaurna people’s place in our State’s story’ (Reschke, 1972). At the time Kaurna were presumed extinct. *Sunday Mail* articles of the period January 1971 to September 1972 reinforced this perception.

*They went without a trace, and are today forgotten and unmourned. We at the Sunday Mail believe that was a travesty: an injustice to the memory of these proud people. That is why we launched the Tjilbruke appeal (Sunday Mail, 1971).*

*... to place cairns or memorials along the route to recall the Kaurna people who did not survive the impact of white settlement (Reschke, 1972).*

Reschke, in collaboration with South Australian Museum anthropologist Robert Edwards, were the prime initiators of this project. Because of its significance in commemorating Tjilbruke and Kaurna, the *Tjilbruke Monument* is discussed in detail in Chapter 10. The placing of cairns along the route was achieved fourteen years later during the South Australian Jubilee 150 in 1986.



Figure 5-12 Tjilbruke Monument, 1972, Kingston Park (John Dowie)

***Mural, Rainbow Serpent, Adelaide Festival Centre, 1973***

Noted Australian artist Sidney Nolan also contributed to acknowledging Aboriginal culture in Adelaide through the multi panel mural *Rainbow Serpent* (Figure 5-13) located in the foyer of the Adelaide Festival Centre. The mural comprises 324 individual units (Figure 5-14) displayed in a large mosaic grid in two sections either side of the main staircase on the balcony level. Of the mural it is stated (Adelaide Festival Centre, n.d. a):

*A wave of light, signifying the rainbow serpent of Aboriginal mythology, creates a unifying meta-design across the total image. Rainbow Serpent is one of a series which began when Nolan saw the blossoming of the Central Australian desert in 1967 after many rainless years.*

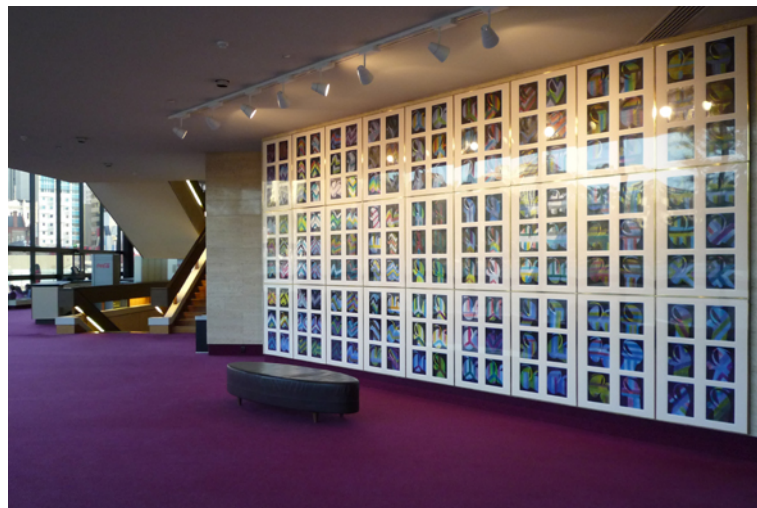


Figure 5-13 Mural, Rainbow Serpent, 1973, AFC, (Sidney Nolan)



Figure 5-14 Mural, Rainbow Serpent, 1973 (detail)

As with the other artists from this phase Nolan is attempting to represent, in an abstract form, the mythological aspects of a culture not before visualised by non-Aboriginals. Two years earlier in 1971 Nolan had painted a companion work titled *Snake* which is 45 m long by 9 m high and comprises 1620 panels. Of this work Nolan's widow Mary stated that Nolan saw it 'as a homage to Australia's Aborigines' (Vowles, 2011). This work has not been publicly displayed in its entirety in Australia until recently (2011) at the Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart.

#### ***Mural, Suzanne Ward, Women's and Children's Hospital, 1978***

In this phase, there was one instance of Aboriginal people being involved in creating a public space artwork, which happens to be an indoor public space, the Suzanne Ward of the Royal Adelaide Children's Hospital (now Women's and Children's Hospital), North Adelaide. The mural (Figure 5-15) was painted in 1978 by the Aboriginal Community College as part of its community program and is the first known work by Aboriginal people. It was painted by non-Aboriginal artist Helen James, the College art teacher, with Aboriginal students Betty Newchurch, Phoebe Wanganeen and Noelene Casey (Figure 5-16). The mural was undertaken following a request from the Hospital for an Aboriginal themed mural in the Ward. The Hospital had a number of Aboriginal children as patients, many of whom were from remote regions and the mural was intended to make the hospital space more welcoming for them. The College, founded in 1973, was then located in Brougham Place, North Adelaide, near to the Hospital. The College is now Tauondi College located at Port Adelaide.





Figure 5-15 Mural, Suzanne Ward, 1978, RACH, (Photo Tauondi College)

According to a College press release (Aboriginal Community College, 1979) at the time the students:

*... have been pleased to make this contribution to the Children's Hospital. At first many of the students were disturbed by the illnesses of the children about them, but they believe that their painting and the feeling and understanding put into it will provide pleasure to its small viewers during the next few years.*



Figure 5-16 Mural, Suzanne Ward, 1978, Royal Adelaide Children's Hospital (B. Newchurch, P. Wanganeen, H. James, N. Casey) (Photo Tauondi College)

The statement 'during the next few years' suggests the mural was not to be permanent and over time the Ward has been altered and the mural painted over. It has not been possible to determine exactly when that occurred. In 1997, when the College was approaching its twenty-fifth anniversary, and nearly twenty years after the mural's painting, an approach was made by the College to the Hospital to undertake another comparable project (Mitchell, 1997). Whilst there was enthusiasm from both parties, lack of resources prevented implementation.



### ***Mural, History of Australia, Prospect, 1982***

A major mural from the phase is the *History of Australia* (Figure 5-17) by the Prospect Mural Group, a community artists group. The mural presents an alternative to the dominant historical view of the time by including Aboriginal people as an integral part of Australian history. It includes Aboriginal motifs as the 'geological' underpinning of white history and also includes Aboriginal characters in the narrative in a manner that is quite subversive for the time. It depicts, behind a British flag, horsemen shooting towards an Aboriginal encampment with Aboriginal men preparing to defend (LHS Figure 5-18) and an Aboriginal world breaking through the floor of a businessman's office to upset the then equilibrium. The mural illustrates that in contrast to the official memory 'vernacular memory represents an array of diverse and ever-changing interests that threaten the attempted universality of the official expression of identity and memory' (Bodnar, 1994:75, cited in Osborne, 2001:6).



Figure 5-17 History of Australia, 1982, Prospect (Prospect Mural Group)

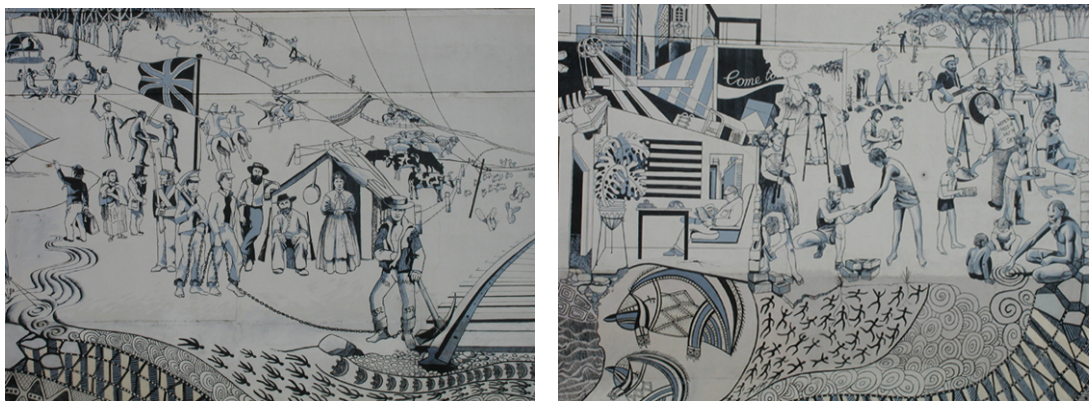


Figure 5-18 History of Australia – Details

The Prospect Mural Group produced an explanatory poster in 1982 to interpret the mural which in part stated:

*The top part of this mural depicts the history of Australia since European settlement in 1788. There are two opposing themes:*

*The first: conflict, oppression, struggle, greed, destruction.*

*The second: co-operation, resistance, generosity, construction.*

*We have employed highly symbolic events and processes in order to say as much as possible in a small space ... European settlement resulted in the rapid*

*destruction of the Aboriginal peoples. They resisted fiercely but within a mere hundred years their lands had been seized over the whole continent. Many tribes were wiped out entirely and in most cases the tribal structures and traditions have been destroyed.*

This mural, which has now been on display for nearly thirty years, provided a template for the inclusion of Aboriginal history as part of the narrative of place alongside a white history, showing that Australian history includes a series of intertwined actions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. It is the last work from this phase.

## **The Role of Artists**

The Markers of this phase did not come about through the policy directives or actions of government or a call by the broader community to remedy the lack of Aboriginal inclusion. The civic elites, who had sponsored public statuary to date, did not sponsor any inclusion of Aboriginal people in public commemorations and the public space narrative. There was not a broad public call in the 1960s, 1970s or 1980s for Aboriginal inclusion in the public space to mirror the social attitudes and change towards Aboriginal people occurring at that time and onwards. Rather, a small number of individuals led and/or responded to the ethos of change of the 1960s and applied it to Aboriginal people's public space inclusion.

A small number of artists provided the most significant, even driving, influence for the 'breaking of the silence' phase. Of the ten Markers of this phase, the first six represented Aboriginal culture at the personal initiative of three artists: John Dowie (1915-2008), Geoffrey Shedley (1914-1981) and Mary Harris (1891-1978), assisted by her nephew Quentin Harris (now deceased-date not known). Of the remaining three Markers, *The Tjilbruke Monument* (1972) was a commission received by Dowie who by then had a record of including Aboriginal culture in works; *Rainbow Serpent* was a personal homage by Nolan to Aboriginal people, the *Suzanne Ward Mural* (1978), was a collaboration between the art section of the newly founded Aboriginal College and the Children's Hospital; and the final Marker, the *History of Australia Mural* (1982), was at the initiative of a community artists group, the Prospect Mural Group.

The Aboriginal public space inclusion of this phase reflects an emergent appreciation by artists of Aboriginal culture and their desire that it be represented as part of the social fabric in the urban domain. Aboriginality was not just confined to the 'outback'. This representation was assisted by a cross-fertilisation that was occurring between artists and anthropologists; as with Dowie, Shedley, Mountford, Tindale and Edwards. This is still occurring in Adelaide under the auspices of Craftsouth, a South Australian craft/arts organisation, and the South Australian Museum (SAM), where under a program titled *Inside SAM*, craftspeople and artists utilise the Museum collection and resources to exhibit in the Museum<sup>23</sup>. The journalist William Reschke is also to be recognised in this cross-disciplinary interaction.

## **Dowie and Shedley, Early Influences**

Because of their role in providing the first works, Dowie's and Shedley's early influences are detailed here to better understand how the works came to be. They

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<sup>23</sup> I participated in this program in 2005 resulting in an exhibition *The Footsteps of Stuart* which has since travelled interstate and overseas.

were lifelong friends; they went to primary school together and later studied architecture together. They both worked in the architectural firm of Hubert Cowell & Co before Dowie left to further pursue his art studies and career whilst Shedley moved to the South Australian Housing Trust, rising to become Chief Architect whilst also maintaining his art practice (Josephine Lawrence, 2009, pers. comm.).

In 1938, aged in their early twenties, they went on a two-week Scout trip to the MacDonnell Ranges near Alice Springs, in the centre of Australia, quite an adventure at that time. Dowie was not a Scout but joined his friend. During the trip they also visited Hermannsburg, the Lutheran Aboriginal mission, where they made sketches and drawings. They travelled to Alice Springs on the same train as the Leichhardt Search Party<sup>24</sup>, which was sent by the South Australian government to investigate a report of skeletons found on the edge of the Simpson Desert. The South Australian ethnologist Charles Mountford (1890-1976) was part of the search party and Shedley and Dowie maintained an association with Mountford after the trip. They also later knew the South Australian Museum anthropologist, Robert Edwards (co-instigator of the 1972 *Tjilbruke Monument*). Shedley later visited Chambers Gorge (Figure 5-19) in the northern Flinders Ranges (with the Rover Scouts) where there is a significant gallery, Marlawahinha Inbiri to the Adnyamathanha people, of Aboriginal rock peckings or engravings (Figure 5-20) (Josephine Lawrence, 2009, pers. comm.).



Figure 5-19 Chambers Gorge, northern South Australia

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<sup>24</sup> Explorer Ludwig Leichhardt's party disappeared in 1848 whilst attempting to cross the continent from east to west. Their remains have never been located. The reported skeletons were calcified tree roots (Lamshed, 1972:58).





Figure 5-20 Marlawahinha Inbiri rock peckings, Chambers Gorge

According to Josephine Lawrence, the Alice Springs trip influenced their work: ‘If one looks at photos of desert Aboriginal people, very thin, standing on one foot with the other on the opposite knee, they look exactly as Geoff and John sculpted them’. There is a similarity in form and pose between the 1965 *Rainmakers* and the 1968 *Three Rivers Fountain* Aboriginal figure which suggests a mutual or cross influence between the two close friends in the manner of their depiction of Aboriginal mythological or symbolic figures. The forms also echo those in the paintings by Adelaide artist Ainslie Roberts of the same period (Figure 5-21). Roberts collaborated with Mountford in the 1960s on three books on Australian Aboriginal myths, *The Dreamtime* 1965, *The Dawn of Time* 1969 and *The First Sunrise* 1971, with the text by Mountford and paintings by Roberts. None of the books mention Kurna stories. Mountford had worked mainly with central Australian Aboriginal peoples and most of the stories in the books are not presented as specific to an Aboriginal language group but were gathered at Nepabunna (Adnyamathanha Country), Uluru (Ayres Rock) and Arnhem Land (Northern Territory). Mountford had wanted to ‘catch the imagination of Australians with the fantasy of Aboriginal myths which had intrigued him’ (Lamshed, 1972:202) and the collaboration with Roberts was the opportunity to do so. Roberts had accompanied Mountford to Central Mt Wedge, Northern Territory, his first experience of traditional Aboriginal culture and was ‘so captured by their poetry and run of imagination that he began to visualise them’. *The Dreamtime* was an immediate success, the first edition quickly sold out with the book being described as ‘an Australian classic’ which opened a window to the richness of Aboriginal mythology and a fascinating new world to those who had not known of this before (Lamshed, 1972:202).



Figure 5-21 Illustration, *The Salt Lakes of Kiti*, 1969, (Ainslie Roberts)

The works by the three artists were an attempt to portray or visualise Aboriginal Dreamtime figures or Ancestor Beings into a Western representational context, something not really done before. Western religious or ancestral iconography is well established, but translating or transferring an Aboriginal 'iconography' into a form readily engaged by non-Aboriginals was a new challenge. The style developed in the 1960s has though largely disappeared, particularly as contemporary Aboriginal art has evolved since the 1970s.

### **Summary**

The lack of Aboriginal representation in the public space in Phase 1, from colonisation until 1960, reflects the lack of Aboriginal inclusion in the broader society of the period. It was not until well into the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century that a change occurred. For well over a century after colonisation public space commemorations and statuary in Adelaide mimicked the style and content of those of Britain and Europe. Colonial places had been inscribed as 'naturally' white places (Taylor, 2000) which naturally excluded Aboriginal people and culture. The minor Aboriginal representation that did occur in this phase was incidental.

Phase 2, from 1960 to the early 1980s marks the change in attitude amongst segments of the community towards better recognition and inclusion of Aboriginal culture in public space artworks and the symbolic construct of the public space. Ten Markers were achieved over a twenty-two year period, a cautious start which was dependent on the initiative of a small number of people. Government agencies did not play any significant part in this phase. The Markers of this phase were initiated, commissioned and mainly designed by non-Aboriginal people with only one having any Aboriginal involvement in its making. Artists, because of both inclination and opportunity, led the way in including Aboriginal cultures in the public space. Their 'breaking of the silence' in the 1960s set a template for the evolution of greater Aboriginal representation. This was built on in the 1970s by other non-Aboriginals, as in the case of the journalist Reschke and anthropologist Edwards, with the initial commemoration of the Kaurna Ancestor Being Tjilbruke. These people, collectively, recognised that a post-colonial Australian culture and identity is part of a cultural continuum and that the inclusion of Aboriginal culture in the public space reflects the ancient and ongoing occupation of this continent by Aboriginal peoples.



The forms of inclusion are clearly with the purpose of representing Aboriginal people or culture and whilst the subject matter is mostly of a general pan-Aboriginal nature, there was some intent to honour the specific Aboriginal people of Adelaide but they were presumed to be an extinct people. After the period of total exclusion of Aboriginal people from the public space, the Markers of Phase 2 have been, and still are, part of the deconstruction of the power processes and a colonial civic identity. Whilst there are only a small number of works, they made visible in the public space the emergent social trend to recognise Aboriginal people and Aboriginal rights.