

CAMD Case Study – INDIGENOUS CULTURES: *tayenebe: Tasmanian Aboriginal women's fibre work*

Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

Opened 2009 and touring nationally until 2012



Creative Exchanges: Past and Present

It gives you a good feeling to watch something grow from your own hands, to watch the fibres take shape and watch the story unfold at the end, this is my heritage, this is my Country, this is me.

Leonie Dickson, Tasmanian Aboriginal Artist

tayenebe, Tasmanian Aboriginal women's fibre work is a travelling exhibition from the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG), which focuses on the work of a group of 35 Tasmanian Aboriginal women and girls who have revitalized the fibre skills of their ancestors. The exhibition highlights the unique connections that Tasmanian Aboriginal people have with the land and sea and provides an insight into the significance of traditional fibre work practice.

The women, aged between 7 and 87 years, used historic Tasmanian Aboriginal twined fibre baskets, created during the 1880s and in public collections, as inspiration to create beautiful bags, baskets, ropes and containers. Like their ancestors did hundreds of years ago, they have used irises, lilies, rush, sedges and reeds to weave and help for containers in a technique unique to Australia.

The word *tayenebe* comes from the Bruny Island language word for 'exchange'. In many ways this project represents a series of vital exchanges between women across generations, cultures and between institutions where traditional skills, stories and memories have all been shared.

The exhibition opened at TMAG on 4 July 2009 and, with the assistance of Visions of Australia, has toured since to venues including the National Museum of Australia, Canberra, the Queensland Museum, Brisbane, the Australian National Maritime Museum Sydney and the Koorie Heritage Trust, Melbourne, finishing its national tour at the Flinders University City Gallery, Adelaide. As a travelling exhibition, *tayenebe* continues to grow and engage increasing numbers of people. The concept of creative exchange lives on in the workshops and public programs at each venue eg while on display at TMAG, the *tayenebe* makers shared their knowledge and skills with people of all ages and the exhibition was the inspiration for a dance by grade 7 students at Ogilvie High School, New Town, Tasmania.

See: <http://static.tmag.tas.gov.au/tayenebe/>