

DARWIN FESTIVAL



TIFFANY SINGH FLY ME UP TO WHERE YOU ARE

2020-2021 Community Project

Education Resource

CONTENTS

ABOUT THE PROJECT	3
HOW TO GET STARTED	4
MATERIALS CHECKLIST	5
PREPARING YOUR CLASS	6
THE HOPES AND DREAMS WORKSHOP TEMPLATE	8
INTENTIONS & OUTCOMES	10

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

Fly Me Up To Where You Are is a hands-on conceptual art project from New Zealand artist Tiffany Singh that seeks to inspire and empower young people.

Primary, middle and high school aged children from all over Darwin are being invited to create one of 5,000 unique dream flags. Inspired by Tibetan prayer flags, each dream flag contains an image or message expressing the students' own thoughts, hopes and dreams for the future. These flags will be created in schools during the 2020 Festival and will then be hung together and displayed in a large-scale community art installation in as part of the 2021 Darwin Festival.

Thought-provoking and inspiring artistic experiences stimulate creative conversations and leave lasting impressions on young minds. In a year where Darwin Festival cannot involve schools in the same way as usual, we are committed to finding alternative and exciting projects to engage young people in the Festival program. *Fly Me Up To Where You Are* is the perfect fit.

This Education Resource provides a framework for active learning by sharing and addressing personal and global concerns. This process is aimed at igniting enthusiasm and responsibility in our younger generations for their wellbeing and the wellbeing of their communities and the world they have the potential to create.

Fly Me Up To Where You Are is a celebration of young people in the Northern Territory. We want them to feel empowered through this project, particularly those students whose voices are often missing from public or social narrative. We hope that it offers an opportunity for young people to voice their opinions and ideas in a highly visible public forum.

What is a Tibetan prayer flag?

A prayer flag is a colourful panel of rectangular cloth. These flags are often found strung in their hundreds along mountain ridges and peaks high in the Himalayas (the mountain range between India and China/Tibet). Prayer flags are used to bless the surrounding countryside and promote peace, compassion, strength and wisdom. The flags do not carry prayers to gods; rather, the Tibetans believe the prayers will be blown by the wind to spread good will and compassion into the space around them. Therefore, prayer flags are thought to bring benefit to all, as coming into contact with the blessings of a prayer flag is a positive experience for all.

About the artist: Tiffany Singh

Tiffany Singh's work positions the arts as a vital contributor to health and well-being. Applying social practice methodology to developing creative frameworks that prioritise the sharing of artistic knowledge with contemporary applications driven by education and wellbeing. Singh aims to sustain community and indigenous art forms, which transform women and youth into strong changemakers for sustainable poverty reduction: mobilising the strength of small artisan communities and social resources for local socio-economic development through awareness at both national and international museum and gallery levels. Presenting contemporary art as a medium for achieving new educational and well-being models through sustainable and ongoing initiatives where both artist, institution and community can look at the positive social impact they can achieve through the arts to find unique and personal solutions through cathartic and therapeutic processes.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Flag workshops will occur throughout the month of August 2020, with the creation of flags in schools. Schools can register with Darwin Festival to participate. Darwin Festival will then distribute flag making kits to schools containing everything required to make the flags and will arrange for a workshop facilitator to visit to work with students.

The stages of making and installing the flags

Stage 1, Registration. Term Two 2020

Registration open for all schools in Darwin and regional areas. Schools will need to provide Darwin Festival with details including contact information, student numbers and preferred workshop times. The Festival will then arrange times for the workshop facilitator to visit schools.

Stage 2, Preparation. Term Three 2020

In this document you will find resources to help prepare your class for the creation of the flags. If possible, try to introduce these ideas within the week prior to the lesson in which the flags are created. We encourage you to work with the students to prepare the images and/or messages they would like to paint onto their dream flag. At this stage, you should introduce the hopes and dreams template to students to help them navigate their thoughts and ideas.

Stage 3, Creation. Term Three 2020

In this class the students will develop a body of colourful flags painted with their messages. Each child will create a flag with an image or message expressing their own hopes and dreams that will become part of the artwork. Darwin Festival will supply the materials needed. The students will be hand-painting onto pre-cut fabric flags using black fabric paint. Once all the flags are completed, Darwin Festival will arrange a collection from the school.

Stage 4, Assemblage. Term Four 2020 – January 2021

The dream flags will be stitched together by local sewing groups. We encourage parents and grandparents to get involved with the work – families are welcome to register with us if they wish to participate. The Festival will supply all materials required for assembly.

Stage 5, Installation. August 2021 as part of Darwin Festival

For the duration of the 2021 Festival, dream flags from all across Darwin will be brought together and hung in a public space in the city centre, as a colourful display of the unifying voices of our youth. Hung row on row to form a vibrant ceiling above the heads of passers-by, just out of arm's reach, *Fly Me up To Where You Are* will form a rich and celebratory environment, constantly moving and shimmering in the breeze and bringing the messages of the children to the heart of the city.

MATERIALS CHECKLIST

What Darwin Festival provides:

- Fabric paint - black
- Flag material, cut and ready to paint on
- Storage box for your flags
- Instructions for assembling flags (if anyone you know would like to be a part of this process)

What you need to provide:

- Something to keep the students clean: aprons, old clothes?
- Something to keep paint off tables and floors
- Suitable place for washing paint brushes and trays
- Paint brushes and containers for the brushes (Darwin Festival can provide extras if required)
- Trays for paint



Image: This design was created using elements provided by five young Auckland artists aged from 12 to 17. Their designs brought together the feeling of the hopes and dreams of our diverse Tamariki from across Auckland.

From the dove and butterflies, to the Indian, Maori and Samoan inspired iconography, all are representative of emergence, transition and pride in cultural identity. This print is an inspirational visual message that embodies the *Fly Me Up to Where You Are* project. Tying all these together is the bold, curving Puhoro. This form is often found in tāmoko (traditional tattoos) and on the prows of waka (canoes). "This pattern represents forging forward courageously as a collective conscious into the unknown future. Forging forward with peace, love and unity at the forefront of our hearts and minds." (From the designers, members of Ngati Whatua o Orakei iwi).

PREPARING YOUR CLASS

The following links, photographs and resources are provided to give historical and contextual background to this project. Please feel free to extract information to show or read to your class.

A word from Tiffany Singh to keep in mind: *"This project is about developing a space for freedom of expression as a means for healing and processing emotions and thoughts in an invaluable addition to education. By creating spaces for creative practice in schools we help students to identify with their feelings and emotions, and to trust in the power of imagination and ignite our young peoples capacity to affect change in the world around us".*

Spend some time in the day or days before the workshop exploring ideas around the project. Encourage your students to think about their hopes and dreams – keep this very broad. The Hopes and Dreams Workshop Template, reflective questions, suggested readings and resources that follow might be useful. If you know of other readings and resources that you think would be appropriate, feel free to share those as well.

You could discuss ideas of community, unity, self-expression, hopes, dreams, inspiration and motivation.

The reflective questions are designed to challenge students to think about these big ideas - there are no right or wrong answers. These questions can be discussed as a class, individually or in groups but are designed to inspire discussion and to connect to a deeper thoughtfulness.

The Hopes and Dreams Workshop Template can be used as well as, or instead of, the questions, but is aimed at drawing specific phrases, symbols, drawings and thoughts relating to the students' hopes and dreams. If you use the Hopes and Dreams Workshop Template concept with your students, we'd love it if you could make copies of them for the artist.

Reflective questions

- What does it mean to collaborate?
- When you are contributing to a group, what do you do?
- What are hopes and dreams?
- What do your hopes and dreams mean to you?
- What would happen if everyone was empowered?
- If you could inspire someone how would you do it?
- How do you feel when you positively express yourself?
- What does it mean to be heard?

Discussion Topic:

What does this quote mean to you?

"Each one of us can make a contribution. Too frequently we think we have to do spectacular things. Yet if we remember that the sea is actually made up of drops of water and each drop counts, each one of us can do our little bit where we are."

- Desmond Tutu

Readings and resources

Horton Hears a Who, by Dr. Seuss – A great story about the value of every voice – no matter how small.

When I Coloured in the World – A book for children who know more about the world than we usually give them credit for. It gives children a wonderful creative agency to make it better. With crayons.

Books about children bringing joy to, and inspiring those around them, by growing things and doing what they love:

The Curious Garden by Peter Brown

The Gardener by Sarah Stewart – Read aloud on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=of5gK-9sOL4&t=5s>

More background information on prayer flags: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prayer_flag

More information about Tiffany Singh and great photos from her past projects:

<http://www.tiffanysingh.com/>



Images: Tiffany Singh working with her students in Bangalore, India 2012

THE HOPES AND DREAMS WORKSHOP TEMPLATE

Spend some time in the day or days before the workshop exploring ideas around the questions on this mind map. This should form the basis for the discussion with the students. You do not have to have this filled out, but do spend some time thinking about what each of these things are and what they mean to us. This would be a good time to start thinking about what your hopes and dreams look like. If you would like more trees in the world, how could you draw that? What does water look like? What does happiness look like? The idea of unpacking these ideas prior to the creation of the flags is to reduce stress that could occur otherwise. We want this to be a fun, playful experience that centres around creativity, so your encouragement in talking through these ideas first would be very helpful.

Hopes & Dreams

for your self?

for your family?

for the future?

for your community?

Self Portrait.

for the world?

Name: _____

School: _____

INTENTIONS & OUTCOMES

The intentions of the project are to:

- Generate community awareness and ownership of political issues and ownership for the future of Darwin
- Empower young people to think about, discuss and find solutions for political issues and social biases that they may face everyday living in Darwin
- Facilitate discussion around a vision for Darwin
- Identify pathways and goals to facilitate change; both local and global by showing students and introducing them to other people in their communities who have facilitated change, to show them it's possible
- Install a sense of ownership for future self-improvement
- To facilitate cross pollination between different sectors of the artistic community - students, artists, institutions and audience

The outcomes of the project are:

- For students to discuss/unpack political issues and biases faced by people from/living in Darwin. They will then use these conversations as the concept to develop the visual identity of their flags, telling a story of what political challenges and biases they face and what hopes and solutions they have for these issues and the Darwin community
- Empowerment of local communities to facilitate and be the change they want to see in the world around them
- To give voice to young people in the community
- A public exhibition of the flags at the 2021 Darwin Festival, to share the messages of young people to a broad audience of people from across Darwin

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