

Suzy Weeks



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"The Cool Burn - Healing Country Together"

I've always loved fire... Long before my aboriginal ancestry was confirmed, I felt an inherent connection to country and culture- a figurative 'fire inside' or 'burn', you may say. And; not dismissing how mesmerising and magnificent fire is to view, I've chosen fire in the form of a traditional 'Cool Burn' as the theme of my painting as fire is much more than a metaphor. Fire is essential for mob and Country; It is essential for survival, healing, connection, change and renewal. Fire connects indigenous people to the land. Fire is life! Also, representing resilience, rebirth and purification, fire promotes bio-diversity and well-being. It provides spiritual, physical, emotional, social and cultural connections. It is an essential tool for land management, traditional ceremonies, medicine, dance, hunting and cooking, as a heat source and much more. For thousands of years fire has been used to care for our sacred landscape, protect our native wildlife, and lower our carbon output. These cool burns also encourage elders to share their knowledge with younger generations to ensure the strength of cultural practice and longevity. Bringing traditional fire practices back to the land is also about strengthening indigenous communities. ***Currently there are 30 Aboriginal savanna burning projects, covering 17.9M Ha in the Top End*". ***Locally, QFES recently partnered with traditional owners to support cultural burns on Tamborine Mountain and Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island). The Tambourine Mountain RFB recently became the first in SEQ to work with traditional owners to change its fire practices. After a cool slow, cultural burn the ground should be patchy with unburnt areas as presented in this painting. The vibrant array of colours from muted to bright tones represent our flora, wildlife, waterways and landscape. The colourful energy is also used to express and acknowledge the diversity of people within a mob and our nation as a whole- coming together to heal country. Fire heals country. Let's heal country together for sustainability, fairness and equitable outcomes for our nation.*