

Kimberley Girls Winning Youth Fashion Project

In conjunction with Mangkaja Arts, Fitzroy Valley District High School and Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre

Fitzroy Crossing is an Indigenous Community 400km inland from Broome in the heart of the Kimberley. Girls between 15 and 17 participated in a program with the Artist in Residence Sarah Mist and Art Teacher Claire Woolhouse at Fitzroy Valley District High School. Over three months costumes were created. The aim was to empower the students through design, while maintaining culture, identity and create a seed of alternative vocational pathways. Workshops were run on fashion illustration and concept development based on contemporary development of traditional themes. The students responded exceptionally well and one particular group were particularly dedicated to finish their designs. It became apparent that the students were not just enthusiastic but exceptionally talented designers. It was decided that the costumes would be entered into the Apex Teenage Fashion Awards in the My Culture category.



Designing at Fitzroy Valley District High School



Model Shaniece Chapman wearing the Boab Dress

the girls performed incredibly well on the catwalk and supported each other through the whole process building confidence and teamwork skills. Both dresses were selected for the state finals in Perth in September and the Boab dress was selected for display in WA fashion week.

A construction plan was put in place for both the selected designs. The Boab dress was designed by Taryn Malo and the Water lily dress by Klintisha Jimbidie. Students from various classes also helped with various construction aspects of the dresses. As the dresses started to take form the students became more excited, watching while their designs became reality. As the dresses were created, support from the wider community also became apparent. Help was given in finding extra materials, music and emotional support for the whole process. Wawili Pitjas a Broome film production company came to the school filmed and interviewed the girls for a Message Stick an indigenous TV programme.

The girls travelled to Perth with the artist in residence, two teachers and seven girls, of which two were the designers and two were models, to enter the Apex Teenage Fashion Award heats on the 19th and 20th of August. The girls were taken through the whole process of hair (sponsored by Chilli Creations) and make up design, modelling and performance. Although exceptional nervous



Sarah Mist, Claire Woolhouse, Shaniece Chapman, Klintisha Jimbidie, Adina Brooking and Taryn Malo in Perth

We then came back to Perth to the Hyatt hotel to compete in the state finals on the 20th of September. The girls again were taken through the process of hair and make up and both designer and model performed exceptionally well on the catwalk. The Boab dress won 1st prize in its category and became a finalist in the Apex National Finals in Sydney on October 10th. The waterlily dress came 3rd and we wish to showcase this dress in Sydney too.

The programme has developed design skills in an area that is inspiring for local youth and hence they have responded so

enthusiastically. The process has developed creative skills from a traditional and strong cultural foundation in a contemporary context. Youth (particularly women) is an area that is so often overlooked and we needed help. We urgently needed sponsorship to participate in the Apex National Teenage Fashion Awards in Sydney for two models, two designers, parent and Artist in Residence. We then raised over \$20 000 from local service providers in two days so we could travel to Sydney.



Adina Brooking modeling the waterlily dress with designer Klintisha Jimbidie at the State finals.

Taryn Malo, Shaniece Chapman, Adina Brooking, Klintisha Jimbidie, Irene Jimbidie and Sarah Mist travelled to Sydney to participate in the National finals competition on Saturday the 10th October. This included a tour of Sydney, hair and make up, rehearsals and interviews. The girls were also excited to meet pop singer Paulini, the hip hop dancer Demi at the event. The girls again performed brilliantly and the Boab dress won 1st place in it's category of My Culture!



Designer Taryn Malo, Models Shaniece Chapman wearing the Boab Dress, Adina Brooking wearing the Water lily dress, Designer Klintisha Jimbidie with Foxtel Interviewer at the State Finals.

Interviews were given on live radio, Foxtel and various print media about the win!

During this process there has been continued support from the community and more students and youth have wanted to be involved. We are now planning an event in Fitzroy Crossing to showcase the dresses and the project with the aim to celebrate and inspire local youth and community. We are also planning to incorporate our local 'Kimberley Girls' entrants in the event.

The response to this project has been tremendous and the girls wish to thank everyone who has supported them. Without this support they could not have reached this level of outstanding achievement. Because this program has been so



Klntisha Jimbidie, Shaniece Chapman, Taryn Malo, Adina Brooking, (sitting far left) with all the Apex Teenage Fashion Awards National Finalists and Foxtel Interviewers in Sydney

successful we wish to build future youth projects on it. If you think you can be of some help to talented youth in the Fitzroy Valley for similar future projects please contact Sarah Mist on 0405 000 525 or email mistgraphix@gmail.com



Designer Taryn Malo winning 1st place with her award



Shaniece Chapman on the catwalk wearing the winning boab dress.