

“Deep Currents” BMX

Bike Renovations by Samu and Brandon Stewart
Painted by Samu Stewart

Samu pronounces, “I love BMXing and I love the ocean. BMXing, making and caring for the ocean is how I roll”.

Renovated bikes are a rarity these days. We live in a wasteful ‘throw-away’ society by and large and rather than repairing old and/or broken things, in many cases the old is discarded and replaced by something new.

Father and son duo, Brandon and Samu Stewart together with the artistic input of mum Safina, are exceptions to this trend. As a specialist bike mechanic, Brandon has taken a special interest in re-building old bikes both for himself and his family. Two of these are displayed here in this exhibition.

This beautifully restored blue BMX represents the team effort of father and son. Brandon had some years earlier retrieved the basic frame from the rubbish tip and re-built it with bits and pieces taken from other discarded bikes. While functionally completed, ascetically the bike presented as a ‘bitsa’ bike. However, with his dad’s help, Samu was determined to restore the bike to its former glory, but with a number of unique ascetic additions reflecting his Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage. Samu chose a beautiful blue colour tone tinted with black on the forks and rear of the frame and painted enamel designs of ocean currents.

There is something special about restorations, analogous to the ‘new birth’ metaphor. On the one hand, there is the transformation of something otherwise deemed broken and of little value. On the other, it reflects the creative and redemptive partnership, commitment, skill and sacrifice of a father, mother and son team, again analogous to the salvation rescue plan of the Holy Trinity who makes all things new.

Consistent with the reflective spirit of NAIDOC Week, these restored bikes remind us that while we are all prone to the destructive wear and tear of age and life battles including direct and indirect prejudice, abuse and injustice, this need not be the end of our story. We can draw resilience, restoration and reconciliation hope for ourselves and for others in the face of pain, injustice and discouragement.

