

Never mind the cultural cringe

Story and image provided by Shannon Brett

When artist Shannon Brett put out a call advertising for everyday people to pose in photos for her, the response was overwhelming.

Even when she explained that they were to be subjects of bogan pride they were still keen to be a part of her vision, and excited at the prospect of being part of an art project.

Shannon was accepted into the NEWflames Artist in Residence program and has produced a new photographic series titled 'Celebration of a Nation'.

Featuring Cairns locals, the series explores stereotypes and characterisations common to Australia.

"Its a tongue in cheek look at

ockerism and that Kath and Kim style ideology" said Shannon in her studio.

As part of the NEWflames program emerging artists such as Shannon are encouraged to create work that is innovative and different from works previously produced or exhibited.

Inaugural NEWflames resident Jenny Fraser who is originally from Cairns, was engaged to work with Shannon Brett in a mentoring process sharing her expertise in the medium of new media arts.

"Its a really strong series, and from the get go Shannon had a clear idea of what she wanted to do so we have explored options of how to extend further beyond photographic outcomes to present and promote the work in different contexts, including

screen-based re-purposing."

NEWflames Inc. is a non-profit foundation with a drive to nurture artistic drive through studio residencies and professional development opportunities for Australian Indigenous artists, which was initiated in 2003 by a group that includes Philanthropist Ann Gamble-Myer and Gallerist Michael Eather.

Previously the program was run out of the CampFire Group studios located at Fireworks Gallery in Brisbane, but in recent years its studios were moved to Cairns to be a part of the Canopy Artspace, a complex showcasing artists from Far North Queensland.

Shannon completed the Bachelor of Contemporary Australian Indigenous Art in Brisbane last year

and relocated to hometown Cairns in January, please to be able to work with Cairns locals and re-engage with the art industry.

Over the first few weeks of the residency Shannon scoured op shops for the red white and blue clothing to represent the Aussie flag, suitable for the models to wear in their portrait sittings.

The outcomes of the residency will culminate in an exhibition featuring photographic prints of the new work by Shannon Brett along with current NEWflames resident

Megan Cope from Brisbane, titled 'Toponymy' her artistic exploration of FNQ place names, which will



Above: Shannon Brett and Jenny Fraser

open at 6pm on Tuesday 29th and run until Saturday 2nd April, at Canopy Studios on Grafton Street, Cairns.