

# VIBE ACTIVITIES

## Artist Profile – Fern Martins page 5



**Fern Martins**

**This experienced artist illustrates stories that are close to her heart**

Aboriginal artist Fern Martins helped set up Boomalli Aboriginal Arts Cooperative in Sydney and has been holding her own exhibitions since the age of 19. Her most recent illustrations are for the book *Bubbay: A Christmas Adventure*, a children's story about self-discovery and friendship.

Fern Martins is a Ngarabul woman from NSW. She is an artist of extraordinary range and experience and has worked as a sculptor, printmaker and artist in various mediums. She was educated at Sydney Girls' High School and completed a Bachelor of Arts at the South Australian School of Art.

Fern says she started drawing when I she was a child: "My nanna used to embroider and she used to encourage me to draw. She used to buy me those Little Golden Books and pencils and little covered notebooks for me to draw in. They were wonderful."

She says she always had a connection to the bush, despite being raised in the city.

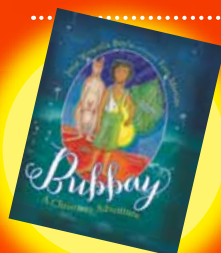
"Nan would take me to visit family in the country, but I was a city-slicker. That ability to paint bush scenes comes from the old folks. My friends used to get me to paint bush scenes on their windows, even though I was a kid from the city," she says.

Fern launched her artistic career at the age of 19 with her one-woman sculptural exhibition under the direction of curator Noel Sheridan.

"An art teacher at high school noticed I had ability. Then I went to study at East Sydney Technical College and I used to do life-drawing classes. Then I studied at the South Australian School of Art," she says.

"I had my first exhibition at the age of 19. Noel Sheridan was an inspirational curator. He took me under his wing and let me have free range."

Fern has also exhibited her 'Land Rights' prints at the National Gallery. Fern's activism for Aboriginal Land Rights during the 1980s raised funds for emerging Land Councils. Together with other young Aboriginal urban artists, she started Boomalli – the first Aboriginal Artists Cooperative – in Sydney in 1987. She also assisted the Sydney community to establish art programs for Aboriginal Cooperatives and lectured at the University of Adelaide.



"I enjoy this work, especially if the stories have storylines that are close to my heart. I always want to close that gap"



"We got it (Boomalli) together and the others came with us. There have been some wonderful people there over the past 25 years that have kept it going. Over the years, I had two kids with special needs, so I didn't follow through, but they have always been wonderful in including me in their anniversary shows," she says.

Despite being so instrumental in the development of Aboriginal art in Sydney since the 1980s, Fern has maintained her independence as an artist.

"I am a very independent artist. I don't like sitting under the gallery system. I do my own travelling shows in communities, libraries, churches and community centres," she says.

She says she is always keen to help other artists and authors.

"I am contributing further illustrations to books at the moment. I enjoy this work, especially if they have storylines that are close to my heart. I always want to close that gap. That is one part of my travel. The other part is spiritually based work using landscapes and illustrating scriptures," she says.

"When I illustrate the work of others I just want to make them happy and proud. I want to give them the best. It is challenging but I really love it.

"It is very hard to survive as an artist, but I am doing my best as an artist. It is a tough journey but it is great. I am not good at anything else."

*Bubbay: A Christmas Adventure*, written by Josie Wowolla Boyle, is the story of a boy who lives in the outback and spends his days protecting a herd of goats from dingoes. It is a hopeful story full of magic, combined with Fern's richly textured illustrations of Australian plants and animals. The book offers a glimpse of how the natural and spiritual worlds can intervene to make ordinary lives better.

*Bubbay: A Christmas Adventure* by Josie Wowolla Boyle, illustrated by Fern Martins, is in good bookshops or online from Magabala Books ([www.magabala.com](http://www.magabala.com)). Based in Broome, this not-for-profit Indigenous publishing house aims to promote, preserve and publish Indigenous Australian culture.

### DEADLY VIBE ART COMPETITION

Send us your artwork of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander role model and go in the running to win a deadly art set. The overall winner will be announced in the December 2012 issue of *Deadly Vibe*.

Mail your artwork to *Deadly Vibe My Art Competition*, PO Box 810, Darlinghurst NSW, 2010, or email a scan (or 1MB digital photo) to [info@vibe.com.au](mailto:info@vibe.com.au)

To see all the entries, look for the **photos** section on [vibe.com.au](http://vibe.com.au)

### THIS MONTH'S WINNERS



Lewis Jetta by Steven



Jessica Manboy by Bailey Bush

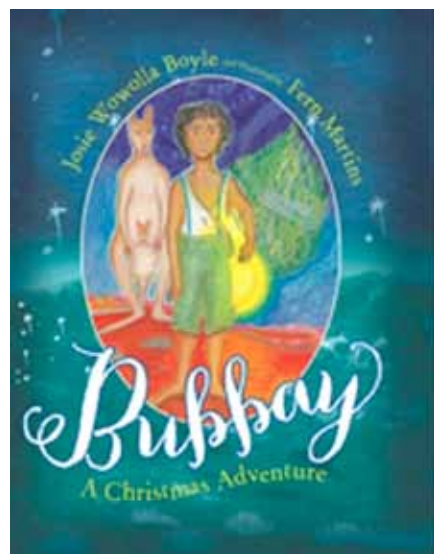
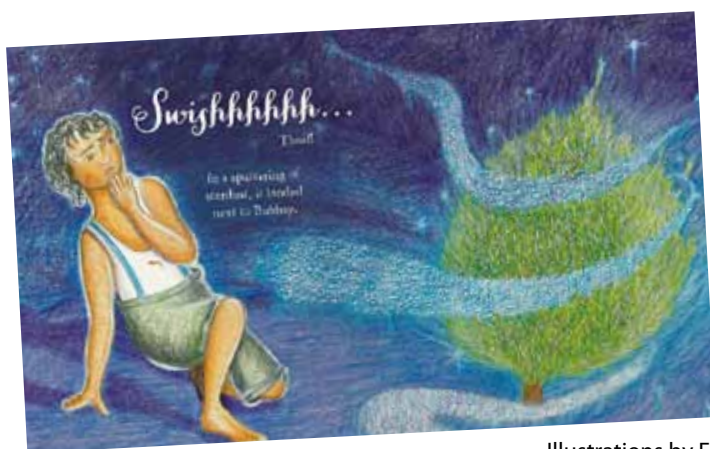
## Biographical Recount

Fern Martins is a Ngarabul woman from NSW. She helped set up Boomalli Aboriginal Arts Cooperative in Sydney and has been holding her own exhibitions since the age of 19. Her most recent illustrations are for the book *Bubbay: A Christmas Adventure*, a children's story about self-discovery and friendship. She says she always had a connection to the bush, despite being raised in the city.

Read Artist Profile – *Fern Martins* on page 5 and answer the questions that follow.

### ACTIVITY 1

#### BUILDING READING SKILLS



Illustrations by Fern Martins for *Bubbay: A Christmas Adventure*

- skimming and scanning for information.
- reading headings, text boxes and pictures.
- reading for meaning.
- making connections between the text and your world.

#### There are three levels of comprehension questions:

<b>Literal</b>	The answer is located in one sentence in the text.
<b>Inferred</b>	You need to make links between sentences and graphics (such as illustrations, maps and tables) and what you already know.
<b>Applied</b>	The answer is in your background knowledge, what you already know or feel.

**1** What age was she when Fern Martins held an exhibition of her art? (inferred)

- ☐ 19  
☐ 20  
☐ 21  
☐ 2012



## 2 Fern Martins describes herself as a “city-slicker.” What does this mean? (inferred)

- ☐ She loves the bush.
- ☐ She has always lived in the city.
- ☐ She never liked the city.
- ☐ She loves travelling in the city.



## 3 Who was the inspiration for her bush paintings? (inferred)

- ☐ her sisters
- ☐ her cousins
- ☐ her father
- ☐ her Nan and the older people in her family

## 4 The text says that Noel Sheridan was an inspirational curator who “took her under his wings.”

This is an example of

(applied)

- ☐ simile
- ☐ metaphor
- ☐ alliteration
- ☐ repetition

## 5 Place these events in the order that they occurred from 1-5. (inferred)

- ☐ Fern was active in the Lands Rights protests of the 1980s.
- ☐ She visited family in the country as a child.
- ☐ She held her first exhibition at the age of 19.
- ☐ Fern recently provided the illustrations for *Bubbay: A Christmas Adventure*.
- ☐ Fern grew up in Ngarabul country around Glen Innes in NSW.



**6** Why have the direct quotes been included in this report?

(applied)




---

---

---

---

---

---

**7** How do the pictures and photo add information to this report?

(applied)

---

---

---

---

---

---

## ACTIVITY 2

### LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS - SPELLING

**1** The spelling mistakes in these sentences have been underlined.  
Write the correct spelling for each word in the box.



She held her own ecsibishons.

She started drawering as a child.

She loves ilustrateing books for people.



**2** Each sentence has one word that is incorrect.  
Write the correct spelling of the word in the box.



She studied art in Sydney.

There are some wunderfull artists in the bush.

It has bean challenging a times.

## ACTIVITY 3

### LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS - PUNCTUATION



**1** Here is an extract from *Bubbay: A Christmas Adventure*, which Fern Martins illustrated. Correct the punctuation and spelling errors in this passage.

down on the plain in a simple house lived a lonley lady called mrs timms  
now and then bubbay swopped her some goats milk for eggs thankyou  
bubbay mrs timms would say smiling softly

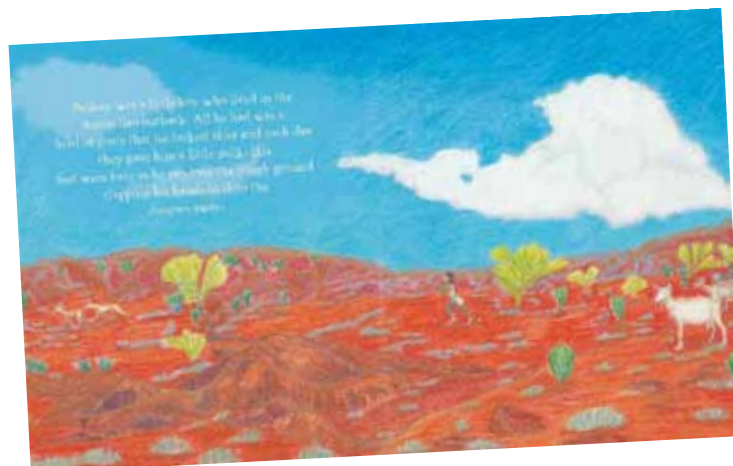
---

---

---

---

---



## ACTIVITY 4

### LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS – LITERARY TECHNIQUES

- 1** Match the literary techniques with their examples from *Bubbay: A Christmas Adventure*.

example from the text	literary technique
lonely lady	simile
Swishhhhhh...Thud!	alliteration
She chose a stone that shone like the sun.	personification
He lights a fire and drifts off to sleep with the stars coming down to keep him company.	onomatopoeia

## ACTIVITY 5

### WRITING A BIOGRAPHICAL RECOUNT



Write your idea on a paper.

A Biographical Recount retells the stages in a person's life.

This genre of text always starts with an **Orientation** to explain why the person is remembered, then gives a **Record of Stages** in the person's life (such as when and where they were born, growing up, school life, greatest career achievements etc).

This Biographical recount tells us about Fern Martins and her achievements and reminds us why she is such a well-respected Australian artist.

- 1** Research a person that you believe has made a significant contribution to Australia.

Follow the scaffold provided to write your Biographical Recount. Include a picture.

#### Remember to:

- research your topic and plan your writing.
- choose your points carefully.
- give examples to support your points.
- write in sentences.
- pay attention to your spelling and punctuation.
- use a new paragraph for each new idea.
- choose your words carefully to convince a reader of your opinions.
- check and edit your writing so that it is clear for a reader.