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About the Cover

Uncle Paul Constable Calcott

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About the Cover

Inclusion by Uncle Paul Constable Calcott

About the Art

Inclusion was inspired by the fossilized footprints found at a place called Lake Mungo, in Australia. The footprints, believed to be over fifty thousand years old, show a one-legged person using a walking stick to participate in a hunt with people who have both their legs. They are hunting emu and kangaroo, as these tracks are also visible. What this says to me is that thousands of years ago, the traditional inhabitants of this country had a culture of inclusion, when Europeans were just starting to walk upright. The fact that this person is using a walking stick also suggests perhaps the first example of a crude mobility aid.

About the Artist

Uncle Paul Constable Calcott is a proud descendant of the Wiradjuri peoples from central New South Wales. At the age of eighteen months, back in 1960, he contracted polio. Living with the resulting disability has driven him to be an advocate for his community around disability rights. He now lives on the Queensland Sunshine Coast on Karbi Karbi Country with his partner of twenty-five years, and as Paul says, he has the privilege, honor, and responsibility of being a recognized community Elder. Uncle Paul has been working in the disability sector for almost forty years, with the past fifteen years specifically devoted to First Peoples living with disability. In 2010, while working with a nongovernmental organization based on the Sunshine Coast, he started an artist group for local First Peoples living with disability. The group's purpose was to address issues such as social isolation and to create a culturally safe environment for people to connect and build resilience via art, cultural connection, and sharing stories.

These activities started Uncle Paul on an incredible journey that helped him grow as an artist and grow as an Aboriginal man. It also gave him insight about his own personal life of living with a disability in a far more positive light. In supporting other members of the community, he gained a stronger sense of purpose by connecting to culture and community through their art and through sharing their stories of strength. In 2015, he began working with the First Peoples Disability Network Australia. He developed opportunities

to share art on a national and international platform to support community disability rights and culturally respectful models of support. He realizes that these projects helped others to have a voice and to be seen as valuable contributors to arts, culture, and community. Uncle Paul has had the opportunity to travel to regional and remote communities throughout Australia and share stories. He realized the ability of art to help us share stories of strength and connection to country and culture. He has learned about the different disability perspectives held in various communities and how art is the common denominator and link between us all.

Uncle Paul has coordinated and facilitated at least fourteen art exhibitions over the past ten years, providing opportunities for First Nations artists living with disability to showcase their work and enhance their economic participation in their communities. With the First Peoples Disability Network Australia, in 2019 Uncle Paul coordinated and facilitated an art exhibition called *Culture Is Inclusion* at the United Nations in Geneva, which featured works by twelve individual artists living with disability. The exhibition moved to Parliament House Brisbane for the International Day for People Living with Disability. That same year, Uncle Paul was awarded a National Human Rights Award for Disability Leadership and Rights Activism. Through his role with First Peoples Disability Network, Uncle Paul facilitates the work of the NuunaRon Art Group for artists living with disability and of E.L.D.A., Elders Living with Disability Australia. He continues to advocate for people with disability to be seen and recognized as contributing members of a richly diverse society, making valuable, unique, and diverse contributions to their culture and the arts.

Uncle Paul's work is displayed both nationally and internationally, including at the Australian embassy in Switzerland and the Queensland treasury, in government buildings in New Zealand and Canada, and in private collections in London, the United States, Germany, Thailand, Malaysia, and the Middle East. Uncle Paul has used his artwork in presentations at the United Nations in New York and Geneva to highlight issues facing First Nations peoples living with disability. He also advocates for human rights issues for LGBTIQ+ people in First Nations communities.