

WE ARE ONE - The First XI

Claire Letitia Reynolds

WE ARE ONE – The First XI celebrates the journey of the all Aboriginal First XI of 1868 and features current Australian Indigenous cricketers, direct descendants of the First XI, and Elders from mainland Australia and the Torres Strait.

The artwork and portraits are a conceptual portrayal by Claire Letitia Reynolds of the 1868 Aboriginal First XI Cricket Team and aim to champion this significant piece of Australian history.

Reynolds has produced a series of artworks utilising analogue and digital processes, with hand-developed films and handcrafted dyes from native Australian species, referencing the unique connection between Australian Indigenous people, culture and Country. The portraits depict current and past Indigenous Australian cricketers, direct descendants of the First XI, and Elders, from across three states of Australia.

Accompanying the portraits, Sasha Parlett presents a series of vignettes that take a documentary look into the oral history of cricket in Australia. Through discussions with descendants of The First XI, past and current First Nations Cricketers, light is shed on the truths and triumphs First Nations Cricketers have faced since the First XI was selected to represent Australia in England in 1868. Highlighting a forgotten history of this colonial sport turning stockmen into athletes, and becoming an iconic sport within First Nations communities

WE ARE ONE - The First XI aims to uplift and contribute to reconciliation in Australia.

The First XI Story

The 1868 First XI was Australia's first-ever sporting team to tour internationally – incredibly, it was a group of thirteen Indigenous Australian athletes. After being smuggled out of Victoria as the Aboriginal Protection act was coming into place, the team sailed to Sydney, then for England on board the Blackwall frigate Parramatta.

The Indigenous athletes were predominantly from Wotjbaluk and Gunditjmara Nations in The Western District of Victoria, with two men from NSW's Wonnarua Nation, known as The Hunter Valley. There is thought that one athlete was from South East Queensland, from Kabi Kabi Nation.

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Their story is one of strength, triumph, and tragedy, with several players suffering severe illnesses. Some were sent home early; another, King Cole, sadly lost his life. Despite this, the ledger was even at the end of the England-wide tournament, at 14 apiece.

WE ARE ONE aims to square up the ledger for Australian Identity, and these pioneering men provide an impetus for progress. So it is with pride that WE ARE ONE celebrates this story of courage, resilience, and character.

- Claire Letitia Reynolds

Approved by Uncle Richard Kennedy, Direct Descendant

About

Claire Letitia Reynolds

Claire Letitia Reynolds is a photographic artist based on Queensland's Sunshine Coast, Australia. Known for capturing subjects at their most intimate and familiar moments, Reynolds blurs the boundaries between art, social commentary and documentary. Born in 1975 in country NSW, Reynolds discovered her love of photography at 14, installing her first darkroom.

Completing a BA Communications degree in Media at UCACT, led her to train in London on influential fashion journals. Returning to Australia, Reynolds published her first book, *Pure and Dirty*, in 2011, receiving international and National acclaim, and included an invitation to exhibit at Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney. In addition, Reynolds has exhibited as a solo artist on iconic Cockatoo Island, Sydney Harbour.

Image list

- 1 Claire Letitia Reynolds, Aunty Betty, Bundjalung Nation | NSW, 2022, Photographic print on fine art paper with handcrafted dye, Brown Bloodwood bark, 45x55cm, 1/1
- 2 Claire Letitia Reynolds, Chace, Quandamooka Nation | QLD, 2022, Photographic print on fine art paper with handcrafted dye, Narrow-leaved Red Gum bark, 45 x 55 cm, 1/1
- 3 Claire Letitia Reynolds, Ben, Wiradjuri Nation | NSW, 2022, Photographic print on fine art paper with handcrafted dye, Eucalyptus Major, Queensland Grey Gum, 45 x 55 cm, 1/1
- 4 Claire Letitia Reynolds, Lesley, Djangadi Nation | NSW, 2022, Photographic print on fine art paper with handcrafted dye, Narrow-leaved Red Gum bark, 45 x 55 cm, 1/1
- 5 Claire Letitia Reynolds, Aunty Fiona Clarke, Gudintjimara, Kirre Whurrong Nations | VIC, 2022, Photographic print on 100% pure mulberry silk hung on found Eucalyptus branch, 140 x 180 cm, 1/1
- 6 Claire Letitia Reynolds, Taine, Gudintjimara Nation | VIC , 2022, Photographic print on fine art paper with handcrafted dye, Narrow-leaved Red Gum leaves, 45 x 55 cm, 1/1
- 7 Claire Letitia Reynolds, Austyn, Wiradjuri Nation | NSW, 2022, Photographic print on fine art paper with handcrafted dye, Swamp Bloodwood leaves, 2022 45 x 55 cm, 1/1
- 8 Claire Letitia Reynolds, Johnny, Gudintjimara Nation | VIC, 2022, Photographic print on fine art paper with handcrafted dye, White Cypress native Pine leaves, 45x55cm, 1/1
- 9 Claire Letitia Reynolds, Dakin, Gudintjimara Nations | VIC, 2022, Photographic print on fine art paper with handcrafted dye, Grey Ironbark leaves, aluminium and iron, 45 x 55 cm, 1/1
- 10 Claire Letitia Reynolds, Oskar, Kurtjar Nation | QLD, 2022, Photographic print on fine art paper with handcrafted dye, Red Bloodwood bark and tree sap, 45 x 55 cm, 1/1
- 11 Claire Letitia Reynolds, Rex, Barkindji, Yorta Yorta Nations | NSW/ VIC, 2022, Photographic print on fine art paper with handcrafted dye, Grey Gum Eucalyptus Major, 45 x 55 cm, 1/1
- 12 Claire Letitia Reynolds, Uncle Richard, Wotjobaluk Nation | VIC, 2022, Photographic print on fine art paper with handcrafted dye, Swamp Bloodwood leaves, 45 x 55 cm, 1/1
- 13 Claire Letitia Reynolds, Kieran, Giithabul Nation | QLD, 2022, Photographic print on fine art paper with handcrafted dye, Red Bloodwood bark, 2022 45 x 55 cm, 1/1
- 14 Claire Letitia Reynolds, Jacob, Dharawal Nation | NSW, 2022, Photographic print on fine art paper with handcrafted dye, Red Bloodwood bark, 45 x 55 cm, 1/1
- 15 Claire Letitia Reynolds , Rosie, Gubbi Gubbi Nation | QLD, 2022, Photographic print on fine art paper with handcrafted dye, Narrow-leaved Red Gum bark, 45 x 55 cm, 1/1
- 16 Claire Letitia Reynolds, Uncle Mickey AM, Yawuru Nation | WA , 2022, Photographic print on fine art paper with handcrafted dye, Brown Bloodwood, 45 x 55 cm, 1/1
- 17 Claire Letitia Reynolds, Black Swans of Gunaduyen, Home of The First XI, Part I, Photographic print on fine art paper with handcrafted dye, Grey Ironbark, 58 x 35 cm, 1/1
- 18 Claire Letitia Reynolds, Black Swans of Gunaduyen, Home of The First XI, Part II, Photographic print on fine art paper with handcrafted dye, Grey Ironbark, 58 x 35 cm, 1/1
- 19 Claire Letitia Reynolds, Black Swans of Gunaduyen, Home of The First XI, Part III, Photographic print on fine art paper with handcrafted dye, Grey Ironbark, 58 x 35 cm, 1/1
- 20 Claire Letitia Reynolds, Uncle Adrian, Mununjalli, Goreng Goreng Nations | QLD, 2022, Photographic print on fine art paper with handcrafted dye, Brown Bloodwood bark, aluminium, 45x55cm, 1/1

- 21 Claire Letitia Reynolds, Jackson, Butchulla, Gubbi Gubbi Nations | QLD, 2022, Photographic print on fine art paper with handcrafted dye, Smooth Barked Apple Angophora leaves, 45x55cm, 1/1
- 22 Claire Letitia Reynolds, Zac, Wongi Nation | WA, 2022, Photographic print on fine art paper with handcrafted dye, Grey Gum E Major bark, aluminium , 45 x 55 cm, 1/1
- 23 Claire Letitia Reynolds, Clodagh, Waiben | Thursday Island, 2022, Photographic print on fine art paper with handcrafted dye, Narrow-leaved Red Gum bark, 45x55cm, 1/1
- 24 Claire Letitia Reynolds, Jack, Gundungara Nation | NSW, 2022, Photographic print on fine art paper with handcrafted dye, Grey Ironbark leaves, aluminium and iron, 45 x 55 cm, 1/1
- 25 Claire Letitia Reynolds, Jake, Mununjalli, Goreng Goreng Nations | QLD, 2022, Photographic print on fine art paper with handcrafted dye, Brown Bloodwood bark, aluminium, 45x55cm, 1/1
- 26 Sasha Parlett, Part 1 - WE ARE ONE –The First XI, 2022, single channel video, 10.5 mins
- 27 Sasha Parlett, Part 2- WE ARE ONE – First Nations Cricket, 2022, single channel video, 10.5 mins
- 28 Michael Connolly, The First XI Didge-Bat, with names of the First XI inscribed, kindly donated by Larry Budd for WE ARE ONE

All artworks are POA.

All quotes accompanying the artworks in the exhibition are taken from 'Cricket Walkabout The Australian Aboriginal Cricketers on Tour 1867-8' by D J Mulvaney, First Edition 1967.

Liberty has been taken replacing the word 'Aborigines' to 'Australian Indigenous', additionally, traditional names have been added.