

## Gidree Bawlee Foundation of Arts, Jamilah Haji and the Uramat Clan

For APT10 Kids, three community-based artist projects bring the voices of young people into the Gallery. These projects — led by the Gidree Bawlee Foundation of Arts in Bangladesh, Thai artist Jamilah Haji, and the Uramat Clan in Gaulim, Papua New Guinea — focus on children as creative contributors who offer imaginative perspectives on the world around them.

Gidree Bawlee Foundation of Arts have developed a puppet-making activity in collaboration with children from the village of Balia. Founder Kamruzzaman Shadhin and his colleague Salma Jamal Moushum explained that children's individual creative decisions shape the outcome of their work.<sup>1</sup> The artists used this approach to develop a video in which a young girl demonstrates how to make a puppet from natural materials to a group of her peers.<sup>2</sup> The whole process was intensely collaborative — between the children and me, the children with each other, and also between all of us and the surrounding communities', said Shadhin.<sup>3</sup> As part of their APT10 Kids project, *Where Stortles Roam 2021*, Gidree Bawlee Foundation of Arts and the children have created two new puppet-making videos that visitors can experience in the Gallery and online.

Collaboration also underpins textile artist Jamilah Haji's *Happiness and Desire 2021*. As a person with a hand difference, Haji cares deeply about providing opportunities for children with disability to be creative and use their imaginations.<sup>4</sup> In Thailand, Haji undertook a workshop with children with disability and their families, inviting them to create a drawing of something that makes them happy or that they wish for. As a gesture of support, Haji embroidered flowers onto each of their drawings. The Gallery also conducted workshops with children from Aussie Hands, an organisation that provides support, information and encouragement to people born with a hand difference and their families. A selection of the children's pictures from Thailand and Australia will be on display as part of the APT10 Kids exhibition.

A second drawing project, *Mudam.gi: Uramat Fire Drawings 2021*, explores the theme of fire as understood by children in Gaulim, Papua New Guinea; and Noosa and Stanthorpe, Queensland — each of which have been affected by fire in different ways. Through a series of workshops, the children produced drawings that explored their diverse experiences with fire. The children's depictions vary greatly, ranging from storytelling around a campfire and the use of ceremonial fire in spiritual practice to



the destructive power of a bushfire. Displayed together, the drawings provide insight into the lives and thoughts of the different groups of children.

Together these projects encourage collaboration and emphasise the value of art as a means of self-expression for young people. By providing insight into children's experiences and their communities, the projects also allow young viewers to consider how they might be alike.

## Jacqueline Tunny and Cosima Scales

### Endnotes

- 1 Gidree Bawlee Foundation of Arts, conversation with the authors, March 2020.
- 2 Gidree Bawlee Foundation of Arts, 'Art around the table', 26 June 2020, *Samdani Art Foundation*, <<https://youtu.be/8-NDXGreVw4>>, viewed July 2020.
- 3 Kamruzzaman Shadhin, email to the author, April 2020.
- 4 Jamilah Haji, email to the author, April 2021.

Gidree Bawlee Foundation of Arts puppet-making activity trial / Thakurgaon, Bangladesh 2021 / Image courtesy: Salma Jamal Moushum

A child creating artwork for Jamilah Haji's *Happiness and Desire 2021* / Photograph: Brad Wagner