

KUWENI DIAS MENDIS

contemporary landscape artist

Kuweni Dias Mendis is a contemporary landscape artist. Born and raised in Sri Lanka, she has childhood memories of the rural landscape of Bibile, walking barefoot in paddy fields, swimming in the river, and foraging for food cooked in clay pots on a wood-fired hearth. Traditional pilgrimages, rituals and participating in ceremonies for the deities of the forest were also intrinsic to her village life.

Dias Mendis came to Australia aged 19 to study and found her way to Queensland's mountainous Beechmont where she lives with her family, close to the Binna Burra rainforests. In this place she has found meaningful relationships within its community and is immersed in the natural environment.

Her artistic process is unusual, driven by her desire to mark paper and fabric using ink, watercolour, pastels, bush dyes, leaves and stitching. She makes her own brushes from sticks and feathers, fronds and other plant materials and paints from leaves and ochres sourced from the bushland environment. Her work is characterised by distinctive and raw mark-making that speaks to the power she draws from the earth. She is a finalist in the Queensland Regional Arts Awards which will tour Queensland 2020-2021.