

Jimmy Pike and the Rainbow Serpent

Artwork © Jimmy Pike Estate. Student work samples used with permission.



What is going on in this picture?



Sometimes, next to artworks in a gallery or in a book or when viewing an artwork on the internet, there is writing that provides information, such as the artist's name and the title of the artwork.

The artwork we are looking at was created by Jimmy Pike. He named the artwork *Rainbow Serpent*. Jimmy Pike passed away (died) in 2002, so we can't ask him about his artwork. But we can try and find some information about his artwork. How could we do this?

I found some information from an art exhibition featuring Jimmy's work. It described what Jimmy Pike said about the rainbow snake:

“There is a kalpurtu, a magic snake, at Japingka waterhole.”

Japingka is the main waterhole in Jimmy's country. His family stayed around there for part of the year.

I found some more information from a man called David Wroth. He was Jimmy's art teacher for a little while. Once he was talking with Jimmy's wife Pat, and they thought the artwork might have something to do with a festival in Broome.

“Pat and I think that this may well have been influenced by the Shinju Matsuri festival in Broome.”

This festival often has people performing a dance with a Chinese dragon



David also said:

“I think it actually represents Jimmy Pike’s face. You can see his beard, his mouth, large eyes. Jimmy Pike had quite a round face.”





Now, can we add to or change our ideas about this artwork?