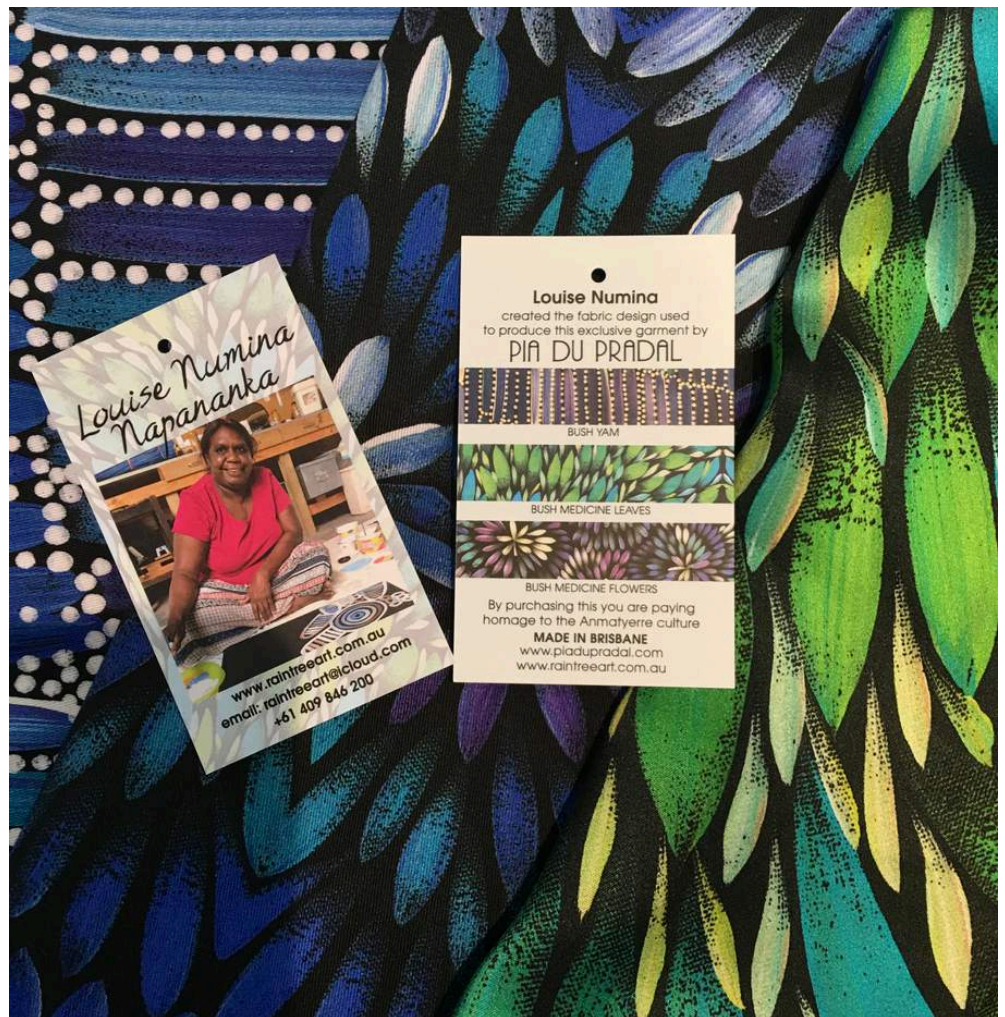


PIA DU PRADAL



The Numina Collaboration





Green Bush Medicine Leaves





Two sellout exhibitions for Louise Numina Napananka in Brisbane supported by Raintree Art and Kenmore Gallery. (2017 & 2019)



Mercedes Benz Fashion Festival 2017



Brisbane Arcade Spring Parade

Bush Yams



Blue Bush Medicine Flowers



I pledge to be a Governor for all of Queensland, and to **travel widely** throughout the State, especially to **Indigenous communities.**



www.govhouse.qld.gov.au

The Queensland Governor,
Her Excellency Jeanette Young

Pink Bush Medicine Leaves





Black & White Bush Medicine Leaves After the Rain



shannonfentimanmp

Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council - YASC



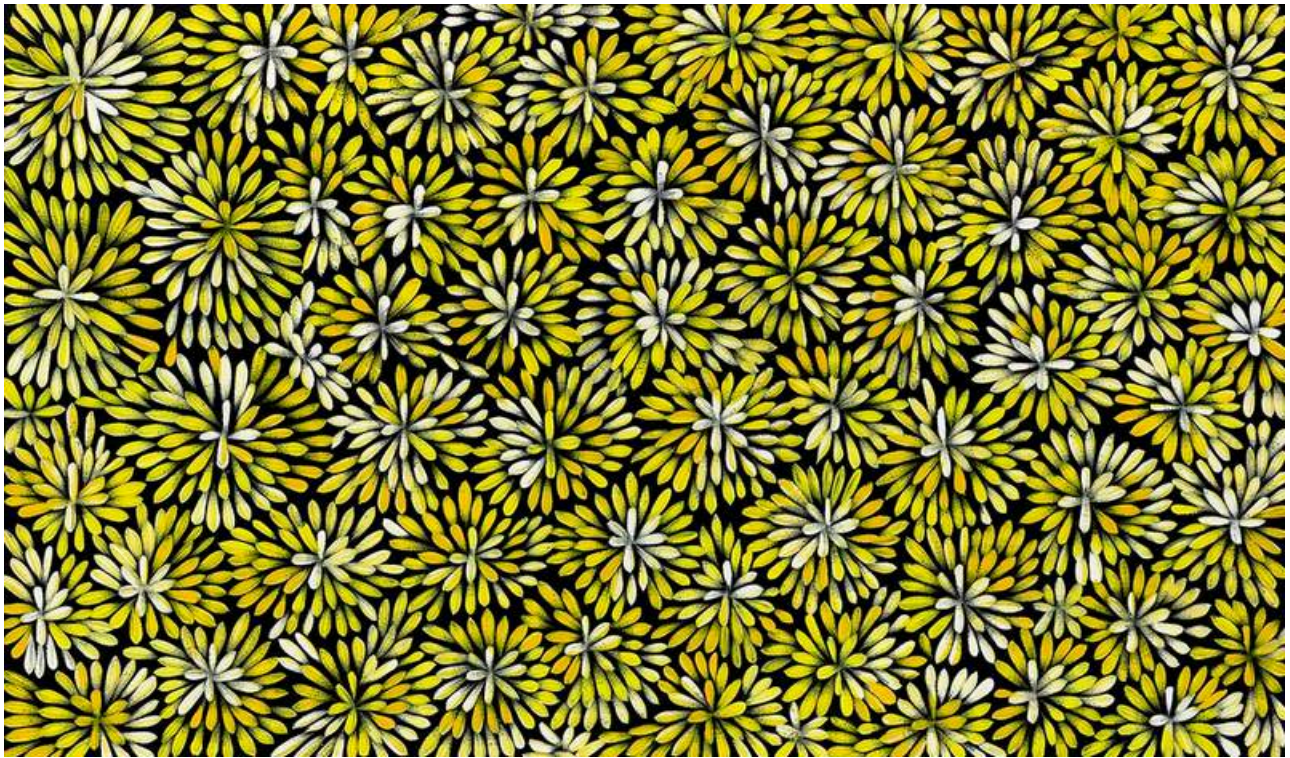


Blue Bush Melons



Aunty Delmae Barton





Yellow Bush Medicine Flowers





Amber Bush Yams



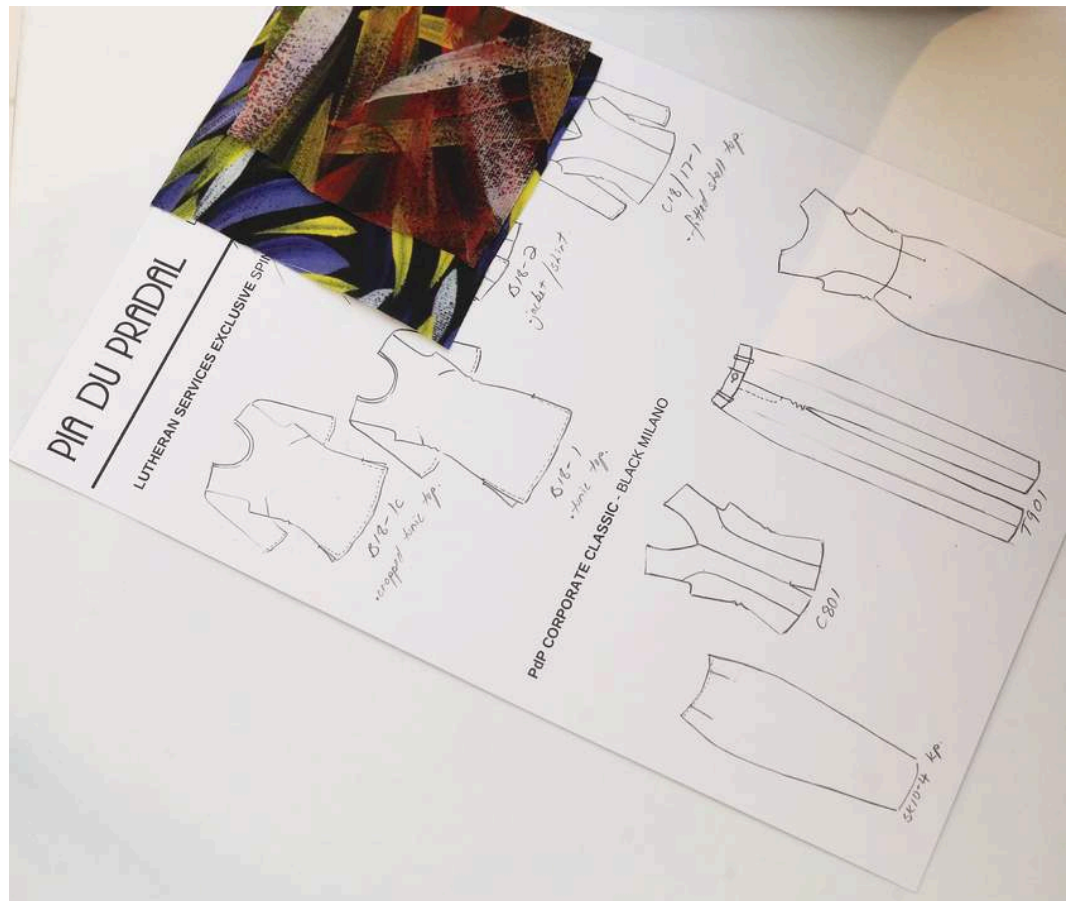


Opal Bush Medicine Leaves





Lutheran Services Corporate Project





Painting workshop in Brisbane with special guest
The Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce in February 2019



This silk scarf features a painting called "Bush Medicine Leaves " by Aboriginal artist Louise Numina Napananka, made in Brisbane, Australia.

The painting is one of a series of paintings from a studio session in collaboration with Pia du Pradal. The colours reflect those of the AFMW logo, including the purple of the suffragette movement from when the Medical Womens International Association was established. The small painting depicted held by Louise is the contribution of the Australian Federation of Medical Women (AFMW) to the International Collage created to celebrate the Centennial of the Medical Women's International Association in New York in July 2019.



Louise paints many important Central Desert Cultural stories including Bush Medicine Leaves, as taught and pioneered by her Aunty Gloria Petyarre, renowned Aboriginal artist from Utopia. Utopian Artists paint Bush Medicine Leaves to convey traditional medical practices and pass these skills on across the generations.

The bush medicine leaves are a traditional medicine, collected from a desert shrub and highly prized for their restorative powers. The leaves can be ground into a milky substance, or boiled to obtain a resin that is combined with kangaroo fat to create a long lasting balm. The Dreaming Story pays homage to the plant, encouraging it to grow and replenish the leaves for further use.

Further information regarding the collaboration and AFMW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women and Medicine Project can be found at www.afmw.org.au



Purple Bush Medicine Leaves Project with
the Australian Federation of Medical Women





Australian
Whispers

Water Soakage - Kwatye Project

lead by Avelina Tarrago

Avelina Tarrago is a proud Wangkamahdla woman from central-west Queensland who grew up in Meeanjin (Brisbane). She is now one of 6 Indigenous Woman barristers in Australia. This year Avelina championed a ground breaking initiative to have First Nations culture featured as a lining option for formal court regalia. She wanted “to be shrouded in culture during formal legal ceremony and to include Culture and Cultural acknowledgement in formal legal settings”.

The “Water Soakage” motif was selected for its inherent significance in Aboriginal and First Nations Culture, as well as the personal significance to Avelina. Water being a necessary condition for all forms of life and a universal necessity for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. In terms of Aboriginal culture, Avelina says that **“Water is essential to Aboriginal Culture and lore both in life and spiritual practice, it cannot be separated from other elements and exists in all parts of life and culture . Water is a shared essential resource for life , there is a shared essential need for access. Water is a community resource and cannot be just for one person or individual”**.

Avelina’s middle name, Yuwea, means “first rain of the season”, a name given by her maternal grandmother, a Wangkamahdla Elder. Her dreaming story is a water dreaming story and so the meaning of “Water Soakage” has a deep personal as well as a greater cultural significance for her. Through her skin (or moiety) connection via her mother, Avelina selected Louise Numina’s art for her chambers, home and this project.

Louise Numina is a proud Anmatyerre woman and renowned artist who has collaborated with Pia since 2017. She says that her “Water Soakage” painting is **“...about survival – finding water in the desert. You look for the patterns in the creek beds and the rock crevices and especially if there are birds flying around, if you dig there the water will be there , pure and ready to drink.”**

Inspired by this, Pia created a new collection for professional women in collaboration with Avelina, featuring Louise Numina’s “Water Soakage” in vibrant desert colours. Part of the sales from this collection will be donated to the Mullenjaiwakka Trust to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lawyers pursuing a career at the Bar.







The Queensland Governor,
Her Excellency Jeanette Young gave
an address to open the final collection
launch at the Milton Studio on
27 March 2024.

“ Pia’s collaboration with artist
Louise Numina Napananka has produced
corporate and formal wear that reflects the
vivid Australian landscapes and rich
heritage of our regional and remote
areas.”

Her Excellency told those who gathered
that Pia’s work had resonated deeply
and far beyond the boundaries of the
fashion world.

“ This evening , we are celebrating a body
of work that illustrates her
long-held commitment to promoting
fashion and culture.”

Addressing Pia directly she said,

“I’d like to extend my heartfelt appreciation
that you offered your passion, innovation
and belief in cultural expression and
inclusivity to Queensland over such a long
period.”





Pia, Louise & Aunty Shirley Collins



For Dame Quentin Bryce, Pia created elegant, bright outfits that stood out against a sea of conservative suits.



Pia du Pradal

POWER



Her smart, striking suits have been present at some of the most significant events in Australia's recent history. **Susan Chenery** meets Pia du Pradal who, with collaborator, traditional artist Louise Numina Napanangka, is taking Australian design to the world.

DRESSING

When Dame Quentin Bryce attended the wedding of Prince William and Catherine

Middleton in 2011, she was resplendent in a hot pink, coral and orange silk brocade suit with matching pink patent stilettos. The Governor-General of Australia was seated close to the action in Westminster Abbey. "There's the royals," she recalls, "then the foreign royals and then the governors-general. We were right up front in the abbey, looking across where they face each other. So we could see everybody coming in – the Middletons, all the royal family. It was a lot of fun."

While 36 million people watched the wedding on television, in a small studio in Brisbane, several

seamstresses watched even more intently. They had made the Governor-General's outfit and now it was being beamed around the world.

The next day, designer Pia du Pradal's phone started ringing with media asking for details about Dame Quentin's suit. "I was mortified," says Pia. "We are very discreet about who we dress. This was all hush-hush. There is no way that any of us would have spoken about it." Then the phone rang again. It was Dame Quentin. "I told them," she admitted.

This was the first time, says Pia, "that the public actually learned we were dressing Quentin to a large degree."

As Governor-General, Quentin Bryce was famous for always looking fabulous. Immaculately coiffed, she made headlines in her custom-made

clothes. It was high fashion in high office. The tailored silk suits were elegant, sharp and classic, but it was the colour that stood out in seas of suits. Under intense scrutiny, constantly photographed, she did not shy away from forthright choices. It was power dressing but with the disarmingly sunny optimism of lucent, unapologetic yellows, greens, blues. A dazzling academic, lawyer and human rights advocate, there was still plenty of pink.

Dressing a Dame

In the Brisbane studio of Pia du Pradal there are the classic box jackets and architectural skirts that are her signature pieces hanging on racks, patterns on cutting tables, rolls of fabric from Italy and the calico that is used for fittings. Dame Quentin is →

PHOTOGRAPHY by WILL HORNER

Collaboration

sitting at a table eating sandwiches and recalling the days when she was meeting world leaders and doing up to four public engagements a day. When she was travelling, she could change outfits three times in one of those hectic days. "There would be a meeting at breakfast, then official things, then afternoon tea, and there would be formal dinners at night that were black tie or military dress, when everybody was dressed to the nines."

Pia and Quentin exchange memories and anecdotes. They plainly have an easy friendship and immense mutual respect. Tall, willowy and blonde, Pia's relationships with all her women – her clients and staff – are clearly grounded in great warmth.

Pia met Quentin through a mutual friend at a hotel where she was showing her clothes.

"This very, very chic woman walked in," recalls Pia. "I think she was wearing Louis Feraud and she was going to be the future Governor of Queensland. And she said, 'When I'm Governor of Queensland I'd like to support local industry'. I thought, that's very nice of her, she'll probably buy a shirt. And then she invited us to do the outfit for her investiture." (That suit was made from a purple Versace fabric "where her medals would stand out" and teamed with lime green shoes.)

Later, says Pia, "we had rented a [workshop] space from Apex Smash Repairs, and Quentin would arrive with the guards and the flag, and they would move all the smashed cars to give her somewhere to park."

"A friendship developed," says Pia, "and we ended up having all her patterns. It would be fair to say that almost everything she wore as governor was made by us."

To avoid the awkwardness of wearing the same thing as someone else, it was decided her outfits would be made individually. Though on that, Quentin says now, "what does it matter?"

There were so many things to take into consideration. The clothes had to work hard. "She had to be able to sit down on a stage," says Pia, "so the skirt couldn't be too revealing. She had to be able to get out of planes and walk on mud. Quentin would order dresses that were wider when she went to a children's hospital so she was able to squat down with the children. We had little weights put into the hems."

They quickly learned that you cannot pin a medal on a light chiffon. "Every garment was designed to be able to wear medals," says Pia.

"You need so many clothes in that role," says Quentin. "You need a lot of wardrobe. There was a lot of standing up for ceremonial functions so it had to look good from the back."

Pia would send sketches and fly to Canberra for fittings. There was the challenge of visiting the Crown Prince in Spain with his beautiful wife, Letizia. "Quentin said everyone would be wearing French and Italian couture, so we had to match that. My staff don't often get the opportunity to produce real couturier work – they loved it." They created a pink suit for Dame Quentin to wear for a luncheon.

"When I needed something fresh," says Dame Quentin, "I would ring and say, 'Can I have the yellow suit in a hot pink?'"

There was the famous yellow coach dress that she wore to swear in Julia Gillard as Prime Minister, splashed on front pages across the country, now in the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House. And there was a woollen crepe in soft apricot pink for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, freezing on a boat on the Thames. "I was on boat number three,"

remembers Quentin, "and you could see the water dripping down from the canvas awning." There was a mauve suit to meet Nelson Mandela.

"People think fashion is frivolous," says Pia, "but they don't give enough attention to the fact that, if you are well dressed, you don't have to worry about how you are dressed. You can focus on what you are doing."

Then there was the time Dame Quentin brought in her female personal protection officer to be fitted for a jacket with room for a gun on her hip.

When her time as Governor-General came to an end, Quentin said, "bring a truck" and donated many of the clothes to women's charities.

Out of Africa

Pia did not set out to be a fashion designer. Growing up in Cape Town, South Africa, she studied social anthropology, African studies, and psychology, then did postgraduate studies in Denmark. Her parents had migrated from Denmark when she was very young, eventually starting a factory making lampshades. "My mother was brilliant with fashion," she says. "Today you would call her a couturier but she →

NEW JOB

Dame Quentin wore a suit made from Versace fabric for her investiture as Queensland Governor in 2003.



SWEARING IN A NEW PM

The yellow coach dress created for Dame Quentin to wear for Julia Gillard's swearing in is now in a museum.



MEETING A PRINCE

Pia created a pink suit for Dame Quentin when she met the Spanish royal couple.





Pia and Dame Quentin with production manager Tony Alder and designer Debbie Fenwick in Pia's Brisbane studio.





Pia has scanned and printed Louise's bush medicine leaves motif on fabric, creating garments which tell ancient, traditional stories.

was making ball gowns and clothes for the social elite and all the ambassadors' wives. I was a little girl watching. She taught me to sew and pin and I saw her draping these women. She is still very stylish. She is 91, wears hot pink jeans and has flaming red hair. She made all my clothes and people would stop us in the street."

But as a young woman in the '70s, "there was no way I was interested in clothes".

She went to do research in Botswana and stayed for 10 years.

"I met my husband [Jacques, an architect] and it was a really wonderful life. I lived in some very isolated villages without water, without electricity. It was probably the most beautiful time of my life. I was doing research and consultancy work, socio-economic impact analysis, that sort of thing."

When she migrated to Australia, she wasn't able to work in her field. "I had specialised in African Studies and I knew nothing about this region. You just do what you can do."

One day at lunch, someone commented on her outfit, which she had made herself. "They said, 'You should have a label.'"

Soon Pia too was dressing the social elite – people such as Anna Bligh and others she is far too discreet to name. Hillary Clinton once remarked that the lime green denim jacket ABC TV's 7.30 presenter Leigh Sales (at that time a regular client) wore to interview her was "fabulous".

In the early days, Pia worked out of a garage, using outworkers. She put an ad in *The Courier Mail* and had hundreds of Vietnamese refugees apply.

"Instead of them coming to my home and bringing a sample of their sewing I decided I would see them in their homes. There was a practice where a person who spoke good English would act as a middle man, use people who couldn't speak English and then take a cut," she explains. "It was unbelievably exploitative."

So instead, she developed a close working relationship with three very

"The significance of Louise's art for our label is unimaginable."

special seamstresses who are still with her today. First she met Hong Nguyen, "who had been through dreadful times", and started working for her in the late 1980s. She was joined by her sister-in-law, Loan Tren, who had been working in an abattoir "and was very unhappy there". Then Quy Du joined the team, the three of them skilfully and dexterously making the clothes that make the headlines.

Pia's high-end clothes are structural and highly tailored. She goes to Lake Como at least once a year to buy fabrics. "That is my passion. If you have fabulous fabric, you don't have to over-design or over-embellish. I want the client to be wearing the garment, not the garment wearing the client. I want the personality to shine."

Partners in design

In 2016, when Pia went to Italy, she found all the fabrics very subdued and conservative that year. So she began to look elsewhere. Fortunately, she was introduced to Louise Numina Napanangka, one of six sisters from Stirling Station, north of Utopia in the Northern Territory. Louise came from a family of celebrated artists and had been taught from the age of five by her aunt, Gloria Pitjara, who won the Wynne Prize for landscape painting in 1999. Gloria had been the first person to put the bush medicine leaf story on canvas and bring it into the public domain. Now known for her own medicine leaves motif, says Pia, "there is just something magic about Louise – her work is mesmerising".

The bush medicine leaf story is an illustration of cultural heritage, a story allocated through the family and community of that region. Louise's work comes from absorbing the stories from an early age – hearing,

understanding, embodying and then expressing them.

"It's the Aboriginal way," says Louise. "We sit down together and paint. That is how we keep our culture strong. We sit with our aunts and we learn our storylines."

We learn about bush medicine, the plants, how to make it and how to use it. It keeps our family strong; it keeps us strong and our culture strong."

Mindful of cultural appropriation, Pia commissioned three paintings from Louise and had them digitally scanned and printed on silk and cotton. Part of the deal was that her work would be promoted on the garments. Louise has come from Darwin to Brisbane three times to paint in Pia's studio. These soulful, vibrant paintings of bush medicine flowers and leaves, bush melon and bush yams are now stitched into garments and carry with them a traditional story about food, medicine and culture. "A healing story," says Louise.

In 2018 Louise was painting in Darwin when the NSW Greens politician David Shoebridge took a video of her. It attracted 10 million views on Facebook. "It was absolutely mind-boggling," says Jane Lewis of Raintree Art, a friend whose gallery sells her work. Another 30-second video taken by Jane received seven million views. Louise once wanted to be famous like her aunt, Gloria. Now she is. And the collaboration has been life-changing for both Louise and Pia.

"The significance of Louise's art for our label was unimaginable," says Pia, "Having clients ask questions about her and her culture is thrilling for me. And to see her designs on our garments at so many significant events in people's lives is wonderful. We had a client wear pink bush medicine leaves to a wedding in Lake Como; green bush medicine leaves have been made into a gala gown to be worn in Venice; Louise's work has been made into suits and worn to international conferences. When clients send me photos I feel as if we've been there with them. I love knowing these clothes travel the world telling such an ancient story." **AWW**



PIA DU PE











The Pia du Pradal Dream Team





Pia Du Pradal

Director of Pia du Pradal - Fashion Design and Manufacture
2mo · Edited

It is all most a year since Pia du Pradal as a fashion label took a new direction. We introduced Aboriginal art onto fabric for exclusive use in our range. This has led to a stimulating, on-going collaboration with Louise Numina Napananka which has evoked great interest from the general public and the media. When this article by Jane Armistead appeared in U on Sunday, Sunday Mail April 8, 2018 I was delighted in the interest shown in what we are doing. As a small Brisbane business we certainly appreciate the support of local media. What has surprised me is that many people do not realise that our label is produced entirely in our Milton studio. Being so 'hands on' allows us adjust our garments to achieve the perfect fit to the quality that has become associated with our label.

View the Winter 2018 collection at www.piadupradal.com

Pia du Pradal

INTERVIEW JANE ARMITSTEAD

64. FASHION DESIGNER

Cape Town-born but Brisbane-based fashionista Pia du Pradal is best known for designing former governor-general Dame Quentin Bryce's faultlessly elegant garments. The Kenmore Hills local spoke about what it takes to create an outfit for a royal wedding, and her new collaboration.

You recently created a range featuring the art of indigenous painter Louise Numina. What inspired this collaboration?

A while back, Quentin Bryce was given a beautiful fabric as a gift from the people of the Tiwi Islands, in the Northern Territory. I've long loved Aboriginal painting and often thought, "Wouldn't that painting be a gorgeous print?" I was introduced to the Numina sisters – six sisters who were taught to paint by their aunts. I absolutely love their work. Louise, one of the sisters, produced three beautiful paintings for us. One is of swirly green leaves that we put on silk, and it's made stunning gala gowns and high-end fashion.

Who initially inspired you to follow a career in fashion?

My background is in social anthropology. I did post-graduate study in Denmark and then research in Botswana. I stayed there for almost 10 years and that's where I met my husband. We migrated to Australia in 1986. My mother was involved in fashion and produced a lot of garments for the social elite, so it was in my blood and I loved it. When I moved to Australia my education in African studies didn't quite translate here so I moved into fashion.

You were the key designer for Quentin Bryce during her time as governor-general. How did that collaboration first come about?



I have a strong philosophy that style doesn't come in one size

”

What was the process behind designing one of her outfits?

While Quentin was in an official position she couldn't wear stock items from our range. She didn't want to be running into people who were wearing the same clothes so we would design especially for her. What I admired the most about her is how down to earth she was – she was so loved by all my staff.

What is one of the more memorable outfits you created for Quentin?

It would be the outfit she wore to the royal wedding for Kate Middleton and Prince William – that was really very special. We had to make a woolen and a silk option for her because she didn't know if it was going to be hot or cold in April. We had about two weeks to make it – it was quite a challenge but it was amazing. We've always protected our clients and it's up to them if they want to tell people who they are dressed by, but Quentin told people after this event, which was really lovely.

Who are the type of women you normally dress?

We dressed Anna Bligh when she was premier. We made a few outfits especially for her, but normally she would just wear stock items that she'd come in and purchase. We also make a lot of clothing for professional women, like judges, barristers and women on boards.

What have been the biggest changes in fashion in the past 30 years?

There have been many changes in direction in shoulder lines, trouser lines and skirt lengths, but the biggest, I think, is the introduction of stretch. We do a bit of stretch but it isn't my favourite. I

Pia Du Pradal



INDULGE MAGAZINE

Published August 3, 2018

If it had not been for one decision to migrate to the unknown, a Brisbane fashion brand worn by leading Australian women including former Governor General Dame Quentin Bryce and Queensland Premier Anna Bligh would have never existed.

Sewing machines hum and scissors snip as calico maps the direction of Brisbane fashion designer Pia du Pradal's summer collection. Bright, bold and brimming with culture, a mix of Italian florals counter contemporary Indigenous prints in the range to be released once the mercury begins to rise.

Pia is no stranger to warmer climates, having migrated to Brisbane from Cape Town in the mid-80s. As an anthropologist specialising in African studies, Pia knew a drastic career change was on her horizon the minute she stepped onto Australian soil. "I thought, what can I do? My mother had made clothing, and she was very clever at it. So I thought, 'why don't you just try your own label?'"

Thirty years has passed since Pia first began creating bespoke daywear and elegant racewear. Known for her sharp tailoring and European style, it was a foreign step into the unfamiliar when Pia first incorporated Aboriginal artwork into her summer collection last year. "A couple of years ago, Quentin Bryce came to us with a beautiful piece of cotton screenprinted by Tiwi Island women and we made her a skirt. I remember saying to Quentin at the time, 'if I could buy this fabric I would use it in the range' but it wasn't available. That was the start of this idea."

Then began the quest to find fabric up of the right standard, and being stubborn about quality, Pia's search came up empty, leaving only one option – she had to make it herself. Meeting Aboriginal artist Louise Numina by chance, Pia commissioned three of her paintings to be produced on silk and on cotton, paintings that now hang in Pia's Brisbane Arcade store in celebration of



the artist. "I've had huge endorsements from indigenous women. I've had emails where women have said to me, 'To wear a scarf in a print that represents my heritage and culture makes me so proud'. That's pretty extraordinary. I've never heard of that response from somebody wearing a Dolce & Gabbana print."

And that's what Pia is all about – the emotional connections. One particular memory brings tears to her eyes as she relives the moment a Stanthorpe farmer stepped into her store. "She said 'my daughter's getting married and I want her to feel proud of me. This isn't how I normally dress. I'm an apple farmer, I wear jeans all the time.' We made her an outfit she felt wonderful in, and her daughter thought she looked beautiful. She sent us the most touching letter thanking us. That's a standout moment."

Over the years, Pia has created a second

1. Pia Du Pradal Image by Vanessa Lefebure. 2. Model Alex Moore wearing one of the new Louise Numina prints. Image by Sonia Bettinelli. More images can be viewed at our online magazine – www.indulgemagazine.net

family in her Milton studio, where hours of edging, cutting and sewing are poured into each piece of fabric embellished with the Pia du Pradal name. In many respects, it feels like an old fashioned family business, where all members are invested in each stitch. But this family, having grown together for decades, continues to evolve, tacking together a legacy stronger than a backstitch.

BY ASHLEY HANGER

Pia du Pradal, Louise Numina Napananka team up to create fashion with a story

Learn the secret to the success of the creative collaboration between Brisbane fashion designer Pia du Padal and Darwin-based artist Louise Numina Napananka.

Fiona Purdon

🕒 2 min read June 4, 2019 - 11:41AM

Brisbane News



Pia du Pradal with designs featuring Louise Numina's art work.
Picture: Russell Shakespeare

Drawing on the vivid colours of a desert sunrise, the art work of indigenous artist Louise Numina Napananka has provided the ideal inspiration for Pia du Padal's new fashion collection.

Louise's stunning *Amber Bush Yams* painting was commissioned by Pia and has influenced the designer's latest cotton and silk collection.

"The Amber Yams are painted in the striking colours of the desert sunrise, shades of coral, yellow and magenta on a black background. The border of white seeds creates an interesting contrast which when translated onto fabric allows for very creative fashion detailing," Pia says. "I wanted to create a versatile collection with trans-seasonal day wear, formal wear and evening options."

Amber Yams marks the third successive year of collaboration between Pia and Louise, a Darwin-based artist whose designs are based on Bush Medicine and Thorny Devil totems.



Darwin indigenous artist Louise Numina Napananka whose painting has inspired Brisbane designer Pia du Padal's collection.

Their collaboration has attracted a huge social media following. Last year in June a video on Facebook went viral, attracting 9.9 million views and over 140,000 shares. Since March a video on Louise's Raintree Art Facebook page has already attracted 6.5 million views and 90,000 shares.

Pia, a favourite designer of former Governor-general Dame Quentin Bryce AM, hopes the collection will spark a curiosity in clients about the artist and what the designs and patterns symbolise.

The Milton-based designer loves the Australian bush and says she was keen to diversify her collection in a new direction when she first collaborated with Louise in 2017.

"Louise has a natural eye for colour and her art work is different to other indigenous art I have seen before," she says. "Her brushwork creates a mesmerising effect."

Pia's communication co-ordinator Jodi Curnow-Baker says the designer, who has been based in Brisbane for 30 years, has a degree in social anthropology from southern Africa and is interested in indigenous culture.



STUNNING SILK: Pia du Pradal and Jodi Curnow-Baker with prints. Picture: Tara Croser

BUSH TUCKER GOES HIGH FASHION

ASTRID TAEMETS

BRISBANE fashion designer Pia du Pradal has collaborated with indigenous artist Louise Numina for another stunning collection, which will be exhibited today.

Bush Yams and Seeds is the sixth series they have worked on together since launching their first collaborative collection in 2017 at Mercedes Benz Fashion Week.

"I fell in love with Louise's brushwork, and

fantasised about ball gowns in silk in the print," said du Pradal.

"The stories behind her paintings are of bush medicine leaves, bush tucker and women's ceremonial body paint.

"Each garment that is sold goes out with a swing tag that includes Numina's contact details as an artist, and that has helped her achieve a lot of acclaim for her work."

The exhibition is open until April 30 at the Kenmore Gallery.

Fashion and art come together

BRISBANE fashion designer **Pia du Pradal** has combined her love of fashion and art in a new gallery.

The designer, who has had a boutique on Park Rd, Milton, for 30 years, has transformed the space into a contemporary gallery showcasing all forms of art and supporting local practitioners.

"I'm tremendously excited; it's very different," said du Pradal, who has moved her boutique to her Milton studio.

"For a long time I've been commissioning artwork to produce fabric for clothing.

"That led to a desire to mix fashion and art. I really wanted to show art and fashion together. The space is small but it's come together in a really beautiful way."

The gallery opened with a launch event on Friday night with an exhibition featuring three artists – jewellery by **Bruce Tully**, paintings by indigenous artist **Louise Numina Napananka**, and sculptures by Brisbane's **Graham Radcliffe**.

All three attended the opening night event, as did the University of Queensland's Pro Vice-Chancellor (indigenous engagement) Professor **Bronwyn Fredericks** and **Dame Quentin Bryce**.

Dame Quentin wore a dress made by du Pradal's designers from the bold fabrics she bought in an Aboriginal



PIA DU PRADAL AND DAME QUENTIN BRYCE

community in the Northern Territory.

Tully is a fourth-generation grazier from Boonah who won a Churchill Fellowship to study jewellery design with skilled artists in Florence. He mined opals himself from his family's Depazzi opal mines in Quilpie.

"His work is contemporary and brings opals into high-end jewellery, as opposed to the tourist bits and pieces," du Pradal said, adding all works were available for purchase with commissions accepted.

"My intention going forward is to change the exhibitions and showcase other artists. I've been in fashion in Park Road for over 30 years. I thought this could be a different way of utilising the space."



BRUCE AND MICHELLE TULLY



LOUISE NUMINA NAPANANKA, SHIRLEY COLLINS AND BRONWYN FREDERICKS

Threads of **life**

A Darwin artist and a Brisbane design icon team up to create fashion with a story all its own

Fiona Purdon

Drawing on the vivid colours of a desert sunrise, the work of indigenous artist Louise Numina Napananka has provided the ideal inspiration for Pia du Pradal's latest collection.

Louise's *Amber Bush Yams* painting was commissioned by Pia, an icon of Brisbane fashion, and influenced the designer's new cotton and silk Numina collection of trans-seasonal day wear, formal wear and evening options.

"The amber yams are painted in the striking colours of the desert sunrise, shades of coral, yellow and magenta on a black background. The border of white seeds creates an interesting contrast which, when translated onto fabric, allows for very creative fashion detailing," Pia says.

Amber Bush Yams marks the third successive annual collaboration between Pia and Louise, a Darwin-based artist whose paintings feature bush medicine leaves and flowers inspired by Dreamtime stories from her Anmatyerre heritage.

An emerging artist based in Darwin, Louise was born in 1976 at Stirling Station, a cattle station near Tennant Creek on the edge of the Utopia homelands, and speaks four languages – Anmatyerre, Kaytetye, Alywarre and English.

The mother-of-three has strong family ties. She has five sisters, all of whom paint, and she also has two brothers. At age five, Louise would sit with her aunts, renowned artists Gloria and Kathleen Petyarre, and would copy them as they painted.

Louise's paintings predominantly depict Kurrajong bush medicine leaves. The women collect the leaves from around the central desert area, and boil them for resin.



The leaves are also used to treat flu, headache, backache, an upset stomach and chest pains. For cuts and bruises, the oils from the boiled leaves are mixed with kangaroo fat and applied to wounds. This medicine is used to heal cuts, wounds, bites, rashes, and as an insect repellent.

Pia, a favourite designer of former governor-general Quentin Bryce, has a degree in social anthropology and is a proud supporter of indigenous women and empowering communities through art and design.

She was looking for a new direction with her fashion when she first collaborated with Louise in 2017 and hopes this new collection will spark a curiosity in clients about the artist and her designs.

"Louise has a natural eye for colour and her art work is different to other indigenous art I have seen before," Pia says. "Her brushwork creates a mesmerising effect."

Pia du Pradal, Brisbane Arcade, Queen Street Mall, city; 20 Park Rd, Milton.
piadupradalonline.myshopify.com



GLORIOUS COLOUR
Louise Numina Napananka (above, left), Pia du Pradal in a design featuring Louise's art. Picture: Russell Shakespeare



Fashion designer Pia du Pradal (left); with husband Jacques (inset left); and with Dr Jeanette Young. Main picture: Liam Kidston

Designer's shock move



Kylie Lang

Queensland fashion designer Pia du Pradal – who has outfitted current and former governors-general Jeannette Young and Quentin Bryce and former premier Anna Bligh – will quit the job and leave Brisbane after putting out her final winter collection.

Ms du Pradal said it was “with some sadness and great excitement that I have made the difficult decision to retire at the end of this financial year”.

The designer, known for elegant racewear and feminine suiting, will move

to Alice Springs in August to reignite her passion for anthropology.

Ms du Pradal was a social anthropologist previously in Botswana, where in 1974 she met her husband Jacques before moving to Queensland and establishing her eponymous label in 1988.

Reflecting on why she started her label 36 years ago, Ms du Pradal said she wanted to “satisfy a niche market that valued impeccably tailored garments with that European continental look”.

“When I think of the places that our clothes have

been – like Buckingham Palace, royal weddings, journalists interviewing powerful politicians on the world stage, I feel honoured,” she said.

Governor-General Jeannette Young will on Tuesday night welcome invited guests to Ms du Pradal’s Milton boutique to view the designer’s Kwatye Collection and winter 2024 range, featuring art by Louise Numina. Proceeds from each Kwatye garment sold will go to the Mullenjaiwakka Trust to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lawyers to pursue a career at the Bar.

PIA REFLECTS

Prominent Queensland fashion designer **Pia du Pradal** bid an emotional farewell to the fashion world on Tuesday night.

The grand farewell was attended by 80 guests including former state governor **Quentin Bryce**, current Governor **Jeanette Young**, **Mary Dickinson**,



Dame Quentin Bryce with Pia du Pradal and Jeanette Young. Picture: Jodi Curnow-Baker

Catherine Baudet, **Amanda Reboul**, **Anna Bligh** and actor **Greta Scacchi**. It marked the end of du Pradal's illustrious 36-year career and her upcoming move to Alice Springs.

Du Pradal, known for dressing high-profile women, opened up about the eccentric and sometimes

humorous requests she received.

"We did a lot of exclusive things for Quentin," she said. "Things would come up last minute, and we'd scurry around to find fabric and make it up."

One memorable request involved fitting Bryce's female personal protection officer with a jacket that had room for a gun.

The time has come to say farewell.

It's been 34 years since the Pia du Pradal brand first started during which time we have produced many beautiful garments that I hope will become heirloom pieces.

I want to thank my Dream Team – Tony Alder, Debby Fenwick, Hong Nguyen, Quy Du, Loan Tran and Lynda Swan for all that they have done for me personally and our clients. And of course without our clients we would not be here.

Thank you for your loyalty, support and friendship over the years.

*“The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.”*

Robert Frost.

