

Artist Statement

During the initial uncertain times of the March – May 2020 lockdown I felt compelled to make work that was more immediately relevant - about connection, consolation and community.

Inspiration came on my daily walks of my dog, Pluto, through my local Seville Park. I noticed a growing number of people engaging with the park in the guise of 'exercise'. Like me, I feel they were finding solace in our small snippet of nature. In Brisbane we were restricted to only one person joining your family group, yet we were fortunate to be not prosecuted for sitting in our parks for up to one hour a day.

Bikes, scooters, balls, frisbees and tree climbing became substitutes for the now banned park play equipment and the European style of an evening stroll through the park seemed to be adopted by many Australian families.

In late March I noticed a young Moslem woman seated cross legged facing a small tree, a takeaway coffee by her side and a mobile phone up to her ear. The two, girl and tree, made a beautiful composition. I went up to her and explained how she made a beautiful picture and that she inspired me to artistically document people enjoying this park during this difficult time. Though surprised she was happy to oblige and introduced herself as Yashmin as she adjusted her hijab ready for the photo.

Most people were happy to be photographed, share their names and we all seemed to enjoy a quick chat. I was not alone in trying to reach out to my local community and turn to nature for solace while living a smaller, more solitary life, one day at a time.

Glenda Orr, 2020