

# GET YOUR ARTS INTO GEAR: CULTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

05 Mar, 15 by Fiona Harper

It's true that Tropical North Queensland is well known for stunning islands, glorious beaches and pristine rainforest. But did you know that the region is also home to some fine cultural offerings? Whether indigenous performance, culture and arts or theatres, galleries, comedies, dance or music, we've got The Arts covered.

Thanks to creative talented locals as well as some big name stars who don't mind putting the tropics on their touring schedule (and why wouldn't they!?), North Queensland's arts scene is thriving.

Here's a few tantalising tasters for satisfying your cultural fix.

## TANKS ART CENTRE

Housed in three concrete former WWII fuel tanks in the leafy suburb of Edge Hill, Tanks Arts Centre forms an intimate cultural precinct adjacent to the Cairns Botanic Gardens. The centre is an important community arts space, holding exhibitions, concerts, workshops and film premieres.

### 2015 Highlights

- Jimmy Cliff – Jamaican reggae legend (1 Apr)
- Michael Franti & Spearhead – singer, songwriter, guitarist & philanthropist, this promises to be special (11 & 12 Apr)
- Donovan Frankenreiter – infectious acoustic bliss from Hawaiian singer/songwriter (17 Apr)
- Augie March – one of Australia's most respected indie-rock acts (1 May)
- Cairns Children's Festival – fun, laughter and all round silliness is promised with headline act The Listies performing their unique style of kids comedy (10 May – Mothers Day)
- Carnival on Collins – one of Cairns prettiest streets is transformed into a vibrant melting pot of market stalls, music & entertainment (6 Sep – Fathers Day)
- Jazz up North – 7 shows featuring giants of the jazz scene (various dates Mar to Nov)
- World Music Series – 4 shows featuring musical stars from across the globe (various dates Feb to Oct)



## CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

A member of Arts Queensland, CCA is home to JUTE Theatre Company (which stands for Just Us Theatre Ensemble) who say they won't be satisfied until all new Australian stories have been told. CCA is also home to Kick Arts Contemporary Arts as well as End Credits Film Club. Pull up a chair and enjoy performances and shows from passionate, savvy and dynamic artists who have much to share.

### 2015 Highlights

- Is my lipstick on straight? – a heartbreakingly funny show depicting one woman's journey with epilepsy



## TJAPUKAI ABORIGINAL CULTURAL PARK

Celebrating 25 years of stories and culture from Indigenous Australia, the centre has been quietly undergoing a massive transformation. Evolving from a dream to combine theatre and a 40,000 year old culture, Tjapukai is a melting pot of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander immersion.

Visitors learn traditional basket weaving, jewellery making and boomerang painting, creating their own souvenirs to take home.

### 2015 Highlights

- All new interactive experiences after \$12m redevelopment including Torres Strait Islander dance troupe



## CAIRNS REGIONAL GALLERY

Located in one of the finest heritage buildings in Tropical North Queensland, Cairns Regional Gallery celebrates its 20th birthday in 2015 (though the building dates back to the 1930's) It's a magnificent building that almost overshadows the artworks themselves. Lovers of pre-WWII architecture will adore the wide verandas with recessed colonnades, while indoors maple and oak lined walls compliment spotted gum hardwood floors.

If you've got time, pop into Perottas for coffee, cake or lunch. Perottas is one of Cairns best cafes, with a lovely outdoor ambience and exquisite food.

### 2015 Highlights

- Shannon Brett: I love a son burnt country

An Aboriginal woman living in an urbane society rejects the historical notion of submissive native women

- Resolved: Journeys in Australian Design

An exhibition featuring 12 of Australia's most inventive contemporary designers



## CAIRNS CIVIC THEATRE

If there's a big name in song, dance, theatre or comedy heading to Tropical North Queensland, it's likely they'll be playing at the Cairns Civic Theatre. With big shoes to fill after a glitzy red carpet opening by then Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, the stage was set for international and local stars!

Fiona Harper is Cairns based travel writer. Widely travelled, highly acclaimed and much published, Fiona's articles & images are published across the globe. When she's not writing about TNQ she's probably running a marathon or exploring the world by foot, bike, kayak, camel or boat: whatever mode of transport she can get her hands on!