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Art should link cultures

Per from N. Jackson

It is disturbing to read both of the appointment of Mr Gary Foley as director of the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council and of his predictably intemperate and divisive remarks about his intentions ('The Age', 5/11).

It is a great mistake to imagine that Aboriginal culture is now solely the property of the Aboriginal people. Those of us who have European parentage but who have grown up in Australia, have inherited something of the Dreamtime and associated myths. This heritage is a part of our Australian civilisation. (It equally follows that European culture is partly the property of our Aboriginal fellow-Australians — but nobody contests this.)

A decision to "completely Aboriginalise" the Aboriginal Arts Board is not so logically well founded as might at first appear. Rather, together with Mr Foley's references to "white tokenism", it seems to smack of intolerance and unjust racial discrimination.

Bill Ricketts, by contrast, is one of those European Australians who has shown, by his marvellous clay sculptures and associated writings



Bill Rickett's 'Earth Mother': a road of love.

at Mount Dandenong and elsewhere, the correct road ahead for the two races and cultures within Australia: a road of love, peace, beauty and imaginative sympathy.

Those who deliberately seek to drive a wedge between Europeans and Aborigines in Australia are enemies to the future well-being of both peoples; and no self-respecting national Government should tolerate their appointment to positions of authority in Government instrumentalities.

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