

Gallery at the SA Museum and you'll see spare and pristine, beautifully lit, state of the art museum display. No sand or spinifex, not a diorama within cooe.

Go to *Ochre and Dust* or *The Spirit of Lanky* and you'll get sand and leaves, painted backdrops and projections of hills and trees.

What can this all mean? Perhaps that these are works that sit uncomfortably in a theatre space—in fact, that aren't meant to be taken indoors at all. *Ochre and Dust* is a storytelling event and feels out of place inside under lights. It is augmented by slides and a strangely irrelevant installation by Fiona Foley. What were the whalebones about? The red sand makes the storytellers comfortable and probably would have been enough without Heidrun Löhr's slides which, although quite interesting in themselves, are distracting to attend to and are further estranged by being projected onto a series of leaf or coolamon-shaped ellipses reminiscent of the SBS logo.

The power of *Ochre and Dust* is the act of sharing story and the technique of using leaves to illustrate and animate that story. If any element could have done with enhancement it was these leaves; simply because the scale of them and the size of the audience meant that an imperative intimacy was lost. Had they been videotaped and projected, for example, then there would have been some advantage to being inside.

Spirit of Lanky, a one-off event at Port Adelaide in a vast wharf shed, was a confusing phenomenon. I thought it was going to be about Lanky, an Aboriginal tracker; it's not. Owen Love, the writer, designer and performer said in his introductory chat that it was intended primarily as a touring work to show the world this story and that there would be very little dialogue. There was plenty of dialogue and it looked nigh impossible to tour.

When I arrived I read that it was an outdoor fire sculpture event. We were, in fact, inside a very big shed but I could smell kerosene. By the time it ended, a

number of things had emerged. This was clearly a community arts project which had grown like Topsy over a long period and you could discern sedimentary layers of concerns, intentions, contributions by different communities that had, bit by bit, swamped the original idea about Lanky. Its concerns ranged from sustainable environmental responsibility to Aboriginal reconciliation; it showed how the understanding, mapping and remembering of particular places must include knowledge of the natural environment and awareness of the history of Aboriginal occupancy to tell any story of the land fully. I left wondering why it was a one-off event and hoping that lots of people of all ages from the communities it addresses get the chance to see it.

Indoors outdoors

Suzanne Spinner

Ochre & Dust

The Auditorium, Art Gallery of SA, March 8

Spirit of Lanky

Wharf Shed 10, Port Adelaide

Go to the new Aboriginal Cultures