

# GHOST STORY

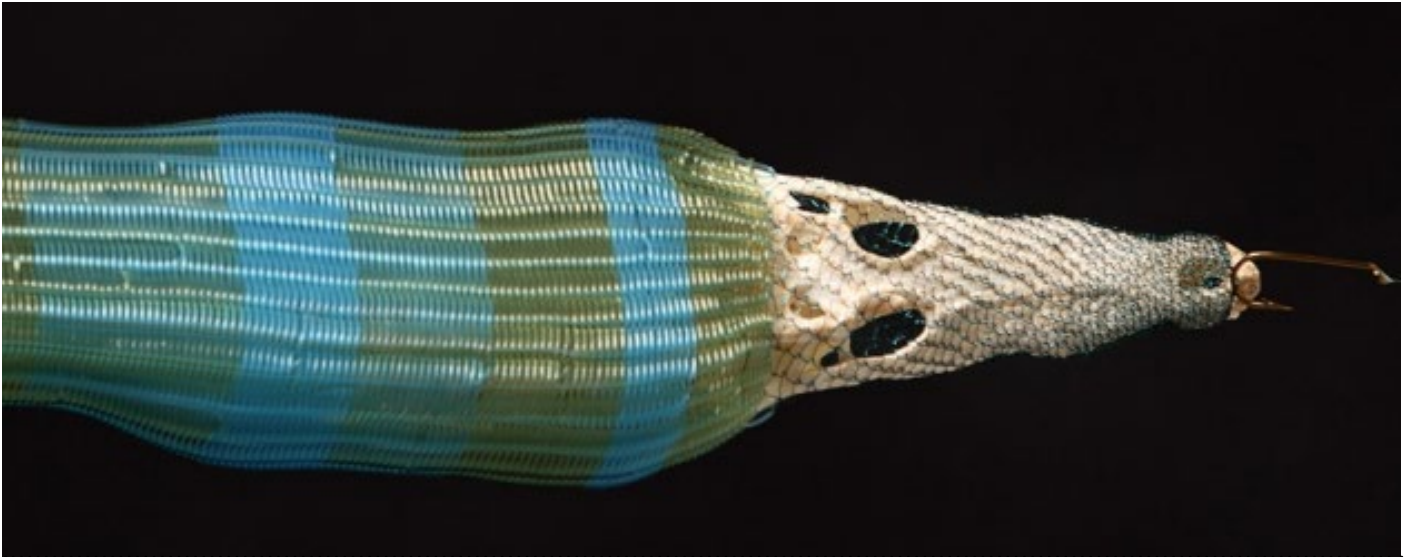
THE ART OF ALY DE GROOT

## MEDIA KIT

Directed by Timothy Parish

Produced by Shannon Swan





# GHOST STORY: THE ART OF ALY DE GROOT

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A Resolution Media Production in association with Verb Studios  
Produced in Association with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and Screen Territory

## PRODUCTION TEAM

**Producer:** Shannon Swan

**Writer/Director:** Timothy Parish

**Camera:** Jason McFadyen

**Editors:** Timothy Parish, Shannon Swan, Jason McFadyen

**Special Effects:** Stuart van Eysden, Wendy Jiang

**Sound Design:** Pip Atherstone-Reid - Windmill Audio

**Music:** Rob Law

**Voice Recording:** Louise Madill

**ABC Editor:** Patrick Livingstone

**ABC Audio:** Jikou Sugarno

**Series Producer:** Danielle Maclean

**Executive Producer:** Nicola Harvey

Filmed on location in Darwin, Northern Territory

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## CONTACT INFORMATION

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PRODUCER | SHANNON SWAN

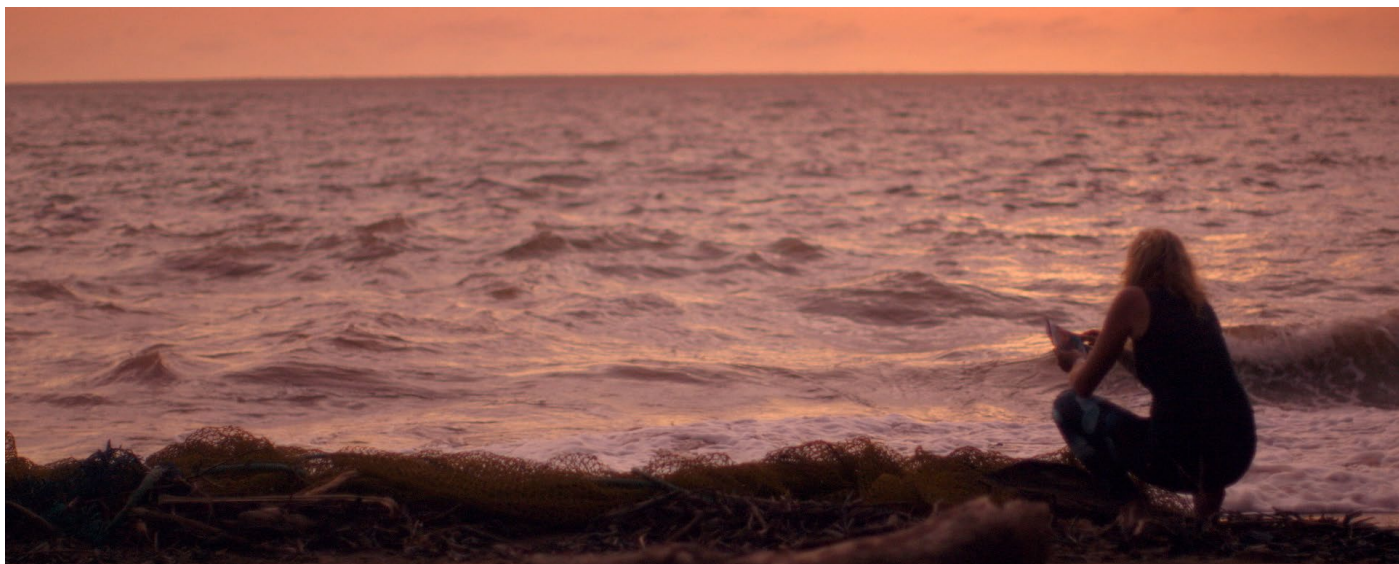
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DIRECTOR | TIMOTHY PARISH

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## TECHNICAL DETAILS

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5 minutes | colour | 16:9

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

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GHOST STORY is an evocative and haunting documentary which follows the artistic process of textile artist Aly De Groot who reclaims ‘ghost nets’ – fishing nets lost at sea – and transforms them into beautiful sculptures echoing marine life.

## LONG SYNOPSIS

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On remote beaches across the Northern Territory coastline, discarded fishing nets wash up after being thrown overboard but continue to fish the ocean, trapping fish in their path. A woman with a box jelly fish tattoo wanders the beach and retrieves these nets one by one. She drags them to shore and methodically sorts them out untangling them until she can finally use them to weave. She takes the salvaged fibres and fishing lines and begins to create stunning delicate sculptures of box jelly fish, or adds bones and other materials to create crocodiles and other marine life.

The woman is Aly De Groot, a contemporary textile artist based in Darwin, whose work utilises the retrieved fishing nets and lines to create striking contemporary art sculptures. Her art provokes an awareness of the environmental issue of ‘ghost nets’, but also actively transforms that issue into a solution as she runs workshops that encourages people to weave the nets into sculptures.

Over the years, Aly’s work has grown to adopt the jellyfish as kind of personal totem, and through her haunting sculptures, she evokes the delicate beauty of this underwater creature. Her work is a striking new aesthetic incarnation that can be seen around the Top End.

At once haunting and poetic, Ghost Story mixes the important environmental message of marine conservation with an evocative interpretation of the underwater world and the art of reusing waste materials to create sculptures.



## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

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Aly De Groot is a textile artist who reclaims discarded fishing nets, known as 'ghost nets' and recycles them into beautiful sculptures which evoke marine life. In collaboration with Ghost Nets Australia, she has worked with indigenous craft artists in remote communities in Groote Eylandt off the coast of Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. Through this beautifully crafted documentary, we are drawn into the magical underwater world, through the dark shadow of the ghost nets and into the magical realm of the imagination which De Groot dubs 'underwater basket weaving'.

<http://www.alydegroot.com.au>

"Ghost net art has proven to be a great vehicle for alerting the general public to the damage that ghost nets inflict on the marine environment." from GHOST NETS AUSTRALIA website.

<http://www.ghostnets.com.au/ghostnet-art/>

## **MAKING OF NOTES**

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'Ghost Story' was shot in Darwin NT over three days in February 2014. The majority of the shoot took place in the Darwin Waterfront, using underwater cameras in order to evoke the artist's vision of 'underwater basket weaving'. This involved a form of 'puppetry' of the sculptures in order to make them come alive in the underwater world utilising fishing rods and string. Other scenes included a location shoot at East Point beach where Aly De Groot's sculpture Intertwined stands, and her studio at Charles Darwin University in Casuarina.

The Ghost Story documentary originally included a location shoot in Groote Eylandt off the coast of Arnhem Land. However, this was cancelled due to the appearance of tropical Cyclone Lam forming off the coast just days before the crew were intended to fly out. The crew had to quickly come up with an alternative schedule to replace the scenes - all part of the fun of shooting in the Territory during the Wet Season!



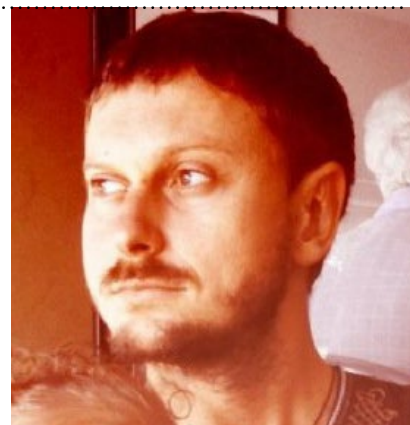
## **BIOGRAPHY | DIRECTOR | TIMOTHY PARISH**

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Timothy Parish is an artist, writer and filmmaker born in Darwin, NT. Since graduating from RMIT Bachelor of Media Arts in 2005, he has worked as a freelance producer and Creative Director at Verb Studios making short films, music videos, live audiovisual performances, long, medium & short form documentary (<http://verbstudios.com.au>)

He has worked across the Top End for clients including Darwin Festival, Northern Land Council, NT Dept. of Education, Darwin Symphony Orchestra, Northern Territory University, Danila Dilba Aboriginal Health Services, Environment Centre NT and Corrugated Iron Youth Arts.

In 2013, Parish completed his first feature documentary AYA AWAKENINGS exploring contemporary indigenous shamanism in the Peruvian Amazon (<http://aya-awakenings.com>) and has just recently written and directed his first theatrical production The Book of Shadows incorporating shadow puppetry and new media.



## **BIOGRAPHY | PRODUCER | SHANNON SWAN**

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Shannon Swan co-founded Resolution Media in 2002, producing a range of corporate videos, music clips for artists such as Clare Bowditch and John Butler Trio and TVCs for clients such as CUA, Latrobe University, iPrimus, and IGA Liquor amongst many more. (<http://www.resolutionmedia.tv/>)

In 2008 Shannon formed Two Taps Productions through which he has produced Fighting the Dragon with Luck (2010), producing and directing the six part television documentary series The ICE – Road to 3PEAT (Foxsports, 2012) and the feature length documentary Lygon Street - Si Parla Italiano (2013) <http://lygonstreetfilm.com.au/>

He is currently developing his new feature length documentary Gurrumul Elcho Dreaming.





## **BIOGRAPHY | ARTIST | ALY DE GROOT**

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De Groot's innovative interpretation of basketry processes are amalgamated with unexpected materials such as marine detritus, making her increasingly recognized as one of Australia's most celebrated contemporary fibre artists. One of her recent achievements includes winning the prestigious TOGART Contemporary Art Prize in Darwin; where the judges praised her crocodile form, that was woven from fishing line, for its 'combination of whimsy, potency and material resolution' ([www.art-collector.net.au](http://www.art-collector.net.au)). She recently completed a large public sculpture, titled Intertwined, commissioned by the City of Darwin. These gigantic woven bronze jellyfish forms were made from reclaimed rope collected whilst working on ghost-net weaving projects with Indigenous rangers and school children in coastal North-East Arnhem Land.

## **ARTIST'S STATEMENT**

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My 'Underwater Basket Weaving' series is a collection of original artworks that involve an experimentation with marine debris along with contemporary basket making techniques to make woven sculpture, wearable art and ghost net baskets. These baskets are often, in actuality, dysfunctional as utilitarian objects, their primary purpose being to establish a creative avenue to dispose of this dire environmental threat. Once they are removed from the oceans and beaches, ghost nets continue to be an ecological burden, becoming landfill or emitting poisonous greenhouse gases when they are burnt. Sea turtles, along with many other marine species, are often slaughtered by the nets, which, once discarded in our seas, continue to fish indiscriminately. These nets can be up to ten kilometres long and are a global problem, but specifically present trouble in Northern Australia, where I have been involved in many projects with Indigenous rangers and weavers to get the nets off of their beaches and find creative avenues to dispose of the nets, rather than burning them. Jellyfish are a large part of a sea turtles diet and turtles often end up eating plastic bags thinking that they are their favourite food. Because of a lack of predators and the warming of the seas, jelly fish populations are burgeoning. I create jellyfish and other marine species to weave a narrative that tells their story.

-Aly De Groot



## **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

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Aly De Groot is one of many artists that have tackled the environmental problem of 'ghost nets' across the Northern Territory of Australia, teaching workshops as well as incorporating the wasted material into her own work, but it is also unique and all her own.

For this documentary I was interested in breaking from the traditional interview format, merging elements of short film and experimental video art to create an artistic interpretation of the artist's motivations. In many cultures the ocean is often associated with the underworld where ghosts and spirits dwell, and the environmental subject matter gave an opportunity to explore the metaphor of the 'ghost' that haunts both the ocean and the artist in a creative way. The outcome is part environmental documentary and part art film and truly manifests the artist's tongue in cheek vision of 'underwater basket weaving', elevating it to an act of pure creation.

-Timothy Parish



## FULL CREDITS

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Producer: Shannon Swan  
Writer/Director: Timothy Parish  
Camera: Jason McFadyen  
Editors: Timothy Parish, Shannon Swan, Jason McFadyen  
Special Effects: Stuart van Eysden, Wendy Jiang  
Sound Design: Pip Atherstone-Reid - Windmill Audio  
Music: Rob Law  
Voice Recording: Louise Madill  
Extra Footage: Connor Askham, Timothy Parish, Shannon Swan

### AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

ABC Editor: Patrick Livingstone  
ABC Audio: Jikou Sugarno  
ABC Business Affairs: Claudia Lawson  
Series Producer: Danielle Maclean  
Executive Producer: Nicola Harvey

### SCREEN TERRITORY

Director: Penelope MacDonald  
Administration: Kira Tapps

Photographs supplied care of Ghost Nets Australia & Anindilyakwa Land Council  
Photographers : Aly de Groot, Livie Powell, Sue Ryan, Matt Gillis, Jen Goldberg  
Rangers: Yirralka laynhapuy ranger, Kevin Yunipingu, Mapoon Land & Sea Rangers,  
Jocelyn DeJersey & Maggie Peter, Nanum Wunghim Ranger, Phillip Mango

Artists in photos: Jan Murrungun, Yulki Nunggumajbarra  
Child in photo: Shekeena Pahimbung

### Special Thanks

GhostNets Australia, Riki Gunn, Ghost Net Art Project, Artists at the Groote Eylandt Arts Centre,  
Anindilyakwa Land and Sea Rangers, Anindilyakwa Land Council, Roina Williams & Christopher  
Durkin, Darwin Waterfront Corporation, Alfiya Pocock, Danielle MacLean, Louise Madill

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Filmed on location in Darwin, Northern Territory