

VIOLENT SALT

EDUCATION RESOURCE

Violent Salt is an Artspace Mackay touring exhibition curated by Yhønnie Scarce and Claire Watson



Australian Government
Visual Arts and Craft Strategy



Queensland
Government



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About this Education Resource

The artworks in *Violent Salt* respond to themes of racism, marginalisation, isolation and prejudice. These themes can, at times, be sensitive and difficult to discuss. The intention of this education resource is to create a starting point for generating inquiry-based, thought provoking conversations whilst in the gallery. Tour guides, educators and tertiary students may use this kit to navigate multiple inroads to exploring and unpacking the works and artist statements of the nine prominent, contemporary Australian artists featured in the exhibition.

Curriculum links and themes

This guide has been designed from a gallery educators' perspective, providing background information on the work practice of each artist and a series of open-ended questions, alongside activities that explore the physical and conceptual nature of each artwork. The formatting of the questions has been framed around four key focus points often explored during gallery tours: OBJECT (materials/techniques); SUBJECT (concepts/theme/intention) CONTEXT (viewpoints/philosophies/ideologies/place focus): PERSONAL (politics/roles and responsibilities of art).

To aid educators, each focal topic has been aligned with content descriptors from the Year 7 to 10 Australian Arts Curriculum as well as Units 1 – 4 of the Victorian and Queensland Senior Secondary Curriculums. The aim of these alignments is to enable educators and senior secondary students to tailor and streamline their exploration to directly relate to a specific area of curriculum study or work unit.

When examining each artwork, the following guide based on the Queensland General Senior Visual Arts Syllabus may also assist educators wanting to frame and develop their own inquiry-based questions:

Contemporary context guiding questions	Personal context guiding questions	Cultural context guiding questions	Formal context guiding questions
<p>How is the meaning and significance of past artworks challenged when viewed through the lens of 21st century ideas and issues?</p> <p>How do contemporary art approaches, technologies and environments impact on the viewer's experience and interpretation of artworks?</p> <p>How are artistic or social traditions challenged and expanded by contemporary art forms, subject matter and display?</p> <p>How do artists communicate or provoke ideas about current issues and concerns and challenge established philosophies?</p>	<p>How does an artist's practice reflect the influences of their life and experiences?</p> <p>How do the experiences and expectations of the viewer influence the reading of the artwork and the construction of personal meaning?</p> <p>How does an artist use symbols, metaphors and expression to communicate personal stories, thoughts, feelings, philosophies and ideas?</p>	<p>How does the artwork communicate the influences of society and the time when it was created?</p> <p>How do the values of past artists compare to the values of today?</p> <p>How do the cultural values and backgrounds of the viewer influence the interpretation of the meaning?</p> <p>How have the historical or contemporary events contributed to the meaning of the artwork?</p>	<p>How do the formal art elements and principles contribute to the meaning and messages in the artwork?</p> <p>How do stylistic characteristics shared with other art forms communicate meaning, intention, time and place?</p> <p>How do materials, techniques, applications, skills or display influence the impact and interpretation of artworks?</p>

Source: Visual Art 2019 v1.1 General Senior Syllabus © Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority

General Capabilities

Literacy

By actively participating in a gallery tour of this exhibition, students will be encouraged to extend and enhance their literacy skills as they analyse, comprehend, discuss, interpret and evaluate the artworks. Both the associated activities and discussions will provide students with the opportunity to develop, apply and communicate their knowledge and skills as both artists and as audiences.

Numeracy

Whilst viewing works in the exhibition, students will utilise numeracy skills to calculate and estimate; develop spatial reasoning to solve problems involving space and explore patterns, symmetry, 2D shapes and 3D objects. In addition, students will use skills in scale and proportion to describe and analyse the way in which artists intentionally make use of the gallery space.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Capability

By exploring the works in this exhibition, students will increase their awareness of how artists engage with and use digital and virtual technologies when making artworks. Students may increase their understanding of how artists apply social and ethical protocols and practices in a digital environment, particularly in relation to the appropriate acknowledgment of intellectual property and the safeguarding of personal security when using ICT. Artists may use digital technologies to locate, access, select and evaluate information, work collaboratively, share and exchange information, and communicate with a variety of audiences.

Personal and Social Capability

As both audience and art makers, students learn to empathise with the emotions, needs and situations of others, to appreciate diverse perspectives, and to understand and negotiate diverse types of relationships. When actively participating in gallery discussions, students develop and practise social skills that assist them to communicate effectively, work collaboratively, make considered group decisions and show leadership.

Intercultural Understanding

In the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts*, intercultural understanding enables students to explore the influence and impact of cultural identities and traditions on the practices and thinking of artists and audiences. Students will develop and act with intercultural understanding when interpreting artworks that explore their own cultural identities and those of others, interpreting and comparing their experiences and worlds, and seeking to represent increasingly complex relationships.

Students are encouraged to demonstrate empathy for others and open-mindedness to perspectives that differ from their own and to appreciate the diversity of cultures and contexts in which artists and audiences live. Through engaging with artworks from diverse cultural sources, students are challenged to consider accepted roles, images, objects, sounds, beliefs and practices in new ways.

Cross-curriculum priorities

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

Students' exploration of traditional and contemporary artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples provides insight into the way the relationships between People, Culture and Country/Place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples can be conveyed through the arts, their expression in living communities, and the way these build identity.

VIOLENT SALT

Introduction

Violent Salt brings together contemporary artists from across Australia representing diverse cultural heritage. Co-curated by Yhonnie Scarce and Claire Watson, the exhibition reflects on the experiences of the marginalised, the underrepresented and the silenced. The exhibition discusses issues surrounding racism and discrimination against First Nations peoples and minority groups as well as the lack of respect for, and desecration of culture and the natural environment. *Violent Salt* invites artists to speak their truths about these experiences and offers an opportunity for understanding and connection, whilst seeking to celebrate and honour Australia's unique multiculturalism and landscape.

The works presented in *Violent Salt* reflect on a social, physical and geographical landscape that has been witness to violence and oppression. It questions how we can repair deep wounds, re-connect across culture and assert and celebrate cultural identities meaningfully and transformatively.

The featured artists are Abdul Abdullah (NSW), Vernon Ah Kee (QLD), Richard Bell (QLD), Daniel Boyd (NSW), Megan Cope (QLD), Karla Dickens (NSW), S.J. Norman (VIC), Yhonnie Scarce (VIC/SA) and Jemima Wyman (QLD).

Interview with Curators Yhonnie Scarce & Claire Watson

Can you explain the inspiration behind 'Violent Salt'?

'Violent Salt' came about after an invitation from Artspace Mackay to visit their gallery and community. In our research trip, we were immediately drawn to the story of blackbirding and how this remains a largely untold story in national discourse. We visited the Mackay cemetery where there are over 110 unmarked South Sea Islander graves. It is through the hard work of volunteers that the stories of these forgotten people are being researched and uncovered. Being there, we felt a desire to share their story of suffering but we were also incredibly aware of just how much work is still needed to bring Australia's traumatic history including frontier wars, into the forefront of the minds of everyday Australians. Whilst blackbirding is one of many traumas perpetrated by white colonists, we wanted to acknowledge the violent past in the formation of modern Australia, revealing how the narrative of discrimination and disrespect still resonates with First Nations communities and minority groups today. We felt these stories need to be discussed and we were so pleased that the staff at Artspace Mackay were keen to tour the exhibition so that a much wider audience could share in these conversations.

Where does the exhibition title 'Violent Salt' come from?

Inscribed in the land is a violent past. Many Australians are oblivious to the frontier wars and are unconsciously or consciously complicit in the dissemination of the narrative that colonial settlement/occupation occurred relatively peacefully.

'Violent Salt' was a term extracted from Tony Birch's preface to 'Broken Teeth', a book of his incisive poetry that was published in 2016. Tony Birch states, 'Any dictatorship worth its violent salt executes the poets first'¹. We felt it was an incredibly provocative phrase and matched the intensity of not only the works we were selecting, but also the issues we were wanting to address.

The words seemed apt for the works in the exhibition which explore our violent history, cultural economies and the ongoing desecration of the natural environment and ecologies. We reached out to Tony Birch to see if he supported the use of his phrase for this exhibition and we were thrilled when he agreed.

How did you both come to collaborate? Here, it is acknowledged that Yhonnie, you are from the Kokatha and Nukunu Peoples; and Claire, you are a white Australian.

We first met in 2015 and immediately there was mutual respect. Our first two meetings went for three and a half hours – we had a lot to discuss! We found despite our differing backgrounds we had a shared interest and passion for the art made by First Nations artists. We were also both committed to furthering knowledge of Australia’s history which is all too often (and sadly) sugar-coated and which fails to acknowledge the experience of Australia’s First Peoples or the effects of white privilege on the marginalised and discriminated. We co-curated an exhibition in 2016 but felt that there was more work to do and we were keen for our efforts to reach a wider audience. We wanted to open the conversation up further so it explored the harsh realities of a discriminatory society more broadly.

What do you hope audiences will take with them after seeing ‘Violent Salt’?

Our hope is that ‘Violent Salt’ will support audiences to question their own perspectives and biases and encourage audiences to not be afraid to discuss issues relating to race, religion, gender, sexuality and culture. It is important that people are supported through these conversations and exposed to perspectives that are all too often neglected within our white-centric society.

As an example, the poisoning and massacres of First Nations peoples has largely been untold in Australia’s populist history. It is this tendency in Australian culture to not confront difficult truths and rampant and ongoing systematic discrimination and racism that needs to be interrogated. This is a truth-telling enterprise that we hope will trigger each visitor with a hunger to learn more and to carefully unpack societal learnings that have at their heart a fear of ‘other’.

For Australians to celebrate and connect, we must first face our violent past.

GLOSSARY

Ambiguity - The quality of being open to more than one interpretation; inexactness.

Anthropology - The study of human societies and cultures and their development.

Australian South Sea Islanders - Australian born descendants of South Sea Islander indentured labourers, 'blackbirded' to work as forced labour on sugar and cotton plantations in Australia.

Blackbirding - The practice of kidnapping South Sea Islanders to use as forced labour on sugar and cotton plantations in Australia between 1863 and 1904.

Colonial settlement - Initial invasion and colonisation (1788 to 1890) The arrival of Lieutenant James Cook, and then Arthur Phillip in 1788, marked the beginning of 'white settlement'. From 1788, Australia was treated by the British as a colony of settlement, not of conquest.

Critical thinking - The objective analysis and evaluation of an issue in order to form a judgement.

DGTMB Studios (Dagingtumbuh) - a brand from Yogyakarta specialising in underground comic strips and professionally produced merchandise. DGTMB Studios was initiated by internationally known contemporary Indonesian artist Eko Nugroho.

Embody - Be an expression of or give a tangible or visible form to (an idea, quality, or feeling)

Empathy - The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

Evoke - Bring or recall (a feeling, memory, or image) to the conscious mind.

First Nations - Similarly to ('First Australians'), 'First Nations' recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the sovereign people of this land. It goes further than 'First Australians' as it recognises various language groups as separate and unique sovereign nations.

Frontier Wars - violent conflicts between First Nations peoples and white settlers during the British colonisation of Australia.

Juxtapose - Place or deal with close together for contrasting effect.

Misperception - A wrong or incorrect understanding or interpretation.

Marginalise - Treat (a person, group, or concept) as insignificant or peripheral.

Outsider - A person who is not accepted by or who isolates themselves from society.

Praxis - Practice, as distinguished from theory.

Racism - Prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior.

Remembrance - The action of remembering something.

Satire - The use of humour, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticise people's vices or follies, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and other topical issues.

Signifier - A sign's physical form (such as a sound, printed word, or image) as distinct from its meaning.

South Sea Islanders - Natives or inhabitants of more than 80 Pacific Islands in the South Seas, including the Melanesian archipelagos of the Solomon Islands, New Caledonia and Vanuatu.

VIOLENT SALT

ABDUL ABDULLAH

VERNON AH KEE

RICHARD BELL

DANIEL BOYD

MEGAN COPE

KARLA DICKENS

S.J. NORMAN

YHONNIE SCARCE

JEMIMA WYMAN

ABDUL ABDULLAH



Abdul ABDULLAH

All let us rejoice

2017

Manual embroidery made with the assistance of DGTMB Studios

125 x 110 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Yavuz Gallery, Singapore

Abdul ABDULLAH

For we are young and free

2017

Manual embroidery made with the assistance of DGTMB Studios

126 x 108 cm

Darebin Art Collection

ABDUL ABDULLAH

B. 1986, Perth, Australia

Lives and works in Sydney, Australia

Pronouns: he/him/his

ARTIST STATEMENT

For we are young and free and *All let us rejoice* borrow lines from the Australian anthem. The phrases speak to a national perception of a shared identity and politic. As a nation-state, *we* are relatively young, and politically we see ourselves as having all the freedoms and self-determination associated with a liberal democracy.

The works are manually embroidered depictions of Australian soldiers in Afghanistan. I have deliberately obscured their eyes and changed the colour of the uniform to keep their identity anonymous, and their portrayal symbolic. The works are not about the specific identity of any one soldier, but about what that soldier represents, and how those collective actions relate to the national identity. What does our liberty mean, when our surrogates are explicitly involved in illiberal, destructive actions in other places? What does it do to the agents, and what does it do to those we inflict our agents on? For many in Australia our military is a symbol of authority and security, but they are being militarily engaged in invasive wars overseas; anyone who comes across our soldiers in action would only see them as an existential threat.

BIOGRAPHY

Abdul Abdullah works across painting, photography, video, installation and performance. As a self-described 'outsider amongst outsiders', his practice is primarily concerned with the experience of the 'other' in society.

Abdullah's projects have engaged with different marginalised minority groups and he is particularly interested in the experience of young Muslims in the contemporary multicultural Australian context, as well as connecting with creative communities throughout the Asia Pacific.

His works are in many collections including the National Gallery of Australia, The Art Gallery of Western Australia, The Gallery of Modern Art, Artbank, the University of Western Australia and The Islamic Museum of Australia. In 2015 Abdul exhibited at *Primavera* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, and at the *Asia Pacific Triennial* at the Gallery of Modern Art in Brisbane. In 2016 he exhibited at the Australian Centre of Contemporary Art and in 2017 he showed at PATAKA Art Museum in New Zealand and with Yavuz Gallery at *Art Basel* Hong Kong and the *Asia Now* Art Fair in Paris. Most recently Abdul exhibited at MIIAM Contemporary Art Museum in Chiang Mai, Thailand; The National Gallery of Australia as part of *Infinite Conversations* and was shortlisted along with his brother Abdul-Rahman Abdullah to represent Australia in the 2019 Venice Biennale.

Abdul Abdullah is represented by Yavuz Gallery, Singapore.

“As an artist, my practise engages with ideas of difference. It’s an exercise in semiotics where I play with potentially contradictory signifiers to critique and challenge entrenched societal norms. Societal norms I’m often at odds with. I use these signs to push and pull my audience in different directions, and in that flux, hope to create an environment that encourages critical thinking” ¹

Focus: Object- materials/techniques

VCE Art/Studio: Structural framework

Qld Senior Secondary Visual Arts - Contemporary context; Personal context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 1 & 2

ACARA curriculum links **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM118](#); [ACAVAM119](#) | **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM126](#); [ACAVAM127](#); [ACAVAM128](#)

Abdul Abdullah commissioned *All let us rejoice* and *For we are young and free* to be made using traditional machine embroidery techniques by artists at DGTMB Studios in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. In many of Abdul’s works, he uses painting as his medium. How might this use of embroidery communicate a different meaning? What challenges/considerations might the artist have faced having the portraits translated into this form of embroidery?

In these two works, Abdul juxtaposes traditional embroidery techniques with contemporary subjects and symbols including ‘smiley faces’ and graffiti techniques. What ideas and concepts do you think are being explored by doing this?

Emojis are a 21st Century method of code. Do you think emojis have the same meaning in all cultures and countries? Why might Abdul have chosen to use a symbol that can be translated across languages?

Abdul’s work often explores the topic of misperception in relation to marginalisation and youth culture. How has he used symbolism to explore this same theme in these two works?

FOCUS: Subject - concepts/theme/intention

VCE Art/Studio: Cultural framework, Contemporary framework

Qld Senior Secondary Visual Arts - Personal context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 1 & 2

ACARA curriculum links **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM122](#); [ACAVAR123](#) | **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM125](#); [ACAVAR130](#)

Abdul has spoken of feeling ‘isolated and marginalised’ as a Muslim Australian since September 11. *“Our Muslim identities became politicised. As kids we all felt it. On the news and in the paper, people with names like ours, and who looked like us, were called terrorists and straight evil.”* ²

With this in mind, how do these works communicate themes of isolation and marginalisation? As an audience, how might this work relate to your life and personal experiences?

In these works, the artist uses ambiguity as a tool by layering visual elements that conflict with one another. At first glance, we see a smiling face over seemingly serious portraits, and the materials used to create the work are unexpected. What effect does this have on you as you view the works?

The backgrounds of both works are solid black, giving no detail on the character's surroundings. What effect does this have on the message? Who are the people portrayed in these works? Would you say these people have authority?

Much of the characters' faces in each of the portraits are obscured. What meaning does this bring? Can you identify their purpose or intention?

FOCUS: Context – viewpoints/philosophies/ideologies/place

VCE Art/Studio: Personal framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus Visual Arts - Cultural context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 2

ACARA curriculum links [Yr 7 & 8 ACAVAM120](#); [ACAVAR123](#); [ACAVAR124](#) | [Yr 9 & 10 ACAVAR129](#); [ACAVAR130](#)

Abdul Abdullah is a 7th generation Muslim Australian and is self-described as an 'outsider amongst outsiders'. Through his art, he sets out to challenge our notion of belonging to a place, we are prompted to look through the eyes of the marginalised. What role does empathy play in developing viewpoints? As an audience, what feelings do these works evoke for you?

How might your personal cultural experiences influence the meaning you interpret from this work, and how might the meaning of these works vary in your community?

Examine Abdul's work statement above. How do the artwork titles *All let us rejoice* and *For we are young and free* prompt us to question and find layers of meaning?

Abdul also states that these works depict Australian soldiers in Afghanistan. How is the artist encouraging critical thinking by using these signifiers?

FOCUS: Personal – politics/roles and responsibilities of art

VCE Art/Studio: Cultural framework, Contemporary framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus- Visual Arts : Contemporary context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus- Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 3

ACARA curriculum links [Yr 7 & 8 ACAVAM118](#); [ACAVAM119](#); [ACAVAR123](#) | [Yr 9 & 10 ACAVAR131](#)

Abdul Abdullah talks about feeling marginalised because of his religious identity "*I was 14 when the planes hit the towers so my entire transition into adulthood was overshadowed by the war on terror. It felt like Muslims became the bad guys overnight. In the popular imagination we were the new communists.*"³ How do these works provoke broader discussion relating to current political issues of marginalisation, war and terrorism?

Media 'framing' is the angle or perspective from which a news story is told. An example of this is when different pieces of information are put together to influence the viewer's interpretation of an event. While viewing Abdul's works, consider the media's use of 'framing' in the portrayal of current political issues of war and immigration.

The emoji is used globally as a social communication tool. In what ways can social media be used to influence and persuade, and how does it differ to traditional forms of mainstream media?

FURTHER RESEARCH/ LINKS

Examine the work of Abdul Abdullah, Karla Dickens and Megan Cope with reference to their uses of icons or symbols. Make comparisons between them - do these artists use icons or symbols as a tool for differing or similar reasons? And to what effect?

ACTIVITY

Emoji are a major communication tool in the world today, and pictures as they say, 'are worth a thousand words' and can be interpreted in very different ways. Work in pairs for this activity. The student who goes first will use a class device to write a short story using only emoji, without speaking to their partner. When complete, the other student will 'read' the story back to the writer as they interpret it. Discuss the results as a class.

Notes

1. Abdul Abdullah, "Combating Prejudice with Art: Abdul Abdullah: Tedxyouth@sydney", Abdul Abdullah, April 12, 2019. <https://abdulabdullah.com/artwork/3842144-Combating-Prejudice-with-Art-Abdul-Abdullah-TEDxYouth-Sydney.html>
2. Rudabah Abbass, "Artist Captures the Mood of the Marginalised", Aljazeera, accessed July 5, 2019. <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/06/abdul-abdullah-australian-artist-marginalised-racism-ara-201462572052118236.html>
3. Lauren Gillin, "Abdul Abdullah Talks About His Art, Australia, and Being the Bad Guy", *Vice*, accessed July 5, 2019. https://www.vice.com/en_au/article/av4xa8/abdul-abdullah-talks-about-his-art-australia-and-being-the-bad-guy

VERNON AH KEE



Vernon AH KEE

Kick the Dust 2019

Three-channel video and riot shields

Dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

VERNON AH KEE

Kuku Yalandji, Waanji, Yidinji and Gugu

Yimithirr Peoples

B. 1967 Innisfail, Queensland, Australia

Lives and works in Brisbane, Australia

Pronouns: he/him/his

ARTIST STATEMENT

Kick the Dust reflects on the racially motivated killing of a young man whose body was dragged behind a ute. The act is reiterated with riot shields to reflect on racial violence in Australia and the disparity in justice. The shields represent the frictions and tensions in Australia between the police and Aboriginal communities, with the shield being a symbol of where these tensions meet: in protest and riots, a sheet of plastic acting as a threshold. The shield is an object of control and suppression not care and support. It bears the scars of these tensions and injustices. The cuts and fractures are deep and many.

BIOGRAPHY

Vernon Ah Kee's conceptual text pieces, videos, photographs and drawings form a critique of Australian popular culture from the perspective of the Aboriginal experience of contemporary life. He particularly explores the dichotomy between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies and cultures. Ah Kee's works respond to the history of the romantic and exoticised portraiture of 'primitives', and effectively reposition the Aboriginal in Australia from an 'othered thing', anchored in museum and scientific records to a contemporary people inhabiting real and current spaces and time. Ah Kee obtained a Doctorate of Visual Arts from the Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, Australia and has recently exhibited at the National Gallery of Victoria, Australia; Special Exhibitions Gallery, Harvard Art Museums, Massachusetts; National Museum of Australia, Canberra; the 14th Istanbul Biennial, Turkey and the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

FOCUS: Object - materials/techniques

VCE Art/Studio: Structural framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Contemporary Context; Formal context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus: Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 1 & 2

ACARA Curriculum links: **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM118](#); [ACAVAM119](#); [ACAVAM122](#) | **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM126](#); [ACAVAM127](#); [ACAVAM128](#)

Vernon Ah Kee is a member of the Kuku, Yalandji, Waanji, Yidinji and Gugu Yimithirr people and an artist who skilfully works across a broad range of mediums from large-scale drawings to text installations and video work. Look at his work *Kick the dust*, why might Vernon have chosen both installation and video as his mediums to communicate themes in the work, and what effect do you feel this has on the message?

Vernon effectively uses dramatic video effects like sound, slow motion, repetition or replay, lighting effects, multiple perspectives, and timing. Watch the video work in full and discuss as a group how each of these film making techniques work together to communicate the message.

Shields are utilised in a variety of ways across traditional and contemporary cultures. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you see these objects and where have you seen them used? Consider the use of shield in contemporary Australian culture?

The three damaged riot shields are installed in the gallery from the ceiling to hang vertically in the viewer's line of sight. What effect does this method of installation, as opposed to hanging them directly on the gallery wall, give to the work?

FOCUS: Subject - concepts/theme/intention

VCE Art/Studio: Contemporary framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus- Visual Arts: Cultural context; Personal context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 1 & 2

ACARA Curriculum links: **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM121](#); [ACAVAM122](#); [ACAVAR123](#) | **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM125](#); [ACAVAM128](#); [ACAVAM129](#)

Vernon states that *Kick the dust* 'represents the frictions and tensions in Australia between the police and Aboriginal communities' and the 'disparity in justice' between First Nations peoples and white Australians. Which elements of the work symbolise and highlight this and how?

Why might the artist have chosen the shield as the main object of focus for the work? What meaning can be interpreted by this, from the viewpoints of First Nations peoples and post-colonial Australian cultures?

What effect does it give to the video message to have the acrylic shield, an inflexible, hard, fragile object dragged through a harsh and rugged Australian landscape? As you view the work, what are the thoughts and emotions that come to mind?

The phrase *Kick the dust* is Vernon's title for the work. Have you heard these words before? In what way is this phrase used, and does it have more than one possible interpretation in this work?

FOCUS: Context - place/viewpoints/philosophies/ideologies

VCE Art/Studio: Personal framework; Contemporary

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Personal context; Formal context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 2

ACARA Curriculum links: **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM118](#); [ACAVAM119](#); [ACAVAM120](#); [ACAVAR124](#) | **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM127](#); [ACAVAM128](#); [ACAVAM129](#); [ACAVAR130](#)

Vernon's conceptual work forms a critique of Australian contemporary culture from the perspective of First Nations people. His work is often described as being hard-hitting. *Kick the dust* describes a real-life event and highlights an extreme example of Australian racism. Why might Vernon have created the work in this confronting way? As an audience, how might your cultural background affect the way you respond to the work?

In *Kick the Dust* the artist explores the cultural importance of shields. Consider and compare the past and present use, and representation of, shields in different cultures, including traditional Australian First Nations and Colonial cultures.

While walking around these shields in *Violent Salt*, imagine you are personally involved in a situation of unrest where shields like these are being used. What would it feel like to be holding one of these shields, and what would your intentions be? What would it feel like to be facing people holding these shields and what would be your concerns?

ACTIVITY

Invite a local First Nations Elder in your community to speak to your class about local culture and language. Consider and discuss any historical or current issues relating to racism that may have happened in your region.

Below are some resources that may help provide support when beginning these conversations:

- Guides for using respectful and inclusive language and terminology (education settings)

<https://www.narragunnawali.org.au/about/terminology-guide>

- Take Action Against Racism RAP Action

<https://www.narragunnawali.org.au/rap/actions/7/teach-about-reconciliation>

- Cultural Safety and Respect in the Classroom

<https://www.narragunnawali.org.au/professional-learning/90/cultural-safety-and-respect-in-the-classroom>

- Let's Talk Race: A guide on how to conduct conversations about racism

<https://itstopswithme.humanrights.gov.au/documentary/let-s-talk-race-guide>

FOCUS: Personal - politics/roles and responsibilities of art

VCE Art/Studio: Cultural Framework: Cultural

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Cultural context; Personal

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 3

ACARA Curriculum links: **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAR123](#); [ACAVAR124](#) | **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM126](#); [ACAVAR131](#)

In your opinion, does *Kick the dust* provokes feelings of empathy in the audience? Why might empathy be an important tool for artists when it comes to themes of racism and marginalisation?

Conversations and facts about people's experiences of racism in Australia can be challenging, emotive and difficult to begin. What role do art galleries and museums play in presenting these stories and viewpoints?

RICHARD BELL



Richard BELL

You Can Go Now

2015

Acrylic on canvas

180 x 240 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

RICHARD BELL

Kamilaroi, Kooma, Jiman and Gurang Gurang Peoples

Born 1953, Charleville, Queensland, Australia

Lives and works in Brisbane, Australia

Pronouns: he/him/his

ARTIST STATEMENT

You Can Go Now arose out of thoughts and discussions about refugees, migration, dispossession, the rise of the Nation State (particularly the European iterations), modern democracy, late (and not so late) Capitalism and the catastrophic arrival of Neo-Liberalism in the late 20th Century. It focuses on Australian Immigration Policy, which, in turn has become a model that many nations in the European Union and elsewhere are turning to.

However, this issue is far from resolved here in Australia. There is widespread and growing opposition to that profoundly cruel and soulless policy despite the wretched and oft repeated racist dog whistling among the trashier elements of both sides of politics.

Australia, while not being a European country, is seen as a European outpost. The Head of State is European, the ruling class is European and the majority of the population is still European.

The refugee crisis that has 'beseiged' Australia's and other First World nations' doorsteps has arrived in those places precisely because of wars waged on behalf of those countries, or; the refugees came from their former colonies.

Instead of blaming the victims, they should be blaming the shareholders.

After five centuries of European Colonialism, it's time to go.

BIOGRAPHY

Richard Bell works across a variety of media including painting, installation, performance and video. One of Australia's most significant artists, Bell's work explores the complex artistic and political problems of Western, colonial and Indigenous art production. He grew out of a generation of Aboriginal activists and has remained committed to the politics of Aboriginal emancipation and self-determination. In 2003 he was the recipient of the Telstra National Aboriginal Art Award, establishing him as an important Australian artistic figure. Bell is represented in most major National and State collections and has exhibited in a number of solo exhibitions at important institutions in Australia, Europe and America.

Richard Bell is represented by Milani Gallery, Brisbane.

FOCUS: Object - materials/techniques

VCE Art/Studio: Structural framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Contemporary Context; Personal Context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 1 & 2

ACARA Curriculum Links: **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM118](#) ; [ACAVAM119](#) **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM125](#); [ACAVAM126](#) ; [ACAVAM128](#)

Look at the work *You Can Go Now* and consider Richard Bell's use of stylisation and symbolism. Is the work designed to be confronting or elicit a particular audience response?

What effect is intended by Richard using text that is created by hand and presented in upper case letters?

Richard uses a map of Australia in this work, what historical and cultural meaning can be interpreted by using this symbol? How might this provoke discussion about land rights, colonisation and immigration concerns?

You Can Go Now is reminiscent of a placard. What are placards for? What are key considerations in designing them as an effective communication tool? In what way might the viewer's personal experience influence their interpretation of the work?

FOCUS: Subject - concepts/theme/intention

VCE Art/Studio: Contemporary framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Personal context; Cultural context; Formal context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 1 & 2

ACARA Curriculum links: **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM121](#) ; [ACAVAM122](#); [ACAVAR123](#) **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM125](#); [ACAVAM129](#); [ACAVAR130](#)

Richard Bell is an internationally recognised artist who prides himself as a staunch political activist. What is activism and why would Richard consider the art world to be an effective forum for activism? Richard's work pushes the boundaries and blurs the lines between art and activism. This is a common technique used by artists creating graffiti or street art. Can you think of an example?

Richard's toolkit includes an oftentimes confronting satire that's designed to agitate. What effect do more aggressive strategies like this have on the artist's audience?

What effect does using humour to confront difficult topics have on a message and an audience?

FOCUS: Context - place/viewpoints/philosophies/ideologies

VCE Art/Studio: Personal framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Contemporary context; Personal context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 2

ACARA Curriculum Links **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM120](#); [ACAVAR123](#); [ACAVAR124](#) **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM129](#); [ACAVAR130](#)

A person's cultural background and experience can determine their interpretation of an artwork. Is your interpretation of this work the same as the person next to you?

Through social commentary, Richard is holding a mirror up to the viewer. What feeling might this elicit in the audience, is this an effective technique in conveying meaning?

Focus: Personal - politics/roles and responsibilities of art

VCE Art/Studio: Cultural framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Formal context; Contemporary context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 3

ACARA Curriculum links: **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM119](#); [ACAVAM120](#); [ACAVAR123](#) **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAR131](#)

Consider Australian political events relating to racial tension and both current and historical immigration policies (Cronulla Riots; White Australia Policy) . How might Richard's work provoke discussion and respond to these themes? Consider this work from the point of view of Australia's First Nations People and immigrants?

In the work *You Can Go Now*, how does Richard encourage the viewer to simultaneously consider local as well as global perspectives? What specific art elements and principles does he employ to communicate this meaning?

ACTIVITY

Put yourself in the shoes of an activist. Consider a social issue you feel strongly about and design a placard to effectively communicate your message. Like Richard Bell, consider the nature of a placard when choosing your use of symbolism and text. Discuss as a class how and where you could use your placard to effectively communicate your message?

DANIEL BOYD



Daniel BOYD

Untitled (tsotoaat)

2019

Oil, acrylic and archival glue on canvas

336 x 199 x 4.5 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

DANIEL BOYD

Kudjala, Gangalu, Kuku Yalanji, Waka Waka,
Gubbi Gubbi, Wangerriburra, Bandjalung and Pentecost Island Peoples
B. 1982 Cairns, Queensland, Australia
Lives and works in Sydney, Australia
Pronouns: he/him/his

ARTIST STATEMENT

BALBAY AND YAMANI

for our ancestors
Whoosh goes the cane cutters inside, seldom
outside the abyss
deliverance comes in waves – balbay – flickering
while stickiness clings to the walls
she gives life to rhizomatic silhouettes, blackbirds seek shelter here
while infinite ripples in a sacred blue pool
tremble for my daughters and their daughters.
Barriers create the creator
raindrops collectively give way to torrents
shifting ancients through billions of moons
yamani dark like matter bright like rainbow
coloured truths
beautiful harmonious truths.

BIOGRAPHY

Daniel Boyd's practice is internationally recognised for its manifold engagement with the colonial history of the Australia-Pacific region. Drawing upon intermingled discourses of science, religion and aesthetics, his work reveals the complexity of perspectives through which political, cultural and personal memory is composed.

Boyd has exhibited his work nationally and internationally since 2005 including in the major solo exhibition Daniel Boyd: Bitter Sweet at Cairns Art Gallery, Queensland (2017). Notable group exhibitions include Divided Worlds, Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, Art Gallery of South Australia (2018); Defying Empire, 3rd National Indigenous Art Triennial, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (2018); A BEAST, A GOD, AND A LINE, Dhaka Art Summit, Bangladesh (2018); Mondialité, Boghossian Foundation, Villa Empain, Brussels (2017); The future is already here – it's just not evenly distributed, 20th Biennale of Sydney (2016); *All the Worlds Futures*, 56th Venice Biennale (2015); *A Time for Dreams*, Moscow International Biennale for Young Art (2014); and *Whorled Explorations*, Kochi-Muziris Biennale, India (2014).

Boyd's work is held in collections including the Natural History Museum, London; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; and the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

'The surface of the works, they're a way of acknowledging all of these things that exist between points of perception. We all understand something different, we see things differently. When people come to my work, they look at the surface, they see information in all of these little dots, and then they automatically presume that there's nothing between the dots... there's black paint there, there's a space there, it's black... or they say, 'it's black there, there's nothing there'... and so it's like a paradox. They're acknowledging that there's nothing there, but at the same time, they know that there's something there.' Boyd continues 'This space, it's about memory or acknowledgement, the incomprehensible, it's like this space. It's a relationship between two people, it's a relationship between different cultures, it's about understanding your place in the universe, it's like understanding how you relate to the landscape.' ¹

FOCUS: Object - materials/techniques

VCE Art/Studio: Structural framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Contemporary Context; Personal Context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 1 & 2

ACARA Curriculum Links: **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM118](#) ; [ACAVAM119](#); [ACAVAR123](#) **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM125](#); [ACAVAM126](#) ; [ACAVAM128](#)

Daniel Boyd has painted *Untitled (tsotoaat)* using a mass of white and grey interconnected dots, and between the dots the surface is black. We can just make out the image, but it is obscured, lacking the detail our eyes usually seek to make sense of an image. What might be the artist's intention by deliberately obscuring and revealing parts of the image in this way?

In this work Daniel has also used archival glue to give a raised, convex shape to the dot work, simulating hundreds, perhaps thousands of lenses that slightly distort or alter the image. What historical and cultural meaning can be interpreted by using this technique? How might this provoke discussion about colonisation and immigration?

Look closely at Daniel's work *Untitled (tsotoaat)*. For some, this landscape painting initially conveys a sense of peacefulness and tranquillity, what feelings does it convey for you when you see this work for the first time? Can you identify what elements and principles of design encourage these emotions?

FOCUS: Subject - concepts/theme/intention

VCE Art/Studio: Contemporary framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Personal context; Cultural context; Formal context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 1 & 2

ACARA Curriculum links: **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM120](#) ; [ACAVAM121](#) ; [ACAVAM122](#); [ACAVAR123](#) **Yr 9 & 10**

[ACAVAM125](#); [ACAVAM127](#); [ACAVAM129](#)

*Ethnography is the recording and analysis of a culture or society, usually based on participant-observation and resulting in a written account of a people, place or institution.*² To create this work, Daniel Boyd used a Colonial Australian ethnographic image as source material. Historical images of this kind are usually found in library or museum collections, and by nature are quite small photographic prints. *Untitled (tsotoaat)* is a huge painting on canvas, that gives us an almost life-size perspective of the people within the image. What might be the artist's intention by creating the work at this scale? What could the artist's reason be for bringing the image from historical archives into a contemporary art gallery setting?

Boyd has named this work *Untitled (tsotoaat)*. The meaning or definition of the word 'tsotoaat' is intentionally withheld by the artist. How does this affect you as the viewer? What might this element of ambiguity bring to the meaning of the work?

How is time represented in this work? Does this scene appear to you to be historical or present day? What elements of the work give you that impression?

FOCUS: Context - place/viewpoints/philosophies/ideologies

VCE Art/Studio: Personal framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Contemporary context; Personal context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 2

ACARA Curriculum Links **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM120](#); [ACAVAR123](#); [ACAVAR124](#) **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM129](#); [ACAVAR130](#);

[ACAVAR131](#)

*'My use of dots references the idea of the cultural lens and the fact that we all have different points of view.'*³ Daniel acknowledges how our personal cultural experience affects the way we perceive information. As an artist, what role might the consideration of multiple viewpoints play in making your work?

As a class, take turns to introduce yourself, express your cultural and personal background and relate your interpretation or feelings about the work *Untitled (tsotoaat)*. How does your response to the work differ to others?

When we see dots in art, we can relate the technique to many historical and present-day sources - First Nations dot paintings, the European Pointillism art movement of the 1800s, the ink dots required to create a printed document, microscopic pixels used to digitally present imagery on our computer screens, and even the stars in our universe. Daniel's work can be explored in terms of each of these sources, spanning cultures and time. As a class, discuss each of these sources and make possible connections to the concepts, themes and techniques in *Untitled (tsotoaat)*.

Effort is required by the viewer to properly interpret or seek to understand the visual information in Daniel's work. Similarly, interpretation of ethnographic imagery requires a great deal of effort from the viewer, as the image alone does not provide the whole story. Consider this context of viewer involvement, what meaning can be interpreted by this in Boyd's work?

Focus: Personal - politics/roles and responsibilities of art

VCE Art/Studio: Cultural framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Formal context; Contemporary context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 3

ACARA Curriculum links: **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM119](#); [ACAVAM120](#); [ACAVAR123](#) **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAR131](#)

Daniel Boyd's work *Untitled (tsotoaat)* is an anthropological photograph from Anglican archives of three South Sea Islander men approaching a colonial Australian ship called The Southern Cross. The Southern Cross sailed from Hobart in the late 1890s, destined for the Pacific Islands to 'shop' for slaves. *Untitled (tsotoaat)* illustrates the point of first contact between these men and the vessel, and though the men's fate is unknown, it is likely they were blackbirded - stolen or kidnapped, brought onto the ship and held against their will for a future of slavery on Australian plantations. Reflect on this Australian colonial history of slavery and disempowerment. Now, looking at the work, does this knowledge change or affect your interpretation of the image? How does your interpretation differ or relate to your first impression of the work?

Boyd's work explores aspects of Australia's unjust and violent colonial history, and tackles the disconnect that pervades our present day understanding of this period. Discuss as a class, issues relating to the current general population's lack of understanding, dismissiveness and even denial of this critical part of our history. Consider the way cultural differences in terms of spoken vs written histories, and our education system have played a part in this.

What role do artists play in questioning Australian colonial histories?

RESEARCH

Research the details of blackbirding in Australia including when it took place, who was affected and how. Investigate the White Australia Policy and what further injustices were inflicted by the Australian Government on Pacific Islanders who were blackbirded.

Australian South Sea Islanders are a distinct cultural group in Australia, recognised by the Queensland Government in the year 2000. Examine the unique history of Australian South Sea Islander people and consider the importance of this government recognition.

ACTIVITY

In his work, Daniel visually explores the notion of what we know and what we don't know about our histories by using tools to partially obscure information. Choose an image relating to your own family and choose a 'coding' technique or techniques to conceal the meaning of the image

Notes

1 Daniel Boyd, "Daniel Boyd introduces '(HNDFWMIAFN)'", QAGOMA, 4 March 2018
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cfPU_fqZEfA&t=160s

2 Simon Coleman and Bob Simpson (2019). "Ethnography", Discoveranthropology.org.uk, <https://www.discoveranthropology.org.uk/about-anthropology/fieldwork/ethnography.html>

3 Daniel Boyd, "Artist statement, 2014 Bulgari Art Award", *Daniel Boyd Untitled (PSM)* | MCA Australia, <https://www.mca.com.au/artists-works/works/2015.30/>

MEGAN COPE



Megan COPE

RE FORMATION part 2 (detail)

2016

used beer cans and silica sand from Minjerribah

Dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist and This Is No Fantasy, Melbourne

MEGAN COPE

Quandamooka People

B. 1982 Brisbane, Australia

Lives and works in Stradbroke Island, Queensland; and Melbourne, Australia

Pronouns: she/her/hers

ARTIST STATEMENT

Megan Cope's practice spans painting, sculpture and site-specific installation and explores the intricate relationship between environment, geography and identity. It re-evaluates the history of colonisation and its impact on Indigenous Australians.

Cope's sculptural installations reflect her ongoing interest in geographic marking. Continued mining and excavation of Indigenous sacred sites obscures and erases Aboriginal presence on the land. It renders a landscape void of markers once used to navigate through country, to find the way home. Enormous middens were previously unmistakable in the landscape, but now only remnants remain and are difficult to locate without local Aboriginal knowledge. In her RE FORMATION installations, Cope recreates a traditional shell midden reminiscent of those in coastal North Stradbroke Island (Minjerrabah) where Cope, a Quandamooka woman, is from. Her contemporary 'oyster shells' are moulded out of materials including concrete, beer cans and silica sand.

BIOGRAPHY

Megan Cope's work has been exhibited in Australia and internationally including at Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art; Musées de la Civilisation in Québec, Canada; Gold Coast City Art Gallery; MONA FOMA, Hobart; Koorie Heritage Trust, Melbourne; City Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand; Para Site Contemporary Art Space, Hong Kong; Careof Art Space, Milan; and the Australian Embassy, Washington.

Most recently Cope's large scale sculptural installations have been curated into three major national survey exhibitions, 'The National' (2017) at the Art Gallery of NSW, 'Defying Empire: 3rd National Indigenous Art Triennial' (2017) at the National Gallery of Australia and 'Sovereignty' (2016) at Australian Centre for Contemporary Art.

In 2016 Cope was invited to create large scale installations for 'Frontier Imaginaries' at QUT Art Museum which toured to Al-Ma'mal Foundation for Contemporary Art, Jerusalem. Other group exhibitions include Another Day in Paradise at Campbelltown Arts Centre, Proppanow at Footscray Arts Centre and Re-visioning Histories at Bundoora Homestead Art Centre. In 2015, Cope won the \$50,000 Western Australian Indigenous Art Award at the Art Gallery of WA for her video work The Blaktism. Cope is a member of Aboriginal art collective proppaNOW.

Megan Cope is represented by This Is No Fantasy, Melbourne.

FOCUS: Object- materials/techniques

VCE Art/Studio: Structural framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Contemporary context; Personal context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus: Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 1 & 2

ACARA Curriculum links: **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM118](#); [ACAVAM119](#) | **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM126](#); [ACAVAM127](#); [ACAVAM128](#); [ACAVAR129](#)

A midden is often described as a 'kitchen midden' or 'shell heap'. It's an old, sometimes ancient deposit for domestic waste, including animal bone, shells and other waste products. Middens are archaeological sites and can be studied to reveal a lot of historical information about the people who once lived in or travelled through a place. Over time, they often grew to become enormous piles or hills, becoming landmarks that First Nations people used to identify locations and navigate country. Why might Megan Cope, a Quandamooka woman create works that reflect middens? What kinds of information do you think archaeologists would be able to uncover by studying Aboriginal middens in Australia?

Cope's work *RE FORMATION PART 2* is constructed in silica sand using beer cans instead of shells. What could the crushed beer cans, and other symbols in the work represent? Might there be more than one meaning here? Speculate why just the Union Jack, not the entire Australian flag is represented in the work.

Megan describes middens as being architectural. Identify what aspects of these works give them architectural qualities?

FOCUS: Subject - concepts/theme/intention

VCE Art/Studio: Structural framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Formal context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 1 & 2

ACARA Curriculum links: **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM118](#); [ACAVAM120](#); [ACAVAM122](#); [ACAVAR123](#) | **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM125](#); [ACAVAR130](#)

More than 80 middens containing shells including Sydney Rock Oysters have been identified on Stradbroke Island but most have now been destroyed. Megan Cope describes shell middens that still exist, 'The ones on my Country have been recorded as being between 6,000 and 12,000 years old' Why might it be important to the artist to raise awareness of middens, and for locals and all Australians to learn about them?

Megan Cope's works include middens that vary in shape and size. What could the reasons for this variation be? What effect would size of the midden have in a gallery context, and for the works in general? What practical considerations might determine the size from the artist's and gallery's viewpoint?

FOCUS: Context - place/viewpoints/philosophies/ideologies

VCE Art/Studio: Personal framework; Contemporary

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Personal context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 2

ACARA Curriculum links: **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM120](#); [ACAVAR123](#); [ACAVAR124](#) | **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM129](#); [ACAVAR130](#)

Megan Cope is a Quandamooka woman inspired by the stories of her people and country. Through her work, she explores themes of colonial place re-naming, and desecration of places of archaeological and cultural significance. Locate Quandamooka country and explore the history of place re-naming in this location.

If you were to choose a place in your local region to be your community's 'kitchen' where would you choose to gather with family and friends to eat and share stories? What things would you consider in choosing this location? If you were to create a modern-day midden in this place, what waste products would you incorporate into the midden? Consider environmental issues and the difference between organic and inorganic waste.

Look at the work RE FORMATIONS PART 2. What effect does Megan's method of juxtaposing ancient against contemporary culture have on the message? What are your first impressions of this work, and how does looking at the work make you feel and why?

FOCUS: Politics/roles and responsibilities of art

VCE Art/Studio: Cultural framework: Cultural; Contemporary

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Cultural context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 3

ACARA Curriculum links: **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAR123](#) | **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM125](#); [ACAVAR131](#)

The island of Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) has been inhabited by First Nations people for at least 21,000 years. For more than 60 years, sand mining has been a very destructive force on the island. It has vastly re-shaped the landscape and vegetation, destroyed important historic First Nations landmarks, and locked traditional owners out of sacred sites. Megan Cope belongs to Quandamooka country on Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) What role does Megan's art practice play in raising awareness of these issues? What tools has Megan used to encourage the viewer to make environmental and political connections?

What effect do you think sand mining like this can have on an island, its First Nations cultural sites, and the flora and fauna of the region?

KARLA DICKENS



Karla DICKENS

Looking at You VI

2017

Inkjet print

Edition 1 of 3

100 x 100 cm

Darebin Art Collection



Karla DICKENS

Quartered

2017

Mixed media

Dimensions variable

Mackay Regional Council Art Collection

KARLA DICKENS

Wiradjuri People

B. 1967 Sydney, Australia

Lives and works in Lismore, New South Wales, Australia

Pronouns: she/her/hers

To see or not to see

A woman
mother
about to turn 50
faired-skinned
queer Aboriginal
living with mental health
making art
under the hood

I see

As a kid
I longed for invisibility
my gift granted
a loud voice rises
I fade
underestimated
Little Miss Riding Hood
I smile deep

Seeing you

Spotlights circle
the beautiful embraced
artists give a knowing nod
moulding, movers, dealers
I stand back
I watch
I hide
I dip a toe in the hood

Bearing witness

The good, the bad, the game
needing protection
laying naked, exposed
on exhibition
for sale
artist/work interwoven
on the chopping block
with or without the hood

See me

Quartered

Your nappies are marked
“A cell awaits”
eyes track each step
Police slow down
ready to ignite your wick
a bomb has been built
blow boy, blow

A vilified innocent
judged by skin
automatic arrests
detected and detained
hopeless offender
manufactured criminal
lock me up Officer

Designer loser
stripped and tear gassed
demoralized and destroyed
destined for the “big house”
mainstream correction
legislated trafficking
no fairness in justice

Kids in jail
out-of-sight / out-of-mind
forcible removal
castration in incarceration
no seeds to plant
just balls to hold
stay out of the boneyard

BIOGRAPHY

Karla Dickens is an artist of Aboriginal (Wiradjuri), Irish and German heritage. She completed a Diploma of Fine Arts at the National Art School in Sydney in 1990 and a Bachelor of Fine Arts at the same institution a decade later. She has held twenty-five solo exhibitions, participated in countless group exhibitions and contributed to many community-based projects between 1994 and the present.

Over recent years, Karla has been included in significant exhibitions including: Defying Empire: 3rd National Indigenous Art Triennial at National Gallery of Australia (2017); The National 2017: New Australian Art at Carriageworks, Sydney; Grounded: Contemporary Australian Art at the National Art School Gallery, Sydney (2017) and Cook and the Pacific, National Library of Australia, Canberra (2018).

As a previous winner of the New South Wales Parliament Art Prize, Dickens' work is held in the Parliament's collection, as well as those of National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; National Museum of Australia, Canberra; Australian National Maritime Museum, Sydney; Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth; Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences, Sydney; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney and numerous regional galleries and universities.

Karla Dickens is represented by Andrew Baker Art Dealer, Brisbane.

“I was always at the tip for my materials as I couldn’t afford canvases. That’s how I came to use recycled materials – maybe people liked that. It hit a chord with some people” ¹

FOCUS: Object - materials/techniques

VCE Art/Studio: Structural framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Contemporary context; Formal context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus: Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 1 & 2

ACARA Curriculum links: **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM118](#); [ACAVAM119](#) | **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM126](#); [ACAVAM128](#)

Karla Dickens has created *Looking at you VI* using a ‘smiley face’ of sorts, roughly cut and stitched by hand, revealing the direct gaze of the wearer. What could Karla be saying by using a pop culture symbol of this kind within the work? Look at the wearer’s facial expression, what meaning do you draw from this and how does it affect the work? What might Karla’s intentional use of symbols communicate?

Karla’s act of re-purposing materials often found at the tip brings its own energy to the work. How does using recycled materials this way change or reinforce a message? How might someone’s personal connection to the second-hand objects influence the viewer’s experience?

FOCUS: Subject - concepts/theme/intention

VCE Art/Studio: Contemporary framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Cultural context; Personal context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 1 & 2

ACARA Curriculum links: **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM122](#); [ACAVAR123](#) | **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM125](#); [ACAVAM129](#); [ACAVAR130](#)

In Karla Dicken’s work *Looking at you VI*, the subject wears a hood, handmade from an Australian Flag, fraying at the edges and with a black bib that further conceals the wearer. What role has Karla assigned to the mask and materials used within this work? Can you identify possible cultural interpretations or references to cultural traditions?

Karla’s poem *To see or not to see* accompanies the work *Looking at you VI*. What meaning can be taken from the title of this poem? How might the ideas presented in this poem relate to the artist’s own experiences?

Together, how do the poem and the work *Looking at you VI* explore themes of marginalisation?

In both the poem and the work titled *Quartered*, Karla refers to high incarceration rates among First Nations youth in Australia. Visually, how does Karla convey the seriousness and tragedy of this topic? How does this work provoke discussion about racism and marginalisation?

Looking at the installation *Quartered*, what effect is created by the arrangement of the objects and the way they are secured to the wall? What meanings can be drawn from Karla symbolising male genitalia in this way?

FOCUS: Context - place/viewpoints/philosophies/ideologies

VCE Art/Studio: Personal framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Personal context; Formal context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 2

ACARA Curriculum links **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM120](#); [ACAVAR123](#); [ACAVAR124](#) | **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM129](#); [ACAVAR130](#)

Freelance writer, Louise Martin-Chew said recently of Karla Dickens “*She does not shy from the life experience that is fuel for these objects. Art gave her a voice, at times literally.*”²

Examine the work *Looking at you VI*. What life experiences and influences might this work be communicating?

Karla’s poetry is displayed alongside her art work, how does the use of this artform enhance the interpretation of the artwork? How might this inclusion of poetry help connect with the viewers’ experiences to construct meaning?

FOCUS: Personal - politics/roles and responsibilities of art

VCE Art/Studio: Cultural Framework: Cultural; Contemporary

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Cultural context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 3

ACARA Curriculum links: **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAR123](#) | **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM125](#); [ACAVAR131](#)

Look at *Quartered* and consider the work through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives. What key cultural and political messages might be communicated in this work?

In the poem *To see or not to see* and the work *Looking at you VI* Karla makes social commentary on being a marginalised woman. How might art play an important role in communicating personal, sometimes difficult stories. Looking at the poem, what other issues of marginalisation are reflected?

ACTIVITY

Think of a personal story that you would like to communicate. What second hand objects would you choose to construct a work, and how would you arrange or assemble the piece?

Notes

1 Louise Martin-Chew, “Karla Dickens Material Memory” *VAULT* Issue 26 May to July (2019): 28-33

2 Louise Martin-Chew, “Karla Dickens Material Memory” *VAULT* Issue 26 May to July (2019): 28-33

S.J. NORMAN



S.J. NORMAN

Bone Library

2012

Sheep and cattle bones, hand-scribed paper

Dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist

S.J. NORMAN

B. 1984, Sydney, Australia

Lives and works in Melbourne, Australia; and Berlin, Germany

Pronouns: they/them/theirs

ARTIST STATEMENT

The artwork *Bone Library* considers the uneasy relationship between artefact, culture and colonial anthropology. The artist S.J. Norman has engraved into the bones of sheep and beef cattle, words from Indigenous Australian languages which have been classified as 'extinct'.

Norman questions language not only as a subject, but as a site of remembrance. They ask: 'why is it that the act of inscription is so central to our notion of memorial? How, through this embodied form of utterance, might we give space to significant losses? And how, through these gestures, might we collectively reinvest with life, that which has been declared "dead"?'

This display represents a much broader and ongoing body of work whereby the artist has performed the act of inscription. During these performances, members of the audience have been invited to become public trustees of the collection by taking a single bone into their temporary trusteeship, agreeing to hold and care for it until such time as the complete collection is recalled. In doing so the audience become members of an international network of 'Bone Librarians', responsible for the shared custodianship of a floating collection.

BIOGRAPHY

Focused on the body as a siphon for personal and collective memory, S.J. Norman investigates the effects of dispossession, displacement and erasure, while testing the limits of intimacy, permission and trust within durational, task-based performances, installations and critical texts.

Norman participated in the 2015 Kaldor Public Art Project, Marina Abramovic: In Residence (Sydney). They have exhibited, performed and discussed their work at the Venice International Performance Week (Venice, Italy); Spill Festival of Live Art (London, UK); Fierce Festival (Birmingham, UK); In Between Time (Bristol, UK); Performance Space (Sydney); Edinburgh Festival (Edinburgh, UK); Brisbane International Festival (Brisbane); Melbourne International Festival (Melbourne); the 2nd Tarnanthi Festival of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art at the Art Gallery of South Australia (Adelaide) and Tate Modern (London, UK).

Norman holds a degree in Writing and Cultural Studies from the University of Technology, Sydney, and has been an Associate Student of Visual Art at Dartington College, Devon, UK. In 2014, they studied jewellery and silversmithing at Central St Martin's School of Art and Design, London. They trained for several years in dance improvisation and Bodyweather with choreographer Martin Del Amo and DeQuincy Co. They have also trained in Butoh with Akaji Maro and Yoshito Ohno at the Kazuo Ohno studio.

FOCUS: Object - materials/techniques

VCE Art/Studio: Structural framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Contemporary Context; Formal context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus: Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 1 & 2

ACARA Curriculum links: **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM118](#); [ACAVAM119](#); [ACAVAM122](#) | **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM126](#); [ACAVAM127](#); [ACAVAM128](#)

S.J. Norman says every element of the piece speaks to Australia's complex colonial history in some way, "*usually in several ways, I want the dialogue to go in several different directions*". ¹

Look closely at this installation of elements from *Bone Library*, what possible meaning can you derive from the use of bones, and the way the artist has prepared them to create the work?

The artist chose engraving as a method to inscribe the bones. What might this technique of inscription, and the font style used bring to the work's meaning? In what other places might you see engraving used?

To create and perform *Bone Library*, S.J. Norman learned the techniques and skills of engraving. Can you think of a time as an artist when you have had to learn specific skills to create an artwork? Why do you think the artist chose to acquire this new skill? When might this be important rather than simply commission another skilled person to complete this component of the work?

FOCUS: Subject - concepts/theme/intention

VCE Art/Studio: Contemporary framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus- Visual Arts: Cultural context; Personal context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 1 & 2

ACARA Curriculum links: **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM122](#); [ACAVAR123](#) | **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM125](#); [ACAVAM128](#); [ACAVAM129](#)

The *Bone Library* installation in *Violent Salt* references a broader, ongoing performance work which involves S.J. Norman installed in a place for a period of time, performing the act of engraving the 'extinct' languages onto the bones. Why might they have chosen to perform the work in this way? Imagine you're in the audience, witnessing the performance. As a sensory experience, what would it sound, look, smell and feel like?

View this insight into S.J. Norman's practice as an installation performance artist <https://vimeo.com/111755243>
What greater meaning can be gained when you view the artist physically present within the work?

The artist states "*We carry a phenomenal amount of information in our bodies, a lot of which is ancestral. We carry trauma and we carry secrets, we carry the imprints of other bodies, we carry the living and the dead*"; "*I seek to centralise the audiences' body within the experience. This is a huge part of both my artistic and political praxis.*" ²

What role does S.J. urge the audience to play in this work?

S.J. Norman's Spill Festival performance of *Bone Library* was enacted over a period of three days. How is 'time' communicated in *Bone Library* and what level of importance, and role does this play in the work? How has the artist simultaneously explored notions of history, present and future?

FOCUS: Context - place/viewpoints/philosophies/ideologies

VCE Art/Studio: Personal framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Personal context; Formal context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 2

ACARA Curriculum links: **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM118](#); [ACAVAM119](#) ; [ACAVAM120](#); [ACAVAR124](#) | **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM127](#); [ACAVAM128](#); [ACAVAM129](#); [ACAVAR130](#)

“The City State Library was a judicious setting for the work. Winding through shelves of English language novels, made the transition to a stark room, walled ceiling-to-floor with road strips of translucent plastic all the more compelling. A forensic lab, quarantined space, archaeological dig or even abattoir was evoked. This was heightened by the distinctive smell of burning bone as it was scored with words.” ³

Compare the above description of the *Bone Library* performance setting, with how this work is being displayed in *Violent Salt*. How can changing the setting or site influence the context of a work? Consider how the interpretation of different settings and sites might be influenced by the audience’s cultural background?

In *Bone Library* the artist explores cultural importance of language. Consider and compare how different cultures value spoken vs written word, including traditional Australian First Nations and Colonial cultures. When language is recorded in written words, does it become more or less accessible?

S.J.’s inscriptions on the bones include words such as “older brother”, “sister” and “greedy”. What significance might there be to using these kinds of everyday words? What other words would you consider significant to include in *Bone Library* and why?

What is a local Indigenous language/s in the place where you live? What is the history of this local language, and is it being spoken and taught today? In the spirit of *Bone Library*, what can you (and your community) do to better understand and keep this language alive into the future?

ACTIVITY

Invite a local First Nations Elder in your community to speak to your class about local culture and language. Research and learn some words that have significance to you and discuss ways you could appropriately display and use them in the classroom.

FOCUS: Personal - politics/roles and responsibilities of art

VCE Art/Studio: Cultural Framework: Cultural; Contemporary

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Cultural context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 3

ACARA Curriculum links: **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAR123](#); [ACAVAR124](#) | **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM125](#); [ACAVAR131](#)

The artist isn’t the sole participant in the work. Consider *Bone Library* as an ongoing body of work and identify all the past, present and future participants and stakeholders that may play a role. How does *Bone Library* facilitate active remembrance?

Like Richard Bell and his work ‘You Can Go Now’, S.J. Norman is prompting us to consider this work in a global context... how is *Bone Library* achieving this?

‘The 21st century will witness a decline in linguistic diversity unprecedented in history’ writes linguist Dr Gregory D.S. Anderson, ‘Speakers abandon languages in direct response to bias and discrimination, whether this is realised overtly through the explicit repression or oppression of linguistic minorities or the community of speakers that the language serves to identify as a separate group, or through more subtle covert forms of discrimination.’ ⁴

How might the demise of First Nations languages lead to further isolation and marginalisation?

In the work statement, S.J. Norman refers to the languages being declared 'dead'. Who classified these languages as 'extinct'? What defines the extinction of language, and how are the languages being resurrected if they are 'dead'?

In Australia since Colonisation, governments have actively discouraged the use of First Nations languages. Research and identify what National and State political policies might have led to the demise of First Nations languages in Australia.

ACTIVITY

As a group, create a list of ideas and activities that could be used to revitalise 'endangered' languages. Who should be consulted with? How will you present these ideas to others?

Notes

1 Pacitti Company, Thinker in residence series, *Heather Cassils in Conversation With... Sarah-jane Norman*, Spill Festival of performance, 2014. <https://vimeo.com/112079889>

2 David Drayton, "S.J talks to Dave Drayton", *TheMusic.com.au*, 2013. <https://www.sarahjanenorman.com/media-highlights-city-of-melbourne>

3 Harun Morrison, 'Communicate without words for a day.' Next Wave Festival 2012 Melbourne, Australia *This is tomorrow, Contemporary Art Magazine*, 2012. <http://thisistomorrow.info/articles/next-wave-festival-2012>

4 Gregory D.S. Anderson, "Saving Endangered Languages Before They Disappear", *The Solutions Journal*, 5, no. 2(2014): 76-83, <https://www.thesolutionsjournal.com/article/saving-endangered-languages-before-they-disappear/>

YHONNIE SCARCE



Yhonnie SCARCE

Hollowing Earth (detail)

2016-2017

Blown and hot formed Uranium glass

Dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist and This Is No Fantasy, Melbourne

YHONNIE SCARCE

Kokatha and Nukunu Peoples

B. Woomera, South Australia

Lives and works in Melbourne and South Australia

Pronouns: She/her/hers

ARTIST STATEMENT

Hollowing Earth examines the issues related to the mining of uranium on Aboriginal land. South Australia is home to over 25 underground and open cut mines, many of which are operating close to occupied areas. Some of the substances that are being excavated in these mines are, zinc, copper, gold, iron ore, coal and uranium.

The artist states, 'Uranium glass has been used in this work to represent the sickness that this material inflicts on those who have been in contact with it, but also the illness that is left behind once the earth has been opened and its contents have been exposed. Each "bush banana" form identifies the desecration of country, gaping holes and scarred surfaces, all of which is the aftermath of the disrespectful behaviour that mining inflicts on the planet'.

BIOGRAPHY

Yhonnie Scarce is one of the first contemporary Australian artists to explore the political and aesthetic power of glass. Scarce's work references the ongoing effects of colonisation on Aboriginal people. Scarce's research focus has explored the impact of the removal and relocation of Aboriginal people from their homelands and the forcible removal of Aboriginal children from their families.

Scarce's work is seen in the collections of the National Gallery of Victoria, The Art Gallery of South Australia, National Gallery Australia, Flinders University Art Museum, the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, and the University of South Australia.

In 2016 Scarce exhibited at Harvard Art Museum, Massachusetts, Galway Art Centre, Ireland and THIS IS NO FANTASY + dianne tanzer gallery, Melbourne. In 2015 Scarce exhibited internationally in Hong Kong, Vancouver, Berlin, Japan and Italy and was involved in several major projects around Australia including the Palimpsest Biennale, Mildura and a site-specific installation at the Art Gallery of South Australia as part of Tarnanthi Festival of Contemporary and Torres Strait Islander Art. Scarce holds a Master of Fine Arts from Monash University.

Yhonnie Scarce is represented by This Is No Fantasy, Melbourne.

FOCUS: Object - materials/techniques

VCE Art/Studio: Structural Framework

Qld Senior Secondary Visual Arts: Contemporary context; Formal context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 1 & 2

ACARA curriculum links: [Yr 7 & 8 ACAVAM118](#); [ACAVAM119](#) | [Yr 9 & 10 ACAVAM125](#); [ACAVAM127](#); [ACAVAM128](#)

Yhonnie Scarce often creates hand-blown glass forms representing important Aboriginal food sources. Why has the artist chosen to create *Hollowing Earth* using the shapes of bush bananas? Can you identify the layers of meaning the artist is conveying by creating 'wounds' on their surfaces?

Historically in glass making, uranium was commonly used as an ingredient to create specific colours. Looking at the artwork, what colour range might uranium produce? These days uranium is rarely used, particularly for tableware, why might this be the case? How does the artist's intentional use of this material, impact your interpretation of the work?

Consider the nature and qualities of glass as a medium and identify possible meanings this brings to the work.

FOCUS: Subject - concepts/theme/intention

VCE Art/Studio: Contemporary Framework

Qld Senior Secondary Visual Arts: Personal context; Formal context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 1 & 2

ACARA curriculum links: [Yr 7 & 8 ACAVAM122](#); [ACAVAR124](#); [Yr 9 & 10 ACAVAM125](#); [ACAVAM127](#); [ACAVAM128](#); [ACAVAM129](#)

By using uranium to create this work, Yhonnie prompts us to consider the uses of chemical elements, as well as how and where it is sourced in Australia. How does this provoke discussion about mining in the twenty-first century?

What practical considerations might the artist, and galleries face during the creation, storage and display of artwork made using uranium? Does this speak to the artist's strength of intention and importance of message?

FOCUS: Context – place/viewpoints/philosophies/ideologies

VCE Art/Studio: Cultural framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus Visual Arts: Cultural context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 2

ACARA curriculum links: [Yr 7 & 8 ACAVAM120](#); [ACAVAR123](#); [ACAVAR124](#) | [Yr 9 & 10 ACAVAR129](#); [ACAVAR130](#)

Look closely at *Hollowing Earth*, how has the artist's depiction of the bush banana explored the concept of time? How does the work make social commentary regarding the effect mining has on people and the environment?

The artist has used a popular native Australian food source for *Hollowing Earth*. What message does this send to the audience? Does the artist's choice of the bush banana send the audience a message regarding cultural traditions and influences?

FOCUS: Personal - politics/roles and responsibilities of art

VCE Art/Studio: Cultural Framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus- Visual Arts: Personal context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 3

ACARA curriculum links: **Yr 7 & 8** - [ACAVAM118](#); [ACAVAM122](#) | **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAR130](#); [ACAVAR131](#)

Through her work, Yhonnie seeks to create awareness of the health and wellbeing of people living in communities affected by mining, as well as the effect it has on land, flora and fauna. What methods has the artist most effectively used to do this, and what role do you believe art plays in raising awareness in this way? How does using art for this purpose compare to other methods for raising awareness?

How does the work *Hollowing Earth* connect with political and environmental issues arising in your local region?

FURTHER RESEARCH/ LINKS

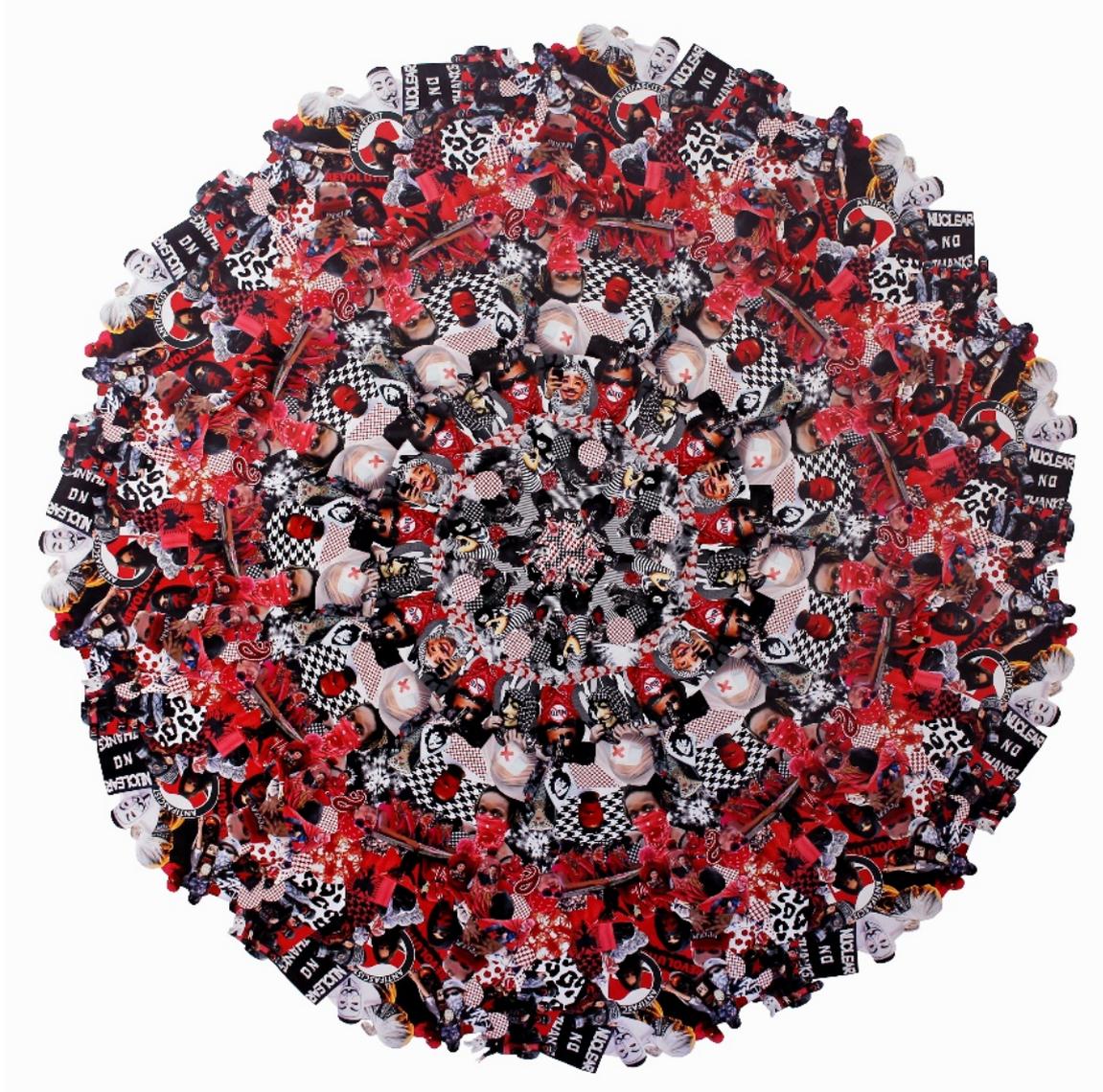
Research Australia's mining and nuclear history as well as current political, social and ethical views on mining uranium in Australia. Explore the effects that mining in general has on First Nations People and people living in regional communities.

Colonialization had devastating effects on Aboriginal agricultural practices which played an integral role in Aboriginal life. These practices have been written and spoken about extensively by researcher and writer Bruce Pascoe. Bruce is an Australian Indigenous writer, from the Bunurong clan, of the Kulin nation. He has worked as a teacher, farmer, a fisherman and an Aboriginal language researcher. For further research and discussion on this topic, read Bruce's important book on Aboriginal Australia and the Birth of Agriculture, *Dark Emu*, and view his TED talks online.

ACTIVITY

Create a piece of artwork to communicate a message about your environment, consider what type of flora or fauna you might use. Consider the types of information this new artwork will need to convey. Explore ideas that might help to pique your audience's curiosity and encourage them to learn more.

JEMIMA WYMAN



Jemima WYMAN

Aggregate Icon (from centre to periphery: Free-Gaza protester, Palestine, 5th May 2012 (Che Guevara t-shirt), Anti-government protester, Milan, 14th December 2010 (screaming skull), Union member protester against labour and fiscal reform, Madrid, 31st March 2012 (striped t-shirt), Indigenous land rights protester, Caledonia, 28th February 2006 (camo hoodie).....)

2016

Hand-cut digital photographs, collage

173 cm diameter

Mackay Regional Council Art Collection

JEMIMA WYMAN

Pairabeenee People

B. 1977 Sydney, Australia

Lives and works in Brisbane, Australia; and Los Angeles, United States of America

Pronouns: she/her/hers

ARTIST STATEMENT

My practice investigates camouflage as a social, formal and political strategy. Through patterning and masking, my recent work explores the theme of visual resistance especially when it is used by marginalised groups to gain power in zones of conflict. Since 2008, I have collected and archived a vast array of images of masked protesters engaged in this very subterfuge through my *MAS-archive*. The archive was developed from witnessing various protest movements online. In an effort to be active, embodied, and empathetic in the interface with the computer screen, I started pulling, archiving, printing and hand-cutting images of protesters wearing masks. The archive has developed in tandem with the protest culture growing globally, especially over the last few years.

As I pull images and create various groupings, different 'collective skins' are emphasised. A paisley bandana, a Keffiyeh, a balaclava, or a Guy Fawkes mask unites these collectives, even when they have divergent ideological positions or are made up of protesters who live millions of miles apart. The members of these imaginary collectives share in the same social camouflage. This camouflage is permissive and facilitates collective visual resistance and the imagination of different futures beyond now.

BIOGRAPHY

Jemima Wyman's practice encompasses performance, video, installation, textiles, photography and painting. She has exhibited widely in Australia and internationally since 1998.

Her recent solo exhibitions were held at Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles (2018 & 2015); Sullivan and Strumpf, Sydney (2017 & 2019); Milani Gallery, Brisbane (2015), and at Steve Turner Contemporary, Los Angeles (2013).

Wyman's work has been included in group exhibitions at City Gallery Wellington; ZKM, Germany; Kunsthaus Langenthal, Switzerland; Nam June Paik Art Center, Korea; Human Resources, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; UQ Art Museum; 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan, and Monash University Museum of Art, Australia.

Her recent commissions include a large-scale wall-work for 'The National' at Carriageworks in Sydney, a five-room interactive installation (plus publication) for The Children's Art Centre at GOMA and a large-scale interactive installation for the Liverpool Biennial at FACT. Writing about Wyman's art practice has been published in The Los Angeles Times, Artlink, Art Collector and Artforum.

Jemima Wyman is represented by Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles; Sullivan + Strumpf, Sydney; and Milani Gallery, Brisbane.

Focus: Object - materials/techniques

VCE Art/Studio: Structural framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Contemporary Context; Formal context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus: Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 1 & 2

ACARA Curriculum links: **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM118](#); [ACAVAM119](#); [ACAVAM122](#); [ACAVAR124](#) | **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM126](#); [ACAVAM127](#); [ACAVAM128](#)

In *Aggregate Icon* Jemima Wyman researches the way minority groups use masks, patterning and camouflage in protest. What visual elements and principles of design has the artist employed to explore these themes?

What possible meaning might the artist be conveying using these strong visual techniques?

Appropriating photographic images from the internet provides Wyman with a seemingly endless source of material. Look closely at both the artist's statement and the imagery in *Aggregate Icon* and consider the artist's intention by using this source material. What effect does it have on you?

Consider the original online depiction of this kind of imagery, scattered throughout the internet. What effect does it have on you to see the imagery refashioned in this way?

In what way has Wyman used or adapted traditional art making techniques and contemporary technologies in this work? How might combining traditional and contemporary visual tools in this way impact people in the audience with different ages, cultures or backgrounds?

Focus: Subject - concepts/theme/intention

VCE Art/Studio: Contemporary framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Cultural context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 1 & 2

ACARA Curriculum links: **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM119](#); [ACAVAM122](#); [ACAVAR123](#) | **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM125](#); [ACAVAM126](#); [ACAVAR130](#)

Jemima Wyman hopes her work fosters an increased visual awareness of events and surrounding climates.

"Most of all I hope it fosters an empathetic mode of being." ¹

Look closely at *Aggregate icon*, what themes within the work provoke empathy in the viewer? How might these themes relate to situations or events in your community?

In her work statement, Jemima communicates that she explores 'the theme of visual resistance especially when it is used by marginalised groups to gain power in zones of conflict.' What evidence of visual resistance can you identify in this work?

Why do you think people in marginalised groups might feel the need to engage in public protest using tools like masks, bright colours, patterns and placards?

Aggregate Icon alters as you view the work from a distance before moving closer. Can you describe how your reading of the work changes as your view changes? What could the artist's intention be in doing this?

Focus: Context – place/viewpoints/philosophies/ideologies

VCE Art/Studio: Personal framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Personal context; Formal context; Cultural context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 2

ACARA Curriculum links **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAM120](#); [ACAVAR123](#); [ACAVAR124](#) | **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM127](#); [ACAVAM129](#); [ACAVAR130](#)

Jemima Wyman states that her work is an “effort to be active, embodied and empathetic” to events she witnesses on the internet. Looking closely at the construction of this work, describe the methods she has used to achieve this.

For this work, Wyman has sourced photographic imagery from a variety of protests throughout the world and at different points in time. Does this juxtaposition of global imagery from different times, places and events add more layers of meaning? In what way does this provoke discussion about twenty-first-century issues and concerns?

How does *Aggregate Icon* show influences of traditional art movements, artforms or styles from around the world?

Focus: Personal - politics/roles and responsibilities of art

VCE Art/Studio: Cultural framework; Contemporary framework

Qld Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts: Cultural context

Qld Applied Senior Secondary Syllabus - Visual Arts in Practice: Core topics 3

ACARA Curriculum links: **Yr 7 & 8** [ACAVAR123](#); [ACAVAR124](#) | **Yr 9 & 10** [ACAVAM125](#); [ACAVAM129](#); [ACAVAR130](#); [ACAVAR131](#)

Jemima Wyman is very interested in the visual tools of activism during acts of protest. What role does traditional and social media play in this? What might be the advantages and disadvantages of media coverage of protests?

Wyman observes “The criticality of activism needs to be applied to art in order to reveal the perpetuation of false narratives.”²

What role do artists have as activists in Australian society? What do you think it means for someone who is marginalised to have art as a means to communicate their story?

Media ‘framing’ is the angle or perspective from which a news story is told. An example of this is when different pieces of information are put together to influence the viewer’s interpretation of an event. How might Wyman’s *Aggregate Icon* reflect the technique of ‘framing’ to influence the viewer’s perspective?

ACTIVITY:

Aggregate Icon encourages empathy towards the plight of people from marginalised groups or communities making protest. Create an artwork that recognises and communicates your support for an uprising against injustice, or inequity.

Notes

1. Jemima Wyman, “Rebel with a Cause: Jemima Wyman”, *Buro 247*, accessed July 5, 2019, <http://www.buro247.com.au/culture-lifestyle/insiders/rebels-with-a-cause-jemima-wyman.html>

2. Jasmina Tumbas, “the Criticality Of Activism Needs To Be Applied To Art In Order To Reveal the Perpetuation Of False Narratives”. Academia Edu, 2016, https://www.academia.edu/35445706/Tumbas_The_Criticality_of_activism_needs_to_be_applied_to_art_in_order_to_reveal_the_perpetuation_of_false_narratives_A_Conversation_with_Jemima_Wyman_2016?auto=download

VIOLENT SALT

EDUCATION RESOURCE

Violent Salt is an Artspace Mackay touring exhibition curated by Yhønnie Scarce and Claire Watson



Australian Government
Visual Arts and Craft Strategy



Queensland
Government

