

VIOLENT SALT







# VIOLENT SALT



An Artspace Mackay touring exhibition  
Curated by Yhonnie Scarce and Claire Watson



**ABDUL ABDULLAH**

**VERNON AH KEE**

**RICHARD BELL**

**DANIEL BOYD**

**MEGAN COPE**

**KARLA DICKENS**

**S.J. NORMAN**

**YHONNIE SCARCE**

**JEMIMA WYMAN**



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# FOREWORD

## Tracey Heathwood

Director, Artspace Mackay

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Welcome to *Violent Salt*, an exhibition which brings together contemporary artists from across Australia to reflect on issues surrounding racism and discrimination against Australia's First Peoples and minority groups.

Mackay has a very rich and complex cultural history. The Mackay Regional Council local government area covers 7,622 km<sup>2</sup> and is situated on the traditional lands of the Yuwibara and Yuibera Peoples. Mackay is also home to the largest population of Australian South Sea Islanders, the Australian-born descendants of South Sea Islanders first blackbirded to Mackay in 1867 as a source of labour for the burgeoning sugar plantations. Some Torres Strait Islanders moved to Mackay seeking a familiar coastal environment after being evacuated from the Torres Strait to the Cherbourg mission at the height of World War II. Others came for the promise of work as fishermen, cane-cutters, railway fettlers and agricultural labourers. Today, 40 different nationalities are represented in the region, making our community incredibly culturally-diverse.

Artspace Mackay is committed to creating a safe and respectful environment for all in which to question, connect, celebrate and inspire through arts, culture and creativity. Exhibitions like *Violent Salt* encourage open conversation about the ways discrimination and racism have affected Australians and help create pathways for supporting, healing and understanding.

Artspace Mackay is very proud to be presenting a national tour of *Violent Salt* to enable these conversations to take place more broadly across regional and metropolitan Australia. Some of the artworks are from our own Mackay Regional Council Art Collection, including works by Karla Dickens and former Mackay resident Jemima Wyman, whilst others are on loan from fellow public galleries and private lenders. Works by Vernon Ah Kee and Daniel Boyd were commissioned especially for the exhibition.

Co-Curators Yhonnie Scarce and Claire Watson and the nine artists featured in this exhibition are to be commended for boldly tackling difficult and challenging aspects of Australian culture through this exhibition. I sincerely thank the artists and their representative galleries, public and private lenders for their commitment to this exhibition; the co-curators and Nat Thomas for their thoughtful essays; and, Yhonnie, Claire and my incredible Artspace Mackay team for making this ambitious project a reality.

I also give thanks to the Australia Council for the Arts and Arts Queensland for their generous support. It is the support of such organisations that enables regional galleries to develop and tour exhibitions of national significance.



# VIOLENT SALT

**Yhonnie Scarce & Claire Watson**

Curators

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The city of Mackay is the starting point for *Violent Salt*. Its history of blackbirding directly speaks to the neglected and exploited people of Australia. There were over 50,000 South Sea Islanders brought to Northern Queensland over 150 years ago, either against their will or tricked in to working as slaves for the cotton and sugar cane industries. Through the hard work of volunteers, the stories of South Sea Islanders—laid to rest in over 110 unmarked graves in the Mackay cemetery—are being researched and uncovered. Within this context of uncovering biographies of the forgotten, *Violent Salt* reflects on the harsh realities of a discriminatory society and how it still affects people today.

Combining works from the Mackay Regional Council Art Collection along with works on loan from public galleries and private lenders, the exhibition posits that there can be hope but facing the truth is a necessary step forward. 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.

*Violent Salt* brings together contemporary artists from across Australia representing diverse cultural heritage. The exhibition explores our violent history, cultural economies and the ongoing desecration of the natural environment and ecologies. It reflects on the experiences of the marginalised, the underrepresented

and the silenced. Issues surrounding racism and discrimination against Australia's First Peoples and minority groups as well as the lack of respect for, and desecration of culture and the natural environment are discussed. *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.

*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. In visiting the Mackay cemetery, we felt a desire to share the story of suffering. 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 impacts First Nations communities and minority groups today. These stories need to be discussed and we are so pleased that the exhibition will tour so that a much wider audience can share in these conversations.

'Violent Salt' was a term found in Tony Birch's preface to 'Broken Teeth', a book of his incisive poetry that was published in 2016.<sup>1</sup> 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. We were thrilled that Tony Birch supported the use of his phrase.

We are honoured to work with so many significant Australian artists in *Violent Salt*: Abdul Abdullah, Vernon Ah Kee, Richard Bell, Daniel Boyd, Megan Cope, Karla Dickens, S.J. Norman, Yhonnie Scarce and Jemima Wyman.

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.

Many Australians are unconsciously or consciously complicit in the dissemination of the narrative that colonial occupation occurred relatively peacefully. It is this tendency in Australian culture to not confront difficult truths and rampant and ongoing systemic 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. Together, we can share, learn and build a stronger and more harmonious future for all people and our environment.

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<sup>1</sup> Tony Birch states: 'Any dictatorship worth its violent salt executes the poets first'. Tony Birch. *Broken Teeth*. Cordite Books. 2016. p.9.

**YHONNIE SCARCE**

**Hollowing Earth** 2016-2017 (detail)

Blown and hot formed Uranium glass

Dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist and This Is No Fantasy, Melbourne



# ILLUMINATING THE UNSPEAKABLE

**Yhonnie Scarce + Claire Watson**

*Any dictatorship worth its violent salt executes the poets first. It is the way it should be, as a great poem cuts through the crap and goes for the heart and heat like a double-barrelled shotgun.*<sup>1</sup> **Tony Birch**

Unapologetic, 'like a double-barrelled shotgun', the works in *Violent Salt* reveal uncomfortable truths. They share stories of resistance, violence, racial vilification, subjugation and heartache. Through various inflections, they invoke gentle activism, rhythmic visual nuances and loud crescendos of protest and defiance, bringing to light the inner murmurings of a settler psyche wishing to suppress and oppress. Their poetry points to past injustices, illuminating the unspeakable. Their truths are asserted with artistry, provoking wonderment, and a call to action, for all Australians: to acknowledge, to mourn, to respect, and to support the path to healing.

Standing tall in the city of Mackay overseeing the Pioneer River, is the heritage listed Leichardt Tree. It has witnessed a troubled past. The weight of history has left deep scars—it has survived numerous axe attacks since colonial settlement in Mackay in 1862.<sup>2</sup> From 1867, having been kidnapped or coerced from their ancestral lands, South Sea Islanders were shipped in and chained to the Leichardt Tree, awaiting their fate at the hands of their new owners/employers.<sup>3</sup> From here they were taken to work the sugar

cane fields under dubious arrangements commonly known as blackbirding, but which many would refer to as slavery.

To imagine the moment when European colonists first saw South Sea Islanders in their crusade to conquer is difficult. For the South Sea Islanders, there was no knowing that this meeting would be so unbalanced. There was no siren to alarm a warning that families were soon to be torn apart. It is this point of first contact as experienced through the colonial gaze that is interrogated by **Daniel Boyd** in *Untitled (tsotoaat)*. Drawn from anthropological images from the Anglican archives, three South Sea Islander men in canoes are observed from the ship *The Southern Cross*. This was likely their last experience of their homelands as they were no doubt blackbirded back to North Queensland where their lives would be forever changed. Adorned in a veil of dots interconnected like a galaxy of stars, tranquillity exudes from this masterful painting and yet it undeniably represents a state of suspended anxiety.

Splicing the gallery space, three shields hang like ghosts in **Vernon Ah Kee's** *Kick the Dust*. Apparitions of a disturbing conflict, they evoke trauma, exposing acute scars. Physical and psychological violence are inscribed into their surface—a boot's imprint, scratches and dirt fused. In the nearby three-channel video, the shields are dragged along a rocky landscape, before meeting their ultimate annihilation at the hand of an unseen perpetrator wielding a crowbar. The violence is disarming. Referencing a horrific racist act on an Aboriginal teenager who was noosed and dragged behind a ute with little recourse for the offender, the shield represents an

## **The Leichardt Tree**

Mackay, Australia 2019

Photograph: Yhonnie Scarce and Claire Watson

unwanted force—the settler’s dream to conquest and enforce control.

Sustained hostility and xenophobia towards First Nations People and immigrants, is the subject of **Richard Bell’s** work *YOU CAN GO NOW*. Prior to colonisation, Australian land and waters were carefully managed and cared for by Aboriginal people.<sup>4</sup> In claiming the land *Terra nullius* the British attempted to undermine Aboriginal people and their legal and moral rights to land. The hyperbolic reaction to immigration and white settlers’ emphatic pronouncements of ‘we’re full’<sup>5</sup> is here countered by the suggestion that colonisation itself is not wanted. Activist and writer Nayuka Gorrie shares:

‘The wilful historical amnesia of forgetting the very boats your ancestors came on while denying the rights of other people on boats is breathtaking.

To the white settler who feels entitled to this country, Aboriginal people are inconvenient... To be disenfranchised on your own country is a strange feeling.’<sup>6</sup>

Bell’s painting unequivocally asks the blindly privileged viewer to deconstruct their inherited and biased colonial gaze towards what it means to belong in Australia. For those who have benefited from the colonial fantasy<sup>7</sup> and the pioneering myth, this may be an affront to the lived experience of privilege and power, but inward reflection is a necessary process if a true First Nations ally is to be found.

In two embroideries handcrafted in the Yogyakarta workshop DGTWB, **Abdul Abdullah** expresses a contemporary reflection of the inner lives of Australian soldiers of war. Armed combat can be terrifying. Death and killing, a haunting experience. Reducing the psychological dimension of war and its ongoing effects into emoji—which Abdullah describes as ‘21st Century hieroglyphics’<sup>8</sup>—is a deliberate contradiction that disguises the unsettling reality of conflict. Taking their titles from the Australian Anthem, *All let us rejoice* and *For we are young and free* reflect on patriotism and how people of all backgrounds have fought under one banner whilst the truth and complexity of experience can be disguised. Self-described as a ‘misfit’<sup>9</sup>, notions of belonging are often reflected in Abdullah’s practice, drawing from his marginalised experience of being a Muslim Australian.

**Jemima Wyman’s** collage of hand-cut digital photographs *Aggregate Icon*<sup>10</sup>, seduces the viewer through symmetry. Mimicking the stained-glass design of rose windows found in gothic cathedrals, a deeper inspection reveals a swathe of imagery the artist has found online of masked protesters from across the globe. Protest rallies are often sites of turmoil and violence. Here, the artist’s hand carefully compiles this commotion from the West Bank to Missouri, into a mesmerising experience of beauty and order. The work explores the shared experiences of alienation, disenfranchisement or anger towards governments and authority. The full title to the work of over 460 words, details the location and issues spurring each masked activist into action.

Their camouflage ranges from red noses to keffiyehs, securing their anonymity and beliefs on a range of issues including fiscal reform, Indigenous land rights, air pollution and anti-nuclear sentiments.

Violence revels in anonymity and the silenced. In the chilling work by **Karla Dickens** *Looking at You VI*, the artist's arresting gaze peers through an executioner's hood emblazoned with the Southern Cross. The symbology of British occupation combined with identity obfuscation is destabilising. The hood recalls a range of haunting imagery including internationally circulated photographs of human rights violations from Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq in 2003. Less spoken of in Australia and abroad are the gross abuses against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders during the Frontier Wars and how these unspeakable acts have affected communities today through intergenerational trauma and systemic discrimination. The abuses include sexual abuse, rape, torture and massacres, many of which were recently brought to light through The Guardian's award-winning coverage *The Killing Times* declaring: *The truth of Australia's history has long been hiding in plain sight*.<sup>11</sup> Timothy Bottoms concurs:

'No Australian today is responsible for what happened on our colonial frontier. But we are responsible for not acknowledging what happened. If we do not, our integrity as a nation is flawed and we are shamed as a people for perpetuating a lie.'<sup>12</sup>

Six dismembered phalluses emanate talismanic properties in Karla Dickens' *Quartered*. Hung from thick rusted iron chains—evoking the neck chains Aboriginal and South Sea Islanders were once physically shackled with—each appendage is adorned with found materials including fabric, feathers, snake skin, jewels and teeth. On either side, hang two cricket balls/gonads. They represent the barbaric act of castration<sup>13</sup>. Ultimately, there is undeniable strength in this work. Attempts to neuter First Nations People's culture and emasculate strong men have failed. Through the leadership expressed in his NAIDOC Week 2016 Address, Stan Grant made this eminently clear: 'But of course, we didn't disappear. We have endured and our voices have never fallen silent.'<sup>14</sup>

Through a live process of inscription into the bones of sheep and cattle, **S.J. Norman's** *Bone Library* is an evocation of the importance of language to First Nations' communities. Prior to settlement there were over 250 Indigenous languages with over 800 dialects. Despite over 150 Indigenous languages still spoken, there remains a threat.<sup>15</sup> Natural habitats and native wildlife are also at risk.<sup>16</sup> An evolving performance-based work, *Bone Library* is at once a declaration of resilience and an in-memoriam to habitat and lives lost at the hands of colonialism and pastoralism. In this iteration, we see words from *A new Wiradjuri dictionary*, a restoration project led by Stan Grant and John Rudder. Revived through the act of writing, these endangered words exist as cultural artefacts presented in a museological-style display.

Culture and daily life intersect in Aboriginal middens. Markers for navigation, sites of cultural identity, and a record of history and time, shell middens represent the lives of **Megan Cope's** ancestors and respect for seasonal and sustainable coastal harvesting. In the alluring *RE FORMATION Part 2*, shimmering beer cans shaped as oyster shells are assembled to reflect the Union Jack. Under this British national flag, Aboriginal middens along the shoreline of Australia were devastated, taken to kilns for lime burning. Alcohol and disease were introduced, and communities were shattered. Despite this history, Cope's midden asserts agency. It is a performance, ephemeral and yet symbolically resolute, infused with life. It is in a state of becoming.

A seductive interplay of form, shadow and light is intrinsic to the work of **Yhonnie Scarce**. At once ethereal and ghostly, her hand-blown glass forms in *Hollowing Earth* seem to float, their viscous membranes buoyant, and yet the weight of history is paramount to their narrative. Scarred with diamond blades, punctured with metal rods, and immersed in water whilst still searing hot to create a shattered effect, these bush bananas or silky pears, tread a delicate line between life and sickness. It is no accident that their striking hue is reminiscent of phlegm. Infused with uranium, they irradiate sickness. Toxic nuclear material invariably leaks into the environment causing serious health problems for traditional custodians. Can the earth and its fruits ever recover from uranium mining? Can the sickness that leaches out into Indigenous communities be physically and psychologically expelled, coughed out?

Illuminated in this extensive survey of works, is an unsettling trauma, undercut with piercing psychological strength. Like the Leichardt Tree, the works in *Violent Salt*, breathe the air of today whilst connecting to history. They are born from deep wounds and yet are resilient and enduring. They urge the viewer to acknowledge that all Australians have the duty to know their shared history and that it is not just the purview of those who have struggled due to marginalisation.

Whilst not all the artists in *Violent Salt* are First Nations artists, they have all felt the effects of marginalisation. This connecting thread has resulted in works that draw fresh insight into Australia's cultural landscape and the events that continue to shape our ever-changing community.

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- <sup>1</sup> Tony Birch. *Broken Teeth*. Cordite Books. 2016. p.9.
- <sup>2</sup> Kathleen Mary Fallon. *Uncle Cedric Andrew Andrew's Mackay: 10 significant sites for the Australian South Sea Islanders facilitated*, edited and written by Kathleen Mary Fallon. ASSI Arts and Cultural Organisation, Mackay, Qld. 2013. p.27
- <sup>3</sup> Penny Cook, Cristine Andrew. *Fields of Sorrow: An oral history of descendants of the South Sea Islanders (Kanakas) and their descendants*. Published Cristine Andrew, Mackay, Queensland, 2000. p.185
- <sup>4</sup> Bruce Pascoe. *Dark Emu*. Magabala Books, Broome Western Australia, 2014
- <sup>5</sup> A sentiment which came to public prominence in the early 2000s.
- <sup>6</sup> Nayuka Gorrie. Hope is like a key card I perpetually lose and find. *The Guardian* 2017 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/aug/08/hope-is-like-a-key-card-i-perpetually-lose-and-find>. Retrieved 16 September 2019
- <sup>7</sup> Sarah Maddison explains '...the nation persists in governing the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in ways that are damaging and harmful, firm in its belief that with the right policy approach, the right funding arrangements, the right set of sanctions and incentives, Indigenous lives will somehow improve. This is the colonial fantasy.' Sarah Maddison. *The Colonial Fantasy: Why White Australia Can't solve Black Problems*. Allen +Unwin, 2019. P.xviii
- <sup>8</sup> Abdul Abdullah. 2018 <https://garlandmag.com/article/abdul-abdullah-and-dgtmb/>.
- <sup>9</sup> Abdul Abdullah. 2018 Otherness with Abdul Abdullah. *Field Work Podcast*. Episode 2. (hosted by Drew Pettifer) <https://soundcloud.com/fieldworkpodcast/episode-2-otherness-with-abdul-abdullah>
- <sup>10</sup> For full title, please see p. 56
- <sup>11</sup> Lorena Allam and Nick Evershed. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/mar/04/the-killing-times-the-massacres-of-aboriginal-people-australia-must-confront>
- <sup>12</sup> Timothy Bottoms. *The Conspiracy of Silence: Queensland's frontier killing times*. Allen + Unwin, Sydney, 2013, p.207
- <sup>13</sup> The artist in conversation. Castration of Aboriginal people is cited in the chapter 'English Colonial Terrorism, Genocide and Indigenous Australians': Asafa Jalata. *Phases of Terrorism in the Age of Globalization: From Christopher Columbus to Osama Bin Laden*, Palgrave Macmillan, UK 2016. p.83
- <sup>14</sup> See full transcript <https://dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/public-diplomacy/indigenous/naidoc-week/Pages/transcript-stan-grants-naidoc-week-2016-address.aspx>. The first time Stan Grant raised these issues was in his IQ2 speech in 2015.
- <sup>15</sup> The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports that there were more than 150 Australian Indigenous languages spoken at home, reflecting the linguistic diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. *Census of Population and Housing, 2016*
- <sup>16</sup> Over 300 species of Australian animals and nearly 1,200 native plant species are at risk of extinction. See the Australian Government website for further details: <https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/publications/threatened-species-and-ecological-communities-australia>.







# CRUMBLING AUSTRALIAN MYTHS

**Nat Thomas**

‘Such is the tenacity of the Australian delusion, it encourages an impoverished national debate.’<sup>1</sup> Bruce Pascoe

To accompany the exhibition *Violent Salt*, I’ve been asked to write about racism in Australia, my experiences as a white Australian and ideas about inclusivity, diversity and future visions. I can speak about being a white Australian as that is my privilege. But a white woman addressing racism is problematic. White people are so adept at taking the higher moral ground and waxing lyrical about that which we have no experience. We continue to frame race relations as a problem we will solve while negating our own responsibilities. But white people are the problem and our problem is we don’t think we’ve got a problem.

**White Australians need to be educated in anti-racism and begin unlearning unconscious bias.**

White Australians like to think of ourselves as sun-loving, fun-loving, super relaxed, egalitarian people. ‘Fair Go Mate’ and the more recent: ‘Have a go, get a go’, is political rhetoric based in aspiration that continues to win elections. The meritocracy myth promises if you work hard here you’ll prosper. We’re addicted to the idea that we live in the ‘Lucky Country’. A cursory glance at reality, shows this country is not lucky or

fair for everyone. Australia has a problem with racism. The difference between how white Australians see ourselves and the reality of how we are is firmly based in delusion.

Weekends we spend at barbies with family and friends, a couple of tinnies and a round of backyard cricket. Truth is we cheat at cricket and we leave a mess everywhere we go. But all Australians are united in our love of sport. We idolise our sporting heroes but the nation’s racism is never more evident than on sporting fields. The vilification of football legends like Michael Long, Nicky Winmar, and most recently Adam Goodes, is racism writ large. When Cathy Freeman won gold at the 1984 Commonwealth (‘Stolenwealth’) Games, cloaking herself in the Aboriginal flag for her victory lap, all hell broke loose. Cathy’s expression of pride in being Aboriginal labeled ‘Un-Australian’.

Australians spend increasingly hot days cooling down on any one of our beautiful beaches, famed for their white sands and clean breaks. *Bondi Rescue* entertains us with ‘real’ stories of our brave (white) surf lifesavers, as they confront a multitude of dilemmas to ensure we remain safe on our day at the beach. But the beach isn’t safe for everyone. In 2005, during the Cronulla riots, mob violence spread out from the beach onto surrounding streets. Racial tensions are fuelled by a media that stokes fear. Commentators like shock-joke Alan Jones.

Over on Channel 7’s *Sunrise* (Sunlies’), all-white panels of ‘experts’ are always waiting in the wings in full make-up, ready to ignore their lack of lived experience of being marginalised, displaced, disadvantaged, or vulnerable to talk about just that. Their discussions of the

**VERNON AH KEE**

*Kick the Dust* 2019 (detail)

Riot shields

Dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

complexities of race relations in Australia in a recent 'Hot Topics' segment, hosted by Samantha Armytage, was so blatantly racist that protests and a lawsuit have resulted. A court enforceable review of 7's production processes in relation to sensitive and complex matters has also been ordered.

Whitewashing is a system whereby white people manipulate the beliefs, explanations, perceptions and values of culturally diverse societies by making ourselves the 'norm' and everyone else the 'other'. It is a way of surreptitiously imposing our beliefs onto everyone but pretending we're not. Whitewashing is the foundation on which white normativity and white entitlement are built. From there it's a short step into white nationalism and white supremacy.

On Election Day we partake in a democracy sausage, then we vote in politicians, who we'll pay to further undermine that democracy. Recently I read in the paper that 'we in Australia have the privilege of living in a democracy where human rights are upheld.' Self-congratulatory reporting is popular with readers but negates that human rights have never been upheld in Australia.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart was released in mid 2017 following an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Referendum Convention. It calls for a 'First Nations Voice' in the Australian constitution and for a process of 'truth-telling' between government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, a step toward processing our dark and violent colonial past.

From the year after I was born in Queensland, till I was 20 years old Joh Bjelke-Petersen was Premier. Joh was famously racist. He was an obsessed, extravagant, paranoid zealot. His ideology dismantled Aboriginal rights, environmental rights, women's rights, and threatened civil liberties, freedom of the press and intellectuals. He destroyed the welfare state, unions and made public demonstration illegal. Joh set up a Police state and a gerrymander. Echoes of Joh's extreme

ideology are present within contemporary Australian politics. I used to think that in time we'd learn from our mistakes but white-history is cyclical and dangerous. Without Joh we wouldn't have Pauline Hansen or 'One Nation' today. She is his legacy, he her inspiration.

In history we were taught that Europe's greatest minds once believed the world flat, that 'explorers' could sail to the edge of the world and fall off. For First Nation's People's this would have been the best-case-scenario.

We studied the 'Age of Discovery' - the great leaps in scientific thinking that enabled brave explorers from the Majestic European Empires (men like Christopher Columbus and Captain James Cook) to launch out into the 'Unknown'. Their mission to 'discover' and settle 'new' lands, detailing and documenting 'new' species of flora and "fauna" as they went, were much lauded. We were taught that the 'Old World' (represented by Europe), discovered the 'New World' in the Americas, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. We were taught imperialist propaganda at school.

*Terra nullius* is Latin for 'nobody's land'. It was the basis in international law used to justify the illegal British settlement of Australia, when our forebears turned up in tall ships and pretended that the world's oldest living culture, Aboriginal people, had no claim to land continually inhabited for 80,000+ years. Aboriginal Nations have lived here longer than any people have ever lived anywhere ever before.

Vernon Ah Kee's 2013 work *Drive it*, a text work of white letters on black background that says: **Australia drive it like you stole it**, aptly sums up what's happened since.

'The underestimation of Indigenous achievements was a deliberate tactic of British colonialism.'<sup>2</sup>

We didn't learn about the Frontier Wars at school, or about racial segregation in Australia. We learned about South Africa's Apartheid. Protestors mobilised to demonstrate against the Springbok

Rugby Tour, marching in opposition to South Africa's entrenched racism. White Australians are historically adept at challenging racism elsewhere, whilst failing to address our own. Instead of learning about the blackbirding that happened here, in places like Mackay, I learned about slavery in the Deep South of America. In Australia the unpaid and underpaid labor of South Sea Islander peoples coerced here propped up industries like sugar cane, poppy plantations, cotton, pastoral industries, railroads, and pearl diving and reflected a discriminatory society. In Australia we called slaves 'indentured laborers', a deceptive use of language.

In his memoir, former Director of the National Gallery of Victoria (1981-88) Patrick McCaughey writes: 'the new public prominence of Aboriginal art remains the greatest single revolution in the past quarter-century in Australian art.'<sup>3</sup> McCaughey spends the rest of his book talking up the artistic genius of Fred Williams and Sidney Nolan.

In state funded art galleries throughout Australia, a disrespectful amount of time, space and energy is spent presenting works by 'genius' white men from Western Europe and North America. The 'masterpiece' artworks of men like Monet, Manet, Degas, Dali and Duchamp, Picasso, Pollock and Rothko, they're household names because they're near impossible to avoid. If the state was to do less importing of Impressionist and Modernist 'masterpiece' exhibitions from elsewhere, which is a parochial artistic vision, and take that time and space and monet, I mean money, and spend it on Aboriginal art and culture, we'd be the better for it.

'Alter your perspective by a few degrees and the view is different.'<sup>4</sup>

Australia Day, Survival Day, Invasion Day, depending how you look at it.

To confront racism white Australians need to unlearn the propaganda we've been taught at school and learn the real history of Australia. We need to know

what whitewashing is and why it exists. We need to stop voting racists into public office. We need a new flag, a new national anthem, and to move from a constitutional monarchy to a republic. We need treaty. The artists in *Violent Salt* critique and challenge the systems of power that continue to discriminate. Art has always provided a place for us to re-connect across cultures and assert and celebrate cultural identities different from our own. That is art's power, and we all need to look closely and to listen.

I pay my respects to Indigenous Elders and leaders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded. This was, and will always be, Aboriginal Land.

—  
**Nat Thomas** is an artist and arts commentator who regularly blogs as Natty Solo.

<sup>1</sup> Bruce Pascoe. 'Dark Emu: Black Seeds: Agriculture or Accident?' 2014 Magabala Books p.104

<sup>2</sup> Ibid p.132

<sup>3</sup> Patrick McCaughey. 'The Bright Shapes and the True Names, A Memoir', The Text Publishing House, 2003, p. 227

<sup>4</sup> Bruce Pascoe. op.cit. p.36

I hope that people in Australia can eventually, sincerely afford others the complexity and specificity they afford themselves. I hope that Australians can be generous in spirit enough to make the sacrifices now that will allow our children to live in an environment better and healthier than our own. I hope that rather than jealously guarding what they perceive is theirs, they can acknowledge the systematic and generational advantages that have allowed them this privilege, and in doing so acknowledge and understand the systematic and generational disadvantages that have suppressed so many. I hope that Australians can recognise our shared societal and individual moral obligations to those who come after us to leave this world a little better off than how we found it.

**Abdul Abdullah**

# ARTWORKS

VIOLENT SALT

# ABDUL ABDULLAH

All let us rejoice 2017

Manual embroidery made with the assistance of  
DGTMB Studios

126 x 111 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Yavuz Gallery, Singapore



**For we are young and free 2017**  
Manual embroidery made with the assistance of  
DGMB Studios  
126.5 x 109 cm  
Darebin Art Collection



# VERNON AH KEE



**Kick the Dust 2019**  
Riot shields  
Dimensions variable  
Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane



**Kick the Dust** 2019

Three-channel video (still)

Six minutes

Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane





VIOLENT SALT

# RICHARD BELL

**You Can Go Now 2015**

Acrylic on canvas

180 x 240 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane



VIOLENT SALT

# DANIEL BOYD



**Untitled (tsotoaat) 2019**

Oil, acrylic and archival glue on canvas

205 x 335 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery,  
Sydney



# MEGAN COPE



**RE FORMATION part 2 2016**

Used beer cans and silica sand from Minjerribah

185 cm diameter (irregular)

Courtesy of the artist and This Is No Fantasy,  
Melbourne



VIOLENT SALT

# KARLA DICKENS

**Looking at You VI** 2017  
Inkjet print | Edition 1 of 3  
100 x 100 cm  
Darebin Art Collection



## VIOLENT SALT

**Quartered** 2017

Mixed media

Dimensions variable

Mackay Regional Council Art Collection

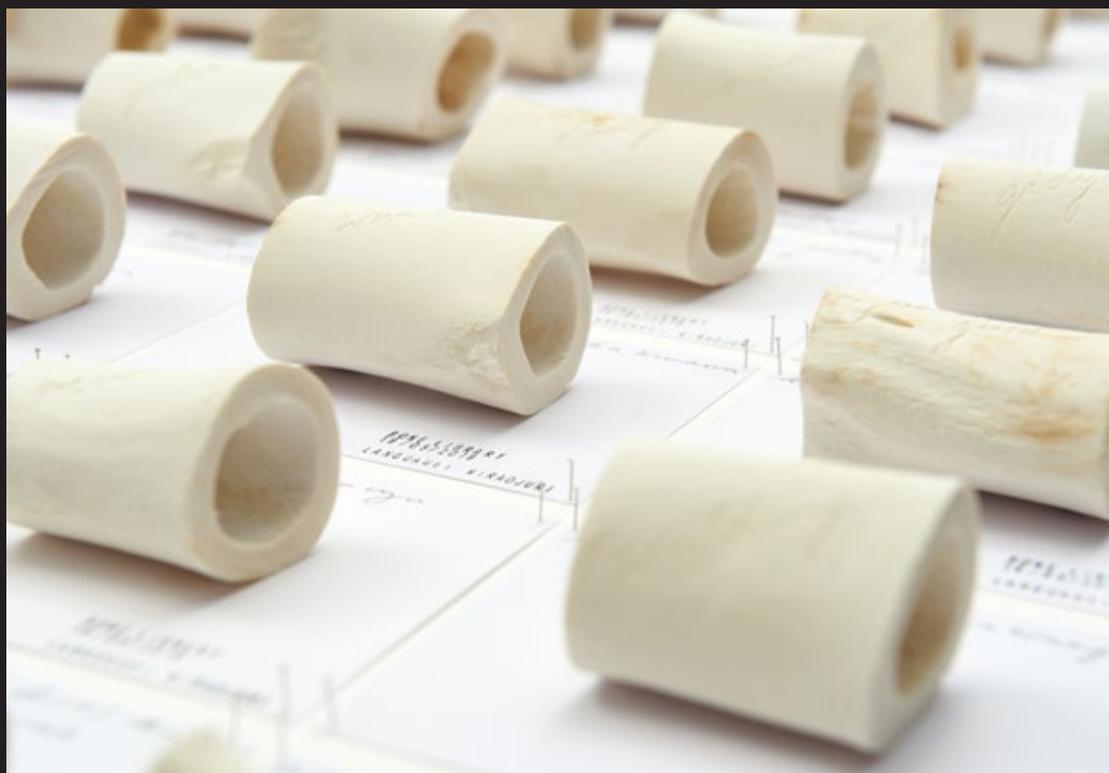




# S.J. NORMAN



**Bone Library 2012-**  
Sheep and cattle bones, hand-scribed paper  
Dimensions variable  
Courtesy of the artist



VIOLENT SALT

# YHONNIE SCARCE

**Hollowing Earth** 2016–2017

Blown and hot formed Uranium glass

Dimensions variable

Photograph: Janelle Low

Courtesy of the artist and This Is No Fantasy,  
Melbourne





VIOLENT SALT

# JEMIMA WYMAN

**Aggregate Icon** (see Page 56 for full title) 2016

Hand-cut digital photographs, collage

173 cm diameter

Mackay Regional Council Art Collection





...of those who were  
judged. The  
...of dignity  
... the world  
and placed them  
... to be grateful  
... been given.  
... to support  
... Ministry

It is my belief  
that we will continue  
to grow better as a nation  
and brighter for the world

My hope is that we  
will continue to  
improve in ways that  
will benefit all  
people.

Hope

... of the  
... of the  
... of the

...

...

My hope...  
That people regardless of color  
race or creed, respect the rights  
of all Australians to live in a  
beautiful country. Live not for  
the tragedies of the past but  
for the potential in the future.  
Life is about choices! D.

My hope is that every one  
of us will work to  
make a better world for  
ourselves and for the  
people of the future. 

...

My hope is that everybody  
starts living in the present,  
not the past.  
Let's move on and  
respect each other.  
Dinah

MY HOPE IS THAT PEOPLE CAN  
ALL BE FRIENDLY AND KIND.  
  
MARGARET  
AGE 3

...

...

...

My hope is that everyone  
will be happy and  
kind to each other.  
Dinah

My hope is that every one  
of us will work to  
make a better world for  
ourselves and for the  
people of the future.

...



# BIOGRAPHIES

# ABDUL ABDULLAH

B. 1986, Perth, Australia  
Lives and works in Sydney, Australia  
Pronouns: he/him/his

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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 Abdullah 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 Abdullah exhibited at MALLAM 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.

# 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

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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.

Vernon Ah Kee is represented by 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

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.

# 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

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; Samdani Art Foundation, Dhaka, Bangladesh; Kadist Collection in Paris, France; and the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

Daniel Boyd is represented by Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney.

## MEGAN COPE

Quandamooka People  
B. 1982 Brisbane, Australia  
Lives and works in Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island), Queensland; and Melbourne, Australia  
Pronouns: she/her/hers

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Megan Cope's site-specific sculptural installations, video work and paintings investigate issues relating to identity, the environment and mapping practices.

Cope's work often resists prescribed notions of Aboriginality and become psychogeographies across various material outcomes that challenge the grand narrative of 'Australia' as well as our sense of time and ownership in a settler colonial state.

In recent years, Cope was a finalist for the Redlands Konica Minolta Art Prize and also undertook a residency in Paris with the Australian Print Workshop for the project titled "French Connections". Her large scale sculptural installations were curated into three 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 ACCA.

Cope's work has been exhibited in Australia and internationally including at Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane; Chapter Art Center, Cardiff Wales; MONA, Hobart; Museum of Brisbane; Cairns Regional Art Gallery; Koorie Heritage Trust, Melbourne; City Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand; Para Site Contemporary Art Space, Hong Kong; Careof Art Space, Milan; the Australian Embassy, Washington USA.

Megan Cope is a member of Aboriginal art collective proppaNOW.

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

## KARLA DICKENS

Wiradjuri People  
B. 1967 Sydney, Australia  
Lives and works in Lismore, New South Wales, Australia  
Pronouns: she/her/hers

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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 thirty solo exhibitions, participated in countless group exhibitions and contributed to many community-based projects between 1994 and the present.

Over recent years, Dickens 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.

## S.J. NORMAN

Wiradjuri People

B. 1984, Sydney, Australia

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

Pronouns: they/them/theirs

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.

## YHONNIE SCARCE

Kokatha and Nukunu Peoples

B. 1973, Woomera, South Australia

Lives and works in Melbourne and South Australia

Pronouns: she/her/hers

Yhonnie Scarce is one of the first contemporary Australian artists to explore the political and aesthetic power of glass. Scarce's work references the on-going 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.

# 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

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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; Kunsthau 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.

# CO-CURATORS

**YHONNIE SCARCE** (see page 55)

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**CLAIRE WATSON**

Lives and works in Melbourne, Australia  
Pronouns: she/her/hers

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Claire Watson is an independent curator and arts writer. Previous roles include Visual Arts Program Coordinator at Asialink and Senior Curator at Gippsland Art Gallery.

Claire has curated over 120 exhibitions and developed major curatorial projects including Re-visioning Histories co-curated with Yhonnie Scarce, 2016; the NETS Victoria/BLINDSIDE touring exhibition Synthetica 2015-2016, the Asialink/BLINDSIDE touring exhibition Vertigo, 2014; and the award-winning project Home—Reframing Craft and Domesticity, 2013 (Museums Australia Award). She writes regularly on Australian contemporary arts practice. She co-edited and co-wrote Asialink publications Every 23 Days: 20 years Touring Asia and Abundant Australia—Highlights of the 11th Venice Architecture Biennale.

Claire has been an international guest speaker at the Museum of Contemporary Art Taipei; Galerie Soemardja, Indonesia; and the TransCultural Exchange Conference, USA.

Her experience includes serving on the Touring Victoria and Regional Partnerships advisory panels at Creative Victoria, serving as a board member for the Public Galleries Association of Victoria, as well as being Chair of the Artistic Directors and Board of Management at BLINDSIDE during 2010-2017.

**Aggregate Icon** (from center to periphery: Free-Gaza protester, Palestine, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2012 (Che Guevara t-shirt), Anti-government protester, Milan, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2010 (screaming skull), Union member protester against labor and fiscal reform, Madrid, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 (striped t-shirt), Indigenous land rights protester, Caledonia, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2006 (camo hoodie), Protesters occupying city hall against the shooting of Michael Brown put a keffiyeh on the George Washington Statue, Chicago, 11<sup>th</sup> August 2012 (Statue), Supporter of the Syrian uprising recording fellow protesters, Beirut, 15<sup>th</sup> August 2011 (mustache facemask), Protesting NATO at summit, Chicago, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2012 (badge), Anti-government protester in solidarity with jailed freelance photographer Ahmed Humaidan, Bahrain, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013 (black keffiyeh), College student stages performance against air pollution, Xi'an, China, 5<sup>th</sup> December 2013 (dust mask), Anti-austerity protester clashing with police, Greece, 29<sup>th</sup> June 2011 (sling-shot) May Day Protester, Bogota, Colombia, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2013 (Che Guevara flag), A 'Sister of perpetual indulgence' at the hunky Jesus contest, San Francisco, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2011 (spotted nun), University student against Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez, Caracas, 26<sup>th</sup> January 2010 (red fabric over eyes and mouth), Supporter of Michael Brown, Ferguson, Missouri, 10<sup>th</sup> August 2014 (dreadlocks), Zapatista Children protesters, Chiapas, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2015 (Six at a desk), G20 protester, Canada, 26<sup>th</sup> June 2010 (heart glasses), Pro-government supporters, Thailand, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2013 (Yingluck and Thaksin printed shirts), Zapatista, Chiapas, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2011 (black belt), Albanian celebrating 100 years of independence from the Ottoman Empire, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2012 (red and black face paint), Protesting grand jury decisions in police-involved death of Eric Garner, Berkeley, California, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2014 (holding donut), Protesting the disappearance of 43 students, Chilpancingo, Mexico, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2014

(profile red bandanna), Palestine youth protesting Israel's military occupation, Beit El settlement, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2016 (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine headband), Anti-NATO protestor, Prague, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2002 (Che-Guaver Mask), Pro-Palestinian protesters, West Bank, 11<sup>th</sup> October 2015 (Group wearing keffiyehs), May Day protester, Oakland, California, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2012 (occupy mask), Zapatistas, Chiapas, 15<sup>th</sup> August 2013 (red and white spotted cape), Anti-Fascist protester, Bulgaria, 17<sup>th</sup> November 2013 (Anti-Fascist flag), Anti-Nuclear protester at Tokyo Electric Power Co. headquarters, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2011 (Nuclear No Thanks), Anti-government protestor, Bangkok, Thailand, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2013 (bandanna Guy Fawkes mask), Protester against the shooting death of teenager Michael Brown, Ferguson, Missouri, 13<sup>th</sup> August 2014 (white t-shirt mask), High school student protests lack of quality education, Santiago, Chile, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2012 (red t-shirt mask), Unknown (hoodie with patches), Millions Mask March, London, 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015 (Guy Fawkes mask with Camo), Protesting at the RNC for good jobs, healthcare, affordable education, equality and peace, Tampa, Florida 27<sup>th</sup> August 2012 (A's painted on shirt), Free Pussy Riot supporter at the Russian Embassy, London, 17<sup>th</sup> August 2012 (rabbit mask), Black Block group defending anti-Morsi protesters, Egypt, 11<sup>th</sup> February 2013 (red face on black masks).







# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The staff of Artspace Mackay acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands and waters that make up the Mackay region, the Yuwibara and Yuibera Peoples. We extend this acknowledgement to all Aboriginal members of the Birry Gubba Nation and pay respects to Elders past, present as well as young emerging leaders. We acknowledge the important protocols of the Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Australian South Sea Islander communities across the Mackay region.

Artspace Mackay sincerely thanks the artists, curators, writers, funders and supporters of *Violent Salt* for their commitment to this project.

## Curators

We wish to thank the artists for their inspired works, honest reflections, and exceptional commitment to *Violent Salt*.

Sincere gratitude to the private and public lenders for their generous loans of works and to the funding bodies for their commitment to the project.

We offer immense gratitude to Tony Birch for supporting the use of his phrase for the exhibition title.

Thanks also to Nat Thomas for her honest and heartfelt reflections and Alister McKeich for his valuable feedback on the curatorial essay.

We gratefully acknowledge the outstanding team of staff at Artspace Mackay led by Director Tracey Heathwood with significant support from Alicia Stevenson and Lauren Turton. Their patience and commitment to this project has been integral to its success.

Thanks to Julie Skate, previous Director of Artspace Mackay for initially extending the invitation to curate an exhibition and supporting our research of Mackay's history.

Our thanks are extended to the Yuwibara Aboriginal Corporation for

opening their hearts and doors to us during our research visit to Mackay.

We especially acknowledge the generosity shown by Marion Healy, Chairperson of the Mesh & Knots Mackay Australian South Sea Islander, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Group, for extending warmth and energy to the project.

Special thanks to Dominic Forde and Sara Keilbach (Forde + Nicol) for the thoughtful branding and design work for *Violent Salt* and their tireless energy.

We respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders throughout Australia for their ongoing connection to Country and Australian South Sea Islander communities. We honour and respect their continuing culture. We especially acknowledge Elders past, present and emerging from Mackay - the Yuwibara People and Yuibera Peoples, and those from the regions in which *Violent Salt* tours.

# Artists

**Karla Dickens** acknowledges the photographer Mick Richards for both bodies of work.

**SJ Norman:** The language resources I drew upon for this version of *Bone Library* were based on the restoration work of Dr Stan Grant (Snr) and Dr John Rudder, which was compiled in the New Wiradjuri Dictionary. The value of this work cannot be overstated, and immeasurable gratitude is due to all who are working to restore our languages. My hope for the future is that significant resources be given to this work as a matter of urgency.

**Jemima Wyman** thanks Milani Gallery, Sullivan + Strumpf and Commonwealth & Council.

# VIOLENT SALT

An Artspace Mackay touring exhibition  
Curated by Yhonnie Scarce and Claire Watson

## Artists

Abdul Abdullah  
Vernon Ah Kee  
Richard Bell  
Daniel Boyd  
Megan Cope  
Karla Dickens  
S.J. Norman  
Yhonnie Scarce  
Jemima Wyman

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Front Inner Cover  
Vernon Ah Kee  
**Kick the Dust** 2019 (still, detail)  
Three channel digital video  
Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

Back Inner Cover  
Installation View: Violent Salt, Artspace Mackay  
Photograph: Claire Watson



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