

COLONIAL AFTERLIVES

EDUCATION KIT

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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE EDUCATION KIT

This education kit has been created to accompany the touring exhibition *Colonial Afterlives*, travelling to five galleries in three states of Australia. *Colonial Afterlives* is a Salamanca Arts Centre exhibition toured by Contemporary Art Tasmania.

It is a resource to investigate the exhibition prior to, during, and after your visit, to enrich students' experience of the exhibition and assist teachers through a diverse range of resources. This education kit may be used for art, history, and social studies classrooms. Activities in this kit are designed to allow students and teachers to gain a deeper understanding of the works on display in the exhibition, and investigate their cultural context further.

The themes explored in the exhibition are suitable for students from grades 7 to 12.

Information about the works and artists in this exhibition has been drawn from the exhibition catalogue, a variety of sources including artists' websites, and through consultation with Sarah Thomas, the exhibition's curator.

Definitions have been taken from Merriam Webster Dictionary <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>

For Visual Art teachers this education kit is ideal for planning lessons and units of work for students who already have an understanding of postmodernism and colonialism.

This kit is divided into sections: **Unpacking Colonial Afterlives**, which explores key themes of the exhibition and offers points of discussion for before your visit; **Artist Case Studies**, which gives an indepth look at two artists in the exhibition with learning activities for junior and senior secondary students; **Artist Overviews**, which consist of introductory texts for each artist in the exhibition accompanied by prompts for further investigation of their work; and **Further Reading**, which provides a range of additional resources for key themes and artists.

CURRICULUM LINKS

This education kit provides teachers with resources, activities and questions that will develop students' critical thinking skills, and knowledge and understanding about postcolonialism. The kit provides some understanding to students and teachers of the various ways in which British imperialism impacted on the lives of colonised peoples, and how this history continues to inform our lives today. It explores some of the common and distinctive experiences of colonised Indigenous cultures across the former British colonies: Australia, New Zealand, Jamaica, Barbados, Guyana and Canada.

Works discussed in this kit give insight into the experiences, histories and identities of colonised peoples, and through the analysis of these works students have the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of local, regional and trans-regional cultures. By engaging with the world of artists and artworks, the art histories and traditions of colonised cultures are made more accessible to students.

Teachers can adapt this kit as needed according to their curriculum needs. The critical questions posed and activities provided in this education kit will enable students to develop deeper understandings of the works through experience, expression, interpretation, criticism and creating exercises.

Through this education kit students can discover how the artists have questioned history and authority. Students will learn about postcolonialism, postmodernism and intertextualisation. The exercises develop discussion of postcolonialism and colonial history, politics, appropriation and re-contextualisation, language, humour and irony, and the critique of historical narratives.

UNPACKING COLONIAL AFTERLIVES

INTRODUCTION TO THE EXHIBITION

Colonial Afterlives explores the ongoing impact of colonialism in several former colonies of what was once the British empire: Australia, Barbados, Canada, Guyana, Jamaica, and New Zealand. The works offer insights into the postcolonial experience from the perspective of the colonised (especially indigenous people) rather than the colonisers, a perspective once unrepresented in the writing and visualising of colonial history. The title of the exhibition suggests that such histories have not faded in the current moment: while the British empire may no longer exist, many still live with its often painful legacies.

In Australia the impact of British colonialism is prevalent in the everyday to the point of obscuring the presence of other cultural histories. The language that we speak, our major cities which have grown from early British settlements, our systems of government are just a few examples of this legacy and a starting point for identifying colonialism's impact. Australian history is still predominantly told as a history of British colonisation and the development of a nation over its two hundred plus year time span. Australian Aboriginal cultures, which are the world's oldest living cultures, have been practiced for over fifty thousand years, yet they have relatively minimal presences in the everyday lives of many Australians. Furthermore, the history of Aboriginal people is still often told in relation to British colonial history, a situation that seems disproportionate when considering the country's much more ancient indigenous heritage.

At its peak in the nineteenth century, the British empire was the largest formal empire the world had ever known. Britain consolidated its wealth and power by expanding its territories and exploiting their resources. In Australia, the process of colonisation led to the widespread dispossession and oppression of Aboriginal people, who were deemed intellectually inferior and in need of civilising. This paternalistic attitude resulted in the destruction of Aboriginal cultures through assimilation and dispersion. Resistance to colonisation led to the decimation of Aboriginal cultures through war.

Versions of this same history have played out across the British empire. Nevertheless, we must be careful not to forget the distinctions between those histories. In the Caribbean islands of Jamaica and Barbados, for example, the British imported thousands of slaves from Africa to work the plantations; as a consequence these cultures today have strong diasporic roots that make them distinctive from the settler nations of Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

The power of the British empire and its colonisation of foreign territories resulted in the Westernisation of cultures across the world. For Indigenous peoples of these colonies this meant a dichotomous existence, becoming simultaneously subjects of Britain as well as being made to feel outsiders in their own land: respect, recognition and equal status for their cultural heritage remains contested.

Sarah Thomas, the curator of *Colonial Afterlives*, wrote in the catalogue essay "Living with ghosts": "We must be wary of viewing colonial history through the lens of the colonisers." However, the lack of alternate perspectives on colonial histories has made the lens of the colonisers our default setting. *Colonial Afterlives* represents some of the many perspectives from which these common histories have been experienced.

ARTISTS

EWAN ATKINSON

DANIEL BOYD

CHARLES CAMPBELL

MAREE CLARKE

FIONA FOLEY

JULIE GOUGH

HEW LOCKE

KENT MONKMAN

JAMES NEWITT

GEOFF PARR

YVONNE REES-PAGH

LISA REIHANA

JOAN ROSS

CHRISTIAN THOMPSON

UNPACKING COLONIAL AFTERLIVES

KEY THEMES

Before visiting the exhibition it is important to have an understanding of some of the key themes running through the works, and to revisit these in deeper investigations.

Teachers should consider the following themes that are addressed in the exhibition and how they apply to their area of study. The glossary of terms offers some simple definitions that can be expanded upon by the teacher.

AUTHORITY

COLONIAL ART

COLONIALISM

CULTURAL HERITAGE

CULTURAL IMPERIALISM

EMPIRE

IDENTITY

IMPERIALISM

INDIGENEITY

INHERITED TRAUMA

POSTCOLONIALISM

POSTMODERNISM

MEET THE CURATOR

SARAH THOMAS

Sarah Thomas is Lecturer in the Art of the Nineteenth Century at Birkbeck College, University of London, and worked as a curator in Australian art museums for many years until 2003. Her interest in colonial Australian art developed particularly during the 1990s when she was Curator of Australian Art at the Art Gallery of South Australia. During those years she curated a large international exhibition called *The Encounter, 1802: Art of the Flinders and Baudin Voyages* (Art Gallery of South Australia, 2002). Her PhD research on the imagery of slavery in the colonial period led to her particular interest in the art of the Anglo-Caribbean, and on visits to Jamaica and Barbados she was struck by some of the postcolonial resonances between these former colonies and Australia. She has published widely, including book chapters 'Slaves and the spectacle of torture: British artists in the New World' (2013) and 'Allegorizing Extinction: Humboldt, Darwin and the Valedictory Image' (2015), and journal articles such as 'The Spectre of Empire in the British Art Museum' (*Museum History Journal*, 2013). Her book *Witnessing Slavery: Art and Travel in the Age of Abolition* is forthcoming.

UNPACKING COLONIAL AFTERLIVES

WHAT IS POSTCOLONIALISM AND POSTCOLONIAL ART?

Strictly speaking the term postcolonial is generally used to refer to the period after the official end of colonialism. The term also denotes an area of theory which seeks to make sense of the colonial past in the context of the present: postcolonial thought analyses the era of colonialism and interrogates its history (*Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* | *decolonize*, 2015). Much like the way in which postmodernist theory asks us to consider the contextual factors in which works of art can be interpreted, postcolonialism too analyses the context of works made under the effects of colonialism and its continued influence on colonised cultures. As a discipline it signifies the continual effects of colonialism, examining how subaltern and colonised peoples transformed in relation to colonisers.

Postcolonial theory responds to the cultural legacy that colonialism leaves in its wake: it addresses the human and socio-political consequences of cultures fractured by colonialism, and recognises that in colonised nations there is a dichotomy between the colonised and the colonisers (*Postcolonial art*, 2016).

In works of art that are made in a postcolonial context there are implied shared histories, across cultures and colonised nations. The artists in *Colonial Afterlives* explore their own postcolonial experiences. It is important to acknowledge that not all artists in this show identify as Indigenous, Aboriginal or First Peoples. Not all have felt the effects of cultural imperialism in the same way and their understandings of colonialism are varied. However, each has lived a life in which postcolonialism has coloured their experience of their nation, their culture and their art.

In Australia we are still coming to grips with our own tense cultural identity, with a history that has been more narrative than retelling, and with a present coloured by an ever changing multiculturalism. In this context the works that emerge from the Australian artists in *Colonial Afterlives* share a tension, wrought from their postcolonial understandings of culture, identity and Aboriginal history.

Postcolonialism is a means to gain and make sense of our past, but also a lens with which to view and critique the here and now.

Postcolonial art is a direct response to the conditions created by colonialism, the systemic, cultural and social ramifications of colonialism are far reaching, and underpin notions of race, ethnicity, power as well as national and cultural identities in colonised nations. Each artist in *Colonial Afterlives* grapples with their understanding of self, their country and their culture through a thorough critique of the impact of colonialism as a historical and ever present reality.

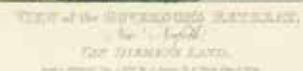
COLONIAL ART

References to and appropriations of colonial art are present throughout *Colonial Afterlives*. This is evidence of the dominant role colonial art plays in the representation of settler life in these former British colonies, as well as the extent to which such histories need to be reconsidered to accommodate Indigenous perspectives.

Colonial art is an important tool for understanding nineteenth-century Australian history (and art history), and as such occupies permanent display space in national and state museums and galleries across the country. Today, however, it is increasingly recognised that such works were made from the perspective of the colonisers only. While the work of nineteenth-century Aboriginal artists such as Tommy McRae (c.1835–1901) and William Barak (c. 1824–1903) among others is now highly sought after by museums, the narrative of ‘colonial art’ remains one still dominated by settler culture. There are very few remaining examples of Aboriginal art from the same period that give an alternative perspective on the colonial experience. Aboriginal art was, and often still is, classified as ethnographic artefact. Only recently have such works been acknowledged as works of ‘art’ in their own right and introduced into the colonial narratives of art history. The legacy of ethnographic classification and the fact that much Aboriginal material culture from the nineteenth century no longer survives, results in the continued marginalisation of Aboriginal art from this narrative.

During the period of colonialism art served in part to document the ‘New World’ and the achievements of the colonisers. Created by free settler and convict artists using European artistic conventions and materials, landscapes drew on the traditions of the Picturesque and Sublime: urban settlements were portrayed as centres of civilisation and growth, and Aboriginal people were often shown as noble savages that provided the landscapes with a sense of geographic authenticity and local colour. Many of these artworks acted as propaganda, to encourage British people to immigrate to Australia and help expand the colonies, and as such portrayed a utopian view rather than a complete historical account.

Amongst the colonies of the British empire colonial art is most prominent within the settler colonies, including Australia, New Zealand and Canada. Whilst such colonial histories are markedly different, similar artistic conventions and the romanticisation of Indigenous peoples link the colonial art of such countries. European traveller artists such as Agostino Brunias (1730-1796) also visited non-settler colonies such as those in the Caribbean, although in the slave islands such as Jamaica and Barbados there was a far smaller demand for European ‘views’ of local scenes. Not intended as locations for large numbers of British (or French) settlers, these countries have powerful diasporic cultures, resulting largely from their strong Afro-Caribbean heritage, a direct result of their slave histories.



UNPACKING COLONIAL AFTERLIVES

COLONIAL ART



IMAGE DETAILS

(PREVIOUS PAGE)

TOP:

Joseph Lycett
*View of the Governor's retreat,
New Norfolk, Van Diemens
Land I, 1825*
Allport Library, Tasmanian
Archive and Heritage Office

BOTTOM:

Agostino Brunias
Linen Market, Dominica
ca. 1780
oil on canvas
49.8 x 68.6 cm
Yale Center for British Art

(CURRENT PAGE)

TOP:

Benjamin Duterrau
The Conciliation, 1840
oil on canvas
121 X 170.5 cm
Tasmanian Museum and Art
Gallery, Hobart
Purchased by Friends of the
Museum and the Board of
Trustees, 1945
AG79

BOTTOM:

John Glover
*The bath of Diana, Van
Diemen's Land, 1837*
oil on canvas
96.5 x 134.5 x 12 cm
National Gallery of Australia,
Canberra
Purchased with the assistance
of the National Gallery of
Australia Foundation, 1993



UNPACKING COLONIAL AFTERLIVES

POSTMODERNISM

In the art world postmodernism is a movement that began in the 1980s as a reaction to modernism, the canon of art and the notion of truth or purity. It recognises that there is no single objective truth, and is an apt lens through which to view the artworks in *Colonial Afterlives*. The exhibition considers that there is no single truth in the history of colonialism - the truth has been distorted by narratives of good guys, and bad guys, of heroes, discoverers and savages. *Colonial Afterlives* acknowledges a diversity of personal responses to Britain's imperial past, one that involved attempts to systematically destroy cultures; these painful legacies remain with us today.

Postmodernism asks us to consider notions of power and authority. There are power constructs at play throughout culture, art and society. Postmodernist art asks us to question those power structures and the ways in which they interrelate. The artists in this exhibition challenge received or accepted historical narratives and artistic conventions. The exhibition challenges authority, the authority of colonial ideas, and the authority with which historians play a role in creating and maintaining or transforming postcolonial identity.

When viewing these artworks through the lens of postmodernism students can ask a series of questions to investigate the work deeply:

What is being challenged?

Has something been appropriated, and how does that add to the meaning?

Is there irony or wit used by the artist; how does that poke fun at power structures?

Who has authority over the historical narrative?

How is authority questioned in this work of art?

UNPACKING COLONIAL AFTERLIVES

BEFORE YOUR VISIT _ DISCUSSION POINTS

AUTHORITY

What is authority?

Who has authority over historical narratives?

How is authority created?

How is authority questioned in art?

COLONIAL ART

How has colonial art shaped your understanding of colonial history and British colonisation of Australia?

Find an example of colonial art from your area and undergo a critical examination.

Ask the following questions: Who created the artwork? Why was it created? What has the artist chosen to include in the artwork? What have they chosen to leave out? Who is the intended audience?

COLONIALISM

Which countries across the world have been colonised by the British Empire?

How has colonialism affected the first peoples of countries that have been under British rule?

CULTURAL HERITAGE

How is cultural heritage passed down in your culture?

Do you know ways that cultural heritage is passed down in other cultures?

In what ways do you think that colonialism can affect cultural heritage?

CULTURAL IMPERIALISM

In what ways has cultural imperialism impacted colonised countries?

Who benefits from cultural imperialism?

EMPIRE

Does the concept of empire still exist?

IDENTITY

What makes up an identity?

Ask students to list all the things that contribute to their own identities. ie. gender, race.

INDIGENEITY

What does it mean to be indigenous?

What are the ways in which people can identify themselves as Indigenous?

How does the United Nations (UN) define Indigeneity?

TRANSGENERATIONAL (INHERITED) TRAUMA

What does the past have to do with the experiences of Indigenous people now?

POSTCOLONIALISM

Consider your own postcolonial experience. In what ways is Australia's colonial past visible in your life?

POSTMODERNISM

How can postmodern artists question authority through art?

Who has the most power in Western society?

What are some ways to change the balance of power in colonised societies?

Who deserves the power in colonised societies?

UNPACKING COLONIAL AFTERLIVES

GLOSSARY / KEY TERMS

ANCESTRY	persons initiating or comprising a line of descent
AUTHORITY	a: claim of legitimacy, the right to exert power or influence b: the power to give orders or make decisions : the power or right to direct or control someone or something
COLONIALISM	a : control by one power over a dependent area or people b : a policy advocating or based on such control
CULTURAL HERITAGE	refers to tangible (physical) and intangible aspects of a culture passed down to future generations
CULTURAL IMPERIALISM	the practice of imposing a culture over a less powerful society
DIASPORA	a : the movement, migration, or scattering of a people away from an established or ancestral homeland b : people settled far from their ancestral homelands
EMPIRE	imperial sovereignty, rule, or dominion
ETHNOGRAPHY	the systematic study of people and cultures
HYBRIDITY	where cultures and races cross over
IDENTITY	the qualities, beliefs, etc., that make a particular person or group different from others
IMPERIALISM	a policy or practice by which a country increases its power by gaining control over other areas of the world
POSTMODERNISM	of, relating to, or being a theory that involves a radical reappraisal of modern assumptions about culture, identity, history, or language
SUBALTERN	a person holding a subordinate position
TRANSGENERATIONAL TRAUMA	Experiences of trauma transferred from the first generation to the next, may be behavioural or genetic

ARTISTS

CASE STUDIES

FIONA FOLEY _ QUEENSLAND

JOAN ROSS _ NEW SOUTH WALES

FIONA FOLEY
QUEENSLAND



AT A GLANCE
BIOGRAPHY

Born in Maryborough, QLD. 1964

Gained her Certificate of Art. 1983

Gained her Bachelor of Fine Art. 1986

Founded Boomalli Aboriginal Arts Co-op in Sydney. 1987.

Became an Adjunct Professor at QLD College of the Arts in Brisbane.

Foley has had group and solo exhibitions in nationally and internationally and is an acclaimed public artist having commissioned works in Sydney, Canberra, Brisbane and Melbourne. Her works are held in Australian and International private collections as well as owned by public institutions ("Fiona Foley: Collector's Dossier - Art Collector", 2016).

IMAGE DETAILS

Nulla 4 eva III, 2009
Ultrachrome print on
Hahnemühle paper
80 x 120 cm

FIONA FOLEY

QUEENSLAND

Fiona Foley is a significant Australian artist. She makes work that addresses various narratives including race, gender, and history and their interplay. Her work often addresses and seeks to critique the systemic violence of our collective colonial history towards Aboriginal nations, often focussing on her personal ancestry in Queensland (*Fiona Foley: Forbidden*, 2016).

Her work is academic, educational and restorative. She uses it as a means to return Aboriginal people to the centre of Australian history, not just to be included in our national narrative. Throughout her bodies of work she often brings up the inherent violence of our colonial past, and the systemic violence of our postcolonial present. In doing so she centres the defining characteristic of colonialism is Australia.

Although her work is inherently political Foley shies away from the label of political artist, preferring that the politics of each work speak for itself (Higson, 2009). Her imagery exposes racism, in both historical and contemporary contexts. This is evident in her 2009 series *Nulla 4 eva* which is about the colonial legacy of disadvantage and racism. In each image presented there is community bound together by being non-white, and separated by race and by privilege.

These works remix ideas about culture from Australia's past and present. In the works we see symbolism and motifs that point to a number of junctures in time, in *Nulla 4 eva II* there is an opium den filled with people of mixed races, people are playing mahjong and smoking opium while a figure watches on taking notes. Here there is a nod to Australia's gold rush past and influx of immigration from China.

On Cronulla Beach in *Nulla 4 eva V* we see figures enjoying a stereotypically Australian day at the beach. In this work Foley includes a number of symbols of cultural diversity and nods to the exclusionary attitude of those involved in the Cronulla riots. The work investigates the notion of ownership and belonging, and asks the viewer to consider who can access the beach and scrutinize the notion of ownership of the beach by white Australians. The work presents ongoing tensions in multicultural Australia, the experiences of

Indigenous Australians are contrasted against non-European immigrants and the presence of white Australia.

In *Nulla 4 eva III* (2009) Foley re-creates an experience that has played out innumerable times in the Australian media since the Cronulla riots of 2005. Australians of Middle Eastern descent are racially targeted by white Australia, this act is made to seem spurious by Foley's inclusion of Indigenous Australians.



IMAGE DETAILS

TOP:
Nulla 4 eva II, 2009
Ultrachrome print on
Hahnemühle paper
80 x 120 cm

BOTTOM:
Nulla 4 eva V, 2009
Ultrachrome print on
Hahnemühle paper
80 x 120 cm

FIONA FOLEY

QUEENSLAND

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

JUNIOR SECONDARY

LOOK

Look at the work *Nulla 4 eva III*. Observe any cultural symbols in the image and look for clues of where these groups might be meeting.

DISCUSS

Who are the people in this work?

What does the body language of the two groups tell you?

What do you think the people on the right are saying?

What kind of building are the people in?

What about this image is ironic?

RESEARCH / ACTIVITY

In the *Nulla 4 eva* series Foley employs a technique known as a tableau, research the definition of tableau and find other artists who also use this technique in their work.

What story has using this technique allowed Foley to tell?

Compare this narrative to that of one other artist you have researched.

SENIOR SECONDARY

LOOK

Look at the work *Nulla 4 eva II*. Describe or write a list of everything you can see in the image.

DISCUSS

Who are the people in this work?

What activities are they engaging in?

What are some of the cultural symbols you can see in the room?

Who is the figure at the front of frame on the right?

RESEARCH

Fiona Foley considers herself to be a researcher and educator as much as an artist. Opium is a recurring theme in her works and symbolises a particular part of the history of Queensland. Research the history of opium in Queensland with particular reference to the Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897. In your research investigate the repercussions the act had on the Aboriginal, Chinese and European communities at the time. Compare and contrast the repercussions and consider how this history might have an effect on the present in Queensland.

ACTIVITY

Imagine you are the man on the right, sketch part of the scene in front of you. Include text in your work as your anthropological findings. You want to interpret some of the activities in the background, or list the symbolism you have encountered in the tableau.

ESSAY QUESTION

Explain how Fiona Foley documents and reconstructs cultural histories in Australia from a postcolonial perspective.

JOAN ROSS
NEW SOUTH WALES



AT A GLANCE
BIOGRAPHY

Born in Glasgow, Scotland. 1961.

Gained her Certificate of Art in 1979/80.

Gained her Bachelor of Visual Arts in 1983/85.

Gained her Masters of Fine Arts in 2012.

She has exhibited her work nationally and internationally since 1989.

Her work is held in many public and private collections including the National Gallery of Australia, the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, a number of regional and university galleries and private collections.

IMAGE DETAILS

BBQ this Sunday BYO,
2011
Digital animation
5 min

JOAN ROSS

NEW SOUTH WALES

Joan Ross works across mediums including video animation, sculpture, drawing and digital collage. The legacy of Australia's colonial past and questions of ownership are prominent themes that re-occur throughout her work, particularly with regard to colonialism's effects of Indigenous Australians (*Joan Ross, Museum Of Contemporary Art Australia*). Through her unique appropriations of colonial artworks, Ross deconstructs established historical narratives, challenging their validity, and embedding alternative content to enable new interpretations.

Signature characteristics in Ross' work include the use of fluorescent (hi-vis) colours, collage-like animations, and the mixing of the past with the present. In *The claiming of things* 2012 and *BBQ this Sunday BYO* 2011, Ross plays out seemingly absurd narratives on top of backdrops of colonial landscapes by John Glover and Joseph Lycett. These static paintings are brought to life in unexpected ways and the first viewing can leave you both amused but confused by what you have seen. Humour plays an important role in Ross' practice, it is used to disarm historical subjects of their authority, opening them up to scrutiny. Through clever placement of contemporary references Ross enables her viewers to reflect on the past through fresh eyes, whilst reminding us of colonialism's ongoing presence and effects. (Dr Simon Cooper - *Colonial Grab* video, Joan Ross).

Ross' use of fluorescent colours is a metaphor for colonisation. Fluorescent colours in real-world contexts are primarily used with reference to emergencies or risk management. They are synonymous with hi-vis workwear and construction workers, and as such the colours have come to denote a level of authority to work within and alter public space. At the beginning of these two animations fluorescent colours are not present within the tranquil landscapes. With the arrival of the colour, along with various characters and objects, an initial curiosity is felt, something is happening, but the authority of the colour enables the changes to occur unquestioned. As time passes however, the colour spreads throughout the landscapes and becomes established. Like the European settlers, it is no longer an anomaly, it has become commonplace.

The two animations presented within *Colonial Afterlives* re-enact the process of colonisation in different ways. The work *The claiming of things* sees the gradual but overwhelming occupation of John Glover's *The Bath of Diana* 1837. Ross uses a number of symbols to explore concepts of ownership and possession, the space within the work is claimed in various ways, from a fence and graffiti to the accumulation of consumer items, resulting in the destruction of the environment until the landscape restores itself through flooding. In *BBQ this Sunday BYO* Ross' looks at occupation in a different sense, through the metaphor of a social barbeque within convict artist Joseph Lycett's edenic landscape *View of the Governor's retreat, New Norfolk* 1825. Rather than the accumulation of boundaries and material items, the barbeque accumulates guests with varying punctuality and accoutrements. The video culminates in a collection of spirographs that emerge from a fleet of tall ships and expand over the scene before transforming into a fireworks display, a reminder of national celebrations and the hype and ceremony that redirect attention from the true occurrences of the past.



IMAGE DETAILS

The claiming of things, 2012
Digital animation
7 min 20 sec

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

JUNIOR SECONDARY

LOOK

Watch the animation *The claiming of things* 2012. Write a list of the different ways the landscape is claimed or possessed in the work. Are these methods historical, or contemporary, or both.

DISCUSS

Think about possessions that you or your family have. How did you come to own them? How do you show that they are your possessions? Did the possessions belong to someone else before you?

In this work the European figures graffiti the word “Banksia” onto the rock in the background, referencing the contemporary graffiti artist Banksy as well as the plant species named by and after the English botanist Sir Joseph Banks. Discuss the naming of things as a process of claiming. Think places that have both a European and Aboriginal name.

In this work Ross uses fluorescent colours as a symbol of authority within public spaces. Think about a time when you have seen construction workers wearing hi-vis, how does wearing this ‘uniform’ give them authority?

RESEARCH

Research international laws in Europe in the late 18th Century regarding taking possession of foreign territories, and the meaning of the term terra nullius, what role did this term play in the British colonisation of Australia?

ACTIVITY

Find an image of a colonial landscape. Using collage ‘occupy’ the landscape with found contemporary imagery. Think about the different ways of symbolising your ownership discussed above. Display your collage alongside the original landscape image. Compare your collage to a photograph of a contemporary urban landscape. How are they similar?

SENIOR SECONDARY

LOOK

Watch *BBQ next Sunday BYO* 2011. Record the events that occur in the animation. Describe each new arrival to the BBQ and what they bring. If you notice contemporary items write what you think they might symbolise.

DISCUSS

Consider the title *BBQ next Sunday BYO*, discuss the present day ritual of the barbeque. What does it symbolise? On what occasions do people barbeque? In the context of this artwork as a metaphor for colonisation what is meant by BYO?

Listen to the soundtrack that accompanies this work. What mood does it set for the story being told? What does the flag in this work symbolise? Compare it to the symbolism of the Australian flag.

ACTIVITY

Write a timeline of European colonisation in Tasmania. Write a timeline of ‘colonisation’ in *BBQ next Sunday BYO* 2011. Compare the timelines and discuss similarities at the end point of each.

ESSAY QUESTION

How does Joan Ross use humour as a weapon against established colonial narratives? Discuss.

ARTISTS

OVERVIEWS

EWAN ATKINSON _ BARBADOS

DANIEL BOYD _ NEW SOUTH WALES

CHARLES CAMPBELL _ JAMAICA

MAREE CLARKE _ VICTORIA

JULIE GOUGH _ TASMANIA

HEW LOCKE _ UNITED KINGDOM / GUYANA

KENT MONKMAN _ CANADA

JAMES NEWITT _ TASMANIA

GEOFF PARR _ TASMANIA

YVONNE REES-PAGH _ TASMANIA

LISA REIHANA _ AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

CHRISTIAN THOMPSON _ AUSTRALIA / UNITED KINGDOM

EWAN ATKINSON

BARBADOS

Ewan Atkinson's mixed media practice investigates the culture of communities and the way that identities are shaped in relation to social boundaries. Looking specifically at Caribbean island communities, Atkinson explores conflicts that occur at an individual level through experiences of communal socialisation.

The series *Playing House* demonstrates Atkinson's interest in education and its role in socialisation. In this series pages from British text books used to educate children in the Caribbean are juxtaposed with staged photographs of dollhouse interiors, in which Atkinson mimics content from the textbook pages. Atkinson's photographs parody the found imagery and content, undermining their authority. The images draw into question the diversities that exist within communities that do not align with the British system of values presented in the textbook, especially within Caribbean communities of diasporic backgrounds.

LOOK

In the series *Playing House*, identify the similarities and differences between each of Atkinson's photographs and the textbook page they are paired with. What world view is presented within the textbook pages and how do Atkinson's photographs challenge them?

DISCUSS

Atkinson uses and references educational texts used in Caribbean schools throughout his work. Have you been presented with educational material you have perceived to be biased? When have you or your family's values been at odds with accepted social norms.



IMAGE DETAILS

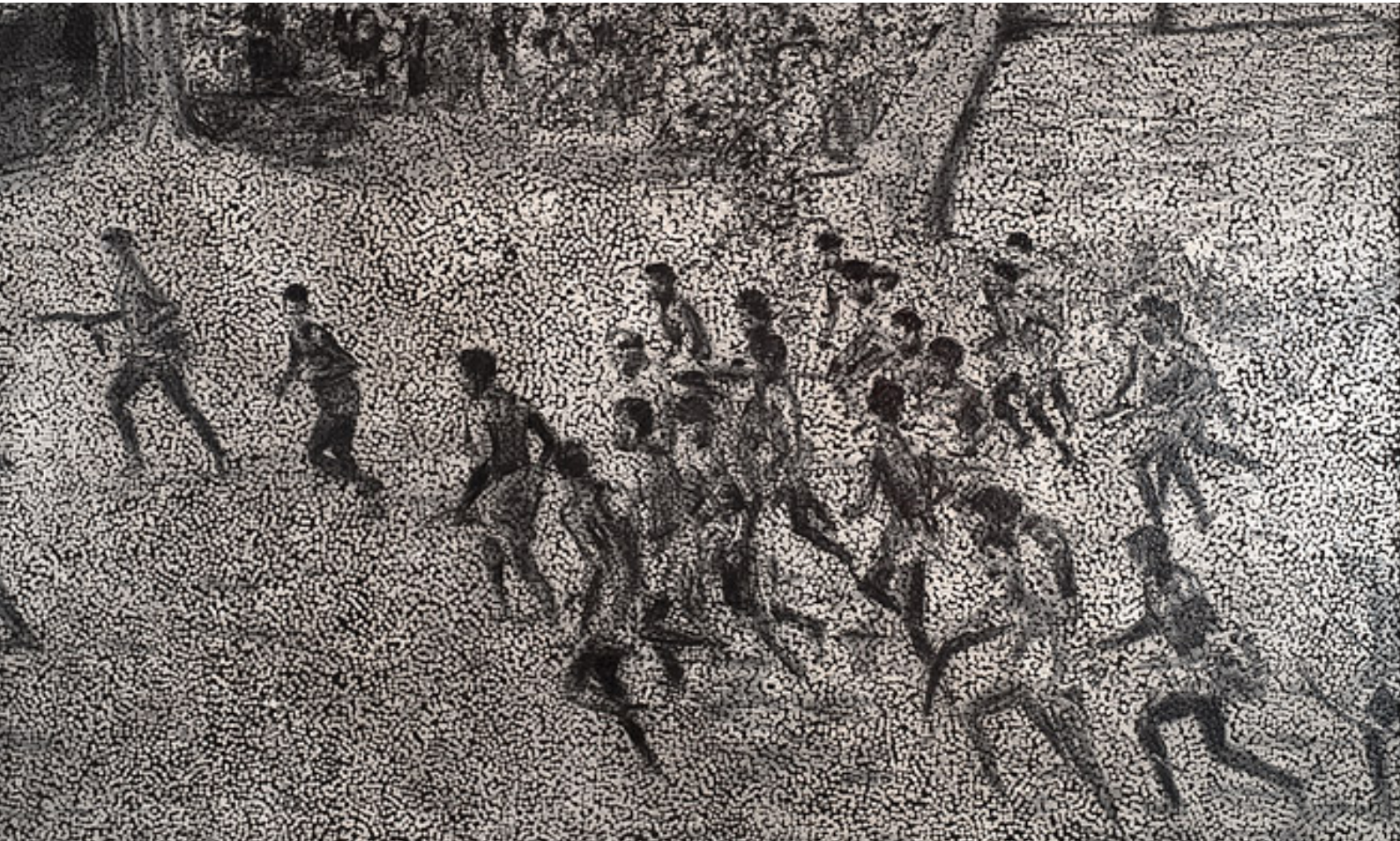
Greedy Nan, 2005
Mixed media on digital print
(original)
62.2 x 40.6 cm
Collection of Judilee Reed,
Brooklyn, New York

DANIEL BOYD

NEW SOUTH WALES

In Boyd's practice he perpetually reframes and reclaims history. His most well known works reinterpret significant moments in history and the way they have been portrayed in works of art through fracturing the colonial narrative of heroism and representing an alternative perspective of plunder and oppression.

In *Untitled (MPR)* 2016 Boyd has painted a scene photographed during the re-enactment of Governor Phillip's landing for the Sesquicentenary Australia Day celebrations in 1938. By highlighting this image he brings into question the staged nature of representations of Aboriginal people throughout history by colonisers, and the historical narratives these images and events have wrought.



LOOK

Examine the way that Boyd has applied the paint to the canvas. What does it remind you of and how does it affect the appearance of the image?

RESEARCH / DISCUSS

Research policies in Australia in 1938 with regard to Aboriginal people. What were the pressing issues at the time? What rights did European Australians have that Aboriginal people didn't?

Research the history of the re-enactment in Sydney that is captured in the photograph that Boyd has appropriated. Who are the Aboriginal people in the foreground? What inconsistencies is Boyd bringing into question?

ACTIVITY

Write a diary entry from the perspective of one of the Aboriginal people who participated in the reenactment. How might they have felt about the event and their role in it?

IMAGE DETAILS

Untitled (MPR), 2016
oil, charcoal and archival
glue on linen
183 x 300 cm
Image courtesy the artist,
Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery and
Harriett and Richard
England Collection

CHARLES CAMPBELL

JAMAICA

Charles Campbell is a multidisciplinary artist, his work spans across performance, print, sculpture and film. He often works collaboratively and constructs artworks that link colonialist and imperialist pasts to utopian futures, seeking to disrupt contemplative histories and insert into them the possibility of a new future with his utopian visions. His work contains symbols of migration, dislocation and dispossession. Through expressions of these ideas he ties imperialist acts to the larger story of far reaching colonialism.

In *Elletson Road (Offerings)* Campbell has collaborated with visual artist and curator France Trépanier. In the film we hear a one sided conversation in which Campbell interviews a man with whom he'd formed a bond. We hear Campbell's questions of and reflections on the man's feelings about extra-judicial killings he carried out while working for the Jamaican Constabulary during the 1970s.



LOOK

Watch the film *Elletson Road (Offerings)*, examine the figure of Campbell and observe what he is wearing; the sculpture that adorns his head and the clothing he has dressed himself in. Pay attention to his stance and facial expressions, particularly toward the end of the film.

DISCUSS

Campbell often works collaboratively, how do you think collaboration affects an artist's practice?

Discuss the links between collaborative practices and the concept of postcolonialism. Analyse the similarities and differences between the provision of alternate perspectives brought about through postcolonial analysis and the opportunity for collaboration between artists.

IMAGE DETAILS

Charles Campbell in
collaboration with
France Trépanier
Elletson Road (Offering),
2016
2 Channel HDMI video,
colour, sound
2 min 36 sec

MAREE CLARKE

VICTORIA

Maree Clarke is a Mutti Mutti, Yorta Yorta, BoonWurrung woman from northwest Victoria whose multimedia artistic practice encompasses photography, painting and sculpture. Through this practice, Clarke carries out a process of repossession of her cultural heritage, relearning and reviving lost cultural practices within a contemporary context.

Clarke's river reed necklaces revive a tradition that has not been practiced since colonisation. In this process of recreation Clarke has increased the size of these necklaces from that of their precursors, their length and size symbolizing the strength and ongoing survival of her culture. Viewed in isolation the necklaces appear as cultural artifacts from another time, a classification resulting from years of ethnographic treatment of such objects up until present day in museums around the world. The accompaniment of Clarke's digital prints however places these objects within a contemporary setting. Worn by the figure of Kimberly who is otherwise dressed all in black, the necklaces seem to hover in space as though displayed in isolation, the exception is Kimberly's face which takes on the symbolic role of the face of contemporary culture holding and carrying on tradition.

Clarke's breastplates represent a reclamation in a different sense. Clarke's breastplates are made from organic materials with traditional designs, replacing the original metal breastplates forced onto Aboriginal people by the colonisers in the nineteenth century. Photographed on the figure of Nicholas who is painted with ochre referencing traditional ceremony, Clarke subsumes this oppressive element of Aboriginal history into new story, creating new associations.

LOOK

Identify the materials Maree Clarke has used to make her sculptures. Look at the scale of the sculptures and consider whether these items would be practical to wear.

DISCUSS

In her art making practice Clarke revives traditional skills that have not been practised since colonialism.

Why have these skills been lost?

Why is it important to Clarke to revive these skills?

What is the symbolism of the breastplate?

ACTIVITY

Maree Clarke constructs her sculptures to be worn, to show power and resilience. Draw a design of a breastplate of your own that would cover part of your upper body, include symbolism that would make you feel strong and resilient.

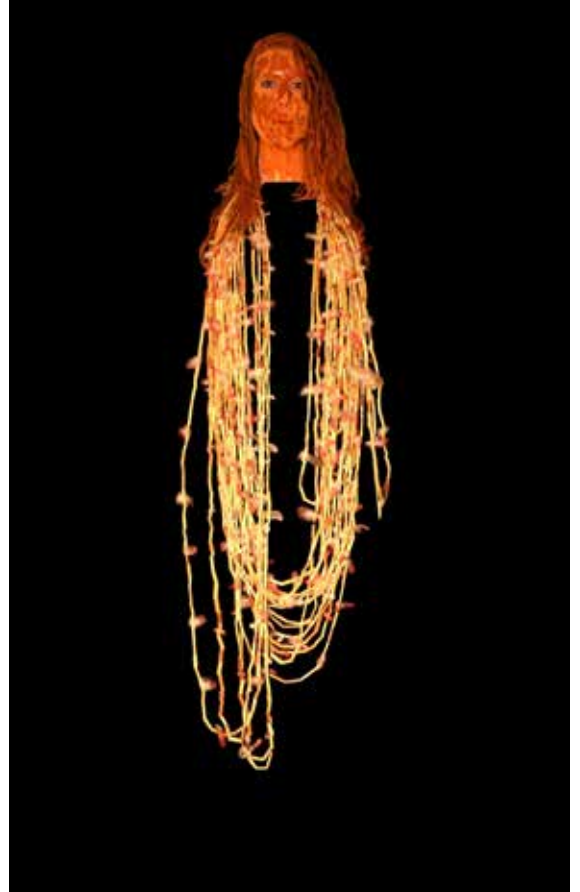


IMAGE DETAILS

TOP:
Kimberly wearing river reed necklace with galah feathers, 2014
Digital print on polypropylene
200 x 120 cm

BOTTOM:
Nicholas wearing kangaroo teeth breastplate, 2014
Digital print on polypropylene
200 x 120 cm

JULIE GOUGH

TASMANIA

Julie Gough is an artist who walks in the footsteps of her forebears in an effort to uncover their past. Her work speaks of dispossession of country, of war and mourning. She uncovers history in places both significant and seemingly insignificant. In her *Hunting Ground* 2014 works Gough looks at multiple sites, barbeque areas with European structures emulating the scale and, at times, locations of colonial huts of shepherds, agriculturalists and stockmen who kept the Tasmanian Aboriginal population at bay. These sites represent places of war and loss to Gough (“Julie Gough - Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, 2014”).



LOOK

Identify the different elements that feature in each work of Gough's *Hunting Ground* series. What are they, what do they symbolise, and how do they relate to each other?

DISCUSS

Julie Gough has titled these works 'Hunting Ground'.

In the image above, what relation does the objects on the left have to hunting? How would this objects have been used in the past, and what is its purpose now? What relation does the image on the right have to hunting?

Do you know of any places in Australia that have dual meanings to European Australians and Aboriginal Australians because of our colonial history?

ACTIVITY

Find a historically significant site in your local area and research its history to uncover something that may be hidden from view about its past. Create two photographs, one of the place and one of an object that hints towards its hidden past. Place your photographs side by side, or join together in Photoshop, to show a more complete image of the place you have chosen. Can you think of other visual elements you can include to help tell the story of this place?

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

The barbeque is a strong cultural symbol in Australia and appears in many forms of popular culture. Watch the satirical film “Babakiueria” and brainstorm other instances in which the barbeque has been used as an Australian cultural symbol.

IMAGE DETAILS

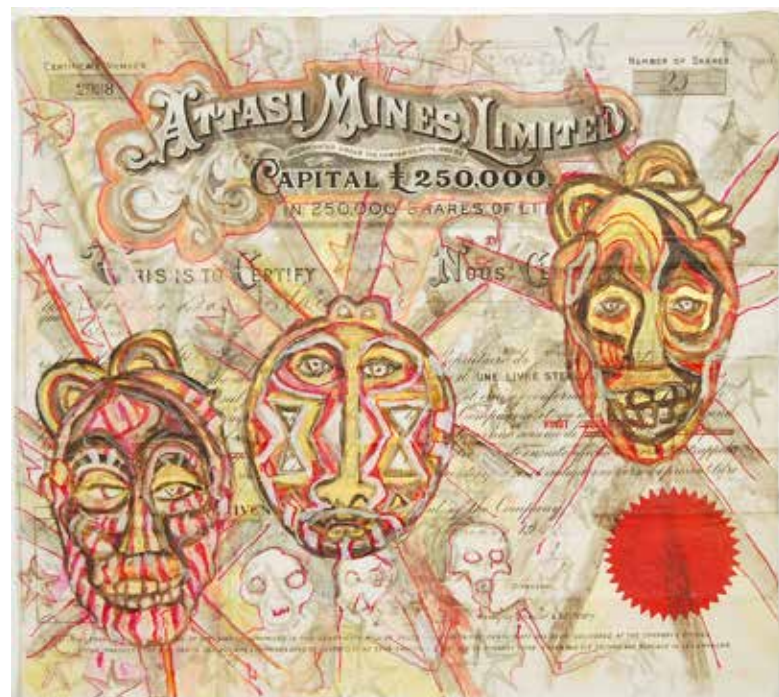
Hunting Ground (Badger Head Dunes 1), 2014
Pigment on rag paper
50 x 125 cm, edition of 5

HEW LOCKE

UNITED KINGDOM / GUYANA

Hew Locke's life has traversed numerous parts of the colonial empire. He has lived in Scotland, a nation which has just recently sought independence from England, and then in Guyana in the Caribbean. The image of the queen's face, a persistent mark of colonialism, has followed him through his life. His work reflects on monarchy, colonialism, ownership, sovereignty, masculinity, but his work leads towards one driving theme, power. He questions the right to power, the processes of attaining power and the authoritarianism that is inherent in power structures.

His works on shares certificates reflect the notion of power through money, share certificates are examples of ownership, power and wealth. Through the addition of his own symbolic imagery Locke echos the past of these documents, defacing them with designs that illuminate their history of exploitation and dispossession.



LOOK

Hew Locke has brought together the past and present in his works, these Share Certificates are from a bygone colonial era and represent power and money. As you look at these works take notice of the lettering styles. Look at the figures, the shapes of their heads and the patterns Locke uses. Think about where you have seen similar patterns before.

DISCUSS

Why do you think the companies used distinct and bold lettering on their Share Certificates?

Looking at the language on the certificates and the imagery that Locke has painted over them, what country's colonial history do you think Locke is critiquing?

Who do you think would have held the Share Certificates at the time of their making?

ACTIVITY

Appropriate an Australian note in Photoshop and feature your own face, include cultural symbols that are significant to you.

IMAGE DETAILS

LEFT:

Societe des Mines D'or de Kilo-Moto, 2009

Acrylic paint on paper
36.5 x 30.5 cm

Image copyright of Hew Locke, courtesy of Hales Gallery, London

RIGHT:

Attasi Mines Limited, 2009

Acrylic paint and felt pen on paper
30 x 27 cm

Image copyright of Hew Locke, courtesy of Hales Gallery, London

KENT MONKMAN

CANADA

Kent Monkman is a Canadian artist of Cree and Irish descent. Throughout his work Monkman critiques the colonial past of North America with his creation of his alter-ego, Miss Chief Eagle Testickle. Miss Chief is both a sensational, humorous performance artist, and a very measured commentary on colonial Christian values and the inflicted gender binary and heteronormative nature of the enforced Christian faith in North America.

In *Dance to Miss Chief* 2010 Monkman explores Germany's ethnographic othering of North American 'Indians' through film. Playing clips from the 1964 *Western Winnetou: Part 2* Monkman subverts the stereotypical images of the Indians created by the white director, and shuns the culturally appropriative nature of the film by casting the gender bending Miss Chief the romantic lead.



LOOK

Watch the film and pay attention to the way that the 'Indian' characters are portrayed. Notice how they are dressed, their facial expressions, movements and ways of speaking.

DISCUSS

What are stereotypes?

How have the characters in the film clips been stereotyped?

Why can reinforcing stereotypes about a race or population through pop culture be negative?

What is cultural appropriation?

Can European traditions and cultural practices be culturally appropriated?

Can you think of any instances of cultural appropriation in modern pop culture?

RESEARCH

Research the term "Two-Spirit", a term widely used by North American tribes to describe an experience of self that does not adhere to the gender binary.

Consider how the elimination of this term could limit people's expressions of self.

IMAGE DETAILS

Dance to Miss Chief, 2010
Digital video with sound,
4:49 mins

JAMES NEWITT

TASMANIA

The Desires of Mute Things 2015 by James Newitt responds to the colonial collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG). The installation interrogates the idea of the museum as a place of knowledge and authority. The colonial collection at the TMAG houses many contentious and often problematic representations of people and place, of which only a small portion are on display at any given time. These seemingly static objects are charged with complex histories that require time and critical enquiry to begin to decode. Through this work, Newitt addresses the silence of these objects, the voice of the museum which shapes our experience of them, and the importance of our role as viewers to look beyond the surface in seeking understanding.



LOOK

Look at the variety of elements the artists has used in the installation *The Desires of Mute Things* 2015. How do they engage with experiences and practices of the museum in different ways?

DISCUSS

Consider your own experience of viewing colonial collections within museums or art galleries.

What histories and stories did you learn about through the artworks and objects on display?

How did you gain this understanding? Were there interpretive tools, such as information panels or audio guides, to aid your learning?

Did the objects and artworks on display reinforce understandings you already had of colonial history or challenge them in some way?

What histories and stories were not represented?

ACTIVITY

Visit the colonial display in your nearest museum or art gallery. Record your thoughts and observations during your time in the space. Write a list of questions that arise from the experience.

IMAGE DETAILS

The Desires of Mute Things,
2015

Installation with digital video
Dimensions variable

GEOFF PARR

TASMANIA

Geoff Parr's *Place* explores the politics of significant Tasmanian historical events, addressing the multiple perspectives that exist within them. Throughout this photographic series Parr himself features as the character of "Packman" an itinerant European in a business suit who appears to be taking a tour of Tasmanian history. This character in dress and appearance embodies a European persona, a descendant of imperialism, an appearance which remains unchanged by his surrounds. His presence in the images draws into question the impact of imperialism past and present in Tasmania. Yet his isolation in most of the landscapes of the series suggest questions of displacement, individual and cultural (*Place II, A Place Founded On Conflict*), which are inherently linked with Tasmania's colonial past.



LOOK

Look closely at the images in the *Place* series. Each feature details that refer to different events or moments in Tasmanian history. Identity them.

RESEARCH

Research the different historical events referred to by Parr in this series. How does the presence of "Packman" bring these historical events into question?

ESSAY QUESTION

Compare the image *National Picture* (above right) from the *Place* series to the work it appropriates, Benjamin Duterrau's 1840 painting *The Conciliation* (see page 7 of this kit).

How does Parr's reconstruction address changing perspectives of historical narratives?

IMAGE DETAILS

Place, 1983/2015
Photographic
transparencies scanned as
digital images and printed
on aluminum
four images 70 x 96 cm
each

YVONNE REES-PAGH

TASMANIA

Yvonne Rees-Pagh works primarily in painting, printmaking and drawing. In her work *Thug* 2011, Rees-Pagh reflects on Australian perceptions of race, multiculturalism and prejudice. Starting with a photograph of the face of one of the Cronulla rioters which featured on the front page of *The Australian* newspaper in March 2016, Rees-Pagh uses a number of different techniques to recreate the image, resulting in varying levels of distortion and focus. Like the original photograph, *Thug* does not portray the complexity of the issues and events, only alluding to them. Rather they become snapshots of a moment obscured by anger and violence.



DISCUSS

How does the title of the work *Thug* influence your understanding of the people and events portrayed?

How has Rees-Pagh used colour and line to portray feeling?

RESEARCH

Research the sugar lift technique in printmaking. What effect has the artist achieved in her work by using this technique?

IMAGE DETAILS

Thug, 2011

Etching, screenprint and
sugar lift on paper

120 x 320 cm

From the collection of
Burnie Regional Art Gallery

LISA REIHANA

AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Lisa Reihana is a multi-disciplinary artist whose work draws upon complex bicultural narratives which run throughout New Zealand's history and to the present day. *Tai Whetuki – House of Death* is a video work which reflects on Maori and Polynesian cultural practices associated with death and mourning. The video imagines the death of a Maori warrior and the various elements of mourning rituals that have long since disappeared. Dark and dreamlike, the work is both real and other-worldly, bringing together the past and the present, and exploring a cultural practice that occupied the space between the dead and the living.

Footage for this work was filmed at Karekare, west of Auckland, the site of a massacre in 1825, this location is a place of death and mourning and remains important and sacred to this day. The choice of site is significant as it draws into question the lingering histories of place and the need to address these histories in the present. In this work Reihana reflects on present day attitudes towards death and the absence of communal rituals that address the process of mourning.



DISCUSS

Discuss different mourning rituals practiced in Australian culture today. Consider costumes or special clothing worn, ceremonies, duration.

RESEARCH

Research Polynesian mourning rituals and the role of the Chief Mourner. How do these traditions differ from practices today?

Research the history of Karekare in relation to the broader history of tribal wars and British colonialism in New Zealand. What impact did the British have on the tribals wars?

IMAGE DETAILS

Tai Whetuki - House of Death, 2015
Ultra HD Video

CHRISTIAN THOMPSON

AUSTRALIA / UNITED KINGDOM

Christian Thompson's work is layered with meanings that include ideas about history, identity, sexuality, and authenticity. A number of his works in particular are a response to the way that Indigenous Australians have been represented in photographs, historically these images could have been exploitative and been taken for the purpose of 'species documentation'.

In his work Thompson turns the camera on himself and creates carefully curated, elaborate costumes, settings and characters who are often cultural mashups more than they are self portraits. The works included in *Colonial Afterlives* demonstrate the performative nature of Thompson's practice. Symbolism plays an important role in Thompson's work as a means of alluding to and exploring different issues.

LOOK

Look at the work *Invaded Dreams* 2012, note everything you can see in the image and consider the choices the artist has made in constructing this photograph.

DISCUSS

Look at the work *Invaded Dreams*, what is the central focus of the image?

What has the artist hidden from the viewer?

What conclusions can be drawn about the meaning of the work when you consider the title and the imagery together?

In *Trinity III* Thompson plays with numerous stereotypes. What does stereotype mean?

What stereotypes can you identify in the image?

In using these stereotypes in his work what does Thompson want the audience to consider?

RESEARCH

Research the history of photographing Indigenous Australians. Consider how the images were composed, what the purpose of the images were, and who the audience for the images was. Place Thompson's work within this context and consider what he is critiquing about this history.

ACTIVITY

In Thompson's *Invaded Dreams* the ship is delicate and fragile due to its scale. Consider how this compares to the strength and power of a warship at full scale. Think of something else that is immense and powerful and create a miniature model of it from a material of your choosing.



IMAGE DETAILS

TOP:

Trinity III, 2014

From the *Polari* series

C-type print

100 x 75 cm

BOTTOM:

Invaded Dreams, 2012

From the *We Bury our Own*

series C-type print

100 x 100 cm

FURTHER READING

POSTCOLONIALISM

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EWAN ATKINSON

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<http://www.mca.com.au/collection/work/200625/>

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CHARLES CAMPBELL

<http://charlescampbellart.com/>

MAREE CLARKE

<https://museumvictoria.com.au/bunjilaka/visiting/birraring-gallery/artist-profiles/maree-clarke/>

FIONA FOLEY

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<https://juliegough.net/>

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HEW LOCKE

<http://www.hewlocke.net/>

KENT MONKMAN

<http://www.kentmonkman.com/>

JAMES NEWITT

<http://jnewitt.com/>

<http://www.mca.com.au/collection/artist/newitt-james/>

GEOFF PARR

<http://shapingtasmania.tmag.tas.gov.au/object.aspx?ID=99>

YVONNE REES-PAGH

<http://www.reespagh.com/visualarts.htm>

LISA REIHANA

<http://www.inpursuitofvenus.com/>

<http://www.heartofthecity.co.nz/arts-and-culture/heritage/tai-whetuki-house-death>

http://www.nzherald.co.nz/entertainment/news/article.cfm?c_id=1501119&objectid=11413483

Example of Chief mourner's costume: <http://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/155805>

West Auckland History resource: <http://westauckland.net.nz/history/>

JOAN ROSS

<http://joanross.com.au/>

CHRISTIAN THOMPSON

<http://www.christianthompson.net/>

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION TOUR

Mildura (VIC) 8 September – 6 November 2016

Dubbo (NSW) 4 February – 26 March 2017

Maitland (NSW) 6 May – 23 July 2017

Benalla (VIC) 12 August – 15 October 2017

Burnie (TAS) 10 November – 17 December 2017

Dates may be subject to change

Colonial Afterlives is a Salamanca Arts Centre exhibition toured by Contemporary Art Tasmania.

Contemporary Art Tasmania is supported by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its principal arts funding body, by the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy and is assisted through Arts Tasmania by the Minister for the Arts.

Salamanca Arts Centre is supported by the Hobart City Council and the Tasmanian State Government.

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government's Visions of Australia program, through Arts Tasmania by the Minister for the Arts and the Contemporary Art Tasmania Exhibition Development Fund.

