

JUS' DRAWN
proppaNOW



JUS' DRAWN: THE PROPPANOW COLLECTIVE
A LINDEN CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS & NETS VICTORIA TOURING EXHIBITION

Jus' Drawn: The proppaNOW Collective

A Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts & NETS Victoria Touring Exhibition

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NB: The soundfiles and further research on the artists may include strong language

Planning your gallery visit

This education resource is designed for teachers and students to provide background and context to the exhibition *Jus' Drawn: The proppaNOW Collective*. Students and teachers are advised to utilise this information parallel to a Gallery visit to view the exhibition, enhanced by discussion and research of a range of resources, including soundfile recordings by each of the proppaNOW artists featuring the artists via the NETS Victoria website:

<http://www.netsvictoria.org.au>

Prior to undertaking a Gallery visit, it is suggested that students read the exhibition room brochure, listen to the recorded soundfiles by the artists and explore a range of suggested resources and links which will provide context and background to the exhibition. It is also recommended that students undertake further research on Aboriginal history, culture and art.

For teachers

To ensure students are comfortable with the Gallery environment, prior to visiting the exhibition they will need to be well briefed and aware of Gallery protocol.

It is recommended for teachers to contact the Education staff or Curator at the Gallery to book a date and time for your students' visit well in advance to discuss key ideas or aspects of the curriculum which are appropriate for your students' year level

Be aware that student numbers are limited at particular galleries.

For students

Galleries are public spaces for the exhibition of works of art for the enjoyment and education of everyone. When you visit the exhibition, many members of the public will also be viewing the works with you. Given there will be many of you in a group, please be conscious of noise levels to ensure other people may also enjoy their experience.

It is also imperative to be aware that all works of art are to be viewed and not touched, unless otherwise advised by the Curator or Education Officer. In *Jus' Drawn*, as the works are either created on paper or directly created on the wall, it will be important to take particular care.

Curriculum links and themes

A broad range of themes and ideas which link to the exhibition may be explored across the curriculum for students, levels 5-6 VELS and VCE, Years 11-12. These themes may be utilised to assist students with contextualising information presented in the exhibition, to inspire discussion and to explore and link to a broad range of study areas across the Arts, the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Particular themes include:

- Contemporary art
- Aboriginal art
- Urban Aboriginal art
- Figuration and abstraction
- Portraiture and identity
- Minimalism
- Conceptual art
- Appropriation
- Australian history
- Aboriginal political history
- Civil rights
- Social and political issues in Australia
- Australian Cultural Heritage

The above themes link to a broad range of study areas including:

- Art
- Studio Arts
- Media studies
- History
- English & English Literature
- Philosophy
- Psychology
- Studies of Society & the Environment
- Australian History
- Social Science

proppaNOW

proppaNOW is a groundbreaking group of urban Brisbane-based Aboriginal contemporary artists.

Defined as provocative, challenging and mischievous Aboriginal agitators, members of the group include Vernon Ah Kee, Tony Albert, Bianca Beetson, Richard Bell, Gordon Hookey, Jennifer Herd and Laurie Neilson.

The artists refer to themselves as Aboriginal artists who as a group living in an urban environment, create contemporary art which is ethical and respectful and ‘the right way’ or ‘proper’ way, ‘now’ – hence the name proppaNOW.

The proppaNOW artists urban expression questions and critiques ‘white’ definitions of Aboriginal art and culture and seeks to redefine these rules to create a new vision, which is dictated by the artists, on their own terms, offering new perspectives on how we, as a society, define ‘Aboriginal art’.

The artists work across a range of media and methods including drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, photography, video and installation with strong, punchy, provocative and often challenging images which explore and express a broad range of cultural, political, historical and environmental issues.

proppaNOW also provides friendship, support and mentorship to urban Aboriginal artists who share common values, experiences and ideas.¹

1. proppaNOW: <http://www.proppanow.com>

Introduction to the exhibition

Jus' Drawn:

The proppaNOW Collective

*A Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts
& NETS Victoria touring exhibition*

Vernon Ah Kee

Tony Albert

Bianca Beetson

Richard Bell

Jennifer Herd

Gordon Hookey

Laurie Nelson

Introduction

Drawing is something that we do. As Aboriginal people, as Blackfellas, drawing is something we all do. For proppaNOW, it is an action, a tool, and a mechanism that we use to communicate our feelings and ideas and it is the beginning of our art-making processes. It is a human trait to recognise or sense the personal in drawing. engaging in and with drawing is to acknowledge the uniqueness we each possess as people and as individuals. But spending time with these works is really a window into how we, as a group of artists interact and engage with each other. As proppaNOW, Jus' Drawn is about the energy, easy dialogue, and enthusiasm that our friendships and familiarity with each other generates. Jus' Drawn is then an idea of who we are, where our ideas are drawn from, where we position ourselves in the scope of what we think is 'Australia'. Jus' Drawn is what we do and how we imagine ourselves.

Vernon Ah Kee, proppaNOW, 2010.

Jus' Drawn is the first exhibition of commissioned drawings by seven artists in the collective proppaNOW, Vernon Ah Kee, Tony Albert, Bianca Beetson, Richard Bell, Gordon Hookey, Jennifer Herd and Laurie Nilsen.

In the exhibition the artists deal with a range of subject matter and emotions, from raw personal loss and grief to broader environmental issues in relation to the destruction of the planet, the art market and contemporary and historical political issues and events.

Jus' Drawn was launched at Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts, St Kilda in 2010 and will tour to five Victorian venues during 2011- 2012, managed by National Exhibitions Touring Support (NETS) Victoria.

Artists' profiles

Tony Albert

Artist's Background

Tony Albert is a Brisbane-based artist who was born in 1981 in North Queensland. His family is from Cardwell, situated in the rainforest area of the far north. His language group is Girramay. Tony completed a degree in Visual Arts majoring in Contemporary Australian Indigenous Art, Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, Brisbane, QLD in 2004.

Recent exhibitions include *Jus' Drawn*, Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts, St Kilda, 2010; *Ash on Me*, Jane Manton Art, Brisbane, 2009; *hopeless romantic*, Gallerysmith, Melbourne, 2008; *Must Have Been Love*, Canberra Contemporary Art Space, 2007; *Go Away*, The Farm 358 George St, Brisbane; *Optimism*, 2008 and *I'm bring'n sexy BLAK*, Jan Manton Art, Brisbane, 2007.

Tony Albert's work is held in collections across Australia, including the National Museum, National Gallery of Australia, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Monash Gallery of Art, University of Queensland Art Museum, Caloundra Regional Art Gallery, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Griffith Artworks and Queensland Art Gallery.

In 2009, Tony won the Linden Postcard Show prize and in 2007 he was awarded the Queensland Sunshine Coast Art Prize.

Tony Albert is represented by Jan Manton Gallery, Queensland and currently lives and works in Brisbane.

Ideas and inspiration

Tony Albert's work reflects political, historical, environmental and cultural issues relevant to Indigenous-Australian people in today's society.

A conceptual artist with a background in painting, Tony is interested in representing ideas as opposed to creating works of art only for the aesthetic or visual appeal. He works across a range of media and methods including painting, photography, drawing and wall-based installations.

Possessing an intense interest in contemporary society and current affairs, Tony is provoked by stereotypical representations of Indigenous-Australians in mainstream culture, often in the form of kitsch, mass produced tourist memorabilia, ornaments and decorative, functional ware, which he calls 'Aboriginalia'. Drawing on his own vast, personal collection of 'Aboriginalia', Tony often marries these objects with paradoxical language and wordplay to express cultural alienation, displacement and social prejudice.²

Work by the Artist

Bullet, 2010, is a minimalist, conceptual work which presents a series of four ink drawings and one text panel. Three of the drawn images are spent rifle cartridges, while one is an unfired cartridge.

The work illustrates and strongly symbolises an aspect of Tony Albert's history and, more specifically, a period in his grandfather's life during WWII. Here, the style and the number of images in the work is highly significant and, together with the text, connects and educates us on the cold, hard facts.

Bullet symbolises the miraculous survival, and gross injustice, to his Aboriginal grandfather as a return servicemen to Australia, after he fought and suffered as a prisoner of war during WWII. Saved by a snap decision by the enemy 'not to shoot', while three of his comrades before him were executed, the work tells the story of his grandfather's capture and near death experience and his later return to Australia under safe passage. However, while his grandfather had undertaken an honorable and brave duty, because he was Aboriginal, he was denied the automatic gifting of property to return soldiers through the Return Servicemen Settlement Scheme – a story now recorded in the revised National History curriculum for Australian schools.



Tony Albert ASH on me 2009
vintage ashtrays on vinyl lettering
150 x 115 x 150 cm
courtesy the artist and Jan Manton Gallery

2. Jan Manton Gallery <http://www.janmantonart.com>

Tony Albert Butler 2010
acrylic on paper
29 x 21 cm
courtesy the artist



In *Sorry*, Tony Albert captures an emotional occasion of both joy and sadness commemorating former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's apology speech to the Indigenous peoples of Australia and The Stolen Generation on 13 February 2008, with the word 'Sorry'.

The large wall-based text work of 'Aboriginalia' presents a myriad of stereotypical representations of Aboriginal people, adhered to the word 'sorry' in vinyl lettering – each face representing a false identity given to them by a white society.

With layered meaning, the work *Sorry* not only explores the way in which Aboriginal people view this day as commemorating a significant point in Australia's history but sadly, the work also alludes to a thin and superficial message suggesting the apology and 'sorry' is perhaps insincere and a 'token' gesture – a continuation of Australia's long history of prejudicial politics and policies which have and continue to marginalise Aboriginal people to this day.

Similarly, in the text-based work *ASH on Me*, 2009, Tony presents 99 kitsch, vintage, 'novelty' ashtrays, printed with a

range of stereotypical representations of Aboriginal people adhered to the word 'ash'. Here Tony not only confronts us with artificial images of Aboriginal people but he also beckons us to consider the unsavory thought of the original use of these mass produced objects, mostly made for the tourist market but for the express purpose of butting out dirty smelly cigarettes.

By utilising these mass-produced objects, portraying traditionally dressed primitives 'of the bush' with traditional implements and objects, Tony is able to extend his interest in collecting this type of commercially manufactured memorabilia, while also highlighting the way in which these images grossly misrepresent Indigenous peoples of Australia.

Conversely, Tony Albert's photographic series, *Gangsta Supastar*, 2006 stars Tony as *50perCENT* (a pseudonym referencing Tony's dual heritage of a white mother and black father) dressed in slick street gear and bling. Exploring Tony's alter ego and the excesses of fame, the work compares black America with black Australia while celebrating the strength of the American black rap music scene.



Tony Albert *SORRY*, 2008
found kitsch objects applied to vinyl letters
99 objects, 200 x 510 x 110 cm (installed)
The James C Sauris Collection, Purchased 2008 with funds from
James C Sauris through the Queensland Art Gallery Foundation
Collection, Queensland Art Gallery

3. Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art
http://qag.qld.gov.au/exhibitions/past/2008/optimism/artists/tony_albert

4. Jan Manton Gallery
<http://www.janmantonart.com/ARTISTS/TONYALBERT/ASHonMe2009/tabid/1777/Default.aspx>

Vernon Ah Kee

Artist's Background

Born in North Queensland and based in Brisbane, Vernon Ah Kee is Kuku Yalandji, Waanji, Yidindji, Gugu Yimithirr and Koko Berrin.

Vernon holds a Bachelor of Visual Arts with Honours (Fine Art) and a Bachelor of Visual Arts in Contemporary Australian Indigenous Art (Honours Fine Art) Queensland College of Art, Griffith University and is researching for his doctorate. Vernon currently lectures on contemporary Australian Indigenous art at Queensland College of Art, with interests including Aboriginal education, identity and art.

Vernon has exhibited broadly in group and solo exhibitions internationally, including representing Australia at the 2009 Venice Biennale. Recent exhibitions include *Jus' Drawn*, Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts, St Kilda, 2010; *waru*, KickArts Contemporary Arts, Cairns; *talkwalktalk*, Mackenzie Gallery, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, 2009; *becauseitisbitter*, Milani Gallery, Brisbane, 2008; *born in this skin*, Milani Gallery, Brisbane, 2008; *belief suspension*, ArtSpace, Sydney, 2008. Group exhibitions include *Once Removed*, Ludateca, Castello, 53rd Venice Biennale, Italy, 2009; *Ignite*, Object, Australian Centre for Craft and Design, Sydney, 2009.

Vernon Ah Kee is represented by Milani Gallery and currently lives and works in Brisbane.⁵

Ideas and inspiration

Vernon Ah Kee's work explores his life, family and his background and issues which deeply affect Aboriginal people. His work is primarily a critique of Australian popular culture specifically demonstrating the black/white dichotomy, which he expresses through the idea that the Aboriginal condition is more a white Australian construct than Aboriginal reality.

As a strong part of his practice, Vernon uses language and text to communicate his ideas, manipulating the visual and semantic properties, producing new, often sharply ironic meanings and powerful commentary on the history of Aboriginal dispossession and contemporary Australian racism.⁶

His previous work and ongoing practice includes drawing and, in particular, photo-real representations of his relatives, conceptual use of text and design and more recently photography, video, digital printing and 3D installation. His background in drawing and screen-printing is an important influence.

Vernon's work and in particular, his drawing has also been influenced by the comic book superhero 'Spider Man' through observing the development of the drawing style over many years. His photoreal portraits are directly influenced by and reference photographic records of his grandparents, from Palm Island in 1938, at a time when these images would contribute to records of what was seen as a dying race.

Work by the Artist

The work *Unwritten* 2010 presents abstracted portraits of Aboriginal people based on a long series which started approximately three years ago. While Vernon is extremely experienced in portraiture and creating photo-real, drawn portraits, the series *Unwritten* is not intended to reference particular individuals.

The series explores and highlights what Vernon Ah Kee describes as 'the unwritten law and perception that Aboriginal people in Australia are seen as being less than or not human and not recognised as being fully formed as humans.'⁷ The abstracted forms, with little facial definition or recognisable features, float and appear to bulge out of the page. Eerie, deep-set areas where the eyes should be stare out directly at the viewer from a cloudy haze with an intense, penetrating gaze.

5. proppaNOW <http://www.proppanow.com>

Milani Gallery <http://www.milanigallery.com.au>

6. The Centre for Cross Cultural Research, The Australian National University http://www.anu.edu.au/culture/abstractions/artists/vak_2.htm

7. Vernon Ah Kee, Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts

<http://www.lindenarts.org/show/2010/0918/>

8. i bid



Vernon Ah Kee *Cantchant (Wegrewhere)* 2009
 Installation, video still
 courtesy the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane



Vernon Ah Kee *Umwitten* 2010
 charcoal on paper
 courtesy the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

Vernon explains; “Aboriginal people have been stopped at the door of humanity and denied the rites and levels of autonomy, decision-making and freedom afforded to white people. These works represent strong emotions felt by Aboriginal people by the way they feel they are viewed by white people such as anger, endurance, persistence, frustration and desperation”.⁸

The work *Cantchant (wegrewhere)*, 2009 was presented in a group exhibition *Once Removed* as part of Australia’s representation at the Venice Biennale. Exhibited in two spaces, one space presented a range of surfboards hanging from the ceiling, painted with north Queensland rainforest shield designs in red, black and yellow with faces of aboriginal people on the reverse and large text slogans on the surrounding walls. The second space, with a three-screen video installation, features young Aboriginal men surfing competitively. Another sequence presents ‘dead’ boards (waterlogged surfboards) hanging from trees, wrapped in barbed wire, bullet holed, blasted by guns. The Aboriginal surfers pose as white yobbos, wearing slogans such as ‘We grew here, you flew here’.⁹

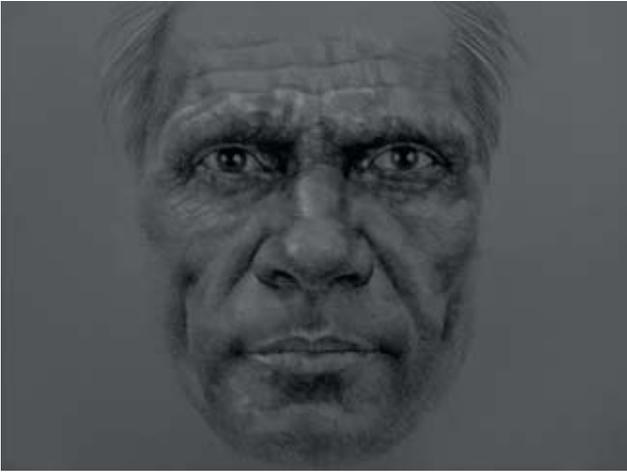
In this work, Vernon explores and questions the notion of the beach and surf culture as being a white Australian domain, a place only for the cultural elite, strongly linked to white Australian identity and way of life. The symbolism of the colours of the Aboriginal flag in shield designs and the brutal element of barbed wire and shootings, all allude to reclaiming territory and ‘killing off’ the ownership of the beach and surfboard culture from white Australian ownership. Here, the beach becomes a competitive arena and unrestful place – no longer a destination for leisure, relaxation or fun but an unwelcome cultural battleground. The T-shirt slogan and ambiguous title, *wegrewhere*, implores us to question and consider, post the Cronulla beach riots in 2005 in western Sydney, issues surrounding cultural identity, displacement and ownership within a type of film noir beach film set.¹⁰

For the 2008 Biennale of Sydney, Ah Kee exhibited twelve photo-real charcoal and pastel drawings on canvas continuing his series of ‘enobling’ portraits of members of his family.

9. Institute of Modern Art, *Cantchant*, Vernon Ah ke
<http://www.ima.org.au/pages/exhibits/cantchant88.php>. Milani Gallery

10. ibid

Vernon Ah Kee *What is an Aborigine* 2008
 George Sibly/
 charcoal, crayon and acrylic on canvas, 180 x 240 cm
 courtesy the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane



Vernon Ah Kee *Born in this Skin* #6 2008
 courtesy the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane



The series of drawings respond to the history of the romantic portraiture of ‘primitives’ and effectively repositions 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. The drawings, which refer to anthropologists’ records of Vernon’s ancestors, inhabit the space with a powerful energy and Aboriginal presence. Gazing at the oversized portraits, the viewer also experiences a sense of discomfort, as the confrontational act of the stare, of facing an accuser, of exercising a right of reply is strongly felt.¹¹

For the 2008 Biennale of Sydney, Vernon Ah Kee appropriated a disused toilet block on Cockatoo Island as part of the series, *Born in this Skin*. Full of racist, sexist, homophobic and otherwise repugnant graffiti, the work was presented as a found object, unchanged by the artist for the Biennale.

At the behest of the Curator of the Biennale, Vernon was asked to select a site for a work of art on Cockatoo Island. For Vernon, the abandoned derelict toilet block complete with the existing graffiti, blatantly exposed the harsh reality of living with prejudice in every guise and in the most real way.

Here, the unidentified taunts, usually disregarded or devalued and placed in another class, in a dirty squalid environment and normally worlds apart from any higher form of art, are repositioned, recontextualised as art for a prestigious exhibition.

Through presenting a work of this nature in a very different context, and to a captive audience during the Biennale, Vernon intentionally shocks the viewer and heightens the offensive nature of the meanings and messages. Here he creates greater awareness of the extent of prejudice, ostracism and alienation caused as a result of these very public taunts and the extent to which he empathises with the victims.¹² These obscene found drawings also offer a counterpoint to the ennobling portraits of relatives for which he is known.¹³

In 2009, Vernon presented the graffiti-covered panels from the toilets for the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair. Photographic documentation of the work was also presented for the exhibition *Born in this Skin* at Milani Gallery, Brisbane.

11. Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, 2008 *Biennale of Sydney Guide*, p. 12.

austracism

to banish (someone) from their native country

to exclude by general consent from society, privileges, etc

Vernon Ah Kee, *Consent*, 2003
vinyl and acrylic on polypropylene board
one of four panels, 200 x 180 cm
courtesy The artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

In a previous series, *Consent*, 2003 Vernon presents a text-based work with two words conjoined – ‘aust’ and ‘racism’ reading as ‘austracism’ in grey, black and white. The work is powerful and confronting in its presentation and subtext and a clever use of wordplay. In billboard proportions, Vernon presents a sobering view of Australian society in which racism and exclusion are omnipresent.

Works from the same series, *Consent, selling; fire*, 2003 present large-scale text with the words, ‘Holocaust’ and ‘Faust’ which Vernon created following a trip to Germany, when he was reflecting on the Australian racial divide and the comparison with German racial politics of WWII.

In this work, as a viewer, we are confronted with not only the visual and semantic properties of these text-based works but also multiple challenging meanings.¹⁴

12. IMA, Vernon Ah Kee
<http://www.ima.org.au/pages/exhibitions.php?archive=true&year=2009>
Milani Gallery

<http://www.milanigallery.com.au/exhibit/born-skin>
13. *ibid*

14. Australian National University, The Centre for Cross-Cultural Research,
Research School of Humanities
http://www.anu.edu.au/culture/abstractions/artists/vak_1.htm

Bianca Beeton

Artist's Background

Bianca Beeton is a Kabi Kabi woman born in Roma, Western Queensland.

Recent exhibitions include *Jus' Drawn*, Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts, St Kilda, 2010; *Emotional Landscapes & Sunsets*, Australian Dreaming Art, Melbourne, 2007; *Gatherings II*, Qld Art Gallery, Brisbane, 2006; *The other Arty Beeton* touring exhibition, Arts Queensland, 2005; *Gatherings, Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art from Qld, Aus*, Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, 2001; *Shoosh! The History of the Campfire Group*, Institute of Modern Art, 2000; *Primavera*, 1997 MCA, Sydney; *Black Humour*, Contemporary Art Space, Canberra, 1997; *All Stock Must Go*, the 2nd Asia Pacific Triennial, Queensland Art Gallery 1996/97. Collaborative performances include *Livid Festival*, Stage X, Dar and the *Black Chics Talking* project, Adelaide Fringe Festival, 2002.

Bianca Beeton holds a Bachelor of Art Visual Arts (Honours) from Queensland University of Technology.

Bianca's work is held in public and private collections in Australia including Art Bank, Queensland Performing Arts Trust and Queensland Art Gallery.

Ideas and inspiration

Bianca Beeton's work is concerned with her identity as an Aboriginal, the commodification of Aboriginal Art and culture, the demarcation of art, artifact and kitsch and a critique of 'beauty' and the 'feminine'. This is blended with references to the work of the central Australian and Western Desert artists such as the Pintupi, the stenciling technique of the Arnhem Land cave painters and twentieth century artists such as Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Lin Onus, Rover Thomas and Andy Warhol. Her use of symbols function as vehicles for understanding the world and reconstructing the ways in which cultures overlap, traditions translate and meanings are recreated.¹⁵

Drawing her inspiration from real life experiences, many of Bianca's ideas are triggered by conversations, dreams, television and popular culture and often highlight the importance of humour and laughing at ourselves.

The colour pink in various hues and media became an earlier signature for Bianca's work and served to explore and highlight 'the candy coated history of Australia'.¹⁶ By embellishing the surface with candy pink, fake fur and frills, the notion of artificiality and satire allowed her to play on references to rock divas, Hollywood stars and the mass media with a garish, slightly deranged viewpoint and also critique issues of importance to herself and to Aboriginal people. Bianca's 'spoonful of sugar' or pink imagery also helped to make the metaphor more easily go down. Her work also explores what she calls 'Cultural Terratism', a reference to the not so pretty and aggressive nature of the tourist industry and its increased encroachment on the natural environment.¹⁷

Bianca works across a broad range of media and methods including painting, photography, installation, new media and ceramics and is involved in collaborations in performance art.

15. Bianca Beeton soundfile
<http://www.proppanow.com/>
Saatchi Online

<http://www.saatchionline.com/pinkstinks>

16. Red Bubble Pink Stinks

<http://www.redbubble.com/people/pinkstinks>

17. *ibid*



Work by the Artist

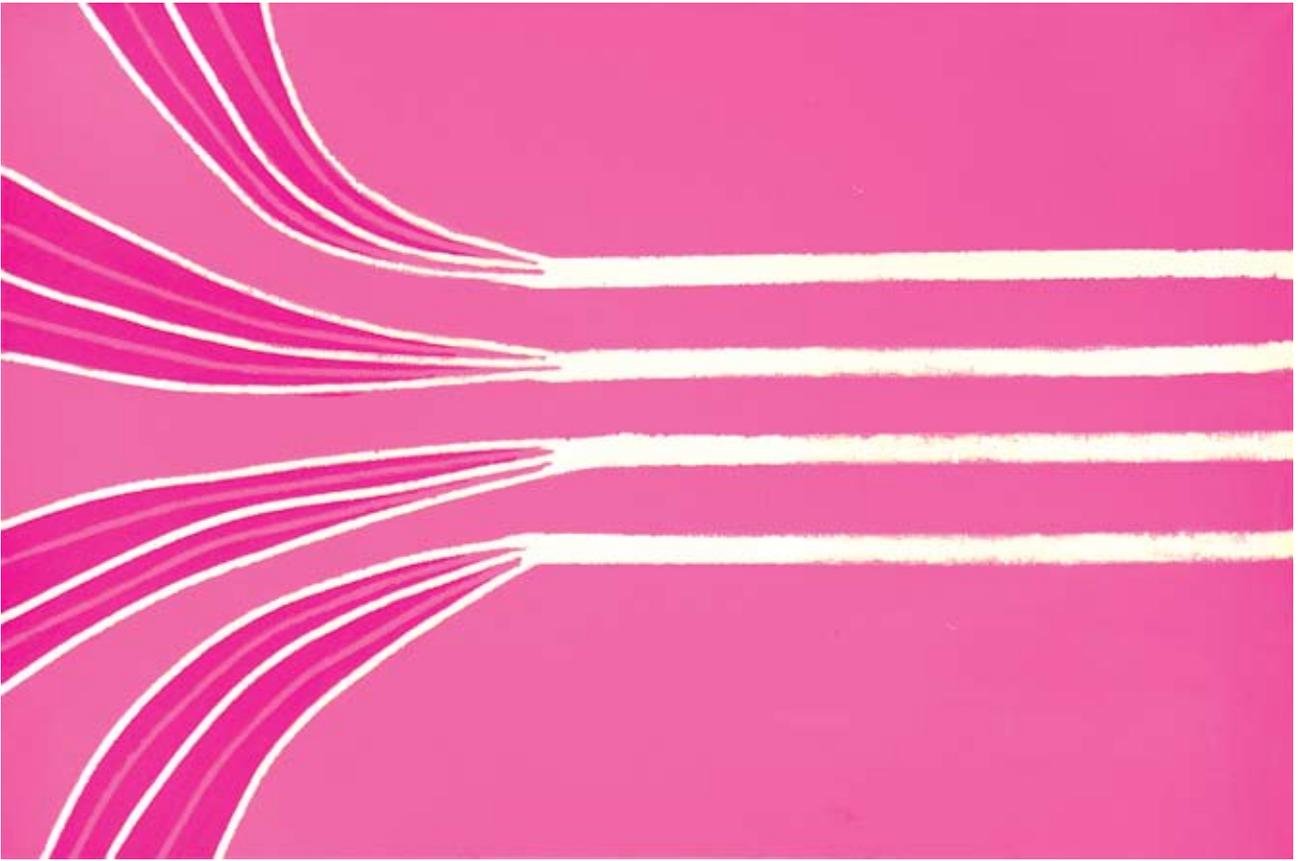
Bianca Beetsen's self portraits, *It's been a bad day, please don't take my picture*, reflects issues surrounding the 'Sorry' apology by the Prime Minister of Australia on 13 February, 2008, the lyrics of the REM song of the same title, together with Bianca's personal feelings in relation to recent experiences and her Aboriginal identity.

In these self-portraits, shadows indicating Bianca's facial features and expression, are lines of text which express her personal feelings, including anger and a sense of loss and grief in relation to a range of issues which include her Aboriginal identity, the Stolen Generation and the recent passing of friends and family members.

Viewed closely, single words repeated, such as 'tea, sugar, flour' and 'words are meaningless and forgettable', reflect on historic events such as colonisation and the 'Sorry' apology to indigenous Australians. Bianca's method of accentuating the features, with lines of text, also alludes to the way in which our faces become increasingly lined with age and define and reflect our feelings and personal life experiences.

The meaning and reference to the REM song lyrics *Bad Day*, also reflects the feeling of wanting to withdraw from society and block out all the unpleasant aspects of life when it becomes overwhelming, whilst appreciating this isn't completely possible. *pink man*, presents a black stencil-like image of an Aboriginal man, contrasted against a hot pink background. The stencilled image is accompanied by two concentric areas of dots which appear arbitrary and decorative. Naked from the waist up, the figure with a primitive appearance stands with crossed arms, looking away from the viewer.





In the image, Bianca references the stencilling technique of the Arnhem Land cave painters and dot painting of the western desert artists, whilst highlighting the decorative qualities of mass-produced imagery of this nature, expressly created to 'showcase' the Indigenous people of Australia for the tourist market.

The candy pink background, coupled with the decorative dots is created to be intentionally incongruous with the image of the male figure and symbolises the 'candy coated history of Australia', commonly used in Bianca's work.

Similarly in the work *Urban Totem*, Bianca references traditional Aboriginal symbols using pink fabric in a range of hues to create a 'soft' totem pole with an 'urban' edge. The range of pink fabric prints, coupled with a stuffed representation of a totem pole, intentionally mocks the commodification of traditional Aboriginal objects, artefacts and imagery, for a market with little appreciation of the history and significance of Australia's Indigenous people and their culture.

Richard Bell

Artist's Background

Richard Bell is Kamilaroi, Ji'man, Kooma and Goreng Goreng, born in Charleville into the Kamilaroi tribe.

Recent exhibitions include *Jus' Drawn*, Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts, St Kilda, 2010; *Richard Bell: Provocateur*, University of Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane, 2009; *Scratch An Aussie*, Milani Gallery, Brisbane, 2008; *WINDOW SHOPPING*, Gertrude Street Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne, 2007; *Psalm Singing*, Bellas Milani Gallery, Brisbane. Group exhibitions include *Terra Nullius*, ACC Galerie, Weimar & Halle 14, Germany, 2009; *Marella: The Hidden Mission*, Penrith Regional Gallery,¹⁸ NSW; *Half Light*, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney, 2008; *Revolutions: Forms That Turn*, 2008, *Biennale of Sydney*, Sydney, 2008.¹⁹

Richard Bell has been selected as one of the artists whose work will feature in a major upcoming exhibition at the Queensland Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane. *21st Century: Art from the first decade*, will feature over 200 works by more than 140 Australian and international artists.

Richard Bell is represented by Milani Gallery, Brisbane, Queensland and currently lives and works in Brisbane.

Ideas and inspiration

Richard Bell was one of the founding members and was involved in the establishment of the group proppaNOW to support urban Aboriginal artists.

As a leader of the first group of urban Indigenous artists whose work provided a means of expression during the period leading up to the 1988 bicentenary of white Australian settlement, Richard's ideas challenged non-Indigenous artists who appropriated Indigenous imagery, particularly in relation to the perception of what was supposedly 'traditional' Indigenous art.²⁰

Described as the 'enfant terrible' of Australian art, Richard's work examines the historical treatment of Aboriginal people after European settlement, addressing contemporary issues such as religion, art, government policy and others such as oppression, frustration and discrimination. Richard believes the work of urban Aboriginal artists is 'classified' and misaligned with traditional art making of another time and place.

Richard Bell's main influences are the American twentieth century Pop artists, Roy Lichtenstein, from whom he parodies the popular comic book and dot style, whilst also referencing and appropriating the work of Andy Warhol and Imants Tillers. He draws his main inspiration from general conversation with people in and outside of his own community, often within public places such as public bars.

Richard regularly utilises comedy, satire and parody to illustrate the friction of the black/white divide and racist comments by politicians, such as the Queensland-based, former One Nation politician, Pauline Hanson. He also inverts his own black/white stereotypes for his photographic, video and performance work.

Richard works across a range of media and methods including painting, digital printing, installation and more recently video and is involved in collaborations in performance art.

Work by the Artist

In the series *Me, me, me dreaming (with a little help from my friends)*, 2010, Richard Bell presents a series of wall works in coloured pastel drawn directly on black-blackboard paint on various walls of the Gallery. In the work, the word 'me' is drawn overlapping, repeatedly in a range of vibrant colours by Richard and other members of proppaNOW at the invitation of the artist.

¹⁸. Milani Gallery

<http://www.milanigallery.com.au/artist/richard-bell?do=news>

¹⁹. <http://www.proppanow.com/>

²⁰. IMA Institute of Modern Art History of the Campfire Group

<http://www.ima.org.au/pages/exhibits/shoosh-a-history-of-the-campfire-group22.php>



The series *Me, me, me dreaming (with a little help from my friends)*, 2010 is a visually whimsical and naïve tribute to the late Indigenous artist Emily Kame Kngwarreye. While referencing the spaghetti linear style of Kngwarreye's work and the Arnhem Land Oenpelli artists the work also addresses the selfish 'me' spirit and the art market.²¹

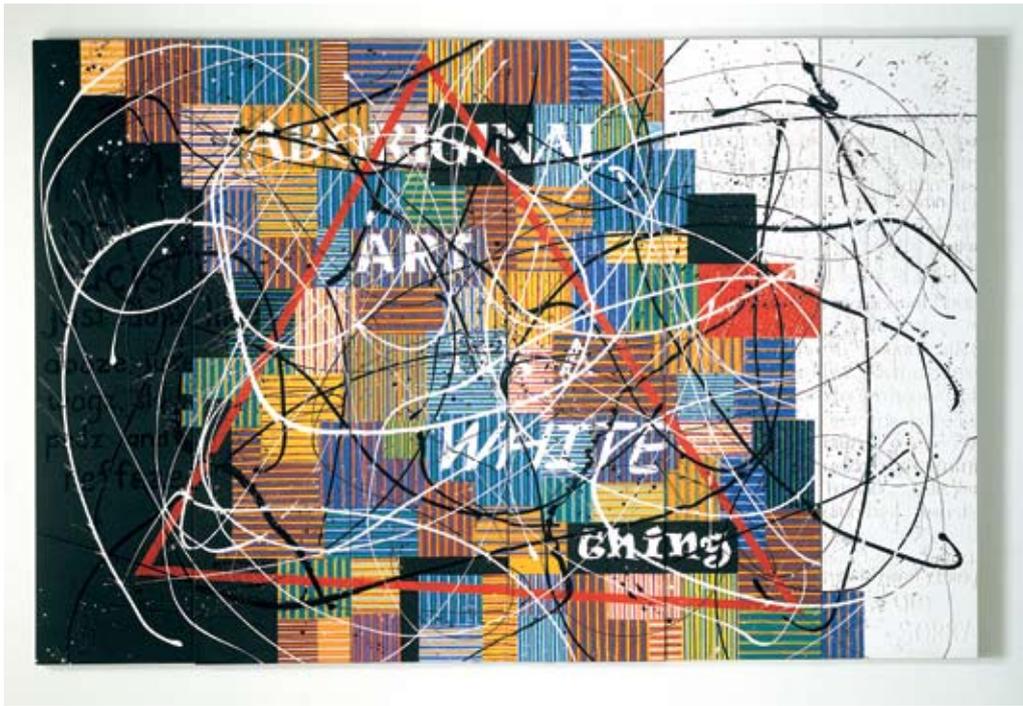
After Emily Kngwarreye passed away, Richard Bell observed how little the commercial art market cared. Instead, to his horror, he witnessed a money grabbing exercise by art dealers who were more concerned about finding a replacement 'Emily' as a result of their financial loss, than showing any concern for the immense sense of loss to Emily's family and community at the time of her passing. Thereafter, Richard created an ongoing series named 'Desperately seeking Emily'.

While the work appears whimsical, the sentiment is not and exposes the extent to which Aboriginal artists have been exploited and are often vulnerable at the hands of commercial art dealers.

Scientia E. Metaphysica Bell's Theorem (Aboriginal Art It's a White Thing), 2003 was selected as the winner of the 2003 Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award, Darwin.

Underneath a structured linear and free-hand sea of paint, Richard confronts the viewer with the quote, 'Aboriginal Art It's a White Thing'. The work parodies the art market and critiques the domination of the modern Western tradition in Australian art.

21. Richard Bell soundfile Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts
<http://www.lindenarts.org/>
ProppaNOW
<http://www.proppanow.com/>



Following a previous work with the same name in 2002, Richard adopts and merges a number of artistic styles, from Jackson Pollock's splashes to the text based conceptual work of Colin McCahon, Joseph Kosuth and the work of Imants Tillers. On the left hand side of the work, a raft of bigoted comments such as 'I am not racist, I just don't like aboze, wogz, slowpedz' and so on, creates a powerful artistic statement, challenging a raft of conventions and prejudices.

Bell's critique of the domination of the modern Western tradition in Australian art, is also symbolised by the Roy Lichtenstein *Made Men* series. In works such as *Big Brush Stroke* (2005) he appropriates the style of Lichtenstein in large inkjet prints on canvas with cartoon characters with ironic comments in speech bubbles, sometimes with changed skin colours and colours of the Aboriginal flag.²²

In the tacky, tasteless text and dissonant elements of the work *Trickie Dickie* (2005), Richard includes a roll of dishonour, listing artists who have appropriated Indigenous imagery.²³

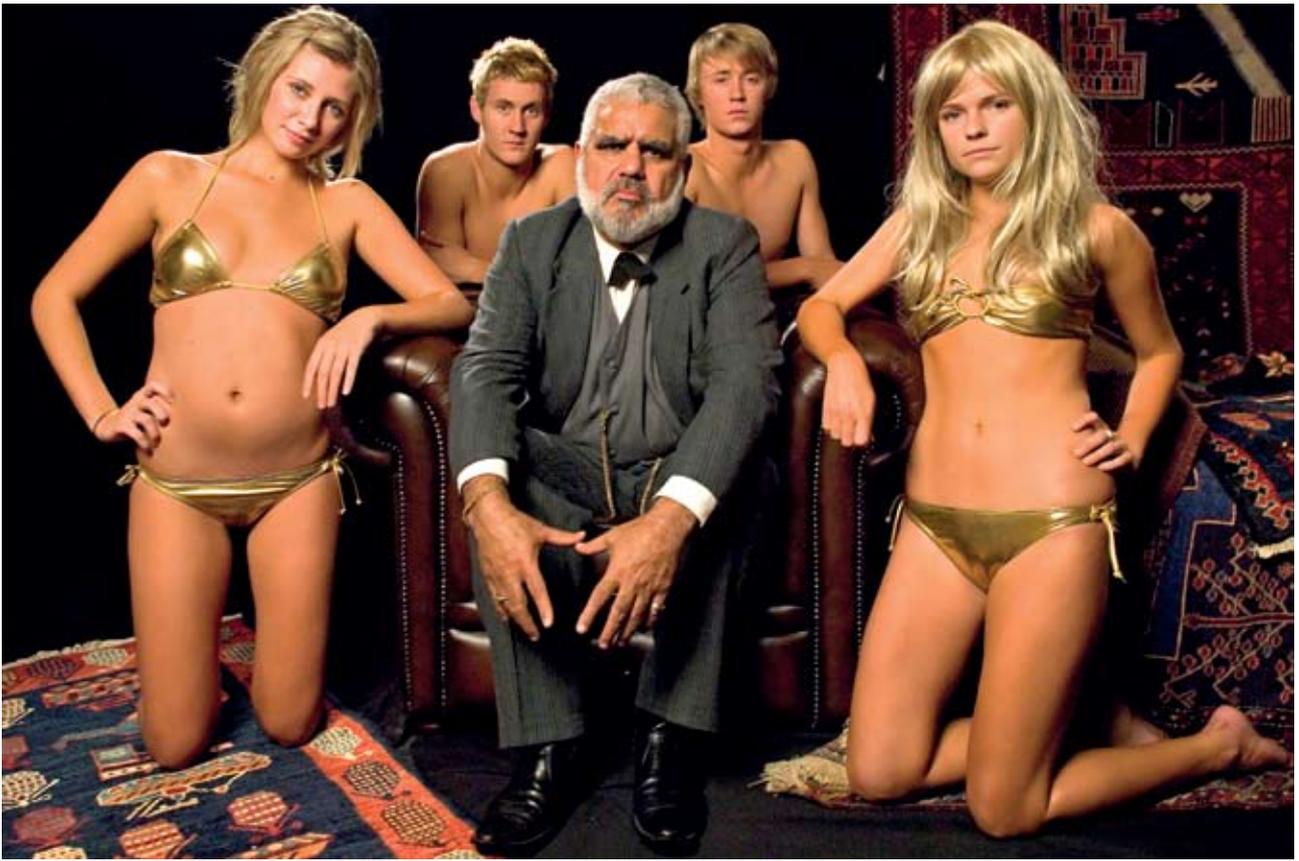
In his satirical video *Uz vs Them* (2006) Richard parodies and continues the debate on the black/white divide in boxing ring.²⁴ A homage to the boxer Anthony Mundine, the work presents Bell as a sleazy fight promoter verbally sparring with a white supremacist skinhead. The work explored issues surrounding identity, fame and Aboriginal people who, like Mundine, refuse identification as Indigenous sportspeople, in favour of identification with Islam and American gangsta culture.

In the later video work *Scratch an Aussie*, 2008, Richard parodies the present day relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians in a Sigmund Freud style psychiatrist's room, with himself and Gary Foley in the starring roles. Through the creation of a black Sigmund Freud interlocutor (played by Indigenous rights activist, academic, writer and actor Gary Foley), Richard cleverly examines racist attitudes across generations. Complete with Persian rugs and the classic psychiatrists couch, Bell sets up a role reversal with white bikini-clad blondes expressing

22. Timothy Morrell Positivity
http://www.cacsa.org.au/cvapsa/2006/10_bs35_4/morrell.pdf

23. The Australian
<http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/news/2006/september/aust15sep06.html>

24. Frieze Art Magazine Issue 116
http://www.frieze.com/issue/review/culture_warriors/



the way they feel they have been discriminated against by a dominant class. At times shockingly confronting, the work is extremely witty and provocative, leaving the viewer with an extreme sense of unease and discomfort.²⁵ Initially created for the 2008 Biennale of Sydney, *Scratch an Aussie* has since screened across the country in numerous film festivals and exhibitions.²⁶

In *Life on a Mission*, 2009, which includes the text, 'I am notta noble savage', Richard confronts the viewer with a strong message surrounding Aboriginal art and identity, challenging the pretext that the 'authentic' Aboriginal person is 'of the bush' or off the mission and their art is either a variation of western desert style painting or traditional barks and spears.

Richard Bell's collaboration with artist Destiny Deakin and collaborator Virginia Fraser, *A Date with Destiny: A Cabaret Evening*, presented a provocative live cabaret event at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, confronting taboos within the art world, Aboriginal culture and society in general.²⁷

25. CACSA Timothy Morrell *Scratch an Aussie*
http://www.cacsa.org.au/cvapsa/2009/t_AFF/Richard%20Bell.pdf

http://www.cacsa.org.au/cvapsa/2009/t_AFF/Richard%20Bell.pdf

26. CVAP
http://www.cacsa.org.au/cvapsa/2009/t_AFF/aff.html

27. MCA
http://www.mca.com.au/default.asp?page_id=14&content_id=1372

Jennifer Herd

Artist's Background

Jennifer is a Mbarbarrum woman whose family roots lie in far North Queensland. Jennifer was one of the founding members of proppaNOW together with Richard Bell and Vernon Ah Kee. Jennifer is the coordinator of the Bachelor of Visual Art course in at Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, Brisbane in Contemporary Australian Indigenous art.³⁴

Jennifer Herd is represented by George Petelin Gallery and currently lives and works in Brisbane.

Ideas and inspiration

Jennifer Herd's work explores her feelings concerning the way in which Aboriginal people have been treated in Australia, her experiences as an Aboriginal person and as she expresses, "making known the untold history of Aboriginal people in Australia".³⁵

Jennifer worked in the theatre and fashion industry for 12 years before moving into the field of Indigenous education and fine art, Jennifer draws on her past experiences and knowledge in costume design, often incorporating stitching and pin holes in her installations, painting, drawing and sculptural works.

Life, death and conflict are common and ongoing themes and she is particularly inspired by the conflicts that took place in her grandmothers' country, Mbarbaram, and commenting on the black armband approach by historians to present the dark side of colonial history. She also comments on the heroism, rather than the pain of this period, to present a different story that does not seek to victimise but to memorialise.³⁶

Jennifer's work is also created in a minimalist style, frequently in a uniformly large or small scale, often utilising the shield to reference her Aboriginal ancestry of Northern Queensland and to symbolise strength and defence.³⁶

She is inspired and influenced by non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal artists such as Elizabeth Cummings, Native American and Canadian artists including George Littlechild, as well as Brett Whiteley, Destiny Deakin, Judy Watson and Fiona Foley.³⁷

34. Griffith University
<http://www.griffith.edu.au/visual-creative-arts/queensland-college-art/staff/ms-jennifer-herd>

35. *ibid*
36. Jennifer Herd
<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=20365086560&v=info>
37. Jennifer Herd soundfile Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts
<http://www.lindenarts.org/>



Jennifer Hard On Dying 2010
Ink drawings on 300gsm watercolour paper, 21 x 29.7 cm
courtesy the artist

Work by the Artist

The series of works on paper *On Dying*, 2010, is a meditation on the subject of dying and life's journey, following the long illness and recent death of Jennifer's daughter and as a way of dealing with the profound loss and grief. The work also reflects on life, death and conflict, common and ongoing themes in her work.

The series of images are representative of shields used by Aboriginal people – a symbol commonly used in her work and derived from her birthplace in Northern Queensland.

One part of the series in red and black is painted using her late daughter's hair – the random splashes and spots a consequence of the uncontrollable nature of the loose hair strands. In the second series, inspired by fond memories of shared experiences with her daughter spent making costumes for the theatre, Jennifer incorporates pinholes and stitching and Indigenous symbols, with one for deceased females.

The minimalist, small-scale, intimately painted and pinhole images created on uniform crisp white watercolour paper provide a sense of order and intimacy from a situation of extreme loss and chaos. Here, Jennifer attempts to take some control, from a sense of this not being of the natural order of things and not of her choosing, while reflecting on her own birthplace and ancestry and referencing her ongoing series, *Walls of Resistance*.

In *On Dying*, Jennifer presents a poignant and personal message from the heart, strongly symbolising the depth of the mother/daughter relationship and of the immeasurable sense of her loss and grief.

Jennifer Herd's ongoing work *Walls of Resistance* includes a wall of boxes with sculptured and pin-holed landscapes of shields. The boxes and sculptured parts of the work, made of straw and tissue paper, are inlaid with mother of pearl and painted with red ochre. This work acts as a memorial and



Jennifer Herd *On Dying* 2010
ink drawings on 300gsm watercolour paper, 21 x 29,7cms
courtesy the artist



Jennifer Herd *On Dying* 2010
pinhole drawings on 300gsm watercolour paper, 29,5cm x 21cms
courtesy the artist

tribute to all the Aboriginal people who fought and died for their land and as a symbol of the “misrepresented part of Australian history and the untold part of Aboriginal history”.³⁸

In the work *Cruciform* from *Walls of Resistance*, Herd’s delicately formed work, analyses the impact of ‘Terra Nullius’. Nine boxes installed in the form of a crucifix serve as a memorial to the death of Aboriginal people and culture.

Here Herd investigates the massacres of Aboriginal people and the consequences in the Cairns region of North Queensland, her ancestral country, with particular reference to the little known Irvinebank Massacre in 1884, in far north Queensland – the pinhole drawings on cartridge paper referring to the shields punctured with bullet holes. Framed in dark wooden boxes like coffins, the shields, like the Aboriginal people they were meant to protect, are now boxed in, institutionalised, pigeon-holed and confined. The work also recalls the culpable influence of Christianity in the attempted erasure of Aboriginal culture.³⁹

38. Jennifer Herd soundfile
<http://www.lindenarts.org/>

39. Learning to be Proppa: Aboriginal artists collective proppaNOW,
Margo Neale *Artlink* Blak on Blak
<http://www.artlink.com.au/articles/3359/learning-to-be-proppa-aboriginal-artists-collecti/>

Gordon Hookey

Artist's Background

Gordon Hookey was born in North Queensland in 1961 and is Waanji. Gordon has exhibited in solo and group exhibitions in Australia, New Zealand, Germany, France and New Caledonia. Recent exhibitions include *Jus' Drawn*, Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts, St Kilda, 2010; *WHICHWAY!...?*, Milani Gallery, Brisbane, 2009; *So Fist Tick Catered Phenomenaah*, Bellas Milani Gallery, Brisbane and *Contempt free hart/ contemporary art*, Umbrella Studio, Townsville, Queensland, 2007; Kopatai Project Space, Port Chalmers, Dunedin, NZ, 2006.

Hookey has also completed residencies at Otago University, Dunedin, NZ; Banff Centre, Banff, Canada; Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne and has received several Australia Council grants. His work is held in many public collections in the United Kingdom, Japan, New Zealand and Canada, the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne and the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane.

Gordon Hookey is represented by Milani Gallery, Brisbane and Nellie Casten Gallery, Melbourne and currently lives and works in Brisbane.⁴⁰

Ideas and inspiration

Hookey's work includes bold paintings and mixed media installations which are often overtly political and provocative, utilising iconic Australian imagery juxtaposed with quick wit and scathing humour to comment on Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australian cultures. His work often expresses pictorial and lyrical narratives across a range of methods including drawing, printmaking, installation and painting, often as large multi-faceted, boldly coloured layered works.

Gordon's ideas highlight issues which have deeply affected Aboriginal people, from matters relating to Indigenous injustices, to the war in Iraq, the relationship between Australia and other Western Countries, immigration, domestic violence, social dysfunction, the art world and government policy.⁴¹

He draws voraciously, recording everyday events and ideas in his visual diaries, later referencing these images for other works of art. *Jus' Drawn* is one of the first exhibitions in which Hookey has created works on paper as finished works of art as opposed to preparatory drawings for paintings or installations.

Conflict and chaos are also central to the meaning of his art. Through his paintings, he often conveys a dark message which he uses to challenge and, hopefully, change the values and attitude of a dominant culture. His work is also strongly identified by witty humour of the absurd, through wordplay and utilising animals as metaphors for human beings as in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.

Work by the Artist

His recent work for *Jus' Drawn*, *Animals*, presents a series of eleven charcoal drawings of animals on uniform size paper. The animals are the focal point of each work, portrayed without any background information or sense of the landscape.

This series explores and symbolises the destruction of animals and the natural environment by white Australians, the wanton destruction of pristine environments and the priority of these issues to governments. In Gordon's words "*Animals* is an environmental and humanitarian comment on the destruction of our earth and our humanity."⁴²

40. ProppaNOW
<http://www.proppanow.com>

41. Oz Arts
http://www.ozarts.com.au/artists/gordon_hookey
42. Gordon Hookey soundfile
<http://www.lindenarts.org>



From researching animals in zoos and other places, in this series Gordon presents drawings of both native land and sea animals such as kangaroos alongside introduced species. The work also references the way in which native animals are not a priority or well cared for by government and the way in which rural land is becoming increasingly degraded by over farming, mining, cropping and chemical use. In Gordon's words, "You can tell how civilised a people or culture is by the way that they treat their animals."

This series is to be viewed within the context and development of Hookey's previous work and references to Orwell's *Animal Farm*, in which he will often include native animals in his images such as kangaroos to symbolise Indigenous people and power and strength, alongside introduced species such as sheep and cattle to symbolise weakness.

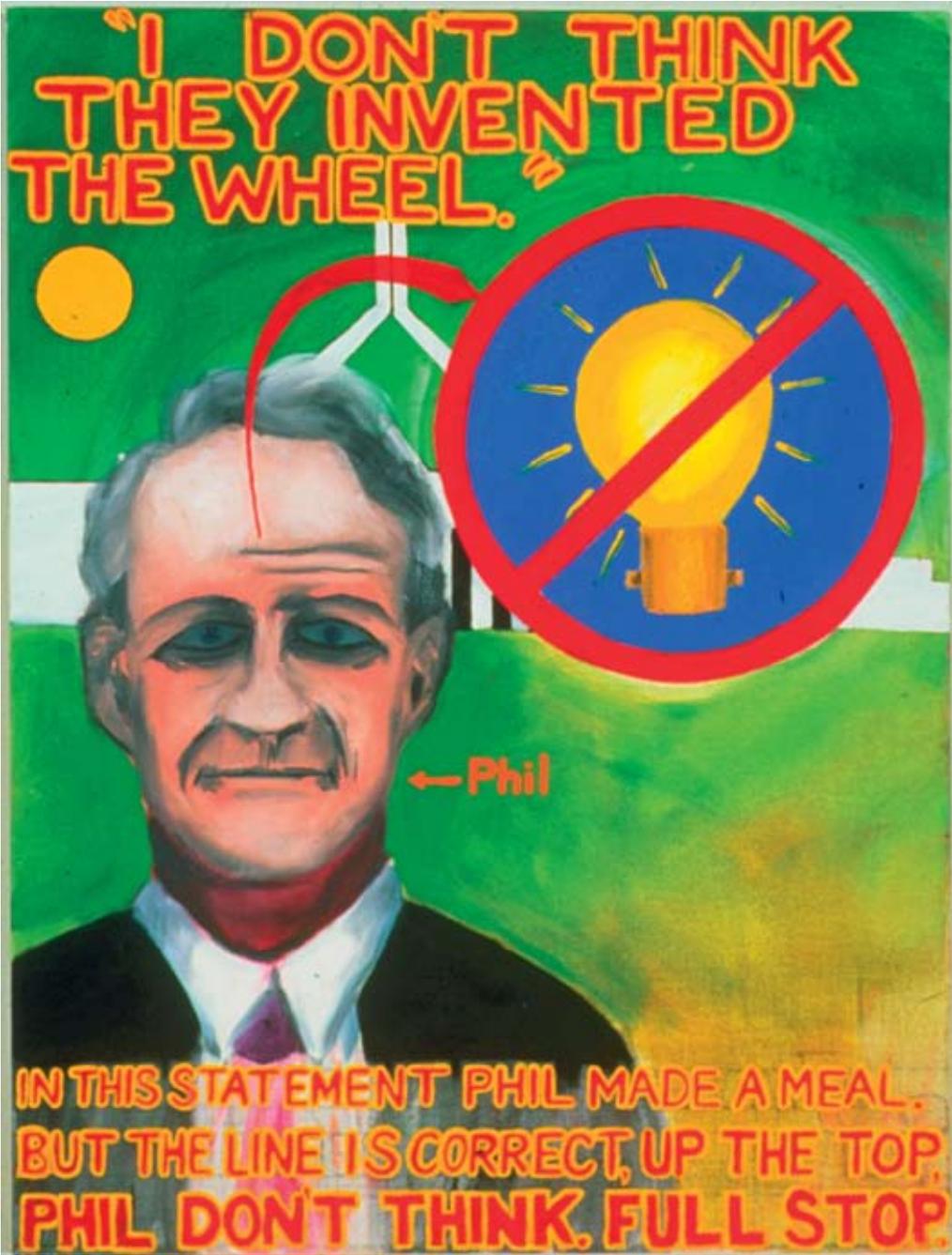
In another series for the 2010 Melbourne Art Fair, Hookey presented a witty series of charcoal drawings of peaceful, savvy kangaroos – some wearing sunglasses with titles such as *Solidarity-Empowerment* and *Whichaway, Murrayway, Goodway*.

The punchy, multi-panelled, boldly coloured work *Ruddock's Wheel* explores issues directly linked to racism in relation to a comment by the Attorney-General Phillip Ruddock, printed in *The Washington Post* in 2001. Ruddock was recorded as saying, "We're dealing with an Indigenous population that has had little contact with the rest of the world. We're dealing with people who were essentially hunters and gatherers. They didn't have chariots. I don't think they invented the wheel". The work also relates to an Aboriginal footy match, during which time the mining company Rio Tinto presented a raffle with a chocolate wheel to divert interest away from the fact that the company was mining land belonging to the local Indigenous community.

On one panel, Ruddock, portrayed as a sheep, stops the 'MV Tampa', a boat carrying 438 people from Afghanistan seeking asylum in Australia, while then Prime Minister John Howard is ignoring their plight and portrayed as 'little Johnny', warmly welcomes the 'pink-faced South African racists', portrayed as pigs. On the opposite side, kangaroos are at war, in charge and empowered, backed up by tanks, ready to shoot missiles while white people in boats are told as the first boat people to 'go back to where your blood has come'. This significant political event, commonly known as 'The Tampa', divided Parliament and communities as they grappled with the plethora of truths and untruths espoused by politicians and by members of the media at the time.



Gordon Hookey, Sacred nation, scared nation, indoctrination 2003, oil on canvas



Gordon Hooley/Ruddock's Wheel 2001 (detail)
oil on canvas, 83 x 65 cm
courtesy the artist and Nellie Caster Gallery, Melbourne

Laurie Nilsen

Artist's Background

Laurie Nilsen was born in Roma, Queensland in 1954 and is of the Manadandanji group. Laurie completed a Certificate in Commercial Illustration at Queensland College of Art, Brisbane 1988-89, B.A (Visual Arts) Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education, Victoria, 1995-2006 and currently lectures in Contemporary Australian Indigenous Art at Griffith University, Brisbane.

Select exhibitions include *Jus' Drawn*, Linden Centre for Contemporary Art, St Kilda, 2010; *Laurie Nilsen* 2008, fireworks gallery Brisbane; *Udungallo* (Bungil Creek) Dreamtime Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA, 1998/99; *Udungallo* (Bungil Creek), fireworks gallery, Brisbane, 1999; *Barbed Wire Boundaries*, fireworks gallery, Brisbane, 1996; *Claypan Series*, Dreamtime Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA, 1995; *Blue*, fireworks gallery Brisbane, 2008; *The Amersham Trophy* (with proppaNOW Artists Collective) Ambleside Street Studio Brisbane, 2007. In 2007, Laurie was awarded the prestigious Wandjuk Marika 3D Memorial Award as part of 24th Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Prize for his work *Gollbiurris on the Bunjil Creek*.

Laurie Nilsen is represented by fireworks gallery and currently lives and works in Brisbane.²⁸

Ideas and inspiration

Laurie Nilsen's work is charged with ideas surrounding Indigenous and gender issues, emu (the artist's totem) and introduced species, religious doctrines and the presentation of language. From his background in sculpture, he now works in drawing, painting and printmaking. His experience and background in graphic design and printmaking is also a strong influence on his work.²⁹

In Laurie's sculptural works his materials include barbed wire, steel, rabbit traps, prawn nets made from found objects and iconic forms such as the crucifix.

Work by the Artist

Barbed wire has become a strong symbol in Laurie's work which he has used for many of his iconic large-scale emu sculptures to accentuate the increased subdivision of rural land and the growing number of emus dying because of the increasing number of barbed-wire fences erected in rural Queensland. With the increased sophistication of the barb, it is now fatal for animals or humans to traverse.

Beyond rural areas, barbed wire is also a symbol of, and associated with, oppression and incarceration, immigration centres and 'no go' zones or of war zones and restricted areas for humans.

His works of large-scale black widow and red back spiders, also created from barbed wire, are a metaphor for the importance for women to handle women's issues, as opposed to being directed by men.

As the emu is Laurie Nilsen's totem, in this series, *Scar*, his aim is to emphasise the increasing number of emus that die a slow painful death as a result of attempting to traverse barbed wire fences in regional Queensland. As Laurie explains, "It isn't possible for emus to jump the fences like other animals and as more and more fences are erected and the land is subdivided, it is a tragedy – the emus are caught and have an agonising death, hanging on the wire".

This series also relates to Laurie Nilsen's previous imagery and interest in barbed wire, from growing up in rural Queensland and spending a great deal of time negotiating and observing fences. Consequently barbed wire became a metaphor for Laurie's work and a strong political symbol. He recounts, "While barbed wire keeps cattle and sheep in, it also keeps animals and Aboriginal people out."³⁰

28. <http://www.proppanow.com/>

29. fireworks gallery
<http://www.fireworksgallery.com.au/Artists/Laurie%20Nilsen/LaurieNilsen.htm>
30. Laurie Nilsen soundfile. Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts
<http://www.lindenarts.org/>



Coupled with his interest in the formation of the wire and the barb locking system, Laurie purposefully presents enlarged microscopic knots and twisted barbs to accentuate its brutality, magnifying the image and using alluring, bold colours to add to, and accentuate, his metaphor.³¹

“They’re made of barbed wire, the thing that kills them, so it’s almost like regeneration or... a way of reincarnating them again. I don’t think I’ll ever get around to making as many as I’ve seen perish”.³²

Laurie Nilsen’s witty body of work, *The Ten Goolburis*, 2008 presents a range of glamorous emu heads inspired by the iconic imagery of Andy Warhol and his celebrity silkscreen print series.

A combination of acrylic silkscreen printing techniques and hand painting, his emus appear as bizarre family portraits, individually titled with various tribal group names and with a direct reference to *Horton’s Indigenous Language Map of Australia*.

Also, by incorporating his own *Mandandanji* tribal name from South Western Queensland where he was born and raised, Nilsen links foreground and background colours with his neighbouring tribal group names, as a form of recognition of the breadth of his extended family.³³

Created in a slick commercial poster style of Andy Warhol, the works also celebrate the importance and significance of Laurie’s totem.

31. fireworks gallery
<http://www.fireworksgallery.com.au/Artists/Laurie%20Nilsen/LaurieNilsen.htm>

32. Ashley Crawford Talks to Laurie Nilsen *Birds on a Wire*
http://www.artcollector.net.au/Assets/395/1/42_nilsen.pdf

33. fireworks gallery
<http://www.fireworksgallery.com.au/Artists/Laurie%20Nilsen/LaurieNilsen.htm>

Laure Nilsen *The Ren Goodburis* 2008
screenprint and acrylic on canvas
courtesy the artist and the works gallery, brisbane



Curriculum links & Questions

VELS

The following curriculum links may be utilised across a range of areas of study for levels 5 & 6 in relation to the exhibition *Jus' Drawn*, the artists' collective proppaNOW and Aboriginal art and culture in The Arts, The Humanities (History), English and LOTE, together with Communication and Thinking Processes.

Initial research

- Visit your local Aboriginal Cultural Centre to explore the history of Aboriginal groups in Australia and the meaning of an Aboriginal 'totem'.
- Examine and research the number of language groups in Australia, via Horton's Language map
<http://www.abc.net.au/indigenous/map/default.htm>
- Watch, the SBS series, *the First Australians*
<http://www.sbs.com.au/firstaustralians/>
- Research the range of mission artists' groups such as the Pintupi, Papunya Tula, Oenprelli, and Utopia, Examine the styles and ideas of the artists' groups and the way in which their work relates to the work of proppaNOW.
- Research the timeline of Australia's development and history on the site *RACISM no way*.
<http://www.racismnoway.com.au/library/history/keydates/index-1800s.html>

The Arts

Creating & Making, Exploring & Responding

- What is 'urban' Aboriginal art and how does it differ from 'traditional' Aboriginal art? Compare the aesthetic of traditional styles of art to proppaNOW. Analyse and compare the main art elements including composition, line, shape, form, texture and colour. View the work of a range of artists including Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Lin Onus, Jimmy Baker, Gulumbu Yunipingu, Julie Dowling, Rover Thomas, Leah King Smith, Jonathon Jones, Destiny Deakin, Judy Watson, Gordon Bennet, Dorothy Napangardi and Fiona Foley etc. Explore the Collections of indigenous art at the National Gallery of Victoria and the National Gallery of Australia websites. NGA – <http://nga.gov.au/Exhibition/NIAT07/Default.cfm?MnuID=2&GallID=18723>
NGA – *Australian Indigenous Art Triennial Warriors* <http://nga.gov.au/Exhibition/NIAT07/Default.cfm?MnuID=2&GallID=27668>
- View and discuss the ABCTV documentary 'Art + Soul' by Hetti Perkins about the evolution of Aboriginal art movement over the last 30 years in Australia.
- Explore the meaning of proppaNOW and the way they work as contemporary artists. Discuss the way in which their work differs from, but relates to, 'traditional' Aboriginal art? Explore particular ways in which the artists present their ideas to express different viewpoints in relation to black/white relations and Aboriginal culture.
- Explore the work of Vernon Ah Kee and his photo-real portraiture and the significance of these images to his cultural history. Create your own family portraits, through which you express or comment on your own cultural history and background.
- Refer to the work of Jennifer Herd and Laurie Nilsen and create a work of art which expresses your identity and includes your own 'cultural symbols'.
- Explore the story of the Papunya Tula artists' group and artists associated with the western desert artists and other art movements including the Pintupi, Oenpelli and Utopia. Also listen to artists talking about their work at:
<http://www.aboriginalartstore.com.au/aboriginal-art-culture/uluru-ayers-rock-part-1-audio.php>
- Explore the work of Richard Bell and appropriate another artist's style in a work to convey your own message about your cultural background.
- Listen to the songs of Archie Roach and create a work which illustrates the lyrics.
- View and research the work of the artist Albert Namatjira and the play called *Namatjira* made about his life and work. Explore the way in which his work compares to the proppaNOW artists' collective and 'traditional' aboriginal art.
- Explore, discuss and write about the notion of country, what this means and the way that indigenous Australians consider the land and people as one. Create a work of art, in your choice of medium, which explores the differences of 'country' for indigenous and non indigenous Australians.
- Discuss and explore the meaning of satire, parody, symbolism and the narrative in art through the artists' work in *Jus' Drawn*.

English & LOTE

Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening

Read, discuss and compare the following Australian and European racial issues through the following narratives:

- *My Place* by Sally Morgan
- *We of the Never Never & Little Black Princess* by Aeneus Gunn
- *Black Like Me* (1961) by John Howard Griffin (Directed in 1964 by Carl Lerner)
- Research and discuss the range of cultures of all the students in your class and explore the ways in which we define culture. Discuss your own history with your friends and family and write about your own cultural history. Create a short narrative which explores your culture or expresses how you feel about your background and your life in Australia.
- Read *Animal Farm* by George Orwell.

Media

Research, compare and discuss the approach and style of the following films, across 35 years, surrounding racial and gender issues as it relates to issues raised in the work of the proppaNOW artists' work:

- *Jedda* (1955). Directed by Charles Chauvel, it was the first film to star two aboriginal actors.
- *12 Angry Men* (1957). Directed by Sidney Lumet
- *To Kill A Mockingbird* (Written by Harper Lee Harper 1960). Film directed by Robert Mulligan (1962)
- *Walkabout* (1959). Author James Vance Marshall/ Directed by Nicholas Roeg (1971)
- *How the West was Lost* (1987). Directed by David Noakes
- *Rabbit Proof Fence* (2002). Directed by Phillip Noyce
- *The Tracker* (2002). Directed by Rolf De Heer
- *10 Canoes* (2005). Directed by Rolf De Heer
- *Samson and Delilah* (2010). Directed by Warwick Thornton

Create your own narrative or short film which explores racial division or prejudice with a particular moral to the story or parodies a political viewpoint or issue.

History & Politics

- What does *Terra Nullius* mean and how does it relate to Australia's cultural history? What is MABO and how is it important to Australia's indigenous community? What is Native Title and how does it affect the way indigenous and non-indigenous Australians perceive the idea or notion of 'country'? How does Native Title impact on Land Rights? Read about the meaning and history of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy.
- Visit the Australian Human Rights Commission site and read and discuss the 'Bringing Them Home and the Stolen Generation' policy. Download the education kit on the site:
http://www.humanrights.gov.au/education/bringing_them_home/rightsED_Bringing_them_home.pdf
- In 1938 the first national conference of Indigenous Australians was held at the Australian Hall, Sydney, to mark a 'Day of Mourning' and protest during the 150th Australia Day anniversary of colonial settlement. Participants called for Aboriginal land and citizenship rights. Research and discuss the significance of this event.
- Daisy Bates (1863-1951), a social worker in Aboriginal communities, and an anthropologist, published her book *The Passing of the Aborigines*. Many of Bates' views and stories were sensationalist and incorrect and many Aboriginal people indicated ambivalence about her and her work. Research and discuss.
- Anthropologists Norman Tindale and Donald Thompson were sent out to photograph and document Aboriginal people, at the behest of the relevant Australian Governments, to document what was seen as a dying species. Discuss and debate the issues this raises in relation to the works of proppaNOW.
- An axe head, recently located on Jawoyn country, Arnhem Land, is the oldest axe head known to man and is dated at 35,000 years, placing indigenous civilisation in Australia as the oldest in the world. Research and discuss.
- The Australian Government is currently revisiting the Australian Constitution which at the moment doesn't acknowledge Indigenous Australians. Discuss the Constitution and how it relates to our perception of an Australian way of life. Visit Australia's cultural heritage portal.
<http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/indigenous/>
- As of 2010, the Citizenship test in Australia demands that new citizens complete a set of questions in relation to Australia before becoming a citizen, with a required 75% pass rate. At the moment, there are no questions which relate to Australian culture. Create a list of questions which you think could be incorporated as part of the test which would reflect Australian culture. Discuss what it means to be 'Australian'.
- In 1987 Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, which includes Uluru (previously called Ayers Rock) was successfully nominated as a World Heritage property and officially acknowledged as a significant indigenous cultural heritage site. Research the site and discuss whether or not you would walk the rock.
http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/world_uluru/index.html
- Do a VOXPOP and determine how many students in your class have ancestral history from other parts of the world. Interview your teachers and staff within your school and determine the ratio of those who are 'Australian born'.

Art unit 1

area of study 1: art & meaning

Outcome 1

interpretation of art ideas and
use of materials and techniques

- View and discuss the ABCTV documentary *Art + Soul*, 2010, by Hetti Perkins on the evolution of the Aboriginal art movement in Australia over the last 30 years.
- Analyse and discuss the ways in which the artists in the collective proppaNOW present their work and the significance of their personal experiences and cultural history to their ideas.
- Analyse a selection of work and particular art elements (line, form, tone, texture, shape, form and focal point) in the work of the proppaNOW artists in *Jus' Drawn*.
- Describe specific ideas in each of the proppaNOW artists' work and the way in which they have conveyed their ideas through their choice of imagery, materials and techniques.
- How are spatial and minimalist qualities important to the messages in Jennifer Herd's and Gordon Hookey's work?
- Analyse the way in which the proppaNOW artists' choice of materials and media have added particular weight or impact to their work, i.e. how significant is the use of Jennifer Herd's daughter's hair or Richard Bell's use of blackboard paint and crayon to the messages of the imagery?
- Research the inspiration and personal meanings and messages in the work of Gordon Hookey, Bianca Beetson and Laurie Nilsen and the relevance of their ideas to their cultural background.
- Examine and explore the style and approach to portraiture and identity in Vernon Ah Kee's current work, *Unwritten*, 2010.
- Explore the story surrounding Tony Albert's work *Bullet*, 2010, and discuss the significance of the use of the metaphor to Tony's grandfather's experience and his cultural history.
- Research and analyse works created by a range of contemporary Aboriginal artists including Destiny Deakin, Gordon Bennet, Jonathan Jones, Fiona Foley, Lin Onus and Jenny Watson and compare the way in which they convey their ideas.

Art unit 2

area of study 1: art & culture

Outcome 1

interpret, compare and contrast
artworks from different cultures

art unit 2: ideas and styles in artworks

- Analyse the work of the proppaNOW artists as a group and the importance of the way in which the style of their work is significant in presenting their ideas.
- Analyse and compare the way in which the proppaNOW artists challenge stereotypical views of Aboriginal art in Australia. How does the current style relate to or differ from what the artists call "Ooga Booga"?
- How do the artists provoke and challenge the viewer to consider alternative viewpoints in relation to Aboriginal art and culture?
- Explore the way in which particular cultural and historical events have influenced and shaped the way the proppaNOW artists have developed their ideas.
- Analyse, compare and contrast the way in which the proppaNOW artists express their Aboriginality and the black/white divide in Australia by their choice of imagery, materials and techniques.
- Examine the way in which some of the proppaNOW artists appropriate or incorporate other artistic styles and imagery from different cultures and times to add weight to the meanings and messages they wish to convey.
- Compare the aesthetic and stylistic qualities of the artists' work i.e. Tony Albert's work *Bullet* to Richard Bell's *Me, me, me, dreaming*.
- Compare Vernon Ah Kee's previous photo-real portraiture from the series, *What is an Aborigine*, 2008 and the way in which he 'enobles' his subjects to his current work *The Unwritten* and in relation to the following comment by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev: *The photo-real drawings 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.* The drawings inhabit the space as an Aboriginal and 'human' presence.
- Compare this work to *Born in the Skin*, 2008, an appropriated disused toilet block on Cockatoo Island for the 2008 Sydney Biennale. Milani Gallery <http://www.milanigallery.com.au/exhibit/born-skin>
- Research the way in which particular political events have influenced the messages the artists convey such as the work *Sorry* by Tony Albert and *Ruddock's Wheel* by Gordon Hookey.

art unit 3

area of study 1: interpreting art

- Compare and contrast the work of Gordon Hookey, Laurie Nilson and Vernon Ah Kee to the Australian artist Sean Gladwell and the similarities and differences in the type of symbolism they each use to portray their sense of Australian culture and identity.
- Examine and comment on the work of Laurie Nilson and the ideas in his work on red back spiders and 'women's business'. Analyse his views from a personal, cultural and historical framework.
- Examine the text based works of Vernon Ah Kee and Gordon Hookey and the way in which they compare and contrast with the artist Joseph Kosuth and the political slogans and billboard art of Barbara Kruger and Jenny Holzer.
- Compare the work of the Afghani artist, Lida Abdul and the British artist Gillian Wearing to the portraiture of Vernon Ah Kee and the similarities and differences in their approaches to identity and their cultural history.
- Analyse the way in which Richard Bell appropriates and parodies the style and imagery of artists such as Imants Tillers and artists from the 1950s and 60s including Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol and Jackson Pollock.
- Examine and compare the conceptual, minimalist style of a range of artists such as Carl Andre, Frank Stella, Dan Flavin and Sol LeWitt with the work of Jennifer Herd and Tony Albert.
- Compare and contrast the environmental concerns of Gordon Hookey with the Swedish artists Gerda Steiner and Jörg Lenzlinger.

art unit 4

area of study 1: outcome 1 discussing & debating art

- Listen to each of the proppaNOW artists in *Jus' Drawn* talking about their work and ideas on the NETS Victoria or Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts website (<http://www.netsvictoria.org.au>, <http://www.lindenarts.org>). Read and discuss the catalogue essay for *Jus' Drawn* and discuss and debate the way in which proppaNOW present challenging and provocative ideas.
- Tony Albert expressed, "I've always thought of myself as an Aboriginal artist - now I'm an Aboriginal person and a contemporary artist." Explore this comment and the way in which it has relevance to indigenous art and to the development of Tony Albert's work and ideas.
- Read and discuss the article *Learning to be proppa: Aboriginal artists collective ProppaNOW* by Margot Neale at <http://www.artlink.com.au/articles/3359/learning-to-be-proppa-aboriginal-artists-collecti/>.
- Read and discuss the publication, *How Aborigines Invented the Idea of Contemporary Art: An Anthology of Writing on Aboriginal Art 1980–2006*, by Ian McLean which features ninety-six authors including art critics and historians, curators, art centre coordinators and managers, artists, anthropologists, sociologists, philosophers and novelists.
- Discuss and debate this text in the work of Vernon Ah Kee, *whitefellanormal* <http://www.acmi.net.au/whitefellanormal.aspx>
- Compare Vernon Ah Kee's previous photo-real portraiture from the series, *What is an Aborigine*, 2008 and the way in which he 'enobles' his subjects to his current work, *The Unwritten*, 2010 and in relation to the following comment: *The photo-real drawings 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. The drawings inhabit the space as an Aboriginal and 'human' presence.* Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, 2008

- Research and analyse this comment by Tony Albert in relation to his past photographic work, *Gangsta Supastar*, 2006. “What’s interested me is the lyrical content of that hip-hop scene, the stuff our youth is talking and singing about because it’s what we don’t, as a society, talk about, things like youth suicide and extreme poverty and lack of education. I was blown away at that, these 15-year-olds tapping into such potent issues.”
<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/arts/curios-of-the-contemporary/story-e6frg8n6-111119151528>
- Read *The Australian* article on 15.09.2006 on Richard Bell’s winning work *Scientia E Metaphysica (Bell’s Theorem)* for the Telstra prize by Richard Bell.
<http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/news/2006/september-aust15sepo6.html>
Explore the way in which the representation and appropriation of indigenous symbols by many non-indigenous artists, such as Margaret Preston, Savanhdary Vongpoothorn and Eddie Burrip, has been a contentious issue. Examine the work of these artists and consider and discuss the way in which Richard Bell’s ideas explore his objection to the appropriation of aboriginal art by other artists while he derives direct influence from a range of non-indigenous artists.
- Read both of the following articles by Richard Bell and discuss and debate his opinion on Aboriginal art.
Richard Bell, *Bell’s Theorem of Aboriginal Art: It’s a White Thing* 11.11.2003
<http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/great/art/article5.html>
Bell’s Theorem: Aboriginal Art, It’s a White Thing Richard Bell <http://www.kooriweb.org/bell/theorum.html>
- Read the review on the work of Gordon Hookey by Robert Nelson 18.05.2005
<http://www.theage.com.au/news/Reviews/GordonHookey/2005/05/17/1116095958003.html>
What do you think about Robert Nelson’s view on Gordon Hookey’s work in comparison to the work of Richard Bell or Gordon Bennett?
“Unlike other pictorial spokesmen of Aboriginal cultural justice, such as Richard Bell and Gordon Bennett, Hookey is amazingly playful. And you don’t experience his work - however pungent - as a downer. Hookey’s access to fun stems not just from a playful nature, but from an inner security, a confident knowledge of where he’s coming from”. Robert Nelson
- Consider and debate this comment by Richard Bell: “Urban Aboriginal Art ... is the work of people descended from the original owners of the heavily populated areas of the continent. Through a brutal colonisation process much of the culture has disappeared. However, what has survived is important... The Dreamtime is the past, the present, the future. The urban artists are still telling dreamtime stories albeit contemporary ones. The Dreamings (of the favoured ‘real Aborigines’ from the least settled areas) actually pass deep into Urban territories. In short, the Dreamings cannot be complete without reciprocity between the supposed real Aborigines of the North and supposed Unreal or inauthentic Aborigines of the South”.
- Read about Vernon Ah Kee’s work *Cantchant (wegrewhere)* created for the Australian exhibition, *Once Removed*, at the Venice Biennale in 2009.
<http://www.ima.org.au/pages/exhibits/cantchant88.php>
View the video of Ah Kee and discuss the possible relationship of his work to racial tensions and the Cronulla Riots in western Sydney in Australia in 2005.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDVU5eZ3kFU>. Do you think this a fair portrayal of the beach scene in Australia?
- Examine the discuss Vernon Ah Kee’s work in the recent 2008 Biennale of Sydney on Cockatoo Island, *Born in this Skin* in relation to the article by Max Delaney in <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/opinion/four-letter-words-spell-art/story-e6frezzo-111116879234> Frieze Magazine Max Delaney 16th Biennale of Sydney http://www.frieze.com/issue/review/16th_biennale_of_sydney/
Discuss whether or not you think this work, as a found object, is a valid work of art? Could this work have any connection to Marcel Duchamp’s work, *Fountain*, 1917?
- Research and discuss the way in which it is claimed that anthropological studies and investigations into Aboriginal people, their heritage and art have influenced the way in which aboriginal art is perceived in Australian society. *Bell’s theorem of Aboriginal art: it’s a white thing* – The Brisbane Institute
<http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/great/art/article5.html>

Studio arts

unit 1 artistic inspiration and techniques

Area of study 3, outcome 3

interpretation of art ideas and use of materials and techniques

- Listen to each of the soundfiles by the proppaNOW artists in *Jus' Drawn* talking about their work and ideas at www.lindenarts.org.
- Examine and explore the ideas in the work in *Jus' Drawn* and of the proppaNOW group of artists, their individual sources of inspiration and differences in their styles, materials and techniques.
- Examine and compare the meanings and messages conveyed in Vernon Ah Kee's abstracted portrait series *Unwritten* with the ideas he has previously presented in the work *Cantchant*, 2009 at Milani Gallery, Brisbane <http://www.milanigallery.com.au/artist/vernon-ah-kee>
- Explore the inspiration, ideas and the meanings conveyed in Richard Bell's work and the links to the late indigenous Australian artist Emily Kame Kngwarreye.
- Compare the work of proppaNOW to a range of indigenous and non-indigenous artists who have influenced their work and practice, such as Gordon Bennett, Destiny Deakin, Jenny Watson, Lin Onus, Julie Dowling, Fiona Foley, Judy Watson and Andy Warhol.
- Explore the work of the Pintupi artists and the Papunya Tula settlement, which officially opened in 1960 as the official site of the Papunya Western Desert artists. Explore the style and ideas of the artists' work from the exhibition *Papunya Tula, Genesis and Genius*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2000 and how it compares to the work in *Jus' Drawn*. http://archive.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/exhibitions/archived/2000/papunya_tula
Research some of the founding members and their work at:
<http://www.artspeak.com.au/pintupi%20artists.htm>
- Richard Bell and Gordon Hookey both talk about Aboriginal art and "Ooga Booga". Investigate the meaning of this expression in relation to Aboriginal art and the development of their work and ideas.

Studio arts

unit 2 Design exploration and concepts

Area of study 2, outcome 2

ideas and styles in artworks

- Examine and explore the ideas expressed in the work of the artists in *Jus' Drawn* and by the proppaNOW group of artists and their individual sources of inspiration.
- Read about the development of the Campfire group of indigenous artists, and the significance to the development of the group to proppaNOW in the following article: *Open Hearted, Open Handed, Open Minded, Campfire Group* <http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/great/art/article11.html>
- Explore and compare the artists' work in *Jus' Drawn* and the minimalist, conceptual approaches to their subject.
- Consider and compare the way in which the proppaNOW artists have utilised the metaphor in their work, as in Gordon Hookey's series, *Animals*, and Jennifer Herd's series *On Dying*.
- Compare the way in which the proppaNOW artists convey their ideas through repetition, symbolism, parody and satire.
- Analyse the style and presentation of Tony Albert's work, *Sorry*, 2008 which commemorates the apology on 13 February 2008 (by the previous Prime Minister of Australia to Indigenous Australians).
- Examine and compare the style of the proppaNOW artists' work with Jonathan Jones, Gordon Bennet, Fiona Foley and Savanhdary Vongpoothorn.

Studio arts

unit 3 studio production and professional art practices

Area of study 3, outcome 3

professional art practices and styles

- Consider Ah Kee's text based works and the fact that they are not strictly made by the artist. Consider and compare the making and presentation of his work to other contemporary artists who also work in text with a strong social and political message such as Barbara Kruger and Jenny Holzer.
- Explore the use of the repeated image and the 'series' in the artists' work in *Jus' Drawn* and the importance of this to the message the artists wish to convey.
- Read and comment on the article, *Authorship, authenticity and intellectual property in Australian Aboriginal art*, 2009 by Annette van den Bosch at <http://www.allbusiness.com/government/elections/politics-politics/13016015-1.html>.
- Research and discuss the 'carpet case' and the infringement of copyright law and indigenous art at <http://ab-ed.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/go/aboriginal-art/protecting-australian-indigenous-art/case-studies-of-copying-and-appropriation/case-study-4-the-carpets-case>.
- Explore some of the concerns and issues which may arise in relation to the presentation and interpretation of the work of deceased indigenous artists.
- Investigate and discuss recent changes in the law in relation to moral rights and the impact this may have for indigenous artists.
- Visit the site for the Venice Biennale and download the 2009 Biennale Education kit for the exhibition 'Once Removed.' The phrase "once removed" suggests being remote, separated or in some way different from the norm. Research and compare the work and cultural concerns of the artists Vernon Ah Kee, Claire Healey & Sean Cordeiro and Ken Yonetani.
- Explore a range of commercial galleries which represent indigenous artists. Compare the styles of the work to the artists in *Jus' Drawn* and the differences in the presentation of their work within a gallery context.
- Visit the Art Collector site on Aboriginal art and provenance at <http://www.artcollector.net.au/EthicallySourcingAboriginalArt>

Studio arts

unit 4 studio production and art industry contexts

Area of study 3, outcome 3

art industry contexts

- Examine the presentation of the artists' work in the exhibition *Jus' Drawn*. How important do you think the display of the works in the exhibition is to supporting and reflecting the ideas of the proppaNOW artists?
- Explore and discuss the work of Richard Bell and the issues which may arise in relation to the presentation of his temporary 'in situ' wall works for the touring component of the exhibition. Discuss the way in which Bell's work will be represented in a range of quite different gallery spaces and whether you think this will impact on the integrity of his work and his ideas. Do you think the public's perception of this work is important or not and why?
- Research the meaning of 'cultural competency' and the way in which this may be relevant in relation to indigenous artists and their work within a gallery context.
- Research the extent of care required for works on paper and in relation to the handling, storage, display and touring of the exhibition, *Jus' Drawn*.
- The works in proppaNOW have been commissioned by the Curator at Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts. Explore the way in which works of art are commissioned and what is involved in the process for the artist and the commissioning body.
- Research the meaning of 'moveable' and 'non-moveable' cultural heritage material and 'keeping places' and the significance of these places to museums and galleries.
- Visit and compare a range of commercial and public galleries, which represent and present the work of Aboriginal artists in Australia. Investigate the mission and the aims of the galleries. Are the works sold for profit or not? Are the artists selected by a curator or do the artists need to apply to exhibit? Does the gallery guarantee authorship by the artists or not? Has the new 'Moral Rights' legislation affected the sale of the work? Are the galleries sensitive to works, which borrow or appropriate Aboriginal imagery? Do the galleries have a policy regarding authenticity?
- Explore the Indigenous Collections of major Australian galleries and their exhibitions and the way in which they represent Aboriginal art.
- Visit your local Indigenous cultural centre and Museum and discuss local issues as they affect Indigenous Australians. Research the way in which Keeping Places within museums require particular authority to hold and conserve secret sacred Aboriginal images and objects.

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