

# *ngaratya* Nici Cumpston, Zena Cumpston, David Doyle, Kent Morris, Adrienne Semmens and Raymond Zada (*together, us group, all in it together*)

## EDUCATION RESOURCE

*ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together)* is a Bunjil Place Gallery exhibition toured by NETS Victoria. Curated by Nici Cumpston and Zena Cumpston.





## Education Resource

Welcome to our exhibition *ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together)*. This exhibition brings together six Barkandji/Barkindji artists. Our Barkandji/Barkindji name means ‘the people belonging to the Baaka/Barka’ (Darling River). Our Country is located in western New South Wales. You can find out more about the location of our Country in the first ‘Before your visit’ activity below.

Our collective of six artists spent time travelling together, engaging with cultural landscapes, our Elders, community, and each other. Our many adventures together on our Country were happy times, and this is telegraphed through the works we have chosen to make and present. Works in a variety of mediums are presented in this exhibition including carving, bronze casting, weaving, string-making, linocuts, etched acrylic, hand-coloured photographs, photographic installations, moving image, screendance and soundscapes. Collectively the artworks presented speak to many diverse stories of Barkandji/Barkindji people and culture.

Barkandji/Barkindji wiimpatja at Mutawintji 2022, Adrienne Semmens, Nici Cumpston, Raymond Zada, Zena Cumpston, Kent Morris and David Doyle 2022. Photo: Raymond Zada

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Kinchega National Park, 2022  
Photo: Raymond Zada

## Introduction

The lands we now call Australia are home to several hundred diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations. Whilst there are many overarching aspects of our cultures that tie us together, such as the fundamental understanding of Country as our Mother, deep respect for our Elders and our shared custodial responsibilities to Country, we as First Peoples are extremely diverse. Whilst we focus here on our Barkandji/Barkindji Country and culture, gaining and understanding of the specificity of our lands and culture may provide insight into the huge diversity within the many communities of First Peoples in Australia today.

There are more than 350 diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages across Australia, and many more dialects. Our languages were not traditionally written, and therefore there are many, many different spellings and no one right way. This is why we choose to write Barkandji/Barkindji – both spellings represent members of the group of artists involved in this show,

and how they choose to spell the name of our cultural group. There are many ways our language group has been represented over time in written form. None of these are 'right' or 'wrong'. Further variations of names used for our group include Paakantyi, Paakantji and Baagandji – but there are many more. Similarly, our lifeblood, the waterway to which we belong, also has multiple accepted spellings, including Baaka/Barka (also known as the Darling River).

Barkandji curator and photographer Nici Cumpston OAM and her sister, writer, researcher, and storyteller Zena Cumpston have worked together to co-curate, as well as make their own works as part of this collective exhibition. They bring together Barkindji/Malyangapa carver, educator, and poet David Doyle; Barkindji photographer Kent Morris; Barkandji performer, dance maker and educator Adrienne Semmens; and Barkandji multimedia artist and broadcaster Raymond Zada.

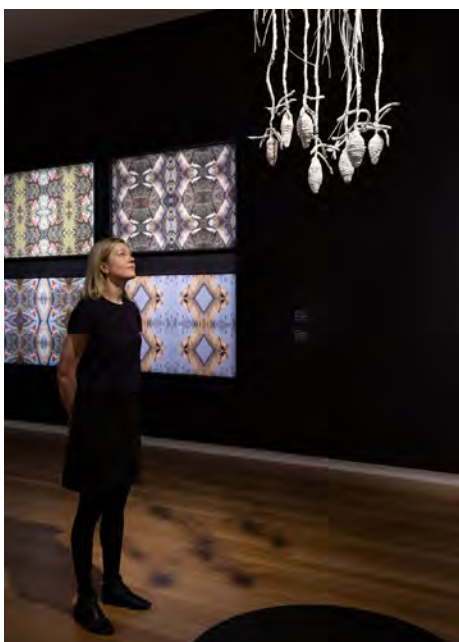
Our collective cannot and does not speak for all Barkandji/Barkindji peoples. We are only one small group. There are many incredible Barkandji/Barkindji artists who are working today to share their culture and Country through many varied forms of artistic expression. Like all of the many hundreds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia, the viewpoints and experiences of our people are incredibly diverse. We each seek to share with you our own individual perspectives.

You can find out more about how the exhibition came together on the [Further learning](#) section of the *ngaratya* website.

Because *ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together)* focuses on our Barkandji/Barkindji Country within the geographical context of south-eastern Australia we do not explore Torres Strait Islander culture here. It is important to note that Torres Strait Islander peoples are also Australia's First Peoples, and also have deep connections to Country, complex knowledge systems and technologies, and a rich culture that continues today.

In our first 'Before your visit' exercise, we share more information about our Country, helping you to locate us and understand more.

Kent Morris, *karta-kartaka (pink cockatoo) #1-#6* 2023 and Zena Cumpston, *karkala (bush bananas)* 2023, installation view *ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together)*, Bunjil Place Gallery, 2023.



## About this resource

This education resource has been developed by the *ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together)* exhibition curators, Barkandji women Zena Cumpston and Nici Cumpston, together with education consultant, teacher and artist Emma Barnes, *ngaratya* artist and educator Adrienne Semmens with input and editing from Bunjil Place Gallery Curator Penny Teale and Senior Education and Audience Engagement Officer Sarah Lyons.

We have tried to make this resource highly accessible for teachers and students, offering opportunities to engage with the themes and stories offered by the artworks on display. We present ideas, provocations, insights and activities.

By telling our stories in the present, we assert our culture and communities as continuing, and our knowledge as both ancient and alive today. Despite the ongoing challenges of colonisation our culture is strong.

We have compiled [Useful links](#) that can be found on our website in the [Further learning](#) section to help support educators. The links provided share useful online resources that correspond with the themes of the show and each of the activities presented within this resource.

## How to utilise this resource

This resource is broken into three main categories:

1. **before your visit**
2. **during your visit, and**
3. **after your visit**

Please be aware you will still get lots from this exhibition even if you are not able to undertake any of the provocations and activities we have provided. However you engage will be worthwhile, just coming to the exhibition, hearing firsthand from the artists through their artist statements and engaging with the artworks offers much in terms of learning opportunities.

We have attempted to make the provocations and activities easily scalable – you can make them simpler or more complex depending on your students.

You will notice that we don't specifically categorise our activities – the way we have designed the activities reflects the fact that our culture does not compartmentalise and categorise in the same way non-Indigenous cultures do. What may seem to be an 'art activity' will offer so much more in terms of multiple explorations in multiple areas including history, science, humanities, geography and many more.



## Before your visit

### Where is Barkandji/Barkindji Country?

Barkandji/Barkindji are the people belonging to the Baaka/Barka (Darling River), and are culturally responsible for this waterway and vast Country spanning more than 100,000 square kilometres across western New South Wales.

Wilcannia sits roughly in the middle of Barkandji/Barkindji Country, and is surrounded on all sides by Barkandji/Barkindji speaking peoples. Our people live all along our Baaka/Barka (Darling River) and also on big tracts of Country either side of our Baaka/Barka, from around Bourke in the north, down to Wentworth in the south of the state of New South Wales. We have several subgroups that make up our cultural group, and each speak different dialects of Barkandji/Barkindji language.

This map utilises the language, social and nation groups as represented in the AIATSIS-produced Indigenous map of Australia.



### ACTIVITY 1

#### Barkandji/Barkindji Country

- Where are you in relation to Barkandji/Barkindji Country?
- Have you heard of these places, or this Country before? If so, how and when?

### ACTIVITY 2

#### Understanding more about the Country you live and work on

There is no place in what is now known as 'Australia' that does not have an enduring relationship and belonging for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander group or group(s) today. Whether in an urban or remote area – everywhere in Australia today is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people's Country. Every place has a Traditional Custodian group or groups whose people have belonged and acted as Traditional Custodians for many, many thousands of years and countless generations.

Access the [Tindale language map of Aboriginal Australia](#)

- Who are the Traditional Custodians of the Country you live and work on?
- Can you find any information about the group or groups who officially represent the communities on whose Country you live?
- Can you find information about the work they are doing to keep their culture and Country strong today?
- Have you been given a welcome by a Traditional Custodian before? If so, why do you think welcomes and acknowledgements are part of protocols today?

Read this ABC article, [Why an Acknowledgement of Country is important \(and advice on how to give one\)](#). Discuss why Acknowledgements of Country are important, and the difference between an Acknowledgement of Country and a Welcome to Country.

### ACTIVITY 3

#### The meaning of 'Country' from a First People's perspective

Across the *ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together)* exhibition and website, visitors will hear and see the terms Country and caring for Country. See a section of the [State of the Environment Report 2021 'Indigenous' chapter](#) that features an exploration of what 'Country' means from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.

- Discuss the text and the ideas it presents. In what ways can the term 'Country' be overly simplified?
- What does this text tell us about how Country means so much more than land?
- What does reciprocity mean?
- How is reciprocity at the core of First People's relationship to Country?

### ACTIVITY 4

#### Waterways as our lifeblood

Uncle Badger (William) Bates is a Barkandji Elder, artist, activist and knowledge holder. He is a senior person in Barkandji community and respect is shown for him as a knowledge holder and an Elder by referring to him as 'Uncle'.

Watch [this video](#) of Barkandji Elder, artist, activist and knowledge holder Uncle Badger Bates.



- What does Uncle Badger say about his relationship to his Baaka/Barka?
- How does this intimate kinship relationship between people and waterways differ to how non-First Nations people may view waterways?

### *ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together)*

- How might seeing waterways as a commodity, not as family, to be loved and cared for, affect the health of waterways?
- If a community does not have their knowledge of and relationship to Country recognized and respected how might that affect their ability to fulfil their cultural responsibility to care for Country?

Once students have had some time to investigate caring for Country through the links provided, they are invited to participate in an *I understand, I question, I wonder* activity.

The following prompts may help to guide their reflection:

- Describe some of the ways First Nations people view Country and their relationship to it.
- What do I want to know more about?
- Speculate about what they will uncover at the *ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together)* exhibition

#### ACTIVITY 5

##### Word cloud

In this activity students develop their own word cloud of what they expect to discover at the exhibition. This task could also be used as an after-visit reflection activity, with students reflecting on what they expected to see, what they did see and learnt about, and the differences between their expectations and their experience. Within this contrast, students may discover the prevalence of stereotypes, or find an opportunity to highlight the importance of understanding First Nations people and culture as in the present, not the past.

You will notice throughout *ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together)* we do not share information about the exhibition, the artists and their works in a third person or the anonymous authoritative 'voice of the institution'. Instead, we forefront the importance of allowing space for Aboriginal people to speak for themselves, to share in their way, with their own voices and from their own perspectives. Each artist has written their own wall text to accompany their works in the exhibition.

#### DISCUSSION

##### What is an 'exhibition'? What is a curator?

An exhibition is a collection of works of art, objects and sometimes other materials that tell a story. A 'curator' is the person responsible for bringing the story to life.

They select, organise and present the chosen material.

##### Museums and galleries 'anonymous voice of authority'

One interesting aspect of this exhibition is the way the curators have chosen to present the information about the artworks. As a way of bringing attention to and critiquing the anonymous 'voice of authority' which historically exists in the way stories are presented in museums, galleries and other institutions, the artists are empowered here to speak about their works in the first person, in their own way. Through utilising this approach the curators reject the 'usual' ways Aboriginal histories have too often been told in the past with narratives and histories being mediated and 'interpreted' (often problematically) by people outside of our culture and ways of knowing.



Welcome space, installation view,  
*ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together)*, Bunjil Place Gallery, 2023

## During your visit

This section is designed to allow students to predominantly focus on the artworks presented and the words and intention of the artists themselves. We have included sections of the artist's statements to prompt questions for discussion that relate to each of the artist's works. You can find the artist statements in their entirety next to each artwork within the gallery and in the [📖 Artist statements](#) section of our website.

### DISCUSSION

- Why is it problematic for people from outside of a culture to be the ones who choose what parts of stories are told?
- Why is it important to allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to tell their own stories?
- The information presented in texts in museums and galleries is often accepted by readers without being told who wrote it. What are some reasons why these texts can be accepted without question, especially when the author is not identified?

Please make students aware that at the start of the exhibition, in the Welcome Space we encourage them to sit on the couch, to touch and explore the photo books and other items. However, in the main space and throughout the rest of the show we ask that visitors do not touch any of the artworks.





## David Doyle (he/him)

Barkindji/Malyangapa people, New South Wales

### kamuru – river red gum

In his [Artist statement](#), David speaks to us about kamuru (river red gum); *'But to us Barkindji, kamuru is more than a protector, more than a prone sentinel and more than a tree. I have tried to capture the importance of kamuru within this display of red gum artefacts while showing its beauty and significance to us Barkindji.'*

David highlights his cultural perspective of this powerful tree. As a Barkindji person he shows us the practical and symbolic importance of this tree, and shares some of the many ways Barkindji people have interacted with this tree over time.



### DISCUSSION

- How does this installation illuminate Aboriginal, and particularly Barkindji, ways of seeing Country?
- What does David's statement and installation share with you about kamuru that you weren't aware of before?
- What Barkindji/Barkandji foods are represented in this installation?
- What does this artwork illustrate about the abundance of Country and the ways in which Country provides all that is needed to survive and thrive?
- How do you think Barkindji people have come to develop and perfect so many ingenious uses for this tree – from food, to medicines, shelter and technologies?

### For younger visitors

- What foods can you see in this artwork?
- What do you think the fishing net is made from?
- Have you seen a big river red gum tree before?

Above and left

David Doyle, *kamuru – river red gum* 2023, installation view  
*ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together)*, Bunjil Place  
Gallery 2023



Nici Cumpston, *Old Mutawintji Gorge I – VII*, from the series *mirrimpilyi – happy and contented* 2023, installation view *ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together)*, Bunjil Place Gallery, 2023

## Nici Cumpston (she/her)

Barkandji people, New South Wales

### mirrimpilyi, happy and contented

In her [✍️ Artist statement](#), Nici shares context about the place these photographs were taken. She speaks of the significance of Mutawintji and some of the business that has brought our people to this important cultural place; *'This series of photographs was created on a group day trip through Old Mutawintji Gorge in late July 2022. Mutawintji is a place of great cultural significance to all Barkandji/Barkindji peoples and many neighbouring groups. For millennia we have gathered here, at this permanent place of water, for cultural activities such as marriages, initiations, ceremony, and trade.'*



### DISCUSSION

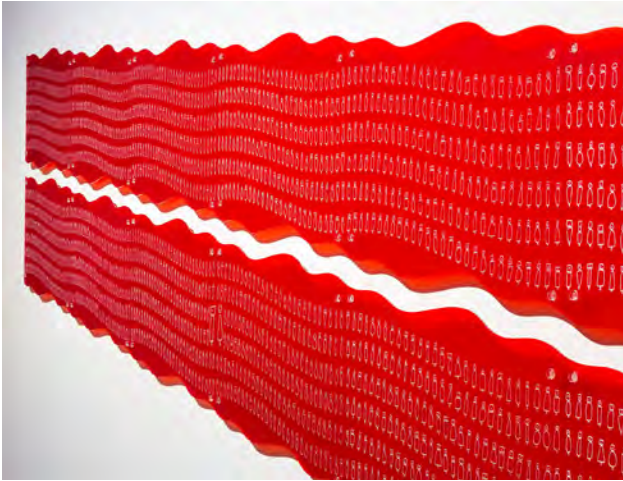
- What does Nici's statement and artwork tell us about Mutawintji?
- Name some of the activities her Barkandji people have travelled to Mutawintji over thousands of years to undertake?
- What role would permanent water sources at Mutawintji have played in making this a cultural meeting place?
- What does the group of Barkandji/Barkindji artists visiting this place together tell you about the cultural practices of Barkandji/Barkindji people – are they in the past or the present?

### For younger visitors

- Can you see the people hidden in one of these photos?
- Is there a place outside that you visit that makes you feel good?

Nici Cumpston, *Old Mutawintji Gorge I*, from the series *mirrimpilyi – happy and contented* 2023 (detail)  
Photo: Michael Haines





## Raymond Zada (he/him)

Barkandji people, New South Wales

Raymond's work explores his Ancestry and Ancestral connection; *'For all of us, the same number of Ancestors contributed to our DNA. We are all connected to places and to others and we each belong to something bigger than our immediate family and our current home. We have a responsibility to respect others and to respect the country we live on.'*

### DISCUSSION

- What does Raymond tell us we all have in common?
- What makes you belong to your ethnic community, or your school community or the community where you live?
- Are you connected through your Ancestry to another country?
- What contributes to making this connection feel big, or what makes it feel smaller?
- Can you think of ways you belong to a community that is larger than just your immediate community/communities?
- What can we do together to show respect to the country we call home?

### For younger visitors

- Do you know where your grandparents were born?
- Does your family belong to Australia and to another country also?

left  
Raymond Zada, *Bloodline* 2023  
(detail)

below  
Raymond Zada, *At Face Value*  
2013/2023 (detail), digital  
media video

At Bunjil Place Gallery, Raymond's moving image work *At Face Value* is also shown on a screen outside the gallery. Through this artwork, Raymond is exploring the ways our identity as diverse Aboriginal peoples is perceived by others. The work includes 25 friends and family members who are all Aboriginal people.

Raymond tells us; *'To take something at face value is to believe the way the thing appears is the way it really is. At Face Value is a series of 25 portraits to challenge some people's narrow views of what an Aboriginal person looks like. As the faces morph, viewers are asked to shift their paradigms and accept that the person they're looking at is Aboriginal.'*

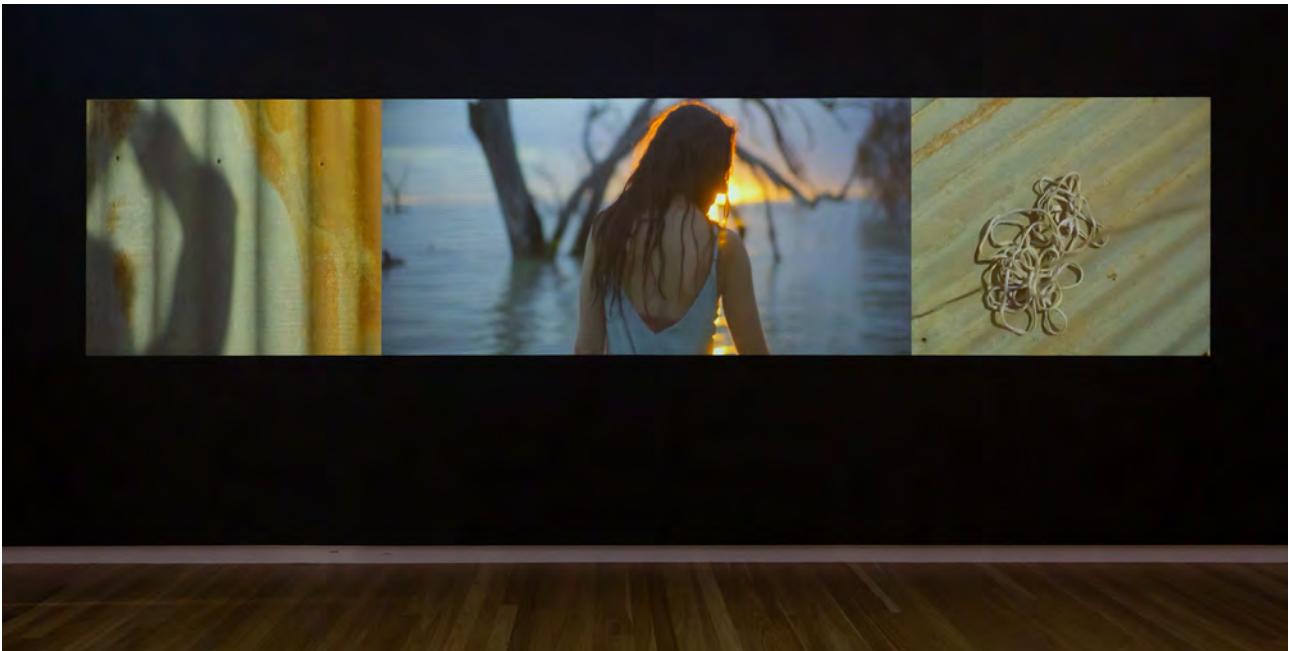
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander belonging is diverse and personal. It has nothing to do with the colour of your skin, the languages you speak, or how and where you live. It is knowing who your family is, being accepted as part of your community through your Ancestral connection, and self-identifying as an Aboriginal person on the basis of family connection, from whom you are descended.



### DISCUSSION

- What are some common stereotypes related to what an Aboriginal person 'looks like'?
- How does Raymond's work *At Face Value* challenge these stereotypes?
- How could stereotypes be harmful to Aboriginal people?
- Why is it important to understand that Aboriginal people are diverse?
- What can we do to get rid of and move away from harmful stereotypes?





Adrianne Semmens, *kuntyiri, shadow, reflection* 2023 and *Holding I-III* 2023, installation view *ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together)*, Bunjil Place Gallery, 2023

## Adrianne Semmens (she/her)

Barkandji people, New South Wales

Adrianne's work explores memories, connection and water; *'My work embodies stories of connection – to Country, to water, to kin. I have been interested in the use of shadow and reflection, as a marker of time passed, of those before us, and of Country holding our stories and knowledge'*

### DISCUSSION

- From what Adrianne shares, what does shadow and reflection represent in this work?
- What does the string remind you of when you see how it moves and how it is utilised in this piece?
- Why might Adrianne be interested in including water in her work specifically as a Barkandji artist?
- Adrianne describes Country as 'holding our knowledge and stories' – how does this illuminate Aboriginal perceptions of Country?
- Why is dance an important part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture today?

### For younger visitors

- What does the string remind you of?
- Have you played with your shadow before?



## Kent Morris (he/him)

Barkindji people, New South Wales

Kent Morris, *karta-kartaka* (pink cockatoo) #7 2023, installation view *ngaratya* (together, us group, all in it together), Bunjil Place Gallery, 2023

In Kent's [Artist statement](#), he speaks of recent histories on our Country and also very ancient ones; *'A pink cockatoo in a hollow tree is part of the Two Ngatyi Story as told by Alf Barlow, a story of how our Country was formed by two rainbow serpents travelling, which is deeply significant to Barkindji people and our culture.'*

*As Major Thomas Mitchell was involved in atrocities towards Barkindji people and other First Nations people, particularly the massacre at Mount Dispersion (now called the Mount Dispersion Massacre Site Aboriginal Place), we refrain from using the more common name associated with this bird.'*



### DISCUSSION

- Are the histories of massacres in Australia well known and spoken of often?
- What have you learnt in your education so far about the many massacres of Aboriginal people that happened across Australia?
- How might the renaming of places and species cause hurt and offence to First People's communities today?
- Have you heard of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Creation Stories that tell how Country was formed?
- What significance do you think these ancient stories, passed down over many hundreds of generations, may have to diverse Aboriginal communities today?

### For younger visitors

- Have you seen birds living in the hollows of trees before?
- What do the moving patterns in this video work remind you of?

Kent Morris, *karta-kartaka* (pink cockatoo) #2 2023 (detail)

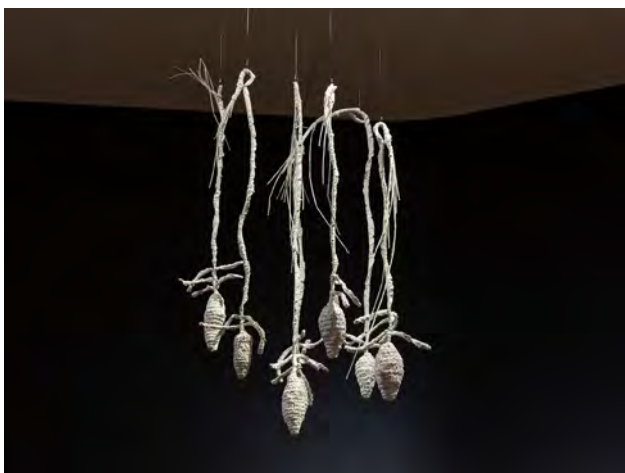


## Zena Cumpston (she/her)

Barkandji people, New South Wales

Zena has made several works for the show, but each are connected in subject matter; *'Circles signpost a portal into Aboriginal knowledge of Country and speak to the idea of return – return to our traditional foodways, our plant knowledge, our holistic land management practices. Circles speak to the foundational importance in our culture of true reciprocity, never taking without giving back.'*

*In all of my work I call for the empowerment of our people, of our deep knowledge and skillful management of Country, for the benefit of all.'*



Zena Cumpston, *karkala (bush bananas)* 2023, *ngarta-kiira (to return to Country)* #1 – #10 2023 and *Abundance – Jacob, Mary and Doughboy* 2023, installation view *ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together)*, Bunjil Place Gallery, 2023

### DISCUSSION

- Are there any foods shown in Zena's work that you recognise?
- How would not having access to the traditional foods of your culture and community affect you? If so, in what ways?
- Zena's work speaks to the work of Aboriginal activists who are calling for recognition and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples knowledge of Country, what do you know about Aboriginal activism?
- How might empowering Aboriginal people's knowledge of their Country, and their traditional management practices be of benefit to everyone?

### For younger visitors

- Do you recognise any of the Aboriginal foods shown here?
- What is your favourite food that comes from a plant?

Zena Cumpston, *karkala (bush bananas)* 2023, installation view *ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together)*, Bunjil Place Gallery, 2023



## After your visit

### CLASSROOM ACTIVITY 1

#### Getting to know the Baaka/Barka (Darling River)

1. Click on [this Google maps link](#)
2. In the 'search box' write

Darling River, New South Wales

3. Choose 'Satellite' view
4. Trace the Baaka/Barka with your finger  
Can you see where the Baaka/Barka connects with the Murray River?
5. Use 'Directions' to see how far the Baaka/Barka is from where you live

Look up where you are and find the closest waterway(s), discuss what you know about the waterway(s) closest to you.

Are they under pressure from the activities of people? If so, how?

See also: [the 'story of a river'](#), which has lots of great classroom activities

### CLASSROOM ACTIVITY 2

#### Connecting to Country

Watch [this video of Uncle Badger Bates](#)

Why do you think Uncle Badger describes the Baaka/Barka as his mother and lifeblood?

How do you feel about the environment you live within – do you feel connected to it? If so, what makes you feel connected?

Uncle Badger's artworks and lino carvings teach us about the Baaka/Barka and the animals, and people who depend on it to live on his Barkandji Country.

Take a walk in nature if you can or within your garden, school or community. Use your senses – what do you see, smell, hear? Sketch outside or from a photograph.

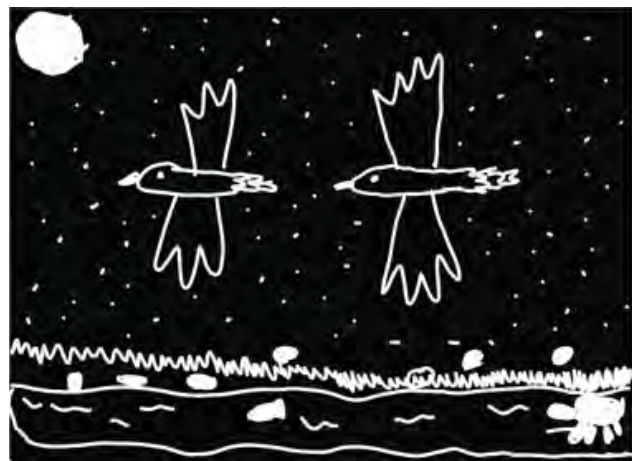
You may like to turn your sketch into;

- A charcoal or pencil drawing
- A digital drawing
- Or create a lino carving digitally, using a tablet

Fill your screen in black. Using the eraser or white pencil tool, digitally carve what you see

- Or develop your digital drawing into a linocut or foam carving

Can you draw lines between living things in your artwork that depend on each other to be healthy?



Student work example Year 4  
student inspired by Merri Creek,  
Victoria

### CLASSROOM ACTIVITY 3

#### Aboriginal plant use

Choose native plants from Zena's [Indigenous Plant Use](#), a free online guide.

Read about and write a word list of their traditional uses.

Have you heard of any of these plants before or seen them growing outside?

You may like to make an 8-page origami fold book using [this link](#). Look closely at the detail and the difference in the plants.



Using Zena's booklet and the [Abundance room sheet](#) in the gallery, read about the many ways Aboriginal people have used these plants.

You may like to look them up to find pictures to print or sketch, use adjoining pages to write a word list that relates to the uses. For example;

**River mint:** colds, stomach health, mosquitos, flavouring food.



#### A further Aboriginal plant use activity

Teachers could collect leaves or flowers from native plants such as Eucalyptus leaves, spiny-headed matt rush or wattle.

Using Zena's native plant and exhibition sheet:

- Ask the children to close their eyes and smell and feel a leaf, branch of flower; use all of the senses to experience the smell and textures.
- Students could make a sketch or create rubbings or tracings from the plant.
- Cut A3 paper in two longways to create a long drawing, these can be then rolled up to create a scroll and tied up with string and a leaf.
- Art materials you could experiment with include; pencil, charcoal, pastel, fineliners or watercolour.
- The students could write words to describe the plant and its uses on the paper.

Look at the following resources, they have further resources and activities for teachers and students aimed at further learning in the area of Indigenous plant use.

[9 ways to build your confidence teaching Indigenous cultures and histories](#)

[How bringing Australian edible plants into your classroom can deepen understanding of Indigenous cultures and histories](#)

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY 4

### Baaka Herald

Download the [Baaka Herald](#), and choose some articles to explore and discuss with students.

- What are the environmental issues that are dominating headlines on Barkandji/Barkindji Country?
- How do you think these issues affect people who live along the Baaka/Barka?
- Does it affect more than just access to water?
- Can you identify crops that are using a lot of water upstream?
- How does what one community or group does in one place affect others when it comes to our waterways?



Raymond Zada, Zena Cumpston,  
*Baaka Herald* 2023, Courtesy  
the artists

Using an A3 PDF print out of the *Baaka Herald*;

- Highlight key words in colour: You may like to use pencils, watercolour paint, pastel, highlighters or any art material that suits.
- Notice any words that continue to reoccur or that stand out to you.
- How do these words connect?
- You may like to continue your Baarka Herald into an artwork using colours to connect the words you highlighted.
- Look out for any patterns that may occur.

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY 5

### Language and dual naming

For Australia's First Peoples language and culture are intrinsically connected. Language holds knowledge of Country and is core to protecting and transmitting knowledge.

Barkandji/Barkindji people know our waterway, our lifeblood, as the Baaka/Barka. Non-Aboriginal people named this waterway the 'Darling River'. Recently there has been a campaign to support a dual naming to show respect to Traditional Custodians, the name Darling-Baaka is now in widespread use.

Many places and landmarks around Australia now have dual names in English and in Aboriginal languages to reflect their long-time belonging to Traditional Custodians. Create a list of places that have dual names, and explore the meaning of these traditional names.

The below list can get you started (but you may wish to make your investigation more local);

- Yarra River
- Melbourne Cricket Ground
- Grampians
- Uluru
- Fraser Island
- Tasmania
- Lake Eyre
- Canberra
- Melbourne

## DISCUSSION

- Do you know of a place that has a dual name (English and/or Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander language name)?
- Why is it important for places to have a dual name?
- How can dual naming geographical locations strengthen people's connection to Country?

Explore dual naming in [Adelaide](#), [Tasmania](#), [Newcastle](#) and [Mount Gambier](#)



**DANCE ACTIVITY**

***In the Water*, by ngaratya artist Adrienne Semmens**

**Introduction**

Together you will be creating a movement sequence inspired by everyday actions undertaken while at a place of water (i.e. the beach or river).

Invite the class to recall a time that they have spent visiting a beach/river/pool, or consider what they may like to do there.

Drawing from their memories or promoted by thoughts of the water, ask students to create and share a movement idea (an everyday movement) inspired by the water.

Some examples include: tracing fingers across the horizon or over the top of the water's surface, moving arms to mimic the flow of the water. Movements could also include practical actions for example applying sun cream, wringing water out of wet hair, laying a towel onto the sand.

**Exploration and refinement**

Students work individually to experiment and explore movement ideas before selecting and refining a movement to share.

**Sequence**

Support the class to sequence each student's individual gestures into an order to a chosen sound track. While developing the sequence, consider the transitions between each gesture, use of levels, direction and contrast.

Once a sequence is established and set to a track (for example, each gesture allocated 8 counts), consider the use of space and dynamics and spatial formation.

Rehearse and perform the movement sequence.

**Further ideas F-10**

There may be a place of water in your local area that could be a source of inspiration for an inquiry and creative development. For example, a local beach, lake or wetland. An inquiry may include:

- The history of the area, acknowledging traditional custodianship of the site, cultural significance, stories and concerns. The gathering of information may inform the movement exploration.
- Topographical maps can provide a starting point for movement exploration, thread and string could be used to map the site within your dance space.
- The local site may also provide an opportunity for a site-specific work, creating movement amongst the location.



*ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together)* installation views, Bunjil Place Gallery, 2023

## Notes on design

*ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together)* presents new artworks from six Barkandji/Barkindji artists.

The artworks, conceptualised over a series of group artist visits to Country as well as lifelong memories of home and family, are deeply personal and reflect each artist's connection to their Country.

The primary artworks include a variety of framed paper/acrylic works, sculptural pieces and multimedia projections/soundscapes. Additional to the primary artworks is the Welcome Space that invites visitors to get acquainted with the artists through a series of projections detailing their visits to Country as well as an intimate snapshot into the cherished memories of each artist through bespoke photo albums.

Building on the exhibition's fundamental concepts of togetherness, connection to home and family and place, the exhibition design works to amplify the shared relationships between artists and artworks, as well as a strong representation of the physicality of visiting, exploring, learning, making and playing on Barkandji/Barkindji Country.

The Welcome Space invites audiences to an introduction to each of the six artists presented within the exhibition, all within an immersive and tactile setting. Physically, the space takes inspiration from photographs of the artists' visits on Country and the various domestic-scale accommodation they stayed in during the trips.

The Welcome Space invites visitors into an abstracted domestic lounge room setting, utilizing soft curves, materiality and lighting to set the tone of the exhibition. The 'lounge room' is central to the shared experience of these trips: a place where long yarns, storytelling, laughs and exchange of creativity and ideas happened. Specific to these interactions is the lounge room sofa. The sofa embodies connection and sharing. Suitable for multiple people to sit and share the universal activity of flicking through family photo albums. Seeing, listening and learning about ancestral histories, stories and memories from family elders; captured in moments of time.

The exhibition is unified by one fabric selection across all design elements, raw calico canvas. This draws inspiration from Zena Cumpston's *First Knowledges Plants: Past, Present and Future* chapter, 'Abundance', and the reproduced 1879 Frederick Bonney photograph within Zena's physical artwork display.

Conceptually, the material choice embodies the practicality and resourcefulness of Barkandji/Barkindji people, as evidenced within the Bonney photograph and detailed by Zena's chapter. The material is soft, yet strong. It is also a literal blank canvas, which clads the exhibition in potential. Utilizing it for projection screens, seating and other surfaces, the material becomes a physical record of the exhibition's life over the various tour locations with visitor usage.

Exhibition 3D Design: Jaxsun Plumley

Exhibition 2D Design: Madeline Critchley, Well-made Design

## List of works

All measurements are in centimetres to the first decimal point, height x width for two dimensional objects and height x width x depth for three dimensional objects. Measurements for prints and works on paper are represented by sheet size.

### Nici Cumpston

Barkandji people, New South Wales

**Old Mutawintji Gorge I – VII**  
from the series *mirrimpilyi, happy and contented* 2023

Adelaide, Kurna Country

pigment inkjet prints on Hahnemühle paper, hand coloured with PanPastels, crayons and pencils

(I-II) (VI-VII) 44.0 x 120.0 cm (each);

(III-V) 120.0 x 44.0 cm (each)

All works courtesy the artist and Michael Reid Gallery

### Zena Cumpston

Barkandji people, New South Wales

**ngarta-kiira (to return to Country) #1 – #10**  
2023

Melbourne, Wurundjeri Country

linocut collage and kopi on Fabriano paper  
(1-4) (7-10) 76.0 x 56.0 cm (each);

(5-6) 56.0 x 76.0 cm (each)

**Abundance – Jacob, Mary and Doughboy**  
2023

Melbourne, Wurundjeri Country

1879, original photograph by Frederic Bonney  
inkjet print on canvas

300.0 x 240.0 cm

Image courtesy State Library of NSW,  
PXA 562/p.10

### karkala (bush bananas)

2023

Melbourne, Wurundjeri Country

woven spiny-headed sedge (*Cyperus gymnocaulos*), kopi  
(1-7) 100.0 x 60.0 x 60.0 cm (overall) (variable)

All works courtesy the artist

### David Doyle

Barkindji/Malyangapa people,  
New South Wales

### kamuru – river red gum

2022–23

Broken Hill, Wilyakali Country  
Melbourne, Wurundjeri Country

### pulthuru (bark canoe)

2022–2023

Broken Hill/Menindee, Wilyakali, Barkandji/  
Barkindji and Malyangapa Country

river red gum

(1-62) 240.0 x 300.0 x 100.0 cm (overall)  
(variable); 40.0 x 300.0 x 100.0 cm (plinth)

**spears, clapsticks, boomerangs, clubs, coolamon, burl bowl, shield**

river red gum

**mussel shells, yabbies, bush bananas, turtle shell, golden perch/yellow belly fish skeleton**

bronze

**murnong, karkala (bush bananas), karnpuka (quandong), cumbungi, rosella**

emu eggs

with eucalyptus, red gum and campfire  
essential oil

All works courtesy the artist

### Nici Cumpston, Zena Cumpston, David Doyle,

Kent Morris, Adrienne Semmens,

Raymond Zada

Barkandji/Barkindji/Malyangapa people,  
New South Wales

### Nets

2023

Broken Hill, Wilyakali Country  
Adelaide, Kurna Country  
Melbourne, Wurundjeri Country

spiny-headed sedge (*Cyperus gymnocaulos*)  
(1-2) 50.0 x 300.0 cm (each) (variable)

Courtesy the artists

### Kent Morris

Barkindji people, New South Wales

### karta-kartaka (pink cockatoo) #1 – #6

2023

Mutawintji, Traditional Owners Country  
Melbourne, Yalukit Willam Country

inkjet prints on Moab Somerset Museum  
Rag paper

(1-6) 100.0 x 150.0 cm (each)

### karta-kartaka (pink cockatoo) #7

2023

Mutawintji, Traditional Owners Country  
Melbourne, Yalukit Willam Country

single channel HD video, 24:9, no sound  
3 minutes

All works courtesy the artist and  
Vivien Anderson Gallery

### Adrienne Semmens

Barkandji people, New South Wales

### kuntiyiri, shadow, reflection

2023

Broken Hill, Wilyakali Country  
Kinchega National Park, Barkandji/Barkindji  
Country  
Adelaide, Kurna Country

3 channel video, stereo sound  
7 minutes 27 seconds  
composer: Amy Flannery  
co-director: Johanis Lyons-Reid

### Holding I–III

2023

Adelaide, Kurna Country

recycled cotton yarn, wire, rust,  
charcoal, eucalyptus, quandong  
and bottlebrush dyes  
(I) 314.0 x 20.0 x 7.0 cm; (II) 315.0 x 15.0 x 14.0 cm;  
(III) 317.0 x 12.0 x 9.5 cm (variable)

### Underfoot

2022

Adelaide, Kurna Country

single channel video, stereo sound  
3 minutes 25 seconds  
composer: Bree Tranter  
cinematographer: Johanis Lyons-Reid  
Bunjil Place presentation only

All works courtesy the artist

### Raymond Zada

Barkandji people, New South Wales

### Bloodline

2023

Adelaide, Kurna Country

enamel on etched acrylic panels  
(1-12) 208.9 x 317.4 cm (overall) (variable)

### At Face Value

2013/2023

Adelaide, Kurna Country

4K video

2 minutes 30 seconds  
Bunjil Place presentation only

### Welcome Space soundscape 2022

Recorded at Kinchega National Park,  
Barkandji/Barkindji Country  
stereo sound, 15 minutes 45 seconds

All works courtesy the artist

### Raymond Zada, Zena Cumpston

Barkandji people, New South Wales

### Baaka Herald

2023

Adelaide, Kurna Country  
Melbourne, Wurundjeri Country

newsprint  
50.0 x 35.0 cm

Courtesy the artists



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front cover

Zena Cumpston, *karkala (bush bananas)*  
2023, Melbourne, Wurundjeri Country,  
woven spiny-headed sedge (*Cyperus  
gymnocaulos*), kopi  
Courtesy the artist

*ngaratya.com.au*

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