

# CULTURE WARRIORS

AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS  
ART TRIENNIAL

CANNOT BUY MY SOUL

Essay by Brenda L. Croft  
[excerpted from publication]

■ national gallery of **australia**

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**Where there are several variations of spellings for Indigenous words, the most commonly used versions have been included or, where supplied, the preferred spelling of individual artists or communities.**

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Exhibition administration: Tina Baum, Acting Senior Curator; Chantelle Woods, Acting Curator; Simona Barkus, Acting Assistant Curator; and Kelli Cole, Curatorial Assistant

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'Vote yes for Aboriginal rights' poster 1967  
National Library of Australia,  
Canberra, Manuscript  
Collection, Gordon Bryant  
Papers (MS 8256/Series 11/  
Box 175)

**A wonderland of truly wondrous things  
That nowhere else upon this Earth are found;  
Of reptiles rare, and birds that have no wings,  
And animals that live deep in the ground;  
And those poor simple children of the Earth,  
(A disappearing race you here may meet),  
Whom whites have driven from their land of birth  
To regions still untrod by booted feet.**

A. G. Bolam, *The trans-Australian wonderland*<sup>1</sup>

The title of the inaugural National Indigenous Art Triennial, *Culture Warriors*, and its timing are prescient in regards to the current focus on issues of nationalism, culture, history and citizenship, and the debates that have surrounded such issues since the days of first contact in the late 1700s.

In devising the curatorial context for the inaugural National Indigenous Art Triennial, the curator invites discussion on a number of issues pertinent to contemporary Australian society, which many of the artists in *Culture Warriors* address in their work, whether subliminally or overtly. The ongoing debates, particularly over the past decade, surrounding the 'the Culture Wars' and/or 'the History Wars' has ebbed and flowed within the public arena, yet remains an often polarising topic. Differing historical remembrances and perspectives are often challenged as revisionist or untrue/fabricated histories, thereby challenging the validity of oral (Indigenous) versus written (non-Indigenous) histories. Even when objective scholarly accounts of history have been presented these have often been derided as promoting a 'black armband view of history'.<sup>2</sup>

*Culture Warriors* also has an ambiguous, ironic context: *any-* and *every-*one can be a 'culture warrior'. The Triennial's title and the inception of the exhibition itself appear to be right on the money (pertinent when considering the prices of Indigenous art on the secondary market) and prophetic. Of the thirty Indigenous artists represented in *Culture Warriors*, twenty-one were not considered citizens of Australia, nor counted on the national census until 1967, when a federal referendum was held on 27 May.<sup>3</sup>

The artists for the Triennial have been selected from regions far and wide: the sparsely populated desert regions of the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in Central Australia; the

tropical and marine climates of Far North Queensland and the Torres Strait Islands; the windswept isle of Tasmania; the rural areas of the south-eastern and south-western states; the ever-ingenious artistic communities of Arnhem Land; and urban areas in the all states and territories, where cultures converge, contrast, collaborate and sometimes collide.

All of these artists are contemporary, irrespective of their domicile, their experiences, their connections to country and cultural practices – they are creating work in and of the here and now. Demarcations defined by others come and go, resurfacing and fading away – primitive, ethnographic, traditional, urban naive, folk, authentic – all of these artists consider themselves Indigenous, first and foremost, their heritage being the framework and foundation, which underpins their creativity. In the case of one artist, long-term collaboration with a non-Indigenous colleague brings a convergence of ideas, drawing on shared experiences.

In the 179 years preceding the 1967 referendum, Indigenous Australians – the First Peoples of this continent – have endured the ongoing effects of colonisation: loss of access to traditional lands, dislocation from customary practices, including language, and forcible removal of children from families and communities.

With the advent of transportation for thousands of convicts from Britain, the Great Southern Land became the new outpost for England's unwanted – mainly convicts – whose ties were severed with their homelands once they were transported to the other side of the world. The colonists had little capacity to imagine what awaited them as they travelled half a world away from their homelands to the 'upside-down' continent on the other side of the equator.

Danie Mellor's (re)creation of this gleefully contrived never-never land is realised in his phantasmagorical tableau *The contrivance of a vintage wonderland (A magnificent flight of curious fancy for science buffs ... a china ark of seductive whimsy ... a divinely ordered special attraction ... upheld in multifariousness)* 2007 (see pp.127, 128), which is the kind of diorama that should have been on display in the social-history museums of the past. Mellor's magical installation conjures up flights of fancy that might have been the imaginations of those terrified and ignorant initial 'boat people'.



Mellor (Mamu/Ngagen/Ngajan peoples) creates creatures that are manufactured from an amalgam of the man-made and the natural. Real macropod paws and ears adorn fibreglass life-size models, encrusted with a mosaic of shattered blue-and-white willow pattern Spode crockery.<sup>4</sup>

Indigenous artists have always used their visual language to ensure personal and collective narratives have been recorded, from the earliest depictions on rock and bark shelters in the north; dendroglyphs and petroglyphs carved into tree trunks and rock elsewhere; or etched onto personal effects such as weapons, customary and utilitarian adornments. Later the drawings by nineteenth-century artists on both sides of the continent<sup>5</sup> recorded contemporary life and unknowingly recorded the irretrievable changes being wrought on Indigenous communities.

Contemporary Indigenous artists draw upon an array of non-Indigenous sources to create unequivocal Indigenous identities, irrespective of domicile and experience, or heritage. The parallel and intersecting histories of this continent have often been subdued or opposed for over two centuries. The artists in *Culture Warriors* bring these comparable histories to the fore.

*Culture Warriors* also pays tribute to a key number of dedicated and significant artists from the overall group. Jean Baptiste Apuatimi, Philip Gudthaykudthay, John Mawurndjul, Lofty Bardayal Nadjamerrek AO

and Arthur Koo'ekka Pambegan Jr will be venerated through a special focus on their substantial contribution over many decades to Indigenous art and cultural life in their communities, which continues to influence and inspire younger artists.

For *Culture Warriors*, Apuatimi – a Tiwi elder whose traditional name is Pulukatu (Female Buffalo) and dance Jarrangini (Buffalo) – has created an arresting series of large canvases, ranging from figurative representations of ceremonial objects: *tutini* (funerary posts) and *pukumani* (mortuary rituals) objects and, as always, body designs (see pp. 3, 5, 7). A tiny figure, she has a powerful presence, accompanied by a wicked sense of humour, declaring herself 'a famous artist now' because of her inclusion in *Culture Warriors*. The image of her standing *solid*<sup>6</sup> on her land on Bathurst Island, bracing herself against an incoming storm, is evocative of the manner in which she creates her art – firm and strong.

Philip Gudthaykudthay, one of the last conversant Liyagalawumirr speakers, was born around 1925 in Central Arnhem Land, and is a senior custodian of the Wagilag creation narrative. Gudthaykudthay's totem is Burruwara, the native cat, which has seen him endowed with the nickname of 'Pussycat', and he is known for his elegant, loping gait, almost gliding along as he walks.

Tutored by great artists of the mid twentieth century classical Arnhem Land style – including his classificatory father, Dawidi (1921–1970), and uncle Djawa (1905–1980) – Gudthaykudthay is the last active artist from the seminal Milingimbi School of painting. His peers from this movement included contemporaries such as David Daymirringu Malangi (1927–1999), and both artists were contributors to the *Aboriginal memorial*, an icon in the national collection since it was acquired in 1987.

In 1983 Gudthaykudthay was the first Central Arnhem Land artist to have a solo show at a contemporary gallery<sup>7</sup>, making him possibly the first Aboriginal artist in Australia to hold a solo exhibition in a contemporary artspace. Gudthaykudthay has created a magnificent series of *badurru* or *dupun* (hollow logs) (see pp. 13, 15) for *Culture Warriors* in his characteristically elegant and spare *miny'tji* (clan body design and *rarrk* (crosshatching), quite distinct from the clan designs painted on the *larrakitj* and *lorrkon* from Yirrkala and Maningrida, respectively.



LEFT: Danie Mellor  
*The contrivance of a vintage  
wonderland (A magnificent flight of  
curious fancy for science buffs ... a  
china ark of seductive whimsy ... a  
divinely ordered special attraction ...  
upheld in multifariousness)* 2007  
detail installation mixed media,  
kangaroo skin, ceramic, synthetic  
eyeballs, wood and birds  
photograph by Stuart Hay  
TOP TO BOTTOM: Jean Baptiste  
Apuatimi dancing at the launch  
of the National Indigenous Art  
Triennial, April 2007 photograph  
NGA; Philip Gudthaykudthay and  
Brenda L. Croft at Bula'bula Arts,  
Ramingining, Northern Territory,  
December 2006, photo by Belinda  
Scott; Philip Gudthaykudthay  
with his works in the *Aboriginal  
memorial* at the National Gallery  
of Australia, Canberra, April 2007  
photograph NGA



John Mawurndjul, from the Kurulk clan of Kuninjku people of Western Arnhem Land, is the most renowned Kuninjku artist working today. He has an acclaimed international reputation, and was lauded as a ‘maestro’ by former French president Jacques Chirac, at the opening of the Australian Indigenous Art Commission for the newest Parisian museum, Musée du quai Branly, in June 2006.



Mawurndjul’s representations of *Mardayin* and sites associated with his traditional country of Milmilngkan – on bark and hollow logs (see pp. 19, 21, 23) – have become increasingly refined in his expert use of *rarrk*. Mawurndjul’s artistic and cultural mastery was acknowledged when he was awarded the Clemenger Contemporary Art Award in 2003, and honoured in the solo exhibition *Rarrk: John Mawurndjul journey through time in northern Australia* at the Museum Tinguely, Basel in Switzerland, in 2005.



Lofty Bardayal Nadjamerrek AO is rightly acknowledged as one of the most learned elders of the Arnhem Land escarpment known as ‘Stone Country’, and is the last of the painters of the magnificent rock art galleries of the region. From the Kundedjngehmi people, Mok clan, Nadjamerrek was born around 1926, at Kukkulumurr, Western Arnhem Land and, as his name suggests, his elevated, graceful physique was often seen traversing the length and breadth of Arnhem Land in his early adult years.

Now residing at his outstation at Kabulwarnamyo, Bardayal paints sparingly, passing on his traditions to his grandsons, who sit quietly watching him as he paints. Although his hand is now somewhat unsteady, his great skill as an ‘old-style’ rock art painter is evident in the stunning barks and works on paper that have been secured for *Culture Warriors* (see pp. 27, 29).

Bardayal may scrape back some of the ochre pigments on the bark canvases or paper sheets when dissatisfied with a particular line, but the stature of his figures – creation beings and totemic animals – remains unchallenged. Whereas Mawurndjul continually works on refining his sublime *rarrk*, filling the entire surface of his canvas, Bardayal’s painting reflects a fidelity to his cultural traditions, with the figurative elements reigning supreme.

Arthur Koo’ekka Pambegan Jr is one of the most respected Winchanam ceremonial elders in Aurukun, a community based on the western side of Cape York Peninsula in Far North Queensland. Pambegan

Jr comes from a family of great standing in the community, learning his cultural traditions through his father, Arthur Koo’ekka Pambegan Sr, who was also an artist and cultural activist of great renown, and was among the first of the Wik-speaking people to live at Aurukun, a mission established by the Moravians at Archer River in 1904.

Pambegan Jr is known for his wonderful sculptural installations of ancestral stories, Bonefish Story Place and Flying Fox Story Place. The distinctive art of Aurukun has also enjoyed a gradual move into the art market in the past twenty-five years, with younger artists encouraged by elders such as Pambegan Jr. *Culture Warriors* will present the first works on canvas by Pambegan Jr alongside his installations (see p. 37).

Kala Lagaw Ya artist Dennis Nona’s bronze sculptures greet visitors to the exhibition, one of which – the impressive *Ubirikubiri* 2007 (see p. 139) – became the first work by a Torres Strait Islander artist to win the overall 24th Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award in August 2007.<sup>8</sup>

*Ubirikubiri* relates to an ancestral story, originally from the closest Melanesian neighbours of Torres Strait Islanders, Papua New Guinea, involving the Mai Kusi (River) on the west coast, and *Ubirikubiri*, the crocodile. The warrior figure lying prone on Ubirikubiri’s reptilian back was killed in retribution for maltreating the crocodile. The intricate carving on the sculpture relates various aspects of the story and is a masterly development of Nona’s skill as a print-maker, evident in the near-biblical creation narrative represented in another of his works in *Culture Warriors*, *Yarwarr* 2007 (see p. 141).

As previously mentioned, 1770 and 1788 are obvious reference dates when a way of life for 500–600 Indigenous nations, which had been secure for thousands of generations, collided cataclysmically with the encroachment of colonisation upon customary beliefs and practices. The monarch who reigned in England during this period of political and cultural turmoil was King George III (1738–1820), who appears as a character in emerging artist Daniel Boyd’s reworked vision of leadership of the earliest days of colonisation.

From the Kudjla/Gangalu people, Boyd is one of the nine artists born after 1967 and has therefore

TOP TO BOTTOM: President Jacques Chirac, John Mawurndjul and Apolline Kohen at the Presidential Palace, Paris, France, June 2006, photograph by Mars Kohen; Andrew Blake, Peter Cooke and Lofty Bardayal Nadjamerrek, Kabulwarnamyo, Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, December 2006, photograph by Brenda L. Croft; Arthur Koo’ekka Pambegan Jr and John Street, Aurukun, Queensland, March 2007, photograph by Brenda L. Croft



Samuel John Neele *Pimbloy: native of New Holland in a canoe of that country* 1804  
 From *The narrative of a voyage of discovery performed in H. M. vessel Lady Nelson, 1803–1804*, by James Grant engraving from a copy in the Dixon Library, State Library of New South Wales

always been classed as a citizen of this country. He is a young, politically aware, internet-savvy artist, whose lush oil paintings reflect a satirical admiration of the classical portraiture of the eighteenth century.

Boyd's gloriously tongue-in-cheek appropriation of the AIATSIS<sup>9</sup> Aboriginal languages map in *Treasure Island* 2005 (see p. 73) seems particularly relevant with the recent reprobation of Indigenous land in the Northern Territory by the Federal Government and the minerals boom that Australia is experiencing, making a very few wealthy, as rarely do the newly rich include Indigenous people.

His regal portrait of King George III in *King No Beard* 2007 (see p. 74), portrayed in all his frills and finery, is brought undone by closer observation of the stately necklace, with the expected gold orbs replaced by skulls. The portrait also contains the artist's self-portrait, mockingly included as a decapitated specimen in a jar, gazing mournfully heaven-ward, like a latter-day Saint Sebastian, martyred like so many of the first Indigenous resistance fighters of Australia.

A direct appropriation of a portrait of King George III, painted in London in 1773 by Nathaniel Dance<sup>10</sup> and now held in the Hermitage collection in St Petersburg, this and other portraits by Boyd directly reference eighteenth-century portraits of figures associated with the earliest days of Australia's colonisation. Within these portraits are other references, as is the case with the macabre self-portrait. The fate of eighteenth-century Dharug/Dharuk resistance leader, Pemulwuy (c. 1750–1802), who led uprisings against the colonisers for twelve years, before finally being captured and executed – having escaped from captivity at least once – had the indignity of his severed head being bottled and sent back to the Home Country, as a trophy of empire, long since lost.

Christopher Pease, Minang/Wardandi/Balardung/Nyoongar people, employs a similar approach in his work. Pease's work is concerned with Indigenous heritage and identity, particularly in relation to Nyoongar culture. He also focuses on contemporary Nyoongar and broader Indigenous identity, and the ongoing impact of non-Indigenous culture on

Louis de Sainson *Taking on water – the Astrolabe – St George’s Sound* 1826 lithograph on wove paper National Gallery of Australia, Canberra



Nyoongar culture from the earliest days of contact in the early 1800s until the present day. This is evident in *New Water Dreaming* 2005 (see p. 145), a direct reference from the hand-coloured lithograph produced by Louis Auguste de Sainson in 1826.

Julie Dowling, a Badimaya/ Yamatji/Widi artist also brings Indigenous history forward in her portraiture. Dowling’s portraits of her ancestors and inspirational Indigenous people are a poignant and powerful means to invest dignity in those who were stripped of it during their lifetimes. Her portrayal of *Walyer* 2006 (see p. 97), a Tasmanian Aboriginal woman resistance fighter is a rallying cry of opposition. Dowling’s protagonist, standing like an Antipodean Bodicea, is a culture warrior, overturning the myth of passive submission.

George Augustus Robinson – a former missionary and Chief Protector of the Aborigines, Port Phillip, Victoria (1839–1949) – referred to Walyer as ‘an Amazon’. She died shortly after her capture in 1830, on 5 June 1831, from another insidious ‘gift’ from the colonists, influenza. She had fought on behalf of her people with bravery and tenacity in a war for which there are no memorials.<sup>11</sup>

Another of Dowling’s works, *Burrup* 2007 (see p. 99), powerfully depicts the degradation of traditional sites pertinent to her people, portraying the possible large-scale destruction of irreplaceable petroglyphs on the Dampier Archipelago. Murujuga/ Murijuga, as ‘the Burrup’ is known by local Aboriginal people, is twenty-eight kilometres north-west of Karratha, in one of the most isolated places in Australia. Its Indigenous petroglyphs, numbering between 500 000 and 1 000 000, are distributed over an area of eighty-eight square kilometres.

Murujuga has been nominated for the National Heritage List but is in imminent danger of being destroyed through mining for natural gas. Compounding the complexity of the issue, a number of local Aboriginal groups have recently signed a native title agreement with the state government. Dowling’s painting conveys the paradoxical situation Indigenous people face, having to make decisions on providing for their communities by exchanging access to traditional lands.

Dowling’s portraits masterfully depict the emotional turmoil of the subject, whatever the



Eugène von Guérard *The barter*  
1854 oil on canvas  
Geelong Gallery  
Gift of W. Max Bell and  
Norman Belcher, 1923

context, whether it involves the ongoing pain – personal and communal – of the Stolen Generations, or the reverse role of enforced servitude upon Indigenous women, as in *The nurse maid (Biddy)* 2005 (see p.98).

Yorta Yorta print-maker and cultural revivalist Treahna Hamm is another artist who gains strength and inspiration from historical customary objects. Like Dennis Nona, she consults extensively with elders from her community before making works that draw on collective memories and practices.

The possum-skin cloaks that Hamm makes are a regeneration of cultural practices that have been dormant for over a century. The skill of making possum-skin cloaks disappeared from Hamm's home state of Victoria nearly a century-and-a-half ago, leaving behind only six known specimens in museums around the globe, two being in the Melbourne Museum, Victoria.<sup>12</sup> *Barmah nurrtja biganga (Barmah Forest possum-skin cloak)* 2005 (see p.103), was created as a direct response after Hamm, with her fellow Koori artists Vicki Couzens and Lee Darroch, viewed these wondrous objects in 1999 and were spurred to recreate the work, and teach themselves the processes that had been 'resting'<sup>13</sup>, undisturbed behind museum walls for so long.

Ironically, Hamm has also been inspired by one of colonial Australia's most prominent artists' illustration of the trade of one such cloak. Eugène von Guérard documented an inter-cultural transaction in his early *Aborigines on the road to diggings* or *The barter* 1854, an oil painting now in the Geelong Gallery, which depicts Wathawurrung people offering possum rugs for sale to white miners on their way to the goldfields. *Yakapna yenbena dungudja nyinidhan biganga (Family ancestor strong fight possum cloak)* 2007 (see p.104), has been created especially for *Culture Warriors* as the artist's tribute to the exhibition's theme.

The first draft of the constitution that eventually led to Federation in 1901 was put to an earlier referendum in 1889. In 1890, speaking at the Australasian Federation Conference, Alfred Deakin – one of the founding fathers of Federation, who went on to become Australia's second prime minister, a position he held over three terms (1903–04, 1905–08 and 1909–10) – proclaimed that 'in this country, we are separated only by imaginary lines ... we are a people one in blood, race, religion and aspiration'.

The same year, 1901, was also the year that the 'White Australia' policy first came to prominence,



Australasian federal referendum certificate, 17 July 1899  
National Library of Australia,  
Canberra, Manuscript  
Collection (MS1605)



although it was not an actual legislation but a generic term referring to a collection of historical laws and policies that were not abolished until 1973, under the Whitlam Labor Government. The topic of acceptable immigration has remained an incendiary political issue ever since, placed firmly back in the public arena in recent times by various public figures.

However, there have also been those who have challenged themselves and Australian society for its capacity to turn a collective blind eye to the injustice and inequality that the First Peoples of this land, the majority of whom live in Third World conditions despite living in a highly developed country that is currently experiencing one of its most prosperous economic periods in decades.

In arguably his most potent speech as Labor prime minister, Paul Keating took Australian society to task for its complicity in doing little to change the status quo for Indigenous Australians. The speech – delivered on 10 December 1992 in Redfern Park, Sydney, at the Australian Launch of the International Year for the World's Indigenous People – included

references to 'morally indefensible ... bad history' and was reported around the globe.

We non-Aboriginal Australians should perhaps remind ourselves that Australia once reached out for us. Didn't Australia provide opportunity and care for the dispossessed Irish? The poor of Britain? The refugees from war and famine and persecution in the countries of Europe and Asia? Isn't it reasonable to say that if we can build a prosperous and remarkably harmonious multicultural society in Australia, surely we can find just solutions to the problems which beset the first Australians – the people to whom the most injustice has been done.

It begins, I think, with the act of recognition. Recognition that it was we who ... practised discrimination and exclusion. It was our ignorance and our prejudice. And our failure to imagine these things being done to us. With some noble exceptions, we failed to make the most basic human response and enter into their hearts and minds. We failed to ask –



National Day of Mourning 1938, photograph Jack Horner Collection. Image courtesy of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

how would I feel if this were done to me?<sup>14</sup> President Chirac's official speech in June 2006 at the opening of the Musée du quai Branly, the newest international museum dedicated to the art and culture of the world's First Peoples, announced to guests from around the world (including Kofi Annan, then Secretary-General of the United Nations), echoed the tone expressed in former Labor prime minister Paul Keating's speech:

Moved by that sense of respect and acknowledgment, in 1998 I decided to create this museum, in full agreement with the Prime Minister Lionel Jospin. France wished to pay a rightful homage to peoples to whom, throughout the ages, history has all too often done violence. Peoples injured and exterminated by the greed and brutality of conquerors. Peoples humiliated and scorned, denied their own history. Peoples still now often marginalized, weakened, endangered, by the inexorable advance of modernity. Peoples who nevertheless want their dignity restored and acknowledged.<sup>15</sup>

However, as the Tasmanian Aboriginal woman resistance fighter Walyer indicates, Indigenous

people did not simply abdicate their rights, their lands, their customs and their lives to the colonisers. In 1938, after a decade's planning and the year before a public gallery acquired the first Aboriginal work of art<sup>16</sup>, the first National Aborigines Day of Mourning was held in Sydney.

Too often, however, Indigenous people are taken out of their cultural context and placed in a colonial curiosities cabinet, viewed as separate from their communities and the events that shaped their lives. Truganinni (1812–1876), a Tasmanian Aboriginal woman from the Bruny Island people was a noted celebrity in her day, best known for being incorrectly identified as 'the last Tasmanian Aboriginal', who had seen great tragedy during her life. She is portrayed in Benjamin Duterrau's painting *The conciliation* 1840, held in the collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. Truganinni is also represented in the national collection in another painting by Duterrau, *Mr Robinson's first interview with Timmy* 1840, acquired in 1979.

Brought to Melbourne as a young woman, with two of her countrymen, Truganinni watched as they suffered the ignominious distinction of being the first men publicly executed in Victoria. When one

LEFT: Benjamin Duterrau  
*Mr Robinson's first interview with Timmy* 1840 oil on canvas  
 National Gallery of Australia, Canberra Purchased 1979  
 RIGHT: H. H. Baily Queen Trucanini, last Aborigine of Tasmania c.1866, photograph National Library of Australia, Canberra

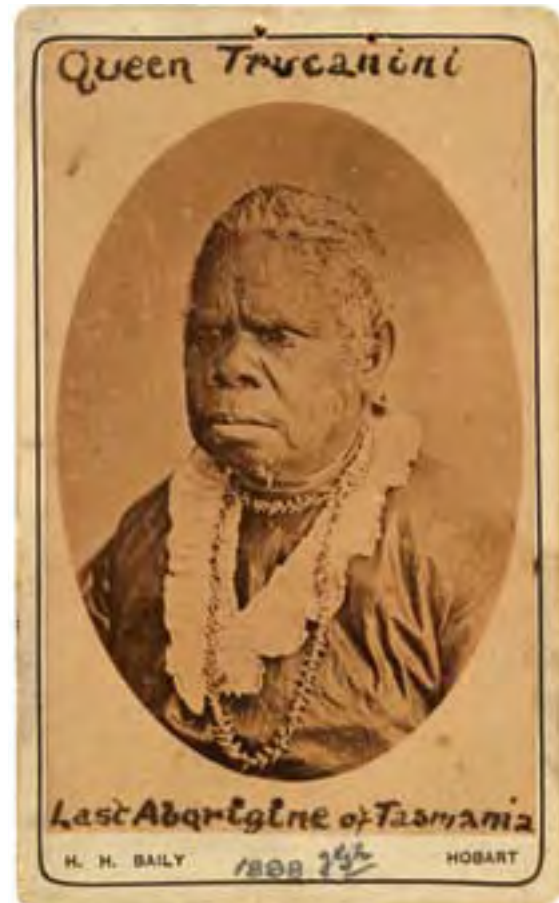


thinks of Trucaninni, one recalls the photographic image of an elderly woman, staring forlornly ahead, her maireener shell necklace wound round her neck – an object now held in the collection of the South Australian Museum. Her remains were not correctly laid to rest in a dignified manner until a century after her death, having been stored in a cardboard box in a museum basement in Tasmania for many decades.

The work of Ricky Maynard (Ben Lomond/Big River people), one of Australia's leading documentary photographers and a master printer, is an elegy to his Tasmanian Aboriginal ancestors and those who have suffered, such as Trucaninni. His exquisitely printed, contemplative series *Portrait of a distant land* 2005–07 (see pp. 118, 121, 122, 123) – comprising ten silver gelatin images of Tasmanian Aboriginal sites – holds the viewer transfixed by that which cannot be seen, but only imagined. The sweep of sky conjures up the windswept landscape of the main island and its surrounds. The lone figure represents the continuity of cultural affirmation, in a quietly dignified and profound stance.

Central Australian artists Jimmy Baker (Pitjantjatjara) and Maringka Baker (Pitjantjatjara), from the ground-breaking artistic community established at Irrunytju (Wingellina) in Western Australia (near the tri-border conjunction of South Australia and the Northern Territory) in 2001, have been working at Tjungu Palya Arts, Nyapari, in the most westerly communities in Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands since 2004.

This is a region that resonates with *tjukurpa*, with creation stories: the same stories that underpin



the world's oldest surviving culture and the art and culture of Australia's oldest contemporary Indigenous art movement ... over 400 artists work in one of the seven art centres, in local craft-rooms, at home or in the bush across the communities. Casual access to the Lands without a permit is not allowed.

The canvases of both artists, such as *Katatjita* 2006 (see p. 49) and *Kuru Ala* 2007 (see p. 55), contain an explosion of brilliant colour, much like the shimmering hues resplendent in the wildflowers, red desert sands, and the reds, yellows, greens and blues of the expansive desert skies of their country.

Their panoptical canvases enable the viewer to sense the intricacies of their traditional homelands, and spar playfully with the wonderful canvases of Jan Billycan (Djan Nanundie). Billycan is an elderly Yulparija woman whose painting has forged ahead since 2003, when her community was able to return to their traditional lands at Bidadanga, a coastal



Frank H. Johnston  
*Portrait of Albert Namatjira* 1958,  
 photograph National Library  
 of Australia, Canberra

large-scale canvases. Her minimalist ground-scapes hypnotise with their apparently shifting perspective, using the most sparing of colours, as in *Untitled* 2007 (see p. 113). Although seemingly far-removed in style, all of these Central Australian artists trace direct artistic and cultural links to the earlier innovative practitioners of Hermannsburg, such as Western Arrernte artist Albert Namatjira (1902–1959) and the earliest artists of Papunya, through their willingness to use unexpected colour and energetic brushstrokes to present their distinctive styles.

South-eastern artists H. J. Wedge (Wiradjuri), Elaine Russell (Kamilaroi) and Trevor ‘Turbo’ Brown (Latje Latje) are all largely self-taught, with Wedge and Russell sharing the experience of adult education through the Eora Centre for Aboriginal Studies, Redfern, Sydney. Wedge and Russell’s early lives on Aboriginal Reserves – Erambie at Cowra, and La Perouse, Sydney, then Murrin Bridge, Tingha – are reflected in their paintings.

Wedge’s works often deal with more complex issues facing disaffected communities: alcohol abuse in *No more drinking* 2006 (see p. 176), degradation and dispossession of land in *Taking the land away* 2006 (see p. 117), and colonialism in *Can’t stop thinkin’ about it I, II, III* 2007 (see p. 175). Russell’s works are generally more gentle in their reflections of mission life, as seen in *Bagging potatoes* 2004 and *Catching yabbies* 2006 (see p. 157), although she addresses the authoritarianism of Aboriginal lives not being truly their own to run, as when the mission managers checked on the ‘welfare’ of children, depicted in *Inspecting our houses* 2004 (see p. 159).

Brown, from rural Victoria, began painting native animals when he was a teenager living rough and homeless, and depicts his beloved animals in idyllic bush settings. His idiosyncratic style developed from having been encouraged to develop his art through adult art classes at RMIT University, Melbourne. His paintings of native fauna can be considered as metaphors for his people, as in *Sugar gliders* 2006 (see p. 80).

Christine Christophersen (Iwatja/Iwaidja) has spent the past decade-and-a-half refining and developing her artistic language, driven by a desire to represent her people’s cultural belief system in all its complexities – kinship, family, clan relationships (see p. 85) – to as broad an audience as possible,

town situated approximately 250 kilometres south of Broome in the Kimberley region of Western Australia.

Following the Bidyadanga community’s return in 2003 many of the elders commenced painting later that year, which makes them fledgling artists. However, their art represents cultural reaffirmation portraying the collective knowledge of the Yulparija people since time immemorial.<sup>17</sup>

Billycan’s work encompasses incredible knowledge of her country, as represented *All the jila* 2006 (see p. 68), which depicts an important site on the Canning Stock Route, *Kunawarriti* (Well 33), in the Great Sandy Desert.

Pintupi/Ngaatjatjarra artist Doreen Reid Nakamarra is one of the most exciting of the next generation of artists associated with Papunya Tula Artists Pty Ltd (PTA), one of the longest running Aboriginal-owned companies in Australia. PTA has been at the forefront of the contemporary Indigenous art movement since the early 1970s, following the arrival at the government settlement Papunya of Sydney-born school teacher Geoffrey Bardon. Bardon was enthusiastic, yet culturally naive in relation to Aboriginal people, and willing to wholeheartedly embrace two-way learning. His encouragement and respect of the community’s elders prompted one of the world’s greatest art movements.<sup>18</sup>

Reid Nakamarra is part of the next generation of PTA artists, and is gaining increasing respect for her



TOP TO BOTTOM:  
Christine Christophersen  
video image from *Blue print*  
2006; Christian Bumarra  
Thompson *Untitled II*  
from the series *Angry young  
Blak man I, II* 2004  
Image courtesy of the artist

whilst ensuring that her elders and community support her portrayal of their shared culture.

Christophersen's country is in one of the world's most pristine sites (and is rightly listed on the World Heritage Register), Kakadu National Park. She is equally at home out bush, or in one of the world's most metropolitan cities, Paris, where she undertook an artist's residency in 2006.

Christophersen is a cultural activist in every sense, having done time in gaol for refusing to pay fines imposed on her because she 'trespassed' on her traditional lands while protesting against the Ranger Uranium Mine at Jabiluka. A decade later and the minerals boom is again placing pressure on Indigenous communities as the Federal Government, having agreed to sell uranium to India, also has to placate concerns about the decision.<sup>19</sup>

Shane Pickett (Balardung/Nyoongar) is one of the foremost Nyoongar artists from the south-west, working as an artist since the early 1980s. However, since 2004 his practice has generated increasing acclaim and he has been the recipient of a number of major national art awards, the most recent being the inaugural major Drawing Together Art Award in May 2007.<sup>20</sup>

Like Christophersen, Pickett has worked for an extended period on developing a visual framework to encompass the distinctive belief system and customary structures of his people. His paintings refer to the complex seasonal changes in his country, as in *On the Horizon of the Dreaming Boodja* 2005 (see p. 151), with its luminous surface depicting where the light of the south-west, which plays such an essential role in viewing the country.

Christian Bumarra Thompson (Bidjara), and Destiny Deacon (Kugu/Kuku people, Cape York, and Erub/Mer people, Torres Strait) in collaboration with non-Indigenous artist Virginia Fraser, all live and work in Melbourne, with Thompson and Deacon sharing cultural ties with Queensland. Some artists work in collectives, secure in the flux of members, while others choose long-term, close collaborations that create an intimacy in the creative process, as with Deacon and Fraser. Deacon's cultural ties may be with tropical Far North Queensland, but it is the inner-city experience that informs her photography and her partnership with Fraser.

All of these artists are cultural bowerbirds, conversant in international art trends and influences; seasoned overseas travellers, undertaking countless residencies and participating in highly significant global cultural events annually; and always on the move, yet always returning home – an amorphous place, particularly for Thompson.

All co-opt new technologies, such as video, digital photo-media, and older art forms like film and performance, and incorporate the most basic of discarded/found materials: styrofoam packing balls, golliwogs and dolls rescued from second-hand shops, plastic, nylon and old music videos. All of this is placed, dare one say *forced*, into a *multi-cultural* (as opposed to integrated) blender – one big melting pot – and what comes of all this cookin' up is whatever the viewer wants it to be: entertaining, hilarious, haunting, unsettling, ambiguous, sinister, confronting, challenging and sublime.

The customary greeting between male relations and family members in Thompson's *The Sixth Mile* and *Desert Slippers* both created 2006 (see p. 165) are profoundly moving in the intensely personal rituals revealed to an unaware public audience. Thompson inhabits many bodies – young, male, urban, *Blak*<sup>21</sup>, androgynous, playful, mimic, and performative – always Bidjara. As with Deacon, there is an underlying gravitas to his amusing imitations of the fetishised Indigenous art star: a male artist from the Kimberley; an internationally renowned, glamorous photographer; an elderly woman from the Northern Territory; a possibly mocking self-portrait; and the piece de resistance, the artist hawking up and spitting out the biggest bowerbird of all, Andy Warhol, in *The Gates of Tambo* 2005 (see p. 163).

The graphically enhanced photographic images, distorted, silent video and encased gollies and dollies of Deacon and Fraser's installation *Colour blinded* 2005<sup>22</sup> (see p. 92) suggest a myriad of burdens, as the viewer is literally colour blinded by the oppressive yellow sodium lighting. The removal of children – *Blak*, brindle and/or white – shadowed by the sad and angry echoes of the Stolen Generations, coupled with the more recent government-sanctioned threat of 'saving the little children' from Indigenous communities, whatever the cost – financial, political, physiological, physical and cultural is a bitter pill to swallow. It is one that Deacon and



LEFT: Destiny Deacon and Virginia Fraser *Colour blinded* installation image. Courtesy of the artists and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery

RIGHT: Yirrkala Bark Petition, 1963, Parliamentary Library, Parliament House

Fraser ensure is coated with a sugary layer of humour, but the acidic aftertaste remains, for these are bleak times if you happen to be Indigenous, or support Indigenous people.

Kuninjku artists Owen Yalandja and Anniebell Marrngamarrnga have created three-dimensional representations of the same ancestral being, the *yawkyawk* (a Kuninjku word meaning 'young woman' and 'young woman spirit being'), though their representations are complementary of each other.

Yalandja's majestic, elegant carvings of *yawkyawk*, as in *Yawkyawk* 2007 (see pp. 181, 182, 183), are hewn from kurrajong trunk, denoting strength and power. The chevron design, his signature, indicates the shimmering scales on the fish-like body of the creatures, designed to catch the light and suggest the inherent power within the billabong where they reside. The son of renowned carver and senior Mumeka custodian Crusoe Kuningbal (1922–1984), was taught to carve by his father.

Marrngamarrnga's *yawkyawk* woven figures require hours and hours of construction. A tiny woman herself, Marrngamarrnga is dwarfed by the stunning scale of *Yawkyawk mother and babies*

2006 (see p. 115). The work is mind-boggling in its creation, the detail of the intricate weaving draws the viewer in, while the creature towers overhead.

Gulumbu Yunupingu is a Gumatj/Rrakpala elder in her community at Yirrkala, in North-East Arnhem Land. A member of an important artistic and cultural dynasty, her family has a long record of political and cultural activism. Her father, Mungurruwuy Yunupingu, was a contributor to one of the most potent cultural documents of the 1960s: the Yirrkala Bark Petition 1963.<sup>23</sup> The petition was presented to the Commonwealth Government, detailing the sovereign rights of the Yolgnu to their traditional lands, which were threatened with being excised by the Menzies Liberal Government for to access the mineral wealth in the region.

Senior custodians also created the Yirrkala Church panels, with clan groups depicting their ancestral stories, obligations and rights through *Dhuwa* and *Yirritja* moiety paintings in two massive panels, which are now permanently housed at Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre in Yirrkala. This is Gulumbu's heritage, and she depicts the ancestral



THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

The National Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice, has received information from the Bureau of Customs, Department of the Interior, and the Bureau of Land Management, that certain individuals have been engaged in the sale of land in the State of California, and that the proceeds of such sales have been used for the purpose of financing the activities of the Communist Party of the United States of America.

- 1. The names of the individuals mentioned in this report are as follows: [List of names]
- 2. The names of the individuals mentioned in this report are as follows: [List of names]
- 3. The names of the individuals mentioned in this report are as follows: [List of names]
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20535

*[Handwritten signatures and notes]*

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WASHINGTON, D. C. 20535

stories in her statuesque *larrakitj* (hollow funerary logs), on bark paintings and recently on the ceiling of part of the Musée du quai Branly, in Paris, France.

The artistic styles of Western and North-East Arnhem Land are quite distinct, with the incredibly fine linear *rarrk* (crosshatching) of Maningrida artists complemented by the equally innovative figurative elements that appear in many Yirrkala artists works. Gulumbu's signature *Gan'yu* (*Stars*) and *Garak* (*the Universe*) designs are carefully built one layer upon another, giving a wonderful textural quality to the surface of her works, with the white and yellow pigments applied to suggest the twinkling of the infinite celestial heavens above.

Four of the ten artists of Murri<sup>24</sup> heritage in *Culture Warriors* have drawn on the case surrounding Mulrundji Doomadgee, who died while in police custody on 19 November 2004, twenty minutes after being picked up for being drunk and disorderly, and placed in the police cells on Palm Island, a notorious Aboriginal settlement.<sup>25</sup>

Palm Island (also known as Great Palm Island, or by its Aboriginal name, Bukaman) is sixty-five kilometres north-west of Townsville, on the east coast of Queensland, Australia. Despite its idyllic setting, Palm Island was a state Aboriginal reserve between 1918 and 1985, with a reputation as being the most repressive of the Queensland reserves. State-designated 'trouble makers' from other reserves throughout Queensland were sent there, with 'trouble' being a euphemism for those who challenged authorities and fought for their rights. It was also a place where many children who were removed from their families were sent and raised in dormitories.

On 28 September 2006, Coroner Christine Clements brought down a finding against Palm Island Police Station Senior Sergeant Chris Hurley, who was declared guilty of Doomadgee's manslaughter. Hurley became the first police officer in the history of Australia's settlement to be found guilty of such an act, two centuries after colonisation commenced and twelve years after the Final Report into the Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Custody was tabled.<sup>26</sup>

Despite millions of dollars in public funding being dedicated to the Royal Commission, very few of its recommendations to address and overturn

the high rates of incarceration of Indigenous Australians from juveniles through to adults have ever been implemented, and fifteen years after being tabled incarceration rates continue to rise, along with every other negative rate in relation to Indigenous communities.

Thus, when Clements' finding was overturned on 19 June 2007, following an appeal by Hurley, Indigenous people across Australia felt that justice would always be denied in their communities, and demonstrated their concern and disgust with public protests in many state and territory capitals. For many people from Queensland it served as a sorry indication that nothing had changed for Murri people.

Vernon Ah Kee (Kuku Yalanji/Waanyi/Yidinji/Gugu Yimithirr peoples) has family links with Palm Island: his grandfather, a Waanyi man from Lawn Hill, was taken there when he was young, and met and married Ah Kee's grandmother on the island.

Ah Kee is known for his text works on panels and walls, which play with visual language. The power of words, text as art and global genericism is represented by a number of powerful text works by Ah Kee. *hang ten* and *strange fruit*, both 2006 (see p. 45), have obvious connotations to deaths in custody, where deaths were often noted as an inmate having hung him or herself. *stolen/removed* 2006, refers to the Stolen Generations, of which Ah Kee's grandfather was a member. *not an animal or a plant* 2006 has a direct link with the 40th anniversary of the 1967 Referendum (as related in the artist's statement on p. 41).

Ah Kee's imposing triptych *mythread* 2007 (see p. 43) contains a tribute to one of his heroes, his grandfather Mick Miller, whose life was 'one of rigid control as government property' through his placement on Palm Island. The work also contains the first self-portrait of the artist, and the thread of reclamation of ancestry and pride resonates throughout all Ah Kee's work, text or drawing. Although the scale of the drawings are gargantuan, they are incredibly intimate, allowing the viewer to share in a personal moment which is usually reserved for the family album, but in the public arena takes on the added meaning of *Here I am/I am Here* – you cannot avoid or ignore me.



Gulumbu Yunupingu ceiling, Australian Indigenous Art Commission, Musée du quai Branly, Paris, France, 2006, Image courtesy of Cracknell Loneragan Architects



Island home ... Friends and family walk ahead of the hearse carrying the body of Cameron [Mulrundji] Doomadgee, 11 December 2004, *Sydney Morning Herald*, photograph by Andy Zakeli



Richard Bell (Kamilaroi/Kooma/Jiman/Gurang Gurang peoples), Gordon Hookey (Waanyi/Waanjiminjin peoples) and Judy Watson (Waanyi people) have traversed state and cultural borders, travelling extensively overseas. These four artists, all now based in Brisbane, grew up during the rule of Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen (1911–2005, Premier of Queensland from 1968 to 1987), during which massive corruption in the police force was revealed. A Royal Commission, known as The Fitzgerald Inquiry (1987–1989) was established, followed by hundreds of prosecutions and many gaolings, including that of the disgraced former Police Commissioner Sir Terence Lewis, ultimately bringing about Bjelke-Petersen's loss of office, after being the longest-serving Queensland Premier.<sup>27</sup>

Bell and Hookey, like Ah Kee, are members of proppaNOW, an artists' collective based in Brisbane. Artists' collectives have long been important for the support and development of artists, and with the establishment of Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-operative Pty Ltd in Sydney in 1987 – where Bell, Hookey and Watson have also been members – create the a space for Blak people, as opposed to pushing Indigenous artists to the margins. As with many collectives, there is a continual ebb and flow, as artists juggle their art-making with earning

an income in order to continue developing their creativity.

Bell, a self-styled propagandist, who shoots from the mouth, machine-gun staccato, in accompaniment to his painting and video-work, won more notoriety for the slogan on his T-shirt – White Girls Can't Hump – when awarded the 2003 Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award, than for the intent and complexity of his winning painting – a pity, as he was only the second urban-based artist to win at the time.<sup>28</sup>

His work is a re-appropriation, a reworking, a reaffirmation of any number of artists from close to home, across the seas and throughout the decades: Jackson Pollock, Jasper Johns (in *Australian Art: it's an Aboriginal Thing* 2006, see p.63), Roy Lichtenstein (in *Big brush stroke* 2005, see p.62), Colin McCahon, Gordon Bennett, Michael Nelson Jagamarra, Imants Tillers and female artist Emily Kam Kngwarray. He is an EveryBlakMan, vastly different from the *everyman* mould in which many of the country's leading politicians of all persuasions cast themselves.

The majority of Indigenous people live in the south-east states in urban areas, with the largest population residing in Western Sydney, not far from the site of first contact two centuries gone. And, although it is stated time and again, Indigenous

people living in urban regions retain very strong connections with their cultural ties, their traditional lands, and through their travels connect and reconnect with other Indigenous individuals and communities, who all share one thing: a pride in culture and a willingness to share that with non-Indigenous people.

*Culture Warriors* is not a competition of 'us versus them', although Bell addresses this very issue with his usual caustic, hard-hitting humour (can't keep a good man down) in *Uz vs Them* 2006 (see p. 60). However, it is the tragedies of Doomadgee's 'accidental death', the destructive influence of Christianity upon many Indigenous communities, and the sorrow of a limited future once again being imposed upon Indigenous people that resonate in *Psalm singing* 2007 (see p. 61).

Hookey takes up the cultural baton, as opposed to police baton, for the loss of his "brother" Doomadgee – for all Indigenous people consider themselves brothers/sisters under the skin/in arms – with his elegiac masterwork *FIGHT: To Survive; To Live; To Die!* 2007 (see p. 109). At over ten metres in length, it contains a multitude of references: the enduring capacity of Indigenous people to stand firm, resist, regenerate, reject the oppression that continues to be heaped upon, the stripping of existing rights and the wish for peace. Like Wedge, Hookey is not troubled by confronting issues within Indigenous communities, such as the impact of alcohol abuse as in *Grog Gott'im* 2005 (see p. 111).

Some artists remain, return or chose to move on. Watson is the most peripatetic of herself, Ah Kee, Bell and Hookey, having lived in rural Queensland, Tasmania, Sydney, Darwin and now back in Brisbane with her family, when international residencies do not lure her overseas again. Watson's response to the Palm Island finding is revealed in *palm cluster* 2007 (see p. 169), from the series *a complicated fall*.<sup>29</sup> It is layered with direct and indirect references to the 'accident' which caused Doomadgee's painful death from 'four broken ribs, a ruptured spleen and a liver almost split in half'<sup>30</sup>, and 'could also refer to a fall from grace, a fall of government' and the 'internal grieving that [the artist] was aware of when [she] was pushing and scrubbing the raw pigments into the canvas'.<sup>31</sup>

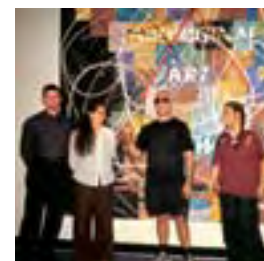
Like Dowling, Watson has experienced the after-effects of forced removal, through her grandmother being taken from her mother as a baby. The poignant memorial to her grandmother, who passed away recently, is revealed in *under the act* 2007 (see p. 171), an artist's book inspired by the official documents held in the Queensland State Archives relating specifically to the artist's family. Hidden histories revealed, laid bare, like an open wound that needs the air to heal.

*Culture Warriors* is not the full story – how can it be when there is so much more to learn? Neither is it a beginning, although it is the first National Indigenous Art Triennial. The issues that Indigenous people are currently facing in this first decade of the twenty-first century continue to inform the visual language of all the artists represented in this exhibition.

Despite the obstacles inflicted upon them, or perhaps *because* of all these things, these artists and the many who come after them in future Triennials will continue to inspire, shock, seduce, confront, challenge and encourage us to stand up for what is fair and just. It is time to stop desiring the creations as ownership of the artists themselves, and supporting the creators of these works, their communities and future generations of artists. You can buy their work, respect their visionary declarations and innovatory contribution to contemporary Indigenous *and* Australian art and culture, but you cannot buy their souls. Indigenous artists give voice to the resilience of their communities through their art, echoed in the words of contemporary Indigenous songman, poet and cultural activist, Kev Carmody:

For 200 years us blacks are beaten down here  
too long on the dole  
My dignity I'm losing here and mentally I'm old  
There's a system here that nails us ain't we left  
out in the cold  
They took our life and liberty friend but they  
couldn't buy our soul.<sup>32</sup>

**Brenda L. Croft**



Brian Kennedy, Franchesca Cubillo, Richard Bell and Cissy Bell in front of *Scientia E Metaphysica* 2003, the overall winning work at the 20th Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin, August 2003, photograph by Brenda L. Croft

- 1 A. G. Bolam, *The trans-Australian wonderland*, Melbourne: The McCubbin-James Press Pty Ltd, 1927.
- 2 Professor Geoffrey Blainey AC, born in Melbourne in 1930 is one of Australia's most significant historians, and coined the phrase 'black armband view of history' in 1993, while delivering the annual Sir John Latham Memorial Lecture, on 3 September at a *Quadrant* magazine dinner held at the American Club, Sydney.
- 3 'Fact sheet 150 – the 1967 referendum', National Archives of Australia, Canberra, viewed September 2007, [naa.gov.au/about-us/publications/fact-sheets/fs150.aspx](http://naa.gov.au/about-us/publications/fact-sheets/fs150.aspx)
- 4 Spode is an English manufacturer of pottery and porcelain, based in Stoke-on-Trent, United Kingdom, c. 1770.
- 5 William Barak (c. 1824–1903), Tommy McRae (c. 1835–1901) in Victoria, Mickey of Ulladulla (c. 1820–1891) in the south-east, and Gyallipurt, George Coolbul (b.d. unknown – 1871) and Johnny Cudgel from the south-west.
- 6 Solid, meaning 'firm', is also used as a colloquial term by Indigenous people to suggest 'good', 'fantastic', 'great'.
- 7 Garry Anderson Gallery, Paddington, Sydney.
- 8 The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award, colloquially known as 'the Telstra' in recognition of its major sponsor, has been staged at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory since 1983.
- 10 D.R. Horton, *Aboriginal Australia wall map*, Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 1996.
- 11 Nathaniel Dance (1735–1811) was a notable English portrait painter and later a politician, and one of the founder members of the Royal Academy, London, in 1768. He was commissioned to paint King George III and his queen, plus Captain James Cook.
- 12 Further reading, see Vicki Maikutena Matson-Green, 'Tarenorerer [Walyer] (c. 1800–1831)', in *The Australian dictionary of biography*, supplementary volume, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2005, p. 376.
- 13 From an interview with Robin Usher, 'Arts review', in *The Age*, 13 March 2006.
- 14 'Arts review', in *The Age*, 13 March 2006.
- 15 'Australian launch of the International Year for the World's Indigenous People', speech given by then prime minister Paul Keating at Redfern Park, Sydney, 10 December 1992, [a viewed September 2007, apology.west.net.au/redfern.html](http://www.viewedseptember2007.apology.west.net.au/redfern.html)
- 16 Speech by M. Jacques Chirac, President of the Republic, at the opening of the Quai Branly Museum, Paris, 20 June, 2006.
- 17 *Illum-baura – Haasts Bluff* 1939, by Albert Namatjira, was acquired by the Art Gallery of South Australia that same year.
- 18 Ashley Crawford, 'Yulparija show their colours', *The Age*, 19 April 2004.
- 19 Further reading, see H. Perkins and H. Fink, *Genesis and genius: Papunya Tula*, Sydney: Art Gallery of NSW, 2000.
- 20 'PM plays down India uranium concerns', 17 August 2004, ABC News, viewed September 2007, [abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/08/17/2007586.htm](http://abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/08/17/2007586.htm)
- 21 Organised jointly by the Australian Public Service Commission, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the National Museum of Australia and the National Archives of Australia as 'an art event exploring reconciliation and promoting the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Australian Public Service', Pickett's winning painting was *Travel lines crossing the Bunurroo Waterway*.
- 22 The term *Blak* was first used by Destiny Deacon in the exhibition *Kudjeris*, at Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-operative Ltd, in 1991, with one of her works titled *Blak lik mi*.
- 23 Further reading, see Geraldine Barlow, *Destiny Deacon: talking back*, exhibition catalogue, Melbourne: Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, 2005.
- 24 Further reading, see 'Community action for rights', Treaty, [1.aiatsis.gov.au/exhibitions/treaty/rights.htm](http://1.aiatsis.gov.au/exhibitions/treaty/rights.htm)
- 25 Gulumbu Yunupingu was one of eight Indigenous artists selected to participate in the Australian Indigenous Art Commission at the Musée du quai Branly, which opened in Paris in June 2006, a decade after its initial planning. The other artists were Paddy Nyunkuny Bedford, John Mawurndjul, Ningura Napurrula, Lena Nyadbi, Michael Riley, Judy Watson and Tommy Watson.
- 26 Murri is a term used by the Indigenous people of Queensland to generically refer to themselves, meaning 'people'.
- 27 Between October 1987 and November 1990, the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody investigated the deaths of ninety-nine Aboriginal persons in police and prison custody, which occurred during the nine years and five months period covered by the Letters Patent of the Royal Commission. Further reading, see summary of the final report into the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody at [austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/rsjlibrary/rciadic/rciadic\\_summary/rcsumk01.html](http://austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/rsjlibrary/rciadic/rciadic_summary/rcsumk01.html)
- 28 Further information, see 'The moonlight state' by Chris Masters, aired on *Four Corners*, ABC Television, 11 May 1987, and *Courier Mail* reporter Chris Dickie's investigative journalism during this period.
- 29 Jodie Broun won the overall Telstra NATSIAA in 1998 with *Whitefellas come to talk 'bout land*.
- 30 A solo exhibition held at Bellas Milani Gallery, Brisbane, from 17–26 May 2007.
- 31 Kenneth Nguyen, 'Palm Island man "bashed to death by policeman"', *The Age*, 28 September 2006.
- 32 Artist's statement, 2007.
- 33 Kev Carmody, *Song cycles*, 1991.