Christian Thompson
Museum of Others (Othering the Explorer, James Cook), 2016
C-type print on metallic paper
120 x 120 cm
image courtesy of Michael Reid Gallery
Heather Koowootha (Kunjarra)  

The Landlady  2015.  
drypoint on perspex,  

Heather Koowootha (Kunjarra)  

Born: Cairns  
1966  
Heather Koowootha was born in Cairns in 1966 and grew up in Yarrabah, going to Aurukun for family holidays. Her works are inspired by teachings passed on from her mother’s culture from the Yidinji people (Yarrabah) and her father’s culture from the Wik Mungkan people (Aurukun). Her grandmother, on her father’s side, is from Pompuraaw. Heather’s father was taken from his mother, from Aurukun to Normanton Mission, when he was twelve years old. Her mother was taken from her mum at a young age and placed in a dormitory in Yarrabah.  

Inspired by stories and experiences whilst growing up, Heather’s print works in particular portray detailed drawings based on ‘lore and order’, sacred land protocols, bush medicine, bush classroom, bush food, mission punishments, and other themes based on community life, history and culture.  

Heather works in a range of mediums including painting, printmaking, jewellery, weaving and drawing.  

Artist’s Statement  
I drew The Landlady because I wanted to have a little bit of fun, as most of my works are very sad and to show people through my work that you can have jokes as well. I don’t want to see people in the gallery being sad and walking out with these worries in their mind. In The Landlady I’ve drawn the Queen of England because she’s always walking around serious. She has two koalas instead of her two corgis. There are early settlers and in the sky all the ancestors are looking down on them from Australia.  

Mostly I love to do a lot of details. I don’t leave anything blank - I’m that sort of artist. Printmaking makes me feel that I’ve achieved something, explaining all my stories. I’ve got everything all bottled up in my head and now it’s all coming out.  

Text courtesy of the Artist and Canopy Art Centre
Christian Thompson

**Museum of Others (Othering the Ethnologist, Augustus Pitt Rivers), 2016**
c-type print on metallic paper
120 x 120 cm

Dr CHRISTIAN THOMPSON is an Australian born, London-based contemporary artist whose work explores notions of identity, cultural hybridity & history. Formally trained as a sculptor, Thompson’s multidisciplinary practice engages mediums such as photography, video, sculpture, performance & sound. His work focuses on the exploration of identity, sexuality, gender, race and memory. In his live performances and conceptual portraits he inhabits a range of personas achieved through handcrafted costumes & carefully orchestrated poses & backdrops. In 2010 Thompson made history when he became the first Aboriginal Australian to be admitted into the University of Oxford in its 900-year history. He holds a Doctorate of Philosophy (Fine Art), Trinity College, University of Oxford, United Kingdom, Master of Theatre, Amsterdam School of Arts, Das Arts, The Netherlands, Masters of Fine Art (Sculpture) RMIT University and Honours (Sculputre) RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia and a Bachelor of Fine Art from the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. His works are held in major international and national collections.

http://www.christianthompson.net/#!biography/c1fam

**Museum of Others,**

‘Museum of Others’ emerges from Christian Thompson’s long-standing engagement with the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford. During Thompson’s Doctoral candidacy at Trinity College from 2010 – 2015 he worked intimately with the Australian photographic collection, generating his acclaimed series ‘We Bury Our Own’ which has been shown extensively in his native Australia, UK, USA and Asia. The artist acts as an interpreter, exploring how historical collections can become active contemporary forces in the production of new cultural expression. Thompson is not critiquing the rubric of museum display but rather engaging collections in a process of auto-ethnography. Utilising processes of research and reflection, combined with his own biography, to bring to the fore unseen or concealed narratives and voices within such collections.

In ‘Museum of Others’ there is a convergence of some of Thompson’s disciplines, such as sculpture, photography and performance. The canvas panels of notable British colonial figures; Captain James Cook (1728 – 1779), John Ruskin (1819 – 1900), Augustus Pitt Rivers (1827-1890) and Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer (1860 – 1929) are worn as masks. The eyes of each figure meticulously removed, replaced by the artist’s. Christian Thompson steps inside the sitter, asking ‘How did you divide up and classify your world?’ and in doing so, the artist within the historical subject returns a new gaze, unpacking the past to view an entirely different present.

Thompson’s research in the Pitt Rivers Museum highlighted an inferred reverence they placed on all those outside a euro-centric world view. Each respected figure actively participated in an act of ‘Othering’. In fact, they built their notoriety, rose through the ranks of society and brokered opportunities for themselves on this very action. In ‘Museum of Others’ Thompson actively inverts this historical positioning, and in doing so, complicates established historical ‘truths’. The gaze of the camera and the focus of the lens has indeed altered dramatically over the last century. Once used to document colonial outposts and ‘savage’ peoples with the stagy surrealism of studio portraiture, the photograph has transitioned. From exotic other to the contemporary documentation of one’s own image. Photography as a medium has remained static yet our relationship to it - to how we see ourselves through it – has irrevocably changed.

**Text and image courtesy of Michael Reid Gallery**

**Christian Thompson**

**Born 1978**
Gawler, South Australia
Bidjara People

**Museum of Others**

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c-type print on metallic paper
120 x 120 cm
Looking at the artwork. What does it look like to you?

TALK
Talk about what jewellery is and why do people wear it.

DO
Design your own headdress based on an animal or sea creature.

Looking closely at the how Grace Lillian Lee has made this work. What has she used to make it?

TALK
Would you wear this work? Is it wearable art or is it a sculpture for a wall? Is there a difference?

DO
Try plaiting different materials to create a long rope. Create a hat or headdress by twisting the rope around each other. Use string to tie it together.

Looking at the colours and materials used. What do you think her inspiration for this piece was?

TALK
Talk about the blend of contemporary materials and colours with the traditional skills and motifs. How important are your links to your ancestry and history? Are there skills passed down in your family?

DO
Research a particular skill used in the past (e.g. French knitting, making fishing lures). Create an artwork based on that skill set.

Grace Lillian Lee

Born: 1988 Cairns Qld
Lives: Cairns, Qld

Body Sculpture presents a body of new works created by Cairns based artist, Grace Lillian Lee. Vivid colours and striking sculptural forms explore how contemporary fashion and performance intersect with traditional artistic and cultural practices to create a new cultural dialogue.

For the artist, fluidity of water - being the source of life - is a current theme and is reflected through repetition, texture and movement of the design. The intricate weavings draw inspiration from techniques used to create adornments for ceremonial purposes in the Torres Straits Islands.

I am celebrating these techniques in a contemporary form, utilising materials, which would not usually be used. I heavily use the prawn weaving techniques, which I learnt from Uncle Ken Thaiday in 2010. I have adapted and developed this technique through exploring different fabrications and playing with scale, shape and form. These forms I have created are a reflection of me exploring my identity, the diverse mix of who I am and where I come from. It’s a way to celebrate, share and be proud of being a multicultural Australian woman.

Grace Lillian Lee, May 2016

Lee’s background and study in fashion has led to appearances in major fashion shows and cultural events, including the 2016 Melbourne Fashion Festival. Specifically for this exhibition, Lee worked with acclaimed artist, Greg Semu, to produce a series of dramatic photographs.

Text courtesy of Cairns Regional Gallery

“The six pieces of body adornment that make up her Body Sculpture collection reference ritual performance and traditional crafts, drawing upon and deepening Grace’s ongoing explorations into palm-leaf weaving techniques - affectionately referred to in the Torres Strait as “prawn-weaving”. The practice is common in the Torres Strait, used for practical basketry, and more decoratively for hanging ornaments and children’s play objects - such as toy prawns [hence its nickname, prawn-weaving].”

“For Body Sculpture, Grace takes a departure from the geographically available materials usually associated with palm-weaving such as coconut leaf, banana fibre or pandanus, to explore the more processed fibres of contemporary fashion such as pre-dyed cotton webbing. “Metres and metres and metres of it!” laughs Grace, then reintroducing traditional elements such as wood cane and decorative goose feathers.”

Quoted from Nature and Beyond - The artistic fashion of Grace Lillian Lee written by Michelle Boyde

www.boyde.com.au


Body Sculpture is at the Cairns Regional Gallery 24 June - 4 September, 2016
Claudia Moodoonuthi

The Chair and Turtle Girl 2016

(Chair) radiata pine, fishing line, raffia, wool, string, electrical wire, cord, ribbon, PVA glue. (turtle) fishing line, raffia, wool, string, cord, ribbon and PVA glue.

Fishing Net 2015

acrylic paint, cotton and plastic string, raffia, wire, nylon fishing line and steel hooks on canvas.

"Aunty Dawn was known for her strength and her nickname was Superwoman. She painted schools of fish a lot!"

"I was fishing with Netta at McKenzie River on Bentinck Island. Netta always sits on a chair when fishing. McKenzie was a bad man. He hunted and killed Kaiadilt people. Netta said Turtle Girl was McKenzie’s daughter."

Claudia Moodoonuthi

Born: 1995 Bentinck Island, Qld
Language: Wik Mungkan, Lardil, Kayardild, English
Lives: Brisbane, Qld

Claudia Moodoonuthi spent the first seven years of her life on Bentinck and Mornington Islands in the Gulf of Carpentaria being raised by her late great-grandmother May Moodoonuthi. During these formative years Claudia spent her time fishing, hunting and gathering in the bush with her family, developing a deep connection to the country and traditional ways of the Lardil and Kaiadilt people.

Moodoonuthi is the great granddaughter of the late King Alfred, senior Kaiadilt law man and elder brother of the late artist Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori. Spending her childhood with May Moodoonuthi, Sally Gabori and auntie Netta Loogatha – all three among the seven Kaiadilt ‘sisters’ from Bentinck Island who burst onto the art scene in 2005, inspired in Claudia not only a love of the country, but a connection to her land through her artistic practice.

In 2003 Claudia relocated to Aurukun, situated on the western side of the Cape York Peninsula, to live with her grandmother’s brother. Although her father, mother, brother and sister stayed on Mornington Island, Claudia Moodoonuthi was warmly welcomed into the Aurukun community and was considered a ‘local’. Her Aurukun aunts and grandmothers have been active in instilling a strong respect for Wik Mungkan customs, lore and beliefs, within her.

Claudia Moodoonuthi’s canvas paintings reflect her connection to country; her bold and colourful images are greatly influenced by her language, tribe, history, and family. In Claudia Moodoonuthi’s work one can see the great lineage of the Kaiadilt women’s innovative artistic practice contemporized even further – May Moodoonuthi, Sally Gabori and Netta Loogatha all beloved and influential to Claudia, famed for their enchanting work incorporating the blazing colours of the tropics.

Text courtesy of the artist and Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne

Claudia Moodoonuthi’s exhibition, Woven Identity, is an installation of colourful paintings and sculptures that reference the artist’s cultural connections to the Lardil and Kaiadilt peoples of Far North Queensland.

This exhibition presents recent paintings on canvas that incorporate woven elements, alongside soft-wrapped and hard-edged sculptural furniture pieces. The lines and textures of these works map her history and her homelands, and together they demonstrate a liveliness and experimentation as Moodoonuthi subtly integrates small idiosyncratic elements from her everyday life into her art. Candid photography and lighthearted experimental videos included in the exhibition provide a further insight into the artist’s personality and the disparate worlds she traverses.

Text courtesy of Cairns Regional Gallery

Woven Identity is at the Cairns Regional Gallery 24 June - 4 September, 2016

Claudia Moodoonuthi is represented by Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne.

Early

Look

Look at the three things in the picture. Look at the many different colours she has used.

Talk

Talk about the colours Claudia is using, what do they remind you of?

Do

Wrap small objects such as bottles or toys in rope and coloured cloth.

Middle

Look

Look at what is similar and what is different between these three works. Clue: Look at the material list for each work.

Talk

Talk about what is similar and what is different between the art works. How has the artist used the different materials?

Do

Wrap small objects such as bottles or toys in rope and coloured cloth. Create an installation of the artist’s work.

Senior

Look

Look at the way these three works have been put together for display. Look at how the art works can be viewed as separate pieces and together as an installation.

Talk

Discuss how Moodoonuthi is using objects and materials to convey aspects of her life.

Do

Choose an object that conveys a personal story. Disguise it using materials that relate to your story.
Erub Arts

Jimmy Kenny Thaiday

Buami

Buami, a warup (traditional island drum) made out of ghostnet. It represents the voice of Torres Strait people. The warup is significant throughout Torres Strait customs, as it is used in many traditional occasions and cultural performances.

I created this artwork to represent “the voice of Torres Strait people”. The warup is identified as a cultural instrument and sound, which represents the Traditional custodians and their voice. The colours of the net is from the colours of the Torres Strait flag and represents the region of Torres Strait.

In Meriam Mer language, buami means sound. A deep harmonic tune is usually described as buami.

This work embodies the environmental message of ghostnets: abandoned fishing nets and how they impact on the ocean, reef and marine life. The sea is our livelihood, we depend on the sea for food and resources, also it is symbolic in our cultural traditions throughout Torres Strait.

“Listen to our voice”.

Erub Installation

Discusses the reconnection and celebration of family, the unifying voice and power of the drum and the human strength that traditionally powered canoes.

Frigate Birds - Jimmy John Thaiday

With an installation of frigate birds explores the connection to the sea shared by Pacific Islanders. Together the three form a powerful reminder of the seafaring traditions of island communities that have cared for our oceans for millennia.

Through their works and their world vision, these artists hope to raise awareness about the dangers of pollution affecting the oceans.

Canoes - Erub Artists

Canoes were generally made from logs traded from Papua New Guinea, the hollowed out hull had two outriggers. Today people travel by dinghy powered by outboards. The canoe glides silently through the water navigated by the stars and the seasonal winds and tides. With its translucent ghost net it invites us to consider the connection to the sea that we share.

Canoes are an important part of Erub’s beliefs, throughout Torres Strait.

Canoes - Erub Artists

Jimmy Kenny Thaiday

Erub Artists - charcoal drawing

Buami ra war - Erub Artists - charcoal drawing

On Lifou, the Erubian artists discovered that many Lifou families farewelled their missionary ancestors, never to hear from them again. For many of them, the visit is a celebration of reunion and the joy shared by the reconnection of family.

The large charcoal on paper scroll represents these chance encounters between Lifou Islanders and their Torres Strait relatives. Individuals from both islands having their outlines traced and later decorated under the guidance of Erub artist, Jimmy Thaiday. Erub Elder, Lesley Pitt described the progression of the drawings “at first there appeared to be just lines with no true meaning but the next day as people came and drew together they put life into the paper, it was the people who made it (the art) come to life.” Each person had something to say and the connection they shared. Images of relatives - Buami ra war is a celebration of reunion and the joy shared by the reconnection of lost relatives. Images represents part of whole work.

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Tommy Pau

Tommy Pau is a descendent of the Eastern Torres Strait Islands, he is of Aboriginal, Papua New Guinea, Pacific Islander and Asian descent. He was born in Townsville, North Queensland and lived there as an infant before relocating to Brisbane, Thursday Island and Cairns. Pau considers himself an artist who is Indigenous, not as an Indigenous artist. His wide ranging professional practice includes sculpture, carving, printmaking, installation work, digital and multimedia, and anything that grabs his interest. He also writes poetry.

Pau’s visual artwork explores concepts that underpin his culture and revalues the impact of the past on present lives and preserved knowledge. By developing a contemporary visual concept and language, Pau encourages the viewer to contemplate how persistent narratives of memory, time and location are used to represent the identity of Indigenous people. His aim is not to desecrate what is sacred, but to better understand the people, their stories, relationship to place and the skills of those who are connected to his Torres Strait Island home.

Tommy Pau is a current member of the Board of the Cultural Centre-Townsville, Umi Arts in Cairns and a previous Board member of Umbrella Studio contemporary arts. Some of his significant life achievements include completing a Bachelor of Education and becoming a finalist in the Telstra Art Award. Pau is currently completing a degree in New Media at James Cook University. His work is in national collections in Australia and his works on paper were included in National and International exhibitions including Saltwater, Freshwater: Existence and Country and Western: Landscape reimagined 1988-2013.

Ad Wer: Story of the Stars from the Eastern Torres Strait is a new body of linocut print works by Tommy Pau examining constellations used by the Eastern Islanders of the Torres Strait and their science of astronomy.

The methodology of the Torres Strait Islanders has been careful observation over thousands of years. Each observation recorded and etched into their memories, life experiences passed down orally to the next generation. The Islanders compare these natural seasonal time stamps so they are able to predict future planning for agriculture and hunting.

Torres Strait Islanders observed the stars to govern their cosmos; to navigate, to plan, to plant, to study symbiotic relationships of space and time. This tells them when to hunt, plant seasonal foods and perform timely annual ceremonies. Tommy Pau sourced his information from casual conversations with elders present, elders past and ethnography works on the Torres Strait. The intent of this exhibition is to preserve, educate and provoke future studies on the science of stars Torres Strait Islanders used in their cosmology.

This knowledge is fast disappearing as the contemporary generations become more reliant on modern technology and methods.

Alfred Cort Haddon (1855-1940), anthropologist and academic from England, travelled to the Torres Strait in August 1888 to carry out ethnographic work. Haddon wrote about the Torres Strait Islander’s use of astronomy, noting a decline in knowledge, stating: "...it considered it my duty to record as much as was possible.” (Haddon, 1925, vol. 1, p.vi).

Pau found Haddon’s research invaluable while producing the artworks for this exhibition. This body of work also attempts to accurately match Western constellations with the Torres Strait Islander constellations for comparative study. There is an interesting connection of how cultures looks at the same objects and give their own explanations.

Pau tells his own account when he was a child of observing the sky:

"We were awakened early to observe the rest of the day’s events by looking at the sky for signs and begin our chores before going to school or meet with cousins and friends to play. As in, before days, old, men woke early to observe the sky and stars to tell what kind of day it will be. They also did this in the evening to predict what tomorrow will be like."

Gep [Sagittarius] 2015
Linocut on paper
76 x 57cm

Gep is know n as the sucker fish. Gep is the fish that was used to catch small turtles by latching a rope to its tail and throwing it near a turtle for it to latch itself to the turtle’s shell and be pulled in by the hunters. This artwork displays this method of hunting and also reflects the Western displays this method of hunting to the turtle’s shell and be pulled in by the hunters. This artwork also attempt to accurately match Western constellations with Torres Strait Islander constellations for comparative study. There is an interesting connection of how cultures looks at the same objects and give their own explanations.

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Tommy Pau
Richard Bell

Born: 1953 Charleville, Qld,
Lives and works: Brisbane, Qld

Kamilaroi, Kooma, Jiman and Gurang Gurang

The Aboriginal Tent Embassy was established to challenge the status, treatment, and rights of Aboriginal people in Australia. As a direct quotation of this activist strategy of protest, Bell’s own Embassy (2013) is at the centre of an ongoing body of artwork titled Imagining Victory. Bell’s makeshift embassy is a public space for imagining and articulating alternate futures and reflecting on or retelling stories of oppression and displacement.

Embassy comprises a large military-style tent, a series of painted placards, practical seating and AV facilities. The tent creates a performance space where issues ranging from sovereignty to solidarity and political action are addressed through conversations, screenings, public meetings, and performances. Embassy is included in the 2016 CIAF line up, was a feature of the 2015 Performa Biennial in New York, and will be included in the Sonsbeekpark exhibition ‘Sonsbeek ’16’ in the Netherlands.

For this Cairns presentation, Embassy will be a three day series of performances, screenings, and conversations that open out from histories linking performance with protest and the fight for fair representation and human rights. Bell has invited local activists, community leaders, musicians, and artists to participate in presentations, performances, and conversations


About the Artist

Richard Bell’s work interrogates taboo issues at the interface between cultures in Australia and challenges stereotyped ideas of Aboriginal culture and art. Represented in major collections in Australia/New Zealand, Bell is internationally recognised through numerous exhibitions, including European touring exhibition Arabats: art of the First Australians (1993); the 9th and 18th Biennales of Sydney (1992 and 2008); Australian Biennales (1993), Art Gallery of New South Wales, the Unfamiliar Territory, Adelaide Biennale of Australian Art (1998) and the 2008 survey of Bell’s practice was held at Location One, New York and a major touring exhibition was organised by the American Federation of the Arts in 2011, which toured North America in 2013.

Richard Bell has described himself as ‘an activist masquerading as an artist’.

Embassy is presented by the Institute of Modern Art in partnership with KitikArt ContemporarArts and Cairns Indigenous Art Fair.

Richard Bell


The black, yellow and red land rights flag was first flown at the Tent Embassy in 1972, uniting Aboriginal people from around the country. Many have described the Embassy as the birthplace of the final form of the Aboriginal Land Rights flag designed by Harold Thomas. Thomas reportedly responded to the request to have the black above the red, not the red over the black. As the late Billy Craigie stated, “otherwise they’ve already buried us, Brother!”

The concept of Aboriginal people needing an Embassy in our own country was genius and an assertion of our Sovereignty. The fact that it was to be a tent embassy that was almost instantly replaceable was also genius. That the first tent embassy was a beach umbrella? Gold!! There is, literally, symbolic overload within that whole event, which is why the 1972 Aboriginal Tent Embassy made the news in 82 countries. It was then that I decided to develop an artistic response that would pay homage and respect to all those involved in that momentous event.”


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The Tent Embassy started out with four protesters and a beach umbrella. On Australia Day in 1972, a number of Indigenous activists erected a beach umbrella on the lawns of Old Parliament House. Michael Anderson, Billy Craigie, Bertie Williams and Tony Koorie set up the protest and placed a sign that said ‘Embassy’ to represent a displaced nation. The activists were protesting against the McMahon Liberal Government’s statement in which land rights were rejected in favour of 50-year leases to Aboriginal communities (a similar protest in Perth, WA was staged at the same time).

The protesters issued a petition in February, which detailed a five point plan addressing Aboriginal ownership of existing reserves and settlements, preservation of all sacred sites, $6 million in compensation and full rights of statehood for the Northern Territory. A policeman on duty at the time reportedly asked the activists how long the protest would last. When told the Embassy would stay until Aboriginal Australians had land rights, the police officer replied “that could be forever”.

The Aboriginal Tent Embassy

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Richard Bell has described himself as ‘an activist masquerading as an artist’.

Embassy is presented by the Institute of Modern Art in partnership with KitikArt Contemporary Arts and Cairns Indigenous Art Fair.
This resource has been developed by REACH (Regional Excellence in Arts and Culture Hubs) and CIAF (Cairns Indigenous Art Fair) to assist teachers and other educators in their support of learning in the visual arts with an emphasis on contemporary Indigenous artists and their work.

What is REACH?

**Regional Excellence in Arts and Culture Hubs**

REACH is an Arts strategy (all strands: Visual Arts, Drama, Dance, Music and Media) being implemented by Education Queensland to connect and bring together people at primary and secondary schools all over FNQ (local, rural and remote) to:

- **Improve** Arts teacher practice by identifying existing strengths and skills and sharing curriculum and classroom practices
- **Identify** talented Arts students and improve their learning and career pathways
- **Develop** and run school-based excellence courses for students using Artists in Residence
- **Exhibit** and celebrate successful outcomes of Arts students
- **Build** up a range of resources to support practical implementation of Arts in schools throughout FNQ.

The REACH Goal

Focus on improving consistency, balance and excellence in Arts Education delivery to Indigenous students, non-Indigenous students and teachers including all phases of learning in rural and remote contexts.

Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF)

CIAF is a unique three-day event that merges an art market with a celebration of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

The Cairns Indigenous Art Fair is the only art fair in Australia to welcome commercial art galleries and Indigenous art centres to sell and showcase art by Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.

Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF) is committed to providing an ethical marketplace for the sale and purchase of Queensland Indigenous art and supporting the career development of Queensland Indigenous artists.

Since the birth of CIAF in 2009, the event has grown to be one of the most recognised Art Fairs / Festivals in Australia. Held 15 - 17 July, 2016, it is a unique event on Australia’s cultural calendar and an unparalleled celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, dance and music. [www.ciaf.com.au](http://www.ciaf.com.au)

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**Warning and notes on the publication**

Readers should be aware that this Education Resource may include names and images of deceased people that may cause sadness or distress to Aboriginal people.

The spelling of Aboriginal and Torres Strait words and names varies. They generally appear in the text according to the artists text or the conventions of accepted usage. In most instances, artists’ birth, language groups, clans and information has been supplied by the artists or their representative organisation.