

DEADLY DECADE

2 - 19 DECEMBER 2021



It's our Birthday

2011 - 2021



Blak Dot Gallery is proud to present:

DEADLY DECADE

Ten years ago we started our journey at the Lygon St gallery. Blak Dot has continued to expand and is now housed in Bulleke-bek (Brunswick) 33 Saxon St for the past six years. Our home at Siteworks and our ongoing alliance with the team on site has developed a relationship that is supportive of a First Nations-run space, this is a rare privilege within art institutions and councils.

Over the years, Blak Dot has championed the voices and stories of First Nations (Local and Global) creatives through over eighty exhibitions, events, workshops, residencies, and our well-loved annual Artist Market. We are proud to have been the launching ground for many great careers in the arts.

Blak Dot facilitates and supports First Nations peoples to re-define and evolve their contemporary practise through art and culture while honouring cultural protocols. Our ties with our network of First Nations artists across Victoria, Australia, and internationally showcase our commitment to providing ongoing opportunities and access to a professional gallery environment for our cultural communities.

One way of ensuring our autonomy and artistic expression as First Peoples is our valued partnerships with festivals including Next Wave, Midsumma, YIRRAMBOI, Channels Festival, Melbourne Fashion Festival and The Melbourne Fringe Festival. Blak Dot has won the award for Best Visual Arts for Fringe multiple times which illustrates the talent of our artists. Through gallery programming and festival relationships, Blak Dot provides opportunities to teach and mentor aspiring Indigenous curators and art workers.

Along with our exhibition and events programming, we also offer a dedicated critical Indigenous learning space, Blakademy. Blakademy is now home to five community collectives and many individual artists. Blakademy houses a large collection of global and local Indigenous and non-European diasporic texts (catalogues, monographs, anthologies, magazines) available for our communities. A dedicated Blak, and POC library, the first in Australia.

Next year, we look forward to our new partnership with the Sydney Road Music Festival who recognizes the importance of uplifting and holding space for First Nations musicians and artists.

Blak Dot and Siteworks will be under redevelopment in the coming year, as the gallery and Site undergo structural changes which will put the gallery and its First Nations community members at the front of the newly developed space. We look forward to working alongside Moreland City Council and Siteworks to ensure that this space will continue to be a dedicated First Nations community meeting place.

We acknowledge that Blak Dot would not be what it is today without its many volunteers and arts community. We are grateful for the immense effort, dedication, work, love, and care they've put into the space. As Naarm/Birrarang-ga's only Indigenous-run artist-run gallery, we recognize that it's our community who makes this gallery a culturally safe exhibiting space as well as a hub for First Nations mobs. We aim that in the future, the gallery, and site will continue to grow with the community. We also acknowledge our allies and supporters who have stood in solidarity with us throughout these years.

As we celebrate a deadly decade of Blak Dot and First Nations excellence we thank everyone who has put their heart and soul into this space. We will continue to practice self-determination, reciprocity, and respectful relationships with all community groups who walk through our doors. We will also continue to support vibrant contemporary First Peoples art and center our cultural and artistic leadership.

We look forward to discovering and sharing great art and artists with you for another decade as Blak Dot Gallery continues to showcase the outstanding talent of our First Nations artists.

Blak Dot Gallery acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we work, live and create: the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people and Elders past and present of the Kulin nations, Naarm (Melbourne)



TextaQueen

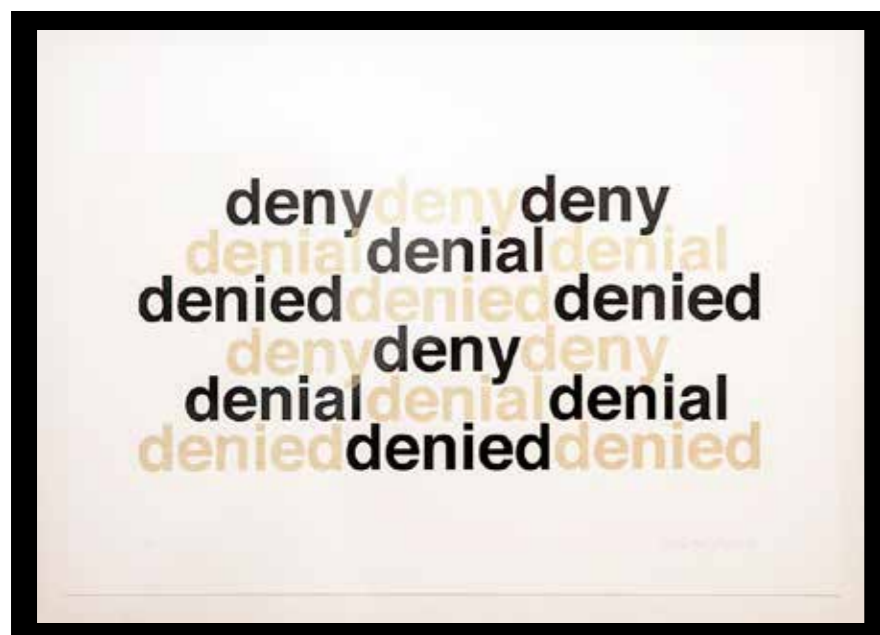
Iso((d)e(f))lation, 2021
Synthetic polymer paint on plywood.



Amani Tia

Lima-sefulu, 2019
Acrylic on canvas 91 x 61cm

Titled "lima-sefulu", the Samoan word for fifty. The work is a self-portrait and an iteration of a photo taken from a holiday to New York City in 2019 to commemorate and mark his 50th birthday. Like so many, New York City still continues to inspire Amani's creativity. The photo was taken at the main concourse of the WTC (World Transport) Transport Hub, Manhattan NYC. Amani happens to be wearing a Blakdot T-shirt so it's only fitting that the portrait celebrates two significant milestones.



Roberta Rich

Nie Deny Nie, 2016
Serigraph on paper,
edition of 5
44 x 58cm



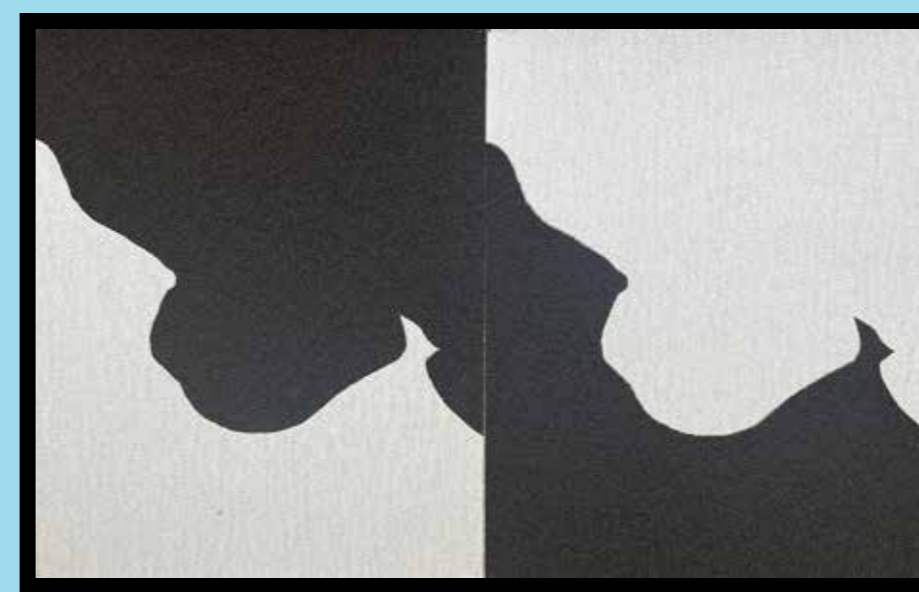
Sonja Hodge

A Wreath for my Old Ones II, 2021
Hand-coloured linocut, a/p, u/s 56 x 81.5cm

This artwork is called "A Wreath for My Old Ones", in honour of our Ancestors. This wreath is also for the Elders in my life and from my own mob, but also for the Elders in the wider Koorie community. Our Elders deserve our utmost respect and love, especially after lockdown. They are the generations that have fought for the rights we now have today. This wreath is for those gone and still with us.

Tamsen Hopkinson

Utu Aunoa, 2021
black and white sandpaper 23 x 28cm



Kirsten Lyttle

Unceded, 2021

Gilcee Print on Canson Platine
Fibre Rag (310gsm)
42cm x 59.4cm

Taken with a long exposure and a lit sparkler, I stood on the banks of the Merri Creek near where I live and wrote the words in the air "Unceded". The long exposure recorded the moving sparkler and not the presence of my own body. As a Māori woman, I am conscious that these lands that I live and work and make on are not mine and that the local Aboriginal peoples have had, and continue to have, a unique relationship to this place. These lands have had story, song, ceremonies, dance, and art both practiced and renewed for tens of thousands of years. Always was, always will be, the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri people, the custodians of this place, Merri Yaluk (Merri Creek).



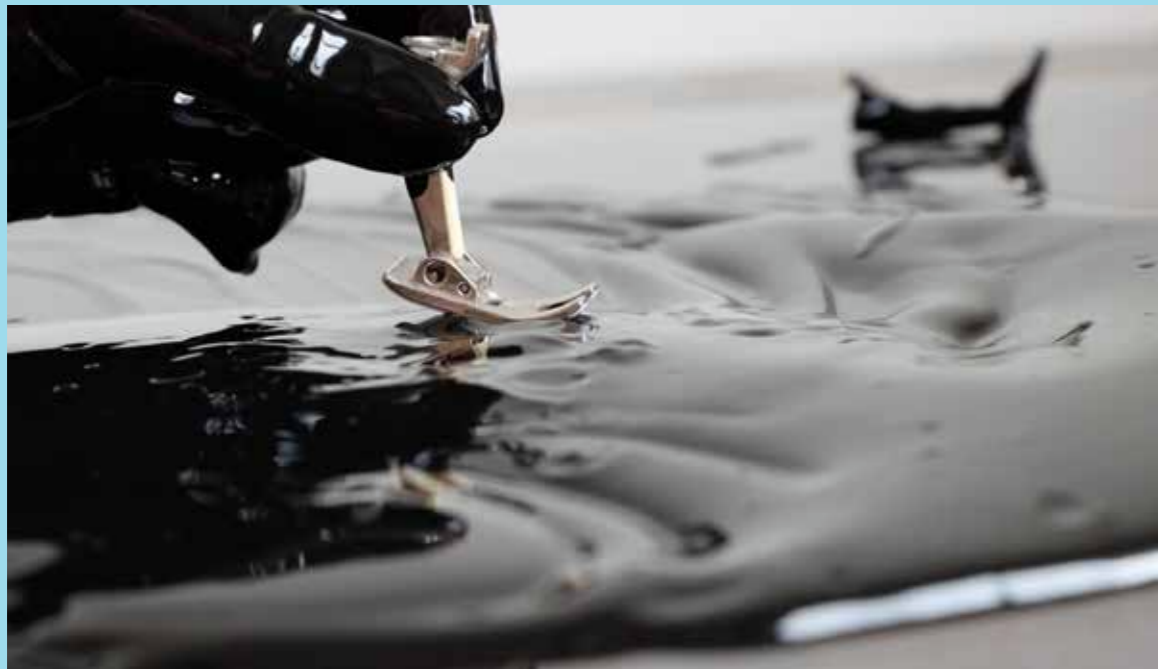
Lena Becerra

Frünce

Video, 6 mins

Frunce is defined as a set of small, parallel pleats.

In this project, Becerra situates objects of clay, bio plastics, resin and metal objects. The work is an attempt to throw a few 'sticks' in the patriarchal, colonial and capitalist wheel, questioning the significance of that to which we are attached – including our own skin. My pieces try to rub the complex limits of inhabiting a striated social fabric. In this simulation of cut, I explore everything that does not end up being defined or fit into imposed structures. Muscular shapes and thin threads are put into tension. Pieces of my body and scraps of skin, narratives of vulnerability, perhaps could be conceived as scales that I expose in order to address new questions: what is this soft, flexible and adaptable mass made of? Is it possible to cultivate pleats in a world that worships silence?"



Katherine Gailer

(aka Katira)

Grounding, 2021

Oil and acrylic on linen
51 x 51cm

We sit in stillness

To grow roots, so we can ground

To reconnect to the rhythm of the land

One Heartbeat at a time

We remember who we are

A thread in the weaving of life



Kait James

Language has been murdered, 2021

Wool, cotton & felt, on printed cotton
46 x 73 cm

As a proud Wadawurrung woman, Kait James's work poses questions relating to identity, perception and our knowledge of Australia's Indigenous communities.

Using techniques including Punch Needling, she embroiders kitsch found materials. Her current work focuses on Aboriginal Calendar Tea Towels from the 1970-80's that generalise and stereotype her culture; subverting them with familiar pop-cultural references, indigenous issues relevant to that year, as well as the present day to reflect her contemporary perspective.

Through the use of humour and vivid colours, James addresses the way colonial culture has dominated Australia's history, how Australia and the world perceives our First Nations' People and her personal reflections on her Indigenous heritage.

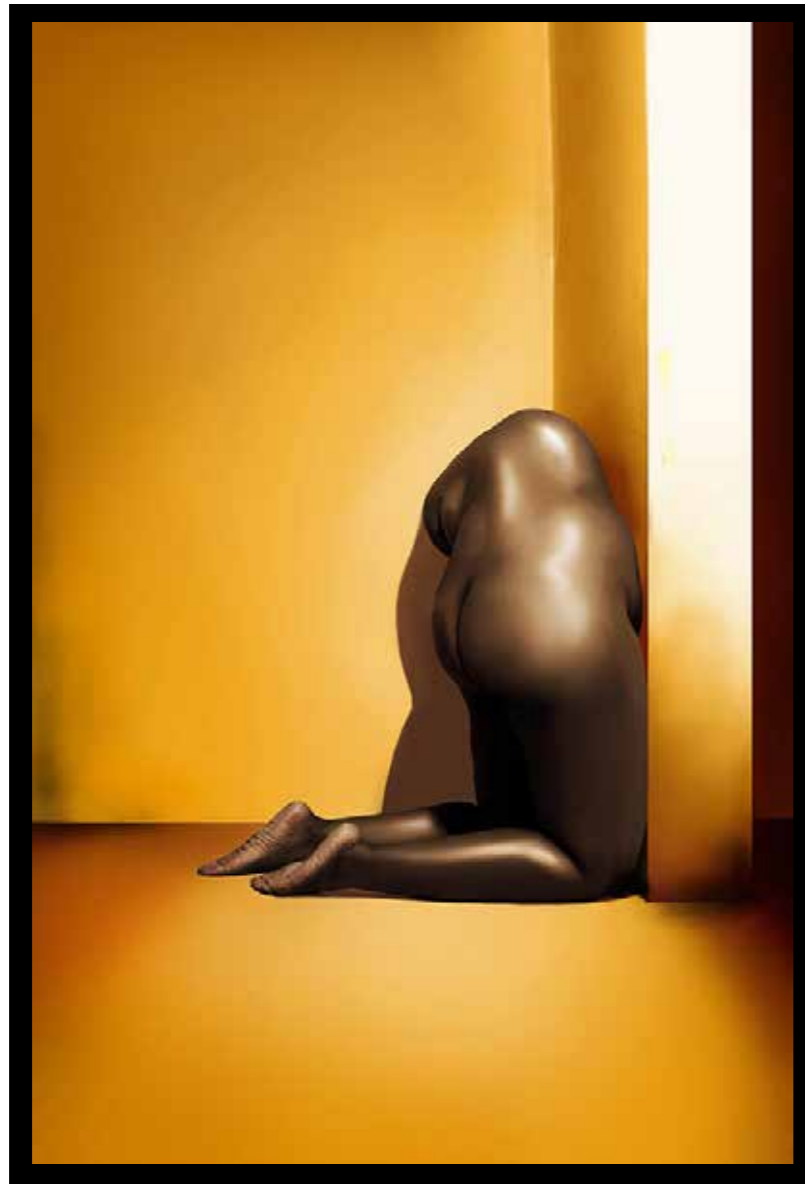


Monique Gilpin

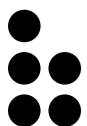
Porcelain Disposition, 2014
Digital prints on pvc 1/5

The Porcelain Series is a dialogue between the concepts of stability and instability and also the traditional and contemporary realities of life. Born from my nomadic experiences within the last six years, my yearning for stability is embodied within the exploration of the human form in a three-dimensional space. Every minute of our lives is spent in physical and psychological dialogue with the space around us and the contorted bodies within these oversaturated three-dimensional spaces have been transmogrified towards semi-abstraction mimicking hard ceramic surfaces.

The porcelain figurines in many older Jamaican homes seem to be ever-present and are symbolic of a stability that the younger generation of Jamaicans no longer seem to be able to achieve. The contortions and attempted transformation of the bodies represent the psychological struggle to achieve this stability.



Porcelain Disposition, 2014
Digital prints on pvc 2/5



Gina Ropiha

Koanga (delight), 2021
Woodblock print, pom poms, thread
100 x 48cm



Kareen Adam

Friends and Lovers (Aa-ilaa), 2021
Posca on used dinner plates (4 plates)
Diameter 24cm

This series of plates are part of a growing family of plates that depict pieces of rocks and corals. The word for family in Dhivehi language (Maldivian) is Aa-ilaa. Corals and rocks are my visual cue for grounding and home. The first plates I drew mapped my immediate family.

I'm making more plates to symbolise the relationships we have with different people. They may be family through blood, or become family over time, regardless of boundaries of culture, gender, status or faith.

These used dinner plates are perfect objects to map relationships on – they symbolise sharing, comfort and nourishment, a simple object that connects us with others. The fact that these were previously used by someone else makes it more meaningful for me.

Lily Laita

Va i ta - the great divide, 2016
Acrylic on cardboard 29.7 x 42 cm

...considering that theoretically 'colour' doesn't exist (as it's a refraction of light), I suppose I use it as a tone or 'shade' to both differentiate forms and create ambiguity of space.

The work is part of a continuing series (started in 1993) on 'va i ta', referencing two pre-Christian roads in Samoa (the man's side and the woman's side) and sustainability of customary practise (tia seu Lupe and ifoga)...



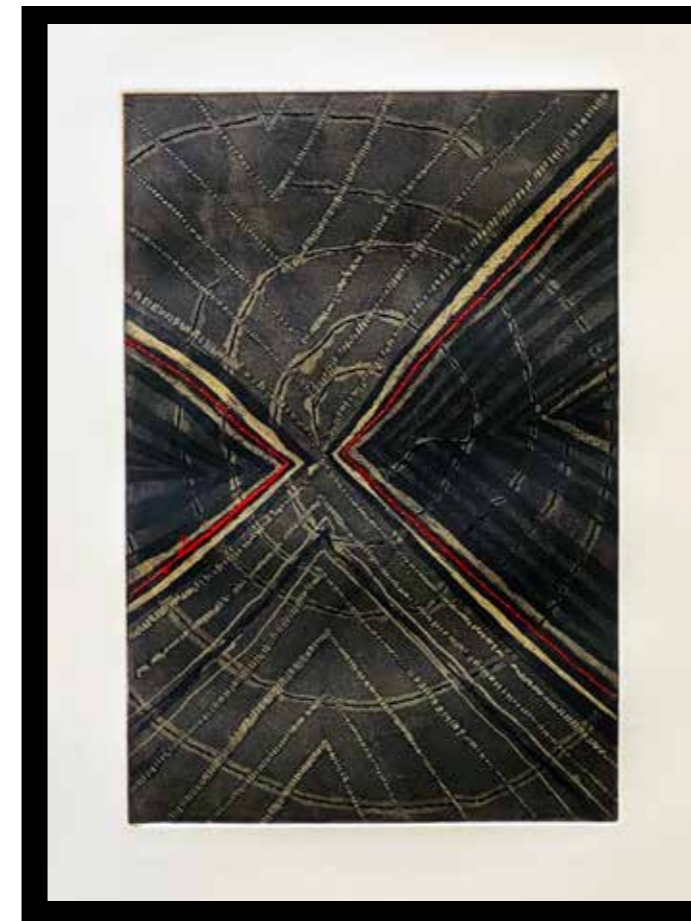
Lisa Waup

in between two mountains, 2021
Two-plate etching on cotton rag paper,
ink, cotton thread.
58 x 38 cm

"in between two mountains details a place I find myself - where do I belong?"

At times I feel I don't belong anywhere except the place I am standing on at any present time. I find myself placed in between two mountains. The place I was brought up in and the ancestral connections I have been in search of over many years.

The 'Hidden Generation' as Noongar author Claire G. Coleman, so eloquently states in her book *Lies Damned Lies* (2021), describes how this is an unofficial terminology in governmental frameworks. It refers specifically to children who have lost culture due to the motivations of their parents to ultimately protect them. History and connections become blurred and hidden - how do you find something (information/connection) that has been hidden?"





Michael Jalaru Torres & Veisia Tonga (Collaboration)

Kakala Tapu, 2021

Digital Print

Ilford Smooth Cotton Rag

112cm x 229cm

Edition of 1

Kakala Tapu is A Sacred Flower, which speaks of the sacred flowers that were gifted by the Goddess from their garden in Pulotu. We honour the gods by adorning our bodies with them. Kakala Tapu is also a metaphor for the Sacred Feminine, the female form. In Tongan Legend a woman's body is Sacred. It is the holder of Mana, the life force, and this Mana exists in the Manava (womb) our first home. The meaning of Manava is Sacred Space.

The female body is made sacred because it holds the womb, the life-giver, our first plane of existence. Women are cherished because of this understanding

This collaboration in a proof of concept to combine various First Nations artist with fine Art photographer Michael Jalaru Torres, working on merging themes and styles and working remotely these works will shed light on past and present tales of First Nations people around the world.

Supported by: First Nations residency program in partnership with Moreland Council & Blak Dot Gallery

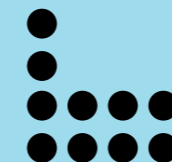
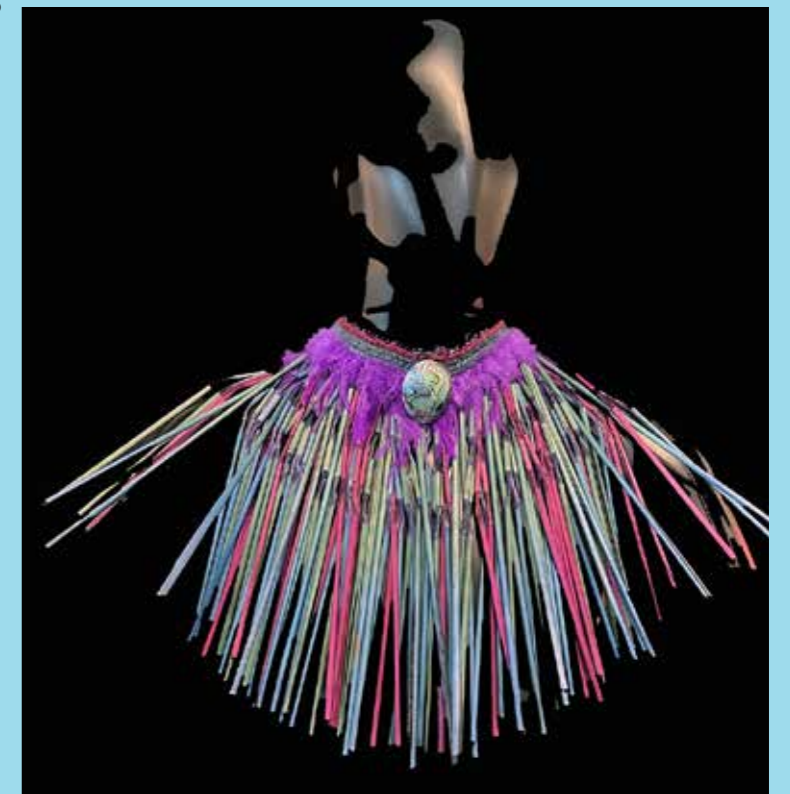
Tane Te Manu McRoberts

Nga wai e rere o Hine Moana
(The waters that flow of Hine Moana)

Harakeke (NZ Flax), Jute, Hen Feathers, Commercial dyes.

Tāheitia- Neck piece.

The leaves for this tāheitia were harvested in Kaiwaka NZ, outside of Otamatea Marae. The name and colours being a representative of the life by the sea type area that Kaiwaka is.



A Room of One's Own - My feminist manifesto

I'd moved continents, settled into Kulin Nations country just as Australia's legal fiction of terra nullius was overturned, and hope for a new nation was stymied, stunted, bludgeoned by the fury of anti-political correctness campaigns. Howard. Hanson. Racist rhetoric. For the next four years, I graffitied my desk, the walls of my bedroom, to write myself into existence.

I live here, not somewhere else, but here.

But where was here? I kept asking. Who am I in this new home Australia?

Where I live, whether I know or care whose land I'm on, can mean whether my good-migrant-conscience-model-minority-citizen is complicit in reinventing white Australia's invasion history.

By Lian Low

Lian Low

A Room of One's Own - My feminist manifesto

Audio, poetry reading, 6:15 mins

A version of this poem was first published in *Wild Tongue Vol 1* (Edited by Timmah Ball and Azja Kulpińska)

*Kim Busty Beatz Bowers' quote is from Candy Bowers' essay in *The Lifted Brow 'Gone Daddy Gone: Brown Girl Seeking...'*



Tama Sharman

Untitled listening, 2019

Linocut on paper, 2/5

Untitled is hard to place but I can describe these works as trusting yourself and listening to the spirit world respecting undocumented knowing, oral culture and uncertainty



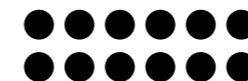
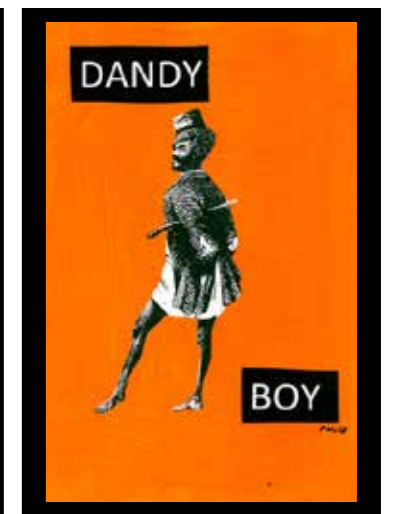
Peter Waples-Crowe

Dandy Boy, 2013

Mixed media on paper 15 x 10cm

Coconut, 2013

Mixed media on paper 15 x 10cm



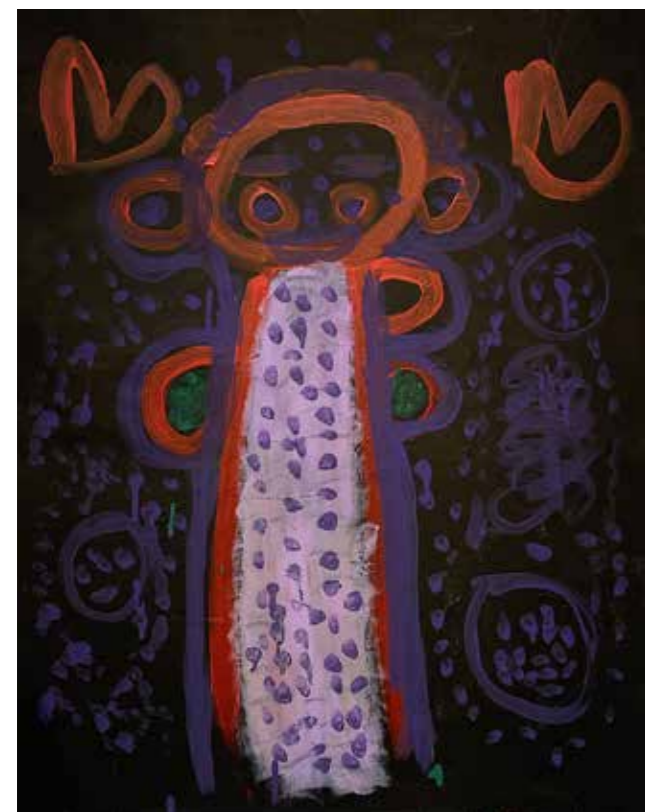
Frances Tapueluelu

My Ancestor My Self, 2021

Fabric, sequins, ngatu (tapa cloth), ink, acrylic paint, glitter, pearls, wire, paper and wool 5 ft, 9 circumference, 101.6cm

I have struggled to make work for the past 8 months or so I have had bouts of anxiety stress tension fatigue and a sense of isolation however I have always felt the presence of an ancestor near which has made me feel that I can get through anything.

This work invokes the presence of my ancestor by using my own body measurements to create this sculpture. The bird is my ancestors' messenger underneath her is a light in the shape of a white hibiscus and the headdress is black coral with a galaxy of starfish moving through it which is a common sight in Tonga in the seas of Tonga.



Annie Moors

Self portrait, 2019

Acrylic on canvas 76 x 61cm

Annie paints with a highly developed technique, which allows her to express complex themes and subject matter of personal and cultural significance, often featuring text in combination with portraiture. Annie was born with down syndrome and an intellectual disability. Born in Darwin, Annie grew up traveling between Milingimbi and Darwin and navigating two cultures. Much of Annie's artistic practice is related to her family and Country in Milingimbi.

Annie's work probes the depths of existential experience relating to dreams, love, loss, family and Yolŋu culture.



GALLERY 2

Léuli Eshraghi

alofisā (2020), from the re(cul)naissance series (2020-21)

Light blue glass, neon ring, aluminum frame, 2m x 2m

Re(cul)naissance, meaning stepping back, and rebirth through the end in French, is a ceremonial framework within which to honour precolonial human-animal kinship and cycles of life, pleasure, connection, survival and thriving before death and the afterlife, as well as the end of Gregorian shame-time. Activated through performance and contemplation, this work requires audience interrogation of subjects and positions rendered contentious – Indigenous pleasure, desire, softness, hardness, embodied knowledges predating militourist and missionary colonisation – outside of the architecture holding them. Filtered into the installation, natural light is tempered within the space to reverse the notion of the 'Coming of the Light,' that masks violent evangelisation undertaken by Euro-American missionaries around the world. Indigenous kinships including multiple genders and sexualities, ceremonial performance practices and visual cultural expressions are returned from Western perceptions of savagery, deviancy and 'Darkness'. Commissioned by the Biennale of Sydney, courtesy of the artist.



Léuli Eshraghi

re(cul)naissance (2020)

HD video, 3:29 mins

With Sereima Adimate, Tommy Misa, Kiliati Pahulu, Angela Tiatia, garments by Babylikestopony. Edition of 3, 1 AP

Commissioned by the Biennale of Sydney, courtesy of the artist.



Acknowledgements

Fringe Dwellers - Occupying and Reclaiming the Margin

A community response to the provocation “Who’s afraid of the Public space” As Indigenous and othered members of marginalized groups, ‘Public Space’ is a place of danger. In response we have been forced to reclaim and occupy small pockets, where we gather collectively for safety.

Blak Dot Gallery and the grounds it occupies has become one such space over the years. Our outdoor gallery space invites Indigenous, Global First Nations, and POC communities to engage, respond and activate the space with temporary installations that demarcates an occupation, a stance of solidarity with Indigenous mob. It is often in the margins where innovation happens. We will activate our occupied public space by sitting together collectively to do workshops, build, weave, dance, perform, in honour of our understanding of Public Space being a space where we situate and enact the collective.

During the lockdowns, our community has become disconnected, through forced separation. For us culture and artistic practice is a source of strength which has unfortunately been disrupted. ‘Fringe Dwellers - Occupying and Reclaiming the Margins’ will enable our groups to gather and celebrate creativity and connection.

Blak Dot Gallery is an exhibition and community space that exhibits and elevates the creativity of First Nations and POC creatives living on the lands of the Kulin Nation (Melbourne).



Blak Dot Gallery are pleased to partner with ACCA for Who’s Afraid of Public Space?, a multifaceted project exploring the role of public culture, the contested nature of public space, and the character and composition of public life.

Engaging contemporary art and cultural practices to consider critical ideas as to what constitutes public culture and to ask who is public space for, Who’s Afraid of Public Space? is inspired by and seeks to animate recent global debates related to the incursion of private interests in the public sphere, the politics of land and place, and patterns of urban transformation, gentrification and technological change.



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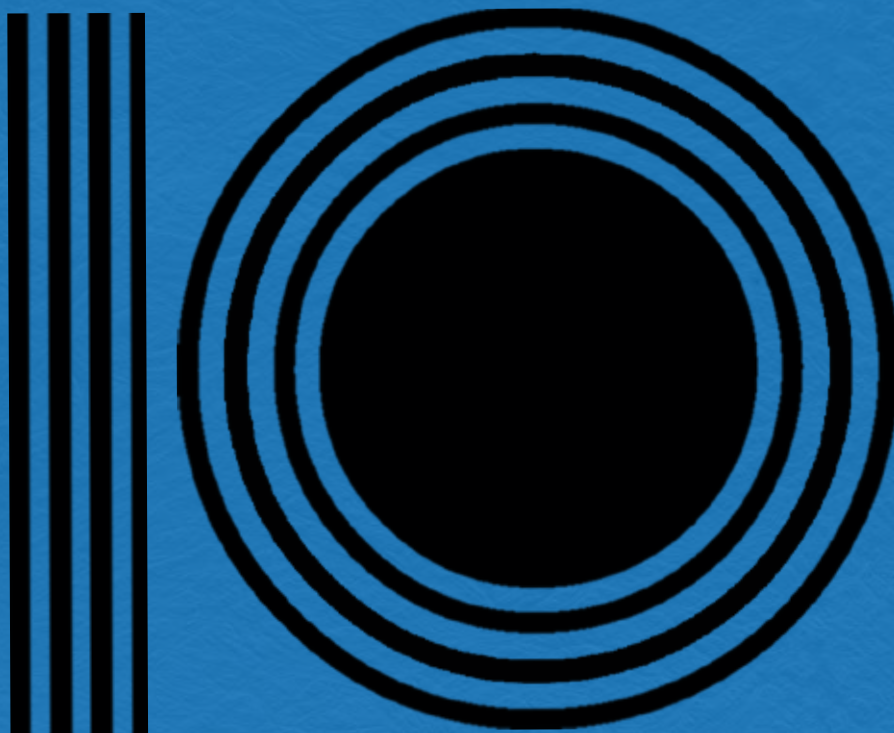
Indigenous Languages and Arts Program (ILA), Creative Victoria, Merri-bek Council, Arts Merri-bek and Blak Dot Gallery.



Australian Government

Indigenous Languages and Arts





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2021 | DECEMBER | EDITION | 27