



art+ soul

A personal journey into the world of Aboriginal art



A **STUDY GUIDE** BY MARGUERITE O'HARA,
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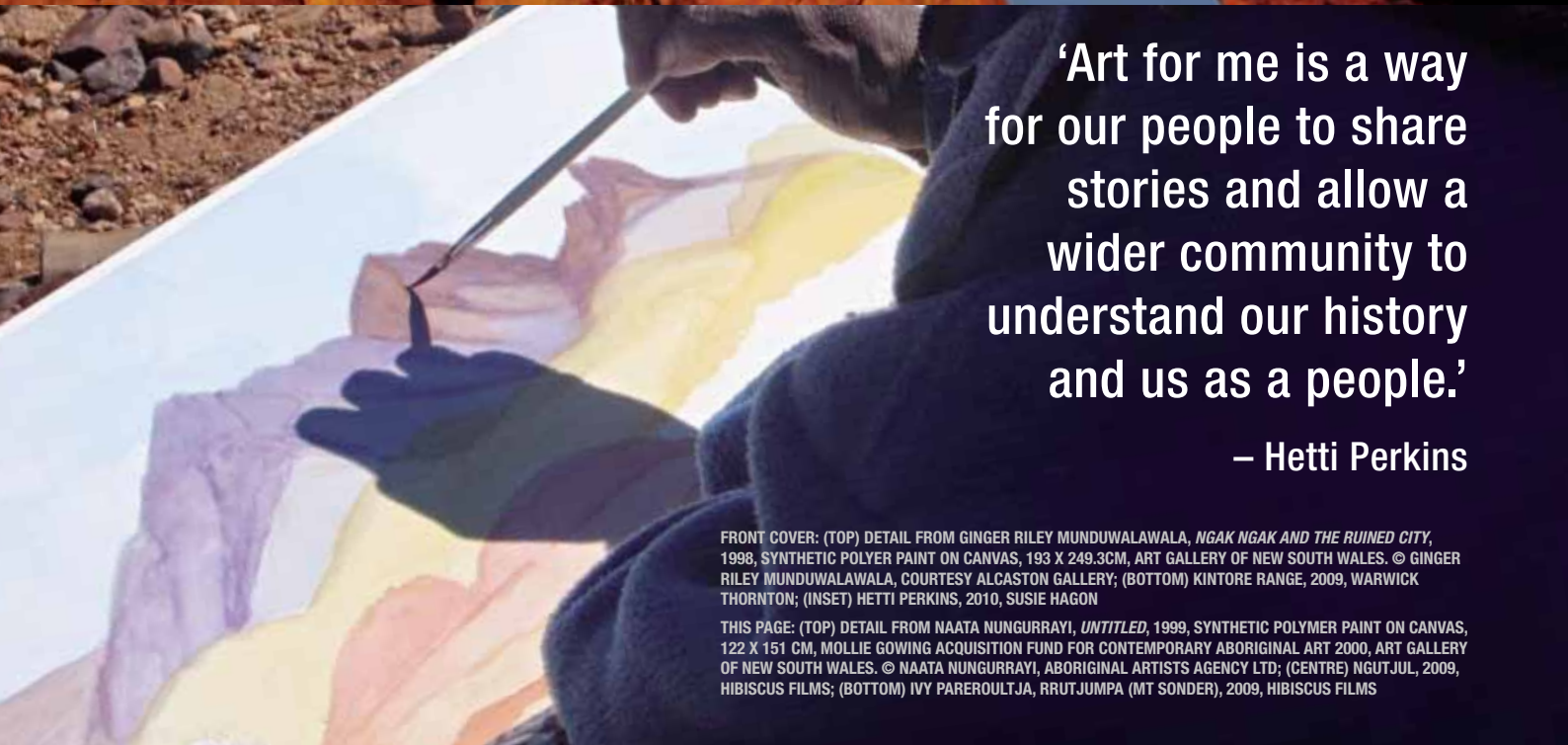


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**‘Art for me is a way
for our people to share
stories and allow a
wider community to
understand our history
and us as a people.’**

– Hetti Perkins

FRONT COVER: (TOP) DETAIL FROM GINGER RILEY MUNDUWALAWALA, *NGAK NGAK AND THE RUINED CITY*, 1998, SYNTHETIC POLYMER PAINT ON CANVAS, 193 X 249.3CM, ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES. © GINGER RILEY MUNDUWALAWALA, COURTESY ALCASTON GALLERY; (BOTTOM) KINTORE RANGE, 2009, WARWICK THORNTON; (INSET) HETTI PERKINS, 2010, SUSIE HAGON

THIS PAGE: (TOP) DETAIL FROM NAATA NUNGURRAYI, *UNTITLED*, 1999, SYNTHETIC POLYMER PAINT ON CANVAS, 122 X 151 CM, MOLLIE GOWING ACQUISITION FUND FOR CONTEMPORARY ABORIGINAL ART 2000, ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES. © NAATA NUNGURRAYI, ABORIGINAL ARTISTS AGENCY LTD; (CENTRE) NGUTJUL, 2009, HIBISCUS FILMS; (BOTTOM) IVY PAREROUULTJA, RRUTJUMPA (MT SONDER), 2009, HIBISCUS FILMS



INTRODUCTION

GULUMBU YUNUPINGU, YIRRKALA, 2009, HIBISCUS FILMS

DVD AND WEBSITE

art + soul is a groundbreaking three-part television series exploring the range and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and culture. Written and presented by Hetti Perkins, senior curator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, and directed by Warwick Thornton, award-winning director of *Samson & Delilah* (2009), the series offers a fascinating tour of the history and infinite variety of the work of Indigenous artists. At the same time, *art + soul* provides a cultural and political history of how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have represented their country and their culture visually. Over three episodes we meet many artists from all over Australia who talk about their art-making practice.

This series offers an opportunity to engage with some of Australia's leading Indigenous artists, following Perkins as she visits remote communities and inner city studios. *art + soul* moves from warm, personal and humorous encounters between Perkins and the artists to intelligent and engaging analyses of each artist's work. The artists featured in *art + soul* represent the diversity of the Indigenous nations of Australia; each was chosen for the strength and individuality they bring to their particular art-making practice. They embody the myriad art forms and shared concepts that bind Indigenous artists and their communities together.

Each episode of *art + soul* is structured around one of three themes – 'home and away', 'dreams and nightmares' and 'bitter and sweet' – which provides a focus for engagement with the ideas explored. In addition, fifteen webisodes, or

short films – five for each of the three episodes – have been produced. These webisodes, which explore a selection of the artists and their work in more detail, will be available on the *art + soul* website <<http://www.abc.net.au/arts/artandsoul>>.

art + soul is an absolutely compelling series. Through 'home and away', 'dreams and nightmares' and 'bitter and sweet', Perkins traverses the country and the heart and soul of Indigenous art.

EXHIBITION

Many of the artworks featured in *art + soul* are part of the Art Gallery of New South Wales collection and make up the exhibition *art + soul* in the Yiribana Gallery (August 2010 – June 2011). The AGNSW website offers information on the artists and their artworks and will screen the fifteen webisodes made in conjunction with *art + soul*. There are additional short films on this website, including interviews with artists from the series. For more information on *art + soul* the exhibition, see <<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/exhibitions/art-soul>>.

BOOK

To accompany the documentary series Hetti Perkins, in association with The Miegunyah Press in Melbourne, has published a 300-page book also titled *art + soul*. This book, featuring essays, colour plates and artists' interviews and biographies, presents Perkins' journey through the documentary series and across Australia.



WARWICK THORNTON, IVY PAREROULTJA AND LENIE NAMATJIRA, RRUTJUMPA (MT SONDER), *ART + SOUL* PRODUCTION STILL, 2009, HIBISCUS FILMS

CURRICULUM LINKS

art + soul offers an enriching and enlightening introduction to the history of Indigenous culture and art practice in Australia and is relevant for upper primary, secondary and tertiary students who are studying Visual Arts, Australian History and Politics and/or Aboriginal Studies.

An engagement with *art + soul* is relevant for teachers and students of

- Visual Arts
- Aboriginal Studies
- Australian Studies
- History
- Politics
- Geography

The series offers a new way of looking at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art. It gives students an opportunity to develop an appreciation for the complexity, strength and beauty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and an understanding of the diversity of Indigenous art practice. *art + soul* also provides a detailed insight into the art-making practice and processes of leading Indigenous artists while teaching students about the personal histories of Indigenous people in Australia – the effects of colonisation, the ways in which people have survived the colonial frontier, and how artists, since first contact, have expressed their continuing connection to country, their language, laws and culture. Students will be able to investigate how these ideas and experiences are represented, to learn about the relationship between the artist, the artwork, their world

and the audience, to develop an awareness of the cultural, environmental and historic context in which the work was created and to develop informed judgements about a range of artworks.

KEY CONCEPTS

LANGUAGE GROUPS

Indigenous Australia – both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander – comprises a network of communities commonly referred to as nations or language groups. Each group is defined by language, even if today the language is not widely spoken. Over 250 different language groups¹ and their respective countries exist across the Australian continent and outer islands and collectively constitute the world's oldest living culture. Each language group is a sovereign nation, uniquely identified by its connection to country. Indigenous Australians are custodians of their respective homelands – this responsibility has been handed down through countless generations. The colonial legal fiction of 'terra nullius', or 'empty land', is redundant evident in that each language group across Australia possesses and respects communal title to their country under Aboriginal customary law.² This connection with country is the foundation of Indigenous Australia, providing cultural and political strength.

There are several maps of Aboriginal Australia available online such as David Horton's 1996 map at <http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/corporate/files/pages/aboriginal_aust/ab_aust_full.pdf>.



RUSTY PETERS, SPRINGVALE STATION, 2009, HIBISCUS FILMS

RESPECTING CULTURAL PROTOCOLS

As these programs contain images and voices of people who have or may have passed away, a warning text appears at the start of each episode to ensure that viewers are aware of what they may see and hear. You may already be familiar with this disclaimer: 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewers are advised that this program contains images and voices of people who have passed away.'

This warning adheres to a common Indigenous protocol of not circulating images and names of people who have passed away while the community is mourning their loss. Cultural protocols can be researched at <http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/32368/Visual_arts_protocol_guide.pdf>.

THE DREAMING

The era of Indigenous creation(s) is often termed the 'dreaming' or the 'dreamtime', terms first coined by Frank Gillen (1875–1899) and the eminent anthropologist Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer (1860–1929) during their field work with Arrernte/Aranda people in Central Australia, when they translated the Arrernte/Aranda word 'Altyerrenge'.³ These Euro-centric terms are inherently problematic as they fail to recognise the complex reality and nuances of Indigenous cultural belief systems. The word 'dreaming' implies a dream, a delusion or a non-reality, while 'dreamtime' implies a set period or a beginning, a static point in time, and none of these definitions are relevant. Creation stories continue as an ongoing and integral part of Indigenous society in the same way that, for Christians, God is responsible for creation yet still plays a vital role in everyday life.

When referring to the era of creation, the terminology used by each language group is more relevant because it best encompasses the ongoing cultural reality of ancestral

creation, knowledge and spirituality. Language words for creation include Wangarr in Arnhem Land, Tjukurrpa and Altyerr in Central Australia, and Ngarranggarni in the East Kimberley. Individual language groups' creation and connection to country is continually celebrated and enriched through sacred and secular social activities such as ceremony, song, story and art.

COUNTRY

The term 'country' in Indigenous Australia is all-encompassing and includes land and sea, the sun and moon, plants and animals, fire and water, all of which have been created by the epic journeys and actions of the ancestors. Country, the physical and spiritual landscape, is the touchstone for Indigenous Australians' cultural belief system, and the physical topography of the landscape connects people to their ancestors. Country, infused with this sacred ancestral life force, continually determines culture and identity. People's relationship to the ancestors determines responsibilities to country, culture and community.

SELF-DETERMINATION

This term refers to the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development. During the 1970s Indigenous Australians began to assert their right to self-determination, this meant being directly involved with and responsible for local government, policy control and direction, and the implementation of action. This shift in Indigenous affairs saw the emergence of community-owned and -operated organisations, including community centres within the arts industry.

For an explanation of other terms used in the series, see the glossary on page 30 of this study guide.



ABOVE: HETTI PERKINS, ROAD TO WALUNGURRU (KINTORE), 2009, HIBISCUS FILMS

BELOW: WARWICK THORNTON, ROAD TO WALUNGURRU (KINTORE), *ART + SOUL* PRODUCTION STILL, 2009, HIBISCUS FILMS

HETTI PERKINS' AND WARWICK THORNTON'S BIOGRAPHIES

Hetti Perkins is an Eastern Arrernte and Kalkadoon woman from Mparntwe (Alice Springs) and is the daughter of political activist Charles Perkins and sister of filmmaker Rachel Perkins (*First Australians*, *Bran Nue Dae* [2009]). Perkins established her curatorial practice at Aboriginal Arts Australia's Sydney gallery and Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative in Chippendale, Sydney and has become a leading curator and writer of Indigenous art. She is currently the senior curator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. In this role Perkins manages the permanent collection and stages major exhibitions of national significance including *Papunya Tula: genesis and genius*, *Crossing Country: the alchemy of western Arnhem Land art*, and *Half Light: portraits from Black Australia*. Perkins has also worked on key international projects including the co-curation of the Australian Pavilion at the 1997 Venice Biennale and the Australian contribution to the Musée du Quai Branly, Paris, in which the work of eight contemporary Aboriginal artists was incorporated into the walls and ceilings of one of the new buildings. As the writer and presenter of *art + soul*, Perkins shares her knowledge of, and passion for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and reflects on how the merging of past and present, tradition and change, is a key aspect to contemporary Indigenous art.

Warwick Thornton is a Kaytej filmmaker from Mparntwe (Alice Springs) where he grew up and worked as a DJ at the

Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA). Thornton was awarded a media traineeship and learned many of his skills on the job. Later he studied cinematography at the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS) in Sydney and went on to work as a director and cinematographer. Thornton's films and documentaries are characterised by their candid insights into the contemporary lives of Indigenous Australia. His first short drama was *Payback* (1996) and he followed it up with *Mimi* (2002). The half-hour *Green Bush* (2005) and *Nana* (2008) won major prizes at the Berlin International Film Festival. In 2009 Thornton wrote, directed and shot the feature film *Samson & Delilah* which won the Camera d'Or at Cannes in May of that year and was one of nine films nominated in the category for foreign language films at the Academy Awards in 2010. As director and cinematographer of *art + soul*, Thornton created a relaxed and informal environment to give audiences an intimate view of artists and their unique practices.





WARWICK THORNTON, MELVILLE ISLAND, *ART + SOUL* PRODUCTION STILL, 2009, HIBISCUS FILMS

PRE-VIEWING QUESTIONS

What do you know about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art? Name any artists whose work you have seen. What sort of places do you expect to see art?

What can art tell us? Why do artists make art? How do historians use artworks from earlier times and different places to learn about history?

Consider the relationships of the themes of *art + soul* – ‘home and away’, ‘dreams and nightmares’ and ‘bitter and sweet’. Are they opposites? Or, do they relate to each other in a symbiotic way? What do they tell you about the series?

Research the Australian Indigenous political movements of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Describe self-determination and the role that activist Charles Perkins played in leading this movement. Create a timeline using images of key events, places and people and annotate it with text.

Look at the role art centres like Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative play in the establishment and foundation of artists and art workers careers, like Hetti Perkins, Brenda L Croft and Avril Quail.

Analyse Hetti Perkins’ curatorial practice. Research exhibitions and projects she has curated both internationally and nationally, including exhibitions at Boomalli. Create a chart that lists and details the types of exhibitions and their ideas, including group and solo exhibitions, artists and their regions, media and concepts. Write a profile of Perkins’ curatorial practice, experiences and achievements.

Research the role community-based communication organisations like Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA), Koori Mail, Gadigal Information Service and National Indigenous Television (NITV) play in Indigenous communities. Discuss in class the important role of communications within Aboriginal communities.

Watch Warwick Thornton’s other films including *Green Bush*, *Nana* and *Samson & Delilah*. List the commonalities within these films. Are Thornton’s subjects familiar, popular, general and/or intimate? Consider how personal stories and scripts affect the success of the film. Write a brief synopsis of a film or draw a storyboard for a film using a personal experience or one from your family.

POST-VIEWING QUESTIONS

What does showing images of the artist’s country mean for you, the viewer? How does this enrich your understanding of the artwork? What importance does Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art have for all Australians?

Consider Hetti Perkins’ role as a curator. How might her job differ from that of a curator of Renaissance, Egyptian or American art? Consider the difference it makes to meet and develop relationships with artists.

Select an individual artist whose work appears in *art + soul*. Choose an artwork or series that you admire and/or would like to know more about. It may be paintings, photographs, sculpture or weaving. Using whatever resources you think are most appropriate, investigate this work and the context in which it was created. Explain which of the artists work you found most interesting and why.

What is an art centre? What are some of the advantages in developing art centres in the communities where the artists in *art + soul* live? Why is it important for artists to be free and able to make their artwork?

In this series, the audience meets the artists through following the presenter, Hetti Perkins, into their homes, studios and communities. Perkins has an established relationship with each artist and the interaction is informal. What does this style of presentation bring to our understanding of the artists' lives and their art-making practice? How would it be different if presented by a stranger to the artists or by a voice-over?

Imagine you are a television critic for your local newspaper. Write a review of the series *art + soul* in which you introduce the key people, analyse the ideas explored, and describe its structure, how it is shot and the way in which each episode builds on the ideas and history explored in the preceding episode. Make a judgement on the success of each episode and of the overall series.

NOTES TO THE READER / TEACHER

This guide features specialised education material developed by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Department and the Public Programs Department at the Art Gallery of New South Wales including the 2009 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collection education kit *Country, culture, community* and the 2008 collection notes *Living Black*.

Authors of this *art + soul* study guide have chosen to not italicise words in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in an effort to include these languages in the common Australian English vernacular. This move follows the example set by major publications such as the Macquarie Encyclopedic Dictionary which includes many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander terms.

As the primary resource for this study guide is the *art + soul* documentary series, there are many quotes in the following pages from the artists and from Hetti Perkins. Unattributed quotes are taken from *art + soul*, and quotes from other resources are referenced accordingly.

ORGANISATION OF THIS GUIDE

This guide follows the structure of the series. Information, images, questions, activities and extended research questions are grouped into sections based on each episode. Each episode is introduced with a brief introduction and synopsis. Within each section – 'home and away', 'dreams and nightmares' and 'bitter+ sweet' – questions and activities are related to specific artists. Ideas and themes relating to wider concepts, such as regional art movements,



NAATA NUNGURRAYI, WALUNGURRU (KINTORE), 2009, HIBISCUS FILMS

or the wider social or political context are still connected to a relevant artist, following *art + soul*'s focus on the practice of individual artists.

SPELLING AND BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Due to changes in orthography, spellings can vary. The spelling used in this study guide follows the most common usage. Exceptions occur when there are regional variations such as Arrente/Aranda and Gamilaroi/Kamilaroi. In this instance the preference of the artist or their representative has been respected.

Artists' biographical details are listed at the beginning of the 'question' part of each episode section. These details appear in the following order: birth (and death) dates, language group and region,⁴ domicile and region.

Endnotes

- ¹ David Horton (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Aboriginal Australia*, vol A–L, Aboriginal Studies Press for the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, 1994, p.279.
- ² 'Terra nullius', or 'empty land', was the legal principle that the British Empire drew on to justify invading Australia.
- ³ Howard Morphy, *Aboriginal Art*, Phaidon, London, 1998, p.68.
- ⁴ Language group regions are based on David Horton's 1996 map of Aboriginal Australia at <http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/corporate/files/pages/aboriginal_aust/ab_aust_full.pdf>.

EPISODE 1 HOME + AWAY

‘What does home mean for our people today? And, what does being away mean in twenty-first century Australia? I once asked an artist, an old tjilpi, Turkey Tolson Tjupurrula, whom I really admire, why he painted and he told me, ‘When you sit down with no paint you get lonely’.

– Hetti Perkins

MELVILLE ISLAND, 2009, WARWICK THORNTON

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders call all corners of this country home yet throughout Australia’s history Indigenous people have been actively dispersed from their homelands, invaded, removed and massacred to make way for the colonial project. Beginning in 1788 with the establishment of Sydney, the frontier was relentless and, as it moved, it compromised traditional life and cast Aboriginal people to society’s fringes. As illustrated in episode one of *art + soul*, contemporary Aboriginal experience is dominated with the physical and psychological return to country and culture, as witnessed in the outstation movement and the assertion of land rights, and illustrated in the growth of art movements.

‘home and away’ opens with Hetti Perkins, senior curator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, in Sydney where she lives and works. Perkins takes us first to the AGNSW and shows us some of the artworks held in its collection. It is from here that she invites us on a journey into the world of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and culture, beginning in Central Australia.

Perkins drives west from Mparntwe (Alice Springs) to the remote community of Walungurru (Kintore), now home to about 400 people and the newly-built headquarters of the Papunya Tula Artists cooperative, whose chair – artist Bobby West Tjupurrula – takes us into the studio. We are told the story of the genesis of the influential Papunya Tula Artists painting movement in the 1970s, borne out of a longing for ‘country’ by a community dispirited by their forced resettlement far from their homelands to the

government-controlled settlement of Papunya. Communities like Walungurru enable Pintupi people to live on their land, allowing for a connection to country that provides the cultural stimulus for art, which, in turn, offers the means for people to remain on country. Women artists including Naata Nungurrayi, shown meticulously applying dots while singing her country, only assumed prominence in the mid 1990s and have invigorated the desert painting movement which today sustains the community.

In her studio we meet Brisbane-based Judy Watson, whose homelands are in north-western Queensland, hard at work on a new artwork. Watson incorporates drawings of objects that were once part of the lives of her ancestors into her layered paintings; by working with the specific objects that she finds in museum collections, Watson creates a process of repatriating these objects, of ‘bringing them home’ in her own way. Watson also uses stories of her immediate family in her artwork, researching the state archives and illustrating her mother’s and grandmother’s experiences.

‘home and away’ then takes us to remote western Arnhem Land where artists are similarly considering what ‘home’ means. Their country is adorned with countless rock art galleries that house traditional knowledge and stories for future generations. In this region mimih beings dwell in these galleries and are the source of inspiration for artist Crusoe Kurddal who creates elegant carvings and performs the mimih dance. Mimihs and other beings were the key subjects of distinguished bark painter John Mawurndjul’s early work, although his paintings have since focused on



PMURLANKINYA (PALM VALLEY), 2009, WARWICK THORNTON

the abstraction of rarrk, or crosshatching. These powerful depictions capture the energy of Mawurndjul's culture and his country, which includes the beings that inhabit his home.

While cooking a meal in her Melbourne house, photographer Destiny Deacon chats to Perkins about what 'home' means to her. Deacon's family is from Queensland and the Torres Strait and today her home is the 'stage' for her constructed photographs. Using whatever is at hand, including an endless collection of black dolls, dollies and kitsch paraphernalia, Deacon creates worlds within worlds that reference the familiar urban experience while approaching the surreal.

Perkins then introduces us to Ricky Maynard, a photographer based at Flinders Island in Tasmania, whose portraits of his community – both people and land – create an intimate dialogue between photographer and subject. Tasmanian Aboriginal people were subjected to the Black War, an unimaginable violence and attempted genocide which forced people from their homelands to the government mission of Wybalenna on the isolated Flinders Island in the Bass Strait. This history is the seminal subject of Maynard's 2005 black-and-white photographic series *Portrait of a Distant Land*.

To the west of Mparntwe, over the Western Australia border, lies the isolated community of Kiwirrkura, the most remote outpost of Papunya Tula Artists. When 'home and away' reaches this community, we meet artists Warlimpirnga Tjapaltjarri and Yukultji Napangati, two of the family who in 1984 gave up a traditional life to come into the outstation at Kiwirrkura. Here they were reunited with their extended family, many of whom had recently established Kiwirrkura in order to be closer to their homelands. Napangati has become an important part of this movement and in her paintings she recalls her ancestral homelands.

'home and away' ends with the late Doreen Reid Nakamarra talking about how her art represents women's sites on her husband's country. Nakamarra, along with fellow artist Napangati and Perkins, travels to New York for an exhibition and what is the artists' first overseas trip. Nakamarra and Napangati are travelling such a long way to exhibit their work – exquisite paintings of the remote Western Desert region – to an appreciative overseas audience.

All the artists in 'home and away', the first episode of *art + soul*, create work based on the concept of home – a sense of place that sadly is often generated by separation. Art to them is a means of maintaining their connection to country, of recalling history and honouring their ancestors, and through their practices they share their knowledge and experiences with the world.

HOME AND AWAY

In this episode, Hetti Perkins asks 'What does home mean for our people today? And what does being away mean in twenty-first century Australia?' What is the definition of 'home' for you? How do you feel when you are far away from home? Write a list of ideas that you connect with concept of home.

Consider the saying 'home is where the heart is' and discuss its meaning in class. Make a painting or a series of paintings which represents your idea of home and the important things about it. Write a short description to present with your piece and have a class exhibition.

Make a list of reasons why people, whether Indigenous or more recent Australians, move away from their place of birth, whether forced, voluntary or chosen.



NAATA NUNGURRAYI, WALUNGURRU (KINTORE), 2009, HIBISCUS FILMS

NAATA NUNGURRAYI
 UNTITLED 1999
 SYNTHETIC POLYMER PAINT ON CANVAS
 122 X 151 CM
 MOLLIE GOWING ACQUISITION FUND FOR CONTEMPORARY
 ABORIGINAL ART 2000
 ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
 © NAATA NUNGURRAYI, ABORIGINAL ARTISTS AGENCY LTD

BOBBY WEST TJUPURRULA

Born 1958, Pintupi, Kiwirrkura, Western Desert region

Investigate the reasons why missions, reserves and government-controlled communities like Papunya were established. Consider the government policy of Assimilation. What were the results in terms of health, social and cultural conditions for the people who lived there?

Research the Western Desert art movement beginning with the exodus of Pintupi people from their desert homes to Papunya from the 1950s, the later formation of the Papunya Tula Artist Cooperative in 1972, and the Art Gallery of New South Wales exhibition *Papunya Tula: genesis and genius* 2000 to emerging artists today. Describe the role played by teacher Geoffrey Bardon.

Examine the part played by key artists like Timmy Payungka Tjapangati and Uta Uta Tjangala in advocating the return to country in the late 1970s with the outstation movement. What results on art-making practices did this return to country have? How does the new confidence, expressed through scale, colour and composition, relate to peoples' return home?

Research the role art centres like Papunya Tula Artists play in the permanent return of artists to their homelands. Outline Papunya Tula Artists' role in supporting individual artists, providing facilities, medical equipment and economic and social development for the community. Why is the support of health care, such as installing dialysis machines in the community, part of Papunya Tula Artists' agenda? Why is it important that this time-intensive treatment is able to be offered in the places where people live?

NAATA NUNGURRAYI

Born c1932, Pintupi, Walungurru (Kintore), Western Desert region

Look at *Untitled* (1999) by Naata Nungurrayi and describe your first impressions. List words to express the mood and colour.

Research Nungurrayi's art-making practice. Look at tools, materials and processes. What are some recurring motifs that represent different aspects and perspectives of country? Consider the desert region where Nungurrayi comes from and describe how a sense of place is evoked through the use of imagery, materials and techniques.

Identify the Aboriginal language or languages spoken in your region. Learn how to exchange greetings in your local language and find local words for plants, animals and places. Compile a glossary. Learn about local ancestral stories and important sites from your area.



PAPUNYA/YUENDUMU/ALICE SPRINGS ROAD SIGN, 2009, HIBISCUS FILMS



JUDY WATSON, BRISBANE, 2009, HIBISCUS FILMS

Research the evolution of women's art in the Central Desert. Why did women at Papunya begin painting later than men? Examine the *Minyma tjukurrpa* canvas project of 1994 and its effect on women's painting practice. Investigate the similarities and differences between the art produced by women at the desert communities of Kiwirrkura and Walungurru (Kintore) to that of Utopia, Yuendumu and Wirrimanu (Balgo). Look specifically at the work of artists such as Emily Kam Ngwaray, Makinti Napanangka and Mitjili Napurrula.

JUDY WATSON

Born 1959, Waanyi, Gulf region, Brisbane, North-east region

Museums are places that collect and store objects historically from 'other' cultures. How does Judy Watson challenge this idea and 'repatriate' objects through her art-making processes?

Research Watson's series of prints from 1997, *our bones in your collections*, *our hair in your collections* and *our skin in your collections*. Discuss how they engage with historical museum practices of collecting Indigenous ancestral remains. Consider the titles, materials, process and imagery. Research the ongoing issue of repatriation and debate whether such remains should be returned. Explain your position.

Think about how Watson's work relates to her personal and family memories. Write a poem about your memories of a person or place you love. How does your poem about memories relate to Watson's work? Is your poem suggestive and soft or direct and hard-edged?

Watson is interested in history and archaeology and describes her art-making process as 'an archaeology of the land and finding out the concealed histories of that place'.⁵

Research her body of work and describe how the materials, processes and aesthetic qualities communicate these ideas. Suggest how Watson's process of art-making – pouring, rubbing and scraping – echoes the formation of the land itself. Find images of sedimentary layers of rock and learn about the geological processes by which they are formed. How are the actions of water involved?

Make your own work in response to your environment. Take rubbings from textured surfaces such as tiled walls, concrete or floors, fabrics, raised lettering, coins or car tyres. Select interesting areas and cut them out. Arrange these fragments to create a balanced composition and glue them down. Talk about how this image relates to your world.

JOHN MAWURNDJUL
 MARDAYIN CEREMONY 2000
 NATURAL PIGMENTS ON BARK
 170 X 78 CM
 DON MITCHELL BEQUEST FUND 2000
 ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
 © JOHN MAWURNDJUL, COURTESY MANINGRIDA ARTS AND CULTURE



CRUSOE KURDDAL AND MICKY YALBARR, MIMIH PERFORMANCE, MANINGRIDA, 2009, HIBISCUS FILMS

CRUSOE KURDDAL

Born 1961, Kuninjkun, Barrihdjowkkeng and Maningrida, Arnhem region

Describe the rock art images at Ngaliirkewern that James Iyuna and Kevin Djimarr show Hetti Perkins in western Arnhem Land. Research rock art from this region, finding out how old these images are. Describe the image of the 'broken woman'. Why has she been depicted this way? What role does rock art play for people?

Mimihs beings taught Kuninjkun people how to sing, dance, hunt and paint. Tall and thin, they can slip through cracks in the rock country to enter their own world, which exists inside the rock. Create a drawing or painting of the rocky escarpments where they live. Imagine what this world inside the rock is like and write a story describing it. How would it be similar or different to our own world?

Research the relationship that Kuninjkun people have with mimihs, yawkyawks and Ngalyod, the Rainbow Serpent, and discuss the role they play in the cultural life of the region. Find parallel relationships in other religions such as Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism and Buddhism. Discuss how cultural beliefs influence everyday life.

Crusoe Kurddal comes from western Arnhem Land. Locate this area on a map and explore it using Google Earth. Find images of the country. Research the seasons and the vegetation. How do these things affect the art made in this area? Watch the film *Ten Canoes* (Rolf de Heer and Peter Djigirr, 2006) set in Arnhem Land, which features Kurddal as the warrior Ridjimiril.



JOHN MAWURNDJUL

Born 1952, Kuninjkun, Milmilngkan and Maningrida, Arnhem region

Look at *Mardayin ceremony* (2000) by John Mawurndjul. Describe what you can see noticing colour, line, patterns, shape and effect. Imagine the kinds of movements Mawurndjul used to paint the fine crosshatching, called rarrk. Act them out.

Using a fine brush, pen or sharp pencil, make your own intricate line patterns on a large sheet of paper. Try working quickly and slowly to create these marks. Do you use your whole body or just your wrist?

Name and count the colours used in *Mardayin ceremony*. Create a bark painting colour chart. Think of colours, patterns and codes in your life – from school or sports uniform to family tartans or flags – which identify you with different groups or places.

Mardayin ceremony relates to a ceremony which includes singing and dancing. Look at the painting and imagine the kind of music that suits it. Choose a song or dance that you like and create an abstract painting using line, pattern and repetition to suggest rhythm and melody.

Can bark painting be 'contemporary' art? In 2003, Mawurndjul was awarded the prestigious Clemenger Contemporary Art Award and thus recognised as one of Australia's leading contemporary artists, yet bark painting is rarely positioned within the context of contemporary Australian art. Why is this? Debate your opinions in class. Discuss your ideas about what makes an artwork contemporary or traditional. Is it possible to be both?

DESTINY DEACON

Born 1957, KuKu, East Cape region, and Erub, Torres Strait region, Melbourne, South-east region

Destiny Deacon creates and arranges a cast of characters in an urban landscape, employing humour, theatricality and playfulness to challenge our ideas and preconceptions. Think about the materials Deacon uses to create her work. Where do you think she finds them? Why do some everyday objects such as dolls assume both a sinister and humorous role in her compositions?

Develop a case study of Deacon's work investigating her use of humour as a political tool. Survey the work of other Indigenous artists such as Richard Bell, Lin Onus and Tracey Moffatt and analyse their use of humour as a weapon against stereotyping, objectification and other limiting prejudices. Is this a more effective strategy than direct political messages? Support your answer with examples from contemporary life.

RICKY MAYNARD

Born 1953, Cape Portland and Ben Lomond, Flinders Island, South-east region

Ricky Maynard believes the way photography was used during the colonial era misrepresented and pigeonholed Aboriginal people. Do you agree? What is the relationship between 'the observed' and 'the observer' in photography? Who has the power to select, frame and represent subjects being filmed or photographed?

Consider the significance of an Indigenous person being behind the camera. Investigate the work of a new generation of Indigenous photographers such as Genevieve Grieves, Brook Andrew and Dianne Jones. Identify how these artists use the camera as a political tool.



WARWICK THORNTON, HETTI PERKINS AND RICKY MAYNARD,
ART + SOUL PRODUCTION STILL, MELBOURNE, 2009, HIBISCUS FILMS



DESTINY DEACON
LOOK OUT! 2009
INKJET PRINT FROM DIGITAL IMAGE ON ARCHIVAL PAPER
60 X 80 CM IMAGE, 81 X 105 CM SHEET
PURCHASED WITH FUNDS PROVIDED BY THE ABORIGINAL COLLECTION
BENEFACTORS' GROUP 2009
ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
© DESTINY DEACON

Research the conflict in the early nineteenth century known as the Black War. What were the results of this war for the Aboriginal people of Tasmania?

Look at *Broken heart* (2005) by Maynard and describe what you see. What can you infer from the title about the meaning of this work? How might the black-and-white tones of this photograph suggest the sense of longing and memory for Tasmanian Aboriginals?

Maynard has talked about the process of creating this photograph, 'I walked all down the coastline for kilometres trying to work out how I could actually portray the way those people would have felt'. Who are the people he refers to? Why did he think they felt broken-hearted? Write a poem communicating the idea of exile. Why did Maynard make the image as a self-portrait?

WARLIMPIRRNGA TJAPALTJARRI

Born c1959, Pintupi, Kiwirrkura, Western Desert region

Find out about the Western Desert and compare it to the place you live. Make a series of paintings showing that place. Choose a natural or constructed surface from your environment and study it closely using a magnifying glass. Make a detailed drawing of what you see and then enlarge it on a photocopier. Create multiple copies and glue them onto a large sheet to make a field of patterning. Discuss how this image relates to your original drawing.



PAPUNYA TULA ARTISTS' STUDIO, WALUNGURRU (KINTORE), 2009, HIBISCUS FILMS

YUKULTJI NAPANGATI

Born c1970, Pintupi, Kiwirrkura, Western Desert region

Locate Yukultji Napangati's home of Kiwirrkura on a map and look at satellite photos of the region. Find out about the climate, vegetation and history of this region. Create a map which includes the location of key communities such as Papunya, Wirrimanu (Balgo), Yuendumu, Lajamanu, Ikuntji (Haasts Bluff) and Walungurru (Kintore).

Look at the work *Untitled* (2005) by Napangati. Does it matter which way you look at this painting – vertically or horizontally? Notice the lines and ridges created by the repetition of lines. What does this painting tell you about the artist's country? Keeping your eyes on the painting, move your head from side to side and up and down. What visual effects does this create? Describe how the visual power of this image evokes the vastness of country and the power of culture. The rippling optical effects created by this artist represent the beauty of her country and the energy of her culture. Create your own powerful optical effect using repetition of patterns and lines.

DOREEN REID NAKAMARRA

c1955–2009, Pintupi, Kiwirrkura, Western Desert region

Doreen Reid Nakamarra talks about how her art represents important women's sites in her husband's country. Look at her work and speculate on how the lines and patterns relate to the landscape. How may the work express distance, temperature and geography?

Nakamarra and Yukultji Napangati travel to New York for the exhibition *Nganana Tjungurringanyi Tjukurpa Nintintjakitja – We Are Here Sharing Our Dreaming* (2009). How do you think the people of New York would respond to Nakamarra and Napangati's paintings? Is it necessary to understand the importance of country and Tjukurpa to appreciate the work? Would their response differ to that of an Australian audience? Explain your reasons for your answer and discuss your ideas in class.

Endnote

⁵ Judy Watson, *Sacred Ground Beating Heart: Works by Judy Watson 1989–2003*, John Curtin Gallery, 2003, p.24.



WARWICK CAMPBELL AND NAATA NUNGURRAYI, WALUNGURRU (KINTORE), *ART + SOUL* PRODUCTION STILL, 2009, HIBISCUS FILMS

EPISODE 2 DREAMS + NIGHTMARES

'This is a land of dreamings, a land of wide horizons and secret places. The first people, our ancestors, created this country and the culture that binds us to it.'

– Hetti Perkins

MILKY WAY, 2009, WARWICK THORNTON

The nightmare that is Australia's colonial settlement left traditional Indigenous practices and ways of life severely compromised. People were forcibly removed and dispersed from their country, children were taken from their mothers and loving families, and Indigenous cultures were persecuted, leaving Aboriginal people strangers in their own land. 'dreams and nightmares', the second episode of *art + soul*, shows how from within the devastation of colonisation Indigenous artists have been at the forefront of continuing the 'dream' of maintaining age-old practices, techniques and concepts, while others establish contemporary expressions and frameworks, enriching traditions and preserving cultural content. This episode also challenges the stereotypical idea of 'the dreaming' to show the currency and vitality of Indigenous knowledge systems that are expressed in many forms.

At the Art Gallery of New South Wales about 100 fruit bats hang upside down from a Hills Hoist clothes line. It's one of the most iconic works in the AGNSW collection. 'The fruit bat sculpture is just for fun. It is the only sculpture I have done that doesn't have some degree of anger,' artist Lin Onus has said of his humorous yet ironic sculpture. To Hetti Perkins, senior curator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art at the AGNSW, it speaks of 'a kind of suburban dreaming' in which the Aboriginal culture that swirls around us all has collided with the Western dream of owning a 'quarter acre block'.

Gija artist Patrick Mung Mung, from Warmun (Turkey Creek) in the East Kimberley, tells the story of Rover Thomas, who started painting after Cyclone Tracy in 1974 when he 'received' a narrative that he interpreted into a *joonba*, or public ceremony. Called the *Gurrir Gurrir*, the ceremony is a contemporary continuation of the *Ngarranggarni*, Gija for the creation or dreaming, and was directed by Thomas who engaged singers and dancers to perform while carrying ochre-painted boards. The *Gurrir Gurrir* marks a cultural turning point, an important return to traditional values that had been exhausted after years of cultural oppression. It became the catalyst for the vibrant Warmun art movement, led by Thomas and inherited now by Mung Mung. Thomas' seminal painting *Two men dreaming* (c1985) contains the hallmarks of the movement – deep open fields of ochre, highlighted with a tracery of white dots. In 1990, Thomas was one of the first Aboriginal artists included in the Venice Biennale, one of the world's most prestigious art events.

'dreams and nightmares' introduces us to Ngarrindjeri weaver Yvonne Koolmatrie who, along with her sisters, takes Perkins to the riverbank to collect the sedge rushes that she uses to weave her sculptural forms. Often based on traditional forms, Koolmatrie's weavings evoke the history of her Ngarrindjeri people who call the rich Coorong region of South Australia home. Since colonisation, this region has been under enormous environmental pressure and, in response to this nightmare, Koolmatrie has actively retrieved traditional Ngarrindjeri weaving practices, thereby maintaining cultural knowledge and drawing attention to the degraded Coorong, where once the sedge grass essential to her weaving grew in profusion.



KINTORE RANGE, 2009, WARWICK THORNTON

We then meet the late Jackie Kurtjunyintja Giles Tjapaltjarri who was a senior artist and community leader from the Gibson Desert in Western Australia. Tjapaltjarri's work now adorns the facade of the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS) in Sydney enabling his Tjukurrpa (dreaming) to be shared with the world and inspire others.

Past, present and future often merge in Aboriginal art. When the AGNSW acquired seventeen evocative totem poles, or Pukumani graveposts, from Melville Island in 1958 it was the first time a gallery, rather than a museum, had commissioned and exhibited Aboriginal art. Nearly forty years later, Perkins vividly recalls the dramatic effect those poles had on Tiwi artist Pedro Wonaeamirri who, when seeing them, was inspired with the designs and carving techniques of his grandfather's generation. In 'dreams and nightmares', we travel to meet Wonaeamirri on Melville Island and he takes us to important and culturally significant places including his art centre, Jilamara Arts & Crafts, and the site of Impanari.

Dreams and nightmares play a significant role in contemporary Aboriginal art. Adelaide-based artist Brenda L Croft drew upon a found collection of 1950s slides showing her father, an Aboriginal man, successfully living within white-dominated society in the photographic series *Man about town* (2003). Joseph Croft was a life-long friend of Hetti's father Charles Perkins, and was part of the nightmare of the Stolen Generation. Croft's artworks often address the inherited grief that she and many other Indigenous Australians live with. The unique and colourful paintings of Wiradjuri artist HJ Wedge, from Erambie Mission in Cowra, New South Wales, similarly deal with 'dreams' and 'nightmares'. Fueled by memories from his childhood, by his thoughts about contemporary events, current affairs, from what he hears on the street or on television, from Wedge's own personal struggles including his alcoholism

and what he knows of domestic violence and its effect on his community, these paintings are scenes of the dream and the nightmare in everyday life.

'dreams and nightmares' takes us back to the desert where one artist's life and work encapsulates the episode title completely. Linguist Jenny Green talks about the life of the important artist Emily Kam Ngwarray and how Ngwarray's sensuous landscape paintings of her country around Utopia, Central Australia, illustrate a connection to culture and attract unprecedented fame. Perkins examines Ngwarray's career and wonders if, late in life, the immense pressure to paint in an unregulated environment became the artist's nightmare.

Aboriginal life was forever changed with colonisation, which brought on the attempted genocide of the world's oldest living culture. From within this nightmare artists have led a cultural renaissance, preserving age-old knowledge and channelling traditions into contemporary forms and expressions. This contemporary movement, as seen in 'dreams and nightmares' the second episode of *art + soul*, has provided the platform for artists to achieve their dreams, engage with new audiences and their carrying traditional expressions into the future.

DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES

Consider the title of this episode. Make a list of the ideas which the words 'dreams' and 'nightmares' might relate to in art. What particular relevance or connotations do they have for Indigenous artists? Think about colonisation and self-determination. Choose one artist from this episode and describe the importance of dreams and nightmares in their practice.



LIN ONUS
FRUIT BATS 1991
 POLYCHROMED FIBREGLASS SCULPTURES, POLYCHROMED
 WOODEN DISKS, HILLS HOIST CLOTHESLINE
 PURCHASED 1993
 ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
 © ESTATE LIN ONUS. LICENSED BY VISCOPY, SYDNEY, 2010

LIN ONUS

**1948–1996, Yorta Yorta, Southern Riverine region,
 Melbourne, South-east region**

Look closely at *Fruit Bats* (1991) by Lin Onus and describe what you can see. Think about size, shape, pattern and materials. How do you think the work has been made? What is the significance of the Hills Hoist clothes line for Australians? Where do you find it and what ideas are suggested? How has Onus used humour to reappropriate this icon of suburbia? What dreams and nightmares in the Australian psyche are suggested by the work? Why do you think this work is one of the most popular at the Art Gallery of New South Wales?

Onus, a Yorta Yorta artist from south-east Australia, has used rarrk, the crosshatching painting style used by many artists in Arnhem Land for the patterning on the fruit bats. Research the processes and cultural protocols Onus went through in order to be able to use this design and technique in his work. Why is this cultural protocol important to respect?

PATRICK MUNG MUNG

**Born c1948, Gija, Warmun (Turkey Creek),
 Kimberley region**

Patrick Mung Mung worked as a stockman for many years on Texas Downs Station and other cattle properties in the

East Kimberley. Learn about the life of a stockman and the role played by Indigenous people in the pastoral industry. Locate the Canning Stock Route on a map and find out about its history, the way it was used and its impact on local Indigenous communities.

The Ngarranggarni is a Gija term for cultural creation and its ongoing influence on everyday life, expressed through song, dance, law and art. Learn more about the Ngarranggarni and the way it encompasses the ancestral past and the present. Look at ways in which creation beliefs influence everyday life are similar to those of other religions such as Christianity, Judaism or Islam.

Research the history, uses and meanings of ochre in the East Kimberley. Choose materials that hold memories or associations for you and use them to create an artwork. Think about the symbolic or metaphorical qualities of the materials you could use to communicate an idea. Present your work with a description of the materials and how they contribute to the significance of the work.

Research the Warmun school of painting established by senior painters Rover Thomas, Paddy Jaminji and Queenie McKenzie. Identify similarities and differences between Mung Mung's work and other Warmun painters in terms of materials, subject, perspective, colour, line, pattern and overall composition.



ROVER THOMAS
TWO MEN DREAMING c1985
 NATURAL PIGMENTS ON CANVAS BOARD
 91 X 61 CM
 PURCHASED 2000
 ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
 © ESTATE ROVER THOMAS, COURTESY WARMUN ART CENTRE



YVONNE KOOLMATRIE
EEL TRAP 1997
 SEDGE GRASS (*LEPIDOSPERMA CANESCENS*)
 59 X 168 X 59 CM
 ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
 © YVONNE KOOLMATRIE, COURTESY ABORIGINAL & PACIFIC ART



YVONNE KOOLMATRIE,
STRATHALBYN, 2009,
 HIBISCUS FILMS

ROVER THOMAS

1926–1998, Kukatja and Wangkajunga, Western Desert region, Warmun (Turkey Creek), Kimberley region

Look at *Two men dreaming* (c1985) by Rover Thomas and list the colours and shapes you can see. Find the man with his boomerang and fighting sticks next to a waterhole that contains sweet water. How has Thomas suggested the glow of moonlight? Are you looking at this country from the ground or the sky? In what ways does this work represent landscape?

Thomas painted from memory. Describe a place you know well – how it looks – can you remember everything about that place or important elements? Make a painting or three-dimensional representation of this place. What colours will you choose to represent it? Present your work and photos of the real place to the class and discuss the differences.

Learn how the nightmare of Cyclone Tracy ignited a cultural renaissance and the birth of a regional contemporary art movement. What is the significance of the Gurrir Gurrir joonba to Gija people and to the wider world of Indigenous art?

YVONNE KOOLMATRIE

Born 1945, Ngarrindjeri, Berri, Southern Riverine region

Look at *Eel trap* (1997) by Yvonne Koolmatrie and describe its colour, texture and shape. Is it two-dimensional or three-dimensional? How do you think it was made? What does

this object remind you of? Select a small area, observe it closely and make a detailed drawing of the pattern and texture.

Look closely at the weaving pattern, including the bundling, stitching and tying of material. Consider the delicacy and resilience of the materials and imagine the labour-intensive process of its creation. How does this artwork evoke the wetlands where the materials come from? Speculate on how your response to *Eel trap* may change depending on where you view it – a museum, an art gallery or a fishing shop? Explain your reasons.

Explain how this eel trap would work. Find out about other fishing and farming technologies developed by Indigenous Australians.

Map the extent of Ngarrindjeri country, including the lower Murray River region, Lake Alexandrina and the Coorong. Research the Coorong National Park and name the different species of birds, fish and animals found in this environment. What is unique about this area? What environmental difficulties does this area face today and why are the sedge rushes used by Koolmatrie now endangered? Find out about the causes and possible solutions to these problems.

Research Koolmatrie's role in the revival and preservation of Ngarrindjeri weaving techniques. Assess the role of museums in her practice. Why is the preservation of Ngarrindjeri weaving so important to Koolmatrie?



PUKUMANI POLES, MELVILLE ISLAND, 2009, WARWICK THORNTON

JACKIE KURLTJUNYINTJA GILES TJAPALTJARRI

Born c1944–2010, Ngaanyatjarra, Patjarr, Southern Desert region

Jackie Kurltjunyintja Giles Tjapaltjarri's monumental work *Tjamu Tjamu* (2009) is installed at the Australian Film Television and Radio School in Sydney. In this episode Warwick Thornton, the director of *art + soul*, officiates at its unveiling and describes the picture as telling a story – the artist's Tjukurrpa. What does he mean by this? Why does he use the word Tjukurrpa instead of 'dreaming'? Consider the ways in which the term 'dreaming' may be inadequate to express the complexity and breadth of Tjukurrpa. What negative connotations does the term have? Find out the local language names for 'dreaming' in places such as the East Kimberley and western Arnhem Land.

Look at *Tjamu Tjamu* and analyse the way composition and use of repetition create rhythm and energy. Discuss colour, space, balance and iconography. Describe how the visual power of this image embodies the power of country and Tjukurrpa. Create an artwork which employs repetition of your own symbols to express the idea of travel. Think about how you will represent topography and movement.

Look at other public art installations such as the permanent installation of Indigenous art at the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris, the sculptural installation *Edge of the trees* (1994–5) by Fiona Foley and Janet Laurence at the Museum of Sydney, Judy Watson's work *fire and water* in Reconciliation Place, Canberra and Michael Riley's *cloud* series at Circular Quay for the Festival of Sydney 2002. Find images of these installations and discuss the role of public art. How may the audience respond differently to an artwork when it is seen outside of a gallery? What part do materials and the scale of the work play?

PEDRO WONAEAMIRRI

Born 1974, Tiwi, Milikapiti, North region

Look at the Tiwi Islands – Bathurst and Melville Islands – on a map of Australia. Learn about Tiwi history including their trade with Macassans, and contact with Dutch navigators, British colonial powers and Japanese pearlers and soldiers. Make an illustrated timeline.

The Tiwi people are proud of their cultural distinctiveness from that of mainland Aboriginal people. This is reflected in their language, ceremonies and art. What does Pedro Wonaeamirri, artist and Hetti Perkins' guide at the Jilamara Arts & Crafts centre, explain as specifically Tiwi in their artwork?

Wonaeamirri has commented, 'Pukumani is singing and dancing that's more a celebration, but more a goodbye ceremony, like goodbye, see you next time in your country.'¹⁶ Research the Pukumani ceremony. Who was Purukupali? Identify him in Wonaeamirri's work. Perkins and Wonaeamirri travel to the site related to the Pukumani ceremony. Describe this place and Wonaeamirri's response to seeing it for the first time.



JACKIE KURLTJUNYINTJA GILES TJAPALTJARRI AND WARWICK THORNTON, AUSTRALIAN FILM TELEVISION AND RADIO SCHOOL, SYDNEY, 2009, HIBISCUS FILMS, COURTESY AUSTRALIAN FILM TELEVISION AND RADIO SCHOOL

Find out about the tools Wonaeamirri used to create his tutini. How did he carve the wood? How did he make the paint? Wonaeamirri demonstrates his use of a pwoja (traditional wooden comb) to apply rows of dots to the tutini. Try making different stamping tools which can be used to create different patterns. Use repetition to make patterns and designs on paper and wooden surfaces.

How are the tutini Wonaeamirri made as sculptures for the Art Gallery of New South Wales different to those used in ceremony? Think about materials used and the context in which they will be viewed.

BRENDA L CROFT

Born 1964, Gurindji and Mudpurra, Fitzmaurice region, Adelaide, Spencer region

Brenda L Croft's father Joseph was part of the Stolen Generations. What did children who were removed from their families, particularly between 1900 and 1970, lose when they were placed in church- or government-run children's homes? How does Charles Perkins describe the effects of this disruption to family?

Where was Croft's father Joseph born? Where did he meet Charles Perkins?

What does the story of Joseph Croft's life, including the deliberate stripping of identity that was part of the forced removal from family and country, tell us about Australia's history?

What do the images of her father that Croft found in a box of slides tell her about his life and his friendships? What is the significance of the photo of Aboriginal women that Croft shows to Hetti Perkins? What does it mean when Croft incorporates such images into her work?

Croft explores the intersection between family experience and history through work which uses her own family photographs, religious imagery and familiar language and text. Find examples of her work and describe her use of post-modern strategies such as irony, humour and quotation. Discuss the use of personal content when referring to broad issues such as the Stolen Generations, missions and the history of Aboriginal and European relations. How are these issues still being felt today in an environment that many describe as post-colonial?

Research the work of other Indigenous artists who work with photomedia, such as Mervyn Bishop, Destiny Deacon and Michael Riley. Discuss the influences of their work on the social and political landscape of today and the ways in which their work and art-making practices challenge stereotypical ideas about Aboriginal identity.



HJ WEDGE, ERAMBIE, 2009, HIBISCUS FILMS

HJ WEDGE

Born 1957, Wiradjuri, Cowra, Southern Riverine region

HJ Wedge grew up on Erambie Mission on the outskirts of Cowra in New South Wales. Find out about the history of missions in Australia. Discover if there is or once was a mission in the area where you live and find out about its history. Invite a community member who grew up on a mission to come and talk to you at school.

Missions were usually built on a river and on the fringes of a town. Why do you think this was? Discuss this with your class. Research the impact missions have had on Indigenous life. Focus on evidence of restrictions on Indigenous language, practice of culture and the removal of children.

Locate Wiradjuri country on the map. Name the adjoining nations and the rivers that run through this country. Which Indigenous nation do you live in? Find out about important local landmarks and places.

Look at paintings by Wedge. Describe his imagery, brush strokes and use of colour and paint. How does he suggest pain, energy and emotion? Is it necessary to know the story to understand the feelings conveyed in his work? How does he create a surreal and dreamlike atmosphere?

Think of a vivid dream you can remember. Write the story of this dream and then illustrate it with a sequence of drawings done with oil pastels. Use bright and intense colours and make strong marks. Exhibit the drawings to your class. Are they able to understand the story from your pictures?

The 1980s and 1990s were an important social and political time in Sydney with the establishment of organisations like the Eora Centre for Visual and Performing Arts, Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative and the Black Theatre Company. Assess the influence of this climate on Wedge's development as an artist. Investigate the role of the Eora Centre in fostering artists such as Wedge, Roy Kennedy and Elaine Russell.



COWRA, 2009, HIBISCUS FILMS

EMILY KAM NGWARRAY

1916–1996, Anmatyerr, Alhalker and Utopia, Central Desert region

Ngwarray describes the subject of her painting as ‘whole lot’ – an attempt to encompass the physical, spiritual and cultural complexity of her country. Discuss how abstraction is suited to this concept. Could literal representation be as effective? Evaluate how an absence of ‘story’ affects your response to her work and artistic vision.

Make a series of realistic drawings of interesting objects. Photocopy and enlarge sections to create details of the original drawings. Arrange these sections in a balanced and rhythmic composition. Scan or photocopy this arrangement several times and display as a series. Are they abstract or representational? Discuss.

Ngwarray sometimes represented underground networks of yam roots in her painting. Find examples of work such as *Big Yam* (1996). Study pictures of plant root systems and do a drawing or painting of the way the roots of a plant in your garden might look. Make a drawing of a place you know well in which you show what is invisible as well as what is visible such as the electrical wiring or plumbing which runs behind a wall or the clothes which hang in a wardrobe.

Research Ngwarray’s body of work and identify stylistic characteristics of each period. How does her work at once suggest the micro and macrocosmic scale of her country? Identify visual effects she uses to evoke the greatness of her subject, her country. Discuss how her work may be read as a response to the natural beauty of her country.

Despite her age and fragile health at the height of her fame in the early 1990s, many people wanted Ngwarray to keep painting. How would her life and art practice be different if there had been an art centre in her community? Consider the role of an art centre and the benefits it provides to an artist in terms of freedom from market pressures. In what ways are Indigenous arts practitioners particularly vulnerable to unethical practices and individuals?

Endnote

- ⁶ Pedro Wonaeamirri, ‘Pedro Wonaeamirri in conversation’ in Hetti Perkins and Margie West (eds), *One sun one moon: Aboriginal art in Australia*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2007, p.136.



EPISODE 3 BITTER + SWEET

‘In the aftermath of colonisation, art has become a bridge between black and white. But for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, the contemporary art movement they have forged is a bittersweet symphony.’
– Hetti Perkins

NGUT JUL, 2009, HIBISCUS FILMS

Within the heartache and bitterness of Australia’s history, which has cast Indigenous communities among the nation’s poorest, Indigenous Australians have championed the arts and captured the attention and imagination of audiences worldwide. Art has become a primary mode of engagement with and education for these issues. Against the odds, many artists create work so that their culture may be understood and in the hope that past actions will never be repeated. At the same time artists provide a platform for asserting and preserving cultural knowledge, techniques and concepts, as seen in *art + soul*’s final episode ‘bitter and sweet’.

This episode opens with Hetti Perkins looking out over Sydney Harbour at night and speculating about what this place would have been like before the arrival of white people in 1788. Perkins considers the rock art galleries of the sandstone escarpments, now hidden by the suburbs and cityscape of contemporary Sydney.

At the State Library of New South Wales in Sydney, Perkins, senior curator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, introduces us to the late Tommy McRae whose exquisite drawings from the 1830s chronicle Aboriginal life and the arrival of squatters and gold-diggers. He lived on the Murray River on the Victoria and New South Wales border and was one of a small cluster of artists of the 19th century that documented with delicate beauty the transformation of their world. McRae fought with the government authorities to retain his independence and to not have his children taken away but sadly they were all forcibly removed.

The story the late Albert Namatjira’s success is equally as bittersweet as that of McRae. Loved for his watercolours of the majestic MacDonnell Ranges, Namatjira was caught

between two worlds, receiving national acclaim for his art but living as a second class citizen. His legacy lives on in the work of his many descendants who paint in his watercolour style. ‘bitter and sweet’ takes us to meet his descendent, Lenie Namatjira, and Ivy Pareroulta who paint for the art centre Ngurratjuta Itja Ntjarra Many Hands Art Centre in Mparntwe (Alice Springs).

Namatjira inspired artists beyond his own community including Arnhem Land’s Ginger Riley Munduwalawala whose richly colourful canvases are powerful celebrations of country and culture. While driving cattle through Central Australia, Munduwalawala met Namatjira and watched him paint, which later influenced Munduwalawala when he began to paint in the 1980s. Munduwalawala’s flamboyant paintings celebrate the country inherited from his grandfather, land centred around the Limmen Bight River, and proudly announce his enduring role as Djungkayi, or custodian, of that country.

East Kimberley artist Rusty Peters similarly celebrates country and culture and his monumental painting *Waterbrain* (2002) tells the story of how knowledge is acquired – how our brains are water absorbing ideas and knowledge – as told to Peters by his grandfather. Now in the collection of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, this painting immortalises this important Gija philosophy. In ‘bitter and sweet’, Peters takes us to his country, now home to vast pastoral estates from which he has lived most of his life in exile.

We meet photographer Mervyn Bishop, who over his years as a photojournalist has documented many changes in the Aboriginal communities. While working for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Bishop was sent to document the living conditions of rural Aboriginal settlements where people were living in appalling conditions. In ‘bitter and sweet’, he

talks about his most famous image, *Prime Minister Gough Whitlam pours soil into the hands of traditional land owner Vincent Lingiari, Northern Territory* (1975) which has become an iconic image in the land rights movement.

Perkins points out that she was ineligible to be counted in the census when she was born, and that, as a result, she sees Aboriginal art as inextricably linked to politics. To discuss the poetics of anarchy and activism in art, Perkins takes us to the studio of Brisbane-based artist Richard Bell. In 'bitter and sweet', Bell refers to the controversy around the Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award which he won in 2003 – his winning painting carries the text 'Aboriginal art: It's a white thing'. Bell talks about his artwork, which directly comments on political issues and his past as a member of the radical Black Power movement of the 1970s.

The late Michael Riley was a close friend Perkins and his exquisite photographs and films explore faith, mythology and Christianity. In 'bitter and sweet', we hear Riley talk about his photographs and films and see images of his work. Riley analysed the processes and long-reaching effects of colonisation through his artistic practice and paralleled these with his own enduring cultural traditions. These seemingly duplicitous concepts are brought poetically together in his films and photographic series, including *Sacrifice* (1992) and his final work *cloud* (2000). He used images of country, including water and sky, as metaphors for cultural and environmental damage yet these artworks are immensely beautiful; they are bittersweet. In *cloud*, cultural imagery sits against the emblematic Australian blue sky: cow and bible are seemingly tossed into the sky while Indigenous icons float effortlessly – the boomerang captured on its symbolic return and the feather, a Wiradjuri/Kamilaroi 'messenger', magically poised, referencing the potent culture which it represents.

We meet senior Yolngu elder Gawirrin Gumana, who painted parts of the celebrated *Yirrkala church panels* (1962–63). He is interviewed in front of his own panels (which are too revered in the community to be filmed in full) that illustrate his law and culture. Gumana is a leading figure



GULUMBU YUNUPINGU, YIRRKALA, 2009, HIBISCUS FILMS



WARLIMPIRRGA TJAPALTJARRI AND WARWICK THORNTON, KIWIRRKURA, ART + SOUL PRODUCTION STILL, 2009, HIBISCUS FILMS

within community and one of the claimants to the historic 2005 High Court decision that granted sea rights to the traditional owners of north-east Arnhem Land. Finally, 'bitter and sweet' introduces us to fellow Yolngu artist Gulumbu Yunupingu who paints Garak the universe, the secular star constellations, as a way of connecting all humanity. Yunupingu believes that people are like stars, all living together and all connected to create a message of peace and harmony.

'bitter and sweet', the final episode of *art + soul*, shows us that although Aboriginal Australia, the world's oldest living culture, has experienced enormous change, persecution and exclusion, Aboriginal art has emerged as a vibrant cultural beacon and is celebrated around the world today. Many artists, their families and ancestors have directly experienced hardships but their work proudly honours country and culture.

BITTER AND SWEET

Think about the ways that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, celebrated around the world as a creative and powerful force, may also communicate subjects of collective sadness and grief. Discuss the role of art in education and in strengthening communities.



HETTI PERKINS AND DAVID TRANTER, MPARNTWE (ALICE SPRINGS), ART + SOUL PRODUCTION STILL, 2009, HIBISCUS FILMS

TOMMY McRAE

c1830s–1901, Kwat Kwat, Lake Moodemere and Wahgunyah, Southern Riverine region

Find and examine images of Tommy McRae's artwork. What is special and distinctive about his way of representing figures? Describe his use of line to create delicate and detailed images of his country and culture. What can you learn about his time and place from these images? Describe the kinds of people, their clothes and actions.

Research the work of other nineteenth century artists who documented the transformation of their worlds such as Mickey of Ulladulla and William Barak. What are common subjects and themes of these artists? How was their works viewed at the time it was made?

ALBERT NAMATJIRA

1902–1959, Western Aranda, Ntaria (Hermannsburg), Central Desert region

Research the life and practice of Albert Namatjira. Did his fame, which led to him being the first Aboriginal person to be freed from the 'wards of the state' list, create any benefits? Discuss the ways in which Namatjira's story is bitter and sweet.

Assess Namatjira's influence on artists such as Ginger Riley Munduwalawala and fellow Ntaria (Hermannsburg) artists like Otto Pareroultja. Study the Hermannsburg school of art starting with Namatjira and his legacy for contemporary artists. Discuss the ways in which Namatjira redefined the Western medium of watercolour by expressing his Altyerr and country.

'Mountains and creeks and springs and water-holes are ... not merely interesting or beautiful scenic features ... they

are the handiwork of ancestors from whom [an Aranda person] has descended ... The whole countryside is his living, age-old family tree.' (TGH Strehlow)⁷ Consider this quote and discuss how Namatjira's understanding and depiction of country differs from conventional European landscape painting. How may it relate to Western Desert land maps by artists such as Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri? Discuss how the terms traditional and contemporary can be used to describe Namatjira's work.

LENIE NAMATJIRA

Born 1951, Western Aranda, Ntaria (Hermannsburg) and Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Central Desert region

Research the Hermannsburg school of painting established by Albert Namatjira and the Pareroultja brothers. Discuss how the watercolour movement is one of the earliest Aboriginal art movements. Outline the role played by artist Rex Batterbee. Explain how Lenie Namatjira and Ivy Pareroultja's development and practice represents generational continuity and change. Identify similarities and differences between Lenie Namatjira's work and other Ntaria painters in terms of materials, subject, perspective, colour and composition.

'The Hermannsburg potters of Ntaria take the landscape tradition one step further, making their ideas three-dimensional.'

– Hetti Perkins

Look at images of the ceramic work made by the Hermannsburg potters. How does this three-dimensional art form recall and incorporate the two-dimensional practice of landscape painting? Choose an artwork by yourself or another artist and translate it into another medium such as a sculptural response to a drawing or painting, a weaving from a photograph or a film of a painting. Identify qualities in the original which interest you and which could be explored through another medium. Assess the results and discuss what new or similar effects have been produced.



GINGER RILEY MUNDUWALAWALA
NGAK NGAK AND THE RUINED CITY 1998
 SYNTHETIC POLYMER PAINT ON CANVAS
 193 X 249.3 CM
 PURCHASED UNDER THE TERMS OF THE FLORENCE TURNER BLAKE BEQUEST 1999
 ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
 © ESTATE GINGER RILEY MUNDUWALAWALA, COURTESY ALCASTON GALLERY



GINGER RILEY MUNDUWALAWALA
NYAMIYUKANJI, THE RIVER COUNTRY 1997
 SYNTHETIC POLYMER PAINT ON CANVAS
 185.3 X 201.7 CM
 PURCHASED 2002
 ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
 © ESTATE GINGER RILEY MUNDUWALAWALA, COURTESY ALCASTON GALLERY

IVY PAREROULTJA

Born 1952, Western Aranda, Ntaria (Hermannsburg) and Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Central Desert region

Ivy Pareroultja learned to paint by watching her uncle Otto Pareroultja. Research the lives and art practices of Otto Pareroultja and his brothers. Describe similarities and differences in their approach to painting. Consider subject, composition, imagery and style.

Find images of the MacDonnell Ranges and the country around Ntaria (Hermannsburg). Look at the colours of the mountains. Compare this country with desert regions like that of Utopia and Kiwirrkura. Focus on geography, seasons and landscape.

Paint a landscape you know well from memory. Hold your knowledge of this place in your mind and depict the geography, landmarks, colours, atmosphere and light. Contrast this approach with painting directly from the landscape. Choose a place you love and immerse yourself in the panorama before you. Notice the shifting light, colour, depth of field, breeze and temperature, recording the scene in detail. Compare the two works and evaluate the differing results. Does one method better express your feelings about each place? Explain.

GINGER RILEY MUNDUWALAWALA

c1936–2002, Marra, Gulf region, Borroloola, Gulf region

Look at *Ngak Ngak and the Ruined City* (1998) by Ginger Riley Munduwalawala. Describe the colours you can see and the way the artist has applied the paint. Imagine you

were a bird flying over this country. Describe the things you would see, the temperature and how you would feel.

Locate the four key elements of Munduwalawala's country which he often painted – Ngak Ngak (the ancestral sea eagle), the Limmen Bight River, Garimala and Bandian (the two ancestral snakes) and the Four Archers rock formations. Make a painting which includes four things which are important to you. Think about people, places and objects and experiment with scale to highlight their importance. Explain your painting to the class.

Find photos and satellite imagery of Munduwalawala's country in south-east Arnhem Land. Notice the colours and patterns of country. Locate the Limmen Bight River and the dramatic rock formations of the region. Compare them with Munduwalawala's depictions of these sites in his paintings.

Consider the use of pictorial perspective in *Nyamiyukanji, the river country* (1997). Are you looking across the landscape or viewing it from above? How does this compositional device suggest the perspective of Ngak Ngak (the ancestral sea eagle)? Compare Munduwalawala's portrayal of the Australian landscape with that of Sidney Nolan and Russell Drysdale. How is each artist's relationship with the land revealed in their work?

Munduwalawala was called the 'boss of colour' for his remarkable use of colour. Consider use of colour, texture, perspective, composition, scale and subject. How does Munduwalawala communicate his love for country and bring it alive? Analyse his use of diverse painting techniques – stippling, underpainting, delicate marks and gestural sweeps – and assess their importance in creating this celebration of country.



RUSTY PETERS
WATERBRAIN 2002
 NATURAL PIGMENTS ON CANVAS
 EIGHT PANELS, 180 X 150 CM EACH PANEL, 180 X 1200 CM OVERALL
 PURCHASED 2002
 ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
 © RUSTY PETERS, COURTESY WARMUN ART CENTRE

RUSTY PETERS

**Born 1935, Gija, Warmun (Turkey Creek),
 Kimberley region**

Study *Waterbrain* (2002) by Rusty Peters and describe the composition, materials and colour used. The work depicts the journey of a man, from being a spirit in the water, looking for a mother, through to adulthood. How does the scale of the work reflect the breadth of the subject?

Look closely and describe the texture of the painted surface. Why are there bumps, grains and grit? What do you think the paint is made out of? How may the use of materials contribute to a sense of place? Discuss the concept of East Kimberley artists 'painting country with country'. How does this effect the reading and understanding of the subjects depicted. Research the history of this region and the development of the Warmun style at <<http://www.warmunart.com/about.htm>>.

'These white people didn't like black people, that's why they were killing them to the west, the south, the north and the east.'

– Rusty Peters, 2002⁸

Many of the Gija people of the East Kimberley region became fringe dwellers, displaced from their country by pastoralists who annexed vast land tracts. The period between 1890 and the 1920s in the Kimberley region was marked by horrific frontier violence as Europeans claimed Indigenous land.

Peters' work *Chinaman's Garden Massacre* was included in the 2002 exhibition *Blood on the spinifex*. Research this exhibition, conceived as a direct response to the History Wars. Learn about this debate and examine the role played by East Kimberley artists in response. Why did these artists choose to tell their stories through art? Do you agree that oral and visual records are legitimate modes of historical evidence? Discuss these ideas in class.

Consider the ways that different artists address truth and how they bear witness to subjects of horror and grief through their art. Investigate other artistic forms which have been used to make records of colonisation such as rock art, songs, ceremonies and theatre.



RUSTY PETERS, GRANT PIRRIE GALLERY, SYDNEY, 2002, FAIRFAX PHOTOS

MERVYN BISHOP

**Born 1945, Dubbo, Southern Riverine region, Sydney,
 South-east region**

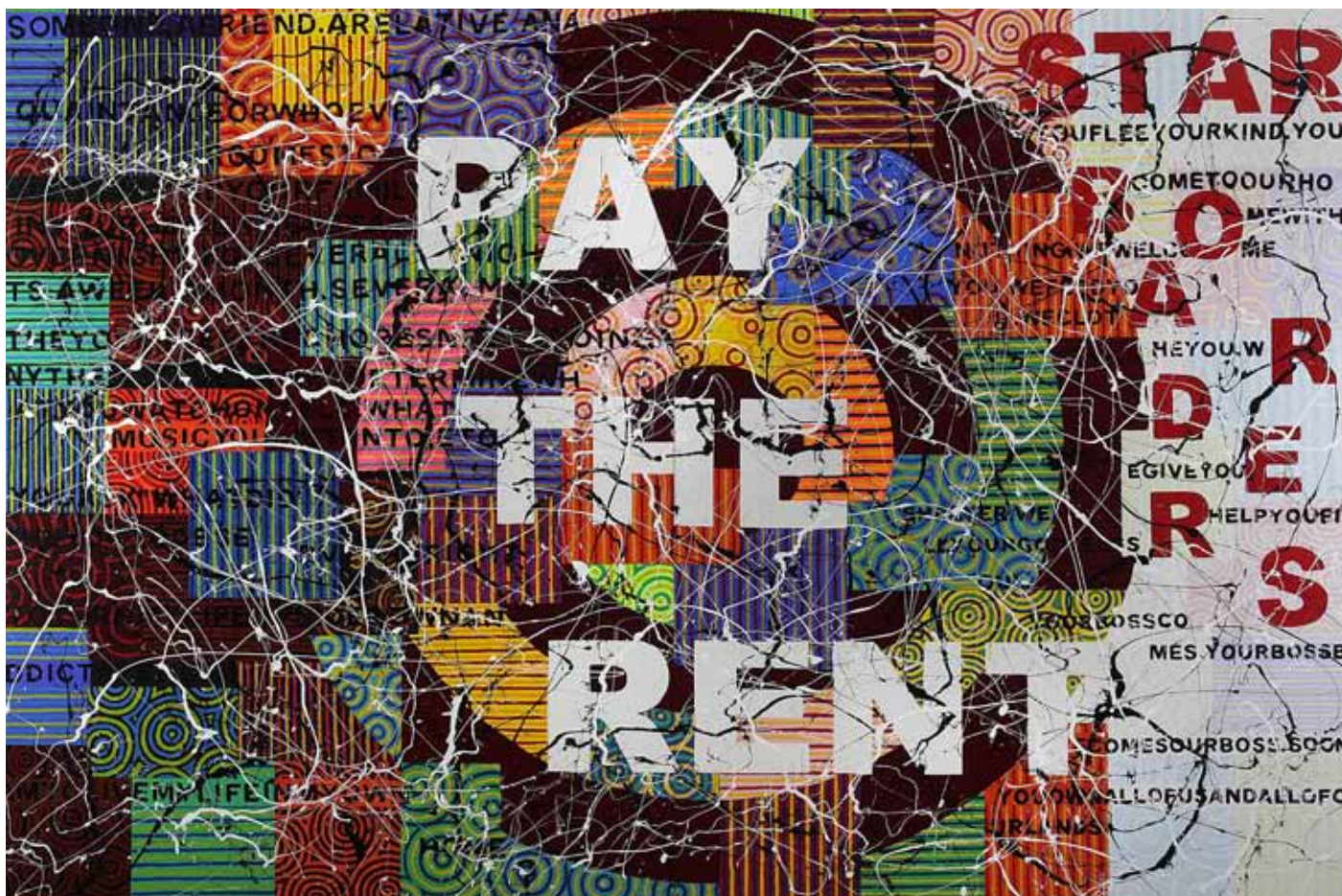
Research Mervyn Bishop's career. He was Australia's first Indigenous press photographer working for the *Sydney Morning Herald* and for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. Bishop recorded many moments in history. Create a timeline of events documented by Bishop from rural poverty to protest marches and political events. Assess his contribution to documenting historical events from an Indigenous perspective.

Bishop took the iconic photograph *Prime Minister Gough Whitlam pours soil into the hands of traditional land owner Vincent Lingiari, Northern Territory* (1975). Look at the photograph and analyse its symbolism. Consider the physical qualities of the participants, their clothing, body language, facial expressions and proximity to each other. Where do their sight-lines meet? Use a viewfinder to isolate the detail of the hands.

For this iconic image, Bishop asked Lingiari and Whitlam to re-enact the pouring of the soil, outside in the sunshine. It is a re-staging of the original ceremony done later on the same day. What reasons might Bishop have had for asking the participants to re-enact the moment in a different location? Does this affect the 'truth' of the resulting image?

Listen to the song 'From Little Things, Big Things Grow' by Kev Carmody and Paul Kelly. This song was written about Vincent Lingiari and his struggle for land rights. How does this song and Bishop's work express the bitter and the sweet experiences of Vincent Lingiari and his people?

Discuss the ways you think the work of Bishop paved the way for a new generation of contemporary Indigenous photographers such as Michael Riley, Ricky Maynard, Tracey Moffatt and Destiny Deacon.



RICHARD BELL
 PAY THE RENT 2009
 SYNTHETIC POLYMER PAINT ON CANVAS
 240 X 360 CM
 COURTESY MILANI GALLERY
 © RICHARD BELL, COURTESY MILANI GALLERY

RICHARD BELL

Born 1953, Kamilaroi, Kooma, Jiman and Gurang Gurang, Northern Riverine region, Brisbane, North-east region

Analyse the use of signs, symbols and text in *Pay the rent* (2009) by Richard Bell. What effect does the use of layering, materials and a street graffiti aesthetic create? How does this contribute to the intention of the work and assist in the communication of its message?

Bell addresses the ways that systems of knowledge, like language and classification, are used by colonising powers to exert control. Investigate how his work challenges those systems and give examples.

Imagine you are an art critic. Write a review of Bell's work in which you analyse the issues and theories he explores. Discuss the strategies he uses and evaluate their effectiveness for audiences who may view them in different contexts such as a gallery, print media or street posters.

Prepare to interview the artist. Reflect on the relationship between the artist, his artwork and the contemporary world. Write a list of questions related to his art-making practice

and the audience. Consider Bell's creation of alter egos and his use of the term 'provocateur' to describe himself as part of his strategy.

Assess how Bell's work addresses stereotyped expectations of Aboriginal men in contemporary Australian culture. Locate examples of Bell's use of word play to create powerful political messages. Investigate his use of language, the site of Western power, to challenge racism and class barriers.

Research the history of Indigenous political engagement in Queensland including Black Power, proppaNOW artists' collective and the Campfire Group.

MICHAEL RILEY

1960–2004, Wiradjuri, Southern Riverine region, and Kamilaroi, Northern Riverine region, Sydney, South-east region

Look at how Michael Riley uses the Australian sky as backdrop in his 2000 series *cloud*. Choose four things that are important to you and represent you and your world. Use photography, drawing or painting to make an image of each thing. Cut them out, and place them on new backgrounds

including scenes of cities, water and textures like grass and stone. How does changing the background change your understanding of the image?

List words and ideas which come to mind when you look at *Untitled (feather)* (2000) by Riley. Notice scale, colour, composition, media and subject matter. Riley described the feather as a 'messenger'. What do you think he meant by this?

Research Riley's diverse suites of work in photomedia, film and video. Look at earlier photographic series including *Sacrifice* (1992) and *flyblown* (1998). Identify recurring themes and subjects and analyse the ways in which his work has grappled with many aspects of Indigenous history – colonisation, dispossession, assimilation and self-determination. How might his own experiences of segregation and racism have informed his practice? How does Riley's practice express the idea of 'bittersweet'?

Riley was instrumental in setting up Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative. Investigate the reasons for the founding of Boomalli and its role in the careers of artists such as Tracey Moffatt, Brenda L Croft and Jeffrey Samuels. Discuss the role of this art centre in supporting self-determination for Indigenous artists.

Create a timeline of social, political and cultural events in Sydney in the 1980s and 1990s. Evaluate how these events, and particularly tertiary education and the migration of Aboriginal people to urban centres, contributed to the energetic political and creative climate of the time.

GAWIRRIN GUMANA

Born c1935, Dhalwangu, Gangan and Yirrkala, Arnhem region

In 1962 and 1963 Gawirrin Gumana, along with other senior Yolngu community elders, participated in painting *Yirrkala church panels* that asserted Yolngu religion and connection to country. This led to the Yirrkala Bark Petition of 1963 and the birth of the land rights movement in Australia. How does Gumana explain the meaning of these panels in *art + soul*? Research the contemporary role churches play within Indigenous communities including those at Nguiu, Wirrimanu (Balgo), Ntaria (Hermannsburg) and Warmun (Turkey Creek).

Research the Yirrkala Bark Petition, the Barunga Statement of 1988, the Ngurrara Canvas of 1997 and the exhibition *Saltwater – Yirrkala Bark Paintings of Sea Country* (1999–2001). Create a timeline of the land rights movement in Australian history starting with the Yirrkala Bark Petition and including the Mabo High Court decision and Blue Mud Bay High Court decision. Discuss the role played by art in achieving Indigenous self-determination.



MILKY WAY, 2009, WARWICK THORNTON

Create an artwork which asserts that you belong to a particular place. Consider how you will communicate your connection to this place.

Present-day Yolngu leader, Galarwuy Yunupingu explains that Aboriginal people do not just paint for fun or profit, but 'to demonstrate our continuing link with our country and the rights and responsibilities we have to it'. Choose three artists from the series *art + soul* and explain how their work demonstrates this statement.

GULUMBU YUNUPINGU

Born c1945, Gumag, Gunyungarra and Yirrkala, Arnhem region

Gulumbu Yunupingu's work is inspired by her father, the late senior artist Mungurrawuy Yunupingu. Her subject of Garak, the universe, is purposely open for people to interpret. How do Yunupingu's paintings of the stars reflect her sense of connecting the world? List other subjects that are shared by people around the world.

Research Yunupingu's family, their achievements and their ongoing cultural projects including the band Yothu Yindi and the Garma Festival.

Locate the community of Yirrkala on a map of Australia. Research the history of the region and find photos and films. Find out about the animals, plants and seasons. Describe the way people live, their technologies and traditions. Using this information, plan a trip to Arnhem Land. What would you like to see when you go there?

Endnotes

⁷ TGH Strehlow quoted in Jane Hardy, John Megaw and Ruth Megaw (eds), *The Heritage of Namatjira: the Watercolourists of Central Australia*, William Heinemann, Port Melbourne, 1992, p.33.

⁸ Rusty Peters quoted in *Blood on the spinifex*, Ian Potter Museum of Art, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, 2002, p.56.



DOREEN REID NAKAMARRA AND HETTI PERKINS,
MPARNTWE (ALICE SPRINGS), 2009, HIBISCUS FILMS

INFORMATION & RESOURCES

art + soul is a 3 x one-hour documentary series for ABC1 Television, produced by Hibiscus Films, financed by Screen Australia, in association with Screen NSW, the Art Gallery of New South Wales and the Australia Council for the Arts.

KEY CREDITS

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GLOSSARY

Altyerr: a term used by Central Desert language groups to describe creation. Rather than only representing something of the past, Altyerr also stands for the present.

Djang: a term used by western Arnhem Land language groups to describe the sites and stories associated with ancestral beings.

Garak: a Yolngu term meaning 'the universe'.

History Wars: a debate regarding the interpretation of events in the British colonisation of Australia, in particular these events' impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their cultures.

Karilwara: a site in the Western Desert associated with snake Tjukurpa.

land rights: a political movement led by Aboriginal activists advocating social justice and self-determination for Indigenous people through government recognition of the sovereignty of Indigenous people and their prior ownership of their land.

Ngalyod: the name of the Rainbow Serpent in western Arnhem Land languages that can be seen everywhere in the rivers, swamps and plains.

Ngarranggarni: a Gija term for the 'dreaming'. It represents a series of narratives or stories that describe the travels and deeds of ancestral beings who created the land, people and culture. Rather than only representing something of the past, Ngarranggarni also stands for the present.

outstation movement: the period in the late 1970s and early 1980s when Aboriginal people were given support and the infrastructure to move back to their traditional country and away from government-controlled settlements.

Pukumani: the funerary ceremony of the Tiwi people of Bathurst and Melville Islands.

Tjukurpa: a term used by Western Desert language groups meaning a series of narratives or stories that describe the travels and deeds of ancestral beings who created the land, people and culture. Rather than only representing something of the past, Tjukurpa also stands for the present.

tutini: a tutini, or pukumani gravepost, is an object used in the Pukumani funerary ceremony of the Tiwi people of Bathurst and Melville Islands. The poles are carved of hardwood and painted in ochre, the design of the pole is significant to the deceased person, their skin group and family.

Wangarr: a term used by western Arnhem Land language groups meaning the 'dreaming'. It represents a series of narratives or stories that describe the travels and deeds of ancestral beings who created the land, people and culture. Rather than only representing something of the past, Wangarr also stands for the present.

RESOURCES

ART + SOUL

Television Series

art + soul, 3 episodes x 55 mins, Hibiscus Films, Sydney, 2010. Writer and presenter Hetti Perkins, director Warwick Thornton. Screening on ABC1 from 7 October 2010.

DVD

art + soul (Warwick Thornton, 2010), 166 mins, Hibiscus Films, Sydney, 2010. Includes 'Making of *art + soul*'. Released by Madman, October 2010, see <<http://www.madman.com.au>>.

Website

<http://www.abc.net.au/arts/artandsoul>

This website provides additional material on artists and artworks and features fifteen webisodes, or short films, which explore the artists and their work in more detail. For each of the three episodes of *art + soul* there are five webisodes which will be available as the corresponding episode goes to air.

Exhibition

art + soul, Art Gallery of New South Wales Yiribana Gallery, from 28 August 2010.

As many of the artworks featured in *art + soul* are part of the AGNSW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collection, the AGNSW will hold an exhibition to accompany the launch of the documentary series. Further to seeing the works at the Gallery, the AGNSW website offers biographical information on artists and artworks and will screen the fifteen webisodes made in conjunction with *art + soul*. There are additional short films on the AGNSW website, including interviews with artists from the series. See <<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/exhibitions/art-soul>>.

Book

Hetti Perkins, *art + soul: a journey of discovery through Aboriginal art*, The Miegunyah Press, Melbourne, 2010.

This 300-page book featuring essays, colour plates, artists' interviews and biographies presents Hetti Perkins' journey through the documentary series. See <<http://www.mup.com.au>>.

BOOKS

Hetti Perkins and Margie West (eds), *One sun one moon: Aboriginal art in Australia*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2007.

Hetti Perkins (ed.), *Tradition today: Indigenous art in Australia*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2004.

Hetti Perkins and Hannah Fink (eds), *Papunya Tula: genesis and genius*, exhibition catalogue, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2000.

EDUCATION RESOURCES

Jonathan Jones and Amanda Peacock, *art + soul: education kit*, <<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/education/education-materials/education-kits/exhibition-kits/art-soul/>>, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2010.

Jonathan Jones and Amanda Peacock, *Country, culture, community: an education kit for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collection*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2009.

Jonathan Jones and Amanda Peacock, *Living Black*, (collection notes), Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2008.

DVDs

Crossing Country (James Marshall and Jonathan Jones, 2004), 25 mins, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2004.

True Stories: artists of the East Kimberley (James Marshall and Hetti Perkins, 2004), 25 mins, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2004.

WEBSITES

When researching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, see websites of state and national galleries and museums and other government websites including ones managed by Indigenous groups such as community-based art centres. These are recommended as authoritative and accurate sources and can be found at <<http://www.cultureand recreation.gov.au/articles/indigenous/art/>>.

STUDY GUIDE

art + soul: a personal journey into the world of Aboriginal art (*art + soul* study guide)

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Coordinators: ATOM, Hibiscus Films and Art Gallery of New South Wales

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MANINGRIDA, 2009, WARWICK THORNTON



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