

**BALLARAT
INTERNATIONAL
FOTO
BIENNALE**

2017

TELL

**CONTEMPORARY INDIGENOUS
PHOTOGRAPHY**

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CONTEMPORARY INDIGENOUS PHOTOGRAPHY

Curator

Jessica Clark

Artists

Moorina Bonini, Maree Clarke, Bindi Cole Chocka, Brenda L Croft, Destiny Deacon, Robert Fielding, Deanne Gilson, Jody Haines, Dianne Jones, Ricky Maynard, Hayley Millar-Baker, Kent Morris, Pitcha Makin Fellas, Steven Rhall, Damien Shen, Warwick Thornton, James Tylor with Laura Wills.

First presented at the Mining Exchange,
12 Lydiard Street North, Ballarat, Victoria 3350

19 August – 17 September 2017

Warning The exhibition and accompanying publications may contain the names and images of deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, we would like to acknowledge the Wadawurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which *Tell* is presented, and pay respect to elders past and present.

We sincerely thank all of the talented and inspirational Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, and their collaborators whose works are included in the *Tell* exhibition, also their representatives, art and cultural centres. We gratefully recognise the support of Ilford, Colour Factory, HC Pro and Creative Framing Gallery Ballarat whose contributions have made this exhibition possible, alongside government and philanthropic partners: Australia Council, Festivals Australia, Creative Victoria, Visit Victoria, City of Ballarat, The Bardas Foundation, The Besen Foundation, The Helen Macpherson Smith Trust, Gandel Philanthropy and The Hugh D.T. Williamson Foundation.

Jessica Clark (curator) would also like to acknowledge the Director of the Ballarat International Foto Biennale, Fiona Sweet – without your passion, diligence and professionalism none of this would have been possible. Warm thanks are extended to Hannah Presley whose eloquent and insightful words feature in the exhibition publication, to Patrice Sharkey who has been a mentor, and particular members of the incredible BIFB team: Production Manager Jo Sapir, Coordinators Chandini Batra and Amelia Bartak, and Education Coordinator Amelia James, along with the countless BIFB volunteers who have been instrumental in the realisation of *Tell*, its publication and accompanying education program. And lastly, Clark gives her personal thanks to her family, friends, colleagues and community who have supported, encouraged and inspired her throughout the development of *Tell*.

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Ballarat International Foto Biennale

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THE PERFORMANCE OF IDENTITY 2017 Ballarat International Foto Biennale

It is with great pleasure and pride that the Ballarat International Foto Biennale presents this exhibition, part of a significant survey of photography and contemporary photo-media from over 100 artists in more than 80 venues. For the 7th Biennale, my first one—I was strongly guided by the desire to look at how identity is created, shared and valued amongst diverse communities from Australia and internationally. From people and places, how photographers express themselves within art – for me, it is truly performative whether that is applied to the physical body, place or space captured through photography and photo-media practices. I am delighted with the dedicated work by each of my invited curators who have contributed remarkable exhibitions for our core program: Aaron Bradbrook (*Rearranging Boundaries*), Jessica Clark (*Tell*), Michelle Mountain (*Reverie Revelry: fashion through photography*) and Rebecca Najdowski (*A Field Guide to the Stars*). I thank them wholeheartedly.

Across history, genre, message, style, the medium and its related forms continues to hold fascination and strong relevance. We remain preoccupied with the photographic image despite the ever-increasing visual saturation of the world we now contend with, brought into our personal space through mobile devices and communication technologies. We constantly navigate the shrinking spheres of the personal, between private and public lives, and the collective. The juxtaposition of desire, intimacy against politics, activism, change – this all speaks to the inherent contradiction of photography – its documentary nature that captures us in our time against its use as a tool for art and artifice. This is a complex medium that continues to draw attention –underlining the need for this dedicated photographic festival.

Empowering connection between people, the Biennale aims to reflect contemporary society, the issues and politics that have currency for Australians today, through photography. This is ever more important in the context of a regional city like Ballarat where this Biennale not only provides a lens to the lives of locals and national and international counterparts, but also brings in a wealth of people to engage and connect with our surrounds.

Thank you to the many people and supporters who have helped bring this great event to fruition. It is a truly collective endeavour between the people of Ballarat and the region, national and international photographers, artists and peers alongside our funding partners across government, business and philanthropy. Thanks are especially due to the hard-working board, volunteers and staff of the Ballarat International Foto Biennale.

We look forward to the ideas, discussions and future opportunities that the 2017 Biennale is bound to generate.

Fiona Sweet
Director

Tell Contemporary Indigenous Photography

Curated by Jessica Clark

The role of photography as a colonial tool for documenting and labelling Indigenous peoples is subverted in *Tell*. Our prior understanding of the medium and its potentiality in contemporary art practice is challenged. Photography's role has shifted in this context. The 17 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists included harness the medium as a powerful mode of self-expression; taking it up as a communicative device to reframe, redefine and re-present. Here and now, photography tells an alternate story. One that is both personal and collective and at its very heart about survival – transforming photography's colonial legacy of imposition, into an empowering mode of resistance.¹

Set against a backdrop of social and political discourse, the exhibition highlights photography as a powerful vehicle to navigate and challenge the external influences that might otherwise define us. Through composition and superimposition Bindi Cole Chocka's *Fertility 1–4* (2017), reveals her Wathaurong Country 'cut-out' and collaged into a focal figure. By depicting culture from within, unimpeded by the domesticity that dominates the background, but somewhat displaced, Cole Chocka deploys a personal lens that speaks to the inextricable interconnection and interrelation between Country, community and culture that continues.

This powerful connection, as well as the presence of Indigenous peoples in Australia's urban landscape, is reaffirmed through the altered imagery of Kent Morris and the Pitcha Makin Fellas. Photography in these works is a powerful mode of cultural and self-affirmation that conveys Indigenous Australia's continued presence in the landscape despite colonisation. Morris's *Cultural Reflections – Up Above #3* (2017) series, captures the beauty of native birds and their engagement with and adaption to the now built environment; reconstructing avian interactions into a social commentary that reflects on the cultural continuity and survival of Indigenous peoples post-colonisation. With a similar focus on photography's malleability and symbolic underpinnings, the Pitcha Makin Fellas' series *Looking at 2 Cultures* (2017), speaks of 'vanished' becoming visible. Like Morris, the Pitcha Makin Fellas highlight presence, continuation and connection as a common thread by translating the group's combined histories into stamp patterning that is applied to the photographic surface to regulate what can and can't be seen – poignant now in considering Australia's socio-political landscape.²

Photography's past fixation on the 'colonised subject' is destabilised in *Tell* with a number of artists re-directing the gaze toward the re-presentation of social and historical narratives on their terms. Artists such as Brenda L. Croft, Ricky Maynard, Dianne Jones and James Tylor, critique the ongoing legacy of colonisation in ways that rouse a reconsideration of our notions of our own truth. Croft's *Self-Portraits on Country* (2014) assembles thirteen brutally honest 'selfies' that depict the artist on her people's traditional homelands, in control and looking straight ahead.³ Grounded in sovereignty, these portraits reflect on personal and public archives to explore notions of dislocation and displacement – a reality common for many Indigenous peoples. Like Croft, Maynard focusses his practice toward the complexities of Indigenous experience – delineated by hardship, perseverance and burden, and the trans-generational trauma that stems from this displacement. Both Croft's *Self-Portraits on Country* (2014) and Maynard's works featured in the *Returning to places that name us* (2000) series, highlight the enduring spirit of Aboriginal peoples, attest the cultural stories of community, place and space, and affirms the importance and need for these stories being told and understood.

Jones brings to light the sway of the imaginary or fictional in historical 'truths' in *Darlarinj (Hunting)*, *Boodjar (Country)* and *Yonga Koorndi (Kangaroo Club)* (2014). Photography is employed to research, critique and reconstruct a cold-case narrative from the past – displaying her research through images repeated and arranged in a gridded storyboard that gradually blurs the image until it is completely unidentifiable. In doing this, Jones uses photography as a means of highlighting the misconceptions and misrepresentations of Aboriginal people that have historically fuelled Australia's history of frontier violence.⁴ Tylor's collaborative project with South Australian artist Laura Wills, titled *The Forgotten Wars* (2017) also explores photography's ability to redefine historical 'truth'. Elements of the past and present are melded as Tylor's depictions of Australia's rural landscape are overlaid with Wills' colourful and intricate map markings that have been derived from colonial war, survey, town and mining maps from the British Parliamentary Papers and Commission Reports that documented the colonisation of Australia.⁵ Through their interdisciplinary approach to photography, both Jones and Tylor reinvestigate the past, translating and re-communicating histories in new ways that reveal the untold truths that lie beneath and beyond the historical records that remain in the mainstream.

The works of Destiny Deacon, Warwick Thornton and Steven Rhall drive these provocations further, calling into question what is known and unknown through their focus on performativity. In *Daisy and Heather Discuss Race* (2016), *Ebony and Ivy Face Race* (2016), and *The Listeners* (2017), Deacon stages her dollies⁶, presenting them in photo and video productions that engage in a discourse of race relations that defies the one-dimensionality of Aboriginal identity often imposed by the media.⁷ In a similar vein, Thornton cinematically interrogates Australia's history of representing Aboriginal people, deconstructing colonial notions of authority in *Untitled 1* and *2* (2013) by adorning his subjects in settler uniforms of 'power' and depicting them levitating above a blood-red country landscape. Rhall removes the figure entirely, in *Avert* (2017), conceptualising photography as an expanded field through his clever essentialist and existentialist explorations that act as an 'antidote' to the effects of prescription.⁸ *Avert* transcends the spatial and temporal boundaries of photographic practice, conceptualising a new way to re-examine Aboriginal people's representation in the public realm and challenging the discourse that plagues the politics of representation from, what Rhall terms, 'a post-modernist positionality'⁹.

The varying accounts of Aboriginal life, history and culture showcased in the story so far, make explicit the multiplicity of Indigeneity and the complexities that comes with this in a contemporary context. Through an introspective lens, Hayley Millar-Baker, Jody Haines and Moorina Bonini, attempt to unhinge the dominant ideologies that attempt to prescribe Indigeneity as a 'one size fits all' entity, that is definable and fixed. Millar-Baker's carefully constructed digital collages, *Even if the race is fated to disappear 1 (Peeneeyt Meerreeng/ Before, Now, Tomorrow)* (2017) and *Untitled 1 (Peeneeyt Murapangi, Peeneeyt Toongkateeyt)*, (2017), meld imagery of colonial buildings with elements of both her birth and ancestral Country (Wathaurong and Gunditjmara respectively) – telling of an identity that is at once multiple, displaced and negotiated between culture and Country. Haines' evocative self-portraits from the series *This is not resolved* (2016) and her holographic projection, *And yet, after so long, I still hear you* (2017), both materially and conceptually reflect the influences that shape us – highlighting the psychological marks made present by the concessions of place Millar-Baker emphasises. Haines illustrates the complexities that stem from these negotiations of self, presenting a series of self-portraits that depict the artist as multiple and in a mind-numbing state of torment and exasperation. Also featuring images of self, and with a similar pursuit in mind, is Bonini's photographic installation, *You've had your turn, now it's MINE* (2017). Like Haines, Bonini places herself and her story in front of the camera; producing an empowering work that defies social and political ideologies through visual affirmations of her strength and resilience; a reclamation of culture and cultural identity, despite the everyday racist remarks and questions she is forced to filter on a daily basis.¹⁰

⁴ D. Jones, interview with the author, 13 June 2017.

⁵ J. Tylor, email with the author, 18 April 2017.

⁶ Destiny Deacon is well known for her use of 'dollies' in her photography, performance, video and installation, using them to 'represent us as people' in the mainstream. (D. Deacon, 'Destiny Deacon', in *art + soul*, The Miegunyah Press: Victoria, 2010, p.64.)

⁷ V. Fraser, email with the author, 20 July 2017.

⁸ S. Rhall, email with the author, 9 July 2017.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ "Why should I be constantly questioned about my cultural identity? How is this fair? Do I have to spend the rest of my life explaining my heritage and why I look like this? Would you want to do that? Are you full Australian? Or 1/4, or half?" (Bonini, 2017). M. Bonini, email with the author, 11 July 2017).

The dialogue of *Tell* continues its exploration of identity and belonging, through the profoundly personal works of Maree Clarke and Deanne Gilson that invoke a cathartic relationship with the lens. Both Clarke and Gilson reaffirm and connect with their cultural heritage through contemporary approaches to reviving traditional ceremony and cultural practice (Clarke, 2017; Gilson, 2017). Clarke's *Self portrait in Mourning Necklace* (2017) and *Mourning Necklace* (2017) embrace tradition as well as a curiosity for new technologies – depicting the artist adorned with her traditional marks of mourning – painted-up with white ochre and wearing a lengthy black river reed and crow feather necklace. The large-scale digital portrait paired with the beautifully crafted mourning necklace beckons a tender reminder of love and loss, and the significance of the healing process. These works inspire an eloquent dialogue in proximity to Gilson's series *Cook, Murnong and Me* (2017), that acts as visual resolution and reflection motivated by familial and ancestral healing. Embedded with current and cultural artefacts, adornments and images of Country, Gilson's heart-felt narratives highlight the revived practice of ceremony and its cultural importance in a contemporary context.¹¹ At an individual and collective level, Clarke and Gilson's works operate as cultural repositories of memory, story and experience that both celebrate and serve as witness in aim of guiding and enabling healing to take place.

Another dynamic perspective of personal and collective healing is realised through the work of Damien Shen and Robert Fielding. Shen's aluminium prints and totypes that comprise the series *Still Life After Penn* (2017), unpack his recent role as an Aboriginal artist working with museological collections that house the remains and secret sacred objects of his Ngarrindjeri ancestors.¹² Utilising his contemporary practice to investigate and interrupt, Shen draws focus to the cultural significance of repatriation and its spiritual essentiality in raising awareness to promote healing and reconciliation. In considering the cultural negotiations and implications of the past, Fielding provides a poetic account of self and community through a contemporary approach to art making fuelled by the concept of reconciliation and forward-thinking. Included in *Tell* are two works by Fielding; *Ngapartji-Ngapartji* (2017), a modified photograph that references the Anangu concept of reciprocity and cooperation, and *Milkali Kutju* (2015) a self-portrait in the form of a diptych, its title embedded in the work and translated to read 'one blood'.¹³ Through language, materiality and composition, Fielding conveys a celebration of culture and togetherness, applying photographic technologies with creative techniques that draw attention to our similarities as opposed to our differences.

The artists of *Tell* collectively mediate the past, critique the present, and aspire to a decolonised future, blending the role of artist and activist through their wide-ranging approaches to contemporary photographic practice. Through a variety of aesthetic and material strategies, the artists place themselves and their stories at centre – sharing vision and voice, and in doing so transforming photography into a liberating device by which to explore, express self and culture. The multi-modal dispersion of photographic works within the exhibition generate a sensorial celebration of Indigeneity and Indigenous perspectives, simultaneously focussing both outwardly and inwardly in a cyclic reflection to emphasise the integral role of the visual in the communication and preservation of culture. Together the artists' personal as well as collective experiences expose a culturally dynamic dialogue that provokes a deeper understanding of the multiplicity of Indigeneity in contemporary Australia and the complexities that come with this.

Jessica Clark is a Palawa woman, a curator, teacher and arts manager; working in the arts sector since 2009. Recent curatorial projects include *Unintended*, 2017 and *DISPERSIA*, 2016 at RMIT SITE EIGHT Gallery, *Ecclectic Street*, 2017 at Easey Street Artist Studios, and currently works in a co-curator and co-project manager role for the commission of a large-scale public artwork for RMIT University's New Academic Street project. She is alumni of UNSW College of Fine Art, Australian Catholic University and RMIT University having completed a Bachelor in Art Theory, postgraduate studies in Education, and a Master of Arts Management respectively. Jessica has recently returned from the 57th International Art Exhibition, the Venice Biennale as part of the Australian First Nations Curatorial Exchange Program 2017.

¹¹ D. Gilson, email with the author, 20 July 2017.

¹² D. Shen, email with the author, 11 July 2017.

¹³ H. Aarons, email with the author, 14 July 2017.

The Spirited Image

By Hannah Presley

With the onslaught of imagery at such an epic level of saturation in our daily lives, it is easy to view the current role of photography as losing impact, however, Aboriginal artists continue to pick up a camera to tell their story.

A recent article by Annika Klein published in *Aperture* suggests that photography is losing ground as the preferred medium by the world's foremost artists, with only three of the eighty-seven exhibitors at the 57th Venice Biennale presenting work based solely within the photographic realm in 2017.¹ Belgium, Poland and Australia were the only countries represented by photographers and two of the three exhibitions utilised the medium as either a method for documenting an artistic process or performance, or as part of a bigger installation. Photography is being incorporated into rather than being the star of these highly regarded exhibitions.

In 2017, Tracey Moffatt represented Australia at the Venice Biennale with a new body of work titled *My Horizon*, comprising two photographic series and two moving image works. This was the first year Australia was represented by a solo Indigenous artist at the Venice Biennale and photography was Moffatt's medium of choice. Moffatt is known for addressing universal themes set in secret locations: her extensive career is influenced by her devotion to the history of photography and unrelenting experimentation.

"In the end I am an artist who is dead serious about wanting to move forward and experiment with the photographic or film and video form. I still strive for old-fashioned artistry with the camera, and I want to push the photo image into other realms. Still, after 40 years of camera play, I get as excited to see the results of my photo shoots as when as a teen I would dash to the chemist shop after school to pick up my latest photo instamatic creations".²

Photography has a powerful and emotive history for the Aboriginal community. Some of the earliest photographs developed in Australia were images of our First Nations people. In 1847 Douglas Kilburn created a series of daguerreotypes depicting people from the Kulin Nations; these studio images were then engraved and published in England for the purposes of souvenirs or curiosities from the colony.

It was common practice for photographers to create backdrops and props that served the notion of presenting a savage and remote race of people whose time was coming to an end. This form of manipulated documentation was repeated across the country and these initial depictions defined how we as Aboriginal people were viewed, keeping us squarely in the realm of the ethnographic. The resulting photographs were then echoed across painting and watercolour, as popular artists of the time were inspired by the staged portrayals of Aboriginal people, ensuring this distorted depiction persevered.

The idea of shifting the power away from the dominant culture and reclaiming the way our community is depicted, in many ways informed an evolution in artistic practice, and an activist spirit now inhabits the contemporary photographic work created by Aboriginal artists.

In 1986 an iconic group exhibition was held as part of the week of NADOC (later NAIDOC) at the Aboriginal Artists Gallery, Sydney. NADOC '86, *Exhibition of Aboriginal and Islander Photographers* included work from Mervyn Bishop, Brenda L Croft, Tony Davis, Ellen Jose, Darren Kemp, Tracey Moffatt, Michael Riley, Chris Robinson, Terry Shewring and Ros Sultan. This dynamic group of artists came together to position themselves squarely within the contemporary art scene by asserting their relevance, making sure they were visible and in turn, flouting the limitations placed on Aboriginal art at the time. This potent statement helped to solidify the artistic agency of Aboriginal artists whilst placing photography at the forefront of this progress.

¹ Aperture Foundation NY. 2017. Does the Venice Biennale Have a Problem with Photography? [ONLINE] Available at: <http://aperture.org/blog/venice-biennale-problem-photography/>.

² N. King, 2017. *My Horizon*. 1st ed. London, United Kingdom: Thames and Hudson.

Visibility is an underlying theme in the photographic expressions of Aboriginal people beginning with the documentation of our own community. Many photographers began their careers recording cultural events such as Indigenous rights marches and celebrations; in many cases subjects were their own families and extended communities. We cannot underestimate the place photographs hold in maintaining an unbroken relationship with our families, identity and culture: they are a reflection of our pride in who we are.

Photography is also being utilised to document the cultural practices of our Elders, bearing witness to the vast knowledge borne from generations of connection. These images play an important role in helping to enrich our future generations' understanding of culture and belonging. As stated by Mutti Mutti/Yorta Yorta and Boonwurrung/Wemba Wemba artist, Maree Clarke "It's about regenerating cultural practices...making people aware of, you know, our culture, and that we are a really strong culture, and that we haven't lost anything; I think they've just been, some of these practices have been laying dormant for a while."³

Photography has captured moments in our history that have shaped who we are and what we want. Aboriginal artists have recognised the medium as an exceptional tool for storytelling by re-telling and asserting our own narrative, addressing inequity in how our community is portrayed. The impact of Indigenous photography now reaches from our Auntie's family albums to the highest level of Australia's international presence in the art world. The immediacy of the medium ensures it will endure as an ideal instrument of both documentation and artistic expression for Aboriginal artists.

Hannah Presley is an Aboriginal curator based in Melbourne. Most recently she was First Nations Curatorial Assistant for Tracey Moffatt at the 57th International Art Exhibition, Venice Biennale 2017. Her practice focuses on the development of creative projects with Aboriginal artists. She works closely with artists, learning about the techniques, history and community that informs their making to help guide her curatorial process. Presley currently manages the Victorian Aboriginal Weaving Collective. Recent curatorial projects include the upcoming *Every Second Feels Like A Century*, West Space, Melbourne (with Debbie Pryor); *Weaving Country* (with Vicki Couzens), Footscray Community Arts Centre, Melbourne (2017).

Artist Biographies



Moorina Bonini, #4, from *You've Had Your Turn, Now it's MINE* installation, 2017 pigment print on rag paper, 45 x 65cm. Courtesy of the artist.

³ Internationally renowned artist Maree Clarke holds her first solo show at home – ABC Mildura – Swan Hill Victoria – Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Accessed 2017. *Internationally renowned artist Maree Clarke holds her first solo show at home – ABC Mildura – Swan Hill Victoria – Australian Broadcasting Corporation.* [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.abc.net.au/local/audio/2011/09/12/3315500.htm>.

Moorina Bonini (b. 1996 Yorta Yorta)

Moorina Bonini is a proud Yorta Yorta woman and member of the Dhulunyagen Clan. Her works are inspired by her own experiences as an Aboriginal and Italian woman, creating work that examines ideas surrounding everyday racism, stereotypes and identity through introspective accounts of lived experience and the constant questions that are hurled in everyday slurs that question her identity. Bonini is an emerging artist who works predominantly within the realms of video art, photography and installation and utilises her contemporary practice as a platform to bring focus to Aboriginal culture.



Bindi Cole-Chocka, *Fertility 1*, 2017, pigment prints on gloss paper, 80 x 120cm. Courtesy of the artist.

Bindi Cole Chocka (b. 1975 Wathaurong)

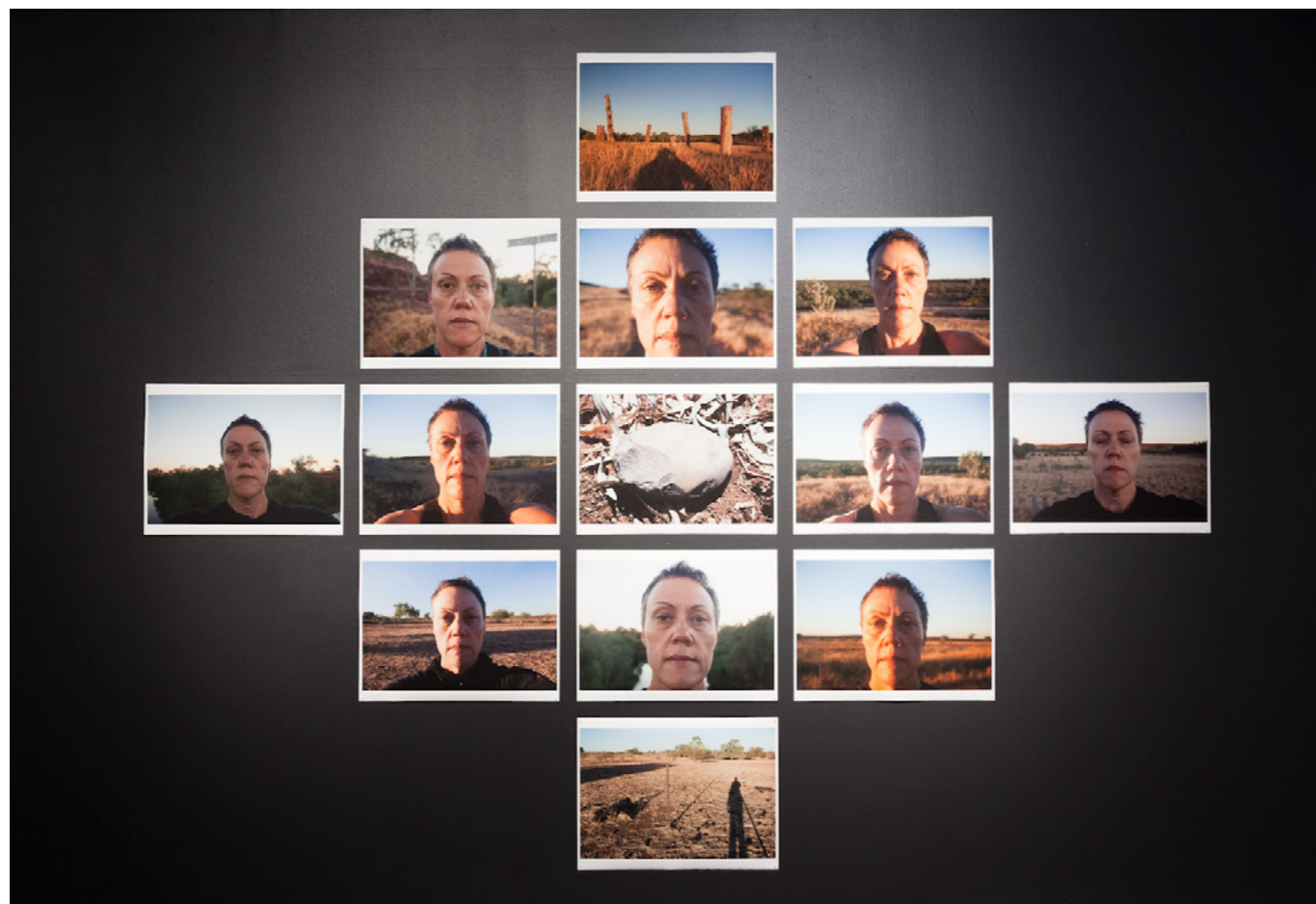
Bindi Cole Chocka is an award-winning resilient and Indigenous contemporary photographer, new media artist, writer and curator, whose work exposes the questions that most are afraid to ask. At times, her artworks are so personal having been cathartically imbued with a gritty honesty, that the viewer's experience can verge on voyeurism. Her work uncovers the latent and unspoken power dynamics of global culture in the here and now. She subtly but powerfully reveals some uncomfortable truths about the fundamental disconnection between who we are – the communities and identities by which we shape our sense of self – and how the prevailing culture attempts to place and define us.



Maree Clarke, *Self portrait in Mourning Necklace* 2017, digital print on photographic paper mounted on Dibond, 180 x 120cm. Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne.

Maree Clarke (b. 1963 Mutti Mutti/Yorta Yorta/Boonwurrung)

Maree Clarke is a Mutti Mutti, Yorta Yorta, Boonwurrung woman from Mildura in northwest Victoria, currently living and working in Melbourne. She is a pivotal figure in the reclamation of southeast Australian Aboriginal art practices and a leader in nurturing and promoting the diversity of contemporary southeast Aboriginal artists. Her continuing desire to affirm and reconnect with her cultural heritage has seen her revivification of the traditional possum skin cloaks, together with the production of contemporary designs of kangaroo teeth necklaces, and river reed necklaces, alongside multi-media installations of photography and video work. Clarke's work explores the customary ceremonies, rituals and language of her ancestors and reveals her long-held ambitions to facilitate cross-cultural dialogue about the ongoing effects of colonisation, while simultaneously providing space for the Aboriginal community to engage with and 'mourn' the impact of dispossession and loss.



Brenda L. Croft, *Self-Portraits on Country*, from *subalter/N/ative dreams* series, 2014, 13 pigment prints, installation, 43 x 61cm (each), Courtesy of the artist, Stills Gallery, Sydney and Niagara Gallery, Melbourne.

Brenda L. Croft (b. 1964 Gurindji/Malngin/Mudburra; Anglo-Australian/Irish/German/Chinese heritage)
 Brenda L. Croft is a member of the Gurindji/Malngin/Mudburra peoples from the Northern Territory of Australia, and Anglo-Australian/German/Irish/Chinese heritage. Croft has been involved in the contemporary arts and cultural sectors for over three decades as an artist, arts administrator, curator, researcher and consultant. She creates multidisciplinary, and multi-platform works drawing on personal and public archives to explore issues faced by contemporary Indigenous peoples, framed within the ongoing impact of colonisation in Australia. Through her work, she aspires to give "a voice to the voiceless, making the invisible visible", uncovering hidden, often denied stories and visual representations, eliciting the power of critical, performative, Indigenous autoethnography methodologies.



Destiny Deacon, *Ebony and Ivy Face Race*, 2016, digital pigment ink print on archival paper, 100 x 75cm. Courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney.

Destiny Deacon (b. 1957 Erub/Mer and Ku Ku)

Destiny Deacon's heritage is the Erub/Mer people of Torres Strait Islands and Ku Ku people of Cape York. She has been exhibiting her photography, video and installation works both nationally and internationally since the 1990's. Her contemporary practice is inherently performative and innately political. Partly autobiographical and partly fictitious, her sharp, witty and stylised compositions metaphorically deal with historical issues and contemporary Aboriginal life, using members of her family, friends to pose for the camera along with a variety of dolls. Deacon's works are informed by personal experience and the mass media – used as a tool to examine and communicate the wide discrepancies between the representation of Aboriginal people by the white Australian population and the reality of contemporary Aboriginal life.



Robert Fielding, *Ngapartji-Ngapartji*, 2017, pigment print on cotton rag paper with alterations, 150 x 120cm. Courtesy of the artist and Mimili Maku Arts, APY Lands, South Australia.

Robert Fielding (b. 1969 Western Arrernte/Yankunytjatjara)

Robert Fielding's mother was Garieva Fielding (dec.), a woman of Pakistani/Western Arrernte descent. Robert's father Bruce Fielding (dec.) was a Yankunytjatjara man, born at Lilla Creek Station, near Finke (Aputula). As a child, Bruce was taken from his mother and raised in Colebrook Home, at Quorn, South Australia. Robert's grandmother was Miriam Khan (dec.) and she was born at Henbury Station. One of her husbands was James Inkamala (dec.) and he was from Ntaria Hermannsburg. Robert is the youngest of 12 children. Continuing the tradition of large families, he and his wife Kaye Lowah have 9 children of their own – Zaachariaha, Zaavan, Zibeon, Zeldon, Payrozza, Partimah, Peshwah, Priyangka and Zedekiah Fielding. Robert's wife Kaye is of Torres Strait/Palm Island heritage.

Robert has been developing his artistic practice at Mimili Maku Arts since 2005 and been employed as a studio assistant, supporting his fellow artists at the art centre since 2010. For Fielding, his contemporary practice is a way for him to connect to his heritage and his family and a chance to explore a possible future of forgiveness not anger. In his role as an arts worker, Robert has developed a strong skillset in photography, which he has enthusiastically incorporated into his artistic practice. His recent explorations of photography, print making and new media draw inspiration from his experience growing up across two very different cultures – Western and Aboriginal.



Deanne Gilson, *Lubra (Me)*, from *Cook, Murnong and Me* series, 2017, digital photograph on aluminium, 115 x 90cm. Courtesy of the artist.

Deanne Gilson (b. 1967 Wadawurrung)

"Monomeeth mirambeena n'yaalingo mirambeek Wadawurrung, dullallally baggarook Deanne. Hi, my name is Deanne and I am a Proud Wadawurrung woman, living on Country in Ballarat".

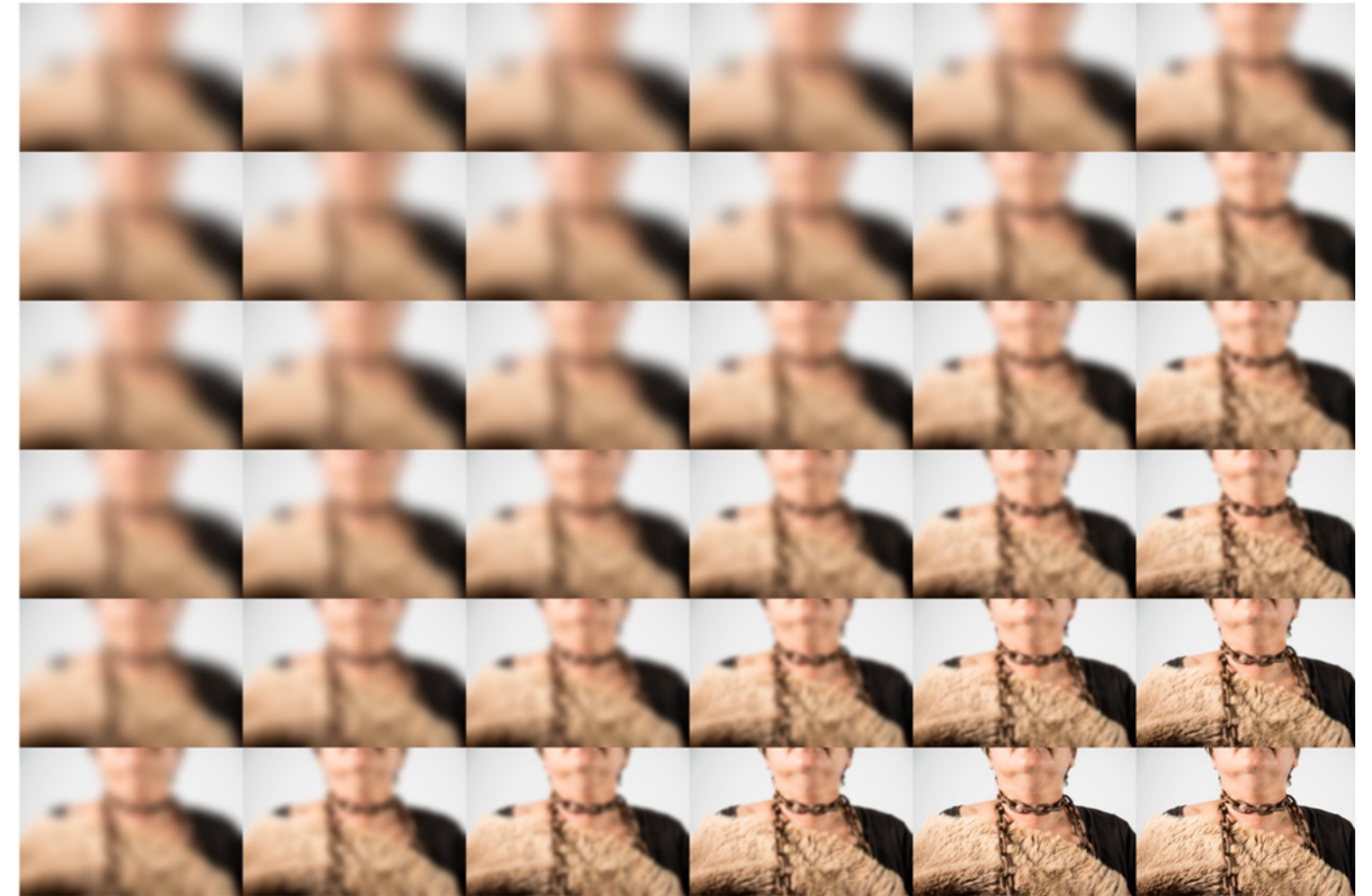
Deanne Gilson is an award-winning multi-media artist working in paint, clay, photo-media, drawing and sculptural installations. Her artwork draws from a spiritual, ancestral connection to Country, place and culture, accompanied by a personal truth acknowledging the lived experiences of the past, present and hopes for the future. In recent work, she reclaims traditional knowledge by reflecting the colonial gaze back and challenging Western portrayals of Aboriginal people, especially the roles the matriarchal women in her family play in keeping family together throughout the colonisation period. Her artworks are constantly being influenced by the changing social and political environment that have brought about loss of family, children, culture, identity, ceremonies and traditional artefact and adornment making, songs, dance and language. Gilson attempts to filter the racism, oppression, discrimination and the need to be able to express the truth and reality of one's actual lived experience, in a way that is respectful and non-confrontational towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Her artwork demonstrates ways in which Aboriginal women can form new connections to culture through visual art practices in order to strengthen family connections thus not only keeping, but also renewing traditional Women's Business both visually and socially.



Jody Haines, *Self Portrait #6*, from *This is not Resolved* series, 2016, Giclee fine art print, 48 x 72cm. Courtesy of the artist.

Jody Haines (b. 1973 Palawa)

Jody Haines is a Palawa woman and descendant of Mannalargenna, originating from Tasmania's North West Coast. Prior to working with the visual, Haines initially studied Contemporary Music, majoring in Voice. Quickly recognising that maybe her dreams of a rock star existence might not be realised, she pursued her other passion – Photography – and went on to study a Bachelor of Photography at Griffith University. Afterward Jody embarked on her visual career as a Photographer, Artist and Curator, incorporating both her love of sound and image in her work. Haines is currently studying a Masters of Art – Art in Public Space at RMIT and lives and works on the lands of the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung peoples.



Dianne Jones, *Darlarinj (Hunting)*, 2014, archival inkjet print on cotton rag, 70 x 90cm. Courtesy of the artist and Niagara Gallery, Melbourne.

Dianne Jones (b. 1966 Noongar Yok/Ballardong)

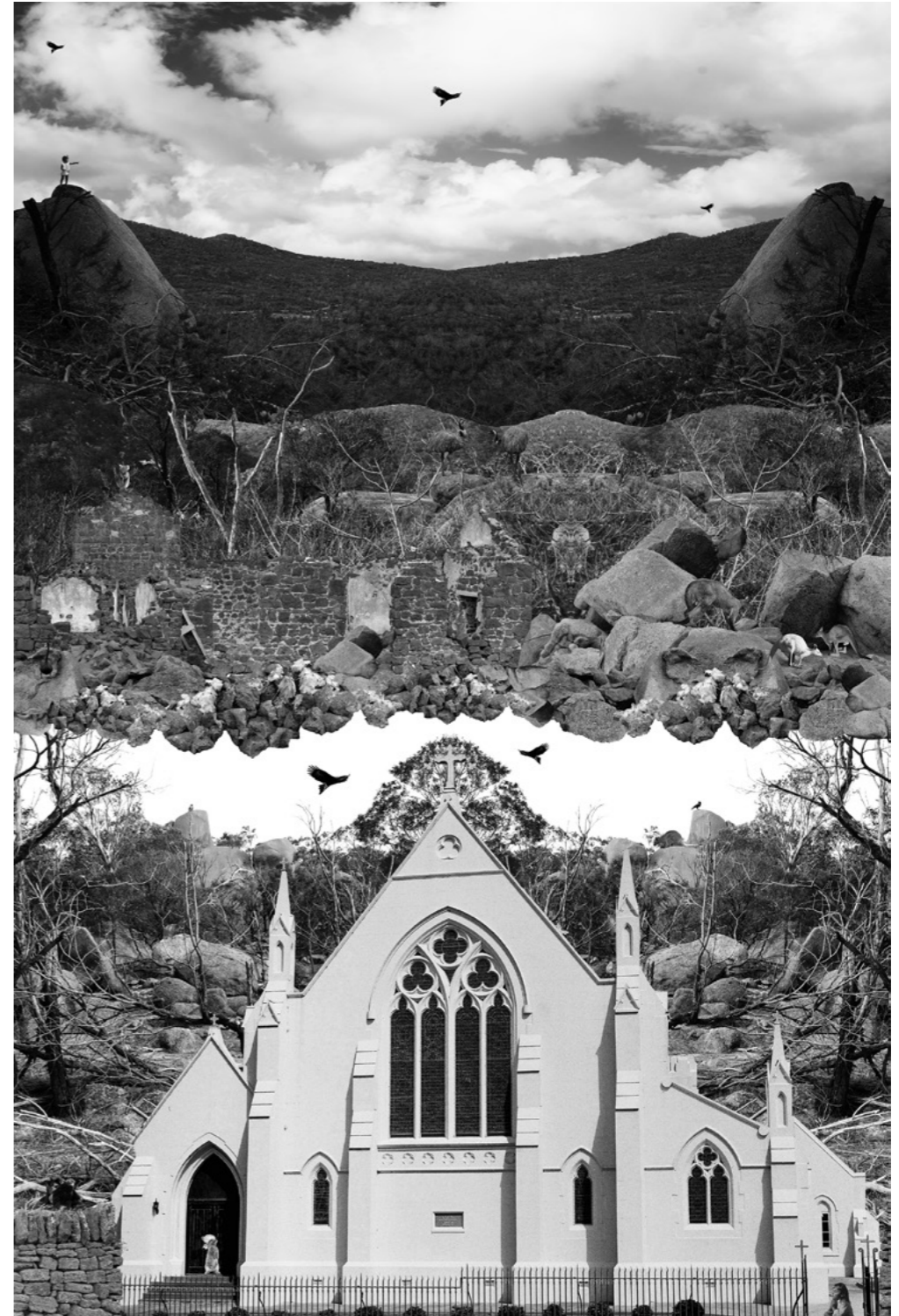
Dianne Jones is a contemporary photo media artist based in Melbourne. Her contemporary practice investigates the representation inverts the accepted view of Australian art history by repositioning the representations of Indigenous people by placing them into iconic Australian artistic images, or re-telling historical stories from an Indigenous perspective. Jones' work has been featured in a number of group exhibitions, and held in private collections and public galleries, around Australia and the world since 2001. She is also a published writer, and is currently undertaking a PhD at Victorian College of the Arts with a visual art research project.



Ricky Maynard, *Wik Elder, Arthur – Returning to Places that Name Us*, 2000, silver gelatin print on paper, unframed; edition 15, 95 x 120cm. Courtesy of the artist, Stills Gallery, Sydney and Bett Gallery, Hobart.

Ricky Maynard (b. 1953 Palawa)

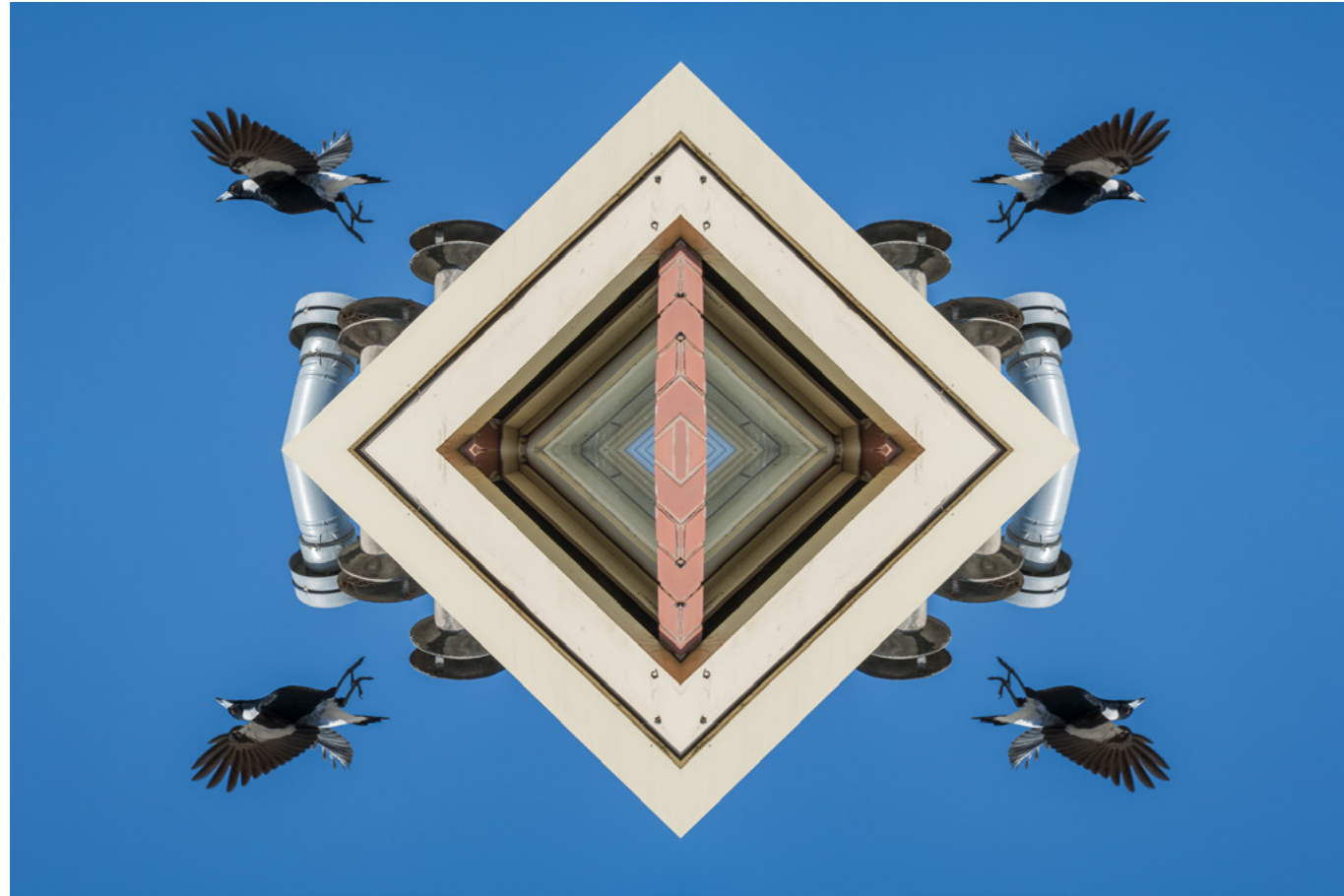
Ricky Maynard is an Indigenous photographer with a commitment to representing his people, and a belief in the value of documentary photography as a tool to effect social change. An important aspect of Maynard's work is to bring to light the stories of Indigenous people where they have previously been absent or distorted. His photographs mark historical sites, events and community figures of great significance to Tasmanian and mainland Aboriginal people, and speak to their struggle in a subtle, poetic, and powerful way. Maynard was born in Tasmania, where he lives and works. He came to prominence in 1988 with a photo essay on Aboriginal Mutton bird farmers entitled *The Moon-Bird People*, which was commissioned for the photographic book *After 200 Years: Photographic Essays of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Australia Today* (1988).



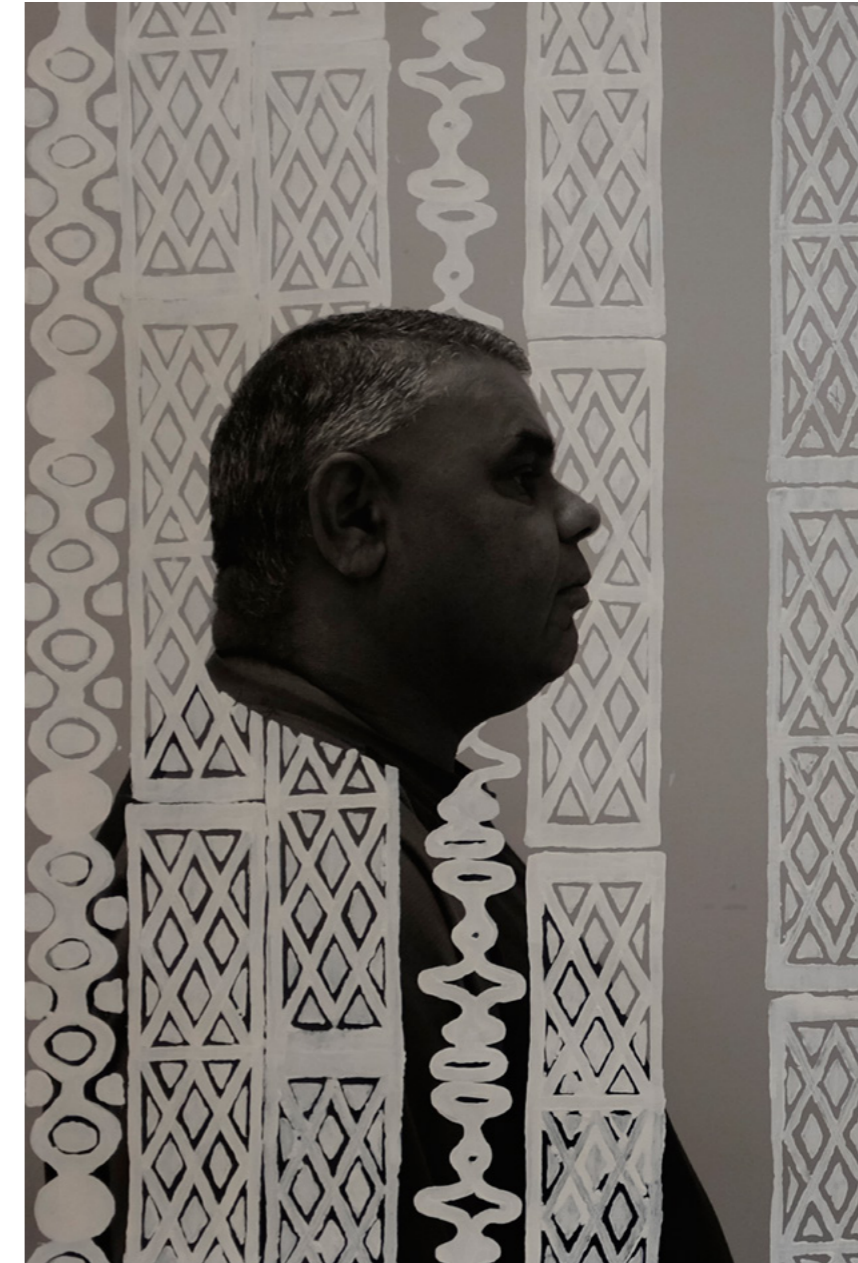
Hayley Millar-Baker, *Even if the race is fated to disappear 1 (Peeneeyt Meerreeng/Before, Now, Tomorrow)*, 2017, inkjet print on cotton rag, mounted on di-bond with a plexiglass cover, 120 x 80cm. Courtesy of the artist.

Hayley Millar-Baker (b. 1989 Gunditjmara)

Hayley Millar-Baker is a Gunditjmara artist raised on Wathaurong land in Victoria. Her practice is influenced and informed by her Koorie heritage and her own experience, existing in a contemporary urban culture. Her connection to culture is inherent to her contemporary practice that explores themes of displacement, alienation, suppression, and social confinement. She utilises the mediums of photography, painting and installation to layer personal imagery and anthropomorphic representations of Indigenous presence in her works in aim of opening-up digital and visual gateways for new narratives to take form.



Kent Morris, *Boonwurrung (St Kilda) – Magpie*, from *Cultural Reflections – Up Above #3* series, 2017, pigment print on rag paper, 80 x 120cm. Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne.



Pitcha Makin Fellas, *Fella Looking*, 2017, from *Looking at 2 Cultures* series, pigment print, acrylic paint, 120 x 80cm. Courtesy of the artists.

Kent Morris (b. 1964 Barkindji)

Kent Morris is a Barkindji man, photographer and curator currently living and working in Melbourne. His body of work spans 20 years as a practising artist. Morris's photographic work exposes and questions the colonial mindset that permeates Australian culture and society. He uses motif, reflection and symbolism in his photographic work as visual recognition of the vitality of Indigeneity regardless of colonial imposition. Morris graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts and is an alumnus of the National Gallery of Australia's Wesfarmers Indigenous Leadership Program. Central themes in his art practice are the connections between contemporary Indigenous experience and contemporary cultural practices and their continuation and evolution.

The Pitcha Makin Fellas

The Pitcha Makin Fellas are a group of Indigenous artists and writers based in Ballarat who are passionate about culture and community, formed in 2013. Getting together to yarn, paint and write weekly in their studio in country Victoria, the Pitcha Makin Fellas have soared to create vibrant expressions of their personal histories and stories as Aboriginal men.

The group includes:

Myles Walsh a Yorta Yorta man who practices in the Visual Arts medium in his spare time.

Peter-Shane Rotumah is a Gunditjmara man and this is the first creative journey with the Pitcha Makin Fellas.

Adrian Rigney is a Wotjabaluk/Ngarrindjeri born in Melbourne. He enjoys the activities and achievements of the group.

Ted Laxton is a Gunditjmara man from the Framlingham Reserve in Western Victoria and has been involved in the arts for 3 years.

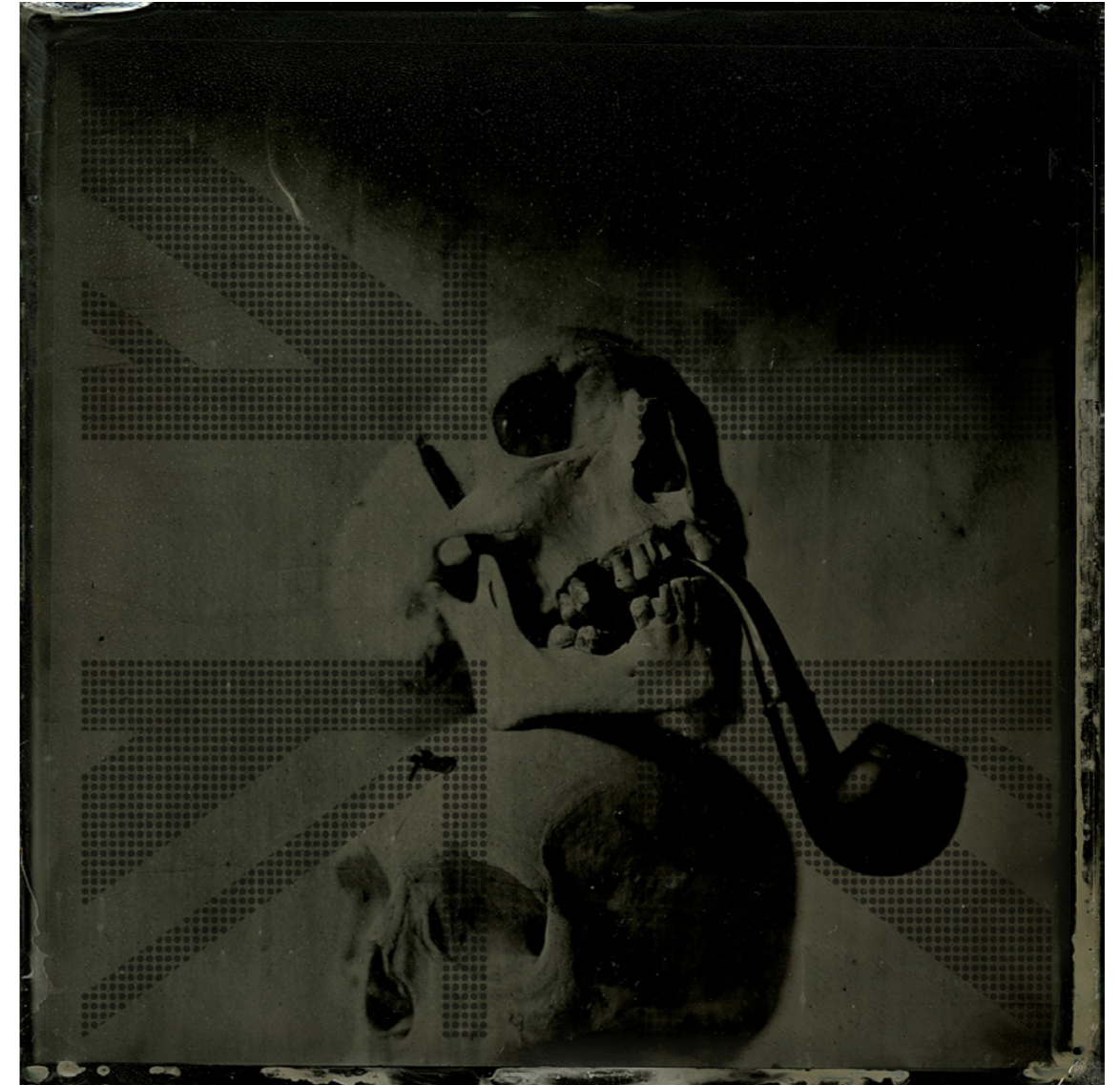
Thomas Marks is a Gunnai/Kurnai(Gippsland)/Wotjabaluk man who became involved with the art group through the local Aboriginal Men's group.



Steven Rhall, *Avert*, 2017, reconstituted wood, krypton gas filled tube, electrical cable, transformers, light sensitive paint, 174 x 60 x 60cm. Courtesy of the artist.

Steven Rhall (b. 1974 Taungurung)

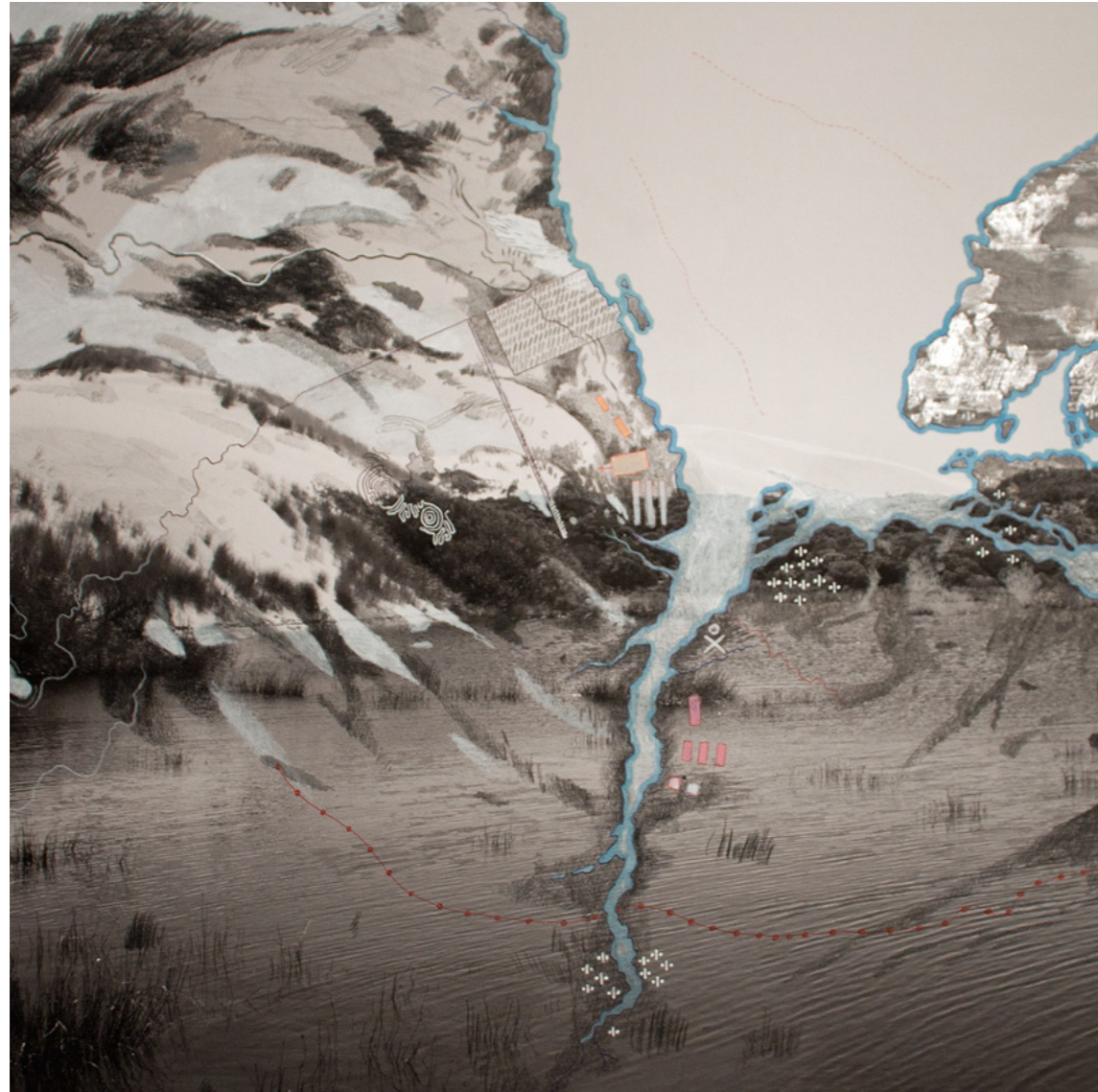
Steven Rhall is an emerging contemporary artist and Taungurung man born on Wathaurong Country. His interdisciplinary photographic practice responds to the cultural landscape, creating networks of interconnected signs and symbols. Reflecting upon both medium specificity and cultural semiotics, Rhall merges post-colonial and interpersonal narratives. Often working performatively, and known for his photographic practice, Rhall incorporates 2D media within the 3D space – his installations tend to include video, found objects and materials of advertising.



Damien Shen, *Still Life After Penn 2*, 2017, pigment prints on aluminium, 80 x 80cm each. Courtesy of the artist and MARS Gallery, Melbourne.

Damien Shen (b. 1976 Ngarrindjeri)

Damien Shen is a South Australian man of Ngarrindjeri and Chinese bloodlines. His artistic practice is embedded in histories, revisiting the people, places and stories that shape the world he occupies. From time consuming, labour intensive drawings to bleeding water colours and velvety smooth oil paintings, Shen is constantly constructing and deconstructing the world around him through his imagery to better understand his identity and the identity of those that help to shape the world he lives.



James Tylor and Laura Wills, *The Forgotten Wars 5*, 2017, drawing on photographic paper, 50 x 50cm. Courtesy of the artists and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne.

James Tylor (b.1986 Nunga (Kurna))

James Tylor's artistic practice examines concepts around cultural identity in Australian contemporary society and social history. He explores Australian cultural representations through his multicultural heritage, which comprises Nunga (Kurna), Maori (Te Arawa) and European (English, Scottish, Irish, Dutch, Iberian and Norwegian) Australian ancestry. Tylor's work focuses largely on the 19th century history of Australia and its continual effect on present day issues surrounding cultural identity in Australia. He uses a hybrid of analogue and digital photographic techniques to create contemporary artworks that reference Australian society and history. Tylor has created new work for the *Tell* exhibition in collaboration with contemporary artist Laura Wills.

Laura Wills (b. 1981)

Wills is a visual artist based in Adelaide, Australia. With a Bachelor of Visual Arts and Applied Design from Adelaide Center of the Arts (2003) she practices a diverse range of media from painting, drawing and photography to installation, media arts and community projects. Wills has a strong interest in using found materials, collaboration and basing projects on social/ environmental themes. She regularly exhibits and has received numerous grants, awards and residencies locally in Australia and overseas.



Warwick Thornton, *Untitled 1 (detail)*, 2013, pigment print, 2 parts; 100 x 100cm; 14.8 x 14.8cm. Courtesy of the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne.

Warwick Thornton (b.1978 Kaytej)

Warwick Thornton is a Kaytej man from North of Alice Springs. His artistic practice interrogates and challenges the established history of Australia, its overtly political environment, and social situations affecting all Australians. Thornton is an award-winning artist, writer, director and cinematographer, with many credits including *The Sapphires* (2012) and *Samson and Dellah*. His installation, *Mother Courage* (2012), was exhibited at Documenta, Germany and ACMI.

List of Works *

Blackhill Lookout, 2017, from *Looking at 2 Cultures* series
Pigment print, acrylic paint, 120 x 80cm

Moorina Bonini

You've Had Your Turn, Now it's MINE, 2017
6 pigment prints on rag paper, 3 wooden boxes housing beakers and ochre samples
Pigment prints: 65 x 45cm;
Boxes: 42 x 21 x 17cm

Bindi Cole-Chocka

Fertility 1–4, 2017
4 pigment prints on gloss paper,
80 x 120cm each

Maree Clarke

Self portrait in Mourning Necklace, 2017
Digital print on photographic paper
mounted on Dibond, 180 x 120cm

Mourning Necklace, 2017
Black river reeds, crow feathers
and waxed thread, 50m long

Brenda L. Croft

Self-Portraits on Country, from *subalter/N/ative dreams* series, 2014
13 pigment prints, installation,
43 x 61cm (each)

Destiny Deacon

Daisy and Heather Discuss Race, 2016
Digital pigment ink print on archival paper,
100 x 75cm

Ebony and Ivy Face Race, 2016
Digital pigment ink print on archival paper,
100 x 75cm

The Listeners, 2017
Two channel screen video; 2 mins, looped

Robert Fielding

Milkali Kutju (One Blood), 2015
Photographic screen print on fine art paper,
2 parts: 84 x 59cm each

Ngapartji-Ngapartji, 2017
Pigment print on cotton rag paper
with alterations, 150 x 120cm

Deanne Gilson

Cooks Comin, Lal Lal Falls, 1766, 2017
from *Cook, Murnong and Me series*, Digital
photograph on aluminium, 115 x 90cm

Murnong Mourning, 2017, from *Cook, Murnong and Me series*
Digital photograph on aluminium,
wood, 130 x 80cm

Lubra (Me), 2017, from *Cook, Murnong and Me series*
Digital photograph on aluminium,
115 x 90cm

Jody Haines

Self Portrait #1–6, from
This is not Resolved series, 2016
Giclee fine art print, 48 x 72cm each

And yet, after so long, I still hear you..., 2017
Projection and soundscape,
1min 20sec looped

Dianne Jones

Darlarinj (Hunting), 2014
Archival inkjet print on cotton rag,
70 x 90cm

Boodjar (Country), 2014,
Archival inkjet print on cotton rag,
70 x 90cm

Yonga Koorndi (Kangaroo Club), 2014
Archival inkjet print on cotton rag,
70 x 90cm

Ricky Maynard

Wik Elder, Gladys – Returning to Places that Name Us, 2000
Silver gelatin print on paper, unframed;
edition 15, 95 x 120cm

Wik Elder, Arthur – Returning to Places that Name Us, 2000
Silver gelatin print on paper, unframed;
edition 15, 95 x 120cm

Wik Elder, Bruce – Returning to Places that Name Us, 2000
Silver gelatin print on paper, unframed;
edition 15, 95 x 120cm

Hayley Millar-Baker

Even if the race is fated to disappear 1 (Peeneeyt Meerreeng/Before, Now, Tomorrow), 2017
Inkjet print on cotton rag, mounted on
Di-bond with a plexiglass cover, 120 x 80cm

Untitled 1 (Peeneeyt Murapangi, Peeneeyt Toongkateeyt), 2017
Inkjet print on cotton rag, mounted on
Di-bond with a plexiglass cover, 120 x 120cm

Kent Morris

Boonwurrung (St Kilda) – Magpie, 2017, from *Cultural Reflections – Up Above #3 series*
Pigment print on rag paper, 80 x 120cm

Boonwurrung (St Kilda) – Currawong, 2017, from *Cultural Reflections – Up Above #3 series*
Pigment print on rag paper, 80 x 120cm

Boonwurrung (St Kilda) – Crow, 2017, from *Cultural Reflections – Up Above #3 series*
Pigment print on rag paper, 120 x 80cm

Pitcha Makin Fellas (Myles Walsh, Peter-Shane Rotumah, Adrian Rigney, Ted Laxton and Thomas Marks)
Fella Looking, 2017, from
Looking at 2 Cultures series
Pigment print, acrylic paint, 120 x 80cm

Angelsea, 2017, from
Looking at 2 Cultures series
Pigment print, acrylic paint, 120 x 80cm

Blackhill Lookout, 2017, from *Looking at 2 Cultures* series
Pigment print, acrylic paint, 120 x 80cm

Steven Rhall

Avert, 2017
Reconstituted wood, krypton gas filled tube,
electrical cable, transformers, light sensitive
paint, 174 x 60 x 60cm

Damien Shen

Still Life After Penn, 2017
6 tintype plates, 5 x 4 inches each

Still Life After Penn 1–6, 2017
6 pigment prints on aluminium,
80 x 80cm each

James Tylor and Laura Wills

The Forgotten Wars 1–6, 2017
Drawing on photographic paper,
50 x 50cm each

Warwick Thornton

Untitled 1, 2013
Pigment print, 2 parts; 100 x 100cm;
14.8 x 14.8cm

Untitled 2, 2013
Pigment print, 2 parts; 100 x 100cm;
14.8 x 14.8cm

Blackhill Lookout, 2017, from *Looking at 2 Cultures* series
Pigment print, acrylic paint, 120 x 80cm

*

All works courtesy of the artists unless otherwise stated.

Maree Clarke's works appear courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

Brenda L. Crofts' works appear courtesy of the artist, Stills Gallery, Sydney and Niagara Gallery, Melbourne

Destiny Deacon's works appear courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

Robert Fielding's works appear courtesy of the artist and Mimili Maku Arts, APY Lands, South Australia

Dianne Jones' works appear courtesy of the artist and Niagara Gallery, Melbourne

Ricky Maynard's works appear courtesy of the artist, Stills Gallery, Sydney and Bett Gallery, Hobart

Kent Morris's works appear courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

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Warwick Thorton's works appear courtesy of the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne

Ballarat International Foto Biennale 2017

Blackhill Lookout, 2017, from *Looking at 2 Cultures* series
Pigment print, acrylic paint, 120 x 80cm

The Ballarat International Foto Biennale

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We invite you to support the Ballarat International Foto Biennale through a fully tax-deductible donation to our Public Fund and help us fully realise our vision and grow our programs for this major cultural event held every two years. All donations \$2 and over are tax deductible.

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