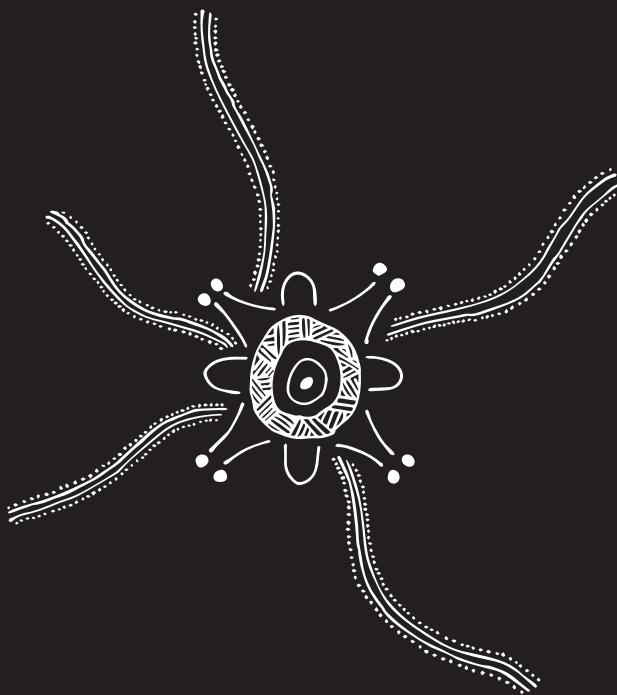


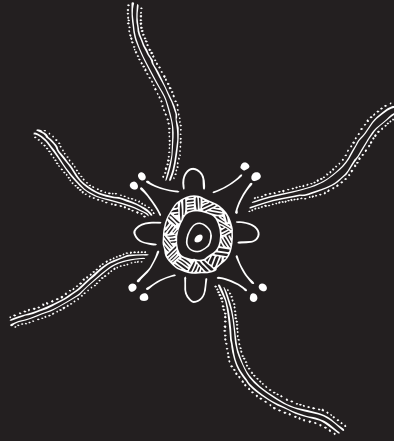
BLAK UNSWEETENED



Inaugural Edition

Literary Journal

2019



This work explores the dichotomy between you and I...

Many would see a meeting place, a gathering of people, yarning and
telling each other stories around a campfire

Everyday people walk out into the world hiding their true selves
from others...

I have created a meeting place where all are welcome. The symbols
represent a man (top), a woman (bottom) and two non-binary people
(left and right).

We often don't know what people are going through...

The paths represent the diverse array of cultures we encounter in our
daily lives, in our families. These paths represent the limbs of a human
being – highlighting that amongst it all, within our hearts we are all
connected as one.

Be kind to one another and simply ask, R U Ok?

Oliver Pike

Wailwan, Ngemba and Wiradjuri man

The inaugural edition of Blak UNSWeetened is dedicated to all Indigenous people throughout Australia who use the art of creativity every day to shine a brighter light on the darkest of days in our lives.

It is dedicated to all those who have never forgotten who they are, and to those on their journey to find themselves. We hope this journal may help all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in their journey as they navigate this world.



AUNTY ESME TIMBERY

**Bidjigal Elder and renowned shell artist at the official opening
Esme Timbery Creative Practice Lab**

The Esme Timbery Creative Practice Lab houses the Io Myers Studio and Studio One managed by the Creative Practice Lab (CPL) in the School of the Arts and Media, UNSW Sydney

CULTURAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As the editors of this inaugural literary journal, we pay our highest respects to Elders, past, present and emerging, who are the traditional custodians of the lands where each UNSW campus is located, including on our main campus' in Sydney and Canberra.

We also pay our highest respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders throughout these ancient lands, who walked before us, who currently walk with us and who will walk with us one day. We acknowledge their commitment to culture and communities and continue their roles as teachers of our culture for thousands of years.

As Elder Uncle Lloyd Walker shares:

“Our people have been living in this area since time began. Our lands, our waterways and the sky are a part of what we refer to as our country.

Our spirit ancestors created our country and all other life forms within it. Giving us our kinship, social structures and our lore(s). Our spirit ancestors left powerful impressions of themselves in our country giving our people a spiritual reasoning for existence.

Our people identify themselves in a number of ways according to their connection to their spirit ancestors, their family, the region they were born and lived in, the language they spoke and the status they held.

In Coastal Sydney you may hear Aboriginal people use words like Warrigal, Gweagal, Gadigal, Bidiagal, Dharawal and Gadhungal. These are layers of identifying people on a personal, local and regional basis.”

B I R I P I •
B I D J I G A L •
B A R K I N D J I •
G A D I G A L • M
D A R K I
B U N D J
G A D H U N G
D H A R A W A L
W A I L W A N •

W O R I M I
G A M I L A R O I
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• W A R R I G A L
W I R A D J U R I

FOREWORD

Ben Jones | Murrawarri

I am absolutely stoked to write the foreword for the inaugural Blak UNSWeetened edition. It is a wonderful showcase of the strong, powerful, creative and diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices that we have here at the uni.

It also gives me great pleasure to announce that following this amazing collection of works, next year Arc@UNSW will launch its inaugural Indigenous Strategy in line with UNSW's Indigenous Strategy.

I encourage you all as you read the pieces in this collection to consider the enormous impact that this mob can have throughout the world with the skills, passion and unique ideas and ways of thinking that they bring to the table...

For within these pages you may well find the next Megan Davis, Anita Heiss, or Stan Grant, with their own story to share and live!



Ben Jones
Murrawarri

Chair of the Board of Directors
Arc@UNSW

FOREWORD

Dr. Terri Janke | Wuthathi and Meriam

This issue of UNSweetened is a Blak UNSweetened, with the themes of Identity, Voice, Treaty, Truth, and Language; or past, present and future. It is an edition that gives Indigenous writers a safe space that allows the words and images to speak our truth.

In this issue, Indigenous students, then and now, share their perspectives. So much can be told in the form of Visual Art, such as the pieces by Claudia, Tyarna, and Keaton illustrate. There is a strong focus on belonging like the resonating piece ‘Unapologetically Myself’, by Tyarna. Gungabula & Gomeroi woman Kira Lyn Clark story ‘Sorry Day Rally’ reminds us of how many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have had and continue to have their connections interrupted through government policies. The theme of Kamilaroi writer Mark Champley’s piece ‘To the Moon and Back’ explores this, with a strong story about reconnection and pride. The poem by Jake Fing showcases strength in family in his elation of being a new parent. Lizzy Mayer’s work is an uplifting tribute to a people who get us through the challenges in a spirited way.

There is the thoughtful consideration of the impact of a formal education. Oliver Pike, a Wailwan, Ngemba and Wiradjuri man explores the complex nexus between education and connection to culture. He challenged me to think – yes – we do go through the education pathway to get our tertiary qualifications and I guess this makes us ‘privileged’. But what is privilege? There is privilege of an education and privilege of culture.

The past, present and future connect, as does the natural and spiritual world. Lisa Roberts’ writing on the Southern Ocean project tells of encouraging young people to share their own stories of their relationship with the natural world. She shares her own relationship with *Euphausia superba* (Antarctic krill) and her research. The science of the heart stuff really. And sometimes when we study, we are too close to it, that we forget to think about how we connect to the things we spend so much time researching and writing about.

I’m proud to be a black – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander – Wuthathi and Meriam – and a graduate of UNSW. I first came to the UNSW in 1985, straight out of high school I was 18 years old, and not so strong in my identity, and not knowing

what I wanted to be or do. Could I go to uni? Could I finish my studies? Could I be a lawyer? Will I be changed? Do I belong anyway? These were questions I struggled with in those early days. I needed to understand what part I could play in working towards Indigenous social justice.

It was scary start, and I did not feel ready. There was a white house on the corner of Botany and High Street in Randwick that was just being set up as the Aboriginal Student's Centre. There were probably only about 20 or 30 Aboriginal students that hung out at the Centre. This core group Much different today, I know. Now, the First Nation student numbers are well over 350 and the Nura Gili Aboriginal Centre is a sanctuary and support centre for First Nations students on campus. I met my husband Andrew at UNSW and now we have two children who share the UNSW experience. My daughter Tamina Pitt finished her computer engineering degree from UNSW. My son, Jaiki Pitt is in second year software engineering. Their journey is supported by the strong community of Blak students and the supporters, academics and friends in UNSW. Thanks so much for that UNSW.

Back to my undergraduate journey. It took me a while to get settled and confident in my studies I did find my alliances with the other Indigenous students who supported me along the way. Some studied law, others studied arts, history, commerce and medicine. But we shared the common bond of going through university black, with so much we wanted to change about the world. An education was going to assist us with this goal.

I eventually found my own personal connection between the legal studies that consumed my mind and the quest for Indigenous empowerment. When I did, I chose to focus on Indigenous intellectual property. I'd found my wings. I finished my degree. I knew the power of our stories, art and cultural expressions and deep knowledge of country and the things on it, need recognition, Central to my career has been the goal of empowering Indigenous people to guard, protect and manage their Indigenous cultural and intellectual property. It's a long journey, but I am playing a role in enabling Indigenous people to understand how the law works, and in that way, they can make informed decisions and assert their cultural protocols and use contracts to create binding agreements.

Like the writers in this edition, I also found that writing helped to reflect on my own identity and belonging. I wrote a novel *Butterfly Song* in 2005 and then books with my two children to share the importance of family, my parents, ancestors and my

children and future descendants. Through story, we made permanent pathways to keep the strong story, and to imprint the message – keep going strong.

Back to the journey of being a Blak student. If you are still in your student journey, may these stories keep you going strong. Stay strong to finish your studies and stay strong in your identity. When I finished my degree, I knew I had the best education to empower me for the future. UNSW has always been strong on its support for Indigenous students. But it's the community, the people around the students, the supporters on staff and in the office that have also been so encouraging.



Dr. Terri Janke
Wuthathi and Meriam
 BA LLB (UNSW) PhD (ANU)
 Solicitor Director
 Terri Janke & Company

EDITORIAL



Rebecca Harcourt
Program Manager
Indigenous Business Education
UNSW Sydney

Jake Fing
UNSW Indigenous Officer,
Chairperson, Indigenous
Student's Association

The agency of Indigenous voices is more vital than ever. The intricacies of weaving together the creative richness, diversity and depths for this inaugural edition of Blak UNSWeetened has been an honour and a privilege.

In inviting submissions from UNSW Indigenous students and alumni, we wanted to showcase the creativity that is present in all our lives, irrespective of factors such as career path. We wanted to honour the creativity, cultural strength, knowledge, intellect, resilience, determination, flair, connectivity and nuance of all. In honouring these, we wanted to give back to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to provide a platform where each of their voices could soar with pride, truth, celebration and resonate for many years to come.

We trust that the inaugural Edition of Blak UNSWeetened will sing to you in the same way that it has sung to us.

Jake Fing and Rebecca Harcourt
November 2019

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Keaton

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Luca Sawyer | Wiradjuri

“We acknowledge the traditional owners of this country. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.”

We want action, not just words.

These words are uttered at the beginning of a meeting, speech or formal occasion. These words are spoken over, and over again, by different voices. These words are said as a politically correct action to supposedly acknowledge the long history of exclusion from Australian history books, the Australian flag, the Australian anthem and the Australian constitution. The long history that involves Australian being built on the rape, massacre, unlawful incarceration and oppression of the First Nation people. They do not acknowledge that this is not history. It is our present and at this slow progression, it is likely also our future.

We need change and we need it NOW.

“We acknowledge the traditional owners of this country.”

Acknowledge this:

Australia does not, in fact, acknowledge the traditional owners of this country.

The system stays blind and promises are broken.

The system is broken.

Intergenerational trauma: the endless cycle of Indigenous youth suffering from violence, pain, and incarceration.

Suffer our children.

Trauma may manifest as disorganised or agitated behaviour that could go unnoticed. However, as Indigenous youth go through school these behaviours only grow and it is impossible not to perceive.

Suffer our youth.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth make up 7% of Australia's youth population; however, a shocking 54% of those youth are in detentions across Australia.

And the root question rarely asked is why?

Disconnection from land, police behaviour, petty crimes such as swearing or drinking, poverty and unemployment, inadequate legal representation, lack of language skills, foetal alcohol syndrome, family breakdown, reoffending, lack of accommodation and childhood trauma.

Suffer our people.

There are so many issues that need to be addressed and it is abundantly clear that they are not acknowledged by the wider Australian society. Justice Reinvestment offers a potential solution to the on-going issue of incarceration, although this program needs to have more funding from the government to effectively implement.

We hold the government responsible.

We hold the government responsible for the Stolen Generation and its cycle of violence, trauma, and incarceration that continues.

We have suffered in silence for too long.

"We acknowledge the traditional owners of this country."

Sorry is just a word.

Since Kevin Rudd's apology in 2008, the number of Indigenous youth removals increased by a devastating 65%.

Sorry is not an action.

If you think you have acknowledged the traditional owners of this country, then think again.

Think about the Channel Seven network, which has been under fire because of their controversial racist comments regarding Aboriginal adoption. The segment aired on

13th March 2019 breached the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice 2015 by including a factual inaccuracy as well as inciting contempt or ridicule on the basis of someone else's race when they suggested, 'there needs to be a second stolen generation'.

Think about that.

Right now, FACS is driving policies that see Indigenous children being placed into long-term care without any attempts of restoration and support for families. The adoption laws passed in November 2018 allow adoption without parental consent. Think about this.

This will lead to more children having a feeling of disconnection from their family and culture, especially due to the fact that Aboriginal culture is rarely taught in public schools. Again, the cycle continues.

Sorry yet? Wait, there's more.

"We acknowledge the traditional owners of this country."

Think about this:

Suicide was unknown to Aboriginal people prior to invasion. You acknowledge the traditional owners of this country, but still nothing has been done about the alarming rate of Indigenous – especially Youth Suicides. Aboriginal Suicides are at a crisis levels in modern Australia and is the leading cause of death for Indigenous peoples. Acknowledge that.

Past trauma and ongoing issues have led to a suicide rate far exceeding non-Indigenous people. A shocking and saddening 95% of Aboriginal people have said they are affected by suicide. For Aboriginal people aged 15 to 35 years, suicide is the leading cause of death.

Ask US why?

The reasons for this include intergenerational trauma, invasion, disconnection from land, poverty, racism, abuse of alcohol and drugs, incarceration, and no access or trust in support services. This is absolutely appalling.

Suffer OUR people

The government needs to implement more systems and strategies to help OUR people and OUR children.

“We acknowledge the traditional owners of this country.”

Acknowledge this

There is no acknowledgement of the traditional owners, because if there were, there would be no more Black Deaths in custody. Consistently there has been a lack of action on recommendations arising from inquests, despite the fact Indigenous prisoners were 1.26 times more likely to die in prison than non-Indigenous prisoners.

Suffer OUR people

When family members go to jail, families and communities are affected by the loss of parents, role models, childcare and family income. Without these community members, and the cycle continues.

Suffer OUR people

However, they often suffer twice, consider the fact around 400 Indigenous Australians have died in custody since the end of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in custody in 1991. This correlates to the underlying racist country that is Australia. Police have a duty of care no matter what the offenders have done or the colour of their skin.

Sorry is just a word.

Nothing is being done about these prominent issues and it is as if it doesn't even exist...

“We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture”.

Acknowledge this

The First Nations people have natured this country for over 60,000 years and now this country is hurting. Australian does not recognise traditional Indigenous methods that can help this country and help battle climate change. Before invasion our country was abound by nature's gifts of beauty, rich and rare. Now, it is battling the

disease called mankind, which destroys everything in its path.

Suffer our land. Suffer our country.

Mankind fabricated climate change and it is up to us to fix it.

We need to save the hundreds of birthing trees sacred to the DjapWurrung peoples, because an unnecessary and unwanted highway is being developed even though it is perfectly useable as it is.

Think about that.

The deaths of millions of fish in the lower Darling River, the largest river in Australia. The water diversions have disrupted the natural balance, which will cause of the worst environmental catastrophes in Australia. Traditional Aboriginal burning needs to be implemented as it helps encourage new growth of vegetation and as a result, large intense bushfires will be uncommon.

Think about this.

Adani's groundwater mine has been approved by the Queensland's Environment Department, despite fierce protests and endless political debate. This decision will result in the destruction of one of the worlds last unspoiled desert oasis, the Doongmabulla Springs Complex, just because the Queensland government are ignorant and greedy.

Acknowledge that.

"We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging."

**We want action, not just words.
We demand a treaty.**

If Australia really did respect Elders past, present and emerging then we would already have a treaty. Australia is the only Commonwealth country that does not have a treaty with its Indigenous people. A treaty in Australia will recognise Indigenous people's history and prior occupation of this land, their lore and the injustices First Nations people have endured.

Know this.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have at no time ceded, relinquished or acquiesced any part of their Sovereign existence and status. A treaty would mean the Recognition and Reconciliation we have been fighting for centuries and would ultimately be able to be put in motion.

Consider this.

While it is foreseeable it would be difficult to form a treaty, as Indigenous Australians have no official king or government, it could function if the treaty is formed as a single national treaty that encapsulates all Indigenous Australians.

Acknowledge this. The time is now!

Our people cannot heal until we have a treaty that will liberate the Terra Nullius lie this nation we share is founded upon.

“We acknowledge the traditional owners of this country. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.”

We want action, not just words.

The next time you hear this – which you undoubtedly will soon – really think about the words being said and remember that those words are a complete and utter lie.

Suffer our country. Suffer our people.

Australia does not, and can never, acknowledge the traditional owners of this country until the many issues above are recognised and overcome together.

We need change and we need it now.

My name is Luca Sawyer. I am a proud Wiradjuri woman hailing from Gilgandra, however, I grew up in a small town called Old Bar on Biripi Country. As the eldest of four, one of my main motivations at uni is being a positive role model for my siblings and creating a better life for my family. This is a personal piece aimed to encapsulate the frustrations of Indigenous people in a white man's system. I am currently studying a dual degree at UNSW Bachelor of Creative Writing and Bachelor of Law





Keaton

EDUCATION VS CONNECTION TO CULTURE

Oliver Pike | Wailwan, Ngemba and Wiradjuri

Some can say with confidence, I have had a pretty privileged and fortunate life, but have I?

In the English Cambridge Dictionary:

Privilege is defined as an advantage that only one person or group of people has; usually because of their position or because they are rich.

Nevertheless, there are many definitions to this word, some include money and access; others say it's about availability and respect. But this doesn't encompass its meaning in its entirety.

Money and respect are not limited to literal money. The riches in family and community, in understanding who you are, what you believe in, this simply can't be placed with a numeral value, it IS priceless.

We respect our own and we love them no matter what, blood lines over anything - no matter what history portrays.

Access and availability, yes, I have had access to one of the best eurocentric schools in Sydney. The availability to get tutors and assistance whenever I needed, at my request. Receiving this kind of aid is the only reason why I am here writing this piece today. Yes, I am privileged in the fact that I have had an article published, I went to a top school, however in my definition, I have missed out on a major part of my life:

The **Privilege of my Culture.**

My Cultural background derives from the Wailwan, Ngemba and Wiradjuri mobs. Differences in dance, language, art and more, define my people for who they are. I missed out on the privilege to grow up and learn my language, to understand the ways of my people and to learn my Culture.

My parents understood to live in the world we are in today, they would have to make sacrifices for their children. They made the tough decision of sending their Aboriginal children to a eurocentric primary school, applying for scholarships to attend Sydney schools to receive a better education.

In doing this they sacrificed us learning our Culture for “progress” in the wider community. In sharing this, I thank my parents endlessly as I wouldn’t have been given any of the opportunities, I have received over the past 20 years.

I’ve been awarded with certificates from Members of Parliament, I speak and acknowledge Country at many distinguished events. One memorable moment was giving the Cultural Acknowledgment in front of the former Governor of New South Wales, Dame Marie Bashir, AD, CVO.

To this day I am thankful for the sacrifices my parents made for me to be able to what I have done and experience.



Oliver Pike with his parents Annie and Cooper Pike

However, there is always more my heart tells me to do.

When I speak to my friends, we yarn, sharing stories of our childhood, schooling experiences and travels. People are always so intrigued and amazed by what I have done in my short life so far. Yet, what they don't seem to understand is that I am equally drawn and fascinated by the experiences and privileges they have lived in their lives:

Learning language on Country with Elders, growing up on the land of their people for their entire life, surrounded by the riches of their people, their land, and through their story, creating the unbreakable cultural ties.

This is a foundation of privilege, so priceless.

Learning from my friends and others is a privilege in the eyes of others, however I also understand in their eyes, what I have done is also a privilege. Till now and forever, people often feel what they don't have is a privilege, and what they do have is normal.

Yet, the definition of privilege is never defined.

For me to say I have been robbed of my Culture is wrong. I have experienced a different life to get where I am today. It's no good this feeling of sorrow, just go out and face it alone. Find your path, your direction and your meaning - to create your story. With your own privileges, you will find your way, your Connection to Culture will find you.

Oliver Pike is a proud Wailwan, Ngemba and Wiradjuri man. Born and raised on the land of his people in Dubbo, he is the youngest child of four to Cooper and Ann-Maree Pike. He graduated from Knox Grammar with a top ATAR: Band 6 results. Knox is one of Australia's top performing private schools in North Shore Sydney. After graduating Oliver took a twelve month break, travelling to Scotland to work in the top performing boarding school an hour drive north of Edinburgh. Oliver is currently in his first year of a dual degree in Fine Arts and Secondary Education at the University of New South Wales, receiving high distinction results with a positive outlook of what his future holds



Learning on Wiradjuri Country

UNAPOLOGETICALLY MYSELF

Tyarna Larkin | Bundjalung and Wiradjuri

When speaking with mob, you both have the shared understanding you are Indigenous with the collective colonial history of our ancestors. However, my point for writing this piece is to highlight the need to create our own sense of home and belonging from our heritage. It is my firm belief every Indigenous Australian identifies and has a different understanding of what their own Indigeneity means to them specifically. Consistently I face variations of the question of “what does it mean to be black?” How can we answer this when everyone has our own concept and connections to culture.

Identity is defined as “Who a person is, or the qualities of a person or group that make them different from others” - The Cambridge Dictionary

I have caramel colored skin, black hair, brown eyes, ten fingers and ten toes. These qualities are what can separate me from others and yet, I do not have to justify them to anyone or make a point of making sure individuals understand it. However, I am also a proud Bundjalung, Wiradjuri and non-Indigenous Australian women, this is WHO I AM. For many years I found myself having to navigate what it meant to be Indigenous, this meant having to constantly determine who I needed to be to fit in. Am I too black for the white kids? Am I too white for the black kids? From discussion with others, it has become apparent I am not the only one to feel this way. However, I can only speak from my own experience of struggling with connecting to culture within the white Australian society. This was a struggle for myself at the time it seemed only I was experiencing; it came for me at a time in my life where you become aware of the importance of belonging and societal hierarchy is at the fore front of our lives. This was during my time at high school, I was lucky enough to have a supportive family from Indigenous and non-Indigenous backgrounds who helped to build my understanding.

During one's time at high school individuals are navigating who they are within larger groups of people and how they portray their right persona to a wider audience. When you add a cultural aspect to this struggle, there is another layer of complexity. This is a concept our people will battle with when growing up or when pushing the boundaries of their understanding of their cultural connections within a colonial Australia.

“What does it mean to be black?” does it mean I have to paint, dance, weave, sing, speak in language, be an activist or have live on my country.

The wider pressures of our mob make it hard to understand our own concept of Indigeneity in our own time.

Lateral violence is an issue that faces our people and is a detriment to the growth of our people and culture. Comparing ourselves to each other and how we connect with culture will ultimately be our own down fall. We need to be able to uplift and guide our young ones to find their own expression of culture.

We need to help those who have not found their way yet, we need to facilitate their journey to find their Indigenous identity. Far too often I see people partaking in activities which makes this uncomfortable or just aren't who they are. If you have anxiety and cannot get up and dance in front of large crowds, don't, find a way to connect in your own way. If you think you cannot paint, try cooking with bushfoods.

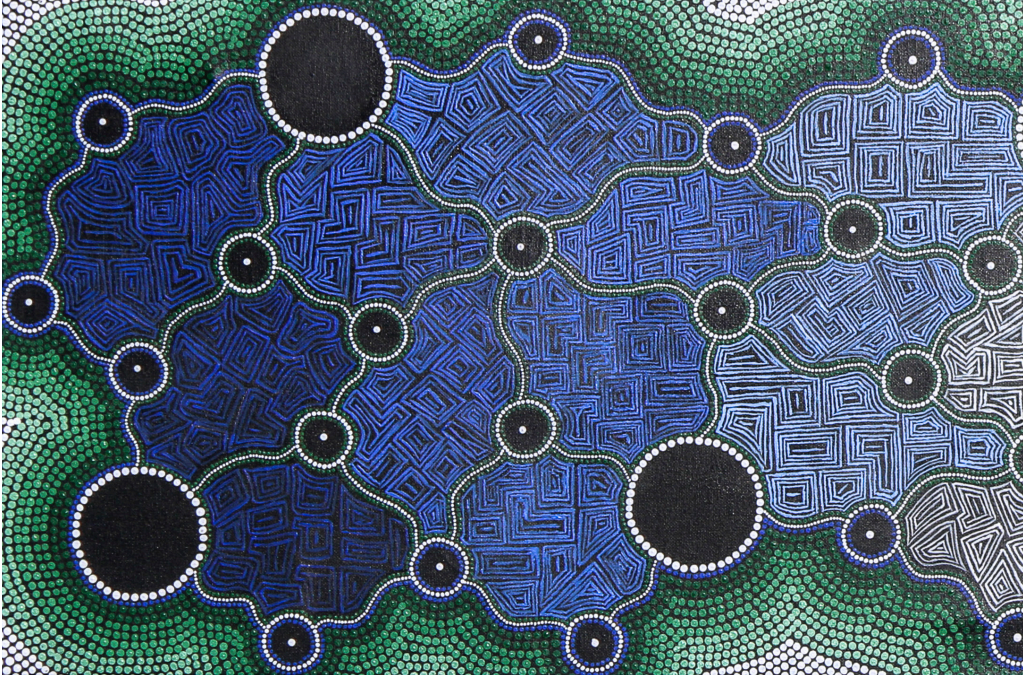
We are living in contemporary times, pigeonholing ourselves in certain categories is only hurting ourselves and our future generations.

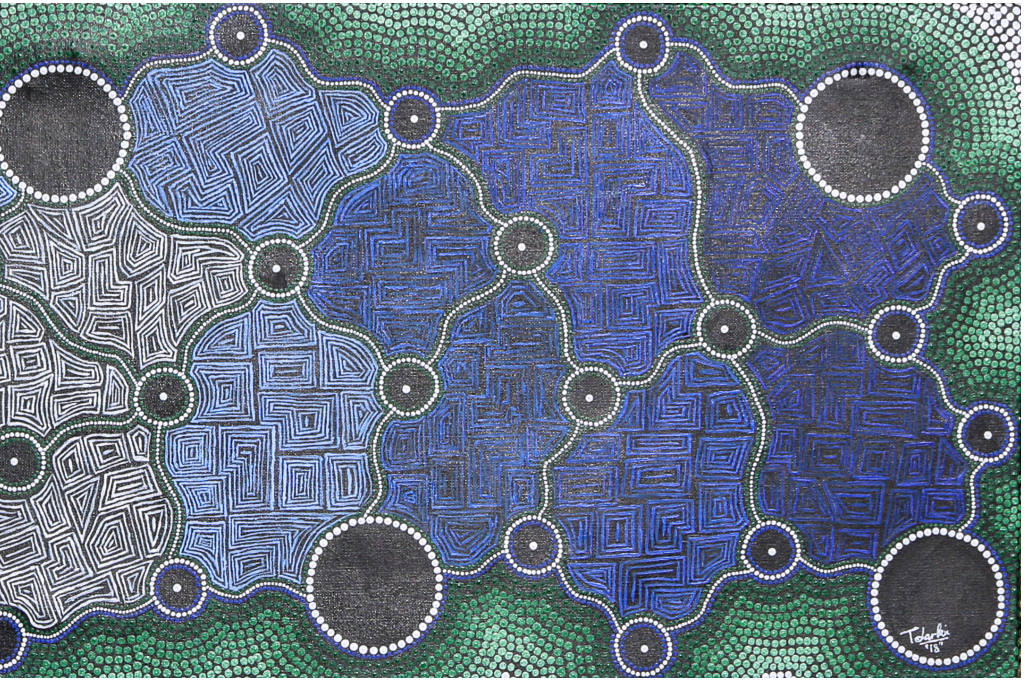
We, as a people, are far too often looking for acceptance from other individuals to validate our “blackness”.

What we do need to realise is acceptance is what we need within ourselves just as much as we need acceptance from others. Getting to a place where we accept ourselves means as a community, we should not be putting pressure on others by displaying lateral violence and saying they need to be one way or the other to be Indigenous. We should be supporting each other on our journeys to finding our OWN connection to Culture within ourselves.

This journey has taken me 24 years and will continue for the rest of my life. I will no longer feel the need to apologise for the way I embrace my Culture and how I connect with my ancestors. I will not be fooled into thinking there is only one right way to do this either.

My cultural identity is my own, something I shape and create.





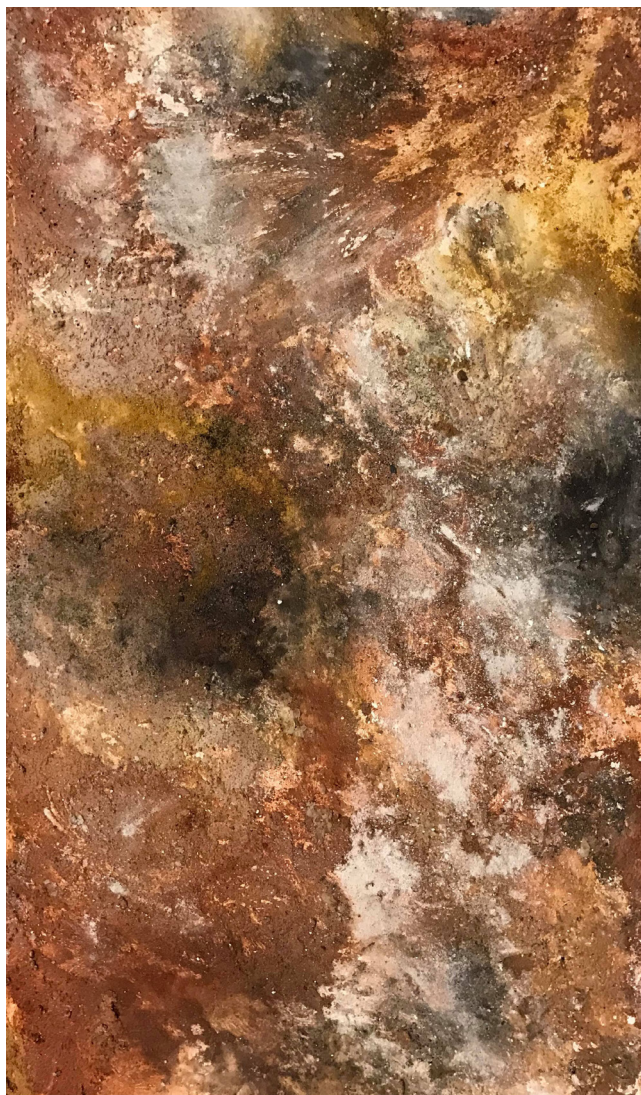
Connections
Artist: Tyarna Larkin | Bundjalung and Wiradjuri

"A relationship in which a person or thing is linked or associated with something else." This painting represents my connection to my family, land, sea and ancestors. It represents moments in time, that have assisted in creating these connections.





Claudia Kent created an installation in response to Indigenous Identity. Her piece centred around "the theme of being questioned, due to not fitting into stereotypical categories. I screen printed different quotes people have said to me when I tell them I am Aboriginal. I printed on my shower walls as I felt this was a space of vulnerability, and the final piece was photographs of the printed quotes, and then of them being washed away (overcoming peoples denial because I know who I am)"



Keaton



Keaton

TO THE MOON AND BACK

Mark Champley | Kamilaroi

Dedicated to my mother, Aunty Fay

Mum had only just turned 18 when I was born. Five months later she was expecting my brother Glen, when my father abandoned us.

We lived with Nan, who was dark skinned, apparently due to us being descendants of Spanish Gypsies. In primary school I enjoyed collecting stamps and cherished those from Spain.

Nan sang to me in a strange language I didn't understand, that soothed my childhood fears. There was another song, in English... "Stay in your own backyard, and don't mind what the white folk say, about a black little boy like you", at the time I felt black.

Nan passed away when I was 9. Still in her twenties, Mum held onto my brother and I, our small but determined family of three, clinging together in our dilapidated rented house. Being a single mother was not as commonplace or accepted then as it is now. The shame of being the only kid in my class without a father, was hard to hide.

Mum worked during the day and relied on us to get to school and back on our own, often getting dinner ready ourselves, after school. "I love you both to the moon and back," she used to say.

Glen and I were tight-as. At school, the other kids used to say, "Never pick a fight with a Champley, coz you'll have to fight them both".

One of my best mates and the only recognised Aboriginal student at Orange Grove Primary School was Michael Ballangarry, who shared with me, and no one else, stories of his family life and culture.

As a teenager I knew the value of a dollar and did whatever I could to lessen the

burden on Mum. I sold newspapers after school, delivered milk, and worked at Clarke & Clarke Menswear in Rozelle. Always impeccably dressed, the two Mr Clarke's motto, "It's all about service," made a significant impression on a young man, eager to enter the business world.

In 1976, I was in year 10 and voted School Captain. Mum's face was so full of pride when I told her, it filled my heart. "I love you to the moon and back," she said. I was re-elected in 1977 and 78, three years all up.

.....

Phone Call from a Ghost

.....

Life goes on. I grew up, got a full-time job and got married. At 26, shortly after the birth of my first child Ryan I received a phone call from a ghost. His voice sounded thin, like he was calling from the end of a tunnel, 26 years long.

I listened as he spoke of his life, something told me he was exaggerating to impress me. I felt uneasy, as if just by listening to him, I was betraying Mum, the only parent I'd ever known. I suggested we meet at Drummoyne Oval the next day at 10 am. "I'll bring your baby grandson." I told him. He said he'd be there.

The next morning, I arrived at the park early. It was a brisk autumn day in Sydney. I sat on a child's swing, feeding my baby son with a bottle as we rocked quietly back and forth. Each time a car pulled up, I got up, only to sit back down and continue waiting. After two soul-crushing hours, I got up from the swing for the last time and wept as I carried Ryan slowly back to our unit. My so-called father had broken my heart a second time. I never heard from him again.

.....

In the late 1990's my mother was struck down with breast cancer. This was a frightening time as families dealing with cancer would know. Mum had a distinctive high-pitched voice which I believe was a result of years of smoking. Somehow the voice matched her short stature, but she was a very strong woman that was forged over many years of struggle. During her treatment she decided to trace our family tree and try to take her mind off the cancer.

I remember, when my mum called me with the news that she had established we had no Spanish heritage, our descendants were Aboriginal. I filled with pride and was not surprised with the news; mum was exactly the same.

Our thoughts soon turned to my Grandmother; she obviously knew we were Aboriginal but had kept it from us. At first there was a little anger, but this soon turned into sadness. Sadness, driven by the loss of Culture and our community link, but more, much more for our Grandmother, who lived a lie for most of her life to protect us from racism and discrimination. This left us both with a sense emptiness caused by the loss of truth, language and identity.

To have it on paper is one thing, but you crave for a connection, acceptance and inclusion. My mum felt a duty to try and connect with our people and somehow make up for lost time. Finally, and thankfully, mum beat the dreaded cancer and had a new sense of drive and passion.

Mum didn't have the opportunity to receive a good education but was very street wise and a great talker. Before I knew it, Mum had received an invitation to address our Aboriginal Land Council and I went along on the road trip to support her. For me it was a journey of a lifetime which would later change my life forever. During the drive I spoke to Mum about how our ancestors would be guiding us on our quest to reconnect and how proud I was of her for her resilience and commitment.

When we arrived, I was so glad we had come together as what we were about to do and the enormity was almost overwhelming. We were warmly welcomed by a community member and asked to sit and wait outside the main meeting room.

When we were asked to join the community meeting, I sat beside my Mum and being the elder, Mum did all the talking. I looked up at her standing addressing the gathering and felt great pride. Mum answered all the questions confidently and I'm sure my Grandmother's spirit was with her, giving her strength. When all the questioning was over, we were asked to wait outside again. I placed my arm around Mum and told her how much I loved her.

We really didn't know what to expect, will we be welcomed as part of the community or leave rejected. The wait seemed an eternity, but it must have been around ten minutes. Then the door opened, and we were asked to re-join the community.

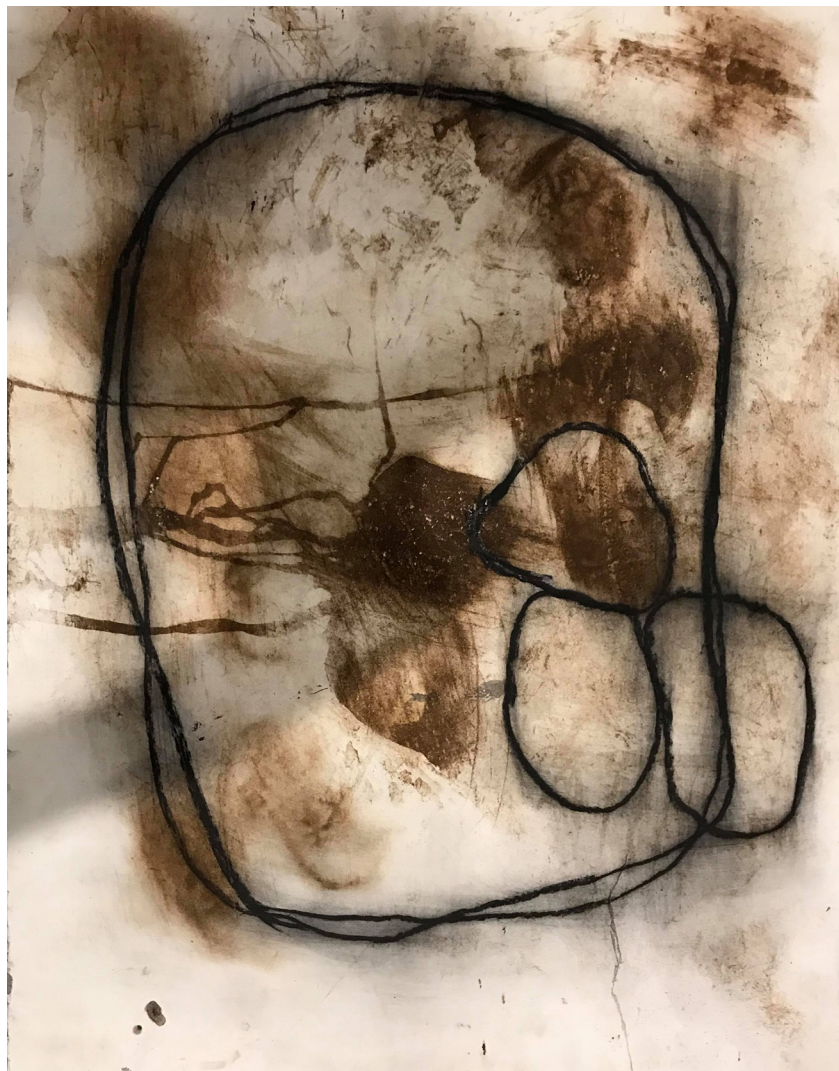
I followed Mum inside and walked with her hoping we would be accepted into a Community that was kept from us.

Still standing everyone in the room rose and moved towards us, we were surrounded, embraced and the words, “Welcome Home” were said. Tears freely rolled from our eyes knowing that we had finally reconnected with OUR MOB.



From top left: Aunt Fay with her grandson baby Ryan, Aunt Fay with grandchildren - Marks' eldest children Mia and Ryan, Aunt Fay being acknowledged at the 2009 Central Coast NAIDOC Awards, Aunt Fay with her son Mark at Sydney Ferries,

My name is Mark Champley. I was born in Sydney on Wangal Land.
I live on Darkinjung Country and my ancestors are Kamilaroi



Keaton



Keaton



Keaton



Keaton



Jake with his daughter Samara

MEMORIES

Jake Fing | Gamilaroi

“Memories are the one true treasure we have in life.
Without our memories, we have nothing”

-My Aunty Julie-

Memories are the one true treasure we have in life
To remember those we call Mother, Father, Brother, Sister, Husband or Wife.

We gain these moments, these brief precious flashes,

But as we grow older the time soon dashes.

The memories I have closest to my heart
are ones of my family
in particular my little one when parenthood began.

The moment little Samara came into this world,

To the moment the doctor placed her in my arms to be held.

Bub came four weeks early, the doctor said she was “eager to come out”

At this moment, with all the happiness in the world, we wanted to shout!

We have been blessed with a beautiful baby girl!

To us she is more precious than any diamond or pearl.

The first time she spoke and used the words “Mum” and “Dad”,

To the moment she learnt to crawl to walk and learn the good from the bad.

Each memory is a gift that we can hold forever and a day,

To us these are priceless, no matter what some may say.



A beautiful **L**oving personality

Kindness coupled with her **I**ntelligent nature

Zesty dance moves and style

Zealous advocate for mob and culture

Youthful disposition coupled with wisdom

Mad is an understatement?

Always able to **A**rticulate her thoughts

Always up for a **Y**arn and a cuppa

Discerning and **E**nchanting

Her **R**adiant spirit shines

Special

SORRY DAY

Kira Lyn Clark | Gungabula and Gomeroi

The day started at Hyde Park. Amongst the tourists and lunch goers were those involved in the Sorry Day rally, laying out canvas signs, preparing microphones and speakers.

Aunty Hazel Collins and Helen Eason were giving interviews in response to the protest.

The rally was about to kick off when a large crowd of people, having finished a climate rally, marched over beating on drums to join the

GMAR's Sorry Day Rally.

A crowd of around a thousand Community members listened as the women of GMAR spoke about the rates of Indigenous child removal, the abuse endured by children in the system, the pain of the families whose children were stolen.

The crowd was visibly angry, emotional and stirred.

Following the Aunties, Uncle Bruce Shillingsworth spoke to the crowd condemning the actions of our government in removing children, destroying Indigenous families and communities. Uncle Bruce also spoke on the lack of water in his community in North Western NSW.

“If the government cannot even provide water to our communities how can they take ‘care’ of our children?

How can they justify tearing apart our families taking our children when they cannot even provide us with water?

Water is an integral aspect to Indigenous culture
and without it, we cannot flourish.

The government knows this yet stands idly by and does nothing but take our kids.”

We began marching.

Uncle Bruce's voice rang with condemnation.

The drummers kept a steady rhythm for the chants.
Uncle Bruce began:

‘Always was!’

‘Always will be, Aboriginal land!’.

‘What do we want?’ he yelled

In response, the thousand strong crowd yelled:

‘Our children back!’.

Uncle Bruce asked the crowd

‘What does Sorry mean?’

We, thousand strong crowd responded vehemently

‘You don’t do it again!’

In the midst of the marching crowd, it was easy to hear the anger, frustration and hurt in the voices of every individual. Signs were held proud and high, with phrases painted across them:

Sorry Means you don’t do it again!

Stop Stolen Generations

Always was Always will be Aboriginal land!

Indigenous flags were waved, one tied to Helen’s back as she marched us towards Parliament House. Onlookers peered from the footpath, balconies, homes and office blocks to watch, stopping in their tracks beckoned by the swell of voices outside.

The crowd gathered around the gates of Parliament House.

The canvas signs were slung up high on the fences for everyone to see.

Helen opened up to the crowd about her children being removed numerous times, detailing her fight against a heartless department to get her kids back, and she did.

**We fight with our matriarchs to keep our children
to stop governments from stealing our babies.**

And in the words of Helen: -

From Stealing Our Existence.

David Shoebridge spoke next, he highlighted the inherent link between fighting for climate justice and fighting for social justice, especially for Indigenous communities. He spoke about Uncle Bruce Shillingsworth and his fight for water on his country, how Indigenous families and communities cannot teach their children about the Cultural importance of the rivers and water systems. The same system that refuses to address the Water Crisis in North Western NSW is the very same one that continues to steal our children and disrespect our First Nation's peoples.

Shoebridge continued to highlight the ongoing tragedy of Indigenous child removals, with the national rate increasing five-fold since 1997.

The crowd bellowed **SHAME!**

‘Since Kevin Rudd gave his apology, the number of Indigenous children stolen from their families in NSW has doubled’.

Once again **SHAME!**

The government has recently passed new legislation that allows Indigenous children to be adopted out of their families even easier than before.

SHAME! Reverberated once more across the crowd

Those inside of Parliament would have heard our voices loud and clear .

Helen's son, Rain, was next to speak.

His story was one of deep sadness and provoked disgust toward the government and departments responsible for his trauma.

At the age of ten Rain was removed by eight police officers and four DOCS workers. The police held his mother, while he and his little sister were stolen and dumped at a stranger's house, with no information given to them at all.

DOCS haven't helped him since, the only way he got back home was running away and his mother's continual fight.

Each time he ran away, DOCS claimed his mother kidnapped him.

You can't kidnap your own babies!

yelled a crowd member.

SHAME!

Mathew told his story next. Days after his fourteenth birthday he was stolen from his family, along with his little sister by four police officers and two DOCS workers. They were taken to a hotel, forced to live there for six months.

Mathew was forced to live off \$14 a day, expected to feed, clothe and get himself to school on a pittance.

He spoke about being alone on Christmas day, a social worker next to him on the beach.

He hasn't seen his little sister in three years.

He now lives in a youth shelter; thankful he isn't homeless.

SHAME!

Aunty Hazel spoke next.

She spoke of children who are shuttled from family to family, who are abused and mistreated by this system and the carers in it. Families who find out their children have passed away in care on Facebook.

SHAME!

No mother goes into a delivery room and births an orphan, no matter what DOCS and the Government tell our children.

Aunty Hazel had some direct questions for Scott Morrison:

What is he going to do?

Is he going to be a man?

A Prime Minister who continues to sanction Genocide?

Aunty Hazel demanded a meeting with Scott Morrison, to come sit face to face with the women of GMAR and have a transparent discussion about the concerns of stealing our kids, of forced adoption laws and continued genocide of our people.

This system is flawed.

It has been flawed since day one because it was founded on genocide.

Kira is a 22 year old Gungahula & Gomeroi woman living on Gadigal land, although she mainly grew up on Deerubbin land out in Western Sydney. Currently studying Social Work & Criminology and Criminal Justice, she hopes to practice identity affirming and trauma-informed work as well as return to Country after graduating. Kira has a love of writing poetry, having received an encouragement award in the 2010 Patrick White Young Indigenous Writing competition during high school.

Family is Culture review is a three-year study of the case files of 1,144 Aboriginal children who entered the NSW out-of-home-care system between 2015 and 2016. This independent review led by UNSW Pro-Vice Chancellor Indigenous Professor Megan Davis is the first to look at how Aboriginal children and families manage in the child protection system and outlines the urgent need for reform detailing 125 key recommendations.

As Professor Davis cites in the foreword:

From the outset I want to highlight three issues salient to the work of this Review: (1) the importance of Aboriginal activism, especially Aboriginal grandmothers, as an informal regulator in the child protection system, (2) 'ritualism' in government departments and (3) the use of commissions of inquiries and reviews in the public policy field of Indigenous affairs

Editors Note: Independent Review of Aboriginal Children in OOHC © Family Is Culture, Sydney, 2019

#JUSTICEFORWALKER #ISTANDWITHYUENDUMU





Antarctica with a flannel flower scattering seeds
Seeding Treaties - Voices from the Southern Ocean

LIVING DATA: VOICES FROM THE SOUTHERN OCEAN

Reportage: Lisa Roberts

I can't separate Identity, Voice, Treaty, Truth, and Language; or past, present and future. Everything is connected.

By chance I worked as an artist in Antarctica, became an academic and an expert on krill sex.

"I should explain that my body is largely transparent.

If you were to see the whole of me you may only see my big black eyes, greeny gut, and glowing red tail. As I swim, my pleopods and feeding basket bits move so fast you barely see them. But you may feel the water turbulence I make. Sometimes, in the dark, I fluoresce. My greeny-yellow stomach is full of phytoplankton I have eaten. Scientists tell me that phytoplankton work together as a massive photo-voltaic system to gather all the sunlight that's cast on Mother Earth's water, with each organism processing a different spectrum of light. That's amazing. A friend tells me that all living things embody the spirit of the world. That's inspiring. Now I want to know my relationship to Antarctic Whales and the Whale Dreaming stories around Australia."

Euphausiasuperba (Antarctic krill)

Voices from the Southern Ocean is a project I am leading 'to inspire, inform and engage young people in telling their own stories of relationship to the natural world'. These are the words I just registered with the NSW Department of Fair Trading as the purpose of 'Living Data Seeding Treaties Incorporated'. I am working with Aboriginal knowledge holders, scientists, software engineers, educators and other artists, to design a travelling installation and on-line interface to enable people to physically and virtually interact with and respond to stories that come from the land and the sea.

By Treaty we mean an agreement that evolves as people work together for the common good.

You can read about our treaty online: [SEEDING TREATIES : Voices from the Southern Ocean](#)

Animations, installations, performances and picture books will be developed through our conversations and workshops, to give voice to ocean creatures and their relatives on land. Aboriginal stories and voices will immerse people within engaging narratives of the same aspects as we understand in Western science, so they may experience how the two views complement each other.

The project began in 2018 in collaboration with Gumbaygnirr cultural systems ecologist Chels Marshall, followed by an art residency in 2019 at the Australian Antarctic Division with Barkindji artist Maddison Gibbs. It will culminate with publication of the International Panel of Climate Change (IPPC) Report in 2022 and leading into the 2023 Global Stocktake to measure and communicate how countries are meeting the Paris Agreement targets.

The online interface will map and track the creatures' explorations and invite responses; Algae, Krill, Fish, Snake, Bird and Whale will travel from Antarctica to Australia to explore how they co-evolved through time and space with natural cycles of global climate change driven by Antarctic sea ice. Their stories will reveal connections between health and wellbeing of individuals, communities and the planet.

Whale will lead and narrate a journey from the sea and then onto land, as in the Whale Dreaming stories of the Yuin and Gumbaynggirr peoples. That journey will reflect how Western scientists understand the evolution of the whale: The whale came from the sea, evolved on land into an almost wolf-like organism and eventually became amphibious and went back into the ocean to become the whales we see today.

I will animate the story of *Euphausiasuperba* (Antarctic krill) that we know from Western science, combined with how I imagine her experience as keystone creature of the Southern Ocean in relationship with fellow creatures, and with the elements, ocean, land, and air.

By chance I worked as an artist in Antarctica, became an academic and an expert on krill sex.

In 2001 I was living in Tasmania and working as a community artist on Flinders Island. People shared their stories to give voice to that place. We made an interactive animated work called *A Little Skiting on the Side*. I drew a local Aboriginal girl dancing with the wind and birds, I animated stories with fishing and farming folk,

and with teachers and their students at the local school. I met a whale observer who convinced me to go with her to Antarctica.

I'm an art-maker, animator and Interactive author, and my heritage is Aboriginal Australian and European. Like many First Nations Australians dispossessed of cultural knowledge, I work to reconnect the different ways of knowing that together sustained Aboriginal Australia for tens of thousands of years. I identify as a global citizen with responsibilities for the Ocean and I recognise Antarctic krill as my totem.

I met my partner in Antarctica and followed him to Sydney where I embarked on Aboriginal Studies at Eora College, and a PhD in New Media Arts at the University of New South Wales. These explorations led me to reconnect with my Aboriginal family and to recognise the primal forms in art and data as languages of relationship.

I created Living Data as a program to explore the similar and different ways we respond as artists and as scientists, to disruptions in natural cycles of climate change. I am Artist in Residence in the Faculty of Science at the University of Technology Sydney and Visiting Scientist (a.k.a. Artist) at the Australian Antarctic Division.

JESSICA LOUISE BIRK

In Memoriam
Jessica Louise Birk
05/08/1984 -10/11/2019



Strong Yaegl woman, who lived in the Northern Beaches of Sydney passed away peacefully and surrounded by loved ones on Sunday 10th November 2019

“This understanding of country allows for a two-way communication to evolve, between those belonging and the country to which they belong. Country is spoken to, sung to, loved and mourned, just as if were a family member. This personification of the landscape allows a more personal interpretation of what lies in it; everything then has a purpose and a story to tell, from the colours of the landscape right down to the stones within it.” Jessica Birk 2018

Jessica Birk BFA a multi- award winning artist
graduated from COFA, UNSW in 2007

I first met Jess when I started at UNSW in 2009 and was struck by her generosity of spirit, vivaciousness, determination & beauty.

She generously introduced me to the AECG Community in the Northern Beaches of which she was President & invited me to Community gatherings and exhibitions

An incredible artist in her own right Jess shared her vision for her people young and old. I witnessed the dignified growth of the collective inclusive legacy she together with her beautiful Mum Lois, family and friends lovingly created.

In 2010 Jess as an alumni joined us at the inaugural UNSW Indigenous Spring Forum with mature age Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to explore & give feedback on opportunities for further study and how business may play a role in their journeys.

I was thrilled when Jess and her cousin Frances ignited their childhood dream to create Dyinda Designs. Their array of colourful beautiful designs fabrics, creations imbued with their Cultural sustainable practices resonate with such Joie de Vivre reflecting their incredible closeness, pride and talents.

Learning of Jess' passing this week I was deeply saddened and sought permission from her family to include this tribute - her loss is felt by many and I pay my deepest respect, condolences and love to all her family and friends.

Vale Jess thank you for your friendship your teachings your creativity your generosity, your wisdom.

May we continue to learn and walk gently together and honour the collective wisdom all around us as you so poignantly led and shared:

“to tap into this collective wisdom and knowledge of the land you need to learn to love and look after it as a living entity. A landscape becomes intrinsically more literal through a ‘holistic’ representation of a landscape and thus includes its aesthetic qualities, it’s colours, textures and representational forms, but also it’s past, it’s stories, it’s present and it’s future” J.B.

Becky Harcourt 15 11.2019



ALUMNI

Did you know the following acclaimed Blak Creatives and Authors are also UNSW Alumni?

Toni Janke	graduated UNSW in 1990 BA LLB
Professor Larissa Behrendt	graduated UNSW in 1992 BJuris LLB
Professor Anita Heiss	graduated UNSW in 1992 BA
Terri Janke	graduated from UNSW in 1995 BA LLB
Associate Professor Brenda Croft	graduated UNSW in 1995 MArtAdm
Angelina Hurley	graduated UNSW in 2004 MArtAdmin
Patricia Adjei	graduated UNSW in 2005 LLB
Melodie Gibson	graduated UNSW in 2006 BA
Teho Ropeyarn	graduated UNSW in 2010 BFA
Lucy Simpson	graduated UNSW in 2010 BDes
Professor Bronwyn Carlson	graduated UNSW in 2012 PhD
Rebekah Treacy	graduated UNSW in 2013 BFA
Yale Macgillivray	graduated UNSW in 2013 BA BFA
Teena McCarthy	graduated UNSW in 2014 BFA with Distinction
Nakari Thorpe	graduated UNSW in 2014 BMedia
Rhyan Clapham	graduated UNSW in 2014 BMus
Ethel – Anne Grundy	graduated UNSW in 2015 BFA
Jordan Ardler	graduated UNSW in 2017 BDes (Hons)
Dennis Golding	graduated UNSW in 2019 BFA (Hons)
Tamina Pitt	graduated UNSW in 2019 BE (Hons)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank:

All the deadly creatives for your submissions it was a joy working with you all!

Terri Janke for your creative insights, generosity and care and finding time in your demanding schedule to give back

Shelley Valentine CEO | Arc @ UNSW who from the beginning embraced this publication and provided invaluable guidance and support throughout

Nick Bentley Arc Junior Graphic Designer for your flexibility and design flair!

Caroline Fox Drinkwater Arc Marketing Studio Manager

Emily Doherty and UNSW Bookshop for your invaluable support.



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