DEADLY NARRATIVES:RECENT COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS



SATURDAY 13 MARCH - SUNDAY 30 MAY 2021

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Saturday 13 March -Sunday 30 May 2021

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Presented by













FRONT COVER-

PITCHA MAKIN FELLAS

We know where you shop (Kangaroo) Acrylic paint on pvc foamboard Collection of KHT, Gift of Tom Mosby & Tony Ellwood

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Deadly Narratives: Recent Collection Highlights is a multifaceted tribute to, and celebration of the Koorie Heritage Trust's five-year anniversary in the Yarra **Building at Federation Square. At its** core, the exhibition supports our vision to contribute to a society where Victorian Aboriginal culture and history are a fundamental part of daily life and it also meets our purpose to promote, support and celebrate the continuing journey of the Aboriginal people of southeastern Australia. Deadly Narratives also resonates with our motto GNOKAN DANNA MURRA KOR-KI (Give me your hand my friend) which reflects our belief that we can all work together to raise awareness and appreciation of the cultural diversity of Victorian Aboriginal culture, and work towards the broader goal of reconciliation for all Australians.

Deadly Narratives reflects the history and importance of KHT at Federation Square, including our ongoing success in strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and extending the reach and enhancement of our visitors' experience in a place of gathering designed for all Victorians. Deadly Narratives emphasises and reinforces our reputation and expertise as an authentic source of cultural knowledge of southeastern Australia, and as a source of advocacy and guidance for increasing the Aboriginal footprint on Victoria's cultural environment and infrastructure.

When it was established in 1985, the KHT committed to protecting and creating greater awareness and appreciation of Koorie culture, through curating and presenting Koorie cultural heritage material. We honour our founding commitments by continuing to acquire cultural material of significance to the Victorian Aboriginal community and have, to date, accumulated over 65,000 works of art and artefacts. Enhancing and strengthening the Collection with annual acquisitions remains faithful to our original objective of being a repository and custodian of a Collection that is by, and for, Victorian Aboriginal people.

For over thirty years since our establishment in 1985, we have grown our reputation as custodian of the only dedicated collection of Koorie art and artefacts. However, to maintain our vision and purpose, and enhance our connection with the community, we relocated in 2015 from our original premises on King Street in Melbourne to Federation Square, and our current location in the Yarra Building enables the

display of art and artefacts in a more transparent, accessible and interactive manner, allowing for greater engagement by the public. As a result, our standing in Victoria as a pre-eminent Australian Aboriginal organisation and a source of cultural knowledge, expertise and advice on south-eastern Aboriginal Australia art and culture is now firmly established. *Deadly Narratives* is a celebration of our history, success, values and vision. It is a tribute to the promotion, support and celebration of the many artists who have exhibited with us over the past five years.

I wish to acknowledge all who have contributed to building our Collection including our exhibitions and collections staff both past and present. I wish to particularly acknowledge the very generous support of Gandel Philanthropy whose Major Grants program have assisted us in acquiring key artworks into our Collection over the last few years, many of which are included in this exhibition. I also acknowledge the support of our programming partners Creative Victoria, City of Melbourne, the Federal Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support Program and the Australia Council for the Arts.

DEADLY NARRATIVES: SHOWCASING FIRST NATIONS

The KHT holds the unique and privileged position of custodian of a collection of over 65,000 artefacts and historical items of value from south-eastern Australia. The KHT Collection is indicative of a quality and rarity that is not easily surpassed.

TOP Lucy Williams-Connelly (Wiradjuri) River Fishing 2016 Pyrography on particle board Gift of Tom Mosby, 2017. AH 03971

BOTTOM Lucy Williams-Connelly (Wiradjuri) Four Men with Weapons 2016 Pyrography on particle board Gift of Tom Mosby, 2017. AH 03968







Marlene Scerri Gunai, Gunditimara) Black Cockatoos 2014 Textile Acquired through the generous support of the Norma Gleeson Fund, 2015. AH 03947

It has been accumulated over more than 35 years, highlighting the strength and resilience of First Nations mobs from throughout Victoria. The Collection acknowledges First Nations mobs residing in Victoria who have also been welcomed to work as artists in order to play a valuable role in reflecting a cultural lens on the world around us.

Deadly Narratives: Recent Collection Highlights proudly showcases emerging and mid-career artists, and established arts practitioners. It draws from major exhibitions held each year at the KHT, and from our Expression of Interest Level 2 Gallery which provides support and mentoring for emerging artists, including an opportunity to learn the skills for compiling a portfolio showcasing their work and what is required to sell their pieces.

After experiencing societal malaise across many generations concerning appropriation of cultural artefacts and assurances of adherence to accepted cultural practices, the KHT Collection determinedly maintains a quiet strength and dignity. Crucial Elder support in light of what is usually deemed unacceptable curatorial practices in relation to sensitive material, such as the keeper of First Nations skeletal remains, was a significant driver of the Collection's eventual establishment, and is documented in Shannon Faulkhead and Uncle Jim Berg's 2010 book: Power and the passion: Our Ancestors Return Home. The authors provide a crucial understanding of the historical impetus that culminated in such a vast collection. Such an understanding is necessary to fully value the Collection from a historical truth-telling perspective, and enables us to move forward from past disadvantages and disrespect directed at and experienced by our First Nations.

Moreover, it is important to note that the Collection is managed by First Nations mobs who are involved at staff and board levels at KHT, and draws on feedback from the community. Documenting works and showcasing diversity is important in developing the Collection. The Collection is maintained according to the highest museum standards, and is developed via First Nations perspectives. The KHT adheres to protocols that relate to exhibitions, collections and public programs, and abides by the



Raymond Young (Gunnai, Yorta Yorta, Gunditimara) Coolamon #2 2016 Clay, glaze Acquired through the generous support of the Norma Gleeson Fund, 2016. AH 03960



International Design Charter (2018) and the Australia Council for the Arts' Protocols for using First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts (2019).

In its early days, a number of items were formally purchased through auction houses, community visits and donations. In its current form, the KHT continues to boost and enhance the Collection via donations and philanthropic means as guided by our Exhibitions policy. The Collection strengthens cultural understanding in a positive and inspiring manner. This enables the transference of knowledge from Elders to the younger mob, which is important for maintaining strength in identity and inspiring artists to stand their ground in showcasing cultural skills, which are just as important as throughout the rest of Australia.

Historically, we have had a number of very strong and resilient artists pave the way forward in Victoria, and it is pleasing to see their earlier work and, in several cases, their current work displayed together. *Deadly Narratives: Recent Collection* presents a broad brushstroke of works added to the Collection over the last five years since KHT's residence at Federation Square. We are representing Elders, our younger mob, and a variety of mediums and cross-disciplinary practices, including weaving, poker work on board, digital photography, and emerging and experimental arts.

Dividing the Collection into broader themes of women's and men's work in craft, earthenware, textiles, weaving, weapons/tools, cloaks/burned designs, canoes, paintings, printmaking, projections, and a strong repository of photographs and oral histories, provides a good test of our Collection's evolution over time. What unites Deadly Narratives: Recent Collection is the bold symbolism and linear mapping of Country. Use of colour and linear styles cleverly depict aspects of cultural life that shine brightly in a powerful narrative: a real Deadly Narrative. Artists represented include Aunty Lucy Williams-Connelly, Lisa Waup, Josh Muir, Patrice Muthaymiles Mahoney, Pitcha Makin Fellas, Daniel Kelly, Mandi Barton, Frank Hood, Aunty Marlene Scerri, Steaphan Paton,

Monique Grbec, Aunty Marlene Gilson, Kait James, Uncle Greg Muir, Lee Darroch, Raymond Young, Cassie Leatham, Laura Kirby, Isobel Morphy-Walsh, Aunty Marilyne Nicholls and Peter Waples-Crowe.

In its current form, the Collection provides a foundation to further explore themes of colonialism, identity, family history, the Stolen Generations, cultural and human rights, and what it means to be a First Nations community member. The KHT Collection identifies and highlights traditions and knowledge as part of Country and connection, including the complexities within Clans and Nations in sustaining such exceptional skills, and the work KHT continues to perform to safeguard these for future generations.

Important elements of any collection are a vision moving forward, adherence to acquisition policies, and consideration of how it can be enhanced by further acquisitions. It is also important to remain conscious of the need for inclusiveness, which is achieved by encompassing regional areas and reaching out to all artists. This was an important aspect of The 8th Koorie Art show this year, which took into account some of the difficulties experienced by many of the artists in getting their works to the KHT during extended uncertainty as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Continuing to support art practitioners and encourage further exhibitions at the KHT by looking back and also moving forward will continue to help grow the KHT Collection.

> Raymond Young (Gunnai, Yorta Yorta, Gunditjmara) Krauatungalung, Brayakulung markings 2016 Terracotta clay, glaze Acquired through the generous support of the Norma Gleeson

Fund, 2016. AH 03959

P12
Marlene Gilson (Watharung)
[Wadawurrung])
Marngrook 2017
Acrylic on linea
Acquired through the assistance
of the Robert Salzer Foundation,
2017. AH 03980







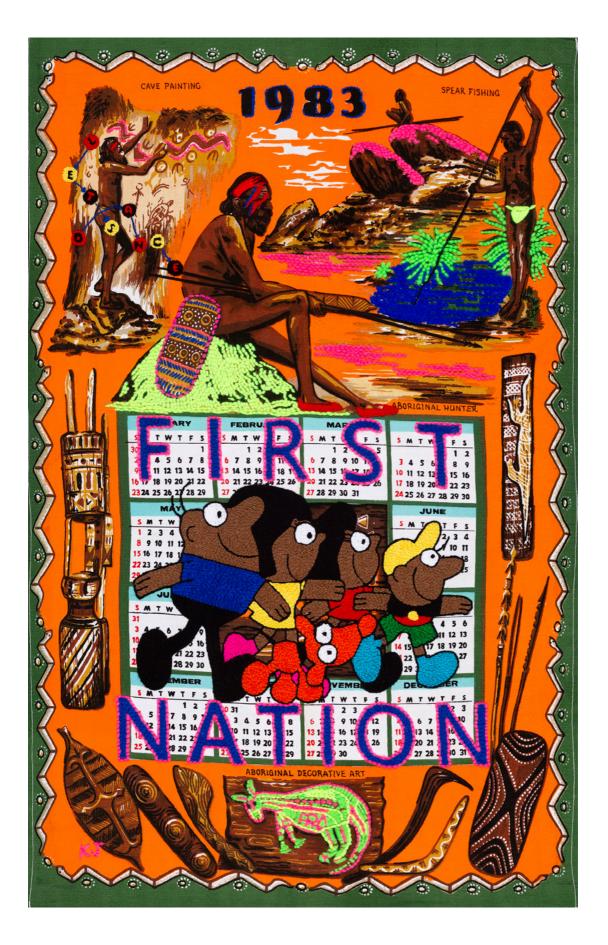
DEADLY NARRATIVES: COLLECTING OUR VOICES OUR WAY

Deadly Narratives centres
Aboriginal people of southeastern Australia as sovereign
and thriving custodians of
these lands. Acquisitions
from the past five years are
displayed with confidence,
and fortify Koorie people's
adaptability and evolving
practices within a placebased context.

Lisa Waup (Gunditjmara, Torres Strait Islander)

Connected Journeys 2019
Ceramic, glaze, possum skin, emu
feathers, cassowary feathers,
cockatoo crest feathers, galah
feather, seed pods (pyrography),
cotton thread, aloe vera fibre,
jewellery wire.
Acquired through the generous
support of Gandel Philanthropy,
2020. All 04006





"living in a society where Aboriginal culture and history are a fundamental part of Victorian life."

According to curator Gail Harradine, her selection reaffirms that we are "living in a society where Aboriginal culture and history are a fundamental part of Victorian life." With exhibits ranging from Burrai Biganga children's cloak by Lee Darroch, needlework by Kait James critiquing stereotypical tea towels, and paintings by Marlene Gilson illustrating frontier history, to the intricate fold out Artist Book by Peter Waples-Crowe, multiple journeys overlap, and in doing so share strength and renewed power amongst the backdrop of frontier wars and ongoing racism. The luminous collection radiates at a national scale, dispelling myths that Aboriginal people and culture do not flourish in cities and regions. The exhibition creates an awareness that Narrm/Birrarung-ga and wider Victoria is a potent centre for blak art and culture, and the assemblage of works is a valuable and dynamic collection of national significance.

Since colonisation, Aboriginal people, culture, art and artefacts have been collected, curated, studied and surveyed. Our belongings are held in Western institutions throughout the world, and our experiences are documented in government archives in archaic filing systems. In recent years, a surge of blak curators, artists, writers and academics have reclaimed our belongings, stories and culture in powerful ways. The Koorie Heritage Trust stands as a significant force within this blak consciousness, and Deadly Narratives continues the project of decolonising the framing of First Nations art and culture within museum and gallery contexts. As Narungga poet Natalie Harkin writes in her 2019 collection Archival Poetics we "re-signify the colonial archive for broader Indigenous cultural memory, for hopeful and just futures..." Similar to Harkin's repossession of the archive, Deadly Narratives re-collects First Nation art to re-imagine the museum or gallery as a space for community. Traditionally steeped in colonialism, the museum or gallery now becomes a place where blak futures are visible rather than archived, thereby critiquing the colonial fantasy that First Peoples and their culture are historical objects to collect.

For a significant period, First Nations art became placeless, disconnected from the local geographies and communities of its origins and collected by institutions. It appeared in a variety of international locations, including the National Gallery of Australia, the British Museum, and The

Kait James (Wadawurrung)
First Nation 2019
Wool and cotton on
printed cotton
Acquired through the
generous support of Anne
Ross. 2019. AH 04008



Isobel Morphy-Walsh (Taun Wurrung)
Munda-ngat brangaluk (to protect, to hug, to hold all)
Stringy Bark *3 2019
Stringy bark, beeswax, kangaroo skin and fur Acquired through the generous support of Gandel Philanthropy, 2020.



Smithsonian, without deep acknowledgement of its ongoing resonance with the people who created it and the places they lived. Indigenous cultural critic Tristan Harwood addressed the globalised treatment of First Nation art, which regularly separates it from community and Country. He argued that the TIWI exhibition held at the National Gallery of Victoria often appeared static even though the gallery acknowledged its colonial lineage: "despite the clear curatorial intention to sidestep the long shadow that ethnography has historically cast on Indigenous art, the gallery fails to acknowledge its own complicity in that history."

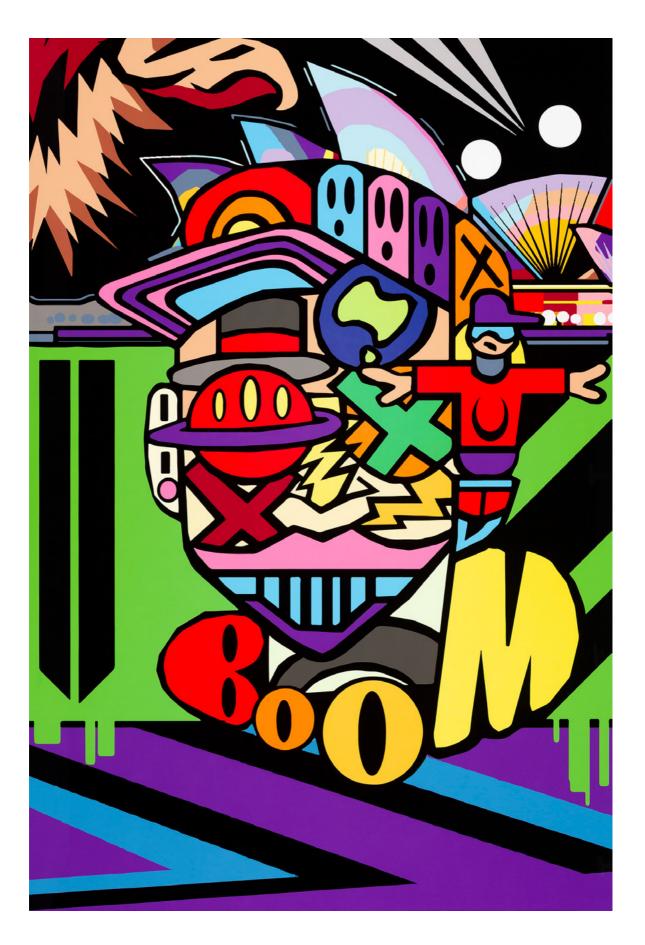
These issues are ameliorated by the KHT's residence within the city's prime cultural precinct. The narrative that Aboriginal art primarily exists in rural and regional areas of northern Australia is altered by illuminating the unique practices occurring at a local level through the dedicated development of a south-eastern Australia collection. No longer do we view Aboriginal art through the lens of northern Australia where major institutions curate from within this region in ways that remain connected to ethnographic processes. Instead, Deadly Narratives displays the astonishing work occurring on this Country, which is vibrant and linked to the peoples and geographies of this land. As curator Harradine makes clear: "the items chosen for this exhibition clearly articulate pride in culture and identity, from Elders creating their enjoyment of hunting and living off the land in pokerwork designs on wood, to our younger emerging artists burning designs on kangaroo skins in what is clearly south-eastern Australian linear style [not dots]."

Through blak-led decision-making, anthropological categorisation of First Nation art is removed and Eurocentric values dismantled. Art is no longer displayed in cabinets absent of life and influence. In contrast, local mobs can engage with culture on Country and strengthen connections. As Harradine explains:

We like to share ideas and consider the layers of meaning and how the artworks resonate together. Working as a team during installation enables a sharing of ideas and reflects First Nations ways of working together (also important for working across First Nations/non-First Nations staff to learn and develop their own understandings of cultural competency). We meet regularly and discuss strategies for hanging and displaying work. This is greatly influenced by cultural journeys reflected by the collection and enhanced by the expertise within our organisation.

Blak ways of collecting ensure that the eclectic array of paintings, sculpture, prints, portraits, pottery, weavings and jewellery beguile the gallery space, resulting in a significant body of work that celebrates south-eastern Aboriginal people's distinctive voice within the continent. MOOB, a bold techno-colour digital print on aluminium by Josh Muir, represents generational shifts. Borrowing from street art, and embodying iconic imagery fused with self-portraiture, the piece incites hope for the next generation. Elaborate wearable work by Lisa Waup and Isobel Morphy-Walsh collapse the binaries of traditional and contemporary to highlight that Aboriginal culture evolves in circular ways - our future is informed by 65,000 years of culture even as we move forward with hope. Waup's breastplate Connected Journeys and Morphy-Walsh's headpiece's Munda-ngat Brangaluk (to protect, to hug, to hold all) Stringy Bark #2 and Munda-ngat Brangaluk (to protect, to hug, to hold all) Stringy Bark #3 use cultural materiality and practice while inviting the viewer to imagine the jewellery in everyday contexts beyond the gallery walls.

Deadly Narratives points towards a dynamic future led by Aboriginal People of Victoria who possess diverse skills drawn from 65,000 years of ancestral knowledge. The exhibition also illuminates the impact of KHT's relocation to Federation Square, increasing both national and international understandings of First Nations people's connection to this Country despite the pervasiveness of Western architecture. Resting along the Birrarung Marr, Narrm/Birrarung-Ga/ Melbourne is re-centred as a Koorie place and an ongoing cultural point for the people of the Eastern Kulin Nations and other south-eastern First Nations people. It enables mob to see their work on their own terms, which nurtures a stronger understanding of the Country and people that the work grew from.





"when I see a work of art or design by one of our people, I see an invitation to join them on a journey. I take myself inside attempting to unwrap the layers."

Deadly Narrative's vision and celebration of KHT's move to Federation Square re-frames the misunderstanding that Aboriginal art is most productive in other parts of Australia. The recent collection reinforces the depth. technique and complex influences that occur in south-eastern Australian Aboriginal art. From decorative pottery by Raymond Young, to Cassie Leatham's delicate Woven Mat with Emu Feathers, and the unflinching realties of Daniel Kelly's print portrait of Nicky Winmar in Racism Still Exists, multiple experiences coalesce within the rich tapestry of Koorie art: a vibrant community is revealed and one in which cultural practices move towards an abundant future. Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin wrote in the 2018 KHT exhibition catalogue Blak Design Matters: "when I see a work of art or design by one of our people, I see an invitation to join them on a journey. I take myself inside attempting to unwrap the layers. I want to feel the message it contains." Seeing ourselves and our stories within the cityscape is part of First Nations people's future and ongoing survival. As Aunty Joyce conveys, these collections allow us to go on a journey and connect with the vital messages that blak communities hold.

P21
Josh Muir (Yorta Yorta,
Guntitjimara)
MOOB 2018
Digital print on aluminium
Gift of Josh Muir, 2019. AH 04004

P22
Lisa Waup (Gunditjmara,
Torres Strait Islander)
Jess's Mauboy 2013
Ochre, tar, cotton stitching,
acrylic on cotton rag paper
Acquired through the generous
support of the Norma Gleeson
Fund, 2015. AH 03949

References

Harkin, N., 2019. Archival Poetics. Vagabond Press. Harwood, T., 2021. TIWI. The Saturday Paper. Murphy, A. J., 2018. Introduction. Blak Design Matters Catalogue. Koorie Heritage Trust.

ARTWORK INDEX



Mandi Barton (Yorta Yorta)
Yinya Burra 2014
Acrylic on canvas
Acquired through the generous support
of the Norma Gleeson Fund, 2015.
AH 03941



Lee Darroch (Yorta Yorta, Mutti Mutti, Boon Wurrung) Yalka biganga (children's cloak) 2016 Pyrography on possum skin, waxed thread Acquired through the generous support of the Norma Gleeson Fund, 2017. AH 03958



Marlene Gilson (Wathaurung [Wadawurrung])
William Buckley Meets Landing
Party/Interpreter 2017
Acrylic on linen
Acquired with the assistance
of the Robert Salzer Foundation,
2017. AH 03979



Marlene Gilson (Wathaurung [Wadawurrung]) Mangrook 2017 Acrylic on linen Acquired with the assistance of the Robert Salzer Foundation, 2017. AH 03980



Monique Grbec 524 Pages 2019 Glitter, fibreglass resin, metal on copper mesh on acrylic board Acquired through the generous support of Gandel Philanthropy, 2020. AH 04012



Frank Hood (Kurnai)
Markings of Kurnai Land 2016
Acrylic on canvas
Acquired through the generous
support of the Norma Gleeson Fund,
2016. AH 03962



Kait James (Wadawurrung)
First Nation 2019
Wool and cotton on printed cotton
Acquired through the
generous support of Anne Ross,
2019. AH 04008



Daniel Kelly (Wathaurung)
Racism Still Exists 2014
Ochre stencil on cotton rag paper
Acquired through the generous support
of the Norma Gleeson Fund, 2015.
AH 03944



Laura Kirby (Wiradjuri, Yorta Yorta, Baraparapara) Woven mat with Emu feathers 2019 Flax, emu feathers Acquired through the generous support of Gandel Philanthropy, 2020. AH 04016



Cassie Leatham (Taungurung)
Darrandel Goornbat (Snake Bone
Necklace) 2016
Snake Bones, thread
Acquired through the generous support
of Gandel Philanthropy, 2018.
AH 03985



Cassie Leatham (Taungurung)
Healing Weaved Floor Mat with Emu
Feathers 2018
Raffia, flax, emu feathers
Acquired through the generous support
of Gandel Philanthropy, 2018.
AH 03986



Isobel Morphy-Walsh (Taun Wurrung)
Munda-ngat Brangaluk (to protect, to
hug, to hold all) Stringy Bark #2 2019,
Stringy bark, beeswax,
kangaroo skin and fur
Acquired through the generous support
of Gandel Philanthropy, 2020.
AH 04009



Isobel Morphy-Walsh (Taun Wurrung)
Munda-ngat brangaluk (to protect, to
hug, to hold all) Stringy Bark ≠3 2019
Stringy bark, beeswax, kangaroo skin
and fur
Acquired through the generous
support of Gandel Philanthropy, 2020.



Greg Muir (Yorta Yorta)
Self Portrait of A Deadly One 2019
Acrylic on canvas
Acquired through the generous
support of Gandel Philanthropy, 2020.
AH 04007



Josh Muir (Yorta Yorta, Guntitjimara) MOOB 2018 Digital print on aluminium Gift of Josh Muir, 2019. AH 04004



Patrice Muthaymiles Mahoney (Kamilaroi) Possum, Kangaroo, Bird and Apple 2014 Montype super lift print with kua inks on cotton rag paper Acquired through the generous support of the Norma Gleeson Fund, 2015. AH 03945



Marilyne Nicholls (Watti Watti, Yorta Yorta, Barrapa Barrapa, Ngarrindjeri, Dja Dja Wurung, Jupagulk) Waa and Emu Feathered Necklace decorated with ochre 2018 Crow feathers, emu feathers, string, ochre Acquired through the generous support of Gandel Philanthropy, 2019. AH 03993



Steaphan Paton (Gunai, Monero, Ngarigo) Cognitive Dissonance #3 2015 Acrylic on canvas, oak, treated sheet skin, pigment on polyester silk Gift of Steaphan Paton, 2017. AH 03976



Pitcha Makin Fellas (Kangaroo) We know where you shop 2013 Acrylic on PVC foamboard Gift of Tom Mosby and Tony Ellwood, 2015. AH 03932



Marlene Scerri (Gunai, Gunditjmara) Black Cockatoos 2014 Textile Acquired through the generous support of the Norma Gleeson Fund, 2015. AH 03947



Lisa Waup (Gunditjmara, Torres Strait Islander) Jess's Mauboy 2013 Ochre, tar, cotton stitching, acrylic on

cotton rag paper Acquired through the generous support of the Norma Gleeson Fund, 2015. AH 03949



Lisa Waup (Gunditjmara, Torres Strait Islander)

Connected Journeys 2019
Ceramic, glaze, possum skin, emu
feathers, cassowary feathers, cockatoo
crest feathers, galah feather, seed pods
(pyrography), cotton thread, aloe vera
fibre, jewellery wire.
Acquired through the generous
support of Gandel Philanthropy, 2020.
AH 04006



Peter Waples-Crowe (Ngarigo)

Artist Book 2017
Mixed media collage
Acquired through the generous
support of Gandel Philanthropy, 2019.
AH 04002



Lucy Williams-Connelly (Wiradjuri) Hunting Goanna 2016 Pyrography on particle board Gift of Tom Mosby, 2017. AH 03967

ARTWORK INDEX



Lucy Williams-Connelly (Wiradjuri)
Four Men with Weapons 2016
Pyrography on particle board
Gift of Tom Mosby, 2017. AH 03968



Lucy Williams-Connelly (Wiradjuri) Campsite 2016 Pyrography on particle board Gift of Tom Mosby, 2017. AH 03969



Lucy Williams-Connelly (Wiradjuri) Two Men at a Fire 2016 Pyrography on particle board Gift of Tom Mosby, 2017. AH 03970



Lucy Williams-Connelly (Wiradjuri) River Fishing 2016 Pyrography on particle board Gift of Tom Mosby, 2017. AH 03971



Lucy Williams-Connelly (Wiradjuri)
Four Men and Canoe 2016
Pyrography on particle board
Gift of Tom Mosby, 2017. AH 03972



Lucy Williams-Connelly (Wiradjuri) Two Houses 2016 Pyrography on particle board Gift of Tom Mosby, 2017. AH 03973



Lucy Williams-Connelly (Wiradjuri) Two Canoes 2016 Pyrography on particle board Gift of Tom Mosby, 2017. AH 03974



Raymond Young (Gunnai, Yorta Yorta, Gunditimara) Krauatungalung, Brayakulung markings 2016 Terracotta clay, glaze Acquired through the generous support of the Norma Gleeson Fund, 2016. AH 03959



Raymond Young (Gunnai, Yorta Yorta, Gunditjmara)
Coolamon #1 2016

Clay, glaze Acquired through the generous support of the Norma Gleeson Fund, 2016. AH 03961



Raymond Young (Gunnai, Yorta Yorta, Gunditjmara)

Gunatymara)
Coolamon #2 2016
Clay, glaze
Acquired through the generous support
of the Norma Gleeson Fund, 2016.
AH 03960



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