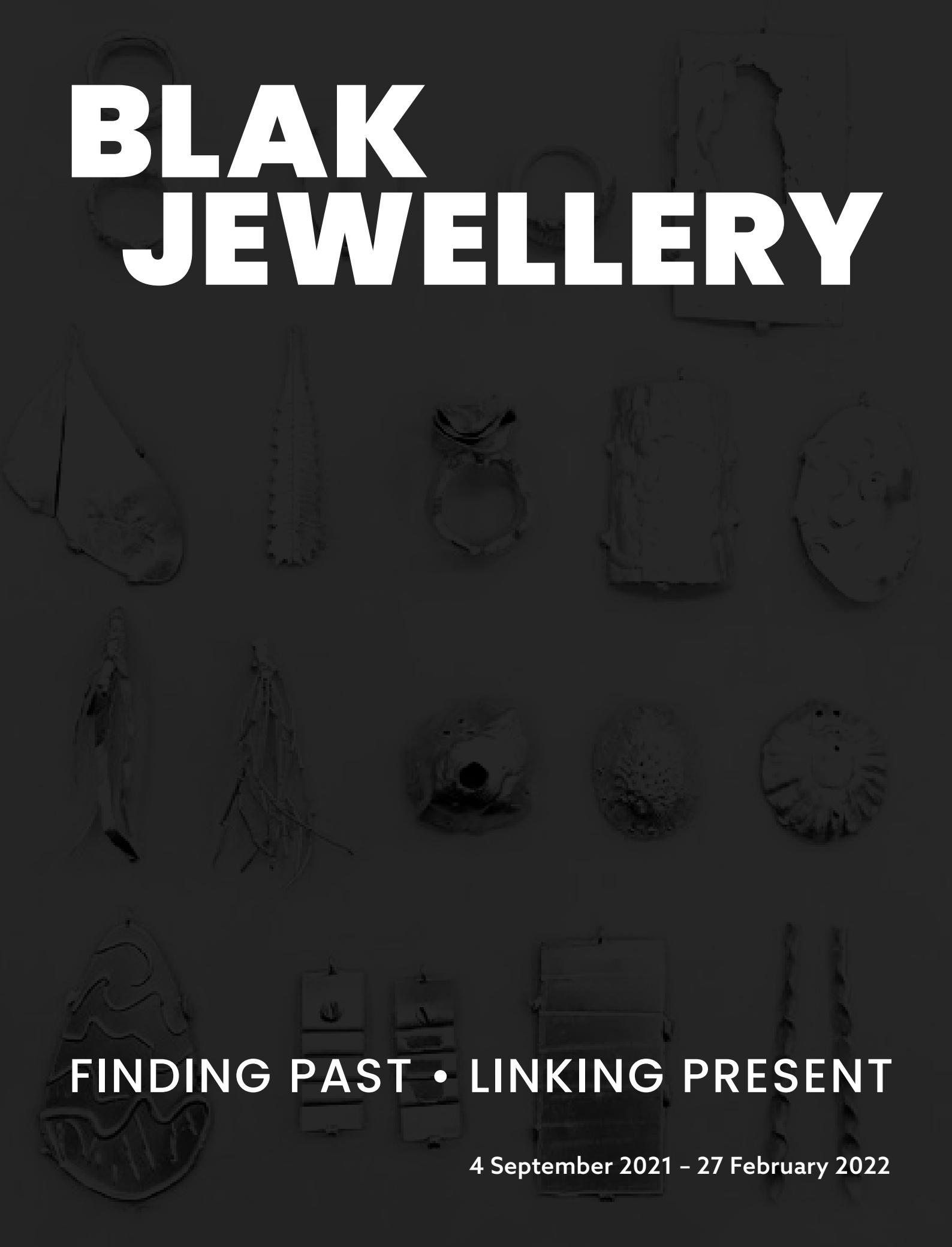


BLAK JEWELLERY



FINDING PAST • LINKING PRESENT

4 September 2021 – 27 February 2022

BLAK JEWELLERY - FINDING PAST, LINKING PRESENT

4 SEPTEMBER 2021 - 27 FEBRUARY 2022

Exhibition Design

Peter King Studio

Publication Management

Magda Petkoff

Copyediting

Nigel White

Design

Jenna Lee

Photography

RMIT Studio photography: Christian Capurro

Installation photography: Christian Capurro

Individual jewellery photography: Fred Kroh

Unless specified elsewhere.

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced by any process without written permission. Enquiries should be directed to the publisher. Copyright 2021 Koorie Heritage Trust, the artists and authors.

ISBN 978-0-9807863-6-1

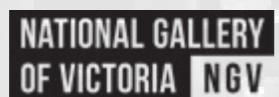


RADIANT PAVILION



Presented by

In partnership with



CONTENTS

ESSAYS

Blak Design - a KHT Initiative - Tom Mosby	4
Living Design - Simone LeAmon	10
Blak Design - <i>becoming from place</i> - Professor Brian Martin	16
Sharing Stories by Design - Andrew Stephens	24

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES AND STATEMENTS

Aunty Suzanne Connolly-Klidomitis	38
Sharn Geary	42
Sandy Hodge	46
Lisa Waup	50
Kait James	54
Jenna Lee	58
Isobel Morphy-Walsh	62
Hollie Johnson	66
Cassie Leatham	70
Aunty Beverley Meldrum	74
Ange Jeffery	78

ARTWORK INDEX	82-93
---------------	-------

EXHIBITION INSTALL IMAGES	94-105
---------------------------	--------

REFERENCES	106
------------	-----

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	107
------------------	-----

Cover image: Laura Deakin

BLAK DESIGN

– A KHT INITIATIVE

**TOM MOSBY,
CEO, KHT**

As it nears the end of its first year, the KHT's inaugural Blak Design Program has demonstrated a real capacity – underpinned by tangible results – to educate talented First Nations artists, and facilitate collaboration between them. Most significantly, as a first of its kind program nationally, it is a crucial step in recognising and raising the profile and reputation of First Nations design in the broader Australian design community.

The Blak Design Program was created after KHT identified a lack of representation of First Nations artists in the mainstream design community, and a lack of design programs that offer specific, detailed learning opportunities for First Nations artists. A key moment that led to this realisation was KHT's *Blak Design Matters* exhibition (21 July to 30 September 2018), co-curated by First Nations Wailwan/Kamaroi architect Jefa Greenaway, and which had been preceded by a number of public blak design programs presented in collaboration with the National Gallery of Victoria. One of the pivotal public programs was a one-day professional development intensive on First Nations jewellery design and development, co-presented by the KHT and NGV as part of Melbourne Design Week 2018. *Blak Design Matters* showcased a wide range of contemporary Indigenous designs, including interior, landscape, and product design, as well as jewellery, fashion and textiles, and architecture and town planning. The works in the exhibition showcased the innovative and ground breaking practices of First Nations designers, reflecting and responding particularly to First Nations self-determination aspirations and expressions.

The Blak Design Program continues the discourse surrounding the promotion of First Nations designs, and encourages non-Indigenous interest in the principles of blak design that KHT had previously explored. It asks key questions: What is Blak design? Who decides what Blak design is? How are these designs perceived without diminishing their integrity?

Developed in partnership with the National Gallery of Victoria's Department of Contemporary Design and Architecture, and RMIT University, and generously supported by the Ian Potter Foundation, the Program aims to foster First Nations cultural innovation within the Victorian design sector underpinned by the International Indigenous Design Charter¹, which sets out the 10 step best practice protocols to guide best practice when working with Indigenous knowledge in commercial design projects. Extending over four years, the Program is intended to provide mentoring in a particular design discipline, production, and small business skills to nurture long-term sustainable design practices.

In the first year of the program which commenced in late 2020 and extending into 2021, the Program supported 11 designers/artists/craftspeople recruited through an expression of interest process. The participants represent a diversity of language groups across the State, including from metropolitan and regional representation. The Program itself consisted of a variety of workshops – many facilitated by First Nations artists, designers, organisations and business owners – and provided the participants with an introduction to and understanding of creative and business practices. With an understanding that the inaugural year of the Program would also operate as a pilot program that would determine how future years would be presented, the KHT worked closely with the participants in developing the content of the Program and particularly the output from the first year which includes the exhibition *Blak Jewellery - Finding Past, Linking Future*.

¹ Kennedy, Dr Russell, Kelly, Dr Meghan, Greenaway, Jefa and Martin, Prof Brian, *International Indigenous Design Charter – Protocols for sharing Indigenous Knowledge in professional design practice*, Deakin University, 2018.



KHT's blak design initiatives revealed the degree to which talented Indigenous designers are underrepresented and undervalued in general design discourse, despite the high quality of their work, their expertise, and the cultural significance of their designs. This underrepresentation not only disregarded the contributions of First Nations designers, but also created a barrier for Indigenous designers determined to develop a strong commercial design practice. Exploring the contributions of contemporary First Nations designs has been at the forefront of KHT's delivered projects over the past few years, and the Blak Design program aims to advance this effort.

The Blak Design program is designed to promote First Nations design principles, and best practice methodologies and theories. It provides a platform to assist First Nations designers in the development of their commercial profile. The platform enables scalable production and sale of participants' designs, while also providing exposure to valuable networking opportunities. Networking emerged as a key strength of the program, and in its first-year participants attended workshops held by extremely knowledgeable industry partners.

Jefa Greenaway, Simone LeAmon, and Elisa Jane Carmichael kick-started the first workshop. Despite it being held on Zoom due to lockdown restrictions at the time, participants soon became familiar with the use of design to maintain and regenerate cultural practices and values. Participants also undertook two intensive two-week workshops using the silversmith studio space at RMIT, with the invaluable guidance of Blanche Tilden, Laura Deakin, and Lindy McSwan. Anyone who has worked with Blanche, Laura, and Lindy will testify to their invaluable guidance, and wealth of experience. Their generosity during these sessions, as well as afterwards when working around lockdown restrictions, was phenomenal. Thanks also go to Kit Wise, the Dean of the School of Art at RMIT, whose generosity and spirit of partnership was key in organising these hands-on workshops.

Participants also engaged in workshops led by artists and business owners from the community, including Sianna Catullo (Clothing the Gaps), James Henry, Laura Thompson (The Koorie Circle, and Clothing the Gaps), David Deo (Indigenous Business Australia), Lowell Hunter, Duean White (Career Steer), Vicki Couzens and Katie Scott (Gallery Funaki). The knowledge these artists shared was nothing short of outstanding. Additional thanks go to KHT's Judy Allsop, who led a workshop on retailing designs, as well as Jenna Lee and Hollie Johnson who are participants in Blak Design, and ran workshops on graphic design and photographing headshots respectively. Blak Design would not be what it is without the generosity and knowledge of all workshop educators.

Another key component of Blak Design's first year is the feedback collected from the program's participants. In its initial iteration, the program was intended to be presented as a one-day workshop, and a 12-day intensive short course, followed by four months of one-on-one mentoring for three participants selected from the group. The three participants were to pair with an industry mentor to design a prototype, which was to be funded for full production and a targeted product launch at a design outlet. However, it became clear from participant feedback that this format did not work for all participants, largely due to concerns about equal access to education and opportunities. As a result, KHT altered the program's delivery to better suit the needs of all participants. The mentoring stage was removed, and the intensive short course extended. As a result, the *Blak Jewellery - Finding Past, Linking Future* exhibition was conceived.

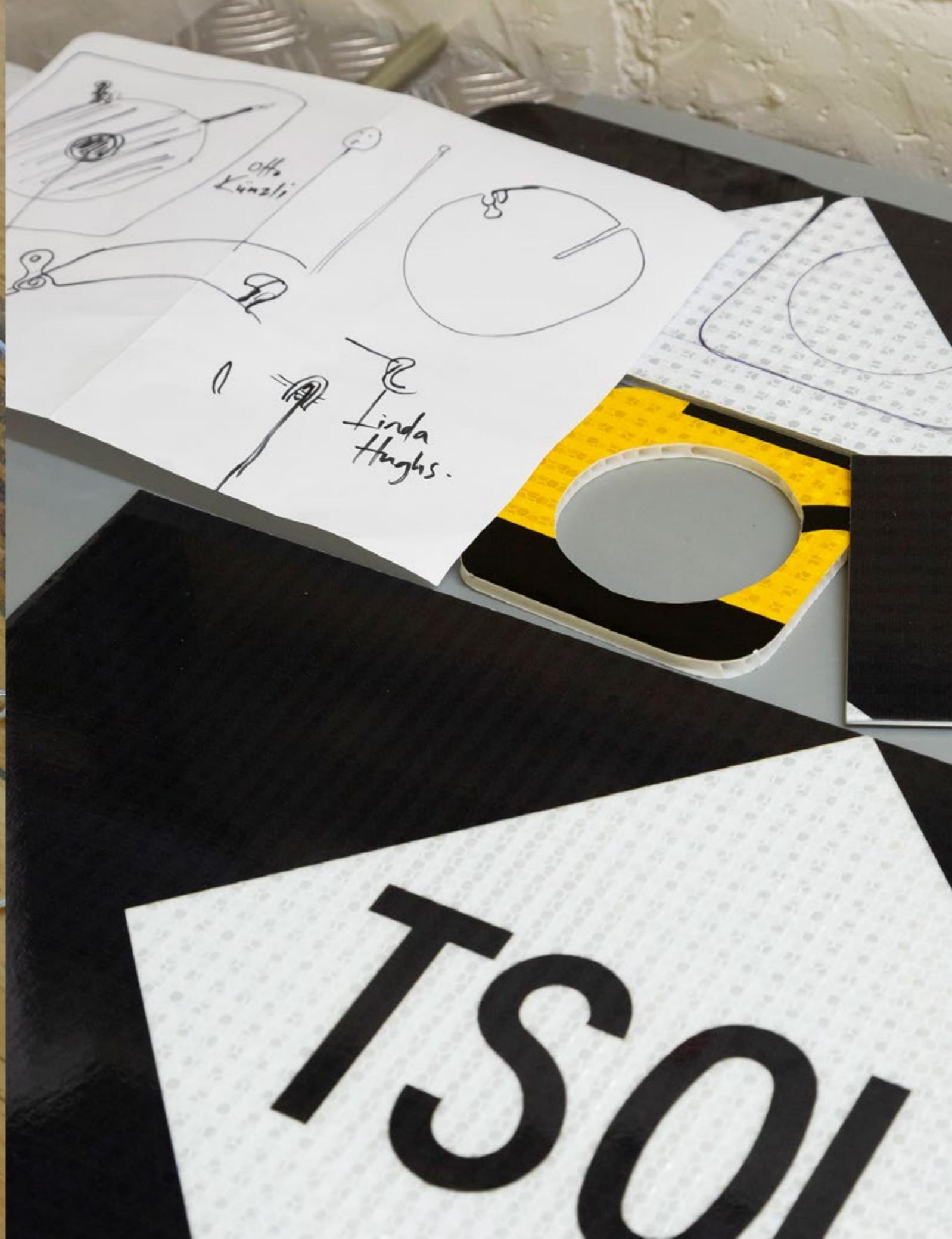
Modifications to the program's format could not have occurred without the honest feedback from participants, and the time and energy they invested to reach conclusions as a group. It has been rewarding to observe the participants build strong relationships and friendships with each other over the course of Blak Design. Participants not only worked with KHT staff, but each other to share information and offer support. Encouragingly, they lifted each other up through all the successes and challenges that come with creating and learning new design techniques. Collaborating with participants to create a program that works for them is a lesson KHT will carry into the program's future, with an emphasis on enhancing the two-way learning that evolved from the program. Many thanks go to the participants who shared their feedback and suggestions with us. KHT is thrilled to exhibit the participants' work in the knowledge that it aligns with their ambitions.

Importantly, the KHT staff and partners who worked tirelessly to bring the program to fruition deserve acknowledgement and gratitude. I extend my deepest thanks to all those involved, particularly Chloë Powell, Blak Design Coordinator, who led the program during its first year. Chloë's care for the participants and their needs was clear throughout the entire program. Many educational opportunities and newfound friendships were only made possible through Chloë's hard work and dedication. I thank Chloë for all that she has achieved, and I am confident the Blak Design participants feel the same. Special thanks must also go to Simone LeAmon, the Hugh Williamson Curator of Contemporary Design and Architecture at NGV, who also worked hard to see this program to fruition. Thanks also go to Gail Harradine, KHT's Curatorial Manager, and her curatorial team, who provided vital support in organising and liaising behind the scenes.

I also wish to acknowledge and thank respected Melbourne based artists and designers Blanche Tilden, Laura Deakin and Lindy McSwan, whose outstanding teaching, generous skill sharing and mentoring of the Blak Design participants throughout the inaugural year of the Program have contributed significantly to the beautiful pieces seen in this exhibition.

Blak Design is supported by the Ian Potter Foundation, in partnership with the National Gallery of Victoria, RMIT University, and precinct partner Federation Square. The *Blak Jewellery - Finding Past, Linking Future* exhibition is also proudly supported by Radiant Pavilion, Melbourne's contemporary jewellery and object biennial. The support these partnerships have provided to the program has been fundamental to its delivery and success, and has allowed KHT to facilitate high quality workshops and support to many of the participants who reside across wider Victoria.

Finally, the first year of the Blak Design Program as well as *Blak Jewellery - Finding Past, Linking Future*, would not have been possible without the dedication, time and energy put in by the participants. I wish to acknowledge, thank and extend my sincerest congratulations to the participants: Ange Jeffery (Wiradjuri), Aunty Beverley Meldrum (Wirangu, Kokatha), Cassie Leatham (Taungurung), Hollie Johnson (Gunaikurnai, Monero Ngarigo), Isobel Morphy-Walsh (Taun Wurrung), Jenna Lee (Larrakia, Wardaman and Karajarri), Kait James (Wadawurrung), Lisa Waup (Gunditjmara and Torres Strait Islander), Sandy Hodge (Lardil), Sharn Geary (Bundjalung) and Aunty Suzanne Connelly-Klidomitis (Wiradjuri).



LIVING DESIGN

**SIMONE LEAMON,
THE HUGH WILLIAMSON CURATOR
OF CONTEMPORARY DESIGN
AND ARCHITECTURE,
NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA**

At its heart, design is derived from the many divergent backgrounds, experiences and beliefs that make up our world, and is therefore anchored to culture, people and the environment. Pivotal to contemporary design embracing its full potential is the bridging of design discourses so that they extend beyond the dominant Western paradigm and become more inclusive of the knowledge systems and material practices of First Nations Peoples.

What emerges from this view is a powerful statement on design's intrinsic relationship to culture, and its role in shaping human experience. Our lives are inseparable from the things we continuously design and create: environments, ways of thinking, technologies, processes, systems, services, and objects. Every day, we carry out our lives in the company of things that are influencing the way we feel, think and act.

With its own diverse histories and forms, design enables a deep understanding of cultures and knowledge systems, as well as their abiding traditions and values. Body adornment is a form of design that belongs to a continuum of material practice, and one that is culturally significant. Communicating on a cultural, social, personal, and sometimes even political level, the practices of Indigenous artists and designers are informing some of the most compelling and 'alive' jewellery today.

Since its establishment in 2015, the National Gallery of Victoria's Contemporary Design and Architecture department has collaborated with curatorial colleagues and partner organisations from around the country. Every collaboration creates opportunities for the NGV to present and commission new design works by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists – for both the permanent collection and for sale in the NGV design store.

In 2017, I had the privilege of travelling to the Torres Strait Islands with my colleague Myles Russell-Cook, Curator of Indigenous Art, to accept an invitation by artist communities on Thursday Island, Saibai, Erub, Mer, Mua, and Badu to facilitate jewellery making workshops in collaboration with the Cairns Art Gallery and the Gab Titui Cultural Centre.

The workshops invited artists to make jewellery and explore design as an inherent symbol of identity and cultural meaning, using traditional materials such as shells, feathers, seeds and plant fibre, new materials, and recycled objects. The workshop model fostered a vital exchange of knowledge between artists and curators, and culminated in a magnificent collection of large-scale, intimate and delicate wearable pieces by thirty-two artists for the NGV collection.

Building on this experience, we began a program of NGV design store jewellery commissions for Melbourne Design Week in 2018, which connected new audiences with contemporary jewellery by Indigenous artists. These commissions included jewellery by Torres Straits Islander artists Wasi Tardent and Reteah Tapim, and the extensive collections of south-east Australian Aboriginal artists Maree Clarke and Cassie Leatham. Produced with the technical support of our team and Melbourne jeweller Blanche Tilden, they constitute a thousand or more necklaces, pendants, earrings and brooches sold through the NGV design store and now treasured and worn by people around the world.



Of these collections, *Thung-ung Coorang* (kangaroo tooth necklace) by multidisciplinary artist, designer and cultural leader Maree Clarke, a Yorta Yorta/Wamba Wamba/Mutti Mutti/Boonwurrung woman, sold out within a week of its launch. Clarke's inventive neckpieces combined organic materials with colourful 3D printed forms modelled from kangaroo teeth, echidna quills and crow feathers.

Clarke's collection later appeared in the Koorie Heritage Trust's trailblazing exhibition *Blak Design Matters*, a 2018 national survey of contemporary Indigenous design curated by architect Jefa Greenaway, which seeded the idea for KHT and our team to collaborate in the same year on the delivery of a one-day jewellery workshop for Indigenous artists living in Victoria. Offering skills development in the making of jewellery fixings, serial production, pricing and marketing, this workshop revealed the potential for a more extensive professional development program.

Envisaged by KHT's CEO Tom Mosby, the new Blak Design program is the first of its type in Australia. This annual mentorship program creates an environment that advances greater access and participation for First Nation artists in the design industry, with a focus on a different design field each year.

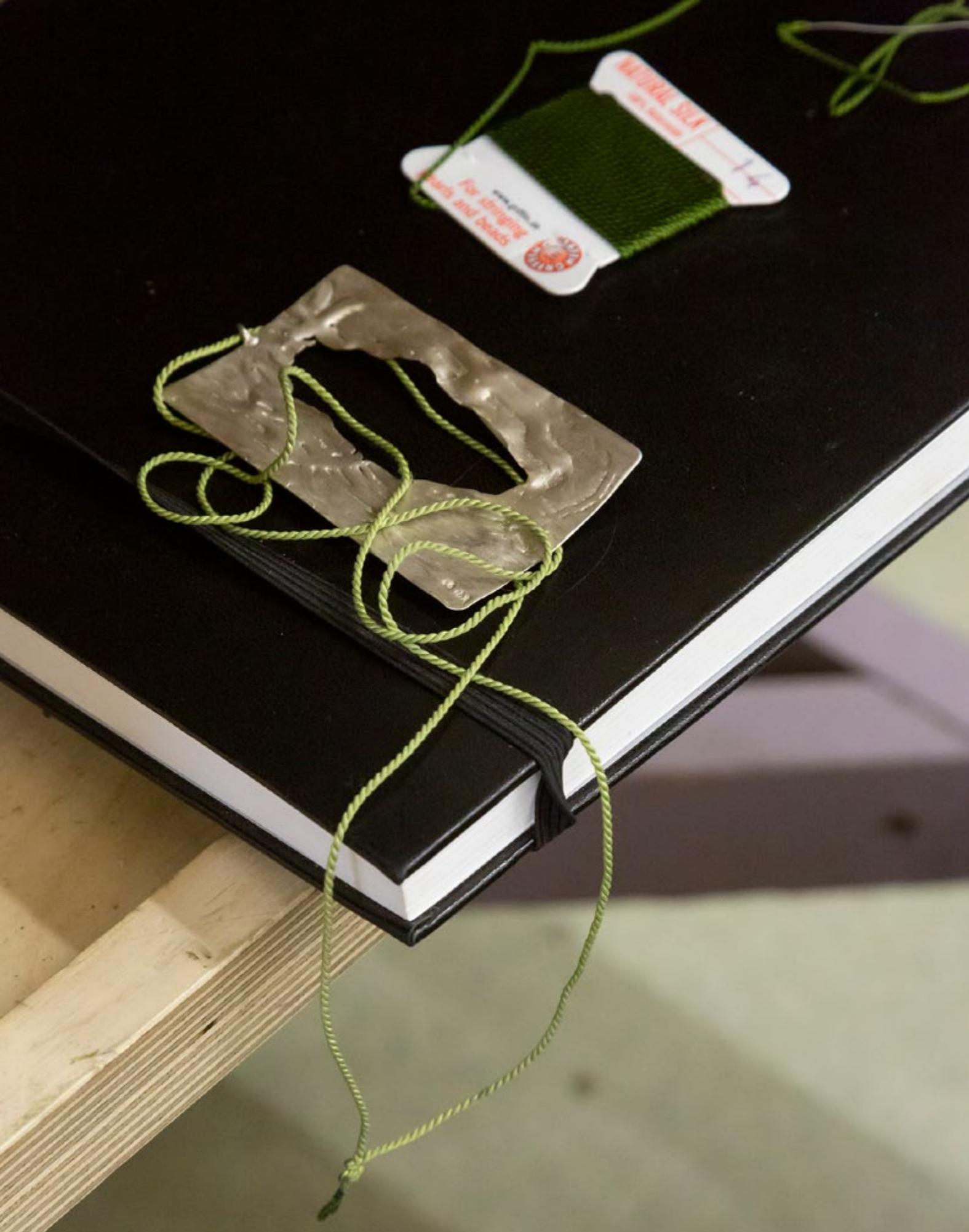
Inspired by KHT's advocacy of contemporary design by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, we became a proud partner of the inaugural Blak Design: KHT Jewellery Program in 2020. As Curator of Contemporary Design and Architecture, and a maker of jewellery, it was exciting to work closely with KHT to lead the development of the four-month program of design, making and business skills that was co-delivered with industry experts and leading First Nation artists and designers. The program we devised had four design units: *Embodying Indigenous Ways of Being, Knowing and Thinking in Design; Design and Storytelling; Jewellery Design Communities and Resources; and, Designing for Assembly and Batch Production*.

We extend our gratitude to the following people who imparted their stories, insights and practical knowledge during the program – through tutorials, workshops and individual mentoring – to the eleven artists participating in the program: architect Jefa Greenaway; artists and designers Maree Clarke, Elisa Jane Carmichael, Cassie Leatham, and Lisa Waup; contemporary jewellers Blanche Tilden and Laura Deakin; NGV Curators of Indigenous Art, Myles Russell-Cook and Hannah Presley; and, Coordinator of the Blak Design: KHT Jewellery Program, Chloë Powell. In addition, we gratefully acknowledge the support of KHT's program partner RMIT University, including the following who brought tremendous commitment and expertise to the program: Professor Kit Wise, Dean of the School of Art; Mark Edgoose, Coordinator of Undergraduate Studies, Gold and Silversmithing; and, Lindy McSwan, Technician, Gold and Silversmithing.

KHT have delivered this ground-breaking program with enormous dedication and energy. The participating artists designed and made outstanding jewellery, and I look forward to following their evolving design practices.

Blak Design is as an agent of change in a competitive design industry where nurturing First Nations design and businesses is paramount not only for tangible economic benefits but for the enrichment of design culture in Australia.

Blak Design is as an agent of change in a competitive design industry where nurturing First Nations design and businesses is paramount not only for tangible economic benefits but for the enrichment of design culture in Australia.



BLAK DESIGN

- BECOMING FROM PLACE

PROFESSOR BRIAN MARTIN

What is *Blak Design* and how is it conceptualised and materialised? *Blak Design* (and Indigenous creative practice) is about the relationality involving the non-human and its intra-action with us: it is outside of ourselves. We do not simply discover knowledge, because knowledge reveals itself and has its own agency, as does creative material practices including design. *Blak Design* has its own agency as it is emergent, performative and ever moving; this agency transpires from Place, from Country. It is in and from Place that it Becomes conceptualised and materialised.

This particular gathering of creative works formulates agency and articulates *Blak Design*, which is a new initiative and program by the Koorie Heritage Trust to support and sustain Indigenous Australian creative practitioners living in Victoria. Each practitioner and their work *Becomes* from *Place*, revealing how their respective practices show and enunciate agency. Kombunerri/Wakka Wakka academic and writer Mary Graham reveals that:

The inclusion of Place in a story provides an authentic explanation of how and why something comes into the world. This in turn provides a balance between agency, whether human or spiritual, and point of origin or Place. Balance and re-balance is achieved when Place is used like an ontological compass.¹

The creative practitioners in *Blak Design* are situated in Place. This writing is located and positioned with Place – WaddaWurrung. Therefore, I am positioned within the dynamic of this Country. Positioning of oneself and the agency of positioning is vital on a number of levels for articulating who, where and how we are. I am Bundjalung, Murrawari and Kamilaroi, and my ancestry travels back through millennia on these respective Countries. I acknowledge the ancestral Country of WaddaWurrung people and community where this writing was created. I pay my respects to my Elders and extend that respect to Bunjil, the great creator ancestor of the Kulin nations. This acknowledgement is *designed* with intent:

For Aboriginal people, Place is epistemologically and ontologically central to notions of action or intent. Not only history but meaning arises out of Place, whether Place is geographically located or an event in time.²

Blak Design holds a collection of design works that Become from multiple Places, actions and intents. The idea of *Becoming* is embedded in Western philosophy and extends from the traditions of Greek and German philosophical understandings of our relationship with ‘being’. It is here that Plato, Heraclitus, Nietzsche and Heidegger saw *Becoming* as the dynamic of change that reveals being, and underpins Western configurations of ontology. In thinking along these philosophical lines, design is premised on this type of ontology. It is at this point that *Blak Design* differs in the way that it comes from this same ontology of *Becoming*, whilst also concurrently extending from the multiplicity of Place. And here, Place is not just a geographical location, but also Places in time. It is grounded in the real and the metaphysical simultaneously, moving between the material and immaterial in its *Becoming*.

Each practitioner’s own place, memory and lived experience – their ancestral place and their current place – is grounded in their material practice. These Places in time synergise into how and what they conceptualise and create for material practice via ancestral memory and the revisitation to it is through Place, for here lays its relationality. The Place of Wiradjuri, Wirangu, Kokatha, Taungurung, GunaiKurnai, Gundjitimara, Monero Ngarigo, Larrakia, Wardaman, Karajarri, Lardil, and Bundjalung weaves through each designer and their materialisations. From these Places, narratives of practice emerge and are ritualised into a contemporary space to be experienced by multiple audiences and viewers – one of the important functions of the *Blak Design* program in demonstrating the importance of Indigenous thinking, knowing and practice.

¹ Mary Graham, “Understanding Human Agency in Terms of Place: A proposed Aboriginal research methodology,” PAN: Philosophy Activism Nature, no. 3 (2009): 75.

² Graham, “Understanding Human Agency in Terms of Place,” 7.



The program *Blak Design* extends over four years, and is principally about investing in sustainable *Blak Design* practices. The program is stepped out in an incremental and capacity-building way, in order to help shape Indigenous designers and their talents into something sustainable, and with longevity. A professional development and mentoring program is supported in partnerships with the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), and the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV). In terms of its outcome and program, the exhibition is important because it reviews the current Indigenous design field, and creates future Indigenous design/creative practice leaders.

The program provides mentoring in design, production, and small business skills to nurture long-term sustainable design. The program for 2020-21 focuses on Indigenous creative practitioners Ange Jeffery, Beverley Meldrum, Cassie Leatham, Hollie Johnson, Isobel Morphy-Walsh, Jenna Lee, Kait James, Lisa Waup, Sandy Hodge, Sharn Geary and Suzanne Connelly-Klidomitis. These important Indigenous practitioners forge a way for audiences to interact with Indigenous knowledge in material form, to experience Place in a physical articulation of personal narratives, identity, lived experience and Country.

Additionally, the program focuses each year on a specific design discipline, providing mentoring in design, production and small business skills to nurture long-term sustainable design practices. This investment is about continuing the work of creative practitioners through revisit and articulation into new technologies. The synergies between memory, ritual, practice and the contemporary are vital here, and platforming this with networking and mentoring enables design practitioners to sustain their practices in a tangible way. This tangibility is extended through the program's networking in order to assist all practitioners in developing their own sustainable commercial design practice while expanding their own cultural expression through practice. This has significant effect in terms of building a criticality of Indigenous design discourse, and therefore revaluing how one looks at and thinks about Indigenous ways of knowing and making. This has been a focus for some time especially in Indigenous creative and design practice in south-eastern Australia.

Let us re-track and revisit the importance of *Blak Design Matters*, a national survey exhibition of contemporary Indigenous Design. In 2018, this important survey and corresponding exhibition revealed a diverse range of Indigenous design practices and also uncovered the under-representation of Indigenous design in various venues and ideological spaces. While the exhibition *Blak Design Matters* celebrated an increasing acknowledgment and awareness of the contributions of Indigenous peoples across a range of creative practice, it drew attention to the fact that Indigenous 'designers' remain largely under-represented and undervalued in general design discourse and in the marketplace. As the curator Jefa Greenaway explained:

The *Blak Design Matters* exhibition captures a moment in time, involving a range of Indigenous designers, across a range of design disciplines. You will see the built-environment professions of architecture, landscape and interior design alongside communication design and branding, plus fashion, jewellery, furniture and fabric design.³

³ Jefa Greenaway (curator), *Blak Design Matters: National Survey of Contemporary Indigenous Design*, Held at the Koorie Heritage Trust (2018): 6.

***The inclusion of Place
in a story provides an
authentic explanation of
how and why something
comes into the world.***

Mary Graham

There was also a significant articulation of the importance of Place in terms of how we express ourselves. The works of Maree Clarke, Grace Lillian Lee and Kristy Dickinson pave the way for 'object' design where they create an intersection between ancestral memory, Place, identities and new technologies. Maree Clarke's significant kangaroo-tooth necklace is a pivotal work that instigates a return to ritual and practice found in our histories that are transformed into a contemporary form. The use of exciting new 3D printing technologies brings the old and new together to create a different Place. From this initial survey and exhibition:

The connection to place was also a motivating factor in the realisation of this exhibit. Work that is being done in the built environment invariably and strongly connects to Country. The way we shape our spaces, places and environments is fundamental to how we connect – to history, to memory, to people and place – and in many respects is how we express ourselves.⁴

There are many practitioners living in south-eastern Australia who focus on revisitation. For example, the revitalisation of the possum skin cloak through the practice of Vicki Couzens also creates a platform of Place, space and time for others to spring from. It is vital for this current exhibition to declare its agency and build from the *Blak Design Matters* survey and existing Indigenous creative practice. As a process of revisitation, it builds upon what has come before. This building, forming and making, through memory, ancestry, ritual and practice strengthen how Indigenous practitioners shift the lens on the premise of design itself: this relationality is predicated on Place. Uncle Charles Moran, Uncle Greg Harrington and Norm Sheehan state:

Revisitation is an important learning event. When you go back to a past story it is unchanged but you are different, so you get a new view of what the story means because of who you have become. The redirection that comes from living awareness of the whole of life is key to decolonisation. The intelligence of Country reveals itself to us if we listen well, observe these connections closely, speak softly, and be ourselves.⁵

This current iteration, *Blak Design*, continues the trajectory to build critical mass of Indigenous design that shifts how we look at design in general. The program, a first of its kind in Australia, is configured and designed in a relational way, building upon what has come before in order to secure a space for the future. In this particular exhibition, the spotlight is on supporting contemporary jewellery and object design. These works relate to the extensive traditions of mark making – marking Country, marking trees, marking the ground, marking the body. This configuration of mark making is significant in the works as it continues the context of the relationship between bodies; in this case, the bodies of design 'objects' and the human body. These design 'objects' carry agency, carry Places and therefore shift the subject/object relationship – they Become subject, they Become embodiment, they Become the body, they Become Place.

It is in this exhibition that each practitioner has blurred the colonial lines. Design

⁴ Jefa Greenaway (curator), *Blak Design Matters*, 6

⁵ Uncle Charles Moran, Uncle Greg Harrington, and Norm Sheehan, "On Country Learning," *Design and Culture*, 10, no. 1 (2018): 78.

itself comes from a colonial space, where objects are caught within the Cartesian subject/object relationship. This colonial space is situated in the linear, the binary and premised on disregard. When we consider the history of design and how it has materialised a way of thinking about covering up and conquering with no relationality with or on Place, *Blak Design* reconfigures this. The works in this exhibition bring Place to the space, and to us the audience and viewer. We get to experience the performative nature and embodiment that emerges from Place. We Become with Place, as these creative works take us there by and through their agency and subjectivity.

The Koorie Heritage Trust is creating significant opportunities to reconfigure how we define creative practices and create a deep relationality between the practices. It is this third space of creative practice where all things are possible. David Garneau in his articulation *Toward Indigenous Criticism*, talks of a "third space".⁶ Here there is another type of space where reality, ontology and culture co-exist and where Indigenous creative practice and *Blak Design* can operate from. It becomes the interface for these conversations to occur, as well as these disruptions to happen. This is their becoming, the agency they instil in the making and therefore the viewing. This program will have a significant impact on Indigenous design locally, nationally and internationally.

The program's design is predicated on Indigenous protocols of engagement which build upon its relationality with Indigenous peoples. Each designer being Indigenous ensures the program is Indigenous led, creates opportunities for Indigenous procurement and creates junctures for deep listening through practice and audience engagement. Similar to the principles in both the Australian and International Indigenous Design Charters,⁷ the *Blak Design* program shares best practice principles premised on ethical and respectful relationality.

Jefa Greenaway asked this important question in *Blak Design Matters*:

In a time where there is an accelerating convergence between art, craft and design, does the prevalence of Indigenous creatives, straddling a range of disciplines, become an exemplar model of this new reality?⁸

It is this convergence that makes us stand in the space of resistance, a space that is Becoming into its own and from Place. It is this reconfiguration of how we look at creative practice, design and Indigeneity more broadly that will surely be of benefit to all. *Blak Design* continues this convergence.

⁶ David Garneau, "Toward Indigenous Criticism: the Ah Kee Paradox" *Artlink* 33, no. 2 (2014): 48

⁷ Kelly Kennedy, Brian Martin, and Jefa Greenaway, *Australian Indigenous Design Charter*, (Deakin University, 2014). Kelly Kennedy, Brian Martin, and Jefa Greenaway, *International Indigenous Design Charter*, (Deakin University, 2018).

⁸ Jefa Greenaway (curator), *Blak Design Matters: National Survey of Contemporary Indigenous Design*. (Held at the Koorie Heritage Trust, 2018), 7.



Always was, always will be.
CLOTHING THE

SHARING STORIES BY DESIGN

ANDREW STEPHENS

Imagine for a moment some special sights and sounds, such as the whisper of a breeze—the *witjweri*—through a majestic stand of she-oak trees, or the patterns made high up in a canopy of gum-trees.

Gaze, too, upon the journey of a woodworm on a piece of bark, or contemplate the serrated shark-tooth edges of a splendid banksia leaf.

Then, envision the rippling reflections cast by a body of water, and long drifts of kelp draped abundantly across a beach-front. See in your mind's eye a portion of strong kangaroo bone, or the gorgeous shape of a Bogong moth. And picture a precious old family photograph, a re-imagined road sign, or the arresting colour of bright-red thread.

These diverse images, full of life and feeling, are among the many powerful influences that have emerged for participants in the Koorie Heritage Trust's ambitious new Blak Design program, which seeks to nurture First Nations artists from various disciplines.

Focussed on jewellery-making, the inaugural 2021 iteration of Blak Design has resulted in *Blak Jewellery: Finding Past, Linking Present*, which showcases work of extraordinary diversity and depth, of creations brimming with story-telling and strong personal connections. The exhibition design by Peter King accentuates all these elements with its carefully articulated modes of display and revelation.

Funded by the Ian Potter Foundation for four years, Blak Design evolved from the Trust's ambition to create a thriving ecology in which participants can explore their diverse stories and backgrounds, while working intimately with their individual design interests. All this is within an environment that fosters both artistic and professional development. The results are thoughtful, broad-ranging and nuanced, all instilled with expressions of Country, family and the more idiosyncratic details of each artist's intuitive aesthetic tendencies.

The program has taken the eleven participants through a series of intensive hands-on workshops during the past year. To learn and refine various jewellery-making skills, they have had sessions at RMIT University's jewellery studios, under the guidance of jewellers Blanche Tilden and Laura Deakin, as well as participating in online sessions. They have also taken part in professional development workshops with creative industry leaders, covering aspects of business, design and marketing. All of them say they have flourished, forging not only new works and ways of making, but also in forming connections with fellow artists.

The selected participants come from a variety of cultural backgrounds, young ones through to Elders, with diverse experiences in art and design. All live in Victoria but have family heritage across the land. One of the primary interests many of them have expressed is the desire to tell meaningful stories that connect with their own understandings of Country, mob and the ancestors. Many emphasise an interest in family histories and events, seeing wearable art as a powerful medium in which memory and honouring can be presented with appropriate respect and significance. In this way, the body becomes a link between past and present through the wearing of a necklace, ring, or other adornment that might be categorised as jewellery. After all, body adornment has always manifested in many different ways across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island cultures, featuring ancestral stories, clan designs and markings with ceremonial significance.



In the work of **Ange Jeffery (Wiradjuri)**, lifelong connections with Country and her current natural environment are expressed with a particularly strong connection in water and animals. A mixed-media artist, Ange has also trained and worked in science and is interested in the way Indigenous understandings bring different perspectives to the way she views and feels about the natural world. Having done some work in jewellery before, she has long had an interest in body adornment, decoration and modification, especially in the way it can have ceremonial significance and in the way our personalities are expressed through the objects we wear.

Ange's work in *Blak Jewellery* uses water as a recurring motif, integrating emu feathers. She notes that the refraction of light through water, and the patterns made when an emu feather overlaps, have provided much inspiration for this series. 'Water is my element,' she says. 'It brings life, it sustains life and it is soothing and special. It is hard, it's dense, it's strong but it is also really light. Water is one of the natural erosion materials. That in itself is powerful. It is beautiful and soft. It looks after me, it looks after my family. And it is calming... it is an all-encompassing meditation source.'

Ange's Blak Design work has helped her to respect the materiality of the emu feather—to allow it to be true to its inherent properties within her making, in which it could be turned into part of a piece of jewellery while also being formed into a rounded shape. The skills she has learnt in the Blak Design program have allowed her to see it as another form of storytelling.

'I like making jewellery because I like seeing [a wearer's] reaction. Everything I do is an extension of myself and thoughts and feelings. It is my interpretation of something I have seen or felt or been with on Country.'

Collecting kelp on the beaches of the Mornington Peninsula is an important part of the artistic process for **Aunty Beverley Meldrum (Wirangu, Kokatha)**. While her work now integrates precious metals such as nine-carat gold, kelp remains at the centre of things—and the way she gathers it is crucial to the meaningfulness she embeds in pieces. 'It speaks to me,' she says of the drifts of kelp she finds on the beaches. 'It will call me over to be chosen and I think it is a gift from the sea. It has finished its life in the sea, and it is washed up on shore. There are all different gradients and colours—the colours are beautiful and it is a real surprise when you make jewellery with it.'

While kelp has long been a primary interest, having used it in breastplates, necklaces and other forms of body adornment, Aunty Bev has been pushing the development of her work further with new skills and materials acquired during the Blak Design classes. It has 'unleashed something' and she has realised how much she likes to display kelp, for everyone to see its beauty. 'It has so many personalities. To bring it to something beautiful that speaks to people: my jobs done. It's all thanks to kelp.'

With a creative practice that incorporates bushtukka, weaving and cultural education, **Cassie Leatham (Taungurung)** says her art-making is all about carrying her ancestors' stories through into the present day. With a focus on the natural environment, sustainability and keeping cultural practices alive, her work for Blak Design brings traditional and contemporary ideas and practices together. 'It is like a reconciliation type of thing: Indigenous and non-Indigenous. If I can carry that story forwards [in my work] how good is that for me, and for others as well, to hear that story of connection?'

Cassie's work was bolstered by being involved with the National Gallery of Victoria's design collection, but she has now taken her skills and ideas further, designing weaved pieces of silver casting and organic thread. Bone is incorporated, representing her ancestors' practice: 'My ancestors weaved and used kangaroo bone needles, which I still make traditionally and use today. Creating silver casting and filing with my grinded stone tools, I incorporated traditional and modern methods. I carry this through in the present day for the future generations to visually witness, for sharing and understanding, and for the non-Indigenous peoples to connect and build on their knowledge.'

Cassie says she wants people to look at her work and see the ways of her ancestors' everyday work: 'The tasks they had to endure—and as I do still—of harvesting, collecting and making.'

Gazing up into the gum trees, **Hollie Johnson (Gunaikurnai, Monero Ngarigo)** has always found herself fascinated by 'crown shyness'—the phenomenon in tree canopies where trees maintain narrow gaps between themselves and their neighbours. Hollie, whose artistic background has included clay, resin and wood-burning, uses native plants and ochres. She lives on Country but her family's deep historical connection with Mystery Bay near Narooma has also had a significant impact on her and has been used in her Blak Design work along with detailed reference to a painting by her grandmother, who used to visit Mystery Bay as girl, travelling there by horse-and-cart. 'We are really interconnected with that place,' Hollie says, noting how the colours—pinks, reds and yellows—are more dominant in the bush there than in other places back home.

Hollie's Blak Design jewellery includes a pendant that references crown shyness as well as cicadas, whose song has resonated throughout her entire life. She has used the distinct textures of cicada wings in the pendant, along with managing to echo the extraordinary jigsaw-like patterns created by the crown shyness she has observed. As she notes, this phenomenon manifests beautifully among gum trees. 'We are fortunate, because gums are found across the entire continent. They are something we can all share.'

A curator and artist who has previously worked with weaving and adornment-making, **Isobel Morphy-Walsh (Taun Wurrung)** says everything she creates is inspired by Country and aimed at better understanding it. Having in the past used natural materials such as stringy bark, lomandra and dianella, Isobel has been pleased to develop new skills during Blak Design, and to continue her practice of only using sustainable or recyclable materials.

With an interest in pollination and the way it manifests in Australia—creatures such as skinks and tiny sugar-gliders pollinate, along with birds and insects—Isobel has developed a focus on various pollinating moths she feels connected to. These include the Bogong moth (*Agrotis infusa*) from her home Country, the mistletoe moth (*Comocrus behri*) that favours eucalypts and mistletoe, and the southern old lady moth (*Dasyopodia selenophora*, which she labels the moon moth), usually found around wattles.





To maintain her connection to traditional practices, the metallic components of Isobel's new jewellery pieces are encased with materials such as she-oak bark. 'The idea of removing something from the ground for no other purpose than human material desire doesn't feel comfortable for me, so I felt the need to let it be wrapped inside pieces of Country.'

Overlapping heritage from Aboriginal, Chinese, Japanese and Filipino cultures has helped form the influences on the artwork made by **Jenna Lee (Gulumerridjin [Larrakia]/Wardaman and KarraJarri Saltwater nations)**. Jenna has a strong attraction to working with paper, in recent years developing a focus on colonial books and Aboriginal word dictionaries as both physical and conceptual materials. Her growing up years involved much papercraft activity and development of art skills from her mother, while postgraduate museum studies developed her interest in archival materials.

Jenna's art practice has also involved work with body adornment and the ways it can operate as a signifier for identity. Through Blak Design, she has honed in on how best to make her creations wearable and durable through integrating new skills in metalwork, with a focus on sterling silver and red-coloured threads. Red is an important colour for her, manifesting across her various cultural influences. 'In my work I want to say as much as I can with as little as possible, taking my ideas to this complex, layered space—and then stripping it back.'

In her previous work with books, Jenna's process of deconstructing has created new objects invested with alternative meanings. In a similar way, gaining literacy with metal has allowed her to forge new meanings and stories. Intrigued by the idea that the body can be seen as an extension of Country, Jenna has become interested in exploring how body adornment objects might express the non-binary. 'What would non-binary adornment objects look like? I don't have that answer yet.'

Having had success with embroidery and textiles through her witty re-working of Aboriginal calendar tea-towels, **Kait James (Wadawurrung)** has often worked with broader Indigenous themes. She is also strongly influenced by pop culture, strong colour and an element of activism. Through Blak Design, she has developed a focus on telling Wadawurrung stories, but now through the medium of jewellery.

In developing her inspirations, Kait has incorporated her great love of the she-oak tree into her pieces. Having spent much time among she-oak trees, in particular around Yarra Bend park, she brings to the fore their importance in Wadawurrung culture, where the hanging branchlets of the drooping she-oak are designated *ngarri*, or hair-like. The new work includes references to the way the sound of the wind through these trees has been referred to as *witjwerri*, the voices of the ancestors. Kait also tells of how the she-oak leaf litter was gathered for babies to sleep upon—those long leaves are also a snake-deterrent, catching in the scales of the reptiles' underbellies. 'So, it has this real sense of protection around the plant. It really resonated with me.'

One of Kait's two silver pieces is a necklace that incorporates a cast she-oak branch; another is made with knotted hot-pink threads, whose movement replicates both the structure and sounds of she-oak branches. A ring incorporates seven leaves intertwined, a reference to the seven family groups of the Wadawurrung. 'I want to hear what my ancestors have to say, and the sound of the *witjwerri*. It's almost like I am making them so I can hear what they have to tell me.'



With extensive experience with body adornment and textile art, **Lisa Waup** (**Gunditjmara and Torres Strait Islander**) has explored new territory by using road signage as a physical and thematic basis in *Blak Jewellery*. Challenging the directional and domineering language used in these signs—One Way, Stop and so on—Lisa reconfigures them in such a way as to reflect on historical and continuing injustices against First Nations people.

Exploring 'directional' signs which use simple arrows, she exposes their symbolism—controlling, repressing and disorienting First Nations people on their own land. By changing the symbology of existing signage, her works talk about being controlled, corralled and shut out. Using 'official' road deviation signs as a basis, Lisa has had her own versions printed, in her own words but in reverse, cutting them up to create alternative instructions, thus giving a symbol of oppression and destruction a positive redirection to liberation. Cutting up a sign in such a way that nothing is wasted, she has created a bracelet, neck-piece and earrings.

'These problematic signs have inspired me to disrupt, fracture and undo the symbolic objects and their original ambition, to decolonise the power of these objects and the spaces in which they have been placed since invasion,' she says. 'These signs direct back to a time when First Nations people in Australia had their own highly organised systems, roads, ways of belonging, culture, agriculture, spirituality, community health, social roles, language, and so on. It challenges the directives of the invasive culture imposing itself on an already well-functioning one.' One Way is thus re-directed in to becoming Our Way.

Emphasising a sense of the masculine in his latest work, **Sandy Hodge (Lardil)** has brought to Blak Design his experience as a practising jewellery-maker, plus a history in metalwork trades and in Aboriginal policy and education. Sandy's introduction to making and showing work was through the 2015 jewellery project/exhibition *Shiny Shiny Blak Bling*. Now, using new skills such as pressed-metal techniques, Sandy has emphasised story-telling in pieces which include imagery referencing banksia leaves and shields.

Sandy has brought to his new work a strong awareness of 'talking about who we are and what is of value, what inspires us'. In his reversible pendants and rings titled *Shields*, he has infused ideas concerning protection, identity and cultural safety using a shield design he has created for himself—one whose genesis began some years ago, referencing shield designs associated with his Mornington Island/Lardil heritage.

In his other new work, the *Shark Leaf* series, comprising necklace and earrings, he has incorporated the distinctive motif of banksia leaves. As a child, growing up in WA, he referred to the leaf of the local variety as 'shark leaf'. Then, about twenty years ago, during his reconnection with his Lardil family, his late grandmother told him that his totem was a shark. For his *Shark Leaf* works has referenced the Saw Banksia (*banksia serrata*) leaf, present on the Wotjobaluk Country where he now lives and works, using a wax casting process to turn the discarded leaves into bronze, brass and sterling silver. 'I love the leaf shape and the seed pods and the way they regenerate through fire,' he says.



A strong connection with family, as expressed through a photograph in her care, **Sharn Geary (Bundjalung)** has expanded her previous experiences in jewellery-making, working out how to convey both story and specific materiality in her new work.

Sharn says the family story she has worked with is centred on the significance of the clothing from the photo. Doing sketches and researching the era when it was taken helped focus her ideas and ability to communicate them, with special emphasis on how to create a sense of the relevant fabric in her new work. 'I have always wanted to be an artist and to express my family's stories, and I saw Blak Design as a way to do that. I feel good that I have invested in myself to be an artist, I have worked for it and now is the time for me to do it. Family is everything, it is number one. Culture for me is my family.'

Having worked for some years for Dinosaur Designs, mainly with resin-based jewellery, Sharn has been excited to explore the possibilities of creating with precious metals. 'I have learnt how to use silver, and working with that metal and working out how it moves when it's heated, when it's quenched, when it's soldered, the shapes you can produce in moving that metal around, has been really inspirational. Silver has been a very strong theme for me and is something I want to now explore more.'

Taking inspiration from her local environment, **Aunty Suzanne Connelly-Klidomitis (Wiradjuri)** speaks eloquently of a childhood spent around Swan Hill, on the river and the Mallee. 'It influences everything,' she says, describing times spent outdoors with her family, exploring the forest during floods, collecting swan and duck eggs, taking photos of wildflowers, making beds of Mallee tree leaves, going along the riverbed, and cutting roots to make boomerangs. 'We were always making stuff.'

With a history in jewellery, weaving and using recycled materials, Aunty Sue has explored metalwork for the first time during Blak Design. She has had a focus on an idea inspired by going around gum trees and examining the bark, seeing the journey of the woodworm in the textures. 'That's the journey of the woodworm. And then we have a journey in us, like the veins in our hands, that's a journey. In the gum trees, the sap is on a journey. You look at the leaves, that's a journey. And the river is a journey too. It is just part of you I suppose: I've grown up knowing the river, I've always known the river and the Mallee.'

Aunty Sue says that while it is difficult to sometimes answer the question 'what inspires you', she says it is 'just in you', evidenced by the fact that she might start out making something she has in mind and end up making something else, unexpectedly. 'It's just in you, I can't explain it. What inspires me is our culture, the land, the river, all the features, the birds, trees, everything around you. I think my work, the theme is the bush, is the river, because that's what I take my inspiration from. My mob and the bush.'



Above photograph taken by Beverley Melbrum.



Jenna Lee, Kait James, Sandy Hodge, Hollie Johnson,
Aunty Suzanne Connelly-Klidomitis, Aunty Beverley Meldrum, Sharn Geary, Blanche Tilden
Chloë Powell, Laura Deakin, Lindy McSwan, Lisa Waup
Not pictured: Cassie Lehman, Isobel Morphy-Walsh
Photo: Kirsten Haydon

AUNTY SUZANNE CONNELLY-KLIDOMITIS

ARTIST BIO:

I live in Swan Hill where I was born and grew up. My mob is Wiradjuri. Since I can remember, I've gone out bush and along the river with my parents to make boomerangs, spears, and anything we could make out of wood and wildflowers. After bringing up my children, I enrolled in an Aboriginal Art and Design course at Swan Hill TAFE and learned painting, drawing, and ceramics. I've always been interested in using natural and recycled materials, such as bark, feathers, quandong seeds, gumnuts, leaves, grasses, and clay, to make artworks and jewellery. I have made earrings out of quandong seeds, emu feathers, and fishing items such as swivels and spinners. I've made necklaces using kangaroo leather thonging and ceramic beads. Every day Eddie and my beautiful children inspire me. I would like to thank Ian Tully art director of swan hill art gallery who gave me the opportunity of my first solo exhibition

ARTIST STATEMENT:

My jewellery pieces represent journeys and songlines.

The patterns in my silver pieces represent the journeys of the woodworm found on the River Red Gums along the Murray River in Swan Hill where I live. The pattern/journey is found inside the bark of the gum trees which I have reproduced in silver.

Keeping the bark with the silver is in keeping with the connection to the real thing and the land.

Each jewellery piece is unique, just as each journey of the woodworm is individual with its own songline. Each day we are like the woodworm – journeying every day to look for our essentials; our physical, mental and spiritual needs. We see journeys and songlines everywhere.

There are patterns, journeys and songlines in everything around us, and in everything we do.

From the blood vessels and veins in our bodies to the roads and rivers we travel on, everything has a journey/songline, even our beautiful River Red Gum trees – from their sap, to their branches, to the veins in their leaves.

P.S. Our River Red Gums are suffering from over extraction of water, which is changing the ancient flooding patterns.



Suzanne CONNELLY - KLIDOMITIS (Wiradjuri)
Journeys - j 1 2021
Silver, River Red Gum, Silk
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Fred Kroh



Suzanne CONNELLY - KLIDOMITIS (Wiradjuri)
Journeys - j 111 2021
Silver, River Red Gum, Silk
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Fred Kroh

*'There are patterns,
journeys and songlines
in everything around us,
and in everything we do.'*

Aunty Suzanne Connelly-Klidomitis

SHARN GEARY

ARTIST BIO:

Sharn is a Bundjalung woman from Grafton NSW who now resides in Naarm (Melbourne). She has a broad history in the creative arts ranging from studying Graphic Design at Billy Blue on North Sydney Oval, to gaining over a decades experience in ecommerce fulfilment for luxury creative labels such as Milligram and Koko Black. Her creative love is jewellery. She has worked with a range of materials from producing resin adornments for Dinosaur Designs to fashioning metals and silversmithing. Being a participant in the Koorie Heritage Trust's Blak Design program focussing on contemporary jewellery, is a culmination of Sharn's heritage, culture and creative passion.

ARTIST STATEMENT: SHARN GEARY

In my work, Donnelly Preservation, I have been inspired by my mother's family photograph. My Great Gran Irene had thirteen children. Upon the passing of my Grandmother she also took in my mum Monica, Aunties Stephanie and Pamela, Uncle Dallas, and their cousin Irene. Gran wanted to make sure they had the best opportunities in life, which was more than she ever had growing up.

For as long as I can remember, this photo of the five Donnelly children has been in my life. Recently, at a family gathering, my Uncle asked me if I knew why they were all "dressed like that". Gran wouldn't let the kids leave the house unless they had washed faces, brushed hair and clean clothes. Every Sunday they had to polish their school shoes. In this photo they are at the Grafton Show, wearing their new outfits, made for them by their Aunt. Blending in by being well presented and looking like everyone else, there was less of a chance that the Donnelly children would stand out and be taken away from their family. This was my family's protection - our survival method. It worked, because they are all still together today. Gran gave them the best opportunities in life, and this upbringing was passed onto me, my brother, and our cousins.

In my work, I have chosen to replicate collars and fashion from the clothes in the photograph, and from the era it was taken in, the 1960s. I have used silver, elastic, plastic and shell buttons. These materials can blend into the background, just like my family did in that photo. I want the audience to recall their own memories, and evoke a realisation that maybe the Mandarin collar on their own white blouse wasn't worn as protection.



Sharn GEARY (Bundjalung)
Donnelly Preservation – Preservation 1 2021
Silver, Plastic Buttons
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Fred Kroh



'For as long as I can remember, this photo of the five Donnelly children has been in my life.'

Sharn Geary

Sharn GEARY (Bundjalung)
Donnelly Preservation - Framed Photo 2021
Archival Print, A4 White Wooden Frame
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Fred Kroh

SANDY HODGE

ARTIST BIO:

"I love designing and making in metal, especially personal pieces for friends and family that have a special meaning and story."

Sandy is a proud Lardil man from Mornington Island, North Queensland, who grew up on Noongar boodja (country) in WA. He has been working with metal from a young age, and was heavily influenced by his late father, a skilled metal worker and welder. Sandy's trade background and professional experience includes working with metals using a range of tools and techniques, including welding, brazing, and sheet metal work.

Sandy was introduced to jewellery making in metal by Melbourne silver smith Peter Eccles in 2005 through the *Shiny Shiny Blak Bling* group project where his works featured at the Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne. He then moved with his family to the Wimmera region where he continued to design and make jewellery (mainly in silver), and further developed his creative practice. He enjoys participating in collaborative works with family and other artists. He is now based in Dimboola in regional Victoria.

Sandy's arts practice features mixed metal pieces, wax and cuttlefish bone casting.

ARTIST STATEMENT:

Being a part of the inaugural Blak Design program and the subsequent *Blak Jewellery Finding Past Linking Present* exhibition has been a life changing experience. I am keen to implement the learnings into my arts practice, and to keep designing and making. I wanted to create works combining the new techniques and inspiration from our mentors Blanche Tilden, Laura Deakin and Lindy McSwan, and the other Deadly artists.

The Shark Leaf set of necklaces and earrings are inspired by some of my earliest memories. Growing up on Noongar boodja near Perth, I would always come across Banksia trees in the bush near home. I remember their flowers, seed pods and their amazing leaves, which I referred to as a 'shark leaf'. In my twenties after re-connecting with my *Lardil* family at Gununa, Mornington Island, my late granny Ida told me that my totem was the shark.

Since relocating to Victoria and living and working on Wotjobaluk Country, Banksias and shark leaves are still around me. The Shark Leaf pieces have been wax cast from the discarded leaves of a Banksia serrata (Saw Banksia) into bronze and sterling silver. I have included a set of rings that fit with the Shark Leaf theme. These works acknowledge techniques learned from Laura Deakin used for sheet wax and chain making.

Sandy HODGE (Lardil)
Shields - Shark Leaf Necklace 2021
925 Sterling Silver, Bronze
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Fred Kroh



The Shields are a set of reversible pendants and rings that explore the notion of protection, identity, and cultural safety. The designs represent my own shield design that I have hand drawn from a young age, a parrying shield that pays respects to the Koorie Heritage Trust collection, and a Mornington Island/Lardil shield design (with the flat top and base).

The pendants are wearable art inspired by a military 'dog tag' that carries basic information, represented by the mixed metal layers, which has special meaning to the wearer and those closest. The meanings of these pieces also affirm cultural strength and protection in the form of a contemporary shield design. I have included a set of rings that fit with the Shields theme.

The material used in the Shields (including the belcher chain) are mixed metals comprising brass, bronze, copper and sterling silver.

These works acknowledge the expertise passed on by Blanche Tilden (riveting), Lindy McSwan (roller printing) and Sam Mertens (press forming).

***'I remember their flowers,
seed pods and their
amazing leaves, which I
referred to as a 'shark leaf'.***

Sandy Hodge

Sandy HODGE (Lardil)
Shields – Large Lardil Shield 2021
925 Sterling Silver, Bronze, Brass
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Fred Kroh



LISA WAUP

ARTIST BIO:

Lisa Waup is a mixed-cultural First Nations woman, multidisciplinary artist and curator. Born and living in Naarm, Australia, Waup's practice is studio-based, and involves the creation of objects. There is a strong connection of symbology through her work and materials which connects her to family, Country, history and story. She works across weaving, printmaking, photography, sculpture, textiles and jewellery, and her work eloquently illustrates her life's journey through discovery and connection. Waup's practice highlights the importance of tracing lost history, ancestral relationships, motherhood, and time, and ultimately incorporates stories of her past, present and future woven into contemporary forms. At present, she is undertaking a Master of Contemporary Art Degree at the Victorian College of the Arts at Melbourne University, which she is due to complete this year.

ARTIST STATEMENT:

Our Way was created by utilising found and custom-made reflective aluminium traffic signs. I have reassembled an everyday object to generate a new meaning. *Our Way* explores the power and peril of traffic, street, directional and warning signs, and their ability to control, repress and disorientate First Nations people on their own land. By altering the text and changing the symbology, these words talk of being controlled, corralled, and shut out. The once stagnant Western sign has been recreated to inspire a new direction, which ultimately moves backward (to family, culture, Country) and forward into the future. Here, a symbol of oppression and restriction takes a positive redirection to reclamation.

***'Here, a symbol of
oppression and
restriction takes a
positive redirection
to reclamation.***

Lisa Waup



Lisa WAUP (Gunditjmara and Torres Strait Islander)
Our Way - neckpiece 2021
Reflective Aluminium, Oxidised Sterling Silver, Rubber, Adhesive

Our Way - bracelet 2021
Reflective Aluminium

Our Way - earrings 2021
Reflective Aluminium, Sprung Steel
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Fred Kroh

KAIT JAMES

ARTIST BIO:

Kait James is a proud Wadawurrung woman, and award-winning contemporary artist living and working on Wurundjeri Country.

Kait obtained a Bachelor of Media Arts (Photography) from RMIT University in 2001 but only returned to making Art in 2018 through her love of culture, colour and textiles.

Kait's work focuses on reclaiming and sharing culture as well, as highlighting Indigenous issues. She endeavours to develop and use her art in ways that encourages responsiveness, unity and optimism within and beyond Indigenous communities.

ARTIST STATEMENT:

The Drooping Sheoak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*) was known in Wadawurrung language as Ngarrmurk or Ngarrrai, meaning hair tree. Ngarrrai were widespread throughout Wadawurrung Country prior to settlement, and featured prominently in many paintings of Geelong in the 1840s by Eugene von Guerard, John Skinner Prout, and Charles Norton.

Whitgewherri (pronounced widjiwerri), was what my ancestors called the whistling or moaning sound the tree and its foliage made in the wind. The Whitgewherri is the voices of my ancestors. This connection with the spirits made the Drooping Sheoaks very special. They allowed the living to hear their ancestors speak to them.

The Ngarrrai not only provided a connection to ancestors, it also held great importance as a provider of shelter and medicine. In addition, its hard wood was utilised for hunting implements, and its seeds were ground to make flour. Its soft leaf litter was a deterrent for snakes, and was used to cushion babies and toddlers in the belief their ancestors were watching over them.

The Sheoak has become very special to me over the past year, especially during the long lockdowns Melbourne experienced when I wasn't able to visit Wadawurrung Country. I spent most of my daily exercise allowance wandering around the Yarra Bend in search of Sheoaks while trying to listen for the Whitgewerri.

This has been the inspiration for my jewellery pieces – wanting to make Whitgewerri that I could wear on a daily basis, with connections between the leaf segments reminiscent of my connections to Country.



Kait JAMES (Wadawurrung)
Whitgewherri - Fluro Ngarrai 1,2 3 2021
Silver, Waxed Cord
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Fred Kroh



Kait JAMES (Wadawurrung)
Whitgewherri - Ngarrai 1 2021
Silver
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Fred Kroh

'This connection with the spirits made the Drooping Sheoaks very special. They allowed the living to hear their ancestors speak to them.'

Kait James

JENNA LEE

ARTIST BIO:

Jenna Lee is a Gulumerridjin (Larrakia), Wardaman and KarraJarri Saltwater woman with mixed Japanese, Chinese, Filipino and Anglo-Australian ancestry. Using art to explore and celebrate her many overlapping identities, Lee works across sculpture, installation, and body adornment. She also works with the moving image, photography and projection in the digital medium.

With a practice focused on materiality and ancestral material culture, Lee works with notions of the archive, histories of colonial collecting, and settler-colonial books and texts. Lee ritually analyses, deconstructs, and reconstructs source material, language and books, transforming them into new forms of cultural beauty and pride, and presenting a tangibly translated book.

Driven to create work in which she, her family, and the broader mixed First Nations community see themselves represented, Lee builds on a foundation of her father's teachings of culture and her mother's teachings of papercraft.

ARTIST STATEMENT:

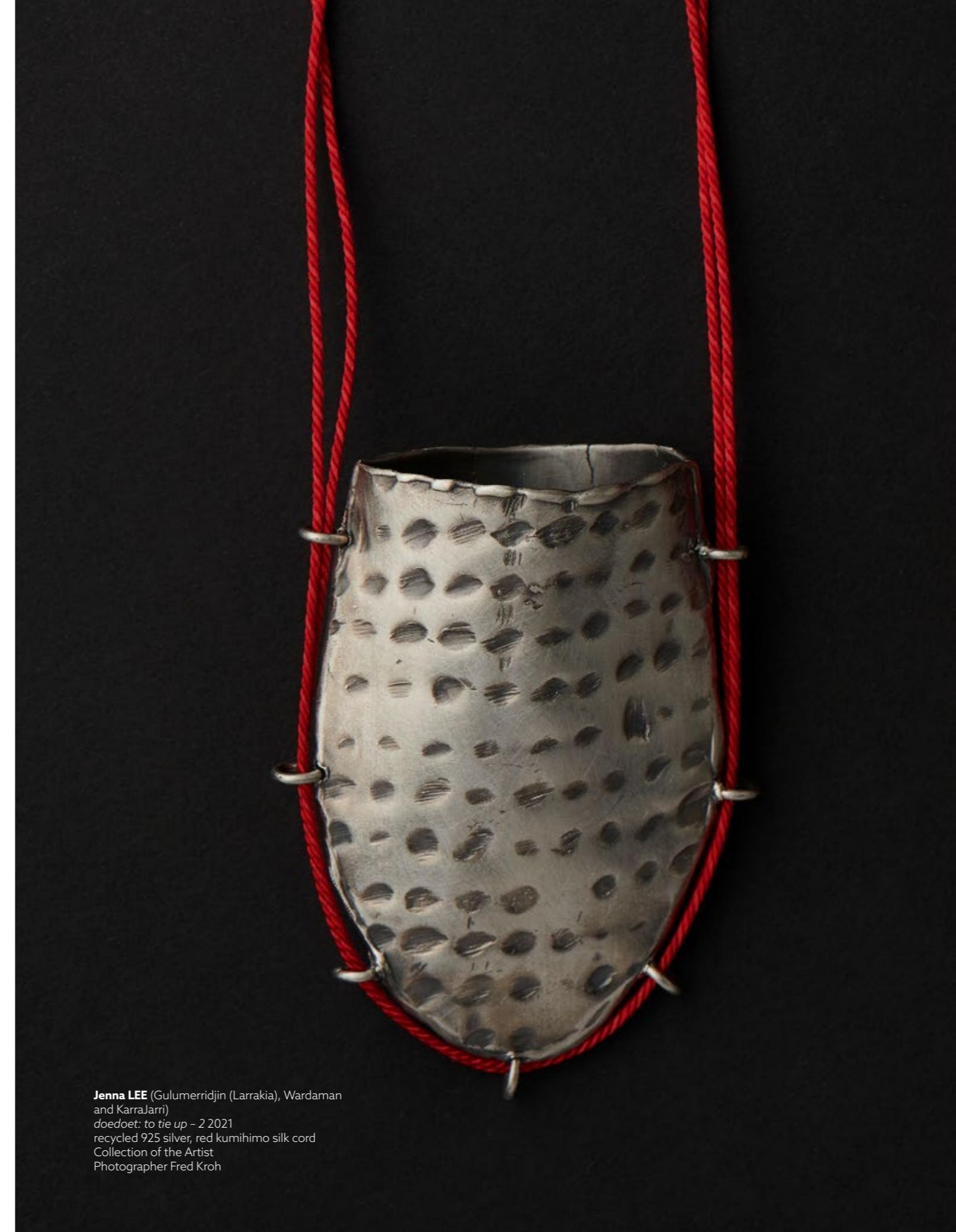
doedoet: to tie up is a series of six neck adornments inspired by researching collections and accessing Gulumerridjin (Larrakia) ancestral material culture in the Melbourne Museum, Queensland Museum, and Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford UK. The pieces represent the stunning diversity of shapes, styles and techniques present in ancestral fibre practices.

The neck adornments draw important references to my family's mixed Asian, Aboriginal and Anglo-Australian heritage through embedded textures of memory, and the red silk thread 'ties up' these overlapping identities.

Each object is made using wax casting and has impressions of either an ornamental trim used in sewing (which evokes memories of childhood: handmade clothing and sewing lessons from my mother), or the weft and warp of my first childhood danala (dilly-bag) gifted by my alap (Grandmother). Each texture represents the impact and influence of intergenerational knowledge transfer in my practice.

Kumihimo silk cord has been knotted onto each of the silver bags to transform them into a wearable object. Three 'failed' casts have been restored with paper from settler-colonial Aboriginal word books. These elements in the series reference the importance of red in my work, as well as my broader practice of restoring and repairing narratives and cultural practices using historic texts written about us without us, as material for transformation.

This body of work came about through the expert mentorship of the program, and the desire to create the type of adornment object I personally always wanted. The objects evoke cross-cultural pride that celebrates the ever-present importance of family teachings of culture and craft in my life.



Jenna LEE (Gulumerridjin (Larrakia), Wardaman and KarraJarri)
doedoet: to tie up - 2 2021
recycled 925 silver, red kumihimo silk cord
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Fred Kroh



Jenna LEE (Gulumerridjin (Larrakia), Wardaman and Karra Jarri)
doedoet: to tie up – 3-4 2021
Recycled 925 silver, Red Kumihimo Silk Cord,
Page Fragment of Aboriginal Words, Varnish,
GlueCollection of the Artist
Photographer Fred Kroh

'The objects evoke cross-cultural pride that celebrates the ever-present importance of family teachings of culture and craft in my life.'

Jenna Lee

ISOBEL MORPHY-WALSH

ARTIST BIO:

Isobel Morphy-Walsh is a proud Nirim Baluk Woman from the Taun Wurrung (Taungurung) people. She is a lover of anecdotes, an artist, an activist, an educator, a singer, a storyteller, and a weaver. Isobel has spent her life working with her community and our cultures, with a particular emphasis on history, culture, and Country, and their importance today.

Isobel's creative practice is wide-ranging and includes many mediums: weaving, lino printing, painting, fabric creation, woodwork, cultural objects, adornments, and, more recently, working with metals.

Her artwork can be found in a state collection, over walls she passes, and on the bodies of people she knows. Many a yarn, spoken word, and song can be heard in her presence. All can be found on the internet.

Isobel has worked to deliver many major events and comprehensive education suites, and engaged in curatorial work with a strong and deliberate focus on First Nations cultures, communities, histories, art, expressions, and engagement. She has spent time looking into the need to decolonise, particularly by exploring the treatment and interpretation of artworks, together with objects and images and the communities they come from, and approaches taken in development.

ARTIST STATEMENT:

Balam munga biik yilam-dui(Moth's work/make/do/mend/earn/Country to home)

Everything is connected. Cause and effect. In learning the ways Country works, we are able to see vast relationships that exist beyond our human intervention or presence. This work is the beginning of a larger quest to understand how the very diverse plants of my Country reproduce. Pollination in Australia is done by far more critters than one first assumes, and happens 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Someone's always busy. Especially Country herself.

The moths of Country often appear at night while having a feed and (you guessed it) pollinating many of the night-time flowering plants. The following pays homage to three such creatures, and includes the plants they live off and the contribution to the life cycle of those same plants.

Bali balam (Mistletoe Moth) pendant necklace and headpiece

The bali balam (Mistletoe Moth) spends its days by the various species of casuarina and eucalypts. When I see them most often on Country, I am passing by the she and bull oaks. The moths begin their lives as grubs under the bark of these trees, and so this enlarged silver cast has been returned and wrapped again inside the very fibres that surrounded it during the beginning of its life. I have also created a woven headpiece exploring bali balam's markings.



Isobel MORPHY-WALSH (Taun Wurrung)
Balam munga biik yilam-dui (Moth's work/ make/ do/ mend/ earn/ country to home) - Mirnjan
balam (Moon Moth) Old Southern Lady Moth 2021
Copper, Brass, Waxed Twine
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Fred Kroh



Isobel MORPHY-WALSH (Taun Wurrung)
Balam munga bilk yilam-dui (Moth's
work/ make/ do/ mend/ earn/ country to
home) - Bali balam (Mistletoe Moth) 2021
Punyart, Blackwood
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Fred Kroh

Debera (Bogong Moth) neckpiece

Up in the high Country – in the mountains of my land – the Deberas (Bogong Moths) escape the heat, and rest on cave walls. They create a veritable wave of moving rockface. They don't like the light when they get down here, and as they rest on the cave walls they tuck their heads under the wings of another. They pollinate a fair few different plants on their travels all the way from Queensland to here, and they used to be a great feast for my mob. Recently, though, we can't touch them because the pesticides used in their breeding grounds are now filling them with dangerous chemicals.

Mirnjan balam (Moon Moth) Old Southern Lady Moth necklace

My family has always called her the Mirnjan moth (Moon Moth) because she only appears when the moon is high in the sky, and she also bears the moon's shape and markings on her wings. Wattles are her love. She too spends her entire life in, under, on, and around the wattles, feasting on the pollen emerging from the golden puffs. This string has been made from wattle bark so that she is held by her lifeline.

**'Everything is connected. Cause
and effect. In learning the ways
Country works, we are able to
see vast relationships that exist
beyond our human intervention
or presence.'**

Isobel Morphy-Walsh

HOLLIE JOHNSON

ARTIST BIO:

Hollie's work serves a purpose and tells a story. She is a young GunaiKurnai and Monero Ngarigo woman who aims to share culture through a range of creative mediums. Her jewellery pieces incorporate native plants and natural materials. Hollie is always on the hunt for new and interesting means to incorporate culture into her work. Hollie has a Bachelor of Arts (Photography), and has studied Indigenous languages. She was fortunate to grow up with a family of traditional artists with expertise in woodcraft, painting, burning, and more. Her work includes jewellery, photography, bush materials, native plants, and an eco-friendly and ethical apparel and accessories label: Deadly Wears. Drawing on her experience working with and mentoring Indigenous students in education, along with her knowledge and language proficiency, Hollie respectfully hopes to utilise her skills to start her own business. The business will support up-and-coming Indigenous artists, and facilitate a local program supporting our Indigenous youth.

ARTIST STATEMENT:

Tackan il Wariga

Sight and Sound

The sights and sounds that inspire these pieces are from a place that holds immense connection for my family. Mystery Bay is a special place we have travelled to for generations. The sights of the landscape, both bush and sea, together with the canopy of gums that provide shade, and the sounds of flora and fauna as you hear waves crash up against the cliff face, are what brings us comfort in another home among nature. Considering we haven't been able to get there in some time, showcasing and carrying this brings elated connection while waiting to return.



Hollie JOHNSON (GunaiKurnai and Monero Ngarigo)
Tackan il Wariga Sight and Sound - Mystery Bay
Necklace 2021
Sterling Silver, Natural Silk Beading Cord
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Fred Kroh



Hollie JOHNSON (GunaiKurnai and Monero Ngarigo)
Tackan il Wariga Sight and Sound - Mystery Bay Earrings 2021
Sterling Silver
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Fred Kroh

'...the sounds of flora and fauna as you hear waves crash up against the cliff face, are what brings us comfort in another home among nature.'

Hollie Johnson

CASSIE LEATHAM

ARTIST BIO:

Cassie Leatham is a Taungurung Woman of the Kulin Nation and is a multidisciplinary established artist, cultural educator, master weaver, dancer/storyteller, and a jewellery designer. Cassie's work has been acquired by the NGV, the KHT collection, private collectors, Town Hall Gallery, and the Melbourne Magistrates' Court. She is also an award-winning artist. Cassie has been involved in numerous exhibitions, and has exhibited nationally and internationally.

Cassie demonstrated skills in a variety of mediums as a child, and increased her knowledge as she grew by listening to Elders and learning from nature. She is mainly self-taught in traditional techniques and contemporary methods, and uses a large range of mediums to express her creative passion for her ancestors' ways, and her everyday stories. Cassie's creative practice and determination to share her skills and knowledge is fulfilled by the mentoring she does with future generations, which gives them the platform to create and share.

ARTIST STATEMENT:

Past Reflections

I am looking deeper into the past to continue with the history and knowledge of my ancestors' ways, connecting through the loops, and weaving techniques from past to present with the collaboration of silver and bone.

This body of work represents the connection between old and new, and being able to continue the stories of weaving by using contemporary techniques and methods to join the past and present together. It is a visual concept and design for future generations to witness.

Each unique piece has its own story, and is inspired by the old ways. Bone needles used in the past still capture time that exists today. The organic thread weaves its own journey through the silver and bone, linking it all together to honour ancestral memory. My journey mirrors the past and keeps weaving strong and visible connections for the future.



Cassie LEATHAM (Taungurung)
Past Reflections - weaved journey 2021
Silver, Organic Thread, Bone
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Fred Kroh



Cassie LEATHAM (Taungurung)
Past Reflections – wattle impressions 2021
Silver, Bone, Sterling Silver
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Fred Kroh

*'I am looking deeper into
the past to continue with
the history and knowledge
of my ancestors' ways'*

Cassie Leatham

AUNTY BEVERLEY MELDRUM

ARTIST BIO:

Beverley is a Wirangu (South Australia) woman through her father's side of the family. Bev was born in South Australia and moved to the Mornington Peninsula thirty years ago, and is a self-proclaimed beach babe, having always lived by the sea.

Beverley is an emerging artist who enjoys working with a wide variety of mediums including ceramics, timber, stone and kelp.

Beverley's work has been featured at the ReDot Gallery in Singapore, Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair, Tarnanthi Art Fair Adelaide, Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, Fremantle Arts Centre, and Baluk Arts.

ARTIST STATEMENT:

I have always lived by the sea. As a little kid we always had a shack by the sea in the south-east of South Australia. We would run around the beach first thing in the morning and play in the seaweed.

I love the smell of the seaweed, even when it's a bit pongy. People wind up their window, but I like to wind mine down and breathe it in. Kelp has a lot of healing properties. It's very understated.

The design for these pieces comes from kelp. Often when I am working with it, inspiration just pings from nowhere. It's got a life of its own. You can mould it into what you want, but in the end it has the final say.

I collect the kelp locally on the Mornington Peninsula. I like to collect my own because it speaks to me; it will call me over to be chosen. I think it's a gift from the sea. It's finished its life in the sea, and then it's washed up on shore, and I like to bring it back to life for everyone to see the beauty.

In addition to kelp, I like to use materials I find discarded on the beach, like netting. Through Blak Design I also began working with precious metals, which opened up a whole new practice of work.

I want the work to reflect the beach. It takes me back to my childhood – the smell and healing qualities of the ocean. The sea air, salt, and the texture of the water on your skin are healing. Sitting in front of the waves, and the force of the waves, is meditative and grounding. It's everything. It's me.

Beverley MELDRUM (Wirangu, Kokatha)
Found Treasures - breastplate 1 2021
Bull Kelp, Acrylic Paint, Netting,
Handmade Brass Chain
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Christian Capurro





Beverley MELDRUM (Wirangu, Kokatha)
Found Treasures – neckpiece 2 2021
Bull Kelp, Fishing Net
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Christian Capurro

'I want the work to reflect the beach. It takes me back to my childhood – the smell and healing qualities of the ocean.'

Aunty Beverley Meldrum

ANGE JEFFERY

ARTIST BIO:

Ange Jeffery is a Wiradjuri artist who grew up on Country in Central West NSW. Wambul (Macquarie River) is a lasting influence and inspires her art practice. She has an environmental science background, and balances her technical ability with creative pursuits, with a particular interest in jewellery making. She delivers jewellery and weaving workshops for her local community, and has completed several commissioned projects.

Ange's values are strongly represented in her work, such as the use of responsibly sourced materials, including collected and recycled natural and manmade items. Her work is organic, combining her culture with contemporary techniques and objects, including ceramics, painting, stencilling, graphics, and jewellery.

ARTIST STATEMENT:

Evolving Gorget is a series of pieces representing my Country and Wambul, also known as the Macquarie River. Their shape and style are derived from gorgets, breastplates, and King and Queen plates. They have been made with natural and manmade materials, using cultural and contemporary techniques. These are memories of time spent on Wambul during childhood – rain, water, and sunshine.

Aboriginal breastplates originate from the gorget. It was a piece of cloth worn by French women during the medieval period which evolved into armour. Two hundred years later it became decorative military regalia. In Australia it was modified again by colonisers and given to First Nations People as a means of recognition and reward. Today, Aboriginal breastplates continue to be divisive.

The intention of these pieces is to push the Aboriginal breastplate through its next cultural evolution.



Ange JEFFERY (Wiradjuri)
Evolving Gorget - Wambul Ngumbaay 2021
Raffia, Brass
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Fred Kroh



Ange JEFFERY (Wiradjuri)
Evolving Gorget - Wambuul Bula 2021
Raffia, Brass
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Fred Kroh

'The intention of these pieces is to push the Aboriginal breastplate through its next cultural evolution.'

Ange Jeffery

ARTWORK INDEX



Ange JEFFERY (Wiradjuri)

Image: Hollie Johnson



Ange JEFFERY (Wiradjuri)

Evolving Gorget - Wambuul Ngumbaay 2021
Raffia, Brass
Collection of the Artist



Ange JEFFERY (Wiradjuri)

Evolving Gorget - Wambuul Bula Ngumbaay
2021
Emu Feathers, Cotton
Collection of the Artist



Ange JEFFERY (Wiradjuri)

Evolving Gorget - Wambuul Bula 2021
Raffia, Brass
Collection of the Artist



Ange JEFFERY (Wiradjuri)

Evolving Gorget - Wambuul Mugu 2021
Sterling Silver
Collection of the Artist



Beverley MELDRUM (Wirangu, Kokatha)

Image: Hollie Johnson



Beverley MELDRUM (Wirangu, Kokatha)

Found Treasures - breastplate 1 2021
Bull Kelp, Acrylic Paint, Netting, Handmade
Brass Chain
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Christian Capurro



Beverley MELDRUM (Wirangu, Kokatha)

Found Treasures - earrings 2 2021
Bull Kelp Stalk, 9ct Gold
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Christian Capurro



Beverley MELDRUM (Wirangu, Kokatha)

Found Treasures - neckpiece 2 2021
Bull Kelp, Fishing Net
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Christian Capurro



Beverley MELDRUM (Wirangu, Kokatha)

Found Treasures - earrings 3 2021
Brass, 9ct Gold Findings, Bull Kelp
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Christian Capurro



Beverley MELDRUM (Wirangu, Kokatha)

Found Treasures - earrings 1 2021
Sterling Silver, Brass, 9ct Gold, Sterling Silver
Finding, Hammered Metals
Collection of the Artist
Photographer Christian Capurro

Beverley MELDRUM (Wirangu, Kokatha)

Found Treasures - necklace 1 2021

Bull Kelp Stalk, 9ct Gold Linkage, Brass

Linkage, Treated Sterling Silver

Collection of the Artist

Photographer Christian Capurro

ARTWORK INDEX



Cassie LEATHAM (Taungurung)
Image: Kelly Coleman



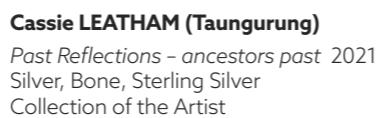
Cassie LEATHAM (Taungurung)
Past Reflections - re-connected 2021
Silver, Organic Thread, Bone
Collection of the Artist



Cassie LEATHAM (Taungurung)
Past Reflections - past present future 2 2021
Silver, Organic Thread, Bone
Collection of the Artist



Cassie LEATHAM (Taungurung)
Past Reflections - wattle impressions 2021
Silver, Bone, Sterling Silver
Collection of the Artist



Cassie LEATHAM (Taungurung)
Past Reflections - ancestors past 2021
Silver, Bone, Sterling Silver
Collection of the Artist



Cassie LEATHAM (Taungurung)
Past Reflections - wattle harvest 2021
Silver, Bone, Sterling Silver
Collection of the Artist



Cassie LEATHAM (Taungurung)
Past Reflections - connection 2021
Silver, Organic Thread, Bone
Collection of the Artist



Cassie LEATHAM (Taungurung)
Past Reflections - belonging 2021
Silver, Organic Thread, Bone
Collection of the Artist



Cassie LEATHAM (Taungurung)
Past Reflections - wattle harvest 2 2021
Silver
Collection of the Artist



Hollie JOHNSON (GunaiKurnai and Monero Ngarigo)
Image: Hollie Johnson



Hollie JOHNSON (GunaiKurnai and Monero Ngarigo)
Tackan il Wariga Sight and Sound - Mystery Bay Earrings 2021
Sterling Silver
Collection of the Artist



Hollie JOHNSON (GunaiKurnai and Monero Ngarigo)
Tackan il Wariga Sight and Sound - Mystery Bay, Yuin Country 2013
Photographic Print
Collection of the Artist

ARTWORK INDEX



Isobel MORPHY-WALSH (Taun Wurrung)

Image: Victoria Morphy



Isobel MORPHY-WALSH (Taun Wurrung)

Balam munga biik yilam-dui (Moth's work/ make/ do/ mend/ earn/ country to home) - Bali balam (Mistletoe Moth) 2021
Punyart, Blackwood
Collection of the Artist



Isobel MORPHY-WALSH (Taun Wurrung)

Balam munga biik yilam-dui (Moth's work/ make/ do/ mend/ earn/ country to home) - Mirnjan balam (Moon Moth) Old Southern Lady Moth 2021
Copper, Brass, Waxed Twine
Collection of the Artist



Isobel MORPHY-WALSH (Taun Wurrung)

Balam munga biik yilam-dui (Moth's work/ make/ do/ mend/ earn/ country to home) - Debera (Bogong Moth) 2021
Copper, Silver, Waxed Twine
Collection of the Artist



Isobel MORPHY-WALSH (Taun Wurrung)

Balam munga biik yilam-dui (Moth's work/ make/ do/ mend/ earn/ country to home) - Bali balam (Mistletoe Moth) 2021
Silver, She Oak, Onion Grass, Waxed Thread
Collection of the Artist



Jenna LEE (Gulumerridjin (Larrakia), Wardaman and KarraJarri)

Image: Hollie Johnson



Jenna LEE (Gulumerridjin (Larrakia), Wardaman and KarraJarri)

doedoet: to tie up - 1 2021
Recycled 925 Silver, Red Kumihimo Silk Cord
Collection of the Artist



Jenna LEE (Gulumerridjin (Larrakia), Wardaman and KarraJarri)

doedoet: to tie up - 2 2021
Recycled 925 Silver, Red Kumihimo Silk Cord
Collection of the Artist



Jenna LEE (Gulumerridjin (Larrakia), Wardaman and KarraJarri)

doedoet: to tie up - 5 2021
Recycled 925 silver, Red Kumihimo Silk Cord, Page Fragment of Aboriginal Words, Varnish, Glue
Collection of the Artist

Jenna LEE (Gulumerridjin (Larrakia), Wardaman and KarraJarri)

doedoet: to tie up - 6 2021
Recycled 925 silver, Red Kumihimo Silk Cord, Page Fragment of Aboriginal Words, Varnish, Glue
Collection of the Artist

ARTWORK INDEX



Kait JAMES (Wadawurrung)

Image: Hollie Johnson



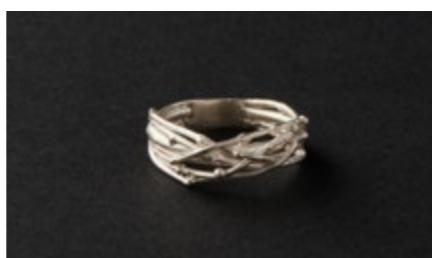
Kait JAMES (Wadawurrung)

Whitgewherri - Fluro Ngarrai 1,2,3 2021
Silver, Waxed Cord
Collection of the Artist



Kait JAMES (Wadawurrung)

Whitgewherri - Ngarrai 2 2021
Silver, Textile
Collection of the Artist



Kait JAMES (Wadawurrung)

Whitgewherri - ring 2021
Silver
Collection of the Artist



Kait JAMES (Wadawurrung)

Whitgewherri - Ngarrai 3 2021
Silver, Textile
Collection of the Artist



Lisa WAUP (Gunditjmara and Torres Strait Islander)

Image: Hollie Johnson



Lisa WAUP (Gunditjmara and Torres Strait Islander)

Our Way - neckpiece 2021
Reflective Aluminium, Oxidised Sterling Silver, Rubber, Adhesive
Collection of the Artist

Lisa WAUP (Gunditjmara and Torres Strait Islander)

Our Way - bracelet 2021
Reflective Aluminium
Collection of the Artist

Lisa WAUP (Gunditjmara and Torres Strait Islander)

Our Way - earrings 2021
Reflective Aluminium, Sprung Steel
Collection of the Artist



Sandy HODGE (Lardil)

Shields - Bronze Shield Ring 2021
925 Sterling Silver, Bronze
Collection of the Artist



Sandy HODGE (Lardil)

Shields - Silver Shield Ring 2021
925 Sterling Silver
Collection of the Artist



Sandy HODGE (Lardil)

Image: Hollie Johnson

ARTWORK INDEX



Sandy HODGE (Lardil)
Shields - Lardil Signet Ring 2021
925 Sterling Silver
Collection of the Artist



Sandy HODGE (Lardil)
Shields - Tiny Parrying Shield 2021
925 Sterling Silver, Brass
Collection of the Artist



Sandy HODGE (Lardil)
Shields - Small Broad Shield 2021
925 Sterling Silver, Brass, Bronze
Collection of the Artist



Sandy HODGE (Lardil)
Shields - Large Lardil Shield 2021
925 Sterling Silver, Bronze, Brass
Collection of the Artist



Sandy HODGE (Lardil)
Shark Leaf - Necklace 2021
925 Sterling Silver, Bronze
Collection of the Artist



Sandy HODGE (Lardil)
Shark Leaf - Signet Ring 2021
925 Sterling Silver
Collection of the Artist



Sandy HODGE (Lardil)
Shields - Shields Thumb Ring 2021
925 Sterling Silver, Brass
Collection of the Artist



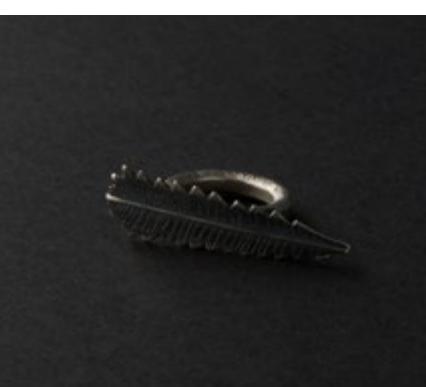
Sandy HODGE (Lardil)
Shields - Tiny Lardil Shield 2021
925 Sterling Silver, Bronze
Collection of the Artist



Sandy HODGE (Lardil)
Shields - Medium Combination Shields, Lardil Frame 2021
925 Sterling Silver, Bronze, Brass
Collection of the Artist



Sandy HODGE (Lardil)
Shields - Large Lardil Shield 2021
925 Sterling Silver, Bronze, Brass
Collection of the Artist



Sandy HODGE (Lardil)
Shark Leaf - Cast Ring 2021
925 Sterling Silver
Collection of the Artist



Sandy HODGE (Lardil)
Shields - Medium Lardil Shield 2021
925 Sterling Silver, Bronze
Collection of the Artist



Sandy HODGE (Lardil)
Shields - Medium Combination Shields, Parrying Frame 2021
925 Sterling Silver, Bronze, Brass
Collection of the Artist

ARTWORK INDEX



Sharn GEARY (Bundjalung)

Image: Hollie Johnson



Sharn GEARY (Bundjalung)

Donnelly Preservation - Preservation 2 2021
Silver, Shell Buttons
Collection of the Artist



Sharn GEARY (Bundjalung)

Donnelly Preservation - Preservation 4 2021
Fabric elastic, Plastic Buttons, Silver
Collection of the Artist



Sharn GEARY (Bundjalung)

Donnelly Preservation - Preservation 1 2021
Silver, Plastic Buttons
Collection of the Artist



Sharn GEARY (Bundjalung)

Donnelly Preservation - Preservation 3 2021
Silver, Plastic Buttons
Collection of the Artist



Sharn GEARY (Bundjalung)

Donnelly Preservation - Framed Photo 2021
Archival Print, A4 White Wooden Frame
Collection of the Artist



Suzanne CONNELLY - KLIDOMITIS (Wiradjuri)

Image: Hollie Johnson



Suzanne CONNELLY - KLIDOMITIS (Wiradjuri)

Journeys - j 1 2021
Silver, River Red Gum, Silk
Collection of the Artist



Suzanne CONNELLY - KLIDOMITIS (Wiradjuri)

Journeys - j 11 2021
Silver, River Red Gum, Silk
Collection of the Artist



Suzanne CONNELLY - KLIDOMITIS (Wiradjuri)

Journeys - j 11 2021
Silver, River Red Gum, Silk
Collection of the Artist

All artwork photographs by Fred Kroh.

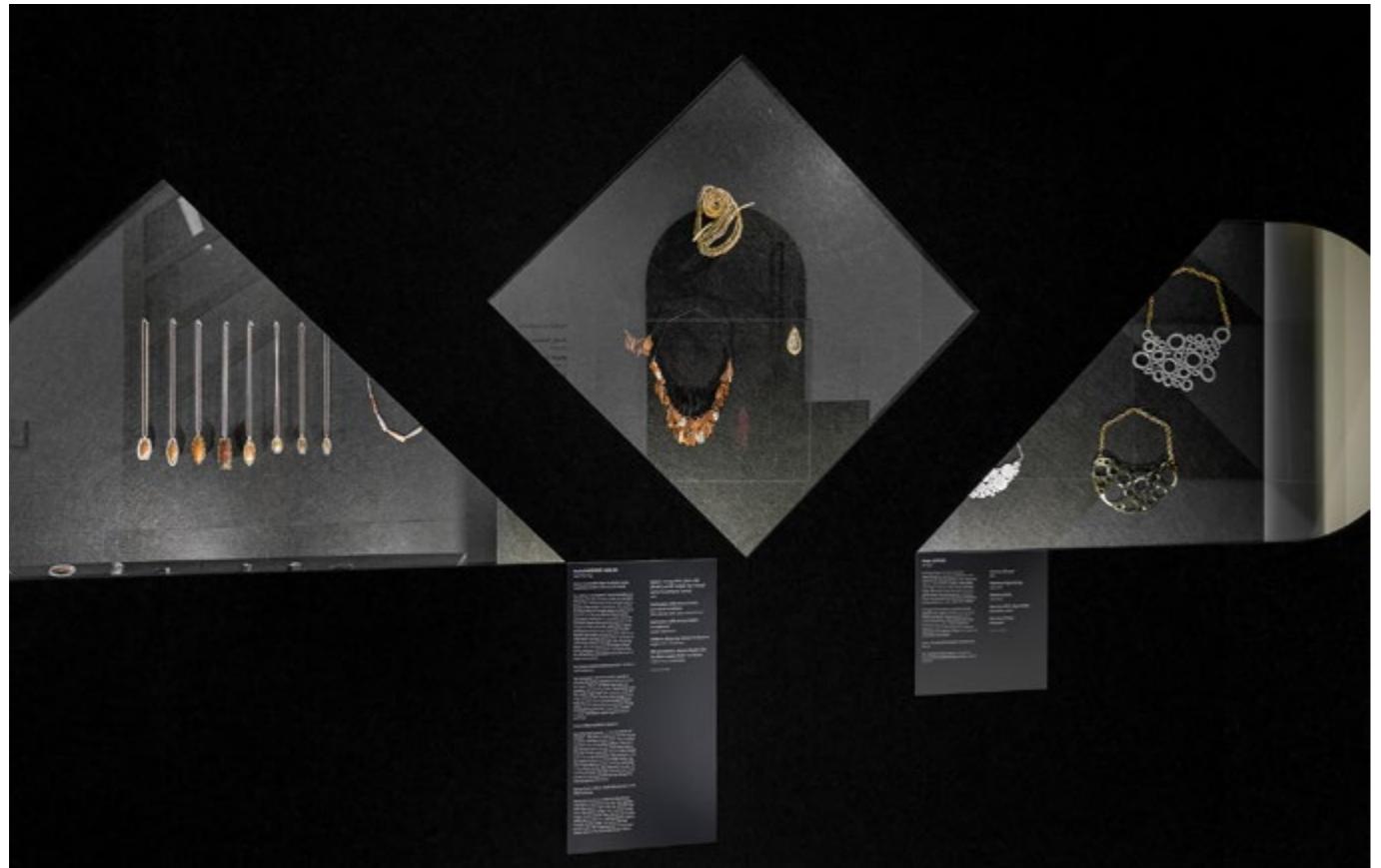
BLAK JEWELLERY

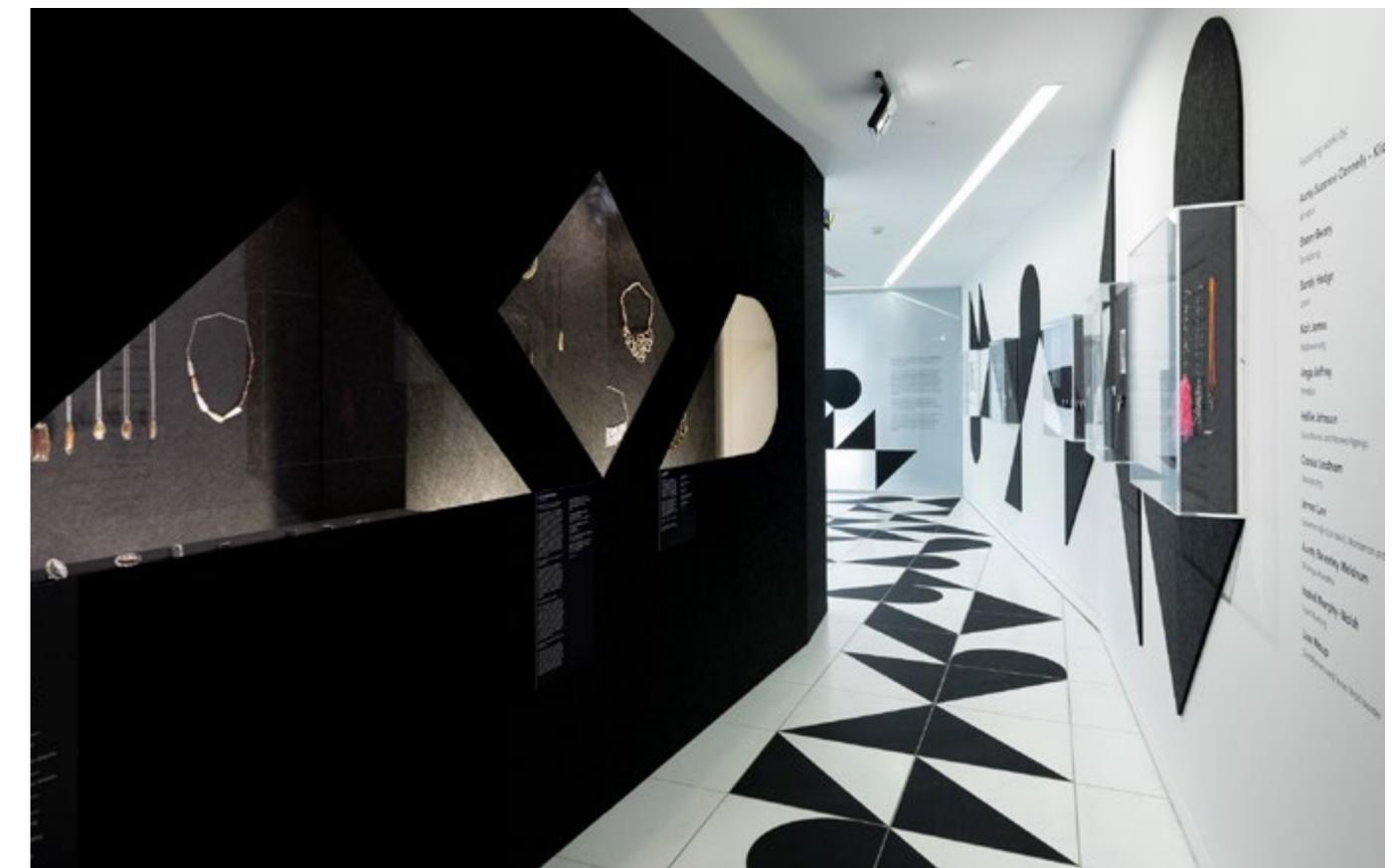
FINDING PAST • LINKING PRESENT

Bonnie Connolly - KUDORITE
Australia
The artwork consists of a clear rectangular box containing a small amount of dark, crumbly material. This material is a mix of natural elements, including dried eucalyptus leaves and twigs, and synthetic materials, such as black plastic and metal components. The overall texture is rough and organic, suggesting a connection to nature and traditional materials. The title 'KUDORITE' is written in a small, sans-serif font at the top left of the box.









Rock Jewellery - Finding First Living Powers celebrate the creative outcomes of the RMIT Indigenous Rock Jewellery program, showcasing jewellery from seven First Nations artists.

The Rock Design program is the first of its kind, marking a crucial step in recognising and valuing design by First Nations design in the wider Australian design landscape. Presented by the RMIT in partnership with the Ian Potter Foundation, RMIT University, National Gallery of Victoria and Federation Square, the design centre honours First Nations cultural tradition while the Victorian design sector and public institutions in turn value, celebrate and support First Nations design processes.

Building on their passion for jewellery design, the participating artists have undertaken a series of jewellery making intensive at RMIT studios, working with notable jewellers Birthe Tidmarsh and Cecile Kavala, curated by Lucy Ricketson.

Each artist presents a beautiful range of contemporary jewellery grounded in their connection to culture, Country and family and the rich legacy of stories they hold. The works draw on cultural connection through materials and design, while exploring experimentation with creative ways to engage with jewellery.





The Blak Design Program involved four weeks of an intensive jewellery making course in which participants learned classic jewellery making techniques. This program was created and delivered by established contemporary jewellers, Blanche Tilden & Laura Deakin, with technical assistance from Lindy McSwan.

We wish to acknowledge the very generous support of Blanche, Laura and Lindy in the Blak Design Program.



Above images: Laura Deakin



Blanche Tilden Living and working in Melbourne, Blanche Tilden has forged an international reputation in the dual fields of contemporary jewellery and studio glass. She holds a BVA and Graduate Diploma and is currently completing a PhD at the School of Art and Design, Australian National University, Canberra. Recognised for individuality and innovation, Blanche's work has been exhibited internationally since 1992 and acquired by all major Australian and significant international museum collections, including the National Gallery of Australia, the National Gallery of Victoria, the Corning Museum of Glass, New York, and the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris. In May 2021, Ripple Effect – a 25-year survey, curated by Jason Smith opened at Geelong Gallery and is now touring to six Australian venues until 2023.

Laura Deakin is an Australian-born contemporary jeweller. She holds a BFA with Honours from Monash University and a Masters of Fine Art from Munich's Academy of Fine Art. Laura's work combines traditional jewellery techniques with modern and classic materials. Using this contrast, her work has a clear focus on contemporary and political issues. Laura's work has been exhibited extensively internationally and is held in permanent collections and museums worldwide. She is founder of the jewellery label Coral Covey Jewellery and currently teaches RMIT University in the Gold & Silversmithing Department.

Lindy McSwan's practice has developed to include jewellery, vessels, small sculptural objects, and works on paper. Lindy has exhibited in group shows nationally and internationally. Her recent practice primarily focuses on the vessel. Having opportunities to travel remotely in Australia, she has developed collections of work interpreting aesthetics unique to the Australian landscape.

We wish to acknowledge all who have contributed to the success of the inaugural year of the Blak Design Program as teachers, mentors, workshop facilitators and presenters, and more:

Cassie Leatham (Taungurung)
David Deo
Duean White (Biripai, NSW)
Elisa-Jane Carmichael (Quandamooka)
Hannah Presley (Marri Ngarr)
Hollie Johnson (Gunaikurnai, Monero Ngarigo),
James Henry (Yuwaalaraay, Gamilaraay, Yorta Yorta, Yuin)
Jefa Greenaway (Wailwan, Kamilaroi)
Jenna Lee (Larrakia, Wardaman and Karajarri)
Katie Scott
Laura Thompson (Gunditjmara)
Lisa Waup (Gunditjmara and Torres Strait Islander)
Lowell Hunter (Nyul Nyul and Bardi)
Maree Clarke (Yorta Yorta, Wamba Wamba, Mutti Mutti, Boonwurrung)
Maya Hodge (Lardil, Yangkaal)
Medika Bonney (Gunditjmara, Wemba Wemba, Gunnai, Narrunga, and Boon Wurrung)
Myles Russell-Cook
N'arweet Carolyn Briggs (Boonwurrung)
Sianna Catullo (Narungga)
Simone LeAmon
Vicki Couzens (Gunditjmara, Keerray Woorroong)

RMIT Staff

Julian Goddard
Kit Wise
Mark Edgoose
Sam Mertens

We also wish to acknowledge the invaluable contribution of the KHT team to the delivery of the inaugural year of the Blak Design Program as well as the exhibition *Blak Jewellery Finding Past Linking Present*:

Chloe Powell, Blak Design Coordinator
Gail Harradine, Curatorial Manager
Gemma Jones, Public Programs Coordinator
Judy Allsop, Retail Manager
Maya Hodge, Assistant Curator (until December 2020)
Pierra van Sparkes, Assistant Curator
Rebecca Mirams, Collections Coordinator
Savanna Kruger, Assistant Curator
Savannah Ross, Curatorial Trainee (from February 2021)

References - Blak Design - becoming from Place, Professor Brian Martin

- Garneau, David. "Extra-Rational Aesthetic Action and Cultural decolonisation." *Fuse Magazine* 36, no. 4 (2013): 14-23.
- Garneau, David. "Toward Indigenous Criticism: the Ah Kee Paradox." *Artlink* 33, no. 2 (2014): 46-51.
- Graham, Mary. "Understanding Human Agency in Terms of Place: A proposed Aboriginal research methodology." *PAN: Philosophy Activism Nature* 3 (2009): 71-78.
- Greenaway, Jefa (curator). *Blak Design Matters: National Survey of Contemporary Indigenous Design*. Held at the Koorie Heritage Trust (2018).
- Kennedy Kelly, Martin Brian and Greenaway Jefa. *Australian Indigenous Design Charter*. Deakin University, 2014.
- Kennedy Kelly, Martin Brian, and Greenaway Jefa. *International Indigenous Design Charter*. Deakin University, 2018.
- Martin, Brian. "Methodology is content: Indigenous approaches to research and knowledge." *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 49, no.14 (2017): 1392-1400.
- Uncle Charles Moran, Uncle Greg Harrington, and Norm Sheehan. "On Country Learning." *Design and Culture* 10, no. 1 (2018): 71-79. DOI: 10.1080/17547075.2018.1430996.



KOORIE HERITAGE TRUST

Yarra Building, Federation Square,
Flinders St &, Swanston St, Melbourne VIC 3000