

The following five artworks, created by the five artists in this exhibition, have been selected and displayed from the Koorie Heritage Trust's Collection.

Bindi Cole Chocka

Wadawarrung
Miss Australia, 2008
photograph

Lorraine Connelly-Northey

Waradgerie
Bag, 2004
rusted bed base wire

Vicki Couzens

Kirrae Wurrong/Gunditjmara
Ween Ween (Mourning Bag), 2011
spiny headed mat rush, feathers, string,
ochre and possum fur

Jenny Mullett

Kurnai/Gunai
*Four Winds/Pe-ar-gul, Journey Lines,
Night Birds*, 2009
acrylic on canvas

Pitcha Makin Fellaz

(Myles Walsh – Yorta Yorta; Peter-Shane Rotumah – Gunditjmara; Adrian Rigney – Wotjabaluk/Ngarrindjeri; Ted Laxton – Gunditjmara; Thomas Marks – Gunnai/Kurnai(Gippsland)/Wotjabaluk; Billy Blackall – Yorta Yorta/Barkinji/Wathaurong; Joe Lee – Mob: Nunga)
We know where you shop [Kangaroo], 2013
acrylic on pvc foamboard

Peter Waples-Crowe

Ngarigo/Waradgerie
The End of Innocence, 2009
mixed media on canvas



Koorie Heritage Trust Inc
'Gnokan Danna Murra Kor-ki'

The Koorie Heritage Trust

295 King Street Melbourne 3000
Phone 03 8622 2600
Opening hours 9-5 Monday to Friday
www.koorieheritagetrust.com

CREATIVE
VICTORIA



image: *Me 'n' You (Me n u) Number 2*, 2014, Pitcha Makin Fellaz



Moving On Up!

13 March – 23 May 2015

These Walls
Kent Morris
Paakantyi

If only these walls could speak... well, they do!

Over the past 12 years, the walls of this building have spoken to Indigenous community members, the general public and visitors from around the world. They have spoken of Country, Culture, family, community, connection, reconnection, history, change and continuity. They have spoken of how our art and culture heal us and educate us and of how we are committed to sharing our stories with all people.

This wonderful building, these walls, this embracing, spiritual place has nurtured artists and community members from diverse backgrounds and experiences from the day it opened its doors. It has, in turn, been defined by all those it supported and by those whose stories and artworks are an integral part of its very structure. There are so many stories in these walls.

In 2008 I was invited by the Trust to work for one day to dismantle an annual exhibition of artworks held on Herring Island. That one day turned into four years and changed the course of my life.

This building these walls and the community within them supported, healed and strengthened me as it had done for many before and for many after. I entered the front doors not knowing who I was or who my ancestors were. Four years later I emerged, strengthened, connected, educated and ready to find my role in the community.

I learnt many lessons from these walls and from the people within them. In 2010, when I was installing the beautiful and thought provoking *Meaning of life* exhibition featuring artworks by Lin Onus, I became transfixed by a small black and white linocut print titled 'Quadroon's Dilemma'.

At the time I was learning about and trying to understand my father's journey. My father, Claude Thomas Patrick Morris, was born in Tibooburra in 1938 and in 1953 he was placed with a white family in Broken Hill through the Aboriginal Welfare Board to complete his secondary schooling. My father went from being a fringe dweller living in a tin shack with dirt floors, kerosene lamps and no running water to living in a house with electric lights, showers and carpeted floors. After completing his secondary education he left the Corner Country of far north-western New South Wales and travelled to Melbourne, where he knew no one, to join the Royal Australian Air Force and hide his family history and heritage.

I have always wondered what he was thinking when he made that remarkable decision. The small, framed lino print that I placed cautiously and curiously on the wall told me what my father could not. The gravity of that decision, how it wasn't a decision made lightly and how many others had faced the 'Quadroon's Dilemma'. The choice between going back to family and the fringe camp and all that came with that or trying to build a new life beyond in the city. The city lights

The Fellaz: Ted Laxton, Myles Walsh, Adrian Rigney, Peter-Shane Rotumah, William Blackall, Thomas Marks and Joe Lee (assisted by artist, Peter Widmer) take a look at what is seen as the traditional view of Aboriginal art and to make it new and relevant to themselves, their community and eventually to others. They are making plans for the future, for the long term.

It's rare that an artist not only shows their artwork at an exhibition, but also offers the viewer the chance to become at one with them and experience how the art comes about. In *Doing over the house*, the Fellaz let you in on their work, how it's made and the tricky thought patterns that go into its creation, like "Whadda you think it needs, Ted?"

Doing over the house is evidence of the Fellaz as producers of fine paintings and it tells a story of their work with young people and community. It also breaks new Fellaz ground by letting them loose to paint directly onto the Trust walls.

On the 2nd Floor of the Koorie Heritage Trust these renaissance Fellaz are creating an installation that shows them as 3 dimensional men in a 2 dimensional world.

Optional information:

The Fellaz consider *Doing over the house* – a useful phrase that may mean;

1. What is that bloody helicopter *doing over the house*?
2. I like the Windsor double arch bed and I could use two as we are *doing over the house* here at the beach.

3. After *doing over the house*, I went down the Crown. Saw Billy the Runt straight away.

Peter Waples-Crowe
Ngarigo/Waradgerie
In the Realm

Peter Waples-Crowe is a visual and performance artist. A descendant of the Ngarigo people of the high country of Southern New South Wales, his art explores his mixed heritage and its contemporary implications.

In the realm explores his interest in Spirituality including the power of signs and symbols. The realm is a place of dreams and messages that connected us to our ancestors and to each other. "A self-confessed mongrel breed, my practice explores the areas of dislocation, globalisation, popular culture, sub-cultures and Indigeneity. Many things including adoption, sexuality, craft, street art, politics, traditional Indigenous cultures, humour and discarded flotsam influence my work. Using various techniques and mixed media applications to locate a sense of belonging and position, I juxtapose visual and re-visioned histories to produce critical reflection. My practice also explores and expands the notion of the 'Aboriginal artist'."

Statements provided by artists.

of work to inform, confront, unsettle; to give the viewer the opportunity to see an Aboriginal perspective on how this Country has been taken. Couzens wants the viewer to consider their understanding of the “colonisation” of this Country; to think about respect and giving honour to those who were here first and died bravely defending their families and Country.

Through the possum skin cloak, a glimpse, an insight, is given into the deep spirituality and cultural practices of Couzens’ people. Many who perished in these early wars were denied proper burial and funeral rights. They have not been laid to rest in a respectful and honourable way.

Couzens uses the crosses and honour roll to reflect this disrespect and dishonour back to a mainstream society who places such value on tradition, proper and respectful honouring and burial of its soldiers and war heroes.

“Our identity has been fragmented,” she states. “Missing pieces, gaping wounds in the body of our cultural knowledge, traditions and practices. Yet we have survived, each generation/family reclaiming, regenerating and remembering more and this disjointed knowledge we have cherished and nurtured through the generations. In these times, through the work of those who have gone before us, we have regained the freedom, our birthright to reclaim, regenerate, revitalise and remember who we are and where we come from”.

Jennifer Mullett Monero

Kurnai/Gunai
Black Cross Stigma

This work is concerned with the emergence of memories; the construction of symbols that embody a cultural essentialism. They are embodied through the series of changes by the interlocking of external and internal worlds.

“By articulating my Aboriginal consciousness I can maintain an Aboriginal ‘body’, in this way, the representation of identity and the construction of symbols sustains the art. The re-connecting of memories, experience and emotions maintains a context, which rejects the fragmentation of assimilation colonialism.

The substance of me, my Aboriginal being, is embodied within an Aboriginal landscape/gender/identity/social. Landscape results from an engaging in place, embodied through the process of memories, experiences and emotions. I have embodied landscapes: urban, forest and traditional; these have become place within my substance.”

Born Sydney 1955 Jennifer graduated from Monash Fine Arts 1995 where she was awarded a patrons prize for ceramics. She was selected twice for Shepparton Regional Art Gallery Ceramic Award and Highly Commended Victorian Indigenous Art Awards 2005. Her work is in the collections of Bunjilaka, National Gallery of Victoria and private collections.

Pitcha Makin Fellaz

*‘Doing over the house’ –
(The Fellaz do up the 2nd floor)*

or the dirt road home. It was a decision that affected so many lives, a decision that brought me to these walls. These walls helped me understand my father and that crucial moment in his life and in the life of my family.

Often I would be installing exhibitions alone into the wee hours of the morning. At an opening the day after such a night, Uncle Jim Berg asked me how I felt about being alone in the building so late. I answered that it was comforting and that I never felt alone. He smiled and said ‘ah... you’re here with the spirit mob, they’ll look after you’.

Over the years I watched, listened and learned. The artworks, artists, staff and visiting community members were my teachers. These walls are akin to the rock art sites of Gariwerd, Mudgegonga and Yeddonba, a living library of culture and stories. The Aunty Joyce Johnson, Darren Pattie-Bux and Gandel Family galleries have been the urban rock art sites of this contemporary cultural education centre.

All the artists in *Moving on Up!* have had a significant connection to the Trust and these walls. Over the years Bindi Cole, Lorraine Connelly-Northey, Vicki Couzens, Peter Waples-Crowe, Jenny Mullett and the pitcha makin fellaz have been actively telling stories through artworks and exhibitions displayed here.

Bindi Cole’s first solo exhibition, *Heart Strong*, was shown at the Koorie Heritage Trust in 2007. The exhibition included a portrait of her father, Wathaurong elder Bryon Powell, which was shortlisted for

the 2007 William and Winifred Bowness Photography Prize. In 2009, while Bindi was working at the Trust, she won the Deadly Art Award at the Victorian Indigenous Art Awards and produced the ‘No Dots Down Here’ magazine.

The art of Peter Waples-Crow has been part of the Trust’s cultural conversations since his 2005 *Sacred Detail* exhibition. In 2011 I had the pleasure of installing Peter’s *Aburbanity* exhibition. I have witnessed his continued exploration of a contemporary, complex and thought provoking identity that inspires and expands what it means to be Koorie today. It is indeed fitting that, for this exhibition, framed works and canvases have given way to Peter painting and creating directly on the walls.

Vicki Couzens’ presence in this building has been of great significance not only through her art practice but also in her work reclaiming, regenerating and revitalising all aspects of our cultural heritage. These walls have been witness to Vicki’s unbridled strength and commitment to culture. They have felt the warmth of her possum skin cloaks and have resonated with the language and musical rhythms of the old people from the south-east.

The Mullett family’s connection to this building has become part of the mortar over the years with so many artists and keepers of culture from this family generously sharing their art and stories. Jenny Mullett’s works are powerful and remind us all of the spiritual depth of this Country, of our ancestors and of ourselves.

Lorraine Connelly-Northey’s metal

narbongs (collecting bags) and other sculptural works made from rusted found objects have always had a special place in this building. The small intricate versions hang in the Trust's gift shop and have regularly been given to departing members of staff while her larger works were also exhibited at the Trust in the 2004 exhibition *100 Narbongs*.

New brothers on the block, the pitcha makin fellaz, have become a part of the Trust's present and future. In a short space of time these fellaz have reminded us of the importance of working together, of standing up for what you believe in and of keeping a sense of humour close at hand. These walls have embraced their stories and so the tradition continues.

These walls speak of Culture, connection and continuity, of learning and sharing, of passing on knowledge and of the journey in gaining it. They have done so for over a decade. The walls of the new Koorie Heritage Trust building at Federation Square will continue the tradition of speaking and telling the stories of south-eastern Australia's first peoples. I look forward to listening to the walls of the Trust's new home on the banks of the Birrarung.

If only these walls could speak... well, they do!

Kent Morris' previous roles at the Koorie Heritage Trust include: Assistant Curator, Exhibitions Assistant Curator, Collections Project Officer, Collections Customer Services Officer Weekend Retail Manager

Artists

Bindi Cole Chocka

Wadawurrung

Wolf in Sheep's Clothing 2013

This work explores the tension between Christianity and Aboriginality, a conflict between two different understandings that has resulted in horrendous acts of violence and cultural silencing. Chocka has been profoundly changed by the revelation of Jesus but she struggles with the notion that so many 'wolves in sheep's clothing' ran missions in Victoria that, in the name of god, participated in the decimation of culture and language. The legacy of this difficult history, a long-standing resentment for the atrocities committed under the banner of Christianity, lingers in the Victorian Aboriginal community and throughout the world.

Bindi Cole Chocka is an award winning, Melbourne-born photographer, curator, new media artist and writer who speaks compellingly about taboo topics through her photographs, videos, installations and writing work. Her work often references her life story and experiences, such as her Wadawurrung heritage, the importance of Christianity in her life, and the impact of politics, the law and other power structures on her lived experience and that of her family and community. Her deeply personal and powerful artistic practice questions the way people circumscribe and misconstrue contemporary identity and experience.

Since her first solo show in 2007, Chocka's work has been widely shown in solo and group exhibitions including State, National and International institutions. Her work is held in various collections across the world.

Lorraine Connelly-Northey

Waradgerie

Ground Drawing with Found Materials 2015

Waradgerie woman Lorraine Connelly-Northey is of mixed descent. Her work is inspired by the Mallee and Riverina environments of North-Western Victoria where she grew up.

A deep respect for the traditions of her ancestors and accumulated knowledge of Aboriginal techniques and forms inspire her work. Using casts offs and found materials such as corrugated iron, fencing wire, bed springs and organic materials she creates sculptural objects with a decidedly contemporary quality. Her work often seems to question our social and political environment.

Lorraine's ground drawing with wire and iron provides a snapshot of the basic tools and implements used by traditional Aboriginal Australians in their hunter/gatherer lifestyle; highlighting the string bags made traditionally of fibre (represented in wire) or bark (represented in iron).

"Years ago I assisted my dad to put up a boundary fence on his property in the Mallee. With my time limits and travel plans, gallery deadlines and not to mention the heat, dust and flies of the Mallee, I

suggested to my dad that the stretched out and rusted plain and barb wire would be perfect for some of my bags and that I would be scavenging back from him, what he and I had previously scavenged from the old dumps to do the fencing, some twenty hers ago.

"He agreed! And why shouldn't he. He's my dad. And it's only a wire fence keeping out what? At least I let him agree when I said I would be taking out the bottom and third wire from the ground and that if I needed more will I take it from the ground or the top wire. He had the final say. Just leave the third one! And so the bags for the 4 metre wall were made."

The baskets were made from materials scavenged from a Mallee farmer's old dump.

Lorraine Connelly-Northey's work has been widely exhibited in solo and group exhibitions, including at the National Gallery of Victoria, Queensland Gallery of Art | Gallery of Modern Art, Melbourne Museum, Tandanya, Object Gallery, Koorie Heritage Trust, Mildura Arts Centre, and Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery.

Vicki Couzens

Kirrae Wurrong/Gunditjmara

The Stony Rises Project

Based in Warrnambool in western Victoria Vicki Couzens' work encompasses painting, installation, mixed media, sculpture, printmaking and public art. Couzens is well known for her involvement in the revival of possum skin cloak making in Victoria.

Vicki Couzens produced this body