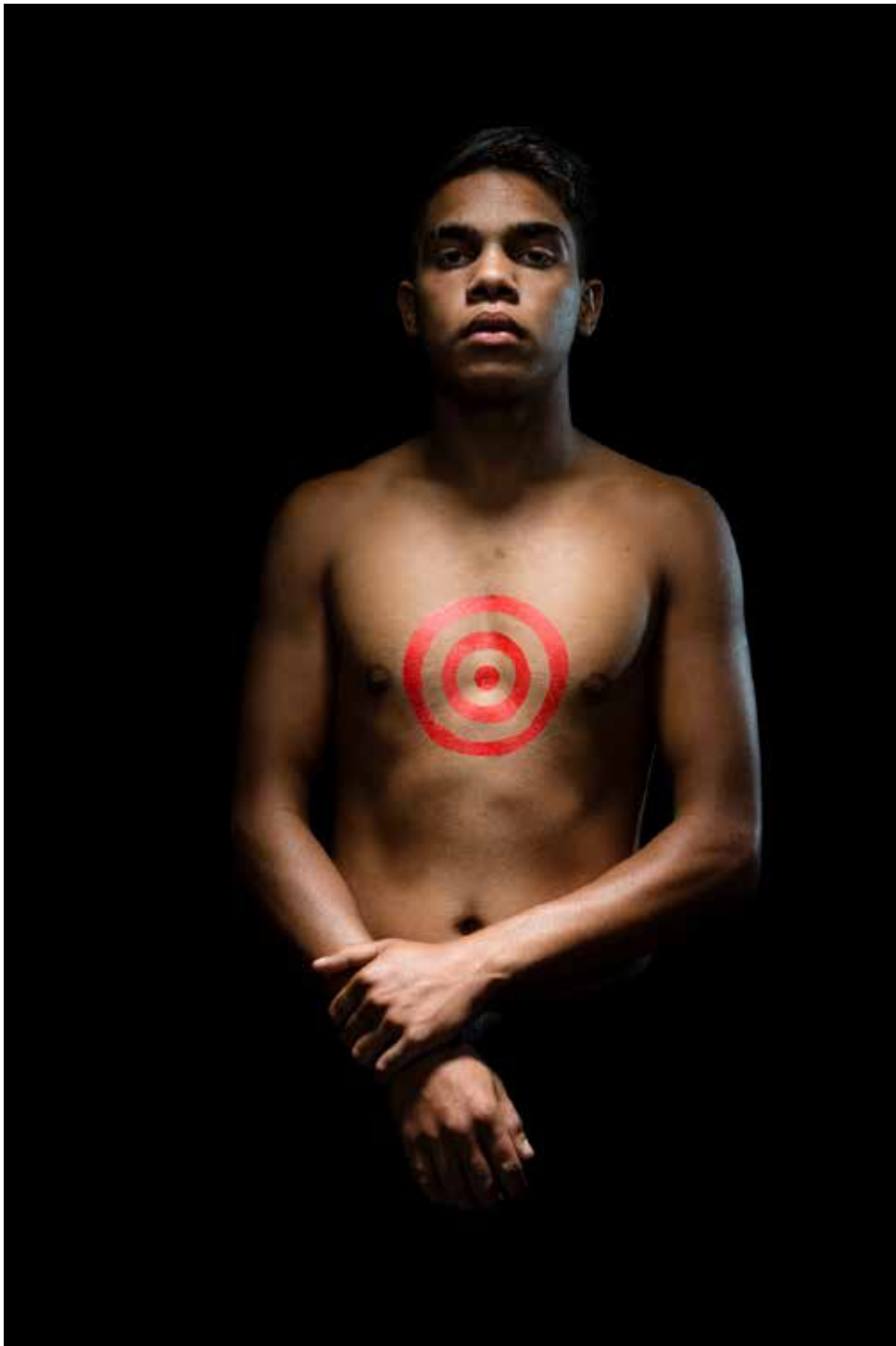


**EDUCATION RESOURCE KIT**

**(IN)VISIBLE:  
THE FIRST PEOPLES AND WAR**



**LM**  
**MACQUARIE**  
**LAKE**  
**CITY**  
**ART**  
**GALLERY**

## OVERVIEW

Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery is dedicated to working with educators to enhance education opportunities in the region. To this end, this resource was developed by the gallery and local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal educators, to support meaningful Aboriginal programming across the curriculum areas of Creative Arts, Visual Arts, HISE, English and History.

It should only be a guide for teachers to use in tandem with relevant syllabus documents and teaching resources. Most of the activities may be adjusted to suit higher or lower stages depending on students' abilities and sophistication with concepts.

The kit's usefulness can be extended through attendance at a professional development forum planned for Friday 8 May and by visiting the exhibition *(in)visible: the First Peoples and War*, on display until 17 May with students. The resource can also be used in conjunction with the exhibition catalogue and Stage 3 Exhibition Activity Sheet.

The gallery and Aboriginal Reference Group acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, the Awabakal People, and as such encourage teachers to make contact with their local Land Council and their Aboriginal Education Consultative Group when developing Aboriginal programming.

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Cover:  
Tony Albert *Brother*  
(*Our Past*) 2013  
150 x 100cm  
Corrigan Collection  
© the artist



# INTRODUCTION

## (IN)VISIBLE: THE FIRST PEOPLES AND WAR

**WAR** is a complex, fraught and emotional subject. Beyond the immediate devastation any warfare wreaks are the insidious and far-reaching ramifications of its aftermath. It affects all of us at some time, in some way. In this Anzac centenary year, many Australians are reflecting on war and its legacy, but for the First Peoples the time for honest reflection is long overdue. Since the frontier violence that characterised the colonisation of their lands, Aboriginal people have lived with conflict as a feature of daily life. Their diverse cultures have been conditioned by ongoing social and political struggle.

In consultation with the Aboriginal Reference Group at Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery, we conceived *(in)visible: the First Peoples and War* to prioritise the perspectives of Aboriginal men and women, and to confront the deeper cultural, political and social issues they have dealt with around conflict situations from the frontier to the front.

In the relatively recent world wars, Aboriginal people endured a great deal of inequality, injustice and neglect, particularly when rewards were distributed to returned servicemen for fighting for their country. As Professor Maynard discusses in his essay, there was scant acknowledgement of the contributions of Aboriginal military personnel at the time. In fact, governmental policy was still confiscating their lands and removing their children.

Aboriginal people nevertheless chose to fight alongside their long-term oppressors for a country that not only denied them citizenship, but also the most basic of human rights. What emerges is an unspoken story of courage, resilience, faith and pride. This story is the heart of *(in)visible*.

Through the powerful works of a group of emerging, mid-career and established contemporary Aboriginal artists, the exhibition takes on some thought-provoking truths. It recognises and responds to sacrifices made by the First Peoples since the invasion, through more recent military engagements, to the present day.

In her performance work, Anna Liebrecht literally gives voice to the story, creating a space for contemplation, compassion and the expression of grief. Julie Gough and Judy Watson visually recount harrowing historical episodes, memorialising families and communities lost to violence. Jason Wing, Amala Groom and Archie Moore repurpose traditional Western forms of tribute – a bust, an honour roll, and a book – to shape profoundly incisive statements about notions of cultural respect. Tony Albert, long-term interrogator of the subject of war and Aboriginal military service, makes the target obvious.

All of the artists in *(in)visible* are reclaiming their history, either personal or cultural. The *Babana Bullets* and the *Poppy Wall* project further attest to the passion and depth of feeling around the subject of fighting for Country and culture, and the commitment to strengthening communities. It has been a privilege for us to develop this exhibition with these artists and the community and to contribute to an active and meaningful process of acknowledgement.

**Yhonnie Scarce** and **Meryl Ryan** Exhibition curators

Installation view from  
*(in)visible: the First Peoples and War*.  
Left to right: *Babana Bullets*,  
2014, by Alair Pambegan,  
Judy Watson, Vernon Ah  
Kee, Megan Cope and  
Jennifer Herd, Biles Fernando  
Collection; Tony Albert,  
*Brothers (Our Past, Our  
Present, Our Future)* 2013,  
pigment prints on paper  
Corrigan Collection  
© the artists

# CATALOGUE ESSAY

## FIGHTING FOR COUNTRY

**ABORIGINAL RESISTANCE AND ENLISTMENT:** From the first instance of British invasion and occupation in 1788, Aboriginal people have fought for their Country. Legendary Aboriginal resistance fighter Pemulwuy (c1750–1802) led a guerrilla military campaign against the British settlement in Sydney. Some believed Pemulwuy, who survived many skirmishes and severe wounds, possessed supernatural powers that made him invincible. A courageous and inspiring figure to his people, he was eventually assassinated and his head removed and shipped to Britain. Pemulwuy was followed by a host of other freedom fighters, including Wyndradyne, leader of the Wiradjuri people in western New South Wales, and Yagan, a Noongar warrior from Western Australia. There are many others, neglected by history, who courageously fought to protect their people.

During the years of colonisation, the Hunter Valley and Port Stephens was unofficially declared to be in a state of war.

The blood of the Blacks begins to flow, we are in a state of warfare up the country here – two stockmen have been speared in retaliation for the 4 natives who were deliberately shot without any trial or form whatever, Martial Law is the cry of the settlers...<sup>1</sup>

The atrocities are well documented, with a terrifying campaign of violence unleashed against the Worimi people by the timber cutters. One is recorded as remarking, without any conscience, that ‘he would kill them [Aborigines] whenever he could’.<sup>2</sup> The Worimi did not bow to such attacks and responded in kind. These assaults further inflamed the hatred of the Worimi, and our own freedom fighters of the region.<sup>3</sup>

From his Mission on the shores of Lake Macquarie, Reverend Threlkeld wrote in some detail of the attacks against the Aboriginal population. He quotes one prominent landholder as stating: ‘the best thing that could be done, would be to shoot all the Blacks and manure the ground with their carcasses. Which was all the good they were fit for!’ And goes on to add:

It was recommended likewise that the Women and Children should especially be shot as the most certain method of getting rid of the race. Shortly after this declaration, martial law was proclaimed ... A large number were driven into a swamp, and mounted police rode round and round and shot them off indiscriminately until they were all destroyed! ... forty-five heads were collected and boiled down for the sake of the skulls.<sup>4</sup>

Henry Reynolds also outlined the horror of this period: ‘old colonists were consulted by the savants when they returned home on holiday. Aboriginal skulls and other skeletal remains became highly desirable prizes for ambitious museum curators’.<sup>5</sup>

## CATALOGUE ESSAY

Despite the carnage of the frontier war period, our people survived into the twentieth century only to be incarcerated into what draws comparison to military concentration camps. Our treatment at the hands of the so-called civilised begs the question why so many of our people subsequently put up their hands to defend Australia in every military campaign from the Boer War through to Afghanistan and Iraq.

Over 90 years ago, my grandfather established the Australian Aboriginal Progressive Association (AAPA) in Sydney. Today, the AAPA is regarded as the first united all-Aboriginal political organisation to form in this country, and its platform and demands still resonate: enough land for each and every Aboriginal family in the country (Land Rights); the cessation of the NSW Aborigines Protection Board's policy of removing Aboriginal children from their families; citizenship in our own country; self-determination (50 years before Gough Whitlam put it on the agenda); protection of a distinct Aboriginal cultural identity; abolition of the Protection Board; and the appointment of an Aboriginal Board in charge of Aboriginal affairs. What has not been recognised about his organisation, however, is that its catalyst can be traced to the First World War.

The experiences of Aboriginal servicemen – returning home and not being acknowledged in the same way as non-Aboriginal soldiers – gave rise to an Aboriginal political voice. Research at the Australian War Memorial has now ascertained that over 1300 Aboriginal men fought for their country in the First World War.<sup>6</sup> This figure has grown substantially from the 300 recognised back in 1988.<sup>7</sup> There were many motivations for Aboriginal soldiers to enlist, including the prospect of a decent wage. Many, however, assumed they were also fighting for social, political and economic changes at home; changes that would ensure their people gained justice, acceptance and respect 'which some thought would be won through war service'.<sup>8</sup> Sadly, these changes were not forthcoming. Some Aboriginal soldiers returned home even to find their children had been removed from their wives' care.

Most people today – black and white – have scant memory of the great successes Aboriginal people experienced on regained plots of Aboriginal land from the mid-1870s onwards in New South Wales. Aboriginal people had written petitions and campaigned to regain some of their traditional country. Archival records describe the returned land as heavily timbered worthless scrub. By the turn of the twentieth century, however, Aboriginal people had successfully converted these lands into successful farms of up to 40 acres – fenced, homesteaded, and supporting crops and livestock. These independent farms were winning prizes at agricultural shows and good financial returns.

From about 1910, successful Aboriginal-controlled farms and land holdings began to attract attention and were forcibly taken and handed over to white farmers. In many instances, police used the point of a gun to force the Aboriginal farmers and their families off the land with only the shirts on their backs. With the introduction of the First World War soldiers' resettlement scheme, this program accelerated and Aboriginal land was handed over to non-Aboriginal soldiers with no recompense for decades of hard work. Furthermore, Aboriginal soldiers who applied to the

## CATALOGUE ESSAY

resettlement scheme were informed it did not apply to them. Up until this time, over 84% of Aboriginal people in New South Wales had been self-sufficient and prospering. If these conditions had been allowed to continue, we would not be wallowing in a state of severe inequality today.

Aboriginal involvement in the First World War is complex and full of contradictions. While at the Western Front, some Aboriginal soldiers experienced a form of camaraderie and acceptance unlike anything they had come across before. During the First World War, many Aboriginal people and communities were keen to enlist and supportive of the war effort; but others spoke out against conscription, and against the war itself. A wharf labourer and trade unionist, my grandfather opposed Billy Hughes' Conscription Referendum and helped to defeat it twice. Dick Johnson and other members of the early Aboriginal political movement on the other hand, were returned soldiers with an axe to grind on the home front.

Australia's First World War history is not all about fighting on the steep slopes of Gallipoli or being dug in amongst the slush and mud on the Western Front. Back at home, our people's war experiences are very important to chronicle. Many Aboriginal people supported the war effort in so many different ways – again without recognition or thanks. At the South Australian Mission of Point McLeay, for instance, this fundraising effort was noted:

The Mission contains only a small community, but they were intensely patriotic. For a fortnight before the recent Red Cross appeal, most of the natives went without not only luxuries, but absolute necessities to provide contributions, and after they had collected £90 it would have been difficult to find one pound amongst the whole of them.<sup>9</sup>

Others were not afraid to speak out in the negative. One non-Aboriginal writer to the Taree newspaper voiced his concerns:

...an [A]boriginal woman was talking loudly and saying: 'The Germans are beating the British and I hope they will too; we will get better treatment from them than we get from the British.' Who is teaching them this Stuff? Readers may smile and say: 'Why take notice of a black, very little harm they can do?' Indeed, but suppose that in our next war with Germany we are tackled on our lonesome and Australia is invaded by the good kind Germans, what lovely scouts and guides the blacks would be for our enemies.<sup>10</sup>

The complexities of the Aboriginal wartime and military experiences are in many instances extreme. What we do know without question is that historically Aboriginal men and women died valiantly defending their land in the wake of invasion, occupation and dispossession. Additionally, even in the face of extreme provocation and racist behaviour, our people did not balk at putting up their hand to defend



## CATALOGUE ESSAY

Australia in every military campaign the country has taken part in. This country has an extraordinarily courageous military past, of which all of us should be proud. For this reason, it is vitally important that we recognise the valour and courage of Aboriginal servicemen and women in that story, and justly say 'Lest We Forget'.

### Professor John Maynard

Director/Chair – Aboriginal History Wollotuka Institute University of Newcastle  
Council – Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIAT SIS)  
Yuraki History, Politics & Culture Node Leader – National Indigenous Research and Knowledge Network (NIRAKN)  
Adjunct Professorial Fellow – National Centre for Indigenous Studies (NCIS), ANU  
Adjunct Professorial Fellow – Australian Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Education (ACIKE), CDU  
Director – Purai – Global Indigenous and Diaspora Research Studies Centre

### Footnotes

- 1 Gunson, 1974: 213
- 2 Dawson, 1831:58
- 3 Dawson, 1831:262-265
- 4 Gunson, 1974: 49
- 5 Reynolds, 1995:203
- 6 Personal communication with Margaret Beadman Australian War Memorial, 12 January 2015
- 7 Goodall, 1988: 32
- 8 Scarlett, 2014: 39
- 9 Murray Pioneer and Australian River Record, Friday 14 June 1918: 2
- 10 Leader, Orange, 31 July 1915: 1

### References

Gunson, N (1974) *Australian Reminiscences and Papers of L.E. Threlkeld Missionary to the Aborigines – 1824-1859*, Canberra, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.  
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Scarlett, P (2014) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Volunteers for the AIF – The Indigenous Response to World War One*, Indigenous Histories, Canberra

### Archives

Personal communication with Margaret Beadman, Australian War Memorial, 12 January 2015  
Commonwealth Archives, B2455, 7259, 2109 <http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/NameSearch/Interface/NameSearchForm.aspx>  
List compiled by local Karuah historian Bonita Parker.

### Newspapers

Our Aim, August 1917 *The Australian Aborigines Advocate*, 31 October 1919  
Our Aim, May 1915: 3  
Our Aim, June 1917: 5  
Our Aim, November 1916: 5  
*The Raymond Terrace Examiner*, 23 August 1918  
*The Raymond Terrace Examiner and Lower Hunter and Port Stephens Advertiser*, 6 April 1923: 3  
*The Wingham Chronicle*, 10 June 1925

# STAGE 3 HSIE and STAGES 3–4 HISTORY

## HSIE: GENERAL RATIONALE

(Excerpt Human Society and its Environment K-6 Syllabus NSW Board of Studies)

The future wellbeing of human society and its environment depends upon the quality of people's interactions with each other and with their cultural, social and physical environments as they strive to meet each other's needs...

HSIE provides a knowledge base for students to gain understandings about change and continuity, cultures, environments, and social systems and structures. Students will have opportunities to learn about people and the environments with which they interact. This knowledge base provides the foundation for studies of Australian and world history and geography, for social, cultural and legal studies, for environmental and economic studies, and for citizenship education...

Learning in HSIE can assist students to empathise with others and understand and evaluate the nature of the society to which they belong. Studies include perspectives of females and males, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, various cultural and socioeconomic groups, people with different religions and belief systems, and people with disabilities...

## HSIE: SYLLABUS LINKS

### **Change and Continuity: Significant Events and People**

CCS3.1 Explains the significance of particular people, groups, places, actions and events in the past in developing Australian identities and heritage.

- Describes the impact of colonial exploration and expansion and the impact these had on all Australia
- Identifies places associated with nationally significant events and people

### **Change and Continuity: Identities**

CUS3.3 Describes different cultural influences and their contribution to Australian identities

- Demonstrates an understanding of different viewpoints about what is an Australian identity and gives their own impressions and point of view
- Identifies examples of Australian culture eg music, literature, art
- Examines the contributions of Aboriginal people to Australian culture and identity
- Demonstrates an understanding of nationally remembered days eg Wattle Day, Remembrance Day, Survival Day, Arbour Day, Anzac Day

## STAGE 3 HSIE and STAGES 3–4 HISTORY

### HISTORY: GENERAL RATIONALE

(Excerpt from History K-10 Syllabus NSW for Australia Curriculum)

History is a disciplined process of inquiry into the past that helps to explain how people, events and forces from the past have shaped our world. It allows students to locate and understand themselves and others in the continuum of human experience up to the present. History provides opportunities for students to explore human actions and achievements in a range of historical contexts. Students become aware that history is all around us and that historical information may be drawn from the physical remains of the past as well as written, visual and oral sources of evidence...

The study of History strengthens an appreciation for and an understanding of civics and citizenship. It also provides broader insights into the historical experiences of different cultural groups within our society and how various groups have struggled for civil rights, for example Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, migrants and women. History encourages students to develop an understanding of significant historical concepts such as cause and effect, change and continuity, significance, empathy and contestability...

### HISTORY: SYLLABUS LINKS

#### Stage 3

- HT3-1 Describes and explains the significance of people, groups, places and events to the development of Australia
- HT3-2 Describes and explains different experiences of people living in time
- HT3-3 Identifies change and continuity and describes the causes and effects of change on Australian society
- HT3-4 Describes and explains the struggles for rights and freedoms in Australia, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- HT3-5 Applies a variety of skills of historical inquiry and communication

#### Stage 4

- HT4-2 Describes major periods of historical time and sequences events, people and societies from the past
- HT4-3 Describes and assesses the motives and actions of past individuals and groups in the context of past societies
- HT4-4 Describes and explains the causes and effects of events and developments of past societies over time
- HT4-10 Selects and uses appropriate oral, written, visual and digital forms to communicate about the past

## STAGE 3 HSIE and STAGES 3–4 HISTORY

### ACTIVITY: FIRST CONTACT

#### LEARNING

Discuss **Jason Wing**'s depiction of Captain Cook as **Captain James Crook**. History is subjective and often told through the eyes of the 'victors' therefore much of the history of Captain Cook's 'discovery' of Australia has been told from the British point of view.

Initial discussion with the students could revolve around viewing the artwork and teasing out some of the basic visual literacy elements such as: what they see, what they feel and what they think the artist is saying and how. Discussion should be accompanied by historical information.



Jason Wing  
*Captain James Crook* 2013  
lithograph on paper  
59.8 x 50cm  
Purchased with assistance  
from Lake Macquarie Art  
Gallery Society, 2013  
Collection Lake Macquarie City  
Art Gallery © the artist

### STAGE 3 HSIE and STAGES 3–4 HISTORY

By creating *Captain James Crook* the artist seeks to redress a misreading of colonial history and offers an alternative perspective to the British-centric version of the invasion taught in Australia. The balaclava-clad Captain James 'Crook' is a reminder that this continent was not settled peacefully by Britain. As the artist says, 'Australia was stolen from the Aboriginal people by "lethal force", and since the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788, the fates of Aboriginal people have continued to be undermined. 'Racism and criminal behaviour by the Australian government,' he adds, 'is alive and well.'

For Jason Wing the forcible acquisition of this continent triggered the 'tone for the Government's "handling" of Aboriginal people'. Every governmental policy to follow endeavoured to disavow Aboriginal people of their humanity. In portraying Captain James Cook as a criminal, the artist questions Cook's right to the mantle of celebrated conqueror and hero, casting him instead as instigator – the very symbol of the theft of Aboriginal land.

In addition, the artist has used a lithographic technique commonly used in the production of colonial portraiture – this print deliberately imitates the appearance of that traditional lithographic style.

Discuss with the students the British and commonly accepted white Australian version of history: that Captain Cook 'discovered' Australia, the land was declared 'terra nullius' and claimed for Britain despite the people who had been living here for thousands of years.

The Australian Government's Department of the Environment website describes the event:

'When Lieutenant (later Captain) James Cook first set foot on Australian soil at Kurnell Peninsula Headland in Botany Bay, he made history. This moment led to the British settlement of the Australian continent, it altered forever the way of life for Indigenous Australians, dramatically expanded the world's scientific understanding of the continent's unique flora and fauna and ultimately led to the creation of a new nation – Australia.

'Originally sent by the British Admiralty to the south seas to observe the transit of the planet Venus across the face of the sun, Cook spent several months circling and surveying New Zealand's North and South Islands. The *Endeavour* then set sail for Van Diemen's Land, which Cook believed to be the south-eastern tip of New Holland. Southerly gales propelled the ship north and on 19 April 1770, Lieutenant Zachary Hicks, Cook's second in command, sighted land. This was the east coast of New Holland, first named Point Hicks and now Cape Everard, on the east coast of Victoria...

'Sailing northwards along the coast, Cook found the first safe harbour to drop anchor on 29 April 1770. In addition to observing the land, Cook was searching for fresh water to sustain the crew on its voyage.

## STAGE 3 HSIE and STAGES 3–4 HISTORY

'Approaching the shore by longboat, the crew noted the presence of a 'small village consisting of about six or eight houses' on what is now known as Kurnell Peninsula. With no means of understanding each other's language, confusion marked the initial contact between the landing party and the local people.

"I thought that they beckoned us to come ashore, but in this we were mistaken, for as soon as we put the boat in they again came to oppose us I fired a musket between the two which had no effect one of them took up a stone and threw at us."

Cook's journal, 29 April 1770

'Cook's party explored the area over the next eight days, gathering food, collecting scientific samples and observing this new land. Despite several encounters, Cook was not able to establish effective communication with the local people, who maintained a wary distance. The crew noted local activities such as camping, fishing, using trees for bark and food, collecting shells and cooking fish.

'The Europeans were not the only ones recording first impressions. Captain Cook stories exist in parts of Aboriginal Australia the explorer never visited. In some Aboriginal stories, Kurnell Peninsula is called "The Foot", the place where Cook's foot first connected with Australian land.'

<http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/national/kurnell>

You may be able to get someone from your local Land Council or Aboriginal Education Consultative Group to visit the school to talk about the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal people.

### APPLY

After students have discussed the artwork, they prepare two texts describing the first contact between Captain James Cook and the Aboriginal people.

The first text is to be an account from an Aboriginal person's point of view being on the beach at the arrival of Cook and the *Endeavour*. This can take the form of a story to be told verbally to others or a visual storyboard with text. It should describe the event and how the narrator felt about it and what effect it had on others.

The second is to be an account from the point of view of a crew member of the *Endeavour*. This could take the form of a letter home, journal entry or a visual storyboard with text. It should describe the event and how the person felt about it and what affect it had on others.

### EVALUATE

In a talking circle, students discuss their texts. How different were the texts? Did the exercise give them better insight into the Aboriginal history of this country? Did it change their point of view about first contact? Perhaps the exercise could evolve into a scripted conversation between an Aboriginal person of the time and a crew member of the *Endeavour*. What would they say to each other today?

## STAGE 3 HSIE and STAGES 3–4 HISTORY

### ACTIVITY: THE FIRST PEOPLES AND WAR

#### LEARNING

This activity is about comparing the Aboriginal role in the Australian frontier wars with their experience of World War 1. First, discuss with students the content of the catalogue essay by John Maynard reproduced in the front of this resource. It outlines some of the history of Aboriginal involvement in conflicts including the world wars. Also look at the *Australian Geographic* article, 'Indigenous servicemen: their contribution', by Elliot Brennan published 19 May 2011.

<http://www.australiangeographic.com.au/topics/history-culture/2011/05/indigenous-servicemen-their-contribution/>

In addition, discuss the information about Pemulwuy and his role in the first contact conflicts between British settlers and Aboriginal people in the following links: <http://www.deadlyvibe.com.au/2007/11/pemulwuy-the-rainbow-warrior/>  
[http://www.myplace.edu.au/decades\\_timeline/1800/decade\\_landing\\_20.html?tabRank=2&subTabRank=2](http://www.myplace.edu.au/decades_timeline/1800/decade_landing_20.html?tabRank=2&subTabRank=2)

For this activity also discuss the World War 1 Gallipoli campaign and the roles that Australian soldiers and British Command played.

From *(in)visible*, have students look at **Yindyamarra Roll** by **Amala Groom**.

'The purpose of an Honour Roll,' says the artist in the exhibition catalogue, 'is to "commemorate the sacrifice of those who have died in war". The Australian War Memorial states its mission is to "assist Australians to remember, interpret and understand the Australian experience of war and its enduring impact on Australian society".'

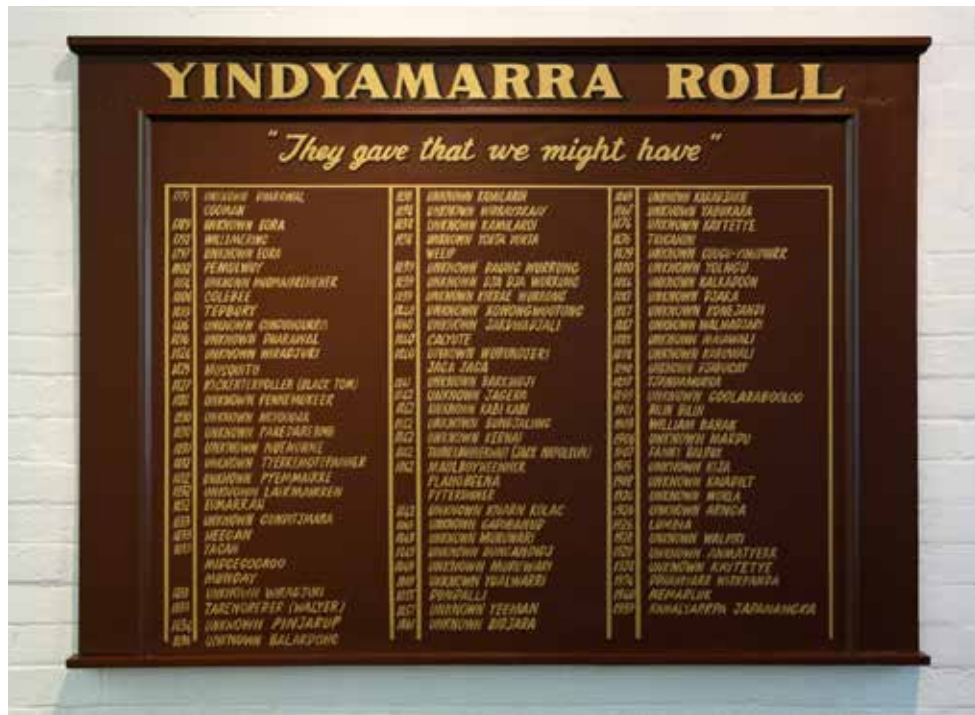
She goes on to say that to 'maintain the fiction that Australia was settled "peacefully" the wars fought on the frontier will never be honoured. These brave warriors who fought for kin and Country will never hold their rightful place in the narrative of the colonial project known as Australia. Their loss of life will never be given the same respect as the loss of the life of the Anzacs, the diggers, the great Aussies who fought under the Australian flag. The thousands of men, women and children who were devastated from the countless massacres and atrocities committed against them will never be dignified by the state.'

In this artwork the artist uses an old timber constructed honour roll format, often found in RSLs, schools etc, to memorialise the known and unknown heroes of the resistance movement. As the artist says 'the *Yindyamarra Roll* is a symbolic tribute to those who fought the onslaught of the colonial invasion of their tribal lands. These warriors gave their lives that we might have a language, a lore, a clan, a nation and a family. Sadly, this list of names and language groups is incomplete.'

As a part of the discussion with students, contact your local Land Council or Aboriginal Education Consultative Group to see if you can access an Aboriginal person to visit the school to talk to the students. There may be an Aboriginal war veteran or current military service personnel in your local community. Hearing stories from a primary source will be an invaluable resource for the students.

## STAGE 3 HSIE and STAGES 3–4 HISTORY

Amala Groom  
*Yindyamarra Roll* 2014  
 acrylic paint on wood  
 125 x 172cm  
 courtesy the artist  
 Photo Liz Warning  
 © the artist



### APPLY

Students are to work in pairs to devise a conversation between an Aboriginal digger in the trenches of Gallipoli during World War 1 and Pemulwuy, the Aboriginal warrior. What would the men say to one another? How different or similar would their experiences and emotions be? Ask students to discuss how they think each soldier/warrior would feel about their country, their families, who they are fighting and why and what odds they are fighting against. This can take the form of a written script, sound recording, acted role-play or graphic short story; one option is to use the zine format in the gallery's *a very fine river* education kit:

<http://artgallery.lakemac.com.au/page.aspx?pid=955&vid=17&fid=466&ftype=True>

### EVALUATE

Students may read/perform their conversations to the class. As a group, discuss what the students have learned about Aboriginal people and war? What similarities and differences can they see between the two characters' experiences even though separated by time. Think about issues of love of country, family ties, friendship, working together for a common cause, fighting conditions, odds stacked against the each soldier/warrior.



# STAGES 3 & 4 ENGLISH

## ENGLISH: GENERAL RATIONALE

(Excerpt from English K-10 Syllabus NSW for Australia Curriculum)

Language shapes our understanding of ourselves and our world. It is the primary means by which we relate to others and is central to the intellectual, social and emotional development of all students. In the years of schooling from Kindergarten to Year 10, English is the study and use of the English language in its various textual forms. These encompass spoken, written and visual texts of varying complexity through which meaning is shaped, conveyed, interpreted and reflected...

They engage with and explore texts that include widely acknowledged quality literature of past and contemporary societies and engage with the literature and literary heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. By composing and responding with imagination, feeling, logic and conviction, students develop understanding of themselves and of human experience and culture. They develop clear and precise skills in speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and representing, and knowledge and understanding of language forms and features and structures of texts...

## ENGLISH: SYLLABUS LINKS

- A. Communicate through speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and representing.**
- EN3-3A Uses an increasing range of skills, strategies and knowledge to read, view and comprehend a wide range of texts in different media and technologies.
- EN4-2A Effectively uses a widening range of processes, skills, strategies and knowledge for responding to and composing texts in different media.
- B. Uses language to shape and make meaning according to purpose, audience and context**
- EN3-5B Discusses how language is used to achieve a widening range of purposes for a widening range of audiences and contexts.
- EN4-3B Uses and describes language forms, features and structures of texts appropriate to a range of purposes, audiences and contexts.
- C. Think in ways that are imaginative, creative, interpretative and critical**
- EN3-7C Thinks imaginatively, creatively, interpretively and critically about information and ideas and identifies connections between texts when responding to and composing texts.
- EN4-5C Thinks imaginatively, creatively, interpretively and critically about information, ideas and arguments to respond to and compose texts.
- D. Express themselves and their relationships with others and their worlds**
- EN3-8D Identifies and considers how different viewpoints of their world, including aspects of culture, are represented in texts.
- EN4-4D Demonstrates understanding of how texts can express aspects of their broadening world and their relationships within it.

### ACTIVITY: SALT IN THE WOUND

#### LEARNING

Discuss the work *salt in the wound* by **Judy Watson**. This is an ideal artwork to view as a visual text because of its narrative and symbolic nature. This installation artwork could almost be a set for a play or film. What are the students seeing and feeling, and what they think the artist is trying to say? Some other questions you might ask include:

- Who created the artwork?
- For what purpose was the artwork created?
- In what context is the artwork being seen?
- Who is the intended audience of the artwork?
- What has been omitted, altered or included in the artwork?
- What does the artwork say about our history?
- What does the artwork communicate about our individual or national identity?
- What does the artwork say about society?
- What does the artwork say about an event?
- What aspects of culture is the artwork communicating?

Talk to your local Land Council or Aboriginal Education Consultative Group to see if an Aboriginal person can visit the school to talk to the students about the frontier wars and massacres. You could also discuss the artwork in tandem with sections of texts such as <http://www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2009/november/1330478364/tony-roberts/brutal-truth>

*salt in the wound* focuses on a transformative moment in Watson's family history and is complex and haunting in its recreation of events. A suspended windbreak of brush evokes the shield that once protected Watson's great great grandmother, Rosie, during a horrifying massacre by troopers at Lawn Hill in North-West Queensland in the mid-1880s. In order to escape native police trackers, she weighed herself down underwater with rocks while breathing through a makeshift grass-reed snorkel. Rosie was one of only two known survivors of the massacre – both were around 12 or 13 years old at the time.

As in many of Judy Watson's works, the materials are symbolic and metaphoric. The red ochre on the floor represents the bayonet wound Rosie sustained during the escape. The salt in this wound is a veiled reference to the many trials Rosie's descendants have continued to face throughout Australian history, yet the installation is a monument to the great spirit in which each generation of Watson's family has continued to live. Watson has said, 'when you walk in that Country the earth is beating pulsating heat, blood, heart ... things are hidden like the bones of the people who have been there before'.

In the installation, the wax ears nailed to the wall are a chilling reminder of the crimes perpetrated against Aboriginal people since the invasion. They represent

## STAGES 3 & 4 ENGLISH

a gruesome shrine, not only to the memory of this Lawn Hill event, but also to the memory of all Aboriginal people mutilated by troopers and pastoralists as a cruel and gratuitous punishment.

For more information reference the exhibition catalogue *(in)visible: the First Peoples and War* and [http://www.qagoma.qld.gov.au/exhibitions/past/2012/contemporary\\_australia\\_women/artists/judy\\_watson](http://www.qagoma.qld.gov.au/exhibitions/past/2012/contemporary_australia_women/artists/judy_watson)



Judy Watson  
*salt in the wound* 2008–09,  
ochre, salt, brush, wax, wire,  
nails, string, installation  
dimensions variable, courtesy  
the artist and Milani Gallery,  
Brisbane. Installation view  
from *(in)visible: the First Peoples  
and War* © the artist.

### APPLY 1

This installation artwork is suggesting an event rather than being literal. It could almost be a set for a play or film. Students break into groups and workshop a storyboard for a short film about what happened to Rosie and her people. This should be written from the Aboriginal point of view. Consider how the tribe would feel and what would they be thinking, why did it happen, what did it feel like to escape and hide?

## STAGES 3 & 4 ENGLISH

The storyboard is a tool to allow the filmmaker to map out the key actions in a scene. In the groups students discuss plot, key actions, characters, what do they want the viewer to think/feel when watching the film and how they will achieve it – sound, camera angles, any key dialogue, colours, lighting, music. They may like to delegate tasks within the group eg sketchers, annotators, director.

Students illustrate and annotate their storyboard in a grid format (as below). Add as many new units as needed but keep to about 10 maximum.

Film Title			
Sequence number	Sequence number	Sequence number	Sequence number
Image/sketch	Image/sketch	Image/sketch	Image/sketch
Notes on angle/ lighting/music / sound/action etc.	Notes on angle/ lighting/music / sound/action etc.	Notes on angle/ lighting/music / sound/action etc.	Notes on angle/ lighting/music / sound/action etc.

### APPLY 2

Students write two short newspaper articles based on the story of Rosie.

Although newspaper articles are meant to be objective and factual, they are often persuasive or written from a particular point of view. The first article is to be written from the Aboriginal point of view. The second article should be written from the British settlers' point of view.

Students should try to be factual in both accounts but consider how each 'side' would have seen the event/massacre. What are the important points about what happened, what should people know about and how should they feel about the event? How can the language in the article cause people to think in a certain way.

### EVALUATION

Did students know about the frontier wars and massacres. By putting themselves in the place of the Aboriginal people, do they now consider Aboriginal history in a different light? Can the students relate to this story of a young girl? Did they find it difficult to write? Can they understand the difference between how non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people would have viewed the event?

## STAGE 3 CREATIVE ARTS

### CREATIVE ARTS: GENERAL RATIONALE

(Excerpt from Creative Arts K-6 NSW Board of Studies 2012)

The artforms of visual arts, music, drama and dance can be thought about in a variety of ways. They play a significant role in how meaning is made in people's lives. Visual arts, music, drama and dance offer students and people of all ages opportunities for personal expression, enjoyment, creative action, imagination, emotional response, aesthetic pleasure and the creation of shared meanings...

Through the arts, the diverse and pluralistic values of Australian cultures, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, reflect the interests and aspirations of groups, and their identities...

**Perspectives** ...teachers should take into account issues related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Teachers should note that experiences in the arts of Aboriginal peoples contribute to students' understanding of Australian society and to the reconciliation of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Contemporary practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the arts reflect ongoing traditions. It is recommended that from Early Stage 1 to Stage 3 all students should experience the work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Teachers need to remember that they are facilitators in the passing on of traditional knowledge and that Elders are the keepers of this traditional knowledge, art and culture. Aboriginal families and communities should be involved in contributing to this important perspective of the curriculum.

### CREATIVE ARTS: SYLLABUS LINKS

- VAS3.2 Makes artworks for different audiences assembling materials in a variety of ways.
- VAS3.3 Acknowledges that audiences respond in different ways to artworks and that there are different opinions about the value of artworks.
- VAS3.4 Communicates about the ways in which subject matter is represented in artworks.

## STAGE 3 CREATIVE ARTS

### ACTIVITY: RESPONSIVE PORTRAITS

#### LEARNING

Discuss **Tony Albert's** photographic portraits ***Brothers (Our Past, Our Present, Our Future)***. Look at visual literacy elements such as what the students are seeing and feeling, and what they think the artist is saying in these artworks. See how many interpretations the students can come up with through discussion.

Look at the gaze of these young men. Who are they looking at? Are we the audience – are they trying to tell us something? It is a strong message? Look at the background and how they sit against it. Do they stand out?

This artwork is a response to events that took place in Sydney 2012. Students could investigate the story of how a group of young teenage Aboriginal boys taking a 'joyride' were shot by police. A series of protests followed the incident during which friends of the injured boys rallied with targets painted on their bare chests. They were protesting against police violence and brutality towards Aboriginal boys and men. This could lead to discussion about racism and bullying.



## STAGE 3 CREATIVE ARTS

Tony Albert  
*Brother (Our Past)* 2013  
pigment print on paper  
150 x 100cm  
Corrigan Collection.  
© the artist

Tony Albert  
*Brother (Our Present)* 2013  
pigment print on paper  
150 x 100cm  
Corrigan Collection.  
© the artist

Tony Albert  
*Brother (Our Future)* 2013  
pigment print on paper  
150 x 100cm  
Corrigan Collection.  
© the artist

The artist is a descendant of the Girramay/Yidinji/Kuku-Yalanji peoples. Through this artwork he is reminding us that Aboriginal people can still be walking targets. They are targets for bullies, racists and even police brutality, but because the teenage boys in these photographs stand proud, challenging the viewer to take aim at the red targets painted on their chests, they are also about being positive in the face of hardship and suffering.

You could also use this discussion to talk about general bullying issues and the school policies in place to combat it.

These photographs are from a series of 20 portraits. Many artists use multiples of their work or series to emphasise a point. In this case, each boy represents all Aboriginal males – all defiant and proud.

### APPLY

Students respond to Tony Albert's artworks with a self-portrait with text and images reflecting on the issues posed by the artworks.

Students take a head and shoulders 'selfie' using a phone or school camera. Each student's gaze should be straight into the camera. They may decide to take portraits of each other instead. The teacher prints the portraits as A4 or A3 black and white images.

Facial features can be reinforced with paint and/or ink and/or coloured pencils. The background can be manipulated with paint, ink, and image/text collage from magazines and the internet, to reinforce the student ideas of bullying, prejudice and Aboriginal people. What is the key message they want to get across to the viewer? Use symbols, text, colours, line, textures to reinforce feelings and messages.

The finished artworks can be displayed as a grid on the classroom wall. This should reinforce the overall message from the class.

### EVALUATE

As a group students discuss the installation and individual artworks. How similar/different are the portraits and messages? Are the overarching messages coming through within the group? Is the overall message stronger when the artworks are displayed as a series of artworks?

## STAGE 3 CREATIVE ARTS

### ACTIVITY: MEMORIALS AND TRIBUTES

#### LEARNING

Instigated by **Tony Albert**, the concept for the bullet-shaped sculptures is based on the standard cartridge used by British and Commonwealth military forces. Leading contemporary Aboriginal artists were invited to work on the surfaces of the **Babana Bullets**. The bullets were then auctioned to raise funds for the Babana Men's Group that works to improve the conditions for Aboriginal communities across Sydney.



The bullet as symbol is very strong in Tony Albert's work. This year he has been working on *YININMADYEMI: thou did'st let fall*, the Aboriginal war memorial unveiled in Sydney's Hyde Park to coincide with the Anzac centenary. It recognises the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island diggers who risked their lives on the battlefield although they were not classed as citizens, were denied the vote and could not access the same benefits as returning white soldiers.



## STAGE 3 CREATIVE ARTS

Again, the artist has chosen to make artwork as multiples the emphasis a point – the *Babana Bullets* may represent all of the Aboriginal men and women who have died in conflicts from all over the country and from so many so different Aboriginal cultures. The artist has also chosen to use multiple bullets in the war memorial, some standing and some fallen.

The discussion can extend to different reasons artists make artwork eg commission, exhibition, cultural meaning, social meaning, and for an audience. Also discuss memorials and why they are made, what forms can they take and how they are viewed by the community. Do they make you think more about what is being memorialised?

### APPLY

The aim of this activity is for students to research the local traditional owners (particularly before British colonisation) and their culture/history and make a group artwork as a tribute or memorial to those peoples and their cultures. It is important that, if possible, an Aboriginal Elder or Aboriginal Education Officer is consulted through this process. Your local Land Council or parents of Aboriginal students will be a good place to start. It would even be better if an Aboriginal artist could be invited to the school.

After research the group can come together to discuss their findings and decide on the form for the memorial that will best reflect the sentiment and stories. Multiples of one form could be used or a selection of different forms. Check with local Aboriginal Elders for the appropriateness of the form especially if an Aboriginal cultural object is to be used.

The chosen forms can then be made or bought. It may be as simple as cardboard or PVC tubes, recycled plates, air-dried clay shapes like coolamons/shields, shells from middens, papier mache forms, found objects. The form will depend on imagination, cultural appropriateness, skills/support and funds available.

Each student should decorate one form either by painting, drawing, collage, or with text. The artwork should reflect the traditional culture and respect usually associated with a memorial or tribute. The collaborative artwork can be assembled either in the classroom or in the grounds of the school. The students can present the artwork to the rest of the school and explain its significance as a memorial to the country's significant heritage.

### EVALUATE

Students can design an event to launch the artwork/s. They can then ask other students what they think of the artworks and what they think they mean. Are all the answers the same? Do different audiences see the artwork differently? Do other students in the school understand the importance of paying tribute the local Aboriginal heritage?

In class discuss how each artwork differs from the others even though it is in the same form.

Vernon Ah Kee  
*other peoples war* 2014  
marker, acrylic paint on pine  
78 x 13.5cm (irregular)

Megan Cope  
*Babana* 2014  
military map, acrylic paint,  
metallic paint, 23 carat gold  
on pine  
78 x 13.5cm (irregular)

Jennifer Herd  
*Shield Me* 2014  
acrylic paint, mother of pearl  
buttons on pine  
78 x 13.5cm (irregular)

Alair Pambegan  
*Flying Fox Story Place* 2014  
acrylic paint, ochre on pine  
78 x 13.5cm (irregular)

Judy Watson  
*Network* 2014  
acrylic paint on pine  
78 x 13.5cm (irregular)  
Biles Fernando Collection  
© the artists

# STAGE 5 VISUAL ARTS

## **VISUAL ARTS: GENERAL RATIONALE**

(Excerpt Visual Arts Years 7–10 Syllabus, NSW Board of Studies 2003)

Visual Arts has a significant role within the curriculum through providing learning opportunities designed to encourage students to understand the visual arts, including the different kinds of creative works they, and others, make.

Visual Arts places great value on the development of students' intellectual and practical autonomy, reflective action, critical judgement and understanding of art in artmaking and in critical and historical studies of art. Visual Arts plays an important role in the social, cultural and spiritual lives of students. It offers a wide range of opportunities for students to develop their own interests, to be self-motivated and active learners who can take responsibility for and continue their own learning in school and post-school settings.

The syllabus identifies the structural, subjective, postmodern and cultural frames as a basis for understanding the visual arts. Each frame represents a different assumption about the visual arts and provides the grounds for addressing questions related to artistic meaning and value. The frames offer a basis for practical choice and alternative grounds for investigating ideas in art. Each frame provides alternative ways to examine and explore the world as content and its artistic and aesthetic representation. The frames are not intended to be exhaustive nor final but are redefined and unfold over time...

## **VISUAL ARTS: SYLLABUS LINKS**

### **Artmaking**

Practice: 5.1 Develops range and autonomy in selecting and applying visual arts conventions and procedures to make artworks

Conceptual framework: 5.2 Makes artworks informed by their understanding of the function of and relationships between artist – artwork – world – audience

Frames: 5.3 Makes artworks informed by an understanding of how the frames affect meaning

Representation: 5.4 Investigates the world as a source of ideas, concepts and subject matter in the visual arts

Conceptual strength and meaning: 5.5 Makes informed choices to develop and extend concepts and different meanings in their artworks

Resolution: 5.6 Demonstrates developing technical accomplishment and refinement in making artworks

### **Critical and Historical Studies**

Practice: 5.7 Applies their understanding of aspects of practice to critical and historical interpretations of art

Representation: 5.10 Demonstrates how art criticism and art history construct meanings

## STAGE 5 VISUAL ARTS

### LEARNING

*Unable to vote but eligible to die*

Richard Wynne (Victorian State Minister for Aboriginal Affairs 2007-2010)

It is estimated that 1300 Aboriginal diggers served in World War 1 (see John Maynard's essay), fighting for a country that did not recognise them as citizens. Around the time of World War 1, Aboriginal people were making significant contributions to the new colony of Australia, yet because of their race they were not allowed to vote, buy land, marry non-Aboriginal partners or even enter a public bar!

Up until recently there were only five known Aboriginal soldiers buried at Gallipoli; an effort has been made to create a roll honouring Aboriginal military service personnel. The issue still remains that many of these names may not be accurate, whether it be too common a surname to identify or if indeed the Aboriginal men changed their names in order to hide their Aboriginality, so that they might be accepted into the armed forces. The fact remains that this was not the first war Aboriginal people fought; it was not the first time life was lost as a result of battle.

The work ***Yindyamarra Roll*** by **Amala Groom** acknowledges the devastating loss of life that occurred during settlement, and the displacement of these realities from the narrative of Australia. Groom uses Western symbology to memorialise the known and unknown heroes; the warriors who fought so that Aboriginal people 'might have a language, a lore, a clan, a nation and a family'. *Yindyamarra Roll* brings the true history of this country's colonisation to the forefront, highlighting not only the loss of life but also of cultural identity.

In the work ***salt in the wound*** **Judy Watson** uses installation and performance to tell the story of her great great grandmother, Rosie, during a horrifying massacre of Aboriginal people in the mid-1880s. By sharing the story of her grandmother, Watson's work serves as a chilling reminder of the crimes perpetrated against Aboriginal people, while giving the viewer the opportunity to stand in Rosie's shoes and experience feelings of terror and tragedy.

During the opening of *(in)visible: the First Peoples and War*, artist **Anna Liebzeit** performed an artwork entitled **Fluid**, using 'live mixing, recorded musical elements and vocalisation'. Leading up to the performance and following, it became apparent that Liebzeit had immersed herself in this piece – that it had become a truly personal, emotive experience. The performance itself was incredibly raw and powerful, familiar yet foreign sounds of anguish and loss were projected to an unsuspecting audience, forced to confront their own vulnerabilities.

In the catalogue the artist explains that by using the performance elements she references 'Australia's Frontier Wars by alluding to texts that form an aural poetic departure point into the deeper (collective) keening song of mourning and loss'.

After the performance the artist has elected to exhibit 'a vessel of water from Lake Macquarie' that had 'witnessed' the performance event at the opening of *(in)visible* alongside a soundscape and video projection of Lake Macquarie taken by

## STAGE 5 VISUAL ARTS

Aboriginal filmmaker, Ray Kelly. In effect, the performance continues and develops into a new work where the audience projects their own thoughts, feelings and experiences into the water. The water was collected by members of the Aboriginal Reference Group, the co-curator, Yhonnie Scarce, and the artist Anna Liebrecht.

### RESEARCH

Students should research a number of personal accounts of Aboriginal peoples in war. These accounts should range from soldiers and their experiences on the battlefield, to the experiences of their families at home. Students should be encouraged to do their own research, and find a story that resonates with them.

#### EXAMPLE: **5709 Cpl Albert Knight DCM**

Corporal Albert Knight 'handled his Lewis Gun section with great skill and worked forward to a suitable position and handed over to No. 1. and proceeded with another N.C.O. to push forward and reconnoiter the enemy position. This necessitated moving over country which afforded no cover other than shell holes, for a distance of 300 yards. This was carried out in broad daylight and in full view of enemy lines and under heavy machine gun trench mortar and artillery fire. In spite of difficulties he succeeded in reaching a position which he located several machine guns and trench mortars which were at times playing on our position. He then returned to our lines with the valuable information which he had obtained and artillery assistance was brought to bear with success on the positions indicated.'

*London Gazette* No 31819; 11th March 1920, p31

*Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* No 31; 11th June 1920

[www.kurbingui.org.au](http://www.kurbingui.org.au)

Additionally, students are to research the practices of performance artists such as; STELLARC, Marina Abramovic, Joseph Beuys etc. Students look at performances and develop an understanding of how the effect of an artwork is not limited to the physical performance. Some artists convey the meaning of their work through physical interaction with an audience, while others also chose to leave an 'echo' in the gallery space. This can add to the performance or allow for it to be transformed into a new artwork.

## STAGE 5 VISUAL ARTS



Anna Liebrezeit  
from Incubator Residency  
(projects: 1&2 occupying  
space, singing water,  
Gadigal Country) 2012

### ACTIVITY: IN THEIR SHOES

#### APPLY

Taking inspiration from the way Amala Groom and Judy Watson have used narratives to personally affect the viewer, students research the experiences of individual Aboriginal people in war and use a variety of artmaking techniques to plan/create works that force the viewer to have a personal connection and awareness. Activity can be completed individually or in a group.

#### The Group Circle – Sharing Circle

Ask students to sit comfortably, and spend the time respectfully recounting the story of their chosen subject. This can be done inside or outside, but it is vital that students are reminded to maintain sincerity and maturity, remembering that they are discussing the hardships of a real person. Teachers may choose to only use one example and read it with the class.

#### Thoughts and Ideas Brainstorm

Students are to create a storybook, based on the account they have chosen. Students extract information from their chosen text, and use this to complete the Thoughts and Ideas Brainstorm Worksheet (see page 31). They are required to deconstruct the story, and identify the basics of the story including:

- Who are the characters?
- Where is it set?
- What happens?
- What inspires them?

They can use a computer with internet access, visual diary, storyboard template (page 20), pens/pencils, glue, butcher's paper and other materials depending on the direction of the activity performance and display space.

## STAGE 5 VISUAL ARTS

### Further development of artwork

Students refer to their research on performance artists and attempt to answer the following questions: what is a performance artwork? How do artists document their works and what are the 'echoes' they choose to leave in a gallery? Do these echoes convey the same meaning/affect the viewer in the same way?

Students then use this knowledge to inform their own artmaking practice, and discern what 'echoes' or artefacts they might leave in the gallery.

Students then revisit their storyboards as a basis for their artmaking.



### Artwork: Performance

Considering the artists in the exhibition, there should be a class discussion as to why performance is an effective way to engage the audience in a visceral way.

For example:

- A performance that effectively portrays how the subject (of their story book) may have felt during their time at war
- Using prior knowledge of the First Peoples and war, create a performance that demonstrates the experiences of the chosen subject after conflict

Anna Liebrezeit *fluid*  
(installation view) 2015  
from the performance at  
Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery  
29 March 2015  
duration approx. 12 mins.

Ray Kelly  
Lake Macquarie projection  
© the artists

### EXHIBITION AND EVALUATION

Students select chosen artefacts/remnants from their performance to further develop what will be left of their performance in a gallery context. Students need to consider that the exhibition of these 'echoes' may cause the viewer to experience the work differently than they would if they had seen the performance.

As a group students evaluate the work of their peers, and discuss how/if the exhibited echoes of their performances further develops meaning.

**STAGE 5 VISUAL ARTS**

**WORKSHEET: THOUGHTS AND IDEAS BRAINSTORM**

**Make a list of ideas of what your storybook could be about. Brainstorm ideas from stories about you or the things around you. Remember your ideas can be made up of pictures, words and sentences. It doesn't have to be a finished story.**

1. Begin with your list of words – jot down whatever words come to you. This is called brainstorming. You might think of more ideas as you write.

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2. From the word list above, decide on a theme for your story (some suggestions might be: about me, my family, native plants, native animals, my favourite place, etc).

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3. Explore these ideas and the characters in your story. Based on your brainstorming and your theme, explore what you would like to write a story about.

- Who are the characters in your story? What are your feelings about the characters?
- Think about where the story is set.
- What happens in the story? What inspires you?

Some ideas for your story could include:

- News
- How you feel about your favourite things eg an activity or place
- What you did on the weekend or on holidays eg 'I went to...'
- Your family and friends eg 'In my family...'

<b>Who are the characters?</b>	<b>Where is it set?</b>	<b>What happens? What inspires you?</b>
eg my sister Nikki and I	eg camping at the holiday park	eg Nikki finds a gumnut leaf

4. Finished? Let's share:
  - Tell the class why you chose your idea. Why it is important to you?
  - Think about what everyone had to talk about.
  - What was different about some stories and what was similar?

# STAGE 6 VISUAL ARTS

## VISUAL ARTS: GENERAL RATIONALE

(Excerpt Visual Arts Stage 6 Syllabus, NSW Board of Studies 2013)

Visual Arts as a subject provides for various interpretations of the visual arts that are both contemporary and relevant. Acknowledging that visual arts encompasses the areas of art, craft and design, the subject is theoretically and practically sustained by practice, the frames, and a conceptual framework about art. These underpinnings form the basis for content and accommodate different student interests and abilities.

Fostering interest and enjoyment in the doing, production and consumption of art, the subject seeks to build informed citizens and discerning audiences for art and to raise the standard of cultural awareness in Australia. Visual Arts acknowledges the need to respect cultural diversity within Australia and in other regions and cultures...

Visual Arts places a high regard on how students develop an informed point of view and encourages tolerance, diversity and empathy between students, teachers and others in the expression of different points of view. Visual Arts recognises the contribution that different kinds of knowing make to understanding. It provides for the acquisition of both practical knowledge and propositional knowledge, and it acknowledges the different sets of beliefs and values that condition understanding and practice...

## VISUAL ARTS: SYLLABUS LINKS

### Critical and Historical Studies

Practice: H7 Applies their understanding of practice in art criticism and art history

Conceptual Framework: H8 Applies their understanding of the relationships among the artist, artwork, world and audience

Frames: H9 Demonstrates an understanding of how the frames provide for different orientations to critical and historical investigations of art

Representation: H10 Constructs a body of significant art histories, critical narratives and other documentary accounts of representation in the visual arts

## LEARNING

The following are questions that follow the format for the HSC Visual Arts Examination – question 1, 2 and 3 on The Frames, The Conceptual Framework, and Practice. The questions are posed and suggested responses furnished.

Discuss the artworks and suggested responses. Students may want to add to these after discussion and research. Also discuss with the students what makes a make successful response. 'Higher level responses address all aspects of the question and use the source material provided as evidence to support arguments or conclusions. Lower level responses tend to describe the images rather than address the question.'

[http://hsc.csu.edu.au/visual\\_arts/requirements/assessment/3355/unpackaging.htm](http://hsc.csu.edu.au/visual_arts/requirements/assessment/3355/unpackaging.htm)



## STAGE 6 VISUAL ARTS

### ACTIVITY: PART ONE

#### ART HISTORY AND ART CRITICISM EXAMINATION PAPER

##### APPLY

After discussion of the presented plates and suggested answers below, have students complete the following sample of Part One of the Art History and Art Criticism Paper within examination conditions and within 45 minutes. Either have them choose which version of Question 3 they want to answer or extend the exam time to accommodate both. Discuss with students the assessment priorities, such as:

- writing in a concise and well reasoned way
- presenting an informed point of view
- using the plates and any other source material provided to inform your response



**Plate 1: Julie Gough,**  
born 1965 Melbourne, Victoria  
Trawlwoolway people  
lives in Hobart, Tasmania  
(In) *Case of Emergency* 2011  
tea tree, copper, Melton  
Mowbray dyed wool,  
kangaroo skins  
256 x 244 x 10cm  
courtesy the artist  
and Bett Gallery, Hobart  
© the artist

## STAGE 6 VISUAL ARTS

### Question 1

(8 minutes and 5 marks)

How does Julie Gogh communicate ideas about memory and experience in Plate 1?

#### POINTS FOR SUBJECTIVE FRAME RESPONSE:

- concerned with individual feeling, emotion, imagination and experience.
- artists as emotionally compelled individuals whose intentions are shaped by their imagination.
- artworks as emotional outpourings and highly evocative reminders of personal memories and experiences, the subconscious and fantasy.
- audiences as viewers who interpret the meaning and value of art in relation to personal associations exploring the unconscious, intuition and imagination as a source of ideas to see how human experiences are recreated and shared between artists and audiences.
- viewing the visual arts aesthetically as an immediate expression of sensory, imaginative, expressive, felt and perceived experience.

This artwork is by an Aboriginal artist, and her heritage frames references to a subjective response, including memory, her experience and the collective experience of Aboriginal people. Also the title (*In*) *Case of Emergency* is a clue. What emergency/s is the artist referencing?

The structure and materials of the artwork suggest a duality between the idea of protection and danger. The choice of the kangaroo skins makes significant connection with the artist's Aboriginality. Kangaroos are a totem for some groups and the skins are used for cloaks and as shelter. The animal is also used as food. It is a direct link to the land and survival and past and present – some in a state of emergency. The skins also have a sensory quality – touching the skins can evoke memories.

The way in which the skins are stretched, in an almost a circular shape, is reminiscent of a shield or safety net (like trampolines used by firefighters in rescues). The bright red centre could represent the inherent power of Aboriginal people, their heart and their lifeblood. On the other hand, it is also evocative of violence and the blood shed by Aboriginal people since first contact – the death and the sacrifice of Aboriginal people then, and as ongoing targets.

There is a lot to explore in this artwork in terms of memory and experience, particularly with reference to the history and culture of Aboriginal people and how irrevocable changes occurred with the coming of the First Fleet.

## STAGE 6 VISUAL ARTS

### Question 2

(16 minutes and 8 marks)

Using the cultural frame describe some of the qualities of the artworks in plates 2 and 3 that tell us about Australian identity.



**Plate 2: Tony Albert**  
born 1981 Townsville, QLD  
Girramay/Yidinji/Kuku-Yalanji  
peoples  
lives in Sydney, NSW  
*Brother (Our Future)* 2013  
pigment print on paper  
150 x 100cm each  
Corrigan Collection  
© the artist



**Plate 3: Amala Groom**  
born 1979 Casino, NSW  
Wiradjuri people  
lives in Sydney NSW  
*Yindyamarra Roll* 2014  
acrylic paint on wood  
125 x 170cm  
courtesy the artist  
(Photo: Liz Warning)  
© the artist

## STAGE 6 VISUAL ARTS

### SUGGESTED POINTS FOR A CULTURAL RESPONSE:

- world structures and formations of societies and communities governed by economic and political agencies.
- the understanding of self and identity through various social constructs, artists as social agents who are influenced by and contribute to social, economic and political conditions.
- artworks as reflections of social, community and cultural interests.
- audiences as art consumers, patrons, sponsors, collectors, historians and the public, valuing art by its social meaning.
- understanding the meaning of art in relation to the social perspective of the community out of which it grows. Ideological views and notions of cultural identity can be explored eg class, race, ethnicity, gender, technology, politics, religion, science, globalisation, the environment and economics.

The following website can give some background to the history of Aboriginal people in relation to Australia at war: <http://thecriticalclassroom.blogspot.com.au/2012/04/exploring-anzac-day-from-indigenous.html>

And in frontier wars: <https://www.awm.gov.au/journal/j38/connorreview.asp>

Both plate 2 and plate 3 are both very powerful works. Together they tell a story of the treatment of Aboriginal people since First Contact. Plate 1, Amala Groom's *Yindyamarra Roll*, at first glance seems like a formal honour roll for returned servicemen from world conflicts, but in fact, on closer inspection, the dates don't correspond to world conflicts but rather to the frontier conflicts between the invaded (Aboriginal people) and the invaders (the English settlers).

Not only are Aboriginal people underacknowledged as returned service people from world conflicts, but also the heroic role they played in protecting their country during the frontier conflicts is either little acknowledged or not accepted at all.

As Amala Groom states in the *(in)visible* exhibition catalogue, 'To maintain the fiction that Australia was settled "peacefully", the wars fought on the frontier will never be honoured. These brave warriors who fought for kin and country will never hold their rightful place in the narrative of the colonial project known as Australia'.

While plate 2 doesn't reference war as such, its message is equally hard-hitting. It is a metaphor for the ongoing conflicts and poor treatment Aboriginal people have experienced since colonial times. Aboriginal people, Tony Albert has said, are constantly wearing a target and with these artworks he builds on this idea, reinforcing the interconnectedness and solidarity of all Aboriginal people against ongoing stereotype and vilification. The triptych was made in response to an actual incident in Kings Cross in 2012 where Aboriginal boys were subjected to excessive force by police after an accident in their car. Racial tensions flared and friends of the injured boys rallied in protest with red targets painted on their bare chests. The boys represented in the artworks are young and fit men, their gaze is powerful.

Both works explore cultural identity through social and political conditions and look at Australian identity through the eyes of Aboriginal people, but by doing so also pose questions about identity for non-Aboriginal Australians.

## STAGE 6 VISUAL ARTS

### Question 3

(21 minutes and 12 marks)

Discuss how the artist's ideas have shaped his practice. Refer to plates 4, 5 and 6 and the text.



**Plate 4: Vernon Ah Kee**  
born 1967, Innistall,  
Queensland  
Kuku Yalandji, Yidindji,  
Gugu Yimithirr, Koko Berrin,  
Waanji peoples  
*other peoples war* 2014  
marker, acrylic paint on pine  
78 x 13.5 cm  
In the detail of this work  
you can see small figures  
fighting with weapons.



**Plate 5: Vernon Ah Kee**  
born 1967, Innistall,  
Queensland  
Kuku Yalandji, Yidindji,  
Gugu Yimithirr, Koko Berrin,  
Waanji peoples  
*Gaze (unwritten)* 2012  
lithograph on Arches paper  
produced in collaboration with  
master printmaker John Loane  
(Viridian Press)  
76 x 56cm  
Purchased 2014  
Collection Lake Macquarie  
City Art Gallery



your duty  
isto accept me  
my duty  
istotolerate you

*I think I've made about half-a-dozen political artworks, where the intention is to be political. Mostly my practice is built on work that is produced within the context of my being Aboriginal. It's made with the idea that my family reads my work, that they understand what it's about, and that they see themselves in it. That's the context that I make my art in. Other people get to make work about their lives and their family's history, and it's not political. It's just that when I make work about my family and articulate it clearly, and it demonstrates the polarities that exist in Australian society, it's construed as firstly oppositional, and then political.*

Vernon Ah Kee, interview of MONA, 2012

<http://monablog.net/2012/08/08/interview-with-vernon-ah-kee/>

**Plate 6: Vernon Ah Kee**

born 1967, Innisfail,  
Queensland  
Kuku Yalandji, Yidindji,  
Gugu Yimithirr, Koko Berrin,  
Waanji peoples

Above: *Cant Chant* (detail) 2009  
installation view at the 2009  
Venice Biennale comprising  
large vinyl text, surfboards  
printed with Yidindji shield  
designs, drawn portraits  
of the artist's family,  
3 video works

Below: (detail) text from  
*Cant Chant* 2009

In this response students are asked to examine the practice of the artist Vernon Ah Kee in the plates and text. The artist uses a variety of materials and methods to communicate his message. Responses should explore what this message is in each of the works.

## STAGE 6 VISUAL ARTS

### Question 3 (this is the second type of question) (21 minutes and 12 marks)

Artists use artworks to comment on issues of their world.

Examine plates 7 and 8 and the accompanying text in relation to this statement.



*'Australia was stolen from the Aboriginal people by lethal force.' Wing added that, 'the fate of Indigenous people had deteriorated since the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788. 'Racism and criminal behaviour by the Australian government is alive and well.'*

Taken from an interview with Jason Wing by the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2012

Left

**Plate 7: Jason Wing**

born 1977 Sydney, NSW

Biripi people

lives in Sydney, NSW

Left: *Captain James Cook* 2013

lithograph on paper

59.8 x 50cm

Purchased with assistance

from Lake Macquarie Art

Gallery Society, 2013

Collection Lake Macquarie

City Art Gallery

note: larger image on page 12

*Cook's image is central in Quilty's 2010 suite of works 'Inhabit', which examines the idea of 'us having inhabited a country for only 200 years, and ... our identity and my own identity'. He regards the 16 paintings and one sculpture that comprise 'Inhabit' as a self-portrait exploring his own role as a white Australian male in the history of this country. Quilty has reinvented the image of Cook in paintings using spray paint and the Rorschach technique, moving away from historical accounts and into his own personal experience and interpretation. He links the process to other areas of his conceptual practice: 'I guess it's about reinventing history, and young men do that all the time. They tattoo themselves with Ned Kelly or the Australian flag or both! It's about the idea of men, Australian males, making up these big parts of history to try to define themselves as Australians.*

From the Ben Quilty Education Resource Kit, Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery

<http://artgallery.lakemac.com.au/>

[downloads/O13CCD89806C41097EDA22E635874CC34B59D2CF.pdf](http://artgallery.lakemac.com.au/downloads/O13CCD89806C41097EDA22E635874CC34B59D2CF.pdf)

Right

**Plate 8: Ben Quilty**

born 1973, Sydney, Australia

lives Southern Highland, NSW

Right: *Cook Rorschach* 2009

oil on linen

140 x 190cm

© the artist

This is a conceptual framework question. Students should examine the role of the artist and how he engages with the audience. Both works portray Captain James Cook, but from different points of view. Students should, through the text, examine the differing points of view.

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