1. Lorraine Connelly-Northey
   Waradgerie people

2. Nici Cumpston
   Barkindji/Paakintji people

3. Alick Tipoti
   Kala Lagaw Ya people

4. Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori
   Kaiadilt people

5. Julie Gough
   Trawlwoolway people

6. Linsay Harris
   Noongar people

7. Lena Yarinkura
   Rembarrnga/Kune peoples

8. Daniel Walbidi
   Mangala/Yulparitja peoples

9. Gunybi Ganambarr
   Ngaymil people

10. Christian Thompson
    Bidjara people
Selected resources

Print

Lane, Carly & Franchesca Cubillo (eds), unDisclosed: 2nd National Indigenous Art Triennial, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2012.

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Country, culture, community: an education kit for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collection, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2009.


Caruana, Wally & Franchesca Cubillo (eds), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art: collection highlights, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2010.


Horton, David (ed), The encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, for the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, 1994.


Online


Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, aiatsis.gov.au.


Dr T Matthew Ciolek (ed), Aboriginal studies WWW virtual library: the Internet guide to Aboriginal studies, ciolek.com/wwwvl-aboriginal.html.

The Koori history website project, kooriweb.org.


Alick Tipoti
Kala Lagaw Ya people, born 1975 Wayben (Thursday Island), Torres Strait Islands, Queensland

*Koedal Baydham Adhaz Parw (Crocodile Shark) mask* 2010, fibreglass, synthetic polymer paint, cassowary feathers, feathers, raffia and seeds, 130 x 300 x 70 cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, purchased 2010

Alick Tipoti is an artist whose works are entrenched in Kala Lagaw Ya cultural traditions. He works in print, installation and sculpture using metal, wood and, more recently, fibreglass. He began experimenting with fibreglass several years ago and realised the potential in its malleability. This mask is made of fibreglass but is also deeply grounded in traditional practices and culture. It is inspired by his ancestors through his visions and dreams and by Torres Strait Islander masks he has studied in museums around the world.

Headdresses and masks, traditionally worn by men during ceremonies and cultural performances, have become identifiable symbols of Torres Strait Islander people and culture. Tipoti’s latest works, however, are larger than life, too big for any dancer to wear. They are both art and Zenadh Kes culture. Tipoti’s skill and ingenuity as an artist, and teacher, will ensure that his culture is recognised, appreciated and passed on.

---

1. Consider what makes traditional ritual objects different to sculpture. Is it an inherent property of the object itself or the attitude of the people who use, view or own it?
2. What is the importance of dance and performance to the culture of the Torres Strait Islands? How have traditionally available materials such as turtle shells influenced forms of artistic expression in the region?
3. Torres Strait Islander culture is quite distinct from many mainland Aboriginal cultures, partly due to their geographic location. Identify how the proximity of the Torres Strait Islands to Papua New Guinea and other Pacific nations has influenced the development of their art, and how this might differ to influences on Aboriginal groups from mainland Australia.
Naata Nungurrayi

Pintupi people, born 1930 Kumil, Western Australia

_Untitled_ 2010, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 122 x 122 cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, purchased 2010. © the artist, licensed by Aboriginal Artists Agency

Naata Nungurrayi is a senior Pintupi artist who lived a traditional nomadic life until she was about thirty years old, when she and her family came in from the bush, for the first time, to the Papunya settlement in the early 1980s. Although Nungurrayi uses traditional designs similar to other desert artists, she has also developed her own distinct style and colour palette.

Her thick application of dots layered against a black background form lines and designs throughout her work. The designs in these works relate to the water-soakage site of Unkunya, west of Pollock Hills in Western Australia. The palette of yellows, oranges, white and black brings the essence of the desert to the canvas, imitating the contours and luminous colours of the landscape. These works provide an intricate but abstract vision of Nungurrayi’s Country, ensuring her presence as an important Kintore artist.

1. Naata Nungurrayi’s painting is a cultural map of Country, containing references to sites of importance to herself, her family and her people. How is it different to traditional European landscape painting and navigational maps? Create a list of design elements such as stripes, concentric circles and wavy lines, and research how they might correspond to narrative or landscape features.

2. Select an art centre in rural or remote Australia (eg Papunya Tula) and research its history. What impact does this communal mode of artistic production have on an artist’s style? How do remote Aboriginal communities share and receive artistic influences, and how does this differ to artists working in urban areas?
Nici Cumpston has been documenting the Murray-Darling river system of her Barkindji/Paakintji people for a number of years. A trained photographer, Cumpston has focused her latest works on Nookamka (Lake Bonney) in the Riverland region of South Australia. Nookamka was once a rich and thriving environment with clear waterways, lush flora and abundant fauna. The region was home to the Barkindji, Muthi Muthi and Nyampa peoples. Enforced flooding in the early 1900s, however, destroyed the land and forced the Indigenous inhabitants from it. When damming ceased in 2007, the history of the area was revealed.

With her work, Cumpston highlights subtle clues to the area’s original inhabitants. She does this with her precise hand colouring of printed black-and-white photographs on canvas. Her aim is not to replicate the original colours of the landscape, as a colour photograph would, but to interpret it, re-rendering the historical Aboriginal presence into this once again accessible albeit devastated landscape.

1. Describe the mood evoked in this photograph. What do you think is Nici Cumpston’s relationship to the scene? Are there any signs of human habitation? Why has Cumpston chosen this time of day? Compare the relative space of the picture plane occupied by sky, sand and water; what does this reveal about the setting?

2. Describe the aesthetic qualities of a hand-coloured photograph as opposed to a genuine colour photograph and the effect created by each.

3. Conduct a search for recent media stories about the process of Indigenous community engagement and consultation for the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. Choose one theme or point of view to summarise and to relate to the concerns portrayed in Cumpston’s work.
Fiona Foley
Badjala people, born 1964 Maryborough, Queensland

Let a hundred flowers bloom 2010, 3 opium pipes, stool, display case, fabric, sketchbook, 36 brass opium poppy sculptures, and 34 inkjet prints on paper, 305.20 x 447.6 x 360 cm (overall), courtesy the artist, Andrew Baker Art Dealer and Niagara Galleries. © the artist, courtesy the artist, Andrew Baker Art Dealer and Niagara Galleries

Fiona Foley has been a practising artist since the early 1980s. She works as a printmaker, sculptor, painter, photographer and installation artist and deals with issues such as identity, culture, politics, race, sexuality, gender and history. Her inquisitive, investigative and analytical nature comes through in her large-scale installation Let a hundred flowers bloom, a work conceived and made during her residency in China in 2010.

Let a hundred flowers bloom develops Foley’s ongoing investigation into the hidden history of the use of opium to subjugate Aboriginal people in Queensland. Aboriginal people were once exploited by European landowners who traded opium dregs for labour. This had disastrous effects on the health of Aboriginal men, women and children. When the Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897 (Qld) was introduced, it provided the Queensland Government with the legal (but not moral) grounds to segregate the state’s Aboriginal and Chinese populations.

1 Fiona Foley’s work is concerned not just with Indigenous affairs but also with broader historical questions of race relations in Australia. Using this work as a point of departure, examine parallels between the official treatment of Chinese immigrants and Aboriginal peoples in Australia since colonisation.

2 Describe the way that this work has been assembled and displayed. What impact do the multiple parts have on the viewer?

3 How was the Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897 (Qld) used to control Aboriginal people? Can you name another piece of Australian legislation that has been used to oppress Indigenous people? Are their similar laws in other countries?
Vernon Ah Kee

Kuku Yalanji/Yidinji/Waanyi/Gugu Yimithirr/Koko Berrin peoples, born 1967 Innisfail, Queensland

tall man 2010, 4-channel video installation, charcoal, crayon, synthetic polymer paint on two canvases, video 11.10 mins, canvases 180 x 240 cm (each), National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, purchased 2012. © the artist, courtesy the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

Vernon Ah Kee is a well-established artist whose work continues to develop in new and surprising ways. He was one of the 30 Indigenous artists represented in the inaugural triennial, Culture Warriors, and his inclusion here, in the second, is testimony to his ongoing development as an artist. His latest installation, tall man 2010 foregrounds recent injustices against Aboriginal people in Queensland.

The work includes a large text panel and portrait situated on either side of a large video projection. The four-channel video incorporates footage from the day of the 2004 Palm Island riot sourced from news media, home videos, mobile phones and CCTV footage—surprisingly, some of which was filmed by the police—as well as footage from the trial of the alleged inciter of the riot, Lex Wotton. With these many perspectives, Ah Kee reveals a very different story of the day and the subsequent persecution of Wotton by the authorities and the media.

1. Part of this work of art quotes Shakespeare’s Macbeth. Why has Vernon Ah Kee chosen this text and how do the themes of the play relate to the events that took place on Palm Island in 2004?

2. Ah Kee’s art presents a strong critique of Australian society that aims to challenge racist and colonial values. Does this mean he is a political artist? Is all the work in this show political? Give your reasons.

3. Select a recent historically important event and conduct a search (eg on YouTube) for relevant copyright-free video footage of the event. Embed the videos in a PowerPoint presentation and write a script that explains and interprets the different perspectives on the event.
Jonathan Jones is an installation artist who primarily uses lights to explore relationships between community and individual, personal and public, object and environment, historical and contemporary. He conceptually and literally illuminates issues relating to identity, race, family, community, Country and cross-cultural histories. Throughout his work, Jones explores these unresolved issues in Australian history as well as how these issues are reflected in other cultures around the world.

In revolution, Jones explores the history of salt, particularly in relation to Indigenous health issues in Australia and the salination around his traditional lands on Murray-Darling river system caused by 150 years of destructive European framing practices. The triangular forms, or boomerangs, refer to the crystalline structures of salt collected from around the Murray-Darling river system and from Dandi in India, where salt also had a major social impact when Ghandi led the Salt March in 1930 in a non-violent protest of the colonial British monopoly on salt.

1. Jonathan Jones works in a relatively unusual medium: light. Compare Jones’s approach to highlighting the devastation wrought on the Murray-Darling river system to Nici Cumpston’s approach to the same subject.

2. How does the experience of interacting with an installation differ to viewing a painting or sculpture?

3. Write a hypothetical proposal for an art installation that employs light as its primary medium. Include sketches of what it would look like in an exhibition space. Will it be indoors or outside? What kind of lighting will you use (eg fairy lights, LED lights, flames)? Pretend cost and technology pose no barriers but consider safety a priority—nobody should be harmed when making or viewing your installation.
Julie Gough

Trawlwoolway people, born 1965 Melbourne, Victoria

Some Tasmanian Aboriginal children living with non-Aboriginal people before 1840
2008, wood and tea tree sticks, 288 x 60 x 50 cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, purchased 2008

Julie Gough is a consummate researcher. She mines historical texts and family histories to reveal the complexities of black and white relations in Tasmania, particularly during colonisation. In Tasmania, to this day, Aboriginal people have continued to endure despite systematic attempts to eradicate them, to remove them from their traditional lands on mainland Tasmania onto outer islands and further afield and to deny their very existence—it is still a common misconception that Tasmanian Aboriginal people in died out in 1876.

Gough is an artist and academic who works predominantly in mixed media and installation art. Much of her work refers to her own and her family’s experiences as Tasmanian Aboriginal people. She concerned with developing a visual language to express and engage with often conflicting and subsumed histories. Her art and research practice involves uncovering and re-presenting historical stories as part of an ongoing project that questions and re-evaluates the impact of the past on our present lives.

1 Research is a key aspect of Gough’s practice. Choose an event in your family history and an object/s connected to that event (eg toy, clock, book, picture frame, tool). Research the event (ask your parents and siblings about their memories of it; was it in the local newspaper or written about in your diary?) and create your own sculptural assemblage from the object/s that retells the history of the event. Write a statement explaining your work.

2 Investigate the factors that led to the ‘genocide’ of Tasmanian Aboriginal people. How has this history been revised in recent decades? What is Gough’s contribution to this project? Can an artist’s ‘revision’ of history be as valid as that of a writer, teacher or academic?
Lena Yarinkura

Rembarrnga/Kune peoples, born 1948 Maningrida, Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

_Yawkyawk_ 2010, natural earth pigments, feathers and PVA fixative on pandanus fibre, 160 x 25 x 15 cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, purchased 2010

Lena Yarinkura is an accomplished painter and weaver of everyday Rembarrnga life and ceremony. She innovated the weaving of animals and spirit figures out of pandanus fibre using tradition basket-weaving methods. Before 2002, Yarinkura and her mother were the only two artists in and around Maningrida working in this way; their pioneering work has since encouraged others.

Yarinkura works with an earthy palette of red and yellow ochres, white clay and black charcoal. Her weavings primarily feature camp dogs, which hold particular significance to Yarinkura, as do yawkyawks, but her repertoire includes a vast range of animals and spirits from the region. Here, her yawkyawks demonstrate her remarkable ability. Yawkyawks are female spirits that live in freshwater. Like mermaids, they are often depicted with fish-like tails and long hair. These stylised woven and padded figures are highly decorated with different bird feathers and pandanus fibre, adding movement and individuality to each character.

1. Lena Yarinkura works closely with her husband Bob Burruwal. What do you think are some of the benefits and challenges of collaborating with another artist?

2. Paying respect to the spiritual realm is fundamental to Yarinkura’s art. Research the traditional use of sculpture in the ceremonies of Western Arnhem Land. How far back can this tradition be traced? What are the earliest fibre works of the region? Search online (eg Australian Museum Collections Online) to create a selective survey of fibre works in Australian museums and galleries.

3. Gather materials, both natural and artificial, from your own home and backyard. Make a chart identifying the materials and evaluating which ones would be most appropriate for use in an art project and why.
Danie Mellor

Mamu/Ngagen/Ngajjan peoples, born 1971 Mackay, Queensland

**Paradise in the sun** 2010, pastel, pencil and wash with glitter and Swarovski crystal on Saunders Waterford paper, 192.5 x 153.5 cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, purchased 2011

Danie Mellor’s practice encompasses drawing, printmaking, sculpture and installation. His work is often both intricate and grand in scale, and his medium and palate differ remarkably from colours often associated with traditional Aboriginal art. His works in *unDisclosed* represent a significant change in his practice since his inclusion in the first National Indigenous Art Triennial, *Culture Warriors*, in 2007.

Since 2009, Mellor has been using blue and white colours in reference to the Spode transfers used on fine bone china ceramics, and his works are speckled with signatory Swarovski crystals surrounded by highly engraved and textured replica historical frames. Much of his most recent work is layered with Masonic symbols, native animals and early contact imagery of Aboriginal people. They effectively reposition early images of Aboriginal people and land painted by European artists and explore the idea of an entwined Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian history.

1. Danie Mellor’s work is laden with signs and symbols from Masonic tradition. What is Freemasonry? What relevance might it have to Indigenous art and particularly the themes of this exhibition? In your answer, consider the role of ritual, initiation and ceremony and the dynamic between secret or sacred knowledge and public knowledge.

2. Consider the mythical and symbolic connotations of the title ‘Paradise in the sun’. What do you think is Mellor’s intention? Is the title ironic? How does Mellor use metaphor and symbolism to represent ideas such as the continuity of history, the oppression of Indigenous peoples and the survival and resilience of Indigenous culture?
Daniel Walbidi

Mangala/Yulparitja peoples, born 1983 Broome, Western Australia

*Kirriwirri* 2010, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 152.5 x 152.5 cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, purchased 2010

Daniel Walbidi is a young visionary who, at the age of 16, was instrumental in starting the arts movement at the small coastal community of Bidyadanga (La Grange Mission), 250 kilometres south of Broome. Although the traditional Country of the Karajarri people, it is now a community of five different cultural groups, all brought in from the surrounding desert regions for the cattle industry. These disparate groups now speak each other’s languages and live together as one family.

Walbidi began painting on discarded wood from doors, off-cuts and boards while encouraging the Elders to tell their stories and histories. He and a group of senior Yulparitja artists returned to their traditional lands around Winpa and Kirriwirri in 2007—a journey that was documented in the 2008 film *Desert heart*. The experience was pivotal to Walbidi’s development as an artist, and his recent work, here, reveals the wondrous details of his Country.

1. Daniel Walbidi has said, ‘Painting is not just limited to what you see’. Discuss the possible meaning of this statement. How can something hidden to one viewer be visible to another?

2. An important element in Walbidi’s paintings of his desert Country is the dynamic, regenerative power of fresh and salt water. Using the language of form (line, colour, shape, composition, medium and technique), describe how water is portrayed in this work.

3. Research Walbidi’s life and his role in establishing the arts movement at Bidyadanga (La Grange Mission). What is the significance of the arts movement to a) the many cultural groups that live at Bidyadanga and b) to the Aboriginal art market in Australia?
Christian Thompson

Bidjara people, born 1978 Gawler, South Australia

HEAT 2010, 3-channel video installation, video 5.52 mins, courtesy the artist and private lender

Christian Thompson’s work is often both culturally and politically charged. He was one of a number of younger artists represented in the first National Indigenous Art Triennial. He is a photographer and performance artist and, more recently, he has delved into video art and directing. Thompson reflects on issues of kinship, cultural and personal identity and globalisation.

Thompson’s HEAT 2010 is a subtle yet powerful three-channel video installation accompanied by the soft melody of a harp. The work is inspired by Thompson’s memories of journeys with his father to Bidjara Country desert in south-west Queensland. The work features three proud, young Aboriginal women—Hetti Perkins’s daughters Madeleine, Thea and Lillie. The women are exposed, powerfully portraying their vulnerability, strength and beauty. Like a desert mirage, they are mesmerising. Their gaze is steady and the only movement is that of their long dark hair being tossed around in slow motion.

1. Research the history of photographic representations of Indigenous people in Australia since colonisation. How might this work relate to or comment on that history?

2. This work has been described as ‘charged with testimony’. What does this mean? Can any other works in this exhibition be described in this way? To what do you think these contemporary Indigenous artists are testifying?

3. An important aim of Thompson’s artistic practice is to communicate the fluidity of personal identity. Do you think this work demonstrates this practice? How can this goal help to combat racial and gender stereotyping? In your answer, consider the common stereotypes of Aboriginal men and women and how they are reinforced in the media?
Nyapanyapa Yunupingu

Gumatj people, born 1943 Yirrkala region, Northern Territory

**White painting #2** 2010, natural earth pigments on bark, 162 x 56 cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, purchased 2010. © the artist, courtesy Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre. Image courtesy Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

Nyapanyapa Yunupingu’s paintings on bark speak of a quiet revolution in north-east Arnhem Land. They depart from the tradition of depicting the complex Dreaming narratives of the region and focus instead on vividly portraying the significant events that occur in her life. Although she only began painting full-time in 2008, her work is prolific and demonstrates a practiced hand.

Yunupingu’s art has an intriguing sense of space and use of line and rhythm. In her ‘white paintings’ in particular, such as *White painting #2* 2010, the figurative element common in bark paintings from the region is removed altogether, and she experiments with abstract, loose and imprecise white lines, forming seemingly random patchwork patterns across the bark. Yunupingu’s development as an artist is exciting, and unique in the Yirrkala region. Her explorative style and desire to tell her own stories make her distinct among other Gumatj artists.

1. **How is a bark painting made?** What are the special considerations that might apply to the use of this material from the perspective of a) an artist b) a conservator at a gallery and c) an art collector?

2. **Define rarrk.** What is the traditional use of rarrk in Arnhem Land bark paintings? Is it simply an aesthetic choice or does it have a more complex history?

3. **During the twentieth century, Aboriginal bark paintings acquired crucial importance as evidence in support of native title claims. Research and summarise the history of bark paintings in Australia a) in traditional Aboriginal society and b) in the interaction of these objects with non-Indigenous Australia. How have they been used to assert the concept of land ownership?**