

Terra Alterius
Land of Another



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Gordon Bennett

Barbara Campbell-Allen

Julie Dowling

Shaun Gladwell + Michael Schiavello

Jonathan Jones

Joanne Searle

Esme Timbery

Freddie Timms

Lynette Wallworth

Guan Wei

Lena Yarinkura

FOREWORD

How different would this country have been as *Terra Alterius: Land of Another*? This exhibition will provoke our thinking on the subject, and through the work of the twelve artists it will furnish us with possibilities, hypotheticals and alternative realities that may not be as abstract as at first sight some might appear. It is possible, almost uniquely, through artistic practice and the making of exhibitions, not only to question the status quo, but to actively examine within a body of work scenarios that otherwise could not be realised or discussed. This exhibition therefore has on one level a truly utilitarian purpose, and I commend Margaret Farmer, a candidate of the College's Master of Art Administration (Honours), for her insistence and vision in bringing this fundamentally important premise to life. I also thank Rilka Oakley for her crucial role in its realisation, ably assisted by Annabel Pegus. I would further like to thank the Indigenous Reference Group, consisting of Julie Dowling, Sue Green and Jonathan Jones, for their wise advice, and Marcia Langton and r e a for contributing illuminating essays to the catalogue. *Terra Nullius: Land of No-one* will be shaken to its core.

Ivan Dougherty Gallery has over the years shown a wide range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, and firmly believes in its underpinning of the visual culture of Australia. That view has been reinforced over recent years both nationally and internationally, and yet at the political level there remains so much that needs to be done for true reconciliation and all related rights to be achieved.

Australia often finds it difficult to openly debate the very issues it most needs to address, witness the question of a republic. The potential therefore of an exhibition such as this, with its accompanying catalogue, public programs and tour, to bring new thinking and to air fresh and provocative views on the history, culture and presence of a shared alternative Australia, is crucial to our discourse.

Art has always provided ways of understanding others that other means cannot attain. *Terra Alterius: Land of Another* approaches previously unimagined possibilities, and I much look forward to the outcomes.

Nick Waterlow OAM

**Imagine an Australia that was recognised
as *terra alterius*, land of another,
rather than treated as *terra nullius*, land of no-one.**

TERRA ALTERIUS: LAND OF ANOTHER

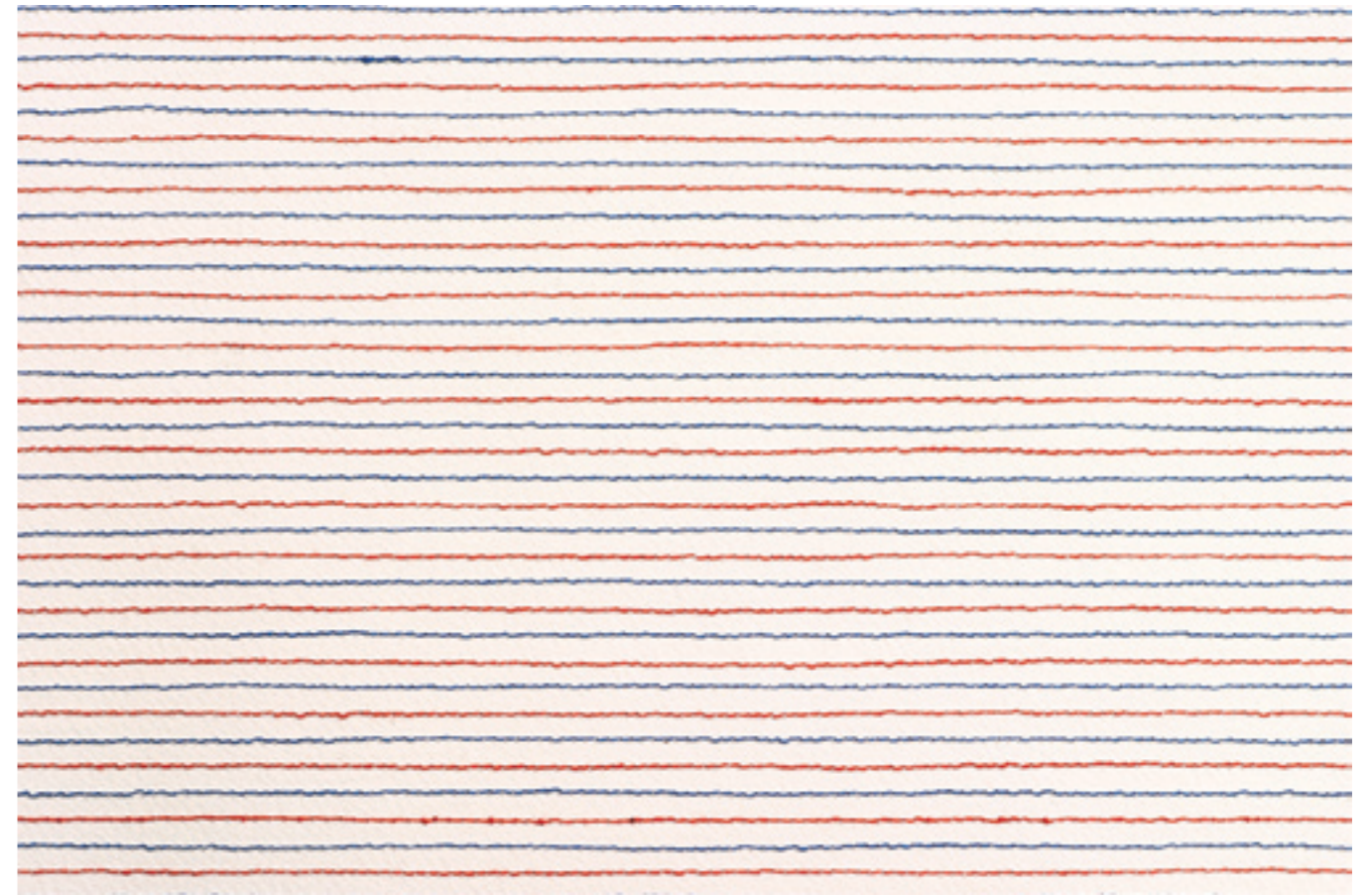
Imagine an Australia that was not claimed and colonised by Britain as *terra nullius*, land of no-one, but recognised by the British as being *terra alterius*, land of another.¹ In this exhibition, twelve artists, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, have created works or nominated recent work in response to this idea. Individually, the works are imaginative, emotionally powerful and thought provoking. Together, they present glimpses of the culture and presence of another Australia, one in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures first meet and interact with respect for each other's existence, difference, law and culture.

This imaginary Australia, *Terra Alterius*, with a different history, civilisation and art, is fertile ground for answers to the question: what might a reconciled Australia be like? *Terra Alterius* is a place outside our everyday lives, a place outside the conventions of Australian society, politics and law, or fear arising from the demands of risk or self-interest. We experience *Terra Alterius* and returning to the familiar, can no longer take everyday things for granted. We are able to imagine something else entirely.

The imagining of *Terra Alterius* is in a long tradition of imagining yet to be discovered or barely explored lands, along with imaginary beings and utopian political systems. In the Western tradition, Australia was itself imagined by Ptolemy as a great southern land that balanced the known land masses of the northern hemisphere, called *terra incognita* (an unknown land), and by those who came after, the Antipodes (the opposite) or *Terra Australis* (the southern land).² Such imaginings inspired and were inspired by explorers. This exhibition recreates this process of imagining and exploration, though not its colonising intent.

The multiplicity of vision and active creation of *Terra Alterius* by the twelve artists in this exhibition demonstrates the process that must occur for social change on a larger scale, for the ideals of *Terra Alterius* to be realised in Australian communities. The exhibition is what Frantz Fanon described as "passionate research ... directed by the secret hope of discovering ... some very beautiful and splendid era whose existence rehabilitates us both in regard to ourselves and in regard to others".³ Fanon was talking of research by colonised peoples, but in this exhibition this research is undertaken also by Australian artists of non-Indigenous heritages. Those bearing the legacy of the colonisers are also in need of rehabilitation. And so is art. The colonial gaze that failed to recognise Indigenous law when it did not resound with European concepts of law is the same gaze that has struggled to understand Aboriginal art practice because it did not fit within Western frames of art. Australian contemporary art remains, despite the enlargement of it by Indigenous artists, a context based in non-Indigenous culture and non-Indigenous approaches to art making. Over the last three decades, Indigenous art has been argued into and out of Western frames of art. It is now regularly presented within them and beside them. Nonetheless, curators frequently articulate their intentions, because "[l]ocating Aboriginal painting within the western art arena remains fraught and politically sensitive".⁴ In this way, the disciplines of law and art show the gap between *terra alterius* and *terra nullius*.

Antipodes 1A, 2A, 3A (2004) by **Jonathan Jones** (Wiradjuri/Kamilaroi) are poised at the moment just prior to encounter. The horizon shifts as the boundary between sea and land changes with the tide and the ship rises and falls with the swell of the sea. All is still before us: What will the tide bring? On which tide shall we come in? But as Jones offers us the potential of this moment again, the question remains: how shall we approach each other? In Jones's works, as at that moment, the horizon holds oblique, glancing perspectives. The intricate patterning of warm, orderly and complex community life is not visible. It is hinted however: there is hope in the linkages between the separate, equivalent values of red, blue and black that represent the still discrete cultures.



Jonathan Jones *Antipodes 1A, 2A, 3A* (detail) 2004 cotton thread, paper 42 x 111.5 cm each courtesy the artist and Gallery Barry Keldoulis, Sydney



Jonathan Jones *Antipodes 1A, 2A, 3A* (detail) 2004 cotton thread, paper 42 x 111.5 cm each courtesy the artist and Gallery Barry Keldoulis, Sydney

Still: Waiting (2004) by new media artist **Lynette Wallworth** challenges us to do better than the British colonisers. *Still: Waiting* is an immersive environment that is changed from the moment we enter it. We have to observe how it responds to our actions and then, if others join us in the environment, negotiate with them as to how we will proceed. It is only with time and observation – our stillness – that the true characteristics and complexities of the environment are revealed. In this way, *Still: Waiting* challenges us to consider other forms of first contact, and may bring us to consider an active process embodied in the concept of *terra alterius*. This is the process of meeting another person or people in a manner that allows for an exchange of equivalent values, allowing for the achievement of mutual understanding, and the possibility of a thorough or radical exchange.⁵ It involves viewing another culture as having an intrinsic value equal to our own, a willingness to learn about it, and a capacity to accept that understanding this other culture may mean we ourselves or our own culture changes in response to this understanding. The difference between Australia's history and the concept of *terra alterius* is that any change that results from encounter is not imposed but mutual and agreed or voluntary. To the degree that change is inexorable, it is also equivalent and responsive.



Lynette Wallworth *Still: Waiting* 2004 video stills from interactive DVD courtesy the artist with Greg Ferris, Penny Hagen, Nicholas Hannah, Robert Hindley, David Mackenzie & Brian Walshaw

The gift

The influence of Aboriginal art as a vehicle for cross-cultural understanding and the gaining of legal and political rights cannot be overstated. For example, in 1963,⁶ when Yirrkala elders presented a bark-painting petition to the House of Representatives⁷ they reasoned, “If they wouldn’t listen to our words, they may try and understand our paintings”.⁸ This strategy has been overwhelmingly successful. In trying to understand Aboriginal painting, non-Indigenous Australia has come to understand something of Aboriginal culture, and in particular, something of the relationship between land, law and people. Indigenous art, especially Aboriginal painting, has also been extraordinarily successful beyond its much hoped for political and legal ambitions. It is an artistic phenomenon, “the mainstream” and benchmark of Australian contemporary art.⁹ What explains this political and artistic success? What motivated non-Indigenous people to try and understand Aboriginal paintings? In addition to the extraordinary abstract qualities, complexity and beauty of much Aboriginal painting, one explanation is the “meaning ... seeded in the body”,¹⁰ the “sublime awe”¹¹ with which we respond to many paintings that drew and continues to draw non-Indigenous people to Aboriginal art. This phenomenon is called affect, and it may account for the ability of Aboriginal art to exist within two frames – Indigenous and Western¹² – to the satisfaction of each, and for its extraordinary success with non-Indigenous audiences, especially those seeking to understand the land of Australia, and some sense of belonging to it.

Even those who don’t know about Aboriginal religious beliefs and the Dreaming can recognise their power. They feel it when they see Aboriginal art. Susan Best explains that where artworks have affective power, they use bodily response to communicate. She explains that this is possible because “affect is an originary trace, an inherited mapping of the body and its expressive potential”, that is, something common to all humans; but that there will still be cultural variations in understanding, “according to what is magnified or diminished from this originary tracing of the body”.¹³ Jennifer Biddle, writing about Kathleen Petyarre’s use of affect, suggests that “this carnal experience is the more conveyable, perhaps the more crucial, terms of trade ultimately, than that of knowledge”.¹⁴ Biddle describes Kathleen Petyarre’s paintings as reproducing “a world which looks like, feels like, this, as only we Anmatyerr/Alyawarr can tell it”.¹⁵ There is:

an insistence in Petyarre’s work on the right to this cultural way of ‘being’ but an insistence that the viewer equally experience the world in these terms. ... Petyarre offers a profound generosity—a hospitality even ... The invitation, the imperative to experience—to witness—to inhabit— ... Is there not an enormity in this gift?¹⁶

To experience Australia in Aboriginal terms ... this was the formal injunction and gift made by the Yirrkala elders, that has been made many times since.

When painting, **Freddie Timms** (Gija) often combines stories of traditional life and *Ngarrannggani* (the Gija word for the period of creation) with his knowledge of the country gained while working as a stockman.¹⁷ Contemporary Aboriginal artists work on a long continuum from those who create work from largely traditional sources and means and those who work primarily or exclusively within the Western frame. Timms is one of the few Aboriginal painters painting from traditional knowledge that also from time to time incorporates political comment.

Stoney Creek, Sally Malay Mine (2003) is based in Timms’s knowledge of land and the current experience of his community. The Sally Malay nickel mine at Stoney Creek is 10 kilometres south of Frog Hollow (part of Timms’s wife’s country and where he started painting in the late 1980s and 1990s), and 40 kilometres south of Warmun (Turkey Creek). At the time Timms completed this painting, community negotiations between the Sally Malay mining company and the traditional owners were taking place. He was listening to people talking about the mine all around him. Now, as in the *Ngarrannggani*, the land is the site of encounter.

In the painting, Stoney Creek is shown as the line that starts in the bottom of the right-hand corner of the painting rising to cross both panels. The black line running down from the yellow semicircle at the top of the painting represents the road from the Great Northern Highway to the mine. The mine in the hills at the end of the road is represented by the yellow semicircle. The mining camp is shown as the yellow and red semicircles on either side of the road. The point where Stoney Creek crosses the Great Northern Highway is close to a permanent spring or living water, which is indicated by the widening of the black creek line. It is a beautiful place surrounded by large old paperbarks full of many species of birds. The area shown in this painting is today part of Mabel Downs Station. The country was a fertile traditional hunting ground before the arrival of Europeans.



Freddie Timms *Stoney Creek, Sally Malay Mine* 2003 ochre & cadmium yellow pigment with binders on Belgian linen 180 x 300 cm courtesy the artist and Gould Galleries, Melbourne

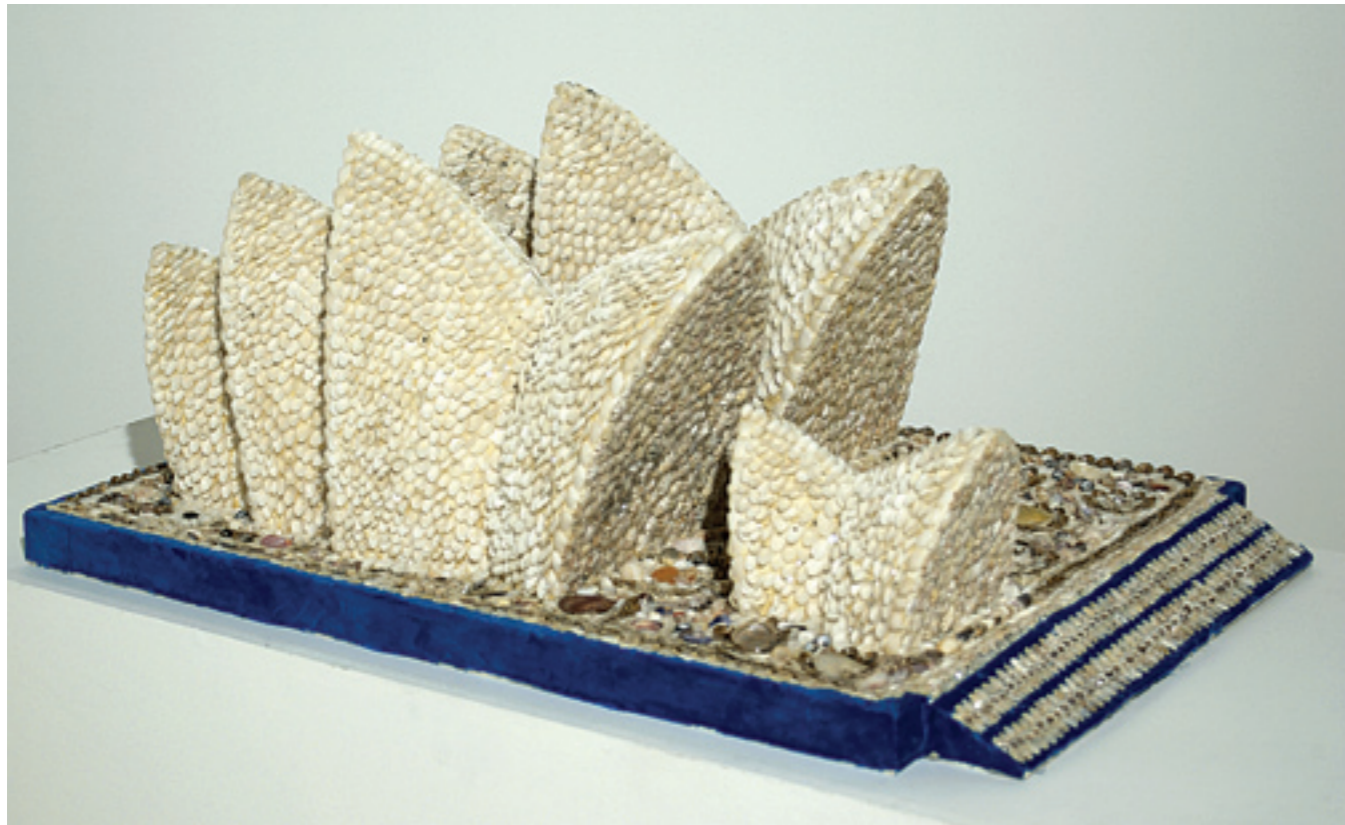
Esme Timbery (Bidjigal) uses traditional shell work techniques that have been handed down to her, mother to daughter, from pre-contact times.¹⁸

Timbery has nominated *Untitled (Opera House)* (2002) and *Untitled (Sydney Harbour Bridge)* (2002) for inclusion in the exhibition. These works demonstrate Timbery's ongoing relationship to her Bidjigal country, extending from La Perouse and Cronulla in Sydney, to Wreck Bay to the South. Timbery holds a traditional view of land, which she has expanded to envelop the landmarks, such as the Sydney Opera House and Sydney Harbour Bridge that have been placed on it. Timbery's relationship to her land is all the more impressive given that she lives in La Perouse, one of the first areas in which there was European contact, now a suburb of Sydney.

Timbery has used her intimate knowledge of her country to locate the shells with which she has encrusted the forms of the Sydney Opera House and Sydney Harbour Bridge. The new surfaces Timbery has given these iconic forms make us reconsider representations of Australia and Australian national identity. In fact, Timbery has repatriated these icons with a matter-of-factness that rivals the wit with which Lin Onus reclaimed the suburban backyard. In his installation *Fruit Bats* (1991), a Hills Hoist, the ultimate icon of Australian suburbia, is colonised by body-painted fruit bats, replete with 'dot painting' droppings.



Esme Timbery *Untitled (Harbour Bridge)* 2002 Polystyrene, wood, PVA glue, fabric & shell 35 x 90 x 106 cm collection: Sydney Opera House



Esme Timbery *Untitled (Opera House)* 2002 Polystyrene, wood, PVA glue, fabric & shell 32 x 54.5 x 82 cm collection: Sydney Opera House

'starAboriginality' vs 'psychological terra nullius'

All of the Aboriginal artists¹⁹ in this exhibition have in their past work incorporated overt social or political comment,²⁰ either by their choice of content or process, or the uses made of them.²¹ Their works in this exhibition show the lived reality of Indigenous lives, and that it is Indigenous Australians who lead the way forward.

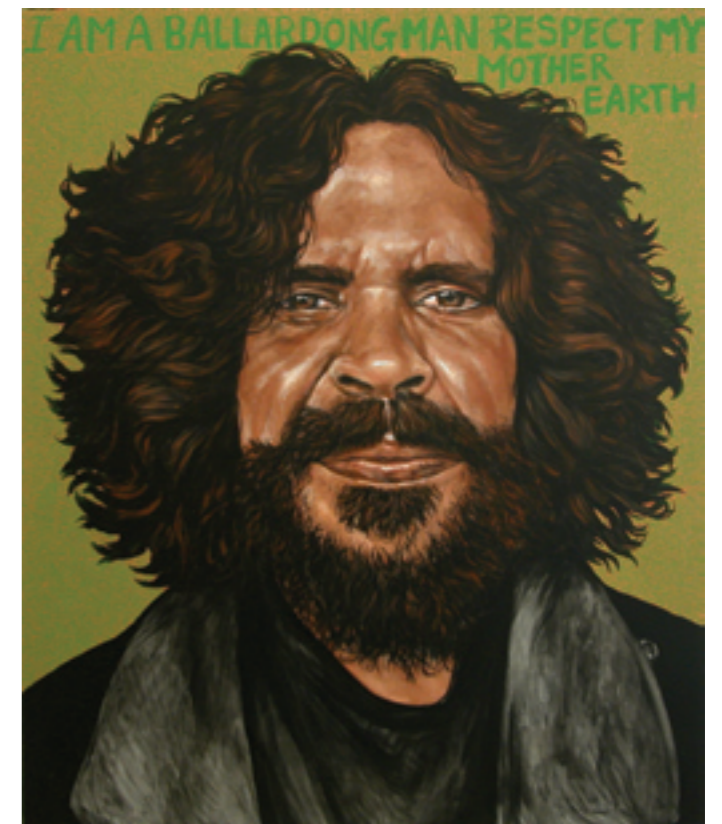
Nearly all Indigenous Australians live bi-culturally to a lesser or greater degree. Non-Indigenous Australians are no strangers to living with and between two or more cultures. As a country of immigrants, most Australians do this to some degree and a fusion of cultural influences is now considered 'Australian'. As yet, comparatively few non-Indigenous Australians live bi-culturally between Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures.

This difference in lived reality is mirrored in the works themselves. All of the artists were invited to create works about any aspect of the history, culture, land, civilisation, aspirations and future of *Terra Alterius* from a personal or public perspective. Several of the non-Indigenous artists, Lynette Wallworth, Shaun Gladwell + Michael Schiavello and Joanne Searle, have responded with works that show less the experience of *Terra Alterius* than the processes by which non-Indigenous Australians might approach it. Their responses in this way are important. For while there is evidence of a "newly predominant cultural condition in Australia", of which the "principal indicator is also its precondition: the opening of non-Indigenous Australian minds to admit the weight and power of Aboriginal culture, presence and being" that Ian North calls "starAboriginality";²² there is also evidence of a continued "psychological *terra nullius*".²³

Dispossession Series: Lizzy, Tully, Spacey (2004) by Julie Dowling (Yamatji/Noongar) forms a family portrait of friends of hers, a family formed from a relationship between an Aboriginal man and a Wudjula (non-Aboriginal) woman. This family shows the bi-cultural lived reality of Aboriginal people, which is also increasingly the lived reality of non-Aboriginal people. These three paintings form part of a larger series making comment using individual portraits of family and friends directly asserting their views on dispossession from culture, country and lore.

The portraits of Lizzy, Tully and Spacey include words that tell us about them and their relationships, especially their relationship to land. Surrounding Lizzy is an aura of the words *life, love, peace* and *freedom*. Spacey's portrait includes the statement, "I am a Ballardong man. Respect my mother earth". Their eleven-year-old son Tully is learning his father's Noongar language and participates keenly in cultural activities with his extended Noongar family. Spacey's mother and aunts are fluent speakers and are a well-spring of language to many in their community. Lizzy is also learning Noongar. Lizzy and Spacey have encouraged Tully to speak Noongar and to participate in the Noongar community in order to develop cultural strength and balance. Dowling has painted Tully with the statement, "My land is my pride".

When painting these works, Dowling was trying to understand the divide between Wudjula and Aboriginal people, because as she says, "It doesn't have to be that way. This family of three is iconic of my belief in anti-imperial enlightenment and they represent to me the relationships that do happen today. Around 67 percent of marriages or relationships in the Aboriginal community are with non-Aboriginal partners. This shows that Aboriginal communities will change in the future just as our personal relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people will change".²⁴



Julie Dowling *Dispossession series: Lizzy, Tully, Spacey* 2004 acrylic, red ochre & plastic on canvas 120 x 100 cm each panel courtesy the artist and Artplace, Perth © Julie Dowling, Licensed by VISCOPY, Australia, 2004

Joanne Searle's ceramic practice is based on environmental metaphors. In this work, she uses the 'binary star' as an analogy for dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous traditions, suggesting that the land is a common centre, an exchange or meeting place. A binary star is an astronomical phenomenon where two stars, as a result of their mutual gravitational pull, orbit around a common centre. The power relationships of colonisation are often described in binaries such as centre/margin, self/other, coloniser and colonised. In Searle's hands the binary analogy is reworked to embody the concept of 'cultural convergence'. Bernard Smith used this term to describe "a relationship [between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians] in which identities are maintained and even developed but relationships become more complex and fruitful, and beneficial to the Australian culture as a whole".²⁵ Smith used this term because, "That which may converge may also diverge: the act of convergence does not imply the destruction of either culture".²⁶ Joanne Searle explains that, "The constant state of flux in which these stars exist parallels the periods of balance and imbalance between the two traditions. In response to Smith's notion of convergence, I have chosen to make both parts of the binary system of equal size, portraying each part's individual importance and the equal significance each brings to the dialogical relationship. The movement of the stars orbiting each other results in a record or track. In the same way, exchanges between the two traditions within this land have traced the path of our mutual history and carve a possible path for the future".²⁷



Joanne Searle *Untitled* (two views) 2004 ceramic, stains, oxides & terracogillata
15 x 40 x 15 cm each courtesy the artist



In Julie Dowling's view, for cultural convergence to be legitimate, it requires a level of understanding of each culture acquired by lived experience. It is this she calls anti-imperial enlightenment.²⁸ Guan Wei's works from the *Exotic Flowers & Rare Grasses* series are painted from just such lived experience. The plants in this series are imaginary hybrids of Chinese and Australian plants, with medicinal qualities potent against the illnesses pictured at the bottom of each picture. They represent a union of East and West, and embody the process of melding what is known from the past and what is newly discovered into a strong, vital and workable whole.

In the first showing of *Terra Alterius: Land of Another*²⁹ Guan Wei incorporates three of these hybrids in a seven-metre wall-painting showing the Chinese discovery of Australia,³⁰ or, as they may have called it 'Big Mouse Kingdom'. By locating these existing works within the larger wall-painting, Guan Wei shows us that the hybrids are an allegory for newcomers to land. His wall-painting *Big Mouse Kingdom* (2004) invites us to consider a different encounter and the perspective of a different new-coming culture. It reminds us that interactions between existing and new-coming cultures happen worldwide and are ongoing.



Guan Wei *Big Mouse Kingdom* 2004 sketch for wall-painting 20 x 42 cm courtesy the artist and Sherman Galleries, Sydney



Guan Wei *Exotic Flowers & Rare Grasses 11-16* 2001 acrylic on stretched canvas 87 x 46 cm each courtesy the artist and Sherman Galleries, Sydney



Land of Another

The land of Australia is a powerful presence in this exhibition. It is the contested ground, that which brings us together, and a likely beneficiary of our attempts at understanding and reconciliation. Smith explained that he borrowed the term cultural convergence from Les Murray, and quoted him as follows:

In Australian civilisation, I would contend, convergence between black and white is a fact, a subtle presence, hard to discern often, and hard to produce evidence for. ... Yet the Jindyworobok poets were on the right track, in a way; their concept of *environmental value*, of the slow moulding of all people within a continent or region towards the human form which that continent or region demands, that is a real process.³¹

Smith agreed that it was the “environment in its widest sense ... that ... remains here with us, to condition us, to make the one out of the many ... A multi-cultural society is then a many-layered historical community, consisting of ethnic communities each treasuring a memory of their own mythical past, but all of which are subject continually to the power of place”.³²

Barbara Campbell-Allen’s evocative forms are animated by their encrusted, marked and scarred surfaces, the result of Anagama wood-firing. In her words, “I present an object to the fire. It has to have its own journey and experience as well”.³³

Campbell-Allen’s installation, *Old Rivers* (2004) is a deeply personal response to the Australian landscape. The ceramic parts are intimate representations of places, often rivers, that together build an understanding of the Australian continent. As a whole, the installation shares the apparent repetition and relentlessness, the mesmerising awe, of the Australian landscape at scale, as seen when driving through it or flying over it.

The rhythmic energy of the installation and within the pieces is the movement of earth and water caused by elemental forces such as heat, tectonics, and wind. As Campbell-Allen says, “An experience of place is always an experience of weather”.³⁴ This flux resonates with Gordon Bennett’s discussion of his work directed to reconciliation and questioning Australian identity:

I once read a book by Hermann Hesse, in the early 1980s, called *Siddhartha* about a man’s search for enlightenment. He eventually found it through his reflection in a river, not a still pond; and he didn’t fall in love with his own reflection as did Narcissus. What he saw was a ‘panorama’ of the past, the present, and the future in a state of ever-flowing flux with his ‘self’ but one moment in that cyclic continuum. If we think of Australia as Narcissus-like, obsessed with its self-image, gazing into the mirror surface of a still pond, then perhaps my work may be understood as one of many disruptions sending ripples across its surface.³⁵

Barbara Campbell-Allen *Old Rivers* (details) 2004
woodfired stoneware, porcelain & paperclay with natural ash glaze
each individual component 15 x 50 x 50 cm, installation size variable courtesy the artist



Retread (2004) is a collaborative work by **Shaun Gladwell + Michael Schiavello**. While art making is frequently a collaborative project in Aboriginal communities, it is much less common within the art practice of non-Indigenous Australian artists. Accordingly, Shaun Gladwell + Michael Schiavello's collaboration in this case is in part a response to the exhibition theme.

In this work, Shaun Gladwell + Michael Schiavello have taken an everyday object – a bicycle – and modified it for the parallel world *Terra Alterius*. As they imagine this parallel world: “footsteps and tyre tracks are natural, transient and subtle, not scarring or destructive; and there would have been a more harmonious meeting of Indigenous and settler cultures – one where the settler cultures were not driven by imperialism towards genocidal philosophies and policies”.³⁶

Gladwell + Schiavello explain: “This imagined alternative is embodied in the re-treaded bike, which is an introduced species of sorts. Instead of this introduced species breeding to dominant proportions and devastating effect, it has designed itself in a sympathetic relationship to its environment. It seeks to move without trace, to function without marks”.³⁷ The artists found inspiration for this work in the Australian film, *Dead Heart* (1996) directed by Nick Parsons, in which a character, portrayed as a *Kadicha* man, uses feathers tied to his feet to walk leaving no traceable footprints.

Retread also embodies a process, a re-treading of history, that is a speculative way forward.

In an interesting parallel, Barbara Campbell-Allen acknowledges that it was Aboriginal peoples' “light tread” on the land that allows her such a high degree of access to the Australian wilderness today. This light tread, appreciated by Campbell-Allen and re-invoked by Gladwell + Schiavello, is not the consequence of a lack of habitation – “[i]n traditional Aboriginal thought there is no nature without culture”,³⁸ – but the consequence of a very different relationship to land.



The art practices of ceramicists Joanne Searle and Barbara Campbell-Allen are deeply rooted in the environment and in their knowledge of their materials. In these ways, their art practices parallel the ethos and formal qualities of Indigenous artists such as Esme Timbery and **Lena Yarinkura** (Kune/Rembarrnga) who also have been subjected to Western divisions between art and craft. Lena Yarinkura “learned how to weave from her mother, Lena Djamarrayku, with whom she collaborated on creating fibre animals. After mastering the traditional range of twined combinations. Before long, her woven sculptures had taken Northern Territory fibre craft and public ceremonial artifacts in a completely new direction”.³⁹ Now, “[t]o illustrate the stories that belong to her husband and herself, Yarinkura makes paperbark and woven sculptures of a range of spirit figures, dogs, yawkyawkw (mermaid-like spirits) and crocodiles. These installations, often decorated with ochre and feathers, have precedents in men’s ceremonial objects that have rarely been seen after the 1960s – as well as the small spirit dolls held by women in the Mularra ceremonies. Yarinkura’s combining of the traditional with the non-traditional makes her work unique”.⁴⁰

In *Untitled (Mice in tree)* (2004), the tree is home, support and provider to the mice, as the Earth is to humans.



Lena Yarinkura *Untitled (Mice in tree)* (detail at right) 2004
cottonwood, pandanus spirals, ochre pigments with PVA 218 x 48 x 50 cm
courtesy the artist and Maningrida Arts & Culture
© Lena Yarinkura, Licensed by VISCOPY, Australia, 2004

Appropriation, reciprocity, belonging ... being

There has been much criticism of non-Indigenous Australians’ near-spiritual response to Aboriginal art, and of those who essentialise Indigenous cultures as the source of answers, especially where this seems to be in response to a crisis of identity or belonging. One ground for this criticism is that the enthusiasm for Indigenous art, especially as emblematic of Australia, is that it is appropriative behaviour that takes possession of the culture for itself and its own purposes. The statement, “You can’t have our spirituality without our political reality”, powerfully demonstrates this criticism.⁴¹

Questions surrounding belonging have always been part of the Australian psyche, arising from dislocation from origin and no doubt an awareness, if only unconscious, of the dispossession of Indigenous Australians. It may be these questions and that posed in Peter Read’s book *Belonging*, “How are contemporary Australians thinking through the problem of knowing that their places of attachment are also the places which Aboriginals loved – and lost?”⁴² is a necessary part of, if not preliminary to, the question asked in the exhibition: how will we shape our future? Similarly, is it strange that non-Indigenous Australians faced with extraordinary environmental problems look to those who have lived in the country for 40,000 – 60,000 years.

But the question remains: what is the difference between engaging with and learning from Indigenous cultures and appropriation? Jennifer Biddle’s comments on Kathleen Petyarre’s paintings suggest that the answer may have something to do with reciprocity – What is being given? What is being taken? Bernard Smith, considering the same question, looked to “a genuine interchange and transaction of the spirit which opened up the hope for a creative rather than a destructive interchange”.⁴³

In the late 1980s, Gordon Bennett decided, “I was in an interesting position: My mind and body had been effectively colonised by Western culture, and yet my Aboriginality, which had been historically, socially and personally repressed, was still part of me ... there were very real demands to be either one thing or the other. There was still no space for me to simply “be”. I decided that I would attempt to create a space by adopting a strategy of intervention and disturbance in the field of representation through my art.”⁴⁴

Until recently, Gordon Bennett did this by interrogating the colonisation of Australia, first by appropriating colonial images in order to disrupt and dislocate myths of ‘Australian’ history (for example in the work *Terra Nullius* (1989)) and then by showing how Australia’s colonisation is part of a wider world history (for example, in his *Notes to Basquiat* series (1999 - 2001)).

Ian McLean wrote about this body of work:

Bennett’s personal philosophical and spiritual agenda is crossed with the politics of the Australian nation, for the antipodean origin of Australia as the other of Europe and the place of Europe’s primitive other parallels on a social scale Bennett’s personal predicament... Bennett’s project of self-redemption is analogous to one of national salvation because he will not be redeemed unless the place is. The nation’s redemption is an essential medicine for his own cure. Bennett’s problem is ours.⁴⁵

Gordon Bennett has responded to the exhibition theme by nominating two recent works, *Number 28* (2003) and *Number 32* (2003), that show how he imagines he would paint, if Australia were *Terra Alterius*. These works are part of a new body of work in which Gordon Bennett returns to abstraction. This direction has not been in response to the exhibition theme as such. From late 2001, he has selected international subjects, such as 9/11 and Saddam Hussain, a move which has been attributed as “partly due to a long expressed frustration at being pigeon-holed as an Indigenous artist” and in part due to the “depressing complacency and colonial mindset of contemporary Australian national life”.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, Gordon Bennett’s location of these works within *Terra Alterius: Land of Another* is significant. What are we to understand from the fact that Australian art’s most powerful though reluctant exposeur of colonialism is now painting in the style he might if Australia were *Terra Alterius: Land of Another*? In the past, Gordon Bennett has used abstraction to demonstrate “a type of reality by embodying it”.⁴⁷ Are these works, like the Yirrkala bark-painting petition, an injunction to and a gifting of the experience of a way of being? Or, if these works are as deeply personal as they appear, is Gordon Bennett finding the space “to simply ‘be’”?⁴⁸

The latter, if even partly true, would be cause for genuine excitement. For if Gordon Bennett is finding the space to simply be, it might indicate that the momentum towards *Terra Alterius* and the incidence of its presence is reaching critical mass.

Margaret Farmer

¹ Catherine Freyne developed the phrase *terra alterius*, in 2000, as an opposite to the legal doctrine of *terra nullius*: Freyne, C., *Terra Alterius: Belonging, Dispossession and Reconciliation in Contemporary Australian Cultural Production*, BA (Hons) Thesis, School of History, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, UNSW (2000). Freyne shows there are two ways of translating *terra alterius* – “land of another; land belonging to another” or “land of the other; land belonging to the other” (p. ii). For this exhibition, the first definition has been chosen in opposition to the power relationships and cultural interactions of colonisation frequently described as a binary of colonising Self and colonised (Indigenous) Other.

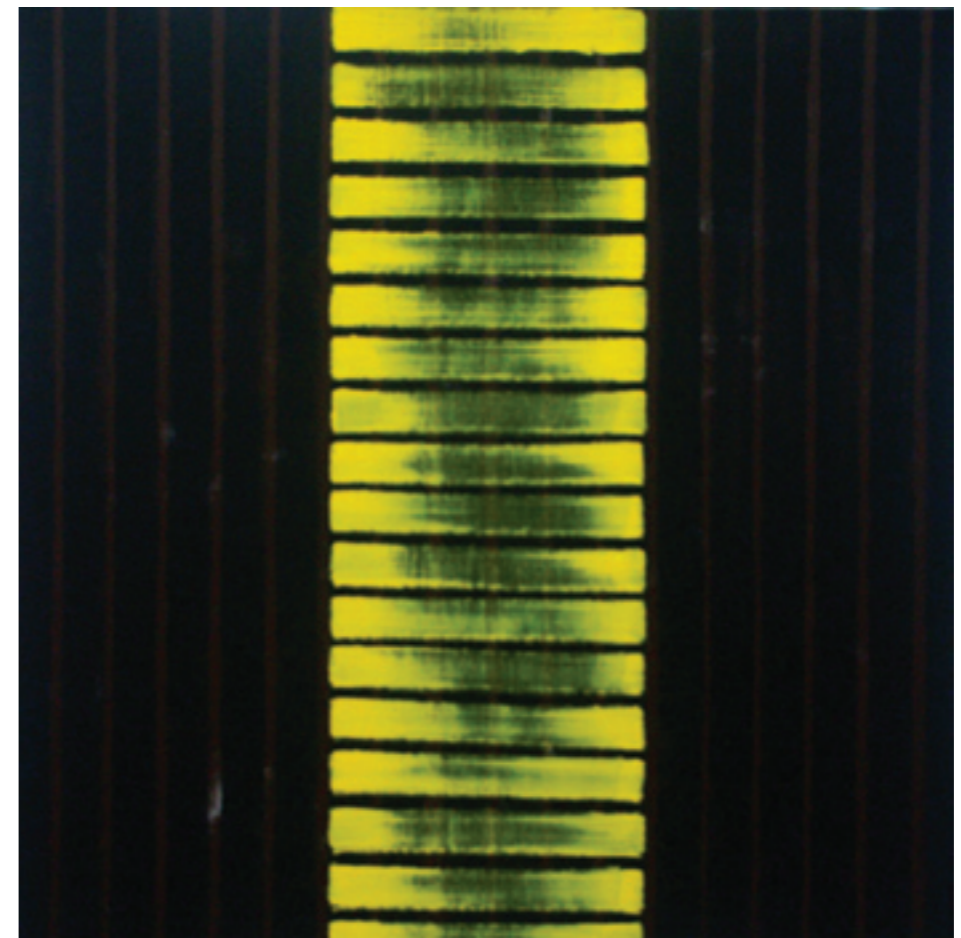
² McLean, I., *White Aborigines: Identity Politics in Australian Art*, Cambridge: New York, NY; Oakleigh, VIC: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 1-2.

³ Fanon, F., ‘On National Culture’, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, London: Penguin, 1965 (1990 reprint), p. 169.

⁴ Fenner, F., *Talking about Abstraction* Catalogue, Paddington, NSW: Ivan Dougherty Gallery, 2004, unpaginated.



Gordon Bennett *Number 32* 2003 acrylic on linen 152 x 152 cm courtesy the artist and Sherman Galleries, Sydney



Gordon Bennett *Number 28* 2003 acrylic on linen 152 x 152 cm courtesy the artist and Sherman Galleries, Sydney

⁵ The formulation of *terra alterius* in this way is deeply indebted to the following definition of reconciliation: “The root meaning of the word is an exchange of equivalent values, and then, through the exchange of sympathy and mutual understanding, the notion of a thorough or radical exchange. Thus reconciliation has the significance of a new stage in personal relationships in which previous hostility of mind or estrangement has been put away in some decisive act.”: Richardson, A., (ed), *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, London: SCM Press, 1950.

⁶ McLean, *Op. cit.*, p. 104.

⁷ McLean, *Op. cit.*, p. 98-99. See also Kleinert, S. & Neale, M. (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture*, South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2000.

⁸ Yunupingu in Lüthi, B. and Lee, G. (eds), *Aratjara Art of the First Australians*, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, 1993, pp. 64-66, as cited by McLean, *Op. cit.*, p. 104.

⁹ Johnson, V., ‘Foreword’, in *Talking about Abstraction* Catalogue, *Op. cit.*, unpaginated.

¹⁰ Best, S., ‘What is Affect? Considering the Affective Dimension of Contemporary Installation Art’, ANZJA vol 2, no 2, 2001: vol 3, no 1, 2002, p. 219.

¹¹ Best, *Op. cit.*, p. 221.

¹² Morphy, H., *Ancestral Connections: Art and An Aboriginal System of Knowledge*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991, p. 21.

¹³ Best, *Op. cit.*, p. 220-221.

¹⁴ Biddle, J., ‘Country, Skin, Canvas: The Incorporeal Art of Kathleen Petyarre’, ANZJA vol 4, no 1, 2003, p. 71.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Biddle, *Op. cit.*, p. 71-72.

¹⁷ This discussion of Freddie Timms’s work is indebted to material prepared by Frances Kofod of Jirrawun Arts Centre, from a conversation between Frances Kofod and Freddie Timms in July 2004.

¹⁸ This discussion is indebted to material prepared by Jonathan Jones in conversation with Esme Timbery. See also Vanni, I., *Bridging the gap: the production of tourist objects at La Perouse* in Kleinert & Neale, *Op. cit.*, pp. 400-402.

¹⁹ While the artists in this exhibition come from many parts of Australia, not all regions of Australia are represented. This is because the differences in the way that the Australian mainland and the Torres Strait Islands were colonised mean that the concept of *terra nullius* as an opposite to *terra nullius* more directly relates to Aboriginal peoples. This decision was made in consultation with the Indigenous Reference Group. For an excellent Australia-wide consideration see *Native Title Business: Contemporary Indigenous Art: A National Travelling Exhibition* curated by Joan G. Winter and the catalogue of the same name, Southport, Qld: Keeaira Press, 2002.

²⁰ The curator thanks the Indigenous Reference Group, particularly Jonathan Jones, for guidance in this matter.

²¹ Although see Jennifer Biddle’s argument in respect of Kathleen Petyarre that Petyarre’s “preference for ‘affect’ cannot be arbitrary in a context where Aboriginal demands for recognition have consistently fallen of deaf ears; in a context where ... it is specifically Aboriginal ‘forms of being’ which are being disallowed”: Biddle, *Op. cit.*, p. 71. It could be argued that the more traditionally an artist lives and paints the more accurately a work by the artist might reflect pre-contact culture. An accurate reflection of the pre-contact cultures is neither possible nor necessary for the purposes of the exhibition, which is to stimulate thought not create a prescriptive or accurate account of *Terra Alterius*.

²² Ian North calls this new predominant cultural condition “(*)Aboriginality” / “starAboriginality”, the asterisk or “star” in place of a prefix such as “post”, which might suggest that this was a past not currently lived reality: North, I., ‘StarAboriginality: Hawke Institute Working Papers series, No. 20’, Magill, South Australia: Hawke Institute, University of South Australia, 2002, pp. 4-6.

²³ Behrendt, L., *Achieving Social Justice: Indigenous Rights and Australia’s Future*, Annandale, NSW: The Federation Press, 2003, p. 3.

²⁴ Conversations with the artist, June and July 2004.

²⁵ Smith B., *The Spectre of Trugamini (1980 Boyer Lectures)*, Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 1980, p. 50.

²⁶ Smith, B., ‘Death of the artist as hero’ in *Essays in History and Culture*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 292.

²⁷ Artist statement, June 2004.

²⁸ Conversation with Julie Dowling, April 2004.

²⁹ At Ivan Dougherty Gallery, UNSW College of Fine Arts, Sydney, 20 August – 25 September 2004.

³⁰As proposed by Gavin Menzies in the book *1421: The Year China Discovered the World* London: Bantam Press, 2002.

³¹ Smith (1980), *Op. cit.*, p. 50.

³² Smith (1988), *Op. cit.*, p. 301.

³³ Conversation with Barbara Campbell-Allen, June 2004.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Bennett, G., ‘The Manifest Toe’, in McLean, I. and Bennett, G., *The Art of Gordon Bennett*, Sydney: Craftsman House, 1996, p. 62.

³⁶ Artist statement, June 2004.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Bennett, G., *Op. cit.*, p. 43.

³⁹ Art Gallery of New South Wales, *Tradition Today: Indigenous Art in Australia*, Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2004, p. 178.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*

⁴¹ Gordon Hookey, *You can’t have our spirituality without our political reality*, 2003, oil on canvas 101.5 x 122 cm.

⁴² Read, P., *Belonging: Australians, Place and Aboriginal Ownership*, Cambridge; Oakleigh, VIC: Cambridge University Press, 2000, back cover.

⁴³ Smith (1988), *Op.cit.*, p. 300.

⁴⁴ Bennett, *Op. cit.*, p. 33.

⁴⁵ McLean, I., ‘Painting a History of the Self in Postcolonial Australia: Gordon Bennett’s Existentialism’ in McLean and Bennett, *Op. cit.*, p. 69.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Bennett, *Op. cit.*, p. 49, quoting Thomas McEvilley.

⁴⁸ Bennett, *Op. cit.*, p. 33.

THE OTHERS

*The other is the future.*¹

The theoretical gymnastics of the eighteenth and nineteenth century that European colonial thinkers performed in order to justify conquest of the lands of others resulted in a strange idea: ‘territory as *terra nullius* even though the area was inhabited’,

...a position which was considered reasonable because the people in question were regarded as ‘having advanced beyond the state of nature only so far as to have developed language and the community of the family, but no further’; in particular they had developed no agriculture.²

In the words of Noel Pearson, the decision of the High Court of Australia in the case of *Mabo and Others v Queensland*[®] (*Mabo*) on 3 June 1992 “finally illuminated the true legal history of the British colonisation of Australia”:⁴

Properly understood, the law of the colonisers recognised a native entitlement to land from the time that sovereignty was first acquired. Contrary to the assumption that the land was *terra nullius*, the High Court confirmed that the common law of England, carried upon the shoulders of the colonists and falling upon Australian soil, included the doctrine of recognition of native title.⁵

Rethinking the concept of Australia as a postcolonial social entity after the rejection of Australia as *terra nullius*, or ownerless, in the *Mabo* judgment, is a tricky challenge in Australian intellectual and cultural life. Several ideas are to be confronted: that there were no Aboriginal property systems prior to the annexation of Australia by the British Crown; that the Crown granted titles over un-owned land; and that Aboriginal life was so simple that they owned nothing. These ideas, deployed as legal doctrine in colonial Australia, resulted in the dispossession of Aboriginal lands. Sufficient restitution, or land justice, was an historical situation that the High Court declined to address adequately in *Mabo* however, arguing a convenient form of extinguishment of Aboriginal titles that could never be repaired. When artists accept the challenge of rethinking *terra nullius*, they draw attention to the ambiguity of being ‘in between’ – living between old and new lands, between Aboriginal systems of law (many still surviving) and the postcolonial regime. It is a novel invitation that asks us to mark out the terrain of *Terra Alterius* where there might be a kind of citizenship that permits multiple ‘cultural logics’ and contingent being in this place in multiple ways. Anthropologist John von Sturmer asked a question during the native title debate in 1995:

Why is it so difficult to understand that there may, even in the one society, be multiple or competing cultural logics which coexist, not necessarily happily, but precisely because they give rise to each other and are necessary to each other?⁶

The difficulty of this question remains apparent, even as, in the Australian arts and literature, hesitant steps towards admitting each other’s existence are taken.

The ‘look’ of the land

In 1982, Imants Tillers, writing in *Art and Text*, referenced the Antipodeans in the 1950s, the Jindyworobak poets in the 1940s, and Margaret Preston. Tillers wrote about “the ‘look’ of traditional aboriginal artefacts, rituals and environments”. In the 1980s, it was this ‘look’, he observed, that contemporary art forms and media, particularly sculpture and performance, sought to approximate.⁷ Such mimetic referencing was deployed by some Australian artists with respect to the Aboriginal arts, then emerging as objects of interest to a wider art audience. Imants Tillers, Tim Johnson and

others were at that time experimenting with Aboriginal signs and symbolic systems in their own works of art. Two decades later, it may be possible to label some of the referencing of the Aboriginal ‘others’ in Australian art, literature, performance, and the visual and written accounts of settler life by Aboriginal creative producers, as a creolisation of Australian culture. There is more evidence of a transformation in the paradigm of perceptions, the boundaries of what is permitted to be represented, resulting in a rich hybridisation of experience, perception, theory and practice; a sense of being ‘in between’ belongs as much to those settler Australians who reject the dogma of ‘*terra nullius*’ as to Aboriginal people whose legal standing has been liberated from racial discrimination; in between the past and the future; in between the awful mess that went before and the dread of its repetition. Writers, such as Tim Bonyhady, Paul Carter, Kiera Lindsey, Tom Griffiths, Libby Robin and Howard Morphy,⁸ have brought “creative cartographies”⁹ to their literary efforts concerning colonial and frontier legacies. They contend with temporal and spatial relationships across the divergent imaginary continents of Australian life. The legal fiction of *terra nullius* is reduced in this flow of words and images to a ridiculous lie, yet its horrible consequences become even more apparent as the evidence of the practical and moral aspects of the injuries caused to Aboriginal peoples mounts up.

Elsewhere, I have written about the adaptation of Aboriginal art to commercial design.¹⁰ It became characteristic of post war modernism in Australia, though it had been vigorously promoted decades earlier by Margaret Preston. Coins, stamp designs, and the imagery created to give the impression of a distinctive Australian way of life all incorporated Aboriginal images along with the faunal oddities, the kangaroo, the koala, and the platypus. Some examples include Eileen Mayo’s suite of designs, one titled *Discover Australia* using traditional Aboriginal art designs; Gert Sellheim’s boomerang poster for the Australian National Travel Association, published in the 1957 edition of the prestigious international annual of advertising art *Modern Publicity*, and dense in Australian symbols. Van de Ven listed some of its elements:

While the poster included the Southern Cross, a surfboard, the figure of a female swimmer, palm trees and a ram, it also incorporates animal and fish totems of the Aboriginal people and the boomerang . . . the most notable of Sellheim’s designs, however, was the flying kangaroo symbol of the late 1940s that Qantas carried to all parts of the world.¹¹

In 1952, the Australian Trade Commission’s display shop in the Rockefeller Building in New York mounted an exhibition entitled *Australian Aboriginal Art*. Alongside the bark paintings and artefacts were high culture representations of white Australian interior decoration and cultural production: textiles by Annan Fabrics of Sydney, designs for textiles by Maurice Holloway of Melbourne and Dahl Collings, ceramics from the Martin Boyd pottery in Sydney, monotypes by Margaret Preston, photographs of ballet costumes designed by Robin Lovejoy for the ballet. *Corroboree*, and stills from the Australian National Film Board’s movie of the ballet. Designers such as Sellheim, Beck, Annan and others continued throughout the fifties to appropriate Aboriginal art designs for the covers of the literary magazine *Meanjin*, Qantas’ in-flight magazine *Airways* and Oswald Ziegler’s book *This is Australia*.¹²

If we counted the number of generations since Aboriginal signs were first incorporated into settler Australian images and designs (leaving aside the depiction of Aboriginal people and life in painting), we might say that we are witnessing the second or third generation use, possibly fourth generation, use of Aboriginal styles by Australian settler artists. The boomerang has been ubiquitous for decades, and both the boomerang and dots were used in pictograms in the 2000 Olympics. Aboriginal signs in global visual life lies just beneath conscious perception, yet a scholarly approach to these matters by curators, writers and historians has raised the general awareness

of the plundering of the Aboriginal world for distinctive graphic elements that signify a familiarity and intimacy with Aboriginal life that Australians, in fact, cannot claim in all honesty; or, even more strange, to signify an imagined ancient past and the settler confidence with Australian landscapes. Yet, one cannot avoid the subtext of our intermingled histories in various Australian literary and visual art works. None of this is new: the New York Avant Garde borrowed from native American art traditions; Picasso and his contemporaries in France borrowed from Africa; European culture has been deeply implicated with ‘the East’, as the late Edward Said so elegantly explained in *Orientalism*.¹³ Barkan and Bush writing on the looting of Benin bronzes by the British elucidate the problem of appropriation of traditional art styles by European artists and collectors by reminding us that “in the end it was revolutionary”:

Not only did it provide a whole new aesthetic category for European connoisseurs but (more importantly) a new idiom for Western art. In hindsight, the looting and its aftermath underline the fundamental instability of easy distinctions between the “savage” and the “civilized” and suggest the kind of ambiguous appropriation associated with modernism: a mixture of violence and aestheticism; the difficulties of placing and displacing the modern and the primordial; the conflation of the past and the future.

As for “primitives,” they never existed. Only Western “primitivism” did, invented in heated arguments about human society...¹⁴

It is also the case that the subalterns and hybrids have appropriated the styles, technologies and histories of the master race and delivered a deathblow to the narrative of racial supremacy and European civilisation as the pinnacle of human evolution. “Can the subaltern speak?” Spivak asked, and the question has been widely interpreted as implying that:

colonized peoples speak, ultimately and always, within the discursive frameworks of the colonizer, however much these latter may depend on the colonized for their self-definition. The subaltern will always be alienated, always “unhomely”, forever strangers in their own land, wanderers between two worlds.¹⁵

“Whose culture is it, anyway?” Nicolas Rothwell asked, responding to the steady stream of publications on the propriety of Aboriginal artists taking their wares to the marketplace.¹⁶ It began to become clear that the objections, such as Germaine Greer’s objection to Aboriginal artists “selling the Dreaming”, and many other equally confused complaints about Aboriginal art, concerned, in reality, the discomfort of the privileged Western audience with the sudden transformation of Aboriginal artworks from “primitive art” to highly priced fine art commodities in the global marketplace. Terry Smith astutely observes that:

Australian Aborigines...in certain circumstances, times, and places, some, sometimes many, are not so subject, in practice or imagination, socially and personally – and, as we can readily see from the achievement of many artists, aesthetically. In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha explores many examples of writers and artists from all over the world offering independent insight from within apparent dependence. My claims here pivot around this possibility: that colonization has not been total, that Australian Aboriginal people can sometimes “be in the beyond” in ways that are not simply other to the dominant orientalisating, othering discourse, nor subject to the double displacement of being the Other’s Other (the colonized woman, for example). They originate their own structures of same and other, produce their own relations of distinction and difference, and then choose whether or not to act “in-between” the cultures.¹⁷

I will excuse the reader, especially the Aboriginal reader for falling about in tears of laughter at this point; in 2001, Dr Smith discovered our humanity; such a startling event. But it is nevertheless undeniable that until Homi Bhabha theorised the possibility of the subaltern’s capacity for unbounded discourse, it was barely suspected by white intellectuals. In the same way, the visual and artistic creativity of the subaltern has been regarded as limited by, if not race, then a tide of history that has permanently incapacitated the colonial subject. As Terry Smith points out, the evidence to the contrary is overwhelming.

The subalterns look back

The gradual departure from late nineteenth century conventions of depicting ‘the others’ encountered during Europe’s Imperial Age, especially in the institutions of the museum and gallery, are evident in the exhibition *Terra Alterius: Land of Another* and several other exhibitions. In *Savage Imaginings*, Lynette Russell exposes the shadow of colonial in the purpose of, for instance, that close cousin of the gallery, the museum:

The diorama to a greater degree than any other form of museum display objectifies people. The fixing of the audience’s gaze on both the artifacts and the bodies of the people is something that cannot be achieved by the display of objects alone. ...The body itself becomes a trophy to be displayed... The objectified and essentially naked bodies depicted in the diorama represent civilization’s antithesis. The people are objects on display like silent specimens in a frozen zoo.¹⁸

Aboriginal artists have confronted these conventions and stereotypes for several decades. Lin Onus, for instance, pointed out the powerfully revolutionary impact of the introduction of Toyota four-wheel drive vehicles to the remote desert regions, and the impact on the Aboriginal artists:

A dilemma that confronts numerous Aboriginal artists comes with the descriptive terminology ‘urban’ or ‘traditional’. There is currently within the Aboriginal artistic movement some considerable agitation to redefine the categories. The word ‘urban’, of course, refers to a city dweller... ‘Traditional’, in the Aboriginal arts sense, seems to refer to a practitioner in a remote area, untainted by external influence. There are also large numbers of artists who are working in neither of these areas. Existing terminology is no longer adequate... Consider the impact of motor vehicles and aircraft on artistic development. The advent of the four-wheel-drive vehicle in northern and central Australia has allowed people to conduct more ceremonial activity than ever before as a consequence of increased mobility. Air travel allows artists from remote areas to accompany their exhibitions to the ‘big smoke’.¹⁹

Vehicles, clothing, houses; it is as if these are invisible. Onus brings the vehicle to our attention to break the hold of primitivist ideology. I take as two exemplars of the power of Aboriginal art to speak back, Julie Dowling and Freddie Timms, with whom I have shared some precious moments, and whose works speak to me with particular clarity.

In several of Julie Dowling’s works (*The Ungrateful, Icon to a Stolen Child ... Blood, Ronnie ... the Neurotic, Andrew ... Lost Boy*) exhibited elsewhere, we see her peculiar capacity to depict Aboriginal people clothed in the attire of their masters – and yet so adroitly adopting the vestments and their social meanings – is rooted in her personal history and perspective on the post frontier world in Western Australia where creolisation and hybridisation have been powerful forces in that extremely racialised society since colonial times. The rich portraits of lives eclipsed by tragedy and neurosis that typify Julie Dowling’s work (and, as well, the indications of psychosis of relationships

between coloniser and colonised in Gordon Bennett’s work) depart radically from the European traditions of painting in Australia that depicts Aborigines and Aboriginal life as subalterns. In ‘A note on the Paintings of Julie Dowling’, a handbag, gloves, hat, lipstick, wallpaper, and curtains, depicted in Dowling’s *The Ungrateful* are teased out as markers of the impact of history, acculturation and ‘in-betweenness’:

One of the most confrontational yet compelling aspects of Julie Dowling’s art work is the gaze. Her indigenous subjects stare out at us directly, demanding a response. The deep black pools of their expressive eyes communicate a history of pain, loss, betrayal, violence, despair, sadness and, occasionally, hope. Stand before the painting “The Ungrateful” and reflect upon our Prime Minister’s view that apologies are not necessary by this generation of non-indigenous Australians for the devastating but well-intended abuses of the past. Look at the proper Christian mother with her white handbag, gloves and hat. Observe the layered design features on the background of wallpaper or curtains with their rich iconic blue and gold patterns of indigenous dots and Christian crosses. This is a “good” home – clean, well kept, presentable – like the children. Then gaze into the eyes of these lost children as they surround the holy mother whose too-bright lipstick, stiff posture and icy stare give away something of the saintly guise. What are they gazing at? What bright future beckons? Where is the “great white hope” to be found? Read the artist’s notes for this painting that tell of the experience of her cousin, traumatised by her own adoption into one of these white homes, her bedwetting that resulted in severe punishments and abandonment to the social welfare authorities. Is this about the past for which no apology is necessary? Then turn to explore the faces of Julie’s extended family members: her cousin Dot in “Icon to a Stolen Child ... Blood”; her stroke affected nana in “Mollie ... no talk”; her mother, “Ronnie ... the Neurotic” who struggled all her life with an obsessive compulsive disorder; her cousin “Andrew ... Lost Boy” who was stolen from his family and institutionalised – not in the 1950s but 3 years ago.²⁰

It is facile to say that her work, and the lives it depicts, falls “between two worlds”. The state of being ‘in-between’, which Homi Bhabha brings to our attention, is, unlike the former, potent with subversive agency. The world of Julie Dowling and her subjects was long ago filled with despair by a ruthless regime that relegated them to that of subject. That Dowling can depict this despair with courage and conviction, sure of the injustice of their fate and of the immorality of the perpetrators, is testimony to her strong and distinctive voice, perhaps not representing the persecuted, but at least, rendering visually their existence. Art demands an audience. It is facile therefore to refuse the possibility that a non-Indigenous person will respond with intelligence and ethics. It is in the potential for such an engagement that *Terra Alterius* can be envisioned.

Frontier violence and the supremacy of white men over Aboriginal people are the difficult subtext of Freddie Timms’ work. The style of the paintings was first introduced to a wider audience by the late Rover Thomas Joolama, who although from the Canning Stock Route much farther to the south, spent his last thirty years living in the east Kimberley at Warmun.²¹ In the mid 1970s, he ‘found’ or was ‘given’, in religious events, the public ceremony of the *Gurrir Gurrir (Kril Kril)*, which eventually provided a stimulus for the production of art in the East Kimberley for an audience beyond the local celebrants who produced the designs and objects for ceremonies. To complement specific verses of the song cycle, pieces of plywood were painted with ochre and carried by the dancers. Rover Thomas and his classificatory uncle Paddy Jaminji painted many of these works on board.²²

As Cornall explains:

The *Gurrir Gurrir* ceremony took the form of a ‘palga’, a narrative dance cycle, a vehicle by which both current and historical events and traditional spirit stories can be revealed in public...dancers carried, for each of the song-lines, painted boards or other constructions, most commonly crosses or similar simple geometric emblems made of light wooden frames and detailed with coloured woollen threads, and occasionally feathers and other materials, known as thread-crosses. The boards, which eventually escaped their ritual origins to become canvases created solely and intentionally as artworks, were originally little more than scraps of cardboard, or salvaged Masonite or three-ply off-cuts. As specific illustrations, the earliest Turkey Creek *Gurrir Gurrir* boards were usually relatively simple images illustrating a single site, spirit or event, raised on dark red ochre or black monochromatic grounds and rarely employing more than three ‘colours’.²³

Freddie Timms paints in the distinctive Kimberley style made famous by the late Rover Thomas and Queenie McKenzie: highly stylised spiritual and historical landscape images, depicted in the minimalist style of the old ritual painting carried in ceremonies as signs of the ancestral places being celebrated. He is a senior traditional owner of a large part of the rich cultural region of the East Kimberley. Men and women of the Gija, Worla and other language groups of this area, have worked as stockmen and domestics on the cattle stations in the Kimberley region, and are the direct descendants of those people who died in the massacres that took place until at least the 1930s in the Kimberley region. Members of the group include Paddy Bedford, Goody Barrett, Rusty Peters, Peggy Patrick and Phyllis Thomas.

Dissatisfied with the way they were being represented, this group of artists formed the Jirrawun Aboriginal Art Corporation in the mid 1990s; Jirrawun means ‘One’, and represents the unity of the artists in their purpose of achieving cultural maintenance and regeneration in a context of economic independence. The great Bow River ‘boss’, the late Mr Timms, father of Freddie Timms, articulated this as the Warlpawun vision.²⁴ The style of the artworks is cryptic and yet intriguing, embracing the traditional symbols of Kimberley Aboriginal religious life; it presents us with the challenge of reading paintings that depict the landscapes of the Kimberley, so resonant with spiritual and historical narratives and meanings for their Aboriginal owners. The paintings refer to the ancestral beings whose existence remains poised in places throughout the country, and to the celebrated pathways of their travels that network the land. As well, the life histories of the artists and their forebears are memorialised in the well-worn tracks of their ancestors and depicted in the paintings. Adventure, astonishment, strangeness, beauty, and the suffering and tragedy of their lives are intimated with subtlety and grace.

The Jirrawun artists – Freddie Timms is one of the leading exponents of this style are the visual historians of a homeland, telling in pictures the originary tropes of its creation and significance, and the fate of its people during the frontier wars, the fate that has shaped their own view of their place in the world. The crypticism of both the visual and performative language of Aboriginal people can be explained, not only by reference to classical cultural principles, but also by their caution in revealing dangerous facts about recent history. This is especially so for the Gija and other peoples of the east Kimberley. From 1996 to 1999, with support from the Argyle Diamond Mine, the people who formed the Jirrawun artists group had joined with others in the region to establish the Daiwul Gija Culture Group as the vehicle for presenting a cross cultural awareness program to the mine workers. The official Course Notes published following the national accreditation of the course are entitled, “*Lirrarn Kerrem*” (*Lida-Garn Gedem, Teaching People to Understand*),²⁵ and they provide an insider’s account of local

history that is utterly chilling, with oral history accounts of two of the eleven massacres “known to have occurred in the Gija area”.²⁶ One of the accounts, provided by Hector Chunda relates the following:

From before the turn of the century to the 1940s, Aboriginal people were massacred in many parts of the East Kimberley. There was a massacre in the 1930s, the story of which was told by Hector Jandin: *This happened some time between 1928 and 1938. A milking cow kept by the hotel keeper at Turkey Creek went missing. Two Aboriginal stockmen from Queensland, who were working on the nearby station said that the cow had been killed by the local Aboriginal people (Kija/[Gija]). In a fit of rage, the hotel keeper set off with the two stockmen and found a group of Kija [Gija] women and children relaxing after their day’s work at the Station. They were rounded up against a big boob tree and shot and their bodies were burned, 26 women and children. One of them escaped and told the police, who chased the two Aboriginal stockmen and shot them. The police told the white hotel keeper to leave the district and he went to Wyndham. Shortly afterward, the milking cow wandered back! The people of Warmun have erected a memorial to their Mothers, Grandmothers, Aunts and Sisters who were killed. On All Souls Day each year they gather at that big tree before the memorial to have Mass and to pray. I asked Hector how the Aboriginal people could forgive us and he said: “If we do not forgive, Juwarri (the evil spirit) will enter us.” (Ngalangangpum School, undated)²⁷*

These stories are told not just as oral histories, but have become incorporated into ritual performances of *Ngarrannggani* (creative ancestral period) stories. These religious accounts connect mundane events to the spiritual world, such as the travels of the spirits of deceased people in the after life. This variation in accounts of these stories from one storyteller to another may be the result of the failing memory of the elderly raconteurs, or it may be that, as the stories become part of the song tradition performed with the ceremonies, the mnemonic stanzas have been altered, so that more than one version of the story is recounted among the group. In any case, there are, according to the Daiwul Gidja [Gija] founders who include many of the present artists, eleven massacres known to have occurred in the region. Their locations are listed as follows: Jailhouse Creek, Mistake Creek, Wartageny, Bedford Downs, Koondooloo Gorge, Spring Creek, White Rock, Queensland Creek, Panton River, Horse Shoe Creek, and Linnekar Gorge. The locations of the eleven remembered massacres are plotted on a map of the region.²⁸ In a way, these narratives demand a truce between the colonised and the coloniser.

The other is the future

In his Mabo Diary, John von Sturmer asked another question of his audience: “When, I wonder, will people be able to live a history which they themselves make, and which they themselves inscribe on their own living spaces?”²⁹ That there exist multiple, competing cultural logics among the groups of people in this country is evident; that each cultural mode constructs a place with its own people, history, emotional resonances, values must also be evident. To admit this, and to speak in fresh terms, without the baggage of *terra nullius*, and the historical language of racism, is the freedom and privilege of artists, writers and thinkers.

Social scientists and philosophers have written about our nature as ‘placelings’, destabilising conventional positivist ideas about place, and being in places; the ‘strange multiplicities’ of James Tully’s political studies,³⁰ and the philosophical investigations of place by E. S. Casey,³¹ and much other new literature resonates with the simple logic of co-existence of Aboriginal and Australian pastoral lease titles in the decision of the High Court of Australia in *Wik Peoples v Queensland*.³² Casey, perhaps better than any other writer, explains the nature of a given place:

Rather than being one definite sort of thing – for example, physical, spiritual, cultural, social – a given place takes on the qualities of its occupants, reflecting those qualities in its own constitution and description and expressing them in its occurrence as an event: places *are* not, they *happen*. (And it is because they happen that they lend themselves so well to narration, whether as history or as story.) Just as a particular place is at least several kinds of things, so there are many sorts of places and not one basic kind only – one supposedly supreme genus. Sorts of places depend on the kinds of things, as well as the actual things, that make them up . . . If, as Wallace Stevens put it, “a mythology reflects its region”, then a region reflects both what is held together there (its “contents”, its co-tenants) and how it is so held.³³

During the national debate on native title that followed the High Court’s decision in Mabo, John von Sturmer also deliberated on the refusal to engage, to make history, among Australians. Read this passage of his Mabo diary, for instance:

This is another type of refusal the key refusal in my view: an assumption that the other must always be other, inexorably, irrevocably other. . . . there is no real purchase to the idea that the important form of sociality is already in place, negotiated not exactly from scratch, but with a freshness that says that sociality is always possible, and on new bases. The audience is right to claim its reality; but an audience that defines itself as audience is constituting itself as witness only; it refuses the possibility of engagement. Not that it wishes to be innocent bystander. No, it wishes to be implicated – but not to move, not to alter its definitions of its own forms of sociality.³⁴

He reminds us that we become victims of the past when “intellectual pursuits are made subservient to undoing the wrongs of the past, . . . it is a subtle or unsubtle form of subversion in favour of very conservative forces”. It is necessary to engage, to make history, to be implicated, and to change. Looking back at the past might be enlightening, but it can also be enervating. Innovation is required to make a new possibility, and this requires critical imagination and not merely historical deliberation. How to re-imagine settler society in Australia without implicating the future in a rehash of racism and barbarity? Postcolonial subjectivities depicted with all their pleasurable and painful aspects provide part of the answer, as Dowling and Timms have shown.

Professor Marcia Langton AM

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^[27] *Ibid.*
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terra era

*Perception is a sort of directed 'questioning' of our (inner and outer) environment. We experience conscious imagery when we persist in our 'questioning' even though there is no positive answer to be had.*¹

site/dig

‘ready, set, go’
me and marbuk are at the bottom of our street.
it’s 1967.
i’m 5 and he’s 7.
me and marbuk are best friends.
we play this game every second day.
we start at the bottom of our street and we count how many steps it takes us to get to the top of the hill.
halfway up we lose count.
‘start again’
‘no’
‘start again’
‘it’s too hot’
start again....
ready?

site/place

I remember playing this game because it was fun. Inevitably we would lose our place before we had got even halfway up the hill and we would have to go back to the beginning...

I’m deep in thought. My experience tells me that in order to ‘start again’ I will have to try and forget everything that I know ... A huge imaginative leap is required before I am even able to envisage the concept of *Terra Alterius: Land of Another* and I am not sure that I can do it.

site/dig

Another recollection comes flooding back.

i am a small child growing up in a New South Wales country town.
i have a sister, a dad and mum is pregnant.
my nanna and pop live next door to us on the hill.²
i love the hill, the dirt road, the open sky, the large tin huts, the trees and the tree shelter that pop builds for us.
i watch pop as he cuts down four trees and then pulls all the branches and leaves off the tree trunks. dad helps him put it all together and then pop and dad drink a cup of tea because they have finished our new tree shelter.

‘it usually takes about a week,’ my pop reckons, ‘to make a tree shelter.’ and he promises me that i can help him make a new one when i am 6 or 7.
the stove is in the tin hut and mum cooks inside but we eat outside under our tree shelter. there is a table and heaps of chairs because mum always feeds lots of people.
ten families live on the hill and each family has a tree shelter.

one day all of this disappears and we move.
but nanna and pop stay on the hill.

i love my nanna but i am troubled because she seems so far away.
mum reckons that we can walk over and see her but i am not sure where nanna lives anymore...

actuality ...

When the white assimilation policy came to Coonabarabran we moved from the hill into town. Our street address was 11 White Street, Coonabarabran, NSW 2357.
Mum got new furniture so she was happy. I was closer to my best friend but further away from my nanna so I was sort of happy. And my sister would have been happy if Mum had bought her a hippopotamus.

reality ...

In February 1967 I knew nothing about how the British had invaded Australia, *terra nullius*, colonisation, or that on May 27 of that same year the Australian Government would hold a referendum, which would finally give us BLAKS³ citizenship rights in our own country...

site/place

I am having a really hard time trying to perform my imaginative leap. I decide to try and stop thinking when Marbuk’s voice interrupts my thoughts:

site/dig

‘bet i can beat you! how many steps do you reckon it takes to get to the top of white street?’
i make a wild guess, ‘maybe about two hundred?’
marbuk reckons it’s more like fifty thousand!
mum yells at us from inside our new house, ‘i hope you kids are not playing in the street.’ we are!

mum never seems to understand how important our games are. marbuk and me are on an adventure. we are in the process of discovering a whole new world. we ignore mum and we start to count – out loud so that we can’t cheat.

site/place

I was a kid, who, so I am told, lived mostly in the realm of my imagination.

So why is my imagination being so uncooperative right now when I really need it to take over and to push memory into the background?
Memory was certainly enjoying having so much open space to meander about in and seemed determined to keep me completely locked in my Coonabarabran childhood! I attempt to surprise memory with a reality check.
It is 2004.
I am sitting in my house in Sydney.
I am trying, desperately, to imagine what it would have been like if the British had arrived in Australia and acknowledged that the land was already occupied? *Terra alterius* not *terra nullius*. I am struggling because my imagination seems completely unable to comprehend this idea. It is stubbornly refusing to provide me with either image or insight.
My imaginative resistance is overwhelming. Why can’t I get in?
A small glimpse, even a hint of what I am trying to conjure up would help!

I feel like a magician who is trying to pull a rabbit out of a hat without the hat or the rabbit!

Why is it so hard for me to imagine *terra alterius*? One land, two cultures. The Europeans meet the Indigenous people for the first time. They agree to co-exist equally, to live side-by-side with mutual respect for each other’s existence and law and with absolute acceptance for one another’s cultural differences.
Perhaps it is because I was forced to learn another story.
A story that was repeated to me *ad infinitum* and legitimised by teachers, historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, clergymen and women, government officials, the media and more recently Mr John Howard. This onslaught of repetitive fiction was supposed to make me forget my real story. I cannot forget.

I try a different tactic. I attempt to force my imagination into action with a series of questions that begin with ‘what if?’

What if I had grown up at the following address, 11 Gamilaraay Street, Coonabarabran, NSW 2357?

What if the first words that I spoke were *yama, ngambaa, bidjirr, bagaan, baagi, dhuyul, maalaabidi, gunagala, marrabaad*⁴ instead of *hello, mum, biscuit, sister, hill, nanna, sky, big tree*, and *good*?

What if some of the people spoke like this and other people spoke something else but it didn’t matter because we all wanted to learn to speak to each other and to see the world from each other’s perspective/s?

What if...?
What if...?
What if...?

Suddenly my imagination rebels. It point blank refuses to contemplate...
ruminate...engage...respond...or to even humour me. No more questions that begin with ‘what if’ ok?

delete/delete/delete/default/remove.

Emotion realises that this is the moment that it has been waiting for. Just as I begin to think that there might be another way to get a picture of Australia as *Terra Alterius: Land of Another* emotion makes its move on me. A huge wave engulfs me...

I reach for the self-help books that I have borrowed from friends who assure me that a solution to any and all feelings can be found ...

I frantically flick through chapters/headings/ words. The books tell me that I can positively deal with, overcome and emerge from ‘sadness, loss, grief, abandonment, isolation, learn to integrate my disowned parts and to clearly identify the many faces of shame that bind me’. But nothing at this point seems to be able to stop my tumultuous feelings of desolation.

Emotion has swamped my imagination. I am trapped. I can’t go back and I can’t go forward!

site/dig

Without warning, Mum’s voice bursts into my head. I look around where is she?

‘stop playing in the sand. you are putting dirt all over the food. come and eat your supper. sit up at the table. nanna will help you.’

nanna likes my sand drawings. she makes up stories about them. we sit for hours nanna and me playing this game and nanna turns my shapes into things – owls, trees, rocks, rivers, roos, possums and porcupines. ‘what’s a porcupine, nanna?’

nanna’s pretty smart. she knows lots of stuff that I don’t know. mum reckons its because nanna has lived in Manila, Cootamundra, Strathfield, Tamworth, Breeza, Barradine and Coonabarabran.
mum starts to explain to me that ‘Coonabarabran is not nanna’s true country. she came here after.’ mum stops unexpectedly, her voice trails off. ‘eat your supper.’
her country? but we all live in Australia, don’t we?
i have no idea where Cootamundra is. maybe it’s another country!
so i ask, ‘where’s Cootamundra?’ i like the sound of Cootamundra because it sounds a bit like Coonabarabran.

mum and nanna look at each other but they don’t answer my question.
this happens a lot in my small-girl world. i am beginning to sense that my nanna and my mum have lots of secrets.
but I accept their silence because I have lots of secrets too.
i eat my food slowly. i am thinking about what this place Cootamundra looks like. i have never been to another country! i decide that i will try and draw it after i finish my supper and then when nanna sees my drawing maybe she will tell me her Cootamundra story. it doesn’t work. nanna helps mum with the dishes!

site/place

‘Imagination is more important than knowledge’. This quote by Albert Einstein drifts into my mind. I think about it. I am not sure. I know that when I am creating art that my imagination leads me into a world of symbols, metaphors and abstractions and as a kid it was my imagination that kept me connected to my spirit. But as an adult I have had to learn how to deal with the harsh realities and pain that my true knowledge of how Australia was colonised has bequeathed to me. Sometimes I cannot find the words or clearly identify the complexity of feelings. How do you put loss into words?
My imagination wants to create a new piece of art. It starts bullying me. It is wayward. It ignores time, responsibilities, bills that need to be paid, washing that needs doing, the phone calls, the emails, even food.

I understand! A brief moment of insight comes my way ...in art it is at least possible to find form for all imaginative possibilities.

‘It is the way in which I (we) can envisage the world, it can bring fragments together and make them whole, it can go over and over the same things and look at them in different ways, it can examine and evoke the mood and sensibility of historical and contemporary moments’ (with respect to bell hooks).⁵

Art is ultimately a way by which we can all, if we want to, start again. We can re-think our past and put into action how we want our future to be ... one land?

*Imagination is what makes our sensory experiences meaningful, enabling us to interpret and make sense of it, whether from a conventional perspective or from a fresh, original, individual one. It is what makes perception more than the mere physical stimulation of sense organs. It also produces mental imagery, visual and otherwise, which is what makes it possible for us to think outside the confines of our present perceptual reality, to consider memories of the past and possibilities for the future, and to weigh alternatives against one another. Thus, imagination makes possible all our thinking about what is, what has been, and, perhaps most important, what might be.*⁶

r e a

¹ Thomas, N.J.T. (<http://www.calstatela.edu/faculty/nthomas/home.htm>) 8th July 2004.

² ‘Hill’ refers to Gunnedah Hill Mission, Gunnedah Road, Coonabarabran, NSW.

³ The term ‘Blak,’ was developed by Destiny Deacon as part of a symbolic but potent strategy of reclaiming colonialist language to create means of self-definition and expression.

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⁵ Hooks, B., *Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood*, London: The Women’s Press Ltd, 1997.

⁶ Thomas, N.J.T., *Op. cit.*

BIOGRAPHIES

Gordon Bennett

b.1955, Monto, Queensland

Gordon Bennett graduated from the Queensland College of Art, Brisbane, in 1988 and has since exhibited widely in significant exhibitions nationally and internationally. His work is largely concerned with mapping alternative histories and ideas in postcolonial Australia, rejecting racial labels and stereotypes.

In the late 1990s, Bennett began a ‘dialogue’ with the work of the late Jean Michel Basquiat, a New York artist seen by Bennett as someone outside Australia who shared both a similar Western cultural tradition and an obsession with drawing, semiotics and visual language. Bennett’s *Notes to Basquiat* culminated in a series of works produced in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks on New York in 2001. Bennett’s subsequent *Camouflage* series (2003) references the war in Iraq and issues of secrecy. His most recent abstract works extend the notion of camouflage, dissolving the appearance of difference.

Bennett has exhibited widely and is nationally and internationally recognised for his work, with representation in biennales in Sydney, Venice, Kwangju, Shanghai and Cuba, and in major exhibitions of contemporary art in the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Italy, Denmark, Canada, South Africa and Japan.

Bennett has received several major awards, including the Moët & Chandon Australian Art Fellowship (1991) and the John McCaughey Memorial Art Prize, National Gallery of Victoria (1997). His work is held in all major public art collections in Australia and in 1996 was the subject of a major publication.

Barbara Campbell-Allen

b.1953, Griffith, New South Wales

Barbara Campbell-Allen is a ceramic artist with many years experience in the delicate process of long wood-fired ceramics. She trained at the National Art School in Sydney, and later at the Gippsland Centre for Design and Art. Campbell-Allen holds a Masters of Arts (Visual Arts). Her work for this degree began an exploration into a contemporary interpretation of the extraordinary, naturally generated glaze effects only found in traditional wood firing techniques. Campbell-Allen utilises paperclay, a blend of paper fibre and clay, which enables the making of light highly sculpted work. She combines this material with wood firing to produce work with unique form, texture and depth of surface. This work is often closely related to natural landforms as aesthetic environments, which form a source of stimulation and inspiration.

Campbell-Allen’s work has been seen in both solo and group exhibitions, and is published in the leading ceramics journals of Australia and America. She combines a successful art practice with teaching at the Workshop Arts Centre in Sydney and the curating of ceramic exhibitions.

Julie Dowling

Yamatji/Noongar

b.1969, Perth, Western Australia

Julie Dowling studied art at the Perth Metropolitan TAFE, has a Bachelor of Fine Art, Curtin University and a Diploma of Fine Art, Claremont School of Art. She has held regular solo exhibitions since 1995. Her paintings are inspired by her family, culture and community, acting as an extension of her family’s oral history through images and stories of herself, relatives and ancestors. More broadly they explore cultural identities, contemporary struggles and the wider representation of Aboriginal people.

Personal oral histories provide the primary sources for her work, whilst also adopting the conventions that served to define Indigenous peoples such as photographs, official and religious documents, portraits and colonial representations. Each work has a distinct theme and symbolic motif often incorporating text or accompanied by a narrative text.

Dowling has been included in important exhibitions both nationally and internationally such as *Art Australia*, Zeitgenössische Kunst, Germany 2003, *New Painting in Australia:2*, Ian Potter Museum, Melbourne, and Art Gallery of New South Wales 2002, *Spirit Country*, Gantner Myer collection of Contemporary Aboriginal Art, Melbourne Museum 2002 and *Federation*, National Gallery of Australia 2001. She has also been selected for the *Torres Srrait Islander Art Award*, Northern Territory Museum & Art Gallery annually from 1998 to 2002. Dowling has received many grants and awards and her work is held in most major state collections in Australia as well as in international collections.

Shaun Gladwell + Michael Schiavello

Shaun Gladwell

b.1972, Sydney, New South Wales

Shaun Gladwell is an accomplished painter, sculptor and video artist whose work encompasses images and ideas that cross cultural and historical boundaries. A Samstag scholar, Gladwell completed postgraduate studies at Goldsmiths College, University of London, following three months at the Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris. In 2003, Gladwell’s work featured in several major exhibitions, including *Home Sweet Home: Works from the Peter Fay Collection* at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, and *Primavera 2003: Exhibiition of Young Australian Artists* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney.

Gladwell’s practice has been noted for its concerns with the: “creative distortions resulting from the transmission of images and ideas between different cultural zones and historical periods”.

Gladwell is represented in numerous collections including the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, private collections in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. He has been included in significant exhibitions at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra and Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney as well as solo shows at Sherman Galleries, Sydney.

Michael Schiavello

b.1967, Gerocarne, Italy

Michael Schiavello practices in time based media, often working cross-culturally in collaborations that explore observations of inter cultural polemics. Schiavello has a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours) from College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales and is presently undertaking a Master of Fine Arts. His films have been screened at *FIM, Festival Da Imagen Em Movimento*, Salvador- Bahia-Brazil 1998, *Landscapes, Mediascapes*, Sydney Film Festival 2001 and *Contagion* at the New Zealand Film Archives in Wellington 2001. He was awarded for his work at the *Changing Images* Festival at Carnivale 2000.

Schiavello has been included in several thematically curated group exhibitions including *Terrain*, Bathurst Regional Gallery, NSW 2003, *Italiani di Sydney*, Museum of Sydney 2003 and *Work Rest Play (escape)* Artspace, Sydney 2002. His work is held in the collections of Museum of Sydney, National Innovation Centre, Sydney; New Zealand Film Archives, Wellington; Artspace, Auckland and Australian National Transport Museum.

Jonathan Jones

Wiradjuri/Kamilaroi

b.1978, Sydney, New South Wales

Jonathan Jones is a collaborative installation artist, who works with light and line in an effort to create representations of the symbiotic relationship of the individual and community. Jones has worked on various exhibitions, nationally and internationally, within an analytical Pacific and Indigenous paradigm. Collaborative exhibitions include *2004* with Darren Dale and David Page at Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne, *The Sound of Missing Objects* in 2003 with Iliara Vanni and Panos Couros and *Reckonings* in 2001 with Nuha Sadd, Ruark Lewis and Romaine Morton, both at The Performance Space, Sydney, and *Red Out* in 2002 a collaborative exhibition with Jim Vivieaere, Contemporary Art Foundation of Auckland, New Zealand.

In 2002 Jones received the Biannual New South Wales Indigenous Artists Fellowship after holding the position of curator at Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-operative Ltd for two years. Jones currently works at the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Joanne Searle

b.1977, Brisbane, Queensland

Joanne Searle is a ceramic artist living and working in the Australian Capital Territory. Her work has been influenced by patterns and textures found in natural objects and the act of collection. In 1999 she was awarded a First Class Honours, Bachelor of Arts Degree from the Australian National University, School of Art. Since graduating, Searle has exhibited widely both nationally and internationally. Most notably, in 2003 she was the only Australian artist to be selected to represent Australia at the 53rd Premio International Ceramics Award at Faenza, Italy. In 2004, she was invited to participate in the Asia Pacific Students Workshop at the University of Hawaii, USA. Searle currently lectures in Ceramics at the Australian National University School of Art and is also co-ordinator of the Distance Education Ceramics Program at ANU.

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, as part of its Craft-inSite Initiative managed by CraftACT.

Esme Timbery

Bidjigal

Esme Timbery employs the classical practices and techniques of women’s shell work to create culturally sublime representations of Australia’s architectural iconography. Her artwork testifies to the oldest urban Aboriginal community at La Perouse on the shores of Botany Bay. Timbery’s knowledge of her Bidjigal country is intimate, collecting shells from La Perouse and Cronulla to Wreck Bay in the south.

Working alongside her mother Elizabeth and sister Rose, Timbery started her own practice in the 1950s and follows her great-grandmother, Queen Emma Timbery, the pioneer of shell work who exhibited in London in 1910. Timbery and her family exhibited and sold their work at the Timbery Family Stall at the Sydney Markets and Royal Easter Show, today her work is often sold through her nephew Laddie Timbery at ‘the loop’ at La Perouse.

Apart from her signature Harbour Bridges, Timbery also makes baby slippers, picture frames and jewellery boxes and recently has worked on special commissions including the Sydney Opera House. Timbery fashions cardboard to be carefully overlaid with fabric and finally covered with a sequence of shell patterns, inspired by her mother’s designs and silver glitter.

Freddie Timms

Gija

b.1946, Bedford Downs Station, Northern Territory

Freddie Timms is a senior Warnum artist from the East Kimberley region of Western Australia. His paintings are like aerial maps of the bones of the country where he lived and worked all his life. Timms maps the landscape on a topographic level showing features such as the black soil, red ground, sandy ground, hills, creeks and water holes. He also uses historical and spiritual places showing roads, stock yards, homesteads and dreaming places.

He says “I think about the country where I was walking and camping, all the main water holes, all the camping areas. I remember the places where I used to go mustering and I follow them up with my painting”.

Timms’s paintings have been exhibited extensively internationally – London, Paris, Düsseldorf, Tokyo, Chicago, Miami and Auckland. He is represented in major public and private collections throughout Australia.

Lynette Wallworth

b.1961, Sydney, New South Wales

Lynette Wallworth is a multi media practitioner who works in DVD installation, photography, short film and performance. Wallworth is supported by the Australia Council for the Arts through a two year fellowship program from the New Media Arts Board, which will allow her to develop new works through residencies in Iran, Massachusetts and at the Lode Star Observatory, New Mexico.

In 2002 Wallworth was Associate Director of the Adelaide Festival, she was a member of the curatorial and working committees for the Adelaide Biennial Exhibition, *ConVerge* on collaborations between artists and scientists and *Art of Dissent* a national conference on dissent, politics and artists working with communities.

The Australian Centre for the Moving Image commissioned a major work *Hold: Vessel 1*, an interactive installation, which was first exhibited at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in *Space Odysseys: Sensation and Immersion* in 2001. Her recent work concentrates largely on interactive installations that explore the intimacy and immensity of the natural world and our relationship to it. She is currently developing new works that explore the role of the participant/viewer to the installation environment.

Guan Wei

b.1957, Beijing, China

In 1989, having graduated from the Department of Fine Arts at Beijing Capital University in 1986, Guan Wei came to Australia as artist-in-residency at the Tasmanian School of Art. He undertook two further residencies at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney in 1992-93 and at the Australian National University School of Art in 1993-94.

Guan Wei’s work has a profoundly felt, if implicitly ironic moral dimension. It is equally the product of his rich, cultural repertory of symbols – and his informed socio-political awareness – born of his experience of the contrasting realities of his former home, China, and (since 1989) his new home, Australia.

Guan Wei has held twenty-five solo exhibitions; and he has been included in numerous significant contemporary exhibitions in Australia and internationally, such as *The Rose Crossing*, 1999 – 2000, *Lines of Descent*, touring in 2000–2001, and survey exhibitions such as the *Third Asia-Pacific Triennial* in Brisbane, 1999. Amongst his recent awards are the Asia Link Grant, Mosman Art Prize, the 39th Festival of Fisher’s Ghost Award and in 2002 he was awarded the Art Gallery of New South Wales’ The Sulman Prize.

Lena Yarinkura

Kune/Rembarrnga

b.1961, Central Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

Lena Yarinkura began painting in 1980 and currently practices at Maningrida Arts & Culture in Arnhem Land, Northern Territory. Her work draws from a variety of traditional and non-traditional mediums including fibre based ceremonial regalia, twined baskets, fibre sculptures and dilly bags as well as bronze and aluminium sculptures, hollow log coffins and carved and painted wooden sculptures. Yarinkura references clan mythologies, incorporating figures and animals such as mermaid, dog, crocodile and various other species from south-central Arnhem Land for example the bandicoot, spotted quoll and bush rat.

Lena Yarinkura has been included in many significant exhibitions internationally and nationally at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney 2003; Rebecca Hossack Gallery, London 2004; *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award*, Museum and Art Gallery of Northern Territory 2002; *National Sculpture Prize*, National Gallery of Australia 2001 and the *2000 Biennale of Sydney*.

Her work is held in the collections of state galleries in New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria, Queensland and Northern Territory as well as the Maningrida Collection, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; National Maritime Museum, Sydney; The Kelton Foundation, Santa Monica, California, USA and Walonia Aboriginal Art, Netherlands.

WRITERS' BIOGRAPHIES

Professor Marcia Langton, AM

Marcia Langton was appointed Inaugural Professor of Australian Indigenous Studies at the University of Melbourne in 2000. In 2002 Professor Langton was named joint winner (with Larissa Behrendt of the University of Technology, Sydney) of the inaugural Neville Bonner Award for Indigenous Teacher of the Year. The award recognised outstanding work by Indigenous university teachers. Professor Langton is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia and was recently appointed to the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee on Indigenous Higher Education. Langton is a descendant of the Yiman and Bidjara peoples of the central and western regions of Queensland.

r e a

r e a is a visual artist from the Gamilaraay/Wailwan people; she was born in 1962 in Coonabarabran, NSW and lives in Sydney. She has a Bachelor of Fine Arts from UNSW College of Fine Arts, Sydney and a Master of Art by Research from the Institute of the Arts, The Australian National University, Canberra. She works in the medium of photography and digital technologies and her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally.

In 2000 r e a was awarded the Biennial Indigenous Arts Fellowship from the NSW Ministry for the Arts she was also awarded an International Visual Arts Samstag Scholarship to study overseas for the year 2002. In 2003 she completed a Masters degree in Science, Digital Imaging and Design at New York University's Center for Advanced Digital Applications (CADA).

LIST OF WORKS

Gordon Bennett

Number 28 2003
acrylic on linen
152 x 152 cm
courtesy the artist and Sherman Galleries, Sydney

Number 32 2003
acrylic on linen
152 x 152 cm
courtesy the artist and Sherman Galleries, Sydney

Barbara Campbell-Allen

Old Rivers 2004
woodfired stoneware, porcelain & paperclay with natural ash glaze
each individual component 15 x 50 x 50 cm, installation size variable
courtesy the artist

Julie Dowling

Dispossession series: Lizzy, Tully, Spacey 2004
acrylic, red ochre & plastic on canvas
120 x 100 cm each
courtesy the artist and Artplace, Perth

Shaun Gladwell + Michael Schiavello

Retread 2004
Aluminium alloy bicycle & mixed media
60 x 150 x 70 cm
courtesy the artists and Sherman Galleries, Sydney

Jonathan Jones

Antipodes 1A, 2A, 3A 2004
cotton thread, paper
42 x 111.5 cm each
courtesy the artist and Gallery Barry Keldoulis, Sydney

Joanne Searle

Untitled 1-4 2004
ceramic, stains, oxides & terrassigillata
15 x 40 x 15 cm each
courtesy the artist

Esme Timbery

Untitled (Harbour Bridge) 2002
Polystyrene, wood, PVA glue, fabric & shell
35 x 90 x 106 cm
collection: Sydney Opera House

Untitled (Opera House) 2002
Polystyrene, wood, PVA glue, fabric & shell
32 x 54.5 x 82 cm
collection: Sydney Opera House

Freddie Timms

Stoney Creek, Sally Malay Mine 2003
ochre & cadmium yellow pigment with binders on Belgian linen
180 x 300 cm
courtesy the artist and Gould Galleries, Melbourne

Lynette Wallworth

Still: Waiting 2004
DVD, surround sound, sensor activated environment
Greg Ferris – On-line Edit
Penny Hagen – Interaction Design
Nicholas Hannah – Sensor Programming
Robert Hindley – Sound Design
David Mackenzie – Camera/Sound/Off-line Edit
Brian Walshaw – Wood Turning
Still: Waiting has been made possible by the generous support of Ivan Dougherty Gallery, UNSW COFA
courtesy the artist

Guan Wei

Exotic Flowers & Rare Grasses 11-16 2001
acrylic on stretched canvas
87 x 46 cm each
courtesy the artist and Sherman Galleries, Sydney

Big Mouse Kingdom 2004
acrylic on plasterboard
350 x 800 cm
courtesy the artist and Sherman Galleries, Sydney

Lena Yarinkura

Untitled (Mice in tree) 2004
cottonwood, pandanus spirals, ochre pigments with PVA
218 x 48 x 50 cm
courtesy the artist and Maningrida Arts & Culture, Northern Territory

DEDICATION

For Betty Little.

Several years ago, in a lecture on Aboriginal history and culture, I asked the lecturer, Betty Little, "What would a reconciled Australia look like?" Ms Little answered, "People would respect me. They would not look down on me." I was shocked by her answer – by the personal pain it evidenced, and because she did not articulate a list of formal political and social changes. In the three years I have been working on this exhibition, I have learned the completeness of her response.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This exhibition could not have happened without the support and work of many people, primarily the artists, who responded to the exhibition concept with generosity and commitment and who have brought *Terra Alterius: Land of Another* into existence.

In addition, I would like to thank the following:

The Eora People, for giving permission to Ivan Dougherty Gallery to develop and host *Terra Alterius: Land of Another* on their land.

Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-operative Ltd, particularly Tracey Duncan, Curator, for its support of the exhibition.

The sponsors of the exhibition, MGF (NSW) (funded by NSW Ministry of the Arts and the Australia Council), NETS Australia, The Gordon Darling Foundation and UNSW College of Fine Arts, for their generous financial and practical support of the exhibition.

The Indigenous Reference Group for their invaluable experience and advice. In particular I would like to thank Julie Dowling for discussions of post-colonial theory; Sue Green for her sure sense of appropriateness and community; and Jonathan Jones for curatorial advice and insight.

Catherine Freyne, for the wonderful phrase *terra alterius*.

The supervisors of the thesis for which this exhibition is research, Nick Waterlow OAM, Director of Ivan Dougherty Gallery, and Joanna Mendelsohn, Associate Professor, School of Art History and Theory, both of the UNSW College of Fine Arts. Nick Waterlow, in accepting my exhibition proposal for IDG, has given me an opportunity and trust of a rare order. He has also written a foreword in this catalogue that captures the ambition and prospect of the exhibition. Joanna Mendelsohn encouraged me to enrol in the Master of Art Administration (Honours) degree, and has been unfailing in her encouragement and support since.

The staff of IDG, especially Rilka Oakley, for her mentorship and, assisted by Annabel Pegus, exhibition management.

Professor Marcia Langton, SAGES, The University of Melbourne, and new media artist and curator r e a, for their powerful essays in response to the concept of *terra alterius*.

Dr Penny McKeon and Kim Snepvangers, Head and Lecturer of the School of Art Education, UNSW College of Fine Arts respectively, and their students, Angela Boardman, Robert Caggegi, Alex Cyreszko, Tanya Demello, Kirsten Duncombe, Emma Fenton, Brian Fisher, Kelly Harris, Penny-Ann Knight, Zoh McEnally, Claire Platt-Hepworth, Jacqueline Pugh, Natalie Pullen and Melinda Robertson, for the thoughtful and stimulating education programs that accompany this exhibition.

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I am indebted to Ricky Campbell-Allen, for long discussions on every aspect of this exhibition, and to my family and Peter Wagner for distractions and support.

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Terra Alterius: Land of Another 20 August – 25 September 2004

Curator: Margaret Farmer

Indigenous Reference Group: Julie Dowling (Yamatji/Noongar), Sue Green (Wiradjuri), Jonathan Jones (Wiradjuri/Kamilaroi)

Education programs: Dr Penny McKeon, Kim Snepvangers, Angela Boardman, Robert Caggegi, Alex Cyreszko, Tanya Demello, Kirsten Duncombe, Emma Fenton, Brian Fisher, Kelly Harris, Penny Knight, Zoh McEnally, Claire Platt-Hepworth, Jacqueline Pugh, Natalie Pullen and Melinda Robertson

Exhibition management: Rilka Oakley assisted by Annabel Pegus

Tour management: Museums and Galleries Foundation of NSW – Dolla Merrillees, Dominique Nagy (until March 2004), Susie Quinn and Adam Weiderman

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The Others © Marcia Langton

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