

James Tylor

Turrangka... in the shadows

12 May – 30 July 2023
UNSW Galleries, Sydney

22 September – 17 November 2023
Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne

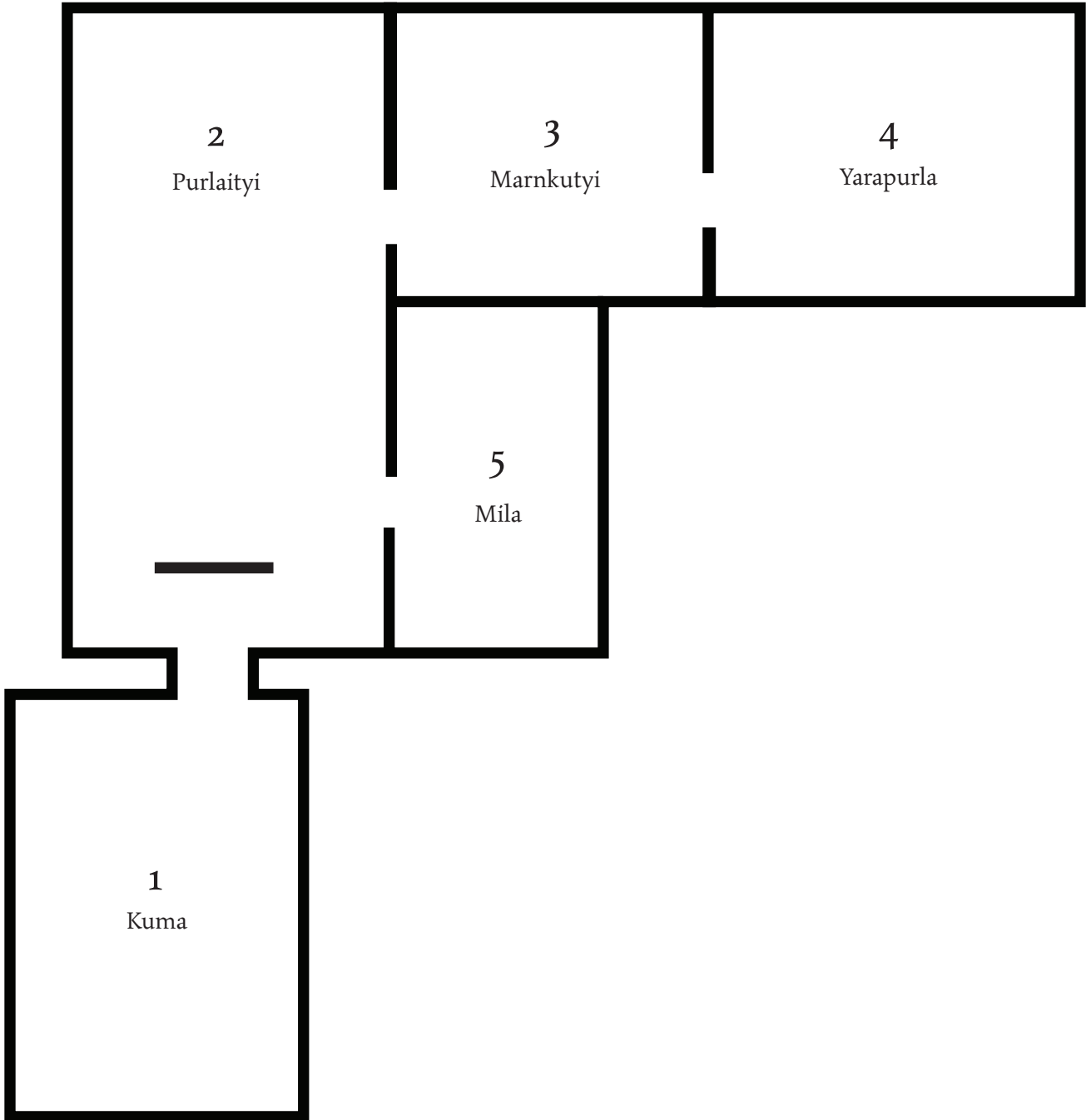
Multi-disciplinary artist James Tylor combines historical and contemporary photographic processes to explore his Nunga (Kaurua Miyurna), Māori (Te Arawa) and European (English, Scottish, Irish, Dutch and Norwegian) ancestry.

‘Turrangka...in the shadows’ unites a decade of Tylor’s practice and, for the first time, brings together the most comprehensive selection of his unique daguerreotypes, expansive digital photographic series, hand-made Kaurua cultural objects, and furniture. The exhibition title is drawn from a Kaurua word, highlighting a significant ongoing aspect of Tylor’s practice: the learning and sharing of his Indigenous language. As well as shadow, *turra* also translates to reflection, image, and mirror.

At the core of Tylor’s practice is a continuously innovative programme of photographic intervention, disrupting the image to redact or highlight visual information. He systematically alters the reading of Country by excising information from the photographic print or inscribing language and place-names onto the surface of his daguerreotypes. These photographs provide a glimpse into Tylor’s broader practice of recreating Kaurua cultural artefacts, architecture, and ephemera. Antiquated analogue photographic processes including Becquerel daguerreotypes and hand-tinting are also used to generate a new archive of pseudo-historical images. Tylor’s recreations point to the absence of these images from the hegemonic depiction of colonial Australia’s visual history.

These strategies are at the service of exploring the suppression and erasure of Aboriginal cultural history from the Australian landscape through the ongoing legacy of colonialism. Tylor considers his actions of learning Kaurua language and reviving culture on Country as a means of repatriation. ‘Turrangka...in the shadows’ looks at the complex interplay of techniques and the incisive observations on Australia’s fraught history that characterise Tylor’s prolific and profound artistic practice.

Curator: Leigh Robb



1. Kuma

Turralayinthe Yarta is a Kurna Miyurna phrase with a double meaning – it translates to ‘landscape photography’, as well as ‘to see yourself in the landscape’. A starting point for the exhibition, these photographs and Kurna mudli, tools or ceremonial objects, connect to the two-year journey James Tylor undertook, traversing over 300 kilometres of the Hans Heysen trail through the Mount Lofty and Flinders Ranges, from Cape Jervis in the south to Wilpena Pound in the north. The Heysen trail is named after the German Australian colonial landscape painter Sir Hans Heysen and passes over many different Nunga nations such as Ramindjeri, Ngarrindjeri, Kurna Miyurna, Peramangk, Ngadjuri, Adnyamathanha, and Nukunu lands. Combining photographs and traditional Nunga designs, the artist acknowledges Nunga nations throughout this series with traditional language, and motifs painted in ochre, charcoal and pipeclay that the artist sourced from the locations in the photographs.

Please do not touch any of the artworks.

From left to right

Turralayinthe Yarta 2017

Inkjet print on Hahnemühle paper with ochre, pipeclay and charcoal

Turralayinthe Yarta (Yarlu)
Turralayinthe Yarta (Mukurta)
Turralayinthe Yarta (Turru)
Turralayinthe Yarta (Wama)
Turralayinthe Yarta (Nukuna)
Turralayinthe Yarta (Miyurna)
Turralayinthe Yarta (Yaki)
Turralayinthe Yarta (Wirramiyu)

Turralayinthe Yarta (Tirntu Kakirra Yarta)

Courtesy of the artist, N.Smith Gallery and GAGPROJECTS

Turralayinthe Yarta Mudli/Belongings 2017

Timber, twine and ochre paint

Patha Yukuna/ Foundation Tree
Yuridla/ Mount Lofty and Mount Bonthyon
Karrawirrapari/ River Torrens
Kurdanyi/ Rainbow
Tirntu/ Sun
Tininyarrarna, Kurrkukurrkurra/ Seven Sisters
Piki/ Moon

Courtesy of the artist and N.Smith Gallery

2. Purlaityi

The central gallery brings together two defining bodies of work: *From an Untouched Landscape* and *Un-resettling*. The first responds to the colonial removal of culture from the Australian landscape, and the latter reflects on Tylor’s Kurna ancestry and Indigenous identity through the learning and reclaiming of traditional practices.

From an Untouched Landscape is an expanded installation that unites photographs and painted wood mudli or tools and hunting implements made by the artist such as wirri/clubs; ipila/clap sticks; kaya/grasstree spears; and wadna/climbing sticks. The artist has taken photographs on Marri Yarta, Peramangk, Nagdjuri and Kurna country – from the eastern side of the Adelaide Hills to the Barossa Valley to the Fleurieu Peninsula. Several photographs were taken on the Angas family farm in the Barossa Valley on Ngadjuri Country.

George Fife Angas was the chairperson of the South Australian Company that colonised South Australia in 1836, and led the dispossession of Aboriginal people from their traditional lands to vacate and sell it to British colonial settlers. Aboriginal people were forced off their land into government-owned Christian missions in the nineteenth century and banned from speaking language or practicing culture. Tylor has deliberately excised and deleted sections from the landscapes to draw attention to this profound loss, and to the blind spots in our collective memory.

Un-resettling is a hand-coloured photographic series through which Tylor has learnt and documented a range of traditional Kurna cultural practices that have been lost through the European colonisation of Australia. From building dwellings and land markers, constructing snares and traps, crafting tools and weapons for hunting, Tylor systematically learnt these practices on Country, documenting them through digital photography, before hand-colouring each image. The relationship between the digital and hand-made, the traditional and the contemporary, are bridged in these works which reaffirm traditional practices.

Economics of Water 2018

Inkjet print on Hahnemühle paper with metallic gold vinyl laminate

Economics of Water #2 (Division)
Economics of Water #10 (Canal)

Courtesy of the artist and N.Smith Gallery and Vivien Anderson Gallery

From an Untouched Landscape

(Deleted Scenes) 2013

(Erased Scenes) 2014

(Removed Scenes) 2018

(Vanished Scenes) 2018

Inkjet print on Hahnemühle paper with hole removed to a black velvet void

(Removed Scenes) from an Untouched Landscape #8
(Vanished Scenes) from an Untouched Landscape #12
(Deleted Scenes) from an Untouched Landscape #2

(Vanished Scenes) from an Untouched Landscape #15
(Deleted Scenes) from an Untouched Landscape #14
(Deleted Scenes) from an Untouched Landscape #10
(Vanished Scenes) from an Untouched Landscape #6
(Deleted Scenes) from an Untouched Landscape #12
(Vanished Scenes) from an Untouched Landscape #4
(Erased Scenes) from an Untouched Landscape #7
(Erased Scenes) from an Untouched Landscape #2
(Erased Scenes) from an Untouched Landscape #1
(Erased Scenes) from an Untouched Landscape #14
(Erased Scenes) from an Untouched Landscape #10
(Erased Scenes) from an Untouched Landscape #8
(Vanished Scenes) from an Untouched Landscape #2
(Erased Scenes) from an Untouched Landscape #13
(Vanished Scenes) from an Untouched Landscape #3
(Removed Scenes) from an Untouched Landscape #5

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery and N.Smith Gallery

From an Untouched Landscape

Mudli/Belongings 2020
Timber and black paint

Midla/ Spearthrower #1
Warkiti/ Tongs
Ngarlawirri/ Long Wooden Sword
Kaya/ Grasstree Spear
Wapu/ Dagger
Kathawirri/ Two-edged Sword Club #2
Katha/ Digging Stick
Wirri/ Club #1
Wirri/ Club #3
Murlapaka/ Broad Shield
Wadna/ Climbing Stick
Wirri/ Club #2
Wirnta/ Wooden Spear
Kantapi/ Adze
Tantanaku/ Fighting Stick
Kutpi/ Reed Spear
Wadnawirri/ Boomerang Club
Ipila/ Clap Sticks
Wirramumiyu Wirri/ Sabre
Pangka wirri/ Club #1
Taiyaruki/ Parry Shield
Pangka wirri/ Club #2

Courtesy of the artist and N.Smith Gallery

James Tylor and Rebecca Selleck

Warpulayinthe 2022
Inkjet print on Hahnemühle paper with Blue Gum frame

Warpulayinthe #3
Warpulayinthe #2
Warpulayinthe #5
Warpulayinthe #4
Warpulayinthe #1

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery

Un-resettling

Dwellings 2013, printed 2023

Happenings 2014

Hauntings 2016, printed 2023

Huntings 2017

Hand-coloured inkjet print on Hahnemühle paper

Un-resettling (Stone Footing for Dome Hut)
Un-resettling (Fallen Tree Half Dome Hut)
Un-resettling (Half Dome Hut on a Cliff Face)
Un-resettling (Bird Hide)
Un-resettling (Duck and Fishing Net)
Un-resettling (Ladder Tree)
Un-resettling (Cairn Land Marker)

Un-resettling (Dome Hut with Stone Wind Break)
Un-resettling (A-frame Hut)
Un-resettling (Earth Oven)
Un-resettling (Scar Tree)
Un-resettling (Bird Snare)
Un-resettling (Poles – Land Markers)

Courtesy of the artist, N.Smith Gallery and Vivien Anderson Gallery

3. Marnkutyi

Daguerreotypes are a recurring medium in Tylor's photographic practice. In the 1830–40s when Adelaide was being colonised, the daguerreotype was the first commercial photographic process. Tylor polishes a plate of silver, exposes it to iodine gas to make it light sensitive, and uses a camera to expose the photograph to light, capturing the image on the surface of the plate. Tylor uses the Becquerel process, utilising red light and the sun to expose the image. Sealed behind glass, it gives the appearance of a positive but is in fact a negative on a mirrored surface.

The Darkness of Enlightenment is an ongoing installation of daguerreotypes and cast bronze objects. The landscapes are from the area of the Southern Kurna region of the Patpangga Fleurieu Peninsula of South Australia where there was first contact between Kurna people and European whalers and colonial settlers. The daguerreotypes are accompanied by cast bronze Kurna artefacts and colonial objects made by the artist that represent the poorly documented interactions with Kurna people, language, and culture on the coastal colonial frontier of South Australia.

The exhibition title draws upon the Kurna word 'turra' which translates to shadow, reflection, image or mirror, reflecting Tylor's ongoing interest in the materiality of the daguerreotype. It points to the relationship between light and shadow in photography, evoking the idea of working in the shadows, and shining a light on untold histories.

Act Like a Man is an important self-portrait series, and the only photographs in which the artist's own body is represented, in a deeply personal negotiation of his coming-of-age. The works are accompanied by the *DeCookolisation* and *Territorial Encounters* series, drawing connections between the personal and political. Together they offer an expansive understanding of the impact of colonialism on First Nations people.

Act Like a Man 2017 Becquerel daguerreotype

Act Like a Man (Fuck You)
Act Like a Man (Don't be a Sissy Boy)
Act Like a Man (Tough Bastard)
Act Like a Man (Handle It)
Act Like a Man (Bum Fluff)
Act Like a Man (Grow Up)
Act Like a Man (Soft Cock)
Act Like a Man (Man Up)

Private Collection

Territorial Encounters 2016 Becquerel daguerreotype with scratches

Territorial Encounters (1836 Port Adelaide #1, Kurna Nation)
Territorial Encounters (1852 Port Augusta, Nukunu Nation)
Territorial Encounters (1853 Goolwa #2, Ngarrindjeri Nation)
Territorial Encounters (1839 Port Lincoln #2, Barnagarla Nation)
Territorial Encounters (1845 Port Pirie #1, Nukunu Nation)

Territorial Encounters (1845 Port Pirie #2, Nukunu Nation)
Territorial Encounters (1849 Port Wakefield #1, Kurna Nation)

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery

The Darkness of Enlightenment II 2022 Becquerel daguerreotypes

The Darkness of Enlightenment (Yartakurlangga/ Rapid Bay 1)
The Darkness of Enlightenment (Karrakarlingga/ Carrackalinga 2)
The Darkness of Enlightenment (Karrkungga/ Ochre Cove)
The Darkness of Enlightenment (Kauwayarlungga/ Myponga Beach 2)
The Darkness of Enlightenment (Karrakarlingga/ Carrackalinga 1)
The Darkness of Enlightenment (Yaitakauwingga/ Second Valley 4)

The Darkness of Enlightenment II **Mudli/Belongings** 2023 Bronze

The Darkness of Enlightenment II (Warra-tatarta/ Message Stick)
The Darkness of Enlightenment II (Yiuwa Piipa/ Jehovah's Book Bible)
The Darkness of Enlightenment II (Palyathata/ Cross sticks)
The Darkness of Enlightenment II (Pityuri/ Pituri bag)
The Darkness of Enlightenment II (Tatayaingki/ Christian Cross)

Courtesy of the artist and N.Smith Gallery

DeCookolisation 2015 Becquerel daguerreotype

Te Moana-a-Raukawa, Aotearoa II/ Cook Strait, New Zealand
Aoraki National Park, Aotearoa I/ Mount Cook National Park, New Zealand
Te Moana-a-Raukawa, Aotearoa III/ Cook Strait, New Zealand
Te Weheka, Aotearoa/ Cook River, New Zealand
Aoraki National Park, Aotearoa II/ Mount Cook National Park New Zealand
'Avaiki Nui/ Cook Islands
Gan gaar, Guugu Yimithirr Nation/ Mount Cook National Park Cooktown, Australia
Te Moana-a-Raukawa, Aotearoa I/ Cook Strait, New Zealand
Te Aoraki, Aotearoa/ Mount Cook, New Zealand

Private Collection

4. Yarapurla

Acts of intervention into the image are central to Tylor's work. Tearing, puncturing, or burning the photographic print can be a means of capturing the violence of the impact of colonialism, as seen in the *Aotearoa, My Hawaiki* and *Nguya: Smallpox* series.

Fire Country is a living room furniture series created with Rebecca Selleck, a Canberra-based artist. Aboriginal people have used wildfire in a controlled manner for millennia, which clears the land and allows plants to flourish. With colonisation, First Nations' knowledge was replaced with incompatible approaches to land management. Tylor constructed Scandinavian modernist furniture and photographic prints and frames which he burnt to carbon black and sealed with animal fats. Sprouting from the blackened furniture are bronze casts of hopeful new leaf shoots and post-fire fungi. This series attempts to embrace fire in Australia as part of our collective culture.

Fire Country 2022

Inkjet print on Hahnemühle paper with partially burnt frame

Fire Country (Malua Bay #1)

Fire Country (Malua Bay #3)

Fire Country (Mount Bold #1)

Fire Country (Kangaroo Island #1)

Fire Country (Namadgi #1)

Fire Country (Mount Bold #2)

Fire Country (Kangaroo Island #3)

Fire Country (Malua Bay #4)

James Tylor & Rebecca Selleck

Fire Country Mudli/Furniture 2022

Burnt Australian Ash timber with cast bronze

Fire Country (Two Seater Lounge with Coffee Table)

Fire Country (Dining Set)

Fire Country (Bookcase)

Courtesy of the artists and GAGPROJECTS

Nguya Smallpox 2020, printed 2023

Inkjet print on Hahnemühle paper with bumps and holes from echidna quills

Nguya Smallpox (Ngunawal)

Nguya Smallpox (Ngambri)

Nguya Smallpox (Kaurna)

Courtesy of the artist and N.Smith Gallery

Aotearoa, My Hawaiki 2015

Inkjet print on Hahnemühle paper with rip

Aotearoa, My Hawaiki #1

Aotearoa, My Hawaiki #2

Aotearoa, My Hawaiki #3

Aotearoa, My Hawaiki #4

Aotearoa, My Hawaiki #7

Aotearoa, My Hawaiki #8

Aotearoa, My Hawaiki #9

Aotearoa, My Hawaiki #10

Courtesy of the artist and N.Smith Gallery

5. Mila

Warpulayintheta is a Kurna word for work or slavery. This series of photographs (in the central gallery) and furniture adorned with bronze casts of native plants and animals made by artist Rebecca Selleck, are an homage to Tylor's great-great grandmother who was a domestic servant on a farm in Balaclava, South Australia. Bringing Tylor's carpentry skills to the work with blue gum wood, he constructed colonial-style furniture referencing the dairy and wheat farms where Aboriginal people often worked as slaves, recognising their labour in the building of colonial Australia.

Terra Botanica is an early series speaking to Joseph Banks' involvement in the colonisation of Australia through the recommendation of Botany Bay.

This gallery features Tylor's first daguerreotype from the 2013 series *Hopes, Dreams and Nightmares*. The image depicts a tree in rural Victoria, and sites where massacres have occurred. Often the occurrence of a single tree in the middle of a cleared landscape represents burial sites. It is a recurring image in Tylor's practice and represents loss and trauma.

We Call This Place ... Kurna Yarta is a series of daguerreotypes inscribed with the place-names of significant sites for Kurna Miyurna people. Since British colonisation, many of the Indigenous place-names in South Australia have been replaced with Anglicised substitutes. These landscape photographs are overlaid with Warra Kurna language to emphasise Kurna Miyurna people's rich historical cultural connection to the region. In Tylor's hands, photography becomes a powerful tool to reclaim culture, language and connection to Country.

Terra Botanica 2015 Becquerel daguerreotype

Terra Botanica II (Agathis australis)
Terra Botanica I (Eucalyptus gracilius)

Terra Botanica I (Eucalyptus leucoxydon)
Terra Botanica I (Callistemon salignus)
Terra Botanica I (Pennisetum alopecuroides)

Terra Botanica I (Grevillea banksii)
Terra Botanica I (Cyathea dealbata, Ponga)
Terra Botanica II (Ipomoea batatas I, Kūmara)
Terra Botanica I (Eucalyptus leucoxydon II)

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery and GAGPROJECTS

Un-resettling **Happenings** 2014

Hauntings 2016, printed 2023

Huntings 2017

Hand-coloured inkjet print on Hahnemühle paper

Un-resettling (Animal Net)
Un-resettling (Hunting Wombats)
Un-resettling (Fish Trap)

Un-resettling (Hunting Kangaroo)

Un-resettling (Fish Smoker)
Un-resettling (Handprints on Rock)

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery

Hopes, Dreams and Nightmares 2013 Becquerel daguerreotype

Hopes, Dreams and Nightmares #3

Private Collection

We Call This Place ... Kurna Yarta 2021 Becquerel daguerreotype with engraved text

We Call This Place (Marriyarta)
We Call This Place (Karrawirrapari)

We Call This Place (Watiparingga)

We Call This Place (Ngangkipari)
We Call This Place (Ngangkiparingga)
We Call This Place (Nurlungga)

We Call This Place (Karrkungga)
We Call This Place (Karildilla)

We Call This Place (Wangka Yarlū)

We Call This Place (Patpangga)
We Call This Place (Yarna)
We Call This Place (Kauwiyarlungga)
We Call This Place (Yartakurlangga)

We Call This Place (Tungkalilla)
We Call This Place (Waitpingga)

Courtesy of the artist and N.Smith Gallery

James Tylor & Rebecca Selleck

Warpulayintheta Mudli/Furniture 2022

Parnguta, ngunata kuru/ Potato and Onion bin
Blue gum timber, cast bronze, animal fat. Bronzes cast from:
(Top drawer) native geranium, chocolate lily, onion orchid,
milkmaid bulbine lily, (bottom drawer) bulbine lily root,
chocolate lily and onion orchid bulbs

Wiltaitpurlati/ Butter Churn

Blue gum timber, brass, cast bronze, animal fat. Bronzes cast from: chocolate lily

Tikatikat/ Table and Bench Seats

Blue gum timber, cast bronze, animal fat. Bronzes cast from:
kangaroo joey, mullet, cockles, oysters, karkala, samphire,
ngangki, saltbush, warrigal greens and quandong seeds

Mai Kuru/ Food Safe

Blue gum timber, cast bronze, bronze flyscreen, animal fat.
Bronzes cast from: Hanging Cockatoo, Cockateel Laying, Pile
With Parrot, Cockatoo, Magpie and Native Pigeons

Murdumurdu kuru/ Flour bin – dough trough

Blue gum timber, cast bronze, animal fat. Bronzes cast from:
golden wattle seeds and pods, black wattle seeds and pods

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery

Notes on Language

Yarta: Land, Country and Nation in Kurna language

Nunga: South Australian Aboriginal people or person (Nunga
language)

Mudli: belongings, furniture, tools, objects, things

Turra: shadow, or reflection, image, mirror

UNSW Galleries stands on an important place of learning
and exchange first occupied by the Bidjigal and Gadigal
peoples of the Eora Nation. We recognise the Bidjigal and
Gadigal peoples as the Traditional Custodians of this site and
acknowledge them as the first artists to inhabit this Land. We
pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and extend
this respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
from all nations of Australia.