



EDUCATION RESOURCE

MAITLAND REGIONAL ART GALLERY

**WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE
SOVEREIGNTY OF THE
TRADITIONAL
CUSTODIANS ON
WHOSE COUNTRY
'CROWNLAND' IS
STAGED - THE
WONNARUA PEOPLE.**



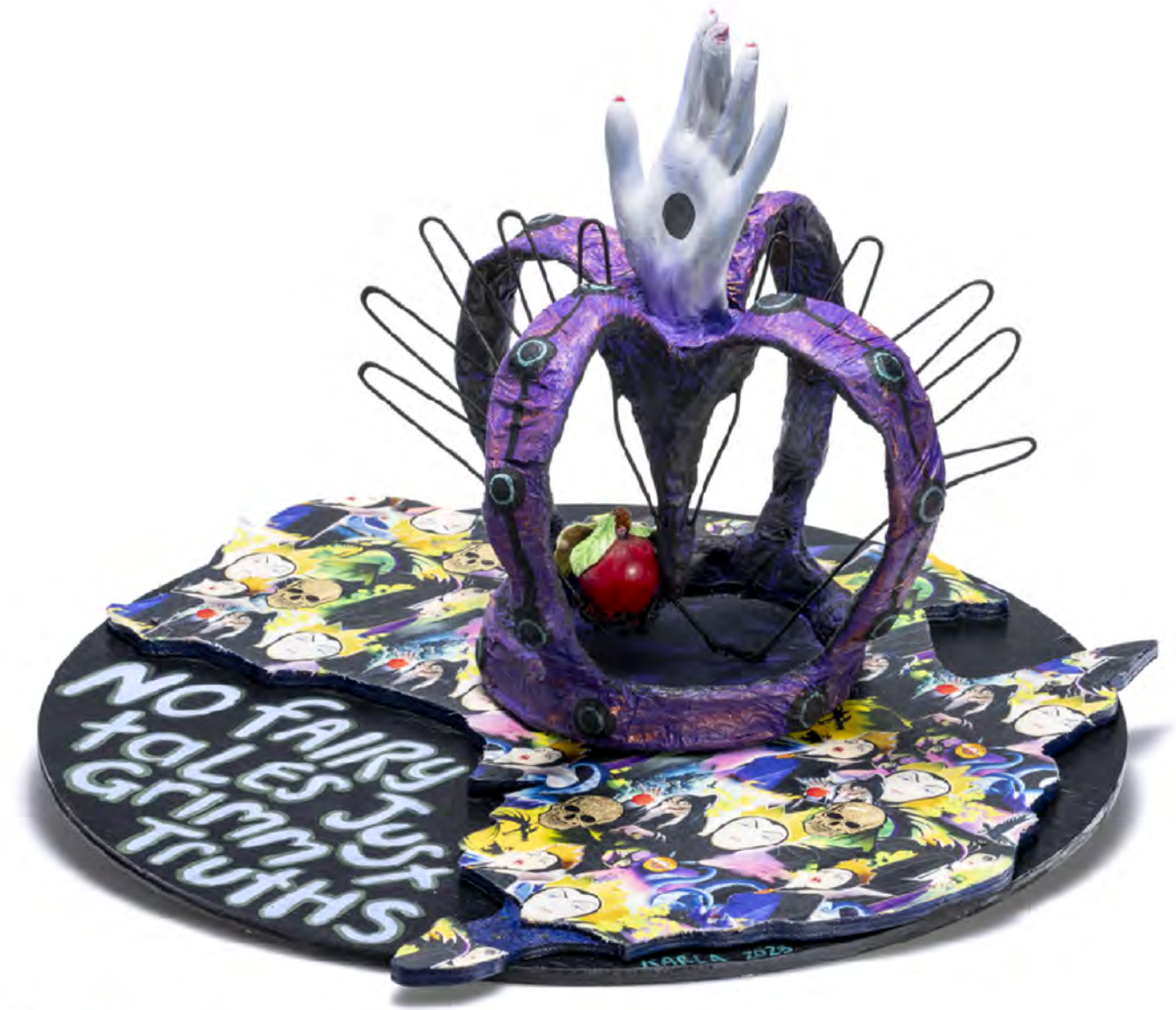
INTRODUCTION

This education resource has been created by Maitland Regional Art Gallery to assist teachers and students in their exploration of CrownLands.

It provides a frame of reference for the artists, the exhibition's curation, and the artworks within. Teachers are invited to tailor the following resources for senior students, to encourage an historical and critical analysis. MRAG hopes to encourage subjective responses from students' own ideas and interpretations of the artworks.

THIS RESOURCE OFFERS:

- Insight into the conception of CrownLand and the practice of exhibiting artists
- An introduction for teachers
- A glossary of terms
- Worksheets and back-in-the-classroom activities for secondary school students



KARLA DICKENS
NO FAIRY TALES JUST GRIMM TRUTHS, 2023
MIXED MEDIA, 40.5 x 64.5CM

PRE-VIEWING PLANNING

Before you visit CrownLand it is suggested that you contact gallery staff to determine the suitability of the exhibition content and subject matter for the intended student year level. Works address themes that may not be suitable for some visitors.



ABOUT THE EXHIBITON

CrownLand began as a conversation between artists. A conversation that shifted and turned a few times moving between issues that punctuate public and private life consistently. They all came back to the idea of life in an unreconciled nation. In conversations where truth and history remain shadowy. Not quite told. But there. Highlighting the absurdity of what now seems like a fading claim to a 'black armband' view of history. The immense privilege of being born into power is a curious thing for us as subjects to ponder and the work of the artists in CrownLand remind us of our place as subordinates within its structure, or as Dr Lisa Slade reminds us in her essay, in our place where there is no common wealth. As we walk through the exhibition, its corridors wallpapered with the terrifying images of Andrew Quilty's Cronulla riots reportage, we face the grim reality of what can be done when a flag, an idea of nationhood is used for ugly and dangerous purposes. This exhibition is filled with complex conversations that are as nuanced and idiosyncratic as the communities we live in. It is also filled with affectionate humour and grim irony. This exhibition was conceived long before a referendum for The Voice was announced and we have no doubt it will be a lightning rod for discussions centred on this. Our aim therefore will be to try as hard as we can to keep community safe in this process. We would like to extend a very dear thank you to Vincent Namatjira and Ben Quilty for their role in kickstarting this project with relish and to Karla Dickens who made a new body of work for this exhibition along with a powerful project honouring the Wonnarua Elders and Queens of the Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council women's group. A very warm thank you to all the women who took part in this and to Tara Dever for her trust in us with this project. We invite you to step into the corridors of CrownLand and move within its complex world.

Dr Gerry Bobsien, Gallery Director





Vincent Namatjira and Ben Quilty *The Crown*, 2022 oil on linen, 202 × 265cm Photo: Mim Stirling

KARLA DICKENS

VINCENT NAMATJIRA

BEN QUILTY

ANDREW QUILTY

JAKE CHAPMAN

MEGAN COPE





Karla Dickens
Silver spoons and genocide, 2023
mixed media, 35 × 64.5cm
Hit the road Jack, 2023
mixed media, 47 × 64.3cm
(detail page 70–71)

KARLA DICKENS

b. 1967, Sydney; lives and works on Bundjalong
Country Lismore, NSW
Wiradjuri

Karla Dickens brings a black humour to her unflinching interrogation of subjects such as race, gender and injustice. Described as a ‘found-object’ virtuoso, her practice often places overlooked or discarded objects into new contexts to interrogate Australian culture, contest histories and agitate for change. In this new series of work Dickens reclaims ‘Australiana’ – the laughing kookaburra, the souvenir teaspoon, sporting miniaturised fauna, and the carved emu egg – to create dioramas of death and dispossession. ‘Deadly’ humour is never far away for Dickens, who reminds us that ‘she is not happy Jan’. Dickens belongs to a lineage of feminist and First Nations political artists and through her assemblages she draws upon the carnivalesque. For Dickens, this is both literal – represented as a series of miniatures theatres or carnivals – and philosophical, with Dickens mobilising the folkloric to challenge dominant society.*

*From the CrownLand publication essay by Dr. Lisa Slade.



Vincent Namatjira
The New King (series), 2022
oil on linen, 132.5 × 112cm
Photo: Mim Stirling

VINCENT NAMATJIRA

b.1983, Alice Springs, NT; lives and works in Indulkana, South Australia, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Land Western Arrernte

Born in Alice Springs, Northern Territory and now based in Indulkana on Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands, South Australia, Namatjira is an acute observer of national and international politics, painting wry portraits of well-known figures such as US presidents, Australian prime ministers, and the British monarchy. Often inserting himself or portraits of people in his community into these compositions, Namatjira fuses deeply personal histories and incisively political critique. His work is bold, humorous, and conceptually rich in its examination of the connections between leadership, wealth, power and influence.

Namatjira's practice has gained significant recognition in Australia and overseas. In 2020, Namatjira was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in honour of his contribution to Indigenous visual arts. In the same year, he was the first Indigenous Australian artist to win the prestigious Archibald Prize. Namatjira was also the winner of the 2019 Ramsay Art Prize, Australia's most generous prize for artists under 40.

FOR ME, THE CANVAS IS A SETTING WHERE I CAN COMBINE THE PAST, PRESENT AND POSSIBLE FUTURES, AND I CAN PUT MYSELF – AS A PROUD ABORIGINAL MAN – AT THE FRONT AND CENTRE OF A SITUATION WHERE WE WOULD USUALLY BE OUT OF SIGHT. IN MY PAINTINGS I’M ON EQUAL FOOTING WITH THE ROYALS. I’M PART OF THEIR ROYAL BALCONY PHOTO SHOOTS, I CLIMB ON TOP OF THE QUEEN’S CARRIAGE, I SHARE A CUPPA TEA IN THE PALACE AND I RETURN THE FAVOUR BY OFFERING THE QUEEN SOME BUSH TUCKER – MAKU (WITCHETTY GRUBS) AND TJALA (HONEY ANTS). I’M STILL WAITING ON MY INVITATION TO VISIT BUCKINGHAM PALACE FOR REAL THOUGH.[1]

[1] QUOTE FROM FORTHCOMING PUBLICATION VINCENT NAMATJIRA BY THAMES & HUDSON





Ben Quilty
The New King (series), 2022
oil on linen, 132.5 × 112cm
Photo: Mim Stirling

BEN QUILTY

b.1973, Sydney Australia, lives and works on Gundungurra Country, South of Sydney, Australia.

Widely known for his thick, gestural oil paintings, Ben Quilty has worked across a range of media. His works often serve as a reflection of social and political events; from the current global refugee crisis to the complex social history of Australia, he is constantly critiquing notions of identity, patriotism and belonging.

Quilty has been a finalist in the prestigious Wynne and Archibald prizes and won the Doug Moran National Portrait Prize in 2009 and the Archibald Prize in 2011 with his portrait of artist, Margaret Olley. In 2011, Quilty travelled to Afghanistan as an official war artist with The Australian War Memorial. He was invited by World Vision Australia to travel to Greece, Serbia and Lebanon with author, Richard Flanagan, to witness firsthand the international refugee crisis in 2016. In 2019 the Art Gallery of South Australia presented the first major survey exhibition of Quilty's work. Curated by Lisa Slade, the exhibition toured to the Art Gallery of NSW and QAGOMA.

ANDREW QUILTY

b.1981, Lives and works in Sydney on Gadigal Country.

Andrew Quilty is an Australian freelance photojournalist and reporter. He received international acclaim when his photographs of the Cronulla riots in 2005 were published by Time magazine. Here in CrownLand, they have been manipulated and multiplied as a 'transmission' echoing the rage embedded in a quarter of a million text messages that helped to mobilise the violence targeting people of 'Middle Eastern appearance' in Cronulla in 2005. The Australian flag, dominated by the Union Jack appears consistently throughout Quilty's images of that violent day.



JAKE CHAPMAN

b.1966, Lives and works in Oxfordshire, England.

Jake Chapman is well known for the sculptures, prints, and installations created with his brother Dinos Chapman. Working as the Chapman brothers, they examine politics, religion, war and morality with an approach often abject and confronting. Their work received escalating interest alongside other artists as part of the seminal group exhibition *Sensation: Young British Artists* from the Saatchi collection, shown in London, Berlin and New York in the late nineties. Now working solo, his *Pity is Treason* series is part of an ongoing iconoclastic fascination by the artist as he reworks, marks and destroys the value of imperial currency reminding us of the proximity of humour to horror.

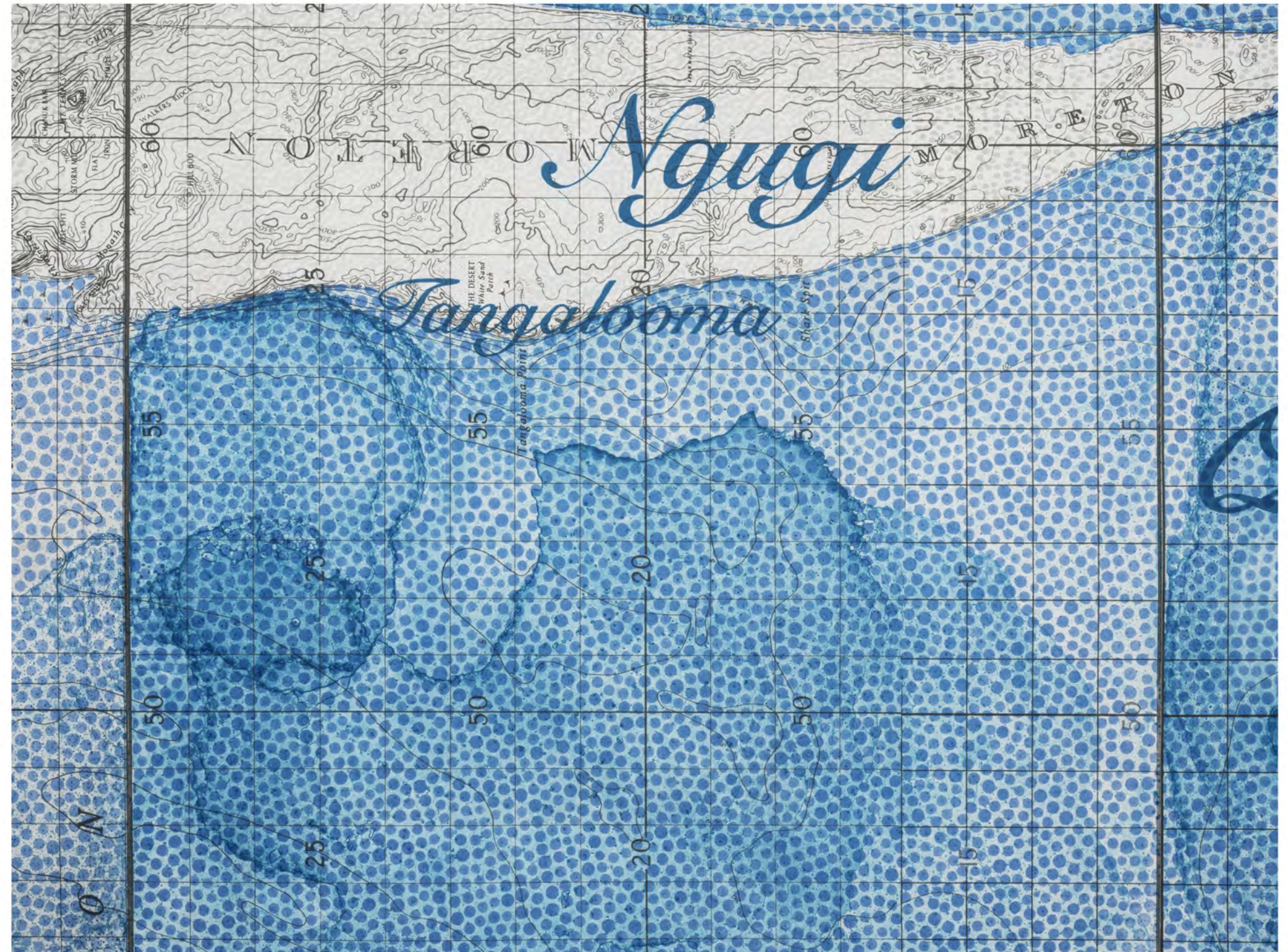


Jake Chapman
Pity is Treason (series), 2022
ink and watercolour on used currency
14.6 × 7.7 cm each
Photo: Sahlan Hayes

MEGAN COPE

b. Minjerribah Moreton Bay/North Stradbroke Island in South East Queensland and lives and works on Bundjalung Country, Lismore, New South Wales Quandamooka

Megan Cope's site-specific sculptural installations, public art practice and paintings investigate issues relating to colonial histories, the environment and mapping practices. In 2021, Cope collaborated with the Australian Print Workshop (APW) and master printmaker Martin King to produce a new body of work titled YARABINDJA BUDJURUNG I and II. In these large-scale lithographs, Cope starts with printed maps of her ancestral Country, near Stradbroke Island and its surrounds, using a nineteenth-century typeface to replace colonial names. These prints illustrate Cope's Ancestral Country near Stradbroke Island and surrounding regions of mainland Brisbane. 'Yarabindja Budjurung' translates to 'beautiful sea country' in the Quandamooka people's language Jandai. Maps are "highly political documents", says Cope. "They can be tools of dispossession."*



Megan Cope
Yarabindja Budjurung I, 2021
lithograph on BFK rives paper, 5 panels: 105 × 75cm each,
105 × 365cm overall. Edition of 10 plus 2 artist's proofs.
Photo: Carl Warner. Courtesy the Artist and Milani Gallery
(detail page 52–53)

FOR TEACHERS

CONNECTING TO CURRICULUM

This program is aimed at senior students engaging with Visual Arts, English, Aboriginal Studies, History and Society & Culture, in addition to Critical and Creative Thinking, key talking points include power, dispossession and sovereignty, as well as expanding historical and cultural perspectives through artistic practice.

Exploration of the exhibition should include examining the roles and relationships between concepts of the artist, artwork, world and audience through analytical and historical lenses.

This kit provides teachers and students with information and activities to allow a meaningful and significant visit to CrownLand that is continued afterwards in the classroom through related discussion and activities.



KEY CONCEPTS

POWER | SOVEREIGNTY | RACISM | MONARCHY | REFERENDUM | SYMBOLISM

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Colonialism: Refers to the policy, system and practices whereby one country exerts systematic domination or occupation over another country or peoples for economic and political gain.

Context: The set of circumstances or facts that surround a particular event, situation or text which usually shapes or informs the reader's understanding.

Land rights: The evolving struggle of Aboriginal and other Indigenous people for the absolute legal and moral acknowledgement of prior ownership of their land and recognition of all accompanying rights and obligations which flow from this association. Land Rights (capitalised) refers to the legislation.

Dispossession: People being taken away or forced from their land, their economic base, their way of life and cultures. Dispossession was experienced by many Aboriginal peoples.

Social construct: A concept or practice that doesn't exist innately in the world but is instead created by society.

Sovereignty: The legal recognition of ownership of land and territory. Implicit in the concept is the right of self-government. Indigenous peoples have never ceded their sovereignty over Australia.

Empire: a group of countries ruled by a single person, government or country.

Symbolism: A form, sign, or emblem that represents something else, often something immaterial, such as an idea or emotion.

Terra nullius: meaning land belonging to no-one, was the legal concept used by the British government to justify the settlement of Australia.

Crown land: Land that is owned and managed by the state government.

Mapped: a drawing of the earth's surface, or part of that surface, showing the shape and position of different countries, political borders, natural features such as rivers and mountains, and artificial features such as roads and buildings

CONNECTING TO CURRICULUM

VA H7

Applies their understanding of practice in art criticism and art history.

Students can explore the artistic practices and roles of the artists featured in the CrownLand exhibition, understanding how they create and communicate their ideas through their artworks

VA H8

Explores the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art in relation to cultural, social, and political contexts.

Students can examine the artworks in the Crownland exhibition to understand the cultural, social, and political contexts in which they were created, and how they contribute to the broader discourse on Aboriginal art and culture.

VA H9

Investigates the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and artists.

CrownLand includes artworks that explore the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal communities and their art practices. Students can analyze these artworks to understand the historical and ongoing effects of colonization on Aboriginal art and artists.



Karla Dickens
No Man's Master, No Man's King, 2023
mixed media, 125 × 125cm
Land Grab, 2023
mixed media, 125 × 125cm

CONNECTING TO CURRICULUM

AS4-3

Examines the ongoing resilience and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Australian society.

Students can analyze the artworks in the CrownLand exhibition to understand how Aboriginal artists contribute to Australian society through their artistic practices and expressions.

EN6-5A

Thinks imaginatively, creatively, interpretively, and critically about information, ideas, and arguments to respond to and compose texts.

Students can engage in imaginative and creative thinking when responding to the artworks in the Crownland exhibition, considering alternative interpretations, exploring symbolism, or analyzing the emotional impact of the artworks.

SC4-3

Investigates the role of the arts in shaping and reflecting cultural values and beliefs.

CrownLand includes artworks that explore the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal communities and their art practices. Students can analyse these artworks to understand the historical and ongoing effects of colonization on Aboriginal art and artists.



SECONDARY STUDENTS

These activities are aimed at secondary students and are designed to develop and broaden students' understanding and ability to critically interpret art concepts, the artists and their practice.

These activities can be initiated in the exhibition through discussion and expanded back in the classroom through individual written work or group discussion.

Activities can be carried out in-person and online to adapt to current teaching and learning contexts

IN THE GALLERY: EXPLORE & DISCUSS

- Using the cultural frame, What does a history that is not quite told mean? Name two works that reflect this.
- Works in this exhibition challenge official history and highlight inequality. Have any of the works in CrownLand changed your opinion on these issues?
- How do the artworks included in the exhibition represent ideas of Australian identity? What does being Australian mean to you?
- Can you think of a situation where humour has relieved a serious situation for you? Select two works that reflect affectionate humour and grim irony in the exhibition.

BACK IN THE CLASSROOM: THINK & CREATE

- Consider the power and influence 'The Crown' and Crown Land have in Australia. How might you express this power visually through exaggeration.
- What does a history that is not quite told mean to you?
- Brainstorm what it means to be Australian.
- What is the idea of life in an unreconciled nation?
- What role has artistic collaboration played in this exhibition?
- What is the uncomfortable theme that needs to be discussed?
- What is crownland?
- What is some of the symbolism in the Crownland logo created by MRAG?



COLLABORATION IN CROWNLAND

- Examine the ways in which Namatjira and Quilty's collaboration is evident in the painting.
- Discuss how the artists' distinct styles and techniques merge to create a cohesive and visually striking composition.
- Consider the significance of collaboration in fostering understanding, empathy, and mutual respect between different cultures and artistic practices.

H7: applies their understanding of practice in art criticism and art history

P7: explores the conventions of practice in art criticism and art history



A few days after Queen Elizabeth II died, Vinnie came to my studio. We'd been planning to make paintings together since before Covid. As he walked through the door, he told me he wouldn't be needing to paint the Queen anymore "Never again," he said. "Now we'll paint the King."



Vincent Namatjira and Ben Quilty
The Crown, 2022 oil on linen, 202 ×
265cm Photo: Mim Stirling

WHO WEARS A CROWN?

The weight of the colonial crown is questioned in this project led by Wiradjuri artist Karla Dickens.

She asked the simple question of ‘who wears a crown?’ to the women of the Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council.

The answer is a dramatic series of performative photographs, in which local Elders, including those young and emerging, are adorned by self-made crowns

Considering the Cultral Frame. Write an extended response for the following questions.

- How is Karla Dickens rewriting the social history of crowns?
- What does the crown represent?
- What could be the cultural and social meaning behind these series of photos?



Karla Dickens
Aunty Marge Weastell – Wonnarua Elder – Our much loved, respected, appreciated and oldest living Wonnarua Elder, 2023 digital photograph, 150 x 100cm, photographer: Clare Hodgins



Karla Dickens
Aunty Lorraine Martyn – Wonnarua Elder, 2023 digital photograph, 150 x 100cm, photographer: Clare Hodgins



Karla Dickens
Aunty Cynthia Morris – Wonnarua Elder, 2023 digital photograph, 150 x 100cm, photographer: Clare Hodgins



Karla Dickens
Penelope Jackson – Wiradjuri Woman, 2023 digital photograph, 150 x 100cm, photographer: Clare Hodgins



Karla Dickens
Emily Heath – Biripi Woman, 2023 digital photograph, 150 x 100cm, photographer: Clare Hodgins



Karla Dickens
Nat Controy – Wonnarua Woman, 2023 digital photograph, 150 x 100cm, photographer: Clare Hodgins



Karla Dickens
Aunty Christine Dever – Local Elder – Wiradjuri Woman, 2023 digital photograph, 150 x 100cm, photographer: Clare Hodgins



Karla Dickens
Tara Dever – Wiradjuri Woman, 2023 digital photograph, 150 x 100cm, photographer: Clare Hodgins



Karla Dickens
Jessica Hopcroft – Barkindji, Ngemba, Gamilarayy-Yuwaalaraay Woman, 2023 digital photograph, 150 x 100cm, photographer: Clare Hodgins

VISUAL LITERACY TOOLKIT

WE LIVE IN A WORLD SATURATED BY IMAGERY. WE PROCESS INFORMATION VISUALLY IN ALL ASPECTS OF OUR LIVES.

How do we unpack the key themes and symbolism in art works and imagery?

DESCRIBE What's going on in this work of art? What can you see that makes you say that? **ANALYSE** What elements or principles of design has the artist used? Line, colour, shape, value, texture, form, space, pattern, balance, movement, contrast, rhythm, emphasis, unity. How have they used them?

INTERPRET Based on what you have observed in the work of art, what might the artist be communicating? **LOOK AGAIN + EVALUATE** Pause to look again. Reconsider the whole image in relation to all its parts. Can you see why some people came to a different interpretation than yours?

LINKS

<https://issuu.com/maitlandregionalartgallery>

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/gallery/2015/dec/11/cronullas-day-of-infamy-the-2005-race-riots-in-pictures>

megancope.com.au

<https://www.iwantjaarts.com.au/artists/vincent-namatjira>:

<https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/artists/dickens-karla/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/gallery/2015/dec/11/cronullas-day-of-infamy-the-2005-race-riots-in-pictures>

<https://ocula.com/magazine/conversations/vincent-namatjira/>

<https://www.insideimaging.com.au/2022/andrew-quilty-home-from-home/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2023/jan/12/karla-dickens-art-of-survival-i-was-either-going-to-jail-or-end-up-dead>

<https://benquilty.com/>

<https://jakeanddinoschapman.com/>

<https://www.theartstory.org/artist/chapman-jake-and-dinos/>

Contact

Kate Adamson - Learning &
Audience Development Curator
for Education Enquires
artgallery@maitland.nsw.gov.au
Ph:0249349859



**MAITLAND
REGIONAL
ART GALLERY**

