

Presented by Arts House
as part of YIRRAMBOI

The Violence of Denial

Genevieve Grieves

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Acknowledgement of Country

We, the artists of this exhibition, acknowledge the
Ancestors of this country and pay our deep respects to
the people – past, present and future - on which this
exhibition is held.

Image: Lament (Yaraan Bundle) by Genevieve Grieves

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Tue 9 – Sun 14 May

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artshouse.com.au

Julie Gough:

History is an increasingly selective journey through past and current Tasmania and their brochures steadfastly maintain its History as anglo. More publicly palpable and palatable than the dark side, 'settler' colonialism has assumed the mantle of possession of both place and stories. The bloody mission of wrenching that island from Aboriginal people to determinedly reform it as a pastoral arcadia failed. The apple was rotten. We are at an impasse.

Vicki Couzens:

In the 'violence of the denial' that is perpetuated in contemporary Australia, we must assert our sovereign Being in thought, word and deed. Until our stories are shared stories, our living will continue being disparate, unequal and incongruent with balance and harmony; belonging, place and wellbeing, the fundamental Law of the Land.

remembering our Ancestors,
remembering our stories
remembering who we are
remember what we already know
remembering our responsibility
remembering our vow
remembering our caring
remembering our Being
now...
then...
and then...
ageless, age old,
synergistic resonance
of One.

r e a:

PolesApart is a body of work that was inspired by the on-going violent impact of colonization on our land and our bodies.

The lack of recognition of the first nations people from the British and the declaration of Terra Nullius has presented a terror that the first peoples have been subjected to since the invasion. At the time of invasion, we were unaware that this encounter would impact on our lives for generations, dispossess us of country and destroy our right to practice our culture and ceremony. The ongoing impact of this violence on the first peoples, in this land now known as Australia, has been denied, accepted and normalised.

In the *PolesApart* series, I reflect on the loss that my grandmother, Ruby Pearl Leslie, nee. Williams-Madden, and her sister, Sophie, experienced, whilst they were in Cootamundra [c.1916-1930]. The framing and content of my work was inspired by the absence of black bodies in Australian 'colonial' paintings. I am specifically referencing *The Pioneer* (1904) by Frederick McCubbin - a large-scale triptych, in which the artist explores 'white' invasion, known as settlement. In McCubbin's paintings, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander bodies have been removed and therefore, erased from history.

PolesApart is a tribute to the memory of my ancestors and to all those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who were unable to find their way home.

Dianne Jones:

Cold Case: The murder of Sarah Cook in York, WA: 1839

In the month of May, 1839, there was a murder of a young white woman and her baby in the wheat belt town of York in Western Australia. Her name was Sarah Cook. When the reports started to spread throughout the colony, outrage and fear erupted and vigilantes rebelled by shooting any Aboriginal person they saw.

In 1840 two Noongar men, Barrabong and Doodjeep, 'confessed' to the murder of Sarah Cook. Without an adequate trial, these men were convicted and punished by death – they were hanged from a Gum Tree near the murder site.

This series of works has been made to excavate a story of violence and retribution. It examines the role of art and how it can engage with storytelling, history and memory to investigate critical events in colonisation and bring mistruths and misrepresentations to the surface.

Genevieve Grieves:

I've always been aware of the discord between what I was told about our history and what I saw represented. My childhood was filled with stories of violence linked with place - stories of massacres and deep loss - but there were never markers to these sites of sadness and mourning. Instead, I saw statues of explorers, Queens, Kings and soldiers who had fought on distant shores and I still see them today in my adopted home here in Narrm (Melbourne). The explorers, monarchs and colonial heroes stand tall while the true history of this country – including the massacres and the trauma of the past – is ignored. The denial of the violence of the past is an act of violence in itself; how can we ever begin to heal when these sites and stories are ignored?

Dianne Jones

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Dianne Jones is a visual artist with an interest in historical truths and untruths. Dianne is a Noongar Yorga from Balladong who foregrounds Aboriginal perspectives within the arts and resistance to dominant representations of white nationhood. She is often known for her work that repositions Aboriginal people in iconic and popular culture. Her recent response to the murder of a white woman for which two Aboriginal men were hung during colonial frontier violence in York, Western Australia became her Masters Thesis and produced a series of artworks known as ‘what lies buried rises’.

Dianne is a Guest Lecturer at University of Melbourne on Racial Literacy and is currently completing her PhD at the Victorian College of the Arts. She has exhibited extensively and is in numerous national and international collections including the National Gallery of Australia, National Gallery of Victoria and Gallery of Western Australia. Dianne is represented by Niagara Galleries.

Genevieve Grieves

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Genevieve Grieves is an award-winning artist, educator, curator, filmmaker and oral historian. She is Worimi from New South Wales and has lived and worked on Kulin Country in Melbourne for many years. Genevieve often teaches at the University of Melbourne and is currently undertaking her PhD in Aboriginal art, frontier violence and memorialisation. She is a passionate supporter of community-engaged creative practice and teaches these methodologies to emerging arts and culture workers. She is also committed to maintaining and sharing south-east Australian cultures as a Board member of Banmirra Arts, possum skin cloak makers; the Footscray Community Arts Centre (FCAC) and the Koorie Heritage Trust to support and strengthen cultures from this region.

Julie Gough

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Julie Gough is an artist, writer and curator who lives in Hobart, Tasmania. Julie’s research and art practice involves uncovering and re-presenting subsumed and often conflicting histories, often referring to her own and her family’s experiences as Tasmanian Aboriginal people. Current work in installation, sound and video provides the means to explore ephemerality, absence and recurrence. Julie’s paternal heritage is Scottish and Irish while her matriarchal Aboriginal family line traditionally comes from Tebrikunna, far north eastern Tasmania. Julie holds a number of degrees including a PhD from the University of Tasmania. She is a prolific and celebrated artist, having held 20 solo exhibitions and exhibited in more than 120 group shows since 1994. Her work is held in many private and public collections.

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r e a is an artist, curator, activist, academic, cultural educator and creative thinker who is engaged in an arts-led, research-based practice. r e a is a descendant of Gamilaraay/Wailwan nations from the central western region of New South Wales. Her ongoing creative practice takes its development from new and critical discourses that are interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary in approach. She explores the convergence between art and technology; philosophy and history; Aboriginality and culture(s); language and identity; and the body and Queer politics. r e a is a doctoral candidate in Visual Anthropology at The National Institute for Experimental Arts (NIEA), UNSW Art and Design. Her work is in national and international private and public collections.

Vicki Couzens

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Vicki Couzens is a Keerray Wurrong woman from the Western Districts of Victoria. Vicki acknowledges her Ancestors and Elders who guide her in her work. Vicki has worked in Aboriginal community affairs for over 35 years. She is a Senior Knowledge Holder for Possum Skin Cloak Story and Language Reclamation and Revival in her Gunditjmara Mother Tongue. Vicki’s contributions in the reclamation, regeneration and revitalisation of cultural knowledge and practices extend across the ‘arts and cultural expression’ spectrum including language research and community development; public art, community arts, visual and performing arts, writing, publications and her own creative expression.



Dianne Jones



Genevieve Grieves



Julie Gough



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Vicki Couzens

To Perpetuate the Memory
(2017)
Genevieve Grieves
Video
4:40 mins

The Grounds of Surrender
(2011)
Julie Gough
Video
19:17 mins

found objects from what lies buried rises
(2017)
Dianne Jones
Video
3:00 mins

Poles Apart
(2009)
r e a
Video
6:55 mins

pang-ngooteweeng-wanoong
(we remember)
(2017)
Vicki Couzens
Video
2:00 mins

We thank Jacob Boehme and the Yirramboi team at the City of Melbourne for making this project possible and the team at Arts House - including Tara Prowse, Tony MacDonald and Blair Hart - for all their amazing assistance.

Vicki Couzens thanks Robert Bundle and Simon Rose for their help with *pang-ngooteeweeng-wanoong* (we remember).

Julie Gough thanks Koenraad Goossens and Jemma Rea for their help realising *The Grounds of Surrender*.

re a thanks Gail Kelly, Cathy Laudenbach, Peter Oldham, Sumai McLean, Amanda Fairbanks and Christine Nicholls for their assistance with the creation of *Poles Apart*.

Dianne Jones and Genevieve Grieves thank Simon Rose for his help with their artworks, *found objects from what lies buried rises* and *To Perpetuate the Memory*, created for this exhibition.

Arts House, as a key program of the City of Melbourne, is Melbourne's contemporary centre for performance and interactive artforms. We support new and diverse ways to make and experience art which is participatory and experiential, interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary, curated through a balance of provocation, responsiveness and collaboration with artists and audiences.

For more information, please contact us on the details below.

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