Sarah Thomas is the curator of Colonial Afterlives. An Australian academic and curator currently living and lecturing in London, she poses the question in the Museum History Journal in January 2013 (vol. 6, no. 1, p. 105): ‘Why do colonial subjects continue to remain of minimal interest to British curators and directors today, despite a wealth of vigorous post-colonial scholarship over the last decade arguing that “the concept of empire belongs at the centre not the margins of British art”? (from T. Barringer, G. Quilley, D. Fordham, Art and the British empire, 2007).

With the insight of the outsider, Thomas notes that much art held in British art museums is that of empire. She posits that ‘The parameters of “British art” are in the process of being radically rearticulated (p. 105).’

The art of colonisation is, no matter the subject nor technique, an art circumscribed by subjugation and frontier wars. hindsight has brought with it a re-positioning of empire. In Colonial Afterlives, Salamanca Arts Centre’s 2015 commissioned exhibition, Sarah Thomas has assembled artworks by 14 Australian and international artists, the great-great-grandchildren of colonisation with millennia of rights to lands and cultures, merged and separate histories, identities, and heritages.

Thomas’s essay, Living With Ghosts, delves into parallel colonial experiences and post-colonial artistic expression manifest in the work of the Colonial Afterlives artists. Thomas invited historian Greg Lehman, ‘a descendant of Woretemoteyner, a young woman taken by sealers from the NE coast of Tasmania in 1810’, to contribute a Tasmanian perspective.

Lehman’s essay, Writing Our Lives, explores recorded history and fictional imaginings, pondering disillusionment among Aboriginal thinkers about how we should be negotiating our way into the future. Progress has slowed…’

Other jewels of empire became republics. Not so Australia. Are we still governed by colonial fear, too nineteenth-century to embrace a twenty-first-century future?

Sincere thanks to Sarah Thomas for bringing together an outstanding group of artists whose works and provocations will challenge viewers; and to the artists, the Board and staff of Salamanca Arts Centre for bringing Colonial Afterlives to fruition.

Colonial Afterlives tours ‘the colonies’ over 2016-17: New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria, and returns to northern Tasmania.
The idea for this exhibition first struck when I was in Barbados talking to artists and curators about a forthcoming exhibition at Tate Britain, *Artist and Empire*. I was already living in London at the time, but my background as an Australian curator led to an immediate sense of recognition. For many artists in this small Caribbean island, just as in Australia, colonial business is unfinished, and its legacies are raw; history is now, and it matters.

During the nineteenth century Australia and the British West Indies were aligned in their roles as strategic sites of Britain’s empire. At a time when millions of slaves still labouring in plantations across the Americas, Van Diemen’s Land had become Britain’s primary penal colony, while its Aboriginal inhabitants resisted an accompanying genocide. The threads of empire shuttled disparate histories and geographies together, as people, commodities and ideas circulated across the globe in ever-greater numbers.

The story of Edward John Eyre (1815-1901) is one example. The son of a Yorkshire vicar, Eyre sought his fortune in Australia, where he became well known in the 1830s and 1840s as an explorer, relying on the knowledge of Aboriginal peoples and developing a sympathetic – if paternalistic – approach to their welfare. After leaving Australia he accepted his first Colonial Office appointment in New Zealand, where in the years following the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi he vigorously pursued policies of assimilation and ‘native civilisation’.1 In 1854 he was appointed to colonial posts in the West Indian islands of St Vincent and Antigua where, in the wake of the ‘Indian Mutiny’/Sepoy Rebellion of 1857, he ruled over an increasingly restless population. It was Eyre’s final posting to Jamaica in 1862 that was to seal his reputation in England as a murderer and monster of cruelty,2 as he imposed brutal martial law during the rebellion at Morant Bay three years later. The threads of history are shared, a series of profound human encounters which seeped into each other, effecting not just imperial policy but so too subaltern agency.

We must be wary of viewing colonial history through the lens of the coloniser. This idea for this exhibition, breathing life into the often-painful traces of former occupation. Nikos Papastergiadis reminds us that today, ‘the new cultural patterns of globalization differ from colonialism, resembling less a centre-periphery binarism than a multi-directional circuit-board.’3 We might then ask, with Britain’s imperial power removed, what remains of that shared history, those networks which linked indigenous and diasporic peoples from Australia, New Zealand, the Caribbean, Canada and beyond? In his book *Return to the Protocols T.J.* Demos speaks of colonialism’s spectres, those ‘haunting memories and ghostly presences that refuse to rest in peace.’ He ascribes their power to what he argues is a widespread political amnesia and misrecognition, describing: ‘the negations, disavowals, and rejections of historical responsibility and present advantage’, occurring in political discourse as much as in cultural representations, that allow and even cause the ghosts to fly free.4 It is these spectres that animate the works in this exhibition, breathing life into the often-painful legacies of colonial history, and reminding us that such legacies demand our urgent attention.

Julie Gough uncovers the silences in colonial art history, tracing her native Tasmania, often on foot (as in *Traveler* [2013]), working with found objects that speak of uncomfortable pasts, mining archaeological seams to raise questions, mourn loss, and lay bare the psychic scars of the past. Her *Hunting Ground Incorporating Barbeque Area* (2014) shines light on dispossession, linking archaeological ‘evidence’ of Aboriginal habitation with arcane traces of former occupation. Ideas of mobility and travel, exploring country on foot, also inform the series *Place* (1983/2015) by Geoff Parr. A committed bush walker, and later a conservation activist and a member of the world’s first Green Party, Parr first made the series in 1983 after returning to Tasmania from Europe. It was during this period that a noted shift occurred in the understanding and acceptance of Aboriginal art by the Australian art world.5 In Tasmania Parr immersed himself in the island’s Indigenous history, encountered in the island’s hinterland, and in displays at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG); his *The National Picture 1985* (1985) would become a lightning rod for debate in the years leading up to, and including, Australia’s Bicentennial.

Christian Thompson and Kent Monkman explore notions of alterity, Indigenous identity and authenticity through performance, turning the camera on themselves to explore fractured identities by appropriating and transforming stereotypes. The series *Polari* (2014), from which this catalogue’s cover comes, takes its name from the underground slang commonly spoken by the gay subculture in Britain in the mid-twentieth century. Produced during a period of residency at Trinity College, Oxford, Thompson’s photograph serves to empower covert sexual and racial identities, the subject’s smouldering appeal as alluring as it is monstrous.
While colonial history has often inspired the work of Fiona Foley, her series Nulla 4 era (2009) casts a direct eye towards two of Australia’s more recent manifestations of racist and xenophobic violence: the Cronulla riots of 2005. In Nulla 4 era III (2009), Foley re-entangles the kinds of hate-fuelled dramas that continue to flare in Australia’s suburban landscapes. Yvonne Rees-Pagh also directs attention to the violence of racism in her print suite Thug (2011), linking this with Britain’s visceral tactical and constitutive etching process involving repeated acid washes and winding incisions into a metal plate. The irony of the location of the 2005 riots on the Kurnell peninsular, close to the site where Cook first landed, was not lost on commentators at the time (although it is Foley herself who inserts Aboriginal people into her fictitious multi-cultural tableauxs). The foundational story of Cook’s landing, much mythologised by White Australia, is re-articulated by Daniel Boyd in We Call Them Pirates Out Here (2006). Boyd’s reclamation of the history painting tradition has in more recent years taken him further afield to the Pacific Islands, where he traced the story of his great-great-grandfather who was coerced into recruitment in the sugar plantations of Queensland. Of his great-great-grandfather who was coerced into labour for little or no pay. This is a story that sits uncomfortably within the larger and better known ‘blackbirded’ between 1863 and 1904, and forced recruitment in the sugar plantations of Queensland. He was typical of many South Sea Islanders who were ‘blackbirded’ between 1863 and 1904, and forced to labour for little or no pay.” This is a story that sits uncomfortably with the larger and better known narrative of indentured labour that Britain relied on for much of its wealth throughout the Victorian era. Human migration – both coerced and voluntary – is a key concern of Jamaican artist Charles Campbell, whose R. Buckminster Fuller (1895-1983) inspired sphere – a symbol of utopian idealism that has preoccupied the artist for several years in his Transpooter (2011-2015) series – is complicated by motifs from Jamaica’s slave past. The modular forms of a modernist utopia are scarified by a nineteenth-century transport ship transporting slaves from the coast of Sierra Leone to awaiting European slavers. Complicity is a theme here that complicates any simple binary between coloniser and colonised. How Locke is best known for his exuberant mixed media portraits of British royalty, a fascination with which stems from a profound and often ambivalent interest in Britishness, fuelled by his pietistic upbringing – first in Scotland, and then in Guyana, the former British colony on the Caribbean coast of South America. Locke remembers having the queen’s face on his school exercise books in Guyana, and as a schoolboy getting into trouble for defacing them. His interest in colonialism has recently developed into a broader meditation on its relationship to globalisation – issues of homeland and exile, migration, and the human impact of state power and capital. It is within this expanded context of the symbols of nationhood, and the contemporary relationship to globalisation – issues of homeland and exile, migration, and the human impact of state power and capital. It is within this expanded context of the symbols of nationhood, and the contemporary relationship to globalisation – issues of homeland and exile, migration, and the human impact of state power and capital. It is within this expanded context of the symbols of nationhood, and the contemporary relationship to globalisation – issues of homeland and exile, migration, and the human impact of state power and capital. 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Mori and Polynesian history and lore, bestowing dignity and humanity to a culture untouched by European contact. Maree Clarke too engages in a symbolic repossessment of her cultural heritage by recreating some of the bodily adornments worn – either willingly or unwillingly – by her ancestors. While the traditional river reed necklaces have been carefully crafted and enlarged to demonstrate the power and resilience of the women that wore them, the ceramic breastplates have been, in Clarke’s words, ‘reclaimed’ from the metal originals that were forced onto Aboriginal bodies in the nineteenth century. Joan Ross animates the polite picturesque aquarells of British colonial artist Joseph Lycett in BBQ this Sunday, RYO (2011). Donning high visibility clothing her cast of British and Aboriginal cut-out figures transform Lycett’s Edenic landscape into a disquieting parody of the everyday suburban barbeque. The claiming of things (2012) introduces Thomas Gainsborough’s famous painted figures, Mr and Mrs William Balfour (1785) into John Glover’s The Bath of Diana, Van Diemen’s Land (1837), where they begin to unleash a torrent of environmental vandalism.

Colonial Afterlives seeks to breathe life into these ghostly apparitions, not by eliding the profound distinctions between the histories of disparate nations, but by re-tracing those networks of empire that have now all but evaporated. Distanced by geography, these spectres continue to commune through history.
The blue waters of Bass Strait surge strongly around a low rocky outcrop. Hardly an island, the few stark boulders are barely enough to part the slow swell and churn the water’s deep, blue embrace. If not for the foaming wake, these rocks would be missed by all but the best of a ship’s watch. But one tired eye knows these rocks well. Their rounded mass resembles the bursting breasts of a nursing mother. Stained bright orange and black by lichens, the surface is scoured by relentless wind and harsh driven brine. In the deep crevice between them where the wind does not reach lays a precious shelter for the rocks’ sole inhabitant.

This is the beginning of a story, a fiction – perhaps based well enough on history and a few blurred facts – but a fiction nonetheless. I have spent decades writing reviews, essays and other polemics, and exploring colonial history. I have looked for solutions to the plight that Aboriginal people face in Tasmania through an analysis of history. But I have found few. Instead history reveals damage and alienation; wrought by colonisation, perpetuated by generations of welfare-dependency, and entrenched by a pervasive culture of victimhood. As the recent ‘History Wars’ in Australia have shown, the true account of Australia’s nationhood remains fiercely contested. The idea of an Australian colonial history that is a ‘non-fiction’ seems lost among academic argument, media hyperbole and political intrigue.

Perhaps there is more to be achieved by investing in fiction than in history. It is certainly a more honest endeavour. Like history, fiction offers elements of interpretation and of description drawn from personal encounter. What is missing in fiction are the subtexts of authority and fact. And, as arguments between Keith Windschuttle and historians such as Henry Reynolds, Lyndall Ryan and James Boyce have demonstrated, the assertion of authority and truth in relation to the Aboriginal experience is problematic to say the least. Perhaps we need to return to story-telling for guidance toward the future. This is, after all, the approach that served our ancestors well for a thousand generations, and made Aboriginal culture what it is (or at least what it was before the influence of colonial history began to unravel our view of the world).

To welcome this exhibition, I offer two stories. One much like we are all expected to tell. Reductive. Rational. Polemical. In the other I unravel a tale, without fact or authority, of an afterlife that preceded my own.

Crouched with her back to the hard granite wall and wrapped tightly in a cloak of wallaby skin to hold the damp chill at bay, a young woman lets herself float into a quiet, dark emptiness. Her face is still soft with youth, but her russet skin is laced with scars. One of her deep-set eyes is large and dark. The cornea is tinged with blue. The iris and pupil merge as one. Her other eye is gone.

Emptiness has been her constant companion since she was left here on the rocks. She has not heard her own name spoken for months. The only time it will come to her is in this dark place where her mother’s voice still cries out. She cries out as her child is dragged away across the sand. Away to where a longboat waits.

As I look around Australia at the beginning of this new century, I see a growing disillusionment among Aboriginal thinkers about how we should be negotiating our way into the future. Progress has slowed, burdened by a growing awareness that much of what we have struggled for has not born fruit. Even if we have made some ground in re-evaluating the assertions of imperial history; even if we have won a better understanding of the extent of injustice, suffering continues to exist. The echoes of the past continue to haunt our families. There is so much pain and so little to ease it as governments withdraw their resources and revert to the punishing practices of a missionary past.

We are realising that a life of resistance has generated a particular identity, which contains us within that which we seek to overcome. Worse, there are now generations of Aboriginal people whose identity has been shaped almost entirely within an oppositional consciousness that has us readily defining our boundaries and limiting possibility in our lives – as we sink deeper into the trauma of intergenerational loss.

Researching the colonial records is like trying to squeeze a sense of possibility from century-old sources that were scarcely concerned with our future fate. The jottings of clerks. The missives of governors. The angry shouts of an invading culture hungry for wealth. The more I search history for a path to the future, the more I am convinced that I am looking in the wrong place. The problem is that we have been generating an identity in a struggle to oppose the past. But the past cannot be opposed, no more than it can be changed (regardless of the efforts of revisionists from
the right or the left). All we learn from this is what we do not want to be. We don’t want to be oppressed. We don’t want to suffer discrimination. We don’t want to be poorly housed. We don’t want to die young.

After two centuries of resistance it has become almost unimaginable that we should do anything else. Any Aborigine can tell you what White Australia has done to Indigenous people. But there are also important questions. What are we doing to ourselves? What do we want to be? Most of us will say the same thing – empowered, equal, respected. But all of these are, at least in terms of our current thinking, limiting. Why? Because each is a measure of our relationship to that which threatens us. Each is a desire that legitimates the authority of oppression, ensuring a continuing connection to what we claim to want to escape. I am not suggesting that struggle is not important. But the sea change that will be required to transform the lives of most Aborigines will only come when we begin to imagine what might exist after the war is over – after we no longer believe in our own oppression – when we lives of most aborigines will only come when we begin to imagine what might exist after two centuries of resistance it has become almost unimaginable that we should do anything else. Any Aborigine can tell you what White Australia has done to Indigenous people. But there are also important questions. What are we doing to ourselves? What do we want to be? Most of us will say the same thing – empowered, equal, respected. But all of these are, at least in terms of our current thinking, limiting. Why? Because each is a measure of our relationship to that which threatens us. Each is a desire that legitimates the authority of oppression, ensuring a continuing connection to what we claim to want to escape. I am not suggesting that struggle is not important. But the sea change that will be required to transform the lives of most Aborigines will only come when we begin to imagine what might exist after the war is over – after we no longer believe in our own oppression – when we refuse to accept that we are defined by what Australia has made of us.

When we feel ostracised, a number of our social needs are in jeopardy. Among these are a need for control of our own lives, self-esteem, belonging and a meaningful existence. Colonisation delivered a direct assault on the ability of Aborigines to control their own lives. Contemporary political and economic structures perpetuate this and have been the subject of much of the Aboriginal struggle. However, other needs are probably our most profound and challenging; ones that are poorly addressed by either government or Aboriginal leaders. Self esteem refers to how we think others perceive our goodness and worth. Two centuries of ostracism of Aborigines by White Australia have led to a popular assumption that Aborigines have done – or are doing – something wrong. But the reasons for this are seldom articulated. In the absence of dialogue many Aboriginal people must surmise what that wrong might be. A self-critical list is left to grow unchecked and, fuelled by the stuff of stereotypes, easily generates a state of hopelessness.

In Aboriginal cultures, ostracism is an extreme form of punishment. To be excluded from your community is to become non-existent. To experience this is to experience a social death. Aborigines in Australia have become largely banished; to remote communities and urban ghettos, and to social and economic margins. The Aboriginal role in contemporary Australian society is mostly limited to entertainment. Roles in business, as professions or as educators are hard won. Status as leaders outside of our community are truly rare.

The human response to these threats is hurt and an increase in need. When we feel we do not belong, our need to belong increases. When we sense a lack of meaning in our lives, the need for meaning is enhanced. So what happens when threats to our social needs are unrelenting? When our ability to cope is depleted? Alienation sets in, and a sense of powerlessness prevails. But rejection by White Australia will only generate these influences on the lives of Aborigines while we authorise our rejection; while we agree to argue the assertions of oppression. While we allow others to be the authors of our oppositional lives.

When our ability to cope is depleted? Alienation sets in, and a sense of powerlessness prevails. But rejection by White Australia will only generate these influences on the lives of Aborigines while we authorise our rejection; while we agree to argue the assertions of oppression. While we allow others to be the authors of our oppositional lives.
Bunga rises to her feet and climbs out of her sheltering cleft. She follows a penguin track of hard-packed sand through sparse tussocks to a small rise. The wind hits her hard in the face. It blows in from a sky gushing crimson and purple. Bunga waits, as she does every morning, for the brief flash of green that precedes her first glimpse of the rising sun—a sign of what the day will bring. Away on the horizon, in the direction of the stiffening breeze, she imagines a billowing sail, stained by the sky’s flaming hue. Whether or not the sail is real is unimportant. It will come anyway. As long as the remaining seals continue to call to her. As long as she remains here.

Broad blades of kelp writhe and flash along the foaming water’s edge. Bunga picks her way across the broken shore and circles the islet, making her approach to the platform where the seals will be hauling their dark forms from the waves. They have filled their bellies and will be tired from foraging; looking forward to slumber in the warming glow of the morning sun. Bunga drops to her hands and knees, then slides on her side through the kelp as she gets closer, dragging her heavy club behind her. She slows to less than a crawl and inches forward, head down. The seals will be looking for her. A careful approach will take her amongst the wary animals; make her one of them.

Listening intently to the barking call that first roused her, she stares at the worn stone flecked with tiny barnacles beneath her hands. Her lips part and she sings quietly to keep the seals calm and still. It is her Mother’s voice that slips from her mouth—making words that melt into the surging foam and swirl around the seal’s glistening fur. When she is close, Bunga raises her head slowly. She draws a sharp breath.

Only one seal is with her on the rock. It is silvery white, and has fixed her in a wide-eyed, liquid gaze. She waits for a movement, when she must quickly strike. But when movement comes it is her that draws back.

A singular identity serves the interests of a market demanding a safe and unthreatening cultural product—familiar dot paintings and smiling dancers. A singular identity serves the interests of politics and of history—creating predictable figures that can be contained by government policies of control.

This Aboriginal identity is constructed and continually refreshed by the powers that seek to confine us, and in the same way by our efforts to resist. We have been so busy shouting out the name of the White oppressor, we forget that our greatest enemy is within. To paraphrase Frantz Fanon, we cannot hope for freedom until we realise that our identities of victimhood and resistance are part of the colonial lie.

We forget what we have when we are distracted by what we have been taught to believe we have lost. But we have not lost the things that are most essential to us—our relationship to the land and to our ancestors—the things that make us Aborigines. So, what if we cease to react to oppression and to serve its interests?

What if we disbelieve in the power that colonial history has over us. What if we celebrate our diversity without constraint? I suspect that we might be astonished by the grandeur of the world, and the limitless possibilities that exist in each of our lives; an inspiring setting from which to begin to write our own futures.

To decolonise our identities. To begin a life after the colonial. A distant coastline takes shape on the horizon as the sky brightens. Bunga cannot make out any smoke from the campsites. Perhaps, she thinks, she is too far away to see them. Or maybe the wind is blowing too hard for the smoke to rise.

She recalls the feel of dry grass in her hands and the heat of the coals on her face. Her Mother’s song brings a burning tear and, far away, the thump of her father’s dancing feet echo the thud of her racing heart. She places the wallaby skin cloak at her feet and bundles it tightly with a length of grass string. After refreshing the layer of seal fat on her body Bunga picks up the bundle and wades into the heaving swell. The tide has begun to turn and the current will pull her toward the distant coastline. The wind is behind her and her arms and legs are strong. Far away, seated beside a glowing hearth, her Mother sings a daughter’s name, as she has done every morning since the child was lost to her.

Greg Lehman is currently completing PhD research at the Tasmanian College of the Arts on the visual representation of his ancestors in colonial art.
EWAN ATKINSON

My work investigates the development of persona and character within the social boundaries that might define or confine a community, with specific reference to Caribbean island communities. Educational experiences, formal and informal, are of particular interest. Role-play is an important part of the work. Fictional characters are the tools with which conflicts between community and singularity are explored.

What value systems control idealised social roles and moral positions? Who keeps these ideals in place? The Neighbourhood is an ongoing project that started in 2007. Using this fictional location and its inhabitants, I examine the production of meaning, modes of escapism, disguise and personal reinvention. Moments when external cultural influences meet folk ‘traditions’ become points of departure in narratives that imagine a community and contextualise individuality.

All images have been digitally reproduced for the exhibition by permission of the artist.

I Cannot Wear this Dress 2005
Mixed media on digital print (original)
The reworking of significant historical works is a potent artistic tool for commentary on Australia’s history, past and present. Aboriginal artist Daniel Boyd examines colonial narratives in Australian art, from heroic depictions of Captain Cook to encounters between Aboriginal Australians and European settlers. Boyd draws inspiration from late eighteenth and nineteenth-century paintings held in public collections, reworking them in subtle and provocative ways. Historically celebrated explorers and colonisers are portrayed as buccaneers and profiteers, their triumphant Union Jack flags transformed into hybrid Jolly Rogers with sinister skulls and cross-bones.

Boyd’s parody of the British colonial invasion of New South Wales, with its reversal of terms – We Call Them Pirates Out Here – responds to Emanuel Phillip Fox’s Landing of Captain Cook at Botany Bay, 1770 commissioned and painted in 1902, in the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria. Boyd’s work takes on the complex histories of the site of Cook’s landing as both a moment of conquest by the English explorer, and the moment of invasion for the original inhabitants. In Boyd’s painting, as in the work of Fox, we see Cook stepping to shore. Whilst in Fox’s work Cook is the symbol of civilised British culture, for Boyd, Cook becomes a pirate ready to take part in the great colonial land grab. Boyd has inserted the faces of his friends as the ship’s crew, hoisting the flag whilst Cook surveys the scene with his one-eye. Smoke in the far distance is evidence of an inhabited land in direct contrast to Cook’s taking of the land and the later proclamation of it as Terra Nullius.

Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, purchased with funds provided by the the Goe and Mordant families, 2006.

Image courtesy the artist, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery and the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia.
The Transporter project inhabits the interstices of a number of artistic, and political concerns. The project converts three-dimensional forms into complex image surfaces, playing between heavily loaded political narratives and utopian ideals, object and image, public and private spaces. The sculptural forms point to Buckminster Fuller’s idea of a rational utopia, while the interwoven images that inhabit their surface reference slavery and colonialism and suggest notions of complicity, compromise and violence. Here the attempt is to create objects that both engage in and defy pre-existing narratives, using unexpected forms and relationships to contest linear notions of time and the certainty of meaning.
These works explore the intersections of knowledge, power and relationships for South Eastern Australian Aboriginal people after colonisation. I love looking at objects in museum collections, researching historic items and turning that research into art – it provides me with a connection to the traditional material practices of my ancestors, yet my practice remains firmly steeped in the now. These objects appear to look back to history and tradition – the breastplates were imposed on us by the colonisers, the river reed necklaces have not been made for many many years since colonisation; in recreating them I have re-possessed them and reinterpreted them to reflect contemporary attitudes and outlook.

The breastplates have been reclaimed – we have taken ownership of them in a respectful way and made them ours. Originally, they were made out of metal. I wanted to remake the breastplates from organic materials with what looked like swales/landscapes on them. I carved traditional designs and adorned them with kangaroo teeth, echidna quills, parrot and eagle feathers. I then wanted to photograph someone wearing them in a contemporary setting – the unlikely coupling of the blue jeans and the breastplate – and painted with ochre in reference to traditional ceremony.

The river reed necklaces are based on the traditional plain river reed necklaces that Boon Wurrung people made and which were given to friends, family or to people passing through country. These have been made using the traditional river reeds, but have been supersized – a testament to the ongoing strength and survival of our culture, and our passing on of the story and knowledge that goes with them.

Images courtesy the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne.

MAREE CLARKE
The works in this series, *Nulla 4 eva*, portray a true, mixed, ‘multi cultural’ nation. Three themes are visited – a playful, if reserved beach culture; secondly that historical meeting place, site of the Chinese opium house once common in north Queensland; and an overall youth focus. ... Foley, in a sense has taken on the role of an unofficial historian. Nobody has asked or authorised this role – someone I guess has to try to play this out. A lot could be said there, but it’s really in this view that her art should be read.

‘*We grew here, you flew here*’
The Cronulla incident was one of contestation; historically as well as physically. Contestation of the site – contestation of the beach as an Australian social interactive space – for many a sacred place. Aboriginal people were never asked for comment – white Australians simply claimed the site. No reference has been given to Aboriginal people’s history or view, yet all Sydney’s coastal beaches carry Aboriginal names – Bondi, Tamarama, Gooeee, Clovelly, Maroubra, Kurnell, and Cronulla. Successive waves of migrants have washed upon our shores – equally challenged as they arrived by the previous wave, vilified and to an extent subsumed and then dismissed. They are strangers to us (Aboriginal people). Who owns the beach? Aboriginal people if anyone.

— Djon Mundine OAM
Indigenous Curator – Contemporary Art
Campbelltown Arts Centre

Image courtesy of the artist and Niagara Galleries.
Hunting Ground Incorporating Barbeque Area is a range of works that morph contemporary Tasmanian public barbeque areas with references to colonial Van Diemen’s Land – in particular the willful dispossession of Aboriginal people from their country, language, customs, each other.

The tenacious colonial land grab in the first decades of the 1800s reduced Van Diemen’s Land to pastoral places with perimeters; agricultural success apparently required the eradication of the original inhabitants. Meanwhile, today, dotted across the island are small pseudo-cottage barbeque areas. These architecturally reflect in scale and sometimes location the original sod or slab huts populated by shepherds and stockmen who kept the roving savages, my ancestors, at bay while extending the expanse of the ‘settled districts’.

For the love of country, Aboriginal Tasmanians fought to the death at places such as these. Barbeque areas retain an uncanny independence from other built environments. They offer free fuel at the push of a button, welcoming everyone to cook anything on a stainless steel plate whose central drainage hole seems simultaneously medical and military. These sites might appear innocuous, democratic, nurturing. For me, however, they express loss of original people from country. Rarely occupied, they appear a cruel recreational, amnesic joke. For what reason did wholesale slaughter occur across my island? For this – designated barbeque areas?

Julie Gough is represented by Bett Gallery, Hobart and Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne.

Hunting Ground (Richmond Park 1) 2014
Pigment on rag paper
Share certificates are a window into the history and movement of money, power and ownership. New companies garland their shares with confident typography and classical motifs implying stability and worth. The ongoing series of painted share certificates is part of Locke’s continuous exploration of concepts of time, fortune, history and change. He uses original shares and bonds as a means of not just looking at history and its unpredictability, but also as a way of exploring politics, economy and culture. These paper relics, which often refer to now defunct or bankrupt companies, once represented fortunes. Now most of them are remnants of the past in the constantly shifting economic landscape.

Hew Locke is represented by Hales Gallery, London.
Move over J.Lo and Cher! Miss Chief Eagle Testickle has a new sexy video of her club track: *Dance to Miss Chief* – a playful critique of German fascination with North American Indians that is guaranteed to make you want to get up and shake your booty! This remix of contemporary and vintage footage celebrates Miss Chief’s on-screen romance with leading man, Winnetou, fictitious Indian from Karl May’s German Westerns.

Monkman’s glamorous diva alter-ego Miss Chief appears in much of his work as an agent provocateur, trickster, and supernatural being, who reverses the colonial gaze, upending received notions of history and indigenous people.

Kent Monkman is represented by Pierre-François Ouellette Art Contemporain in Montreal and Toronto, Sargent’s Daughters in New York and Trepanier Baer in Calgary.
We want to see suffering, serenity, humour, when we know nothing. Colonisers of the world, we want everything to speak to us: the beast, the dead, the statues. And these statues are mute. They have mouths and don’t speak. They have eyes and don’t see us.

Chris Marker and Alain Resnais, Les statues meurent aussi [Statues also die], 1953

In their 1953 film Chris Marker and Alain Resnais tell us that statues can die, particularly when these artefacts are torn from their original context and forced onto display within ethnographic museums throughout Europe. So if statues can die when they are recontextualised from Africa to European museums then what if we listen to other objects, from our own conflicted history, what might they say about their public existence?

In this work a constellation of elements interacts and overlaps, including objects, video, text and voice. The work responds to the colonial collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. It draws a vague, drifting outline around this network of contentious and often problematic representations of people and place. A drifting eye lingers on objects and spaces (both public and hidden) within the museum while an anonymous voice follows a train of thought that is prompted by the objects, spaces and people it encounters along the way.

The artist would like to thank: the Salamanca Arts Centre; Sarah Thomas; The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery; Jane Stewart; and the Tasmanian College of the Arts.

The Desires of Mute Things 2015
Installation with digital video
Recuperating after a serious traffic accident in 1982 I spent many months overseas in the United States, England and mostly on the Continent travelling from one venue to the next around Europe’s summer art circuit and bumping up against the art famous. My months of travel with luggage set the pattern for the ‘pack man’ concept, which was extended by observing the ‘bag ladies’ with their home possessions carried in bulging plastic bags.

The ‘Packman’ that I adopted on returning to Tasmania was quintessentially a cultured European who may occasionally pen a poem to elevate his status with colleagues. The piece Place resulted from allowing Packman to roam about our historic hinterland. There were about a dozen staged photographs with eight making it into colour transparencies displayed on light boxes and shown as Place at Perspecta in 1983.

Two years later National Picture 1985 was superscanned onto canvas. It is based upon Duterrau’s 1840 Conciliation painted as a study for his own larger National Picture, a project he advertised at the time and which has unfortunately been lost.

In 1988 a transparency was made of my National Picture 1985 and added to Place for an exhibition in London during our bicentenary year. Subsequently this second version of Place was acquired by the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. Four images from the second version of Place were selected for Colonial Afterlives. The change from light-box display to print on aluminium is to suit the exhibition’s travelling agenda and so Packman continues to do the rounds.

Photo: Geoff Parr
Credit: Geoff Parr

Place 1983/2015
Photographic transparencies scanned as digital images and printed on aluminium

GEOFF PARR
The racist violence that exploded in the Sydney suburb of Cronulla in December 2005 is of great significance. The importance of this event sparked furious debates on multiculturalism and racism, forcing reflection on the notorious reputation of our country and its racist history, and how as a nation we deal with the problem.

Thug (2011) is a four panel work based upon a photograph of the head of one of the Cronulla rioters. In what was seen as a shame tactic, police released photos of men wanted for questioning in relation to the Cronulla riots. These were published on the front page of The Australian newspaper on 9 March 2006. I reflected upon this front page exposure. These ‘thugs’ became the source of inspiration for creating the work.

The left hand panel is an etched line drawing; the lines frenetically build up the image, imbuing the anger and violence in the rioter’s face. The middle panels are photographic enlargements of the head, silkscreened with sugar lift solution onto the etching plate. In the enlargement process the head became distorted. In creating the final panel, three plates were printed over each other, nearly completely obliterating the rioter’s face. This act of obliteration of the thug’s face was my way of also obliterating the violence he symbolised.
A wounded Māori warrior looms out of the dark primordial landscape, finds a safe haven to lay down, and dies ... Accompanied by his frightening attendant, the exalted Tahitian Chief Mourner takes a villager’s life in a frenzied attack – re-enacting a long vanished ritual. A Māori woman performs a karonga to open up the space between heavenly and earthly realms, while grieving for the dead is visualised in a blood-letting ceremony where women honour the pain of loss. Enigmatic and poignant, Tai Whetuki – House of Death’s mythological imagery examines current and ancient Māori and Polynesian traditions associated with death and the process of mourning.
Joan Ross’s recent digital print and video works combine visual elements from a variety of early colonial Australian paintings and contemporary life in order to re-conceptualise and problematise our relationship to both.

The work confronts us with colonial references made strange through historical juxtaposition, in order that we may recognise the underlying and ongoing power relations of imperial occupation within our own motivations and presumptions.

The desire to act upon someone else’s property/space/person/culture is all too familiar; a desire perhaps as banal as touching someone else’s shopping or as controlling and organised as the power of a yellow fluorescent hi-vis uniform. The work of Joan Ross recognises a secret desire to trespass upon another’s private territory and identifies the increasing presence of day glow fluorescence in our landscape as an alien invasion of control and possession, not that dissimilar to planting a flag in foreign soil.

For an Australian, the subject of colonialism is emotionally charged, highly sensitive and lived everyday. Joan’s open narratives, disruptive chronologies, playful collaging and her re-visioning of nineteenth century European aesthetics is a measured response to the multi-layered, often paradoxical mix of the brutal, the beautiful, the emotional and the institutional that is colonialism’s legacy.

— Simon Cooper

Joan Ross is represented by Bett Gallery Hobart and Michael Reid Gallery Sydney.
The series *We Bury Our Own* was inspired by, and in dialogue with, the Australian Photographic Collection archived at the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford. The series, including *Invaded Dreams* and *Down Under World*, referenced historic images of Aboriginal people, mostly dated from the late nineteenth century. Thompson’s work is best summarised by Dr Chris Morton, Curator and Head of Photograph and Manuscript Collections, Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford in his catalogue essay for the exhibition:

‘Thompson has chosen to take the history of photographic representation of Aboriginal people as a starting point for the spiritual repatriation of the archive through the redemptive process of self-portraiture. Importantly, this process has not involved drawing on those historical markers of identity which are so prevalent in ethnographic imagery, but rather his own fluid and evolving transcultural identity, as well as biographical markers of another recent identity, that of an Oxford student in formal dress. Although archival imagery is a key inspiration in Thompson’s work generally, he is inspired by the materiality and composition of a wide variety of images from many different reference points such as contemporary fashion, film, and music. It is this playful blending of genres and reference points that not only makes Thompson’s approach distinctive, it also resonates historically with the blending of scientific and popular genres in the archival imagery with which he has engaged during this project.’

Christian Thompson appears courtesy of Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne.
LIST OF WORKS

EWAN ATKINSON
Playing House series:
Cooked Man 2005
Mixed media on digital print (original)
62 x 40.6 cm
Barbados National Collection,
Bridgetown, Barbados

Greedy Nan 2005
Mixed media on digital print (original)
62 x 40.6 cm
Barbados National Collection,
Bridgetown, Barbados

I Cannot Wear this Dress 2005
Mixed media on digital print (original)
62 x 40.6 cm
Collection of Judilee Reed, Brooklyn,
New York

Many Boys and Girls Live in Flats 2005
Mixed media on digital print (original)
62 x 40.6 cm
Barbados National Collection,
Bridgetown, Barbados

This Belongs to Me 2005
Mixed media on digital print (original)
62 x 40.6 cm
Barbados National Collection,
Bridgetown, Barbados

You Will Have to Use Soap 2005
Mixed media on digital print (original)
62 x 40.6 cm
Collection of Judilee Reed, Brooklyn,
New York

Pages 18-27 of the Nelson’s
collection of Judilee Reed, Brooklyn,
62.2 x 40.6 cm
mixed media on digital print (original)

2010
Neighbourhood (Under Glass)
Morality Tales For the Discerning
Pages 18-27 of the Nelson’s
collection of Judilee Reed, Brooklyn,
62.2 x 40.6 cm
mixed media on digital print (original)

2005
You Will Have to Use Soap
62.2 x 40.6 cm
mixed media on digital print (original)

This Belongs to Me
2005
Barbados National Collection,
62.2 x 40.6 cm
mixed media on digital print (original)

2005
Many Boys and Girls Live in Flats
collection of Judilee Reed, Brooklyn,
62.2 x 40.6 cm
mixed media on digital print (original)

2005
Barbados National Collection,
62.2 x 40.6 cm
mixed media on digital print (original)

2005

PLAYING HOUSE SERIES

FIONA FOLEY
Nulla 4 eva I 2009
Ultrachrome print on Hahnemühle paper
80 x 120 cm

Nulla 4 eva II 2009
Ultrachrome print on Hahnemühle paper
80 x 120 cm

Nulla 4 eva III 2009
Ultrachrome print on Hahnemühle paper
80 x 120 cm

Nulla 4 eva V 2009
Ultrachrome print on Hahnemühle paper
80 x 120 cm

JULIE GOUGH
Hunting Ground Incorporating
Barbeque Area 2014
HDMI video H264, 16:9, 10 mins, colour,
sound, edited by Jemma Rea

Hunting Ground (Badger Head Dunes) 2014
Pigment on rag paper
50 x 125 cm, edition of 5

Hunting Ground (Bay of Fires) 2014
Pigment on rag paper
50 x 125 cm, edition of 5

Hunting Ground (Bonny’s Plains) 2014
Pigment on rag paper
50 x 125 cm, edition of 5

Hunting Ground (LiddilIon) 2014
Pigment on rag paper
50 x 125 cm, edition of 5

Hunting Ground (Rosedale) 2014
Pigment on rag paper
50 x 125 cm, edition of 5

Hunting Ground (Richardson Park) 1
2014
Pigment on rag paper
50 x 125 cm, edition of 5

Traveller 2013
HDMI video, colour, sound, 9.28 mins
edited by Jemma Rea

HEW LOCKE
Share Certificates:
Attasi Minis Limited 2009
Acrylic paint and felt pen on paper
30 x 27 cm

Cédric Fon Tolér’Afrique 1 2014
Acrylic on share certificate
43 x 31.5 cm

Compagnie du Lubilash 2011
Acrylic on paper
32 x 45 cm

Societe des Minis d’or de Kilo-Moto 2009
Acrylic paint on paper
36.5 x 30.5 cm
Images copyright Hew Locke,
courtesy of Hales Gallery, London

KENT MONKMAN
Dance to Miss Chief 2010
Digital video with sound, 4:49 mins

The claiming of things
Digital animation, 5 min

CHRISTIAN THOMPSON
Trinity III 2014
From the Polari series
C-type print
100 x 75 cm

Invaded Dreams 2012
From the We Buy our Own series
C-type print
160 x 100 cm

Down Under World 2012
From the We Buy our Own series
C-type print
160 x 100 cm
B I O G R A P H I E S

S A R A H  T H O M A S

Dr Sarah Thomas was Curator of Australian Art at the Art Gallery of South Australia from 1999 until 2003. She has lived in London since 2008, and currently lectures in the history of art at Birbeck College, University of London. Recent publications focus on the art history and museology of the British empire, the role and particularities of the itinerant artist, and the iconography of slavery. In 2013 she was awarded a PhD from the University of Sydney.

G R E G  L E H M A N

Greg Lehman is a descendant of Woorootemoyeen, a young woman taken by sealers from her home in the north east of Tasmania around 1810. Her daughter, Dolly Briggs, was the first Tasmanian Aborigine to be granted land by the colonial government of Van Diemen’s Land. Greg Lehman is currently completing PhD research at the Tasmanian College of the Arts on the visual representation of his ancestors in colonial art.

E W A N  A T K I N S O N

Ewan Atkinson was born in Barbados in 1975. He received a BFA in the U.S.A. from the Atlanta College of Art and an MA in Cultural Studies at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus. He has exhibited in regional and international exhibitions including the 2010 Lima Biennial, ‘Wrestling with the Image: Caribbean Interventions’ at the Art Museum of the Americas in Washington DC, and ‘Infinitely Island’ at the Brooklyn Museum in New York. Atkinson has been an educator for 15 years and is currently the coordinator of the BFA in Studio Art at the Barbados Community College. He also works as a freelance illustrator and designer.

D A N I E L  B O Y D

Born 1982, Cairns, Queensland. Lives and works in Sydney. Daniel Boyd’s work reinterprets Aboriginal and Australian-European history, drawing attention to the often subjective nature of what we are taught. His work often dwells on themes of inheritance, both personal and anti-historical, in particular the heritage of primitivism and its influence in Modernist aesthetics. Daniel Boyd is a Kudjala/Gangaladj man from Far North Queensland. He has been exhibiting his work nationally and internationally since 2005. Boyd exhibited at The TarraWarra Biennial 2014: Whisper In My Voice curated by Natalie King and Djirr-m吮-mundine. Earlier in 2014 he received The Bulgari Award for his painting Untitled, 2014 at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. In 2013, Boyd exhibited at ArtSpice, Sydney. In Daniel Boyd: History is Made at Night. In 2012 he exhibited in the Up In Smoke Tour, National History Museum, London.

C H A R L E S  C A M P B E L L

Charles Campbell is a Jamaican born multidisciplinary artist, writer and curator. His work has been exhibited widely including at the Havanna Biennial, the Brooklyn Museum, the Art Museum of the Americas, the Santo Domingo Biennial, the Cuence Biennial, Alice Yard, the Biennale d’art contemporain de la Martinique, Museo de Arte Contemporaneos, Puerto Rico, the Agora, National Center of African American Culture, the Contemporary Art Centre, New Orleans, Rijkschage, Ottawa, the Art Gallery of Mississauga and Duke University. He has written for numerous publications including Frieze Magazine and ARC Magazine, a Caribbean arts journal. Campbell holds an MA in Fine Art from Goldsmith College, London, and currently lives and works in Jamaica.

M A R E E  C L A R K E

Maree Clarke, a Mutti Mutti, Yorta, BoolWarrung woman from Mildura in northeast Victoria, is a multi disciplinary artist living and working in Melbourne. She is a pivotal figure in the reclamation of southeast Australian Aboriginal art practices, reviving elements of Aboriginal culture that were lost over the period of colonisation, as well as a leader in nurturing and promoting the diversity of contemporary southeast Aboriginal artists.

Clarke’s continuing desire to affirm and reconnect with her cultural heritage has seen her promote the revivification of Victorian Aboriginal cultural materials such as the traditional possum skin cloaks, together with the production of contemporary designs of kangaroo teeth necklaces, string headbands adorned with kangaroo teeth and ochilina quills, and river red necklaces.

Maree Clarke’s multi media installations of photography, painting and sculpture further explore the customary ceremonies, rituals and language of her ancestors.

F I O N A  F O L E Y

Fiona Foley was born in Maryborough, Queensland in 1964. She completed a Certificate of Arts at the East Sydney Technical College in 1983, during which she was a visiting student at St Martins School of Art, London. From 1984 to 1986 she undertook a Bachelor of Visual Arts at Sydney College of the Arts, and in 1987 she completed a Diploma of Education at the Sydney Institute of Education, Sydney University. Throughout her career Fiona has taken an active role promoting indigenous identity and was co-founder of the Boonmii Aboriginal Artists Co-operative, Sydney in 1987. In 2003, she was appointed Adjunct Professor at Queensland College of Art, Griffith University. In 2004, Foley completed an International Studio and Curatorial Program residency in New York. In 2006 she exhibited in the 17th Biennale of Sydney, Foleyle continues to work on projects, including sculptural commissions and installations, in Australia and overseas.

J U L I E  G O U G H

Julie Gough is an artist, freelance curator and writer who lives in Tasmania. Her research and art practice often involves uncovering and re-presenting conflicting and subsumed histories, many referring to other than 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 holds a PhD and BA Honours in Visual Arts from the University of Tasmania, a Masters degree from Goldsmiths College, London and BA (Visual Arts) Curtin University and BA (Prehistory/English Literature) from the University of Western Australia. She has exhibited widely in Australia since 1994 including: andExiled, NGV, 2012; Clemenger Award, NGV, 2010; Biennale of Sydney, 2006; Liverpool Biennial, UK, 2001; Peregina, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1995. Gough’s work is held in most Australian state and national gallery collections, and her work is represented by Bett Gallery, Hobart.
Puhi, Ng ti is an internationally recognized interdisciplinary artist who has worked in a variety of mediums, including painting, film/video, performance, and public art. His work explores the languages of post-colonial subject matter from around the world, represented in the collections of major museums in Canada and the US.

James Newitt
James Newitt (b. 1981, Hobart, Tasmania) lives and works in Lisbon, Portugal and Hobart, Tasmania. His work engages with specific social and cultural relations, often embracing mutability and paradox, in order to investigate the spaces between individual and collective identity, memory and history, fact and fiction through personal, observational and historical approaches. Newitt's work has been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions in Australia and Europe including: Lumiar Cité, Lisbon, 2013; the 2013 Anne Landa Award for Video and New Media Arts, Art Gallery of New South Wales; the Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, 2012; the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, 2009; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2007 and 2009; Rosalux, Berlin, 2009 and 2010; The Gallery of Fine Arts, Split, Croatia, 2010; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2010. In 2012 Newitt was awarded the prestigious Samstag Scholarship to participate in the Maureen Frank Independent Study Program in Lisbon. James is an Associate Lecturer at the University of Tasmania, Tasmanian College of the Arts.

Geoff Parr
Geoff Parr is a practicing artist living in Hobart. He is an Emeritus Professor at the University of Tasmania. His first solo exhibition was in 1965 and over the years his artworks have been included in major contemporary art exhibitions such as Australian Perspectives 03/05 and The 19th Biennial Stories of Australian Art at Commonwealth House, London in 1980. He won the Hobart Art Prize in 1994. A large survey of his work entitled "Geoff Parr: Imagining the Collection" was held at the Carnegie Gallery in Hobart in 2006.

Joan Ross
Joan Ross lives and works between Sydney and the Blue Mountains. She has exhibited her work nationally and internationally since 1989 including solo exhibitions at the National Gallery of Australia, the Museum of Contemporary Art Taipei, the Fine Art Society, London, James Cavello Gallery, New York, Frans Masereel Centrum, Belgium, Edith Cowan University, Western Australia, Nossobrook State Art Museum Russia, Burnie Regional Art Gallery, Tasmania.

Lisa Reihana
Ground-breaking and courageous, Lisa Reihana (Ngāpuhi, Ngāi Tūhoe, Ngāi Te Rangi) is an internationally renowned, multi-disciplinary artist. Her work spans many mediums including moving image, sculpture and multimedia formats. It demonstrates a keen ability to communicate complex ideas about indigenous identity and bi-cultural living. Lisa Reihana's extensive exhibition history includes regular exhibitions both within New Zealand and overseas, artist residencies in New Zealand, Canada and the USA. Her works are contained in significant collections around the world.
Salamanca Arts Centre (SAC) is Tasmania’s creative hub, an arts-engine room for connecting artists, artists-based businesses with national and international audiences, peers and opportunities.

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