

*Hatched 2021
National Graduate Show*

08 May - 11 July 2021

About PICA

Housed in a large and striking heritage building in the heart of Perth, Western Australia, PICA is the city's focal point for those wishing to experience the best of Australian and international visual, performance and interdisciplinary art.

PICA is both a producing and presenting institution that runs a year-round program of changing exhibitions, seasons in contemporary dance, theatre and performance and a range of interdisciplinary projects. It boasts one of the largest and most breath-taking exhibition spaces in Australia and has become known for the leading role it plays in the presentation of significant new work.

PICA's key aim is to promote, support and present contemporary arts and to stimulate critical discussion around the arts and broader cultural issues. Providing a site for experimentation, critical analysis, discussion, and debate is fundamental to its charter. PICA is known for the rigour and breadth of its artistic and education programs, high production standards and impeccable presentation.

PICA is an icon of contemporary thinking – it is a catalyst for innovative and groundbreaking art and culture. Not constrained by convention, PICA gives artists and audiences a glimpse of what is possible.

To learn more about our coming program, or to make a booking, visit pica.org.au or call 08 9228 6300.

How to use these resources

This education kit has been created to assist secondary students' engagement with the *Hatched National Graduate Show 2021*.

It is targeted towards teachers and students in years 7 to 12, and focuses on critical and creative thinking as a way to look at, understand and make contemporary art.

Links to the Western Australian Curriculum as well as works addressing cross-curricular priorities are noted as easy reference points for teachers.

Four activities have been created to deepen student engagement with the themes of four of the featured artists. These can be used in the classroom and provide hands-on paths of enquiry that teachers can follow or adapt for the specific needs of their own classes.

Contents

4 Introduction to Hatched

4 Links to full catalogue, floor sheets and other resources

5 Themes and key questions

6 Focus on 4 selected artists: **Bradley Kickett** **Alexa Malizon** **Joshua Ophel** **Yul Scarf**

Introduction to *Hatched: National Graduate Show 2021*:

In 2021, PICA celebrates 30 years supporting the work of Australia's leading artists at the earliest stages of their careers through the iconic *Hatched: National Graduate Show*, the only national exhibition of its kind. Over this time PICA has presented the work of over a thousand artists who have gone on to help define contemporary Australian practice as the leading artists of their generation.

From painting, sculpture and drawing, to installation, video and sound work, this exhibition offers an intriguing snapshot of current contemporary art practices in Australia.

The artists who have been selected for this year are as follows:

Alicia Butt (SA)
Dean De Landre (VIC)
Stephanie Doddridge (SA)
Hannah Foley (TAS)
Shanti Gelmi (WA)
Michael Guisanga Tuhanuku (VIC)
Nicholas Hanisch (SA)
Anna Jalanski (VIC)
Bradley Kickett (WA)
Renee Kire (QLD)
Kate Land (QLD)
Alexa Malizon (ACT)
Beth Maslen (VIC)
Lisa Myeong-Joo (NSW)
Natasha Nielsen (WA)
Michella Nudelman (VIC)
Joshua Ophel (ACT)
Natalie Quan Yau Tso (NSW)
Harrison Riekie (WA)
Yul Scarf (NSW)
Grace Ware (VIC)
Eli Waters (NSW)
Elle Wickens (NSW)
Hope Yates (NSW)

Full education resources are available online here:

<https://pica.org.au/learn/students-teachers/>

Themes and key questions

The works of the four artists featured in this kit can be discussed in relation to one another. Prominent themes of culture and identity unite the works and can be explored in more detail with students using the prompts below.

Identity

How do each of these artists explore their own identity? How do the modes of representation differ? Which of the works do you find most accessible? Is this impacted by your own identity?

Decolonisation

Artists Bradley Kickett and Yul Scarf interrogate concepts of decolonisation in their works. How are their works similar? How are they different? How does their identity impact the work they are making? What messages do you take away from each of these works?

Points of view

Joshua Ophel and Alexa Malizon's video works explore different points of view in relation to the articulation and performance of identity. How does perception alter experience? How is your identity impacted by the ways in which others see or don't see you?

Intercultural understanding

All four artists tackle questions of intercultural understanding in their works. What cultures do each of these work reference? How do they articulate their own experience of intercultural understanding and/or misunderstanding? What is different between the works? How does your own identity impact the way you respond to each of these works?

Bradley Kickett

Curtin University
Bachelor of Arts (Fine Art)



Bradley Kickett is a Nyoongar artist descended from the Kickett clan in York, Western Australia. *Boundary Road* is an installation bringing together painting, video and text to directly critique the colonial mentality that continues to permeate the contemporary art world. Kickett focuses on the process of creating Aboriginal art within a Western institutional context, meaning that ways of practising, exhibiting, and marketing Aboriginal art are judged against Western art historical standards.

Boundary Road presents the outcome of this pressure to create artwork in a certain way. The text posters are direct replicas of posters that could be found around Perth before 1967 when the movement of local Aboriginal people into the city was limited and controlled. This series shows the process of acquiring a Certificate of Exemption, to be able to move off the Aboriginal Reserve and live in the city on a road specifically set aside for this, often called Boundary Road. Conditions for this exemption were that the person could not practise culture, speak language or have any contact with their family. Here, Kickett draws a line of commonality to institutional art education, where the pressure to create work in a certain way led to his feelings of alienation from cultural practices.

There are no images of Kickett's artworks before they were destroyed, as Kickett invites the audience to piece together what they looked like before destruction. This is to demonstrate how Nyoongar people must try to piece their culture back together, not fully knowing how it was before the implementation of colonial policies that were designed to destroy culture. The installation of four of Kickett's paintings, destroyed by the weapons used to implement colonisation, demonstrate the destruction that such policies have had and are continuing to enact upon Nyoongar artists. The sand taken from Nyoongar Boodjah shows that this is happening on Nyoongar land and no matter how long it remains, it will always be Nyoongar land.

Bradley Kickett, *Boundary Road*, 2020, ink on paper, foamboard, acrylic and ochre on canvas, easels, sand from Nyoongar Boodjah, 12-gauge shotgun shells, 20-gauge shotgun shells, 0.243. rifle shells, 0.203. rifle shells, 0.270. rifle shells, 30/30 rifle shells

You can use the following prompts and questions to explore Bradley Kickett's work with students:

Looking

What are your first reactions to the work? Why does it make them feel or think like that? How has your own gender, race, class and age as well as attitudes, values and beliefs influenced the way you look at and understand the works? How have cultural contexts of the artists' life impacted the production of artworks?

Thinking

Bradley Kickett notes: 'What I would like people to take away from [B]oundary [R]oad is why is the current education system based on an old racist colonial system designed to destroy cultures and identity's [sic], how the System needs a complete change from the ground up.'ⁱ

Have you encountered similar feelings in your experience of the education system? In what way does the education system 'destroy cultures and identities'? Do you feel valued by this system? Why or why not?

Think about the word 'epistemology'? What does this mean? How is it relevant to this work?

Think about the word 'decolonisation'? What does this mean? How is it relevant to this work?

Analysing

As a group, ask students to think about why a sense of identity is so important to individuals and communities. Brainstorm the different elements of a person's identity, creating a chart to show possible connections. How do people express their identity? As individuals and as a community? How can a person's sense of identity impact on their behaviour?

Give students time for self-reflection about their own identity and identify the elements they perceive as most important. Are these elements cultural? Behavioural? Physical? Once they have determined these elements, ask students to consider a single factor that has had the greatest impact on their identity. This could be an event, a characteristic, a cultural practice or way of perceiving the world. Create an artwork that reflects these elements, giving emphasis in terms of greatest impact.

ⁱ Email interview with Bradley Kickett, date 14 April 2021.

Making Decolonise the classroom

Boundary Road is a series of works steeped in trauma. Kickett notes that *Boundary Road* was created as ‘...a direct result from the impacts I experienced in the Academic system at University. The feedback I received was so culturally inappropriate and so far from anything an Aboriginal artist would do, that I almost withdrew from the art course. The effect on me from the Academic institutions was really negative and made me think and talk about the inappropriate nature of such a system with First Nations artists.’ⁱⁱ

The trauma inflicted on Kickett during his studies is replicated in the physical destruction of the painted works, in turn creating a new, fragmented artwork. Kickett explains that his practice ‘...unfolded by looking at how the Education system is based from the Colonial systems, and looking at how a colonial system is designed to destroy an indigenous culture and way of life.’ⁱⁱⁱ

Researchers widely acknowledge the Western education system values and is dominated by Western thought.^{iv} It is acknowledged that societal inequality ‘...arises when Western knowledge is normalised and naturalised as being universally true, rational, and objective, and thereby devalues all other forms of knowledge.’^v

In response, academics are increasingly using the framework of ‘decolonisation’ in calls to reimagine a more equitable and just education system which embraces diverse ways of being and knowing. ‘Decolonisation’ as a framework aims to address embedded oppression and Western privilege by removing barriers that have long silenced or dismissed non-Western voices. As noted by Biermann, ‘[d]ecolonisation is “the unravelling of assumed certainties and the re-imagining and re-negotiating of common futures.’^{vi}

Activists play a significant role in the call for decolonization of institutions. Activist collective Decolonize This Place is an action-oriented movement based in New York City. Involving over 30 collaborators, consisting of grassroots groups and art collectives that seek to resist, unsettle, and reclaim the city. Their protests have frequently been centred on art galleries and museums, which a view to deeper, long-term societal reimagining and reconstruction.^{vii}

Within their practices, Decolonise This Place use a framework of study – reflection – action to mediate their practice.

**Ask your students to apply this framework to the project of decolonizing their classroom.
How would they imagine a place that responds to Kickett’s call for action?**

ii Email interview with Bradley Kickett, date 14 April 2021

iii Ibid.

iv Harvey, Arlene and Russell-Mundine Gabrielle, ‘Decolonising the curriculum: using graduate qualities to embed Indigenous knowledges at the academic cultural interface’, in *Teaching in Higher Education*, 24:6, 789-808; Gillan; Kevin, Mellor, Suzanne and Krakouer, Jacyntha ‘The Case for Urgency: Advocating for Indigenous voice in education’, Australian Council for Educational Research, ACER Press, Victoria, 2017. Accessed <https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1027&context=aer>, 20 April 2021.

v Rose, Gillian. 1997. “Situating Knowledges: Positionality, Reflexivities and Other Tactics” in *Progress in Human Geography*, 21(3), pp. 305–320; Veldman, Jennifer, and Andrew M. Guilfoyle. 2013. “Racism and Resilience in Australian Aboriginal Graduates’ Experiences of Higher Education” in *The International Journal of Learning in Higher Education*, 19 (4), pp. 107–120.

vi Biermann, Soenke, ‘Knowledge, power and decolonization: implication for non-indigenous scholars, researchers and educators.’ In *Indigenous philosophies and critical education: a reader*, edited by George J Sefa Dei. Peter Lang, New York, 2011, p. 394.

vii Decolonise This Place. Accessed <https://decolonizethisplace.org/>, 20 April 2021.

Curriculum Links

The Arts (Visual Arts)

Inquiry
Analysis
Social, cultural and historical contexts
Interpretation / response
Art practice

Year 11 Visual Arts Units:
Unit 1: Differences
Unit 2: Identities

Year 12 Visual Art Units:
Unit 1: Commentaries
Unit 2: Points of view

Humanities and Social Sciences

History
Civics and citizenship
Communicating and Reflecting

General Capabilities

Critical and creative thinking
Ethical understanding
Intercultural understanding

Cross-curriculum priorities

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
histories and cultures

Alexa Malizon

Australian National University
Bachelor of Visual Arts (Honours)



Born in Australia to Filipino immigrants, Alexa Malizon's work brings insight to the lived cultural experience of existing within a diaspora. Her work surveys nuances in identity, miscommunication, cultural shame and the representation of the sexualised ethnographic body. Humour and the language of social media video posts are key characteristics of her practice. To an Australian audience, Malizon identifies herself as an ethnic 'other', the semantics of her body marked as starkly different from the white Amazonian figures depicted and dominated on television shows like *Love Island*. Yet, to a Filipino audience, she mumbles through mispronounced Tagalog and stumbles through the motions of viral dance moves.

Diversitea Talks is a series of video propositions that explore the intersections between lived cultural experience and popular Australian and Filipino cultures. *Mag Otso Otso* presents two figures performing what seems like a back-flexing twerking dance. Whilst the figure on the right is perennially cheerful as she carries out this choreography, the figure on the left remains discordantly sullen. Behind each figure, the Filipino pop music video *Otso Otso* echoes and distorts with each iteration. The contrasting expressions evoke an intimate dialogue between the 'self' and the 'other' in light of performing to cultural expectations. *Ningning* features the same characters entering into a singing duet of the Filipino classic *Bituing Walang Ningning*. Whilst one character exudes grace and poise, the other stumbles through the Tagalog lyrics with trepidation. Found images of majestic Filipino island scenes, cheesy visual transitions, lip-synching, microphone feedback and awkward stares all contribute to the disconnect between the expectations of what a 'Filipina' encompasses and the personal shame when these expectations are not fulfilled.

Alexa Malizon, *Mag Otso Otso*, from *Diversitea Talks*, 2020, two-channel digital video with sound
Alexa Malizon, *Ningning*, from *Diversitea Talks*, 2020, digital video with sound

You can use the following prompts and questions to explore Alexa Malizon’s work with students:

Looking

What do the videos remind you of? Are they high or low quality? Is it bright or dull? Does the performer look comfortable or uncomfortable? How has the video been edited? How does this affect the experience of watching? Do you understand what is being said? Does the performer?

Thinking

These works form part of a series entitled *Diversitea Talks*. What does the title tell you about the works themselves? What do you know of the artist? How does this mediate your experience of the work? What qualities does contemporary society consider beautiful? How are the standards of beauty different for different people? What do you and your peers do to conform with or rebel against these standards? How do you receive messages about what is considered beautiful?

Analysing

Alexa Malizon has noted ‘... my identity [has] been conflicted from the upbringings that I have to conform from two different worlds. It made me question where I belong, what my morals and values are, and my authenticity of being Filipino or Australian – or even both. I also questioned how and why Asians, particularly Filipinos, are underrepresented or have negative connotations due to stereotypes in Australian mainstream media.’^{viii}

Think critically about the work through the themes of:

Identity

Belonging

Race and racism

Culture and cultural expectations

Femininity and feminism

Curriculum Links

The Arts (Visual Arts)

Inquiry
Analysis
Social, cultural and historical contexts
Interpretation / response
Art practice

Year 11 Visual Arts Units:
Unit 1: Differences
Unit 2: Identities

Year 12 Visual Art Units:
Unit 1: Commentaries
Unit 2: Points of view

Media Production and Analysis
Year 11 Media Production and Analysis
Units
Unit 1: Popular Culture

Year 12 Media Production and Analysis
Units
Unit 3: Media Art
Unit 4: Power and Persuasion

Humanities and Social Sciences

Civics and citizenship
Communicating and Reflecting

General Capabilities

Critical and creative thinking
Ethical understanding
Intercultural understanding

Cross-curriculum priorities

Asia and Australia's engagement with
Asia

Making

Activity 1: Constructing identity

Many artists have made work that tackles issues of identity. This work is often driven by experiences of discrimination, struggles to come to terms with who they are or find a place of community to which they feel a sense of belonging. They have examined such issues as the assumption of white male privilege, forms of sexuality seen as taboo by society, and the ways in which societal expectations can undermine a woman's capacity to define herself on her own terms.

Think about your identity and write down the first five words you think of to describe yourself. Then ask a partner to change these words to the opposite meaning. For example, if you wrote "outgoing," change the word to "shy."

Using this list of words, construct an alter ego for yourself. Consider the following questions: What is this person's name? Where is this person from? What do they like to do? What problems and difficulties do they encounter in their lived experience?

Create an illustration of this person which explores their identity and the issues they might face in their everyday life.

Activity 2: Performing identity

Malizon's work is concerned with themes of intersectionality as they impact her experience as the female child of Filipino migrants. She uses humour in her work '...because it was a powerful way to convey an underlying message of issues such as racism, cultural expectations, femininity, identity crisis and so on.'^{ix}

Her work can be seen as exploring concepts of 'identity as performance'. The performer's discomfort in the 'acts' associated with her cultural identity, and the clear rupture between the 'complicit' and 'disgruntled' performer clearly show how various 'versions' of self can be created and maintained at the same time. Several scholars have highlighted the potential of social media as a tool allowing users to build an identity (or identities) and present them to various audiences^x, while others note that this capacity overlooks the materiality of social interactions and the lived experience of identity.^{xi}

For instance, several scholars have highlighted the potential of social media considered as tools allowing users to build an identity (or identities) and present them to various audiences. Compile and print out five images of yourself from your social media account. Write five words next to each one that describes the identity you are performing in the image. How do these images differ or relate in the versions of yourself they are showing? What factors influence the images you have chosen and how you want to be perceived?

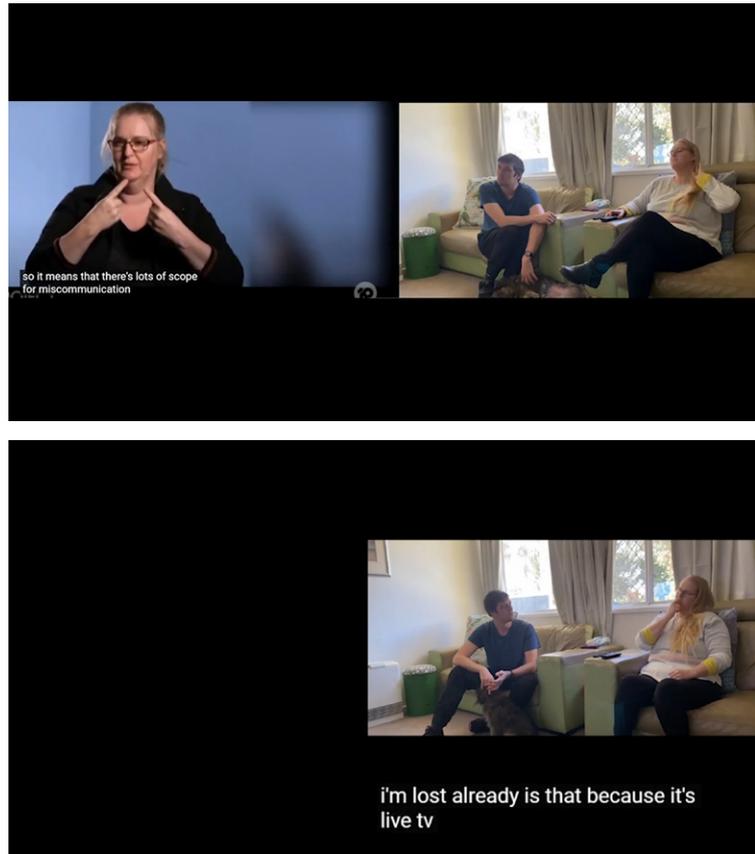
^{ix} Email interview with Alexa Malizon, 13 April 2021.

^x Farquhar, L. 2012. "Performing and Interpreting Identity through Facebook Imagery," *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies* (19:4), pp. 446-471; Hewitt, A., and Forte, A. 2006. "Crossing Boundaries: Identity Management and Student/Faculty Relationships on the Facebook," Poster presented at CSCW, Banff, Alberta, pp. 1-2.

^{xi} Marabelli, Marco and Page, Xinru, 'Performing Identity through Social Media: A Sociomaterial Perspective'. Accessed at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324672003_Performing_Identity_Through_Social_Media_A_Sociomaterial_Perspective, 23 April 2021.

Joshua Ophel

Australian National University
Bachelor of Visual Arts (Honours)



Joshua Ophel engages video, interview and collaboration to examine dialogue as a site of performance of identity and power relations. Through these forms, he deploys reflexive listening and interpreting to navigate the spaces between Auslan and English. His recent video works bear witness to the dynamics between languages and culture from the position of a child of Deaf adults. In his work, Ophel intersects practices of interpreting and socially engaged art to critically consider forms of access and representation.

Interpreting the News documents a reflection on the experience of being interviewed for National TV. A mother and her son debrief together, sharing a viewing of the broadcast, which prompts responses of pride, discomfort, laughter and confusion. The conversation that emerges on the couch retraces the interview and expands on the Deaf perspective. Distinct forms of interview contrast, and through dialogue the sidelined voice can interject. The work develops an asymmetry in audio and text, constructing barriers of delays and misunderstanding to share the experience of unreliable auto-captions. Complicating the translation invites the viewer to consider the significance of accessibility and the consequences of exclusion. To challenge the brief consideration of Deafness offered by news media and address the domestic landscape of cultural exchange *Interpreting the News* amplifies the Deaf voice and imagines a form of dialogue with television in the home.

Joshua Ophel, *Interpreting the News*, 2020, digital video with sound.

You can use the following prompts and questions to explore Joshua Ophel's work with students:

Looking

How many layers of language and interpretation are represented in these works? Who decides what is being said? What is left out? How is this work a product of the time and place of its creation? How does the use of sound and imagery alter the experience of the work? How has the video been edited? How does this influence the response of the viewer? How many errors in the captioning can you observe?

Thinking

The interviewee lists a number of assumptions made about Deaf people. How much do you know about deafness? Would you have made these same assumptions? How are language and culture linked? How might Deaf people be disempowered in emergency situations?

Analysing

Joshua Ophel is the child of two Deaf parents whose first language is Auslan (Australian Sign Language). He has said that '[...]rowing up I often found myself explaining differences between my family and others exhausting so I would keep my language and culture private by separating my spheres. ... [But] As I have gotten older the role of art making in my life has grown to become a space where I feel comfortable sharing parts of myself.'^{xii}

What parts of your identity do you keep hidden? Why?

xii Email interview with Joshua Ophel, 14 April 2021.

Making

Activity 1: Speaking disagreements

The interpreters represented in Joshua's work have been involved in communicating to the Deaf community during times of crisis.

Imagine interpreting a message you disagreed with. How would that feel? Create a performance that responds to that feeling.

Activity 2: Closed captions

Ophel's work is concerned with the power of communication in relation to the Deaf community. His work analyses the way in which the mediation of communication dilutes information, distorts perspectives and/or empowers or disempowers particular speakers.

Christine Sun Kim considers similar themes in her work. As a Deaf artist, she speaks of learning to 'fit in' to a hearing world, conforming to societal expectations and pressures through keen observation and mimicry. Like Ophel, Kim's work frequently considers ways in which this process disempowers and marginalizes Deaf people in society at large.

Like Ophel in *Interpreting the News*, Kim draws attention to the limitations of closed captions in relaying meaning and the ways in which this mode of communication marginalizes the Deaf experience. In her work *Closer Captions*, Kim poetically rewrites and personalizes audio captions to relay a nuanced sense of what is happening on screen.

You can watch Closer Captions here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tfe479qL8hg&ab_channel=Pop-UpMagazine

Similarly, Deaf artist Sue Jo Wright explores the experience of connection and communication. Wright notes that '...an increased reliance on English in a textual form to communicate and deliver information, [means] many deaf people who struggle with English [have] felt the gap between the Deaf world and the hearing world widen immeasurably.'^{xiii}

You can watch Sue Jo Wright's video work Breaking Up here:

<https://www.suejowright.com/breaking-up>

After watching the above videos, ask your students to create an artwork that explores the limitations of language to express information, feeling and/or what is happening. Ask them to think about objectivity and subjectivity in their work. What is being said and for whom?

xiii Sue Jo Wright. Accessed at <https://www.suejowright.com/breaking-up>, 20 April 2021.



Curriculum Links

The Arts (Visual Arts)

Inquiry
Analysis
Social, cultural and historical contexts
Interpretation / response
Art practice

Year 11 Visual Arts Units:

Unit 1: Differences

Unit 2: Identities

Year 12 Visual Art Units:

Unit 1: Commentaries

Unit 2: Points of view

General Capabilities

Critical and creative thinking
Ethical understanding
Intercultural understanding

Yul Scarf

National Art School
Bachelor of Fine Art



Yul Scarf is a multi-disciplinary artist motivated by radical political change. Scarf uses their practice to materialise queer politics, solidarity and humour and often works collaboratively to develop their themes and imagery. Through the medium of ceramics, Scarf interrogates the role of clay in processes of colonisation, allowing unceded earth, remnants of the early colony and contemporary culture to blur. In the space between the precarity and fixedness of ceramics, deeper truths about settler colonial Australia materialise.

Most recently Scarf has responded to calls from the Gweagal- Bidjigal Tribal Elders Council to mark the 250th anniversary of First Nations resistance to ongoing colonial practices on this continent. The resulting commemorative objects compel audiences to re-envision the structures we inherit and the futures that are possible in the ruins. Referencing the Morrison government's 2020 economic stimulus program, *HomeBuilder Scheme (rebuild or renovate)* is a monument that declares its own instability. On top of a bed of 200-million-year-old Sydney sandstone sits a hastily constructed tower of colonial bricks. *2020 (Still Digesting)* is a series of plates decorated with QR codes that link viewers to artworks and articles resisting monumental racism. The back of each plate echoes the property mark of milk and beer bottles to state, 'This Remains 100% Aboriginal Land', speaking both to the clay of the plate and to the continent more broadly.

Yul Scarf, *Homebuilder Scheme: Rebuild or Renovate*, 2020, Sydney sandstone, convict bricks, television monitor
Yul Scarf, *2020: Still Digesting*, 2020, 12 ceramic plates with individualised QR codes
Department of Home Affairs, *COLONIAL VIRUS*, 2020, printed onto ceramics by Yul Scarf
Yul Scarf, *This Remains 100% Aboriginal Land*, 2020, 3 ceramic plates commemorating 250 years of First Nations resistance

You can use the following prompts and questions to explore Yul Scarf's work with students:

Looking

What material is this work made with? How has the artist treated the material? How has the clay been used? How are the sculptures organised in the space? How do the elements work together? What do the QR codes link to? How does this interaction change the feeling of the work? How do these linkages elaborate the themes of the work? What ceramics techniques have been used in the creation of the plates?

Thinking

Yul Scarf has noted that “Australia” ... is only a recent British idea, so I try to avoid saying it. If we use First Nations names, we can see the ways things were organised differently before invasion. We are allowed to make decisions like that about what kind of words we want to use.’^{xiv}

The colonial project has been deeply embedded in language. Colonisers imposed their language onto First Nations peoples, forbidding the use of Aboriginal languages and punishing those who did so.

How does language remain a tool of colonisation? What role does language play in valuing particular experiences and/or identities and repressing others? What do you think it means to use the word ‘Australia’?

Ask your students to think about elements of First Nations languages they might know. Should these languages be taught in schools? How would this change peoples' experiences?

Analysing

Our experiences shape our identity as individuals and communities. Explore this concept on a personal level: what experiences have particularly impacted your idea of yourself? How does this impact your interactions with others? Extend this thinking out to consider your community. How is community similarly shaped by experience?

xii Sue Jo Wright. Accessed at <https://www.suejowright.com/breaking-up>, 20 April 2021

Making

Activity 1: Materiality of Country

In explaining the development of their practice, Scarf notes the significance of an exchange with Jade Kennedy, a Dharawal man, who explained ‘...[C]ountry doesn’t stop being [C]ountry once its mined. Once it becomes your television. Once it is your plate. ... Aboriginal land is our material world, ... [C]ountry doesn’t disappear with colonial theft.’

Similarly, artist Shane Pickett explained this concept in a 2007 artist statement as follows: ‘Every river, every tree, every rock is important, as the Dreaming runs through them connecting all things, including mankind. These are the energy paths of the Dreaming and they are never meant to be broken, never meant to fail.’^{xv}

In his 2019 article, ‘How Clay Helped Shape Colonial Sydney’, archeologist Nick Pitt explicates the way in which clay was used as a tool by colonisers to exaggerate notions of ‘superiority’ in contrast to the ‘savagery’ of disenfranchised First Nations communities.^{xvi} Scarf’s exploration of the medium is deeply political, as ‘...[w]hat medium could be more direct to think and speak about the politics of land and who has rights to it.’^{xvii}

For Scarf, the awakening realization of the continuity of Country has drawn into question their processes and materials. While the materials utilised in these works have been reclaimed from ‘... some buckets of soft sludge left over from a 3D printing project for the 2018 Sydney Biennial [sic]’^{xviii}, they note in an increasing sense of discomfort with the use of the material itself, suggesting a coming change in their practice by asking ‘What relationships will I need to tend to in order to know if it is ok to harvest clay? Who would I need to ask? How can I get to know Country?’^{xix}

Ask your students to discuss the above concepts of Country and their own levels of comfort and/ or discomfort in creating in this context. Ask them to create a work that explores and honours Country as embedded within the material itself or, alternatively, to develop a process by which concepts of Country can be respected and acknowledged in the process of making.

xv Shane Pickett, artist statement, in *Culture Warriors*, ed. Brenda L. Croft (Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2007), p. 149.

xvi Nick Pitt, 2019, ‘How clay helped shape colonial Sydney,’ in *The Conversation*, accessed at: <https://theconversation.com/how-clay-helped-shape-colonial-sydney-120580>, 20 April 2021.

xvii Yul Scarf, ‘THIS REMAINS 100% ABORIGINAL LAND’, in *The Journal of Australian Ceramics*, Vol 60 No 1, April 2021, p., ***

xviii Ibid.

xix Ibid.

Making

Activity 2: Articles of Activism

Scarf's work draws on a long history of Activist Art - work that addresses political or social issues and is frequently grounded in the act of 'doing' to effect change.

Artists such as Ai Wei Wei, The Guerilla Girls and Banksy could all be considered explicitly activist artists, but movement such as Black Lives Matter and #metoo have both highlighted the extent to which art, artists and the politics of the time are intrinsically linked. As the Centre for Artistic Activism notes, '...[o]ur modern political terrain is a highly mediated landscape of signs and symbols, stories and spectacles. To operate successfully on this cultural topography, we need to respond creatively.'¹

For Scarf, their roles as artist and activist are intrinsically linked: 'I spend a lot of time working with other people to grow our politics and make political actions together, often in really creative ways that expand my thinking on what art is. I am very strongly pro-collective and anti-capitalist!'²

Scarf's collaborative relationship with and contribution to the Department of Homo Affairs (DOHA) is crucial to their practice. They note: 'Maybe change is like pulling a monument down? It takes a lot of coordination. It takes people listening to each other. It takes people acting and taking risks together. It takes keeping each other safe. It involves people writing and thinking. It involves people making art. It involves people talking with each other and getting materials together. Everyone can throw in their energy, but it's the people who are most affected by the monument who get to decide how and if it comes down, they know how to lead the way.'³

In response to this quote, ask your students to work as a collective (or a number of collectives) to come up with a project that links activism and art. What change do they want to see in the world and how will they use art as a tool to try and effect this change?

1 The Center for Artistic Activism, Accessed at <https://c4aa.org/what-we-do>, 20 April 2021.
2 Email interview with Yul Scarf, 14 April 2021.
3 Ibid.

Curriculum Links

The Arts (Visual Arts)

Inquiry
Analysis
Social, cultural and historical contexts
Interpretation/response
Art practice

Year 11 Visual Arts Units:
Unit 1: Differences
Unit 2: Identities

Year 12 Visual Art Units:
Unit 1: Commentaries
Unit 2: Points of view

Humanities and Social Sciences

History
Civics and citizenship
Communicating and Reflecting

General Capabilities

Critical and creative thinking
Ethical understanding
Intercultural understanding

Cross-curriculum priorities

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
histories and cultures

Perth Cultural Centre
51 James St Northbridge
pica.org.au | 9228 6300

@pica_perth



Major Exhibition Partner



Schenberg Art Fellowship Partner



Government Partners



Major Partner



Freight Partner

Community Engagement Partner



City of Perth

Project Partner

PICA DONOR
PROGRAM

ART
1000

PICA's ongoing programs are primarily supported by an investment from the State of Western Australia through the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries in association with Lotterywest, assistance from the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body. PICA is supported by the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments. PICA's opening events, public programs, family and learning programs and studio residencies are supported by our Community Engagement Partner City of Perth.