

**black
prints
from
cicada
press**

may 31 - august 18, 2013

artists' statements

Reko Rennie, *Big Red*, 2013

Big Red stands confidently upright, defiantly staking his claim to space, power, land and culture.

Laurel Nannup, *Pinjarra Reserve*, 2012

I wanted to tell of when I was a young kid, of how we used to live on the Pinjarra Reserve. There was about eight families living on the Reserve, three of the houses were built of wooden boards and the rest of them were tin shacks or tents. The Reserve was about two miles out of the township of Pinjarra. This is my memory of the Pinjarra Reserve in the 1950s.

Gordon Hookey, *Terra-ist*, 2013

The print Terra-ist is part of a greater body of work. Terra meaning land and ist the fight for land. The term was first coined when George W. and Tony Blair and John Howard were pointing the finger at different groups and calling them terrorists yet they were perpetrating the same acts. I decided to disarm the finger pointing by making up my own word. The word is taken from terra nullius, which means land devoid of people, which in itself was a legal lie used to describe Australia at the time of colonization.

Laurel Nannup, *Yellow Taxis*, 2012

I was amazed to see how many yellow taxis there were in New York. They were all lined up and there seemed to be a lot of them in the street. I see more taxis in New York than I see in Perth.

Roy Kennedy, *How Soon They Forget*, 2006

I named this print because so many people asked me how I know so much about Darlington Point. Little do they know that I was reared up on this mission back in the late 1940s. Warangesda Mission was closed down in 1925. My mother was born on Warangesda Mission. The mission on the other side of the river is where I was brought up, called Police Paddock Mission. Both of these missions are at Darlington Point. - Roy Kennedy 2001, published in the monograph 'How Soon They Forget' by Philippa Scarlett, 2009.

This work is about Roy's memories of growing up at Police Paddock Mission and the memories of his mother who grew up at Warangesda Mission, both situated on the Murrumbidgee River at Darlington Point outside the township of Griffith in South West New South Wales. It shows recurring themes of the mulberry tree, the church and the police station, which were the three constants in Roy Kennedy's life at that time.

Tess Allas, *dogma*, 2011

dogma is my response across time to the nun who, in my first week of kindergarten, slapped me for not coloring in circles correctly. According to her circles were (are) traditionally colored-in by drawing straight lines across the orb rather than colouring using a spiral fashion as I had done. In the broader interpretation, this image is about the mass control of a people by the systems installed, generating fear and conformity.

Graham 'Nudge' Blacklock, *Gunya 3*, 2012

The title refers to a place of dwelling or 'humpy'. It is an aerial view looking down over my grandmother's country of the Taree/Port Macquarie area. It is the part of New South Wales that belongs to the Biripi mob (tribe). It depicts all the humps scattered across the vast land.



Left: Jason Wing, *Captain James Crook*, 2013. Right: Reko Rennie, *Big Red*, 2012. Images courtesy Cicada Press.

David Nolan, *View from the Kitchen Window*, 2012

A half hour ain't long enough to sit and watch the world outside. The wind blowing in the trees, clouds whisking by under a winter sun, planes ascending-descending on their respective flight paths, wishing I were up there.

Every lunch hour I'd sit at this window and drift off into the world outside. Surrounded by walls at every location, visual line of sight was limited. Here though, I could at least stretch my eyes, a popular spot with inmates. I could see and hear the planes, wanting nothing more than to be on one of them at that moment. Flight paths would change with the weather, but I would still be here every day till my time would come. It did come and I did get on that plane!

Frances Belle Parker, *Ulgundahi*, 2008

An aerial view of Ulgundahi Island, one of the many islands contained within the banks of the Clarence River. This is the island that my mum grew up on. When the early settlers arrived in Maclean they forced all the Aborigines from the area onto Ulgundahi Island. They did this as a way to contain them. The island had a school and church for the people to attend and learn the white missionary ways. Aboriginal families continued living on Ulgundahi until 1961 when heavy flooding forced them to leave for good. The island continues to play an important role within the Yaegl landscape and it will continue to be the heart of the Yaegl people. I map the area of Yaegl land that I am most familiar with, by doing this I am able to share a part of who I am with those who view my work.

Jason Wing, *Captain James Crook*, 2013

In April 1770 Captain Cook sailed into Camay (Botany Bay), home of the Eora people, and declared that the country was terra nullius - a land belonging to no one. He promptly then took 'possession' of the country on behalf of the Crown. Australian politicians state that Australia was peacefully

colonized despite the fact that Australia was stolen from the Aboriginal people by lethal force. Saying "sorry" to Aboriginal people means nothing whilst the Intervention Policy still exists. The true purpose of Intervention has nothing to do with taking care of Aboriginal people, it robs them of their basic human rights. The Policy allows the Australian Government unlimited access to mining on sacred Aboriginal land and full control of Aboriginal people's lives. The Intervention Policy proves that the Australian Government does not care about empowering Aboriginal people, or respecting them in any way. It provides no support for any hardships endured as a result of being dispossessed of land, culture and family. It also proves that fundamentally nothing has changed in 224 years. Things are getting worse for Aboriginal people.

Vernon Ah Kee, *let's be polite about aboriginal art, 2012*

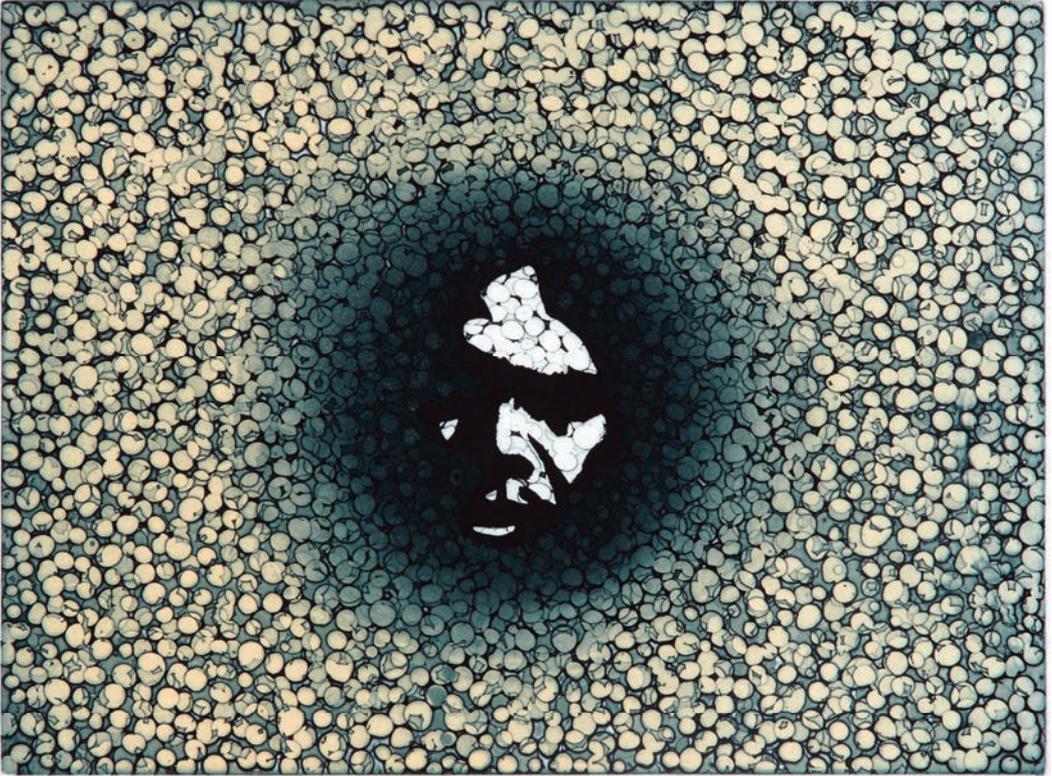
Aboriginal art in Australia suffers under the weight of a kind of national politeness. We can call it 'tiptoeing' or we can call it 'political-correctness.' Whichever we choose, 'politeness' would seem de rigueur when approaching any area of the Aboriginal arts. And although a careful appropriateness can be evidenced across the Aboriginal arts spectrum, it is in the visual arts that this cult of politeness has, over decades, been expressed in a dearth of critique resulting in Aboriginal art being mired in mediocrity. *let's be polite* asserts that, over a long period of time, the lack of constructive criticism in Aboriginal art has led it unavoidably to the point where much of what is called Aboriginal 'art' falls into ever-narrowing and increasingly benign descriptions of, albeit decorative and colourful, mediocrity.

Brett Nannup, *Self Portrait, 2012*

In *Self Portrait*, I have used a silhouette image of myself as an emerging printmaker with a commitment to the exploration, as an Aboriginal man, of who I am and where I belong.



Laurel Nannup, *Pinjarra Reserve*, 2012. Image courtesy Cicada Press.



Brett Nannup, *Self-Portrait*, 2012. Image courtesy Cicada Press.

tess allas is the curator of *Black Prints from Cicada Press*. She has worked in the field of Aboriginal visual arts and community cultural development since the early 1990s and has a Masters in Curatorship and Modern Art from the University of Sydney. She worked as the Storylines Research Officer at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales (COFA UNSW) from 2006 to 2009 and is currently employed there as Associate Lecturer at the School of Art History and Art Education.

michael kempson is the Director of Cicada Press and the Head of Printmaking at COFA UNSW. An artist himself, he has been exhibiting since 1983 with a total of twenty-five one-person exhibitions and his work is represented in the National Gallery of Australia and several State Galleries. His curatorial experience involves twenty-six exhibitions including *Personal Space: Contemporary Chinese and Australian Prints* at Manly Art Gallery and Museum which is touring Australian and Chinese galleries in 2012-13, and *Aboriginal Dreams – Paintings, Etchings, Linocuts – Indigenous Art from Papunya Tjupi*, at Indus Valley School of Art, Karachi, Pakistan.



black prints from cicada press

provides glimpses into the art practices of a variety of artists from across Australia. Some of the artworks are narrative-based, some are stories of memory, identity and tradition while others should be considered conceptual art albeit with a particular Australian Aboriginal twist. The title is a word play on the Australian childhood summer obsession of collecting cicada carcasses. 'Greengrocers' are the most common cicada and many of their carcasses can be traded for just one carcass of the rare and highly prized 'Black Prince.'



cicada press is an educationally focused custom printing workshop at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales. Since 2004 Cicada Press has worked with approximately 100 artists and created nearly 1000 editions. The works in this exhibition are the product of workshops and residencies with Indigenous artists who have collaborated with printer Michael Kempson and his students to explore print media.



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