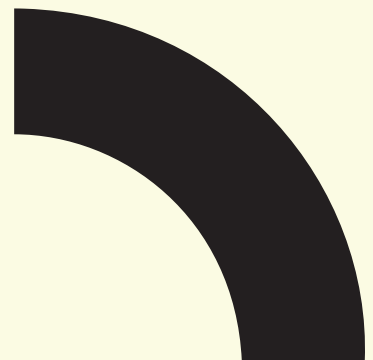


A learning resource designed to engage students and teachers with Indigenous concepts in the *Void* Exhibition



# VOID

Learning Resource



The touring exhibition *Void* is curated by Emily McDaniel, in conjunction with UTS Gallery and Bathurst Regional Art Gallery and presented nationally by Museums & Galleries of NSW. This project has been assisted by the Australian Government's Visions of Australia program.



This learning resource has been produced by Amy Bambach, Annie-renae Winters and Alice McAuliffe with support from UTS Gallery and Museums & Galleries of NSW. *Void* at UTS Gallery was supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW.

# Void

The exhibition was first held at UTS Gallery from 25 September to 16 November 2018 and will tour from 2019 to the following galleries and arts centres:

**Bathurst Regional Art Gallery**, NSW

**Canberra Museum and Gallery**, ACT

**Wagga Wagga Art Gallery**, NSW

**Geraldton Regional Art Gallery**, WA

**Bendigo Art Gallery**, VIC

**Newcastle Art Gallery**, NSW

**Tweed Regional Gallery  
and Margaret Olley Art Centre**, NSW

**Artspace Mackay**, QLD

Cover images: **Andy Snelgar**, *Shovel (BaBarr)*, 2017 and *Woomera (Miru)* 2017. Courtesy the artist and UTS Art Collection.  
Photo: Campbell Henderson; **James Tylor**, *(Deleted Scenes) From an Untouched Landscape #7, Knocklofty Reserve, West Hobart, Palawa Land*, 2013, Inkjet print on hahnemühle paper with hole removed to a black velvet void, 63 x 63 cm framed.  
Courtesy the artist and UTS Art Collection

# Exhibition Essay

**By Bruce Pascoe**

These artworks are important because the earth is important. She is our mother.

I hope you don't think that is a truism or platitude and certainly not a motherhood statement.

In the world today we are so ready to condemn anything that contains sentiment or feeling, ruthless when it comes to considering layers above or beneath the concrete. But the world is on its knees. We hear that 30% of Australia's reef fish disappeared in the last ten years and we barely murmur.

These images and objects are not to be glanced at, one more demand on our crowded attention, they are to be looked at, considered, absorbed.

They are of country, our shared country. We share this country now. All of us. It is too late to pretend that the past theft of land can be completely reversed, we are all in it together now. If there are problems, they are our problems, if there are solutions they will come from us. We can't wait for Canberra. August 2018 should have told us where that energy and excitement is concentrated.

Care for the mother is up to us and these artists care. Consider their visions carefully because they can be trusted, for they are talking about their mother, their home.

We have been wanting to talk with you for a very long time. We wanted to invite you into the country not for you to trample us and treat the land as roughly as it has been treated. We wanted to tell you the story of the land, the land where you now eat and sleep, we wanted you to know her lores and learn how to respect her, look after her welfare, ensure that there is a beach and grass and clean water for your grandchildren as we ensured that for one hundred and twenty thousand years.

We live in an age where a great deal is possible. So much has gone wrong, so many lives crushed, so much land wasted, poisoned, despoiled, but can you hear a different drum?

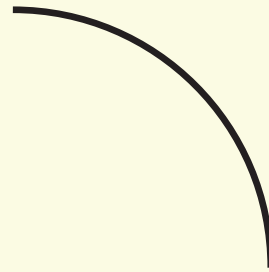
Let us use this momentum of communication and let us begin with this exhibition, let us consider these stories about your homeland. Whoever you are.

**Bruce Pascoe, 2018**



# Void & Landscape

In this exhibition, voids in the landscape hold dual meaning. In **James Tylor**'s works, the void represents erasure. The artist uses literal black voids in his photographs to demonstrate the removal of Aboriginal people, culture and knowledge from their land through colonisation. However, in **Josephine** and **Jennifer Wurrkidj**'s works, the void represents resilience. Their carvings of *mimih* spirits, who live in the crevices between rocky escarpments in Western Arnhem Land, illustrate how Aboriginal culture and beliefs remain embedded in the depths of the land. Together, these artworks remind us of the deep spiritual connections that Aboriginal people have with their land. They also signal that although the landscape may seem neutral, it is steeped with culture, memory and contested histories.



“Today the absence of Aboriginal culture within the Australian landscape is censored by this process of colonisation and has left much of the Australian landscape with the appearance that it was ‘untouched’ before European arrival.”

**James Tylor**

“Us bininj (Aboriginal) mob, we are same like our country. That country is like us, and we are like that country, like family. We are just one, same like them animals, snakes, birds – any type really. And when we pass, it just goes back in like one circle, you know. Like that, that’s the story.”

**Jennifer Wurrkidj**

The Mimih predate human existence and are acknowledged as having taught humans to hunt, sing, dance and make art. They are so slim that even the slightest breeze would be fatal. The slight irregular form of each figure describes the rough and rugged interior of their homelands and demonstrates they are literally shaped by the negative spaces that they live within.

**Emily McDaniel**

# Talking Points

- Erasure and censorship of Aboriginal people, culture and knowledge through colonisation.
- Resilience and resistance through landscape.
- Cultural perspectives of landscape.

# Getting Started

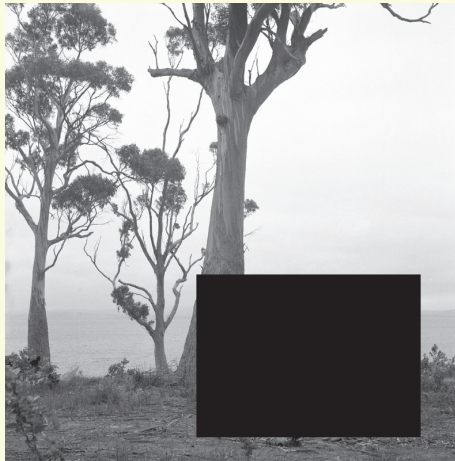
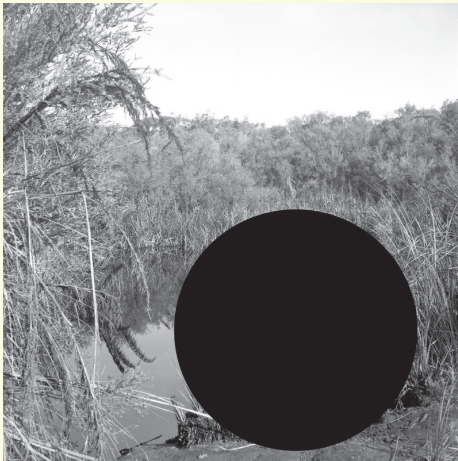
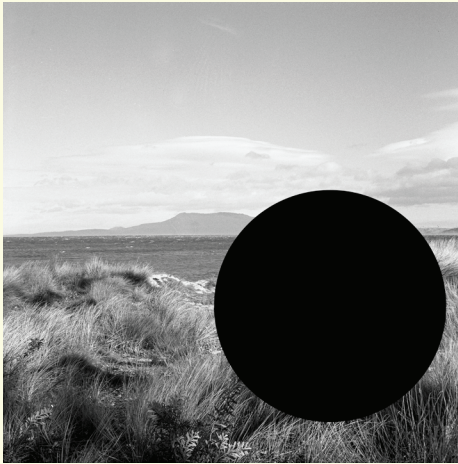
*Void* is a subjective word that can have multiple, and often opposite, meanings informed by personal and cultural perspectives. For example, in the artworks in this exhibition, void has connotations of presence or absence; infinite or enclosed; defined and undefined.

- 1.** On post-its or palm cards, write down all the words you can think of that you associate with the term 'void'. Write one word per card. Lay them out on a surface.
- 2.** Group together alike words that you see connections between. Consider:
  - What feeling does each of these groups of words create for 'void'?
  - Do you feel that any of these groups don't fit? Why?
- 3.** Now, pair together any words that oppose each other.
  - Do both words still fit the term 'void'? Why or why not?
- 4.** Choose the 3 words that you feel best represent 'void'. Compare these with a friend.
  - How does their interpretation of 'void' differ?
  - What informs each of your interpretations?





# James Tylor



## Conversation Points

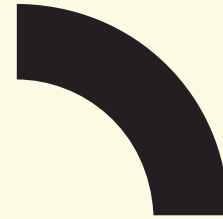
- Look closely at Tylor's photographs. What words from your 'Getting Started' do you feel best fit Tylor's representation of the void in his photographs. Why do you think this?
- To make these works, Tylor cuts a hole out of the photograph and places a black velvet void behind the image. How does this process reflect the meaning of void that is explored in *(Erased Scenes) from an Untouched Landscape* and *(Deleted Scenes) from an Untouched Landscape*?
- Describe the interaction, or relationship, between the 'void' and the rest of the image in Tylor's photographs. Consider the shape, placement and material of the 'void'.
- Landscape is one of the key genres in Western art, and can be defined as art that mainly depicts a scenic view. How do you think Tylor's photographic works challenge this definition of the landscape genre?

**James Tylor**, *(Deleted Scenes) From an Untouched Landscape #7, Knocklofty Reserve, West Hobart, Palawa Land*, 2013, Inkjet print on hahnemühle paper with hole removed to a black velvet void, 63 x 63 cm framed. Courtesy the artist and UTS Art Collection; *(Deleted Scenes) From an Untouched Landscape #13, Lake St Clair National Park, Tasmania, Palawa Land*, 2013, Inkjet print on hahnemühle paper with hole removed to a black velvet void, 63 x 63 cm framed. Courtesy the artist and UTS Art Collection; *(Erased Scenes) From an Untouched Landscape #2, Narrawong State Forest, Victoria, Gundjimtara Land*, 2014, Inkjet print on hahnemühle paper with hole removed to a black velvet void, 63 x 63 cm framed. Courtesy the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Victoria; *(Erased Scenes) From an Untouched Landscape #10, Maria Island, Tasmania, Palawa Land*, 2014, Inkjet print on hahnemühle paper with hole removed to a black velvet void, 63 x 63 cm framed. Courtesy the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Victoria.

# Jennifer and Josephine Wurrkidj



*Void*, curated by **Emily McDaniel**, (installation view) UTS Gallery, 25 September—16 November 2018. Pictured: **Jennifer Wurrkidj**, *Mimih Spirit*, 2018 and **Josephine Wurrkidj**, *Mimih Spirit*, 2018. Courtesy the artists and Maningrida Arts & Culture. © Jennifer Wurrkidj/Copyright Agency, 2019. © Josephine Wurrkidj/Copyright Agency, 2019. Photo: Jessica Maurer Photography.



## Conversation Points

- Look closely at Jennifer and Josephine Wurrkidj's *Mimih Spirit* artworks. What words from your 'Getting Started' activity do you feel best fit the meaning of void in their work? Why do you think this?
- Look at the sculptures closely. What are the similarities and differences between the two works? What does this suggest about the qualities of the *mimih*?
- On page 7, curator Emily McDaniel explains that the forms of the *mimih* spirits are, "shaped by the negative spaces that they live within." Read more about the *mimih* spirits and the environments they live in. Discuss how the *mimih*'s environment has influenced the representation of their form. How is this form emphasised by the way the sculptures are presented in the gallery?
- Describe the marks and textures in the works. How might the artists have made them?
- In their work, the artists have used materials including peanut tree, Leichhardt tree and ochre pigment. How do you think this choice of materials adds to the Wurrkidjs' storytelling about the *mimih*?

# Activity **Photographic Geo-biographies**

As Bruce Pascoe says in his introduction to this exhibition, “we share this country now.”

As part of this process, it is important to build a new, shared understanding of place and understand that common spaces can hold different meanings for the variety of people in our community.

In a group, follow the steps below to create a communal geo-biography of place based on life stories and autobiographical memories.

- 1.** Choose a place that everyone in your group has an experience of: your school, the suburb your school is located in or even the region or town where you live.
- 2.** Take a photo of a specific site within this place that you associate a strong memory with. For example, where you sit at lunch at school, or, the beach or park you always visit with your family.
- 3.** Write a statement to accompany your photograph.  
In your statement you should:
  - Introduce yourself
  - Describe the specific site where your memory occurred
  - Share at least one fact about the history, geography or community of this site. This should include Aboriginal history and knowledge.
  - Explain your memory of this site.
- 4.** As a group, plot each of your geo-biographical sites onto a map or aerial photograph of the area.
- 5.** Exhibit the map together with each of your group’s photographic geo-biographies. Consider:

How do our experiences of place differ?

How do they combine to represent a fuller understanding of place?

Note: You could also complete this activity by using different mediums such short film, audio-recordings or illustrations instead of photography. Be creative with the presentation of your geo-biographies! You could layer your text over the photographs or design them as posters.

# Curriculum Links

## Australian Curriculum Links

Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year 7-8: ACAVAM118, ACAVAR123, ACAVAR124</li> <li>Year 9 - 10: ACAVAM126, ACAVAR130, ACAVAR131,</li> </ul>
History:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year 9: ACDSEH020</li> </ul>
Geography:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year 7: ACHGK043.</li> <li>Year 8: ACHGK049, ACHGK052,</li> </ul>
Design & Technology:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year 7-8: ACTDEK029.</li> <li>Year 9-10: ACTDEK040</li> </ul>

## NSW Curriculum Links

Visual Arts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stage 4: 4.7, 4.9, 4.10</li> <li>Stage 5: 5.7, 5.9, 5.10</li> </ul>
History:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stage 4: HT4-2, HT4-3, HT4-4 (Depth Study 6D)</li> <li>Stage 5: HT5-3, HT5-4</li> </ul>
Geography:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stage 4: GE4-3, GE4-4</li> <li>Stage 5: GE5-2, GE5-5</li> </ul>
Design & Technology:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stage 4: TE4-1DP</li> <li>Stage 5: DT5-4, DT5-5</li> </ul>

## Further Research

- Listen to James Tylor discussing what his art means to him at: <https://vimeo.com/199614225>
- Learn more about tangible and intangible cultural heritage at: <http://www.utsdesignindex.com/researchmethod/tangible-intangible-heritage/>
- Josephine Wurrkidj is the daughter of renowned artist John Mawurndjul. Watch Mawurndjul discuss mimih spirits and their role in his practice at: <https://www.johnmawurndjul.com/works/mimih-spirit/>
- Learn about the importance of Bábbarra women printing their culture at: <http://www.crossart.com.au/archive/111-2017-exhibitions-projects/326-bab-barra-women-printing-culture>
- Read more about Bábbarra Designs' journey to stage an exhibition in Paris: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/jul/02/why-not-paris-five-indigenous-artists-and-their-trek-from-remote-australia>

# Cross-Curriculum Connections

## Design & Technology

Jennifer Wurrkidj is also a textile artist at Bábbarra Designs, one of the oldest continuously operating Indigenous textile enterprises in Australia. It is part of the Bábbarra Women's Centre, which helps women to achieve financial independence and change the narrative about the economic vulnerability of Indigenous women.

Complete a case study on the Bábbarra Designs and the positive social impact initiatives of the Bábbarra Women's Centre. As part of your research, examine the fabric designs of several Bábbarra artists, reporting on their characteristics and techniques and the link to the cultural identity of the designer.

Extension: Create a repeat print, which uses imagery inspired by your own surroundings or cultural heritage. Design a product for your repeat print to be used on.

## Geography

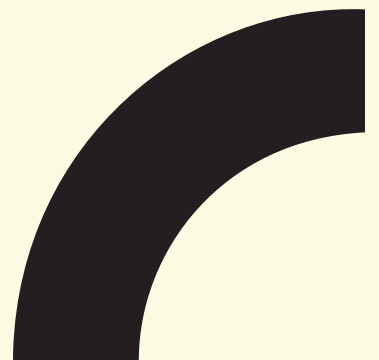
James Tylor's works address the erasure of Aboriginal knowledge and culture through colonisation, including land management practices. In his essay for this exhibition Bruce Pascoe says: *"We wanted to tell you the story of the land... we wanted you to know her lores and learn how to respect her, look after her welfare, ensure that there is a beach and grass and clean water for your grandchildren as we ensured that for one hundred and twenty thousand years."*

Watch Bruce Pascoe's Ted talk, [A real history of Aboriginal Australians, the first agriculturalists](#).

Then use the [AITSIS Map of Indigenous Australia](#) to find out the language or nation group of the land where you live.

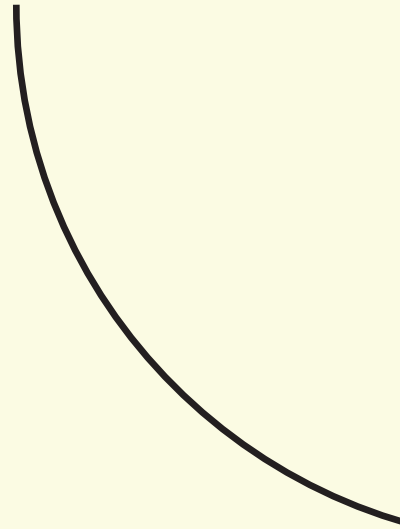
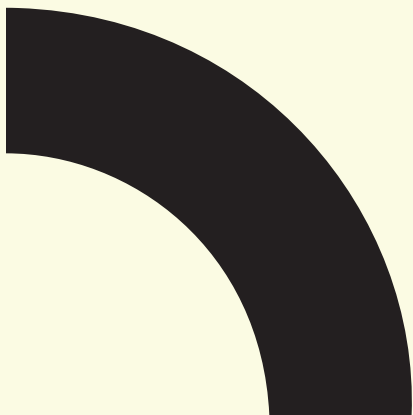
Research the environmental practices that they would have used to manage the land before colonisation.

What can we learn and apply from these approaches today?



# Void & Knowledge

These works by **Dr Thancoupie Gloria Fletcher AO** and **Jonathan Jones** look at how Aboriginal knowledge, cultural design and ways of being are encoded in objects and Country. Thancoupie used her ceramic 'story pots' as vessels to transmit cultural knowledge, coded in the material, shape and space of her work. Jones' video *dhawin-dyuray (axe-having)*, 2015, aims to reveal the inseparable relationship between a cultural object's material, its maker and the Country it is born from. Both artists poetically use the void in their works as a mechanism to preserve, pass on and restore Aboriginal Knowledges and practices.





“The clay and bauxite comes from my land. It is my land, earth, it is me. And the designs and the stories are from the land, from my mind, from my hands - I can't change that.”

**Thancoupie**

“Handling ancestral objects like these are like holding the hand of an Ancestor. These objects were left behind for us to work with by our Ancestors.”

**Jonathan Jones**

# Talking Points

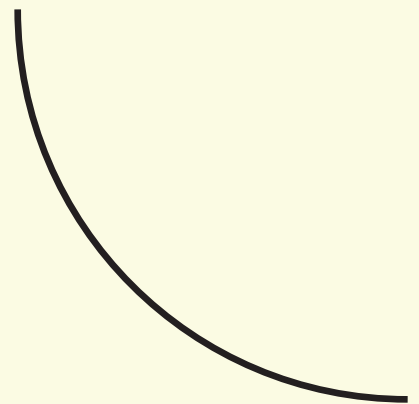
- The interconnectedness between cultural design, cultural knowledge and Country.
- How cultural knowledge and ways of being are contained within objects and spaces.
- How traces of the past, history and ancestry are resonant within spaces and objects.
- How cultural knowledge is transferred and re-activated across time.

# Getting Started

**1.** Think of an object you have at home that has been in your family for a long time. For example, a special plate that was your great-grandmother's and now belongs to your mother.

- Where did this object come from?
- Who in your family bought, or acquired this object? Who has owned this object since?
- Where has this object been in its time in your family? For example, different houses, or even countries.
- What would it have seen in its life both in your family history and Australian history?

**2.** Create a quick drawing of your object and around it write or draw 5 pieces of knowledge your object holds. For example: the plate could hold knowledge about what your great-grandmother was like and family celebrations.



# Thancoupie



**Dr. Thancoupie Gloria Fletcher AO**, *Peetharee story - Dugong & Emu*, 1980, Hand built earthenware, slip and oxide decoration on incised designs, 30 x 30 x 30cm. Collection of Bathurst Regional Art Gallery. Courtesy Estate of Thancoupie Gloria Fletcher AO. Photo: David Roma Photography; Thancoupie (1937-2011), Dhaynagwidh (Tainikuit) Peoples, *Pot*, 1986. Parliament House Collection. Courtesy Estate of Thancoupie Gloria Fletcher AO; Thancoupie (1937-2011), Dhaynagwidh (Tainikuit) Peoples, *Pot*, 1986. Parliament House Collection. Courtesy Estate of Thancoupie Gloria Fletcher AO.



## Conversation Points

- Read the descriptive text and look at the artwork images closely. Thancoupie calls her works story pots. What aspects of Thancoupie's world do you think her works tell us stories about? For example, her beliefs or her ancestry.
- How does Thancoupie use symbols, materials and form to communicate these stories in her work?
- Describe how you think Thancoupie's use of clay visually and symbolically connects to her Country. Consider the clay's colour, texture and finish.
- For the Thaynakwith people, clay traditionally has a sacred ceremonial function and Thancoupie had to ask permission to use this material in her work. Do you think the original cultural or functional purpose of an object is retained when it leaves its original community or place of origin? Why or why not? Consider:

What happens to objects when they enter the museum/gallery space? For example, how are they displayed and stored. Is it the same for non-Indigenous objects as Indigenous objects?

# Jonathan Jones



## Conversation Points

- How does Jones' work show the connection between a cultural object and the Country it was made on? Consider his use of scale, silhouette, panning and title.
- Jones presents the work as a 2 channel, immersive floor to ceiling projection.
  - What do you think the effect of this would be on the viewer?
  - Why do you think Jones would want the viewer to experience his work in this way?
- Jones' work has been described as "a constant reflection of the past, reconnecting it to the present". How do you think *dhawin-dyuray (axe-having)* achieves this? Consider the content of the work, its presentation, where it has been exhibited and who would see the work.

**Jonathan Jones**, *dhawin-dyuray (axe-having)*, 2015. 2 channel video, PAL, surround sound, 6 mins 27 secs. Editor: Elliott Magen; Photographer: Jenni Carter; Designer: Criena Court; Sound Design: Wes Chew, Sam Gain-Emerly and Luke Mynott, Sonar Sound

## Activity **Learn My Language**

Language is a key aspect in Jonathan Jones' work as it symbolises connection to culture and identity. He says that to "learn my language is to learn my Country". The simple act of using language helps to preserve and re-embed cultural knowledge within our society, just as Thancoupie and Jones' work seeks to do.

- 1.** Use the [AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia](#) to find out the language or nation group of the land your school is located on.
- 2.** Research online to find a dictionary or word bank resource for the language group of your area. There are many excellent resources available online such as RegenR8's Wiradjuri language app or your local Aboriginal Land Council may be able to help.
- 3.** Learn the Aboriginal names in your local area for things including landmarks, places, everyday items, people, actions and foods.
- 4.** Consider how you can re-activate these language words in your school. Ideas could include creating and displaying new names for classrooms and shared spaces; creating signage for plants with their name in language and traditional use or creating illustrated alphabet books or signs using language words. Reach out to your local **Aboriginal Education Regional Representative** to help guide your ideas.

Extension: Contact the [AECG](#) for advice and assistance on organising initiatives, such as language lessons, to help re-embed Aboriginal history, knowledge and culture in your school environment.

# Cross-Curriculum Connections

## Design & Technology

Thancoupie's work integrates a strong use of cultural symbols, while Jonathan Jones' work often uses or references *murruwaygu* (the cultural design that is seen in Wiradjuri Country and possessions). Jones has said that "the repeating diamonds, chevrons and radiating lines that make up the complex network of murruwaygu hold deep ancestral knowledge waiting to inspire the next generation".

Research the ethics involved in using Aboriginal cultural designs by reading the Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP). Write a set of guidelines for your school on the ethical use of Aboriginal cultural and intellectual property, including designs and techniques. Think about the best way to enforce and educate these guidelines within your classroom - perhaps they could be developed as an infographic, poster or even presentation.

Extension: Research contemporary artists including Brook Andrew and Reko Rennie who also use Aboriginal cultural design in their work. Think of a design, symbol or motif from within your own culture. How could you translate this into a different material, scale, colour or context to bring new relevance or a new audience to this knowledge?



# Curriculum Links

## Australian Curriculum Links

Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year 7-8: ACAVAR123, ACAVAR124</li> <li>Year 9 - 10: ACAVAR130, ACAVAR131</li> </ul>
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Design & Technology:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year 7-8: ACTDEK029.</li> <li>Year 9-10: ACTDEK040, ACTDEP048,</li> </ul>

## NSW Curriculum Links

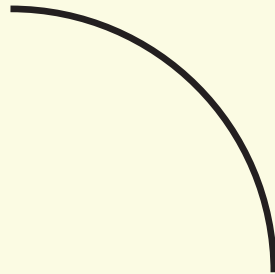
Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stage 4: 4.7, 4.9, 4.10</li> <li>Stage 5: 5.7, 5.9, 5.10</li> </ul>
History:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stage 4: HT4-7</li> <li>Stage 5: HT5-7</li> </ul>
Design & Technology:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stage 4: TE4-1DP</li> <li>Stage 5: DT5-4, DT5-5</li> </ul>

## Further Research

- Learn what misappropriation of Indigenous cultural heritage means and how to avoid it by watching [this animation at UTS Design Index](#).
- Visit Kaldor Public Art Projects' Project Page to learn more about Jonathan Jones' *barrangal dyara (skin and bones)* installation at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Sydney.
- Visit the Defying Empire: 3rd National Indigenous Art Triennial exhibition page to find more artists whose work asserts Aboriginal histories, culture, language and stories. Jones' *dhawin-duyray (axe-having)* (2015) was also featured in this exhibition.

# Void & the Undefined

**Hayley Millar-Baker** and **Mabel Juli** both discuss the idea of invisibility in their work in different ways. Juli's work, *Garnkiny Ngarranggarni* depicts an important ancestral story for the Gija people. Her true meaning is often unsaid but rather felt in her use of graphic black and white natural pigments, which she uses to powerfully articulate the void, or negative space that surrounds the stars in her night sky. Juli uses this void to communicate the relationship between the infinite, and what is seen and unseen. Just like Juli, Millar-Baker uses her birth Country (Wathaurong) to nurture a cultural connection. Her work is inspired by her ancestral country and tells of the volcanic rock formations which provided her ancestors safe passage and refuge during early colonial settlement. Both artists use their art to speak of an undefined void and the space that creates.



“...They used to take me out bush when I was a little girl – good size – and they told me all about those Dreamtime stories. And I always remember those stories. I got ‘em in my brain.”

**Mabel Juli**



“Rocks hold a very deep important narrative in my ancestral history through the landscapes of Gunditjmarra country. The landscape was ruggedly pushed and altered from lava flow during the eruption of Budj Bim (now known by its colonised name Mount Eccles). The lava flow broke down over time and gave my ancestors a safe place to live away from the Colonists. From these rocks my family built their famous and now heritage listed stone MiaMia housings, river systems and eel traps, and also used the rocks as a way to escape murderous colonists. The 71 rocks are installed into formation depending on the context, the land, and the country it sits on. Each rock was washed, cleansed, and is painted black and varnished to conceal its identity thereby protecting it.”

**Hayley Millar-Baker**

## Talking Points

- Investigate the layers of Indigenous Knowledge embedded in artworks.
- Understanding how artworks are created for different audiences by assembling materials in a variety of ways. Looking at expansive understandings of time.
- How does art represent likenesses of things in the world and help students discuss the undefinable voids and complexities in society?

## Getting Started

What are the things that are undefined but we know are there?  
What are some things that we know are there but we can't see?

- Brainstorm a list of texture and shape words. Describe an object using these words without naming the object - can your class guess what you are describing?
- Wrap an object up with a material like foil, paper or fabric and ask students to guess what the object is.

## Discussion Questions

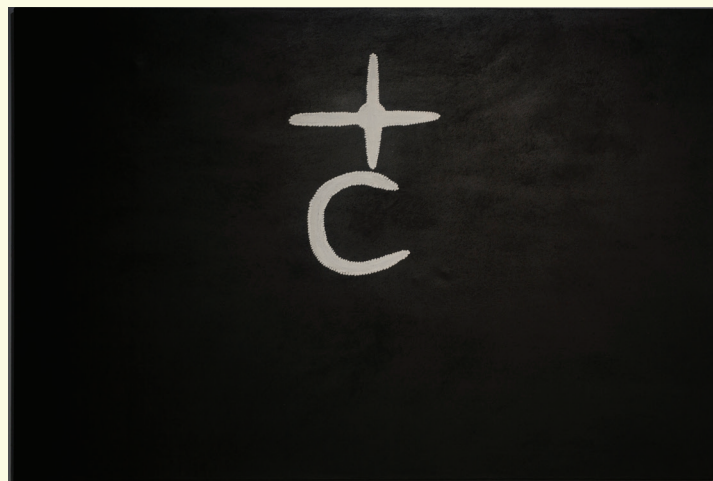
- Why does the artist conceal identities and meanings in both their artworks?
- For Millar-Baker, these formations speak to her own feelings of connection to and disconnection from Country.
- Aboriginal people refer to the Dreamtime, which is often undefined by time but rather it is felt or represented through art. What other examples are there of this in your culture? First Nations astronomy looks at the space between the stars rather than just the stars themselves. Can you think of any negative spaces or spaces in between where the negative space (void) is just as or more important than the positive space?
- Mabel Juli depicts her ancestral narratives that are expressed by the night sky. What is your personal cultural or connection to the sky?

## Hayley Millar-Baker



*Void*, curated by **Emily McDaniel**, (installation view) UTS Gallery, 25 September—16 November 2018.  
Pictured: **Hayley Millar-Baker**, *Meeyn Meerreeng (Country at Night)*, 2017. Courtesy the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery. Photo: Jessica Maurer Photography

## Mabel Juli



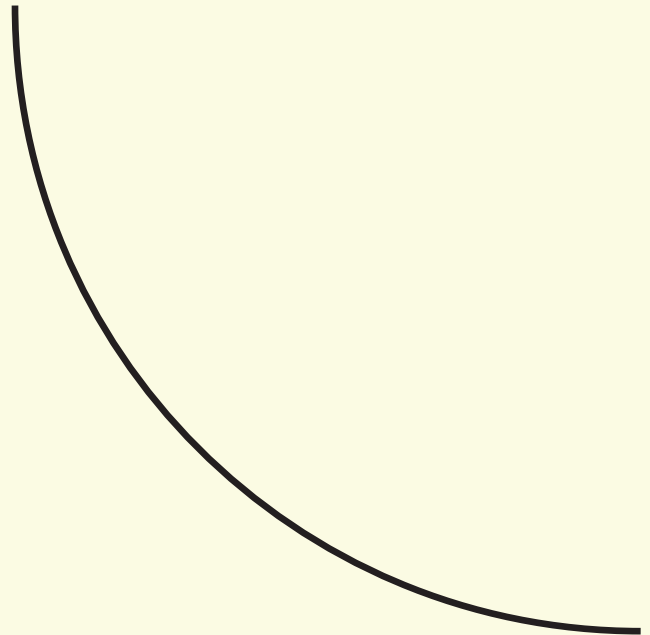
**Mabel Juli**, *Garrnkiny Ngarranggarni*, 2006, natural ochre and pigment on canvas, 180 x 120 cm. Courtesy the artist and Warmun Art Centre. © Mabel Juli/Copyright Agency, 2019.

# Activity A Series Of Prints

## Print One: Drawing from memory

- Closing your eyes draw the outline of your special object (VAS 3.1) You might like to have a few turns at this.
- Thinking of the way Mabel Juli uses her choice of materials (natural ochre pigment) to communicate and create a strong contrast between the negative and positive space. Which two colours can you use to enhance the positive space of your drawing? Think about the density, texture and pigment of either your ink, pen or paint (your choice) and the way you can use it. Similar to the way Mabel Juli uses these tools to create the deep blackness of colour in her work. (VAS 3.1) (VAS 3.2)

**Cross-Curriculum Connection:** Mathematics/Science & Technology/English



# Activity A Series Of Prints

## Print Two: The void defines the form

Write an instruction sheet for someone that is going to make a replica of this shape you have designed on grid paper. Create instructions using an X-Y plane. (MA3 - 8WA)

1. Get a partner to follow these instructions and create the shape. Your partner is to mark a dot on an X-Y plane grid everytime there is a new instruction and then draw a line to the next spot.(MA3 - 17MG)
2. Once the shape is complete (the shape should be marked out by lines connected by dots), work through the process of deciding on the medium you will choose to fill the negative and positive space.
3. Record this process of decision making in an art diary and explain why you chose the materials you did. (ST3 - 5WT) (EN3 - 6B)

Exhibit your prints (print one and print two) side by side and write a reflection on the finished process. Think about visually what you notice is different about each print and how that relates to the meaning of the original object. (EN3 - 1A) (EN3 - 6B)

### **Cross-Curriculum Connection:**

- Indigenous cosmology ties to relationships (ST3 - 8ES) (GE3 - 2)
- Indigenous sky stories and links to travel and environmental sustainability.(GE3 - 1)

## Further Research

- Ancestral story - Great emu in the sky - (GE3 - 3)  
<https://kamilaroianationsidentityweebly.com/the-dreaming.html>
- Indigenous Australians first to discover variable stars - (GE3 - 3)  
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-07-15/indigenous-astronomy-discoveries-that-preceded-modern-science/11308924>

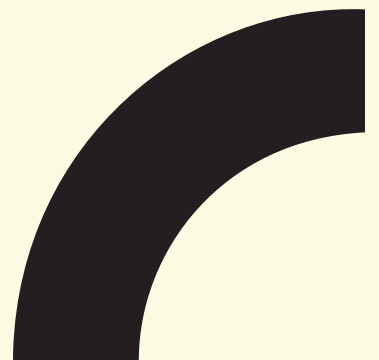
# Curriculum Links

## Australian Curriculum Links

Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Years 5-6: ACAVAM114, ACAVAM115, ACAVAM116, ACAVAR117</li> </ul>
Science & Technology:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year 5: ACSSU078</li> </ul>
Mathematics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year 5: ACMMG113</li> <li>Year 6: ACMMG143</li> </ul>
English:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year 5: ACELY1704</li> <li>Year 6: ACELY1714</li> </ul>

## NSW Curriculum Links

Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stage 3: VAS3.1, VAS3.2, VAS3.4</li> </ul>
Science & Technology:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stage 3: ST3-10ES-S</li> </ul>
Geography:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stage 3: GE3-2</li> </ul>
Mathematics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stage 3: MA3-8NA, MA3-17MG</li> </ul>
English:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stage 3: EN3-1A, EN3-6B</li> </ul>



# Teachers Guide

## Engaging with Indigenous concepts in the *Void* Exhibition

The exhibition *Void* deals with many different aspects of Indigenous culture. This guide seeks to provide you with basic building blocks to create a culturally safe, authentic base for starting a wonderful learning experience for your students. Please read through the following themes to help you begin this process.

### Key Themes

#### **Indigenous culture is still living and present today**

- These resources are designed so that all students can engage in reconciliation and respect the world's oldest continuous living culture that belongs to Australia (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2014). It is important to recognise through these artworks that Indigenous art is vibrant and living today and constantly evolving while also remembering the past.
- Draw out the students own experiences when looking at the art, seeking to demystify many different ideas around Indigenous art. Finding connections can be a powerful tool to engage students from all cultures.

#### **Indigenous culture is layered and diverse**

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art cannot be defined just by one art form or movement; it is very complex and area-specific to whichever region or community it belongs to.
- We have included artists' quotes in this resource to emphasise the artist's voice in talking about their works. It's important to pay attention to the language they use for certain aspects of their culture and art making, particularly when it describes ancestral narratives. For example Mabel Juli uses *Garnkiny* her language word for the moon that relates to the broader ancestral stories '*Garnkiny Ngarranggarni*', while Jonathan Jones titled his work *dhawin-dyuray* (*axe-having*).





### **Creating culturally safe spaces within your classroom**

- Contemporary Aboriginal art can help teach Indigenous knowledges in all Key Learning Areas. The cross curriculum priority in the Australian syllabus uses key concepts to meet these outcomes. The key concepts are Country and Place and secondly Culture and People (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2014). The teaching resource is designed to be used across a variety of Key Learning Areas.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is important to teach in order to create a culturally safe classroom. This body of knowledge is taught as key elements because they are linked to a deeper knowledge and a holistic worldview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2014). The key goal for non-Indigenous students is that they will understand that identities and culture are a source of strength and resilience of Aboriginal people against the contemporary impacts of colonisation (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2014).

### **Connect with local Indigenous groups and knowledge holders in your community**

- If talking about Indigenous culture is new or daunting to you, we encourage you to learn with your students, when questions come up that you are unable to answer utilise the opportunity to research and learn alongside your students. Your local Aboriginal Land Council, Indigenous Seniors and families in your community can be rich resources of knowledge and stories.
- What we have included in this resource are ideas to consider and guide you and your students, they are not intended to be finite ways of exploring the artists' work. We encourage you to use the artists' voices where possible, taking their creative expressions of connection to Country as a way for you and your students to also connect to the Country you are on. As Bruce Pascoe says in his introductory essay: "These images and objects are not to be glanced at, one more demand on our crowded attention, they are to be looked at, considered, absorbed. They are of country, our shared country. We share this country now."