



NAIDOC CELEBRATIONS 2014 30 June – 18 July *Yey Susurrus* Joondalup Art Gallery 4/48 Central Walk, Joondalup

Deborah Bonar. Women Yarning Around the Campfire, 2013. Acrylic on Belgian linen



SERVING COUNTRY -CENTENARY & BEYOND

NAIDOC Celebrations 2014

Yey Susurrus

30 June - 18 July 2014

Yey Susurrus is exhibited as part of the City of Joondalup's NAIDOC Week celebrations and features artworks by female Indigenous artists who are working in innovative or daring ways or playing with traditional art forms or crafts, or extending their practice in new and experimental ways. The exhibition celebrates Indigenous culture across Australia, bringing together work from artists based in Tasmania, Queensland and Sydney, as well as locally.

Featured Artists

Barbara **BYNDER** Marlene HAROLD Janine McCAULLAY-BOTT Simone **PENNY** Jenny FRASER Sandra HILL Charmaine **GREEN** Naomi **GRANT** Tjemma NAPANANGKA Patsy **MUDJIDELL** Ningie NANGALA Norma McDONALD Deborah **BONAR** Janet FORBES Sharyn EGAN Julie GOUGH

Curated by Gemma Ben-Ary

With thanks to: Ian Plunkett at Japingka Gallery, Judith Hugo, Curator of the Central Institute of Technology Art Collection, Anna Kanaris at Artitja Fine Art, Fremantle, Ron Bradfield at Artsource and the artists who have generously contributed their time and talent.

Yey Susurrus

The title comes from the Noongar word, yey, meaning now or today, and the English word susurrus, which means to whisper or murmur, as the wind whispers through long grass. The words, put together in this way, are a call to listen carefully - to the murmurings of the present time. This exhibition features selected artworks by contemporary female Aboriginal artists from across Australia; women who are working in innovative or daring ways, adapting tradition, experimenting with traditional art forms or crafts. or extending their practice in new ways. There is a wide array of strategies, materials and media, from film to fibre-work employed by these women to communicate a message, and it is evident from the content in each work that the creators are as much visual artists. as they are writers, thinkers, public speakers, teachers, activists, and – most importantly, women. Innovation cannot exist by itself, however. Tradition underpins, and often defines, many forms of Aboriginal art, and there is a deliberately constructed tension between tradition and innovation in this selection of work.

Weaving and fibre-work is a strong feminine tradition and a suitable place to begin to discuss some of the artworks on display. Sharyn Egan, Janet Forbes and Janine McAullay-Bott interpret the tradition of weaving in their own unique style. Egan's Miss Q is made from mixed fibres from many countries including Tjampi grass, a type of native Spinifex commonly found in Janet Forbes country, which is also used in PaPa (Dog). This mingling of fibre serves as a reminder of the diasporic nature of contemporary Aboriginal communities and a willingness to cross borders - both artistic as well as geographical with craft. Departing slightly from the metaphor of the whispering or murmuring theme, it must be said that women's weaving circles are often less of a whisper, and more of a thrum - where gossip, news, anecdotes and ideas are exchanged around the twining, and where the process is as important as the outcome. McAullay-Bott's Fish Trap is another example of tradition and innovation joining in a sculptural woven form that references a Noongar fish trap, and speaks of a sense of community and of sharing food and drink. Fish and family ties also appear in Green's Wadbi Line series, and provide a link to this most ancient and universal of human rituals; the shared meal.

Marlene Harold's *Early Morning Mist* speaks of the magic of a Pilbara dawn; she addresses her ancestors and creation myth, along with the beauty of the subtle colours of the tall grasses and the dewy moments before the sun is up. This work is a kind of incantation. It tells the sacred creation story of Naurru Nyujunnggama, When the World was Soft. When the creation spirits, the Marroa, rose from the ground, they raised the sky and the world out of the ocean. They first gave names and form to the country and then to all the birds and animals. Finally, they created the Ngaardangarli, the Aboriginal people. In the early morning, the mist over the water is known to be the smoke from the Marroa's breakfast fires. This is a subject matter central to Harold's work. and her deep respect for her culture and for the telling of this sacred story is palpable. The word susurrus applies accurately to this painting. It is an expression that describes the whispering of the feathery grasses of the Pilbarra, and also of the ancestral beings that created them. Those beings seem to shimmer throughout Harold's work.

Julie Gough and Jenny Fraser use film to tell two different stories. Gough's *Rivers Run* takes the viewer on an unnerving journey along a river where once much blood was shed. She has taken accounts written by the early settlers of Tasmania in the 1800s regarding skirmishes with the 'natives.' The story is told in a multi-layered way, there are

the English accounts translated verbatim from old manuscripts; these provide an authoritative, historical narration from the settler's perspective, with a dark and forbidding landscape serving as a backdrop. A presence and an absence are strongly felt. The water is deep and enigmatic, the trees along the banks are thick, and the drama in this work is subtle and underplayed. entirely silent with text scrolling continuously like the end credits of a film. Jenny Fraser's Beach Scene Series is an enquiry into our fascination with coastal areas as a contested site. She writes. "Most beach movies say a lot about culture wars, often mirroring issues of belonging, identity, ownership, entitlement and consequent conflict. When witnessing a recurring action, some say 'I've seen that movie.' It is an ambiguous expression of dismissal/resignation/fatigue, recognising predictability and history repeating itself." Here Fraser makes an irreverent dig at culture wars and at Hollywood or media portrayals of belonging, identity and entitlement.

In this exhibition, tradition has been carried through language and storytelling, whatever the medium or the visual technique. The visual strategies employed by these Indigenous women artists have been part of their individual exploration in making sense of feelings, spaces, borders, and spiritual beliefs. In everyday life, meanings are sometimes, too often. lost in translation. Visual artists are able to bridge this gap and communicate ideas that exist in a borderless place beyond language. Some of the artworks in Yey Susurrus are explicit, while others are coded and complex. This is a collection of multi-voiced retellings of important messages, incantations, and sacred stories. In the way that a seashell sings of the sea, artists tell of the Yey, the now, and here is a selection of stories. that are well worth listening to.

Gemma Ben-Ary Curator City of Joondalup



Noongar Six Seasons Panorama 2014 Acrylic on water colour paper \$2,500

Barbara BYNDER

Barbara Bynder is a visual artist, writer and scholar. born in the wheat-belt town of Bruce Rock in Western Australia. She was taught about art by her uncle, Charles Pickett, a self-taught Aboriginal artist whose work is highly regarded in the Carrolup style. She holds a Professional Certificate in Indigenous research, and is undertaking higher degree research in preliminary social anthropology. She holds a Bachelor of Arts, having completed a double major in social science and writing. She also holds the position of Deputy Curatorial Director of the Berndt Museum at the University of Western Australia. Barbara's artistic practise is an expression of her passion to educate the wider community of the richness and diversity of Aboriginal art, culture and heritage.

"Being a modern Aboriginal woman, I am enthused by the change in direction of aboriginal artists, from dot painting to the more expressive contemporary styles that suggest a desire to simultaneously maintain culture and heritage, whilst conceptualising understanding and awareness of an evolving Aboriginal society."

Story

This work is a panorama of the six Noongar seasons. The background is a red-gum tree trunk. For me, trees represent the substance of life that ground us to mother earth and include the water source such as rain. fresh water lakes and rivers as well as estuaries that sustain life. The panorama of the tree trunk is a section of the trunk that is then overlaid with design and patterning representing fire, earth, wind and water. All of these elements exist to create and sustain life. The colours are representative of the flowers that bloom in each season, with the exception of Birak, the burning season. The colours of Birak are yellow, orange, red and black.

Birak, December to January

This is the season of the young; Birak is the beginning of summer. The earth begins to warm with cool sea breezes floating in during the afternoons, and rain decreases. Birak is also the season of fire, burning of country removed the undergrowth to force larger animals out into the open, making it easier to hunt. Burning filled the earth with yellow, red, black and orange colours.

Bunuru, February to March

Bunuru is the hottest time of the year with little rain, easterly winds and sea breezes along the coast in

the afternoons. During the season of Bunuru, Aboriginal people moved towards waterways, rivers and coastal areas, fishing and keeping cool. White flowers from the jarrah, marri and ghost gums bloom during the Bunuru season.

Djeran, April to May

Djeran is the season that sees a break from the heat. The nights become cool and less balmy. Dew begins to cover the plants in the evenings and early mornings. The winds become less intense and carry with them a light cool breeze rising up from the south. Red flowering gums are in abundance during this season. Light showers appear during Djeran.

Makuru, June to July

Makuru is the cold, wet and rainy. Westerly and southerly winds swept through this season bringing with it heavy rain, overcast skies and dark wet nights. Waterways, catchments and rivers began to fill. Flowers with blue and purple hues bloom in this season. White flowers emerge towards the end of this season.

Djilba, August to September

Djilba is the end of winter and the beginning of spring. During this season, rains begin to ease mixed with windy days that sometimes show warmth and cool nights. Flowers begin to bloom in abundance during this season. Masses of yellow acacias bloom throughout this season with a splash of showy cream flowers dotting the landscape. Grass trees also bloom at this time of the year continuing into Kambarang.

Kambarang, October to November

Kambarang enjoys the full bloom of spring during the weeks of October easing off towards the end of November. The landscape is littered with an abundance of colours. Orange and green flowers from the Banksia and the white of the acacia and the red kangaroo paw make for a myriad of colourful splendour during this season. The most beautiful colour of this season comes from the moodiar tree or more commonly known in South Western Australia as the Christmas tree (nuvtsia). The flowers of the moodjar are a beautiful bright orange. The days begin to warm with longer dry days beginning to appear.



Early Morning Mist 2013 Acrylic on canvas \$4,900

Marlene HAROLD

Marlene Harold was born on Mt Florence Station in the Millstream Tablelands and was schooled in Nullagine and Marble Bar, finishing her education in Roebourne. One of her chief subjects is the creation story according to Yindjibarndi law, called *Ngurru Nyujunnggama* – *When the World was Soft*.

Marlene moves with ease between methods of applying paint to express her depictions of country and has a particularly delicate way of mixing and layering colour that differentiates her from her fellow Pilbara artists.

Her work is avidly collected, and she was greatly honoured when one of her paintings was chosen to be presented to Queen Elizabeth II on her visit to Australia in 2011.





Fish Trap 2014 Palm fronds (Queen palm), wood, gumnuts, emu feathers \$1,650

Janine McAULLAY-BOTT

Janine has established her career in weaving and interpreting her Noongar heritage through fibre and natural materials. She believes her craft is a gift from the ancestors which she is honoured to share for future generations.

Janine is represented by Artitja Fine Art Gallery, Fremantle.



Secret 1, Secret 2, Secret 3 (tripdych) 2003

Digital print paper on board On loan from the Central Institute of Technology Art Collection

Simone PENNY

Simone completed an Advanced Diploma in Art and Design (Visual Art) at Central TAFE in 2003. This work is a series of digital stills taken from a video sequence that explored her personal journey of discovering her true identity.

"I am an Aboriginal woman. I was raised in a middle-class Dutch family and grew up in a mining town in Papua New Guinea. Initially I started working and investigating post-colonialism and assimilations. I began to realise that it is about two very different cultures. Exploration of those cultural imperatives has inspired my work; it is about crossing the boundaries between the Dutch lifestyle and the Aboriginal way of life. It is about two different narratives colliding into one another.

This is my personal journey, crossing cultures."



Name that Beach Scene Series II, (1-12) (detail) 2014 Digital print on canvas \$300 each

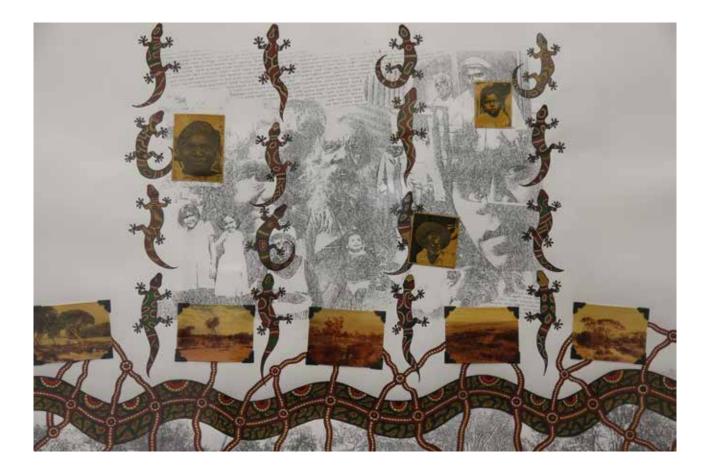
Jenny FRASER

A Murri of mixed ancestry, Jenny Fraser was born in far North Queensland and her old people originally hailed from Yugambeh Country in the Gold Coast hinterland on the border of southeast Queensland and northern New South Wales. She has a professional background in Art and Media Education and has since completed a Masters of Indigenous Wellbeing at Southern Cross University in Lismore, NSW.

Jenny is a celebrated screen artist. She was awarded an honourable mention at the 2007 imagineNATIVE Film Festival, Toronto, Canada and in 2009, was nominated for a Deadly Award. She is set to challenge audiences again with her upcoming Australia Council fellowship project 'Midden' which was awarded in 2012.

Because of the diverse creative mediums Jenny uses, much of her work defies categorisation. More recently her work takes iconic and everyday symbols of Australian life and places them into a context that questions the values they represent. With a laconic sense of humour she picks away at the fabric of society, exposing contradictions, absurdities and denial. More recently she was the first Aboriginal Curator to present a Triennial exhibition in Australia: 'the other APT' coinciding and responding to the Asia Pacific Triennial which was then accepted for inclusion into the 2008 Biennale of Sydney.

She has travelled extensively and completed residency programs from remote communities in Queensland and the Northern Territory to the Rocky Mountains in Canada and also Raw Space and New Flames in Brisbane.



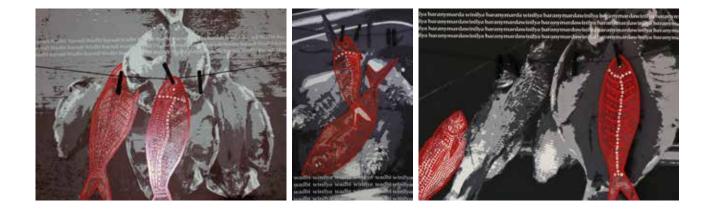
Heartlands 1995 Solvent transfer, hand painted with gouache and watercolour On loan from the Central Institute of Technology Art Collection

Sandra HILL

Sandra Hill is a Yorga (woman) of the Noongar Aboriginal people of the south-west of Western Australia. Her traditional clans are Balladong and Wilmen on her mother's side and Wardandi and Minang on her father's side. Sandra Hill was taken away from her family at the age of five and placed in Sister Kate's Children's Home until she was fostered out to a white family. It took her 29 years to trace her original family through files she was able to access as a social welfare worker.

Her special gift for art has been a means for her coming to terms with her sad past as well as allowing the wider community the opportunity to share and understand the damage and loss experienced by Aboriginal children who were removed from their families.

Hill started as a printmaker but now works primarily in paint and is the mother of well-known artist sons, Christopher Pease and Ben Pushman.



7. Barndi Wadbi
8. Wadbi Wanilya
9. Wadbi Line
2014
Mixed medium on canvas
\$660 each

Charmaine GREEN

"These pieces talk to my life in a bi-cultural relationship with a Maori partner. We find common ground in sharing food and mixing both our cultures, Yamaji and Maori. The smoking of fish brings together the family in conversation, from catching the fish, to preparing it, and then cooking for all to eat. Our clothes line transforms into a fish drying line as we swap yarns and share conversations around a table or camp fire."



Red Dirt Plains 2013 Acrylic and collage \$6,000

Naomi GRANT

Naomi Grant is a descendant of the Wiradjuri people of central New South Wales and has lived in Perth, Western Australia, for the past 36 years. She graduated from Curtin University with a BA in Design and paints landscape in bold colour from dreams, memories and visions.

"Red Dirt Plains symbolises the feeling the land generates in my mind. The expansive earth and desert of WA, with so much of it a rich red colour, synonymous with the Pilbara region. The rivers and lakes that flow throughout the desert, creating waterways that bring an amazing range of life to the land that often appears barren."

Naomi has won numerous awards, and was recently announced as the winner of the prestigious BHP Billiton Worsley Alumina Acquisition Prize, with her work *'Time Calls Us Back'* being acquired into the City of Bunbury's Art Collection.



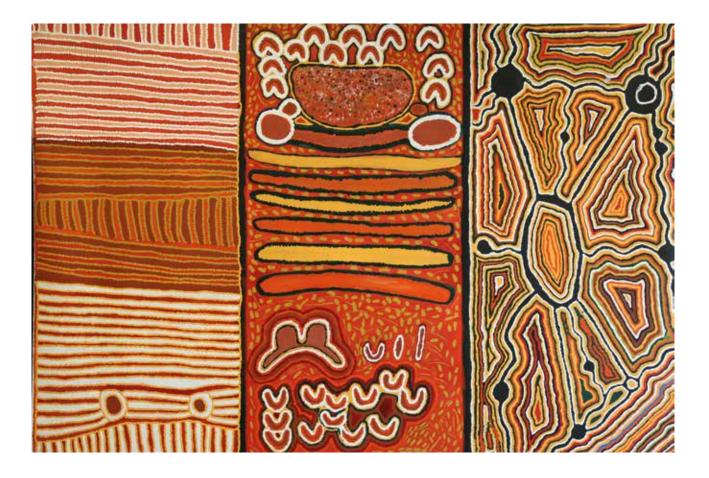


11. Wadbi Line 112. Wadbi Line 22014Mixed media on canvas\$350 each

Charmaine GREEN

Our Wadbi Line

Our clothes line has a dual purpose Sure most of the time it holds Our washing - our wet clothes, linen But lots of other times it becomes our Wadbi Line We split the mullet We salt the mullet Then we hang the mullet Just like we do our washing On our clothes line Barndi Wadbi mmmm barndi wadbi barndi wadbi What a delicious sight Butterflied mullet hanging and drying Waiting to be smoked In a camp oven outside Utakarra style - our way Yamaji and Maori hands Golden smoked wadbi To be eaten together Barndi wadbi mmmm barndi wadbi barndi wadbi Charmaine Green, 2014 Translation: Wadbi; Wajarri for fish Barndi; Wajarri for good Yamaji; Wajarri for Aboriginal person from Midwest



Lullapi in the Great Sandy Desert Ngara Ngara in the Tanami Desert Lamara in the Great Sandy Desert Acrylic on linen 1996

On loan from the Central Institute of Technology Art Collection

Tjemma NAPANANGKA, Patsy MUDJIDELL and Ningie NANGALA

This triptych, purchased from the Balgo Hills Aboriginal Community in 1996, was included in the Art Gallery of WA's 1997 exhibition *Daughters of the Dreaming – Sisters Together Strong* and in the University of Western Australia's 1999 exhibition Generations – *The Stolen Years of Fighters and Singers*.

Each artist has depicted a site in the desert which has special significance for her – Tjemma's is a region near two waterholes where she and her family gathered bush carrots, Patsy's is a women's ceremonial dance site described to her by her mother, and Ningie tells of travels with her family around her 'ancestral' country in the region of Pippar in the years before she settled at the Balgo community.

Ningie Nangala was born in the Pippar/Kiwirrkurra area. Her mother and father died when she was very young, and she came to the Balgo Mission on the invitation of Aboriginal people living there, when her family group was camped at Lirrwati close to Balgo. Like many people at that time, she returned to her own country before settling more permanently at the old mission, first at Tjalyiwarn, then at its present site at Wirrumanu from 1962. As a young girl she tended the mission goats, gathering bush food for them to eat. She married and had four children. After her first husband passed away, she married Tjumpo, another important Balgo artist, and had a further five children. Ningie's bold and dramatic style is highly sought after and her unique application of thick 'rivers' of paint result in a highly unique style. Ningie loves to paint and is a dedicated and prolific artist.



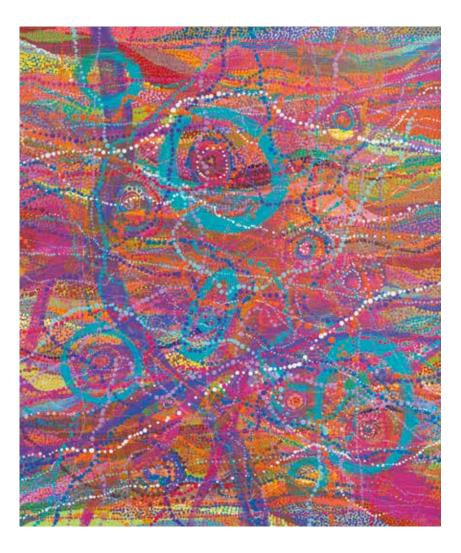
Locked Out (detail) 1997 Mixed media on handmade paper On Ioan from Judith Hugo's private collection

Norma McDONALD

Norma began studying art and design at Midland TAFE in 1993, and taught there between 1997 and 2002. She has won several grants and awards as well as numerous public art commissions and is regularly undertaking residencies, designing logos, sculpture walks, books and even a film. To date. Norma has had 11 solo exhibitions and her work is represented in the National Gallery, the Art Gallery of Western Australia, the Berndt Museum. Edith Cowan University, several city councils and many private collections, both nationally and internationally. Norma's work addresses inequality between races, the plight of the stolen generation, and the search for identity.

In 1997 she was included in the exhibition, *Daughters of the Dreaming: Sisters Together Strong* at the Art Gallery of Western Australia. Other artists who participated in this exhibition included Bai Bai Napangarti, Ngingi Nangala, Patsy Mudjidell, Tjemma (Freda) Napanangka, Julie Dixon, Alta Winmar, Gladys Milroy and Gnungu Mia. This same year also saw MacDonald stage another solo exhibition *Land Strong, We Belong* at the Aboriginal Arts and Crafts Gallery in Perth. MacDonald is represented by Gomboc Gallery in Perth and since 2000 has staged many solo exhibitions with them including / Can Fly in 2002, Coming Home in 2003, Third Space Between Two and Two Worlds-One Skv in 2004. Fusion in 2006 and Could Have – Should Have: The Story of Carrolup Mission in 2008. In 2003 she also participated in the group show Gnyung Waart Kooling Kulark at the Fremantle Maritime Museum. In 2005 her work was included in John E Stanton curated exhibition. On Track: Contemporary Aboriginal Art from Western Australia at the Berndt Museum of Anthropology. This exhibition toured nationally until 2008.

She has work in the permanent collections of the Art Gallery of Western Australia, the National Gallery of Australia, the Berndt Museum of Anthropology, the University of Western Australia, Curtin University, Edith Cowan University, Midland College of TAFE, Port Hedland Hospital, Armadale City Council, Fremantle City Council, Mundaring Shire Council and Gomboc Gallery.



Territ-Territ, the Honeyeater 2013 Acrylic on linen \$3,840

Deborah BONAR

Perth-based artist Deborah Bonar has a unique style and paints with lyricism and delicacy, producing work of immense visual power and complexity. Bonar talks through her art as she reconnects with her culture - country, family and history. Creating art gives her a voice and the artistic expression to tell her interpretive stories of Aboriginal culture and her people's strong spiritual connection to land, water and nature. Her work mixes traditional earthy tones against synthetic pastels and pop tones creating a dialogue that explores connection to land in modern Australia.

At the beginning of the dry season, Territ-territ the honeyeater whistles and sings to the green plum to make it fat and ripe.



Women Yarning Around the Campfire 2011 Acrylic on canvas \$420

Deborah BONAR

"Women cook up the food they have gathered while yarning around the campfire".



Pa Pa (Dog) 2011 Woven spinifex and wool On loan from the Central Institute of Technology Art Collection

Janet FORBES

Janet Forbes, the daughter of Fred Forbes, is one of the (Tjanpi Weavers) from Papulankutja Artists Centre in Blackstone in the Northern Territory, who are renowned for their quirky woven animal figures and also for winning the 2005 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award with a full sized woven Toyota ute. This grass ute has subsequently toured to many museums across Australia, and has become an icon of the entwining of innovation and tradition in Indigenous Australian art. Papulankutja artists are community-focussed and they believe in working collaboratively, together, with a strong heart.



Miss Q 2014 Meadow grass, Tjanpi grass, raffia \$1500

Sharyn EGAN

Sharyn Egan is a Noongar woman born in Subiaco in 1957. At the age of three she was taken from her family and incarcerated at the New Norcia Mission until the age of 13 and she never saw her parents again. Her work is informed by this experience, and comments upon the associated trauma, emotions and a deep sense of loss and displacement amongst Aboriginal people.

She has received acclaim for her work and collaborated with Shane Pickett, Lance Chad, Troy Bennell, Alice Warrell and Yvonne Kickett on a large-scale work in the 2006 Perth International Arts Festival. Her fibre and weaving work has become well known as an example of contemporary indigenous art in Western Australia. One of my men was crossing the River with a musket, I called to him to come back when the Natives immediately cried out "Ah you coward". For some time they still continued on the Rock making use of such language as above, and constantly raising their hands and leaping.

About two hours after the house had been fired. I perceived one skulking round the stacks silently with the intention of taking some of the articles we had rescued from the flames – my son seeing him first cried out "Father – black Fellow".

He immediately ran round the stacks again and scrambled up some Rocks and on my bringing Rivers Run (still) 2009 Digital video on DVD Duration: 40 minutes Copyright \$2000 limited edition, 3 of 10

Julie GOUGH

"Rivers Run is a silent 40 minute DVD projection piece. It consists of footage from a kayaking journey taken on the South Esk River in northern Tasmania in 2009. *Rivers Run* shows my slow movements, as I arterially paddled through major colonial land grant properties including Clarendon estate. Text scrolls up the face of the footage transcribed from original 1820s and 1830s records held in the Archives Office of Tasmania. These records are known as "the Depredations" or CSO 1/316 - 332 file 7578: The papers of Governor Arthur 1824 – 1836 relating to the Tasmanian Aborigines. The text in this film is a direct transcript of correspondence that relates riverbank skirmishes between Aboriginal and non Aboriginal people across Van Diemen's Land, as sent to Governor Arthur by the non Aboriginal people involved."

Julie Gough is a multi media artist and writer based in Hobart, Tasmania, and is a descendant of Woretemoeteyenner, one of the four daughters of significant east coast leader, Mannalargenna, from Tebrikunna, in north-east Tasmania. Julie's practice involves the uncovering of subsumed, conflicting histories through various mediums such as installation, sound and video. Julie holds a PhD from the University of Tasmania and has held 20 solo exhibitions and exhibited in more than 120 group shows since 1994, including the Clemenger Award, the Biennale of Sydney and the Liverpool Biennale. Her work is held in prominent collections across Australia and internationally. including The National Gallery of Australia, The National Gallery of Victoria, The Art Gallery of New South Wales, The Art Gallery of South Australia. The Art Gallerv of Western Australia. Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, the National Museum of Australia. the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston. Julie is represented by Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi in Melbourne, Bett Gallerv in Hobart and Turner Galleries in Perth.



These baskets were created by children from Sacred Heart College who worked with Noongar weaver, Sharyn Egan, as part of the City's NAIDOC celebrations program in June and July 2014.



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