

LOOKING AT PAINTING

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COVER IMAGE: MS N YUNUPINGU, *UNTITLED 5861-18*, 2018. PAINT PEN ON CLEAR ACETATE, 86 X 82 CM. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND ROSLYN OXLEY 9 GALLERY, SYDNEY.

ABOUT THIS EDUCATION KIT



Art is made to tell a story; from the artist to the viewer, which is you and me.

We are here to discover some of the stories from the exhibitions. What's important about art is what makes it matter to you. It might be a lovely shade of blue that you like or the way the sun looks in a painting. Art can matter for all sorts of reasons and none of them are wrong. The art that is made for this exhibition, *LOOKING AT PAINTING*, considers the history of painting and different artists are pushing the boundaries of how we see and experience painting.

Images are everywhere. They are in the palm of our hand, in our loungerooms and as we walk down the street on

screens and billboards. Why then, does an artist choose paint as the medium for producing images? Is it the materiality of the paint? Is it the expansion of time it takes to create images using paint? Is it the surface that the artist is working on? These are some of the questions that *LOOKING AT PAINTING* explores.

Think about what you know painting to be and then consider, how do these artists push those concepts of painting? What makes their practice unique? What if all the things that we knew made a painting were just rules to be broken/ explored?

We would like to acknowledge the Cabrogal Clan of the Darug Nation who are the traditional custodians of the land that now resides within Liverpool City Council's boundaries. We acknowledge that this land was also accessed by peoples of the Dhurawal and Darug Nations.

ABOVE: EXHIBITION VIEW, *LOOKING AT PAINTING*. FROM LEFT: CARMEN GLYNN-BRAUN, *INTRICACIES OF IDENTITY*, 2021. NELL, *RELATIONSHIPS*, 2020. KIRTIKA KAIN, *THE SOLAR LINE XXIV*, 2020. (COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND ROSLYN OXLEY 9 GALLERY) ROCHELLE HALEY, *DOUBLE COLUMN*, 2021. KIRTIKA KAIN, *THE SOLAR LINE XXVII*, 2020. (COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND ROSLYN OXLEY 9 GALLERY). PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHANTEL BANN.



LOOKING AT PAINTING

Artists: NELL, Carmen Glynn-Braun, Hayley Megan French, Jody Graham, Rochelle Haley, Kirtika Kain, Claudia Nicholson, Judy Watson and N Yunupingu
18 October 2021 - 23 January 2022

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ROCHELLE HALEY, *DOUBLE VEIL*, 2021. PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHANTEL BANN.

NELL



RELATIONSHIPS, PRINTED FABRIC, MIXED MEDIA AND ACRYLIC PAINT ON CANVAS 2020.
IMAGE CREDIT: CHANTEL BANN

Nell's artwork can be read like a story made up of popular signs and symbols and texts transformed into imagery. Nell uses smiley faces, lightning bolts, clouds, rain drops, suns, meditating figures, flames and eggs, drips, ghosts, iconic symbols such as the **crucifix** and faces as repeated motifs in her work. She engages this universal symbolism as a language to communicate beyond cultural upbringing. In the work *Relationships* Nell has used green dots which are circles cut from her favourite painting pant and used them as a symbol of change and growth. There are golden eyes above the word "I", playing on the knowledge of self and seeing. The ghost, a figure that repeatedly appears in Nell's practice, is both within the image and an outsider as it is removed from the rest of the work.

Nell works across performance, sculpture, music, painting, video and immersive installation. Her work is heavily based on the influences of Buddhist philosophy, popular culture and Rock and Roll.

Big Ideas: Identity, Language, Symbolism, Balance

Questions and Activities:

- Think about your favourite piece of music. Write the name of this music in a text that reflects how it makes you feel. Is it Jagged, sharp, angular? Or perhaps rounded and smooth?
- What colours would match this image made from text?
- How can you show more about what this music means to you?

CARMEN GLYNN-BRAUN



INTRICACIES OF IDENTITY, INSTALLATION VIEW. ACRYLIC PAINT, MAKE UP (FACIAL FOUNDATION), GOLD LEAF 2021.
IMAGE CREDIT: CHANTEL BANN

Carmen Glynn-Braun flips the script on the traditions of painting. She uses facial makeup and a paint mixture to explore the continued impact of the **Assimilation policy** upon Aboriginal women. The Assimilation policy involved stealing Aboriginal children from their families and 'breeding out' the colours of Aboriginal skin to achieve a colonial ideal of 'White Australia'. The work shows 5 'paint skins' which exemplify some of the many different skin tones that belong to First Nations people today during **post-colonial settlement**. They are an expansion to Carmen's practice that explores the colonial classification of First Nations People into 'full blood', 'half caste' and 'quarter caste'. The medium of the paint is the canvas. There is no white square to hang the work upon.

Carmen uses materiality seductively, allowing the viewer to come to the work whilst using the space for advocacy and awareness through subject matter/concept.

Big Ideas: Identity, Materiality, Society, History, Power

Questions and Activities:

- What about you tells the story of your culture?
- Draw or paint yourself and highlight these elements in the image.

JODY GRAHAM



LEFT: *AFTER THE RAIN*, ACRYLIC, INK, CHARCOAL, SAP, HAND STITCHING ON PAPER 2017-20.

RIGHT: *MARK MAKING TOOLS*, ANIMAL BONES, HORNS, TEETH, CLAWS, FUR, HAIR, WOOD, DRIFTWOOD, WIRE, FABRIC, STRING, ROPE, BROKEN BROOM, BROKEN WALKING STICK, CHARCOAL FROM BLACK SUMMER BUSHFIRES 2020-21

IMAGE CREDIT: CHANTEL BANN

Jody Graham has two major works in *LOOKING AT PAINTING*, these are *After the Rain* and *Mark Making Tools*. *After the Rain* is a suite of works on paper that have been created with Jody's **unconventional** mark making tools. Jody constructs these tools herself after long walks to collect materials including bones, broken brooms, bits of nature, rocks, twisted branches, wire and old doll parts. The tools become sculptural objects of themselves, souvenirs of the spaces in which they were collected.

Jody works across drawing, sculpture, installation and performance and is constantly evolving her mark making practice. Process is very important to Jody's work as we can see in *after the rain*. Jody works with the limitations imposed by the constructed tool and her body, she also uses the natural environment to assist in her mark making, specifically soaking some of these pieces of paper in mud puddles while working on them. The work itself

relates to the glisten of wet eucalypts after rain in the Australian bush.

Big Ideas: Process, Traditions, Tools, Recycling/Reusing

Questions and Activities:

- Why do you think this work is interesting?
- What can you see in it that tells you of the way that it was made?
- Can you see any unusual marks that tell you about the tools that may have been made?
- Go for a walk around your yard or neighbourhood and collect some objects. They may be sticks, rocks, discarded objects...anything. Use string to bind the objects to a stick that you can hold like a paint brush. Paint with the new tool onto some paper.
- What does it feel like to use this tool? Exciting? Awkward? Messy? Fun?
- Write a poem to describe using this tool.

ROCHELLE HALEY



DOUBLE VEIL, 2021. IMAGE CREDIT: CHANTEL BANN

Rochelle Haley's practice explores **experimental** drawing techniques, painting, movement, **abstraction** and installation, to investigate the relationship between architecture, bodies and physical space. Her works can include the floors and walls of a space, use canvas, beading, fabric or live performance. In this particular work, she uses a wall mural and fabric fringing to investigate the relationship between the unusual architecture in the Hopper Gallery at Casula Powerhouse with elements that are associated with traditional painting. These include the feeling of light, shadow, perspective and movement.

How a space feels when you move through it is very important to Rochelle. Sometimes she creates dance choreography and uses dancers to activate her colourful spaces for a short time. Rochelle explores how the

movement of the bodies and the interaction is expressed and felt by audiences.

Big Ideas: Time, Space, Relationships, Movement

Questions and Activities:

- Think about how your body moves in space. Sway your hips, raise your arms, move your feet. Now interact with your shadow on a wall. What kind of movements does your body do? If these movements were a language, what do you think they would say?

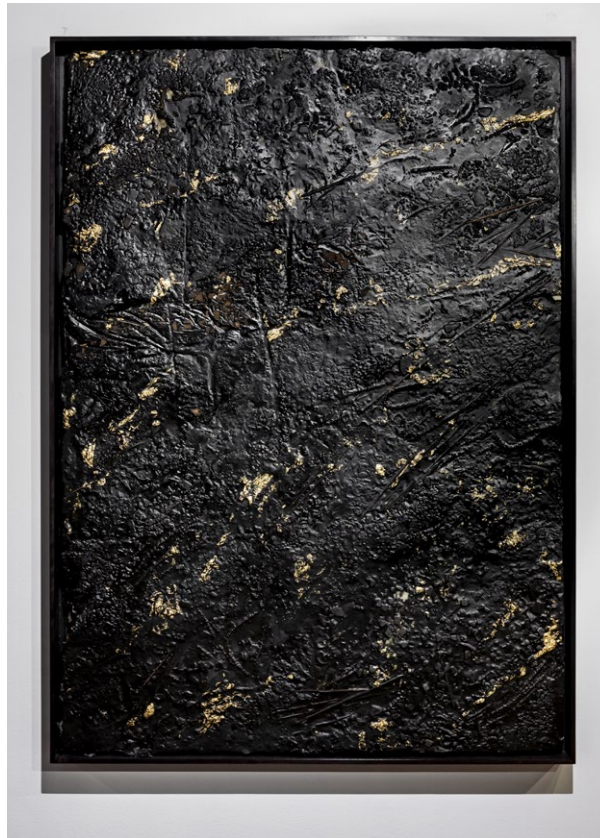
KIRTIKA KAIN

The work of Kirtika Kain is about her history and the history of her ancestors inspired by a book called *Jina Amucha (The Prisons We Broke)*, which describes the lives of Dalit's (the lowest caste in India's segregating caste system). She uses materials such as iron filings, metal dust, silicon carbide, gold pigment and vermilion, rope, human hair, leather, reeds, rocks, charcoal, tar, printing on layers of rice paper and waxes. She uses bitumen paint on copper and zinc allowing them to etch for weeks before **oxidising** and developing **patinas**. Born into the **Dalit** caste herself but raised in Australia, Kirtika uses her work to investigate the power structures that have been imposed upon and embodied by generations before her from the perspective of an outsider. Kirtika uses materials and the **immediacy** of process to investigate the political and bodily history of what it is to be a Dalit born woman.

Big Ideas: Identity, Relationships, Society, Power

Questions and Activities:

- Think about your own family history. If you could use any materials to represent this what would it be and why?



IDOLATRY, TAR, BROOM GRASS, PLASTER, HAIR, GOLD LEAF IN WAX 2019.
IMAGE CREDIT: CHANTEL BANN

HAYLEY MEGAN FRENCH



THE PIPELINE, ACRYLIC ON POLAROID PHOTOGRAPH, MOUNTED ON TASMANIAN OAK 2018-21.
IMAGE CREDIT: CHANTEL BANN

Hayley Megan French's practice has evolved from her experiences in suburbia, particularly Old Guildford, Darug land, Miriwoong country in Goonoonoorang/ Kununurra and Toowoomba, Giabal and Jarowair land. French lives and works on Bidjigal land. Hayley creates her paintings using a process that begins by walking through her suburban areas and documenting the streets using her polaroid camera. Hayley then uses a unique 4 colour palette particular to each suburb's geography and paints over the polaroid. The polaroid is an instant form of notetaking and recording the environment. Hayley does this to create and reinforce a sense of home. The landscape becomes an extension of her identity and her knowledge of the region becomes layered and interwoven with experiences and stories.

"I came to understand place as a verb rather than a noun, which exists in our doings: walking, talking and living."- Simryn Gill

Big Ideas: Belonging, Identity, Process

Questions and Activities:

- What makes a suburb? Think about the space that you live in. (The immediate space of the home, zoom out to include the homes around you, zoom out again to include the streets around your home.)
- What makes this area unique? Is it the culture of the people? Is it the way the suburb is built or is it a landmark?
- Paint or draw the most iconic element of your suburb.

CLAUDIA NICHOLSON



DREAM MAP, 2021 (DETAIL) WATERCOLOUR AND INK ON PAPER. IMAGE CREDIT: CHANTEL BANN
IMAGE CREDIT: CHANTEL BANN

Colombian born, Claudia Nicholson is an **interdisciplinary** artist using painting, installation, performance and video to explore her connection to heritage after being raised in Australia. Claudia blends artistic practices that are local to Central and South America, particularly **alfombras de aserrin** and **silletas**, with her own style. Through her work she investigates her deep connection - yet removal from- these traditions and engages them as sites for celebration and resistance. She is also interested in the politics of painting in particular and the relationship painting and art has with colonisation.

In *Dream Map*, Claudia has re-created a dream scene featuring figures from her own personal archive of photographs of herself and her family. She has used airbrushing and watercolour, which has achieved a watery, abstract scene, reminiscent of

dreaming. Claudia is interested in dreaming because it helps her to try and understand the complexities of identity. For Claudia, this artwork is like a map, that is helping her understand her identity.

Big Ideas: Culture, Identity, History, Colonialism.

Questions and Activities:

- What culture/s do you have in your family history?
- What art practices are typical of these cultures?
- Investigate these practices...what materials were used?
- Why were they done?
- Were there particular people that made them?
- How were they valued within the culture?

JUDY WATSON



LEFT: *WATERSPOUT PIGMENT*, 1995, ACRYLIC PASTEL AND OIL STICK ON CANVAS.

RIGHT: *WATER SKY SPINE ON OCHRE NETS*, 2021, OCHRE, ACRYLIC AND GRAPHITE ON CALICO.

IMAGE CREDIT: CHANTEL BANN

Judy Watson's **matrilineal** heritage comes from the Waanyi nation from south of the Gulf of Carpentaria in Queensland and the Northern Territory. They are also known as the Running Water People as the precious resource of water abundantly runs through country. She is interested in the hidden histories of the Indigenous experience on the Australian colonial frontier, particularly those of women. She often uses materials she finds in situ and uses the earth's natural **undulations** to create watery patterns upon the canvas. The canvas is not stretched as Watson avoids the hard edge this gives and prefers instead for her work to float in space like a ghost or a shroud.

Waterspout comes from a dream that Judy had in which a tall rectangular column of water tore up the beach exposing the earth below. There was a large **conch shell** and a **large baler shell** in the trench. Judy explores the history of the Baler shell through its traditional uses in Indigenous Communities such as bailing water out of canoes and holding ochre to paint.

Water sky spine on ochre nets shows Judy's

signature wash background with the image of a bunya leaf from the bunya pine tree. Her grandmother spoke of her Mother as "she giveth us the flesh off her backbone" meaning she gave the best she had. Judy uses the symbol of a spine for resilience, family, language and culture citing the colloquial saying 'they've got backbone'.

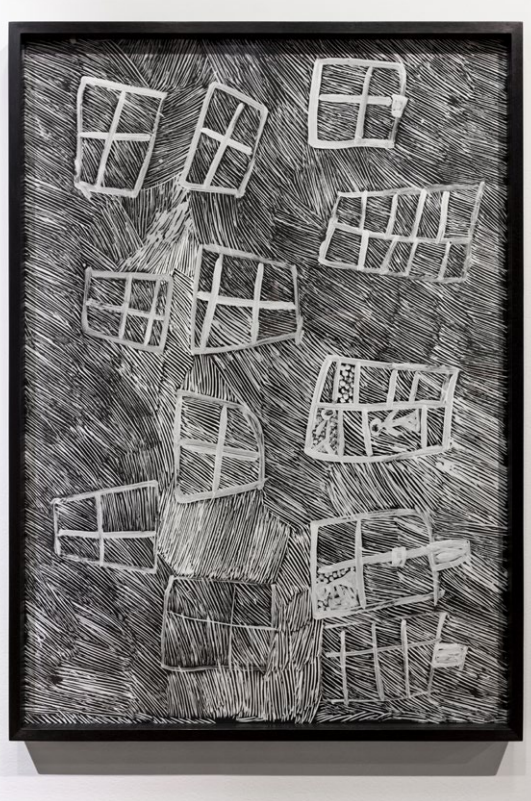
Big Ideas: Identity, Culture, Process, History, Power

Questions and Activities:

- Judy Watson works diligently to discover hidden stories about Indigenous history and brings them into her work for the viewer to see. Use the library or the internet to search for histories about the area where you live. What kind of events are recorded?
- Are you surprised by any of them? Are there some that you feel happened and aren't recorded or easily found?
- Use one of these stories as the inspiration for an image. How do you bring this hidden story to life through art?

MS N YUNUPINGU

Ms N Yunupingu is part of the Yirritja Moiety from the Gumatj Clan, located in Biranybirany. She lives and works in Yirrkala. Her mediums include bark, **Larrakitj pole**, canvas, paper and board, acetate, sculpture, printmaking, carvings, installations and screen-based works. Unlike other artists of the **Yolngu people** (her cultural group in the Northern Territory), Yunupingu's work has become increasingly more process driven, akin to action painting and not focussed upon sacred Yolngu dreaming narratives. In 2009 Yunupingu became more rhythmic and abstract with no reference to her life. She calls these works **Mayilimirw paintings** (meaningless). These pieces are meditative and focus on the act of painting which is dictated by the materials that Yunupingu is using. She uses circles, lines and shapes to add structure and then surrounds with crosshatching or lines. The subject matter is insignificant or non-existent and relies on Yunupingu's **spontaneity** for mark making.



UNTITLED 5861-18, 2018. PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHANTEL BANN.

Big Ideas: Tradition, Process, Identity

Questions and Activities:

- What makes Yunupingu's work different to traditional ideas of Indigenous art?
- Start with a pen or pencil and draw some random circles on a piece of paper. Use the same pen or pencil to fill in the design so that the entire page is covered in pattern.



EXHIBITION VIEW, LOOKING AT PAINTING. FROM LEFT: HAYLEY MEGAN FRENCH, *THE PIPELINE*, (DETAIL) 2018 - 2021. JUDY WATSON, *WATERSPOUT*, (DETAIL) 1995. FROM THE LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL COLLECTION. PURCHASED WITH ASSISTANCE FROM THE NEW SOUTH WALES GOVERNMENT - MINISTRY FOR THE ARTS, 1996. CLAUDIA NICHOLSON, *DREAM MAP* 2021. CARMEN GLYNN-BRAUN, *INTRICACIES OF IDENTITY*, 2021. NELL, *RELATIONSHIPS*, 2020. ROCHELLE HALEY, *DOUBLE COLUMN*, 2021. KIRTIKA KAIN, *THE SOLAR LINE XXVII*, 2020. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND ROSLYN OXLEY 9 GALLERY. PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHANTEL BANN.



ROCHELLE HALEY, *DOUBLE VEIL*, 2021. PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHANTEL BANN.

GLOSSARY

Abstraction	freedom from representational qualities in art
Alfombras de aserrin (sawdust carpets)	temporary before being disturbed by dance or performance
Assimilation policy	policy of absorbing Aboriginal people into white society through the process of removing children from their families. The ultimate intent of this policy was the destruction of Aboriginal society.
Baler shell	There are two species of baler shell, the northern baler (<i>Melo amphora</i>) and the southern baler (<i>Melo miltonis</i>). The shells of this large marine mollusc were highly valued by Aboriginal people, who used them to store water. The name came about because early Europeans recorded Aboriginal people bailing out their canoes with these huge shells.
Crucifix	is an image of Jesus on the cross, as distinct from a bare cross.
Colonial settlement	In the sixteenth century, England sought to emulate other European powers by establishing colonies in the New World
Conch shell	is a common name of a number of different medium-to-large-sized sea snail shells, generally those of large snails whose shell has a high spire and a noticeable siphonal canal.
Dalit	is a name for people belonging to the lowest caste in India, characterised as “untouchable”.
Experimental	(of art or an artistic technique) involving a radically new and innovative style.
Interdisciplinary	relating to more than one branch of knowledge
Immediacy	the quality of bringing one into direct and instant involvement with something, giving rise to a sense of urgency or excitement.
Larrakitj pole	Larrakitj were once created by the Yolngu (indigenous peoples from the northeastern Arnhem Land region) to house the bones of their dead.

Latinidad	is a Spanish-language term that refers to the various attributes shared by Latin American people and their descendants without reducing those similarities to any single essential trait.
Matrilineal	of or based on kinship with the mother or the female line.
Oxidising	to combine chemically with oxygen; convert into an oxide
Patinas	Patina is a thin layer that variously forms on the surface of copper, brass, bronze and similar metals, or certain stones, and wooden furniture, or any similar acquired change of a surface through age and exposure.
Silletas	wearable objects made from fresh flowers
Spontaneity	the condition of being spontaneous; spontaneous behaviour or action.
Undulations	a smoothly rising and falling form, outline, or movement.
Unconventional	not based on or conforming to what is generally done or believed.
Yolngu people	The people who live in the Miwatj or north-east Arnhem Land region are known generally as Yolngu, which simply means ‘people’. They belong to a number of intermarrying clans that are also closely related culturally and linguistically

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