

**BRIAN MARTIN**

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**Brian Martin** is from, Sydney, New South Wales, and now lives and works in Melbourne. Brian Martin, a descendant of the Bundjalung, Muruwari and Kamilaroi peoples, has been exhibiting since 1991. He has a PHD by research from Deakin University and is currently Associate Dean Indigenous at MADA, Monash University Art Design and Architecture Faculty. He has exhibited his incredible work with William Mora Galleries since 2013. This year his work was exhibited at TREE STORY Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne, been a finalist in the Dobell Drawing Prize # 22 National Art School, part of Tarrawarra Biennial 2021: *Slow Moving Waters* Tarrawarra Museum of Art and part of the Rising Festival and Metro Tunnel Creative Program with his work displayed along City Square on Swanston Street Melbourne.

**The WORK:**

1. Pakaantyi #16, 2021, Charcoal on paper, 209 x 146 cm, Courtesy William Mora Galleries

**STATEMENT:**

*For Aboriginal people, place is epistemologically and ontologically central to notions and discussions regarding action or intent. Not only history but meaning arises out of place, whether place is geographically located or an event in time. The saying "the past is another country" is, from Aboriginal logic, pertinent to multi-dimensional time, that is, all events that have occurred and are occurring within any of the range of senses of time occupy a place (in time). In other words, Place precedes Inquiry. Place defines and supersedes Inquiry. Place is a living, Spiritual thing again whether place is geographically located or an event in time. Place does not hamper, confuse or attenuate Inquiry, rather Place both enhances and clarifies Inquiry. Place underpins Inquiry but not ideologically so.*

*Place and Spirit- Spirit and Place: Mary Graham*

Jugun translates as Country. Country is premised on *Place* and is the foundation and agency of Indigenous ways of knowing. Jugun is not only land but is living subjectivity, situated in the real conditions of existence as opposed to some imaginary relationship, as experienced in western modes of thinking and relating.

This collection of charcoal drawings articulates the agency and importance of Jugun. These Countryscapes are a presentation of Bunggabi (trees) which links our own relationality to Jugun and Place. There are multiple cultural materials that are made from Bunggabi, including shields, coolamons, canoes, musical instruments, to name a few. It is significant to build relationality of Jugun with contemporary practices as it revitalises our ancestral past and demonstrates that Indigenous cultures are about the interconnectedness between memory, practice and Place. Methexis is the reverberation of bringing something into being, into creation and into the world. From Jugun, these drawings are built.

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**PETER WAPLES-CROWE** (He/they)

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**Peter Waples-Crowe** is a multidisciplinary artist who's practice explores the intersection of an Indigenous queer identity, spirituality and Australia's ongoing colonisation. Influenced by his adoption and later reconnection to his Ngarigo heritage, his art comments on the world as a contested site for his multiple identities. Referencing many disparate ideas and themes, his art is auto-ethnographic in its nature, and largely based on personal experiences.

**THE WORK:**

- 2. The snow people**, Orihon (Concertina book) 15 x 100 cm

**STATEMENT:**

The book is an exploration of the fragility of Ngarigu County. The impact of climate change means less snow, which nourishes the alpine environment and also sees the decline in the iconic snow gum. The country was also heavily impacted by the recent bush fires, and is currently being harmed under the construction of the snowy 2.0 hydropower scheme which ironically is a green power project.

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**DEANNE GILSON**

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Dr Deanne is a proud Wadawurrung woman of Aboriginal and Australian/English descent, living on her ancestral Country of Ballarat in Victoria. Her award-winning art practice has spanned thirty-seven years full time, with a practice that encapsulates a multi-disciplinary approach working in painting, clay and sculptural installation, fabric design and photography. Along with facilitating cultural educational workshops in schools and local business.

Gilson's contemporary artworks aim to reconnect back to traditional stories, in particular her Creation Story given to her by her mum. The Creation narrative extends to the elements of Earth, Air Fire and Water as well as portraying the six Kulin seasons. Time is traversed through multi layers of cultural memory and experiences that take in before and after colonisation, the sky country and under country. Further exploring western genres like still-life and landscape as not being separate but one and the same.

Through the process of art making, Gilson uses this as an extension of ancestral ceremonies that allow her to draw on the notion of spiritual connections that cannot be seen but accepted as being held within the creative process. Traditional marks found on ancestral artefacts reveal cultural knowledge of women's business and ceremony, while at the same time reflecting the colonial gaze as a way to strengthen and regain her identity back.

Gilson has revived ochre painting across Wadawurrung Country and talks of the benefits to herself while sourcing materials from Country and walking on Country before she begins to create art. Allowing a transitional space from western art practices to one that is in tune with nature and creating a platform for healing, acceptance, change, reconciliation and strength. Stating that "my art is part of my Dreaming and ceremony, always was, always will be."

**WORK**

3. Delama Murnong Murrup Ba-gurrk (honouring and embracing women's business through the murnong spirit)  
Yellow ceremonial ochre, wattle tree sap, acrylic, gold leaf on linen  
120 x 150cm

**STATEMENT**

Before settlement there were golden murnong (yam daisy) fields all across Wadawurrung Country. Food was plentiful and my family thrived living off the murnong. The women harvested the murnong and cooked the tubers up for all to eat. This was considered important women's business and the act of digging itself became a traditional ngarrimili (dance) ceremony with the digging stick a prized tool for its spiritual link to ancestral knowledges. This knowledge and practice has now disappeared with the first fleet having brought sheep and cattle to my Country that pulled the murnong tubers from the roots, never to grow back. The murnong quickly became extinct on my Country and my people starved. This food source kept us alive for thousands of generations and now it is all gone. Our women today pay homage to the murnong spirit and still perform the murnong dance to honour and celebrate the murnong daisy.

**WORK**

4. Dirda Murrup (Dead Spirit), After the Bush Fires, Our Scar Trees Have Become Institutionalised  
White ceremonial ochre, charcoal, acacia gum, acrylic on linen  
120 x 150cm

**STATEMENT:**

Held within the knowledge of this painting, the murnong daisy is depicted here in its spirit form. Using white ceremonial ochre that traditionally is used to mark the graves of family who have passed, it forms the links between the living and the dead. Coupled with the devastating bushfires of 2019-2020 that woke us all up to the tragic loss of everything in their paths. What has happened since is the need to start to employ traditional First Nations fire burning Knowledges, like the traditional burn offs that my ancestors used to do. The ancient ways of caring for Country are paramount to our survival and must be utilised for future generations, especially our native plants and animals. My sister Tammy Gilson and son Blair Gilson are both employed as traditional fire officers working with the Department of Environment Land, Water and Planning and other traditional custodians. Hearing their stories, I am learning more each day about the impacts of the environment and feeling sad over not being able to stop this. Having grown up in the bush on my Country I fear for my future generations. Country needs help and human intervention to heal. It is considered our Mother and myself as a First Nations woman cannot be separated from Country, as if one, my DNA is linked and coded with the land and when it is pain I am in pain. With the under Country

burnt to a crisp with these bushfires nothing grows back. Our most sacred trees, the scar trees, the meeting trees and the birthing trees are being cut down, burnt and removed, again causing so much pain for my people. Governments are not listening and helping us. I feel this to be the second wave of colonisation taking place right now, first the people, now the trees, plants and animals. Stories of scar trees being purchased and sold into institutions so they can be paraded like my people. Climate changes have highlighted the fact that we are all now equal and all in danger of losing out if we do not stop and plan ahead. We all need to come together and start healing Country and caring for it properly. Our Governments have not done this. I am deeply proud of my eldest son and my sister as they are making a difference but we need more of them. All I can do is speak up and paint their stories, it's not enough to sustain us all.

## **WORK**

### **5. Coolamon and Ceremonial Digging Stick**

Our Coolamons Are Resting Now

Red gum coolamon (300 years old). Manna gum digging stick

58 cm x 121cm

## **STATEMENT**

I found this beautiful old slab of red gum in a recycled timber yard, it was brought in by an old farmer on Wadawurrung Country. My brother Robert Gilson helped me carve it. I sanded it and oiled the wood all the time talking to the old trees knowledge and listening to it. It is rare, it is around three hundred years old and it may never reach this age again. It tells me it is sad and wants me to tell its story to you. Without living trees, we will die and it will no longer be able to speak. I speak for the trees and as I placed my digging stick to lie across its belly, it tells me it is resting, but not really empty nor defeated as yet, we still have hope. Nyatne, Deanne.

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**JAMES TYLOR**

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**James Tylor** (Possum) was born in Mildura in 1986, Victoria. He spent his childhood in Menindee in far west New South Wales, and then moved to Kununurra and Derby in the Kimberley region of Western Australia in his adolescent years. From 2003 to 2008, James trained and worked as a carpenter in Australia and Denmark. In 2011 he completed a bachelor of Visual Arts (Photography) at the South Australian School of Art in Adelaide and in 2012 he completed Honours in Fine Arts (Photography) at the Tasmanian School of Art in Hobart. He returned to Adelaide in 2013 and completed a Masters in Visual Art (Photography) at the South Australian School of Art.

He explores Australian cultural representations through his multi-cultural heritage, which comprises Nunga (Kurna), Māori (Te Arawa) and European (English, Scottish, Irish, Dutch and Norwegian) Australian ancestry. James' work focuses largely on the 19th century history of Australia and its continual effect on present day issues surrounding cultural identity in Australia.

**WORK**

6. Video: *Karta Pintingga (The Island of the Dead)*, Courtesy Vivien Anderson Gallery

**STATEMENT:**

*Karta Pintingga (The Island of the Dead)* is a silent mono-chromatic film about *Karta Pintingga Kangaroo Island* in South Australia. This visually poetic silent film references the Island's dark human history. The Island has a long Indigenous history dating back over 45,000 years. Since its isolation from the Australian landmass 10,000 years ago, it was uninhabited by people until the arrival of Matthew Flinders in 1802 and European whalers who colonised it between 1803-1836. *Karta Pintingga* has cultural importance for Kurna and Ngarrindjeri people. They have dark stories about the Island's creation and of its colonial history with European whalers kidnapping Indigenous women and holding them captive there. *Karta Pintingga* is the Kurna name for Kangaroo Island and it translates to "the Island of the Dead"

**The WORKS**

7. *Economics of water #8 (Channel)*, 2018
8. *Economics of water #11 (Diversion)*, 2018

Photographic prints with laminated gold vinyl, 100 x 100 cm, Edition of 10,  
Courtesy Vivien Anderson Gallery

**STATEMENT:**

*Economics of Water* highlights the environmental damage to the Murray Darling River system from poor water management by the State and Federal governments of Australia. This series of photographs of the drought affected Menindee Lakes have been overlaid with gold geometric shapes that symbolise the human infrastructure of water diversion for commercial agriculture and settlements.

The Murray Darling Basin is Australia's largest river system, stretching across Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. The rivers, lakes and floodplains have been a sustainable cultural river system for Indigenous people living along the waterways for 65,000+ years, providing water, food, resources and trade routes.

Following European colonisation, control of the River's natural resources have been redirected to non-Indigenous agriculture, fisheries, transport and settlements. Industrialisation of agriculture through large commercial-scale farming and multi-national owned companies has led to unsustainable water consumption from the Murray Darling River system. The State and Federal Governments have and continue to use the River's natural resources as a commodity for financial profit with little regard for environmental and cultural consequences.

Low rainfall in the Darling River catchment due to climate change and El Niño weather have led to drought conditions in the River system. This lack of water combined with agricultural run-off from livestock, pesticides and fertilisers has led to low quality, polluted waterways. The poor environmental conditions have been compounded by introduced species like rabbits and carp.

*Economics of Water* highlights the historic European colonisation of the Murray Darling River system through the systematic control of the water resources and how this has led to the overconsumption of water today. The failure of the State and Federal Governments to regulate and manage water consumption has resulted in irreparable damage to the River's environment.

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**KENT MORRIS**

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**Kent Morris** is Barkindji man living on Yaluk-ut Weelam Country in Melbourne. He graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts and is an alumnus of the National Gallery of Australia's Wesfarmers Indigenous Leadership Program. Central themes in his art practice are the connections between contemporary Indigenous experience and contemporary cultural practices and their continuation and evolution.

**The WORKS:**

9. *Barkindji Blue Sky - Ancestral Connections #1* 2019  
giclee print on rag paper, 80 x 120 cm
10. *Barkindji Blue Sky - Ancestral Connections #9* 2020  
giclee print on rag paper, 100 x 150 cm  
Courtesy Vivien Anderson Gallery

**STATEMENT:**

Indigenous knowledge is routinely challenged or ignored in Australia. To address this, structural change is required to prioritise Indigenous philosophies, lived experiences and knowledge systems.

My art practice reveals the continuing presence and patterns of Aboriginal history, culture and knowledge in the contemporary Australian landscape, despite ongoing colonial interventions in the physical and political environment.

The shapes and structures of the built environment are being reconstructed to reflect the present and long-standing systems, shapes and designs of the first people of Australia. The new configurations of the built environment, the forms and technologies that colonialism brought with it, are being re-imagined and reshaped through a First Nations lens to reflect the long history of Indigenous knowledge in Australia and to reaffirm presence, identity and connectivity.

The interaction of native birds with the built environment reflects resilience, adaption, continuity and change to ecological systems. Learning from the rhythm and habits of native birds in a variety of spaces, I experienced how birds have adapted to the built environment, to technology and colonialism, reflecting on the ways in which Indigenous culture survives and adapts.

This series was photographed on Kurnu Barkindji country in Bourke over Easter where descendants of Jacky and Kitty Knight gathered for a family reunion.

Kurnu Barkindji people were many, then were very few, we are now many again and connection to our ancestors continues across generations, cycling through time, past, present and future. We discover, reunite, share family histories and remain linked via many means, including new technologies. Our ancestors watch over us under a Barkindji blue sky.

My artworks are constructed from a single photograph taken while walking on Country. Apart from basic editing, digital information has not been added to, or subtracted from, the original photograph.

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