



UNIVERSITY of
TASMANIA

Friday 7 August 2020

'Too Many Cooks' connect Country, culture and colonisation

A University of Tasmania online exhibition will celebrate connection to Country and cultural survival while questioning dominant Anglocentric Australian history, 250 years following Captain James Cook's visit to Australia.

The exhibition program will commence at **3 pm today, Friday, 7 August**, with [online talks](#) from three of the artists, as well as Professor Ian Mclean, Hugh Ramsay Chair of Australian Art History at the University of Melbourne and Professor Greg Lehman, University of Tasmania Pro Vice-Chancellor, Aboriginal Leadership.

The [Too Many Cooks online exhibition](#) will go live on **Saturday, 22 August**, on the date that Cook claimed the east coast of Australia for the British Crown in 1770.

The exhibition will feature 54 artworks, including more than 40 artworks from the University's Fine Art Collection, such as recent acquisitions *The Conquest* (2013) by Rew Hanks and *Canoe* (2013) by Tasmanian Aboriginal Elder Rex Greeno.

Greeno, upon retiring from a 40-year career as a fisherman, turned to constructing traditional Tasmanian Aboriginal canoes which had not been seen in lutruwita/Tasmania since the early 19th Century. *Canoe* is an exquisite scale replica of these unique paperbark watercraft.

"We want to show artworks which are not usually available to a wide audience, and an online exhibition spurred by COVID-19 also enables people to access the exhibition nationally and internationally," co-curator and University Fine Art Collection Registrar Ms Rachael Rose said.

On loan from artist Julie Gough is her video work *Tomalah* (2015), filmed on Bruny Island. According to Gough, *tomalah* means 'long way' in ancestral Aboriginal language – referring to the object being a long way from home and us, a long way from the object.

"This work links us to Cook's erroneous navigation, missing the Tasmanian coastline mapped by Abel Tasman 130 years before and only finding Van Diemen's Land on his third voyage in 1777," co-curator Professor Lehman said.

“Against the backdrop of Cook commemorations, Australian artists continue to spotlight unresolved social issues such as Black deaths in custody and emphasise the strength and continuity of Aboriginal culture and the ongoing struggle for justice.”

Available online from Saturday, 22 August will be a learning resource, including a Welcome to Country filmed on Bruny Island at the site of Cook’s landing, a 360-degree virtual gallery tour and curatorial floor talk, and 3D interactive images of cultural objects in the exhibition.

“The student learning resource will offer insight into the art of European encounters with Indigenous Australians, and the life and death of Captain Cook,” Ms Rose said.

A collaboration with National Science Week will also result in a web resource and activities that explore the science and art of Aboriginal canoe making, including a video presentation by Greeno, available at scienceweek.net.au/event/tasmanias-first-scientists-investigations-into-tasmanian-aboriginal-canoe-making.

Today’s online event from 3-5 pm will feature a visual introduction to the exhibition by Professor Lehman and a panel discussion and Q&A with:

- Professor Ian Mclean, Hugh Ramsay Chair of Australian Art History, University of Melbourne (panel chair);
- Julie Gough, artist, based in Hobart;
- Rew Hanks, artist, based in Sydney; and
- Tom Nicholson, artist, based in Melbourne.

People can register for the online event at utas.edu.au/events/2020/august/too-many-cooks. From 22 August, the exhibition will be accessible via utas.edu.au/creative-arts-media/events/art-hobart/2020/august/too-many-cooks-online.

The exhibition is presented by the University’s Plimsoll Gallery (currently closed to the public) and Fine Art Collection in collaboration with the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Aboriginal Leadership.

Images available to download:

Julie Gough
‘Tomalah’ 2015
Video, HDMI, mp4, 16:9, H264, 1080p, sound, 4:50min
Edited by Mark Kuilenburg
Still image: Courtesy of the artist

Rex Greeno
‘Canoe’, 2013
Tasmanian paperbark, tea tree, string, glue
Photo credit: Rémi Chauvin

Rew Hanks
‘The Conquest’, 2013
Linocut, 2/30

Photo: Courtesy of the artist and Michael Reid Sydney + Berlin

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