TOO many COOKS
Too many cooks spoil the broth.
Too Many Cooks exhibition is presented by the Plimsoll Gallery, University of Tasmania’s Fine Art Collection in collaboration with the Office of the Pro Vice Chancellor, Aboriginal Leadership.

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All artwork is from the Fine Art Collection, University of Tasmania unless otherwise indicated.

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Cover and front pages - Rew Hanks, The Conquest (detail), 2013, linocut, 2/30
Photo: courtesy the artist and Michael Reid Sydney + Berlin
‘You are also with the Consent of the Natives to take Possession of Convenient Situations in the Country in the Name of the King of Great Britain: Or: if you find the Country uninhabited take Possession for his Majesty by setting up Proper Marks and Inscriptions, as first discoverers and possessors.’

Secret Instructions for Lt James Cook, 30 July 1768, Whitehall.
T. Conder. *A General Chart exhibiting the discoveries of Captain James Cook* (detail), 1784, engraving. Special and Rare Collections, University of Tasmania. Photo credit: Rémi Chauvin.
‘they came out of the Woods to us without shewing the least mark of fear and with the greatest confidence imaginable.’

Capt James Cook, Adventure Bay, 27 January 1777.
from internationally-renowned artists and institutions to demonstrate the importance of visual art in informing and reflecting social processes that define Australia's cultural and political identity.

This exhibition also challenges the current COVID-19 crisis by creating innovative digital platforms for interaction with the exhibition at a time when public access is restricted by the need for social distancing. These platforms including 360 degree virtual walk-throughs, 3D high resolution photogrammetry of cultural objects, and a suite of interactive educational resources to support the Indigenisation of curricula across the University’s teaching programs. This collateral, together with a downloadable version of this catalogue, are available at www.utas.edu.au/creative-arts-media/events/art/hobart/2020/august/too-many-cooks-online

Life Worlds

Over a period of at least 60,000 years, Indigenous people occupied almost every part of the continent now known as Australia. Yet, despite instructions issued by the British Admistration, no recognition of the inherent rights of the hundreds of First Nations of Australia was made by Cook or any of the colonial governors who followed in his wake.

Intimate knowledge of climate, biodiversity, landscape, law and history has been woven together across two thousand generations of stories, ceremonies and songlines to celebrate the intricacy and wisdom of a diversity of Indigenous lifeworlds that bound people to their Country. Blind to the beauty of these cultures, British imperialism instead imagined an empty land that could be available for the taking. It was not until 1996 that the Wik People of Cape York won landmark legal recognition in the Australian High Court that their Native Title rights could co-exist with British property law. Significantly, it was on Cape York that Cook made the first claim over Aboriginal territory on behalf of the British Crown.

Ancestral traditions of visual culture continue to celebrate rich connections to Country through unique painting and sculpture. More recently, technologies of photography and digital media document the ongoing struggle for proper recognition of Indigenous sovereignty and calls for constitutional recognition and treaty.

The vast scale of ancestral homelands in central Australia, and the intimate knowledge of these held by custodians of tjukurpa (law) is represented in this exhibition by Nguyul - a site near Kintore’ c. 1994, by Eunice Napanggangja Jack, and Kumintjay (deceased) Napangangka Nolan. This 1.8m by 2.3m canvas tells the personal stories of these senior women's Dreamings and the Country of their ancestors. Born in the early 1940s, the artists are closely associated with the beginnings of contemporary desert painting. Commencing in 1972, Papunya tula utilised acrylic paints on canvas to make Indigenous lifeworlds accessible to Western audiences. This art movement soon spread to other remote communities, articulating relationships with Country across an inland Australia that Joseph Banks, the naturalist travelling with Cook, dismissed as 'uninhabited'.

Other works, including the bark painting ‘Daily Life’ (no date) by Bobby Pascoe and a caned and painted ‘Barramundi’ by an unknown Aboriginal artist describe the aesthetic richness with which Indigenous artists honour their lifeworlds through visual culture. ‘Wik Elder, Joe’ 2000, part of the series Returning to Places that Name Us, by Tasmanian Aboriginal photographer Ricky Maynard, documents the human face of political struggle.

Invasion

Tragically, the defining experience of Indigenous people in Australia since Cook’s arrival has been displacement from their Country by settlers. This involved what many scholars describe as ethnic cleansing or genocide, processes which deeply challenge popular conceptions of a continent peacefully settled. Official narratives avoided such descriptions by substituting suggestions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were inherently inferior to British society, arguing that their extinction was inevitable.

Alongside direct impacts on Indigenous populations, colonial histories over-wrote sixty millennia of knowledge, stories and ceremonies with a memoir of imperial pride, nationalism and scientific racism. A popular desire for Aborigines to eventually disappear accompanied the redefinition of ancient cultural landscapes as resources awaiting exploitation and development.

Colonial artists, often under direct instruction by military commanders, crafted a visual rhetoric that communicated peaceful, picturesque opportunities for new settlers, and the success of colonial enterprise. In Van Diemen’s Land (Tasmania), this involved the visual exclusion of Aboriginal people from colonial landscapes until the Black War was over. Then, from the early 1830s, Aboriginal people were reinscribed in colonial landscapes as a melancholic testament to colonial achievement.

Many contemporary Australian artists seek to interrogate the rhetoric of colonial art by refiguring iconic scenes and historic figures, including Cook; exposing the processes at play in our visual history.

Establishing a striking visual parallel with ‘Daily Life’, ‘Terry O’Malley’s “Hobartown” uses a similar storyboard approach to represent the confluence of historical, institutional and social processes at play in the beginnings of British colonial enterprise in Van Diemen’s Land. Colonial artists such as Joseph Lycett and John Glover were responsible for the promotion and documentation of the colony during and after the Black War. This was an eight-year period of conflict that raged between Palawa people defending their Country and British settlers, who were issued with grants of land still in Palawa possession. These grants were instrumental in setters mounting systematic campaigns to kill or exile Tasmanian Aboriginal families from their homelands.

Two works by Joan Ross: ‘The Art of Flower Arranging’ 2014, and ‘We Love a Sunburnt Country’ 2014, use digital reproductions of Glover and Lycett’s paintings to offer wry comment on the appropriation and European aestheticization of Aboriginal cultural landscapes. Printmaker Rev Hanks similarly transforms famous Glover landscapes from innocent scenes of colonial industry by reinscribing them with icons of Palawa culture such as bark canoes and totems. Together with giant extinct Thylacines repurposed as Trojan horses, these compositions (‘The Defeat of the Trojan Tiger 2003; “Trojan Tiger versus the Woolly Redcoats” 2002) expose the genocidal consequences for Tasmanian Aboriginal people of British expansion.

Other recently-acquired examples of Hanks’ work continue the artist’s dark comedic treatment of Australian characters to expose conflicted narratives in Australian history. In ‘The Conquest’ 2013, a heroic figure of Cook stands over his own fallen corpse in a pastiche of imagery from D.P. Dodd’s ‘Death of Cook’ 1784, and E. Phillips Fox’s ‘Landing of Captain Cook at Botany Bay’, 1902. The theme of invasion is amplified by an onlooking crowd of cane toads and a boatload of Beatles, conflating the role of agriculture and entertainment industries in running the environmental and cultural landscape in the wake of Cook’s arrival. ‘Not Always Black and White’ juxtaposes icons of Australian feminist identity - Trucanini and Germaine Greer – to parody the myth of Palawa extinction, and the subjugation of women of all races by imperialising institutions. “Devil’s Garden” 2011, presents the figure of John Gould armed with a shotgun, perhaps to emphasise the destructive role of scientific theories in colonial settings. Both Ross and Hanks invite the viewer into a visual world drawn from the traditions of caricature popular in Cook’s late 18th century Britain. Their compositions are iconographic puzzles, challenging the viewer to understand more of Australia’s problematic history.
The theme of invasion is continued with Michael McWilliams’ large oil painting ‘White Cat Monday’ 2014. This whimsical depiction of a Gloveresque Tasmanian landscape is populated by white feral cats outnumbering a single thylacine, anachronistic in a habitat transformed by European garden traditions.

Right Here Right Now

In 1988, Australia celebrated the bicentennial of the arrival of Governor Arthur Phillip’s First Fleet of British colonists. This celebration echoed earlier commemorations of Cook’s visit, and similarly struggled to situate the First Nations of Australia, who still consider these British ‘heroes’ as invaders. Such celebrations have little scope to acknowledge the intergenerational legacies of genocide, exile and injustice that were consequences of their arrival.

The Bicentennial was met with some of the largest public protests ever seen, as sympathetic Australians from all walks of life marched alongside their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander comrades to demand an honest account of history. As part of this response, artists from Indigenous, colonial and migrant origins created a series of screenprinted posters titled Right Here, Right Now - 1988, seeking to capture a moment in Australian history that forever changed our national view of the past and our relationship with the future.

Right Here, Right Now - 1988 was arranged by Co-Media Adelaide. The series toured nationally to ten galleries, including the University of Tasmania. Themes of land rights, deaths in custody and dispossession mounted a strong rejection of the official message of celebration, while powerfully acknowledging the survival of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and continuing demands for justice.

Contributing to the series were Indigenous artists Sally Morgan (‘Citizenship’) and Byron Pickett (‘Descendants’). Other artists focused on events in Tasmania (Julie Shields, ‘White on Black’, Marie McMahon, ‘Wodilly’s Vision - Truganina’s Sisters’), deaths in custody (Lyn Finch, ‘Eddie West Died Here’, Toni Robertson, ‘Anniversary Print’), and marginalisation (Jayne Amible, ‘Some are Kept at Home, Some have Lost their Home’). Stylistically and aesthetically diverse, the series includes posters that linger respectfully on Country as an archive of culture, and similarly struggle to situate the First Nations of Australia, who still consider their place in Australia’s art history, the events that powerfully acknowledge the survival of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and continuing demands for justice.

The University of Tasmania acquired this series in 1988 as a major addition to its nascent Fine Art Collection. Since then, Right Here, Right Now - 1988 has been dispersed across the Sandy Bay campus [many in the Law School], each of the prints influencing the day-to-day visual environment of students, teachers and administrators with a challenging, sometimes enigmatic presence. These artworks have affected political attitudes and cultural perspectives; and inflected lectures, essays and theses. Too Many Cooks brings the majority of the collection together for public exhibition in Tasmania for the first time since its acquisition, allowing reflection on their place in Australia’s art history, the events that generated this creative response and our national consciousness today.

Being in Country

The sanctity of Country as a repository of knowledge, history and spirituality forms an essential common thread for Indigenous people across Australia. Walking on Country, ‘learned from Country and sharing Country and having our Country through texture, shade and use of earthen pigments. Making art that respects and seeks justice for Country is an undeniable refutation of Cook’s presumption of terra nullius. More than this, it is an act of deep remembrance of landscape as an archive of knowledge, and a place of personal meaning.

Contemporary Aboriginal artists, Julie Gough and Judy Watson have each undertaken this journey in their artwork over long, internationally-recognised careers. Watson’s ‘stones and bones’ 1991 and ‘heartland’ 1992, are works that draw on this Waanyi artist’s original training as a printmaker. Her accomplishment in techniques of aquatint and etching, and her long fascination with the layering of materials on canvas and experimentation with accidental effects capture the gentle and embracing beauty of Country through texture, shade and use of earthen pigments.

Gough’s art practice has, in recent years, shifted from sculpture and painting to focus increasingly on video to forensically document processes of invasion and dispossession of her Palawa ancestors. ‘Tomolah’ 2015 takes the viewer to the shores of Bruny Island to be immersed in timeless scenes of a coastal landscape that has changed little since the sea level rose 10,000 years ago; forcing Aboriginal families onto higher ground. Now it forms the islands of Tasmania. This video work also takes the viewer into the museum archive to witness the beginnings of cultural repatriation of objects that have been stolen away from Country and muted by their confinement in collections. Gough’s other work, ‘Manifestation (Bruny Island)’ 2010, forms a powerful icon of colonial violence and Aboriginal resistance to the invasion; an inevitable consequence of Cook’s disregard for Indigenous sovereign rights.

By Sea

The entire coastline of eastern Australia was visited by Cook during his first and third voyages, from tropical Possession Island off the tip of Cape York to the temperate grandeur of Bruny Island in the far south. Like those of numerous other Dutch, British, and French navigators, these were journeys popularly celebrated as testament to European accomplishment and superiority. Yet, Indigenous peoples of Australia also made their way to the island continent by sea travel over 2,000 generations ago, following epic migrations across multiple continents.

European visual art and literature are replete with celebration of the glory of maritime culture, usually ignoring the reality that sailing ships were instruments of colonial power and the insidious trade in slaves that enabled the spectacular growth of Western colonial economies.

The Indigenous canoes of eastern Australia were a common subject for European expedition artists. However, their ethnographic perspective ensured that these depictions mostly served as evidence of the primitivism of First Nations technology. Too Many Cooks juxtaposes a contemporary Palawa canoe with these images, alongside a rare 17th century Dutch map of the southern hemisphere by Henricus Hondius c. 1641. This map was made just before Abel Tasman’s voyage, when Tasmania did not yet exist in the European imagination. In 1642 Tasman named his discovery Anthony van Diemen’s Land and concluded from the widely spaced notches he observed cut into the trunk of a tree that the place was inhabited by a race of giants. Hastily returning to his ships, perhaps terrified at the prospect of an encounter with such a monster, Tasman made hisAcross Country, creative practice locates artists in the place of their ancestors and renews continuity of culture that has been a foundation of survival during times of disruption and denial.

Alongside this naive and sometimes confused European maritime history and erroneous identification of Indigenous watercraft (ignazio Fumagalli, 1822), a replica of a Tasmanian
paperbark canoe by Palawa artist Uncle Rex Greeno (‘Canoe’, 2013) attests to the finely
crafted nature of these unique constructions. Greeno’s exquisite examples are represented
in Australia’s most important cultural institutions and, like this one, are inspiring evidence
of the aesthetic genius of form and function that characterises Palawa canoe making.

**The Webber Chronicle**

In April 1770, Cook sailed from New Zealand with the intention of landing on the coast
of Van Diemen’s Land. The great navigator completely missed the coastline mapped
by Tasman 130 years before and instead made landfall on the Australian mainland. In
1776, Cook embarked on his third and final voyage to the South Pacific, taking the artist
John Webber as official artist on board the HMS Resolution. After visiting the Antarctic
Kerguelen Islands, his ship was damaged by a squall en route to New Zealand, losing
its top foremast and main top gallant. This forced Cook to make for Van Diemen’s Land,
where he landed at Adventure Bay, Bruny Island on the 26th of January 1777. After taking
on timber and water, they prepared to depart the following day, but were delayed by
weather.

As a result of these unpredictable events, Webber had the opportunity to create the first
European drawings of Aboriginal people of Tasmania. Included in Too Many Cooks is the
earliest known drawing of a Neunone man (‘Native of Van Diemen’s Land, New Holland’
1777), loaned by the Allport Museum and Art Gallery. Based on this and other drawings,
the first engraved images of a Tasmanian man and woman with her child were made and
published in London (J. Caldwell 1784). Opposite Webber’s drawing in the gallery is a
copy of his portrait of Cook, completed the year before their departure on the voyage.
This digital print, ordered online from the National Portrait Gallery, London, and delivered
by Royal Mail to the curators, speaks to the continuing celebrity of Cook and the unknown
quantity of Cook memorabilia that continues to circulate through a globe trade that he
helped create.

Perhaps the most interesting of Webber’s works is an unfinished drawing (‘Captain Cook’s
First Interview with the Natives’ 1777), depicting Cook’s meeting with a large group of
Aboriginal men on 29th of January. Reiterating both his portrait of Cook and of the
Neunone man, Webber shows Cook in the act of presenting one of the men with a medal.
The moment is highly significant. Is the gift of a worthless token Cook’s effort at obtaining
consent for the dispossession that was soon to follow?

Tom Nicholson (‘Interview’, 2016) explores Webber’s enigmatic scene by revisiting the
place of Cook’s landing on Bruny Island to locate the exact viewpoint of the drawing.
Nicholson reproduced the drawing in its original dimensions and accompanied it with
text of his own interview with the author on the reverse, exploring the nuances of an
Aboriginal lifeworld of middens and landscape across time alongside the possibilities
of Webber’s artistic project. Nicholson’s ‘Interview’ takes the form of a sculptural work,
with folded sets of the drawing and text arranged in what might suggest a pedestal for
Cook’s image. However, in this iteration, the multiple Cooks that leave the gallery are stamped with a narrative that
ensures recognition of Aboriginal presence and possession of Country, and the self-
determination of Aboriginal people in voicing their own story. Importantly, Nicholson’s
‘Interview’ also explores a strange symmetry between the posture of Cook in this drawing
and a very different composition created by Webber two years later.

Cook did not survive to learn of Britain’s annexation of Australia. On 14 February, 1779,
while attempting to kidnap the Hawaiian king, Kalaniʻōpuʻu, Cook was killed. Webber
recorded the event, and his painting, ‘The Death of Cook’ was engraved by Francesco
Bartolozzi and published in 1784. This scene shares curious compositional similarities
with Webber’s unfinished drawing (see pp 60-61). In both, Cook lurches forward, arm
outstretched, intent on determining the outcome; a boat near to shore signifies his
temporary presence, men from opposing cultures are arrayed ahead and behind him.
On Bruny Island, Cook is about to trigger dispossession and genocide. In Hawai‘i, he is
moments from his own final reckoning. Both scenes are shown in the gallery as large
projections. Nicholson’s sculpture is caught between the two, while the portraits of Cook
and the Neunone man observe the assemblage with mute regard. But Webber’s painting
was not the last of Cook. His fame resulted in many other artists, including Johann Zoffany
and Daniel Potter Dodd (Thomas Cook 1784) publishing their own interpretations of
the scene. Cook was variously depicted as a self-sacrificing Enlightenment hero and a
tragic victim of savagery. His celebrity was played out across numerous media, including
pamphlets, printed calicos and children’s ephemera. The 1784 Summer Exhibition of
the Royal Academy had no less than three further paintings of Cook’s death, by Johan
Ramberg, Charles Grignion Jr. and John Carter. That exhibition seemed to suffer from too
many Cooks, prompting one critic to lament, ‘Poor Cook, what an unhappy fate, doomed
to be murdered all over the world.’

**Endnotes**

1 Charles Lasueur sketched canoes in both Van Diemen’s Land and New South Wales. His engraving
of a bark canoe made during a visit to the British colony of New South Wales was reproduced by
Milanese engraver Ignazio Fumagalli. This print has a period notation misidentifying it as ‘V. Die-
mensland’.

2 Geoff Quilley, Empire to Nation: Art, History and the Visualization of Maritime Britain 1768-1829
Understanding the difference between myth and history, or transcendental and empirical truths, was the quest of the Enlightenment. If we are to believe Bernard Smith’s ground-breaking study, European Vision and the South Pacific (1960), it was also Cook’s principle achievement. Smith argued that Cook’s explorations distilled the real from the myth of the South Seas and terra Australis, which is ironic given that the myth of Cook has never been more powerful.

As we enter the 250th anniversary of Cook’s decade in the Pacific, the Cook myth has become a lightning rod for the contested ideologies of the 21st century. The loudest thunder is heard in Australia, which surely would have bemused Cook, as it was a place in which he was little interested. Cook’s heart was in the wide blue of the Pacific, not its western landfall. On the first voyage (1768-1771), he spent four months in the Society Islands (Tahiti and adjoining islands) and a further six months exploring New Zealand, after which he considered his mission complete. By contrast, if we discount his seven weeks locked down in Cooktown repairing the Endeavour after it nearly sank when striking the reef, and the one week in Botany Bay provisioning the ship, Cook ‘coasted the shore of this Country to the North’ in a relatively hurried manner, completing the more than 3,000 km in seven weeks.

Taking this long route home via the east coast of New Holland and Batavia was not Cook’s preferred option but his officers thought it was the safer course. In a somewhat deflated letter to Admiralty posted from Batavia, Cook apologetically reported the failure of his mission: ‘the discoverys made in this Voyage are not great . . . I have failed in discovering the so much talked of Southern Continent (which perhaps do not exist), and which I myself had much at heart’.

During Cook’s next two voyages, he returned to New Zealand and the Society Islands but not to the east coast of Australia, though on his third voyage he stopped four days in Tasmania to provision his ships on his way to the wide blue Pacific – his final home for the remaining two years of his life.

If Cook largely ignored Australia, Australians have not ignored him. Today, there are over one hundred Cook memorials of various kinds in England, France, Canada, USA and several nations across the Pacific but none more than in Australia, which has about half of them. The National Library of Australia (NLA) owns more Cook memorabilia than any other institution. Australia’s psychic investment in Cook was also reflected in its budget of $50 million to commemorate the 250th anniversary of Cook’s first voyage. Like England, Australia began its celebrations in 2018 (Cook having set out from Plymouth in 1768), with an exhibition at the NLA drawn from its extensive holdings, Cook and the Pacific. Next year it was Tahiti and New Zealand’s turn. However, the celebrations have been soured by the mood of postcolonial iconoclasm that has descended on memorialising the agents of imperialism, driving a wedge between ethics and history. For its celebrations in 2019, New Zealand borrowed Australia’s replica Endeavour, but one town turned it away and the prime minister, Jacinda Ardern, boycotted the main event when it docked at Gisborne, where Cook had first come ashore 250 years earlier. She was reported saying:

There are things that need to be talked about when we talk about the 250th anniversary. Never before has the story fully been told of the loss of life when Cook arrived. This is the chance to talk about the reality of New Zealand’s history, to acknowledge it, to be open about it. That might attract some protests but that is all part of the conversation.

As one of the most celebrated and cardinal figures of the European Enlightenment, the Age of Discovery and the British Empire, few bear the burden of empire as heavily as Cook. This is doubly so in Australia. While Cook received little attention in the Australian settler-colonies before the 1850s, he assumed an increasingly importance in an emerging settler-national imaginary as the colonies gained self-government in the latter half of the century. Without the equivalent of the Waitangi Treaty, Australia had greater difficulty than...
New Zealand in justifying its sovereignty. Putting all its money on Cook as an ancestral origin story provided an umbilical cord to the Empire, as if the nascent settler nation could inherit the sovereignty that derived from its origins as a colony of this Empire. This was the main theme in the first significant public expression of the Australian Cook myth. The occasion was the ceremonial laying of the foundation stone of the imposing monument of Cook in Hyde Park on 7 March 1869. In the officiating speech, Sir Alfred Stephen, the Chief Justice of NSW and Chair of the committee formed to erect the statue, declared:

The colonists of NSW ... would connect the monument which they are about to rear with memories of the Anglo-Saxon tradition of Empire, of the sanguine designs of Princess Mary, as Australians, the intimacy of our union with the land of our forefathers, and our unwavering love for her, her glorious Constitution, and her Queen.

Some 12,000 jam-packed onlookers witnessed the event. ‘The park was probably never before so densely crowded, though the attraction was also due to the visiting H.R.H. Duke of Edinburgh (Prince Alfred) formally laying the foundation stone. When the monument was unveiled nine years later, on 25 February 1879, Stephen, now promoted to Lieutenant Governor, again gave the main speech, this time before some 60,000 settler-colonists and dignitaries—about 25% of Sydney’s population. The press reported, ‘There has never been a gathering in Sydney so numerous, nor a more magnificent spectacle.’

Since the late 1840s, a group of leading Sydney-based settlers, including Stephen and Henry Parkes—the so-called ‘Father of Federation’—had been instrumental in imagining a new settler nation. They had been planning the statue for more than a decade as part of Henry Parkes— the so-called ‘Father of Federation’—had been instrumental in imagining a new settler nation. They had been planning the statue for more than a decade as part of a grandiose project to commemorate the centenary of new settler-nation. They had been planning the statue for more than a decade as part of a grandiose project to commemorate the centenary of their newly formed nation. This was the first such English hero was 32-year old landing, which occurred on 7 January 1901 as ‘the highlight of the nation’s inaugural climax that greatly impressed the 5,000 largely white audience. Since then it has been impossible to take Indigenous resistance out of the Cook myth of settler sovereignty. This was the first such English hero was 32-year old landing, which occurred on 7 January 1901 as ‘the highlight of the nation’s inaugural climax that greatly impressed the 5,000 largely white audience. Since then it has been impossible to take Indigenous resistance out of the Cook myth of settler sovereignty.

Missing from this memorialisation was mention of the imagined nation’s first peoples, unless one counts, as one newspaper reported at the time, ‘the sombre visages of a few Australian aborigines in the dense crowd of pale faces gathered in the park’. However, this absence was not long in being filled. In the first historical re-enactment of Cook’s landing, which occurred on 7 January 1901 as ‘the highlight of the nation’s inaugural celebrations’ upon federation, a troupe of 25 Aboriginal men were brought down on the train from Queensland to re-enact the Aboriginal opposition to the landing. Their charge, according to Parkison, was to draw the approaching actors playing Cook’s landing party provided a dramatic

Indigenous resistance was well known in historical accounts Cook’s Pacific explorations from the beginning, appearing in the journals of Cook and others on his voyages. Sydney Parkinson, the young Quaker artist that Joseph Banks employed on the first voyage to make botanical drawings, had higher ambitions, and in his spare time made various other studies—portraits, landscapes and genre scenes. He sketched aspects of the landing at Botany Bay, in which he was one of the first on shore. However, he did not see fit to sketch Cook leading what the myth of Australia considers this historic landing, as E. Phillips Fox, would do 130 years later in is well known painting. Rather, Parkinson recorded this historic occasion with a sketch of two Dhawalal holding a spear and shield that he described in his journal. This was worked up into a heroic image of resistance modelled on classical Greek statuary, and engraved for the publication of his journal in 1773. Much reproduced in other contexts and appropriated by future artists, including Fox in his painting, it became an iconic image of Cook’s landing.

Cook was a myth in his own time, but the eulogising that followed his death in 1779 cemented the myth in its modern form. Here Cook was a new type of hero made for the emerging world of the secular nation-state. The first such English hero was 32-year old General James Wolfe, whose death at the moment of Britain’s victory over the French at the Battle of Quebec in 1759 was a touchstone for a new sense of English national destiny. Considered the turning point in the Seven Year’s War (1756-1763) — which had sucked all of Europe’s major powers into the first global war— Wolfe’s victory at Quebec opened the door to Britain’s ascendency as a global empire.

Cook had cut his teeth at Quebec, playing a decisive role in the victory. So it was fitting that his decade in the Pacific, begun nine year later, cemented Britain’s dominance as a world power, setting the stage for what James Belich called ‘the settler revolution and the rise of the Anglo-World, 1763-1951’.

Wolfe’s death, during a clumsy attempt to kidnap a Hawaiian chief twenty years after Wolfe fell, made him the latest hero of this nascent modern British Empire, and one who has not been forgotten.

Whatever the reality of heroism, the fate of heroes is to return as myths, usually in the dress of art. Wolfe again set the modern precedent, when Benjamin West depicted his martyrdom in The Death of General Wolfe, painted in 1770 as Cook was sailing up the east coast of Australia. The painting on 25 February 1770 (1902), Cook’s outstretched arm like a stigmata that signals his coming sacrifice.

In the tradition of history painting and following West’s template, Fox undertook extensive study of God’s sovereign power and also Christ’s sacrificial crucifixion. In Fox’s previously mentioned painting, the Ash Meadows, Wolfe again set the modern precedent, when Benjamin West depicted his martyrdom in The Death of General Wolfe (1770), which Gordon Bennett would appropriate exactly 200 years later in Big Rheumatic Jesus: The Apotheosis of Cook (1993). Rising above the smoke of English guns, it depicts Cook ascending into the embrace of Britannia to the trumpet of an accompanying angel.

Both Zoffany and de Loutherbourg drew upon West’s portrayal of the dying Wolfe, and like him, created a synthesis of neo-classical references and eye-witness accounts. The first painting to document Cook’s death, by John Webber who was the artist on the third voyage, depicts the moment when Cook was fatally stabbed while signalling his outstretched right arm for help. This outstretched arm became emblematic of Cook because it conveniently combined historical truth with this frequent Biblical symbol of God’s sovereign power and also Christ’s sacrificial crucifixion. In Fox’s previously mentioned painting, the Ash Meadows, West had hit upon a formula in which the synthesis of classical references and documentary realism served to mythologise contemporary events. Cook’s death produced a similar cocktail of eulogies, poems, plays, music and painting. Commemorative in ambition, scale and pathos to West’s The Death of General Wolfe, is Johan Zoffany’s The Death of Captain James Cook, 14 February 1777 (c. 1790s), which now resides in London’s National Maritime Museum. Another neo-classical commemoration from the same time period is a widely reproduced engraving designed by Philip James de Loutherbourg, Apotheosis of Cook (1793) — which Gordon Bennett would appropriate exactly 200 years later in Big Rheumatic Jesus: The Apotheosis of Cook (1993). Rising above the smoke of English guns, it depicts Cook ascending into the embrace of Britannia to the trumpet of an accompanying angel.

In the tradition of history painting and following West’s template, Fox undertook extensive research of both art and history in preparing his design. He likely witnessed the 1901 re-enactment of the landing (referred to above), which in effect he depicts in what is one of the last surviving history paintings. Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria to commemorate the founding of the Australian nation-state, it has been removed from display in this year’s 250th anniversary of the landing, presumably in solidarity with postcolonial iconoclasm.

In showing how the transcendental aspirations of an emerging nationalism could be pictured in the imminent relations of death, West created a template for modern history painting. More importantly, the return of history as myth in the imaging of Wolfe’s and Cook’s deaths as national self-sacrifice reified a symbolic founding moment for a new modern British Empire, and one who has not been forgotten.

The die was thus cast in the mould of mythological narrative. Common to all societies,
such narratives employ universal archetypes (ancestral heroes) to enact foundational stories for a moral universe. Peopleed by archetypes that readily return in different guises, myths are living stories designed to be rewritten in the context of contemporary events. Not surprisingly, Cook turned up in Aboriginal sagas, as if he was a ready-made archetype with which to make sense of the modern or colonial moral order. By the same temporal logic, once Cook (as ancestral colonist) appeared, his footprints were found in existing stories. Cook’s multiple reincarnation is the lesson of Paddy Fordham Waburnanga’s series of paintings Too Many Captain Cooks (begun in 1988), which depicts a Macassan Cook in two incarnations. The first, who ‘did not do any wrong’, had journeyed from an island in the north to Sydney Harbour, but after being speared, other people started thinking they could make Captain Cook another way: New people. Maybe all his sons. Too many Captain Cooks. They started shooting people then: New Captain Cook people… They have made war. Warmakers, those New Captain Cooks.

If Aboriginal Cooks have been woven into a modern Aboriginal imaginary or cosmology, a different though increasingly contested set of Cooks inhabit the Australian settler-national imaginary. Alarmed at the current postcolonial iconoclasm, defenders of the settler Cook myth are on their guard. In his review of the NLA’s Cook and the Pacific, the Australian newspaper art critic Christopher Allen wryly observed: ‘the organisers seem to have been anxious not to offend any of those for whom taking offense has become a form of self-gratification and self-mortification… so the exhibition is protected, as by apotropaic spirits, by indigenous figures welcoming us to the commemoration of Cook.’

Allen’s riposte to the iconoclastic trumping of history by ethics was to outflank it with Cook the humanitarian. Of ‘exceptional personal qualities’, wrote Allen, ‘all the evidence is that Cook was a humane and fair man in his role as commander, capable of inspiring the kind of trust and loyalty without which such enterprises are impossible.’ Cook’s greatness, he added, ‘transcended national interests and political differences. He was a hero of his age, comparable to the astronauts and cosmonauts of the mid-twentieth century, who were admired by the East and the West alike.’ Allen’s very telling smacks of myth – of the age, comparable to the astronauts and cosmonauts of the mid-twentieth century, who were admired by the East and the West alike. ‘Cook’s greatness’, Allen’s very telling smacks of myth – of the making of an archetype that in this case brushes over the recorded historical actions of Cook as killer, kidnapper and thief.

Allen also rewrites the settler-national myth for a contemporary audience by dismissing ‘Cook the discoverer’, in the process buttressing his own claim to Cook as a ‘truth-teller’. In his previously mentioned report to Admiralty written from Batavia, Cook never claimed to have discovered Australia or taking possession of it. His major discovery was that the fabled terra Australs of ancient Greek myth existed only in the imagination, not in reality. Yet, in his journal, Cook claimed to have ‘discovered’ all sorts of things, a reef here a passage there. He was, after all, an explorer, but he used the term in its original meaning to uncover something that is already there about which he previously was ignorant. On the other hand, in his letter to Admiralty, Cook used the term ‘discover’ to signify the narrow legal meaning it acquired during the Age of Discovery and which Admiralty had used in its instructions. Called the ‘discovery doctrine’, it descended from fifteenth-century Papal Bulls that gave Christian monarch’s sovereignty over territories they ‘discovered’ in the New World. Its modern legal legacy in Cook’s time was articulated in De Vattel’s Law of Nations (1758):

If navigators going on voyages of discovery, furnished with a commission from their sovereign, and meeting with islands or other lands in a desert state, have taken possession of them in the name of their nation: and this title has usually been respected, provided it was soon after followed by a real possession.

In this way the Papal myth of the transcendent Christian God and His past with European monarchs in the myth of the Divine Right of Kings, returned as a secularised legal convention between European nations. This judicial achievement of the European Enlightenment underpinned Admiralty’s orders for Cook to search for the fabled ‘Southern Continent so often mentioned’, and ‘if you discover the Continent abovementioned or any other such Islands as you may discover in the Course of your Voyage that have not hitherto been discovered by any Europeans, you are to take Possession for His Majesty’. This is why it is said that Cook ‘discovered’ Australia, not that he merely explored its eastern shoreline. It underwrites Cook the possessor or imperialist, which Allen obfuscates but which is the primary target of postcolonial iconoclasts.

If for Cook, ‘discovered’ was a somewhat ambivalent term, in an oft’ quoted extract, his journal unequivocally says that he took ‘possession’ of the east coast according to the discovery doctrine, or what we now call terra nullius. His claim followed de Vattel’s Law of Nations to the letter, in which his much-lauded romantic sentiment of the noble savage, referred to by Allen in his myth of Cook the humanitarian, was back-handed praise. This was, according to de Vattel, admissible evidence for taking possession of an inhabited place.

Margaret Cameron-Ash recently argued that Cook’s journal is a brilliant document of subfuscure that strategically bends the truth in order to aid the cause of the British Empire. She even proposes that Cook never actually took possession of the eastern coast but later added this fiction to thwart French ambitions. Fiction or fact, once entered into his journal the claim became legal. It was sealed eighteen years later in accord with de Vattel Law of Nations when Phillip established the military-run penal colony at Sydney. This is why the figures of Phillip, the First Fleet and Australia Day (and thus Australia) have, in the minds of so many Australians, been integrated into one mythical story of the ancestral Captain Cook and his landing at Botany Bay.

Myths are invariably distilled from historical events, but the transcendental truth of myth will always trump the empirical details of history. Whatever the facts of the matter – and if Cameron-Ash is right, we may never really know what Cook discovered – art, identity and morality reveal themselves in myth. The strong feelings in Australia towards Cook, be they positive or negative, concern myths, which no amount of ‘truth telling’ will undo. Further, the repercussions of the Cook myths have been far more real than anything Cook actually did in Australia. Whether iconoclasm is the path to redemption is a moot point, but it does redeem the power of art and myth.

Iconoclasm is an age-old tactic to halt the return of myths when they are beyond rewriting. It signals a loss of faith in the usefulness of ancestors and a desire to start again. However, iconoclasts have never succeeded in slaying the archetypes; they inevitably return. This is why so many new Cooks are appearing today from the imaginations of artists, especially Indigenous artists. The watershed moment was the Australian bicentenary, as it provided a rethinking Australia’s foundational stories. Then, in the late 1980s, this new bout of storytelling was kicked off by the likes of Robert Campbell Junior, Paddy Fordham, Gordon Bennett, Tracey Moffatt and the dancer Malcolm Cole. In 1988, Cole starred in the first Indigenous float in a Sydney Mardi Grass, as a camp Cook. In their weavings of a postcolonial national imaginary Indigenous artists are today’s main mythographers of Cook.

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Endnotes

2 Ibid., 31 March 1770.
3 Ibid., p. 488.
4 https://www.captaincookssociety.com/home
18 Cook, Captain Cook’s Journal During His First Voyage Made in H. M. Bark “Endeavour” 1768-71, 22 August 1770.
19 It appears in Cook’s journal on 23 August, the day after his entry of taking formal possession.
20 Margaret Cameron-Ash, Lying for the Admiralty: Captain Cook’s Endeavour Voyage (Sydney: Rosenberg, 2018).

Bibliography

Allen, Christopher. “Captain Cook Left Legacy of Unprecedented Era When Cultures Collided.” Australian 23 November 2018.

Terry O’Malley Hobartown (detail), no date, acrylic on masonite. Photo credit: Rémi Chauvin
I am witness - Julie Gough

There is a discernible lack of appreciation by settler Australia about the grievances and sense of historical injustice that Indigenous people feel.

In 2010 I drove to Bruny Island with chairs, spears, fuel, matches and an opportunity of access, to undertake an inflammatory task where the British Government in Van Diemen’s Land in 1829 built a “sod hut”, and where lay preacher George Augustus Robinson commenced our (Tasmanian Aboriginal) civilizing.

Bare representations of generations of unrest and distrust, of invaded and invaders, sat on the shore between the mud-mound remnant of the Hut and the strait to mainland Lutruwita/Tasmania - my homeland. A piece of furniture impaled by a spear burned while the backdrop of kunanyi (Mt Wellington) framed and documented this as an episode of history, in place, by an Aboriginal agent and witness. Duration, its hot reflection in the water, made it more. It had a life beyond its making and recording its truth in a split-second image: “Manifestation”. It moved through grief, rage, loss, memorializing, taking me with it, placed amidst my ancestors.

Captain James Cook is also a hostage of history. Beyond his intention and lifetime he is unnaturally cast by Australian Nation builders as the moment, the purposeful punctum to express before and after, depending on your position, discovery or invasion. Cook is symbolically staged by the mainstream as the first harbinger of civilization to this Indo-Pacific region, despite his actions, representations and demise revealing him more an idiot savant than saviour. Meanwhile he has multiplied as statuary.

Liberated from his two-dimensional origins, the Federation Art Commission of 1901: The Landing of Captain Cook by Emmanuel Phillips Fox, held in the National Gallery of Victoria, this statue more honestly stages the fraudulence of the entity: “Australia”. Transfixed perpetually, arm raised, overtly claiming ground; dragging us behind we endure in his wake the fabrication that the British legally took this continent, and that the continuance of colonial rule is tenable.

To make this Commonwealth of ours
Renowned of all the lands;
For those who’ve come across the seas
We’ve boundless plains to share:

Artworks are as much documents of truth as those written, spoken or sung, meaning, they are all, in isolation, fabrications, made. They live beside and amongst us, to serve purposes that change through time, like memories, and history. Art is perhaps the most patiently generative, it encourages dialogue, and awaits responses across generations, and increasingly across cultures.

What First Peoples make is culture, not about culture. Likewise what non-Aboriginal people make about our culture can only superficially obscure theirs. Since the 1640s visiting Dutch, British and French came ashore at Lutruwita/Van Diemen’s Land/Tasmania, and took and took note of our presence, people, cultural objects, and reproduced some in publications. Atlases of their Voyages. These recordings, registers of moments of pre-colonising encounter have, as time transpired, remobilized, and today circulate amidst later works of “fine art”. Together they document their times. Often uncensored and uncensured both can diverge from official written accounts.

They resurface to inspire and inform fresh investigations, responses, insights; to situate, reground. Increasingly accessible, larger than peripheral, they force a face-off for what happened during the 1800s on this island.
European settlement led to the early and very rapid disintegration of the Northern tribe (Port Sorrell to Emu Bay and southward to the foot of the Great Western Tiers) and the Midlands tribe (Port Dalrymple to Oatlands). 

John, 1996.

The British determined to represent their Terra Australis history on the hop, their art followed close behind, the land clearances of the original people. Content is not content. The quietness of much of their 19th-century Van Diemantarian art belies the troubles, the anxieties the uncertainties and the bloodcurdling violence of the epoch that produced it. Salt Pan Plains, land granted to “settlers” was land taken from Aboriginal people. In the bush, colonial print of that title attributed to Joseph Lyttel there is no indication of any unrest here before or to come. Yet it was a battleground that still awaits truth telling.

Old Tom Ward, who was transported in 1818, and who gave me some striking records of the past, said that when up the country in 1820, the stock-keepers of Salt Pan Plains, were guilty of abominable conduct toward two Native women. These afterwards told their Cooky’s or husbands, and the tribe surrounded the hut, and killed two men out of the three.

James Bonwick, 1870.

Captain Cook has stood firm for colonists, their greatest ally he continues to take, in their stead, the pressure and scrutiny off those that did worse than him. It is the colonists that took and cleared the land of the First Peoples, whether directly or by oblique instructions to their servants. And these colonists are not named Cook.

In Van Diemen’s Land in 1830 Lieutenant Governor George Arthur ordered a “Military campaign against the Aboriginal Occupants of Van Diemen’s Land”, still colloquially termed The Black Line. This set of 12 manoeuvres over 24 days aimed to force remaining Aboriginal people in the “Settled districts” to the Tasman Peninsula, then onto ships of exile to Flinders Island.

There were 119 leaders of parties, with a guide to each, in addition to the array of soldiers, and hundreds of constabulary, there were 738 convict assigned servants attached to the line. A considerable number of free labouring men ranged themselves in the parties. Ticker of leave men assembled. Altogether, there were about three thousand men engaged in the Line operations. A noble gathering of Tasmanian born youths took an active part in the field, as skirmishers in front, and proved their excellent Bush qualities.

Historian James Bonwick (1870) listed the leaders of the line(s):

Among the leaders of parties co-operating with the military and magistracy were Messrs. Wolipple, Robertson, Wedge, Emmett, Brodrick, Shevlin, J. Batman, H. Batman, H. Torr, Pearson, Massey, Myers, Hobbs, Sennett, Layman, G. Scott, Monisy, Allison, Franks, Flaxmore, G. Evans, Hunsion, Cox, Allison, Ammytage, Russell, Thomas, Jones, Patterson, Kimberley, Espre, Lackay, Stanfield, Cawthorne, Cassidy, Mills, Proctor, Stacey, Steele, Symott, Shone, McDonald, Gatehouse, Dodge, Cume, Kirby, Lloyd, Billiet, Cottrell, Ritchie, Moriarty, Herring, Lawrence, Gray, Gibson, Brumby, Pyke, Griffiths, Darke, Campbell, Henderson, Saltmarsh, Christian, Bonney, Giblin, Collins, Smith, White, Ralston, Adams, A. McDonald, H. McDonald, Hayes, Lanning, Spratt, Geiss, Ramsey, Caesar, Clark, Barker, Heywood, Brown, Tully, Ring, C. Walker, Shiley, Donaghue, Hawthorn, Cunningham, Doran, Brodie, Allardyce, Ballantyne, Collett, Milton, Howells, Green, Nicholas, Fisher, Mason, Captain Vicary and Captain Moriarty were supposed to be in charge of the roving parties. Mr. Franks was chief guide in the Oatlands district.

This list expanded from those named in Government Order No.11, Enclosure No.5, Colonial Secretary’s Office, 2 September 1830:


G. C. G. C. C., Simpkin, Sutherland, Ruffey, Gatesby, G. Simpson, C. Thompson, H. Munay, Bliss, Oliver, Malcolm, Taylor, Mackenzie, Bayles, Stewart, Allan, Biba, Corney, Fletch, Young, O’Connor, Yorke, Captain McPherson, Captain Bayle, Capt. Maclaine, Captain Leard, Messrs. Meredith, Hawkins, Gatehouse, Buxton, Harte, Ames, Allen, King, Lynne, Captain Wentworth, Messrs Triffitt, Sharland, Mazetti, Young, Dixon, Austin, Burn, Jamieson, Shane, Risley, Captain Vicary, Lieutenant Croy, Lieutenant Murray, Captain Donaldson, Captain Mahon, Lieutenant Aubin.

Today delegated to garbled listings in obscure volumes the assailant colonists in this pro-active attempt at ethnic cleansing remain, in direct contrast to Captain James Cook, excised from their actions, removed from Aboriginal history and continuing legacy of dispossession from Country and self governance.

Bonwick ‘s obfuscation reaches far beyond disordered non-alphabetical listings and phonetic spellings, his publication erased the identities of those who undertook murderous violence against us, along with the names of our dead.

A settler of the Esk informed me that a neighbor of his, wanting a gin, asked him to accompany him on his Sabine expedition. He had heard that a woman had been seen with a small party on an island in the river, and was then on his way thither to seize her. He pointed exultingly to a bullock-chain which he carried, as the means of capture.

The days of propagating ever more Cooks to desperately foment an honorable foundation story are now well gone. In the growing will for truth over silence our island’s past is being populated with grounded events and named participants. Light is being cast upon spectres; shame and shadows replaced by accountability. The once hidden colonial figures of history are re-taking Cook’s place, and the named are many.

Endnotes

4 Australian National Anthem op.cit.
6 Bonwick, James, 1870, The Last of the Tasmanians, or, The Black War of Van Diemen’s Land, Sampson, Low, Son and Marston, London, Chapter III: Cruelties to the Blacks, p.61
7 ibid, p.151.
8 ibid, pp.150-151.
9 Arthur, George. & Great Britain. Colonial Office. & Tasmanian Historical Research Association. 1971, Van Diemen’s Land : copies of all correspondence between Lieutenant-Governor Arthur and His Majesty’s Secretary of State for the Colonies, on the subject of the military operations lately carried on against the Aboriginal inhabitants of Van Diemen’s Land / With an historical introduction by A.G.L. Shaw. Tasmanian Historical Research Association Hobart, pp. 66-70.
10 Bonwick, James, op.cit, p.60.
Eunice Napanangka Jack

Eunice Napanangka Jack was born in 1940 at Lupul near Tjukurla in Western Australia near the border with Northern Territory. She started painting with the opening of the Ikuntji Women's Centre in 1992. Napanangka Jack is an important senior woman in the Haasts Bluff community and is well known for her hunting skills, dancing and traditional law knowledge. Her father was Tutuma Tjapangarti, one of the first men to paint for Papunya Tula.

Kumuntjai Napanangka Nolan

Kumuntjai Napanangka Nolan was born in 1943 at Yateman's Bore in the Northern Territory. In the 1940s her family moved throughout Central Australia as a response to the droughts of that time. They travelled together with Tutuma Tjapanagarti's family (Eunice Jack's father), and the two women developed a friendship which was maintained throughout their lives. Kumuntjai Napanangka Nolan was married to the Papunya Tula artist Lionel Kantawarina Tjupurrula, which inspired her interest in painting. She painted for the Ikuntji Women's Centre and took part in the Minyma Tjukurrpa – the women's Dreaming project at Kintore in 1994 and 1995. She died in 2019.
Ricky Maynard

Ricky Maynard (b. 1953) was born in Launceston, Tasmania and is now based on Flinders Island. He has built his career photographing and documenting the histories of Indigenous communities and is well-known for his bold and sensitive portraits. Maynard reveals the characters of Indigenous people – particularly from his home of Tasmania – telling stories previously absent or incomplete. His work is held in numerous public and private collections, including the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, National Gallery of Victoria, Art Gallery of New South Wales, and Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

Ricky Maynard

Wiki Elder, Joe, from ‘Returning to Places that Name Us’ series 2000
silver gelatin on paper 5/15
Photo: courtesy Betti Gallery
We saw indeed only the sea coast: what the immense tract of inland country may produce is to us totally unknown: we may have liberty to conjecture however that they are totally uninhabited.

*Joseph Banks, c. 26th August 1770*
*The Endeavour Journal of Sir Joseph Banks*
Terry O’Malley

Terry O’Malley (b. 1949) is originally from Hull in England. He has lived in Tasmania since 1982. A painter, ceramicist, and performance artist, O’Malley has featured in many solo and group exhibitions. From 1982-1986 he was Head of the Sculpture Department at the University of Tasmania’s School of Art. His works are in many collections, including the Australian National Gallery, the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, the Derwent Collection, the Queensland Gallery and the Artbank in Sydney, and a number of private collections.
Joseph Lycett

Joseph Lycett (c.1774 - 1828) was an English artist, trained in portrait and miniature painting. In 1814 he was charged with forgery and transported to Sydney as a convict. While serving his sentence in Australia he utilised his artistic talents, attracting patrons amongst officials and the military. Lycett specialised in painting views of NSW and Van Diemen’s Land on commission to Governor Macquarie. After receiving a pardon and returning to London, he printed and published two large lithographs of Sydney and Hobart in 1822, and in 1824-25 his Views in Australia were published in twelve monthly parts.
Joan Ross

Joan Ross (1961) was born in Glasgow and now lives in Sydney. She works across a range of media including drawing, painting, installation, photography, sculpture and video. Her work depicts the legacy of colonialism in Australia, particularly its effect on Indigenous Australians. She has exhibited widely, and her work is held in the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra and a number of regional galleries, university and private collections.

Joan Ross

The art of flower arranging 2014
hand-painted pigment print on cotton rag paper 5/5
Photo: courtesy Bett Gallery

Joan Ross

We love your sunburnt country 2014
hand-painted pigment print on cotton rag paper 5/5
Photo: courtesy Bett Gallery
Rew Hanks

Rew Hanks (b. 1958) is a Sydney-based printmaker whose intricate linocuts combine historic imagery, wit and contemporary references, prompting critique of Australia’s cultural identity - colonialism, politics and the environment. His precise, detailed works continue a long history of printmaking as political commentary and social satire. For over 30 years Hanks has exhibited both nationally and internationally and has been awarded many prizes - most recently the Megalo International Print Prize in 2020. His works are held in the Australian National Gallery, most state and regional galleries throughout Australia, and fourteen international galleries.
Rew Hanks
The Conquest 2013
linocut 2/30
Photo: courtesy the artist and Michael Reid Sydney + Berlin

Rew Hanks
The Defeat of the Trojan Tiger 2003
linocut 10/25
Photo: courtesy the artist and Michael Reid Sydney + Berlin
Rew Hanks

Trojan Tiger versus the Woolly Redcoats 2002
Linocut 1/25
Photo: courtesy the artist and Michael Reid Sydney + Berlin
Michael McWilliams

Michael McWilliams (b. 1956) lives and works in Longford, Tasmania. He is a visual arts graduate from the University of Tasmania and has had several solo exhibitions since 1995. Joining his family antique business in 1990, along with restoration he developed his skills painting fine imagery on furniture. The Tasmanian landscape features prominently in his work, and he uses subtle humour to convey environmental messages underlining the tension between native and introduced flora and fauna. McWilliams has been a Wynne Prize finalist (2008 and 2010), and a winner of both the Glover Prize (2004) and Waterhouse Art Prize (2005 and 2008).

Michael McWilliams
White Cat Monday 2014
acrylic on linen
Photo: courtesy Handmark Gallery
Henricus Hondius II

Henricus Hondius II (1597-1651) was a Dutch engraver, cartographer, and publisher. Born in Amsterdam, he was the son of a famous cartographer. In 1604 Hondius obtained the original plates of Gerard Mercator’s world map of 1569. Adding and enlarging the maps, he published a new version in several languages, proceeding to re-engage and update the maps several times with brother-in-law Jan Jansson. Part of Mercator’s ‘Atlantis Majoris’, the map ‘Polus Antarticus’ was originally published in 1637. From Hondius’ plate, this circular map was regularly revised and reissued.

The idea of faraway lands - decorated with ships, penguins, and exotic native people - caught the European imagination. Four versions were printed over a period of 60 years by different publishers and editions, including Dutch, Latin, French, and German translations. This print is an early state (c.1641), predating the first appearance of New Zealand and Van Diemen’s Land. In later iterations the title cartouche was moved so New Zealand could be added, following the voyages of Tasman in 1642 and 1644.

William MacLeod

William MacLeod (1850-1929) was born in London but moved to Australia as a young boy. He trained as an artist from an early age, and quickly developed a reputation as an accomplished portrait painter, a designer of stained-glass windows, and as illustrator for popular journals. He worked on the Picturesque Atlas of Australasia (1886-88), a publication issued in serial form to commemorate the centenary of the European colonisation of Australia. MacLeod contributed cartoons to the Bulletin, eventually becoming joint owner and director over the next forty years. He is represented in the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the National Gallery of Australia, the National Library. Various state libraries also have examples of his portrait lithographs.
Charles Alexandre Lesueur

Charles Alexandre Lesueur (1778-1846) was a French artist, naturalist, and explorer. In 1800, Lesueur travelled to Australia with Nicolas Baudin’s expedition as artist, working with naturalist François Péron. The expedition collected over 100,000 marine and land specimens, with Lesueur making a large number of sketches and full-scale drawings. These ranged in subject from zoology and coastal profiles, to Indigenous portraits and artefacts. After their return to France in 1804, Lesueur contributed to the published account of the voyage, *Voyage des Découvertes aux Terres Australes*. Lesueur travelled constantly, living for over 20 years in the United States, collecting, drawing, and researching. On his return to France, he became curator of the newly established Musée d’Histoire Naturelle at Le Havre.

Claude-François Fortier after Charles Alexandre Lesueur
*Terre De Diemen Navigation. Vue de la Côte Orientale de l’Île Schouten* c. 1807
engraving
On Loan from a private collection
Louis Auguste de Sainson

Louis Auguste de Sainson (1800-1887) was born in France and trained as a topographic draughtsman. He was the official artist aboard Dumont d’Urville’s *Astrolabe*, exploring the Pacific, Asia, New Zealand and Australia. The crew first visited Australia in 1826, returning in 1827-1828. In Hobart Town, de Sainson made a number of important drawings of Hobart and its surroundings. On his return to France, de Sainson contributed to the official *Atlas historique* of the expedition, published in 1833. He was a meticulous draughtsman, and many of his drawings of Australia, its Indigenous people and geographical features were lithographed or made into copper engravings. They were widely illustrated in various accounts of exploration, including *Pitoresque Autour du Monde* (1834-1835). The French National Archives holds a large collection of his drawings.

Ignazio Fumagalli

Ignazio Fumagalli (1778-1842) was an Italian artist, academic, and art critic. He trained at Milan’s Brera Academy of Fine Arts, teaching there and later holding the Chair of Aesthetics. He is mainly known as an engraver, but as well as a printmaker, was a watercolourist and sculptor. This engraving is based on an engraving of a work by Charles Lesueur, first published in *Voyage de Découvertes…* in 1807. Such images were widely re-engraved and published throughout Europe in response to intense interest in Indigenous culture and technology.
Rex Greeno

Rex Greeno (b. 1942) was born on Flinders Island in Bass Strait. His Aboriginal heritage comes from his mother, Dulcie Greeno, a noted shell necklace and basket maker, and his grandfather, Silas Mansell, who taught him mutton-birding, cray-fishing, and how to build boats. After his retirement from 40 years as professional fisherman, Greeno drew on his knowledge of the sea to resurrect the art of traditional canoe construction, which had disappeared in the early 19th century. Greeno taught himself by reading extensively and experimenting with various raw materials and ways of constructing the canoes. He is represented in several national collecting institutions, with full-scale boats in QVMAG, Museum of Victoria, the National Gallery of Australia, National Museum of Australia, Museum and Art Gallery Northern Territory, and small model boats in regional and private collections.

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

John Webber (1751-1793) was born in London and studied painting in Bern and Paris. Webber served as official artist on James Cook’s third voyage around the Pacific (1776–80) aboard HMS Resolution. In 1777 at Adventure Bay, Bruny Island, he made drawings of the local people – the first to be made of Tasmanian Aboriginal people by a European artist. During the voyage Webber made many works of the landscape and people of New Zealand, Hawaii and other Pacific islands. On return to England, his drawings and paintings were engraved for the British Admiralty’s account of the expedition, which was published in 1784. His Death of Captain Cook became one of his most well-known works. Webber continued to paint and exhibit his artworks, mostly landscapes, and was elected a member of the Royal Academy in 1785.

‘We had not been enlong landed before about twenty of them men and boys joined us without expressing the least fear or distrust. I gave each of them a string of Beads and a Medal, which I thought they received with some satisfaction.’

James Cook, 29 January 1777. Adventure Bay, Van Diemen’s Land.

‘The Captn expressd his sorrow, that the behaviour of the Indians would at last oblige him to use force; for that they must not he said imagine they have gaind an advantage over us. After being knock’d down I saw no more of Capt Cook, all my People I observed were totally vanquish’d.’

Charles Clerke, 14 February 1779, Kealakekua Bay, Hawai’i
John Webber: James Cook, 1776, oil on canvas painting, National Portrait Gallery, London. Digital print on demand, NPG.

Tom Nicholson

Tom Nicholson (b. 1973) lives and works in Melbourne. His work often gravitates around processes of drawing, the persistence of images, and the demands of histories upon the present. Recent projects include Public meeting, a survey show at ACCA in 2019, untitled (seven monuments) (2013-19), a collaborative permanent public work with senior Wurundjeri elder Aunty Joy Murphy AO and Wiradjuri/Kamilaroi artist Jonathan Jones, marking the original boundaries of Coranderrk Aboriginal station; Towards a glass monument (2019), a large-scale permanent stained-glass window project for the University of Melbourne.

Image: Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

Tom Nicholson
Interview 2016
stack of oﬀ-set printed multiple to take away
On Loan from the artist
Image: Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane
A NEW, AUTHENTIC, AND COMPLETE COLLECTION of Voyages Round the World, Undertaken and Performed by ROYAL AUTHORITY. Containing an AUTHENTIC, ENTERTAINING, FULL, and COMPLETE HISTORY of Captain COOK’s First, Second, Third and Last VOYAGES, Undertaken by Order of his PRESENT MAJESTY, FOR MAKING DISCOVERIES in GEOGRAPHY, NAVIGATION, ASTRONOMY, &c. in the SOUTHERN and NORTHERN HEMISPHERES, &c. &c. &c.

R. CHAPMAN, Printer to the ROYAL SOCIETY, for B. DENT, Printer in the Strand, near St. Paul’s Churchyard, London, 1786.

Mr. Thornton after William Hodges: A Striking Likeness of the late Captain James Cook, F.R.S. published 1781 engraving

Special and Rare Collections University of Tasmania
Photo credit: Rémi Chauvin
T. Cook (engraver) and D.P. Dodd, (artist)
James Caldwall

James Caldwall (1739-1822) was born in London. He is known mainly for his portraits, although he also engraved genre and military subjects. Caldwall employed a technique that combined both engraving and etching. He reproduced many paintings after John Collet and worked on the plates for Cook’s Voyages, constituting a large group of proofs now held by British Museum. His engravings of a Tasmanian Aboriginal man and a woman with her child were the first published portraits of Tasmanian Aboriginal people.
Julie Gough

Julie Gough (b. 1965) is a Trawlwoolway (Tasmanian Aboriginal) artist, writer and curator of Indigenous Cultures at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. Her Briggs-Johnson family have lived in the Latrobe region of North West Tasmania since the 1840s, with Tebrikunna their Traditional Country in far north eastern Lutruwita (Tasmania). Gough’s art and research practice often involves uncovering and re-presenting conflicting and subsumed histories, many referring to her family’s experiences as Tasmanian Aboriginal people. She holds a PhD from the University of Tasmania (2001) and an MA from the University of London, Goldsmith College (1998). Since 1994 Julie has exhibited in more than 130 exhibitions, and her work is held in most state and national collections.
Julie Gough
Manifestation (Bruny Island) 2010
giclée print on Hahnemühle photo rag paper 6/10
Photo: courtesy the artist
Judy Watson

Judy Watson (b. 1959) is a multimedia artist who lives in Brisbane. Her art practice includes printmaking, painting, video and installation. Watson’s art is inspired by the traditional culture of the Waanyi people in north-west Queensland, the home of her mother’s family. Her work explores the many layers of collective memory and meaning in the stories of Indigenous people. The depiction of land is a continuing theme in her practice as seen in her use of ochres, rubbings, and natural materials. Watson studied art at colleges in Queensland, Victoria and the University of Tasmania (1980-82). She has exhibited widely over 25 years and her work is held in major Australian and international collections.

walking around the country
looking at things
being shown important sites
making connections with family and land
fishing, talking
sharing food and laughter
going back to the place
where my grandmother and her
mother were born
going back there with my grandmother
going places I’ve read about in libraries
the history of our people before
and after the invasion
the impact on my family
seeing the country through
my grandmother’s eyes
learning about bush foods
going back to the city
and making work
space
heat
dust
flies
throwing the cast net

Judy Watson

stones and bones
1991
powder pigment on canvas
Photo credit: Rémi Chauvin
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heartland: from ‘The Land’ series 1992
etching and aquatint, two colour from three plates 30/60
Photo: courtesy Grahame Galleries
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Judy Watson
Right Here, Right Now - Australia 1988

In 1988, national celebrations were held to mark 200 years of European settlement of Australia. In reaction against the official narratives of colonisation, a group of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal printmakers and art organisations came together to produce a series of 32 screen prints called Right Here, Right Now.

Arranged by Co-Media Adelaide, the series toured nationally to ten galleries, including the University of Tasmania. Themes of land rights, deaths in custody and dispossession mounted a strong rejection of the official message of celebration, while recognising the survival of culture and demands for justice.

Projects like this transformed the Bicentennial to stimulate a maturing of public discourse. The result was increasing reflection on Australian national and cultural identity, a reassessment of history, and hope for the future.
WHITE ON BLACK

The annihilation of Aboriginal people and their culture cannot be separated from the destruction of nature.
Angela Gee (b. 1953) New Zealand
Sand Dune Uluru 1987
screenprint 5/15
Photo credit: Rémi Chauvin
© Angela Gee/Copyright Agency, 2020

Right: Paul Worstead (b. 1950) New South Wales
It is Wisely Written 1987
screenprint 8/30
Photo credit: Rémi Chauvin

Overleaf: Stephen Fox (b. 1952) South Australia
Even Today For Many it is Still One Way 1987
screenprint 1/15
Photo credit: Rémi Chauvin
This Baptist came over one week and sang the sweet song of the Lord, telling in tongues... when I heard he had said, 'We are all one with God and with each other. Righteously it made me wonder who really had sent him—perhaps Jesus.'

THE MISSIONARY POSITION
Toni Robertson (b. 1953) NSW
Anniversary Print 1987
screenprint 6/25
Photo credit: Rémi Chauvin

Lyn Finch (b. 1959) Queensland
Eddie West Died Here 1987
screenprint 5/15
Photo credit: Rémi Chauvin

Andrew Hill (b. 1952) South Australia
Colonisation, Racism, Genocide 1987
screenprint 6/25
Photo credit: Rémi Chauvin

Tom Robertson (b. 1953) NSW
Anniversary Print 1987
screenprint 10/40
Photo credit: Rémi Chauvin
Byron Pickett (b. 1955) Western Australia Descendants 1987 screenprint 1/20 Photo credit: Rémi Chauvin

Below: Wendy Black (b. 1954) Victoria Buandik Rock Shelter 1987 screenprint 4/15 Photo credit: Rémi Chauvin

Jan Fieldsend (b. 1951) New Zealand I Do Not Celebrate 200 Years of War against Aboriginal Peoples and the Land 1987 screenprint 14/15 Photo credit: Rémi Chauvin

Portland Print Workshop, formed 1982 Victoria Untitled 1987 screenprint 13/30 Photo credit: Rémi Chauvin


Byron Pickett (b. 1955) Western Australia Descendants 1987 screenprint 1/20 Photo credit: Rémi Chauvin
Marie McMahon (b. 1953) New South Wales, Wooreddy’s Vision - Truganina’s Sisters 1988, screenprint 6/10
Photo credit: Rémi Chauvin © Marie McMahon/Copyright Agency, 2020
Ray Young (1951-2009) New South Wales, Fort Dundas 88: This Place We People
screenprint 1/20
Photo credit: Rémi Chauvin

Colin Russell (b. 1958) Victoria Survival of the Fittest 1987
screenprint 3/30
Photo credit: Rémi Chauvin
screenprint 1/20. Photo credit: Rémi Chauvin

screenprint, 3/30. Photo credit: Rémi Chauvin

Stephen Nothing (b. 1962) Queensland, Brisbane Poster Group
Let’s Have A Drink And Celebrate, 1987
screenprint 8/30
Photo credit: Rémi Chauvin © Stephen A Nothing/Copyright Agency, 2020

and your trees and soil. I want the manly men and all the women. Your kids. I want your knowledge and skill. Stop your dreaming. I want you to be like me. What’s wrong with that. Of course I know we’re equal. But I’m better.

LETS HAVE A DRINK AND CELEBRATE
Some are kept at home, some are homeless and some think they own the whole bloody world... 1987

Photo credit: Rémi Chauvin
Special and Rare Book Bibliography

A voyage to the Pacific Ocean : undertaken by command of His Majesty, for making discoveries in the Northern Hemisphere : performed under the direction of Captains Cook, Clerke, and Gore, in the years 1776, 1777, 1778, 1779, and 1780 : being a copious, comprehensive, and satisfactory abridgement of the voyage written by Captain James Cook, F.R.S., and Captain James King, LL. D. and F.R.S. / by James Cook. London : Printed for John Stockdale, Scatcherd and Whitaker, John Fielding, and John Hardy, 1784. Morris-Royal Society-Rare G 420 .C69 1784b vol.3

A voyage to the Pacific Ocean : undertaken by command of His Majesty, for making discoveries in the Northern Hemisphere : to determine the position and extent of the west side of North America, its distance from Asia, and the practicability of a northern passage to Europe : performed under the direction of Captains Cook, Clerke, and Gore, in His Majesty's ships the Resolution and Discovery, in the years 1776, 1777, 1778, 1779, and 1780 / by James Cook. London : Printed by W. and A. Strahan for G. Nicol and T. Cadell, 1784. Morris-Christ College-Rare G 420 .C69 1784 vol.1

A new, authentic, and complete collection of voyages round the world, undertaken and performed by Royal Authority : containing an authentic, entertaining, full, and complete history of Captain Cook's first, second, third and last voyages ... / now publishing under the immediate direction of George William Anderson ; assisted by a principal officer who sailed in the Resolution sloop, and by many other gentlemen of the most distinguished naval abilities. London : Printed for the proprietors, and published by Alex. Hogg, [1784?]. Morris-Royal Society-Rare-Folio G 420 /C62 A5 1784

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Curators:

Rachael Rose holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts, and a Master of Fine Art and Design (Printmaking) from the University of Tasmania. She is the Registrar and Keeper of the University’s Fine Art Collection, and maintains her art practice from a private studio.

Professor Greg Lehman is an art historian and Pro Vice Chancellor of Aboriginal Leadership at the University of Tasmania. He recently curated The National Picture: art of Tasmania’s Black War at the National Gallery of Australia with Tim Bonyhady. Greg is a descendent of the Trawulwuy people of north east Tasmania and writes extensively on Tasmanian colonial history and visual representation of Aboriginal people.