

EXPRESSIONS OF  
KOOBIE IDENTITY

SATURDAY 7 AUGUST  
- 21 NOVEMBER 2021

# SEEN & UNSEEN



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## EXPRESSIONS OF KORIE IDENTITY

Saturday 7 August —  
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### INDIGENOUS READERS

Please be aware that this catalogue contains the names, words, and images of people who have passed away.

The Koorie Heritage Trust would like to pay homage to the artists in *Seen and Unseen* and from the original *Can't See for Lookin* exhibition that have since passed, and acknowledge their amazing contribution to the community through their art and cultural practice. Thank you for paving the way.

### FRONT COVER—

Rachel Mullett (Gunnai, Monero).  
*Metung* c. 1990, acrylic on canvas.  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust

# CONTENTS

- 2 Introduction by Tom Mosby**
- 4 The past is always embedded in the present by Gail Harradine**
- 16 'All Aboriginal art is political': Can't See For Lookin and the climate of change by Dr Fran Edmonds**
- 28 *SEEN AND UNSEEN*: Reasserting Blak Identity, Culture and People In Urban Areas by Timmah Ball**
- 34 Seeing and Remembering by Merren Ricketson**
- 40 Artwork index**

# INTRODUCTION

Tom Mosby, CEO, KHT

*Seen and Unseen: Expressions of Koorie Identity* draws primarily on the Koorie Heritage Trust's art and artefacts collection to reflect on the trailblazing exhibition *Can't See for Lookin*, which featured key South East Australian First Nations artists who challenged existing First Nations art stereotypes by showcasing South East Australian designs and styles. The 1993 exhibition was held at the National Gallery of Victoria, and was released alongside an education toolkit that aimed to inform primary to tertiary teachers on Koorie cultural, historical, and social issues.

*Can't See for Lookin* was created during a pivotal time for South East Australian First Nations artists, with more and more artists exploring their own cultural heritage and cultural connections in their art. An important part of this exploration was contesting non-Indigenous assumptions that South East Australia First Nations art is inauthentic. *Can't See for Lookin* and the many other exhibitions of the 1990s highlighted the complex histories of colonial encounters, and created a space for First Nations artist's voices and their stories.

*Can't See for Lookin* highlighted the significant work of South East Australian First Nations women artists,

including the late Connie Alberts Hart, Rachel Mullett, Karen Casey, Maree Clarke, Destiny Deacon, Dr Treahna Hamm, Ellen José, Lisa Kennedy, Leah King-Smith, Kerri Krüse, Dr Donna Leslie, and Gayle Maddigan. Together, these artists were able to highlight their expertise and knowledge, and pave the way forward for future First Nations cultural creativity.

*Can't See for Lookin* was among the first Aboriginal women-only exhibitions, and highlighted the previously unexplored role of Aboriginal women in educating and socialising children in their communities.

*Seen and Unseen: Expressions of Koorie Identity* is inspired by the original *Can't See for Lookin* exhibition, particularly the ongoing struggle by South East Australian First Nations artists for recognition of their cultural and artistic identity.

*Seen and Unseen* expands on this group of artists by acknowledging other significant South East Australian First Nations artists, both male and female, including the late Lin Onus, Ray Thomas, Lyn Thorpe, Sonja Hodge, the late Les Griggs, and Peter Clarke. All these artists paved the way for contemporary

South East Australian First Nations artists, some of whom are featured in this exhibition, including James Henry, Kent Morris, Sandra Aitken, Irene Norman, the late Len Tregonning, and Vicki Couzens.

In addition to these artists' works, *Seen and Unseen: Expressions of Koorie Identity* also draws on archival and oral history material. These works aim to provide context to the social, cultural, and political movements of the time.

This exhibition could not have come to fruition without the work of all the artists, especially contemporary artists who have loaned material, and important lenders like the Women's Art Register. Koorie Heritage Trust is also grateful for the support from Creative Victoria, the Australia Council for the Arts, and City of Melbourne.



# THE PAST IS ALWAYS EMBEDDED IN THE PRESENT

Gail Harradine, Curatorial Manager, KHT

As a relatively young Wotjobaluk/Djubagalk/Jadawadjali woman during the 1990s and studying at Melbourne University, I became part of a strong First Nations arts and culture community. To the broader community, we may have been 'invisible' as to our culture, identity and art practice, but together we felt empowered to make change. There was no 'traditional' and 'contemporary' whereby one stopped and an even less authentic cultural practice began. Instead, it was the old and the new fused together to develop ways of seeing through a cultural lens, and confronting subject matter that needed to be examined firsthand by First Nations artists themselves. I really see it now as the cutting edge of being a proud First Nations creative arts practitioner.

First Nations curating became an attractive option via important avenues such as Auntie Maxine Brigg's development of the Koori Arts Collective, and key First Nations positions within some councils that enabled considerable light to be shone on Koorie art and designs. My placement at the Koori Arts Collective was arranged as part of my postgraduate degree in Art Curatorial Studies where I learned about art and curating in a nurturing hands-on environment. My thesis investigated the general public's perceptions of art within gallery spaces to try to understand what the general visitor understood or interpreted about Victorian First Nations art. The underlining positive note was that visitors wanted to see more art together with interpretations of art from South East Australian First Nations artists. Artists such as Karen Casey (Tasmanian Aboriginal artist) were popular in terms of recent art of interest, and there was significant interest in attending galleries to see Aboriginal art on a weekly basis. In sum, visitors indicated a need to know the past to have any possible understanding of the present.

Looking back at contemporaneous writings, I can see what a pivotal time it was in First Nations lives. We were nurtured and protected by Blak Elders, Blak artists, Blak performers, Blak filmmakers, Blak writers and Blak poets who are now recognised in a broader sense for their long-term commitment to genuine authenticity in a world of highly questionable ethnographic perspectives placed on us. A staunch mob with integrity in their individual talents, they

embedded a strong sense of cultural identity and were a support network to visual artists by staying true to their clan designs, and staying true to empowering and constructing their own culturally appropriate practice/style.

In a wider context, *Seen and Unseen* is an ongoing dialogue around First Nations invisibility within the broader community. It is also a reflection of a chequered history; specifically, the inability of galleries, museums and other mainstream institutions to interpret First Nations art/curating in a way that was First Nation's led.

Sharing knowledge and passing on the importance of telling individual stories is an integral part of cultural connectedness. *Seen and Unseen: Expressions of Koorie Identity* places a spotlight on a number of key artists who have highly significant works in the Koorie Heritage Trust's (KHT) collection. Of particular focus is the *Can't See for Lookin* education kit. Strong leadership during its development was provided by key individuals such as Mutti Mutti, Yorta Yorta, Wamba Wamba and Boon Wurrung artist and curator Maree Clarke, alongside her brother, the late Peter Clarke. Support was also provided through the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. A partnership was formed with significant women educators, such as Kate Harvey and Merren Ricketson who were involved through the Women's Art Register. Lardil and Yangkaal artist Sonja Hodge provided this insight on the *Can't See for Lookin* education kit:

It was a big learning curve for all of us in terms of working together and compiling the information/artworks and working with Merren on the exhibition. It was really precious to us at that time in looking back, as it was hard yakka. I remember those times with Maree, and painting the poles near the old City Square [requiring a cherry picker] on Swanston, and random people coming up and asking us whether we were supposed to be doing that ... such ridiculous comments.

It is wonderful to walk past the painted poles that still stand out boldly in Swanston Street, with this large scale public art project having withstood time, and realise the potential and reach of such talented arts practitioners.

The education kit showcased twelve First Nations women artists and slides of their artwork featured in the exhibition. The slides highlighted the



importance of these skilled artists. However, the development of such a project did have to overcome some challenges but ultimately created a positive outcome, with the creation of a slide kit and an exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria's Access Gallery in 1993. At the time, I raised the issue of the lack of such exhibitions in Melbourne and made the point that it would be important to see such exhibitions with local Koorie voices, as they are just as important as other Indigenous exhibitions at public gallery institutions in Melbourne. After viewing significant archival material from the Women's Art Register, including black and white photographs of the launch and a striking cover illustration by Lisa Kennedy (and an inner booklet logo design by the late Peter Clarke), it is apparent that the project attests to the care and support of the artists and their families, as well as the education kit's Project Working Party. All of this coincided with the United Nations Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples in 1994. The information was targeted at primary to tertiary levels for a range of Women's Studies classes and Koorie Studies, as well as Australian studies.

In addition to the concepts surrounding the *Can't See for Lookin* education kit, *Seen and Unseen* is heavily influenced by other key practitioners of the period, such as the late Lisa Bellear. Lisa was an original member of Koorie Vision, an arts/performance organisation involved in the landmark *Kitch'en Koori* exhibition in the early 1990s as part of Fringe. The whole idea of making *Kitch'en Koori* our own and relating it to how many of us sometimes worked around the kitchen table storytelling with our families was certainly intriguing to all who were involved. At the time, Michelle Griffen of *The Melbourne Review/Melbourne Times* wrote:

While a lot of the pieces are informed by traditional culture, they are not the sort of art works you'd see at the exclusive Aboriginal Art galleries in the city ('Black joke shows up kitsch's dark side', 1992)

There is no doubt that Lisa brought wonderful humour to a lot of what she actively worked on. Not only was she a wonderful Aboriginal Liaison Officer at Melbourne University in the 1990s, but even more so a poet, activist, writer, broadcaster, photographer of integrity and very much about 'speaking straight'. Lisa provided a clear directive:

First Nations art in Victoria was just as important as First Nations art anywhere else. An interview with Lisa provides insight into *Seen and Unseen*:

My major concern is that, largely, it is still non-Aboriginal people deciding about exhibitions, deciding what's considered Aboriginal art, and unfortunately in many respects, Victorian Koori Artists and Torres Strait Islander Artists are not included (Lisa Bellear, author's Postgraduate Thesis interview, 1993).

Lisa was adamant that there was a need to involve and support each other in terms of artistic endeavours, whether it was literature, painting, or film:

This [engaging non-First Nations people in art institutions such as The Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative to become exponents of culture] will [continue to] happen until we start getting more and more Indigenous people like yourself doin' those Art Curatorial Studies ... you've got mostly white people that do it ... but if they can learn from an Aboriginal organisation or Arts organisation that has vision, which exhibits right across the world and encourages Aboriginal artists right across Australia, then people will learn and grow (Lisa Bellear, author's Postgraduate Thesis interview, 1993).

All paths lead back to educating, and creating understanding. We now have even more Indigenous mobs attending universities, which is important for the sharing of cultural ideas and supporting each other. Being part of the strong activism in universities and within the community was inspiring, and supported pivotal artists such as Lisa Bellear. However, pathways to work in the arts were few in the 1980s and 1990s, and definitely far between for First Nations creatives despite creativity being integral for wellbeing and bolstering identity. As community members often say, "We are the most widely trained mob with our deadly certificates." It is only in recent times after we started asking questions about why there were no clearly defined pathways to our Master's and PhD degrees that tertiary institutions started to develop appropriate and relevant courses. Without supportive pathways in education, employment opportunities in the art world, and a seat at decision-making forums, we will continue to be invisible.

Lisa's observations are directly aligned to the past always being present: that lands were never ceded, violence associated with invasion, introduced diseases, massacres, and racism continues to impact greatly on mobs. Photographs by Lisa show the immense struggles that continue to be unresolved. These images bring attention to marches, significant events, and the importance of family and friends. Lisa's collection of photographic works housed at the KHT is of prodigious interest and value to not only the First Nations community but the broader community, due to her special outlook on life and connection with people – she often gave someone a photo of significance to them and their family – and valuing others. Her works in *Seen and Unseen* provide a glimpse of the huge legacy of such a highly respected woman.

Sonja Hodge and Indi Clarke have lent the KHT a stunning print by Dr Trehna Hamm (Yorta Yorta) for *Seen and Unseen*. Trehna was also involved in the *Can't See for Lookin* education kit and exhibition. In discussing the importance of *Seen and Unseen* paying homage to artists from the 1990s, Trehna commented:

I remember that Lin Onus would always say to come and visit, and was really encouraging with technical aspects of art, and it was nice to have that support. Many artists were self-taught, a little away from the constructs of universities.

We were from so many different places, from all over ... Karen Casey, Ellen José, Donna Leslie, Buster (Ray Thomas) ... and there were opportunities to exhibit together. I would visit Ellen and she had a good sense of humour. We would catch up around the dining table.

*Seen and Unseen* is about showcasing artists and their works from the KHT collection, together with some key selected loaned artworks that were ahead of their time. The featured artists' resilience and pride in identity, and their integrity in producing art that reflected their own truths, personal vision and cultural connections, was indeed brave. Their continued efforts to showcase their ways of seeing through their art are a huge influence to many of us who view their artwork today. In doing so, we pay our respects to those who forged ahead during times when it must have been difficult due to a lack of understanding of the deep meaning behind the works.

Established by key Elders such as Uncle Jim Berg, the KHT collection continues its integral and important role for ensuring that cultural belongings are recognised for their valuable contributions to art, culture in the South East of Australia.

*Seen and Unseen* drills down into what it is to be proud of Country and connection. In the past, there were many linkages between artists supporting each other and I have lost count of the number of community mob who talk about the importance of family connections around the kitchen/dining table, and even producing art at the same time. In *Seen and Unseen*, the artists explore mediums and themes to tell others about their worlds; not necessarily in the same way as all art practitioners, but taking into account the importance of family and culture around art making.

Artists featured in *Seen and Unseen* such as Maree Clarke (Yorta Yorta/Mutti Mutti/Wamba Wamba/BoonWurrung), the late Lisa Bellear (Minjungbul/Goernpil/Noonuccal/Kanak), Dr Trehna Hamm (Yorta Yorta), and Dr Vicki Couzens (member of the Keerray Wooroong language group of the Gunditjmarra) continue to be highly influential to the revitalisation of art within Victorian First Nations communities. Family traditions relating to cloak making, painting, weaving, jewellery making, designing and making shields and clubs, and creating feather flowers continue to be passed down, as evidenced by the KHT collection. Alongside passed on practices, photography has been an important means to reflect current thinking, and create an insight into the state of play between non-First Nations and our diverse clans.

Other artists such as the late Lin Onus, a Yorta Yorta man, and Ray Thomas, a Gunnai man (who was inspired by Lin), were drawing upon strong realistic principles to depict resilience and political moments, including times of heartbreak impacting Indigenous families, pinpointing key moments in our history (such as the police forcibly removing children from their families).

*Seen and Unseen* also includes artist, Dr Donna Leslie (Gamilaroi), with her work titled: *Watching over me-from the inside*:

Originally this painting began as an image about captivity. Through the dream, the

sleeping spirit finds freedom. I wanted to create a symbol for the protection of the person experiencing imprisonment. This painting is dedicated to the memory of the late artist, Les Griggs.

Incarceration has wide and profound consequences for Aboriginal communities, with an ever increasing number of our people behind bars, and dying in custody for crimes of poverty and coping mechanisms such as substance abuse. Les Griggs, a Gunditjmara man, was known for his unique style that utilised earth colours, patterns, and shapes that were distinctly Aboriginal but simultaneously distinctly his own. In this way, Les worked to regenerate the culture of Victorian Aboriginal people. Les used recognisable imagery such as bottles and cans to represent alcoholism, syringes and gravestones to represent drug addiction, nooses and bars to represent Aboriginal deaths in custody, and keys and locks to represent incarceration. These are still some of the issues and concerns of many Aboriginal people today. *Seen and Unseen* features Les' *Three Civilised Evils* triptych to highlight his very distinctive style, while simultaneously raising issues that were not broadly focused upon when Les created it.

Artists Maree Clarke and Sonja Hodge developed their unique styles by drawing upon cultural adornments to connect to the natural environment. The cultural adornments are collected, drilled, and arranged according to their size. The collection is skilfully painted with designs reflecting the artists' personal and distinctive culture and nations.

The intention of *Seen and Unseen* is to encourage all First Nations and non-First Nations visitors to reflect on where we have come from in art making in South East Australia. *Seen and Unseen* generates a space for visitors to consider works from a significant period of art-making in South East Australia, which fought for the visibility of cultural belongings connecting to place, which continues to inform practices today. The exhibition asks the viewer to consider the fundamental discourse present which will hopefully generate a curiosity to know more about the artists, their distinct practices and their pride in culture, family and place.

Many of the artworks in *Seen and Unseen* showcase linear and wavy lines, and patterns,

which are particular to South East Australia. Geometric diamonds, circles, and wavy lines reflect identity, ceremony, and special places in clans and nations that have links to ceremonial and cultural bloodlines. They also reflect rivers and mappings of Country that are present in the many themes that weave through the cultural belongings in the KHT collection.

The artworks in *Seen and Unseen* also connect to resilience, pride, and sad times that involve a lot of grief, loss, substance abuse, and child abuse concerns. They also reflect the special and quiet times, such as Auntie Rachel Mullet's *Metung* that is featured as our hero image for the exhibition. It is special to KHT to have the Elders involved in such a prominent way. I encourage our audience to find out more about some of the other very significant artists featured.

Revitalisation, adapting and changing are ongoing processes we have learned in order to survive and rise above transgenerational trauma and ignorance. We are survivors of times that were intended to inflict genocide and genocidal practices that are still very much evident today, so being able to express ourselves is crucial in utilising distinct visual art styles that greatly generate pride and wellbeing for many creative mobs. As a result, we continue to be vigilant about our rights, and pass on our knowledge to ensure our survival. We are fully immersed in our history. Although the trauma that resulted after our mobs were herded onto missions, told not to speak their language, and forced to change their ways is difficult to face, it is often at the forefront of our art, and creates a strong presence in *Seen and Unseen*.

Having strong Victorian First Nations Elders and First Nations artists lead the way is important to acknowledge, as is paying respects to those who have passed away; they will never be forgotten in our hearts. I am grateful to the artists who in 2019 planted a seed with us at the KHT for *Seen and Unseen*. It is a snapshot of the importance of earlier times, and a tribute to trailblazing artists that practiced art in challenging circumstances.

Although *Seen and Unseen* does reflect on the 1990s, the show also refers to more recent artworks from the collection adding depth and longevity in relation to the theme of identity, to create further dialogue. It crosses the

divide between the young and old when it comes to understanding what resilience and empathy towards others means. It reinforces our voice and being involved directly with our community for truth-telling. Embedding such truth-telling paves the way for future generations to connect with and feel proud of their culture. Bringing on board recent works helps to connect family links in an artistic sense and the ongoing nature of culture such as with the late Aunty Connie Hart's meticulous baskets and the work of Sandra Aitken (Gunditjmara), with her weaved blue hay bale twined eel trap, using modern materials and showing the importance of old and new in her art practice.

In showcasing First Nations artists in exhibitions such as *Seen and Unseen*, it is very clear that First Nations art and specific renditions of cultural/personal designs have always been present and continue to be produced. As the KHT Curatorial Manager, I continue to witness artists build up their practice in unique ways despite a lot of ignorance from the broader community about what constitutes Koorie art and identity. If one door closes, we keep trying and continue to build their practice on their own terms. *Seen and Unseen* is an example of staying strong and remaining resilient.

PG 11  
**Vicki Couzens (Kirrae Wurrung,  
Gunditjmara)**  
*Clan (2) Possum Skin  
Cloak Design* 1998  
chalk pastel on paper  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust

PG 12  
**Ray Thomas (Brabrawooloong,  
Gunnai)**  
*Land Rights* c. 1991  
acrylic on canvas  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust

















**‘ALL ABORIGINAL  
ART IS POLITICAL’:  
*CAN’T SEE  
FOR LOOKIN*  
AND THE CLIMATE  
OF CHANGE.**

Dr Fran Edmonds

PG 14 TOP  
**Lisa Bellear (Goenpil, Noonuccal,  
Minjungbal, South Sea Islander)**  
*NAIDOC march, with a police officer  
in the foreground, Swanston Street,  
Melbourne 2000*  
digital print on aluminium  
Gift of John Stewart, 2012  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust

PG 14 BOTTOM  
**Lisa Bellear (Goenpil, Noonuccal,  
Minjungbal, South Sea Islander)**  
*NAIDOC march 2000*  
digital print on paper  
Gift of John Stewart, 2012  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust

**I believe it's time  
that we put the  
work of Victorian  
Aboriginal art  
|and craft on  
show in this state.  
Our Stories,  
Our History,  
Our People.**

**LYN THORPE  
(YORTA YORTA, ARTIST)**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **DREAMINGS 1988-89**

In 1988 – the bicentennial year of European occupation of the land now known as Australia – the *Dreamings* exhibition began a two-year tour of the USA. This was among the first international exhibitions of Aboriginal art and was critically acclaimed for raising international awareness of Aboriginal art within a contemporary framework. Curated by non-Aboriginal anthropologist Peter Sutton and including an accompanying large-scale catalogue written by white scholars, the works shown in the exhibition ranged from bark masterpieces from Arnhem Land, to spectacular contemporary acrylic on canvas paintings from the Western Desert. The catalogue discussed Aboriginal art more broadly, including work from city/urban-based artists, including those from the south-east. Although issues of funding limited the display of wider representation of art from around the country, it seems unlikely, however, that art from the south-east would have been shown in *Dreamings* given the hesitancy of the authors when they declared that:

The number of Aboriginal artists in the cities is still small, and in quantity and quality their work, on average, does not compare with that of people from remote areas (Sutton and Anderson 1989: 1).

A further reason for neglecting to display art from more populated regions of the country was provided by the exhibition organiser Andrew Pekavik from New York, when he told the American anthropologist Fred Myers that:

There is too much pain [in urban art]. They [the audience] don't like accusatory art. People want something they can feel more positive about (Pekavik quoted in Myers 2002: 242).

The apparently disruptive political nature of urban-based art from the south-east reinforced in the public imagination the idea that 'real' Aboriginal people were somehow removed from the reality of contemporary life, and that 'real' Aboriginal people and therefore 'real' Aboriginal art were only to be found in the more remote parts of the country.

The statements did not account for more than 200 years of colonisation, or that Aboriginal people in the south-east were subject to the earliest and

arguably most rapid and destructive colonial invasion in the world. Like the widely acclaimed work from the Top End and Centre, Aboriginal art from the south-east also connected people to their stories, their experiences and identities. According to Gumbangyirr activist and academic, Gary Foley, all Aboriginal art is political because it is a statement of cultural survival. He explains further:

[A]ny expression of Aboriginal art, be it traditional or contemporary is an act of political defiance. So much time and effort, two hundred years of very concerted effort to destroy Aboriginality and Aboriginal culture has gone into this country. The fact that Aboriginal culture does remain a living thing in itself is an extraordinary political statement, about ... resilience ... adaptability and ... tremendous willpower (Gary Foley, quoted in Symes and Lingard 1988: 209).

This essay discusses the ‘tremendous willpower’ of south-east Australian Aboriginal artists to have their artwork seen as ‘real’ Aboriginal art from the 1980s through to the early 1990s. While often working alongside non-Indigenous collaborators/allies, the story includes a discussion of the approaches that Aboriginal people in the south-east took to control, articulate and express their connections to Country, kin and culture through their art and the exhibition process. The role of Aboriginal artists was significant in contesting the ongoing effects of colonisation, which had attempted to displace people from their culture and assimilate the Aboriginal population into the broader/white community. The essay is framed by events surrounding the *Can't See for Lookin* exhibition (1993) – the first all-female Aboriginal exhibition to be held in Melbourne and one of the first major exhibitions co-curated by renowned Mutti Mutti/Wemba Wemba/Yorta Yorta/Boonwurrung artist and cultural matriarch Maree Clarke.

## **LOOKIN TO CHANGE: KOORI ART '84, BOOMALLI AND THE KOORIE HERITAGE TRUST**

The 1980s-90s saw a climate of growing unrest with respect to social justice and rights for Aboriginal people. A march by Aboriginal protestors and supporters on 26 January 1988 during the bicentennial celebrations was designed to raise awareness of the continuing impact of colonisation on Aboriginal people. The event became known as ‘Survival Day’, and ‘We Have Survived’ became the rallying call, emphasising Aboriginal resilience and ongoing connections to Country for millennia.

In the lead up to the bicentenary and four years prior to the *Dreamings* exhibition, a group of Aboriginal artists in Sydney, including the renowned Melbourne-based Yorta Yorta artist Lin Onus, launched the *Koori Art '84* exhibition. This exhibition responded to the ‘high art’ world’s limited recognition of art by those from urban Australia, and as Aboriginal art curator Margot Neale states: ‘it inserted the word Koorie into the language of the art world’ (Neale 2000: 268), and became the inspiration for the establishment of the Aboriginal-run Boomalli Aboriginal Artist Cooperative in Sydney in 1987.

Boomalli became a significant resource for young Aboriginal artists around the country, with a board consisting of many who are today renowned for their ground-breaking work in promoting contemporary Aboriginal art, self-determination and autonomy, particularly curatorial practices. The original board members included artists Tracey Moffatt, Brenda Croft, Fiona Foley, Bronwyn Bancroft and others.

Self-determination for Aboriginal people over the control of their cultural heritage, including artworks, was the motivation behind the establishment of the Koorie Heritage Trust (KHT) in 1985, by Gunditjmara Elder Uncle Jim Berg with lawyers Ron Merkel and Ron Castan. Their intent was to repatriate Ancestral remains from the Murray Black collection at the University of Melbourne, and to buy back cultural collections and sacred objects. This initiated the Trust’s significant collection of Aboriginal material culture and contemporary artworks, which

acknowledged that Aboriginal art and cultural items should be located in an organisation where they are controlled, managed and curated by and for the benefit of south-east Australian Aboriginal (Koori) people.

## **LOOKIN AND SEEING: EXHIBITING ABORIGINAL ART AND PROMOTING SELF-DETERMINATION**

### **ARATJARA 1993-94**

Arising from the 1988 bicentenary and in response to growing calls for better representation of Aboriginal art by Aboriginal people, Gary Foley, as the first Indigenous Director of the Aboriginal Arts Board, campaigned for an international, Aboriginal self-determined exhibition. *Aratjara*, the exhibition, although planned for 1988 was not shown until 1993-94, and travelled to Germany, England and Denmark. It contested the idea that non-Aboriginal anthropologists and art historians were the 'experts' on Aboriginal art, while also challenging the concept that Aboriginal art belonged mainly in ethnographic rather than fine art museums. *Aratjara* set a precedent for combining fine art expertise with Aboriginal community knowledge: over half the chapters in the catalogue were written by Aboriginal artists/curators, including a chapter by Lin Onus on the work of artists from Victoria.

### **CAN'T SEE FOR LOOKIN 1993**

*Aratjara*, along with the establishment of Boomalli and the KHT, saw a gradual emergence of Aboriginal control over the management and exhibition of Aboriginal art. *Can't See for Lookin* paralleled these ambitions and focused attention on the significance of Aboriginal perspectives about Aboriginal art and its broader socio-historical and cultural imperatives, specifically within the Aboriginal community in Victoria.

*Can't See for Lookin* was the brainchild of Aboriginal artists Maree Clarke, her brother Peter (deceased), sister-in-law Sonja Hodge (Lardil), with contributions from others including non-Aboriginal writer, Kate Harvey. All were

responsible for the exhibition, and although more modest than *Aratjara*, *Can't See for Lookin* was significant in creating a paradigm shift in advancing broader perceptions about contemporary Aboriginal art. Importantly, the exhibition was held at Victoria's premier public art institution, the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) in June 1993, supporting the celebration of Aboriginal women artists in a fine art arena.

The exhibition drew on Maree and Peter's passion to focus attention on Aboriginal art from the south-east, which began with jewellery they made together from echidna quills, mulga wood and bush seeds in the late 1980s. Their early jewellery making, which Maree and Peter started in their hometown of Mildura in 1987, was sold through the Aboriginal enterprise, Kiah Krafts. Later, the founder of the Koorie Heritage Trust, Uncle Jim Berg, purchased a number of Peter and Maree's jewellery for the KHT's collection, including examples of Maree's echidna-quill necklace and earrings. These made their way into the *Can't See for Lookin* exhibition.

In the early 1990s, at the time of *Can't See for Lookin*, there were a number of policy shifts that sought to advance human rights/social justice for Aboriginal people, including the establishment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) in 1990; the Royal Commission into Deaths in Custody, 1991; the Council of Aboriginal Reconciliation, 1991; and, the handing down of the Mabo decision in 1992 that overturned the absurdity of *Terra Nullius* – land belonging to no-one – leading to the *Native Title Act* in 1993. While these policies promised greater recognition of issues affecting Aboriginal people, a general misunderstanding regarding the diversity of Aboriginality continued. This restricted broader considerations about Aboriginal art and affected many artists from the south-east whose work continued to be overlooked. The multiple art styles, inclusive of mixed-media and new technologies, challenged assumptions about what was 'real' Aboriginal art.

In this climate, *Can't See for Lookin*, which included only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (First Nations) women, forged insights into both the diverse backgrounds of First

Nations artists living in Victoria and the different ways that art expressed connections to culture and identity, and challenged the general stereotype of Aboriginal art as dot paintings by Aboriginal men from Central Australia. The title itself was salient because it alluded to the hidden nature of Aboriginal/First Nations women's work in sustaining culture and caring for future generations. Although specifically orientated to artists from Victoria, the exhibition also included First Nations women whose connections to Country were elsewhere but who had contributed to promoting Aboriginal/First Nations art and culture in the region. It also included women who had grown up with strong connections to their cultural heritage and others who were reconnecting with their identity. As Maree stated in an interview for Art Monthly at the time:

It started off Victorian Koori women artists, but then of course a lot of your Koori [First Nations] women artists based in Victoria aren't necessarily from Victoria, so it ended up just being Koori women artists (Maree Clarke quoted in Fraser 1993: 23).

Twelve women were featured in the exhibition, including master weaver, Aunty Connie Hart (Gunditjmara, 1917-1993); Aunty Rachel Mullett (Monero/Gunnai); Karen Casey (Tasmania); Destiny Deacon (KuKu and Erub/Mer); Treahna Hamm (Yorta Yorta); Ellen José (Meriam Mir, Torres Strait, 1951-2017); Lisa Kennedy (Trawlwoolway, Tas); Leah King-Smith (Bigambul); Kerri Krüse; Donna Leslie (Gamileroi); Gayle Maddigan (Wemba Wemba/Wertigikia/Nari Nari); and, Maree Clarke. Artworks ranged from jewellery and photographs, to weaving, paintings and more. Their art reflected their experiences as Aboriginal women, and the political and social situations of the Aboriginal community over decades. All explored to some degree themes of injustice, discrimination and cultural reclamation.

The exhibition included a catalogue and an education tool kit, titled: *Can't See for Lookin: Koorie women artists educating*. Like *Aratjara*, the catalogue contained discussions of the artwork by the artists,

rather than ethnographic descriptions by white anthropologists. The education kit was the result of a collaboration between the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) and the Women's Art Register, and provided an important resource inclusive of the artists' stories for use in the classroom with a focus on Aboriginal women's knowledge of cultural, historical and social issues from an Aboriginal woman's perspective. In a separate section to the artists' stories, comprehensive/colour slides of their work were included, alongside resources for teachers that provided practical strategies for cross-cultural learning. The implementation of Koori perspectives in the education curriculum reflected the broader political agenda set out in the report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and moves towards reconciliation.

## CONCLUSION

Fast forward almost thirty years since *Can't See for Lookin* and there have been many changes in the way Aboriginal art is curated and exhibited. Aboriginal artists are now able to infiltrate venues across the spectrum, from international art exhibitions, to regional galleries and community organisations, opening avenues for lookin' at and seeing Aboriginal art as diverse as the people and the places it comes from. In 2021, Maree Clarke's work is featured in a solo exhibition at the NGV, marking the inaugural exhibition of a living descendant of the Boonwurrung people on whose land the NGV is located: she is also the first woman.

Despite these gains, however, the current climate in relation to policies initiated in the 1990s that sought to advance social justice for Aboriginal people remains an issue. Acceptance of Aboriginal people's sovereignty over their unceded lands remains contested, attesting to limitations in the reconciliation process. This is highlighted by a lack of incentive by various Commonwealth governments to support the implementation of a Treaty between First Nations Australians and all other Australians. Further, the Aboriginal community continues to bear the brunt of the failed implementation



of recommendations following the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, demonstrated by the excessive incarceration rates and subsequent deaths of Aboriginal people while imprisoned.

Reflecting on the ambitions of *Can't See for Lookin*, one can only speculate as to how influential the exhibition and the education toolkit were in furthering broader community perspectives – especially the perspectives of young people in general in the 1990s – about the histories and politics that shaped Aboriginal Victoria. Whether the stories told through art impacted the way young people who were exposed to the education tool kit see and look at Aboriginal art today is an area for future research. However, given the increasing number of Aboriginal artists able to tell their stories from their perspectives, it is possible that *Can't See for Lookin* did contribute to progressing understandings of Aboriginality into the future.

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PG 20

**Sonja Hodge (Lardil, Yangkaal)**  
*Brooch* 1994  
acrylic on cedar wood, metal  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust

PG 22

**Rachel Mullett (Gunnai, Monero)**  
*Metung* c.1990  
acrylic on canvas  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust









Rachel M. Miller





# SEEING AND REMEMBERING

Merren Ricketson

The atmosphere was electric the night *Can't See for Lookin - Koori Women Educating* opened in the National Gallery of Victoria's (NGV) Access Gallery. It was June 1993, the United Nations Year of Indigenous People. The excitement was contagious! Artists, families, friends and colleagues gathered to mark the culmination of a three-year project. The exhibition celebrated Koorie art and launched a slide resource kit of the same name. Most of the artists were well known in the Koorie and arts community. However, for many visitors it was the first time they had viewed the range, complexity and vitality of the art of the south-east, or learned of the myriad personal and cultural stories that inspired it.

The walls sang with the colour and power of the works, challenging the stereotypical views held at the time about Aboriginal art. Traditional and contemporary imagery merged. Connie Alberts Hart's coil-bundle woven baskets displayed techniques she learned secretly while watching her mother at Lake Condah Mission. Rachel Mullett's paintings interlaced Country and culture, recording memories of bountiful bush tucker, and walking with the spirits of her ancestors. Maree Clarke's silver bromide photos honoured Elders and family, and her echidna quill and painted wooden jewellery, some made with Sonja Hodge, were displayed on river sand. Karen Casey's paintings expressed transformation and spiritual awakening. Destiny Deacon's colour Polaroid laser prints, some from the *Blak lik mi* series, used subversion and humour to challenge prejudice, racism and sexism.

Treahna Hamm's intricate hand-coloured etchings evoked the power and mystery of the bush she was missing, having moved to Sydney. Ellen Jose's works from the *Black Diggers - Ghost Fighters* series depicted the way Aboriginal servicemen and women were unacknowledged on their return from war. Leah King-Smith's cibachromes from the *Patterns of Connections* series re-positioned 19th century studio family portraits that were produced for government records against her own landscapes. Lisa Kennedy's richly layered pastel works expressed life cycles and spirit of place, ancient traces, and the abundance of bird and marine life.

The vibrant paintings exhibited by Gayle Maddigan, and her apron that combined feathers, twine, mineral pigments and wax, alongside photos of her painted tram, exemplified the way many of the exhibitors moved between media to connect culture and Country. Donna Leslie used ink, watercolour and gouache. She had spoken to me about channelling her identity and emotions into her works. Her stark lithograph *Imprisoned spirit*, 1990 was dedicated to her cousin Bruce Lesley, who had died in custody. Kerri Krüse's linocuts expressed the struggles of a childhood beset by racism and violence. Also exhibited was the eight-panel mural she created with Megan Evans and community members, which dominated one end of the gallery space. We had tracked it down to the backyard of a cafe in Williamstown.

Exhibiting these artists together was ground breaking. Many were already on the way to significant careers. Their CVs in the catalogue revealed extensive involvement in exhibitions, community art festivals, commissions, collaborative and design projects, tertiary art study, and the sale of works. Exhibits were borrowed from Keeping Places, commercial galleries, and private and state collections including the Koorie Heritage Trust, the State Library and the Tasmanian Museum. Other artists were emerging. Kerri Krüse told me she used to go past the NGV and think "I'll go in there one day, and now my work is here!"

At its heart, *Can't See for Lookin* was an education project, initiated by The Women's Art Register (WAR) in response to calls from teachers requesting Aboriginal images and information. Previously, WAR had made four slide resource kits for schools using their extensive resources. The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) became the major partner. A consultative committee was formed comprising artists and educators – Peter Clarke from VAEAI, Charles Williams Senior from the Aboriginal Arts Board, and Liz McAloon and myself from WAR – with support from The Koorie Heritage Trust and a number of funding bodies. This collaborative team produced a kit containing 36 images and an accompanying information booklet, compiled and written by Kate Harvey. Maree Clarke and Sonja Hodge were employed as Project Officers.

Partnering with VAEAI was a great fit for WAR. The then VAEAI President Mary Atkinson wrote in the kit preface: VAEAI "has worked for many years for the right for Koorie students to have an education which is relevant to them, reflecting respect for their culture and endorsing their Aboriginality." The project was designed to ensure Koorie empowerment, employment, and role models for Aboriginal students. Designed for upper primary to tertiary level, the kit was suitable for Koorie Studies, Art and Design courses, Australian History subjects, women's studies and the humanities.

Consultative Committee meetings were lively and intense as we refined content, chose images, finalised grant applications, and resolved contractual and copyright issues. At a workshop early on, the artists expressed a desire for their

work to be represented and written about for schools. Any profits made from the kit were to be directed into a scholarship fund for Koorie women artists. We applied to the NGV for the exhibition/launch to be in the Access Gallery, a space which gave community and cultural groups exhibition opportunities. While the kit included three works by each artist, the exhibition allowed for many more works to be displayed.

The project title illuminated a lack of knowledge and recognition of Aboriginal cultural practices in the south-east; practices ever present but made invisible by being forbidden or destroyed through colonisation and genocide, or dismissed due to the gender bias of the art world and the limited, anthropological view of Aboriginal art by some major collecting institutions. The kit presented multiple viewpoints, and spoke of survival and continuity, of environmental destruction, and of the alienation and racism many of the artists experienced at school.

Central to the project was women telling their own stories. The catalogue and labels used the artist statements Kate Harvey had produced, where the artists spoke unmediated by curators or academics. Aunty Connie Hart (born 1917) and Aunty Rachel Mullet (born 1935) shared powerful and moving memories. Connie Hart, an Elder of the Gunditjmarra people, told of her carefree childhood with relatives and Elders at Lake Condah, despite the strictures of the mission system. When she returned to Little Dunmore aged 63 she found the rare grass for weaving, a skill she taught until her death. Sadly, Connie Hart died a few weeks before the launch. Her family told us she had been very excited about the project, and therefore allowed us to continue using her works. Rachel Mullett, a Gunnai/Monero Elder, spoke of learning the Monero language from her aunts, and of her family of 11 who were continuously on the move to seek work, and to protect the children from being taken. She always drew on swept earth or wet sand, and scratched into rocks, and loved using crayons at school before leaving at 13.

The launch kicked off a week of events including a seminar on strategies for cross-cultural teaching. A free concert in the Great

Hall with Ruby Hunter, Tiddas and Ochre was attended by over 900 people. Uncle Archie was there too, supporting the musicians. The NGV Board gave free entrance to the Koorie community, waiving the entrance fee charged by the Gallery in those days. We had distributed the entry cards all over the state. The effects of the project were far-reaching with 15,000 people attending the exhibition over three weeks, and it received national coverage in the print and electronic media.

Since then, things have changed a great deal in relation to showing artists of the south-east and their representation in exhibitions and collections. It is wonderful that this project is the kernel of *Seen and Unseen* almost 30 years later. In widening the circle of exhibitors, the Koorie Heritage Trust will ensure many more people will revisit or be introduced to the creative power of these artists and their multilayered stories and knowledge, and honour and acknowledge the contribution they make to the dynamic Indigenous art scene both in Australia and internationally.

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Blak: "A term used by some Aboriginal people to reclaim historical, representational, symbolical and romanticised notions of Black or Blackness." Destiny Deacon, in her exhibition *Blak lik mi*, 1991.

The Women's Art Register (WAR) is a living archive of women's art practice holding documentation of over 5000 artists. Since 1975, WAR has provided material for research, education, advocacy and support to enhance the status and representation of women artists. It is run largely by volunteer artists and art workers and is located at Richmond Library.

Funding bodies included VAEAI, The Stegley Foundation, The Telematics Trust, The Reichstein Foundation, and Vic Health.

PG 24

**Lisa Kennedy (Trawlwoolway)**  
*Past, Present, Future (Tryptich)* 1993  
pastel on paper  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust

PG 28

**Sandra Aitken (Gunditjmarra)**  
*Healing Walk Eel Trap* 2012  
plastic hay bale twine  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust













# SEEN AND UNSEEN: REASSERTING BLAK IDENTITY, CULTURE AND PEOPLE IN URBAN AREAS

Timmah Ball

PG 30  
**Treahna Hamm (Yorta Yorta)**  
*Paradise Overkill (A/P)* 1998  
colour etching and  
aquatint on paper  
Courtesy of Indi Clarke

**Aborigines,  
in Victoria?  
Aboriginal  
women, here,  
I've never seen  
one, and if  
I did, what  
would I say.**

**LYN THORPE  
(YORTA YORTA, ARTIST)**

In 1993, Yorta Yorta artist Maree Clarke and her brother Peter Clarke disrupted the settler narrative that “real Aboriginal art was by ‘blackfellas’ from remote locations” in the ground breaking exhibition *Can't See for Lookin — Koori Women Artists Educating*. It illuminated vital cultural practices abundant in South East Australia, which were often led by the Blak matriarchy. As the catalogue introduction proclaimed:

The title was chosen to challenge the ways white society tends to see, or not see, Koori people and culture. It dispels the Gubbah mythology that there are no more ‘real’ Aboriginal people in Victoria, and calls for recognition.

The influence and impact of this statement and exhibition have been profound. For multiple generations, First Nations people were falsely categorised into binaries that obliterated the distinct language groups that continued to exist throughout the continent. We were *seen* in specific geospatial contexts – remote, regional, outback, or desert – but frighteningly *unseen* in cities, suburbs and towns.

The perceived invisibility of South East mob in urban areas uncomfortably ignored the art, resilience and everyday existence of urban Koori people living in Narm/Birrarung-Ga, and the wider Blak diaspora that had moved here. It falsely assumed that mob had not adapted and flourished under the hyper-capitalist conditions of colonialism in cities. Mob had created their own forms of expression, activism and survivance through art, culture and community organising, with outputs as divergent as Ilbijerri Theatre Company, community-controlled health services, The Koori Mail, The Aboriginal Advancement League and the Koorie Heritage Trust, which opened in 1985. In addition, the city brimmed with powerful activists like Gary Foley, Robbie Thorpe, Lisa Belleair and more, which strengthened South East mob's ability to collectivise in urban environments and assert sovereignty. To assume that there were no more ‘real’ Aboriginal people in Victoria perpetuated colonialism, and severely undermined the Blak work and

community that thrived. As Belleair articulated with incisive sarcasm in *Women's Liberation*, cognitive dissidence permeated the city.

In 2021, almost thirty years later, the socio-cultural landscape has transformed in Narrm/Birrarung-ga. *Seen and Unseen* becomes a powerful reminder of the artists and impact of the 1993 exhibition whose influence has helped reshape the city, asserting Koori people's rights for a sovereign future, both in the arts and beyond. Blak culture has not only increased in visibility, but on a deeper level is beginning to influence the future planning of cities and urban areas.

Since 1993, Maree Clarke's art practice has evocatively contested the narrative of erasure, which persisted in urban environments and has influenced multiple public art works by emerging and celebrated Blak artists like Reko Rennie, Robert Young and Megan Cope. Works such as *Wominjeka Tarnuk Yooroom (Welcome Bowl)*, 2013 by Maree Clarke in collaboration with Vicki Couzens reveals the culture and pre-colonial environment of the Eastern Kulin nations in urban Footscray. Ten bluestone boulders circle the corners of Paisley and Nicholson Streets in Footscray, representing a traditional coolamon (Wooden vessel) used for Welcome to Country ceremonies. The boulders' dominant physicality demonstrates ongoing cultural presence and practice. South East Koori mob did not disappear in the presence of rapidly gentrifying cosmopolitan Footscray; they survived and continue to thrive. Clarke and Couzens ensure Kulin mob are seen.

Clarke's public art and the 1993 exhibition helped establish new precedents that continue to echo through the city. From Brunswick to Ringwood and across the CBD, Blak culture is seen both in galleries, on the street and in urban developments. Recently, Hayley Millar Barker's electrifying *I Will Survive*, 2020, which was temporarily installed at the State Library of Victoria forecourt for PHOTO 2021, reinserted family stories passed on to her. A young Blak woman's presence enables us to imagine different futures where our ancestry guides us through uncertain times. Her work sits within a growing lineage of urban projects, such as the Yirramboi First Nations Festival; the renaming of Carlton alleyway to

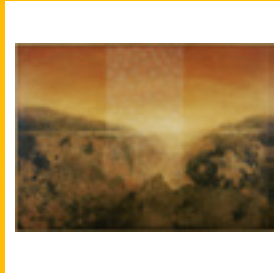
*Warrior Woman Lane*, with murals by Charlotte Allingham honouring Lisa Belleair; the Metro Tunnel, with installations by Josh Muir and Ronald Edwards Pepper; and, Rising Festival Art Trams, with murals by Aunty Zeta Thomson, Jarra Karalinar Steel, Ray Thomas, Aunty Rochelle Patten, Thomas Marks and Deanne Gilson. This diverse mix of installations, performances and music redefines the city, and colonial Melbourne becomes a sovereign Aboriginal place.

More significantly, the increased visibility of Blak art, culture, language and people in the CBD and surrounding suburbs has ignited greater public consciousness of the role Indigenous knowledge can play in the future of urban environments. Despite settler amnesia, the influence of Koori art and exhibitions has radically shifted perceptions of contemporary Indigenous art and most importantly how we see the city itself.

# ARTWORK INDEX



**Sandra Aitken (Gunditjmara)**  
*Healing Walk Eel Trap* 2012  
 plastic hay bale twine  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Karen Casey (Australian Indigenous, Anglo-Celtic)**  
*Temporal Tracing* 2000  
 mixed media, aged Linolium, synthetic polymer and mica on board  
 Courtesy of Karen Casey



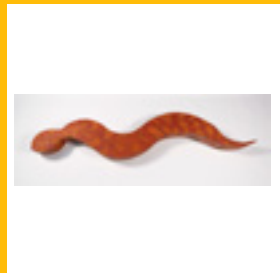
**Karen Casey (Australian Indigenous, Anglo-Celtic)**  
*Wadaloada Dreaming* 2017  
 video  
 Courtesy of Karen Casey



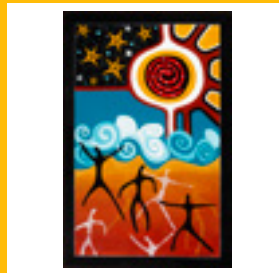
**Maree Clarke (Mutti Mutti, Wamba Wamba, Yorta Yorta, Boonwurrung)**  
*Earrings* c. 1987  
 echidna quill, acrylic on mulga wood, metal  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Maree Clarke (Mutti Mutti, Wamba Wamba, Yorta Yorta, Boonwurrung)**  
*Earrings* c. 1987  
 acrylic on mulga wood, metal  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Maree Clarke (Mutti Mutti, Wamba Wamba, Yorta Yorta, Boonwurrung)**  
 Len Tregonning (Guncui/Kurnai)  
*Sculpture* 1992  
 pokerwork and stain on wood  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



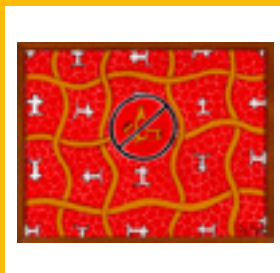
**Sonja Hodge (Lardil, Yangkaal)**  
 Peter Clarke (Mutti Mutti, Latje Latje, Wamba Wamba)  
*New Day Dawning* c. 1995  
 acrylic on paper  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Vicki Couzens (Kirrae Wurrung, Gunditjmara)**  
*Clan (2) Possum Skin*  
*Cloak Design* 1998  
 chalk and pastel on paper  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Vicki Couzens (Kirrae Wurrung, Gunditjmara)**  
*Ancestral memories* 1998  
 ink on paper  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Les Griggs (Gunditjmara)**  
*Three Civilised Evils (Triptych)* 1988  
 acrylic on canvas board  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Treahna Hamm (Yorta Yorta)**  
*Paradise Overkill (A/P)* 1998  
 colour etching and aquatint on paper  
 Courtesy of Indi Clarke



**Treahna Hamm (Yorta Yorta)**  
*Turtle* c. 2002  
 reeds, plant fibre  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Treahna Hamm (Yorta Yorta)**  
*Turtle* c. 2002  
 reeds, turtle shell  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



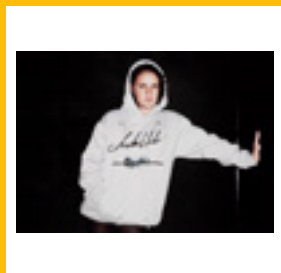
**Sonja Hodge (Gunditjmara)**  
*Basket* c. 1989  
 flat grass  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Sonja Hodge (Gunditjmara)**  
*Basket* c. 1989  
 speargrass  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Connie Hart (Gunditjmara)**  
*Basket* c. 1994  
 reeds  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**James Henry (Yorta Yorta, Kamilaroi)**  
*Arika Waulu* (Gunditjmara, Gunnai) 2011  
 photographic print on paper  
 Commissioned 2011  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



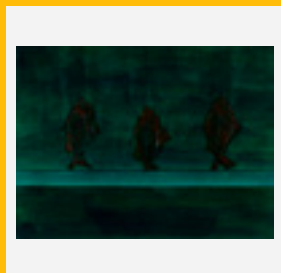
**Sonja Hodge (Lardil, Yangkaal)**  
*Earrings* c. 1987  
 acrylic on mulga wood, metal  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



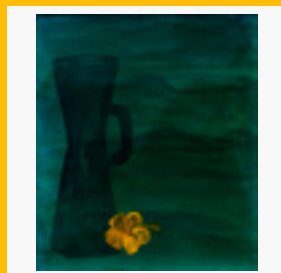
**Sonja Hodge (Lardil, Yangkaal)**  
*Brooch* 1994  
 acrylic on cedar wood, metal  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



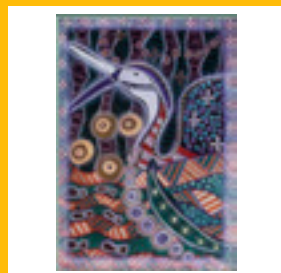
**Ellen José (Torres Strait Islander)**  
*Simply Surviving* (Triptych) 1991  
 watercolour and gouache on paper  
 On loan from the Ellen José Memorial Foundation



**Ellen José (Torres Strait Islander)**  
*Three Down, Two to Go* 2002  
 oil on linen  
 On loan from the Ellen José Memorial Foundation



**Ellen José (Torres Strait Islander)**  
*My Island My Home My People* 2005  
 oil on linen  
 On loan from the Ellen José Memorial Foundation



**Lisa Kennedy (Trawlwoolway)**  
*Past, Present, Future* (Triptych) 1993  
 pastel on paper  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Kiah Krafts**  
*Earrings* c. 1987  
 acrylic on mulga wood, metal  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Kiah Krafts**  
Earrings c. 1993  
paint on wood, metal  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



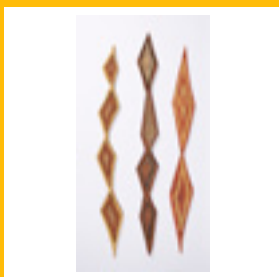
**Kiah Krafts**  
Necklace c. 1988  
gum nuts, line  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



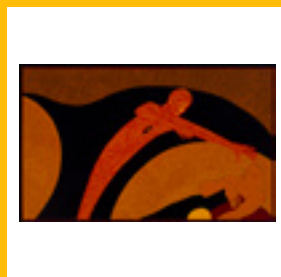
**Kiah Krafts**  
Necklace c. 1993  
seeds, echidna quill, line  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Kiah Krafts**  
Brooch c. 1990s  
acrylic on wood, metal  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



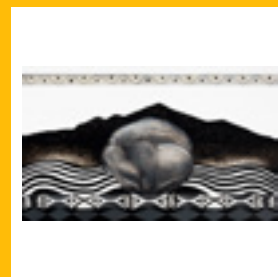
**Kelly Koumalatosos (Wergaia, Wamba Wamba)**  
Totem c. 1998  
acrylic and ochre on wood  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



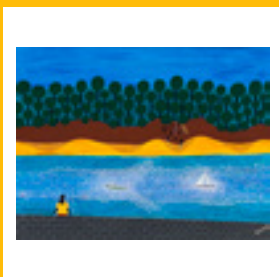
**Donna Leslie (Gamilaroi)**  
Watching Over Me: On the Inside 1996  
acrylic on canvas  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Gayle Maddigan (Dhudhuroa, Nari Nari, Wamba Wamba, Wegaia)**  
Bloodlines c. 2006  
wool, synthetic fibre backing  
Gift of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, 2011  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



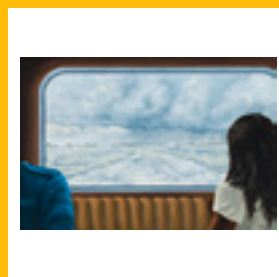
**Kent Morris (Karnu-Barkindji)**  
Marngrook - My Father's Country 2011  
oil on canvas  
Gift of Kent Morris, 2013  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Rachel Mullett (Gunnai, Monero)**  
Metung c. 1990  
acrylic on canvas  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



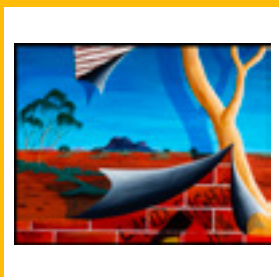
**Rachel Mullett (Gunnai, Monero)**  
Our Basket 2004  
acrylic on canvas  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Lin Onus (Yorta Yorta)**  
On the Deniliquin Road c. 1985  
acrylic on canvas  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Irene Norman (Wailwan)**  
You Took My Child 2014  
acrylic on canvas  
Acquired through the Norma Gleeson Fund, 2015  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Ray Thomas (Brabrawooloong, Gunnai)**  
Land Rights c. 1991  
acrylic on canvas  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



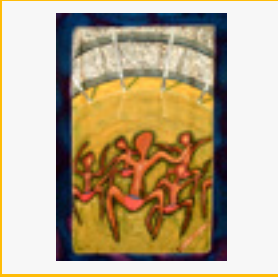
**Ray Thomas (Brabrawooloong, Gunnai)**  
NAIDOC c. 1991  
acrylic on canvas  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Ray Thomas (Brabrawooloong, Gunnai)**  
Lake Tyers Aboriginal Station 1861 to present 2004  
acrylic on canvas  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



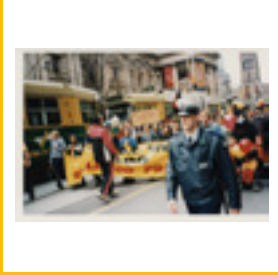
**Lyn Thorpe (Yorta Yorta, Wamba Wamba, Wadi Wadi)**  
Very Much Alive 1996  
acrylic on canvas  
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



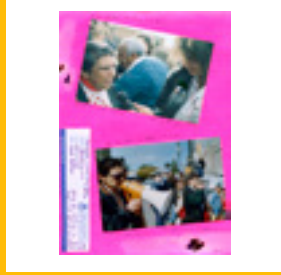
**Lyn Thorpe (Yorta Yorta, Wamba Wamba, Wadi Wadi)**  
*Koori Youth Will Shake Spear* 2000  
 Procion Dyes on Gouta silk  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



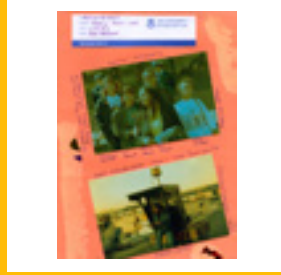
**Len Tregonning (Gunnai/Kurnai)**  
*Gunnai/Kurnai Shields (Triptych)* 2010  
 acrylic and gold leaf on canvas  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



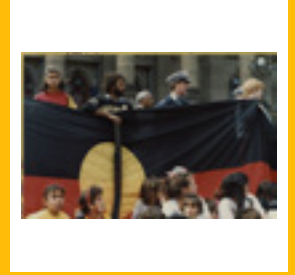
**Lisa Bellear (Goenpil, Noonuccal, Minjungbal, South Sea Islander)**  
*NAIDOC march, with a police officer in the foreground, Swanston Street, Melbourne* 2000  
 digital print on aluminium  
 Gift of John Stewart, 2012  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Lisa Bellear (Goenpil, Noonuccal, Minjungbal, South Sea Islander)**  
*Speaking out* 1997  
 paper, colour photos, ink, foil glitter, Blu tack, glue  
 Gift of John Stewart, 2012  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



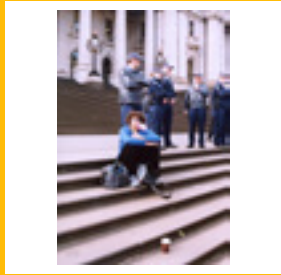
**Lisa Bellear (Goenpil, Noonuccal, Minjungbal, South Sea Islander)**  
*Poetry-Music-Love* 1997  
 paper, colour photos, ink, foil glitter, Blu tack, glue  
 Gift of John Stewart, 2012  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Lisa Bellear (Goenpil, Noonuccal, Minjungbal, South Sea Islander)**  
*Group demonstrating on steps of Parliament House* c. 1996  
 digital print on aluminium  
 Gift of John Stewart, 2012  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Lisa Bellear (Goenpil, Noonuccal, Minjungbal, South Sea Islander)**  
*NAIDOC march 2000*  
 digital print on paper  
 Gift of John Stewart, 2012  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Janina Harding (Meriam (Erub/Mer))**  
*Lisa Bellear at "Fight Racism and Oppression" rally* 2004  
 digital print on paper  
 Gift of John Stewart, 2012  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Education Resource Kit**  
 with 36 Slides, Booklet and 'Letter to A Teacher' *Can't See for Lookin*, 12  
*Koori Women Artists Educating* 1993

Produced as a joint project between the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. and the Women's Art Register.  
 Compiler: Kate Harvey  
 Production: Peter Clarke, Liz McAloon, Merren Ricketson  
 Project working Party: Peter Clarke, Maree Clarke, Kate Harvey, Sonja Hodge, Ellen José, Liz McAloon, Merren Ricketson  
 Gift of the Women's Art Register, 2021  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Exhibition Catalogue**  
*Can't See for Lookin, Koori Women Artists Educating*  
 National Gallery of Victoria  
 Access Gallery  
 4-27 June 1993  
 ink on paper  
 Gift of the Women's Art Register, 2021  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



**Exhibition Invitation**  
*Can't See For Lookin, Koorie Women Artists Educating* 1993  
 National Gallery of Victoria  
 Access Gallery  
 ink on paper (facsimile)  
 On loan from the Women's Art Register



**Exhibition Catalogue (fold out poster)**  
*Contemporary Koori Art*,  
 Feb 5-28, 1993  
 Westpac Gallery, Melbourne  
 ink on paper  
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust



GNOKAN DANNA MURRA KOR-KI

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