

Layers of Blak celebrates the creative outcome of the Koorie Heritage Trust's second year of the *Blak Design* program, showcasing jewellery from eleven Victorian First Peoples artists.

The *Blak Design* program is the first of its kind nationally, marking a crucial step in recognising and reclaiming space for First Peoples design in the wider Australian design landscape. Presented by the KHT in partnership with the National Gallery of Victoria and RMIT University, with generous support from the Ian Potter Foundation, *Blak Design* aims to foster First Peoples cultural innovation within the Victorian design sector and provide a platform for nurturing sustainable, collaborative First Peoples design practices.

Building on their passion for jewellery design, the participating artists have undertaken a series of jewellery making intensives at RMIT jewellery studios with notable jewellers Blanche Tilden and Laura Deakin, assisted by Lindy McSwan.

Each artist presents a beautiful range of contemporary jewellery, layered with complexity and grounded in their connection to culture, Country and family and the rich legacy of adornment these hold. The works draw on cultural connections through materials and design, while embracing experimentation with creative ways to reimagine jewellery.

Select pieces from the *Layers of Black* exhibition are available for purchase on request.

Please send all enquiries to exhibitions@korieheritagetrust.com

A series of short films featuring the *Layers of Black* exhibiting artists is currently being screened upstairs on level 3.

Featuring works by:

Thelma Austin

Gunditjmara

Mandi Barton

Yorta Yorta, Barapa Barapa, Wemba Wemba

Lorraine Brigdale

Yorta Yorta

Nikki Browne

Bidjara

Deanne Gilson

Wadawurrung

Tammy Gilson

Wadawurrung

Elijah Money

Wiradjuri

Yasmin Silveira

Palawa

Sammy Trist

Taungurung

Dominic White

Palawa

Tracy Wise

Barkindji Ngayampaa Maligundidj

THELMA AUSTIN

Gunditjmara

Blak Queens – The journey of an Aboriginal woman connecting with the journey of a gumtree

Bubba crown – Germination and growth

2022

sterling silver

Bubba crown – Germination and growth represents the journey of a Blak Queen from conception until her early 20's, on her journey she will be held, cuddled, educated and protected by family, Aunty girls and Elders. She will be looked after and guided by them for many years to help her become a young woman. She will experience a lot of firsts, first cuddles, first steps, first words, first day at school, first job and first time as a young adult.

This journey also connects with the germination and growth cycle of gumtree, it's a beautiful journey of growth from a seed to a young gumtree. The sterling silver crown was made by wax casting and soldering. The crown has young gum leaves connecting with mother earth's layers of Country.

Aunty crown – Flowering

2022

sterling silver, copper

Aunty crown – Flowering represents the journey of a Blak Queen from her early 20's until she becomes a Matriarch, on her journey she will grow from a young woman to a woman, she will become a Mum, Aunty and Grandmother if not through blood it will be through our kinship networks. She will gain many learnings on this journey, she will have ups and downs, she will live, love, laugh and cry.

This is a long journey where she will gain scars on her mind, body, heart, and spirit, along the way she will also heal and keep growing. She is brave, passionate, and beautiful. All these elements can be seen in the textures of the gum leaves in this crown.

This journey also connects with the flowering cycle of a gumtree. She will go through her journey and come out as a beautiful flowering gum. The Aunty crown is made from copper that has been used in the electroforming process, all gum leaves have been hand sawn, filed, and riveted together.

Text continues next page

Matriarch crown – Fertilisation and seed release

2022

sterling silver, copper, brass

Matriarch crown – Fertilisation and seed release represents a Blak Queen in her Eldership, she is everything a Bubba and Aunty wants to become, she is proud, elegant, beautiful, wise, kind, cultural, honest, firm, respectful, and walks with grace, carrying all the knowledge she has gained through your journey. She teaches the next generation the important cultural ways of our people continuing the lifecycle of an Aboriginal women. She is a Matriarch!

The crown has been designed with all these elements at the forefront of our mind, I have etched the backbone of the gumleaf into the leaves to represent our matriarchs, the Blak Queens who hold our families and communities together. They are the backbone of our people. The gum leaves have been sawn by hand, etched and riveted together. I have also made silver gumnuts to be placed on the crown to represent the fertilisation and seed release cycle of the gumtree, the seeds fall from the dried gumnut into Mother Earth to restart the journey again.

Thelma Austin, 2022

Collection of the artist

MANDI BARTON

Yorta Yorta, Barappa Barappa, Wemba Wemba

Danin (Float) Necklace 1

Danin (Float) Necklace 2

Danin (Float) Necklace 3

2022

possum skin, aluminium

Danin (Float) reflects my journey connecting with culture, community and Country to strengthen my identity and to have a voice, to show up, to be proud.

Growing up in the suburbs on the edge of the industrial sites there wasn't much 'country' but we had the creek 'Stony Creek' that ran through West Footscray, Kingsville and Yarraville. We would often make paper boats, bark boats or leaf boats and watch them float down the stream. An urban kid connecting to Country. Wala (water) is main design symbol in all the pendants as it is a strong cultural connection to all my daughters.

The aluminium symbolises Footscray (the Western Suburbs), the place I grew up, the railway lines and the steel works. It also denotes a time when we used to look for cans so that we could 'cash them in'. An energy transfer was produced when applying texture to aluminium, coincidentally the results appear similar to the practice of traditional scarring.

An initial raft/canoe shape was applied to the aluminium to wrap it around the possum skin. Possum skin is a traditional material I have utilised in the piece to represent culture wrapping around and coming through the metal, supporting and always being present.

Danin (Float) Necklace 1 represents *dance* and my youngest daughter, she brings the energy of dance. *Danin (Float) Necklace 2* represents *home* and my middle daughter. Home is important to her. *Danin (Float) Necklace 3* represents *family* and my eldest daughter, 'family' is her symbol. Each of these symbols – *dance*, *home* and *family* – are burnt onto the possum skin.

Mandi Barton, 2022

Collection of the artist

LORRAINE BRIGDALE

Yorta Yorta

Remember

Remember

Remember

2022

sterling silver

Remember

Remember

Remember

2022

wire, leather, silver

I take the time to acknowledge (and remember), the craft of my ancestors which was an important part of an ancient people's method of survival. Using fine silver to create a drawing like image, of an object which was traditionally made of grasses or other natural fibres and used in everyday life of Aboriginal people, I consider the perceived value of Aboriginal people's work and the materials they used.

I explore and experiment with a handcraft that was used by my ancestors in making everyday objects. My hands bending the wire in a loop net weave to create a shadowy sketch of the dilly bag, were reminded of coil weaving with natural grasses, the inexpensive wire used to create a beautiful object brings to mind the low perceived value of Australian Aboriginal people's work in the time of colonisation.

Lorraine Brigdale, 2022

Collection of the artist

NIKKI BROWNE

Bidjara

STOP KILLING COUNTRY

2022

sewing machine cogs, gum leaves, resin, copper, silver

STOP KILLING COUNTRY

2022

gum leaves, gum nuts, resin, copper, silver

2 parts

STOP KILLING COUNTRY was inspired by my love of Country and looking after Country, and the industrial world killing our Country. The gum leaves are from my childhood I would decorate them and give them as gifts, the prehistoric size of the large blue gum leaves represents Aboriginal culture dating back over 65 000 years. The leaves also speak too. Although you may have never seen these enormous gum leaves that doesn't mean they don't exist. There's so much about Country, plants and animals that we may not know or see, but it still needs to be protected.

The Sewing machine cogs represent industry – cars, logging trucks, commercial industry – the churning of engines, pollution, manufacturing. Government making decisions about logging and mining, destroying Country for roads and housing. Although industry is needed it's about making environmental choices about industry, there's a lot of different ways we can have industry working in an environmentally sustainable way. The oil slick on the cogs represents pollutants, engine oils the pollutants poisoning Country, plants and animals.

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STOP KILLING COUNTRY

2022

sea urchin spines, sewing machine cogs, copper

STOP KILLING COUNTRY

2022

sea urchin spines, copper, silver

2 parts

STOP KILLING COUNTRY was inspired by my love of water and speaking to looking after our waterways whether they be oceans, rivers, waterholes, creeks and all things related to water. The industrial world is poisoning and redirecting the natural flow of the water that heals our Country.

The sea urchin spines were gifted to me, I connected with the tactile nature of them. The feeling of stone and the ochre colours of Country. The patterns of nature that link to our adornments, iconography, cultural stories, rock art and ceremony through painting our bodies in ochre. The oil slick on the sewing machine cogs speaks to the pollution going into our waterways, the oil spills that kill our ocean plants and creatures. The constant evolution of pollutants and industry that is pouring into the natural waters of Country and killing animals – land animals drinking and bathing in the water, fish, crustaceans, corals, micro-organisms – being killed off from the evolution of man. The government not protecting our waterways and oceans.

The sea urchin spines also connect with sound. The sound of them rattling together connecting to the sounds of pebbles clunking together in our rivers and creeks, eel, fish and fresh water crustaceans, land animals, bugs all moving around in and above water. The ocean sounds of sea urchins, fish, whales, dolphins, seals, micro-organisms, octopus and all things living under the water. The orchestra of sounds, the songs that would be heard by the creatures that live submerged in these environments. The sound of the waves dragging pebbles back into the ocean. The clanging music of our waterways.

Nikki Browne, 2022

Collection of the artist

DEANNE GILSON

Wadawurrung

Past: Mok burreyin Wadawurrung Ba-gurrk Murnong, Goim Ngurgang Toor Murrup (Proud Wadawurrung Women Digging for Murnong alongside Female Kangaroo Spirit, All Standing Proud).

Pre-colonisation

2022

female kangaroo tail, sterling silver, silk thread, velvet, yellow ochre (sourced only on Wadawurrung Country), acrylic paint

Standing proud, past tense, pre-colonisation, a female kangaroo tail is imbued with the notion of the spirit of my matriarchal ancestral women. This tail is depicted as a pre cursor to the Victorian collars our women were made to wear post colonisation. The kangaroo cannot stand unless the tail is strong to balance her and move her forward. This is a metaphor for standing proud and moving forward. It reflects a continuation of our cultural practices and the passing down of knowledge. A couple of hundred years ago now my ancestral women went about their daily lives, harvesting the murnong (yam daisy) tubers, feeding their children and creating beautiful adornments and clothing to wear out of possum and kangaroo skins. Emu feathers, shells, native grasses and reeds were used for adornment decoration and clothing.

The female skin is softer and was used to wrap our pupups (babies). The fur did not choke in their mouths being shorter. Our women used sacred digging sticks to dig the murnong daisy tubers up, that were eaten raw or cooked on a fire. This was a main food source for our family, especially small children. The sacred and valued stick was buried with the women so that they could continue their work in the Dreaming and watching over their children in the spirit world. The native bee watches over too and pollinates the murnong, as well the much loved and equally important banksia tree. Many indigenous plants and bees, are fast becoming endangered and without them we cannot grow and sustain a healthy life and food source.

My practice deals with issues of climate change as well as traditional and contemporary women's business, I see all the elements as interconnected, keeping us alive and strong. The water painted on the skin is a traditional Wadawurrung mark and makes me proud to continue my ancestral marks, coupled with the element of water to sustain us. We are made up of water and connected to the water spirit that runs through Country, we cannot be separated from it. The female kangaroo skin mimics my own, both women trying to survive and protect our children. I give thanks to the kangaroo spirits that have allowed me to use their skins, as all have a living presence even in death. The sterling silver has allowed me to highlight the many components of my story telling and is a contemporary jewellery aspect of my work, it has a beautiful feminine essence that aids in highlighting how beautiful our women, stories and culture are.

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Mok burreyin Wadawurrung Mundi-gurrk, Goim Ngurgang Toor Murrup, Nan's spirit watching over me as a Butterfly and gifting me Chocolate Lilies. Post Colonisation to Present Tense

2022

female kangaroo tail, sterling silver, cotton, organza, silk thread, velvet, lace

The Black tail design tells the story of the colonised Aboriginal woman from post colonisation until present day. This is important to note as many issues of the colonial male and female gaze still exist and continue to affect us. There is a derogative sexual reference to the Aboriginal woman's sexual organs as black velvet, this has been referred to with the use of velvet in all three collars. As if by mistake and I acknowledge nothing is, a woman's uterus is captured in the naturally occurring shape of the tail and the strings either side, as the collar design was being created. I see this as a gift from my Nan and my ancestral women's spirit, acknowledging that my work creates a safe space to tell her story. The heavy darkness depicted as the colour black, is not a reference to skin colour, instead holds many sad emotions, that I as an Aboriginal woman acknowledge. I do not want this to define and have power over my voice anymore. These emotions are still present as underlying trauma but do not define my voice into the future. We were made to look like the white woman, dressed up like a trophy wife and made to act like her and be like her, but not treated like her. We were her domestic and his sexual slave. She was adorned and exotic, something other than who she really was. The positioning of the tail replaces and overrides the lace of the Victorian women, it hangs at the front and depicts her strength and culture as being still present, still standing proud, the forefront of strength for our children, not untouched, instead positioned as being outed and visible. This piece was made out of love for my Nan, my mum's mum Rita Dalton (nee Fagan) and is a symbol of her strength and resilience and her fighting spirit. My dear Nan, her story is now made visible for the first time and we see her. She watches over me as a butterfly in my garden and as I look for the chocolate lilies sprouting every year on Wadawurrung Dja (Country).

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Mok burreyin Wadawurrung Ba-gurrk (Wadawurrung Women Standing Proud) Future Tense, Our Children Being Embraced

2022

female kangaroo tails, sterling silver, cotton, silk thread, pink and white ceremonial ochre, acrylic paint

The final tail, represents me now and working towards a brighter future for our children. Highlighting the flowering gum blossom from our Creation Story, my lived experience coupled with that of my grandson Arlo, me embracing him and my love for indigenous plants and flowers. I go on daily walks on Wadawurrung Dja (Country) and notice the blossoming of the different seasons as they change throughout the year and subtle changes in the environment – good and bad. As I walk I often wonder about how Arlo's life will be when I'm not here and how so many indigenous plants and animals are fast disappearing. My goal is to use my art practice to immortalise as many as I can from my Country to leave images behind for our future generations. The kangaroo skin was used to wrap our children up and keep them warm and this neck adornment stands for protection and love for them. Being visible and practicing culture once again through gentle ceremonies of smoking and healing practices. The leaves of the gum tree are used in smoking ceremonies and hold our sacred knowledge within. The bottle brush is included for its beautiful shapes and colours, all continuing Wadawurrung Songlines through art practice as ceremony and a celebration of culture. Country is in me and held within my adornments that are not really contemporary jewellery designs, but something new and other, not the 'exotic other', instead being my voice as a First Nations woman, mother, sister, Aunty and Nan to Arlo. The tree is my life force, as is the tail, from Goim, working like a cultural thread pushing me forward and standing proud. Nyatne, Deanne.

Deanne Gilson, 2022

Collection of the artist

TAMMY GILSON

Wadawurrung

Darrabarruk mongarrk perk:perk (new echidna quill adornment)

2022

echidna quills, sterling silver

Mongarrk murrun (echidna alive)

2022

echidna quills, sterling silver

Mongarrk perk:perk wirrng 1 (echidna quill earrings)

2022

echidna quills, sterling silver

2 parts

Mongarrk perk:perk wirrng 2 (echidna quill earrings)

2022

echidna quills, sterling silver

2 parts

Mongarrk is 'echidna' in Wadawurrung language. My ancestors had many uses for the mongarrk perk:perk (echidna quill) and over many years I was handed the knowledge of how to process them. The echidna is a very small and slow-moving mammal and I often find them on the side of the road. As sad as it is, I take them home and rest them for six months under a crate in the paddock with a blue stone on top, until the perk:perk (quills) are easily removed. I prepare them to use, but not before honouring mongarrk. The rest I pass through sacred smoke from a fire and return back to Country. I give darrabarruk (new life) to the perk:perk (quills) and transform them into designer adornment pieces.

Perk:perk means 'quill' in Wadawurrung language, but also refers to prickle as the quills are very sharp. A number of these monagarrk perk:perk (echidna quill) pieces incorporate lost wax casting techniques to produce sterling silver echidna quills, hammered sterling silver wire and silver chenier to hold the features together. These pieces bring together traditional knowledge and contemporary design. Each perk:perk (quill) is measured, drilled and prepared with care as the quills are made of keratin the same as our fingernails and over time harden. They are placed to follow the contour of the body and sanded to remove sharpness. This follows to natural shape on the mongarrk itself as they have the ability to roll into a ball to protect themselves from predators, so it seems natural to design with them in this way.

I feel a sense of protection with these pieces, as mongarrk used her perk:perk (quills) to protect herself.

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Ngarrama (to burn)

2022

sterling silver, grass tree flower stem, grass tree resin, charcoal, possum fur

Wiyng kalk wirring (firestick earrings)

2022

grass tree fire stick, sterling silver, grass tree resin

2 parts

Ngarrama (to burn) represents many years of learning and respect for Country applied through managing and nourishing our people and landscape with cultural fire. In May 2022, I co-facilitated a women's cultural burn workshop on Wadawurrung Country which was the first for Victoria. The stem or flower stalk from the grass tree was used during a cultural burn to mop out and also used for the closing fire dance ceremony.

The Wiyng kalk (fire stick) is used as the signature piece in these adornments. The Wiyng kalk (firestick) is reburnt and covered with djuwutji (resin) from the grass tree which is a sought-after commodity used as an adhesive. Mixed with charcoal and other materials to bind together and coat the cut fire stick. The stem or flower stalk from the fire stick holds memories of women coming together, empowering one another and applying fire to the landscape.

The three pieces of Wiyng kalk (fire stick) in *Ngarrama (to burn)* represent three generations – my Mum as she welcomed our visitors to Country at the workshop; myself acknowledging my love for managing Country with fire; and the third represents my daughter, the next generation to hold the knowledge. The centre is hollow and represents the next part of the process.

After the fire comes the aerating of the soil represented by the silver digging stick. It is concave on one end for digging and pointy on the other for aerating. The digging stick was used to prepare the soil for the women to plant with food plants, such as Murnong.

Tammy Gilson, 2022

Collection of the artist

ELIJAH MONEY

Wiradjuri

Namesake

2022

sterling silver, 9ct gold

Our names are bestowed to us as gifts and as a way to share our identity. Through *Namesake* I wanted to pay homage to my lineage of last names, starting with my Wiradjuri last name 'Williams'. The only tile that contains two words 'make me' is a play on words of my biological father's last name. My legal last name, 'Money', is my mother's maiden name; a name that I legally chose to take on at 19 to share not only my love for my mother, but to feel connected with my sister as well.

Leaning into the strength of communicating, it felt fitting to create a 25-word poem that encapsulates the short and vulnerable entirety of my 25 years of existence.

This piece doesn't contain a clasp, as it doesn't end. My presence and story do not end here. I am doing my best to continue evolving, growing, learning and nurturing both myself and others. My identity contains multitudes and I am multifaceted like that of a precious gem.

Predominantly made by carving my handwriting into wax with the addition of stamping certain words to add emphasis, this piece is made from recycled sterling silver and uses yellow 9ct gold to highlight points of connection.

Poem: from William's to MAKE ME, now MONEY, from country, to.... travel to home now guest

fragile rattled blood bones comfortable resting learning self and love

Elijah Money, 2022

Collection of the artist

YASMIN SILVEIRA

Palawa

Coral Ring

Coral Ring II

2022

sterling silver

I have made two coral rings – *Coral Ring* and *Coral Ring II* – for my Mum and I. We are both very connected to the water, as are our Saltwater mob. This year we look forward to being welcomed onto Country for the first time, and seeing Musselroe Bay where our ancestors thrived before colonisation.

Water connects and divides us from our Country in lutruwita (Tasmania). The 'Bass Strait' more specifically. Our ancestors were moved across waters from mainland lutruwita, to Flinders island, and then onto mainland Victoria in the Gippsland region. This is how my mother's family ended up in Victoria. It is an uncomfortable truth to sit with, that we are here due to the removal of First People from their Country.

Limpet Ring

2022

sterling silver

The *Limpet Ring* mimics the shape of a limpet that has dried and gone brittle due to sun exposure, and the middle of it has fallen away. I often find these on my beach walks and slip them onto my fingers like rings. Limpets have been used by our old people in body adornments for centuries – whole or broken. This piece is a homage to the traditional ways and values of these natural materials and shapes.

Maireener & Coral Necklace

2022

maireener shells, moss jasper beads, waxed cord, sterling silver

Maireener & Coral Necklace is the result of experimenting with threading, knotting, and balancing strings with different materials, taking inspiration from the book *Kanalaritja: An Unbroken String*. The sterling silver coral pieces are little replicas I had cast in silver from one perfect piece of coral I found on the beach near home. I wanted to replicate it in a semi-precious material, and multiply the beautiful pattern on its surface. I wanted to inject some colour into the body of work, something that complimented the natural iridescent colours of the Maireener shells.

Maireener/Limpet Earrings

2022

sterling silver

2 parts

The *Maireener/Limpet Earrings* are a consolidation of two different shapes. The maireener has a small tip at the top, while the limpet has the curved wavy bottom with lines running from the outer edge, coming in to meet at the centre. I pierced the inner lines and cut-out the centre using a saw, spending lots of time to file down the wavy edges of these shapes.

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Maireener Hoops

2022

maireener shells, sterling silver

2 parts

For *Maireener Hoops* I have threaded maireener shells onto sterling silver hoops, combining a traditional method with a contemporary material. The shells themselves are such a focal point I kept the use of silver to a minimum and using them as a form for the shells to sit upon.

Triton Shell Necklace

2022

brass, silver

After completing the mussel/limpet and urchin necklaces, I decided to experiment with the shape of the triton shell for the *Triton Shell Necklace*, which has been hand-cut and shaped from a sheet of brass.

Unbroken Links

2022

brass, silver

Unbroken Links is made up of shapes representing shells found in south-eastern waters. Mussel shapes represent Musselroe Bay – a significant place on my Country of lutruwita (Tasmania). Limpet shapes represent a common shell I find here on the beaches of Bunurong land (my home where I live).

The book *Kanalaritja: An Unbroken String* tells the history of stringing shells and how the tradition is still sacred and strong amongst Tasmanian Aboriginal women today. It is something I long to be taught on Country by community and Elders I am yet to meet. Using two different metals, I wanted to speak about two cultures coming together, and how that looks.

Urchin Necklace

2022

brass

Urchins are another object I find along beaches on Bunurong land. For *Urchin Necklace* I used a punch to create the bumps in the metal, piercing every line on its surface with a saw. I used a doming block and nylon hammer to give the urchins a nice, soft roundness, to unflatten them.

Yasmin Silveira, 2022

Collection of the artist

SAMMY TRIST

Taungurung

Damselfly Dreaming

2022

sterling silver, oxidized silver, anodized titanium

Damselfly Dreaming

2022

anodized titanium, sterling silver

Damselfly Dreaming

2022

anodized titanium, sterling silver, silk

I wanted to be surrounded by damselflies. I also wanted them to be light and delicate, to replicate a real damselfly. The Ancient Greenling damselfly's existence depends on clean fresh waterways to breed. They are endangered due to farming and global warming. I created the chain to represent the cumbunji I harvested from the wetlands to make rope.

I was taken with the colour of the anodized titanium and how it replicated the metallic colour of the Ancient Greenling Damselfly.

One of the damselfly's I have made features a double set of wings, to make it look like they are fluttering. For this *Damselfly Dreaming* I plaited silk thread, two strands of green and two strands of blue. The four strands plaited together represent myself and my three sisters, connected through blood and culture.

Damselfly Dreaming

2022

emu feathers, sterling silver

2 parts

Damselfly Dreaming

2022

emu feathers, sterling silver, water reed

2 parts

For the *Damselfly Dreaming* emu feather earrings I have coloured the emu feathers to represent the water and plants at the wetlands where the damselfly breeds. For one of the pairs, I have made a damselfly using fine silver wire to hang in amongst the feathers, as often you only see a glimpse of them as they dart past you.

Text continues next page

Damselfly Dreaming

2022

sterling silver, anodized titanium, cumbunji, water reed

2 parts

Damselfly Dreaming

2022

sterling silver, anodized titanium, cumbunji

2 parts

Damselfly Dreaming

2022

sterling silver, anodized titanium

2 parts

I harvested the water reeds from the wetlands near my house during winter this year. Using a small hand saw I cut the reeds into small pieces and then sanded the ends. I also harvested the cumbunji in March this year, hanging it up to dry for a month. I then soaked it overnight, and split the reeds by hand before weaving it into a fine rope. This process is my connection to Country and culture. We make water reed necklaces for ceremony and gifts. The damselfly breeds in clean waterways where the cumbunji and water reeds grow.

Sammy Trist, 2022

Collection of the artist

DOMINIC WHITE

Palawa

Kelp Ruff

2022

bull kelp, sterling silver, rubber

Kelp Ruff explores the kelp medium. Trying to maintain the essence of 'kelpness' and the cultural connection to the medium while applying it to a jewellery structure. The boldness of the flared kelp is unavoidable and asserts connection and relationship.

Round kelp overlap chain 1

2022

bull kelp, sterling silver, xanthoria resin
ed 1/40

The *Round kelp overlap chain 1* is possible due to the plasticity of kelp. Its ability to bend and form into shape then dry and hold that shape. The process of forming the individual link beads adapts the natural kelp to a formal circle design, that then reasserts its 'kelpness' as it dries on a form. These chain links are then threaded into an adornment. I hope the process mimics the translation from Western conformity into an assertion of identity and cultural connection.

Round silver kelp overlap chain no 1

2022

sterling silver, grass tree resin, epoxy
ed. 1/40

The cast silver links of *Round silver kelp overlap chain no 1* are taken from the kelp formed links. They take a step into the silversmithing jewellery world while maintaining their 'kelpness'. Each link maintains the skin texture of the kelp while in this silver form. The tonal variation speaks of transition and the multiple layers an assertion of Blak. This work asserts that regardless of the context of adornment, individual history and Western jewellery traditions. The essence of being here and the links of connections remain. The weight of the silver links changes the wearer's experience.

Silver kelp chain Necklace 1

2022

sterling silver

Silver kelp chain Necklace 1 refines these ideas in silver. It uses the refined aesthetic of delicate jewellery to explore the same themes. There is an element of translation from kelp to steel to silver. This belies the translation that happens from First Nations concepts to Western thought.

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Steel kelp chain Necklace 1

2022

mild steel

Steel kelp chain Necklace 1 was an expansion of the steel slave collar idea in other works I have produced. The form is based on a business tie. The steel is a hard conforming colonial material, yet its form references kelp. This is to state that regardless of how we conform to a colonial Western imposed form there is an adaption and growth that comes from a deep cultural and philosophical base that is unique. This runs counter to, and subverts, the intent of Western male business adornment.

I would like to acknowledge Aunty Nanette Shaw for her generosity in teaching me about kelp. Forever grateful for these opportunities and relationships.

Dominic White, 2022

Collection of the artist

TRACY WISE

Barkindji Ngiyampaa Maligundidj

Jahgany

2022

Australian native grass, brass, sterling silver

Jahgany

2022

sterling silver

Jahgany (#3 eel trinket)

2022

sterling silver

I acknowledge the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung people, from who's land I sourced fibre and where I weaved, casted and forged these jewellery pieces, not far from Birrarung (Yarra River) where the luk eels travel through and live.

I first sighted Jahgany the eel way before I began this program, as a cloud formation in the sky. During the making of the eels and eel trap pieces I was concerned about cultural appropriation, but the eel didn't stop appearing to me. I later found out that my people in Northern Coastal NSW had a creation story of the giant eel a creator being of the Bundjalung people. Making the eel trap and learning the natural grass technique was special and I would like to thank Lorraine Rain Brigdale for sharing her weaving knowledge with me, along with Aunty Caroline Briggs who put my mind at ease when she explained her story of luk the eel and why it is important to protect its habitat.

Tracy Wise, 2022

Collection of the artist