

Midland Junction Arts Centre

MANAGED BY MUNDARING ARTS CENTRE INC | SUPPORTED BY CITY OF SWAN



RE.COLLECTION

Curated by Samara King

16 March - 5 May 2024

With the deepest respect for First Nations communities and cultures, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this exhibition and catalogue contains images and names of deceased persons.

Each photograph has been screened by senior Elders before being reproduced. However, as some images' home communities are unknown, we welcome any advice or knowledge from visitors. Furthermore, if during this exhibition any images are found to depict inappropriate protocols or information they will be removed immediately, and the Returning Photos archive updated.

Re.Collection, curated by Samara King, celebrates the endurance of Aboriginal art and culture, exploring how archival photographs can be reclaimed and utilised as a connection and memory of First Nations history and experiences.

A selection of nineteenth and early twentieth century archival photographs are displayed in the West Gallery, featuring Aboriginal life from Western Australia. These images were sourced from the *Returning Photos* research project¹, which worked with four European museums - University of Oxford's Pitt River Museum², The Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology³, the Musée de Quai Branly in Paris and the Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen (National Museum of World Cultures) in Leiden, The Netherlands - to make their photograph collections accessible to First Nations relatives and communities. The resulting digital archive allows users to search for photographs by different criteria such as place, cultural group, name of

individual or photographer, or date.

The photographs on display are from the Pitt River Museum and Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. They were selected to celebrate and reflect on the lives and experiences of Aboriginal people in Western Australia.

*From objects to portraits, landscapes and action shots, these images share an insight into our history. Yet many of these photos contain unknown people and places. Through *Re.Collection*, we hope by highlighting these images we can discover new connections or knowledge.*

We welcome community advice and have placed information forms within the gallery space. Any new details or

*knowledge can be incorporated back into the *Returning Photos* archive and to corresponding museums.⁴*

As a PhD candidate at the University of Western Australia, Samara King is researching how historic photographs of Aboriginal life and culture in Western Australia can be decolonised and reclaimed by First Nations people. Her PhD project involves three intersecting parts: examining a photographic archive; understanding how collecting institutions engage with First Nations researchers; and discovering how historic photographs can be recontextualised by First Nations people.

Through *Re.Collection*, Samara demonstrates the value of archival

photographs in sharing the historic experiences of Aboriginal people in Western Australia. By incorporating First Nations voice and practices, historic images can be employed as a source of cultural material, artistic expression, or ancestral memory.

While it may be challenging to confront images from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there is an opportunity to pay tribute to the lives and experiences of Aboriginal people during that era. Sharing these photographs also continues our efforts for truth-telling, combating a colonial amnesia that continues across this State.⁴

Continued overleaf...

The East Gallery features works by First Nation artists Dianne Jones, Jarnda Councillor-Barns and Katie West, demonstrating the diverse reimaging of archival photography in understanding Indigenous notions of place, art and history.

Utilising a selection of archival photographs - from family photographs to colonial portraits - this display showcases the richness of First Nations art and

ideas. Connection to place and culture are enduring concepts across Dianne Jones' deconstruction of the archival colonial portrait, Jarnda Councillor-Barns' celebratory digital paintings, and Katie West's complex textural imagery.

¹ Please note, as part of *Returning Photos* each image was screened by a senior Elder before being published online.

² www.prm.ox.ac.uk/collections-online#/search

³ collections.maa.cam.ac.uk

⁴ Quote from Samara King, Curator, PhD candidate



SAMARA KING

Samara King is a Karajarri woman from Broome, Western Australia and is currently completing a PhD in Anthropology at The University of Western Australia. Her research focuses on engagement between museums and First Nations researchers, particularly how archival photographs are shared and exhibited.

King graduated from The University of Western Australia in 2019, where she received a Bachelor of Philosophy with First Class Honours in Anthropology and Sociology, and Indigenous Knowledge, History and Heritage. She also has a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communications

from Curtin University and is skilled in web publishing and cultural heritage management. King is currently employed at The Keeping Place, an Indigenous owned, not-for-profit software company.

King is passionate about curating and co-partnered a digital exhibition on the history of Wadjemup/ Rottne Island in 2020, while working as an Emerging Curator with the Rottne Island Authority and the Western Australian Museum. She has also worked at the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (WA) and at The National Library of Australia.

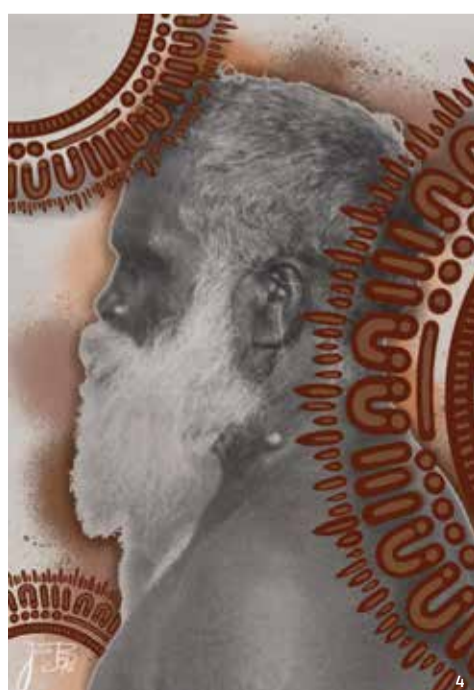
JARND A COUNCILLOR-BARNS

My arts practice seeks to blur the boundaries between the digital and the tangible, exploring the intersections where technology and traditional art converge. Through a fusion of digital design and fine art techniques, I create immersive experiences that resonate with viewers on both aesthetic and emotional levels.

My work is a reflection of the dynamic interplay between the virtual and the physical realms of existence. Drawing inspiration from the ever-evolving landscape of technology and the timeless beauty of my culture, I explore themes of identity, connectivity, and cultural heritage. At the heart of my practice lies a deep reverence for the transformative power of art. As a creator, I view my work as a catalyst for dialogue and introspection, sparking conversations about the ever-changing nature of reality and the boundless possibilities of human expression surrounding Indigenous cultures. Ultimately, my aim is to inspire wonder, curiosity, and empathy in those who encounter my art – to ignite a spark of imagination that transcends the confines of space and time and fosters a deeper connection to the country and traditional lands we stand on.

Jarnda Bina Councillor-Barns is a Karajarri, Nuggaja, Noongar (Binjarup), Maori woman from Boorloo/ Perth, Western Australia. She grew up in Rubibi/ Broome and at 17 moved to Geraldton, her grandfather's Country. In Geraldton, Councillor-Barns started painting and has since applied her artistic skills through work for AUSTRADE, City of Perth, Super Rugby, Perth football league and others.

Currently residing in Boorloo, Councillor-Barns hopes to continue to share her connection to Noongar culture and country with her son, learning language and art from her Elders.



KATIE WEST

Through installation, textiles, and social practice my arts practice reveals culturally complex notions of place and belonging. In this series, I draw on an archive of family photos capturing life on a wheat and sheep farm in Noongar Yued country. An extension of my work with textiles, these pieces draw attention to unintended textural details and the material and cultural implications of these found objects. Light and movement are emphasised and re-presented in sparse compositions through obscuring figures, forms, and objects. From this vantage point, the material qualities of photographic paper come to the surface – patterned textures derived from manufacture and processing with the accumulation of dust and scratches due to handling. My work invites contemplation of one's experience of place, earthly elements, and personal archives.

Katie West is an artist and Yindjibarndi woman based in Noongar Ballardong country, working in installation, textiles and social practice. The process of using found objects, their provenance, and the cultural, social, and spiritual implications of their use, underpins her practice. Using found textiles, video, and sound, West creates installations, textile pieces, happenings that invite attention to the many ways we weave our stories, places, histories, and futures.

West studied Visual Art at Edith Cowan University (2009) and Sociology at Murdoch University (2013). In 2017 she completed a Master of Contemporary Art at the Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne, graduating as the recipient of the Dominik Mersch Gallery Award and the Falls Creek Resort Indigenous Award.

West has presented solo exhibitions at Perth Institute of Contemporary Art (PICA); TarraWarra Museum of Art, Healesville; and West Space, Melbourne for Next Wave Festival 2016, and has participated

in group exhibitions nationally and internationally, including the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA), Melbourne and Shimmer, Rotterdam. Katie West is represented by Dominik Mersch Gallery, Sydney, NSW.



DIANNE JONES

The black body is often invoked as a dark presence, a spectre for white history creating fragmentation and unease in their present. But what are the images that haunt and 'unsettle' Indigenous peoples? When I see the portraits of people from the colonial period in Australia, I wonder how much they knew of the violence and dispossession happening at this time. Can the dispossessed rise up through the lens and possess those who haunted them? Deleuze describes affect as autonomic – trigger-like – physical reactions that are above else bodily. There is an instant trigger to images here in which I examine the responses to pictorial reminiscences, romanticism and memory as a ghostly presence imbued with the uncanny. Sites/sights of imperialistic fabrication - the mind remembers something about the image which may or may not be reality but the 'affect' of which resonates beyond the aesthetic into an energetic corporeal sensation. Who were these people? What stories lie buried? Inserting myself across genders, there is a repossession and queering of the colonial gothic archive. Through a recovered antique family album from which these works are made, ideologies invested in the construction of iconic historical imagery may be resurrected and embodied/ disembodied.

Dianne Jones is a Ballardong artist from Noongar Country, in Western Australia. Jones utilises photo-media to reposition the representation of Aboriginal Peoples and enact creative resistance to historical and contemporary colonial ideologies. Jones' arts practice reveals what is missing from pervasive Australian narratives and art history, highlighting the multifaceted nature of contemporary Indigenous identities.

Born in Northam, Western Australia, Jones completed a Masters by Research in Fine Arts at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA), Melbourne in 2016, and is currently completing her Doctorate at VCA. Her work has been exhibited at the Ian Potter Centre: NGV, the National Gallery of Victoria; Parliament House of Western Australia; Monash Gallery of Art, Melbourne; and

Incinerator Gallery, Melbourne. Her work has been collected by the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; NGV, Melbourne; The Art Gallery of Western Australia; Parliament House, WA; Edith Cowan University; and the Museum of Contemporary Aboriginal Art, Utrecht, The Netherlands. Dianne Jones is represented by Niagara Galleries, Melbourne, Victoria.



IMAGES

Cover: Jarnda Councillor-Barns, *Stories of our waterways* (detail), 2024, giclee fine art print on Hahnemühle photo rag paper, 33 x 48 cm. Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, P.604.ACH1.

1. Photograph of 'Louie' making a fire at Billiluna Station, Sturt Creek, Western Australia. Photographed as part of the Michael Terry expedition from 21 July to 22 November, 1924. Mounted Haddon Collection, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, P.612.ACH1.
2. Postcard of three unknown Aboriginal men hunting in Fitzroy River, Western Australia. Unmounted Haddon Collection, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, P.64775.ACH2.
3. Katie West, *Water tank pipes* (detail), 2023, archival pigment print, ed. 2 of 3, 60.5 x 43 cm.
4. Jarnda Councillor-Barns, *The presence of our history* (detail), 2024, giclee fine art print on Hahnemühle photo rag paper, 48 x 33 cm, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, P.14209.TVR.
5. Dianne Jones, *Woman on balcony*, 2009, archival digital print on photo paper, ed. 2 of 10, 90 x 64 cm.
6. Dianne Jones, *Man in chair*, 2009, archival digital print on photo paper, ed. 2 of 10, 90 x 64 cm.

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Open Tue - Fri 10am - 5pm, Sat & Sun 11am - 3pm during exhibitions | Closed Mon & Public Holidays

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Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries



Midland Junction Arts Centre respectfully acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we operate, the Whadjuk people, as well as other First Australians connected with this land. We pay our respects to Elders both past and present.