

Wominjeka Djeembana × Tate present

COUNTRY INFORMING PRACTICE SYMPOSIUM

9 December 2024



Image: Smoking Ceremony of the Dhulu (Kamilaroi) with Brian Martin and Bradley Webb.
Photo: © Museum der Kulturen Basel, photographer Omar Lemke.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge and pay respects to the traditional and sovereign territory of the Boonwurrung and Wurrundjeri peoples of the Kulin Nations, the traditional owners of the land on which Wominjeka Djeembana is located. We pay respects to elders, past, present and emerging and to the numerous Indigenous peoples who have crossed this land throughout millennia. We further extend that respect to creation Ancestors across this Ancestral Country.

INTRODUCTION

A one-day program of artist talks, research presentations, and panel conversations by members of Wominjeka Djeembana Indigenous research lab and invited guests.

The *Country Informing Practice Symposium* will consider how Indigenous creative practices are informed and often led by deep relational connections to land, skies and waterways. There will be critical engagement with exhibition making, the role of museums and repatriation, image making and navigating representations of self and Country.

This event is organised by Wominjeka Djeembana Indigenous Research Lab, Faculty of Art Design and Architecture, Monash University and the Hyundai Tate Research Centre: Transnational, in partnership with Hyundai Motor.

DETAILS

9 December 2024
The Pavilion, Building H, Level 8,
Monash University, 900 Dandenong Road,
Caulfield East

CONVENORS

Professor Brian Martin, Dr Peta Clancy,
Kimberley Moulton, Dr Jessica Neath
and Dr Kirsten Lyttle

ACCESSIBILITY

Accessible parking is available and the venue is wheelchair accessible. Further information about accessible parking: monash.edu/about/our-locations/transport-parking/parking/accessible-parking

REGISTRATION

Please register to attend this event by 1 December 2024 at monash.edu/mada/events/2024/Country-Informing-Practice-Symposium

SCHEDULE

MONDAY 9 DECEMBER 2024

9.30AM	Arrival and registration
9.45AM	Welcome to Country
9.55AM	Introduction by Professor Brian Martin
10.00AM	SESSION 1 Yawa Yulendj Djeembana: Journeying Together with Knowledge
10.05AM	Presentation by N'Arweet Professor Carolyn Briggs AM
10.25AM	Presentation by Megan Tamati-Quennell
10.45AM	Panel discussion
11.00AM	SESSION 2 Ancestral Dialogues: Navigating Dislocation, Blackness, and Indigenous Memory Through the Lens
11.05AM	Presentation by Jahkarli Romanis
11.25AM	Presentation by Dr Kirsten Lyttle
11.45AM	Presentation by Dr wani toaishara
12.05PM	Panel conversation
12.30PM	LUNCH
1.30PM	SESSION 3 We Are Eagles: Country Informing Practice
1.40PM	Presentation by Professor Brian Martin
2.00PM	Presentation by Kelli Col
2.20PM	Presentation by Gabi Briggs
2.40PM	Panel conversation
3.20PM	Closing remarks
3.30PM	Close

A yarnning circle for Wominjeka Djeembana members and invited guests will follow the close of the symposium.

SESSION ABSTRACTS

SESSION 1: Yawa Yulendj Djeembana: Journeying Together with Knowledge

This session brings together two visionaries who are leaders in reclaiming Indigenous knowledges and addressing the absences that permeate official histories of art and of place. N'Arweet Professor Carolyn Briggs AM is a senior Boonwurrung elder and Traditional Custodian of Melbourne. She has worked for over 40 years to recover Boonwurrung knowledge of place and to make this knowledge visible for future generations. Megan Tamati-Quennell is a senior Māori art curator who has a 30-year plus career in exhibition making establishing a curatorial practice that recovers, recalls and re-writes the significance and meaning of art in the field of modern and contemporary Māori art. This session will reflect on these long journeys into knowledge and the importance of building a legacy for the future.

SESSION 2: Ancestral Dialogues: Navigating Dislocation, Blackness, and Indigenous Memory Through the Lens

This panel explores transformative and decolonial approaches to photographic practice, as informed by Country, community, and diasporic identities. Engaging with themes of dislocation, belonging, and ancestral memory, the panelists—Jahkarli Romanis (Pitta Pitta), Dr Kirsten Garner Lyttle (Māori-Australian, Waikato Tainui, Ngāti Tahinga) and Dr wani toaishara (Congolese), and —will share practices that reflect the complexities of identity, displacement, and belonging. From interrogating imaging technologies and reconfiguring narratives of Blackness, their work reimagines photography as a tool for decolonisation and challenging dominant narratives. Through selected works, the panelists will demonstrate how land, histories, and kinship shape their creative processes, contributing to a broader dialogue on Indigenous and diasporic storytelling. The session will be introduced and moderated by Dr Peta Clancy (Yorta Yorta).

SESSION 3: We Are Eagles: Country Informing Practice

We Are Eagles is an iterative project of knowledge sharing, art and kin conversations with Indigenous creative practitioners led by Kimberley Moulton, Adjunct Curator Indigenous Art Tate Modern and the Hyundai Tate Research Centre: Transnational. The title is inspired by the First Nations Australian political movement of 1938 known as 'The Day Of Mourning'. In calling for equal rights and humane treatment of First Peoples, Pastor Sir Doug Nicholls KCVO OBE stated: "We do not want chickenfeed...We are not chickens; we are eagles." Referencing this sentiment of First Peoples empowerment as a departure point for conversation, this program anchors artists whose practice embodies acts of self-determination, critical anti-colonial discourse and practice informed by Country. In this session we will hear from Professor Brian Martin (Bundjalung, Kamilaroi and Muruwari), Kelli Cole (Warumunga and Luritja) and Gabi Briggs (Anaiwan and Gumbaynggirr) on their work in conversation with Kimberley Moulton (Yorta Yorta).

BIOGRAPHIES



N'ARWEET CAROLYN BRIGGS AM

N'Arweet Professor Carolyn Briggs AM is a senior Boonwurrung Elder. A descendant of the First Peoples of Melbourne, the Yaluk-ut Weelam clan of the Boonwurrung, she is the great-granddaughter of Louisa Briggs, a Boonwurrung woman born near Melbourne in the early nineteenth century. N'Arweet has been significantly involved in developing and supporting opportunities for Indigenous youth and Boon Wurrung culture for over 40 years and in 2019, she was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia for her significant service to the Aboriginal community. N'Arweet is the author of *Journey Cycles of the Boon Wurrung: Stories with Boonwurrung Language* (2008, 2014) and Professor in Practice-led Research at Wominjeka Djemabana Indigenous Research Lab, Monash University.



GABI BRIGGS

Gabi Briggs is an Anaiwan Gedyura artist, researcher, weaver, and community organiser. Gabi engages with the complexities of race, power, and truth-telling, seeking to restore Indigenous sovereignty and enact self-determination. Her practice reflects a commitment to returning back to Indigenous knowledges and addresses pressing issues like the climate crisis. She is a PhD candidate in Wominjeka Djembana Indigenous research lab at Monash University.



KELLI COLE

A proud Warumunga and Luritja woman, Kelli has extensive curatorial experience and was Curator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art at the National Gallery of Australia (NGA) from 2007-2024. Her notable projects include co-curating the Emily Kam Kngwarray at the NGA and more recently as lead curator for Emily Kam Kngwarray at Tate Modern, London. Her other curatorial work includes Resolution and Body Language, as well as being integral to all three National Indigenous Art Triennials at the NGA. She is recognised for her work with Desart and her deep connection to Aboriginal art in Central Australia and in 2014 was awarded the Australia Council Visual Arts curatorial fellowship. Kelli was appointed Director of Curatorial and Engagement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Gallery of Australia (ATSIAGA) in February 2024.



PETA CLANCY

Visual artist Dr Peta Clancy is a descendant of the Yorta Yorta people. She is currently the Associate Dean Indigenous in the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture at Monash University and a practice-led researcher in Wominjeka Djeembana Indigenous research lab. In 2022 she was awarded a two-year Australia Council Fellowship for Visual Arts. Working predominantly with photography, she creates work performatively with and on Country in collaboration with Traditional Owners, exploring multiple time frames, histories and perspectives. Peta has exhibited her artwork in Australia and internationally and is represented by Dominik Mersch Gallery in Australia.



KIRSTEN LYTTLE

Dr Kirsten Garner Lyttle (Māori-Australian, Waikato Tainui, Ngāti Tahinga) is an academic and artist at Monash University's Wominjeka Djeembana Indigenous Research Lab. Her research methodology, whakaahua (to transform), reimagines photography as a site for creating Māori customary art, critiquing colonial ethnographic practices. Kirsten's work has been featured in major exhibitions, including Melbourne Now 2023 (NGV Australia) and the 9th TarraWarra Biennial 2023. In 2024, she received the MADA Dean's Early Career Researcher of the Year Award, Monash University, and an honourable mention in the Bowness Photography Prize. Her artwork is held in leading Australian collections, including NGV Australia.



BRIAN MARTIN

Professor Brian Martin is Director of Wominjeka Djeembana Indigenous research lab at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. He is a Bundjalung, Kamilaroi and Muruwari man of southeast Australia and co-author of the Australian and International Indigenous Design Charters. Brian has been a practising artist for thirty years, exhibiting both nationally and internationally specifically in the media of painting and drawing. His research and practice focus on refiguring creative practice and culture from an Indigenous ideological perspective based on a reciprocal relationship to "Country".



KIMBERLEY MOULTON

Kimberley Moulton is a Yorta Yorta woman, writer and curator. Currently she is Senior Curator with RISING Festival, Adjunct Curator Indigenous Art Tate Modern London, and a PhD candidate with the Wominjeka Djeembana Indigenous Research Lab, Monash University. Formerly Senior Curator South Eastern First Peoples Collection, Museums Victoria, her practice works with knowledge, histories and futures at the intersection of First Peoples collections, history and contemporary art. She is a Curator Emeritus at Museums Victoria.



JESSICA NEATH

Dr Jessica Neath is an Australian art historian of settler descent living and working on Boonwurrung Country. She is a research fellow at Wominjeka Djeembana Indigenous research lab, Monash University. Recently she co-curated the exhibition *More Than a Tarrang (tree): Memory, Material and Cultural Agency* (2023) at the Melbourne Museum and is a co-author with Professor Brook Andrew of the Newsouth publication, *marramarra: Indigenous artists making history visible*.



JAHKARLI ROMANIS

Jahkarli Felicitas Romanis is a proud Pitta Pitta woman and emerging artist based on Kulin Land. After completing an Honours in Photography degree at RMIT in 2020, she commenced a PhD at Monash University in 2021 through the Wominjeka Djeembana Indigenous Research Lab. Jahkarli's practice aims to subvert and disrupt colonial ways of thinking and image making. She utilises her research and artwork as tools for investigating biases encoded within imaging technologies. Jahkarli's work heavily reflects on her family stories, oral histories and archives.



MEGAN TAMATI-QUENNELL

Megan Tamati-Quennell is a leading art curator, writer and researcher from Aotearoa, New Zealand. She has a 34-year curatorial career specialising in the field of modern and contemporary Māori and Indigenous art. She has held curatorial positions at Te Papa, the National Art Gallery and Museum in Wellington and at the Govett Brewster Art Gallery, in Taranaki. She is the longest serving curator in this field and received a CNZM – a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit – in June 2024, for her contribution to Māori and First nations art. Currently she is co-curating ‘to carry’, the Sharjah Biennial 16, 6 February – 15 June 2025 and is a PhD candidate in Wominjeka Djeembana at Monash University. Megan is of Te Ātiawa, Ngati Mutunga, Taranaki, Waitaha, Kāti Māmoe and Ngāi Tahu, Māori descent.



WANI TOAISHARA

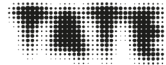
Dr wani toaishara is a Congolese practice-led researcher living in Naarm whose works bridge the realms of documentary and conceptual art. His practice explores the effects of colonialism on Africa and its diaspora, dislocation and memory, and the intricate layers of cultural practice, Indigeneity and identity. His works span various mediums, including image-making, performance, installation and film, often interrogating the complexities of Black sociality in urban spaces. wani is a graduate of Monash University's Wominjeka Djeembana Indigenous research lab and has exhibited across Australia and internationally. In 2022, he was awarded the Josephine Ulrick and Win Schubert Award for photography.



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