



# 2009 Parliament of NSW Aboriginal Art Prize Education Resource Kit





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## Introduction

The *Parliament of New South Wales Aboriginal Art Prize* is awarded annually to an NSW Aboriginal Artist. The Prize has an award of \$20,000 and the winning work is acquisitive to the Parliament of New South Wales.

Finalists of the 2009 *Parliament of New South Wales Aboriginal Art Prize* are aged eighteen years or older, belong to a NSW language group or were born in NSW. The works entered must adhere to size guidelines, must have been produced in the last twelve months and not previously exhibited.

In addition to the *Parliament of NSW Aboriginal Art Prize*, there is a second award, the College of Fine Arts (COFA) Professional Development Award. This Award includes a two week residency at COFA and solo exhibition at the COFAspace Gallery. The COFA Professional Development Award is supported by the University of NSW.

The *Parliament of NSW Aboriginal Art Prize* was established in 2005 and is presented in partnership between the Parliament of New South Wales and Campbelltown Arts Centre, and receives support from Arts NSW.

The winner of the 2009 *Parliament of NSW Aboriginal Art Prize* is Roy Kennedy with his painting *Mission series 2*. The winner of the COFA Professional Development Award is Penny Evans for her triptych *Dispersion of the old girls 1-3*.

## How to use this resource

This kit has been prepared by Campbelltown Arts Centre in partnership with Museums and Galleries NSW as resource for teachers engaging with Aboriginal studies as part of the upper primary and lower secondary curriculum. It also acts as a practical companion for the 2009 Parliament of NSW Aboriginal Art Prize, providing syllabus links and suggested discussion points for selected works. It is recommended that this resource be used as a starting point to engage with wider issues covered within the syllabus, from Aboriginal human rights to artistic techniques.

## Partners & Supporters



*The Parliament of NSW Aboriginal Art Prize 2009 is presented as a partnership between NSW Parliament House and Campbelltown Arts Centre and is toured by Museums & Galleries NSW. The COFA Professional Development Award is supported by the University of NSW. This touring exhibition would not have been possible without support from Arts NSW.*

For more information please contact:

Mimi Kelly, Manager, Exhibitions and Gallery Development

e: [mimik@mgnsw.org.au](mailto:mimik@mgnsw.org.au) t: 61 2 9339 9906

# Natalie Bateman



**May May at home**  
2009  
acrylic on canvas  
92.0 x 122.0cm

# Natalie Bateman

## May May at Home

### about the artist

Natalie Bateman was born in 1972 in Sydney and belongs to the Yuin/Gadigal language group. She grew up on the oceans of Maroubra, La Perouse, South and North Coasts of NSW. She identifies first and foremost with ocean and mainly paints sea themes. The artist is self taught and loves to use colour and creates her own space through her artworks.

### the artwork

This painting shows a place very special to the artist. It shows the resting place of the spirit of the artist's grandmother. The location is Wallaga Lake on the South Coast of NSW, where the artist's great grandfather was born. This painting is a blend of traditional and contemporary painting techniques.

### questions to ask students:

- ▶▶ **This painting tells a story through the use of colours and shapes. What do you think the different colours and shapes are?**

**Arrows** - The artist's grandmothers travels from her house in La Perouse to her homeland in the South Coast.

**Fish** - The Groper fish – the artist's grandmothers favourite fish - a very symbolic fish for the artist's family.

**Colours** - blue = sky, green = land, blue = sea, red & orange = her grandmother's warmth, love and nurturing.

- ▶▶ **What picture do you think about when you think about your family?**
- ▶▶ **Is there a colour that reminds you of your grandmother?**
- ▶▶ **What techniques can you see in this painting?**

## syllabus links

### Human Society & Its Environment - Stage 3

#### *Environments*

- ▶ patterns of human involvement and use of environments, eg Aboriginal land management practices

### Visual Arts - Stage 4

- ▶ the field of visual arts and design as comprising conventions, activities, traditions and customs shaped by different values and beliefs
- ▶ artworks that relate to their own background and experience



*a blue groper fish*

**Alin Duncan**

**Swimming fish (detail)**

2009

acrylic on Euraba handmade rag paper

39.0 x 155.0 cm



# Alin Duncan

## Swimming Fish

### the artist

Alin Duncan was born in 1959 in Moree, NSW and belongs to the Goomeroi Language Group. Alin has been making art for over a decade. Painting is a tradition that has been passed down through his family. He has twelve siblings and many of them paint.

### the artwork

Alin Duncan draws inspiration for his work from local animals and culture. Painting mostly in acrylics he also works in printmaking and carving. Alin is a respected artist in his community and is well known for his works which incorporate sand as a part of the composition.

Alin Duncan is part of the **Euraba Artists & Papermakers**, a group of Northern NSW Aboriginal artists specialising in handmade paper art. Euraba Artists and Papermakers is situated in the border town of Boggabilla. Cotton is a major crop grown in the Boggabilla region. Euraba Artists & Papermakers use 100% cotton offcuts from local clothing industry to produce cotton rag pulp for their paper.

[www.eurabapaper.com.au](http://www.eurabapaper.com.au)

### questions to ask students:

- ▶▶ Why do you think the artist has painted fish?
- ▶▶ Do you have a favourite animal? Why is it your favourite?
- ▶▶ Many of the artist's family members paint. Is there a hobby that you like to do with your family?

### syllabus links

#### Human Society & Its Environment - Stage 3

##### *Environments*

- ▶ patterns of human involvement and use of environments, eg Aboriginal land management practices

#### Visual Arts - Stage 4

- ▶ the field of visual arts and design as comprising conventions, activities, traditions and customs shaped by different values and beliefs
- ▶ artworks produced for exhibition and display
- ▶ artists working individually, in groups and in collaboration with others



# Penny Evans

## Dispersion of the old girls 1 – 3

### the artist

Penny Evans is of Kamilaroi descent, with her mother's family originating from Mungindi in Northern NSW. She has been continuously working with clay, drawing, painting and printmaking since 1990.

Evans' work refers to her identity and the decolonising process. She believes in the healing power of art practice and her work is often a mapping of her personal psychological and spiritual development. She admits though that often the symbolism of her work becomes more apparent after she has completed the work.

### the artwork

This series of work tells the story of the artist's family history. The title dispersion refers to the way in which the family was scattered and lost contact with their homeland of the Mungindi area in NSW.

Many Aboriginal families were displaced during the 1930s – 40s during the implementation of the **White Australia Policy**. This policy was directed at integrating the Aboriginal people into the European population by forcibly removing children from their Aboriginal parents and raising them within institutions according to European traditions.<sup>1</sup>

This style of artwork is mixed media. Materials used include cardboard, paint, collage, pins and polypropylene. Collage imagery has been sourced from souvenir ceramics of the 50s & 60s. The design is also similar to tea towels, which refers to the art and craft practices of older women in assimilated society using found materials.

## questions to ask students:

- ▶▶ What type of materials are used in this artwork?
- ▶▶ Do you know what style of artwork this is?
- ▶▶ There are a lot of symbols and pictures in this artwork. What do you think they mean?

## syllabus links

### Human Society & Its Environment - Stage 3

#### *Change and Continuity*

- ▶ Australian human rights issues, past and present, including the impact of the stolen generations

#### *Environments*

- ▶ patterns of human involvement and use of environments, eg Aboriginal land management practices

### Visual Arts - Stage 4

- ▶ the field of visual arts and design as comprising conventions, activities, traditions and customs shaped by different values and beliefs
- ▶ artworks that relate to their own background and experience
- ▶ how artists develop their intentions

<sup>1</sup> Rhonda Craven (ed), Teaching Aboriginal Studies, 1999, Alen & Unwin, Sydney, p 118

# Lois Haywood



1/3

They took his trees away

Lois Haywood 2009

**They took his trees away**

2009

linoprint

62.5 x 59.5 cm

# Lois Haywood

## They took his trees away

### the artist

Lois Haywood was born in Campbelltown, NSW in 1953 and belongs to the Dharug language group. Haywood has diverse tertiary qualifications that include; graphic design, ceramics, management and environmental interpretation and community education. In 1999 Haywood established the ECI Insitu (Environment and Conservation Interpretation), specialising in the interpretation of natural and cultural heritage. This business has given Haywood diverse experience that includes; murals, sculptures, mosaics, display joinery, computer graphics, web design, interpretative signage, maps, information-tour brochures and education programs.

### the artwork

This is a **lino print** showing a spiritual dingo called a Balawan. The artist is connected with this animal, seeing his role as a protector of the environment around Mt Imlay and Nadgee Nature Reserve. The artist's work often has a strong emphasis on the environment and deals with the issues raised by the impact of logging.

**Logging** is a controversial and serious environmental issue. According to the Australian Conservation Foundation it has a devastating impact on our old-growth forests as it alters the structure of the forest – the number of big old trees with hollows, the number of fallen logs, the density of the understorey and the canopy vegetation, all of which are unlikely to regenerate to their original state for more than a thousand years.<sup>1</sup>

### questions to ask students:

- ▶▶ What do you think this artwork is about?
- ▶▶ Why is the dingo so big?  
Do you think it is important to the artist? Why?
- ▶▶ The title is "They took his trees away".  
What do you think this means?

### syllabus links

#### Human Society & Its Environment - Stage 3

##### *Environments*

- ▶ patterns of human involvement and use of environments, eg Aboriginal land management practices
- ▶ effects of human and natural changes on environments
- ▶ different perspectives about the maintenance and improvement of environments
- ▶ explanations of natural phenomena and the environment in Aboriginal Dreaming stories

#### Visual Arts - Stage 4

- ▶ the field of visual arts and design as comprising conventions, activities, traditions and customs shaped by different values and beliefs
- ▶ artworks produced for exhibition and display
- ▶ how artists develop their intentions

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.acfonline.org.au/articles/news.asp?news\\_id=1528](http://www.acfonline.org.au/articles/news.asp?news_id=1528)

# Anthony Kennedy

**The Hunt**

2009

acrylic on canvas

92.0 x 122.0cm



# Anthony Kennedy

## The Hunt

### the artist

Anthony Kennedy was born in 1939 at Adelong, NSW and belongs to the Wiradjuri language group. He was a finalist in the Parliament of NSW Aboriginal Art Prize, NSW in 2005 and 2007. In 2005 Kennedy won the Festival of Fisher's Ghost Art Aboriginal award, Campbelltown Arts Centre.

### the artwork

This painting is a contemporary abstract painting telling the story of a traditional Aboriginal practice – **hunting**.

**Hunting** is a tradition of Aboriginal culture, as they were once nomadic people that lived off the land. Traditionally it was the men who hunted animals such as kangaroos and wallabies and it was the women who gathered shellfish, plants and berries.<sup>1</sup>

The paint is applied in patches of colour to reveal the different characters involved in the hunt. (Kangaroo, Emu, crocodile, hunters, black crow.)

This style of painting is called **Abstract**. Abstract Art is a style that does not depict recognisable scenes or objects, but instead is made up of forms and colours that exist for their own expressive sake.<sup>2</sup>

### questions to ask students:

- ▶▶ What style of painting do you think this is?
- ▶▶ Can you see any figures or animals in this painting?
- ▶▶ What do you think they are doing?

### syllabus links

#### Human Society & Its Environment - Stage 3

##### *Environments*

- ▶ patterns of human involvement and use of environments, eg Aboriginal land management practices

#### Visual Arts - Stage 4

- ▶ the field of visual arts and design as comprising conventions, activities, traditions and customs shaped by different values and beliefs
- ▶ artworks produced for exhibition and display
- ▶ how artists develop their intentions

<sup>1</sup> John Haywood, Australian Aborigines, 2009, world book, chicago, pg 36

<sup>2</sup> Ian Chilvers. "abstract art." A Dictionary of Twentieth-Century Art. 1999. Retrieved November 11, 2009 from Encyclopedia.com: <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O5-abstractart.html>

# Roy Kennedy



**Mission series 2**  
2009  
acrylic on board  
11.8 x 152.5cm

# Roy Kennedy

## Mission Series 2

### the artist

Roy Kennedy was born in Griffith in 1934. He was raised in a **Mission Reserve** until 1948, when he was granted a “**Freedom of Movement**” from the **Aboriginal Protection Board**, yet did not feel settled until the late 1980s. In 1995 he enrolled in a local TAFE and soon became interested in art. He has continued to enjoy his art and regularly paints stories of his mission life.

Kennedy’s work documents an Aboriginal perspective of what it was like growing up on the missions and reserves of Western NSW in the early twentieth century. European missions began to arise in the 1820s, by Christian Groups targeted at changing the spiritual beliefs of Aboriginal people and provided a European education to Aboriginal children. These missions were established like camps, controlled by a station master. The accommodation and food was very basic and many aboriginal people were taken from their land to be rehoused on these reserves.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the period of missions more than 350 mission reserves were established all across Australia.<sup>2</sup>

### the artwork

In *Mission Series 2* Kennedy depicts how Aboriginals were treated in the Missions, drawing upon his own memories of Warangesha Mission. His mother was born in 1909. She was taken away as were many of the children, who came from Warangesha Mission. Warangesha Mission was built in 1880 by preacher, John Gribble, with help from Aboriginal men from this area. As there were no funds or any way of getting timber and iron, trees were cut down along the Murrumbidgee River. Humpies and huts were made using gum timber and saplings as well as the bark from these trees.

## questions to ask students

- ▶▶ This painting tells a story, what do you think the story is?
- ▶▶ Why do you think the artist has chosen to paint this scene?
- ▶▶ Why do you think it is important to him?

## syllabus links

### Human Society & Its Environment - Stage 3

#### *Change and Continuity*

- ▶ Australian human rights issues, past and present, including the impact of the stolen generations

#### *Environments*

- ▶ patterns of human involvement and use of environments, eg Aboriginal land management practices

### Visual Arts - Stage 4

- ▶ the field of visual arts and design as comprising conventions, activities, traditions and customs shaped by different values and beliefs
- ▶ artworks that relate to their own background and experience
- ▶ the pleasure and enjoyment in making artworks

<sup>1</sup> Jean A.Ellis Australia’s Aboriginal Heritage, 1994, Collins Dove, vic, Aus Pg 148

<sup>2</sup> Colin Bourke, Eleanor Bourke and Bill Edwards, Aboriginal Australia, 1998, University of Queensland press, Pg 3,

# Bevan Skinner



## **Stars of the Valley**

2008

earthenware clay and glazes

39.0 x 27.0cm

# **Bevan Skinner**

## **Stars of the Valley**

### **about the artist**

Bevan Skinner was born in 1970 in Kempsey, NSW and belongs to the Gumbaingir language group. He grew up around Grafton and was encouraged to enrol in an Associate Diploma in Art, majoring in ceramics.

As a Gumbaingir Aboriginal Australian, being an artist always revolves around his culture, identity and spirit. Striving to be as natural in his approach to art as he is to everyday living. Skinner is greatly influenced by his surroundings, his family and nature.

### **the artwork**

Skinner defines himself as an artist/potter and clay is his canvas. He enjoys working with clay, as it is a natural medium – raw, earthy and textural. Skinner uses these qualities to express himself and what he has been through in life so far.

Skinner hand builds his pots. This is a slow, cathartic process, where layer upon layer is added to slowly form a strong, meaningful art piece. The natural beauty of the old rock art of Skinner’s ancestors and country play a role in his search for his own mark. The marking on his pots are kept raw and energetic, using underglazes and raw oxides to reveal a dry natural finish that is a response to Skinner’s connection to his ancient culture.

### **questions to ask students:**

- ▶▶ How do you think this artwork was made?
- ▶▶ How long do you think it took to make?
- ▶▶ What do you think this artwork means to the artist?

### **syllabus links**

#### **Human Society & Its Environment - Stage 3**

##### *Environments*

- ▶ patterns of human involvement and use of environments, eg Aboriginal land management practices

#### **Visual Arts - Stage 4**

- ▶ the field of visual arts and design as comprising conventions, activities, traditions and customs shaped by different values and beliefs
- ▶ artworks produced for exhibition and display
- ▶ the material, physical and virtual form of artworks intentionally made by artists

**Rex Winston**

**Water Dreaming**

2009

acrylic on canvas

91.0 x 180.0 cm



# Rex Winston

## Water Dreaming

### the artist

Rex Winston was born in Sydney in 1968 to a mother from the Kamilaroi area of Walgett in NSW. Rex was adopted by a white family at the age of three months and grew up at Nyngan; a farming community in Central West NSW.

Winston's first painting sparked an interest in connecting with his Aboriginal heritage. Rex has a passion for painting and like many Aboriginal painters he has not received any formal art training. Rex's paintings are inspired by his life, the environment and landscape and are expressed through dot marking.

### the artwork

Rex Winston paints in the traditional Aboriginal style of **dot painting**. Traditional dot painting is historically linked to the western desert Papunya artists. It is thought that these artists began painting in this style in response to the dotted spinifex vegetation that surrounded them in the western deserts of the Northern Territory. It also relates to the way in which the paint is applied, often traditionally through sticks, before the introduction of brushes. This style of painting is full of symbology, such as circles, tracks, lines, U-shapes or arcs and the imprint of weapons. Although the same shapes may appear in different paintings, the specific meaning given to each symbol is only truly known by the artist.

This painting is inspired by rain drops falling onto still waters. This is reflected through the title of the work. The title also refers to the Aboriginal tradition of **Dreaming**. Dreaming is a European term that refers to Aboriginal cosmology. It encompasses the creator and ancestral beings, the laws of religious and social behaviour, the land, and the spiritual forces that sustain life. <sup>1</sup>

## questions to ask students

- ▶▶ What do you see in this painting?
- ▶▶ The title of this painting is Water Dreaming. What do you think this means?
- ▶▶ This is a style of painting unique to Aboriginal Art. Do you know what it is called?

## syllabus links

### Human Society & Its Environment - Stage 3

#### *Change and Continuity*

- ▶ Australian human rights issues, past and present, including the impact of the stolen generations

#### *Environments*

- ▶ patterns of human involvement and use of environments, eg Aboriginal land management practices
- ▶ explanations of natural phenomena and the environment in Aboriginal Dreaming stories

### Visual Arts - Stage 4

- ▶ the field of visual arts and design as comprising conventions, activities, traditions and customs shaped by different values and beliefs
- ▶ artworks that relate to their own background and experience

<sup>1</sup> Wally Caruana, Aboriginal Art, 1993, Thames & Hudson, Singapore pg 214.