

the  
churchie  
emerging art prize

9 October – 18 December 2021

**Education Kit**

**IMA**  
INSTITUTE OF MODERN ART

**Churchie.**



## How to Use This Resource

This education kit has been developed for use alongside visiting the exhibition *the churchie emerging art prize 2021* at the Institute of Modern Art (IMA).

Teachers can select and adapt the curriculum-linked questions and activities provided within the resource for learning experiences in the gallery or classroom. Key terms are highlighted throughout the text. A list of key terms is situated at the end of the resource, together with further suggested resources for further research.

## Artists and Artworks

- Akil Ahamat, *Dawn of a day too dark to call tomorrow*, 2021
- Tiyan Baker, *dihan bitugung da pasar*, 2021
- Christopher Bassi, *The Garden and The Sea*, 2021
- Leon Russell (Cameron) Black, *Pupuni Jilamara*, 2019
- Ohni Blu *Water, Doesn't Tell me to Lose Weight*, 2019
- Riana Head-Toussaint, *First Language*, 2020
- Visaya HOFFIE *Rich in cryptocurrency*, 2021
- Kait James, *Bloody Shit*, 2021
- Alexa Malizon, *Ningning from Diversitea Talks (still)*, 2020
- Kyra Mancktelow, *Blue jacket - Blak skin*, 2021
- Ivy Minniecon, *White Washing*, 2021
- Nina Sanadze, *Apotheosis*, 2021
- Jayanto Tan, *Potluck Party Pai Ti Kong (A Praying The Heaven God)*, 2021
- Joanne Wheeler, *'Olden Times, Ntaria'*

Image previous page: Tiyan Baker, *dihan bitugung da pasar*, 2021, embalmed durian shells and seeds, hydrocal plaster, fractionated coconut oil, durian, resin, fruit flies. Resin moulding and casting by Claire Tennant. Lifecast moulded, cast and altered by Clare Nicholson.

## About the Exhibition

'the churchie' is one of Australia's leading prizes for emerging artists. Presented at the IMA since 2019, the finalists' exhibition provides a survey of the compelling and diverse work being produced by emerging artists today.

The 2021 finalists exhibition is guest curated by artist, writer, and curator Grace Herbert.

*The 2021 finalists and their works are a testament to the power of self-expression and art in these 'unprecedented times'. The group of 14 individual voices speak to many of the issues and circumstances outlined above in incredibly poetic and intelligent ways. The artists in 'the churchie' this year share personal stories and histories: addressing racism and stereotyping; the ongoing effects of colonisation and war; experiences of diaspora and the resilience of culture and diasporic practices; intergenerational knowledge and skill sharing; and a broad range of current political, social, and cultural ideas.*

(Excerpt by Grace Herbert from the exhibition catalogue essay)

Family, home, country, belonging, and identity form a foundation from which many of this year's artists position their creative explorations.

Political commentary and critique is consistent across the works in this year's exhibition. A number of artists in the show use historic references, theories, and language to frame their works, others use fiction, speculative futures, and imagination as a means to suggest alternative modes of being.

Image: Jayanto Tan, *Potluck Party Pai Ti Kong (A Praying The Heaven God)*, 2021, ceramics, dimensions variable



# Akil Ahamat



Image: *Dawn of a day too dark to call tomorrow*, 2021, digital video with stereo sound, 00:03:58

## About the Artist

Akil Ahamat's work – spanning video, sound, performance, and installation – considers the physical and social isolation of online experience and how it impacts us. Exploring the forms and techniques used in **ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response)** roleplay videos, Ahamat uses installation elements and audio technology to create connections between himself and the audience in the gallery. ASMR is used to describe the feeling of 'tingles' up one's spine in response to audio/visual stimulus; often whispering, crinkling sounds, or gentle tapping. Within the public space of the gallery, the intimate effect generated by ASMR disarms the audience and allows the artist a deep connection with the audience that they can use to communicate ideas about personal identity in the digital age.

## About the Artwork

*Dawn of a day too dark to call tomorrow* highlights the importance of people seeking emotional connection and trust on digital platforms, which are filled with misinformation amongst an audience's shortening attention span.

This video is part of an ongoing series exploring the relationship between Ahamat and a snail. In this iteration, we find Ahamat and the snail in a moment of rare physical proximity and in a moment of conflict. As they perform and reperform a shifting script, the work begins to comment on the purpose and effects of storytelling. Using intimate ASMR sound design and detailed cinematography, this sensory work explores the main question posed in the script; what do we do when we can't trust what we see?

## Gallery Discussion

- **Discuss** whether ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response) is art or not? How does this work challenge traditional notions of what is considered art?
- How do you think digital platforms such as Facebook and Instagram have contributed to the "misinformation" and shortening attention spans mentioned in the artist statement?
- How would you describe the relationship between the artist and the snail? How does misinformation and trust play a role in this work?

## Classroom Activities

- **Investigate** the nature of ASMR and its applications in the art world. Find one other artist who uses ASMR then compare and contrast their work with Ahamat.
- Using the question *What do we do when we can't trust what we see?* as a starting point, **create** a mind map to **explore** this question from multiple angles eg. your social circles, digital platforms, echo-chambers
- Then, **select** one aspect to expand on and **create** a short 1min video that **experiments** with ASMR and/or sound design.

# Tiyan Baker



Image: *dihan bitugung da pasar*, 2021, embalmed durian shells and seeds, hydrocal plaster, fractionated coconut oil, durian, resin, fruit flies. Resin moulding and casting by Claire Tennant. Lifecast moulded, cast and altered by Clare Nicholson.

## About the Artist

Tiyan Baker is an early career Malaysian Bidayūh settler-Australian artist who makes video and installation art. Baker's practice engages with sites of contemporary cultural crises. Her work often uses field research, documentary techniques and found artefacts to question established discourses and reveal bias, frailty, and failure. Recently Baker's practice also explores her Bidayūh heritage. She pieces together Bidayūh language, story, and knowledge to create new, hybridised cosmologies that help her navigate contemporary life.

## About the Artwork

This work is part of Baker's ongoing investigation into the durian as an artistic medium. Durian is a divisive fruit that evokes feelings of pleasure in some people and disgust in others due to its strong scent and polarising taste. In Sarawak, Baker's family grow wild durian on their ancestral lands. For the artist's family, and Bidayūhs at large, durian brings wealth, continuity, and togetherness. Countless words, activities and rituals surround durian, and it is commonly enjoyed at gatherings of family and friends. But it is also associated with danger and bodily harm. Even among Bidayūhs, it is believed that if durian is consumed incorrectly, it may cause sickness or death.

This work was inspired by an affectionate and longing message Baker's aunt sent to relatives in a family Whatsapp chat:

**"Gati kinde neg miri kita rarak nalo maan dihan bitugung da pasar / Everyone come here and together we can eat the durian piled up in the market."**

## Gallery Discussion

- How does *dihan bitugung da pasar* reflect the influences of the artist's life and experiences growing up in Malaysia and her Bidayūh heritage?
- Is there a food that has special significance for you and your family? How does this food play a role in your family's gatherings, activities or rituals?
- **Identify** the visual language the artist has used to communicate meaning and connection to culture in this work?

## Classroom Activities

- **Explore** a food that has special meaning for you and your family and **create** a small sculpture or series of sculptures using clay, either air-drying modelling clay, plasticine or ceramic clay
- Share the story behind the food with your class, either as a short written paragraph or oral presentation

# Christopher Bassi



Image: *The Garden and The Sea*, 2021, oil on canvas, series of 6, each 45.7 x 40.6cm

## About the Artist

Christopher Bassi is an Australian artist of Meriam, Yupungathi and British descent. For Bassi painting is a means of storytelling, which he employs in a **representational** style. His work explores concepts of place, belonging and the entangling of racial and cultural identities. Bassi uses **speculative worlding** to tell stories set beyond our known world, investigating the image as socially coded and embedded within historical legacies of Western Art history.

## About the Artwork

*The Garden and The Sea* is a series of images related to the artist's familiar histories and connection to the landscape of Far North Queensland and the Torres Strait. Moving between themes of personal histories, family, and reflections of the self. Bassi's work depicts these themes through a series of individual motifs, that when viewed collectively represent the idea of "home" as both an emotional and physical place. Simultaneously intimate and universal, the works speak to the fragmented nature of both love and belonging.

## Gallery Discussion

- **Identify** and **discuss** the symbols and motifs the artist uses in *The Garden and The Sea* series that shows a connection to the landscape of Far North Queensland and the Torres Strait.
- How can an object be used to tell a story? **Discuss** how Bassi uses visual language to communicate his connection to place.
- **Discuss** how viewing Bassi's six paintings as a series rather than individually supports the artist's exploration of painting as a means of storytelling.

## Classroom Activities

- Collect two objects that you have a personal connection with. Organise these objects into a still life composition and **create** a series of sustained drawings of 2 minutes, 5 minutes and 15 minutes in duration.
- **Identify** the elders and leaders within your extended family. Share with your class two cultural objects that illustrate how they communicate values and share culture within your family.

# Leon Russell (Cameron)

## Black



Image: *Pupuni Jilamara*, 2019, 180 x 120 cm, natural ochres with acrylic binders on canvas. Photo credit: Munupi Arts (two paintings with same name)

### About the Artist

Leon Russell (Cameron) Black first began painting in 2017 at the Munupi Arts Centre. Black's works are representative of Tiwi Islands painting, while demonstrating a unique and striking individual style. His paintings are about country, landscape, culture, family, and the Tiwi people of Pirlangimpi and their way of life.

*"My paintings are about my country and my culture. My dreaming is Nyarringari (Magpie Geese). From my father side my country is Jurrupi. From my mother side my country is Yapalika. My mother Lidwina Tepomitari is a well-known artist, she has been taught by my grandfather Romuald Puruntatameri—he was a great artist, cultural leader, and song man. My uncle Tracy is a really good carver. I have seen them all paint since I was a little boy. I learnt from them, looking at them painting and carving. I only paint with natural ochres. In my paintings I can tell everything about my life in Pirlangimpi, paint all these things in the Tiwi way, in my way, my own way."*

— Leon Russell (Cameron) Black

### Gallery Discussion

- What visual language has Black used to show a connection to his indigenous culture?
- **Discuss** how the artwork links to the artist's cultural values and background?
- How is the painting style and use of natural ochres an important aspect of Black's work?

### Classroom Activities

- Research the Munupi Arts Centre to learn more about the artists the centre supports.
- Think of images, objects and elements from your own life that can be used as symbols for your own family history. You may like to speak with a family member to generate ideas. **Experiment** by choosing a small selection of images, objects or elements, then **use** a medium such as painting or drawing to repeat your chosen elements to **create** a pattern.

# Ohni Blu



Image: *Water Doesn't Tell me to Lose Weight*, 2019, video, 00:06:25

## About the Artist

Ohni Blu was born in Central West Queensland on the traditional lands of the Koa People and now resides on the traditional lands of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation. Blu is an emerging interdisciplinary artist, curator and events producer with a love of collaboration. Their work negotiates personal narratives across lgbtiq+ identity, chronic health and disability. Their practice surveys themes of community care, radical healing and vulnerability.

## About the Artwork

*Water Doesn't Tell Me To Lose Weight* was filmed in a remote area of the Yarrunga creek on the lands of the traditional owners, the Yuin People. Surrounded by a sunken forest of burnt Eucalyptus trees, Blu's naked body swims slowly through the dark water, using the otherworldly and surreal landscape to communicate ideas about the social model of disability and offers an emotional insight into the artist's relationship to their changing body. This narrative contemplates the idea that as a strong swimmer, if Blu lived in a world of water, they might not define themselves as physically disabled.

Using techniques drawn from sci-fi and speculative fiction, the artist creates a contrasting world through this artwork that challenges harmful ways of thinking and dreams instead of a more diverse and accessible future.

## Gallery Discussion

- What feelings or emotions do you think the artist intended to evoke in the viewer?
- **Discuss** how the artist uses water as a metaphor in this work.
- **Discuss** how the Australian landscape contributes to the visual language in the film?
- **Identify** what sci fi or speculative fiction techniques have been used in this work?

## Classroom Activities

- Listen and relax to an ambient soundscape for 5mins and reflect on the experience. What thoughts entered your mind? Was it difficult to switch off? Why/why not?
- How could you make a soundscape that references a place important to you? Record sounds in your chosen place and weave them together.
- Imagine how you would create a world that promotes a better future and addresses issues important to you eg. the environment, social justice or equality. **Create** your own speculative future using a digital technology of your choice.

# Riana Head-Toussaint



Image: Riana Head-Toussaint, *performance still*.

## About the Artist

Riana Head-Toussaint is an interdisciplinary disabled artist, Solicitor, Curator and Access Consultant who uses a manual wheelchair for mobility.

She employs choreography, performance, video, sound design, installation and audience activation to create works that investigate systems, structures and ways of thinking; and advocate for social change. The main concerns in her work are **agency**, representation, the limits of empathy, and how these impact people across different marginalised groups.

## About the Artwork

*First Language* is a meditation on movement; it considers the essential choreography at play in wheelchair use. By capturing and archiving the movements of the body through the medium of film, the artwork highlights wheelchair use as a valuable form of cultural expression.

*"As a wheelchair-user, I have a movement language that is intricate and precise. It is a part of my bodily memory and has taken a lifetime to hone.*

*However, there is no recognised lexicon to communicate and legitimise my wheelchair movement. If I want to share my practice with others, there is no validated language available for us to utilise. First Language is a response to that: a concentration on the visible language in silent revolt against the erasure and nonrecognition of legitimate forms of cultural expression."*

— Riana Head-Toussaint

## Gallery Discussion

- Head-Toussaint's work is about showcasing wheelchair use as a rich and legitimate form of art and culture. Many other types of cultural expression have also been sidelined or devalued by the Western dance **canon**. What other examples can you think of, and can you see any threads of connection across these forms?
- For Head-Toussaint, much of her artwork is both a form of advocacy as well as art. What other artists can you think of that approach art-making in this way? What is the value in this?

## Classroom Activities

- In making *First Language*, the artist reflected on the intricacies of her own movement language by naming and highlighting them. Consider your own movement language in your body: the movements that you gravitate towards or that are authentically 'you'. It could be the way you cross your legs, rest your hand on your cheek, the way you smile. Take note of these signature movements and share them with a partner.
- Then, think about the authentic movements you created in the activity above – what are some names you might give to them, that capture their essence? (The words do not have to literally describe the movement – they could relate more to the movement quality, or what the movement makes you think about or feel when you perform it).

# Visaya Hoffie



Image: *Rich in cryptocurrency*, 2021, clay, wool, oil paint, acrylic, airbrush, nail enamel, glue, eyeshadow, nylon, dimensions variable.  
Dimensions: installation consisting of chaise lounge 180 x 80cm, Painting, inflatable + Perspex globe 215 x 100cm, Clay sculpture 50 x 30, tufted rug 100 x 80cm.

## About the Artist

Visaya Hoffie's approach merges references to "high-art" or fine art with those of popular culture, her work spanning painting, sculpture, printmaking, ceramics, design, animation, leatherwork, textiles and a range of craft media. Hoffie's recent work transforms various aspects of decor into immersive installations that imply that the viewer's presence and response is part of the work. Her imagery brings observations made during her extensive experiences travelling overseas to bear on her love of the incidental, the everyday, the local, the overlooked, the rejected, the dejected, and the downright stupid.

## About the Artwork

This installation blurs the traditional boundaries that define what is art, challenging the hierarchies and implied authority that defines high-art as more tasteful and aesthetic versus low art or **kitsch** which is considered more functional and of less value. Hoffie brings together re-worked replica designer furniture, a ceramic table lamp, an outside inflatable companion, a one-off designed tufted rug and a painting featuring an angry colon to mimic an **ersatz** gallery environment. By creating this setting, the artist places the 'experience of the gallery' as the subject of the work, drawing attention to the viewer's own behaviour in the art gallery and making this part of the artwork.

## Gallery Discussion

- Hoffie's art uses naive and pop-art motifs together with "high-art" references to bridge the gap between "fine art" and kitsch, design and street culture. **Discuss** whether kitsch can still be considered art?
- How does popular culture shape or inform the artist's work?
- **Discuss** how the artist uses humour in their work. Why might this be an effective tool to communicate with an audience?

## Classroom Activities

- Think about a place you have travelled to in the past that you found inspiring. It could be overseas or interstate, or even in your neighbourhood. **Create** a small installation in response using a variety of simple materials such as modelling clay, leather and drawing tools. Incorporate pop culture references into the work.
- Research one "craft" technique and **create** a series of small experiments investigating this technique.

# Kait James

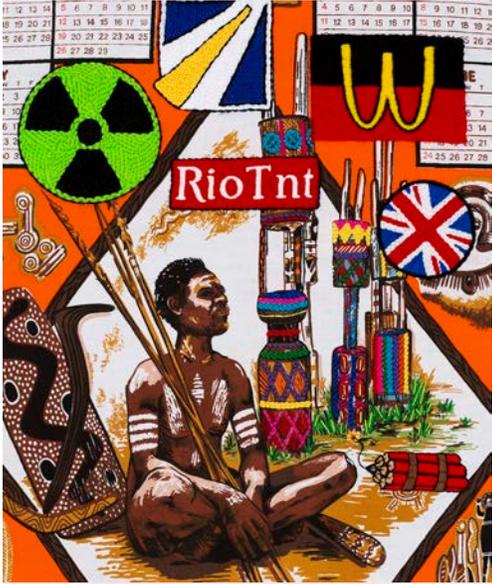


Image: *Bloody Shit*, 2021, acrylic yarn and cotton on printed cotton, 46 x 73cm.  
Photo: Christian Capurro.

## About the Artist

Kait James is a contemporary artist based in Melbourne. As a proud Wadawurrung woman, James's work poses questions about identity, perception, and our knowledge of Australia's Indigenous communities. Using techniques including punch needling, she embroiders **kitsch found materials**.

## About the Artwork

Kait James's current work focuses on colonial and Aboriginal calendar tea towels from the 1970s and 80s that generalise and stereotype her culture. James subverts them with familiar pop-culture references, Indigenous issues relevant to that year, as well as pressing concerns of the present day to reflect her contemporary perspective. Through the use of humour and vivid colours, James addresses the way colonial culture has dominated Australia's history, how Australia and the world perceive our First Nations peoples, and her personal reflections on her Indigenous heritage.

## Gallery Discussion

- How is the artist's re-appropriation of kitsch Aboriginalia significant in a cultural context?
- **Discuss** the literal and non-literal meaning in the artist's work. **Reflect on** the ways the materials, techniques and processes invite you into conversations with James's work.
- What do you find challenging, confusing or surprising about the artwork? What does it make you question?

## Classroom Activities

- Research and explore the historical production of Aboriginalia.
- Collect old or second-hand printed textile items. **Using** dichotomies, change and alter the fabric's original meaning.

# Alexa Malizon



Image: *Ningning* from *Diversitea Talks* (still), 2020, digital video, colour and sound, 00:01:51

## About the Artist

Canberra-based artist Alexa Malizon explores the lived cultural experience of existing within a **diaspora**. Born in Australia to Filipino immigrants, her identity has been influenced by her upbringing between two different worlds. She explores this intersectionality through a range of photographic media to reconnect with her cultural roots and to engage with themes such as identity, miscommunication, cultural shame, and the representation of the sexualised ethnographic body.

## About the Artwork

Hybrid Filipino-Australian landscapes, cheesy visual transitions, lip-synching and awkward stares communicate a disconnect between the expectations of what a 'Filipina' encompasses and the personal shame when these expectations are not fulfilled. Alexa Malizon's *Dalawa* is a three-channel video work that explores the contradictions and complexities of growing up in Australia with Filipino heritage.

The background presents a fictional landscape that morphs Mount Mayon in the Philippines with grasslands of Ngannawal and Ngambri country, Canberra, Australia. The screens are arranged in a triptych; on the outer two screens, Malizon dances in time to the popular Filipino song "Otso Otso". In the central video, she attempts to sing the Filipino karaoke classic "Bituing Walang Ningning". Both sequences evoke an intimate, humorous, yet awkward friction between the 'self' and the 'other' in light of performing to cultural expectations.

## Gallery Discussion

- What thoughts or feelings about growing up between two different worlds does the artist convey through their work?
- How does the use of video influence the impact and interpretation of the work?

## Classroom Activities

- **Reflect on** your upbringing to create an artwork that expresses your cultural and/or personal identity. Experiment with a range of media such as photography, film and sound.
- **Create** a hybrid landscape of two different places using either traditional painting and drawing mediums, or as a digital landscape using Photoshop.

# Kyra Mancktelow



Image: *Blue jacket - Blak skin*, 2021, ink impression on Hahnemühle paper, 145 x 92 cm. Courtesy of the artist and N.Smith Gallery, Gadigal Country / Sydney.

## About the Artist

Kyra Mancktelow's practice investigates legacies of colonialism, posing questions about how we remember and acknowledge First Nations' histories. An emerging Quandamooka artist with links to the Mardigan people of Cunnamulla, Mancktelow's practice includes sculpture, ceramics and printmaking to share her rich heritage, stories and traditions.

*"Our Old People were unclothed but never naked.*

*Our Old People dressed in their identity  
In body scars and pigments marking ceremonies  
The same way the white man wears a uniform.*

*Our Old People trimmed their hair with bones, feathers, fibres and shells.  
The same way a King wears his crown.*

*Our Old People wore adornments around their necks and on their bodies.  
The same way the wealth flash their jewels.*

*Our Old People carried their dillies against their skin.  
The same way a Queen holds her purse.*

*Our Old People were named savages by the nakedness of their bodies by newcomers who colonise us, stigmatise us and fetishise us."*

— Kyra Mancktelow

## Gallery Discussion

- **Discuss** how the artist provokes discussions about culture and identity.
- How does Mancktelow connect with the viewer's experiences to create meaning?
- **Discuss** how the artist uses an invisible code to communicate meaning.

## Classroom Activities

- **Identify** a piece of clothing or a textile item at home that holds a memory. **Create** an artwork that accompanies the textile to express this memory.
- **Experiment** with collaging fabrics and printmaking techniques.
- **Consider** the cultural lens of this work and **research** either the Quandamooka or the Mardigan people of Cunnamulla to understand more about the impacts of colonialism on First Nations' histories.

# Ivy Minniecon



Image: *White Washing*, 2021, prints on calico, string, dimensions variable

## About the Artist

Ivy Minniecon is a South Sea Islander and descendant of the Kuku Yalanji, Kabi Kabi, Gooreng Gooreng Nations. She uses printmaking, mixed-media, sculpture, photography, and video in her art practice, which is grounded in belonging.

## About the Artwork

*Whitewashing* is an ongoing series of prints on fabric that document racial stereotyping experienced by the Indigenous arts community. This work includes images and stories of a broad cross section of the art community from students, academics, and contemporary artists associated with the Bachelor of Contemporary Australian Indigenous Art, at the Queensland College of Art (QCA).

The prints feature comments directed to or overheard by each collaborator, forming a tapestry of systematic racial abuse and vilification, and echoing how casual racism is engrained in our society. The bleached calico prints reference the domestic processes attached to the stolen generations, **Mission** life, and slavery. Designed to be displayed on a string line which symbolises a washing line or being 'hung out' to dry. Minniecon's work gives voice to all her subjects and changes the **status quo** of Indigenous people remaining invisible.

## Gallery Discussion

- What is meant by the term casual racism?
- **Identify** and **discuss** the symbols and motifs that Minniecon uses to comment on experiences of casual racism.
- Have you ever overheard comments that could be considered casual racism? How might we change this practice?

## Classroom Activities

- Engage in a destruction of surface activity using an emulsion transfer of printed imagery. **Reflect on** how the process of destruction adds to the artwork's meaning.
- Research Australia's responses to the national apology and **identify** alternate responses to the apology within the arts community. **Experiment** with non-text visual representations of the concept of an apology.
- **Create** a series of three prints that visually document a stereotype.

# Nina Sanadze



Image: Apotheosis, 2021, an original studio archive of a prominent soviet sculptor Valentin Topuridze (1907-1980), plaster models, moulds and fragments, 1600 x 3100 x 2000mm. Photo by Grant Hancock.

## About the Artist

Nina Sanadze was born in Georgia (former USSR) in 1976 and immigrated to Australia in 1996. Presenting appropriated original artefacts, replicas or documentary films as witnesses and evidence, Sanadze seeks to re-examine our grand political narratives (how storytelling can shape fact and impact on understandings of reality). Humour and beauty allow her to address often disturbing concerns, reflecting the complex paradigm of our existence, which is both sublime and horrific.

## About the Artwork

*Apotheosis* is a new version of a previous installation titled *100 Years After and 30 Years On*. It is constructed from the surviving studio archive of a prominent soviet sculptor, Valentin Topuridze (1907-1980), whose public sculptures were torn down in 1989 with the fall of the Soviet regime.

Displaced, disembodied, **de-contextualised**, and piled together like corpses, the sculptural archive forms a different kind of monument, a memorial. The unexpected interactions between individual sculptures create random and dramatic compositions. Once monumental and victorious, they now appear fragile and insignificant, hinting at the impermanence of every political era and **ideology**.

This installation is inspired by the 19th century painting *The Apotheosis of War* by Russian artist Vasily Vereshchagin.

## Gallery Discussion

- How does the composition of the installed artefacts shape your understanding of the artist's message?
- The installation is inspired by an iconic 19th century painting. How does the reinterpretation of this image as an installation change the way the viewer engages with the iconography?
- Sanadze's work is intentionally embedded with humour to challenge our understanding of grand political narratives. What stylistic techniques is the artist employing to evoke humour for the viewer?

## Classroom Activities

- **Identify** an iconic historic painting and recreate it as an installation, with the intent to challenge the meaning embedded within the original work.
- Collect a selection of works you have previously made and assemble these as an installation. Notice any connections and through lines between your pieces, and try to emphasise these through your choice of assembly method. **Consider** how you might unify them by using structures such as wall hangings, plinths or adding a soundscape.
- **Select** a previous 3D work you have made. Apply a rust patina to it. **Consider** the ways in which its meaning is shifted once its appearance is altered.

# Jayanto Tan



Image: *Potluck Party Pai Ti Kong (A Praying The Heaven God)*, 2021, ceramics, dimensions variable

## About the Artist

Jayanto Tan is a visual artist who was born and raised in a small town in North Sumatra, Indonesia. As a Chinese-Sumatran living in Sydney, his practice blends Eastern and Western mythologies with the reality of current events.

## About the Artwork

These ceramic 'soul foods' created during the COVID-19 lockdown came about from conversations between the artist and his friends and family on what kind of art should be made during isolation. The work is inspired by the myth and tradition of '*Pai Ti Kong (Praying The Heaven God)*' of his mother's Hokkien ancestry. In this story Hokkien people escaped a violent invasion of their village by hiding in a sugarcane field and praying for their safety. When they survived the attack they emerged and honoured the Heaven God for keeping them safe through presenting offerings; an annual ritual that continues to this day to ensure their ongoing safety and prosperity.

As an immigrant artist who fled poverty and political repression in search of a better life in Sydney, Tan has created these objects as a homage to the victims of the Riot of May 1998 throughout Indonesia. Largely targeting Chinese-Indonesians, this event saw thousands of people massacred, burned, and many ethnic Chinese-Indonesian women raped. These ceramic works symbolise life and hope, although the tragedy remains unresolved politically.

## Gallery Discussion

- Tan uses food as a symbol of life and hope in tragic circumstances. Why do you think food can be an effective symbol to communicate thoughts and ideas?
- What kind of food would you choose to symbolise life and hope? What could that communicate to the viewer about your personal or cultural identity?

## Classroom Activities

- Prepare a collective feast with your class and display this as a still life. **Create** a small sculpture or series of sculptures inspired by the food on display.
- Then, **discuss** the stories behind the artworks whilst sharing and enjoying the feast with your classmates.
- Research other artists who use food in their practice. **Compare** and **contrast** their work with that of Tan.

# Joanne Wheeler



Image: 'Olden Times, Ntaria', acrylic on Linen, 92 x 151 x 2cm

## About the Artist

Joanne Napangardi Wheeler was born in 1969 in Ntaria (Hermannsburg) and is the great granddaughter of renowned watercolourist Albert Namitjira. Joanne is a Western Aranda speaking woman, who identifies with the West MacDonnell Range country of her mother's family, and Kaltukatjara, her father's country. Wheeler's work focuses on her country of Ntaria, Palm Valley, Hermannsburg Community, Hermannsburg Mountain, and the Finke River. Wheeler combines Tjukurrpa and personal history narratives, contemporary figurative and traditional mark making, and stories from the past and the present.

## About the Artwork

Joanne Wheeler's two paintings are titled *Olden Times, Ntaria* and *These Times, Ntaria*. In *Olden Times, Ntaria* her family are shown on country before **colonisation** and the establishment of the Hermannsburg Mission. In *These Times, Ntaria* community are shown coming together for sports day.

"Family used to be walking round all along Finke River, find all them emu. Looking. Looking. Real hungry one. This is my Country. Good Country, sandhill Country, green Country, lots of grass, sandhill, mountain. This is my family on Country before Hermannsburg Mission Times. Long ago those people, long ago. That's how things were. And here I am."

— Joanne Wheeler

## Gallery Discussion

- **Identify** three symbols in Wheeler's painting 'Olden Times, Ntaria'. What is the narrative these symbols help to depict?
- How does the artist communicate her cultural context?
- How does the artist use compositional techniques to enhance a narrative?

## Classroom Activities

- **Develop** three symbols that depict a story from your personal history.
- **Experiment** with figurative and non-figurative mark making to communicate connection to a place that is significant for you.

## List of Key Terms

**Agency** – the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices.

**Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR)** – a tingling sensation that typically begins on the scalp and moves down the back of the neck and upper spine triggered by specific auditory or visual stimuli.

**Canon** – the body of high culture literature, music, philosophy, and works of art that have achieved the status of classics. The notion of the 'canon' has been disputed and critiqued as it devalues some forms of culture in favour of others to maintain a particular status quo.

**Colonisation** – is a practice or policy of control by one people or power over other people or areas. In this process colonisers may impose their religion, language, economics, and other practices and override existing culture/s.

**De-contextualise** – to consider (something) in isolation from its usual situation, to obscure meaning.

**Diaspora** – the dispersion or spread of any people from their original homeland.

**Dreaming** – a First Nations peoples' understanding of the world and its creation. Passed from generation to generation through storytelling, the Dreaming shares beliefs that are connected to Country and the natural world. These stories incorporate creation, rules for living, social regulations, ethics and morality.

**Ersatz** – made or used as a substitute, typically an inferior one, for something else.

**Ethnographic** – Scientific methods used to document and represent cultures. There is debate around the 'cultural authority' embedded in this term and whether this research can represent cultures and cultural practices other than its own.

**Found Materials** – art created from undisguised, but often modified, items or products that are not normally considered materials from which art is made, often because they already have a non-art function.

**Ideology** – a set of ideas or beliefs, especially one on which a political system, organisation or political party is based.

**High Art** – artforms valued more highly than "low art". Fine art versus kitsch for example.

**Intergenerational** – something that carries across generations of people, or connects two different generations.

**Intersectionality** – the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect.

**Kitsch** – art or other objects that appeal to popular rather than "refined" tastes.

**Mission** – missions were institutions that Aboriginal people were placed in after being forcibly removed from their traditional lands, often run by the church. Aboriginal people were not allowed to speak language or continue traditions and ceremonies in these places and were punished if they were seen doing these things.

**Paradigm** – a philosophical or theoretical framework.

**Reappropriate** – to take back or reclaim (something) for one's own purposes.

**Social Model of Disability** – seeks to change society in order to accommodate people living with impairment; supporting the view that people with disability have a right to be fully participating citizens on an equal basis with others.

**Status quo** – the current state of things or the way things are now.

## Further Resources

[Dawn of a Day Too Dark to Call Tomorrow](#) by Akil Ahamat

[Ningning](#) by Alexa Malizon

[Water Doesn't Tell Me to Lose Weight](#) by Ohni Blu

Further 'the churchie' resources are available via the [IMA Resources webpage](#), including the Virtual Exhibition, Artist Podcasts and Video Talks

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## Visiting IMA

IMA's Education programs are FREE and available for primary, secondary and tertiary groups on weekdays during exhibition seasons. Bookings are required for both guided and self-guided school and tertiary groups.

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