



This language that is every stone

12 February – 16 April 2022

Education Kit

How to Use This Resource

This education kit has been developed for use alongside viewing the exhibition *This language that is every stone* 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 and compiled with definitions at the end of the resource.

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Floorplan

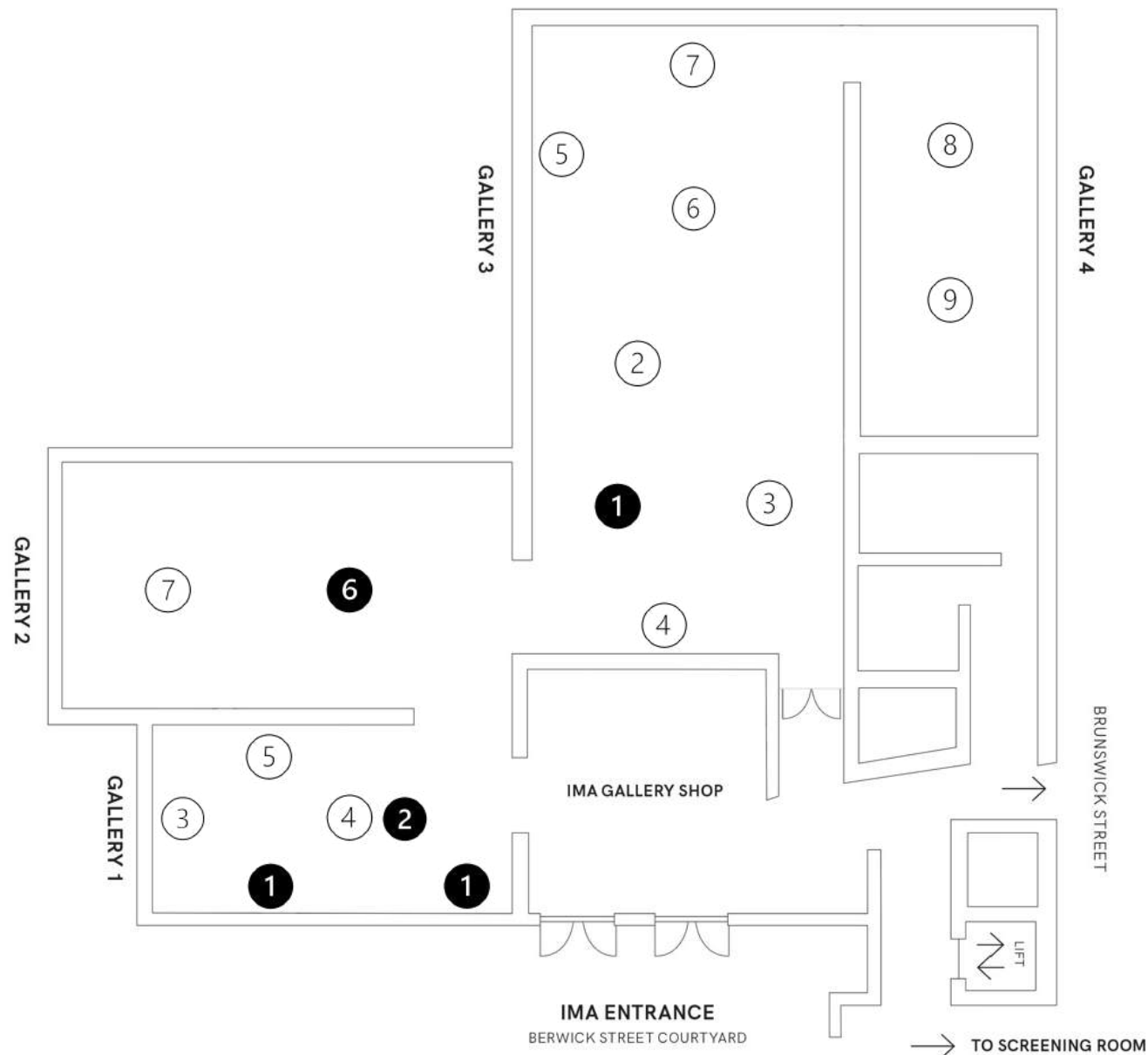
Galleries 1 and 2

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Image cover page: Daniel Boyd, *Untitled (EOTAEIAOOTA)*, 2020, oil, acrylic, and archival glue on canvas. 58.5 x 82.5 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney.



About the Exhibition

Curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, Asad Raza, and Warraba Weatherall

Vernon Ah Kee, Robert Andrew, Daniel Boyd, Megan Cope, Manthia Diawara, Taloi Havini, Koo Jeong A, Sancintya Mohini Simpson, Phuong Ngo, The Otolith Group, Philippe Parreno, Raqs Media Collective, Khaled Sabsabi, Anri Sala, Yhonnie Scarce, Shireen Taweel.

Curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, Asad Raza, and Warraba Weatherall, *This language that is every stone* is part of a series of exhibitions that surveys the life and work of Martinican writer Édouard Glissant.

Widely recognised as one of the most important literary figures of the Caribbean, Glissant was a poet and philosopher whose body of work continues to inspire and influence artists across the globe.

The exhibition examines the concept of **creolisation**, an idea brought to prominence by Glissant, defined as a constant state of cultural transformation, whereby local difference emerges from recurrent contact between people—with one another—as well as the natural world.

As Glissant writes, creolisation is “a phenomenon that is real in the world: that is to say not one of us can pretend to be shielded from the good or bad influences of the world.”

Developed for viewing in Australia, *This language that is every stone* explores the exchange of cultural influences and their impact on one another through the works of Australian First Nations and **diasporic** artists, with contributions from international counterparts.

This language that is every stone is supported by the Copyright Agency Cultural Fund and the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland.

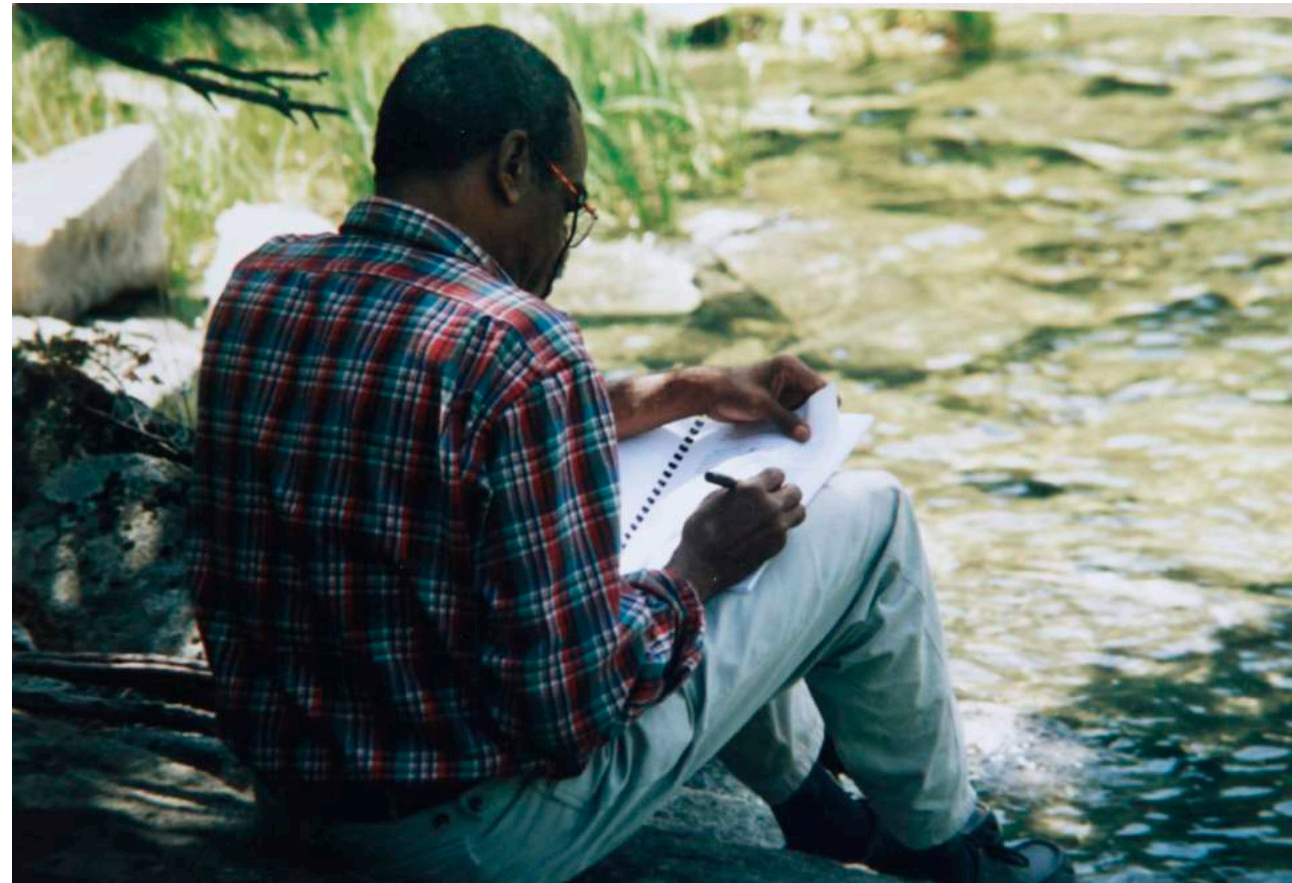


Image: Édouard Glissant. Courtesy l'Institut du Tout-Monde.



'(I)t's making people aware of the kind of, the layered history... the interactions with this place over time. So, it's breaking that down so that you hopefully get a sense of... the immediate experience with the work and your relationship to this place. And so, it's, it's just a tool for me to have the viewer understand that space.'

-Daniel Boyd, excerpt from interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist at the opening of the *Mondialité* exhibition at Fondation Boghossian, Villa Empain

Image: Daniel Boyd, *Untitled (27°27'34.9"S 153°02'12.4"E)*, 2022, Window installation, adhesive vinyl on glass. Image courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney.

Artist

Daniel Boyd draws on his Aboriginal heritage as a Kudjla/Gangalu man from North Queensland to create paintings, installations and sculptures that examine **Eurocentric** narratives of Australia's colonial history. Boyd uses his signature "dot" painting technique to express Indigenous collective memory and perception.

The artist often draws on archival images to create paintings in oil, watercolour or charcoal, overlaid with dots of **archival glue** or resin, which creates an effect similar to **Pointillism**.

Daniel Boyd



Image: Daniel Boyd, *Untitled (EOTAEIAOOTA)*, 2020, oil, acrylic, and archival glue on canvas. 58.5 x 82.5 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney.

Artwork

Boyd is interested in representing multiple "lenses", both visually through his chosen medium and conceptually by viewing a narrative from multiple perspectives. The **negative spaces** between dots can be seen as blacked-out pinpricks that obstruct vision, suggesting the holes or missing parts in our collective memory.

In *Untitled (27°27'34.9"S 153°02'12.4"E)* (image previous page), the viewer experiences Boyd's artwork installed directly onto the doors of the gallery space, making the artwork both a surface and a space that encloses the whole exhibition. Boyd draws our attention to place, offering the artwork as a compass to navigate and understand the space and all the artworks it contains.

Gallery Discussion

- How does the presentation and display of this work influence how it is perceived by an audience?
- Cultural context: How does the artwork demonstrate influences of art movements and styles?
- Personal context: How does the artwork generate an emotional response from the viewer? How do you feel when you view Boyd's work?

Classroom Activities

- **Experiment** with visual lenses by **creating** a work that incorporates multiple layers. You may like to use materials such as fabric, glass, Perspex or mirrored surfaces or layers of paint. How can you **modify** an image by covering some parts and revealing others?
- What is the "layered history... the interactions with this place over time" that Boyd references in his work? **Research** the history of your local area and the interactions between people and the land. How have these shifted across time and cultures?

'The ancestor speaks, it is the ocean, it is the race that washed the continents with its veil of sufferings; it says this race which is song, the dew of song and the muffles perfume and the blue of the song, and its mouth is the song of all mouths of foam; Ocean! You permit, you are the accomplice, maker of stars; how is it you do not open your wings into a voracious lung? And see! There remains only the sum of the song and the eternity of voice and childhood already of those who will inherit it. Because as far as suffering is concerned it belongs to all: everyone has its vigorous sand between their teeth. The ocean is patience, its wisdom is the tare of time.'

*-Édouard Glissant, *The Restless Earth**

Image: Megan Cope, *Kinyingarra Guwinyanba Poles (Study/Prototypes)*, 2021, eucalyptus, Kinyinyarra (Sydney rock oyster) shell and stainless-steel trace wire. Image courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane.



Artist

Megan Cope is a Quandamooka artist. Her **site-specific** sculptural installations, video work, paintings and public art investigate issues about identity, the environment and mapping practices.

She is a member of Aboriginal art collective **proppaNOW**.

Megan Cope



Image detail: Megan Cope, *Kinyingarra Guwinyanba Poles (Study/Prototypes)*, 2021, eucalyptus, Kinyinyarra (Sydney rock oyster) shell and stainless-steel trace wire. Image courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane.

Artwork

This work follows six years of investigating the impact of the colonial lime burning industry and devastation of **Aboriginal middens** and oyster reefs in Quandamooka Sea Country. *Kinyingarra Guwinyanba* (which means 'place of oyster rocks' in Jandai & Gowar language) are hand built sculptures placed on Country to create a living artwork for the future.

Resting on the seashore near Myora on Minjerriba-Stradbroke Island, Cope has planted dozens of oyster rods in collaboration with community members. Building on the cultural practices of the artist's ancestors - which were violently interrupted by colonisation - Cope's work is a visual, living monument to her Country and people.

Kinyingarra Guwinyanba demonstrates how art can physically heal country that has been colonised, through practices that restore both ecology and culture.

Gallery Discussion

- Have you visited the artist's Country, Minjerriba-Stradbroke Island before? If not, is there another place near the sea you like to visit? What did you observe about the land and sea while you were there?
- Formal context: **Identify** the visual language the artist has used to communicate meaning and connection to culture in this work? How is the use of materials important?

Classroom Activities

- **Research** the **Land art** movement to discover other artists that incorporate living materials into their artwork. Choose one artist and write a paragraph to **compare** and **contrast** their approach with that of Megan Cope.
- **Identify** a place in the natural environment that has special meaning for you. It could be a park, a nature reserve or even your own backyard. How could you **create** a **site-specific** artwork using natural materials that pays tribute to this place? Are there people or communities you could collaborate with in the making of the work?



Image detail: Sancintya Mohini Simpson, *Kāla*, 2022, sugarcane ash.
Image courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane.

Artist

Sancintya Mohini Simpson is a descendent of **indentured labourers** sent from India to work on colonial sugar plantations in South Africa. Her work navigates the complexities of migration, memory and trauma – addressing gaps and silences within the colonial archive. Simpson’s work moves between painting, video, poetry, and performance to develop narratives and construct rituals that reflect on her **matrilineal** lineage.

Sancintya Mohini Simpson



Image: Sancintya Mohini Simpson, *Kāla*, 2022, sugarcane ash.
Image courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane.

Artwork

Kāla (2022) reflects on the traditional Tamil women’s artform *kōlam* – a daily practice of drawing designs in rice flour in the home. Symmetrical geometric line drawings sit at the threshold between inside and outside – welcoming visitors and attracting prosperity.

The artist reconstructs the *kōlam* with the ash of sugarcane – replacing the medium of rice flour as a source of nourishment, with burnt notes of loss, violence and trauma. The *kōlam* – placed at the beginning of the exhibition – moves from geometric symmetry to a muddle of black dust as visitors travel across the threshold and into the gallery. The traditional practice of daily renewal is replaced with the work’s process of decay.

Gallery Discussion

- Why do you think the artist has chosen to create an **ephemeral** or temporary work of art in a gallery context?
- Formal context: How does time play a role in creating meaning within the artist’s work? How might it influence the viewer to perceive the work differently?
- Personal context: How is the artist’s family history as a descendent of indentured labourers reflected in this artwork?

Classroom Activities

- **Experiment** with ephemeral art using simple materials you could find in a kitchen or home. How does the artwork change over time? Document this process **using** photography or film.
- Both Simpson and Édouard Glissant are influenced by place and the loss felt by a history of labour exploitation in the sugar industry. Choose either Simpson (South Africa) or Glissant (Martinique) to **investigate** the history of place as it has influenced the work of your chosen creative.



*'Language resembles
an electric current;
alive with centuries of
cultural experiences
such as learning,
trade, identity,
community and
ancestral knowledge'.*

-Shireen Taweel

Image: Shireen Taweel, *Switching Codes*, 2020, directional sound sculptures, copper, steel, three channel audio, dimensions variable. Photo: Silversalt Photography.

Artist

Shireen Taweel is a multimedia installation artist whose work uses language as a lens to explore the construction of cultural heritage, knowledge and identity. Her practice draws on personal experiences as a Lebanese Australian living between cultures, and how the physical spaces within her community reflect a complex cultural landscape of transformation.

Taweel's works are often **site-specific**, weaving local stories and research with a focus on experimentation in material and sound. The artist is self-taught, using traditional coppersmith skills such as piercing and engraving to create her sculptures.

Shireen Taweel



Image: Shireen Taweel, *Switching Codes*, 2020, directional sound sculptures, copper, steel, three channel audio, dimensions variable. Photo: Silversalt Photography.

Artwork

Switching Codes unpacks the influence of the Arabic, English and French languages in Lebanon, and how these impact on Lebanese cultural identity in Australia, Lebanon, and France. **Code-switching** is used in everyday conversation in Lebanon and helps to unify the diverse cultural influences of the country's languages and the cultural and political histories that come with these languages.

The sound projected from the artist's sculptures is a combination of the Arabic, French and English languages. Words dissolve and shift meaning, at the same time familiar and disordered.

Gallery Discussion

- Do you speak any languages or dialects other than English? If so, how does this language influence your experience of living in Australia?
- Cultural context: How does the artwork explore Lebanese cultural traditions and identity?
- Formal context: How does the artwork emphasise the process of making and craftsmanship?

Classroom Activities

- **Research** a language group other than English in your school community. What relationship does this language, its culture and history have with English? **Discuss** your findings with a friend.
- **Experiment** with creating a soundscape using these two languages. You could record spoken words in each language and overlap them, or cut and edit them to create a **hybrid** language or conversation.

List of Key Terms

Aboriginal middens - mounds of accumulated shells made by Aboriginal people when collecting, cooking and eating shellfish.

Archival glue - specially formulated adhesive that does not degrade with age.

Code-switching - when a speaker mixes words and phrases between two or more languages or dialects in a single conversation. Multilinguals, speakers of more than one language, sometimes use elements of multiple languages when conversing with each other. Socially, code-switching involves adjusting one's style of speech, appearance, behaviour, and expression in ways that will optimize the comfort of others

Creolisation - an idea brought to prominence by Glissant, defined as a constant state of cultural transformation, whereby endless local difference emerges from recurrent contact between people—with one another—as well as the natural world.

Diasporic - something that contains cultural knowledge and links to another place, outside the immediate context.

Ephemeral - an artwork that only happens once, or is not made from a lasting form and will dissolve over time.

Eurocentric - the use of a European or Western culture as a universal value, and the process of applying this value to other cultures.

Hybrid - something that combines two or more elements in its entity.

Indentured labourers - workers bound by a contract to work without salary for a specific amount of time. The contract may be entered voluntarily to pay for goods or services, to repay a debt or may be forced upon them as punishment for a crime.

Land art - an artwork made using the landscape or environment itself as the medium. Land art as an art movement arose from 1960s and 1970s conceptual art.

Matrilineal - of the mother or female side of the family.

Negative space - the space in an artwork around the subject or object of focus.

Pointillism - a painting technique where small dots of colour are applied in patterns to form an image. It was used by the Impressionists at the turn of the 20th century.

ProppaNOW - an artist collective based in Brisbane. Members include; Vernon Ah Kee, Tony Albert, Richard Bell, Jennifer Herd, Gordon Hookey, Laurie Nilsen and Megan Cope.

Site-specific - an artwork designed for a particular location, if removed from that location it loses all or a substantial part of its meaning.

Curriculum Links

Australian Curriculum / Visual Art / Years 11-12 Syllabus Objectives

1. implement ideas and representations
2. apply literacy skills
3. analyse and interpret visual language, expression and meaning in artworks and practices
4. evaluate art practices, traditions, cultures and theories
5. justify viewpoints
6. experiment in response to stimulus
7. create meaning through the knowledge and understanding of materials, techniques, technologies and art processes
8. realise responses to communicate meaning

Australian Curriculum / Visual Arts / Years F-10

Use materials, techniques and processes to explore visual conventions when making artworks (ACAVAM107) (ACAVAM111) (ACAVAM115)

Explore ideas and artworks from different cultures and times, including artwork by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, to use as inspiration for their own representations (ACAVAM106) (ACAVAM110) (ACAVAM114)

Respond to visual artworks and consider where and why people make visual artworks, starting with visual artworks from Australia, including visual artworks of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (ACAVAR109) (ACAVAR113) (ACAVAR117)

Develop ways to enhance their intentions as artists through exploration of how artists use materials, techniques, technologies and processes (ACAVAM119) (ACAVAM121)

Practise techniques and processes to enhance representation of ideas in their art-making (ACAVAM126) (ACAVAM128)

Australian Curriculum / Cross-curriculum Priority / Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

Code	Organising ideas
Country/Place	
OI.1	Australia has two distinct Indigenous groups: Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and within those groups there is significant diversity.
OI.2	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities maintain a special connection to and responsibility for Country/Place.
OI.3	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have holistic belief systems and are spiritually and intellectually connected to the land, sea, sky and waterways.
Culture	
OI.4	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies have many Language Groups.
OI.5	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' ways of life are uniquely expressed through ways of being, knowing, thinking and doing.
OI.6	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples live in Australia as first peoples of Country or Place and demonstrate resilience in responding to historic and contemporary impacts of colonisation.
People	
OI.7	The broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies encompass a diversity of nations across Australia.
OI.8	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' family and kinship structures are strong and sophisticated.
OI.9	The significant contributions of Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the present and past are acknowledged locally, nationally and globally.

Further Resources

Cope, Megan. *MEGAN COPE*, <http://www.megancope.com.au/>

Fondation Boghossian. *MONDIALITE*,
<http://www.villaempain.com/en/mondialite/>

Glissant Édouard. "The Restless Earth." *The Collected Poems of Édouard Glissant*, edited by Jeff Humphries, translated by Melissa Manolas, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2005.

Simpson, Sancintya Mohini. *SANCINTYA MOHINI SIMPSON*,
<https://sancintya.com/>

Taweel, Shireen. *SHIREEN TAWEEL*, <http://www.shireentaweel.com/>

Additional 'This language that is every stone' resources are available via the [IMA Resources webpage](#)

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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.

Institute of Modern Art

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