



An Alternative Economics

7 May- 9 July 2022

Education Kit

How to Use This Resource

This education kit has been developed for use alongside viewing the exhibition *An Alternative Economics* 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

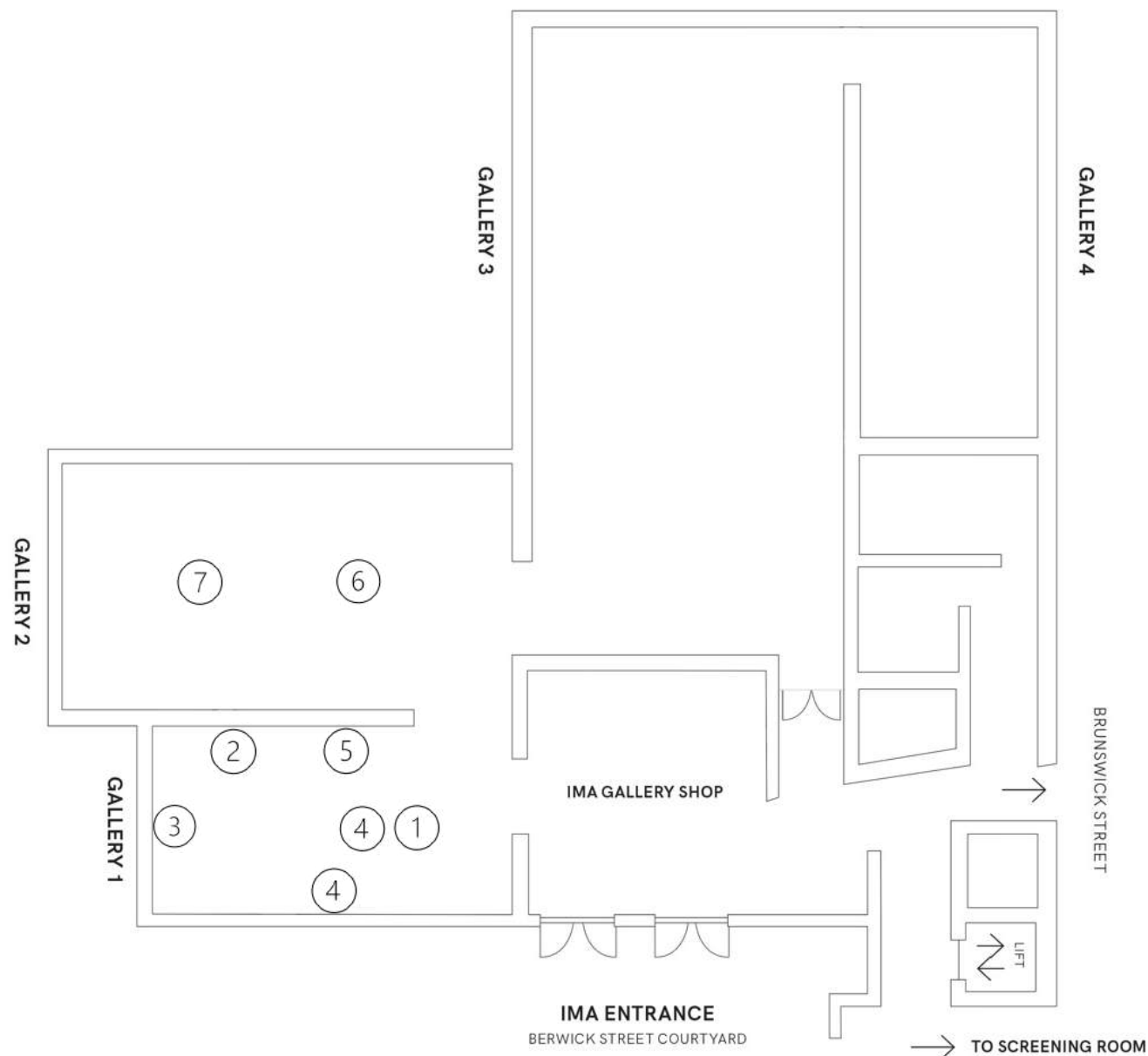
Gallery 1

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Image cover page: Keg de Souza, *Not a Drop to Drink*, 2021, glass table, edible and native plants, sound. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Bryony Jackson.





About the Exhibition

Curated by Tulleah Pearce

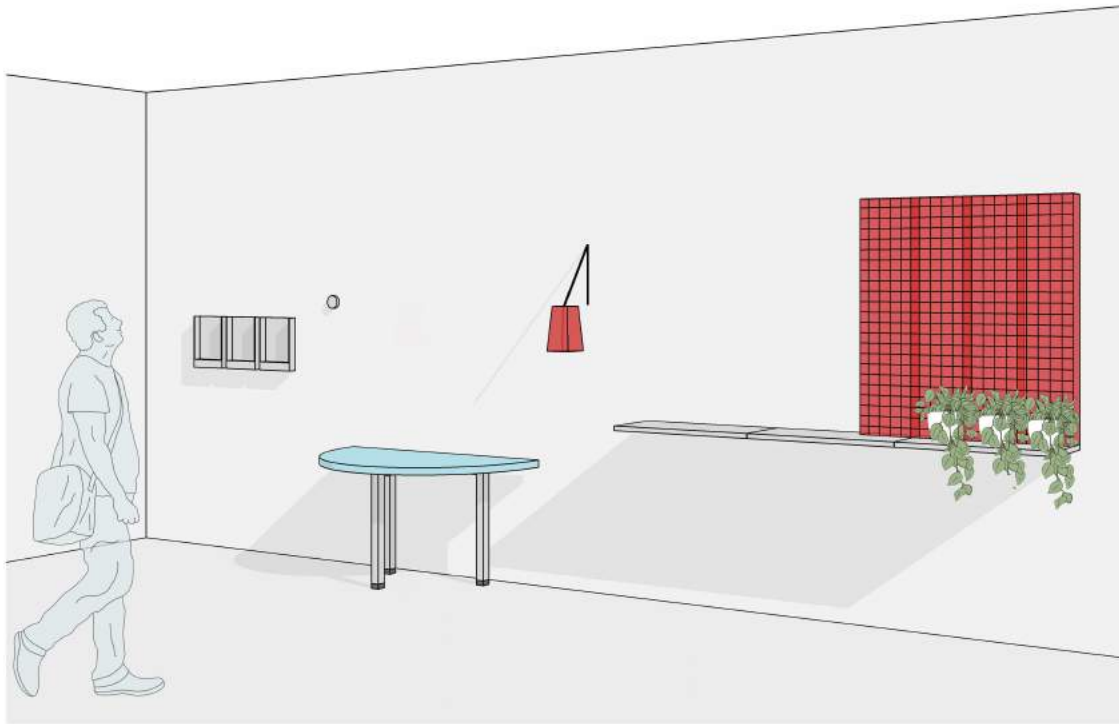
Five Mile Radius, Gunybi Ganambarr, Wanda Gillespie, Katie Paterson, Make or Break, Keg de Souza, and Shevaun Wright

An Alternative Economics brings together Australian and international artists who use art to explore the creation of value - what is 'counted' in our society and why?

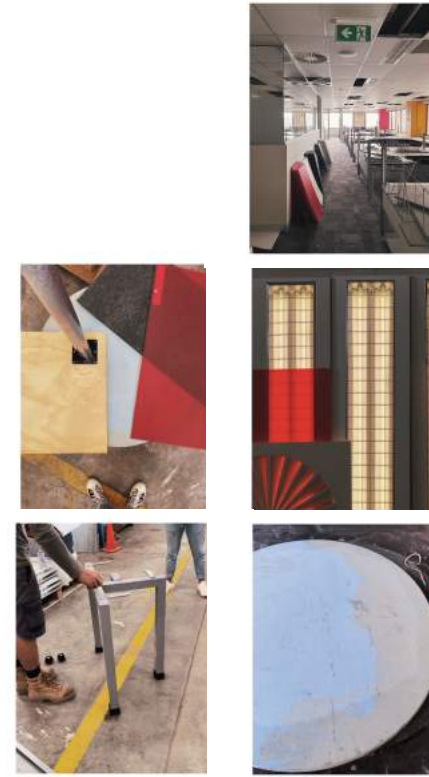
Artists each offer propositions for artmaking in a 'post-growth' world; utilising materials of place, critiquing non-renewable systems, sharing cultural knowledge, promoting the rights of nature, and meditating on the role of art practice to promote change.

The art objects in *An Alternative Economics* index these processes of critique through their form and offer alternate models in their concepts. These ideas often decentre the human or institution as the judge or authority of value, and highlight that it is the transformation of relationships that mark the pathways towards change. The artists in this exhibition each propose (in big and small ways) alternate visions for a more sustainable, equal, and ultimately just future.

Image detail: Shevaun Wright, *Teddy Bear Lien*, 2022, photographs, documents, stuffed toys, dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist.



A reworked furniture series made from materials marked as construction and demolition waste



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444 QUEEN
 FMR

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Artists

Five Mile Radius are Brisbane-based architects who work within the parameters of 'building with what you've got', advocating for positive change in the building industry.

Founded in 2016, the studio is the **collaborative** effort of a group of architects, tradespeople and educators passionate about testing new ideas for Australia's built future.

The studio works with both recycled and natural materials and is seen as a local leader in **closed loop** thinking, waste reuse and **bioclimatic design**.

Five Mile Radius



Image: Five Mile Radius, *Location Scouting for 444 Queen St*, 2022. Courtesy of the artists.

Artwork

The installation is a series of design objects produced from demolition materials. The architecture collective have been engaged by commercial developers Hutchinsons and demolition firm Aztech to reuse fittings and building materials from an office building at 444 Queen St. Construction causes 40% of global carbon emissions and 44% of all waste globally comes from construction and demolition processes.

The aim is to keep materials in their highest value through repair, reuse or recycling, rather than **downcycling** which creates lower grade materials. The table, seat, lightbox and shelving reflect a circular approach to materials but also the social relationships that enable this reuse to occur.

Gallery Discussion

- Formal context: Five Mile Radius use waste materials, often sourced from construction sites, to create experimental projects. How is the choice of materials an important factor in conveying meaning through their work?
- Contemporary context: Outside a gallery context, furniture and objects such as those made by the artists could be defined as product design. What differentiates product design from contemporary art in this instance?

Classroom Activities

- Watch the artist video of Five Mile Radius on the IMA Resources webpage. Collaborate in small groups to **design** a future focused item of furniture. Sketch your design then **create** a prototype using waste cardboard. **Experiment** with construction and joining techniques such as rolling, tearing, cutting and creating tabs and slots to refine your design.
- To extend this activity further, draw a relationships mind map that outlines the people, businesses, and organisations in your community that you could source these materials from.



Gunnybi Ganambarr obeys the long-term instructions from Buku elders:

*"If you are going to paint the land,
use the land",*

which ensures the miny'tji (sacred designs) drawn from song cycles remain connected to place through found materials, and are only shared by those invested with appropriate cultural authority over them.

Artist

Gunybi Ganambarr is a Yolngu artist who lives and works on his ancestral country at Gängän, near Yirrkala in north-east Arnhem Land. He began his artistic career painting on bark and **larrakitj** but since 2008 has extended his practice with experimental and innovative use of reclaimed materials, which include wood, rubber, glass, steel, galvanised iron and aluminium which he finds on Country.

Ganambarr's works communicate the complex relationships between the artist and specific parts of country – the seasonal cycles of animal migration, food sources, environmental change, and ceremony – as well as the workings of spirit throughout Country, forever connecting ancestral times with the current moment.

Gunybi Ganambarr



Image: Gunybi Ganambarr, *Fishtrap on the Gängän River*, 2019, mixed media, 231 x 134cm. Courtesy of Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Art Centre.

Artwork

These works use foil-covered building insulation to depict two sacred song cycles from the Yirritja moiety, one from freshwater and one from saltwater ancestral knowledge. They both show the complex interweaving of place, knowledge and **ancestral lore**.

Fishtrap on the Gängän River depicts the sacred water where Barama the ancestral being of the Yirritja created the law, language, and ceremonial rituals that define Yirritja life. The diamond *miny'tji* in this work refer to the waters surrounding Gängän, but also transform into triangles to refer to the structure of fishtraps. Fishtrap ceremonies are an important ritual between different Yirritja groups, bringing people together for social, educational and ceremonial exchange.

Gallery Discussion

- Contemporary context: Ganambarr bridges two worlds by paying homage to traditional ways of making while experimenting with new and innovative materials. How has he done this and why is this important?
- Formal context: How are the elements and principles of art evident in sharing the song cycles in each work?

Classroom Activities

- Embark on a beach or creek clean up with your class and collect found objects from this location. Incorporate these objects into an artwork that speaks to place and caring for the environment.
- Research the Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Art Centre in East Arnhem Land. How does the centre bring knowledge of the past to the present through its activities? Write a short paragraph to **justify** your reasoning.



"Future Library has nature, the environment at its core - and involves ecology, the interconnectedness of things, those living now and still to come. It questions the present tendency to think in short bursts of time, making decisions only for us living now.

The timescale is one-hundred years, not vast in cosmic terms. However, in many ways, the human timescale of 100 years is more confronting. It is beyond many of our current lifespans, but close enough to come face to face with it, to comprehend and relativise."

Katie Paterson

Artist

Katie Paterson is a Scottish artist who collaborates with scientists and researchers across the world to consider our place on Earth in the context of geological time and change.

Her artworks make use of technology and specialist expertise to stage intimate, poetic and philosophical engagements between people and their natural environment.

Katie Paterson



Image: Katie Paterson, 'Future Library', 2014-2114. Photo © Rio Gandara / Helsingin Sanomat Future Library is commissioned and produced by Bjørnvika Utvikling, and managed by the Future Library Trust. Supported by the City of Oslo, Agency for Cultural Affairs and Agency for Urban Environment.

Artwork

This short film tells the story of the artist's vast project *Future Library* which began in 2014 and will unfold over one-hundred years. Each year a writer will be commissioned to contribute a text, which will be held in trust unread and unpublished for a century, stored in a public library in Oslo. Meanwhile in the Norwegian countryside a forest planted to supply the paper for this anthology will grow.

The writers who have contributed texts to date, and who appear in the film, are Margaret Atwood (2014), David Mitchell (2015), Sjón (2016), Elif Shafak (2017) and Han Kang (2018). They have subsequently been joined by Karl Ove Knausgård (2019), Ocean Vuong (2020), and Tsitsi Dangarembga (2021).

Gallery Discussion

- Katie Paterson has created a thoughtful, time-based work for an audience in the future. How does it make you feel knowing the final outcome of this artwork will not be viewed by anyone living in this room?
- Formal context: What is your impression of the annual pilgrimage into the forest, and the meaning it holds for the wider community and the project as it has evolved over time?

Classroom Activities

- **Create** a time-based work that explores the lifespan of a natural or manmade element. This could be a leaf, an insect, a piece of paper. How does the work change over time? Document your work and **reflect on** your observations.
- Imagine you have been asked to contribute a text to *Future Library*. Write a short text or poem to your future self to be opened in five, 10 or 20 years time.



Image : Keg de Souza, *Not a Drop to Drink Participatory Performance*, 2021. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Bryony Jackson.

Artist

Keg de Souza is an artist of Goan heritage who lives and works on unceded Gadigal land and explores the politics of space through **temporary architecture**, **radical pedagogy** and **food politics**.

This investigation is influenced by architectural training, squatting and organising, as well as personal experiences of colonialism – from her own ancestral lands being colonised to living as a settler on other people’s unceded lands.

Keg often creates projects that focus on pedagogy to centre voices that are often marginalised – for learning about Place.

Keg de Souza



Image detail: Keg de Souza, *Not a Drop to Drink*, 2021, glass table, edible and native plants, sound. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Bryony Jackson.

Artwork

Not a Drop to Drink invites community to prepare for climate crisis through conversations around two of the biggest climate concerns in Australia; droughts affecting crops and food supply, and water scarcity. The installation comprises of a circular glass table with edible drought tolerant and native plants and an immersive soundtrack.

This work was developed through conversations with Boon Wurrung elder N’arweet Carolyn Briggs, and others with varied knowledges such as: a mycologist, First Nations chef, a farmer, a water law and policy specialist, a botanist, restaurateurs and more.

De Souza imagines the future food systems and sources we will need in order to live in a way that sustains and nourishes both Country and ourselves.

Gallery Discussion

- Keg de Souza has collaborated with a diverse range of people in this interdisciplinary installation to learn about place and generate conversations around climate change. Who would you invite to a dinner table discussion on climate change? What would be on the menu?
- Cultural context: How does this collaborative project prioritise First Nations knowledge systems and other marginalised voices?

Classroom Activities

- **Create** a temporary architecture using natural or sustainably sourced materials that responds to place, ideally a place in your local area of special significance to you. Possible materials could be waste cardboard, sticks, plants or seed pods found in your backyard, school or park. How could your structure be used to generate discussion on climate change?
- Choose a social justice issue you are concerned about and collaborate with a classmate to **create** an interdisciplinary project that responds to this issue. How could you incorporate diverse voices into your art making?

Artists

Make or Break are an artist collective that devises and experiments with **process-based projects** that are co-authored with communities.

You can expect them to make...

Sprawling projects // open-ended conversation // cups of tea // slow decisions // impassioned critique // institutions uncomfortable // matching onesies // books // snacks // curiosity seem like a job.

Make or Break is Rebecca Gallo and Connie Athes, who work and live on the stolen lands of the Gadigal, Bidjigal and Burramattagal people in Sydney, Australia.

Make or Break



Image: Make or Break, *Institutional Waste*, 2021, mixed media, dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artists.

Artwork

Our core organisational practice at the IMA - temporary exhibition making - generates waste: plasterboard, MDF, and timber that has to be 'de-valued' before being disposed of.

In response, Make or Break has set up a recycling-station-as-sculptural-installation built from exhibition waste, where the audience can participate in breaking down used gyprock sheeting, to be used as garden fertilizer and in papermaking at the close of the exhibition.

This temporary structure and its recovery process invites us to physically engage with these materials, to care for them, to think about their potential, and in doing so create new more sympathetic relationships to them.

Gallery Discussion

- Consider the waste management of an institution such as the IMA or a place of work or study. How would you critique the flow of materials that passes through this institution?
- Formal context: Audiences are invited to participate in breaking down waste to be reused at the end of the exhibition. How does this audience participation change our relationship to gypsum?

Classroom Activities

- How would you **create** a work that invites audience participation? Choose a material to explore its lifecycle and consider how this material can be transformed with audience participation.
- Conduct a waste and re-use audit. Keep a log of the waste (rubbish and recycling) you create at school. Take a moment to think about the future life of one of these waste products you have logged and record a speculative or poetic thought about its making or future life or decomposition - giving the material a story beyond waste.

Artist

Shevaun Wright is an artist and lawyer with an interdisciplinary practice that uses the notion of the 'social contract' as a tool for engaging in legal and artistic critique of institutions.

Informed by her Aboriginal heritage, she aims to extend feminist and post-colonial critiques of the law and art as a means to access and reveal similarities.

Shevaun Wright



Image detail: Shevaun Wright, *Teddy Bear Lien*, 2022, photographs, documents, stuffed toys, dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist.

Artwork

In this installation the artist has taken six childhood toys from friends and colleagues as collateral over an outstanding debt. The 'Teddy Bear Lien' document outlines the terms under which these objects might be returned to their original owners, alongside the paperwork required to prove this relationship.

A lien is a legal claim granted over an item of property to ensure a debt is paid or some other obligation is performed.

Conceptually this work parallels and interrogates the compensation offered to survivors of the Stolen Generation. Wright equates the debts owed to her with the one-off payments offered by the Australia Government.

Gallery Discussion

- Cultural context: This interdisciplinary work combines the visual arts with law and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives. How does this work critique the Native Title process in Australia?
- How does the artist provoke an emotional response in the viewer, particularly through the use of materials?

Classroom Activities

- **Discuss** the notion of the "social contract" as a group. How would this apply to your classroom? Devise a social contract that defines the rights and responsibilities of individuals and expectations of how to treat one another.
- **Research** Mike Kelley's artwork *Ahh...Youth!* How does this work **compare** and **contrast** to *Teddy Bear Lien*? Write a short paragraph to outline your response.



"I believe in the power of an object. I guess that's why I continue to make art and often more specifically sculpture.

While on residencies in Indonesia I was drawn to Javanese mysticism and the potential for inanimate objects to harbour a kind of soul (similar ideas I've read about in Siberian shamanism).

I've always been drawn to religious or ceremonial artefacts that hold a kind of aura through their use.

Often highly decorative, we know these are important objects – they hold an invisible energy."

- Wanda Gillespie

Artist

Wanda Gillespie is an Australian/New Zealand contemporary artist based in Tāmaki Makaurau, Aotearoa New Zealand. Her sculptures and **performative actions** seek transcendence through the reimagining of known forms.

As a woodcarver she uses traditional craft techniques in contemporary ways to question known histories and the nature of reality.

Wanda Gillespie



Image: Wanda Gillespie, *Counting Frame*, 2021. Brass, Rewarewa timber, Jelutong chip carved stand, coconut beads, wooden beads, gauche and wax finish. Courtesy of the artist.

Artwork

When she first began making these frames the artist saw them as tools for recording the value of the spiritual realm. However, the global pandemic and the change in values it prompted led Gillespie to see them as functional computers for future economies.

The frames are made from native New Zealand Rewarewa wood. Forms are drawn from a range of sources; Molecular structures, principles of **sacred geometry**, and the abstracted headlands and waterfalls in the paintings of Colin McCahon.

Designed for a future that places economic value on the natural environment, these functional computers may measure anything that impacts on vital places such as forests, mangroves, reefs and rivers.

Gallery Discussion

- Gillespie sees her sculptures as “functional computers for future economies”. How do you imagine the future may change the way we measure or value things, whether they be objects, ideas, people or places? How do we calculate the unquantifiable?
- Cultural context: Gillespie is interested in how objects used in spiritual or ceremonial practices can take on a power of their own. How do you imagine the meaning of the work may change when displayed in a gallery context, or alternatively in a church, temple or other spiritual site?

Classroom Activities

- How would you use art to measure the intangible? **Create** a device or object that calculates an intangible (non-physical) thing such as ideas, value systems, personality traits or even brand recognition.
- The repurposing of objects to give them special functions is a recurring strategy in Gillespie’s practice. Source a collection of everyday objects from your surroundings. How could you arrange these objects to elevate their function beyond the everyday? **Consider** adopting mathematical principles such as the golden ratio or sacred geometry.

List of Key Terms

ancestral lore - The Aboriginal peoples of Australia had a complex system of law long before the establishment of British law in Australia. Aboriginal lore was laid down in the time of creation; which gave meaning to everything, and affects the relationships people have with their environment, each other, and their totems. It is important to recognise the diverse range of Aboriginal peoples throughout Australia and that each language group has their own unique spirituality, beliefs, and lore.

bioclimatic design - a principle where the local environment and weather conditions are used to inform the design of a product, building, or structure. This ensures the design responds to local conditions and has a lower impact.

closed loop - a design philosophy where the one-way model of production (produce, use, dispose) is disrupted in favour of a cycle where materials are reused (produce, use, recycle). By maintaining the high quality materials through the recycling process, this cycle can be infinite and reduce waste.

collaborative - when two or more artists bring their practices together to co-create an artwork. This can be part of an ongoing partnership (like Make or Break, and Five Mile Radius) or as a one-off experiment.

downcycling - a recycling practice that involves breaking an item down into its component elements or materials. These resulting materials are of lower quality than the original material.

food politics - Government policies, economic, and social conditions that shape how food is produced, how it reaches our tables, and how it is eaten. As an example, both famine and the obesity epidemic are happening at the same time in different parts of the world. This unbalanced distribution of food demonstrates a failure in global food politics.

larrakitj - burial poles created by the Yolŋu people of north-eastern Arnhem Land. They are made of hollowed out eucalypt trunks and embellished with intricate and culturally significant designs.

performative actions - live interactions with art objects that seek to communicate or elaborate on the meaning of the work. Bringing the body into a physical conversation with the artwork can make the work feel more intimate or give us a more emotional connection to it. These can be performed by the artist or the audience.

process-based projects - emerging from the conceptual art movement of the 1960s, process art is where the methods through which a work is made, form part of the work itself. The gathering, sorting, collating, associating, time, actions, and proceedings that occur to produce a work are as much a part of it as the final object exhibited.

radical pedagogy - Is a type of learning that examines what education is and how 'what we learn' shapes the society we live in. Radical pedagogy creates connections between subjects, takes place in locations outside of traditional 'learning venues', and involves people who have gained knowledge outside of the established education system.

sacred geometry - Where symbolic and sacred meaning is given to certain geometric shapes and proportions. Often these shapes and ratios are used in the construction of significant buildings or objects, to convey their social significance.

temporary architecture - purposely short-lived structures that play with our expectations of traditional buildings. They are often used to house exhibitions or talks and aim to generate discussion in the community. They make us think differently about the role of buildings or structures in our daily lives.

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
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

De Souza, Keg. *KEG DE SOUZA*, <http://www.kegdesouza.com>

5 Mile Radius. *5 MILE RADIUS*, <https://www.fivemileradius.org>

Gillespie, Wanda. *WANDA GILLESPIE*, <https://www.wandagillespie.com>

Make or Break. *MAKE OR BREAK*, <https://makeorbreakart.com>

Paterson, Katie. 2019, <https://vimeo.com/katiepaterson/future-library>

Wright, Shevaun. *SHEVAUN WRIGHT*, <https://www.shevaunwright.com>

Additional 'An Alternative Economics' 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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