

**SOVEREIGNTY**  
**CURRICULUM LINKS**

Australian Centre  
for Contemporary Art

acca

# VCE ART

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## UNIT 1

### Area of Study 1: Artworks and meaning

Brook Andrew's Maralinga clock and Yhonnie Scarce's Fallout Babies are very different works in terms of material, technique and symbolism. However, what these artworks share is that they both reference the same historical event, the Maralinga nuclear tests, as their subject matter.

Using the Personal Framework research, discuss and compare Yhonnie Scarce and Brook Andrew's approach to representation of the Maralinga nuclear tests. What relationship do the artists have to this event? What is your interpretation of how the artist's feelings have been represented through their artworks, and, how are these representations linked to their personal experiences? Create a mind map that charts the linkages between each artist, their personal experience, and their artworks.

Furthermore, as a class use the Structural Framework to analyse the artists' different approaches to artmaking. Focus discussion on the materials, techniques and processes employed. For example, how has each approached sculptural expression differently? Also, consider the style and symbolism each artist has employed, and how their works compare (what they share) and contrast (what are their differences).

## UNIT 3

### Area of Study 1: Interpreting art

Though the two works are from very different times, one 1897 and the other 2015, William Barak's work Parrying Shield and Brook Andrew's The weight of history, the mark of time (sphere) share a similar surface pattern that references a traditional pattern of the Wurundjeri and Wiradjuri peoples. You will be researching this commonality and using it as a link in a short written comparison of the artworks.

Using the *Sovereignty* Education Kit, the sources from the reference section within it, and other information that you source independently, write a comparison of William Barak's work Parrying Shield and Brook Andrew's The weight of history, the mark of time (sphere). Divide your interpretive comparison into four one-paragraph sections and in each address this comparison from the distinct perspectives of the Structural, Personal, Cultural and Contemporary frameworks. This is an opportunity for you to consolidate your knowledge of the different frameworks.



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IMAGE: Brook Andrew, *Black and White: Special Cut* 2005, Hope and Peace series screenprint. Private collection, Melbourne

# VCE STUDIO ARTS

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## UNIT 1

### Area of Study 1: Researching and recording ideas

*Sovereignty* contains a great many artworks in a myriad of different artforms. To help take in and digest exhibitions it can be a good idea to focus, record and reflect upon your experience. This process will also help you in the development of your own studio practice.

Spend some time in the exhibition *Sovereignty* with your visual diary. Focus on a few key works in the exhibition and record your thoughts on the materials, techniques and processes used by artists. Take photographs of the exhibition and note both how the works have been arranged in each space, connections between adjacent works, and details of focus artworks for visual reference material. Later collate these into either your folio or a digital folder under the title 'Research. Add annotations that record your observations of: what inspired you; any works that will influence your own art; key ideas/concepts explored; types of artform (for example: sculpture, drawing, installation); and aesthetic qualities.

## UNIT 1

### Area of Study 3: Interpreting art ideas and use of materials and techniques

Beginning with this Education Kit and the further readings provided, explore how at least two artists in *Sovereignty* have explored one of the following narratives in their work:

- Self-determination
- Identity
- Sovereignty
- Resistance

Investigate multiple works from each artist, including works not included in the exhibition. Use a range of relevant resources in your research.

As a class discuss how multiple artists in *Sovereignty* have communicated the effects of European contact on Aboriginal peoples, focusing on use of materials, techniques and processes.

## UNIT 3

### AREA OF STUDY 3: Artists and studio practices

Marlene Gilson's painting in *Sovereignty* are examples of contemporary history paintings - a term introduced in the seventeenth century. Choose an artist from this period that created history paintings. You could start by studying more about history painting here. In comparison to Gilson, analyse their interpretations of subject matter as well as cultural and historical contexts. Furthermore, discuss the artists' painting techniques, and compare their use of elements and principles to communicate subject matter.

## SECONDARY VISUAL ARTS

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### LEVELS 9 & 10

#### Explore and Express Ideas **VCAVAE041**

Brook Andrew uses digital technologies to create the designs for his printed and fabricated artworks, such as the large inflatable spherical sculpture in *Sovereignty*. The digital process allows Andrew to create very sharp, defined edges that result in graphic images. The clarity of his shape, line and text allow the artist's ideas to be central to the viewer's experience of the work. For example, the diamond pattern seen on Andrew's inflatable sculpture is a traditional design of the Wiradjuri people. By using digital techniques Andrew brings traditional clan design into the contemporary context, foregrounding the persistence of Wiradjuri culture in colonial Australia, and thus enhancing the meaning of the pattern within his artwork.

Experiment with the sharp graphic potential of digital composition. Through research find a pattern or design that comes from somewhere in your heritage, or from the environment you are living. You could look at traditional fabrics, paintings, carvings or even buildings. Once you have chosen your design convert it into a black and white image in Photoshop and simplify using only line and shape tools. When finished note in your folio or sketch book: how has the translation into a digital image enhanced the meaning of your chosen design?

#### Visual Arts Practices **VCAVAV043**

Brook Andrew has used the traditional diamond pattern of the Wiradjuri people repeatedly to denote his own ancestry and to symbolise indigeneity within his artworks. He translates the traditional pattern into a continuous, repeating hard-edged abstraction which he then places onto walls, objects and two-dimensional artworks.

Research Brook Andrew's practice to note and analyse his repeated use of the traditional Wiradjuri diamond pattern in his artworks. Andrew has used this pattern on supports including: two-dimensional printed works, a bouncing castle, wall paintings, clothing, and a caravan. Find at least five examples online to create a collection of research images. Annotate these different examples to analyse how different usages have resulted in different effects. For each example write a short paragraph on what you think Andrew's artistic intention may have been in using this traditional pattern in each different way.

#### Present and Perform **VCAVAV043**

*Sovereignty* was co-curated by Paola Balla, an Indigenous artist and curator, and Max Delany, ACCA's Artistic Director. There is a history in Australia of colonial power acting upon, against and in place of Indigenous peoples and this collaborative approach is a way of ensuring that the Indigenous artists and communities involved in the exhibition have agency and control over the manner in which their art and cultures are represented.

After visiting the exhibition make half a page of notes about how *Sovereignty* differs from other exhibition you have seen - think both about the types of artworks in the exhibition and the way in which the exhibition has been assembled. As a class read and discuss the catalogue essays by co-curators Max Delany and Paola Balla. Discuss how each has reflected upon the exhibition differently.

## Respond and Interpret VCAVAR046

*Sovereignty* is named for a specific political and social issue - that of First Nations people's sovereignty over themselves and their traditional lands. The recognition of sovereignty would mean that First Nations peoples would gain independence and the right to control their traditional lands, manage their communities, and the acknowledgement that their sovereignty was never ceded (given over) to colonial powers. This exhibition can be perceived as a positive gesture towards the recognition of Indigenous sovereignty, and a critical window onto the history that has led to this point in time. In this way the art exhibition broadcasts a wider message throughout the Australian community, which may inspire debate, discussion and even change.

In 200 words select one artwork to analyse from a political angle. This means that you are to look at how the artist has drawn, painted, woven, sculpted, photographed or taped their artwork in such a way that results in a political statement.

### Example:

Jim Berg's photographs. Berg has assembled this collection of photographs that are evidence of Indigenous activity on the land predating colonial settlement/invasion. They are evidence that Indigenous peoples were living on the land in harmony with the landscape and its resources well before western arrival. In this sense these photographs make a case for recognition of the deep knowledge and connection to land that Indigenous peoples have, contradicting the original claim of settlers that Australia was terra nullius (empty land). This fundamental contradiction shifts the entire axis of defence for colonial activities.



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IMAGE: Jim Berg, *Silent witness – A window to the past* 2005.  
Courtesy the artist

## SECONDARY VISUAL ARTS

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### LEVELS 7 & 8

#### Explore and Express Ideas **VCAVAE033**

Maree Clarke's video installation *Born of the Land* was made in response to the artist experiencing a series of bereavements over a short period. The artwork looks at connecting with traditional mourning ritual as a way of coping with emotions of loss and sadness. Clarke has attempted to convey emotion through her artwork in several ways: the pace of the video is slow and solemn; the Kopi caps symbolise death and loss; the robe she wears is black and associated with death; the branches in her installation are dead and bare; the saturated gradient of the light is dramatic and suggests either the beginning or end of day - symbolic of the beginning or end of life.

Create a drawing with the intention of conveying a particular emotion, and the choice of emotion is up to you - joy, sadness, anger, fear, happiness, etc. You are not allowed to use words. Instead focus on what you include and how you represent emotion using symbols and visual elements. Consider the difference between dark and light; warm and cold; action and stillness. You might want to close your eyes and concentrating on your chosen emotion, try to note all the different memories that you have which you associate with those feelings.

#### Visual Arts Practices **VCAVAV036**

Lucy Williams-Connelly has created a suite of pokerwork depictions of everyday life from her local community. She has developed a style of burning an image into wood that is an evolution

of an earlier technique of using a piece of fencing wire in the fire until hot and the used it to burn a wood surface. Williams-Connelly uses a purpose built tool rather than wire, but her works still hark back to this older technique. Williams-Connelly may have been influenced by another Indigenous artist, Tommy McRae. McRae drew works on paper that depict important events from the time of the initial settlement/invasion of Australia. Williams Connelly's style is very reminiscent of McRae and she too presents a type of narrative record of Indigenous life in Australia - hunting, and observing kangaroos on the land.

It is likely that Williams Connelly greatly appreciates the work of Tommy McRae and that this has manifested in her artworks. It is your task to choose an artist whom you admire and to then create an artwork in their style. First draw up a list of qualities of their work including: the subject matter they like to use; the techniques they like to use; and the colour schemes, textures and tonal qualities particular to them. Next, plan out an artwork of your own that mimics the qualities that you have just listed. You might want to attempt to interpret their style as well.

#### Present and Perform **VCAVAP037**

There are a whole variety of types of artworks and methods of display in *Sovereignty*. Barak's Shield and Club are mounted securely behind glass because they are rare and valuable, whereas Andrew's Maralinga Clock is on the floor and unprotected in open space. These types of artwork and display are in contrast to one another and because of that they have a different effect on the viewer. Barak's

artefacts are presented for looking only, whereas Andrew's are in the physical space of the viewer, inviting close inspection.

As a class assemble an exhibition of artworks that you have recently made. You will need to decide upon the positioning of the artworks, the lighting of the room, and the number of works shown. All these elements affect the way the viewer encounters the exhibition.

#### Respond and Interpret **VCAVAR039**

Briggs uses hip-hop as his choice of artistic expression. As a younger person hip-hop is something that Briggs grew up with and it is natural for him to adopt the artform to express himself. Hip-hop also has the ability to communicate very directly via lyrics, and there is an extensive history of political and social issues being addressed through the music of hip hop artists.

Reflect on how you felt when watching Briggs' music videos *Sheplife* and *Bad Apples*. Research other examples of hip-hop artists from different cultures and times. How have these artists historically influenced social change?



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IMAGES TOP TO BOTTOM:

Lucy Williams-Connelly, *Mother and six baby emus* 2016.  
Courtesy the artist

Tommy McRae, *Corroboree* c. 1890, Courtesy Foord Family  
Collection, University of Melbourne Archives

# PRIMARY VISUAL ARTS

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## LEVELS FOUNDATION - 2

### Visual Arts Practices **VCAVAV018**

Reko Rennie's banner *Always here* is a text-based artwork. Explore singular and collective words found in everyday life. Using markers, pastel and pencil, use this word to create a text-based artwork, focusing on examples of Pop and Street Art, using colour and shape to create pattern, rhythm and contrast.

### Respond and Interpret **VCAVAR020**

Kent Morris' artworks are presented as a series in the exhibition *Sovereignty*. As a group identify the subject matter of a series. Furthermore, discuss and describe the common design elements in the works, such as line, shape and colour.

## LEVELS 3 - 6

### Explore and Express Ideas **VCAVAE025**

Marlene Gilson's two paintings in *Sovereignty* are contemporary history paintings, meaning the pictures she has painted tell us something about the past. Study Gilson's paintings closely, either in the exhibition or using images provided. As a whole the paintings tell a story about historical events, but there are also smaller stories occurring when you focus on different sections in the composition. Choose a section and write a short creative story about the people, environment and objects in that area.

### Visual Arts Practices **VCAVAV030**

Clinton Nain's Water bottle bags hanging sculpture uses cultural and introduced objects to critique of the exploitation of natural resources and environment. In pairs collaborate to create a sculptural work to be suspended from the ceiling, using a range of available and recyclable materials found in your everyday environment. How will your choice of objects enhance the meaning or visual qualities of your work? Combine these materials to test and innovate with properties and qualities of mixed media.



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IMAGE: Reko Rennie, *Always here* 2016, installation view, ACCA. Courtesy the artist and blackartprojects, Melbourne



## PRIMARY HUMANITIES / HISTORY

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### LEVELS FOUNDATION - 2

Foundation to Level 2 / Historical Concepts and Skills / Historical significance (VCHHC057)

How has Jim Berg, respected Gunditjmara Elder, author and educator, used photography in his work at ACCA like a window to communicate practices of Aboriginal peoples from the past? Discuss how bark was used to create sophisticated objects and technologies.

### LEVELS 3 - 6

#### Historical Concepts and Skills / Historical significance VCHHC071

Glenda Nicholls' three woven cloaks in *Sovereignty* are adorned with symbolic materials from Indigenous and colonial cultures, including possum skin, wool, velvet, a sixpence coin, silver chain and padlock, mussel shell, quandong seeds, mirror, glass beads, a silver crucifix and emu feathers. As a group, research and brainstorm the political and poetic significance of these objects.

#### Historical Knowledge / First contacts VCHHK078

Study the artworks and research information from multiple sources on three artists in *Sovereignty*, Steaphan Paton, Vicky Couzens and Maree Clarke. Using a map of South East Australia, pinpoint the area of which each artist is from, and discuss how their art practice demonstrates their interconnectedness of Country/Place, people, culture and identity.

#### Historical Knowledge / The Australian colonies VCHHK089

The nature of convict or colonial presence, including the factors that influenced changing patterns of development, how the environment changed, and aspects of the daily life of the inhabitants, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

#### Historical Knowledge / The Australian colonies VCHHK092

Using multiple sources, research how William Barak developed strong relationships with settlers and performed a linking role between indigenous and colonial communities.

#### Historical Concepts and Skills / Cause and effect VCHHC086

Trevor 'Turbo' Brown, an artist in *Sovereignty*, and Jack Charles, a key figure that features in two works in the exhibition, were both affected by assimilation policies and practices. Research the policies implemented by each state in Australia with significant dates, as well as the Stolen Generation, and the impact these practices had on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



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IMAGE: Trevor 'Turbo' Brown, *Jackie Charles* 2009, Collection of Hans Sip, Melbourne

## SECONDARY HUMANITIES / HISTORY

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### LEVELS 7 - 8

#### Historical Knowledge / Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures *VCHHK108*

To hold the exhibition at ACCA many works in *Sovereignty* have been borrowed from collections of other institutions, such as museums or trusts. The Club and Shield (1897) by William Barak, as example, was borrowed from the Koorie Heritage Trust, which promotes, supports and celebrates the continuing journey of the Aboriginal people of South Eastern Australia. Through accessing their website, investigate how the Koorie Heritage Trust protect and conserve the heritage, culture and artefacts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Compare this to the Melbourne Museum's practices. Additionally, pair a group visit to see *Sovereignty* at ACCA with one of these places.

### LEVELS 9 - 10

#### Historical Knowledge / The making of the modern world / Australia and Asia *VCHHK134*

Throughout *Sovereignty* there are works from artists that address massacres and deaths of Aboriginal peoples as a result of European settlement. Weereeyta-wan, yoonggama wangan ngootyoong by Vicki Couzens draws on conflicting cultural traditions to commemorate the lives of her ancestors lost in massacres and in battles in defence of Gunditjmara Country. One of many protest banners made by WAR outlines massacre sites across the South East Australia. Marlene Gilson's history painting Tunnerminnerwait and Maulboyheenner is one of the first known visual representations of the 1842 Melbourne public execution of the two young Tasmanian Aboriginal men by the settler colony of Port Phillip. Discuss and compare how these artists have communicated the effects of European contact on Aboriginal peoples.

#### Historical Knowledge / The modern world and Australia / Rights and freedoms (1945 – the present) *VCHHK152*

Watch the film *Bastardy* in class. How has Jack Charles' life been shaped by consequences of being forcibly removed from his family? How does the film explore his life and struggle with identity?

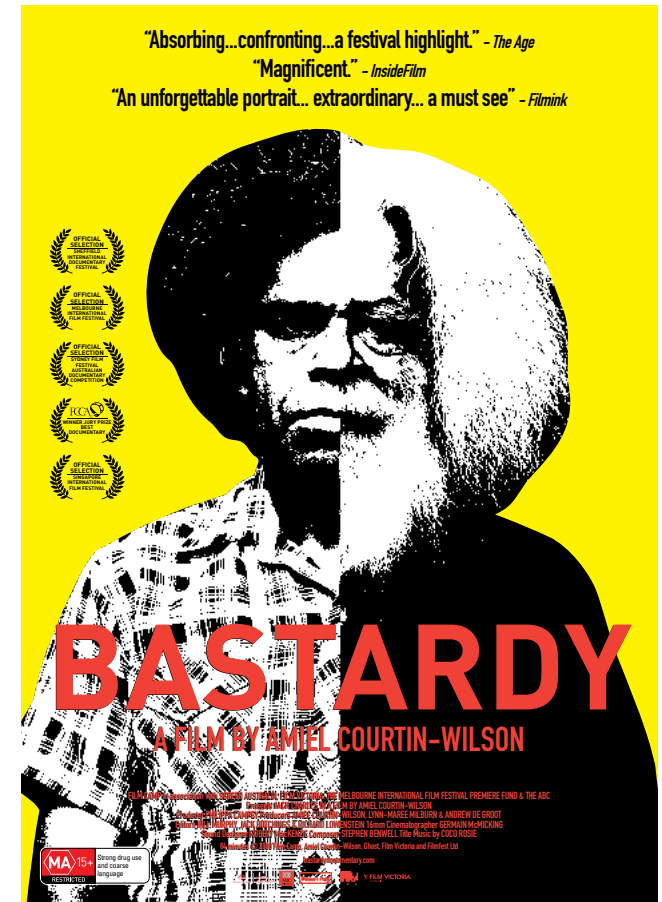


IMAGE: Amiel Courtin-Wilson & Jack Charles, *Bastardy* 2008 (Poster/DVD graphic design). Courtesy Amiel Courtin-Wilson and Film Camp Pty Ltd

## SECONDARY HUMANITIES / CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP

### LEVELS 7 - 8

#### Citizenship, Diversity and Identity **VCCCC026**

*Sovereignty* was an exhibition co-curated by Max Delany, ACCA's Artistic Director and Paola Balla, who also worked consultatively with an advisory committee of artists, elders and professionals. In her catalogue text *Sovereignty: Inalienable and intimate* Balla said:

*"Sovereignty itself is an inalienable, innate and intimate right; its expression can be found buried within artistic works, gently emerging from inherited practices, or boldly spelled out in new artistic forms adorned with confident lines, camouflage, electric lights and bling."*

Investigate the works in the exhibition, and discuss how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists are strengthening their identities through artmaking.

### LEVELS 9 - 10

#### Government and Democracy **VCCCG030**

WAR actively use social media, in particular Facebook, as a communication tool to highlight and inform other of their activism and resistance. Find other examples of activism through social media, and discuss as a class how this influences people's understanding of issues, and the positives and negatives of using social media in this way.

#### Laws and Citizens **VCCCL033**

Carried out with the agreement and support of the Australian Government, the British conducted nuclear tests at Maralinga in South Australia in the 1950s and 1960s. Brook Andrew and Yhonnie Scarce's artworks in *Sovereignty* both explore the colonial disregard for the lives of the local Indigenous community at Maralinga. Research the effects of Maralinga on this community, and then track the Australian Government's handling of Maralinga through law to present day. You can begin by searching through media and articles like this.

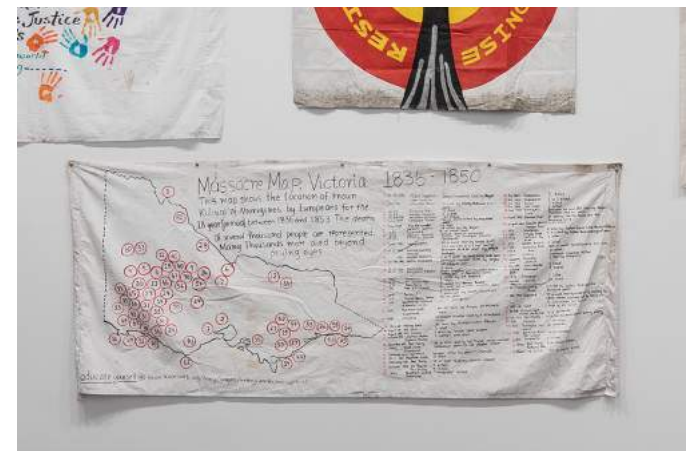


IMAGE TOP TO BOTTOM:

Lisa Bellear, *Welcome to Camp Sovereignty* 2006. Koorie Heritage Trust Collection

Warriors of The Aboriginal Resistance (WAR), installation view, ACCA, 2016. Photo: Andrew Curtis

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