



We acknowledge and thank the Traditional Custodians of Country *Collective Movements* will visit throughout this tour.

The artists, curators, NETS Victoria and Monash University Museum of Art respect and recognise their Elders past and present, as well as their continued care for Country and its waterways, and the cultural and creative practices that have been passed down from generation to generation, since time immemorial.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this publication contains names and images of deceased persons.

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EXHIBITION INTRODUCTION

Collective Movements is a wide-ranging project focusing on the work of historic and contemporary First Nations creative practitioners and community groups from across Victoria that recognises collectivity as integral to Indigenous knowledges and ways of being. An exhibition, publishing, conversation and workshop platform, the project begins with the desire to move beyond Western art concepts of ‘collaboration’ and ‘collectivism’, acknowledging the way Indigenous creatives work within a broader community and its inheritances.

Collective Movements features new artwork commissions alongside existing works, archives and participation from a range of contributors, including Ensemble Dutala, ILBIJERRI Theatre Company, Kaiela Arts, Koorroyarr, Latje Latje Dance Group Mildura, Pitcha Makin Fellas, the Possum Skin Cloak Story (founded by Vicki Couzens, Debra Couzens [1962–2021], Lee Darroch and Treahna Hamm), The Torch, this mob and a look back at the *We Iri, We Homeborn* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Festival (1996–99).

Collective Movements is co-curated by Taungurung artist and curator Kate ten Buuren; Lardil and Yangkaal artist and curator Maya Hodge; and N’Arweet Professor Carolyn Briggs AM PhD; with support from Bundjalung, Muruwari and Kamilaroi artist and senior academic, Professor Brian Martin, Director of the Wominjeka Djeembana Indigenous Research Lab at Monash University.

To learn more about this exhibition and continue conversations in the classroom, please visit the links below:

[Collective Movements short film](#) featuring video interviews with the artists, collectives and curators.

[Glossary of terms](#) for an in-depth exploration of language referred to throughout the exhibition and this education resource.

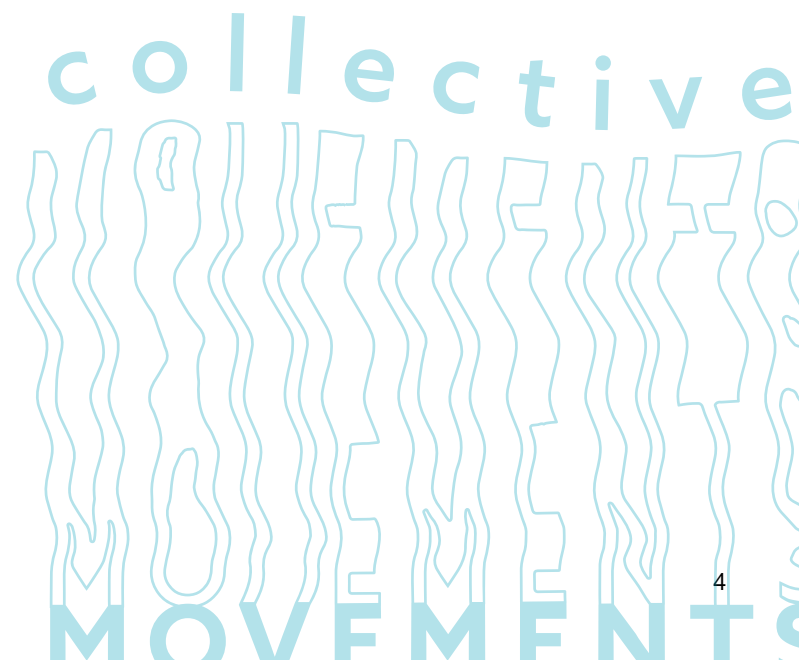
[Collective Movements digital catalogue](#) featuring yarns and essays by the curators and other First Nations writers, curators and artists.

Collective Movements was initiated by Monash University Museum of Art | MUMA, Melbourne, and first presented there from 5 May – 23 July 2022. This education kit has been developed by Pierra Van Sparkes, Curator Engagement, MUMA.

‘We sit on a continuum—within a larger ecosystem of cultural creation that spans thousands of generations and that will continue on into the future. *Collective Movements* traces the ripple-effects of creative practices from the past, reflecting on creators today and looking locally at groups from across Victoria.

It highlights collectives and collaborative actions born out of a community need—an ethos of care for our people and the survival and evolution of our culture through creative means. Each group featured works in different ways and across many mediums, but their core ways of being and doing are similar—community is always at the heart of it.’

– Kate ten Buuren and Maya Hodge



PLANNING AND PREPARATION FOR SCHOOLS

Protocols and considerations

Educators who visit *Collective Movements* with their students are encouraged to refer to relevant protocols when teaching about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. These include the [Koorie Cross-Curricular Protocols](#) and [Protocols for Koorie Education in Victorian Primary and Secondary Schools](#), which have been developed for the Victorian education community.

These protocols are designed to protect the integrity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural expressions in ways that allow all people to engage respectfully with them and feel connected to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

Australian Curriculum links Learning Areas

Visual Arts

Collective Movements relates to Visual Arts curricula at all levels of the Australian Curriculum.

Explore and Express Ideas: Students view *Collective Movements* and observe a variety of ideas, themes, techniques, processes and materials explored by the exhibiting artists. Respecting relevant cultural protocols, students make artworks in response to their experiences in the galleries.

Visual Arts Practices: While visiting the exhibition *Collective Movements*, students will encounter various art collectives, artists and art practices. They will develop an understanding of how the exhibiting artists conceptualise their work and use materials to create artworks.

Present and Perform: As they view *Collective Movements*, students will encounter various methods of installation and presentation in the galleries. They will consider the artistic intentions of artists and curators, and how these relate to their own audience experience.

Respond and Interpret: Students will speculate about the meaning of the artworks displayed in *Collective Movements*. Following the visit, they research how particular contemporary cultural contexts have inspired the artists.

General Capabilities: Engagement with the artworks on display in *Collective Movements* provides opportunities for students to develop the following general capabilities:

- Critical and creative thinking
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding
- Personal and social development

Cross-curriculum Priorities

All artworks on display in *Collective Movements* are relevant to the cross-curriculum priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, and sustainability.

Adapting the material to suit your students

This education resource is broadly aimed at school students from levels 4 through 10. Tertiary educators and teachers of early-years students are invited to adapt this material to suit the specific learning needs of their students. The starting points for discussion and the activities within this resource provide opportunities for students to learn as both audience and artist. There are suggestions for talking about artworks in the galleries as well as prompts for making artworks in response to the exhibition back in the classroom.

ABOUT THE CURATORS

N’Arweet Professor Carolyn Briggs AM PhD is a Boon Wurrung senior Elder and is the chairperson and founder of the Boon Wurrung Foundation. She has been involved in developing and supporting opportunities for Indigenous youth and Boon Wurrung culture for over fifty years. A big part of her work is defining her role as an Elder, but also having it validated by the wider community. This involves teaching a generation of children about language and history. Carolyn was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia in 2019 for her significant service to the Indigenous community and she sees this national recognition as part of her role of an Elder. She has undertaken studies in language and linguistics in the hope of recording her Boon Wurrung language in oral and written form, and received a doctorate (media and communication) for research in assisting urban Indigenous youth to understand Indigenous knowledge, which has been part of Carolyn’s life-long journey documenting the history of her ancestors. Previously Senior Indigenous Research Fellow (Practice) in Art, Design and Architecture, Monash University, Carolyn is currently Elder in Research at the College of Design and Social Context, RMIT University.

Kate ten Buuren is a Taungurung curator, artist and writer working on Kulin Country. Kate’s cross-disciplinary practice investigates collective and collaborative ways of working, and her interest in contemporary visual art, film and oral traditions is grounded in self-determination, self-representation and the power of knowing one another. Kate is the founder and an active member of First Nations arts collective this mob, who make space for young artists to connect and create on their own terms. Kate currently works as Senior Curator at MAP Co, and has previously held curatorial positions at ACMI and the Koorie Heritage Trust.

Maya Hodge is a proud Lardil and Yangkaal woman raised in Mildura, Victoria, currently based on the lands of the Kulin Nation (Melbourne). Focusing on how artistic processes act as a way of healing, Maya’s creative practice, music and writing explores the power of disrupting colonial narratives through curatorial and project-based work dedicated to uplifting First Nations autonomy and storytelling. Maya currently works as Communications Officer at the Koorie Youth Council. She has previously completed a publishing internship with Open Book and worked as Assistant Curator at Koorie Heritage Trust. Maya is a resident artist in this mob’s studio space based at Collingwood Yards and is a founding member of Ensemble Dutala, Australia’s first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander chamber ensemble.



‘As young creative practitioners, we understand the significance of collectives—we’re in them ourselves and seek out opportunities to work in collaboration with our peers, broader community, and Elders. Being co-curators of *Collective Movements* alongside N’Arweet Professor Carolyn Briggs AM PhD has been a nourishing process that honours an age-old intergenerational practice. We started the project in the midst of a pandemic, at times feeling the difficulty and irony of curating an exhibition centered around the importance of sharing space and coming together to create, all while we were being forced into separation. N’Arweet’s guidance and profound knowledge of place, people and connections has grounded this project and kept us on track in moments of doubt. For that we’re eternally grateful.’

— Kate ten Buuren and Maya Hodge

DISCUSSION OF STORYTELLING IN THE SHOW

Kate ten Buuren and Maya Hodge

Framing the 'collective' in place

Yorta Yorta curator Kimberley Moulton asks us to consider what it means to be a collective from a First People's standpoint, through her text 'One Mob, Once Voice, One Land: The Meta-Collective', published in *Mázejoavku. Indigenous Collectivity and Art* in 2020. The text looks at Sámi artist collective Mázejoavku who were active from 1978–1983 in Máze (Sápmi, Northern Norway). Kimberley states that First Peoples collectives have fundamental differences to non-Indigenous collectives. These fundamental differences draw from Indigenous peoples' innate connection to one another and to the land—defined by clan and kin, Ancestors, the Country we come from and that they may be guided by totems or other non-human kin—'Together through our cultural values and sovereign status, we connect across expansive deserts, oceans, mountains and tundras. Beyond our inherent shared experiences, collectives have been formed for political and social action, for strength in numbers. People coming together with artistic, political and environmental intent have changed the world many times over.'¹

Our connection to land is what sets our collectives apart from non-Indigenous people. As the sovereign people of these lands, we have a responsibility and an ever-present relationship to the lands where we are from and live. We exist in connection to all that is around us, not in competition to, or ownership of.

While developing *Collective Movements*, our curatorial group yarned about how the waterways serve as connectors between us. These river systems have sustained our people for generations and carry stories across the land. Visually, when looking at maps of river systems, we draw connections between them and the veins in our bodies, or similarly our family trees. Historically, members of our families were born and lived in communities on the riverbanks because they were edged out onto the fringes of white townships. They were not welcome elsewhere. So, our people created our own spaces to cook, sing, give birth, grieve, love and create along these waterways, which in turn gave back to us. Rivers and waterways have always been a part of our stories and our artistic expression because they flow like the blood flows through veins. It's no accident that the collectives that are part of this show are also tied to the waterways, which in turn bind each other together.

There is a global shift occurring, where collective practices are being celebrated—perhaps as an antidote or response to the global pandemic forcing us all into isolation. Blakfullas however, continue the legacy set by our community's collectives and collaborative actions and know that this is nothing new.

Finding ourselves as part of the group

When we practice our culture, it connects us deeply with our Old People. In his essay 'It's Not Just What We Learn, It's About How We Learn It',² Tiriki Onus discusses learning through making and the comfort he takes in knowing that when we practise our culture, we are not the first to do something; we inherit the practice from our Ancestors. This contradicts the white endeavour to be the first to 'discover' or 'invent'. Our collectives refuse the white ideology of the lone genius artist. Often members of the group share power, decision making and financial gain, with multiple voices adding to the impact of their work. Indigenous scholar Mary Graham is well known for her theory on collective frameworks and Indigenous knowledges as she states, 'We believe that a person finds their individuality within the group.'³ Professor Aileen Moreton-Robinson reinforces this perspective saying 'In Indigenous cultural domains relationality means that one experiences the self as part of others and others as a part of the self; this is learnt through reciprocity, obligation, shared experiences, coexistence, cooperation and social memory.'⁴

Our approach to collaboration differs from Western ideologies because we collectively experience the urgency for unity—walking towards it without having to define what it is. We have been forced to rebuild what was taken from us and forge a pathway through co-ops, health services, art hubs and community groups. We are born into long lines of family, history, connection of Place, and when we meet mob for the first time, we already have a deep understanding of one another.

We're proud to have commissioned a mural work using the same methodology of mentorship and sharing between artists that was shaped by artists like Yorta Yorta man Lin Onus. *Paying Homage to Culture* was created for the first iteration of *Collective Movements* by artists from the Torch, including Ash Thomas, who were mentored and guided by Uncle Ray Thomas—one of the original Koorie Mural muralists. Ash's new mural, *The Hunters*, is touring with the exhibition.

ILBIJERRI Theatre Company formed in the same era and significant ‘cultural wave’—the 1980s and 1990s—as Bangarra Dance Theatre, Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-operative, Nindeebiyah Workshop and Koorie Kollij, when Blakfullas were using art and cultural expression as a form of resistance, empowerment and connection. ILBIJERRI’s inclusion in *Collective Movements* communicates the significance of the people and groups who were actively making change in this period—how they shifted the cultural landscape forever—as well as the potency of Blak voices in all areas of our creative sector.

A few years down the track in 1996, the *We Iri, We Homeborn* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Festival took the city by storm, showcasing the largest display of Victorian Aboriginal art in five exhibitions across multiple high profile venues, including the National Gallery of Victoria’s Access Gallery. The festival, run through the City of Port Phillip, celebrated and made visible the living culture of Koorie people and—as Maree Clarke says—‘put Victorian Aboriginal art on the map’ and challenged widespread misconceptions that there was no ‘real Aboriginal art’ in Victoria. The beginnings of the renaissance of possum skin cloaks was just prior to the turn of the millennium, thanks to four women: Vicki Couzens, Debra Couzens (1962–2021), Lee Darroch and Treahna Hamm. The women worked together to recreate cloaks of their Ancestors, and then shared their knowledge with communities across the South East. This reinvigorated the cultural practice of cloak making and children today are growing up wearing and making possum skin cloaks. In this period of time, our people worked tirelessly to amplify our cultural practices here in Victoria and made space for creative and cultural connection and experimentation. Their actions have had a lasting legacy and show how change is possible when we work together.

We’ve been doing this since forever

The individuals within these groups, and the groups themselves, are a continuation of creation that has been practised here for generations. They do not start at the formal beginnings of these distinct collectives, nor do they end when the collectives dissolve. Each conversation put into action, agreement to work together, or natural outcome of a yarn that happened while weaving or over drinks at the pub, builds momentum that ripples out further than the group. When one moves, we all move. This demonstrates how our culture evolves and flows and has continued here for thousands of generations. This is not a project about

art but rather about people and our connections. At the core of these groups is the collective desire to leave things better than the way we found them. Fighting for our voices to be heard, our cultures to thrive and our stories and relationships with one another to be maintained and fostered forever.

Kaiela Arts has roots going back far beyond their formalisation as an arts centre. They are open for all community to come together, experiment and create, with their activities today reflecting the ways of being and doing that have long been practised on Yorta Yorta Woka [Yorta Yorta Country]. Similarly, sisters Kelsey and Tarryn Love maintain their connections to culture and practices that have existed in their family lines for generations through the work they make in their collective Koorroyarr. Their work with possum skins and weaving, and the designs they use, demonstrate the ongoing and intergenerational effects of the work their Aunties Vicki and Debra Couzens started—alongside Lee Darroch and Treahna Hamm—in reviving possum skin cloak making in the ‘90s.

Latje Latje Dance Group Mildura exemplifies the intricate layerings of family, community and cultural expression that led to the empowerment of many people from many different nations. The group ran for almost forty years, formalising in Robinvale in the late ‘70s, and later moving to create a much-needed space in Mildura and its surrounding regions for young people to have a place to come together and learn to dance in contemporary and traditional ways. This group’s presence and impact is still felt in Mildura and beyond; it continues in the dances still danced today, and the living memories of those who took part.

Ballarat-based collective the Pitcha Makin Fellas are an ever-evolving group with varying contributors but a vision that remains the same; they represent important issues that they see in the news and in their local community, using their signature stamping style and leveraging their strong, collective voice to speak back to violence and injustice.

We continue to feel the impact of the 1996 *We Iri, We Homeborn* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Festival, and the legacy of the five core members of the Koorie Arts Project team who delivered art materials and trekked across the state to collect artwork from over 100 makers to exhibit across the city.

Collectivising as a means to make the changes that we want to see is reflected in the work of emerging collectives such as this mob—a fluid collective that provides space and support for young artists to come together and create on their own terms. Their installation, *Gunyah Manu (Home Camp)*, 2022, embodies their way of working: bringing people together to share and yarn and learn through making, in the safety of each other’s company.

Much like ILBIJERRI formed to combat the lack of representation of our stories and peoples on stages across the country, Ensemble Dutala are carving out space in the classical music world by providing pathways for Indigenous musicians. The group addresses the lack of safe spaces for emerging practitioners to play together and is—as Deborah Cheetham AO says—an important beacon for aspiring musicians.

Artists from The Torch, an initiative conceived to provide creative outlets and opportunities to incarcerated and post-release Indigenous peoples, worked collaboratively with Uncle Ray Thomas to create their mural that depicts our reciprocity with the lands, waterways, plants, animals and Ancestors. Following this collaboration, Torch artist Ash Thomas created the mural *The Hunters*.

Our next movements

As youngfullas, we have inherited these stories and the responsibility to uphold the importance of forging spaces for ourselves and acknowledging the history of the journey to where we are now. In the same vein, we have these spaces to practise what our Elders and family have fought for—for us to resist and to thrive into a future where future generations will not have to perpetually experience what they did. The groups within *Collective Movements* exemplify the distinct practices of relationality and collective building that convey the unique and important reasons why Blackfullas come together to create, and the incredible movements of the Koorie arts community: movements of art resistance, activism, reclamation of cultural practice, of people moving across Country, of waterways and the rippling impacts this has had in the lives of mob living in Victoria. As curators, we’ve been left with hearts full of our peoples’ storytelling, which we now wear proudly on our shoulders. Our movements as Blackfullas have been one of survival—under the cover of night, in broad daylight as people marched off missions, through whispers of language, ceremony in secret, with pride, and sorrow and anger. Co-curating this show has been a long journey for the both of

us. We have bonded as Aboriginal women and grown in our friendship, we have learnt about the ongoing movements of people and practice across the state and beyond through the groups within this show and tied to it, and the importance of creative resistance through yarns with Elders, aunties and uncles and the next generation.

This is an edited excerpt from Maya Hodge and Kate ten Buuren, ‘An Intro from Co-curators’, *Collective Movements: First Nations Collectives, Collaborations and Creative Practices from across Victoria*, exh. cat., Monash University Museum of Art and Monash University Publishing, Melbourne, 2022, pp. 160–66. The original text can be accessed online via <https://netsvictoria.org.au/exhibition/collective-movements>

¹ Kimberley Moulton, ‘One Mob, Once Voice, One Land: The Meta-Collective’, in Katya García-Antón (ed.), *Mázejoavku. Indigenous Collectivity and Art*, Office for Contemporary Art Norway (OCA), Oslo, and DAT, Kautokeino, 2020, p. 209

² Tiriki Onus, ‘It’s Not Just What We Learn, It’s About How We Learn It’, *Collective Movements: First Nations Collectives, Collaborations and Creative Practices from across Victoria*, exh. cat., Monash University Museum of Art and Monash University Publishing, Melbourne, 2022, pp. 160–66. This text can also be accessed online at <https://netsvictoria.org.au/exhibition/collective-movements>

³ Mary Graham, ‘Some Thoughts about the Philosophical Underpinnings of Aboriginal Worldviews’, *Worldviews: Environment, Culture, Religion*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1999, p. 106

⁴ Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *Talkin’ Up to the White Woman: Aboriginal Women and Feminism*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 2002, p. 16

ENSEMBLE DUTALA

Since 2020

Ensemble Dutala is Australia's first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander chamber ensemble, currently consisting of nine musicians from Perth, Sydney, Moree, Mildura and Melbourne representing Yorta Yorta, Noongar, Kala Kawa Ya, Kiwai, Motu, Lardil and Yangkaal language groups. The ensemble formed in 2020 as an initiative of Short Black Opera (SBO), the national not-for-profit opera company founded ten years prior by Yorta Yorta woman, soprano, composer, educator and performing arts leader Deborah Cheetham AO.

Dutala (meaning star-filled sky in Yorta Yorta, Deborah's grandmother's language) grew out of SBO's One Day in January program: an ongoing initiative bringing artists together online and in Melbourne for a training intensive on the days leading up to January 26. As Deborah describes, 'Its purpose is to create a culturally empowering environment where First Nations orchestral musicians thrive, while at the same time creating a pathway to careers in orchestral music.'

The group's current members are Director Aaron Wyatt (violin/viola), Allara Briggs-Pattison (double bass), Preston Clifton (cello), Baden Hitchcock (violin), Jess Hitchcock (bassoon/piano), Maya Hodge (violin), Rosie Savage (French horn), Zeena Tesoriero (violin) and Jackson Worley (cello). Ensemble Dutala has performed with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria and the Dhungala Children's Choir and has collaborated with contemporary musicians Bumpy and Alice Skye in venues and festivals such as the Melbourne Recital Centre and the Yaluk-ut Weelam Ngargee Festival.

'Ensemble Dutala's purpose right now in coming together, is to share each other's experience and feel like we're not so alone and isolated. Ensemble Dutala is important as a beacon for any young First Nations musician.'

— Deborah Cheetham AO



Our Place 2022

5-channel video with stereo sound; 20 minutes

Director: Aaron Wyatt

Cinematography: Marleena Forward

Technical support: Liam Hennebry and Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

Editing: Aaron Wyatt and Liam Hennebry

Colour grading: Liam Hennebry

Produced by: Short Black Opera

Production Manager: Matthew Schroeders

Audio engineering: Duncan Yardley

Performers: Allara Briggs-Pattison, Deborah Cheetham, Preston Clifton, Maya Hodge, Rosie Savage, Jackson Worley and Aaron Wyatt

Venue courtesy of ABC (Iwaki Auditorium)

Courtesy of Short Black Opera

ILBIJERRI Theatre Company

Since 1990

ILBIJERRI Theatre Company is the longest-running Indigenous theatre company in Australia, created in 1990 by a group of artists, writers, community members and activists. In 1989, Yorta Yorta, Wiradjuri and South Sea Islander actor Kylie Belling and Kuku Yulangi and Erub writer John Harding attended the Second National Black Playwrights Conference in Sydney. This ignited their drive to form a theatre company that could build upon the legacy of storytelling and theatre that existed in Victoria.

Together with Lisa Bellea, Destiny Deacon, Eleanor Harding, Janina Harding, Kim Kruger, Bev Murray, Clinton Naina, Maryanne Sam and Stan Yarramunua, the group established ILBIJERRI—a word meaning ‘coming together for ceremony’ in Woiwurrung.

ILBIJERRI Theatre Company put on their first independent production in 1991, *Up the Road*. Their second major work, *Stolen*, was then developed collaboratively with community over seven years and was presented in multiple national and international tours.

In 2001, they hosted the inaugural Victorian Indigenous Playwrights Conference, and later developed a series of social impact productions that continue to tour through health services and community spaces.

‘ILBIJERRI has never wavered from its central purpose: “telling our stories as the First Peoples of this land—told by us, for us.” What has changed is our capacity to meet the broad range of needs; we produce work for big stages, festivals and national tours, as well as work that is nimble and able to go to the people. None of this would be possible if not for the hard work, the blood, sweat and tears of those founding and passionate members who kept the company going over its establishing years. Many companies have come and gone in this time—the fact we are still here is testament to them.’

— Rachael Maza AM, Artistic Director



Selection of posters, programs and postcards from thirty years of ILBIJERRI Theatre Company productions. Courtesy of ILBIJERRI Theatre Company

Kaiela Arts

Since 2006

Kaiela Arts has a long story, rooted in the journey of Yorta Yorta people and their Woka [Country], and pre-dating its formalisation in 2006 as an arts and cultural organisation known as Gallery Kaiela.

Gallery Kaiela's purpose was to bring art out of individuals' homes, publicly display and sell works made around kitchen tables or home studios, and celebrate the ongoing creative and cultural practices of the community.

Gallery Kaiela evolved into Kaiela Arts, changing location twice and formalising as an arts centre that included studio spaces. It is now a thriving arts centre; a hub for conversation and creation, it plays a central role in the wellbeing of the whole community. It's not just the art that's important, it is the space it holds for people to connect to each other and to culture.

Kaiela artists work across weaving, woodwork, watercolour and acrylic painting, emu egg carving, clay, screenprinting and textiles. They collaborate on projects with people from across the community, not just with artists. The centre runs painting and weaving workshops each week for young people up to Elders.

They have received commissions from major institutions including Monash University, RMIT University, and the recently built Shepparton Arts Museum, where Kaiela Arts has been based since 2021.

'You can feel the energy of people when it just naturally happens, when people are there for the same reasons. It's a part of the spirit of who we are, and that is why it's important for us to be able to collaborate and connect. Environments like this are really important for people to congregate. That's what keeps it happening in the homes as well, it's a bit of both. We're building and keeping our relationships and connections strong. As Aboriginal people, our biggest strength is as a collective. If we don't have our collective, we lose our sense of people.'

— Lyn Thorpe



Suzanne Taylor, *Rainbow Basket*, 2022 and Cecelia Taylor, *Raffia Basket*, 2020



Kaiela Arts. Installation view, *Collective Movements*, Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne, 2022. Photo: Christian Capurro

Koorroyarr

Since 2018

In 2018, Kelsey and Tarryn Love began Koorroyarr, a creative platform that honours their positionality as Gunditjmara women, sisters and granddaughters continually learning and seeking knowledge of their culture. Kelsey and Tarryn are Gunditjmara Keerray Woorroong sisters from south-west Victoria, born and raised on Wadawurrung Country in Geelong.

'Koorroyarr' means 'granddaughter' in their mother tongue Keerray Woorroong, which captures the significant presence, impact and vital role that family and kinship plays in their arts practice.

By centring Keerray Woorroong language and ways of being, the sisters aim to carry on the work of those before them in reclaiming, reviving and reinvigorating culture while exploring their identity in the here and now.

Kelsey and Tarryn 'constantly bring in family to guide us, contribute and be involved', highlighting 'ways of knowing, being and doing that is not one way, but constantly happening and changing.'

Their work reflects the transference of knowledge and pays respect to those who have passed it down. Celebrating the distinctiveness of Gunditjmara culture, they work with a variety of mediums including weaving, drawing, painting, wood burning, possum skins and sculpture.

Informed by their own individual experiences and journeys, their collaboration is most evident in the processes of how their work is made, rather than just the outcomes. For Kelsey and Tarryn, 'it is in the cuppas, yarns, phone calls, texts etc. It is the times where we sit, talk and create in spaces and places together, not always necessarily on the same work, but together processing our thoughts and ideas. This style of collaboration is the ways we saw our Blak matriarchs growing up and now.'

'It has always felt very natural to work collectively. Outside of our familial and kinship relations that embedded our understanding of collectiveness culturally, I think we unknowingly observed how to work collectively in a creative and arts capacity at different times growing up.'

— Tarryn Love



yoongama—to give and receive 2022

possum skin, steel, wax thread and New Zealand flax
190 x 121 cm

Courtesy of Koorroyarr

Student learning activities:

Kelsey and Tarryn highlight the vital role that family and kinship plays in their arts practice.

- Describe in your own words what family and kinship means to you.
- As a class, reflect on some examples of knowledge, skills, responsibilities or values that have been taught and passed down to you through your family and/or community.
- How do these influence you and your ways of knowing, being and doing?
- In your chosen medium, create an artwork that shares your experience of family, kinship and culture.

Closely observe the materials used to create *yoongama*.

- What materials can you see?
- What do you think the relationship is between these materials and the storytelling within the work?



KINSHIP ARTS

Latje Latje Dance Group Mildura

1978–2005

Latje Latje Dance Group Mildura was one of the earliest and longest-running organised traditional and contemporary dance groups in Victoria. They formed in 1978 after local Koorie children attended a cultural camp at Camp Jungai and were taught dances by notable Aboriginal leaders, Yamatji man Ernie Dingo and Senior Elder and artist of the Maḡarra clan, Yolŋu people, Donald Nuwandjali Marawili. Both men gave permission for the children to continue practicing the dances and to teach them to other young Koorie students.

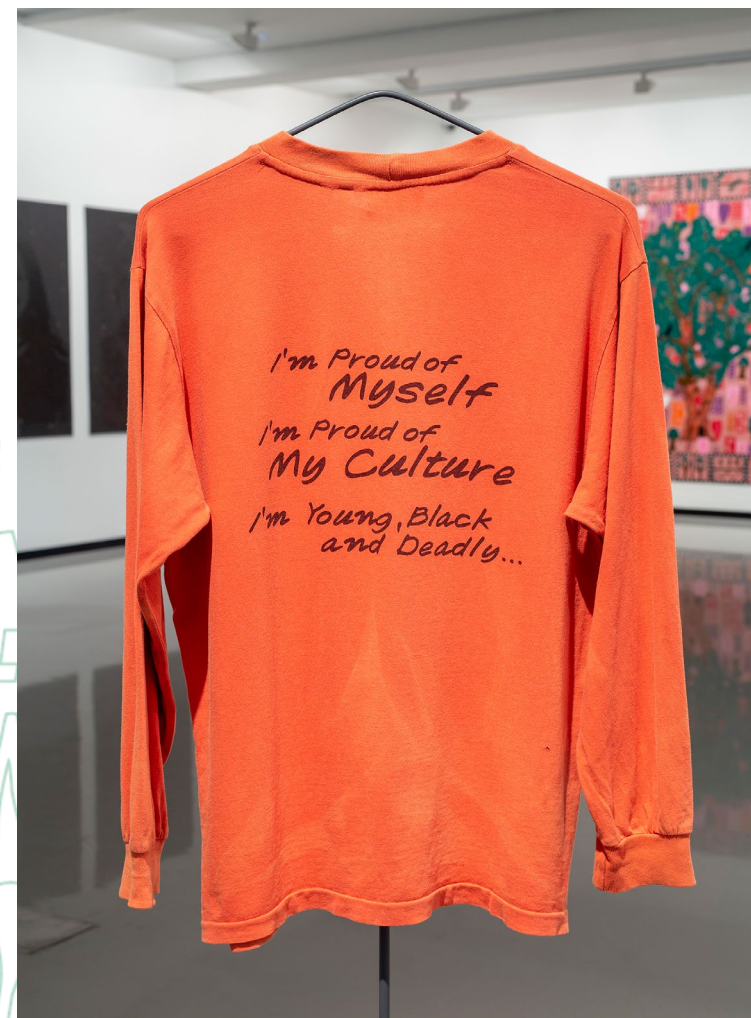
The group connected with other dance groups such as the Mornington Island Dancers and Bangarra Dance Theatre. They travelled to perform in events including the International Dance and the Child conference in Auckland in 1985, and supported Yothu Yindi at the Port Fairy Folk Festival in 1997.

Reflecting on the growing archive and legacy of the group, founding member Jenny Kirby said: 'It's good to see all the young ones that actually got involved. I've noticed a few of them are my family members.'

The archival project represented in Collective Movements seeks to begin the process of documenting Latje Latje Dance Group Mildura's story for future generations to access. Historically, archives have been sources of pain for our communities; when we reclaim them to honour the ongoing legacies of our people, they can be sources of celebration. The group lives on in the dances that are lovingly passed down through families, in the memories of group members and in photo albums that contain windows to the past still living present.

'Mildura can be a very transitory place. You look at the dispersal rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids and mob that live on Country and in particular here in Victoria. These spaces were a necessity to give mob a chance to connect and learn culture respectfully.'

— Indi Clarke



Latje Latje Dance Group Mildura T-shirt, designed by Peter Clarke

The curators acknowledge Joan Quinlan, Karen Clarke, Jenny Kirby, Maree Clarke, Mark Doolan-Morgan, Sonja Hodge, Darlene Thomas, Aaron Clarke, Indi Clarke and Peter Peterson for their time and knowledge in the development of the archival display.

Student learning activities:

Indi Clarke reflects on the important role the dance group played in connecting its members to their cultures and one another.

- In what ways do you think learning and sharing stories through dance can connect a person to their community?
- As a class, brainstorm some of the kinds of activities you like to do together with your family/friends/community.
- What helps you feel a sense of belonging and connection within your family and community?

Latje Latje Dance Group Mildura's story has been shared in *Collective Movements* via archival photographs, pamphlets and even textiles like the T-shirt pictured on previous page.

- Do the family, friend and community groups that you belong to collect and share photographs to remember particular stories and events?
- Do you think it's important for people to remember stories from the past? Why/why not?
- Reflect on how the personal and community stories we choose to keep and share shape who we are now, or where we hope to be in the future.
- Find a photograph or sentimental item from your past. This could be a family photo, school photo, or a photo of a special occasion or event you remember. Write down or share the story of the photo as you remember it. If you can, have a conversation about the photo with a person who was there with you when it was taken. Did their memory of the photo enable you to learn anything new about the photo or the time when it was taken? How is their perspective similar or different to yours? Does their recollection change how you remember the story behind the photograph? If so, how?



Coolamon with emu feathers, clapsticks and ochres (courtesy of Peter Peterson) with photographs from the archival display in *Collective Movements*

The curators recognise that archives have historically been sources of pain for First Peoples' communities.

- Find out more about the role archives have historically played in the documentation and representation of First Peoples.
- Why do you think these historical archives have been a source of pain for First Peoples?
- Why is reclaiming archival documentation now and for the future important to First Peoples' self-determination and truth-telling?

Pitcha Makin Fellas

Since 2013

The Pitcha Makin Fellas are an arts collective based in Ballarat on Wadawurrung land who are passionate about their culture and community, and share their pride through their art. The group formed in 2013 at the Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative from a meeting to develop a children's book. At the end of this meeting, seven artists and writers came together to form the collective.

Since then, the Pitcha Makin Fellas have become known for their tongue-in-cheek humour and the signature stamps that they make to create their brightly coloured paintings. Over the past nine years, the group has been through many evolutions and they currently have three members, Gimuy Walubarra Yidinji woman Trudy Edgeley; Dja Dja Wurrung, Gunditjmara and Yorta Yorta woman Alison McRae; and Gunditjmara man Ted Laxton, one of the original seven.

Inspired by the histories and cultural traditions of south-eastern Australia, as well as observations, news and public debates, their works range from paintings and murals to hand-painted breastplates, a series of 'Blakfella Time' clocks, and books. They use their collective voice to speak up and speak back to incidents of racism, discrimination and the ongoing impacts of colonialism in their local community. They regularly lead workshops for community and school groups.

The Pitcha Makin Fellas are currently Artists-in-Residence at Federation University Australia in Ballarat and their studio is the key to making their works. In this space, they sit together and workshop ideas, discuss things that matter to them and collaborate on how to best tell their stories through stamps and paint.

'Painting with the Fellas has given me something productive to do and a different outlook on life. It has fulfilled my life.'

— Ted Laxton



Why Don't Whitefellas Like Trees? 2022
synthetic polymer paint on foamboard
3 parts, 260 x 156 cm each
Monash University Collection
Purchased 2022

PITCHA
MAKIN
FELLAS

Student learning activities:

In this work, the Pitcha Makin Fellas pay homage to Djab Wurrung peoples care for Country and their ongoing efforts to protect sacred trees and sites from destruction.

- What Country do you live on and go to school on?
- With a partner or in small groups, share what caring for Country means to you.
- As a class, brainstorm some of the kinds of actions you can take to care for the Country you live on, and some of the potential benefits of doing these activities. Can you achieve the best outcomes alone or will you need to work together? How can you help each other to care for Country?

The artwork *Why Don't Whitefellas Like Trees?* features many colourful motifs and repetitive patterns made using the artists' signature stamps.

- As a class, make your own collective artworks inspired by the Pitcha Makin Fellas about the environment. Create your own stamps out of recycled cardboard, offcuts from an old yoga mat and some acrylic paint.
- Along the way, consider the environmental impact of making art. Are any of the art materials able to be reused, recycled or repurposed? If so, how? For example, could you consider sharing your stamps with other students in the class to use less resources?
- In the art classroom, create a community list of actions to care for Country. Give the list a stamp each time you achieve an action. Remember, caring for Country is an ongoing practice so you might stamp the same action many times a week, or even in a day!
- What does your list look like at the end of the week? What about the end of the school term? Have you created your own colourful artwork through actions?

Do you know of any groups or movements working to protect Country and culture where you live?

- As a class, do some research to find out about the organisations, community groups and movements that are working together to protect Country near you.
- Find out more about the actions these groups are taking to care for Country.
- Who are the leaders of these groups? Are they First Peoples who are custodians of this place (Traditional Owners)?
- Caring for Country is intricately connected to First Peoples' protocols and teachings about how we live with respect and reciprocity for the land, skies, waterways and cosmologies of a particular place. As a class reflect on why First Peoples' leadership is important in the ongoing protection of Country and culture.

The Pitcha Makin Fellas are known for their 'tongue-in-cheek' humour in their artistic storytelling, which can be seen in the title of their artwork *Why Don't Whitefellas Like Trees?*

- What do you think the importance of humour is in the Pitcha Makin Fellas' artwork?
- How might humour be a powerful way to 'speak up and speak back to incidents of racism, discrimination and the ongoing impacts of colonialism'?



Possum Skin Cloak Story

Since 1999

The Possum Skin Cloak Story in *Collective Movements* traces the beginnings of one of the most significant cultural renaissances of south-eastern Australia, the widespread return of possum skin cloak making, which began with four Koorie women answering the calls of their Ancestors.

During a printmaking workshop visit to the Melbourne Museum in 1999, Gunditjmara Keerray Woorroong woman Vicki Couzens and Yorta Yorta, Mutti Mutti and Boonwurrung woman Lee Darroch encountered the Gunditjmara Lake Condah Cloak, one of six known surviving possum skin cloaks from the nineteenth century. During this experience, the Ancestors of the cloak gifted Vicki a vision 'to return cloaks to community'. Vicki shared this with Lee, and in collaboration with Yorta Yorta artist Treahna Hamm and Keerray Woorroong woman and Vicki's sister, Debra Couzens (1962–2021), the women embarked on the journey to recreate the cloaks of their Ancestors and distribute cloak-making knowledge back to community.

Lee and Treahna collaborated on the Yorta Yorta cloak collected from Maiden's Punt (Echuca) in 1853, also held in the museum's collection, while Debra and Vicki collaborated on the Gunditjmara cloak collected from Lake Condah in 1872. They sought permission and guidance from their Elders and advice from other cloak makers in the community. They tried different techniques, adapting to contemporary materials on hand. This experimentation along with knowledge sharing, collaboration and support between the women was key to replicating the cloaks.

These beginnings have had a lasting legacy, with many cloak makers, including the original collective members, teaching workshops in schools, childcare settings, hospitals, Elders groups and more. Such activities have regenerated and reinvigorated possum skin cloak knowledge by reconnecting individuals, families and communities to their birthright cultural knowledges and practices, seeding and enabling continuation and future creation through the generations.

This work grew to include contemporary artist, Mutti Mutti, Yorta Yorta, Boonwurrung/Wemba Wemba woman Maree Clarke in community workshops organised for the Opening Ceremony of the 2006 Commonwealth Games. Following this major project, Vicki, Lee and Maree formed Banmirra Arts to facilitate workshops across south-east Australia.



Lee Darroch, *Dhamala Biganga (Grandfather Possum Cloak)* c.2005 (detail)
possum skins, pokerwork designs, ochre and thread
approx. 200 x 150 cm
Courtesy of the artist

A focus on children saw another shift in the practice, with many cloaks made specifically for young people, and workshops being held for our young ones to instill pride and cultural knowledge.

Lee crafted *Dhamala Biganga (Grandfather Possum Cloak)*, which captures stories passed down through her father about Yorta Yorta Country, to pass on to her children and grandchildren.

Treahna's *Baby Possum Skin Cloak* was made to be worn by a young Indigenous person, and she continues to work with young people in both primary and high schools across the south-east, sharing Aboriginal arts and culture.

In 2013, Barapa Barapa, Wiradjuri and Yorta Yorta Elder Aunty Esther Kirby worked with Vicki to deliver cloak-making workshops with children from the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA). They shared information about designs, kinship, language and stories to empower the children to connect to their culture, and to each other.

Across the south-east, families now use cloaks in birthing, welcoming babies to Country, ceremonies, and in the passing of our loved ones. Cloaks have made their way into the everyday life of Koorie people once again, and are used to pass on story and knowledge of place, kinship and identity.

Student learning activities:

The designs featured on possum skin cloaks tell a story of the makers' experience of place, kinship and identity, and are often added to as they move through time and place.

- With a partner, have a conversation about why it is so important that First Peoples' cultural practices such as possum skin cloak making are passed on through the generations.
- In your own chosen medium, create a 'living' artwork that tells your story, highlighting important people and places you have spent time with along the way. Add to this artwork as you grow and change.
- You might like to invite some of your friends and family to contribute some of their own creative input to your artwork. Include messages for your future family, friends and self.

Artist Vicki Couzens describes how possum skin cloak making was 'sleeping' prior to the revitalisation of this cultural practice.

- Why do you think Vicki Couzens used the word 'sleeping', and how might this language inform how we think about the continuity of First Peoples' cultures and communities now?



Children in workshops with Vicki Couzens, Aunty Esther Kirby and Maree Clarke, *Possum Skin Children's Cloak Number Three* 2013 (detail)

'When people are seeing possum skin cloaks today, they're seeing the contemporary cultural revitalisation of a practice that's been sleeping, that has been part of all those practices that have been impacted by colonial genocidal practices. These things are profound expressions of people's connectivity to their being, who they are, and our belonging.'

— Vicki Couzens

The Torch

Since 2011

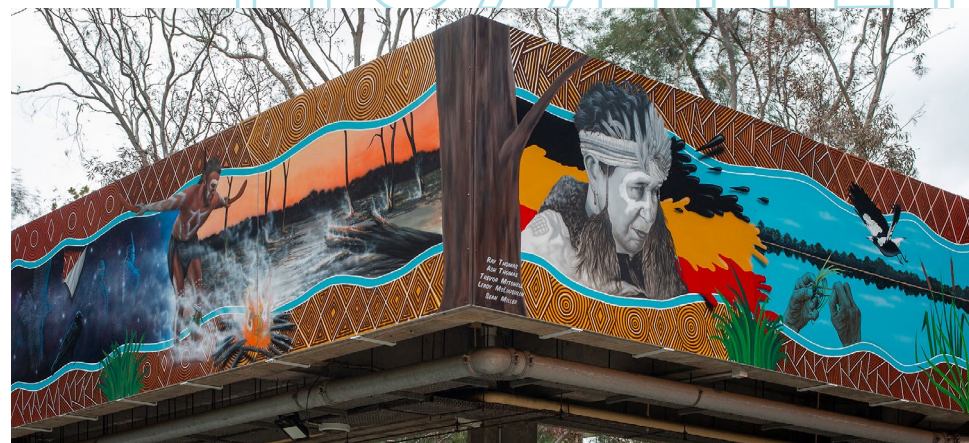
Since 2011, The Torch has been providing art, cultural and arts industry support to Victorian-based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are currently or have previously been incarcerated. The organisation assists artists to reconnect with culture, earn income from art sales (with 100% of the sale price going directly to the artist), foster new networks and to pursue educational and creative industry avenues upon their release.

The Torch is represented in *Collective Movements*' tour by Yorta Yorta and Wiradjuri artist and Ash Thomas' mural *The Hunters*, 2022. This mural is a travelling public artwork, accompanying *Collective Movements* on its journey throughout the varied Country of the South-East. For more information on where to see *The Hunters* please ask the gallery you are visiting.

For *Collective Movements*' initial presentation at MUMA, Gunnai artist Ray Thomas—a former Indigenous Arts Officer with The Torch—worked with Yorta Yorta artist Leroy McLaughlin, Gamilaroi artist Sean Miller, Barkindji artist Trevor Mitchell and Wiradjuri and Yorta Yorta/Wiradjuri artist Ash Thomas on the mural *Paying Homage to Culture*, 2022, which is installed on Monash University's Caulfield campus. Following this collaboration, Ash Thomas created *The Hunters*, 2022, for the exhibition.

Ray's initial collaboration with the four artists served as a platform for sharing cultural and artistic knowledge between those involved. Produced in association with The Torch, the two murals exemplify the organisation's program of cultural strengthening and artistic expression.

Ray's murals can be seen at the Northcote Town Hall and the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service in Preston and Fitzroy, and he was one of the group of artists who created the Koorie Mural at the Aborigines* Advancement League (AAL) in the 1980s. Earlier in his life, Ray connected with Yorta Yorta artist Lin Onus, who introduced him to oil paints and became a mentor throughout Ray's career, including on the Koorie Mural.



Ray Thomas with Leroy McLaughlin, Sean Miller, Trevor Mitchell and Ash Thomas
Paying Homage to Culture 2022

Ash Thomas
The Hunters 2022

Both murals created in association with The Torch

***Educators note on language:** We hold the utmost respect for the founders and community members of AAL, and recognise First Peoples' right to refer to our themselves with language autonomously deemed appropriate. We advise educators and students to avoid referring to First Peoples of this place as 'Aborigines', as this terminology is widely considered an outdated or pejorative term. This is just one of many examples of how language use has changed over time, and the varied perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

this mob

Since 2016

this mob is an arts collective for emerging creatives based on Boonwurrung and Wurundjeri lands. As the next generation of influential Blak creatives, this mob believes that young Blakfullas have an integral voice in shaping our collective future.

this mob formed in 2016 to address the lack of safe spaces for Victorian-based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to come together and create. Since then, this mob has forged spaces for young people to learn, make and present their art and voices across a number of different curatorial projects, workshops, public interventions, performances, discussions and publications.

Operating out of a studio at the Collingwood Yards, the collective is made up of creative practitioners with different material practices including writing, curating, painting, sculpture, weaving, performance and more. The group's membership is not fixed, and new members are brought in project-to-project.

The work *Gunyah Manu (Home Camp)* was led by Yorta Yorta and Wurundjeri artist Moorina Bonini and Boonwurrung artist and cultural educator Mitch Mahoney in collaboration with Anaiwan and Gumbaynggirr artist Gabi Briggs, Nirim Baluk artist Hannah Morphy-Walsh, Luritja artist, curator and writer Jenna Rain Warwick, Wiradjuri woman Karen Adams as well as Yasbelle Kerkow and Kareen Adam. It is a representation of traditional housing that derives from the collaborators' collective knowledge about building techniques and sustainable practice. *Gunyah Manu (Home Camp)* represents making space for young artists—integral to cultural and spiritual strength-building and peer support, and centred in traditional practices that continue to inspire, ground and empower young Blakfullas in both their art-making and artistic journeys. Its presentation will change as the work moves from location to location.



Gunyah Manu (Home Camp) 2022

Djab Wurrung stringybark, bamboo, string, sand, quarry rocks and tree stumps
approx. 340 x 520 cm diameter

Lead artist: Moorina Bonini

Consultant: Mitch Mahoney

Contributors: Kareen Adam, Karen Adams, Gabi Briggs,
Yasbelle Kerkow, Hannah Morphy-Walsh and Jenna Rain Warwick
Courtesy of this mob

'It is fluid . . . we all come from different mobs and as a group we recognise that as a strength. We all have individual knowledges from our own mobs that we can bring together in the collective space. When we share our knowledge and have yarns about things that matter to us, we bring not just our individualistic ideas or points of view, but our own communities.'

— Moorina Bonini



Student learning activities:

***Gunyah Manu (Home Camp)* explores the importance of making spaces for young mob to learn, create and come together.**

- Describe in your own words what makes a space inspiring and inviting for you to learn and create in. Are you indoors or outdoors? Are there particular people there? Are you moving your body or staying still? What materials are you surrounded by? Is it somewhere you've been before or somewhere new?
- In small groups, share your ideas and design an ideal learning space. Work collaboratively and give each member of the group an opportunity to share their ideas and be represented in your design.
- When you have finished your design, reflect on how you share your ideas with one another. What things are you willing to compromise on? What do you stand your ground on? How do you communicate this with your group? Are there any key differences between your individual ideas and your group's collaborative design? What are some strengths of working together?

We Iri, We Homeborn Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Festival

1996, 1997 and 1999

In NAIDOC Week 1996, the Koori Arts Project Team at the City of Port Phillip led by Maree Clarke, Kimba Thompson, Len Tregonning, Lee Clarke, Sonja Hodge and Maree Moffatt coordinated the *We Iri, We Homeborn* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Festival. Consisting of a series of exhibitions across five venues in Melbourne, the festival was the largest display of Victorian-based emerging and established Indigenous artists' works at that time.

Maree Clarke and Jacqui Geia travelled across the state dropping off arts supplies to Indigenous artists and returned a few months later with Kimba, Len and Lee to collect the work.

When they asked for a truck to pick up the work, they received the response: 'What do you need a two-tonne truck for? There's no Aboriginal art in Victoria.' Over 500 artworks from over 100 artists were collected by the team, requiring a three-tonne truck.

We Iri, We Homeborn demonstrated the volume of work being made by the Koorie community and the diversity of practice. According to Maree Clarke, 'it was groundbreaking and really put Victorian Aboriginal art on the map', launching the careers of the community's most prolific artists.

The festival occurred again in 1997 and 1999 and its legacy includes different Koorie festivals and events in the City of Port Phillip, such as the Yaluk-ut Weelam Ngargee Festival, evolving with a musical focus.

'The festival opened up Pandora's box, in a way that if no one was to travel that whole six days and go to every community, yarn to everybody, or do it two, three times over, there wouldn't have been that connection to be able to.'

— Kimba Thompson



Cover of the catalogue from the first *We Iri, We Homeborn* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Festival, City of Port Phillip Koori Arts Unit, 1996. Port Phillip City Collection. Cover art: Donna Brown

WE IRI,
WE
HOMEBORN

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