

# unbranded

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Damien Shen  
Dean Cross  
Gunybi Ganambarr  
Illiam Nargoodah  
James Tylor  
John Prince Siddon  
Ngarralja Tommy May  
Nongirrŋa Marawili  
Nyurpaya Kaika Burton  
Patrina Munungurr  
Sharyn Egan  
Sonia Kurarra  
Wukun Wanambi

121 View St BENDIGO Victoria 3550

*unbranded* presents work by Indigenous contemporary artists whose practices undermine and subvert the notion of a singular Indigenous 'brand' or 'aesthetic'. Their work unpicks preconceptions of what Indigenous creative practice is or should be, rejecting binary assumptions around 'traditional/non-traditional', or 'urban/remote' practices and other applied, and often arbitrary categorisations. Their work instead reflects multiplicity, complexity and sometimes-conflicting experiences of culture and identity in contemporary Australia.

The act of 'branding', clustering often disparate products together for marketing purposes, strips the voice of the individual artist or maker and separates creative output from the contemporary context in which it is created. In the case of Indigenous Australian Art, the commodification of cultural output as a consumable, digestible, 'thing', owned and understood with minimal engagement is highly problematic.

The establishment of a publicly-accepted Indigenous aesthetic has emerged from two centuries of misunderstanding, and misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in Australia. This took place in our museums, in our politics and in our broader society and resulted in mistrusts about the existence of a pan-Aboriginal society, culture and identity. It is the legacy of this lack of understanding and awareness which has resulted in an Indigenous brand, one which has outlawed cultural plurality, diversity, complexity, contradiction and contested in-between spaces. Branding denies the possibility of multi-directional dialogue between cultures and acts as a device of separation and cultural othering. It bleaches colour and nuance, white-washing diverse experiences and histories into a banal singularity.

*unbranded* as a curatorial enterprise questions these reductive and divisive modes of representation and interpretation, while simultaneously affirming the diversity, multiplicity and complexity of contemporary Indigenous experience, both live and inherited.

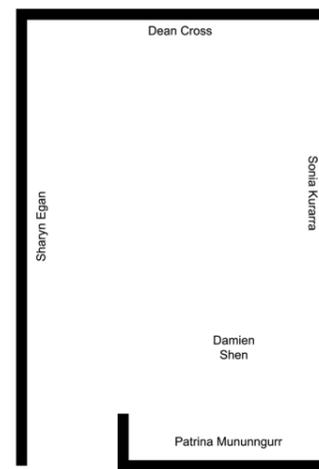
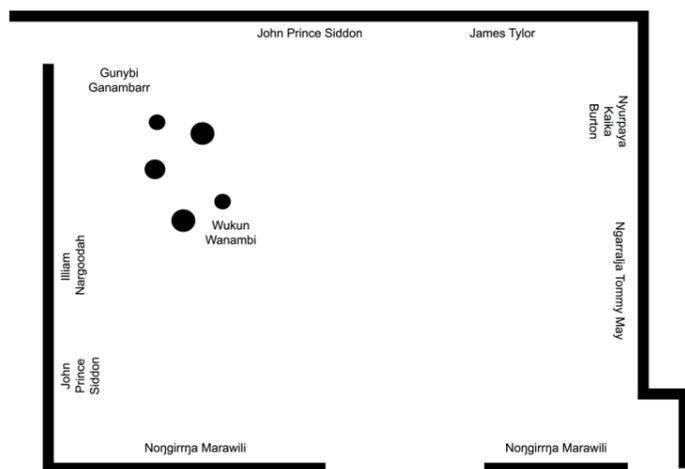
Emerging from ongoing discussions around the premise established by Glenn Iseger-Pilkington in his essay *Branded: the Indigenous Aesthetic* originally published by the Centre for Contemporary Photography (CCP) in 2009, *unbranded* challenges the relevance of an 'Indigenous brand' or 'aesthetic', and refutes the notion that such a brand can somehow represent the experience of Indigenous artists and Indigenous people across Australia. Despite the incredible diversity of contemporary art being produced across a wide variety of mediums, forms and content and in a diverse range of community and individual contexts, these ideas persist and reflect a lack of public engagement with the realities of contemporary life and culture and the diverse experiences of Indigenous artists.

*unbranded* speaks to the nuance of life across Indigenous Australia. It explores the many ways that artists perceive, decipher and share their cultures, lived experiences and thoughts and feelings about the world with others, through their visionary art practices.

Glenn Iseger-Pilkington & Travis Curtin.  
Curators.

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## GALLERY 1

### Nonggirra Marawili (b. c.1938)

Yolngu Peoples: Yirritja moiety; Madarrpa clan

*Bol'ngu Djapu* (2017)

*Lightning* (2017)

All 150 x 100 cm

All enamel paint on aluminium composite board

Courtesy of the artist, Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre and Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne.

*Lightning* (2017)

All enamel paint on aluminium composite board

Courtesy of the artist, Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre and Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne. Private collection, USA.

### John Prince Siddon (b. 1964)

Country: Fitzroy Crossing; Language: Walmajarri

*Untitled (spray can)* (2016); *Untitled (spray can)* (2016); *Untitled (spray can)* (2016);

*Untitled (spray can)* (2016)

Dimensions variable

All synthetic polymer paint and encising on etched spray can

Courtesy of the artist and Mangkaja Arts. Harriett and Richard England Collection, Tasmania.

*Dead Babies* (2018)

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas

155 x 155 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Mangkaja Arts.

### Illiam Nargoodah (b. 1997)

Country: Jimbalakudunj; Language: Walmajarri / Nykina; Skin:Tjungiya

*Untitled (hand crafted knives)* (2018)

Two parts: 25 x 3 x 2 cm; 22 x 2.1 x 1.6 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Mangkaja Arts.

*Cheese Knife* (2017)

Steel, hose, bone; 17 x 2 x 2 cm

*Gutts'em Out Knife* (2017)

Found sheep shear, Mudurra wood; 24 x 6 x 1 cm

*Rib-cracker* (2017)

Steel from gate, Mudurra wood, copper pipe; 51 x 4 x 4 cm

*Small Birds* (2017)

Garden shears; 13 x 3 cm / 13 x 3 cm

All courtesy of the artist and Mangkaja Arts. Private Collection, Fremantle.

### Wukun Wanambi (b. 1962)

Yolngu Peoples; Dhuwa moiety, Marrakulu clan

*Trial Bay* (2016)

*Trial Bay* (2016)

200 cm; 256 cm

Both earth pigment and clay on naturally hollowed tree trunk

Courtesy of the artist and Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre. Harriett and Richard England Collection, Tasmania.

### Gunybi Ganambarr (b.1973)

Yolngu Peoples; Dhuwa moiety; Nyamil clan

*Gudurrku* (2019)

enamel paint on etched aluminium composite board; 148 x 127 cm

*Milngurr Nyamil font* (2016)

engraved galvanised steel; 165 x 120 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Buku-Larrngay Mulka.

*Garrapara* (2013)

*Garrapara* (2015)

*Garrapara* (2013)

233 cm; 175 cm; 206 cm (respectively)

All earth pigment and sand on naturally hollowed tree trunk

All courtesy of the artist and Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre. Harriett and Richard England Collection, Tasmania.

### James Tylor (b. 1986)

Nunga (Kaurua), Māori (Te Arawa) and European (English, Scottish, Irish, Dutch and Norwegian)

Australian ancestry

*Deleted Scenes From an Untouched Landscape*

# 11 (2013)

*Erased Scenes From an Untouched Landscape*

# 1 (2014); # 6 (2014); # 13 (2014)

All inkjet print on hahnemuhle paper with hole removed to a black velvet void

All 50 x 50 cm

*Murlapaka Broad shields* (2019)

70 x 40 x 5 cm

*Mara wadna Number Seven Club* (2019)

60 x 40 x 5 cm

*Wakalti Parry Shield* (2019)

60 x 10 x 10 cm

*Wiramumiyu wirri Barbed club* (2019)

50 x 5 x 3 cm

*Midla Spear thrower* (2019)

50 x 5 x 3 cm

All timber and black paint

All works by James Tylor are courtesy of the artist, Vivien Anderson Gallery, Naarm Melbourne and GAGPRO-JECTS, Tarntanya Adelaide.

### Nyurpaya Kaika Burton (b. 1949)

Language: Pitjantjatjara

*Ngayuku tjukurpa, mara walytjangku palyantja – My story, written in my own hand* (2019)

Ink and synthetic polymer paint on paper

152.5 x 130 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Tjala Arts.

### Ngarralja Tommy May (b. 1935)

Country: Yarrnkurnja; Language: Walmajarri; Skin: Jungkurra

*Jitirr* (2017); *Jitirr* (2017); *Jitirr* (2017)

All acrylic paint and drawing into enamel on metal

Each 90 x 90 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Mangkaja Arts. Harriett and Richard England Collection, Tasmania.

## GALLERY 2

### Sharyn Egan (b. 1957)

Nyoongar Peoples

*Our Babies* (2019)

100 sardine tins, cloth, pebble gravel

Dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist, loaned from the artist.

### Dean Cross (b. 1986)

Worimi Peoples

*Untitled Slogan Painting* (2017)

Synthetic paint on found particle board and Ngunnawal stone

Two parts, 122 x 80 x 1.5 cm; 26 x 22 x 9 cm at widest points, dimensions variable

*Yowie* (2017)

Looped HD video, ed.3

34 minutes 30 seconds

*Untitled (A Yowie Dispatched)* (2017)

Australian Army ghillie suit

Dimensions variable

All works courtesy of the artist.

### Sonia Kurarra (b. 1952)

Country: Noonkanbah; Language: Walmajarri; Skin: Nampiyinti

*Martuwarra* (2015)

152 x 152 cm

*Martuwarra* (2015)

152 x 137 cm

Both synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Both courtesy of the artist and Mangkaja Arts.

### Patrina Mununggurr (b. 1989)

Yolngu Peoples; Dhuwa moiety; Djapu clan

*Dhunupa'kum Nhuna Wanda (Straighten Your Mind)* (2018)

Filmic work; 1 minute 33 seconds

Courtesy of the artist, Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre and The Mulka Project.

### Damien Shen (b. 1976)

Ngarrindjeri and Chinese Australian

*Still Life After Penn #1; #2; #3; #4; #5: #6* (2017)

All tintype

All 5 x 4 inches (except #5 which is 4 x 5 inches)

All courtesy of the artist and MARS Gallery. Collection of Craig Semple, Melbourne.