

Lorraine Connelly-Northey

Waradgerie (Wiradjuri) born Swan Hill, Victoria / Wamba Wamba and Wadi Wadi Country 1962, lives Waradgerie (Wiradjuri) Country

Narrbong, 2008

corrugated iron with pigment, wire

La Trobe University Art Collection. Purchased 2010. LTU2296

Narrbong, 2008

rusted mesh, fencing wire

La Trobe University Art Collection. Purchased 2010. LTU2297

Narrbong, 2008

rusted metal can, fencing wire

La Trobe University Art Collection. Purchased 2010. LTU2298

Narrbong, 2009

rusted filter mesh, fencing wire

La Trobe University Art Collection. Purchased 2010. LTU2299

Narrbong, 2009

corrugated iron, fencing wire

La Trobe University Art Collection. Purchased 2010. LTU2300

Narrbong, 2009

fly wire mesh, fencing wire

La Trobe University Art Collection. Purchased 2010. LTU2301

Lorraine Connelly-Northey's sculptural series *Narrbong* is an ode to her people's traditional fibre bag-making practices. For Wiradjuri people, *Narrbong-galang* are used for storing and collecting and as vessels for goods or food. Traditionally, the large-scale baskets vary in size, shape and colour.

Born in Swan Hill, Connelly-Northey grew up in regional Victoria, surrounded by farm machinery. Through this experience, she uses traditional coil-weaving techniques, incorporating found objects and imagining them into cultural belongings. In her *Narrbong* series, Connelly-Northey repurposes materials for farming, including mesh wire, corrugated iron, fencing wire, rusted filter mesh and metal cans. The rust colours of the metal baskets range from light orange, brown and yellow, created by natural processes over time and reminiscent of the colours of dunes, grasses and barks of Country.

Connelly-Northey twists, threads and weaves a series of works that embody a strong presence by enlarging the scale of her generational knowledge. The technique and shape shift with each *narrbong*, warping dangerous barbed wire into delicately curved handles and rusted corrugated iron into burnt orange dusted and scaled surfaces.

Connelly-Northey speaks to the complex history of postcolonial Australia through the historical weight of iron and the employment of this material in traditional practice. Her works ask us to think deeply about the duality of shared histories through materials and how this impacts relationships, individuals, communities, Country and cultural practices. Throughout her work, Connelly-Northey uplifts cultural agency and story through the transformation of traditional forms into contemporary structures of resilience.

More reading

Michael Moran, '[Lorraine Connelly-Northey: Narrbong-galang](#)', Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery website, 2019, accessed 2022.

Maya Hodge, 2022