

unbranded

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Education resource

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

LA TROBE
ART
INSTITUTE

 LA TROBE
UNIVERSITY

Curators Glenn Iseger-Pilkington & Travis Curtin

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION:

unbranded presents artwork by thirteen contemporary Indigenous artists who challenge the idea of an Indigenous 'brand' or 'aesthetic' (style). The exhibition emerged out of discussions between the two curators in response to Glenn's essay, *Branded*, first published in *Flash* (the Centre for Contemporary Photography's online journal) issue 3, in November 2009.

The artwork in *unbranded* does not fit conveniently within this singular 'Indigenous brand'. The exhibition shows us that no brand is capable of representing the experiences and output of all Indigenous artists and Indigenous people across the country. 'Branding' denies the enormous diversity of the art that is currently being produced - art that explores a range of ideas using all kinds of materials and produced in a variety of places (both rural and urban).

Identity is complex - individuals do not belong to a single group or brand. There are many facets (parts) that inform our individuality: our history, beliefs and our contemporary experiences. *unbranded* seeks to acknowledge and reflect the diversity and complexity of contemporary Indigenous experiences and arts practice.

Mangkaja Arts

DURING YOUR VISIT:

unbranded features a wide variety of sculpture, painting, video and photography. Some of the artists are well established (they've been making art for a long time) while others are early in their career. Often aboriginal art is branded as 'traditional' or 'non-traditional'. While looking at the work in the exhibition consider:

- Which of the artworks would you define as fitting the indigenous 'brand'? Why?
- How might the individual artists fit within (or sit outside) this brand?
- Which of the artworks would you say is most contemporary? Why?
- How does the artist's use of materials challenge the idea of this brand?

AFTER YOUR VISIT:

Consider the following ideas from the curator's essay:

The work in the exhibition "...reflects multiplicity, complexity and sometimes conflicting experiences of culture and identity in contemporary Australia."

What well-known Australian stories are referenced in the work of Dean Cross? How does the artist challenge notions of national identity through his use of these stories?

Branding seeks to make indigenous art a "...consumable, digestible, 'thing', owned and understood."

In his painting "Dead Babies", John Prince Siddon presents us with a confronting image of how disability was understood and managed in the past. How has the artist used branding as a tool to share his challenging message?

BEFORE YOUR VISIT:

A brand is an identifying mark - it indicates that something belongs to a particular group (like a logo on your sportswear). When something is branded, it is excluded from all other possible groupings. Branding of people removes the interesting and sometimes challenging differences in their experiences, opinions and beliefs. For indigenous artists, this has meant that the diversity of their experiences and their multiple histories have been white-washed (or, glossed over) into a single narrative (story) of indigeneity.

- What do you think Australian Indigenous art looks like?
- What are you expecting to see in this exhibition?
- Bulku-Larrnggay Mulka Art Centre
- What sort of ideas do you think will be explored by the artists in the exhibition?
- What materials do you think the artists will have used?
- Where do you think the artists live? Do you think that this would change the work that they make? How?

"This is just my thinking. No one told me to do this pattern. I did this on my own, just my painting, no one else's."

Nongirrŋa Marawili, 2018

Adelaide

Sydney

Branding "...strips the voice of the individual artist..."

How does Nyurpaya Kaika Burton assert her identity? How might this approach challenge the accepted brand of Aboriginal Art?