STILL IN MY MIND
Gurindji location, experience and visuality

An Artback NT Education Resource
ITINERARY

2018

Godinymayin Yijard River Arts and Culture Centre, Katherine, NT
Charles Darwin University, Darwin, NT

2019

Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs, NT
South Australian Museum, Adelaide, SA

2020

Geraldton Regional Art Gallery, Geraldton, WA
Fremantle Arts Centre, Perth, WA
Blue Mountains Cultural Centre, Katoomba, NSW

2021

Drill Hall Gallery, Australian National University, ACT

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AUTHORISATIONS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The artists in Still in my mind are from various language groups including Mudburra, Bilinarra and Gurindji, however only Gurindji and English are used in this document.

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Cover Images

Biddy Wavehill Yamawurr Nagala and Jimmy Wavehill Ngawanyja Japalyi, Aerial View of Jiglampak (Old Wave Hill) Station, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, image courtesy of Karungkarni Art and Culture Aboriginal Corporation
Brenda L Croft, Self-portrait at Malyalyimalyaly/Lipanangku (original Wave Hill Station site, 1883 – 1925), 2014, Inkjet print on archival paper, image courtesy of the artist and Niagara Galleries, Melbourne
STILL IN MY MIND
Gurindji location, experience and visuality
An Artback NT Education Resource for School Students

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PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

GURINDJI COUNTRY

Look at a map of Australia and locate the Victoria River region in the Northern Territory.

Compare this map with a map of Indigenous language groups and identify the Gurindji nation.


Discuss: How do the two maps tell different stories about people and place?

Identify the language groups in your region.

As a class brainstorm some definitions and synonyms for the word country.

Artist and curator Brenda L Croft states Country is best represented as a proper noun. Does country with a capital C have the same meaning as country with a small c?

As a class investigate the meaning of the term Country when used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Break into groups to do a web search, discuss as a group and formulate a definition in your own words to share with the rest of the class.

Consider this quote, Country has Language and Language has Country.

Discuss the significance of language in relation to social and cultural identity.

Refer to the language list and audio recordings in this kit and practice saying some Gurindji words.

KEY CONCEPTS

Create a class glossary of key words and concepts relevant to the exhibition.

[Refer to the Key Concepts in the Resources section of this kit as a starting point]

Break students into groups to research definitions and discuss as a class.

Compile a list of words and meanings and display them in the classroom.

STORIES IN SONG

Brenda L Croft identifies Country and dispossession as central themes in the exhibition.

Use the following songs and the Background Information in this kit as starting points for discussion of these concepts in relation to the Gurindji experience, the Gurindji Walk-Off and the Stolen Generations.

Listen to the song Gurindji Blues and read through the song lyrics.

http://indigenousrights.net.au/__data/assets/mp3_file/0018/413550/f56.mp3

• What is the song about?
• Who is Vincent Lingiari?
• What was the motivation to record this song?

Listen to the song From Little Things Big Things Grow and read through the song lyrics.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hzEx303CUTk

• What is the song about?
• What was the Wave Hill Walk-Off?
• Where, when and why did it happen?

Listen to the songs Brown Skin Baby and Took the Children Away and read through the lyrics.


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aywDT6yHMmo

• What are these songs about?
• What does Stolen Generations refer to?
EXHIBITION ACTIVITIES

IN THE EXHIBITION FOR TEACHERS

USING THE KEY ARTWORKS AND WORKSHEETS

Use the Key Artworks to promote looking and responding as a group and then ask students, working independently or in study groups, to collect more information throughout the exhibition using the worksheets provided.

Information gathered in the gallery can be shared back in the classroom and utilised as starting points for classroom activities that explore the themes of the exhibition further.

Alert students to the information contained in the exhibition texts including captions, extended labels and the introductory panel and encourage them to spend time looking closely at the works on display and sharing their thoughts with each other.

GENERAL GUIDING STRATEGIES

Focus student engagement with the artworks by using four basic areas of enquiry:

Subjective enquiry
- Encouraging imaginative and emotional responses and associations
- Making sensory connections - using all five senses as filters to generate responses

Structural enquiry
- Unpacking the making process - the materials, tools and processes
- Analysing the visual language including elements such as colour, shape, line, composition and pattern

Cultural enquiry
- Exploring the cultural, social and historical worldview that informs the work
- Engaging with people, places and stories

Critical Enquiry
- Analysing and evaluating the content of the work
- Understanding the intention of the artist

IN THE EXHIBITION FOR STUDENTS

FOR JUNIORS: A PERSONAL JOURNEY

All the works in the exhibition are related to a journey that connects and reconnects people and place over time through family, memory and experience.

Look for images and objects in the exhibition that tell different stories of people, place and activity.

Map your journey through the exhibition by recording your observations, thoughts and feelings using the Meaningful Objects and Postcards of People and Place worksheets provided.

[NB for teachers: You may wish to provide students with oversized stiff cards to use as postcards instead of the worksheet]

FOR SENIORS: CULTURAL ARCHAEOLOGIST

Artist and curator Brenda L Croft likens herself to a ‘cultural archaeologist’.

What do you think she means by this? What is an archaeologist? What sort of work do they do?

Imagine you are a cultural archaeologist looking for clues in the exhibition to piece together a story about people and place.

Use the Key Artworks as starting points to gather material.

Record your thoughts, observations and queries using the Cultural Archaeologist worksheets provided.

Break into investigative groups to find out about
- Gurindji Country and station life
- Vincent Lingiari and the Gurindji Walk-Off
- Stolen Generations and its impact

When collecting data make sure to cover the full range of media include a painting, a print, a photograph, a video and an object.
KEY ARTWORKS TO COMPARE

*Kurlwa* (stone axe), No. 17 Bore, unknown maker.

*Kartak* (Stockman’s pannikin), unknown maker.
KEY ARTWORKS TO COMPARE

ABOUT THE ARTWORKS

During June 2014 Croft participated in the documentation of sites associated with oral history stories published in Yijarni: True Stories from Gurindji Country. Working with Gurindji custodians, Karungkarni Art and Culture Aboriginal Corporation and linguists Felicity Meakins and Erika Charola, Croft photographed elders and family members as they visited places on Gurindji country, including massacre sites. Along the way Croft found two objects which she describes below.

We stopped at a distant bore [where cattle are watered]. Stepping out of the Troop carrier I had been driving, my eyes were drawn to the rocky ground beneath my feet. A cultural talisman caught my eye and bending down, I picked up the most stunning stone axe. My aunt, Violet Nanaku Wadrill, called out to me from another vehicle in our cultural convoy, so I walked over and handed the axe to her through the window.

That axe has become my version of a cultural guide, whenever I feel I am losing my way, in the archives, in my research, in creating work, I return to the object/artefact and the images I took that day – the stone was shaped and hewn by unknown hands at an unknown time, but I can feel their hands when I turn the axe over in my palm.

I experience the same impact when I hold the handmade pannikin I found at the old rubbish dump at Jinparrak (Old Wave Hill Station). Discarded long ago, it has been fashioned from an old food tin and twisted fencing wire. The solidity of the rusted vessel provides comfort, in the same manner as the stone axe - both make me feel grounded, while at the same time their aesthetic presence is sublime. One, created in the same manner since time immemorial, the other, from necessity and available means.

We, those dispossessed from place, ceremony and kin, are like the fragments flaked from that ancient stone tool, quarried from our homelands. We are all chipped from that same solid piece of rock, with some of us still making the long journey home, wherever and whatever that may be.

LOOKING and RESPONDING

What can objects tell us about people and place?

How do we ascribe meaning to objects?

Scrutinise these two objects and describe what they are made from and how they have been made.

Consider: Could you purchase them at the supermarket or in a hardware? What makes you think this? Suggest where they may have come from and when they may have been made.

Imagine picking up the stone and describe how it feels in your palm. Is it heavy or light, smooth or rough?

Imagine gripping the handle of the mug and raising it to your lips. How does this feel? What might you drink out of it? Brainstorm a list of words to describe the qualities of these objects.

Visualise yourself as the maker of these objects and explain how they have been made. Picture a scene where these objects are being used and describe the place around you. Who are you with and what are you doing?

Croft refers to the stone axe as a ‘cultural talisman’ and a ‘touchstone’. What do you think she means by this? What sort of emotional connection is evoked by this description? Consider what sorts of values we subscribe to objects besides their utilitarian or functional ones.

Brainstorm some other descriptors for objects such as artefact, souvenir, keepsake, heirloom, relic, trinket. What are the emotional or symbolic values embedded in these terms? Describe a favourite object of your own to the group and explain what makes it special to you.

Look for other objects in the exhibition and create a comprehensive inventory of your findings. Read labels and scour paintings, photos and videos for clues. Analyse what these objects tell us about cultural and station life, male and female activities, work and living conditions. What symbolic significance can be ascribed to them?

Record your findings and observations in the Meaningful Objects worksheet.
KEY ARTWORKS TO COMPARE

Leah Leaman Yipingali Namijia, Gurindji, Mudburra and Malngin women finding peace by gathering bush foods and flowers during knock-off time in the early station days, 2015.
Synthetic polymer paint on canvas.
Image courtesy of Karungkarni Art and Culture Aboriginal Corporation.

Violet Wadrill Nanaku, Ration, 2013.
Screenprint on BFK Rives paper.
Image courtesy of Karungkarni Art and Culture Aboriginal Corporation.
KEY ARTWORKS TO COMPARE

ABOUT THE ARTWORKS

Leah Leaman Yipingali Namijia,
Gurindji, Mudburra and Malngin women finding peace by gathering bush foods and flowers during knock-off time in the early station days, 2015.

When I did this painting I was thinking about how the women in the old days were treated on the station. They had a really hard life. They had to work all day and look after their families too, in terrible conditions. My grandmother Violet and my other grandmothers and aunties used to tell me about it. But in the wet season, they used to leave the station and go through the bush, collecting bush food and bush medicine, which gave them a break from their hard lives.

This painting shows all the flowers and the different kinds of bush food that come out in the wet season, and how these women had the chance to just spend time together at peace. I did the painting to pay tribute to these women. I also wanted to think that there were good times for them too.

Violet Wadrill Nanaku,
Ration, 2013.

The small black boxes in this screen print represent the rations supplied to Aboriginal workers on Wave Hill Station. People were given a calico flour bag, which they had to wash, and then on Friday go to the Store to receive their weekly supply of rations. The rations were limited to a scoop each of tea, sugar, flour, rice, golden syrup, some matches and tobacco. Gurindji artist Ena Oscar Majapula Nanaku recounts, You know, they didn’t used to get paid. They used to work for sugar and tea-leaf, flour. They used to get rations: tea, sugar and tobacco.

LOOKING and RESPONDING

Brainstorm a list of descriptive words to communicate the qualities of these two pictures. Consider pattern, colour, shape, composition and mood and engage all your senses when generating this list. For instance, imagine these two artworks are covers for a CD. What sort of music would you expect to hear? Picture them as labels on a packet of food. What might be inside? Would it be sweet or sour, creamy or crunchy?

Locate all the U shapes (these represent women) in Leah’s painting and count how many there are. Suggest why the U-shapes are different sizes and choose one to be you. Describe the view from where you are. Who are you with and what are you doing? What is the landscape around you like? Mime the action of collecting food from the bush and describe the sorts of foods you have gathered.

Compare this method of obtaining food to the experience of receiving rations. What would the process of this have been like? What sorts of food were the workers given?

Imagine a conversation between the women out bush and in the line-up for rations. Break into two groups and start a story circle about these different experiences where everyone contributes a line to the story.

Look for other references to daily living in the exhibition including cultural life, station work and living conditions.

Record your findings and observations in the Postcards of People and Place or Cultural Archaeologist worksheets.
KEY ARTWORKS TO COMPARE

Acrylic paint on canvas. Image courtesy of Karungkarni Art and Culture Aboriginal Corporation.

Ngumpin workers waited here for the dinner bell, got food and came back and ate it here

well
marlarn (river red gum)
pawulyji (swamp box)
milker yard
Nipper Jurrlama (Biddy’s jaju) lived here
Biddy’s lamparr lived here
tupa (windbreaks)

Margaret Paddy’s kaku lived here
partiki (nut tree)
Mariah Yokgingari and Cinaman Daisy lived here
Wantarnu (where women performed Jarrarta)
wanyrri (bauhinia) birthing trees
road to No 7 Bore
way to ring place to perform Karungka and Mintiwarra

blacksmith shop
kitchen
bakery
men’s quarters
horse yard
trough
woman carrying water with a yoke
Mudburra, Malngin, Ngairinyman and Janu camp
KEY ARTWORKS TO COMPARE

ABOUT THE ARTWORK

Biddy Wavehill Yamawurr Nangala and Jimmy Wavehill Ngawanyja Jalaply, Aerial view of Jinparrak (Old Wave Hill Station), 2015.

Jimmy: This is the history – what I’ve seen with my own eyes – what it looked like at Wave Hill Station. It’s not a Dreamtime story or anything like that. It’s history from old people who used to tell me all kinds of things. I kept it all in my head. I’d seen it from the old days so I thought, ‘I’ll have to put down [represent] that station’ so people can be reminded when they listen to the stories.

I put down this bore here, and over here is where the babies were born. And over here is where the women went after they knocked off for the day – under the wanyarri (native bauhinia trees). We [the men] never used to go near there; we’d go around the long way. And from this bore, you see the boy-house [Aboriginal stock workers were referred to as ‘boys’]. The stock boys used to get water from here. And from the big camp they came too. And on the other side of the boy-house, the river’s somewhere there. This is where people used to sleep in windbreaks in the cold season.

Biddy: This was the ceremony place for the women. We used to go up there.

Jimmy: This is the boy-house and the big camp, and the yard from where people walked off. They followed the fence line and came this way [the direction of Kalkaringi].

Biddy: There was only one bore for the whole camp. You had to fetch water with a yoke and bucket. Kartiya didn’t help us with taps. We didn’t have good food. Vestey didn’t give us any. He didn’t treat us at all well. It was no good for our sense of well-being.

Jimmy: One old lady used to go all the time with a bucket, and [so did] the men from the boy-house. Kartiya didn’t live like that; they had taps and everything at the station at Wave Hill. We thought about it and we decided to make the painting of the station so that people can see what it was like in the old days, because when people walked off, the station people went over everything with a bulldozer. They only left their buildings – maybe for history. They must’ve been angry and destroyed our camp. I feel happy that I’ve created this piece of history, so people can know something about Jinparrak where we’d lived all our lives.

Biddy: It’s nice and big so you can see it properly.

LOOKING and RESPONDING

The late 1800s marked the start of cattle station time when many Gurindji stopped living in the bush and settled in ‘.blacks’ camps’ on the stations, only returning to the bush during the wet season which was station lay-off period. The first station at Wave Hill was located on the banks of the Victoria River near Kalkaringi but it flooded in 1924 which prompted the move to Jinparrak. The camp at Jinparrak was later razed, in all likelihood, to destroy evidence of the poor conditions.

Biddy and Jimmy’s painting is both a map and a story. It has been described as a memory-map. What do you think is meant by this?

Find and count the trees, people, windmills, watertanks and hills. Refer to the artwork key and locate the places where people lived and worked. Find the ceremonial grounds, the windbreaks, the buildings and roads.

Pinpoint the trees under which the ngumpit (Aboriginal) workers ate their dinner. Imagine sitting under these trees and tell a story about your day, where you have been and what you have been doing. Take it in turns to trace a journey on the map and recount your activities to the group.

Look for images and objects in the exhibition that connect to Biddy and Jimmy’s memory-map. Find photographs of the people, places and activities referred to. Note down the photographer’s name, when and where the photo was taken and what archive it belongs to.

Record information and observations using the Postcards of People and Place or Cultural Archaeologist worksheets.

Additional Classroom Activity

In groups, create a 3D version of Jimmy and Biddy’s painting using cardboard or stiff paper. How does the 2D information assist you in constructing your 3D version?

Brainstorm other sorts of maps and mapping eg political, geographical, topographical, weather map, treasure map, mud map. Find examples of these maps and compare and contrast as a class. What sorts of stories do these maps tell? Investigate how mapping presents a particular story about relationships between people, place and knowledge. Consider the exhibition as a place and create a memory map of your experience of the exhibition.

1 Yijarni - True Stories from Gurindji Country, p2-3
KEY ARTWORKS TO COMPARE

LR: Photos by Michael Terry from 1925: Blacks camp at the original Wave Hill Station; Yards at the original Wave Hill Station on the banks of the Victoria River near Kalkaringi; Men working at the yards on the eastern side of the river, photos courtesy of NLA. Photos by Hannah Middleton from 1970; Couple in their tin humpy; Unidentified woman with outdoor kitchen/pantry. Photo by Brian Manning from 1966: Tin Humpies at Wave Hill Station.
KEY ARTWORKS TO COMPARE

ABOUT THE ARTWORKS

Photographs by Michael Terry, Brian Manning and Hannah Middleton drawn from public and private archival holdings.

Michael Terry

Michael Terry (1899–1981) was born on 3 May 1899 at Gateshead, England. He served in the Royal Naval Air Service, Armoured Car Section, from 1917 to 1918, before migrating to Perth, Australia, where he became a noted author and explorer. Terry led numerous expeditions to Central Australia and the Northern Territory from 1923 to 1935 many of which were privately financed by mining companies undertaking exploration. He visited the first Wave Hill Station in 1925. He died in Annandale, Sydney, in 1981.

Brian Manning

Brian Manning (1932–2013) was a lifelong socialist and trade union activist, with membership in the Communist Party of Australia and Maritime Union of Australia. He helped establish the Northern Territory Council for Aboriginal Rights in 1961 and co-founded the NT Trades and Labour Council. Renowned for garnering support for the Gurindji community during the Wave Hill Walk-Off, he took supplies to the strikers in his 1960s TJ Series Bedford truck on numerous arduous trips throughout the nine-year-long land rights fight. The truck was donated to the National Museum of Australia in 2016 to mark the 50th anniversary of the Walk-Off.

Dr Hannah Middleton

Dr Hannah Middleton was born in England in 1942. From 1970 to 1971, she lived at Daguragu with the Gurindji community and completed her PhD on the Aboriginal land rights campaign. After teaching at the University of New South Wales, she edited the newspaper of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) and later became CPA General Secretary. A longtime peace activist, Hannah has written on Indigenous issues and the environment, including But now we want the land back (1977).

Jimmy and Biddy’s painting is a visual aerial map of the Jinparrak station layout from the 1960s, through the eyes of Mudburra and Gurindji people who worked as a stockman and domestic servant for kartiya (non-Aboriginal people). The archival photographs document the stations from a kartiya perspective.

Brenda L Croft immersed herself in the materials held in a diverse range of archives as part of her practice-led research. She describes her passion for archives below.

For as long as I can remember, I have always been drawn to the archives, initially those closest to home, the personal archives of my family, and in more recent decades, those in, and of, the ‘public’ domain, designated official documents and material, with a capital ‘A’.

Both types, private and public, house profound histories - filed away in folders and boxes containing letters, notebooks, microfiche, photographs, negatives, transparencies, audio tapes, film, miscellaneous documents and ephemera, all dependent on the knowledge holders sharing their recollections, providing the methods and means with which to decode their contents.

My mother Dorothy inspired the archivist in me, organising regular family slide nights, adding captions to books, papers, photographs and slides, filing away letters, cards and notices that held resonance for her, which she felt would hold significance for someone in our family down the track.

She was also determined to create a personal archive for my father, Joe, whose past seemed a blank beyond a certain point in his early childhood. A member of the Stolen Generations, he professed not to remember anything before the age of seven years.

LOOKING and RESPONDING

Croft has exhibited specific materials from public and private archives in the exhibition as well as drawn on her archival research to create her own artworks.

The captions in the exhibition include a reference to the archive from which material was drawn. How many different archives can you find? Where have the materials come from and where are they housed? How do archives contribute to public memory? How can they be interpreted to present different and varied viewpoints?
KEY ARTWORKS TO COMPARE

Brenda L Croft, Self-portraits on Country, 2014
Installation of thirteen images. Inkjet on archival paper.
Image courtesy of the artist.
KEY ARTWORKS TO COMPARE

ABOUT THE ARTWORK


*Self-portraits on Country* is an installation of thirteen photographs taken by the artist over a period of months in different seasons, at different sites around the Wave Hill/Victoria River region and arranged in a crucifix format.

The images of the artist are the antithesis of the ubiquitous, often posed, glamorous ‘selfies’, that people upload to social media. The effort of walking in heat and cold is evident on the artist’s face. The central image is the stone axe, that the artist found at No.17 bore at Marungkuwarrij (Camfield Creek). The artist has placed the image at the heart of her installation, in reference to the relationship between Country and place for Indigenous people.

The idea of what constitutes a self-portrait is also challenged by Croft, in the two images depicting her shadow in place of her image. The far-right image in the central row portrays the artist with her eyes closed in contemplation, the actual Wave Hill in the background, the juxtaposition of Country and memory representing the curatorial context of Country being ‘still in my mind’.

LOOKING and RESPONDING

Count the number of photos that make up this installation and play a game of *spot* the difference between them. Identify what is similar and what is different in each. Propose why Croft has included so many images. Why not just have one image?

Put yourself in Croft’s place. Where are you? What is the weather like? What time of day or time of year is it? What makes you think this? Describe the country around you. What can you hear, smell, feel on your face? What sort of mood are you in?

Describe how the photos have been arranged. What does this formation remind you of? Suggest why Croft has chosen this arrangement. Picture the images scattered on a table or arranged in a long line or a square. How would a different display change the experience of viewing them?

Identify the object in the middle image. Suggest why Croft would include this and place it at the centre of the other images. Describe the images at the top and the bottom. What sets them apart from the others. What makes them similar to each other? Is Croft in these photos?

Find the photo of Croft with her eyes shut. Close your eyes and imagine what she may be thinking and feeling. Open your eyes and share your thoughts with the group.
KEY ARTWORKS TO COMPARE

Brenda L Croft, ABO,origina, full/blood, HALF-CASTE, octaroon, from the series blood/type, 2016.
Inkjet prints on archival paper. Images courtesy of the artist.
KEY ARTWORKS TO COMPARE

ABOUT THE ARTWORK

Brenda L Croft, blood/type series, 2016.

Brenda L Croft’s blood/type is a series of self-portraits based on small photographs originally made on wet collodion tin plates. Collodion was the principal photographic process used between the 1850s-1870s, and one often used in Australia to photograph Aboriginal people. Croft brings this antiquarian process into contact with contemporary technology by scanning the original tin plates and printing them digitally in a way that retains the historical associations or memory of the original antiquarian process.

Over these self-portraits, Croft has digitally superimposed descriptors used bureaucratically to categorise her father, Joseph Croft, and others in her immediate and extended family. These descriptors, such as ‘full-blood’, ‘half-blood’, ‘quarter-caste’, ‘quadroon’ and ‘octaroon’, form part of a racist taxonomy of terms used historically (and, although less formally, still today) to categorise and define Indigenous people, using a sliding scale of indigeneity that moves from black to near-white.1

Croft recalls crying in Darwin’s National Archives of Australia when she found the original records documenting her father’s removal from his community in the Police Station Timber Creek Letterbook, 1926–1928.

It was dated July 1, 1927. My father was listed as Joe (quadroon), and his (half-caste) mother, Bessie. It was the most significant moment I’ve experienced in my research.2

By labelling herself in a similar manner she in effect becomes a stand-in for her relations, fusing notions of past and present and questioning the perception and presentation of Aboriginality and heritage.

The overlay of different fonts across the artist’s face creates a play on words relating to blood types/type face and the bold A B O also belies a layered interpretation. Croft’s image – self-defined and resistant – challenges the racist logic of the terms, while at the same time highlighting that there is no single Indigenous way of being.

1 National Museum of Australia
2 Brenda L Croft in Fran Strachan, Love and Memory, Uniken, UNSW Magazine, Spring 2015

LOOKING and RESPONDING

Compare Self-portraits on Country with blood/type series.

Consider medium, technique, composition, subject matter and mood. Identify what is similar and what is different.

Analyse the use of image and text. Read the words and discuss what the terms refer to. When were they used? Why were they used?

Consider the style of the lettering? What does it remind you of? Is it a ‘modern’ typeface? Suggest why the artist chose this typeface. Investigate how else she has combined contemporary image making methods with older ones. Suggest why she has done this.

Reflect on the choice of colour for the lettering.

Picture the words in a different colour, for instance, bright blue of green. How would this change the way you respond to the work? Consider the significance of this colour choice in relation to the title of the work. The title is a play on words. Brainstorm the multiple interpretations possible.

Take it in turns to role-play being the artist and answer questions from the group about both bodies of work. Describe the process of making the works and the reasons for making them.

Look for other works by Brenda L Croft in the exhibition. What stories do they tell? Are they all self-portraits?

Record your findings and observations in the Postcards of People and Place or Cultural Archaeologist worksheets.
KEY ARTWORKS TO COMPARE

Norman Tindale, AA346-4-22-1 Inverway Station data cards, R1317, photograph mounted on board, 1954.

Photo: Robert Wesley-Smith
ABOUT THE ARTWORKS

Norman Barnett Tindale

Norman Barnett Tindale (1900–1993) was born in Perth, Western Australia. An anthropologist, archaeologist, entomologist and ethnologist, he was employed by the South Australian Museum from 1918 to 1933.

Tindale began working with Indigenous communities while on his first expedition to Groote Eylandt (1921–1922), during which he met Maroadunei, a Ngandi songmaker from Arnhem Land, Northern Territory. Maroadunei introduced Tindale to the concept of ‘tribal boundaries’, establishing that Indigenous Australians were linked to their Country by culture, kinship and language.

In 1974, Tindale published his research, collated during subsequent expeditions around the continent, in the treatise and accompanying map - Aboriginal tribes of Australia, their terrain, environmental controls, distribution, limits and proper names. He died in Palo Alto, California, USA, aged ninety-three.

Rob Wesley-Smith

Rob Wesley-Smith grew up in Adelaide in a family which was always concerned about human rights, especially in relation to Australia’s Indigenous people. He went on to study Rural Science at the University of New England, NSW, in the 1960s, where he mixed with other social justice activists.

His later work in the Northern Territory was an opportunity for him to learn from Aboriginal people. Reading about the Wave Hill Walk-Off prompted him to drive down from Darwin to Daguragu to offer his assistance to the cause. He became good friends with many Gurindji community members, both at Daguragu and in Darwin.

His main actions at Wave Hill were in the first half of the 1970s, after which the East Timor independence movement occupied most of his attention.

LOOKING and RESPONDING

Compare and contrast these two photographs taken over twenty years apart. Read the labels to find out when and where they were taken and who took them.

Imagine being the photographer and the person being photographed. Pose like the people in the photograph and describe the experience of being photographed. Imagine and describe the process of taking the photograph and suggest why they were taken.

Analyse what the images communicate about the motivation of the photographers and the identity of the subjects. Consider the mood and the composition.

Picture these photographs in a newspaper or magazine and suggest a headline to accompany them.

Compare and contrast these images with other photographs of people in the exhibition. Look for photographs by Axel Poignant, Mervyn Bishop, Michael Terry and others.

In each instance consider what they reveal about

- the reason for taking the photograph
- the viewpoint of the photographer
- the relationship of the photographer to the people photographed
- the audience for the photograph

Record your findings and observations in the Postcards of People and Place or Cultural Archaeologist Worksheets.
**KEY ARTWORKS TO COMPARE**

ABOUT THE ARTWORK


The artist explains, This painting is about something very important to Gurindji people. They didn’t like the way they were treated at Jinparrak. So, Vincent Lingiari went up to the Vestey’s, the owners of the station, and told them they weren’t going to work for them anymore. That’s why I put that set of footprints there. Then Lingiari went back to the camp and gathered everyone – that’s the other footprints. They collected their boomerangs and spears and walked off. They walked to Kalkaringi, following that fence line from Jinparrak to Gordy Creek, and from Gordy Creek across the black soil plain, past the grid, and straight down to the river, where the Victoria River is.

There are two red shapes that are boomerangs. And those two white men standing there on the left are the manager, Tom Fisher and the Vestey’s owner. On the right-hand side are Vincent and one of the Gurindji people. That’s when they were talking about walking off from Jinparrak, from the Vestey’s. I also included the handover to Vincent Lingiari from Gough Whitlam. That’s the story. That’s the meaning of that dot painting that I’ve done.

The truck represented in the painting belonged to Brian Manning, one of the first people to assist the Gurindji in their strike action. He used his 1960s TJ series Bedford truck to deliver crucial supplies and correspondence to the strikers on a regular basis, making at least fifteen gruelling trips on the rough, unsealed road from Darwin. Manning’s travelling companions and fellow Walk-Off supporters included Northern Territory Council of Aboriginal Rights members and Indigenous activists Dexter Daniels and Robert Tudawali.¹

The Bedford truck was placed on the Northern Territory Heritage Register in 2011 and acquired by the National Museum of Australia in 2017.

¹ http://www.nma.gov.au/explore/blog/memento-of-wave-hill-walk-off

LOOKING and RESPONDING

Imagine being the artist and describe making this painting. What was the first mark you made? What was the last? Estimate how many dots there are. What other symbols are included? Read the label and discuss how these symbols represent different parts of a well-known story.

Identify the ngumpit (Aboriginal) and the kartiya (non-Aboriginal) figures. Who do you think they are? Find the figure holding a piece of paper. Who is this and what is happening? Add imaginary speech bubbles to all these people. What conversations might be taking place?

Imagine getting into the truck and driving around. Describe the view from the window and the journey. Locate the two sets of footprints and the boomerangs. What part of the story do these symbols represent? Follow the path of the footprints and recount the experience.

The artist has created a ‘history painting’ representing different events that took place at different times in a single composition. Consider the painting as a visual script for a movie. When and where is it set? What would the different scenes be? What is the chronological order of events?

Role-play a rehearsal for this movie. Break into separate groups of actors for each scene and appoint a Director, and an Assistant Director to position actors, talk though dialogue and characterisation, and direct the action. Think of a title for the movie.

Look for other objects and images in the exhibition that relate to the Walk-Off and the Gurindji struggle for land rights. Record your findings and observations in Postcards of People and Place or Cultural Archaeologist worksheets.
KEY ARTWORKS TO COMPARE

Brenda L Croft, Retrac(k)ing country and (s)kin, 2017, multi-media audio-visual installation. Installation images courtesy UNSW Galleries.

Still image details from installation. Images courtesy the artist.
Top: Maurie Ryan Japarta and Michael Paddy Japarta, Jinparrak (Old Wave Hill Station)
Middle: Timber Creek Police Letters Book, NTRS 2771/P1 – Police Book (PB) 256, 1926 – 1928, p 36
Bottom: Darwin Gardens Cemetery, 5 November 2014
ABOUT THE ARTWORK

Brenda L Croft,
Retrac(k)ing country and (s)kin, 2016.

Walking the Wave-Hill Track is a performative act that has helped connect me to my father’s birthplace and the strength of our people. When you walk you think differently ... it changes the way you breathe.

Brenda L Croft

Over a number of years Croft has been trekking sections of the now heritage listed Wave Hill Walk-Off route in Gurindji country mapping what she calls her “memory-scape” with audio-visual media and photography captured via a camera strapped onto her chest, near her “heart and heartbeat”.

The resulting experimental, large-scale audio-visual work Retrac(k)ing country and (s)kin incorporates this material, alongside archival audio recordings and video footage from other sites relevant to Croft’s father and immediate family’s journey as members of the Stolen Generations; her late brother Lindsay’s research with their father conducted in 1989; and her father’s own research on his life story. It is a multi-faceted, multi-layered work which acts as the heartbeat for the entire exhibition, drawing together elements from Victoria River country and people, and displaced Gurindji community and creating an immersive audio-visual experience for the viewer of her physical, intellectual and emotional journey.

Croft plays with words in the title alluding to retracing/retracking; skin/kin - highlighting that people, family and Country are intrinsically connected, inseparable and indivisible.

References:
https://uqartmuseum.wordpress.com/2017/09/04/the-wave-hill-walk-off-through-brenda-l-crofts-eyes/

LOOKING and RESPONDING

Spend some time walking amongst the screens that form part of this audio-visual installation and then come together to share impressions.

Brainstorm some words as a group to describe the experience of this work. How does it differ to the experience of viewing Nutwood’s painting?

Take it in turns to describe one thing seen or heard. As a group piece together these audio-visual clues and suggest what the work is about. Are there any similarities in content with Nutwood’s painting? If so, what are they?

Analyse how this work was put together. Where has the imagery come from? How has it been combined? How has it been displayed? Why do you think the artist would choose to display it this way?

Consider the work in relationship to the title. What clues to the artist’s intent are contained in the word play - tracing and tracking, skin and kin. What is your interpretation of these words in relation to the work?

The artist describes the installation as a ‘memory-scape’. What do you think she means by this? Is it a place? What sort of journey does she take the viewer on? Imagine you are a reporter for a news channel and give an on-the-spot report that details your experience and analysis of the journey through this memory-scape.
Look for 3D objects in the exhibition, as well as objects documented in photographs and videos and represented in paintings. Make a comprehensive list of everything you find.

Which objects represent Gurindji Country. Which represent station life? What makes you think this?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gurindji Country</th>
<th>Station life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>
Choose an object from each list to examine in detail. Make an annotated sketch and record your thoughts, feelings, observations and associations with these objects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECT ONE</th>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECT TWO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Journey through the exhibition exploring people and places across time.
Choose a print, a photograph, a painting, an object and a video to write home about.
Make a sketch and write a short message describing your observations and thoughts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMAGE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image-url" alt="Image" /></td>
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</table>

Caption:

MESSAGE

"..."
**Cultural Archaeologist: Data Sheet**

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<tr>
<th>Sketch</th>
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<table>
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<th>Title:</th>
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<th>Maker:</th>
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<th>Notes:</th>
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POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

ART AND IDENTITY

Framing Questions:

- What do we mean by identity?
- How is identity formed through connection to people and place?
- What is the relationship between personal, social and cultural identity?
- What happens if these relationships and connections are disrupted, dismissed or displaced?
- How important is a sense of belonging to identity?

Family Heritage

My family’s layered history has always informed my creative practice whether in visual, written or spoken presentation.

Brenda L Croft, Still in my mind exhibition catalogue, p26

Share a family story with the class. Are all families the same? How important is your family to your sense of self?

Research your family history as far back as you can. Where does your family come from? How are family stories and family knowledge recorded and shared in your family?

Conduct interviews with family members and write up oral histories.

Collate a family archive of photographs, memorabilia, special objects, memories and stories.

Draw on this material as inspiration to create a large collage work titled Me and My Family.

Include a family tree and your own visual responses and stories.

Stolen Generations

Continually assessing the context of belonging to home, Country and family is intrinsic to how I understand the meaning of being Indigenous and human. If a person has been disconnected from these key elements, does that leave one ‘homeless’, displaced, without family?


Listen to the songs Brown Skin Baby by Bob Randall and They Took the Children Away by Archie Roach. As a class, read the lyrics, discuss the meaning of the songs and list responses on the board.

Break into study groups to further research the Stolen Generations. Find out about the Australian Government policies that led to the Stolen Generations. When, where and why was this policy implemented? What was the intended effect of this policy?

Investigate personal stories by individuals and families affected by the Stolen Generations. Many members of the Gurindji community, including Brenda L Croft’s father, Joe Croft, were separated from their families and taken far away to institutional homes. Find out about the different compounds and homes eg Kahlín Compound and Retta Dixon Children’s Home. [See Recommended References as starting point for your research]

CLASSROOM PRESS CONFERENCE

Utilise all this research to stage a class press conference about the Stolen Generations policy that explores motivations and outcomes from different perspectives.

Brainstorm as a class the major protagonists eg policy makers, welfare officials, dormitory attendants, parents and children, general community members.

Break into performance groups to role-play the different characters and stage two separate discussions, one set in the 1950s and another set in current times. Class members in the audience can act as reporters posing questions and recording the different viewpoints and arguments to write up for the local paper. Have viewpoints and perspectives changed over time? How or how not?

Utilise artworks from the exhibition, quotes from the exhibition catalogue and Yijarni - True Stories from Gurindji Country as well as other research to develop characters and script questions and responses.

Joe Croft in new school uniform about to leave ‘The Bungalow’ in Alice Springs, on a scholarship for All Souls Anglican College, Charters Towers, Queensland, 1940. Photo courtesy of Brenda L Croft.
I have delved ever deeper into my family’s past, immersing myself in personal and public archives, each search more labyrinthine than the last, revealing increasingly fragile documents and with the loss of elders, elusive memories.

Brenda L Croft, *Still in my mind* exhibition catalogue, p 27

As part of her practice-led research Croft tracked down a series of photographs of her grandmother, Bessie, held in the collection of the South Australian Museum. They were taken in 1934, by CJ Hackett, a doctor conducting medical research at Kahlin Compound in Darwin, where Croft’s grandmother and father had been interned from the late 1920s. The photographs document parts of Bessie’s face and body that were pertinent to the scientific enquiry and as such are disturbingly dehumanising.

In her artwork *shut/mouth/scream* the artist uses a photo of her grandmother from this archive and pairs it with a ‘portrait’ of herself cropped in the same manner. Croft was born in 1964, thirty years to the day after the image of her grandmother was taken who would have been about thirty years old when she was photographed. Croft includes these dates in the diptych as a call out to her grandmother across generations and across time.

The image’s reclamation, through Croft’s visual call and response, is an angry howl at the abject treatment meted out not only to her grandmother and other family members, but to all First Peoples’ impacted by authoritarian regimes, which continues to this day, evident in the high numbers of First Peoples’ children held in out of home care and detention.1

She [Bessie] becomes a signifier for the way that so many of our people were treated. They were photographed and prodded and measured and documented and so many of those images are just hiding lying in the collections waiting for people like me to come along and find them.2

1. Larissa Behrendt, *subalter/N/ative dreams* exhibition catalogue, Stills Gallery, 2016

CLASS DISCUSSION

The exhibition *Still in my mind* draws on many different archives.

- What is an archive?
- Where and how are archives stored and accessed?
- How can images, objects and documents come together to tell a story of people and place?
- How do we record, maintain and pass on personal and public histories?
- How has the artist Brenda L Croft drawn on archives to develop her artworks?
My Father Joe

Brenda L Croft, like so many Indigenous people in Australia today, has direct lived experience of the Stolen Generations.

Gurindji refer to themselves as Victoria River people and during the pastoral encroachment from the late nineteenth century onwards, displaced communities lived on stations along the river. My father, Joe Croft, was told he was born on Victoria River Downs in the mid 1920s.

Like hundreds of children of mixed heritage he was taken away, living in a series of children’s homes in Darwin, Pine Creek and Alice Springs. He and my grandmother, Bessie, were taken to Kahlín Aboriginal Compound in 1927 and from there he was removed from her care in 1930 and taken to Pine Creek Boys Home, then to the Bungalow/Half-Caste Children’s Home in 1931. Later, he was sent to boarding school in Queensland.

My father lost contact with my grandmother in the early 1940s, when women and children were evacuated from Darwin following the Japanese bombing of the city; he thought she had died. It was not until 1968 that he learnt she was alive. In 1974 our family travelled to Darwin to be reunited with her, shortly before her death later that year. In 1989 my father travelled back to Victoria River country for the first time since he was taken to Darwin six decades earlier. I followed in his footsteps in 1991.


Joe Croft remembers

Yeah, I’m Joe Croft… I was born in 1926 in Gurindji tribe area around Wattie Creek. If you ever heard of the assimilation policy I was part of it

[In 1968 I applied for a job] in Northern New South Wales, Toonumbar Dam, near Kyogle, [northern New South Wales] but they mentioned that I had to send them a copy of my birth certificate so I thought I’d write to the Department of Native Affairs in Darwin to see if they had a copy and I got a letter back from the Director, a Mr Harry Giese, saying that they had records of me in various government homes but no birth certificate. So, if I had no birth certificate they would write one for me because my mother was still alive, Grannie Bessie, was living at Retta Dixon Home, so that’s what happened.

It was a big shock because we had lost contact since 1942, I think it was when I used to write from All Souls school. My contact was a police patrolman called Bill Harney¹ and he turned around and said my mother had gone back to her tribe, I think it was 1942-1968 – that’s a long time eh?

Joe Croft interview with Brenda L Croft, 18 July 1966. Four days later he passed away.

Brenda L Croft, Kahlin Compound Site, Myilly Point, Darwin (still detail) from Retrac(k)ing country and (s)kin, 2017, experimental audio visual installation.

1 Bill Harney was a Patrol Officer with the Native Affairs Branch 1940-47. Further reading: http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/harney-william-edward-bill-10428

LETTERS HOME

Croft’s father Joe corresponded with his mother through sympathetic intermediaries at different times throughout their separation, initially as a child while Joe was at boarding school and then again almost thirty years later when he discovered she was still alive and living in Darwin.

Use the weblink https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/ref/nt/browse_by_location.html as a starting point to investigate childrens’ homes and institutions operating in the NT in the late 19th and early 21st century. Choose one to research in depth. What were the living conditions for children like? Imagine yourself in their situation and write a letter to your distant parents describing your experience.
Mapping Home

When you first go home, you are setting out on two journeys. First is the physical journey...sitting in a car and driving to meet long-lost relatives. The second journey may take a lot longer.


My father Joseph (Joe) Croft’s ongoing, fractured journey home took place over many decades during his life. It has endured in the two decades since his death, as I continue on his behalf by retrac(k)ing my family’s tangled kinship connections through, upon, and immersed in Country.


Brenda L Croft refers to her artistic and curatorial practice as ‘an ongoing journey seeking home wherever that may be’ and describes that journey as ‘geographical, spiritual, literal, metaphysical.’

What is meant by the word home? Is home a place, a feeling or both? What do we mean when we say we ‘feel at home’? How do we feel if we are homesick? Would you ever aspire to be homeless? What if you were forced from or taken from your home?

Think of some other everyday expressions that incorporate the word home such as ‘home is where the heart is’, ‘on the home stretch’, ‘home and hosed’ or ‘home made’. What is an homeland? How does a home page operate on a computer? What ideas, experiences and perceptions are embedded in these expressions. What does home mean to you on a personal level?

On a large sheet of paper create a mind map for the concept of home. Include a broad range of associations incorporating physical places and emotional spaces, memories, moods, feelings, thoughts, objects, activities and people. Include images as well as words in the map.

Reference this conceptual mapping as inspiration to develop a series of artworks or a piece of creative writing about your relationship to home.

Seeing Self

Hold a class discussion about identity.

- Is it just how you look and when and where you were born?
- How does family, social and cultural identity entwine with individual identity?
- How do we define ourselves? How are we defined by others?

As a class discuss Brenda L Croft’s blood/type series and compare with her photographic installation Self Portrait on Country. [Refer to Key Artworks pages in this kit]

Analyse how she has combined the personal and the political in these works.

Compare these works with the photographs in the exhibition taken by Tindale. What is similar? What is different?

Identify other works made by Brenda L Croft in the exhibition and discuss what she communicates about her identity through these works.

Choose two works that particularly interest you and write a list of five interview questions to ask the artist. In pairs role-play an interview situation. Take it in turns to be the artist and the interviewer. Write the interview up.

Indigenous curator Francesco Cubilio (Larrakia, Bardi, Wardaman and Yanuwa peoples) states:

In the past, Indigenous people were often photographic subject matter – used as props by non-Indigenous people to convey a particular Eurocentric viewpoint. They were photographed in portraiture and as part of the ‘untamed’ landscape, according to a non-indigenous aesthetic, ethnographic and anthropological agenda. They were captured and monitored via the colonial economy of surveillance and control that retold stereotypical narratives of primitive cultures as having no place in a modern empire, except as curiosities for scientific and public consumption.

‘We are your blind spot’ in Resolution, New Indigenous Photomedia, p5

Discuss this quote as a class and investigate how photography has been utilised by contemporary Indigenous artists as a tool to take control of personal and cultural representation.

Research three other Aboriginal artists who utilise photo media to explore issues of identity politics and cultural stereotyping in their work eg Vernon Ah Kee, Michael Cook, Darren Siwes, Michael Riley, Destiny Deacon, Nici Cumpston and share your findings with the class as a verbal report. Include images to support your talk.

NOT JUST A SELFIE

Using photo-based media create a self-portrait which incorporates a sense of home or belonging.

Create another portrait which challenges gender, cultural or social stereotypes.

Consider incorporating references to place and objects and including text in the final work.

Write a paragraph of text to go with each portrait.

Display all the portraits and texts as a class exhibition.
POST VISIT ACTIVITIES

ART AND SOCIAL HISTORY

Framing Questions:

• What is the significance to contemporary society of events and ideas from the past?
• How are events and ideas from the past recorded, shared and commemorated?
• What is meant by human rights and social justice?
• How can individuals and groups exercise their rights in society?

Life at Wave Hill

Drawing on observations gathered in the exhibition hold a class discussion about life in the Victoria River Region in the first half of last century. **Collate** a combined class inventory of Meaningful Objects. **Swap** Postcards of People and Place with a classmate and **read** the message aloud to the class. Pin the postcards on a notice board to refer to. As a class, **imagine** and **describe** living and working conditions for Gurindji people in comparison to settlers.

Break into study groups to conduct further research.

• What was life like for Gurindji people before and after settlers arrived in their homelands?
• How did Gurindji people source food prior to pastoralists arriving? What happened after?
• How did Gurindji connection to Country compare with a pastoralist vision of the land? What was the impact on the land of running cattle? What sort of work was involved to run the station. Who did that work?

**JINPARRAK STORY BOOK**

Use this discussion and research as inspiration to **write** a story about life at Wave Hill that includes experiences and perceptions from Gurindji and settler perspectives. **Collate** all the stories into a class book called - **A day at Jinparrak.** Include images from the exhibition in the book.

**CULTURAL MAPPING**

**Find out** about the Aboriginal history in the region where you live. **Create** a class map and **add** information and imagery as it comes to light. **Include** historical and present-day experiences and perspectives.

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**Humpy House**

Violet Wadrill Nanaku

*Humpy House, Jinparrak,* 2013, screenprint

The brown shapes depict the humpies in which Aboriginal people lived on Wave Hill Station prior to the Walk-Off in 1966. There is a large humpy at the top of the print and a small one in the bottom left corner. Aboriginal people had to crawl to enter the small humpies made of scrap tin and old canvas. The blue triangle represents a hill near the milking yard. At the base of this hill are three rock shelters where women gave birth to their children. The black circle represents a termite mound; the lavender one is a spring waterhole where the tracks of the red-backed kingfisher go back and forth, representing one of Violet’s Dreaming stories. The trees represent a popular fruit tree, kurlatarti (bush orange). In the orange semi circle, men and women are sitting around the fire protected by the windbreak. The old woman is walking. After the Walk-Off all the humpies and belongings that people left behind were bulldozed.
**Bountiful Country**
For Gurindji, many plant and animal species have creation period stories, special ceremonies and unique songs and dances associated with them. Many of these stories, ceremonies, songs and dances contain knowledge of a spiritual and personal nature that strongly link people, places, plants and animals. These knowledge systems are detailed, complex and critically important for cultural reasons and land management purposes.

**PARTIKI ‘NUT TREE’**

The hard, dark fruit are broken open and the seed inside is eaten. In the old days the fruit were cracked open with the back of a spear-thrower called a warlmayi. Now an axe or hammer is often used. The seed is similar to a peanut and is pleasant tasting. The leaves are boiled in water and the liquid is used as a wash to treat itchy skin, scabies and infected ears. It is like an antiseptic. It is also good for toothaches and can be used as shampoo, as it makes your hair dark and healthy. The timber is good firewood and it is common to find sugarbag called namawurru or ngarlu in the trunk. The outer bark produces fine black soot called wuyu when it is burnt. This can be used as colour during ceremonies. In the past it was rubbed onto the skin of light-skinned babies so that the welfare officers would not take them away.

Ivy Kulungari Hector et al., Bilinarra, Gurindji and Malngin Plants and Animals, pp 20, 61-2

Short videos about bush foods and medicines filmed on Gurindji country including Gurindji Bush Medicines and Ngarlu (sugarbag), Kumpulu (white currant), Kawurh (tobacco ashes), Kinyuwurra (bush onions), Kamara (black soil yams), Kilipi (bush banana) as well as bush tucker videos from other regions.

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**GURINDJI BUSH FOODS GAME**

**Refer** to the Gurindji word list in this kit as a starting point to find out more about bush foods and medicines in the Victoria River region.

**Investigate** paintings of these plants by artists from the area and find other drawings and photos.
[Visit the Karungkarni Art Centre website [http://karungkarniart.theblinkserver.com/?page_id=16](http://karungkarniart.theblinkserver.com/?page_id=16)]

**Make** your own drawings and **choose** two to convert into lino cut images.

**Create** a class set of oversize picture cards with a lino cut image of a plant on one side and its Gurindji name and a short description on the other, with each student contributing two cards to the pack.

**Play** a game of snap or memory using these cards.

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**Michael Terry**

PIC/8847/6/57
Pictures Collection, National Library of Australia

In this photo a man painted up for Wangka, a ceremony learnt from Daily River people, is talking with Michael Terry at Wave Hill Station. Despite harsh conditions on the station and continuing killings, ceremony was still practiced and shared among Aboriginal groups, Northern Territory, 1925

**Imagine** a conversation between these two men. What might they be talking about? How would their world views differ? **Script** a short conversation and **role-play** for the class in pairs.
Aboriginal Activism

Discuss as a class the terms terra nullius and colonisation. What do they mean in the context of Australian history?

Investigate what life was like for Gurindji people in the early decades of last century.

Find out about what Gurindji refer to as the Killing Times and Vestey Time. [Refer to Yijarni—True Stories from Gurindji Country for first-hand accounts]

Research and describe the events that led to the Gurindji Walk-Off.

Investigate the political climate in Australia at the time.

Identify other people involved in the struggle who are represented in the exhibition including Brian Manning, Frank Hardy, Hannah Middleton, Dexter Daniels and Robert Tudawali. How did they contribute to the cause?

Investigate the role of union movements in the struggle and the relationship between the bush strike and city protests. What motivated the protests and demonstrations in the city?

Imagine visiting the strike camps at Wattie Creek or being part of a protest march in the city.

Picture and describe the experience.

Research stories and media reports about the Gurindji Walk-Off written at the time and since.

Compare these accounts with the exhibition Still in my mind and how it presents this story. How long did the protest last? What was the eventual outcome of the Walk-Off? What is its legacy today?

Write your own account of the Gurindji Walk-Off and its significance in the history of Australia.

DESIGN A POLITICAL POSTER

Fifty years ago, the Gurindji walked off their land as a powerful political action that has come to represent a rejection of discriminatory treatment, the affirmation of recognition of Indigenous ownership of land and a reassertion of Indigenous cultural integrity. This articulate claim of sovereignty and self-determination was celebrated decades later in the iconic imagery of soil passing from the hands of Gough Whitlam into the hands of Vincent Lingiari returning land that had always been Gurindji.

Larissa Behrendt, Subalter/N/ative dreams exhibition catalogue, Stills Gallery, 2016

Some images can be associated with particular moments in history and acquire iconic status. Mervyn Bishop’s photograph of Gough Whitlam pouring sand into Vincent Lingiari’s hand is one such image.

As a class, analyse why this image is so powerful and discuss what it communicates.

Choose another pivotal moment in the history of the Aboriginal Land Rights struggle to investigate. [Refer to the Timeline in this kit as a starting point]

Gather as much visual, written and aural material as you can.

Use this research material as inspiration to design a poster that raises awareness about this issue or event.

Research other political posters and analyse the compositional elements that give these posters visual impact.

Experiment with a few different designs and make sure to include image and text in your final design.

Organise a school exhibition of political posters and invite other classes to attend.

Aboriginal Leaders

Find out more about Vincent Lingiari. Who was he? What was his background? Why is he an important figure in Australian history? What did he achieve?

Write a page of information about Lingiari and include a photo.

Identify other important Aboriginal leaders and activists in the history of Australia and make a class list.

Choose one person to research in depth and prepare a Powerpoint presentation for the class. Include biographical information as well as information about their motivations, activities and achievements.

Create a class mural of portraits of inspirational Aboriginal people accompanied by a paragraph of text, where each student chooses a fellow student’s Powerpoint as a starting point to work with.
Commemoration

The legacy of the Wave Hill Walk-Off is acknowledged through the annual Freedom Day Festival held in Kalkarindji over the weekend closest to August 23 – the date of the Walk-Off in 1966. The commemoration starts with the Land Rights March to the ceremony ground by the Victoria River for performance of the Freedom Day wajarra (corroboree), speeches and a BBQ and celebrations continue with an exhibition of art and historical photographs, music concerts, a sports carnival and guided tours to Jinparrak.

Gurindji traditional owner Rob Roy says the annual Freedom Day Festival keeps this story of their elders alive.

*It brings us happiness to commemorate the Walk-Off with the Freedom Day festival every year... It happened for land rights, for wages and better futures for our kids...It makes us proud to preserve the legacy of Vincent Lingiari and the other 200 people who walked of the station....We want to make the festival a successful event every year and make sure the history of what took place here is known right across the country and gets taught in schools. We want people to come to our festival to help us celebrate the movement that started off modern day land rights.*

Brenda L Croft has walked the Wave Hill Walk-Off Track a number of times, participated in Freedom Day and helped organise the 45th anniversary event commemorating Gurindji Freedom Day.

*I found it incredibly moving retracing the steps of those 200+ activists over four decades later. I walked the Track as a tribute to those people, but also in honour of those who were taken from our community and never made it home, and for those who will travel the Track in the future. It was never simply about walking 22 kilometres of country; it was also about walking through temporal space.*


She describes her experience of walking the Gurindji Walk-Off Track as navigating her way through memories as well as landscape. Suggest what she means by this. How can/do contemporary actions resonate with past experiences?

**CLASS DISCUSSION**

Referring to the map of the Walk-Off Track use google earth to zoom in to this location and trace the journey.

**Find out** about Freedom Day and **imagine** and **describe** walking the 22 km Walk-Off Track. What is the significance of Freedom Day? Why do you think it is important to participate in such events? What is being acknowledged? What is being celebrated? How do events like these contribute to public memory?

Listen to kids from Kalkarindji talk about Freedom Day here

**POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES**

**ART and STORYTELLING**

**Framing Questions:**
- How do stories define us personally and culturally?
- What are the different ways stories may be told and shared?
- What stories are told about the past? Who tells them?
- Why are some stories better known than others?
- What are some of the stories told by artists in the exhibition?

**Unwritten Histories**

**Reflect** on and **discuss** the following statements as a class
- History is made up of many individual stories that form part of larger cultural narratives.
- Stories bind people, societies and cultures together.

In Western societies the written word can be privileged over oral histories.

**Brainstorm** all the different ways that stories can be told if they are not written down.

**Research** the different ways that Aboriginal people have and do maintain and share their cultural histories and knowledge and **share** examples with the class.

**Consider** the artworks in the exhibition *Still in my mind*. What stories do they tell?

**Choose** two different artworks to **investigate** in depth and prepare a short talk that tells the story of these works.

Working in pairs **interview** a friend about themselves, their family or a particular memory or story they would like to share and use as inspiration for an artwork. Then swap over.

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**Telling Stories Painting Stories**

The Gurindji language plays an integral role in the exhibition *Still in my mind*. Many of the paintings included were originally produced for *Yijarni: True Stories from Gurindji Country*, which is a collection of oral histories told by Gurindji elders in their own language. A number of these stories had been told previously to historians and anthropologists in their best English but with not nearly the same detail, humour and pathos as the stories from Yijarni, which are told in their first language, Gurindji. The works were created during a Karungkarni Arts artist camp in 2015, facilitated by Penny Smith (Karungkarni Arts Manager), Brenda and I, and supported by the Murnkurrumurru rangers. Artists listened to the recorded stories from Yijarni and produced beautiful visual interpretations of these stories over a number of days camped at Warrijuny on Gurindji country.

Dr Felicity Meakins, linguist, University of Queensland.
https://uqartmuseum.wordpress.com/2017/09/04/the-wave-hill-walk-off-through-brenda-l-crofts-eyes/
Exhibition as storytelling

Hold a class discussion to share impressions of the exhibition and the experience of visiting the gallery. Reflect on the different works. Which stood out for you and why?

Describe how the exhibition was displayed and organised. How were works grouped together? What was the effect of this? What relationships and connections between the works are highlighted by seeing them together?

Consider how the exhibition labelling contributed to the experience of the works.

Discuss the exhibition title: Still in my mind: location, experience and visuality. Where did this title come from? How does it frame the experience and understanding of the exhibition?

Brainstorm a list of things learnt or questions raised by your visit.

WRITE A REVIEW

Imagine you are an art critic and write a short review of the exhibition. Include information and reflection on

- the main themes and ideas
- the different artists, artworks and perspectives
- the experience of visiting the exhibition
- your impression of the exhibition

You may wish to read other reviews listed in Recommended References as inspiration.

CURATE AN EXHIBITION

With a diverse career as an artist, researcher and independent curator, Brenda L. Croft has been creating multi-disciplinary, multi-platform work for more than three decades.... Croft’s work considers the ongoing legacies of colonisation; how many Indigenous peoples were dispossessed of their language, ceremony and cultural connections and how the imposed language and culture has been used to define, constrict and displace Indigenous people within their own lands


As a class discuss the role of the curator. What do curators do?

Brainstorm a list of all the activities required to create an exhibition eg formulating a curatorial rationale, researching artists and artworks, sourcing and selecting objects, writing labels, displaying and lighting objects.

In teams curate an online exhibition that tells a social justice story.

Utilise an historical event, a biographical story or a regional focus as a starting point.

Research oral histories, objects, ephemera and artworks across a range of media for possible inclusion.

Consider the different stories connected to different works as well as the story they tell when read together. As a group define the central issues, ideas and experiences you wish to highlight and debate why certain works belong or don’t belong in the final selection.

Write a paragraph about each artist and each artwork and an introductory label to accompany the exhibition that outlines the key themes. Think of a title.