

BLAK MIRROR

curated by Jason Wing

**featuring artists, Billy Cooley,
Lulu Cooley, Dean Cross, Blak Douglas,
Brad Harkin, Aleshia Lonsdale,
Amala Groom, Chico Monks,
Nicole Monks, Damien Shen,
Leanne Tobin, James Tylor.**

BILLY COOLEY

Billy Cooley was born in 1952 at Soudan Cattle Station near Cammowéal in South West Queensland. His family ancestry includes Chinese and Irish as well as Aboriginal. Billy spent much of his life working as a stockman, ending up at Mulga Park Cattle Station. As well as his exceptional workmanship producing traditional tools and weapons, he developed a specific interest in snake stories and has become known for his exceptionally beautiful and lifelike serpent sculptures. Billy and his Pitjantjatjara wife Lulu have honed their carving and burning skills over years of collaboration and refined their practice to the highest level of technical ability, using only basic hand tools. They are long term directors of Maruku Arts, working closely with management for decades. The couple have participated in many exhibitions, nationally and overseas.

LULU COOLEY

Lulu Cooley was born in 1953 on Pitjantjatjara lands, Amata community in South Australia. She is **minyma-ulkumunu**; a senior Aboriginal woman. She is a consummate carver and has deep knowledge of desert country and cultural practices. She specialises in the making of **piti** and **wira**, traditional bowls. Lulu remembers learning her carving skills from her mother and other female relatives in the 1960s. Close observation and practice has led to her distinctive 'scallop' style, **tali** meaning sand dunes. Lulu works closely alongside her husband Billy Cooley the snake carver extraordinaire and they are long serving ambassadors of the Maruku collective. The couple always work intimately together and their relationship is deeply rooted in a connection as life-partners and co-creators, they are rarely ever apart.

DEAN CROSS

Dean is a multi-disciplinary artist who works across the sculptural and pictorial fields. For over a decade, Dean has been engaged, both nationally and internationally, as a contemporary dance performer and choreographer. Dean has also exhibited extensively up and down the east coast of Australia. This include solo shows at M16 and Huw Davies Gallery, Canberra, ad group shows at Blakdot, Melbourne, Collab Gallery, Sydney and Tributary Projects, Canberra.

Dean's work is held in numerous private collections across Australia, France and the United States. It is also in the permanent collection of the QUT Art Museum, Brisbane.

BLAK DOUGLAS

Born Adam Douglas Hill Blacktown (1970) Western Sydney to a Koori Father / Caucasian Mother. Trained in illustration & photography, became self – practiced in painting with a style influenced by the study of Graphic Design & devoutly politicised per social justice. Collections: Blacktown & Liverpool City Councils, City of Sydney, Aboriginal Art Museum (Utrecht), National Gallery of Australia, National Maritime Museum, National Museum of Australia, Town Hall Collection, Taipei Museum. A successive finalist in the Telstra National Indigenous Art Award, the Parliament of NSW Aboriginal Art Prize and a finalist in the Xstrata Emerging Artists Award and a 2015 Archibald Prize finalist.

AMALA GROOM

Amala Groom is a Wiradjuri conceptual artist whose practice is informed by, and reflects, First Nations methodologies, epistemologies and ways of being. Her work, as a form of passionate activism, delivers penetrating and insightful commentary on contemporary society, politics and race relations. Articulated across diverse media, Groom's work seeks to subvert and unsettle Western mythology and iconography in order to enunciate Aboriginal stories, practices and histories.

BRAD HARKIN

Brad Harkin is a South Australian visual artist, primarily working with mixed media sculptural and sound installations. His current practice explores themes of cultural identity, memory, and ritualised human behaviours. He has a background in music production and Bachelor degree in Visual Arts, resulting in an amalgamation of visuals and audio in his portfolio. Harkin has been working in the visual arts sector in both South Australian and interstate galleries since 2011, and has had the privilege of working with many great artists while installing their exhibitions. He is currently studying a Masters degree in Fine Art and Design at the Tasmanian College of the Arts in Hobart. Conceptually, Harkin's work is informed by strong ties to both his Anglo Australian and Narungga Aboriginal heritage.

ALESHIA LONSDALE

Aleshia Lonsdale is a visual artist based on regional New South Wales. Lonsdale began primarily as a painter and a weaver and has since expanded her practice to incorporate sculptural and installation work. Inspiration for her work is drawn from issues facing Aboriginal people including issues facing Aboriginal people including issues of Aboriginality and identity.

CHICO MONKS

Chico Monks was born into a world of creativity with both parents teaching and practicing art, he was encouraged to communicate through art as a way of being. Chico Monks graduated from Southern Cross University in 2001 with a BA in sculpture and has been exhibiting throughout Australia and internationally.

NICOLE MONKS

b. 1981, Subiaco, Western Australia

Nicole Monks is a trans- disciplinary artist of Yamatji Wajarri, Dutch and English heritage. Living and practicing in Sydney, Monks is informed by her cross-cultural identity. A designer by trade and founder of blackandwhite creative, Monks crosses art forms to work with furniture and objects, textiles, video installation and performance as both a solo and collaborative artist.

DAMIEN SHEN

Damien Shen is a South Australian man of Ngarrindjeri (Aboriginal) and Chinese descent. As an artist he draws on both of these powerful cultural influences to create works of intense personal meaning. In using his artistic talent to share his story he aims to open the eyes of viewers to new ways of seeing Australian identity and Aboriginal art.

LEANNE TOBIN

Leanne Tobin is descended from the Boorooberongal and Wumali clans of the Darug, the traditional Aboriginal people of the Greater Sydney region.

Leanne uses her art to tell local stories and to evoke an environmental conscience and respect towards the land and its original people.

Her work seeks to connect the observer with the land they stand on, highlighting their shared role in caring for country while also conveying the intrinsic spiritual connection Aboriginal people have with the land; a connection that is often hidden beneath the concrete and tar of the city and suburbs.

JAMES TYLOR

James Tylor was born in Mildura Victoria. He grew up in far West NSW and The Kimberly region of WA. He completed a Masters in Visual Art at the South Australian school of Art in 2013 and he currently lives and works in Adelaide.

James' photographic practice examines racial and cultural identity in Australian contemporary society and social history. He explores Australia's cultural representation through alternative photography mediums as well as his multi-cultural heritage comprising Nunga (Kurna), Māori (Te Arawa) and European Australian ancestry and it's place within Australian narrative.