

HOME FLOWN

EXQUISITE SUITE OF UNIQUE CONTEMPORARY ARTIFACTS & PAINTINGS

EXHIBITION OPENING THURSDAY MAY 7, 6PM

Reconciliation Wall (Fountain Court)

Parliament of New South Wales - 6 Macquarie Street, Sydney

Since winning the 2022 Archibald Prize, I've enjoyed the freedom of exploration in art.

This exhibition is decidedly left field for me yet succinctly poignant in commentary.

The suite of works present as a stimulating critique on the commercialisation of Aboriginal Art as we know it today.

The opportunity to exhibit within the Fountain Court is both honorable and nostalgic.

It was here where I was a successive finalist in the past 'Parliament of NSW Aboriginal Art Prize.

It's now great to have a dedicated wall within such a historic institution solely for the display of First Nations Art.

Blak Douglas, 2026



THROW CAUTION TO THE WIND

This series of custom etched mulga wood boomerangs have been a year in the making however several years in the consciousness. I've had a strong affiliation with the 'returning boomerang' purportedly native to the South East region of the continent. Furthermore, a fascination with the evolutionary path of throwing clubs and how they've morphed into the ingenious technological implements we now associate with the Kooris of NSW / Victoria.

As an avid observer and researcher, I've become significantly influenced by the variety of adaptations of the returning boomerang. From becoming an internationally competitive sport fostered out of the U.S.A in the 1990s, to the controversial patenting and marketing of the Chanel boomerang by the French fashion house in 2017. All manner of slogans, advertising and 'knock off' Indigenous designs have appeared on various types of fabricated materials worldwide.

Thus, I've embarked on a first in creating this suite of limited pieces comprising the original hardwood artist proofs. Primarily a satirical commentary on one of my favourite topics of disputation that many would label 'that old adverse chestnut'. The irony of descending from a subordinated Dhungatti family lineage, whose tribal homeland is occupied, yet having to pay taxes to the Commonwealth of Australia. This is a debate I have presented since winning the Archibald Prize 2022 and surrendering 30% to the Australian Taxation Office, my Grandmother having been made a 'ward of the State' only 98 years ago. My story is identical to most Aboriginal people of the South East regions of course. So I choose to laugh rather than cry in this particular instance by producing this suite of historic firsts.

Working closely with a master mould maker and an acclaimed laser cutting company, I carefully sourced a variety of hard wood boomerangs and selected fonts complimenting each cause i.e: 'credit card', 'black lives matter' and 'saloon'. Then creating text designs to suit various sized boomerangs, we now have a suite that speak the financial dialectic. All whilst embracing the parody of the concept of 'returns' and financial rhetoric. My personal favourite is the large 'Karlye' (Arrente) hunting boomerang, carrying the slogan - 'ACCOUNT OVERDUE PLEASE PAY IMMEDIATELY'. Additionally, the small piece featuring the 'Centrelink' logo and the 'TOKEN' piece perhaps referencing the debated novelty of 'Welcome to Country / Acknowledgement of Country', despite the aforementioned in the previous paragraph.

To marry these to the accompanying suite 'Home Flown', I've produced custom-cut hand painted roundels featuring my trademark 'cracked' style. A metaphor representing 'antiquity' and a celebration of a time immemorial tradition of cultural practices both black and white here in Australia. May these custom stylised boomerangs be considered to have exited the neighbouring detailed pieces with their omitted boomerang 'ghost' shape. Fleeing the confines of economic entrapment in order to make their own individual contemporary statements on the very ludicrousness of the taxable scenario. Most artefacts become collected by institutions or private collectors acquired through the tyranny of Auction Houses. An unregulated free-for-all, capitalising on objects carrying little to no personal identification of production, and price determined by a non-Aboriginal ethnographic/oceanic 'expert'.

May these works pay homage to the countless tribal boomerang makers who have collectively and unfortunately been bypassed the concept of a Patent,™ or © throughout their lifetime of painstakingly carving out fine implements pertinent to their clan's country here in NSW.



TITLE: Remuneration
SIZE: 30cm^ø
MEDIUM: Etched Mulgawood boomerang
mounted on Permacrylik™ painted 12mm MDF



TITLE: Sorry business
SIZE: 37cm^ø
MEDIUM: Etched Mulgawood boomerang
mounted on Permacrylik™ painted 12mm MDF



TITLE: In the blak
SIZE: 37cm^ø
MEDIUM: Etched Mulgawood boomerang
mounted on Permacylik™ painted 12mm MDF



TITLE: Culture Club
SIZE: 42cm^ø
MEDIUM: Etched Mulgawood boomerang
mounted on Permacrylik™ painted 12mm MDF



TITLE: Cattle Class
SIZE: 42cm^ø
MEDIUM: Etched Mulgawood boomerang
mounted on Permacrylik™ painted 12mm MDF



TITLE: Interlopers
SIZE: 52cm^ø
MEDIUM: Etched Mulgawood boomerang
mounted on Permacrylik™ painted 12mm MDF



TITLE: Big mob ceremony
SIZE: 52cm^ø
MEDIUM: Etched Mulgawood boomerang
mounted on Permacrylik™ painted 12mm MDF



TITLE: Inlaw enforcement
SIZE: 69cm^o
MEDIUM: Etched Mulgawood boomerang
mounted on Permacrylik™ painted 12mm MDF



TITLE: Breadline Incorporated
SIZE: 75cm^ø
MEDIUM: Etched Mulgawood boomerang
mounted on Permacrylik™ painted 12mm MDF



TITLE: The Paymaker
SIZE: 90cm^ø
MEDIUM: Etched Mulgawood boomerang
mounted on Permacyklik™ painted 12mm MDF

HOME FLOWN

These tailored paintings present as a response to a growing issue of contention that many of my First Nations practitioner contemporaries share. That being, the battle against the common perception of what is 'Aboriginal Art'. The challenge for many modern Aboriginal artists, particularly the urbane multi - disciplinary type is to not succumb to the default template which commonly stipulates the want for a design to be "identifiably Aboriginal".

My formative painting career began in an industrial unit in the back blocks of South Penrith during the year 1998. Having graduated from University of Western Sydney, I'd attained a B.A. in Graphic Design. I'd been exposed to a contemporary world of artistic design mentored by some of the finest practitioners on the continent. Having observed leading First Nations artworks adorning the walls of the university library, I was confounded by what defined 'traditional' v's contemporary.

Come 2000 and the frenzy of tourism surrounding the Sydney Olympic Games, I decided to vacate my local environs on a profoundly influential cultural mission. By chance, I'd been granted a rare invitation to Warumpunya (Papunya). Spending time in the company of the remaining 'Papunya Tula' painters Michael Jagamarra Nelson, Dinny Nolan, Long Jack Phillipis Tjapaltjarri and Paddy Carroll Tjungurayi. These esteemed artists were literally the 'Grandfathers of dot painting'. My learning curve had begun its steep ascent.

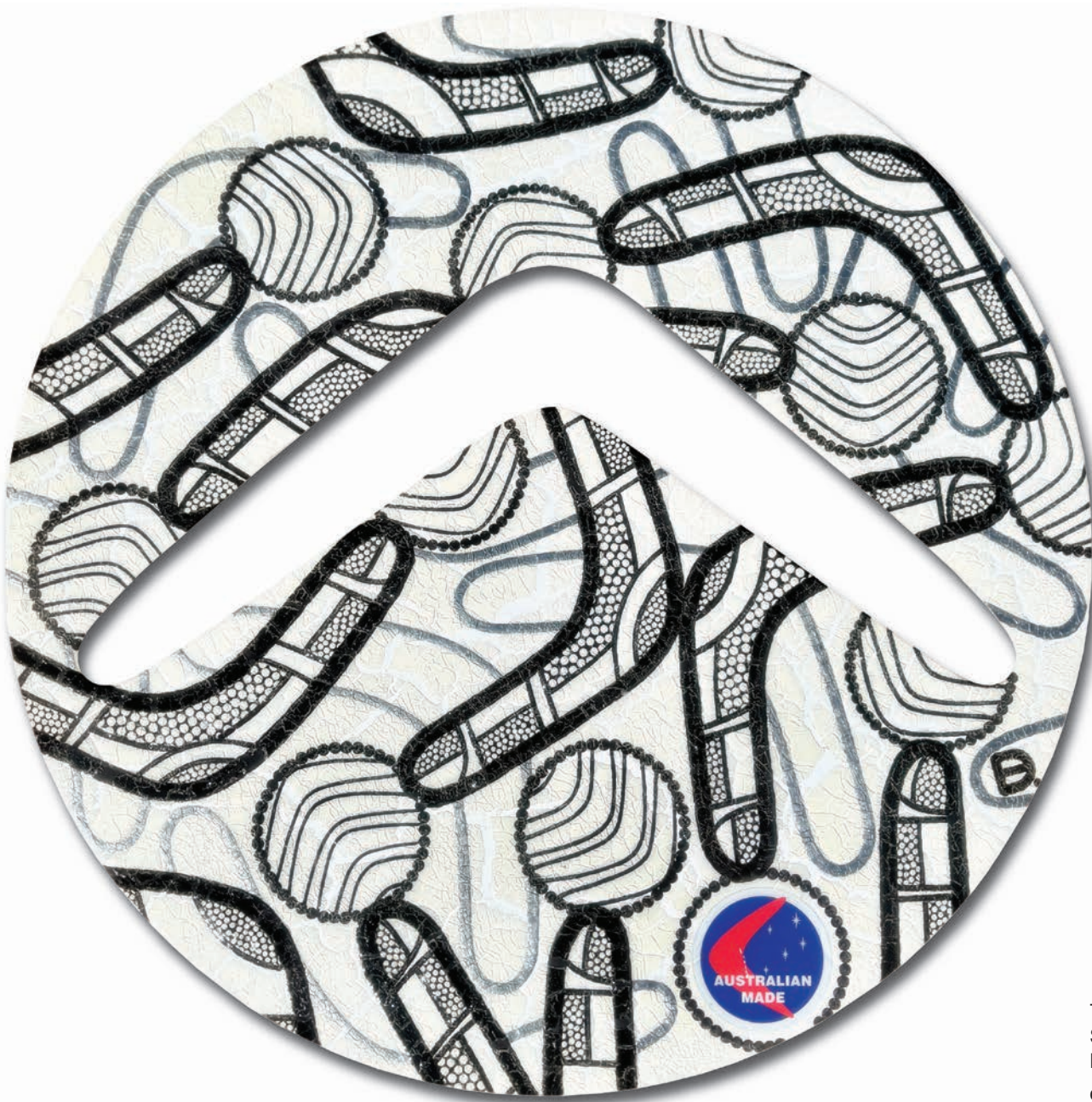
Returning to the Eastern Seaboard and my hometown of Penrith, I had re-entered the largest concentrated population of First Nations peoples on the continent. At that moment in time and still largely today, there is a firm grasp upon the adherence to 'traditional' style dot painting. Each of the artists who were producing works within the shared Industrial unit each were painting the very same style which became the omnipresent norm.

It seemed that one had to visit to a modern art institution or an uptown commercial gallery in order to view a break - away First Nations artist. Only the most savvy of private galleries were representing artists whom were at the mercy of the lay person generic critique - "that doesn't look like Aboriginal Art". And here we are some 30 years on and the sentiment is still prevalent. Here's one trivial test... (Q) Name the most famed living female First Nations artist. (A)?

Venturing to the Southern Sydney beach haven of La Perouse and on any given weekend tourists were bedazzled by the charismatic Bidjigal showman Uncle Laddy Timbery. Laddy was the master boomerang craftsman from the Shoalhaven region. Laddy would paint boomerangs in fine style and set up an outdoor shop selling an array of artefacts and also offer free throwing lessons on the grassy knoll behind. The Timbery's were a cultural institution unto themselves.

By omitting the actual boomerang in each of these roundels, we introduce a veritable void and invite the colloquial question - 'how long is a piece of string'? (Re contemporary Aboriginal art practice). Consider these paintings 'spirit portraits' of cultural urbanity combining two distinct culturally affiliated icons of 'Aboriginality'.

Each piece carries the retro 'Australian Made' certified logo which coincidentally features the returning boomerang motif. A quirky jab at the "borrowing" of Aboriginal cultural iconology, which when coupled with the identifiable painted designs, link these pieces as bonafide locally produced works of art.



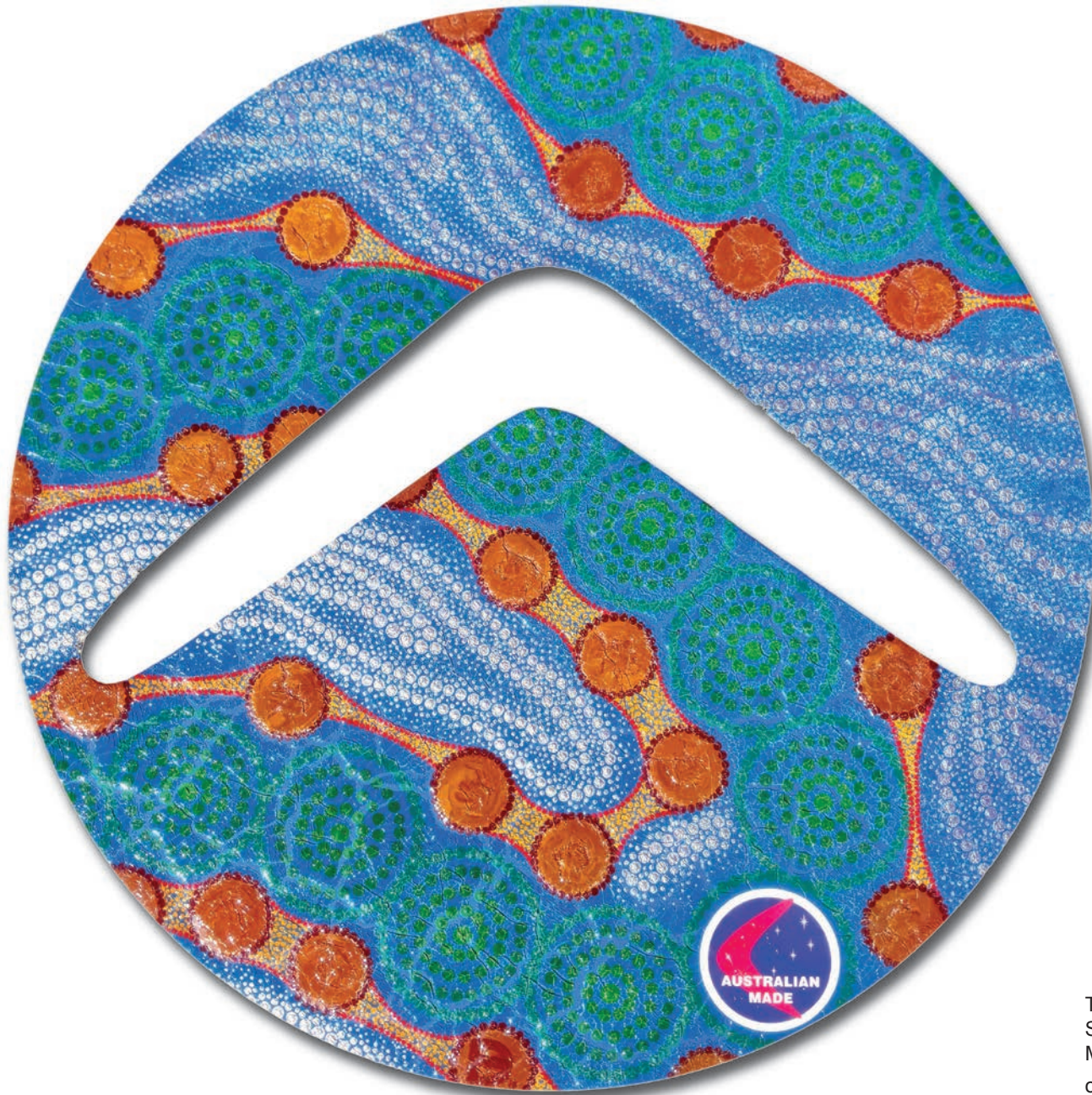
TITLE: The second airport
SIZE: 90cm^ø
MEDIUM: Permacylik™ paints / vintage decal
on 12mm custom lasercut MDF



TITLE: The Royal National Park
SIZE: 90cm^ø
MEDIUM: Permacrylik™ paints / vintage decal
on 12mm custom lasercut MDF



TITLE: The Rocks
SIZE: 90cm^ø
MEDIUM: Permacrylik™ paints / vintage decal
on 12mm custom lasercut MDF



TITLE: The Hawkesbury
SIZE: 90cm^ø
MEDIUM: Permacrylik™ paints / vintage decal
on 12mm custom lasercut MDF



TITLE: The Cutaway
SIZE: 90cm^ø
MEDIUM: Permacrylik™ paints / vintage decal
on 12mm custom lasercut MDF



TITLE: The CBD
SIZE: 90cm^ø
MEDIUM: Permacrylik™ paints / vintage decal
on 12mm custom lasercut MDF



TITLE: The Block
SIZE: 90cm^ø
MEDIUM: Permacrylik™ paints / vintage decal
on 12mm custom lasercut MDF