



# Bound and Unbound: Sovereign Acts

Ali Gumiyya Baker | Faye Rosas Blanch | Natalie Harkin | Simone Ulalka Tur



#### Acknowledgement of country

We acknowledge the Kaurna people – the traditional owners of the lands and waters on which the city of Adelaide was built and where this project was created.

#### Warning

Members of Aboriginal communities are respectfully advised that some of the people mentioned in writing or depicted in photographs in the following pages have passed away. All such mentions and photographs in this publication are with permission.

#### Camping in the shadow of the racist texts

Ali Gumiilya Baker, *racist texts*, 2014, books, dimensions variable  
photo: Denys Finney

## Bound and Unbound: Sovereign Acts – Act I

Ali Gumiilya Baker | Faye Rosas Blanch | Natalie Harkin | Simone Ulalka Tur

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Cover image: Ali Gumiilya Baker, Miring people, South Australia

Simone Ulalka Tur: *Bound/Unbound Sovereign Acts – Act II*, 2015, digital photograph, courtesy the artist

## Introduction

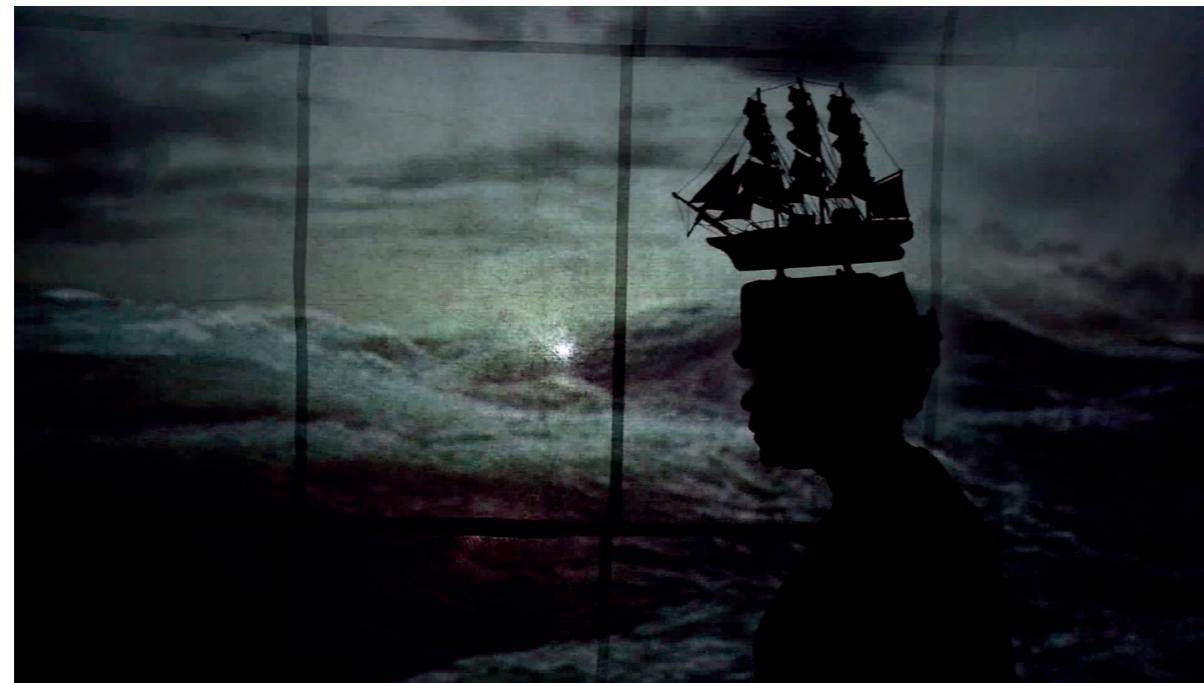
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*Bound and Unbound: Sovereign Acts – Act I, decolonising methodologies of the lived and spoken* was an exhibition of experimental work that explored complex ideas of being both bound and free; what we are bound to historically and, as sovereign people, what we choose to (un)bind ourselves to and from, both now and into the future.

*Bound and Unbound: Sovereign Acts – Act II*, in October 2015, builds on the success of *Act I*, extending these ideas and their expression through embodied projection and performance. Both *Acts* engage Aboriginal community members who have historically been contained and excluded within and beyond the mortar and boundaries of Adelaide's so-called 'cultural precinct'. When our ancestors' voices are heard and listened to, this compels a call and response engagement with the broader Aboriginal community. We can all speak back through individual and collective *Sovereign Acts*.

The Unbound collective is Ali Gumillya Baker (curator), Simone Ulalka Tur, Faye Rosas Blanch and Natalie Harkin.

ALI GUMILLYA BAKER shifts the colonial gaze through film, performance, projection, and grandmother-stories    SIMONE ULALKA TUR's performance and poetics enact an intergenerational transmission of story-work through education    FAYE ROSAS BLANCH engages rap theory to embody sovereignty and shedding of the colonial skin    NATALIE HARKIN's archival-poetics is informed by blood-memory, haunting and grandmother-stories.



Ali Gumillya Baker, *Tall ships Part 2*, 2014, video loop, performed by Faye Rosas Blanch, Natalie Harkin and Michael Bonner, video by Ali Gumillya Baker

## Bound and Unbound: Sovereign Acts – Act I decolonising methodologies of the lived and spoken

### 1 Knowledge of Trees [1] – ALI GUMILLYA BAKER

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There are river gum trees, massive old bodies that exist from the time before white people came to this land. Some of these trees in Adelaide on Kaurna land live beside rivers that are no more, rivers that have been made into concrete storm water drains. Some of these trees have old names from the time before this time. At one time many people knew the name of this tree or that tree. Now the trees are strangers in the landscape. Many who live near them do not know or imagine their long place in the world.

These are the gnarly old gums with the wide wide trunks. If you all stand with your arms outstretched and join hands maybe you can work out how old the tree is. It feels good to press up and hold their old energy.

Bearing witness to all of the horror that came with modernity.



Simone Ulalka Tur and Faye Rosas Blanch, still from *My pen is my weapon*, 2014, video loop, video by Ali Gumillya Baker



Uncle Lewis Yerloburka O'Brien and Faye Rosas Blanch at the launch of *Bound and Unbound: Sovereign Acts – Act I, decolonising methodologies of the lived and spoken*, Fontanelle Gallery, August 2014, photo: Fernando M Gonçalves

## 2 A Gift – SIMONE ULALKA TUR

### Dedication

Poem by Mona Ngitji Ngitji Tur

To my tjamu, grandfather

Love beyond expression,  
Forgive my intrusion.

Hope has come at last  
To explain your past;  
To promote your culture,  
For children of our future.

So they can learn your philosophy of life:  
In this our country,  
Live as brother and sister  
Without hate of colour or race.

(Tur 2010, p.i)

## Dedication

Composition for violin by Kaitlin Inawantji Morrison  
Adaptation of *Dedication* poem to song by Nancy Bates

The musical score consists of two staves: Voice (bass clef, bass staff) and Violin (treble clef, treble staff). The tempo is marked as ♩ = 50. The lyrics are integrated into the music, appearing below the notes. The score is divided into sections by measure numbers (3, 4, 8, 12, 17, 21) and includes three endings (3, 3, and a final ending).

**Section 1 (Measures 1-3):**

To my tja-mu, my grand-fath-er love bey-on<sup>d</sup> ex-pre-sion for-give my int-

**Section 2 (Measures 4-8):**

ru-sion... Hope has come at last, to ex-plain your past. To prom-o-te

**Section 3 (Measures 8-12):**

your cul-ture, for chil-dren of our fu-ture.. So they can learn our phil - o - so - phy of

**Section 4 (Measures 12-16):**

life, in this our coun-tr-y..

**Section 5 (Measures 17-21):**

Live as bro-thers and sis-ters with-out hate of co-lour or race.

**Section 6 (Measures 21-25):**

To my tja-mu.. To my tja-mu.. To my tja-mu.. My tja-mu..

The *Dedication* poem is from my late mother Mona Ngitji Ngitji Tur's autobiography, *Cicada Dreaming* (2010).

Interwoven throughout *Ngunytju*/mother's book are poems which share expressions of hope, vision, lament, happiness and sadness and beauty. In a collaborative paper 'Writing Forward, Writing Back, Writing Black – Working Process and Work-in-Progress' (Worby, Tur and Blanch, 2014) of which *Cicada Dreaming* is the connecting reference point for the authors of the article, we reflect on Mum's autobiography:

*Cicada Dreaming* is important, here, because Ngitji Ngitji drew sustenance from song, poetry, painting and prose in a spectrum of expression. She danced with her grandmothers, aunties, sisters and daughters. She sang her country. She wrote books. She composed and taught *Inma*. She spoke her story. She translated her story. The overlaying of forms and registers she used in her work enhances our understanding of how we might approach issues such as responsibility, sovereignty, reciprocation, a just education (p.4).

The *Dedication* offers a call to grandfathers, Elders, ancestors to teach our children, to learn and be strong in culture, to understand our history and to see a future. *Ngunytju* was a cultural Elder and interpreter. Most of her life was dedicated to cross-cultural teaching and was generous in desire for Reconciliation. This is reflected in how *Ngunytju* saw her journey. In her words:

It is amazing how the bridge that one forms in one's life is crossed over and over again by different people and how the circle of connection and belonging keeps expanding.  
(Tur 2010, p.147)

*Bound and Unbound Act I* has provided me with an opportunity to enact through creative expression an intergenerational transmission of story-work through education (Archibald 2008). The exhibition also involved my daughter/niece Katie Inawantji who is a violinist. *Cicada Dreaming* is a gift to my family from my mum, especially since she has passed. The significance of this intergenerational gift is hard to describe, but Trinh T. Minh-ha offers a helpful explanation. In *Woman, Native, Other* (1989) she describes the act of story-telling and the gift of the story this way:

The story never really begins nor ends, even though there is a beginning and an end to every story, just as there is a beginning and end to every teller (p.1).

We – you and me, she and he, we and they – we differ in the content of the words, in the construction and weaving of sentences but most of all, I feel, in the choice and mixing of utterances, the ethos, the tones, the paces, the cuts, the pauses. The story circulates like a gift; an empty gift which anybody can lay claim to by filling it to taste, you can never truly possess. A gift built on multiplicity (p.2).

*Bound and Unbound Act I* offered an honouring, a future teaching, a hope. This process has taken time, through many conversations, ideas, shared and individual strengths, and the right timing. As Blanch reflects, silences wait for shared voices to unfold and come to be. (Worby, Tur and Blanch 2014). I also draw on Trinh T. Minh-ha who speaks to the process of conversations as 'unfolding'. She sees them as gentle, circular, happening when they are ready to come, emerging – taking time, which can reflect cultural ways of engaging such as talking circles, or the teaching relationship between community Elder and leaner where sharing and learning unfolds.

The process of taking time, letting the contemporary song emerge, the vision of the exhibition, is reflected in Minh-ha's words that:

Never does one open the discussion by coming right to the heart of the matter...  
To allow it to emerge, people approach it indirectly by postponing until it matures, by letting it come when it is ready to come. There is no catching, no pushing, no directing, no breaking through, no need for linear progression which gives the comforting illusion that one knows where one goes.

(1989, p.1)

In an interview with my late mother (Tur & Tur 2006), *Ngunytju* reflects and shares the process of being trained as a child, becoming knowledgeable and teaching specific knowledge of *Inma*/song/dance as an Elder. She says:

I am teaching exactly as I remember as I was taught and until *ninti tjukutjuku* that means just a little bit of knowledge and *ngula ma pulkaringanyi*/later on you will become bigger, and then I will assess you by your training and if you are ready to move on and become a teacher yourself, with the Elders and myself as well, I myself know when you will be ready to go onto the next step.

(p.165)

In adapting the *Dedication* poem to song I knew that I wanted my *Untal*/daughter, who plays the violin, to perform her *Kami's*/grandmother's poem. In western way Katie is my niece and I am her aunty, but I have always been her mother through our kinship system. In this context there is a mum-daughter learning process, a shared teaching – an intergenerational transmission. This was also about teaching Katie her generational stories from great *Kami*/grandmother, to *Kami*/grandmother, to mum, to aunty to daughter. The process took place 'out of country'. This required me to reflect, take time, to seek cultural support and guidance through my *Kami*/grandmother and *Kangkuru*/older sister or female cousin, changing text to song, song to music through the violin composition, and the representation of connection to land. The process involved seeking the song to emerge from the call from my mother to her *Tjamus*/grandfathers 'to promote our culture'. This is a contemporary approach to intergenerational transmission which respects culture, lived reality and context: bound and unbound.



*Act I* performance by Kaitlin Inawantji Morrison, photos: Fernando M Gonçalves  
Below right: Simone Ulalka Tur, still from *Dedication* video, *Act II*, photo: Ali Gumillya Baker

### 3 Knowledge of Trees [2] – ALI GUMILLYA BAKER

The knowledge of the names for trees gives me hope. Not names for genus groups or the types of trees, but individually named old trees. Once you have been here for generations you deserve a magical name. Beings that stand still in the landscape.

The place near where they lived had an oldness about it that made you want to rest your head. It was a place of important ceremony. We were protected by trees that were so old they took your breath away. Trees that were so large whole flocks of birds could rest there. Loud screeching birds calling news at sunset and then again at sunrise.



Ali Gumillya Baker, *Nungas occupying and enjoying*, 2014, banner  
Letters Patent 1836, 2014, banner, photo: Denys Finney

### 4 My Hair Defines Me – FAYE ROSAS BLANCH

... something must be said. Must be said that has not been and has been said before.  
'It will take a long time but the story must be told'.  
(Minh-ha 1989, p.119)

It is in the context of telling a story I allow myself to find a way through the memories that are embedded in my body, and my own storage of memories that I carry across this vast land. Morrison (1990) notes:

... the emotional memory or what the nerves and the skin remember as well, as how it appears and, a rush of imagination is our 'flooding', a kind of literary archeology, where the information and guesswork journey us to a site to see what remains were left behind and to reconstruct the world that these remains imply (p.302).



Faye Rosas Blanch, *It's so Hip to be BLAK*, 2014, video loop, written and performed by Faye Rosas Blanch, video by Ali Gumillya Baker

Engaging in *Bound and Unbound Act I* enabled a transformation and a new way of looking at the world, but also one that remembers the footsteps taken along the journey through one's 'country'. Like a song line that remains etched in my mind as I unpack my own journey through the performance of spoken word to bring my ancestors' voices to the fore.

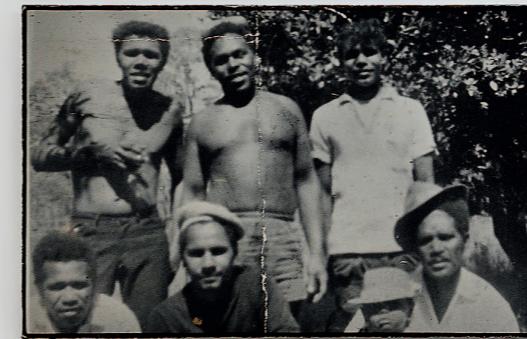
Memories remind me of where they belong and how the body is imbued with memories. Minh-ha (1989) provides an insightful analysis of how stories are part of our memories, regardless of whether we see these stories as truths or not. In making sense of how I proceed to grasp understanding of my story, or the creation of story, what is clear is that I can make my story my own or I can draw from my grandmothers to relate stories and see myself in the telling. However, in the creation of the stories and in the telling there exist fragments and schisms. In those fragments lie questions and in the questions a sense of loss – but also a sense of hope – because the stories exist within the memories and in the memories is love, desire and wonderment.

I'm talking about a kind of story-telling that employs free narration and raises questions like: 'What is true?', 'Which truth?' and 'How does she know?' My response is an embodied response. I know there is connection, in and through these stories to my grandmothers, mother and sisters as well as uncles, brothers, all family members. The stories are in their heads and bodies as well. They come back and forth in our respective and shared consciousness (Garde-Hansen, Hoskins & Reading 2009). This 'back and forth' highlights the ways past moments, places, people, events, encounters and actions all seemingly contribute to our self-identity. (Re)-remembering provides assertion of the involvement of introducing the past into the present to represent and produce a 'reactivated' site of consciousness (Garde-Hansen, Hoskins & Reading 2009 p.2). Therefore, in (re)remembering and exploring memory to reconstruct my understanding of blood memory, I take guidance from the words of Harkin (2014a) expressed in her desire to find the archived-hidden in relation to her Nanna's experiences:

I longed to go right back to that beginning place ... to those first colonial-recordings of my family, to the frontier-violence-contact-zone, and trace my blood from there (p.3).

I use hair as a defining element of my own identity to position clear understanding of how I reactivate a site of consciousness, in recognising the way my hair and my own experiences with my hair shape and contribute to my memory. Kobena Mercer (1990) discusses hair as signifying part of discourse and the question of 'the beautiful'. I was keen to engage in the concept of 1960s symbolisation of 'Black is Beautiful' and wrote these three words on all my notebooks back in high school in the 70s. Mercer states that, 'the cultural politics of "race" and "aesthetics" since forever have been critiqued in the everyday, and argues for the de-psychologization of hair styles that are identified as purely 'black' and therefore 'nature'. Mercer considers that hair creation and hair enjoyment is a cultural activity. I agree. I speak back:

My hair defines me,  
My land and my country is held in my hair that grows, and holds me  
I touch my hair, it is fuzzy, soft and enjoyable to play with,  
I have hidden treasures in my hair ...  
I don't want my hair tamed I don't want my hair  
Controlled ...



Ali Gumiilya Baker and Faye Rosas Blanch, camp, 2014, installation mixed media, family photos

In the context of my performance it is clearly defined that my hair is part of who I am as an Indigenous person from a particular language group with family members with very similar hair texture. Mercer (1990) states that 'where race structures social relations of power, hair – as visible as skin colour, but also the most tangible sign of racial difference – takes on another forcibly symbolic dimension' (p.249). Measured in the past, scientists wanting to know the evolution of 'man', stole, clipped, took and kept, strands of hair to provide their own white worldly understanding of the 'hair of the native' (Hall 1997; Harding 1993).

Such signifying representations undertaken by colonial powers studied, analysed, critiqued and produced knowledge about the 'savage' body. Indigenous peoples all over Australia were subjected to the language of biological inferiority and the meanings associated with 'difference' and the repertoires of western epistemological representation (Hall 1997). They – the scientists – produced knowledge about me and my people, and this socially constructed knowledge has been the topic of discursive conversations and understandings for years, both in the past and, in some ways, in the contemporary. Disrupting these conversations is key to taking back power and reasserting myself as I want to be represented – to love who I am, to know that all the treasured parts of me are who I am and so to continue to breathe politically, to occupy and enjoy the wealth of my country.

## 5 Knowledge of Trees [3] – ALI GUMILLYA BAKER

She loved the neglected in-between land next to the airport. She loved the feeling of space, the views of the hills in the distance foregrounded with the small city. The sky so big. More sky than earth here, almost like the place where her Nana was from.

This was one of those spaces that had been forgotten for one reason or another, like the bits of concreted land in the middle of a busy intersection, all dusty and polluted. It was edged with what was once an old creek that had since been concretised and transformed into a stormwater drain. On the other side of the drain creek was a highway where cars travelled fast back and forth from their original destination pathway. Either to the tourist beach or the discount stores.

The cars and the wind over the tarmac blew rubbish up against the cyclone fence with razor wire at the top. Weeds grew in the dried up clay soil. And most people who came near this space were well on their way to elsewhere, imagining themselves in some bigger more important place, some place more beautiful, projected to their next destination, clutching at their bags looking nervously to each other as they took to the sky. They tried not to think about the ground below, tried to detach themselves. Planes took off and people parked their cars in little car parks to watch.



Natalie Harkin, *Archive Fever Paradox* [2], 2014, Video 1 – video loop, *Whitewash-Brainwash (excerpt)*, 2003, sound component, Video 2 – video loop, by Ali Gumillya Baker, Denys Finney, Daniel Phllis, *Ode to the Board of Anthropological Research*, 2012, sound component  
photo: Denys Finney

## 6 Archive Fever Paradox [2] – NATALIE HARKIN

## Blood and Surveillance – on the Record

The whole question of how to transform these people who are gradually becoming whiter, into a useful race who will be able to maintain themselves, is a very difficult and serious problem.

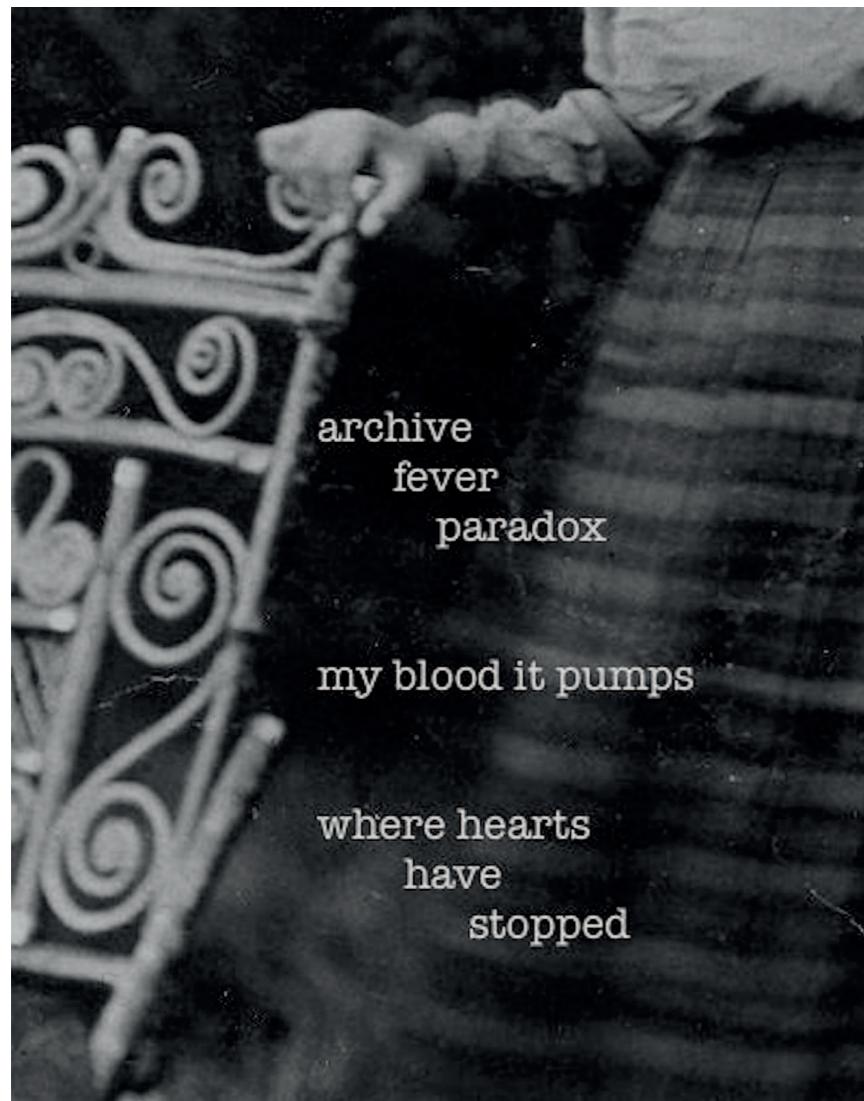
(W.G. South, Chief Protector of Aboriginals, 1922:1)

As I read South Australian Aboriginal affairs legislation between 1844 and 1939,<sup>1</sup> *Aborigines Protection Board Annual Reports* spanning a century, and reports from the Board of Anthropological Research based on Norman Tindale's anthropological expeditions, a float of narrative rises and unfolds; a narrative inscribed and articulated as *The Aboriginal Problem*.

This *Problem*, represented as truth and absolute in public discourse, becomes deeply engrained, stained and embedded to profoundly shape the foundation of a nation's psyche; and with the unfolding of this grand-narrative there is something ever-present. These reports revealed something else that was both visceral-reality and created-imagined fantasy; something that anchored and centred and pulsed to and from the heart of it all, and that was *blood*.

everywhere blood      blood on the record      but there is always something else      to  
touch      feel      claim      that stirs      far beyond half-caste quadroon octofoon  
mixed-blood reckonings      for the record      we have something else      to  
ground us in important places      beyond scientific labels      in our something else  
there is movement      living      breathing      pulsing repeating      no  
blood-quantum measurements here      or mulattoed-shades of black and white  
here      in something else      paradoxes stir      to gather fragments      from  
deeply-fractured lives      strength-and-fragility      from past-lives      nudging us  
toward tomorrow      remembering through magnificent landscapes      of deep  
colonialisms      there is mourning and hope      in our celebrations      our  
retellings      mourning and hope      signified through the body at the heart of  
new collections      recollections      imaginings      for the record      there is  
this      memory-in-the-blood.

<sup>1</sup> An Ordinance for the Protection, Maintenance and Upbringing of Orphans and other Destitute Children and Aborigines Act 1844; State Children's Act 1895; Children's Protection Act 1899; Aborigines Act 1911; Aborigines (Training of Children) Act 1923; Adoption of Children Act 1925; Maintenance Act 1926; Aborigines Act 1934; Children's Protection Act 1936; Aborigines Act Amendment Act 1939.



Natalie Harkin, Postcard, Archive Fever Paradox [2], side 1, 2014, postcard

This *Aboriginal Problem* narrative is mirrored in the Children's Welfare Board case files, and Aborigines Protection Board correspondence files on my family. As I read these official documents, juxtaposed with my family's personal files from the archives, I am struck by the detail in the method and the thinking; the logic reinforcing the actions so transparent; the layers of narrative anchored in blood-quantum dilution, breathtaking. Rarely named, she was simply their 'Girl': their State-Child, half-cast, quadroon, octoroon, true-to-type, of-her-own-kind, native, liar, nice-type, obedient, on-probation, difficult, tidy-looking, most-polite, well-spoken, careless, destitute, inmate, consorter! I question:

when they come to claim me name me frame me  
will they slice me in half  
or quarters  
or one-sixteenths?

These personal files I've had access to provide a chilling and more intimate snapshot of lives lived under extraordinary surveillance from the early to mid-1900s. A closer look at Aboriginal affairs history in South Australia confirms our family story is not particularly special, but in fact represents a general pattern of forced movement and displacement from lands, of child removal and of high levels of surveillance historically and typically experienced by Aboriginal people in this State, and indeed across Australia.

*SURVEILLANCE!* The Aborigines Protection Board – The Protector – The Mission Superintendents – The Secretary – The Welfare Board – The Children's Welfare Department – The Boarding-Out-Officer – The Senior Probation Officer – The Inspector – The 'State Ladies' – The Matron – The Deputy-Director-of-Rationing – The Police – The Doctor – The Psychologist – The School Teacher – The Academic – The Scientific Expert – The Anthropologist...

I re-read them watch them study them  
know them more  
than they know me.

ATTENTION  
RECORD KEEPERS OF  
THE STATE  
WE HAVE YOU  
UNDER SURVEILLANCE!  
WE HAVE YOU UNDER  
SURVEILLANCE!



Natalie Harkin, ATTENTION, 2014, paper paste-up, dimensions variable, photo: Denys Finney

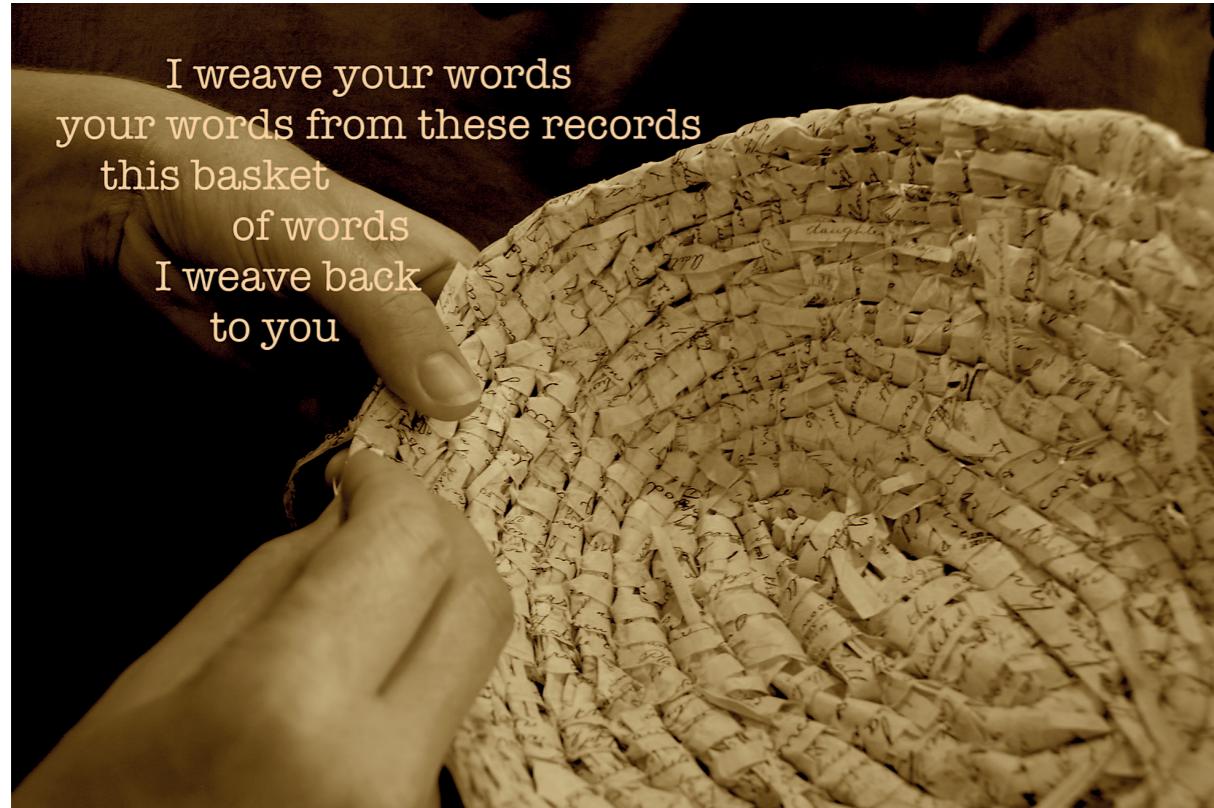
## (Re)Writing the Local

Where do we go when we yearn for something beyond actual memory, beyond knowledge of our actual being; when we suspect, realise or recognise that there is more to us than what we remember of our own experience? There is something affective, beyond intuition, which collides with memory, imagination and history. There are spectres everywhere, calling and willing me to investigate; leading me 'to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life' (Gordon 2008, p. 8). I recognise this unsettled feeling, this knowing, as natural as the life-giving air I breathe.

Our imaginings are central to our dreams for something else beyond dominant hegemonic worldviews and systems. Our situated-imaginings are central: to blood memory and haunting as a way of knowing; to the work of mourning, as we concern ourselves with oppressive memories of the past and the liberatory promise of the future; and as we attempt to bear witness to our histories of exclusion (Durrant 2004).

My attempt to disrupt and rupture the colonial-archive with our Aboriginal subjectivities effectively places the State, and those *archons of power* to which Derrida (1996) refers, as the object of my research. Our sovereign voices and our collective memory are central to this disruption and re-telling.

So, all haunted and affected by Nanna's State records, I sit and I read and I write to rewrite the local: a small rupturing contribution to a larger counter-narrative of the official colonial record, and our collected-collective life. Our voices may have been missing, but our resistance carries forward.



Natalie Harkin, Postcard, Archive Fever Paradox [2], side 2, 2014, postcard

she learned quickly to duck-and-weave the whitewash-brainwash assimilation-agents of State thanks to memories of mothers-sisters-aunties-grandmothers who could fine-tune and weave their smoke-and-mirror subversion talents... like how to stay safe with family who rest under her skin who settle her gut tame her tongue and wedge deep in the pulse of her heart – like where to hide stories through a fabric threaded and woven with invisible places where no-other can see or would know where to look – like how to receive messages that keep her heart open and beating strong, messages whispering on winds and flying on feathers and singing though seasons where no-other can hear or would think to listen...

(Harkin 2014b)

## 7 Knowledge of Trees [4] – ALI GUMILLYA BAKER

The land on the edge of the airport had not been loved in a long time.

It was what cultural theorists might describe as an interstitial space, like the cavity that holds the lungs in preparation for breath. Between one place and the next. Like the hallway between two languages, the space of translation.

The young woman felt like she could relate to this space, uncared for but with amazing views, neglected except by the imagination. Baudrillard (1998) called it the desert of the real. Rotting at the edges.

A rubbish place, a place to call home and learn to love again.

'When you lay your body in the body  
entered as if skin and bone were public places,

when you lay your body in the body  
entered as if you're the ground you walk on,

you know no memory should live  
in these memories

becoming the body of you'

(excerpt from *Some years there exists a wanting to escape*, in Rankine, 2014, p.139-146)

## **Bound and Unbound: Sovereign Acts – decolonising methodologies of the lived and spoken Act 1**

Curated by Ali Gumiilya Baker

24/08/14 – 21/09/14

we are women of the earth from beautiful lands and multiple histories we are  
 Mirning we are Antikirinya/Yankunytjatjara we are Yidinyji/MBararam we  
 are Narungga we share a legacy of colonial categorisation-containment-archivisation  
 and all that was carried on Tall Ships across rolling seas this intergenerational  
 effect of living under Aborigines Acts of the State we want to share the weight of the  
 colonised burden to lighten this load

we are sovereign women we choose to act speak look give back in critical-  
 performative ways we sing we weave we project we disrupt in order  
 to transform we connect to multiple sites of past-present-future  
 and we share this space with you

*Act I* this multi-stage-multi-site project develops a series of performances / projections /  
 poetics our installation activist pieces enact intergenerational transformations of old and  
 new stories we explore the bound and the free what we are bound to  
 historically what we choose to (un)bind ourselves to and from now and  
 into the future

watch this space *Act I* projects toward *Act II* in 2015 be watched we sing to the  
 Old Ones and await their guidance in yet to be imagined ways bear witness to this embodied  
 process this honouring this giving back and cultural continuance a layering of  
 experimental performance the nexus explored between ethical-practice / political-  
 work / activism /education in the poetic and the visual and all that weaves and binds we  
 interrogate the archival-paradox what we both treasure and loath in the same  
 breath where hearts still beat strong between the almost translucent sheets of detailed  
 surveillance we live in the shadow of these racist texts here the state in all  
 its violent (mis)representation we mine those institutions of power the  
 museums the government acts the policies and we offer up new narratives  
 to transform in ways that are currently unimagined

this is our love our responsibility our enacted blood-memory our  
 sovereign identity and (re)representation  
 consider these ideas of the bound and (un)bound we welcome you into the space

**Ali Gumiilya Baker** shifts the colonial gaze through film, performance, projection, and  
 grandmother-stories **Simone Ulalka Tur**'s performance and poetics enact an intergenerational  
 transmission of story-work through education **Faye Rosas Blanch** engages rap theory  
 to embody sovereignty and shedding of the colonial skin **Natalie Harkin**'s archival-poetics  
 is informed by blood-memory, haunting and grandmother-stories.

## Acknowledgements – Act I

### Thanks

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 Office of the Dean of Indigenous Strategy and Engagement.

Fontanelle Gallery and Studios, Artlink magazine, Charles Sturt Council.

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Encouragement from Fiona Salmon, Nici Cumpston, Brenda L. Croft, Fulvia Mantelli and Jared Thomas.

### Notes to artworks:

\*3. *Dedication Song*, 2014 – Thanks to Nancy Bates for assistance with the adaptation of the *Dedication* poem by Mona Ngitji Ngitji Tur to a song

\*\*13. *I am in the House*, 2014, written and performed by Faye Rosas Blanch

*Language in Action*, 2014 in Gus Worby, Simone Ulalka Tur and Faye Rosas Blanch, 'Writing Forward, Writing Back, Writing Black – Working Process And Work-in-progress', *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature*, supplement, September 2014

*My pen is my weapon*, 2014, written by Faye Rosas Blanch and performed by Faye Rosas Blanch and Simone Ulalka Tur, video and sound post production by Denys Finney

- Opening event Sunday 24 August with performances by the artists, including Katie Inawantji Morrison accompanying Simone on violin, 'anthropologists' Steve Hemming (MC), Jo Holmes and Jackie Wurm, singer Isabelle da Sylveira, and opening speaker Dr Julie Gough and Kaurna greeting by Uncle Yerloburka Lewis O'Brien.
- Seminar with the artists 3–4pm Thursday 28 August, Fontanelle Gallery
- Closing performance by the artists, including Katie Inawantji Morrison, 4–6pm Saturday 20 September. We acknowledge the song *For I Aborigine* by the late Lily Sansbury and Carroll Karpandy from the album *Nukunya Dreaming*. We also thank Carroll Karpandy for granting us permission to perform this song.

Fontanelle Gallery, Wednesday–Sunday 12–5pm

For more background and updates, including *Act II* and *Act III* go to: [www.flinders.edu.au/yunggorendi/unbound](http://www.flinders.edu.au/yunggorendi/unbound)  
 More information about the Letters Patent 1836  
<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/awaye/the-letters-patent/3803030>

This project was created on Kaurna Country.

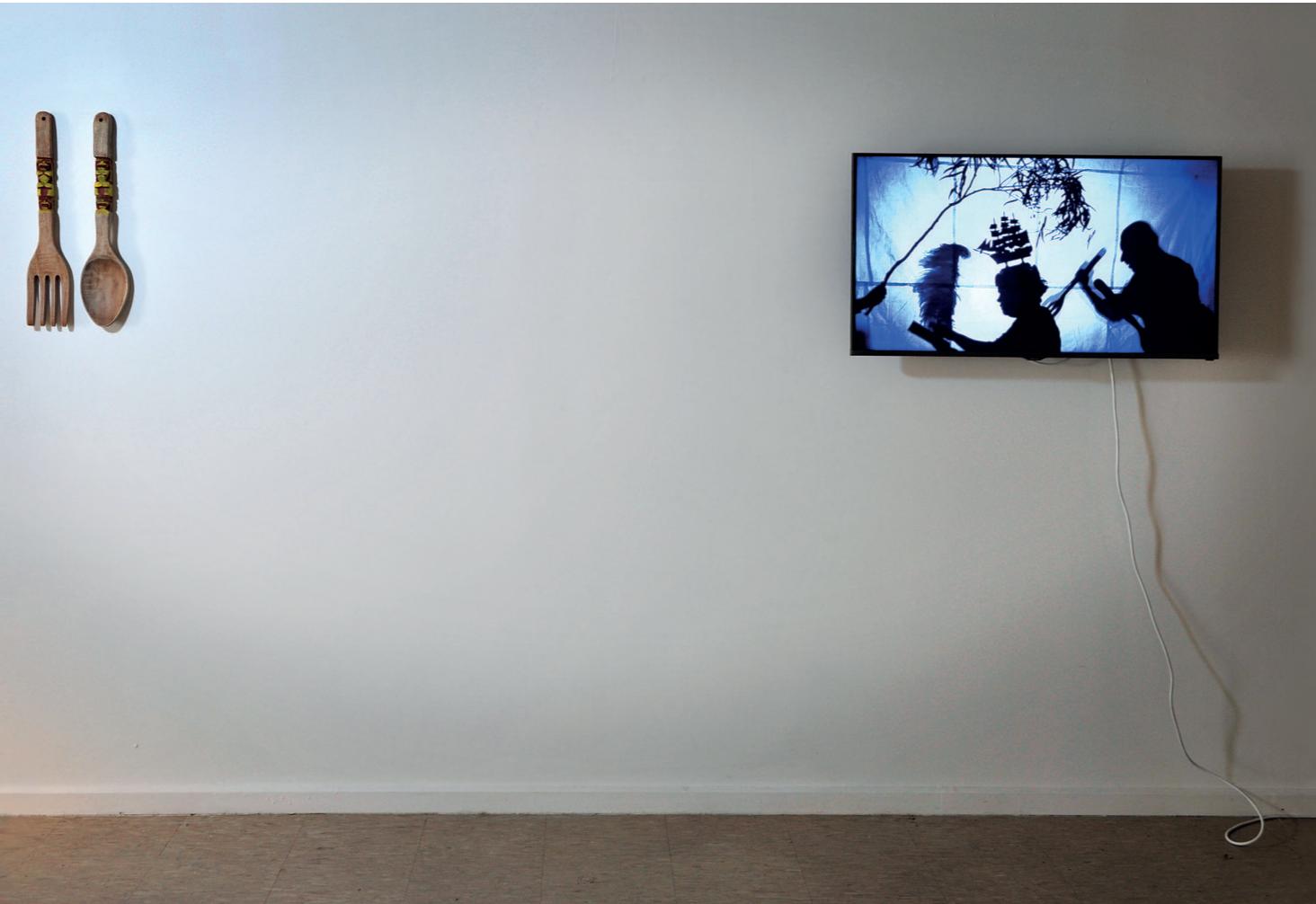
This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.



## 9 Unnatural – Unacceptable – ALI GUMILLYA BAKER

Un-natural because the more recent history of this country is not and never will be a natural unfolding. Un-natural because the construction of race is not natural, these genealogical labels are but one view of humanity, and these ways of viewing people and our relationships to each other have done much to destroy the social, spiritual and cultural fabric of my people. As well as these myths of race, the Western construction of nature is not the only way of viewing our world. Despite and because of these un-natural ideas we continue to have an institution named 'Museum of Natural History', an institution that has enormous power in the construction of knowledge for our children. Within this institution Aboriginal people are viewed in a past tense. Within this space is the evidence of crime, stolen human remains, blood, hair, bones and casts of our bodies as violent records of a false superiority. My family have been caught in this trap of representation and it is unacceptable.

Who speaks? Who listens? I was left here for dead but instead I lived.



Ali Gumillya Baker, fork and spoon, 2014, mixed media and down among the wild men/colonial imagination, 2014, video

## 10 Paperbark, the Milky Way and the Everyday...

*Bound and Unbound: Sovereign Acts – Act II* is presented as a part of the inaugural TARNANTHI | Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art, October 2015.

*Act II* speaks back to colonial institutions of power as dominant repositories of culture and knowledge. These institutions on North Terrace contain many founding documents and historic journals, letters, images and diaries of non-Indigenous explorers and colonists, as well as their depictions of Aboriginal people. Within these collections are representations of the artists' families and communities. *Act II* will perform, project and respond to these imposed colonial spaces.

Winds carry whispers  
from a lifetime ago  
breathe deep and love  
we are on Kaurna Land.

*Sovereign love poem #6*, 5 – 18 October 2015, bus shelter poster, Commercial Road, Port Adelaide



Ali Gumillya Baker, pod and seeds, 2014, mixed media, dimensions variable

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## Bound and Unbound: Sovereign Acts – Act II

Performance 1: 8 October 2015, 7.30pm  
Art Gallery of South Australia, Fish Gates

Performance 2: 14 October 2015, 7.30pm  
State Library of South Australia, forecourt

*Bound and Unbound: Sovereign Acts – Act II* is presented as a part of TARNANTHI | Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art, developed by the Art Gallery of South Australia in partnership with BHP Billiton and supported by the Government of South Australia.

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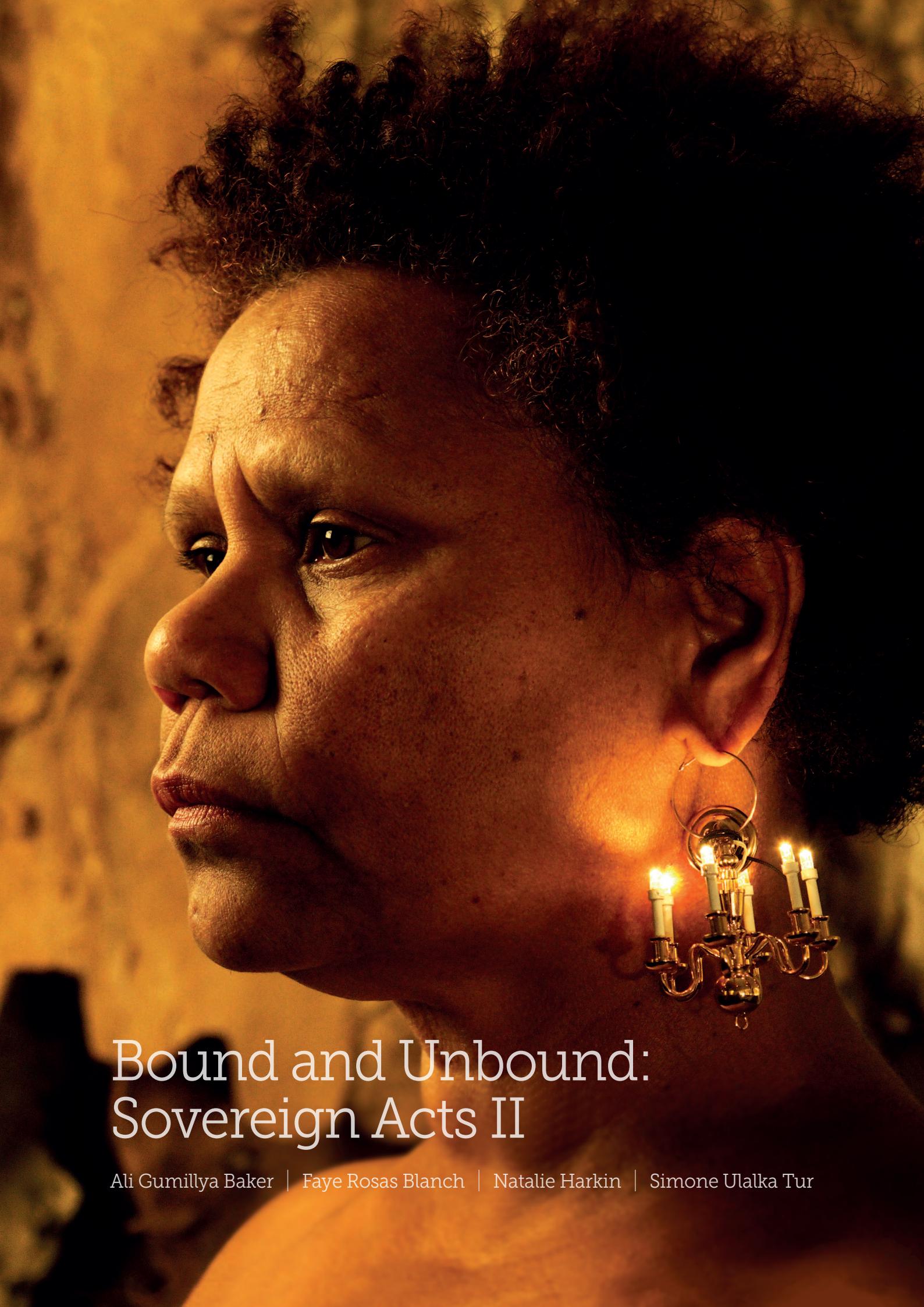
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Faye Rosas Blanch: *Bound/Unbound Sovereign Acts – Act II*, 2015, digital photograph, courtesy the artist

Bound and Unbound: Sovereign Acts – Act II



# Bound and Unbound: Sovereign Acts II

Ali Gumillya Baker | Faye Rosas Blanch | Natalie Harkin | Simone Ulalka Tur