

Aski Earth Terre Yarta

Education Resource



AUSTRALIAN
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FOR PHOTOGRAPHY

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Project Partner



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Cover image: Meryl McMaster, *Bring me to this place*, 2017. Courtesy and © the Artist.

Acknowledgement

The Australian Centre for Photography acknowledges and pays respect to the past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of Country featured in this exhibition and across the nation. We celebrate the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



About the Resource

Important Information

Curriculum:

The *Aski Earth Terre Yarta* learning resource is closely aligned with the Australian Curriculum:

- The Arts: Drama, Dance, Media Arts, Music, Visual Arts
- Humanities and social science; history, geography, economics and business
- English

Set classroom ground rules:

Due to the nature of some of the exhibition content, setting classroom ground rules with your students before viewing is an important step in creating a safe space. It helps to develop mutual respect and understanding between the members of your classroom community.

For more information on the exhibition and the artists, please go to: acp.org.au

About the Exhibition



Aski Earth Terra Yarta: James Tylor + Meryl McMaster

For the ACP's annual 'In dialogue' 2019, two Indigenous artists, one Australian the other Canadian, communicate their histories of European colonization. James Tylor (Possum) explores Australian cultural representations through his multi-cultural heritage, which comprises Nunga (Kurna), Māori (Te Arawa) and European (English, Scottish, Irish, Dutch, Iberian and Norwegian). In Kurna language, *Turalayintheta Yarta* means 'to see yourself in the landscape' or 'landscape photography'. The *Turalayintheta Yarta* series was taken by Tylor over a two-year period as he walked sections of the 1,200 km long Heysen Trail, parts of which trace the boundary of Kurna lands across the Mount Lofty Ranges.

In painting over the photographs with ochre, pipeclay and charcoal the artist is embodied within these ancestral spaces. His use of traditional language and design also honours the many Nunga nations of this area, including Ramindjeri, Ngarrindjeri, Kurna, Peramangk, Ngadjuri, Adnyamathanha, and Nukunu lands. The carved and painted artifacts included in the series are potent in their activation of the Nunga people's intellectual, spiritual and physical connection with yarta, or Country.

Being born into the heritage of both Canadian Plains Cree and migrant British and Dutch has shaped Meryl McMaster's relationship to the environment. Her awareness of time also comes from this melding of diverse cultural approaches – one linear and extending in both directions from the present, the other recurrent and cyclical.

The series *As immense as the sky* features sites on the central and southern Canadian Prairies. Through the use of photography and performance the artist has reconnected with her ancestors and introduced herself to the aski, or land, they inhabited. The elements of the environs, birds, beasts, and foliage have emerged from the narratives of the landscape to embellish her poems and images. While the rain, clouds and pale light on the horizon emphasise fleeting changes over an ageless terrain.

Above: James Tylor, *Tarntanyangga* and *Karrawirra pari*, from the *Turalayintheta Yarta* 2017, 2019
Photographer: Michael Waite

James Tylor



Turalayinthe Yarta series

This series explores my connection with *Kaurna yarta* (Kaurna land) through learning, researching, documenting and traveling on country. *Turalayinthe Yarta* is a Kaurna phrase 'to see yourself in the landscape' or 'landscape photography'. In a two-year period, I travelled over 300 km of the southern part of the Hans Heysen trail that runs parallel along the Kaurna nation boundary line in the Mount Lofty ranges. Combining photographs and traditional Nunga (South Australian Aboriginal people) designs to represent my connection with this Kaurna region of South Australia.

The Heysen trail runs through the Mount Lofty and Flinders ranges from Cape Jervis in the south to Wilpena pound in the north. The Heysen trail named after the renown German Australian colonial landscape painter Sir Hans Heysen. The 1,200km long trail passes over many different Nunga nations such as Ramindjeri, Ngarrindjeri, Kaurna, Peramangk, Ngadjuri, Adnyamathanha, and Nukunu lands. I have attempted to acknowledge these Nunga nations throughout this series with traditional language and design.

The photographs of the landscape document different regions, and environments of Kaurna and the surrounding Nunga region. Painting over the European medium of photography with ochre, pipeclay and charcoal with Nunga designs to represent Nunga people's intellectual, spiritual and physical connection with yarta (Country). The ochre and charcoal on the photographs is a physical presentation of the landscape on the photographs.

My Nunga Kaurna family has been in the region of South Australia for 65,000–80,000 years and has a rich cultural connection to this land. It is a great honour for me as a Kaurna person to learn, practice and walk in my ancestors' footsteps. This series acknowledges and pays respect to Nunga people and their rich cultural, spiritual and physical connection to this landscape of South Australia.

Above: James Tylor, *Turalayinthe Yarta series* 2017, 2019. Photographer: Michael Waite

Meryl McMaster



***As Immense as the Sky* series**

The way we experience the passing of time shapes our relationship to and understanding of our immediate world. My awareness of time comes from an overlapping of two distinct approaches – one is that of a linear path that extends in both directions from the present, and another one that is recurrent and cyclical. This intersection of world views has been part of my upbringing, a result of being born into a family both Indigenous (Plains Cree) and Western (British/Dutch).

Contemplating time and the countless cycles of life that have recurred around the ancient *mistassini* (monoliths), *sputinas* (buttes), *wiyacahk* (canyons) and *ayeakow awacha* (dunes) of Canada led to the development of *As Immense as the Sky*. These thoughts left me in a state of wonderment, but also stirred within me a fearful apprehension of our permanent and collective impact upon our beautiful world.

To confront this fear, I sought wisdom in the places of ancestral life, listening to the truths of relatives, Elders, friends and peoples who have traversed this land before me. At the social, cultural and environmental contact zones of my Indigenous and European ancestors I set out to study and collect their knowledge and to animate and re-tell it in a personally transformative process through photography. *As Immense as the Sky* is about walking these ancient paths, experiencing the diversity of panoramas, and learning about my ancestors' wisdom.

The resulting images are a blend and collapse of time into the present. The stories of kayas (long ago) and the foreboding whispers of the future intertwine my body with the land, in the hope that we all maintain a long-term ecological equilibrium with the world around us.

Above: Meryl McMaster, *On the edge of this immensity* 2019.

Kurna History

James Tylor

Kurna people are the traditional Indigenous owners of the Adelaide Plains and Foothills of the Nganu Mount Lofty Ranges in South Australia. The Yarta Kurna Nation stretches from Witawartingga Cape Jervis in the south to Murrkauwi Crystal Brook in the north and sits between the Nganu Mount Lofty Ranges and the Yarlú Spencer Gulf. Kurna people have been in the Kurna Nation of the Adelaide Plains for over 65,000 years. Over these millennia, Kurna people have developed a highly tuned and sustainable cultural understanding of this landscape. They utilised the unique geography by harnessing the climate, geology, animals, plants, constellations and interwove this relationship with the environment into cultural historical stories and Songlines. Kurna people traditionally had a unique system of custodial ownership of the land called *Parngkarra*, where the specific regions of land and knowledges were handed down through the generations. Kurna place names are important signifiers of cultural stories and Songlines that connect to the history of this landscape.

In 1836, the British South Australian Company officially colonised the mainland of South Australia with the foundation of the city of Adelaide at the Kurna site of Tarntanya. The establishment of the colony marks the beginning of the invasion of the Kurna Nation and the dispossession of Kurna people from their traditional lands. The British government in South Australia were aware of the Kurna *Parngkarra* system of generational inherited custodial ownership of the land. They chose to replace it with the British commercial system of land sale ownership, called Torrens Title, which helped to fund the South Australian Company to colonise the region of South Australia. The South Australian Company sold the land to British and German colonists for European farming and settlement. The British colonisation of South Australia was first led by European explorers, military and surveyors and followed by farmers, miners and settlers. Many of the Indigenous places were renamed after European explorers, pastoralist and places in Europe. The use of European languages such as, English, Gaelic and German in place names in South Australia was a deliberate tactic by the British to declare their ownership of the land and remove the Indigenous history, language and cultural presence from the Australian landscape.



Above: James Tylor, *Pudna/Waterhole*, from the *Karrawirra Yarta* series 2016, Becquerel Daguerreotype

Kurna History



The British South Australian Government used a series of acts to dispossess Kurna people of their culture, language and traditional lands. The South Australian Government Acts were the first of their kind in the Australian Colonies to systematically control Aboriginal people. Today we know these laws as Racial Segregation, Racial Assimilation, Domestic slavery and the Stolen Generation. The beginning of the Australian Frontier Wars in South Australia started with the colonisation of Adelaide in 1836 by the British colonists forcing Kurna people off their land. This dispossession of land forced Kurna people into the Christian Missions in Pirltawardli (1838-1845) and then Kintore Avenue (1845-1851) where they were racially segregated from the European colonists in Tarntanya Adelaide. The European settlers in Tarntanya Adelaide lobbied for the removal of Aboriginal people in the city, which led to the closure of Kintore mission. Kurna children were first moved to Poonindie (1850-1894) 700kms away in Port Lincoln, officially beginning the Stolen Generation policy in Australia. The children were later moved again to Point Pearce (1868-1967) and Raukkan Point McLeay mission (1859-1974) over 200km away from Adelaide.

Indigenous people, including Kurna, were not allowed to leave the missions without permission from the Aboriginal Protector. The main objectives of Aboriginal missions were to remove Aboriginal people from the land for European settlement and to westernise and train them as indentured domestic servants to European colonists, which was a form of slave labour. It was not until the 1967 referendum that Aboriginal people were included in the Australian Census. The referendum on this decision marked the end of racial segregation of Aboriginal people from the European population in Australia. The official closure of the government Christian missions meant Kurna people could return back to the Tarntanya Adelaide region. The community has actively been reclaiming their traditional ownership of the Kurna land through highlighting Kurna people's 65 000+ year cultural history of the region.

Above: James Tylor, *Wirramiyu* and *Kurdanyi* 'miyu and ngamaitya kumpu', from the *Turalayinthi Yarta* series 2017, 2019. Photographer: Michael Waite

Plains Cree History

Meryl McMaster

The oral traditions among North American Indigenous peoples are many. Each culture has stories that tell about the beginning of time and everything subsequent. They are stories about the land and all that takes place upon it.

These stories are about all our relations. They are our identity. They are passed down orally. European history in the Americas, on the other hand, is told differently. Their stories are about events based on key dates. This is how we're taught in school.

But it is the story Indigenous/settler relations that is significant. Europeans arrived in different stages beginning with the Norse about 1,000 years ago, landing in what is now known as L'Anse aux Meadows, on the northwest shores of Newfoundland. They didn't set up permanent settlements. Five hundred years later in 1497, the Italian Giovanni Caboto sailed to the eastern shores of Newfoundland. Not long after several European countries began sailing to North America and later setting up colonial settlements, importing their people along with historical disputes.

While in North America different European nations set up alliances with different Indigenous peoples. Such alliances were often trading partners. Indigenous peoples were still considered equal in terms of power. Such relations were solidified in Peace and Friendship Treaties. This did not last long, however, as Indigenous peoples began dying from the importation of infectious diseases decimating populations up to 90%. The ravages of disease and warfare reduced Indigenous populations to a point that colonial governments began acquiring property through land cession treaties. The shift of power was complete.



Above: Meryl McMaster, *Calling me home* 2019.

Plains Cree History

I'm curious about how our sense of self is constructed through history, lineage and culture.

Meryl McMaster



Since the late nineteenth century Indigenous peoples have been forced to live in designated areas known as reserves, where they have had to learn new ways of life. In the process they became disconnected with ancient customs and traditional knowledges. Stories of the land have also almost disappeared. Slowly, however, Indigenous peoples across the country have begun to heal and understand how critical these stories are to their survival and continuance.

Today, this healing process can be seen in the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, where reconciliation defined as “coming to terms with events of the past in a manner that overcomes conflict and establishes a respectful and healthy relationship among people going forward.”

My own familial history is rich in both heritages – Indigenous (Plains Cree) and European (British and Dutch) – and my current work is about the questions of this dynamic. It is about the histories and stories of both sides coming together. Recently I had the privilege of traveling across Canada to learn where many of these stories originated. I feel that without making such an effort to be in the land and landscapes of my ancestors I would be deprived of this knowledge.

Above: Meryl McMaster, *Lead me to places I could never find on my own I* 2019.

Exploring History

Historically in Australia, Indigenous people didn't have much say in how they were represented in early photography when being photographed by European photographers.

James Tylor



In Australia and Canada, photography was used historically as a tool for documenting Indigenous people and the land from a colonial perspective. Museums in Australia and around the world hold extensive collections of photographs portraying Indigenous peoples. These images are framed by an anthropological perspective, one which has inhibited a broader understanding of the diversity and complexity of Indigenous cultures and histories.

James Tylor uses photography as a tool to re-examine and reconsider these historical representations and shift the narrative around Australian Aboriginal culture. In many cases he physically manipulates the digital print by hand-colouring or tinting the surface. He also experiments with the nineteenth century daguerreotype, or Becquerel process, used by some of the first anthropologists in South Australia. This method produces direct positive images on a silver-coated copper plate, each a unique object. The surface is easily scratched and so they were housed in elaborate cases for protection.

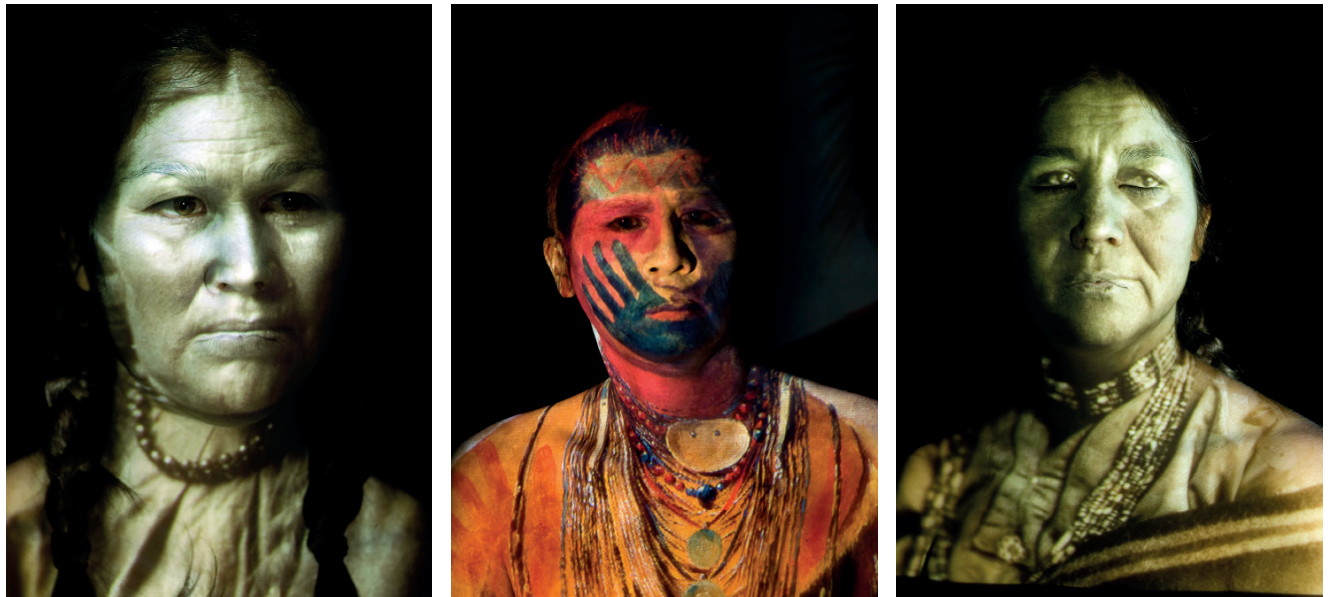
The artist says, 'The appearance of the analogue processes helps to transport peoples imaginations to that time in history. I like to use digital process with analogue techniques to do new things with the old method.' By working creatively with analogue processes and technologies, which can be tied to specific periods in Australian history, Tylor shifts the viewers thinking about what is presented in the image while also reinvigorating an appreciation for now unfamiliar photographic media.

Above: James Tylor, *Wirramiyu*, from the *Turalayinhi Yarta* series 2017, 2019.

Exploring History

Tylor views the role of the museum as being pivotal to changing our understanding of the past. Until the late twentieth century their role as a western educational institution having excluded Aboriginal people from telling their own stories, instead presenting stories 'misrepresented by political agenda and Darwinist hierarchical theories'. He says,

'This is problematic because although things have dramatically changed in museums in Australia in the last thirty years, the legacy of those ideas is still affecting the representation of Indigenous culture in museums today.'



Meryl McMaster work reflects on how representations of the landscape and identity in Canada have been impacted upon by colonisation. The artist seeks to repurpose and shift photography's role in perpetuating historical stereotypes. In 'Ancestral' series, McMaster responds to images by American ethnographic photographers, such as William Soule and Edward S Curtis. Overlaying her features on images of known Indigenous people the artist reclaims their identity and stories. 'Most of the subjects in the historical images were passive, so the "Ancestral" images deal with the gaze. My subjects are looking out at the viewer. So it flipped around the way the Indigenous body was represented in the Western photographic tradition.' Curtis and Soule's images were made as visual records to document Indigenous peoples and their way of life before a predicted disappearance. Over 100 years later these images continue to be circulated as historical truth.

In works such as 'Bring me to this place' and 'On the edge of this immensity', McMaster wears white make-up on the top section of her face. This practice was initially used in her Ancestral series to transform her body into a screen to allow the projected image to show up against her skin. She continued using white or colourful face paint in her later photographs as it helped to disguise her as she created dreamlike characters and theatrical embodiments of herself. Over time the use of this paint has come to represent many things. Sometimes it symbolises the masks/personas that we wear; sometimes it is used to create a blank slate upon which one's self is inscribed, erased and re-written over time; and sometimes the make-up can be understood as the imposing of 'whiteness' on Indigenous bodies through the processes of colonisation. The artist encourages the viewer to reflect critically on the complexities of their individual experience and relationship with colonialism, regardless of their cultural background.

Above left to right: Meryl McMaster, *Ancestral 4* (Cheyanne woman, photograph by Edward S. Curtis) 2008; *Ancestral 14* (Chief White Cloud Cherokee, painting by George Catlin) 2008; and *Ancestral 7* (Otoe woman, photograph by Edward S. Curtis) 2008.

Exploring History

As a mode of representation, photographs are closely linked to notions of visual evidence to the extent that they are often regarded as a mirror image of reality.

It is precisely this close relationship that plays an important role in Indigenous self-representation, where the photographic record offers proof that Indigenous peoples have never actually been ‘vanishing’.

Ellyn Walker



Extend Your Thinking

Consider Walker's statement about photographs being considered a mirror image of reality in a historical context. Choose one of the following exercises to explore this statement:

- Research an anthropological photographer from Australia, or North America, such as Norman Tindale, R.G. Kimber, Edward S. Curtis or William Soule. Write a summary of their main achievements. How was their work viewed at the time it was made. How would their work and attitudes be viewed in today's society?
- Several artists have used anthropological images and documentation as a basis for a body of work, such as Vernon Ah Kee, Bindi Cole, Laurie Nilsen, Maree Clarke and Brooke Andrew. Choose a body of work by an artist to research, detailing their research techniques and use of symbolism. How did they set about reclaiming/correcting these histories?
- Write a short essay detailing how social media and technology, such as Photoshop, has shifted our view of photography as a depiction of reality. Do we still hold the misconception that photographs are 'real'? Does this affect our interaction with social media and the dissemination of information through social media?

Above: James Tylor, *Pudna*, from the *Turalayinthe Yarta* series 2017, 2019.

About the *In Dialogue* exhibitions

Over the years the ACP has facilitates dialogues between an Australian and an International artist with the aim to foster and expand meaningful engagement and deeper global connections. Over several months the selected artists communicate with each other about their research, the concepts they are explore in their practice and how the processes they use to execute their works. Finally they come together for the 'In dialogue' exhibition. They did not collaborated on the works exhibited. However, there are commonalities in their ideas, despite often working with very different materials.



Extend Your Thinking

Explore the 'In Dialogue' approach in the classroom. Assign each student a topic as a basis for a photographic work of art. You can have students draw from a list you have compiled or select their own topic.

- Organise students into pairs. Ask them to start researching their individual topic. In parallel, have them engage in a written conversation about their assigned topic and their planned approach with their partner.
- Set students the challenge of keeping all communication in writing and ensure that they don't share any visuals of their work with each other as they go.
- Conversation topics should include research findings and techniques they plan on exploring while creating their work. Students should continue to update each other (in writing only) as they create the work. How have they chosen to visually communicate their research? What challenges are they facing?
- Have students bring their finished work in to class for presentation to each other. Ask them to identify and reflect on the similarities and differences in their work, and analyse how their topics have been realised in the finished product.
- Invite the class to analyse the 'In Dialogue' projects of other pairs of students. Looking at the images only, can they identify the topic chosen by each artist? Can they see similarities in the works?

Above: Meryl McMaster and James Tylor at the ACP Project Gallery Space, July 2019.
Photographer: Michael Waite

Exploring Language



nipimātisiwin mēskanow pēyakwan kipimātisiwin

My destiny is entwined with yours

mihcēt mēskanāsa ēkwa sīpīsisa itohtēmakahki mahtāwinohk

Networks of trails and waterways leading to sacred sites

ēta kā nakiskātohk ta mācīhk

seasonal meeting places

ēta kā kiyohkātocik pītosi iyiniwak

hunting and gathering areas

ēta kā mistēhtākwahk osci kiyohkēwina kotak iyiniwak

A place crucial to social links with other nations

ēta namōya ka pīkopitamihk osci kayās

A place undamaged since the Younger Dryas*

kayāsi kisiskāciwan

Ancient kisiskāciwan

wāhyaw māyiwēpan

Distant storm

kostamihk tānsi ē wī mēskocipayik nīkānihk askiy

A fearful apprehension of impact in this moment of environmental history

tāntē: minahtakahk (Cypress Hills), Conglomerate Cliffs, Saskatchewan

Place: Minahtakahk (Cypress Hills), Conglomerate Cliffs, Saskatchewan

* Younger Dryas: was a period of rapid cooling in the late Pleistocene 12,800 to 11,500 calendar years ago.

Above: Meryl McMaster, *My destiny is entwined with yours* 2019.

Exploring Language

Language is vital to maintaining and passing on culture. Historically in many parts of Australia, Aboriginal languages and cultural practices were forbidden. Christian missions enforced the learning and use of English and European cultural practices. This meant that over time, many Aboriginal languages have been lost. In the 1880s Kurna language went into decline as a living language, however since the 1990s the Kurna community has been actively reviving its use.



Kurna Song

Nantu Yarta Grey Kangaroo land

Nanturlu tutha ngarkuthi kawanta wamangka
Grey Kangaroo ate grass on the northern plains

Kardlarlu tutha ngadli nantu wayiwayi kumpathi
A fire came and burnt the grass scaring the Grey Kangaroo away

Manya parltarri wamangka, tutha tarni
It rains on the plains and the grass emerges again

Nantu muinmu pudni kawanta wamaana

The Grey Kangaroo comes home again to the northern plains. This is a song about fire farming on the northern plains of the Kurna nation and a metaphor for the European colonisation of the mid north region of South Australia.

Written by Michael O'Brien, James Tylor, Bec Selleck, Rob Amery, Lisa Williamson at University of Adelaide Jan. 2019.

Extend Your Thinking

Ways to explore language in the classroom:

- Select a poem, or piece of descriptive text, which reminds you of 'home' and create your own visual response - photograph, drawing, painting and mixed media.
- Use an online resource for local Aboriginal languages to translate your chosen poem. See the Kurna resource listed on page 24. Present your translation to the class and discuss as a group how the translation alters the rhythm and flow of the poem. As an extension, try adapting the poem into a song and reflect on how music can be used to add and enhance meaning.
- Compare the work and life of two Indigenous writers, such as Jared Thomas, Natalie Harkin, Alexis West, Bruce Pascoe, Stan Grant, Anita Heiss, Ali Cobby Eckermann Sally Morgan or Claire G. Coleman. Write a comparison of the two poets style of writing and themes explored. Include in your report some information about events that may have contributed to their perspectives on a particular issue or subject.

Above: James Tylor, *Marrimyurna*, from the *Turalayinthe Yarta* series 2017, 2019.

Exploring Identity



Much of the strength of Tylor's work is derived from the way in which he begins with intimate moments, quiet times of reflection and personal stories, and reimagines these experiences.... Tylor lives these lives, through research, creating artefacts and taking part in an intimate and tactile photographic process.

Eleanor Scicchitano

Both Tylor and McMaster seek to examine and reconcile their dual heritages through their art practice. McMaster aims to reflect on and overcome conflicted feelings she has held about her ancestry. While her parents raised her on positive stories about both of her heritages, when she came to learn about Canada's history she struggled to reconcile the two sides of her identity that were steeped in conflict. 'It was as if I was involved in some kind of betrayal. I struggled with how to acknowledge and be present in both sides of myself.' McMaster explores these confusing feelings and biases in her images. 'I've learned that my two different heritages are not always going to completely align, and in order to move forward I have to celebrate those differences.' Investigating the past in order to form a fuller understanding of the present, McMaster hopes to make space for moments of introspection and contemplation of where we are and where we are heading.

James Tylor explores the meaning of culture, and the way it can influence our perceptions of ourselves and others. Researching aspects of Australia's Colonial and Aboriginal history extensively while creating each body of work, Tylor references oral histories and archival histories in his work, seeking connection and understanding of his Aboriginal, Maori and European heritages. The loss of Indigenous cultural identity and practice in Australia is central to his practice, and he hopes to see Australia 'decolonise and indigenise Australia's history and culture', emphasising the importance for all Australians to engage with our indigenous and colonial histories in a healthy way. Tylor approaches the subject from a perspective of communication, education and understanding, striving for a peaceful balance between cultures.

Above: James Tylor, *Yarlú*, from the *Turalayinthe Yarta* series 2017, 2019.

Exploring Identity

Reflected in one's ancestry is the weight of history – histories that are as much about the legacies of family as they are about the self.

Ellyn Walker



Extend Your Thinking

Exercises to unpack the concept of 'the gaze' and its impact on self-identity:

- Research 'the gaze' and write an explanation of what the term means in a visual art, or art photography, context. You may choose to focus on 'the male gaze', 'the female gaze' or 'the colonial gaze'.
- In a small group, complete a series of photographic portraits using different points of observation, high and low angle camerawork. Also use different expressions to communicate a variety of emotions. Make sure each person has a turn in the role of photographer and sitter.
- Once you have completed their portraits, analyse some of the images. breaking the class into three groups, discuss three different perspectives: the gaze of the photographer; the gaze of the subject, and the gaze of the audience.
- Collate some examples from advertising, magazines and the media. Use these as a basis for discussing how the mediated gaze impacts on collective cultural identity and self-perception.

Above: *Aski Earth Terra Yarta*, installation view at ACP Project Gallery Space, July 2019.
Photographer: Michael Waite

Exploring Landscape

I came to see these landscapes as immense time capsules of buried knowledge. As Immense as the Sky is about walking these ancient paths, experiencing the diversity of panoramas, and learning about my ancestors' wisdom.

Meryl McMaster



For many First Nations peoples a close relationship with, and understanding of, the land has been central to their survival and way of life. Colonisation and the subsequent displacement of Indigenous peoples from their land is a key contributing factor to the erosion of their culture. Colonial agriculture has also had an impacted the environment contributing to the challenges we are now experiencing across the planet.

McMaster positions herself within the natural Canadian landscape dressed in elaborate handcrafted costumes. However, her intent is for the landscape to speak as an equal subject within the image. The artist met with family, friends and community Elders to gain an understanding of the significance of the sites in which she poses. Her intention is for the viewer to lose themselves in the landscape and appreciate the land as having a long Indigenous history. A lover of the outdoors McMaster says, 'I think I'm trying to pull on my own heartstrings when I'm taking my images, like I'm trying to bring out those personal emotions that I feel when I'm just on my own or with people — bring out that soul within the plants or the trees.'

In 'From a Still Unquiet Place', Meryl surveys the site on which her father was born. Draped down her back are locket, each containing a photograph of an ancestor, and her body is swathed in tartan. The impact of deforestation and farming is evident in the vast open field. Without the trees to adsorb the subterranean water a lake has formed.

Above: Meryl McMaster, *From a still unquiet place* 2019.

Exploring Landscape



For James Tylor, the Australian landscape and its preservation is at the forefront of his practice. Drawing on the research of writers such as Bruce Pascoe, the author of 'Dark Emu', Tylor examines Australia's history of colonisation and migration and their profound impact on Indigenous cultures and relationship to place and spirituality. The impact of white settlement on the landscape is obvious in 'Turalayinthi Yarta' series in which images of lone trees and open fields document what was once forest areas and wild grasslands.

In his series 'Un-resettling (dwellings)' Tylor references colonial artists Alexander Schramm and George French Angas to construct a number of traditional Aboriginal shelters. Tylor then photographed them in their bush setting before hand colouring sections of each black and white print. In tinting the dwellings he sets them apart from the monochromatic background. This highlights their absence in today's landscape and the erasure of Indigenous culture from our collective memory.

Extend Your Thinking

- Research the pre-colonial history of your local area, either online or through your local library, and create a visual representation of what the area might have looked like before colonisation. Focus on choice of medium and consider use of perspective.

NOTE: 'Dark Emu' by Bruce Pascoe presents extensive research on pre-colonial history. Information on individual areas can be found by referring to the index of the book. This would be a good starting point for students.

- Both McMaster and Tylor often reference colonial art that they came across in their research. Choose an early colonial painting or sketch by Alexander Schramm, George French Angas, or S.T. Gill that depicts Aboriginal communities and their way of life. Then:
 1. Write a diary entry from the artist's perspective, detailing what they observed. Also consider how it might have felt to be in a new landscape, observing a culture very different from their own.
 2. Write a diary entry as one of the people in the painting detailing the changes in their life as the colony rapidly developed. Include their physical and emotional responses.

As an extension, review each other's work and discuss empathy and bias. Did you find it easier to empathise with one person than another? Are their elements of bias present in some of your classmates responses?

Above: James Tylor, *Dome hut with stone wind break*, *Dome hut in a field* and *A-frame hut*, from the *Un-resettling* series 2013.

About James Tylor

James Tylor (b. 1986) lives and works in Adelaide, Australia.

Through his photographic practice, James Tylor examines the loss of Indigenous cultural identity in contemporary Australia. Combining drawing with analogue and digital photographic techniques, he uses historical photographic processes such as the daguerreotype and ambrotype that were often used to document Indigenous peoples and the European colonisation of the continent. Tylor also experiments with contemporary techniques of colouring, tearing and scratching the prints, incorporating elements from oral histories and archival research.



In recent works, Tylor has created and photographed culturally hybrid versions of tools, shelters, and other significant objects that reflect his own diverse heritage, which comprises Nunga (Kurna), Māori (Te Arawa), European (English, Scottish, Irish, Dutch, Iberian and Norwegian) and Australian ancestry. The histories of colonisation and migration — and their profound impact on Indigenous cultures and relationship to place and spirituality — are central to his practice.

Tylor has exhibited internationally in the United States, France and Germany and across Australia at institutions including Tandanya National Indigenous Cultural Institute, Adelaide; Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide; Artspace, Sydney; 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney; Bendigo Art Gallery; QAGOMA, Brisbane; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; and the Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne. His work is held in public and private collections in Australia, Aotearoa (New Zealand), United Kingdom, United States, France and Italy.

James recommends you read:

Bruce Pascoe, *Dark emu: Aboriginal Australia and the birth of agriculture*, 2018, 2014

Bill Gammage, *The biggest estate on earth: how Aborigines made Australia*, 2011

Charles Massey, *Call of the reed warbler: regenerative agriculture for a restored earth*, 2018

About Meryl McMaster



Meryl McMaster (b. 1988) lives and works in Ottawa, Canada.

Multidisciplinary artist Meryl McMaster works predominantly with photography, incorporating the production of props, sculptural garments and performance into images that form a synergy, transporting the viewer out of the ordinary and into a space of contemplation and introspection.

McMaster's work has been included in exhibitions throughout Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom, including the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, Washington and New York; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art, Toronto; Eiteljorg Museum, Indianapolis; Ottawa Art Gallery; Institute of American Indian Arts Museum of Contemporary Native Arts, Santa Fe; McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg; Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon; and the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

McMaster's work is featured in public collections within Canada and the United States, including the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa; Eiteljorg Museum, Indianapolis; the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, Washington and New York; Ottawa Art Gallery; Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City; and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, Gatineau. McMaster is the recipient of the Scotiabank New Generation Photography Award, the REVEAL Indigenous Art Award, Charles Pachter Prize for Emerging Artists, the Canon Canada Prize, the Eiteljorg Contemporary Art Fellowship, the OCAD U Medal and in 2016 was long-listed for the Sobey Art Award.

Meryl recommends you read:

Olive Patricia Dickason and William Newbigging, *Indigenous Peoples within Canada: a concise history*, 2019

Thomas King et al., *Our story: Aboriginal voices on Canada's past*, 2004

Peter Knudtson and David Suzuki, *Wisdom of the Elders: sacred native stories of nature*, 1997

Glossary

Alliance - a union or association formed for mutual benefit, especially between countries or organisations.

Ancestral - of, belonging to, or inherited from an ancestor or ancestors.

anthropologist- someone who studies human societies and cultures and their development, including the study of human biological and physiological characteristics and their evolution.

assimilation - the process of becoming similar to something.

Bias - inclination or prejudice for or against one person or group, especially in a way considered to be unfair.

Colonial - relating to or characteristic of a colony or colonies.

Complexity - the state or quality of being intricate or complicated.

Contemplating - look thoughtfully at something or someone for a long time.

Custodial - the legal right or responsibility to care for someone or something.

Cyclical - occurring in cycles; recurrent.

Decimate - to kill a large number of something, or to reduce something severely.

Displacement - the action of moving someone or something from its place or position.

Disposition - the position or arrangement of something in a particular place.

Elude - escape from or avoid someone or something, typically in a skilful way.

Equilibrium - a state in which opposing forces or influences are balanced.

Erosion - the gradual destruction or diminution of something.

Ethnologist - a scientist who study and comparison different races of people and their cultures, especially in regard to their historical development.

Foreboding - implying that something bad is going to happen.

Immense - extremely large or great, especially in scale or degree.

Institution - a large organisation that has a particular kind of work or purpose.

Intervention - the action or process of intervening.

Interwine - twist or twine together. Connect or link (two or more things) closely.

Introspection - the examination or observation of one's own mental and emotional processes.

Self-analysis or soul-searching.

Kinfolk - another term for kinsfolk (in anthropological or formal use) a person's blood relations, regarded collectively.

Linear - progressing from one stage to another in a single series of steps; sequential.

Linear path - the Linear Path is a worldview in which mastering perfectionism, progress and ever-exceeding improvement lead to success, security and happiness.

Ochre - Ochre or ocher is a natural clay earth pigment which is a mixture of ferric oxide and varying amounts of clay and sand. It ranges in colour from yellow to deep orange or brown.

Pipeclay - a fine white clay, used especially for making tobacco pipes, whitening leather or other dress, etc.

Pivotal - of crucial importance in relation to the development or success of something else.

Racial segregation - is the systemic separation of people into racial or other ethnic groups in daily life.

Reconcile - the restoration of friendly relations

Representation - the description or portrayal of someone or something in a particular way.

Romanticise - deal with or describe in an idealized or unrealistic fashion; make (something) seem better or more appealing than it really is.

Traverse - to move or travel across or through something, especially an area of land or water.

Transformative - causing a major change to something or someone, especially in a way that makes it or them better.

Wonderment - a state of awed admiration or respect

Resources and Links

For more information on the exhibition and the artists, please go to: **acp.org.au**

Meryl McMaster

www.merylmcmaster.com

<https://www.cbc.ca/arts/exhibitionists/with-haunting-photos-and-elaborate-costumes-meryl-mc-master-shows-us-the-deep-history-of-the-land-1.4998974>

<https://www.glenbow.org/exhibitions/meryl-mcmaster/>

<https://bordercrossingsmag.com/article/picturing-the-red-line>

<https://www.macleans.ca/culture/photographer-meryl-mcmaster-how-the-world-is-really-transformed/>

James Tylor

<https://www.jamestylor.com/bio.html>

<https://www.antidote.org.au/artists/james-tylor/>

<https://www.artlink.com.au/articles/4159/moments-of-intersection-james-tylor/>

<https://memoreview.net/blog/james-tylor-un-resettling-vivien-anderson-gallery-by-helen-hughes>

<https://www.jamestylor.com/national-gallery-of-victoria.html>

Kaurna resources

<https://www.adelaide.edu.au/kwp/resources/>

<http://www.kaurnaplacenames.com>

Plains Cree resources:

http://digital.scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/exhibit_nehiyawak_leadership

<https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/settlement/kids/021013-2161-e.html>

Transforming Tindale

<https://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/journals/index.php/phrj/article/view/5329/5791>

The Gaze

<https://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/mediatheory/keywords/gaze/>

<http://www.humbertgalleries.ca/sites/default/files/Returning%20the%20Gaze%20Teaching%20Resource%20Guide.pdf>