

Brook Garru Andrew: DIWIL Education Resource

MURRAY ART MUSEUM ALBURY

Education Kit

MAMA



Brook Garru Andrew
DIWIL, 2021
Installation view
Murray Art Museum Albury
Photo: Jeremy Weihrauch

Introduction

Murray Art Museum Albury (MAMA) is proud to present DIWIL, an immersive installation by the internationally acclaimed interdisciplinary artist and scholar, Brook Garru Andrew.

The Wiradjuri word diwil translates to ‘collection of small particles or things’ and reflects on the artist’s relationship with objects, history, and Country. The exhibition marks the premiere of *GARRU NGAJUJU NGAAY*, a major new installation commissioned by MAMA. *GARRU* (magpie) *NGAJUU NGAAY* (see) is a wall drawing and neon installation that fully surrounds audiences in the museum’s collection galleries. The work is part of a continually evolving approach to wall drawing and museum intervention, and prominently includes language, with the words *NGAJUU NGAAY – I SEE* making the gallery a place of inspection, reckoning and exchange.

Within the space created by *GARRU NGAJUJU NGAAY*, key works from the last decade amplify the artist’s approach to harnessing alternative narratives to explore the legacies of colonisation and modernism.

Brook Garru Andrew’s matriarchal kinship is from the kalar midday (land of the three rivers) of Wiradjuri, and Ngunnawal on his mother’s father’s line, both Aboriginal nations of Australia, and paternally Celtic. He is driven by the collisions of intertwined narratives, often emerging from the devastating effects of colonisation. Andrew’s contemporary interpretation of diwil refers to the problems of access to cultural objects and traditional lands for many Aboriginal people today, what the artist calls the mess of the “Colonial Hole”. As title for this new exhibition, diwil describes the bringing together of new and historical artworks to speak to each other at this time and to enter the museum’s permanent collection.

Brook Garru Andrew was Artistic Director of NIRIN, the 22nd Biennale of Sydney, 2020, and is currently Enterprise Professor, Interdisciplinary Practice at the University of Melbourne, Associate Professor, Fine Art at Monash University and Associate Researcher at the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford. Brook is represented by Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne; Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney; and Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris and Brussels.

DIWIL (pr. G-whi-il)
GARRU (pr. Ghaa-roo)
NGAJUU (pr. Narr-duu)
NGAAY (pr. Naay)

This Education Resource for the exhibition Brook Garru Andrew: DIWIL has been developed to accompany the NSW HSC curriculum and is suitable for years 9 – 12.

Biography

Brook Garru Andrew is an Australian contemporary artist of Wiradjuri, Ngunnawal and Celtic descent. His interdisciplinary practice spans across video, sculpture, photography and immersive installations. Andrew's artworks and writing often explore legacies of colonization and modernism.

His artworks, museum interventions and curatorial projects challenge the limitations imposed by power structures, historical amnesia, stereotyping and complicity to centre Indigenous perspectives. He explores the collisions of intertwined narratives, often emerging from the mess of the "Colonial Hole". The Colonial Hole being the "authority of History Paintings or European landscape conventions".¹

Brook Garru Andrew was Artistic Director of the 22nd Biennale of Sydney (2020) which he renamed NIRIN, a ground-breaking First Nations and artist-led exhibition. As part of NIRIN, Andrew celebrated works of not only Australia's First Nations artists, but also those from communities around the world.

In 2019 Andrew concluded an ambitious, four-year-long Australian Research Council grant, "Representation, Remembrance and the Memorial". Based at Monash University, this project was designed to respond to the repeated high-level calls for a national memorial to Aboriginal loss and the Frontier Wars.

Brook Garru Andrew has exhibited works both nationally and internationally since 1996. Recent exhibitions were held at the musée du quai Branly, Paris (2020); Wuzhen International Art Exhibition (2019); Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea (PAC), Milan (2019); Musée d'ethnographie de Genève, Geneva (2017-2018); Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (2017); and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid (2014-15). In 2017, his distinguished 25-year career was recognised with a large-scale, immersive solo exhibition, *The Right to Offend is Sacred* at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

1 Renton, A. and Andrew, B., 2021. *Di'van | A Journal of Accounts*, [online] No Centre or Periphery: Powerful Objectives(8), pp.28-41.
Available at: https://artdesign.unsw.edu.au/sites/default/files/brook_andrew_andrew_renton_no_centre_or_periphery.pdf

Donut 1, 2011



Brook Garru Andrew
DIWIL, 2021
Installation view
Murray Art Museum Albury
Photo: Jeremy Wehrauch

Donut 1 is a large inflatable PVC sculpture surfaced in a graphic derived from a traditional Wiradjuri design. This type of design and material form has been used by Brook Garru Andrew in other works such as *The Cell* and *Jumping Castle War Memorial*. The hard-edge black and white design acts as a metaphor for seeing differently. The traditional Wiradjuri design and the contemporary optical experience reference how and what we see as a historical influence on our contemporary lives.

The artwork's silhouette was intended to present a familiar form in an unfamiliar context. Transformed into a striking, black and white, hard-edged object, *Donut 1* encouraged viewers to imagine an everyday object in a different light.² *Donut 1* challenges cultural and historical perceptions and comments on both local and global issues regarding race.

The placement of *Donut 1* within *GARRU NGAJUJU NGAAY* expands the hallucinatory, optical effect of the installation. The large scale of the sculpture encroaches on the viewer's space, asking us to consider how they encounter and move around this work. *Donut 1* fosters playfulness and curiosity, offering audiences alternative ways of accessing the Wiradjuri patterning of Andrew's wall drawing practice.

The sphere-shape references ancient European and Indigenous depictions of time travel and healing. Israeli physicist Amos Ori designed a time machine in this shape and similarly the form comes from a story that speaks of Aboriginal magic trees that form circle shapes in their branches and are in fact time-travelling objects.³

² City of Sydney. 2012. Donut. [online]
Available at: <https://www.cityartsydney.com.au/artwork/donut/>

³ Soundscapes. 2011. BROOK ANDREW'S DONUT 1 (2011). [online]
Available at: <https://soundscapes.melbournerecital.com.au/explore/brook-andrews-donut-1-2011>

GARRU NGAJUU NGAAY, 2021



Brook Garru Andrew
GARRU NGAJUU NGAAY, 2021 (Detail),
Installation View, Murray Art Museum Albury.
Photo Jeremy Weihrauch.

GARRU NGAJUU NGAAY (Magpie I See) is an immersive installation that wraps around the gallery, surrounding the audience on all sides. This newly commissioned wall drawing references mark making and patternation significant to Wiradjuri and First Nations practice within South East Australia.

The distinctive black and white diamonds and zigzags found within Andrew's painted wall drawings are representative of dendroglyphs used by Wiradjuri people over millennia. Andrew reimagines the context of this ancient practice by transforming it into prominent, sharp-edged designs that envelop the viewer. The neon elements within *DIWIL* extend sections of line work beyond the wall, further disrupting the gallery space which formerly acted as the Land and Title office.



Brook Garru Andrew
GARRU NGAJUU NGAAY, 2021 (Detail),
Installation View, Murray Art Museum Albury.
Photo Jeremy Weihrauch.

Short Answer Questions

1. Spend some time in the space with Brook Garru Andrew's work *GARRU NGAJUU NGAAY* and read the accompanying text. Why do you think the artist has chosen to work with the colours and patterns used in the work?
2. Discuss how Brook Garru Andrew works within the cultural frame in *GARRU NGAJUU NGAAY*, 2021.
3. This work was commissioned by the Murray Art Museum Albury. What do you think is the significance of this work being displayed in the old Land and Title office?
4. How has the artist addressed issues of race and culture within Australia in *GARRU NGAJUU NGAAY*?

Essay Topics

Cultural Frame: artist - world

1. In relation to the exhibition and text in this case study, how has Andrew's life experiences affected his interpretation of the world as expressed in his artwork?

Artmaking Practice: structural

2. What symbols are used to convey messages to the viewer in the works of Brook Garru Andrew?

Cultural Frame

3. Analyze how Andrew has incorporated different cultural traditions, images and systems of representation to highlight the way that Aboriginal identity has been constructed.

Conceptual Framework

4. Evaluate the importance of the artists' intentions in the production and meaning of artworks.



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Further Research

Brook Andrew

The Cell

A Guide to the Ordinary Function of the Cell and the Affiliated Creation

Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation, Sydney

Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane

<https://thesubstation.org.au/uploads/Brook-Andrew-The-Cell.pdf>

Brook Andrew: Ethical portraits and ghost-scapes

By Marcia Langton

National Gallery of Victoria

<https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/essay/brook-andrew-ethical-portraits-and-ghost-scapes/>

Brook Andrew: 'I was challenged to unwind the histories that were told to me because I didn't believe them'

By Janet McKenzie

Studio International

<https://www.studiointernational.com/index.php/brook-andrew-interview-melbourne>

Brook Andrew: The Right to Offend is Sacred

By Ian McLean

National Gallery of Victoria

<https://www.artlink.com.au/articles/4588/brook-andrew-the-right-to-offend-is-sacred/>

Representation, remembrance and the memorial

By Christine Phillips, Carroll Go-Sam, Jock Gilbert, Brook Andrew, Jessica Neath and Corina Marino

Landscape Australia

<https://landscapeaustralia.com/articles/representation-remembrance-and-the-memorial/>

Aboriginal artist and provocateur Brook Andrew on shaking up the Sydney Biennale

By Brook Turner

The Sydney Morning Herald

<https://www.smh.com.au/culture/art-and-design/aboriginal-artist-and-provocateur-brook-andrew-on-shaking-up-the-sydney-biennale-20190930-p52w6c.html>

No Centre or Periphery: Powerful Objectives

By Andrew Renton & Brook Andrew

University of New South Wales

https://artdesign.unsw.edu.au/sites/default/files/brook_andrew_andrew_renton_no_centre_or_periphery.pdf