



KARLA DICKENS

BUNGAREE PAINTINGS

BUNGAREE

I am obsessed and warmed by the man Bungaree and his playful interaction with his new Colonial rulers. Bungaree was a man of intelligence and wit. He was flamboyant and content to play the fool because it paid off handsomely at times. He was a solid hinge swinging between black and white camps, a role possessed by few in his day.

Reflecting on Broken Bay in the early 1800s, I was struck by the darkness of the times. My 'Bungaree' works are dark in nature because they contain black netting and somber colouring. The netting and dark tones read as an ever-present shadow lingering over Australia's history (both visually and metaphorically), setting the atmosphere for a true, black Georgian time under blue skies.

The King and The Pirates uses Bungaree's skull to make a traditional pirates' flag. The names of ships upon which 'King' Bungaree journeyed are inscribed onto the crossbones, telling the tale of him joining forces with the pirates who wore the red coats. Over his head is a 'bump', the currency of the time for which he was known to ask (or beg); it is reminiscent of a halo.

Initiated features Bungaree's portrait painted onto a black doily sitting atop his 'King' chest plate. It reads, "Boongaree Chief of the Broken Bay Tribe". He is surrounded by ribbons emblazoned with the words "No Man's Master, No Man's King". As a parody of his title "Bungaree, King of the Sydney Blacks", I accentuated the absurdity and dark humour of this 'King'. I seek awareness of the collision of souls, swimming (and sometimes sinking) deep into a complete unknowingness of 'difference' and 'otherness'.

Commonwealth Banquet was the third of the works I produced for this exhibition. Bungaree, Flinders, Trim the cat and a black swan (plentiful in the waters of Sydney at the time) sit together, decorated with bows and flowers. As they sit I envision a Saturday matinee ready to begin, with Trim (Flinders' cat and a celebrity of the time) having as much presence as the Captain and the 'King'. The swan will be the day's banquet—being fed to Trim by Bungaree, as waters are sailed and buttons and buckles polished.

I have been enriched by my reflections of Bungaree—the man, the mimic, the beggar, the drunk, the brave and witty middle-man—with too many wives and buckets of flair; a truly worthy 'King'.



THE KING AND THE PIRATES 2012

Oil and mixed media on canvas

133 x 163 cm

\$11,000



COMMONWEALTH BANQUET 2012

Oil and mixed media on canvas

76 x 102 cm

\$6,600



INITIATED 2012

Oil and mixed media on canvas

76 x 102 cm

\$6,600

KARLA DICKENS

Born 3 December 1967, Sydney
Heritage Wiradjuri

EDUCATION

2000 Bachelor of Fine Arts, National Art School, Sydney
1993 Diploma of Fine Arts, National Art School, Sydney

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2015 *Black Dogs, Love and Crutches*, Andrew Baker Art Dealer, Brisbane
You Winesome you lose some, Glasshouse Port Macquarie, New South Wales
On This Site, Verge Gallery, University of Sydney Union, New South Wales
2012 *Field and Game*, The Hughes Gallery, Sydney
2011 *Home is Where the Rabbits Live*, Firstdraft, Sydney
2010 *The Black Madonna*, Casula Powerhouse, Sydney; Grafton Regional Gallery, New South Wales
Beloved Mother, Dacou, Alstonville, New South Wales
2009 *In Loving Memory I Found the Black Madonna*, Museum of Brisbane, Queensland
2008 *Karla Dickens*, Iain Dawson Gallery, Sydney
Loving Memory, Lismore Regional Gallery, New South Wales
2005 *Home*, Next Contemporary Art Space, Southern Cross University, Lismore, New South Wales
2004 *Our Lady of Triana*, Black Fellas Dreaming, Sydney
Urban Aborigines, Black Fellas Dreaming, Bangalow, New South Wales
2003 *Love, Luck & Lust*, A-Space on Cleveland, Sydney
2002 *Sheilas Downunder*, Pine Street Gallery, Sydney
2001 *Unwind*, A-Space on Cleveland, Sydney
2000 *Now Nowhere Here*, DQ Gallery, Sydney
1998 *Cross Works*, Guardella, Italy,
No Limits, Hogarth Galleries, Sydney

JOINT EXHIBITIONS

2014 *The Honey and the Bunny* (with Monica Oppens), Southern Cross University Library, Lismore, New South Wales
2011 *Mother of All* (with Ishta Wilson), Tweed River Art Gallery, Murwillumbah, New South Wales

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2015 *Western Australian Indigenous Art Awards 2015*, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth
The Colour of the Sky Today: Prague Quadrennial of Space and Design (PQ), Collorodo Mansfeld Palace, Prague, Czech Republic

	<i>Bungaree's Farm</i> , The Tanks/Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney
	<i>Blak Nite Screen 2015</i> , City of Melbourne, Treasury Gardens, Melbourne
	<i>Cementa 15: Biennial Contemporary Arts Festival</i> , Kandos, New South Wales
	<i>Wiradjuri Ngurambanggu</i> , Murray Art Museum Albury, New South Wales
2014	<i>TarraWarra Biennial 2014: Whisper in My Mask</i> , TarraWarra Museum of Art, Healesville, Victoria
	<i>Hereby Make Protest</i> , Carriageworks, Sydney
2013	<i>The Art of Sound</i> , Grafton Regional Gallery, New South Wales
	<i>The Native Institute</i> , Blacktown Arts Centre, New South Wales
	<i>Parliament of New South Wales Aboriginal Art Prize</i> , Parliament House, Sydney
2012–15	<i>Bungaree: The First Australian</i> , Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney; Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery, New South Wales; The Glasshouse, Port Macquarie, New South Wales
2012	<i>Home</i> , Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
	<i>Feminage: The Logic of Feminist Collage</i> , The Cross Art Projects, Sydney
2011	<i>People We Know—Places We've Been</i> , Goulburn Regional Gallery, New South Wales
	<i>Thank you for the days: My Teenage Years</i> , Lismore Regional Gallery, New South Wales
	<i>Pink Sunrise</i> , Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-operative, Sydney
	<i>Freedom Riders</i> , University Art Gallery, The University of Sydney, New South Wales
	<i>Fairytales in Fairyland</i> , Grafton Regional Gallery, New South Wales
2010	<i>Safari: Biennale of Sydney Fringe</i> , MOP, Sydney
	<i>Parliament of New South Wales Indigenous Art Award</i> , Parliament House, Sydney
	<i>Articles of Interest</i> , SCI Next Art Gallery, Lismore, New South Wales
	<i>Lest We Forget</i> , Dacou, Alstonville, New South Wales
2009	<i>Parliament of New South Wales Indigenous Art Award</i> , Parliament House, Sydney (touring New South Wales regional galleries)
	<i>Connections</i> , NPWS Art, Northern Rivers Community Gallery, Ballina, New South Wales
2008	<i>Messages of Peace</i> , Gallery XX, Settembre, Italy
	<i>Fisher's Ghost Art Award</i> , Campbelltown City Art Centre, New South Wales
	<i>Confidential Business Project</i> , Casula Powerhouse, Sydney
	<i>Australian Values</i> , Next Art Gallery, Southern Cross University, Lismore, New South Wales
	<i>Premier State</i> , Campbelltown City Art Centre, New South Wales
	<i>Identity</i> , Grafton Regional Gallery, New South Wales
	<i>The Year of the Apology</i> , Northern Rivers Community Gallery, Ballina, New South Wales
2007	<i>Parliament of New South Wales Indigenous Art Award</i> , Parliament House, Sydney (touring New South Wales regional galleries)
	<i>Past, Present, Future</i> , Grafton Regional Gallery, New South Wales

- 2006 *3 in 10*, Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-operative, Sydney
Chrysalis: The Emergence of Northern Rivers Artists, Lismore Regional Gallery, New South Wales
The Pink, The Black and the Beautiful, Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-operative, Sydney
Our Spirit Our Country, Bungjalung Art Award, Lismore Regional Gallery, New South Wales
- 2005 *Group of Eleven Artists—NAIDOC Week*, Waverley Library, Sydney
- 2004 *Nice Coloured Dolls*, 24HR Art Northern Territory Centre for Contemporary Art, Darwin
- 2003 *Hung, Drawn and Quartered*, Tin Sheds Gallery, University of Sydney, New South Wales
- 2001 *Aboriginal Ways of Knowing*, Macy Gallery, Columbia University, New York, NY, USA
- 1999 *Perspecta: Love Magic*, S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney
Arone Meeks & Co., Cooe Aboriginal Gallery, Sydney
- 1998 *National Indigenous Heritage Art Award*, Old Parliament House, Canberra
Co-existence—Sorry, Hogarth Galleries, Sydney
- 1997 *Stars on the Net*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
- 1996 *Never the Less*, John Paynter Gallery, Newcastle, New South Wales
- 1995 *Portia Geach Memorial Award*, S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney
- 1994 *Festival of Fisher's Ghost*, Campbelltown City Art Gallery, New South Wales
Recognising the Republic, Michael Nagy Fine Art Gallery, Sydney

AWARDS

- 2013 Winner, *New South Wales Parliament Art Prize*, NSW Parliament, Sydney
- 2009 Runner-up, *NPWS Northern Rivers Region Aboriginal Art Award*, Northern Rivers Community Gallery, Ballina, New South Wales
- 2007 Winner, *NPWS Northern Rivers Region Aboriginal Art Award*, Northern Rivers Community Gallery, Ballina, New South Wales
- 2006 Winner, *NPWS Northern Rivers Region Aboriginal Art Award*, Northern Rivers Community Gallery, Ballina, New South Wales

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anon. 'Freedom Riders', *Sydney University Museums News*, Art and Aboriginal Rights Special Feature, Sydney, June 2011
- Anon. 'Remembering 'Humanity Lost': Karla Dickens and Aris Prabawa', *Art Monthly Australia*, Issue 244, October 2011, pp. 66–67
- Anon. 'The medicine of creation', *GPSpeak*, October 2011
- Balodis, Janis. 'The healing art of transformation', *Health Speak*, Summer 2015
- Behrendt, Larissa. 'Hereby Make Protest review—a historical reflection on Aboriginal activism', *The Guardian*, 18 June 2014

Flemming, Robyn (editor). *Wiradjuri Ngurambanggu* [ex. cat.], Murray Art Museum Albury, New South Wales, 2015

Fraser, Virginia. 'Bungaree, the First Australian interrupted', *Art Monthly Australia*, Issue 262, August 2013, pp. 9–12

Geczy, Adam. 'The Native Institute', *Art Monthly Australia*, Issue 263 September 2014, p. 56

King, Natalie, Mundine, Djon and Cruikshank, Alan. 'Whisper in my mask', *Contemporary Visual Art+Culture Broadsheet*, Issue 43.2, 2014

Leane, Jeanine. 'Karla Dickens: Continuing the Dialogue', *Art and Australia*, May 2104, 51.4

Mundine, Professor Djon OAM (editor). *Bungaree: The First Australian* [ex.cat.], Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney; Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery, New South Wales, 2012, p. 11 and pp. 38–39

Mundine, Professor Djon OAM. 'Conversations with a Crow', *Art Monthly Australia*, Issue 212, August 2008, pp. 40–42

O'Riordan, Maurice. 'Where Eagles Hover', *Artlink*, Volume 18 Number 1, March 1999

O'Riordan, Maurice. 'What's up, Karla', *Karla Dickens: Home is Where the Rabbit Lives* [ex. cat.], Firstdraft/Arts NSW, Sydney, 2011

O'Riordan, Maurice. 'In My Painting, At My Window', *Karla Dickens: Loving Memory* [ex. cat.], Lismore Regional Gallery, 2008

Parker, Luke and Stephen, Ann (editors). *Freedom Riders: Art and Activism 1960s to Now*, University Art Gallery, The University of Sydney, Sydney, 2011

Taffel, Jacqui. 'Story of Bungaree explored on the site that was once his', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 February 2015

Taylor, Andrew. 'Wrapped in colours of denial: Finalists in an Aboriginal art prize aren't afraid of controversy', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 October 2013

Zafirios, Yiorgos. 'Karla Dickens: It's Not Bloody Art—It's Work!', *Artlink*, Issue 35:2 Artlink Indigenous Global, June 2015

COLLECTIONS

National Museum of Australia, Canberra

Artbank, Sydney

Bendigo Art Gallery, Victoria

Black Fellas Dreaming Museum, Sydney

Campbelltown City Art Centre, New South Wales

Grafton Regional Art Gallery, New South Wales

Lismore Regional Art Gallery, New South Wales

Northern Rivers Performing Arts, Lismore, New South Wales

University of Technology, Sydney

UBS Warburg Collection, Sydney

Andrew Baker Art Dealer

26 Brookes Street • Bowen Hills Qld 4006

07 3252 2292 • 0412 990 356

info@andrew-baker.com • www.andrew-baker.com

