



MICHAEL COOK

CIVILISED



CIVILISED #1 (2012)

Inkjet print on paper—100 x 87.5 cm, Edition 8 (3 full sets, 5 split sets)
\$3,750 each or \$44,000 for a complete set of fourteen prints

Inkjet print on canvas—160 x 140 cm, Edition 3 (1 full set, 2 split sets)
\$6,600 each or \$77,000 for a complete set of fourteen prints

CIVILISED #1

*"They are human creatures,
the work of the same omnipotent author,
equally under his care with the most polished European;
perhaps being less offensive, more entitled to his favour."
"These people may truly be said to be in the pure state of nature,
and may appear to some to be the most wretched upon the earth;
but in reality they are far happier than ... de Europeans."*

*"They are human creatures,
the work of the same omnipotent author,
equally under his care with the most polished European;
perhaps being less offensive, more entitled to his favour."*

*"These people may truly be said to be in the pure state of nature,
and may appear to some to be the most wretched upon the earth;
but in reality they are far happier than ... we Europeans."*

Lieutenant James Cook (b.1728–d.1779) a British explorer, navigator and cartographer
who first visited Australia in 1770 on H.M. Barque *Endeavour*



CIVILISED #2 (2012)

Inkjet print on paper—100 x 87.5 cm, Edition 8 (3 full sets, 5 split sets)
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Inkjet print on canvas—160 x 140 cm, Edition 3 (1 full set, 2 split sets)
\$6,600 each or \$77,000 for a complete set of fourteen prints

CIVILISED #2

*"They said a big mob of logs that were huge,
very big with lots of devils on them. The devils looked strange.
Their skin looked different and they were white..."*

*"They saw a big mob of logs that were huge,
very big with lots of devils on them. The devils looked strange.
Their skin looked different and they were white..."*

Francis Yunkaporta (b.1923–d.1998) a deceased Wik (Aurukun, Qld) elder as quoted in
James A. Henderson's *Sent Forth a Dove*, University of Western Australia Press, 1999



CIVILISED #3 (2012)

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Inkjet print on canvas—160 x 140 cm, Edition 3 (1 full set, 2 split sets)
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CIVILISED #3

*"The most arid and barren region that could be found anywhere on earth;
the inhabitants too are the most wretched and poorest creatures
that I have ever seen in my age or time"*

*"The most arid and barren region that could be found anywhere on earth;
the inhabitants too are the most wretched and poorest creatures
that I have ever seen in my age or time."*

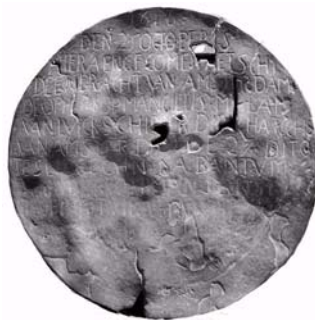
Jan Carstensz (b.1595–d. ?) a Dutch explorer who visited Cape York in 1623 on the *Pera*

1616 Dirk Hartog Plate

Dirk Hartog (1580–1621) was a Dutch seaman who spent his early career trading as a private merchant in the Baltic and Mediterranean seas. In 1615 he was appointed master of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) ship *Eendracht*, and in January 1616 set sail with a fleet of VOC ships for Batavia (Jakarta, Indonesia) to trade in spices and other goods. *Eendracht* became separated from the fleet in a storm before reaching the Cape of Good Hope but continued on her voyage, sailing about 7,000 km east before turning north and setting a course for Batavia. But Hartog sailed further east than he should have. On 25 October 1616 he dropped anchor off what is now known as Dirk Hartog Island and landed – the first recorded landing of a European in Western Australia.

To record his visit for posterity Hartog climbed a cliff, now called Cape Inscription, and set a wooden post into a cleft in the rock. He nailed to the post a pewter plate inscribed with a brief account of his visit. The Hartog plate remained on the cliff for another 81 years until it was rediscovered by another VOC captain, Willem de Vlamingh, in 1697. The oldest known physical record from Australia's European history, the plate is now preserved in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. The Cape Inscription area is included in Australia's National Heritage List as a place of national significance, and is protected under Australian law.

After leaving the island Hartog continued north, charting as he went. His voyage along the Western Australian coastline revealed that the mythical 'Terra Australis Incognita' was indeed fact, and his name for the region – Landt van d'Eendracht, or Eendracht's Land – began appearing on world maps. William Dampier arrived at Dirk Hartog Island in August 1699. He anchored southeast of Cape Inscription, at a place now called Dampier's Landing, and thus did not notice the inscribed plate left by Willem de Vlamingh just two years earlier. Dampier explored the island and surrounding waters, noting Bernier and Dorre Islands and the northern end of Peron Peninsula, which he also (mistakenly) thought was an island. During this time his cook, Mr Goodwin, died, becoming the first European known to have been buried on Australian soil.



1697 Willem de Vlamingh

Dutchman Willem de Vlamingh was born in 1640. A gifted seaman, he took command of his first ship aged just 24 and for several years hunted whales and walrus off Greenland and northern Russia.

In 1688 de Vlamingh joined the VOC and made his first voyage to Batavia (Jakarta, Indonesia) in the same year. Following a second voyage in 1694, he was charged with the command of three vessels, Geelvinck, Nijptangh and Het Weseltje, to search for Ridderschap van Holland, a VOC ship lost en route to Batavia. De Vlamingh was also to chart the southwest coast of New Holland, as Australia was then known, to improve navigation for merchant shipping.

The three ships set sail from Amsterdam on 3 May 1696. Although the search for the Ridderschap van Holland proved fruitless, de Vlamingh did chart (see below) parts of Western Australia's coastline and explored Rottnest Island and the Swan River (later the site of the state capital, Perth).

The ships arrived in Shark Bay on 30 January 1697 and anchored in South Passage, off the southern tip of Dirk Hartog Island. Several days were spent exploring the area, and turtle eggs were collected on a beach now known as Turtle Bay. On 4 February Dirk Hartog's plate was found at Cape Inscription. Recognising its historic value, de Vlamingh removed the plate (he returned it to Amsterdam) and replaced it with one of his own, onto which he copied the original inscription and added an account of his own landing.



On 11 February 1697, the little fleet set sail for Batavia. De Vlamingh's plate remained untouched at Cape Inscription for 104 years before being found by Nicolas Baudin's expedition in 1801.



CIVILISED #4 (2012)

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CIVILISED #4

*"... that vast regions were for the greater part uncultivated,
and certain parts inhabited by savage, cruel black barbarians
who slew some of our sailors"*

*"... that vast regions were for the greater part uncultivated,
and certain parts inhabited by savage, cruel black barbarians
who slew some of our sailors."*

Willem Janszoon (William Jansz) (c.1570–1630) a Dutch navigator who visited Cape York in 1606 on the *Duyfken*



CIVILISED #5 (2012)

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CIVILISED #6 (2012)

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Inkjet print on canvas—160 x 140 cm, Edition 3 (1 full set, 2 split sets)
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CIVILISED #6

*"The natives are very opulent and naked.
Their arms were lances, arrows, and clubs of stone
ill fashioned"*

*"The natives are very opulent and naked.
Their arms were lances, arrows, and clubs of stone
ill fashioned."*

Luis Váez de Torres (born c.1565; fl.1607—d.?) a Galician or Portuguese maritime explorer serving the Spanish Crown who visited Torres Strait in 1606 on the *San Pedro*



CIVILISED #7 (2012)

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CIVILISED #8 (2012)

Inkjet print on paper—100 x 87.5 cm, Edition 8 (3 full sets, 5 split sets)
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Inkjet print on canvas—160 x 140 cm, Edition 3 (1 full set, 2 split sets)
\$6,600 each or \$77,000 for a complete set of fourteen prints

CIVILISED #8

*"They seemed to doubt that we were the same species as them;
our colour was so strange that they could not stop staring and inspecting."*

*"They seemed to doubt that we were the same species as them; our colour was so strange that they could not stop
staring and inspecting."*

Saint Jean Roux an ensign on *Le Mascarin*, a French ship captained by
Marc-Joseph Marion du Fresne which visited Tasmania in 1772



CIVILISED #9 (2012)

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CIVILISED #10 (2012)

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CIVILISED #11 (2012)

Inkjet print on paper—100 x 87.5 cm, Edition 8 (3 full sets, 5 split sets)
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Inkjet print on canvas—160 x 140 cm, Edition 3 (1 full set, 2 split sets)
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CIVILISED #11

*"The inhabitants of this country are the miserablest people in the world.....
They are tall, straight-bodied, and thin, with small long limbs.
They have great heads, round foreheads, and great brows"*

*"The inhabitants of this country are the miserablest people in the world...
They are tall, straight-bodied, and thin, with small long limbs.
They have great heads, round foreheads, and great brows"*

William Dampier (1651–1715) an English buccaneer who first visited
Western Australia in 1688 on the privateer *Cygnat*



CIVILISED #12 (2012)

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Inkjet print on canvas—160 x 140 cm, Edition 3 (1 full set, 2 split sets)
\$6,600 each or \$77,000 for a complete set of fourteen prints

CIVILISED #12

*"They have no houses, but lie in the open air, without any covering;
the earth being their bed, and the heaven their canopy...."*

*"They have no houses, but lie in the open air, without any covering;
the earth being their bed, and the heaven their canopy..."*

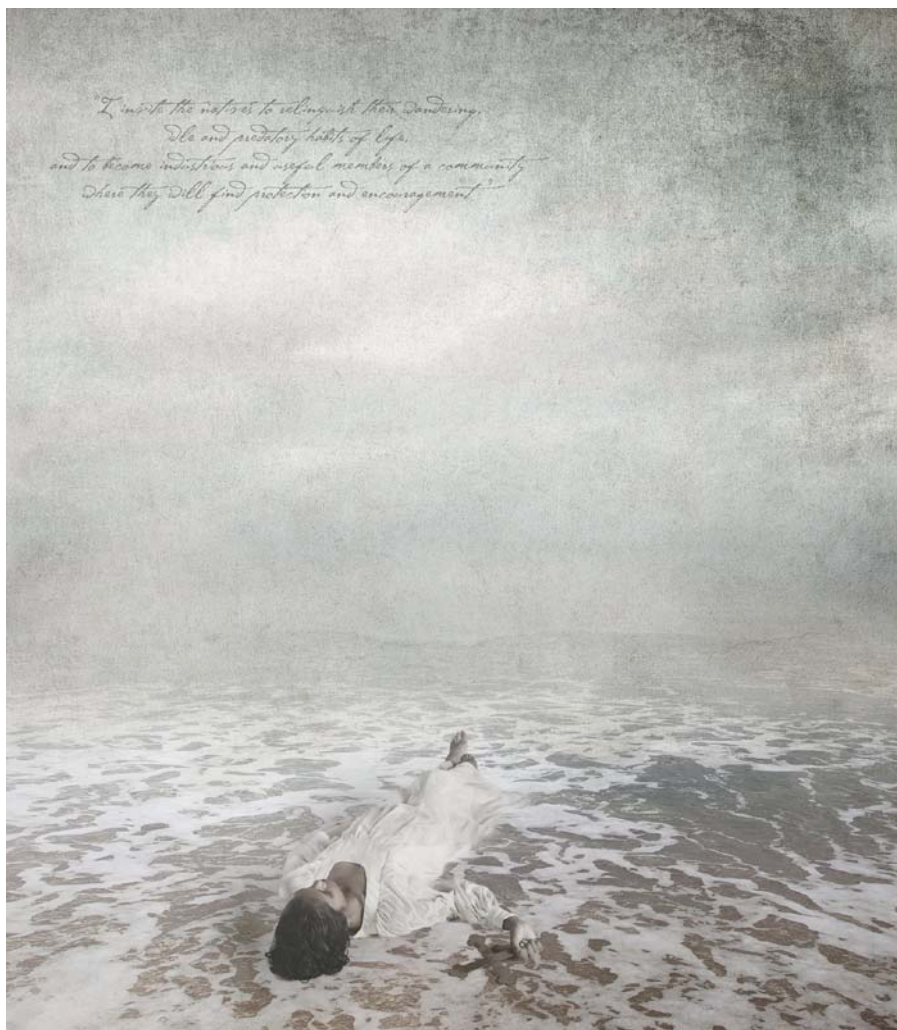
William Dampier (1651–1715) an English buccaneer who first visited
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CIVILISED #13 (2012)

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CIVILISED #14 (2012)

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Inkjet print on canvas—160 x 140 cm, Edition 3 (1 full set, 2 split sets)
\$6,600 each or \$77,000 for a complete set of fourteen prints

CIVILISED #14

*"I invite the natives to relinquish their wandering,
idle and predatory habits of life,
and to become industrious and useful members of a community
where they will find protection and encouragement"*

*"I invite the natives to relinquish their wandering,
idle and predatory habits of life,
and to become industrious and useful members of a community
where they will find protection and encouragement"*

Governor Lachlan Macquarie (1762–1824) the last autocratic,
non-constitutional Governor of New South Wales

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

I was never taught Aboriginal history at school, only about European settlement of Australia. What I learnt in school was similar to the first European settlers' beliefs, with words like 'natives' and 'discovery of Australia'. Looking back now, I realise that it was a false way of teaching, and that it hid the truth about the treatment of Aborigines over the past four hundred years.

Captain Cook wrote "these people may truly be said to be in the pure state of nature, and may appear to some to be the most wretched upon the earth; but in reality they are far happier than ... we Europeans." What was the colonisers' view of what it means to be civilised, and would a better understanding of Aboriginal cultures have made a difference to our history? Was being civilised about fashion, speech, cultivating the land, having Christian beliefs, or was it to do with the colour of someone's skin or how they appeared?

Upon the European discovery of Australia, Aborigines were seen as 'natives'—part of the flora and fauna. European settlers were not interested in understanding new cultures, or how Aborigines lived in harmony with the land—only that their way of life was superior. Even today, Aboriginal people are still suffering because these beliefs still exist amongst some non-Indigenous Australians. Even today, in a so-called 'modern' society, racism is rife.

This body of work dresses Aboriginal Australians in the fashions of four European countries that visited Australia before and in the early stages of colonisation: Spain, The Netherlands, England and France. It asks 'what makes a person civilised?' and suggests how different history might have been if those Europeans had realised that the Aborigines were indeed civilised.

For Aboriginal Australians were certainly civilised, as James Cook appreciated. The harmony with the land that had existed for tens of thousands of years was precious, in perfect balance, and in the last 400 years some of these lessons could have been considered more thoughtfully.

MICHAEL COOK

BIOGRAPHY

Born 25 August 1968, Brisbane
Heritage Bidjara people of south-west Queensland

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2012 *Civilised*, Andrew Baker Art Dealer, Brisbane
Broken Dreams, October Gallery, London, UK
Through My Eyes, La Trobe University Visual Arts Centre, Bendigo, Victoria
The Mission, Dianne Tanzer Gallery + Projects, Melbourne
2011 *Uninhabited*, Andrew Baker Art Dealer, Brisbane
2010 *Through My Eyes*, Andrew Baker Art Dealer, Brisbane

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2012 *The 7th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT7)*, Queensland Art Gallery/GoMA, Brisbane
UnDisclosed: 2nd National Indigenous Art Triennial, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
29th Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award, Museums and Art Galleries of the Northern Territory, Darwin
My Country: Works from Indigenous communities that celebrate their heritage, University of Western Sydney Art Gallery, New South Wales
Josephine Ulrick & Win Schubert Photography Award, Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Queensland
SCAP 2D 2012: Sunshine Coast Art Prize 2D, Caloundra Regional Gallery, Queensland
Omission, Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts, Melbourne
Where the art leads: new explorations by Queensland Indigenous artists, Cairns Regional Gallery, Queensland
All I need is everything, Rockhampton Art Gallery, Queensland
Pairs, Dianne Tanzer Gallery + Projects, Melbourne
2011 *Face Up: A Look at portraits from the collection*, Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Queensland
Western Australian Indigenous Art Awards 2011, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth
Josephine Ulrick & Win Schubert Photography Award, Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Queensland
2010 *15th Redlands Westpac Art Prize*, Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney

AWARDS

2012 Finalist, *29th Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award*, Museums and Art Galleries of the Northern Territory, Darwin
Finalist, *SCAP 2D 2012: Sunshine Coast Art Prize 2D*, Caloundra Regional Gallery, Queensland

- Finalist, *Josephine Ulrick & Win Schubert Photography Award*, Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Queensland
- 2011 Winner, 'People's Choice Award', *Western Australian Indigenous Art Awards 2011*, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth
- Winner, 'Visual Artist of the Year', *17th Annual Deadly Awards—the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Awards*
- Finalist, *Western Australian Indigenous Art Awards 2011*, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth
- Finalist, *Josephine Ulrick & Win Schubert Photography Award*, Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Queensland
- 2008 Winner, 'Visual Artist of the Year', *14th Annual Deadly Awards—the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Awards*

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- Dauber, Dr Christine. 'Michael Cook: Through My Eyes', *Eyemazing*, Issue 03–2011, Amsterdam
- Dauber, Dr Christine. 'Michael Cook—Through My Eyes: A dream of things to come', *Art Monthly*, #245, November 2011
- Dauber, Dr Christine. 'Michael Cook—Broken Dreams a Journey of Discovery', *Michael Cook: Broken Dreams* [ex. cat.], Andrew Baker Art Dealer, Brisbane and October Gallery, London, 2012

Desmond, Michael. 'Wistful Humour: Michael Cook's Antipodean Garden of Eden', *FormeInforme* (on-line journal), Brisbane, June 2012

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Michael Cook: *Through My Eyes* [ex. cat.], Andrew Baker Art Dealer, Brisbane, 2010

Morgan, Joyce. 'Indigenous art is not ancient history: The second triennial portrays the multiple layers of Aboriginal art', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 May 2012

Nagorcka, Shae. 'On the weakness of monumental things', *Michael Cook* [ex. cat.], Dianne Tanzer Gallery + Projects, Melbourne, 2012

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O'Riordan, Maurice. '50 Things Collectors Need to Know 2012: 08 Michael Cook', *Australian Art Collector*, Issue 59, January–March 2010

Rainforth, Dylan. 'Black Julia', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 October 2012

Rothwell, Nicolas. 'Surveying the landscape at the 2nd National Indigenous Art Triennial', *The Australian*, 5 May 2012

Scollay, Rachel. 'The art of Cook: Deadly winner Cook's focus turns to fine art', *The Koori Mail*, 30 November 2011

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COLLECTIONS

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Artbank, Sydney

Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth

Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane

Bendigo Art Gallery, Victoria

Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Queensland

Ipswich Art Gallery, Queensland

La Trobe University, Melbourne

Monash Gallery of Art, Melbourne

Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane

Rockhampton Art Gallery, Queensland

University of Western Sydney, New South Wales

University of Wollongong, New South Wales

Alex Mackay Collection of Erotic Art, Brisbane

Corrigan Collection, Sydney

Daryl Hewson Collection, Brisbane

TEWRR Collection, Brisbane

The Bowerman Collection, Brisbane

The M Collection, Melbourne

The Owen and Wagner Collection of Australian Aboriginal Art, Chapel Hill, NC, USA

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