

# **‘Baldy’**

**May 2006**

Acrylic, Red ochre and Plastic on canvas 91 x 71cm

**Text:** Sugar, Flour

Symbols: Left base shows a symbol of water (ngupi) while above it a woman drowns. A man falls in the water to catch her while above there is a scene of a colonial town being struck by lightning from a cloud. Right base shows a figure bleeding from the legs and head. Above this another figure is also resting in a pool of blood, a lightning bolt touching the figure. Above this is a colonial goal house. Another figure is standing to the left and is struck by lightning. At the top of this picture, a figure is lifted up into the sky and is reaching out to the lightening as if to meet it. This is my symbol of Windradyne engaging with wudjulahs (non-Aboriginal people) and is derived from his own views on the invasion of his people’s land.

## **Painting:**

A Wiradjuri elder named Windradyne came from the Bathurst region of New South Wales. Windradyne was one of the earliest leaders who first engaged with non-Aboriginal explorers in the Macquarie region. I wanted to paint this elder because he represents those who endeavored to enact their cultural authority as elders in dealing with Wudjulahs (non-Aboriginal people) who entered their territories.

Windradyne holds a black crow feather. In Noongar culture, the crow is a foreboding messenger. Windradyne urged his Wiradjuri countrymen to be prepared for the worst. He was heard to say “... the storm clouds are gathering and it will be worse than the most violent thunder and lightening” referring to the anticipated influx of wudjulah culture and people. He represents to me the hundreds of elders who actively engaged with wudjulahs, in good faith, only to have their authority ignored, disrespected and diminished by the invading colonial forces. This continues on into the present day, where the authority and wisdom of the elders goes largely unrecognized by white society.

This painting comes from a suite concerning early historical interactions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Australia. First contact relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the colonies reveal much about the divide that continues to exist today and this painting is about what we can learn from such engagements. Aboriginal people use their oral histories as well as written historical records from non-Aboriginal colonial perspectives to construct racial consciousness and visions of Aboriginal self-determination. I have painted the stories of Aboriginal resistance fighters to grapple the construction of the ‘hero’ in art. Romanticism was widely used in early colonial art in Australia emphasizing Rousseau’s theory of the ‘noble savage’. These early power relations must be highlighted so that we can see how nationalism and imperial sentiment were constructed. As an Aboriginal person, I feel that it is important to understand colonial art practices brought here and how they can be used for decolonisation. By using the colonial romantic imagery of Aboriginal people as a tool, I can inform non-Aboriginal people of the denial of Aboriginal culture in current representations of Australian history.

## **Reference Texts:**

Found in: [http://www.acr.net.au/~davidandjane/frebel\\_20000416.pdf](http://www.acr.net.au/~davidandjane/frebel_20000416.pdf)

Found in: [http://www.nsw.nationaltrust.org.au/ida/link\\_d3\\_1824war.html](http://www.nsw.nationaltrust.org.au/ida/link_d3_1824war.html)

Found in: <http://www.geocities.com/davidmarkatwell/makarrata.html>

Found in: <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/AS10494b.htm?hilite=Windradyne>

## **‘Miago’**

**May 2006**

Acrylic, Red ochre and Plastic on canvas

91 x 71cm

### **Symbols:**

Left shows the sailing vessel, ‘The Beagle’, at dock on the Swan River with a dingy adrift. A group of western clothing (including boots, a plumed hat and a coat) are discarded into the water.

Right shows three figures falling into the Swan River and/or reaching toward a traditional Noongar raft. Noongar implements (boomerang, axe and joonda) are falling into the water. An outline of the Wargul (Rainbow Serpent spirit) emerges out of the water towards the sky.

### **Painting:**

This picture is of ‘Miago’ who was a Noongar warrior from the Upper Swan River. Miago was taken onto the H.M.S Beagle by Sir George Grey who accounts for Miago in his journals of expeditions of ‘discovery’ to the Kimberley coast. Grey stated that Miago proved a “temperate, attentive, cheerful servant”. However, when the ship returned to Perth, Miago jumped ship discarding his western clothing and taking two loaves of bread. He went back to the bush to live with his people in the Upper Swan River area.

I painted Miago because he represents those who tried to act as ambassadors, translators and negotiators for the British colonial forces. Miago, and men like him, were exploited and relegated to lowly positions, rather than being recognized for performing an important service to the colonial population.

This painting comes from a suite concerning early historical interactions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Australia. First contact relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the colonies reveal much about the divide that continues to exist today and this painting is about what we can learn from such engagements. Aboriginal people use their oral histories as well as written historical records from non-Aboriginal colonial perspectives to construct racial consciousness and visions of Aboriginal self-determination. I have painted the stories of Aboriginal resistance fighters to grapple the construction of the ‘hero’ in art. Romanticism was widely used in early colonial art in Australia emphasizing Rousseau’s theory of the ‘noble savage’. These early power relations must be highlighted so that we can see how nationalism and imperial sentiment were constructed. As an Aboriginal person, I feel that it is important to understand colonial art practices brought here and how they can be used for decolonisation. By using the colonial romantic imagery of Aboriginal people as a tool, I can inform non-Aboriginal people of the denial of Aboriginal culture in current representations of Australian history.

### **Reference Text:**

Found at: [http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/e/eyre/edward\\_john/e98m/](http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/e/eyre/edward_john/e98m/)

Found at: <http://gutenberg.net.au/ausexplore/ausexpl00-index.html>

# **'Musquito'**

**May 2006**

Acrylic, Red ochre and plastic on canvas

91 x 71cm

## **Symbols:**

Left shows western style colonial homes in Tasmania with three floating Aboriginal spirit figures in the land and the sky.

Right shows at top a hangman's noose over a meeting around a waterhole. At the base is the scales of justice with a white hand pushing the scales into an uneven position.

## **Painting:**

Musquito (Mosquito) was an Eora (Gai-Mariagal) warrior born on the north shore of Port Jackson, New South Wales. Musquito was initially removed from his country and entrapped into working as a tracker for the colonials. He escaped and began to organise large groups of men to join him in a series of raids on the settler population. These raids were retaliatory acts in response to the stealing of Indigenous women by white men. His band of warriors joined him because of his charismatic leadership many of who were not his own kin or from his home community. They shared a deep conviction to resist and struggle against imperial colonialism. The painting represents him as a young man holding his spear pointing towards the place where he was wounded at the time of his capture.

This painting comes from a suite concerning early historical interactions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Australia. First contact relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the colonies reveal much about the divide that continues to exist today and this painting is about what we can learn from such engagements. Aboriginal people use their oral histories as well as written historical records from non-Aboriginal colonial perspectives to construct racial consciousness and visions of Aboriginal self-determination. I have painted the stories of Aboriginal resistance fighters to grapple the construction of the 'hero' in art. Romanticism was widely used in early colonial art in Australia emphasizing Rousseau's theory of the 'noble savage'. These early power relations must be highlighted so that we can see how nationalism and imperial sentiment were constructed. As an Aboriginal person, I feel that it is important to understand colonial art practices brought here and how they can be used for decolonisation. By using the colonial romantic imagery of Aboriginal people as a tool, I can inform non-Aboriginal people of the denial of Aboriginal culture in current representations of Australian history.

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Found in: <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/AS10366b.htm?hilite=Mosquit>

# **‘Tunnerminnerwait’**

**May 2006**

Acrylic, Red ochre and Plastic on canvas

91 x 71cm

## **Symbols:**

Left shows a pictograph of the young Tunnerminnerwait hiding under a ledge at Cape Grim during the massacre of his family members as they were driven over the cliffs. Above is a white flint-lock rifle. Above it is a waterhole in the form of a rising sun. Right is a landscape of burning colonial houses.

## **Painting:**

I wanted to paint this individual because he represents to me the spirit of resistance in the face of great and insurmountable odds. Tunnerminnerwait was a massacre survivor, whose acts of resistance including the burning of farming properties and settlements, represented organized attacks on non-Indigenous enterprise and a direct challenge to white invasion.

Federal Minister, Philip Ruddock, when he was the minister responsible for reconciliation, claimed that ‘settler’ Australia and Indigenous Australia did not need a treaty because there had never been a war between our peoples. Acts of resistance, such as waged by Tunnerminerwait and his followers, counters dominant ideas that white invasion or settlement was passively accepted by Aboriginal people. Bringing to light these events of resistance fighting, shows that warfare existed between the invaders and Indigenous people. This still points to the necessity of a treaty today. Tunnerminnerwait was particularly remarkable because he organized resistance outside his own country. I interpreted Tunnerminnerwait’s actions as a declaration of war.

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## **Reference Texts:**

Found in: [http://www.acr.net.au/~davidandjane/frebel\\_20000416.pdf](http://www.acr.net.au/~davidandjane/frebel_20000416.pdf)

Reynolds, H. (1999) “Why weren’t We Told” Penguin Books, Melbourne, pp169-170

Found in: <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/AS10147b.htm>

Found in: <http://www.melbourne.indymedia.org/news/2006/01/104827.php>

[http://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/exhibitions/rare\\_books/portraits/fentontxt.htm](http://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/exhibitions/rare_books/portraits/fentontxt.htm)

# **‘Windradyne’**

**May 2006**

Acrylic, Red ochre and Plastic on canvas

91 x 71cm

**Symbols:** Left base shows a symbol of water (ngupi) while above it a woman drowns. A man falls in the water to catch her while above there is a scene of a colonial town being struck by lightning from a cloud. Right base shows a figure bleeding from the legs and head. Above this another figure is also resting in a pool of blood, a lightning bolt touching the figure. Above this is a colonial goal house. Another figure is standing to the left and is struck by lightning. At the top of this picture, a figure is lifted up into the sky and is reaching out to the lightning as if to meet it. This is my symbol of Windradyne engaging with wudjulahs (non-Aboriginal people) and is derived from his own views on the invasion of his people’s land.

## **Painting:**

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Windradyne holds a black crow feather. In Noongar culture, the crow is a foreboding messenger. Windradyne urged his Wiradjuri countrymen to be prepared for the worst. He was heard to say “... the storm clouds are gathering and it will be worse than the most violent thunder and lightning” referring to the anticipated influx of wudjulah culture and people. He represents to me the hundreds of elders who actively engaged with wudjulahs, in good faith, only to have their authority ignored, disrespected and diminished by the invading colonial forces. This continues on into the present day, where the authority and wisdom of the elders goes largely unrecognized by white society.

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Found in: <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/AS10494b.htm?hilite=Windradyne>

# **‘Dundalli’**

**May 2006**

Acrylic, Red ochre and plastic on canvas

91 x 71cm

## **Symbols:**

Left base shows wudjulah (non-Aboriginal) hands drawing blood from the body of Dundalli. Top left and top center shows more wudjulah hands on a set of scales (a symbol for the western justice system) which is being tipped unevenly by wudjulah hands. The pair of hands at the top center are drawing blood from Dundalli’s head. Right base and center shows figures of Indigenous people dying from poison and small pox. These figures crawl to the top of the left side towards a western styled house, a wudjulah figure stands recoiling as a witness. The sun rises above his head.

## **Painting:**

Dundalli was a Ningy-Ningy warrior from the Moreton Bay region of Queensland. Dundalli’s sacred country was found in the Glasshouse Mountains. I wanted to paint an image of this warrior because his story signifies the injustice that Indigenous people faced in the colonial era. He stands holding a spear with his hand on his chest.

Dundalli’s name is the Bribie word for the Wonga pigeon which is his totemic affiliation. He wears the white feathers of this pigeon in his hair. Dundalli was a highly organized guerilla fighter whose stealth and tactical guerilla warfare were instrumental in him evading capture for a prolonged period. He formed part of an alliance, which fought against the spread of white settlement. Dundalli was convicted for crimes for which there were no witnesses. Dundalli’s capture, trial and gruesome hanging reflects the inequalities inherent in the relationship between Aboriginal men and the Australian criminal justice system. I believe such inequalities are still evident today. It is about the unfairness of the criminal justice system’s relationship with Aboriginal men since invasion. Are they criminals or political prisoners?

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Found in: <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/AS10137b.htm?hilite=DUNDALLI>

# **‘Winditj’**

**May 2006**

Acrylic and Red ochre on canvas

120 x 100cm

## **Painting:**

This painting shows the moment when Winditj (also known as Tommy Winditj), a Ballardong Noongar from Kellerberrin, introduces Lord John Forrest and his party, into my ancestral country near Payne’s Find in the Mid-West of Western Australia. According to my family’s oral history, we were told that Winditj would strip his western clothes to show his body to the local people proving that he was a man just like them. Those he met would often think Winditj was a ‘ghost’ just like the wudjulah (white) strangers he traveled with on their frightening animals (horses).

In the background, I have painted many campfires indicating the many family groups that existed together within Widi and Badimaya country. Payne’s Find was established near the area where many groups, including Noongar, would gather for trade and marriage. With Winditj’s knowledge of land, protocols and etiquette as a guide, Lord Forrest and his party could easily find food and water without being repelled by those of my ancestors they met. As he traveled, Lord Forrest believed that he was acting in accordance with the will of God especially when he came into my ancestor’s country. He believed that Indigenous people were inferior and degenerate. Their vulnerability to the gun was perceived by Forrest and his cohorts as an act of God enabling them to pass with ease through the territory and settle unabated. Men like Winditj were indispensable for ‘exploration’, acting as interpreters and guides.

This painting is about early historical interactions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Australia. First contact relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the colonies reveal much about the divide that continues to exist today and this painting is about what we can learn from such engagements. Aboriginal people use their oral histories as well as written historical records from non-Aboriginal colonial perspectives to construct racial consciousness and visions of Aboriginal self-determination. I have painted the stories of Aboriginal resistance fighters to grapple the construction of the ‘hero’ in art. Romanticism was widely used in early colonial art in Australia emphasizing Rousseau’s theory of the ‘noble savage’. These early power relations must be highlighted so that we can see how nationalism and imperial sentiment were constructed. As an Aboriginal person, I feel that it is important to understand colonial art practices brought here and how they can be used for decolonisation. By using the colonial romantic imagery of Aboriginal people as a tool, I can inform non-Aboriginal people of the denial of Aboriginal culture in current representations of Australian history.

## **Reference:**

Found in : <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A060453b.htm>

# **'Pemulwuy'**

**May 2006**

Acrylic and Red ochre on canvas

120 x 100cm

## **Painting:**

Pemulwuy was a Bidjigal 'clever man' or spiritual leader from the country known today as Botany Bay on the northern side of the Georges River, New South Wales. His name came from the Darug word meaning earth. Pemulwuy was the first guerilla fighter. He was considered unable to be killed by bullets as he was shot seriously twice and survived both times.

In this painting, Pemulwuy is burning corn fields at night in the areas around Sydney. I interpret his actions as means of controlling the encroachments of the settler farming population on his community interests such as sacred areas, water holes and meeting places. These new crops were planted after destroying indigenous food sources. By burning crops, Pemulwuy sent a clear message that an introduced lifestyle was not welcome. This painting is an emotive response to counter the popular myth that Indigenous people in this country did not fight hard enough against the invasion.

This painting is about early historical interactions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Australia. First contact relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the colonies reveal much about the divide that continues to exist today and this painting is about what we can learn from such engagements. Aboriginal people use their oral histories as well as written historical records from non-Aboriginal colonial perspectives to construct racial consciousness and visions of Aboriginal self-determination. I have painted the stories of Aboriginal resistance fighters to grapple the construction of the 'hero' in art. Romanticism was widely used in early colonial art in Australia emphasizing Rousseau's theory of the 'noble savage'. These early power relations must be highlighted so that we can see how nationalism and imperial sentiment were constructed. As an Aboriginal person, I feel that it is important to understand colonial art practices brought here and how they can be used for decolonisation. By using the colonial romantic imagery of Aboriginal people as a tool, I can inform non-Aboriginal people of the denial of Aboriginal culture in current representations of Australian history.

## **Reference Texts:**

Found in: <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/AS10389b.htm?hilite=Pemulwuy>

Found in: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pemulwuy>

Found in: <http://www.gadigal.org.au/main.php?option=pemulwuy&itemid=43&parentid=events>

Found in: <http://www.cat.org.au/forgottenwar/sydney.html>

# **‘Kalktungu (Kalkadoons)’**

**May 2006**

Acrylic and Red ochre on canvas

120 x 100cm

## **Painting:**

I wanted to paint these warriors because they signify to me the way our communities organized together in a time of war. The story of the Kalkatungu depicts them as very fierce and formidable. I showed these men waiting for the second and final assault by the squatters, military and police who are gathering to the far distant left of the picture.

A myth has been perpetrated about the annihilation of the Kalkadoon people. It is not just another story of the destruction of our people by ‘superior’ colonial forces. This image portrays a group of male family members assembling to fight for their country and positions the viewer as if they are included in this community. I wanted to play with the perpetuation of the Anzac legend as a tragic symbolism of Australian nationalism. While constructions of national identity for wudjulahs are focused on foreign shores, Aboriginal people still remember and honor the resistance of their ancestors as fundamental to their identity.

This painting is about early historical interactions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Australia. First contact relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the colonies reveal much about the divide that continues to exist today and this painting is about what we can learn from such engagements. Aboriginal people use their oral histories as well as written historical records from non-Aboriginal colonial perspectives to construct racial consciousness and visions of Aboriginal self-determination. I have painted the stories of Aboriginal resistance fighters to grapple the construction of the ‘hero’ in art. Romanticism was widely used in early colonial art in Australia emphasizing Rousseau’s theory of the ‘noble savage’. These early power relations must be highlighted so that we can see how nationalism and imperial sentiment were constructed. As an Aboriginal person, I feel that it is important to understand colonial art practices brought here and how they can be used for decolonisation. By using the colonial romantic imagery of Aboriginal people as a tool, I can inform non-Aboriginal people of the denial of Aboriginal culture in current representations of Australian history.

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## **‘Sambo (Saturday)’**

**May 2006**

Acrylic, Red ochre and oil on canvas

120 x 100cm

### **Painting:**

Sambo (or Saturday) came from peoples located on the border between Queensland and New South Wales. He was referred to by colonial newspapers as an Aboriginal ‘Rob Roy’ for his resistance to colonial power. I wanted to paint this warrior because he represents those that practiced their traditional ways and journeys across country despite their lands being occupied by colonial forces and settlers without negotiation. People such as Sambo (Saturday) took it upon themselves to discipline the encroachments on their sacred areas and hunting grounds by taking rent. He received widespread protection from a large number of Aboriginal people throughout this territory and was able to evade capture for several years. It is ironic that the colonial authorities would equate his dissent with that of the Irish resistance movement back in Britain.

This painting is about early historical interactions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Australia. First contact relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the colonies reveal much about the divide that continues to exist today and this painting is about what we can learn from such engagements. Aboriginal people use their oral histories as well as written historical records from non-Aboriginal colonial perspectives to construct racial consciousness and visions of Aboriginal self-determination. I have painted the stories of Aboriginal resistance fighters to grapple the construction of the ‘hero’ in art. Romanticism was widely used in early colonial art in Australia emphasizing Rousseau’s theory of the ‘noble savage’. These early power relations must be highlighted so that we can see how nationalism and imperial sentiment were constructed. As an Aboriginal person, I feel that it is important to understand colonial art practices brought here and how they can be used for decolonisation. By using the colonial romantic imagery of Aboriginal people as a tool, I can inform non-Aboriginal people of the denial of Aboriginal culture in current representations of Australian history.

### **References:**

Found in: <http://www.unswpress.com.au/itemimages/hiresimages/0868408921.jpg>

# **‘Jandamurra’**

**May 2006**

Acrylic and Red ochre on canvas

100 x 120cm

## **Painting:**

Jandamurra was a Banuba warrior who became a legendary resistance fighter. He was also known as “Pigeon” living in the west Kimberley near what is known now as Fitzroy Crossing. I wanted to paint this warrior because he represents to me the internal struggle for those within our community. He was faced with choosing the values of the dominant culture over those of his own community. I painted Jandamurra at the moment in the pre-dawn light where he makes a choice between taking his uncle and extended family away from his ancestral country into captivity. Such an arrest would help his boyhood companion/boss, Constable William Richardson to become a squatter. Jandamarra chooses to set his extended family free by shooting Richardson and escaping with them back into their country.

Jandamurra became a legend in the Kimberley because he would survive the many times he was cornered and shot by troopers. The legend goes that he could not be killed because a Marban Man (Medicine Man) had removed Jandamurra’s heart and placed it into his big toe. Someone then betrayed him by telling the troopers. Jandamurra was subsequently slain with a wound to his foot.

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## **Resource Text:**

Found in: [http://www.acr.net.au/~davidandjane/frebel\\_20000416.pdf](http://www.acr.net.au/~davidandjane/frebel_20000416.pdf)

# **'Bungaree'**

**May 2006**

Acrylic and Red ochre on canvas

120 x 100cm

## **Painting:**

This painting shows Bungaree, who originally came from the country near Broken Bay in New South Wales. He was the first Aboriginal person to circumnavigate Australia (with Lieutenant Matthew Flinders), and was the subject of at least 17 portraits, some of the earliest depictions of Aboriginal people ever painted.

I have painted Bungaree as an old man standing in a colonial square somewhere in the new colony in Sydney. He stands tipping his hat to a prostitute while her daughter reaches to get an apple to give to him. Bungaree is wearing an admiralty uniform, a metal gorget (breast plate) and holds aloft an admiralty hat. These items were all given to him by Mathew Flinders for his services to the British Colonial Empire. Behind him are two wudjulah drunks walking with a bottle of cider between them. In the distant left is a group of three Indigenous women huddled against the weather. One of these women is standing and represents Bungaree's wife 'Queen Gooseberry' (aka 'Cora Gooseberry'). I wanted to make a statement about what happened to those individuals who guided the invading colonial forces over their lands. It is a morality picture in regard to dispossession. I have painted Bungaree in the same pose he was painted in an early portrait made of him in his youth. I painted him as a beggar on streets of white prosperity, possessing little or no authority in this new world and reminding those around him of how time changed his importance to the colony.

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## **Reference:**

Found in: <http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/flinders/biographies/bungaree.html>

# **‘Walyer’**

**May 2006**

Acrylic and Red ochre on canvas

200 x 150cm

## **Painting:**

This painting is of Walyer (aka Te Nor & Tarenorerer) a Plair-Leke-Liller-Plue woman from Tasmania.

In her teens, Walyer was abducted by men from another tribe and traded to sealers for flour and dogs. Such transactions occurred as Tasmanian Aboriginal people's lives were disrupted by encroaching European settlement. Sealers took Aboriginal women for labour and as sexual commodities. During her time with the sealers, Walyer learnt English and how to use firearms. She escaped in 1828 and joined the Lairmairrener group of Emu Bay. In 1830, colonial authorities reported that Walyer was leading violent attacks against settlers and other Aboriginal groups. She and her group used muskets in these assaults, previously unprecedented in Aboriginal attacks.

Walyer represents to me the hundreds of women who fought for their land against the invading colonial forces. Walyer also represents the women of today who see that their struggle has never ceased in obtaining rights for their people over their land and lore. I painted Walyer gesturing toward a group of colonial houses in the distant right. The moon shows light from behind the clouds outlining her cloaked body as she holds two guns. She is gesturing to the viewer as if they are a member of the fighters she has assembled to attack the colonial encroachments upon her lands. There is a road carved into the trees under the distant mountains towards a group of colonial houses with smoke coming out of their chimney's signifying their occupancy. Walyer stands in action holding two guns, a rifle ('fowler') and a small flint-lock pistol is held in her belt around her skirt. She wears a Bookah (Kangaroo cloak), shell necklace and clay ornamentation covers her hair.

This painting is about early historical interactions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Australia. First contact relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the colonies reveal much about the divide that continues to exist today and this painting is about what we can learn from such engagements. Aboriginal people use their oral histories as well as written historical records from non-Aboriginal colonial perspectives to construct racial consciousness and visions of Aboriginal self-determination. I have painted the stories of Aboriginal resistance fighters to grapple the construction of the 'hero' in art. Romanticism was widely used in early colonial art in Australia emphasizing Rousseau's theory of the 'noble savage'. These early power relations must be highlighted so that we can see how nationalism and imperial sentiment were constructed. As an Aboriginal person, I feel that it is important to understand colonial art practices brought here and how they can be used for decolonisation. By using the colonial romantic imagery of Aboriginal people as a tool, I can inform non-Aboriginal people of the denial of Aboriginal culture in current representations of Australian history.

## **Reference:**

Found in: [http://www.acr.net.au/~davidandjane/frebel\\_20000416.pdf](http://www.acr.net.au/~davidandjane/frebel_20000416.pdf)

Found in: [http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/outlawed/explore\\_the\\_outlaws/walyer/](http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/outlawed/explore_the_outlaws/walyer/)

Found in: <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/AS10455b.htm?hilite=Walyer>

Found in: [http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/projects/counterpoints/Proc\\_2003/A8.pdf](http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/projects/counterpoints/Proc_2003/A8.pdf)

# **‘Yagan’**

**May 2006**

Acrylic and Red ochre on canvas 150 x 200cm

## **Painting:**

This painting is about Yagan, a Whadjuk Noongar warrior, who became a freedom fighter in and around Perth in Western Australia. This painting shows Yagan at a tournament of spear throwing in 1833 that was organised by the colonial forces with the assistance of three brothers from King George Sound. These three brothers are located to the bottom right of the picture. The legend goes that Yagan had already a large price on his head for reprisal killings of settlers. On the day of the tournament, he appeared suddenly walking through the crowd of his gathered countrymen. He took every available spear and managed to thrill and shock the wudjulahs assembled by getting almost every spear hitting a bulls-eye. Yagan then turned, disappearing back into the crowd and all without being apprehended by troopers. The colonial authorities prevented his arrest because they feared that it would bring about violence from the Noongars assembled at the tournament. The Noongars largely outnumbered the Wudjulahs present at the tournament.

I painted early Swan River settler, Robert Lyon standing in a blue waist coat to the right. In the background, there is the vista of King’s Park (back when it was known as Mount Eliza). The area of the tournament is located on the sandbar where the future city of Perth now stands. The small black female dog is Yagan’s own legendary companion who was able to successfully warn him of approaching troopers. To the bottom left of the painting is Gyallipert and Manyat, two Noongar brothers. Gyallipert is shaking coins from Manyat’s hand symbolizing rejection of Wudjulah inducements. The two wudjulah men in the background to Yagan’s left are expressing a mixture of emotions, some stare with admiration, while others show fear, anger and hatred. To the right bottom of the painting are three men including Richard Dale (in yellow shirt) and George Smythe (in light green shirt). The man in the red shirt is Governor Stirling. All three men are looking at Gyallipert’s and Manyat’s reactions to the value of wudjulah money.

Yagan wears a Bookah (kangaroo skin cloak), holds a spear thrower and wears two black cockatoo feathers in his hair, they are worn as a symbol of his totemic connection. He has initiation scarring across his chest symbolizing his status in the Noongar community. I painted Yagan so as to comment on the continuing contentious views held by Australian politicians towards Aboriginal customary law. This painting illustrates the way our beliefs, customs and laws were not respected in Yagan’s time and are not fully recognized today. Yagan assumed authority to continue his people’s forms of justice towards the wudjulah intruders whom he grew to see as unjust.

This painting is about early historical interactions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Australia. First contact relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the colonies reveal much about the divide that continues to exist today and this painting is about what we can learn from such engagements. Aboriginal people use their oral histories as well as written historical records from non-Aboriginal colonial perspectives to construct racial consciousness and visions of Aboriginal self-determination. I have painted the stories of Aboriginal resistance fighters to grapple the construction of the ‘hero’ in art. Romanticism was widely used in early colonial art in Australia emphasizing Rousseau’s theory of the ‘noble savage’. These early power relations must be highlighted so that we can see how nationalism and imperial sentiment were constructed. As an Aboriginal person, I feel that it is important to understand colonial art practices brought here and how they can be used for decolonisation. By using the colonial romantic imagery of Aboriginal people as a tool, I can inform non-Aboriginal people of the denial of Aboriginal culture in current representations of Australian history.

## **Reference Text:**

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Found in: <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A020578b.htm?hilite=YAGAN>

Found in: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yagan>

## **‘Self Portrait: Djeran’**

**May 2006**

Oil on canvas

92x 61cm

### **Painting:**

This self-portrait reflects my contemplation of self after producing this latest exhibition entitled Widi Boornoo (Wild Message). In Noongar Boodja (country) there are six separate seasonal events which are connected to the earth. Each season is related to the moving of the community to different locations corresponding with available seasonal foods. ‘Djeran’ is April/May (the period of time I painted this picture) and describes cooler weather beginning. In the old day, Djeran meant fishing is good with plant bulbs and seeds becoming plentiful. Collecting them was good eating. It is also the season when possum are smoked from their nests and the men go hunting for Yongka (Kangaroo) and Waitch (emu). The weather patterns are now changing in Noongar country because global warming is changing the seasons. This year, Noongar country is experiencing its driest Djeran season since invasion.

This self portrait shows me wearing the hat I began to wear this year with a head band made up of the land rights colours. In these fast times, our rights as Indigenous Peoples are being eroded and with the push of governments towards globalization for economic gain, our cultures are used to enhance the appeal of nations as products within a global market. Aboriginal passions and expressions are now product without respecting our distinctive rights as Indigenous peoples within this country. The Liberal/National Government of Australia is abusive of our different aspirations and rights. Fear marks this time of my life. It comes from power held by those on top who talk about greater paternalism in the lives of my community as we continue to struggle as we have always done. We have the right to self-determination. No funding imperative, no police enforcement and no swipe of a pen can ever change our fundamental rights as the original occupiers of this land who never ceded sovereignty. My painting is a statement of resistance.

### **Resource text:**

Found in: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noongar>

## **‘Sable Valet: Shilling’**

**May 2006**

Acrylic, Red ochre and oil on canvas

30x25cm

### **Painting:**

This painting shows ‘Shilling’ who’s name was directly derived from the empire money/currency available during the colonial period. My great great-aunt was called Shilling by the man that took her from her family. His name was Mr. Barrington. He took her as his concubine and she fathered a daughter to him naming her Mary Barrington. Barrington had Shilling and Mary working as servants in his house. Oral history gives account that Shilling and my great-grandmother, Tuppence, (Mary Oliver) were both from the same country known as Goodingow. Both were taken from their mothers at a very young age in order to find water and food in the bush.

Shilling is placed in the center of this painting looking left towards her country outside of the mining camp named Cossak in the Midwest of Western Australia. Around her chin are the circling hoof prints of a horse and small feet walking toward the viewer. The tracks then circle around into the shack of a man who stands watching.

This painting reflects upon the lives of those individuals who were taken away from their families and communities for the sole purpose of exploitation. Known as Sable valets, these children as young as 6, were stolen away from their families so they could track and find water for the early colonial invaders. They were easily captured and once under the power of their masters, were defenseless and entirely vulnerable to those who stole them. These cruel men found that even young children were capable of finding basic food in their ancestral lands. These children experienced physical, mental, and sexual abuse. The legacy of such treatment is reflected in the dysfunction and illness experienced by their descendents today.

### **Reference Text:**

Found in: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shilling>

Reynolds, H. (1990) ‘Black Pioneers’, Penguin Books, Melbourne

## **‘Sable Valet: Tuppance’**

**May 2006**

Acrylic, Red ochre and oil on canvas

30x25

### **Painting:**

This painting reflects upon the children who were the first to be born under the influence of the colonial population. My great grandmother was the daughter of a Sable Valet. This was my great great-grandmother, Melbin. My great grandmother was named Mary ‘Tuppence’ Oliver. The ‘Tuppence’ in her name being a reference to the smallest denominations of money used by colonizers. Her name was given to her by her colonial father, Mr Edward Oliver who was a squatter in her mother’s country near Warriadar Station in the Mid West of Western Australia.

Tuppence was a nurse maid and servant to her father’s new colonial bride and to the children he fathered with her. Tuppence stands facing the viewer. Her eyes lifted slightly toward the back of a colonial wudjulah woman’s dress on which a small wood beetle is sitting making her smile sadly. In the distance is an embroidery circle with sewing attached while a cameo portrait of the colonial bride sits upon the wall. This whole scene reflects the attitudes towards colour and race within early gentile Australian society once wudjulah women began to enter the frontier. These Aboriginal children and women were made servants to my colonial ancestors. Their lands were taken through deception and violence.

This painting reflects upon the lives of those individuals who were taken away from their families and communities for the sole purpose of exploitation. Known as Sable valets, these children as young as 6, were stolen away from their families so they could track and find water for the early colonial invaders. They were easily captured and once under the power of their masters, were defenseless and entirely vulnerable to those who stole them. These cruel men found that even young children were capable of finding basic food in their ancestral lands. These children experienced physical, mental, and sexual abuse. The legacy of such treatment is reflected in the dysfunction and illness experienced by their descendents today.

### **Reference:**

Found in: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Two Pence>

Reynolds, H. (1990) ‘Black Pioneers’, Penguin Books, Melbourne

## **‘Sable Valet: Jinnie’**

**May 2006**

Acrylic, Red ochre and oil on canvas

30x25

### **Painting:**

This painting shows a young girl facing the viewer. Her eyes lift up towards a family group of Indigenous people walking in the distance; she smiles slightly to herself in recognition. A wudjulah (non-Indigenous) baby is in her charge and plays in the bottom right with two balls. In the bottom left, a wash basin sits with washing board and clothes half-washed. There is a clothes line pulled by the summer wind across the top of the painting.

Many young children and women were stolen or traded from their families for many purposes such as concubines, house maids or nurse maids to colonial children. Jinny or Jinnie became a popular name to give to these stolen children as it branded them for future interpretations of the derogatory name of ‘Gin’. There is record within many Indigenous communities of several generations of women & girls being called Ginni, Ginnie or ‘House Gin’. The word ‘Gin’ possibly originates from an Aboriginal word recorded in 1788, known as ‘Diyin’, which meant ‘woman’ or ‘wife’. The white settlers interpreted ‘Diyin’ as ‘Gin’, and it quickly became a derogatory word for an Indigenous woman.

I wanted to reflect upon these individuals as they represent the first engagement with white cultural practices and society. Though forced, they became interpreters of these new strangers and provided insight to their people of the way their colonial captors behaved.

This painting reflects upon the lives of those individuals who were taken away from their families and communities for the sole purpose of exploitation. Known as Sable valets, these children as young as 6, were stolen away from their families so they could track and find water for the early colonial invaders. They were easily captured and once under the power of their masters, were defenseless and entirely vulnerable to those who stole them. These cruel men found that even young children were capable of finding basic food in their ancestral lands. These children experienced physical, mental, and sexual abuse. The legacy of such treatment is reflected in the dysfunction and illness experienced by their descendents today.

### **Reference Text:**

Reynolds, H. (1990) ‘Black Pioneers’, Penguin Books, Melbourne

Found in: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gin\\_%28disambiguation%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gin_%28disambiguation%29)

Found in: [http://www.huon.org/newsletter/havoc\\_aug05.pdf](http://www.huon.org/newsletter/havoc_aug05.pdf)

## **‘Sable Valet: Wool Bill’**

**May 2006**

Acrylic, Red ochre and oil on canvas

30x25cm

### **Painting:**

This painting was painted in response to the story as quoted by Henry Reynolds about a small boy who became a ‘body servant’ to a man named Robert Dawson. Dawson captured him for the sole purpose of having a servant for his own perceived status in the colonial society of the time. A child slave represented the dominating actions of racist individuals upon vulnerable children. Taken from their families, often by force, these children were stolen long before the ‘stolen generations’ became legislated officially. Some argue that such an early practice influenced the mercenary attitudes towards Aboriginal adults as incapable parents or worse, as inhuman towards their own children. Such attitudes are still thrown around today without recognition of early atrocities and their effects upon Indigenous people in this country.

The boy in this picture looks down to the bottom left as if in sad contemplation. Tall trees surround his face as if an unfamiliar cage. His cage must have been the total dependence he had to the man who took him. In front of his face sits a wash cloth and bowl filled with water as a symbol alluding to his role as a personal servant.

This painting reflects upon the lives of those individuals who were taken away from their families and communities for the sole purpose of exploitation. Known as Sable valets, these children as young as 6, were stolen away from their families so they could track and find water for the early colonial invaders. They were easily captured and once under the power of their masters, were defenseless and entirely vulnerable to those who stole them. These cruel men found that even young children were capable of finding basic food in their ancestral lands. These children experienced physical, mental, and sexual abuse. The legacy of such treatment is reflected in the dysfunction and illness experienced by their descendents today.

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Reynolds, H. (1990) ‘Black Pioneers’, Penguin Books, Melbourne