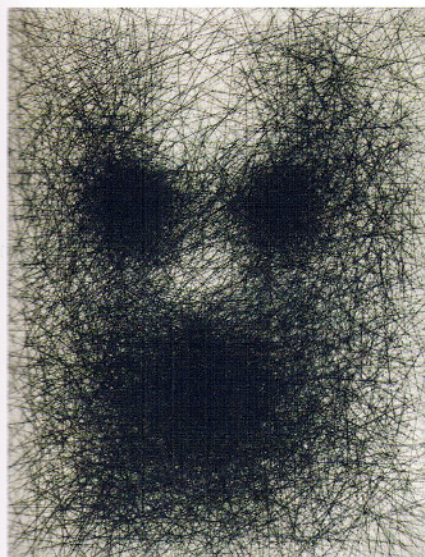


Aboriginal printmaking workshops

and recent residencies at Cicada Press, COFA UNSW, Sydney



Vernon Ah Kee, *Unwritten (Black)*, 2102, etching, 67 x 50.5 cm

by Tess Allas, Associate Lecturer,
School of Art History & Art Education,
COFA, and
Michael Kempson,
Head of Printmaking and Director,
Cicada Press, COFA

In late February six artists from around Australia participated in the inaugural two-week Aboriginal Printmaking Workshop, organised and conducted at COFA UNSW by academics Tess Allas and Michael Kempson. It occurred as a consequence of the 'Storylines' research project that investigated the art-making practices of Aboriginal artists from across Australia who are not part of the Art Centre System that exists in remote communities. The findings of this research (www.storylines.org.au) showed a great disparity between what is considered, researched, curated or even discussed at many levels of the art industry for artists from urban and regional areas. The printmaking workshop, in seeking to address this issue, hosted WA artists Laurel and Brett Nannup, Graham 'Nudge' Blacklock from Northern NSW and Bonny Foley-Brennan and Glenn Duffield from Boolarng Nangamai, an art/culture studio in Gerringong, on the south coast of NSW. Also attending was David Nolan, the recipient of the 2011 COFA UNSW Prize, which forms part of the annual Parliament of NSW Aboriginal Art Prize. The COFA award offers mentorship and access to COFA staff/facilities and an exhibition at COFAspace gallery in October 2012. Apart from the educative value of introducing printmaking practice to these artists, the simple act of having an Aboriginal presence on campus was an acknowledgement of the importance of COFA UNSW's Aboriginal community outreach practices.

The prints produced at this workshop, along with a recently completed April residency with Brisbane-based artist Vernon Ah Kee, the May residency of Gordon Hookey and previous workshops with Graham Davis-King, Fiona Foley, Roy Kennedy and Danie Mellor form part of an ever expanding Aboriginal Print Portfolio. In addition a July workshop was held with six artists from the Euraba Papermaking Company in Boggabilla, northeast NSW. Leonie Binge, Lola Binge, Christine Dumas, Joy Duncan, May Hinch, and Deborah Knox were involved in a collaborative work with German artist Monika Grzymala for the Biennale of Sydney. The Biennale of Sydney financed the Euraba workshop. For many of these women printmaking was an art practice that they had only touched upon during their TAFE courses but much of what they create with their papermaking artwork and the skills this requires translated very easily to the etching process. There were of course some challenges to overcome and new skills to learn but, with good grace and a wonderful sense of humour, the artists

Vernon Ah Kee, *Let's be polite about Aboriginal art*, 2012, aquatint, 31 x 32 cm

applied themselves and created work beyond their initial imaginings.

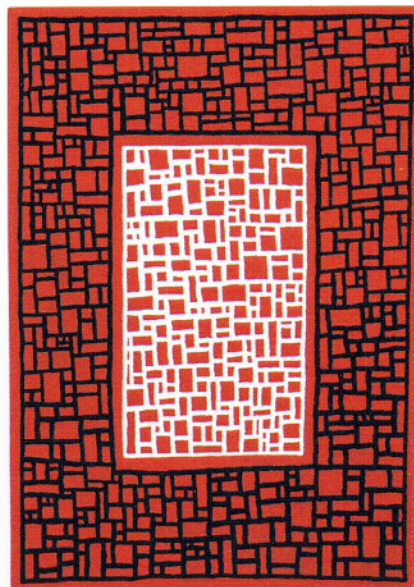
In August this year Cicada Press hosted Melbourne-based artist Reko Rennie for a week-long residency. Rennie's aim was to create etchings and possibly lithographs informed by his highly successful practice of stencilling.

The outcomes of this research are far reaching for there is a range of exhibitions planned for 2013. Negotiations are continuing on a project to take local Indigenous artists to visit Iqaluit, capital of the Far Northern Canadian Province of Nunavut for exchange with Inuit lithographers from the Kinngait Studio in Cape Dorset. COFA has also been invited to conduct a joint Aboriginal and First Nations Print Exhibition at the First Peoples Festival of Montreal in August. The last and most prestigious is an exhibition of these recent prints at the Kluge-Ruhe Museum at the University of Virginia, USA, the only museum in North America dedicated solely to Australian Aboriginal art.

The personal outcomes for the artists have been far reaching. Both Laurel and Brett Nannup's prints were collected into the BHP Art Collection and Nudge Blacklock's two-plate etching *Bodypaint* was shortlisted in the 'Works on Paper' category for the 2012 Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Awards, held in August at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory in Darwin, NT. Nudge, Laurel and Brett have also submitted work for consideration in the 2012 Fremantle Print Awards and at the time of writing were waiting to hear the result.

Stay tuned. •

Graham 'Nudge' Blacklock, *Bodypaint*, 2012, aquatint, 50 x 35 cm



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