

BLAK

NEW CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

COOK

ON COOKS' COTTAGE

BOOK

A SET OF PROVOCATIONS *Clare Land* | *Paola Balla* | *Kate Golding*

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are respectfully advised that this publication contains the names, words and images of people who have passed away.



Dedication

THE LATE TRACEY BANIVANUA MAR





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Walter Hobbs, *Cook's Cottage, Fitzroy Gardens, Melbourne, 1940*, State Library Victoria, Accession no: H2010.56/59.

COMPETING VIEWS OF COOK

'CAPTAIN COOK' IS ONE OF THE BEST-KNOWN NAMES IN AUSTRALIAN HISTORY. But public feelings about Cook are divided. Cook only spent about 40 days on Australian shores in two brief visits in 1770 and 1773. However, he and his crew examined the coast and waters carefully, collecting detailed information for the British Empire about the economic potential of the land and how future British ships could navigate the coast. Cook and his crew were the forerunners of the British colonisation of Australia, and centuries of British influence in the Pacific more broadly.

A wealthy Melburnian purchased Cooks' Cottage for the city in 1934, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the colonisation of Victoria.¹ The cottage is just one of many hundreds of public monuments commemorating Cook that have been sponsored by governments or citizens of influence. However, members of the public have registered a different perspective on Cook's legacy by vandalising such monuments and using them as a rallying point. This has generated debate over how Cook and his legacy should be dealt with by officialdom and represented to the public.²

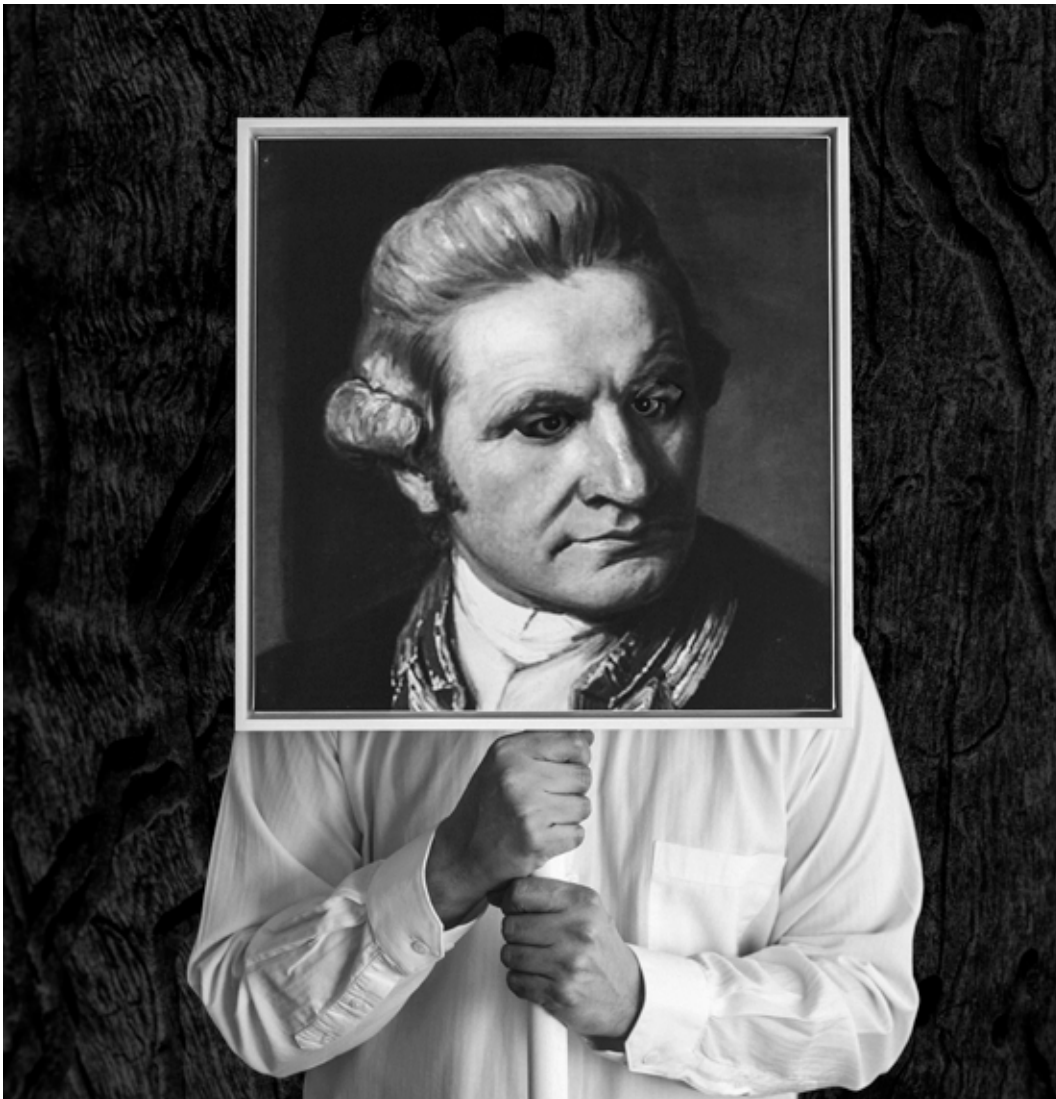
PAGES 4 AND 5
Lisa Bellear (Minjungbul/Noonuccal/
Kanak), *Black GST protestors including
Wayne Thorpe and Robbie Corowa,
Captain Cook's Cottage, Fitzroy
Gardens, Melbourne*, 2006. Digitised
colour photograph. Lisa Bellear
Collection. Gift of John Stewart, 2012.
Koorie Heritage Trust, PH 05529.

During the 2006 protest and ceremony pictured in
this artwork by Lisa Bellear, supporters of the Black
GST (Genocide, Sovereignty, Treaty) wrapped 'crime
scene tape' around Cooks' Cottage.



ABOVE
Callum Morton, *Cottage Industry:
Bawdy Nights*, 1999. Wood, epoxy,
Perspex, acrylic, lights, sound,
80 x 50 x 50 cm. © Callum Morton.
Courtesy the artist and Anna
Schwartz Gallery. Photo: McClelland
Gallery. Collection of McClelland
Sculpture Park and Gallery.

The artwork *Cottage Industry: Bawdy Nights* (1999) by
non-Aboriginal artist Callum Morton is a scale model
of Cooks' Cottage. The Cottage sits on a packing crate
and issues a raucous soundtrack. It hints that there is
more going on with Cooks' Cottage and its situation
in the Fitzroy Gardens than its homely appearance
suggests.



Blak Cook Book explores the two main competing views of Cook and all that he symbolises. It also presents a view of James Cook as just one man and a view of his journeys from the perspective of the First Nations whose lives, lands and stories were ruptured as a result.

This publication also notes the dangers of telling an unbalanced story about our own history. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults remember the first time they were told a one-sided view of Cook at school, and how this ruptured their educational and childhood journey. Yet children have shown that they have the capacity to deal with complexity and multiple perspectives, and enjoy learning history more when the debates are engaged, not ignored.

In this publication you will find a range of stories and artworks that challenge the one-sided view; and you will find out how First Nations peoples negotiated Cook's voyages at the time and continue to negotiate his legacy today.

OPPOSITE

Christian Thompson,
Otherring the Explorer, James Cook
from the series *Museum of Others*,
2016. C-type print, 120 x 120 cm.
Courtesy the artist and Sarah Scout
Presents, Melbourne.

As this Christian Thompson artwork shows, who Cook was in the broad sense is a topic of significant public interest and concern.



ABOVE

Photograph of Gary Foley
at the Captain Cook statue,
Hyde Park, Sydney.
Photo: Haydn Keenan, 2009.

Captain Cook is an important 'white Australian culture hero.' Black Power activists have used this knowledge to get attention for their views. As historian and activist Gary Foley explains: 'Whenever we felt like getting a little bit of public attention, you could always be guaranteed to get a headline if you bought a can of paint down here to Hyde Park in Sydney and chucked it over Captain Cook.'⁴

OVERVIEW OF COOK'S PACIFIC VOYAGES

COOK'S THREE VOYAGES OF DISCOVERY IN THE PACIFIC in the 1770s mark a significant turning point in the recent history of Britain and the Pacific. Other Europeans, particularly the Spanish, had been crossing the Pacific Ocean since the 1500s, largely for trade. However, it was Cook's journeys that signalled the beginning of British influence in the region, and the beginning of significant, ongoing disruption to First Nations peoples and lands.⁵

1768–1771 ENDEAVOUR

The first Pacific voyage captained by James Cook had scientific and military goals: to observe and record the movement of the planet Venus across the sun from a location in the South Pacific (so that scientists could calculate the distance from Earth to the sun), and to take detailed observations of sea depth and coastlines as a guide for future voyages. Cook was also instructed to look out for opportunities to expand the empire with the east coast of Australia in mind. The *Endeavour* observed the transit of Venus from Tahiti in July 1769, then mapped the north and south islands of Aotearoa New Zealand and the east coast of Australia. On his return home, Cook's charts and journals were used to assert a claim against other colonial powers that Britain had lawfully taken possession of vast areas of Australia's east.⁶

1772–1775 RESOLUTION AND ADVENTURE

On the second voyage Cook captained the *Resolution*, and was accompanied by the *Adventure*, helmed by Tobias Furneaux. This time Cook aimed to further explore the far south of the Pacific and determine whether or not there was a major southern continent in the Antarctic region. Between them the two ships made several forays south of the Antarctic Circle, with the journey including Tasmania, Aotearoa New Zealand, Tahiti, Tonga, Rapa Nui (Easter Island), Vanuatu (New Hebrides), New Caledonia and Norfolk Island.

1776–1780 RESOLUTION AND DISCOVERY

The focus of the third voyage was the North Pacific and the hope of finding a shipping route from the Atlantic to the Pacific – a 'North-West Passage'. The journey took in the Kerguelen group of islands, Tasmania, Aotearoa New Zealand, Tonga, Tahiti, Hawai'i, Vancouver Island, Alaska and the Arctic

Circle. From there the voyage headed back to Hawai'i, where a dispute ended in Cook being killed along with 4 crew and 16 Kānaka Maoli. A replacement captain took the helm of the *Resolution* and voyaged north again, then southwards along the western coast of Russia. On the way home they passed Japan and stopped in China (Macao).

The voyages gave the British government an overview of the layout of the entire Oceania region and a good understanding of their prospects for exploiting its lands and resources. This process of exploitation began soon after Cook's third voyage, with various vessels soon setting back out to Australia, Tahiti, the southern oceans, the north coast of America and Aotearoa New Zealand to seek produce, hunt for whales and establish settler colonies. Given the importance of Cook's role on the voyages, he is a highly symbolic figure for First Nations communities of the Pacific.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES' OBSERVATIONS OF COOK

1770 | Gunai/Kurnai peoples first encountered Cook on 14 April 1770 when he sailed within view of 'Point Hicks' in East Gippsland. They immediately sent smoke signals of warning up the coast in the direction of the *Endeavour's* travel.⁷ Local family groups and those up the coast indicated their heavy occupation of the land by lighting numerous visible camp fires which were understood by the *Endeavour* to indicate significant human presence.⁸

1770 | The Gweagal clan of 'Botany Bay' first laid eyes on Cook in late April 1770. This is where Cook first stepped on shore.⁹

1770 | The Waymbuurr clan of the Guugu Yimithirr people on the bank of Waalumbaal Birri (since renamed the Endeavour River) made contact with Cook at 'Cooktown', Queensland.

1770 | Torres Strait Islanders kept a close eye on Cook when he used the strait as a safe passage between the Australian coast and New Guinea. At this point, the *Endeavour* was looking for a place to turn westward for the long journey home, having finished charting the east coast of Australia.

1773 | Neunonne clansmen, of Tasmania's Bruny Island, watched Cook's companion vessel the *Adventure* closely as it arrived and the crew made landfall. They did not elect to meet this crew, but made contact with Cook when he returned in 1777.¹⁰

CROSS-CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS

COOK'S REPERTOIRE OF WEAPONS



EACH OF COOK'S JOURNEYS LASTED TWO TO THREE YEARS. There were hundreds of meetings, understandings, misunderstandings and conflicts between Cook and his crew and First Nations peoples and communities during these years.

As well as following the coastlines closely to record shipping information and create charts, Cook needed to make many stops at many Pacific Islands to refuel and to restock food supplies. At times, he negotiated with First Nations peoples, exchanging European items such as metal tools in return for use of local resources. If he met resistance to his visits or his requests for supplies, Cook and his crew forced their way with a variety of weapons. As Cook wrote in his diary:

'We attempt to land in a peacable manner, if this succeeds its well, if not we land nevertheless and maintain the footing we thus got by the Superiority of our fire arms, in what other light can they than at first look upon us but as invaders of the Country...'¹¹

This shows that Cook himself recognised that arriving by force on First Nations' shores would be understandably perceived as an act of invasion.

While Cook went on to say he wanted to be seen as a friendly visitor, in reality he laid the groundwork for later armed colonizers, vindicating this perspective. However, many non-Indigenous Australians resist the 'invasion' label today, instead opting for the less politically charged 'settlement'.

Some of the cross-cultural encounters during Cook's journeys, such as those between ship and shore, were quite brief.

Others, such as those between First Nations peoples from different parts of the Pacific, were longstanding; they flowed from existing First Nations networks which continued and changed after Cook.

First Nations peoples' stories of belonging to the Pacific are unbroken. But the impact of Cook's journeys was so great that in explaining this to the descendants of Europeans today, the terms 'Before Cook' and 'pre-*baolé*' are used.

ABOVE
Cannon from HMB *Endeavour*
1725–50. Photography by George
Serras, National Museum of
Australia.

Cook took heavy weaponry on his journeys. If First Nations people impeded or bothered him during his journeys or his refuelling and rest stops, Cook used 'smallshot as a first warning, followed by a musketball through a canoe or at a bird; shooting musketoon balls overhead or into the water, or firing the great guns overhead to demonstrate the ship's firepower. Only in the last resort would he allow his men to shoot to kill.'¹²

SECRET INSTRUCTIONS

GWEAGAL | GUUGU YIMITHIRR

BEFORE COOK SET OFF ON THE FIRST JOURNEY, the British Admiralty gave him secret instructions. These were both written and verbal.¹³ He was not allowed to read the written instructions until he had reached Tahiti and finished observing an important planetary event, the transit of Venus. Cook's instructions were to head towards Australia and assess the east coast of the continent and its resources in all respects: *the beasts, fowls, fishes; the nature of the soil; any mines, minerals or valuable stones; trees, fruits and grains; and the genius, temper, disposition and number of the natives.*

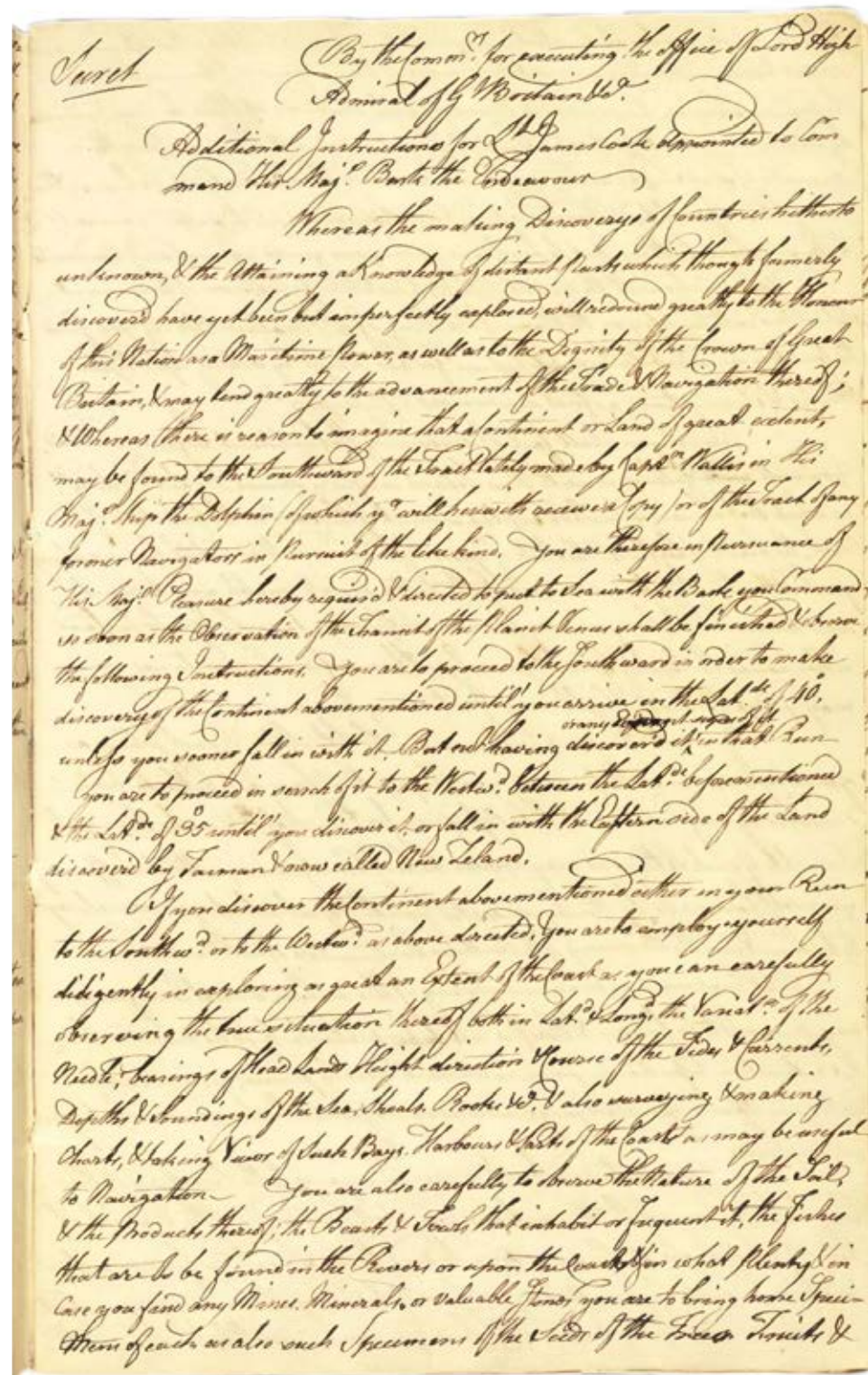
The instructions then said, 'You are also with the Consent of the Natives to take Possession of Convenient Situations in the Country in the Name of the King of Great Britain: Or: if you find the Country uninhabited take Possession for his Majesty by setting up Proper Marks and Inscriptions, as first discoverers and possessors.'¹⁴

Cook was clearly unable to gain 'the consent of the natives' in his visits to the east coast of Australia. Quite the opposite: he was unable to establish any kind of understanding or engagement with the Neunonne or Gweagal peoples. This is because Cook's behaviour – entering Country without consent – was not appropriate. Cook and his crew did not behave properly; they revealed themselves as clueless about

custom and law. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples ignored and avoided Cook and his crew to indicate that they rejected his intent to enter Country.¹⁵ They also rejected, discarded and ignored gifts that he left for them.¹⁶

Cook's crew had a bit more success further north in Guugu Yimithirr Country – though this was achieved entirely by accident. Having crashed into the Great Barrier Reef and damaged his ship, Cook was forced landwards. Completely focused on repairing the ship, Cook and his crew lingered off shore for several days. They did not try to approach the shore immediately and seek contact with the local land owners as they had in Gweagal Country. This was a much more culturally recognisable and appropriate behaviour

Cook did not follow an important part of his instructions. He followed the part about 'taking possession' of First Nations land, but he did not follow the part about doing this 'with the consent of the natives'.



OPPOSITE
Secret instructions issued to James Cook by the British Admiralty (1768), Cook's voyage 1768–71: copies of correspondence, etc. National Library of Australia, Canberra.

from the Guugu Yimithirr perspective, who were able to initiate contact at the right time for them.

Cook's diaries of 1770 and 1773 show that he was a bit confused about his rejection by Aboriginal peoples on the east coast and later lutruwita (Tasmania).

Cook failed to get 'the consent of the natives' and to 'enter the law and ceremony of the land.'¹⁷ However, Cook went on to claim to the rest of the world that he had established 'possession' of the continent for the purposes of international law.¹⁸ He had broken Aboriginal laws and disregarded many of the existing rules of colonisation.¹⁹ Millions of non-Indigenous people followed in Cook's footsteps, resulting in illegal land grabs and genocide.²⁰

This is why Cook is remembered as 'the original invader'²¹ and a harbinger of death to Aboriginal peoples and culture.²² In fact, to many First Nations peoples all over the Pacific, Cook remains a 'Great White Evil.'²³

Gunai man Robbie Thorpe has a few things to say on the themes of broken laws and military force in this excerpt from his performance poem 'Ruling the waves, Waiving the rules':

It's incredible, Australia's history

And the narrative of colonialism in this country

It's only 250 years ago that they were

Cooking the books

OPPOSITE

Jason Wing,
Captain James Cook, 2013.
Bronze, 60 x 60 x 30cm.
Edition of 5. Image courtesy of
the artist and Arterreal Gallery.
Photograph by Garrie Maguire,
Red Gate Gallery Artist in
Residence programme.

Biripi artist Jason Wing's *Captain James Cook* (2013) portrays Cook as a burglar by placing a black balaclava over a bronze bust of the captain's likeness. This is a comment on Cook unlawfully 'taking possession' of the place he renamed New South Wales (eastern Australia today) in 1770.

Banking on Banks

Ruling the waves

Waiving the rules

A pre-emptive strike

On innocent people

Weapons of mass destruction, namely

Smallpox

Vile potions

Phial potions

Genocide notions

It's the beginning of your history here

If it wasn't for the acts of terror

And the policies of genocide

Australia wouldn't exist

It's a Crown, naval, corporation-backed war

Undeclared

Secret

Come on folks!

You're in denial...²⁴



NAVIGATING EACH OTHER'S WORLDS

TUPAIA'S CULTURAL RESOURCES AND DIPLOMACY

DURING THE FIRST JOURNEY, COOK HAD SOME EXCELLENT LUCK. A remarkable Raiatean man called Tupaia came aboard the *Endeavour* in Tahiti and seemed very interested to join the journey. It turned out that Tupaia was a highly skilled navigator and was willing to share his extensive knowledge with Cook. He revealed details about 130 islands and worked with Cook and Joseph Banks to translate his knowledge into at least two charts: 'Tupaia's Chart', which showed the locations of 74 islands from the reference point of Tahiti, and 'A chart of the Society Isles in the South Sea'.²⁵

Tupaia was able to list all these islands despite not having visited all of them – his map was recorded as oral memory, the accumulated wisdom of generations of Pacific navigators. It is possible that Tupaia was interested in joining Cook's journey as an opportunity to exercise his own knowledge.²⁶

As Cook recorded in his diary: 'I have before hinted that these people have an extensive knowledge of the islands situated in these seas.'²⁷ First Nations peoples of the Pacific were also able to predict the weather more accurately than Europeans at that time.²⁸



Tupaia was also very knowledgeable about language, culture and religion. This was due to his extensive education as a tahua (priest) and member of the arioi – a respected society of travelling cultural practitioners and messengers. He showed Cook how to behave when the *Endeavour* approached Huahine and Aotearoa New Zealand. In reality, Tupaia took over leadership of the first journey from Tahiti onwards because he had the superior local knowledge to pilot the ship safely when close to shore, and the ability to communicate with First Nations peoples because of shared language and familiar customs. Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand treated Tupaia rather than Cook as the commander of the *Endeavour*.²⁹ Tupaia spent a lot of time talking with Māori about Pacific culture and history while in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Tupaia did not share language with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. However, he was still able to play an important role in defusing conflict between the law-breaking crew of the *Endeavour* and the Guugu Yimithirr because of his cultural resources. For instance, in an interaction with four community members who initially shouted at the crew and stood in a row with spears raised, 'Tupia went towards [them]... he made signs that they should lay them down and come forward without them; this they immediately did and sat down with him upon the ground.'³⁰ The four Guugu Yimithirr then tolerated four crew members joining them, making sure that the crew didn't get between them and their spears.

ABOVE
Polynesian Voyaging Society's recreated traditional voyaging canoe called the *Hōkūle'a*. Photo: Polynesian Voyaging Society / 'Ōiwi TV. Photographer: Jason Patterson.

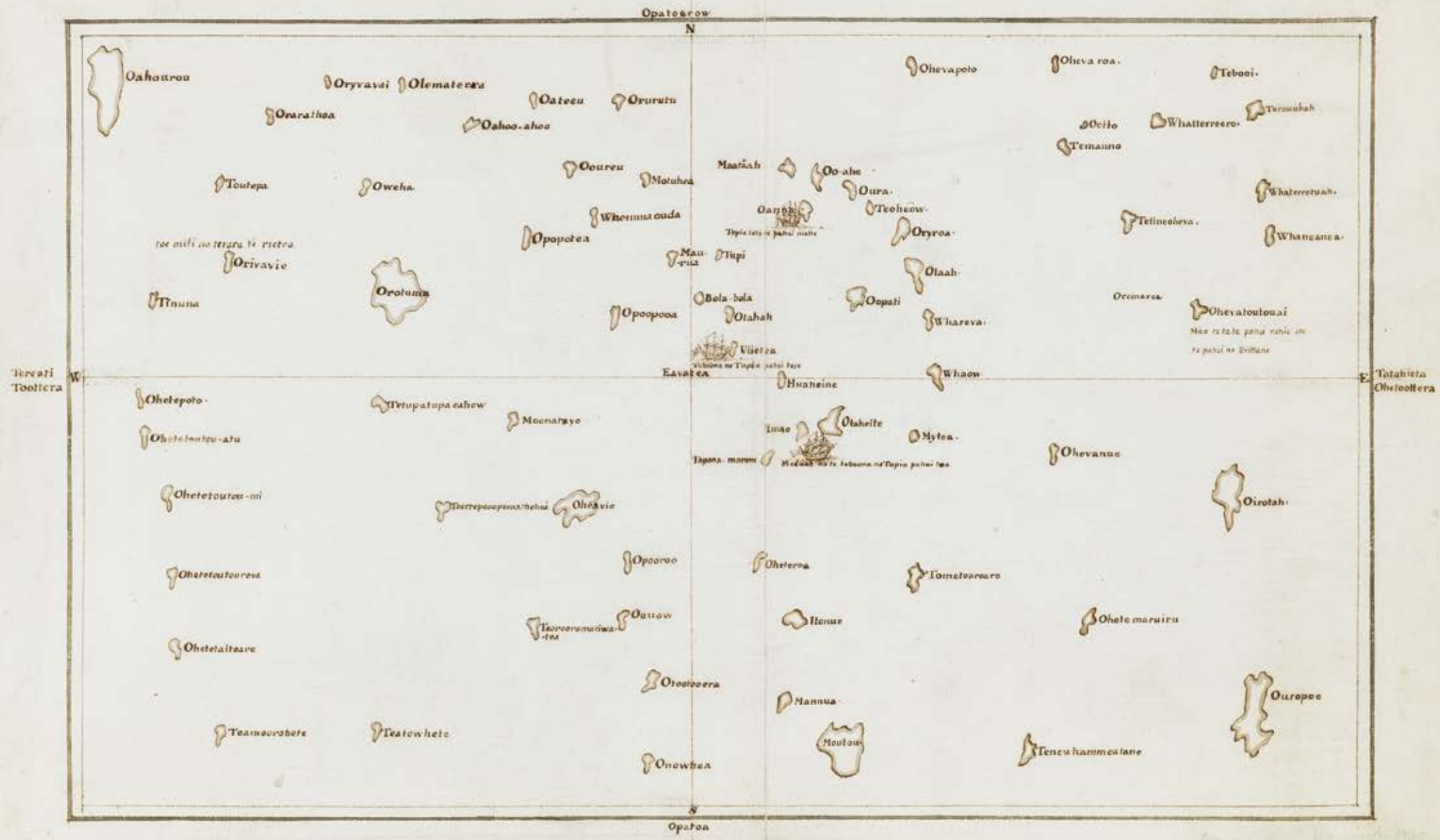
The Polynesian Voyaging Society, founded in 1975, built a wa'a (traditional voyaging canoe) called the *Hōkūle'a* as part of a project to reassert and enjoy the genius of Pacific navigation and culture. Without instruments, the *Hōkūle'a* has navigated more than 175,000 kilometres between Hawai'i and Tahiti as well as Aotearoa New Zealand, Easter Island, Tonga, the Marquesas Islands, the Cook Islands, Micronesia and Japan.

OVERLEAF
Attributed to James Cook (1728–79), *Chart of the Society Islands, with Otaheite [Tahiti] in the centre*, from 'Charts and Maps made during the Voyage of Discovery in the South Pacific Ocean, by Captain James Cook, commander of the *Endeavour*, in 1769 and 1770', 1769.

Ink on paper. British Library, London, UK. Add. MS 21593 C. © British Library Board. All Rights Reserved. Bridgeman Images.

This map was created on the first voyage and is a European representation of Tupaia's knowledge. Pacific navigation involves reference to stars, as well as careful observations of winds and currents. Pacific navigators can detect the presence of an island at a great distance and steer their vessel towards it.

21593 C.



OBSERVING EACH OTHER

NOT ONLY DID TUPAIA HELP THE FIRST JOURNEY WITH NAVIGATION AND DIPLOMACY, he also helped Joseph Banks with his project to describe the First Nations peoples and cultures that they encountered.³¹ Likewise, two more First Nations men – Mai from Ra’iatea and Hitihiti from Bora Bora – shared their knowledge of Tahitian language with the scientists on board the second voyage.³² Each of Cook’s voyages included artists who sketched the land and people, and Tupaia himself made at least 16 such drawings.

Europeans were very curious to hear stories from explorers such as Cook and Banks about ‘strange’ peoples a long way away. Inaccurate and very exotic pictures of Pacific First Nations peoples were even put on wallpaper and sold in Europe.³³ Stories and images that suggested First Nations peoples were inferior made Europeans feel more comfortable about stealing their land and disturbing their way of life.

Cook and Banks themselves had heard stories about First Nations people from explorers who had gone before them (in particular William Dampier, 1697). However, once the *Endeavour* reached the east coast of Australia, Banks realised that stories he had heard before the voyages had influenced what he expected to see. Describing what those on ship could see through telescopes when squinting towards shore, Banks wrote that they could ‘discern 5 people who appeared through our glasses to be enormously black... so far did the prejudices which we had built on Dampiers account influence us that we fancied that we could

see their Colour when we could scarcely distinguish whether or not they were men.’³⁴ From a First Nations perspective, the way most European observers described First Nations cultures was unfamiliar. Sometimes it was biased: either exaggerated or racist. In this context, the drawings made by Tupaia are exciting and important. As an ‘outside’ observer, Tupaia’s viewpoint was sympathetic, and he noticed details that were valuable to First Nations peoples.

OPPOSITE
Tupaia (c. 1725–70),
Māori trading a crayfish
with Joseph Banks, drawing
by Tupaia, from ‘Drawings
illustrative of Captain Cook’s
First Voyage, 1768–1771’, 1769.
Watercolour, on paper, 26.8
x 20.5 cm. British Library,
London, UK. Add. MS 15508,
fol. 12. © British Library
Board. All Rights Reserved.
Bridgeman Images.

Tupaia’s painting depicts an exchange of goods between an unnamed Māori man and the explorer Joseph Banks. Tupaia had acted as an intermediary, leading Banks to attempt the trade of some nails or cloth for a lobster. Banks wrote later he made sure to grip the lobster firmly before letting go of the goods he offered in exchange.³⁵





Another artwork related to the arrival of the British from a First Nations perspective is Kwat Kwat artist Tommy McRae's drawing *Victorian Blacks – Melbourne tribe holding corroboree after seeing ships for the first time* (c. 1890). It shows a group of Wathaurong people dancing, including the escaped convict William Buckley, who the Wathaurong sheltered for many years after he escaped. In the background is a colonial tall ship. There are flags on top of both the tall ship and the Wathaurong dancers, suggesting that the artist is concerned with the confrontation of two sovereign orders. Like the Tupaia drawings and the more recent First Nations artworks featured in this publication, McRae's drawing is important: it is a refreshing and thought-provoking contrast to the more widespread European interpretations of Cook's voyages.

Māori artist Lisa Reihana (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Hine and Ngāi Tu) took the colonial French wallpaper *Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique* (1804–1805) and re-populated it with culturally and politically strong depictions of First Nations peoples in a substantial series of works in 2015 and 2016 titled *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]*.³⁶ Reihana's work is very detailed and shows particular moments from Cook's journeys, including his death. With her work, Reihana comments on the exotic view colonists had of Polynesian people and culture. She reflects on the damage many of Cook's crew inflicted on Polynesian communities by seeking sexual contact with them and passing on diseases.³⁷ Reihana insists that when we consider the history of Cook's voyages, we must consider both points of view.³⁸



OPPOSITE
Tupaia (c. 1725–70), *Indigenous Australians in bark canoes*, drawing by Tupaia, from 'Drawings illustrative of Captain Cook's First Voyage, 1768–1771', 1770.

Pencil and watercolour, on paper, 26.4 x 36 cm. British Library, London, UK. Add. MS 15508, fol. 10. © British Library Board. All Rights Reserved. Bridgeman Images.

Tupaia's drawing *Indigenous Australians in bark canoes* (1770) clearly shows a garrara spear and how it is used in fishing. Gweagal man Shayne Williams says this is a compelling example of cultural continuity: 'The style of this garrara spear is exactly consistent with the way my brother-in-law taught my nephew and myself to make garrara spears.'³⁹

ABOVE
Tommy McRae, Kwatkwat people, (c. 1833/1837–1901), *Victorian Blacks – Melbourne tribe holding corroboree after seeing ships for the first time*, c. 1890s, Wahgunyah, Victoria.

Drawing in pen and iron-gall ink, cream wove paper, 23.8 x 36.0 cm. Purchased by the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra 1994. NGA 94.1232.2.

In this 1890s artwork by Tommy McRae, the tall ship and the Wathaurong dancers each bear their own flags. It suggests that the arrival of British ships is the beginning of a confrontation between nations.



ABOVE
Lisa Reihana, detail in *Pursuit of Venus [infected]*, 2015–17, Ultra HD video, colour, 7.1 sound, 64 min. Image courtesy of the artist, New Zealand at Venice and Artprojects. © Lisa Reihana / Copyright Agency, 2021.

This image shows just one part of a very large video work that brings 'wallpaper' to life with animation. The artist Lisa Reihana has taken wallpaper from the 1800s that showed Pacific First Nations peoples through colonial eyes and inserted accurate details showing the varying cultures of different parts of the Pacific. She has included real details of how First Nations peoples reacted to Cook's journeys.

GETTING TIRED OF EACH OTHER

TURTLE STORY

Each time Cook stopped to refuel and restock he relied on the generosity of the local people. He would typically stop at each place for at least a few weeks. At times his requests for wood, freshwater and vegetables pushed the limits of what local people had to spare. When it came to fishing, Cook and his crew generally helped themselves and they were keen to catch as much as possible. Towards the end of their stay in Guugu Yimithirr country the *Endeavour*

crew broke the law by catching too many turtles in an unseasonal period. Guugu Yimithirr community members tried to get the crew to hand some turtles back, but the crew resisted. The Guugu Yimithirr let them know this was not OK by setting fire to parts of Cook's onshore camp.⁴⁰ Cook and Banks tried to save their equipment, and both of them fired guns at the Guugu Yimithirr.

DEATH OF COOK

Something similar happened in Hawai'i, leading to Cook's death – an event that has been interpreted and re-interpreted many times by European historians and anthropologists.⁴¹ Why did this experienced traveller get stabbed to death late in his third journey?

Was it due to a misunderstanding by Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians)? It's possible that when Cook first arrived he might have been accommodated as a kind of religious figure because he accidentally turned up in the middle of an important religious festival (the Makahiki). However, Cook and his crew definitely overstayed their welcome – after enjoying lavish hospitality they returned too soon, needing to repair a broken mast. John Ledyard, an American on board the *Endeavour*, revealed in his journal, 'Our return to this bay was as disagreeable to us as it was to the inhabitants, for we were reciprocally tired of each other. They had been oppressed and were weary of our prostituted alliance... It was also equally evident from the looks of the natives as well as every other

appearance that our friendship was at an end, and that we had nothing to do but to hasten our departure to some different island where our vices were not known, and where our intrinsic virtues might gain us another short space of being wondered at...'⁴²

Several paintings depicting Cook's death have been made. The works often represent the Kānaka Maoli as fair-skinned and European in appearance. By contrast, the artist, historian and activist Herbert Kawainui Kāne made a series of paintings that depicted various historical events from his perspective as a Kānaka Maoli. Kāne did a lot of research in preparation for his paintings, trying to make them as accurate as possible. He even found out what the tides, weather and geology would have been the day Captain Cook died at Kealakekua on St Valentine's Day in 1779.⁴³ He also made sure to tell the full story: many people forget that 17 Hawaiians lost their lives at the same time as Cook.⁴⁴ In Kāne's painting a Kānaka Maoli man lies, presumably injured, on the rocks in front of Cook.



ABOVE
Herbert Kawainui Kāne,
The Death of Cook, February 14, 1779,
1983. Oil painting, 91.4 x 53.3 cm.
Copyright Herbert K. Kane, LLC.

Captain Cook was killed at Kealakekua Bay in Hawai'i during the third voyage, as shown in this painting by Herbert Kawainui Kāne.



Taking a different approach, Kirsten Lyttle's series *Killing Kuki* (2009–2011) doesn't try to recreate the historical scene of Cook's death realistically. Instead, she brings together the historical colonisation symbolised by Cook and the current day impacts of the tourist trade centred on Hawai'i, which also encroaches on Kānaka Maoli lands and ways.⁴⁵ She does this by taking three aloha shirts (as they are known in Hawai'i) and, instead of using the familiar, friendly flower pattern, creating a pattern that depicts Cook in different states of being – dying, as a disembodied head, and as a skull.

'Hawaiian shirts' for tourists are a cheapened version of the culturally meaningful aloha shirt created by Kānaka Maoli. Here, Kirsten Lyttle, an artist of Māori descent (Ngāti Tahinga, Tainui A Whiro), uses these shirts to comment on the impact of colonisation and its modern-day version (tourism), while also celebrating the death of Cook in the Hawaiian islands.

ABOVE LEFT
Dr Kirsten Lyttle,
Kuki Bones, 2011, from
the *Killing Kuki* series,
2009–2011. Hand-printed
silk screen print on home-
sewn Hawaiian shirt, cotton,
cotton thread, screen print
ink. © Dr Kirsten Lyttle.

ABOVE MIDDLE
Dr Kirsten Lyttle,
Killing Kuki, 2011, from the
Killing Kuki series, 2009–2011.
Hand-printed silk screen print
on home-sewn Hawaiian shirt,
cotton, cotton thread, screen
print ink. © Dr Kirsten Lyttle.

ABOVE RIGHT
Dr Kirsten Lyttle,
Death in Hawai'i, 2009–2011,
from the *Killing Kuki* series,
2009–2011. Hand-painted
and home-sewn Hawaiian
shirt, cotton, cotton thread,
paint, ink and transfers.
© Dr Kirsten Lyttle.

IS COOK ALIVE OR DEAD?

Even though Cook definitely died in 1779, the strange thing is that non-Aboriginal people in Australia seem to want to pretend that he lives on. Mudburra man Hobbles Danayarri has noticed this, saying: 'Aboriginal people all know that Captain Cook is dead. It's the white people, European people, who don't know that he's dead, or who don't accept that he's dead, or who refuse to allow him to die because they still "follow his law".'⁴⁶ There are very important legal questions about Cook's 'possession' of Australia that have not been resolved. That is why land rights, native title, treaties and more are still such controversial issues in Australian politics. These issues lie at the heart of Hobbles Danayarri's comment.

Maybe Cooks' Cottage is evidence of white Australia's refusal to deal with these issues and to finally say goodbye to Cook – after all, the Cottage does have a life-sized statue of Cook standing in the back garden.

There are hundreds of monuments across Australia and the world that in essence say 'Cook is alive', and like Cooks' Cottage they are not entirely authentic.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, there's a unique object with a very close and authentic relationship to James Cook that definitely says 'Cook is dead'. It lies nearly forgotten in a library in Sydney: a tiny little coffin-shaped 'ditty box'.

Many memorials to Cook created by non-Indigenous people suggest that he is a hero, with a legacy to be unanimously celebrated. The overlooked ditty box says that Cook is just one dead man.

ABOVE
*Carved ditty box shaped
like a coffin on silver stand,
containing a rough watercolour
sketch of the death of Cook,
including a lock of Cook's hair,
ca. 1779 / carved by sailors
on Cook's last ship HMS
Resolution.*

Dixon Library,
State Library of New
South Wales, call number
SAFE /DR 2.

This small 'ditty box', which would fit in an adult's hand, was carved by crew members of the *Resolution* from the oak of the ship after Cook's death and given to his widow. It contains a small watercolour depicting Cook's death, and a lock of his hair. It is now held in the collection of the State Library of New South Wales.

FOLLOWING COOK'S THREE VOYAGES, the British government moved to formally colonise many sites in the Pacific. The 18th and 19th centuries were a time marked by intensive land theft and forced movement of First Nations peoples. The Pacific indentured labour trade brought people back and forth from the Solomons, New Caledonia, Vanuatu and Fiji to Australia and particularly Queensland. In the 20th century, France and Britain advanced their scientific knowledge at the expense of First Nations lands and people in the Pacific, the USA and Australia by conducting a series of nuclear tests – 193 in Polynesia alone.

Economic exploitation of the area resulted in difficulties for First Nations people and significant environmental destruction and pollution. For example, in 1945 the residents of Banaba (Ocean Island) in Kiribati were moved to Fiji, and their island mined to be used as agricultural fertiliser in 'advanced' countries.⁴⁹ More recently, plastic waste from across the globe has found its way into the Pacific Ocean, forming an enormous 'garbage patch,'⁵⁰ and several nations are threatened with inundation due to climate change.⁵¹

From a First Nations perspective, when you consider the impact of European colonisation and culture in the Pacific and compare it to how Europeans have openly looked down on Pacific cultures, there are many contradictions. Former NSW Premier Bob Askin reveals typical colonial attitudes here: 'The Aborigines made some resistance and suffered from their contact with our culture. We are now trying to restore what they inevitably lost from moving out of the Stone Age and into the machine age.'⁵² Askin acknowledges the heavy impact of colonisation to some degree; his words are also marked by a clear sense of European superiority.

Stone Age Sewerage Garbage

With the words 'Stone Age', Askin derides Aboriginal culture as backwards and crude, ignoring achievements in social organisation, sustainability and cultural expression. Robbie Thorpe succinctly re-contextualises this type of colonial judgement of First Nations cultures, twisting the critique onto the unsustainable character of European capitalist economies:

Stone Age

Sewerage

*Garbage*⁵³

Ironically, the colonially-driven circulation of First Nations peoples within the Pacific resulted in new kinds of familial and historical ties being established between First Nations peoples, developing into a network through which political ideas and resistance strategies circulated. Community advocates worked to make and build transnational connections between local movements.⁵⁴ Following centuries of struggle, some First Nations peoples have managed to get back their independence. However, the old colonial powers in Europe (especially Britain and France), and the newer ones in Australia and the United States of America, are still holding on to power within the Pacific for economic and military advantage.

LOOKING BACK ON COOK

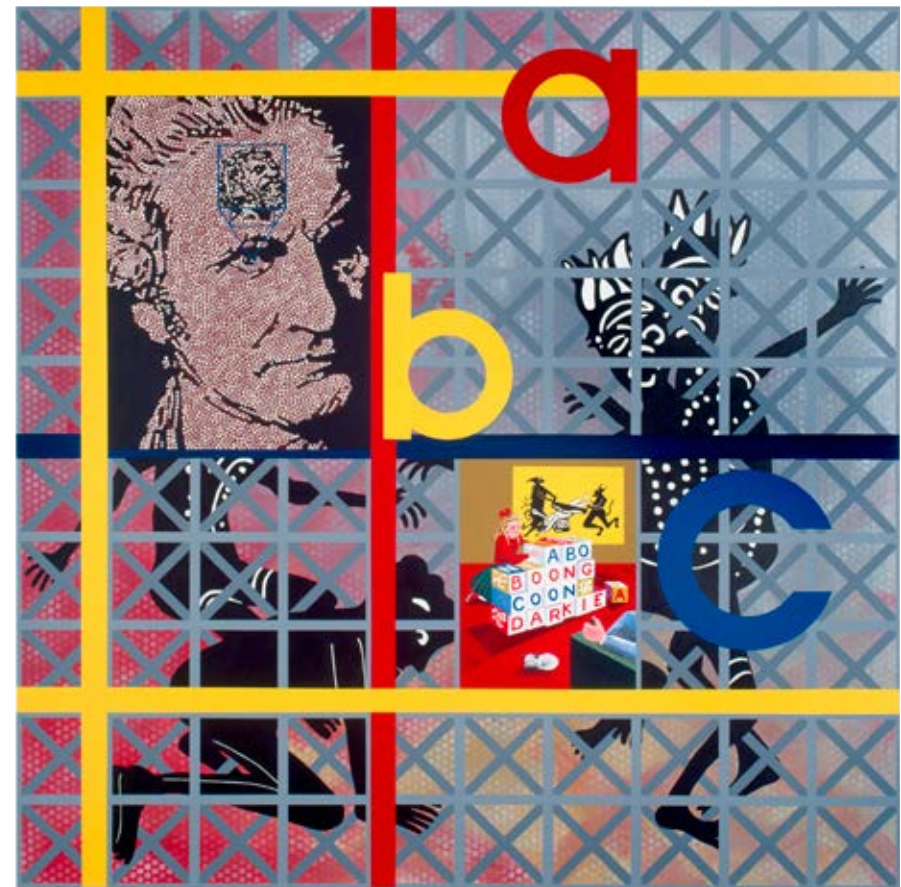
CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING AND FOLKLORE

'CAPTAIN COOK DISCOVERED AUSTRALIA' IS A PHRASE familiar to almost every Australian child and adult. But how true is it? Many European explorers had visited and documented parts of the continent before Cook's journeys. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's origin stories are set here, and even First Nations people in the western Pacific have origin stories linked to this country. There are long-standing trading systems between peoples of the north coast of Australia and the southern islands of the Indonesian archipelago. Cook discovered Australia in the way Melburnians discover a new cafe.



From the perspective of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, confronting the 'Captain Cook discovered Australia' story is often a powerful moment of rupture in a child's education.⁵⁵ When an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child hears this message in school, they find themselves either having to argue with their teacher, or bring the question home to their families. The experience creates a foundational breach in the child's sense of belonging in relation to their education. It reveals that, in the deepest sense, the schooling system is not by, for or about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

One Aboriginal dad, the artist Lin Onus (Yorta Yorta), supported his son Tiriki by creating the super hero Kaptn Koori. Onus wanted to create a character Tiriki could relate to, something to counteract the deeply colonial thrust of the education system.



Myths and simplified, one-sided stories about Australian history don't really work for non-Indigenous children either. They not only deny non-Indigenous children access to significant knowledge of the place on which they live but also contribute to shaping the way all children see themselves, and probably get in the way of finding a just Australian future.⁵⁶

If schools and governments listened to what children talk about among themselves, they might find that there is great potential for dealing with multiple perspectives about history. For instance, Australian children's folklore (playground culture) includes multiple raucous limericks about Captain Cook, all highly irreverent ('Captain Cook chased a chook...'). Perhaps school children have a greater appetite for historical complexity than adults and educators realise?⁵⁷

ABOVE
Gordon Bennett, *Home décor (Algebra) Daddy's little girl* (1998). Acrylic on linen, 182.5 x 182.5 cm. Collection: Private, Melbourne. © The Estate of Gordon Bennett.

Gordon Bennett's work *Home décor (Algebra) Daddy's little girl* (1998) comments on the process by which white Australian children learn damaging myths and take on racist views. The painting is dominated by a portrait of Captain Cook, who has a stereotypical image of an Aboriginal man in his mind's eye. A white child is playing with building blocks. She has produced a stack of racist words and awaits the approval of her dogmatic father figure who steers her biased education.

OPPOSITE
Lin Onus, *Kaptn Koori*, 1985.
© Lin Onus Estate / Copyright Agency, 2021.

Kaptn Koori was created by the artist Lin Onus. He could see that the 'Captain Cook discovered Australia' myth created a hero out of Cook in a way that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children couldn't relate to.



ABOVE

Vincent Namatjira, Western Arrernte people, Northern Territory, born 1983, Alice Springs, Northern Territory. *Close Contact* 2018, Indulkana, South Australia, synthetic polymer paint on plywood, 188.0 x 62.0 x 3.5 cm. Gift of the James and Diana Ramsay Foundation for the Ramsay Art Prize 2019. Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, photography Grant Hancock 20193S2 © Vincent Namatjira / Copyright Agency, 2020. Courtesy of Iwantja Arts and THIS IS NO FANTASY.

Vincent Namatjira's work *Close Contact* (2018) combines painting and sculpture to depict a self-portrait of the artist with Captain Cook as his shadow. The work shows how Blak¹⁸ and white Australia are linked through the history of first contact that continues into the present day.



ABOVE

Kate Golding. *The Milbi Wall*, Gan-gaarr (Cooktown), Guugu Yimithirr Nation, 2015. Courtesy of the artist and the Gungarde Community Centre Aboriginal Corporation and community members who created the Milbi Wall.

The 12-metre-long Milbi Wall – a community-led monument to the Guugu Yimithirr peoples' encounter with Cook – was dedicated in 'Cooktown, Queensland' in 1998. Neither idealisation nor protest, the story places Cook as an important but not foundational element in the ongoing Guugu Yimithirr story.

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

AS SEEN THROUGHOUT THIS PUBLICATION, in the work of First Nations artists and intellectuals Cook is regarded across the First Nations of the Pacific as 'the original invader'. His legacy is still being resisted and renegotiated by First Nations peoples.

Cooks' Cottage itself has frequently been the site of protests by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and supporters because it is a centrally-located public landmark that is highly symbolic of British colonisation, along with all the questions of law and justice that originated with Cook's 1770 'possession' of this land.

The cottage is also seen as symbolic of a one-sided view of history, because for a long time there have been very few significant cues to encourage visitors and passers-by to consider the wide-ranging negative associations of Cook's legacy for First Nations peoples.⁵⁹

Were it not for the nearby culturally modified tree that speaks to continuous Aboriginal connection with the area, it would be possible for visitors to overlook the very existence of Aboriginal people.

Cook's voyages from 1768–1779 inaugurated massive disruptions to people, land and life across the Pacific. But the survivance of First Nations peoples and cultures has mediated this impact. A strong spirit of resistance comes across in First Nations' perspectives on Cook. Most of Aboriginal history existed *bc* (Before Cook), and life goes on in the immediate and longer-term aftermath of colonisation.⁶⁰

OPPOSITE
Karla Dickens,
I'd better go and get somethin' harder, 2014.
Mixed media, polyptych (28 components),
dimensions variable. Collection: Australian
National Maritime Museum. Photograph:
Mick Richards. Photograph courtesy of the
artist and Andrew Baker Art Dealer, Brisbane.

Paddy Fordham Wainburranga noted that there are 'too many Captain Cooks': after his journey he multiplied endlessly.⁶¹ A little bit of him is in all non-First Nations peoples on this land. He is small but deadly. But the artwork avenges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, putting Cook in his place as a plaything. Not a major figure of history but a figurine.



Robbie Thorpe
 Stephen Banham
 Gayle Carr
 Sam Horsfield
 Kim Kruger
 James Staughton

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5. Gary Foley quote taken from a clip from the 2014 TV series *Persons of Interest*. Smart Street Films. Accessed 19 May 2019 from <https://youtu.be/f2CKlgeUXMo>
6. Banivanua Mar, Tracey (2016). *Decolonisation and the Pacific: Indigenous globalisation and the ends of empire* (p. 25). Cambridge University Press. Tracey Banivanua Mar was a renowned historian and Melburnian of Fijian (Lauan), Chinese and British descent.
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13. Salmond (2004, p. 276).
14. Cameron-Ash (2018, pp. 95–96).
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16. Williams (n.d.); Nugent, Maria (2009). *Captain Cook was here* (p. 126). Cambridge University Press.
17. Nugent (2009, p. 60); Healy, Chris (1990). 'We know your mob now': Histories and their cultures. *Meanjin*, 49(3):516; Simmons (2017, pp. 411–430).
18. Watson, Irene (2015). *Aboriginal peoples, colonialism and international law: Raw law* (p. 109). Routledge.
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The City of Melbourne respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Boonwurrung and Woivurrung language groups of the Eastern Kulin Nation, and their Elders past and present. The place we now know as the Fitzroy Gardens is located on ancestral lands. The culturally modified tree in the gardens speaks to continuous Aboriginal connection and the generations of custodianship of this Country which stretches back time immemorial; it is a testament to their cultural knowledge, strength, and resilience. Cooks' Cottage tells a very different story, which, in the spirit of truth-telling, this publication goes some way to address.

NEGOTIATING CAPTAIN COOK'S VOYAGES

Stability and Change

Before Cook / Pre-*haole* era

1500–1874

Informal colonial era – passing trade, especially Spanish.

1642–44

Aotearoa New Zealand, New Holland (Australia) and Tasmania (Van Diemen's Land) 'discovered' by Dutch sailor Abel Tasman.

1765–1840

Intensive voyaging into the central Pacific from Europe and the Americas.

2019

Cook Islands begin process to change their name.

Surveillance

1769

Tupaia (Raiatean) joins the *Endeavour*, monitors Cook-mob and conducts cultural discussions with Pacific kin.

1770

The Gunai/Kurnai monitor the *Endeavour's* journey, forewarning other nations of Cook's arrival using smoke signals.

1774

Mai (Raiatean) accompanies Cook to England during the second voyage.

1850

Tongan leader Tāufa'āhau circulates anti-colonial information between Tahiti, Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Hawai'i and Fiji.

2021

First Nations peoples are still fighting Indonesia, Chile, Peru, USA, France, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand for their rights to self-determination.

1999–2008

First Nations scholars Karen Martin and Linda Tuhiwai Smith bring protocols for the regulation of outsiders into the field of research.

2013–2017

Hawaiian wayfinders make a worldwide voyage in a wa'a, observing local cultural protocols at each port.

2006

Kevin Buzzacott (Arabunna) sends selected colonials on a First Fleet Back to England.

1988

Burnum Burnum (Woiwurrung / Yorta Yorta) takes possession of Britain.

Knowledges

1770

Tupaia (Raiatean) gives significant navigational information to Cook and assumes leadership of the *Endeavour* on approach to Aotearoa New Zealand.

1770

In Tahiti, Cook observes the movement of the planet Venus in relation to the sun as part of a European scientific project.

1773

Mai (Raiatean) and Hitihiti (Boraboran) share cultural information with Cook's scientists.

1950s–90s

Scientific knowledge is advanced through the irradiation of Pacific First Nations lands and people in almost 200 nuclear tests.

2015

A US government plan to install a thirty-metre telescope in Hawai'i meets much opposition from aloha āina.

1978

First Nations peoples circulate decolonial news and ideas across Oceania using Vanua'aku Radio.

1974

The World Council of Indigenous Peoples is founded by a member of the National Indian Brotherhood of Canada after visiting Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

1942

Ngarinyin compose the Captain Cook jurnpa featuring caricatures of Cook and General MacArthur.

1970s

Dance academies teaching hula are sites of cultural resurgence and political resistance.

La Perouse community members counter a government-sponsored re-enactment of Cook's arrival on its 200th anniversary with a mourning ceremony.

Networks

Cultural, linguistic, economic networks link First Nations people from PNG, Torres Strait and Northern Kimberley to China, Macassa and the Dutch East Indies.

1820s–1850s

Hawai'i, Tahiti, Tonga, Fiji and 'the United Tribes' of Aotearoa declare their independence and express sovereignty.

1860s– 20TH CENTURY

Forced relocations between Pacific lands intensify networks between First Nations people. Anti-colonial sentiment circulates.

Regulating Outsiders

1770

The Gweagal reject a visit from Cook who remarks: 'all they seem'd to want was for us to be gone'.

1773

Tahitians and Tongans use cultural exchanges to build alliances with Cook, and to gain local political advantage.

1779

Kānaka Maoli appropriate power from Cook's crew using sexual politics and, after killing Cook, by distributing some of his body parts.

Ceremony

1770

Cook constructs diary entries about his ceremony of possession.



ABOVE | Jason Wing, *Captain James Cook*, 2013. Bronze, 60 x 60 x 30cm. Edition of 5. Image courtesy of the Artist and Arterreal Gallery. Photograph by Garrie Maguire, Red Gate Gallery Artist in Residence programme.

