

MEDIA RELEASE



1 Art Gallery Way
Mosman NSW 2088 AUSTRALIA
02 9978 4178 mosmanartgallery.org.au

5 March 2020

Artist Megan Cope headlines Mosman Art Gallery's First Nations program

From **28 March to 17 May**, Mosman Art Gallery (MAG) will present the work of Quandamooka artist **Megan Cope**. Cope's work is inspired by the stories of her people and the connections Aboriginal people have to Country, and this exhibition will showcase two bodies of work, *The Black Napoleon* and *RE FORMATION I* in Gallery 1 at MAG.

The Black Napoleon is a recent body of work created in response to an artist residency in France, undertaken by the artist as part of the Australian Print Workshop (APW) program 'French Connections'. During the APW residency, Cope had access to important French public archives and collections of cultural materials relating to early exploration of Australia and the Pacific. In this series of seven lithograph prints, she reflects on the story of the Aboriginal leader Eulope from Moreton Bay, who led the Quandamooka people in their resistance battles against British forces. Called the "Black Napoleon" by the colony for his apparent resemblance to Napoleon Bonaparte. His story is just one of many which saw the defying of Empire at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries throughout Australia

In the installation piece ***RE FORMATION I***, Cope has recreated significant shell midden sites from her country, built up over thousands of years of food gathering and processing practices by Quandamooka people. Across the country, many of these middens were desecrated by early colonists to extract lime, thereby erasing evidence of First Nations occupation and land use, desecrated many of these middens. By challenging historical narratives, people's notions of ownership and connection to the land, the artist highlights alternative historical narratives. In this way, Cope's artwork aims to re-image and remap history and recreate a shared sense of place and identity.

Cope (b. 1982, Brisbane) is currently living and working between Minjerriba and Melbourne. Through diverse mediums, her dynamic practice investigates the relationship between place and environment, geography, history, contested sites, identities and power. Her work has been exhibited extensively across Australia and internationally. Major national survey exhibitions include the *2020 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art* at the Art Gallery of South Australia, *The National* (2017) at the Art Gallery of NSW, *Defying Empire: 3rd National Indigenous Art Triennial* (2017) at the National Gallery of Australia, and *Sovereignty* (2016) at Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne. Cope has also exhibited at Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art; MONA FOMA, Hobart; Koorie Heritage Trust, Melbourne; Artspace, Sydney; City Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand; Para Site Contemporary Art Space, Hong Kong; Care of Art Space, Milan; and the Australian Embassy in Washington. She is represented by Milani Gallery, Brisbane.

During this period MAG will also present the group exhibition ***Bungaree's Farm*** in Gallery 2. The exhibition presents audio, video, performance and installation art exploring Bungaree's legacy. Bungaree, known as the Chief of the Broken Bay Aborigines, was a central figure in early Colonial Sydney. As an Aboriginal leader, he was the first person known to have been called an 'Australian'. *Bungaree's Farm* was commissioned in 2015 to mark the 200th anniversary of the establishment of Bungaree's Farm by Governor Macquarie on 31 January 1815.

The exhibition was originally showcased in the T5 Camouflage Fuel Tank (a large-scale former WWII naval fuel tank at Georges Heights) on the site of Bungaree's Farm in 2015 and was awarded both the Indigenous Project Award and the overall National Winner Award at the 2015 Museums and Galleries National Awards (MAGNAs). Participating artists include; Daniel Boyd, Blak Douglas, Karla Dickens, Leah Flanagan, Amala Groom, Warwick Keen, Peter McKenzie, Djon Mundine OAM, Caroline Oakley, Bjorn Stewart, Leanne Tobin, Jason Wing, Chantal Woods and Sandy Woods.

To complement these exhibitions of contemporary art by First Nations artists, MAG continues its presentation of ***Mother's Little Helper*** in The Cube, the Gallery's dedicated space for video and experimental art. Created by Lismore-based Wiradjuri artist **Karla Dickens**, in partnership with Bunurong, Yuin and Tasmanian writer Bruce Pascoe, the single-channel video reflects on our relationship to "Mother Earth" and the next generation which must be equipped with the right skills and knowledge to make positive change.

This suite of exhibitions will be officially opened by Chris Keely, Executive Director of Create NSW, at a launch event on Friday 27 March, 6.30pm and will be accompanied by a series of public programs.

Megan Cope / Bungaree's Farm

Where: MOSMAN ART GALLERY, 1 Art Gallery Way, Mosman 2088
On View: Saturday 28 March – Sunday 17 May 2020
Opening Night: Friday 27 March, 6.30pm
Gallery Hours: Open 7 days, 10am-5pm (Weds 10am-8pm). Closed public holidays.
Admission: Free
mosmangallery.org.au



Media contact

Public Programs, Exhibitions & Media Officer, Jane Gillespie
j.gillespie@mosman.nsw.gov.au 02 9978 4186 m 0419 784 030

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