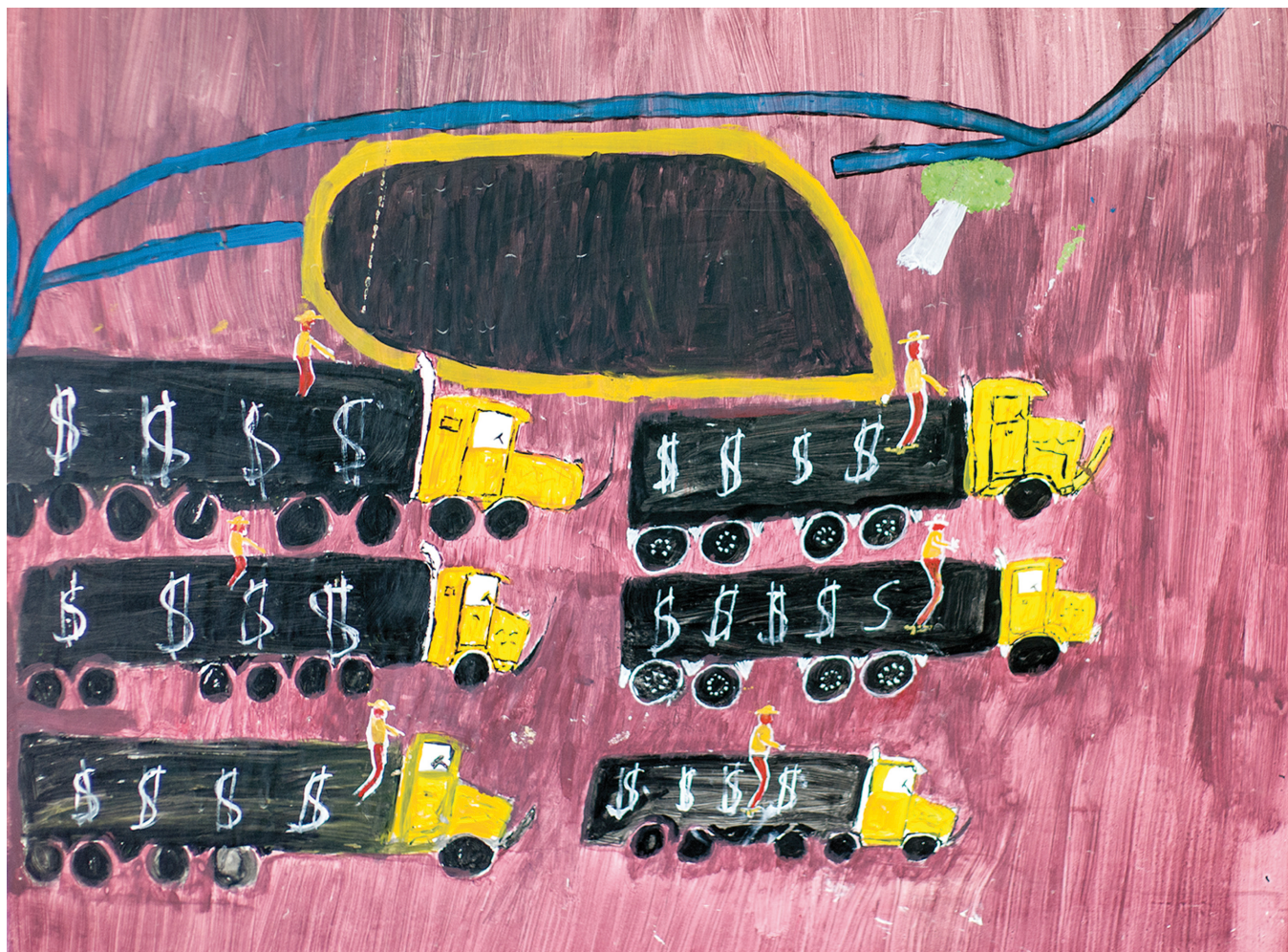


Therese Ritchie, *Cain O'Keefe*, digital print on Ilford Monofibre Silk, 84 x 56 cm.
From *Open Cut*, an exhibition by Jacky Green, Therese Ritchie and Seán Kerins, 2017.



Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri people as the traditional owners of the land and thank each of the artists for their contribution and involvement. We acknowledge this is land never ceded.

Some of the original artists have been joined by a growing band of artist activists. We acknowledge also the expanded field of curatorial activism over recent years.

Thanks to Moreland City Council for welcoming the artists back to Counihan Gallery In Brunswick. We are proud to follow in the footsteps of artist Noel Counihan (1913-1986) a champion of human rights and free speech through his art and activism. This is the second exhibition at The Cross Art Projects to witness the Intervention and Australia's ongoing human rights abuse. *Ghost Citizens: Witnessing the Intervention* (2012, The Cross Art Projects) coincided with the Sydney Biennale followed by Counihan Gallery In Brunswick Project

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Thank you

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Image above: Jacky Green, *Yee-haw, Money trucks 2017* (detail). Acrylic on canvas, 87 x 100 cm. Courtesy the artist.

Image front: Alison Alder. *Australian Political Disasters 2017*. Installation comprising 10 prints. Edition of 2.

Counihan Gallery In Brunswick

Free Entry. 233 Sydney Road, Brunswick VIC 3056 | 9389 8622

Wednesday – Saturday 11 am – 5 pm | Sunday 1 – 5 pm

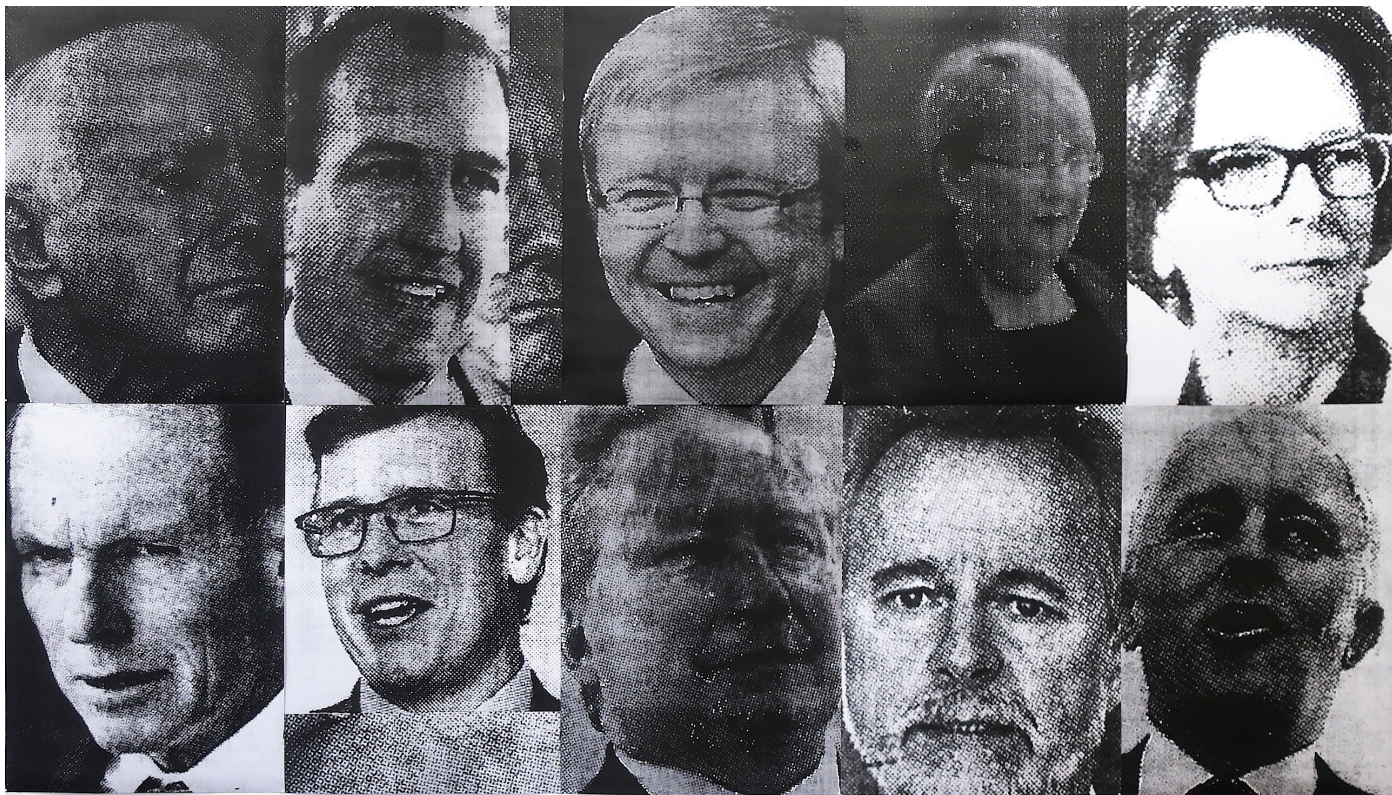
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Moreland City Council

A WIDENING GAP: THE INTERVENTION 10 YEARS ON



**ANON (YOUNG ARTIST IN DON DALE JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY)
WITH PRINTER FRANCK GOHIER | ALISON ALDER | NICK BLAND
MARGARET BOKO | MIRIAM CHARLIE | BRENDA L. CROFT | DAVID FRANK
ILTJA NTJARRA / MANY HANDS ART CENTRE (BENITA CLEMENTS,
MERVYN RUBUNTJA, REINHOLD INKAMALA, VANESSA INKAMALA
GLORIA PANNKA, BETTY NAPARULA WHEELER) | FIONA MACDONALD
WITH INTERVENTION ROLLBACK ACTION GROUP ALICE SPRINGS
CHIPS MACKINOLTY | STICS (STOP THE INTERVENTION COLLECTIVE
SYDNEY) | TEENA MCCARTHY | SALLY M. MULDA | OPEN CUT
(JACKY GREEN, SEAN KERINS AND THERESE RITCHIE) | JASON WING**

CO-CURATORS JO HOLDER AND DJON MUNDINE OAM

8 JUNE – 8 JULY 2018

THE CROSS
ART PROJECTS



**COUNIHAN
GALLERY
IN BRUNSWICK**

A WIDENING GAP: THE INTERVENTION 10 YEARS ON



Ghost Citizens follow us and infiltrate our daily lives. In a continent full of the ghosts and shadows of colonialism, the historical, social, and physical landscape is pitted. Each story is a ghost story loaded with shadows - a kind of 'scar' story.

Djon Mundine OAM. 2013

A Widening Gap: The Intervention 10 Years On witnesses a world that is remote from the essential services that the rest of Australia takes for granted. The tenth anniversary of the introduction of "the Intervention" — the Northern Territory National Emergency Response — has come and gone. Unlike the 50th anniversary of the 1967 referendum to remove two references in the Australian Constitution, which discriminated against Aboriginal people, and the 25th anniversary of the Mabo High Court decision recognising the land rights of the Meriam people, to the Murray Islands in the Torres Strait, it has not been celebrated. It was observed with significant protests and actions around the country.

We are at a decisive moment. The *Uluru Statement from the Heart* (June 2017) presents not protests but just three recommendations as a way forward: a Voice to Parliament, treaties or the ritualised ceremony of Makaratta and constitutional reform to recognise First Nations rights and a truth commission.

It is worth reflecting on recent political villainy. Over a decade ago on the eve of a Federal election, Prime Minister John Howard hijacked a report into the protection of Aboriginal children from sexual abuse called *Little Children are Sacred* (Patricia Anderson and Rex Wild, 2007). They sent in the Australian Army, the Federal Police and doctors to 'stabilize' virtually every single Aboriginal community. In Central Australia, Howard and Minister Brough posed for photographs with troops and boasted about 'closing the gap'. To do this they disabled the Racial Discrimination Act, at odds with international human rights conventions. They forced many communities into 99-year leases to access essential services.

Ten years on Pat Turner, an Arrernte woman currently CEO of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, said of the Intervention, "nothing has changed for the better" and this is "a complete violation of the human rights of Aboriginal people". (ABC Radio, The Drum, Interview on the Intervention, 19 June 2017.) The Intervention has failed yet it continues with its key measures in place: despite over 50 damning reports into the 'widening gap', most published in the last 10 years. They quietly extended the Intervention until 2022 with only 2 of the ninety-seven recommendations in *Little Children are Sacred* being implemented. Change of government changed the occupation's name to 'Stronger Futures'.

The Intervention has everything to do with taking land and silencing Aboriginal people. Instead of schools, new police stations were built in community and police search and arrest powers extended — leading to a surge of people in remand for minor offenses. The brutalising of children in detention

disturbed Australian amnesia when, in August 2016, the ABC TV's Four Corners investigated CCTV evidence of the systemic use of force and abuse of Aboriginal children in juvenile detention in Darwin and Alice Springs. National outcry forced a Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the NT.

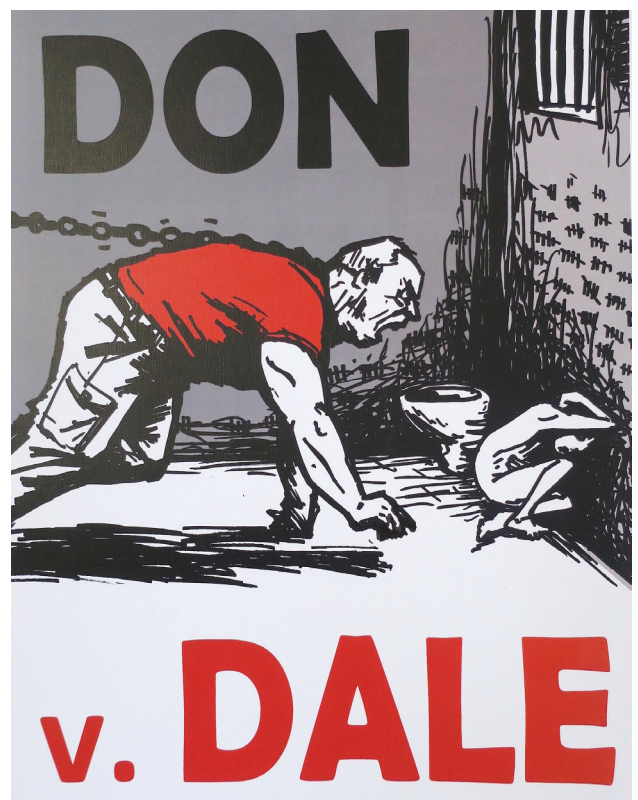
The artists in the exhibition come from the Northern Territory as well as from across Australia; are Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal; and include a young former resident of Don Dale Youth Detention Centre. Their works proclaim the Intervention as a thinly disguised land grab to benefit the mining and resources industry. 'Stronger Futures' has delivered a future that has impoverished and removed agency from Aboriginal people and their organisations, while communities struggle to sustain valued ways of life, art and culture.

A Widening Gap includes a rare work arising made by a youth at Don Dale Youth Detention Centre in Darwin. The 'Don Dale' Royal Commission into the abuse of children in juvenile detention looked at torture techniques: spit hoods and restraint chairs, unlawful duration of solitary confinement, gassing and strip searches at whim (including of young girls). They found that youth arrests increased over the past decade by 1571% for Indigenous females and 224% for Indigenous males. (Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the NT, NAAJA Submission, p. 9. Final Report November 2017.) Governments were torturing young people in condemned adult prisons rather than educating.

Presented as an exhibition within *A Widening Gap*, is a case study *Open Cut*, an independent research project by artists Jacky Green, Sean Kerins and Therese Ritchie. *Open Cut* tracks the brutal history of intervention into Aboriginal Sovereignty in the remote Gulf Country on behalf of pastoral and now mining interests. The other case study is a splendid suite of watercolours by Arrente artists from Hermannsburg/Ntaria and Alice Springs carrying the legacy of Albert Namitjira at Iltja Ntjarra/Many Hands Arts Centre. Their communities were the first occupied and they wickedly re-craft H. G. Wells' infamous "War of the Worlds" Radio Broadcast. A Martian invasion anyone? A fake news conceit before we had official fake news.

On his home video made in 2007 Mervyn Rubuntja replies to Prime Minister John Howard and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Mal Brough. The artist speaks about his traditional land Ntyelkeme, about 150km northwest of Alice Springs in the Central Australian desert. "We need to stop that mining at Pine Hill station [North West MacDonnell Ranges, NT]... This is a main sacred place for us not far from where they are mining, it is our Honey Ants Dreaming." His colleague at Iltja Ntjarra Clara Inkamala says, "We want to send strong messages through our art. Mining is ruining our land and our sacred sites. It is destroying the home of the little animals, our bush tucker and the vegetation. This damage only helps big companies to get richer and richer while the traditional owners get poorer and poorer. ... This is for our kids; we've got to try to look after the next generation. (Source: Clara Inkamala artists in residency with Tony Albert and Timoteus Anggawan Kusno. 2016.)

Jacky Green a senior Garawa man, artist and ranger from the south-west Gulf says, "The land rights struggle continues.... When we see those trucks on other people's country it makes us sad. Through our paintings we show the damage that is being done to our country. A future with no limits and restrictions to foreigners operating on our land is poisonous to our country." (Source: Jacky Green, Artist Statement, NATSI Art Award, Museum and Gallery of the NT, 2016.)



Nick Bland, Don v. Dale, April 2017.
Ink on paper. Courtesy the artist.

Posters by Alison Alder, Chips Mackinolty, Fiona MacDonald and Jason Wing, reflect the vibrant connections between politics and printmaking. Chips Mackinolty's road signs were a response to the 2007 invasion. He mocks the pretention of declaring a 'National Emergency Next 1,347,525km' — the vast area of the Northern Territory — and the 'Proscribed Area' signs (that now host great graffiti) proclaim 'and there'll be NO dancing', as an absurd centralised diktat. Alison Alder targets a rogue's gallery of politicians (and one mining magnate), all enforcers of the Intervention. Their creation of targeted social security payments via the BasicsCard as "the only card for when you have no choice" is a ruthless form of racial targeting.



Margaret Nampitjinpa Boko
Tjitji jumparinganyi mutuka katu (Kids jumping on cars) 2015.
 Screenprint on paper, 40 x 30 cm. Courtesy Tangentyere Artists.
 Photo Silversalt.

The Intervention trampled the bitter-sweet victory of the outstation and Land Rights movements of the 1970s justly celebrated in Brenda L. Croft's exhibition *Still in my mind* (UNSW Gallery, Sydney 2017). Photographs by Brenda L. Croft, selected from her near-iconic series 'Signs of the Times', capture the subversion as communities react to vilification — including Proscribed Community signs at nationally significant places such as Daguragu where the Gurindji sought the return of their traditional lands.

Miriam Charlie photographs her family's temporary housing (temporary since a cyclone in 1983). As Miriam Charlie says, 'I am a Yanyuwa/Garrwa woman. I call it "My country, no home" because we have a Country but no home, people are living in tin shacks, in matchbox-sized houses. Even traditional owners here don't own houses. I wanted to take these photos to show the world how my people are living. The project is not to shame them.'

For the 'proscribed communities' (there are about 75 in the NT) it has been a hard ten-years with no benefit. The poster selection by Stop the Intervention Collective Sydney attests to the dedication needed to keep the subject of human rights on the national political radar. Little children are scared, sick and are being removed from family and incarcerated at appalling rates. It is time to consider implementing the simple recommendations made by the extensive process that resulted in the 'Statement from the Heart'.

Jo Holder and Djon Mundine OAM

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