



Fiona Tabart, #scrimshaw, 2014

List of Artists

Raymond Arnold, Joel Crosswell, Julie Gough, David Keeling, Ricky Maynard, Matthew Newton, Denise Robinson and Fiona Tabart.

List of Images

Cover Image:

Matthew Newton, *Moonbird boy 3* (from the series *Moonbird boy*), 2009, digital print, acc. 2010.010

Inside Images:

Fiona Tabart, #scrimshaw, 2014, sandblasted plywood with paint inlay, acc. 2015.009

Julie Gough, *We ran/I am: Journal of George Augustus Robinson 3 November 1830, Swan Island, North East Tasmania* – “I issued slops to all the fresh natives, gave them baubles and played the flute, and rendered them as satisfied as I could. The people all seemed satisfied at their clothes. Trousers is excellent things and confines their legs so they cannot run.” (detail), 2007, calico trousers, earth pigment, photographs and canvas, acc. 2007.001a-v

Joel Crosswell, *Galaxias*, 2014, ink on paper, acc. 2014.026

Raymond Arnold, *Justify the Line III – Iron Blow Re-excavation*, 1992, etching, handmade paper, pulp, recycled arches print fragments, acc. 1992.053

All images courtesy of the artists.

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Devonport Regional Gallery, Upper Gallery

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Devonport Regional Gallery

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Saturday, Sunday & Public Holidays 7.30am - 2.00pm



Here at the Earth's End

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Here at the Earth's End features works from the DCC permanent collection which provide a commentary or reflection on environmental, social or political concerns of Tasmania's past, present and future. In considering and responding to the world around them, each of these artists present Tasmania as the site of complex human interactions, and as bearing significant consequences of human actions. Some of these artists have been involved in direct activism alongside the production of their work. Others deliver a call to action on matters of environmental sustainability and climate change. Many bear witness to social and political histories that have left lasting scars on this island and its people.

Julie Gough's installation *We ran/I am* comprises a series of photographs documenting Gough running the notorious Black Line. In 1830, Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur ordered the formation of a human chain of settlers to travel south across Oyster Bay, Big River, North Midlands and Ben Lomond over a period of weeks, to systematically capture and trap Aboriginal people on the Tasman Peninsula, for relocation to the islands. A portion of the extended title of the work quotes the diary of George Augustus Robinson, on the trousers issued to Aboriginal people, reading... 'Trousers is excellent things and confines their legs so they cannot run'.ⁱ Displayed below the photographs of *We ran/I*



Julie Gough, *We ran/I am* (detail), 2007

am are seven pairs of calico trousers, soiled by the earth, as Gough ran key sites of the Black Line.

The striking portrait *Moonbird boy 3* by Matthew Newton depicts a boy holding a Mutton bird, or Moon bird, which Tasmanian Aboriginals have harvested for hundreds of years, towards a processing hut on Big Dog Island in the Bass Strait. It references the poem *The Moon Birds of Big Dog Island*, written by the young Aboriginal Tasmanian Errol West in the 1970s, which begins 'Like dust blown across the plain are the people of the Moon Bird, And yet there is no one to teach me the songs'.ⁱⁱ Both Errol West's poem and Newton's work highlight the enduring questions of identity, of preserving oral traditions and customs, and of the rich living culture of a group of people commonly misconceived to have been the victims of complete genocide in Tasmania.

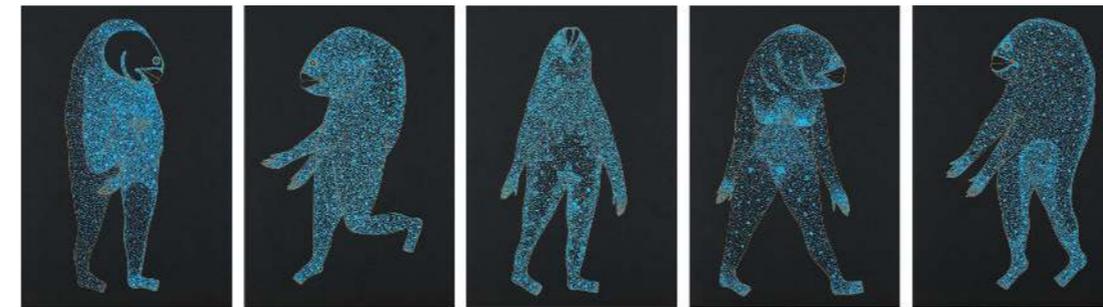
Ricky Maynard is an Aboriginal Tasmanian photographer who through his documentary portraits tells the stories of Aboriginal Tasmanians and their ongoing lived experience. Maynard's work is often a response to the narratives adopted in formal histories and documents, with Ricky stating 'My focus is an attempt to redress history and some of the myths surrounding that history'.ⁱⁱⁱ The series *Portrait of a Distant Landscape* both reflects on a history of prejudice and injustice, as well as celebrating the land and the life and cultural practices of the people of the Bass Strait Islands.



In *Part and particle*, Denise Robinson presents a series of abstract, monochrome landscapes, with their origins on the north-west coast of Tasmania. Each work is formed from fine pieces of corraline algae, collected directly from the coast by the artist, before being placed in white paint on hand-made paper. This intricate and time-consuming process has correlations to the traditional Aboriginal practice of collecting for shell-necklace making. The resulting work is like a map of the coastline, tracing the contours of the land, of the waves, and the paths of those who inhabit these places and leave their marks on the land.

In her work *#scrimshaw*, Fiona Tabart considers the past, present and future of whaling and its implications for the future of the species. Whaling in Tasmania began with white settlement and was at its peak in the early 19th century, before a decline in whale numbers by the 1840s. 1900 marked the final Tasmanian whaling expedition. Viewing Australian artist William Duke's 1848 lithograph *The Rounding* was the catalyst for Tabart creating *#scrimshaw*, which mirrors the shape of whale bones and teeth which would be etched or engraved in the art of scrimshaw. In Tabart's words, 'What creature will be left to engrave the story of human existence on our polished bones?'^{iv}

Joel Crosswell's work *Galaxias* focuses on the freshwater Central Tasmanian Clarence Galaxias trout, linking its status as critically endangered with humankind's own vulnerabilities. Across five panels, Crosswell's trout morphs



Joel Crosswell, *Galaxias*, 2014

to adopt human-like traits, linking the evolution and potential demise of this species with our own progression and mortality. While focusing on a single endangered species, Crosswell's work acts as a symbol of the broader ecological issues facing current and future generations as they confront climate change.

Throughout his practice, Raymond Arnold has engaged in political and ecological activism stemming from Tasmanian conservation concerns. In *Justify the Line - Iron Blow Re-excavation* Arnold bears witness to the scarification of the land at the Iron Blow mine at Mt Lyell. The Mt Lyell mine operated for over 100 years from 1893 - 1994. During its operation, excess waste flowed into the river system, contaminating the King River, Queen River and Macquarie Harbour in a process called acid mine drainage. Arnold's process for this intaglio print, where lines are incised into the printing plate, mirrors the digging of the open-cut mine and the lasting scar it has carved in the landscape.

David Keeling's work *The Diminishing Paradise II* presents 30 miniature paintings, each of which acts as a window into a snippet of Tasmania as it has changed over time. Images of untouched landscapes are interspersed with hints of human presence; through a car, an axe or a building visible in the distance, to the dominating features of modernisation and consumption emerging through the billowing factory smoke stack and the golden

arches of McDonalds. *The Diminishing Paradise II* traces a gradual encroachment of modern life on to an island revered for its untouched natural wonders.

Each of these artists, through their works, has borne witness to the past, present and future events that shape this island, providing commentary, insight, and reflection on the ever-evolving story of Tasmania.

Erin Wilson
Curator



Raymond Arnold, *Justify the Line III - Iron Blow Re-excavation*, 1992

*Title taken from Margaret Scott's poem *In Tasmania*

ⁱ Full title: *We ran/I am. Journal of George Augustus Robinson 3 November 1830, Swan Island, North East Tasmania - "I issued slops to all the fresh natives, gave them baubles and played the flute, and rendered them as satisfied as I could. The people all seemed satisfied at their clothes. Trousers is excellent things and confines their legs so they cannot run."*

ⁱⁱ Errol West, *The Moon Birds of Big Dog Island*, 1970s

ⁱⁱⁱ Ricky Maynard in _____

^{iv} Fiona Tabart in *#scrimshaw* artist statement, *Tidal* 2014 exhibition, Devonport Regional Gallery, 2014