

Wominjeka Marlpul Malian Georgia Macguire

Woirurung Wurundjeri

Darga Wui Niangya Choctaw Chickasaw.

Welcome to Otherlands.

As part of my performance, I am claiming the space as Indigenous.

During this event, I hold all the cards and I am the authority.

In order to do this, before I talk about my work and share experiences of culture that I believe connect strongly to the processes of the abject, we need to make a few changes.

For this event there are some rules, which reflect my own social mores and cultural protocols that I would like everyone to adhere to.

Rule 1:

Unless you are physically unable to do so, everyone who is under the age of 50, you will need to take off your shoes and come and sit on the floor space at the front of the amphitheatre.

Rule 2:

If you would like to ask any questions, make any comments or give feedback, which I will be asking you to do later, you will need to be holding this message stick.

In my culture it is considered disrespectful to make direct eye contact with someone who has more authority/seniority than you.

As I am the matriarch in this Indigenous space, lets just call me the Queen of the Otherlands, when you speak to me look away. Look at the floor, another person the

ceiling whatever you need to, because if you were in my homeland and you made direct eye contact with me, I might be likely to organize to have to speared.

Rule 3:

If you identify as male, as I am discussing topics that are women's business and for women's ears only it would usually be considered a privilege for you to remain in the room. However for the purposes of this exercise and out of respect for my culture I would ask you please be a silent observer during the discussions. If you do have questions I would prefer it if you approached me in one of the breaks during the event.

And finally the last rule:

Rule 4:

In my culture when someone shares information/knowledge/resources/country/food whatever it is customary to reciprocate. In order to maintain that custom in this space I will give you a brief introduction to Indigenous women's business particularly regarding the sacred, whilst describing my art work and ask that in return you provide comments insights into how that information relates to the work of Kristeva and notions of the abject.

In this space I am the expert on Wurundjeri culture and you are the experts on Kristeva. I am standing here to learn through mutual exchange and provide you with insights into the experiences of otherness like that of racial otherness which usually results in the exclusion many Indigenous people in international academic forums like this one.

I want to read you a quote from my mother:

"You are from Mother Earth, and when Bunji guides your spirit to our ancestors in the stars, your flesh, blood and bone belong to her."

As you can see, around the room and on the screen there are a series of works made of possum skin.

This work is the physical manifestation of generational trauma and fear.

Each piece is the externalization of the emotional experiences of being an Aboriginal woman in postcolonial Australia, It is an outpouring in a country where the mortality rate is for Indigenous women is 42 years old. Where child mortality rates of Indigenous children are worse than that of Ethiopia, where the incarceration of black men is worse than it was at the height of apartheid in South Africa. Where Aboriginal people are lied to, threatened by authorities and silenced by media. I live in a country where the Attorney General said that Australians have the right to be bigots. Where earlier this year 80 thousand people protested in the streets of Melbourne against the forcible removal of Indigenous people from their homelands in remote Western Australia and their cries were ignored by the government and the media. Where 62 women have died as a result of violence in 2015, making it an average of 2 women a week being murdered in Australia. Where it is illegal to report child abuse in Australian detention centres in Nauru. Where we hide behind our reputation of being laid back Aussies, who are easy going friendly and enjoying a land of opportunity.

Each piece is connected to traditional women's practices where women made totems using material from their own bodies including hair, nails, blood, breast milk, the placenta and umbilical chords, even bones and decaying flesh from deceased family members. They were often strategically placed or buried in sacred spaces or worn as jewellery or sometimes carried on their person in a handmade bags as a way to strengthen a woman's connection to her country from where she draws strength. These works are made in a similar way incorporating elements of what I understand to be abject.