

DESIGN STORYTELLERS: THE WORK OF BROACHED COMMISSIONS

ARTWORK LABELS

© COPYRIGHT

This document remains the property of the National Gallery of Victoria and must be returned upon request.
Reproduction in part or in whole is prohibited without written authorisation.

Established in 2011, Broached Commissions was founded as a creative agency whose purpose is to commission designers to produce ambitious and finely crafted, collectable design pieces with the capacity to reflect on or disrupt the traditions of design. Through a series of thematically rich collections, Broached Commissions has cemented a position that is unique in the world of Australian design. Each collection is anchored within an overarching creative framework, providing a sounding board against which designers can propose works that must respond to a central narrative, binding the work together.

This exhibition presents works from across four Broached Commission collections: *Broached East*, *Broached Colonial*, *Broached Exceptions* and *Broached Monsters*. Together the exhibited works convey the ongoing Broached Commissions project of interrogating globalisation, and the upheavals it causes, through the history of material culture.

Creative director of Broached Commissions, Lou Weis, says: 'We believe that design gives form to power. Ambition has no inherent form; designers invent it. On behalf of others – governments, corporations and individuals – designers create the tactile experience of persuasion and desire. In particular we are interested in design since the Industrial Revolution and the peak of the colonial period. It is from this period forward that modern Australia comes into being'.

Broached East

The *Broached East* collection responds to Australia's relationship to Asia in the mid to late nineteenth century – a period that saw a massive influx of Chinese migrant workers to the goldfields in the 1850s and, in the later part of the century, the influence of Japanese culture after the Meiji Restoration. From 1850 to 1930 more than 100 million people migrated globally – the greatest volume of human migration ever. Throughout this momentous period of globalisation Asia was a trading partner of Australia: exotic delights were imported from the region, yet Asian countries and migrants were often treated with suspicion.

Through narratives embedded within the works, the *Broached East* collection examines some of the complex relationships emerging at the beginnings of globalisation, presenting objects that explore the stylistic influences of Japan while also revealing individual stories of hardship and success. The objects in this collection are designed for use in twilight hours, when people retreat from the world to reconnect to their non-mechanical, philosophical and holistic selves. The collection thus reminds us that no matter how far people travel, and how much life is disrupted, we all share the need for privacy, for intimacy, and the opportunity to ultimately find respect and prosperity.

Chen Lu

Taiwan born 1975, arrived Australia 1990

Dressing table from the *Broached East* collection

2013

Myrtle (*Myrtus*), brass, mirrored glass, gold leaf

During the 1860s the Meiji Restoration transformed Japan's relationship to the rest of the world. Japanese art and design sensibilities began to resonate internationally. Coinciding with the Victorian gold rush, Japonisme influenced Australian art and design movements of the time, with motifs, forms and elements of Japanese culture mixing into the style of the day. Reimagining the ubiquitous bathroom mirror, basin and drawers, Chen Lu's *Dressing table* is based on late nineteenth-century geisha dressing tables, originally designed to be knelt at on a tatami mat. Lu's piece, dedicated to the intimate rituals of beauty, reveals an infatuation with Oriental exoticism.

Collection of Broached Commissions

Azuma Makoto designer

Japan born 1976

AMKK design studio

Japan est. 2009

Paludarium Shigeru from the *Broached East* collection

2013

stainless steel, glass, bonsai

Illuminating the connections established between Japan and Australia during the Meiji Restoration and Victorian gold rush of the 1860s, *Paludarium Shigeru* reflects upon the Wardian case, a sealed container used in the nineteenth century to protect plant specimens transported across the open seas, and to facilitate botanical collecting and taxonomy. Reimagined for the twenty-first century, the vitrine still keeps plants alive, but now provides the elements necessary for survival by industrial means. This techno-futurist device highlights the increasing intervention of humans within biospheres, questioning the often-unintended consequences of economic globalisation throughout history, such as the altering of natural systems and the prevalence of invasive species.

FLOWERS BY HATTIE MOLLOY

Collection of Broached Commissions

For kids

Japanese designer Azuma Makoto creates many different types of artwork based on the life cycle of plants. His works explore the connections between people, plants and the environments that sustain them. This metal container is designed for growing plants. It is based on the design of a Wardian case, a sealed glass cabinet that was used in the nineteenth century to protect plants from the harsh salty conditions while being shipped across the open seas from Australia to Europe.

Azuma Makoto designer

Japan born 1976

AMKK design studio

Japan est. 2009

Block flowers set of 9 from the *Broached East* collection

2018

acrylic, *Saxifraga stolonifera* Curtis, *Cosmos bipinnatus* Cav., *Chloranthus japonicus* Siebold, *Dicentra peregrina* (Rudolph) Makino, *Primula sieboldii* E.Morren, *Platycodon grandiflorus* (Jacq.) A.DC., *Swertia japonica* (Schult.) Makino, *Liriope minor* (Maxim.) *Viola chaerophylloides* var. *sieboldiana*

Block flowers offers a conversation on the new relationships that emerged between science and nature during the eighteenth century. Prior to the Scientific Revolution, which gained momentum with the work of Enlightenment thinkers, human understanding of nature was enabled by a rich mix of deduction, practical knowledge, religion and folklore. The Scientific Revolution insisted on empirical, reductionist method, which argued only rational and scientific thinking could unravel the mysteries of the natural world. Casting out 'superstition', nature was scrutinised, dissected, systematised and classified through taxonomy to better exploit its useful properties.

Collection of Broached Commissions

Naihan Li designer

China born 1981

U-P graphic design studio

Australia est. 2004

Armillary whiskey bar from the *Broached East* collection

2013

Brass, black walnut (*Juglandaceae*)

Used historically in China for astronomy and navigation at sea, armillary spheres were strongly associated with Chinese scientific and military prowess. The spheres feature aspects of the sky and cosmos such as planets and constellations, while a framework of moveable interrelated rings represents longitude, latitude and other astronomical features. Li has used this object to create another with new narrative potential. She speculates on the successful life of a Chinese migrant during the Victorian gold rush. The plum blossom motif emphasises the importance of individual achievement; the bar becomes a memento of success for an isolated but thriving entrepreneur living in Australian frontier culture.

Private collection

Trent Jansen designer

Australia born 1981

JP Finsbury, Sydney manufacturer

Australia est. 2013

Chinaman's file rocking chair from the *Broached East* collection

2013

Victorian ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*), Manchurian ash (*Fraxinus mandshurica*), rubber, steel

The two-step rocking motion of this chair replicates the motion felt by a Chinese mother carrying her child in a traditional sling. The evocation of the maternal bond is accentuated by the width of the chair, which is made for two. Drawing into focus the very personal and often challenging nature of migration, Jansen pays homage to the estimated 16,500 Chinese immigrants who walked to the Victorian goldfields from Robe in South Australia during the mid nineteenth century. Ships carrying Chinese nationals to New South Wales and Victoria were taxed, so passengers disembarked in South Australia. Travelling on foot in single file was known as 'Chinaman's file'.

Purchased with funds donated by
Gordon Moffatt AM, 2017

2016.424

For kids

During the Victorian gold rush thousands of Chinese migrants walked to the goldfields in the Victorian Central Highlands from Robe in South Australia. They travelled on foot in single file, which was known as 'Chinaman's file'. Trent Jansen's rocking chair has been designed with a special mechanism in the base that creates a two-step rocking motion. By changing the way the rocking chair moves the designer is asking us to think about the motion felt by a Chinese mother carrying her child in a traditional sling on this journey.

U-P graphic design studio

Australia est 2004

Taylor Curry moving image designer

Australia born 1988

Broached East

2018

animated projection

Broached Colonial

This design collection explores a profound moment in Australian history – the early years of British colonisation, from 1788 to 1851. With the arrival of the First Fleet, British rule of law and the Industrial Revolution came to the east coast of Australia, significantly impacting the lives of Australia's First Peoples.

Broached Commissions selected this period as the focus of its first collection because it is a time when foreign objects started arriving in Australia, along with ideas relating to home, industry, law, militarism and agriculture. The objects and influences came from a range of places: the British Empire, the United States, France and beyond.

The works within the collection reveal individual stories of discovery and hardship experienced by early migrants and convicts in what they perceived as a strange, harsh land and culture far from home.

No designer was given a specific object brief by Broached Commissions; rather, they were provided with historical research that guided each designer towards an object design. The resulting set of interrelated narratives reflect some of the ways in which contemporary Australian designers look back on this complex and challenging period in Australian history.

Trent Jansen

Australia born 1981

Briggs Family tea service, set of 6 items from the *Broached Colonial* collection

2011

porcelain, brass, copper, bull kelp, wallaby pelt

This tea service seeks to represent the story of the marriage of George Briggs, a free settler to Tasmania, to Woretermoeteyenner of the Pairrebeenne people, and the four children they had together. The tea service brings together the materials common for water holding in each culture: porcelain in Britain and bull kelp in Indigenous communities in Tasmania. The materials are integrated within a unique set of objects that the designer has used to represent the beginnings of a mixed Indigenous and non-indigenous Australian culture.

Collection of Broached Commissions

For kids

This tea set was designed by Trent Jansen to celebrate the story of George Briggs, an English settler in Tasmania during the colonial period. Briggs married a local woman named Woretermoeteyenner, of Tasmania's Pairrebeenne people. The tea set is made of porcelain, a material which the British used for water vessels, and bull kelp, which the Pairrebeenne people used for water vessels.

Adam Goodrum designer

Australia born 1972

Woodcraft Mobiliar, Melbourne

manufacturer

Australia, est. 2009

Birdsmouth table from the *Broached Colonial* collection

2011

marblo, brass, kangaroo skin, wenge timber and blackwood timber

In his seminal work on the colonisation of Australia, *The Fatal Shore* (1986), Robert Hughes observed that the timbers for masts and the flax for sails held the same importance in the maintenance and expansion of empire as petroleum and uranium do today. Adam Goodrum has designed a jewellery-like element for this table (modelled after the famed hollow birdsmouth mast) that punctuates the Chippendale-inspired tabletop. Manipulating scale and power, the once mighty mast is reduced by the designer to a delicate form, symbolising the passing of an era, the waning of an empire and the demise of a technology that once ruled the sea.

Collection of Broached Commissions

For kids

The connection between the tabletop and the legs of Adam Goodrum's *Birdsmouth* table reminds us of masts on sailing ships, which were an essential way of travelling in the colonial period for exploring, shipping convicts to Australia, and carrying cargo back and forth. The strength of the mast is reimagined by the designer as very delicate – just a memory of a time when sailing boats ruled the seas.

Charles Wilson designer

Australia born 1968

Woodcraft Mobiliar, Melbourne

manufacturer

Australia est. 2009

Tall boy from the *Broached Colonial* collection

2015

Tasmanian Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*), black lacquer

Tall boy from the *Broached Colonial* collection

2015

Tasmanian Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*), French polish

The seven-drawer *Tall boy* integrates a range of colonial-period references into the traditional furniture type of the high boy, a double-height chest of drawers which has its origins in late seventeenth-century English furniture design. To create this object the designer has brought together research on makeshift early agricultural structures of rural Australia, the simple geometry and solid surfaces of European Biedermeier furniture, and the four-sided, narrow tapering form of an obelisk, landmarks commonly found in European cities of the era.

Private collection

John Warwicker

England born 1955 arrived Australia 2005

The Great Survey

2018

paper, ink

Seat of Judgement

2018

paper, ink

Dead hand

2018

paper, ink

Produced especially for the *Design Storytellers* exhibition, these 'private property' posters demonstrate graphic designer John Warwicker's commitment to explore the historical evolution of typography. The posters also seek to represent the way in which private property law was used to force Indigenous Australians off their land. Broached commissions and Warwicker collaborated on these works to show the formal typographical language of British law and how it came to Australia; how legal frameworks such as the Torrens system of land titles migrated from Australia to the rest of the world; and finally, how the Mabo decision etched its way into *terra nullius*.

Lucy McRae

England born 1979 arrived Australia 1982

Prickly lamp from the *Broached Colonial* collection

2011

timber, steel

In response to the curatorial framework established for the *Broached Colonial* collection, designer and artist Lucy McRae's work uses the form and materiality of the object to convey historical emotion. The lamp focuses on the experience of convict women in the early years of colonial settlement, a time when life was unpredictable and frequently characterised by risk and violence. McRae's lamp is elegant yet defensive, coated in an impenetrable surface of 60,000 hand-dyed toothpicks. The object has seemingly developed a protective skin to insulate itself against the depravities and harshness of convict culture.

Collection of Broached Commissions

For kids

This lamp is prickly because it is covered in 60,000 hand-dyed toothpicks. The designer made this lamp to encourage us to think about how hard life must have been for women who were convicts during the colonial period in Australia, a time when life was tough and dangerous.

Chen Lu designer

Taiwan born 1975, arrived Australia 1990

U-P graphic design studio

Australia est. 2004

Dream lantern from the *Broached Colonial* collection

2011

timber, marblo, glass, brass

Dream lantern is the result of research into curiosity objects of the late eighteenth to mid nineteenth centuries. The four decorative shades are inspired by different elements in the life of convict Mary Bryant, who in 1791 escaped from Port Jackson with her family and other convicts. Voyaging to Timor, Bryant and her companions posed as survivors, but were detained and shipped via South Africa back to England. On the journey her husband and children died. At trial, Bryant was ordered to complete her sentence but was pardoned in May 1793, due to massive public support because of her heroic journey and great suffering.

Collection of Broached Commissions

For kids

The patterns that are cut into the different layers of this light by Chen Lu were inspired by the life of English convict Mary Bryant, who was sent to Australia as punishment for stealing. Mary and her family escaped from Port Jackson in Sydney in 1791. They sailed in a small boat to Timor, north of Australia, where they were caught. Mary was sent back home, stopping in South Africa on her way to England to face punishment for escaping. Luckily, she was forgiven for her crime by England and set free.

U-P graphic design studio

Australia est 2004

Taylor Curry moving image designer

Australia born 1988

Broached Colonial

2018

animated projection

Max Lamb designer

England born 1980

Gosford Quarries manufacturer

Australia est. 1922

**Hawkesbury sandstone, stool set
of four from the *Broached Colonial*
collection**

2011

Mount White Sandstone

**Hawkesbury sandstone, table from the
Broached Colonial collection**

2011

Mount White Sandstone

**Hawkesbury sandstone, bench from
the *Broached Colonial* collection**

2011

Mount White Sandstone

Hawkesbury sandstone, steps from the *Broached Colonial* collection

2011

Mount White Sandstone

Max Lamb's work explores materials by re-contextualising them in both conventional and unconventional ways. He exploits the inherent qualities of his materials and reconsiders their function through a research-driven design process that marries historical context with contemporary production. Responding to the curatorial proposition of *Broached Colonial*, Lamb focused on connecting to Sydney's colonial past through material, function and form. Featuring sandstone from local quarries, each of the pieces in the *Hawkesbury sandstone* series references the migration of specific forms from Europe to Australia – the keystone arch in the long bench, horse-mounting steps and wood stump seats are all referenced in the collection.

Collection of Broached Commissions

Ma Yangsong designer

China born 1975

Gallery ALL production house

China est. 2013

MAD Martian candelabra no.1

2017

cast bronze, 24k gold plate

MAD Martian candelabra no.2

2017

cast bronze, 24k gold plate

These candelabras are the result of a speculative commission based on Chinese colonisation of space. They are artefacts of the future, representing the emergent material culture of a new civilisation on Mars. In developing the work, architect Ma Yangsong, in response to a creative brief from Broached Commissions, considered how these imagined inhabitants would live and furnish their homes. Using a combination of advanced manufacturing technology and hand finishing, these works reference contemporary sci-fi aesthetics, blending organic nature and technology in an imagined bio-future.

Private collection

Mimi Jung

Korea born 1981, arrived United States 1989

Fallen fence

2018

polycord, paper

Through her large-scale woven works Korean-American artist Mimi Jung explores her experience of displacement and immigration. *Fallen fence* is an evolutionary step, sitting between earlier two-dimensional weavings and later sculptural glass forms. The curves and slumps of this work inspired the new glass works presented here. The materials of paper and polycord were selected to create a work that conveyed roughness and textural tactility, in contrast to the fine mohair normally woven by the artist.

Collection of Broached Commissions

Mimi Jung

Korea born 1981, arrived United States 1989

Judson Studios, Los Angeles

manufacturer

United States est. 1897

Glass work one from the *Broached Exceptions* collection

2018

glass

Glass work two from the *Broached Exceptions* collection

2018

glass

Glass work three from the *Broached Exceptions* collection

2018

glass

Continuing an ongoing investigation into the forces and consequences of migration and globalisation, the latest Broached Commission invited Los Angeles-based Korean artist Mimi Jung to produce a set of glass objects that encapsulate and communicate her experiences of migration. The gentle, optimistic colour selection for the works is symbolically interrupted by rugged voids where the bonding of glass has failed, hinting at the disconnection or trauma that can be experienced with migration. The works are created by fusing stacks of glass that have been moulded with imprints of Mimi Jung's mohair weaving work.

Private collection

For kids

These glass objects by Mimi Jung tell a story of leaving home and moving to a foreign country. The beautiful colours of the glass remind us of hope for a better future, but the holes in the glass remind us that leaving home can be hard and painful, and that settling into a new place can be filled with challenges.

John Warwicker

England born 1955 arrived Australia 2005

Taylor Curry moving image designer

Australia born 1988

Broached Exceptions

2018

animated projection

Broached Monsters

Prior to British colonisation, Australia was imagined, in the northern hemisphere, as a vast southern landmass. Little else was known about it. However, tales of fabulous and sometimes frightening creatures, of incredible proportions and improbable anatomy, did filter through from early traders and explorers.

Fear of these creatures was apparently legitimised when early British colonists started to learn of the monsters of Aboriginal folklore. Stories of the bunyip or yahoo captured their imaginations. Soon, local Aboriginal people began to tap into the British colonisers' sense of fear, which gained potency through fireside stories, folkloric tales and sensational journalism.

Over five years of design investigation through a process he describes as 'design anthropology', Trent Jansen has sought to create a range of objects that capture the essential character of three creatures, representing both Indigenous and non-Indigenous vernaculars – Jangarra, Pankalangu and the Hairy Wild Man from Botany Bay. Through this work, Jansen suggests that at times stories developed by Indigenous Australians have co-mingled with European fears. He also suggests that perhaps some of these myths might act as central figures for a national mythology that is inclusive of both cultures.

Rita Minga designer and artist

Wangkajunga born c. 1935

Johnny Nargoodah lead designer
and artist

Nykina/Walmajarri born 1959

Trent Jansen designer

Australia born 1981

Wes Maselli studio coordinator

Australia 1979

Gene Tighe designer and artist

Walmajarri born c. 1935

Elsie Dickens designer and artist

Walmajarri born c. 1935

Duane Shaw technician, designer
and artist

Gooniyandi/Walmajarri born 1987

Illiam Nargoodah technician, designer
and artist

Walmajarri/Nyikina born 1997

Mayarn Lawford designer and artist

Walmajarri born 1935

Eva Nargoodah designer and artist

Walmajarri/Wangkajunga born 1954

Yangkarni Penny K-Lyons designer
and artist

Walmajarri born c. 1932

Jangarra armchair from the *Broached Monsters* collection

2017

Jartalu wood, gum branches, human hair

The Jangarra armchair is a continuation of Trent Jansen's interest in Indigenous and colonial-era creature mythologies. *Jangarra* is a large, hairy man carrying a boomerang and shield who hides behind large rocks and ant hills waiting for his prey. While the main coolamon-like forms are hand-carved with axes from Jartalu trees, an important aspect of the *Jangarra* is the addition of traditional string-making using human hair by Mayarn Lawford and Yangkarni Penny K-Lyons, the last two remaining people in Fitzroy Crossing who still have the skill to make human-hair string in the traditional way. The overall form represents both the ant hill that Jangarra hides behind and the creature himself.

Private collection

For kids

This handmade armchair is based on the story of a deadly outback creature – the Jangarra. Indigenous stories describe him as a large, hairy man carrying a boomerang and shield that hides behind large rocks waiting to catch someone. Trent Jansen and a group of local artists and craftspeople made the work near Fitzroy Crossing in Western Australia, from hand-carved local wood.

Trent Jansen designer

Australia born 1981

JP Finsbury, Sydney manufacturer

Australia est. 2013

**Pankalangu armchair from the
Broached Monsters collection**

2017

Wallaby pelt, leather, plywood, stainless steel, brass

Private collection

Trent Jansen

Australia born 1981

**Hairy Wild Man from Botany Bay
chandelier from the *Broached
Monsters* collection**

2017

glass, neon

**Hairy Wild Man from Botany Bay
chaise longue from the *Broached
Monsters* collection**

2017

leather, Icelandic sheepskin, timber

The early nineteenth-century myth of the Hairy Wild Man from Botany Bay described a savage giant of 2.7 metres with a broad face, deathly eyes and long but sparse wiry hair. This chaise longue takes its formal influence from a series of Australian native animals that exhibit some of the physical characteristics of the Wild Man. The design references the soft mid section of the wombat, the hairy ears of the koala, the leathery skin of the goanna and the long splintery hair of the tussock *lymantriidae* moth, when at caterpillar stage. This is a brooding object loaded with colonial fear, and superstition.

Private collection

Trent Jansen

Australia born 1981

Taylor Curry moving image designer

Australia born 1988

Broached Monsters

2018

animated projection

Trent Jansen designer

Australia born 1981

JP Finsbury, Sydney manufacturer

Australia est. 2013

Pankalangu side table from the *Broached Monsters* collection

2017

brass, timber

Pankalangu wardrobe from the *Broached Monsters* collection

2017

Queensland walnut (*Cryptocarya palmerstonii*), copper,
brass, plywood

According to a story shared with Trent Jansen by Western Arrernte man Baden Williams, Pankalangu is a territorial being that lives in the desert and bush. Pankalangu can only move with the rain, and is made visible when the rain that falls on his scales is caught by the light, defining a glistening silhouette. Stories of these creatures are told to children to ensure they do not stray into the bush alone. Jansen's interpretations were formally influenced by some of the unique characteristics of other creatures from this region – the perentie (a type of lizard) and the Central Australian locust.

Private collection

For kids

The collection of furniture in this room is inspired by a story shared with Trent Jansen by Western Arrernte man Baden Williams about the Pankalangu, a deadly creature that lives in the bush who moves only when it is raining. The story of Pankalangu is a spooky story that adults tell their kids to stop them from wandering off into the bush alone.