

POSSUM-SKIN CLOAKS

with Maree Clarke

Maree Clarke is a Yorta Yorta/Wamba Wamba/Mutti Mutti/Boonwurrung woman. She makes art to connect with her culture and she shares it with her family, friends and community to keep culture strong for the next generation. Maree has created the possum-skin cloak below using sixty-three possum pelts! You can see more of Maree's works of art at ngv.melbourne/collection.



What are possum-skin cloaks?

Aboriginal people from south-east Australia have worn possum-skin cloaks for many years. The cloaks are made from possum pelts and keep people warm when it's cold, dry when it's wet and snug when they're sleeping.

A young child is given a cloak made from just a few possum pelts. As they grow, more pelts are added and the cloak grows with them. They keep their cloak for the rest of their life until they are buried in them.

(left and below) Maree Clarke Walert – gum barerarerungar: Tipperary, Ireland Dunstable, Britain Yorta Yorta Trawlwoolway Boonwurrung Mutti Mutti Wamba Wamba 2020 sixty-three-pelt possum-skin cloak. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. © Maree Clarke Photo: Tom Ross

Markings are added to the inside of possum-skin cloaks. They are like maps that tell stories of the owner's Country, culture and family.



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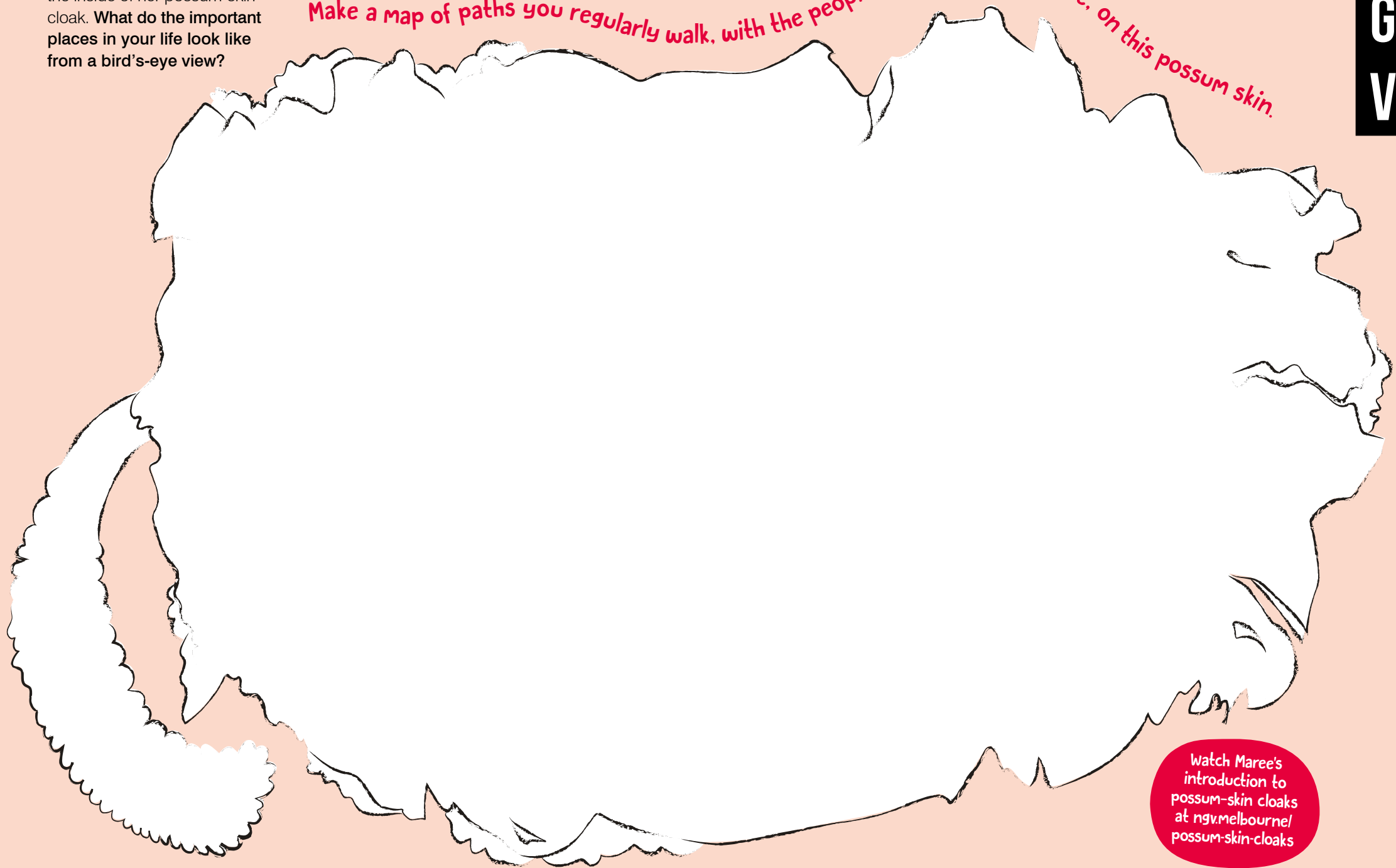


Education and Training



Maree Clarke marked the important places in her life on the inside of her possum-skin cloak. **What do the important places in your life look like from a bird's-eye view?**

Make a map of paths you regularly walk, with the people and animals you see, on this possum skin.



Watch Maree's introduction to possum-skin cloaks at ngv.melbourne/possum-skin-cloaks