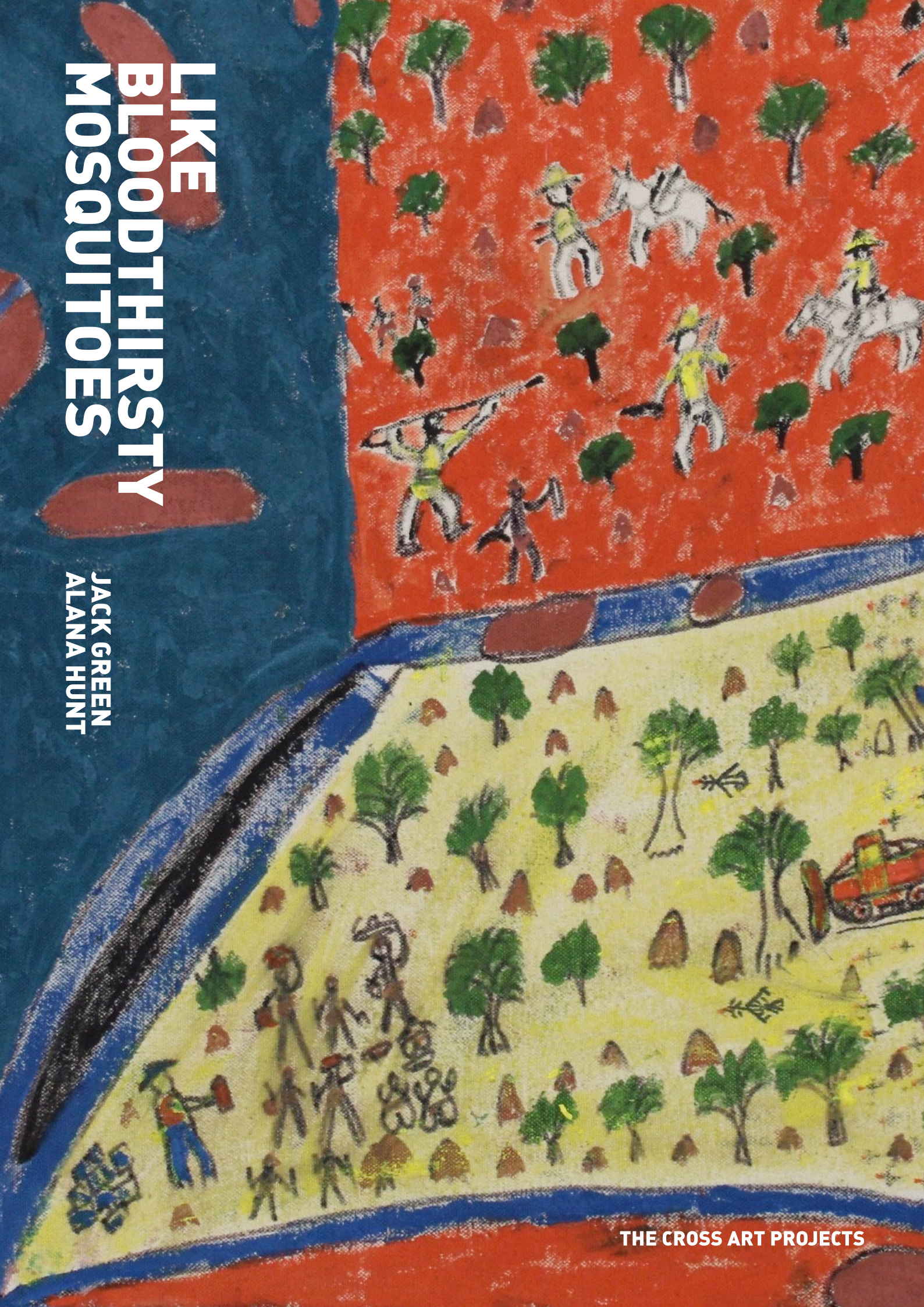


LIKE BLOODTHIRSTY MOSQUITOES

JACK GREEN
ALANA HUNT



THE CROSS ART PROJECTS

Catalogue Essay

[LIKE BLOODTHIRSTY MOSQUITOES](#), JACK GREEN & ALANA HUNT, THE CROSS ART PROJECTS, 31 AUGUST — 28 SEPTEMBER 2024, CO-CURATED BY WATCH THIS SPACE & THE CROSS ART PROJECTS, PRESENTED IN ASSOCIATION WITH WATCH THIS SPACE (MPARNTWE/ALICE SPRINGS), WARALUNGKU ARTS (BORROLOOLA/BURRULULA) AND THE NORTHERN TERRITORY FRACK FREE ALLIANCE. PUBLISHED BY THE CROSS ART PROJECTS. ESSAY: JO HOLDER. PUBLICATION DESIGN: BELLE BLAU DESIGN. PHOTOGRAPHY: BELLE BLAU AND SILVERSALT PHOTOGRAPHY. [LIKE BLOODTHIRSTY MOSQUITOES](#), JACK GREEN AND ALANA HUNT, CATALOGUE | ISBN: 978-0-6452366-9-9, © THE CROSS ART PROJECTS, 2024, COVER ARTWORK: JACK GREEN, [LIKE BLOODTHIRSTY MOSQUITOES](#), 2024, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 60 X 45 CM. COURTESY PRIVATE COLLECTION.

Like bloodthirsty mosquitoes presents two acute bodies of work by Jack Green and Alana Hunt, counterpointed to detail the range of slow and constant harms of colonialism and resources extraction in different regions of remote northern Australia: the south-west Gulf Country in the Northern Territory and the Kimberley in Western Australia.

A painting by Jack Green gives the exhibition its title. An excerpt from his accompanying statement for Like bloodthirsty mosquitoes explains: “It never stops. From the first time they came on horses with guns shooting and killing our people and now in the mining trucks and drilling rigs one after another, like blood thirsty mosquitoes.”

In their work, Green and Hunt draw on a decade of exhibitions, writing, research and experience to paint a picture of ongoing frontier violence—of conquest and killings, land theft (pastoralists, miners, nation builders and other grifters), racial partition and racist conservation policy. They are attentive to the grit and nuance of the local, set against the abstract workings of power interactions that invisibly shape relationships.

Through their combined Indigenous and non-Indigenous sets of eyes and voices, we understand that theft of minerals, water and wealth is an active continuum of domination that includes knowledge and power from relationships and payment from workers. For example, Jack Green and his family worked in the pastoral industry under slave labour conditions. Green and Hunt’s work upholds the right of First Nations peoples to organise and represent. Both artists often collaborate with equally experienced artist allies.

Senior Garrwa leader Jack Green (working with Seán Kerins and other allies),¹ records damage and regulatory failure in a world where big monsoonal rivers flow from the Barkly Tablelands into the Gulf of Carpentaria and the Australian government is largely absent. Jack Green’s paintings detail the destruction of sacred sites and ecosystems, and longer-range and potentially lethal environmental harm. His statements

address the power injustice between Traditional Owners and the state acting in the interests of extractors. In the Gulf Country, as everywhere, sovereignty was never surrendered, and people have fought and died for over a century. The Gulf Country alone has over 50 massacre sites.

Here the Rainbow Serpent is one of the most spiritually powerful ancestral beings and rests under the McArthur River. Green states, “The McArthur River region is a powerful place, it’s full of sacred sites that give us life ... they cut the Snake to create the massive open cut pit in our land when they diverted the McArthur River. After they diverted the river a lot of the senior minggirringi (traditional owners) and junggayi (managers or custodians) for that place died.”

Jack Green brings to light the secretive dealings of one of the world’s biggest multinational miners, and the failings of environmental and Aboriginal heritage and sacred sites regulation. Swiss company Glencore Xstrata’s monolithic McArthur River Mine—one of the world’s biggest open cut lead, zinc, and silver mines—is situated 60km south-west of Borroloola/Burrulula: a small town with a 76 percent Aboriginal population. The resistance and representations of the region’s clans—the Gudanji, Garrwa, Marra and Yanyuwa people—have failed to stop the mine’s expansion and toxic impacts. The now contaminated river flows through the town as do trucks hauling minerals to the port. Green sometimes parodies corporate cowboys gleefully riding these massive haulage rigs, each container marked with the number of the millions of dollars in (untaxed) profits.

There is a sordid history of government legislating to enable mining after a court has intervened. After a victory in the Northern Territory Supreme Court (under the Sacred Sites Act) against the mine’s expansion, the Territory government passed an amendment to the mine’s

Ratification Act (1992) to override the court’s judgement. In 2008 when Glencore Xstrata became Glencore, the mine changed to open cut and the river was diverted six kilometres to mine the riverbed. When Xstrata took over Mount Isa Mines in 2003, this was a small underground mine beside the McArthur River. In 2023 the Territory government again overturned a court decision and slashed the mine’s environmental security bond.

McArthur River Mine will continue to cause damage for hundreds, if not thousands of years, and the community will be left to foot the bill. The mine continues to operate without a life-of-mine closure plan, and a security bond that is wholly inadequate to deal with the catastrophic impacts. Meanwhile, with breathtaking cynicism the mine doles out miniscule amounts to a compulsory Community Benefit Fund (for the rodeo, not much needed housing)—exposing how tainted funding to communities legitimises mining.

Over these years, a Federal “develop the north” policy, has identified the Territory for “advanced stage” exploration for onshore shale gas with large contingent resources in the Beetaloo Sub-basin, Bonaparte Basin, and McArthur Basin. Jack Green states, “Whitefellas come straight into our Country with their trucks, looking for minerals and gas, and when they find em, they come with their drill rigs to start drilling and digging and sucking up our water. They suck the life from us and leave us with poison in our Country.”

Working from Miriwoong Country in the East Kimberley and from Gadigal/Sydney, Alana Hunt deploys a shifting media portfolio across film, photography, artist books and compiled volumes of research. Hunt was an artist in residence with the Kimberley Land Council from 2020-23 as part of SPACED’s Rural Utopias program, producing the body of work A Very Clear Picture, which exposed the failure of the West Australian

Aboriginal Heritage Act (1972). Hunt has lived and worked on Gija and Miriwoong Countries for over 12 years and nurtures a continuing connection, recently returning to hold an outdoor film festival in Kununurra, the administrative hub of the Ord River Irrigation Scheme, and actively followed the landmark Timber Creek compensation claim in the High Court (Mr A. Griffiths v Commonwealth, 2019).

The centrepiece of Alana Hunt’s installation is Surveilling a Crime Scene (2023)—a 22-minute film shot in the auteur’s medium of Super 8 and narrated by Hunt in a gentle monologue. The projection sits beside the black and white photographs of A Delicate Balancing Act (2020-23), depicting the further alienation of Country for “your tourist adventure”.

On another wall sits A Very Clear Picture (2021-22), a triptych of scribbled key words such as “infrastructure upgrade, mining, tailing, geotechnical” along with other empty banalities transcribed by the artist as former Rio Tinto chief executive Sam Walsh reads 967 project summaries submitted between 2010-20 under ‘Clause 18’ of the state’s Aboriginal heritage legislation for her video work Nine Hundred and Sixty Seven (2020-21). This graffiti proclaims the Crown’s Sovereignty over stolen land.

Miriwoong people’s Country was stolen by the Ord River Irrigation Scheme, proposed as a messianic “irrigate the desert” intervention using a huge Commonwealth grant to build the Ord River Dam which forged the waters of Lake Argyle. The film’s shock reveal is archival footage of Miriwoong Country being blasted—hills, rocks and dust flying. It is the late 1960s and Traditional Owners were not consulted. Hunt describes the role of the town of Kununurra as the centre of a project that will unfold over differing decades, through constant attempts at expansion.

Ord River Irrigation Area Stage 2 saw 50,000 hectares of black soil plains opened for

¹ Jack Green’s allies in art and exhibition making include: Seán Kerins, Nancy McDinny, Stuart Hoosan, Miriam Charlie, Therese Ritchie, Djon Mundine and The Cross Art Projects team. Alana Hunt’s publications detail her collaborators.



agriculture in the early 2000s. Ord Stage 3 could potentially see agricultural activity expanded across the border into the Northern Territory. While Traditional Owners are consulted in these more recent developments, the nature of that consultation, and Aboriginal people’s authority in those consultations illustrates an immense disparity of power and spurs internal conflict.

The film could be a satire about failed and inedible sandalwood plantations and other monoculture crops and the implied trajectory of national ascent or progress (for non-Indigenous people) as heralded by nation-building narratives, but Hunt deftly fingers other motives. She identifies colonisation not just as the pioneer myth, murders, displacement, and the transfer of vast intergenerational colonial wealth “to a few privileged white men”, but also as a continuous and present violence operating on many subtle levels. After the film’s introductory upbeat cowboy music, Hunt states, “It is a story about you and me. It is a story about the persistent violence of daily life here.”

The manifestation of non-Indigenous life on Miriwoong Country/Kununurra is one of ease, with its picnic grounds and dams set in glorious landscapes. Here the talk is of “stolen cars not stolen land”. Slow violence is present in our peripheral vision as we watch the deceptively ordinary presence of a solitary jogger in an “empty landscape”, and tourist groups disembarking from buses and boats to float over submerged Country, sacred sites and Dreaming tracks.

Green and Hunt describe an extractive economy that targets First Nations peoples, lands, and waters as terra nullius—existing only for the removal of natural resources, particularly for export with minimal processing. The concept of “extractivismo” was coined in Portuguese to describe the exploitation of forest resources in Brazil. The concept encases an ethos of menace

and violence that sustains power structures, destroys communities, and produces injustice. The Ord River Irrigation Scheme was and is funded and promoted as a “food bowl”. Today Big Cotton is itching to get at the free water. They call this new madness “Stage 3”.² The “extractivismo” signature is the same no matter what continent or island. Mining (especially hydrocarbon operations) and industrial agriculture contaminates everything.

It is expected that those whose lives are upended by these operations will remain unseen and voiceless.

In remote areas where compliance, monitoring and enforcement is weak and where there are poor success rates in addressing other environmental and societal challenges (such as Australia’s abysmal failure to “close the gap”), the disrespect and danger equation is exponentially greater.

In 2020, Jack Green submitted copies of a series of his paintings and accompanying stories to the Juukan Gorge Inquiry. The betrayal of Gudanji, Garrwa, Marra and Yanyuwa people by the Northern Territory and Federal Governments became one of six Case Studies for a Senate Inquiry by the Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia into the destruction (by dynamite) of the 46,000 years old sacred rock shelter at Juukan Gorge in the Pilbara region. In this case, the grief, shock, and outrage at miner



Rio Tinto’s wilful yet legal desecration of the site reverberated globally. The Museum of Australian Democracy (or MoAD) in Old Parliament House Canberra had the foresight to turn the submission into the extraordinary exhibition [Jack Green, Statement](#), which continues until mid-2025.

The legislation containing the infamous Section 18 which legitimated the detonation of Juukan Gorge was also documented by Alana Hunt in [A Very Clear Picture: A Collection of Work, Words and Sources](#) (2023)—collated over the course of her residency with the KLC to examine the violent banality of language used to legally perpetrate colonial violence. The Juukan Gorge Inquiry’s Final Report (October 2021) makes eight recommendations to address the disparity in power between Indigenous peoples and the mining industry as well as the failings of legislation designed to protect Indigenous heritage.

The Inquiry found that the current Western Australian Aboriginal heritage laws “played a critical role in the destruction of the shelters”. It concluded, “The Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 has failed to protect Aboriginal Heritage, making the destruction of Indigenous heritage not only legal but almost inevitable.” Until the destruction, WA boasted that their legislation was the most rigorous in Australia.

After Juukan Gorge, The Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 (WA) was reviewed and repealed. It was briefly replaced with the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021 (WA) which was abruptly repealed after backlash from extractors. The Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 remains the primary source of legislation for the “protection” of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Western Australia. However, there is some “improvement” to the controversial Section 18 approval process by which Ministerial consent is obtained to authorise the damage or destruction

of Aboriginal sites. Aboriginal people have appeal rights (to a state tribunal) regarding the Minister’s decision. The broader definition of “Aboriginal cultural heritage” adopted under the 2021 Act, which included “cultural landscapes” and other forms of intangible cultural heritage, have not been carried across to the 1972 Act.

Jack Green’s introduction to his exhibition [Statement: Jack Green’s Paintings](#) at the Museum of Australian Democracy reads: “I want to show people what is happening to our country and to Aboriginal people. No one is listening to us. What we want. How we want to live. What we want in the future for our children. It’s for these reasons that I started to paint. I want government to listen to Aboriginal people. I want people in the cities to know what’s happening to us and our country. I want the government and mining companies to know that we are still here. We aren’t going anywhere. We aren’t dead yet. We are still here, feeling the country.”

We need more voices like those of Green and Hunt. We stand at a critical point in the recognition of Indigenous primacy in heritage in this country—lest we are led to a bitter end, shrouded in carbon-dense blackness. Meanwhile, in the gallery, the film fades to darkness.

Essay by Jo Holder

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THE CROSS
ART PROJECTS X
Thurs-Sat 11-6
7-9pm
www.thecrossart.com.au

Like bloodthirsty mosquitoes
JACK GREEN & ALANA HUNT



[Like bloodthirsty mosquitoes](#), The Cross Art Projects, 2024, installation view

Jack Green



Left: Jack Green, [Our Old People Were Chased and Shot Like Animals](#), 2023, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 50 cm, #95-23 (detail).



Jack Green

Jack Green is an artist and conservationist born in Wakaiya Country, Soudan Station, NT, 1953. He is a Mambaliya man, Garrwa on his father's side and Marra on his mother's side. He grew up and worked on cattle stations, travelling for ceremonies, and settled in Borroloola in the early 1970s. Jack Green has spent a lifetime fighting to get access to, protect and care for his Country. He has battled for native title and for an Indigenous Protected Area, was the founding coordinator of the Waanyi Garrwa Rangers, under the Northern Land Council, and is now their Senior Cultural Adviser and sat on the Indigenous Protection Authority (which cares for sacred sites). His work has been honoured by several conservation awards.

To be heard, Jack Green holds exhibitions and talks on the operation and impacts of mining on Country, culture and community. His solo exhibitions and exhibitions with allies (Seán Kerins, Nancy McDinny and Stuart Hoosan and Therese Ritchie), include: Melbourne at Arena Gallery (2013); Sydney at The Cross Art Projects (2014, 2016, 2017) and Darwin (Open Cut at NCCA 2018 and tour to Lismore, The Cross Art Projects and Counihan Gallery in Melbourne). He has twice been a finalist in NATSIA (2017 and 2022.) Recent exhibitions are Heart of Country at Drill Hall Gallery (2022) and The Museum of Australian Democracy (2022-2025) in Canberra and 'Like blood thirsty mosquitoes' with Alana Hunt at Watch this Space in Mparntwe/ Alice Springs and The Cross Art Projects in Gadigal/Sydney (2024). His work has been acquired by public and private collections.



Jack Green, [Like bloodthirsty mosquitoes](#), The Cross Art Projects, 2024, installation view



Like Bloodthirsty Mosquitoes

“On the left of the painting on the blue you can see good land. It’s never been touched by miners or frackers. All the sacred sites are there and kept safe. On the orange you can see how they took our land with their guns, riding in on horses and killing our people with their bullets. ‘Clearing the land’, they say for their cattle. We tried to fight back. The river runs through the land. This is McArthur River. It’s given us life for thousands of years. In the river and all around are sacred sites. They are powerful places that give us life and we have to care for them, protect them as our old people have done. The man in the blue trousers is the welfare man. In the past when they pushed us off our land and rounded us up like cattle, government welfare people came in, giving out food trying to quieten the people down. The welfare man is just like the government men today who come with the miners and frackers—they got a few bits and pieces to chuck around to the people to quieten them down while they let in the mining and fracking companies who race in with all their equipment, clearing the land and pushing us out. In the top right of the painting is what looks like a whole lot of arrows. These represent mosquitoes. There are thousands and thousands of them coming at you to suck your blood. This is what it feels like with all the miners and frackers that government are letting into our country. It never stops. From the first time they came on horses with guns, shooting and killing our people, and now in the mining trucks and drilling rigs one after another, like bloodthirsty mosquitoes.”



Jack Green, [This is How Government, Miners and Frackers Undermine Our Law](#)
2023, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 40 cm, #84-24

This is How Government, Miners and Frackers Undermine Our Law

“At the top of the painting you can see us Aboriginal people. Two men standing on yellow and one man on the ochre, in the middle standing on the blue is a white man. The white man, he goes and talks with Aboriginal people. He represents the government. He says, ‘I come here to tell you what government says.’ On the yellow you got Aboriginal people rounded up sitting at a table. It looks like a meeting but they been told by government and miners what’s going to happen. They got no say in the decision. The meeting is made to look like they have a say, but we know that this isn’t what happens. They don’t want to listen to our Law. The government and miners like it when they can pick a few of our people off, give them a bit of paper to wave around, make them look like they are a part of the decision making. Government likes to make everyone think that it’s Aboriginal people who invited all the planes and busses with the workers into our country. In the painting, below the Aboriginal people waving their bits of papers about, are us Law people, we all got our spears ready and we are not happy with what’s happening. The government man, standing on the blue, like all the government men we see round Borroloola, carries a bit of paper with black lines on it. He tells us, ‘This is the government’s law and you gotta follow it.’ But we all know that government uses their law to destroy our Aboriginal Law and our land. On the right of the painting standing on the ochre you got the same thing happening, this time it’s the frackers coming in. They got a few people to wave around their papers saying, ‘This is what government says. Everything is good to go.’ What we see is more and more tricks, dozers and drilling rigs coming into our land pushing us aside, pushing our animals away, drilling into our land to suck out the gas and truck minerals away leaving us poor and our country and sacred sites damaged.”

Our Old People Were Chased and Shot Like Animals

“At the top of the painting are three men standing on the hills. These are Garrwa people, the owners of the country, looking out across their wide lands. They been chased up to the high country from Wollogorang to Calvert by men on horses with big hunting guns. The men on horses come at the people from two ways and chased them into a cave where the men, women and children try to hide. The white men come into the cave and shoot everyone dead. My ancestors were chased and shot like animals by white men on horses who wanted our land for their cattle. We only had spears, boomerangs and rocks and they had these huge big elephant hunting rifles. This is how they took our land.”





One, Two, Three, Four, Five Hundred Thousand Million

“One, two, three, four, five hundred thousand million may be more, that’s how much Glencore, an evil international mining company, trucks out of our Country every year. We’ll never know how much they take as Glencore and the NT Government keep everything pretty secret. What we do know is that our sacred sites are being destroyed and we will be left with one of the world’s biggest waste rock dumps that will leak acid and heavy metal into our waters for hundreds of years. In my mind the mining manager rides the waste dump like a cowboy, screaming with happiness as he thinks he’s going to get away with leaving his toxic waste in our Country. All around the old people who have gone before us stand watching, weeping for their sacred country.”



Jack Green, [Remembering What We Had](#), 2024, acrylic on canvas, 90 x 60 cm, 59-24

Remembering What We Had

“For tens of thousands of years us Garrwa people lived along the creeks and rivers in the Gulf country. What whitefellas now call Settlement Creek, the Calvert, Robinson, Foelsche— these rivers gave us life. Fish, turtles and crocodiles in the water and wallabies, birds and echidna along the banks and nearby. Then one day whitefellas arrived, bringing with them cattle and guns. This is when the killings started in the 1870s. They started hunting us down, killing men, women, children and babies. I remember what we once had and paint up-side-down hearts to show our pain when we remember what happened. When will whitefellas acknowledge what they done to us?”

**Our Beautiful Country is Being Destroyed
in Front of Us People, Black and White**

“Standing on the hills under our Aboriginal flags are the old people, long gone, but still here watching as the fracking trucks come into our Country with their drilling rigs and bulldozers. The frackers with government permission push over trees, cut through Dreaming Tracks and drill deep into our country to blast, pump down toxic chemicals and take the gas resting in the Earth. Frackers and the government, who give the OK and money to start destroying our Country don’t care about our beautiful land with its rich waters full of life and food. They just want to make money while they clear the land and poison our water and live far away in the big cities. It’s not just us Aboriginal people fighting to protect the land and water, but whitefellas too, the station owners are standing with us to try and push back the frackers to protect the water and the land. Like us they know you can’t eat money.”





Jack Green, [Whitefellas, Gas Pipelines, Killing Country](#), 2019, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 90 cm, #248-19

Whitefellas, Gas Pipelines, Killing Country

“Whitefellas been coming into our Country for long time now. They dig up our minerals and truck them away and pollute our land and waters. Now they here again with their fracking trucks to suck the gas out of our Country. They don’t care what we think. Our Native Title rights are so weak that we can’t say no to what whitefellas push on us. The water is dryin’ up everywhere. The animals are disappearing. Government people live in flash houses far away and they don’t care what happens to us Aboriginal people. The two whitefellas holding up the pipeline are going to destroy our Country. On the left is the company man, he wants everything to happen fast so he can make his money and get out of here. The fella on the right is the Northern Territory Minister for Local Government, Housing and Community Development. He never listens to us Aboriginal people. He’s so busy holding up the gas pipeline for the company that he can’t see he’s slowly sinking down into the earth. He’s got no idea what he’s doing to us and our County. Soon he’ll sink under the ground and disappear.”

Red Bank Copper Mine Leaking Shit Into Our Waters

“For over 30 years now Red Bank Copper Mine has been leaking copper sulphate into our waters. The NT government left the mining company leave of 50,000 tonnes of acid forming waste rock out in the open to be washed into the creeks in the monsoon rains. Over 10 years ago the government made a promise to us to clean it up. The Minister for Mines and Energy Willem Westra van Holthe made the promise, but nothing has happened. Forty kilometres from the mine the water is contaminated. The mine site is a scared site, a Possum Dreaming, and it’s been desecrated, hurting the custodians of the site.”



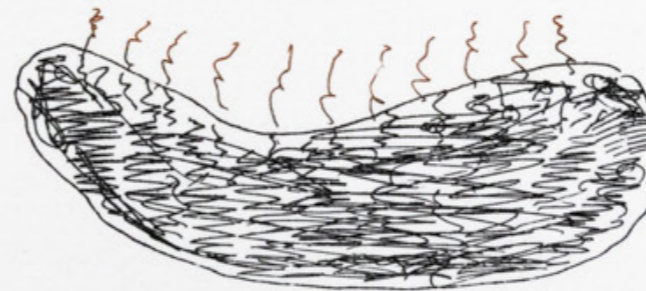
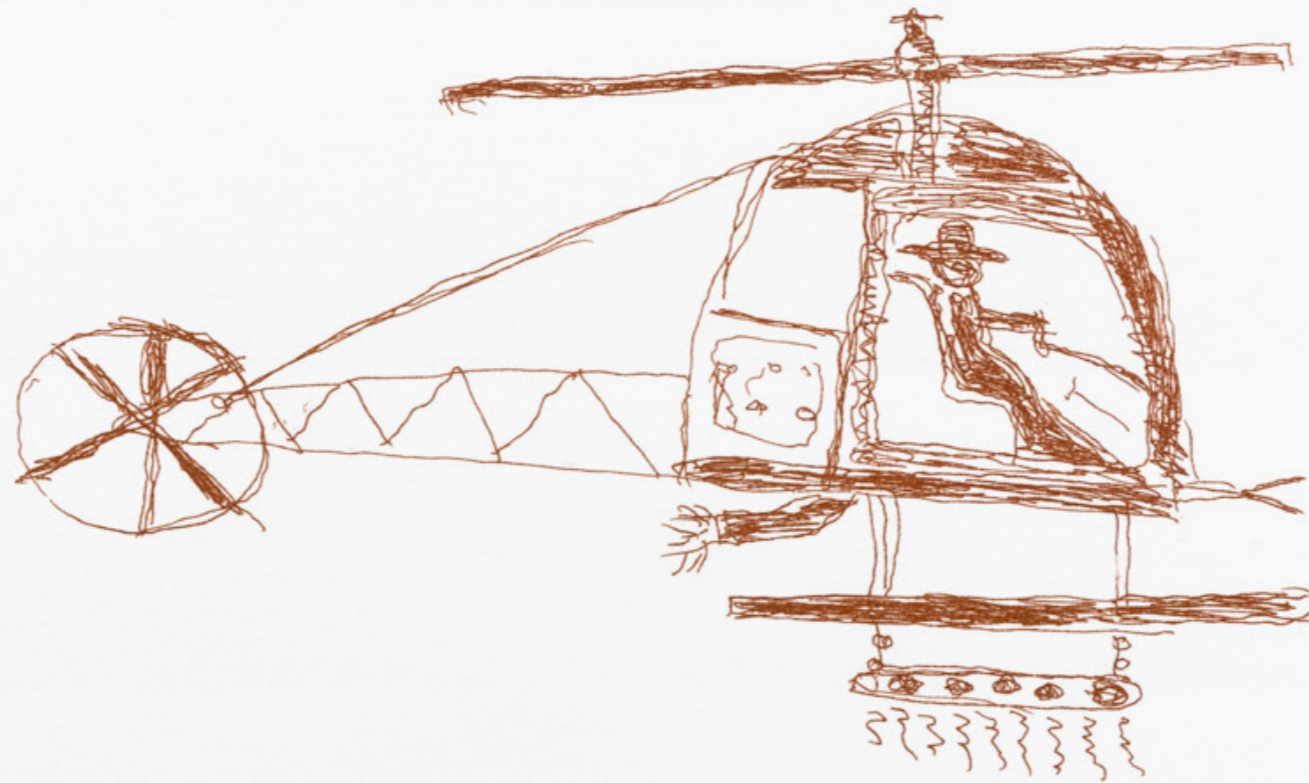


The Rodeo is Not What it Once Was

“Once the Borroloola rodeo was a community thing. Everyone together, black and white, worked to make it happen. No one owned it. Lots of people riding, lots of fun, lots of bruises. Today the rodeo has been taken over by Glencore and McArthur River Mine. The company uses the event to make themselves look good. ‘See what we do for the community’, they say while they pollute our country and leave us with a toxic waste rock pile that will leak acid into our waters for generations. They may be able to pull the wool over people’s eyes, but not the old scrub bullocky, with his head down watching.”

Jack Green, The Rodeo is Not What it Once Was
2024, acrylic on canvas, 40 x 40 cm, #61-24

Text by Jack Green



9/10 JACK GREEN

Alana Hunt



Left: Alana Hunt, [Surveilling a Crime Scene](#),
2023, super 8mm film, 21m58s (still)



Alana Hunt

Alana Hunt is a non-Indigenous person who lived on Gija and Miriwoong Countries in north-west Australia between 2011-23, and is currently based in Redfern on Gadigal Country. This, and her long-standing relationship with South Asia (and Kashmir in particular), shapes her examination of the violence that results from the fragility of nations and the aspirations and failures of colonial dreams. Her work challenges dominant ideas and histories in the public sphere and in the social space between people. Alana studied in Sydney, Halifax and New Delhi.

From 2020-23 Alana was an artist in residence with the Kimberley Land Council producing work about the WA Aboriginal Heritage Act (1972) via SPACED 's Rural Utopias program for socially engaged art. Under the guidance of the KLC's legal team she learnt about forms of legislation which legalise colonial expansion, materialising this research into video, printed matter, photography, and public events.

In late 2023, Hunt completed *Surveilling a Crime Scene* (2023) a film that examines the materialisation of non-indigenous life on Miriwoong Country in the town of Kununurra and its surrounds. The project premiered at the Northern Centre for Contemporary Art (Darwin) in October 2023 and has since been shown in exhibitions and film festivals in Sydney, Perth, Kununurra, Wollongong and Sharjah.

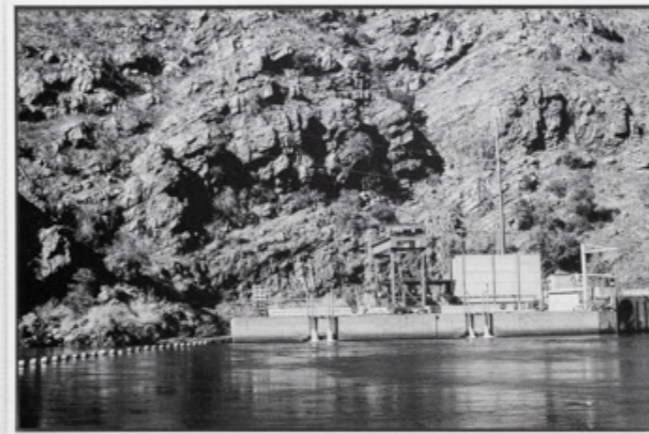
Alana Hunt is the recipient of a number of awards and fellowships, including the 2023 STILL:

National Still Life Award judged by Max Delany at Yarrila Arts and Museum, the Incinerator Award for Art and Social Change (2017), the Fauvette Laureiro Memorial Artist Scholarship (2011), the Sheila Foundation's Fini Fellowship (2022) and the 2024 PICA x CAP Commission which will see her develop new work. Premiering in October 2025 at PICA, *A Deceptively Simple Need* will examine our settler colony – how the basic need for home is weaponised and profited from, then guarded by the irreproachability and apparent innocence of daily life.

Hunt's recent exhibitions include [Dreams Nursed in Darkness](#) at Wollongong Art Gallery, 2024; [Surveilling a Crime Scene](#) at Northern Centre for Contemporary Art, Darwin, 2023; [Rural Utopias](#) at Art Gallery of Western Australia, 2023-4; [Photo Kathmandu, Nepal](#), 2023; [Kaghazi Pairahan: Publishing & Resistance in South Asia](#) at Printed Matter, New York, 2024, Arthshila Santiniketan and Ahmedabad, 2024, and at Double Dummy, Arles, 2023.

Alana has produced a number of critically acclaimed artist books, and her writing has been published by Hyperallergic, Artlink, Westerly, Meanjin, Overland, un Magazine, and in exhibition catalogues with the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Tandanya and The Power Institute among others. Writing about her practice has appeared in The Guardian (AU/UK), Third Text, New Left Review, The Wire, The Saturday Paper, Artlink, Hyperallergic, The Caravan, Dawn, The Times of India, We Make Money Not Art, and StirWorld among others.

Photograph: Chris Griffiths



Alana Hunt, *A Delicate Balancing Act*
2020-23, 35mm film photographs digitally printed on archival paper, 30cm x 45cm (each) (framed), edition of 5 + AP



Alana Hunt, [A Delicate Balancing Act](#)
2020-23, 35mm film photographs digitally printed on archival paper, 30cm x 45cm (1 of 12), edition of 5 + AP



Alana Hunt, Like bloodthirsty mosquitoes, The Cross Art Projects, 2024, installation view

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Alana Hunt, [A Very Clear Picture](#)
 2021-22, digital print on archival paper, 154 x 109 cm, edition of 5 + AP (details)

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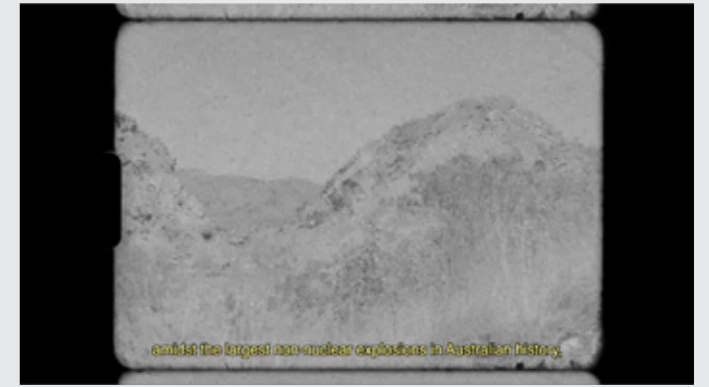
“The hastily scribbled notes of [A Very Clear Picture](#) were produced as Sam Walsh AO, former CEO of Rio Tinto, narrated aloud, over 2hr41m without pause. He read the project summaries of 967 Section 18 applications that sought permission to “destroy, damage or alter an ‘Aboriginal site’ via the WA Aboriginal Heritage Act between 2010-20. Since the legislation came into effect in 1972, over 3300 applications to destroy, damage or alter Aboriginal heritage have been processed. Only around three have ever been declined. Under the guise of protecting Aboriginal heritage this legislation provides a pathway for its destruction. While Sam read, I wrote. Trying to capture a word or phrase from each of the 967 project summaries he read. These notes, and the video Sam’s narration accompanies, paint a very clear picture of colonisation—how everything from large scale mines to seemingly innocuous things like footpaths, jetties and housing estates play a part in this violent nexus of industry, government and settler-life. It is a specific kind of violence, birthed through bureaucratic processes that appear clean on paper, but wreak havoc in the world.”

Text by Alana Hunt. [A Very Clear Picture](#) was produced as part of a residency with the Kimberley Land Council via SPACED’s Rural Utopias program 2020-23.



This is a story about the boat people.

SURVEILLING A CRIME SCENE



Surveilling a Crime Scene examines the materialisation of non-Indigenous life on Miriwoong Country, through the town of Kununurra and its surrounds. The film aligns and overlays what may otherwise seem like discontinuous domains—a dam, tourism, a monument, agriculture, a police station, tortured bodies burned with cigarettes, bureaucratic forms—to produce a silhouette of tools, techniques, and procedures of power and oppression active in Australia today. Surveilling a Crime Scene delivers a gentle yet powerful tapestry of evidence that recognises colonisation not as history but as a continuous and present violence, one that is deceptively ordinary.

Surveilling a Crime Scene was produced with the support of the Copyright Agency's Cultural Fund + The Sheila Foundation's Michela & Adrian Fini Fellowship.



Alana Hunt, [A Very Clear Picture: A Collection of Work, Words and Sources](#)
2023 edition of 3 x two-part folders 800+ pages (installation view)



Alana Hunt, [Surveilling a Crime Scene](#)
2023, printed with midnight blue ink on a risograph by Matthew Van Roden at Split/Shift Press, Larrakia Country,
16.5cm w x 11.3cm h x 1.8cm, 186pp, published October 2023 (first edition) (detail)

Fracking and the Treadmill of Extractivism

Fracking is death by a thousand cuts. Literally: the earth is scarred and desecrated by thousands of drill sites, wastewater ponds and gas transportation infrastructure crisscrossing Country. These cuts are felt first and deepest by First Nations people whose health, sovereignty, ability to access Country and practice culture are destroyed by drilling.

Like the mining industry at large in so-called Australia, the fracking industry is perpetuating what Rob Nixon calls “slow violence”. Former Labor senator Pat Dodson puts it more starkly: “an incremental form of genocide”.

When fracking companies sought permission from Gudanji and Yanyuwa peoples to frack on country west of Borroloola, they allayed the concerns of Traditional Owners by telling them that fracking entailed merely a few “holes the size of the billy cans”. The Northern Land Council’s explanatory documents on the fracking process for consultation meetings with Traditional Owners presented images of lonesome, isolated frack wells. They neglected to inform Traditional Owners that ultimately production involves potentially thousands of frack wells carved out over Country and multiplying like a plague: 200-300 new wells each year for 20-40 years, according to the Northern Territory government’s “Strategic Basin Plan”.

When a shale formation is fracked, all the oil comes out at once, and after the initial surge, production drops right off. Fracked “tight oil” wells have declines in production as high as 70-90% during the first year of operation. For gas producers this presents a daunting financial challenge, since most have to maintain cash flow through sustained production in order to service debt they have acquired to scale up production. This is especially challenging for small players like Empire Energy, fracking near Jack’s Country.

This rapid decline in well productivity requires that more and more wells be drilled in rapid succession in order to keep production levels stable. Industry insiders call this the “drilling treadmill”, which is good for just about no-one - it means increased worker fatalities, increased risks of massive methane leaks and chemical spillages, increased land clearing, increased air pollution, increased destruction of sacred sites, decreased

access to Country and ability to practice culture for First Nations people.

The NT’s extractivist economy is a raw commodity frontier enmeshed in a broader militarist and capitalist economy. It is the drilling treadmill writ large. Recently the NT government has announced a 10-year contract with Texan fracking company Tamboran to purchase Beetaloo gas for consumption within the NT. No one in the affected communities has consented to this full-scale production. This contract mirrors that of the 2006 Henderson Labor government which locked the Territory into buying gas from Italian company ENI’s offshore Blacktip field.

Government agreed to be the first buyer of Blacktip gas to get that project up and running, only to find that supply far exceeded domestic consumption. To get out of that bind, they paid \$800 million on a pipeline from Tennant Creek to Mt Isa to sell the gas to a company there. The pipeline was built in 2018 and the gas from the Blacktip field ran out in 2022. So now, in order to pay off its debt, the Northern Territory Government is opening up another gas field and committing public money to another extractive capitalist venture. The treadmill continues.

As Dan Tout puts it in his [Arena](#) article on the Juukan Gorge destruction: “The reciprocal and mutually reinforcing relationship in which state funding is funnelled back to mining companies in the form of subsidies and infrastructure used to underwrite their unfettered extraction of mineral resources from Indigenous lands is... fundamental. This destructive system of relations results in a ruinous cycle akin to—and indeed entangled with—the spiralling feedback loops of global warming and environmental destruction.”

By The Central Australian Frack Free Alliance

Acknowledgements

History

The first iteration of [Like bloodthirsty mosquitoes](#) was curated by and exhibited at Watch this Space in mid-2024 in Mparntwe /Alice Springs, on the sovereign lands of the Arrernte people. Alana Hunt's exhibition [Surveilling a Crime Scene](#) premiered at the Northern Centre for Contemporary Art in Darwin, in October 2023.

With Thanks

Watch this Space and The Cross Art Projects thank all involved in creating this exhibition especially Jack Green, Alana Hunt and Dr Seán Kerins. The Cross Art Projects thanks Watch this Space Collective (Saar Amptmeijer, Meret MacDonald, Gabriel Curtin), The Central Australian Frack Free Alliance and Katerina Wendl at Waralungku Arts. At The Cross Art Projects, thankyou to Belle Blau, Reiana Aramoane, Ace Bourke, Phillip Boulten and installers Harry Copas and Andrew Haining. Thanks to associate curators Jasmin Stephens and Maurice O'Riordan.

We pay our respect to Gadigal people and all First Nations people globally and stand in solidarity.

Like bloodthirsty mosquitoes Jack Green & Alana Hunt

Curated by Watch This Space Collective and The Cross Art Projects

Opened Saturday 31 August 2024
The Cross Art Projects
Reading by WTS representative Gabriel Curtin, artist Alana Hunt and special guest Dr Tony McAvoy SC

31 August — 28 September 2024

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**LIKE
BLOODTHIRSTY
MOSQUITOES**

**JACK GREEN
ALANA HUNT**

**THE CROSS ART PROJECTS
31 AUGUST — 28 SEPTEMBER 2024**