

TOKKŌTAI

CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIAN AND JAPANESE ARTISTS
ON WAR AND THE BATTLE OF SYDNEY HARBOUR - 75th ANNIVERSARY

20 MAY – 12 JUNE 2017

A MOSMAN ART GALLERY EXHIBITION

Staged in the T5 Camouflage Fuel Tank, Headland Park, Georges Heights, Mosman

MICHELLE BELGIORNO • KEN DONE • JENNIE FEYEN
SUE PEDLEY • MIKU SATO • GARY WARNER

TOKKŌTAI

CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIAN AND JAPANESE ARTISTS ON WAR AND THE BATTLE OF SYDNEY HARBOUR

Tokkōtai: Contemporary Australian and Japanese Artists on War and the Battle of Sydney Harbour is a suite of installations and immersive experiences which acknowledge the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Sydney Harbour.

Seventy-five years ago the birthplace of modern Australia came under foreign attack for the first and only time. On the night of 31 May 1942 three Japanese midget submarines entered the waters of Sydney Harbour – the surprise attack resulted in chaos and panic in the nation's largest and oldest city and left an indelible mark on Australian identity and the course

of our history - twenty one Australian Naval personnel and six Japanese submariners perished in the attack.

To mark the 75th anniversary of this event Mosman Art Gallery has commissioned six Australian and Japanese artists to interpret and respond to this remarkable story. This suite of new and adapted artwork are displayed in the T5 Camouflage Fuel Tank, an industrial scale former naval oil tank, built and camouflaged against Japanese attack during World War II.

Tokkōtai: Contemporary Australian and Japanese Artists on War and the Battle of Sydney Harbour

is firmly placed within the art-making tradition of drawing inspiration from historical narrative and is the first bi-national exhibition that is dedicated to exploring this event. The project is a compelling and culturally sensitive series of site-specific installations and immersive experiences that deal with empire, self-sacrifice, death, destruction and honour. This is a local story for the Mosman community, but one that has broader national and international significance and Mosman Art Gallery is proud of the leading role it is taking in its development.

LIST OF ARTWORKS

Michelle Belgiorno

A Thousand Stitches of Hope, 2017
Site specific installation
Hand embroidered linen, wood, fishing line

Ken Done Attack (series)

The Plan, 2011
Oil on canvas
152 x 122 cm

Farewell, 2011
Oil on canvas
152 x 122 cm

Journey, 2011
Oil on canvas
152 x 122 cm

Sure to Die, 2011
Oil on canvas
152 x 122 cm

Our Mother, 2011
Oil on canvas
152 x 122 cm

No Cause for Alarm, 2011
Oil on canvas
152 x 122 cm

No Entry, 2011
Oil on canvas
152 x 122 cm

Waiting to Attack, 2011
Oil on canvas
152 x 122 cm

Caught in the Net, 2011
Oil on canvas
152 x 122 cm

Red Alert, 2011
Oil on canvas
152 x 122 cm

The Attack I & II, 2011
Oil on canvas
152 x 244 cm

Drowning, 2011
Oil on canvas
152 x 122 cm

Roll of Honour, 2011
Oil on canvas
152 x 122 cm

The Funeral, 2011
Oil on canvas
152 x 122 cm

Jennie Feyen

Sakura and Steel, 2017
HD Video installation
with audio
Duration: 6 mins looped
Cast: Kei Ikeda
Writer & Director:
Jennie Feyen
Cinematographer:
Matt Bedford
Soundtrack:
Ellie Cummings
Editor: Jennie Feyen

Sue Pedley

Orange-Net-Work, 2017
Site specific installation
Fibre, stone, graphite,
ink on paper

Miku Sato

Not the Yellow Submarines, 2015-2017
Single screen video
installation, plastic model,
seawater
Duration: 7 mins, 54 sec

Gary Warner

Orange-Net-Work-Soundings, 2017
Digital audio files,
4 x speakers,
3 x sound sources
Duration: Indeterminate
(random recombination)

MICHELLE BELGIORNO

A THOUSAND STITCHES OF HOPE ARTIST STATEMENT

A Thousand Stitches of Hope is a collaborative art project which involved hundreds of Australian and Japanese women in a conversation about the World War II history of our two countries whilst together stitching relevant motifs onto 75 contemporary, commemorative *senninbari* belts.

The *senninbari* belt was traditionally a good luck amulet given to soldiers before their departure from Japan. Generally made of white cotton, the belts were decorated with 1000 stitches sewn by women, (family and community), as an act of devotion and hope for a safe return. It was believed that the thoughts of all the people who stitched the belt would protect the wearer from harm.

One such *senninbari* belt, belonging to Lieutenant Keiu Matsuo, was found amongst the remains of the midget submarine which was destroyed in 1942 in Taylors Bay Mosman, near my art studio. After the war, the Australian Government returned Matsuo's *senninbari* belt to his mother as an act of reconciliation. As a poet, she responded with several Tanka poems expressing her sadness at the sacrifice and loss of lives on both sides.

In researching my work for the exhibition I was touched by this story; how a simple cotton relic could help build bridges between individuals and nations.

In a series of sewing workshops I invited Japanese and Australian women of all ages to add their stitches and war stories whilst discussing reconciliation and Australian-Japanese history. The communal act of stitching and talking, acknowledging past deeds and expelling anger, sorrow and shame was incredibly moving for many participants.

The stitches and threads became a metaphor for the interwoven stories, lives and connections between our two countries. The 75 beautifully embroidered *senninbari* belts, once cultural relics associated with war and shame, became expressions of hope for continued peace.

The work is part of an ongoing personal artistic exploration of human culture through direct observation as well as through relics, myths and narratives.

For several years my focus has been on the inscrutable culture of Japan, drawing on a deep association that began forty years ago as an exchange student to Tokyo. My recent exhibitions have explored Japanese cultural themes such as tea ceremony, burial rites and ancestral worship.

To see footage and comments of participants from the stitching workshops in both countries please visit www.michellebelgiorno.com.



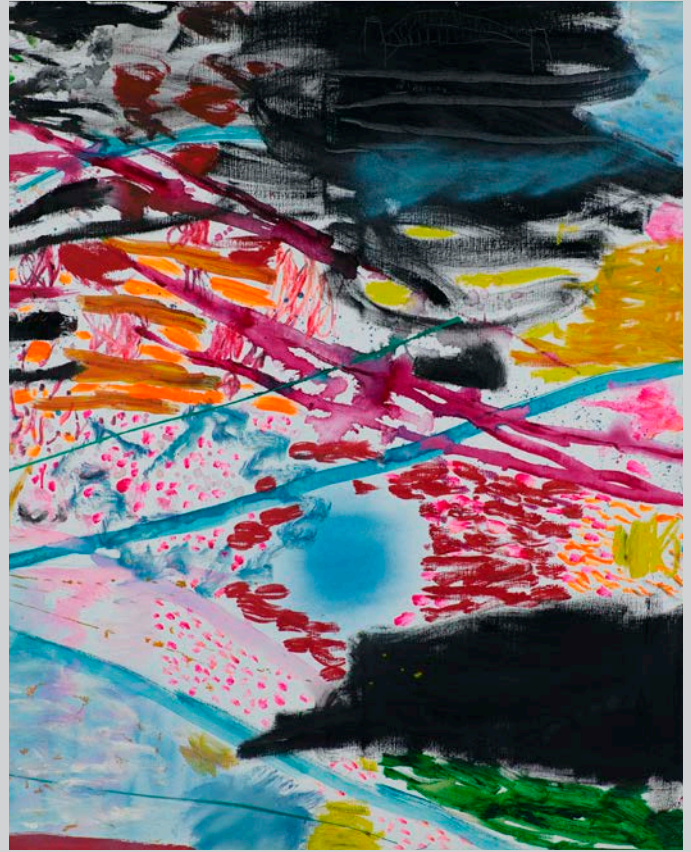
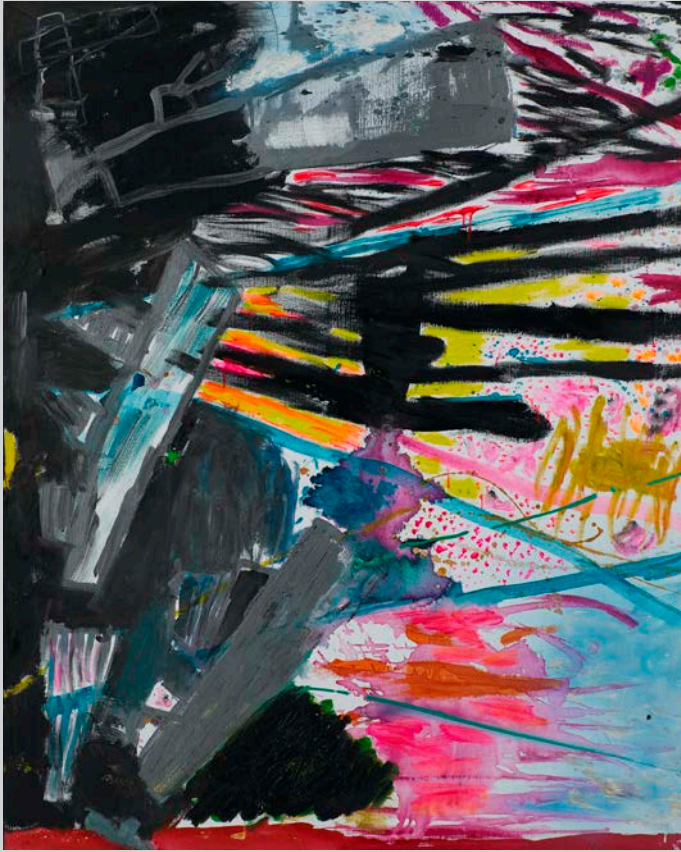
Michelle Belgiorno, photograph by Susie Hagon



A Thousand Stitches of Hope, 2017
Artwork details and workshop image



KEN DONE



ATTACK: JAPANESE MIDGET SUBMARINES IN SYDNEY HARBOUR

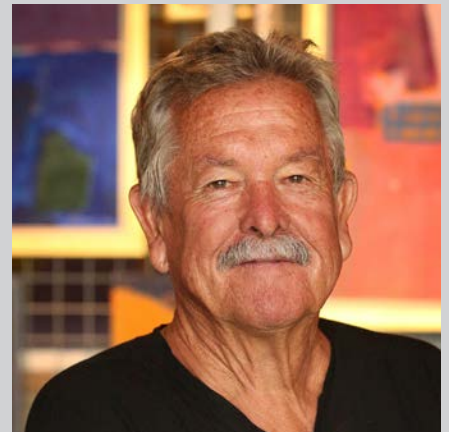
Attack is a series of fifteen large scale paintings that follow the story of the Japanese submariners, from their plan to attack, to the Battle of Sydney Harbour, and finally to their funeral service in Australia with full military honours. The series of paintings was critically acclaimed when first displayed at Mosman Art Gallery in 2012.

ARTIST STATEMENT

I didn't want to glorify war however the courage and valour of these young Japanese submariners is to be respected and admired.

I hope these paintings leave the viewer with some understanding of this passage of Australian history.

It was a great honour and challenge to be given this commission by Mosman Art Gallery.



Ken Done, photograph by Stuart Spence

The Attack I & II, 2011
Diptych, Oil on canvas, 152 x 244 cm

JENNIE FEYEN



SAKURA AND STEEL **ARTIST STATEMENT**

Sakura and Steel is an art film that uses movement and music to explore the events of the Sydney Harbour attack of 1942. It explores the dichotomy of the event; the darkness endured by the submariners and the weight of their attack, and the beauty of Australia honouring the submariners' courage and sacrifice by giving them a military funeral.

Through the movement of one performer, Japanese-Australian contemporary dancer Kei Ikeda, the film explores the emotions and distress felt by the submariners during the attack. As an artist I am drawn to non-verbal performances and the way one's face and body can communicate meaning. Inspired by silent films and visual poems, I wrote and directed the piece and co-choreographed the movement with Ikeda. The atmosphere of the film was created by Matt Bedford's cinematography and Ellie Cumming's original score.

The title of the work is inspired by direct quotes and actions that took place during the event. Rear-Admiral Muirhead-Gould referred to the midget submarines as 'steel coffins' in recognition of the Japanese submariners' bravery, and upon receiving the ashes of her deceased son, the mother of Lieutenant Matsuo scattered cherry blossoms in the water where her son's midget submarine had been located.

Although the Sydney Harbour attack had tragic consequences for both Japan and Australia, *Sakura and Steel* ultimately celebrates the fact that two former enemies have become trusted allies, and continue to strengthen their relationship.

Sakura and Steel, 2017
Still from HD Video installation with audio
Duration: 6 mins looped
Cast: Kei Ikeda
Writer & Director: Jennie Feyen
Cinematographer: Matt Bedford
Soundtrack: Ellie Cummings
Editor: Jennie Feyen



Jennie Feyen, photograph by Dan Gray



Kei Ikeda, photograph by Lauren Daniels

SUE PEDLEY

ORANGE-NET-WORK ARTIST STATEMENT

Orange-Net-Work is a mixed media work. It brings together an orange net made in 2010 in collaboration with a fishing community on the island of Teshima in Japan's Seto Inland Sea; a sound work created with artist Gary Warner; hundreds of stones; and a series of frottages that overlay naval and civilian clothing onto sounding maps of the Seto Inland Sea and Sydney Harbour.

The orange net, based on the dimensions of a nori seaweed harvesting net, was made by the Teshima local community and volunteers from nearby cities. The net became a conduit to form new relationships, pass on stories and share in the tradition of netting. The completed net was then draped over an abandoned house in the village as part of the Setouchi Triennial.

This new work explores an historical link between the use of nets in the Inland Sea and in Sydney Harbour. During WWII an anti submarine boom net was installed in Sydney Harbour, stretching from Georges Heights to Watsons Bay. On the night of May 31st, 1942 three Japanese mini submarines entered the harbour. One became entangled in the net. As a consequence of this attack, six Japanese and twenty one Australian sailors tragically died, but the main impact was psychological, creating greater fear of Japanese invasion in Australia.

The Seto Inland Sea and Sydney Harbour each played pivotal roles in naval strategies during the Pacific War. The Inland Sea was an Imperial Japanese Naval base, harbouring training centres and shipyards. Sydney Harbour was a base for the Royal Australian Navy and a port for US Navy ships.

The frottages depict both naval and civilian clothing. The civilian clothes are all from the abandoned house in Teshima where three generations of clothes had been left untouched for over 20 years. The naval clothes are from the Royal Australian Navy's heritage collection on Spectacle Island in Sydney Harbour, and include a Japanese submariner's jacket donated by the Japanese Midget Submarine Association.

By relocating the orange net and the naval and civilian clothes, placing them within a former military oil tank and enlivening them with sound, the work touches on deep intergenerational hurts and divisions created by war. It also aims to suggest an enduring capacity to recover and heal from these traumas.



Sue Pedley, photograph by Anne Zahalka



Above: Frottage detail from *Orange-Net-Work*, 2017. Ink on paper

Below: *Orange-Net-Work*, in Teshima, Japan, 2010
Sue Pedley wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Mr. Daisuke, Mr Uematsu, Mr. Yamasaka, Anne Ferran, Virginia Hilyard, Peter Mackie, Hao Ngyuen, Mike Ohalloran, Paul Pavlous, Royal Australian Navy, John Perryman and Susan Thompson.



MIKU SATO

NOT THE YELLOW SUBMARINES **ARTIST STATEMENT**

Currently my work involves moving among different cities in order to develop research based projects through engagement and practices with local people in different cultures.

My approach towards the intervals and spaces that exist between the public and private domains, between the active and passive, proposes new perspectives on our society and generates alternative forms of communications among our community.

I start an art project by researching the history and social issues of each place. I then expand on this by selecting a certain theme from my interests and my own experiences. I gather material through workshops of open-source ideas, and people's participatory actions, which guide my project to offer a different point of view on our society. I look at the world through an alternative lens, by creating and participating in different activities (for example cooking with river water or wearing odd socks) that make a statement that is akin to drawing in public.

Here I aim to share my experiences and make new discoveries through my interactions with other people. As a result, my projects are often available for the public to view as both installation and video work.

For the *Tokkōtai* project, the boys depicted in the video are each only 23 years old which is the same age as the youngest of the sub-mariners in the original submarine attack, in the Battle of Sydney Harbour. They represent the countries of Australia and Japan by performing in my video.

The Australian boy is at the beach where the submarine attack occurred in Sydney, and the Japanese boy is at the beach where ashes of the tokkōtai had been returned home, in Yokohama (which is also my hometown in Japan).

The video title also refers to a parallel event in 1966, in which a group of Australian university students painted the original submarine bright yellow in response to The Beatles' song 'Yellow Submarine' when the submarine was displayed outside the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. Their actions are also reflected in my use of this song title as a reference for the relationship between Australia, UK and Japan.

Miku Sato's work has been supported by the ASAHI SHIMBUN FOUNDATION, Japan.



Miku Sato, photograph by Iwako Murakami
Not the Yellow Submarines, 2015-2017
Stills from single screen video installation,
plastic model, seawater
Duration: 7 mins, 54 sec



GARY WARNER

ORANGE-NET-WORK-SOUNDINGS ARTIST STATEMENT

Immaterial sound activates memory, emotion and imagination. Incorporating field recordings I made in Sydney and Kyoto and others made by Sue Pedley on the island of Teshima, *Orange-Net-Work-Soundings* explores the poetic potential of compositional randomness, using three sound sources.

The first represents the idea of machinic confinement - a cramped sonic interior of rumbles, squeaks, grinding and clanks, emerging from a thudding heartbeat that slowly decays to silence. The other two sources represent the flux of psychological and spiritual interiority - memories, desires, fear, determination, pride.

Here, fleeting random alignments of Japanese voices, song and music, nature and everyday life, constantly entwine and dissipate.



Gary Warner, photograph by Joanna Greenwood



Audio production for the Tokkōtai Project
(screen grab detail)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Mosman Art Gallery would also like to thank those project partners who have provided in kind support and funding for the project to be realized, including (staff of): Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, NSW Government - Create NSW, Mosman Council and the ART foundation.

This exhibition has been brought to fruition by the hard work and dedication of the whole Mosman Art Gallery staff. Special thanks go to Hannah Farrell, Jane Hurley, Alessia Kernot, Judi MacLaren, Marian Melham, Michael Neal, Julie Petersen, Yolande Pierce, Anita Toft and Martin Tokarczyk.

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T5 Camouflage Fuel Tank

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Georges Heights, Mosman