Front Cover:

Untitled (SC), 2014, Oil, Charcoal and archival glue on linen, 168 x 140 cm (detail)
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>Sarah Bond</td>
<td>6–9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Jitish Kallat</td>
<td>10–13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay: Towards a Diaspora of Meaning</td>
<td>Dan Rule</td>
<td>14–17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Images</td>
<td></td>
<td>18–25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography: Daniel Boyd</td>
<td></td>
<td>26–27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners</td>
<td></td>
<td>28–29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foreword

Asialink Arts is delighted to be a part of Whorled Explorations, the second edition of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale (KMB). Founded in 2010 by artists/curators Bose Krishnamachari and Riyas Komu, KMB was India’s first and only international biennale and continues to gain global recognition for its distinctive and engaging format.

In 2014, 94 artists from 30 countries were invited to participate across 8 venues at Kochi on the south west coast of India in the state of Kerala. Following his selection by curator and artistic director, Jitish Kallat, Asialink Arts is pleased to collaborate and support Australian artist Daniel Boyd for the 2014 Kochi-Muziris Biennale.

Boyd explores and re-interprets Aboriginal and Australian-European history to create an alternative dialogue between opposing ideas and cultures. Through his painting, history is interrogated and new connections with the present developed. In the painting series produced specifically for the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Boyd employs celestial navigation, historical coins and stories of trade routes between Europe, Africa, India and northern Australia.

Boyd’s participation builds on Asialink Arts’ successful project for the inaugural Kochi-Muziris Biennale (2012) with the performative work of Dylan Martorell. Providing the opportunity for local and international audiences to experience the work of artists such as Boyd and Martorell is central to our core role in enabling international opportunities for artists and curators through cultural and professional exchange.

I extend thanks and gratitude to Daniel Boyd for his commitment to this project, for his considered and exquisite art; to Jitish Kallat for his curatorial vision and continued friendship; to Dan Rule for his thoughtful essay; to Roslyn Oxley and Cassandra Bird from Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery (Sydney) and to Station Gallery (Melbourne) for their assistance. On behalf of Asialink Arts, I would like to acknowledge the support of the Australia India Council in making this project and publication possible. Thanks also to the staff at the Australian High Commission, New Delhi; the Australian Consulate General, Chennai, as well as our program funders, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Australia Council for the Arts whose ongoing support of Asialink Arts makes projects such as this possible.

Sarah Bond
Director Visual Arts, Asialink Arts
89
Introduction

(Sub)versions : Daniel Boyd at Kochi-Muziris Biennale 2014

Jitish Kallat, Curator and Artistic Director, Kochi-Muziris Biennale 2014

The curatorial processes of the second edition of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale titled Whorled Explorations were inspired by two chronologically overlapping, but perhaps directly unrelated historical episodes in Kerala during the 14th to 17th century. This was a time when the Kerala School of Astronomy and Mathematics was making some transformative propositions for locating human existence within the wider cosmos.

It was also the moment when the shores of the historic port-town of Kochi were closely linked to the maritime chapter of the ‘Age of Discovery’, when the maps of the world changed rapidly and within the revised geography we see sharp turns in history, animating the early processes of globalization. Drawing a cluster of images and metaphors from these inaugural thought coordinates, allusions to the historical and the cosmological recur throughout the exhibition. The exhibition draws upon a wide glossary of signs from this legendary maritime gateway interlacing the bygone with the imminent and the terrestrial with the celestial.

Daniel Boyd’s suite of paintings at the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, interweave several remote, yet related strands of thought and imagery into a richly layered portfolio of historical speculations. A celestial navigation chart, historical coins, and appropriations of old paintings, one of which depict the first meeting of the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama with the Zamorin of Calicut, collectively become meditations on early trade, and the complex and conflicted narratives of human contact. It is only fitting that these images come to us obscured in darkness. They seem to re-emerge through an ever-shifting interplay between legibility and illegibility from what appear like tiny constellation of stars in the form of resin dots that recur in much of Daniel’s works. These dots connect Daniel’s paintings to his artistic ancestry in the aboriginal painting tradition of stippling the pictorial surface with dots. The dots are often bearers of symbolic wisdom in the aboriginal paintings; in Daniel’s painting they are greatly re-purposed to exceed their role as pictorial elements and function more as an optical device. The dots are viewfinders to dispense measured portions of information, and it is through a calibrated submersion of images in and out of darkness, that Daniel Boyd achieves subtle subversions of a past from where we might quite literally participate in joining the dots to re-set our view of the present.

Jitish Kallat was born in Mumbai in 1974, the city where he lives and works. His work has been exhibited widely at museums and institutions including Tate Modern, London; Martin Gorpius Bau, Berlin; Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane; Serpentine Gallery, London; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; Hangar Bicocca, Milan; ZKM Museum, Karlsruhe; Arken Museum of Modern Kunst, Copenhagen; MAXXI, Rome; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. He has had one-person exhibitions at museums including Bhau Daji Lad Museum, Mumbai; Ian Potter Museum of Art, Melbourne; San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose; Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago.
12 13

14 - 17

2014

14 - 17

2014
Daniel Boyd: Towards a Diaspora of Meaning
By Dan Rule

The idea of acknowledgement is a loaded one in the context of history painting. In the postcolonialist setting – not to mention a socio-political milieu that has fashioned much of its mythology around tropes of denial – the notion of granting recognition to perspectives other than those underpinning history’s dominant cultural strand is one laden with implications, subversions and potentials.

The work of Daniel Boyd operates very much within this realm. At once a mode of historical and personal enquiry, it is also a means to loosen and expand the parameters of perspective, understanding and the gaze. As much as his paintings, installation and video practice – each of which are characterised by Boyd’s distinctive pointillist technique, where he blackens much of painted surface to leave only a sea of “lenses” that reveal the information beneath – embraces the precedent of history painting, it also picks it apart at the seams. In previous works, idyllic Vanuatu landscapes, scenes and portraits came to form a wider allegory for the denial of Boyd’s own ancestral history, for the Queensland sugar cane slave trade and for Modernism’s contact with the Pacific; where an image of Picasso in a Native American headdress posed questions of Modernism’s acknowledgement and appropriation of supposedly “primitive”.

His paintings forward a kind of diaspora of meaning; they are incubators for a multiplicity of perspectives. It is our job to fill in the dark matter with our own assumptions, cultural baggage, research and privileges of knowledge.

His new series of works is no exception. Across a suite of three large paintings and a smaller diptych, Boyd weaves connections between early Portuguese and Dutch explorers, India’s spice trade, celestial navigation, Vanuatu and remote Arnhem Land – and in the process, offers new potentials for a way of thinking about not just the region, but history as it has been told. In one painting, we witness Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama meeting the Zamoran of Calicut in Kochi in 1498, though the work offers a different, less rose-coloured set of perspectives on the foundation of spice trade. Amid the gaps in information, we’re led to consider da Gama’s questionable practices in the region and the whitewash of mythology. A diptych, meanwhile, pictures two Dutch East India Company coins found off the coast of Arnhem Land, Australia – not dissimilar to those da Gama demanded of Sultan of Kilwa when holding him to ransom – questioning the lineages and realities of European contact and our continent’s latent connections to the spice trade pre-“discovery”. A vast painting of a celestial chart whispers of early navigation, of the means used to enact early trade and the colonial push.

In any case, Boyd’s paintings remain speculative and herein lies their strength – they offer a new reading not just of history, but of the historical device. History as discourse – as narrative and mythology – has little place in his wider approach. History as time – as the unfathomable multiplicity and specificity of perspectives across time – however, is a central tenet. If the lenses that pock Boyd’s paintings are flashes of historical representation, then the dark matter is the profound multiplicity of details and perspectives that inform its potential reading.

Dan Rule is a writer, critic, editor and publisher from Melbourne, Australia. He is a longstanding visual art critic for Melbourne newspaper The Saturday Age, a design and architecture columnist for The Age, the editor of Vault magazine, the co-editor of Composite Journal and has written on art, design and music for publications including i-D, Dazed and Confused, Oyster, TOO MUCH, The Sydney Morning Herald, The Big Issue and countless others. He is the co-director of Perimeter Books, Perimeter Distribution and Perimeter Editions, for which he has edited and written several books on contemporary artists from Australia, the United States and Europe. Perimeter Editions is in the midst of developing a major new book on Daniel Boyd, due for release in early 2015.
ഫലകിലോ ചിലവും:
(ഫലകിലോകാലിന് സീനിയോളിക്സ്)

16 17
Top: Durbar Hall, Ernakulam, Kerala. Courtesy of Kochi Biennale Foundation.

Above: *Untitled (ZVC)*, 2014, Oil, charcoal and archival glue on linen, 198 x 300cm

Previous Page: *Untitled (SC)*, 2014, Oil, Charcoal and archival glue on linen, 168 x 140 cm (detail)
Untitled (PSM), 2014, Oil, charcoal and archival glue on polyester, 190 x 190cm

Daniel Boyd installation at Durbar Hall, Ernakulam. Courtesy of the Kochi Biennale Foundation.
Daniel Boyd lives and works in Sydney, Australia. Since 2005 Boyd has been exhibiting both nationally and internationally. He is widely recognised for his work which reinterprets Aboriginal and Australian-European history, often re-appropriating classical portraits of colonial icons such as Captain Cook, Governor Phillip and King George III. Boyd interrogates history to create a dialogue between opposing ideas and cultures.

In 2014 Boyd was awarded the Bulgari Art Award. He has participated in biennales in Moscow, 2014; Melbourne (TarraWarra), 2014; Brisbane (Asia Pacific Triennale of Contemporary Art), 2012; as well as the inaugural national Indigenous Art Triennial at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2007. Other group exhibitions include: Post-Picasso: Contemporary Reaction, Museu Picasso, Barcelona, 2014; Debil Debil, curated by Marcia Langton, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Sydney, 2013; Bungaree: The First Australian, curated by Djon Mundine, Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney, 2012; Octopus 9: I forget to Forget, curated by Stephen Gilchrist, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne, 2009; Culture Warriors, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2007; If you see something say something, Gallery 4A, Sydney, 2007. Boyd's work is held by National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney; Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Museum of Australian Democracy, Canberra; Natural History Museum, London; as well as numerous private collections.
Asialink Arts

Asialink Arts is a multidisciplinary arts organisation based at The University of Melbourne, Australia. Asialink Arts operates nationally and internationally to generate new models and platforms for cultural exchange. Partnering with organisations throughout Asia and Australia, we undertake touring exhibitions, residencies, research and special projects. The Exhibition Touring Program develops contemporary projects of Australian art and provides opportunities for artistic exchange and development.

Kochi-Muziris Biennale

Established in 2012, the Kochi-Muziris Biennale seeks to invoke the latent cosmopolitan spirit of the modern metropolis of Kochi and its legendary past, Muziris, to create a platform that introduces contemporary international visual art theory and practice to India, to showcase and debate new Indian and international aesthetics and art experiences and enable a dialogue among artists, curators, and the public. It is a project in appreciation of, and an education about, artistic expression and its relationship with society.
Acknowledgements

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**Locations**
1. Durbar Hall Art Gallery
   Daniel Boyd
2. David Hall
3. Parade Ground
4. Vasco Da Gama Square
5. Kashi Art Cafe
6. Calival Yard
7. Aspinwall House
8. Pepper House

**Ernakulam**
Mantacherry
Willingdon Island
Fort Kochi Beach
Fort Kochi
Marine Drive
Vembanad Lake
Ponjikarra
Murikumpadam
Vembanad Lake
Kochi