

Contemporary Fine Art

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INGO KLEINERT – ARTIST STATEMENT

It is often said that history is written by the victors. History is never conclusive, finite or static. It requires our continued questioning, investigation and reflection. To quote Paul Beatty from *Sellout*, 'History isn't the paper it's printed on. It's memory and memory is time, emotions and song. History is the thing that stays with you.'

This group of four cabinets is based on 19th century collector's cabinets and secretaires. The cabinets, together with the texts inscribed on each, reference contemporary and historical issues relating to Australia's Indigenous people, landscape and culture. In so doing the cabinets aim to bring to mind nearly 250 years of colonial history and continued relationships and responsibilities to the land.

The Darwin Cabinet (2014) is based on Australia's earliest dated piece of furniture made by James Packer (a convict craftsman) in 1815. The cabinet was inspired by Roger McDonald's book *Mr Darwin's Shooter*. The 24 (empty) drawers are engraved with the names of now extinct or endangered Australian parrots.

The Banks Cabinet (2015) is based on 19th century campaign secretaires and incorporates within the secretaire a secret drawer. The text inscribed on the writing tablet is one of the earliest recorded comments describing the landscape of Australia's east coast. It was written by Sydney Parkinson, artist on the HMS Endeavour on James Cook's first voyage on 27 April 1770: 'The country looked very pleasant and fertile; and the trees, quite free from underwood, appeared like plantations in a gentleman's park.'

The Baudin Cabinet (2016) is based on a 19th century collector's cabinet and secretaire and has a secret drawer in the base. The text is from the journal of Nicolas Baudin's expedition to the southern part of Van Diemen's Land on 13-17 January 1802: '...the friendliness between them and our men became so great, and confidence on either side so firmly established, that they all started dancing together'.

The History Cabinet (2017) is a contemporary design with a nod to the past. The cabinet refers to relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people: past, present and future.