

Contemporary Fine Art

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#### JAMES TYLOR – ARTIST STATEMENT

The Un-resettling series is a self-experimental exploration project of re-learning and practicing traditional Indigenous cultural practices in contemporary society that have been lost due to European colonisation of Australia. European colonisation has had a massive impact on Indigenous cultural practices since 1788. This hand-coloured photographic series attempts to re-explore and restore these lost traditions.

Historically the loss of traditional practices occurred due to the Westernisation of Indigenous people and culture by the British and Australian governments. Cultural loss first begun when the Indigenous people were removed from their traditional lands and were segregated to Christian missions and government reserves where traditional indigenous cultural practices were forbidden. The Australian government's assimilation policies from 1901-1967, including the Stolen Generation, was a major contributing factor in the loss of knowledge and traditional practices.

Since the 1967 referendum that included Aboriginal people as Australian citizens, Indigenous people from communities across Australia have been actively working to continue or regain lost knowledge and restore traditional practices. In some cases individual and communities have to overcome challenges imposed by Australian Government policies and laws that hinder access to land and the ability to freely practice traditional culture in contemporary society.

As a young Australian with Indigenous ancestry I feel that it is extremely important to learn, understand, practice and teach indigenous culture. In this self-experimental exploration project, I have attempted to re-learn some traditional practices from oral discussions, language, drawings, paintings, photographs, historical journals and publications. Re-learning these practices has given me a deeper understanding of Australian history, the environment and my ancestors' cultural practices but most importantly a great understanding of my own Indigenous identity.

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