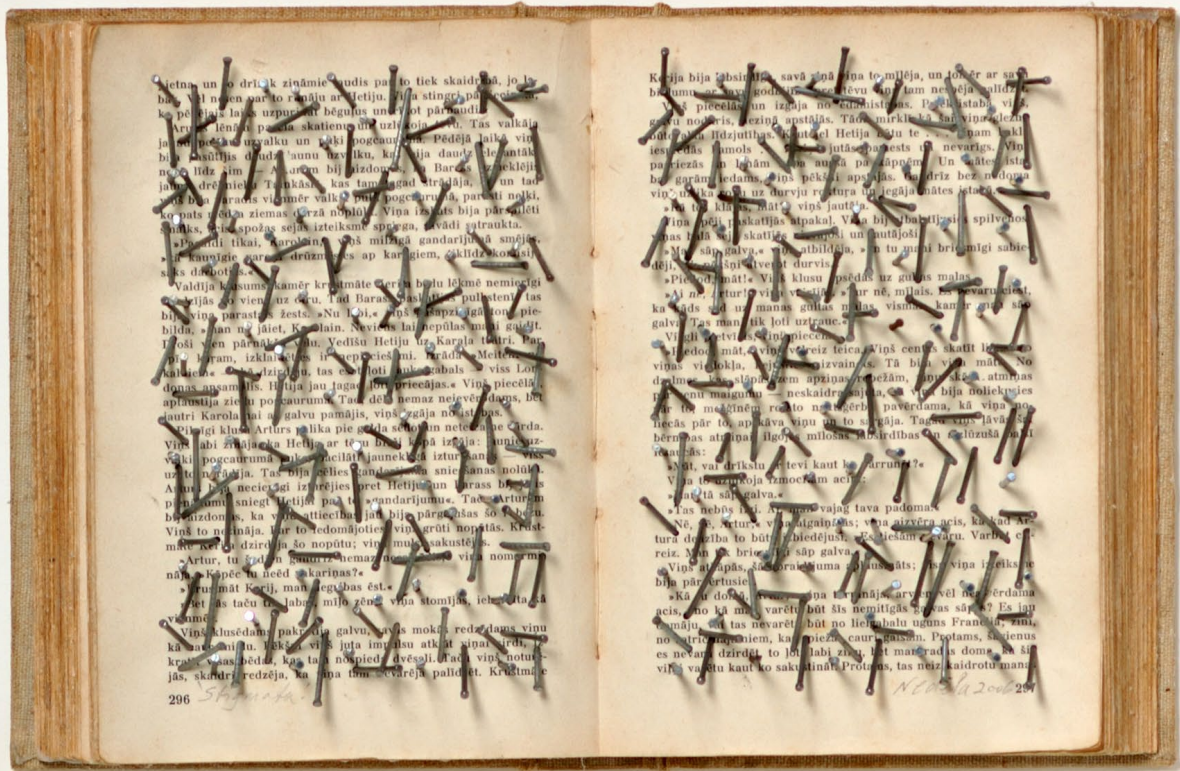


# RECYCLED LIBRARY

## Altered books



Jānis NEDĒLA *Stigmata* 2005.  
Nails, book. 40.0 x 50.5 cm.  
Collection Artspace Mackay,  
Mackay Regional Council.



An Artspace Mackay Touring Exhibition

# Education Resource



# RECYCLED LIBRARY

## Altered books

An Artspace Mackay Touring Exhibition

### Education Resource

*Recycled Library: Altered books* is the sixth touring exhibition developed by Artspace Mackay and the first to focus on an aspect of its own collection of artists' books. The Mackay Regional Council Collection of artists' books was started by the Mackay City Library in the late 1980s and was transferred to Artspace Mackay when it opened in 2003. Since then, it has grown to become the third largest collection of artists' books in Australia after the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra and the State Library of Queensland, Brisbane.

The works in *Recycled Library* are all playing on, and questioning, the collective response we have towards 'the book'. Since we were old enough to distinguish between fact and fiction we have been introduced to books that are presented as facts to be learnt or kept as reference material. However, history is written by the victorious and new advances in micro-technology are changing our understanding of ourselves and even our origins.

Many of the works in this exhibition explore the reliance on the printed text as a vehicle for cultural migration. Some question the presumed knowledge that accompanied the first settlers to Australia about history, philosophy, science, literature and even art that predominantly derived from their Anglo-Celtic culture. Many of the artists represented in *Recycled Library* come from vastly different cultures, bringing new histories and customs, while others are spending extended periods away from Australia and coming to terms with their 'outsider' status.

This Education Resource kit contains reproductions of works by 9 of the 17 artists represented in *Recycled Library*. These full-colour reproductions have an explanatory text on the back as well as primary and secondary school activities.

Primary and secondary students are encouraged to develop their knowledge, interpret symbols, analyse meanings, understand other cultures and reflect on the relevance of this material to their daily lives. Each page has a discussion, a looking and a research activity or question tailored to either upper primary or secondary level.

**For more information on *Recycled Library* and other Artspace Mackay initiatives, visit [www.artspacemackay.com.au](http://www.artspacemackay.com.au)**





Marion BORGELT *Cryptologist's memoir No. 18* 2004.  
Book, beeswax, oil & ribbon. 38.7 x 57.5 cm.  
Courtesy of the artist. © Marion Borgelt/Licensed by Viscopy, 2009

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# RECYCLED LIBRARY

## Altered books

**Marion BORGELT** *Cryptologist's memoir No.18* 2004.  
Book, beeswax, oil & ribbon. 38.7 x 57.5 cm.  
Courtesy of the artist. © Marion Borgelt/Licensed by Viscopy, 2009

Marion Borgelt was born in Nhill, Victoria, Australia in 1954 and studied at the South Australia School of Art, Underdale College, South Australia and New York Studio School. She has lived in New York, (1979-80), Paris, France, (1989-97) and currently lives in Sydney.

Marion Borgelt's *Cryptologist's memoir* series, 2004-7, was inspired by a newspaper article about the death of Yang Huanyi in September 2004 at the age of 98. She was the last living person fluent in Nushu, a secret women's written language in China that was over a thousand years old. It was believed to have been invented by one of the Emperor's concubines in the Hunan Province of Southern China and passed down from mother to daughter in the form of poetry and feminine advice often disguised as patterning in embroidery. During a time when women were not permitted to be educated, and unable to read or write their own thoughts and feelings, they communicated with each other through messages written on embroidered gifts.

Over the past few decades, Marion Borgelt has been developing her own visual language influenced and inspired by scripts and decorative motifs from many sources including ancient Celtic, Indian and Polynesian cultures. Choosing a broad selection of books, Borgelt has carved into the pages and into the recessed areas she has, sculpted in beeswax, two letters/symbols, one turned 180 degrees from the other, and painted in oil using a limited pallet of black, white and red. She comments that this series "is about hidden language, a language literally hidden inside books and also hidden in terms of its signs and symbols being indecipherable."

### Primary

#### Discussion

Why do you think Marion has depicted one of the symbols, in each set of two, upside down?

#### Looking

Look at the symbols Marian has created. Do they remind you of letters and symbols from our modern English language?

#### Activity/Research

Create your own 'secret language' by inventing three letters for a secret alphabet all of your own. Draw these three letters in separate squares on a sheet of paper. Use only the colours black, white and red in your designs.

### Secondary

#### Discussion

What does a Cryptologist do?

#### Looking

Why do you think Marion has embedded this 'secret language' into the middle of existing books?

#### Activity/Research

Research what it was like to be a woman living in the Hunan Province of Southern China 1000 years ago. Who was the Emperor at this time?



**Jayne DYER** *A Reading 3* 2008. Digital print on aluminium. 198.0 x 120.0 cm. Image from The Reading Room installation, Elizabeth Bay House Museum, Historic Houses Trust of NSW, 2007. Courtesy of the artist. © Jayne Dyer/Licensed by Viscopy, 2009.

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# RECYCLED LIBRARY

## Altered books

**Jayne DYER** *A Reading 3* 2008. Digital print on aluminium. 198.0 x 120.0 cm.  
Image from The Reading Room installation, Elizabeth Bay House Museum, Historic Houses Trust of NSW, 2007. Courtesy of the artist. © Jayne Dyer/Licensed by Viscopy, 2009

Jayne Dyer was born in Melbourne, and studied at RMIT, Melbourne, before moving to Sydney in 1995. She has exhibited widely throughout Australia and Asia and since 2008 she has been living and working in Beijing, China.

Jayne Dyer's work comments on both the shortcomings and potential power of the library. A library is imperfect as a repository of all knowledge and ideas but when restricted and available only to the few, it is a source of political and social power.

In 2007, Dyer was one of three artists invited to make installations in Elizabeth Bay House, Sydney, the home of the English gentleman, Alexander Macleay, who arrived in Sydney in 1826 to take up the post of Colonial Secretary of New South Wales. In an upstairs room of the now empty library, famous for its vast collection of Natural History books, she filled the doorway with an assortment of second-hand books giving the impression that the whole blocked-off room is full of publications spilling out of the doorways. We are unable to enter the room or open the books although we are permitted to read a few titles and the occasional open page. This work, *A Reading 3* 2008, suggests the danger of too much information.

### Primary

#### Discussion

Picture yourself standing in front of this doorway. What do you think would happen if you tried to take one of the books out of the doorway?

#### Looking

Can you read some of the titles of the books in the doorway? Do you think most of these books are fiction or non-fiction?

#### Activity/Research

This photograph of Jayne Dyer's work was taken at Elizabeth Bay House, which was once the home of an English gentleman who came to live in Sydney, Australia in 1826. What do you think this house is used for today? See if you can find some photographs of Elizabeth Bay House on the internet. Draw a house plan of what you think the inside of Elizabeth Bay House was like in the 1820s.

### Secondary

#### Discussion

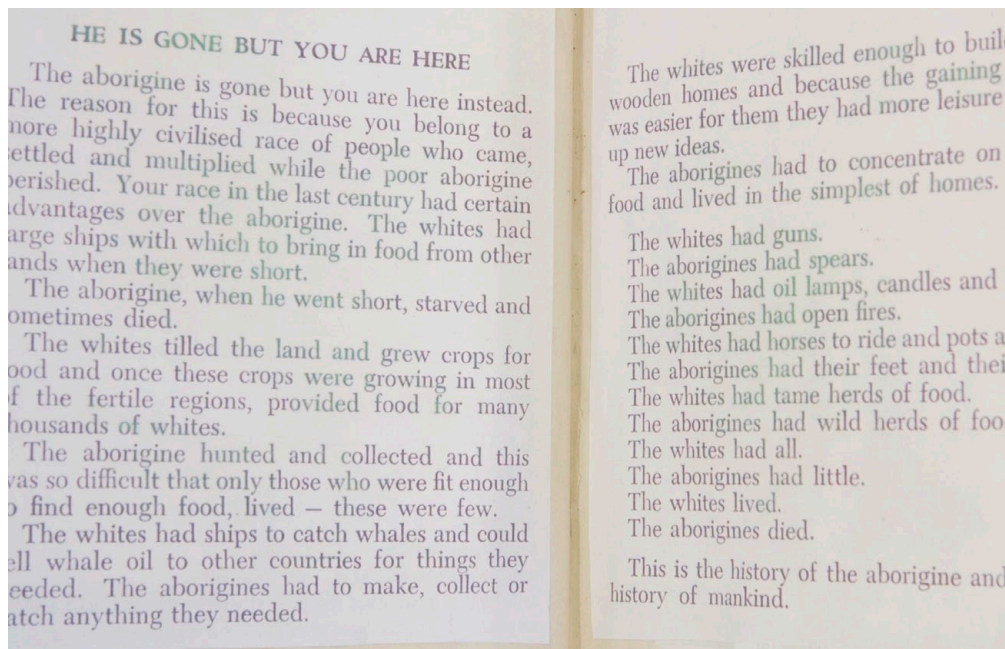
The work *A Reading 3* was originally created in a doorway in Elizabeth Bay House in Sydney, as part of an installation project. As a private residence in the 1800s, the home's library was famous for its collection of Natural History books. How accessible were books like this in the 1800s?

#### Looking

*A Reading 3* is presented in the exhibition as a large-scale photograph. Do you think this work would have the same impact if had it been shown as a smaller photograph?

#### Activity/Research

Collect some second-hand, discarded hard-cover books and create your own free-standing sculpture from them. Think about the message you want to convey by considering the type of books collected, their size & colour, whether you show them open or shut, or whether you paint them all a solid colour. Do these books share select information or do they shield their knowledge, hiding facts or secrets?



**Julie GOUGH** *A half hour hidden history reader* 2007.  
 Collage & hand-writing on white paint over existing text.  
 21.3 x 15.7 x 2.0cm. Collection, State Library of Queensland

*Included in the exhibition at Artspace Mackay, Gladstone Regional Gallery & Museum, Grafton Regional Gallery and Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery only.*

# RECYCLED LIBRARY

## Altered books

**Julie GOUGH** *A half hour hidden history reader* 2007.  
Collage & hand-writing on white paint over existing text.  
21.3 x 15.7 x 2.0cm. Collection, State Library of Queensland

Dr. Julie Gough was born in Melbourne, Victoria, in 1965 and completed her Visual Arts degree at Curtin University, Western Australia. Dr Gough's works have been seen in many exhibitions around Australia, and are held in significant public collections. She received her doctorate in 2001 from the University of Tasmania, Hobart, and currently resides in Townsville, Queensland.

Julie Gough's work *A Half Hour Hidden History Reader* 2007, was inspired by finding a second hand copy of "The Tasmanian History Readers-4 Royal School Series" issued by the Education Department in Hobart and discovering inside an abridged history of Britain. Gough whited out the greater part of each page and in her own hand wrote an alternative 'Tasmanian History' in 14 short chapters that can be read in 'a half hour'.

The opening chapter "How white people came to take our isle" consists of two pages from a book "Our Isle. An outline for students" by D.A. Williams. This excerpt is a chapter headed 'He is gone but you are here' and consists of a horrific 'justification', based on assumptions of racial superiority, of why there are no longer any Tasmanian Aborigines. The remaining hand-written chapters recount tales from the artist's family history, centred on an indigenous teenage girl who worked as a domestic servant for an early settler family and an incident when she was shot by her master, who was supposedly aiming for a possum.

### Primary

#### Discussion

Julie Gough has changed this school history book by painting over the pages with white paint and inserting her own text. What other ways can you think of to change an existing book?

#### Looking

Can you still read some of the original text in this book? Does it relate to the words Julie has written into the book?

#### Activity/Research

Find a second-hand, old book and change/alter it in some way. You can do this by tearing out some text/pages, hiding some text with paint or inserting your own drawings and photocopied images into the book.

### Secondary

#### Discussion

The original book in this artwork is an old text book for schools in Tasmania. Do you think the same text book would be relevant in today's classrooms? Discuss as a group.

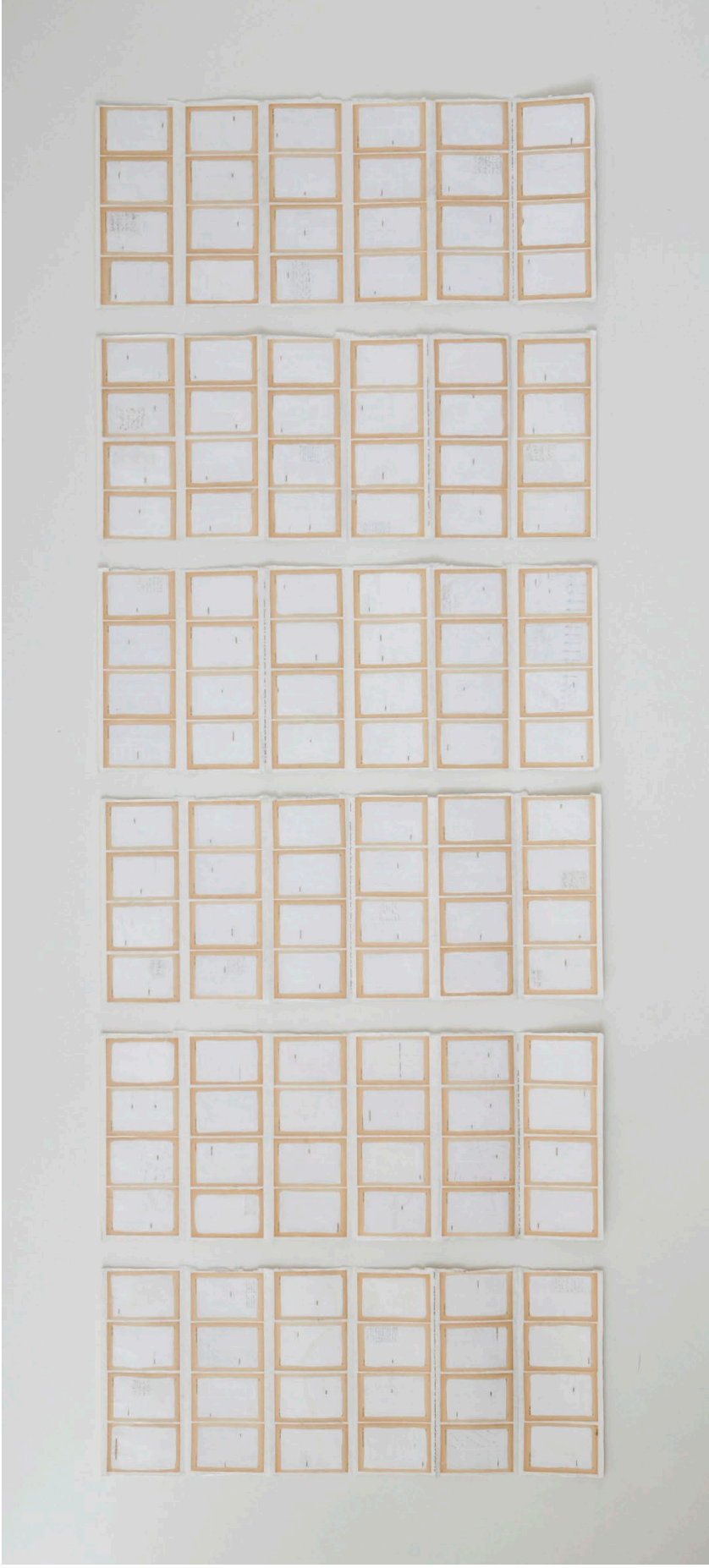
#### Looking

Would this work have the same impact if all of the original text in the book was covered?

#### Activity/Research

Truganini, who died in 1876, was widely regarded as the last full-blooded Tasmanian Aborigine. The story of her life and death remains immensely important and is a symbol of the plight of Indigenous Australians. Research the life of Truganini and, in ten sentences, write a short 'history' of her life.





**Liz JENEID** *Book for a journey* 2002. 6 panels using recycled thesaurus pages, gesso Thai paper, ink, muslin. 138.0 x 390.0cm. Courtesy of the artist.  
© Liz Jeneid /Licensed by Viscopy, 2009.

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# RECYCLED LIBRARY

## Altered books

**Liz JENEID** *Book for a journey* 2002. 6 panels using recycled thesaurus pages, gesso Thai paper, ink, muslin. 138.0 x 390.0cm. Courtesy of the artist.  
© Liz Jeneid /Licensed by Viscopy, 2009.

Liz Jeneid was born in Australia in 1936. Her work has been exhibited throughout Australia and she has undertaken many residencies, including going twice to Antarctica. She is currently Honorary Fellow in the Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong, and lives in Mt Kembla, New South Wales.

Liz Jeneid's *Book for a Journey* 2002, is about making journeys and was made for a particular journey. This large work was made for the exhibition 'Paperworks 2002 Ino' at the Ino Town Paper Museum, on the Japanese island of Shikoku. 132 pages from a Thesaurus are pasted onto six panels, each folded like a traditional Orihon style manuscript so that they can be hung like scrolls on the wall. Every page of the Thesaurus is painted in white gesso all over with the exception of a single word related to travel or travelling. The single words are read in the order each viewer chooses as they scan the painted surface creating a different haiku each time. As if it had been used as a traveller's sketch book, Jeneid has drawn rough sketches over the gesso on some pages and added quotes about travel to each panel. Tiny squares of rough gauze marked with ink suggest hurried written notes or perhaps little secrets.

### Primary

#### Discussion

What is a Thesaurus? What can it be used for?

#### Looking

Find 5 words you like in Liz Jeneid's work and tell these to a friend.

#### Activity/Research

Create your own travel journal. Fold and staple together some pages to make a small booklet. Make sketches about a journey you have recently taken and write a single word on each page to describe your journey.

### Secondary

#### Discussion

The artist Liz Jeneid suggests that the words in this work can be read in the order each viewer chooses. In English, we tend to read from left to right, top to bottom. How do you think this work may have been read whilst it was on display in Japan?

#### Looking

This work was made especially for an exhibition at a paper museum on the Japanese island of Shikoku. In what ways do you think this exhibition influenced the work? Think about this in terms of media, format, colour, texture and line.

#### Activity/Research

A haiku is a type of Japanese poem that is also popular in the English language. A haiku usually consists of three lines of up to 17 syllables, with the first line containing 5 syllables, the second containing 7 syllables and the third containing 5 syllables. Write your own haiku, with a travel theme.



**Yvonne KENDALL** *Learning to read again #5* 2004.  
Book, crepe paper, newspaper, string. 25.0 x 24.0 x 9.0cm.  
Collection Artspace Mackay, Mackay Regional Council.

# RECYCLED LIBRARY

## Altered books

**Yvonne KENDALL** *Learning to read again #5* 2004.  
Book, crepe paper, newspaper, string. 25.0 x 24.0 x 9.0cm.  
Collection Artspace Mackay, Mackay Regional Council.

Yvonne Kendall was born in Birmingham, England in 1965. She studied sculpture at the Victorian College, Prahran Campus, and completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1987. She has exhibited widely throughout Australia and Europe, and currently lives and works in Germany.

Yvonne Kendall's *Learning to read again* series, 2004, is concerned with language and cultural communication. Participating in an art 'blind date' in 1997, Kendall was paired up with German artist Henning Eichinger for a German/Australian collaboration project. After a successful collaboration by correspondence she was invited to Germany in 2000 to give a workshop and is still there now, married to Eichinger and living with their young child in Reutlingen.

At one level *Learning to read again* is a simple expression of the frustration of adjusting to a world where everyone speaks a different language. However, beyond our empathy for the artist's personal experience, we may differ in our response to the symbolism of 'the brain' and 'the book'. The brain is our centre of consciousness and represents our personal identity, thinking, learning, intellectuality and the rational as opposed to the emotional. Molded in Papier-mâché, it is literally made from the same substance as the book it is oozing out of. The book can be read as a symbol of the German language the artist is striving to master but could also represent German culture and society in general or even the sum of all knowledge as recorded in books.

### Primary

#### Discussion

Have you ever found it difficult to communicate your feelings and ideas to someone? Perhaps they spoke a different language to you? This is what the artist had in mind when she made this altered book. Do you think she has communicated her idea well in this work?

#### Looking

What is the brain in this work made out of?

#### Activity/Research

Make a small book in the shape of a brain (fold and staple together some sheets of paper and cut into the shape of a brain) and fill it with words about 'communication' (listen, read, talk, write, speak, whisper etc.).

### Secondary

#### Discussion

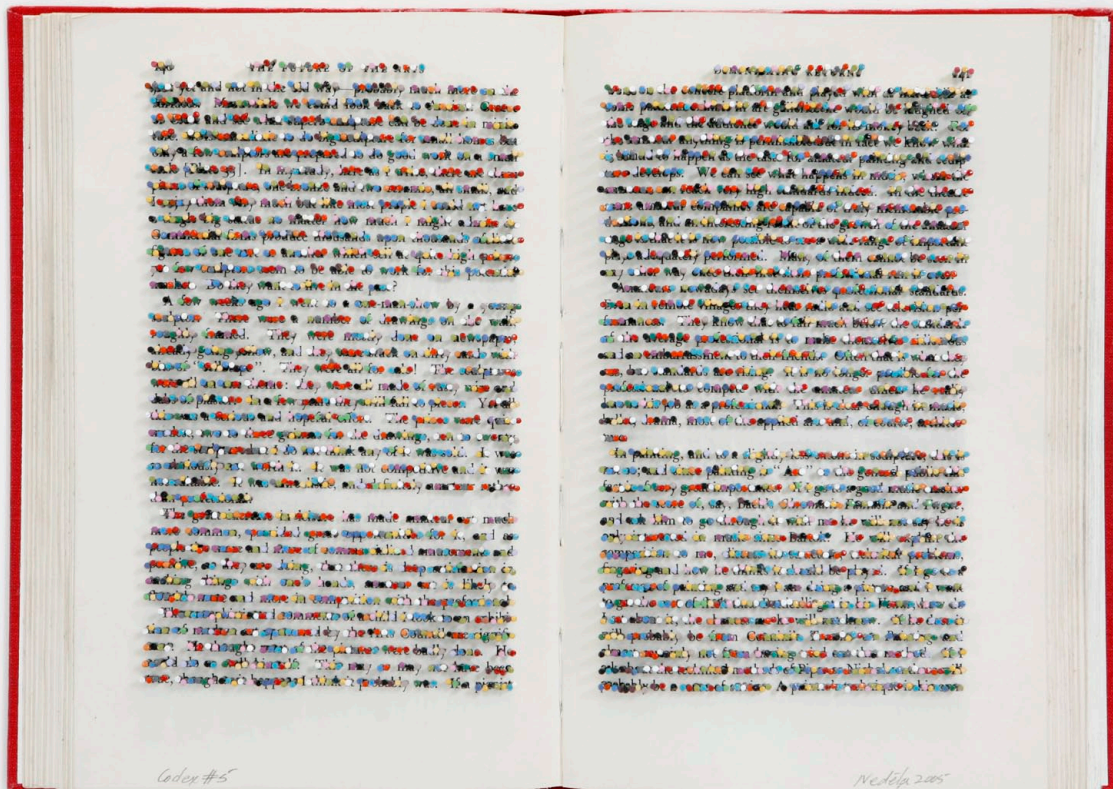
Discuss the title of this work, *Learning to read again*. Do you think this is an apt title for the work? Would you be able to decipher what this work is about without knowing the title?

#### Looking

What language is this book written in?

#### Activity/Research

Using wire and Papier-mâché, create a 'hand' sculpture from the pages of an old book (hint: you can use your own hand as a mould for your sculpture by wrapping the wire frame around your hand). Instead of painting it white, leave the text from the book visible on your sculpture.



Jánis NEDÉLA Codex No.5 2005. Nails, acrylic paint, nail varnish, book. 40.0 x 50.5cm. Collection Artspace Mackay, Mackay Regional Council.

# RECYCLED LIBRARY

## Altered books

**Jánis NEDÉLA** *Codex No.5* 2005. Nails, acrylic paint, nail varnish, book. 40.0 x 50.5cm. Collection Artspace Mackay, Mackay Regional Council.

Jánis Nedéla was born in Albany, Western Australia, in 1955 and studied at Perth Technical College and Curtin University of Technology, Western Australia. He currently lives in Fremantle, Western Australia.

In *Codex No. 5*, Jánis Nedéla has almost completely obscured the English text of a book by sticking coloured pins into each letter, coded so that each letter is replaced by a specific colour. The code is less obvious in other works from the *Codex* series, 2005 – 2006, where different coloured pins are stuck into the first or last four words of each page, revealing the rhythm of printed words on typeset pages and accentuating the length of certain words.

Jánis Nedéla has always been fascinated with the patterns and structures of the printed text. As a schoolboy growing up in Albany, WA, he got into trouble at school for defacing his books. In 2003 and 2006, he visited Riga, Latvia where his parents were born and discovered that the language he had learnt from his parents' books sounded old fashioned to the modern Latvian ear. His parent's culture and language had been frozen in time while their country's culture and language had continued to evolve and change.

### Primary

#### Discussion

The artist Jánis Nedéla is interested in the way the text on a page makes a pattern. Can you see these patterns more clearly if you squint your eyes?

#### Looking

What colour pin is used for the letter 'T'?

#### Activity/Research

Create your own code. Write the letters of the alphabet along the top of a page and create a 'code' for each letter underneath it. Use a different coloured dot or create a symbol for each letter. Then, write out a sentence using your new code.

### Secondary

#### Discussion

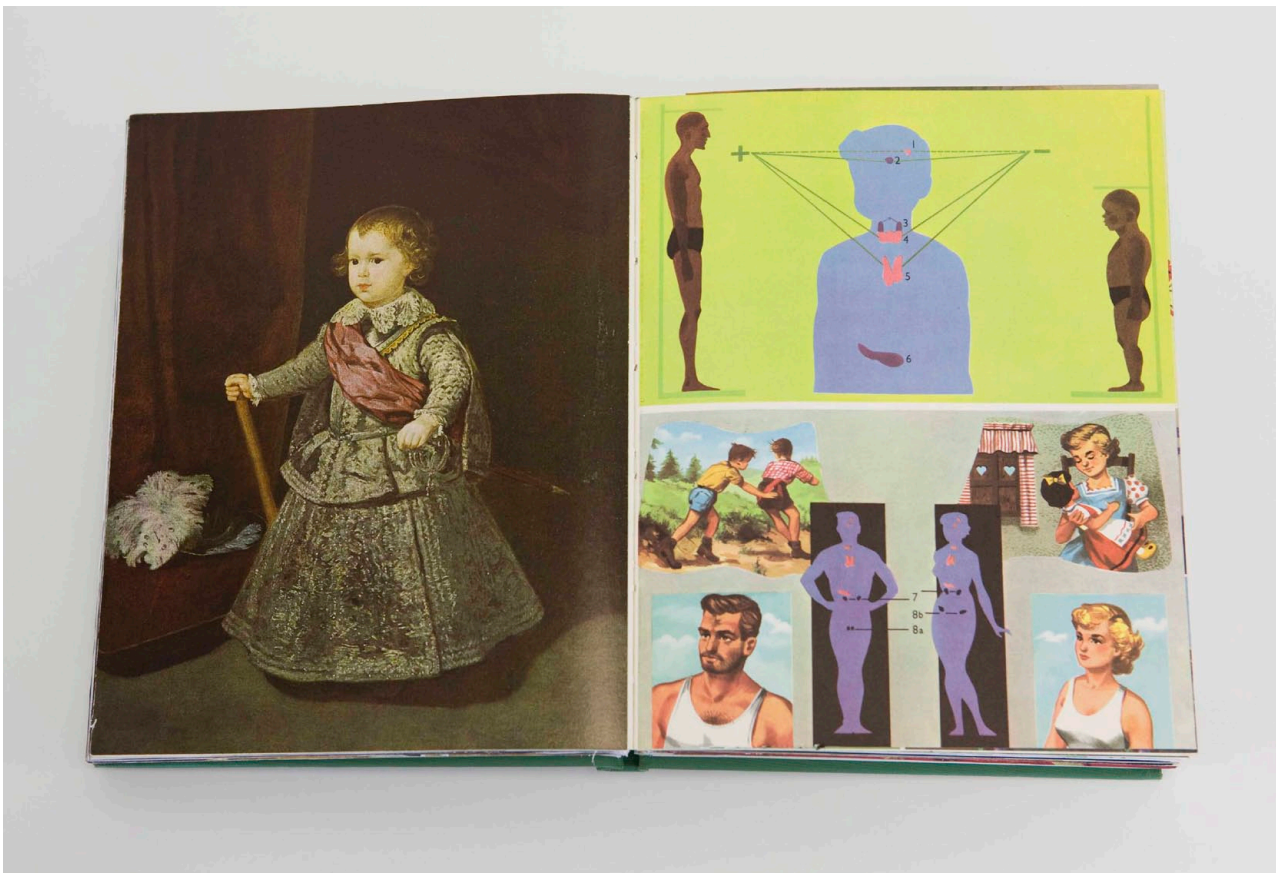
The artist Jánis Nedéla is interested in the rhythm of printed words on typeset pages and has accentuated this rhythm by tracking it with a 'code' of brightly coloured pins. Does this make the pattern created by the type easier to see or not?

#### Looking

If you were to re-create the word 'water' using the artist's code, what coloured pins would be used and in what order?

#### Activity/Research

Create a painting or drawing that only uses letters/text in the composition.



David SEQUEIRA *Life and all its marvels* 2007.  
Book, digital prints collage. 24.5 x 39.0cm.  
Collection Artspace Mackay, Mackay Regional Council

# RECYCLED LIBRARY

## Altered books

**David SEQUEIRA** *Life and all its marvels* 2007.  
Book, digital prints collage. 24.5 x 39.0cm. Collection  
Artspace Mackay, Mackay Regional Council.

David Sequeira was born in New Delhi, India, in 1966. He is currently a doctoral candidate at RMIT, Melbourne. David's work has been exhibited widely in Australia and overseas, including in New Delhi, New York, Constantinople and Bandung, Indonesia. He currently lives in Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.

Altered books have become increasingly popular as a craft practice, an extension of scrapbooking, and this is evident in the growing number of sites on the World Wide Web and do-it-yourself publications on the market. In 1769, the Rev. James Granger published a "Biographical History of England", deliberately leaving blank pages for the reader to collect and paste in suitable illustrations. This practice, known as Grangerism, expanded in the Victorian Era as readers applied this extra-illustrating to other books.

David Sequeira is playfully continuing this tradition in his book *Life and all its marvels* 2007. However, instead of adding illustrations to accompany the text, Sequeira has totally obscured the text with reproductions of portraits from throughout the history of European art and interspersed with photographic portraits of himself. 'Life and all its marvels: Plant, Animal, Human' is a single volume children's encyclopaedia, published in 1960 and illustrated with colourful graphic images rather than photographic reproductions. The illustrations are on the right hand pages and appear with no text so that, by obscuring the text on the left hand pages, the illustrations are like graphic puzzles as opposed to their intended function of complementing the text. For Sequeira, this work recalls a childhood memory, before learning to read, of looking at his father's World Book Encyclopaedia, purchased shortly after arriving in Australia.

### Primary

#### Discussion

The artist recalls a childhood memory of looking at his father's 'World Book Encyclopaedia', which was purchased shortly after they arrived in Australia from India. What is the first book you remember reading/looking at?

#### Looking

The original of this book had text on the left hand side to accompany the pictures on the right hand side. What do you think the original text might have said?

#### Activity/Research

Find two second-hand children's books with lots of illustrations. Make an altered book by cutting out illustrations from one book and pasting them into the pages of the second book. Create interesting collages by combining the illustrations from these books.

### Secondary

#### Discussion

Do you think this artist would describe this artwork as 'serious' or 'whimsical'?

#### Looking

In what era do you think the original encyclopaedia was produced? How does it differ from the encyclopaedias of today?

#### Activity/Research

Research the practice 'Grangerism'. Who is this named after? When was this practice popular?





**Kylie STILLMAN** *Black pine* 2005. Carved books.  
37.0 x 28.0 x 22.0cm. Courtesy of the Artist and  
Utopia Art Sydney.

# RECYCLED LIBRARY

## Altered books

**Kylie STILLMAN** *Black pine* 2005. Carved books.  
37.0 x 28.0 x 22.0cm. Courtesy of the Artist and  
Utopia Art Sydney.

Kylie Stillman was born in Australia in 1975. She studied painting at RMIT and graduated with Honours in 1999. Since then, Kylie's work has been exhibited throughout Australia and she undertook a residency in Milan in 2006. Kylie now lives in Melbourne, Victoria.

Kylie Stillman is an artist deeply concerned with the natural environment. The notion of recycling old books offsets some of the concern we might have about the destruction of trees to feed our love of books. This concern for the destruction of trees is evident in the stacked book work *Black Pine* 2005, where the negative 'ghost' of a tree is carved into a whole set of books.

Other works in the exhibition depict birds exquisitely carved into the pages of books. Like negative sculptures, the birds are rendered in negative space. These are not images of birds, or even stuffed birds, but rather the space left after the bird has gone. More and more species of birds are becoming extinct because of climate change and human destruction of the natural environment and perhaps future generations will only be able to see some of these species reproduced in books.

Many of Stillman's works are carved from discarded editions of law books or old sets of encyclopaedias that have been replaced by regularly updated and revised editions. This environmental waste also questions our reliance on the book as an accurate record of our knowledge, laws and culture.

### Primary

#### Discussion

What is the link between the 'missing', carved tree in this work and the books it is made from?

#### Looking

How many books has the artist used to create this work?

#### Activity/Research

Make a three-dimensional tree sculpture using old newspapers. Roll newspapers together to form the trunk of the tree and cut in leaves and branches at the top.

### Secondary

#### Discussion

The artist Kylie Stillman is making a strong statement about the state of the environment in this work. Discuss this as a group.

#### Looking

How did the artist make this work? Did she join the books together before carving the tree?

#### Activity/Research

Research the type of trees used to produce paper pulp. Where in Australia are most of these trees grown?



**Hossein VALAMANESH** *Open Book* 1993. Paper, binding ribbon. 48.5 x 52.0 x 12.0cm. Courtesy of the artist. © Hossein Valamanesh/Licensed by Viscopy, 2009.

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# RECYCLED LIBRARY

## Altered books

**Hossein VALAMANESH** *Open Book* 1993. Paper, binding ribbon. 48.5 x 52.0 x 12.0cm. Courtesy of the artist. © Hossein Valamanesh/Licensed by Viscopy, 2009.

Hossein Valamanesh was born in Tehran, Iran, in 1949. He emigrated to Australia after completing his degree in Fine Arts. He has exhibited extensively in Australia and abroad, including Tokyo, Berlin, Madrid, Singapore, Taipei, Bangladesh and Lahore, Pakistan. His work is held in many public and private collections. Hossein has also undertaken residencies in Asia and Europe, and he now lives in Adelaide, South Australia.

Hossein Valamanesh was born in Iran and trained as an artist there before immigrating to Australia. The prevailing themes in his work, of self-knowledge and the path to enlightenment, are influenced by Persian Sufism and particularly the 13th century Sufi poet Rumi.

In Valamanesh's work *Open Book* 1993, he has not altered an existing book but rather he has altered the conventional format of a book. He has created a self portrait by shaping the binding and blank pages of his book so that, when open, it forms an outline of his head. The pages of *Open Book* are blank, free of all extraneous thought and open to the potential of all knowledge. Now living in Australia, Valamanesh plays on our notion of an 'open book' as someone who is easily 'read.'

### Primary

#### Discussion

In this book by Hossein Valamanesh, the pages have been left blank. Imagine what kind of story might fill this book.

#### Looking

What shape does this book make when it is open?

#### Activity/Research

Draw a self-portrait. Give this drawing a title that describes your personality.

### Secondary

#### Discussion

What does the saying 'an open book' (in relation to a person) mean?

#### Looking

What is the significance of the pages being left blank?

#### Activity/Research

Research the Sufi poet Rumi and find a poem that inspires you. Create an artwork based on this poem.