

# mandyQUADRIO

TEXT

words Harry De Vries

In Mandy Quadrio's *Look Out! Colonisation, 2023*, binoculars serve as a physical aperture through which to make evident the symbolic structures and logics of colonialism that haunt today's Australia.

The binoculars pierce a veil of steel wool which droops and pools under pendulous weight. Steel wool recurs in Quadrio's work— a tactile symbol of the violent "scrubbing out" of Indigenous culture across Australia; a ubiquitous part of our day-to-day life, an abrasive violence upon which rests the status quo. Here, the weight of the massed steel wool blocks out light from the gallery's only window. These endemic legacies of violence can totally envelop our frame of reference.

At first it seems the binoculars pierce this veil, allowing the viewer a peek beyond this legacy. But we can't overlook the colonial connotations in binoculars as well. These devices mark a particular attitude towards seeing— particularly seeing land, or Country— that we take for granted.

Binoculars are mapper's tools, rangefinders for artillery-men, surveyor's tools to help translate land into terms of value and money; they were built for purpose, and when you have a hammer anything can be a nail. Quadrio's work reminds us that remaining in the comfortable reference frames of our colonial past permits, at best, a highly curated view of the world to come.

Which of course begs the question: how do we escape? Quadrio's metaphor of scrubbing-out implies the leaving of trace scratches. The impacts of colonialism are everywhere: but mapping them out is the first step to charting what lay beneath.

BIO

Mandy Quadrio is a Trawlwoolway woman and her ancestral Countries are Tebrakunna, north-east Trouwunna/ Tasmania, and the Oyster Bay nation of eastern Trouwunna. As a Brisbane/Meenjin- based artist her art practice uncovers personal and cultural landscapes that address great inaccuracies in Australian history.

[www.mandyquadrio.com.au](http://www.mandyquadrio.com.au)

Schmick Contemporary acknowledges the land on which we operate as unceded and we pay our respects to past, present and emerging elders of the Eora Nation.

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