

# Canal to Creek

WestConnex

Transurban

THE WESTCONNEX PUBLIC ART PROGRAM



VADEA  
NSW

VISUAL ARTS & DESIGN  
EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION

# JASON WING

BUTU WARGUN | STAGE 5 WORKSHEET



Jason Wing  
*Butu Wargun*



## CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION

**VOCABULARY** - multi-disciplinary, stenciling, graffiti, street art, colonialism, motif, public art, poly-cultural, reconciliation, large-scale, mural, surreal, fluorescent, dynamic, representational, semi-abstract, abstract expressionism, graffiti, contested

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK - ARTIST

Jason Wing is a Sydney based artist of both Chinese and Aboriginal heritage. Born in 1977, Wing's formative years were spent immersed in Asian cultures in the western Sydney suburb of Cabramatta. Wing began as a street artist and has since expanded his practice to incorporate photo media, installation and painting. He is a highly regarded contemporary, multi-disciplinary artist who works with communities to create large-scale, site-specific, public artworks.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK - ARTWORK

**Butu Wargun** is a significantly **large-scale**, outdoor **mural** work that incorporates **surreal, fluorescent** colours that are bold and **dynamic**. Subject matter is both **representational** and **semi-abstract** against the highly **abstract expressive** nature of the background. Bird figures are transparent and ghostlike, flying in chaotic formations that evoke a battle. The sheer scale of the work and the fact that it spills out over other buildings and the foot-path make it an unavoidable and immersive artwork. The artwork is displayed on the retaining walls of the M5 motorway in South Western Sydney between Bexley North and Beverley Hills. It was commissioned for the WestConnex Public Art Program – Canal to Creek.

**Butu Wargun** is an historical narrative work that connects to the site. It celebrates Pemulwuy the Rainbow Warrior and his war of resistance against colonial settlers. Pemulwuy is represented by the dominant birdman motif and he was a very important Bidjigal man of the Eora nation in the late 18th century because he led the Aboriginal campaign of resistance against the colonising forces. He did this by using the Cooks River as a major artery for connecting clans and transporting warriors - an incredibly important site-specific history showing this Bidjigal hero in context. The concept is of Pemulwuy 'popping up' unexpectedly and being everywhere at once.

## CULTURAL FRAME

Follow this link to learn more about Pemulwuy - <https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/pemulwuy>

**Explain who Pemulwuy was and how he contributed to Aboriginal history around colonisation. Why is it important for us to know about him and what he did?**

## POSTMODERN FRAME

**Butu Wargun** challenges and questions Aboriginal history in relation to contested land. The story of Pemulwuy and his role in resistance fighting against the colonial forces is evidence of contested land ownership.

**Butu Wargun** invites audiences to question mainstream beliefs about colonisation.

**Contested** means that the Aboriginal people fought for the land that they lived on prior to colonisation. **How has Wing demonstrated that the land was fought for? What evidence is there in the visual properties of the artwork?**



## STRUCTURAL FRAME

Within *Butu Wargun*, Wing has chosen to create a **graffiti** design that incorporates his stencilling practice. Vibrant colours, shapes and forms represented throughout this work are scattered strategically to create movement. These elements are supported by principles of unity, repetition and balance within the composition in order to communicate a strong historical narrative. Wing has developed a series of stencils that reflect the forms and shapes of birds, in full flight, throughout the space and they are the strongest symbolic motif in the work. These birds symbolically represent the Aboriginal warriors that fought alongside Pemulwuy as part of the resistance against the colonising forces. Pemulwuy is specifically represented by the Crow because legend has it that he escaped incarceration by turning into a crow and flying away.

**Explore what makes this artwork so dynamic and visually engaging?**

**What other qualities would birds represent in context to this story?**

**Describe how has Wing created a sense of movement and chaos in this work?**

The movement and chaos suggest a battle scene. How has Wing evoked a sense of battle?



### EXTENDED INVESTIGATION

**Explain how site can influence the intentions and choices of artists.**

**Explore how artworks pose alternative histories and why this is important.**

## ARTMAKING TASK

Jason Wing has explored the history of the site his artwork is to be displayed. For your artmaking, you will be creating an artwork that represents a factual story from history that impacted the local Aboriginal group in your area. Research on the internet for stories of early colonial history and its impact on the local Aboriginal people. Alternatively, you can watch this clip explaining the known facts of the first fleet landing (6mins) - [http://www.workingwithindigenoustralian.info/content/History\\_2\\_60,000\\_years.html](http://www.workingwithindigenoustralian.info/content/History_2_60,000_years.html)

1. Identify the key figures in your historical narrative and explore how they might be symbolically represented
2. Collect images that represent these figures - either literally or symbolically
3. Collect the following items to create your own stencil design: paper, pencil, scissors or stencil knife, acrylic paint, paint brush, non-toxic spray paint (minimum 2 colours), tape, canvas board, face mask
4. What mood will you want to create in your work - choose a colour palette that will communicate that mood. Prepare your background using these colours.
5. Watch this video clip - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSNvXI-wVdw>
6. Tape your stencil into place on the canvas board
7. Ensure you are in a well-ventilated area and cover the surface you will be painting on. When you are ready, put on your face mask.
8. Spray the stencil - allow to dry. Repeat as many times as you want with different colours and different shapes
9. Experiment with light coats and more opaque coats. Consider not completing the whole object



### EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Go to [Photopea.com](http://Photopea.com) (an interactive photomedia application online) and build a mural design using photographs of your site and editing them with found images from the internet.

Work as part of a group to design a larger work that could be displayed in the school grounds or local community. Working with your teacher or other adult, make connections with the local Aboriginal groups to share stories and ideas as part of a mural project that presents inclusive views of history and local stories.