

24 August 2021

### **First Nations photography through a new lens**

The work of three contemporary Aboriginal photographers will be contrasted with stark historical images of First Nations people in a new State Library of Queensland exhibition opening 28 August.

*Viewpoints: Contemporary Aboriginal photography* explores the experiences of Indigenous communities across Queensland from two very different perspectives.

The contemporary photographs taken by Michael Aird, Jo-Anne Driessens and Naomi Hobson, are markedly different from the historical photos taken by non-Indigenous photographers that are held in cultural institutions around the world.

Michael Aird explains in his book *Brisbane Blacks*: "The camera is the tool of a dominant society; the powerful photographing the oppressed."

This exhibition celebrates new narratives and Indigenous representation and identity in contemporary photography.

Sombre historical images of Aboriginal people are contrasted with contemporary photos of places and spaces, community leaders and identities, joyful children, pivotal events, and everyday moments.

Curator Georgia Walsh said the contemporary photographs reflect a new approach to photography in Indigenous communities.

"These contemporary images give voice and agency to Aboriginal people," she said.

"They show the diverse experiences and vitality of proud First Nations people through a respectful lens."

#### **Quotes from Minister for the Arts Leeanne Enoch:**

"*Viewpoints: Contemporary Aboriginal photography* is a powerful exhibition showcasing the work of three Queensland artists who work in the medium of photography.

"Naomi Hobson, Michael Aird and Jo-Anne Driessens present images with a meaningful focus on the representation of Aboriginal people in contemporary Australian society.

"The exhibition elevates First Nations perspectives and interpretations, engages in storytelling and acknowledges the diverse customs, traditions, and our shared history.

"State Library plays an important role in strengthening the way to a more inclusive and respectful future in line with the Palaszczuk Government's commitment to *Tracks to Treaty*."

**Quotes from State Librarian and CEO Vicki McDonald AM:**

“State Library is honoured to be able to display the work of these three contemporary photographers.”

“The *Viewpoints* exhibition is part of our commitment to First Nations truth-telling and is an opportunity for all Queenslanders to reflect on the past while embracing an exciting inclusive future.

“At the heart of their work is a desire to involve Aboriginal people in the creation and custodianship of contemporary stories for future generations.”

*Viewpoints: Contemporary Aboriginal photography* exhibition

28 Aug 2021 – 13 Feb 2022

Open daily 10am–5pm | Free entry

Philip Bacon Heritage Gallery, level 4 | State Library of Queensland, Cultural Centre, South Bank  
[slq.qld.gov.au/viewpoints](http://slq.qld.gov.au/viewpoints) | [#slqViewpoints](https://twitter.com/slqViewpoints)

**Media kit:** <https://spaces.hightail.com/space/pgCweUDRcY>



**Media enquiries**  
State Library of Queensland Communications team  
[media@slq.qld.gov.au](mailto:media@slq.qld.gov.au)  
(07) 3840 7897 | 0401 997 553

Interviews and images are available upon request.