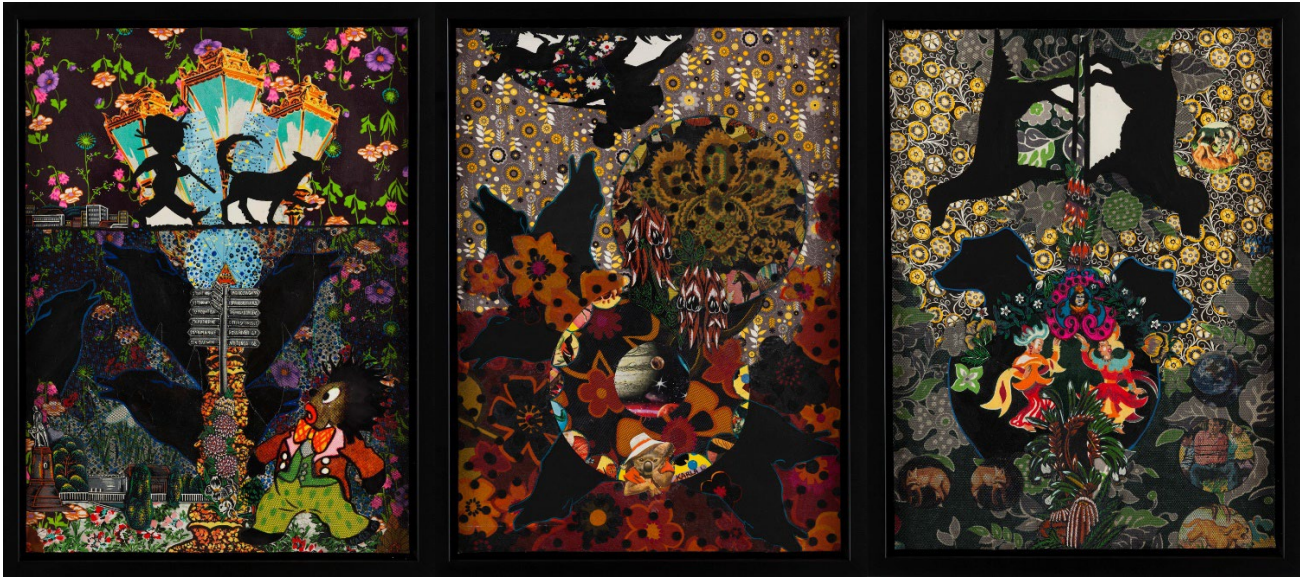


Artist: **KARLA DICKENS**



**Karla Dickens** (b. 1967, NSW) *Black dog series*, 2013, Found fabric, pencil, synthetic polymer paint and adhesive on board, Drawing, 67 x 49 cm, left *Walking the Dog*, centre *Howling Comrade*, right *Dancing Hounds*

#### About Karla Dickens

Karla Dickens makes art about Australian history and personal experience. Most known for her assemblages and collages, Dickens, a Wiradjuri woman, is keenly aware of the power of objects and her chosen materials to speak about issues of great significance, across cultures. By choosing real found images, cut out of old books for example, or by using historical objects in her installations, the social history and human handling of the things, create an intimate and direct narrative beyond art.

In works such as these three collages from the 'Black Dog' series, Dickens deftly manipulates found textiles to touch on stories about contemporary Aboriginal identity, sexuality and mental health, underpinned by her concerns about the continued whitewashing of Australia's past. The Black Dog may, through the common slang, represent depression, or it might be more generally a black haunting. (Artbank <https://www.artbank.gov.au/contact/sydney#search> )  
<https://www.karladickens.com.au/>

#### Information from the artist

*With my art I talk about my personal experiences. I don't set out to make political statements....I am political simply because I am who I am – a single mother, a lesbian, a First Australian.*

#### Key Concepts

Self-reflection, mental health issues, aboriginality, sexuality, feminism and motherhood.

#### Art Studying

Look at the three artworks pictured above.

How has Dickens used material, texture and images in a symbolic way?

What do you think she wants to convey through these motifs?

Additional: Watch this video from Art Gallery NSW [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11FWgfcz\\_SM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11FWgfcz_SM) (4:45 mins)

#### Artmaking

Try making an entire artwork by arranging only old materials, these could be items of clothing you no longer use that have certain memories attached to them and images cut from magazines you once read.

How can you put these things together to tell your own personal story?

Why may have these things been important to you? Perhaps they had some significance that you hadn't recognised until now, why is this? What do the memories surrounding these motifs tell the world about your personal story?