

**Artist**
**Ken + Julia Yonetani**

*Murray River Yabbies*, 2011  
*Murray River Salt*, 2011 Edition of 3  
 Diameter 33cm


**Information from Ken and Julia Yonetani**

*Still Life: The Food Bowl* is made from this groundwater salt. It draws on the still life genre as an artistic tradition that emerged as current agricultural practices were being developed, bringing new food produce to the tables of a rising European bourgeois class. The themes of consumption, luxury, vanity and mortality portrayed in these early paintings are re-enacted in this installation, now made entirely from salt.

The stark white salt works bring focus to the **environmental** cost of agricultural production and connect with the historical associations of salt—as a powerful, sacred substance that maintains life by enabling food preservation, but also induces the death of ecosystems and the collapse of empires. Salt becomes a metaphor for the rise and fall of civilizations throughout history, and the issues of **environmental decline**, climate change, and food security that face us on a global scale today.

(Ken + Julia Yonetani in conversation with Cash Brown, *STILL LIFE: THE FOOD BOWL*)

**Studying**

- Working collaboratively Ken + Julia Yonetani explore the complex relationship between humans and the natural environment. Increasing awareness of the human impact on the land and issues of **environmental decline** and **degradation** using salt as a material and **metaphorically** to symbolise the death of the landscape.
- Research the impact of food production on the Murray-Darling basin (also known as Australia's 'food bowl') and **environmental degradation** caused by rising saline levels in groundwater.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wxsiMvrc4M8>.
- Australian artists Lauren Berkowitz, Raquel Ormella and The Slow Art Collective promote a social message to preserve and protect nature. Research how their practice considers sustainability and the environment.  
<http://www.laurenberkowitz.com.au/>  
<https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/258.2013.a-c/>  
<https://www.slowartcollective.com/>

**Making**

Create an artwork that raises your own concerns for the impact of humans on the environment. Choose an issue you feel most passionate about and how your artwork can be used to inspire greater public awareness. Use waste paper or plastic containers.