

Mohamed Bourouissa



Introduction

Born 1978 in Blida, Algeria
Artwork Title: *Brutal Family Roots*, 2020
Artwork Location: Cockatoo Island

Preceded by a long immersion phase, each of Mohamed Bourouissa's projects builds a new, enunciated situation. Unlike simplistic and false media constructions, the artist reintroduces complexity into the representation of the margins of hypervisibility.

Bourouissa's work revolves around notions of power and the mechanisms at play in contemporary society. One form of power remains that of control: control of information, control of bodies, control of territory and language. Bourouissa's work explores notions of migration, appropriation, territory and language, using the modern history of the acacia plant, electronic music and the poetry of rap. Bourouissa is interested in language and history.

Bourouissa's work puts into perspective the story of the Australian acacia – imported into Algeria – with the semantic history of a local Australian language. This language is used to tell a global story, usually told in English, that resonates with colonial and migratory histories shared by both countries.

Bourouissa's work utilises the musical genre of rap as an artistic mode throughout the installation. Rap has its own story. It's a music that has its origins in American Blues, a music that has developed uniquely in different parts of the world, re-appropriated by different populations and communities. Bourouissa brings all of these material and conceptual threads together in a large-scale, sonic installation at Cockatoo Island.

Mohamed Bourouissa, *Brutal Family Roots*, 2020, mixed-media installation with audio, acacia and carpet. Commissioned by the Biennale of Sydney with generous support from the Oranges & Sardines Foundation, and assistance from the Ambassade de France en Australie, and the Council for Australian-Arab Relations of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. This artwork was created through an artist residency at the Bundanon Trust. Courtesy the artist; Kamel Mennour, Paris; and Blum and Poe, Los Angeles Audio collaboration with Jordan Quinqueret, Nardean and MC Kronic.

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Inquiry questions

- What is the difference between something imported and something that is native to a place?
- Have you ever travelled to another country and been reminded of home? It might have been something in the natural environment, or meeting someone from the same place as you. How did this make you feel?
- Think about where your ancestors have come from and list five things that characterise the place they have come from.

Creative learning activity

Identify three plants that are not native to Australia.

1. Choose one plant and research where it comes from originally, and how it spread throughout the world.
2. Write a poem or rap about the plant you selected.

Reflection

- Were you surprised about how many plants are not native to Australia?
- Do you have any of these plants in your garden?

Extension

- Choose another country in the world and find some plants that have been imported to it.

Can you find any that exist in Australia?

Under what conditions does the plant thrive?