

biennaleofsydney

Kaylene Whiskey

Kaylene TV, 2023

Mixed media installation

Courtesy of the artist, Iwantja Arts and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery

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Commissioned by the Biennale of Sydney and the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain with generous assistance from the Australian Government through Creative Australia, its principal arts investment and advisory body.

Education Resource (7-12)



*Kaylene Whiskey working in the Iwantja Arts studio, Indulkana SA
Courtesy of the artist and Iwantja Arts. Photo: Iwantja Arts*



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Overview

Each of Kaylene Whiskey's paintings, uniquely coloured and featuring a two-dimensional comic style alongside the 'dot' iconography of the Central Desert, is a celebration of her Anangu culture. As she works, Whiskey listens to rock 'n' roll, country and pop music, while the TV plays films or NITV (the National Indigenous Television channel) in the background, all of which she absorbs into a uniquely joyful body of work.

Whiskey moves effortlessly between comics, canvas, Saturday morning cartoons, and landscape with a versatility that is particularly striking in *Kaylene TV*. Newly commissioned for the Biennale of Sydney, it is the first of her works produced on such a large scale. Inviting audiences into a giant TV, the work points to how media and entertainment influence our contemporary, post-television-era lives.

Featuring human-size cut-outs of icons such as singers Cher and Dolly Parton, as well as Whiskey's own hybrid Black superheroes, kungka kunpu (strong women), in an ensemble cast, *Kaylene TV* is singularly delightful. At a time when all screens seem to be overflowing with stories of crisis, corruption and chaos, Whiskey's insight into her own sparkling world, lived proudly on Country, makes space for a playfulness and spirit.



*Kaylene Whiskey and her work, taken on Country in Indulkana SA.
Courtesy of the artist and Iwantja Arts. Photo: Iwantja Arts*



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Discussion Questions



Kaylene Whiskey working in the Iwantja Arts studio, Indulkana SA
Courtesy of the artist and Iwantja Arts. Photo: Iwantja Arts

Whiskey's work draws heavily on **Pop Art** traditions whilst also situated in the movement of **Desert Painting** from the **Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands**.

How would you normally describe the **characteristics**, **themes** and **subjects** of Pop Art?

What was the **social context** from which it arose?

In what ways does **Whiskey's context** depart from traditional Pop Art? How might Desert Painting and Pop Art **complement** each other?

(women) across cultures are a theme in Whiskey's work and she often places them in **remote desert community landscapes** alongside First Nations women.

Strong powerful kungkas

What might Whiskey be communicating through this **recontextualisation** of her idols?
How has art been used in the **Feminist movement**?
How important are First Nations women's voices in the **fight for gender equality**?

Practical Activities

Whiskey often paints classic characters in new ways, including Black Wonder Woman, who appears in many of her works. She also places people in remote desert communities.

Choose an idol of your own and paint them in a new context. Consider how the contrast might intrigue an audience. What might your idol bring to this new environment? What might the environment or new surroundings offer them?

Portraiture can often be seen as quite a serious and austere artform. Whiskey's works are playful, joyful and often humorous.

Create a portrait of someone of your choosing and fill it with life and energy. Try to capture their positive qualities and convey a sense of joy and excitement using tools from the Pop Art movement.

