





Installation photographs of *Between the Archives: an Indigenous Perspective* (Crista Bradshaw). Photography: Lana Adams. Courtesy of the artist and Lana Adams.

# BETWEEN THE ARCHIVES: AN INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE

Crista Bradshaw

The Guildhouse Collections Project + City of Adelaide  
17 November 2025 - 15 February 2026

This project has been undertaken on the traditional lands of the Kurna people and Peramangk people. We respect their cultural authority and ongoing spiritual connections to their Country.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Crista Bradshaw is a Wangkumaran contemporary artist whose multidisciplinary practice explores cultural reconnection and the impacts of colonial dispossession, communicating loss, absence, and healing arising from separation from Country.

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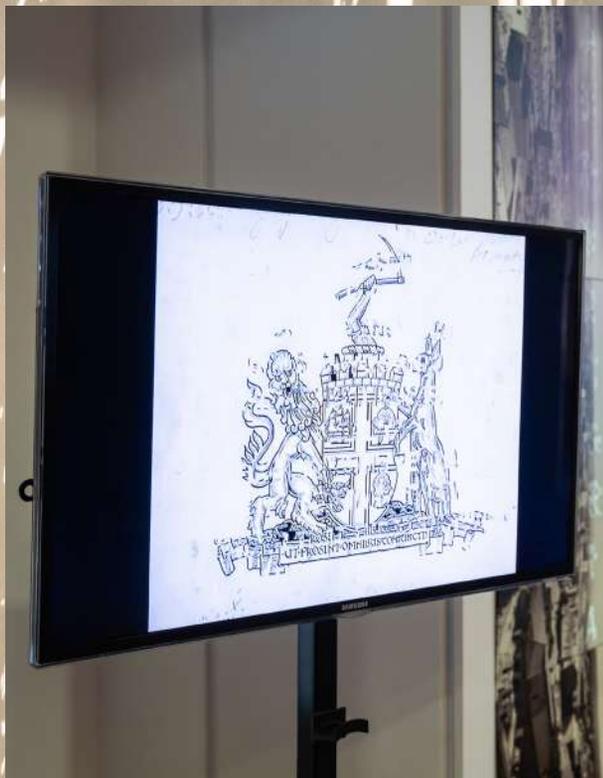
# FOREWORD

Beth Neate, CEO, Guildhouse

*Between the Archives: an Indigenous Perspective* analyses the colonial and historical archives of the City of Adelaide through a First Nations lens, revealing compelling narratives and counter-narratives about power, resistance and ideology. The work celebrates the deep knowledge systems of First Nations people and brings into view the making and re-making of this place, we now know as Adelaide. The work raises uncomfortable questions; Whose truth are we telling? And whose truth are we silencing?

The Guildhouse Collections Project invites an artist into a significant cultural collection - to analyse, observe, research and reflect, and then develop and exhibit anew work in response. Crista Bradshaw's Collections Project with the City of Adelaide marks an important contribution to this series and to community truth-telling. Through video, text, sound and objects, Crista's work challenges us to see our history afresh, to think critically and to understand ourselves and our society more fully. We thank our collaborative partner the City of Adelaide for their active support and our presenting partner the Art Gallery of South Australia through the *Tarnanthi Festival*. The Guildhouse Collections Project is supported through CreateSA.





## FOREWORD

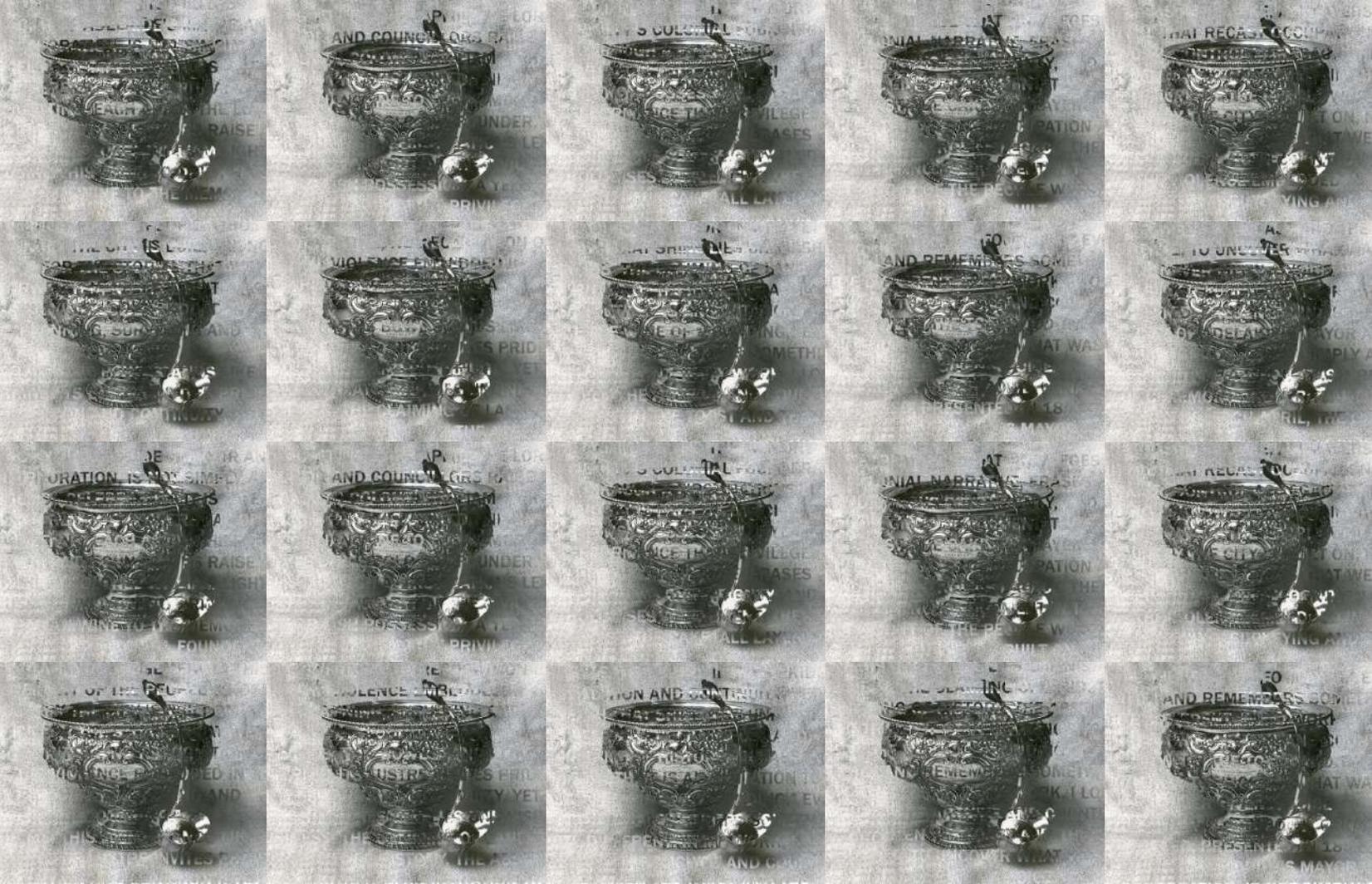
Becca Freezer, Curator, City of Adelaide

This project is long overdue.

For almost 180 years, the City of Adelaide has stewarded collections that shape how the city understands itself. The City Archives hold records of governance, planning decisions and civic development. These sit alongside historic memorabilia and artefacts accumulated by successive Councils since 1853, as well as public art, monuments, memorials, and a growing body of contemporary artworks. Together, these holdings form Adelaide's civic memory. What is most striking is not what is present, but what is missing. The absence of Aboriginal culture, language and sovereignty in its historic record is not incidental; it is structural.

Crista Bradshaw's *Between the Archives: an Indigenous Perspective* makes these omissions impossible to ignore. Developed through the Guildhouse Collections Project, this work is presented during the 2025 *Tarnanthi Festival* at the City's ART POD on Pirie Street.

As Curator for the City of Adelaide, I am grateful to Crista for the clarity, rigour and cultural sensitivity she has brought to this project. This work challenges us to confront the limits of our institutions and commit to a public record that is truthful and accountable, led by First Nations voices. Special thanks to our colleagues at Guildhouse, including then Artistic Programs Manager Samantha Faehrmann, and to the *Tarnanthi* team at the Art Gallery of South Australia.



# ARTIST STATEMENT

Crista Bradshaw

*Between the Archives: an Indigenous Perspective* engages with historical records, images, maps, and ceremonial objects from the City of Adelaide's Civic Collections to examine how Kurna Yarta has been claimed through acts of naming, mapping, and documentation, and how these processes have obscured Indigenous presence, sovereignty, and relationships to land.

Across the exhibition, archival imagery is fragmented, reoriented, and projected onto unstable surfaces. A *Panorama photograph of Adelaide taken from the GPO, looking south-west* [6321ITEM0010] of early twentieth-century Adelaide is installed on its side, disrupting conventional ways of viewing the city and echoing the imposition of colonial spatial logic onto Country, which flattened layered Indigenous knowledge systems into Western forms. Glitching text is layered over these images, operating as both interruption and assertion; words such as "Kurna Yarta", "Invasion", "Erasure", "Unseeded", and "Unsettled" surface unevenly, referencing land, displacement, and contested sovereignty.

The videos engage with archival photographs from the Civic Collections, depicting the Drawing of the *Adelaide Coat of Arms for Year Book plate* [HP1669], *Lord Mayor's Ball, 1967* (*Coat of Arms on table beneath Queen Adelaide knitted*

*shawl*) [3554ITEM0280], and the *Punch bowl and ladle used at the Colonel Light ceremony* [3554.128.016.]. All are historic civic symbols that speak to colonial power and ceremony. The photography is layered with partially legible, slowly moving text that drifts across the image like water. The shifting motion distorts both image and language, resisting fixed interpretation and foregrounding absence as a form of presence. Drawing on water as a metaphor for memory, connection, and transformation, the work symbolically dissolves the authority of the colonial archive, returning the narrative to a state of fluidity.

Organic materials, particularly dead gum leaves and natural fragments, play a central role in the exhibition. Selected for their cultural and symbolic resonance, these materials act as carriers of memory and ancestral presence, positioning Country itself as a living archive. Projecting archival maps onto these fragile surfaces creates a tension between permanence and impermanence, revealing the vulnerability of imposed systems when placed against natural cycles of decay and renewal.

Sound, including recordings of gum leaves, further grounds the work in a sensory and relational framework. Presented within the ART POD, the exhibition functions as a quiet counter-archive, one that draws attention to what sits between records, and invites viewers to reconsider their relationship to the city through Indigenous presence, memory, and material.



ings the work into a tactile, poetic register, where material  
aning are inseparable. The fragile, decaying leaves funct  
oth surface and metaphor, embodying the environmental  
ural consequences of dispossession. Their organic veins  
linear logic of colonial maps, yet their irregularity resist  
ment, disrupting the maps' claims to order and perman  
projected image sits lightly on the leaf, temporary and  
e, creating a dialogue between the archive and the land's  
reserve and the land's ongoing cycles of death and rebir  
tinity. As the light shifts or fades, the colonial grid diss  
ealing the fragility of imposed systems and foregroundin  
collisions of history and geography, where the land's pre



## **BETWEEN THE ARCHIVES: BETWEEN THE LEAVES**

Ali Eckermann

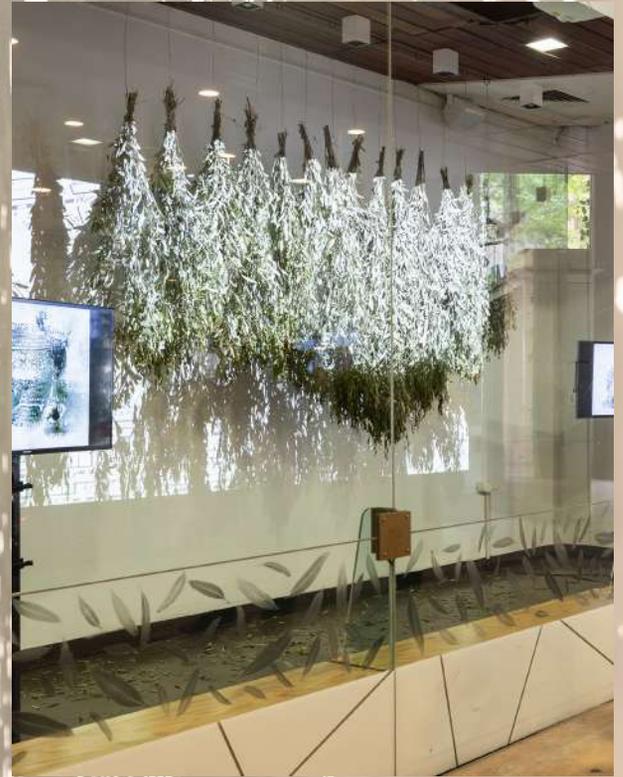
When one hears the word leave(s) it is often understood with a sense of departure. When uttered in a firm voice it confirms to go away from, a removal an exodus, colloquially to take one's leave.

As an Aboriginal grandmother I reference this to the destructive circumstance of the arrival and implementation of colonialism upon this sacred land, the desperate and ongoing trials of cultural genocide to cause the custodial departure of the very people who have cared for and still maintain country for 80 000 plus years. Our departure is refused by our survival, our true belonging as integral as rachis to a leaf.

Leave(s) is transmuted back to the natural world. In a metaphysical sense, ancient trees are living books and leaves represent words on the page. In a parallel metaphor activists and environmentalists constantly fight to prevent logging of eucalyptus woodlands and rainforests, the remains from the Gondwana era, these precious ecosystems dating prior to the British occupation

on this unceded land. If these old-growth forests are critical for biodiversity, the ongoing eliminations mirror the presence of a saddening mono racial tone that is bandied by governments to sustain the fallacy of Australia, funded always by the ever-presence of extractive mining in all its forms upon animal, mineral, physical and spiritual.

In this archival exhibition leave(s) represent the tonic to re-education and re-evaluation, holding space for observation and thought. Close surveillance promises a meditation for listening; be witness to the health of everyday environmental and human wellbeing. Observe the artistic significance to interpret the leaves as words; on the ground read the story of what once was. Observe with a free mind to capture the meanings within this exhibition and within oneself. Read the actual archive that unites all who dwell on this wondrous continent. Envision individual understanding like rachis form.





The Guildhouse Collections Project with the City of Adelaide is supported by CreateSA and presented with *Tarnanthi Festival*.

*Between the Archives: An Indigenous Perspective*

17 November 2025 - 15 February 2026

Presented at the ART POD

25 Pirie Street, Adelaide SA 5000

Guildhouse Project Manager: Samantha Faehrmann

City of Adelaide Project Manager: Becca Freezer

Support: Christina Peek, Tegan Hale, Helen Szuster

Catalogue Design: Crista Bradshaw

Archival Sources:

*Drawing of the Adelaide Coat of Arms for Year Book plate*, date unknown. City of Adelaide Archives, Historical Picture Collection and Photo Library, HP1669.

*Lord Mayor's Ball*, 1967. Coat of Arms on table beneath Queen Adelaide knitted shawl. City of Adelaide Archives Photo Library, 3554ITEM0280.

*Punch bowl and ladle used at the Colonel Light ceremony*, date unknown. Civic Collection numbers CC00007 and CC000980. City of Adelaide Archives Photo Library, 3554.128.016.

*Panorama photograph of Adelaide taken from the GPO, looking south-west*, 1920. City of Adelaide Archives Photo Library, 6321ITEM0010.

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