

Vernon Ah Kee 'Dark + Disturbing' T-shirts

Accession number 32790

Date [between 2007 and 2020?]

Author / Creator

Ah Kee, Vernon, 1967- artist.

Dark + Disturbing (Organisation), commissioning body.

Scope and content The collection contains T-shirts featuring text, including plays on words which expose Australia's colonial legacy and its ongoing implications for Aboriginal people, created as part of Vernon Ah Kee's curatorial project Dark + Disturbing.

System of arrangement Arranged into 1 series.

Description 9 T-shirts

Administrative / Biographical history "Dark + Disturbing is a curatorial project of artist Vernon Ah Kee that explores Aboriginal sensibilities around knowledge, identity, and protest. It interrogates power structures and provides a platform for Aboriginal voice". Vernon Ah Kee explains "Dark + Disturbing" references the place the "aborigine" holds in this country. The "aborigine" is either rendered invisible, as in terra nullius, or is made negative and pathologised as a problem or a curse." (Dark + Disturbing website, viewed 14 October 2021)

Access restrictions Unrestricted access.

Copyright status In copyright.

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Preferred citation

32790, Vernon Ah Kee 'Dark + Disturbing' T-shirts, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland

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Series 1: T-shirts (2007-2020?)

Series number 1

Series title T-shirts

Date 2007-2020?

Scope and content

T-shirts designed by Queensland artist and political activist Vernon Ah Kee featuring text, including plays on words which expose Australia's colonial legacy and its ongoing implications for Aboriginal people.

Author / Creator

Ah Kee, Vernon, 1967-, artist

Description

Description 9 T-shirts

Locate OMOSBOX Box 23473 O/S

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Items in this series:

"Aboriginal all the time" T-shirt (2007)

Unit ID 32790/1

Date 2007

Scope and content

The T-shirt is black with the words "aboriginal all the time" in white text on the front. Vernon Ah Kee explains "When we were kids, my dad used to say you had to be "Aboriginal all the time". What he meant was, he'd worked with people who were performing Aboriginality while they were at work, and then forget they were Aboriginal when worked stopped. He said "if you work for Aboriginal people you should be Aboriginal all the time"." (Dark + Disturbing website, viewed 14 October 2021). The shirt was manufactured by JB's Wear.

Description

Description 1 T-shirt (cotton)

M, chest width 53 cm., back length 71 cm.

"Australia drive it like you stole it" T-shirt (2013)

Unit ID 32790/2

Date 2013

Scope and content

The T-shirt is black with the words "australia drive it like you stole it" in white text on the front. With this message Vernon Ah Kee "critiques Australian claims to the Australian continent." (Dark + Disturbing website, viewed 14 October 2021). The shirt was manufactured by JB's Wear.

Description

Description 1 T-shirt (cotton)

M, chest width 53 cm., back length 71 cm.

"Because racism" T-shirt (2007-2020?)

Unit ID 32790/3

Date 2007-2020?

Scope and content

The T-shirt is black with the words "because racism" in white text on the front. "In a country like Australia, everyone is racist because everything relates to race. As long as there is an oppressed peoples, particularly its native people, then absolutely everything is 'because racism'." (Dark + Disturbing website, viewed 14 October 2021). The shirt was manufactured by JB's Wear.

Description

Description 1 T-shirt (cotton)

M, chest width 53 cm., back length 71 cm.

"I see deadly people" T-shirt (2013)

Unit ID 32790/4

Date 2013

Scope and content

The T-shirt is black with the words "i see deadly people" in white text on the front. "Deadly is a popular term amongst Aboriginal people. It can mean great, good, fast, strong, knowledgeable". (Dark + Disturbing website, viewed 14 October 2021). The shirt was manufactured by JB's Wear.

Description

Description 1 T-shirt (cotton)

M, chest width 53 cm., back length 71 cm.

"Does not assimilate into other cultures very well" T-shirt (2007)

Unit ID 32790/5

Date 2007

Scope and content

The T-shirt is black with the words "does not assimilate into other cultures very well" in white text on the front. Vernon Ah Kee explains "When Aboriginal people were entrenched in mission and reserves, the local protector or authority figure would be required to write reports on individuals and/or groups, who were not conforming or not performing to expected behaviours. This design is typical of the notations and comments in reports, that were used to negatively describe individuals who were seen as troublesome." (Dark + Disturbing website, viewed 14 October 2021). The shirt was manufactured by JB's Wear.

Description

Description 1 T-shirt (cotton)

M, chest width 52 cm., back length 71 cm.

"Australia drop it like its hot" T-shirt (2014)

Unit ID 32790/6

Date 2014

Scope and content

The T-shirt is black with the words "australia drop it like its hot" in white text on the front. With this message "Vernon critiques Australian claims to the Australian continent" (Dark + Disturbing website, viewed 14 October 2021). The text 'pN2014' is on the right sleeve. The shirt was manufactured by Gildan.

Description

Description 1 T-shirt (cotton)

S, chest width 46 cm., back length 64 cm.

"White Australia black history" T-shirt (2015)

Unit ID 32790/7

Date 2015

Scope and content

The T-shirt is black with the words "WHITE AUSTRALIA BLACK HISTORY" in white text on the front. This version of the well-known phrase "white Australia black history" was created by Vernon Ah Kee in 2015. The design is a series of visual puns that interrogates the reality that the truth of Australian history that is not just strongly resisted but more so it is greatly denied. (Dark + Disturbing website, viewed 14 October 2021) The shirt was manufactured by JB's Wear.

Description

Description 1 T-shirt (cotton)

M, chest width 51 cm., back length 72 cm.

"Demoncrazy" T-shirt (2015)

Unit ID 32790/8

Date 2015

Scope and content

The T-shirt is black with the words "demoncrazy" in white text on the front. Vernon Ah Kee explains "Sometime around 2015, we were having a proppaNOW meeting. We were just sitting around and we must have been talking about what our next show could be themed around and a couple of us Googled the word democracy. On my phone as well as Meg's, the words demon crazy came up. It stuck in my mind and I created the shirt because it's just an

appropriate phrase when we think about the way in which democracy does not serve the interests of Aboriginal people.” (Dark + Disturbing website, viewed 14 October 2021) The shirt was manufactured by JB's Wear.

Description

Description 1 T-shirt (cotton)
M, chest width 51 cm., back length 72 cm.

"Still here" T-shirt (2010)

Unit ID 32790/9

Date 2010

Scope and content

The T-shirt is black with the words "still here" in red on the front. ""Still here" was originally created in response to continued questions about Aboriginal sovereignty. Despite their terra nullius, their attempts to assimilate, their racism, Aboriginal people are still here" (Dark + Disturbing website, viewed 14 October 2021) The shirt was manufactured by JB's Wear.

Description

Description 1 T-shirt (cotton)
S, chest width 49.5 cm., back length 67 cm.