

Start at home

Create a necklace that represents your story



About the artist

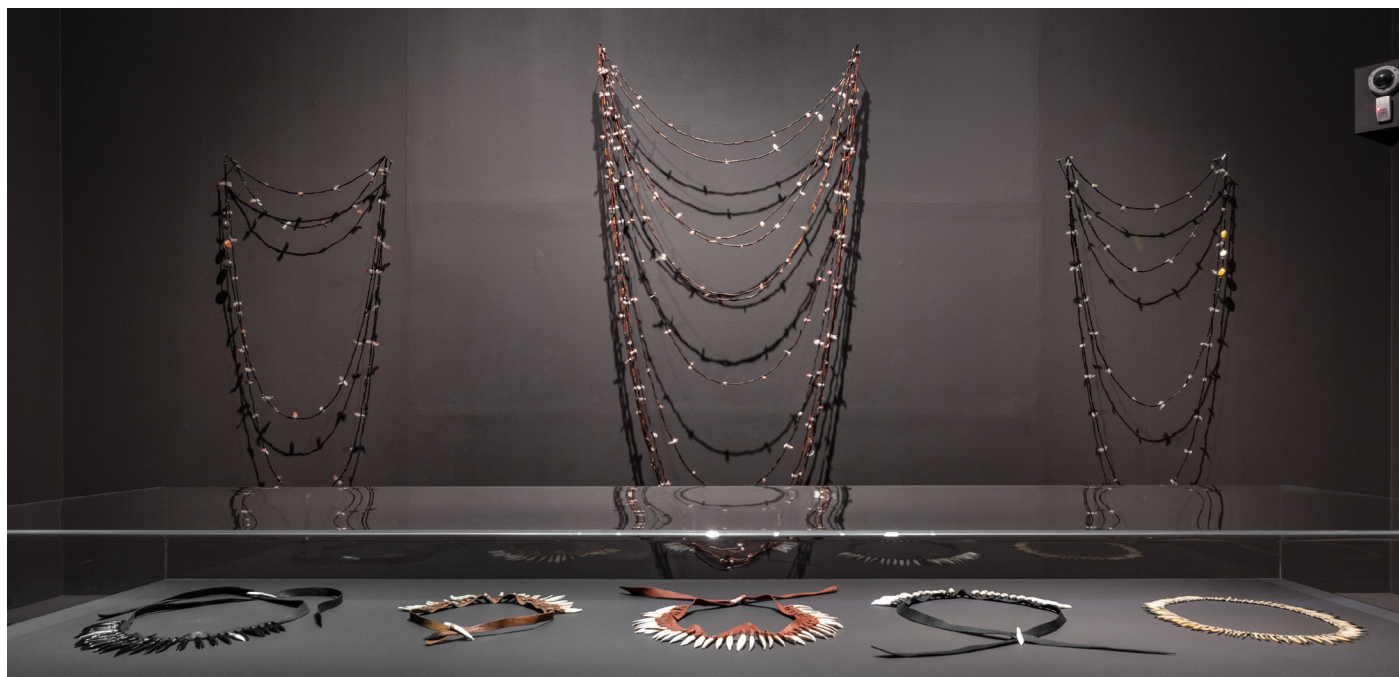
Artist Maree Clarke was born in Swan Hill, Victoria in 1961. Today she lives in Yarraville, Melbourne, where she runs her arts practice from her backyard studio. Clarke is connected to the traditional lands of the Mutti Mutti, Wemba Wemba, Yorta Yorta and Boonwurrung peoples. She has a strong desire to reconnect and preserve her heritage and is dedicated to passing down cultural knowledge.

In 1987, Maree left her decade-long career as an Aboriginal educator to pursue a life in the arts. She has never looked back since. For the past 30 years she has worked as an artist, curator, and artistic director. She has now become a well-respected artist who works with a range of mediums including photography, video, sculpture, painting, printmaking and jewellery.

About the work

Since the late 1980's Maree Clarke has played a significant role in the revival of the history and designs of the south-eastern Australian Aboriginal arts practice. Throughout her artistic career, she has explored customary ceremonies, rituals and language of her ancestors. Such as, the river reed necklace, this was given as a talisman to visitors passing through Country as a symbol of safe passage and friendship.

The beautiful necklaces Clarke creates can be as grand as 30-40 meters in length. They are made from river reeds, both natural and cast-glass, feathers, echidna quills and found and cast-glass kangaroo teeth. They are enlarged to represent the significant loss of cultural knowledge and practices throughout colonisation. She wants to make others more aware that cultural identity and practices are still alive and strong among Indigenous communities.



Materials you need

- string/twine or jute
- cotton thread
- beads of varying sizes (wooden or plastic)
- found objects from your local area (nuts, seeds, flowers, leaves or feathers)
- paper/card
- coloured pencils/markers
- paint
- sewing needle or a hole punch
- scissors
- glue
- sticky tape

Take it further

Maree Clarke would often encourage family members to get involved in the process of making her artwork. This was anything from sourcing materials to being models in her photography. You could ask your family or friends to design, collect and put together a necklace with you. A necklace that represents a collaboration of stories and ideas of everyone involved. This gives you a chance to reflect and tell your life stories and find objects that represent their meanings.

Create your own Sculptural necklace

Maree Clarke likes to explore different mediums to tell stories through her art. For this activity you will create a personalised necklace that represents you, your culture, things you love and where you live. You may want to create a small necklace or a large scale necklace to hang on your wall like the artist.

- 1 Sketch a design of the necklace you would like to make. What materials will you use and why are they meaningful to you?
- 2 Explore your garden, local park or even your own home. Collect things that have sentimental meaning to you. This could be a feather from a bird you like, or a tree nut that reminds you of a past adventure.
- 3 Using a piece of card, your paints and pencils, create a personalised hand-drawn object to add to the necklace.
- 4 Line up the beads and place your found and drawn objects in between them to create a pattern. This gives you a chance to make any final adjustments.
- 5 Measure the string against your arrangement of beads and objects. Before you cut the string, make sure it is long enough to tie both ends together. Attach your beads and objects to the string either by piercing a hole through them or tying thread to your objects. You may need an adult to help you with this.
- 6 Tie both ends together in a double knot. Look at your creation and think about how it represents you and your story. Will you wear this necklace or display it on your wall?

Maree Clarke's work is currently on display in Gallery 10 as part of Tarnanthi

image installation view: Tarnanthi 2021, featuring works by Maree Clarke, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide; photo: Saul Steed.

We would love to see your work! Ask your parent or carer to post a photo on Instagram and tag the Art Gallery of South Australia. Or you can email your photo to us at public.programs@artgallery.sa.gov.au

@agsa.adelaide #agsastart