

Decoding Kait James, It's Time, 2023

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this resource contains or references images and names of deceased persons.

This educational resource is meant for high school students. Some of the links contain language and images that could be offensive.



1. It's Time

"It's Time" was the political slogan used by Gough Whitlam in the 1972 successful political campaign. He was the first Labor Prime Minister after 23 years in opposition. He was a leader that brought great social, political and policy change.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-05-16/gough-whitlam-its-time/11118720>

2. Tick Tock, We Won't Stop!

Related to the lyrical nature of hip hop songs. For example - similar to the words and rhymes used by the 1980's group the [Beastie Boys, Sure Shot](#)

3. Large clock around neck

Relates to the imagery from hip hop culture - specifically the rapper Flava Flav from Public Enemy. Public Enemy is an American hip hop group formed by Chuck D and Flavor Flav on Long Island, New York, in 1985. The group rose to prominence for their political messages including subjects such as American racism and the American media. [Ref: wikipedia](#)

Public Enemy's 2nd Album *"It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold us Back"* is described by critics as one of the greatest and most influential albums of all time, outstanding for its socially and politically charged lyricism.

Public Enemy's biggest single was **"Fight the Power"** The song includes many cultural references, it samples civil right speeches and the music of James Brown and black church services . It was conceived for use in the Spike Lee's 1989 film **"Do the Right Thing"**

[Fight the power](#) YouTube

[Fight the Power](#) - wiki

[Do the Right Thing](#) - wiki

<https://www.youtube.com/@publicenemy>

<https://open.spotify.com/album/03Mx6yaV7k4bsEmcTH8J49>



Flava Flav - Public Enemy

When asked about the significance of his trademark clock necklaces, Flav responded:

"The reason why I wear this clock is because, you know, time is the most important element, and when we stop, time keeps going."

4. Image of Aboriginal man

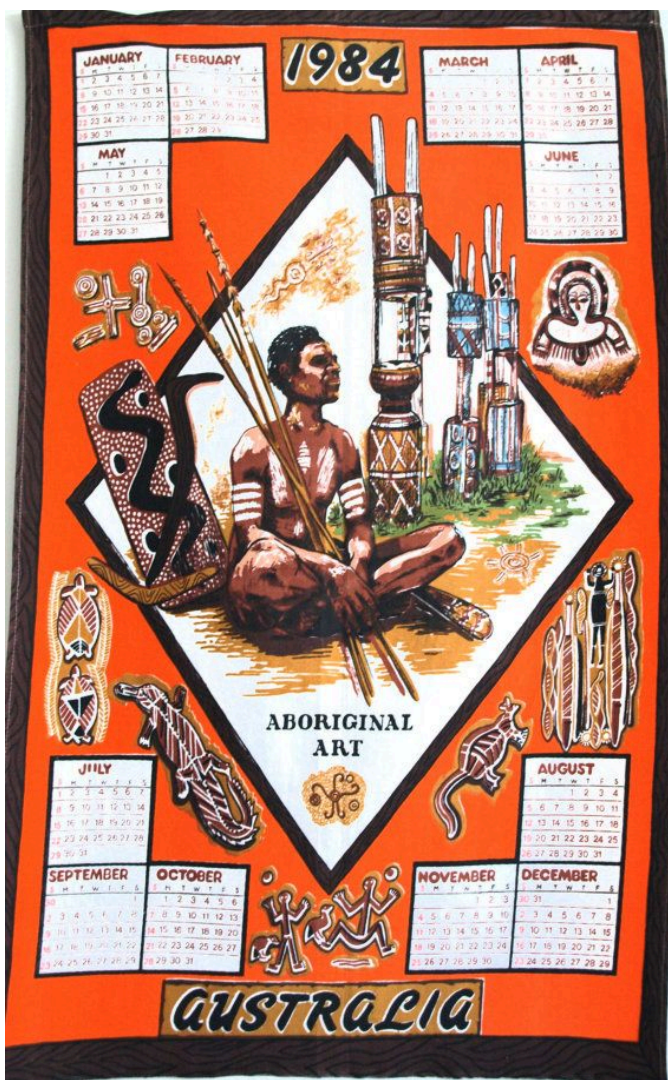
The image is a reproduction of an Aboriginal man used on a mass produced tea towel made for the year 1984. It is not clear who made the image, or who the man is. The cultural significance of the objects and symbols are not explained.

The design and style of the tea towel is now referred to as kitsch and also an example Aboriginalia.

Aboriginalia is a term used to describe objects that are based on Australian Aboriginal culture and valued for their decorative nature. This type of object *could* be seen as derogatory towards Aboriginal people - a viewpoint represented by academic Liz Conor in this article [“The politics of Aboriginal kitsch”](#)

However, this interpretation should be used with care - as indicated by this article [“A response to ‘Aboriginalia’ and the politics of Aboriginal kitsch”](#) written by essayist, and Wiradjuri writer and poet Kerry Reed-Gilbert published by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

The most interesting part of the article is in the comment section, with an exchange between the essayist [Kerry Reed-Gilbert](#) and researcher Liz Conor - who is not Aboriginal.



In their writings - the two women offer different understandings of the Aboriginalia objects and their consumption.

Liz Conor had assumed that the objects of Aboriginalia are racist and have little value for Aboriginal people. This is wrong, as indicated by Kerry Reed-Gilbert's response. Once this is realised - Conor seeks an apology.

With this misunderstanding recognised, and the acknowledgement of other perspectives clarified - a mutual understanding is formed.

Kerry Reed-Gilbert provides a final piece of advice on the subject;

“To Liz and other non-Aboriginal people we are always willing to share the journey with you but first you must be invited to share it and that means yarning up with Mob. Then write your reports but don't leave us out so you can become the expert. In Unity Auntie Kerry Reed-Gilbert”

A quote from Kait James shares her view that relates to both perspectives.

‘My love-hate relationship with Aboriginalia reflects a tug-of-war between cultural pride and commercial exploitation. While these items offer a connection to culture and identity, they also perpetuate harmful stereotypes and trivialise Indigenous culture. It's a delicate balance between embracing tradition and confronting colonial residue.’

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