

Connection to place and evolving identity

Contemporary Australian culture is very **self-centred**.

Our identities are based on **power** – what we own, how much money we have, what we’ve done, and what we’ve **conquered**. We give little consideration to the impacts that our actions have on the land, or how those impacts affect others. We identify by the houses we’ve built and by the changes we’ve made, rather than by the landscape itself. We are connected to others virtually, but abstain from true and meaningful connections to those in our communities.

Indigenous culture places an unmatched importance attached to place and the interconnection between people, and how these play a significant role in identity.

People and land are inseparable.

I am very much interested in the belief that our ***identities are connected to place***, that as places change ***our identities evolve***, and how ***we are all linked*** through this connection to place.

The land is our food, our culture, our spirit and our identity.”

Dennis Foley, a Gai-mariagal/Wiradjuri man.

“(Place) enables me to identify who I am, who my family is, who my ancestors were and what my stories are.”

Catherine Liddle, an Arrente/Luritja woman.

“...interconnectedness with other people provides strong grounding in one’s own identity...”

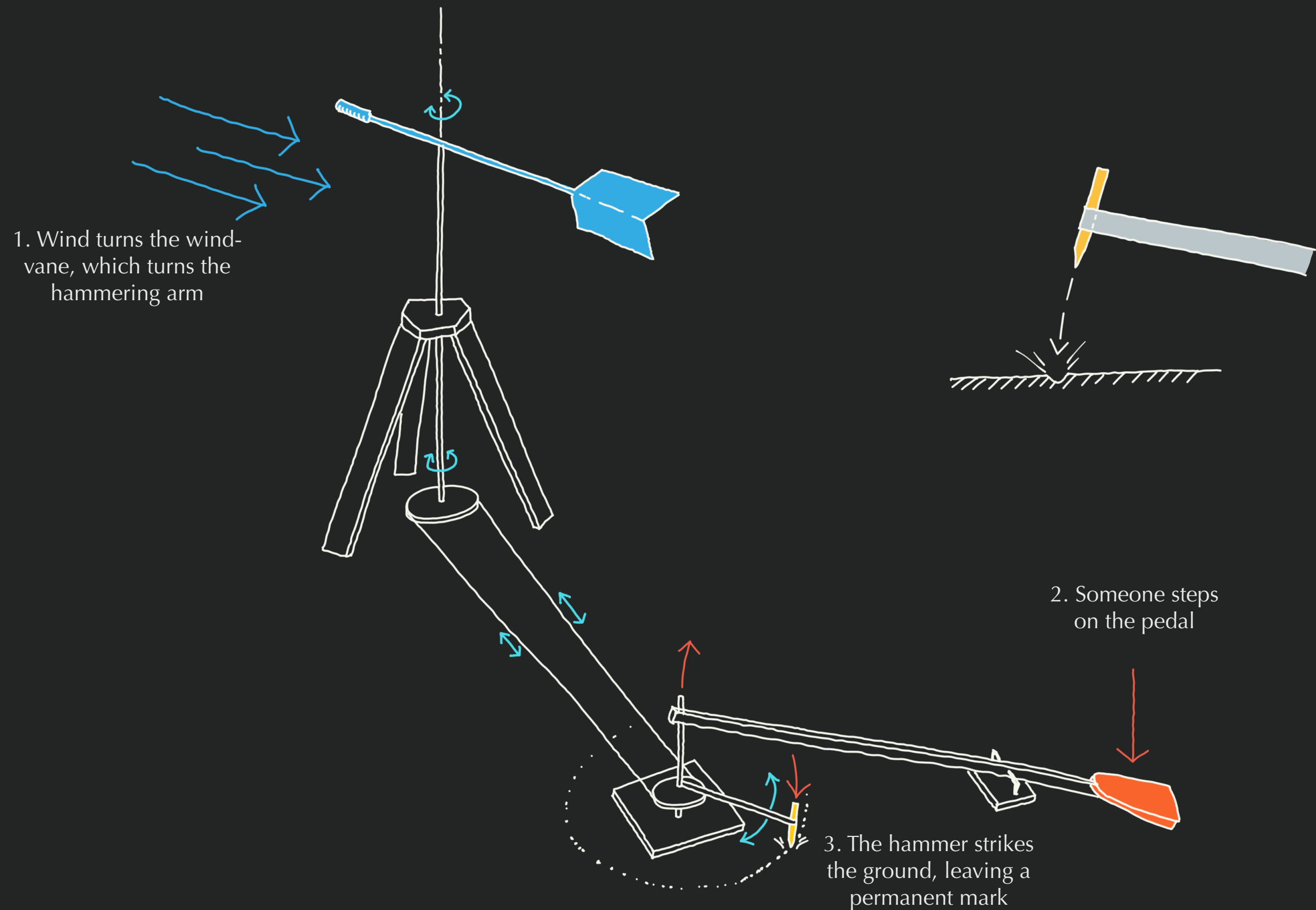
Larissa Behrendt, an Eualeyai/Kamillaroï woman.



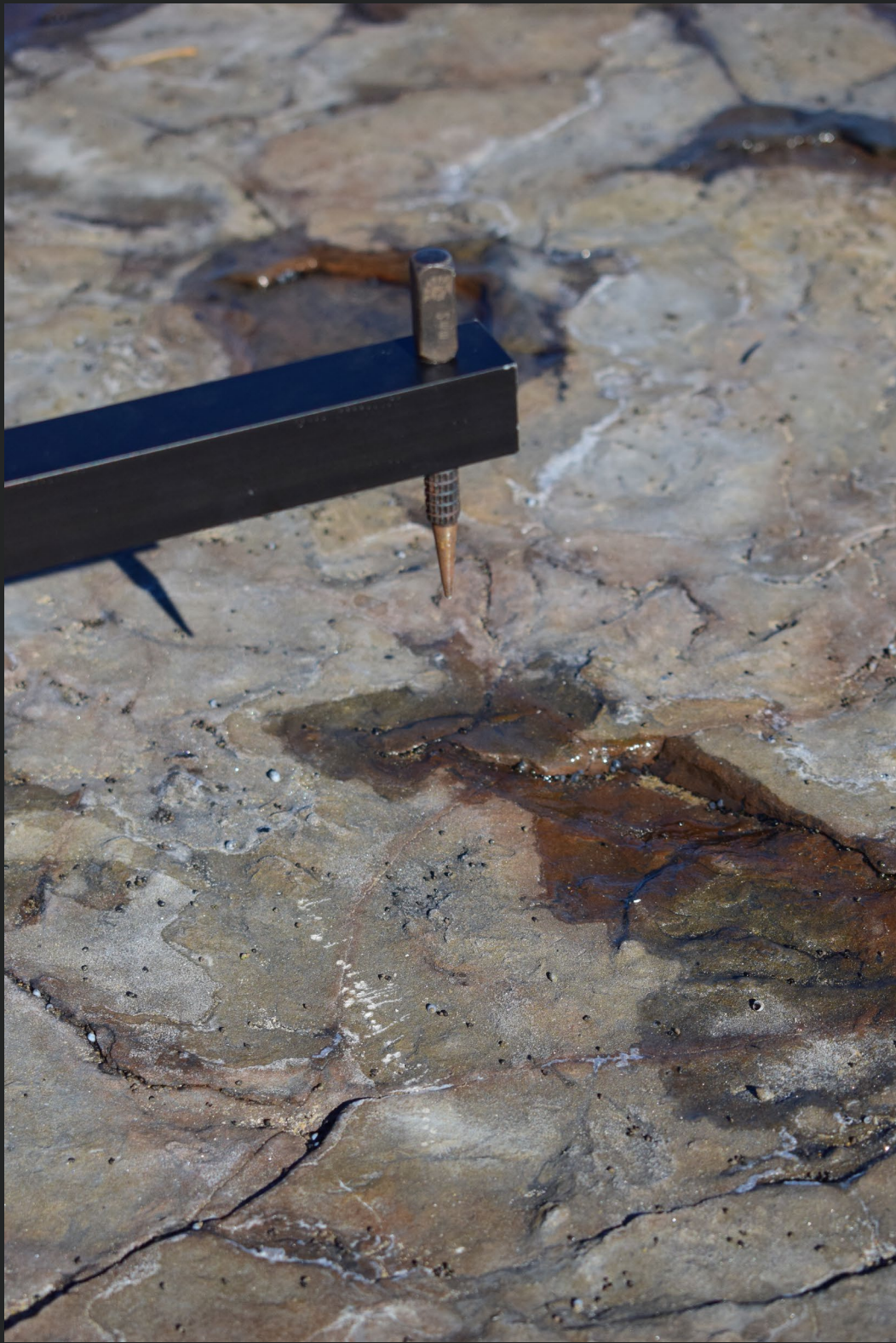
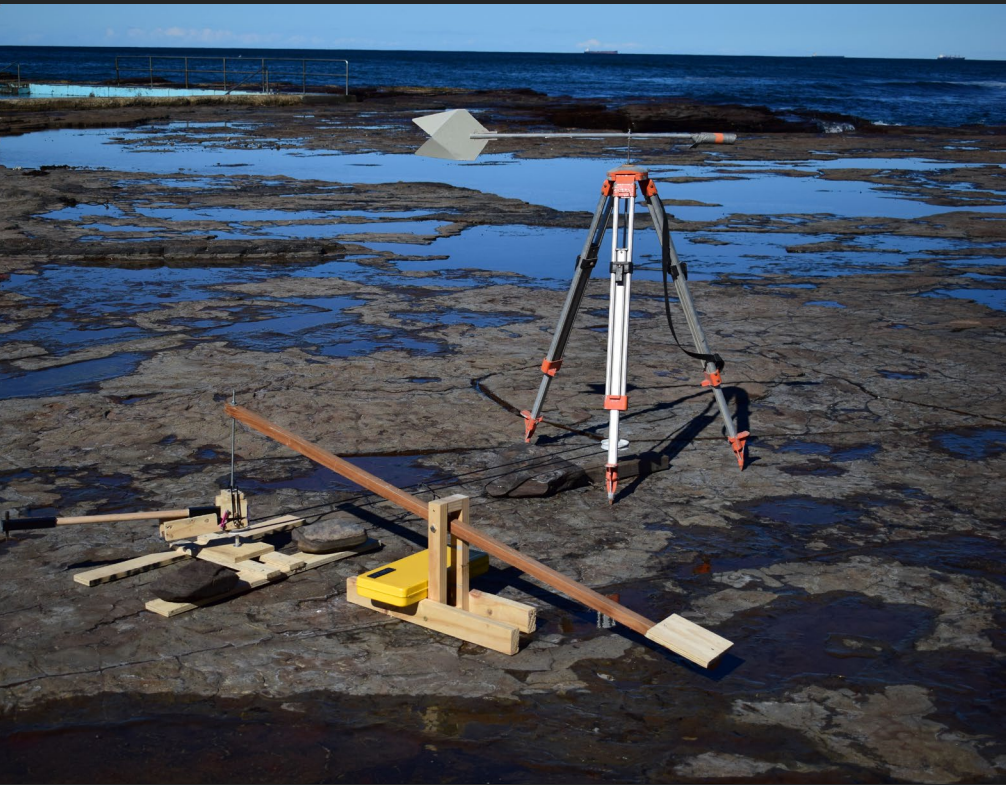
Rock platforms represent a relatively untouched connection to ancient land

Highly developed urban areas represent the typical “connection to place” in contemporary Australian culture. We must change a place to identify with it.

The proposal: An installation of social engagement based on the belief that identity is profoundly place-based. When someone engages with the installation by stepping on the pedal, a metal hammer is brought down, making an immediate mark on the land. This mark permanently links the person with place. The person's impact has physically changed the place, thus the identity of the place and, in-turn, their own identity has evolved. Furthermore, the collective impacts by everyone who engages with the installation links everyone together, creating a collective identity.



Prototype installation in place



Mark making