

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land in which we work and live, the Wurundjeri people.

We pay our respect to all Elders past, present and emerging of the Kulin Nations.

Always Was, Always Will Be Aboriginal Land. Sovereignty has never been ceded.

CODE SWITCH

**Brian Martin
Ashley Perry
Quishile Charan
Bella Waru**

**Megan Cope
Hannah Presley
Sara Daly**

**Gabi Briggs
Bronte Perry
Tamsen Hopkinson**

Culturally kept and facilitated by "Moorina Bonini and Tyson Campbell".

Dates: 12 September - 29 September 2019

This exhibition situates itself at the intersection of Indigenous knowledge, exchange and embodiment.

Alternative knowledge systems are currently gaining cultural capital, and we are witnessing the art academy actively courting Indigenous knowledge systems into its fold as a form of "decolonising". We might ask: is it decolonising or recolonising? To decolonise is a continued

project of the Anglo-Celtic value system. Therefore, it is imperative to ask: who benefits from the labour of such research?

We are interested in how alternative knowledge systems can be employed beneficially in artistic research, while considering the implications and ethics in the turn towards Indigenous knowledge systems within the art academy.

CRITICAL MASS - A CROWDING OF CRUCIAL IDEAS AT BRUNSWICK MECHANICS INSTITUTE, SITEWORKS AND BLAK DOT GALLERY DURING MELBOURNE FRINGE FESTIVAL 2019.

CRITICAL CONVERSATION PROGRAM

A series of critical conversations, resulting from the exhibition's publication will take place throughout the exhibition. On Saturday 14 September, artists Gabi Briggs, Quishile Charan, Bronté Perry and Ashley Perry will be in conversation with the curators, discussing their work and themes in the exhibition. On Saturday 21 September, writers Brian Martin, Hannah Presley and Sara Daly discuss their essays in the exhibition's publication, in the context of the exhibition. And on Friday 27 September, visitors can join artist Megan Cope and researcher, Brian Martin in a special night of conversation and oysters over the fire.

**Saturday 14th of September
1pm - 3pm**

CODE SWITCH

Artist Talk at Blak Dot Gallery
Gabi Briggs, Quishile Charan Bronté Perry, Ashley Perry

Facilitated by Moorina Bonini and Tyson Campbell

**Saturday 21st of September
3pm - 4 pm**

CODE SWITCH

Critical Conversation with Writers at Blak Dot Gallery
Brian Martin, Hannah Presley, Sara Daly

A conversation unpacking the writing contributed to the exhibition, facilitated by Moorina Bonini and Tyson Campbell

**Friday 27th of September
5:30pm - 7.30pm**

CODE SWITCH

Oysters over the fire and conversation with
Megan Cope and Brian Martin at Blak Dot Gallery

CURATORS

Moorina Bonini

Moorina Bonini is a proud Yorta Yorta and Woiwurrung woman. She is descended from the Dhulunyagen family clan of Ulupna people (Yorta Yorta) and is part of the Briggs/McCrae family. Moorina is a practicing artist whose works are inspired by her own experiences as an Aboriginal and Italian woman and within her practice creates artwork that examines contemporary Indigenous histories through the use of installation and video.

Moorina holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from RMIT University and a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Visual Arts)(Honours) from VCA. Her work has been exhibited within group shows and at various galleries such as Ballarat International Poto Biennale, Sydney Festival, Centre for Contemporary Photography, Blak Dot Gallery, KINGS Ari, c3 Contemporary Art Space, SEVENTH Gallery and Brunswick Street Gallery. Moorina has produced and co-curated art and cultural programs across RMIT University and The University of Melbourne. Moorina is currently working at Next Wave as a Producer-in-Residence and Assistant Curator at the Koorie Heritage Trust. She is also a board member for SEVENTH Gallery and is currently the First Nations Programming Coordinator.

Tyson Campbell

Tyson Campbell (Te Rarawa/ Ngāti Maniapoto) is a Narm/Melbourne based multi-disciplinary artist whose work is engaged with the relationships between the indigenous and the settler-state imaginaries. Tyson is currently researching non-performativity as a way of de-railing and de-legitimising control, discipline and punishment within contractual agreements of social and financial outcomes of contemporary indigenous culture production. Using robust and alarming materials; antagonism and earnestness collapse into each other in generative and un-expecting ways—putting into question to how we can see and feel queer, or takatāpuhi futures of organisation.

FOREWORD

"It appals us that the west can desire, extract and claim ownership of our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce and then simultaneously reject the people who created and developed those ideas and seek to deny them further opportunities to be creators of their own culture and nations"- Linda Tuhiwai smith. ¹

Blooming into Spring, *Code-switch* is a curatorial effort that reclaims and re-imagines an Indigenous cultural transformation that link artists and writers from the so called Australian context and across the ditch, in the Aotearoa/ New Zealand context. This Exhibition elevates all it's contributors to unsettle the narratives placed about Indigenous people in Australia and In Aotearoa, uniting their spiritualities without flattening their intrinsic socio-political differences. Facilitated and culturally kept, by Moorina Bonini and Tyson Campbell, *Code-switch* resembles the first iteration of a longer-term commitment to centralising Indigenous knowledge systems and to destabilise the much larger problem of what Brian Martin calls "The Imagined Moral Centre". Spanning over multi-media, photography, sculpture and textiles this exhibition is an autonomous, self-organised, governed expression of what an art ecology in Melbourne could look and feel like, if we, as a collective, speak past and through structures that have historically erased us. This is when a switching of language occurs, strikingly familiar to the dominant narrative, but subversive in intent.

This exhibition sets up fertile possibilities of what can come, when the art-centred Institutional training can be seen as a resource to undermine, rather than one of which has oppressing totalising effects on the mind. It is imperative for Indigenous people across the globe, to continue to see ourselves in each other, and to recognise and to develop meaningful relationships based on this. As Indigenous knowledge systems are being courted into an Art academy, we

must consider how we thrust our labour into a speculative and semiotic thirst trap of which a white marketplace elicits. Perhaps the value of our labour, should be housed and invested in an academy that whose protocol is reciprocal and reflects the culturally diverse community in which we inherently live in.

Country informs us all of our Identities and our positionality towards it. This means that we all have a responsibility towards keeping Country's best interests in the fore, while being aware of an economy of value that has an illusionary relationship towards it.

We do align with the word:

Curator

We also associate ourselves as:

Cultural Keepers

We not keep our Indigenous Knowledges from our communities. Our work, vision, art admin is for:

Our Community

This is the:

Lore

'As long as whiteness remains invisible, race is the prison reserved for the other.'
- Aileen Moreton-Robinson ²

¹ Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies : research and Indigenous peoples.* London : New York : Dunedin, N.Z. : New York : Zed Books : University of Otago Press : Distributed in the USA exclusively by St. Martin's Press

² Moreton-Robinson, Aileen (2000). 'Talkin' up to the white woman : Aboriginal women and feminism.' University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, Queensland

Brian Martin

ESSAY CONTRIBUTION

Methodology is content: Indigenous approaches to research and knowledge

Institute of Koorie Education, Deakin University
Australia, Waurin Ponds, Australia.

ABSTRACT

There has been extensive work in the space of Indigenous epistemological approaches to research. Because Australian Indigenous peoples have been researched significantly, there are guidelines around the ethical and cultural conduct of this type of research. Via investigating the Academy's approach to research in general, we can illuminate the vast differences between empirical approaches to research from the 'West' compared to knowledge acquisition and sharing through 'relationality' from

BIO Brian Martin is Associate Dean Indigenous at Monash University Art, Design and Architecture and is from Bundjalung, MuruWarri and Kamilaroi ancestry. As a practising artist, Brian has been exhibiting his work for approximately 27 years, both nationally and internationally. His research has investigated the relationship of materialism in the arts to an Indigenous worldview and Aboriginal knowledge framework and epistemology. His work reconfigures understandings of culture and visual practice from an Aboriginal perspective. Currently Honorary Professor of Eminence at Centurion University of Technology and Management, Odisha, India, he is also co-author of the Australian and International Indigenous Design Charter.

an Indigenous perspective. This paper investigates this dichotomy and brings into question the premise of power and value attributed to each approach, arguing that this is still not an equal ascription. This paper posits a reconfiguration of approaches to research as a way of extending on research in general, and provides a platform of how Indigenous knowledges can extend on and reconfigure, in a positive way, approaches to research.

KEYWORDS

Relationality; interpellation; indigenous knowledge; agency; interpolation.

Positioning

Before commencing our journey in looking at the relationality of method to content in an Indigenous worldview, I first need to position myself in this pursuit. The positioning of oneself and the agency of positioning is vital on a number of levels which will be discussed at a later stage. I am of Bundjalung, Murrawari and Kamilaroi heritage and my ancestry travels back through millennia on these respective Countries.

I also acknowledge the ancestral Country of Wathaurong people and community where this paper was created. I pay my respects to my elders and extend that respect to Bunjil, the great creator ancestor of the Kulin nations.

Agency

The world is intra-activity in its differential mattering. It is through specific intra-actions that a differential sense of being is enacted in the ongoing ebb and flow of agency. That is, it is through specific intra-actions that phenomena come to matter-in both senses of the word. (Barad, 2003, p. 11)

Just as the 'intra-activity' of my positioning is to this paper and to Country, we must recognise that within an Indigenous worldview, all 'things' have agency and are interconnected through a system of relationality. Karen Barad moves from geometrical optics to physical optics to the questions of diffraction rather than reflection. It is through this notion of diffraction that Barad formulates 'intra-activity' as opposed to inter-activity. The former being internally determined as to the latter being external between two separate bodies. This is vital to an understanding of agency as it suggests that there exists an inherent 'relatedness' between things internally. It is here that we can recognise that all matter, including knowledge, has agency.

This idea is one that creates a different type of privileging which we will unpack in this paper. The methods or epistemologies of knowledge acquisition are significant to the

agency of knowledge itself. The argument here is that there exists a long, yet short, history of methods to acquiring knowledge in the research space of the academy. This paper is an attempt to illuminate a way of reconfiguring the separation of method (epistemology) and content (knowledge/ontology) in some strands of Western thinking through relational agency as experienced through an Indigenous Australian ideology and cultural framework. In an Indigenous worldview there is no separation between method and content. In fact, the 'how' is just as, if not more, important than the 'what'. But for us to get to this space, we need to identify what we are critiquing in Western knowledges and research.

The discourse of separation

In her traverse critique of Western systems of knowledge exploring their weaknesses and possible use value for Indigenous Knowing, Veronica Arbon gives heed to the idea that Western philosophies are not necessarily us. There is caution:

These ontological features are extremely destructive to an Indigenous knowledge position but share a space with other skills and knowledge of the western scientific world which may have use in Indigenous lives. The issue is therefore how to use such knowledge and skills while not being captured within the deep core of separation, domination and control lurking in western knowledge systems. (Arbon, 2008, p. 140)

Why are the ontological features of Western thinking destructive to Indigenous knowledges? When we consider the premise of Western systems of knowledge and research paradigms, they extend from scientific inquiry. In light of this, there is a linear movement through the traditional research path as follows:

- Asking a question
- Conducting background research
- Constructing a hypothesis and a null hypothesis
- Test the hypothesis

- Analyse data and compare with hypothesis
- Draw a conclusion
- Report results
- Ideology has no history: it does not have a history of its own as its history is external to it;
- Ideology is a pure dream.

Although very simplistic, this demonstrates the linear progression of a research pathway in order to acquire content through various methods. Of course these methods vary from quantitative to qualitative research and beyond. It is this historicist path that separates the how from the why via deconstructing the research process into parts. To extend on Arbon's words of caution, we need to identify why there is a separation, and then ask how these systems can be of use to an Indigenous worldview. So, why a separation between methodology and content?

Dominant Western philosophical discourse premised on representationalist thinking, has grounded its thinking in an ideology and system of thinking that has little relationship to the existence of everyday living. The fundamental problem here is that a binary is created where ideology and lived experience have ephemeral relationality, creating a separation. Historically, this type of Western philosophical discourse has involved a quest to represent an ideology of existence that is empirically and scientifically grounded. This course of thinking has established a Western framework and is confined by the limitations of Western ideology and representation. The critical issue here is the notion of ideology itself. For Louis Althusser: 'Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence' (Althusser, 1971, p. 163).

In his exploration of ideology and the state, Althusser observes the means of production as a reproduction of labour power in its submission to the ruling ideology. In doing so, Althusser presents a 'new reality': 'Ideology' (Althusser, 1971, p. 133). It is in this context that he claims there is a ruling ideology that amalgamates the diversity of production. His argument is based on the following premises:

Furthermore, for Althusser:

However, while admitting that they do not correspond to reality, i.e. that they constitute an illusion, we admit that they do make allusion to reality, and that they need only be 'interpreted' to discover the reality of the world behind their imaginary representation of that world (ideology = illusion/allusion). (Althusser, 1971, p. 162)

The vital point here of the equation, ideology = illusion/allusion is that humans transpose and represent reality to themselves in an imaginary form.

Althusser further argues that humans construct themselves through an alienated representation since the conditions of existence around them are alienating. The crucial part of this argument is founded on the idea that the relationship that humanity has to its own reality is like ideology itself. Humanity in Althusserian terms has no history. Within this quandary, Althusser moves on to claim that 'ideology has a material existence' which exists in its practice or practices and therefore, this type of existence is material (Althusser, 1971, p. 165). It is here that ideology itself is made possible by subjectivity as 'Ideology interpellates individuals as subjects' (Althusser, 1971, p. 170). This is vital to Althusser's understanding of ideology in a material existence as having no history as it is manufactured by and manufactures the subjects themselves. We must acknowledge the separation the subject has in relation to ideology in this framework. This separation is the reason why the subject has to constantly interrupt itself with questions about its illusory practices in order to attempt to resolve the split between subject and existence and furthermore be interpellated. This further adds to the separation due to the nature of ideology itself within this framework. This suggests

that knowledge does not have agency if there is no interpellation, as it is predicated on the subject.

For Althusser, the existence of ideology is premised by the subject and for the subject. This construct is crucial to an understanding of ideology in Western terms. If ideology is an imaginary relation to reality and has no history, which is an aspect of material existence itself, then humanity itself has no relationship to its own reality and history. Not only does ideology represent a false consciousness, the ideology of humanity does itself operate as this type of consciousness. Knowledge cannot have agency as it relies on the subject. All 'otherness' outside the subject cannot have agency. On the basis of the Althusserian relationship between ideology, subjects and the real conditions of existence, the notion of an imagined consciousness presents itself. In light of this, the separation continues where all other modes of thinking are devalued, especially an Indigenous ideological framework based on lived experience. This separation and value is premised on power and the dominant culture that maintains it.

Imagined consciousness

This imagined consciousness does have a major effect on Indigenous ways of knowing from the dominant power that enforces it. In critiquing the newspaper articles 'Jedda Star Fights Culture of Rape' and 'Sticks and Stones' by Paul Toohey and 'Noble Rot' by Nicholas Rothwell (The Weekend Australian, 14 April 2001), Norm Sheehan reveals a hidden agenda by a dominant culture. He postulates that the way incidents in Aboriginal communities are represented are to serve an agenda which sustains the moral righteousness of the white centre. These newspaper articles foreground traditional Aboriginal culture as a significant causal factor in the perpetration of these crimes. This imagined consciousness is one that attempts to conceal the past and perpetuates a disparity between the real world and an

imaginary one. This perpetual dominance is something Sheehan refers to as an 'Imagined Moral Centre'.

What must never be stated, however, is that these identities are not only constructed to marginalise and control Aboriginal communities, they are also constructed to conceal aspects of the dominant culture that may expose it as unworthy. (Sheehan, 2001, p. 32)

Sheehan extends further:

Arguably, the main reason for the construction of these identities are that they are needed to conceal real culpability and ignite the imaginary moral centre of the dominant group. (Sheehan, 2001, p.32)

In this moral superiority, a false consciousness is perpetuated furthering the split between the real and imaginary worlds. It is ideology and representation itself that further the divide as there is a non-existent relationality and agency. In Sheehan's Imagined Moral Centre, ideologies interpellate individuals with no relationality. We have to attempt to destabilise this false centre in order to reassign value to an alternative Indigenous ideology to reconfigure approaches to research. Challenging this is vital to any attempt at redefining ideology, as in this framework, ideology becomes a construction of imaginary representations.

Destabilising the centre

As Balwant Jani observes: 'If we have to decolonize historical writings, we have to disengage our minds from the western notions of history' (Jani, 2001, p. 17). I claim that in order to value Indigenous ideology, we have to disengage from established narratives, scrutinise them and overturn them to reassign value. Jani states further:

A decolonized mind is open to alternatives; it constitutes itself from alternatives and is therefore truly representative. The greatness of a decolonised mind lies in the acceptance of an alien language; its dynamism

lies in reshaping it; its variety lies in producing literatures in it; its superiority lies in being able to represent the ethos of a heterogeneous group against the parochialism of the colonist's language. (Jani, 2001, pp. 17, 18)

Within the context of Australian society, the only legitimate research practice in relation to Aboriginal culture and identity is one where there is no separation between method (epistemology) and content (knowledge/ontology). It is also one that values the premise of lived experience as ontologically significant within research. Lived experience refuses the notion of an imaginary relationship to existence. How knowledge is acquired from Indigenous communities is paramount to the research process. We have to create an ontological space of cultural ideology in order to reaffirm the cohesion between life, culture, Country, practice and memory, which is opposed to an ideology constructed within an Althusserian framework.

The difficulty of moving between two modes of thinking, a Western and Indigenous mode, presents different conceptions of the world that are separate. However, it is within this movement between the two that creates a kind of shimmering that allows the argument and illumination to come through. Margaret Kovach states:

'Gaining control of the research process has been pivotal for Indigenous people in decolonization' (Kovach, 2005, p. 23).

This takes us back to positioning and in this positioning it is imperative that it is Indigenous.

Indigenous knowing

In his creation of a set of principles for Indigenist research, Lester Irabinna Rigney argues for a deracialisation and decolonisation in order for cultural freedom to be acquired by Indigenous peoples, especially in the research space. He outlines as follows:

Principle and Rationale of Indigenist Research:

I understand Indigenist research to be formed by three fundamental and inter-related principles:

- Resistance as the emancipatory imperative in Indigenist research
- Political integrity in Indigenous research
- Privileging Indigenous voices in Indigenist research (Rigney, 1997, p. 636)

For Rigney, Resistance is research undertaken as a part of the struggle for Indigenous Australians for recognition for self-determination. Political integrity is that the research undertaken is by Indigenous Australians. And Privileging Indigenous voices, is one where the research values and focuses on the lived experience and struggles of Indigenous Australians. What is vital here is that it is the positioning of the research in terms of Indigeneity on all levels that politicise the research space. It is in this space that Karen Martin states that Western research must recognise Indigenous methodological approaches. Martin, as with Arbon, see the value of Indigenist research aligning itself with certain aspects of Western qualitative research frameworks. Martin advances her argument through the term 'relatedness'. Through her discussion of a Quandamooopah worldview and ontology, Martin observes that 'Throughout this account of Quandamooopah worldview, the essential feature of relatedness is constant' (Martin, 2008, p. 69). She gives a definition of relatedness as a particular manner of connectedness and a relation between things, going on to say:

In this research study relatedness is defined as the set of conditions, processes and practices that occur amongst and between the Creators and Ancestors: the Spirits: the Filter and the Entities. This relatedness occurs across contexts and is maintained within conditions that are: physical, spiritual, political, geographical, intellectual, emotional, social, historical, sensory, instinctive and intuitive. (Martin, 2008, p. 69)

It is this interconnectedness, or in Martin's words, 'relatedness' that further demonstrates the premise of a 'real' relationship people have to an inseparable cultural ideology that is premised on Country. More importantly, this is further reiterated in Martin's discussion about relatedness between people and Country.

We are therefore related to every inch of our Country and to every Entity within it, but there are sites where this relatedness is deeper for some Entities. For People, this depth of relatedness is experienced in terms of gender where there are women's sites or men's sites. There are also areas within our Country where the relatedness is deeper for certain families or clans. (Martin, 2008, p. 70)

In Martin's discussion, the three conditions that comprise 'relatedness' are vital to an Aboriginal ontology. Martin's theorization of ontology in relation to Ways of Doing substantiates how an Aboriginal worldview and lived experience is based on the practice of relatedness. This is vital to an understanding of what is already given in an Indigenous worldview. The relatedness that we have to the world around us also can be seen as the inseparable relationality that we have to making cultural things. A pragmatic example we can use to demonstrate the separation is the use of the term 'art'. In the multiple Aboriginal languages in Australia, we do not find the word 'art'. Art is a Western term and could be argued as some-thing stationary of static and has, at many times throughout history, separated itself from the social and real world. The use of the word 'Yuka' in Wergaia language means 'to paint' which is a demonstration of the action of doing. 'Yuka' has agency and has relationality to the maker, the viewer and to knowing.

I propose that opposing the split or separation that Western ideological structures create, is the notion of Country, relationality and agency as it is given in an Indigenous framework in which there is no need for interpellation as there is no existing separation between the subject

and ideology. In this instance, Country can take on the subjective position, which is the fundamental basis of an Indigenous ideology. Country assumes subjectiveness. It has agency. This agency of Country is opposed to the way in which objects are represented through a Western framework. In an Indigenous worldview, Country informs people of their identity and it is Country's active role of informing us of our whole belief system that relays its importance to culture. It is the reciprocal relationship that people have to Country and its relationality that demonstrates Country as subject. Positioning oneself with Country is establishing agency of both people and Country, they are inseparable. In this paradigm, knowledge has agency and has relationality with people, Country and entities. How knowledge is obtained then, is of utmost importance as this affects the agency of that knowledge. Knowledge, like Country, has subjectivity and has its own agency. A way to describe the relationality of agency is through the term interpolation. Interpolation suggests putting something between other parts. This term, used in mathematics, measures the intersecting data points along a linear progression. In this definition, interpolation connects multiple points. False consciousness can be refused by interpolation as interpolation is internal, has agency and creates relationality.

The agency of knowing

Shawn Wilson presents the argument that Indigenous peoples think and behave in a manner different to that of non-Indigenous peoples. Firstly, by positioning himself as an Opaskwayak Cree from Manitoba Canada, he states:

An Indigenous epistemology would include not only a set of knowledge that is the intellectual property of the people, but also the manner in which that knowledge is understood. My understanding of the similarity between Indigenous peoples way of thinking can be best stated as being circular and egalitarian. (Wilson, 1999, p. 2)

It is not only how knowledge is understood, but it is important how that knowledge is obtained and shared amongst people. Just as we described the notion of art in an Indigenous worldview as something that has significant agency, knowledge is ever moving, not static. It is 'knowing'. Opposing the notion of separation and interpellation, Wilson further states:

What becomes important then in this circular worldview is your relationship with an idea, or how you view it. Thus, in many Indigenous languages, an object ceases to be a concrete thing, like a chair for example, but becomes what its relationship to me is, like a place to sit. (Wilson, 1999, p. 3)

To extend beyond this notion, the idea or even for that 'matter', the chair has agency. The idea or chair does not need the human subject to interpellate it. The idea or knowledge has agency. This is the agency of knowing. Furthermore, Wilson, in his discussion on a ceremony including a literature review, hypothesises:

The idea that knowledge is approached through the intellect leads to the belief that research must be objective rather than subjective, that personal emotions and motives must be removed if the research 'results' are to be valid. (Wilson, 2008, pp. 55, 56)

This brings us back to the premise of research in a Western view being 'objective' to remain valid. Once again the binary ignores other metaphysical and epistemological approaches to knowledge acquisition. For example, the importance of lived experience in an Indigenous research paradigm. Let us delve a little deeper into the notion of objectivity. Donna Haraway in *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective*, argues that feminists have been used and trapped by the binary of the 'tempting dichotomy on the question of objectivity' (Haraway, 1988, p. 675). Haraway provides a possible solution:

We need the power of modern critical theories of how meanings and bodies get

made, not in order to deny meanings and bodies, but in order to build meanings and bodies that have a chance for life (Haraway, 1988, p. 580).

This describes an opposing view to the conditions of interpellation. It is here that relationality is being built. This becomes an interpolation of relationality, where meanings and bodies can exert their agency. However, it is not just any meaning or body that can shift the centre of power relations. Haraway suggests that this lies with the subjugated:

The subjugated have a decent chance to be on to the god trick and all its dazzling- and, therefore, blinding- illuminations. Subjugated standpoints are preferred because they seem to promise more adequate, sustained, objective, transforming accounts of the world. (Haraway, 1988, p. 584)

She goes on to observe that this positioning is hostile to various forms of relativism and suggests that it is within the epistemology of 'partial perspectives' that objectivity lies:

The alternative to relativism is partial, locatable, critical knowledges sustaining the possibility of webs and connections called solidarity in politics and shared conversations in epistemology. (Haraway, 1988, p. 584)

However, a tenuous disparity exists on two distinct levels. Accordingly, Haraway states that no perspective is privileged as all boundaries in knowledge are conceived as power interchanges and not efforts towards the truth. Secondly, there is still that attempt towards objectivity that even with a subjugated or partial perspective interferes with the agency of knowledge. Let us move away for a moment from the relationship between the knower and knowing (subject and object) in order to eliminate the powermoves. How does Indigenous relationality build on knowledge's agency?

The talking circle is a ritual used among many different Indigenous people. In a talking circle, one person starts by holding a stone, feather, talking stick or other object. The person holding this

'sacred' object has the floor as long as he or she holds it, and has the opportunity to speak (or choose not to, as the case may be). When he or she is finished, the object is passed along to the next person in the circle, who then has then floor. This continues until everyone in the circle has the opportunity to hold the object and to speak if they choose to. Remember that you are building spirituality, so don't be afraid to introduce the sacredness of your talking stick or rock. (Wilson, 1999, p. 4)

If knowledge has its own agency, then it is not tied to the knower. This is a true Indigenist materiality. With Yarning, or the circular movement of knowing, knowledge is given agency through building relationality with one another, with knowing and knowledge building relationality with itself. In the example above given by Wilson, we could say that talking or Yarning circles are a form of interpolation. We could extend by saying that knowing is carried by itself or is transmitted through the talking stick or rock. It becomes knowing, a transmutation of knowing occurs. Then there is no power move. It is agency at its best. In an Indigenous worldview, positioning oneself, positioning Country and positioning knowing clarifies a way of reconfiguring the general knowledge economy without the reliance on the question of 'objectivity'.

The agency of positioning

We can see that positioning is vital to an Indigenist research configuration as outlined by Rigney and discussed by Haraway. This also postulates the relationship between the real and the imaginary as realised in the comparison of Althusserian ideology to Indigenous lived experience. Indigenous ideology is premised on the real conditions of existence and not one that is alienating from them. Barad states '... representationalism is the belief in the ontological distinction between representations and that which they purport to represent' (Barad, 2003, p. 3). In saying so, Barad suggests that representationalism determines that inherent attributes are anterior to them. It is on the basis of this ontological gap that

we argue where an Indigenous relationality of method as content in research can shift the boundaries of research in general. This is to allow the research process to proceed beyond the framework of representation or an imagined consciousness. Indigenous knowing and research is an exemplary way of demonstrating the premise of 'doing' as a form of performative agency and immersive experience. The act of doing is vital not only to extend understandings of an alternative framework but also to enact an Indigenous ideology that is based in the real and upon lived experience. It is this agency of positioning that allows us to shift the power moves back to the agency of knowing itself.

All bodies, not merely 'human' bodies, come to matter through the world's iterative intra-activity-its performativity. This is true not only as the surface or contours of the body but also of the body in the fullness of its physicality, including the very 'atoms' of its being. Bodies are not objects with inherent boundaries and properties; they are material-discursive phenomena. (Barad, 2003, p. 15)

Barad presents a relational ontology where nature, the body and materiality can be in their own becoming whilst at the same time involving our role in the practices of knowing and becoming. It is in the causal relationship that a real materialist ontology is demonstrated. For Barad, the conceptual shift exists and begins in 'intra-action' as opposed to 'inter-action'. This is elaborated through her understanding of phenomena as phenomena. This is contrary to the idea of the epistemological separable observer and observed, knower and known, subject and object, '.... phenomena are the ontological separability of agentially intra-acting "components".' (Barad, 2003, p. 9) This connects with an Indigenous notion that Country has an intra-active agency and it is in this action and from within an Indigenous framework, that the concept of object/subject, knower/known is questioned. It is this relationality that creates agency for all entities. For Barad this objectivity is defined as intra-actions leaving marks on the body. For

Indigenous peoples, this is the process of immersive lived experience. This is further illuminated by Barad's statement: 'On an agential realist account, agency is cut loose from its traditional humanist orbit' (Barad, 2003, p. 16). In all Indigenous accounts Country, people, entities, kin and knowing is not passive. What an Indigenous approach to research offers is one that does not limit itself to a linear separation. Barad describes this as terms of onto-epistemology:

The separation of epistemology from ontology is a reverberation of a metaphysics that assumes an inherent difference between human and nonhuman, subject and object, mind and body, matter and discourse. Onto-epistemology- the study of practices of knowing in being- is probably a better way to think about the kind of understandings that are needed to come to terms with how specific intra-actions matter. (Barad, 2003, p. 18)

An Indigenous research paradigm and ways of knowing are phenomena that have come to matter (in both senses of the word {sic.}) and have existed for millennia. Barad provides a way for us to extrapolate a way of communicating Indigenous knowing through a Western paradigm. It is here that we find a great use for Western modes of thinking without being captured by the separation as cautioned by Arbon. Our position starts from an Indigenous one. This position has strong cultural agency and reconfigures approaches to research that privileges the agency of all things relational.

Respecting relational agency

The above position draws on perspectives of both Indigenous and Western thinkers, but is primarily based on an Indigenous ideological understanding of the world predicated on relationality and agency. This comes from my own lived experience. My own positioning as stated at the outset of this paper. We can propose a number of criteria on how to acquire knowledge that is relational, respects agency of that knowledge, is culturally appropriate and

ethical. Significant work has recently been done in the space of pre-ethics relationality. I have included a brief description below of the pre-ethics guidelines that have been created by staff and Indigenous Higher Degree by Research students at Deakin University. These Guidelines and Principles for Pre-ethical Approaches to Indigenous Australian Research provide a way when research is conducted with Indigenous peoples, communities and entities. They stipulate from the beginning that relationality underpins all aspects of the research process, both methodological and by its content. Below is a summary of the guidelines and principles:

The following guidelines are primarily intended to assist researchers in ensuring that relationships are premised on an Indigenous way of relationality.

Principles

- Consider the positioning of the researcher
- Consider the positioning of the participant

- (1) Situate/position yourself as a person and a researcher
- (2) Participants position themselves as co-producer and subject and not only an object of the research.
- (3) Recognise that the nature of the participant is in relation to Country and other entities
- (4) Recognise the importance of lived experience and its relation to use value in research
- (5) The location of the research needs to be paramount in terms of whether the community approves the competency of the research
- (6) The participant reserves the right to consent orally

(7) Principles need to be negotiated and are not necessarily binding because lived experience and actuality of relationality is ever moving (Martin et al., 2016).

These guidelines create a relational narrative within the research epistemology, where the researcher, participants and entities coexist and claim their agency. If any researcher follows these guidelines regardless of the qualitative research participants, different narratives will appear. These relational narratives not only enrich the research process, but shift the content of the research by revealing different knowledges. These knowledges assert their agency within this zone.

We have examined a different approach to knowledge acquisition from an Indigenous positioning and viewpoint. We found that these are premised on lived experience, relationality and allowing the agency of all entities to assert themselves. This approach also provides us with a positioning that refuses the foundation of the binary of subject and object. An Indigenous Australian approach to research is premised on building relationality and is not constructed by the subject as realised in a Western approach. Relationality has agency. Indigenous Australian methodological approaches operate in their own right, and at the same time they accept existing binaries and ambiguities, as they are not linear in their worldview and epistemology. The methodological approaches to research are the content of the research and vice versa. They have a two-way agency. These are inseparable in an Indigenous worldview and it is in this light that we not only reassign axiology to this framework, but offer a relational way of reconfiguring research within the general knowledge economy.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

Brian Martin is currently the head of Research at the Institute of Koorie Education at Deakin University Australia. Born in Redfern Sydney, Brian is from MuruWarri, Bundjalung and Kamilaroi ancestry. His academic qualifications include a Bachelor of Visual Arts with Honours from the University of Sydney, a Graduate Diploma of Vocational Education and Training from Charles Sturt University and a PhD by research from Deakin University. As a practising artist for twenty-five years, Brian has been exhibiting his work for approximately twenty years, both nationally and internationally. His work is in various private and public collections including the National Gallery of Victoria. His artwork and research has focused on the traditions of Western painting and drawing however it has materialised his cultural background by its conceptual basis. His publication history has investigated the relationship of materialism in the arts to an Indigenous worldview and Aboriginal knowledge framework and epistemology. He has further reconfigured understandings of culture and visual practice from an Aboriginal perspective. He is also currently an Honorary Professor of Eminence with Centurion University of Technology and Management in India and a board director of the National Theatre in Melbourne.

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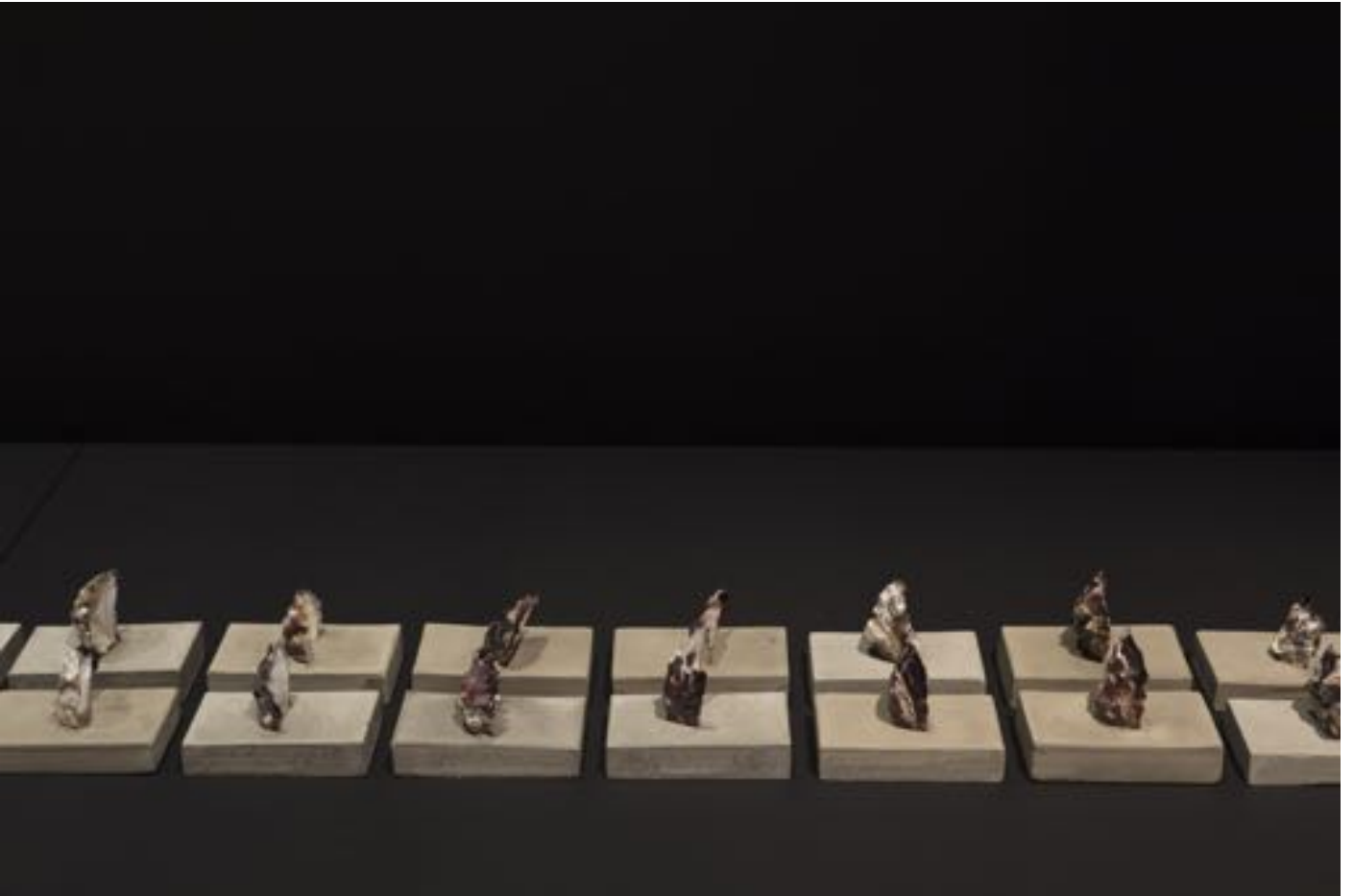
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Megan Cope - *Foundations I (LINE)* 2016

Megan Cope

Foundations I (LINE)
2016

Oyster shells and cast concrete
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist and This Is No Fantasy,
Melbourne

ARTIST STATEMENT

This work explores the foundations and cement production connected to the early limeburning industry that saw the mass burning of Aboriginal shell piles and middens throughout coastal Aboriginal communities.

In archaeological terms a midden is a mound or deposit containing shells, animal bones, and other refuse that indicates the site of a human settlement. The removal of Aboriginal architectural forms such as middens and the continued mining and excavation of our sacred sites renders a landscape void of markers once used to navigate through country, to find our way home.

Perpetual reinforcement, replacement and echoed perceptions of empty lands, have paved a vitriolic establishment of denial resulting in a framework supporting only the invasive settler colonial society by obscuring, submerging and erasing Aboriginal presence on the land. Enormous middens, once with grandeur, ironically serve now as an institution of evidence to prove our existence beneath the pavement.

BIO Megan Cope is a Quandamooka woman (North Stradbroke Island) in South East Queensland. Her site-specific sculptural installations, video work and paintings investigate issues relating to identity, the environment and mapping practices. Cope's work often resists prescribed notions of Aboriginality and become psychogeographies across various material outcomes that challenge the grand narrative of 'Australia' as well as our sense of time and ownership in a settler colonial state.

COMPONENTS

There are 38 pieces in total. Each approximately 12.5 x 7cm



Gabi Briggs - *Murra Burn*

Gabi Briggs

Murra Burn

Due to a developing anxiety to protect my Indigenous body from violence I will be exercising a ritual/regimen of self-care.

ARTIST STATEMENT

The corporeal of an Indigenous womanhood, spiritually interweaves and interlocks around the deep connection that our bodies have to Country. Covert methods and the deliberate lengths taken to obtain woman's murra (hair), allows men to gain control over the owner of whom the hair was taken from. This practice is an act of violence against women. This puts women at a high risk to become sick after that theft has taken place. A hijack has been initiated and the agency of womanhood has been derailed.

The patriarchy is a force that continually decides the fate of what resides beneath its summit.

Murra Burn is a work that came to life in 2015, and is now re-presented and re-staged at Blak Dot Gallery in 2019. In the four years since its inception, not much has changed in the gender violence inflicted on Indigenous women. I would conclude that there has been an exponential increase in violence against Indigenous Women in so-called 'Australia'. In the case of Indigenous women, it is the intersection of gender and racial inequality that creates the conditions for such high rates of violence against them. I will be burning my hair as a means of self-care and protection from the imposed patriarchy upon my Indigenous body, spirit and mind. Borrowing from Audre Lord, "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation and that is an act of political warfare".¹

BIO Gabi Briggs is a sovereign Anaiwan and Gumbangier kajira (woman) who documents her body and how it occupies places and the viewers gaze (you). She does so in order to examine power, privilege and the colonizing and politicizing of her body and narrative. Forever complexed and possibly hoodwinked, Briggs looks to the arts as a place to have agency, to decolonise and to find absolute autonomy and sovereignty.

Murra Burn aims to renegotiate what self-love might look like as an Anaiwan woman reclaiming the violent incursions enacted on my very essence. This requires the decentering of vapid and commodified notions of self-care that are extensions of colonial notions of womanhood-which also lends itself to the domination of Indigenous womanhood.

For me, an immediacy looms, demanding a priority and a shift towards revitalising Indigenous understandings of self and care. It is needed now, more than ever, if we are to collectively sustain the power and security associated with ourselves as extensions of matrilineal bloodlines.

According to the Australian Government Department of Social Services report; Reporting on Family Violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities, Aboriginal women from Australia are 35 times more likely to be subjected to violence than non-Aboriginal women. Statistics from The Australian National Research Organisation for Womens Safety reflects this claim, and statistics can be found at the end of this passage.

An installation will be the final manifestation of MURRA. The collection of hair throughout a few weeks, will be key in the development of MURRA BURN and will be present in the installation post-extinguishment in a glass bowl in which it was burnt. The bowl will act as indexical evidence of the extinguishment of my hair, accompanied by an immersive sound piece that use these statistics as the score.

¹ Audre Lorde, *A Burst of Light : Essays*, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Firebrand Books, 1988.)



Ashley Perry - *Boo-rroo-rra Kun-ji:-yil Ba:-bun (Full Moon Corroboree)* 2019

Ashley Perry

Boo-rroo-rra Kun-ji:-yil Ba:-bun
(Full Moon Corroboree) 2019

1m x 1m or ø1m
Glass, steel, rare earth magnets.

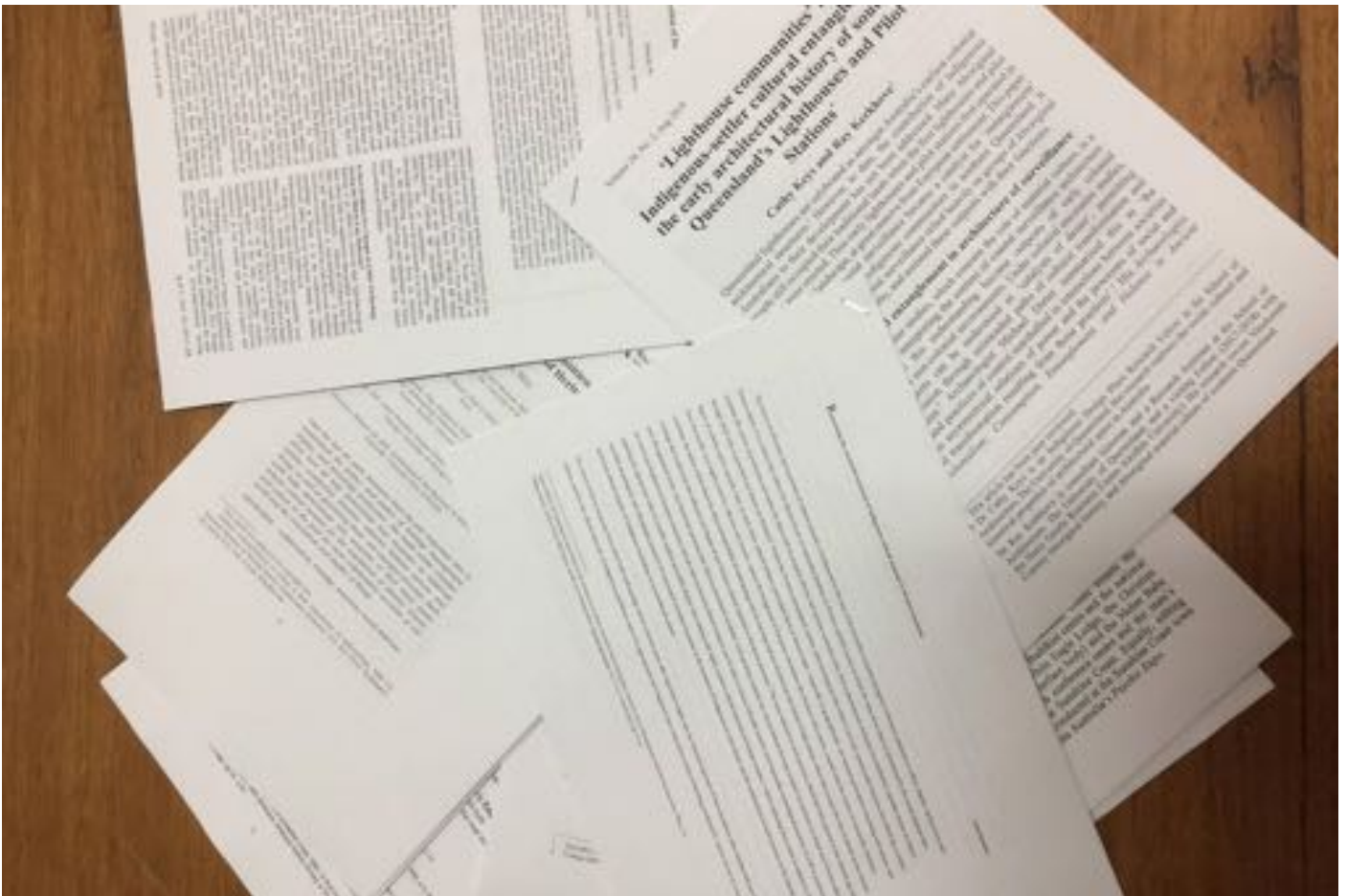
ARTIST STATEMENT

My great grandma Vera spoke of the dances that were held on the mission. These dances occurred throughout the year and had their roots in the traditional practices of the Yoolooburrabee of Quandamooka. When the Aboriginal people of Quandamooka Country were moved onto the mission at Moongalba (Myora), a lot of our cultural practices were prohibited, including the use of the Jandai language. This resulted in altered forms of cultural practices like the Kun-ji:-yil Ba:-bun (Moon Corroboree) that adapted to exist within the restrictions set by the mission system. Grandma Vera described the ceremony as a joyous occasion, with the event bringing together the whole mission. The children and the adults would dance together to music they made. Two of the boys would rise a moon prop made of branches and cloth collected from around the mission in a nearby tree.

Boo-rroo-rra Kun-ji:-yil Ba:-bun is an re-imagining of the 'moon prop' that was used during the Kun-ji:-yil Ba:-bun (Moon Corroboree) – now made out of many shards of glass that have been drawn together to create the important circular moon motif.

BIO Ashley Perry's recent works come from research into Quandamooka cultural practices, with a focus on material culture held in museum, university and private collections. This research is used to produce works that uncover and question the discrepancies embedded in these archives. Drawn from a number of sources from firsthand accounts to historical documents, these varied and often differing accounts are interrogated, compared and are used to produce the works. The works enter a dialogue, questioning the certainty around some of these accounts and engaging in a speculative potential. Perry is Interested in decolonising theories as a way of understanding materials, histories, and artistic practice and examining knowledge structures and methods around collections.

Perry works across sculpture, drawing, printmaking and new media utilising a wide variety of materials, from traditional processes such as copperplate etching to more contemporary such as .html programming. He completed a Bachelor of Fine Art in Sculpture and Spatial Practice with honours at the Victorian College of the Arts. Perry has exhibited across Melbourne in galleries including Margaret Lawrence Gallery, West Space, Incinerator Gallery and the McClelland Gallery & Sculpture Park. He recently presented work in Florence, Italy for the University of Melbourne's First Commissions Project. He was the recipient of the Mary and Lou Senini Prize in sculpture (2017) and the Fiona Myer Award (2017). In 2017 Ashley was awarded an exchange to the Indonesian Institute of the Arts, Yogyakarta as a part of the New Colombo Plan scholarship.



Ashley Perry - Repository for Indigenous Knowledges 2019

Ashley Perry

*Repository for Indigenous
Knowledges 2019*

Dimensions variable
Vinyl, plywood, forms, donated material.

ARTIST STATEMENT

In 1988 human rights activist Henrietta Marrie, presented at the Aborigines Making History' Conference calling for the large reforms to the keeping and accessibility of archival materials connected to Indigenous peoples. Giving a voice to what many in communities had been asking for a prolonged period of time.

"...copies of this research and resultant publications are rarely ever given to the relevant Aboriginal people or communities..." (Henrietta Ne' Fourmile... pg. 2)

Marrie presented Who owns the past? – Aborigines as captives of the archives at the 'Aborigines Making History' Conference, Canberra, May 1988.

Through my research for Quandamooka content, I have come across countless papers published on our culture, our histories, our lands and environments, but they have never reached our people. The same has happened for many other Indigenous communities across the world. This Inaccessibility to key information relating to our cultural heritage has been detrimental to my own and many other communities.

This repository invites visitors to submit material that may have been stolen from communities and research relevant to their world views. Content accumulated from this provocation intends to be shared and made accessible to the people of who the research reflects in accordance with appropriate Indigenous protocols of that area.



James Tylor - *Aotearoa, my Hawaiki*

James Tylor

Aotearoa, my Hawaiki

Inkjet print on hahnemuhle paper with rip,
50x25cm

ARTIST STATEMENT

Aotearoa, my Hawaiki explores the Polynesian Māori concept of Hawaiki. Hawaiki is the ancestral homeland and/or island where Māori people came from before migrating to Aotearoa (New Zealand). For New Zealand Māori people the actual physical place of Hawaiki is 'Avaiki Nui (The Cook Islands). As an Australian of Māori descent I have always had an ideological connection to Aotearoa because it is the place where my Māori ancestors came from before migrating to Australia, So for myself a Māori Australian my Hawaiki or ancestral homeland is Aotearoa.

Growing up in Australia I always held a connection to the ideological meaning of Aotearoa "land of the long white cloud". As a child this meaning made me imagine a place where the mountains touched the clouds. This was a very different place to my home where I grew up in Australia that is mostly flat and with clear blue sky. This series represents my ideological connection to Aotearoa through my New Zealand Māori ancestry; Although It also highlights my disconnection from the physical place or landscape of New Zealand due to not having grown up in New Zealand because my Māori family migrated to Australia so many generations ago.

BIO James Tylor is an Australian multi-disciplinary contemporary visual artist. He was born in Mildura, Victoria. He spent his childhood in Menindee in far west New South Wales, and then moved to Kununurra and Derby in the Kimberley region of Western Australia in his adolescent years. From 2003 to 2008, James trained and worked as a carpenter in Australia and Denmark. In 2011 he completed a bachelor of Visual Arts (Photography) at the South Australian School of Art in Adelaide and in 2012 he completed Honours in Fine Arts (Photography) at the Tasmanian School of Art in Hobart. He returned to Adelaide in 2013 and completed a Masters in Visual Arts and Design (Photography) at the South Australian School of Art. Since completing his tertiary education he has researched Indigenous and European colonial history with a focus on South Australia. He is an experienced writer, designer, curator, historian, researcher, art gallery installation and museum collection conservator. James currently works as a professional visual artist in Canberra in the Australian Capital Territory.

Tylor is a multi-disciplinary visual artist whose practice explores Australian environment, culture and social history. These mediums include photography, video, painting, drawing, sculpture, installation, sound, scents and food. He explores Australian cultural representations through the perspectives of his multicultural heritage that comprises Nunga (Kurna), Māori (Te Arawa) and European (English, Scottish, Irish, Dutch and Norwegian) ancestry.

Hannah Presley

Talking Good Way

ESSAY CONTRIBUTION

Code switching originally referred only to the alternating of languages, in both situation and environment. Sadly, I don't speak an Aboriginal language, but I am cognisant of a shift in the way I communicate when I am around other Aboriginal people, there is a unique level of comfort and connection. There are many of us who can relate to the experience of existing in two worlds, a duality in the way we live our lives.

It is hard analysing a concept that can be found in your own identity. It's even harder when you try to write about it when you are visiting family in Alice Springs. When I am here I feel more relaxed and comfortable and the way I speak and communicate also gets more informal. My speech is more focused on sounds and hand signals and less focused on perfect diction. I find myself talking with facial expressions as much as words and the tone of my voice even shifts.

Some of us succeed in finding a balance within these worlds and some find they have given too much away and reject the balance entirely. Perhaps being strong in one way of communication makes the dominant culture work harder to understand us, but I believe there is strength in each of these experiences.

How does this begin, is it a choice and how much awareness is there when it is occurring? What does it look like? A greeting, a catch up,

BIO Hannah Presley is an Aboriginal curator based in Melbourne, she is currently curator of Indigenous Art at the National Gallery of Victoria. Presley was the inaugural curator for the Yalingwa program at Australian Centre for Contemporary Art and was also First Nations Curatorial Assistant for Tracey Moffatt at the 57th International Art Exhibition, Venice Biennale 2017. Her practice focuses on the development of creative projects with Aboriginal artists, working closely with artists, learning about the techniques, history and community that informs their making to help guide her curatorial process. Recent curatorial projects include *Every Second Feels Like A Century*, West Space, Melbourne (with Debbie Pryor); *Weaving Country* (with Vicki Couzens), Footscray Community Arts Centre, Melbourne (2017); *Hero Worship*, Craft, Melbourne (2016) (with Debbie Pryor). In 2016, Presley was awarded Best Emerging Curator at the Melbourne Fringe Festival

a check in, certain emphasis on words, ways of talking and asking and listening.

There is a meaningful exchange that exists, does everyone see it or just the people who know? Maybe it can be a confusing idea, especially if you are not from a multilingual background, as people from the dominant culture rarely need to code-switch beyond professional versus social. The idea that you interact with people differently in different contexts is not unfamiliar, busy modern lives have varying codes, but the awareness that there could be two distinctive world views encapsulated within one person is more than that...it is more than external interactions.

I first heard the term 'code switch' more recently, working with Aboriginal artists, and I began to appreciate what it actually was. For me it has been a natural progression as I have entered different environments across my entire life, my speech and behaviours are modified in subtle ways without conscious acknowledgment.

I have considered the role safety has played in this, cultural safety working with different mobs and also self-protection within the mainstream galleries and arts organisations I have worked in. It is important to investigate who benefits from code switching, some acknowledge these skills as an asset, particularly in the arts. Being able to

contribute to programming that is inclusive and accessible for Aboriginal artists in established inner-city arts environments means talking both ways. I have seen the benefit of this dual understanding in my role as curator, making connections and creating access. Coming back to Alice, my other home, is the reminder I need to stay strong and keep creating opportunities for Aboriginal artists from all over the Country.

Driving around Alice on Arrernte Country, the trees and rocks are looking dusty, all waiting for a downpour to wash away the red dirt and make the leaves shine again. I head home tomorrow, acknowledging how moving between worlds requires a level of understanding of each and how both nourish in different ways.



Bronte Perry - *Te Whakawa*

Bronte Perry

Te Whakawā

Cotton canvas, steel rod

BIO Bronte Perry is an artist based in Tāmaki Makaurau. Born 'n' bred in South Auckland, Perry is interested in utilising the ideas of whakapapa, whanaungatanga and lived experiences to explore socio-political contexts through immersive installation and sculpture. They graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts Honours, from the Elam School of Fine Arts at the University of Auckland in 2017. Recent exhibitions include: The river remains, ake tonu atu, New Artist Show, Artspace Aotearoa, Tāmaki Makaurau (2018), and my heart is soft, with Ange Perry, Enjoy Contemporary Art Space, Te Whanganui-a-Tara (2018), In The Shadow Of Te Whare Karakia O Mikaera, Elam Graduate Show, University of Auckland, Tāmaki Makaurau (2017) and But They Love Us, Window Gallery, University Of Auckland, Tāmaki Makaurau (2017).

ARTIST STATEMENT

Benefiting from a pākeha racialisation that renders me the affordability into full citizenship, I am a state's favourite wet dream. Like assimilated whakapapa, I'm the native schools golden child, prized glory.

Yet, it is the solidarity through what is incommensurable, in which connects me to Te Ao Māori, rather than a reconciliation. It exists as a catalyst that drives the intensity of my desire to unsettle settler futurity. As grief begets grief, a cyclical force gifts me unique and questionable sets of responsibilities.

Bronte Perry

Back in the chop shop: the role of labour in crits.

ESSAY CONTRIBUTION

Critiques are a difficult tool to utilize. Elam has a relatively haphazard introduction into running critiques. Rather like those infant babies which are biffed into swimming pools by stern faced aquatic instructors, the institution tends to throw you in the deep end. Though this technique can work for some, for many it falls short of leaving individuals drowning in anxiety, missed opportunity and ultimately ill-learned critical engagement.

The borders which encompass the studio environment are frequently touted as a sheltered space for criticism harboured within the safety of the institution. A place to practice giving and receiving critical thought before being thrown into the brutality of the creative arts industry. Yet, do these critical opinions, or lack thereof, received within the institution differ from that of outside of it?

The social, political, emotional contexts of each individual crit differs, therefore it is important to observe the power dynamics of any crit before engaging. Vestiges of authoritarianism and interlacing levels toxic masculinity, patriarchalism and colonialism still dominates the studio environment, therefore leaves an open door for it to bleed into crits. This idea of sheltered or safe environment is effectively false. The vast majority of minorities will experience the same if not higher levels of derogatory or gut-wrenching 'opinions' within crits here at

Elam as they would from say your favourite art racist John Hurrell in the big bad world of arts industry.

Minorities are at more of a risk of being left in underwhelming levels silence or forced to engage with detrimental discussions due to interlacing issues which are not addressed by the participants nor the tutors. Elam's role as an educational institution should be to teach students to engage with multiple forms of art practices beyond material observation. The classic "I think that colour is successful" or "if you moved it two centimeters to the left" are rather superficially helpful to the long term progression or development of one's practice.

The role of the educator

The vast majority of minorities at one point or another would have heard the golden tones of "I've been too afraid to ask questions" or "I don't know much about this context, issue, culture etc, so I can't really engage with your work". These comments and their variants attempts to shift the blame of their inability to provide a critique, or form a constructive dialogue, from the commenter to the minority. Shifting the weight of labour onto that of minority, transforming them into the role of the educator. This form of labour is not new. Marginalised individuals are seen to represent

the community of which they are 'victim' of the situation. Consequently attempting to invalidate the anger of offended, in many cases the minority. "Oh sorry, I didn't know". Time and time again this scene plays out, where minorities are furthered othered by the fragility of those more privileged.

On a final note, it is essential to be mindful of labour, especially the emotional labour that your peers and friends invest into crits or discussions. It is imperative to return that labour, so as not to exploit it.

_Veteres Ossa

Mental health and taking care of others

An immense level of physical and emotional labour goes into maintaining an art practice. That is to say that crits are apart of that maintenance. Either as the individual receiving or offering a critique, emotional labour becomes an integral exponent of those crits and like any form of labour it should not be exploited. Hence, it is important to understand the power dynamics of these crits. Who holds the most power? Who holds what and how much authority and privilege? It can not be left to the shoulders of the few to carry and maintain healthy crits. It's important to diversify crits whilst maintaining safety mechanism to ensure the physical and mental health of all individuals involved, especially minorities. Bringing in individuals who will use their privilege to interrupt toxic behaviour is one such example. Research the contexts, themes or issues of the individuals in your group, be self aware of your actions and discussions. Accept the criticism if you step or speak out of line and ask how you may rectify the situation rather than hiding behind a facade of ignorance.

In order for positive and constructive dialogue, the sharing and expressing of knowledge, experiences and opinions between individuals and groups, you must respect the personal boundaries of those individuals. The capacity to which they feel safe to enter into these exchanges is determined by the acknowledgement and actions of your own self-awareness around power and privilege.



Quishile Charan - *to grieve among the sugarcane fields 2018*

Quishile Charan

to grieve among the sugarcane fields
2018

Cotton, natural pigments: haldi (turmeric) and kawakawa leaves, textile ink, rope, dowel rods
Courtesy of the artist

ARTIST STATEMENT

to grieve among the sugarcane fields is a continuation of Charan's practice of unearthing the colonially buried Indo-Fijian histories. Charan undertakes a process of inherited manual labour in order to create a textile which stitches together remnants of memories across images and generations. A process that re-embodies intergenerational knowledge in order to tell these once hidden stories of Girmitiyas. Photographs exhumed from the archives along with hand carved textile blocks construct a landscape of reclaimed histories. With each textile, Charan responds to an exchange of time, conversation and hospitality shared with the artist's female Indo-Fijian community. Reworking these lived narratives acts as a means to subvert from the deceptive and perverse tongues of the empirical narrative.

Textile techniques within this work have been passed down and have been explored through the support of female elders. Natural pigment dye and textile printing are used to communicate both the labour of the female girmitiyas and the invisibility of non-western craft within art history. The textile is a banner which marks the continuation of survival and resistance of the Indo-Fijian community.

BIO Quishile Charan is an Indo-Fijian artist and writer living and working in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Charan's practice focuses on healing through craft that speaks of hands, emotions, spirituality, and of women who resisted indentured labour during colonial Fiji. As a female descendent of indenture, Charan undertakes her responsibility to build counter-colonial narratives for her female ancestors. She explores how textile narratives can stitch and thread together active forms of love, care and hope that function as a contemporary form of resistance to the present-day realities of existing under neo-colonialism. Charan also seeks to use textile-making to challenge the colonial occupation of knowledge that pertains to the history of women's bodily and mental experience of indentured labour in Fiji. Charan upholds the values and significance of craft as a language, identity and hope through the intergenerational love shared between the artist and the women in her life. Knowledge is kept and stored with each length of fabric created, both a form of visually-expressed oral storytelling and an offering to the girmitiyas, the ancestors of Indenture.

Recent projects include *To Uphold Your Name* (with Salome Tanuvasa), Mangere Arts Centre, Auckland (2018); *Your Woman is a Very Bad Woman*, Firstdraft gallery, Sydney (2018). Writing projects include: "Unearthing the History of my Female Ancestors in Fiji", *Matters Art Journal Aotearoa*, Issue 8, 2018. "Part III: Odisha 24th of November 2017, 2:45pm", *HAMSTER Magazine Issue 03*, The Physics Room, 2018. Charan has a BFA (Hons) from Elam School of Fine Arts, The University of Auckland and a Masters of Visual Arts from Auckland University of Technology.

BIO Sara Daly is a Melbourne based first gen Pākeha (Aotearoa). Sara occasionally writes on the topic of art and is interested in where and why the art world is failing and constructive alternatives to the existing system.

Sara Daly

ESSAY CONTRIBUTION

Positioning

This writing comes from the position of a pakeha/ white person of anglo-celtic descent (Ireland). Using a concept articulated by Ghassan Hage, that to study the practices of cultures outside our own, is an effective way to reflect and look inwards on our own practices and contexts. Hage writes that seeing the practices of cultures other than our own allows us the possibility to see that, 'we can be radically other than what we are' (Hage, 2012, p. 289). He argues that this anthropological/ethnographic method enables us to step outside of ourselves, and to imagine how we are not, and yet still are, somewhat alike. It is in this process that we find new spaces and ways of being.

The question posed

How does the art world in Australia envision its current future fantasy with the terms diversity and inclusivity? How are these terms enacted in the selected examples, and what can we learn from these for the Australian context?

A central tenet proposed in this essay is to ask how acts of distancing, performed through an 'Us' and 'Them' mentality, has played out and enabled the current status quo to be maintained, tentatively holding itself up by projecting outwards rather than reflecting inwards. For example, it would seem,

according to research and the available data that the current demographic of the art world is increasingly removed from the demographic of the population—an imbalance particularly noticeable in senior management positions. Despite widespread knowledge of this, it is treated as if the absence of marginalised voices and racial and ethnic diversity is a problem out there, not in here, enabling empathy and rhetoric about equitability, while avoiding self-reflection. Yet all actions are part of a system, and what affects one person will affect another sooner or later.

Elle Hardy in *The Monthly Today* (September 3, 2019) exemplifies this point in reference to an Australian Senate discussion paper, an 'inquiry into nationhood, national identity and democracy'. Hardy comments on the paper's damning description of the, 'clowns to the left...and the jokers to the right...'. Yet, Hardy points out, all the paper seems to do is look outwards for problems, rather than inwards to reflect on what the rest, the perfect political middle, might be doing. The current landscape depends on understandings and decisions that are expansive, inclusive and future thinking. To bring it back to the context of the art world, Whiteness, will be affected by the reductive choices Whiteness makes. Therefore, this essay looks to examples of how outward looking actions maintain an unstable centre, and what alternative paths might be taken.

To begin it is important to acknowledge what this unstable centre is and how it might be challenged. Norm Sheehan writes of the unexamined 'Imaginary Moral Centre', which he argues is a self-chosen centralized position, in which Us is the centre, and Them is the people over there (Sheehan, 2001). The Imaginary Moral arises because this centre is un-examined and it avoids developing genuine morals by always looking in an outwards direction rather than inwards. Sheehan uses it in the context that colonial-settler people have continually avoided reflecting on how their way of life impacts on Aboriginal communities in Australia, instead turning their gaze outward to ask what needs to be 'addressed' in Aboriginal communities. This outward view creates separation from the self through the act of maintaining a mindset that looks outwards and never self reflexively inwards, failing to see the inside and outside are part of one continuum.

In turn, Brian Martin argues that a common belief is held in the dominant culture that how we know, or our chosen epistemology, based on ideas that objective truth exists and can be found through rational thinking, is universal (Martin, 2016). This is one aspect at the heart of Sheehan's Imaginary Moral Centre and its impact is far reaching because it assumes everyone shares close to identical values. Building on Donna Haraway's concept that knowledge is formed through a web of multiple and partial perspectives; Martin suggests an alternative method of knowledge building based on relationality. This gives knowledge agency that is not predetermined by humans or society. Martin draws a connection to this view of knowledge and the formation of Australian Aboriginal knowledge that situates Country as the informant of a world-view.

Hage, who asks how multiple iterations of knowledge formation can complement each other, has an anthropological angle complementary to Martin's methodology. He suggests that simply trying to replace a dominant power structure is not effective

because the newly erected scaffolding often replaces many of the same power tropes as its predecessor, changing the ideology, but not the intent towards power and domination.

In *Alter-Politics*, Hage queries the possibility of existing alongside each other through finding spaces that give accessibility to the inaccessible, claiming that we need: 'Spaces that give enough of themselves to tell us they exist but are nonetheless impervious to easy capture and to being assimilated in our dominant realities' (Hage, 2015, p. 305). He elaborates on the idea in *Is Racism and Environmental Threat* taking the stance that dualism, as a form of thinking descending from Descartes, is hardly likely to disappear through a critical subversion and undermining of its form. He writes,

dualism and polarisation are part and parcel of generalised domestication as a mode of existing in the world and it is highly unlikely that a mode of existence so closely articulated to the realm of human necessity will cease to exist: for as long as beings, whether humans, animals, or plants, need to ensure their survival in the world, there will be domestication (Hage, 2017, p. 53).

With this in mind, Hage does not foresee domestication suddenly ending and also argues that dualism and domestication are not inherently bad, rather it is what is done with the dualism and domestication that is ill-fated and in need of revision. Hage's suggestion therefore is not overturning one system with another that is equally problematic and dual in nature, but turning to a 'recovery of multiplicities of modes of inhabitation that modernity has excluded and marginalised'. To which he adds: 'Anthropological research has a particularly important part to play here' (Hage, 2017, p.54).

Examples

Denise Ryner suggests arts and culture funding for Black, Indigenous, and People

of Colour (BIPOC) in the Canadian context supports short-term solutions over creating long-term structural change (Ryner, 2018). BIPOC curators, for example, may be funded for year-long curatorial positions, but rarely does this eventuate into a long-term contract, or movement upwards into positions of senior management. This raises two immediate questions: Why do BIPOC curators continually not enter the ranks of senior management? And what effect does the demographic of senior management have on programming?

In the first instance, the lack of BIPOC in senior management is a reflection of mismatched beliefs about what makes an expert curator, and what skills a curator needs in the contemporary context. Ryner argues that those who are experts in engagement and have connections to community increasingly have more to offer the art institution than their academic and professionally shaped counterparts (Ryner, 2018, p. 127).

In the second instance, Ryner argues that an institution's programming agenda will reflect the values of those in senior positions. But programming must also reflect the values of the stakeholders in order for the institution to maintain support and remain sustainable. According to Ryner, art institutions have traditionally favoured presenting art for a majority middle class white audience, but as the demographic of the public population shifts, a new demographic of stakeholders will take place, wanting to see their values reflected in programming. Stakeholders include board members, private and state sponsors, tax payers, art museum audiences and the community at large so it becomes evermore crucial that those in senior management can re-align their values and programming to match those of the stakeholder.

To understand one core part of the ongoing exclusion, Ryner refers to Andrea Fatona's observations. Fatona suggests the history of exclusion dates back to the 1951 Massey

Commission, which established an idea of what Canadian Culture was going to look like. Created from a Eurocentric imaginary it pushed back against artists and intellectuals of the day who were lobbying for 'the creation of a funding agency to support art and academic activity' (Ryner, 2018, p. 126). Canadian culture was perceived, in the mind of those appointed to the commission, as predominantly 'white, modern, and European' (Ryner, 2018, p.126). This is the backbone of what contemporary policy is built upon, and vitally, where change needs to happen. In conclusion, Ryner emphasises that education in inclusivity needs to begin with board members and employees, and tertiary art education needs to '...train students, whether or not they self-identify as racialized, Indigenous or LGBTQIA, to expect to work in—as well as create—diverse and inclusive working environments (Ryner, 2018, p. 127).

The second example comes from research by Patricia Ann Banks on the inclusion of African American art in the Whitehouse and the effect of a more inclusive arts policy pioneered during the Obama Administration (Banks, 2010). This example might demonstrate Hage's idea of finding the space within that benefits multiple groups by using the existing structure as a base from which to work. Banks example could be read as a method of capitalising on the positive aspects of systems already in place and simultaneously shifting what that system looks like by creating new ways to identify with it. Alternatively this method, building on and altering an existing system, could be imagined as an evolving web of multiple realities that constantly develops through a method of relationality, as suggested by Martin.

For Banks, success of the arts in the 21st century is going to be dependent on its inclusion of racial and ethnic diversity as what are currently considered ethnic and racial minorities become demographic majorities of the American population. Banks makes two specific points worth

noting: One is the positive impact inclusive policy can have; the other is highlighting a shift in the population demographic and consequently demographic of art consumers in the 21st century. For example, Banks writes that art institutions have traditionally favoured supporting art that an elite white audience will enjoy, but as more middle class African American's become the main audience, it is important to ask what art African Americans will buy. Banks interviewed one hundred African American middle-class consumers of art, finding that consumption of black art was high, in part to 'articulate and nurture their own and their children's racial identity...' (Banks, 2018, p. 97). If art institutions are holding onto the current status quo with the rationale that art needs money to exist, then this demographic shift requires serious consideration. Art institutions can no longer afford to ignore the shifting demographic while watching their predominantly white market evaporate.

Banks main point, however, is to demonstrate what role an inclusive arts policy can have in changing how histories, national identity, and art are perceived. During President Obama's time in the Whitehouse, Banks looks to what his policy, committed to buying, collecting, and borrowing African American art for the Whitehouse, did for African American art and African Americans as a group. Banks writes that through these actions of collection and display, Obama significantly increased the presence of African American art on the walls of the nation's 'collective home' (Banks, 2018, p. 95). The positive effects, writes Banks, are multiple: To begin, it made African American histories part of the American national shared heritage; it integrated African American art into the category of American Art; these actions further legitimated African American art in a national context, and in the national imagination; it ensured African American histories are an integral part of American history; it increased recognition of African American art as its own valuable entity in the canon of American Art and

recognition of African American art as American Art; subsequently the validation of African American art through these channels increased its economic value; and finally, the achievement of African American artists was viewed by African Americans as the achievement of African Americans as a group (Banks, 2018, p. 97). Banks' research reveals one effective method of developing and acting on culturally inclusive policy. It could be argued that this is a situation where a 'space' has been found within the existing structure that legitimates African American lives in America as integral to the national history and to the national identity, while retaining unique and dual identities.

Conclusion

When approaching a dialogue about art it is imperative to discuss sustainability. Art renders itself vulnerable to the stakeholders of a capitalist society. Josephine Caust (2018) writes at length about the role stakeholders can have in influencing decisions, giving pause for thought about what values an art institution needs to embody to ensure a continued connection with their stakeholders.

In addressing what good arts leadership can look like, Caust notes multiple examples of institutions that have made the effort to be more community oriented. The examples are many and cannot be done justice here, but it is worth noting briefly Caust's cautionary words against believing to quickly and whole-heartedly in the rhetoric. She writes,

In a study conducted with 12 institutions across the United Kingdom, it was concluded that in many cases 'claims of community collaboration and reciprocity seemed, to their community partners, to be somewhat exaggerated' (Lynch, 2011, p. 5 cited in Caust, 2018, p. 142).

This is similar to Ryner's caution against short term funding tactics that look good in statistics, but avoid any holistic and long-term view of increasing inclusivity and diversity in the arts.

Though Blak Dot Gallery's operation cannot be discussed in detail here, it is arguably an example of both a place that has found a space that builds on an existing structure, recognised as an important gallery within Melbourne and Brunswick and that stands alongside these galleries, offering a new angle on gallery management. It is also an example of developing a gallery through the dynamic of relationality. Blak Dot Gallery's identity has forged itself over an eleven-year period. This has been maintained and cultivated through a predominately queer WOC (women of colour, inclusive) grass roots community structure, that prioritises local and global Indigenous voices and cultural expressions. In this structure, Blak Dot Gallery, directed by Kimba Thompson, has a direct and meaningful connection to the traditional owners who inform the basis and future of this gallery.

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Tamsen Hopkinson - image courtesy of the artist

Tamsen Hopkinson

Sculpture 1: roto / rāwaho

Sculpture 2: rāwaho / roto

ARTIST STATEMENT

Tamsen Hopkinson's work '*roto / rāwaho* // *rāwhao / roto*' is based on the Möbius loop; a surface with only one side and only one boundary. The Möbius loop has the mathematical property of being unorientable. Hiriwa translates as silver, referring to the healing nature of the colour as well as the properties of metal. Aluminium is both light weight and malleable, fragile and strong. One surface is textured with sandpaper (sand from an unknown location) and the other is kept shiny and flat. Her work highlights the complications of practising Tino Rangatiratanga under the patriarchal nature of colonisation.

BIO Tamsen Hopkinson, Ngāti Kahungunu ki te Wairoa, Ngāti Pahauwera is a Māori artist from Aotearoa, based in Narm Melbourne. Her practice is an expression of mana wahine from a kaupapa Māori world view, which is also informed by her Irish Pakeha ancestry. Tamsen's work questions the construction of race, the patriarchal nature of colonisation and the hiriwa / silver area between binaries. Tamsen uses ideas of materiality to contrast, contradict and question the mistranslation between two cultures, based in a painting conversation. Tino Rangatiratanga underpins and grounds her practice.

Tamsen Hopkinson (BFA / BA (hons)) majored in Painting, Art History and Philosophy from the Elam School of Fine Arts, Aotearoa. Tamsen has worked across multiple artist run spaces over the last 8 years including programming for West Space, TCB Art Inc. and is a current member of the Un Magazine Advisory board. She is the producer of Dust Productions, a video and audio storytelling artist collective with a focus on contemporary art and accessibility: <http://unprojects.org.au/un-extended/STUDIO/> Tamsen has collaborated across various music projects including Blank Statements, J.McFarlane's Reality Guest and BCC. She currently works as a Teaching Associate at Monash University of Art Design and Architecture (MADA).



Bella Waru

Bella Waru

BIO Bella Waru is a Birraranga//Melbourne-based creative of Ngāti Tukorehe, Te Ati Awa (Māori) & European descent. Working primarily with movement & sound, Waru performs, creates and facilitates ritual as medium for ignition//resurgence//connection//activation//clearing//healing. Their work rises from the body as a vessel of personal, ancestral and environmental knowledge, inheritance and connection.

Ko Tainui te Waka

Ko Tararua nga pai Maunga

Ko Ohau te Awa

Ko Ngāti Tukorehe te Marae

Ko Ngāti Tukorehe te iwi

Ko teenei pepeha o Ihapera Mason tōku kuia

Ko Aotea te Waka

Ko Taranaki te Maunga

Ko Waitotoroa te Awa

Ko Parihaka te Marae

Ko Niho te Whareniui

Ko Ngāti Ruanui, Ngai Rauru, Taranaki, Ruahine, Titahi, Te Atiawa nga iwi

Ko teenei pepeha o Puohooho Mason tōku koro

Ko Te Haumoariki tōku matua

Ko Katia tōku whaea

Ko Ihapera Whāwhai Waru tāku ingoa

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Next Wave

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Charlotte McLachlan

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Blak Dot Volunteers

Jooyung Kim, Kiah Reading, Isabella
Hone-Saunders, Sean Mileš, Sarah Scott (Kotare),
Chi Tran and Karlanya O'loughlin

Helen Hughes

Julie Andrews

Vivien Anderson Gallery

SITWORKS

Next Wave

DJ Don't Underestimate This Pussy (Natalie Smith)

Chalie Sofo

Amy Stuart



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